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YOUR SUCCESS : OUR MOTTO.

Message from the Founder and Chief Mentor



Dr. Bhabani Shankar Chayani

Dear students,

The present issue of "LISAS CAREER IN FOCUS" has got some added features. It contains analytical articles contributed by different groups of students with elaborate studies.

LISAS'IAS is committed for all round development of the candidates preparing for the Civil Services examinations. Hence, it organized group discussions on different topics in which the students participated with great enthusiasm. Their presentations were evaluated by the experts who suggested further improvements. Following that the contents of these group discussions were curated and included in the articles being published in this issue of the magazine. I am quite sure that these articles and other topics of the magazine will be of great help for you.

I wish you "ALL THE BEST"

Dr. Bhabani Shankar Chayani

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Dear students,

“LISAS CAREER IN FOCUS” aims at improving your skills and helping you master different areas of general knowledge which is an important requirement for your success in all the competitive examinations. It contains significant information about the recent events.

In order to achieve success you need to be focused, hardworking and determined. You must polish your skills and try to improve yourself. Devote your time and attention to your preparation which will help you in getting positive results.

BEST OF LUCK

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Linu Chayani'.

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ISSUES OF THE MONTH

THE SYRIAN CONFLICT

The Syrian conflict also known as the Syrian Civil War, began in 2011 as part of the broader wave of the Arab Spring protests. Initially sparked by demonstrations against President Bashar al-Assad's authoritarian regime, the conflict quickly escalated into a



full-scale civil war. It involves multiple factions, including the Syrian government, opposition groups, Kurdish forces, and various Islamist extremist organizations, with foreign powers such as Russia, Iran, Turkey, and the United States also playing significant roles. The war has led to widespread devastation, with hundreds of thousands killed and millions displaced. Complex geopolitical interests, sectarian divides, and the rise of terrorist groups like ISIS have made the conflict one of the most devastating and intractable wars in modern history. Despite several attempts at peace negotiations, a resolution remains elusive, and Syria continues to face a humanitarian crisis.

Syria's Location

It is a country in West Asia with Damascus as its capital city. It is in the Eastern Mediterranean and the Levant. The bordering

countries are- Turkey to the north, Iraq to the east, Jordan to the south, Israel, and Lebanon to the west.

Causes for the uprising of the war

The Syrian Civil War began with peaceful protests President Bashar al-Assad's regime in 2011 which quickly escalated into an armed conflict. In 2012-13 the conflict became a full-scale civil war with the Free Syrian Army fighting Assad's government. The regime was accused of using chemical weapons. In between 2014 and 2016 ISIS emerged as a major force, while international powers like the United States of America, Russia, and Iran became involved with Russia providing critical military support to Assad. In 2017-2019, Assad was supported by Russian and Iranian forces. Turkey intervened in the north, and de-escalation zones were established but often violated.

In 2020-2021, Idlib province became the last major battle ground as Assad's forces with Russian backing targeted opposition groups. In 2022 the United States and Turkey continued their military presence in Syria, and the country still faces challenges in reconstruction and economic recovery. In 2024, some Arab nations have moved towards normalizing relations with Assad, while Western countries maintain sanctions. The situation remains tense, especially with Kurdish groups in the north.

Escalation and Armed Conflict (2012-2013)

By the mid of 2012, the conflict had escalated into a full-scale civil war with the Free Syrian

Army (FSA) and other rebel groups fighting against Assad's government forces. The war began taking on sectarian dimensions with the majority Sunni Muslim opposition groups facing off against the Alawite-dominated Assad regime which is backed by Shia militias from Iraq and Hezbollah. In 2013, Assad's regime was accused of using chemical weapons, particularly the sarin gas attack in Ghouta leading to international outrage and calls for intervention.

Humanitarian Crisis

The Syrian conflict is one of the largest and most complex humanitarian crises in the world, the impact of which is hard to overstate. It has killed as well as affected millions of people both within Syria and across the region since it began in 2011. According to the United Nations Human Rights Office (OHCHR) in the year 2022 at least 306,887 civilians had been killed in Syria during the conflict between March 2011 and March 2021, representing about 1.5% of its pre-war population. As per the various war monitors, the total number of deaths in the Syrian Conflict is approximately 617,910 as of March 2024. The violence in Syria caused millions to flee their homes and over 6.8 million people are internally displaced within Syria which is one of the largest numbers globally.

Refugee Crisis

The conflict in Syria has caused the largest refugee crisis of our time, impacting millions of people within Syria and in surrounding countries. More than 5.4 million people have fled to the neighbouring countries, such as Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq, and Egypt. For instance, Turkey hosts the largest population of Syrian refugees with nearly 3 million people. An estimated 2.45 million children are out of school, and over a million are at risk of dropping out.

Economic Impact

The war in Syria constitutes a dramatic rupture in both the political and societal dynamics that preceded it. However, the longest and the most profound impact has been on the economy of the country. The Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS) estimated that Syria's GDP contracted by 55% between 2011 and 2020 and more than 90% of Syrians are living in poverty. The conflict caused extensive damage to Syria's infrastructure, disrupted agricultural systems causing food insecurity and even increased unemployment levels. The economic effects of the war have also affected neighbouring countries, particularly through trade.

Peace Talks

Many peace talks arranged by external actors to resolve the ongoing conflict in Syria were initiated but they have not been fruitful in achieving their objectives. Attempts to find a solution to the Syrian conflict began in late 2011 with two unsuccessful Arab League initiatives. In January 2012 and November 2013, Russia suggested talks in Moscow between the Syrian government and the opposition. In 2014, the Geneva Conference on Syria took place which was organised by the United Nations. In 2015, further talks started in Vienna involving United States, European Union, Russia, China, and various regional actors such as Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Turkey, and Iran. The Kazakh officials offered Astana as a neutral venue and "a natural home" for peace negotiations on Syria. The latest major effort to bring about an end to the war started in October 2019 in Geneva with the convening of the Syrian Constitutional Committee to draft a new constitution for Syria under the auspices of the United Nations. However, the peace process failed to produce meaningful results before Assad's regime was toppled by force in December 2024.

Impact on Middle East

The rise of Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham influence could lead to a new wave of extremism and complicate Syria's ethnic and sectarian decisions increasing the risk of fragmentation or prolonged conflict in Syria. Regional instability has destabilized the entire Middle East, and made Syria into a battleground for proxy wars involving global powers that has resulted in displacement and regional tensions. The conflict has disrupted trade routes and economic activities severely impacting global oil prices. Widespread human rights violation is also observed in the Gulf region.

India's Interests in Syria

A Line of Credit amounting to US\$ 240 million was extended to Syria for part financing (52%) of the 2x200 MW Tishreen Thermal Power Plant Extension project costing US\$ 430 million. India-Syria Centre of Excellence in IT was set up at Damascus with the assistance from Government of India through C-DAC in December 2010, but could not be operationalised due to premature recall of the Indian experts on security grounds when the crisis broke. India facilitated the development and modernization of the Hama Iron and Steel Plant, under a LOC of US\$25 million, which was extended to Syria in 2008. Indian company Apollo International Limited in tandem with GECOSTEEL under the Syrian Ministry of Industry has completed (2017) the project during the crisis. An MOU on Cooperation in Fertilizer sector was also concluded in October 2010. The MOU will facilitate Indian involvement in the development of phosphatic fertilizer sector in Syria. Further, cooperation in this field must

resume post crisis Syria. India has two significant investments in Syria in the oil sector. Firstly, an agreement signed in January 2004 between ONGC and IPR International for exploration of oil/natural gas in Deir-ez-Zour in northern Syria. Secondly, investment by ONGC India and CNPC China to jointly acquire the 37% stake of PetroCanada in the Syrian Al Furat Petroleum Company. OVL is currently facing difficulties in its operations due to the sanctions imposed by US & EU on the Syrian oil sector.

Syrian Conflict and India's Soft Power

India has been involved in providing humanitarian aid and supporting peace in Syria. India and Syria enjoy friendly political relations based on historic and civilizational links. Both countries have a secular, nationalist, and developmental orientation, share similar perceptions on many international and regional issues and are a member of Non-Aligned Movement. India's traditional support for just Arab causes notably the Palestinian cause and for the return of the occupied Golan Heights to Syria is appreciated by the Syrians. Mahatma Gandhi, Tagore, Nehru, and Indira Gandhi are remembered with great respect. Soft power, humanitarian, and peacekeeping efforts in Syria could enhance India's global image who believes dialogue is the way to resolve any conflict.

Conclusion

The Syrian conflict stands as one of the most devastating modern wars with no clear resolution in sight and the broader implications for regional and global stability still unfolding.

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STRENGTHENING INDIA'S AGRICULTURE SECTOR

Agriculture is the backbone of the Indian economy providing livelihood to over 50% of the population. With a rich history tracing back to the Indus Valley civilization, Indian agriculture has evolved significantly over the centuries. Settled life soon followed with implements and technologies being adopted for agriculture.

Under the leadership of M.S Swaminathan, the green revolution in India began in the



1960s with the introduction of high yielding varieties of rice, and wheat to increase food production to reduce hunger and poverty. The period between 1991 to 2003 is known as the period of Golden revolution in India.

Strengthening Indian agriculture requires a multi-faceted approach that addresses various challenges such as low productivity, water scarcity, and climate change and promotes sustainable agricultural practices.

Role of agriculture in Indian Economy

Agriculture sustains nearly 45% of India's workforce and contributes around 15% to GDP. Over 80% of the rural households depend on agriculture, driving poverty alleviation and rural development. Agricultural exports significantly boost India's trade balance and foreign exchange reserves. It ensures food security and supports key industries like textiles and food processing. This sector promotes allied industries like

dairy and fisheries, enhancing employment opportunities. Various ways agriculture is important includes contribution to the national income, employment generation, basis of economic development and internal trade.

Challenges in agriculture

- 1. Climate Change Vulnerability:** The increasing frequency of extreme weather events is severely impacting crop yields and farming patterns across India. Heat waves, erratic rainfall, and unseasonal rains have created unprecedented challenges for traditional agricultural calendars and crop choices. In 2023, India experienced its second-warmest year on record.
- 2. Water Stress and Irrigation Inefficiency:** India's agricultural sector continues to be the largest consumer of water with only 11% of India's agricultural land under micro-irrigation.
- 3. Land Fragmentation and Declining Farm Sizes:** The continuous division of agricultural land is severely impacting economic viability of farming operations and technology adoption. The average landholding for farming among farmers in the country decreased from 1.08 hectares in 2016-17 to just 0.74 hectares in 2021-22.
- 4. Technology Adoption Gap:** The digital divide and lack of technical knowledge continue to hamper modern agriculture practice adoption. As of 2023, only 30% of Indian farmers utilize digital technology in agriculture, with rural digital literacy remaining at just 25%.
- 5. Pests and Diseases:** Pests and diseases destroy a significant

percentage of crops annually, leading to economic losses and food shortages.

6. **Economic Challenges:** Many farmers lack access to affordable credit, limiting their ability to invest in quality seeds, fertilizers, and modern equipment. Price fluctuations in global commodity markets also create uncertainty and financial instability for farmers.
7. **Policy and Governance Issues:** Inefficient subsidies, tariffs, and trade barriers distort markets and harm local farmers. Unclear or inequitable land tenure systems prevent farmers from making long-term investments in their land.
8. **Sustainability and Biodiversity:** Expanding agricultural land at the expense of forests leads to biodiversity loss and contributes to climate change. Intensive farming practices lead to the depletion of natural resources such as groundwater and nutrients.

Strategies to strengthen Indian Agriculture

1. **Investment in Agricultural Research and Development:** Developing high-yielding variety (HYV) seeds and genetically modified (GM) crops that are more resistant to pests and diseases can significantly boost productivity. Research into integrated pest management (IPM) techniques to reduce reliance on chemical pesticides and promote sustainable farming practices.
2. **Infrastructure Development:** Promoting the use of drip and sprinkler irrigation systems to enhance water use efficiency and reduce wastage. The Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchai Yojana (PMKSY) scheme aims to improve water use efficiency through micro-irrigation and other methods. Developing rural infrastructures like roads, storage facilities, and cold chains to reduce post-harvest losses.
3. **Government Schemes and Economic Support:** Expanding the reach of crop insurance schemes like Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY) to provide financial assistance for crop losses due to natural disasters. Facilitating the adoption of new technologies by providing financial aid and subsidies directly to farmers through direct benefit transfer.
4. **Improve Irrigation and Water Management:** Farmers should adopt water conservation techniques and ensure that water is being distributed equally.
5. **Technological Advancements:** Farmers are being encouraged to adopt modern farming techniques for better agriculture growth. Utilization of initiatives like Digital India and Sub-Mission on Agriculture Mechanisation would help in proper monitoring of crop health by using AI and drones.
6. **Sustainable Practices:** Good and sustainable agricultural practices help to enhance soil health and reduce the dependency on harmful chemical products. Paramparagat Krishi Vikas Yojana (PKVY) is a scheme which helps to promote sustainable farming and organic agricultural practices.
7. **Market Reforms:** Markets must be directly accessible to farmers. Sources like e-NAM helps to reduce middlemen intrusion and help farmers to access the domestic and international markets.
8. **Climate Resilient Strategies:** National Innovations in Climate Resilient Agriculture (NICRA) promotes investments in the research for climate resilient crops. Developing and promoting

a variety of climate resilient crops will help to mitigate the impact of climate change.

- 9. Education and Training:** Krishi Vigyan Kendras (KVK) helps to educate farmers on the advanced agriculture techniques and provides training to grow better agricultural crops.

Some other strategic planning to strengthen Indian Agriculture

Increasing well-planned investment on basic infrastructures like power and irrigation as well as increasing arable land by reducing dumping and patenting. Government budgetary provision should allocate more budget for agriculture as an efficient credit policy regime with the required rural banking and credit system. Greater access to land for the poor will improve employability. Modern mechanisation should be utilised to increase productivity.

Eradication of corruption and scams as it develops unequal competition and rise in poverty. Developing educational institutions for farmers so that they can competently learn new techniques to adopt in agriculture. Focus on future research as current situation and trends connected with agriculture call for new responses. A sense of confidence, security and national sovereignty should be developed among farmers. Globalization has the potential to transform subsistence agriculture to commercialized agriculture that provide better remuneration.

Role of Agricultural Modernisation in India's Growth Journey

Agricultural modernization has played a pivotal role in India's growth journey by significantly increasing food production, improving rural livelihoods, and contributing to the overall economic development of the country. But most significantly it has played a crucial role in India's economic growth by

increasing crop productivity, improving food security, generating rural employment, boosting farmer incomes, and facilitating better market access through advanced technologies like precision farming, irrigation systems, and high-yielding crop varieties. Agricultural modernization is important for India's growth because it can:

- 1. Increase productivity:** Modern technologies like mechanization, precision farming, and improved irrigation can help farmers increase their yields.
- 2. Reduce production costs:** Modern technologies can streamline farming operations, reduce labour requirements, and minimize post-harvest losses.
- 3. Improve food security:** Increasing production can help ensure that more people have access to nutritious and affordable food.
- 4. Create new jobs:** Modernization can help create new jobs and improve the quality of life for rural communities.
- 5. Enable sustainable agricultural practices:** Modernization can help farmers adopt sustainable agricultural practices that preserve the environment while increasing productivity.
- 6. Strengthening Rural Infrastructure and Logistics:** Robust rural infrastructure is essential for modernized agriculture, enabling farmers to access markets and reduce post-harvest losses.
- 7. Value Addition and Agri-Processing:** Agricultural modernization promotes the integration of farming with food processing industries, adding value to raw produce and boosting farmer incomes.
- 8. Empowering Small and Marginal Farmers:** Modernization creates an inclusive ecosystem for small and

marginal farmers, who constitute over 85% of India's farming population.

9. Improving Export Competitiveness:

Modernizing agriculture enhances India's capacity to compete in global markets and expand its agricultural exports.

10. Digital and Financial Inclusion:

Modernization ensures financial inclusion and improved access to resources for farmers.

Odisha's Role

Recently Prime Minister Modi in his monthly radio programme of Mann ki baat highlighted the Vegetable Revolution happening in the Golamunda block of Kalahandi district in Odisha. He praised the efforts of Shri Krushna Nag who started this revolution. This region in Kalahandi was infamous for unemployment and seasonal migration due to the region's scarcity of water and resources. But today, by adopting modern farming technologies, the farmers are cultivating tomatoes and bitter gourd over a collective area of 350 acres with an annual turnover of Rs 1.5 crores. They are also learning new techniques for cultivating onions and potatoes.

In India recently the Agricultural Export Policy is formulated for the first time which has led to

increase in agriculture exports. Dragon fruits have been exported from Odisha to Dubai for the first time which were grown organically in the farm fields of Deputy Chief Minister KV Singh Deo in Bolangir district. As organic farming fetches better remuneration as well as is good for the environment, more farmers are being encouraged to pursue this. India's certified organic farming area has increased and now it has the fourth largest area globally for organic farming.

Way Ahead

India's agricultural sector is facing several challenges, which are limiting its growth and development. However, the government has implemented several policies aimed at addressing these challenges. A combine effort of government policies, private sector investment, and farmer-led innovations can unlock the sector's full potential. By embracing sustainable practices, empowering farmers, and leveraging technology like the employment of robotics, temperature and moisture sensors, aerial photos and GPS technology, India can not only meet its domestic food needs but also emerge as a global agricultural powerhouse.

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ELECTORAL SYSTEM IN INDIA

India is a socialist, secular, democratic republic, and the largest democracy in the world. The Modern India nation state came into existence on 15th of August 1947. India is a constitutional democracy with a parliamentary system of government and at the heart of the system lies a commitment



to hold regular, free, and fair elections. The election determines the composition of the government, the membership of the two houses of

parliament, the state and union territory legislative assemblies and presidency and vice-presidency. Elections are also held for local bodies such as municipal corporations and panchayati raj institutions.

India's Electoral System

Election is a very important part of a democratic country. 2024 was a significant year in the history of global democracy as more than 64 nations held presidential and general elections. India's election system has some unique features compared to other countries.

1. **Parliamentary System:** India follows a parliamentary system of government like the United Kingdom. The president is the head of state, while the prime minister is the head of government. In contrast, the United States of America follows a presidential system where the president is

both the head of the state and government.

2. **Election Commission:** India has an independent election commission that oversees the entire election process, ensuring free and fair elections. This is similar to many other democracies, but the scale and complexity in India are unique due to its vast population and diversity.
3. **First Past-The Post System:** India uses the first-past-the post (FPTP) system for its election, where the candidate with the most vote wins. This is similar to the United Kingdom but different from countries like Germany which use proportional representation.
4. **Simultaneous Elections:** India often holds simultaneous elections for the Lok Sabha (House of the People) and State Legislative Assemblies, although not always. This can be different from countries like United States of America where federal and state elections are separately.
5. **Universal Adult Franchise:** India grants the right to vote to all citizens aged 18 years and above. This is a common feature in many democracies but was a significant achievement for India given its diverse and complex society.

What is Election?

An arrangement where citizens can choose their representatives is known as an election. An election is a formal decision-making process by which a population chooses an individual to hold public office. Elections is a mechanism by which modern day representative democracies have been operating since the 17th century. The various

types of elections include general elections, mid-term elections, and bye-elections.

India's First General Election:

Independent India's first general elections were held between 25th October 1951 and 21st February 1952. It was a humongous exercise in which a sixth of the world's population voted making it the largest election conducted in the world at the time. Ultimately, 17.32 crore voters from across the country (excluding Jammu and Kashmir) were enrolled, and 45% were women. This was the first time such a massive exercise of universal adult franchise was undertaken, with 176 million electors above the age of 21 (the voting age was brought to 18 only in 1989 through the Constitution (Sixty-first Amendment) Act), of whom 82% were unlettered.

The Parliament enacted the Representation of the People Acts of 1950 and 1951 laying down the groundwork for voter qualifications, election machinery, and other electoral processes. The Election Commission of India (ECI) was set up in January, 1950, with Sukumar Sen as the Chief Election Commissioner. In 1951, India's low literacy rate of 18.33% led to the idea of using different coloured ballot boxes for each candidate, but this was deemed impractical. Instead, it was decided to use separate ballot boxes for each candidate at all booths, with the candidate's election symbol on it. The ballot papers were pink in colour, with "Election Commission India" and a serial number with two letters denoting the state - HY for Hyderabad State, BR for Bihar, AS for Assam, etc.

There were 53 political parties, of which 14 were national. These included the Indian National Congress, the Communist Party of India, the Socialist Party, the Kisan Mazdoor Praja Party, and Akhil Bharatiya Hindu

Mahasabha, among others. The Indian National Congress, led by Jawaharlal Nehru, emerged as the dominant political force, securing 318 out of 489 Lok Sabha seats, consolidating its position as the ruling party. The Communist Party of India (CPI) emerged as the runner-up in the first Lok Sabha election, followed by the Socialist Party and other political parties.

Election Commission of India

The architects of the Indian constitution attached special significance to an independent electoral machinery for the conduct of elections. The Constitution of India provides for an Election Commission of India which is responsible for superintendence, direction and control of all elections. It is responsible for conducting elections to both the houses of Parliament and State Legislatures and for the offices of President and Vice-President.

Besides, it is also responsible for the preparation, revision, updating, and maintenance of lists of voters. It delimits constituencies for election to the Parliament and the State Legislatures, fixes the election programme and settles election disputes. It performs many other functions related to elections. Election Commission of India (ECI) plays a crucial role in ensuring free and fair elections in the world's largest democracy. Established under Article 324 of the Indian Constitution, the ECI is responsible for administering election processes at both the national and state levels.

The Election Commission consists of the Chief Election Commissioner and such other Election Commissioners as may be decided by the President from time to time. Ever since the first Chief Election Commissioner was appointed in 1950, there was no other Election Commissioner till 1989. The Chief

Election Commissioner was assisted by a larger number of officials. The Election Commission became a multi-member body on 16 October 1989 when the President appointed two more Election Commissioners. The senior of the two Election Commissioners is appointed as the Chief Election Commissioner.

The Election Commission of India derives its authority from Article 324 of the Indian Constitution. Article 324 in the Constitution of India mentions that 'Superintendence, direction, and control of elections to be vested in an Election Commission further detailing composition, tenure, responsibilities, and removal. This article grants the ECI the power to direct, supervise, and control the entire electoral process, which includes preparing electoral rolls, scheduling elections, and ensuring free and fair polling. The Constitution not only establishes the ECI but also ensures its autonomy and independence by providing the Commission with complete control over electoral matters.

Election Process in India

Elections in India are conducted according to the procedure laid down by law. The following process is observed.

Notification for Election: The process of election officially begins when on the recommendation of Election Commission, the President in case of Lok Sabha and the Governor in case of the State Assembly issues a notification for the election. Seven days are given to candidates to file nomination. The seventh day is the last date after the issue of notification excluding Sunday. Scrutiny of nomination papers is done on the day normally after the last date of filing nominations. The candidate can withdraw his/her nomination on the second day after the scrutiny of papers. Election is

held not earlier than twentieth day after the withdrawal.

Filing of Nomination: A person who intends to contest an election is required to file the nomination paper in a prescribed form indicating his name, age, postal address and serial number in the electoral rolls. The candidate is required to be duly proposed and seconded by at least two voters registered in the concerned constituency. Every candidate must take an oath or make affirmation. These papers are then submitted to the Returning Officer designated by the Election Commission.

Security Deposit: Every candidate has to make a security deposit at the time of filing nomination. For Lok Sabha every candidate must make a security deposit of Rs.10,000 and for State Assembly Rs. 5,000. But candidates belonging to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes are required to deposit Rs. 5,000 if contesting for the Lok Sabha elections and Rs.2,500 if contesting for the Vidhan Sabha elections. The security deposit is forfeited if the candidate fails to get at least 1/6 of the total valid votes polled.

Scrutiny and Withdrawal: All nomination papers received by the Returning Officer are scrutinised on the day fixed by the Election Commission. This is done to ensure that all papers are filled according to the procedure laid down and accompanied by the required security deposit. The Returning Officer is empowered to reject a nomination paper on any one of the following:

- i) If the candidate is less than 25 years of age.
- ii) If he/she has not made security deposit.
- iii) If he/she is holding any office of profit.
- iv) If he/she is not listed as a voter anywhere in the country

The second day after the scrutiny of nomination papers is the last date for the

withdrawal of the candidates. In case that day happens to be a holiday or Sunday, the day immediately after that is fixed as the last day for the withdrawal.

Election Campaign: Campaigning is the process by which a candidate tries to persuade the voters to vote for him/her. During this period, the candidates try to travel through their constituency to influence as many voters as possible to vote in their favour. In the recent times, the Election Commission has granted all the recognised National and Regional Parties, free access to the State-owned electronic media, the All India Radio (AIR) and the Doordarshan to do their campaigning. The total free time is fixed by the Election Commission which is allotted to all the political parties. Campaigning stops 48 hours before the day of polling. Several campaign techniques are involved in the election process. Some of these are:

- i) Holding of public meetings.
- ii) Distribution of handbills, highlighting the main issues of their election manifesto.
- iii) Door to door appeal by influential people in the party.
- iv) Broadcasting and telecasting of speeches by various political leaders.

Model Code of Conduct: During the campaigning period the political parties and the contesting candidates are expected to abide by a model code of conduct imposed by the Election Commission of India based on the consensus among political parties. It comes into force the moment the schedule of election is announced by the Election Commission. The code of conduct is as follows:

- (i) Political Parties and contesting candidates should not use religious places for election campaign.
- (ii) Such speeches should not be delivered in a way to create hatred among

different communities belonging to different religions, castes, and languages.

- (iii) Official machinery should not be used for election work.
- (iv) No new grants can be sanctioned, no new schemes or projects can be started once the election dates are announced.
- (v) One cannot misuse mass media for partisan coverage.

Scrutinising Expenses: Though the Election Commission provides free access for a limited time to all the recognised National and State parties for their campaign, this does not mean that political parties do not spend anything on their elections campaign. The political parties and the candidates contesting election spend large sum of amount on their election campaign. However, the Election Commission has the power to scrutinise the election expenses to be incurred by the candidates. There is a ceiling on expenses to be incurred in Parliamentary as well as State Assembly elections. Every candidate is required to file an account of his election expenses within 45 days of declaration of results. In case of default or if the candidate has incurred (expenses) more than the prescribed limit, the Election Commission can take appropriate action and the candidate elected may be disqualified and his election may be countermanded.

Polling, Counting and Declaration of result: To conduct polling, large number of polling booths are set up in each constituency. Each booth is placed under the charge of a Presiding Officer with the polling officers to help the process. A voter casts his/her vote secretly in an enclosure, so that no other person comes to know of the choice he/she has made. It is known as secret ballot. After the polling is over, ballot boxes

are sealed in the presence of agents of the candidates. Agents ensure that no voter is denied right to vote, provided the voter turns up within the prescribed time limit.

Electronic Voting Machines: The Election Commission has started using tamper proof electronic voting machines to ensure free and fair election. Each machine has the names and symbols of the candidates in a constituency. One Electronic Voting Machine (EVM) can accommodate a maximum of 16 candidates. But if the number exceeds 16, then more than one EVM may be used. If the number of candidates is very large, ballot papers may be used. The voter has to press the appropriate button to vote for the candidate of his/her choice. As soon as the button is pressed, the machine is automatically switched off. Then comes the turn of the next voter. The machine is easy to operate, and with this the use of ballot paper and ballot boxes is done away with. When the machine is used, the counting of votes becomes more convenient and faster. The EVMs were used in all the seven Lok Sabha constituencies in Delhi in 1999, and later in all the State Assembly constituencies. In 2004 General Elections EVMs were used all over the country for Lok Sabha elections.

The sealed ballot boxes or EVMs are shifted in tight security to the counting center. Counting takes place under the supervision of the Returning Officer and in the presence of candidates and their agents. If there is any doubt about the validity or otherwise of a vote, decision of the Returning Officer is final. As soon as counting is over, the candidate securing the maximum number of votes is declared elected (or returned) by the Returning Officer.

Repolling: If at the time of polling, a booth is captured by some anti-social elements, the Election Commission may order holding of a

re-poll in either the entire constituency or any booth.

Countermanding of Election: If a duly nominated candidate belonging to a recognised party dies at any time after the last date of nomination and before the commencement of polling, the Election Commission orders countermanding the elections. This is not just postponement of polling. The entire election process, beginning from nominations is initiated afresh in the concerned constituency.

Electoral Reforms

The evolution of elections in India has been marked by significant reforms and adaptations to modern procedures, ensuring the process remains fair, transparent, and efficient. Here are some key changes and modern adaptations:

- 1. Introduction of EVMs:** Transitioning from paper ballots to EVMs, first used in a limited manner in 1982 and fully implemented in the 2004 general elections. It reduced instances of ballot tampering, faster counting of votes, and increased accuracy.
- 2. Voter-Verified Paper Audit Trail (VVPAT):** Introduced to enhance transparency and allow voters to verify their vote. It provides a printed slip showing the voter's choice, which is then deposited in a sealed box.
- 3. Lowering of Voting Age:** The 61st Constitutional Amendment Act of 1989 reduced the voting age from 21 to 18 years. It increased youth participation in the electoral process.
- 4. Use of Technology:** Simplified the process of voter registration and updating details. Apps like Voter Helpline provide information on polling stations, voter ID status, and more.

5. Transparency and Accountability:

Candidates are required to disclose their criminal records, if any, to promote transparency. Measures to regulate election spending and reduce the influence of money in politics has been taken.

6. Inclusive Voting: Special provisions for differently-abled voters, including Braille EVMs and ramps at polling stations. Exploring options for remote voting to facilitate participation by NRIs and migrant workers.

One Nation One Election

The One Nation One Election policy also known as simultaneous elections, is a proposal to conduct the Lok Sabha and state legislative assembly elections at the same time across India. This idea aims to streamline the electoral process, reduce costs, and improve governance. The proposal suggests aligning the election cycles of the Lok Sabha and State Assemblies so that voters can cast their ballots for both tiers of government on the same day. Conducting elections simultaneously would save significant amounts of money typically spent on organizing separate elections, including costs for security, transportation, voting materials, and election personnel. With fewer elections, the government machinery can focus more on governance rather than constantly preparing for elections. Elections often disrupt daily life and public administration. Holding them together would minimize these disruptions, ensuring continuous governance and development activities. Implementing this policy requires significant amendments to the Constitution and electoral laws. Articles 83, 172, and 327 would need to be amended, and a new Article 82(A) would be added.

Simultaneous elections could lead to a stronger political mandate for the ruling party or coalition, enhancing governance stability. By reducing the frequency of elections, the policy could save significant public funds and boost economic growth by allowing uninterrupted governance. A bill proposing the constitutional amendments required for One Nation One Election has been introduced in the Lok Sabha. The bill aims to synchronize elections in Jammu and Kashmir, Puducherry, and Delhi with the rest of the country, with the actual procedure starting in 2034.

Challenges with Elections

The increasing role of money power in the form of voter bribery and funding of political parties can dilute the democratic framework. Over the last two decades, the influence of criminals in political arena has increased and political parties continue to put up criminal candidates. The use of religion, caste, community, tribe, and any other form of group identity for electoral gain or for gathering political support should not be allowed. Analysts had suggested that issuing electoral bonds could be misused given the lack of disclosure requirements for individuals purchasing electoral bonds.

Electoral bonds made electoral funding even more opaque. It brought more black money into the political system. With electoral bonds there can be a legal channel for companies to round trip their tax haven cash to a political party. If this could be arranged, then a businessman could lobby for a change in policy, and legally funnel a part of the profit occurring from this policy change to the politician or party that brought it about. The Supreme Court of India struck down the electoral bond scheme terming it as unconstitutional as it violated the right to information of voters.

