Message from the Founder & Chief Mentor

Dr. Bhabani Shankar Chayani

Dear students,

This issue of 'LISAS CAREER IN FOCUS' contains facts, articles and analytical essays on different topics. It will be certainly helpful for preparing general studies for the competitive examinations.While going through an article of this magazine, it is desirable that you should try to understand the facts and also remember that to be reproduced in the examination.Please avoid cramming the facts without understanding. Because, it may prompt you to make mistakes. After understanding the facts, you should revise the same.Repeated revision followed by recapitulation helps memorization of the facts better and also for a longer period of time. By this, you can reproduce the same facts in the examination in a flawless manner.

This edition of magazine will be received by you when 2024 comes to an end.It is a time for you to assess how you have utilized this year for furthering your career and pursuing your interests.The value of time should be understood by you.You might have read a proverb time and tide waits for none. In fact, one of the biggest challenges of a candidate to be successful in the competitive examination is to be able to complete each task in a time bound manner. Hence, you should be productive enough by trying to cover maximum number of topics within minimum possible time.

I wish you **'Best of Luck'** for the upcoming competitive examinations.

Bhabani Shankar Chayani
Mob : 9437170693

Message from the Director & Editor

Dr. Linu Chayani

First Class First B.A. (Hons) & M.A.
M.Phil. (Delhi University), Ph.D. (Utkal)

Dear students,

It is a pleasure on my part to bring the latest issue of **"LISAS CAREER IN FOCUS"**. This issue would educate you on different current events occurring on national, international and regional levels.

On this occasion I would like to impress upon you the necessity of hard work as a means of success. While walking on the path towards success, you will face several challenges. A simple method to overcome these challenges is that no matter what happens you must never give up. Sincerity combined with a positive attitude will be of tremendous help to you for succeeding in the competitive examinations.

I wish you **"BEST OF LUCK"** for the upcoming **Odisha Civil Services (Preliminary) Examination.**

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ALL THE BEST

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Dr. Linu Chayani
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ISSUES OF THE MONTH

G20 SUMMIT 2024 : BUILDING ON INDIA'S LEGACY

Brazil hosted the G20 summit in Rio de Janeiro, carrying forward the momentum of inclusive governance established during India's presidency in 2023. Under Brazil's presidency, the G20 prioritized social

inclusion, hunger reduction, and sustainable development - themes that aligned closely with India's previous presidency's human-centric approach. As part of the G20 Troika alongside Brazil and South Africa, India continues to ensure that the forum evolves towards more balanced global governance that represents developing world interests.

How has India leveraged G20 to enhance its Global Leadership Role?

- **Diplomatic Leadership:** India's successful G20 presidency in 2023 established its position as a bridge between developed and developing nations.
- The historic inclusion of the African Union as a permanent G20 member under India's leadership expanded the forum's representation.

- India's diplomatic triumph was evident in achieving the unanimous Delhi Declaration despite deep geopolitical divisions.
- **Economic and Trade Opportunities:** G20 membership gives India direct access to shape global economic policies, particularly crucial as India aims to become a $5 trillion economy.
- The India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC) announced during India's G20 presidency represents a strategic alternative to China's BRI, potentially saving 40% of time in trade routes.
- India's digital public infrastructure success, particularly UPI, was endorsed by G20 as a model for developing nations.
- These economic initiatives position India as both a major market and a source of developmental solutions.
- **Strategic Autonomy:** India's G20 role helps balance its strategic autonomy, particularly crucial in managing relations between the US-led Western bloc and Russia-China axis.
- The establishment of Global Biofuel Alliance during India's presidency, demonstrates India's leadership in energy security and climate action.
- India's successful navigation of contentious issues like China's territorial expansionism and Russia-Ukraine

conflict during its presidency showed diplomatic maturity.

- **Sustainable Development and Climate Leadership:** India used the G20 platform to advance its climate commitments while ensuring development rights of the Global South.
  - India's LiFE (Lifestyle for Environment) initiative received global endorsement, with a commitment to reduce 1 billion tonnes of projected emissions by 2030.
  - The International Solar Alliance (ISA), championed by India, saw increased G20 support.
- **Cultural and Soft Power Projection:** G20 provided an unprecedented platform for showcasing India's cultural heritage and modern capabilities.
  - The 200+ G20 meetings across India generated a huge chunk of tourism revenue.
  - India's presidency saw the launch of "Culture Unites" initiative. This cultural diplomacy strengthens India's position as a civilizational state with modern capabilities.

Key Challenges undermining the effectiveness of the G20

- **Consensus Building and Decision Implementation:** The growing geopolitical tensions, particularly evidenced in the Russia-Ukraine conflict, make consensus-building increasingly difficult within G20.
  - Recent summits have shown this challenge - while India achieved consensus in 2023, the Bali summit in 2022 struggled to issue a joint communique.
  - This implementation gap threatens G20's credibility as an effective global governance forum.
- **Global Economic Fragmentation:** The rise of economic blocs like the European Free Trade Association and protectionist

policies threaten G20's ability to maintain global economic cooperation.
  - The trade coverage of the trade-restrictive measures was estimated at USD 828.9 billion which was up significantly from USD 246.0 billion in the 2023 G20 Report.
  - The growing US-China trade tensions have led to supply chain reorganization. Global FDI fell by 12% in 2022 to $1.3 trillion, reflecting growing economic nationalism.
- **Institutional Legitimacy and Representation:** Despite the African Union's inclusion, questions persist about G20's legitimacy in representing global interests.
  - Criticism continues regarding overrepresentation of European countries (EU plus individual members) while regions like Africa remain underrepresented.
  - The challenge of balancing efficiency with inclusivity remains central to G20's future relevance.
- **Climate Action and Development Trade-offs:** Balancing climate commitments with development needs presents significant challenges for G20 members.
  - Despite pledges, G20 countries account for 80% of global emissions.
  - The promised climate finance of $100 billion annually remains unmet.
  - Developing G20 members face particular challenges - India alone requires $2.5 trillion by 2030 to fulfill its commitments under the Paris Agreement.
  - The tension between immediate development needs and long-term climate goals continues to impede decisive action.
- Debt Sustainability and Financial Stability: Growing global debt levels pose significant challenges to G20's economic coordination efforts.

- o IMF reports global debt reached 238% of GDP in 2022, with developing G20 members particularly vulnerable.
- o The Common Framework for Debt Treatment has faced implementation challenges.

Measures can be adopted to enhance the effectiveness of G20

- ▪ Strengthening Implementation Mechanisms: Create a permanent G20 secretariat to maintain continuity and compliance tracking.
- o Introduce legally binding commitments with clear timelines and accountability measures.
- o Develop an automated tracking system for member commitments with quarterly reviews. Establish financial incentives and penalties tied to implementation rates. Create a peer review mechanism for major commitments.
- ▪ **Reforming Decision-Making Process :** Implement two-tier voting: consensus for strategic decisions, qualified majority for operational matters.
- o Establish crisis resolution protocols for deadlock issues. Create specialized technical committees for complex policy areas.
- o Align with Brazil 2024's success in achieving consensus on billionaire taxation and Global Alliance Against Hunger.
- ▪ **Enhancing Financial Architecture:** Create dedicated funding mechanisms for climate finance implementation.
- o Scale up climate finance "from billions to trillions" as committed in Brazil Summit 2024.
- o Reform Multilaterial Development Banks with enhanced capital adequacy frameworks. Establish standardized debt restructuring procedures. Develop innovative financing instruments for developing nations.
- ▪ **Strengthening Climate Action:** Create binding commitments for climate finance with clear disbursement timelines.
- o Establish technology transfer mechanisms between developed and developing members. Develop standardized emissions tracking systems. Institute climate action compliance monitoring.
- ▪ **Improving Crisis Management:** Establish a permanent emergency response coordination centre. Create standardized protocols for different crisis types.
- o Institute rapid response funding mechanisms. Create crisis-specific task forces with clear mandates.
- ▪ **Tackling Global Economic Fragmentation:** Promote initiatives like the "Global Supply Chain Resilience Forum" within G20, focusing on minimizing disruptions caused by geopolitical tensions or economic nationalism.
- o Facilitate dialogues aimed at minimizing protectionist policies, supported by targeted incentives for multilateral trade agreements.
- o Launch a G20 framework to attract FDI in green and digital technologies, with emphasis on harmonizing tax regimes and reducing regulatory bottlenecks.
- ▪ **Enhancing Institutional Legitimacy and Representation:** Expand representation by including additional voices from underrepresented regions such as South America, and small island developing states.
- o Foster stronger engagement with non-G20 nations, UN agencies, and civil society organizations to ensure that global perspectives are reflected.
- ▪ **Ensuring Debt Sustainability and Financial Stability:** Reform the Common

Framework for Debt Treatment by including private creditors and promoting greater transparency.

o Promote initiatives allowing debt-laden countries to exchange debt obligations for investments in climate resilience projects.

o Establish a permanent debt observatory to monitor vulnerabilities, provide early warnings, and propose pre-emptive measures for global financial stability.

Conclusion:

The G20 has emerged as a vital platform for addressing global challenges, and India has skillfully leveraged it to champion inclusive governance, economic resilience, and climate action. Strengthening institutional mechanisms, fostering equitable representation, and aligning development goals with climate commitments are essential for enhancing the G20's impact.

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TRANSFORMING GOVERNANCE WITH AI AND DPI

The past decade has transformed India into a global leader in technology-driven governance, marked by its rise as the fifth-largest economy and a pioneer in Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI). Governance has evolved into a system that directly serves citizens, ensuring efficiency, transparency,

and impact. With 90 crore Indians connected to the internet and generating massive datasets, the integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) into DPI holds immense potential to reimagine governance.

AI and its applications in leveraging DPI

- **Artificial Intelligence (AI):** Artificial Intelligence (AI) refers to systems capable of mimicking human cognitive processes, such as learning, reasoning and decision-making.
  - These capabilities are powered by advanced algorithms, data analysis and pattern recognition.
- **Enhancing Indian DPI:** In India, AI-enabled DPI platforms like Aadhaar, UPI and DigiLocker have revolutionized governance.
  - These platforms integrate multilingual AI systems, ensuring accessibility for India's diverse population.
  - AI also supports predictive analytics for better planning and real-time engagement with citizens, making governance more inclusive.
- **GovAI is Revolutionizing Governance:** GovAI, or AI in governance, ensures efficiency, transparency, and citizen-centric service delivery.
  - It streamlines revenue collection, monitors social security schemes, and optimizes disaster management.
  - For example, AI in public revenue management identifies tax evasion patterns while ensuring faster compliance processes.
- **Transforming Industries:** AI drives automation, improves precision and enhances efficiency across industries.
  - In healthcare, AI tools predict diseases and personalize treatments. In agriculture, AI offers predictive insights into crop health and weather patterns.
  - Similarly, education and transportation benefit from AI-driven innovations that improve accessibility and service delivery.

Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI)

- DPI refers to foundational digital platforms, such as digital identification systems, payment infrastructures, and data exchange solutions, designed to deliver essential services. These systems promote digital inclusion, empowering citizens and enhancing their quality of life by enabling access to critical services.
- **Components of the DPI Ecosystem:** DPIs facilitate the flow of people, money, and information, forming the basis of an effective ecosystem:
  - Digital Identification Systems ensure seamless flow of people by providing verified digital IDs.

- Real-Time Payment Systems enable fast, efficient, and secure money transfers.
- Consent-Based Data Sharing Systems empower individuals to control their personal information, unlocking the full benefits of DPIs while ensuring data security and privacy.

What Role can AI play in Transforming Governance?

- Improving Public Service Delivery: AI automates routine tasks, reducing inefficiencies and human errors.
  - For example, platforms like DigiLocker streamline credentialing, while chatbots powered by AI offer real-time citizen support.
  - This has enhanced citizen engagement, especially in remote areas, ensuring government services are accessible to all.
- **Data-Driven Policy Making:** AI enables evidence-based policymaking by analyzing large datasets to identify trends and predict outcomes.
  - For instance, the National Data and Analytics Platform (NDAP) can enhance AI-driven governance by providing accessible, high-quality public sector data.
  - This data can fuel AI models for predictive analytics, evidence-based policymaking, and improved public service delivery, enabling more transparent, efficient, and data-driven decision-making across government sectors.
- **AI Powers Inclusive & Multilingual Governance:** Large Language Models (LLMs) and multilingual AI systems enable citizens to access services in regional languages, breaking linguistic barriers.
  - This ensures inclusivity in governance, empowering marginalized communities. For instance, integrating AI into DPI ensures that platforms like CoWIN address diverse linguistic needs.
- **Groundbreaking Innovations in Healthcare:** AI in healthcare is revolutionizing delivery and accessibility by enabling telemedicine platforms that provide personalized healthcare services to even the most remote areas.
  - Recently, the National Health Authority (NHA) and IIT Kanpur have signed a MoU under the Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission to advance AI in healthcare.
  - This collaboration aims to develop a digital public goods platform for AI-driven health research, enabling the comparison and validation of AI models
- **AI Drives Agricultural & Rural Development:** AI offers predictive insights for weather patterns, pest management, and resource allocation, benefiting farmers. Example: AI startupFasal provides a 14-day micro-climatic forecast advance to prepare in advance for inconsistent weather.
  - It supports precision farming by optimizing inputs such as water and fertilizers, while bridging the urban-rural divide in technology access.
  - For instance, to optimize the crop cutting experiment for the Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana projet, the central government utilized an AI and Machine learning (ML)-driven digital platform from CropIn.
- **AI Enhances National Security & Disaster Management:** AI's real-time analytics enhance cybersecurity and national security by predicting threats, monitoring data, and analyzing intelligence, ensuring faster response times.
  - AI is transforming flood management in India by enhancing prediction, response, and prevention through technologies like the RAHAT app in Assam, which

facilitates early warning, evacuation, search and rescue, and resource distribution, particularly in remote areas.

- **Economic Growth is accelerated by AI:** India's startup ecosystem has rapidly expanded, now home to over 100,000 startups, with many focusing on cutting-edge AI innovations.
  - The INDIAai Innovation Centre plays a crucial role in nurturing these startups by providing resources, training, and a platform for developing AI models specifically designed for governance and public sector challenges.
  - Through public-private partnerships, the government enhances this innovation by offering funding, infrastructure, and collaborative support, accelerating the development and deployment of AI solutions across various sectors.
- India's AI Leadership: As Chair of the Global Partnership on Artificial Intelligence (GPAI), India promotes responsible AI governance.
  - Through initiatives like INDIAai, the country fosters an ecosystem that is scalable, ethical, and inclusive, serving as a model for global AI implementation.

Challenges in AI integration in Governance

- **Data Fragmentation:** India's fragmented and inconsistent datasets pose major challenges to AI effectiveness, as high-quality, standardized data is essential for AI systems to learn, adapt, and make accurate predictions.
  - However, in India, data is often siloed across different government departments, agencies, and private entities, leading to duplication, gaps, and inconsistencies.
  - The lack of unified and structured datasets hinders AI efficiency, reducing accuracy and reliability, while also

raising privacy concerns as fragmented data may lack sufficient security and safeguards against misuse.

- **Infrastructure Gaps & Limited Scalability:** Robust computational infrastructure is essential for effective AI deployment, but despite efforts like INDIAai Compute Capacity, rural and underserved regions still face challenges with limited internet connectivity, data storage, and computing resources.
  - While urban centres benefit from advanced AI capabilities, rural areas struggle with basic infrastructure, creating a digital divide that excludes large populations from AI-enabled governance.
  - Also, AI systems require constant power and connectivity, which are often unreliable in rural areas, further limiting their scalability.
  - Building and maintaining AI infrastructure, such as data centres and supercomputers, is capital-intensive and demands long-term investments.
- **Regulatory Frameworks:** India currently lacks a comprehensive regulatory framework for AI governance, creating uncertainty and potential misuse.
  - The lack of clear guidelines for ethical AI deployment, data privacy, and accountability for AI-driven decisions, combined with the rapid evolution of AI systems, challenges traditional regulatory approaches and complicates enforcement.
- **Skill Gaps:** A large segment of India's workforce lacks the necessary skills to develop, manage, and utilize AI systems effectively, creating a gap between the growing demand for AI talent and the available workforce.
  - This gap is worsened by a disconnect between academic training and industry needs, as well as a shortage of AI

experts to design advanced models and integrate them into governance systems.

o Programs like Responsible AI for Youth aim to address this, but access remains uneven, especially in rural and underprivileged areas.

▪ **High Costs & Resource Allocation Challenges:** AI development is resource-intensive, demanding significant investments in talent, infrastructure, and research, while balancing cost efficiency with scalability continues to be a persistent challenge.

o Setting up AI infrastructure, including supercomputing facilities and data annotation centres, requires significant upfront investment, while maintaining AI systems incurs ongoing costs for data collection, model updates, and cybersecurity.

o Smaller states and regions often face funding inequities, limiting their ability to invest in AI and creating disparities in adoption across the country.

▪ **Cybersecurity:** It is a critical challenge in AI integration for governance, as AI systems can be susceptible to cyber-attacks, data breaches, and malicious manipulations.

o These risks threaten data integrity, privacy, and the security of digital governance infrastructure and services.

▪ Ethical Biases: AI systems are as unbiased as the data they are trained on; in governance, biased datasets can lead to discriminatory outcomes, marginalizing vulnerable populations and affecting welfare schemes.

o For example, biased AI systems in welfare distribution could prioritize certain groups while excluding others based on historical inequities embedded in data.

o The "black box" nature of AI systems, where the logic behind decisions is not transparent, erodes trust and makes accountability difficult.

o Citizens and policymakers may struggle to validate or challenge AI-generated decisions, and if biases are not addressed, AI could exacerbate systemic inequities instead of mitigating them.

Government Initiatives to boost AI adaptability

▪ **INDIAai Mission:** With a Rs 10,300 croreoutlay, the INDIAai Mission focuses on developing compute capacity, innovation centres, and datasets platforms.

o Indigenous AI model development ensures scalability and alignment with India's needs.

▪ **DPI Platforms Leverage AI:** India's DPI platforms, including Aadhaar, UPI and DigiLocker, integrate AI for seamless governance.

o The transformation of CoWIN into a national vaccination management tool illustrates the adaptability of AI in public service delivery.

▪ **Ethical AI Frameworks:** Initiatives like Safe and Trusted AI prioritizes ethical, transparent, and accountable use of AI, ensuring fairness, privacy, and inclusivity while building trust in AI-driven governance and minimizing risks of bias and misuse.

o Collaborations like the UNESCO-MeitY AI Readiness Assessment Methodology (RAM) align AI governance with global ethical standards, ensuring transparency and trust.

▪ **Skill Development Programs Expand Access:** Programs like Responsible AI for Youth and INDIAai FutureSkills focus on bridging skill gaps, especially in rural areas.

- These initiatives democratize access to AI education, fostering a workforce equipped for the AI revolution.
- **R&D Ecosystem to Strengthens Innovation:** The National Research Foundation (NRF) fosters collaboration among academia, industry, and government.
  - This approach accelerates the development and deployment of AI solutions tailored to India's unique requirements.
- **International Partnerships:** The US-India AI Initiative explores AI applications in critical sectors like healthcare and agriculture.
  - Regional efforts, such as Telangana's Applied AI Research Centre, address local challenges in mobility and public health.

Way forward to leverage AI in Governance

- **Strengthen Computational Infrastructure:** Invest in cloud computing, data centres, and distributed networks to ensure that AI systems can handle increasing demands.
  - Prioritize rural areas by enhancing reliable internet connectivity and computational resources, bridging the rural-urban digital divide.
- **Enact Comprehensive AI Policies:** India must establish comprehensive legislation addressing transparency, bias mitigation, and accountability in AI systems to ensure ethical deployment.
  - Aligning domestic policies with global standards like the EU Artificial Intelligence Act will make India's frameworks internationally competitive.
- **Democratize AI Education:** Expand initiatives like INDIAai FutureSkills to provide AI training in underserved areas, targeting rural and marginalized communities.

- Utilize online platforms to deliver scalable education, ensuring inclusivity for learners from diverse socio-economic backgrounds.
- **Foster Public-Private Collaboration:** Encourage partnerships where private sector innovation complements public infrastructure, driving AI advancements tailored for governance.
  - Programs like INDIAai Compute Capacity showcase the success of such collaborations, fostering innovation and cost-efficiency.
- **Ensure High-Quality Datasets:** Implement governance frameworks to ensure datasets are accurate, accessible, and privacy compliant for reliable AI training.
  - Unify fragmented datasets through platforms like the IndiaDatasets Programme, enhancing their utility for governance applications.
  - Consent-based data sharing in AI governance would promote transparency, ensure privacy, empower citizens, and enable efficient, personalized public services while fostering trust and supporting informed, data-driven policymaking.
- **Prioritize Inclusive AI Ecosystems:** AI systems must address India's linguistic diversity by offering support in regional languages, ensuring accessibility for all citizens.
  - Focus on developing tools for marginalized communities to bridge socio-economic divides and promote equitable access to governance.
- **Monitor and Adapt Policies:** Establish mechanisms for regular impact assessment of AI policies, ensuring they remain effective and relevant.

- Use real-time data-driven insights to refine strategies, adapting governance systems to evolving technological and societal needs.
- **Enhancing cyber-security:** For leveraging AI in governance there is a need to enhance cyber-security.
- By implementing AI-driven solutions for real-time threat detection, predictive analysis, and automated responses, India can strengthen its Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI), protect critical data, and improve national security, ensuring secure and efficient service delivery.

What can India learn from the EU's AI Act?

- *Risk-Based Approach:* The EU's AI Act classifies AI systems into categories based on their potential risk, imposing stricter regulations on high-risk applications like healthcare and critical infrastructure.
- *Transparency and Accountability:* It mandates that AI systems be transparent, with clear explanations of how decisions are made, and ensures accountability for developers and users.

- *Data Privacy and Safety:* The Act enforces strict data protection requirements, emphasizing privacy and the safeguarding of individuals' rights while deploying AI technologies.

Conclusion

GovAI is the next frontier in India's digital governance journey, leveraging AI to make governance targeted, inclusive, and efficient. By combining DPI with AI, India can set a global precedent, demonstrating how technology transforms public administration. As the Chair of GPAI, India's leadership in trusted partnerships will ensure AI's potential benefits are shared globally, making governance the killer app for AI and solidifying the nation's role as a tech-driven trailblazer.

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INDIA'S SOUTH ASIA STRATEGY

India finds itself at a crossroads in South Asia, where strained ties with neighbours like Nepal, Maldives, and Bangladesh signal growing discontent with its traditional approach to regional diplomacy. The reliance on geographic dominance and assertive policies is increasingly counterproductive, as smaller nations deftly leverage China to balance India's influence. This calls for a shift from a "neighbourhood first" policy to a more inclusive "neighbourliness first" approach, emphasizing mutual respect, non-interference, and addressing the aspirations of smaller nations.

Significance of Neighbourhood First for India

- **Strategic Security Imperatives:** India's 15,106.7 km of land borders and 7,516.6 km of coastline make neighbourhood stability crucial for national security.
  - The policy helps counter China's "String of Pearls" strategy, which aims to encircle India through military and commercial facilities.
  - Collaborative security initiatives, like the joint India-Maldives-Sri Lanka maritime exercise 'Dosti', emphasize regional unity in safeguarding shared waters.
- **Economic Integration and Growth:** South Asia, with a population of 2 billion, represents significant economic potential.
  - The average exports share of India in the SAARC region has been 5.9% of its total product, highlighting growing regional trade importance.
  - Infrastructure initiatives like the India-Myanmar-Thailand trilateral highway and Chabahar Port development in Iran provide crucial trade connectivity.
  - These economic linkages are vital for India's $5 trillion economy goal by 2025.
- **Energy Security and Resource Management:** Regional cooperation is crucial for managing shared resources, particularly water from rivers like Ganges, Brahmaputra, and Indus
  - Growing energy demands require regional solutions - for instance, India has permitted Nepal to export an additional 251 MW of electricity, marking the first instance of the Himalayan nation supplying power to Bihar.
  - Cross-border electricity trade initiatives like the Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal (BBIN) Power Trade Agreement facilitate optimal resource utilization.
- **Cultural and Civilizational Bonds:** The region shares deep historical, cultural, and religious ties spanning millennia.
  - India's soft power initiatives like the Buddhist Circuit tourism strengthen these bonds.
  - Cultural diplomacy through initiatives like the South Asian University in Delhi builds regional understanding. These connections help counter growing anti-India narratives in neighbouring countries.
- **Maritime Domain Awareness and Control:** India's strategic location commanding key Indian Ocean trade routes makes regional maritime cooperation vital.
  - Information Fusion Centre-Indian Ocean Region (IFC-IOR) launched in 2018 promotes maritime domain awareness with regional partners.
  - Coastal security cooperation helps combat maritime crimes - like in March 2024, a joint operation by the NCB, Indian

Navy, and Gujarat ATS seized 3,300 kg of drugs from a dhow 60 nautical miles off the Indian Ocean coast, arresting five foreign nationals with suspected Pakistani links, the largest offshore drug bust in India.

- **Global Power Aspirations:** Strong regional influence is crucial for India's global power ambitions as a leader of the Global South.
- Leadership in regional organizations like BIMSTEC (Bay of Bengal Initiative) demonstrates regional stewardship.
- Successful regional cooperation strengthens India's case for UNSC permanent membership.
- The Neighbourhood policy helps establish India as a responsible power capable of managing regional affairs. Also, Regional support is crucial for India's global initiatives like International Solar Alliance (ISA)

Key challenges India is facing in the South Asian Region

- **Territorial Disputes:** Territorial disputes remain a significant barrier to peace and cooperation in South Asia.
- The long-standing conflict over Kashmir between India and Pakistan continues to fuel tensions, while unresolved border issues with China add another layer of complexity.
- India's recent decision to refrain from traveling to Pakistan for the 2025 Champions Trophy (Cricket) reflects the broader challenges in maintaining normalcy in such relationships.
- These disputes often lead to military confrontations and diplomatic standoffs like the Galwan Valley Standoff in 2020 that distract from cooperative efforts on regional development.

- **Rising Chinese Economic Influence and Debt Diplomacy:** The Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) has dramatically increased China's footprint in South Asia, with investments exceeding $200 billion in the region.
- Sri Lanka's Hambantota Port, leased to China for 99 years after debt default, stands as a stark example of debt-trap diplomacy.
- Pakistan has received over $62 billion through China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), while in the 2023-24 fiscal year, China committed NPR 254.7 billion to Nepal, making up 51.4% of the country's total foreign investment.
- Bangladesh, traditionally India's close ally, has accepted Chinese investments worth $26 billion in infrastructure projects.
- This economic penetration has directly challenged India's historical role as the region's primary development partner.
- **Diminishing Political Capital and Trust Deficit:** Recent political transitions have highlighted India's waning influence- The Maldives' newly elected President has prompted demands for the removal of Indian military presence.
- Nepal under K P Oli has shown a clear pro-China tilt. The fallout from India's perceived interference in Nepal's 2015 constitution-making process and subsequent unofficial blockade continues to sour relations.
- Bangladesh's new government under Mohammed Yunus represents a shift from the previously India-friendly regime.
- Myanmar's military coup and ongoing civil conflict have implications for India's Act East Policy and management of the North Eastern border.
- **Security Challenges and Strategic Vulnerabilities:** The China-Pakistan military nexus has evolved into a more

sophisticated threat, with Pakistan acquiring advanced Chinese military technology including J-10C fighters and Type 054A/P frigates.
- Reports indicate a 20% increase in piracy incidents in 2023, with notable attacks such as the hijacking of the MV Chem Pluto off India's west coast underscoring the evolving nature of maritime terrorism
- Pakistan's continued support to cross-border terrorism evident in the recent Reasi terrorism attack, remains a persistent threat.
- **Economic Integration Barriers:** SAARC's ineffectiveness, largely due to India-Pakistan tensions, has stalled regional economic integration.
- Intraregional trade accounts for barely 5% of South Asia's total trade, compared to the ASEAN region where intra regional trade makes up 25%.
- The Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal (BBIN) initiative's slow progress, particularly in implementing the Motor Vehicles Agreement, exemplifies regional connectivity challenges.
- Cross-border infrastructure projects face delays - for instance, India-Nepal Pancheshwar Multipurpose Project, conceived under the Mahakali Treaty of 1996, has faced significant delays.
- **Resource and Environmental Challenges:** Water-sharing disputes in the region have escalated, particularly with India's unresolved Teesta river agreement with Bangladesh.
- At the same time, China's extensive dam-building activities on rivers flowing from its upper riparian positions are increasingly threatening India's water security, potentially reducing the flow of vital rivers like the Brahmaputra.

- Climate change impacts, particularly rising sea levels threatening Maldives and Bangladesh, create potential for mass displacement and regional instability.
- Energy security concerns are growing as India competes with China for access to regional resources - evident in the competition for Myanmar's gas fields and Sri Lankan energy projects.
- **Cultural and Identity Politics:** The rise of religious nationalism across the region complicates India's secular diplomatic stance.
- Treatment of minorities in neighbouring countries (like Hindus in Pakistan and Bangladesh) creates domestic political pressures on Indian foreign policy.
- The Rohingya refugee crisis strains resources and tests regional relationships.
- Issues like the Citizenship Amendment Act(CAA) have impacted India's relationships, particularly with Bangladesh, where concerns about potential refugee influx exist.

