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Current Affairs - English ***MARCH' 2024***



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"CURRENT AFFAIRS

MONTH OF MARCH' 2024"

LAW AND AMENDMENT

Supreme Court ended immunity for lawmakers taking bribes for voting.

- In a significant ruling, the Supreme Court has revoked immunity for lawmakers who accept bribes for voting.
- The above mentioned news related to *Sita Soren v. Union of India, 2024* case
- The decision, led by Chief Justice of India D.Y. Chandrachud and a seven-judge Constitution Bench, overruled the 1998 judgment in *P.V Narasimha Rao v. State*.
- This landmark judgment clarifies that Members of Parliament (MPs) and Members of Legislative Assemblies (MLAs) are not shielded from prosecution for bribery.
- The Court emphasized that bribery is not protected by parliamentary privileges. While Article 105(2) and Article 194(2) of the Indian Constitution grant MPs and MLAs immunity from prosecution, the Court clarified that accepting a bribe is a separate criminal offense, distinct from parliamentary duties.
- This decision ensures accountability and upholds the integrity of the legislative process, marking a pivotal moment in Indian jurisprudence.

Central government has implemented Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA).

- The Central government has enacted the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) and issued the Citizenship (Amendment) Rules, 2024.
- This legislation aims to provide Indian citizenship to persecuted minorities from six communities—Hindu, Sikh, Buddhist, Jain, Parsi, and Christian—originating from Afghanistan, Bangladesh, and Pakistan.
- The CAA grants nationality to non-Muslim migrants who entered India prior to December 31, 2014, due to religious persecution. President's assent to the Citizenship Amendment Act was granted on December 12, 2019 and The CAA 2019 amended the Citizenship Act of 1955 and facilitated Hindu, Sikh, Buddhist, Jain, Parsi and Christian religious minorities coming to India from Muslim majority countries like Pakistan, Bangladesh and Afghanistan to acquire Indian citizenship due to religious persecution or fear thereof.
- Applications for citizenship under the CAA are facilitated through an online portal, as stated by the Home Ministry.
- Non-Muslim minorities from Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Afghanistan seeking Indian citizenship can apply through registration or naturalization processes.
- These provisions are operational in nine states: Gujarat, Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh, Haryana, Punjab, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Delhi, and Maharashtra.
- Citizenship is the legal status and relationship between an individual and a state that entails specific rights and duties.
- Citizenship in India is listed in the Union List under the Constitution and thus is under the exclusive jurisdiction of Parliament.

The government has raised the minimum age for the postal ballot to 85.

- The government has recently increased the minimum age for postal ballots to 85 years for the upcoming Lok Sabha and State Assembly elections.
- This amendment, brought forth by the Union Law Ministry, modifies the Conduct of Elections Rules-1961, expanding the eligible age from 80 to 85 years.

"CURRENT AFFAIR"

- The rule allows postal ballot voting for a specified group of electors, including essential services workers, persons with disabilities, individuals affected by Covid-19, and senior citizens.
- Out of the total 96.88 crore electors, approximately 1.85 crore fall into the newly eligible age bracket.
- Those opting for the postal ballot facility undergo a procedure conducted at home by officials, which is meticulously documented through videography and communicated to political parties.

France becomes the first country to enshrine abortion as a constitutional right

- France becomes the first nation to constitutionally guarantee abortion rights, enshrining women's freedom to choose in the country's constitution.
- French President Macron's administration proposed amending Article 34 of the constitution to ensure the right to abortion, aiming to make it irreversible and protect reproductive rights.
- The National Assembly and Senate overwhelmingly backed the bill, achieving the necessary three-fifths majority for constitutional change, despite initial resistance in the Senate.
- The move comes amid global efforts to safeguard women's reproductive rights, following concerns raised by the US Supreme Court's decision to reverse Roe v. Wade.
- It became the 25th amendment to the founding document of modern France and the first since 2008.
- There, a law was made in 1975 to legalize the provision of voluntary termination of pregnancy. The law has been updated nine times since 1975.
- This law was made in the name of the then Health Minister Simone Veil, who supported it. This law allowed abortion for up to ten weeks.
- Later in 2001, it was increased to 12 weeks, and in 2022 it was increased to 14 weeks.
- This procedure has been included in the French national health care system since 1980.

Supreme Court stops Assam's move to withdraw notification of Pobitora wildlife sanctuary

- The Assam government's bid to revoke the notification establishing the Pobitora wildlife sanctuary, issued on March 17, 1998, was halted by the intervention of the Supreme Court.
- The government cited the lack of settlement regarding the rights of residents in the affected villages as the rationale behind its action.
- This move sparked considerable controversy, with authorities contending that the sanctuary's declaration had been made without adequate consultation with relevant departments or stakeholders, including the Revenue department and the Chief Minister.
- The Supreme Court's intervention underscores the importance of adherence to due process and consultation in matters concerning environmental conservation and community rights.

Supreme Court Summarises Factors to Decide Term of Sentence Convicts Must Undergo Before Remission in Murder Cases

- The Supreme Court has outlined key factors to determine the duration of sentence convicts must serve before being eligible for remission in murder cases.
- These factors include the severity of injuries, number of victims, criminal history of the accused, and whether the crime occurred while on bail. Additionally, positive factors such as the age of the accused, potential for rehabilitation, and display of remorseful behavior were also considered.
- The decision arose from a case involving the murder of a family, where the accused had an extramarital affair with the victim's wife.
- The court adjusted the sentence from 30 years to 25 years' imprisonment, weighing factors such as premeditation and the accused's behavior while in custody.

Model Code of Conduct comes into force for the 2024 Lok Sabha elections.

- Chief Election Commissioner Rajiv Kumar urged all political parties to strictly follow the Model Code of Conduct (MCC).
- The Chief Election Commissioner lays down a list of dos and don'ts for leaders and parties ahead of elections.
- The Model Code of Conduct is issued for free and fair elections. It has no statutory backing.
- The election commission can issue a notice to a politician or a party for violating the provisions of the MCC.
- The Model Code of Conduct is a set of guidelines issued to regulate political parties and candidates before elections.

"CURRENT AFFAIR"

- The MCC remains in force from the announcement of the date of the election schedule until the date of the results.
- The MCC contains eight provisions that deal with general conduct, meetings, processions, polling day, polling booths, observers, the party in power, and election manifestos.
- As per the MCC, the ministers should not combine official visits with election work or use official machinery for the same.
- The ruling party cannot use government transport or machinery for campaigning.
- Political parties or candidates can be criticised based only on their work record.
- No caste or communal sentiments can be used to attract voters.

Arvind Kejriwal became the first sitting Chief Minister to get arrested.

- Enforcement Directorate (ED) arrested Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal in the liquor policy scam under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act, of 2002.
- Bail under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act, of 2002 is not easy due to its stringent provisions.
- AIADMK chief J Jayalalithaa was the first former CM to get arrested in 1996.
- Prevention of Money Laundering Act, 2002:
- It was enacted in 2002 and implemented on July 1, 2005.
- Its main objective is to prevent money laundering.
- It was amended in 2012 to bring banks, mutual funds, and insurance companies under its purview.
- All offences under the PMLA are cognizable and non-bailable. It has no provision for anticipatory bail.
- Under section 45, two more strict conditions for bail were added under PMLA in 2018.
- Delhi liquor policy scam:
- In 2021, a new excise policy was introduced by the Delhi government to modernize alcohol sales in the city.
- Enforcement Directorate (ED) blamed that the policy was intentionally designed with loopholes to favour AAP leaders and promote cartel formations.
- ED alleged that AAP leaders received kickbacks from liquor businesses in exchange for preferential treatment.

Hong Kong has passed a new security law referred to as 'Article 23'.

- Hong Kong lawmakers unanimously passed the "Safeguarding National Security Bill".
- It was first presented in the Legislative Council on March 8.
- Article 23 of the Basic Law states that the Hong Kong government must freely make laws to prohibit national security crimes.
- The new rules modify existing rules and penalties.
- It adds five new categories of crimes – treason, insurrection, espionage and theft of state secrets, harming national security, and external interference – some of which carry penalties of imprisonment, even life.
- The domestic security law, which took effect March 23, will "plug the gaps" of a similar security law imposed by Beijing in 2020 in response to mass pro-democracy protests in Hong Kong in 2019.
- The European Union and the United Nations said Hong Kong's new national security bill is extremely worrying and could lead to the end of fundamental freedoms in the China-ruled city.

SC Forms Committee to Protect Great Indian Bustard

- An expert committee appointed by the Supreme Court to look into the preservation of the Great Indian Bustard.
- This is a "non-negotiable" and "sustainable development requirement in the context of meeting the country's international commitments towards promoting renewable sources of energy".
- The ruling was made by a bench that included Manoj Mishra, JB Pardiwala, and Chief Justice of India DY Chandrachud in handling a matter involving the Great Indian Bustard's (GIB) protection.
- The court has sought a report from the committee by July and listed the matter for the second week of August 2024.
- The Court underlined the importance of taking proactive measures to protect the GIB.

"CURRENT AFFAIR"

- The committee includes the Director of Wildlife Institute of India, Dehradun, Hari Shankar Singh, a Member of the National Board for Wildlife, Niranjana Kumar Vasu, Ex-Principal Chief Conservator of Forest.
- It also includes B Majumdar, former Chief Wildlife Warden and Principal Chief Conservator of Forest, Maharashtra, and Devesh Gadhave, Deputy Director of the Corbett Foundation, among others.
- In the regions of Rajasthan and Gujarat that the Wildlife Institute of India designated as priority areas, the committee will determine the scope, feasibility, and extent of overhead and underground power lines.

Supreme Court said judges should not order accused persons to surrender their right to be politically active in return for bail.

- In a recent order, a three-judge bench led by Justice BR Gavai said that forcing a person to stay away from politics by making his bail conditional is a clear violation of fundamental rights.
- This was made clear by the apex court in a petition filed by a former mayor of Berhampur Municipal Corporation.
- In 2022, Siba Shankar Das was granted bail in a criminal case.
- According to one of the grounds established by the Orissa High Court was that he should not "create any unpleasant situation in public or indulge in any political activities directly or indirectly".
- In early 2024, the High Court was approached by Mr Das to modify this bail condition, saying he wanted to participate in political activities ahead of the Lok Sabha elections.
- In January, the High Court rejected his petition. Subsequently, he moved to the apex court.
- The Supreme Court said imposing such a condition would violate the fundamental rights of the appellant and no such condition could have been imposed.
- Therefore, quash and set aside the condition imposed by the High Court.

IMPORTANT DAYS

World Hearing Day observed on 03 March

- The World Health Organization observes World Hearing Day on March 3 of each year.
- The theme for this year's World Hearing Day is Changing Mindsets.
- It is observed globally to encourage ear and hearing care as well as to increase public knowledge of how to prevent hearing loss.
- The purpose of the day's establishment in 2007 was to increase awareness about deafness.
- World Hearing Day was initially named International Ear Day.
- In 2016, International Ear Day was renamed World Hearing Day.

World Wildlife Day, celebrated on March 3

- World Wildlife Day, celebrated annually on March 3, serves as a poignant reminder of the urgent need to protect and preserve the world's fauna and flora.
- This year's theme is 'Connecting People and Planet: Exploring Digital Innovation in Wildlife Conservation'.
- On 20 December 2013, the United Nations General Assembly declared March 3 as the United Nations World Wildlife Day.
- This occasion is not only a celebration but a global call to action, urging individuals, communities, and governments worldwide to engage in practices that contribute to the sustainability of our planet's biodiversity.

National Security Day 2024/ National Safety Day 2024 celebrated on 4 March

- Every year on 4 March, National Security Day or National Safety Day is commemorated in India by the National Safety Council.
- The day was first celebrated on the foundation day of the National Safety Council in 1972.
- The theme for National Safety Day 2024 is "Focus on Safety Leadership for ESG Excellence".

"CURRENT AFFAIR"

- The main objective of National Security Day is to implement safe practices at the workplace by taking safety measures to prevent accidents.
- It is dedicated to all security forces of India for their contribution to maintaining peace and security.
- It is observed to honour the sacrifice of all security forces, including policemen, para-military forces, commandos, guards, army, etc.
- National Safety Council (NSC): It was founded on March 4, 1966, by the Ministry of Labour and Employment as a self-financing non-governing body.
- In 2000, the NSC was established as a public trust under the Bombay Public Trust Act 1950.
- Its headquarters is in Navi Mumbai.
- It was founded to develop and implement a voluntary routine in the areas of safety, health, and the environment.

International Day for Disarmament and Non-Proliferation Awareness 2024 celebrated on 5 March

- The second International Day for Disarmament and Non-Proliferation Awareness was celebrated on 5 March, 2024 across the world.
- The day aims to raise public awareness and understanding of disarmament issues, especially among young people.
- Kyrgyzstan had proposed to the international community to declare March 5 as the International Day for Disarmament and Non-Proliferation Awareness.
- On March 5, 1970, the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons entered into force.
- In 2022, global military spending reached \$2.24 trillion. 12,500 nuclear weapons are a threat to humanity.
- On December 7, 2022, the United Nations General Assembly unanimously supported Kyrgyzstan's initiative and adopted a resolution declaring March 5 as the International Day for Disarmament and Non-Proliferation Awareness.

International Women's Day is observed on March 8

- International Women's Day is celebrated on 8th March
- This year's International Women's Day theme is 'Invest in women: Accelerate Progress'.
- International Women's Day is a global day celebrating the social, economic, cultural, and political achievements of women.
- Gender equality is essential for prosperous economies and a healthy planet, yet a \$360 billion annual deficit in gender-equality measures by 2030 poses a significant challenge.

No Smoking Day to be observed on March 13

- National No Smoking Day, held every second Wednesday of March, will be March 13, 2024.
- National No Smoking Day, observed every second Wednesday of March, aims to raise awareness about the health dangers of smoking and encourage smokers to seek help.
- The day originated in the UK in 1984 and has since evolved into a global campaign, with organizations from both the public and non-profit sectors joining forces to support the cause.

World Kidney Day 2024 observed on 14 March

- World Kidney Day is observed on the second Thursday of March. In 2024, it was celebrated on March 14.
- 'Kidney Health For All' is the theme of the World Kidney Day campaign for 2024.
- The theme is focused on the increasing burden of chronic kidney disease and achieving optimal kidney care.
- It was first observed in 2006 with the slogan 'Are Your Kidneys ok?'.
- The main goal of the day is to support impartial access to kidney healthcare.
- It is a joint initiative of the International Society of Nephrology (ISN) and the International Federation of Kidney Foundations – World Kidney Alliance (IFKF-WKA).
- The kidney is responsible for removing waste products from the body and maintaining electrolyte levels.

