
CURRENT AFFAIRS
MAY 2023

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NATIONAL NEWS

PM Narendra Modi inaugurates New Parliament building

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the new Parliament building. A multi-faith prayer was also held to mark the occasion.
- The Prime Minister performed “Ganapati Homam” to invoke Gods to bless the inauguration of the new Parliament building.
- The new Parliament building has been designed by Bimal Patel and constructed by Tata Projects Ltd.
- It is a triangular-shaped four-storey building with a built-up area of 64,500 square metres. The material used for the new building has been acquired from various parts of the country. It has a grand constitution hall to showcase India’s democratic heritage, a lounge for MPs, a library, multiple committee rooms, dining areas and ample parking space.
- The building has three main gates -- Gyan Dwar, Shakti Dwar and Karma Dwar. It also has separate entrances for VIPs, MPs and visitors.
- The new Parliament building can comfortably seat 888 members in the Lok Sabha chamber and 300 in the Rajya Sabha chamber. In case of a joint sitting of both the Houses, a total of 1,280 members can be accommodated in the Lok Sabha chamber.
- PM Modi had laid the foundation stone of the new Parliament building on December 10, 2020. The present Parliament building was completed in 1927 and is now 96 years old. Over the years, the old building was found to be inadequate for present day requirements.

Key Points

New Parliamentary House – Tata Projects Ltd.
Constructed by

PM Modi places Sengol in new Parliament building

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi placed Tamil Nadu’s historic “Sengol” near the Lok Sabha Speaker’s chair in the new parliament. It represents India’s independence, sovereignty, cultural diversity and history. It is five feet in length and has a Nandi, Lord

Shiva’s sacred bull, on the top, symbolising justice. He was handed over the Sengol by Adheenam seers.

- Sengol was chosen as a symbol to mark the transfer of power from the British in 1947. Amid the dilemma as to what symbolism should be adopted to mark the transfer of power from the Britishers. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru had turned to C Rajagopalachari, the veteran freedom fighter from Tamil Nadu, for help. He suggested the Sengol which is a Chola-era sceptre made of silver with a coat of gold. The sceptre was received by India’s first Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru from Lord Mountbatten.
- The term Sengol is derived from Tamil word ‘semmai’, meaning righteousness. It was made by Vummidi Bangaru Jewellers, a well-known jeweller in Chennai under the supervision of the seer of Thiruvaduthurai Atheenam, a Tamil Nadu mutt.
- It was placed in Nehru’s collection wing at the Allahabad museum in Prayagraj.

Key Points

Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu	– M.K. Stalin
Capital	– Chennai
Governor	– Ravindra Narayana Ravi

PM Modi virtually flags off Northeast’s first Vande Bharat Express in Assam

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi virtually flagged off Northeast’s first and India’s 18th Vande Bharat Express connecting Guwahati to West Bengal’s New Jalpaiguri.
- Along with the semi-high speed train, PM Modi also dedicated New Bongaigaon–Dudhnoi–Mendipather and Guwahati–Chaparmukh electrified sections to the nation. He also inaugurated the new DEMU/MEMU (workshop for trains) shed at Lumding.
- Assam’s first and Bengal’s third semi-high-speed train would connect Guwahati and New Jalpaiguri and would cover the distance of 411 km in five hours and thirty minutes.

Key Points

Assam's CM	– Himanta Biswa Sarma
Assam's capital	– Dispur
West Bengal's CM	– Mamata Banerjee
West Bengal's Capital	– Kolkata

India celebrated Veer Savarkar's 140th Birth Anniversary 2023

- India celebrated the 140th birth anniversary of Veer Savarkar in a grand manner in 2023, paying homage to one of the most influential figures in the nation's freedom struggle.
- Veer Savarkar, also known as Vinayak Damodar Savarkar, was a visionary leader, philosopher and prominent nationalist who played a pivotal role in India's journey towards independence.
- He was born on May 28, 1883 and dedicated his life to the cause of freedom and stood firmly against British colonial rule.
- In 2023, Maharashtra's Chief Minister, Eknath Shinde, decided that on May 28, this day would be commemorated as Swatantrya Veer Gaurav Din, or the birth anniversary of Savarkar.

Central Government to Launch New ₹75 Coin to Mark New Parliament Inauguration

- A special ₹ 75 coin was launched to commemorate the inauguration of the new Parliament building.
- The commemorative coin will serve as a tribute to India celebrating 75 years of independence.
- One side of the coin will feature the Lion Capital of the Ashoka Pillar, with the words "Satyameva Jayate" below it. The word "Bharat" will be written in Devanagari script on the left side, and the word "India" in English on the right.
- The coin will also have the rupee symbol and the denomination value of 75 in international numerals written below the Lion Capital. The other side of the coin will show an image of the Parliament complex.
- The words "Sansad Sankul" will be written in Devanagari script on the upper periphery and "Parliament Complex" in English on the lower periphery.
- The coin will be circular in shape with a diameter of 44 millimetres and will have 200 serrations along its edges. The 35-gram coin will be made from a four-

part alloy, which includes 50% Silver, 40% Copper, 5% Nickel and 5% Zinc.

NTCA Constitutes New Committee to Oversee Cheetah Project

- National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) has constituted an 11-member Cheetah Project Steering Committee and appointed Rajesh Gopal, secretary general of Global Tiger Forum, as its chairman.
- The newly-formed committee will review progress, monitor and advice on the Cheetah introduction to the Madhya Pradesh Forest Department and NTCA.
- The committee will also take decisions on the opening of the cheetah habitat for eco-tourism and suggest regulations in this regard, says the notice.
- The move comes following the death of six cheetahs, including three newborn cubs, within a period of two and half months at Kuno National Park (KNP) in Madhya Pradesh. Three cheetah cubs born to the Namibian cheetah allegedly died of dehydration and malnourishment. The decision to form the committee was taken in a meeting with the additional chief secretary of the Madhya Pradesh Government.

HP Government Aims to Formulate Green Hydrogen Policy

- The Himachal Pradesh Government is formulating a green hydrogen policy, which aims to promote the use of green hydrogen and establish Himachal Pradesh as a leading hub for its production.
- The primary objective of the policy was to attract investments in large-scale renewable energy projects, ensuring a consistent and sustainable supply of green electricity for electrolysis.
- By leveraging its natural advantages, Himachal Pradesh aimed to create a favourable environment for the production of green hydrogen.
- To kick-start the efforts towards green hydrogen production, the state government had already entered into a memorandum of understanding with Oil India Limited (OIL). The collaboration would enable the production of green hydrogen and green ammonia on a pilot basis.

Key Points

Himachal Pradesh's Capital	– Shimla
Himachal Pradesh's CM	– Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu
Himachal Pradesh Governor	– Shiv Pratap Shukla

Ministry of Minority Affairs supports the Development of Unani Medicine System

- Ministry of Minority Affairs has supported Central Council of Research in Unani Medicine (CCRUM) and National Institute of Unani Medicine (NIUM) Bengaluru, under the Ministry of Ayush, for the promotion and upgradation of Unani Medicine facilities in India.
- Ministry of Minority Affairs has approved a grant of ₹ 45.34 Crores under Pradhan Mantri Jan Vikas Karyakram (PMJVK), a centrally sponsored scheme (CSS). This will support the upgradation of Unani Medicine facilities at Hyderabad, Chennai, Lucknow, Silchar and Bengaluru.
- PMJVK is an area development programme under which community infrastructure and basic amenities are being created in the identified areas.

Key Points

Union Minister of Minority Affairs	– Smriti Irani
Union Minister of AYUSH	– Sarbananda Sonowal

Goa Signed MoU with Uttarakhand for Strengthening Tourism Cooperation

- The officials of the Government of Goa and the Government of Uttarakhand have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to collaborate towards enhancing the tourism landscape of both Goa and Uttarakhand.
- It is aimed at promoting bilateral cooperation in the travel and tourism sector and facilitating travel between the states to increase the number of tourists visiting Goa and Uttarakhand, respectively.
- Under the MoU, both states will benefit from direct flight connectivity between Uttarakhand and Goa; the travel time is reduced from 7 hours to 2.5 hours, making it easier for tourists to travel between the two states. The tourism departments of both states will also work on joint packages to promote various tourism

products, including adventure tourism activities, ecotourism, spiritual tourism and wellness tourism.

- This MoU is a first of its kind in India, where two states are collaborating to promote the Prime Minister's vision of Dekho Apna Desh and can be emulated by the rest of the states in India.

Key Points

Goa's CM	– Pramod Sawant
Goa's Capital	– Panaji
Uttarakhand's CM	– Pushkar Singh Dhama
Uttarakhand's Capital	– Gairsain and Dehradun (winter)

Kerala Becomes India's First Fully E-Governed State, Achieving Total E-Governance

- Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan announced that Kerala has achieved the distinction of becoming India's first fully e-governed state.
- It has successfully digitised an extensive range of government services, ensuring prompt and transparent delivery to its citizens.
- A noteworthy step in this direction is the implementation of the Kerala Fibre Optic Network (KFON) project, which has made internet access a citizen's right. This pioneering initiative will make the internet affordable or even free for the residents of Kerala.
- Furthermore, the government has launched a single-window portal called e-Sevanam, offering an extensive array of 900 services which would soon be extended to taluk-level offices.
- To bridge the digital divide and propel e-governance, Kerala has established the country's first digital university and embarked on the ambitious digital science park project, worth ₹ 1,500 crore. These strategic initiatives are aimed at fostering a knowledge-based society and economy, promoting e-literacy, and ensuring that the benefits of e-governance reach all sections of society.

UGC Launches NEP SAARTHI: Students as Ambassadors for Transforming Higher Education

- The University Grants Commission (UGC) has introduced a new initiative called "NEP SAARTHI – Student Ambassador for Academic Reforms in Transforming Higher Education in India."

- Under this scheme, the UGC urges Vice Chancellors, Directors and Principals of Higher Educational Institutions (HEIs) to nominate three outstanding students from their institutions to become NEP SAARTHIs.
- These students should possess excellent communication skills, organisational capabilities, creativity, a sense of responsibility and leadership qualities.

They will play a pivotal role in creating awareness about NEP 2020 initiatives on their campuses and motivating their peers to actively participate in their implementation. They will act as ambassadors, disseminating information, and initiating dialogues, organising events and collecting feedback from students to improve the implementation of NEP 2020.

Key Points

Headquarters	–	New Delhi
Chairman	–	Mamidala Jagadesh Kumar

Adani–Hindenburg Allegations: SC-Appointed Panel Submits Report in a Sealed Cover

- The six-member expert panel that the Supreme Court had set up to probe the allegations against the Adani Group levelled by US-based short-seller Hindenburg Research has submitted its report in a sealed cover.
- The Supreme Court panel is headed by former Supreme Court judge A.M. Sapre, and comprises former bankers K.V. Kamath and O.P. Bhatt, Infosys cofounder Nandan Nilekani, securities lawyer Somasekhar Sundaresan and retired high court judge J.P. Devadhar. The panel was mandated to make recommendations to strengthen regulations and to protect Indian investors against the volatility of the kind which has been witnessed in the recent past.
- The Supreme Court had ordered SEBI to investigate any violations of securities law by the Adani Group in the wake of the Hindenburg report. SEBI sought an extension from the apex court for another six months for completing its probe in the allegations levelled against Adani Group.
- Earlier this year in January, Hindenburg Research accused the Adani Group of “brazen stock manipulation and accounting fraud for decades”. It further said that the Indian conglomerate was involved in stock manipulation and fraud using shell companies and Adani companies have also taken on substantial debt, including pledging shares for loans.