Measures India can adopt to strengthen its Neighbourhood First Policy
- **Economic Integration and Trade Facilitation:** Initiate a Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) specifically for South Asian neighbours with reduced tariffs and simplified customs procedures.
- Establish Special Economic Zones (SEZs) along border areas with Nepal, Bangladesh, and Myanmar to boost cross-border trade and local development.
- Develop integrated check posts (ICPs) with modern facilities, single-window clearance, and digital payment systems to reduce trade barriers.
- Launch a regional e-commerce platform to facilitate direct business-to-business and

business-to-consumer trade within the region.

- **Infrastructure and Connectivity Enhancement:** Fast-track completion of ongoing projects like India-Myanmar-Thailand Trilateral Highway and extend it to Cambodia and Vietnam.
  - Develop multi-modal transport corridors connecting Indian ports with landlocked neighbours through rail, road, and inland waterways.
  - Establish cross-border energy grids and gas pipelines to create an integrated regional energy market.
  - Modernize border infrastructure with advanced surveillance systems, better roads, and trading facilities.
  - Implement BBIN Motor Vehicles Agreement fully with technology-based tracking and documentation systems.
- **Digital and Technology Cooperation:** Create a South Asian Digital Hub for sharing expertise in fintech, e-governance, and digital public infrastructure.
  - Extend India Stack (UPI, Aadhaar) technologies to neighbouring countries to facilitate cross-border digital transactions.
  - Establish a regional cyber security coordination centre to combat cyber threats and share intelligence. Launch dedicated satellites for improved regional connectivity and disaster management.
- **Cultural and Educational Exchange:** Increase Indian Council for Cultural Relations scholarships for students from neighbouring countries with focus on technical and professional courses.
  - Establish more South Asian Universities in border states focusing on regional languages, culture, and development studies.
  - Create a Regional Cultural Circuit connecting Buddhist, Islamic, and Hindu heritage sites across borders.
  - Launch joint media initiatives including co-production of content and journalist exchange programs.
- Security Cooperation Framework Establish a Regional Counter-Terrorism Coordination Centre with real-time intelligence sharing capabilities.
  - Create joint border management teams with neighbouring countries for coordinated patrol and crisis response.
  - Develop a shared maritime domain awareness platform with automated vessel tracking and threat assessment.
- **Environmental and Resource Management:** Establish a Regional Climate Action Task Force for coordinated response to environmental challenges.
  - Implement shared early warning systems for natural disasters and environmental emergencies. Create a regional carbon trading market to promote clean development.
- **Skill Development and Employment:** Launch Regional Skill Development Initiative focusing on sectors with high employment potential.
  - Create cross-border industrial training institutes with standardized certification systems. Develop regional labour market information systems for better skill-demand matching.
  - Implement mutual recognition of professional qualifications across the region.
- **Local Government Cooperation:** Establish Sister City partnerships between border cities for cultural and economic cooperation.
  - Create Joint Development Councils for border districts with coordinated planning.

- o Develop integrated urban planning for border cities with shared facilities. Create mechanisms for regular interaction between local government officials.
- ▪ **Green Border Initiative:** Establish cross-border renewable energy corridors with solar and wind projects jointly operated by neighbouring countries.
- o Create 'Green Buffer Zones' along borders with joint forest management and biodiversity conservation.
- o Develop shared waste management and recycling facilities in border regions. Also, Launch joint climate-resilient agriculture projects in border areas.

Conclusion:

The road ahead for India in South Asia requires a fundamental shift in approach to its neighbours. A genuine commitment to mutual development, non-interference, and addressing common concerns is paramount. By prioritizing economic integration, addressing security challenges, and fostering cultural exchange, India can reclaim its rightful place as a regional leader and usher in an era of peace, prosperity, and shared progress in South Asia.
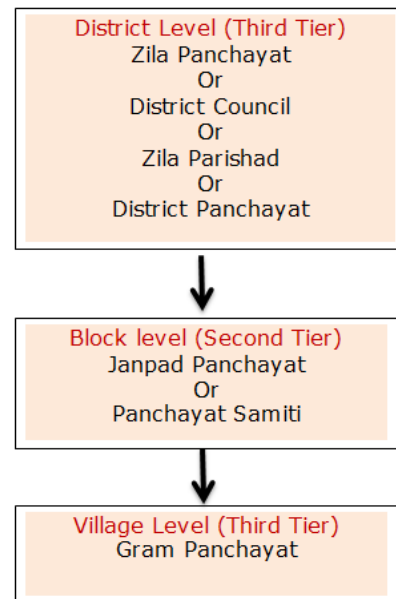
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REVITALIZING INDIA'S LOCAL GOVERNANCE

The RBI's report on municipal corporation finances underscores a critical urbanization challenge: despite generating 60% of India's GDP and housing half the population by 2050, municipal corporations command only 0.6% of GDP in revenue receipts. They rely heavily on grants and underutilize revenue sources like property tax. Notably, 10 municipal corporations account for 60% of revenues, highlighting resource disparities. Without full devolution of the 3Fs (Functions, Finances, Functionaries), grassroots governance remains weak. Strengthening fiscal powers and autonomy is essential for better local governance and accountability.

Current Structure of Local Governance in India

- Local bodies are institutions of self-governance responsible for planning, development, and administration in rural (Panchayats) and urban (Municipalities) areas.
    o They play a critical role as regulators, service providers, welfare agents, and facilitators of development at the grassroots level.
- **Constitutional Framework:** Local government is a State subject under the Seventh Schedule (List II) of the Constitution.
    o Article 243G provides for the devolution of powers to local bodies, making them key players in delivering infrastructure and services.
- **Evolution of Local Bodies:**
    o Originated during British rule, Panchayati Raj was envisioned by Mahatma Gandhi as "Gram Swaraj" (village self-governance).
    o Early efforts like the 1952 Community Development Programme failed due to lack of public participation.
    o Balwantrai Mehta's 1957 report advocated village-level organizations for implementing government schemes.
    o The Ashok Mehta Committee (1977) emphasized empowering Panchayats, leading to "Second Generation Panchayats."
    o The 73rd Constitutional Amendment (1992) institutionalized Panchayati Raj as the third tier of governance, granting powers for economic and social development planning over 29 subjects listed in the Eleventh Schedule.

Structure of Panchayati Raj System (Different Level of Panchayati Raj System)

District Level (Third Tier)
Zila Panchayat
Or
District Council
Or
Zila Parishad
Or
District Panchayat

Block level (Second Tier)
Janpad Panchayat
Or
Panchayat Samiti

Village Level (Third Tier)
Gram Panchayat

- **Funding Sources for Panchayats:**
    o Local body grants recommended by the Central Finance Commission.
    o Funds from centrally-sponsored schemes.

o State government allocations via State Finance Commissions.

Role of Local Bodies in strengthening development in India

- Financial Decentralization and Resource Management: The 15th Finance Commission has allocated Rs 4.36 lakh crore to local bodies for 2021-26, marking a significant increase in their financial autonomy.
o Municipal corporations are increasingly exploring innovative financing methods, with Indore Municipal Corporation raising Rs 244 crore through green bonds in 2022 for solar projects.
o Property tax reforms, like Bengaluru's GIS-based system implemented in 2023, have shown potential to increase revenue.
- Urban Planning and Infrastructure Development: Local bodies are spearheading transformation through initiatives like the Smart Cities Mission, with 100 cities implementing projects worth Rs 2.05 lakh crore.
o Municipalities are adopting climate-resilient infrastructure planning, exemplified by Surat's flood management system.
o Innovative projects like Indore's waste-to-energy plant, showcase local bodies' capacity for sustainable development.
- **Social Welfare and Public Service Delivery:** Gram panchayats have played a crucial role in MGNREGA implementation, generating a total of 293.70 crore person days in FY 2022-23.
o Local bodies' involvement in health infrastructure proved vital during Covid-19, with urban local bodies managing vaccination centres.
o The convergence of schemes like National Rural Livelihood Mission through panchayats has helped form more than 90 lakh Self Help Groups.

- **Environmental Sustainability and Climate Action:** Urban local bodies are leading climate action through initiatives like India's first solar city Diu achieving 100% daytime solar power.
o Municipalities are increasingly adopting green building codes, with Hyderabad mandating rainwater harvesting in new constructions.
- **Participatory Democracy and Citizen Engagement:** The 50% reservation for women in local bodies has enhanced women representation at grassroot level.
o Elected women representatives constitute 45.6% of total Panchayati Raj Institution representatives. (RBI report)
o Participatory budgeting initiatives, like in Pune, are strengthening democratic processes.
o The Area Sabha system, implemented in cities like Chennai, has created neighbourhood-level democratic units.
o Gram Sabhas have achieved 85% attendance in key decisions.
- Economic Development and Livelihood Generation: Through the PM SVANidhi scheme, municipalities have facilitated more than 65.75 lakh loans, benefiting over 50 lakh street vendors.
o Common Services Centres (CSC) has launched the Yogyata mobile phone application to provide vocational educational and skill enhancement opportunities to youth.

Major challenges confronting Local Bodies in India

- **Inadequate Financial Resources:** Local bodies lack financial independence, relying heavily on state and central transfers, which are often delayed or conditional.
o According to the RBI's 2022 report, urban local bodies (ULBs) generated only 0.6% of

GDP as their own-source revenue (OSR), far below Brazil's 7%.

o Limited capacity to levy and collect taxes further exacerbates the issue.

o The 15th Finance Commission granted ₹4.36 lakh crore to local bodies for 2021-26, but timely utilization remains a concern.

o Also, State Finance Commissions are not established in a timely manner. This delay hinders the effective distribution of resources and proper fiscal planning at the state level.

▪ **Functional Challenges and Political Interference:** Frequent political interference undermines the functioning of local bodies, disrupting their autonomy and accountability.

o State governments often dissolve elected councils prematurely or delay local elections, as seen in Maharashtra, where all 27 municipal corporations operated without elected bodies in 2023.

o Additionally, party politics influence local decision-making, sidelining public welfare.

o Karnataka's government notice of dismissal to Belagavi Municipal Corporation in 2023 highlights this interference.

• Such actions not only weaken local democracy but also delay critical urban reforms like waste management.

▪ **Capacity Building and Human Resource Deficiency:** Local bodies suffer from severe understaffing, lack of technical expertise, and inadequate training of existing staff.

o This affects their ability to plan, implement projects, and utilize modern technology for governance. The absence of specialized departments hampers efficient service delivery.

o A 2023 study found that municipal corporations have 35% vacant positions.

▪ **Urbanization and Infrastructure Stress:** Rapid urbanization has overwhelmed local bodies, straining their ability to provide essential services like housing, water, and sanitation.

o Slum households constitute 17% of the total urban population. At the same time, there are 11 million vacant homes across urban India. (Observer Research Foundation)

o In Bengaluru, the 2022 floods exposed the failure of urban local bodies to manage encroachments on drainage channels.

o Similarly, slums in Mumbai face chronic water shortages, reflecting poor urban planning. Without proactive planning, local bodies struggle to meet the needs of rapidly growing populations.

▪ **Environmental Management Challenges:** Managing waste and pollution remains a critical challenge for local bodies, with significant gaps in compliance and infrastructure.

o The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change estimates that only 75–80% of the total municipal waste gets collected and only 22–28% of this is processed and treated, and landfill sites like Ghazipur in Delhi continue to grow.

o Poor waste management also exacerbates air pollution; for instance, stubble burning in Punjab and Haryana persists due to weak enforcement at the local level.

▪ **Community Participation and Accountability:** Despite constitutional provisions, community participation in governance remains minimal, weakening local accountability.

o A recent study states that as of January 2023, only 8 of 16 states with notified ward

committee rules reported active committees.

- Local bodies often fail to utilize mechanisms like Gram Sabhas effectively (partially due to reduced powers under Biological Diversity (Amendment) Act, 2023), resulting in top-down decision-making.
- **Coordination with Multiple Agencies:** Local bodies often struggle with overlapping jurisdictions and poor coordination with parastatal agencies or Special Purpose Vehicles.
- Multiple authorities handling similar functions leads to inefficiency and delays in project implementation. Planning becomes complicated due to a fragmented institutional framework.
- For instance, the Delhi Development Authority (DDA) and Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) often face coordination issues when it comes to urban planning, land acquisition, and infrastructure projects.

Measures can be adopted to empower Local Bodies in India

- Legal Framework Strengthening: State municipal legislations need comprehensive revision to empower local bodies with greater autonomy and authority.
- Following L M Singhvi Committee recommendations, dedicated tribunals should be established to handle local body disputes quickly.
- Clear delineation of functions between state and local bodies needs legal backing through detailed activity mapping.
- Enforcement powers of local bodies need strengthening especially in areas of planning violations and revenue collection.

- Legal frameworks for municipal borrowing and alternative financing need establishment.
- **Financial Empowerment:** A comprehensive municipal finance management system must be established with digital integration and modern property tax reforms using GIS and market-linked rates.
- Developing municipal bond markets and enabling direct market borrowing with credit rating mechanisms can create new funding channels.
- L M Singhvi Committee's recommendation for stronger financial powers should be implemented through state finance commissions and regular fiscal devolution.
- Local bodies should be empowered to generate their own revenue through diverse sources like betterment levy, impact fees, and land monetization.
- Kerala's decentralization model successfully incorporates Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) into state-level planning, ensuring grassroots participation in governance, can be replicated in other states too.
- **Administrative Reforms:** Following GVK Rao Committee's emphasis on professionalization, a specialized urban administrative service cadre should be established with permanent technical staffing including urban planners and specialists.
- Performance-based staff assessment and promotion systems need implementation to ensure accountability and efficiency.
- Regular capacity building and training programs should be mandated for all levels of staff through dedicated institutions.

- E-governance platforms should streamline administrative processes while enabling transparency and reducing corruption.
- **Planning Authority Enhancement:** Local bodies need planning autonomy within state guidelines, with mandatory long-term master plans that undergo regular updates.
  - Strengthening Metropolitan Planning Committees with real powers will enable coordinated regional development.
  - Integration of ward-level plans into city development plans ensures bottom-up planning aligned with BalwantRai Mehta Committee's vision.
  - Dedicated planning cells in each municipality staffed with professional planners will enhance planning quality and implementation.
- **Technology Integration:** Comprehensive digital platforms should integrate all municipal services with real-time monitoring systems for service delivery and revenue collection.
  - Smart infrastructure management solutions including IoT sensors and automated systems should be implemented for efficient asset management
  - Digital payment and collection systems need universal implementation to improve financial efficiency and transparency.
- SwachhAI should be implemented in a steadfast manner.
  - Citizen engagement platforms with grievance redressal mechanisms should be mandatory.
- **Participatory Governance:** Ward committees need strengthening with real powers and budgets, implementing L M Singhvi Committee's vision of grassroots democracy.
  - Participatory budgeting mechanisms should be mandatory with fixed percentage allocation for ward-level decisions along with using blockchain technology for transparent budgeting.
  - Citizen monitoring of projects through digital platforms and social audits needs to be institutionalized. Regular ward sabhas and area sabhas should be mandated with online streaming for transparency.
- **Environmental Management:** Mandatory climate action plans for all urban local bodies need to be backed by dedicated funding and implementation mechanisms.
  - Integrated waste management systems with waste-to-energy conversion should be standardized across cities.
  - Environmental monitoring cells with real-time air quality data and pollution control measures need establishment.
  - Green infrastructure development including urban forests and water conservation should be mandatory. Sustainable urban planning guidelines need to be integrated into all development plans.

Conclusion:

Strengthening India's local governance requires enhanced fiscal autonomy, administrative reforms, and robust legal frameworks to empower local bodies. Empowering local bodies through democratic decentralization will drive effective urban and rural development. Active citizen participation and technology integration can foster greater transparency and accountability.

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BRIDGING GAPS IN INDIA'S HEALTH SYSTEM

According to a recent paper published by the World Bank, low and middle-income countries, including India, are facing a decline in public health expenditure, reversing pre-pandemic gains. A study of 63 nations shows a drop in health spending growth from 2.4% (pre-pandemic) to 0.9% (2019-2023). In India and 34 other countries, health budgets have also fallen as a share of national spending, down to 6.5% in 2023. IMF projections indicate continued budget cuts for healthcare through 2029, raising concerns about achieving universal health coverage and Sustainable Development Goals health goals amidst widening infrastructure gaps.
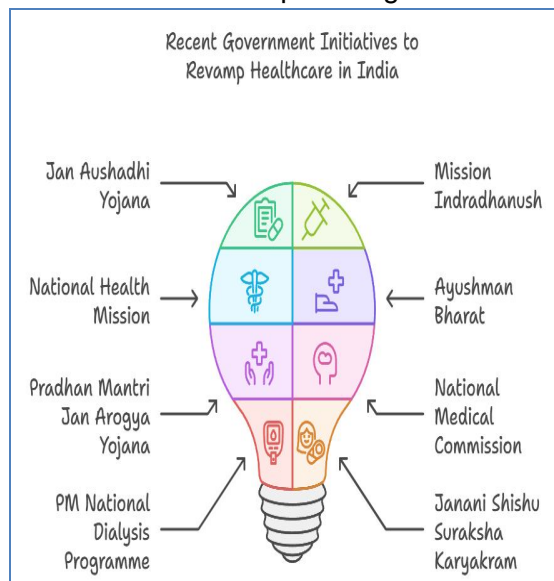
Key emerging Health Challenges that India is facing

- Climate Change-induced Health Crisis: Rising temperatures and extreme weather events in India are significantly impacting public health, with heat-related illnesses, respiratory diseases, and vector-borne diseases showing alarming increases.
- o In India, 191 billion potential labour hours were lost due to heat exposure in 2022, an increase of 54% from 1991-2000.
- Also, waterborne diseases, which are exacerbated by the rising frequency of floods, pose a significant health risk in India.
- Floods often contaminate water sources, leading to outbreaks of diseases like cholera, dysentery, and typhoid.

- o Deaths due to extreme weather events rose 18% in India in just 3 years, with notable increases in vector-borne diseases like dengue.
- **Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR) Crisis:** India faces a critical challenge with antimicrobial resistance, driven by widespread misuse of antibiotics, poor sanitation, and inadequate healthcare practices.
- o A 2022 Lancet study found that over 47% of antibiotic formulations used in India's private sector in 2019 lacked approval from the Central Drug Regulator, leading to widespread and often unnecessary usage.
- o Also, studies indicate a rise in multi-drug resistant infections in Indian hospitals, with reports of resistant strains of *E. coli and Klebsiellapneumoniae* increasingly found in intensive care units (ICUs).
- **Mental Health Emergency:** Post-pandemic India is witnessing an unprecedented mental health crisis, with inadequate infrastructure and workforce to address growing needs.
- o The stigma surrounding mental health, combined with limited access to quality care and insufficient insurance coverage, creates significant barriers to treatment.
- o Covid-19 pandemic triggered 25% increase in prevalence of anxiety and depression worldwide (WHO)
- o The National Mental Health Survey indicates that 150 million Indians need mental health interventions, while there are only 0.75 psychiatrists per 100,000 population.
- **Rising Non-communicable Diseases (NCDs):** India's epidemiological transition shows a dramatic shift toward NCDs, particularly

diabetes, cardiovascular diseases, and cancers, affecting younger populations and creating a double burden of disease.

o The combination of sedentary lifestyles, urbanization, and dietary changes is accelerating this trend, while healthcare systems struggle to adapt from infectious disease management to chronic care models.

o NCDs are a major global health issue, causing 74% of deaths worldwide and 63% of deaths in India.

• India now has more than 101 million people living with diabetes compared to 70 million people in 2019

▪ **Double Burden of Diseases:** India faces a "double burden of disease," dealing with both communicable and non-communicable diseases (NCDs) simultaneously.

o Infectious diseases like tuberculosis, dengue, and malaria remain widespread, especially in rural and low-income areas.

• Post-Covid-19 pandemic, India faces new challenges from emerging and re-emerging infectious diseases, with increasing concerns about zoonotic diseases and pandemic preparedness.

• India reported over 3,000 cases of H3N2 influenza in 2023.

• In India, 30 Mpox cases have been reported since the WHO's 2022 PHEIC Declaration.

o Meanwhile, the rise of NCDs such as diabetes, hypertension, cancer and cardiovascular diseases is accelerating due to lifestyle changes, urbanization, and dietary shifts.

• Studies have estimated a 12.8% increase in the number of annual cancer cases by the year 2025, which would be around 1.57 million.

o This dual challenge strains healthcare resources, as facilities must address both communicable diseases and chronic conditions that require long-term care.

Recent Government Initiatives to Revamp Healthcare in India

Jan Aushadhi Yojana — Mission Indradhanush — National Health Mission — Ayushman Bharat — Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana — National Medical Commission — PM National Dialysis Programme — Janani Shishu Suraksha Karyakram

Why is India struggling to sustain Effective Healthcare despite multiple initiatives?

▪ **Fragmented Governance:** India's healthcare system suffers from fragmented governance across central, state, and local levels, leading to inconsistent policy implementation and resource allocation.

o States like Kerala have robust healthcare systems with better health indicators, while others like Bihar lag behind.

o The Clinical Establishments Act of 2010 aims to standardize healthcare services across India.

• However, its implementation varies by state, leading to differences in healthcare quality and regulation enforcement.

▪ **Inadequate Health Care Financing:** Despite ambitious healthcare initiatives, India's public health spending remains critically low, with heavy reliance on private out-of-pocket expenditure.

- Government health expenditure in India stands at 1.9% of GDP, as per the Economic Survey 2023-24.
- In India, out-of-pocket health expenditure (OOP) expenses account for about 62.6% of total health expenditure, one of the highest in the world

- **Infrastructure and Resource Disparities:** Urban-rural divide in healthcare infrastructure continues to widen, with significant disparities in the distribution of medical facilities, equipment, and infrastructure.
  - Only 11% of sub-centres, 13% of PHCs, and 16% of CHCs meet Indian Public Health Standards.
  - A NitiAayog report has said that about 65% of hospital beds in the country cater to almost 50% of the population.

- **Workforce Challenges and Brain Drain:** The healthcare sector faces severe shortages of qualified professionals, compounded by continuous brain drain and uneven distribution.
  - Medical education capacity, though expanding, struggles with quality issues and doesn't align with healthcare needs. Rural postings remain unattractive despite incentives.
  - The Rural Health Statistics report shows that there is a shortfall of more than 80% of the required surgeons and paediatricians in the 6,064 Community Health Centres across the country.

- **Data Management and Monitoring Gaps:** Despite digital initiatives, healthcare data remains poorly integrated, hampering evidence-based policy-making and resource allocation.
  - The lack of real-time health surveillance systems affects disease monitoring and response capabilities.
  - Privacy concerns and infrastructure limitations slow digital health adoption.
  - Despite the government's efforts to promote Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission adoption, only 30% of total Health Facility Registry have come from the private sector, despite holding a 70% market share.

Lack of Focus on Preventive healthcare: Focus remains predominantly on curative care rather than preventive healthcare and public health measures.

Health education and awareness programs receive inadequate attention and resources. Environmental health and social determinants of health get limited policy focus.

The Indian government's expenditure on preventive healthcare constitutes only 13.55% of the Current Health Expenditure (CHE).

Supply chain and pharmaceutical issues: Healthcare supply chains remain inefficient with frequent stockouts of essential medicines and equipment.

Dependence on imported active pharmaceutical ingredients affects drug security and costs.

- Generic medicine programs face implementation and quality perception challenges.
- India imports about 70% of its Active Pharmaceutical Ingredient requirements from China, particularly vitamins and antibiotics.

Measures India can ddopt to strengthen the Healthcare System

- **Integrated Digital Health Ecosystem:** India should fast-track the implementation of the Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission by establishing a unified health data infrastructure that connects all

- stakeholders, from primary health centres to tertiary hospitals.
- This would include standardized Electronic Health Records (EHRs), telemedicine platforms, and real-time disease surveillance systems, while ensuring robust data privacy and security.
- The system must allow seamless information exchange between public and private healthcare providers, with a focus on improving last-mile connectivity in rural areas.
- Also, platforms like E-Sanjeevani can be expanded and strengthened learning from Tamil Nadu which has topped eSanjeevani OPD consultations as per a 2020 report.

- **Strengthening Primary Health Care:** Health and Wellness Centres (HWCs) should be transformed into comprehensive primary care hubs, equipped with essential diagnostics, telemedicine facilities, and trained personnel.
  - The focus should shift to preventive care and early detection through regular health screenings, vaccination programs, and community health education.
  - A strong referral system should connect primary, secondary, and tertiary care facilities, while local communities, through ASHAs and community health workers, can be engaged for better health awareness and preventive care.
  - Performance-based incentives for healthcare workers would also improve service quality and retention.

- **Public-Private Partnership Reforms:** New Public-Private Partnership (PPP) models should be developed to ensure equitable healthcare access while maintaining high-quality standards.

- Clear regulatory frameworks with performance metrics, quality benchmarks, and pricing controls should be implemented for private sector participation.
- Independent monitoring systems should be established to assess PPP outcomes and ensure accountability.
- Furthermore, technology transfer and capacity building should be a focus of these partnerships.

- **Healthcare Financing Reform:** A mixed financing model should be adopted, combining increased public spending with universal health insurance coverage.
  - Public health spending should gradually be increased to 2.5% of GDP through a dedicated health cess and optimized resource allocation.
  - Strengthening the Ayushman Bharat scheme by expanding coverage and simplifying claim processes is essential.
  - Recent expansion of health coverage under the Ayushman Bharat PradhanMantri Jan ArogyaYojana to include all senior citizens aged 70 and above is a significant step.

- **Medical Education and Workforce Development:** Medical education should be modernized with a focus on practical skills, digital health, and emerging technologies.
  - A mandatory rural posting system with attractive incentives and career progression opportunities should be introduced.
  - Chhattisgarh's Mitanin program, which uses community health workers effectively to address rural doctor shortages, can serve as a model.
  - A standardized continuing medical education system with regular skill updates

should be created. Additionally, medical education hubs should be established in underserved regions, with a focus on addressing local healthcare needs.

- **Pharmaceutical and Medical Device Manufacturing:** India should strengthen domestic manufacturing capabilities for essential medicines and medical devices through Production Linked Incentive schemes.
  - o API parks with shared infrastructure should be developed to reduce import dependence.
  - o Quality control measures and standardization for generic medicines should be implemented to build trust in domestic products.
  - o The Jan Aushadhi network should also be strengthened with better supply chain management.
- **Emergency Preparedness System:** A network of regional emergency response centres should be established, with adequate surge capacity and essential supplies.
  - o Early warning systems for disease outbreaks, with real-time monitoring capabilities, should be implemented.
  - o Additionally, strategic reserves of essential medicines and equipment should be built and regularly rotated.
- **Preventive Healthcare Focus:** Comprehensive health screening programs should be implemented across all age groups at HWCs.
  - o Integrating traditional medicine systems (AYUSH) with modern medicine could offer a holistic approach to healthcare.
  - o Targeted interventions for lifestyle diseases should be introduced through workplace and school health programs.

- Campaigns like Eat Right India and Fit India should be actively promoted to encourage healthier lifestyles.
- **Regulatory Framework Modernization:** A unified healthcare regulatory authority should be established with clear mandates for quality control and standard setting.
  - o Mandatory accreditation systems for all healthcare facilities should be implemented, with regular audits.
  - o Transparent pricing mechanisms for medical services and procedures should be developed.
- **One Health Approach:** India should fast track the implementation of the One Health approach, which links human, animal, and environmental health to prevent zoonotic diseases.
  - o Strengthening surveillance and early detection systems at the human-animal-environment interface can help control outbreaks.
  - o Collaboration between healthcare, veterinary, and environmental sectors is essential.

Conclusion:

To address India's mounting healthcare challenges, a multi-pronged approach is essential, focusing on digital integration, preventive care, and robust public-private partnerships. Strengthening primary care and emphasising preventive health will reduce the burden on tertiary systems. With coordinated reforms, India can better navigate health crises and advance towards universal health coverage and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

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INDIA'S INDUSTRIAL FUTURE

As India envisions its transformation into a USD 30-trillion economy under Viksit Bharat@2047, industrial cities and corridors are emerging as the backbone of this ambitious journey. The recent approval of 12 new industrial cities under the National Industrial Corridor Development Programme, backed by a ₹28,602 crore investment, signals India's commitment to becoming a global manufacturing hub. These industrial corridors, exemplified by projects like the Delhi-Mumbai Industrial Corridor, are set to create a multiplier effect by connecting urban and rural centres while fostering innovation hubs.