"CURRENT AFFAIR"

World Consumer Rights Day 2024 observed on 15 March

- On March 15, the world observes World Consumer Rights Day, an annual event dedicated to reminding us of the importance of consumer rights in our global marketplace.
- This day emphasizes the need for transparency regarding the quantity, quality, and price of goods, as well as the significance of safeguarding consumer rights.
- World Consumer Rights Day serves as a platform to educate and empower consumers about their rights and responsibilities, while also advocating for fair and ethical business practices worldwide.
- World Consumer Rights Day 2024 Theme: 'Fair and Responsible AI for Consumers'
- Consumers International, the global voice for consumers, has chosen the theme 'Fair and responsible AI for consumers' for this year's World Consumer Rights Day. This theme sheds light on the rapid integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) into our daily lives and the necessity of ensuring that AI technologies respect and uphold consumer rights.

International Day of Happiness observed on 20 March

- International Day of Happiness is observed on 20 March.
- It was started by the United Nations in 2012. It was started to recognize happiness as a fundamental human goal.
- The first International Day of Happiness was observed in 2013.
- The UN resolution proclaiming International Day of Happiness was initiated by Bhutan.
- Bhutan is a country which values Gross National Happiness over GDP.
- India is ranked at 126th out of 146 countries in the World Happiness Index for 2023.

World Sparrow Day observed on 20 March

- World Sparrow Day is an annual observance held every year on March 20th to raise global awareness about the household sparrow and its alarming population decline.
- This humble little bird was once a common sight everywhere but has now become an uncommon spectacle in many parts of the world.
- The idea of World Sparrow Day was conceived by the Nature Forever Society (NFS) of India and the Eco-Sys Action Foundation based in France.
- The first World Sparrow Day was marked in 2010.

French Language Day celebrated on 20 March

- On March 20th, the United Nations celebrates French Language Day.
- This is one of the six official languages celebrated by the UN each year.
- The OIF's theme is "The Francophonie of the Future"
- Focuses on creating, innovating, and entrepreneurship in the French language
- The UN cooperates with OIF members to promote the French language globally.

World Forestry Day observed on 21 March

- World Forestry Day was officially designated on March 21st through a resolution passed by the United Nations General Assembly on November 28, 2013.
- The theme for International Day of Forests 2024 is Forests and Innovation: New Solutions for a Better World.
- The inaugural International Day of Forests took place on March 21, 2013, marking the commencement of global recognition for the vital role of forests.
- Annually, the world loses over 13 million hectares (32 million acres) of forests, highlighting the urgent need for concerted action to combat deforestation and preserve these vital ecosystems.
- The idea of World Forestry Day was proposed in 1971 by the General Assembly of the European Confederation of Agriculture. March 21 was chosen by the United Nations as it aligns with the Vernal Equinox and Autumn Equinox in the northern and southern hemispheres, respectively.

World Down Syndrome Day observed on 21 March

- World Down Syndrome Day (WDSO), 21 March, is a global awareness day which has been officially observed by the United Nations since 2012.
- World Down Syndrome Day 2024 theme is "End The Stereotypes".

"CURRENT AFFAIR"

- Down syndrome is a naturally occurring chromosomal arrangement, exists in all regions across the globe and commonly results in variable effects on learning styles, physical characteristics or health.

World Poetry Day 2024 observed on 21 March

- Every year World Poetry Day is observed on 21 March.
- Its main aim is to encourage young poets and appreciate the role of poetry in the development and enlightenment of the world.
- The theme of World Poetry Day 2024 is "Standing on the Shoulders of Giants."
- Poetry is an art form that can transform even the most basic of lines into a powerful catalyst.
- It is observed to honour poets and aware the new generation about the tradition of Poetry.
- UNESCO announced 21 March as World Poetry Day at its 30th General Conference in Paris in 1999.
- Poetry is the oldest form of readable and understandable human language.

World Water Day 2024 observed on 22 March

- World Water Day is observed annually on 22 March since 1993.
- The theme of World Water Day 2024 is "Water for Peace".
- The purpose of World Water Day is to increase awareness of the crisis of water and sanitation and to encourage action toward solving it.
- The major goals are to increase public awareness of water-related concerns and to motivate individuals to manage freshwater resources sustainably.
- On December 22, 1992, the UN General Assembly initially adopted the resolution that established World Water Day.
- The first World Water Day was celebrated in 1993.

Martyrdom Day/ Shaheed Diwas 2024 observed on 23 March

- Martyrdom Day is observed every year on 23 March to pay tribute to the sacrifice of Bhagat Singh, Rajguru, and Sukhdev.
- The British rulers hanged Bhagat Singh, Rajguru, and Sukhdev for their revolutionary activities against British rule on 23 March 1931.
- On 8 April 1929, Bhagat Singh and Batukeshwar Dutt threw bombs at the Central Legislative Assembly in protest of the Public Safety Bill and the Trade Dispute Bill.
- Bhagat Singh, Sukhdev, and Rajguru were hanged on the charge of assassinating British officer John Saunders in 1928.

World Tuberculosis Day 2024 observed on 24 March

- World Tuberculosis Day is observed every year on 24 March.
- The theme of World TB Day 2024 - 'Yes! We can end TB!'.
- It is observed to raise awareness about tuberculosis (TB) and to advocate more efforts to eliminate it.
- World Health Organization (WHO) celebrated the first World Tuberculosis Day on 24 March 1982.
- Tuberculosis is an infectious disease that mainly affects the lungs. It caused 1.3 million deaths in 2022.
- It is caused by a bacteria called Mycobacterium tuberculosis. It spreads through the air.
- Tuberculosis can be treated by a combination of antibacterial medications for a period of six to 12 months.

World Theatre Day 2024 celebrated on 27 March

- World Theatre Day is celebrated globally on March 27th every year to highlight the importance of theatre in conveying diverse cultures and traditions.
- The theme for World Theatre Day 2024 is "Theatre and a Culture of Peace".
- The day honors theatre artists and their contributions to society, raising awareness about social issues through dramatic performances.
- Established by the International Theatre Institute in 1961, World Theatre Day promotes the significance of theatre in fostering social development and cultural exchange.

"CURRENT AFFAIR"

APPOINTMENTS

IPS officer Daljit Singh Chaudhary has been appointed as director general of NSG.

- The central government appointed Daljit Singh Chaudhary as the director general (DG) of the National Security Guard (NSG).
- Daljit Singh Chaudhary is currently serving as the DG of Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB). He has been given the additional charge of the NSG.
- He has taken the place of MA Ganapathy, who superannuated on 29 February.
- An order has been issued by the Home Ministry regarding this.
- The National Security Guard (NSG) is an elite counter-terrorism unit under the Indian Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA).
- It was founded on 22 September 1986 under the National Security Guard Act, 1986.
- National Security Guard personnel are referred to as 'Black Cats'.
- Its headquarters is in New Delhi.

AS Rajeev has been appointed as the Vigilance Commissioner

- President Droupadi Murmu appointed AS Rajeev as Vigilance Commissioner in the Central Vigilance Commission on March 11, 2024.
- He has been appointed under the power vested under Section 4(1) of the Central Vigilance Commission Act, 2003.
- The tenure of the Vigilance Commissioner is four years or until the attainment of the age of 65.
- Central Vigilance Commission (CVC): is an apex anti-corruption government body in India.
- It was established on the recommendation of the K. Santhanam Committee.
- It was established on February 11, 1964, by a resolution of the Government of India and was granted statutory status in 2003 under the Central Vigilance Commission Act 2003.

Sub-inspector Suman Kumari became the first woman sniper of BSF.

- Suman Kumari has become the BSF's first woman sniper after completing 'rigorous' training at CSWT Indore.
- She completed an eight-week sniper training at the Central School of Weapons and Tactics (CSWT) in Indore.
- She decided to take the sniper training after witnessing the threat of cross-border sniper assaults while leading a platoon in Punjab.
- She was the only female in the sniper course with 56 male peers.
- She is from a modest family in Himachal Pradesh's Mandi district.

Former Supreme Court judge AM Khanwilkar sworn in as Lokpal chairperson

- Former Supreme Court judge AM Khanwilkar was sworn in as Lokpal chairperson.
- President Droupadi Murmu administered the oath of office to Khanwilkar as the chairperson of Lokpal.
- Khanwilkar had served as a Supreme Court judge from May 13, 2016, to July 29, 2022.
- He was appointed as the chairperson of the anti-corruption ombudsman last month.
- Khanwilkar was sworn in as Lokpal chairperson, filling the post after nearly two years fell vacant.

Asif Ali Zardari sworn in as 14th President of Pakistan

- Asif Ali Zardari was sworn in as the 14th President of Pakistan on March 10, after being elected as the next chief leader of Pakistan.
- Chief Justice of Pakistan Qazi Faiz Isa administered the oath of office to Zardari at his official residence Sadr, Rashtrapati Bhavan.
- Asif Ali Zardari, co-chairman of the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP), was elected as the joint candidate of the government alliance, which won election as the country's president for the second time on March 9.

"CURRENT AFFAIR"

Gyanesh Kumar and Sukhbir Singh Sandhu appointed new Election Commissioners

- Gyanesh Kumar and Sukhbir Singh Sandhu have been appointed as the new Election Commissioners.
- The new commissioners were selected by a three-member committee headed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and comprising Union Home Minister Amit Shah and leader of Congress in Lok Sabha Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury.
- Sukhbir Singh Sandhu, a retired IAS officer of Uttarakhand cadre, was earlier the Chief Secretary of Uttarakhand and served as the Secretary of Lokpal on a contract basis. He has also held positions such as the Chairman of the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) and served in the Ministry of Education.
- The Election Commission may soon announce the schedule for the upcoming Lok Sabha elections, which are expected to be held in April-May 2024.

Justice Satyendra Kumar Singh appointed as new Lokayukta of Madhya Pradesh

- Justice Satyendra Kumar Singh has been appointed as the new Lokayukta of Madhya Pradesh, with the ceremony administered by Governor Mangubhai Patel at Raj Bhavan.
- The appointment of the Lokayukta is facilitated with the consent of the Leader of the Opposition and the Chief Justice of the High Court, as mandated by the Lokayukta Act.
- The Lokayukta serves as an anti-corruption authority at the state level, responsible for investigating allegations of corruption against government officials and ensuring transparency and accountability in public administration.

Nayab Singh Saini takes oath as Chief Minister of Haryana

- Haryana BJP President and MP Nayab Singh Saini has taken oath as the new Chief Minister of Haryana after the resignation of Manohar Lal and his Council of Ministers.
- The new Chief Minister inducted five MLAs, including an independent, into his cabinet during the swearing-in ceremony by Governor Bandaru Dattatreya.
- Haryana BJP President and MP Nayab Singh Saini has taken oath as the new Chief Minister of Haryana after the resignation of Manohar Lal and his Council of Ministers.
- The new Chief Minister inducted five MLAs, including an independent, into his cabinet during the swearing-in ceremony by Governor Bandaru Dattatreya.

Vladimir Putin Wins Russian Presidential Elections for Record Fifth Term

- Vladimir Putin has won a historic fifth term as the President of Russia, securing a landslide victory in the presidential elections with 87 percent of the vote.
- This victory solidifies Putin's position as Russia's longest-serving leader, surpassing even Josef Stalin, indicating the significant trust and support he enjoys among the Russian populace.
- In his victory speech in Moscow, Putin pledged to prioritize resolving issues related to Russia's military operation in Ukraine and emphasized strengthening the Russian military as a key objective for his upcoming term in office.

Rahul Singh has been appointed as chairperson of CBSE.

- Senior bureaucrat Rahul Singh has been appointed as the new chairperson of the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE).
- He will succeed Nidhi Chhibber, who has been appointed as an advisor to the Niti Aayog.
- The appointment has been approved by the Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC).
- He is an Indian Administrative Service (IAS) officer of the Bihar cadre, who was serving as the Additional Secretary in the Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT).
- Rajeev Kumar Mital has been appointed as the Director General of the National Mission for Clean Ganga under the Ministry of Jal Shakti.

Navneet Kumar Sehgal became the new chairman of the Prasar Bharati.

- Navneet Kumar Sehgal assumed charge as the new Prasar Bharati Chairman.
- Navneet Kumar Sehgal is a 1988-batch retired bureaucrat of UP cadre.
- He will succeed A Surya Prakash who completed his term as Chairman in 2020.

"CURRENT AFFAIR"

- The post is being filled after a gap of 4 years. He has handled many key assignments in the Yogi Adityanath government.
- Prasar Bharati oversees the operations of Doordarshan and All India Radio.
- Prasar Bharati was formed in November 1997. It is headquartered in New Delhi.

Jharkhand governor CP Radhakrishnan gets an additional charge of Telangana.

- Jharkhand Governor CP Radhakrishnan became the in-charge governor of Telangana.
- He will also carry the additional responsibilities of the Lieutenant Governor of Puducherry.
- Radhakrishnan is the third person from Tamil Nadu to occupy the post of governor in Telangana for a consecutive term.
- Radhakrishnan assumed the governorship of Jharkhand in 2023.
- Recently, Tamilisai Soundararajan resigned as governor of Telangana and Lieutenant Governor of Puducherry posts.

Moushumi Chakraborty appointed as new Director General (News) of AIR

- Moushumi Chakraborty, a seasoned Indian Information Service (IIS) officer from the 1991 batch, has been appointed as the Director General (News) of All India Radio (AIR).
- She will succeed Vasudha Gupta in this role, bringing her wealth of experience and expertise to lead the news division of AIR.
- AIR, with its extensive reach, covers nearly the entire population of the country and approximately 92% of the total geographical area.
- Serving a socio-economically and culturally diverse audience, AIR broadcasts in multiple languages, catering to the varied needs and interests of its listeners across the nation.
- Chakraborty's appointment underscores the commitment of AIR to delivering quality news and programming to its vast audience base.

Union Minister Kiren Rijiju given additional charge of Ministry of Food Processing Industries

- The additional charge of the Ministry of Food Processing Industries has been given to Kiren Rijiju.
- Union Minister Pashupati Kumar Paras resigned from the Union Cabinet on 19 March.
- His resignation has been accepted by President Droupadi Murmu with immediate effect.
- Kiren Rijiju is currently having the charge of Ministry of Earth Sciences.
- Pashupati Kumar Paras is the chief of Rashtriya Lok Janshakti Party.

Election Commission of India appoints Bhushan Gagrani as new BMC Commissioner

- Bhushan Gagrani has been appointed as the Commissioner of the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) by the Election Commission of India.
- The upcoming general elections in Maharashtra will be conducted in five phases, covering a total of 48 constituencies.
- Saurabh Rao is set to assume the role of the civic chief of Thane, while Kailash Shinde will be appointed as the civic chief of Navi Mumbai.

Naveen Jindal takes charge as president of the Indian Steel Association

- Naveen Jindal, Chairman of Jindal Steel & Power, has assumed the position of President of the Indian Steel Association (ISA), succeeding Dilip Oommen of ArcelorMittal Nippon Steel India.
- In his new role, Jindal will play a key role in shaping policies and strategies within the Indian steel industry.
- Notable past presidents of ISA include industry stalwarts such as Sajjan Jindal and TV Narendran.
- ISA serves as the apex body representing steel producers in India.