Amit Shah Lays Foundation Stone of National Academy of Coastal Policing Campus in Dwaraka, Gujarat

- Union Home and Cooperation Minister Amit Shah laid the foundation stone of the permanent campus of the National Academy of Coastal Policing at Okha in Dwaraka, Gujarat.
- The academy will provide training facilities to more than three thousand security personnel in a year.
- The National Academy of Coastal Policing, the country’s first national academy, was established in 2018 to provide intensive training to the marine police of nine coastal states, five Union Territories as well as the Central Police Forces.

India launches Operation Karuna for cyclone-hit in Myanmar

- India launched “Operation Karuna” to provide humanitarian assistance for people in Myanmar, which is affected by Cyclone Mocha, and three ships carrying relief material reached Yangon.
- Indian Naval Ships Shivalik, Kamorta and Savitri were the first Naval ships to arrive at Yangon with relief material.
- At least 46 people died in the Rakhine state villages of Bu Ma and nearby Khaung Doke Kar, inhabited by the persecuted Rohingya Muslim minority.

Key Points

Capital of Myanmar	–	Naypyidaw
President	–	Myint Swe

Bhopal becomes first city to measure Sustainable Development Goals progress

- Bhopal becomes the first city in India to adopt the localisation of the United Nations-mandated sustainable development goals (SDGs).
- To assess its achievements and identify areas for improvement, it has implemented a Voluntary Local Review (VLR) process. Through the VLR process, cities gather data, analyse their performance, and report on the actions taken to address the SDGs within their jurisdiction. It involves assessing the alignment of local policies, programmes and initiatives with the targets and indicators of the SDGs.
- The Voluntary Local Review (VLR) process in Bhopal is a collaboration between the Bhopal Municipal Corporation, UN-Habitat and local stakeholders. The VLR incorporates both quantitative and qualitative

approaches to review the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Bhopal. It involves mapping 56 developmental projects and assessing the city's progress toward the SDGs.

- The VLR process helps cities identify areas where they have made significant progress, as well as areas that require improvement or further attention. It promotes transparency, accountability and dialogue between local governments and their communities, enabling them to track their achievements, share best practices and learn from each other's experiences.
- SDGs are a set of global goals established by the United Nations to address various socio-economic and environmental challenges facing the world. They were adopted in 2015 as a successor to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and provide a comprehensive framework for achieving sustainable development by 2030.
- The SDGs consist of 17 goals and 169 targets that cover a wide range of issues, including poverty eradication, quality education, gender equality, clean energy, climate action, sustainable cities, responsible consumption and production and biodiversity conservation among others. The goals aim to promote social inclusion, economic growth, environmental sustainability and global cooperation.

Ministry of Ayush and ICMR sign an MoU to promote and collaborate on integrative health research

- In a significant development, a Memorandum of Understanding was signed between the Ministry of Ayush and the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) to promote and collaborate on integrative health research.
- This cooperation will focus on identified areas of national importance in healthcare for promoting high impact research to generate evidence utilising modern scientific methods. This MoU will also strengthen research capacity through training of Ayush researchers.
- It will facilitate looking at the possibility of inclusion of research on Integrative Medicine in the "National ethical guidelines for biomedical and health research involving human participants" by ICMR-DHR. One of the important aspects of this MoU is related to building research capacity, which will be led by ICMR for Ayush researchers. It will develop a curriculum; facilitate the development and delivery of training modules.
- Ministry of Ayush and ICMR will also design and conduct conferences/workshops/seminars jointly with

active participation of researchers interested in the field of integrative healthcare.

Key Points

Union Minister of Ayush	– Sarbananda Sonowal
ICMR HQ	– New Delhi
ICMR's Director General	– Rajiv Bahl

Government shuffles cabinet: Kiren Rijju exited as Union Law Minister

- In the government's cabinet shuffle, Kiren Rijju was replaced by Arjun Ram Meghwal, who was assigned the independent charge as Minister of State in the Ministry of Law and Justice, in addition to his existing portfolios.
- Kiren Rijju will now handle the portfolio of the Ministry of Earth Sciences. Union Minister Jitendra Singh was holding charge of the Ministry of Earth Sciences.

India Makes Unique ID Number Mandatory for Doctors to Practice Medicine

- The National Medical Commission has passed a new resolution making it mandatory for all doctors to have a Unique Identification Number (UID) to practice medicine in India.
- As per the new regulation, the UID will be generated centrally by the NMC ethics board and thereby grant the practitioner, registration in NMR and eligibility to practice medicine in India.
- There will be a common national medical register for all the registered medical practitioners and doctors in the country. The same will be maintained by the Ethics and Medical Registration Board (EMRB) under the NMC.
- The register will contain all the entries of the registered medical practitioners of all State Registers.
- It will be maintained by the various State Medical Councils that will have all the detailed relevant information about the doctors.
- This unique licence will be issued to a registered medical practitioner and will be valid for five years. After this five-year valid period, the doctor will have to renew the licencing by making an application to the State Medical Council, said the new notification.
- In case of renewal, the application to renew this licence may be made before three months of the expiration of the validity of the licence.

Key Points

Chairperson	–	Dr. Suresh Chandra Sharma
Headquarters	–	New Delhi

Delhi government wins Supreme Court battle with Centre, gets control over services except law and land, police and public order.

- The Supreme Court in a unanimous judgment ruled in favour of the elected government of Delhi and said it will have power on all services except law and order and land.
- LG shall exercise powers under the administrative role as entrusted by the president.
- Executive administration can only extend to matters which fall outside the legislative assembly but is limited to the powers entrusted by President and it cannot mean administration over the entire NCTD, otherwise the purpose of having a separate elected body in Delhi will be rendered futile, the top court said.
- The Delhi case involves the continuation of a dispute that who controls the Capital's bureaucrat, the lieutenant governor or the elected government.
- In May 2022, when it referred the matter to a five-judge bench, the court clarified that the bench shall adjudicate the limited issue relating to 'services' in Delhi and that no other substantial issue on interpretation of Article 239AA shall be adjudicated afresh.
- Article 239AA delineates the legislative and executive powers of the Delhi government while clarifying those three subjects, namely land, police and public order, shall remain under the exclusive domain of the Centre in the capital.

Key Points

Delhi's Chief Minister	–	Arvind Kejriwal
Delhi's Lt. Governor	–	Vinai Kumar Saxena

UP Government launches Digital Health Cards with Health Insurance Facility

- The Uttar Pradesh government has launched a novel initiative 'School Health Program'. A digital health report card for the overall physical and mental well-being of 1,765 municipal school students is also being prepared under the project. Along with this, the benefit of health insurance worth ₹ 25,000 is being given to these children.

- The programme is likely to be implemented in the state's other nine smart cities also after the successful completion of the pilot project.
- This programme is a slightly better version than the earlier one for the health of children. In this, school mapping is done and the health department team visits schools for check-up of children under National Child Health.

Varanasi's LBSI airport gets India's first reading lounge

- The Lal Bahadur Shastri International (LBSI) Airport, Varanasi has become the first in India to have a free reading lounge. Apart from books on Kashi, the lounge's library has a collection of literature and books in many international languages.
- The lounge has been established with the assistance of National Book Trust (NBT), an Indian publishing house and autonomous body under the ministry of education of the Union Government. The NBT will operate this lounge, created near the entrance point of the airport's main lobby.
- The lounge also has a dedicated shelf of budding authors displaying their recently published books under the Prime Minister's Mentorship Scheme for Young Writers (PM-YUVA Scheme).
- The lounge also offers free access to downloaded portions of any book through a QR code. For the technology-driven generation, another QR code gives access to select Free Audio books, on the comfort of a mobile, laptop or tablet.

Telangana Government launches first of its kind State Robotics Framework

- The Telangana government launched State Robotics Framework, a first of its kind policy in India, aimed at creating a sustainable robotics ecosystem and to position the state as a leader in the field of robotics.
- The framework is a comprehensive roadmap that outlines the state's vision for the development of the robotics ecosystem in the state and contributing to the growth of the industry in the country, an official release said.
- The framework was developed by the Emerging Technologies Wing of the ITE&C Department of Telangana in collaboration with the All India Robotics Association and inputs from academia, industry experts and stakeholders.

- The framework focuses on leveraging robotics technology to drive growth and development across four key domains agriculture, healthcare, industrial automation and consumer robotics. The state will set up a Robo Park equipped with testing facilities, co-working options and co-production/manufacturing options either at sites owned by the state or in partnership with the industry, academia and incubators, at competitive rates.

New lithium deposits discovered in Rajasthan after J&K

- After Jammu and Kashmir, lithium reserves have been traced in Rajasthan's Degana. It is said that lithium reserves are higher than the ones recently found in Jammu and Kashmir.
- For the first time, lithium reserves were found in Jammu and Kashmir's Reasi in February this year. This was the first significant mineral discovery in India, as previously only, a small reserve had been discovered in Karnataka. It attributes the discovery to the mines ministry's new focus on rare earth.
- Since lithium is a key component of batteries used in electric vehicles, the government is searching for rare metal reserves both within and outside the country.
- Apart from the Geological Survey of India (GSI), a consortium of three Public-sector Undertaking companies – National Aluminium Company, Hindustan Copper and Mineral Exploration Corp – is working to provide a vehicle for research & development for recycling, acquisition and also joint manufacturing of lithium-ion batteries.
- Lithium reserves are concentrated in the lithium triangle in South America – Argentina, Bolivia and Chile, with 50% of the deposits concentrated in these regions. China, meanwhile, has the lead over other countries and China controls 75% of lithium refining.
- India's plan to increase EV penetration by 30% by 2030 relies heavily on lithium – as of now, only a little more than 1% of all vehicle sales in the country are electric vehicles.
- A lithium battery is the only alternative for electric vehicles since it has a high power-to-weight ratio, enabling it to provide a large charge while keeping the vehicle's curb weight low. It is more energy efficient and performs better at a wide range of temperatures. This makes it a safer, more reliable method than other materials.

MSME Ministry's National SC-ST Hub scheme benefitted 1 lakh micro, small units till March 31, 2023

- The MSME ministry's scheme to support scheduled caste and scheduled tribe entrepreneurs to fulfil the mandate of 4% public procurement from central public sector enterprises (CPSEs) — National Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe Hub (NSSH) has benefitted over 1 lakh entrepreneurs.
- The scheme was launched in October 2016 by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and is implemented by MSME Ministry's National Small Industries Corporation (NSIC).
- Under the government's public procurement policy, a minimum of 25% of the total annual value of goods and services bought from CPSEs should come from micro and small enterprises. This includes the sub-target of a minimum of 4% procurement from enterprises owned by SC/ST entrepreneurs and 3% from women entrepreneurs.