Role of Industrial Clusters in driving India's development journey

- Economic Scale and Integration: Manufacturing clusters create powerful economies of scale through shared infrastructure and resources, significantly reducing operational costs for businesses of all sizes.
  o The recent approval of 12 new industrial cities under NICDP demonstrates India's commitment to this model.
  o These clusters are projected to generate 1 million direct and 3 million indirect jobs.
- Supply Chain Optimization and Cost Efficiency: Gujarat's Pharmaceutical cluster in Ahmedabad-Vadodara corridor exemplifies how clustering reduces logistics costs through shared infrastructure and proximate supplier networks.
  o The cluster accounts for 28% of India's pharma exports, with 130 U.S. Food and Drug Administration certified drug manufacturing facilities.
  o The integration of suppliers, manufacturers, and distributors in close proximity creates significant cost advantages and operational efficiencies.
- **MSME Growth Catalyst:** Industrial clusters serve as critical growth engines for MSMEs by providing them access to established supply chains, modern infrastructure, and market linkages.
  o The ecosystem approach enables smaller businesses to benefit from proximity to larger anchor companies, as evidenced by Vedanta's recent announcement to establish two industrial parks for aluminium, zinc, and silver processing on a not-for-profit basis.
- **Export Competitiveness:** Industrial clusters significantly enhance India's export competitiveness by creating specialized manufacturing ecosystems that can compete globally.
  o The focused development of sector-specific clusters, supported by initiatives like Production-Linked Incentives (PLI) and integrated infrastructure through PM Gati Shakti, is transforming India's export capabilities.
  o The Surat diamond industry processes 85-90% of the world's rough diamonds and has a reputation for cutting-edge technology and skilled personnel, making it a vital player in the global diamond trade.
- **Regional Development Catalyst:** Industrial corridors are proving to be powerful drivers of balanced regional development by connecting urban and rural

areas and creating new economic opportunities.

o This is exemplified by how the Chennai-Bengaluru Industrial Corridor has spurred development in smaller towns along its route, creating new growth centres.

o Recent data reveals that regions around industrial corridors have experienced a higher GDP growth rate compared to non-corridor regions.

▪ **FDI Attraction Centres:** Industrial clusters have emerged as powerful magnets for Foreign Direct Investment, offering ready-to-use infrastructure and clear policy frameworks.

o The success is evident in cases like Toyota's recent investment in Sambhajinagar and the growing interest from global manufacturers in sectors ranging from electronics to pharmaceuticals.

Key Industrial Clusters in India

▪ **Automotive:**

o Chennai, Tamil Nadu: Known as the "Detroit of India," hosts major manufacturers like Ford, Hyundai, and BMW.

o Pune, Maharashtra: Focuses on passenger and commercial vehicles, with Tata Motors, Mercedes-Benz, and Bajaj Auto.

o Gurugram-Manesar, Haryana: Home to Maruti Suzuki and Hero MotoCorp.

o Sanand, Gujarat: Notable for Tata Motors and previously Ford.

▪ **Textiles:**

o Tiruppur, Tamil Nadu: "Knitwear Capital of India," specializing in cotton garments for export.

o Ludhiana, Punjab: Known for woollen apparel and knitwear.

o Surat, Gujarat: Synthetic textile hub and major polyester producer.

o Bhiwandi, Maharashtra: Power loom industry for synthetic and cotton fabrics.

▪ **Pharmaceuticals and Biotech:**

o Hyderabad, Telangana ("Genome Valley"): Centre for pharmaceutical and biotech research with Dr. Reddy's Laboratories.

o Ahmedabad, Gujarat: Houses ZydusCadila and Torrent Pharma for bulk drug manufacturing.

o Mumbai, Maharashtra: Home to Lupin, Sun Pharmaceuticals, and other formulation developers.

▪ **Chemicals and Petrochemicals:**

o Vadodara and Jamnagar, Gujarat: Leading hubs, with Jamnagar hosting Reliance's oil refinery.

o Mumbai, Maharashtra: Major port city for chemical and petrochemical industries.

o Ankleshwar and Vapi, Gujarat: Key regions for chemicals and dye production.

▪ **Gems and Jewellery:**

o Surat, Gujarat: World leader in diamond cutting and polishing.

o Mumbai, Maharashtra: Major centre for gold jewellery manufacturing and diamond trade.

o Jaipur, Rajasthan: Renowned for coloured gemstones, including cutting and polishing of precious stones.

Major challenges limiting the growth of India's Industrial Sector

▪ **Infrastructure Bottlenecks:** India's logistics costs account for 14-18% of GDP (Economic Survey 2022-23) compared to 8-10% in developed economies, significantly impacting industrial competitiveness.

o For several years now, electricity distribution companies (discoms), which are mostly state-owned, have witnessed steep financial losses.

- Between 2017-18 and 2022-23, losses accumulated to over 3 lakh crore rupees.
- **Land Acquisition Challenges:** Complex land laws and lengthy legal procedures delay projects, making acquisition difficult.
  - Bengaluru Peripheral Ring Road project has been delayed for years due to land acquisition issues
  - Cost overruns and delays plague over 1,800 infrastructure projects (Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation).
  - Surging land prices are also triggering increased legal disputes over ownership conflicts, prolonging already stalled projects.
  - Additionally, land is a state subject, and the discrepancies in pricing and measurement standards between states add further complexity.
- **Rigid Labour Laws and Skill Gaps:** The industrial sector in India faces challenges with labour reforms due to the slow implementation of recent labour codes. This issue has been highlighted by recent strikes, such as the one at Samsung's facility in Bangalore.
  - If the skill gap in India continues on its current trajectory, most industries will be plagued by about 75-80% skill gap issues
  - Unemployment rate in India rose sharply to 9.2% in June 2024. The formal sector employment remains at 10% of the workforce, indicating structural rigidities.
- Limited Access to Credit: India is one of the fastest-growing economies in the world but there exists a significant gap in accessing formal credit, especially when compared to other developed nations.
  - According to a BizFund report, only 16% of MSMEs in India receive formal credit leaving more than 80% of these companies under-financed or financed through informal sources.
  - As of March, 2024, the share of industry in bank credit shrunk to 23.1%
- **Technology Adoption Barriers:** Lack of scale and skill in MSMEs restricts Indian manufacturing industries from investing, modernizing and thereby adopting Industry 4.0.
  - The digital infrastructure gap requires investments of $23 billion by 2025 for competitive modernization.
  - India ranks 72 out of 174 countries, with an AI Preparedness Index rating of 0.49.
  - Technology adoption costs are higher for Indian industries due to import dependencies.
- **Environmental Compliance Challenges:** Industrial units face high compliance costs of operational expenses due to environmental regulations.
  - Also, a 2020 report stated that 18% of highly polluting industries that were required to install online continuous emissions monitoring systems (CEMS), have not complied with the norms.
- This is partly because bureaucratic delays in obtaining environmental approvals and other clearances increase a developer's overall project expense by as much as 10-12%.
- **Global Competition and Trade Barriers:** Recent WTO data shows India's share in global exports at 1.8%, despite being the 5th largest economy.
  - Non-tariff barriers in key export markets affect a large number of Indian industrial exports.
- Additionally, green trade barriers like the European Union's Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism could impact key sectors like steel, potentially affecting Indian exports to the EU.

- **Research and Innovation Gap:** India's R&D spending at 0.7% of GDP is significantly lower than China's 2.4% and USA's 3.1%.
- In the past two years, India's patent filing process has seen marked improvements. However, India's global share in patent filings remains just over 2%, indicating a continued need for targeted initiatives

Strategies India could implement to accelerate the development of Industrial Clusters

- **Integrated Infrastructure Development:** Create dedicated infrastructure SPVs (Special Purpose Vehicles) for each major industrial cluster with targeted funding.
- Implement time-bound development of plug-and-play infrastructure facilities including 24x7 power, water supply, and waste management systems.
- Develop more multi-modal logistics parks under Gati Shakti within clusters with direct connectivity to ports, airports, and freight corridors.
- Set up common facility centres housing testing labs, design centres, and R&D facilities shared by cluster members.
- **Technology Innovation Centres:** Establish cluster-specific Centres of Excellence in partnership with premier technical institutions (IITs/NITs) and industry leaders.
- Create shared prototyping and testing facilities equipped with advanced manufacturing technologies like 3D printing and robotics.
- Implement cloud-based common platforms for design, simulation, and virtual manufacturing capabilities.
- Provide subsidized access to Industry 4.0 technologies for MSMEs within clusters.

- The recent success of Pune's Auto Cluster Development and Research Institute, demonstrates this approach's effectiveness.
- **Financial Support Framework:** Create dedicated cluster development funds with participation from government, industry, and financial institutions.
- Implement credit guarantee schemes specifically designed for cluster MSMEs.
- Develop supply chain financing programs leveraging the strength of anchor companies.
- Set up fintech platforms for invoice discounting and peer-to-peer lending within clusters.
- **Environmental Sustainability Initiatives:** Develop common effluent treatment plants and waste management facilities with modern technologies.
- Implement cluster-wide renewable energy projects including solar parks and waste-to-energy plants.
- Create circular economy networks within clusters for resource optimization and waste reduction.
- Establish green rating systems with incentives for environmentally conscious units.
- **Market Linkage Programmes:** Establish digital B2B platforms connecting cluster members with domestic and international buyers.
- Develop export facilitation centres providing documentation and compliance support.
- Implement quality certification programs aligned with international standards. The successful example is Surat Diamond Bourse.
- **Digital Infrastructure Development:** Implement 5G networks and IoT infrastructure across industrial clusters.

o Create digital twins of cluster infrastructure for efficient management and maintenance.

o Develop blockchain-based platforms for supply chain transparency and traceability.

▪ **Social Infrastructure Support:** Develop integrated townships with housing, healthcare, and education facilities near clusters.

o Create public transportation networks connecting clusters with residential areas. Establish recreational facilities and social spaces within cluster areas.

o Implement daycarecentres and women-friendly workplace facilities. The successful example is Sri City Industrial Cluster, where social infrastructure development improved worker retention.

• Also, Sri City management developed not only the industrial zone but trained manpower from neighbouring villages to support industry needs.

▪ **International Collaboration Programmes:** Establish twinning arrangements with successful international clusters for knowledge exchange.

o Develop international market intelligence cells within clusters. Implement global best practice sharing programs across cluster members.

Conclusion:

India's industrial clusters are poised to drive economic growth and innovation. By addressing infrastructure bottlenecks, improving access to finance, fostering technology adoption, and prioritizing sustainability, India can create world-class industrial hubs and progress towards SDG 9 (Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure) and SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth). These clusters will not only generate employment and boost exports but also contribute to the country's goal of becoming a $30 trillion economy.

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INDIA'S RISE AS A GLOBAL INVESTMENT HUB

India's transformation from an economically constrained nation to a global investment hotspot can be significantly attributed to the Make in India initiative. This flagship program has reinvigorated job creation, stimulated economic growth, and empowered businesses, particularly MSMEs, to produce high-quality goods. It has helped transform several sectors from importers of substandard products to exporters of premium goods, with the toy manufacturing industry serving as a prime example, witnessing a 239% increase in exports while halving imports.

The success of Make in India is complemented by other effective policies and initiatives such as Startup India, Production Linked Incentive (PLI) schemes, and significant infrastructure investments. These efforts have attracted substantial foreign investments, created millions of jobs, and positioned India as a key partner in high-tech and emerging technologies. The country's appeal to global investors is further enhanced by its "four Ds": decisive leadership, demand from a large population, demographic dividend, and vibrant democracy. As a result, India has become a sought-after destination for manufacturing and innovation, with a promising future ahead.

How India is becoming an increasingly Attractive Investment Destination?

- **Robust Economic Growth**: India has emerged as one of the world's fastest-growing economies, with total FDI inflows reaching USD 990.97 billion from April 2000 to March 2024.
  - IMF expects India's GDP to grow by 6.7% in FY24, making it one of the fastest-growing large economies.
  - The Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan, introduced a USD 270 billion economic stimulus package, equivalent to 10% of the nation's GDP.
- **Demographic Dividend:** India is home to the world's largest youth population, with a projected increase from 121.1 crore in 2011 to 152.2 crore by 2036, making it a powerhouse of demographic advantage. With a vibrant workforce and a vast pool of young talent, India will remain one of the youngest countries globally until 2030.
  - This young population is increasingly tech-savvy, with internet users in India projected to reach 900 million by 2025, creating opportunities in e-commerce, digital services, and tech-enabled sectors.
- **Infrastructure Development:** India's infrastructure development is advancing rapidly, with the National Infrastructure Pipeline (NIP) being a key driver for growth.
  - This initiative aims to create world-class infrastructure and boost India's economy to a USD 5 trillion target by FY 2025.
  - Over 9,700 projects worth USD 3,093.51 billion have been identified, spanning critical sectors like Energy (24%), Roads (18%), Urban (17%), and Railways (12%).
- Additionally, a significant equity infusion of INR 6,000 crore into the National Investment and Infrastructure Fund (NIIF)

further strengthens India's capacity to attract global investments.

- **Improving Ease of Doing Business:** The Indian government has implemented numerous reforms to enhance the business environment.
  - India's rank in the World Bank's Ease of Doing Business Index improved from 142 in 2014 to 63 in 2019.
  - Recent initiatives include the elimination of over 25,000 compliance requirements, digitization of processes, and the introduction of the Goods and Services Tax (GST).
  - The India Industrial Land Bank (IILB), a GIS-based portal, provides extensive information on industrial parks, enhancing ease of doing business.
- **Competitive Labour Costs**: India's large and growing workforce offers a significant cost advantage to investors.
  - India has one of the world's largest labour forces, ensuring a steady supply of workers across various skill levels. Indian labour costs remain competitive compared to many other countries, particularly in manufacturing and services sectors.
  - The average manufacturing labour cost in India is significantly lower than in China and many Southeast Asian countries.
  - Recent labour reforms have aimed to provide more flexibility to businesses while protecting workers' rights, potentially making India more attractive for labour-intensive industries.
- **Large and Growing Consumer Base:** India's massive and expanding consumer market is a major draw for investors:
  - India's population is equivalent to 17.78% of the total world population, offering an enormous potential customer base.
  - The strength of the middle class is expected to rise from 432 million people in 2020-21 to 715 million (47%) in 2030-31, driving increased consumer spending across various sectors.
- **Strategic Geopolitical Position**: India's rising geopolitical importance and its position as a counterbalance to China in the Indo-Pacific region have increased its attractiveness to global investors.
  - India's participation in strategic groupings like the Quad (with the US, Japan, and Australia) and its leadership in initiatives like the International Solar Alliance showcase its growing global influence.
  - Recent developments, such as the Supply Chain Resilience Initiative, have further enhanced its appeal to international investors looking for alternatives to China.
- **Booming Start-up Ecosystem**: India's start-up ecosystem has seen explosive growth, making it the third-largest globally.
  - As of 3rd October 2023, India is home to 111 unicorns with a total valuation of $ 349.67 billion.
  - The government's Startup India initiative, launched in 2016, has played a crucial role in this growth by providing funding, tax benefits, and regulatory support.
  - This thriving ecosystem has attracted significant foreign investment, with Indian start-ups raising USD 24 billion in equity funding in 2022 despite global economic headwinds.
- **Renewable Energy Push:** India's commitment to renewable energy has created substantial investment opportunities.
  - The country aims to achieve 500 GW of renewable energy capacity by 2030, up from about 170 GW in early 2023.

- o This ambitious target has spurred investments in solar, wind, and green hydrogen projects.
- Such initiatives not only attract foreign investment but also position India as a leader in the global transition to clean energy.
- **Digital Infrastructure and Fintech Revolution**: India's digital infrastructure, particularly the India Stack has revolutionized financial inclusion and created new investment opportunities.
- o Unified Payments Interface (UPI) processed a staggering 3729.1 transactions per second with 117.6 billion transactions being processed on the platform in 2023.
- o This digital backbone has fuelled the growth of fintech, with India's fintech market expected to reach USD 150 billion by 2025.
- o Global tech giants and venture capitalists are increasingly investing in Indian fintechstartups, recognizing the potential of India's large, underserved market and innovative digital solutions.

Challenges hinder India's attractiveness as an Investment Destination

- **Infrastructure Gaps:** Despite significant improvements, India's infrastructure still lags behind global standards, impacting efficiency and increasing costs for businesses.
- o In 2023, India ranked 38 out of the 139 nations in the World Bank's Logistics Performance Index (LPI), highlighting room for improvement.
- o The infrastructure deficit is particularly acute in areas like power distribution, water supply, and last-mile connectivity, affecting manufacturing competitiveness.
- **Regulatory Complexity and Policy Uncertainty:** India's regulatory environment, while improving, remains complex and sometimes unpredictable, deterring potential investors.
- o Recent examples include retrospective tax disputes with companies like Vodafone and Cairn Energy, which were only resolved in 2021 after years of litigation.
- o The frequent changes in e-commerce rules and data localization requirements have also created uncertainty for tech companies.
- **Labour Market Rigidities:** India's new 4 labour codes which were introduced in 2019 & 2020 are yet to be implemented. The workers in the unorganized sector constitute more than 90% of the total employment in the country.
- o The skills mismatch in the labour market is another concern. A employability survey of 2019 reveals that 80% of Indian engineers are not fit for any job in the knowledge economy and only 2.5% of them possess tech skills in Artificial Intelligence (AI) that industry requires.
- **Banking Sector Challenges:** The Indian banking sector, particularly public sector banks, continues to grapple with high non-performing assets (NPAs) and capital adequacy issues, constraining credit flow to businesses.
- o According to RBI's Financial Stability Report of June 2024, non-performing assets (NPAs) of scheduled commercial banks (though declining) are still at 2.8% (Gross NPA).
- o The recent near collapse of Yes Bank in 2020 raised questions about the stability of the financial system.
- **Land Acquisition Challenges:** Land acquisition remains a significant hurdle for large-scale industrial and infrastructure projects in India.
- o The Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act of 2013, while protecting landowners' rights,

has made the process more time-consuming and expensive.

o For example, the Mumbai-Ahmedabad High Speed Rail project has faced significant delays due to land acquisition issues.

o The lack of digitized land records in many states further complicates the process, leading to disputes and project delays.

▪ **Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) Concerns:** While India has made progress in strengthening its IPR regime, concerns persist among international investors, particularly in sectors like pharmaceuticals and technology.

o India ranked 42nd out of 55 countries in the U.S. Chamber of Commerce's 2023 International IP Index.

o The country's patent laws, especially Section 3(d) of the Patents Act, which sets a high bar for pharmaceutical patents, have been a point of contention.

o The prevalence of counterfeit goods, with a 2022 FICCI report estimating the size of the counterfeit market in India at ₹2.6 trillion (in 5 Key Indian industries), further underscores the challenges in IPR protection.

▪ **Digital Infrastructure and Cyber-security:** Despite rapid digitalization, India still faces challenges in digital infrastructure and cyber-security, which are critical for attracting investments in the tech sector.

o Indian Computer Emergency Response Team (Cert-In) handled 1,391,457 cyber security incidents in 2022, raising concerns about data protection.

Steps India can take to enhance its appeal as an Investment Destination

▪ **Accelerate Infrastructure Development:** India should prioritize closing its infrastructure gap by accelerating project implementation and increasing investment.

o Emphasis should be on improving logistics efficiency; India's logistics costs (14% of

GDP) are significantly higher than in developed countries (8-10%). Initiatives like the PM Gati Shakti National Master Plan should be fast-tracked.

o Successful implementation could potentially save billions of dollars annually in logistics costs and boost export competitiveness.

▪ **Streamline Regulatory Processes:** India needs to further simplify its regulatory environment to reduce compliance burdens and improve ease of doing business.

o The government should build on its success in eliminating over 25,000 compliance requirements and decriminalizing minor offenses.

o Implementing a single-window clearance system for all central and state-level approvals could significantly reduce project delays.

o For instance, the success of Gujarat's single-window system could be replicated nationally.

o Digitizing and integrating various regulatory processes could potentially save businesses billions in compliance costs annually.

▪ **Labour Law Reforms and Skill Development:** Implementing the four new labour codes swiftly and effectively is crucial to increase labour market flexibility.

o Simultaneously, India should ramp up its skill development initiatives to address the employability gap.

o The government should aim to increase the number of people skilled under the PradhanMantriKaushalVikasYojana.

o Collaborations with industry, like the recent partnership between Google and NASSCOM to train 100,000 developers in cloud technologies, should be scaled up.

▪ **Strengthen the Banking Sector:** India should continue its efforts to clean up bank balance sheets and recapitalize public sector banks.

- Implementing the recommendations of the RBI's Internal Working Group on ownership guidelines for Indian private sector banks could attract more investment in the banking sector.
- **Land Reforms and Digitization**: Implementing comprehensive land reforms, including digitization of land records and streamlining the land acquisition process, is crucial.
- The government should aim to complete the digitization of land records under the Digital India Land Records Modernization Programme in all states.
- Successful implementation could potentially reduce land-related disputes by 50% and cut project implementation times significantly.
- **Strengthen Intellectual Property Rights Protection:** India should focus on strengthening its IPR regime to boost investor confidence, particularly in high-tech and R&D-intensive sectors.
- In order to reduce the time taken in the application process of patents, prescribed time limits for the first step may be reduced to 14-15 months (from 18 months currently), bringing it in line with the US and China
- Increasing the number of patent examiners and modernizing the IP offices could help achieve this goal.
- **Boost Digital Infrastructure and Cyber-security:** India should accelerate its digital infrastructure development, aiming to provide high-speed internet access to all villages under the BharatNet project.
- The government should focus on increasing the average fixed broadband speed.
- Implementing the National Cyber Security Strategy and establishing a robust system could potentially reduce cyber-security incidents by 50% and position India as a secure destination for data-driven investments.
- **Promote Sustainable Development:** India should accelerate its transition to renewable energy and sustainable practices to attract ESG-focused investments.
- Also, promoting circular economy practices and water conservation could address resource scarcity issues.
- These measures could potentially attract over USD 100 billion in green investments by 2030 and position India as a leader in sustainable manufacturing.
- **Enhance Education and Skill Development:** India should focus on aligning its education system with industry needs, particularly in emerging technologies.
- Implementing the National Education Policy 2020 effectively, with a focus on digital skills and practical training, is crucial.
- Scaling up successful models like the Indian Institutes of Skills, which aim to provide industry-relevant training, could help bridge the skill gap.

Conclusion

India's journey toward becoming a global investment hub is on a promising path, driven by strategic reforms, infrastructure development, and a young, tech-savvy workforce. To fully realize its potential, India must address key challenges in infrastructure, regulatory complexity, and skill development, while continuing to strengthen its digital and sustainable growth initiatives. With targeted measures, India can cement its position as a top destination for global investments.

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WORLD AFFAIRS

Navin Ramgoolam became the new Prime Minister of Mauritius

NavinRamgoolam was sworn in as prime minister for his fourth term. His Alliance du Changement (ADC) coalition won a landslide 60 of the 62 national assembly seats with 62.6% of votes. Ramgoolam took the oath of office during a brief ceremony at State House. Ramgoolam launched a program in 2006 to cut bureaucracy and simplify taxes to diversify the $10 billion economy from tourism, textiles, and sugar exports. The outgoing Prime Minister PravindJugnauth's popularity had decreased due to the cost of living crisis and corruption allegations. Pravind Kumar Jugnauth succeeded his father, AneeroodJugnauth, in 2017. He again became Prime Minister in 2019.

Dubai topped the Middle East and rose to fifth place globally in the '2024 Global City Index'

Dubai is the highest-ranked city in the Middle East and Africa in the '2024 Global City Index' released by Brand Finance, leading the region for the second year in a row. London, Paris, and New York City retain top 3 spots in second annual Brand Finance Global City Index. Dubai has also risen to fifth place globally, surpassing global cities such as Singapore, Los Angeles, Sydney, San Francisco and Amsterdam. The city also made a significant jump in local and remote work opportunities, moving up from 24th to fourth place. Due to its strategic role as an international trade hub and strong economy, Dubai was ranked as the second most important city globally. Scoring 86 out of 100, Dubai's overall performance across key indicators highlights its economic resilience and strategic vision.

Russia and North Korea signed a treaty to establish a comprehensive strategic partnership

Russian President Vladimir Putin has signed a treaty with North Korea to establish a comprehensive strategic partnership. The treaty was originally signed by the top leaders of the two countries in Pyongyang on June 19. It was ratified by the lower house of parliament. comprehensive strategic partnership Russia's upper house of parliament approved the bill on November 6. Under this agreement, Russia and North Korea have committed to developing a sustained partnership based on mutual respect for sovereignty, territorial integrity, non-interference in internal affairs, equality, and other principles of international law. Under this treaty, if either country faces an armed attack, then immediate military and other forms of assistance will be provided. The treaty will come into effect upon the exchange of ratification instruments.

A proposal made by Australia to ban social media for children under 16

Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese announced plans to introduce legislation restricting social media access for children under 16. The proposed law, considered one of the strictest globally, includes age verification methods like biometrics or government ID. It aims to address the physical

and mental health risks of excessive social media use. The legislation will be introduced to Parliament this year and take effect 12 months after approval. Children with parental consent or existing accounts will not be exempt. Similar efforts, such as France's proposed ban for those under 15, have faced challenges.

Donald Trump won the 2024 US elections

With this win, Donald Trump will be sworn in as the 47th US President. A presidential candidate needs 270 votes to win. After Trump's victory in the crucial states, he currently has 277 electoral votes, while Harris has 224. In more than a century, Trump is the first president to win a non-consecutive second term. According to the 20th Amendment of the US Constitution, the swearing-in ceremony of the President always takes place on January 20. So, on January 20th, President-elect Trump will be sworn in.
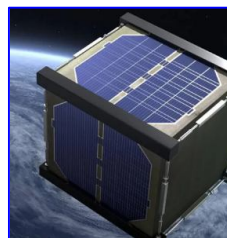
Singapore is ranked as the world's most powerful passport on the Henley Passport Index

The Henley Passport Index ranks Singapore as the world's most powerful passport. It has visa-free access to 195 countries. Italy, Japan, Germany, Spain, and France are in the second spot. Indian passport ranks 83rd with visa-free travel to 58 countries. The ranking is based on the number of countries that can be travelled without a visa. Austria, Denmark, Finland, Ireland, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, South Korea, and Sweden are in the third spot with visa-free access to 191 countries. The United States is in the 8th spot with visa-free access to 186 countries. Afghanistan, Syria, Iraq, Yemen, Somalia, and Pakistan are the least powerful passports in the world.

European Space Agency's mission Proba-3 will be launched by India in December

India will launch the European Space Agency's Proba-3 mission in December from Sriharikota to study the Sun's faint corona. At the Indian Space Conference 3.0, Science and Technology Minister Dr.Jitendra Singh emphasized the widespread use of space technology in sectors like navigation and terrain mapping, contributing to smart cities. He also outlined India's space ambitions, including the Gaganyaan mission, the launch of the Bharat Space Station by 2035, and landing an astronaut on the Moon by 2040. India's goal is to increase its share in the global space economy from 2% to 10%.

Japan is set to test the world's first wooden satellite

Japanese scientists are set to test the world's first wooden satellite. A team from Kyoto University and homebuilder Sumitomo Forestry has developed this wooden satellite named the "LignoSat." "Lignosat" is named after the Latin word for wood. It will be launched to the International Space Station via a SpaceX rocket. Former Japanese Space Shuttle astronaut Takao Doi was part of the Kyoto team. It will remain in orbit for six months to test how well the material can withstand extreme environments. The wood used for this satellite comes from a type of magnolia tree – the Japanese Honoki. The wood also provides benefits at the end of the satellite's life, when it will burn up harmlessly in Earth's atmosphere. Traditional satellites also burn up, but when they do so they release a shower of polluting metal particles.

Collins Dictionary Names "Brat" 2024 Word of the Year

In a reflection of evolving social attitudes and pop culture influences, Collins Dictionary announced "brat" as its Word of the Year for 2024. The word, redefined by British singer Charli XCX and popularized through her album of the same name, has come to represent a "confident, independent, and hedonistic attitude." Originally used to describe a misbehaving child, "brat" now embodies a culturally resonant spirit of self-expression and rebellion that resonates globally, with notable support from US presidential candidate Kamala Harris.

Lahore became the most polluted city in the world

The air quality in Lahore has reached the 700 mark on the Air Quality Index (AQI). The overall AQI has been recorded around 700, which placed Lahore at the top of the world's most polluted cities list. Health authorities have issued warnings to citizens and advised citizens to take immediate precautions. In winter, air becomes heavier than in summer. It causes poisonous particles in the atmosphere to move downwards. A layer of polluted particles, consisting of large amounts of carbon and smoke, accumulates over the entire area. The smoke produced by burning crop remnants, factories, and burning coal, garbage, oil, or tyres are the main reasons for the pollution in Lahore.

India's expenditure on education is higher than countries like China and Japan: UNESCO's report

A UNESCO report revealed that India allocated 4.1% to 4.6% of its GDP to education between 2015 and 2024, aligning with the UN recommendation of 4-6%. Government expenditure on education during this period ranged from 13.5% to 17.2%. India invested more in education compared to other Central and Southern Asian countries. In South Asia, Nepal and Bhutan also allocate 4-6% of their GDP to education. Globally, public expenditure on education declined from 13.2% in 2010 to 12.5% in 2020.

Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) members adopted the Rome Declaration on Water Scarcity in Agriculture

Rome Declaration on Water Scarcity in Agriculture aims to resolve the water scarcity and climate crisis. The Water Scarcity in Agriculture (WASAG) initiative was launched at the United Nations Climate Conference in 2016 to support countries in addressing water scarcity challenges. Under this declaration, the countries have committed to mobilize greater political support in terms of policies, legal, and institutional frameworks. They will also work on accessing finance and responsible water governance to address the effects of water scarcity and climate change, On the occasion of the High-level Rome Water Dialogue, the declaration has been launched. The theme of this year's annual World Food Forum (WFF) was 'Good food for all, for today and tomorrow'. Global Family Farming Forum and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) were also launched at the WFF.

