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# Current Affairs

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# 1. POLITY

## 1. SC ISSUES GUIDELINES FOR ENVIRONMENTAL REGULATORY BODIES

**Why in news:** The Supreme Court (SC) held that bodies and authorities **enforcing environmental laws should be accountable, transparent and efficient in their functioning.**

**What has the SC said?**

The court passed the directions while approving the Centre's notification, **making the expert committee assisting the SC on environment and forest issues, the Central Empowered Committee (CEC), a permanent body.**

SC issued directions for the environmental bodies to get regular performance audits towards proper institutionalization of environmental regulatory bodies and authorities.

In **T.N. Godavarman Thirumulpad v. UoI case, SC issued guidelines to ensure effective functioning of environmental bodies to uphold Environmental Rule of Law.**

- a) **Environmental Rule of Law integrates essential elements of rule of law with environmental governance.**
- b) Court also approved notification of **Central Empowered Committee (CEC) under Section 3(3) of the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986.**

### Key highlights of the guidelines for environmental bodies

- Clearly lay down composition of bodies and service conditions of members.
- Certain and clear source of finances.
- Clear demarcation of mandate and role.
- Notify rules, regulations, and guidelines in regional languages, to the extent possible.

- Regular and systematic audit.
- Notify norms for public hearing, the process of decision making, etc.

### **Central Empowered Committee (CEC)**

- Initially constituted as an ad hoc body through SC's order in **TN Godavarman vs Union of India (1996).**
- In September 2023, Union Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC) notified CEC as a **permanent statutory body under Environment (Protection) Act, 1986.**
- Functions: Monitor implementation of SC's orders on environmental issues.
- Jurisdiction: Whole of India.

## 2. 285TH REPORT OF LAW COMMISSION

**Why in news:** 285th Report of Law Commission recommends Criminal defamation to be retained as part of new criminal laws.

It highlighted that reputation flows from **Article 21, and being a facet of right to life and personal liberty, needs to be adequately protected against defamatory speech and imputations.**

Defamation is considered a reasonable restriction under **Article 19(2) to the freedom of speech and expression in Article 19(1)(a)** Defamation is any false statement published or spoken deliberately, intentionally, knowingly with the intention to damage someone's reputation.

**In India, defamation is categorized as either criminal or civil.**

- Under criminal defamation, individuals can be charged with an offence punishable by imprisonment or a fine.
- Civil defamation, on the other hand, involves filing a lawsuit seeking compensation for damages caused by defamatory statements.

Legal and constitutional Provisions of Criminal Defamation

- **The Indian Penal Code (IPC), 1860** has comprehensive provisions pertaining to criminal defamation from Section 499-502.
- **Section 499:** deals with overall definition of defamation.
- **Section 500:** deals with punishment upto 2 years imprisonment or fine or both.

### 3. THE UTTARAKHAND CABINET HAS APPROVED THE FINAL DRAFT OF THE UNIFORM CIVIL CODE (UCC)

- It is set to focus on gender equality by introducing provisions that treat men and women equally, especially in matters pertaining to inheritance.
- It will also revoke practices governing marriage and divorce such as **polygamy, iddat (mandatory period of waiting to be observed by women following the dissolution of a Muslim marriage) and triple talaq.**

**Note:** As per the 2011 national census, the hill province has a 14% (13.9%) muslim population, with most people from the community living in the Terai region.

#### About Uniform Civil Code

- **Overview:** UCC is part of Part IV of the Constitution which includes the Directive Principles of State Policy (DPSP).
- **Article 44 in DPSP states that** "The State shall endeavour to secure for the citizens a uniform civil code throughout the territory of India"

#### Supreme Court's Observations

- Over the years, the Supreme Court has deliberated upon **the UCC in several judgments**, but refused to issue any directive to the government since **law-making falls within the exclusive domain of Parliament.**
- In its **1985 judgment in the Shah Bano Begum case**, the Court observed that "it is a matter of

**regret that Article 44 has remained a dead letter"** and called for its implementation.

- Such a demand was reiterated in subsequent cases such as **Sarla Mudgal versus Union of India (1995), and John Vallamattom versus Union of India (2003)** among others.

**Background:** The UCC can be traced back to the debates during the framing of the Indian Constitution.

- Some members of the Constituent Assembly, including **Dr BR Ambedkar** believed that a **UCC was necessary to promote gender equality, secularism, and national integration.**
- However, many other **members including Nazirudin Ahmad** were **against it**, claiming that the religious laws of different communities should not be tampered with, without their consent.
- **Purpose:** It aims to enforce a uniform legal framework to all citizens, irrespective of their religion.
- Right now, matters including marriage, divorce and succession are governed by religion-based personal laws.

### 4. FLOOR TEST

**Why in News:** The newly formed Jharkhand government is facing a Floor test.

#### About Floor test

- A floor test is primarily taken to know whether the government still enjoys the confidence of the legislature.
- It is a constitutional mechanism under which a Chief Minister can **be asked to prove majority on the floor of the Legislative Assembly of the state by the Governor.**
- **Article 174(2)(b)** of the Constitution gives powers to the **Governor to dissolve the**



Assembly on the aid and advice of the cabinet.

- Under **Article 175(2)**, the Governor can **summon the House and call for a floor test** to prove whether the government has the numbers
- This happens both in the parliament and the state legislative assemblies.

## 5. EXEMPTIONS UNDER RTI ACT, 2005

**Why in news:** CBI not completely exempted from disclosing information under RTI: Delhi HC

### Section 24 of RTI Act

- It provides immunity from the Act, to intelligence and security organizations specified in Second Schedule of the Act.
- However, information pertaining to the allegations of corruption and human rights violations need to be disclosed by such agencies.

### Other Exemptions

**Section 8(1)** lists exemption from disclosure of information.

- e.g. Information which, Would prejudicially affect **sovereignty and integrity of India**.
- May constitute **contempt of court or breach of privilege of Parliament etc.**

## 6. THE PUBLIC EXAMINATIONS (PREVENTION OF UNFAIR MEANS) BILL, 2024

**Why in news:** The Centre introduced a Bill in the Lok Sabha titled "**The Public Examinations (Prevention of Unfair Means) Bill, 2024**" to curb leaks, malpractices as well as organized malpractices in recruitment examinations

### About the bill

- It outlines **15 unfair practices**, such as leaking question papers, colluding to leak them, unauthorised possession of materials such as question paper or an **Optical Mark**

Recognition response sheet, providing answers by unauthorised individuals, assisting candidates without authorisation, manipulating exam conditions, conducting fake exams, issuing fraudulent admit cards, and more.

- **Coverage:** It will cover entrance examinations held by the Union **Public Service Commission, the Staff Selection Commission**, the Railways, banking recruitment examinations and all computer-based examinations conducted by the National Testing Agency.
- It will also cover entrance tests such as **NEET, JEE, and CUET**.
- **Punishment:** "All offences under this Act, shall be cognizable, non-bailable and non-compoundable."
- It proposes a punishment of a minimum of three to five years of imprisonment to curb cheating and for those involved in organised crimes of cheating will face **five to 10 years of imprisonment and a minimum fine of Rs 1 crore**.
- **Objectives and Need :** In the last few years, leaks of question papers and **organised cheating had affected the interests of lakhs of student due to cancellation of tests and examinations**
- The bill is aimed at preventing organised gangs and institutions **that are involved in unfair means for monetary gains**, but it protects candidates from its provisions.
- It is aimed to bring greater transparency, fairness and **credibility to the public examination systems** and to reassure the youth that their sincere and genuine efforts will be fairly rewarded and their future is safe.

## 7. THE WATER (PREVENTION AND CONTROL OF POLLUTION) AMENDMENT BILL, 2024 IS INTRODUCED IN THE RAJYA SABHA

### Key highlights

**Empowers Central Government to:**

- Exempt certain categories of industrial plants from provision relating to restriction on new outlets and new discharges.
- Prescribe **manner of nomination of chairman of State Pollution Control Board**
- Issue guidelines for **grant, refusal or cancellation of consent by any State Board for establishment of any industry, operation, treatment, etc.**
- Appoint Adjudicating officer who is an officer not below Joint Secretary to the Centre or a Secretary to the State to hold an inquiry and to impose the penalty.
- **Penalty for Contravention:** Contraventions of provisions for which no penalty has been provided in the Act shall attract penalty of **Rs. 10,000 to Rs. 15 lakhs.**
- Persistence of contravention shall attract penalty which may extend to **Rs. 10,000 per day.**
- **Crediting Penalty amount:** To be credited to the Environmental Protection Fund established under Environment (Protection) Act, 1986.
- **Appeal:** Appeal against the order of adjudicating officer may be made to the National Green Tribunal.

#### About Article 252 of Constitution

- Empowers Parliament to legislate on any matters with respect to which it lacks legislative power except as provided in articles 249 and 250.
- **Article 249 and Article 250 empower Parliament to legislate on matter in State List in the national interest and if Proclamation of Emergency is in operation.**
- Parliament can legislate on such matter, if two or more state Legislatures pass resolution to this effect.
- Any Such Act by the Parliament shall apply to States passing such resolution and to another State by which it is adopted.
- Also, such Act could be amended or repealed only by the Parliament.

### 8. RS PASSED BILLS MODIFYING LISTS OF SC AND ST COMMUNITIES

Rajya Sabha passed the Constitution (Scheduled Tribes) Order Amendment Bill, 2024 and Constitution (Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes) Order Amendment Bill, 2024.

#### **About**

The Bill seeks to add several new communities to the **Scheduled Tribes list of Odisha and the inclusion of synonyms and phonetic variations of existing tribes in the ST lists of both Andhra Pradesh and Odisha.**

#### **In Odisha, the PVTG communities added are;**

- Pauri Bhuyan and Paudi Bhuyan as synonyms of the Bhuyan tribe;
- Chuktia Bhunjia as a synonym of the Bhunjia tribe;
- Bondo as a sub-tribe of the Bondo Poraja tribe;
- Mankidia, a synonym for the Mankirdia tribe.
- **In Andhra Pradesh, the PVTG communities included**
- Bondo Porja and Khond Porja as synonyms of the Porja tribe and
- Konda Savaras as a synonym for the Savaras tribe.

#### **Recognition to PVTGs**

- In **1973**, the **Dhebar Commission** created Primitive Tribal Groups (PTGs) as a separate category.
- In **1975**, the Indian government initiated the identification of the most vulnerable tribal groups, designating them as PVTGs, with an initial declaration of 52 such groups.
- An additional **23 groups were included in this category in 1993.**
- In **2006**, this category was renamed Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs).
- There are **75 PVTGs in India**, spread over 18 States and the Union Territory of Andaman & Nicobar Islands.
- **Odisha has the largest population of PVTGs followed by Madhya Pradesh.**

### Other additions and changes

- The Bill to amend Odisha's ST list also shifted two entries — **Tamadia and Tamudia** — from the Scheduled Castes list to the Scheduled Tribes list.
- Odisha's ST list was expanded by adding two communities to it as new entries. These are the **Muka Dora community and the Konda Reddy (and synonyms) community.**

### 9. SUPREME COURT (SC) CRITICISES NATIONAL GREEN TRIBUNAL (NGT'S) TREND OF PASSING EX-PARTE ORDERS

**Why in news: A.** A Division Bench of SC was hearing an appeal against an ex-parte order **in suo motu proceedings by NGT** which directed appellants for payment of compensation.

- **Ex-Parte orders are those that can be granted without waiting for a response from other side.**

#### Key observations of SC regarding NGT

**Recurrent engagement in unilateral decision making, provisioning ex-post-facto review hearing, and routinely dismissing it has become a norm.**

- Imposition of huge sums for damages proved to be **counterproductive in safeguarding environment.**
- Tribunal must ensure procedural integrity to ensure harmonious balance between justice and due process.

#### About NGT

- Statutory body established under **National Green Tribunal Act, 2010.**
- It is a specialized body equipped with necessary expertise to handle environmental disputes involving multi-disciplinary issues.
- It is guided **by principles of natural justice.**
- Not bound by Code of Civil Procedure, 1908 or **Indian Evidence Act, 1872.**

- Composition: Headed by Chairperson who sits in the **Principal Bench, and**
- at least 10 but not more than 20 judicial members, and
- at least 10 but not more than 20 expert members

The **NGT deals with civil cases under the seven laws related to the environment, these include:**

- The Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1974,
- The Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Cess Act, 1977,
- The Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980,
- The Air (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1981,
- The Environment (Protection) Act, 1986,
- The Public Liability Insurance Act, 1991 and
- The Biological Diversity Act, 2002.

### **B. National Green Tribunal (NGT) highlighted inadequate addressing of arsenic and fluoride groundwater contamination**

- NGT had taken suo motu cognizance of the matter based on the Central Ground Water Board (CGWB) report.
- **As per CGWB report, Arsenic** was reported in **230 districts** (in 25 states) and fluoride was reported in 469 districts (in 27 states).

#### Impacts of these Contaminations

- **Fluoride: dental fluorosis, skeletal fluorosis and non-skeletal fluorosis, induces ageing.**
- **Arsenic: skin de-pigmentation, bronchitis, and skin, lung, bladder, and liver cancer.**
- **Other adverse health effects include dermatological, neurological, respiratory, cardiovascular, immunological, and endocrine impacts.**
- **Permissible limits:** The Bureau of Indian Standards has mandated the maximum permissible limit:- **For Arsenic 0.01 mg/L and for fluoride 1.0 mg/L.**



## 10. DIGITIZATION OF GRAM PANCHAYAT' PILOT PROJECT

**Why in news:** Ministry of Panchayati Raj (MoPR) launched 'Smart Gram Panchayat: Revolution towards Digitization of Gram Panchayat' pilot project.

- This project aims to extend Prime Minister's WiFi Access Network Interface (**PM-WANI**) service in all gram panchayats across Begusarai district in Bihar.
- Project is funded under revamped **Rashtriya Gram Swaraj Abhiyan, implemented by MoPR.**

### Need to Digitise Gram Panchayats

- Enhance connectivity, bridge rural-urban divide, foster **accountability and efficiency in local self-governance.**
- Enhance access to online services in crucial sectors like **health, education and skilling**, thereby elevating quality of life in rural areas.
- Create employment, enhance disposable incomes of **small and medium entrepreneurs and boost GDP of country.**
- **PM- WANI Scheme was launched by Department of Telecommunication in 2020.**
- It aims to enhance proliferation of **public WiFi hotspots to create robust digital communications infrastructure in country, especially in rural areas.**

### **PM WANI consists four elements**

- Public Data Office (PDO):** Establish, maintain, and operate PM-WANI compliant Wi-Fi Hotspots and deliver Broadband services to subscribers.
- Public Data Office Aggregator (PDOA):** Provide aggregation services like authorization and accounting to PDOs.
- App Provider:** Develop an App to register users and discover WANI compliant Wi-Fi hotspots for accessing internet service.
- Central Registry:** Maintain details of App Providers, PDOAs, and PDOs. Currently, it is

maintained by Centre for Development of Telematics (C-DoT)

## 11. SUPREME COURT STRIKES DOWN ELECTORAL BONDS SCHEME

**Why in news:** "Supreme Court strikes down electoral bonds scheme: '**unconstitutional**', '**arbitrary and violative of Article 14**'"

- The Supreme Court struck down the electoral bonds scheme asserting that the scheme violates the right to information under **Article 19(1)(a)** of the Constitution.
- Court also quashed the amendments made to the **Income Tax Act and the Representation of People Act 1951** which made the donations **anonymous.**
- **Amendments to Companies Act 2013** provision allowing unlimited corporate contributions are arbitrary and violative of Article 14.
- This scheme was challenged shortly after it was notified in **January 2018**, by a number of parties, including the **Communist Party of India (M), Common Cause and the Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR).**

### About Electoral Bonds Scheme (EBS):

- **Finance Act 2017** introduced EBS that allowed corporations and individuals to anonymously donate money to political parties by purchasing electoral bonds from the SBI.
- Electoral bonds are **interest-free bearer instruments like Promissory Notes, with 100% tax exemption.**
- They are issued in **multiples of Rs 1,000, Rs 10,000, Rs 1 lakh, Rs 10 lakh, and Rs 1 cr.**
- A citizen of India or a body incorporated in India is eligible to purchase the bond.
- It was proposed as a measure to address the **lack of transparency** in political parties' funding and curbing black money.



**Issues related to EBS:**

- As per RBI, **shell companies may** misuse bearer bonds for money laundering transactions.
- Unlimited and anonymous corporate funding infringes the principle of free and fair elections.
- **Corporate Dominance:** Electoral bonds, mainly issued in high denominations, raise concerns of corporate dominance over individual donors, and the anonymity for donors further fuels suspicion.
- **Lack of Transparency:** Transparency issues exist, as funds transferred to political parties make it challenging to track corporate contributions, infringing upon citizens' right to information and creating corruption risks.

**12. MALFUNCTIONING OF ELECTRONIC VOTING MACHINES (EVMS)**

**Why in news:** Several states had flagged the malfunctioning of Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs) during the 2019 Lok Sabha polls according to documents obtained through the Right to Information.

**Electronic Voting Machine (EVM)**

- **Electronic Voting Machine (EVM)** is a simple electronic device used to record votes in place of ballot papers and boxes which were used earlier in conventional voting systems.
- The use of EVM started back in **1982 Kerala Assembly elections**. Prior to this only ballot papers and ballot boxes were allowed.

There are only two Indian PSUs that manufacture EVM machines;

- **Bharat Electronic Limited (BEL)** and
- **Electronics Corporation of India Limited (ECIL).**

The secret source code is only accessible to a few engineers.

**How does the machine work?**

- EVM has two parts, it consists of a 'control unit' and a '**balloting unit**', connected by a **5-meter cable**.
- The control unit is with the **Election Commission**-appointed polling officer and it is the brain of the EVM.
- The **balloting unit** is in the voting compartment into which the voter enters to cast the vote in secret by pressing the button against the name and symbol of the candidate of her choice.
- The balloting unit is turned on only after the polling officer presses the '**Ballot**' button on it.
- The EVM runs on a **6 volt single alkaline battery** fitted in the control unit, and can even be used in areas that **have no electricity**.

**13. MAHARASHTRA ASSEMBLY UNANIMOUSLY PASSES BILL TO PROVIDE 10% RESERVATION TO MARATHA COMMUNITY**

**Why in news:** Bill seeks to provide reservation to Maratha community in educational institutions and government jobs, based on a comprehensive survey report submitted by Maharashtra State Backward Class Commission.

- Previously in **2021, Supreme Court struck down a similar Act that sought to provide reservation to Maratha Community** in educational institutions and State public services, with following observations:
- No extraordinary circumstances were made out in granting separate reservation to Maratha Community by exceeding the **50% ceiling limit of reservation**.
- 9-judge Bench of **the Supreme Court in Indira Sawhney Case (1992)** set a ceiling of 50% on reservations under **Article 16(4)**.
- **Article 16(4)** enables the State to make provisions in favor of backward classes of citizens in public employment.
- **Exceeding ceiling limit without there being any exceptional circumstances clearly violates Article 14 and 16.**

- Changing **50% limit** is to have a society which is not founded on equality but on caste rule.
- Court also held that criteria for reservation under **Article 16(4) should not be proportionate** representation but adequate representation.
- **Concerns related to the bill: Boost to ‘Sons-of-the-soil’** movement promoting regionalism, rise of similar demands from other communities affecting social cohesion, etc.