Financial transparency in political parties is also one of the fundamental deeper political reforms that is a necessary precondition which must be satisfied before any meaningful electoral reforms can take place on the ground. Independence of the ECI, the manner of CEC and ECS was debated. One member proposed ratification of CEC'S appointment by the legislature, but the constituent assembly disagreed and it simply provided for the CEC to be appointed by the president, leaving it to the legislature to enact a suitable law.

Way Ahead

The Election Commission has taken several new initiatives in the recent past, a reference to some of which has already been made. Notable among these are, a scheme for use of State-owned Electronic Media for broadcast/telecast by political parties, restrictions on opinion and exit polls, checking criminalization of politics, computerization of electoral rolls, providing electors with identity cards, simplifying the

procedure for maintenance of accounts and filling of the same by candidates. Various other measures for strict compliance of Model Code of Conduct for providing a level playing field to contestants during the elections has been taken.

The Election process in India is a dynamic and robust system that upholds the core democratic principal of free, fair, and transparent elections. It remains the cornerstone of the world's largest democracy, upholding the will of the people and reinforcing the foundations of representative governance. As India continues to evolve and progress, the Indian election process and system must adapt to meet the changing needs to the country, while preserving the core principles that have made it a model for democracies around the world.

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BANGLADESH CRISIS AND ITS POSSIBLE IMPLICATIONS FOR INDIA

History repeats itself is a saying of Karl Marx that defines the Bangladesh crisis today. Stability of the neighbour is not just their need but is our necessity as one nation's crisis echoes across borders. December holds great significance for every Bangladeshi. It was on 16th of December 1971 that the Mukti Bahini, supported by the Indian Armed Forces overran Dhaka leading to Pakistan Army's surrender at the Ramna Racecourse. It is known as 'Victory Day', the historic moment is still remembered and celebrated with fanfare. But now two elements are notably absent - those are the ousted Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's face, and mentions of India's help during the Bangladesh Liberation War.

Historical Background

The undivided Independent India was divided in 1947 into Pakistan and India. Pakistan was politically divided to West and East. Pakistan was politically divided to West and East. Pakistan failed in its foreign policy to secure its east by imposing western Pakistan dominance on the East based on language, finance, politics and on many other grounds. In 1948, Governor-General Muhammad Ali Jinnah declared that "Urdu, and only Urdu" would be Pakistan's federal language. But the east Pakistan had 56% with Bengali as common language so this declaration was viewed as an attack on the Bengali culture. 59% of exports were from the East Pakistan but East only got 25% of total investments. The East was neglected during the Bhola cyclone days. East Pakistan had larger population so it had 156 seats and west had 133 seats in the Pakistan national assembly. When Mujibur Rahman won the election in 1971 it was not accepted by the West Pakistani leaders.

East Pakistan was met by brutal and suppressive force from the ruling elite of the West Pakistan establishment, in what came to be termed as Operation Searchlight. The Pakistan Army's violent crackdown led to Awami League leader Sheikh Mujibur Rahman declaring East Pakistan's independence as the state of Bangladesh on 26th of March 1971. Most Bengalis supported



this move, although some Islamists opposed it and sided with the Pakistan Army. Sheikh Mujibur Rahman formed the Mukti Bahini with the help of India and forced Pakistan to sign the historic Instrument of Accession. In the war, partition was opposed by Islamist groups (Jamat e Islami) and terrorist groups like Al Badr and Al Shams those sided with Pakistan army. Sheikh Mujibur called them Razakars (traitors).

Sheikh Mujibur came to power and banned radical Islamist groups and joined Mukti Bahini with Bangladesh Army. He introduced 30% reservation for Mukti Bahini people in Bangladesh government posts. In 1975 as unemployment and protest escalated, it compelled Sheikh Mujibur to introduce BAKSAL (one party system) to push opposition at back foot. But it backfired him as the army turned against him which led to the

assassination of the father of Bangladesh and his family. During this time Sheikh Hasina was given political asylum by Indira Gandhi. To capture this opportunity Bangladesh Nationalist Party led by Ziaur Rahman lifted the ban on radical Islamist groups and came to power in 1976. He too was assassinated on 1981 by a military coup. After this his wife Khalida Zia took the charge to which Sheikh Hasina saw as a golden opportunity.

How the crisis unfolded

Khalida Zia had been a strong ally of the radical Islamist groups and Sheikh Hasina's vote bank had been the minorities and Mukti Bahini supporters. Sheikh Hasina's election manifesto always advertised about the reservation for Mukti Bahini and their descendants. Although she was criticised for this system, she continued with her father's ideology. Eventually it backfired at her. At the same time foreign powers such as the United States of America and China were also interested in Bangladesh to gain their grounds.

Sheikh Hasina led her first term in 1996 till 2001, becoming the first female Prime Minister of Bangladesh. However, she lost the next elections to a four-party alliance led by the BNP, Jamaat-e-Islami, Jatiya Party (Manju), and Islamic OikyoJote. In January 2007, Sheikh Hasina was arrested on account of corruption and extortion and the Awami League supporters saw this as a politically motivated act. In December 2008, she won elections and was sworn in once again as the PM of Bangladesh in January 2009, followed by another consecutive term in 2014 and 2018.

In 2018 students' death in a bus accident led to massive protests which gradually included reasons like reservation system and unemployment rate. Sheikh Hasina was forced to remove the reservation system for

Mukti Bahini descendants. There has been reports of Sheikh Hasina's party supporters who were given fake certificates to be counted as under reservation system and the number reported was above 60,000. In the 2018 election she was alleged for having rigged the election.

In 2023, the garment industries constituted 11% of Bangladesh GDP and it was in the top 5 garment export countries but workers of garment industries protested due to low wages. Sheikh Hasina failed to take any actions in favor of the protest as she knew that hiking their wages will lead to dissatisfaction among industrialists. Lowering wages would have compelled the industrialists to explore cheaper markets in Vietnam which would have eventually led to the outflux of MNCs from the Bangladesh. Sheikh Hasina chose to suppress the protest. It upset the workers and the intensity of protests diffused all over Bangladesh. Bangladesh had elections in December 2023 but Sheikh Hasina delayed it to 7th of Jan 2024 to cool down the anger among protestors. She won the election but it was not accepted by the opposition who alleged her for rigging the votes.

In June 2024, the High Court said that the decision to scrap the quota system was unconstitutional. Citizens went to Supreme Court against Sheikh Hasina for not using legislative power to scrap quota system and organized massive protests on roads. Quota was then reduced to 5%. Abu Bakr, Nahid Islam, Asif Mohd these 3 students led the students protest and seeing this Sheikh Hasina instructed the administration to take charge against them. The whole situation quickly escalated and Sheikh Hasina fled Dhaka and landed at an Indian air force base near New Delhi on August 5, 2024.

Nature of Crisis: The crisis in Bangladesh is multifaceted, with historical, political, economic, and social dimensions. Key factors contributing to the nature and reasons behind the ongoing crisis in the country include-

1. Political Instability: Bangladesh has been characterized by deep political divisions, primarily between the two major political parties: the Awami League (AL) and the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP). These parties have often engaged in fierce confrontations, leading to instability, frequent strikes (hartals), and sometimes violent protests. Both the major parties are led by political dynasties, the Awami League by Sheikh Hasina, and the BNP by Khalida Zia. This dynastic rivalry fuels personality politics rather than policy-focused debates. The ruling government, under Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, has been accused of curbing dissent, limiting freedom of speech, and undermining democratic institutions. This has led to tensions with opposition parties and civil society groups.

2. Corruption and Governance Issues: Corruption is pervasive at various levels of government, hindering effective governance, development, and the functioning of public institutions. This weakens the rule of law and can exacerbate inequalities. Sheikh Hasina has been charged for embezzlement of \$5 billion linked to Russian backed Rooppur Nuclear Plant. Both the ruling party and opposition have relied on political patronage networks that often sidestep merit-based appointments and policy implementation, further deepening governance challenges.

3. Economic Challenges: Despite impressive economic growth, Bangladesh faces significant poverty and inequality. A

large portion of the population remains vulnerable, with rural areas suffering from lack of infrastructure, education, and healthcare. The country faces high unemployment rates, especially among the youth, contributing to social unrest. Although the garment industry has been a significant driver of growth, job creation has not been evenly distributed. Bangladesh's economy is heavily reliant on textile and garment exports, making it vulnerable to shifts in global demand or trade disruptions.

4. Environmental Vulnerabilities: Bangladesh is highly susceptible to the impacts of climate change, including rising sea levels, flooding, and cyclones. These environmental challenges exacerbate poverty and displacement, creating internal migration pressures and heightening tensions over resource distribution. The country regularly faces devastating natural disasters, such as floods and cyclones, which disrupt lives, economies, and infrastructure.

5. Religious and Ethnic Tensions: The rise of religious extremism and fundamentalist groups has posed a challenge to Bangladesh's secular identity. Violence against religious minorities, including Hindus and Buddhists, has occurred sporadically. Chinmoy Das demanded a special tribunal, ministry, Law and Protection and recovery of temples retrospectively the scene of 1971 but he was charged with sedition. Temples were damaged and devotees were attacked. The influx of over a million Rohingya refugees from Myanmar since 2017 has strained Bangladesh's resources and led to tensions both within local communities and with the government. The refugee camps

have become a source of humanitarian concern and political friction.

6. Geopolitical Factors: Bangladesh shares a long border with India, and while the countries generally have cordial relations, issues related to border security, trade, water sharing, and minority rights sometimes cause friction. The Rohingya refugee crisis has strained Bangladesh's relations with Myanmar, with Bangladesh seeking more international support for the safe repatriation of refugees.

7. Social and Cultural Issues: While there have been advancements in women's rights, Bangladesh still faces challenges such as violence against women, child marriage, and access to education for girls, particularly in rural areas. The youth demographic in Bangladesh, facing limited job opportunities and widespread corruption, has led to disillusionment, contributing to social unrest, particularly in urban areas.

Present day Bangladesh

Widespread protest, violence and state repression have plunged Bangladesh into social and political chaos. This unrest resulted in the dramatic resignation of Sheikh Hasina, who fled to Delhi, finding temporary asylum. Professor Yunus is leading the Bangladesh interim government, promising democracy, and fresh elections. This in fact has created a political vacuum with leadership instability, public discontent, and weakened governance, fostering uncertainty.

The unrest is deeply intertwined with its economic struggles. Despite the Awami League's claims of growth and development, GDP growth fell to 3.78% in late 2023 from 6.01% the previous year. It is grappling with issues including financial deficits, declining forex reserves, non-performing bank loans, currency devaluation, falling remittances,

reduced exports, and rising unemployment rates. Bangladesh faces declining foreign investments due to economic crisis, political instability, tight liquidity, and rising interest rates.

The Bangladesh Hindu Buddhist Christian Unity Council (BHBCUC) reports over a 1000 human rights violation against minorities in a year, leading to 45 deaths. About 70-75% are linked to land grabbing involving political and government complicity. Minorities population declined from 19% in 1971 to 8.6 % in 2023. Bangladesh's crisis worsens with the Rohingya issue, as over a million refugees strain resources. Humanitarian challenges include inadequate shelter, food, and healthcare, fueling social tension and further complicating the country's political and economic instability.

Bangladesh faces economic and political challenges, including rising inflation, rising unemployment, declining foreign reserves, and energy shortages, which threaten its stability. Ongoing protests over governance and economic mismanagement may escalate, impacting social harmony. Climate change exacerbates vulnerabilities, posing risks to agriculture and livelihoods. Despite infrastructural growth, unemployment and inequality persist, straining public trust. However, Bangladesh's strategic location and textile exports offer recovery potential if reforms are implemented. Strengthening democratic institutions, diversifying exports, and addressing climate resilience are crucial for long-term stability. Without timely interventions, the crisis could deepen, affecting regional stability and economic progress.

Geostrategic Interventions

The United States of America sought to acquire St. Martin's Island to establish a military base, leveraging Bangladesh's

strategic position at the Bay of Bengal. This would help monitor Chinese projects and secure the vital Malacca Strait for U.S. interests. China on the other hand fears that political changes in Bangladesh could disrupt trade, delay BRI projects, and harm its strategic interests. A USA military presence may threaten China's energy security, impact the Malacca Strait, and destabilize its regional influence, particularly with Myanmar.

India's geostrategic intervention in the Bangladesh crisis would focus on diplomatic support, peacekeeping, border security, and safeguarding regional interests, while countering Islamist influence and maintaining strong ties amid shifting political dynamics. Pakistan may support Islamist groups in Bangladesh to challenge India's influence, destabilize the government, and exacerbate anti-India sentiment, using regional tensions and diplomatic channels to strengthen its position in South Asia.

Impact on India:

India's \$8 billion credit to Bangladesh aids infrastructure development, ensuring cooperation for efficient trade, travel, and strategic movement near the Bangladesh border. Disrupted ties could jeopardize India's northeast access via the vulnerable 'Chicken's Neck' corridor. The export and import of various commodities like cotton, agricultural products, etc. will decline. India has lost a trusted ally Sheikh Hasina who provided duty free access on most tariffs but due to the crisis there might be disruption in trade between the nations. Around 25% of textile industries in Bangladesh are owned by Indian companies which will be impacted negatively due to ongoing crisis.

India shares a 4096 km land border with Bangladesh, which remains partially unfenced. This gap may lead to increased incidents of drug and arms trafficking, cattle

smuggling, and cross-border terrorism. India fears a rising extremism due to ongoing crisis, as radical groups linked to Pakistan's ISI and Lashkar-e-Taiba could expand operations against India from the east.

The 2011 Teesta River agreement allocated 42.5% water to India, 37.5% to Bangladesh, with 20% free flow. Current tensions may jeopardize existing river-water sharing arrangements between the two nations. Instability in Bangladesh could lead to an influx of refugees into India, posing a security challenge. India's tourism, particularly medical tourism, may face disruptions as Bangladesh, its largest tourist source in 2023, accounted for 22% of total arrivals—the highest contribution from any single country.

India's infrastructure projects with Bangladesh, including railways, may face delays, such as RITES' passenger coach supply and the Agartala-Akhaura rail link. India faces challenges in supporting Sheikh Hasina, risking anti-India sentiment in Bangladesh and Islamist backlash. Groups like Jamaat-e-Islami and Hefazat-e-Islam, backed by Pakistan, have fueled protests against India, complicating New Delhi's ties with Bangladesh's future government.

Strategic Roadmap to address the crisis

The Bhishma Pitamah of Indian politics once said that 'We can change our enemies but not our neighbors' as harmony with them is not an option, it is a necessity. India seems to have missed the bus when it comes to foreign policy for neighboring countries. In simple terms the policy of neighborhood first is now the neighborhood lost. Nepal, Sri Lanka, Maldives, Pakistan, all are now victims of China's debt trap policy.

A novel named 'Don Quixote' had a saying 'It is the part of a wise man to keep himself today for tomorrow, and not venture all his eggs in one basket.' In 2013, India and Bangladesh

signed an extradition treaty as a strategic measure to address insurgency and terrorism along their shared borders. Today it is a dilemma for India. Extraditing Sheikh Hasina to the new government in Dhaka for prosecution could damage its credibility with other allies. On the other hand, Hasina's ongoing presence in India remains a contentious issue, straining India's relations with Bangladesh.

Thucydides' trap best describes the rising tension between the two countries as it says all rising powers threaten the established power to check their influence and dominance. As Bangladesh is one of the fastest growing economies, an established power like India in its neighbour, explains the concerns of this theory. The following approach can be taken to address the concern.

India needs to fact-check media propagandas sourced from both the countries. Undoubtedly minorities are under threats in Bangladesh but it is also undeniable that fake cases are worsening the relation. There has been inputs that Hindu population is under attack at Uttara but the truth is that not even 1% Hindu lives there. It must be ensured that sources are reliable. To ease the pressure on chicken neck corridor, India should start focusing on the Kaladan project with Myanmar, a link between Sittwe port and Kolkata port since Tetulia Corridor and Akhaura- Agartala rail link is vulnerable to Bangladesh crisis.

Mahfuj Alam a close aide to Mohammed Yunus posted an expanded Bangladesh map (occupying some Indian territories) but the irony is Arakan army of Myanmar has already occupied Teknaf region near Bangladesh border. Hence Arakan army is now strategically significant for India to check Bangladesh's aggression. Since Awami league is now dissolved in Bangladesh, the second largest party is BNP. India should stick to wait and watch policy till the election which is to be held at the end of 2025. In real the attack is on Awami league supporters but unfortunately the minorities happen to be in significant numbers in them. Hence, it is just a result of dominos effect. To check this India needs to ensure a free and fair election occurs next time and make certain that political parties do not play communal card in upcoming elections.

Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) says in article 18 that freedom of practicing any religion has to be secured. Citing this in the past, USA had used China for atrocities against Uyghurs in Xinxiang and Buddhist in Tibet. India can also utilize such legal framework to counter Bangladesh in future if needed by citing the Chinmoy Das case. India's roadmap in addressing the Bangladesh crisis must emphasize regional cooperation, sustainable development, and humanitarian assistance. By leading with responsibility and shared goals, India can promote stability and prosperity in South Asia.

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EFFECTIVE WATER MANAGEMENT IN INDIA

Water is a vital resource for India's socioeconomic development, supporting agriculture, industry, energy production, and domestic consumption. However, the country faces acute challenges in water management due to an increasing population, urbanization, industrialization, and climate change.

Effective water management is critical to ensure sustainable development and water



security for India's future. India accounts for 18% of the global population but has only 4% of the world's freshwater resources, leading to severe water stress. Inefficient irrigation methods, groundwater overexploitation, pollution, and seasonal monsoonal variability exacerbate the crisis.

According to NITI Aayog, nearly 600 million people in India face high to extreme water stress, and the country's water demand is projected to double by 2030, far exceeding the available supply. Effective water management encompasses the conservation, equitable distribution, and efficient utilization of water resources. Policies such as the National Water Policy, initiatives like the Jal Shakti Abhiyan, and programs such as Namami Gange and Atal Bhujal Yojana aim to promote water sustainability.

Current Scenario

- 1. Water Availability and Demand:** Due to the increasing number of populations, India is facing severe water crisis. India receives about 1,170 billion cubic meters (BCM) of annual rainfall, but only about 700 BCM is usable due to topographical and temporal challenges.
- 2. Groundwater Overexploitation:** India is the largest consumer of groundwater, extracting more than 25% of the total groundwater. Over 60% of irrigation and 85% of rural drinking water needs are met by groundwater, leading to rapid depletion in states like Punjab, Haryana, and Rajasthan.
- 3. Pollution of Water Resources:** Nearly 70% of surface water is contaminated with pollutants like industrial effluents, untreated sewage, and agricultural runoff. Rivers such as the Yamuna and Ganga are among the most polluted in the world.
- 4. Climate Change Impact:** Erratic monsoons, prolonged droughts, and glacial retreat are exacerbating water scarcity and affecting agricultural productivity.
- 5. Urban Water Crisis:** Rapid urbanization has strained water resources in cities. A NITI Aayog 2018 report warned that 21 cities, including Bengaluru and Chennai could run out of groundwater by 2030. Chennai's 2019 water crisis where its reservoirs dried up highlighted the vulnerability of urban water systems.

Strategies for Effective Water Management in India

- 1. Promoting Water Conservation:** Traditional practices like rainwater harvesting should be revived and scaled up, especially in urban areas. States like

Tamil Nadu have mandated rainwater harvesting, setting an example for others.

2. Enhancing Irrigation Efficiency: Adopting micro-irrigation methods like drip and sprinkler systems can reduce wastage significantly. The Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojana (PMKSY) supports these techniques.

3. Groundwater Recharge: To counter depletion, initiatives like the Atal Bhujal Yojana focus on replenishing groundwater through artificial recharge and sustainable use.

4. Strengthening Wastewater Management: Only 30% of India's sewage is treated. Expanding wastewater treatment infrastructure and reusing treated water for industrial and agricultural purposes can reduce freshwater demand.

Inter-State Water Disputes

Godavari: It involves the states of Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, and Odisha.

Krishna: It involves the states of Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, and Telangana. The Krishna Water Disputes Tribunal II was formed in 2004 to address this dispute.

Narmada: It involves the states of Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, and Maharashtra.

Ravi and Beas: It involves the states of Punjab, Haryana, and Rajasthan. The Ravi and Beas Water Tribunal was formed in 1986 to address this dispute.

Vansadhara: It involves the states of Odisha and Andhra Pradesh. The Vansadhara Water Disputes Tribunal was formed to address this dispute.

Mahadayi/Mandovi: This dispute involves the states of Maharashtra, Goa, and Karnataka. The Mahadayi Water Disputes Tribunal was formed in 2010 to address this dispute.

Cauvery: This dispute involves the states of Kerala, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, and the Union Territory of Pondicherry.

Efforts Taken

Constitutional Provisions: Water is primarily a state subject, allowing states to legislate on water supply, irrigation, canals, and drainage. The Centre has jurisdiction over inter-state rivers and river valleys (Entry 56, List I). Article 21 of the Constitution indirectly recognizes the Right to Water as a part of the Right to Life.

Legislative Framework: The Environment Protection Act, 1986 regulates water pollution and mandates environmental clearances for water-intensive projects. The Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1974 establishes water quality standards and penalizes for pollution. The Inter-State River Water Disputes Act, 1956 facilitates the resolution of disputes over sharing of inter-state river waters.

Government Initiatives: The Jal Shakti Abhiyan focuses on water conservation and rainwater harvesting. The Namami Gange project aims to rejuvenate the Ganga River. The Atal Bhujal Yojana promotes sustainable groundwater management. The National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG) and river interlinking projects addresses regional disparities.

Recommendations

Adopt Integrated Water Resource Management (IWRM): To encourage a holistic approach that integrates surface and groundwater use, ecosystem needs, and community participation.

Revive and Modernize Traditional Systems: Investing in restoring stepwells, johads, and tanks while integrating them with modern water conservation techniques.

Enhance Irrigation Practices: To promote water-efficient irrigation systems, such as drip and sprinkler methods, supported by

government subsidies. Encouraging crop diversification toward less water-intensive crops such as millets and pulses.

Expand Rainwater Harvesting: Mandating rainwater harvesting in urban and rural development plans by incentivizing communities to adopt rooftop rainwater harvesting systems as it requires regular maintenance.

Odisha's efforts in Water Management: Odisha has received the best state award during the 5th National Water Awards in 2023 for taking remarkable steps to promote water management and conservation. Odisha's remarkable achievements in water conservation include the construction of over 53,000 water conservation and rainwater harvesting structures and the renovation of 11,000 traditional water bodies. Additionally, 21,000 wastewater treatment plants were set up, transforming over 90,900 hectares of irrigated land to micro-irrigation systems, benefitting 87,000 farmers. The state has also made significant strides in afforestation, completing the plantation of 9 crore saplings.

Role of Wetlands in Water Conservation

Wetlands play a crucial role in enhancing groundwater recharge, nutrient recycling, and water purification. Odisha has recently added 3 more wetlands namely the Hirakud reservoir in Sambalpur, Ansupa Lake in Cuttack, and Tampara lake in Ganjam. Along with these

other wetlands in Odisha are Satkosia Gorge, Bhitarkanika Mangroves and Chilika lake. The Bhitarkanika mangroves act as a barrier and helps in flood control during tropical cyclones along with providing ecological safety as well as water management.

Way Ahead

Addressing India's water crisis requires a synergistic approach that integrates modern infrastructure, traditional practices, and proactive governance. A resilient future can only be achieved by placing water conservation at the core of national policy and grassroots action. Pollution prevention, climate-resilient infrastructure, and the equitable distribution of resources must be prioritized to ensure water security for all. Leveraging advanced technologies, such as satellite monitoring and AI-based forecasting, can enhance efficiency and predict challenges, allowing for proactive measures. Despite challenges like over-extraction of groundwater, pollution, and climate change, India has immense potential to improve water management through effective policies, public participation, and technological interventions. A collective effort from government, private sectors, and civil society is essential to ensure water security for present and future generations.

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CYBER THREATS AND ITS IMPLICATIONS

Cyber threats refer to malicious activities aimed at disrupting, damaging, or gaining unauthorized access to digital systems, network, or data. These threats can come from various sources such as cyber criminals, hackers, insider threats, or even nation states and then manifest in different forms.

Types of Cyber Threats

Sending phishing emails purportedly from genuine email accounts of the email service (but fake). The email contains links that prompt you to visit a page, once you enter your login ID and password, the same get stealthily stolen by the fraudsters.

The most reported and seen crimes that occur on social media involve people making threats, bullying, harassing, and stalking others online. While much of this type of activity goes unpunished, or is not taken seriously, victims of these types of crimes frequently do not know when to call the police. Creation of fake profile of a person and posting offensive content including morphed photographs on the fake profile. Developing online friendship over social media and using the emotional connect to trick you in transferring funds on some pretext such as medical emergency, legal troubles, problems in a foreign country etc.

Data theft is the theft of software through the illegal copying and selling of copyrighted data or software codes in an open market without permission of the owner's company. It is also known as piracy. Criminals can hide links to ransomware in seemingly normal emails or web pages. Once activated, ransomware prevents users from interacting with their files, applications or systems until a ransom is paid,

typically in the form of an anonymous currency such as bitcoin.

Under SIM Swap, fraudsters manage to get a new SIM card issued against your registered mobile number through the mobile service provider. With the help of this new SIM card, they get One Time Password (OTP) and



alerts, required for making financial transactions through your bank account. Vishing is one such attempt where fraudsters try to seek your personal information like Customer ID, Net Banking password, ATM PIN, OTP, Card expiry date, CVV etc. through a phone call.

Smishing is a type of fraud that uses mobile phone text messages to lure victims into calling back on a fraudulent phone number, visiting fraudulent websites or downloading malicious content via phone or web. Phishing is a type of fraud that involves stealing personal information such as Customer ID, IPIN, Credit/Debit Card number, Card expiry date, CVV number, etc. Fraudsters pose as Bank officials and send fake emails to customers, asking them to urgently verify or update their account information by clicking on a link in the email.

Money Mule is a term used to describe innocent victims who are duped by fraudsters into laundering stolen/illegal money via their bank account(s). A Trojan is a harmful piece of

software that users are typically tricked into loading and executing on their computers. After it is installed and activated, trojan attacks the computer leading to deletion of files, data theft, or activation/spread of viruses.

History of Cyber Threats

The history of cyber threats dates back several decades, with significant milestones in the evolution of computer security challenges. One of the first known computer viruses, Creeper, was created as an experimental self-replicating program. Developed to remove the Creeper virus, Reaper is considered one of the first antivirus programs.

As personal computers became more common, malware such as viruses, worms, and trojans started to spread. The Brain virus (1986) was one of the first to infect PCs. One of the first significant internet worms, it infected around 6,000 computers on the ARPANET. It caused widespread disruption and led to the first criminal prosecution under the Computer Fraud and Abuse Act.

As the internet grew, cybercriminals began exploiting new vulnerabilities. Spam emails, denial-of-service (DoS) attacks, and basic credit card fraud became more common. The Michelangelo Virus (1991) a major virus that threatened to infect millions of computers worldwide, but it ultimately did not cause the expected damage. Companies like Norton and McAfee began offering antivirus solutions to combat the growing threat landscape.

A highly destructive email virus ILOVEYOU Virus (2000) spread rapidly and caused an estimated \$10 billion in damages worldwide. It used social engineering to trick users into opening infected email attachments. As businesses and government agencies began to rely heavily on the internet, large-scale Distributed Denial of Service attacks emerged, where multiple systems are used to flood a network and disrupt its operation. Networks of infected computers, known as botnets, were

used for cybercrime, including spam, data theft, and launching DDoS attacks.

A highly sophisticated worm believed to be created by the U.S. and Israel to target Iran's nuclear program, Stuxnet (2010) demonstrated the growing use of cyberattacks for geopolitical purposes. Attacks targeting the software supply chain, such as the SolarWinds attack (2020), revealed vulnerabilities in trusted software providers, impacting government agencies and corporations. Nowadays, cybercriminals are increasingly leveraging AI to create more sophisticated attacks and avoid detections.

How to secure ourselves from cyber threats

Using the two-factor authentication which requires you to enter a code sent to you in a text message or another service to access your account after you enter your username and password. This makes it more difficult for a hacker to access your information, even if they can crack your password. Do not open SPAM mail or e-mails sent from unknown senders. Do not click on any link sent on such mails.

Keep your e-mail password long and difficult. Password should have at least 8 characters and there should be at least one upper-case, one lower-case, one numeral and one special character in your password. Do not store your passwords in your device (phone/tablet). Anyone getting access (physical or remote) to your device will easily get to know your passwords. For secure net banking, keep your customer ID and password confidential and do not disclose it to anybody. Memorize your ATM PIN. Do not write it down anywhere, and certainly never on the card itself. Do not share your PIN or card with anyone including bank employees, not even your friends or family. Change your PIN regularly.

Cyber Regulation in India

India faces increasing risks such as data breaches, ransomware, phishing attacks, and

cyber fraud. India is among the top countries targeted by cybercriminals due to its large digital population. The Information Technology (IT) Act, 2000 (Amended in 2008) is the primary law governing cybersecurity and cybercrime in India. It penalizes hacking, identity theft, phishing, and cyber terrorism. It provides legal recognition for electronic records and transactions. It also empowers the government to block websites and intercept digital communications for national security.

The Digital Personal Data Protection Act (DPDPA), 2023 protects personal data of individuals while balancing innovation and data economy. It penalizes mishandling or breaches of personal data with fines up to Rs 250 crores. It requires data handlers (businesses or institutions) to minimize data collection and ensure its security. It also mandates individuals to provide clear and informed consent for their data usage.

There are many guidelines issued by the Indian Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT-In) to handle cyber incidents. It mandates reporting of cyber incidents within 6 hours. It enforces logging of digital activity for 180 days. Use official portals like the Cyber Crime Reporting Portal (cybercrime.gov.in) to report incidents and notify CERT-In or local police if a breach or attack occurs.

Personal Cyber Hygiene

Regularly update software and antivirus programs. Use strong passwords and enable two-factor authentication. Avoid downloading unverified apps or clicking on suspicious links. Respect others' privacy online; avoid sharing unauthorized personal or sensitive content. Avoid posting offensive or illegal content on social media.

Awareness program for cyber threats

Governments worldwide have launched various awareness programs to educate citizens about cyber threats and promote online safety. In India, National Cyber Security

awareness month is observed every October to raise awareness about cyber security and promote online safety. Cyber Swaachha Kendra is a botnet cleaning and malware analysis center launched by the Indian government to provide free botnet cleaning and malware analysis service. Cyber Surakshith Bharat is an initiative launched by the Indian government to promote cyber security awareness and provide training to citizens.

The 'cyber commando' initiative aims to establish a specialised group of well-trained police officers who will safeguard information and communication technology (ICT) infrastructure, handle incident responses, and conduct digital forensics within their organisations while serving as a national resource. In Odisha, a goal has been set to establish cyber police stations in all the districts. A cybercrime branch will also be created in the state for high-level investigation and monitoring of cybercrimes with a senior officer in charge.

Educational Initiatives

Integrating cyber security into school curricula and teaching each child about online safety, cyber etiquette, and basic cyber security practices. Conducting workshops and training programs to organize workshops, seminars, and training programs for citizens, focusing on cyber security best practices and emerging threats. Collaborating with educational institutions and partnering with universities, colleges, and vocational schools to develop cyber security courses, certifications, and degree programs.