MV Rao has been elected as the Chairman of the Indian Banks' Association (IBA).

- MV Rao, managing director and chief executive officer of Central Bank of India, has been elected as the Chairman of the Indian Banks' Association (IBA).
- On March 21, the managing committee of the Indian Banks' Association (IBA) made this decision.
- Madhav Nair will be now the honorary secretary of the association.
- The IBA and bank unions have recently signed the 9th joint note and the final 12th bipartite settlement agreement.

"CURRENT AFFAIR"

- Indian Banks Association:
- It is a representative body of Indian banks and financial institutions.
- It was formed for the development, coordination and strengthening of Indian banking.

Mr Ashwani Kumar elected as the New President of the Federation of Indian Export Organisations (FIEO)

- Mr. Ashwani Kumar, Partner of Victor Forgings, Jalandhar has been unanimously elected as the new President of Federation of Indian Export Organisations (FIEO).
- Shri Ashwini Kumar is a well-known and popular business entrepreneur and exporter from Jalandhar (Punjab), representing the engineering sector of exports.
- A widely travelled businessman, Mr. Kumar has held several key positions in various renowned organizations of the country including FIEO as Chairman (Northern Region) and member of the Managing Committee of the Federation.
- With extensive experience in various leadership roles within the government and several associations in Punjab, including representing the engineering sector of exports, Kumar aims to enhance the competitiveness of India's exports and expand its global footprints.

Hansa Mishra (IA&AS) selected for appointment to the post of director in the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC).

- She has been chosen for an appointment under the Central Staffing Scheme, as per the Department of Personnel and Training's (DoPT) directive.
- She has been elected for a term of five years from the date he assumes charge of the post or until further orders, whichever is earlier.
- Mishra is a 2010 batch Indian Audit and Accounts Service (IA&AS) officer.
- She was recommended for central deputation by the Comptroller and Auditor General of India.
- Central staffing program is a government implemented structure that ensures effective administration and allows transfer of officers between national and state governments.
- This system provides for deputation of qualified officers to other central government agencies, promoting exchange of ideas and experiences.
- Union Public Service Commission is a Constitutional Body under Articles 315-323 of the Indian Constitution. It was formed on 1 October 1926. Dr. Manoj Soni is the Chairman of UPSC.

Justice Ritu Raj Awasthi sworn in as a judicial member of the Lokpal of India.

- Justice AM Khanwilkar, Chairman of the Lokpal of India, administered him the oath.
- Shri Pankaj Kumar and Shri Ajay Tirkey took oath as Lokpal members.
- On 27 March, the oath ceremony was organized at the Indian Lokpal Office in New Delhi.
- On 26th March 2024, two existing Judicial Members, namely Justice PK Mohanty and Justice Abhilasha Kumari and three Members, namely Shri DK Jain, Archana Ramasundaram and Shri Mahender Singh, have completed their tenure in Lokpal.
- Justice Ritu Raj Awasthi served as the Chairperson of the 22nd Law Commission of India before joining as Judicial Member of the Lokpal of India. Earlier, he was the Chief Justice of Karnataka High Court.
- Shri Pankaj Kumar is a 1986 batch IAS officer of Gujarat cadre. Before joining as a member of the Lokpal of India, he was the Chief Secretary of Gujarat.
- Shri Ajay Tirkey is a 1987 batch IAS officer of Madhya Pradesh cadre. Before joining as a member of the Lokpal of India, he was the Secretary, Department of Land Resources Government of India.

Sadanand Vasant Date has been appointed as Director General of National Investigation Agency (NIA).

- He is presently serving as Chief of Maharashtra Anti-Terrorism Squad.
- His appointment has been approved by the Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC) for a tenure up to his superannuation on 31 December 2026.
- The appointment of Rajeev Kumar Sharma as Director General of Bureau of Police Research and Development has also been approved by ACC.
- Rajeev Kumar Sharma is 1990 batch IPS officer of Rajasthan Cadre.

"CURRENT AFFAIR"

- Piyush Anand has been appointed as Director General (DG) of National Disaster Response Force (NDRF).
- He is an Uttar Pradesh cadre IPS officer. He is currently working as Special DG of Central Industrial Security Force (CISF).

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Nepal has made Pokhara its tourism capital.

- Prime Minister Pushpa Kamla Dahal declared Pokhara as the tourism capital of Nepal.
- He said he would urge China to treat the Pokhara International Airport as a grant project from its side.
- China had built Pokhara International Airport. It was announced ready for commercial operation in January 2022.
- However, it has not been used due to the conflict between the governments of Nepal and China.
- This announcement has come when Nepal is preparing to secure Chinese aid to build the Nepal-China Industrial Friendship Park in approximately 4,000 acres.
- It may extend to 6,600 acres in east Nepal's Jhapa along the north Bengal border.
- The park is likely to be formalized at Kathmandu's Investment summit on 29-30 April.
- A 327- MegaWatt upper Marsyangdi Hydroenergy Project is likely to be formalized at the summit.

Sweden has officially become the 32nd member of NATO.

- Sweden recently completed the accession process in Washington.
- NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg highlighted that Sweden now has the protections under Article 5.
- Under Article 5 of NATO's treaty, all members are obliged to come to the aid of an ally whose territory or security is under threat.
- It has only been activated once, that too by the U.S. after the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks.
- Finland joined NATO last year and became its 31st member.
- North Atlantic Treaty Organization:
 - It is an intergovernmental political and military alliance of 32 North American and European countries.
 - It was constituted in 1949 with the North Atlantic Treaty, which regulates the functioning of NATO.
 - Its headquarters is located in Brussels, Belgium.

Thailand poised to become the first Southeast Asia country to allow same-sex marriage.

- Thailand's parliament passed a bill to give a nod to same-sex marriage.
- This bill will amend the Civil and Commercial Code of Thailand and replaced gendered terms like "husband and wife" with gender-neutral language such as "spouses" and "individuals".
- The bill has been passed with the approval of 400 of the 415 members of the House of Representatives. 10 members voted against the bill.
- The bill has to be passed through the upper house of Thailand's parliament.
- In December 2023, Thai lawmakers approved four draft bills concerning same-sex marriage.
- Taiwan was the first Asian country to legalise same-sex marriage in 2019.
- In November 2023, Nepal became the first South Asian nation to formally recognise and register a same-sex marriage.

Climate change indicators reached record levels in 2023: WMO

- The World Meteorological Organization (WMO) has declared 2023 as the warmest year on record, contributing to the warmest decade ever recorded from 2014 to 2023.
- According to the WMO's annual State of the Climate Report, the average surface temperature in 2023 was 1.45 degrees Celsius higher than the pre-industrial period average of 1850-1900.

"CURRENT AFFAIR"

- The global mean surface temperature during 2014-2023 was 1.2 degrees Celsius above the pre-industrial average.
- The report highlights alarming increases in greenhouse gas concentrations, with carbon dioxide, methane, and nitrous oxide reaching new records in 2022.
- In 2022, Carbon dioxide concentrations reached 417.9 parts per million, which is 150 per cent of the levels in the pre-industrial times.
- Methane concentration has reached 1,923 parts per billion, which is 264 per cent of pre-industrial levels.
- Nitrous oxide concentrations reached 335.8 parts per billion in 2022. It is 124 per cent of the pre-industrial level.
- Ocean heat content and sea level touched a record high and the rate of increase is accelerating.
- 70 per cent of Earth's area is covered by water and the rising greenhouse gases generate excess energy which accumulates in the form of heat.

Disposable e-cigarettes will be banned by New Zealand in a bid to prevent minors from taking up the habit.

- New Zealand said it would ban disposable e-cigarettes or vapes and increase financial penalties for those selling such products to minors.
- The move came less than a month after the government repealed a unique law to phase out tobacco smoking by imposing a lifetime ban on youth buying cigarettes.
- This unique law was enacted by the previous left-leaning government.
- Under the new laws, the government will impose fines of up to 100,000 New Zealand dollars (\$60,000) on retailers selling vapes to children under 18.
- While the government will impose a fine of 1,000 New Zealand dollars (\$600) on individual sellers.
- Other rules introduced would prevent e-cigarettes from being sold with images or catchy names that could attract youth.

1st Foreign Office Consultations between India and Mauritania was organised in Nouakchott.

- India and Mauritania held their inaugural Foreign Office Consultations in Nouakchott, where they engaged in discussions on various bilateral, regional, and global issues of mutual interest.
- Both countries agreed to convene the next round of consultations in New Delhi at a mutually convenient date.
- The consultations highlighted the significant increase in bilateral trade over the past three years, reaching nearly 378 million US dollars in 2022–2023 from 108 million US dollars in 2021–2022.
- In June 2021, India established its Resident Mission in Nouakchott to strengthen diplomatic ties.
- Additionally, India extended a Line of Credit (LOC) amounting to USD 21.8 million to Mauritania for projects related to drinking water and agro-industries.
- Major exports from India to Mauritania include cereals, plastics, cotton, ceramics, and iron and steel articles, while Mauritania exports iron and steel, ores, cotton, and electrical machinery to India.
- Nouakchott serves as Mauritania's capital and largest city, situated in Northwest Africa, bordered by the Atlantic Ocean to the west and Western Sahara to the north and northwest, with Algeria, Mali, and Senegal as its neighboring countries.

Venezuela became fifth largest crude oil supplier of India.

- In February 2024, Venezuela became fifth largest crude oil supplier of India.
- Venezuela is the country with the world's largest proven oil reserves (300 billion barrels).
- In January 2024, India became the largest buyer of crude oil from Venezuela.
- This happened after US removed sanctions on Venezuela for six months starting from 18 October 2023.
- However, the reimposition of US sanctions after April 18 may impact the trade.
- Until 2019, India was third largest buyer of crude oil from Venezuela after the US and China.
- Venezuela contributes only about 4-5% of India's overall imports.

India will double its financial support for Bhutan in the next five years.

- India has decided to double Bhutan's assistance from ₹5,000 crore in 2019-2024 to ₹10,000 crore till 2029.

"CURRENT AFFAIR"

- India and Bhutan inked seven agreements, on cooperation in energy, food safety, sports, space and research.
- India and Bhutan will work on initiatives for better air connectivity and rail links between Kokrajhar-Gelephu and Banarhat-Samtse and waterways navigation through Brahmaputra.
- Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) had received permission from the Election Commission to announce the grant of ₹10,000 crore for Bhutan.
- The financial assistance also includes India's support for Bhutan's economic stimulus package.
- India-Bhutan decided to boost the developmental partnership as well as deepen cultural linkages.

Vaughan Gething became the first Black leader of a government in the UK.

- Vaughan Gething has been elected the first minister of Wales.
- He became the first Black leader of a government in the U.K.
- He is elected government leader by members of the Welsh parliament. He secured 27 of 51 votes in the Legislature.
- He is the son of a Welsh father and a Zambian mother. He will take oath after the approval of King Charles III.
- Now, three of the UK's four governments have non-white leaders.
- Wales has a population of about 3 million. It is one of the four parts of the United Kingdom, along with England, Scotland and Northern Ireland.
- The British government is responsible for defence, foreign affairs and other UK-wide issues for these parts.

UN Security Council has demanded an immediate ceasefire in Gaza

- For the first time, the UN Security Council has demanded an immediate ceasefire in Gaza.
- On 25 March, an immediate ceasefire between Israel and Palestinian militants Hamas and the immediate and unconditional release of all hostages demanded by the United Nations Security Council.
- After the United States abstained from the vote, the remaining 14 council members voted for the resolution, which was proposed by the 10 elected members of the body.
- Washington had previously been against a ceasefire in the nearly six-month-old war in the Gaza Strip.
- It used its veto power to protect US ally Israel as it retaliated against Hamas for an October 7 attack that Israel says killed 1,200 people.
- But amid growing global pressure for a ceasefire in the war, which has killed more than 32,000 Palestinians, the US abstained from the vote on March 25.
- This allowed the Security Council to demand an immediate ceasefire for the Muslim fasting month of Ramadan, which ends in two weeks.
- The Security Council resolution "emphasizes the urgent need to strengthen the protection of civilians throughout the Gaza Strip and increase the flow of humanitarian assistance."

International Telecommunication Union elected India as co-chair of its Digital Innovation Board.

- India's telecom secretary Neeraj Mittal has been unanimously elected as the Co-Chair of the Digital Innovation Board of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU).
- The Digital Innovation Board of ITU has been formed under the aegis of the Innovation and Entrepreneurship Alliance for Digital Development.
- United Nations (UN) started the Innovation and Entrepreneurship Alliance for Digital Development to fulfil the needs of ITU members in the field of innovation.
- Digital Transformation Lab, Network of Acceleration Centres, and the Digital Innovation Board are the three main vehicles of the Innovation and Entrepreneurship Alliance.
- The Coalition has established a Digital Innovation Board to provide strategic guidance, expertise and support to its campaign to build critical local supporters and foster innovation and entrepreneurship in digital development to create a more inclusive and equitable digital future for all. Can be provided.
- 17 organizations from around the world have been selected by the International Telecommunication Union to host the Network of Acceleration Centres with the Global Innovation Centre at the ITU Area Office and Innovation Centre.

"CURRENT AFFAIR"

- Neeraj Mittal also invited ITU to host the next meeting of the Digital Innovation Board in India alongside the World Telecommunication Standardization Assembly.

First Resolution on Artificial Intelligence was approved by the UN General Assembly.

- The resolution gives global support to an international effort to ensure that powerful new technologies benefit all countries, and respect human rights.
- The resolution was adopted unanimously without a vote, which was sponsored by the United States and co-sponsored by 123 countries.
- This means that the resolution has the support of all 193 UN member states.
- To negotiate the text of the resolution adopted on March 22, the United States worked with more than 120 countries at the United Nations, including Russia, China, and Cuba over the past few months.
- The resolution aims to bridge the digital divide between developed rich countries and poor developing countries and ensure they are all at the table in discussions on AI.
- Additionally, it also aims to ensure that developing countries have the technology and capabilities to reap the benefits of AI.
- This includes detecting diseases, predicting floods, helping farmers, and training the next generation of workers.

NATIONAL NEWS

The government notified the Cinematograph (Certification) Rules, 2024.

- To improve the process of certification of films for public exhibition, the Cinematograph (Certification) Rules, 2024 have been notified by the government.
- The main aim of the rule is to streamline and modernise the film certification process.
- Central Board of Film Certification (CBFC) has undertaken extensive consultations with filmmakers, cinema owners, disability rights organisations, non-government organisations, and film industry bodies to ensure an all-encompassing and all-inclusive approach.
- The new notified rules will ensure transparency, efficiency and ease of doing business for the film industry.
- The new rules have further subdivided age-based categories of certification into three age-based categories: seven years (UA 7+), 13 years (UA 13+), and 16 years (UA 16+), instead of 12 years.
- As per the new rules, one-third of the CBFC Board members will be women. The new rules will allow for the film to be screened expeditiously for certification.
- The government has also notified the guidelines for the accessibility of persons with hearing and visual impairment to films.