Prabowo Subianto took over as President of Indonesia

PrabowoSubianto became the eighth president of Indonesia, the world's third-largest democracy, after winning nearly 60% of the vote in the February 14 election. A former special forces commander, he introduced policies like free school meals. He appointed 48 ministers and 58 vice-ministers to his cabinet. This marks the end of JokoWidodo's leadership, which focused on

economic growth and infrastructure development. Indonesia is an archipelago of over 17,000 islands, with Jakarta as its capital.

NASA launched the Europa Clipper to search for life on Jupiter's moon

NASA launched the Europa Clipper to search for life on Jupiter and its moon, Europa. It was launched from a SpaceX Falcon Heavy rocket from NASA's Kennedy Space Center. Nasa's spacecraft has been designed to study Jupiter's Europa moon's icy surface and the subsurface ocean believed to exist beneath. Europa Clipper will not directly search for life, but it will examine whether Europa's environment could support it or not. Its findings may pave the way for future missions aimed at detecting life. Europa is one of Jupiter's 95 known moons. It is slightly smaller than Earth's moon. It is covered by an ice sheet estimated to be 10 to 15 miles (15 to 24 km) thick. Scientists believe that a vast ocean exists under this frozen surface. This ocean could be a rich environment for life due to the presence of water. The Europa Clipper is the largest spacecraft Nasa has built for planetary exploration.

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NATIONAL AFFAIRS

Environment Ministry has notified new rules under new Water Act

The new Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) rules, 2024, have been notified for holding inquiries and imposing penalties for violations of the Water Act. These rules follow amendments made earlier in 2024, allowing the Centre to appoint officers to adjudicate offences and determine penalties. The rules also exempt non-polluting 'white' industries from obtaining prior permissions. Now, the Central Pollution Control Board, State Pollution Control Boards, and other relevant bodies can file complaints to the adjudicating officer for any violations of the act.

New guidelines issued by the Centre to regulate misleading advertisements by coaching institutes

The Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA) has issued guidelines for coaching institutes to ensure transparency and prevent misleading advertisements. Institutes must display disclaimers, get consent from minor candidates for using photos and testimonials after selection, and accurately declare their services and infrastructure. The guidelines also define coaching institutes and prohibit false claims or guarantees. CCPA has already issued notices to 45 UPSC coaching institutes for misleading ads and imposed fines. Institutes must also have a consumer grievance redressal mechanism.

India's retail inflation reached a 14-month high in October

India's retail inflation reached a 14-month high in October due to a sharp rise in vegetable prices. Annual retail inflation reached 6.21% in October, which is more than the tolerance band of 2%-6% for the first time in over a year. The October retail inflation rate was also higher than the 5.81% forecasted by economists. Rising food prices have decreased the purchasing power of middle-income households. The RBI has projected GDP growth of 7.2% for the financial year 2024-25.

Government approved the first ever women battalion for CISF

The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) has approved the establishment of the first all-women battalion of the Central Industrial Security Force (CISF). The main of this decision is to empower women and enhance their role in national security. The first women's battalion for CISF will have more than 1,000 personnel. This step has been taken due to increasing demands on the force, particularly in VIP security, airports, and other critical installations. This new women's battalion is named as a "reserve battalion". It will be formed from the existing workforce of approximately 2,00,000 CISF personnel. It will be led by a senior officer holding the rank of commandant. Currently, women comprise more than 7% of the CISF's total strength of around 1,80,000.

Union Minister Dharmendra Pradhan inaugurated the national workshop on Higher & Technical Education

Education Minister DharmendraPradhan inaugurated a two-day national workshop on Higher and Technical Education. Its main aim is to disseminate various approaches and methodologies to implement National Education Policy (NEP) 2020. The workshop will encourage NEP's adoption in state institutions and will pave the way for a more robust, inclusive, and globally competitive education system. During this two-day workshop, 14 technical sessions on the themes of NEP 2020 Implementation.

National MSME Cluster Outreach Programme has been launched by Union Minister for Finance Nirmala Sitharaman

Union Minister Nirmala Sitharaman launched a national program to boost financial access for Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs). It has been organized jointly by the Department of Financial Services (DFS), the Ministry of Finance, the Government of India, and the Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI). The main aim of the program is to ensure access to financial services and promote the growth of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs). The Union Finance Minister also virtually inaugurated six new SIDBI branches in Karnataka. SIDBI signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Peenya Industries Association to support MSMEs through capacity building, credit facilities, and knowledge-sharing. The Union Finance Minister also distributed sanction letters to 11 MSME customers of SIDBI, aggregating to Rs. 25.75 crore.

1967 decision on the minority status of Aligarh Muslim University struck down by the Supreme Court

The Supreme Court, by a 4:3 majority, overturned its 1967 verdict, ruling that Aligarh Muslim University (AMU) is a minority institution. The earlier ruling had stated that AMU, as a central university, couldn't be classified as a minority institution. The Court's new decision emphasizes that the key factor in determining minority status is who founded the institution, not its legal character. This ruling came in response to a 2006 Allahabad High Court decision that had denied AMU's minority status. AMU was founded in 1875 by Sir Syed Ahmad Khan as the Muhammadan Anglo-Oriental College.

The government will bring a National Counter Terrorism Policy soon

The two-day 'Anti-Terrorism Conference-2024' organized by the National Investigation Agency (NIA) in New Delhi. The inaugural session of the 'Anti-Terrorism Conference-2024' was addressed by Union Home and Cooperation Minister ShriAmit Shah. During this, the Home Minister also announced that the Home Ministry will soon introduce a National Counter-Terrorism Policy and Strategy to fight terrorism, terrorists and the entire ecosystem that supports them. He said that in the last 10 years, the Government of India has moved forward with a solid strategy against terrorism. He said that India's slogan of 'zero tolerance against terrorism' has been accepted not only by India but the whole world. In the last 10 years, a strong 'ecosystem' has been created in India to deal with terrorism. Union Home Minister has also felicitated 11 NIA medal winners. In the 75 years since India's independence, 36,468 policemen have made the supreme sacrifice to maintain internal security and protect the borders to maintain the security of the country.

Government has doubled penalties for farmers involved in Stubble Burning

The Environment, Forestry, and Climate Change Ministry has doubled penalties for stubble burning. The government has issued

the Air Quality Management in National Capital Region and Adjoining Areas (Imposition, Collection and Utilization of Environmental Compensation for Stubble Burning) Amendment Rules, 2024. Under the revised rules, farmers with less than two acres of land holding will have to pay Rs 5,000 for stubble burning. It was earlier Rs 2,500. Those with land between two and five acres will be fined Rs 10,000, while farmers with over five acres of land will pay Rs 30,000. The amendment seeks to standardize the penalty structure, taking into account farmers with smaller landholdings.

PM-Vidyalaxmi scheme has been approved by the government to provide financial support to meritorious students

In order to pursue higher education, the students will be eligible for loans that are free of collateral and guarantors. The program was created to ensure that no Indian youth will be prevented from pursuing high-quality higher education due to financial limitations. According to the plan, the government will offer a 75% credit guarantee for loans up to 7.5 lakh rupees in order to help banks increase their coverage. Students with an annual family income of up to eight lakh rupees will also be eligible for a three percent interest subvention for loans up to 10 lakh rupees during the moratorium period. Seven lakh students are anticipated to benefit from this program. Students can apply for an education loan on the unified site PM Vidyalaxmi in order to take advantage of the program.

A 15-day JalUtsav launched by NITI Aayog

NITI Aayog has launched a 15-day 'JalUtsav' to raise awareness about water conservation and management, following Prime Minister Modi's vision. The campaign, held in partnership with various ministries, is being organized in 20 states across Aspirational Districts and Blocks. It focuses on community participation in water protection, efficient household water use, and instilling responsibility among utilities. The initiative also involves school students in water management activities to inspire change. The festival began with the 'JalBandhan' ceremony, where leaders tied a sacred thread on water resources and launched local water facts.

The "First in the World Challenge" is a new initiative announced by the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR)

The goal of the new program is to inspire Indian scientists to develop novel approaches to challenging health issues. According to ICMR, the program aims to promote innovative, out of the box, futuristic concepts, the creation of new knowledge. It also aims to promote the discovery and advancement of ground-breaking health technologies (drugs, treatments, vaccines, diagnostics, interventions, etc.). The technologies must be such that they have never been thought, tested or tried in the world till date. This is a high-risk, high-reward endeavour with potentially unpredictable success rates. A group of researchers (from one institute or from several institutes) or an individual may submit the proposals.

India unveiled its updated National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plan (NBSAP)

A document titled Updated National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plan: A Roadmap for Conservation of India's Biodiversity has been released by KirtiVardhan Singh. This has been released at the event organised at the 16th Conference of Parties (COP16) of the Convention on

Biological Diversity. This is the third NBSAP that has been developed since 2000. Under this plan, India has set 23 targets under six broad conservation domains. The Biodiversity Expenditure Review estimated that its implementation would require an estimated annual average financial requirement of Rs 81,664.88 crore at the central government level. This document also provided a financial plan. The biodiversity finance plan suggests some financial solutions. Finance Plan, including augmenting public finance, corporate social responsibility, ecological fiscal transfer, and access and benefit sharing (ABS).

Global Allied Health Network has been launched at the International Allied Health Conference (IAHC 2024)

The International Allied Health Conference was held on November 1, 2024, in conjunction with the third Singapore Allied Health Conference. 1,100 global Allied Health Professionals (AHPs) and students from over 18 countries participated in the conference to enhance collaboration and innovation. It has been organised by the National University Health System (NUHS) in partnership with SingHealth and the National Healthcare Group (NHG). "Advancing Allied Health: Diverse in Calling, United in Purpose" is the theme of this conference. It emphasises the shared mission of healthcare professionals from diverse specialities. The Global Allied Health Network (GAHN) has been launched at this conference to formalise a strategic collaboration with key stakeholder organisations, including the World Health Organization.

Government is likely to begin the census in 2025

The government is planning to begin the long-delayed Census in 2025. The process will start in 2025 and is expected to continue until 2026. The census may also include sub-sect surveys within the General and SC-ST categories. After the census, the delimitation of LokSabha seats will start and will likely be completed by 2028. The census is conducted every ten years to update the National Population Register (NPR). It was scheduled to be conducted in 2021 but was postponed due to the Covid pandemic. The tenure of the Registrar General and Census Commissioner of India has also been extended till August 2026. The first complete census was conducted in 1872 under Lord Mayo.

Freedom fighter Pasumpon Muthuramalingar's 116th birthday was celebrated as Guru Pooja

Union Minister of State for Information and Broadcasting Dr L Murugan paid tributes to Muthuramalingar. Chief Minister M.K. Stalin said that Muthuramalingar was a legendary warrior in all respects, and the state government had built memorials in honour of him. He is remembered for his bold stance in making a sacrificial contribution to the freedom struggle. Pasumpon Muthuramalinga Thevar was elected three times to the national parliamentary constituency. The birth anniversary of Muthuramalinga Thevar is celebrated as ThevarJayanthi. Thevar attended the 52nd annual session of the Indian National Congress held in Tripuri in March 1939. MuthuramalingamThevar strongly supported the Temple Entry Authorisation and Indemnity Act.

PM Modi launched healthcare projects worth approximately Rs 13,000 crore on DhanvantariJayanti

The event at the All India Institute of Ayurveda (AIIA) in New Delhi highlighted initiatives under the Ayushman Bharat PradhanMantri Jan ArogyaYojana (PM-JAY), including health coverage for citizens aged 70 and above. PM Modi inaugurated Phase II of AIIA and three

new medical colleges in Madhya Pradesh. He laid foundation stones for five nursing colleges and 21 Critical Care Blocks across five states. The PM also launched the U-WIN portal for vaccination records and inaugurated a Central Drugs Testing Laboratory in Bhubaneswar. Additionally, he established two Central Research Institutes for Yoga and Naturopathy and launched a nationwide health awareness campaign.

'Swavlamban 2024' Exhibition has been launched by Navy Chief Dinesh Tripathi at Bharat Mandapam to promote indigenization

The "Swavlamban 2024" exhibition, held in Delhi on October 28-29, showcases innovations from young Indian entrepreneurs and strengthens collaboration between the Indian Navy and industry stakeholders. Admiral Tripathi visited the event, which featured 115 stalls from agencies like the Indian Army, Coast Guard, Air Force, and BSF. The Swavlamban initiative, launched in 2022, focuses on working with Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) to address the Navy's operational needs. The exhibition displayed products related to autonomous systems, AI, quantum technologies, and surveillance.

Prime Minister NarendraModi inaugurated a new Jan Aushadhi Kendra at the AIIMS, New Delhi

This Jan Aushadhi Kendra at the AIIMS, New Delhi, has been established on October 29 as part of the PradhanMantriBhartiyaJanaushadhiPariyojana (PMBJP). Its main aim is to provide accessible and quality healthcare to Indian citizens by providing affordable generic medicines. AIIMS Jan Aushadhi Kendra will have more than 2,047 essential generic medicines and 300 types of surgical devices. This centre will offer medicines for cardiovascular health, cancer treatments, diabetes, infections, allergies, and gastrointestinal issues. At present, more than 14,000 Jan AushadhiKendras are operating across India. Jan Aushadhi Kendra's number will be increased to 25,000 over the next two years. The PradhanMantriBhartiyaJanaushadhiPariyojana (PMBJP) was launched in 2008 to provide quality generic medicines available at affordable prices.

Between January-April 2024, Indians lost Rs 120 crore in digital arrest frauds

Indians lost Rs 120.30 crore in "digital arrest" frauds in the first quarter of 2024. The Ministry of Home Affairs monitors cybercrime through the Indian Cybercrime Coordination Centre (I4C), which found that 46% of cyber frauds were reported in this period. The National Cybercrime Reporting Portal (NCRP) registered 7.4 lakh complaints between January and April 2024. The main types of scams include digital arrest, trading, investment, and romance scams. In digital arrest frauds, victims are forced to stay visible to fraudsters until their demands are met.

Sports Ministry discontinued the Dhyan Chand Lifetime Award

The sports ministry announced on October 24 that the Dhyan Chand Award for lifetime achievement will be discontinued, and a new Arjuna Award (Lifetime) will be introduced. The Arjuna Award (Lifetime) will recognize lifetime contributions to sports development. The Dhyan Chand Lifetime Achievement Award, instituted in 2002, was given to individuals with notable participation in major sports events. The Dronacharya Award will continue to recognize coaches at the grassroots level. The Maulana Abdul Kalam Azad (MAKA) Trophy will be awarded to the top-performing university in the Khelo India University Games.

After the age of 80, central government pensioners will get an additional compassionate pension

Central government pensioners 80 years of age and older would be eligible for an additional income known as the compassionate allowance, according to a recent announcement by the Department of Pension and Pensioners' Welfare (DoPPW). Retirees of the central government civil service who become 80 years old can now obtain these additional payments according to new guidelines. The following is how the additional compassionate allowance will be paid: 20% of the basic pension or compassionate allowance will be paid to people aged 80 to 85. Between the ages of 85 and 90, 30% of the basic pension or compassionate allowance will be paid. Between the ages of 90 and 95, 40% of the basic pension or compassionate allowance will be paid. 50% of the basic pension or compassionate allowance will be paid to people aged 95 to 100. One hundred years or more: 100% of the compassionate allowance or basic pension. The first day of the month that the pensioner achieves the specified age will mark the start of the supplementary pension or compassionate allowance.

Mormugao became India's first port to be listed on the Environmental Ship Index (ESI) platform

Mormugao Port Authority has become the first Indian port to be listed as an incentive provider on the Environment Ship Index (ESI) portal. Mormugao Port's effort to incentivise green shipping has received international recognition. Mormugao Port is India's first port to introduce Green Ship Incentives through the ESI. Mormugao Port's 'HaritShrey' incentive program was launched in October 2023. This initiative supports the broader goal of achieving long-term emission reductions in maritime operations. It offers discounts on port charges based on ESI scores and rewards ships with higher environmental performance.

Government to set up a committee to reduce the disparity between farm-gate prices and retail costs of horticulture produce

Union Agriculture Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan said that the government will establish a committee to reduce the farm-gate prices and retail costs of horticulture produce. Farmers sell vegetables at 5 rupees a kilo and consumers purchase it in 50 rupees. Shivraj Singh Chouhan also outlined a two-pronged approach to tackle price volatility. Union Agriculture Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan also unveiled a plan to launch 'KrishiChaupal'. It is an initiative aimed to bidge the lab-to-land gap in agricultural research. Agriculture is India's economic backbone and no progress is possible without strengthening this sector. He emphasised upon the need to optimise the functioning of over 730 KrishiVigyanKendras (KVKs) across India.

NHRC's national conference on the rights of older persons concluded

A day-long national conference on the 'Rights of Older Persons' concluded at VigyanBhawan, New Delhi. It has been organized on the occasion of the 31st Foundation Day of the National Human Rights Commission of India. Union Minister ShriAmitYadav, who chaired the first session, assured the government's commitment to the welfare of older persons. Addressing the issue of 'Ageing of the Aged,' 'Analyzing the gendered face of ageing and how to tackle the same' and 'Evaluating the healthcare scenario were the three technical sessions of the conference. NHRC has taken several steps including forming a core group and issuing guidelines for the protection of the rights of elderly persons.

The National Electricity Plan was unveiled by the government to meet India's growing energy needs

The National Electricity Plan (Transmission), unveiled by Union Power Minister ManoharLalKhattar, aims to meet India's growing energy demand. Prepared by the Central Electricity Authority, the plan targets 500 GW of renewable energy capacity by 2030 and 600 GW by 2032. It outlines initiatives such as integrating 10 GW of offshore wind farms, 47 GW of battery storage, and 30 GW of pumped storage plants. The plan also includes adding 190,000 circuit kilometres of transmission lines and 1,270 GVA of transformation capacity over the next decade, with an investment of ₹9 lakh crore.

Cabinet approves MSP for rabi crops for the 2025-26 season

The Union Cabinet has approved new Minimum Support Prices (MSP) for Rabi crops for the upcoming marketing season 2025-26. This decision has been taken to ensure better income for farmers and to promote the cultivation of key crops during the Rabi season. The MSP for wheat has been increased by Rs 150 per quintal. This brings the new price to Rs 2,425 per quintal. For mustard, the MSP has been raised by Rs 300. Its price has increased from Rs 5,650 to Rs 5,950 per quintal. Mustard is widely grown in states like Rajasthan, Haryana, and Madhya Pradesh. For gram, safflower and barley, there is an increase of Rs 210 per quintal, Rs140 per quintal and Rs130 per quintal respectively. The expected margin over all-India weighted average cost of production is 105% for wheat, followed by 98 for rapeseed & mustard. This increased MSP of rabi crops will ensure remunerative prices to the farmers.

International Conference on Communication and Dissemination of Traditional Knowledge started at Gurugram University

Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR)-National Institute of Science Communication and Policy Research (NIScPR) and Gurugram University jointly inaugurated the conference. Director of CSIR-NIScPR, Professor Ranjana Aggarwal, provided an overview of SVASTIK (Scientifically Validated Traditional Knowledge). Professor Aggarwal highlighted its significance in promoting scientifically validated Indian traditional knowledge. NIScPR has disseminated SVASTIK stories in 17 Indian languages through social media. At the inaugural session of the Conference, the Souvenir and Abstract Book were also released.

First digital population clock of Bengaluru has been inaugurated at the Institute for Social Economic Change (ISEC)

Bengaluru's first digital population clock has been inaugurated at the Institute for Social Economic Change (ISEC). It will provide real-time estimates of Karnataka's population of the country. This project was jointly completed by ISEC, and the Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW). It would update state's population for every 1.10 minute (one minute, 10 seconds) and the country's population at every two seconds. The clock will play a key role in enhancing our understanding of population trends. The new census data research workstation would further strengthen academic research, policy analysis, and capacity building in population studies.

Gujarat has become India's 1 state to implement a dedicated semiconductor policy

'Gujarat Semiconductor Policy 2022-2027' has been introduced by Gujarat government. The policy aims to solidify position of Gujarat as a leader in semiconductor self-reliance. Recently, foundation stone for Micron's advanced semiconductor assembly, test, mark, and pack (ATMP) plant was laid by Gujarat CM Bhupendra Patel in Sanand. India's first AI-enabled semiconductor fabrication facility is being established by Tata Electronics Private Limited (TEPL) and Taiwan's Powerchip Semiconductor Manufacturing Corporation (PSMC) in Dholera's emerging 'Semicon City'. The policy offers a 100% one-time refund on stamp duty and registration fees, aRs 2 per unit electricity subsidy, and a Rs 12 per cubic metre rate for water. It also includes up to 75% land acquisition subsidy for semiconductor units in Dholera. Dholera is being developed as India's first Greenfield Smart City.

ADB signed a $ 200 million loan agreement to upgrade water supply and other services in Uttarakhand

The government of India and the Asian Development Bank signed aRs 1,680 crore loan agreement to upgrade water supply, sanitation, mobility, and other urban services in Uttarakhand. The agreement will enhance urban services in Uttarakhand to boost livability and sustainability in cities. This project aims to create an urban infrastructure that is resilient to climate and environmental risks such as floods and landslides. It will also help in building the capacity of the state agencies in project management, climate, and disaster-resilient planning. It will enhance transportation, urban mobility, drainage, flood management, and overall public services in Haldwani. The project will improve water supply delivery in four cities: Champawat, Kichha, Kotdwar, and Vikasnagar.

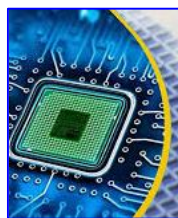**Madhya Pradesh-Rajasthan joint panel formed for coordination on cheetah project**

A joint corridor management committee has been formed by Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan to conserve cheetahs, following incidents of cheetahs straying from Madhya Pradesh into Rajasthan. The committee will focus on suitable areas for future cheetah translocations and recommend necessary measures. The committee is co-chaired by the chief wildlife conservators of both states. As part of India's cheetah reintroduction project, eight Namibian cheetahs were released into Kuno National Park in 2022, followed by 12 South African cheetahs in 2023. There have been incidents of cheetahs straying into Rajasthan, with 17 cubs born in Kuno in the last two years. Currently, there are 24 cheetahs in Kuno.

The semiconductor project approved by UP Cabinet

The Uttar Pradesh Cabinet has approved a mega semiconductor manufacturing project

near Noida International Airport at Jewar. The project will involve two companies: Vamsundari (HCL Group) and Tarq (Hiranandani Group). Vamsundari will invest Rs 3,706 crore to manufacture driver ICs and display integrated circuits, while Tarq will invest Rs 28,440 crore in its unit. The state IT department supports the projects, and the government will provide a capital subsidy of Rs 7,037 crore. The land for these projects will be allocated by the Yamuna Expressway Industrial Development Authority (YEIDA).

Odd-Even scheme implemented by Sikkim to reduce traffic congestion in Gangtok

The Sikkim government has implemented an odd-even traffic scheme in Gangtok to reduce

congestion, effective from November 5. The rule applies to both private and government vehicles with registration numbers ending in odd or even digits, allowing them to ply on odd and even dates, respectively, between 9:30 am-12:00 noon and 3:30 pm-6:00 pm. The restriction applies on National Highway 10, from Mayfair Fatak to GICI, Zero Point. Exemptions include taxis, government vehicles of Additional Secretary level and above, ambulances, police vehicles, and essential services.

Supreme Court upheld the constitutional validity of the Uttar Pradesh Board of Madarsa Education Act, 2004

A bench comprising Chief Justice of India DY Chandrachud and Justices JB Pardiwala and Manoj Misra gave the verdict against the Allahabad High Court's decision. This judgement has declared the High Court judgement as "unconstitutional" and violative of the principles of secularism. The Supreme Court also declared that madrasas can't grant degrees of higher education as it is a violation of the University Grants Commission Act. The bench also said that the Uttar Pradesh government have to play a vital role in ensuring that educational standards in madrasas align with modern academic expectations. The Uttar Pradesh Board of Madarsa Education Act, 2004 was declared unconstitutional on March 22, 2024.

Madhya Pradesh government approved 35% reservation for women in all state government services

The Madhya Pradesh government has increased reservation for women in all state government services from 33% to 35%. It is a major step towards women's empowerment in the state. The state government has also given approval to open 254 new fertiliser sales centres in the state. A 660-megawatt critical thermal power plant will be opened in Sarni by decommissioning the earlier power plant units of a total of 830 MW units. The state government also granted permission to increase the recruitment age of assistant Professors in Medical College to 50 years from 40 years in the state.

Compensation for human death in wildlife attack has been increased by Madhya Pradesh government from 8 lakh rupees to 25 lakh rupees

The Madhya Pradesh government made this announcement a day following an elephant trampled two men to death near the Bandhavgarh Tiger Reserve in Umaria district. Increased compensation of 25 lakh rupees each would be provided to the families of the two persons who were killed in elephant attacks in Umaria, said Chief Minister Mohan Yadav. Two villagers were killed at Devra village and Brahe village by an elephant near Bandhavgarh Tiger Reserve. Recently, this tiger reserve was in news over the deaths of 10 elephants. Bandhavgarh is known for Evergreen Sal forest and Mixed forest. Bandhavgarh Tiger Reserve is located in the eastern Satpura hills of Umaria&Katni Districts.

Kannada short film "Sunflowers Were the First Ones to Know" has been nominated for Oscars 2025

The Kannada short film "Sunflowers Were the First Ones to Know" has qualified for the Oscars 2025 in the Live Action Short Film category. It has been produced by the Film and Television Institute of India (FTII) and won the La Cinef at Cannes 2024. Chidananda S. Naik has directed it. This short film is about an elderly woman who steals the village rooster, which causes sunlight to cease. A prophecy is invoked to restore order, and the woman is exiled from the village.

Maharashtra's share in India's GDP has declined from 15.2% to 13.3%

Maharashtra has the highest share of India's GDP. As per the working paper from the Economic Advisory Council to the PM (EAC-PM), Maharashtra's share has declined from 15.2% in 2010-11 to just 13% in 2020-21 and 13.3% in 2023-24. In the last two decades, Gujarat's share in India's GDP has increased from 7.5% in 2010-11 to 8.1% in 2022-23. Gujarat's relative per capita income compared to the national average is higher than Maharashtra's. Maharashtra's economic performance has remained almost steady between 1960-61 and 2023-24. Sikkim (319.1%) reported the highest relative per capita income, followed by Goa with a figure of 290.7% for 2022–23. In 2023-24, Delhi (250.8%), Telangana (193.6%), Karnataka (180.7%), Haryana (176.8%), and TN (171.1%) are ahead of Maharashtra in terms of relative per capita income.

Bankhandi in Himachal will become the first zoo in India to get IGBC certification

Himachal Pradesh Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu announced that the upcoming DurgeshAranya Zoological Park in Kangra will be India's first zoo to receive certification from the Indian Green Building Council for its sustainable and eco-friendly design. The park is registered with the IGBC and will focus on both building and landscape certification. The first phase, covering 25 hectares at a cost of ₹230 crore, is expected to be completed by the third quarter of 2025. The entire project, with an estimated cost of ₹619 crore, aims to boost tourism in the region.

Sandstone replicas of Konark wheel have been installed at Rashtrapati Bhavan

Four sandstone replicas of the Konark wheel have been installed at the RashtrapatiBhavan Cultural Centre and the AmritUdyan. The Konark wheel replicas will show and promote India's rich cultural heritage. This initiative is part of several steps taken to introduce traditional cultural and historical elements in the RashtrapatiBhavan. The Konark Sun Temple is a UNESCO World Heritage Site. It is a great example of Odisha temple architecture. It was built in the shape of a colossal chariot carrying the Sun god. Konark Wheel consists of 8 wider spokes and 8 inner spokes, and it is 9 feet in diameter. The distance between two wider spokes is 3 hours (180 minutes).

Grand Deepotsav held on the banks of Saryu River in Ayodhya

According to UP CM Yogi Adityanath, this year 500-year wait ended on 22 January and Lord Ram returned to the newly constructed temple. Union Minister of culture and tourism Gajendra Singh Shekhawat, and Chief Minister of state Yogi Adityanath were present at the occasion. Before Deepotsav, they released the book written by Ayodhya Mayor. By burning more than 25 lakh diyas (earthen lamps) at the Saryu River's ghats in Ayodhya, the Uttar Pradesh government set a world record. The world record for the greatest display of 25,12,585 earthen lamps on the 55 ghats of the Saryu river was set in Ayodhya. This year, 1,121 batuks performed the largest aarti collectively on the Saryughats, setting another world record. Since Yogi Adityanath took office, this was Ayodhya's eighth consecutive Deepotsav. Since Lord Rama's consecration ceremony at the Ram Janmabhoomi Temple, this was the first Deepotsav.