Key Points

Union MSME minister – Narayan Rane

Union Minister Shri Narendra Singh Tomar Inaugurates the Millets Experience Centre at Dilli Haat, INA, New Delhi

- Shri Narendra Singh Tomar, Union Minister, Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare (MoA&FW), inaugurated the exclusive 'Millets Experience Centre (MEC)' at Dilli Haat, INA, New Delhi. This has been established by NAFED and MoA&FW.
- Through the MEC, NAFED aims to raise awareness of millets and promote the use of millets (Shree Anna) as a staple food throughout the world. This Centre features a live kitchen setup that serves delectable millet-based dishes, and a variety of ready-to-eat products developed by various millet-centric startups.
- India is celebrating 2023 as the International Year of Millets 2023 (IYM-2023).

Government Panel Recommends Banning Diesel 4-Wheeler Vehicles by 2027

- The Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas had setup an Energy Transition Advisory Committee, headed by former oil secretary Tarun Kapoor.
- It has recommended the Indian government to ban the use of diesel-powered four-wheeler vehicles by 2027

and switch to electric and gas-fuelled vehicles in cities with more than a million people and polluted towns in order to cut emissions.

- India is among the top emitters of greenhouse gases. Diesel accounts for about two-fifths of refined fuel consumption in India with 80% of that being used in the transport sector. The country aims at producing 40% of its electricity from renewables to achieve its 2070 net zero goals.
- The panel's report said the government should consider "targeted extension" of incentives given under the Faster Adoption and Manufacturing of Electric and Hybrid Vehicles scheme (FAME) to beyond March 31 to boost electric vehicle use in the country.
- The panel said new registrations of only electric-powered city delivery vehicles should be allowed from 2024. It further suggested for higher use of railways and gas-powered trucks for the movement of cargo. The country's railway network is expected to be fully electric in two to three years.

Kiren Rijiju launched the trailer of the first Tagine language film

- Union minister Kiren Rijiju launched the trailer of the "first ever" movie in Tagin language of his home state Arunachal Pradesh. The movie named "Love in 90s" will be tax free.

- The film looks at displaying the culture of the Tagin community before the whole country and the world. This film is directed by Tapen Natam.

Himachal Cabinet approves monthly incentive of ₹ 1,500 for women of Spiti

- The Himachal Pradesh Cabinet decided to provide ₹ 1,500 per month as Indira Gandhi Mahila Samman Nidhi to all eligible women of the Spiti Valley, including Buddhist nuns, of above 18 years.
- The cabinet also gave its nod to introduce e-stamping for the collection of stamp duty to promote ease-of-doing business. It decided to stop printing of physical stamp papers with immediate effect and to authorise stamp vendors as authorised collection centres.
- It also gave its nod to continue with a dual system of stamps, i.e., physical stamp paper and e-stamp paper from April 1 to March 31, 2024, and after April 1, 2024, physical stamp paper will discontinue completely. The Cabinet decided to give ₹ 600 in lieu of school uniform through direct benefit transfer to all eligible students.
- It also decided to increase the honorarium of Nambardars in the Revenue Department from ₹ 3,200 to ₹ 3,700 per month as per the budget announcement, which will benefit about 3,177 people.

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

India Secured Approval to Set Up a Second Hydropower Project in Nepal

- Nepal decided to allow India's Satluj Jal Vidyut Nigam (SJVN) Limited to develop a second hydropower project in the country. At present SJVN is developing a 900-MW Arun -III hydroelectric project, a run-of-river located on the Arun River in Eastern Nepal, scheduled to be completed in 2024.
- The SJVN has formed a local company, Lower Arun Power Development Company, in Nepal.
- The Lower Arun project located in the Sankhuwasabha and Bhojpur districts will not have any reservoir or dam and will be a tailrace development of Arun-III, which will mean water re-enters the river for the Lower Arun project.
- This is the third project undertaken, all through negotiation windows, on the Arun River after the 900 MW Arun-III and 695 MW Arun-IV hydroelectricity projects.

- The three projects will generate nearly 2,300 MW of electricity from the river in the Sankhuwasabha district.

Key Points

Nepal Capital	– Kathmandu
Nepal President	– Ram Chandra Poudel

WMO Approves Global Tracker for Greenhouse Gas Emissions

- The World Meteorological Congress has approved a new greenhouse gas (GHG) monitoring initiative with the unanimous support from WMO's 193 members.
- The new global GHG watch will fill critical information gaps and provide an integrated and operational framework. The framework will bring all space-based and surface-based observing systems, as well as modelling and data assimilation capabilities, under one roof.

- It supports urgent action to reduce heat-trapping gases, which are fuelling temperature increases.

Ireland is on Track to Become the First Country to Enforce Mandatory Health Advisories on Alcohol Products

- Ireland is the first country in the European Union (EU) to ensure that, from 2026, all alcohol products will have comprehensive labelling about health risks from consumption, including warnings about the risks of developing cancers.
- Under the regulations, alcohol product labels in Ireland will include important information, such as calorie content and grams of alcohol. These labels will also prominently display warnings about the risks associated with alcohol consumption during pregnancy, as well as the dangers of liver disease and cancers caused by alcohol.

India and Australia Sign Agreements on Migration and Green Hydrogen Task Force

- India and Australia signed agreements in the field of migration and mobility partnership and on green hydrogen task force.
- The migration partnership agreement aimed at making it easier for students, academics and professionals to live, study and work in each other's countries. Both countries also finalised the terms of reference of an India–Australia hydrogen task force, which will report to the ministerial dialogue on the opportunities available for the two countries on green hydrogen.
- The deal was signed during Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Australia. Mr. Modi is in Australia, for the third and final leg of his three-nation tour. His visit to Australia reinforces the strong priority attached by India and Australia to a bilateral relationship. It comes within just two months of the state visit of the Australian Prime Minister to India in March this year.

SpaceX Sends First Saudi Arabian Astronauts to the International Space Station

- Rayyanah Barnawi, a female stem cell researcher and Ali al-Qarni, a Royal Saudi Air Force fighter pilot named joined a crew led by a retired NASA astronaut from Kennedy Space Centre.
- They are Saudi Arabia's first astronauts in decades to have embarked on a journey to the International Space Station (ISS).
- The mission was organised by Axiom Space, a Houston-based company, and executed by SpaceX.

Israel ties up with IIT-M to set up water technology centre

- Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Madras has signed a Letter of Intent (LoI) with Israel to build an 'India–Israel Centre of Water Technology' (CoWT) in Water Resources Management and Water Technologies.
- The Centre aims to build human capacity to ensure the implementation of the best technologies of Israel in a tailor-made context for the Indian requirements and pilot sustainable technologies to ensure water security for the country.
- In cooperation with MASHAV, Israel's Agency for International Development Cooperation, the upcoming Centre will help MoHUA develop its 'AMRUT' Mission for achieving its overall targets.
- In addition to sustainable practices of water management, CoWT will build a mutual network of knowledge sharing that would include technology, scientific information and literature. Moreover, it will also function as a platform to bring together experts from both countries to hold discussions and consultations on issues like drinking water, sewerage management and to develop new areas of intervention. The Centre will provide wide exposure to Indian Water professionals at all levels who will demonstrate the projects with the latest technologies and put up an exhibition of Israeli water companies.

Nepal designates 2025 as a 'Special tourism year'

- The President of Nepal Ram Chandra Paudel announced that the decade of the 2080s of Bikram Samvat will be marked as 'the Visit Nepal decade' and the year 2025 as the special year for tourism.
- This was announced while presenting the policies and programmes for the fiscal year, 2080/81 at the joint meeting of the federal parliament.
- With the collaboration of private sectors, 'Samarmatha Special Honour' will be conferred on foreign nationals considering their role in the promotion of Nepal's art, culture, language and literature in the international arena.

Key Points

Nepal Capital	– Kathmandu
Nepal President	– Ram Chandra Poudel

5,000-year-old 'Great Grandfather' tree is officially the world's oldest tree

- A 5,000-year-old Patagonian cypress tree in Chile has been officially recognised as the world's oldest tree. It is located in the Alerce Costero National Park and is nicknamed "Great Grandfather."
- It is estimated to be between 5,000 and 6,500 years old, making it the oldest living organism on Earth.
- It measures 28 metres tall and 4 metres (13 Feet) in diameter and is the oldest living organism on Earth.

UN General Assembly Declares November 26 as World Sustainable Transport Day

- The UN General Assembly has adopted a resolution to designate November 26 every year as World Sustainable Transport Day.
- The resolution emphasises the contribution of sustainable, low-emission and energy-efficient modes of transport to climate change mitigation and adaptation and the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, as well as the importance of long-term strategies and multi-stakeholder partnerships in delivering such sustainable modes of transport.

World Bank Approves \$82 Million Loan for Controlling Zoonotic Diseases in India

- The World Bank has approved an \$82 million loan towards the adoption of global best practices for animal health management to prevent, detect, and respond to endemic zoonotic, transboundary and emerging infectious diseases.
- It will strengthen India's One Health approach, which recognises that people and animals are connected with their shared environment.
- Animal disease outbreaks globally continue to pose risks to public health systems and have enormous economic costs. With India having the largest livestock population in the world, these risks are particularly high. For example, foot and mouth disease alone costs the country more than \$3.3 billion annually.
- Through state-of-the-art laboratories, the programme will also strengthen collaboration and data sharing with the human health sector. It will also enhance food quality and safety in animal products, especially in livestock and wet markets.
- The \$82 million loan from the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) uses the Programme-for-Results (PforR) financing instrument

that links disbursement of funds directly to the achievement of specific programme results. The loan has a maturity of 11.5 years with a grace period of 4.5 years.

Key Points

- World Bank President – Ajay Banga
- World Bank HQ – Washington DC, US

Sri Lanka Supreme Court clears way to decriminalise homosexuality

- Sri Lanka's Supreme Court has given the green light to a bill seeking to decriminalise homosexuality in a move hailed as a "historic development".
- LGBTQ+ rights activists in Sri Lanka have been campaigning for years to change the law in a country where homosexuality is still punishable by a prison sentence and a fine, leading to the private member's bill presented in parliament last month.

Key Points

- Sri Lanka Capital – Sri Jayawardenepura Kotte (Legislative) and Colombo (Executive and Judicial)
- Sri Lanka President – Ranil Wickremesinghe
- Sri Lanka Prime Minister – Dinesh Gunawardena

PM Modi to attend France's Bastille Day Parade as guest of honour on July 14

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi will attend this year's Bastille Day Parade in Paris as the guest of honour on July 14th .
- An Indian armed forces' contingent will also participate in the parade along with their French counterparts. On the occasion of the 25th anniversary of the India-France strategic partnership, Prime Minister Modi has accepted French President Emmanuel Macron's invitation to attend this year's Bastille Day Parade as the guest of honour, it said.
- Prime Minister Modi's visit is expected to herald the next phase of the India-France strategic partnership by setting new and ambitious goals for strategic, cultural, scientific, academic and economic cooperation, including in a wide range of industries.