Para archer and Arjuna Awardee Ms. Sheetal Devi will be the National Divyanganganjan Icon of Election Commission of India

- Iconic para archer and Arjuna awardee Sheetal Devi has been declared a national icon in the PwD category.
- The Election Commission of India (ECI) in collaboration with the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) organized an exhibition cricket match between the Cricket Association of India (IDCA) team and the Delhi and District Cricket Association (DDCA) team.
- On this, Sheetal Devi said that her age is just 17 years. Next time she will also participate in the festival of elections by making votes.
- He thanked the Election Commission for being made the PWD icon. He inspired the countrymen to vote in voting.

Jammu & Kashmir government has added 15 new castes in the Other Backward Classes (OBCs).

- It has approved 10% reservation for tribes, which include Paharis.

"CURRENT AFFAIR"

- The Social Welfare Department's proposal to amend the Jammu and Kashmir Reservation Rules, 2005 has been approved by the J&K LG Manoj Sinha.
- The overall reservation for Scheduled Tribes (STs) has increased to 20%.
- Four new tribes have been added to Scheduled Tribes Order as applicable to the J&K by the Parliament.
- These new tribes are Pahari Ethnic Group, Paddari Tribe, Kolis and Gadda Brahmins.
- The Administrative Council, led by J&K LG Manoj Sinha has approved an equal and separate percentage of reservation for both already notified and now newly added tribes.
- The Council increased reservation in favour of OBCs to 8%. Earlier, J&K had 4% reservation for OBCs.

Operation Indravati has been launched by India

- India has launched Operation Indravati to evacuate Indian Nationals from Haiti to the Dominican Republic amidst escalating violence and gang wars in Haiti.
- External Affairs Minister Dr. S Jaishankar confirmed the successful evacuation of 12 Indians on 21 March.
- The situation in Haiti worsened after violent attacks erupted across Port-au-Prince on 29 February, leading to a state of emergency declared on March 3.
- Currently, Haiti's acting Prime Minister, Ariel Henry, is in exile in Puerto Rico. Haiti is situated on the island of Hispaniola in the Caribbean Sea, while the Dominican Republic shares the island and is bordered by the Atlantic Ocean to the north. Its capital is Santo Domingo.

Ministry of Information and Broadcasting has announced guidelines for betting and gambling platforms.

- The Ministry has advised all social media influencers and endorsers to refrain from advertising or promoting of offshore online betting and gambling platforms.
- The Ministry has also advised them to refrain from surrogate advertisements of offshore online betting and gambling platforms.
- Further, online advertisement intermediaries have been advised by the Ministry not to target such promotional content towards Indian audiences.
- Ministry has advised social media intermediaries to carry out sensitization efforts among their users to refrain from publishing such content.
- Failure to comply with the advisory may lead to proceedings under the provisions of the Consumer Protection Act, 2019.
- The proceedings may include removal or disabling of social media posts or accounts. The proceedings may also include penal action under the applicable statutes.
- The Ministry has reiterated the advisory issued by the Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA).
- Section 79 of the IT Act, 2000 provides for exemption from liability of intermediaries for third party information.
- However, according to sub section (3)(b) of section 79, the exemption from liability shall not apply in certain cases.

Uttarakhand becomes first state to implement UCC

- President Droupadi Murmu has approved the Uniform Civil Code Uttarakhand Bill, 2024, making Uttarakhand the first state in India to implement the Uniform Civil Code (UCC).
- The approval from the President paves the way for the implementation of the UCC Act in Uttarakhand, once the state government issues the necessary notification.
- Shailesh Bagauli, the secretary to CM Pushkar Singh Dhami, confirmed the development, indicating that the bill's approval marks a significant milestone in the legal framework of Uttarakhand.

India's 1st Green Hydrogen Plant

- India's 1st Green Hydrogen Plant in the Stainless Steel Sector has been inaugurated at Jindal Stainless Limited, Hisar, Haryana.
- It has been inaugurated by Union Steel Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia.
- This will be the world's first off-grid Green Hydrogen plant for the stainless steel industry.

"CURRENT AFFAIR"

- This will be the world's first Green Hydrogen plant with rooftop and floating solar.
- It will cut down carbon emissions by about 2,700 Metric Tons per annum.
- It will cut down 54,000 tons of carbon dioxide emissions during the next two decades.
- While speaking on the occasion, Union Minister highlighted that India has evolved from a net importer to net exporter and aims to become world's largest producer of crude steel.
- The National Green Hydrogen Mission was launched in 2023.
- It was launched with an outlay of about twenty thousand crore rupees.
- It was launched to make India a Global Hub for the production, usage and export of Green Hydrogen and its derivatives.

'One Nation, One Election' panel under the leadership of Ram Nath Kovind submitted its report to the President.

- Former President Ram Nath Kovind-led high-level committee on 'One Nation, One Election' submitted its report to the President on March 14.
- The committee recommended a three-tier simultaneous election for panchayats, assemblies, and Parliament.
- The panel suggested that the Lok Sabha and State Assembly elections should be held simultaneously and then municipality and panchayat polls should be conducted within 100 days.
- The 18,626-page report is the outcome of extensive consultations with stakeholders, experts, and research over 191 days.
- As per the report, simultaneous polls will foster the development process and social cohesion. This will deepen the foundation of democracy.
- The panel recommended to create a common electoral roll and voter ID cards by the Election Commission of India in association with state election authorities.
- The panel also recommended amendments to five articles of the constitution for the simultaneous polls.
- In the case of Hung House, a no-confidence motion or fresh election should be conducted for the new Lok Sabha or state Assembly for the unexpired term.
- The committee to give recommendations on 'One Nation, One Election' was constituted on September 2, 2023.
- Ghulam Nabi Azad, Amit Shah, N.K. Singh, Subhash Kashyap, Sanjay Kothari and Harish Salve are the members of this committee.
- Law Minister Arjun Ram Meghwal was a Special Invitee to the Committee.

Startup Mahakumbh started on 18 March 2024 in New Delhi.

- It is one of the largest events that showcase India's startup ecosystem.
- It will continue till the 20th of March 2024 at Bharat Mandapam.
- It will have pavilions on AI, B2B, agritech, deeptech, climate tech, fintech, gaming, esports, incubators and accelerators.
- This event aims to connect startups with venture capitalists, investors and likely corporate partners.
- This event will be attended by over 2000 startups, 30000 future entrepreneurs, and 50000 business visitors and over 500 incubators and delegations from ten countries.
- Bharat Innovates is the central theme of the event.
- It is led by combined efforts of ASSOCHAM, nasscom, Bootstrap Incubation & Advisory Foundation, TiE and Indian Venture and Alternate Capital Association (IVCA).
- DPIIT Secretary Rajesh Kumar Singh said India has third largest startup ecosystem.

Lok Sabha elections will be held in 7 phases from April 19.

- On 16 March, the election schedule for the general elections in 2024 as well as assembly elections in four states was announced by the Election Commission.
- The counting of votes will take place on June 4.
- In addition, the election schedule for the assembly elections in Sikkim, Odisha, Andhra Pradesh and Arunachal Pradesh was also announced by the Election Commission.
- There are 97 crore registered voters in India and more than 10.5 lakh polling stations manned by 1.5 crore personnel. There will be 1.82 crore first-time voters in this election.
- On June 16, 2024, the tenure of the current Lok Sabha is ending.

"CURRENT AFFAIR"

- There are 543 Lok Sabha seats in the country, out of which 84 parliamentary constituencies are reserved for Scheduled Castes and 47 for Scheduled Tribes.
- The Model Code of Conduct (MCC) has come into force with the announcement of the election schedule.
- MCC is a set of guidelines issued to regulate political parties and candidates before elections.
- The rules cover issues relating to speeches, polling day, polling booths, portfolios, the content of election manifestos, processions, and general conduct, so as to ensure free and fair elections.

India, Brazil hold first '2+2' defence and foreign ministerial dialogue

- India and Brazil convened their first-ever '2+2' Defence and Foreign Ministerial Dialogue, marking a milestone in their strategic partnership.
- The dialogue aims to enhance collaboration in key areas including energy, technology, and counter-terrorism, underscoring the significance of cooperation in these domains.
- Led by officials from both nations, the dialogue involved participation from defence and foreign ministers, alongside their counterparts, addressing strategic and security concerns to strengthen bilateral ties.

A database has been launched by India to record crimes against UN peacekeepers.

- This new database has been designed to record crimes against UN peacekeepers and to monitor progress in holding perpetrators accountable.
- The launch of this database was announced at a meeting of the India-led 'Group of Friends' (GOF).
- This database will act as an online repository, which will empower the Secretariat Missions.
- It will help member countries to monitor and address cases of malicious acts against peacekeepers.
- This database has been sponsored by India. It is hosted on the Unite Aware platform.
- In 2022, 'Group of Friends' (GOF) was launched to promote accountability for crimes against the Blue Helmets.
- India, Bangladesh, Egypt, France, Morocco and Nepal are co-chairs of the GOF. It has 40 members.

AFSPA extended by the Center for six months in eight districts of Nagaland.

- The Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act, 1958 extended by the Central Government to eight districts of Nagaland and 21 police stations in five districts.
- The Central government declared them as 'disturbed areas' for a period of six months with effect from April 1, 2024, unless withdrawn earlier.
- The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) announced through a notification that the AFSPA has been extended for another six months in Dimapur, Newland, Chumaukedima, Mon, Kiphire, Noklak, Phek and Peren districts of Nagaland.
- Additionally, AFSPA has been extended to areas under the jurisdiction of 21 police stations in five districts of Nagaland.
- This includes six police stations each in Zunheboto and Mokokchung districts, five police stations in Kohima, three police stations in Wokha, and Yanglok police station in Longleng district.
- Earlier, the Center had declared Nagaland as a 'disturbed area' for six months from October 1, 2023, in the exercise of powers conferred by Section 3 of the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act, 1958 (28 of 1958).
- It included eight districts and 21 Police Stations in five other districts of the state of the state.
- Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act (AFSPA):
- This is a Parliamentary Act that was introduced in 1958.
- The Act gives the Armed Forces special powers of search and arrest and many others for the maintenance of public order.

STATE NEWS

'Mission 414' campaign has been launched by the Election Commission

- 'Mission 414' campaign has been launched by the Election Commission in Himachal Pradesh.
- To increase voter turnout, the 'Mission 414' campaign has been launched by the Election Commission in Himachal Pradesh.
- The main aim of the campaign is to maximise voter turnout in 414 polling stations which registered less than 60% voting in the last Lok Sabha polls.
- Special invitation cards made by children would be given to prospective voters.
- The average voter turnout in Himachal Pradesh in the 2019 Lok Sabha election was 72.42%.
- In Himachal Pradesh, 1,38,918 first-time voters will cast their vote for four Lok Sabha seats of Hamirpur, Kangra, Mandi, and Shimla (SC).
- The expenditure limit of candidates for Lok Sabha polls would be ₹95 lakh.
- Tashigang polling station in Lahaul and Spiti situated at an altitude of 15,256 feet is the highest polling booth in India.

UP Board of Madrasa Education Act declared 'unconstitutional' by Allahabad HC

- The Uttar Pradesh Madrasa Education Board Act, 2004, declared "unconstitutional" and a violation of the principle of secularism by the Allahabad High Court.
- The Allahabad High Court asked the state government to accommodate the current students in the formal schooling system.
- On a writ petition filed by a person named Anshuman Singh Rathore, the division bench of Justice Vivek Chaudhary and Justice Subhash Vidyarthi of the Lucknow bench of the court declared the law ultra vires.
- Petitioner objected to the fact that Madrasas are managed by the Minority Welfare Department instead of the Education Department.
- The petitioner submitted that the Madarsa Act violates the principles of secularism, which is the basic structure of the Constitution and fails to provide quality compulsory education up to the age of 14 years/Class-VIII as mandated under Article 21-A.
- They fail to provide universal and quality school education to all the children studying in Madarsa.
- There are approximately 25,000 madrassas in Uttar Pradesh of which 16,500 are recognized by the Uttar Pradesh Madrasa Education Board.
- Of these, 560 madrassas receive grants from the government. Besides, there are 8,500 unrecognized madrassas in the state.

Uttar Pradesh Police introduces 'Trinetra' App 2.0, marking a digital policing revolution in the state.

- The introduction of Trinetra app 2.0 marks a significant advancement in policing for Uttar Pradesh.
- This cutting-edge platform, tailored for use by the state's police force, promises to revolutionize crime prevention and investigation.
- With over 9.32 lakh criminal records already digitized, the app aids officers in identifying suspects during security checks. Available to all police personnel from the rank of Inspector and above, Trinetra App 2.0 provides comprehensive access to crime-related information, including FIR details, interrogation reports, and audio recordings.
- Moreover, its innovative features, such as voice sample identification and facial recognition technology, further enhance its utility in criminal apprehension and the search for missing individuals.

Keyi Panyor became the 26th district of Arunachal Pradesh.

- Keyi Panyor became the 26th district of Arunachal Pradesh by carving out the areas from Lower Subansiri.
- The headquarters of this district will be Ter Gapin-Sam Sarth.
- The formation of the Keyi Panyor district is the beginning of a new era of development and progress.
- This new district has been created on demand by the people of the Nyishi community.

"CURRENT AFFAIR"

- Arunachal Pradesh:
- It is a state in northeast India that was formed from the North-East Frontier Agency (NEFA) region.
- It was declared a state on February 20, 1987.
- Itanagar is its capital and largest town.
- As per the 2011 census, Arunachal Pradesh has a population of 1,383,727 and an area of 83,743 square kilometres.

Maharashtra Renames Ahmednagar as 'Ahilyanagar'

- Maharashtra government decided to rename Ahmednagar District as Ahilya Nagar and Velha Tehsil as Rajgad.
- The state cabinet of the Maharashtra government has decided to rename Ahmednagar District as Ahilya Nagar.
- Ahilyanagar has been named after Ahilyabai Holkar. She was the most able ruler of Malwa province in the 18th century.
- Ahilyabai was born on May 31, 1725, in the Ahmednagar district of Maharashtra.
- Velha tehsil has been renamed as Rajgad. It was the first capital of the Maratha Empire under Shivaji.
- The state cabinet also approved the renaming of eight suburban railway stations in Mumbai.
- Curry Road station has been renamed as Lalbaug while Sandhurst Road station will be now called Dongri.
- Marine Lines renamed as Mumbadevi, Charni Road as Girgaon, Cotton Green as Kalachowki, Dockyard as Mazgaon, King's Circle as Tirthankar Parswanath and Mumbai Central as Nana Jagannath Shankarsheth.