#### **14. RIGHT TO ADOPT CHILDREN IS NOT A FUNDAMENTAL RIGHT WITHIN ARTICLE 21: DELHI HIGH COURT**

**Why in news:** HC also said that Right to adopt children cannot be raised to a level granting Prospective Adoptive Parents (PAPs) the right to demand their choice of who to adopt.

- Therefore, HC upheld Regulation 5 (7) of Adoption Regulations 2022.
- Under Regulation 5 (7) couples with two or more biological children shall only be considered for special needs children and hard to place children (applicable retrospectively).
- Special needs child means a child who is suffering from any disability as provided in Rights of Persons **With Disabilities Act, 2016**.
- hard to place child means a child who has not been placed in adoption after going through procedure mentioned under rule.
- **Under Regulation 5 (2) Other PAPs**, irrespective of marital status, with or without a biological child (son or daughter) can go for adoption subject to following:
  - Married couple need consent of both spouses
  - Single female can adopt a child of any gender
  - Single male shall not adopt a girl child.

**The 2022 Regulations are issued under the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act or JJ Act of 2015.**

#### **About JJ Act 2015 (Amended in 2021)**

- **JJ Act, 2015** is a secular Act that governs adoption of an orphan / abandoned / surrendered child.
- **Hindu Adoption Maintenance Act, 1956 (HAMA)** also governs adoption in India.
- It establishes Central Adoption Resource Authority (CARA) **under Ministry of Women & Child Development**,
- CARA is the nodal body to monitor and regulate in-country and inter-country adoptions of Indian children.

#### **15. ARTICLE 142 OF THE CONSTITUTION**

**Why in news:**

1. Supreme Court (SC) using Article 142 quashed Chandigarh's Mayor election.
2. Supreme Court invoked Article 142 to remit the 20-year sentence of a person convicted under Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act (POCSO), 2012.

#### **Article 142**

- Empower SC to pass a decree or order for doing complete **justice in any cause or matter pending before it**.
- Such decree or order is enforceable throughout India in such manner as may be prescribed by any **law made by Parliament (or by President's order until such provision is made)**.
- Also Subject to such law, SC has power to make any order to secure attendance of any person, discovery or production of any documents, investigation or punishment of any contempt of itself.

#### **Judgment was delivered in response to curative petition.**

A curative petition is the last recourse open to a petitioner after the review petition is dismissed.

**Article 142**

- Article **exclusively enables the Supreme Court to issue or pass any order that it feels is necessary to provide 'complete justice' in a case before it.**
- Any decree so passed or order so made shall be enforceable throughout the territory of India.

**16. CENTRAL GOVERNMENT AMENDS SURROGACY RULES 2022**

**Why in news:** The Central government ammended **Surrogacy Rules 2022** and allowed couples with medical conditions to use donor gametes for surrogacy.

- **Gamete Source Flexibility:** The Central government has modified the Surrogacy (Regulation) Rules, 2022 and notified that both gametes need not come from a married couple in case they are certified as suffering from a medical condition.
- **Couple Requirement:** As per the latest amendment, the couple can have a child born through surrogacy but must have at least one gamete from the intending couple.
- **Single Women Requirement:** Single Women (widow or divorcee) undergoing surrogacy must use self-eggs and donor sperm to avail of surrogacy procedures.
- In 2023, **Supreme Court in Arun Muthuvel vs. Union of India case allowed a woman with Mayer-Rokitansky-Kuster-Hauser (MRKH) Syndrome** to undergo surrogacy with a donor egg.
- MRKH is a rare congenital disorder that affects reproductive system and cause infertility.
- Surrogacy is a practice whereby one woman bears and gives birth to a child for an intending couple.

**About Surrogacy (Regulation) Act, 2021**

- Only **altruistic surrogacy is allowed and penalises commercial surrogacy.**

- Intending couple must be legally married (age limit **23-50 for female and 26-55 for male**) and must not have a surviving child.
- Surrogate Mother must be married woman having a **child of her own and between age of 25- 35 years.**

**17. 'SUPPORT TO POOR PRISONERS SCHEME'**

**Why in news:** Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) allocated annual fund of **Rs 20 crore for 'Support to Poor Prisoners Scheme'** across States and Union Territories (UTs)

- This provides relief to poor prisoners who are either **unable to pay fine imposed** on them or are unable to secure bail due to financial constraints.
- Prisons/ Persons detained therein, is a State subject.
- **Support to Poor Prisoners Scheme was announced in Union Budget 2023-24.**
- Through this, MHA will enable underprivileged prisoners, majority of whom belong to socially disadvantaged or marginalized groups with lower education and income levels, to get out of prison.
- It will solve the problem of overcrowding in jails.
- Guidelines and Standard Operating Procedure for implementation of Scheme
- **National Crime Records Bureau has been designated as Central Nodal Agency (CNA). Funds to States/UTs will be provided through CNA.**
- **Constitute an Empowered Committee in each District of State/UT, which will assess requirement of financial support** in each eligible case of a prisoner for securing bail etc.
- Oversight Committee may be constituted at State Government level.
- Maximum assistance would be **Rs. 40,000 for undertrial prisoners and Rs 25,000 for convicted prisoners.**



- For any amount over and above Rs. 40,000 and Rs. 25, 000, proposal may be approved by State level Oversight Committee.

### Other Measures taken to improve condition of Prison and Prisoners

- **Model Prisons Act, 2023** for ensuring transformation of inmates into
- law-abiding citizens and their rehabilitation in society.
- Fast Track Courts to expedite trial of pending cases.
- **National Human Rights Commission** to protect basic rights of prisoners.
- Model Prison Manual 2016 provides detailed guidelines on facilities which may be provided to under trial inmates.

### PRACTICE QUESTIONS

#### 1. In the context of Surrogacy, consider the following statements:

- 1) It is the practice wherein a woman agrees to carry a foetus and give birth to a baby for someone else without having any parental rights on the child.
- 2) A child born through surrogacy must have both gametes from the intending couple.

#### Which of the statements given above are correct?

- a) 1 only
- b) 2 only
- c) Both 1 and 2
- d) Neither 1 nor 2

#### 2. Consider the following statements:

- 1) Central Empowered Committee (CEC), an adhoc body.
- 2) CEC notified under Environment (Protection) Act, 1986.

#### Which of the statements given above are incorrect?

- a) 1 only
- b) 2 only

- c) Both 1 and 2
- d) Neither 1 nor 2

#### 3. Consider the following statements regarding Uniform Civil Code:

- 1) Uniform Civil Code is enforceable part of the Directive Principles of State Policy (DPSP).
- 2) It aims to enforce a uniform legal framework to all citizens, irrespective of their religion.
- 3) Dr BR Ambedkar and Nazirrudin Ahmad were against it.

#### Which of the statements given above are correct?

- a) 1 only
- b) 2 only
- c) 1 and 2 only
- d) 1,2 and 3 only

#### 4. Consider the following statements

- 1) Now, CBI not completely exempted from disclosing information under RTI.
- 2) Section 24 of RTI Act provides immunity from the Act, to intelligence and security organizations specified in Second Schedule of the Act except information pertaining to the allegations of corruption and human rights violations.

#### Which of the statements given above are correct?

- a) 1 only
- b) 2 only
- c) Both 1 and 2
- d) Neither 1 nor 2

#### 5. Consider the following statements

- 1) The Bill seeks to add several new communities to the Scheduled Tribes list of Odisha.
- 2) There are 75 PVTGs in India, spread over 18 States and 2 the Union Territories.
- 3) M.P has the largest population of PVTGs

#### Which of the statements given above are incorrect?

- 1 only
- 2 and 3 only
- 1, 2 and 3 only
- None

Consider the following statements regarding Electoral bonds:

- Electoral bonds are interest-free bearer instruments like Promissory Notes, with 100% tax exemption.
- Unlimited corporate contributions are allowed.
- Recently sc said "It is 'unconstitutional', 'arbitrary and violative of Article 14'".

Which of the statements given above are correct?

- 1 only
- 2 and 3 only
- 1, 2 and 3 only
- None

## 2. INTERNATIONAL RELATION

### 1. BILATERAL INVESTMENT TREATY (BIT)

**Why in news:** Union Cabinet approved Signing and ratification of Bilateral Investment Treaty (BIT) with United Arab Emirates (UAE)

- Treaty is aimed to improve confidence of investors to increase foreign investments and Overseas Direct Investment (ODI) opportunities in India.
- Existing Bilateral Investment Protection Agreement with UAE will expire in September 2024.
- BIT is a reciprocal agreement for according protection to investments by nationals and companies of one State in another State
- UAE emerged as 4th largest investor in India in FY23

Key Provisions of Model BIT, 2015

- "Enterprise" based definition of investment
- National Treatment: Similar treatment as domestic investors.
- Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR):** Voluntarily incorporate internationally recognized standards of CSR.
- Settlement of Disputes:** Exhaust local remedies before commencing international arbitration.

### The Bilateral Investment Treaty (BIT):

- It is an agreement between two countries that sets the terms and conditions for private investment by nationals and companies of one state in another.
- It is a part of the International Investment Agreements (IIAs) under the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD).

### 2. FREE MOVEMENT REGIME (FMR) AGREEMENT

**Why in news:** India's recent plans to review the Free Movement Regime (FMR) agreement with Myanmar

- The decision aims to address a complex intersection of historical, cultural, and security considerations.
- Currently, India and Myanmar share a 1,643 km border across Manipur, Mizoram, Nagaland and Arunachal Pradesh, of which only 10 km is fenced, in Manipur.

### Free Movement Regime:

- The FMR was established in 2018 as part of India's Act East policy, promoting cross-border movement up to 16 km without a visa.
- Individuals residing at the border need a one-year border pass for stays lasting up to two weeks in the neighbouring country.
- It aimed to facilitate local border trade, improve access to education and healthcare for border residents, and strengthen diplomatic ties.

### 3. DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE PLANS

**Why in news:** In the recently announced Interim Budget for the fiscal year 2024-25, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) has outlined its development assistance plans, focusing on strategic partners and neighbouring countries.

#### The Development Aid Distributed Among Countries:

- The ministry allocated a total of **Rs 22,154 crore for the 2024-25 fiscal year** in the Interim budget as against last year's outlay of Rs 18,050 crore.
- In line with India's 'Neighbourhood First' policy, the largest share of the aid portfolio has been granted to **Bhutan with an allocation of Rs 2,068 crore against Rs 2,400 crore in 2023-24.**
- Bhutan emerges as the frontrunner, receiving a substantial share of the aid portfolio.
- The development assistance to the **Maldives** has been kept at **Rs 600 crore as against last year's Rs 770 crore**, according to budget papers.
- In continuation with India's special relationship with the people of **Afghanistan**, a **budgetary aid of Rs 200 crore** has been set aside for the country.
- An amount of **Rs 120 crore will be provided to Bangladesh** under development aid while Nepal would be provided Rs 700 crore.
- **Sri Lanka will get development aid worth Rs 75 crore, Mauritius to receive Rs 370 crore** while the amount for Myanmar has been pegged at Rs 250 crore.
- A separate amount of **Rs 200 crore has been set aside for African countries.**
- The total development assistance to various countries and regions such as Latin America and Eurasia has been pegged at Rs 4,883 crore.
- The allocation for **Chabahar Port has also been maintained at Rs 100 crore**, underlining India's focus on connectivity projects with Iran.
- The Government of India has committed Rs. 45 billion to **Bhutan's 12th Five Year Plan (2018-**

**2023)**, which includes **Rs. 28 billion for Project Tied Assistance (PTA).**

- The PTA program includes projects in various sectors, including health, education, culture, livestock development, and infrastructure.

### 4. PRIME MINISTER OF GREECE PAID STATE VISIT TO INDIA

#### Key highlights

- Greece decided to join the Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative (IPOI).
  - IPOI is an initiative of India which builds upon the **Security and Growth for All in the Region (SAGAR) initiative announced in 2015.**
- Both countries agreed to collaborate in the Eastern Mediterranean region and advance the development of the **India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC).**
- IMEC was launched by **India on the sidelines of the G20 Leaders' Summit in 2023.**
- Announced to establish a Joint Working Group (JWG) to enhance coordination on common challenges in defence, cyber security, counter-terrorism, and maritime security.
- Emphasized the need for increased cooperation in defence manufacturing.
- Reiterated their commitment to double trade between the two nations by 2030.
- **Bilateral Trade in 2022-23 was USD 1.9 billion.**

#### Key Aspects of India-Greece Relations:

- Key Partner in the Mediterranean Region and act as a gateway to the European Union (EU).
- Relations were elevated to Strategic Partnership in 2023.
- Supported **India's membership in Wassenaar Arrangement, Australia Group etc.**
- Supports United Nation Security Council (UNSC) expansion, with India as a permanent member.
- Joined India led Initiatives like International Solar Alliance (ISA).



**RAISINA Dialogue**

- Greek PM was the chief guest of 9th edition of the Raisina Dialogue.
- Raisina Dialogue is India's flagship conference on geopolitics and geo-economics, committed to addressing the most challenging issues facing the international community.
- The **theme of the 2024 edition is Chaturanga: Conflict, Contest, Cooperate, Create.**
- **six "thematic pillars". These include:**
  1. **Tech Frontiers:** Regulations & Realities
  2. **Peace with the Planet:** Invest & Innovate
  3. **War & Peace:** Armouries & Asymmetries
  4. **Decolonising Multilateralism:** Institutions & Inclusion
  5. **The Post 2030 Agenda:** People & Progress
  6. **Defending Democracy:** Society & Sovereignty.
- **Jointly organised by the Ministry of External Affairs and the Observer Research Foundation.**

**6. 6TH REGIONAL DIALOGUE OF SECRETARIES OF SECURITY COUNCILS**

**Why in news:** Recently, the 6th Regional Dialogue of Secretaries of Security Councils/National Security Advisers (NSA) on Afghanistan was held in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan.

- India highlighted its worries about large drug shipments linked to Afghanistan and potential instability due to **the presence of terrorists from banned groups such as Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) and Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM) on Afghan soil.**
- Regional Security Dialogue on Afghanistan follows the objective of UNSCR 2593.
- The resolution, passed by the 15-member organ (UNSC), **calls for the prevention of**

**Afghan territory from being used to pose threats or launch attacks against any nation.**

- Drug trafficking is a serious menace for the region. The recent seizures of large shipments of drugs are a worrisome trend.
- **India is partnering with UNODC** in Afghanistan to provide humanitarian assistance for individuals, especially females, who are benefiting from drug rehabilitation programs being undertaken in Afghanistan.
- **Under this partnership, India has supplied 11,000 units of hygiene kits, baby food kits, blankets, medical aid etc. to UNODC, Kabul.**

**6. THE INDUS-X SUMMIT**

**Why in news:** The INDUS-X Summit will be held on **February 20-21 in New Delhi**, marking a significant milestone in the collaborative efforts between India and the US in defense innovation.

- The 'INDUS-X' summit is a **joint initiative between India and the US**, which signifies a pivotal milestone in bilateral defense cooperation, fostering strategic technology partnerships and industrial collaboration.
- The summit was **jointly organized by Innovations for Defence Excellence (iDEX), MoD, and the DoD, and coordinated by the US-India Business Council (USIBC) and Society of India Defense Manufacturers (SIDM).**
- **Inception: June 2023.**
- **Aim:** To bolster defense innovation and technology collaboration between the two nations.
- **Objectives:** Advancing strategic co-operation: By expanding strategic technology partnerships and defense industrial cooperation.
- **Bridging Innovation Gaps:** Establish a defense innovation bridge encompassing joint challenges, academia engagement, industry-startup connect, and investment in defense projects.

**Innovations for Defense Excellence (iDEX)**

- iDEX is a flagship initiative launched in **2018** by the **Ministry of Defence, Government of India**.
- Aim: Fostering innovation and technology development in the defense and aerospace sectors.
- Objective: Creating an ecosystem to rapidly develop new, indigenized, and innovative technologies for the Indian defense and aerospace sector.

- Both sides discuss the importance of Digital Public Infrastructure through the MoU.
- They can be built on open standards to deliver and provide **equitable access** to public and private services.
- **India Stack Solutions are DPIS developed and implemented by India at population scale to provide access and delivery of public services.**
- India is keen on partnering with Colombia by building upon development partnership on digital transformation leading to a smooth adoption of **Digital Public Infrastructure in Colombia**.

**7. INDIA AND COLOMBIA SIGN MOU ON DIGITAL COOPERATION**

**Why in news:** India and Colombia signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on Cooperation in the field of Sharing Successful **Digital Solutions Implemented at Population Scale for Digital Transformation**.



- The MoU was signed between the **Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology** and the Information Technologies and Communications of Colombia.

**8. CSTO: COLLECTIVE SECURITY TREATY ORGANIZATION**

**Why in news:** Armenia has suspended its participation in a Russia-led **security bloc, CSTO, due to differences with other member states**.

**CSTO: Collective Security Treaty Organization**

- CSTO is an intergovernmental military alliance in Eurasia formed in 2002.



- Members: Total 6
- **Russia, Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan.**

- **Uzbekistan joined in 2006 and then withdrew again in 2012.**
- **Objective:** To strengthen regional and international security and to maintain peace including **cybersecurity and stability of the member states** like NATO.
- It is a Russia led security bloc.

**Which of the statements given above are correct?**

- 1 only
- 2 only
- 1 and 2 only
- 1, 2 and 3 only

**Armenia's Suspension of Its Participation in CSTO due to:**

- In a conflict between Azerbaijan and Armenia, the **non-interference** of Russia took the relations between both nations to a new low.
- When Russian peacekeepers did not intervene to stop **Azerbaijan from taking control of Nagorno-Karabakh** from the Armenian separatists, the relations between both nations soured.

**3. Consider the following statements regarding 'INDUS-X' summit:**

- 1) Recently 'INDUS-X' summit held in USA.
- 2) IT IS jointly organized by Innovations for Defence Excellence (iDEX), MoD, and the DoD, and coordinated by the US-India Business Council (USIBC) and Society of India Defense Manufacturers (SIDM).

**Which of the statements given above are incorrect?**

- 1 only
- 2 only
- Both 1 and 2
- Neither 1 nor 2

### **PRACTICE QUESTIONS**

**1. Which of the following countries shares land borders with Albania?**

- 1) Greece
- 2) Montenegro
- 3) Italy
- 4) Bulgaria

**Select the correct answer using the codes given below:**

- 1 and 2 only
- 2 and 3 only
- 1 and 4 only
- 2, 3 and 4 only

**2. Consider the following statements:**

- 1) As per the CSTO treaty, an aggression against one signatory would be perceived as an aggression against all.
- 2) It is an Armenia led security bloc.
- 3) Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, and Tajikistan are members of CSTO.

**4. Consider the following statements**

- 1) 6th Regional Dialogue of Secretaries of Security Councils on Afghanistan was held in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan.
- 2) It follows the objective of UNSCR 2593.

**Which of the statements given above are correct?**

- 1 only
- 2 only
- Both 1 and 2
- Neither 1 nor 2

**Consider the following statements regarding Raisina Dialogue:**

- 1) Greece's Prime Minister joined the inauguration session as the chief guest.
- 2) Dialogue theme Chaturanga: Conflict, Contest, Cooperate, Create.
- 3) Ministry of External Affairs, hosts the conference alone.