Karnataka government has launched two flagship start-up programs

ELEVATE 2024 and Karnataka Accelerator Network (KAN) initiatives have been launched by the Karnataka government. The Elevate 2024 scheme has been designed for early-stage startups. It is a grant-in-aid seed fund scheme. It provides grants of up to ₹50 lakh per start-up. It also supports incubation,

mentorship, incentives, and access to venture capital networks. This scheme is a gateway to avail various benefits under the Karnataka Startup Policy 2022-27. About 302 start-ups will benefit from the program over six cohorts in three years. Karnataka Accelerator Network (KAN) is an acceleration network for providing mentorship, market access, and funding opportunities for growth-stage start-ups across Karnataka. Karnataka is the first state to implement such a comprehensive scheme for startups.

Government has approved an Rs 177-crore project to develop Muthalapozhi Harbour in Thiruvananthapuram

The government has decided to develop Muthalapozhi Harbour in Thiruvananthapuram. The redevelopment project includes both water and land facilities upgradation. The Government will allocate Rs 106.2 crore under the Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY), while the state will contribute Rs 70.8 crore. Rs 13 crore will be allocated for smart-green port initiatives and coastal protection. Union government has commissioned the Pune-based Central Water and Power Research Station (CWPRS).

NTPC and Indian Army will establish solar hydrogen microgrid in Ladakh for sustainable power supply

NTPC and Indian Army have partnered to set up a solar hydrogen-based microgrid at Chusul, Ladakh. This will ensure a stable power supply using green hydrogen in off-grid Army locations. Foundation stone of this unique project has been laid by the defence minister Rajnath Singh through video conferencing on 25 October 2024. This solar hydrogen-based micogrid system has been designed by NTPC to operate independently using hydrogen as an energy storage medium. This system will take place of existing diesel generators at off-grid Army locations. This will provide a sustainable power supply despite harsh winter conditions.

Mou signed between the Government e-Marketplace (GeM) and Sikkim government to increase the adoption of GeM

This is a significant milestone for GeM's collaboration with various state governments to act as a facilitator for public procurement of goods and services in an efficient, transparent and inclusive manner. With this MoU, GeM has covered all states and union territories. As of October 23, buyers from the Sikkim government have made purchases worth around Rs 90 crore. Currently, more than three thousand sellers from Sikkim are connected on the GeMportal. Of these, 2,720 sellers are registered as "micro" sellers. Through the GeM portal, Sikkim-based sellers get access to bids issued by the purchasing agencies of the Central Government, Sikkim and other State Governments. GeM is a one-stop online platform for procurement of goods and services for all Central Government Agencies, Central Public Sector Undertakings, State Governments and all the concerned departments including buyers from cooperative societies.

Weather forecast has been launched by government at Gram Panchayat Level in New Delhi

The initiative is aimed at enhancing disaster preparedness at the grassroots level. It is also aimed at empowering rural communities. It will directly benefit farmers and villagers across India. The initiative will provide weather updates via e-GramSwaraj, the MeriPanchayat app, and Gram Manchitra. The Panchayati Raj Ministry, the Earth Sciences Ministry, and the India Meteorological Department have laid the cornerstone of this initiative. Jitendra Singh, the minister of earth sciences, emphasised that space technology has helped weather forecasting accuracy rise by 40% over the past ten years. The Minister also emphasised the allocation of 2000 crore rupees under the government's Mission Mausam. Mission

Mausam was approved by the union cabinet on September 11, 2024, with a budget outlay of 2,000 crores over two years.

Haryana government led by Saini implemented sub-classification of Scheduled Castes

The Haryana Cabinet, led by Nayab Singh Saini, announced that the state will implement the Supreme Court's order on sub-categorization of Scheduled Castes (SCs) immediately. This move, the first of its kind in India, provides 20% reservation for SCs in government jobs and education. The Haryana Scheduled Caste Commission had earlier recommended a 10% sub-quota for 'deprived SCs' in state government jobs. A bill introduced in 2020 proposed increasing this sub-quota to 50% in education, identifying 36 SCs as "deprived" due to their lower social and educational status.

Mission Basundhara 3.0 launched in Guwahati by Assam Chief Minister HimantaBiswaSarma

Its objective is to provide land rights to indigenous people. Under this, steps will also be taken to digitize various land related services and publish maps for the benefit of the people of the state. The Chief Minister also launched the Revenue Department's DigiDoc, a digital directory for non-registrable and optionally registrable documents. This directory will streamline services, reduce processing time, and enhance public convenience and improve accessibility and efficiency. The Chief Minister said that soon after assuming office, his government decided to grant land rights to indigenous communities in Assam, a move first taken after 75 years of Independence. For this purpose, Mission Vasundhara was started in 2021. The Assam government has resolved eight lakh applications in nine months under Mission Basundhara 1.

Labour and Employment Minister Dr.Mansukh Mandaviya launched the eShram in New Delhi

eShram is a One Stop Solution for Unorganized Workers. It will act as a mediator

to make sure that unorganized workers get easy access to various government schemes. The initiative's primary aim is to efficiently integrate data regarding recipients of all social security and welfare programs intended for unorganised workers onto a single platform. This initiative will assist in making unorganised labourers aware of the schemes available to them.

The Regional Connectivity Scheme – UdeDeshKaAamNagrik (RCS-UDAN) completed eight years of its launch

Ministry of Civil Aviation had launched the scheme on 21st of October, 2016. Improving unserved air routes in underprivileged areas of the nation is the main goal of the UDAN program. On April 27, 2017, PM Modi launched the first RCS-UDAN flight under the scheme. More than 600 UDAN routes have been operationalised since the scheme's launch. Over one crore forty-four lakh passengers have taken flights since the launch. Thus far, the plan has linked 34 Indian states and union territories. Under the scheme, two heliports and 10 airports have been operationalised in the Northeast.

Prime Minister NarendraModi laid the foundation stone and inaugurated a project worth 6,700 crore rupees in Varanasi

Prime Minister laid the foundation stone for the expansion of the Airport runway and the construction of a new terminal building and Allied works at LalBahadurShastri International Airport in Varanasi. He also laid the foundation stone of the New Civil Enclave

at Agra Airport in Uttar Pradesh. Prime Minister also inaugurated tourism development works in Buddhism-related areas in Sarnath. He also launched many other initiatives, like tourism development works at Banasur Temple and the Gurudham Temple and beautification and redevelopment of parks. He also inaugurated the RJ Sankara Eye Hospital in Varanasi. Under the Khelo India scheme and the Smart City Mission, the Prime Minister inaugurated Phases 2 and 3 of the redevelopment of the Varanasi Sports Complex.

MeraHouChongba 2024 has been celebrated in Imphal, Manipur

The MeraHouChongba 2024 is an annual festival to strengthen the cordial bond

between the indigenous communities living in the hills and valleys. The State Level Organizing Committee observed the MeraHouChongba 2024 festival at Manipur Royal Palace. The titular King of Manipur, LeishembaSanajaoba, who is also a sitting MP (RajyaSabha) hosted a reception ceremony for the village chief. The celebration started with the rituals of Men Tongba and YenkhongTamba at KanglaUttra. On this occasion, gifts were exchanged and cultural programs among the indigenous communities were observed.

A resolution urging the central government to withdraw the Waqf (Amendment) Bill is passed by the Kerala Assembly

The central government has been unanimously recommended to withdraw the 2024 Waqf Amendment Bill by the Kerala Legislative Assembly. The government's resolution was presented by State Minister for Minority Welfare, Waqf, and Hajj Pilgrimage, V. Abdurahiman. He alleged that the union government's proposed amendments are a violation of federalist principles. He alleged

they are against the rights and values guaranteed by the nation's Constitution. The resolution accused the proposed bill of violating democracy, federalism, secularism, right to belief, and fundamental rights. The Joint Parliamentary Committee is now considering the proposed law. The resolution stated that the proposed measure contradicts the federal principles of the Indian Constitution and also aims to take away the states' authority to pass laws pertaining to the Waqf. The resolution stated that the Waqf Act was put in place to guarantee adherents of the relevant faith that Waqf Endowments and institutions' properties would be protected in accordance with Article 26 of the Constitution's rights.

Samarthak, first ship of the two Multi Purpose Vessel project, has been launched at L&T, Kattupalli

Mrs ShashiTripathi President NWWA launched the ship. Admiral Dinesh K Tripathi, Chief of the Naval Staff presided over the launch ceremony. The ship has been named 'Samarthak ' which means ' Supporter'. The two Multi Purpose Vessel project are being built by L&T Shipyard for the Indian Navy. On 25 March 22, Ministry of Defence and L&T Shipyard signed the contract for building two Multi Purpose Vessel. The Multi Purpose Vessels can achieve a maximum speed of 15 knots. They are 106 m long and 16.8 wide.

ODISHA NEWS

Odisha won Best State Award at 5 National Water Awards 2023

The 5th National Water Awards 2023 were announced in New Delhi. In the best state category, Odisha bagged the first prize, while Uttar Pradesh got the second position. Gujarat and Puducherry jointly secured the third position. On October 22, the 5th National Water Awards 2023 will be presented by

President DraupadiMurmu in New Delhi. The awards will be presented to a total of 38 winners, including joint winners in nine categories. Each award winner will receive a citation and a trophy as well as a cash prize in some categories. To create awareness among people about the importance of water and to motivate people to adopt best water use practices, the 1st National Water Awards were instituted in 2018 by the Department of Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation. The National Water Awards (NWA) focus on the good work and efforts done by individuals and organizations across the country towards realizing the Government's dream of a 'Water Prosperous India'. These awards are meant to create awareness among people about the importance of water and motivate them to adopt best water use practices.

CM: PESA in state after taking views of tribals

Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi Friday said that his government has organised gram sabhas in 7,667 panchayats to take the opinion of the tribal people before implementation of the Panchayats Extension of Scheduled Areas (PESA) Act. The CM said this while lay ing the foundation stones for various projects worth ₹1,535 crore for tribal development here. He also launched a portal on the Forest Rights Act as the state celebrated 'Jana Jatiya Gourav Divas' on the occasion of the 150th birth anniversary of tribal icon Birsa Munda.

Tripura, Arunachal ministers visit Odisha Mandap at IITF

Industries and Commerce Min- ister Santana Chakma from Tripura and Nyato Dukam from Arunachal Pradesh visited the Odisha Mandap at the India International Trade Fair (ITF) in New Delhi Friday. During the visit, Chakma said that Odisha has lot of potential in tourism sector and government is doing great work in promoting that at IITF. Dukam

also appreciated the initiative and said, "I am really impressed by Odisha's handicraft and handloom work. It is one of the most productive states and is doing great work in all the sectors."

Maiden National Hockey Title for Odisha

Dubbed as the capital of Indian Hockey for producing a number of India in ternationals including current Hockey India president Dilip Tirkey, Odisha surprisingly didn't ever win Senior Men National Championship. day here at Mayor Radhakrish- nan Stadium as Odisha out- played Haryana 5-1 in the final of the 14th Hockey India Senior Men's National Championship 2024.

Navy to showcase maritime capabilities in Puri

The Indian Navy is set to demonstrate its maritime capabilities and operation al strength at the Blue Flag Beach of Puri in Odisha on the occasion of Navy Day December 4, officials said Saturday. President Droupadi Murmu has consented to be the chief guest for the event, a Navy spokesper son said in a statement.

'Udbhav' kicks off

The 5th EMRS (Ekalavya Model Residential School) National Cultural and Liter- ary Fest and Kala Utsav - 'Udbhav' will be held here from November 12 (Tuesday), an official statement said. This festival is being organised by the Department of STSC Devel- opment, Minorities and Backward Class Welfare Department of Odi- sha and is funded by the Nation- al Educational Society for Tribal Students (NESTS), the statement said Sunday. Union Tribal Affairs Minister Jual Oram, Minister of State for Tribal Affairs, Durgadas Uikey •and Odisha minister Nityananda Gond are scheduled to grace the opening ceremony of the event.

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INDIA AND THE WORLD

First US-India Ocean Dialogue

The event discussed measures to promote security and prosperity in the Indo-Pacific region, with U.S. Deputy Secretary of State Kurt Campbell and Principal Deputy National Security Advisor Jon Finer participating virtually. The Critical and Emerging Technologies (iCET) Intersessional was also held to expand cooperation on technological innovation and production. The iCET initiative, focused on high-tech cooperation, was led by National Security Adviser AjitDoval and U.S. counterpart Jake Sullivan. The Quad, comprising India, Australia, Japan, and the U.S., also announced the Indo-Pacific Maritime Domain Awareness initiative for the Indian Ocean Region.

The 43 Edition of the India International Trade Fair (IITF) at Bharat Mandapam in New Delhi

The theme of this year's India International Trade Fair (IITF) was Viksit Bharat in 2047. The focus state of the event was Jharkhand, and Bihar and Uttar Pradesh were the partner states. A total of 11 countries participated in the fair, including China, Egypt, Iran, South Korea, Sweden, Thailand, Türkiye, Tunisia, Lebanon, Kyrgyzstan, and the UAE.

9th edition of Garuda Shakti exercise concluded between India and Indonesia

The 9th edition of the India-Indonesia Joint Special Forces Exercise Garuda Shakti concluded in Indonesia. The closing ceremony was attended by senior military officers from both countries, including Indian Ambassador Sandeep Chakraborty and Defense Attache Captain Shiv Kumar. The exercise, which began on November 1, aimed to enhance joint military capabilities in counterterrorism operations. It involved 25 Indian personnel from the Parachute Regiment and 40 Indonesian personnel from the Kopassus Special Forces. The exercise also focused on strengthening bilateral military ties and deepening technological cooperation, as 2024 marks the "Year of Technology Absorption" for the Indian Army. This year also marks the 75th anniversary of India-Indonesia diplomatic relations and a decade of India's Act East Policy, with Indonesia as a key partner.

India ranked among global top 10 for patents, trademarks and designs

In the World Intellectual Property Indicators 2024 report, India ranked among the top 10 globally in patents, trademarks, and industrial designs. India is emerging as a leader in intellectual property, with significant growth in these areas. It ranks sixth globally for patents, with 64,480 applications, over half of which were filed locally. The country also saw a 149.4% increase in patents granted in 2023. India's industrial design applications grew by 36.4%, with textiles, tools, and health sectors leading the filings.

Coast Guards of India and Sri Lanka held the 7th Annual High-Level Meeting in Colombo

A meeting was held to combat maritime crimes and promote regional cooperation, attended by delegations from the Indian Coast Guard (ICG) and Sri Lanka Coast Guard (SLCG). The meeting focused on issues like drug trafficking, marine pollution, seafarer

safety, and capacity building. Both Coast Guards committed to enhancing mutual cooperation to strengthen maritime safety and security in the region. This annual meeting follows a Memorandum of Understanding signed in May 2018, with the 8th edition scheduled for 2025 in India.

25th South Asian Telecommunication Regulators Council (SATRC) conference held in New Delhi

The 25th South Asian Telecommunication Regulators Council (SATRC) conference, held on November 12, was a two-day event to discuss new regulatory strategies for the telecommunications sector. It brought together regulators from telecom service providers, internet service providers, satellite service providers, and consumers to collaborate on a unified regulatory agenda. Organized by the Asia-Pacific Telecommunity (APT) and hosted by the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI), the conference aimed to set the agenda for the next two years.
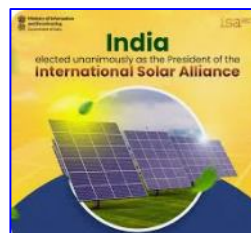
Russian Business centre will open in New Delhi

The Russian Embassy in India will inaugurate the Russian Business Center in New Delhi, led by the Business Council for Cooperation with India and Synergy Corporation. The center aims to strengthen business ties between India and Russia, promote export cooperation, and provide a platform for business community interactions. It will offer co-working space for events, forums, conferences, and seminars. The Russian-Indian Business Forum's plenary session in Mumbai will focus on enhancing economic relations. Bilateral trade between the two countries has already exceeded the USD 30 billion target for 2025, with key initiatives like the International North-South Transport Corridor and Chennai-Vladivostok Eastern Maritime Corridor.

The first integrated check post inaugurated on the India-Bhutan border

The Darranga Immigration Check Post (ICP) was inaugurated on 7 November by Assam Governor Lakshman Prasad Acharya in Tamulpur district to strengthen India-Bhutan relations. Bhutan's Prime Minister LyonchhenDashoTshering also attended the event. The ICP, located 700 meters from the Indo-Bhutan border, spans 14.5 acres and is equipped with modern facilities such as an office complex, parking areas, warehouses, and residential quarters for officers. Developed by the Land Ports Authority of India, it also includes inspection spaces and a plant quarantine system for efficient operations.

India has been elected as President of International Solar Alliance for 2 years until 2026

France has been elected as co-President of International Solar Alliance for 2 years until 2026. AshishKhanna will succeed Dr. Ajay Mathur as ISA Director General. He will

assume the role in 2025. India's solar capacity has expanded from less than 2 GW in 2014 to 90 GW. Fiji aims to meet 100% of its power demand with renewable energy by 2030. Fossil fuel imports currently account for 30% of Fiji's total import costs.

AnMoU signed between India and Algeria on bilateral defence cooperation

This MoU will enhance defence partnership between the two countries, increase mutual understanding and enhance strategic interests. Chief of Defence Staff General Anil Chauhan and Chief of Staff of the People's National Army SaídChanegriha signed the MoU in the presence of military and officials. General Chauhan was on an official visit to

the North African country from October 31 to November 3. General Chouhan's visit coincided with the 70th anniversary of the Algerian Revolution on November 01, along with a military parade and other memorial activities.

The India-US Joint Special Forces Exercise 'VajraPrahar' is being held in Idaho

The 'VajraPrahar Exercise' held at the Orchard Combat Training Centre in Idaho, USA. Its goal was to enhance joint capabilities and interoperability in special forces operations in desert and semidesert environments. The exercise allowed both India and the US to share best practices in conducting such operations. This was the second joint exercise of the year between the Indian and US armies, following 'YudhAbhyas' in Rajasthan. The Indian Army was represented by the Special Forces Unit, and the US Army by the Green Berets.

Nature Coalition has been launched by countries at UN COP16 talks

At the U.N. COP16 biodiversity talks in Cali, Colombia launched a coalition of 20 countries, including Mexico, Sweden, Uganda, and Chile, to address rapid environmental destruction and its risks to humanity. The coalition aims to implement principles for improving humanity's relationship with nature. The summit focuses on achieving 23 goals from the 2022 Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, including preserving 30% of the Earth and mobilizing $200 billion annually for conservation by 2030.

Indian Railways & Transport Ministry in Switzerland joined hands to enhance technical cooperation

The Indian Railways signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Department of Environment, Transport and Communications of Switzerland. The main aim of the MoU is to enhance technical cooperation between both countries. The MoU will provide a comprehensive framework for collaboration with the Indian Railways in various areas, including technology sharing, track maintenance, management and construction. This MoU is in line with the government's commitment to modernizing Indian Railways.

MoUs in rail transport, customs & investment have been signed between India and Spain

India and Spain signed MoUs in rail transport, customs, investment financing, and cultural exchanges. Both nations will celebrate 2026 as the Year of Culture, Tourism, and AI. Prime Minister NarendraModi and Spanish President Pedro Sánchez agreed to enhance cooperation in sustainable energy, climate change, and renewable energy. Spain invited India to join the International Drought Resilience Alliance (IDRA). India opened its first Consulate General in Barcelona, while Spain will open one in Bengaluru. The leaders reaffirmed their commitment to the India-EU Strategic Partnership and called for peace in Ukraine in line with international law.

U.S., France, and Armenia emerged as India's top three defence export destinations

The U.S., France, and Armenia are the top destinations for India's military exports, with India exporting defence equipment to over 100 countries. Key exports include aircraft parts to the U.S., software and electronics to France, and ATAGS artillery guns, Pinaka rocket launchers, and Swathi radars to Armenia. India's Defence Industrial Base includes 16 public sector units, 430 licensed firms, and 16,000 medium and small

enterprises, supporting its push for increased defence exports and domestic production.

India is ranked 176th out of 180 countries in the 2024 Global Nature Conservation Survey

India ranked 176th out of 180 countries in the 2024 Global Nature Conservation Index (NCI) with a low score of 45.5. The index, released on October 24, evaluates conservation efforts based on land management, biodiversity threats, governance, and future trends. Developed by Ben-Gurion University and BioDB.com, the NCI highlighted India's challenges, including significant land conversion (53% for urban, industrial, or agricultural use), excessive fertilizer use, increasing soil pollution, and biodiversity threats. India also lost 23,300 square kilometers of tree cover due to deforestation between 2001 and 2019.

India and Pakistan have agreed to extend Sri Kartarpur Sahib Corridor Agreement for further five years

The Kartarpur Corridor Agreement, signed on October 24, 2019, for five years, facilitates visa-free pilgrim visits from India to GurdwaraDarbar Sahib in Kartarpur, Pakistan. Its renewal ensures uninterrupted operation. India has again urged Pakistan to waive the $20 service fee charged per pilgrim. The corridor connects GurdwaraDarbar Sahib in Pakistan with GurudwaraDera Baba Nanak in Punjab, India.

Quad countries took part in back-to-back naval war games

The Quad group of countries — India, Australia, Japan, and the U.S.—participated in back-to-back naval exercises. Exercise Malabar was conducted in Visakhapatnam from October 8 to 18. The Harbour Phase' was held in Visakhapatnam, while the sea phase was held in the Bay of Bengal. Malabar 2024 Sea Phase shows the collaboration and engagement in the maritime domain between Quad countries. Exercise Kakadu, hosted by the Royal Australian Navy, was held from September 9 to 20. Nearly 3,000 personnel from 30 nations, ships from 10 countries, and aircraft from five nations took part in this exercise. Anti-submarine warfare and underwater domain awareness have emerged as major focus areas among the Quad partners.

COP16 biodiversity summit kicked off in Colombia

The two-week COP16 biodiversity summit started in Colombia. The main aim of the

summit is to halt the rapid destruction of nature which has reached unprecedented extremes globally in 2024. The summit aims to negotiate the next steps in implementing the landmark 2022 Kunming-Montreal accord. Since 1970, Climate change, deforestation, pollution and habitat destruction have led to a 69% decline in global wildlife populations. This summit will mark the 16th meeting of nations that signed the original 1992 Convention on Biodiversity. 23000 delegates will participate in the COP16 biodiversity summit. Delegates will be under pressure to prove their support for the goals laid out in the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework agreement.

Indo-Oman conducted bilateral naval exercise Naseem-Al-Bahr

INS Trikand and Dornier Maritime Patrol Aircraft took part in the exercise Naseem-Al-Bahr with the Royal Navy of Oman Vessel Al Seeb off Goa from 13 to 18 October 24. The exercise was carried out in two phases. The harbour phase lasted from 13 to 15 October 24. The harbour phase was followed by the sea phase (16 to 18 October 24). Under harbour activities, personnel from both Navies

engaged in professional interactions. During the sea phase, both ships carried out various evolutions, including manoeuvres, and Replenishment at Sea Approaches (RASAPS). The integral helicopter undertook cross-deck landings and vertical replenishment (VERTREP) with RNOV Al Seeb.

ITU-World Telecommunication Standardization Assembly inaugurated by Prime Minister

Prime Minister NarendraModi inaugurated the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) World Telecommunication Standardization Assembly (WTSA-24) and the 8th India Mobile Congress 2024 at Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi. WTSA-24, held from October 15 to 24, 2024, is the ITU's governing conference for digital technology standards, marking its first-ever hosting in India and the Asia-Pacific. The event, attended by over 3,000 delegates from 190 countries, focused on standards for emerging technologies like 6G, AI, IoT, Big Data, and cybersecurity.India Mobile Congress 2024 showcased advancements in 6G, 5G, IoT, quantum technology, semiconductors, green tech, and electronics manufacturing, emphasizing India's innovation ecosystem.

India and Colombia signed the Audiovisual Co-production Agreement in New Delhi

Minister of State for Information and Broadcasting Dr. L. Murugan was the signatory representative of India. Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs of Colombia, Jorge Enrique Rojas Rodriguez was the signatory representing his country. This agreement will benefit producers from both countries. It will also lead to an exchange of art and culture among India and Colombia. It will also boost cultural ties between India and Colombia. At present, India has co-production treaties with 16 countries. Colombia is the 17th country with which India has signed a Co-Production Agreement.

India and US to finalize ₹32,000 croredeal for 31 predator drones and MRO facility

India and the United States are set to sign a ₹32,000 crore deal for 31 Predator drones and a Maintenance, Repair, and Overhaul (MRO) facility. The Cabinet Committee on Security has approved the procurement, allocating 15 drones to the Navy, while the Air Force and Army will share the remaining. The drones will be stationed at key locations, including INS Rajali in Tamil Nadu, Porbandar in Gujarat, and two airbases in Uttar Pradesh. This tri-service agreement follows a detailed assessment by the Indian military.

India is now Russia's second-largest supplier of restricted technology

US and European officials said India has become the second largest supplier of restricted critical technologies to Russia. It highlights the challenge to efforts to curb exports that fuel President Vladimir Putin's war machine. Indian exports of restricted items such as microchips, circuits and machine tools exceeded $60 million in both April and May, nearly double from the first months of the year, and reached $95 million in July. The latest figures imply that nearly a fifth of the sensitive technology going to Russia's military-industrial complex has made its way through India. India has emerged as the top buyer of Russian oil despite allied efforts to restrict sales. In July, US Deputy Treasury Secretary Wally Adeyemo wrote a letter to senior officials of the Confederation of Indian Industry, warning of the sanctions risk faced by Indian companies and banks doing business with Russia's military industrial base.

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BUSINESS AND ECONOMY

According to the RBI Deputy Governor, digital transfers of cash for public services increased by 56% in 2024

In 2024, India saw a 56% increase in daily e-transactions for public services compared to the previous year. Digitally enabled Direct Benefit Transfers (DBTs) of ₹6.9 lakh crore benefited 176 crore people in the fiscal year 2023–2024, saving ₹3.5 lakh crore in costs by March 2023. RBI Deputy Governor Michael Patra highlighted that AI adoption in Indian businesses rose from 8% in 2023 to 25% in 2024, with generative AI projected to add $359–438 billion to India's GDP by 2030. India has also committed ₹1.25 trillion to its semiconductor industry and halved the cost of Know Your Customer (KYC) processes through Aadhaar.

In the first half of 2024–2025, Public Sector Banks (PSBs) had shown a growth of 11% year over year

The aggregate business of Public Sector Banks was 236.04 lakh crore rupees. According to the Finance Ministry, significant banking reforms have been implemented in recent years. These include the adoption of the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC), the implementation of Enhance Access and Service Excellence (EASE), and the establishment of a strong governance framework. Year over year, the worldwide credit portfolio increased by 12.9%, while the deposit portfolio increased by 9.5%. Additionally, PSBs have made great strides in implementing cutting-edge technology like blockchain, AI, and the cloud.

Hindalco ranked as the world's most sustainable aluminium company

For the fifth consecutive year, Hindalco Industries Ltd. was ranked the World's Most Sustainable Aluminium Company in the 2024 S&P Global Corporate Sustainability Assessment. The company scored 87 points, 9 points higher than in 2023, and was 22 points ahead of its closest competitor. Hindalco ranked in the 100th percentile for most Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) factors in the DJSI World Index, which includes the top 10% of the largest 2,500 companies by market capitalization.

RBI and SEBI introduced a framework for the reclassification of FPI to FDI

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has introduced a framework allowing foreign portfolio investors (FPIs) to convert their investments into foreign direct investment (FDI) once they exceed the 10% ownership limit in Indian companies. FPIs must reclassify the excess holdings as FDI within five trading days or divest them. Reclassification is not allowed in sectors where FDI is restricted. If an FPI fails to divest within the five-day window, the entire investment will be treated as FDI.

World's first CO_2-to-methanol conversion plant has been inaugurated by NTPC at its Vindhyachal facility

This coincides with the company's 50th raising day celebration. NTPC Chairman Gurdeep Singh highlighted the company's ongoing initiatives in green technologies. These initiatives include work on Gen-4 ethanol, green urea, and sustainable aviation fuel. NTPC has also developed and tested first indigenous catalyst for Methanol Synthesis.

During the event, NTPC also launched hydrogen-fueled buses in Leh.

On failure of the resolution plan, the Supreme Court ordered Jet Airways' liquidation

The takeover bid by Kalrock Capital and MurariLalJalan for Jet Airways was rejected by the court. The court ruled that the NCLAT's approval ignored a Supreme Court ruling from January 2023, which stated that liquidation was the best option for employees and lenders. The NCLAT allowed the adjustment of aRs 150 crore performance bank guarantee (PBG) against a Rs 350 crore infusion from the Jalan-Kalrock Consortium (JKC), disregarding the SC's judgment. The Supreme Court instructed the NCLT, Mumbai, to appoint a liquidator for Jet Airways.

To strengthen FCI, the Cabinet has approved an equity investment of Rs 10,700 crore

The government will provide the Food Corporation of India (FCI) with Rs 10,700 crore in new equity to enhance its operating capacity. This infusion will reduce interest burdens and lower the need for government subsidies. FCI, responsible for food grain purchase, storage, transportation, and distribution, has expanded its operations due to growth in Minimum Support Price (MSP) and food grain acquisition over the past decade. FCI's equity was Rs 10,157 crore in FY24, up from Rs 4 crore when it started operations in 1964.