An alliance for Global Gender Equity and Equality has been launched by India.

- The logo and website for the Alliance for Global Good – Gender Equity and Equality have been released by Union Minister Smriti Irani.
- Bill Gates, Co-Chair of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, and Chandrajit Banerjee, Director General, the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) were also present at the event.
- The Alliance for Global Good: Gender Equity and Equality was launched at the Davos 2024 summit. It is a significant step in the global pursuit of gender equality.
- The main aim of the alliance is to consolidate global best practices, foster knowledge exchange, and attract investments in women's health, education, and entrepreneurship.
- The logo of the alliance symbolizes the essence of equality and equity. It embodies intellect, wisdom, and understanding.
- It is inspired by Lord Ganesh, who symbolises intellect, wisdom, and understanding.

4th women's policy unveiled by Maharashtra on Women's Day.

- This policy focuses on the overall development of women and the effective implementation of related schemes.
- On 8 March, Women and Child Development Minister Aditi Tatkare announced this policy during the golden jubilee year of the Women's Economic Development Corporation.
- Maharashtra has become the first state in India to launch a women's policy.
- Three-level committees have been formed to review the implementation of this policy, which includes a high-power committee chaired by the Chief Minister.
- It includes a state task force chaired by the Minister of Women and Child Development and a district-level committee chaired by the Guardian Minister.
- Previously, the government has announced three women's policies, which aim to promote women's development.
- In 1994, the first women's policy of Maharashtra state was announced, the second in 2001, and the third in 2014.

Operation Kamdhenu has been launched by J&K police.

- To curb the issue of cattle smuggling, J&K police launched "Operation Kamdhenu".
- A comprehensive strategy will be devised to scrutinize the activities of cattle smugglers.

"CURRENT AFFAIR"

- Its main aim is to tackle not only the smuggling activities but to also catch the masterminds behind these illicit operations.
- Additionally, the assets of the accused will be assessed as part of the investigation process.
- Under this operation, engine and chassis numbers, mobile numbers, and Aadhar card details of vehicles involved in smuggling will be documented.
- SP Rural Jammu, DSP Headquarters Samba and DSP (Dar) Kathua will oversee the implementation of Operation Kamdhenu.

Karnataka and the World Economic Forum joined hands to set up a centre for Artificial Intelligence.

- It will be the only World Economic Forum's centre dedicated to AI in India.
- It will be part of the WEF Centre for the Fourth Industrial Revolution (C4IR).
- This centre will play a key role in establishing industry-academia networks and facilitating the exchange of technological trends.
- It will also help in fostering research collaboration, and actively responding to global issues.
- Its main goal is to contribute to the global dialogue on the ethical and practical dimensions of AI.
- It will foster collaboration and networking opportunities for startups within the AI domain.
- Bengaluru is considered one of the top five cities globally for Artificial Intelligence (AI).

SPORTS

Rachin Ravindra became the youngest player to receive the Sir Richard Hadlee Medal.

- Rachin Ravindra made history as the youngest recipient of the prestigious Sir Richard Hadlee Medal, receiving it at the age of 24.
- His outstanding achievements in cricket were further highlighted when he was named the ICC's Emerging Player of the Year for 2023 and also honored with the Best Male Cricketer of the Year award in New Zealand.
- This accolade follows in the footsteps of Daryl Mitchell, the 2022 recipient. Instituted in 2011 by New Zealand Cricket, the Sir Richard Hadlee Medal commemorates the legendary New Zealand cricketer and stands as a symbol of excellence in the sport.

Royal Challengers Bangalore won their first Women's Premier League title.

- Royal Challengers Bangalore clinched their maiden Women's Premier League (WPL) title in a thrilling showdown against Delhi Capitals on 17th March.
- The final, held at the Arun Jaitley Stadium in New Delhi, saw Delhi Capitals set a target of 114 runs, only to be chased down by RCB with 8 wickets to spare, reaching 115 for 2 in 19.3 overs.
- Sophie Molineux's stellar performance earned her the well-deserved title of Player of the Match.
- This victory marked a significant milestone for Royal Challengers Bangalore in the WPL, coming after a successful season that showcased their talent and determination.
- The Women's Premier League, a T20 cricket tournament owned and operated by the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI), saw its second season featuring five competitive teams.

Paris 2024 Olympics

- Sharath Kamal named as the flag bearer and Mary Kom as the chef de mission at the Paris 2024 Olympics.
- The Indian Olympic Association (IOA) on March 21 announced that top table tennis player Sharath Kamal will be the flag bearer for the Indian team for the upcoming Paris 2024 Olympics.
- Apart from this, Olympic bronze medalist MC Mary Kom has been named as the Chef de Mission for the Summer Games.
- Kamal has won the National Table Tennis Championships a record 10 times and has also won 13 medals in the CWG.
- MC Mary Kom is the first female boxer in boxing history to win six world titles.

"CURRENT AFFAIR"

- Additionally, Gagan Narang has been appointed head of shooting village operations for the Paris Olympics.
- Narang is a bronze medalist in the 10-meter air rifle event at the 2012 London Olympics.
- The Paris Olympics is scheduled to take place from July 26 to August 11.

Achanta Sharath Kamal to be India's flagbearer at Paris Olympics

- Table tennis player and Commonwealth Games champion Achanta Sharath Kamal (41) was named as the flagbearer of the Indian contingent for the Paris Olympics.
- Six-time world champion MC Mary Kom has been appointed as the head of the Indian contingent.
- Olympic bronze medallist Gagan Narang has been appointed to operate the shooting range.

India makes new Guinness World Record in Kabaddi with participation of 128 players

- India made history by making a Guinness World record with participation of 128 players, on The World Kabaddi Day, 24 March.
- This new history in the field of Kabaddi game has been written at Tau Devi Lal Stadium in Panchkula district.
- An MOU recently signed between Holistic International Pravasi Sports Association (HIPSA) and the Government of Haryana, for the promotion of Kabaddi, globally, was one of the main reasons to choose India as a venue and Haryana in particular, for the event.
- While Guinness had set the record benchmark for 84 players to break the record, the organizers had challenged the record, with an attempt for 154 players.

Virat Kohli became the first Indian to score 12,000 runs in T20 cricket

- Virat Kohli became the first Indian cricketer to score 12,000 runs in T20 cricket during the opening match of the 17th edition of the Indian Premier League (IPL) between Royal Challengers Bangalore and Chennai Super Kings.
- Kohli achieved this milestone after facing the ninth ball of the next over, bowled by Sri Lankan captain Mahesh Thikshana, by taking two runs, thus completing his 12,000 T20 runs.
- With this accomplishment, Kohli solidifies his status as one of the most prolific batsmen in T20 cricket, having scored 8 centuries and 91 half-centuries in his T20 career for India, Delhi, India A, and Royal Challengers Bangalore.

Vinay won Gold at para powerlifting World Cup in Egypt

- Vinay, hailing from Gorakhpur, UP, clinched gold at the Para Powerlifting World Cup in Egypt.
- The 18-year-old athlete dominated the 59kg youth category, lifting a remarkable 120kg weight to secure victory.
- Vinay's achievement marks a significant milestone as he becomes the first para powerlifter from Uttar Pradesh to attain such success on the global stage.

AWARDS

PM Modi to receive Bhutan's highest civilian award

- The Order of the Druk Gyalpo, Bhutan's highest civilian award, will be presented by Bhutan's King Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck to PM Narendra Modi.
- PM Modi has arrived in Bhutan on March 22 for a 24-hour State visit.
- Bhutan's highest civilian award was announced in 2021 in recognition of PM Modi's efforts towards strengthening India-Bhutan relations, particularly India's effort to provide 500,000 doses of COVID-19 vaccines.
- PM Modi also held talks with Prime Minister Tshering Tobgay and exchanged MoUs on which they have agreed upon cooperation on energy conservation and food safety standards.
- Both leaders also discuss Bhutan's boundary talks with China including plans for the disputed parts of Doklam in Bhutan's West.

"CURRENT AFFAIR"

- Bhutan's plans for its 13th Five Year Plan (FYP 2024-2029) and India's development assistance for various projects were also discussed.
- He also inaugurated a "Mother and Child Hospital" in Thimphu
- India is Bhutan's top trading partner. India contributed 73% of the total external grants of Bhutan.

Aviation Week Laureates Award was presented to ISRO

- Aviation Week Laureates Award was presented to ISRO for its achievements in the historic Chandrayaan-3 mission.
- Sripriya Ranganathan, Deputy Ambassador at the Indian Embassy in the US, received the award on behalf of ISRO.
- The Aviation Week Laureates Award is known for recognizing exceptional achievements within the aerospace industry.
- With a cost of a modest \$75 million, this mission achieved a historic milestone by making a successful landing at the lunar South Pole.
- Chandrayaan-3 confirmed the presence of water in this region, a discovery that has profound implications for future lunar exploration and the possibility of sustaining life on the Moon.
- The recognition by Aviation Week reflects international appreciation and respect for ISRO's contribution to space exploration.
- Earlier, the Leif Erikson Lunar Prize was given to ISRO from the Husavik Museum for its unwavering commitment and significant contribution to lunar exploration.

First "Global Inequality Research Award" presented to Bina Agarwal and James Boyce.

- The World Inequality Lab (WIL) has joined hands with Sciences Po's Center for Research on Social Inequalities (CRIS) to award the first edition of the Global Inequality Research Award (GiRA).
- The purpose of the award is to honor researchers from all disciplines who have made significant contributions to the understanding of global inequalities.
- The Global Inequality Research Prize will be awarded every two years.
- Economist Bina Agrawal (University of Manchester), is the author of leading work on gender inequalities, environmental governance, ecofeminism, and environmental inequalities.
- Economist James K. Boyce (University of Massachusetts Amherst), is the author of a seminal work on the relationship between social inequality and environmental degradation.
- He has made a major contribution to the structure of the field of environmental political economy.
- GiRA wants to acknowledge leading scholarship in the area of global inequality understood from two major perspectives:
- First, the perspective of inequality research is being conducted in all corners of the world.
- Second, the perspective of inequality is a complex phenomenon that requires light from all angles to be fully understood and ultimately mitigated.

Renowned philanthropist Ratan Tata was honoured with the PV Narasimha Rao Memorial Award for philanthropic work

- Ratan Tata has been awarded the prestigious PV Narasimha Rao Memorial Award for his exceptional philanthropic contributions, highlighting his significant impact on various communities across India.
- This recognition underscores Tata's unwavering commitment to social welfare and humanitarian causes, as evidenced by his generous donations, both at an individual level and through Tata Trusts.
- Ratan Tata's philanthropic initiatives have covered diverse sectors such as healthcare, education, rural development, and environmental sustainability, reflecting his broad vision and deep concern for societal well-being. His philanthropic endeavors have earned him widespread admiration and respect, nationally and internationally.

Renowned poet Prabha Varma selected for Saraswati Samman for the year 2023

- Renowned poet Prabha Varma has been selected for the Saraswati Samman for the year 2023 for his work in Malayalam language.
- He has been considered for this award for his Malayalam language poetry work, Roudra Sathwikam and also for his contribution to the literature during the period 2013 to 2022. The honour carries, apart from a citation, a plaque and an award money of fifteen lakh rupees.

“CURRENT AFFAIR”

- Roudra Sathwikam is a poetic work of Prabha Varma in Malyalam language which was published in 2022. The novel in poetic verse probes the conflict between power and politics, individual and state, art and power in a unique manner.
- Instituted in 1991, the Saraswati Samman is one of the most prestigious literary awards in the country.

Greeshma Kuthar and Ritika Chopra received the Chameli Devi Jain Award 2024.

- Greeshma Kuthar and Ritika Chopra were honored with the prestigious Chameli Devi Jain Award 2024 for Outstanding Woman Media Person of the Year.
- This esteemed accolade, established by the Media Foundation in 1980, recognizes the remarkable contributions of Indian women journalists in various fields such as social development, politics, gender justice, and conflict reporting.
- Selected from a pool of over 65 entries by an independent jury chaired by senior journalist Radhika Ramaseshan, alongside Mariyam Alavi and Richard Mahapatra, the winners were lauded for their exceptional journalistic endeavors.
- Grishma Kuthar, an independent multimedia journalist renowned for her in-depth research and investigative reporting in conflict-ridden regions like Manipur, shares the honor with Ritika Chopra, Chief of the National Bureau and National Education Editor at The Indian Express, Delhi.
- The award ceremony, held on March 15, celebrates the legacy of Chameli Devi Jain, a freedom fighter and social reformer, and highlights the crucial role of women journalists in shaping public discourse and championing pressing issues within society.

Sangeet Natak Akademi Awards for 2022 and 2023

- President Droupadi Murmu conferred Sangeet Natak Akademi Awards for 2022 and 2023 in New Delhi.
- She conferred these Sangeet Natak Akademi Awards for 2022 and 2023 to ninety-four eminent artists (two joint award).
- The awards have been given in the fields of music, dance, drama, folk and tribal arts, puppetry and allied theatre art forms.
- She also bestowed the Sangeet Natak Akademi Fellowship (Akademi Ratna) to seven artists.
- Sangeet Natak Akademi Fellowship is the highest honour, which is given to artists in the field of performing arts for their outstanding contribution.
- The Akademi Awards have been given since 1952.
- Sangeet Natak Akademi Fellows receive three lakh rupees. Akademi Award winners receive one lakh rupees

TM Krishna and Neena Prasad selected for the Sangita Kalanidhi and Nritya Kalanidhi awards respectively.

- The Sangita Kalanidhi Award of the Music Academy for 2024 will be given to Noted Carnatic vocalist and Magsaysay award winner Thodur Madabusi Krishna.
- Considered the equivalent of the Oscars for Carnatic music, the award is given by the Music Academy in Chennai.
- Dr. Neena Prasad will receive the Nritya Kalanidhi Award 2024.
- The Mridangam player Parasala Ravi (V. Raveendran Nair) and vocalist Geetha Raja will receive the Sangita Kala Acharya Awards.
- Thiruvaiyyaru Brothers S. Narasimhan and S. Venkatesan will receive TTK Awards.
- TTK Award will also be presented to violinist H.K. Narasimhamurthy.
- Dr. Margaret Bastin will receive the Musicologist Award.
- The academic sessions of the 98th Annual Conference and Concerts of The Music Academy will be presided over by the Sangita Kalanidhi awardee.
- It will be held between December 15, 2024, and January 1, 2025.
- Sangita Kalanidhi awardee will receive the award, together with those selected for the Sangita Kala Acharya, the TTK, and the Musicologist awards at the Sadas on January 1, 2025.
- On January 3, 2025, the Nritya Kalanidhi Award winner will receive the award at the inauguration of the Music Academy's 18th Annual Dance Festival.