Which of the statements given above are correct?

- 1 and 2 only
- 2 and 3 only
- 1 and 2 only
- 1, 2 and 3 only

### 3. ECONOMY

#### 1. AGRICULTURAL AND PROCESSED FOOD PRODUCTS EXPORT DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY (APEDA)

**Why in news:** Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA) created dedicated organic promotion division.

- This division is now serving as a focal point for coordinating efforts to promote country's organic export potential.
- APEDA also **formulated roadmap to push organic exports from Uttarakhand and Sikkim**, focusing on enhancing farming practices, optimizing certification procedures, and identifying prime export product.
- Sikkim is the first Organic State of India.**
  - Organic farming is a sustainable agriculture system that excludes use of synthetic inputs in farming and relies on on-farm inputs like crop residues, farmyard manure, enriched composts, etc. for nutrient management of crops.
- India's rank 6th in terms of World's Organic Agricultural land as per 2021 data.**
- Madhya Pradesh** is largest producer of organic products **followed by Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Karnataka, and Odisha.**
- Organic products are exported to USA, Canada, Great Britain, Switzerland, Turkey, Australia, Ecuador, etc.
- Significance of organic farming: Improve soil fertility, reduce soil erosion, lowers

environmental pollution, reduce greenhouse gas etc.

#### 2. PENSION FUND REGULATORY AND DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY (PFRDA) NOTIFIES A SERIES OF AMENDMENTS

**Why in news:** The Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority (PFRDA) has notified the National Pension System Trust (Second Amendment) Regulations 2023 and Pension Fund (Amendment) Regulations 2023

- The **amendments to NPS Trust Regulations** simplify the provisions related to appointment of Trustees, their terms and conditions, holding of meetings of Board of Trustees and appointment of CEO - NPS Trust.
- Amendments to Pension Fund Regulations** simplify the provisions related to governance of Pension Funds in line with Companies Act, 2013 and enhanced disclosure by Pension Funds.
- PFRDA notifies new rules for Trustee Bank to protect NPS subscribers.
- The amendments to Trustee Bank (TB) Regulations** simplify and strengthen the provisions related to the implementation of fraud prevention and mitigation policy, compensation to the subscriber, invitation of application for new registration and surrender of certificate of registration.
- Amendments to Central Recordkeeping Agency (CRA) Regulations** simplify and strengthen the provisions related to the governance of CRA in line with the Companies Act, 2013 and enhance disclosure of information by CRA.

**The other notable amendments include:**

- Implementation of fraud prevention and mitigation policy by CRA to protect the interest of subscribers.
- Inclusion of certificate by CEO in the annual report in respect of adequacy and

effectiveness of internal controls, compliance and audit processes.

- Criteria of 'fit and proper person' has been introduced for CRA and its key personnel.

### **3. CABINET COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC AFFAIRS**

#### **APPROVED FRP OF SUGARCANE**

**Why in news:** Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs approved FRP of sugarcane payable by sugar factories for sugar season 2024-25.

#### **About FRP:**

**FRP is the price declared by central government**, at which mills are bound to procure sugarcane from farmers.

- Sugarcane (Control) Order 1966 issued under the Essential Commodities Act (ECA), 1955 gives powers to fix FRP.
- Based on recommendations of **Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices**.
- Linked to a basic recovery rate of sugar, with a premium payable to farmers for higher recoveries,
- Some states announce State Advised Price (SAP) to procure sugarcane in their respective states.
- SAP is normally higher than FRP.

### **4. IBSA**

**Why in news:** India has contributed \$ 1 mn to the ibsa fund.

#### **IBSA Fund**

- It was jointly established by India, Brazil and South Africa in 2004 and became operational in 2006.
- Fund-supports projects in Global south to achieve their national priorities, as well as all other internationally agreed development goals.

#### **About IBSA**

- Forum **comprises India, Brazil and South Africa**.
- Formalised and named the IBSA Dialogue Forum in 2003.

### **5. REBATE OF STATE AND CENTRAL TAXES AND LEVIES (ROSCTL)**

**Why in news:** Union Cabinet extends Scheme for Rebate of State and Central Taxes and Levies (RoSCTL) for export of Apparel/Garments till March 2026

- The continuation of RoSCTL **will ensure predictability and stability in policy regime**, help remove the burden of taxes and levies and provide level playing field on the principle that "goods are exported and not domestic taxes"
- **The objective of the scheme is to compensate for the State and Central Taxes and Levies in addition to the Duty Drawback Scheme on export of apparel/ garments and Made-ups by way of rebate.**
- It is based on **an internationally acceptable principle that taxes and duties** should not be exported, to enable a level playing field in the international market for exports.
- Hence, **not only indirect taxes on inputs are to be rebated or reimbursed** but also other un-refunded State & Central taxes and levies are to be rebated.
- **Extension of RoSCTL will help in enhancing export costcompetitiveness of apparel/garments and made-ups sectors (includes tarpaulins, tents etc.).**
  - It will help in achieving target of taking Indian textile **industry to \$250 billion by 2030, including \$ 100 billion exports.**

**RoSCTL**

- Introduced by the Ministry of Textiles in 2019.
- It replaced the Rebate of State Levies (RoSL) Scheme.
- **Objective:** To reimburse all embedded State and Central Taxes/Levies related to the export of manufactured goods and garments.
- Implemented by: **Department of Revenue.**
- Benefits: RoSCTL provides exporters with rebates on both State and Central taxes and levies.
- India has a 4% share of the global trade in textiles and apparel.
- **5th largest producer of technical textiles in world.**
- India is one of the largest producers of cotton and jute in the world.
- **2nd largest producer of silk in the world and 95% of the world's hand-woven fabric comes from India.**

such seizure lapses and the property so seized must be returned to the person from whom it was so seized,”

- **Article 300 A provides that no person shall be deprived of his/her property except by authority of law.**

**About PMLA, 2002**

- It provides for confiscation of property derived from, or involved in, money-laundering and for matters connected therewith.
- Enforcement Directorate (ED) and Financial Intelligence Unit – India (FIU-IND) have been given the responsibility to enforce the provisions of the Act.

**7. THE INSOLVENCY AND BANKRUPTCY BOARD OF INDIA**

**Why in news:** The IBBI notified the **Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India (Insolvency Resolution Process for Personal Guarantors to Corporate Debtors) (Amendment) Regulations, 2024** and Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India (Bankruptcy Process for Personal Guarantors to Corporate Debtors) (Amendment) Regulations, 2024 on 31 January 2024.

- The Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India (IBBI) has amended the **rules to remove the restrictions on an insolvency professional (IP) to be appointed as resolution professional (RP) or bankruptcy trustee (BT) in the insolvency resolution process or bankruptcy process of personal guarantor (PG) to corporate debtors (CDs) respectively, if she has acted or is acting as interim resolution professional, RP or liquidator during the corporate insolvency resolution process (CIRP) or liquidation process of the CD.**

**6. PREVENTION OF MONEY LAUNDERING ACT**

**Why in news:** The Delhi high court has said that the assets seized in connection **with a money laundering case must be returned if the investigation continues beyond 365 days and does not result in any charge sheet as it directed the Enforcement Directorate (ED) to return the property** it seized a man more than three years ago.

- Justice Navin Chawla said the continuation of a **seizure beyond 365 days, in the absence of the pendency of any proceedings, will be confiscatory in nature and violative of the right to property (Article 300A of the Constitution).**
- “The natural consequence of the investigation for a period beyond 365 days not resulting in any proceedings relating to any offence under the Act, **in terms of section 8(3) of the (Prevention of Money Laundering) Act, is that**



### Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India (IBBI)

- Statutory body under the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, 2016. Regulates both Insolvency profession as well as processes.
- Regulatory oversight over IPs, Insolvency Professional Agencies, IPEs and Information Utilities.
- **Composition:** Chairperson, 3 ex-officio members of Central Government, 1 ex-officio member of RBI, and 5 other members (at least 3 full-time) nominated by centre.

### 8. ANNUAL SURVEY OF INDUSTRIES (ASI)

**Why in news:** Annual Survey of Industries (ASI) released by the **Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI)**.

- ASI is the principal source of Industrial Statistics in India.
- It is **conducted under the Collection of Statistics (COS) Act, 2008**.
- It covers all factories registered under the Factories Act, 1948.
- Also, covers unit under the **Bidi and Cigar Workers (Conditions of Employment) Act 1966 etc.**
- However, defence establishments, oil storage and distribution depots, etc. are not covered under it.

#### Key Highlights

- In terms of Gross Value Addition, **Gujarat remained at the top, followed by Maharashtra**, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and Uttar Pradesh
- The top **five states in terms of employment are Tamil Nadu, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh and Haryana**.
- Manufacturing sector showed resilience even after the disruption caused by the pandemic.
- Main driver of resilience included Manufacture of Basic metal, Coke & Refined Petroleum

Products, Pharmaceutical Products, Motor vehicles, etc.

#### About Manufacturing Sector

- Contributes around **17% in the Gross Domestic Product (GDP)**.
- India aims to increase share to 25% by 2025.
- There is huge potential exporting manufactured goods.
- Key Deriving factors: Huge domestic demand, Foreign Direct Investment (FDI), etc.

#### Challenges faced by Sector:

- Lack of Credit Availability,
- Low productivity in comparison to other countries like
- China, Vietnam etc., Informal or unorganised sector, Lack of skilled labour, Infrastructure bottlenecks etc.

### 8. WORLD'S LARGEST GRAIN STORAGE PLAN CARRIED OUT IN 11 STATES

**Why in news:** To address the shortage of foodgrain storage capacity in the country, the government has approved this plan in May 2023.

**700 lakh tonne storage capacity will be created in the next five years, with an investment of ₹1.25 lakh crore.**

- The project is being carried out in 11 states by primary agricultural credit societies (Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, **Tamil Nadu, Tripura, Uttarakhand, Rajasthan, Maharashtra, Assam, Gujarat, Karnataka and Telangana**).
- **Vision:** Thousands of Primary Agricultural Credit Societies (PACS) from across the country will join it in the next couple of years to reach 100% storage capacity before 2027.
- To drive this vision, the **Ministry of Cooperation** has introduced an unprecedented initiative—the **'World's Largest Grain Storage Plan in the Cooperative Sector**.

### About the World's Largest Grain Storage Plan

- It is India's ambitious plan in the cooperative sector that is poised to revolutionise agriculture and the Fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) industry.
- **To Enable PACS Participation:** The Plan entails the creation of various agri infrastructures at the PACS level, including setting up decentralised godowns, custom hiring centres, Fair Price Shops, etc.
- The **Budgetary Allocation:** Though the plan does not have a separate allocation, it will be implemented by converging 8 schemes.
- **Financial Support by NABARD:** Refinancing PACS at highly subsidised rates of around 1% after incorporating the benefits of 3% interest subvention under the Alternative Investment Fund (AIF) scheme for projects up to Rs. 2 Crore.
- **Implemented by:** The **National Cooperative Development Corporation (NCDC) with the support of NABARD**, Food Corporation of India (FCI), Central Warehousing Corporation (CWC), NABARD Consultancy Services (NABCONS), National Buildings Construction Corporation (NBCC), etc. in different States/ UTs.
- An **Inter-Ministerial Committee (IMC):** It has been constituted to ensure accountability and smooth, effective and transparent implementation of the plan.
- **A National Level Coordination Committee (NLCC):** It has also been constituted having members from Ministry/Departments, Central Government agencies concerned to steer the overall implementation of the Plan and reviewing the progress of implementation, etc.
- **Monitoring:** State Cooperative Development Committee (SCDC) at State level and District Cooperative Development Committee (DCDC) in each District of the State/UT have also been constituted.

- To set up a storage infrastructure of 700 lakh metric tons.
- To double the Existing Storage Statistics
- To set up a network of integrated grain storage facilities through PACS nationwide.
- Strengthen the Economic Condition of PACS

### About National Food Security Act (NFSA)

- It is a **social welfare legislation introduced in 2013**, with an aim to provide food security to eligible beneficiaries by ensuring access to adequate food grains at subsidized prices.
- **Scope of Beneficiaries:** The NFSA aims to cover up to **75% of the rural population and up to 50%** of the urban population, totaling around **81.35 crore persons**.
- **Additional Beneficiaries:** There is scope to identify **1.24 crore** more beneficiaries across 21 states and UTs.
- **Entitlement:** Eligible households receive 5 kilograms of **foodgrains per person per month** at subsidized prices specified in the schedule.
- **Free Foodgrains:** Under NFSA, eligible beneficiaries can **buy food grains at subsidized rates—rice at Rs 3/kg, wheat at Rs 2/kg, and nutri-cereals at Rs 1/kg.**

### 8 SCHEMES IDENTIFIED FOR CONVERGENCE

#### Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare

- Agriculture Infrastructure Fund (AIF)
- Agricultural Marketing Infrastructure Scheme (AMI)
- Mission for Integrated Development of Horticulture (MIDH)
- Sub-Mission on Agricultural Mechanization (SMAM)

#### Ministry of Food Processing Industries

- Pradhan Mantri Formalization of Micro Food Processing Enterprises Scheme
- Pradhan Mantri Kisan Sampada Yojana (PMKSY)

#### Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution

- Allocation of food grains under the Food Security Act
- Procurement ops at MSP

Aim:

**PRACTICE QUESTIONS****1. Consider the following statements**

- 1) Annual Survey of Industries (ASI) released by the Ministry of Commerce and Industry
- 2) Gujarat remained at the top, followed by Maharashtra in terms of value addition

**Which of the statements given above are correct?**

- a) 1 only
- b) 2 only
- c) Both 1 and 2
- d) Neither 1 nor 2

**2. Consider the following statements**

- 1) Madhya Pradesh is largest producer of organic products
- 2) Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA) created dedicated organic promotion division.
- 3) Sikkim is the first Organic State of India.

**Which of the statements given above are correct?**

- a) 1 and 2 only
- b) 2 and 3 only
- c) 1 and 2 only
- d) 1, 2 and 3 only

**3. Consider the following statements regarding Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India.**

- 1) (IBBI) has amended the rules to remove the restrictions on an insolvency professional (IP) to be appointed as resolution professional (RP) or bankruptcy trustee (BT)
- 2) All members of are appointed by central banks.

**Which of the statements given above are incorrect?**

- a) 1 only
- b) 2 only
- c) Both 1 and 2
- d) Neither 1 nor 2

**4. Consider the following statements**

- 1) PMLA, 2002 provides for confiscation of property derived from, or involved in, money-laundering and for matters connected therewith.
- 2) In recent court order property can be seized beyond 365 days.
- 3) The right to property is now fundamental right.

**Which of the statements given above are correct?**

- a) 1 and 2 only
- b) 1 only
- c) 1 and 3 only
- d) 1, 2 and 3 only

**5. Consider the following statements regarding Rebate Of State And Central Taxes And Levies (ROSCTL)**

- 1) The objective of the scheme is to compensate for the State and Central Taxes and Levies in addition to the Duty Drawback Scheme on export of apparel/ garments
- 2) 5th largest producer of technical textiles in world.

**Which of the statements given above are correct?**

- a) 1 only
- b) 2 only
- c) Both 1 and 2
- d) Neither 1 nor 2

**6. Consider the following statements**

- 1) World's largest grain storage plan carried out in all states/ut.
- 2) With total investment of ₹1.25 lakh crore.
- 3) Separate budgetary allocation

**Which of the statements given above are correct?**

- a) 1 only
- b) 2 only
- c) 1 and 2 only



d) 1 and 3 only

## 4. ENVIRONMENT

### 1. WORLD WETLAND DAY

**Why in news:** WWD 2024 was celebrated at Sirpur Lake Indore, Madhya Pradesh.

- (MP) with theme- 'Wetlands and Human Wellbeing'
- WWD is observed on **2nd February** every year worldwide to commemorate the signing of the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands of International Importance in 1971.
- **India has been a party to the Convention since 1982.**

#### About Sirpur Lake

- It is a **human-made wetland.**
- Located in the **city of Indore, MP.**
- Lake is shallow, alkaline, nutrient-rich and prone to floods.

### 2. GUIDELINES FOR UNDERTAKING PILOT PROJECTS FOR USING GREEN HYDROGEN IN THE TRANSPORT SECTOR

**Why in news:** The Government of India has come out with guidelines for undertaking pilot projects for using Green Hydrogen in the transport sector.

- The "Scheme Guidelines for implementation of Pilot Projects for use of Green Hydrogen in the Transport Sector", have been **issued by the Ministry of New & Renewable Energy (MNRE)** on February 14, **2024, under the National Green Hydrogen Mission.**
- The MNRE will implement pilot projects for **replacing fossil fuels** in the transport sector with Green Hydrogen and its derivatives.
- These pilot projects will be **implemented through the Ministry of Road Transport and**

**Highways** and the Scheme Implementing Agencies (SIAs) nominated under this Scheme.

- The scheme **will support development of technologies for use of Green Hydrogen as a fuel in Buses, Trucks and 4-wheelers**, based on fuel cell-based propulsion technology / internal combustion engine-based propulsion technology.
- The Scheme will be implemented with a total budgetary outlay of **Rs. 496 Crores till the financial year 2025-26.**

#### National Green Hydrogen Mission

- The National Green Hydrogen Mission was launched on **4th January 2023, with an outlay of Rs. 19,744 crores up to FY 2029-30.**
- It will contribute to **India's goal to become Aatma Nirbhar (self-reliant) through clean energy** and serve as an inspiration for the global Clean Energy Transition. The Mission will lead to **significant decarbonization of the economy, reduced dependence on fossil fuel imports**, and enable India to assume technology and market leadership in Green Hydrogen.

### 3. DACHIGAM NATIONAL PARK

**Why in news:** Due to heavy snowfall, Himalayan Black Bears are provided a special diet to aid them during hibernation period at rehabilitation centre of DNP.

#### About DNP

- Located in Jammu and Kashmir and **spread in Zabarwan mountain** ranges of great Himalayas.
- Occupies almost half of catchment zone of world famous Dal Lake.
- Dagwan is the major river in the park

- Holds the last **viable population of Hangul or Kashmir stag (IUCN status: critically endangered) in world.**
- Poaching by Gujjars, Bakarwals is the main cause for Hangul decline. Also, inhabits largest population of Asiatic black bear in Asia.

#### 4. INDIAN GHARIAL

**Why in news:** After a gap of 75 years, an endangered female Indian Gharial (*Gavialis gangeticus*) was spotted in the Bishwanath stretch of the Brahmaputra under Kaziranga Tiger Reserve which brings cheers to nature lovers across the state.

- Distribution: Major population occurs in three tributaries of Ganga River - Chambal and Girwa in India and Rapti-Naryani in Nepal.
- **Gharial reserves of India are located in three States – UP, MP, and Rajasthan.**
- Habitat: Resides exclusively in river habitats with deep, clear, fast-flowing waters and steep, sandy banks.
- Conservation status: IUCN (**Critically Endangered**), Wildlife Protection Act, 1972 (Schedule I), and CITES (Appendix I).
- Indian gharial is one of the largest river-dwelling crocodile species of the world that grows **up to 8 metres in total length and weight around 160 kg.**

#### 5. CONSERVATION RESERVE.

**Why in news:** Telangana's State Board for Wildlife (SBWL) approved the corridor area between **Tadoba-Andhari Tiger Reserve and Kawal Tiger Reserve** as a conservation reserve.

