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Current Affairs - English ***FEBRUARY' 2024***



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Head Office :

211-212, D-1, 2nd Floor, Virat Bhawan, Dr. Mukherjee Nagar, Delhi-110009

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“CURRENT AFFAIRS

MONTH OF FEBRUARY’ 2024”

LAW AND AMENDMENT

T N Godavarman Case and Definition of Forest

- The Supreme Court of India recently directed governments to adopt a 'broad' definition of forests, emphasizing the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980.
- Enacted to safeguard forests and resources, the Act's Section 2 defines 'forest land' broadly, encompassing reserved, protected, or government-recorded areas.
- The landmark *TN Godavarman Thirumalpad vs Union of India, (1996)* case reinforced this, interpreting 'forest' in line with its dictionary meaning.
- The Act applies to all areas resembling a forest, prioritizing conservation efforts across statutorily recognized forests in India.
- The issue of 'definition of forest' in India has the implications on forest conservation, rights of indigenous communities, and economic development.
- It is crucial that any changes to the definition of 'forest' are made with careful consideration of their potential impacts on India's rich biodiversity, the livelihoods of forest-dependent communities, and the country's commitments to climate change mitigation.

Diamond Jubilee of the Supreme Court

- The Supreme Court of India (SC) recently marked its Diamond Jubilee Celebration (75th anniversary) at the Supreme Court Auditorium in Delhi, coinciding with the 75th anniversary of the Indian Constitution.
- The event witnessed the launch of several citizen-centric information and technology initiatives aimed at enhancing judicial accessibility and transparency.
- Digital initiatives, including the Digital Supreme Court Reports (Digi SCR) and Digital Courts 2.0 and a revamped SC website were launched as a part of the event.
- The Digital Supreme Court Reports (Digi SCR) initiative aims to provide free, electronic access to Supreme Court judgments since 1950, fostering transparency and accessibility.
- Digital Courts 2.0, leveraging AI for real-time transcription of court proceedings, represents a significant leap towards efficient record-keeping and judicial processes.
- The revamped Supreme Court website, available in bilingual format (English and Hindi), offers a user-friendly interface for seamless access to judicial information.
- Efforts to enhance accessibility to justice, particularly in remote areas, were emphasised, with a focus on expanding the reach of the Supreme Court.
- Investments in physical infrastructure, such as the expansion of the Supreme Court Building Complex, were also highlighted as crucial steps towards bolstering judicial efficiency.

Uttarakhand becomes the first state to pass a Uniform Civil Code Bill.

- The Uniform Civil Code (UCC), Uttarakhand, Bill 2024, has been passed by the legislative assembly.
- It will govern and regulate the laws related to marriage and divorce, succession, live-in relationships, and matters related to it.
- Now, Uttarakhand will have a common law on marriage, divorce, land, property and inheritance for all citizens, irrespective of their religion.
- The Uniform Civil Code will not apply to the Scheduled Tribes of the state.
- Key features of Uttarakhand's Uniform Civil Code:

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- Marriage and divorce practices that come under Muslim Personal Law such as halala, iddat, and triple talaq have been banned.
- The legal age for marriage has been kept to 21 years for men and 18 years for women.
- Couples in a live-in relationship have to submit a “statement of live-in relationship” to the concerned Registrar.
- If they have spent a month without submitting such a statement, they can face a jail term of up to three months or a maximum fine of Rs 10,000, or both.
- The Bill abolished the concept of “illegitimate children”. The new law extends legal recognition to children born in void and voidable marriages.
- It explicitly bans bigamy and polygamy in the state and lists five conditions for the solemnisation of marriages.
- Marriages that occur after the enactment of the Bill have to be compulsorily registered.

Centre has amended Surrogacy (Regulation) Rules, 2022.

- It has permitted couples with medical conditions to use donor gametes.
- It has been notified that if a couple is verified to have a medical issue, then none of the gametes needs to be from a married pair.
- The most recent amendment states that the couple may use surrogacy to conceive a child, but they will need to have at least one gamete from the intended partner.
- According to the notification, single women (widows or divorcees) undergoing surrogacy must use donor sperm and self-eggs.
- Couples undergoing surrogacy were required by previous regulations to obtain both of the intended couple's gametes.
- The District Medical Board will certify if either husband or wife suffers from medical condition that requires use of donor gamete.
- A lady with a rare congenital condition was previously permitted to use donor eggs for surrogacy by the Supreme Court.
- In March 2023, the Centre issued a notification that prohibited donor gametes for couples intending to undergo surrogacy.
- In surrogacy, a woman carries a foetus and gives birth to a baby for someone else. The woman does so without having any parental rights on the child.

Center presented a new bill introduced in Lok Sabha to curb exam malpractice.

- On 5 February, a bill was introduced by the government in Lok Sabha that seeks to do away with malpractices and irregularities in competitive examinations, with provisions for a maximum jail term of 10 years and a fine up to ₹1 crore.
- Union Minister Jitendra Singh introduced the Public Examinations (Prevention of Unfair Means) Bill, 2024.
- The bill was introduced after the cancellation of a series of competitive exams.
- It includes the teacher recruitment exam in Rajasthan, CET for Group-D posts in Haryana, the recruitment exam for junior clerks in Gujarat, and the constable recruitment examination in Bihar, following question paper leaks.
- The Bill envisages bringing greater transparency, fairness, and credibility in public examination systems and assuring the youth that their honest efforts will be appropriately rewarded and their future is secure.
- Objective of the Bill:
 - The bill aims to take action against organized gangs, mafia elements, and people indulging in malpractices without targeting students. Government officials found guilty will also not be spared.
 - The Bill seeks to constitute a high-level National Technical Committee on Public Examinations which will make recommendations to make the computerized examination process more secure.
 - The committee will develop protocols for insulating digital platforms, formulate ways and means to develop fool proof IT security systems and ensure electronic monitoring of examination centers.
 - This also includes creating national standards and services for both IT and physical infrastructure to be deployed for the conduct of competitive examinations.
 - To prevent nefarious elements from using impersonation methods and indulging in paper leaks and other malpractices.

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A new name has been allotted by ECI to the Sharad Pawar faction.

- On 7 February, the Sharad Pawar-led party was officially named 'Nationalist Congress Party-Sharadchandra Pawar' by the Election Commission.
- The Sharad Pawar faction submitted three name preferences for their party in compliance with the directions of the Election Commission of India.
- In order of preference, the proposed names were “Nationalist Congress Party – Sharadchandra Pawar”, “Nationalist Congress Party – Sharadrao Pawar”, and “NCP -- Sharad Pawar.”
- This faction had also asked for the election symbol 'banyan tree' for itself.
- The poll panel approved the official name for his group/faction, allowing the upcoming elections for six Rajya Sabha seats in Maharashtra.
- In July 2023, the NCP had split from Sharad Pawar's nephew and senior leader Ajit Pawar and joined the Eknath Shinde-led government along with eight party MLAs.
- On February 6, the ECI officially recognized Ajit Pawar's faction as the Nationalist Congress Party (NCP).
- The EC said that the faction led by the Petitioner, Sh Ajit Anantrao Pawar, is the Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) and is entitled to use its name.
- NCP is entitled to use its reserved symbol "clock" for the purposes of the Election Symbols (Reservation and Allotment) Order, 1968.

Rajya Sabha has passed the Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Amendment Bill, 2024.

- The Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Amendment Bill, 2024 seeks to amend the Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1974.
- This bill proposed to decriminalise several violations and impose penalties. Initially, it will apply to Himachal Pradesh, Rajasthan, and the Union Territories.
- The Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, of 1974 established the central and state pollution control boards to prevent and control water pollution.
- As per this act, the chairman of a State Pollution Control Board is nominated by the state government.
- As per the provision of the bill, now central government will prescribe the manner of nomination and the terms and conditions of service of the chairman.
- The bill also proposed a penalty between 10000 to 15 lakh rupees for violation of rules related to the discharge of polluting matter in water bodies.

Lok Sabha passed the bill to reserve seats for OBCs in J&K local bodies.

- The Jammu and Kashmir Local Bodies (Amendment) Bill, 2024 has been passed by Lok Sabha to provide reservation for Other Backward Classes (OBC) in panchayat and municipal bodies in the Jammu and Kashmir.
- It seeks to amend certain provisions of the Jammu and Kashmir Panchayati Raj Act, 1989, the Jammu and Kashmir Municipal Act, 2000 and the Jammu and Kashmir Municipal Corporation Act, 2000 (the Acts).
- Currently, there is no reservation for OBCs in panchayats and municipalities in J&K.
- The Panchayat elections were last held in Jammu and Kashmir in 2018. The five-year term of almost 30,000 local representatives expired on January 9.
- In the interim budget, \$14 billion has been allocated to Jammu and Kashmir for fiscal 2024-25.
- Lok Sabha also passed two Bills to modify lists of SCs, STs in Jammu and Kashmir.
- The Constitution (Scheduled Castes) Order (Amendment) Bill, 2024 proposed to add the Valmiki community as a synonym for Chura, Balmiki, Bhangi, and Mehtar communities in the list of Scheduled Castes in the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir.
- The Bill will amend the Constitution (Jammu and Kashmir) Scheduled Castes Order of 1956.

Electoral bond scheme for political funding declared “unconstitutional” by the Supreme Court

- In a landmark judgment on February 15, Chief Justice of India DY Chandrachud said the scheme was arbitrary and violated citizens' right to information.
- A five-judge Constitution bench of the Supreme Court struck down the electoral bond scheme, which allowed anonymous donations to political parties.

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- On January 2, 2018, the electoral bond scheme launched by the government was seen as a solution to replace cash donations and increase transparency in political funding.
- The Supreme Court said that this scheme violates the right to information of the citizens, thereby affecting the freedom of speech and expression under Article 19(1)(a) of the Constitution.
- Chief Justice Chandrachud, while striking down the scheme introduced through the Finance Act, 2017, said information about the funding of political parties is essential for the effective exercise of voting choice.
- The electoral bonds Issuer bank, the State Bank of India (SBI), has been ordered to submit details of the political parties that have received electoral bonds since 2019 to the Election Commission of India (ECI) by March 6, 2024.
- ECI has also been asked to publish such details on its official website.
- The Supreme Court also struck down the amendments made to the Income Tax Act and the Representation of the People Act, which had made donations anonymous.
- The judgment also said that the amendment to the Companies Act allowing blanket corporate political funding was "unconstitutional".
- Before the amendment to the Companies Act in 2017, loss-making companies in India were not allowed to make contributions.
- Furthermore, the Supreme Court said that the electoral scheme would help the political party that is in power.

APPOINTMENTS

Justice Pradeep Kumar Srivastava Takes Oath as Permanent Judge of Jharkhand High Court

- Justice Pradeep Kumar Srivastava was sworn in as a permanent judge of the Jharkhand High Court
- He has been appointed as a permanent judge in the Jharkhand High Court.
- The appointment was confirmed by the Ministry of Law and Justice under Article 217(1) of the Indian Constitution.
- President favours elevation from additional judge to permanent judge.
- The appointment with effect from the date he assumes new responsibilities, as recommended by the Supreme Court Collegium on January 18.
- Procedure for appointment of Chief Justice and Judges of High Courts governed by Article 217(1).

Justice Ritu Bahri sworn in as first woman Chief Justice of Uttarakhand High Court

- Justice Ritu Bahri became the first woman Chief Justice of the Uttarakhand High Court.
- In October, Justice Ritu Bahri was appointed as the working judge of the Punjab and Haryana High Court.
- On November 2, 2023, the Supreme Court collegium recommended his nomination for the post of Chief Justice of the Uttarakhand High Court.
- Governor General Gurmeet Singh administered the oath of office to the new Chief Justice of Uttarakhand High Court.

Northern Ireland elects Irish nationalist Michelle O'Neill as first minister

- Northern Ireland elected Irish nationalist Michelle O'Neill as First Minister for the first time in a historic change on 3 February.
- The appointment of Michelle O'Neill is the result of the belated outcome of a crucial 2022 election as a sign of the Sinn Féin party's excellence in the British maritime sector.
- This nomination reflects a transformation toward a new era, which Sein Féin leaders are not just about a time of conflict, but of a struggle.
- The government structure established by the Good Friday Peace Accord of 1998 ensures equal power-sharing between British Unionists and Irish nationalists.

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Senior advocate Rajendra Prasad Gupta has been appointed as the new Advocate General of Rajasthan

- The appointment of Rajendra Prasad Gupta marks the beginning of a new chapter as the 19th Advocate General of Rajasthan, making him act as the state's legal authority.
- As the 19th Advocate General, Gupta becomes an important legal authority in Rajasthan, responsible for providing legal counsel to the state government and representing its interests in legal matters.
- The role of the Advocate General is appointed under Article 165 of the Indian Constitution, which reveals its constitutional significance, which functions to give legal advice to the state government and discharge such functions as may be specified by the governor.
- The selection of Dr. Rajendra Prasad Gupta is recognising his legal qualifications and experience, who are crucial for solving the difficulties of Rajasthan and giving sound advice to the state in legal matters.

Ahmed Awad Bin Mubarak appointed as the new Prime Minister of Yemen

- Yemen's Presidential Leadership Council on Monday appointed its Foreign Minister Ahmad Awad bin Mubarak as the country's new prime minister.
- In this incumbent role, former Prime Minister Main Abdulmalik Saeed will now serve as an adviser to the chairman of the Presidential Leadership Council.
- Bin Mubarak was abducted by the country's Iran-related Houthis while serving as Yemen's national minister in 2015.

BJP leader Nand Kishore Yadav elected Speaker of Bihar Assembly

- Nand Kishore Yadav, a senior BJP leader, has been unanimously elected as the Speaker of the Bihar Vidhan Sabha.
- The election took place after a voice vote, with no opposition.
- With a remarkable political journey, Yadav served as an MLA seven times, representing the Patna Sahib constituency.

President has appointed A S Rajeev as Vigilance Commissioner.

- A S Rajeev has been appointed as Vigilance Commissioner.
- Under the CVC Act, the Central Vigilance Commission is a three-member body with a Central Vigilance Commissioner and two Vigilance Commissioners.
- Praveen Kumar Srivastava has been serving as Central Vigilance Commissioner since May 2023.
- Central Vigilance Commission:
 - It is an apex anti-corruption government body in India.
 - It was established in 1964 on the recommendation of the K. Santhanam Committee.
 - It was granted statutory status in 2003 under the Central Vigilance Commission Act 2003.
 - The CVC Act does not lay down specific "eligibility criteria" for the appointment of commissioners.

President Murmu appoints former SC judge Justice AM Khanwilkar as Chairperson of Lokpal

- Former Supreme Court judge A M Khanwilkar was appointed as the chairperson of the anti-corruption ombudsman Lokpal nearly 2 years after the post fell vacant.
- The Lokpal has been working without its regular chief after Justice Pinaki Chandra Ghose completed his term on May 27, 2022.
- Justice Pradip Kumar Mohanty, a judicial member of the Lokpal, is currently the acting chairperson.
- Justice Khanwilkar served as a judge of the Supreme Court from May 13, 2016, to July 29, 2022.
- The Lokpal was established under the Lokpal and Lokayuktas Act of 2013.
- Its primary task is to inquire and investigate allegations of corruption against public functionaries covered under the Lokpal Act.

Jay Shah has been reappointed as chairman of the Asian Cricket Council

- Jay Shah has been reappointed as chairman of the Asian Cricket Council (ACC) for a third successive term.
- Sri Lanka Cricket president Shammi Silva proposed BCCI secretary Jay Shah's term extension for the 2nd time.