"CURRENT AFFAIR"

COP28 President, Dr. Sultan Al Jaber Receives Leadership Award at CERAWeek by S&P Global 2024

- Dr. Sultan Al Jaber receives CERAWeek Leadership Award for COP28 presidency.
- UAE Consensus, led by Dr. Al Jaber, aims for global climate action.
- Award highlights Dr. Al Jaber's leadership in achieving Paris Agreement goals.
- COP28's inclusivity key to success in global energy transformation.
- CERAWeek 2024 focuses on multidimensional energy transition strategies.

Indian Scientist Prof Jayant Murthy Honoured with Asteroid Name

- Renowned Indian astrophysicist Prof. Jayant Murthy honored by IAU with asteroid name (215884) Jayantmurthy for pioneering work in ultraviolet astronomy and space missions.
- Asteroid previously known as "2005 EX296", now named after Prof. Murthy, orbits the Sun between Mars and Jupiter, completing one revolution every 3.3 years.
- Recognition highlights Murthy's contributions to NASA's New Horizons mission, which studied Pluto in detail during its 2015 flyby and ventured into the Kuiper Belt.
- Murthy's research focuses on measuring cosmic ultraviolet background radiation, best done from the outer Solar System to minimize interference from the Sun and interplanetary medium.

Michel Talagrand has won the 2024 Abel prize

- Michel Talagrand has been awarded the 2024 Abel Prize for his ground breaking work in probability theory and understanding randomness.
- Talagrand, based at the French National Centre for Scientific Research (CNRS), has focused on characterizing extremes in stochastic systems throughout his four-decade career.
- The Abel Prize is often referred to as the Nobel Prize of mathematics and recognizes exceptional contributions to the field.

DEFENCE

India-US Joint Military Exercise "EX TIGER TRIUMPH – 24"

- Exercise Tiger Triumph-24 is being held from 18 to 31 March 2024 on the Eastern Seaboard in the US.
- It is a bilateral tri-Service Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) Exercise between India and US.
- This exercise aims to develop interoperability for HADR operations.
- It also aims to refine Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) to enable coordination between forces of US and India.
- Harbour phase of the exercise will be organised from 18 March to 25 March. After harbour phase, sea phase will start.
- In the exercise, Indian Navy Ships and aircraft, Indian Army personnel and vehicles and Indian Air Force aircraft and helicopters would take part along with the Rapid Action Medical Team.
- US Navy Ships and troops of the US Marine Corps and US Army would represent the US.

Indian Army's New Tech Unit STEAG

- The Indian Army has set up a specialized technology unit called Signals Technology Evaluation and Adaptation Group (STEAG) to research and evaluate next-generation communication technologies.
- The aim is to develop advanced communication capabilities for defence applications and future warfare.
- STEAG will focus on studying and adapting technologies like:
 - ✓ Artificial Intelligence
 - ✓ 5G and 6G networks
 - ✓ Machine Learning
 - ✓ Quantum Technologies

"CURRENT AFFAIR"

Joint Military Exercise "LAMITIYE-2024" is scheduled to take place from March 18th to 27th.

- A contingent from the Indian Army will participate in the 10th edition of the Joint Military Exercise "LAMITIYE" with Seychelles Defence Forces (SDF).
- Exercise "LAMITIYE-2024" is significant for fostering cooperation between India and Seychelles.
- The term 'LAMITIYE' means 'Friendship' in the Creole language.
- 45 personnel from the renowned GORKHA RIFLES of the Indian Army are taking part in this exercise.
- The main aim of the exercise is to improve interoperability in Sub-conventional Operations within Semi-Urban environments.
- Participants will engage in different activities, including Field Training Exercises, combat discussions, lectures, demonstrations, and a Validation Exercise.
- Both armies seek to elevate their proficiency in tackling contemporary security challenges.

Naval exercise "Cutlass Express" – 24 was held at Port Victoria, Seychelles.

- The Indian Navy with INS Tir participated in the naval exercise "Cutlass Express".
- The naval exercise was organized from 26th February to 8th March 2024.
- In the exercise, the Indian Navy actively engaged with 16 friendly foreign countries.
- Visit Board Search and Seizure (VBSS) procedures, Diving operations, and training in theoretical and practical aspects of Maritime Interdiction Operations were part of this exercise.
- During the exercise, the Indian divers along with US and Seychelles divers participated in the joint diving operations.
- Cutlass Express is a multinational maritime exercise. It is sponsored by the US African Command.
- Its main objective is to strengthen maritime security and cooperation in the East African Coast and West Indian Ocean region.

'Bharat Shakti' - a Tri-Services Firing and Manoeuvre Exercise was held in Pokhran, Rajasthan.

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, and Army Chief General Manoj Pande witness the 'Bharat Shakti' - a Tri-Services Firing and Manoeuvre Exercise.
- The exercise was held for 50 minutes at Rajasthan's Pokhran field firing range.
- LCA Tejas combat aircraft, ALH Mk-IV helicopter, Arjun main battle tank, K-9 Vajra self-propelled howitzer, and the Dhanush and Sharang artillery gun systems were showcased at this exercise.
- Pinaka's multi-barrel rocket launcher system and a swarm of drones left the audience spellbound.
- 'Bharat Shakti' is the first of its kind exercise on such a large scale.
- 'Bharat Shakti' showed India's resilience, innovation and domestic defence capabilities on the global stage.

"Sea Defenders-2024" conducted between the US Coast Guard and the Indian Coast Guard.

- On 07 March, United States Coast Guard Ship Bertholf had arrived at Port Blair for joint exercises to strengthen the bilateral cooperation.
- The joint exercise codenamed "Sea Defenders-2024" was conducted off the coast of Port Blair on 09-10 March 2024.
- During the exercise, scenarios involving piracy and challenging asymmetric threats were simulated.
- In this, exercises like simulated drone attacks on commercial and merchant ships, joint maritime search and rescue operations, firefighting, disposal of marine pollution, and drug prevention were conducted.
- Additionally, a simulated medical evacuation procedure was also conducted to increase preparedness in emergency situations.
- The Legend-class United States Coast Guard Cutter (USCGC) Bertholf is equipped with advanced technology and weapons, including a helicopter landing pad, state-of-the-art sensors, and communications equipment.
- High-level interactions between these maritime agencies of the two countries have been a regular activity towards maintaining professional relations.
- Previously, the US Coast Guard ship Midget visited Chennai on 22 September 2022.

"CURRENT AFFAIR"

IMT TRILAT exercise

- INS Tir and INS Sujatha will participate in the upcoming second edition of the India – Mozambique – Tanzania (IMT) Trilateral (Trilat) exercise. It is a joint maritime exercise taking place from 21-29 Mar 24.
- The first exercise of IMT Trilat took place on October 22, in which INS Tarkash had participation with the navies of Tanzania and Mozambique.
- The current version of the exercise is planned in two phases.
- As part of the harbour phase scheduled from 21-24 Mar 24, naval ships Tir and Sujata will engage with respective navies at the ports of Zanzibar in Tanzania and Maputo in Mozambique.
- This phase will begin with a planning conference followed by joint harbour training activities such as damage control, firefighting, visit board search and seizure procedures, medical lectures, disaster evacuation and diving operations.
- The sea phase of the exercise will take place on 24-27 Mar 24, covering practical aspects of counter threats, visit board search and seizure procedures, boat operations, maneuvers and firing exercises.

INDEX AND RANKING

Delhi is the most polluted capital city in the world

- Delhi's PM2.5 level in 2022 was 89.1 micrograms per cubic meter in 2022, which worsened to 92.7 micrograms per cubic meter in 2023. Delhi has been ranked the world's most polluted capital for the fourth consecutive time since 2018, according to a report by Swiss group IQ Air.
- India had the third worst air quality in 2023 after Bangladesh and Pakistan, as noted in a report by Swiss group IQ Air.
- According to the report, about 1.36 billion people in India were exposed to PM 2.5, which is one of the main causes of air pollution.
- According to the World Air Quality Report of Swiss organization IQAir, the capital Delhi is the most polluted, while India is third in the list of polluted countries.

India 134 Out Of 193 In Human Development Index

- India's Human Development Index (HDI) improved in 2022, with the country climbing one position to 134th out of 193 nations and territories compared to the previous year.
- The HDI value for India surged to 0.644 in 2022, indicating advancements in key areas such as life expectancy, education, and Gross National Income (GNI) per capita.
- India's progress in reducing gender inequality is notable, as reflected by its Gender Inequality Index (GII) value of 0.437, which is better than both the global and South Asian averages.

World Happiness Report 2024

- Finland has become world's happiest country for the seventh consecutive year according to World Happiness Report 2024.
- Finland is followed by Denmark, Iceland and Sweden. Israel has also found a place in the top five of the ranking.
- As per the report, the top 10 countries in the list have not changed since before the Covid-19 pandemic.
- The United States and Germany have declined in the rankings.
- Afghanistan is the least happy country after Congo, Sierra Leone, Lesotho and Lebanon.
- The rank of the United States has declined from 16th place last year to 23rd place this year.
- UK is ranked 20th place this year and Canada occupied 15th place.
- India is ranked at 126th place. China is ranked at 60th place. Nepal and Pakistan are ranked at 93rd and 108th places, respectively.
- Sri Lanka and Bangladesh are ranked at 128th and 129th spots, respectively.
- According to the report, older age is linked with higher life satisfaction in India.
- As per the report, older Indian women have reported lower life satisfaction than older men.

"CURRENT AFFAIR"

- Lithuania, Israel, Serbia, Iceland and Denmark are the top five countries in ranking of happiness in young people (aged 30 and below).
- In this, Finland is ranked at seventh place and India is ranked at 127th spot.
- Indian occupied 121st spot in ranking of happiness in old people (aged 60 and above).
- United Nations Sustainable Development Solutions Network publishes the World Happiness Report annually. It is based on six factors.
- These factors are GDP per capita, healthy life expectancy, having someone to count on, freedom to make life choices, generosity, and freedom from corruption.

As per the ILO study, 3.5 people for every 1,000 are engaged in forced labour.

- According to the International Labour Organization (ILO), forced labour generates illegal profits worth \$36 billion annually.
- Since 2014, illegal profits have increased by 37%, fuelled by a growth in the number of people forced into labour as well as higher profits generated from the exploitation of victims.
- The report titled 'Profits and poverty: The economics of forced labour' has been released by the ILO.
- Profits from forced labour are highest in Europe and Central Asia (\$84 billion), followed by Asia and the Pacific (\$62 billion).
- Forced commercial sexual exploitation accounts for more than two-thirds (73%) of the total illegal profits.
- The illegal profits are the wages that belonged to workers but were kept by their exploiters.
- There were 27.6 million people engaged in forced labour every day in 2021.
- Between 2016 and 2021, the number of people in forced labour increased by 2.7 million.
- The report highlights that there is an urgent need for investment in enforcement measures to stop illegal profit flows and hold perpetrators accountable.

'Democracy Report 2024' has been released by the Gothenburg-based V-Dem Institute.

- According to the 'Democracy Report 2024', India emerged as "one of the worst autocratizers".
- The V-Dem report categorises countries into four regime types based on their score in the Liberal Democratic Index (LDI).
- Liberal Democracy, Electoral Democracy, Electoral Autocracy, and Closed Autocracy are the four regime types of the Liberal Democratic Index.
- This index indicates whether a country is turning more democratic ('democratising') or more autocratic ('autocratising').
- As per the report, in 2023, 42 countries were undergoing autocratisation.
- India accounts for about half of the population living in autocratising countries.
- Democratisation took place only in 18 countries which accounted for just 400 million people.
- As per the report, 71% of people in the world live in autocracies.

In the Grievance Redressal Assessment Index, the Home Ministry ranked among the top 10 ministries.

- The Home Ministry has once again secured its position among the top 10 ministries in the Grievance Redressal Assessment Index (GRAI) for the year 2023-24, showcasing consistent excellence across all 15 specified indicators.
- Demonstrating remarkable efficiency, the Ministry has surpassed expectations with an average redressal time of eight days, significantly below the standard 30 days. Impressively, the Ministry successfully addressed 48,837 public complaints during the period.
- Furthermore, the Home Ministry stands out with a commendably low appeal rate of only 10%, a testament to the effectiveness of its grievance redressal mechanisms.
- Despite these achievements, citizen satisfaction stands at 40%, indicating areas for potential improvement.
- Overall, the Ministry's stellar performance underscores its commitment to swiftly addressing public grievances and upholding accountability and transparency in governance.

UNESCO published the United Nations World Water Development Report 2024.

- On behalf of UN-Water, UNESCO published the United Nations World Water Development Report 2024.

"CURRENT AFFAIR"

- The report highlights that tensions over water are fueling conflicts around the world.
- To maintain peace, states must promote international cooperation and cross-border agreements.
- Today, 2.2 billion people still live without access to safely managed drinking water, and 3.5 billion lack access to safely managed sanitation, according to a new report published by UNESCO.
- More than 1.4 billion people were affected by drought between 2002 and 2021.
- By 2022, almost half of the world's population faced severe water scarcity for at least part of the year.
- While one-quarter faced 'extremely high' levels of water stress, they were using more than 80% of their annual renewable freshwater supply.
- Worldwide, about 70% of freshwater withdrawals come from agriculture, followed by industry (just under 20%) and domestic (or municipal) use (about 12%).
- Groundwater supplies about 25% of the total water used for irrigation and half of the freshwater is withdrawn for domestic purposes.

In Hurun Research's list, Mumbai has emerged as Asia's new billionaire hub, overtaking Beijing

- According to Hurun Research's 2024 Global Rich List, Mumbai has rapidly emerged as Asia's billionaire hub and has overtaken Beijing for the first time.
- India's financial capital now has 92 billionaires, surpassing Beijing's 91 billionaires, yet China has more billionaires at 814 compared to India's 271.
- In terms of billionaires, Mumbai ranked third globally, with New York leading with 119 billionaires, followed by London with 97 billionaires.
- The rise of the Maharashtrian city is credited to the addition of 26 new billionaires in the last year, bringing its total wealth of billionaires to \$445 billion, up 47% from the previous year.
- In contrast, the total wealth of Beijing's billionaires is \$265 billion, which has seen a decline of 28%.
- Mumbai's wealth-boosting sectors include energy and pharmaceuticals, which have seen notable gains by business tycoons like Mukesh Ambani.
- Among Mumbai's billionaire elite, real estate magnate Mangal Prabhat Lodha and his family experienced the most significant increase in wealth at 116%.

Elon Musk Tops Hurun Rich List Again, Mark Zuckerberg and Larry Page Enter Top 10

- The Hurun Research Institute has unveiled its highly anticipated "Hurun Global Rich List 2024," showcasing the world's wealthiest individuals
- Once again, Tesla's visionary CEO, Elon Musk, claims the top spot, boasting a staggering net worth of \$231 billion.
- This marks his third ascension to the pinnacle of wealth in the last four years, solidifying his status as the preeminent billionaire globally.
- Notably, Mark Zuckerberg, representing Meta, surges into the top 10 billionaires list with a formidable wealth of \$158 billion, signifying a remarkable leap in fortunes for 2024.
- Additionally, Larry Page, the former helm of Google, makes a notable entry into this elite cohort with a formidable fortune of \$123 billion, attributed to his astute strategic investments and ventures.