Real-time tracking for international money transfers has been launched by IDFC FIRST Bank

With this, IDFC FIRST Bank has become the first Indian bank which is offering real-time tracking for money sent abroad. This service is developed in partnership with Swift. This service is accessible though the mobile app and internet banking platforms of the bank.

With real-time tracking, the bank has empowered customers to monitor their cross-border transactions. The Swift GPI plugin provides customers a way to track their overseas money transfers. The tracker provides real-time updates on the status of funds. It shows whether funds are in transit or have been credited to the recipient bank.

RBI increased gold reserves to 855 metric tonnes

India's total gold reserves held by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) reached 854.73 metric

tonnes. Of this, 510.46 metric tonnes are stored domestically, and 324.01 metric tonnes are kept at the Bank of England and the Bank for International Settlements. Gold now makes up 9.32% of India's total reserves, up from 8.15% in March 2024. As of June 2024, India's foreign exchange reserves covered 11.2 months of imports, slightly down from 11.3 months in March. Short-term debt increased from 19.7% to 20.3% of reserves. India's International Investment Position showed a rise in external assets by $108.4 billion and liabilities by $97.7 billion year-over-year.

NTPC Ltd developed an Indigenous Catalyst for Methanol production from Flue Gas CO2

NTPC Ltd in association with the Indian Institute of Petroleum (IIP), Dehradun, has developed an Indigenous Catalyst for Hydrogenation of CO_2 to Methanol. NETRA, the R&D wing of NTPC, has developed this Indigenous catalyst. A catalyst is an essential component of any chemical synthesis. NTPC has taken many steps towards its commitment towards greenhouse gas (GHG) reduction. The purity of methanol produced by this catalyst is more than 99%. 1 mole of CO2 and

3 moles of H2 passed through the fix bed downflow reactor.

Solex Energy has partnered with State Bank of India

SBI has partnered with Solex Energy to provide financing for solar projects, offering loans up to Rs 10 crore under its Surya Shakti Solar Finance Scheme. The partnership aims to make solar energy more accessible and affordable, supporting India's renewable energy future. Solex Energy will provide end-to-end support, including site evaluation and regulatory approvals. SBI will also offer a digital platform for a smooth loan application process. Additionally, Tata Power Solar Systems Ltd (TPSSL) partnered with ICICI Bank in August to finance solar units for residential and corporate customers.

The US-based Global Finance magazine has ranked RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das as the top central banker

This is the second consecutive year that he has been ranked as the top central banker globally. Governor Shaktikanta Das received the award for A+ grade in the Central Bank Report Card 2024. The award was presented at an event organised by Global Finance in Washington DC, USA. Das has been ranked at the top of the list of three central bank governors who have been given an A+ rating. Apart from Das, Christian Ketel Thomsen of Denmark and Thomas Jordan of Switzerland have also been ranked in the 'A+' category of central bankers. The grades are based on a scale from A to F for success in inflation control, economic growth targets, currency stability and interest rate management. State Bank of India (SBI) has been recognised as the Best Bank in India for 2024 by Global Finance Magazine of the US at its 31st Annual Best Bank Awards event.

META collaborated with IndiaAI to advance open source AI innovation, research and development

Meta announced a strategic collaboration with 'IndiaAI' at the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) to promote open-source AI innovation, R&D, and skills development in India. This includes the establishment of the Centre for Generative AI, Srijan at IIT Jodhpur. Also, it includes the launch of the 'AI for Skilling and Capacity Building' initiative in partnership with the All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE). This partnership will enable the development of indigenous AI applications and advance skill development in AI. Additionally, it will also boost research capabilities aimed at contributing to India's AI mission of ensuring technological sovereignty and the vision of India-specific AI solutions.

Prime Minister Mudra loan limit has been increased

The loan limit under the Prime Minister Mudra loan scheme has been increased from Rs 10 lakh to Rs 20 lakh. Finance Minister NirmalaSitharaman announced this change as part of the 2024-2025 Union Budget. A new "Tarun Plus" category has been created for entrepreneurs who have repaid previous Tarun loans, allowing them to access loans between Rs 10 lakh and Rs 20 lakh. The Credit Guarantee Fund for Micro Units (CGFMU) now covers loans up to Rs 20 lakh, making it easier for small businesses to get credit. Mudra loans offer up to Rs 20 lakh without collateral, with categories named "Shishu," "Kishor," "Tarun," and "Tarun Plus," based on the entrepreneur's growth stage and financial needs.

India's Unified Payment Interface (UPI) will be introduced in Maldives

President Dr. Mohamed Muizzu has decided to introduce India's UPI in the Maldives. This step will bring benefits to the Maldivian economy. These benefits include increased financial inclusion, improved efficiency in financial transactions and enhanced digital infrastructure. With this, Indian tourists will be able to make transactions in Indian rupees on UPI-enabled apps. They will not be required to go through the hassle of converting currency. It has been decided by President Muizzu to form a consortium in order to implement UPI in the Maldives. He also recommended that the consortium include national banks, telecommunications firms, state-owned enterprises, and fintech firms. In August 2024, two nations have signed anMoU to implement the Unified Payments Interface in the Maldives.

"SAMARTH" (Scheme for Capacity Building in Textiles Sector) extended by the government till March 2026

The SAMARTH scheme, a demand-driven and employment-oriented mass skilling program by the Ministry of Textiles, has been extended for two more years (FY 2024-25 and 2025-26) with a budget of Rs 495 crore. The scheme aims to train 3 lakh people in textile-related skills, covering most of the textile value chain, except spinning and weaving. It has trained 3.27 lakh candidates, with 79.5% securing employment. The program has a strong focus on women, with 88.3% of trainees being female. The scheme is implemented through various partners, including textile industries, government agencies, and sectoral organizations.

A two-day International Methanol Seminar and Expo 2024 is being organized by NITI Aayog in New Delhi

The event is being organised in collaboration with the Methanol Institute of the United States. The event will highlight the progress of projects, products and R&D initiatives related to methanol production, applications and associated technological developments across the world. The main focus of the seminar will be to highlight the role of methanol in the global energy transition and the emergence of methanol as a low-carbon fuel in green shipping. Methanol is a versatile fuel that can be produced from a wide range of domestic feedstocks, including biomass, coal, and renewable sources. It is one of the cleanest fuels and is cheaper than fossil fuels.

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SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

DRDO carried out the maiden flight test of the Long Range Land Attack Cruise Missile (LRLACM)

The test has been carried out from the Integrated Test Range, Chandipur, off the coast of Odisha, from a mobile articulated launcher. LRLACM has been developed by DRDO's Aeronautical Development Establishment (ADE) in Bengaluru. Other DRDO laboratories and Indian industries have also contributed to its development. Bharat Dynamics Limited (BDL) in Hyderabad and Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL) in Bengaluru served as the Development-CumProduction Partners. The missile can be launched from mobile ground-based platforms using a mobile articulated launcher. It can also be launched from frontline ships via a universal vertical launch module system. This is a new variant of the Nirbhay LRLACM. The procurement of the LRLACM of more than 1,000 km range in July 2020 has been approved by the Defence Acquisition Council.

The first-ever space exercise 'Antariksha Abhyas-2024' inaugurated in New Delhi

The first three-day space exercise 'AntarikshaAbhyas – 2024' was conducted by the Defense Space Agency to address threats to space-based assets. The exercise aimed to enhance understanding of space assets, identify operational issues, and integrate India's space capabilities in military operations. It involved participants from the Army, Navy, Air Force, and affiliated units of the Defence Space Agency.

Indian Navy hosted the 3rd MAHASAGAR summit on maritime security

The third edition of the MAHASAGAR summit on maritime security has been hosted by the Indian Navy. MAHASAGAR summit is a bi-annual flagship outreach event to foster collaboration among maritime heads across the Indian Ocean Region (IOR) under the framework of Active Security and Growth for All in the Region. 'Training Cooperation to Mitigate Common Maritime Security Challenges in the IOR' is the theme of the summit. It will bring senior leaders from maritime agencies across the IOR littorals, including Bangladesh, Comoros, Kenya, Madagascar, the Maldives, Mauritius, Mozambique, the Seychelles, etc., to one platform.

India's first analog space mission has been started by ISRO to plan Lunar mission experiments

India's first analog space mission has been started at Leh in Ladakh. At Leh, ISRO will stimulate life in an interplanetary habitat. Analog space missions are field tests in locations on Earth. They have physical similarities to the extreme space environments. They play a significant role in problem solving for spaceflight research. Ladakh has been chosen as its geographical features are believed to closely resemble Martian and lunar landscapes. These features include dry and cold climate, barren land, high-altitude terrain and extreme isolation. The mission includes a compact, inflatable habitat named Hab-1. Analog space mission at Leh is a collaborative effort by the Human Spaceflight Centre, ISRO, AAKA Space Studio, University of Ladakh, and IIT Bombay.

Indian Institute of Astrophysics (IIA) Bengaluru has reported the "first significant" result from Aditya-L1

Scientists from the Indian Institute of Astrophysics (IIA) reported significant results from the Visible Emission Line Coronagraph (VELC) payload of India's Aditya-L1 solar mission. Launched by ISRO on September 2, 2023, VELC accurately estimated the onset time of a coronal mass ejection (CME) from the Sun on July 16. CMEs are violent eruptions of plasma, and the unique data from VELC helped track their early stages. The Aditya-L1 spacecraft was placed in a halo orbit around the Earth-Sun Lagrange point (L1) on January 6, 2024.

Global AI Preparedness India's position among leading Nations

Artificial intelligence (AI) is revolutionizing the global economy, reshaping labor markets, industries, and societal dynamics. This transformation brings vast opportunities along with complex challenges. According to a forecast by Grand View Research, the global AI market is expected to grow at a robust compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 36.6% from 2024 to 2030, highlighting AI's expanding role in various sectors.

'Digital Memorial of Valour' launched by the Railway Protection Force in honour of the brave martyrs
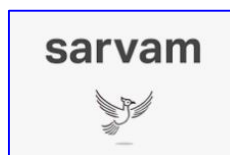
The Railway Protection Force launched the 'Digital Memorial of Valour' website in New Delhi to honor the sacrifices of its personnel. The website allows users to digitally decorate photos of martyrs with wreaths and candles as a tribute. It features the names, ranks, and photos of 14 martyrs from the previous year and includes a list of 1,011 martyrs who died in service. The site also offers a digital copy of the 'List of Martyrs of Railway Protection Force' for subscription, released from October 28, 2024.

Aircraft complex for manufacturing of C-295 military aircraft has been inaugurated by PM Modi

PM Modi and Spanish PM Pedro Sanchez inaugurated the TATA Aircraft Complex in Vadodara for manufacturing C-295 military aircraft. This is India's first private sector assembly line for military aircraft. The project will produce 56 C-295 aircraft, with Tata Advanced Systems manufacturing 40, and Airbus delivering 16. The aircraft will carry 71 troops or 49-50 paratroopers. The first aircraft is expected to be ready by September 2026.

Sarvam AI has launched a new language model for 10 Indian languages

The latest language model of Sarvam AI was trained with NVIDIA's NeMo framework on the

Yotta Shakti Cloud using HGX H100 systems. The new AI model called Sarvam-1 supports Bengali, Gujarati, Hindi, Kannada, Malayalam, Marathi, Oriya, Punjabi, Tamil, and Telugu languages. Sarvam 2B launched its first foundational AI model in August 2024. This new AI model has been developed with 2 billion parameters. Parameter count is used to indicate the complexity of an AI model. Sarvam-1 and Phi-3 Mini AI models fall under the category of small language models (SLMs). Sarvam-1 is more efficient in handling Indic language scripts as compared to previous LLMs by using minimal tokens per word. Sarvam-1 is more efficient, with inference speeds that are 4-6 times faster than larger models like Gemma-2-9B and Llama-3.1-8B.
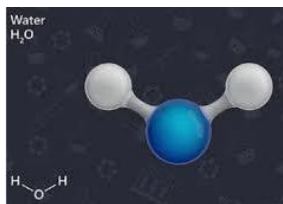
ISRO and DBT inked a pact to conduct biotechnology experiments in the space station

The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) and the Department of Biotechnology (DBT) have signed an agreement to design

and conduct experiments at the BharatiyaAntariksh Station (BAS). This agreement will promote innovation and developments in human health research, novel pharmaceuticals, biotherapeutics, and regenerative medicine. Experiments including how weightlessness can influence muscle loss in those in space, what kind of algae may be suitable as nutrients or to preserve food for longer, etc. will be conducted. The BharatiyaAntariksh Station (BAS) is a proposed indigenous space station to take shape from 2028-2035. The ISRO-DBT also collaborated for another initiative called the BIOE3 (Biotechnology for Economy, Environment and Employment). China launched the base module of its space station, Tiangong, in 2021 and has completed the tri-modular station as of November 2022.

New non-toxic molecules developed by scientists at the Pune-based Agharkar Research Institute to treat Alzheimer's disease

Scientists at Agharkar Research Institute, Pune, developed a rapid, one-pot, three-component reaction to create new molecules with high synthetic yield. These molecules target cholinesterase enzymes, increasing acetylcholine levels, which are important for memory and learning. The team's research may aid in treating neurodegenerative diseases, particularly Alzheimer's, which affects about 60-70% of the 55 million people with dementia worldwide.

Union Cabinet approved a 1000 crore rupees Venture Capital Fund for the space sector

It has been approved under the aegis of the Indian National Space Promotion and Authorisation Centre (IN-SPACe). The deployment period of the proposed Venture Capital Fund will be up to five years from the actual date of the start of the fund operations. The average allocated amount could be 150 to 250 crore rupees per year. The indicative range of investment is proposed to be Rs 10-Rs 60 crore. Indicative Equity Investment Range could be Rs 10 crore–Rs 30 crore for the growth stage and Rs 30 crore to Rs 60 crore for the late growth stage. This fund will support approximately 40 startups. The Government established IN-SPACe to promote and oversee private sector participation in space activities.

New species of snake discovered in the Himalayas, named after Leonardo DiCaprio

A new snake species, *Anguiculusdicaprioi*, was discovered in the western Himalayas by a team of researchers from India, Germany, and the UK in 2020. The species was named in honor of actor and environmentalist Leonardo DiCaprio for his significant contributions to conservation and raising awareness about climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution. The discovery was published in the journal *Scientific Reports* on October 21, 2024. The species was classified under a new genus called *Anguiculus*, meaning "little snake" in Latin, and the specific name "dicaprioi" is a tribute to DiCaprio's environmental activism.

India's fourth nuclear submarine was launched into water

India launched its fourth nuclear-powered ballistic missile submarine (SSBN), S4*, at the Ship Building Centre in Visakhapatnam on October 16. The S4* is larger and more capable than the first SSBN, INS Arihant, and can carry multiple K-4 submarine-launched ballistic missiles. Currently, India operates two SSBNs: INS Arihant, inducted in 2016, and INS Arighaat, commissioned in August 2024. The third SSBN, INS Aridaman, is undergoing

sea trials and is expected to enter service by 2025. Additionally, the Cabinet Committee on Security approved plans to build two nuclear-powered attack submarines to enhance deterrence in the Indo-Pacific region.

Army's Sudarshan Chakra Corps have conducted Swavlamban Shakti's exercise

The Army's Sudarshan Chakra Corps of Southern Command conducted 'Exercise SWAVLAMBAN SHAKTI' at Babina Field Firing Ranges near Jhansi. The XXI Corps or Sudarshan Chakra Corps is headquartered in Bhopal. The main aim of the exercise is to enhance combat capabilities through the integration of niche and emerging technologies.

Coastal security exercise 'SagarKavach' successfully organised by the Indian Coast Guard

The Indian Coast Guard conducted the Coastal Security Exercise 'SagarKavach' off Gujarat and Daman and Diu on October 16-17. This exercise, the second edition of the year, aimed to enhance maritime security by testing existing Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs). It involved various agencies, including the Indian Navy, State Police, BSF, NSG, and others. The exercise included ships, boats, and aerial surveillance with drones and aircraft. Several operational scenarios were simulated to evaluate coordination and effectiveness in maintaining maritime security.

Kaziranga National Park emerged as India's second butterfly diversity hub

More than 446 butterfly species have been reported from Kaziranga National Park. It has emerged as India's second butterfly diversity hub after the Namdapha National Park in Arunachal Pradesh. The first-ever "Butterfly Conservation Meet-2024" was held from September 27 to 29. 40 butterfly enthusiasts from across India participated in the event. The event was focused on detailed butterfly records and further dissemination of the butterfly status. A total of 85 species of butterflies were observed during the meeting. This Butterfly Conservation Meet aims was to raise awareness about the importance of butterfly conservation in Kaziranga.

e-Migrate V2.0 web portal and Mobile App has been inaugurated by External Affairs Minister Dr S Jaishankar

This portal promotes safe and legal mobility

channels for Indian migrants. The eMigrate V2.0 portal's launch, according to Dr.Jaishankar, is evidence of the government's efforts to provide secure, open, and inclusive mobility for Indians. According to him, the updated portal represents the government's dedication to upholding the rights and dignity of Indian labourers employed abroad. The Minister stated that this is significant because it also supports the promotion of orderly, safe, regular, and responsible movement and mobility of people, which is Goal 10 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Goals. The Minister of External Affairs noted that the number of passports issued has nearly doubled in recent years. Dr.Jaishankar also noted the fact that the portal will also give migrants social security.

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SPORTS

Pankaj Advani bagged the 28th World Billiards title

PankajAdvani clinched a historic 28th world title by defeating England's Robert Hall 4-2 at the IBSF World Billiards Championship in Doha. It is his seventh world title in a row, a streak that started in 2016. He continued his strong performance in the fifth frame with another impressive break of 154 points. Advani quickly regained control after reaching the 150-point mark first in the second frame.

Aravindh clinched the Chennai Grand Masters 2024 Masters title

In chess, GM AravindhChithambaram clinched the Chennai Grand Masters title after defeating GM LevonAronian. GM V Pranav remained unbeaten throughout the tournament and claimed the Challengers title. The Chennai Grand Masters 2024 has two categories: Masters & Challengers. Aronian settled for a quick draw against GM Amin Tabatabaei. The Masters category witnessed a three-way tie for the top spot. Pranav ended the tournament with four wins and three draws and gets a direct entry in the Masters category next year.

India formally bids to host the 2036 Olympics

The Indian Olympic Association (IOA) officially submitted a Letter of Intent to the Future Host Commission of the International Olympic Committee (IOC). India has formally desired to host the Olympic and Paralympic Games in 2036. 10 countries have shown initial interest in hosting the 2036 Games. Mexico,Indonesia, Turkey, Poland, Egypt, and South Korea are the other countries that have shown interest in hosting the 2036 Olympic Games. Los Angeles in the USA will host the 2028 Summer Olympics, and Brisbane, Australia, will host the 2032 Games. Last year, at the IOC's 141st session in Mumbai, India committed to host the 2036 Olympic Games.

TanushreePandey has won silver medal at World Soft Tennis Championship

TanushreePandey of India won the silver medal in soft tennis at the World Soft Tennis Championship in Jingshan, China. In yesterday's Under 21 Women's Individual Singles final, she lost 3–4 to Chinese Taipei's Chiang Min Yu. Earlier, in semifinal match, Tanushree defeated her Japanese opponent 4-3. She had defeated her Chinese opponent by the same margin in the quarterfinals. The use of soft rubber balls rather than hard yellow ones and a distinct scoring system are two ways that soft tennis differs from lawn tennis.

India's Atanu Das won the Bronze Medal in the Swiss Open Indoor Archery

India's Atanu Das won the Bronze medal in the Swiss Open Indoor Archery in Lausanne, Switzerland. Atanu Das defeated Switzerland's Thomas Rufer by 6-4 in the Recurve Men's Bronze medal match. Romain won the silver medal while Italy's Alessandro Paoli clinched the gold. More than 300 archers from 31 countries participated in the 2025 Indoor Archery World Series. The Swiss Open includes both recurve and compound divisions. Six events will be conducted in the 2025 season 1, which will be conducted from November 2024 to March 2025.

India won 17 medals including four gold at the Under-19 World Boxing Championships

India won 17 medals, including four gold in the men's and women's categories, with an impressive performance at the Under-19 World Boxing Championships in Colorado, USA. The total medal count of 17 includes 4 gold, 8 silver and 5 bronze medal winners. The Indian boxing contingent consisted of 19 boxers, comprising 9 men and 10 women, of which 12 athletes reached the finals, with every female boxer winning a medal. The four gold medallists included sole male champion HemantSangwan and female champions KrishaVerma, ParthaviGrewal and VanshikaGoswami. Among the medal winners, 11 were Khelo India athletes, of whom eight trained at the Sports Authority of India (SAI) National Centre of Excellence (NCOE) in Rohtak, winning 10 medals in total.

Mansi Ahlawat won the bronze medal at the Senior World Wrestling Championships

India's MansiAhlawat won the bronze medal in the women's 59 kg category at the Senior World Championships in Tirana, Albania. She defeated Laurence Beauregard of Canada with 5-0. Risako Kinjo of Japan won the gold, and TserenchimedSukhee of Mongolia clinched the silver. Elena Heike Brugger of Germany shared the Bronze with Mansi. In the Men's Freestyle 92 kg category, India's Sandeep S Mann will take on BatyrbekTsakulov of Slovakia in the Repechage round. Bipasha lost to AnastasiyaAlpyeyeva of Ukraine in the 72 kg qualification round.

In Table Tennis, India's Yashaswini Ghorpade and Krittwika Roy won the women's doubles title

The Indian duo won the title at the WTT Feeder Cagliari 2024 table tennis tournament in Italy. They defeated the South Korean pair of YooSiwoo and Kim Haeun 3-1 in the final. Earlier, the Indian table tennis players defeated the Italian team of Arianna Barani and Maria Picu 3-0 in the first round. The team defeated Japan's Sachi Aoki and Sakura Yokoi in the quarter-finals. They secured place in the final with 3-1 win over German Sophia Klee and Franziska Schreiner.

Sharapova and Bryan brothers have been inducted into the Hall of Fame

Five-time singles Grand Slam champion Maria

Sharapova and American twins Bob and Mike Bryan have been inducted into the International Tennis Hall of Fame's Class of 2025. They will be officially inducted on Aug 23, 2025, in a ceremony at the Hall of Fame in Newport. Sharapova became the first Russian woman to reach the world number one ranking in 2005. She also won a silver medal at the 2012 London Olympics. The Bryan brothers had won 16 Grand Slam men's doubles titles together and were the world's top-ranked team for a record 438 weeks. The Bryans also won Olympic gold at London 2012 and were part of the U.S. Davis Cup-winning team in 2007.

In wrestling, India won two medals at U-23 World Championship

India won one silver and one Bronze at Under 23 Wrestling World Championship 2024 in Tirana, Albania. India's Anjli won Silver in the women's 59kg category. After losing to Ukrainian SolimiiaVynnyk in the final, she took second place. Monika defeated Xinze Du, a Chinese competitor, 5-3 in the 68 kg category to win a bronze medal. In the men's 55 kg Greco-Roman category, VishvajitRamchandra More of India defeated Adam Ulbashev to win the bronze medal. This was India's first medal

at the Under-23 Wrestling World Championships 2024 in Tirana, Albania.

Indian football team jumped to 125th spot in latest FIFA world rankings

The Indian men's football team moved up one place to 125th in the latest FIFA rankings released on October 24. The team achieved this position due to its 1-1 draw against Vietnam in an international friendly match earlier this month. India are yet to win a match under new coach Manolo Marquez. The Marquez-led side has lost one match and drawn twice, earning +0.26 points, taking their total to 1133.78. India also moved up one place to 22nd in the AFC standings. However, world champions Argentina continue to dominate at No.1 with 1883.5 points, while France, European champions Spain and England and Brazil complete the top five.

Former Indian women's hockey captain Rani Rampal announced her retirement

Rani Rampal's illustrious 16-year career has come to an end, during which she rose from a small town in Haryana to become an inspiration for her phenomenal rise. The 29-year-old departed as one of India's most successful hockey players, having led the women's team to its best-ever finish at the Olympics - fourth place at the Tokyo Games in 2021. Rani is a skilled forward who made her international debut in the Olympic qualifiers in 2008 at the age of 14. She scored 205 goals in 254 matches for India. She was awarded the Major Dhyan Chand KhelRatna Award in 2020. In 2020, she was also awarded the Padma Shri, the country's fourth highest civilian award. Recently, she has been appointed as the national coach for sub-junior women players.

New Zealand women's team won the 2024 T20 Cricket World Cup title

New Zealand made history by winning their first Women's T20 World Cup, defeating South Africa by 32 runs in the final at the Dubai International Cricket Stadium. South Africa, chasing a target of 159, scored 126/9 in 20 overs. Amelia Kerr was named both player of the series and player of the match. This was New Zealand's first World Cup title, after previously reaching the finals in 2009 and 2010. As of 2024, Australia has won the most Women's T20 World Cups, with six titles. England, West Indies, and New Zealand have each won one title.

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AWARDS

Samantha Harvey won the Booker Prize for her novel 'Orbital'

Samantha Harvey won the 2024 Booker Prize for her 136-page novel *Orbital*, which explores life on the International Space Station. Written during the pandemic, *Orbital* is the second-shortest novel to win the prize and has outsold the last three Booker winners combined. Harvey is the first woman to win the Booker Prize since 2019. The award, announced by Edmund de Waal at a ceremony in London, includes £50,000 and a trophy, presented by Paul Lynch.

Third RohiniNayyar Prize awarded to 28-year-old Odisha engineer Anil Pradhan

Pradhan, co-founder of the Young Tinker Foundation, was awarded for his outstanding contribution to rural development through STEM education. He introduced "Tinker-on-Wheels," a mobile lab providing hands-on training in robotics and 3D printing to students in rural Odisha, Telangana, and Tamil Nadu. His initiative has benefited over 2.5 lakh students by bringing practical learning to schools lacking infrastructure.

Bibhab Kumar Talukdar received 'The Harry Messel Award'

Bibhab Kumar Talukdar of Assam has received 'The Harry Messel Award for Conservation Leadership by the Species Survival Commission (SSC) of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN). He received the award during the ongoing 5th IUCN SSC Leaders' Meeting in Abu Dhabi. 300 conservation experts have participated in the meeting to address the intertwined crises of biodiversity and climate change. Talukdar has received the award for his significant contributions to species conservation, particularly through his leadership in the SSC.

Mohanji received the Humanitarian Award at the 2024 Conscious Companies Awards in Johannesburg

Mohanji, a renowned humanitarian and spiritual leader, received special recognition for his global humanitarian leadership at the 9th Conscious Companies Awards in Johannesburg, South Africa. The prestigious annual event celebrates ethical and visionary leaders who demonstrate conscious leadership within their organizations. The Conscious Companies Awards are given to individuals and organizations that promote ethical behaviour and sustainable practices. Mohanji is a globally recognized humanitarian and philanthropist. He devoted his life to guiding people from selfishness to selflessness.

Rajkumar Hirani received the National Kishore Kumar Award

Popular film Producer and director RajkumarHirani has been conferred the National Kishore Kumar Award in Khandwa, Madhya Pradesh. On the occasion of the 37th death anniversary of Kishore Kumar, the award is given to RajkumarHirani. RajkumarHirani reached the Samadhi of Kishore Kumar and paid tribute to him before receiving the award. Many famous Bollywood actors, writers, and producer-directors have received this award to date. Khandwa is the birthplace of Kishore Kumar. The award has been given every year to an eminent artist by the Directorate of Culture, Madhya Pradesh Government since 1997.

IAF World Space Award presented to ISRO Chairman S. Somnath for the remarkable achievement of Chandrayaan3

ISRO Chairman S. Somnath received the prestigious World Space Award from the International Astronautical Federation (IAF) for the success of Chandrayaan-3. The award was presented at the 75th International Astronautical Congress in Milan, Italy. Chandrayaan-3's historic landing near the Moon's south pole on August 23, 2023, made India the first country to achieve this milestone.

2024 Nobel Economics Prize awarded to DaronAcemoglu, Simon Johnson & James A. Robinson

The 2024 Nobel Prize in Economics was awarded for groundbreaking research on how institutions shape prosperity. The Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences recognized the work for its insights into how strong institutions promote economic growth, reduce inequality, and improve the rule of law. The award, officially called the "Bank of Sweden Prize in Economic Sciences in Memory of Alfred Nobel," includes a cash prize of 11 million Swedish Krona.

Nobel Peace Prize has been awarded to the Japanese organisation Nihon Hidankyo

The Nobel Peace Prize has been awarded to Nihon Hidankyo. It is an organisation of survivors of the Hiroshima-Nagasaki bombings. Nihon Hidankyo members are survivors of the atomic bombings in Hiroshima and Nagasaki by the United States in 1945. The members of this organization raise awareness about the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of using nuclear weapons. The US dropped a bomb named "Little Boy" on Hiroshima and a bomb named "Fat Man" on Nagasaki. Hibakusha's main objectives are the elimination of nuclear weapons and due compensation to the victims. In 2017, the Nobel Peace Prize was awarded to the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN).