'Gigachat' Russia's Sberbank launches AI to compete with ChatGPT

- Sberbank, Russia's largest lender, has launched its own generative artificial intelligence tool, GigaChat, to compete with Microsoft-backed ChatGPT and Google's Bard. Its multimodal neural network technology is now in an invite-only testing phase.
- GigaChat can answer customers' questions, hold conversations, develop software programme codes, and generate words and graphics based on the same context. GigaChat also offers multimodal interaction and is better trained in Russian.

- The NeONKA (Neural Omnimodal Network with Knowledge-Awareness) neural network ensemble model is used by Sberbank's GigaChat, and it consists of numerous neural network models, supervised fine-tuning and reinforcement learning with human feedback.
- GigaChat can support a discussion, write texts, answer fact-based inquiries and create graphics, among other things.

GOVERNMENT SCHEMES

Manshukh Mandaviya launched National Medical Devices Policy 2023

- Dr. Mansukh Mandaviya unveiled the National Medical Devices Policy, 2023, and launched the Export Promotion Council for Medical Devices.
- The policy is expected to facilitate an orderly growth of the medical device sector to meet the public health objectives of access, affordability, quality and innovation.
- It will help the Medical Devices Sector grow from present \$11 billion to \$50 billion by 2030. It focuses on an accelerated growth path with a patient-centric approach and to emerge as the global leader in the manufacturing and innovation of medical devices by achieving 10–12% share in the expanding global market over the next 25 years.
- He also launched a scheme titled 'Assistance for Medical Devices clusters for Common Facilities (AMD-CF)'. This scheme aims to establish and strengthen common infrastructure facilities in the medical devices clusters and fortify testing facilities for medical devices.

15 August 2023 under the Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav. The key thrust of the campaign is to promote Digital Transactions in rural areas, particularly among women.

Maharashtra Government Launches 'Shasan Aplya Dari' Initiative to Bring Government Schemes and Services to Citizens' Doorsteps

- The Maharashtra government launched a new initiative called 'Shasan Aplya Dari' (government at your doorstep). The primary objective of this initiative is to provide citizens with easy access to government schemes and documents, all in one place.
- It aims to eliminate the difficulties faced by citizens when availing government services and benefits. A dedicated cell has been set up in the CM's office for the initiative and 15,146 volunteers have been appointed for the same across the state.

Key Points

Maharashtra Chief Minister – Eknath Shinde

Giriraj Singh launches SAMARTH campaign to promote digital transactions at Gram Panchayat level

- Union Minister for Rural Development and Panchayati Raj, Shri Giriraj Singh launched the 'Campaign on Promoting Digital Transactions in 50,000 Gram Panchayats' under the AzadiAmritkaMahotsav in Lucknow.
- The Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India is running a "Campaign on Promoting Digital Transactions in 50,000 Gram Panchayats" which started from 1st February 2023 and will continue till

Meri LiFE, Mera Swachh Seher Campaign Gains Momentum

- The Meri LiFE, Mera Swachh Seher Campaign was launched by the Union Minister, Shri Hardeep S. Puri with an aim to nudge cities to set up RRR Centres, one stop collection centres, for citizens to contribute clothes, shoes, old books, toys and used plastic to be reused or recycled.
- RRR Centres stands for Reduce, Reuse and Recycle centres.

- The “Meri LiFE, Mera Swachh Shehar” campaign is led by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs, in collaboration with local authorities, NGOs and citizens across the country. The campaign aims to foster a culture of sustainability and waste management in urban areas.

Union Minister Shri Ashwini Vaishnaw launches Sanchar Saathi portal

- Ashwini Vaishnaw, Minister of Communications, Railways and Electronics & IT, launched the Sanchar Saathi portal. It aims to empower mobile phone users by providing essential services and to reduce the number of frauds and thefts which happen due to the loss of mobile device. The portal will provide the following services:
 - CEIR (Central Equipment Identity Register) – for blocking stolen/lost mobiles.
 - Know your mobile connections – to know mobile connections registered in your name.
 - ASTR (Artificial Intelligence and Facial Recognition powered Solution for Telecom SIM Subscriber Verification) – to identify fraudulent subscribers.

Shri Bhupender Yadav launches Meri LiFE App

- The Union Minister for Environment, Forest and Climate Change Shri Bhupender Yadav launched a mobile application, called “Meri LiFE” (My life). This app is inspired by the concept of LiFE, envisioned by the Prime Minister at COP 26, which emphasises mindful and deliberate utilisation instead of mindless and wasteful consumption.
- Mission LiFE (Lifestyle for Environment) was launched by The Prime Minister on 20 October 2022 at Kevadia, Gujarat and focuses on bringing about behaviour changes in individuals through simple easy to do actions.
- The ministry has developed two dedicated portals for LiFE, in order to create a structured reporting format that can track the progress being made on LiFE. The Mission LiFE Portal (missionlife-moefcc.nic.in) is open access and can be used to download the 100+ creatives, videos and knowledge materials that have been developed by the ministry for LiFE.
- The Meri LiFE Portal (merilife.org) has been developed for ministries and institutions to upload event reports and capture the progress of the mass mobilisation drive.

“Poshan Bhi, Padhai Bhi” Campaign launched to improve Early Childhood Education in India

- Union Ministry of Women and Child Development have launched a campaign named “Poshan Bhi Padhai Bhi”.
- Under this, work will be undertaken in Anganwadis across the country for providing nutrition as well as better education to children in the age group of 3 to 6 years. Under the National Education Policy 2020, Anganwadi workers are being trained by NIPSID regarding the mental development of children between the ages of 3 and 6 years.

Union Health Ministry launched SAKSHAM Learning Management Information System

- SAKSHAM stands for Stimulating Advanced Knowledge for Sustainable Health Management. It is a dedicated and unified platform for providing online training and medical education to all health professionals in the country.
- It has been developed by the National Institute of Health and Family Welfare (NIHFW), New Delhi, and is envisioned to be utilised for all blended learning programmes in the future.
- Going forward, it will act as a central database of trained healthcare professionals in the country and will also serve as an enabler for case-based learning in the sector.
- The courses offered in the portal have been developed in collaboration with global healthcare agencies, including WHO, UNICEF, UNDP and reputed national and international institutes, and are also peer reviewed and approved by domain experts from the concerned departments.

Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) Launches Space Science and Technology Awareness Training Programme

- ISRO has launched a new introductory-level online training programme called ‘Space Science and Technology Awareness Training (START)’ aimed at post-graduate and final-year undergraduate students of physical sciences and technology. The programme will cover various domains of space science, including Astronomy & Astrophysics, Heliophysics & Sun-Earth interaction, Instrumentation and Aeronomy. It will be delivered by the scientists from Indian academia and ISRO centres.

- It is part of ISRO's efforts to enable Indian students to become professionals in space science and technology. The programme will provide students with introductory-level training in space science and technology, giving them an overview of different facets of the field, research opportunities and career options.

Key Points

ISRO's Chairman	– S. Somanath
ISRO's HQ	– Bengaluru

MoHUA and MoR jointly ink MoU with JICA for Project SMART

- The Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA) and Ministry of Railways (MoR) jointly signed an MoU with Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) for 'Station Area Development along Mumbai–Ahmedabad High Speed Rail' (Project-SMART).
- Project-SMART envisages to develop surrounding areas of Mumbai–Ahmedabad High Speed Railway (MAHSR) Stations to enhance accessibility and convenience of commuters and other stakeholders and to promote economic activities in the vicinity of station areas.
- It would facilitate and enhance institutional capacity of State Governments, Municipal Corporations and Urban Development Authorities to plan, develop and manage surrounding areas of MAHSR stations.
- It was inked for four High Speed Rail Stations –

Sabarmati, Surat in Gujarat and Virar and Thane in Maharashtra; out of 12 stations in-route. Surat, Virar and Thane are Green field while Sabarmati is a Brown field development.

UGC launches 'CU-Chayan' portal for faculty recruitment in Central varsities

- University Grant Commission Chairman M Jagadesh Kumar launched the Central University Faculty recruitment portal 'CU-Chayan'.
- It is a completely user-friendly portal and caters to the needs of all the stakeholders in the recruitment process. UGC has developed this portal to create an enabling environment for both, universities and the applicants with universities driving all the stages of the recruitment independently.
- It is a unified recruitment portal, designed and developed specifically for recruitment of the faculties in Central Universities.

Telangana Government to Implement Insurance Scheme for Toddy Tappers

- Telangana Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao is set to introduce the 'Geetha Karmikula Bhima' (insurance for toddy tappers) on the lines of Rythu Bhima for farmers, which is currently being implemented in the state.
- The insurance money of ₹ five lakh would be deposited directly in the bank account of the respective family members in case any toddy tapper dies accidentally while collecting toddy from palm trees in the fields.

ECONOMY AND BUSINESS

Bank of Maharashtra Emerges as Top Performer in NPA Management during FY23

- Bank of Maharashtra (BoM) has emerged as the best bank as far as management of bad loans is concerned with its net non-performing assets (NPAs) falling as low as 0.25% during the financial year ended March 2023. This is the lowest ratio among all banks having total business above ₹ 3 lakh crore and not just public sector banks (PSBs).
- It was followed by HDFC Bank with net NPA falling to 0.27% and Kotak Mahindra Bank clinching the third spot with 0.37% of net advances.
- On the PSB side, BoM was followed by the country's biggest lender State Bank of India (SBI) with net NPAs

falling to 0.67% and Bank of Baroda at 0.89% at the end of March 2023.

SEBI sets up Intermediary Advisory Committee Chaired by Former SEBI ED S Ravindran

- The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) has constituted an Intermediary Advisory Committee chaired by former SEBI ED S Ravindran to advise the market regulator on changes in the legal framework and increasing transparency in the functioning of market intermediaries like stock exchanges, depository participants, clearing corporations, among others.
- The committee has representation from the broking community, legal and financial institutions.

- The committee's role will be to advise on enhanced adoption of technology and cyber security by intermediaries, including in respect of compliances, to suggest measures for improving market safety, efficiency, transparency and integrity, and to advise on simplification and transparency in systems and procedures.
- The committee's role will be to advise on enhanced adoption of technology and cyber security.

Key Points

SEBI's HQ	– Mumbai
SEBI's Chairperson	– Madhabi Puri Buch

RBI Approves Amalgamation of Maratha Co-op Bank and Cosmos Co-operative Bank

- RBI has sanctioned the Scheme of Amalgamation of Maratha Sahakari Bank Ltd., Mumbai, Maharashtra with the Cosmos Co-operative Bank Limited, Pune, Maharashtra.
- The scheme has been sanctioned in exercise of the powers conferred under Sub-Section (4) of Section 44A read with Section 56 of the Banking Regulation Act, 1949.
- The scheme will come into force with effect from May 29, 2023. All branches of Maratha Sahakari Bank Ltd., Mumbai (Maharashtra) will function as branches of The Cosmos Co-operative Bank Limited, Pune (Maharashtra) with effect from May 29, 2023.

Key Points

RBI's HQ	– Mumbai
RBI's Chairperson	– Shaktikanta Das

HDFC Bank Partners with Manipal Global Skills Academy to Launch LXP – An All Women Job Ready Training Programme

- HDFC Bank launched the Leadership Excellence Program (LXP) focused on hiring and training Women Branch Managers in partnership with Manipal Global Skills Academy, India's premier skills training enterprise.
- The programme will deliver customised training to enable effective lateral hiring from Day 1 on the job. Through this module, the bank plans to hire, train and deploy over 200 women branch managers across Chennai, Bangalore, Hyderabad, Mumbai, Surat, Ahmedabad and Uttar Pradesh.