Mumbai becomes Asia's billionaire capital for the first time

- Mumbai surpasses Beijing as Asia's billionaire capital with 92 billionaires, driven by a 47% increase in total billionaire wealth to \$445 billion.
- Growth sectors like energy and pharmaceuticals contribute to Mumbai's rise, with notable gains seen by industry leaders like Mukesh Ambani.
- Indian billionaires witness diverse movements in global rankings, with Mukesh Ambani maintaining 10th place and Gautam Adani climbing to 15th place.
- Mumbai's billionaire elite sees significant wealth increases, with real estate magnate Mangal Prabhat Lodha experiencing a 116% surge, showcasing the city's evolving economic landscape.

Union Health Ministry released India TB report 2024

- According to the report, India has achieved a decrease of 16% in TB incidence and an 18% decline in mortality caused by TB since 2015.
- As per the report, incidence (new cases emerging each year) rate had declined from 237 per lakh population in 2015 to 199 per lakh population in 2022.

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- As stated by the report, the mortality rate had fallen from 28 per lakh population in 2015 to 23 per lakh population in 2022.
- India has fixed 2025 as the target for eliminating the TB.
- In 2023, the private health care sector accounted for roughly 32% of all TB cases that were notified. This is a 17% rise over the last year.
- The report states that during the last nine years, there has been an annual improvement of more than 50% in the overall notification of tuberculosis cases.
- The state with the biggest increase in notifications was Uttar Pradesh (increase of 21% from the previous year). Bihar came in second place (15%).
- According to the report, in 2023, the National Tuberculosis Elimination Programme (NTEP) performed roughly 68.3 lakh nucleic acid amplification tests (NAAT) and 1.89 crore sputum smear tests.

India Gaming Report 2024

- According to a report, Indian gaming industry's annual revenue will increase to \$6 billion by 2028 from \$3.1 billion in 2023.
- According to the India Gaming Report 2024, there would be 240 million gamers by 2028, up from 144 million gamers in 2023.
- Winzo, an online gaming company, and the Interactive Entertainment and Innovation Council jointly released the report.
- According to the report, there are more than 1,400 gaming companies in India, 500 of which are game studios.
- The number of professional players will rise from 500 in 2023 to 2.5 times that number in 2028, according to the report.
- According to the report, game downloads in India increased dramatically from 5.65 billion in 2019 to 9.5 billion in 2023.
- India's percentage of worldwide game downloads increased to a significant 16% in 2023 as a result of this rise.
- With 4.4 billion downloads (7.4% market share) and 4.5 billion (7.6% market share) respectively, India is followed by Brazil and the US.
- In India, mobile gaming accounts for 90% of the total gaming market.
- In the US and China, it makes for roughly 37% and 62% of the market, respectively.
- Of the gaming community, approximately half of the members are between the ages of 18 and 30.

BANKING, ECONOMY AND FINANCE

Moody's raised India's 2024 GDP forecast to 6.8%.

- Moody's Investor Service raised India's economy GDP forecast to 6.8% from 6.1 %.
- Moody predicted that inflation will remain above the RBI's target of 4 per cent.
- Moody's noted that the 8.4 per cent growth during the third quarter is more than the economists' projections of 6.6 per cent.
- As per Moody's Global Macroeconomic Outlook, the growth will be 6.4 per cent in 2025.
- India's economy has performed well and stronger-than-expected data in 2023.
- India is likely to remain the fastest-growing among G-20 economies.
- Moody's expects that after the general election policy will continue and the focus will remain on infrastructure development.
- The private industrial capital spending is slowly picking up and it is expected to pick up with ongoing supply chain diversification benefits.
- According to Moody's, the newly elected leaders will shape both international and domestic policy over the next four to five years, changing supply networks and geopolitical dynamics.

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S&P Global has increased India's growth forecast to 6.8% for Fiscal Year 2024-25.

- S&P Global has increased forecast by 40 basis points. It is yet lower than the forecast of 7.6% for the current fiscal.
- The projection made by S&P Global is lower than RBI's estimate of 7%.
- S&P has not changed its forecast for Fiscal Years 2025-26, 2026-2027 and 2027-2028.
- It has kept growth forecast for Fiscal Year 2025-26 at 6.9%, for Fiscal Year 2026-2027 at 7% and for Fiscal Year 2027-2028 at 7%.
- S&P has projected robust growth for Asian emerging market economies like India, Indonesia, the Philippines, and Vietnam.

A study shows that India's solar waste could reach 600 kilotons by 2030.

- According to a new study released March 20, India's solar waste could reach 600 kilotons by 2030, the equivalent of filling 720 Olympic-sized swimming pools.
- The study is released by the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy and the independent think tank Council on Energy, Environment, and Water (CEEW), titled "Enabling a Circular Economy in India's Solar Industry: Assessing the Solar Waste Quantum."
- The study said that about 67% of this waste will come from five states: Rajasthan, Gujarat, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, and Tamil Nadu.
- Currently, India's installed capacity of 66.7 GW (by FY 2023) has already generated about 100 kilotonnes of waste, which will increase to 340 kilotonnes by 2030.
- This will include about 10 kilotonnes of silicon, 12-18 tonnes of silver, and 16 tonnes of cadmium and tellurium, most of which are important minerals for India.
- Recycling solar waste to recover these materials will reduce import dependence and increase India's mineral security.
- The study said solar waste will increase to about 19,000 kilotonnes by 2050, of which 77% will be generated from new capacities.

Morgan Stanley Raises India GDP Growth Forecast to 6.8%

- Morgan Stanley has increased its GDP growth forecast for India for the financial year 2024-25 (FY25) to 6.8%, up from the previous estimate of 6.5%.
- This revision reflects a positive outlook on India's economic trajectory, emphasizing its strength and stability in the current cycle.
- The firm also revised its growth forecast for the ongoing financial year, FY24, to 7.9%.

India's Foreign Exchange Reserves Reach Record High

- India's foreign exchange reserves have soared to a new peak, reaching \$642.631 billion in the week ending March 22, marking the fifth consecutive week of increase, according to the latest data from the Reserve Bank of India (RBI).
- Continuous Growth: Prior to the week ending on March 22, the reserves surged by \$6.396 billion.
- Composition: The foreign currency assets (FCA), the largest component, slightly declined to \$568.264 billion, while gold reserves rose to \$51.487 billion.
- Yearly Comparison: In 2023, RBI added approximately \$58 billion to the forex reserves, whereas in 2022, there was a cumulative slump of \$71 billion.

India's Current Account Balance in Q3: 2023-24

- India's current account deficit narrowed to USD 10.5 billion or the equivalent of 1.2% of GDP in the October-December 2023 quarter, compared with USD 16.8 billion or 2.0% of GDP in the same quarter of the previous year.
- The services surplus widened sharply to USD 45.0 billion from USD 38.7 billion a year ago, on the back of rising exports of software, business and travel services, and the secondary income surplus increased slightly to USD 29.3 billion from USD 28.5 billion.
- Meanwhile, the goods deficit remained relatively unchanged at USD 71.6 billion compared to USD 71.3 billion a year earlier, while the primary income gap rose to USD 13.2 billion from USD 12.7 billion.

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- During the first three quarters of the 2023-24 fiscal year, the current account deficit narrowed to USD 31.0 billion, or 1.2% of GDP, from USD 65.6 billion, or 2.6% of GDP, in the corresponding period a year ago, driven by a decrease in the goods trade deficit.

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

ISRO successfully executed the landing mission of Reusable Launch Vehicle 'Pushpak'.

- The Indian Space Research Organisation (Isro) successfully executed a landing mission for its Reusable Launch Vehicle (RLV) named "Pushpak" from the Aeronautical Test Range (ATR) in Karnataka.
- The launch vehicle was taken off to an altitude of about 4.5 km by an Indian Air Force helicopter.
- This mission is part of developing the technologies needed for a reusable launch vehicle to enable low-cost access to space.
- The Reusable Launch Vehicle – Technology Demonstrator (RLV-TD) is ISRO's most technologically challenging project.
- The reusable launch vehicle will help reduce the cost of space missions.
- ISRO envisions RLV-TD as the first stage of India's reusable two-stage orbital launch vehicle.

Zero orbital debris mission accomplished by ISRO's POEM-3 mission.

- On March 25, ISRO said it achieved another milestone as the PSLV Orbital Experimental Module-3 (POEM-3) met its fiery end via re-entry into the Earth's atmosphere.
- On March 21, 2024, this milestone was achieved and the PSLV-C58/XPoSat mission has left practically zero debris in orbit.
- PSLV-C58 mission was completed on January 1, 2024.
- After completing the primary mission of placing all the satellites in their desired orbits, the terminal stage of PSLV was changed to a 3-axis stabilized platform, POEM-3.
- The stage was de-orbited from 650 km to 350 km, facilitating its early re-entry, and decommissioned to remove residual propellants to reduce any accidental break-up risk.
- With a total of 9 different experimental payloads, POEM-3 was configured to conduct technology demonstration and scientific experiments on newly developed indigenous systems.

India's second privately developed rocket

- A history created by Tamil Nadu with India's second privately developed rocket.
- On March 22, Tamil Nadu will witness history when one of its Chennai headquartered space start-ups Agnikul Cosmos Private Limited launches its first rocket.
- The rocket Agnibaan Sub Orbital Technology Demonstrator (SOrTeD) will be launched from Satish Dhawan Space Centre, Sriharikota, Andhra Pradesh.
- There are many interesting facts about this particular launch of Agnibaan SOrTeD:
- It will be India's first launch from a private Launchpad.
- It will be India's first semi-cryogenic engine-powered rocket launch.
- It will be the world's first single-piece 3D-printed engine designed and built indigenously.
- Established in 2017, Agnikul Cosmos in December 2020 became the first company in the country to sign an agreement with ISRO to gain access to the space agency's expertise and its facilities to build Agnibaan.
- In 2022, India's first privately developed rocket, Vikram-S was launched from the ISRO launchpad in Sriharikota.
- It was developed by Hyderabad-based start-up Skyroot Aerospace Pvt. Ltd. This mission was named Prarambh.

Chandrayaan-3 landing site name 'Shiva Shakti' has been approved by IAU.

- Chandrayaan-3 landing site name 'Shiva Shakti' has got approval from the International Astronomical Union (IAU).

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- The IAU's working group for Planetary System Nomenclature has approved the name 'Shiv Shakti' for the landing site of Chandrayaan-3.
- The word "Shiv" stands for the welfare of humanity" and Shakti means strength to achieve the welfare of humanity.
- Shiv Shakti point will be a symbol of unity from the Himalayas to Kanyakumari.
- ISRO's Chandrayaan-3 was launched on July 14, 2023 and landed successfully on the Moon's South Pole on August 23, 2023.
- On 26 March 2023, PM Modi announced that the place where Chandrayaan-3's Moon lander touched down would be known as 'Shiv Shakti'.
- The Chandrayaan-2 landing failure spot will be known as "Tiranga Point".
- The day on which Vikram Lander reached the moon's surface will be celebrated as "National Space Day".

ISRO will launch START 2024 program in April-May.

- Space Science and Technology Awareness Training (START)-2024 will be launched by ISRO.
- ISRO has invited Expressions of Interest for the START-2024 program in educational institutes/Universities/Colleges within India.
- The START-2024 program will be conducted during April-May, 2024.
- START is an introductory-level online training in space science and technology for UG and PG students.
- Post-graduate students and final-year under graduate students of physical sciences (Physics and Chemistry) and technology are eligible for this training.
- Educational institutions that want to become part of this ISRO initiative have to apply by April 2, 2024.
- The START programme will be conducted through the ISRO E-CLASS platform.

BOOKS AND AUTHORS

S. Raman has authored a Book Titled "From A Car Shed To The Corner Room & Beyond".

- "From A Car Shed To The Corner Room & Beyond," is an autobiography of S. Raman.
- This book gives a first-person account of his remarkable journey from a clerk at SBI to becoming the Chairman and Managing Director of Canara Bank and a full-time member of SEBI.
- This book is an exploration of the intricate dance between integrity on a personal level, professional obstacles, and the structural problems in the financial world rather than just a personal narrative.
- Raman's troubles began in 2018, years after his retirement when the CBI questioned him in connection with a loan given to Winsome Jewellery during his tenure as chairman of the credit committee at Canara Bank.

'Phool Bahadur' – The First Magahi Novel in English

- The Dibrugarh University International Literary Festival held on 19-21 March 2024 witnessed the launch of a remarkable literary work – the English translation of the first Magahi novel, 'Phool Bahadur'.
- The translation was done by Abhay K, a renowned writer from Nalanda, Bihar.
- 'Phool Bahadur' was originally written by Jayanath Pati and published in 1928.

Odisha CM Naveen Patnaik releases book titled 'FIH Odisha Hockey Men's World Cup 2023'

- In a significant celebration of sports and culture, Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik released the coffee table book titled 'FIH Odisha Hockey Men's World Cup 2023'.
- The book, a publication by Sportstar, the esteemed sports magazine of The Hindu Group, encapsulates the essence and excitement of the 15th FIH Odisha Hockey Men's World Cup held in 2023.

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- The FIH Hockey Men's World Cup 2023 was a monumental event for Odisha, hosting the prestigious tournament at two prime locations: Bhubaneswar and Rourkela.

A book on Indian modern art "The Gems of Indian Art" launched

- The launch of "The Gems of Indian Art", a comprehensive documentation of Harish Khullar's extensive collection of 20th-century Indian modern and contemporary art.
- This near-300-page book was unveiled by Ministers Shri Nitin Gadkari, Shri Arjun Ram Meghwal, and Shri S.P.S. Baghel, marking a pivotal moment in India's art scene.
- Harish Khullar's collection, which the book documents, is celebrated internationally for its exceptional quality and prestigious provenance.

"The Conspiracy" By Gotabaya Rajapaksa

- Former Sri Lankan President Gotabaya Rajapaksa emerged from a long period of silence, unveiling a book.
- In which he asserts that his removal from office was orchestrated by geopolitical tensions, particularly between China and other nations.
- Entitled The Conspiracy to Oust Me from the Presidency, Rajapaksa's book hit the shelves without an official launch, shedding light on his perspective regarding the circumstances leading to his departure.

SUMMIT AND CONFERENCE

South Korea hosted the third Summit for Democracy.