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- All the members of the ACC unanimously supported his nomination at the annual general meeting of the ACC in Bali.
- Shah first took over the role in January 2021. He replaced Bangladesh Cricket Board President Nazmul Hassan.
- Under the leadership of Shah, ACC organised the Asia Cup in the T20 format in 2022 and in the ODI format in 2023.
- Pankaj Khimji, chairman of Oman Cricket and vice-president of the ACC, congratulated Shah on his reappointment.
- It is a cricket organisation that currently consists of 25 member associations.
- It was established in 1983. It is headquartered in Colombo, Sri Lanka. It is subordinate to the International Cricket Council.

Champai Soren took oath as the new Chief Minister of Jharkhand.

- On February 2, JMM legislature party leader Champai Soren took oath as the Chief Minister of Jharkhand at Raj Bhavan in Ranchi.
- He became CM two days after Hemant Soren resigned from the post of Chief Minister and his arrest by ED.
- On 1 February, Champai Soren urged the Governor to accept his claim to form the government as soon as possible, which was without a Chief Minister since the resignation of Hemant Soren.
- Champai Soren, whose party is a constituent of the JMM-led alliance, has been given 10 days to prove his government's majority.
- The 67-year-old tribal leader took oath as the 12th Chief Minister of the state and the sixth Chief Minister from the Kolhan region of Jharkhand.
- Apart from this, in the swearing-in ceremony, senior Congress leader Alamgir Alam and RJD leader Satyanand Bhokta took oath as cabinet ministers.

Sultan Ibrahim of Johor was sworn in as the 17th King of Malaysia.

- On January 31, Sultan Ibrahim Iskandar, a billionaire from the southern state of Johor, has been appointed Malaysia's 17th king.
- He succeeded Al-Sultan Abdullah Sultan Ahmad Shah, who would return to lead his home state of Pahang at the end of his five-year tenure as king.
- In the presence of other royal families, PM Anwar Ibrahim, and cabinet members, Ibrahim Iskandar took the oath of office at the National Palace in Kuala Lumpur and signed the document of the proclamation of office in a ceremony.
- The coronation ceremony will be held later.
- Since Malaysia gained independence from Britain in 1957, Nine ethnic Malay state rulers have taken turns as kings for five-year terms under the world's only such system.
- Malaysia has 13 states, but only nine have royal families.

Ranjeet Kumar Agarwal has assumed the position of ICAI President.

- For the council year 2024-2025, Ranjeet Kumar Agarwal has assumed the position of ICAI President.
- The largest accounting organization in the world, the Institute of Chartered Accountants of India (ICAI), has elected him to serve as its 72nd President.
- The Institute of Chartered Accountants of India (ICAI) Vice-President is now Charanjot Singh Nanda, a member of the Central Council.
- Agarwal was elected to the ICAI's 23rd, 24th, and 25th Central Councils three times in a succession.
- At now, ICAI has more than eight lakh students and almost four lakh members.
- Institute of Chartered Accountants of India (ICAI):
- It was established on 01 July 1949 as a statutory body by the Chartered Accountants Act, 1949.
- It regulates the Chartered Accountancy profession in India. It is headquartered in New Delhi.

Maryam Nawaz has become 1st woman Chief Minister (CM) of West Punjab in Pakistan.

- Maryam Nawaz is the daughter of three-time Pakistan Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif.
- She said she would now not only represent a political party. She would be a Wazir-e-Ala of the entire Punjab.

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- In the elections, Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) won 137 seats in the Punjab Assembly.
- Independents backed by former PM Imran Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) won 113 seats.
- In 2017, she was featured in the BBC's 100 Women list.
- Additionally, she was included in The New York Times list of 11 Powerful Women Around the World for the year 2017.

Mio Oka appointed as ADB's Country Director for India on 5 February.

- She succeeded Takeo Konishi who has been promoted as ADB Director-General for South Asia at Manila headquarters.
- Oka will be responsible for leading ADB operations in India and fostering relationships with the government and other development partners in the country.
- Her role is to lead the implementation of ADB's Country Partnership Strategy, 2023-2027, which is designed to catalyze strong, climate-resilient, and inclusive private sector-led growth in India.
- This will be achieved through accelerated structural transformation and job creation, promoting climate-resilient green growth, and increased social and economic inclusivity.
- Since beginning operations in India in 1986, ADB has been a steadfast partner in supporting the country's development goals and economic growth.
- Currently, India is ADB's fourth largest shareholder and one of its largest borrowers since 2010.
- In 2023, ADB has committed to provide India with a sovereign loan of US\$ 2.59 billion, besides technical assistance of US\$ 16.31 million and grants of US\$ 5.25 million under the sovereign portfolio.
- The current India sovereign portfolio comprises 73 projects worth a total of US\$15.7 billion.
- ADB was established in 1966 and has 68 members.

Narendra Kumar Yadav has been appointed brand ambassador of Fit India Movement.

- Narendra Kumar Yadav, Additional Director GST, has been appointed as the brand ambassador of Fit India Movement.
- He is one of the youngest Indian Revenue Service (IRS) officers.
- He became the first civil servant to be chosen as the brand ambassador of the Fit India Movement.
- He is known for his dedication, passion, and unwavering commitment to public service.
- He has emerged as a prominent figure in the realm of health and fitness.
- FIT India Movement:
- It was launched on 29th August 2019 by the Prime Minister Narendra Modi.
- The main aim of the mission is to bring about behavioural changes and move towards a more physically active lifestyle.

Former Prime Minister of Finland Alexander Stubb became the new President of Finland.

- On 11 February, after a seven-year hiatus, Former Prime Minister, triathlete, and Europhile Alexander Stubb made a triumphant return to politics, winning the Finnish presidency in the election.
- In the counting, 98% of the votes were counted. Stubb received 51.7% of the vote while his Green Party rival, former Foreign Minister Pekka Haavisto, received 48.4%.
- This is the first election after Finland joined the NATO military alliance.
- In April 2023, Finland officially became the 31st member of the Washington-led alliance.
- On 1 March, Mr Stubb will officially assume office, replacing Sauli Niinisto.
- The head of Finland is in charge of foreign and security affairs and is the commander-in-chief of the country's armed forces.

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IMPORTANT DAYS

Indian Coast Guard Day celebrated on 1 February

- Every year, Indian Coast Guard Day is celebrated on February 1.
- This day is observed to mark the anniversary of the founding of the Indian Coast Guard on 1 February 1977 under the Coast Guard Act, 1978.
- This year, Indian Coast Guard Day is celebrating its 48th anniversary.

World Wetlands Day 2024 observed on 2 February

- World Wetlands Day is observed annually on 2 February to raise awareness about wetlands.
- The theme of World Wetlands Day 2024 is 'Wetlands and Human Wellbeing'.
- It marks the anniversary of the Convention on Wetlands, which was adopted on 2 February 1971 in Ramsar, Iran.
- On 30 August 2021, the UN General Assembly adopted a resolution that established 2 February as World Wetlands Day.
- A wetland is an area of land that is either covered with water or saturated with water. It includes mangroves, deltas, floodplains, rice-fields, coral reefs, etc.
- India has increased the number of Ramsar sites (wetlands of international importance) to 80 from the current 75 by designating five more wetlands as Ramsar sites.
- Tamil Nadu continues to have the maximum number of Ramsar sites (16 sites) followed by Uttar Pradesh (10 sites).

World Cancer Day is celebrated on February 4

- Every year on February 4, World Cancer Day is observed globally and is observed by WHO to make people aware about the disease cancer and how to cure it.
- In 2024, the theme for World Cancer Day is "Close the care gap".
- The slogan emphasizes the need to bridge the gap in access to quality cancer care.
- The focus is on uniting voices and taking action to improve access to screening, early detection, treatment, and palliative care.

World Pulses Day 2024 celebrated on 10 February

- World Pulses Day is celebrated every year to increase awareness about the nutritional and environmental benefits of pulses.
- The theme for World Pulses Day 2024 is "Pulses: nourishing soils and people."
- 10 February was proclaimed as World Pulses Day by UN General Assembly in 2019.
- Burkina Faso had proposed this day in the General Assembly. It is a landlocked country in West Africa.
- UN General Assembly announced 2016 as the International Year of Pulses.
- Pulses are also called legumes. They are considered global foods. They are grown in almost every country.
- Pulses are a rich source of protein. They are low in fat. They are rich in soluble fiber.
- They can lower cholesterol and help in controlling blood sugar. They help combat obesity.
- They help in the management of non-communicable diseases like diabetes. Their nitrogen-fixing properties improve soil fertility.

International Day of Women and Girls in Science 2024 observed on 11 February

- Every year on 11 February, International Day of Women and Girls in Science is observed.
- It is observed to raise awareness about the role of women in achieving development goals.
- This year 9th edition of International Day of Women and Girls in Science was celebrated across the world.
- The theme of International Day of Women and Girls in Science 2024 is "Women and Girls in Science Leadership, a New Era for Sustainability."
- In 2015, the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) declared 11 February as the International Day of Women and Girls in Science.

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- On 20 December 2013, the General Assembly adopted a resolution on science, technology, and innovation for development.
- It recognizes that full and equal access to and participation in science, technology, and innovation for women and girls of all ages is essential to achieving gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls.
- Since 1998, UNESCO and the L'Oréal Foundation is organizing an award ceremony that honours women scientists of exceptional talent from around the world.

World Unani Day celebrated on 11 February

- World Unani Day is celebrated once a year on February 11.
- It is celebrated in honour of Indian Unani scholar Hakim Ajmal Khan. This day marks his birth anniversary.
- He is widely thought of as the pioneer of Unani medicine in India.
- The theme of this year's World Unani Day is "Unani Medicine-One Earth, One Health".
- Hakim Ajmal Khan was born on February 11, 1868.
- Unani medicine is also known as Unani Tibb, Arabian medicine, or Islamic medicine. In Arabic, "Unani" translates to "Greek".
- World Unani Day originated in the year 2016. Ministry of AYUSH, Government of India, announced its celebration in 2016.
- It was for the first time celebrated in 2017 at the Central Research Institute of Unani Medicine in Hyderabad.

World Radio Day 2024 observed on 13 February

- World Radio Day is observed every year on 13 February to raise awareness about the importance of radio.
- The theme for World Radio Day 2024 is "Radio: A century informing, entertaining and educating".
- It is also observed to encourage access to information through radio.
- This year, the 13th edition of World Radio Day was celebrated.
- In 1895, the first radio broadcast was made by Guglielmo Marconi.
- Radio came into commercial existence in the early 1920s.
- Radio stations came into existence about three decades later and by the 1950s, radio and broadcasting systems became a common commodity throughout the world.
- In 2011, UNESCO member states declared 13 February as World Radio Day.
- In 2013, it was adopted as an international event by the United Nations General Assembly.

Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Jayanti 2024 celebrated on 19 February

- Every year on 19 February, Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Jayanti also known as Shiv Jayanti is celebrated.
- It is the birth anniversary of Shivaji, the founder of the Maratha Empire, which is celebrated throughout Maharashtra.
- In 2024, India celebrated the 394th birth anniversary of the great Maratha ruler.
- Celebrating this festival first started with Maratha ruler Mahatma Phule in Pune in 1870.
- PM Modi also paid tribute to Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj on his birth anniversary.
- Shivaji Maharaj's name was Shivaji Bhosale and he was a member of the Bhosale Maratha dynasty.
- He was born in Shivneri Fort on the Marathi Shalivahana in 1630, according to Krishna Paksha 3 of the Hindu calendar Falgun.
- He is considered one of the greatest Maratha rulers.

International Mother Language Day celebrated 21 February

- Every year, International Mother Language Day is commemorated on February 21.
- International Mother Language Day encourages multilingualism in society and attempts to preserve traditional knowledge and cultures through long-term strategies.
- The movement for International Mother Language Day started in Bangladesh.
- On 21 February 1952, some students were killed because they began the movement to make Bengali a official language in Bangladesh.

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- In 1999, UNESCO declared 21 February as International Mother Language Day at the 30th UNESCO General Conference.
- The theme for International Mother Language Day 2024 is "Multilingual education – a pillar of learning and intergenerational learning".
- The United Nations General Assembly had declared 2008 as the International Year of Languages.

Mizoram celebrates its 37th Statehood day

- Mizoram joyously observed its 37th State Day with widespread festivities throughout the state, culminating in a grand celebration.
- Aizawl's Vanapa Hall hosted the focal point of the celebrations, where citizens gathered in large numbers to commemorate the occasion.
- Governor Dr. Hari Babu Kambhampati honored the event as the Chief Guest, while Chief Minister Lalduhoma extended his presence as the Guest of Honour, adding to the significance of the day's celebrations.
- Mizoram's journey from being a part of Assam to becoming a separate entity is marked by significant historical milestones, including its establishment as a Union Territory in 1972 after being carved out from Assam.
- The formal recognition of Mizoram as a full-fledged state of India came with the adoption of the 53rd Amendment Act by the Indian Parliament in 1986. Consequently, on February 20, 1987, Mizoram officially became the 23rd state of India, marking a significant milestone in its political evolution.
- Mizoram, with Aizawl as its capital, comprises 11 districts. Governor Kaiwalya Trivikram Parnaik serves as the ceremonial head of the state, while Pema Khandu holds the position of Chief Minister, responsible for the executive administration of the state.

World Thinking Day observed every year on 22 February

- World Thinking Day is celebrated every year on 22 February.
- The theme of World Thinking Day 2024 is Our World, Our Thriving Future: Environment and Global Poverty.
- The day is celebrated by Girl Scouts, Girl Guides and other girl groups to give a platform to girls around the world to think of each other and to thank and appreciate the "Sister" Girl Scouts and Girl Guides.
- The history of World Thinking Day began when in 1926, during the Fourth World Conference of the World Guides and Girl Scouts Association, delegates from all over the world decided to meet at Camp Edith Massey in New York to create a day for Guides and Girl Scouts.
- World Thinking Day aims to strengthen and empower friendships and sisters bonds among young women.

Central Excise Day to be observed on February 24

- Central Excise Day is celebrated every year on February 24 across India.
- The day is celebrated on 24 February 1944 to commemorate the enactment of Central Excise and Salt Act.
- In India, the Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC) is responsible for administering Customs, Goods, and Service Tax (GST), Central Excise, Service Tax and Narcotics in India.
- The Customs and Central Excise/ Central GST department was established to administer customs laws.

World NGO Day 2024 celebrated on 27 February

- World NGO Day is celebrated annually on 27 February to recognize and honour all non-governmental and non-profit organizations.
- The theme of World NGO Day 2024 is "Building a Sustainable Future: The Role of NGOs in Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)."
- It was first proposed in 2010 by the Baltic Sea NGO Forum. It highlights the work of NGOs around the world.
- In 2014, the UN, EU leaders, and international organizations adopted 27th February as World NGO day.

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- It is celebrated in over 89 countries and in more than six continents.
- The Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland hosted the global inaugural event of World NGO Day on 27 February 2014 in Helsinki, Finland.
- India has more than three million non-governmental organizations (NGO). They play important roles as facilitators and partners in different sectors.

National Science Day is observed on 28 February

- National Science Day in India, celebrated annually on February 28th, honors the discovery of the Raman Effect by Indian physicist Sir C.V. Raman.
- The theme for National Science Day 2024 is "Indigenous Technologies for Viksit Bharat," highlighting the importance of homegrown innovations for the development of the nation.
- This day serves as a platform to recognize and raise awareness about the significant contributions of the scientific community towards the progress and prosperity of India.

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

UPI has been formally launched at Eiffel Tower in Paris, France

- It was formally launched at a Republic Day reception held in France.
- Indian tourists can now buy tickets for the Eiffel Tower via UPI.
- Eiffel Tower is the first merchant to offer UPI payments in France.
- France has become the first European country to accept UPI.
- India and France pledged to foster a healthy ecosystem and form partnerships in 2023 to empower their citizens and guarantee their full participation in the digital century.
- A deal was signed by France's Lyra Collect and NPCI International Payments Limited (NIPL) to deploy the Unified Payment Interface (UPI) throughout France.
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi declared that India and France have decided to adopt the UPI payment method and that it will start at the famous Eiffel Tower, while on a visit to France in July of last year.
- The UPI is India's mobile-based payment system. It allows people to make payments through a virtual payment address created by the customer.
- NIPL was incorporated on April 3, 2020 as a wholly owned subsidiary of National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI).
- NIPL is devoted to the deployment of RuPay and UPI outside of India.