- SBWL is established under the **Wildlife (Protection) Amendment (WPA) Act, 2002**, headed by Chief Minister or Administrator in case of UT.

#### **About Conservation Reserve:**

- A protected area under the '**Wildlife (Protection) Act (WPA), 1972**' (added through the WPA Act of 2002).

- Acts as buffer zone to or connectors and migration corridors **between national parks, wildlife sanctuaries and protected areas.**
- Declared by the State Government, after consulting with the **central government and the local communities.**
- It is administered with the help of the Conservation Reserve Management Committee.

#### **Tadoba-Andhari Tiger Reserve**

- It is located in the **Chandrapur district of Maharashtra.**
- The total area of the reserve is 625.4 sq. KM. This includes Tadoba National Park, covering 116.55 sq. KM and Andhari Wildlife Sanctuary of 508.85 sq. KM.
- Biogeographically, the reserve falls in the Central plateau province of the Deccan peninsula, with tropical dry deciduous forests and a typical Central Indian faunal assemblage.

#### **Kawal Tiger Reserve**

- Kawal Tiger Reserve is located in the North Eastern part of Telangana (Old Adilabad district) having Godavari river on one side and Maharashtra border on other side.
- Govt of India declared Kawal wildlife sanctuary as **Tiger Reserve** in 2012.

#### 6. SIXTH ASSEMBLY SESSION OF UNITED NATIONS ENVIRONMENTAL PROGRAMME (UNEA-6)

**Why in news:** The Sixth Assembly session of United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEA-6) is being held at their headquarters in **Nairobi, Kenya.**

- Focus: To plan for the role of multilateralism to help tackle the triple planetary crisis of climate change, **nature and biodiversity loss**, and pollution and waste and shape the global environmental policy.
- **Theme:** Effective, inclusive and sustainable multilateral actions to tackle climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution.

- President of the Sixth United Nations Environmental Assembly (UNEA-6):-Leila Benli.

**About United Nations Environmental Assembly**

- It is the governing body of the **UN Environment Programme (UNEP)**.
- It is the **world’s highest-level** decision-making body on the environment.
- The Assembly is made up of **the 193 UN Member States** and convenes **every two years** to advance global environmental governance.
- It was **created in June 2012**, during the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, **also referred to as RIO+20**.

**7. LEOPARDS REPORT**

**Why in news:** Union Minister for Environment, Forest and Climate Change, **Shri Bhupender Yadav** released the report on **Status of Leopards in India, on 29th February, 2024** at New Delhi.

- The fifth cycle leopard population estimation was carried out by the **National Tiger Conservation Authority and Wildlife Institute of India, in collaboration with State Forest Departments**, as part of the quadrennial **“Monitoring of Tiger, Co-predators, prey and their habitat”** exercise in tiger range States.

**Key Findings:**

- India's leopard population is estimated at **13,874 (Range: 12,616 – 15,132) individuals**, representing stable population in comparison to the similar area being sampled **in 2018 with 12852 (12,172-13,535) individuals**.
- This estimate **represents population of 70% of leopard habitat**, the Himalayas and semi-arid parts of country which are not tiger habitat were not sampled.
- Central India shows a **stable or slightly growing population of leopards** (2018: 8071, 2022: 8820), Shivalik hills and Gangetic plains experienced **decline (2018: 1253, 2022: 1109)**.

- If we look at the area which was sampled both in 2018 and 2022 across India, **there is a 1.08% per annum growth**.
- In **Shivalik hills and Gangetic plains, there is a -3.4% decline** per annum, while the largest growth rate was in **Central India and Eastern Ghats of 1.5%**.
- Madhya Pradesh houses **the largest population of leopards in the country – 3907 (2018: 3421), followed by Maharashtra (2022: 1985; 2018: 1,690)**, Karnataka (2022: 1,879 ; 2018: 1,783) and Tamil Nadu (2022: 1,070; 2018: 868).
- Tiger Reserves or sites with highest leopard population are, **Nagarajunasagar Srisailem (Andhra Pradesh), followed by Panna (Madhya Pradesh), and Satpura (Madhya Pradesh)**.
- The fifth cycle of leopard population estimation (2022) in India focused on forested habitats **within 18 tiger states, covering four major tiger conservation landscapes. Non-forested habitats, arid, and high Himalayas above 2000 msl (~ 30% area) were not sampled for leopard**.





**PRACTICE QUESTIONS**

**1. Consider the following statements:**

- 1) Pilot Projects for use of Green Hydrogen in the Transport Sector”, have been issued by the Ministry of New & Renewable Energy (MNRE).
- 2) Implemented by the Ministry of environment forest and climate change.

Which of the statements given above are incorrect?

- a) 1 only
- b) 2 only
- c) Both 1 and 2
- d) Neither 1 nor 2

**2. Consider the following statements regarding Status of Leopards report:**

- 1) India's leopard population is increased.
- 2) Maharashtra houses the largest population of leopards in the country.
- 3) Carried out by the National Tiger Conservation Authority and Wildlife Institute of India.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

- a) 1 and 2 only
- b) 2 only
- c) 1 and 3 only
- d) 1, 2 and 3 only

**3. Consider the following statements:**

- 1) United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEA-6) is being held at Nairobi, Kenya.
- 2) It was created in June 1992, during the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, also referred to earth RIO summit.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

- a) 1 only
- b) 2 only
- c) Both 1 and 2
- d) Neither 1 nor 2
- e) FDSFD

**6. SCHEMES**

SCHEMES	INFORMATION
<p><b>TRACK CHILD PORTAL AND THE GHAR PORTAL</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In a concerted effort to fortify child protection measures, the Ministry of Women and Child Development has pioneered the development of <b>two pivotal portals: the Track Child Portal and the GHAR – GO Home and Re-Unite Portal.</b></li> <li>Serves as a <b>centralized hub for tracking missing and found children nationwide.</b></li> <li>Developed in collaboration with stakeholders such as <b>the Ministry of Home Affairs, CCTNS (Crime and Criminal Tracking &amp; Network Systems), and various State Governments/UT Administrations,</b> this platform empowers authorities and citizens alike to monitor the</li> </ul>

	<p>whereabouts of missing children effectively.</p>		
<p><b>KILKARI</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Union Ministers of State for Health and Family Welfare, Prof. S P Singh Baghel and Dr. Bharati Pravin Pawar, virtually launched the <b>Kilkari programme and Mobile Academy</b>, aimed at strengthening <b>public health infrastructure in Maharashtra and Gujarat.</b></li> <li>• <b>‘Kilkari’ (meaning ‘a baby’s gurgle’)</b>, is a centralized interactive voice response (IVR) based <b>mobile health service which delivers free, weekly, time-appropriate 72 audio messages</b> about pregnancy, childbirth, and childcare directly to families’ mobile phones from the second trimester of pregnancy until the child is one year old.</li> <li>• Women who are <b>registered in Reproductive Child Health (RCH) portal)</b></li> </ul>		<p><b>based on the woman’s LMP (last menstrual period) or the child’s DoB (Date of Birth)</b>, receive a weekly call with pre-recorded audio content directly to the mobile phones of pregnant women and mothers with children under the age of one year.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Kilkari audio messages are present in the form of voice of a fictitious doctor character called Dr. Anita.</b></li> <li>• <b>Mobile Academy is a free audio training course designed to expand and refresh the knowledge of Accredited Social Health Activists (ASHAs) and improve their communication skills via their mobile phones, which is both cost-effective and efficient.</b></li> <li>• <b>It is an anytime, anywhere training course that can train thousands of ASHAs</b></li> </ul>

	<p>simultaneously via mobile phone.</p>
<b>SWAYAM PLUS PLATFORM</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recently <b>SWAYAM Plus Platform</b> was inaugurated by the Union Minister of Education and <b>Skill Development &amp; Entrepreneurship</b> in New Delhi.</li> <li>SWAYAM, the <b>Massive Open Online Course (MOOC)</b> platform providing educational opportunities for a <b>vast number of learners, was launched by the Ministry of Education in 2017.</b></li> <li>Aligned with <b>NEP 2020</b>, <b>SWAYAM Plus</b> now offers industry-relevant courses to boost employability, with features like <b>multilingual content, AI guidance, credit recognition,</b> and pathways to employment, developed in collaboration with companies like <b>L&amp;T, Microsoft, CISCO, and others.</b></li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>NITI Aayog</b>, the premier policy think tank of the</li> </ul>

<b>(GROW) PORTAL</b>	<p>Government of India, launched the <b>Greening and Restoration of Wasteland with Agroforestry (GROW)</b> portal.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The GROW portal is hosted on the <b>Bhuvan</b> platform, ensuring <b>universal access to state and district-level data related to agroforestry suitability.</b></li> <li>Through the portal, users can access detailed maps and assessments of agroforestry suitability across different regions of India.</li> <li>The portal utilises thematic <b>datasets derived from remote sensing and Geographic Information System (GIS) technology,</b> offering comprehensive information on factors influencing agroforestry suitability.</li> </ul>
<b>GST-EXEMPTED</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>MSME</b> Minister introduced a scheme for <b>GST-exempted micro enterprises, facilitating collateral-free loans up</b></li> </ul>



<p><b>MICRO ENTERPRISES</b></p>	<p>to Rs 20 lakh under the Credit Guarantee Fund Trust for Micro and Small Enterprises (CGTMSE)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The scheme, titled <b>‘Special Provision for Informal Micro Enterprises under Credit Guarantee Scheme,’</b> aims to provide credit support to micro or nano enterprises.</li> <li>• It seeks to moderate the credit risk perception associated with lending to IMEs, as stated by the MSME Ministry.</li> </ul>
<p><b>INITIATIVE FOR TRIBAL STUDENT HEALTH</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• AYUSH and Tribal Affairs Ministries Launch <b>Joint Initiative for Tribal Student Health</b></li> <li>• This joint initiative focuses on implementing <b>Ayurvedic interventions to address health issues among over 20,000 tribal students.</b></li> </ul>
<p><b>(KALIA) SCHEME</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Krushak Assistance for Livelihood and Income Augmentation (KALIA) Scheme</li> <li>• State Government of <b>Odisha extends KALIA scheme by 3 years.</b></li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>About KALIA Scheme</b></li> <li>• <b>Objective:</b> To provide financial assistance to small and marginal farmers (SMF) including sharecroppers, tenant farmers, and landless agricultural households (LAH) in the state.</li> <li>• Comprehensive welfare solution conceived as a Direct Income Transfer (DIT).</li> <li>• Excludes medium and large farmers.</li> <li>• Other benefits: Scholarship for Children of KALIA beneficiaries,</li> <li>• Livelihood packages for landless households, etc.</li> <li>• Synchronized with PM-KISAN to provide annual benefit of</li> <li>• <b>₹10000 to SMF (₹6,000 from PM-KISAN and ₹4,000, from KALIA).</b></li> </ul>
<p><b>‘PM SURYA GHAR: MUFT BIJLI YOJANA</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prime Minister Narendra Modi Unveils ‘PM Surya Ghar: Muft Bijli Yojana’</li> <li>• Aimed at fostering a greener future and facilitating the nation’s march towards energy self-sufficiency,</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>This pioneering project, with an earmarked investment exceeding Rs 75,000 crore, is designed to illuminate one crore (10 million) households across the country by providing up to 300 units of free electricity every month, generated through solar power.</b></li> <li>• <b>Eligibility Criteria</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Indian citizenship required.</li> <li>b. Annual family income not exceeding Rs 1.5 lakh.</li> <li>c. No government employees in the applicant’s family.</li> <li>d. Open to citizens of all castes.</li> <li>e. Aadhar card linked to the bank account is mandatory.</li> </ol> </li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Krishi Rakshak Portal and Helpline</b></li> <li>• An integrated grievance redressal mechanism.</li> <li>• Includes a digital portal and a call center.</li> <li>• <b>SARTHI Initiative</b></li> <li>• Stands for <b>Sandbox for Agricultural and Rural Security, Technology, and Insurance.</b></li> <li>• <b>Utilizes technology to offer various insurance products.</b></li> <li>• Coverage includes health, life, property, agriculture tools, motor assets, and disaster risks.</li> <li>• <b>Learning Management System (LMS)</b></li> <li>• Designed to transform training and knowledge-sharing for stakeholders.</li> <li>• Targets effective implementation of key agricultural schemes nationwide.</li> </ul>
<p><b>MADHYA PRADESH</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Union Agriculture and Farmers Welfare Minister Arjun Munda introduced several key initiatives under the Prime Minister Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY) in New Delhi.</li> </ul>	<p><b>SWATI PORTAL</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>SWATI Portal Launched To Empower Women in STEM</b></li> <li>• By centralizing information on Indian women and girls in (Science, Technology,</li> </ul>

	<p><b>Engineering, Mathematics, and Medicine) STEMM fields</b>, this portal aims to bridge the gender gap and promote inclusivity in science and technology.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The portal is developed, hosted, and maintained by the National Institute of Plant Genome Research (NIPGR), <b>New Delhi, under the leadership of Dr. Subhra Chakraborty, Director, NIPGR.</b></li> <li>• <b>About SWATI Portal</b></li> <li>• Purpose: The portal serves as a single online <b>platform to represent and showcase the contributions of Indian women and girls in STEMM fields.</b></li> <li>• <b>Database:</b> It houses a comprehensive database that will aid policymakers in addressing the challenges of gender gap in STEMM fields.</li> <li>• Interactive Features: SWATI Portal is designed to be interactive,</li> </ul>		<p>allowing users to access and contribute to the database easily.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Development:</b> The portal is the first-of-its-kind in India and has been developed, hosted, and maintained by <b>the National Institute of Plant Genome Research (NIPGR) located in New Delhi.</b></li> </ul>
		<p><b>ONE STOP CENTRES (OSCS)</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There are more <b>than 700 OSCs set up across India.</b></li> <li>• OSCs fall under Sambal Sub Scheme of <b>Mission Shakti initiated by Ministry of Women and Child Development.</b></li> <li>• Scheme of OSC is being implemented <b>since 2015.</b></li> <li>• <b>Objectives</b></li> <li>• To provide integrated support and assistance to women affected by violence and in distress.</li> <li>• To facilitate emergency and non - emergency access to a range of services.</li> <li>• Services offered</li> <li>• Medical assistance</li> <li>• Assistance to women in lodging FIR</li> </ul>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Legal aid and counselling etc.</li> </ul>
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## 7. STATES NEWS

STATES	INFORMATION
<b>Tamil Nadu</b>	<p>Tamil Nadu has set a new benchmark in environmental conservation and biodiversity protection by securing <b>two more Ramsar sites</b>.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The recent addition of the <b>Longwood Shola Reserve Forest</b> in The Nilgiris and the <b>Karaivetti Bird Sanctuary in Ariyalur</b>.</li> <li>• Tamil Nadu Youth Welfare and Sports Development Minister Udhayanidhi Stalin recently announced a pioneering scheme aimed at nurturing sports talent at the grassroots level.</li> <li>• Named after the late <b>Kalaignar Karunanidhi</b>, the <b>'Kalaignar Sports Kit' initiative</b> is set to provide sporting kits to 12,000 village</li> </ul>

<b>KARNATAKA</b>	<p>Government of <b>Karnataka's Digital Detox Initiative</b> for a responsible gaming environment has taken a pioneering step towards fostering a healthier digital ecosystem.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The core objective of Karnataka's digital detox initiative is <b>to promote moderation and responsible behaviour within the digital</b> and gaming spheres. By advocating for scheduled breaks and encouraging offline activities, the government aims to:             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Reduce the risk of digital addiction</li> <li>b) Enhance physical health and mental wellbeing</li> <li>c) Foster meaningful social interactions and real-world connections</li> </ol> </li> <li>• Karnataka clinched the <b>Nagesh Trophy</b>, marking a significant milestone in the <b>Men's National T20 Cricket</b></li> </ul>
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	<p><b>Tournament for the Blind 2023-24.</b> The thrilling final, held in Nagpur, saw Karnataka defeating <b>Andhra Pradesh</b> by <b>nine wickets</b>.</p>		<p>Training Centre in Assam.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This initiative aims to address <b>unemployment</b> by providing <b>comprehensive training opportunities</b> to the youth and enhancing their employability in the construction sector.</li> </ul>
<p><b>ASSAM</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Assam Welcomes Northeast's First Naturopathy Hospital</b> Sarbananda Sonowal and Assam CM <b>Dr. Himanta Biswa Sarma</b> inaugurated the Central Research Institute of Yoga &amp; Naturopathy and a 100-bed <b>hospital in Dibrugarh</b>.</li> <li>Assam, the state government has officially declared <b>kaji nemu (Citrus limon)</b>, a variety of lemon unique to the region, as the <b>'State Fruit'</b>.</li> <li>In a collaborative effort between the <b>Assam government</b> and <b>Larsen &amp; Toubro (L&amp;T)</b>, <b>Chief Minister Dr. Himanta Biswa Sarma</b> inaugurated the <b>Construction Skill</b></li> </ol>	<p><b>GUJARAT</b></p> <p><b>Bharat Rang Mahotsav</b>, India's premier theatre festival, commenced its journey in the culturally rich <b>Kachchh district of Gujarat</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The festival kicked off in grand style with a mesmerizing rendition of <b>'Uttararamacharitam,'</b> a classic masterpiece by <b>Bhavabhuti</b>, directed by <b>Dr. Chavan Pramod R.</b> from <b>Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda</b>.</li> </ul>	
		<p><b>RAJASTHAN</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Rajasthan's Karauli</b> district has emerged as a new focal point for mineral exploration after the <b>Mines Department</b></li> </ul>

	<p>announced the discovery of substantial iron ore deposits.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This find, located near <b>Hindon</b>, spans <b>approximately 1,888 hectares</b> and is poised to significantly impact the state's industrial landscape.</li> </ul>
<p><b>MAHARASHTRA</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Maharashtra</b> Government Decided To Introduce '<b>Chief Minister Vayoshree Yojana</b>'</li> <li>The introduction of the '<b>Chief Minister Vayoshree Yojana</b>' is set to benefit <b>around 15 lakh senior citizens</b> suffering from physical or mental disabilities.</li> <li>Under this scheme, <b>eligible citizens above the age of 65 will receive financial assistance of three thousand rupees</b>, providing much-needed support and relief to vulnerable members of society.</li> </ul>