- South Korea recently hosted the third Summit for Democracy, a conference initiated by U.S. President Joe Biden to address the challenges facing democratic principles worldwide.
- Taking place from March 18 to 20, the summit comprised various events including a Ministerial Conference, Multi-Stakeholder Roundtable, Civil Society and Youth Event, and Leaders' Plenary.
- With representatives from over 30 countries in attendance, the summit focused on combating digital threats to democracy and leveraging technology to uphold universal human rights.
- South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol highlighted the emergence of fake news and disinformation fueled by AI and digital technology as primary threats to democracy, echoing concerns raised by U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken regarding authoritarian regimes exploiting technology to undermine democratic values and human rights.

The first edition of the Naval Commanders' Conference of 2024 will commence from 5th March.

- The first edition of the Naval Commanders' Conference of 2024 is scheduled to commence from 5th March.
- Defense Minister, Rajnath Singh, will address the Naval Commanders during this conference.
- The conference will be held for three days in the Hybrid format.
- The Chief of Defence Staff, along with the Chiefs of the Indian Army and Indian Air Force will also take part in this conference.
- Naval Commanders during the conference will discuss the coordination of tri-service forces in the face of the evolving national security situation in the region.
- They will also explore avenues to enhance tri-service synergy and readiness in defence of the nation and India's national interests.
- Geopolitical dynamics, regional challenges, and volatile maritime security situation will be also discussed.

Dr S Jaishankar co-chaired the 10th India-South Korea Joint Commission meeting in Seoul.

- To enhance bilateral cooperation, External Affairs Minister Dr. S. Jaishankar, along with Cho Tae-yul co-chaired the 10th India - South Korea Joint Commission Meeting in Seoul.

"CURRENT AFFAIR"

- They discussed issues related to bilateral ties and cooperation in the fields of defence, science and technology, business, and trade.
- They also discussed ways to enhance people-to-people exchange and cultural cooperation.
- Both ministers also exchanged views on developments in the Indo-Pacific and global issues of mutual interest.
- The Gimhae- Ayodhya connection is a testament to the shared cultural heritage and longstanding people-to-people relations.

4th Shanghai Cooperation Organisation Startup Forum in New Delhi

- The fourth edition of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) Startup Forum convened in New Delhi on March 19, 2024, with a focus on enhancing interactions among SCO Member States' startups, fostering innovation, creating employment opportunities, and nurturing young talent.
- Over 15 SCO startups showcased their innovative products and services, facilitating networking and inspiration among entrepreneurs.
- Conducted by Startup India, the workshop provided strategic insights into setting up seed funds for early-stage startups, encouraging interactive participation and knowledge exchange.
- All SCO Member States agreed to establish a SWG for Startups and Innovation at the SCO Heads of State Summit in 2022, aimed at fostering collaboration and regional economic development.
- India, as the permanent chair, has led the adoption of SWG regulations and will host its second meeting in November 2024.
- India has organized various initiatives to empower local startup ecosystems within SCO Member States, offering mentorship and facilitating investor and corporate engagement activities.
- India will host the 5th SCO Startup Forum in January 2025, continuing its commitment to fostering innovation and collaboration among SCO Member States.

Armenian parliamentary delegation and the Indian parliamentary delegation held a bilateral meeting.

- The meeting took place on the side lines of Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) function.
- The Indian parliamentary delegation was led by Deputy Chairman Rajya Sabha Harivansh.
- Vice President of the National Assembly Hakob Arshakyan led Armenia's parliamentary delegation.
- Deputy Chairman Rajya Sabha Harivansh met the President of the Inter-Parliamentary Union Tulia Ackson.
- Tulia Ackson is the Speaker of the National Assembly of the United Republic of Tanzania.
- She was congratulated by Harivansh on taking on the role of IPU President.
- The Indian Parliamentary Delegation is currently in Geneva, Switzerland for the 148th Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) Assembly.
- There are five Rajya Sabha members in the delegation.
- These members are S Niranjan Reddy, Sujeet Kumar, Ashok Mittal, Prashanta Nanda and Sumitra.
- Inter-Parliamentary Union:
- It is an international organization of national parliaments. It was established in 1889.
- It is headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland. It has 180 members and 14 associate members.

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Current Affairs MCQs

1. What is the main theme of World Wildlife Day 2024?
 - (a) Celebrating the beauty of wildlife
 - (b) Exploring the dangers of climate change
 - (c) Connecting People and Planet: Exploring Digital Innovation in Wildlife Conservation
 - (d) Raising awareness about illegal wildlife trade
2. What is the date of International Women's Day?
 - (a) March 8
 - (b) April 15
 - (c) May 1
 - (d) June 21
3. What is the first country globally to embed abortion rights into its constitution?
 - (a) United States
 - (b) France
 - (c) Canada
 - (d) United Kingdom
4. Recently, which country became the 32nd member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)?
 - (a) Egypt
 - (b) Sweden
 - (c) India
 - (d) Malaysia
5. Who won the first prize in the National Youth Parliament Festival 2024?
 - (a) Vaishna Pitchai
 - (b) Kanishka Sharma
 - (c) Yatin Bhaskar Duggal
 - (d) Om Birla
6. When is World Kidney Day celebrated every year?
 - (a) The first Monday of March
 - (b) The second Thursday of March
 - (c) The last Friday of March
 - (d) A random day in March
7. What is the name of the world's largest literary festival organized by Sahitya Akademi in March 2024 in New Delhi?
 - (a) Sahitya Mahotsav
 - (b) Kavyotsav
 - (c) Sahityotsav
 - (d) Kathautsav
8. Who remains as the leading Republican candidate for the 2024 presidential nomination after Nikki Haley's exit?
 - (a) Joe Biden
 - (b) Nikki Haley
 - (c) Donald Trump
 - (d) Robert F. Kennedy Jr.

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9. What recent development led to the Supreme Court declaring the electoral bonds scheme unconstitutional?
 - (a) Release of detailed data by the Election Commission
 - (b) A Constitution Bench ruling on February 15, 2024
 - (c) Introduction of a new electoral bond denomination
 - (d) State Bank of India's involvement in the scheme
10. Who won the Men's Singles title at the WTT Feeder Beirut tournament in Lebanon on March 21, 2024?
 - (a) Manav Vikas Thakkar
 - (b) Sathiyar Gnanasekaran
 - (c) Chuang Chih-yuan
 - (d) Manush Utpal Shah
11. Who won the Best Actor Oscar award at the 96th Academy Awards?
 - (a) Cillian Murphy
 - (b) Robert Downey Jr.
 - (c) Christopher Nolan
 - (d) Emma Stone
12. Which date is solemnly observed as the martyrdom day of Shaheed Bhagat Singh, Rajguru, and Sukhdev?
 - (a) March 22
 - (b) March 23
 - (c) April 23
 - (d) April 22
13. Who among the following have been recently appointed as an Election Commissioner in India?
 - (a) Umesh Sinha and Gyanesh Kumar
 - (b) Sukhbir Sandhu and Gyanesh Kumar
 - (c) Sunil Arora and Sukhbir Sandhu
 - (d) Sushil Chandra and Rajiv Kumar
14. Who won the French Open Men's doubles Badminton title in 2024?
 - (a) Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty
 - (b) Yang Po-han and Lee Jhe-huei
 - (c) Kento Momota and Hiroyuki Endo
 - (d) Kevin Sanjaya Sukamuljo and Marcus Fernaldi Gideon
15. Who became the Chief Minister of Haryana in March 2024?
 - (a) Manohar Lal Khattar
 - (b) Nayab Singh Saini
 - (c) Dushyant Chautala
 - (d) Biplab Dev
16. Which state recently became the first in India to implement the Uniform Civil Code (UCC) ?
 - (a) Uttar Pradesh
 - (b) Uttarakhand
 - (c) Punjab
 - (d) Maharashtra
17. What is Fly91?
 - (a) A new regional airline
 - (b) A popular tourist destination
 - (c) A type of bird
 - (d) A fictional superhero

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18. What is the traditional starting date for the IPL season?
- (a) Last Friday of April
 - (b) Last Friday of March
 - (c) First Friday of April
 - (d) Second Friday of March
19. When is World Kidney Day celebrated every year?
- (a) The first Monday of March
 - (b) The second Thursday of March
 - (c) The last Friday of March
 - (d) A random day in March
20. Which female cheetah recently (in March 2024) gave birth to five cubs in Kuno National Park?
- (a) Gauri
 - (b) Gamini
 - (c) Chitra
 - (d) Laila
21. Who developed the Agni-5 missile?
- (a) NASA
 - (b) European Space Agency (ESA)
 - (c) Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO)
 - (d) SpaceX
22. Which team won the Ranji Trophy of the 2023-24 season?
- (a) Vidarbha
 - (b) Mumbai
 - (c) Saurashtra
 - (d) Gujarat
23. UN Security Council passed the resolution on March 25, 2024, for an immediate ceasefire in Gaza. Which countries are involved in the conflict?
- (a) Israel and Egypt
 - (b) Israel and Jordan
 - (c) Israel and Palestine
 - (d) Israel and Lebanon
24. What is INS Jatayu?
- (a) A new aircraft carrier commissioned by the Indian Navy
 - (b) A naval base commissioned at Minicoy Island, Lakshadweep
 - (c) A submarine deployed in the Indian Ocean
 - (d) A missile destroyer inducted into the Indian Navy
25. What is the name of the first Reusable Launch Vehicle (RLV) successfully tested by ISRO?
- (a) RLV Viman
 - (b) RLV-TD
 - (c) RLV-Mk3
 - (d) RLV 'Pushpak'
26. Who was sworn-in as the judicial member of Lokpal on March 27, 2024?
- (a) Justice A. M. Khanwilkar
 - (b) Pankaj Kumar
 - (c) Ajay Tirkey
 - (d) Justice Ritu Raj Awasthi

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27. Which former Prime Ministers were awarded the Bharat Ratna posthumously on March 30, 2024?
- (a) Jawaharlal Nehru and Indira Gandhi
 - (b) Rajiv Gandhi and Atal Bihari Vajpayee
 - (c) Chaudhary Charan Singh and P V Narasimha Rao
 - (d) Morarji Desai and V P Singh
28. Vikramaditya Vedic Clock, recently mentioned in the news, is located in which city?
- (a) Ujjain
 - (b) Indore
 - (c) Bikaner
 - (d) Lucknow
29. Yars Missile, recently seen in the news, is an intercontinental ballistic missile developed by which country?
- (a) Russia
 - (b) China
 - (c) Israel
 - (d) India
30. Recently, which institute hosted the 'All India Research Scholars' Summit (AIRSS) 2024'?
- (a) IIT Madras
 - (b) IIM Ahmedabad
 - (c) IIT Kanpur
 - (d) IIT Bombay
31. Recently, which country hosted the 17th Annual International Biocuration Conference?
- (a) Myanmar
 - (b) Nepal
 - (c) India
 - (d) Bangladesh
32. What was the purpose of the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, 2019 (CAA)?
- (a) To provide citizenship to all migrants from neighboring countries
 - (b) To grant Indian nationality to non-Muslim migrants from Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Afghanistan
 - (c) To promote religious diversity in India
 - (d) To restrict immigration from specific countries
33. Gangster-politician Mukhtar Ansari, who recently passed away, was a prominent figure in which state's politics?
- (a) Bihar
 - (b) Uttar Pradesh
 - (c) Maharashtra
 - (d) Madhya Pradesh
34. Where did the Indian Navy conduct the operation to rescue the Pakistani nationals from Somali pirates in March 2024?
- (a) Bay of Bengal
 - (b) Indian Ocean
 - (c) Arabian Sea
 - (d) South China Sea
35. Who has been elected as the President in the recent Russian presidential elections?
- (a) Vladimir Putin
 - (b) Alexei Navalny
 - (c) Dmitry Medvedev
 - (d) Mikhail Gorbachev

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36. What is the significance of Good Friday in the Christian calendar?
- (a) Celebration of Jesus' birth
 - (b) Commemoration of Jesus' crucifixion
 - (c) Observance of the Last Supper
 - (d) Recognition of the resurrection
37. What was the Indian Ministry of External Affairs' response to recent remarks from the U.S. Department of State regarding the arrest of Arvind Kejriwal and the freezing of Congress party bank accounts?
- (a) Expressed support for the U.S. stance
 - (b) Objected to the remarks and emphasized respect for sovereignty
 - (c) They remained neutral on the matter
 - (d) Demanded immediate action from the U.S. government
38. Who is the Chairperson of Lokpal of India?
- (a) Justice Ritu Raj Awasthi
 - (b) Praveen Kumar Srivastava
 - (c) Justice A. M. Khanwilkar
 - (d) Pankaj Kumar
39. What prestigious award was Prabha Varma honored?
- (a) Jnanpith Award
 - (b) Saraswati Samman
 - (c) Sahitya Akademi Award
 - (d) Padma Bhushan
40. Who has been appointed as the Director General of the National Investigation Agency (NIA)?
- (a) Sadanand Vasant Date
 - (b) Rajeev Kumar Sharma
 - (c) Piyush Anand
 - (d) Nina Singh
41. Which city has been ranked as the world's most polluted capital city for four consecutive years since 2018?
- (a) Mumbai
 - (b) New Delhi
 - (c) Beijing
 - (d) Tokyo
42. Who reclaimed the title of the world's richest person according to the Hurun Global Rich List 2024?
- (a) Bernard Arnault
 - (b) Jeff Bezos
 - (c) Elon Musk
 - (d) Mukesh Ambani
43. Who has been appointed as the Director General of the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF)?
- (a) Sadanand Vasant Date
 - (b) Rajeev Kumar Sharma
 - (c) Piyush Anand
 - (d) Nina Singh
44. What is the name of the app of Election Commission of India used for reporting violations of the model code of conduct?
- (a) cTRACK
 - (b) cVIGIL

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- (c) cREPORT
(d) cELECT
45. Who retained the title of Asia's richest person according to the Hurun Global Rich List 2024?
(a) Elon Musk
(b) Jeff Bezos
(c) Mukesh Ambani
(d) Gautam Adani
46. Where did the Guinness World Record in Kabaddi with participation of 128 players event take place?
(a) Mumbai, Maharashtra
(b) Bengaluru, Karnataka
(c) Panchkula, Haryana
(d) Chennai, Tamil Nadu
47. Which city surpassed Beijing to become Asia's billionaire capital for the first time, according to the information provided?
(a) Shanghai
(b) Mumbai
(c) Tokyo
(d) Seoul
48. Which "National Creators Award" category honors creators making a significant contribution to environmental sustainability?
(a) Best Storyteller Award
(b) Disruptor of the Year
(c) Green Champion Award
(d) Tech Creator Award
49. What is the purpose of the 'Sankalan' mobile app launched by the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB)?
(a) To report criminal activities anonymously
(b) To provide information about criminal records
(c) To navigate through new criminal laws
(d) To track missing persons
50. What caused the collapse of the Francis Scott Key Bridge in Baltimore, Maryland in March 2024?
(a) Earthquake
(b) Cargo ship collision
(c) Structural failure
(d) High winds

"CURRENT AFFAIR"

ANSWER – KEY

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



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