- This is aligned with the bank's stated goal to improve gender diversity, increasing the percentage of women within the organisation to 25 per cent by the year 2025. The LXP is a transformative initiative to establish a robust talent pipeline of female professionals at HDFC Bank, a premier lender in India's private sector.

ADB and India Sign \$141.12 Million Loan for Industrial Corridor Development in Andhra

- The Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the Government of India signed a \$141.12 million loan to support the development of high-quality internal infrastructure such as roads, water supply systems and electricity distribution network in three industrial clusters in the state of Andhra Pradesh.
- This financing is the second tranche of the \$500 million multi-tranche financing facility (MFF) for the programme approved by ADB in 2016 to build infrastructure in three industrial clusters in the Visakhapatnam and Srikalahasthi–Chittoor nodes in the state.
- The ADB financing through adopting multi-sectoral approach will help the state in promoting industrialisation to increase the share of manufacturing in the state's gross domestic product, build competitiveness and creating jobs in the project target areas.

Key Points

ADB HQ	– Mandaluyong, Philippines
ADB President	– Masatsugu Asakawa

Ministry of Civil Aviation Launched UDAN 5.1 for Helicopter Routes

- Following four successful rounds of the Regional Connectivity Scheme (RCS) – Ude Desh Ka Aam Nagrik (UDAN) and with version 5.0 of the fifth round underway, the Ministry of Civil Aviation has launched UDAN 5.1 further to enhance the connectivity to remote areas of the country and achieve last mile connectivity through helicopters.
- For the first time under RCS-UDAN, this round is designed specifically for helicopter routes. The main features include, an increase in the scope of operations for operators wherein the scheme will now allow routes where one of the origin or destination locations is in a priority area.
- Airfare caps have been reduced by as much as 25% to make flying in helicopters more affordable for

passengers. Viability Gap Funding (VGF) caps for the operators have been increased substantially for both single and twin-engine helicopters to enhance financial viability for operating the awarded routes.

- The current version of the scheme has been designed after consultations with all stakeholders including helicopter operators.
- While the intended target is to provide last-mile connectivity, it is also projected to give the helicopter segment of the Indian civil aviation industry a much-needed boost.
- Under the UDAN scheme passengers have received the benefit of air connectivity, airlines have received concessions for operating regional routes, and unserved regions have received the direct and indirect benefits of air connectivity for their economic development.

Key Points

Union Civil Minister – Jyotiraditya Scindia

Infosys launches Topaz, an AI-first set of services, solutions and platforms

- IT services major Infosys Ltd launched Infosys Topaz – an artificial intelligence-first set of services, solutions and platforms using generative AI technologies.
- It helps amplify the potential of humans, enterprises and communities to tap into the next generation of opportunities to create value from unprecedented innovations, connected ecosystems and pervasive efficiencies.
- Infosys Topaz leverages Infosys-applied AI framework to build an AI-first core that empowers people to deliver cognitive solutions that accelerate value creation.

Key Points

Infosys Chairman – Nandan Nilekani
 Infosys MD and CEO – Salil Parekh
 Headquarters – Bangalore, Karnataka

Microsoft Launches Jugalbandi, a Multilingual AI-Chat bot for Rural India

- Microsoft has unveiled a new generative AI-driven chatbot called 'Jugalbandi', designed for farmers and other users living in rural India.

- The chatbot is being developed in collaboration with Microsoft Research and the government-backed AI4Bharat – an open-source language AI centre based at the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Madras – and OpenNyAI.
- The chatbot will operate over the WhatsApp messaging service and it aims to make information on government schemes accessible in multiple languages.
- So far, Jugalbandi covers 10 of India's 22 official languages and 171 of a total of approximately 20,000 government programmes.

Key Points

Microsoft Chairman and CEO – Satya Nadella
 Microsoft Headquarters – Washington, US

RBI Announces Withdrawal of ₹ 2,000 Banknotes from Circulation

- The RBI announced the withdrawal of its highest value currency note, ₹ 2,000, from circulation, adding that the notes will continue to be legal tender. The existing ₹ 2,000 notes can be deposited or exchanged in banks until September 30, but set a limit of "₹ 20,000 at a time".
- People can deposit money into their bank accounts and/or exchange them into notes of other denominations at any bank branch. It also advised banks to stop issuing ₹2,000 notes with immediate effect.
- ₹ 2,000 notes were introduced during demonetisation in November 2016, when ₹ 500 and ₹ 1,000 notes were withdrawn.
- According to the RBI, about 89% of the ₹ 2,000 denomination notes were issued prior to March 2017 and are at the end of their estimated life span of four-five years.
- The total value of these banknotes in circulation has declined from ₹ 6.73 lakh crore at its peak as on March 31, 2018 (37.3% of notes in circulation) to ₹ 3.62 lakh crore constituting only 10.8% of notes in circulation on March 31, 2023.
- The ₹ 2,000 note was introduced in November 2016 under Section 24(1) of RBI Act, 1934, primarily to meet the currency requirement of the economy in an expeditious manner after the withdrawal of legal tender status of all ₹500 and ₹ 1,000 notes in circulation at that time.

METRO Sells India Cash & Carry to Reliance Retail for ₹ 2,850 crore

- German retailer METRO AG announced the completion of the sale of its Indian Cash and Carry business to Reliance Retail Ventures Ltd (RRVL), which holds the retail empire of Reliance Industries Ltd.
- The deal includes all 31 wholesale stores operated by METRO Cash & Carry India and the entire real estate portfolio (6 store-occupied properties) to RRVL.
- METRO and RRVL in December 2022 announced a deal for the acquisition of German firm's wholesale operations in India by billionaire Mukesh Ambani-led firm for ₹2,850 crore.
- The deal will help Reliance Retail strengthen its dominant position in India's mammoth retail sector, which is one of the fastest-growing markets globally.
- METRO is a leading international food wholesaler, operating in more than 30 countries. In the financial year 2021–22, METRO generated sales of 29.8 billion Euros.

Indian Army's Gajraj Corps Conducts Joint Flood Relief Exercise 'Jal Rahat' In Assam

- Gajraj Corps of the Indian Army conducted a Joint Flood Relief 'Exercise Jal Rahat' at Hagrama Bridge on Manas River, Assam to validate joint drills and coordinate preparedness by multi-agency flood relief columns.
- Apart from Indian Army-SSB, National Disaster Response Force (NDRF), State Disaster Response Force (SDRF), District Disaster Management Authority (DDMA) and police representatives took part. The event included coordination and rehearsals for rescue mission of people from inundated areas by joint efforts of specialist teams from Army, NDRF and SDRF.
- Notably, the Indian Army has been at the forefront during flood relief operations over the years has evacuated thousands of lives.

RBI Expects Banks to Completely Stop Using LIBOR by July

- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has asked banks and financial institutions to adopt by July 1 a widely accepted Alternative Reference Rate, such as the Secured Overnight Financing Rate (SOFR), to complete the transition from the scandal-hit London Interbank Offered Rate (LIBOR) and Mumbai Interbank Forward Outright Rate (MIFOR).

- Banks and private companies were using LIBOR as the benchmark rate for raising funds abroad. It was a key benchmark for setting the interest rates charged on adjustable-rate loans, mortgages and corporate debt.
- New transactions are now predominantly undertaken using SOFR and the Modified Mumbai Interbank Forward Outright Rate (MMIFOR). SOFR is considered a more accurate and more secure pricing benchmark.
- LIBOR is being phased out because of the role it played in worsening the 2008 Financial Crisis, as well as scandals involving LIBOR manipulation among rate-setting banks. In 2012, investigations into the way LIBOR was set uncovered a widespread, long-lasting scheme among multiple banks to manipulate rates for profit. The MIFOR, a domestic interest rate benchmark reliant on Dollar LIBOR, will also cease to be published by Financial Benchmarks India Pvt. Ltd after June 30.

London Stock Exchange Group to set up Technology Centre in Hyderabad

- In a major boost to the banking, financial services and insurance sector in Telangana, the London Stock Exchange Group PLC (LSEG) has announced its decision to set up a Technology Centre of Excellence in Hyderabad, generating employment for about 1,000 people in a year.
- This is a significant boost to the Banking, Financial Services, and Insurance (BFSI) sector in the city. The move is expected to create ample employment opportunities and drive growth in the industry.
- The London Stock Exchange Group is a leading global financial market infrastructure and data provider, operating in 70 countries worldwide and serving customers in 190 countries. With over 2,000 issuers across 100 countries and a benchmark of \$161 linked to FTSE Russell indexes, LSEG continues to be a major player in the global financial industry.

RBI Collaborates with GFIN to Prevent 'Greenwashing'

- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has taken a significant step towards addressing the issue of greenwashing in the financial sector by collaborating with the Global Financial Innovation Network (GFIN).
- This partnership aims to tackle the deceptive practice of greenwashing, where financial institutions make false or exaggerated environmental claims to attract investments for purportedly sustainable projects.

- Greenwashing has become a growing concern as the focus on environmental sustainability intensifies worldwide. Investors, individuals and organisations are increasingly seeking investment opportunities that align with their environmental values. However, the lack of clear standards and consistent reporting practices has created a breeding ground for misleading claims and misrepresentation.
- GFIN is an international network of financial regulators and organisations that work together to foster innovation and share best practices in the financial sector.
- By partnering with GFIN, RBI aims to leverage collective expertise and resources to address greenwashing effectively.

AIBEA Introduces “Bank Clinic” to Assist Bank Customers with Grievance Redressal

- The All India Bank Employees Association (AIBEA) has recently launched a unique initiative called “Bank Clinic” to assist bank customers with grievance redressal.
- The initiative is aimed at providing a platform for customers to voice their complaints and receive quick solutions to their banking problems. The Bank Clinic will be set up in select branches of public sector banks across the country. The clinic will have a team of experts who will provide assistance to customers facing banking-related issues. Customers can visit the Bank Clinic and discuss their grievances with the experts.
- The experts will then guide them on the steps to be taken to resolve their issues.

Google’s Bard Chatbot to Launch Globally, Including India

- Google has officially introduced its artificial intelligence (AI) chatbot Bard in India and in over 180 countries.
- The chatbot can be accessed by logging on to bard.google.com. The simplified website specifies that the tool is still an “experiment” and can throw inaccurate information.
- Along with a brief introduction about the AI tool, the user will be prompted to click on the button called ‘Try Bard’. After clicking on the button, the user will be asked to agree to the privacy permission to access Bard. The users will also be prompted to give feedback to make Bard better. However, Google Bard has the capability to produce multiple drafts for a single query. It also stays updated with latest development, whereas

ChatGPT uses some months-old dataset to produce answers to queries.