<p><b>UTTAR PRADESH</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I. The Forest Department in <b>Uttar Pradesh's Gonda district</b>, in collaboration with the Turtle Survival Alliance Foundation India, is initiating a conservation effort.             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This endeavor aims to establish a turtle conservation reserve <b>along the Sarju river, a tributary of the Ghaghra river</b>.</li> <li>Gonda district is known for its turtle diversity, making it an ideal location for such a conservation effort.</li> <li>The proposed reserve will encompass a <b>2-kilometer stretch of the Sarju river</b>, teeming with a diverse array of plant species, avifauna, fishes, and water snakes.</li> </ul> </li> <li>II. The Uttar Pradesh government is taking significant <b>steps 'EV Upyog' Portal to promote the manufacture and use</b></li> </ol>
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	<p>of electric vehicles (EVs) in the state.</p>		<p>Regional Centre of <b>Sangeet Natak Akademi</b> in <b>Hyderabad</b>, known as the <b>Dakshin Bharat Sanskritik Kendra</b>. This initiative aims to foster the diverse cultural heritage of South India.</p>
<p><b>TELANGANA</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The <b>Medaram Jatara</b>, known as <b>Sammakka Saralamma Jatara</b>, began this year on February 21 in Medaram, <b>Mulugu district</b>, showcasing <b>Telangana's rich tribal heritage</b>.                     <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This four-day event, considered the world's largest tribal gathering, attracts pilgrims to the remote village of <b>Medaram once every two years</b>.</li> </ul> </li> <li>On February 28, a <b>21-foot statue of Rajput king Maharana Pratap</b> was installed and unveiled at <b>Maharana Pratap Chowk in Begum Bazaar, Hyderabad</b>. It is claimed to be the first of its kind in <b>Telangana</b>.</li> <li>The <b>Ministry of Culture</b> takes a momentous stride towards cultural enrichment with the inauguration of the</li> </ol>	<p><b>MADHYA PRADESH</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Ujjain, Madhya Pradesh</b>, is set to unveil a groundbreaking innovation in timekeeping with the <b>world's first Vedic Clock</b>.</li> <li>This meticulously crafted timepiece, housed on an <b>85-foot tower</b> at the city's <b>Jantar Mantar</b>, will be officially inaugurated on <b>March 1st, 2024</b>, by Prime Minister <b>Narendra Modi</b> in a virtual ceremony.</li> </ul>	
		<p><b>SIKKIM</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>PM Modi inaugurated the foundation stone for <b>Sikkim's first railway station in Rangpo</b>.</li> <li>It is a key component of the ongoing <b>45-km</b></li> </ul>

	<p>rail line construction from Sevoke, <b>West Bengal</b>, to Rangpo, <b>Sikkim</b>.</p>		<p>showcasing a remarkable jump from <b>the 5th position in 2023</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The rankings further feature <b>Goa, Kerala, Rajasthan, and Uttarakhand</b> in the following positions.</li> <li><b>'Most Welcoming Cities in India':</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mararikulam (Kerala)</li> <li>Jaisalmer (Rajasthan)</li> <li>Bir (Maharashtra)</li> <li>Leh (Jammu &amp; Kashmir)</li> </ol> </li> </ul>
<p><b>ODISHA</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Odisha</b> has taken a significant step towards <b>conservation</b> by <b>declaring the Gupteswar forest in Koraput district as its fourth Biodiversity Heritage Site (BHS)</b>.             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mandasaru BHS in Kandhamal district,</li> <li>Mahendragiri BHS in Gajapati district, and</li> <li>Gandhamardan BHS in Bargarh and Balangir districts.</li> </ol> </li> </ul>	<p><b>CHANDIGARH</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>CITCO (Chandigarh Industrial and Tourism Development Corporation)</b> introduces a pizza maker near Sukhna Lake, producing hot pizzas in three minutes, a <b>first in North India</b>.</li> <li><b>Dr. Rohit Shekhar Sharma, Founder &amp; CEO at iMatrix Group of Companies (iMatrix World Wide)</b>, leads the project inspired by France.</li> </ul>
<p><b>12TH ANNUAL TRAVELLER REVIEW AWARDS 2024</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In a recent announcement, <b>Booking.com</b>, the popular online travel agency, unveiled its <b>12th Annual Traveller Review Awards 2024</b>, highlighting the Most Welcoming Regions and Cities in India.</li> <li>Securing the top spot in the category of the <b>'Most Welcoming Region in India'</b> is <b>Himachal Pradesh</b>,</li> </ul>		

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The machine is crafted at their <b>Mohali factory</b>, <b>outperforming similar ventures</b>, <b>dispensing 100 pizzas daily</b>.</li> </ul>
UTTARAKHAND	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Uttarakhand</b> Chief Minister <b>Pushkar Singh Dhami</b> unveiled the <b>'Himalayan Basket'</b> initiative from his residence.</li> <li>The <b>'Himalayan Basket'</b> initiative is designed to boost local employment by capitalizing on the district's abundant agricultural resources. By focusing on the procurement of <b>milk, turmeric, and mint from local farmers</b>, the project endeavors to produce and <b>export high-demand products</b> such as <b>'churpi'</b> and <b>ghee</b>.</li> </ul>
DELHI	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Delhi</b> Chief Minister <b>Arvind Kejriwal</b> announced a significant government initiative declaring <b>free bus travel for the transgender</b></li> </ul>

	<p><b>community</b> within the national capital. Emphasizing the long-standing neglect faced by marginalized group</p>
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## 8. DEFENSE AND SPACE

EXERCISE	INFORMATION
<b>'Year of Naval Civilians'</b>	<p>In <b>2024</b>, the Indian Navy designates as the <b>'Year of Naval Civilians,'</b> prioritizing holistic Civilian HR Management.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It aims to boost administrative efficiency and enhance employee welfare.</li> </ul>
<b>Smart Ammunition</b>	<p>Indian <b>Institute of Technology Madras (IIT Madras)</b> and <b>Munitions India Limited</b> have <b>joined forces</b> to pioneer the development of <b>155 Smart Ammunition</b>.</p> <p>The <b>155mm Indian Smart Ammunition</b> is crafted to seamlessly integrate with current artillery guns, requiring no modifications. It incorporates advanced features like fin stabilization, canard control, and a <b>3-mode fuse operation</b>, meeting diverse tactical needs.</p>



<p><b>statue of General Bipin Rawat</b></p>	<p>Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and Uttarakhand's Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami unveiled a statue of General Bipin Rawat, who was India's first Chief of Defence Staff (CDS).</p>
<p><b>Gaganyaan Mission and ISRO Projects Inauguration by PM Modi</b></p>	<p>Prime Minister Narendra Modi disclosed the identities of the four pilots currently undergoing training for India's first human space flight mission, Gaganyaan, during his visit to the <b>Vikram Sarabhai Space Center (VSSC) in Kerala's Thiruvananthapuram.</b></p> <p>Astronaut Designates</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Group Captain P Balakrishnan Nair</li> <li>2. Group Captain Ajit Krishnan</li> <li>3. Group Captain Angad Pratap</li> <li>4. Wing Commander S Shukla</li> </ol> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In a monumental stride towards promoting technological advancement and innovation, the Indian Institute of Technology Guwahati, in collaboration with <b>EduRade,</b> has</li> </ul>

	<p><b>inaugurated India's largest Remote Pilot Training Organisation (RPTO).</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This initiative aligns seamlessly with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision to establish India as a global drone hub <b>by 2030, as highlighted in the recently launched 'Namo Drone Didi' initiative.</b></li> </ul>
	<p>Intuitive Machines, a firm based in Houston, Texas, has become the <b>first commercial company</b> to successfully land on the Moon, near the lunar south pole.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The strikingly tall, <b>hexagonal cylinder Nova-C lander, named Odysseus, launched on a SpaceX Falcon 9</b> rocket on 15 February and successfully entered lunar orbit on 21 February.</li> </ul>
<p><b>wooden satellite</b></p>	<p>NASA and the Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA) are gearing up to launch the <b>world's inaugural wooden satellite, known as the LignoSat probe.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Magnolia wood,</b> identified for its</li> </ul>

	<p>durability, emerged as the optimal choice after extensive timber profiling.</p>
<b>New Weather Satellite</b>	<p>ISRO's New Weather Satellite, INSAT-3DS, Launched from Sriharikota</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ISRO Headquarters: Bengaluru;</li> <li>• ISRO Founder: Vikram Sarabhai;</li> <li>• ISRO Founded: 15 August 1969;</li> <li>• ISRO Officeholder: S. Somanath (Chairperson).</li> </ul>
<b>Exercise Vayu Shakti-24</b>	<p>The Indian Air Force (IAF) is set to conduct Exercise Vayu Shakti-24, a grand display of its aerial might, on 17 February 2024, at the <b>Pokhran Air to Ground Range near Jaisalmer.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exercise Vayu Shakti is set to deliver a compelling display of the Indian Air Force's offensive and defensive prowess, seamlessly operating both day and night.</li> </ul>
<b>Exercise 'Dharma Guardian'</b>	<p>The 5th edition of the Joint Military Exercise '<b>Dharma Guardian</b>' commenced today at the <b>Mahajan Field Firing Ranges in Rajasthan, India.</b></p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exercise 'DHARMA GUARDIAN' is an annual exercise and conducted alternatively in India and Japan.</li> </ul>
<b>MILAN naval exercise</b>	<p>The 12th edition of the <b>MILAN naval exercise</b> is poised to set sail in the <b>strategic port city of Visakhapatnam from February 19 to 27</b>, marking a significant gathering of naval forces from over 50 countries.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This year's theme, "<b>Forging Naval Alliances for a Secure Maritime Future,</b>"</li> </ul>
<b>Exercise 'DOSTI-16'</b>	<p>16th biennial trilateral coast guard exercise <b>between India, the Maldives, and Sri Lanka</b> started.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Bangladesh is participating as an observer..</b></li> </ul>
<b>Basic Structure and Republic</b>	<p>Study of <b>asteroid Ryugu samples</b> has provided evidence that the organic molecules which gave rise to life to our planet were brought here by ancient comets.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Comets are frozen leftovers from the formation of the solar system <b>composed of dust, rock, and ice.</b></li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Samples were brought by the <b>Hayabusa2, asteroid-sampling spacecraft of Japan.</b></li> </ul> <p><b>About Asteroid Ryugu</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is a diamond-shaped space rock.</li> <li>• It orbits the sun <b>between Earth and Mars and occasionally crosses Earth's orbit</b> (therefore classified as potentially hazardous).</li> <li>• It is a carbonaceous or C-type asteroid, which means it contains a lot of carbon and water.</li> </ul>
	<p>In collaboration between <b>AIIMS, New Delhi, and the Centre for Development of Advanced Computing (CDAC), Pune</b>, the groundbreaking AI platform iOncology.ai has been unveiled.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This cutting-edge technology focuses on the <b>early detection of cancer, particularly targeting breast and ovarian cancers</b>, which are prevalent among women in India.</li> </ul>
<p><b>GRAPES-3</b></p>	<p>GRAPES-3 discovered a new feature in the cosmic-ray proton</p>

	<p>spectrum at about 166 tera-electron-volt (TeV) energy.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>GRAPES-3 in Ooty (Tamil Nadu) is a collaboration of Tata</b></li> <li>• Institute of Fundamental Research (Mumbai) and other Indian Institution with Japan.</li> <li>• It is designed to study cosmic rays with an array of air shower detectors and a large area <b>muon detector.</b></li> </ul>
<p><b>INS Sandhyak</b></p>	<p>INS Sandhyak, first Survey Vessel Large (SVL) Ship, commissioned into Indian Navy in Visakhapatnam.</p> <p><b>About INS Sandhyak</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>First in a series of four SVL ships.</b></li> <li>• Equipped with state-of-the-art hydrographic equipment including Deep &amp; Shallow Water Multi-Beam Echo-Sounders, Autonomous Underwater Vehicle, etc.</li> <li>• Can offer limited defence capabilities and serve as hospital ship during wartime or emergencies.</li> </ul>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Has an indigenous content of over 80% by cost.</li> </ul>
<b>ANTI-DRONE SYSTEM</b>	<p>Professor <b>Karan Nathwani</b> from <b>IIT-Jammu</b> has created a groundbreaking anti-drone system that relies on sound technology.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This innovative approach ensures affordability and user-friendliness. Unlike conventional methods using visual or radar technology, <b>Nathwani's system identifies drones accurately</b> by analyzing their distinct acoustic signatures.</li> </ul> <p>Affordable and Accessible</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Priced at <b>approximately Rs 4 lakh</b>, the system offers a cost-effective alternative to conventional anti-drone technologies.</li> <li>Its user-friendly design ensures easy deployment and operation by security forces and civilian authorities without specialized training.</li> </ul>

## 9. SUMMITS

SUMMIT NAME	DISCRIPTION
<p><b>US-India Cyber Security Initiative</b></p>	<p>In a collaborative effort between the US Consulate and the <b>Mahratta Chamber of Commerce, Industries and Agriculture (MCCIA)</b>, the <b>first-ever US-India Cyber Security Initiative</b> has been launched.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>At the <b>MCCIA Pune Business International Business Summit</b></li> <li>"Cyber issues are a priority in the <b>US-India bilateral relationship</b>. The challenge facing the United States and India is how to minimize cyber security threats and ensure the digital revolution promotes global prosperity and stability.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Neem Summit &amp; Global Neem Trade Fair</b></p>	<p>The <b>Neem Summit &amp; Global Neem Trade Fair</b>, organized in collaboration with <b>ICAR-Central Agroforestry Research Institute, Jhansi</b>, took place in <b>New Delhi</b> on 19-20 February 2024.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The event aims to showcase the</li> </ul>

	<p>multifaceted uses of neem in agriculture, healthcare, and environmental sustainability.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The overarching theme is <b>“Neem for Sustainable Agriculture, Health, and Environment.”</b></li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Theme: <b>“Shaping Future Governments”</b></li> <li>Global Participation: Over 25 government and state heads from around the world expected to attend.</li> <li>Attendees: Anticipated 4,000 attendees, including representatives from 85 international and regional organizations.</li> </ul>
<p><b>India Energy Week 2024</b></p>	<p>India Energy Week 2024 is set to take place in <b>Goa from February 6 to 9, 2024.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This premier event, inaugurated by the <b>Hon’ble Prime Minister of India Shri Narendra Modi</b>, is the country’s largest and sole comprehensive energy exhibition and conference.</li> <li>With support of <b>Ministry of Petroleum &amp; Natural Gas and Federation of Indian Petroleum Industry (FIPI)</b></li> </ul>	<p><b>Indian Ocean Conference</b></p>	<p>The 7th Indian Ocean Conference in <b>Perth, Australia</b>, addressed various issues, aiming for a Stable and Sustainable Indian Ocean.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Organized by India Foundation in <b>collaboration with the Ministry of External Affairs and Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade</b>, the conference aimed to address diverse issues.</li> <li>Theme <b>“Towards a Stable and Sustainable Indian Ocean.”</b></li> <li>The IOC aims to foster Security and Growth for All in the Region (SAGAR) by uniting critical states and principal maritime</li> </ul>
<p><b>2024 World Governments Summit in Dubai</b></p>	<p>The Summit will gather thought leaders, global experts, and decision makers from around the globe to identify innovative solutions to future challenges.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>India, Türkiye, and Qatar</b> as guests of honor.</li> </ul>		

	partners in dialogue and cooperation.
<b>Future Skills Summit</b>	<p>The <b>Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY)</b>, in collaboration with the <b>National Institute of Electronics and IT (NIELIT)</b>, is hosting the Future Skills Summit in <b>Guwahati</b>.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Themes: <b>Semicon India, IndiaAI, Cyber Security &amp; Emerging Technologies, and Digital India’s Talent for the Global Workforce.</b></li> <li>• <b>First-ever Digital India future SKILLS Summit, which was held today at the Birinchi Kumar Baruah Auditorium, Gauhati University.</b></li> <li>• <b>“FutureSKILLS is bringing a world of opportunities for young Indians to seize, succeed and pave the way for creation of a talent pool that will power the future of tech</b></li> <li>• <b>“Assam will soon have a Rs. 25,000 Cr. Semiconductor packaging plant”</b></li> <li>• <b>“Young Indians from Assam aspiring to enter the world of</b></li> </ul>

	<p>semiconductors won't have to leave their state or travel to other cities anymore”.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>“Projects worth Rs. 1800 crore have been implemented by the Assam Govt. to skill our youths on industry 4.0 across 77 polytechnics and ITIs. Recently an agreement has been signed with TATA and also allotted 150-acre land to establish semiconductor industry near Guwahati.”</b></li> </ul>
<b>One Nation One Student ID Card</b>	<p>National Conference on APAAR: <b>One Nation One Student ID Card Inaugurated by Dharmendra Pradhan in New Delhi.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>APAAR serves as a unique identification system for all students across India, commencing from early childhood.</b></li> <li>• <b>Every student is assigned a lifelong 12-digit ID, simplifying the tracking of academic progress from pre-primary education through higher education.</b></li> </ul>

- Gateway to **Digilocker: APAAR** functions as a gateway to Digilocker, a digital repository where students can securely store crucial documents, including exam results and report cards, for convenient access during future endeavours such as higher education or job applications.
- Each individual receives a unique **APAAR ID**, linked to the **Academic Bank Credit (ABC)**, a digital repository housing a student's earned credits throughout their academic journey.
- APAAR's introduction aims to streamline education processes, reducing the burden on students to carry physical documents.
- NEP 2020 Initiative: **This initiative was launched as part of the National Education Policy 2020 by the Ministry of Education**

## 10. APPOINTMENTS

NAME	APPOINTMENT
<b>Anil Kumar Lahot</b>	Anil Kumar Lahoti, former Railway Board Chief, <b>Appointed Chairman Of Telecom Regulatory Authority of India -TRAI</b>
<b>Ajay Manikrao Khanwilkar</b>	Former Supreme Court judge Justice <b>Ajay Manikrao Khanwilkar</b> has been appointed as the chairperson of the Lokpal The judicial members appointed are as follows: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Justice Lingappa Narayana Swamy</li> <li>2) Justice Sanjay Yadav</li> <li>3) Justice Ritu Raj Awasthi</li> </ol> Other members are: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Sushil Chandra</li> <li>2) Pankaj Kumar</li> </ol>
<b>Maryam Nawaz</b>	Maryam Nawaz Becomes First Woman Chief Minister of Punjab
<b>Geeta Batra</b>	<b>Geeta Batra</b> , a distinguished Indian economist, has been appointed as the Director of the Independent Evaluation Office (IEO) of <b>the World Bank's Global Environment Facility (GEF)</b> .
<b>A S Rajeev</b>	The government appointed A S Rajeev, former MD and CEO of <b>Bank of Maharashtra</b> , as Vigilance



	Commissioner in the <b>Central Vigilance Commission (CVC).</b>
<b>Shubman Gill</b>	Punjab Chief Electoral Officer's office has announced Indian cricketer <b>Shubman Gill</b> as the new " <b>state icon</b> " for Punjab.
Sindhu Ganapathy's	Southern Railway Appoints First <b>Transwoman TTE, Breaks Barriers in Dindigul</b>
<b>Narendra Kumar Yadav</b>	IRS Officer Narendra Kumar Yadav Leads the " <b>Fit India</b> " Movement as <b>Brand Ambassador</b>
<b>Olzhas Bektenov</b>	Kazakh President Appoints <b>Olzhas Bektenov</b> as <b>Prime Minister</b>
<b>Ajay Kumar Choudhary</b>	Ajay Kumar Choudhary Appointed <b>Non-Executive Chairman of NPCI</b>
<b>Jay Shah</b>	Jay Shah was unanimously appointed for a <b>third consecutive term as the President of the Asian Cricket Council (ACC)</b>
<b>Shri Satnam Singh Sandhu</b>	<p>The President appointed <b>Shri Satnam Singh Sandhu to the Rajya Sabha</b>, acknowledging his outstanding role in education, philanthropy, and community development.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Satnam Singh Sandhu</b>, son of a farmer, rose to become one of India's prominent educationists.</li> <li>• Overcoming personal struggles, <b>he founded Chandigarh Group of Colleges (CGC)</b> in 2001 and</li> </ul>