Malta becomes 119th member of International Solar Alliance

- Malta announced joining the International Solar Alliance.
- The ISA aims to reduce the need for unreliable sources such as biofuels.
- The Permanent Secretary of the Maltese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Christopher Kutazar signed the ISA Framework Agreement.
- The agreement was signed in the presence of Abhishek Singh, Depository and Joint Secretary (Economic Diplomacy) in New Delhi.
- India welcomed Malta and congratulated it on joining the Solar Alliance as the 119th country.

Philippines becomes first Asian country to ratify ILO Convention

- The Philippines has taken an important step by adopting the ILO Treaty to end trade violence and harassment. This has contributed significantly to ensuring a safe and respectful work environment globally.
- The treaty prioritizes gender equality and sensitivity, acknowledging the disproportionate impact of trade violence and harassment for individuals. This has demonstrated its commitment to encouraging equitable and safe work places for all.

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- The ILO said that the Philippines laid the instruments of the set of Violence and Harassment Convention 2019 (No. 190), making the Philippines the 38th country in the world and Convention No. 190 the first Asian country.

UAE has been removed from FATF's 'grey list'.

- The Financial Action Task Force (FATF) has decided to remove UAE from its 'grey list'.
- UAE was placed under scrutiny in 2022 after FATF highlighted the risk of money laundering and terrorist financing.
- The European Union listed the UAE as a high-risk country for money laundering and terrorist financing.
- Last year, ESMA barred European banks and others from clearing trades with the Dubai Commodities Clearing Corporation.
- The fifth FATF Plenary was held under the Singapore Presidency of T. Raja Kumar in Paris on 21-23 February.
- The Financial Action Task Force (FATF) is the body for global money laundering and terrorist financing watchdog. It sets international standards that aim to prevent these illegal activities and the harm they cause to society.

London emerged as the most congested city in the world in 2023

- As per a report by the Amsterdam-based location technology specialist TomTom, London is the most congested city in the world.
- During rush hour, London lost 148 hours yearly. Commuters have to spend 37 minutes and 20 seconds in traffic on average to cover a distance of 10 km.
- Ireland's capital Dublin is the second most congested city. Here people, in 2023, spent 29 minutes 30 seconds on average to travel 10km.
- However, the average speed of 16 km/hour during rush hours in Dublin.
- Toronto is on the third spot in terms of congestion. A commuter has to spend 29 minutes on average to cover the distance of 10 km.
- Due to the average speed of 18 km/hour during rush hour, the commuters in Toronto lost 98 hours yearly.
- Bengaluru and Pune are in the sixth and seventh positions, respectively.
- In 2023, the average travel time per 10 km in Bengaluru was 28 minutes 10 seconds while in Pune a commuter has to spend 27 minutes and 50 seconds spent to cover a similar distance.
- Romania's Bucharest, the Philippines' Manila, and Belgium's Brussels at the eighth, ninth, and tenth spots, respectively.

Qatar court has released all eight former Indian Navy personnel, earlier sentenced to death

- Out of eight, seven have returned to India. Eight personnel were working for the Dahra Global Company.
- Plans are being made to return the final veteran who has been freed. They were detained in Qatar.
- Earlier, following diplomatic talks between Qatar and India, the capital punishment for the jailed ex-Indian Navy personnel was commuted to an extended prison term.
- They were put in prison in Qatar in October 2022. They were accused of spying on a submarine programme.
- In 2023, the sentence was reduced to jail term in the Dahra Global case.

Dubai will have the world's first air taxi.

- At the World Government Summit 2024, Dubai signed agreements to launch the world's first air taxi service.
- The agreements will pave the way for the deployment of a city-wide electric aerial taxi service and a vertiport network.
- Joby Aviation S4 is an innovative aircraft designed to accommodate four passengers along with a pilot.
- It is powered by four battery packs and has a maximum range of 161 km and a top speed of 321 km per hour.

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- It has Vertical take-off and landing capabilities and is ideal for urban areas.
- It will reduce noise pollution compared to helicopters. The air-taxi network will commence its operations in 2026.
- The air taxi is an important step toward a more sustainable and accessible transportation future.

World's largest single-day election concluded in Indonesia.

- Polling has been concluded for the world's largest single-day election in Indonesia.
- The General elections were held in Indonesia on 14 February 2024 to elect the President, Vice President, and People's Consultative Assembly (MPR).
- The voting took place across three time zones.
- Indonesia is the world's third-largest democracy with around 205 million voters.
- Prabowo Subianto secured victory in the presidential election. He received more than 55 per cent of the vote.
- The newly elected members of the MPR will be sworn in on 1 October 2024.

US Congress passed the Quad bill to enhance cooperation.

- The Strengthening the 'Quad' Act has been passed by the US House of Representatives.
- The legislation's main aim is to intensify cooperation between India, US, Japan and Australia in the Indo-Pacific.
- A Quad Intra-Parliamentary Working Group will be also formed. The US Secretary of State will have to submit the status of Quad's activities within 180 days.
- A strategy for bolstering cooperation has been also discussed in the Congress.
- This bill was introduced by House Foreign Affairs Committee ranking member Gregory Meeks.
- Congress states that the US should expand dialogue and cooperation through Quad.
- Quad: the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (QSD) is commonly known as the Quad.
- It is a group of India, Australia, Japan, and the United States with a commitment to work for a free, open, prosperous and inclusive Indo-Pacific region.
- In 2007, the group met for the first time on the sidelines of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean).
- It is seen as a strategic grouping to reduce Chinese domination.

World Health Organization launched the Global Initiative on Digital Health (GIDH).

- It is a digital health platform for sharing knowledge and digital products among countries.
- It was one of the three priority areas that were agreed during India's G20 presidency in 2023.
- On the occasion of launching the Global Initiative on Digital Health (GIDH), Union Health Minister Mansukh Mandaviya and India's representative to the UN Arindam Bagchi were present also.
- Global Initiative on Digital Health will be a network of networks. It will have four components- country needs tracker, country resource portal, transformation toolbox, and knowledge exchange.
- This initiative will help in democratising digital health technologies, especially for countries of the Global South.

NATIONAL NEWS

India has added five more wetlands to its list of Ramsar sites, taking the total number in India to eighty

- India now has eighty Ramsar Sites, up from seventy-five previously.
- Environment Minister Bhupender Yadav met with Dr. Musonda Mumba, Secretary General of the Ramsar Convention, who presented the five sites' certificates.
- The Environment Minister complimented Tamil Nadu and Karnataka on having their wetlands included on the Ramsar Sites list.
- The newly added wetlands are given below.

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- Magadi Kere Conservation Reserve, Ankasamudra Bird Conservation Reserve and Aghanashini Estuary from Karnataka
- Karaivetti Bird Sanctuary and Longwood Shola Reserve Forest from Tamil Nadu
- The Ramsar Convention is an international treaty. Its purpose is the conservation and wise use of wetlands.
- It was signed on February 2, 1971, in the Iranian city of Ramsar, which is located on the Caspian Sea.

UGC issued guidelines for Higher Education Institutions to provide equal opportunities to all.

- The University Grants Commission (UGC) has issued 'Guidelines to Provide Equitable Opportunity for the Socio-Economically Disadvantaged Groups (SEDGs) in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs).
- The guidelines are in line with the recommendations of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020.
- It emphasizes on accessibility, equity, and inclusivity in higher education for socio-economically disadvantaged groups.
- University Grants Commission recommended that all universities and Higher Education Institutions should follow these guidelines to improve the educational opportunities of students from socioeconomically disadvantaged backgrounds.
- UGC urged Universities and HEI to implement bridge courses, earn-while-learn schemes and outreach programmes to provide employability opportunities for students.
- UGC made mandatory to form socioeconomically disadvantaged groups (SEDGs) cell to ensure inclusive, equal, and quality higher education for students.
- The chairperson and members of the cell will nominated by the Head of the Higher Education Institution.

"Sudarshan Setu", the nation's longest cable-stayed bridge, inaugurated by PM Modi in Gujarat

- He dedicated to the nation "Sudarshan Setu," the nation's longest signature-stayed bridge, which is approximately 2.32 km long.
- The bridge at Dwarka, Gujarat, connects the mainland of Okha with the island of Beyt Dwarka.
- According to PM Modi, the nation is headed toward becoming the world's fifth-largest economy.
- Sudarshan Setu has footpaths decorated with verses from Srimad Bhagavad Gita and images of Lord Krishna on either side.
- The train electrification projects between Jetalsar and Vansjalia and Rajkot and Okha, Jetalsar and Somnath, and Rajkot were dedicated by the Prime Minister to the nation.
- At the Race Course Ground in Rajkot, Prime Minister Narendra Modi officially opened and laid the foundation stone for projects valued at over 48,100 crore rupees.
- Five new AIIMS were dedicated to the nation by the PM.
- These AIIMS are located at Rajkot (Gujarat), Bathinda (Punjab), Raebareli (Uttar Pradesh), Kalyani (West Bengal) and Mangalagiri (Andhra Pradesh).

Farmers are marching towards Delhi to demand a legal guarantee of Minimum Support Price (MSP).

- Farmers from Punjab, Haryana, and western Uttar Pradesh are marching towards Delhi to assert their demands.
- Since February 13, the 'Delhi Chalo' protest has been in full swing.
- What are the main demands of farmers?
- Farmers are moving towards Delhi with the demand for a legal guarantee for Minimum Support Price (MSP) for their produce, along with other demands.
- They also want to implement the recommendations of the Swaminathan Commission and provide pensions for farmers and agricultural labourers.
- The repeal of the Electricity Act 2020 and compensation for farmers killed in Lakhimpur Kheri.
- The withdrawal of cases against those involved in the farmers' movement.
- What is the Minimum Support Price?
- MSP is the rate at which the crops are purchased by the government from the farmers.

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2024 has been declared the 'Year of Naval Civilians' by the Indian Navy

- It has been declared to improve the administration, efficiency, and welfare of Naval civilians by addressing all aspects of civilian human resource management in a time-bound manner.
- Key focus areas towards maximizing administrative efficiency, digital initiatives, general and specific training programs, and welfare activities have been identified for implementation in 2024.
- Civilian personnel of the Navy constitute approximately one-third of the total workforce of the Indian Navy and contribute significantly to its operational effectiveness in all areas.
- Civilian personnel influence the overall performance of naval structures such as command headquarters, dockyards, material organizations, naval armament depots, Naval Armament Inspectorates, training establishments, and many other types of support units.
- However, several initiatives have been conceived and implemented in the past to enhance organizational efficiency and satisfaction levels among civilian personnel.

India's largest theatre festival 'Bharat Rang Mahotsav' started in Gujarat

- Bharat Rang Mahotsav commenced in the Kachchh district of Gujarat.
- It is a 21-day cultural event in which more than 150 plays will be showcased and workshops, and discussions will be organized.
- This festival will be organized in 15 cities across India. It will be organized at Mumbai, Pune, Bhuj, Vijayawada, Jodhpur, Dibrugarh, Bhubaneswar, Patna, Ramnagar, and Srinagar.
- In this festival, participants will gain exposure to a wider audience. It will open doors to potential collaborative ventures and will energize the global theatre landscape.
- NSD has started Rang Haat this year. It is an innovative initiative to create Asia's first global theatre market.

NITI Aayog planned the economic transformation of four cities.

- The NITI Aayog has prepared the economic transformation vision of Mumbai, Surat, Varanasi, and Visakhapatnam. It will help India to become a developed economy by 2047.
- NITI Aayog is preparing a vision document to develop India's economy of USD 30 trillion by 2047.
- The vision document comprises various aspects of development, including economic growth, social progress, environmental sustainability, and good governance.
- NITI Aayog officials have taken steps to take the GDP of the Mumbai Metropolitan Region (MMR) to USD 300 billion by 2030.
- NITI Aayog is also planning to prepare economic planning for 20-25 more cities.

The closing ceremony of SN Goenka's 100th birth anniversary addressed by PM Modi

- On February 4, PM Narendra Modi addressed the concluding ceremony of the year-long celebrations of the 100th birth anniversary of S N Goenka.
- S N Goenka was an Indian teacher of Vipassana meditation.
- Shri Modi said that Vipassana is the path of self-transformation through self-observation.
- Vipassana has become even more important in today's challenging times when youth have become victims of stress due to work-life balance, lifestyle, and other problems.
- The Prime Minister said that due to the efforts of Acharya Goenka, more than 80 countries of the world understood the importance of meditation and adopted it.
- Shri Modi appreciated the efforts of Acharya Goenka to make everyone's life peaceful, happy, and harmonious through his campaigns.
- Satya Narayan Goenka was born on 30 January 1924 and died on 29 September 2013.
- he was born in Burma to an Indian business family, then he moved to India in 1969 and began teaching meditation.

Aadi Mahotsav 2024 has been inaugurated by President Droupadi Murmu.

- On February 10, the annual National Tribal Festival, Aadi Mahotsav 2024 was inaugurated by President Draupadi Murmu in New Delhi at the Major Dhyani Chand National Stadium.
- Under the aegis of the Ministry of Tribal Affairs, TRIFED is organizing this event, which will showcase the rich diversity of India's tribal heritage.
- The Mahotsav will be organized from 10 to 18 February 2024.

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- The Mahotsav will have an extended showcase with over 300 stalls, offering a diverse display of tribal arts, handicrafts, natural produce, and delicious tribal cuisine.
- Apart from this, one thousand artisans from across the country will also participate and showcase their work.
- A separate food court has also been set up, showcasing tribal cuisine from different parts of the country.

PM Modi inaugurated India Energy Week 2024 in Goa

- Around 17 Energy Ministers from different countries are expected to participate in the event.
- More than 35 thousand attendees and over 900 exhibitors are expected to take part in the event.
- India Energy Week 2024 is India’s largest and only all-encompassing energy exhibition and conference.
- Saudi Aramco is a sponsor of the event. It is the national oil company of Saudi Arabia.
- India Energy Week 2024 is being held from 6–9 February in Goa.
- It is organized by the Federation of Indian Petroleum Industry under the aegis of the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas.
- PM also inaugurated and laid foundation stone of projects worth more than 1,330 crore rupees in a public programme.
- He inaugurated the permanent campus of the National Institute of Technology, Goa.
- He dedicated to the nation the new campus of the National Institute of Watersports.
- He also laid the foundation stone for Passenger Ropeway, connecting Panaji and Reis Magos.
- He also distributed appointment letters to 1,930 new Government recruits across various departments under the Rozgar Mela.

FSSAI has approved different amendments to streamline food safety and standards regulations

- In the meeting held under the chairmanship of Union Health Secretary Apurva Chandra, various amendments across different Food Safety and Standards Regulations were approved.
- In the meeting, the amendments were approved to do away with the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) or AGMARK certification for food products.
- According to the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, food businesses would not be required to go to different authorities for mandatory certification after the amendments are finalized.
- After the amendments are finalized, only Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) certification will be mandatory for food products.
- The Ministry said other approvals include standards of Mead (Honey wine) and Alcoholic Ready-to-drink (RTD) beverages, revision of standards of milk fat products, and standards for Haleem.
- The FSSAI has approved a comprehensive and first-of-its-kind manual of methods of analysis for ensuring regulatory compliance of food products.
- As part of standards for meat products, FSSAI will also set standards for Haleem. Haleem currently doesn’t have any set standards.
- Haleem is a dish made of meat, pulses, grains, and other ingredients.