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MISCELLANEOUS

Alix Didier Fils-Aime took oath as Prime Minister of Haiti

Haiti is facing a humanitarian and security crisis, worsened by escalating gang violence, which killed or injured about 2,500 people in the first three months of 2024. Aime succeeded Garry Conille, who served twice as Prime Minister before being dismissed by the Transitional Presidential Council. This council, established in April, is tasked with selecting new leaders and organizing elections. Haiti's capital is Port-au-Prince, and its currency is the gourde.

Praveena Rai took over as CEO and MD of Multi Commodity Exchange of India

Multi Commodity Exchange of India (MCX) Ltd announced that PraveenaRai has officially assumed the position of Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer with effect from October 31, 2024. At the annual general meeting held on September 26, Rai's appointment was confirmed by the company's board, regulators and shareholders. Rai's tenure as MD and CEO is for five years. Rai is a prominent figure in India's financial sector with over three decades of experience, having made significant contributions to digital and strategic advancements. Before joining MCX, Rai served as Chief Operating Officer at National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI). Her career has also included leadership roles as Regional Head of Payments, Asia Pacific at HSBC, and prior to that she has also worked at Citigroup Global Services and Kotak Mahindra Bank.

Rajesh Kumar Singh Takes Charge as New Defence Secretary in South Block

Rajesh Kumar Singh, a distinguished 1989-batch Indian Administrative Service (IAS) officer of the Kerala cadre, officially took charge as the Defence Secretary at South Block, New Delhi. Mr. Singh succeeds GiridharAramane, the 1988-batch IAS officer from the Andhra Pradesh cadre, who retired from his service on October 31, 2024, after serving a notable two-year term in this crucial role.

Justice SanjivKhanna appointed as the next Chief Justice of India

President DraupadiMurmu appointed Justice SanjivKhanna as the 51st Chief Justice of India, effective November 11, after consulting with Chief Justice DY Chandrachud. Currently the second most senior judge of the Supreme Court, Justice Khanna, who has delivered landmark judgments emphasizing individual liberty and democracy, will retire on May 13, 2025.

Manoj Kumar Dubey assumed charge as CMD & CEO of IRFC

Manoj Kumar Dubey has been appointed as the Chairman & Managing Director (CMD) and CEO of the Indian Railway Finance Corporation (IRFC), a Miniratna public sector enterprise under the Ministry of Railways. Previously, he served as Director (Finance) and CFO of Container Corporation of India. Established in 1986, IRFC raises funds domestically and internationally to support Indian Railways' extra budgetary resource requirements. It is among the top public sector companies, with a market capitalization of over ₹2 lakh crore.

OBITUARIES

Varadarao Kamalakara Rao passed away at the age of 88

He is a world-renowned Mridangam scholar. He received the Central Sangeet Natak Akademi Award years ago. He was a disciple of Palgat Mani Ayer. He became aMridangaVidwan at an early age. He received the President Medal from the SarvepalliRadhakrishnan during his college days.

Veteran Tamil actor Delhi Ganesh passed away at the age of 80

Renowned Tamil actor Delhi Ganesh, known for his versatility in supporting roles in an illustrious career spanning four decades, passed away on November 9 due to health complications. Delhi Ganesh's career, marked by his ability to play a diverse range of roles – from comical to villainous and poignant supporting characters – has seen him appear in over 400 films. He shared the screen with Tamil cinema legends like Rajinikanth and Kamal Haasan and earned a respected position in the industry. Delhi Ganesh's contribution to Tamil cinema has been recognised with several awards, including the Tamil Nadu State Film Award Special Prize for Pasi (1979) and the prestigious Kalaimamani Award in 1994.

Bihar's Nightingale Sharda Sinha passed away at the age of 72

Renowned folk singer ShardaSinha, popularly known as "Nightingale of Bihar," died on November 5 at the age of 72. She died of refractory shock due to septicemia at the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), New Delhi. Since the 1970s, ShardaSinha's illustrious career has brought Bhojpuri, Maithili and Hindi folk music national recognition. Sinha has sung many folk songs including "VivahGeet", and "ChhathGeet". For her contribution to music, she was awarded the Padma Shri award in 1991 and the Padma Bhushan, India's third highest civilian award, in 2018.

RohiniGodbole passes away at the age of 72. She was a renowned physicist and gender equity proponent

She was a Padma Shri recipient. She received Padma Shri award in 2019. The French government awarded her the National Medal of Merit in 2021. She was professor at the Centre for High Energy Physics, Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore. She researched elementary particle physics field theory. She was among the members who submitted the report titled 'INSA Report: Access of Indian Women to Careers in Science'. Along with Ram Ramaswamy, she edited the book Lilavati's Daughters, a collection of biographical essays on women scientists from India.

BOOKS

A book titled 'Maa-Mother' has been released by Union Law and Justice Minister Arjun Ram Meghwal in New Delhi

The book has been released in the presence of Kerala Governor, Arif Mohammed Khan and West Bengal Governor Dr C.V Anand Bose. Dr Davendra Kumar Dhodawat, Additional Secretary to the Governor of Kerala is the author of the book. The book contains an illustration of motherhood as poems written in Hindi and English. It explores the untold story of the love and affection of mothers.

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MATCH POINT

- World's first high-altitude para sports centrewill be established in **- Leh**
- 'Pan-India' coastal defence exercise 'Sea Vigil-24' was organised by the Indian Navy in **- Mumbai**
- Recipient of the Booker Prize 2024 for the novel Orbital based on the International Space Station**- Samantha Harvey**
- The State of the Climate Report 2024 has been recently released by**- World Meteorological Organization (WMO)**
- 18th PravasiBharatiya Divas (PBD) conference will be organized at **- Bhubaneswar, Odisha**
- Newly elected President of USA Donald Trump has appointed this personality as the Defence Minister**- Pete Hegseth**
- In this Indian city the Russian Business Centre was inaugurated**- New Delhi**
- In this city of Bihar Prime Minister NarendraModi laid the foundation stone of AIIMS**- Darbhanga**
- Newly elected President of USA Donald Trump has appointed this personality as the Foreign Minister**- Marco Rubio**
- Recently 'Garuda Shakti' exercise was organized between India and **- Indonesia**
- Newly elected Prime Minister of Japan**- Shigeru Ishiba**
- New Prime Minister of Mauritius**- Dr. Naveen Ramgulam**
- ISRO signed an agreement for Spacecraft Thermal Research Centre with **– IIT, Madras**
- India's rank in WIPO Patent Filing 2023 at the global level **– Sixth**
- Actor SonuSoodhas been appointed as brand ambassador for tourism by the tourism department of **- Thailand**
- New President of International Hockey Federation**- TayyabIkram**
- In this city of Uttar Pradesh the state's first double-decker electric bus service was launched**- Lucknow**
- New Chief Justice (51st) of India**- Justice SanjivKhanna**
- INSV Tarinihas reached this place for the first phase of NavikaSagarParikrama II campaign**- Fremantle, Australia**
- Military exercise 'Vinbax': India-Vietnam 5th joint military exercise 'Winbex' was held in **- Ambala**
- New President of International Solar Alliance**- India**
- Annual meeting of the International Solar Alliance was recently organizedin**- New Delhi**
- First Asian Buddhist Summit was held in **- New Delhi**
- Recently BibekDebroy passed away, he was a famous person in **- Economics**

- RBI has recently given approval to this company for online payment aggregator business- **Jio Financial**
- State's first digital library of Himachal Pradesh was inaugurated in - **Bilaspur**
- Two indigenous patrol vessels recently launched by the Indian Coast Guard- **'Adamya' and 'Akshar'**
- In this state the country's first 'Writers Village' was inaugurated- **Uttarakhand**
- India's rank in the World Justice Project's 2024 Rule of Law Index- **79**
- This bank was recently declared the best bank of India- **State Bank of India**
- India's first private military aircraft factory was inaugurated in - **Gujarat**
- This state government has recently announced the creation of 'Special Education Zone' in the state- **Uttar Pradesh(in 6 districts)**
- Exercise SIMBEX 2024 was organized between India and - **Singapore**
- Two railway projects have been approved to connect the districts of Andhra Pradesh, Telangana and Bihar with the rail network in - **8 districts**
- Leadership Summit 2024 was hoisted by – **IIT Guwahati**
- New President of Vietnam– **LuongQuong**
- This country has been recently declared malaria free by the World Health Organization- **Egypt**
- The PravasiParichay 2024 program was organized in the Indian Embassy of - **Saudi Arabia**
- BRICS Summit 2024was organised in – **Russia (Kazan)**
- 2026 edition of the Commonwealth Games will be held in - **Glasgow**
- Cyclonic storm 'Dana' that arose in the Bay of Bengal has been named by - **Qatar**
- New chairperson of National Commission for Women- **VijayaKishorRahatkar**
- Indian Army organized 'Swavalamban Shakti Exercise' in - **Uttar Pradesh**
- This corps unit of Indian Army participated in the 'Swavalamban Shakti Exercise' of Indian Army- **Sudarshan Corps**
- Indian Navy's 1st Training Squadron (1TS) completed long distance training deployment in- **Manama**
- Recently this state government is preparing to declare Sanskrit as a compulsory subject- **Uttarakhand**
- New Chief Minister of Haryana- **Nayab Singh Saini**
- Second International Methanol Seminar (2024) was hoisted by– **India(Manekshaw Centre, New Delhi)**
- New Chief Minister of Jammu and Kashmir- **Omar Abdullah**
- This Indian female cricketer has been inducted into the ICC Hall of Fame- **Neetu David**
- 23rd SCO meeting(2024) was hoisted by – **Pakistan**

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MCQ ON CURRENT AFFAIRS

1. The Solomon Islands are located in which one of the following oceans?
   (a) Atlantic Ocean
   (b) Indian Ocean
   (c) Arctic Ocean
   (d) Pacific Ocean
2. World Diabetes Day commemorates the birthday of which scientist?
   (a) Robert Koch
   (b) Sir Frederick Banting
   (c) Alexander Fleming
   (d) Louis Pasteur
3. Consider the following statements regarding the Know Your Medicine (KYM)' app:
   1. It is part of National Anti-Doping Agency India's mission to raise anti-doping awareness and education.
   2. It allows users to easily verify whether a specific medicine is listed as prohibited by the World Anti-Doping Agency.
   Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
   (a) 1 only
   (b) 2 only
   (c) Both 1 and 2
   (d) Neither 1 nor 2
4. Consider the following statements about Disturbed Areas" declared by the Ministry of Home Affairs
   1. A "Disturbed Area" is declared under the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act, 1958 (AFSPA).
   2. The declaration of a "Disturbed Area" empowers the armed forces to operate in the region without prior warrant.
   3. The declaration of a "Disturbed Area" is a permanent measure.
   Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
   (a) 1 and 2
   (b) 1 and 3
   (c) 2 and 3
   (d) All three

5. Consider the following statements regarding the SVASTIK initiative:
   1. It is a national initiative which is coordinated by the CSIR-National Institute of Science Communication and Policy Research.
   2. It was launched to communicate scientifically validated traditional knowledge of India to society.
   Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
   (a) 1 only
   (b) 2 only
   (c) Both 1 and 2
   (d) Neither 1 nor 2
6. Consider the following statements regarding the Booker Prize:
   1. It is the world's leading literary award given for a single work of fiction.
   2. It is awarded to novel originally written in English and published in the UK and Ireland in the year of the prize.
   Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
   (a) 1 only
   (b) 2 only
   (c) Both 1 and 2
   (d) Neither 1 nor 2
7. Consider the following statements regarding the Exercise 'Sea Vigil-24:
   1. It aims to raise awareness amongst coastal communities about maritime security.
   2. It is a joint maritime exercise between QUAD countries in the Indian Ocean every year.
   Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
   (a) 1 only
   (b) 2 only
   (c) Both 1 and 2
   (d) Neither 1 nor 2

8. Indian Army conducts high-intensity tri-services exercise 'PoorviPrahar' in which of the following states?
   (a) Maharashtra
   (b) Jammu Kashmir
   (c) Meghalaya
   (d) Arunachal Pradesh

9. Consider the following:
   1. Indian currency donated by a foreign source
   2. Foreign securities donated by a foreign source
   3. Interest accrued on foreign contributions

   How many of the above qualify as a 'foreign contribution' under the Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act (FCRA), 2010?
   (a) Only one
   (b) Only two
   (c) All three
   (d) None

10. Consider the following statements regarding the Long Range Land Attack Cruise Missile:
    1. It can be launched from both mobile ground-based systems and frontline ships by using a universal vertical launch module.
    2. It is developed by the Defence Research and Development Organisation.

    Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
    (a) 1 only
    (b) 2 only
    (c) Both 1 and 2
    (d) Neither 1 nor 2

11. Consider the following statements about FPI and FDI in India
    1. Singapore, Mauritius, the US, the Netherlands, and Japan were the top five source countries for FDI
    2. FDI is subject to more stringent regulations and government scrutiny compared to FPI.
    3. FPI is more volatile than FDI and can be influenced by global economic conditions.

    How many of the statements given above are correct?

    (a) Only one
    (b) Only two
    (c) All three
    (d) None

12. Consider the following statements about new Water act in india .
    1. These rules aim to streamline the process of inquiry and imposition of penalties for water pollution offenses.
    2. The rules empower Pollution Control Boards to conduct surprise inspections of industrial units.
    3. The rules mandate the use of technology to monitor water quality in real-time.

    How many of the statements given above are correct?
    (a) Only one
    (b) Only two
    (c) All three
    (d) None

13. Consider the following statements about AntarikshaAbhyas – 2024:
    1. AntarikshaAbhyas – 2024 is conducted by the Defence Space Agency to address space-related threats and opportunities.
    2. The exercise includes participation from key military branches and organizations like ISRO and DRDO.
    3. The exercise is conducted in Bengaluru.

    Which of the above statements is/are correct?
    (a) 1 only
    (b) 1, 2, and 3
    (c) 2 and 3 only
    (d) 1 and 2 only

14. The Subansiri Lower Hydro Electric Project is located on the border of which of the following states?
    (a) Assam and Manipur
    (b) Arunachal Pradesh and Assam
    (c) West Bengal and Sikkim
    (d) Meghalaya and Nagaland

15. 'Arpactophiluspulawskii', recently seen in the news is a/an:
    (a) Rare species of butterfly
    (b) New variety of flowering plant
    (c) Ancient marine reptile
    (d) New species of wasp

16. The Toto Tribe, one of the most endangered tribes in the world, primarily resides in which one of the following states?
    (a) Nagaland
    (b) Odisha
    (c) Uttarakhand
    (d) West Bengal

17. Consider the following statements regarding the Arrow-3 Missile Defence System:
    1. It was jointly developed by Israel and the United States of America.
    2. It is primarily designed to intercept ballistic missiles outside the Earth's atmosphere.
    Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
    (a) 1 only
    (b) 2 only
    (c) Both 1 and 2
    (d) Neither 1 nor 2

18. Consider the following statements regarding SagarmalaParikrama:
    1. It is supported by the Indian Navy's Naval Innovation and IndigenisationOrganisation.
    2. It paves the way for future deployment of autonomous vessels in critical sea lanes.
    Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
    (a) 1 only
    (b) 2 only
    (c) Both 1 and 2
    (d) Neither 1 nor 2

19. Which of the following country developed PyPIM Platform?
    (a) Israeli
    (b) India
    (c) Germany
    (d) Australia

20. Exercise AUSTRAHIND, is conducted between India and:
    (a) Russia
    (b) Japan
    (c) Nepal
    (d) Australia

21. Consider the following statements about First digital population clock.

1. It was inaugurated at the Institute for Social and Economic Change (ISEC) in Bengaluru.
2. It displays real-time population estimates for India and Karnataka.
3. It is maintained by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.
How many of the statements given above are correct?
    (a) Only one
    (b) Only two
    (c) All three
    (d) None

22. Which of the following states is first state to implement a dedicated semiconductor policy ?
    (a) Tamilnadu
    (b) Maharashtra
    (c) Karnataka
    (d) Gujarat

23. Consider the following statements regarding the One Rank One Pension (OROP) scheme:
    1. OROP benefits apply uniformly to all ex-service personnel, including those discharged voluntarily after the scheme's implementation.
    2. The scheme provides for arrears to be paid in four half-yearly installments for most beneficiaries.
    3. Family pensioners and Gallantry awardees receive their arrears in a single installment.
    Which of the above statements is correct?
    (a) 1 and 2 only
    (b) 1, 2, and 3
    (c) 1 and 3 only
    (d) 2 and 3 only

24. Dholera is part of which of the following unique development initiatives in India?
    (a) Brownfield Industrial Park
    (b) Renewable Energy Cluster
    (c) Special Agricultural Economic Zone
    (d) India's first Greenfield Smart City

25. Consider the following statements regarding the Chhath Puja:
    1. It is celebrated in the states of Bihar and Uttar Pradesh.

2. It is dedicated to God Surya and celebrated between the months of October and November.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

26. Consider the following statements regarding the Agrivoltaic Farming:
1. It is the practice of growing crops underneath solar panels.
2. It reduces land-use efficiency because of solar panel usage in the farm.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

27. Consider the following statements about RCEP .
1. RCEP is a free trade agreement (FTA) between the ten ASEAN member states and its five FTA partners: China, Japan, South Korea, Australia, and New Zealand.
2. India was initially a part of the RCEP negotiations but later withdrew.
3. RCEP aims to liberalize trade and investment in the region, reducing tariffs and non-tariff barriers.

How many of the statements given above are correct?

(a) Only one
(b) Only two
(c) All three
(d) None

28. Consider the following statements about CPTPP(Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership)
1. It is a free trade agreement (FTA) between 11 countries in the Asia-Pacific region.
2. The United States is a member of the CPTPP.

3. The CPTPP is designed to counterbalance China's economic influence in the region.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

(a) 1 and 2
(b) 1 and 3
(c) 2 and 3
(d) All three

29. The ancient town of Al-Natah was recently discovered in which one of the following countries?

(a) Bangladesh
(b) Indonesia
(c) Iran
(d) Saudi Arabia

30. Consider the following statements regarding KumbhMela:
1. It received patronage from various royal dynasties like Chola and Vijayanagara empires.
2. It is celebrated four times over a course of 12 years.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

31. With reference to PM Vidyalaxmi Scheme, consider the following statements:
1. It is a Centrally Sponsored Scheme.
2. It is applicable to educational institutions which are determined by the National Institutional Ranking Framework rankings.
3. Under this scheme any student who gets admission in quality Higher Education Institution (QHEIs) will get collateral free loan.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

(a) 1 and 2
(b) 2 and 3
(c) 1 and 3
(d) All three

32. Consider the following statements regarding the MAHASAGAR Initiative:
    1. It is Indian Navy's flagship initiative which is conducted bi-annually.
    2. It highlights the necessary imperatives for training and Corporation towards mitigation of common maritime challenges in the Indian Ocean Region.

    Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
    (a) 1 only
    (b) 2 only
    (c) Both 1 and 2
    (d) Neither 1 nor 2

33. Minuteman III Missile, recently seen in the news, is an intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) developed by which one of the following countries?
    (a) North Korea
    (b) Israel
    (c) China
    (d) United States of America

34. Consider the following statements regarding the Proba-3 mission:
    1. It is the European Space Agency's (ESA) first mission dedicated to precision formation flying.
    2. It aims to create an artificial eclipse by precisely coordinating two independent satellites.

    Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
    (a) 1 only
    (b) 2 only
    (c) Both 1 and 2
    (d) Neither 1 nor 2

35. Consider the following statements about 'AarogyaMaitri Health Cube'
    1. It is the world's first portable hospital.
    2. It was designed indigenously under Project BHISHM

    Select the correct statement(s)
    (a) 1 only
    (b) 2 only
    (c) Both 1 and 2
    (d) Neither 1 nor 2

36. What was the primary mandate of the Sanjay Kumar Committee in relation to the Western Ghats?
    (a) To expand the Ecologically Sensitive Area (ESA) boundaries of all Western Ghats villages
    (b) To designate the entire Western Ghats as ecologically sensitive
    (c) To enforce conservation measures without field visits
    (d) To review and validate objections from states regarding Ecologically Sensitive Area (ESA) demarcations

37. Which of the following unique engineering features is associated with the Kalka-Shimla Narrow-Gauge Railway?
    (a) World's highest multi-arc gallery bridge
    (b) World's longest railway tunnel
    (c) India's only double-track mountain railway
    (d) Longest railway bridge in Asia

38. GobindSagar Lake lies in which one of the following states?
    (a) Assam
    (b) Punjab
    (c) Madhya Pradesh
    (d) Himachal Pradesh

39. NingolChakkouba festival, recently in news, is celebrated in:
    (a) Manipur
    (b) Punjab
    (c) Odisha
    (d) Tamil Nadu

40. Which of the following is NOT a function of the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA)?
    (a) Monitoring tiger populations
    (b) Allocating funds for tiger conservation
    (c) Providing technical support to state governments for tiger conservation
    (d) Implementing wildlife conservation projects in all protected areas

41. Consider the following statements about the COP 29
    1. It is scheduled to take place in Baku, Azerbaijan
    2. The primary goal of COP29 is to accelerate global efforts to address climate change and limit global

warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels.

Choose the incorrect statements:
- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 only
- (c) Both 1 and 2
- (d) Neither 1 nor 2

42. Which of the following best describes the primary objective of the First in the World Challenge initiative launched by Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR)?
- (a) To foster bold, first-of-its-kind health innovations with global impact potential
- (b) To fund large-scale public health awareness programs in India
- (c) To encourage incremental advancements in existing medical technologies
- (d) To promote traditional medicine and Ayurveda exclusively

43. Which of the following is correct regarding Sambhar Lake?
- (a) It is the largest freshwater lake in India.
- (b) It is the most saline lake in India and is Ramsar-listed.
- (c) It is the largest artificial lake in India.
- (d) It is the largest lake in Northeast India.

44. Which of the following best describes the primary purpose of the Tumaini Festival?
- (a) To promote local business and commerce through art and craft sales
- (b) To provide a competitive platform for regional musicians and artists
- (c) To organize sports events among African countries
- (d) To foster cultural exchange and highlight resilience, especially among refugees

45. Consider the following statements regarding Wular Lake:
1. Wular Lake is located in Rajasthan and is the largest freshwater lake in India.
2. It is Ramsar-listed due to its ecological importance and biodiversity.
3. Wular Lake is primarily a saline Lake.
4. It is situated near the PirPanjal mountain range in Jammu and Kashmir.

Which of the above statements are correct?

- (a) 1, 2, and 3 only
- (b) 4 only
- (c) 1 and 3 only
- (d) 2 and 4 only

46. Turtle Wildlife Sanctuary, recently seen in the news, lies in which one of the following states?
- (a) Andhra Pradesh
- (b) West Bengal
- (c) Bihar
- (d) Uttar Pradesh

47. Which of the following scenarios best explains the use of a transponder?
- (a) Powering a portable Bluetooth speaker
- (b) Downloading an application on a smartphone
- (c) Heating water in an electric kettle
- (d) Identifying and tracking an aircraft

48. Consider the following statements regarding the black hole V404 Cygni:
1. It is located in the constellation of Cygnus.
2. It was formed by the supernova process.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 only
- (c) Both 1 and 2
- (d) Neither 1 nor 2

49. Consider the following statements regarding the Indian Green Building Council:
1. It is part of the Confederation of Indian Industry and provides green building rating programmes in India.
2. It considers sustainable station facility and energy efficiency for giving green building ratings.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 only
- (c) Both 1 and 2
- (d) Neither 1 nor 2

50. With reference to the 'Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction,' consider the following statements:
1. It provides member states with concrete actions to protect developmental gains from the risks of disaster.

2. It is the successor instrument to the 'Hyogo Framework for Action.'

3. It covers technological hazards in addition to the natural hazards.

How many of the statements given above are correct?

(a) Only one
(b) Only two
(c) All three
(d) None

51. What is the main goal of the "First in the World Challenge" initiative, recently seen in the news?

(a) To support incremental improvements in scientific research
(b) To promote the development of groundbreaking health technologies
(c) To enhance training programs for young researchers
(d) To promote traditional knowledge systems

52. Consider the following statements regarding Thadou Tribe:

1. They are indigenous people reside in the State of Manipur.
2. They celebrate Hun-Thadou cultural festival at the arrival of the New Year.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

53. With reference to the Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister (EAC-PM), consider the following statements:

1. It is an independent body constituted to give advice on economic and related issues to the Government of India, specifically to the Prime Minister.
2. The advice tendered by the EAC-PM is binding on the Government.
3. It is common for the Council to be reconstituted time and again with different organizational structures headed by various economists.

How many of the statements given above are correct?

(a) Only one
(b) Only two
(c) All three
(d) None

54. Consider the following statements regarding the Namo Drone Didi Scheme:

1. It aims to provide drones to Women SHGs for providing rental services to farmers for agriculture purposes.
2. It is completely funded by the central government.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

55. Consider the following statements regarding the Analogue Space Mission:

1. It is a simulated mission conducted on Earth that mimics the conditions and challenges of actual space exploration.
2. The Indian Space Research Organisation launched its first Analogue Space Mission in Leh.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

56. With reference to PARAKH RashtriyaSarvekshan 2024, consider the following statements:

1. It aims to create a broader understanding of the educational landscape in India.
2. It collects samples from only government and government-aided district school students.
3. It will cover students from Grades 3, 6, and 9 across India.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

(a) 1 and 2
(b) 1 and 3
(c) 2 and 3
(d) All three

57. Consider the following statements regarding Light Detection and Ranging (LiDAR):
1. It is a remote sensing technology that uses light in the form of a pulsed laser.
2. It is used to generate three-dimensional information about the shape of the Earth and its surface characteristics.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
(a) 1 only
(b) 2 only
(c) Both 1 and 2
(d) Neither 1 nor 2

58. Consider the following statements about YuvaAapdaMitra Scheme (YAMS)
1. The primary aim of the YuvaAapdaMitra Scheme is to train young volunteers in disaster preparedness and response.
2. It also aims to contribute to long-term community resilience by minimizing reliance on external aid through local empowerment.

Choose the incorrect statements:
(a) 1 only
(b) 2 only
(c) Both 1 and 2
(d) Neither 1 nor 2

59. Recently India participated in two notable military exercises namely, Exercise VAJRA PRAHAR and Exercise GARUD SHAKTI. Which of the below given countries participated in the exercise?
(a) United States and Indonesia
(b) United States and United Kingdom
(c) United States and Russia
(d) United States and Nepal

60. Consider the following statements regarding the Global Hunger Index (GHI) 2024 and India's performance:
1. The Global Hunger Index uses indicators such as undernourishment, child wasting, child stunting, and child mortality to assess hunger levels.
2. India has the highest rate of child stunting in the world, according to GHI 2024.
3. The Ministry of Women and Child Development has raised concerns over GHI data, claiming that the Poshan Tracker reports a lower child wasting rate than what GHI states.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
(a) 1 only
(b) 1 and 3 only
(c) 2 and 3 only
(d) 1, 2, and 3

61. Consider the following statements about Raigad Fort
1. Raigad fort in Maharashtra is the classic example of Maratha architecture.
2. The fort served as the 2nd capital of ChhatrapatiShivajiMaharaj.

Choose the correct statements:
(a) 1 only
(b) 2 only
(c) Both 1 and 2
(d) Neither 1 nor 2

62. Which of the following best describes the primary objective of the Aarambh 6.0 initiative?
(a) To provide advanced technological training to senior civil servants.
(b) To enhance governance through public participation and improved feedback systems.
(c) To promote agricultural innovations in rural development.
(d) To streamline financial management in public administration.

63. With reference to BRICS and its membership, consider the following statements:
1. BRICS was founded in 2009 as a coalition of emerging economies to enhance their global economic and political influence.
2. The headquarters of BRICS is located in Shanghai, China.
3. New members can join BRICS only if all current members agree to their inclusion during the annual BRICS summit.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

(a) 1 and 2
(b) 1 and 3
(c) 2 and 3
(d) All three

64. Concerning the DANA (DepresiónAislada en Niveles Altos) phenomenon, consider the following statements:
1. DANA is caused by a high-pressure system over the Mediterranean Sea leading to dry conditions.
2. The phenomenon involves the interaction between a pocket of cold air and warm, moist air over the sea.
3. Climate change has intensified DANA events, making them more severe and widespread.
Which of the statements given above are correct?
(a) 1 Only
(b) 2 and 3 only
(c) 1 and 3 only
(d) 1, 2 & 3

65. Greenhouse Gas Bulletin, has been published annually since 2004 by which of the following organization?
(a) World Meteorological Organization
(b) United Nations Environment Programme
(c) Global Carbon Council
(d) Sustainable Development Solutions Network

66. Consider the following statements about Mission AmritSarovar
1. It was launched with an aim to build 75 AmritSarovars during the 75th year of independence.
2. Indian Space Research Organisation has been engaged as Technical partner for the Mission.
Choose the correct statements:
(a) 1 only
(b) 2 only
(c) Both 1 and 2
(d) Neither 1 nor 2

67. Consider the following statements regarding the AyushmanVayaVandana Card:
1. The scheme provides ₹5 lakh in annual health coverage for seniors aged 70 and above.