	<p>established <b>Chandigarh University in 2012.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• His university achieved the prestigious recognition of ranking first among private universities in <b>Asia within QS World Rankings 2023.</b></li> </ul>
<b>Ranveer Singh</b>	Ranveer Singh Joins boAt as a Stakeholder and Brand Ambassador.
<b>Mio Oka</b>	The <b>Asian Development Bank (ADB)</b> has announced the appointment of Mio Oka as its <b>new Country Director for India</b> , succeeding Takeo Konishi.
<b>Nawaf Salam</b>	Lebanese <b>Judge Nawaf Salam</b> was elected as the new president of the <b>International Court of Justice (ICJ)</b> for a three-year term.
<b>Sachin Jain</b>	The <b>World Gold Council (WGC)</b> , representing global gold miners, has named Sachin Jain as its new CEO for India
<b>Renu Sud Karnad</b>	<b>PayU Payments Private Ltd</b> , a prominent <b>fintech</b> arm of the global consumer internet group <b>Prosus</b> , has announced the appointment of <b>Renu Sud Karnad</b> as the chairperson and independent director.
<b>Ravindra Kumar</b>	Ravindra Kumar, the newly appointed <b>Director-Operations</b> at <b>NTPC Ltd</b> ,

<b>Nikhil Joshi</b>	Nikhil Joshi Appointed As Managing Director of <b>Boeing Defence India</b>
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## 11. BOOKS

BOOKS	AUTHOR
<b>"Artificial Intelligence and National Security,</b>	CDS Gen. <b>Anil Chauhan</b> revealed a book named, "Artificial Intelligence and National Security," at <b>Pune's Defence Litreature Festival, "Kalam and Kavach,"</b> blending India's heritage with modern security.
<b>Dabbling in Diplomacy</b>	"Dabbling in Diplomacy: Authorised & Otherwise, Recollections of a <b>Non-Career Diplomat,"</b> <b>Professor S.D. Muni.</b>
<b>'9 Incredible Years of Haryana Government</b>	<b>Jagdeep Dhankhar</b> Released the book titled '9 Incredible Years of Haryana Government
<b>Maha Swaapnikudu</b>	<b>Maha Swaapnikudu' (A Great Visionary)</b> Authored by journalist <b>P. Vikram</b> and published by <b>NRI Koduri Venkat on Chandrababu naidu</b>
<b>Sculpted Stones</b>	<b>"Sculpted Stones: Mysteries of Mamallapuram"</b> <b>Authored by Ashwin Prabhu</b>
<b>Basic Structure and Republic</b>	<b>"Basic Structure and Republic"</b> Released by Governor <b>P. S. Sreedharan Pillai</b>

## 12. OBITUARIES

OBITUARIES
<p><b>1) Legendary Ghazal Singer Pankaj Udhas Passes Away</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Udhas' exceptional talent was acknowledged through numerous prestigious awards, including the Filmfare Award, the Sangeet Natak Akademi Award for Ghazal Singing, and the Padma Shri, India's fourth-highest civilian honor.</li> </ul>
<p><b>1) Germany's Andreas Brehme, 1990 World Cup Winning Goal Scorer, Passes Away</b></p>
<p><b>2) Ameen Sayani, the legendary voice that defined radio for generations of Indians, passed away at the age of 91. Known for his iconic program Binaca Geetmala</b></p>
<p><b>3) Dattajirao Gaekwad, Nation's Oldest Test Cricketer, Passes Away At 95</b></p>
<p><b>4) Renowned Litterateur &amp; Padma Shri Awardee Usha Kiran Khan Passes Away</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Her demise has left an indelible void in the <b>realm of Hindi and Maithili</b> literature, marking the end of an era of profound storytelling and cultural enrichment.</li> </ul>
<p><b>5) Veteran artist A Ramachandran Passes Away in Delhi.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ramachandran's artistic oeuvre is a testament to his belief in the intrinsic value of Indian art traditions and the rich tapestry of its cultural narratives.</li> </ul>
<p><b>6) Farooq Nazki, a revered poet, broadcaster, and a distinguished</b></p>

recipient of the Sahitya Akademi Award.

- 7) **Renowned Jain monk Acharya Vidyasagar Maharaj**, 77, peacefully departed via 'Sallekhna' at Chandragiri Teerth in Dongargarh, Rajnandgaon, Chhattisgarh.
- 8) **Chef Imtiaz Qureshi**, who passed away at the age of 93.
  - The **Padma Shri awardee**, often hailed as a “culinary genius,” was instrumental in bringing the ancient dum pukht cooking technique back to the forefront of Indian cuisine.
  - **Kelvin Kiptum, the men’s marathon world record holder**, and his coach, Gervais Hakizimana, met with a tragic end in a traffic accident on the night of February 12, 2024.

## 13. SPORTS

### SPORTS

- 1) **The Khelo India Youth Games 2024** has kicked off in **Tamil Nadu, showcasing the nation’s young sporting talent** in a celebration of skill, determination, and sportsmanship.
  - Hosted in four vibrant cities – **Chennai, Madurai, Trichy, and Coimbatore**
  - The stakes are high at KIYG 2024, with **933 medals up for grabs, including 278 gold, 278 silver, and 377 bronze.**

- **Maharashtra won the last edition of the KIYG held in Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh with a total medals count of 161 – 56 gold, 55 silver and 50 bronze.**
- 2) **Abhinav Bindra, India's first individual Olympic gold medalist and an IOC Athletes' Commission member, is among the 11,000 torchbearers chosen to carry the iconic symbol.**
  - 3) **The Telangana Football Association (TFA) has gained approval to host the FIFA World Cup qualifiers for India vs. Kuwait.** Hyderabad is hosting of the FIFA World Cup qualifiers between **India and Kuwait.**
  - 4) the **first-ever BIMSTEC Aquatics Championship** was officially declared **open in New Delhi on February 6th, 2024**
    - **With over 400 athletes and officials from seven BIMSTEC Member States** set to participate, the championship promises to be a vibrant display of sporting excellence and cultural exchange.
  - 5) **Wei Yi emerged victorious in the 2024 Tata Steel Chess Tournament, triumphing in an intense four-player tiebreak alongside Anish Giri, Gukesh Dommaraju, and Nodirbek Abdusattorov.**
  - 6) **At Shah Alam, Malaysia, the Indian women’s badminton team etched their**

**names into history by clinching a historic gold medal at the Badminton Asia Team Championships 2024.**

- 7) **Rizwan Javed**, a UK club cricketer, receives a 17 ½ year ban from cricket due to multiple breaches of the ECB Anti-Corruption Code.
- 8) **Ravichandran Ashwin** has etched his name in the annals of cricket history by becoming the **second Indian bowler to take 500 wickets** in Test matches.
- 9) Athletics Integrity Unit (AIU) and the National Anti-Doping Agency (NADA) have imposed significant suspensions on two athletes for anti-doping rule violations.
  - **Hammer thrower Rachna Kumari** faces a 12-year suspension for her second anti-doping rule violation
  - **Quarter-miler Nirmala Sheoran**, another athlete with a history of doping violations, has been handed an eight-year suspension by NADA for her second offence.
- 10) **At 100 years old, Iranian diver Taghi Askari showcased his skills at the Diving World Championships in Diving World Championships in Doha**
- 11) Union Minister for **Youth Affairs and Sports Anurag Singh Thakur handed over the Chess Olympiad Torch to Budapest, Hungary**, the host city for the 45th edition of the Chess Olympiad. The ceremony, held at the Major Dhyanchand **National Stadium in New Delhi**

- 12) International Cricket Council (ICC) has announced the winners of the **ICC Men's and Women's Player of the Month for January 2024**. **West Indies' Shamar Joseph and Ireland's Amy Hunter** have been bestowed with this honour, marking their remarkable contributions to their respective teams in the past month.
- 13) **Pathum Nissanka** etched his name in **Sri Lankan cricket history, by becoming the first-ever player to score a double century** in One Day Internationals (ODIs) for the nation.
- 14) The National Anti-Doping Agency (NADA) hosted the **"Road to Paris 2024: Championing Clean Sports and Uniting for Anti-Doping"** Conference. The event aimed to educate Indian athletes about the dangers of prohibited substances while emphasizing ethical competition.
  - NADA unveiled **"The Paris Pinnacle: NADA's Guide to Ethical Sporting,"** a comprehensive resource providing guidelines for athletes preparing for **the Paris Olympics 2024**.
- 15) Anurag Singh Thakur virtually inaugurated the Centre of Excellence for Nutritional Supplements Testing (**CoE-NSTS**) at the **National Forensic Sciences University (NFSU) in Gandhinagar, Gujarat**.
- 16) Union Minister for **Youth Affairs and Sports Anurag Singh Thakur inaugurated the Khelo India University games in Guwahati**.



17) An **eight-year-old chess prodigy from Singapore has made headlines by achieving a remarkable feat in the world of chess.** In a gripping three-hour game at **Switzerland's Burgdorfer Stadthaus-Open**, **Ashwath Kaushik** emerged victorious against the seasoned Polish grandmaster Jacek Stopa, securing his place in history as the youngest chess player to defeat a grandmaster.

18) 7th North East Youth Festival 2024

- The Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports has officially unveiled the logo for the **highly anticipated 7th North East Youth Festival 2024.**
- **Scheduled to take place in Tripura from February 26 to 29**

19) **Bhagwan Singh and Mahesh Khurana from Bhopal have completed the Pangong Frozen Lake Marathon 2024, held in Leh-Ladakh.** Known for its extreme conditions, this marathon is celebrated as the **'World's Highest Frozen Lake Marathon.'**

- The event unfolded on February 20, amidst heavy snowfall, at an altitude of 18,680 feet with temperatures plunging to **-15°C**, posing an ultimate challenge to the participants.

20) The Khelo India Winter Games 2024 concluded in **Gulmarg**, with the Army emerging victorious after a thrilling final day of competition.

21) **Alpine skier Bobby Pandey's gold medal** in the parallel slalom event proved decisive, propelling Army to the top of **the medal table with 10 gold medals.** This narrow margin placed them one gold ahead of **Karnataka (9 gold) and three ahead of Maharashtra (7 gold), who had led after the first round in Ladakh.**

22) **Neil Wagner from New Zealand Announces Retirement from International Cricket**

23) **The mascot for the Khelo India Winter Games 2024 is the majestic snow leopard, named 'Sheen-e She' or 'Shan' in the Ladakh region**

## 14. AWARDS

### BHARAT RATNA 2024

- The **Bharat Ratna is the highest civilian award of the Republic of India.** Instituted on **2 January 1954**, the award is conferred in recognition of "exceptional service/performance of the highest order", without distinction of race, occupation, position or gender. The award was originally limited to **achievements in the arts, literature, science, and public services, but the Government of India expanded the criteria to include "any field of human endeavor" in December 2011.**

- The recommendations for the award are made by the Prime Minister to the President. The recipients receive a **Sanad (certificate) signed by the President and a peepal leaf-shaped medallion with no monetary grant associated with the award.** Bharat Ratna recipients rank seventh in the Indian order of precedence.
- Since then, the award has been bestowed upon 53 individuals, including 18 who were awarded posthumously.
  - a. The original statutes did not provide for posthumous awards but were amended in **January 1966 to permit them to honor former Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri, the first individual to be honored posthumously**
  - b. The **first Bharat Ratna** award was awarded to politician **C. Rajagopalachari, philosopher Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, and scientist CV Raman in the year 1954.**
  - c. The youngest **Bharat Ratna** recipient in **India was Sachin Tendulkar** who received this award in the year 2014 when he was 40 years old.
  - d. **Dhondo Keshav Karve** was the oldest person to receive the Bharat Ratna Award. He was a social reformer and was awarded on **his 100th birthday in 1958**

	2. Nanaji Deshmukh	A social activist from India, education, health, and rural self-reliance.
	3. Bhupen Hazarika	Indian playback singer, lyricist, musician, singer, poet, and filmmaker from Assam.
<b>Bharat Ratna 2024 (Posthumously)</b>	1. Karpooori Thakur	A renowned socialist leader and former Chief Minister of Bihar
<b>Bharat Ratna 2024</b>	2. Lal Krishna Advani	A Veteran Bhartiya Janta Party Leader
<b>Bharat Ratna 2024</b>	3. PV Narsimha Rao	Former Prime Minister
<b>Bharat Ratna 2024</b>	4. Chaudhary Charan Singh	A former Prime Minister who supported the agricultural sector and upheld the rights of the farmers.
<b>Bharat Ratna 2024</b>	5. MS Swaminathan	Father of Green Revolution

<b>Bharat Ratna 2019</b>	1. Pranab Mukherjee	Indian politician, and senior leader in the Indian National Congress.
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FILMFARE AWARDS 2024 WINNERS	
Category	Winner
Best Film	12th Fail
Best Director	Vidhu Vinod Chopra (12th Fail)
Best Actor in a Leading Role (Male)	Ranbir Kapoor (Animal)
Best Actor in a Leading Role (Female)	Alia Bhatt (Rocky Aur Rani Kii Prem Kahaani)
Best Film (Critics')	Joram (Devashish Makhija)
Best Actor (Critics')	Vikrant Massey (12th Fail)
Best Actress (Critics')	Rani Mukerji (Mrs Chatterjee vs. Norway), Shefali Shah (Three of Us)
Best Actor in a Supporting Role (Male)	Vicky Kaushal (Dunki)
Best Actor in a Supporting Role (Female)	Shabana Azmi (Rocky Aur Rani Kii Prem Kahaani)
Best Lyrics	Amitabh Bhattacharya ("Tere Vaaste" – Zara Hatke Zara Bachke)
Best Music Album	Animal (Pritam, Vishal Mishra, Manan Bhardwaj, Shreyas Puranik, Jaani, Bhupinder Babbal, et al.)
Best Playback Singer (Male)	Bhupinder Babbal (Arjan Vailly – Animal)
Best Playback Singer (Female)	Shilpa Rao (Besharam Rang – Pathaan)
Best Story	Amit Rai (OMG 2), Devashish Makhija (Joram)
Best Screenplay	Vidhu Vinod Chopra (12th Fail)
Best Dialogue	Ishita Moitra (Rocky Aur Rani Kii Prem Kahaani)
Best Background Score	Harshavardhan Rameshwar (Animal)

Best Cinematography	Avinash Arun Dhaware (Three of Us)
Best Production Design	Subrata Chakraborty, Amit Ray (Sam Bahadur)
Best Costume Design	Sachin Lovelekar, Divvyra Gambhir, Nidhhi Gambhir (Sam Bahadur)
Best Sound Design	Kunal Sharma (Mpse) (Sam Bahadur) Sync Cinema (Animal)
Best Editing	Jaskunwar Singh Kohli- Vidhu Vinod Chopra (12th Fail)
Best Action	Spiro Razatos, Anl Arasu, Craig Macrae, Yannick Ben, Kecha Khamphakdee, Sunil Rodrigues (Jawan)
Best VFX	Red Chillies VFX (Jawan)
Best Choreography	Ganesh Acharya ("What Jhumka?" – Rocky Aur Rani Kii Prem Kahaani)
Best Debut Director	Tarun Dudeja (Dhak Dhak)
Best Debut Male	Aditya Rawal (Faraaz)
Best Debut Female	Alizeh Agnihotri (Farrey)
Lifetime Achievement Award	David Dhawan

GRAMMY 2024 WINNERS	
Category	Winner
Song of the Year	Billie Eilish – What Was I Made For? from Barbie
Best Pop Vocal Album	Taylor Swift – Midnights
Best R&B Song	SZA – Snooze
Best Country Album	Lainey Wilson – Bell Bottom Country
Best Música Urbana Album	Karol G – Mañana Será Bonito

<b>Best Pop Solo Performance</b>	Miley Cyrus – Flowers
<b>Best Progressive R&amp;B Album</b>	SZA – SOS
<b>Best R&amp;B Performance</b>	Coco Jones – ICU
<b>Best Folk Album</b>	Joni Mitchell – Joni Mitchell at Newport (Live)
<b>Producer of the Year, Non-Classical</b>	Jack Antonoff
<b>Songwriter of the Year, Non-Classical</b>	Theron Thomas
<b>Best Pop Duo/Group Performance</b>	SZA featuring Phoebe Bridgers – Ghost in the Machine
<b>Best Dance/Electronic Recording</b>	Skrillex, Fred again.. and Flowdan – Rumble
<b>Best Pop Dance Recording</b>	Kylie Minogue – Padam Padam
<b>Best Dance/Electronic Music Album</b>	Fred again.. – Actual Life 3 (January 1 – September 9 2022)
<b>Best Traditional R&amp;B Performance</b>	PJ Morton featuring Susan Carol – Good Morning
<b>Best R&amp;B Album</b>	Victoria Monét – Jaguar II
<b>Best Rap Performance</b>	Killer Mike featuring André 3000, Future and Eryn Allen Kane – Scientists & Engineers
<b>Best Melodic Rap Performance</b>	Lil Durk featuring J Cole – All My Life
<b>Best Rap Song</b>	Killer Mike featuring André 3000, Future and Eryn Allen Kane – Scientists & Engineers
<b>Best Rap Album</b>	Killer Mike – Michael
<b>Best Country Solo Performance</b>	Chris Stapleton – White Horse
<b>Best Country Song</b>	Chris Stapleton – White Horse
<b>Best Song Written for Visual Media</b>	Billie Eilish – What Was I Made For? from Barbie
<b>Best Comedy Album</b>	Dave Chappelle – What’s in a Name?
<b>Best Global Music Album</b>	Indian musicians Shankar Mahadevan and Zakir Hussain’s fusion band ‘Shakti’
<b>Best African Music</b>	Tyla – Water

<b>Performance</b>	
<b>Best Musical Theater Album</b>	Some Like It Hot
<b>Best Alternative Music Album</b>	boygenius – The Record
<b>Best Alternative Music Performance</b>	Paramore – This Is Why
<b>Best Rock Album</b>	Paramore – This Is Why
<b>Best Rock Song</b>	boygenius – Not Strong Enough
<b>Best Metal Performance</b>	Metallica – 72 Seasons
<b>Best Rock Performance</b>	boygenius – Not Strong Enough
<b>Best Country Duo/Group Performance</b>	Zach Bryan featuring Kacey Musgraves – I Remember Everything

**THE BRITISH ACADEMY OF FILM AND TELEVISION ARTS (BAFTA) AWARDS 2024**

S.No	Category	Winner
1	Best Film	Oppenheimer
2	Outstanding British Film	The Zone of Interest
3	Outstanding Debut by a British Writer, Director, or Producer	Earth Mama – Savanah Leaf (Writer, Director, Producer), Shirley O’Connor (Producer), Medb Riordan (Producer)
4	Film Not in the English Language	The Zone of Interest
5	Documentary	20 Days in Mariupol
6	Animated Film	The Boy And The Heron
7	Director	Christopher Nolan, Oppenheimer
8	Original Screenplay	Anatomy of a Fall
9	Adapted Screenplay	American Fiction
10	Leading Actress	Emma Stone, Poor Things
11	Leading Actor	Cillian Murphy, Oppenheimer
12	Supporting Actress	Da’Vine Joy Randolph, The Holdovers
13	Supporting Actor	Robert Downey Jr., Oppenheimer
14	Original Score	Oppenheimer