Whole 1,643 km long Indo-Myanmar border would be fenced.

- This step will improve surveillance and control insurgencies, smuggling, and the drug trade in the area.
- At the border, people on both sides are currently allowed to enter 16 km into each other’s territory without any documents.
- Government has not fixed any deadline for completing the fencing.
- This would effectively end the free movement regime with Myanmar.
- A patrol track along the border will also be built to facilitate better surveillance.
- The withdrawal of free movement regime with Myanmar was first announced by Union Home Minister Amit Shah during a visit to Assam in January.
- Free movement regime with Myanmar has been in place since 2018.
- Ministry of Home Affairs has sent a proposal to end the free movement regime to the Ministry of External Affairs.
- Ten kilometres of the border in Moreh, Manipur, have already been fenced.

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- The implementation of two pilot projects involving fence using a hybrid surveillance system (HSS) is underway.
- With these projects, fences are going to be installed at a distance of one kilometer each in Manipur and Arunachal Pradesh.
- Furthermore, the approval has been granted for fence works spanning roughly 20 kilometres in Manipur, with work scheduled to commence shortly.
- Indo-Myanmar border (IMB) passes through Mizoram, Manipur, Nagaland and Arunachal Pradesh. It is guarded by Assam Rifles.
- Manipur has a 390 km porous border with Myanmar.
- 2,064 km of India's 3,323 km land border with Pakistan have already been fenced.
- Similarly, of the 4,096 km border with Bangladesh, 3,180 km are fully enclosed by fencing. The other 916 km are covered by both physical and non-physical barriers.

STATE NEWS

Burhanpur in Madhya Pradesh is organising annual Banana Festival from 20 January 2024.

- The two-day Banana festival is being organised in collaboration with district administration and its various departments.
- It is being organised under the one-district one-product programme (ODOP).
- The festival invites businesses, specialists, and scientists from throughout the country to explore investment potential in the region while showcasing Burhanpur's agricultural expertise.
- With 23,650 hectares under cultivation and 18,325 farmers, Burhanpur produces 16 lakh metric tonnes of bananas annually.
- Banana sales alone generate a staggering 1,700 million rupees in revenue.
- Burhanpur in Madhya Pradesh is known as the banana city of central India.

The Khajuraho Dance Festival started on 20 February 2024 in Khajuraho, Madhya Pradesh.

- This is the 50th year of celebration of the Khajuraho Dance Festival.
- Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Dr. Mohan Yadav inaugurated the festival.
- The festival will continue till 26th of this February. In the festival, renowned artists of the country will perform various classical dances like Kathak, Bharatanatyam, Odissi, and Kuchipudi.
- On the first day of this dance festival, over 1500 artists performed Kathak in Kathak Kumbh.
- The Culture Department of the Madhya Pradesh Government is organising the festival in collaboration with Ustad Alaaddin Khan Academy of Music and Arts.

World's first Vedic clock installed in Ujjain, Madhya Pradesh

- The world's first Vedic clock has been installed in Ujjain, this clock will display the Panchang, planetary positions, and Muhurat.
- The clock time will calculate from one sunrise to another. It is located on an 85-foot-high tower in Jantar Mantar, Ujjain.
- The Vedic clock is a symbol of Indian cultural heritage and it tells how precious and important our cultural heritage is.
- The clock is a symbol of scientific achievement that is taking the traditional knowledge on the path of advancement by combining it with the latest technology. It will be inaugurated by Prime Minister Modi.

Attukal Pongal festival celebrated at Attukal Bhagavathy Temple in Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala

- Attukal Pongal is a significant festival celebrated by Malayali women at the Attukal Bhagavathy Temple in Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala.
- It holds the Guinness World Record for the largest congregation of women and is often referred to as the Sabarimala of women.

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- Women prepare traditional dishes like Pongala and Payasam as offerings to the Goddess Bhagavathy during Attukal Pongal.
- The ritual of cooking these sweet dishes is a central aspect of the festival, symbolizing devotion and gratitude towards the deity.
- Attukal Pongal is celebrated annually over a period of ten days and is considered one of the most popular festivals in South Kerala. The festival attracts a large number of devotees, especially women, who gather to participate in the rituals and seek blessings from Goddess Bhagavathy.

Assam Tourism Development and Registration Bill 2024

- Assam Tourism Development and Registration Bill 2024 has been approved by the Assam cabinet.
- This bill is to regulate the tourism sector. It will be introduced in the upcoming budget session of the Assam Legislative Assembly.
- The Mising Autonomous Council Amendment Bill 2024 has also been approved by the cabinet.
- Through this bill, the number of elected members will be increased from 36 to 40 and the number of nominated members will be increased from 4 to 5.
- Assam cabinet has also approved the administrative approval of Rs 376.11 crore for the construction of a new flyover in Guwahati.
- The foundation stone of the new flyover will be laid by the Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma.

'Kaji Nemu' lemon has been designated as the state fruit of Assam.

- The fruit known as "Kaji Nemu" (citrus limon) is indigenous fruit of Assam.
- It has an oval shape. Its smooth, thin skin is typically a pale green color.
- A GI tag has already been issued to Kaji Nemu.
- Because of its culinary and therapeutic qualities, Kaji Nemu is a highly valued fruit. Its flavour is particularly acidic and strong.
- Its anti-inflammatory and digestive qualities are also well-known.
- A common component of traditional Assamese cooking is Kaji Nemu.
- The total area under Kaji Nemu cultivation is 15.9 hectares, and the yield is 1.58 metric tonnes.
- This fruit has been exported to several nations, particularly the Middle East, during the past two years.
- A product that has a specific geographical origin and is known for certain attributes or qualities is given the geographical indicator (GI) tag.

'Sadak Surakhya Force' (SSF) has been set up by the Punjab government.

- The Punjab government has set up this force to reduce road fatalities in India.
- Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Singh Mann flagged off 144 hi-tech vehicles from Jalandhar on 27 January 2024.
- Help will be available to anyone in the State by calling 112, and a vehicle will be at the location within ten minutes of receiving the call.
- Sadak Surakhya Force will be led by the Indian Hockey team's former captain and AIG traffic Gaganjit Singh.
- 144 hi-tech vehicles have been flagged off with over 1,200 police jawans.
- About 90 female drivers will also handle the steering of vehicle.
- The vehicles will cover 5,500 km of State and national highways.
- Each vehicle will cover a distance of nearly 30 kilometres.
- The vehicles have specialised equipment to check for drunken driving and overspeeding.

Uttarakhand will start India's first helicopter emergency medical service.

- Union Aviation Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia said that India's first Helicopter Emergency Medical Service (HEMS) would be launched from Uttarakhand.
- At the All India Institute of Medical Sciences in Rishikesh, a helicopter will be deployed from where it can be sent anywhere within a 150 km radius to transport people to hospitals.
- Under the project 'Sanjeevani', the HEMS service would be operated.

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- The development came a day after the recently inauguration of the newly constructed terminal building (Phase-2) at Jolly Grant Airport, Dehradun, by Scindia.
- Built at a cost of ₹486 crore, the terminal will be able to serve 3,240 passengers during peak hours and 4.7 million passengers annually.
- In December, the Uttarakhand Helipad and Heliport Policy 2023 was approved by the Uttarakhand Cabinet to address challenges in access to remote areas in the hilly regions of the state.
- The policy was proposed by the Uttarakhand Civil Aviation Development Authority (UCADA), the nodal body for the development of civil aviation infrastructure and ecosystems in the state.

UP government presented Rs 7.36 lakh crore budget for 2024-25.

- Uttar Pradesh Finance Minister Suresh Khanna presented the annual budget of Rs 7.36 lakh crore for the fiscal year 2024-25 in the state Assembly.
- Out of the total outlay, ₹24,863.57 crore has been allocated to new schemes.
- Out of the total expenditure, ₹5,32,655.33 crore has been allocated for the revenue account and ₹2,03,782.38 crore for the capital account.
- For the next fiscal, total receipts are expected to be ₹7,21,233.82 crore. It includes revenue receipts estimated at ₹6,06,802.40 crore and capital receipts of ₹1,14,531.42 crore.
- This budget is also the 'Pink budget'- with a focus on 'Matri Shakti' and women-related schemes in the state.

Maharashtra Government decided to launch 'Mukhyamantri Vayoshri Yojana'.

- 'Mukhyamantri Vayoshri Yojana' is likely to benefit 15 lakh senior citizens who are suffering from any physical or mental disability.
- These citizens above 65 years of age will be screened, and those found eligible will be paid Rs 3,000.
- With a cost of approximately Rs 480 crore, this scheme will be implemented in all the districts.
- The government has announced a support scheme with an aim to increase the confidence of depositors in cooperative societies.
- The government will create an independent entity that will pay deposits up to Rs 1 lakh in case of bankruptcy of a non-agricultural cooperative society.
- While the government has announced an initial corpus of Rs 100 crore as its contribution for this unit, the cooperative societies will also have to contribute ten paise for every Rs 100 of deposits received.
- About three crore depositors are expected to benefit from this decision.

"Dhami against drugs campaign"

- "Dhami against drugs campaign" has been launched by Uttarakhand Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami.
- It is being run by Bharatiya Janata Yuva Morcha Metropolitan Dehradun from 5th February to 10th February.
- On this occasion, T-shirts and posters related to the campaign were also released by the Chief Minister.
- Earlier, Dhami called upon the people of the state to come forward to help the government in its resolution to make the state drug-free by the year 2025.
- In addition, he organized a high-level meeting and directed the officials to rapidly involve students and colleges in the campaign to achieve the goal of "Drug-Free Uttarakhand" by the year 2025.

Gupteswar Forest in Odisha has been declared a Bio-Diversity Heritage site

- Gupteswar Forest in Koraput district has been declared the fourth biodiversity heritage site (BHS) of Odisha.
- The other three are- Mandasaru BHS in Kandhamala district, Mahendragiri BHS in Gajapati district, and Gandhamardan BHs in the Bargarh and Bolangir districts.
- It is spread over more than 350 hectares area of land. The local community traditionally worships its sacred grove.
- The Odisha Biodiversity Board has conducted the biodiversity inventory and survey.

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- It shows that 608 faunal species, including 28 species of mammals, 188 species of birds, 18 species of amphibia, 48 species of reptiles, 43 species of moths, and 141 species of butterflies, have been found in this area.
- Eight species of bats out of the total 16 species found in southern Odisha have been found in the limestone caves of Gupteswar.
- This Bio-Diversity Heritage site has 182 species of trees, 76 species of shrubs, 177 species of herbs, 69 species of climbers, 14 species of orchids, and threatened medicinal plants.

Haryana government launches 'Savera' programme

- Haryana has launched "Savera" programme for identification and prevention of successor in-patient breast cancer.
- The objective of this program is breast cancer screening by visually impaired women, which can play an important role in timely detection of breast cancer.
- The successful performance of "Saveyra" programme will be a guide for comprehensive implementation in Haryana.
- Along with Savera, Haryana has also established a National Cancer Institute at Indian Institute of Medical Sciences, Jhajjar.
- This program will significantly improve the health security of women in the state of Haryana.

Uttar Pradesh to establish its first 'turtle conservation reserve' in Sarju river

- Uttar Pradesh's forest department is set to establish a turtle conservation reserve in the Sarju River.
- Sarju River, a tributary of Ghaghra, in the Gonda district is known for "rich turtle diversity".
- A 2 km stretch of river Sarju has been proposed for the reserve. It is also rich in species of plants, birds, fish, and water snakes.
- Sarju is the only river in India where nine turtle species are found. Eight of these are listed in Schedule I of the Wildlife Protection Act.
- A management plan for an initial period of 10 years will be implemented for not only conserving turtles but also 30 species of fish and 50 species of birds.
- The management plan will also lay special emphasis on protecting the river stream from pollution.
- The population of the endangered crowned river turtle has decreased drastically in the past two decades.

Sikkim's first railway station foundation stone has been laid by PM Modi.

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi laid the foundation stone of Rangpo railway station.
- Sikkim will now be connected with a railway line. The railway will become the third mode of transportation for residents.
- The government will develop this project in three phases. In the first phase, Sevoke to the Rangpo rail project will be developed.
- In the other phase, the railway line from Rangpo to Gangtok; and in the third phase, from Gangtok to Nathula will be developed.
- The design of the Rangpo railway station will be inspired from the rich culture, heritage and architecture of Sikkim.
- The station will be a part of the under-construction 45-km rail line from Sevoke near Siliguri in West Bengal to Rangpo in Sikkim
- The Sevoke-Rangpo section of the Northeast Frontier Railway will have the capacity to handle 25 tons and trains can run at a maximum speed of 110 kmph.

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SPORTS

Australian Open 2024

- The 2024 Australian Open was held at Melbourne Park, Victoria, Australia from 14–28 January 2024.
- This was the 112th edition of the Australian Open.
- **Men's Singles Winner:**
 - ✓ Italy's young tennis player Jannick Sinner won the men's singles title at the Australian Open 2024 by defeating Russia's Daniil Medvedev.
- **Women's Singles Winner:**
 - ✓ Belarus's Aryna Sabalenka won her second consecutive Grand Slam title by defeating China's Zheng Qianwen in the Australian Open final.
 - ✓ Sabalenka is the first woman to win consecutive Australian Open titles since Victoria Azarenka in 2012 and 2013.
- **Men's Doubles Winner:**
 - ✓ In the Australian Open 2024, India's famous tennis player Rohan Bopanna and Australia's Matthew Ebden won the men's doubles title.
- **Women's Doubles Winner:**
 - ✓ Taiwan tennis players Hsieh Su Wei and Belgium's Elise Mertens defeated Latvian-Ukrainian pair Jelena Ostapenko and Lyudmyla Kichenok to win the women's doubles title at the Australian Open 2024.
 - ✓ Su Wei, 38, has become the second oldest woman to win a Grand Slam doubles title after America's Lisa Raymond.
 - ✓ Su Wei and Mertens together won the women's doubles title for the first time in the Australian Open.
- **Mixed doubles winners:**
 - ✓ Taiwan's Hsieh Su-Wei and Poland's Jan Zielinski won the Australian Open mixed doubles title with a thrilling win over Desirae Krawczyk of the United States and Neal Skupski of Britain.

U19 World Cup 2024

- Australia won the 2024 ICC Under-19 World Cup by defeating India by 79 runs in the final match on February 11, 2024 at Willowmoore Park, Benoni, South Africa.
- This is Australia's fourth ICC Under-19 World Cup victory, and the third consecutive time they defeat India in the final.
- The 2024 Under-19 Cricket World Cup ran from January 19 to February 11, 2024, and used a limited-overs (50 overs) format.

Indian women's team wins Badminton Asia Team Championship title

- The Indian women's team created history by winning the Badminton Asia Team Championships title on 18 February.
- Indian women's badminton team clinched the Badminton Asia Team Championship title. The final was won 3–2 against Thailand.
- Under the leadership of PV Sindhu, the Indian team won the title by defeating top-seeded teams like China, Japan, and Thailand.
- 17-year-old Anmol Kharb made a crucial contribution to make India victorious in the final.

FIFA World Cup 2026

- The schedule of the FIFA World Cup 2026 has been released, which will be jointly hosted by the United States, Canada, and Mexico.
- The Estadio Azteca will be held at an important stadium located in Mexico City, in which the Mexico team will have their preliminary match.
- The final of this unique edition will take place on July 19, 2026, in New York, New Jersey.
- A total of 104 matches will be played across 16 host cities across 48 teams.

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- This will be the first time Canada has hosted the FIFA World Cup, while the USA will host it for the second time in 1994.
- Miami will hold the third-place game, while Dallas and Atlanta have ensured semi-final rights.