Conclusion

Ultimately, addressing cyber threats requires a comprehensive approach that combines technology, policies, and education to protect digital assets and ensure resilience against future attacks.



INDIA'S POSITION AS SHIFTING GLOBAL NUCLEAR POWER

If we define nuclear energy in simple terms, it can be said that it is the energy which is produced by mainly two processes. First is through nuclear fission which involves breaking two heavy atoms like Uranium-235 and Plutonium-239 while bombarding with a neutron to produce large amount of energy.



Second is nuclear fusion which is the process where two light atomic nuclei such as hydrogen isotopes like deuterium and tritium combine to form a heavier nucleus like helium. At present, nuclear fission is the only process currently used in commercial nuclear power plants worldwide and nuclear fusion remains in the experimental stage.

History of nuclear energy

The discovery of nuclear energy started between 1930 and 1940. In 1938, Otto Hahn and Fritz Strassman discovered the nuclear fission of Uranium for the first time, by laying the groundwork for nuclear energy. Thereafter, the first nuclear power-based weapon was developed by the collaboration of the world's three powerful countries like USA, UK, and Canada through the Manhattan Project in 1941. It was considered as a great achievement of the tripartite alliance. But during the World War-II, the world witnessed the worst use of nuclear weapons like *Little Boy* and *Fat Man*, the most powerful nuclear

weapons of the USA which caused Japan a future of suffering and loss.

History of India's nuclear power energy

The early development of Nuclear Programme was developed in 1945 by Sir Homi Jehangir Bhabha, a professor at Tata Institute of Fundamental Research. He is popularly known as the "Father of Indian Nuclear Programme" with massive support of Sir Dorabji Tata, the chairman-cum-founder of the Tata Group. In 1954, for the purpose of nuclear weapon design and production, "The Trombay Atomic Energy Establishment" was established, where the first nuclear reactor, APSARA, was developed, which was christened by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru.

Later, the Trombay Atomic Energy Establishment was renamed as "Bhabha Atomic Research Centre (BARC)" after the death of Sir Homi Bhabha in 1966. Sir Vikram Sarabhai was appointed as the Chairman of Nuclear program in 1966 while Shri Lal Bahadur Shastri was the Prime Minister of India. During this period the process was slowed down due to the Gandhian beliefs of Shri Lal Bahadur Shastri. It was only upon Smt. Indira Gandhi becoming the Prime Minister of India in 1967 that the work on the program was renewed and weapon-grade plutonium was developed. In other words, it can be said that plutonium is the best contribution of Sir Homi Nusserwanji Sethna, a nuclear scientist and leader in India's atomic energy program.

During the term of former Prime Minister Smt. Indira Gandhi, for the first time, India had conducted its first nuclear test at the Pokhran range test in Rajasthan in 1974 named as "Smiling Buddha" or "Pokhran-I" under the leadership of Sir Raja Ramanna, Sir P.K. Iyengar, and Sir Rajagopala Chidambaram.

In 1998, India conducted its second nuclear test, "Operation Shakti" or "Pokhran-II" under the leadership of former President of India, Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam and Sir Rajagopala Chidambaram.

As per the report given by the International Atomic Energy Agency 2023, globally, India's rank is 10th in nuclear power generation and with 22 reactors contributing to about 1.6% of the global electricity supply. In budget 2024-25, the Government of India has allocated Rs 24,969 crore to Department of Atomic Energy for further development. While discussing about the relationship of India with other nuclear countries, India has signed the Indo-US Nuclear deal with USA in 2008 which is known as 123 Agreement. Kundankulam nuclear project is the best result of India-Russia collaboration, which is now considered as the largest power plant of India. Jaitapur project in Ratnagiri, Maharashtra is the best example of India-France collaboration. India has also signed Civil Nuclear Agreement with Japan in 2016.

Why India needs to develop nuclear energy?

India's population and economy are growing rapidly, leading to a significant increase in energy consumption. Nuclear power can provide a large, reliable source of electricity to meet this growing demand. India relies heavily on coal for its energy needs, which contributes to air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions. By expanding its nuclear energy capacity, India aims to diversify its energy mix, reduce dependence on fossil fuels and reduce the environmental impact of energy production.

Developing nuclear energy allows India to advance its technological capabilities and become more self-reliant in energy production. It also helps build expertise in nuclear technology, which can have

applications in other industries. India imports a significant portion of its energy resources, particularly oil and natural gas. Nuclear energy provides a stable and domestically-sourced alternative energy. Nuclear power plants do not emit greenhouse gases which is good for the environment as well as India has abundant thorium reserves that can be used to produce nuclear energy.

Nuclear Power Plants in India

The Kundankulam Nuclear Power Plant in Tamil Nadu is India's largest operational nuclear power plant with a total capacity of 2,000 MW. The Tarapur Atomic Power Station in Maharashtra is India's first nuclear power plant, with a current capacity of 1400 MW.

As of November 2024, India has 24 nuclear reactors in operation in 8 nuclear power plants, with a total installed capacity of 8,180 MW. Nuclear power produced a total of 48 TWh in 2023, contributing around 3% of total power generation in India.

Advantages of Nuclear Energy

Nuclear power has a very high energy density, meaning, it can produce a large amount of energy from a small amount of fuel compared to other energy sources. The energy density of nuclear fuel is orders of magnitude higher than that of fossil fuel like coal or oil. A small amount of uranium about the size of a marble can produce as much energy as several tonnes of coal. This high energy density is due to the process of nuclear fission, where the nucleus of a Uranium or Plutonium atom is split to release a large amount of energy in the form of heat. Because of this high energy density nuclear power plant requires much less fuel and occupies significantly less land compared to renewable sources like wind or solar which requires large areas to generate same amount of energy.

Nuclear power is considered as a clean and low carbon energy source because it

generates electricity, with minimal greenhouse gas emission. Unlike fossil fuels, such as, coal or natural gas, nuclear power plants produce very little carbon dioxide during their operation. However, while nuclear power itself is low carbon, there are environmental considerations, such as mining and processing of uranium fuel, the construction of reactors and the long-term management of radioactive waste. Climate change mitigation by reducing greenhouse gas emission, nuclear power can help mitigate climate change.

India's rapid economic growth has led to a surge in energy demand. Supporting the economic growth of nuclear power, involves several strategies both at the policy level and within the industry. Collaboration between government and private companies can help to share the high upfront cost of nuclear plant construction.

Nuclear power contributes to a diversified energy mix, reducing reliance on any single source of energy. Unlike fossil fuels, which are often imported from other countries, nuclear energy relies on domestically - sourced Uranium or Thorium. Base load energy supply of electricity which is crucial for maintain grid reliability.

Unlike solar and wind energy, nuclear power plant provides a stable and uninterrupted energy supply, making them suitable for meeting base load electricity demands. Nuclear power plant typically operates with a capacity factor of over 90% meaning, they produce electricity at full capacity most of the time. Nuclear plants are designed to provide consistent, steady power output. A nuclear reactor can operate for 12-24 months before refuelling, ensuring long-term energy production without frequent interruptions.

Building a nuclear power plant requires thousands of skilled workers, including civil mechanical and electrical engineers. It involves an extensive supply chain from Uranium mining and fuel fabrication to component manufacturing. Generation IV reactor including molten salt reactors, sodium-cooled fast reactors and gas-cooled reactors promise higher efficiency. Ongoing efforts in nuclear fusion technology (International Thermonuclear Experimental Reactor (ITER) project and Artificial Intelligence (AI) and automation). Here, AI and digital twin technologies are transforming reactor operation, creating demand for data scientist.

Disadvantages of Nuclear Energy

Building a nuclear power plant requires advanced engineering, extensive safety system and highly specialized materials. Due to long construction period (often 5-10 years or more) interest on loan and financing cost accumulate significantly before the plant begins generating revenue. Advancements in nuclear technology such as next generation reactors and fusion research require heavy investment. Roughly, the cost of production of 1 unit of hydroelectricity is Rs 2.5-3.5, whereas the cost of production of 1 unit of nuclear energy is Rs 6.5. As the unit cost production of solar energy is Rs 1.9, the government is primarily promoting the use of solar based energy over other forms of clean energy.

Accidents occurs when the reactor core overheats, potentially leading to the release of radioactive materials (Chernobyl, Fukushima). Small leaks can occur due to equipment failure, poor maintenance, or natural disasters, leading to environmental and health concern. If the cooling system malfunctions, the reactor can overheat, increasing the risk of molten down or explosion. Operator mistakes,

procedural lapses or inadequate training can contribute to accidents.

The invisible and long-lasting nature of radiation makes people anxious about potential health risks, even with strict safety measures in place. Fear of leaks, groundwater contamination and the challenge of finding disposal sites contribute to opposition. Some people worry that the expansion of nuclear power could lead to spread of nuclear weapons technology. The long-term storage and management of nuclear waste are major public concerns. Nuclear power generates radioactive waste that must be carefully managed to prevent environmental and health risks. Low level waste contains low level of radiation (contaminated tools, filters). Intermediate level waste is more than low level waste (reactor component). High level waste is highly radioactive and heat generating waste (spent nuclear fuel).

Nuclear power is considered a low carbon energy source, low on emission; nuclear plants can impact local ecosystems during construction and operation. The most significant environmental concern is the production of long-lived radioactive waste, which remains hazardous for thousands of years. Nuclear power plant requires large quantities of water for cooling this, can lead to thermal pollution of nearby water bodies, affecting aquatic life. Groundwater contamination with radioactive and heavy metal pollutants poses health risks.

Impact of nuclear energy on ecosystem and biodiversity

Nuclear energy is often considered as a clean and efficient source of power. It produces about 10g of CO₂ per kilowatt hour, compared to about 500 for fossil gas and 1000 for coal. However, the truth is more complex. While nuclear power plants do not emit greenhouse gases during operation, they do produce

radioactive waste that remains hazardous for thousands of years. According to the World Nuclear Association, there are currently 443 operational nuclear power plants worldwide, with 50 more under construction. But the nuclear industry's environmental impact extends far beyond the power plants themselves. The mining of uranium, used in nuclear fuel, has devastating environmental consequences. But with modern in-situ technology, this impact can be reduced compared to classical underground or open-pit mining.

In 2020, the International Atomic Energy Agency reported that uranium mining resulted in the release of over 100 million cubic meters of radioactive waste rock into the environment. Many people have argued that an expansion of nuclear power would help combat climate change. Others have argued that it is one way to reduce emissions, but it comes with its own problems, such as risks related to severe nuclear accidents, attacks on nuclear sites and nuclear terrorism. Nuclear accidents like Chernobyl and Fukushima have highlighted the catastrophic consequences of nuclear power.

If we look at its impact on human health, while nuclear power plants provide electricity to millions, they also pose significant health risks. Radiation exposure can potentially result in short-term and long-term effects in every organ system in the body. When most or all of the human body is exposed to a single dose of more than 1 Gy of radiation, acute radiation sickness can occur. If total body doses are extremely high (>20 Gy), severe acute neurovascular compromise can occur. The World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that the Chernobyl disaster exposed over 200,000 workers to radiation, resulting in 28 immediate deaths and a significant increase in cancer cases.

A 2020 study published in the Journal of Radiological Protection found that nuclear power plant workers are at a higher risk of developing cancer, particularly leukaemia. According to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), there are over 400,000 workers employed in the nuclear industry worldwide, all of whom are at risk of radiation exposure. In addition to this, communities living near nuclear power plants are also at risk.

A 2019 study published in the journal Environmental Health Perspectives found that children living near nuclear power plants have a higher risk of developing leukaemia. The impact of nuclear energy on human health is a serious concern. And it is indispensable to prioritize the health and safety of workers and communities near nuclear power plants.

Nuclear disasters can cause widespread death and sickness among wildlife, just like humans. Nuclear power plants and uranium mining have devastating effects on ecosystems and biodiversity. According to a 2020 study published in the Journal of Environmental Radioactivity, the Chernobyl disaster released radioactive materials that contaminated over 200,000 square kilometres of land, affecting numerous species, including wolves, bears, and birds.

Also, the nuclear power plants' cooling systems harm aquatic life. A 2019 report by the Nuclear Information and Resource Service found that nuclear power plants in the United States kill an estimated 3.4 million fish and other aquatic organisms annually. A 2018 study published in the journal "Environmental Science and Technology" found that uranium mining in the Grand Canyon region of the United States contaminated soil, water, and air, posing a significant threat to local wildlife. Furthermore, the International Union for Conservation of

Nature (IUCN) reports that nuclear activity have impacted over 100 species worldwide, including many endangered species.

Summits and Conferences on Nuclear Energy

India actively participates in various nuclear energy summits and conferences to strengthen its global collaboration, enhance technological exchange, and affirm its commitment to peaceful uses of nuclear energy. These engagements help India secure resources, foster international partnerships, and promote the safe and sustainable use of nuclear power. As a member of the G20, India advocates for nuclear energy as a reliable low-carbon energy source. Discussions often include global strategies to integrate nuclear power into clean energy systems. Nuclear energy development and cooperation are regularly discussed at BRICS summits. India has collaborated with Russia, a BRICS member, for projects like the Kudankulam Nuclear Power Plant. Discussions include enhancing clean energy production through nuclear power.

At UNFCCC COP summits, India advocates for nuclear energy as part of its strategy to reduce carbon emissions and transition to clean energy. Nuclear energy is presented as a critical component of India's goals under its Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs). At Global Centre for Nuclear Energy Partnership (GCNEP), India hosts international workshops and conferences at the GCNEP focusing on nuclear security, reactor safety, and advanced research in nuclear technology. It provides a platform for international cooperation on peaceful nuclear energy use.

India is a founding member of the IAEA and actively participates in its annual General Conferences. India collaborates with the IAEA

on nuclear safety, security, and peaceful applications of nuclear technology. India has participated in the Nuclear Security Summits held in Washington (2010), Seoul (2012), The Hague (2014), and Washington (2016). It focuses on preventing nuclear terrorism, securing nuclear materials, and promoting safe handling of radioactive substances. India has committed to enhance nuclear security through indigenous measures. This includes establishment of the Global Centre for Nuclear Energy Partnership (GCNEP) in Haryana to foster international collaboration on nuclear security and training.

Indo-US Nuclear Deal (2008) is a landmark agreement between India and the United States marked India's entry into the global nuclear energy market after decades of isolation. It allowed India to engage in civil nuclear trade with other nations while maintaining its independent nuclear weapons program. It led to agreements with other countries like France, Russia, and Japan for civil nuclear cooperation. India participates in the Conference on Disarmament, emphasizing the importance of peaceful nuclear energy while advocating for non-discriminatory disarmament measures. India reiterates its stand on maintaining its nuclear program for peaceful purposes and strategic deterrence.

India has consistently lobbied for membership in the Nuclear Suppliers Group, emphasizing its strong non-proliferation record. Although not a member, India actively engages with NSG members to expand civil nuclear trade and ensure access to advanced nuclear technologies. India collaborates with countries in the Asia-Pacific region to promote nuclear energy development. The Asia Pacific Nuclear Energy forum emphasize safe nuclear power usage and advancements in technology, particularly for emerging economies.

India regularly participates in the World Nuclear Association Annual Symposium, a global forum for nuclear industry leaders. NPCIL and BARC showcase India's achievements in indigenous reactor technology and thorium-based energy research. India is a key participant in International Framework for Nuclear Energy Cooperation, which aims to promote international cooperation for safe and peaceful nuclear energy use. Focus areas include nuclear safety, infrastructure development, and public acceptance of nuclear power.

India and Russia have a long-standing partnership in nuclear energy, with collaborations on projects like the Kudankulam Nuclear Power Plant. Annual summits often focus on expanding nuclear power cooperation, including joint research and technology transfer. India and France signed a civil nuclear cooperation agreement in 2008. Discussions at bilateral summits focus on projects like the Jaitapur Nuclear Power Plant, set to be the largest nuclear power plant in the World. India and Japan signed a civil nuclear cooperation agreement in 2016. The dialogue includes discussions on nuclear safety, security, and the peaceful use of nuclear energy. India and the UK discuss nuclear energy collaboration as part of broader energy partnerships. Focus areas include research on advanced reactor designs and fusion energy.

Future goal of India's Nuclear Energy

India's nuclear power capacity is poised for significant growth, increasing from the current 8,180 MW to 22,480 MW by 2031-2032 and eventually 100GW by 2047. This includes building several new reactors and fast-tracking ongoing projects. India has developed nuclear technology through scientific research and technological development. India is the

only developing country to have built, tested and used nuclear reactors for electricity generation. India's indigenous development of nuclear technology reflects its focus on self-reliance, energy security and advance scientific innovation.

India has collaborated with many countries on nuclear energy including the United States, Russia, and France. These collaborations have helped India build nuclear power plants, diversify its nuclear technology, and secure nuclear fuel. India signed the 123 Agreement with the USA in 2008 which allowed India to trade with nuclear power with the USA. India and Russia have a longstanding agreement dating back to the cold war; Russia has helped India build nuclear power plants including the Kundankulam nuclear power plant in Tamil Nadu. France-Jaitapur Nuclear Power Project in Maharashtra is a result of National Power Corporation of India and Electricite de France's collaboration. If built, it will have a capacity of 9,900 MW and will become one of world's largest nuclear power plants.

India is actively developing nuclear power as a clean and sustainable energy source to address its growing energy demands while mitigating environmental impacts. Nuclear energy plays a vital role in achieving clean energy transition due to its low carbon emissions, efficiency, and reliability. Nuclear energy aligns with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 7 that is, affordable and clean energy. Nuclear energy also contributes indirectly to SDG 13, which is, climate action. By reducing reliance on fossil fuels, it aids in combating climate change. India has taken some aggressive steps to promote these types of sustainable goals. Nuclear power plants produce minimal greenhouse gas emissions during operation, supporting climate action goals. India focuses on Thorium-based reactors, leveraging its abundant thorium reserves for clean and sustainable nuclear energy. India is developing advanced technologies for safe handling and disposal of nuclear waste, aligning with sustainability principles.

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SEMICONDUCTOR ECOSYSTEM IN INDIA

The global semiconductor industry is rapidly expanding, driven by technological advancements and the increasing demand for electronics across sectors like electric vehicles (EVs), the Internet of Things (IoT), and artificial intelligence (AI). Recognizing the strategic importance of semiconductors, India is making concerted efforts to establish itself as a key player in this ecosystem. While India has long excelled in electronics manufacturing and IT services, the semiconductor industry has traditionally lagged due to the absence of domestic chip manufacturing. However, recent initiatives, including the US\$10 billion India Semiconductor Mission (ISM), aim to transform India into a global semiconductor hub.

Semiconductors are materials which have a conductivity between conductors (generally metals) and non-conductors or insulators (such as most ceramics). Semiconductors can be pure elements, such as silicon or germanium, or compounds such as gallium arsenide or cadmium selenide. In a process called doping, small amounts of impurities are added to pure semiconductors causing large changes in the conductivity of the material. Due to their role in the fabrication of electronic devices, semiconductors are an important part of our lives. Although many electronic devices could be made using vacuum tube technology, the developments in semiconductor technology during the past 50 years have made electronic devices smaller, faster, and more reliable.

Opportunities for India

According to a recent report published in the Economic Times, India's semiconductor market was valued at \$45 billion in 2023 and is projected to rapidly grow at a CAGR of 13

per cent to surpass \$100 billion by 2030. As the largest populous economy in the world, India possesses a vast domestic consumption market for semiconductors. India has emerged as the second-largest market for 5G smartphones after China in the first half of 2024, which is expected to grow further in future.

Government has approved the Semicon India programme for the development of semiconductor and display manufacturing



ecosystem in the country. The establishment of semiconductor manufacturing units and assembly, testing, marking, and packaging facilities is creating a strong foundation for the industry. Collaborations with global semiconductor leaders and technology partnerships with countries like the US and Japan are enhancing India's capabilities and fostering technology transfers.

Global Key Players in Semiconductor Production

East Asian countries like Taiwan (TSMC), South Korea, and China account for over 70% of the global market share. The United States is home to chip design and R&D tech giants like Intel and Qualcomm.

Europe (Germany and Netherlands) focuses on specialty chips and automotive applications. Taiwan has emerged as a global powerhouse in the semiconductor industry,

producing integrated circuits, microprocessors, and other essential electronic components. Recognizing the chip revolution early, the Taiwanese government invested heavily in the 1970s, fostering R&D and attracting talent. Taiwan strategically leveraged its chip power for diplomacy, fostering alliances and a conflict-free environment for its industry to thrive. TSMC manufactures most of the world's chips. TSMC's chip manufacturing machinery comes from the Netherlands and supplies its chips mainly to NVIDIA (USA). This has resulted in the creation of Choke points around these companies. Any disruption in this supply chain could trigger a global tech meltdown affecting industries from automobiles to healthcare to Artificial Intelligence (AI).

Need for semiconductor ecosystem in India

India's burgeoning population and increasing digitalisation have increased demand for semiconductor components. The vision of National Policy on Electronics 2019 is to position India as a global hub for Electronics System Design and Manufacturing. India wants to achieve technological leadership in this area of strategic importance, which is also key to the security of the country's critical information infrastructure. India's focus on technological advancements in AI, IoT, 6G, and smart devices necessitates a robust semiconductor industry.

India boasts a pool of talented engineers and skilled professionals, offering a competitive advantage in designing and developing semiconductor products. The global shift in supply chains due to geopolitical factors (US-China tension) and the need for diversification provides an opportunity for India. Fortifying digital security infrastructure, fostering technological sovereignty, and enabling secure communication and defence

applications contribute to critical national interests.

India's Initiatives

Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) notified the Production Linked Incentive (PLI) Scheme as part of the vision of National Policy on Electronics. It includes 4-6% domestic production-linked incentives to electronics companies that manufacture mobile phones and specified components, including assembly, testing, marking, and packaging units. It offers incentives based on incremental sales designed to boost domestic manufacturing & attract large investments in the sector. In the interim 2024 Union Budget, India increased the allocation for the Semiconductor and display manufacturing scheme by 130%.

MeitY has set up the India Semiconductor Mission (ISM) as a dedicated body to drive the program and facilitate investments. It offers financial incentives and support for establishing high-tech clusters and R&D facilities. In 2022, India signed the India-US Critical and Emerging Technologies (iCET) deal to elevate and expand Indo-U.S. strategic technology partnership and defence industrial cooperation between the countries' governments, businesses, and academic institutions. Strengthening innovation ecosystems, defence innovation and technology cooperation, resilient semiconductor supply chains, space, STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) talent and next-generation telecom is call of the hour.

Under the Design Linked Initiative (DLI) scheme financial and infrastructure support will be provided to companies across various stages of development and deployment of semiconductor design for integrated circuits (ICs), chips, systems on chips (SoCs), systems and IP cores, and semiconductor-linked design for over five years. Recently, the

cabinet approved the establishment of three semiconductor units under this program. Tata Electronics Private Limited ("TEPL") will partner with Power Chip Semiconductor Manufacturing Corp (PSMC) in Taiwan to establish a semiconductor fab in Dholera, Gujarat. Semiconductor unit in Morigaon, Assam, by Tata Semiconductor Assembly & Test Pvt Ltd ("TSAT"). CG Power, in partnership with Renesas Electronics Corporation, Japan, and Stars Microelectronics, Thailand, will establish a semiconductor unit in Sanand, Gujarat.

Initiatives taken in Odisha

The Odisha Semiconductor Manufacturing and Fabless Policy envisions developing an end-to-end semiconductor ecosystem in Odisha. The policy aspires to contribute to the national semiconductor ecosystem development objectives and aims to transform Odisha into a leading center of semiconductor design and manufacturing, a startup hub for semiconductor R&D and design companies, and the primary repository of the semiconductor design talent in the country. It will build a conducive fabless ecosystem in the state and attract a minimum of 100-120 chip design companies and startups in the next 7 years as well as create a minimum of 5000-6000 high-end jobs in the chip design space in the next 7 years.

India's first silicon carbide manufacturing facility to be set up in Odisha at an investment of Rs 620 crore. The project will be developed by RIR Power Electronics Limited, a leader in India's semiconductor power electronics technology at the EMC Park, Infovalley, Bhubaneswar. This new facility will not only create state-of-the-art products but also open a wealth of opportunities for the talented youth, providing them with avenues to work at the cutting edge of technology in Odisha.

Challenges

The Semiconductor fabrication unit undertakings cost billions of dollars for

extensive facilities. Therefore, it can be carried out by only a few companies worldwide. They require a high-quality supply of water, electricity, and insulation from the elements, reflecting the high capital needed to make sophisticated circuits. A state-of-the-art fabrication unit can take up to five years before full production, but it requires full financing and continuous labour supply during the gestation period. A semiconductor fab is a multi-step sequence by which electronic circuits are gradually created, and it requires high skills and technology, which India lacks.

From a value-chain perspective, silicon, Germanium & Gallium arsenide, and Silicon carbide are needed, but they are unavailable in India and must be imported. The semiconductor fabrication process involves using toxic materials such as arsenic, antimony, and phosphorus, which can have adverse environmental effects. Trade war and geopolitical tensions between the USA and China, due to which the USA has put stiff trade restrictions on the supply of cutting-edge technology.

Way Ahead

It is very important to channel fiscal support, initially targeting segments beyond chip fabrication, such as design centres, testing facilities, and packaging, leveraging India's talent pool. There is a need to strengthen educational programs and training initiatives such as the Skill India mission and others to leverage India's demographic dividend and provide youth with employment opportunities. Strengthen alliances with countries like the USA, Taiwan, and Japan to ensure efficient supply chains and access to vital raw materials and technologies. Diversify sources, reduce import dependency, and fortify the semiconductor supply chain to mitigate risks from global disruptions.



WORLD AFFAIRS

Croatia's President Zoran Milanovic won re-election for another five-year term

Zoran Milanovic defeated candidate from the ruling conservative party in a runoff vote.



Zoran Milanovic is a critic of the European Union and NATO. Milanović won over 74% of the vote compared to Dragan Primorac. Dragan Primorac got over 26%

votes. Zoran Milanovic is a critic of Western military support for Ukraine in its war against Russia. Croatia is a country in Central and Southeast Europe. It is located on the coast of the Adriatic Sea. Zagreb is the capital of Croatia. It is surrounded by Slovenia to the northwest, Hungary to the northeast and Serbia to the east.

An emergency declared in LA by the US as the wildfire spread to nearly 3,000 acres

A state of emergency has been declared in Los Angeles as wildfires rapidly spread to over 2,900 acres. Important landmarks and buildings have been damaged, and nearly one lakh people have been evacuated. Over 1,400 firefighters are working to control the fire. Many people abandoned their vehicles between Malibu and Santa Monica, leading firefighters to clear blocked roads. NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory is among the areas under evacuation orders due to the Eaton Fire. The fires, which started on January 7 and worsened due to strong winds, threaten more than 13,000 buildings.

John Mahama became President of Ghana for the third time

John Mahama won the presidential election last year after promising to tackle the economic crisis, corruption, and unemployment. He was previously Ghana's president between July 2012 and January 2017. He will replace current President Nana Akufo-Addo. Mahama was first sworn in as president in July 2012. The ceremony was attended by several African leaders, including Rwanda's Paul Kagame, Kenya's William Ruto, and Congo's Felix Tshisekedi. He will focus on economic restoration and stabilization of the macroeconomic environment, as well as on good governance.

China released a prototype of the world's fastest train

China has unveiled its next-generation high-speed train, the CR450 prototype. It can reach up to a speed of 450 km/h. CR450 will replace CR400, which can operate at a speed of 350 Km/h. This milestone has been achieved through extensive research and development. The train's braking system has been optimised to ensure stability and safety at these unprecedented speeds. It will have advanced systems like water-cooled, permanent magnet traction and a high-stability bogie system. It is a significant step towards in the field of China's high-speed rail ambitions.

Romania and Bulgaria officially became members of the European Union's border-free Schengen area

After scrapping land border controls, Romania and Bulgaria have become full members of

the Schengen area. The Bulgarian and Romanian interior ministers symbolically removed a barrier on the Danube Bridge. Schengen area has now 25 of the 27 EU member states, excluding Cyprus and Ireland. It enables the free movement of more than 425 million EU citizens. The Schengen zone is the largest area of free movement in the world. Both countries have partially joined the Schengen Area in March 2024, but open travel was restricted to those arriving only by air or sea.

Russia introduced tourist tax

The Russian government has introduced a new tourist tax to replace the previous resort fee. Now, travellers staying in hotels and other accommodations will have to contribute an additional 1 per cent of their lodging costs. This is the start of the plan to bolster regional tourism infrastructure. The tax was introduced as part of amendments to the Russian Tax Code in July 2024. Under the new plan, the tourist tax will begin at a rate of 1 per cent in 2025 and will be increased to 3 per cent by 2027. Many regions, particularly those with established or emerging tourism industries, have already adopted this initiative. Russia has also officially dropped export duties on anthracite, coking coal, and thermal coal.

Mohamed Al-Bashir appointed as Syria's caretaker Prime Minister

Mohamed al-Bashir has been appointed the caretaker Prime Minister of Syria's transitional government. With the support of the former rebels who overthrew President Bashar al-Assad just days ago, Mr. Bashir will serve as the head of the interim government until March 1, 2025. Al-Bashir ran the rebel-led Salvation Government before the 12-day offensive swept into Syria's capital, Damascus. In the past, Mohammed al-Bashir,

who is not well-known throughout most of Syria, oversaw a government in a small, rebel-controlled area of the northwest.

Burkina Faso's military junta appointed Rimtalba Jean Emmanuel Ouedraogo as prime minister

Rimtalba Jean Emmanuel Ouedraogo was Communications Minister and spokesperson of the government. Rimtalba Jean Emmanuel Ouedraogo will be the West African country's new Prime Minister, junta leader Ibrahim Traore said. Traore had issued a decree dismissing PM Apollinaire Joachim Kyelem de Tambela. Burkina Faso's ruling military junta appointed a new PM, a day after dissolving the government. The junta in Burkina Faso seized power in September 2022.

Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah became first female President of Namibia



Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah of the South West Africa People's Organization

(SWAPO) party won Namibia's 8th presidential election, securing over 57% of the votes. Her closest rival, Panduleni Tula, received 26%. Nandi-Ndaitwah, who was serving as vice president, had been a key figure in Namibia's politics since its independence from South Africa in 1990. SWAPO also won the National Assembly elections, securing 51 of the 96 elected seats. **"Brain Rot" has been selected as Oxford Word of the Year 2024**

This reflects concerns about impact of social media on mental health. It is defined as cognitive decline due to trivial online content. After a public vote by more than 37,000 participants, six words were shortlisted. Brain Rot is one of them. Other five are demure,

dynamic pricing, lore, romantasy, and slop. The "brain rot" is being increasingly used to describe the perceived negative effects of excessive consumption of low-quality online content. Oxford University Press (OUP) describes Brain Rot as a noun. The first recorded use of "brain rot" was in Henry David Thoreau's book Walden in 1854.

In Sri Lanka, the NPP has won the parliamentary election by a wide margin

The ruling National People's Power (NPP) of Sri Lanka registered a landslide victory in the parliamentary elections, securing a two-thirds

majority with 159 seats in the 225-member house. Sajith Premadasa's Samagi Jana Balawegaya, the largest opposition party, came second with 40 seats. Arasu Kadchi, an Ilankai Tamil party, won eight seats, and the New Democratic Front, allied with former President Ranil Wickremasinghe, won five seats. The elections were held on November 14, 2024. Anura Kumara Dissanayake, leader of the NPP, became the 10th president of Sri Lanka.