Ministry of Ports, Shipping & Waterways Launches ‘Harit Sagar’ Green Port Guidelines 2023

- To meet the larger vision of achieving Zero Carbon Emission Goal, Ministry of Ports, Shipping & Waterways has launched ‘Harit Sagar’ the Green Port Guidelines.
- Harit Sagar Guidelines – 2023 envisages ecosystem dynamics in port development, operation and maintenance while aligning with ‘Working with Nature’ concept and minimising impact on biotic components of harbor ecosystem.
- It lays emphasis on use of Clean/Green energy in Port operation, developing Port capabilities for storage, handling and bunkering Greener Fuels viz. Green Hydrogen, Green Ammonia, Green Methanol/Ethanol, etc.
- These guidelines provides a framework for the Major Ports for drawing out a comprehensive action plan for achieving targeted outcomes in terms of quantified reduction in carbon emission over defined timelines, through focused implementation and close monitoring of Green Initiatives and to achieve Sustainable Developmental Goals (SDG).

Key Points

Union Minister of Ports, – Sarbananda Sonowal
Shipping & Waterways

India and Thailand Conduct 35th Indo-Thai Coordinated Patrol (CORPAT)

- The Indian Navy and the Royal Thai Navy conducted the 35th edition of the India–Thailand Coordinated Patrol (Indo-Thai CORPAT) from May 3 to May 10, 2023, in the Andaman Sea.
- The bi-annual coordinated patrol aims to reinforce maritime linkages between the two countries and ensure the safety and security of the international trade route in the Indian Ocean.
- The patrol helps in understanding and interoperability between the two navies and facilitates the prevention and suppression of unlawful activities such as Illegal Unreported Unregulated (IUU) fishing, drug trafficking, piracy and armed robbery.
- It also enables the exchange of information to prevent smuggling, illegal immigration and conduct search and rescue (SAR) operations at sea.

- The Indian Navy has been proactively engaging with countries in the Indian Ocean Region towards enhancing regional maritime security as part of the Government of India's vision of SAGAR (Security and Growth for All in the Region).

Key Points

Chief of the Naval Staff, (CNS) – R Hari Kumar

MakeMyTrip Collaborates with Microsoft to Introduce Voice Assisted Booking in Indian Languages

- MakeMyTrip collaborates with Microsoft for voice-assisted booking in Indian languages to use Generative AI to make travel planning accessible by introducing voice-assisted booking in Indian languages.
- The new, in-platform tech stack powered by Microsoft Azure OpenAI Service and Azure Cognitive Services, will converse with the user to offer personalised travel recommendations based on their preferences, curate holiday packages based on variable inputs like occasion, budget, activity preferences, time of travel, among others and even help book these holiday packages.

Air Force Receives 1st Batch of Indigenous VTOL Loitering Munition

- In a boost to India's air defence, the Indian Air Force (IAF) got its first batch of Vertical Take Off and Landing (VTOL) developed by TATA Advanced Systems Limited (TASL). These are capable of operating from all kinds of terrain and high altitude areas and can take down targets at a range of over 50 km, without exposing any personnel to risk.
- They are an autonomous system developed by TASL. It is designed for VTOL and has successfully demonstrated its capability to carry out precision strikes during trials and tests.
- ASL-50 loitering munition has successfully demonstrated its ability to strike targets during tests at Pokhran. The system was able to hit the designated ground target accurately during trials. Earlier, it had demonstrated its ability to operate from high-altitude areas during trials in Ladakh earlier this year.

Key Points

Chief of Air Staff (CoAS) – Vivek Ram Chaudhari

HDFC Bank Launched Programme for Bharat, to Onboard 1 lakh Customers

- HDFC Bank launched its retail banking programme 'Vishesh' for customers in semi-urban and rural geographies wherein it plans to onboard around 1 lakh new customers.
- As a part of this, HDFC plans to add more branches and launch customised, tailor-made products and financial solutions for this market segment. It will look to add 675 branches in semi-urban and rural geographies in FY24 to take the total number to nearly 5,000. As of March 31, 52 per cent of the bank's 7,821 branches are in rural and semi urban locations.
- Under the programme, the private sector lender has put in place a unique customer engagement model, felicitating rural seniors such as sarpanches, teachers and key officials as they play a key role in the growth and progress of villages

Key Points

HDFC's HQ	– Mumbai
HDFC's Chairman	– Atanu Chakraborty
HDFC's CEO	– Sashidhar Jagdishan

MoS for Home Affairs Shri Nityanand Rai Inaugurates Land Port Dawki in Meghalaya

- Union Minister of State for Home Affairs Shri Nityanand Rai inaugurated the Land Port Dawki, Meghalaya.
- The Land Port is expected to boost the tourism and business sectors of Meghalaya as well as the country. It has a good infrastructure, a slew of facilities such as godown, canteen, cargo for tourists and electric substation, among others are also available here.
- The Dawki Land Port is an important project of the Government of India, aimed at promoting trade and commerce between India and Bangladesh. It is located in the West Jantia Hills in Meghalaya, 55 km from the district headquarters, Jowai, and about 84 km from Shillong. The corresponding Land Port in Bangladesh is Tamabil, located in the Sylhet district.
- Land Port Dawki serves as a vital trade and transportation hub between India and Bangladesh, facilitating the movement of goods, people and vehicles across the border. It also facilitates passenger movement across the border.

First Border Haat Inaugurated at Bholaganj in Sylhet Division between India and Bangladesh

- A new Border Haat between India and Bangladesh was inaugurated in Bholaganj under the Companiganj upazila of Sylhet. The opening of the Border Haat at Bholaganj on the border between Sylhet in Bangladesh and East Khasi Hills of Meghalaya was welcomed by people on both sides of borders with great enthusiasm. This is the fourth Border Haat in Sylhet division out of which three are currently functional. Three more Border Haats are planned to be opened in the Sylhet division
- The Bholaganj Border Haat will have 26 stalls from India and 24 stalls from Bangladesh where traditional items from both the countries will be sold duty free.
- The first Border Haat was inaugurated in 2011 in the West Garo Hills district of Meghalaya at Kalaichar and Kurigram in Bangladesh.
- Border Haat will contribute immensely in bonding of people on both sides of border, knowledge sharing and deepening people-to-people connectivity which is an essential building block in cementing ties between the two neighbouring countries.

Key Points

Bangladesh Capital	– Dhaka
Bangladesh PM	– Sheikh Hasina

RBI Mandates Complete Information for Money Transfers to Curb Money Laundering and Terrorism Financing

- RBI has recently updated its instructions in the Master Direction on Know Your Customer (KYC) related to wire transfers and also aligned the same with the relevant recommendation of the Financial Action Task Force (FATF).
- It asked all banks, financial institutions in the country to ensure all wire transfers – domestic as well as international wire transfers – to contain complete information about the originator and beneficiary to prevent them from being used as a channel for money laundering, terrorist financing platforms.
- Domestic wire transfers of ₹50,000 and above, where the originator is not an account holder of the ordering RE, shall also be accompanied by originator and beneficiary information as indicated for cross-border wire transfers. 'Ordering RE' refers to the financial institution which initiates the wire transfer and transfers the funds on behalf of the originator.

- REs should make available all the information on the wire transfers to appropriate law enforcement and/or prosecutorial authorities as well as FIU-IND on receiving such requests with appropriate legal provisions.

RBI Publishes 2022–23 'Currency and Finance' Report with Focus on Climate Change

- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI), released a report on currency and finance for the financial year (FY) 2022–23.
- The theme of the report is 'Towards a Greener Cleaner India'.
- The report covers four major dimensions of climate change to assess future challenges to sustainable high growth in India, viz., the unprecedented scale and pace of climate change; its macroeconomic effects; implications for financial stability; and policy options to mitigate climate risks.
- It highlighted that there is a need for a balanced policy intervention with progress ensured across all policy levers for India to achieve its green transition targets by 2030 and later make the net zero goal by 2070 attainable.

Rajnath Singh Initiates Construction of Coast Guard Establishment in Maldives

- Defence minister Rajnath Singh and his Maldivian counterpart Mariya Didi laid the foundation of a harbour for the coast guard of that country at Sifavaru to boost its maritime security capabilities.
- This is being done at a time when China is attempting to step up its presence in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR) by sending more warships on deployments and also taking up projects in the region.
- India and the Maldives signed a pact for the development of the coast guard facility in 2021 when New Delhi also extended a \$50 million line of credit to the Maldives for defence projects.

JP Morgan Acquires First Republic Bank Amidst Recent Failures of Major US Banks

- The First Republic Bank has been seized and a deal agreed to sell the bank to JPMorgan Chase & Co, in what is the third major U.S. institution to fail in two months.
- The banking giant will take \$173 billion of loans and about \$30 billion of securities of First Republic Bank, including \$92 billion of deposits.

Adani Group to Develop India's First Integrated Data Centre and Technology Business Park in Visakhapatnam

- The Adani Group is developing an integrated data centre and technology business park in Visakhapatnam to boost local technology ecosystem in the region.
- The investments will be on top of the ₹ 20,000 crore already invested in the state, which created more than 18,000 direct and 54,000 indirect job.
- The project, which will have a data centre, technology and business park and skill development centre, will generate jobs for local communities and open new gateways of growth in the region, connecting Vizag to the APAC (Asia-Pacific) IT ecosystem.
- AdaniConneX, a 50:50 joint venture between Adani Group and EdgeConneX, will host within the park an integrated 300 MW data center facility, according to the statement.
- The establishment of 300 MW data centres by the Adani Group will facilitate the laying of a submarine cable from Singapore and help change the future dynamics of broadband services.

Key Points

Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh – Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy

Microsoft Launches Two New Initiatives to Support Indian SMBs

- Microsoft has announced two new initiatives to guide India's small and medium businesses (SMBs) on digital transformation projects and help them learn new technology and business skills. The initiatives include an SMB-focused website and a dedicated helpline number.
- The SMB-focused website will focus on improving networking opportunities for small business owners and entrepreneurs in India, enhance their skills and achieve holistic growth.
- It offers an SMB Academy that can help SMBs gain valuable digital skills and improve workforce productivity using Microsoft's curated business and technology courses. The website also offers varied Microsoft solutions that best address the needs of an organisation, as well as easy access to Microsoft's vast ecosystem of over 17,000 partners in the country.

India's First Female Rafale Pilot, Shivangi Singh Part of Exercise in France

- Shivangi Singh, the Indian Air Force's first woman pilot to fly the Rafale fighter aircraft, is part of the IAF team which will take part in the multinational Exercise Orion in France.
- She is the Rafale squadron's first woman fighter pilot, and is set to make history by flying the multi-role air dominance aircraft.
- Shivangi Singh joined the Indian Air Force in 2017 and was commissioned into the IAF's second batch of women fighter pilots. Before flying Rafale, Shivangi also flew MiG-21 Bison aircraft. She hails from Varanasi and is currently undergoing conversion training and will shortly become a part of the IAF's Golden Arrows squadron based out of Ambala in Haryana.
- Shivangi Singh became the first woman fighter pilot to fly a Rafale after she was selected as a Rafale pilot following a stringent selection process in 2020.