2. The scheme was introduced under the Ministry of Finance.
3. Enrollment requires registration through the PM-JAY portal or Ayushman app.
Which of the above statements are correct?
(a) 1 only
(b) 1 and 3 only
(c) 2 only
(d) 1, 2, and 3

68. Consider the following statements about the MaitriDwar:
1. It is located at the India-Bangladesh border in the North 24 Parganas district, West Bengal.
2. The gate is used solely for passenger movement.
3. It significantly enhances India-Bangladesh land-based trade.
Which of the above statements are correct?
(a) 1 and 3 only
(b) 2 only
(c) 1, 2, and 3
(d) 1 and 2 only

69. Consider the following statements about the PradhanMantriMatsyaSampadaYojana:
1. It aims to enhance fish production and double fishermen's income.
2. It includes the Vessel Communication and Support System for fishermen's safety.
3. It exclusively focuses on inland fisheries and aquaculture.
Which of the above statements are correct?
(a) 1 and 2 only
(b) 1 only
(c) 2 and 3 only
(d) 1, 2, and 3

70. Simhachalam Temple, recently seen in the news, lies in which state?
(a) Andhra Pradesh
(b) Kerala
(c) Madhya Pradesh
(d) Odisha

71. What is the primary purpose of the Civil Registration System (CRS) Mobile App, recently seen in the news?
(a) To facilitate voter registration

(b) To assist with birth and death registrations
(c) To monitor census data in real-time
(d) To track migration patterns within the country

72. Consider the following statements regarding the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization (CTBTO):
1. It is a legally binding multilateral treaty signed by all the member states of the United Nations (UN).
2. In order to verify compliance with its provisions, the treaty establishes a global network of monitoring facilities and allows for on-site inspections of suspicious events.
Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
(a) 1 only
(b) 2 only
(c) Both 1 and 2
(d) Neither 1 nor 2

73. Consider the following statements regarding the Mission for Integrated Development of Horticulture:
1. It is a Central Sponsored Scheme (CSS) implemented for the holistic growth of the horticulture sector.
2. It provides technical advice and administrative support to State Horticulture Missions.
Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
(a) 1 only
(b) 2 only
(c) Both 1 and 2
(d) Neither 1 nor 2

74. Lord's Resistance Army, a rebel group recently seen in news belongs to which of the following country?
(a) Uganda
(b) Ethiopia
(c) Sudan
(d) Somalia

75. Consider the following statements
1. In India, there are no limits on the expenditure of political parties during elections.

2. Indrajit Gupta Committee associated with State funding of elections.
Choose the correct statements:
(a) 1 only
(b) 2 only
(c) Both 1 and 2
(d) Neither 1 nor 2

76. Which of the following statements accurately reflects the significance of the Tata Advanced Systems Ltd. (TASL)-Airbus facility in Vadodara, Gujarat?
(a) The TASL-Airbus facility solely focuses on producing civil aircraft for global exports.
(b) It marks India's first military aircraft production plant in the private sector, manufacturing the C295 for the Indian Air Force.
(c) This collaboration allows India to import aircraft components for assembly.
(d) The facility exclusively targets maritime patrol and disaster response missions for the Indian Air Force

77. Which of the following statements best captures the objective of the Ayushman Bharat PradhanMantri Jan ArogyaYojana (AB PM-JAY)?
(a) To provide universal health coverage for all Indian citizens without income-based limits.
(b) To replace existing healthcare schemes for all government employees with a comprehensive plan for preventive care.
(c) To cover only primary healthcare services with no focus on secondary or tertiary care.
(d) To offer health insurance coverage up to ₹5 lakhs annually per family for secondary and tertiary hospital care to vulnerable families.

78. Which of the following statements is correct regarding the Indian Coast Guard's new Fast Patrol Vessels (FPVs) 'Adamya' and 'Akshar'?
(a) They are equipped with Controllable Pitch Propeller-based propulsion, aiding maneuverability.

(b) They are entirely manufactured with imported components to enhance quality.

(c) These vessels have a maximum speed of 35 knots, enhancing rapid response capability.

(d) They have been manufactured by Hindustan Shipyard Ltd. to support fisheries protection.

79. Consider the following statements regarding the Indian Cybercrime Coordination Centre (I4C):

1. It has been established under the Ministry of Science and Technology (MHA) to deal with cybercrime in the country in a coordinated and comprehensive manner.

2. I4C brings together academia, industry, the public and government in the prevention, detection, investigation, and prosecution of cybercrimes.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

80. Marapi Volcano, recently seen in the news, lies in which country?

(a) Chile
(b) Japan
(c) United States
(d) Indonesia

81. Consider the following statements regarding the PradhanMantriVanbandhuKalyanYojana:

1. It aims to empower tribal communities in India and establishes a framework for sustainable development.

2. Under this PradhanMantriAdiAdarsh Gram Yojana helps the development of road and telecom connectivity, education and health services facilities.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

82. Consider the following statements about Gulf of Oman

1. This Gulf connects the Arabian Sea with the Strait of Hormuz, which then empties into the Persian Gulf.

2. Muscat, the capital of Oman, is located on the coast of the gulf.

3. It is bordered by Pakistan, Iran and the United Arab Emirates.

How many of the statements given above are correct?

(a) Only one
(b) Only two
(c) All three
(d) None

83. Consider the following statements regarding the Digital Arrest Scam:

1. Scammers only target individuals with a history of cybercrimes to make the scam seem realistic.

2. Video calls are sometimes used by scammers to add credibility to their impersonation.

3. Victims are often coerced into providing personal information under the threat of immediate arrest.

4. The scam typically involves quoting false legal provisions to pressure victims.

Which of the above statements are correct?

(a) 1, 2, and 3 only
(b) 2, 3, and 4 only
(c) 2 and 4 only
(d) 1, 2, 3, and 4

84. Consider the following statements regarding Coral Triangle:

1. It includes countries like Indonesia, Malaysia and Papua New Guinea.

2. It is known as the 'Amazon of the seas'.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

85. With reference to Sohrai's painting, consider the following statements:

1. It is an indigenous mural art form.

2. It is mainly made by tribal women of Northeastern India.
3. The theme of this painting is based on natural elements of the universe like forests and rivers.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
(a) 1 and 2
(b) 1 and 3
(c) 2 and 3
(d) All three

86. Rani Chennamma is associated with which one of the following events?
(a) Santal Rebellion
(b) Koya Revolt
(c) Ahom revolt
(d) Kittur Rebellion

87. Consider the following statements about Kadar tribe
1. They are predominantly found in the forests of Kerala and Tamil Nadu.
2. The Kadar tribe is classified as a particularly vulnerable tribal group.
3. The Kadar is one of the oldest communities in the world to follow a matrilineal system.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
(a) 1 and 2
(b) 1 and 3
(c) 2 and 3
(d) All three

88. Consider the following statements about Bhu-Aadhaar
1. It is a 12-digit alpha-numeric identity is given to each land parcel.
2. It was launched in 2021 as part of the Central government's Digital India Land Records Modernisation Programme.
3. It is accorded to a land parcel based on the longitude and latitude coordinates.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
(a) 2 and 3
(b) 1 and 3
(c) 1 and 2
(d) All three

89. Which of the following statements best describes the purpose of the Abhay Anti-Submarine Warfare Shallow Water Craft?
(a) Designed for high-seas combat and long-range naval operations
(b) Built for air defense support in deep-sea operations
(c) Primarily developed for long-range patrolling in international waters
(d) Focused on low-intensity maritime operations, and mine-laying in coastal waters

90. What is a significant historical connection of the Pampa Valley and Angel Valley regions near the Periyar Tiger Reserve (PTR)?
(a) The regions were established as exclusive wildlife sanctuaries for endangered species.
(b) They were designated as protected areas for indigenous tribes.
(c) They are sites of the "Grow More Food" campaign, supporting post-war veterans in 1947-48.
(d) These valleys were developed as tourism hubs immediately after India's independence.

91. Consider the following statements regarding Coking Coal:
1. It typically contains less carbon, more ash and more moisture than thermal coal.
2. It is an essential ingredient in the production of steel.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
(a) 1 only
(b) 2 only
(c) Both 1 and 2
(d) Neither 1 nor 2

92. Consider the following statements regarding the Great Indian Bustard:
1. It is the heaviest of the flying birds which inhabits dry grasslands and scrublands.
2. It is mainly found in the Rajasthan and Maharashtra regions.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
(a) 1 only

(b)   2 only

(c)   Both 1 and 2

(d)   Neither 1 nor 2

93. Consider the following statements regarding the Pandemic Fund Project:
1.   It is designed to enhance animal health security by upgrading and expanding animal health laboratories.
2.   It is funded by the Food and Agriculture Organization.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

(a)   1 only

(b)   2 only

(c)   Both 1 and 2

(d)   Neither 1 nor 2

94. With reference to the 21st Livestock Census, consider the following:
1.   It aims to collect information about sixteen animal species.
2.   It collects data on the contribution of pastoralists to the livestock sector.
3.   It will not carry out a headcount of poultry birds and stray animals in the country.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

(a)   1 and 2

(b)   1 and 3

(c)   2 and 3

(d)   All three

95. Consider the following statements regarding Cybersquatting:
1.   It is an act of registering or using a domain name to profit from a trademark, corporate or personal name of an individual.
2.   It is penalised under the Information Technology Act 2000 in India.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

(a)   1 only

(b)   2 only

(c)   Both 1 and 2

(d)   Neither 1 nor 2

96. Which one of the following is the best description of 'Begonia neisti', that was in the news recently?

(a)   A new species of flowering plant discovered in Northeast India.

(b)   An invasive alien species found in the Eastern Ghats.

(c)   A rare medicinal herb found in the Western Ghats.

(d)   A rare species of orchid found in the Andaman Islands.

97. Consider the following statements regarding the National Mission for Manuscripts (NMM):
1.   It was established by the Ministry of Education, Government of India.
2.   The majority of existing Indian manuscripts are in Sanskrit.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

(a)   1 only

(b)   2 only

(c)   Both 1 and 2

(d)   Neither 1 nor 2

98. The AsolaBhatti Wildlife Sanctuary is situated on the northern terminal of which mountain range?

(a)   Himalayas

(b)   Western Ghats

(c)   Vindhya Range

(d)   Aravalli Range

99. Consider the following statements regarding the Center for Generative AI:
1.   It will be established by the IndiaAI' and Meta at IIT Jodhpur.
2.   It aims to nurture 1 lakh youth developers & entrepreneurs in AI skills over the next 3 years.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

(a)   1 only

(b)   2 only

(c)   Both 1 and 2

(d)   Neither 1 nor 2

100. Consider the following statements about Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR)
1.   It is an autonomous body under the Ministry of Culture.
2.   ICCR was founded in 1950 by MaulanaAbulKalam Azad.
3.   It promotes, through its network of cultural centres, Indian culture abroad.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
- (a) 2 and 3
- (b) 1 and 3
- (c) 1 and 2
- (d) All three

101. Consider the following statements about Exercise SIMBEX
1. It is an annual bilateral naval exercise between the Indian Navy and Sri Lankan Navy.
2. The 2024 edition is being held in the Eastern Naval Command at Visakhapatnam.

Choose the incorrect statements:
- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 only
- (c) Both 1 and 2
- (d) Neither 1 nor 2

102. Which of the port is the India's first port to introduce Green Ship Incentives through the Environmental Ship Index (ESI)?
- (a) Visakhapatnam Port
- (b) Mormugao port
- (c) Kandla port
- (d) Jawaharlal Nehru Port

103. Consider the following statements about the 2024 Emission Gap Report:
1. The Emission Gap Report is published by the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).
2. It assesses the difference between current and necessary emission levels to meet the targets of the Paris Agreement.
3. The report focuses on the need for developed countries to update their NDCs before 2025.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?
- (a) 2 and 3 only
- (b) 1 and 2 only
- (c) 1 and 3 only
- (d) None of the above

104. Consider the following statements about the Ethanol Blending Program (EBP):
1. The program aims to achieve a 20% ethanol blend in petrol by 2025, advancing the original target from 2030.
2. The Ministry of New and Renewable Energy is the nodal ministry for this program.
3. The EBP is expected to provide economic benefits to sugarcane farmers by creating demand for ethanol.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
- (a) 2 and 3
- (b) 1 and 3
- (c) 1 and 2
- (d) All three

105. The 'EOS-06 Satellite' is designed primarily for studies related to which of the following?
- (a) Earth's oceans and coastal zones
- (b) Space weather observation
- (c) Forest cover analysis
- (d) Agricultural monitoring

106. Which of the following themes was adopted for the 16th BRICS Summit 2024?
- (a) "Inclusive Growth for All"
- (b) "Strengthening Multilateralism for Just Global Development and Security"
- (c) "Multilateralism for a Secure World"
- (d) "Strengthening Global Alliances for Development"

107. Who among the following publishes the World Economic Outlook (WEO)?
- (a) World Bank
- (b) International Monetary Fund (IMF)
- (c) World Economic Forum (WEF)
- (d) World Trade Organization (WTO)

108. Consider the following statements regarding the UDAN (UdeDeshkaAamNagrik) Scheme:
1. The scheme envisages providing connectivity to unserved and underserved airports of the country through the revival of existing airstrips and airports.
2. The government works in partnership with airlines to provide subsidies and incentives to operate flights on underserved and unserved routes.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
- (a) 1 only

(b)   2 only
(c)   Both 1 and 2
(d)   Neither 1 nor 2

109.   Consider the following statements regarding the LISA Mission:
1.   It is a collaborative effort between the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) and the European Space Agency (ESA).
2.   It aims to detect and study gravitational waves.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
(a)   1 only
(b)   2 only
(c)   Both 1 and 2
(d)   Neither 1 nor 2

110.   Consider the following statements regarding the PM-YASASVI Scheme:
1.   It is an umbrella scheme aimed at uplifting students from Other Backward Classes (OBC) and Economically Backward Classes.
2.   It is implemented by the Union Ministry of Tribal Affairs.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
(a)   1 only
(b)   2 only
(c)   Both 1 and 2
(d)   Neither 1 nor 2

111.   Consider the following statements about Space Docking Experiment (SPADEX)
1.   It is one of ISRO's most significant steps towards developing autonomous docking technology.
2.   The mission involves two vehicles 'Chaser' and the 'Target'—coming together and connecting in space.

Choose the correct statements:
(a)   1 only
(b)   2 only
(c)   Both 1 and 2
(d)   Neither 1 nor 2

112.   Consider the following statements about Mission Mausam:
1.   Mission Mausam is primarily focused on weather modification, targeting

events like rainfall, fog, and lightning strikes.
2.   The Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology (IITM) is developing a unique cloud chamber with convection properties to study Indian monsoon clouds.
3.   The Mission aims to predict monsoon patterns across South Asia by focusing on oceanographic phenomena.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?
(a)   3 only
(b)   1 and 2 only
(c)   2 only
(d)   1, 2, and 3

113.   The 'Korowai tribe', recently seen in the news, is located in:
(a)   Amazon Rainforest
(b)   Indonesia
(c)   Northern Australia
(d)   Andaman Islands

114.   The Han River flow through which one of the following major cities?
(a)   Bangkok
(b)   Jakarta
(c)   Beijing
(d)   Seoul

115.   Consider the following statements regarding the Cloud chamber:
1.   It is a scientific apparatus that mimics the conditions required for cloud formation.
2.   India is building its first cloud chamber at the Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology (IITM), Pune.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
(a)   1 only
(b)   2 only
(c)   Neither 1 nor 2
(d)   Both 1 and 2

116.   Consider the following statements
1.   Common lands are natural resources that are used collectively by a community, such as forests, pastures, ponds and 'wastelands'.
2.   Public Land Protection Cell (PLPC), headed by the chairman of ZilaPanchayat receives complaints on

encroachments of rural common lands and resolves such disputes.
3. PLPC aids in reducing the financial burden of the citizens by allowing them to access legal recourse at a much cheaper cost.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
(a) 1 and 2
(b) 1 and 3
(c) 2 and 3
(d) All three

117. Consider the following statements about Bioluminescence
1. It is a natural phenomenon produced by certain marine organisms called dinoflagellates.
2. This occurs when the luciferase enzyme reacts with the luciferin compound in the presence of oxygen.

Choose the correct statements:
(a) 1 only
(b) 2 only
(c) Both 1 and 2
(d) Neither 1 nor 2

118. Consider the following submarines
1. INS Arihant
2. INS Aridhaman
3. INS Arighaat

Which of the above mentioned submarines are India's nuclear-powered ballistic missile submarines?
(a) 1 only
(b) 2 and 3
(c) 3 only
(d) 1, 2 and 3

119. The term "shadow fleet" has gained attention in the global maritime industry. Consider the following statements regarding "shadow fleet":
1. Shadow fleets obscure the ownership and origin of cargo to bypass international sanctions.
2. Shadow fleets are primarily operated under the national flags of countries with stringent maritime laws.
3. These fleets frequently change flags, names, and ownership to mask their activities.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
(a) 1 and 2
(b) 1 and 3
(c) 2 and 3
(d) All three

120. Consider the following statements regarding green hydrogen:
1. Green hydrogen is produced through electrolysis, using renewable energy sources.
2. The process of producing green hydrogen emits greenhouse gases.
3. Wind, solar, and hydropower are commonly used to generate green hydrogen.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?
(a) 1 and 3 only
(b) 1 only
(c) 2 and 3 only
(d) 1, 2, and 3

121. Consider the following statements regarding Nature Restoration Law (NRL), recently seen in the news:
1. It is a European Union (EU) law to tackle the triple crises of climate change, biodiversity loss, and environmental degradation.
2. It sets binding targets on member states to restore degraded ecosystems.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
(a) 1 only
(b) 2 only
(c) Both 1 and 2
(d) Neither 1 nor 2

122. Consider the following statements regarding the eShram One-Stop Solution:
1. It is an initiative of the Union Ministry of Commerce & Industry.
2. It provides seamless access to different Social Security Schemes to the registered unorganised workers.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
(a) 1 only
(b) 2 only
(c) Both 1 and 2
(d) Neither 1 nor 2

123. Consider the following statements regarding Nilgiri tit Butterfly:
1. It is found in the KalakkadMundanthurai Tiger Reserve.
2. It is classified under Schedule II of the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
(a) 1 only
(b) 2 only
(c) Both 1 and 2
(d) Neither 1 nor 2

124. Consider the following statements regarding Kala-azar:
1. Kala-azar is caused by a protozoan parasite called Leishmaniadonovani.
2. The primary vector for Kala-azar in India is the Aedes mosquito.
3. Severe anemia is one of the prominent symptoms of Kala-azar.

Which of the above statements are correct?
(a) 1 and 2
(b) 1 and 3
(c) 2 and 3
(d) 1, 2, and 3

125. With reference to the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act (PCMA), 2006, consider the following statements:
1. It has provisions to prohibit child marriages, provide relief to victims, and enhance punishment for those who abet, promote, or solemnize such marriages.
2. The District Collector is the nodal officer at the district level for the purpose of implementation of the Act.
3. Child Marriage Prohibition Officers (CMPO) are to be appointed in every state to prohibit child marriages and ensure the protection of the victims as well as the prosecution of the offenders.

How many of the statements given above are correct?
(a) Only one
(b) Only two
(c) All three
(d) None

126. "Sri Singeeswarar Temple", recently seen in the news, is located in which one of the following states?
(a) Maharashtra
(b) Tamil Nadu
(c) Odisha
(d) Kerala

127. Consider the following statements regarding the Moonlight Programme:
1. It is an initiative of the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO).
2. It consists of a constellation of five lunar satellites which provide telecommunication and navigation services for the Moon.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
(a) 1 only
(b) 2 only
(c) Both 1 and 2
(d) Neither 1 nor 2

128. Consider the following statements regarding the National Water Awards:
1. It is given by the Department of Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation.
2. It is awarded for creating awareness among the people about the importance of water.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
(a) 1 only
(b) 2 only
(c) Both 1 and 2
(d) Neither 1 nor 2

129. Exercise Naseem-Al-Bahr is held between India and:
(a) Saudi Arabia
(b) Japan
(c) Indonesia
(d) Oman

130. Consider the following statements regarding Abhidhamma Divas:
1. It commemorates the day when Lord Buddha descended from the celestial realm, Tāvatiṃsa-devaloka to Sankassiya.

2. It coincides with the end of the first Rainy Retreat (Vassa) and the Pavāraṇā festival.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

131. Consider the following statements regarding Smart Insulin (NNC2215):

1. It consists of a ring-shaped structure and a molecule with a similar shape to glucose called a glucoside.
2. It is developed by the Indian Institute of Science in collaboration with the World Health Organisation.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

132. Consider the following statements about Next Generation Missile Vessels (NGMV)

1. Six NGMVs are being built by Cochin Shipyard Limited (CSL)
2. The primary role of the ships would be to provide offensive capability against enemy warships.
3. The core of the NGMV propulsion system is the LM2500, a marine gas turbine.

How many of the statements given above are correct?

(a) Only one
(b) Only two
(c) None
(d) All three

133. Which of the following is NOT an example of non-kinetic warfare?

(a) Cyberattacks targeting a nation's power grid.
(b) Bombing a military installation to destroy communication infrastructure.
(c) Spreading disinformation to manipulate public opinion during elections.
(d) Jamming satellite communications to disrupt a country's defense systems.

134. With reference to the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC), consider the following:

1. Nepal
2. Bhutan
3. Myanmar
4. Thailand
5. Bangladesh

How many of the countries are members of BIMSTEC?

(a) Only two
(b) Only three
(c) Only four
(d) All five

135. Consider the following statements regarding the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD):

1. is the most comprehensive binding international agreement in the field of nature conservation and the sustainable use of natural resources.
2. It has the objective to fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising out of the utilisation of genetic resources.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

136. Consider the following statements regarding Marine Heat Wave:

1. It occurs when the surface temperature of a particular region of the sea rises above the average temperature.
2. It damages marine habitats and also impacts coral reefs and species displacement.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

137. With reference to Vitiligo disease, consider the following:

1. It is a chronic skin disorder that occurs when melanocytes are destroyed.

2. It can be cured permanently by using phototherapy treatment.

3. It affects both men and women equally.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

(a) 1 and 2
(b) 1 and 3
(c) 2 and 3
(d) All three

138. Consider the following statements regarding Trojan asteroids:

1. These are remnants of the primordial material that formed the outer planets.

2. These occupy a stable Lagrange Point in a planet's orbit around the sun.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

139. Consider the following statements regarding Hyperuniformity:

1. It involves density fluctuations in the long-wavelength range decay to zero.

2. It can be used to control various physiological functions in cells.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

140. Petra, recently seen in the news, is an archaeological city located in which country?

(a) Egypt
(b) Jordan
(c) Greece
(d) Iraq

141. Consider the following statements regarding the World Energy Outlook report:

1. It is an annual report published by the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC).

2. It identifies and explores the biggest trends in energy demand and supply, as well as what they mean for energy security, emissions, and economic development.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

142. Consider the following statements regarding the Karakoram Wildlife Sanctuary:

1. It is located to the north of Hemis National Park and to the east of Deosai National Park.

2. River Shyok and Nubra Rivers are the major water sources of this sanctuary

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

143. Consider the following statements regarding the Hand-in-Hand Initiative:

1. It is a flagship program of the Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO).

2. It seeks to eradicate poverty and end hunger and malnutrition by using biophysical and socio-economic data.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

144. Consider the following statements about Bushveld Igneous Complex (BIC)

1. It is the largest layered igneous intrusion within the Earth's crust.

2. It is located in North-Western Australia.

3. It is renowned for containing some of the richest ore deposits.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

(a) 1 and 2
(b) 1 and 3
(c) 2 and 3
(d) All three

145. Consider the following statements about Prime Minister Early Career Research Grant (PMECRG)

1. It is designed with a flexible budget and incorporates progressive initiatives to facilitate ease of research.
2. It was launched by the Council of Scientific & Industrial Research (CSIR) and NITI Aayog.

Choose the incorrect statements:
(a)   1 only
(b)   2 only
(c)   Both 1 and 2
(d)   Neither 1 nor 2

146. SAMARTHAK, recently seen in news, is associated with?
(a)   First indigenous multi-purpose vessel
(b)   Third Survey vessel of India Navy
(c)   First indigenous air-Independent Propulsion Technology
(d)   An app to register missing person

147. Consider the following statements about the Battle of Walong:
1. It is the only Indian counterattack during the 1962 war.
2. Indian forces held off a much larger Chinese army.
3. The battle demonstrated India's only counteroffensive during the Sino-Indian War.
4. Walong is located in Arunachal Pradesh, near the McMahon Line.

Which of the above statements are correct?
(a)   1 and 3
(b)   1, 2 and 4
(c)   1, 3, and 4
(d)   1, 2, 3, and 4

148. Consider the following statements regarding the Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP):
1. It is a framework designed to combat air pollution in the Delhi-NCR region.
2. The Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) oversees the implementation of GRAP.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
(a)   1 only
(b)   2 only
(c)   Both 1 and 2
(d)   Neither 1 nor 2

149. With reference to Kaziranga National Park, consider the following:

1. It is located in the state of Assam.
2. It is declared as a World Heritage Site by UNESCO.
3. The River Manas passes through this national park.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
(a)   1 and 2
(b)   1 and 3
(c)   2 and 3
(d)   All three

150. Consider the following statements regarding the International Solar Alliance (ISA) Assembly:
1. It is the apex decision-making body of the International Solar Alliance.
2. It meets annually and India is the President of this assembly.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
(a)   1 only
(b)   2 only
(c)   Both 1 and 2
(d)   Neither 1 nor 2

151. Consider the following statements about Swell Waves
1. It is the formation of long wavelength waves on the surface of the seas.
2. They occur due to the local winds.
3. These waves can propagate in directions that differ from the direction of the wind.
4. Their wavelengths always exceed more than 150 m.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
(a)   1, 2and 3
(b)   1 and 3
(c)   2, 3and 4
(d)   All four

152. The term "Hibakusha" refers to:
(a)   survivors of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki
(b)   Japanese soldiers who fought in World War II
(c)   victims of the 2011 Fukushima nuclear disaster
(d)   people displaced during World War II

153. Consider the following statements regarding the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO):
    1. It is a specialized agency of the United Nations (UN) that leads international efforts to defeat hunger.
    2. It is headquartered in Rome, Italy.
    Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
    (a) 1 only
    (b) 2 only
    (c) Both 1 and 2
    (d) Neither 1 nor 2

154. Roopkund Lake, recently seen in the news, is located in which one of the following states?
    (a) Punjab
    (b) Arunachal Pradesh
    (c) Meghalaya
    (d) Uttarakhand

155. Hellfire Missiles, recently seen in the news, are developed by which one of the following countries?
    (a) Russia
    (b) United States of America
    (c) United Kingdom
    (d) Iran

156. Consider the following statements regarding Ossification test:
    1. It is a medical procedure that analyses bones in order to determine age.
    2. It is used to assess skeletal maturity in children with growth disorders.
    Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
    (a) 1 only
    (b) 2 only
    (c) Both 1 and 2

    (d) Neither 1 nor 2

157. With reference to Diphtheria, consider the following statements:
    1. It is a bacterial infection of the nose and throat.
    2. It is a contagious infection which can usually spread through respiratory droplets.
    3. There is no treatment available for this infection.
    Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
    (a) 1 and 2
    (b) 1 and 3
    (c) 2 and 3
    (d) All three

158. Consider the following statements regarding e-Migrate Portal v2.0:
    1. It promotes safe and legal migration for Indian workers abroad.
    2. The platform integrates with Digilocker for seamless document submission.
    3. It was launched by the Ministry of Labor and Employment.
    Which of the above statements is/are correct?
    (a) 1 only
    (b) 1, 2, and 3
    (c) 1 and 2 only
    (d) 2 and 3 only

ANSWER KEYS

1	D	51	B	101	A	151	B
2	B	52	C	102	B	152	A
3	C	53	B	103	A	153	C
4	A	54	A	104	B	154	D
5	C	55	C	105	A	155	B
6	C	56	B	106	B	156	C
7	A	57	C	107	B	157	A
8	D	58	D	108	C	158	C
9	C	59	A	109	C		
10	C	60	B	110	A		
11	C	61	C	111	C		
12	C	62	B	112	B		
13	D	63	B	113	B		
14	B	64	B	114	D		
15	D	65	A	115	D		
16	D	66	A	116	B		
17	C	67	B	117	C		
18	C	68	A	118	D		
19	A	69	A	119	B		
20	D	70	A	120	A		
21	C	71	B	121	C		
22	D	72	B	122	B		
23	D	73	C	123	C		
24	D	74	A	124	B		
25	C	75	C	125	C		
26	A	76	B	126	B		
27	C	77	D	127	B		
28	B	78	A	128	C		
29	D	79	B	129	D		
30	C	80	D	130	C		
31	B	81	C	131	A		
32	C	82	C	132	D		
33	D	83	B	133	B		
34	C	84	C	134	D		
35	C	85	B	135	C		
36	D	86	D	136	C		
37	A	87	A	137	B		
38	D	88	A	138	C		
39	A	89	D	139	C		
40	D	90	C	140	B		
41	C	91	B	141	B		
42	A	92	C	142	C		
43	B	93	A	143	C		
44	D	94	A	144	B		
45	D	95	A	145	B		
46	D	96	A	146	A		
47	D	97	B	147	B		
48	A	98	D	148	A		
49	C	99	C	149	A		
50	C	100	A	150	C		