R Ashwin becomes first Indian bowler to take 100 Test wickets against England

- Ravichandran Ashwin becomes the first Indian bowler to claim 100 Test wickets against England, achieving the milestone during the fourth Test in Ranchi.
- Ashwin dismissed Jonny Bairstow to reach the landmark, with a full-length delivery that led to a successful DRS decision overturning the initial not-out call.
- Additionally, Ashwin joins Ian Botham as the second fastest cricketer to achieve the double of 1000 runs and 100 wickets against any opposition, achieving the feat in just 23 Tests against England.

Agni Chopra hits four centuries to make historic Ranji Trophy debut

- Agni Chopra achieves a historic feat by becoming the first batter to score centuries in his first four first-class games.
- He made his debut for Mizoram in the Ranji Trophy Plate League.
- Chopra, aged 25, is the son of film critic Anupama Chopra and filmmaker Vidhu Vinod Chopra.
- His impressive scores include 105, 101, 114, 10, 164, 15, 166, and 92 in his first four Ranji games.

Khelo India Games

- Maharashtra won the overall championship for the fourth time in six editions of the Khelo India Games.
- On 31 January, the 6th edition of the Khelo India Games concluded.
- Maharashtra won a total of 158 medals, including 57 gold, 48 silver, and 53 bronze.
- Host Tamil Nadu finished second with a total of 97 medals in the medal tally, including 38 gold, 20 silver, and 39 bronze.
- Haryana stood third with 35 gold, 22 silver, and 46 bronze.
- In the boys' gold medal match in the football final, Meghalaya defeated Punjab 2-0 and the bronze medal went to Jharkhand, Odisha.
- The Khelo India Youth Games were held at the Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium in Chennai from January 19 to 31.
- This was the first time the Khelo India Youth Games were held in South India.

Indian shuttler Raksha Kandasamy wins Italian Junior Singles title

- Indian shuttler Raksha Kandasamy won the Italian Junior Singles title, defeating Ananya Agarwal 21-14, 21-12 in the final with her effortless strategy.
- The defence won the title, beating the high players in the competition held on February 23-25 in Milan, Italy.
- They didn't lose any games from 64 to winning the title, which praises their performance.

Drass Warriors won the 15th CEC Ice Hockey Cup Championship.

- In a thrilling encounter at the Khree Sultan Choo Ice Hockey Rink, Kargil in Ladakh, the Drass Warriors won the 15th CEC Ice Hockey Cup Championship.
- They achieved a spectacular 7-goal victory against United Chiktan.
- Wasim Bilal earned the prestigious titles of Man of the Series and Man of the Match.
- The District Youth Services and Sports Department organized the tournament.
- 31 men's teams and 4 women's teams from Kargil participated in the tournament.
- In women, Bodhkhharbo women's team also won the Women's Cup by defeating Wakha Mulbkeh.
- On the occasion, plans to set up ice hockey rinks at the block and village levels were also announced, with a focus on completing an international all-weather ice hockey rink, to further promote the sports.

Sports Minister Anurag Singh Thakur launched the 1st BIMSTEC Aquatics Championship.

- The BIMSTEC Aquatics Championships is being held for the first time at Delhi's Dr. Syama Prasad Mookerjee Swimming Pool Complex from 6th February to 9th February 2024.

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- A total of 39 medals will be given out across three sporting events. More than 268 athletes from various BIMSTEC member countries will participate in the event.
- Union Sports Minister Anurag Singh Thakur along with dignitaries from visiting countries attended the opening ceremony.
- The event was initially proposed for the year 2021 but it was postponed to 2024 due to the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The announcement of the tournament was made by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi during the 4th BIMSTEC Summit in 2018.
- Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC):
- It is an international organization of South Asia and Southeast Asian countries.
- Its members are Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Myanmar, Nepal, Sri Lanka, and Thailand.
- It was formed on 6 June 1997 through the Bangkok Declaration.
- Its headquarters is located in Dhaka, Bangladesh.

Sumit Nagal won the Chennai Open ATP Challenger title.

- On 11 February, India's Sumit Nagal won the Chennai Open ATP Challenger title win over top seed Luca Nardi of Italy at the SDAT Tennis Stadium in Chennai.
- He became the first Indian to win a men's singles event at the Chennai Open ATP level event.
- Earlier, Leander Paes in 1996, Somdev Devvarman in 2009, and Yuki Bhambri in 2018 were defeated in the final.
- Additionally, Nagal received 100 ATP points and US\$18230 (equivalent to Rs 15.13 lakh), taking him into the top 100 ranking in the world.
- Luca Nardi got 10730 US dollars, i.e. Rs 8.90 lakh, and 60 ATP points.
- This is Nagal's fifth career ATP Challenger singles title and his second title on Indian soil, more than six years after winning the Bengaluru Open Challenger in 2017.
- In the doubles title, the Indian pair Ramkumar Ramanathan and Saketh Myneni won by defeating Niki Kalianda Poonacha/Ritvik Chaudhary Bollipalli on 10 February.
- The Chennai Open ATP Challenger was hosted in collaboration with the Government of Tamil Nadu and the Sports Development Authority of Tamil Nadu.

United World Wrestling lifts suspension on India.

- United World Wrestling lifted the suspension on the Wrestling Federation of India.
- The United World Wrestling (UWW) reviewed the suspension of WFI and decided to lift the ban.
- United World Wrestling (UWW) also directed that no discriminatory action against Bajrang Punia, Vinesh Phogat and Sakshi Malik for protest.
- On 23rd August 2023, United World Wrestling imposed a ban on the Wrestling Federation of India.
- WFI has assured UWW that all wrestlers will be allowed to participate in all WFI competitions without any discrimination.

AWARDS

Grammy Awards 2024

- The 66th Annual Grammy Awards 2024 were held in Los Angeles.
- The first Grammy Awards ceremony was held on May 4, 1959.
- It is an award presented by the Recording Academy to recognize achievement in the music industry.
- The winners of the 66th Grammy Awards are as follows:
- Indian musicians Shankar Mahadevan and Zakir Hussain's fusion band 'Shakti' bagged the Grammy's award for 'Best Global Music Album'.
- Zakir Hussain also secured the 'Best Global Music Performance' Grammy for his contribution to 'Pashto'.
- The top Grammy Awards
- ✓ Album of the year - Taylor Swift, Midnights

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- ✓ Record of the year - Miley Cyrus, Flowers
- ✓ Song of the year- Billie Eilish, What Was I Made For?
- ✓ Best new artist - Victoria Monét
- ✓ Taylor Swift becomes the first performer to win the prize for album of the year four times.
- ✓ South African singer Tyla made history by picking up the first ever award for best African performance.

Bharat Ratna

- Former Prime Ministers PV Narasimha Rao and Chaudhary Charan Singh, as well as agricultural scientist MS Swaminathan, will receive the Bharat Ratna.
- Chaudhary Charan Singh served as the sixth Prime Minister of India. He was sworn in on July 28, 1979, but stepped down 170 days after his government couldn't prove his majority.
- He formed the Bharatiya Kranti Dal (BKD), which later merged with the Samyukta (United) Socialist Party to form the Bharatiya Lok Dal (BLD).
- Pamulaparti Venkata Narasimha Rao served as the 10th Prime Minister of India from June 21, 1991, to May 16, 1996. He is known for the economic reforms of 1991.
- The 'Father of the Green Revolution', Dr. Swaminathan, played a key role in changes introduced in farming in the 1960s and '70s.
- The reforms in agriculture helped India achieve self-reliance in agriculture.
- Earlier, the government had announced giving Bharat Ratna to LK Advani and socialist icon Karpoori Thakur.

70th Dadasaheb Phalke Award

- The Dadasaheb Phalke Award is India's highest award in the field of cinema.
- It is presented annually at the National Film Awards ceremony by the Directorate of Film Festivals, an organisation set up by the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting.
- The recipient is honoured for their "outstanding contribution to the growth and development of Indian cinema.
- The Dadasaheb Phalke International Film Festival Awards 2024 were held in Mumbai.
- Around 40 individuals were honoured for their exemplary contributions towards the growth and development of Indian cinema.
- The film "Jawan" won the award for Best Film, while "12th Fail" received the Best Film (Critics) award.
- Shah Rukh Khan was honored as the Best Actor for his role in "Jawan," while Rani Mukerji received the Best Actress award for "Mrs Chatterjee vs Norway."
- Sandeep Reddy Vanga was recognized as the Best Director for the film "Animal."
- Bobby Deol was awarded the Best Actor in a Negative Role for his performance in "Animal."
- The Best International Feature Film award went to "Oppenheimer," and "Farzi" won the award for Best Web Series.

Shashi Tharoor receives France's highest civilian award

- A distinguished writer and former Union Minister Shashi Tharoor was awarded France's highest civilian honour, "Chevalier de la legion d'Honneur" during a ceremony held at the French Embassy.
- The prestigious honour was bestowed upon Tharoor by French Senate President Gérard Lärcher in honour of his significant contribution to literature and public service.
- Tharoor's outstanding achievements as a prolific writer, coupled with his tenure as a Member of Parliament representing Thiruvananthapuram for the Congress Party, earned him this esteemed recognition from the French government.

Three young Indian scientists win prestigious UK award

- Three young Indian scientists, Rahul R Nair, Mehul Malik, and Tanmay Bharat have received the prestigious Blavatnik Prize in Britain.
- The Blavatnik Prizes recognize the outstanding achievements and contributions of early-career scientists in a variety of fields.
- The award ceremony will take place at a black-tie gala event in London on February 27.

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- The total grant amounted to £480,000, supporting promising researchers such as Nair, Malik and Bharat.
- Awarded for his work in materials physics, Rahul R Nair has developed innovative membranes using 2D materials with potential applications in energy-efficient separation and filtration.
- Professor Mehul Malik's research in quantum physics focuses on harnessing high-dimensional entanglements for secure quantum communication over long distances
- Both Bharat and Malik will receive the grant, along with other awardees, to further their research endeavours.

Jnanpith Award will be honoured to Gulzar and Rambhadracharya for 2023.

- On February 17, the Jnanpith selection committee announced, Noted Urdu poet Gulzar and Sanskrit scholar Jagadguru Rambhadracharya have been named as recipients of the 58th Jnanpith Award.
- 89-year-old Sampurna Singh Kalra, better known as Gulzar, is known for his work in Hindi cinema and is considered one of the finest Urdu poets of this era.
- Previously, Gulzar had received the Sahitya Akademi Award for Urdu in 2002, the Dadasaheb Phalke Award in 2013, the Padma Bhushan in 2004, and at least five National Film Awards for his work.
- Jnanpith Award established in 1961, the award is a literary award that is presented every year by the Bhartiya Jnanpith for outstanding contribution to literature.
- The award is given for literary work in 22 "scheduled languages" recognised in the Indian Constitution.
- Under this award, a prize of Rs 21 lakh, a statue of Vagdevi, and a citation is given.
- The first award was presented in 1965 to G. Sankara Kurup.

Business Woman of the Year - 2023' Award

- Defence Minister Rajnath Singh honoured Dr. Bina Modi with the 'Outstanding Business Woman of the Year - 2023' Award.
- Dr. Bina Modi was presented with the award at a conference by the Indo-American Chamber of Commerce.
- The conference was on 'Strengthening Indo-US Relationship in Amritkal-Aatmanirbhar Bharat'.
- The award recognizes Dr. Bina Modi's remarkable contributions to the industry.
- Her contributions place her among the few women chairpersons of Fortune500 and ET500 India companies.
- Dr. Bina Modi is the chairperson of Modi Enterprises.

President Droupadi Murmu conferred 'Jeevan Raksha Medal' to a constable of Railway Protection Special Force

- President Droupadi Murmu conferred the prestigious 'Jeevan Raksha Medal' to Shri Shashikant Kumar, Constable of Railway Protection Special Force (RPSF) for the year 2023 on the occasion of Republic Day 2024.
- Her unparalleled courage, thinking and quick action in saving the life of a woman railway passenger earned her this prestigious recognition.
- The 'Jeevan Raksha Medal' is a testimony to Shri Shashikant Kumar's exemplary courage and unwavering commitment towards public safety.
- The 'Jeevan Raksha Medal' is a testimony to Shri Shashikant Kumar's exemplary courage and unwavering commitment towards public safety.

NIMHANS, Bengaluru, received the WHO Nelson Mandela Award

- The National Institute of Mental Health and Neuro Sciences (NIMHANS), Bengaluru, received the Nelson Mandela Award for Health Promotion in 2024.
- For 2024, the award has been jointly presented to Professor Bontle Mbongwe of Botswana and NIMHANS.
- NIMHANS received the award for its dedication and outstanding contributions in promoting mental health and well-being.
- It has played a key role in the field of mental health and neurosciences.

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- It has started and implemented avant-garde mental health programs that fulfil the needs of diverse populations.
- The Nelson Mandela Award for Health Promotion was started by WHO in 2019.
- It recognizes individuals, institutions, and governmental or non-governmental organizations that make remarkable contributions to health promotion.

At the Ice Palace on the Jungfrau, Switzerland Tourism honoured Neeraj Chopra with a plaque.

- He has been bestowed a high honour at Jungfrauoch, renowned as the 'Top of Europe.'
- He was honoured with a plaque unveiled in the Ice Palace, joining illustrious athletes on the Wall of Fame.
- Neeraj Chopra will be inducted into the Wall of Fame of Jungfrau Railways.
- The Wall of Fame in Jungfrauoch is evidence of tenacity and the quest for greatness.
- Neeraj Chopra gave the Ice Palace his javelin as a gift. He had already given a javelin to the Swiss Olympic Museum.
- A wall of fame is a wall containing plaques commemorating notable individuals.
- The Jungfrauoch is a saddle connecting the Jungfrau and the Monch.
- The Jungfrau is one of the main summits of the Bernese Alps. The Bernese Alps are a mountain range of the Alps.

KPP Nambiar Award for 2024

- IEEE Kerala Section has given the KPP Nambiar Award for 2024 to ISRO Chairman S Somanath.
- The award is named after KPP Nambiar, founder-chair of IEEE Kerala Section.
- It is an annual award. It is instituted to honour individuals in Kerala.
- They are awarded for their significant contributions to the IEEE vision of advancing technology for humanity.
- Somanath was selected for his contributions in steering Chandrayaan-3, ISRO's lunar exploration programme.
- Institute of Electrical and Electronic Engineers (IEEE) Kerala Section has given the Amarnath Raja Humanitarian Technology Award to Jawahara Fathima and team, MA College, Kothamangalam.
- They have been awarded for the project 'Light for lives'.
- Outstanding Woman Engineer Award has been to Athuladevi S, Deputy Director, Avionics, VSSC.

National Creators Awards announced by the government for new age influencers.

- 'National Creators Awards' announced by the government to recognize new age influencers and creators and celebrate India's digital creator economy.
- The 'National Creators Awards' aims to highlight the diverse voices and talents shaping India's development and cultural narrative, driving positive social change, and fostering innovation and creativity in the digital sector.
- The National Creators Awards, which honour digital innovators and content creators for their significant contributions to India's digital ecosystem, have been announced by MyGov India.
- The award recognizes exceptional creativity and innovation across more than 20 categories, including storytelling, social change advocacy, environmental sustainability, education, gaming, and more.
- The 'Disruptor of the Year' award is given to a creator who has challenged the status quo by bringing significant change or innovation in his or her field.
- The 'Celebrity Creator of the Year' recognizes a high-profile creator who has leveraged their celebrity status to influence positive change and set an example for creative and influential online content.
- The 'International Creator Award' honors foreign-based creators who are helping enhance India's culture and soft power.
- The 'Tech Creator Award' is for those who uncover the secrets of technology while providing insights, reviews, and recommendations on the latest gadgets and innovations.
- The selection process involves a combination of the nomination phase, screening of nominations, followed by public voting, and jury review.
- The winners will be announced based on a combination of jury and public votes.
- "The aim of the National Creators Awards is to inspire, recognise, and celebrate the transformative potential of digital media in building more inclusive, participatory, and empowered societies."