India to Join International Climate Action in Civil Aviation from 2027

- India will start participating in the International Civil Aviation Organisation's (ICAO) Carbon Offsetting and Reduction Scheme for International Aviation (CORSIA) and the Long-Term Aspirational Goals (LTAG) from 2027.
- The ICAO has been tasked to reduce carbon emissions from international civil aviation as one of its focus areas. In order to mitigate carbon emissions from aviation and its impact on climate change, the global body has adopted several key aspirational goals.
- Among them are a 2% annual fuel efficiency improvement through 2050, carbon neutral growth and net zero by 2050. The ICAO has clubbed them under CORSIA and LTAG.
- The former is to be implemented in three phases.
- India committed to net zero by 2070 at the 26th Conference of Parties (COP26) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

Key Points

ICAO HQ – Canada
ICAO Secretary General – Juan Carlos Salazar

Indian Army Inducts First Women Officers into Regiment of Artillery

- The Indian Army inducted its first batch of “Five Women Officers” into the Regiment of Artillery in another significant move towards expanding woman’s role in the armed forces.
- These officers will be given the same opportunities and challenges as their male counterparts.
- The women officers were inducted into the Regiment after successfully completing their training at the Officers Training Academy (OTA) in Chennai.
- In this fighting arm of the Indian army, these young women officers will be posted to all types of artillery units where they will receive adequate training and exposure to handle Rocket, Medium, Field and Surveillance and Target Acquisition (SATA) and equipment in difficult conditions.
- The Army has revealed that three of the newly commissioned women officers in the Regiment of

Artillery will be posted to units deployed along the northern borders with China, while the other two will be posted in “challenging locations” near the frontier with Pakistan.

- In January, Chief of Army Staff Gen Manoj Pande announced the decision of commissioning women officers into artillery units, the proposal which was later approved by the government.

Tamil Nadu Tops Market Borrowing for Third Consecutive Year, RBI Data Revealed

- Tamil Nadu has so far raised ₹30,500 crores in the fiscal 2020–21 and has topped market borrowings among States in the country.
- Tamil Nadu has accounted for 17% of the borrowings done through the issue of bonds, known as state development loans. With borrowings of ₹25,500 crore, Maharashtra accounted for 14%, followed by Rajasthan and Andhra Pradesh at 17% each, as per the data.

PEOPLE IN NEWS/APPOINTMENTS

Name	Designation
Srikrishnan Harihara Sarma	MD & CEO of Karnataka Bank
Mukesh Ambani	Member of Advisory Committee of COP 28
Parminder Chopra	First woman CMD of Power Finance Corporation
Harsh Jain	Chairperson of IAMAI, Indian Entrepreneurs Lead the Way
Jaswant Singh Birdi	First Turban-Wearing Lord Mayor of Coventry, UK
Sourav Ganguly	Brand Ambassador of Tripura Tourism
Siddaramaiah	Chief Minister of Karnataka
AK Jain	Petroleum and Natural Gas Regulatory Board (PNGRB) Chairman
Ravneet Kaur	Chairperson of the Competition Commission of India (CCI).
Bhavesh Gupta	President and COO of Paytm
Ludovit Odor	Slovakia’s Caretaker Prime Minister
Virat Kohli	Duroflex’s Brand Ambassador
Manoj Soni	UPSC Chairman
Ashutosh Dixit	Deputy Chief of Air Staff
Geeta Rao Gupta	US Ambassador at Large for Global Women’s Issues
Praveen Sood	CBI Director
Linda Yaccarino	Twitter CEO
Rajiv Dhar	Interim CEO & MD of National Investment and Infrastructure Fund Limited (NIIFL)
Alia Bhatt	First Indian Global Ambassador of Gucci
Bola Tinubu	President of Nigeria

Name	Designation
Praveen Kumar Srivastava	Central Vigilance Commissioner
Angshumali Rastogi	India's representative to the council of the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO)
Girish Chandra Murmu	External Auditor of WHO
R Dinesh	President of Confederation of Indian Industry
Justice Mamidanna Satya Ratna Sri Ramachandra Rao	Chief Justice of Himachal Pradesh High Court
Sachin Tendulkar	Smile Ambassador of Maharashtra Government
SN Subrahmanyam	CMD of L&T
Rathendra Raman	Chairman of the Kolkata Port
Neera Tandon	Domestic Policy Advisor in Biden Administration, US
Polavarapu Mallikharjuna Prasad	Chairman and Managing Director of Coal India (CIL)
Margherita Della Valle	CEO of Vodafone
Pandit Ramkishan	"Shatabdi Purush" (Man of the Century)
Rajneesh Karnatak	MD and Chairman of Bank of India
Debadatta Chand	Managing Director of Bank of Baroda

DAYS AND THEMES

Date	Day	Theme
1 May	International Worker's Day or May Day	
1 May	Maharashtra Day	
2 May	World Asthma Day (First tuesday of May)	Asthma Care for All
2 May	World Tuna Day	
3 May	World Press Freedom Day	Shaping a Future of Rights: Freedom of expression as a driver for all other human rights
4 May	Coal Miners Day	
4 May	International Firefighter's Day	
5 May	World Portuguese Language Day	
7 May	World Athletics Day	Athletics for All – A New Beginning
8 May	World Thalassaemia Day	Strengthening Education to Bridge the Thalassaemia Care Gap
8 May	World Red Cross Day	Everything we do comes from the heart
10 May	International Day of Argania or International Day of the Argan Tree	
10 May	World Lupus Day	
11 May	National Technology Day	
12 May	International Day of Plant Health	Plant Health for Environmental Protection
12 May	International Nurses Day	Our Nurses. Our Future
15 May	International Day of Families	'Demographic Trends and Families'
16 May	International Day of Living Together in Peace	

Date	Day	Theme
16 May	International Day of Light	
16 May	National Dengue Day	Fight Dengue, Save Lives
17 May	World Telecommunication and Information Society Day	Enabling the least developed nations through information and communication technologies
17 May	World Hypertension Day	Measure Your Blood Pressure Accurately, Control It, Live Longer.
18 May	International Museum Day	Museums, Sustainability and Well-being
18 May	Global Accessibility Awareness Day	
18 May	World AIDS Vaccine Day	
19 May	National Endangered Species Day (Third Friday in May)	
21 May	International Tea Day	
21 May	National Anti-Terrorism Day	
22 May	International Day for Biological Diversity	From Agreement to Action: Build Back Biodiversity
23 May	International Day to End Obstetric Fistula	20 years on – progress but not enough! Act now to end fistula by 2030!
23 May	World Turtle Day	I love turtles
29 May	International Day of UN Peacekeepers	Peace Begins With Me
30 May	World Vape Day	
31 May	World No Tobacco Day	Grow food, not tobacco

OBITUARIES (NATIONAL)

Name	Occupation/ Field	Place
Arun Gandhi	Activist, Speaker and Writer	Kolhapur, Maharashtra
Karumuttu T Kannan	Industrialist and Philanthropist	Madurai, Tamil Nadu
GH Nayak	Writer	Mysuru, Karnataka
Sarath Babu	Actor	Hyderabad
Srichand Parmanand Hinduja	Hinduja Group Chairman	London
A.R. Khaleel	Vice President, Former All India Football Federation (AIFF)	
Ranjit Guha	Historian	Austria
Dr. N. Gopalakrishnan	Creator of the Indian Institute of Scientific Heritage (IISH) and a former scientist at the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR)	

OBITUARIES (INTERNATIONAL)

Name	Occupation/Field	Place
Tina Turner	Queen of Rock	Zurich, Switzerland
Antonio Carbajal	Footballer	

BOOKS AND AUTHORS

Name of the writer	Book
RINGSIDE-Up, close, and Personal on India and Beyond	Dr. Vijay Darda
The Golden Years: The Many Joys of Living a Good Long Life	Ruskin Bond
Guts Amidst Bloodbath: The Aunshuman Gaekwad Narrative	Aditya Bhushan
Droupadi Murmu: From Tribal Hinterlands to Raisina Hills	Kasturi Ray
My Life As A Comrade	KK Shailaja
MADE IN INDIA: 75 Years of Business and Enterprise	Amitabh Kant
Collective Spirit, Concrete Action	Shashi Shekhar Vempati

RANKS, INDICES AND REPORTS

Health Index Report of Covid Year: Kerala and Tamil Nadu Top Performers

- Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Telangana emerged as the top-performing states among the 'large states', Tripura performed well in the smaller states category while Delhi ranked at the bottom among the Union Territories in NITI Aayog's annual 'Health Index' for Covid-19 pandemic year of 2020–21.
- In the category of smaller states, Tripura has demonstrated the best overall performance with Sikkim and Goa following closely. On the other hand, Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland and Manipur occupy the bottom three positions.
- Among the union territories, Lakshadweep has secured the top position in terms of overall performance, while Delhi has been placed at the bottom.
- The Health Index, launched by NITI Aayog in 2017, assesses the performance of states and union territories based on 24 health performance indicators. NITI Aayog collaborated with the Union Health Ministry and the World Bank to release the comprehensive health index.
- The report assesses the performance of states and union territories based on two parameters: incremental performance, measuring year-on-year progress, and overall performance, evaluating overall achievements.
- The health index comprises indicators in three domains: health outcomes, governance and information and key inputs and processes. The report has been prepared in collaboration with the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW) with technical assistance from the World Bank, as stated in a released statement in 2021.

SPORTS NEWS

Max Verstappen Wins Monaco Grand Prix 2023

- Max Verstappen won the 2023 Monaco Grand Prix, leading all 78 laps from pole position.
- The victory was Verstappen's fourth of the season and extended his lead in the Drivers' Championship to 39 points

Hari Buddha Magar Climbs Mt Everest with Artificial Legs

- Hari Budha Magar, a former Gurkha soldier from Nepal who lost both his legs, made history by successfully climbing Mount Everest using prosthetic legs.

- Upon his return to Kathmandu, he was warmly welcomed by his relatives and family members.

Adidas Named New India Cricket Team Kit Sponsor

- The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) announced that Adidas will be the new kit sponsor of the Indian team in a five-year deal.

Key Points

BCCI President	– Roger Binny
BCCI HQ	– Mumbai

Telangana's Vuppala Praneeth Became India's 82nd Grandmaster

- Telangana's Praneeth Vuppala has become India's 82nd Grandmaster after he achieved the required 2,500 FIDE rating points during the Baku Open tournament.
- Praneeth is now the sixth Grandmaster from the State of Telangana.

Birthday of Indian Football Legend PK Banerjee will be Celebrated as 'AIFF Grassroots Day'

- The All India Football Federation (AIFF) has declared that June 23, the birth anniversary of Indian football legend Pradip Kumar Banerjee, will be recognised as 'AIFF Grassroots Day'.
- Popularly known as P.K., the late Mr. Banerjee captained the Indian team in the 1960 Rome Olympics and enjoyed a stellar career as a player before taking up coaching, where he also tasted plenty of success.

RR's Yuzvendra Chahal Creates History, Becomes First Indian to take most Wickets in IPL

- RR's Yuzvendra Chahal creates history, becomes the first Indian to take most wickets in IPL.
- Yuzvendra Chahal, the spinner for both India and the Rajasthan Royals cricket team, made history as he became the first Indian bowler to take 300 wickets in T20 cricket.