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NATIONAL AFFAIRS

Union Minister Piyush Goyal launched the National Turmeric Board

Shri Pale Ganga Reddy became the first chairperson of the National Turmeric Board,



with its headquarters in Nizamabad. The board aims to increase turmeric producers' income by promoting research and development of new

products and enhancing the export of turmeric-related items. India is the largest producer, consumer, and exporter of turmeric, contributing 70% of global production. In 2023-24, 3.05 lakh hectares were under turmeric cultivation in India.

India's National Highways recorded 60% growth in the last 10 years

India's National Highway network has grown from 91,287 km in 2014 to 146,195 km in 2024, making it the second largest in the world. High-speed corridors have increased from 93 km in 2014 to 2,474 km in 2024. The government has also added 2,540 km of highways through Externally Aided Projects (EAP) with loans from international agencies. As part of the Bharatmala Pariyojana, the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways plans to develop 35 Multimodal Logistics Parks (MMLPs) with an investment of Rs 46,000 crore. Additionally, Registered Vehicle Scrapping Facilities are now operating in 19 states and UTs.

Marathi language was officially given classical status

Marathi has been officially granted classical language status through a Government

Resolution. Union Culture Minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat handed over the recognition to Maharashtra's Marathi Language Minister Uday Samant in Delhi. Although the Union Cabinet had approved the status for Marathi in October 2024, the official notification was delayed. This recognition is a significant achievement for Marathi speakers globally. The Maharashtra government plans to propose benefits for classical languages to the central government soon. Tamil was the first language granted classical status in 2004, followed by Sanskrit in 2005.

Government is planning to launch a new credit guarantee scheme for MSMEs

The government will launch a new credit guarantee scheme for MSMEs providing free loans up to Rs 100 crore without any guarantee. The proposal is expected to be presented before the Union Cabinet for approval. The main aim of the scheme will be to provide term loans for MSMEs to purchase machinery and equipment without collateral or third-party guarantees. The scheme will be implemented by pooling MSMEs' credit risks, supported by a self-financing guarantee fund. The MSME sector is a crucial sector of the Indian Economy. It provides employment to 50 million people. MSMEs have boosted India's GDP, their Gross Value Added (GVA) contribution has grown from 29.7% in 2017-18 to 30.1% in 2022-23.

The second meeting of Inland Waterways Development Council (IWDC) announced investments of over ₹50,000 crore in next five years

The government announced over ₹1400 crore in new initiatives for 21 Inland Waterway

States. ₹3000 crore will be invested by 2030 for the development of NW2, NW16, and the Indo-Bangladesh Protocol Route (IBPR). The Ministry aims to launch 1000 Green vessels and expand Kochi's Water Metro Project to 15 cities, including Guwahati. ₹23,000 crore is allocated for National Waterways Development and Green Shipping. The National River Traffic & Navigation System was launched to ensure seamless vessel movement. The Inland Waterways Authority of India (IWAI) is the nodal agency for these developments.

The Bharat Cleantech Manufacturing Platform launched by Union Minister Piyush Goyal at the Bharat Climate Forum 2025 in New Delhi

A new platform has been launched to enhance India's clean technology value chains in solar, wind, hydrogen, and battery storage sectors, aiming to make India a global leader in sustainability. The Minister highlighted that product-linked incentives (PLI) and subsidies can only accelerate growth temporarily, and the clean energy sector should focus on self-reliance. The goal is to meet Prime Minister Modi's target of 500 GW of clean energy by 2030. India has been performing well in meeting its climate commitments under the Paris Agreement and UNFCCC.

According to figures released by the Election Commission of India, Puducherry had the highest percentage of female voters in the nation during the 2024 Lok Sabha Elections

According to a press statement from the Puducherry Chief Electoral Officer, women make up 5,42,979, or 53.03%, of the 10,23,699 electorate. With all 31 polling places were staffed only by trained female officials, the Mahe Assembly Segment created history. The gender ratio in the Union Territory

also increased significantly, rising from 1127 in 2023 to 1130 in 2024. The ECI data also shows a 5.19% increase among registered voters. Of the 151 transgender voters who were registered, about 70% of them cast ballots. According to the data, the number of NOTA votes dropped from 12,199 in 2019 to 9763 in 2024.

The Grameen Bharat Mahotsav 2025 inaugurated by PM Narendra Modi in Delhi

NABARD is organizing an event to showcase rural India's entrepreneurial potential and cultural heritage, with the goal of building a resilient rural India for a developed nation by



2047. The event will focus on strengthening rural infrastructure, promoting self-sufficient economies, and encouraging innovation. It will include sessions and workshops on financial inclusion, sustainable agriculture, and economic stability, with an emphasis on Northeast India. The initiative also aims to support rural women's entrepreneurship and foster collaboration among government representatives, business owners, and artisans.

Government notified amendment in the Foreign Trade Policy, 2023

The Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT) has notified the amendment in the Foreign Trade Policy, 2023. It has included Para 1.07A and 1.07B to bring legal backing to the FTP for consultation with stakeholders to seek views, suggestions, comments or feedback from relevant stakeholders. The main objective of the amendment is to encourage the participation of all stakeholders in the decision-making process. It will also provide a mechanism to inform reasons for not accepting views, suggestions, comments or feedback related to the formulation or amendment of the Foreign Trade Policy,

2023. This notification is part of the new era of inclusiveness in decision-making pertaining to trade.

Union cabinet approved MoU on trade of Non-Basmati White Rice between the Ministry of Cooperation of India and the Ministry of Trade of Indonesia

This MoU has been signed for trading of one million metric tonnes of non-basmati white rice annually based on production and international prices. The duration of the MoU will be four years and will get automatically extended for an additional four years. This agreement will be implemented by National Cooperative Exports Limited (NCEL). This MoU will help to resolve the issue of the trade imbalance and will strengthen India-Indonesia trade relations. NCEL will procure Non-Basmati White Rice (NBWR) from the open market through a transparent tender process and from cooperative societies.

Sashakt Beti and e-Drishti projects were launched by the Education Minister

Union Minister for Education Dharmendra Pradhan stated that the government is planning to increase funds for the advancement of the educational infrastructure. On January 4, he said this while inaugurating the dedication ceremony at Delhi University. During the programme, Shri Pradhan launched the Sashakt Beti and e-Drishti projects. Under both the projects, laptops and tablets were distributed by the Minister to orphaned children, single parent women and visually impaired students. He also launched the Delhi University Ambulance. The Commemorative Volume of Donor's Chronicle, 2024, was released by the education minister during the event.



In 2020, India's greenhouse gas emissions decreased by 7.93% from the year before

According to data provided to the UN climate change office, India's GDP's emission intensity decreased by 36% between 2005 and 2020. According to fourth Biennial Update Report (BUR-4) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), total national emissions in 2020 were 2,959 million tonnes of CO₂ equivalent, excluding land use change. Emissions have increased by 98.34% since 1994. India is aiming to reduce GDP emission intensity by 45% by 2030 and achieve 50% electric power capacity from non-fossil fuels.

Cabinet approved the extension of PM Fasal Bima Yojana, a weather-based crop insurance scheme till 2025-26

The government has extended the PM Fasal Bima Yojana and the Restructured Weather Based Crop Insurance Scheme until 2025-26, with an increased budget of ₹69,515 crore. Most of the insured farmers (88%) are small and marginal, with 57% from OBC, SC, and ST categories. The government also approved the extension of the Special Package for Di-Ammonium Phosphate (DAP) fertilizers, ensuring that farmers will continue to get DAP at ₹1,350 per 50kg bag at affordable prices. PM Fasal Bima Yojana was launched on 18 February 2016.

Advanced RPVs will be introduced by NHAI to enhance highway safety

NHAI plans to enhance road safety and highway patrol services by implementing advanced incident management. New Route Patrolling Vehicles (RPVs), called 'Rajmarg Saathi,' will feature updated designs, technology, and safety equipment. These vehicles will improve road safety, minimize traffic disruption, and respond to emergencies. The rear of the RPVs now includes a closed cabinet with organized shelves for equipment,

replacing the previous open space. The new RPVs also feature a dashboard camera with AI Video Analytics to identify road issues like cracks, potholes, and pedestrians.

Gorakhpur will get India's first integrated waste management city

By September 2025, Gorakhpur will build India's first city-cum-learning center for integrated waste management. The 40-acre complex will process 700 tonnes of dry and wet waste daily to produce Bio-CNG and charcoal. It will also include a hazardous waste plant serving Gorakhpur and eight surrounding districts. The project will create jobs, boost income, and provide technical education. The center will handle various waste types, including biomedical, e-waste, and industrial waste. NTPC has signed an agreement, and three specialized plants are planned, including one for dry waste, one for wet waste producing bio-CNG, and one for hazardous waste.

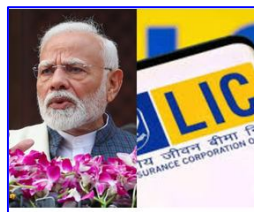
On Human Rights Day, the 'Hamara Shauchalay: Hamara Samman' campaign concluded

The "Hamara Shauchalay: Hamara Samman" campaign concluded on Human Rights Day, highlighting sanitation as a matter of dignity and human rights. Launched on World Toilet Day, the three-week campaign mobilized communities across India. Over 3.35 lakh new individual household toilets were sanctioned, and 1.54 lakh community sanitation complexes were improved. The initiative, organized by the Ministry of Jal Shakti, reached over 38 lakh participants through more than 50,500 programs. The campaign emphasized the importance of access to clean toilets for dignity, safety, and equality, especially for women and marginalized communities.

The Material Cost under the Pradhan Mantri Poshan Shakti Nirman (PM POSHAN) enhanced by 13.70% by the Union Education Ministry

The cost of materials for the PM POSHAN Scheme has increased: from Rs 5.45 to Rs 6.19 for primary and Bal Vatika classes, and from Rs 8.17 to Rs 9.29 for upper primary classes, effective from December 1, 2024. The Central Government will bear an additional cost of over Rs 425 crore in the 2024-25 financial year. The scheme, which provides one hot-cooked meal to 11.70 crore students in classes 1 to 8 across more than 10 lakh schools, aims to provide nutritional support and increase student participation.

Bima Sakhi Yojana launched by Prime Minister Modi to empower women aged 18 to 70 years



PM Narendra Modi launched LIC's Bima Sakhi Yojana and laid the foundation stone for the main campus of Maharana Pratap Horticultural University in

Panipat, Haryana. The university, spread over 495 acres, will be established at a cost of over Rs 700 crore and will offer horticultural studies and research. Bima Sakhi Yojana aims to empower women aged 18 to 70 by providing training, a stipend, and opportunities to work as LIC agents, with the potential to become Development Officers.

Urjaveer scheme has been launched by the Union Minister Manohar Lal

Union Minister Manohar Lal and Chief Minister Nara Chandrababu Naidu launched the 'Urjaveer' scheme in Vijayawada. The scheme aims to promote energy efficiency and renewable energy, creating a network of individuals committed to energy conservation. It empowers citizens to contribute to

sustainable practices and India's energy-saving goals.

Union Minister launched 'Anna Chakra' to enhance the efficiency of the PDS supply chain

Food and Public Distribution Minister Pralhad Joshi launched 'Anna Chakra' in New Delhi to improve the efficiency of the Public Distribution System (PDS) supply chain. Developed with the World Food Programme and IIT-Delhi, it will optimize food grain movement through route planning, reducing transportation emissions. Additionally, the Subsidy Claim Application for the National Food Security Act (SCAN) portal was launched to automate food subsidy processes, enhancing transparency and accountability in PDS implementation.

Forest cover data updated by the government, and forest conservation amendments were implemented

The Ministry of Environment, Forest, and Climate Change announced that the Forest



Survey of India (FSI) will now use 2022-23 as the base year for forest cover

assessments, replacing 2011-12. The

total forest area in India is 7,13,789 square kilometres, covering 21.71% of the country. Forest and tree cover increased by 7,449 square kilometres since 2017, with no loss of forest area. The government also introduced amendments to the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980, effective from December 1, 2023, to strengthen forest conservation and sustainable development.

Guidelines on flexible-duration degrees for undergraduate students have been approved by UGC

The University Grants Commission (UGC) approved a Standard Operating Protocol

(SOP) for Accelerated Degree Programs (ADPs). This allows students to complete their undergraduate degrees faster or extend the duration based on their learning abilities. Students can earn extra credits per semester to finish a three- or four-year degree in a shorter time. Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) will assess student eligibility for ADPs, and the degrees will be recognized for employment and academic purposes. HEIs may reserve 10% of their student intake for ADPs, with the option to reduce or extend the duration by up to two semesters.

India's first green hydrogen fuelling station established in Leh

Amara Raja Infra has completed India's first green hydrogen fuelling station in Leh, Ladakh, inaugurated by Union Minister Manohar Lal. The station, with a capacity to produce 80kg of GH2 per day, will support emission-free transport in the region. NTPC will deploy five hydrogen fuel cell buses in the area. This project will pave the way for large-scale green hydrogen mobility and storage initiatives across the country.

The national campaign 'Bal Vivah Mukti Bharat' launched by the Centre in New Delhi

The Union Minister Annapurna Devi launched the Bal Vivah Mukti Bharat campaign in New Delhi to make India a child marriage-free nation. The campaign introduces the Child Marriage Free India Portal to raise awareness, prevent child marriages, and report incidents. Inspired by the success of the 'Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao' initiative, the campaign aims to promote education, skills, and entrepreneurship among girls and women. Despite progress in reducing child mortality and improving girls' education, child marriage remains a significant issue, with one in five girls still married before the legal age of 18.

PAN 2.0 Project of Income Tax Department has been approved by centre

The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) approved the PAN 2.0 Project of the Income Tax Department with a financial cost of ₹1,435 crore. The project aims to upgrade the current system and create a unified portal. It will enhance the digital experience for taxpayers and improve PAN/TAN services through technology-driven reforms. The PAN 2.0 system will integrate core and non-core operations and enable PAN to serve as a Common Identifier for various government digital systems, supporting the Digital India initiative.

Union Cabinet launched the National Mission on Natural Farming (NMNF)

The National Mission on Natural Farming (NMNF) has been launched with a financial outlay of ₹2,481 crore. The mission aims to encourage farmers to adopt natural farming methods, reduce cultivation costs, and decrease reliance on purchased inputs. It focuses on integrating local livestock, promoting agroecological principles, and fostering healthy soil ecosystems. The mission also aims to provide safe, nutritious food and ensure long-term soil health and environmental sustainability.

'One Nation One Subscription' scheme has been approved by the Union Cabinet

The Union Cabinet has approved the 'One Nation One Subscription' scheme, which will provide access to scholarly research articles and journals for over 6,300 institutions in India. With an allocation of Rs 6,000 crore for three years, the scheme will benefit higher educational institutions and research organizations. The scheme aims to align with the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 and Viksitbharat@2047, providing access through a unified portal.

An MoU signed by SECI to promote Green Hydrogen initiative

An MoU was signed between the Solar Energy Corporation of India (SECI) and H2Global Stiftung to promote green hydrogen initiatives. The agreement aims to foster knowledge exchange and cooperation between India and importing countries, contributing to the global green hydrogen economy. This collaboration will help India design joint tenders and advance its Green Hydrogen initiative, supporting its goal of becoming a global export hub for green hydrogen.

Union Government has launched the Partnerships for Accelerated Innovation and Research (PAIR) programme

The PAIR program aims to enhance research in public universities by pairing emerging institutions with top research hubs for mentorship. The program will promote research



excellence through a hub-and-spoke model, where a hub institution mentors up to seven spoke institutions. The goal is to improve research standards and foster innovation in universities with support from high-ranking institutions.

Mines Ministry signed an MoU with IEA to cooperate on critical minerals

The Ministry of Mines signed an agreement with the International Energy Agency (IEA) to enhance cooperation on critical minerals. The MoU will provide India with access to data, analysis, and policy recommendations while supporting capacity building and knowledge exchange. It will also facilitate joint research, workshops, and training programs to promote collaboration in technology and extraction techniques.

STATE NEWS

Union Minister Piyush Goyal launched the National Turmeric Board

Shri Palle Ganga Reddy has been appointed as the first chairperson of the National



Turmeric Board, with Nizamabad as its headquarters.

The Board aims to increase turmeric producers' income, promote research, and develop new turmeric products. India, the world's largest producer, consumer, and exporter of turmeric, grows it in 20 states, covering 3.05 lakh hectares. In 2023-24, India produced 10.74 lakh tonnes, accounting for 70% of global turmeric production, and will focus on marketing turmeric products internationally.

Flamingo Festival in Tirupati district

Flamingo Festival organized after a gap of five years in Tirupati district of Andhra Pradesh. It is spread over five locations including Nelapattu, B.V. Palem, Atakanithippa, Sri City and Sullurpeta. More than 200 varieties of birds are expected to fly to this region during this season. A three-day session will be conducted on eco-friendly biodiversity at Sri City, bird watching spots at Nelapattu and Atakanithippa. The government has developed infrastructure facilities also in the region by integrating it with Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA).

First battery energy storage system of India will start in Kilokri, south Delhi in March this year

India's first commercial utility-scale battery energy storage system (BESS) will be a 20 MW/40 MWh cluster, providing power for four hours a day, split between two hours during the day and two at night. Located at BSES

Rajdhani's substation in Kilokri, South Delhi, the project has been approved by the Delhi Electricity Regulatory Commission. It will cost ₹120 crore (\$14 million) and is funded by the Global Energy Alliance for People and Planet (GEAPP). India aims to deploy 47 GW of BESS by 2032, with GEAPP targeting 1 GW of BESS by 2026.

The Karnataka Forest Department launched the 'Garudakshi' online FIR system

To stop forest encroachments, illegal tree-felling, and poaching, the Karnataka Forest Department has launched the 'Garudakshi' online FIR system. It has been developed in collaboration with the Wildlife Trust of India (WTI). It will enable the online handling of forest crime cases under the Forest and Wildlife Protection Acts. At present, this system is being implemented in five forest divisions: Bangalore City, Bangalore Forest Patrol, Bhadravati, Sirsi, and Malai Mahadeshwar Wildlife Division. The Garudakshi software will be gradually implemented across all divisions. This advanced alert system will help officials in monitoring illegal activities, including tree felling, by tracking changes in forest cover.

IIT Madras launched Asia's largest Shallow Wave Basin Research facility

Asia's largest Shallow Wave Basin Research Facility has been launched by IIT Madras at its Thiruvananthapuram campus to meet both research and industrial needs. It will fulfil India's growing technical and research needs in coastal and marine engineering. It has been developed under the National Technology Centre for Ports, Waterways, and Coasts (NTCPWC). This facility will resolve challenges related to Indian ports, waterways, and coastal engineering. This facility will be used for testing the effects of 3D waves on structures for helping harbour, offshore, coastal, and

inland waterways projects. It will also help in the study of sediment transport, wave impact loading, and structural stability in the face of climate change.

Maha Kumbh Mela started on 13 January in Prayagraj with Amrit Snan

Maha Kumbh started on the occasion of Paush Poonnima. It is the world's largest spiritual and cultural gathering. Millions of pilgrims, devotees, and tourists visit Triveni Sangam's numerous ghats to take sacred dips. Triveni Sangam is the confluence of Ganga, Yamuna and Saraswati rivers. Millions of devotees will attend the Sangam to observe the ancient Kalpvas tradition in addition to the ritual bath. As per ancient beliefs, Kalpvas will be observed by devotees for one month till Magh Poonnima. Maha Kumbh Mela will continue till Mahashivaratri on 26th February. Maha Kumbh this year is special considering a rare celestial alignment that takes place only once in 144 years. Kalpvas is mentioned in the Mahabharata. It is a month-long period of spiritual practices during Kumbh Mela.

India's first 'Generation Beta' baby was born in Aizawl

A baby boy, named Frankie Remruatdika Zadeng, became the first Child of 'Generation Beta' in India. He was born at the Synod Hospital in Aizawl, Mizoram. Futurist Mark McCrindle introduced the term 'Gen Beta' to refer to children born between 2025 and 2039. By 2025, this generation will be 16% of the total global population. These children will be the offspring of Gen Ys (millennials) and older Gen Zs. Gen Beta will experience a seamless integration of the digital and physical worlds.

The new Jammu Railway Division, along with several other railway projects, inaugurated by PM Modi

PM Narendra Modi inaugurated and laid the foundation stone for various railway projects via video conferencing. A key highlight was

the inauguration of the new Jammu Railway Division, covering 742.1 km across multiple sections, including Pathankot, Jammu, Udhampur, and Baramulla. The Charlapalli New Terminal Station in Telangana was also inaugurated, developed at a cost of over ₹400 crore to decongest existing stations and improve passenger amenities with nine platforms. Additionally, the foundation stone for the Rayagada Railway Division Building in East Coast Railway was laid. With the new Jammu division, Indian Railways will now have 70 divisions under its 17 zones.

Wayanad landslide has been declared a disaster of 'severe nature'

The Union government has declared the Wayanad landslide a disaster of 'severe nature'. The state was putting pressure on the Centre to declare the landslide



a disaster of 'severe nature'. The state government has also requested the central government to waive off loans for the disaster-affected people. The estimated loss from the disaster is about Rs 1,202 crore and the state government requested Rs 2,262 crore for the rehabilitation package. However, there is no mention of any special fund for the state. This disaster claimed 254 lives and left 128 missing.

40 years after the Bhopal gas tragedy, toxic waste was lifted from the Union Carbide factory for safe disposal

Forty years after the Bhopal gas tragedy, 377 tonnes of hazardous waste from the closed Union Carbide factory began being moved for disposal on January 1. The waste is being transported in 12 sealed trucks to Pithampur industrial area, 250 km from Bhopal. A green corridor has been created for safe transport, and about 100 workers are packing and loading the waste. The waste will be

incinerated, and the ash will be tested for harmful elements. Smoke from the incinerator will pass through special filters to prevent pollution. The 1984 gas leak from the Union Carbide factory killed at least 5,479 people and caused severe health issues. The Madhya Pradesh High Court recently set a four-week deadline to clear the waste, following Supreme Court orders.

Delhi government launched 'Pujari Granthi Samman Yojana'

Arvind Kejriwal announced the 'Pujari Granthi Samman Yojana'. Under this scheme, a



monthly honorarium of ₹18000 will be given to Hindu and

Sikh priests. The registration for the Pujari Granthi Samman Yojana has started. Earlier, Arvind Kejriwal launched the Mahila Samman scheme to provide a stipend of ₹2100 per month to unemployed women.

India's first glass bridge over the sea has been inaugurated in Kanniyakumari

India's first glass bridge over the sea, connecting Tiruvalluvar Statue and Vivekananda Rock Memorial in Kanniyakumari has been inaugurated by Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M.K. Stalin. It has been built at a cost of ₹37 cr. It is a 10-metre-wide bridge that is 77 metres long. After the development of this bridge, visitors will walk safely between the two iconic landmarks while watching the sea underneath. The bowstring arch on the glass bridge has been designed to withstand the saline breeze from the sea and high humidity. This initiative aligns with broader efforts to develop Kanyakumari as a premier tourist destination.

Gujarat government signed an MoU with Thailand for the conservation and promotion of Buddhist heritage sites

Gujarat and Thailand agreed to cooperate in the Conservation, Promotion, and Development of Buddhist Tangible and Intangible Heritage in Gujarat. An MOU was also signed between Gujarat Tourism and Thailand's Bodh Gaya Vijayalaya-980 Institute. The 4th Mekong Ganga Dhamma Yatra was on a visit to India from December 2 to December 10. Its main aim is to strengthen Cultural and Spiritual Ties between the Mekong and Ganga Civilizations. A Thai delegation from the 4th Dhammayatra met Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel in Gandhinagar.

Tamil Nadu launched the "Kalaigiar handicrafts scheme" to empower artisans and craftsmen

The Tamil Nadu government has launched the Kalaigiar Handicrafts Scheme to support artisans and craftsmen in 25 trades. The scheme offers credit support of up to Rs 3 lakh, with a 25% subsidy (max Rs 50,000) and a 5% interest subsidy. Beneficiaries must be at least 35 years old. This initiative aims to promote skill development and entrepreneurship. It complements the PM Vishwakarma Yojana, launched in 2023, to support artisans in 18 trades.

An MoU signed by the Government of Puducherry with Karmayogi Bharat and the Capacity Building Commission

Puducherry has become the 14th state/union territory to join the iGOT Karmayogi platform, which helps government employees with their capacity-building. The platform offers online learning, competency management, career development, mentorship, and networking. Managed by Karmayogi Bharat, a government non-profit, the platform is overseen by the

Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances, and Pensions.

A 50 million dollar loan agreement has been signed by the Centre and the Asian Development Bank (ADB) for a climate-adaptative water harvesting project in Meghalaya

A loan agreement for the Climate-Adaptative Community-Based Water-Harvesting Project was signed to build 532 small water storage facilities across 12 districts. These facilities will capture excess rainfall and flash floods, ensuring water availability during dry seasons. The project will also create irrigation areas for farmers, set up 50 weather stations, and install micro-irrigation systems in Meghalaya. The ADB will assist the state's agencies in improving water management.

Ratapani has been declared as the 8th Tiger Reserve area of Madhya Pradesh

The Ratapani Wildlife Sanctuary in Madhya Pradesh has been declared a tiger reserve after approval from the Ministry of Environment, Forest, and Climate Change. Ratapani is the 57th Tiger Reserve of India. Ratapani Tiger Reserve has a core area of 763.8 sq km and has a buffer area of 507.6 sq km and a total area of 1271.4 sq km. This conservation initiative will strengthen wildlife management in the forests of Ratapani, Bhopal Sehore area. Standard protection, habitat management, ecotourism, community engagement activities etc shall be adopted in this tiger reserve. It will strengthen Wildlife conservation in the Ratapani Tiger landscape.

West Bengal declared top destination for heritage tourism by UNESCO

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee said UNESCO had declared the state as a top destination for heritage tourism and the sector had generated employment for lakhs of youth. Minister of State for Tourism Indranil Sen said a record 2,489 homestays have been opened

in the state and 65% of these are located in North Bengal. The Chief Minister also said that the Jagannath temple under construction in Digha will soon be opened for devotees. The CM also said that a tender has been issued for the construction of a bridge over the Muriganga river at Ganga Sagar Island, where the annual Gangasagar Mela is held.

Uber has launched Asia's first water transport service on Dal Lake

Asia's first water transport service, Uber Shikara, was launched on Dal Lake, Jammu, and Kashmir. Under this initiative, tourists can now enjoy hassle-free, pre-booked shikara rides through Uber's ride-hailing app. Uber India and South Asia President Prabhjeet Singh inaugurated this service. This service is currently starting with seven local shikara operators. These shikaras will be located at Nehru Park, a scenic island in the heart of Dal Lake. Uber ensures fair pricing by adhering to government-regulated rates. One Uber Shikara can accommodate up to four passengers and offers one-hour rides daily between 10 a.m. and 5 p.m. It is similar to service launched by Uber at different European locations like Venice, Italy.

JMM leader Hemant Soren sworn in as the 14th Chief Minister of Jharkhand

Governor Santosh Kumar Gangwar administered the oath of office and secrecy to



Mr Soren at a ceremony. Hemant Soren took oath as the Chief Minister of Jharkhand for the fourth time.

Soren has just taken oath alone and the Cabinet expansion is planned after the government wins the trust vote in the Assembly. Recently, the JMM-led alliance won a decisive victory in the state assembly elections, winning 56 out of 81 seats. Soren defeated BJP's Gamlil Hembrom in the

Barhait assembly seat by a margin of 39,791 votes.

'Haryana Good Governance Awards Scheme 2024' notified by the Haryana Government to promote excellence in governance

The scheme aims to reward government employees for innovative work and efforts that improve governance. Awards are categorized into flagship, state-level, and district-level awards. Flagship awards, worth Rs 51,000, recognize teams in key projects. State-level awards offer Rs 51,000 for first place, Rs 31,000 for second, and Rs 21,000 for third, along with a trophy and certificate. District-level awards, given by the Deputy Commissioner, offer cash prizes of Rs 31,000, Rs 21,000, and Rs 11,000 for the top three, along with a trophy and certificate.

More than 1.76 crore school students from 36 states and UTs took part in Project Veer Gatha 4.0

Project Veer Gatha 4.0 honors the bravery and sacrifice of Armed Forces officers by



having students submit poetry, paintings, essays, and other works. 100 winners will be selected and

receive a Rs. 10,000 prize each. Launched in 2021, the project educates students about gallantry awardees and their heroic stories. The initiative has grown, with 8 lakh students in its first edition and 1.36 crore students in the third edition.

Guru Ghasidas-Tamor Pingla Tiger Reserve, Chhattisgarh has been notified as the 56th Tiger reserve of the country

The Guru Ghasidas-Tamor Pingla Tiger Reserve in Chhattisgarh is the third-largest tiger reserve in India, covering 2,829 sq km. It

includes a core area of 2,049.2 sq km, which consists of Guru Ghasidas National Park and Tamor Pingla Wildlife Sanctuary, with a buffer zone of 780.15 sq km. The reserve is connected to other tiger reserves in Madhya Pradesh and Jharkhand. It was officially notified in October 2021 and is the fourth tiger reserve in Chhattisgarh.

Jauljibi Mela, Uttarakhand ,Pithoragarh

The Jauljibi Mela-2024 was inaugurated by Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami, who called it a "priceless heritage" of Uttarakhand. The fair has been promoting harmony between India, Tibet, Nepal, and border areas for centuries, providing a platform for small traders, farmers, and artisans to showcase their products. The Chief Minister also laid the foundation stone for 18 schemes worth Rs 64.47 crore, including inaugurations and new projects. Additionally, the state government approved the State Millet Mission to promote local products like Mandwa and Jhingoor to boost farmers' income. He also mentioned the development of 16 mythological temples under the Manaskhand Temple Mala Mission.

Hyderabad Airport won global recognition for digital innovations

At the Saudi Airport Exhibition 2024, GMR Hyderabad International Airport Limited (GHIAL) won international awards for its digital innovations. GHIAL's 'Digital Twin' received recognition in the Innovation & Technology and Facility Management categories. Additionally, their 'Smart Shopping Trolley' was the runner-up in the Airport Revenue Management category. The 'Digital Twin' creates a virtual replica of the airport using real-time data from sensors, CCTV, and IoT devices, providing a data-driven view of airport operations.

Jurisdiction of six police stations in Manipur has been declared as “disturbed areas” by the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA)

AFSPA has been reimposed in several areas of Manipur, including police stations in Imphal West, Imphal East, Jiribam, Kangpokpi, and Bishnupur districts, due to recent civilian attacks. The order will remain in effect until 31 March 2025. AFSPA grants armed forces special powers to search, arrest, and maintain order in "disturbed areas."

ODISHA NEWS

All-India Director General and Inspector General of Police Conference started in Bhubaneswar

Prime Minister Narendra Modi attended the all-India Director Generals and Inspector Generals of Police conference at Bhubaneswar. This three-day Conference will be conducted from 29-31 November. Union Home Minister Amit Shah and National Security Advisor Ajit Doval and many other dignitaries will attend the summit. The conference will focus on national security challenges and the evolving responsibilities of police forces. In this conference, internal security, cybercrime, Maoist menace, and challenges posed by emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence and drones issues will be discussed. Chiefs of CRPF,

RAW, NSG, Intelligence Bureau and SPG are also taking part in this event.