15	Cinematography	<b>Oppenheimer</b>
16	Editing	<b>Oppenheimer</b>
17	Casting	<b>The Holdovers</b>
18	Production Design	<b>Poor Things</b>
19	Costumer Design	<b>Poor Things</b>
20	Makeup & Hair	<b>Poor Things</b>
21	Sound	<b>The Zone of Interest</b>
22	Special Visual Effects	<b>Poor Things</b>
23	British Short Animation	<b>Crab Day</b>
24	EE Rising Star Award	<b>Mia McKenna-Bruce</b>
25	<b>British Short Film</b>	<b>Jellyfish and Lobster</b>

**AUSTRALIAN OPEN 2024 WINNERS**

Category	Winner	Runner-Up
Men's Singles	Jannik Sinner (Italy)	Daniil Medvedev (Russia)
Women's Singles	Aryna Sabalenka (Belarus)	Zheng Qinwen (China)
Men's Doubles	Rohan Bopanna (India) & Matthew Ebden (Australia)	Simone Bolelli and Andrea Vavassori (Italy)
Women's Doubles	Hsieh Su-Wei (Taiwan) & Elise Mertens (Belgium)	Jelena Ostapenko and Lyudmyla Kichenok (Latvia-Ukraine)
Mixed Doubles	<b>Hsieh Su-wei (Taiwan) &amp; Jan Zielinski (Poland)</b>	Desirae Krawczyk (USA) & Neal Skupski (Britain)

**AWARDS IN DIFFERENT FIELDS**

- 1) Jacintha Kalyan has etched her name in the annals of sports history as the

country's first female pitch curator. With the highly anticipated 2nd edition of the Women's Premier League (WPL)

- 2) Acharya Lokesh Muni to be Honored as 'Global Jain Peace Ambassador'
- 3) The recipient of this year's Romain Rolland Book Prize is Pankaj Kumar Chatterjee for his remarkable translation of Jean-Daniel Baltassat's "Le Divan de Staline" into Bengali, titled "Staliner Divan."
- 4) Dr. Aditi Sen De, an esteemed physicist from the Harish Chandra Research Institute, recently received the 2023 GD Birla Award for Scientific Excellence. Dr. De's expertise in quantum communication networks and cryptographic networks aligns seamlessly with the evolving landscape of quantum technologies.
- 5) Shashi Tharoor has been bestowed with the prestigious 'Chevalier de la Légion d'Honneur' (Knight of the Legion of Honour), France's highest civilian honour.
- 6) Swedish photographer Alex Dawson has clinched the prestigious title of Underwater Photographer of the Year 2024.
- 7) REC Limited, a leading NBFC and Maharatna CPSU under the Ministry of Power, receives the 'Innovative Technology Development Award' at IIT Madras CSR Summit.
- 8) The Ministry of Jal Shakti honored Noida for water conservation at the

**World Water Award 2023-24**, recognizing its achievements in sewage treatment and water reuse.

- 9) The iconic **Jungfraujoch**, also known as the Top of Europe, witnessed a momentous event recently. India's Olympic gold medalist and world champion javelin thrower, **Neeraj Chopra**, was honoured with a commemorative plaque at the renowned Ice Palace. This prestigious recognition adds another feather to his cap and strengthens the bond between Switzerland and India.
- 10) **Pyarelal Sharma, one-half of the legendary composer duo Laxmikant-Pyarelal**, has been felicitated with the prestigious Lakshminarayana International Award.
- 11) **Dr. Bina Modi**, Chairperson of Modi Enterprises, receives '**Outstanding Business Woman of the Year**' Award from Rajnath Singh at an IACC conference.
- 12) **REC Limited, a top NBFC and Maharatna CPSU** under the Ministry of Power, receives the esteemed Best Green Bond - Corporate Award at The Asset Triple A Awards for Sustainable Finance.
- 13) **Legendary sprinter and current President of the Indian Olympic Association (IOA), PT Usha**, was honoured with the prestigious 'Lifetime Achievement' award.
- 14) **Nikhil Mukund Wagh**, who works as a Public Relations Officer at Goa Shipyard Limited, was recently given the "Maha

Gaurav 2024" award. This award was handed **to him by Shri Ajit Pawar, the Deputy Chief Minister of Maharashtra, during a ceremony at Kaneri Math in Kolhapur on Monday, January 29. Nikhil has been in the fields of journalism and public relations.** This award shows how dedicated and impactful Nikhil Wagh has been in his work.

- 15) The esteemed **Blavatnik Awards will acknowledge the outstanding achievements of Rahul R Nair, Mehul Malik, Tanmay Bharat**, and other emerging scientists during a formal gala event in London.
  - **Rahul R Nair**, a materials physicist at The University of Manchester, has been honored as the Laureate in Physical Sciences & Engineering for his pioneering work in developing innovative membranes using two-dimensional (2D) materials
  - Professor **Mehul Malik**, a Quantum physicist at Heriot-Watt University, is pioneering quantum communications with his research. Malik's work harnesses high-dimensional entanglement to create robust quantum networks, promising secure transmission of data over long distances
  - **Dr. Tanmay Bharat**, a structural microbiologist at the MRC Laboratory of Molecular Biology, utilizes cryo-electron tomography to uncover atomic-level details of cell surface molecules.

#### 16) **The Jnanpith Award**

- **The Jnanpith Award is the oldest and the highest Indian literary award presented annually by the Bharatiya Jnanpith to an author for their "outstanding contribution towards literature".** Instituted in 1961, the award is bestowed only on Indian writers writing in Indian languages included in the **Eighth Schedule** to the Constitution of India and English, **with no posthumous conferral.**
- **As of 2015,** the cash prize has been revised to **₹11 lakh (equivalent to ₹17 lakh or US\$21,000 in 2023)** and out of twenty-three eligible languages the award has been presented for works in sixteen languages: **Hindi (eleven), Kannada (eight), Bengali and Malayalam (six each), Urdu (five) Gujarati, Marathi, Odia (four each), Assamese and Telugu (three each), Punjabi, Tamil, Konkani and Sanskrit (two each), English, Kashmiri and (one each).**
- In **1976,** Bengali novelist **Ashapoorna Devi** became the first woman to win the award and was honoured for the **1965 novel Prothom Protishruti (The First Promise),** the first in a trilogy.

- This year, the honour is bestowed upon two luminaries from the world of letters: celebrated Urdu poet and Bollywood personality **Gulzar,** and the distinguished Sanskrit scholar and spiritual leader **Jagadguru Rambhadracharya.** Their selection for the 58th edition of the award underscores the rich diversity and depth of Indian literary traditions, spanning the classical to the contemporary.
- **GULZAR:** His achievements have been recognized with numerous accolades, including **the Sahitya Akademi Award for Urdu, the Dadasaheb Phalke Award, the Padma Bhushan, and several National Film Awards. Notably, his song "Jai Ho" from the film "Slumdog Millionaire" has won both an Oscar and a Grammy, showcasing his international acclaim.**
- **Gulzar's directorial ventures such as "Koshish," "Parichay," and "Mausam," among others, are considered classics.**
- **Jagadguru Rambhadracharya** stands as a towering figure in the world of Sanskrit scholarship and Hindu spirituality. As the founder and head of **Tulsi Peeth** in Madhya Pradesh, his contributions to

education, literature, and spiritual discourse are unparalleled.

## 15. MISCELLANEOUS

### MISCELLANEOUS

#### 1) Google Rebrands Its Chatbot, Bard, As Gemini

- This positions Google in direct rivalry with **OpenAI**, marking a pivotal moment in the AI competition.
- This rebranding effort coincides with the launch of a new subscription plan, offering users access to Google's most advanced AI model, the **Ultra 1.0, within the Gemini family**.
- The Power of Ultra 1.0
- **Google's Ultra 1.0** model boasts enhanced capabilities, particularly excelling in complex tasks like coding and logical reasoning.

#### 2) AIIMS, in collaboration with CDAC, unveils iOncology.ai, an AI platform for early cancer detection, focusing on breast and ovarian cancers prevalent in India.

- MoU between AIIMS and DGE for Rheumatological Disorders
- The Department of Rheumatology at **AIIMS New Delhi has signed an MoU with the Directorate General of Employment, Ministry of Labour & Employment, Government of India.**

- This initiative aims to address challenges faced by patients with disabilities due to rheumatological disorders by providing certifications for employable skills and promoting economic upliftment and vocational rehabilitation.

#### 3) US has announced a steep increase in fees for various categories of nonimmigrant visas like the H-1B, L-1 and EB-5, the most popular among Indians.

- **H-1B visa allows US companies to employ foreign workers in specialty occupations that require theoretical or technical expertise.**
- L-1 visa is a visa category in the US that is designed for intracompany transferees.
- **It allows multinational companies to transfer certain employees from their foreign offices to work in the US temporarily.**
- **EB-5, or US golden visa, provides a special road for overseas investors and their families to seek permanent residency and Green Cards in the United States.**

#### 4) IIT-Kanpur has successfully built and tested India's first HETTF (named as S2 as well as Jigarthanda).

- It puts India amongst only a handful of countries with this advanced hypersonic testing capability.
- **This project was supported by Fund for Improvement in S&T Infrastructure (FIST) of Department of Science & Technology.**



- It is capable of generating flight speeds between 3-10 km/s, simulating the hypersonic conditions encountered during atmospheric entry of vehicles, asteroid entry, scramjet flights, and ballistic missiles.

- This makes it a valuable test facility for ongoing missions of **ISRO and DRDO including Gaganyaan, RLV, and hypersonic cruise missiles**

### **5) Foreign Ministers of Germany, Poland, and France have met recently to revive the Weimar Triangle.**

- Weimar Triangle is a regional group created **in 1991, to develop a** shared vision for Europe and forge closer ties between these three countries' societies.
- The Triangle was initially the key forum for supporting
- German-Polish reconciliation after World War II.
- The group takes its name from the city of Weimar, Germany, where the initial meeting took place.

### **6) Between 2021 and 2023, H5N1 has wiped out a significant bird population in the United Kingdom.**

- **H5N1 is a type of influenza virus that causes a highly infectious,**
- severe respiratory disease in birds called avian influenza (or "bird flu").
- **H5N1 is categorized as one of the highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) viruses.**
- H5N1 infection in humans occurs through close contact with infected live or dead

birds, or H5N1-contaminated environments.

- H5N1 infection in humans can cause severe disease and has a high mortality rate.

### **7) Recently a significant rise has been witnessed in the cases of 'Zombie Deer Disease' In USA.**

#### **○ About Zombie Deer Disease**

- It is also known as Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD),
- Caused by: misfolded proteins known as prions and affects species in the cervid family i.e., deer, elk, reindeer, sika deer, and moose.
- It is a contagious neurological condition fatal to animals and there are no treatments or vaccines.
- Till now, no direct evidence of its human transmission has been found.
- Symptoms: Drastic weight loss (wasting), stumbling, listlessness, and other neurologic symptoms.

### **8) According to World Health Organization, world is near to eradicate GWD.**

#### **○ About GWD (Dracunculiasis)**

- It is an infection caused by parasite Dracunculus
- medinensis. Spread by drinking water containing Guinea worm larvae. Larvae are immature forms of worm.
- Affects people in rural, deprived, and isolated communities who depend mainly on open stagnant surface water sources like ponds.

- Also infections in animals, particularly in dogs, have been reported. It is one of the Neglected Tropical Diseases. There is no vaccine and drug to prevent the disease and treat patients.
- India successfully eradicated GWD in 2000.

**9) India hit target towards eliminating Kala Azar for the first time in 2023 by reporting less than one case per 10,000 population across all blocks**

- **About Kala Azar**
- It is also known as Visceral Leishmaniasis and is a protozoan parasitic disease.
- **Causing agent: infected female phlebotomine sandfly.**
- Symptoms: irregular fever, weight loss, enlargement of the spleen and liver, and anaemia.
- The disease is endemic in Bihar, Jharkhand, Uttar Pradesh and **West Bengal.**
- Areas infected: Brazil, east Africa, and India

**10) In a significant stride towards scientific progress, Banaras Hindu University (BHU) has initiated two groundbreaking endeavors: the establishment of the Human DNA Bank and the imminent completion of the Wildlife DNA Bank. These initiatives, powered by cutting-edge technologies such as the Automated DNA Extractor Machine, epitomize India's commitment to innovation and indigenous manufacturing under the Make in India initiative.**

**11) Ministry of Education launched MoE-AICTE Investor Network jointly established by AICTE and MoE's Innovation Cell (MIC).**

- It aims to bring students, faculty, investors and market on one
- platform to strengthen culture of innovation and address issue of start-up funding.
- It will provide crucial financial support, mentoring, and strategic guidance to early-stage student or faculty-led startups.

**12) Indian Institute of Mass Communication (IIMC) has been declared as a deemed to be University by the Education Ministry.**

- **About Deemed to be University**
- A Higher education Institution, other than University, working at a very high standard in a specific area of study can be declared as 'Deemed-to-be-university'.
- Declared under section 3 of University Grants Commission
- **(UGC) Act, 1956 on the advice of the University Grants Commission (UGC).**

## 16. BUDGET 2024-25

Recently, Union Finance Minister Nirmal Sitharaman presented the budget for Financial Year 2024-25 on February 1.

- The FM announced on 1st February 2024 that the theme for this year’s Budget would be **“Viksit Bharat Budget 2024”**.
- She reiterated that the country continues to strive towards Atmanirbhar Bharat. At the same time, the welfare and **aspirations of the Gareeb (poor), Mahila (women), Yuva (youth), and Annadata (farmers)** would be the most important focus areas in the Interim Budget 2024.
- Since 2024 is an election year, instead of a normal budget, an interim budget will be presented this year.
- **Interim budget:** It is a **short-term financial plan that covers government expenses until the elections**.
- Unlike a **normal budget, which covers every aspect of government finances**, including revenues, expenditures, allocations, and policy statements, interim budget only outlines the government’s anticipated revenues and expenses until the new government is formed.
- As part of **Interim budget, the Parliament passes a vote-on-account**.
- **Vote-on-account:** According to **Article 116 of the Constitution**, a **vote-on-account** represents an advance payment to the government from the Consolidated Fund of India, for meeting immediate expenditure requirements.

- The threshold for presumptive taxation for retail businesses raised from ₹2 crore to ₹3 crore.
- Corporate tax rate decreased **from 30% to 22% for existing companies and 15% for new manufacturing companies**.
- Improvement in tax-payer services through
- Faceless Assessment and Appeal
- New Form 26AS and prefilling of tax returns

**Indirect Tax**

- Average monthly Gross GST collections doubled to **21.66 lakh crore in FY24**.
- Increase in **tax buoyancy of State revenue from 0.72 (2012-16) to 1.22 in the post-GST period (2017-23)**
- Reduction in logistics cost and prices of most goods and services
- Decline in import release time since 2019
- **47 per cent at Inland Container Depots**
- **28 per cent at Air Cargo complexes**
- 27 per cent at Sea Ports Supply Chain Optimization by eliminating tax arbitrage and octroi.

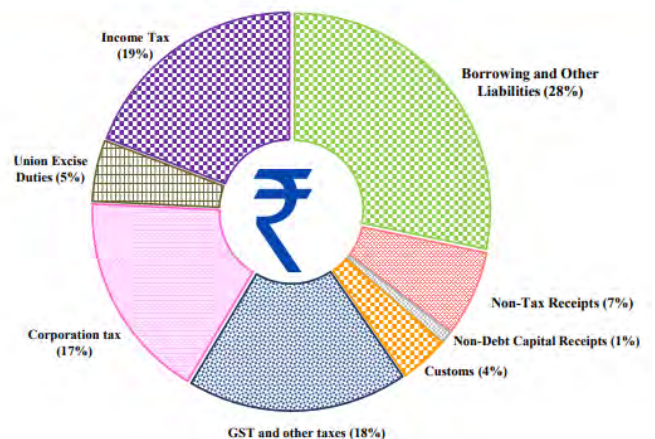
**INTERIM BUDGET 2024:**

**1) TAX PROPOSALS**

**a. Direct Tax**

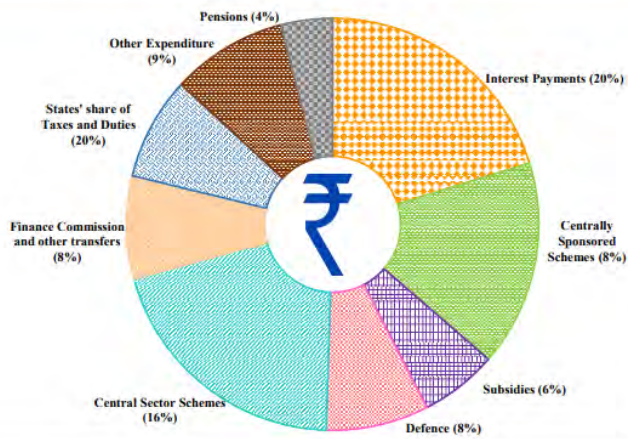
- **Tax Collections** more than trebled in last 10 years.
- Number of return filers **swelled to 2.4 times**.
- Reduction in average processing time of returns from 93 days in 2013-14 to 10 days in 2023-24.
- New Tax regime resulted in reduced and rationalized tax rates
- Taxpayers with income up to **₹7 lakh have no tax liability**

**Rupee Comes From**





## Rupee Goes To



- **1.4 crore** youth have been trained under the Skill India Mission.
- Fostering entrepreneurial aspirations of youth - **43 crore** loans have been sanctioned under the PM Mudra Yojana.
- A corpus of **Rs.1 lakh crore** to fund tech-savvy youth with a 50-year, interest-free loan at low or nil interest rates charge to provide financing/re-financing.

### C. Welfare of Farmers (Annadata)

- There has been direct financial assistance provided to 11.8 crore farmers under PM-KISAN.
- Crop Insurance has been given to 4 crore farmers under PM Fasal Bima Yojana.
- There has been an integration of 1,361 mandis under eNAM, supporting trading volume of Rs.3 lakh crore.

### D. Nari Shakti

- 30 crore Mudra Yojana loans have been disbursed to women entrepreneurs.
- There has been an increase in female enrollment in higher education by 28 per cent in the past 10 years.
- There is 43% of female enrolment in STEM courses
- One crore women are assisted by 83 lakh SHGs to become Lakhpati Didis.

### Strategy Shift for Amrit Kaal as Kartavya Kaal

#### 1) Sustainable Development/Green Energy

- The Finance Minister highlighted the need for sustainable **development by committing to meet 'Net Zero' by 2070 under Amrit Kaal. In this regard, the FM proposed:**
- Viability gap funding for harnessing offshore wind energy for an initial capacity of **one gigawatt**.
- Setting up of **coal gasification and liquefaction capacity of 100 MT by 2030**
- Phased mandatory blending of CNG, PNG, and compressed biogas for domestic purposes

### Roadmap for Viksit Bharat 2047

- This year's Budget took on the Viksit Bharat theme, with the government visualising a developed India by 2047. **'Garib' (Poor), 'Mahilayen' (Women), 'Yuva' (Youth) and 'Annadata' (Farmers) are the four-pillars of the Viksit Bharat Budget 2024. In light of the people-centric inclusive development plan, the Finance Minister announced-**
- There will be substantive development of all forms of infrastructure - physical, digital and social.
- Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI) will promote formalisation and financial inclusion.
- The government plans to deepen and widen the tax base via GST.
- Strengthened financial sector **brought savings, credit and investment back on track.**
- A robust gateway will be set up called GIFT IFSC will be set up for global capital and financial services for the economy.
- There will be proactive inflation management.