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INDEX AND REPORTS

India steps down to 85th place in the world's most powerful passports ranking.

- France secured the top spot in The Henley Passport Index for 2024.
- Whereas India's passport ranking has slipped one place compared to last year, from 84th to 85th.
- The Henley Passport Index ranked countries based on the strength of their passports.
- France is leading the list in 2024, with its passport offering visa-free access to 194 countries.
- Along with France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Singapore, and Spain are also among the top-ranked countries.
- Pakistan remains at 106th position like 2023, while Bangladesh has slipped from 101st to 102nd.
- Henley Passport Index:
 - It was launched in 2006. The index covers 199 passports and 227 travel destinations.
 - It is based on the data collected from the International Air Transport Association (IATA).
 - The Index's scoring system was developed to give users a nuanced, practical, and reliable overview of the power of their passport.
- Each passport is scored on the total number of destinations the holder can access visa-free.

1.41 million new cancer cases have been reported in India in 2022

- The World Health Organization (WHO) released the latest estimates of the global burden of cancer released on February 1, 2024.
- Globally, the number of new cancer cases has increased by 20 million.
- 1,413,316 new cancer cases have been reported in India in 2022. Out of this, 691,178 are men and 722,138 are women.
- Breast cancer had the highest number (192,020) of new cases in India. It accounts for 13.6 per cent of all patients.
- Breast cancer was followed by lip and oral cavity (143,759 new cases, 10.2 per cent), cervix and uterine (127,526 new cases, 9 per cent), lung (81,748, 5.8 per cent), and oesophageal cancers (70,637 new cases, 5.5 per cent).
- Lung cancer with 2.5 million new cases is the most common occurring cancer in the world.
- Female breast cancer ranked second (2.3 million cases, 11.6 per cent), followed by colorectal cancer (1.9 million cases, 9.6 per cent).
- 9.7 million people have died around the world due to cancer in 2022. 916,827 cancer deaths were reported in India alone in 2022.
- Globally, India accounted for 40 per cent of deaths that occurred due to cervical cancer.
- By 2050, it is anticipated that the nations with the highest HDI will have had additional 4.8 million new cancer cases.

Mukesh Ambani has secured the second rank in the Brand Guardianship Index 2024.

- Mukesh Ambani has secured the top position among Indians and second globally in the Brand Guardianship Index 2024.
- Mukesh Ambani with a score of 80.3 is ahead of Microsoft's Satya Nadella, Sundar Pichai of Google, Apple's Tim Cook, and Tesla's Elon Musk.
- Huateng Ma of China-based Tencent with a BGI score of 81.6 has secured the top position in the ranking.
- The 2024 survey highlighted Ambani's leadership in the 'Diversified' conglomerates.
- N Chandrasekaran, chairman of Tata Sons climbed from eighth to fifth place in the 2023 ranking.
- Anish Shah of Mahindra & Mahindra secured the sixth position while Salil Parekh of Infosys secured the 16th position.
- The Brand Guardianship Index recognises CEOs who effectively build business value while considering the interests of all stakeholders.

One in five of the world's migratory species is at risk of extinction.

- According to a United Nations report, more than a fifth of the world's migrating species are at risk of extinct.

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- Climate change and human encroachment are the main threats to the world's migratory species.
- The report recommended what governments need to do to tackle the threats to migratory species.
- Human activities, including hunting, fishing, and other forms of overexploitation, impacted 70% of the species on the U.N. list.
- Habitat loss affected up to 75% of the species. Of the 1,189 species covered by a 1979 U.N. convention to protect migratory animals, 44% of them number has declined.
- The numbers are based on assessments and data provided by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) as well as the Living Planet Index.
- The report urged the government to avoid disrupting habitats and migration paths while creating dams, pipelines or wind turbines.

India will become World's Biggest Oil Demand Growth Driver by 2030

Poverty has come down to below 5% in India: NITI Aayog CEO

- NITI Aayog CEO B V R Subrahmanyam said that People are becoming prosperous in rural and urban areas.
- He said that as per the latest consumer expenditure survey, poverty has come down to 5%.
- The National Sample Survey Office (NSSO) released data on household consumption expenditure for the year 2022-23.
- According to this data, the per capita monthly household expenditure has become doubled in 2022-23 as compared to 2011-12.
- This survey has kept people in 20 different categories and the average per capita monthly expenditure for all categories stood at Rs 3,773 in rural areas and Rs 6,459 in urban areas.
- If the trend continues then it might become possible that urban and rural consumption become the same in the coming years.
- Consumption in rural areas is growing faster than in urban areas. The gap was 84 per cent in 2011-12 and has come down to 71 per cent in 2022-23.
- As per the NSSO survey, consumption of cereals and food has decreased. In rural areas, the consumption of cereals has decreased.
- Consumption of cereals and food in urban areas has also decreased as a share in the average MPCE from six per cent in 2011-12 to less than four per cent now.
- In food, people are drinking more milk, eating fruits and more vegetables.

BANKING, ECONOMY AND FINANCE

RBI decided to keep the repo rate unchanged at 6.5 per cent for the sixth consecutive time.

- In the Reserve Bank of India's Monetary Policy Committee, the repo rate was kept unchanged at 6.5 per cent. The decision was taken by a majority of 5-1.
- The repo rate was last changed in February 2023 when it was increased from 6.25 per cent to 6.5 per cent.
- The Marginal Standing Facility rate has also been kept unchanged at 6.75 per cent and the Standing Deposit Facility rate has been kept at 6.25 per cent.
- Equated monthly instalments (EMIs) on home, car and other loans will remain unchanged.
- Retail inflation reached to a four-month high of 5.69 per cent in December 2023.
- For 2024-25, the inflation target will remain at 4.5% in Q1; 4 per cent in Q2; 4.6 per cent in Q3; and 4.7 per cent in Q4.
- The real GDP growth for 2024-25 has been projected at 7 per cent.

Japan fell into recession and lost its position as the world's third-largest economy.

- After declining in the last quarter of 2023, Japan's economy is now the world's fourth largest and fell behind Germany.

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- According to Cabinet Office data on real GDP released on 15 February, the government reported that the economy shrank by an annual rate of 0.4% from October to December, although it grew by 1.9% for the whole of 2023.
- It declined by 2.9% in July-September. Contraction in two consecutive quarters is considered an indicator that an economy is in a technical recession.
- Until 2010, Japan's economy was the second largest when it was overtaken by China.
- In 2023, Japan's nominal GDP totaled \$4.2 trillion, while Germany's was \$4.4 trillion or \$4.5 trillion, depending on currency conversion.
- The weak Japanese yen was a major factor in the decline to fourth place, as nominal GDP is compared in dollar terms.
- The US remains the world's largest economy with a GDP of \$27.94 trillion in 2023.
- India's wealth is about \$3.7 trillion but it is growing at a fast rate of about 7%.

India Ratings Forecasts GDP Growth to Moderate to 6.5% for FY25

- India Ratings forecasts a moderation in GDP growth to 6.5% for FY25, slightly lower than the Reserve Bank of India's estimate of 7%, citing sustained government capital expenditure and healthy corporate performance as positive indicators for economic recovery.
- The agency predicts headline retail inflation to be at 4.8% for FY25, 30 basis points higher than RBI's projection, with particular emphasis on a discrepancy in the third quarter where India Ratings forecasts 5.5%.
- Private final consumption expenditure is expected to grow by 6.1% in FY25, up from 4.4% in FY24, but caution is expressed regarding a skewed consumption trend favoring upper-income households, indicating the need for broader-based consumption growth strategies.

Mineral Production rose by 5.1% in December 2023.

- In December 2023, mineral production has grown by 5.1% as compared to December 2022.
- For the period April to December 2023-24, the cumulative growth of Mineral Production was 8.5 per cent higher than the corresponding period of last year.
- Magnesite, Lignite, Limestone, Coal, Natural Gas, Zinc, Manganese, Lead, Copper and Bauxite have shown positive growth during December 2023.
- Production level of important minerals in December 2023 were: Coal 929 lakh, Lignite 40 lakh, Petroleum (crude) 25 lakh, Iron ore 255 lakh, Limestone 372 lakh tonnes.
- Petroleum (crude) (-1.0%), Gold (-29.9%), Chromite (-30.8%), Phosphorite (-31.2%) and Diamond (-74.4%) showed negative growth in December 2023.

India expected to grow faster at 6.2% in FY25: OECD

- The OECD in its latest report has raised India's economic growth outlook to 6.2% of the projected growth relevance for the 2024-25 financial year, higher than the earlier estimated growth of 6.1%.
- This positive change follows a strong performance in the 2022-23 financial year.
- However, the growth rates forecasted for the coming financial years indicate a gradual moderation.
- Real GDP growth is being decimated due to weakness in the international economic outlook and inauspicious weather conditions.
- Despite this, the growth in services exports and the continued public configuration will support the economy.
- In terms of managing inflation, the RBI is expected to reduce interest rates regularly from the second half of 2024.

IMF upgrades India's GDP growth rate to 6.7 percent for current financial year

- IMF has upgraded India's GDP growth rate to 6.7 percent for the current financial year, which is 40 basis points higher than its previous forecast of 6.3 percent.
- In its latest World Economic Outlook report, IMF also raised India's upward medium-term GDP growth to 6.5 percent for the years 2025 and 2026, marking a 20 basis point upgrade from its October 2023 forecast.
- The upgraded growth estimates are attributed to strong public investment and positive labor market outcomes in India.

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- IMF projects a narrowing of India's current account deficit projection for the financial year 2024 from 1.8 percent of GDP to 1.6 percent.
- India continues to be recognized as the fastest-growing economy among the major economies of the world, maintaining its growth momentum from the previous financial year, where GDP expanded by 7.2 percent.

DEFENCE

DRDO successfully conducted flight trials of High-speed Expendable Aerial Target 'ABHYAS'.

- Defence Research & Development Organisation (DRDO) successfully conducted four flight trials of High-speed Expendable Aerial Target (HEAT) – ABHYAS from the Integrated Test Range, Chandipur in Odisha.
- Flight tests were conducted with four different mission objectives in the modified powered configuration. A single booster designed by Advanced Systems Laboratory, Hyderabad was used for this.
- The objectives like the safe release of the booster, launcher clearance and attaining the required end-of-launch velocity have been achieved.
- Various parameters like required endurance, speed, manoeuvrability, altitude and range were successfully validated during the flight trials.
- ABHYAS has been designed by DRDO's Aeronautical Development Establishment (ADE). It has been designed for autonomous flying with the help of an autopilot indigenously made by the ADE.
- It has a Radar Cross-section, Visual and Infrared augmentation system required for weapon practice.
- It has a laptop-based ground control system with which the aircraft can be integrated and perform pre-flight checks, in-flight data recording, post-flight replay and post-flight analysis.

Visakhapatnam to host 12th edition of Milan naval exercise

- The 12th edition of the MILAN naval exercise will be organized from February 19 to 27 in Visakhapatnam. More than 50 countries will participate in the exercise.
- The main objective of the exercise is to ensure the safety of maritime trade for the benefit of all stakeholders.
- This exercise will provide a platform for the navies of participating countries to collaborate and share ideas.
- The Harbour Phase will take place from February 19 to 23. It will witness a series of events, including the International City Parade, International Maritime Seminar, Subject Matter Expert Exchange, and Table Top Exercise.
- Participating country's navies will take part in advanced air defence, anti-submarine, and anti-surface warfare drills during the Sea phase of the exercise.
- The MILAN will provide an opportunity for navies to not only foster friendship and strengthen relationships but will also enhance interoperability.

Indo-Japan joint exercise 'Dharma Guardian' begins in Rajasthan

- The 5th edition of joint military exercise 'Dharma Guardian' between Indian Army and Japan Ground Self Defence Force commenced today at Mahajan Field Firing Ranges, Bikaner, Rajasthan.
- The exercise is being conducted from 25 February to 9 March 2024.
- Exercise 'Dharma Guardian' is an annual military exercise and is conducted alternatively in India and Japan. The contingent of both countries includes 40-40 soldiers.
- The Japanese contingent is represented by troops of the 34th Infantry Regiment and the Indian contingent is represented by a battalion of Rajputana Rifles.
- The aim of the exercise is to promote military cooperation and enhance joint capabilities to carry out joint operations in semi-urban conditions under Chapter VII of the UN Charter. The exercise will focus on high level of physical fitness, joint planning, joint tactical drills and special weapon skills.

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Indian Air Force conducted 'Exercise- Vayu Shakti-24' in Rajasthan.

- The Indian Air Force shows its offensive capabilities at the Pokhran air-to-ground range near Jaisalmer.
- Fighter jets carried out precision strikes against simulated enemy aircraft and targets on the ground.
- Exercise Vayu Shakti-24 was based on the theme of Lightning Strike from the Sky.
- More than 120 aircraft, including Jaguar fighter jets, Sukhoi, Rafale, and Apache attack helicopters, took part in the exercise.
- Light combat aircraft Tejas, Prachand light combat helicopters, and Akash and Samar surface-to-air missile systems were also used during the exercise.
- Rudra helicopters destroyed tanks with their rockets, and the C-130J special operations aircraft carried out an assault landing.
- Vayu Shakti was last held at Pokhran in February 2019.

The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) successfully launched INSAT-3DS from Sriharikota

- ISRO successfully launches INSAT-3DS, a weather monitoring and disaster warning satellite.
- The satellite was launched on GSLV-F14 rocket from Sriharikota.
- INSAT-3DS has superior capabilities to provide weather and climate-related information.
- The main purpose of this satellite is to monitor the Earth's surface, make ocean observations and monitor the atmosphere even more thoroughly.
- GSLV or Geosynchronous Launch Vehicle was called the "naughty boy" of Indian space due to its repeated failures in the past.

A multinational military exercise 'Shanti Prayas IV' started in Nepal.

- 19 countries, including India, Bangladesh and Pakistan are participating Multinational military exercise 'Shanti Prayas IV' started in Nepal.
- It will enhance the interoperability and peacekeeping skills of the forces.
- Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal “Prachanda” inaugurated the two-week-long military drill.
- The multinational military exercise is taking place at the Birendra Peace Operation Training Centre in the Kabhre district.
- 1,125 army personnel from 19 countries are participating in this exercise.
- The exercise is being organised with the assistance of the Global Peace Operation Initiative of the US government.
- The inaugural multi-platoon training event 'Shanti Prayas' was hosted by Nepal in 2000.
- The tactical level field training event (FTE) and critical enabler and capability enhancement (2CE) are the key events of this exercise.

Trilateral Coast Guard Exercise 'Dosti 16' started in Maldives.

- Amid Security Concerns, Indian and Sri Lankan ships reached the Maldives to take part in the trilateral coast guard exercise 'Dosti 16'.
- The two ships of the Indian Coast Guard (ICG) – ICGS Samarth and ICGS Abhinav are taking part in this exercise.
- Sri Lanka sent SLNS Samudra to participate in the biennial trilateral exercise.
- The main aim of the exercise is to fortify the friendship, enhance mutual operational capability, and exercise interoperability.
- It will enhance cooperation between the Coast Guards of India, Sri Lanka and the Maldives.
- Exercise 'Dosti 16' will be conducted from February 22 to 25.
- Exercise Dosti was first conducted in 1991 between the Indian and Maldives Coast Guards. Sri Lanka joined the exercise for the first time in 2012.
- After pro-China Mohamed Muizzu assumed office as President, ties between India and the Maldives have been on the downswing.

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SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Before the ISRO's ambitious Gaganyaan mission, Woman Robot Astronaut 'Vyommitra' will fly into space.