KIIT-DU ranked 4th in India in the inaugural Times Higher Education (THE) Interdisciplinary Science Rankings 2025

It recognises universities that achieve excellence in interdisciplinary scientific research. However, only four Indian universities—both private and public—feature in the top 100 universities globally, and KIIT is one of them, ranked 92nd globally. India has a strong representation in the recently released rankings, with 65 universities featuring, seven of them in the top 100. It is noteworthy that Anna University is leading among Indian institutions and has secured the 41st position globally. This recognition underlines KIIT University's commitment to promote interdisciplinary research and innovation. Among Indian institutions, KIIT is one of the top-performing institutions, contributing significantly to the nation's presence in the global interdisciplinary science landscape. This recognition underlines the commitment of KIIT University to promote interdisciplinary research and innovation. Among Indian institutions, KIIT is one of the top performers, contributing significantly to the country's presence in the global interdisciplinary science landscape.

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INDIA AND THE WORLD

India and Spain will celebrate 2026 as the “dual year,” highlighting culture, tourism, and AI

During his official visit to Spain, External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar announced that



2026 will be marked as the ‘dual year’ to celebrate culture, tourism, and advancements in artificial intelligence

between India and Spain. Jaishankar described the Indian diaspora as indispensable to foster stronger bilateral relations and noted their contribution to Spain's economy and society. Currently, India and Spain have an annual trade of US\$10 billion, which includes cooperation in areas such as railways, clean technology, drones and space exploration.

According to the UN, India retained the title of the world's fastest growing large economy, with a growth rate estimated at 6.6%

India is expected to be the world's fastest-growing large economy, with an estimated growth rate of 6.6% in 2025, according to the UN's World Economic Situation and Prospects report. The economy will benefit from strong export growth in services, particularly pharmaceuticals and electronics. Global growth remains stable at 2.8%, while growth in advanced economies has declined. China's growth forecast has been lowered to 4.8% for this year, with a further decline expected next year. The US economy is also slowing, with a

projected growth of 1.9%, down from 2.8% last year.

India and US to jointly build interoperable sonobuoys for Navy

India and the US have announced cooperation on co-producing US sonobuoys for Undersea Domain Awareness (UDA) for the Indian Navy. This technology helps track submarines in deep seas. Ultra Maritime (UM) and Bharat Dynamics Limited (BDL) are working together to develop advanced sonobuoy technologies for the Indian Ocean. The sonobuoys will be produced according to US Navy standards, with manufacturing split between the US and India under the "Make in India" initiative. This collaboration aims to strengthen defense ties and improve monitoring of naval activities in the Indian Ocean region.

India joined the UN committee on big data for official statistics

India joined the UN Committee of Experts on Big Data and Data Science for Official Statistics (UN-CEBD). The UN-CEBD was formed to investigate the benefits and challenges of Big Data including the potential for monitoring and reporting on sustainable development goals. India will contribute to shaping global standards and practices in harnessing Big Data and data science for official statistical purposes. Big Data and advanced data science techniques will revolutionize the production and dissemination of official statistics. India aims to modernize its statistical processes by integrating non-traditional data sources such as IoT, satellite imagery, and private sector data streams.

India now ranks fourth in the world with foreign exchange reserves that have risen to over 700 billion US dollars

From 2014 to 2024, India received around \$709 billion in foreign direct investment. India's economy is now the fifth largest in the world, moving toward becoming the third largest. It improved significantly in global rankings, rising from 71st to 39th on the Global Competitiveness Index and moving up 42 spots in the Ease of Doing Business index between 2015 and 2018. In 2024, India became the second-largest producer of crude steel and mobile phones. Additionally, seven Indian universities are ranked in the Top 100 in Asia, according to the QS World University Rankings: Asia 2025.

India and Australia's economic cooperation and trade agreement completed two years

The India-Australia Economic Cooperation and Trade Agreement ECTA has completed two years of remarkable success. It has enhanced trade ties and created new opportunities for MSMEs, businesses and employment in both countries. Bilateral merchandise trade has more than doubled. It has surged from over 12 billion dollars in 2020-21 to 26 billion dollars in 2022-23. Total trade reached 24 billion in 2023-24, with India's exports to Australia growing by 14 per cent. Many sectors like textiles, chemicals, and agriculture have shown substantial growth. Imports of essential raw materials, such as metalliferous ores, cotton, wood and wood products have supported India's industries.

Union cabinet approved MoU on trade of Non-Basmati White Rice between the Ministry of Cooperation of India and the Ministry of Trade of Indonesia

This MoU has been signed for trading of one million metric tonnes of non-basmati white rice

annually based on production and international prices. The duration of the MoU will be four years and will get automatically extended for an additional four years. This agreement will be implemented by National Cooperative Exports Limited (NCEL). This MoU will help to resolve the issue of the trade imbalance and will strengthen India-Indonesia trade relations. NCEL will procure Non-Basmati White Rice (NBWR) from the open market through a transparent tender process and from cooperative societies.

For naval exercise Varuna, French aircraft carrier Charles de Gaulle arrived in Goa

The French nuclear-powered aircraft carrier Charles De Gaulle arrived in Goa for the 42nd



annual Varuna naval exercise with the Indian Navy. The exercise aims to enhance maritime security in the Indian

Ocean region. France and India have strong military cooperation, including naval exercises like Varuna, Shakti, and Garuda. Since 2008, France has been a member of the Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS), which focuses on maritime security issues. India has been France's key strategic partner since 1998, with French Navy ships regularly visiting Indian ports.

Anti-dumping duty has been imposed by Finance Ministry on digital plates from five countries

The Finance Ministry has imposed a five-year anti-dumping duty on digital plates from China, South Korea, Japan, Taiwan, and Vietnam. This decision follows recommendations from the Directorate General of Trade Remedies (DGTR) based on a sunset review petition filed by TechNova Imaging Systems. The current anti-dumping duties, initially imposed in July 2020, will

remain in effect until January 29, 2025. Digital Offset Printing Plates (DOPP), made from high purity aluminium coils, are used in the printing industry.

India, France and UAE participated in the "Desert Knight" exercise

India, France, and the UAE concluded a trilateral air combat exercise called "Desert



Knight" in the Arabian Sea. The exercise aimed to enhance trilateral defence cooperation and

improve interoperability among the air forces. The Indian Air Force participated with Sukhoi-30MKIs, Jaguars, and IL-78 mid-air refuellers, while French Rafale jets and UAE's F-16 fighters also took part. This exercise was part of efforts to strengthen defence ties in the Indo-Pacific and the Persian Gulf. "Desert Knight" was based on the trilateral framework established in 2022 by the foreign ministers of India, France, and the UAE.

For the first time, India will chair the UN Commission on Narcotic Drugs

India has been selected to chair the 68th Session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND). Shambhu Kumaran, India's Permanent Representative to the UN in Vienna, assumed the chairmanship. This is the first time India has chaired the CND, which is the UN's policy-making body on drug-related matters. India will advocate for the interests of developing nations and promote dialogue on drug policy issues. The CND was established in 1946 by the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC).

13 round of Foreign Office Consultations held between India and Egypt

India-Egypt bilateral relations have been discussed and they commit to strengthening the Strategic Partnership. Both sides also discussed avenues for further deepening of

existing relations in political, economic, and socio-cultural areas. Both sides also exchanged perspectives on important regional and global issues of common interest. India and Egypt enjoy warm and friendly relations based on historic and civilizational linkages. Both sides also agreed to hold the next round of FOC in Egypt.

A \$1.17 billion deal for support systems for MH-60R helicopters has been approved by the U.S.

The United States has approved a \$1.17 billion deal to sell support equipment for MH-60R helicopters to India under the Foreign Military Sales program. India had previously contracted 24 helicopters in a \$2.2 billion deal with Lockheed Martin in 2020, with nine already inducted into the armed services. The proposed sale includes 30 Multifunctional Information Distribution System-Joint Tactical Radio Systems to enhance India's anti-submarine warfare capabilities. Lockheed Martin will be the prime contractor, and offset agreements will be negotiated.

4th edition of Exercise Harimau Shakti concluded between India and Malaysia

The 4th edition of the India-Malaysia Joint Military Exercise Harimau Shakti concluded at Bentong camp in Malaysia. The Indian contingent, comprising 78 personnel from the Mahar regiment, participated, along with 123 personnel from the Royal Malaysian Regiment. The exercise aimed to enhance the joint military capabilities of both sides in conducting counter-insurgency operations in jungle terrain. Both sides shared best practices in tactics, techniques, and procedures for joint operations.

India and ADB signed a \$98 million loan agreement to promote plant health management in India

The Centre and the Asian Development Bank (ADB) signed a loan agreement to provide

disease-free planting materials to horticulture farmers. This project will improve crop yield, quality, and climate resilience, supporting the Atmanirbhar Clean Plant Programme (CPP) for better plant health management. It will involve collaboration with private nurseries, researchers, state governments, and growers' associations to ensure success and sustainability. The initiative aims to help farmers adapt to climate change.

India has been re-elected to UN Peacebuilding Commission for term of 2025-2026

Since the Peacebuilding Commission's founding in December 2005, India has been its member. The Peacebuilding Commission is an intergovernmental advisory body. It strengthens the international community's larger peace agenda and aids peace initiatives in nations affected by conflicts. In 2005, it was founded. It was charged with providing advice on peacebuilding and peace maintenance matters to the UN General Assembly and Security Council. It seeks to advance a comprehensive, cohesive, and integrated approach to peacebuilding.

The India-Singapore bilateral exercise AgniWarrior

The India-Singapore bilateral military exercise, AgniWarrior, took place at the Deolali Field Firing Range in Maharashtra. The exercise aimed to enhance military interaction and exchange best practices between the artillery units of both countries. It also fostered cultural exchange and strengthened bilateral relations. The exercise followed the visit of Singapore Defence Minister Dr. Ng Eng Hen to India, where he co-chaired the 6th India-Singapore Defence Ministers' Dialogue with Indian Defence Minister Rajnath Singh.

India secured 49th place in the Network Readiness Index 2024

India moved up 11 places in the 2024 Network Readiness Index (NRI), securing 49th place globally. Its score improved from 49.93 in 2023 to 53.63 in 2024. India ranked first in AI scientific publications, AI talent concentration, and ICT services exports, and second in FTTH internet subscriptions, mobile broadband traffic, and international internet bandwidth. The NRI report, assessing 133 economies, evaluates technology, people, governance, and impact. India also saw improvements in teledensity, which rose from 75.2% to 84.69%, with wireless connections reaching 119 crore.

India signed the final Act of the Riyadh Design Law Treaty

After two decades of negotiations, the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) adopted the Design Law Treaty (DLT), which India signed. The treaty aims to harmonize industrial design protection procedures, making it easier, faster, and more affordable for designers to protect their work globally. It introduces a standardized framework for design registration, reducing complexities and administrative burdens, and provides a mechanism to restore rights in case of lapses, ensuring applicants can recover lost opportunities.

India is among the top 10 countries in terms of AI readiness

A Boston Consulting Group (BCG) study revealed that most economies are not prepared for AI-driven disruption, with over 70% scoring below average in areas like skills, ecosystem participation, and R&D. The study evaluates economies based on their vulnerability to AI impacts and their readiness



to harness AI for economic growth. It identifies six sectors most vulnerable to AI transformation: information and communications, high-tech goods, retail, financial services, public services, and automotive manufacturing. The study also introduces the ASPIRE Index, which measures readiness across ambition, skills, policy, investment, research, and ecosystem.

10 agreements signed between India and Guyana to enhance cooperation in health, hydrocarbons, agriculture and other sectors

India and Guyana signed several agreements following talks between Prime Minister Modi and President Dr. Mohammed Irfan Ali. The MoUs covered cooperation in medical products, Janaushadhi Yojana, cultural exchange, establishing a UPI-like system in Guyana, and broadcasting collaboration. An MoU was also signed between the National Defence Institute of Guyana and the National Defence University, Gujarat. Both countries

agreed to resolve issues through dialogue and diplomacy. Guyana is involved in India's global initiatives like the International Solar Alliance and Global Biofuels Alliance, which will support a sustainable future.

At the 19 G20 Summit, G20 leaders issued the Rio de Janeiro Declaration

G20 leaders called for action on the conflicts in West Asia and Ukraine, as well as on climate change. The Declaration aimed to promote inclusive and sustainable growth. It urged an expanded Security Council to better represent under-represented regions and communities. The declaration condemned all forms of terrorism and emphasized the importance of civilian safety, humanitarian aid, and resolving crises through dialogue and diplomacy. It reaffirmed a strong commitment to multilateralism.

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BUSINESS AND ECONOMY

RBI has raised the monetary ceiling of gold loans under Bullet Repayment Scheme

Earlier limit was two lakh rupees. New limit is four lakh rupees for Urban Co-operative



Banks. According to the Union Cooperation Ministry, this will eliminate the

challenges that the Urban Co-operative Banks are now facing. Additionally, this will assist in reaching the designated Priority Sector Lending goal. The government is dedicated to bolstering cooperatives and treating them similarly to other types of businesses.

RBI proposed lookup facility for NEFT, RTGS

The RBI plans to introduce a lookup facility in RTGS and NEFT systems to help users verify beneficiary names before transactions, similar to UPI and IMPS. Currently, users cannot see beneficiary names before making payments. NPCI has been tasked with developing and implementing this feature across all banks. While remitting and beneficiary banks will store lookup data, NPCI will not retain any such data.

Rural poverty ratio declined below 5% in FY24 for the first time to 4.86 per cent from 7.2 per cent in FY23, according to a study by SBI Research

Poverty in India declined faster in rural areas during FY24, with the urban poverty ratio dropping from 4.6% to 4.09%. Higher consumption growth among the poorest and increased Direct Benefit Transfers (DBT) contributed to this decline. The poverty line for FY24 is set at ₹1,632 per month for rural

areas and ₹1,944 for urban areas, adjusted for inflation from the 2011–12 estimates. India's overall poverty rate is estimated at 4% to 4.5%. High-income states have savings rates above the national average of 31%, while Bihar and Uttar Pradesh have lower rates due to out-migration.

RBI approved the merger of National Co-operative Bank with Cosmos Co-operative Bank

This merger has been approved by RBI under Sub-Section (4) of Section 44A read with Section 56 of the Banking Regulation Act, 1949. The branches of The National Co-operative Bank, Bangalore (Karnataka), will function as branches of Cosmos Co-operative Bank Limited. National Co-operative Bank has a total of 13 branches. Earlier, RBI had imposed restrictions on the National Co-operative Bank Ltd. and limited deposit withdrawals to Rs 50,000 per account due to the bank's weak financial performance.

With a 3.9% market share in global trade, India is the sixth-largest exporter of textiles and apparel globally

India's textile and apparel exports reached USD 21,358 million in the first half of FY 2024–25, a 7% increase from the previous year. Ready-made garments accounted for 41% of total exports, valued at USD 8,733 million. The US and EU remain key markets, receiving 47% of total exports. Between April and October 2024, exports of ready-made garments grew by 12%, cotton textiles by 1%, and man-made textiles by 5%, while wool and handloom exports declined by 19% and 6%, respectively. Textile and apparel imports in FY 2023–24 dropped by 15% to USD 8,946

million. In the first half of FY 2024–25, imports fell by 1% to USD 5,425 million, with man-made textiles being the largest import category at USD 1,859 million.

Chhattisgarh became the first state to link the forest ecosystem to green GDP

Chhattisgarh has launched a scheme linking its forests' ecosystem services to Green GDP for the first time. This initiative aims to highlight the forests' contributions, such as clean air, water conservation, and biodiversity, in the state's economic growth. The plan ensures sustainable development while preserving the environment. With 44% of its land covered by forests, the state relies on natural resources for millions of livelihoods through products like tendu leaves, lac, and medicinal plants. Forests also help combat climate change by absorbing carbon dioxide. By integrating these benefits into economic planning, Chhattisgarh aims to balance economic growth with ecological sustainability.

Vehicle retail sales have risen by 9% in India in 2024

In 2024, vehicle retail sales in India surpassed 26 million units. EV sales grew to 1.95 million units from 1.5 million in 2023, with EV penetration rising to 7.5%. In the electric two-wheeler segment, Bajaj Auto's market share increased to 25% in December. Maruti Suzuki India saw a 30% sales growth, reaching 1,78,248 units in December. Kia India's total sales rose by 6% to 2,55,038 units in 2024. Hyundai Motor India achieved its highest-ever yearly domestic sales with 6,05,433 units.

RBI increased limit for collateral-free agricultural loans from 1.6 lakh to 2 lakh rupees

The Reserve Bank of India increased the limit for collateral-free agricultural loans from ₹1.6 lakh to ₹2 lakh, effective from January 1. This decision aimed to improve credit access for

small and marginal farmers by waiving collateral and margin requirements for loans up to ₹2 lakh per borrower. It also made it easier for farmers to access Kisan Credit Card (KCC) loans and supported the government's Modified Interest Subvention Scheme, promoting financial inclusion in agriculture.

MuleHunter unveiled by the RBI to prevent digital frauds

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) introduced an AI and Machine Learning-based model



called MuleHunter to prevent digital fraud using mule accounts.

Developed by the Reserve Bank Innovation Hub (RBIH), it helps banks address the issue of mule accounts and reduce fraud. MuleHunter uses a database from banks and payment system operators, with an AI engine trained to detect fraud effectively. Banks and other institutions can use their own fraud detection systems or supplement them with MuleHunter. The goal is to create an infrastructure-level facility for multiple participants to use.

RBI has decided to keep policy repo rate unchanged at 6.50% for 11 time

The RBI decided to keep the Standing Deposit Facility (SDF) rate at 6.25% and the Marginal Standing Facility (MSF) rate and Bank Rate at 6.75%. The Monetary Policy Committee maintained a 'neutral' outlook. The Cash Reserve Ratio (CRR) was reduced by 50 basis points to 4%. The GDP growth projection for FY25 was revised down to 6.6%, and the inflation projection was kept at 4.8%. Additionally, small finance banks were allowed to approve UPI credit lines, following the introduction of UPI credit lines for

scheduled commercial banks in September 2023.

India's GDP growth projection for FY25 has been revised by Morgan Stanley from 6.7% to 6.3%

India's GDP growth slowed to 5.4% in the July-September quarter of 2024, the lowest since March 2023, down from 6.7% in the previous quarter. This fell short of Morgan Stanley's 6.3% forecast. Private consumption grew faster, while the services sector expanded by 7.1%. However, manufacturing and energy sectors slowed industrial growth to 3.9%. Morgan Stanley highlighted three key factors for long-term recovery: RBI cash balances, government spending, agricultural performance, and domestic liquidity and financial conditions.

Government will revise the base year for GDP calculation from 2011-12 to 2022-23

Government has constituted an Advisory Committee on National Accounts Statistics



(ACNAS) to facilitate the transition. The committee has members from central and state governments, the RBI,

academia, and research institutions. ACNAS will identify new data sources. It will give recommendations on the methodology for compiling national accounts in the revised series. To strengthen the statistical system, the government has undertaken following initiatives. The establishment of ACNAS The standardization of data structures to ensure high-quality reporting across the National Statistical System The increased utilization of administrative data.

By 2030, the Indian pharmaceutical sector is expected to have grown 58% to \$130 billion

India's pharmaceutical sector, valued at \$55 billion, generated \$27.85 billion in export revenue, earning the title of the "Pharmacy of the World." The industry is expected to grow to \$450 billion by 2047 and reach a \$1 trillion market. It contributes about 2% of India's GDP and ranks third globally in pharmaceutical output volume and fourteenth in value. India is also the third-largest biotechnology destination in the Asia-Pacific region.

IndusInd Bank has collaborated with UNICEF for strengthening climate resilience in five districts

IndusInd Bank, in collaboration with UNICEF, launched a disaster risk reduction program in five districts: Dharashiv (Maharashtra), Begusarai (Bihar), Virudhunagar (Tamil Nadu), Baran (Rajasthan), and Bahraich (Uttar Pradesh). This initiative is part of the bank's Holistic Rural Development program under the Climate Action section. The program, overseen by the CSR Trust for SDGs in India (CTSI), aims to improve disaster preparedness, government policies, and climate-responsive systems. IIT Gandhinagar will develop a monitoring and early warning system.

Meta fined ₹213.14 crore by CCI over 2021 WhatsApp privacy policy

Meta was fined Rs 213.14 crore by the Competition Commission of India (CCI) over WhatsApp's 2021 privacy policy update. The CCI ruled that sharing user data with other Meta companies for purposes beyond WhatsApp services cannot be a requirement to access the service in India. The update, which became effective in February 2021, made it mandatory for users to accept new

terms that included data sharing with Meta, removing the previous option to opt out.


NITI Aayog's Women Entrepreneurship Platform (WEP) has partnered with Urban Company to support women MSMEs

NITI Aayog's WEP launched a pilot program with Urban Company to support women MSMEs in the beauty and wellness sector. The program focuses on helping women entrepreneurs who own local salons and parlors by providing training in key areas such as skilling, legal compliance, access to finance, marketing, business development, and mentorship. This initiative is part of the "Award to Reward" program, aimed at fostering a strong ecosystem for women in the sector.

Reliance Industries has successfully merged its media assets with the India division of the international media conglomerate Walt Disney


Reliance Industries has invested Rs 11,500 crore (USD 1.4 billion) in a new joint venture valued at Rs 70,352 crore (USD 8.5 billion). Nita Ambani will be the chairperson, and Uday Shankar will be the vice-chairperson. The JV is controlled by Reliance Industries, with Disney owning 36.84%, Viacom18 46.82%, and Reliance Industries 16.34%. The venture will be one of India's largest media and entertainment firms.

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SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Two naval ships and one submarine dedicated to the nation by PM Narendra Modi in Mumbai

For the first time, three ships—INS Surat, INS Nilgiri, and INS Vagsheer—were inducted into the Indian Navy simultaneously. This marks a significant step towards India becoming a global



leader in defence manufacturing and maritime security. PM Modi described the induction as a "special day for naval capacities." INS Surat is a guided-missile destroyer, INS Nilgiri is a stealth frigate, and INS Vagsheer is a Scorpene-class submarine, known for its versatility and quiet operations. These ships will strengthen India's naval capabilities and contribute to its self-reliance in defence.

The third-generation anti-tank missile 'Nag Mk-2' successfully tested by India

India successfully conducted field trials of the indigenously developed third-generation anti-tank guided missile, Nag Mark 2 (Nag Mk 2). The missile, designed to counter modern armored threats, demonstrated precision by accurately hitting targets at both maximum and minimum ranges. It features fire-and-forget technology, allowing operators to lock onto targets before launch. The trials also tested the 'Nag Missile Carrier' (Version 2), and the weapon system is now ready for induction into the Indian Army.

Union Minister for Science and Technology, Dr. Jitendra Singh, chaired a high-level review of ISRO's major upcoming space missions for 2025

The missions include the first "uncrewed" orbital mission under "Gaganyaan". Other

missions are two GSLV missions, a commercial launch of LVM3, and the ISRO-NASA collaboration on the NISAR satellite. In January, the GSLV-F15 mission will carry the NVS-02 navigation satellite to support the NavIC constellation. In February, the GSLV-F16 mission will launch NISAR. NISAR is an Earth observation satellite co-developed with NASA. The commercial LVM3-M5 mission is set for March. This will deploy BlueBird Block-2 satellites under a contract with the U.S.-based AST SpaceMobile.

An AI-powered agriculture network launched by the UP Government and Google Cloud

The UP government and Google Cloud (India) signed an MoU to launch the Uttar Pradesh Open Network for Agriculture, powered by Gemini and Beacon. This initiative aims to revolutionize agriculture by providing farmers with real-time data on weather, market prices, and microclimates. It will offer services like advisory, credit, mechanization, and market linkages to help farmers improve productivity and income. The goal is to empower farmers and support the state's aim of doubling their income.

A \$3 billion investment in India announced by Microsoft, along with plans to train 10 million individuals in AI skills

Microsoft CEO Satya Nadella announced a \$3 billion investment to expand the company's cloud and AI infrastructure in India, marking its biggest expansion in the country. Nadella met PM Modi to discuss technology and AI advancements. He also visited Hyderabad, where he met Telangana's Chief Minister and ministers. Microsoft, one of the first tech companies in Hyderabad, has grown its

employee base to 10,000. The investment will strengthen Microsoft's regional presence and its mission to empower individuals and organizations in India.

ISRO brought satellites to the 3-meter range under SpaDex

Two Indian satellites came within three metres during a trial for space docking. The Indian Space Research Organization successfully brought the SDX01 (Chaser) and SDX02 (Target) satellites at a 3-meter distance before moving them back to a safer distance. All the sensors developed by ISRO for this mission have been fully calibrated and tested before docking experiments. After analyzing data, the satellites will attempt an exciting handshake. On 30th December, SpaDeX had placed the satellites in a 475-kilometre orbit. ISRO postponed the historic docking twice to refine calibrations and algorithms. A successful docking will make India the fourth country with a space docking facility in the world. Two fast-moving spacecraft are maneuvered into the same orbit, brought closer together, and then "docked" as part of the docking procedure.

Defence Ministry declared 2025 as 'Year Of Reforms'

The Ministry of Defence has designated 2025 as the Year of Reforms to enhance the Armed Forces' combat readiness and technological advancement. Key areas of focus include boosting defence manufacturing, modernising infrastructure, and improving procurement processes. Emphasis will also be placed on integrating technologies like drones, AI, and cyberwarfare. The reforms aim to promote research and development, make India a reliable defence exporter, and optimise veteran welfare programs, ensuring the Armed Forces are ready for integrated operations across multiple domains.

Bacteria developed by IIT Bombay to combat soil pollution and boost agriculture

Researchers at IIT Bombay have developed a groundbreaking solution to tackle soil pollution. They have identified bacteria that can consume toxic pollutants in the soil and produce essential nutrients as byproducts. The bacteria, from the *Pseudomonas* and *Acinetobacter* genera, can break down aromatic compounds—harmful chemicals found in pesticides, herbicides, and industrial byproducts—that often contaminate the soil. These pollutants hinder seed germination, stunt plant growth, and reduce agricultural yields. The bacteria not only remove harmful substances but also promote plant growth by increasing growth hormones, preventing harmful fungi, and making nutrients more accessible. The bacteria, isolated from contaminated soil and agricultural fields, act as natural cleaners, converting pollutants into harmless compounds. This research offers a promising approach to combat soil contamination, benefiting the agricultural sector and improving soil health. The study was published in the journal *Environmental Technology and Innovation*.

India's first diabetes biobank has been set up in Chennai



The Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) and the Madras Diabetes Research Foundation (MDRF) have established India's first diabetes biobank in Chennai. It aims to collect and store biological samples to advance diabetes research, focusing on its causes and patterns in India. The biobank includes blood samples from two major ICMR-funded studies, including the ICMR-India Diabetes (ICMR-INDIAB) study conducted from 2008 to 2020.

IIT Madras completed India's first Hyperloop train test track

IIT Madras has completed a 410-meter Hyperloop test track, marking a key milestone in futuristic transport. Led by the Avishkar Hyperloop team and TuTr, a startup incubated at the institute, this development brings India closer to adopting Hyperloop technology. The technology will be implemented in two phases: a 11.5-kilometer test track in phase one and a 100-kilometer track in phase two. Hyperloop trains, designed to reach speeds up to 1,100 km/h, will operate in a vacuum-sealed, frictionless environment. The first full-scale Hyperloop project in India is planned between Mumbai and Pune.

IIT Madras became the first research organization to release 3D images of the fetal brain

IIT Madras has launched the most detailed 3D high-resolution images of the fetal brain, developed by the Sudha Gopalakrishnan Brain Centre. This breakthrough in brain mapping technology will advance understanding of brain development and aid in developing treatments for brain-related health conditions. The project was completed at a fraction of the cost compared to Western countries and will help study brain development from fetal stages through to young adulthood.

India developed the first indigenous Antibiotic 'Nafithromycin'

'Nafithromycin,' developed by Wockhardt with support from BIRAC, is designed to treat drug-resistant bacteria, including community-acquired bacterial pneumonia (CABP). It is the first new drug of its kind in over 30 years. Nafithromycin is more effective than existing antibiotics like azithromycin and requires a shorter three-day treatment. It is awaiting final approval from CDSCO. The drug aims to

address the growing concern of antimicrobial resistance (AMR).

'Nano Bubble Technology' has been launched for cleaning and purifying water of the National Zoological Park in Delhi

Union Minister of State for Forest, Environment and Climate Change launched 'Nano Bubble Technology' for cleaning and purifying water of the National Zoological Park in Delhi. To promote the health of aquatic animals, this technology will be effective in cleaning dirty pond water by eliminating algae and similar growths. The goal of this technology is to keep water clean, ensuring the health and well-being of aquatic creatures. Clean water prevents foul smells, algae buildup, and discolouration often caused by dirty pond water.

ISRO launched the PSLV-C59/Proba 3 mission

Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) launched the PSLV-C59/Proba 3 mission from the Satish Dhawan Space Centre in Sriharikota. PSLV C59 launched Proba 3 satellites of the European Space Agency into the highly elliptical orbit. New Space India Limited has received this order from the European Space Agency. New Space India Limited is the commercial arm of ISRO. Proba 3 satellites will split into two after reaching the orbit. The satellites will study the Sun's Corona, its surrounding atmosphere, solar wind and space weather.

Indian Army launched 'Eklavya' Digital Platform for Officers' Training

The Eklavya software platform, developed by the Indian Army, aligns with the "Decade of Transformation" vision and the "Year of Technology Absorption." Created at no cost by BISAG-N, Gandhinagar, it is hosted on the Army Data Network. The platform offers three types of courses: Pre-Course Preparatory Capsules, Assignment-Related Courses, and

Professional Development Suite. It also features a searchable "Knowledge Highway" with journals, research papers, and articles.

India successfully tested K-4 submarine-launched nuclear missile from INS Arighaat

India successfully tested the K-4 missile with a 3,500 km strike range in the Bay of Bengal, launched from the INS Arighaat submarine. The K-4 is more advanced than the K-15 missile, which has a range of 750 km and is deployed on India's first SSBN, INS Arihant. INS Arighaat, India's second nuclear-powered submarine, can carry K-4 missiles. India is also set to induct INS Aridhaman, its third SSBN, in early 2025, further strengthening its sea-based nuclear deterrence.

The government has given ISRO permission to launch its next Venus Orbiting Satellite mission, called Shukrayaan, in 2028

Chandrayaan 4 will be a joint Indian-Japanese mission aimed at landing on the Moon's south pole. It will carry a heavier 350 kg rover. The project is pending full approval. ISRO is also working on improving weather and communication systems, with upcoming launches of advanced sensors and satellites. The Mars mission includes plans to land on Mars' surface. Gaganyaan, an unmanned mission, will be followed by a manned flight within two years. India's space station, smaller than the ISS, will be operational by 2035, with its first module launching in 2028.

Nayi Chetna 3.0 campaign launched by Union Minister Shri Shivraj Singh Chouhan

The 3rd edition of the National Campaign against Gender-Based Violence, 'Nayi Chetna – Pehal Badlaav Ki,' was launched by Union Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan in New Delhi. The campaign aims to raise awareness, encourage communities to speak out, and empower local institutions to act against

gender-based violence. 227 new Gender Resource Centres (GRCs) were inaugurated to provide support, information, and legal aid to victims. A one-month #AbKoiBehanAhi campaign, focusing on collective action against GBV, was also launched under the Ministry of Rural Development. The campaign will run across all states and union territories until December 23, 2024.