Babar Azam Becomes Fastest to 5,000 ODI Runs

- Pakistan skipper Babar Azam has become the fastest player to reach 5,000 runs in the ODI format. He crossed the 5,000 run-mark in 97 innings. Babar broke Hashim Amla's record of scoring 5,000 runs in 101 innings.

- He is the captain of Pakistan's cricket team.

Logo and Mascot of the Khelo India University Games Uttar Pradesh 2022 Launched

- The Union Minister for Youth Affairs & Sports Anurag Singh Thakur and Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh Yogi Adityanath launched the official Logo, Mascot, Flambeau, Anthem & Jersey of Khelo India University Games Uttar Pradesh-2022.
- This is the third edition of the Khelo India University Games.
- The anthem of the Games titled 'Khelo India – Har Dil Mein Desh' is composed and sung by renowned singer Palash Sen.
- The mascot of the University Games is Jitu Barasingha, an exotic live state animal and a symbol of 'Pride of Pride', was unveiled on the occasion. Jitu will serve as a source of excitement, fostering fan engagement and building team spirit throughout the tournament.
- The official logo of the Khelo India University Games 2022 Uttar Pradesh represents the rich heritage of Uttar Pradesh, India's largest state. The logo is a representation of the state's rich traditional and historical legacy which has been the foundation for its development in all aspects viz; education, infrastructure and sports.

Ding Liren Becomes China's First World Chess Champion

- Ding Liren has become China's first men's world chess champion, after defeating Russia's Ian Nepomniachtchi. Ding, 30, won a rapid-play tiebreaker after 14 first-stage games at the World Chess Championship in Kazakhstan.
- He has become 17th world chess champion.

EVENTS

Laos to Host ASEAN Tourism Forum 2024 with "Quality and Responsible Tourism -Sustaining ASEAN Future" Theme

- Laos will host the annual ASEAN Tourism Forum in January 2024, which will take place in Vientiane, Laos.
- The theme of the forum is "Quality and Responsible Tourism — Sustaining ASEAN Future," which reflects the focus on sustainable and responsible tourism practices.
- The event will focus on aspects like sustainability, digitalisation and labour shortage to improve the tourism industry in Southeast Asia.

India Hosts the First-ever Physical Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) Startup Forum in New Delhi

- In a major development, India has taken the lead in organising the first-ever physical Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) Startup Forum, New Delhi. The forum served as a platform to connect startup communities from SCO member countries, allowing them to share insights, expertise and forge partnerships.
- After two successful editions in virtual mode, Startup India, Department of Promotion for Industry and Internal Trade, Ministry of Commerce organised the

third edition in the form of first-ever physical SCO startup forum.

- The engagement aimed at expanding the startup interactions amongst the SCO Member States, nurturing the spirit of innovation, generating more employment and encouraging young talent to build innovative solutions.
- The forum witnessed physical participation from SCO Member States including a delegation of government officials, private industry players, incubators and startups.

42nd ASEAN Summit Begins in Indonesia with Focus on Becoming Global Growth Centre

- The 42nd Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Summit formally kicked off in the Indonesian town of Labuan Bajo.
- The country's President Joko Widodo urged unity and economic integration for the regional bloc to play a central role in regional peace and development.
- The ASEAN, founded in 1967, groups Brunei,

Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam. The last time Indonesia chaired ASEAN was in 2011, after hosting the summits in 1976 and 2003. The country has scheduled the 43rd summit and the East Asia Summit to be held on September 6–7 in capital, Jakarta.

- ASEAN Summit is held twice a year.

UAE Government Launches 'Machines Can See 2023' Summit

- The UAE Government launched the 'Machines Can See 2023' Summit, one of the international conferences in Artificial Intelligence (AI) in the whole region, taking place at the Museum of the Future in Dubai.
- It was launched in partnership between Artificial Intelligence, Digital Economy and Remote Work Applications Office and 'Machines Can See' company.
- It aims to bring together experts from around the world to discuss the future of AI and its potential in contributing to the UAE's vision of creating the next Silicon Valley.

AWARDS AND HONOURS

Goan Writer Damodar Mauzo Gets 57th Jnanpith Award

- Goan writer Damodar Mauzo, Goa has received the prestigious Jnanpith Award, the country's highest literary honour.
- He is a Goan short story writer, novelist, critic and scriptwriter in Konkani. He is the second Goan to receive the award, after Ravindra Kelekar in 2008.

- Mauzo's 25 books have been published in Konkani and one in English. Many of his books have also been translated in different languages.
- His famous novel 'Karmelin' received the Sahitya Akademi Award in 1983.

Cannes Film Festival 2023 Awardee's List

Category	Name
Palme d'Or	Anatomy of A Fall, directed by Justine Triet
Grand Prix	The Zone of Interest Director: Jonathan Glazer
Jury Prize	Fallen Leaves, Directed by Aki Kaurismaki
Best Director	Tran Anh Hung for The Pot-Au-Feu
Best Screenplay	Monster, written by Yuji Sakamoto
Best Actress	Merve Dizdar, About Dry Grasses
Best Actor	Kōji Yakusho, Perfect Days
Camera d'Or	Inside the Yellow Cocoon Shell, directed by Thien An Pham
Short Film Palme d'Or	27, directed by Flóra Anna Buda
Queer Palm	Monster

IIFA Awards 2023 Announced

- The IIFA Awards 2023 were held in Abu Dhabi. They were held in collaboration with the Department of

Culture and Tourism – Abu Dhabi (DCT Abu Dhabi), and Miral, Abu Dhabi's leading curator of immersive destinations and experiences.

Category	Winner
Best Picture	Drishyam 2
Best Director	R Madhavan, Rocketry: The Nambi Effect
Best Performance in a leading role (male)	Hrithik Roshan, Vikram Vedha
Best Performance in a leading role (female)	Alia Bhatt, Gangubai Kathiawadi
Best Performance in a supporting role (male)	Anil Kapoor, JuggJugg Jiyo
Best Performance in a supporting role (female)	Mouni Roy, Brahmastra Part One Shiva
Best Debut (Male)	Babil Khan, Qala and Shantanu Maheshwari, Gangubai Kathiawadi
Best Debut (Female)	Khushalii Kumar, Dhokha: Round D Corner
Best Playback Singer (Male)	Arijit Singh, Kesariya, Brahmastra Part One: Shiva
Best Playback Singer (Female)	Shreya Ghoshal, Rasiya, Brahmastra Part One: Shiva
Best Music	Pritam Chakraborty, Brahmastra Part One: Shiva
Best Lyrics	Amitabh Bhattacharya, Kesariya, Brahmastra Part One: Shiva
Outstanding Achievement in Regional Cinema	Riteish Deshmukh and Genelia D'Souza, Ved
Oustanding Achievement in Indian Cinema	Kamal Hassan

Narendra Modi Conferred with Papua New Guinea and Fiji's Highest Honour

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi has been conferred with the highest honours by Fiji and Papua New Guinea.
- PM Modi was conferred with the "The Companion of the Order of Fiji" by his Fijian counterpart Sitiveni Rabuka for his global leadership, in a rare honour for a non-Fijian.
- Papua New Guinea conferred its highest civilian order, Grand Companion of the Order of Logohu (GCL), on PM Modi for championing the cause of unity of Pacific Island countries and spearheading the cause of Global South. Very few non-residents of the island nation have received this award.
- PM Modi has been conferred highest civilian honours by several nations. These recognitions are a reflection of PM Modi's leadership and vision which has strengthened India's emergence on the global stage. It

also reflects India's growing ties with countries around the world.

Pulitzer Prizes 2023 Announced

- The Pulitzer Prize honours achievements in 22 categories such as musical arts, written compositions, published editorials, journalism, periodicals, etc. Columbia University of the United States is the controlling head of the prize.
- The winners from 21 groups are granted a \$15,000 cash award along with a certificate. However, the winner of the Public Service category in Journalism is revered with a gold medal.
- This awardship event was established in 1917 under provisions given in the will of Joseph Pulitzer who was a leading figure in Politics and Publishing. The Public Service Gold Medal has 2 sides, obverse and reverse and this fascinating laurel was designed by an American Sculptor, Daniel Chester French in 1917.

Fiction	
Hernan Diaz	Novel 'Trust'
Barbara Kingsolver	Novel 'Demon Copperhead'
General Non-Fiction Prize	
Robert Samuels and Toluse Olorunnipa	Biography Book 'His Name is George Floyd'

Poet Prize	
Carl Phillips	Anthology Book 'Then the War: And Selected Poems, 2007–2020'
Music Prize	
Rhiannon Giddens and Michael Abels	Opera 'Omar'
Feature Photography Prize	
Christina House of Los Angeles Times	
Editorial Writing Prize	
Miami Herald Editorial Board including Nancy Ancrum, Luisa Yanez, Lauren Costantino, Army Driscoll and Isadora Rangel	Series 'Broken Promises'
Drama Prize	
Sanaz Toossi	Play 'English'
History Prize	
Jefferson Cowie	Chronicle 'Freedom's Dominion: A Saga of White Resistance to Federal Power'
Biography/Autobiography Prize	
'G-Man: J. Edgar Hoover and the Making of the American Century'	Beverly Gage – Biography
Public Service Prize	
Associated Press, Evgeniy Maloletka, Mstyslav Chernov	How Moscow grabs Ukrainian kids and makes them Russians', 'The mouth of a bear: Ukrainian refugees sent to Russia', '20 days in Mariupol: The tram that documented city's agony', etc.
Breaking News Photography Prize	
Associated Press	Russia-Ukraine Battle
International Reporting Prize	
Staff of the New York Times	Putin's War', 'Bucha's Month of Terror', 'They Died by a Bridge in Ukraine'.
Investigative Reporting Prize	
Staff of the Wall Street Journal	
Breaking News Reporting Prize	
Staff of the Los Angeles Times	
National Reporting Prize	
Caroline Kitchener	'Pregnant and desperate in post-Roe America'
Explanatory Reporting Prize	
Caitlin Dickerson	We need to take away children'
Feature Writing Prize	
Eli Saslow	An American education'
Criticism Prize	
Andrea Long Chu – 'Hanya's Boys', 'The Mixed Metaphor', 'Ottessa Moshfegh Is Praying for Us', 'The Velveteen Rabbit Was Always More Than a Children's Book', 'Misreading Octavia Butler'	
Pulitzer Prize for Audio Reporting	
Connie Walker	Stolen: Surviving St. Michael's

Meera Syal to Receive a BAFTA Fellowship in London

- Popular UK-based Indian-origin actor–writer Meera Syal has been conferred a BAFTA Fellowship, the highest accolade bestowed by the British Academy of Film and Television Arts (BAFTA) upon an individual in recognition of an outstanding and exceptional contribution to film and/or television.
- She is best known for television shows such as ‘Goodness Gracious Me’ and ‘The Kumars at No. 42’.

Russian Poet Maria Stepanova Wins Leipzig Book Prize 2023

- Maria Stepanova has been awarded the prestigious Leipzig Book Prize for European Understanding in 2023. She was awarded the prestigious Leipzig Book Prize
- For her volume of poetry, *Girls Without Clothes*.
- She was also nominated for her the Booker Prize in 2021 for her novel ‘In Memory of Memory’ in which she explores Stalinism and the fall of the Soviet Union.