- This will be India's first human-manned space flight carrying Indian astronauts into space.
- On February 4, Union Minister Jitendra Singh made this announcement while talking to media persons in Delhi.
- The uncrewed "Vyommitra" mission is scheduled for the third quarter of 2024, while a manned mission "Gaganyaan" is to be launched in 2025.
- Vyommitra is a name derived from two Sanskrit words, namely "Vyoma" (meaning place) and "Mitra" (meaning friend).
- This female robotic astronaut module is equipped with the ability to monitor parameters, issue alerts and perform life support operations.
- It can perform tasks such as operating six panels and answering questions.
- The 'Vyommitra' astronaut has been designed in such a way that it can simulate human actions in the space environment and interact with life support systems.
- In preparation for the launch of India's first manned space flight 'Gaganyaan', the first test vehicle Udaan TV D1 was completed on October 21, 2023.

India's first spy satellite developed by TASL

- Indian company TASL has developed its first spy satellite.
- The satellite will launch on a SpaceX rocket in April.
- The satellite will be continuously guided and monitored through the Ground Control Centre at Bengaluru.
- The satellite will provide real-time accurate information and ground control.
- This is the first time that an Indian private company is developing a spy satellite.
- The centre will guide the satellite with operational readiness and process its imagery.

NASA and Japan set to launch the world's first wooden satellite.

- To combat space debris, Japan and the United States will launch the world's first wooden satellite, the LingoSat probe, into space.
- It has been created from magnolia wood, which is known for its stability and resistance to cracks.
- It is a joint venture between Japanese scientists and their American counterparts.
- Researchers from Kyoto University and Sumitomo Forestry have collaborated to construct this timber satellite.
- Their ingenious solution will replace traditional metal components with biodegradable materials.
- Takao Doi, a Japanese aerospace engineer, has cautioned the world about the detrimental effects of existing satellites.
- At present, the satellites generate aluminium particles while re-entering the atmosphere of Earth. It is injurious to the earth's upper layer.
- This innovation will spark hope that satellites and other technology can remain operational even after the depletion of non-biodegradable resources.

NASA launches new mission to study Earth's climate, ocean, and atmosphere:

- The National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) announced the successful launch of its satellite mission to study ocean health, air quality, and the effects of a changing climate.
- The satellite, which is dubbed PACE for plankton, aerosol, climate, and [ocean] ecosystem.
- The PACE mission will study the impact of tiny, often invisible things: microscopic life in water and microscopic particles in the air.

Four astronauts have been named for India's first manned space mission.

- The four astronauts- Prashanth Nair, Angad Prathap, Ajit Krishnan, and Shubhanshu Shukla have been named for India's first manned space mission.
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi revealed the name of the four astronauts for the Gaganyaan Mission.

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- The astronauts have undergone a year-long training course in Russia's Zvyozdny Gorodok city.
- The Gaganyaan Mission is India's first human space flight program.
- Under the Gaganyaan project, crew members will be sent into an orbit of 400 km for a three-day mission.
- ISRO has set up an Astronaut Training Facility in Bengaluru to train astronauts for the manned mission.
- Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) completed the final round of ground qualification tests on February 13, 2024.
- ISRO completed the acceptance tests of the flight engine identified for the first unmanned Gaganyaan (G1) mission.

SCHEMES AND INITIATIVES

The rooftop solar scheme for free electricity has been launched.

- The scheme is named PM Surya Ghar Muft Bijli Yojana.
- It has been launched with an investment of over Rs. 75,000 crores.
- The scheme aims to light up 1 crore households by providing up to 300 units of free electricity every month.
- This scheme will provide subsidies directly into the bank accounts of the people.
- In this scheme, the central government will make sure that there is no cost burden on the people.
- Urban Local Bodies and Panchayats will be incentivized to promote rooftop solar systems in their jurisdictions to popularize this scheme at the grassroots.
- The government has already kept ₹10,000 crore subsidy in the FY25 budget under the head of solar grid rooftop.
- The scheme's benefits listed by Finance Minister Sitharaman in this year's budget speech include annual household savings of ₹15,000-18,000 from free solar electricity, with the option of selling the surplus to distribution companies.
- The scheme was first announced by PM Modi on 22 January, the day of the consecration of the Ram Mandir in Ayodhya.

The government launched the realigned AHIDF Scheme.

- Union Minister Parshottam Rupala launched the realigned AHIDF Scheme and released the Radio Jingle on AHIDF in New Delhi.
- The scheme has been realigned and will be implemented for another 3 years till 2025-26. FPOs, dairy cooperatives and industries will benefit from this scheme.
- In the realigned scheme, the Dairy Infrastructure Development Fund has been subsumed.
- The Dairy Cooperative will also get Credit Guarantee support under the Credit Guarantee Fund of AHIDF.
- Now, Dairy Cooperatives will get the benefit of interest subvention of 3% under AHIDF instead of 2.5%.
- This scheme will help the Dairy Cooperatives to upgrade their processing infrastructure.
- Under the realigned scheme, the benefits will be as follows:

Government launched 'Sagar Aankalan' guidelines to boost efficiency and competitiveness.

- Union Minister Sarbananda Sonowal launched the 'Sagar Aankalan' guidelines for the Indian port performance index.
- The 'Sagar Aankalan' guidelines have been issued for national benchmarking of Indian Ports Performance.
- It will be enforced across all seaports in India to improve efficiency and competitiveness.
- The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change has also approved environmental clearance for Maharashtra's Vadhavan Port in Palghar.

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- Vadhavan Port is a collaborative effort between the Jawaharlal Nehru Port Trust (JNPT) and the Maharashtra Maritime Board.
- The shipping ministry will soon seek cabinet approval for the Rs 76,220 crore project.

Government decided to continue the Women's safety scheme till 2025-26.

- The Ministry of Home Affairs' proposal to continue the implementation of the umbrella Scheme on 'Safety of Women' has been accepted by the Union Government.
- The scheme has been extended with a cost of 1180 crore rupees for the period from 2021-22 to 2025-26.
- The government will also set up six cyber forensic science laboratories at Pune, Chandigarh, Kolkata, Delhi, Kamrup, and Bhopal.
- Women's help desks and 827 antihuman trafficking units have been set up at 13,557 police stations.
- Women's help desks will also be established in the remaining 3,329 police stations.
- Every year 5000 police personnel will be imparted training for effective investigation and prosecution to curb the crime against women and children.
- The 24-hour emergency helpline service 112 will be also scaled up.

Government is organising 'Mera Pehla Vote Desh Ke Liye' initiative.

- Government is organising it in Higher Educational institutions across the country from 28 February 2024.
- Government is organising this initiative to ensure universal enlightened participation of youth in elections.
- This initiative's key objective is to engage and encourage young voters to come out and vote.
- The initiative will be continued till 6th of March, 2024.
- The initiative symbolizes the importance of Elections in the largest democracy in the world.
- It also symbolizes the pride of voting in the largest democracy in the world.
- Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan had directed all Higher Educational institutions in India to carry out comprehensive voter awareness activities at their campuses.

SUMMIT AND CONFERENCES

First meeting of the 16th Finance Commission

- First meeting of the 16th Finance Commission was held under the chairmanship of Arvind Panagariya.
- The 16th Finance Commission held its first meeting in New Delhi under the chairmanship of Arvind Panagariya.
- In the first meeting, terms of reference (ToRs) and the need for wide-ranging consultations with various stakeholders were discussed.
- As per the order by the President of India, the Ministry of Finance notified the 16th Finance Commission on December 31, 2023.
- The commission will recommend a devolution formula for tax revenues between the Centre and states.
- It will also suggest measures to augment resources for local bodies.
- The 16th Finance Commission will also carry out detailed analytical work and rope in all the expertise from leading research organisations, think tanks, and other organisations.
- The commission will submit its recommendations by October 31, 2025.

India and Oman hold the 12th Joint Military Cooperation Committee meeting in Muscat.

- During the meeting, the two nations reviewed defence cooperation.
- The meeting was co-chaired by Defence Secretary Giridhar Aramane with the Secretary-General, Ministry of Defence, Oman Dr. Mohammed Bin Naseer Bin Ali Al Zaabi on 31 January 2024.

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- During the meeting, many new areas of cooperation were discussed in the fields of training, Joint exercise, Information sharing, Oceanography, and Ship Building that would build interoperability and mutual trust between militaries of both nations.
- Both nations also exchanged views on regional and global issues of shared interest.
- India and Oman relations:
- Diplomatic relations between India and Oman were established in 1955 and were upgraded to a Strategic Partnership in November 2008.
- In October 2022, the Central Bank of Oman signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) to link the payment systems between India and Oman.
- India was 2nd largest market for Oman's crude oil exports for 2022.

Commonwealth Legal Education Association (CLEA) - Commonwealth Attorneys and Solicitors General Conference

- PM Modi inaugurated the Commonwealth Legal Education Association (CLEA) - Commonwealth Attorneys and Solicitors General Conference in New Delhi.
- The theme of this conference is Cross-Border Challenges in Justice Delivery.
- During the conference, important issues of law and justice will be deliberated.
- Some of these issues are judicial transition and the ethical dimensions of legal practice, executive accountability and revisiting modern-day legal education.
- Participants in the conference are Attorney Generals and Solicitors from the Commonwealth nations spanning the Asia-Pacific, Africa, and the Caribbean along with different international delegations.
- The conference serves as a unique platform. It offers a forum for interaction among different stakeholders in the Commonwealth legal fraternity.
- An exclusive round table conference tailored for Attorneys and Solicitors general is also included in the conference.
- It aims to develop a comprehensive roadmap to address the challenges in legal education and transnational justice delivery.

World Sustainable Development Summit

- World Sustainable Development Summit has been inaugurated by Vice-President Jagdeep Dhankar in New Delhi.
- It was inaugurated in the presence of Prime Minister of Guyana Mark Phillips and Union Minister for Environment, Forests and Climate Change Bhupender Yadav.
- On the occasion, Vice-President quoted Mahatma Gandhi and said the earth has enough for everyone's need, but not for everyone's greed.
- The summit is organised by 'The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI)'.
- The summit is being held from 7-9 February 2024 in New Delhi.
- This is the 23rd edition of the annual summit of TERI.
- The theme for this year's summit is Leadership for Sustainable Development and Climate Justice.

World Governments Summit

- India, Turkiye, and Qatar have been named Guests of Honor for the World Governments Summit.
- The 2024 World Governments Summit is scheduled to take place in Dubai from February 12–14.
- 'Shaping Future Governments' is the theme of the World Governments Summit 2024.
- The delegations from Turkiye, India, and Qatar will be led by President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, and Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim Al Thani, respectively.
- 25 government and state heads from around the world will participate in the summit.
- During the summit, the guest countries will showcase their successful experiences and developmental practices.
- Representatives of over 85 international and regional organizations, 120 governmental delegations, and 4,000 attendees will attend the summit.

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The 67th All India Police Duty Meet (AIPDM) is being hosted in Lucknow.

- The Railway Protection Force (RPF) is hosting the 67th AIPDM from 12th February to 16th, 2024.
- This event aims to promote collaboration and excellence among police officers for scientific detection and investigation of crimes.
- The Director General of RPF launched the dedicated Mobile application and website for the 67th All India Police Duty Meet.
- 67th AIPDM calls law enforcement professionals to come together, learn, and strengthen their collective pursuit of investigative excellence.
- It serves as a platform for the law enforcement personnel to exchange best practices and refine their abilities.
- RPF has 9% representation of women. This is the highest percentage among all Armed Forces in India.

The first-ever Future Skills Summit will be organized by MeitY in Guwahati.

- On 15 February, in collaboration with the National Institute of Electronics and IT (NIELIT), the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) hosted the Future Skills Summit in Guwahati.
- Union Minister of State for Electronics and IT, Rajeev Chandrasekhar inaugurated the event.
- The aim of the summit was to bring together young Indians, thought leaders, industry experts, policymakers, educators, and technology enthusiasts to discuss strategies to catalyze future-ready talent for India and the world.
- The focus of the summit was on the impact of rapid digitalization globally, with emphasis on new opportunities for young Indians in cutting-edge technologies such as Artificial Intelligence (AI), Machine Learning (ML), Semiconductor, Robotics, and Cyber Security.
- These developments offer significant opportunities for the country's youth.
- The main objective is to create a roadmap that can leverage emerging technologies and establish partnerships with industry and academic institutions across the country.
- More than 20 strategic collaborations are expected between NIELIT and leading institutions like Intel, HCL, Microsoft, Kindryl, IIM Raipur, IITM Gwalior, Wipro, and others.

In Kathmandu, the 16th World Social Forum (WSF) 2024 meeting started.

- The "Another World is Possible" is theme of the five-day WSF 2024.
- This theme seeks to foster horizontal communication between social movements, trade unions, civil society organizations, and individuals who are against neoliberal globalization.
- The event began with a solidarity march that started from the main venue at Bhrikutimandap and passed through Bhadrakali, New Road Gate, Ratna Park and back to Bhrikutimandap.
- Approximately forty thousand participants from ninety-two countries are anticipated for the WSF.
- Numerous urgent themes will be covered in this edition of the WSF, such as caste discrimination, economic inequality, labor, migration, climate justice, gender equality, peace, and sustainable development, among many others.
- The Kathmandu Forum is an important turning point that demonstrates the diversity and tenacity of international solidarity movements.
- It is anticipated that about 1252 organizations from 92 countries would participate.
- The Forum will conclude on 19th February 2024.

Mobile World Congress 2024 is scheduled to begin on February 26 in Barcelona, Spain.

- Mobile World Congress 2024 (MWC) will be hosted by GSMA in Barcelona, Spain.
- Every year, this event is hosted to bring people from different companies that deal in mobile and wireless technologies into one place.
- Various companies will showcase their latest products and innovations at the event.
- The theme of this year's Mobile World Congress is "Future First". Most discussions will be around this topic.
- The event is also divided into six sub-themes: Humanising AI, 5G and Beyond, Connecting Everything, Manufacturing DX, Game Changers, and Our Digital DNA.
- OnePlus is likely to announce its first OnePlus Watch 2 at the Mobile World Congress.

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PM Narendra Modi inaugurated the 9th edition of Raisina Dialogue in New Delhi.

- Kyriakos Mitsotakis, the Prime Minister of Greece, attended the inaugural session as the Chief Guest. Kyriakos Mitsotakis gave the keynote speech.
- More than a hundred countries will send representatives to the three-day Raisina Dialogue.
- Ministers, past heads of state and heads of government, military chiefs, business executives, technology executives, academics, journalists, and scholars specializing in strategic affairs are among the attendees.
- "Chaturanga: Conflict, Contest, Cooperate, Create" is the topic for this edition.
- Global thought leaders and decision-makers will interact with one another through conversations in a variety of forms centered on six themes.
- These include War and Peace: Armouries and Asymmetries, Peace with the Planet: Invest and Innovate, and Tech Frontiers: Regulations and Realities.

11th bilateral Consular Dialogue between India and the US took place in New Delhi.

- Dr. K J Srinivasa led the Indian delegation, while the US delegation was led by Rena Bitter.
- India and the US have discussed ways of enhancing cooperation on various issues such as extradition, mobility of students and professionals, safe and legal migration, and protection of vulnerable women and children.
- The dialogue will improve people-to-people ties and cooperation between both countries.
- Both sides also welcome the launch of a pilot in the US to adjudicate domestic renewals.
- Both countries also agreed to hold the next Consular Dialogue in the US next year.

MISCELLANEOUS

Etihad became the official sponsor of the Chennai Super Kings

- Gulf carrier Etihad Airways became the official sponsor of the Chennai Super Kings. The partnership will cover CSK's events and platforms.
- Etihad roped in Bollywood actor Katrina Kaif as its brand ambassador.
- The partnership with CSK was announced at Kalaiwanar Arangam in Chennai in the presence of team officials and CSK players.
- Gulf carrier Etihad Airways has also recently increased the frequency of its Mumbai and Delhi flights to four from two.
- Shyam Steel appointed Ravi Kishan as the brand ambassador.
- Neeraj Chopra joined Team Visa as its new brand ambassador in India.