#### A. Garib Kalyan, Desh ka Kalyan

- **Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) has led to savings of Rs. 2.7 lakh crore.**
- **25 crore** people have moved out of multidimensional poverty.
- Credit assistance has been given to 78 lakh street vendors under PM-SVANidhi.

#### B. Empowering the Youth



- Financial assistance for the procurement of biomass aggregation machinery
- Further, there will be **rooftop solarisation with one crore households** enabled to obtain up to **300 units of free electricity per month**.
- The government also plans to adopt e-buses for public transport and strengthen the e-vehicle ecosystem by supporting the manufacturing and charging of electric vehicles.
- A new scheme of bio-manufacturing and bio-foundry will be launched to support environment-friendly alternatives.
- **1.3 crore LED street lights will be installed under the SNLP scheme.**
- The **Blue Economy 2.0 scheme** will be launched to restore and adapt coastal aquaculture and marine-culture.

## 2) Research and Innovation for catalyzing growth, employment and development

- A corpus of **Rs.1 lakh crore** to be established with fifty-year interest free loan to provide long-term financing or refinancing with long tenors and low or nil interest rates.
- A new scheme to be launched for strengthening deep-tech technologies for defence purposes and expediting 'atmanirbharta'.

## 3) Infrastructure

- **Capital expenditure** outlay for Infrastructure development and employment generation to be increased by **11.1 per cent to Rs.11,11,111 crore, that will be 3.4 per cent of the GDP.**

## 4) Railways

- 3 major economic railway corridor programmes identified under the **PM Gati Shakti** to be implemented to improve logistics efficiency and reduce cost
  - Energy, mineral and cement corridors
  - Port connectivity corridors
  - High traffic density corridors
- Forty thousand normal rail bogies to be converted to Vande Bharat standards.

## 5) Aviation Sector

- **Number of airports in the country doubled to 149.**
- Five hundred and seventeen new routes are carrying **1.3 crore passengers.**
- Indian carriers have placed orders for over 1000 new aircrafts.

## 6) Green Energy

- Coal gasification and liquefaction **capacity of 100 MT to be set up by 2030.**
- Phased mandatory blending of **compressed biogas (CBG) in compressed natural gas (CNG) for transport and piped natural gas (PNG) for domestic purposes to be mandated.**

## 7) Inclusive Development

- The FM highlighted the need for inclusive development under **Amrit Kaal, with an aspirational District Programme** to assist states in faster development, including employment generation. In this regard.

## 8) Healthcare

- The government is actively encouraging cervical cancer vaccination for **girls aged between 9-14 years.**
- The **Saksham Anganwadi and Poshan 2.0** scheme would expedite the upgradation of Anganwadi centres to improve nutrition delivery, early childhood care and development.
- A **U-WIN platform** is to be rolled out for the **immunisation efforts of Mission Indradhanush.**
- Health coverage under the Ayushman Bharat scheme will be extended for all ASHA, **Anganwadi workers, and helpers.**
- A committee will be formed to study the issues faced in setting up more medical colleges in India.

## 9) Housing

- The Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (Grameen) is close to achieving the **target of 3 crore houses,**

with an additional 2 crore targeted for the next 5 years.

- Housing for the middle class scheme to be launched to encourage the middle class to buy or build their own houses.

#### 10) Tourism

- States will be encouraged to undertake the development of **iconic tourist centres to attract business and promote opportunities** for local entrepreneurship.
- Long-term interest-free loans are to be provided to states to encourage development.
- Projects for port **connectivity, tourism infrastructure, and amenities will be taken up in islands, including Lakshadweep.**

#### 11) Agriculture and Food Processing

- The government is set to promote private and public investment in post-harvest activities.
- The application of **Nano-DAP is to be expanded in all agro-climatic zones.**
- **Atmanirbhar Oilseeds Abhiyan strategy to be formulated to achieve atma nirbharta** for oilseeds.
- A comprehensive programme for dairy development is to be formulated.
- The implementation of **Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana** will be stepped up to enhance aquaculture productivity, double exports, and generate more employment opportunities.
- **Further, five integrated aquaparks will be set up.**

#### 12) Investments

- FDI inflow during 2014-23 of USD 596 billion was twice of the inflow during 2005-14.

- **Ministry of road transport and highways:** ₹2.78 lakh crore
- **Ministry of railways:** ₹2.55 lakh crore
- **Ministry of consumer affairs, food & public distribution:** ₹2.13 lakh crore
- **Ministry of home affairs:** ₹2.03 lakh crore
- **Ministry of rural development:** ₹1.77 lakh crore
- **Ministry of chemicals and fertilizers:** ₹1.68 lakh crore
- **Ministry of communications:** ₹1.37 lakh crore
- **Ministry of agriculture and farmer's welfare:** 1.27 lakh crore
- **Ministry of Education:** ₹1.24 Lakh Crore
- **Ministry of Health:** ₹90,171 Crore

#### International Assistance Schemes Allocation

##### I. Scheme for Bhutan:

- Actual 2022-2023: ₹2467 crore
- Budget Estimates 2023-2024: ₹2401 crore
- Revised Estimates 2023-2024: ₹2399 crore
- Budget Estimates 2024-2025: ₹2069 crore

##### II. Scheme for Nepal:

- Actual 2022-2023: ₹434 crore
- Budget Estimates 2023-2024: ₹550 crore
- Revised Estimates 2023-2024: ₹650 crore
- Budget Estimates 2024-2025: ₹700 crore

##### III. Maldives Assistance:

- Actual 2022-2023: ₹183 crore
- Budget Estimates 2023-2024: ₹400 crore
- Revised Estimates 2023-2024: ₹771 crore
- Budget Estimates 2024-2025: ₹600 crore

##### IV. Support to International Training/Programmes:

- Actual 2022-2023: ₹480 crore
- Budget Estimates 2023-2024: ₹435 crore
- Revised Estimates 2023-2024: ₹1105 crore
- Budget Estimates 2024-2025: ₹769 crore

#### Allocations for Various Ministries and Schemes

The following allocations have been proposed for various ministries under the Interim Budget 2024:

- **Defence Ministry:** ₹6.1 lakh crore

**Reforms in the States for ‘Viksit Bharat’**

- A provision of **Rs.75,000 crore rupees as fifty-year interest free loan** is proposed to support milestone-linked reforms by the State Governments.

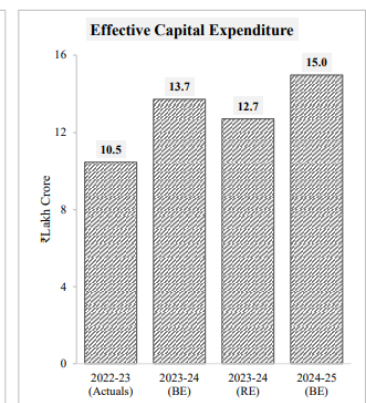
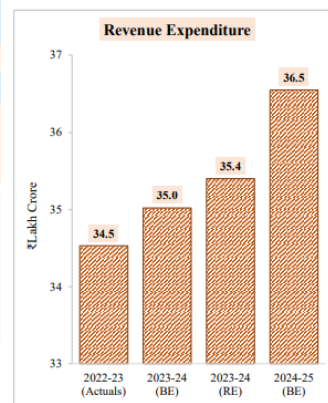
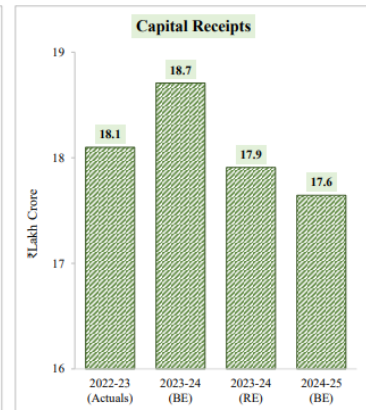
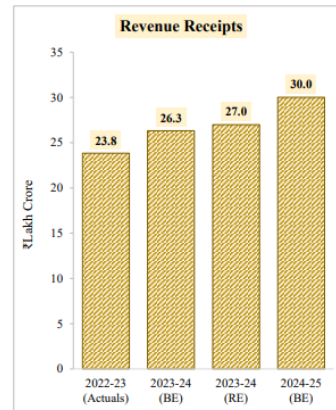
**Revised Estimates (RE) 2023-24**

- RE of the total receipts other than borrowings is Rs.27.56 lakh crore, of which the tax receipts are Rs.23.24 lakh crore.
- RE of the total expenditure is Rs.44.90 lakh crore.
- Revenue receipts at Rs.30.03 lakh crore are expected to be higher than the Budget Estimate, reflecting strong growth momentum and formalization in the economy.
- RE of the fiscal deficit is 5.8 per cent of GDP for 2023-24.

**Budget Estimates 2024-25**

- Total receipts other than borrowings and the total expenditure are estimated at **Rs.30.80 and Rs.47.66 lakh crore respectively.**
- Tax receipts are estimated at **Rs.26.02 lakh crore.**
- Scheme of fifty-year interest free loan for capital expenditure to states to be continued this year with total outlay of **Rs.1.3 lakh crore.**
- Fiscal deficit in 2024-25 is estimated to be 5.1 per cent of GDP
- Gross and net market borrowings through dated securities **during 2024-25 are estimated at Rs.14.13 and Rs.11.75 lakh crore respectively.**

**Receipts and Expenditure**



**TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE**

1. Recently, which state government police adopted Self-Balancing e-scooters For Smart Patrols?
  - Uttarakhand
2. Which state government has recently launched a ‘Mass Drug Administration’ campaign to eliminate filariasis?
  - Uttar Pradesh
3. Who has been appointed as the first woman chief secretary of Uttarakhand?
  - Radha Raturi
4. Who is the new brand ambassador of ‘Fit India Movement’?
  - Narendra Kumar Yadav



5. How many units of free electricity per month are provided under the recently launched PM Surya Ghar Muft Bijli Yojana?
  - 300
6. Recently, which country won the 2024 ICC Under-19 World Cup?
  - Australia
7. Where was the first council meeting of the Global Biodiversity Framework Fund (GBFF) held?
  - United States
8. Which Indian cricketer has been appointed as a state icon by Punjab Chief Electoral Officer for the upcoming Lok Sabha elections?
  - Shubman Gill
9. Recently, which cricketer made fastest 10000 runs in T20?
  - Babar Azam
10. Recently, where was the world's first Vedic clock installed?
  - Ujjain, Madhya Pradesh
11. Prime Minister of India recently inaugurated National Institute of Naturopathy (NIN) named 'Nisarg Gram' in which city?
  - Pune
12. Recently, which Indian food brand became the first to win an International Taste Award?
  - Prasuma
13. Which song won the song of the year at GRAMMY 2024 award?
  - Billie Eilish – What Was I Made For? from Barbie
14. Who won the Best Global Music Album GRAMMY 2024 award?
  - Indian musicians Shankar Mahadevan and Zakir Hussain's fusion band 'Shakti'-THIS MOVEMENT
15. Which Indian politician has been bestowed with the prestigious 'Chevalier de la Légion d'Honneur' (Knight of the Legion of Honour), France's highest civilian honour?
  - Shashi Tharoor
16. Who won the prestigious title of Underwater Photographer of the Year 2024?
  - Swedish photographer Alex Dawson
17. Who won The Jnanpith Award 2024?
  - GULZAR and Jagadguru Rambhadracharya
18. Who is the newly appointed chairman of TRAI?
  - Anil Kumar Lahoti
19. What was the title of the book unveiled by Chief of Defence Staff General Anil Chauhan at the Defence Literature Festival?
  - Kalam and Kavach
20. Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, launched the 2024 Commonwealth Legal Education Association (CLEA) - Commonwealth Attorneys and Solicitors General Conference in which city?
  - New Delhi's Vigyan Bhawan.
21. India's strategic collaboration with which country in defense takes a significant leap forward with the procurement of MQ-9B armed drones?
  - United States
22. What is the name of The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) launched its largest military exercise in Europe in decades?
  - Steadfast Defender 2024



23. India is set to launch its first spy satellite developed by a domestic private player, What is the name of company?
- Tata Advanced Systems Ltd (TASL)
24. What is the name of Russian cosmonaut broke the world record for the most time in space, is projected to reach 1,000 days?
- Oleg Kononenko
25. Which University has initiated two groundbreaking endeavors: the establishment of the Human DNA Bank and the imminent completion of the Wildlife DNA Bank?
- Banaras Hindu University
26. Which district hosted the launch of Bharat Rang Mahotsav in Gujarat?
- Kachchh district
27. Who directed the play 'Uttararamacharitam' at Bharat Rang Mahotsav?
- Ratan Thiyam
28. Who hosted the 36th edition of the National Book Fair?
- The NTR Stadium in Hyderabad
29. Which state reached 100 percent saturation in the 'Har Ghar Jal' scheme under the Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM), announced by Chief Minister Pema Khandu.
- Arunachal Pradesh
30. Where will the FIFA World Cup qualifiers between India and Kuwait are hosted?
- Hyderabad Telengana
31. Where is the BIMSTEC Aquatics Championship taking place?
- Delhi's Dr. Syama Prasad Mookerjee Swimming Pool Complex
32. Who has launched 'Ministry of Education - AICTE Investor Network' in New Delhi?
- Dharmendra Pradhan
33. WHO has awarded its first-ever certificates validating progress in eliminating industrially produced trans fatty acids to five countries. What is the name of these five countries?
- Denmark, Lithuania, Poland, Saudi Arabia, and Thailand
34. How much lakh crore rupees was GST collected in January 2024?
- 1,72,129 crore
35. As per Union Budget 2024, Government has allocated how much percent of GDP for Capital Expenditure Boost?
- 3.4%
36. Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman has revised estimate of the fiscal deficit for FY24 stands at what percent?
- 5.8%
37. How much many allocated for infrastructure in budget 2024-25?
- Rs.11,11,111 crore
38. Recently Harun Rashid Khan has been appointed as the nonexecutive chairman of which Small Finance Bank?
- AU Small Finance Bank Limited
39. In February 2024, who has nominated to Rajya Sabha from punjab?
- Satnam Singh
40. Which company took the crown as the world's top-selling automaker for a fourth straight year?

- Toyota Motor
- 41. List the name of three Indian scientists who won the prestigious UK's Blavatnik Awards for young scientists at UK?
  - Rahul R Nair, Mehul Malik, Tanmay Bharat
- 42. What is the mascot of the Khelo India Winter Games 2024?
  - Sheen-e She Gulmarg, Jammu & Kashmir from February 21-25.
- 43. Who is the author of the book titled 'Ek Samandar, Mere Andar'?
  - Sanjeev Joshi
- 44. Who won the Australia Open 2024 in women's singles?
  - Aryna Sabalenka (Belarus)
- 45. Indian Navy has declared 2024 as '-----'
  - 'Year of Naval Civilians'
- 46. For which age group did Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman propose to "encourage vaccination as a preventive measure against cervical cancer"?
  - 9-14 Years
- 47. Which state organized the 37th edition of Surajkund International Crafts Mela 2024?
  - Faridabad district, Haryana.
- 48. Which is the partner country of the Surajkund International Crafts Mela 2024?
  - TANZANIA
- 49. Who has been selected as a torchbearer for the 2024 Paris Olympic Games?
  - Abhinav Bindra
- 50. Who has been given the "Maha Gaurav 2024" award by the Maharashtra government?
  - Nikhil Wagh
- 51. NPCI International Payments (NIPL) has partnered with which company to enable UPI payments from the Eiffel Tower in France?
  - Lyra
- 52. The Indian Air Force will be conducting Exercise Vayu Shakti-24 on 17 February 2024 at which place?
  - Jaisalmer, Rajasthan
- 53. Who has recently received the 'Lifetime Achievement' award from the Sports Journalists Federation of India and the Delhi Sports Journalists Association?
  - PT Usha
- 54. In February 2024, which bank has raised \$300 million through its first-ever sustainable finance bond issue?
  - HDFC Bank
- 55. Olzhas Bektenov has been appointed as the new prime minister of which country?
  - Kazakhstan
- 56. Who has inaugurated the BIMSTEC Aquatics Championships 2024 in New Delhi?
  - Anurag Singh Thakur
- 57. In February 2024, which country has approved a visa-free policy for Indian citizens for a maximum stay of 15 days?
  - Iran
- 58. Who developed India's first indigenously-designed 155mm Smart Ammunition?
  - IIT Madras and Munitions India Limited
- 59. Who has released a book titled "9 Incredible Years of Haryana Government: Emergence of a New and Vibrant Haryana" in Surajkund, Faridabad?
  - Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar

60. Hage Geingob passed away recently at the age of 82. He was the president of which country?
- Namibia
61. Who has been honored with the 'Outstanding Business Woman of the Year 2023' award by the Defence Minister Rajnath Singh?
- Bina Modi
62. In February 2024, Narendra Modi has laid the foundation stone of projects worth over ₹1330 crore in which state?
- Goa
63. Dr Jitendra Singh has released the theme for the "National Science Day 2024" titled "-----"
- 'Indigenous Technologies for Viksit Bharat
64. Justice Ritu Bahri was sworn in as the first woman Chief Justice of the which High Court?
- Uttarakhand
65. Who is appointed as a Asian Development Bank (ADB) country director for India?
- Mio Oka
66. Mir Mohammad Farooq Nazki died at the age of 83. he was belongs to which field?
- Poet
67. Which countries are the guests of honor at the 2024 World Governments Summit which set to take place in Dubai from February 12 to 14?
- India, Türkiye & Qatar
68. In February 2024, Which stadium has been re-named as the Niranjan Shah Stadium?
- Saurashtra Cricket Association Stadium, Rajkot
69. Papanasam beach, which was seen in the news recently, is located in which state?
- Kerala
70. India was declared joint winners of SAFF Women's U-19 Championships with which country?
- Bangladesh
71. Who has been felicitated with the Lakshminarayana International Award?
- Pyarelal Sharma
72. What is the theme of National Productivity Day 2024 celebrated on 12 Feb?
- Artificial Intelligence (AI)- Productivity Engine for Economic Growth
73. Defence Minister Rajnath Singh has unveiled a life-size statue of General Bipin Rawat in which city?
- Dehradun

**74. Who are the candidates for Bharat Ratna in 2024?**

<b>Bharat Ratna 2024 (Posthumously)</b>	<b>6. Karpoori Thakur</b>	<b>A renowned socialist leader and former Chief Minister of Bihar</b>
<b>Bharat Ratna 2024</b>	<b>7. Lal Krishna Advani</b>	<b>A Veteran Bhartiya Janta Party Leader</b>
<b>Bharat Ratna 2024</b>	<b>8. PV Narsimha Rao</b>	<b>Former Prime Minister</b>
<b>Bharat Ratna 2024</b>	<b>9. Chaudhary Charan Singh</b>	<b>A former Prime Minister who supported the agricultural sector and upheld the rights of the farmers.</b>