India's first AI data bank launched to boost national security

India's first Artificial Intelligence (AI) data bank was launched by Union Minister Jitendra

Singh at the 7th ASSOCHAM AI

Leadership Meet

2024. The data bank aims to promote innovation, enhance national security, and



provide researchers, startups, and developers with access to diverse datasets for AI solutions. It will support predictive analytics in disaster management, cybersecurity, and real-time analysis of satellite, drone, and IoT data, in line with India's AI development goals.

OTT Platform "WAVES" launched by National Public Broadcaster Prasar Bharati

The OTT platform WAVES was launched at the 55th International Film Festival of India (IFFI) in Goa. It offers family-friendly entertainment and connects viewers to India's cultural heritage with classic shows like *Ramayan*, *Mahabharat*, and *Shaktimaan*. WAVES also features news, documentaries, and regional content in over 12 languages. It promotes inclusivity and diversity and includes live broadcasts like the Aarti of Lord Shri Ram Lalla from Ayodhya and the *Mann Ki Baat* program by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Multi Agency Disaster Relief Exercise 'Sanyukt Vimochan 2024' successfully conducted by the Indian Army

The Indian Army successfully conducted the *Sanyukt Vimochan 2024* humanitarian and disaster relief exercise in Gujarat. Organized by the Konark Corps, the two-day event in Ahmedabad and Porbandar showcased India's disaster response capabilities. The exercise included a Table Top Exercise on responding to a cyclone in Gujarat and a Multi-Agency Capability demonstration at Chowpatty beach. Representatives from various disaster management authorities and the Indian Armed Forces participated in the event.

The satellite GSAT 20 successfully launched by ISRO on board SpaceX's Falcon 9 rocket in US

ISRO successfully launched the GSAT-20 communication satellite using SpaceX's Falcon 9 rocket from Cape Canaveral, US. Weighing 4,700 kg, GSAT-20 will provide

broadband services in remote areas and in-flight internet for aircraft. The satellite will operate for 14 years. This is ISRO's first launch with SpaceX, as its own rocket, LVM-3, is not suitable for such a heavy satellite. SpaceX was chosen due to the unavailability of rockets from Arianespace.

Eco-friendly bio-derived foam has been developed by the Indian Institute of Science (IISc)

Researchers at IISc have developed an eco-friendly, biodegradable foam as an alternative to plastic foams. Made from bio-based epoxy resins, non-edible oils, and hardeners from tea leaves, this foam is suitable for packaging FMCG products. It reduces reliance on fossil fuels and non-recyclable materials while maintaining strength. The Indian foam market is growing, with expectations to reach USD 11.1 billion by 2032. Traditional plastic foam production generates significant greenhouse gas emissions.



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SPORTS

Lionel Messi becomes first men's footballer to win 'Presidential Medal of Freedom'

Lionel Messi has been awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the highest civilian honour in the United States of America. The medal is presented to individuals who have contributed to the prosperity, values, or security of the United States, world peace, or other significant societal. He will be the second sportsperson to win the Presidential award after Megan Rapinoe. US President Joe Biden presented the award. Lionel Messi joined Inter Miami on a free transfer from Paris Saint-Germain in July 2023. He has won the Ballon d'Or and the FIFA Men's Best Player in 2023.



Jasprit Bumrah became the fastest Indian to take 200 test wickets

Jasprit Bumrah became the fastest Indian bowler to take 200 Test wickets. He achieved this feat in the ongoing Border-Gavaskar Trophy at the Melbourne Cricket Ground. Bumrah achieved the landmark with his 8484th legal delivery in Test cricket. He surpassed Mohammed Shami, who reached the same milestone after 9896 deliveries. He is now the fourth-fastest bowler to take 200 wickets after Waqar Younis (7725 balls), Dale Steyn (7848 balls), and Kagiso Rabada (8154 balls).

Hemanth Muddappa scripted history by winning the 15th National Title in Motorcycle Drag Racing

Hemanth Muddappa has become a triple champion in the Indian National Motorcycle

Drag Racing Championship 2024. Muddappa of Mantra Racing participated in three classes in the 2024 Nationals. He has taken an unbeatable lead of 29 points in the 4-stroke 1051 to 1650cc Super Sport class. He achieved this milestone by taking part in three more classes and winning two of them. He is known for his exceptional skills and dominance on the drag strip.

Mumbai won the Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy 2024

Mumbai won the Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy 2024 by defeating Madhya Pradesh in the final. Mumbai chased down the target of 175 in 17.5 overs, with Suryakumar Yadav scoring 48 runs. Suryansh Shedge was named Player of the Match, while Ajinkya Rahane was named Player of the Series. This is Mumbai's second Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy win, after their 2022 victory.

Bangladesh won the U-19 Asia Cup by defeating India by 59 runs

Bangladesh defeated India in the final to win the Men's Asia Under-19 Cricket Cup. India was bowled out for 139, with Mohammad Amaan scoring 26 runs and Hardik Raj contributing 24 runs. The ACC Under-19 Asia Cup, contested by Asian men's under-19 teams, began in 1989.

India hockey team won the Men's Junior Asia Cup 2024

The Indian junior men's hockey team won their fifth Men's Junior Asia Cup title by defeating Pakistan 5-3 in the final. Hockey India announced cash rewards for the players and support staff for their performance. India has previously won the tournament in 2004, 2008, 2015, and 2023.

Arjun Erigaisi becomes second Indian to achieve 2800 ELO rating after five-time World Champion Viswanathan Anand

Arjun Erigaisi, ranked 4th globally, reached a 2800 ELO rating and became the 16th player worldwide to achieve this. His current rating is 2801, just below Hikaru Nakamura. D. Gukesh is ranked 5th with a rating of 2783. Magnus Carlsen remains at the top with 2831 ratings. Erigaisi, born in Warangal, Telangana, earned the Grandmaster title at 14 years old. He became India's top-rated player in September 2024.

Bihar will host the Khelo India Youth Games and Para Games in April 2025

Bihar will host the Khelo India Para Games for the first time, following the Youth Games. The Para Games will be held 10 to 15 days after the Youth Games. The first edition of the Para Games took place in Delhi in 2023. Bihar has 38 Khelo India Centres, one Khelo India State Centre of Excellence, and three Sports Authority of India (SAI) training centres.

Indian Hockey team won Women's Asian Champions Trophy

India won the Women's Asian Champions Trophy in Hockey by defeating China 1-0 in the final. Deepika scored the winning goal and was named the best player of the tournament, finishing as the top scorer with 11 goals. This was India's third title in the tournament. Japan won the bronze medal by defeating Malaysia 4-1.

Harbhajan Singh has been appointed as the ambassador for sports in Dubai

Harbhajan Singh has been appointed as Dubai's Sports Ambassador by the Dubai Sports Council. He joins sports personalities like Khabib Nurmagomedov, Sania Mirza, and

Patrice Evra in promoting Dubai's sports development. Harbhajan, with over 700 international wickets and extensive experience, will help enhance Dubai's status as a global sports hub.

In the Hockey India-14th Senior National championship final, Odisha defeated



Haryana 5-1 to win its first gold

The SDAT-Mayor Radhakrishnan Stadium served as the venue for

the final. After losing to Punjab in the previous summit match, Haryana suffered its second straight loss. Earlier, Uttar Pradesh won the bronze medal after defeating Manipur 2-1. The goalkeeper Sahil Kumar Nayak and the rushers Kerobin Lakra and Amit Kumar Topno of Odisha shown great agility by interfering with Haryana's penalty corners. Haryana lost the game because of Shilanand's three goals in the fourth and final quarter.

World's first high altitude para sports centre to be built in Leh

The Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Council (LAHDC) in Leh, in collaboration with the Aditya Mehta Foundation (AMF), is setting up the world's first high-altitude para sports centre to support para-athletes for the 2028 Paralympics. The centre will offer training in various para sports like archery, athletics, badminton, cycling, and winter sports such as skiing. Until it opens, AMF will support 15 children with special needs from the Leh-Ladakh region.

AWARDS

Odia poet Prativa Satpathy will be honoured with the Gangadhar National Award

Prativa Satpathy will be conferred the Gangadhar National Award for Poetry 2023 by the Sambalpur University. The award will be presented on the occasion of the 58th foundation day of Sambalpur University. She is a recipient of the Sahitya Akademi Award. Her writings in Odia have been translated into several Indian and foreign languages. This award was instituted by the Sambalpur University in 1989. The award carries a citation, shawl and a cash prize of Rs 1,00,00. Earlier, Gulzar, Alli Sardar Zafri, Kedar Nath Singh, Ayyapa Panikar, etc. received the Gangadhar National Award for excellence in the field of poetry.

82 edition of the Golden Globes award ceremony held in Los Angeles

The Brutalist received seven nominations, with Adrien Brody winning Best Male Actor in a Motion Picture – Drama. *Shōgun* won four awards in the Television category, including Best Series (Drama) and acting awards. Pamela Anderson won Best Female Actor in a Motion Picture – Drama for *The Last Showgirl*. *El Mal (Emilia Pérez)* won Best Original Song, and *Flow* won Best Animated Motion Picture. Payal Kapadia's *All We Imagine As Light* received two nominations but did not win any awards.



Satin Creditcare Network has won 'Microfinance Organization of the Year Award' at the Global Inclusive Finance Summit

Satin Creditcare Network was honoured for making microfinance inclusive. It was also honoured for making a lasting impact on large number of households and empowering them to build sustainable livelihoods to help them achieve financial stability. Satin Creditcare Network is a leading microfinance company. Global Inclusive Finance Summit was organised in New Delhi.

National Panchayat Awards 2024 conferred by the President of India, Smt. Droupadi Murmu

The National Panchayat Awards 2024 ceremony was held at Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi, organized by the Ministry of Panchayati Raj. The President presented awards to 45 Panchayats for their outstanding contributions to sustainable and inclusive development. A booklet titled *Best Practices on the Works of Award-Winning Panchayats* was released by Union Minister Rajiv Ranjan Singh, highlighting innovative practices of the awardees. Key award categories included Deen Dayal Upadhyay Panchayat Satat Vikas Puraskar, Nanaji Deshmukh Sarvottam Panchayat Satat Vikas Puraskar, and Carbon Neutral Vishesh Panchayat Puraskar. The awards recognize efforts in poverty alleviation, health, water conservation, sanitation, governance, and women's empowerment.

Payal Kapadia made history with a Golden Globe nomination for *All We Imagine as Light*

Filmmaker Payal Kapadia made history as the first Indian director nominated for Best Director (Motion Picture) at the 82nd Golden Globe Awards for her film *All We Imagine as Light*. The film also received a nomination for Best Motion Picture (Non-English Language) and won the Best International Film award at the New York Film Critics Circle and Best International Feature at the 2024 Gotham Awards. Other Best Director nominees included Jacques Audiard (*Emilia Pérez*), Sean Baker (*Anora*), Edward Berger (*Conclave*), Brady Corbet (*The Brutalist*), and Coralie Fargeat (*The Substance*). The 82nd Golden Globe Awards celebrated excellence in film and television in January 2025.

UNESCO has selected the Abathsayeshwarar Temple in Thukkatchi, Thanjavur district, Tamil Nadu for the Award of Distinction for 2023

The 1,300-year-old temple has received recognition for its preservation of its cultural legacy. King Vikrama Chola and King Kulothunga Chola built the temple. Five prakarams are claimed to have existed in the past in the temple. Soundaryanayaki Ambal, Ashtabhujha Durga Parameshwari, Aadhi Sarabeshwarar, Pillayar, Murugan, Chandikeswarar, two Bhairavars, two Suryas, and two Naagar were among the numerous deity shrines in the temple. The award was announced as part of UNESCO Asia - Pacific Awards for cultural heritage conservation.

India received the award for social security good practices at the Asia-Pacific forum

The 'Good Practice Award for Asia and Pacific 2024' has been presented to India in

Riyadh, Saudi Arabia India has received awards for adopting good practices in providing social security to its workforce. The Employees' Provident Fund Organization (EPFO) received five certificates of merit for communication channels. On behalf of EPFO, the awards were received by Ashok Kumar Singh, DG, ESIC. These awards recognise the efforts undertaken by EPFO to reform and adopt good practices.

In the Union Fisheries Ministry's Awards, Kerala was selected as the best marine state, and Kollam as the best marine district



Kerala was awarded the best marine state, and Kollam the best marine district, by the Union Fisheries

Ministry on World Fisheries Day. Kerala was recognized for its record growth in marine fish production, welfare schemes for fishermen, and effective implementation of central programs. The awards highlight the state's commitment to sustainable development and the inclusion of coastal fishermen communities.

General Dwivedi was conferred the honorary rank of General by the Nepal Army

Indian Army Chief General Upendra Dwivedi was conferred the rank of Honorary General of the Nepal Army by President Ram Chandra Paudel in Kathmandu. During his five-day visit, General Dwivedi met Nepal Army Chief General Ashok Raj Sigdel to discuss strengthening military ties and gifted military horses and dogs as a symbol of friendship between the two armies.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi received the highest honour from Guyana and Barbados

Guyana conferred "The Order of Excellence," its highest national honor, on PM Modi. He also received the "Honorary Order of Freedom of Barbados" from Barbados. Previously, PM Modi had received the highest state accolades from Nigeria and Dominica. Additionally, Dominica announced and conferred its highest national honor, the "Dominica Award of Honour," on him.

Coal India Ltd received Green World Awards 2024 in London

Coal India Ltd (CIL) won the Green World Environment Award in the Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) category for its Thalassemia Bal Sewa Yojna, which provides financial assistance of up to ₹10 lakh for Bone Marrow Transplants to over 600 Thalassemia patients. CIL was the first Public Sector Undertaking to launch such a CSR project in 2017. The award was presented by The Green Organization, which recognizes global environmental and CSR best practices. CIL produces over 80% of India's coal and supports 70% of coal-based power generation.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi honoured with the Grand Commander of the Order of the Niger (GCON) award by Nigeria

He became the second foreign dignitary to receive this honor, following Queen Elizabeth, who was awarded the GCON in 1969. Prime Minister Modi arrived in Abuja for a two-day visit to Nigeria, marking the first visit of an Indian Prime Minister to Nigeria in 17 years. The Prime Minister was presented with the 'Key to the City' of Abuja, symbolizing the trust and respect the people of Nigeria had for him.

At the 38th Leeds International Film Festival, Manoj Bajpayee starrer 'The Fable' won the Best Film award in the UK

"The Fable" has won the award at the Constellation Feature Film Competition, which honours the best "new, pioneering cinema" from around the world. "The Fable" has been directed by writer-director Ram Reddy. The award follows the recent success of The Fable, which included its world premiere at the Berlinale Film Festival 2024. In October 2024, 'The Fable' also won the Special Jury Prize at the 2024 MAMI Mumbai Film Festival. Founded in 1987, the Leeds International Film Festival (LIFF) is the largest film festival in England outside London. The festival is held annually in November at various venues across Leeds, West Yorkshire, screening a wide range of films.

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MISCELLANEOUS

APPOINTMENT

Vitul Kumar assumed the charge of Director General of the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF)

IPS officer Vitul Kumar has been appointed as the Director General of the Central



Reserve Police Force (CRPF) after the retirement of Anish Dayal Singh. Currently serving as the special director

general, he will hold the position until a permanent replacement is appointed. Kumar has received several awards, including the President's Police Medal and the Police Medal.

Sanjay Malhotra has been appointed as RBI Governor

Sanjay Malhotra has been appointed as the 26th Governor of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) for a three-year term starting December 11, 2024. He will succeed Shaktikanta Das, whose six-year tenure ends on December 10, 2024. Malhotra, currently the Revenue Secretary, has played a key role in formulating tax policies and has previously served as Secretary in the Department of Financial Services. He has extensive experience in finance, taxation, power, IT, and mines.

Dinesh Bhatia has been appointed as the next Ambassador of India to Brazil

Dinesh Bhatia, a 1992-batch Indian Foreign Service officer, has been appointed as the next Ambassador of India to Brazil. Currently serving as India's Ambassador to Argentina, Bhatia has previously held roles as Consul

General in Toronto and Ambassador to Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, and Liberia. He has also served in the Department of Atomic Energy and as Private Secretary to the Tourism Minister of India. Bhatia is the author of *Devi Purana* (2023) and *Physics for the Civil Services Preliminary Examination* (1994).

Justice D. Krishnakumar has been appointed Chief Justice of Manipur High Court

The name of Justice Krishnakumar, presently serving as a judge of the Madras High Court, was proposed by collegium on 18 November. Justice D. Krishnakumar is the seniormost judge after the Chief Justice in Madras High Court. The present Chief Justice of the Manipur High Court, Justice Siddharth Mridul, demitted office on 21 November upon attaining the age of 62. Justice Krishnakumar is due to retire on May 21, 2025. He belongs to a backward community. Manipur has been facing ethnic conflict for last few days.

Tulsi Gabbard appointed US Director of National Intelligence

The newly-elected President of the United States Donald Trump appointed Tulsi Gabbard as the Director of National Intelligence (DNI). He will require Senate approval to assume the position. If she is selected for the role, Gabbard will manage a budget of more than \$70 billion (£55 billion) and oversee 18 intelligence agencies. In 2002, Tulsi became the youngest woman to be elected to the Hawaii State Legislature at just 21 years of age. 43-year-old Tulsi Gabbard is a US Army reservist and four-term Democratic congresswoman from

Hawaii who in 2012 became the first Hindu to win a seat in the US House of Representatives. Gabbard represented Hawaii in Congress from 2013 to 2021 and she became the first Hindu to serve in the House.

OBITUARIES

Veteran nuclear scientist Dr. Rajagopala Chidambaram passed away at the age of 88

Dr. Chidambaram played a critical role in India's nuclear weapons programme. He was part of India's first nuclear test in 1974 and the Pokhran-II tests in 1998. He has served in several key scientific and strategic positions, including Principal Scientific Adviser to the Government of India, Director of the Bhabha Atomic Research Centre, and Chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission. He was also Chairman of the Board of Governors of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). He received the Martin Forster Medal for this thesis on Nuclear Magnetic Resonance.

Famous botanist KS Manilal passed away at the age of 86

Eminent botanist K. S. Manilal, a Padmashree awardee, passed away due to age-related ailments. He was known for translating the 17th-century botanical treatise "Hortus Malabaricus" into English and Malayalam. Manilal, former head of the Department of Botany at the University of Calicut, made significant contributions to botany, publishing over 200 research papers, and introducing new plant species. His work on Hortus Malabaricus remains a key resource for botanical studies of the Malabar region. In 2020, he was honoured with the Padmashree for his scientific contributions.

Padma Vibhushan and four-time Grammy Award winner, tabla player Zakir Hussain, passed away at the age of 73

Zakir Husain died of complications arising from idiopathic pulmonary fibrosis. Born on March 9, 1951, he was the son of the renowned tabla player Ustad Alla Rakha. In his career spanning six decades, the musician has worked with many renowned international and Indian artistes. Zakir Hussain received four Grammy Awards in his career, three of them at the 66th awards ceremony earlier this year.

Former Karnataka Chief Minister and Union Minister SM Krishna passed away at 92



He served as the CM of Karnataka from October 11, 1999, to May 20, 2004. He served as the governor of Maharashtra from December 6, 2004, to March 8, 2008.

Known for his love of tennis, Krishna enjoyed designing men's clothes and reading. He was also part of the Indian delegation to the United Nations in 1982 and the Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference in New Zealand in 1965. He was a delegate at the Commonwealth Parliamentary Seminar at Westminster in 1990.

Economic historian Amiya Kumar Bagchi passed away

He is known for his work on underdevelopment and imperialism. He authored books such as Private Investment in India 1900-1939, The Political Economy of Underdevelopment and Perilous Passage. In the starting, he was a mathematical economist and game theorist. He later turned to economic history. He was official historian of the State Bank of India (SBI) from 1976 to

1998. He was the founder-director of the Institute of Development Studies, Kolkata. He was awarded the Padma Shri in 2005.

World's oldest man, John Tinniswood, passed away in England at the age of 112

Guinness World Records announced on November 26 that John Tinniswood, an Englishman born the year the Titanic sank, has died at the age of 112. Tinniswood, who survived two world wars and two global pandemics, was officially recognised as the world's oldest person earlier this year. On 25 November, he died at a care home in Southport, northwest England. John Tinniswood was born in August 1912 in Liverpool. From the age of 100 until he was 110, John Tinniswood received birthday cards annually from Queen Elizabeth, who was 14 years his junior, until his death in 2022.

BOOKS

The book 'Why Bharat Matters' was released by External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar in Dubai

External Affairs Minister Dr S Jaishankar released his book, 'Why Bharat Matters,' at the Mohammed Bin Rashid Library in Dubai, UAE. During the event, Dr Jaishankar elaborated on the themes and key messages of his book, and reflected on the complex interplay of global and domestic factors that shape India's position in the world. Dr Jaishankar's first book was titled 'The India Way', but he chose the word 'Bharat' for his second book to capture the authentic voice and spirit of the changing Indian society. The core message of 'Why Bharat Matters' is the importance of self-reliance in assessing global challenges and opportunities.

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MATCH POINT

- Recently Union Textiles Minister inaugurated the Indian Pavilion at Heimtextil 2025 in– **Germany (Frankfurt)**
- 'Bhargavastra' micro-missile system has been developed by- **Economic Explosives Limited**
- Recently 'Gaan-Ngai' 2025 festival was organized in - **Manipur**
- INS Utkarsh, which was recently inducted into the Navy, has been built by- **Larsen & Toubro**
- Pavana river, which was in news recently, flows in - **Maharashtra**
- Indian women's cricket team scored the highest score in ODI against - **Ireland**
- Newly appointed chairperson of the newly formed Athletes Commission of AFI-**Anju Bobby George**
- Nag Mark 2 anti-tank guided missile has been developed by - **DRDO**
- New Prime Minister of Lebanon- **Nawaf Salam**
- First Kho-Kho World Cup was organized in - **New Delhi**
- PM Modi launched this mission to celebrate the completion of 150 years of the Meteorological Department- **'Mission Mausam'**
- This is the biggest annual festival for the Hatti tribes of the Trans-Giri region in Himachal Pradesh- **Boda Festival**
- This country will host the 28th Conference of Speakers and Presiding Officers of Parliaments of Commonwealth countries- **India**
- Z-Morh Tunnel or Sonamarg Tunnel will provide connectivity to these two cities- **Jammu and Srinagar**
- Developed India Young Leaders Dialogue was organized in - **New Delhi**
- Uttar Pradesh CM Yogi Adityanath inaugurated the special 'Kumbhwani' channel of All India Radio at - **Prayagraj**
- India's first cable-stayed railway bridge inaugurated in - **Jammu and Kashmir**
- PM Modi laid the foundation stone of India's first green hydrogen hub in - **Visakhapatnam**
- 18th PravasiBharatiya Divas was organized in - **Bhubaneswar**
- Theme of World Hindi Day 2025- **'Global voice of Hindi unity and cultural pride'**
- New president of Ghana- **John Dramani Mahama**
- Recently India and America have announced the co-production of this technology for the Indian Navy- **Hypersonic missile**
- Justin Trudeau has recently resigned from the post of Prime Minister of - **Canada**
- The name given to the 'torch' of the 38th National Games is - **'Tejaswini'**
- This city has recently been declared the world's most polluted city- **Hanoi**
- Costas Simitis has passed away recently, he was the former Prime Minister of - **Greece**
- Awardees of Khel Ratna Award 2025- **Gukesh D, Harmanpreet Singh, Praveen Kumar and Manu Bhaker**
- India's first glass sea bridge was unveiled in - **Tamil Nadu**

- These two sports persons jointly won the title of World Blitz Chess Championship- **Magnus Carlsen and Ian Nepomniachtchi**
- Winner of the title of the 78th edition of Santosh Trophy- **West Bengal**
- World Blitz Chess Championship held in - **New York**
- India conducted the "Surya Kiran" military exercise with - **Nepal**
- This team won the Pro Kabaddi League title recently- **Haryana Steelers**
- Hockey India League 2024-25 will be organized at - **Rourkela**
- 'SLINEX' bilateral naval exercise is held between India and - **Sri Lanka**
- This country is building the world's largest hydroelectric dam- **China**
- Recently the Bald Eagle has been officially declared the national bird of - **USA**
- Kaveri engine, which was in the news recently, has been developed by - **Gas Turbine Research Institute**
- Recently Ambedkar Scholarships scheme has been launched for students by - **Delhi State Government**
- New Prime Minister of the Oceanian country Tonga- **'Aisakevalu Ake**
- BPCL is planning an \$11 billion refinery project in - **Andhra Pradesh**
- New Chairman of National Human Rights Commission- **V. Ramasubramaniam**
- This organisation won the gold medal in the AP State Energy Conservation Awards-2024 competitions for excellence in energy conservation in the iron and steel sector- **Rashtriya Ispat Nigam Limited (RINL)**
- This initiative has been started to strengthen governance at the grassroots level - **'Viksit Panchayat Karmayogi'**
- Indian women's team score its highest score in T20I cricket history against - **West Indies**
- Asian Roll Ball Championship was organized in - **Goa**
- India's rank in the Travel and Tourism Development Index 2024- **39th**
- Ganga River Dolphin Tagging Project is an initiative of - **Union Environment Ministry**
- Awardee of Sahitya Akademi Award 2024 for Hindi- **Gagan Gill**
- Recently this country honoured Indian educationist Arun Kapoor with state honour- **Bhutan**
- Recently 'Arctic Report Card' has been published by - **National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration**
- Awardee of the Sahitya Akademi Award 2024 for English language- **Easterine Kire**
- Banglar Bari Housing Scheme has been launched recently by - **West Bengal CM Mamta Banerjee**
- Winner of the title of FIFA Intercontinental Cup 2024- **Real Madrid**
- This country has recently signed the International Solar Alliance Framework Agreement- **Moldova**
- Winner of the Best FIFA Women's Player 2024 award- **Aitana Bonmati**
- Winner of the Best FIFA Men's Player 2024 award- **Vinicius Junior**
- This personality was recently awarded the Jamsetji Tata Award for Biosciences Leadership- **Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw**

- INS 'Nirdeshak' was commissioned in this Naval Dockyard- **Visakhapatnam**
- INS 'Nirdeshak' is designed for- **Hydrographic survey and aid in navigation**
- Indian Navy has recently joined hands with this organisation for logistics education, research and training- **Gati Shakti University**
- INS 'Nirdeshak', which has joined the Indian Navy, has been built by- **Garden Reach Shipbuilders and Engineers, Kolkata**
- These countries participated with India in 'Desert Knight Air Combat Exercise'- **France and United Arab Emirates**
- This country recently tested the Dark Eagle hypersonic missile- **USA**
- This scheme has been launched by the Government of India to promote cargo movement through inland waterways- **'Jalvahak' Scheme**
- New President of Georgia- **Mikhail Kavelashvili**
- Ustad Zakir Hussain passed away, he was famous for musical instrument- **Tabla**
- INS Tushil, included in the Indian Navy, has been built with the cooperation of – **Russia**
- This Indian state has recently been declared as the top destination for heritage tourism by UNESCO- **West Bengal**
- This Indian has recently been awarded the 'Champions of the Earth Award'- **Madhav Gadgil**
- This chess player has become the youngest world chess champion- **D Gukesh**
- Singer Purushottam Upadhyay has passed away recently, he was a famous singer of - **Gujarati**
- This cricketer has become the first female cricketer to score 4 ODI centuries in a calendar year- **Smriti Mandhana**
- India's position in the Asian Women's Handball Championship 2024- **Sixth**
- Eaglenest Bird Festival is celebrated every year in - **Arunachal Pradesh**
- Winner of the title of 20th Asian Women's Handball Championship- **Japan**
- Guruvayur temple, which was in the news recently, is located in - **Kerala**
- New Governor of Reserve Bank of India- **Sanjay Malhotra**
- This country's iconic rice wine sake has been officially recognized by UNESCO as part of the intangible cultural heritage of humanity- **Japan**
- Newly elected President of Ghana- **John Mahama**
- Uber has launched Shikara ride booking under Asia's first water transport service- **Dal Lake (Srinagar)**
- World Maritime Conference 2024 was held in – **India (Chennai)**
- Ratapani Wildlife Sanctuary has been declared the 8th Tiger Reserve of - **Madhya Pradesh** (57th tiger reserve in India)
- India organized the joint military exercise Harimau Shakti with - **Malaysia**
- This state has launched Mission Arun Himveer to enhance market linkages for local agricultural and horticultural producers- **Arunachal Pradesh**
- Winner of gold medal in Syed Modi International Badminton Tournament- **PV Sindhu**
- Recently this country has banned the use of social media for people under 16 years of age- **Australia**

- International Tourism Mart was organized recently at - **Kaziranga National Park**
- Winner of the Golden Peacock Award for Best Film at the 55th International Film Festival of India- **Toxic**
- 'Saraksha' mobile application has been launched by- **Indian Railways**
- New Chief Minister of Jharkhand- **HemantSoren**
- India has recently started bilateral exercise Agniwarrior 2024 with - **Singapore**
- Indian Coast Guard's National Maritime Search and Rescue Exercise and Workshop (SAREX-24) was organized at - **Kochi, Kerala**
- New head of Brahmos Aerospace- **Dr.JaytirthRaghavendra Joshi**
- India's rank in the Network Readiness Index 2024- **49th**
- The "Ab Koi BahanaNahi" campaign has been launched in collaboration with- **UN Women**
- Youngest player sold in IPL auction history- **VaibhavSuryavanshi (13 years)**
- Most expensive player in IPL auction history- **Rishabh Pant (27 crore, Lucknow Super Giants)**
- Khelo India Youth Games and Para Games of the year 2025 will be hosted by - **Bihar**
- Recently ISRO has signed an agreement for 'Gaganyaan' mission with space agency of - **Australia**
- Winner of the title of Women's Asian Hockey Champions Trophy 2024- **India**
- SECI has signed MoU to promote Green Hydrogen initiative with - **H2 Global**
- Recently PM Modi was awarded the highest honour of - **Dominica**
- Recently this country has declared emergency due to water shortage- **Ecuador**
- India's first Artificial Intelligence (AI) data bank was launched by - **Dr.Jitendra Singh**
- With these countries has India agreed to use digital public infrastructure and AI to reduce global inequality- **Brazil, South Africa**
- Recently the United Nations has named Bastar village as a tourist destination. This village belong to - **Chhattisgarh**
- India's first night safari park is being developed in - **Lucknow**
- Joint military exercise 'PurviPrahar' was organized in - **Arunachal Pradesh**
- New Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) of the country recently- **Sanjay Murthy**
- This country has recently approved a new constitution- **Gabon**
- Winner of the 14th Hockey India Senior National Championship 2024- **Odisha**
- Winner of the title of the 4th National Finswimming Championship- **West Bengal**
- Guru Ghasidas-TamorPingla Tiger Reserve (56th Tiger Reserve of India) is located in – **Chhattisgarh**
- G20 summit 2024 was organized in - **Rio de Janeiro (Brazil)**
- This state government has announced 100% exemption on road and registration taxes for electric vehicles- **Telangana**
- PM Modihas been honoured with the highest civilian honour of - **Nigeria**
- Nugu Wildlife Sanctuary, which was in the news recently, is located in - **Karnataka**
- 'Global Energy Efficiency Alliance' has been launched by - **UAE**
- New brand ambassador of Dubai Sports Council- **SaniaMirza and Harbhajan Singh**