India-Bangladesh open trade through Maia (West Bengal)-Sultanganj (Bangladesh) river ports.

- India and Bangladesh started the first trial movement of vessels between Maia Port in India and Sultanganj Port in Bangladesh on February 12, 2024.
- The first Cargo vessels carrying stones from Maia port have been flagged off by Shantanu Thakur, Indian Minister of State for Ports, Shipping, and Waterways.
- The riverine distance between Maia port and Sultanganj port is 16km. Out of which, 4.5km of waterways is in India, and the remaining 11.5km are in Bangladesh.
- The route from Maia to Dhubri via Aricha shortens the journey by 930 kilometres.
- The trial of using the Indo Bangladesh Protocol (IBP) Route no 5 & 6 will help in reducing the time of transportation.

Abu Dhabi's first Hindu stone temple was inaugurated by PM Modi on 14 February.

- The temple has been constructed by Bochasanwasi Shri Akshar Purushottam Swaminarayan Sanstha (BAPS).
- At a cost of approximately ₹700 crore, the BAPS temple has been built on a 27-acre site in Abu Mreikhah, near Al Rahba on the Dubai-Abu Dhabi Sheikh Zayed Highway.

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- The grand temple has been constructed according to the ancient style of construction and creation described in the Crafts and Architecture Shastras, Hindu texts that describe the art of temple design and construction.
- More than 300 high-tech sensors have been installed at every level of the temple to measure temperature, pressure, and motion (seismic activity).
- In the construction of the temple, no metal has been used and fly ash has been used to fill the foundation, replacing 55% of cement in the concrete mix, reducing the carbon footprint of the temple.
- Heat-resistant nano tiles and heavy glass panels have been used, both of which combine traditional aesthetic stone structures with modern functionality.
- Considering the extreme temperatures in the UAE, the tiles will be comfortable for visitors to walk on even in hot weather.
- Just like the Ayodhya Ram Temple, Abu Dhabi's first Hindu temple is built in the Nagara style of architecture.

Khasi freedom fighter U Tirot Sing statue has been unveiled in Dhaka.

- A statue of U Tirot Sing has been unveiled at the Indira Gandhi Cultural Centre, Dhaka.
- U Tirot Sing was a freedom fighter from Khasi Hills who rebelled against British colonialism.
- The Deputy Chief Minister of Meghalaya, Sniawbhalang Dhar, and the High Commissioner of India to Bangladesh, Pranay Verma, jointly unveiled the statue.
- Tirot Sing was a tribal chief known as 'the Hero of the Khasi Hills' of Meghalaya.
- He was one of the chiefs of the Khasi people in the early 19th century.
- His death is commemorated in Meghalaya as U Tirot Sing Day.

Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals's COP14 concluded at Samarkand.

- The COP14 of the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS COP 14) concluded in Samarkand, Uzbekistan on 17 February 2024.
- It was organized under the theme "Nature knows no borders". It was the first global biodiversity gathering since the adoption of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) in 2022.
- At CMS COP14, Parties reviewed the implementation of the Convention and adopted a New Strategic Plan for the period 2024-2032.
- The participating members agreed to adopt listing proposals for 14 migratory species and several other resolutions for global wildlife.
- Eurasian lynx, Peruvian pelican, Pallas's cat, guanaco, Laulao catfish, Balkan lynx, Lahille's bottlenose dolphin, harbour porpoise, Magellanic plover, bearded vulture, etc. are among these 14 migratory species.
- COP14 also adopted a proposal to include Pallas's cat (*Felis manul*) in Appendix II of the Convention.
- The Committee of the Whole (COW) also recommended including the guanaco (*Lama guanicoe*) in Appendix II of the Convention for adoption.

Gita Mahotsav held in Colombo

- The International Gita Mahotsav will be held in Colombo from March 1, hosted by Sri Lanka's Buddha Sasan, Minister for Religious and Cultural Affairs, Vidura Wickramanayake.
- The event is aimed at popularising the timeless teachings of Shrimad Bhagwat Gita and will be held at the Neelam Pokuna theatre complex.
- The three-day festival, sponsored by the Kurukshetra Development Board of Haryana, will include Gita Yajna, Japa, Shobha Yatra, seminars on contemporary topics, competitions and a copy of Srimad Bhagavada Gita will be presented to the Parliament of Sri Lanka on March 4.

PM Modi inaugurates UAE's first Hindu temple

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the first Hindu temple built in the UAE. The construction of the temple was going on since 2019 and its cost is Rs 700 crore.

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- A total of 18 lakh bricks have been used in the temple and marble has also been used in it. Stones from Rajasthan have also been used to enhance the grandeur of the temple.
- The construction work of this temple has been done by the BAPS organization located on Sheikh Zayed Highway in Abu Dhabi. The government has donated land for this temple.
- There is also a marble carving made from over 25,000 stone pieces by skilled craftsmen from Rajasthan and Gujarat for the temple. For this, a large number of pink sandstones have been brought from northern Rajasthan.



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Current Affairs MCQs

1. Who is the first Indian to receive an honorary Knighthood under King Charles III?
 - (a) Ratan Tata
 - (b) Sachin Tendulkar
 - (c) Sunil Bharti Mittal
 - (d) Narendra Modi
2. Which is the largest multinational naval exercise of the Indian Navy?
 - (a) Operation Trident
 - (b) Exercise Varuna
 - (c) MILAN
 - (d) Operation TROPEX
3. How many Ramsar sites does India have after adding 5 new ones in 2024?
 - (a) 75
 - (b) 80
 - (c) 85
 - (d) 90
4. What is the theme of World Wetlands Day 2024?
 - (a) Wetlands and Climate Change
 - (b) Wetlands and Sustainable Use
 - (c) Wetlands and Human Wellbeing
 - (d) Wetlands and Economic Development
5. Who won the women's Badminton Asia Team Championships title 2024?
 - (a) India
 - (b) Thailand
 - (c) China
 - (d) Indonesia
6. Who has been honored with the 58th Jnanpith Award?
 - (a) Gulzar
 - (b) Jagadguru Rambhadracharya
 - (c) Both (a) and (b)
 - (d) None of the above
7. What did the Supreme Court do regarding the electoral bonds scheme for political funding?
 - (a) Upheld its constitutionality
 - (b) Invalidated the scheme
 - (c) Proposed amendments to the scheme
 - (d) Requested more information from the government
8. National Science Day in India is celebrated on which date?
 - (a) January 26th
 - (b) February 28th
 - (c) March 12th
 - (d) May 11th
9. On what grounds did the Supreme Court declare the electoral bonds scheme as violating citizens' rights?
 - (a) Violation of privacy
 - (b) Violation of the right to information

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- (c) Unfair distribution of funds
(d) Lack of transparency in political funding
10. What is the name of India's first human spaceflight program?
(a) Chandrayaan
(b) Aditya-1
(c) Gaganyaan
(d) LVM3
11. Which Indian Prime Minister, also having served as Deputy Prime Minister, Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh, and Union Minister for Home Affairs and Finance?
(a) P V Narasimha Rao
(b) Dr. MS Swaminathan
(c) Chaudhary Charan Singh
(d) Narendra Modi
12. What is the theme of the 2024 edition of the Raisina Dialogue?
(a) "Tech Frontiers: Regulations & Realities"
(b) "Peace with the Planet: Invest & Innovate"
(c) "Chaturanga: Conflict, Contest, Cooperate, Create"
(d) "Decolonising Multilateralism: Institutions & Inclusion"
13. How many astronauts will be part of the first crewed Gaganyaan mission?
(a) 1
(b) 2
(c) 3
(d) 4
14. After the announcement of Bharat Ratna to former Prime Minister Chaudhary Charan Singh, which political party decided to join the ruling NDA alliance?
(a) Biju Janta Dal (BJD)
(b) Rashtriya Lok Dal (RLD)
(c) Rashtriya Janta Dal (RJD)
(d) Indian National Lok Dal (INLD)
15. Who has been confirmed as the captain of the Indian cricket team for the 2024 T20 World Cup?
(a) Virat Kohli
(b) Rohit Sharma
(c) Ajinkya Rahane
(d) KL Rahul
16. When will the provisions of Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, 2023, Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023, and Bharatiya Sakshya Adhinyam, 2023 come into force?
(a) July 1, 2023
(b) July 1, 2024
(c) January 1, 2023
(d) December 31, 2023
17. Where is the 2024 T20 World Cup scheduled to be held?
(a) India and Sri Lanka
(b) Australia and New Zealand
(c) Caribbean and the USA
(d) South Africa and Zimbabwe

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18. Who is referred to as the "Father of India's Green Revolution" ?
- (a) Chaudhary Charan Singh
 - (b) P V Narasimha Rao
 - (c) Dr. MS Swaminathan
 - (d) Norman Borlaug
19. Which scientist is credited with the discovery of the "Raman Effect"?
- (a) S. N. Bose
 - (b) Homi J. Bhabha
 - (c) C. V. Raman
 - (d) Vikram Sarabhai
20. According to the Education Ministry, from which academic session onwards should the age of admission to Grade 1 be 6 years?
- (a) 2026-27
 - (b) 2023-24
 - (c) 2024-25
 - (d) 2025-26
21. What does APAAR stand for?
- (a) Automated Permanent Academic Account Registry
 - (b) Academic Bank of Credits
 - (c) One Nation, One Student ID Card
 - (d) Digital India Initiative
22. Who was awarded the Player of the Match in the Rajkot test?
- (a) Shubman Gill
 - (b) Sarfaraz
 - (c) Ravindra Jadeja
 - (d) Mark Wood
23. Who has been appointed as the new Lokpal of India?
- (a) Justice Lingappa Narayana Swamy
 - (b) Justice AM Khanwilkar
 - (c) President Droupadi Murmu
 - (d) Sushil Chandra
24. What is the name of the country's longest signature stayed bridge, recently inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in Gujarat?
- (a) Bharati Setu
 - (b) Sudarshan Setu
 - (c) Dwarka Bridge
 - (d) Vishwa Setu
25. What is the significance of the BAPS Mandir in Abu Dhabi?
- (a) It is the largest Hindu temple in the Middle East.
 - (b) It is the first traditional Hindu stone temple in the Middle East.
 - (c) It is a modern architectural marvel.
 - (d) It is dedicated to promoting unity in the Indian community.
26. Where was the recently discovered ancient stone wall located?
- (a) Pacific Ocean
 - (b) Baltic Sea
 - (c) Mediterranean Sea
 - (d) North Sea

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27. Who won the women’s Badminton Asia Team Championships title 2024?
- India
 - Thailand
 - China
 - Indonesia
28. The main objective of the Public Examinations (Prevention of Unfair Means) Bill is to:
- Increase the difficulty level of exams
 - Reduce the number of public examinations
 - Ensure fair and just public examinations
 - Introduce online exams for all subjects
29. Which prominent Indian musicians, who are part of the fusion band Shakti, won the Grammy Award in the Best Global Music Album category for their latest album “This Moment”?
- A.R. Rahman and Lata Mangeshkar
 - Shankar Mahadevan and Zakir Hussain
 - Hariharan and Kavita Krishnamurthy
 - Sonu Nigam and Shreya Ghoshal
30. What is the length of the Indo-Myanmar border that the Indian government plans to fence?
- 1,643 kilometers
 - 2,000 kilometers
 - 1,000 kilometers
 - 3,500 kilometers
31. Who is the current Chief of the Indian Army?
- Gen Bipin Rawat
 - Gen Dalbir Singh Suhag
 - Gen Manoj Mukund Naravane
 - Gen Manoj Pande
32. Who has been honored with the 58th Jnanpith Award?
- Gulzar
 - Jagadguru Rambhadracharya
 - Both (a) and (b)
 - None of the above
33. What is the purpose of satellite INSAT-3DS?
- Communication
 - Earth observation
 - Meteorological observations
 - Space exploration
34. Independent candidates who won the majority of seats in the general elections are largely affiliated with:
- Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N)
 - Pakistan People’s Party (PPP)
 - Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM)
 - Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI)
35. Which song from the film “Slumdog Millionaire” contributed to Gulzar’s international acclaim?
- “Jai Ho”
 - “Tere Bina”
 - “Dil Se Re”
 - “Chaiyya Chaiyya”

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36. Who leads the alliance government that won the trust vote in the Jharkhand State Assembly?
- Hemant Soren
 - Champai Soren
 - Ramdas Soren
 - Indrajit Mahatha
37. What is the full form of EPFO?
- Employees' Provident Fund Organisation
 - Economic Protection and Financial Oversight
 - Employment Promotion and Financial Operations
 - Essential Provident Fund Obligation
38. What city is launching the world's first air taxi service?
- Singapore
 - Dubai
 - Tokyo
 - New York
39. Which musical instrument does Rakesh Chaurasia, a veteran Indian classical musician, play?
- Sitar
 - Tabla
 - Bansuri (Indian bamboo flute)
 - Harmonium
40. What is the name of the woman robot astronaut that will fly into space ahead of ISRO's "Gaganyaan" mission?
- Vyomnaut
 - Gaganyaatri
 - Vyommitra
 - Astronautila
41. Which country won the 2024 Under-19 Men's ODI Cricket World Cup?
- India
 - Australia
 - South Africa
 - England
42. What does FMR stand for in context of India and Myanmar?
- Foreign Ministry Resolution
 - Free Movement Regime
 - Federal Movement Restriction
 - Frontier Management Regulation
43. Why is the Indian government fencing the Indo-Myanmar border?
- To prevent wildlife trafficking
 - To curb insurgencies and smuggling
 - To promote cultural exchange
 - To facilitate cross-border trade
44. Who won the SAFF U-19 Women's Championship in 2024?
- Bangladesh
 - Nepal
 - Bhutan
 - India

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45. Who is the current Prime minister of Greece?
- (a) Kyriakos Mitsotakis
 - (b) Giorgos Gerapetritis
 - (c) Nikos Dendias
 - (d) Katerina Sakellaropoulou
46. With which award will LK Advani be conferred in February 2024?
- (a) Padma Bhushan
 - (b) Bharat Ratna
 - (c) Padma Vibhushan
 - (d) Param Vir Chakra
47. Who is the current Prime Minister of Guyana visiting India in February 2024?
- (a) Justin Trudeau
 - (b) Droupadi Murmu
 - (c) Mark Phillips
 - (d) Boris Johnson
48. Who introduced the Finance Bill, 2024, in the Lok Sabha?
- (a) Prime Minister Narendra Modi
 - (b) Home Minister Amit Saha
 - (c) Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman
 - (d) Minister of State for Finance Pankaj Chaudhary
49. What technology is the government planning to implement for toll collection on national highways?
- (a) RFID technology
 - (b) Satellite-based GPS
 - (c) Facial recognition
 - (d) QR code scanning
50. What is the name of the brand launched by government to provide subsidized rice directly to consumers in February 2024?
- (a) Bharat Grains
 - (b) Bharat Rice
 - (c) Bharat Essentials
 - (d) Bharat food

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ANSWER – KEY

1	C	11	C	21	A	31	D	41	B
2	C	12	C	22	C	32	C	42	B
3	B	13	C	23	B	33	C	43	B
4	C	14	B	24	B	34	D	44	D
5	A	15	B	25	B	35	A	45	A
6	C	16	B	26	B	36	B	46	B
7	B	17	C	27	A	37	A	47	C
8	B	18	C	28	C	38	B	48	C
9	B	19	C	29	B	39	C	49	B
10	C	20	C	30	A	40	C	50	B



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9821593226 (26-30), 011-47243226

Website : www.pahujalawacademy.com | E-mail : info@pahujalawacademy.com