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MCQ ON CURRENT AFFAIRS

1. Which of the following are features of Diego Garcia Island?
 1. It is located south of the equator in the Indian Ocean.
 2. It serves as a key refuelling and logistics hub for U.S. naval operations.
 3. It is uninhabited except for military personnel and contractors.
 4. It is home to one of the largest coral reefs in the world.Select the correct answer:
 - (a) 1, 2, and 3 only
 - (b) 2, 3, and 4 only
 - (c) 1, 2, 3, and 4
 - (d) 1, 3, and 4 only
2. Combat Air Teaming System, recently in news, is developed by:
 - (a) Defence Research and Development Organisation
 - (b) ISRO
 - (c) Bharat Electronics Limited
 - (d) Hindustan Aeronautics Limited
3. What is the primary astronomical factor that determines the timing of the Maha Kumbh Mela?
 - (a) Conjunction of the Sun, Moon, and Mars
 - (b) Alignment of the Sun, Moon, and Jupiter in specific zodiac signs
 - (c) Position of Venus in relation to the Moon
 - (d) The movement of the Earth around its perihelion
4. Recently seen in news Delft Island is located at
 - (a) Arabian Sea, off the coast of Kerala.
 - (b) Bay of Bengal, near the Andaman Islands.
 - (c) Laccadive Sea, near Lakshadweep.
 - (d) Palk Strait, off the northern coast of Sri Lanka.
5. Indravati National Park lies in which state?
 - (a) Gujarat
 - (b) Chhattisgarh
 - (c) Madhya Pradesh
 - (d) Odisha
6. UN World Economic Situation and Prospects, recently in news, is published by:
 - (a) United Nations Development Programme
 - (b) UN Statistical Commission
 - (c) UN Economic and Social Council
 - (d) United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs
7. Consider the following statements regarding Surface-Enhanced Raman Spectroscopy:
 1. It is a surface-sensitive technique that enhances Raman scattering by molecules adsorbed on rough metal surfaces.
 2. It is used for material and life sciences because of its intrinsic features.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. Consider the following statements regarding the fire retardant:
 1. It is a mix of chemicals used to slow down the spread of fires.
 2. It contains toxic metals like chromium and cadmium which affects aquatic life.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
9. Consider the following statements about the Caste Census in India
1. The last caste-based census conducted in India was in 1931 during the British colonial period.
 2. The Socio-Economic and Caste Census (SECC) of 2011 collected caste data, but the full results were not released due to concerns about potential social unrest.
 3. Arguments in favour of a caste census include the need for empirical data to design targeted welfare policies and address social inequalities.
- How many of the statements given above are correct?
- (a) Only one
(b) Only two
(c) All three
(d) None
10. Consider the following statements about the India's digital data protection framework
1. Data localization mandates require all personal data of Indian citizens to be stored within the geographical boundaries of India.
 2. The concept of "deemed consent" allows for the processing of personal data without explicit consent in certain situations defined by law, such as medical emergencies.
 3. A Data Protection Authority is proposed to be established to oversee the implementation and enforcement of the data protection framework.
- Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
- (a) 1 and 2
(b) 2 and 3
(c) 1 and 3
(d) All three
11. What is the primary function of a Sonobuoy?
- (a) To detect and track underwater submarines using passive sonar technology.
 - (b) To launch anti-submarine missiles from aircraft.
 - (c) To deploy underwater communication cables.
 - (d) To conduct oceanographic research and surveys.
12. Where is the Punatsangchhu-II Hydroelectric Project (PHEP-II), recently seen in the news, located?
- (a) China
 - (b) Nepal
 - (c) India
 - (d) Bhutan
13. Consider the following statements regarding the UN Committee of Experts on Big Data and Data Science for Official Statistics:
1. It was created to investigate challenges of Big Data and potential for monitoring and reporting on sustainable development goals.
 2. It was created in 2014 with India as its first Chair.
- 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
14. Consider the following statements regarding the Project Veer Gatha:
1. It aims to raise awareness of Gallantry awardees' acts of bravery and the life stories of these heroes.
 2. It is an initiative of the union Ministry of Home 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
15. Consider the following statements about the Section 152 of BNS
1. It replaces Section 124A of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) which dealt with sedition.
 2. It criminalizes acts that excite or attempt to excite secession or armed rebellion
 3. It does not include any provisions related to electronic communication or financial means used to commit the offense.
- Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
- (a) 1 and 2
 - (b) 1 and 3
 - (c) 2 and 3
 - (d) All three
16. The 'Anji Khad Bridge', recently seen in the news, is located in:
- (a) Arunachal Pradesh
 - (b) Assam
 - (c) Uttarakhand
 - (d) Jammu and Kashmir
17. Consider the following statements regarding 'Z-Morh Tunnel', recently seen in the news:
1. It is a 2-lane railway tunnel in located in Jammu and Kashmir.
 2. It is vital for ensuring year-round connectivity to Ladakh.
- 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 the 'Genome India Project':
1. It is an initiative to map the genetic diversity of India's population.
 2. It is supported and funded by 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
19. Consider the following statements regarding the 'Miyawaki Technique':
1. It is a method for creating dense forests in limited spaces.
 2. It improves soil quality, enhances biodiversity and accelerates forest 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
20. Consider the following statements about the Centre and State's revenue
1. The Centre's share in States' revenue has increased significantly in recent years.
 2. This increase is primarily attributed to the growing importance of centrally sponsored schemes.
 3. Increased devolution of funds to States has led to greater fiscal autonomy for them.
- Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
- (a) 1 and 2
 - (b) 1 and 3
 - (c) 2 and 3
 - (d) All three
21. With reference to the Flamingo Festival 2025, consider the following statements:
1. The festival celebrates the annual migration of flamingos to Pulicat Lake and Nelapattu Bird Sanctuary.
 2. Pulicat Lake, one of the key sites for the festival, is the largest brackish water lake in India.
 3. Nelapattu Bird Sanctuary is known as the largest breeding site for spot-billed pelicans in Southeast Asia.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

22. Which of the following objectives align with the Microsoft and IndiaAI partnership?

- 1. Promoting indigenous AI capabilities and solutions.
- 2. Accelerating the deployment of AI-based healthcare technologies in rural areas.
- 3. Establishing India's dominance in the global AI compute infrastructure market.

Select the correct Solution using the code given below:

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

23. Consider the following statements regarding the Indo-Tibetan Border Police:

- 1. It is one of the Central Armed Police Forces of India.
- 2. It works under the Union Ministry of Home 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

24. Consider the following statements regarding the 'EmpowHER Biz' initiative:

- 1. It offers mentorship and comprehensive training to aspiring women entrepreneurs.
- 2. It is an initiative of the Union Ministry of Women and Child 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

25. Which of the following best describes 'Garudakshi', recently seen in the news?

- (a) It is software modelled on the online FIR system to curb wildlife and forests crime.
- (b) It is a new AI tool to monitor transactions through darknet
- (c) It is an initiative to build diesel-electric submarines for the Indian Navy
- (d) It is an online platform to monitor biomagnification of pesticides like DDT for the decline of eagle population

26. With reference to 'Soapstone', consider the following statements:

- 1. It is a metamorphic rock made of talc.
- 2. It is a naturally occurring mineral with high heat-resistant properties.
- 3. In India, it is only found in the state of Rajasthan.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

27. Consider the following statements regarding 'Pravasi Bharatiya Divas':

- 1. It is a flagship event of the Ministry of External Affairs.
- 2. It is held on January 9th to commemorate the return of Mahatma Gandhi from South Africa.

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

28. Consider the following statements regarding UJALA Scheme:

- 1. It is the world's largest zero-subsidy LED lamp distribution scheme.

2. It is implemented by Energy Efficiency Services Limited (EESL) under the Ministry of Power.
- Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
- 1 only
 - 2 only
 - Both 1 and 2
 - Neither 1 nor 2
29. What are sonobuoys primarily used for?
- Studying weather patterns
 - Detecting and tracking submarines and ships
 - Mapping the ocean floor
 - Measuring coastal erosion
30. Consider the following statements regarding the Net-Zero Banking Alliance:
1. It is a group of global banks which are committed to aligning their lending and investment activities with net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050.
 2. The Reserve Bank of India is a member of this alliance.
- Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
- 1 only
 - 2 only
 - Both 1 and 2
 - Neither 1 nor 2
31. Consider the following statements regarding the Production Linked Incentive Scheme 1.1:
1. It covers products like Alloy Steel Products & Steel wires and Electrical Steel.
 2. It is implemented during the production period of FY 2025-26 to FY 2029-30.
- Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
- 1 only
 - 2 only
 - Both 1 and 2
 - Neither 1 nor 2
32. Consider the following statements about the Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY)
1. PMMSY is primarily focused on inland fisheries and does not include any provisions for marine fisheries.
 2. The scheme promotes the use of traditional fishing methods to ensure sustainability.
- Choose the incorrect statements:
- 1 only
 - 2 only
 - Both 1 and 2
 - Neither 1 nor 2
33. Consider the following statements about the POEM-4 mission:
1. It was ISRO's first mission to include agricultural experiments in space.
 2. The mission marked the first use of India's space robotic arm.
 3. It demonstrated advancements in space sustainability using modular payload designs.
- How many of the above statements is/are correct?
- Only one
 - Only two
 - All three
 - None
34. Consider the following statements regarding 'Panchayat Se Parliament 2.0', programme:
1. Its primary focus is to empower women representatives from Panchayati Raj institutions.
 2. It will bring together all the women sarpanch across India.
- Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
- 1 only
 - 2 only
 - Both 1 and 2
 - Neither 1 nor 2
35. The 'Banihal Bypass' is located in:
- Himachal Pradesh
 - Uttarakhand

- (c) Sikkim
(d) Jammu & Kashmir
36. Consider the following statements regarding HMPV transmission and epidemiology:
1. It primarily spreads through direct person-to-person contact.
 2. It is a leading cause of severe lower respiratory infections in children.
 3. It cannot survive on surfaces for more than a few minutes.
- Which of the above statements is/are correct?
- (a) 1 and 2 only
(b) 1 and 3 only
(c) 2 and 3 only
(d) 1, 2 and 3
37. Consider the following statements regarding the Nanopore Technology:
1. It is a cutting-edge method for sequencing DNA and RNA by detecting changes in electrical conductivity as molecules pass through a nanopore.
 2. It is highly expensive and requires sophisticated computational and lab infrastructure.
- 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
38. Consider the following statements regarding Rani Velu Nachiyar:
1. She waged a war against the British in collaboration with Hyder Ali and Gopala Nayaker.
 2. She is also known by the title 'Veeramangai'.
- 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
39. What is the most common environmental cause of Blue Baby Syndrome?
- (a) Air pollution
(b) Vitamin deficiencies
(c) Exposure to lead
(d) Nitrate-contaminated water
40. Consider the following statements about the Hydrogel
1. Hydrogels are three-dimensional networks of hydrophilic polymers that can absorb and retain large amounts of water.
 2. They are insoluble in water due to cross-linking between the polymer chains.
- Choose the incorrect statements:
- (a) 1 only
(b) 2 only
(c) Both 1 and 2
(d) Neither 1 nor 2
41. What is the primary mandate of the Ramesh Chand Panel, constituted recently?
- (a) To propose a new GDP calculation methodology.
(b) To revise the base year of the Wholesale Price Index (WPI).
(c) To assess fiscal policies of the government.
(d) To evaluate public expenditure.
42. Consider the following statements about Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY):
1. It provides coverage for yield losses caused by natural calamities.
 2. Farmers must pay 10% of the premium for horticultural crops.
 3. Satellite technology is used for yield estimation.
- Which of the above statements are correct?
- (a) 1 and 2 only
(b) 1 and 3 only
(c) 2 and 3 only
(d) 1, 2, and 3

43. Consider the following with reference to the Central Groundwater Board (CGWB):
1. National Aquifer Mapping and Management (NAQUIM)
 2. Groundwater explorations
 3. Monitoring of groundwater levels and quality
 4. Regulation and control of groundwater development
 5. Water conservation and artificial recharge to groundwater
- How many of the above are major activities of the CGWB?
- (a) Only two
 - (b) Only three
 - (c) Only four
 - (d) All five
44. Which among the following best describes 'INS Surat', recently seen in the news?
- (a) It is a nuclear-powered aircraft carrier.
 - (b) It is a Shivalik-class stealth multi-role frigate.
 - (c) It is a Kalvari-class submarine.
 - (d) It is a stealth destroyer.
45. Consider the following statements regarding the Parker Solar Probe:
1. The Parker Solar Probe is part of NASA's Living with a Star program.
 2. The probe was designed to explore the magnetic fields of Earth's atmosphere.
 3. The data gathered is crucial for advancing space weather forecasting.
- Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
- (a) 1 and 2
 - (b) 1 and 3
 - (c) 2 and 3
 - (d) All three
46. With reference to the Space Docking Experiment (SpaDeX), consider the following statements:
1. It aims to develop and demonstrate the technology needed for rendezvous, docking and undocking of two small spacecraft.
2. India will be the first country in the world to achieve this feat.
- 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
47. Which of the following are eligible for the Prime Minister's Internship Scheme?
1. Candidates aged between 21 and 24 years and not engaged in full-time employment
 2. Individuals who have completed at least class 10 or higher
 3. Post-graduates
- Select the correct answer using the code given below:
- (a) 1 and 2 only
 - (b) 2 and 3 only
 - (c) 1 and 3 only
 - (d) 1, 2 and 3
48. Consider the following statements.
1. Greenland is the world's second-largest island.
 2. Three-quarters of Greenland's surface is permanently covered by an ice sheet.
 3. Greenland holds significant mineral and energy reserves due to melting ice.
- Which of the above statements is/are correct?
- (a) 1 and 2 only
 - (b) 1 and 3 only
 - (c) 1, 2 and 3
 - (d) 2 and 3 only
49. What's unique about the Denmark Strait Cataract, recently seen in the news??
- (a) It is a newly discovered coral reef system.
 - (b) It is the largest waterfall on Earth.
 - (c) It is the deepest ocean trench in the North Atlantic.

(d) None of the above.
50. Consider the following statements regarding the 'FREE-AI' Committee, recently seen in the news:

1. It was constituted by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) to develop a framework for responsible and ethical Artificial Intelligence (AI) in the financial sector.
2. Its mandate is to study the present level of AI adoption in financial services and review regulatory and supervisory approaches on AI with a focus on the financial sector globally.

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

51. The Upper Siang Hydropower Project is located in which one of the following states?

- (a) Sikkim
- (b) Arunachal Pradesh
- (c) Assam
- (d) Meghalaya

52. Consider the following statements regarding the Household Consumption Expenditure Survey:

1. It is designed to collect information on consumption and expenditure of the households on goods and services.
2. It is conducted by National Sample Survey Office (NSSO) under the Ministry of Statistics & Programme Implementation.

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. Consider the following statements regarding Kaveri Engine:

1. It is developed by the Gas Turbine Research Establishment under the Defence Research and Development Organisation.

2. It is suitable for unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) like the Ghatak.

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

54. Golden Visa, which was recently in the news, is:

- (a) a lifetime visa provided by the European Union for Nobel Laureates
- (b) provided to Indian diplomats who are on special duty
- (c) a special visa provided to Olympic medal winners by India
- (d) a Residence By Investment (RBI) plan given to foreign nationals

55. Consider the following statements about the significance of Kamarajar Port:

1. It is incorporated under the Sagarmala Programme.
2. It contributes to industrialization along the Coromandel Coast.
3. It primarily handles passenger ferries between Chennai and Kolkata.

Which of the above statements are correct?

- (a) 1 and 3
- (b) 2 and 3
- (c) 1 and 2
- (d) None of the above

56. Which treaty led to the transfer of the Panama Canal's control from the U.S. to Panama?

- (a) Hay-Bunau-Varilla Treaty
- (b) Treaty of Paris
- (c) Treaty of Tordesillas
- (d) Torrijos-Carter Treaty

57. 'Order of Mubarak Al-Kabeer', which was recently awarded to the Prime Minister of India, is the highest national award of:

- (a) Saudi Arabia

- (b) Kuwait
(c) Indonesia
(d) Bangladesh
58. Consider the following statements with reference to the Quantum Satellite:
1. It is a communications satellite that uses quantum physics to secure its signals.
 2. It aims to protect against threats from quantum computing.
- 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
59. Consider the following statements regarding the Northern giant hornet:
1. It is an invasive species and poses a significant threat to insects and native pollinators.
 2. It can kill an entire beehive of honeybees in just 90 minutes.
- 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
60. Which of the following best defines "Never Events", with respect to healthcare sector?
- (a) Routine medical errors that occur in high-stress healthcare settings
(b) Events requiring extensive post-treatment recovery periods
(c) Complex medical conditions with no available treatment options
(d) Rare, preventable incidents in healthcare resulting in severe consequences
61. With reference to the Dark Comets, consider the following:
1. They are celestial bodies which consist of glowing tails.
 2. They spin quite rapidly and disperse escaping gas and dust in all directions.
 3. They are categorized as outer dark comets and inner dark comets.
- Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
- (a) 1 and 2
(b) 2 and 3
(c) 1 and 3
(d) All three
62. Consider the following statements about the sovereign gold scheme
1. The Sovereign Gold Bond Scheme was launched by the Government of India in 2014.
 2. The bonds are issued by the Reserve Bank of India on behalf of the Government of India.
 3. Primary objective of the Sovereign Gold Bond Scheme to reduce India's dependence on gold imports
- Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
- (a) 1 and 2
(b) 2 and 3
(c) 1 and 3
(d) All three
63. With reference to the National Investigation Agency, consider the following:
1. It was set up under the National Investigation Agency Act, 2008.
 2. It investigates offences related to atomic energy and nuclear weapons.
 3. It works under the Union Ministry of Home Affairs.
- How many of the above statements are correct?
- (a) Only one
(b) Only two
(c) All three
(d) None
64. The Baiga Tribe primarily resides in which of the following states?
1. Chhattisgarh
 2. West Bengal

3. Uttar Pradesh
4. Odisha

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

65. Which of the following is the primary objective of the NISHTHA program?

- (a) To improve the infrastructure of schools
- (b) To increase the enrollment of students in schools
- (c) To build the capacity of school heads and teachers
- (d) To promote digital education

66. Exercise SLINEX, is conducted between, India and:

- (a) Singapore
- (b) Japan
- (c) France
- (d) Sri Lanka

67. Consider the following statements regarding the POSH Act, 2013:

1. It applies only to permanent female employees in private organizations.
2. Sexual harassment at a workplace is strictly prohibited under the Act.
3. Complaints under the Act must be filed within six months of the incident.
4. A Local Complaints Committee (LCC) must be constituted in districts without an ICC.

Which of the above statements are correct?

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

68. Consider the following statements regarding the Most Favoured Nation (MFN) principle:

1. MFN is a principle of non-discrimination ensuring equal trade treatment for WTO member nations.

2. It was established under the Bretton Woods system post-World War II.
3. Countries with MFN status cannot impose tariffs on goods from each other.
4. MFN principles also apply to services and intellectual property under WTO agreements.

Which of the above statements are correct?

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

69. Consider the following statements about the 'Green Steel Taxonomy for India'

1. The 'Green Steel Taxonomy for India' is a framework developed by the Ministry of Environment to promote sustainable steel production in India.
2. The taxonomy provides a set of criteria to evaluate the environmental sustainability of steel production processes.
3. The taxonomy is aligned with the European Union's Green Taxonomy and is expected to help Indian steel companies access green financing

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

70. The Malwa Canal Project is a planned irrigation and water management project in which one of the following states?

- (a) Madhya Pradesh
- (b) Rajasthan
- (c) Punjab
- (d) Gujarat

71. Consider the following statements regarding the Durgadi Fort:

1. It is located in Maharashtra.
2. It was built by the Britishers in the 18th century as a military stronghold.

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

72. Kaleshwaram Lift Irrigation Project (KLIP) is a multi-purpose irrigation project on which one of the following rivers?

- (a) Kaveri
- (b) Godavari
- (c) Krishna
- (d) Mahanadi

73. 'Dulcibella camanchaca', recently seen in the news, is a species of:

- (a) Gecko
- (b) Fish
- (c) Butterfly
- (d) Amphipod

74. Consider the following statements regarding the CE20 Cryogenic Engine:

1. It is developed by the Liquid Propulsion Systems Centre of ISRO.
2. It is qualified for the Gaganyaan mission with a thrust level of 20 tonnes.

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

75. With reference to the Konda Reddi tribe, consider the following statements:

1. It is recognized as a Particularly Vulnerable Tribal group.
2. It is mainly found in the state of Tamil Nadu.
3. It has its own institution of social control called 'Kula Panchayat'.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

76. Consider the following statements regarding the SAMARTH Udyog Bharat 4.0 initiative:

1. It is an initiative of the Union Ministry of Heavy Industries and Public Enterprises.
2. It aims to provide assistance to Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) to train the workforce and make them aware about Industry 4.0 technologies.

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

77. Consider the following statements regarding the DAE- Homi Bhabha Chair Scheme:

1. It is administered by the Union Ministry of Science and Technology.
2. Under this scheme an opportunity is given to outstanding Scientists and Engineers to work for the Department of Atomic Energy.

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

78. Consider the following statements regarding the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI):

1. It is India's apex anti-smuggling intelligence and investigation agency.
2. It works under the Central Board of Indirect Taxes & Customs.

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

79. The Birhor tribe is primarily found in which one of the following states?
- Gujarat
 - Karnataka
 - Assam
 - Jharkhand
80. Mehrauli Archeological Park is located in which one of the following cities?
- Delhi
 - Bhopal
 - Kolkata
 - Bengaluru
81. Consider the following statements regarding the Exercise Desert Knight:
- It is a trilateral air combat exercise between India, France and the United Arab Emirates (UAE).
 - It was conducted recently over the Arabian Sea.
- Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
- 1 only
 - 2 only
 - Both 1 and 2
 - Neither 1 nor 2
82. With reference to the Abathsahayeshwarar Temple, consider the following statements:
- It is located in Tamil Nadu.
 - It was built by Krishnadevaraya of Vijayanagara dynasty.
 - It has been selected for UNESCO's Asia-Pacific Awards for Cultural Heritage Conservation.
- Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
- 1 and 2
 - 1 and 3
 - 2 and 3
 - All three
83. Consider the following statements regarding the Dharini Brain Atlas:
- It is the largest publicly accessible digital dataset of the human foetal brain.
 - It can help in the development of treatments for brain-related health conditions.
- Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
- 1 only
 - 2 only
 - Both 1 and 2
 - Neither 1 nor 2
84. Consider the following statements about Disease X
- Disease X is a term used by the World Health Organization (WHO) to describe a hypothetical pathogen that could cause a future pandemic.
 - Scientists are of the opinion that Disease X could be 20 times more deadly than SARS-Covid virus that caused pandemic recently.
 - Disease X was included in the WHO's updated Blueprint list of diseases back in 2018.
- How many of the statements given above are correct?
- Only one
 - Only two
 - All three
 - None
85. Consider the following statements about the Gaganyaan mission
- The Gaganyaan Mission is India's first human spaceflight mission.
 - The mission aims to send a crew of three astronauts to the Low Earth Orbit (LEO) for a period of seven days.
 - The mission is being implemented by the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) with the help of the Russian space agency Roscosmos.
- Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
- 1 only
 - 1 and 3
 - 2 and 3

- (d) All three
86. Who is the Chairperson of the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) established under the Disaster Management Act 2005?
- Prime Minister of India
 - Home Minister of India
 - Minister of State for Home Affairs
 - Chief Minister of the concerned state
87. Consider the following statements about the Foreign Direct Investment (FDI)
- FDI is allowed only in the manufacturing sector.
 - Reserve Bank of India (RBI) is the primary agency responsible for regulating FDI in India.
- Choose the incorrect statements:
- 1 only
 - 2 only
 - Both 1 and 2
 - Neither 1 nor 2
88. Which organization is responsible for organizing the World Chess Championship?
- World Chess Association (WCA)
 - Fédération Internationale des Échecs (FIDE)
 - International Board of Chess (IBC)
 - World Chess Federation (WCF)
89. Consider the following statements about the 'One Nation, One Election' policy:
- It requires amendments to multiple constitutional articles for implementation.
 - The Ramnath Kovind Committee was formed to evaluate its feasibility.
 - The policy proposes holding Lok Sabha and local body elections simultaneously.
- Which of the above statements is/are correct?
- 1, 2, and 3
 - 1 and 3 only
 - 2 and 3 only
 - 1 and 2 only
90. Dark Eagle, recently seen in the news, is a long-range hypersonic anti-missile system developed by which one of the following countries?
- China
 - Russia
 - Israel
 - United States of America
91. Consider the following statements regarding the IndiaAI Future Skills platform:
- It is one of the seven foundational pillars of the IndiaAI Mission.
 - It aims to foster inclusive access to AI education by establishing Data and AI Labs in Tier 2 and Tier 3 cities across India.
- Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
- 1 only
 - 2 only
 - Both 1 and 2
 - Neither 1 nor 2
92. Consider the following statements regarding the Athlete Biological Passport Programme:
- It is an advanced anti-doping tool that monitors an athlete's biological markers over time.
 - Under this programme the haematological module identifies the use of prohibited substances.
- Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
- 1 only
 - 2 only
 - Both 1 and 2
 - Neither 1 nor 2
93. With reference to GenCast Model, consider the following statements:
- It is a new machine-learning weather prediction model.
 - It is developed by the Indian Meteorological Department.
 - It generates multiple forecasts to capture the complex behaviour of the atmosphere.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

94. Consider the following statements about haemophilia

1. Haemophilia is a genetic disorder that affects the blood's ability to clot.
2. It is caused by a deficiency or mutation in one of the genes that code for clotting factors.
3. Haemophilia A is the most common type of haemophilia and is caused by a deficiency in clotting factor VIII.

How many of the statements given above are correct?

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

95. Consider the following statements about the Vaikom Satyagraha

1. The Vaikom Satyagraha was a movement led by Mahatma Gandhi in 1924-25 to protest against the restrictions on the entry of lower-caste people into temples.
2. The Vaikom Satyagraha was led by several prominent leaders, including K. Kelappan, T.K. Madhavan and K.P. Kesava Menon
3. The movement was not enough successful in achieving its objective, and the temple was not opened to people of all castes.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

96. Who can appoint Amici Curiae?

- (a) Only the Supreme Court of India
- (b) Only the High Courts
- (c) Any court in India
- (d) Both the Supreme Court and High Courts

97. With reference to the World Malaria Report 2024, consider the following statements:

1. It is an annual report released by the World Health Organisation (WHO).
2. Africa accounts for more than 90 percent of global cases and malaria deaths in 2023.
3. The number of estimated malaria cases in India increased by over 5 percent over the last six years.

How many of the statements given above are correct?

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

98. With reference to the Railways (Amendment) Bill, 2024, consider the following statements:

1. It provides statutory backing to the Railway Board and authorises the Union government to decide the composition of the Railway Board.
2. It proposes to establish an independent regulator to oversee tariffs, safety and the participation of the private sector in the railways.
3. It proposes to improve operational efficiencies and decentralize powers, granting greater autonomy to railway zones.

How many of the statements given above are correct?

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

99. Consider the following statements regarding the Yuva Sahakar Scheme:
1. It aims to encourage newly formed cooperative societies with innovative ideas.
 2. It is implemented by the National Cooperative Development Corporation (NCDC).
- 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 regarding C. Rajagopalachari:
1. He participated in agitations against the Rowlatt Act and the Non-Cooperation movement during India's freedom struggle.
 2. He wrote Chakravarti Thirumagan in English language.
- 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
101. Consider the following statements about Subramania Bharati
1. In 1908, he published SwadesaGeethangal, a collection of 16 patriotic poems.
 2. In 1906, he launched "India" the Tamil newspaper, advocating Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity.
 3. His famous poems include Kannan Pattu, NilavumVanminumKatrum, Panchali Sabatam, and Kuyil Pattu
- How many of the statements given above are correct?
- (a) Only one
 - (b) Only two
 - (c) All three
 - (d) None
102. Consider the following statements about the PM POSHAN Abhiyan
1. The scheme aims to provide nutrition support to children in the age group of 6-14 years.
 2. The scheme will be implemented in all districts of the country.
 3. Take home ration is a component of PM POSHAN Abhiyan
- How many of the statements given above are correct?
- (a) Only one
 - (b) Only two
 - (c) All three
 - (d) None
103. Which of the following rivers flows through Syria and is considered its lifeline?
- (a) Euphrates
 - (b) Nile
 - (c) Tigris
 - (d) Jordan
104. What is the primary reason Madhav Gadgil was named UNEP Champion of the Earth 2024?
- (a) Establishing urban biodiversity frameworks
 - (b) His research on climate change mitigation
 - (c) Promoting renewable energy adoption in India
 - (d) His work on the Western Ghats conservation
105. With reference to the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), consider the following statements:
1. It is a specialized agency of the United Nations.
 2. It is exclusively focused on and dedicated to transforming agriculture, rural economy and food systems.
 3. It invests in rural projects through grants and low-interest loans.
- How many of the statements given above are correct?
- (a) Only one
 - (b) Only two

- (c) All three
(d) None
106. Consider the following statements regarding the India Skills Report, 2025:
1. More than 50% of Indian graduates are expected to be globally employable in 2025.
 2. The Science graduates have the highest global employability.
- 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
107. 'AgeXtend', recently seen in the news, is a/an:
- (a) medical device to track ageing
(b) natural supplement for anti-ageing
(c) government program for geriatric care
(d) platform to discover molecules that could slow down ageing
108. Consider the following statements regarding the Champions of the Earth award:
1. It is the highest environmental honour awarded by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).
 2. It is only given to individuals who are working on innovative and sustainable solutions to address climate change.
- 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 Dalle Khursani:
1. It is a variety of fiery red pepper which has received a Geographical Indication Tag.
 2. It is cultivated in the state of Nagaland.
- 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 about the National Food Security Act(NFSA)
1. The NFSA was enacted in 2014 to provide food security to the poor and vulnerable sections of the population
 2. The Act provides for the provision of subsidized foodgrains to 67% of the population.
 3. The NFSA also provides for the provision of maternity benefits to pregnant women.
- Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
- (a) 1 and 2
(b) 2 and 3
(c) 1 and 3
(d) All three
111. Consider the following statements about MuleHunter.AI:
1. MuleHunter.AI was developed by the Ministry of Finance.
 2. It targets offline frauds such as counterfeit cash circulation.
 3. Its primary function is real-time monitoring of mule accounts.
- Which of the above statements is/are correct?
- (a) 2 and 3 only
(b) 1 and 3 only
(c) 1, 2 and 3
(d) 3 only
112. What is the primary aim of the Bima Sakhi Yojana?
- (a) To provide direct insurance coverage to rural women.
(b) To provide education loans for women pursuing financial careers.

- (c) To offer free life insurance policies for women aged 18-70 years.
- (d) To train women as LIC agents and promote financial literacy
113. Consider the following statements regarding the Bima Sakhi Yojana:
1. It is an initiative of the state-owned Life Insurance Corporation (LIC).
 2. It intends to give health insurance to women falling below the poverty line.
- 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
114. Which one of the following types of majority is required in the Rajya Sabha to pass a resolution for the removal of the Vice President of India?
- (a) Two-third majority of members present and voting
 - (b) Simple majority of members present and voting
 - (c) Three-fourth majority of all members
 - (d) Majority of all the then members of the House
115. Consider the following statements regarding the Voronezh Radar:
1. It is a critical component of Israel's early warning and missile defence infrastructure.
 2. It is capable of identifying and tracking a range of threats, including ballistic missiles and aircraft, over distances of more than 5000 kilometers.
- 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
116. Consider the following statements regarding Subaru Telescope:
1. It is a Russian optical-infrared telescope.
 2. Its powerful light-collecting capability can capture weak light from celestial objects.
- 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
117. The "GG Tau A System", recently seen in the news, is a/an:
- (a) newly discovered plant gene
 - (b) Large Language Model
 - (c) asteroid
 - (d) triple-star system
118. Consider the following statements regarding National Panchayat Award:
1. It recognizes and encourages Panchayats for their efforts in poverty alleviation.
 2. Under this, Gram Urja Swaraj Vishesh Panchayat Puraskar is awarded to Panchayats for their performance in adoption and usage of renewable sources of energy.
- 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
119. Consider the following statements regarding the Amrit Gyaan Kosh Portal:
1. It is developed by the National Informatics Centre (NIC).
 2. It aims to promote self-reliance in governance training.
- 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

120. What is the geological origin of Lonar Lake, saline lake located in the Buldhana district of Maharashtra?
- Tectonic activity
 - Volcanic eruption
 - Erosion by water
 - Meteorite impact
121. The Places of Worship (Special Provisions) Act, 1991, was enacted to:
- Allow the conversion of places of worship after August 15, 1947
 - Remove penalties for violating religious conversion laws
 - Permit legal proceedings for places of worship disputes predating 1947
 - Freeze the status of places of worship as of August 15, 1947
122. Consider the following statements about government initiatives for a "Viksit Bharat":
- The Make in India initiative focuses exclusively on export-oriented industries.
 - The Digital India program primarily targets rural internet connectivity.
 - The Green India Mission emphasizes renewable energy and urban development.
- Which of the above statements is correct?
- 1 only
 - 3 only
 - 2 and 3 only
 - None of the above
123. Consider the following statements regarding Nova Explosion:
- It is a special class of transient astronomical event that causes the sudden appearance of bright star.
 - It occurs in binary star systems where a dense, white dwarf star orbits closely with a Sun-like companion.
- Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
- 1 only
 - 2 only
 - Both 1 and 2
 - Neither 1 nor 2
124. Who is eligible to open an FCNR(B) deposit account?
- Resident Indians
 - Non-Resident Indians (NRIs)
 - Foreign nationals
 - Only B and C
125. Which of the following places is referred to as "Mini Kashmir" due to its scenic beauty and forests?
- Doodhpathri
 - Pahalgam
 - Bhadarwah
 - Gulmarg
126. Consider the following statements regarding the Nicobarese tribe:
- They belong to the Southeast Asian cultural complex.
 - They mainly practice a mix of hunting-and-gathering and fishing.
- Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
- 1 only
 - 2 only
 - Both 1 and 2
 - Neither 1 nor 2
127. Mullaperiyar Dam, recently seen in the news, lies in which one of the following States?
- Maharashtra
 - Odisha
 - Karnataka
 - Kerala
128. Angami Tribe, recently seen in the news, primarily resides in which one of the following States?
- Nagaland
 - Odisha
 - Gujarat
 - Assam
129. Consider the following statements regarding the Rural Technology Action Group (RuTAG) Initiative:
- It is an initiative of the Union Ministry of Rural Development.

2. It aims to provide a higher level of Science & Technology intervention and support for rural areas.
- 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
130. With reference to the PM e-VIDYA, consider the following statements:
1. It was launched by the Union Ministry of Education.
 2. It aims to bridge the digital divide and ensure inclusive, quality education for all learners across the nation.
 3. Under it, Digital Infrastructure for School Education (DIKSHA) platform provides QR-coded Energized Textbooks for all grades in India.
- How many of the above statements are correct?
- (a) Only One
(b) Only Two
(c) All three
(d) None
131. Consider the following statements regarding the National Highway Authority of India Contractor rating system:
1. It is based on Pavement Condition Index (PCI) as well as Defect rectification compliance on NHAI One App.
 2. Under this system contractors will be evaluated every six months and ratings will be uploaded on NHAI website.
- 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. The GRIHA Summit primarily focuses on:
- (a) Promoting energy-intensive urban development
- (b) Enhancing infrastructure for renewable energy exports
- (c) Developing international waterway projects exclusively
- (d) Advancing sustainable building practices and climate resilience
133. Consider the following statements about the “Anna Chakra” tool, that was launched recently:
1. It integrates with the PM Gati Shakti platform for logistics coordination.
 2. It ensures food grain quality monitoring at Fair Price Shops (FPSs).
 3. It uses advanced algorithms to optimize delivery routes.
 4. It supports interstate PDS movement with geo-located FPSs and warehouses.
- Which of the above statements is/are correct?
- (a) 1, 2, and 3 only
(b) 1, 3, and 4 only
(c) 2, 3, and 4 only
(d) 1, 2, 3, and 4
134. Consider the following statements regarding the recently launched SCAN Portal:
1. It streamlines subsidy claims under the National Food Security Act (NFSA).
 2. It enables real-time tracking of subsidy disbursements to Fair Price Shops.
 3. It integrates with the Aadhaar Payment Bridge System for direct benefit transfer.
 4. It is an initiative under the Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution.
- Which of the above statements is/are correct?
- (a) 1 and 2 only
(b) 1, 2, and 4 only
(c) 2, 3, and 4 only
(d) 1, 3, and 4 only

135. Consider the following statements regarding the Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage (INTACH):

1. It is a statutory body with a mandate to protect and conserve India's vast heritage.
2. It is dedicated to the preservation of India's tangible and intangible heritage.

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 the Global Strategy for Resilient Drylands:

1. It is prepared by the United Nations Environment Programme.
2. It provides a roadmap to enhance food security, conserve biodiversity and build resilient livelihoods.

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. Consider the following statements about the

1. Sand mining is regulated only under the Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act, 1957.
2. Ministry of Mines is responsible for granting environmental clearance for sand mining projects in India.

Choose the incorrect statements:

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

138. What is the primary condition for Lake-Effect Snow to occur?

- (a) Cold air interacting with warmer, unfrozen lake waters
- (b) Frozen lake surfaces with high atmospheric moisture
- (c) Stable atmospheric conditions with low wind speed
- (d) Warm air interacting with cold lake waters

139. Consider the following statements regarding the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD) Air Quality Dashboard:

1. It monitors PM2.5 levels across the Indo-Gangetic plain and Himalayan foothills.
2. It exclusively tracks air quality in ICIMOD's member countries.
3. The dashboard integrates advanced forecasting tools for actionable insights.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

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

140. Consider the following statements regarding Feather Mites:

1. They are microscopic arachnids that inhabit bird feathers, feeding on oils, skin flakes and organic debris.
2. They are always parasitic, causing irritation or feather damage.

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

141. Consider the following statements regarding Nanobubbles:

1. They have a high surface area to volume ratio, allowing for a greater amount of gas to be in contact with water.

2. They can effectively remove organic pollutants, bacteria, and other contaminants from 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

142. Consider the following statements regarding SheSTEM 2024:

- 1. It is a startup funding program.
- 2. It is organised by the Atal Innovation Mission and the Embassy of Sweden.

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 Homo juluensis:

- 1. It is a new species of ancient humans with distinctively large skulls.
- 2. They survived in small groups primarily across South America.

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. World Drought Atlas, recently in news, is launched by:

- (a) United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD)
- (b) World Economic Forum
- (c) World Bank
- (d) United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)

145. Consider the following statements regarding the Heat Shock Protein 70:

- 1. It is a molecular chaperone that plays a vital role in helping other proteins fold into their proper shapes.

2. It gets elevated during times of cellular stress and helps to shield 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

146. Consider the following statements regarding the SVAGRIHA Rating:

- 1. It is guidance-cum-rating system developed for small stand alone buildings like residences and commercial offices.
- 2. It is applicable to all kinds of projects without any limit of built up area.

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

147. With reference to Gharcholas Saree, consider the following statements:

- 1. It is woven on Cotton or Silk fabric in large checks of using Silk and Zari threads.
- 2. Its designs often incorporate symbols of fertility and prosperity, such as the kalash and the paan.
- 3. It has received the Geographical Indication tag.

How many of the above statements are correct?

- (a) Only One
- (b) Only Two
- (c) All three
- (d) None

148. What is the main objective of Sugamya Bharat Abhiyan?

- (a) To promote inclusive education for children with disabilities
- (b) To provide employment opportunities for persons with disabilities

- (c) To provide financial assistance to persons with disabilities
- (d) To make public buildings and transport accessible to persons with disabilities
149. Consider the following statements about the ICJ(International Court of Justice)
1. The ICJ is the principal judicial organ of the United Nations.
 2. The ICJ has compulsory jurisdiction over all UN member states.
- Choose the incorrect statements:
- (a) 1 only
 - (b) 2 only
 - (c) Both 1 and 2
 - (d) Neither 1 nor 2
150. Consider the following statements about the PROBA-3 mission
1. It is the mission by NASA with the aim of demonstrating the feasibility of flying two satellites in formation
 2. PROBA-3 will study the Sun's corona and the solar wind.
- Choose the correct statements:
- (a) 1 only
 - (b) 2 only
 - (c) Both 1 and 2
 - (d) Neither 1 nor 2
151. Consider the following statements regarding the Oilfields (Regulation and Development) Amendment Bill, 2024:
1. It includes any naturally occurring hydrocarbon, coal bed methane and shale gas/oil in the category of mineral oils.
 2. It also empowers the Central Government to make rules on the merger and combination of petroleum leases.
- 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
152. Which one of the following Acts is proposed to be amended by the Banking Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2024?
- (a) Reserve Bank of India Act, 1934
 - (b) State Bank of India Act, 1955
 - (c) Banking Regulation Act, 1949
 - (d) All of the above
153. With reference to the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989, consider the following statements:
1. It does not apply to crimes committed between SCs and STs.
 2. All offences listed in the Act are cognizable.
 3. The Act is implemented by the respective State Governments and Union Territory Administrations.
- How many of the statements given above are correct?
- (a) Only one
 - (b) Only two
 - (c) All three
 - (d) None
154. Linen Inspection and Sorting Assistant (LISA) system, recently in news, is an initiative of:
- (a) Indian Railways
 - (b) Quality Council of India
 - (c) Bureau of Indian Standards
 - (d) Food Safety and Standards Authority of India
155. Consider the following statements regarding the Aravalli Green Wall Project:
1. It is an initiative of the Union Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change.
 2. It focuses on agroforestry and pasture development to enhance the livelihoods of local communities
- 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

156. Consider the following statements regarding the Ayush OushadhiGunvattaevamUttipadan Samvardhan Yojana:
1. It is a Centrally Sponsored Scheme formulated by the Ministry of Ayush.
 2. It aims to regulate Ayurveda, Siddha, Unani, and Homeopathy (ASU&H) medicines 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
157. Which of the following organizations is implementing India's "One Nation, One Subscription" initiative?
- (a) Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR)
 - (b) Department of Science and Technology (DST)
 - (c) Indian Council of Social Science Research (ICSSR)
 - (d) University Grants Commission (UGC)
158. Consider the following statements about the Ratapani forest
1. Ratapani forest has been declared as the eighth tiger reserve of state is situated in Chattisgarh.
 2. It is part of Satpuramaikal landscape.
- Choose the incorrect statements:
- (a) 1 only
 - (b) 2 only
 - (c) Both 1 and 2
 - (d) Neither 1 nor 2
159. Which technologies are uniquely bundled in the Pro-Active Governance and Timely Implementation (PRAGATI) platform?
- (a) Artificial intelligence, blockchain and video conferencing.
 - (b) Digital data management, video conferencing and geospatial technology.
 - (c) Quantum computing, data analytics and geospatial technology.
 - (d) Cloud computing, machine learning and video conferencing.
160. Exercise HARIMAU SHAKTI, is conducted between India and:
- (a) Vietnam
 - (b) Russia
 - (c) Sri Lanka
 - (d) Malaysia
161. Consider the following statements regarding Global One-Stop Centres:
1. These centres aim to provide comprehensive assistance to women in vulnerable situations.
 2. These centres will be established by the Union Ministry of External Affairs in UAE and Saudi Arabia.
- 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
162. Consider the following statements regarding the LISA system:
1. It is designed to automate the linen inspection process in Indian Railways' air-conditioned coaches.
 2. It uses AI to detect defects, stains, or damages in linens.
 3. It cannot process large volumes of linens quickly
- Which of the above statements is/are correct?
- (a) 1 only
 - (b) 1 and 3 only
 - (c) 1, 2 and 3
 - (d) 1 and 2 only
163. Vadhavan Port, recently seen in the news, is an all-weather, Greenfield, deep-draft major port to be developed in which one of the following states?
- (a) Andhra Pradesh
 - (b) Maharashtra
 - (c) Gujarat

- (d) Tamil Nadu
164. What causes solar storms?
- Gravitational pull between the Sun and the Moon
 - Twisting of the Sun's magnetic fields due to differential rotation
 - Rapid cooling of the Sun's surface
 - Solar eclipses

165. With reference to Urban Infrastructure Development Fund, consider the following statements:

- It is established through the use of priority sector lending shortfall.
- It is used by public agencies to create urban infrastructure in tier-2 and tier-3 cities.
- It is managed by the National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD).

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- 1 and 2
- 1 and 3
- 2 and 3
- All three

166. Exercise CINBAX, is conducted between India and:

- Cambodia
- Japan
- Vietnam
- France

167. With reference to Tungsten, consider the following statements:

- It is a chemical element which has the highest melting point of all metals.
- Tungsten alloys tend to be strong and flexible, resist wear, and conduct electricity well.
- Australia dominates global production of Tungsten.

How many of the statements given above are correct?

- Only one
- Only two
- All three

- (d) None

168. What is Lothal, a prominent ancient city, best known for?

- Step wells
- Granaries
- Temples
- Artificial dockyard

169. Consider the following statements regarding the Centre for Processing Accelerated Corporate Exit:

- It is set up to centralise the process of striking off companies from the Ministry of Corporate Affairs Register.
- It works under the supervision of the Director General of Corporate Affairs.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

170. WOH G64, recently seen in the news, is a:

- Red supergiant star
- new plant gene
- newly discovered galaxy
- unique high altitude cloud

171. With reference to Ramappa Temple, consider the following:

- It is located in the state of Telangana.
- It is built during the reign of Vijayanagar Empire.
- It has been designated as a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- 1 and 2
- 1 and 3
- 2 and 3
- All three

172. Consider the following statements regarding the Atmanirbhar Clean Plant Programme:

- It is designed to address issues in horticulture by providing access to

high-quality, virus-free planting material.

2. It is implemented by the National Horticulture Board (NHB) and the Indian Council of Agricultural Research.

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

173. Exercise AGNI WARRIOR, is conducted between India and:

- (a) Nepal
(b) France
(c) Japan
(d) Singapore

174. Phlegraean Fields, recently seen in the news, lies in which country?

- (a) Russia
(b) Italy
(c) Canada
(d) Iceland

175. Consider the following statements regarding the United Nations Peacebuilding Commission:

1. It is an inter-governmental advisory body that supports peace efforts in conflict-affected countries.
2. Its members are elected from the United Nations General Assembly, the Security Council, and the Economic and Social Council.

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

176. Consider the following statements regarding the Global Engagement Scheme:

1. It promotes India's rich cultural heritage and enhance India's image in the global arena.

2. Under this scheme, grants are sanctioned to fostering closer friendship and cultural contacts between India and foreign country.

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

177. Consider the following statements about the K4 missile

1. The K4 missile is a nuclear-capable ballistic missile developed by India
2. The K4 missile has a range of approximately 3,500 km.
3. The K4 missile is capable of being launched from a submarine.

How many of the statements given above are correct?

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

178. What is the unique feature of the New Pamban Bridge?

- (a) It is India's first vertical-lift railway sea bridge.
(b) It is India's first bridge with a double-decker road and rail track.
(c) It uses only manual mechanisms for lifting spans.
(d) It connects Tamil Nadu's mainland to Sri Lanka.

179. The Baltic Sea connects to the Atlantic Ocean through which straits?

- (a) Strait of Hormuz
(b) Danish Straits
(c) Strait of Gibraltar
(d) Malacca Strait

180. The Ngada festival, recently seen in the news, is considered the most important festival for which one of the following tribes?

- (a) Konyak
(b) Toda

- (c) Bhutia
(d) Rengma Naga
181. Tato-I Hydroelectric Project, recently seen in the news, will be located in which State?
(a) Arunachal Pradesh
(b) Assam
(c) Punjab
(d) Odisha
182. With reference to the Eklavya Online Digital Platform, consider the following statements:
1. It is an initiative of the Indian army.
2. It has been developed by the Bhaskaracharya National Institute of Space Applications and Geoinformatics.
3. It enables the army officers to get domain specialisation in the field of their choice.
How many of the above statements are correct?
(a) Only one
(b) Only two
(c) All three
(d) None
183. Consider the following statements about the new type of moiré superconductor
1. The superconductivity in the material arises from the interaction between electrons in the twisted graphene layers.
2. The new type of moiré superconductor is made up of twisted graphene layers.
3. The material exhibits robust superconductivity at low temperatures.
Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
(a) 1 and 2
(b) 1 and 3
(c) 2 and 3
(d) All three
184. Which among the following best describes 'Sabal-20', recently seen in the news?
(a) a space exploration rover
(b) an amphibious vehicle for disaster management
(c) a high-altitude weather monitoring balloon
(d) an aerial logistics drone
185. Consider the following statements regarding the 'Bal Vivah Mukh Bharat' Campaign, recently seen in the news:
1. It was launched by the Union Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment.
2. The campaign will call on every State and Union Territory to devise an action plan aimed at reducing the child marriage rates below 5% by 2029.
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
186. Consider the following statements regarding the Jarawa Tribe:
1. They are an indigenous tribe which lives in the Nicobar group of islands.
2. At present, their number ranges a few hundred individuals.
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
187. SAREX-24, recently in news, is a:
(a) tribal festival conducted in the North Eastern state of India
(b) multilateral maritime exercise
(c) annual TB awareness campaign of World Health Organisation
(d) Indian Coast Guard's maritime exercise
188. Consider the following statements regarding the Surface Hydrokinetic Turbine (SHKT) technology:
1. It uses kinetic energy of flowing water with practically zero potential

head for generation of electrical energy.

2. It is helpful in meeting round-the-clock renewable energy in areas with poor grid accessibility.

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

189. What makes peatlands significant for climate regulation?

- (a) High rates of methane emissions due to decomposition
(b) Ability to sequester more carbon than all the world's forests combined
(c) Exclusive role as carbon emitters during degradation
(d) Capacity to purify water without affecting carbon cycles

190. Consider the following statements regarding the Places of Worship (Special Provisions) Act, 1991:

1. It is a law to prohibit the conversion of any place of worship and maintain its religious character as it existed on 15 August 1947.
2. It does not apply to an ancient and historical monument, or an archaeological site covered by the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains Act, 1958.

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

191. With reference to Global Matchmaking Platform, consider the following:

1. It is designed to fast-track the decarbonisation of heavy-emitting industries in emerging and developing economies.

2. It was conceptualized during the 28th United Nations Climate Change conference (COP28).

3. Its secretariat is hosted by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

192. What is the primary objective of MACE in Ladakh?

- (a) To promote organic farming in Ladakh
(b) To develop climate-resilient agricultural practices
(c) To increase agricultural productivity in Ladakh
(d) To promote eco-tourism in Ladakh

193. Consider the following statements about the PM JANMAN Yojana

1. The scheme aims to provide basic facilities to Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs) only.
2. PM JANMAN stands for Pradhan Mantri Janjati Adivasi Nyaya Maha Abhiyan.

Choose the incorrect statements:

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

194. Consider the following statements regarding the National Mission on Natural Farming (NMNF):

1. It aims to promote chemical-free farming practices.
2. The mission involves establishing Bio-input Resource Centres (BRCs) across India.
3. Real-time geo-tagged monitoring of clusters is enabled through an online portal.

Which of the above statements are correct?

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

195. Consider the following statements regarding the Gelephu Mindfulness City (GMC), recently seen in the news:

- 1. It is an innovative urban development project that integrates economic growth with mindfulness, holistic living, and sustainability.
- 2. It is located in the south-central part of Bhutan along the border with India in Assam.

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

196. Consider the following statements regarding the National Gopal Ratna Award:

- 1. It is distributed in the field of livestock and dairy sector in India.
- 2. It is given on the occasion of National Milk Day.

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

197. Which of the following is a key ecological significance of the Thrissur-Ponnani Kole Wetlands?

- (a) It is a major stopover for birds along the Central Asian Flyway.
- (b) It provides 40% of Kerala's fish requirement.
- (c) It prevents saline intrusion into the Arabian Sea.
- (d) It is located in the Western Ghats Biosphere Reserve.

198. Consider the following statements regarding the CBSE Merit Scholarship Scheme for Single Girl Child:

- 1. The applicant should be the single girl child of her parents and be an Indian national.
- 2. Students who are selected for the scholarship will receive an amount of ₹500/- per month from class 6 to 12.

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

199. Narasapuram lace craft, recently secured Geographical Indication (GI) tag, is from:

- (a) Andhra Pradesh
- (b) Tripura
- (c) Punjab
- (d) Uttarakhand

200. Consider the following statements about Lachit Borphukan

- 1. Lachit Borphukan was a renowned military general of the Ahom Kingdom in the 17th century.
- 2. He is best known for his victory over the Mughal Empire in the Battle of Saraighat in 1671.
- 3. Lachit Borphukan was also a skilled diplomat and strategist who played a key role in maintaining the independence of the Ahom Kingdom.

How many of the statements given above are correct?

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

201. Consider the following statements regarding the STARS Program (Strengthening Teaching-Learning and Results for States):

- 1. It is funded by the World Bank and managed by the Ministry of Education.

2. The Program is a part of the Samagra Shiksha scheme.
 3. The program emphasizes skill-based education in schools.
- Which of the above statements is/are correct?
- (a) 1 and 2 only
 - (b) 1 and 3 only
 - (c) 2 and 3 only
 - (d) 1, 2, and 3
202. Consider the following statements:
1. It is a small mid-altitude lake situated in Srinagar, Jammu and Kashmir.
 2. It is surrounded by the Pir Panjal mountains.
 3. It is popular for the floating market where vendors have their own wooden boats and approach tourists.
- The above statements correctly describe which one of the following lakes?
- (a) Pangong Lake
 - (b) Bhimtal Lake
 - (c) Renuka Lake
 - (d) Dal Lake
203. Consider the following statements regarding the Dibang Multi-Purpose Hydro Power Project:
1. It is a flood control cum hydroelectric power project to be developed on the Dibang River in Arunachal Pradesh.
 2. The project envisages the construction of the highest Concrete-Gravity Dam of 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
204. Jobs at Your Doorstep report, recently in news, is prepared by:
- (a) World Economic Forum
 - (b) UNESCO
 - (c) International Labour Organisation
 - (d) World Bank
205. Consider the following statements regarding the 'Project Veer Gatha':
1. It is a joint initiative of the Union Ministry of Defence and Ministry of Education.
 2. It aims to disseminate the inspiring tales of selfless sacrifice and courage of the Gallantry Awardees among the students.
- 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
206. With reference to Compressed Biogas, consider the following:
1. It is the a of biogas devoid of impurities like carbon dioxide and hydrogen sulphide.
 2. It has calorific value much more than the Compressed Natural Gas.
 3. It helps India in reducing import of natural gas and crude.
- Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
- (a) 1 and 2
 - (b) 1 and 3
 - (c) 2 and 3
 - (d) All three
207. Nafithromycin, recently in news, is:
- (a) An antibiotic
 - (b) An invasive species
 - (c) A new TB drug
 - (d) A nano fertilizer
208. Consider the following statements regarding Solar Energy Corporation of India (SECI) Ltd:
1. It is the leading Central Public Sector Undertaking (CPSU) dedicated to the development and expansion of Renewable Energy (RE) capacity in India.
 2. It serves as an implementing agency for the development of renewable energy projects as part of fulfilling

India's Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs).

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

209. With reference to ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting-Plus (ADMM-Plus), consider the following:

1. It was established to strengthen security and defence cooperation in the region.
2. The inaugural ADMM-Plus was convened in Hanoi, Vietnam.
3. India is not a member of this initiative.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

210. Consider the following statements about Global Alliance Against Hunger and Poverty

1. The Global Alliance Against Hunger and Poverty is an international initiative launched by the United Nations.
2. The alliance aims to eradicate hunger and poverty worldwide by 2030.
3. India is a founding member of the Global Alliance Against Hunger and Poverty.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

211. Recently rock-cut footprints, human figure dating back to Megalithic period unearthed

at Kanhirapail in which of the following state?

- (a) Tamilnadu
- (b) Andhra Pradesh
- (c) Karnataka
- (d) Kerala

212. Consider the following statements about Viksit Bharat Initiative for Student Innovation and Outreach Network (VISION)

1. The initiative is aimed at nurturing education, skill development, and innovation among underprivileged children.
2. It is an initiative of Skill Ministry of Indian government.

Choose the correct statements:

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

213. Climate Change Performance Index, recently in news, is published by:

- (a) World Economic Forum
- (b) Germanwatch
- (c) United Nations Environment Programme
- (d) World Wildlife Fund

214. Consider the following statements regarding the Ustad Bismillah Khan Yuva Puraskar:

1. It was instituted by the Sangeet Natak Akademi.
2. It is given annually to outstanding young artists in the fields of music, dance and drama.

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

215. Consider the following statements regarding the Artificial Intelligence (AI) data bank:

1. It aims to propel innovation and boosting the India's national security.

2. It will provide a diverse datasets essential for creating scalable and inclusive AI solutions to researchers and developers.

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

216. Which of the following features distinguishes the PM Vidyalaxmi Scheme?

- (a) Collateral-free education loans with a 50% government credit guarantee
- (b) Eligibility for all higher education institutions in India
- (c) Exclusively supports foreign education for meritorious students
- (d) Interest subvention for families with an annual income up to ₹8 lakhs

217. Consider the following statements regarding Aquaculture:

- 1. It is the propagation and husbandry of aquatic plants, animals, and other organisms for commercial, recreational, and scientific purposes.
- 2. Globally, aquaculture already supplies more than half of all seafood consumed by humans.

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

218. Consider the following statements regarding the Bhu-Neer Portal:

- 1. It has been developed by Central Ground Water Authority in collaboration with the National Informatics Centre.
- 2. It is designed to provide comprehensive details regarding the legal framework governing groundwater extraction 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

219. Which of the following is the India's first indigenous antibiotic

- (a) Ciprofloxacin
- (b) Ofloxacin
- (c) Cefoperazone
- (d) Nafithromycin

ANSWER KEYS

1	C	51	B	101	C	151	C	201	D
2	D	52	C	102	C	152	D	202	D
3	B	53	C	103	A	153	C	203	C
4	D	54	D	104	D	154	A	204	D
5	B	55	C	105	C	155	C	205	C
6	D	56	D	106	A	156	B	206	B
7	C	57	B	107	D	157	D	207	A
8	C	58	C	108	A	158	B	208	C
9	C	59	C	109	A	159	B	209	A
10	B	60	D	110	B	160	D	210	B
11	A	61	B	111	D	161	C	211	D
12	D	62	B	112	D	162	D	212	A
13	A	63	C	113	A	163	B	213	B
14	A	64	D	114	D	164	B	214	C
15	A	65	C	115	B	165	A	215	C
16	D	66	D	116	B	166	A	216	D
17	B	67	D	117	D	167	B	217	C
18	A	68	D	118	C	168	D	218	C
19	C	69	C	119	B	169	C	219	D
20	A	70	C	120	D	170	A		
21	C	71	A	121	D	171	B		
22	D	72	B	122	B	172	C		
23	C	73	D	123	C	173	D		
24	A	74	C	124	B	174	B		
25	A	75	B	125	C	175	D		
26	A	76	C	126	C	176	C		
27	C	77	B	127	D	177	C		
28	C	78	C	128	A	178	A		
29	B	79	D	129	B	179	B		
30	A	80	A	130	C	180	D		
31	C	81	C	131	C	181	A		
32	C	82	B	132	D	182	C		
33	C	83	C	133	B	183	B		
34	A	84	C	134	B	184	D		
35	D	85	A	135	B	185	B		
36	A	86	A	136	B	186	B		
37	A	87	C	137	C	187	D		
38	C	88	B	138	A	188	C		
39	D	89	D	139	A	189	B		
40	D	90	D	140	A	190	C		
41	B	91	C	141	C	191	A		
42	B	92	C	142	B	192	B		
43	D	93	B	143	A	193	D		
44	D	94	C	144	A	194	D		
45	B	95	A	145	C	195	C		
46	A	96	D	146	A	196	C		
47	A	97	B	147	C	197	A		
48	D	98	C	148	D	198	A		
49	B	99	C	149	B	199	A		
50	C	100	A	150	B	200	C		

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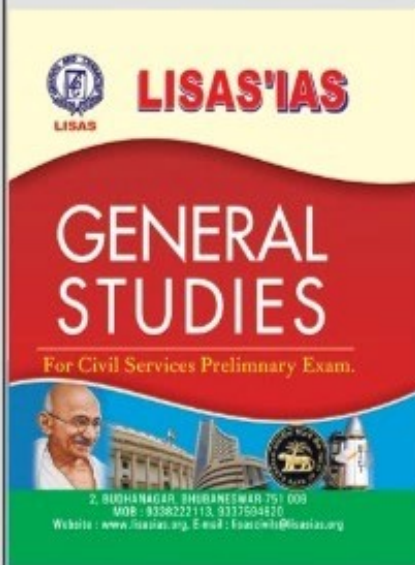
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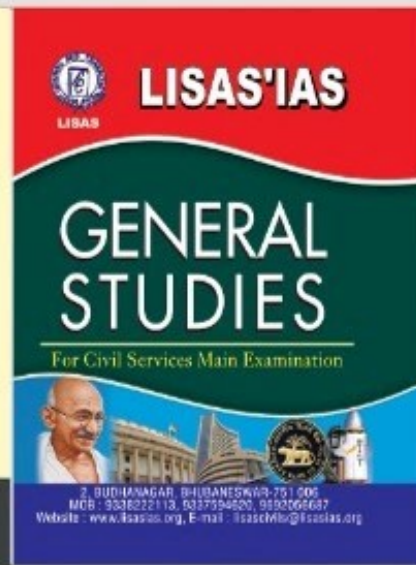
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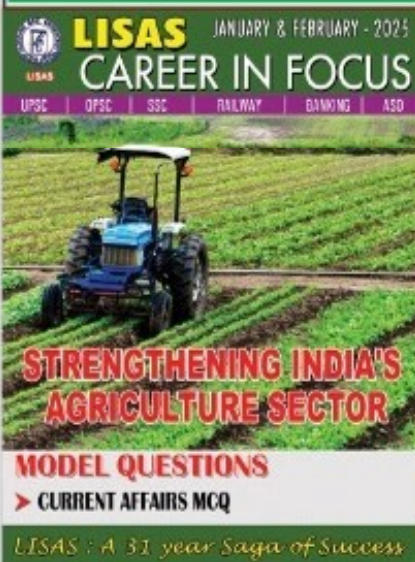


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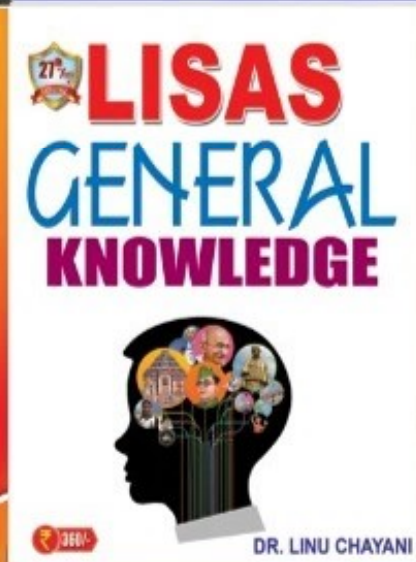
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