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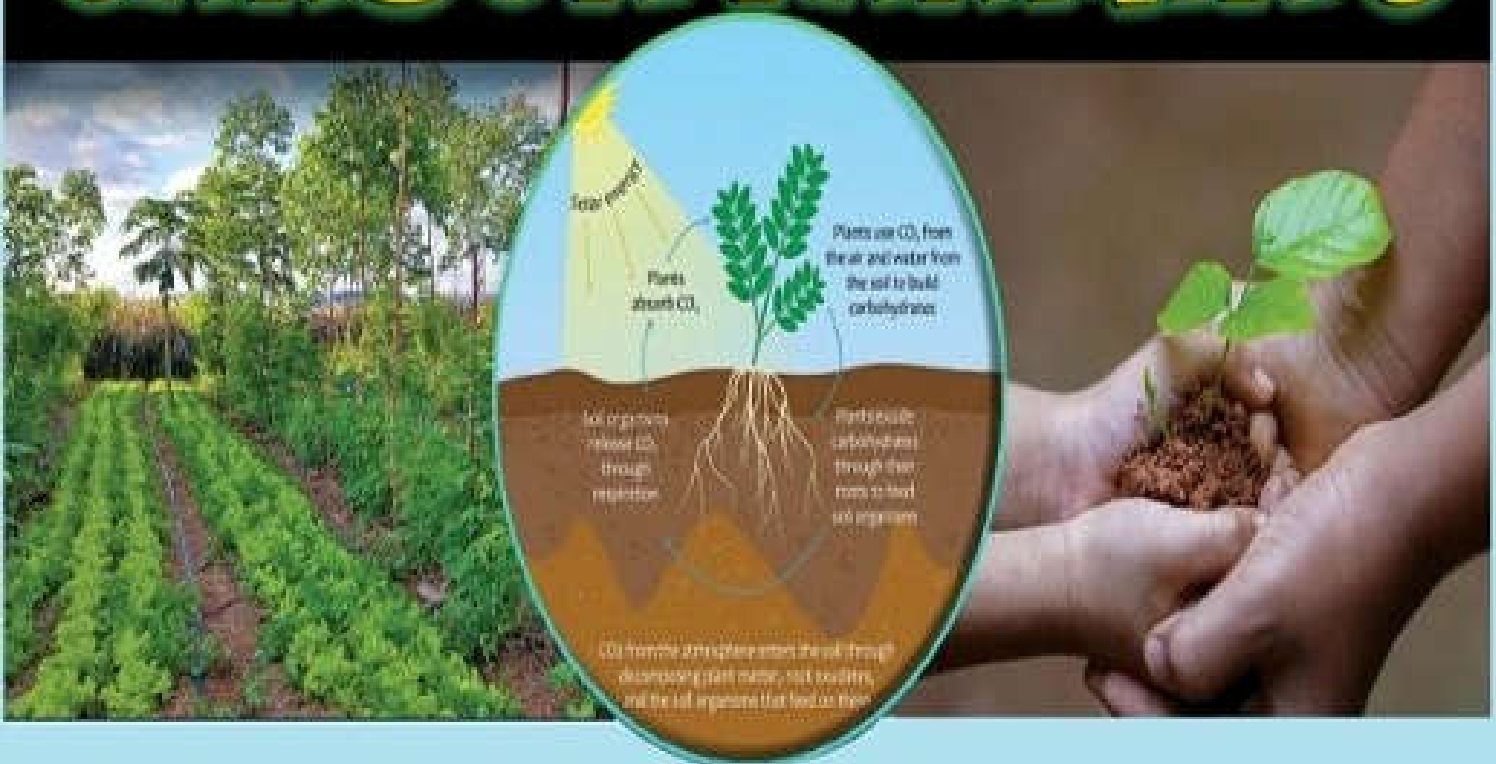
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CARBON FARMING



MODEL QUESTIONS

➤ CURRENT AFFAIRS MCQ

LISAS : A 31 year Saga of Success

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Message from the Editor



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Dear students,

In this edition of **“LISAS CAREER IN FOCUS”**, we continue our endeavour to improve your knowledge on different topics of Current Affairs which will be helpful for your preparation for the Competitive Exams.

It is not a difficult task to crack competitive exams., if you prepare for them following proper procedures. While dealing with different topics we have tried to make you learn the techniques of analyzing facts in a critical manner. You must try for perfection in all the subjects. When perfection is the final destination, success will be a mere milestone for you to achieve.

Dr. Linu Chayani

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- **Migration: Trends, Challenges And Solutions**
- **Carbon Farming: A Pathway To Sustainable Agriculture**
- **Empowering Women, Elevating India**
- **India's Global Rise And Regional Retreat**
- **India's Trade Dynamics**
- **India's Arctic Expedition**
- **Fixing India's Food Systems**

➤ World Affairs	35
➤ National Affairs	39
➤ India & the World	47
➤ Business and Economy	53
➤ Science and Technology	56
➤ Sports	60
➤ Awards	62
➤ Miscellaneous	63
➤ Match Point	66
➤ MCQ on Current Affairs	68

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ISSUES OF THE MONTH

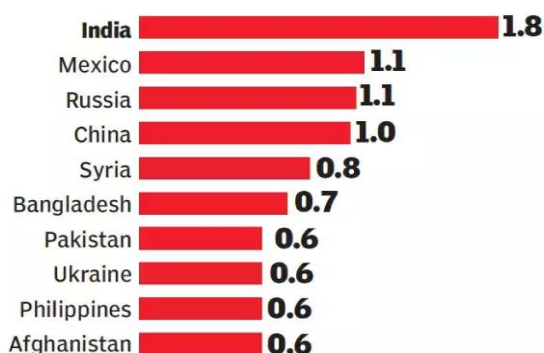
MIGRATION: TRENDS, CHALLENGES AND SOLUTIONS

The latest World Migration Report, released by the International Organization for Migration, confirms that migration from India to the UAE, the US, and Saudi Arabia ranks among the top 10 country-to-country migration corridors and male emigration from India constitutes nearly 65% of total external migration, indicating that men often migrate for work while women tend to stay behind.

In 2020, approximately 18 million people from India were living outside their country of birth, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), the United States (US), and Saudi Arabia host the largest Indian diaspora, both internal migration within the country and migration to other countries are typically driven by the pursuit of improved livelihoods.

MORE INDIAN EXPATS THAN PAK, B'DESH COMBINED

(Immigrant popn, 2020, crore)



Meaning of Migration

- As per the International Organization for Migration's definition, a migrant is an

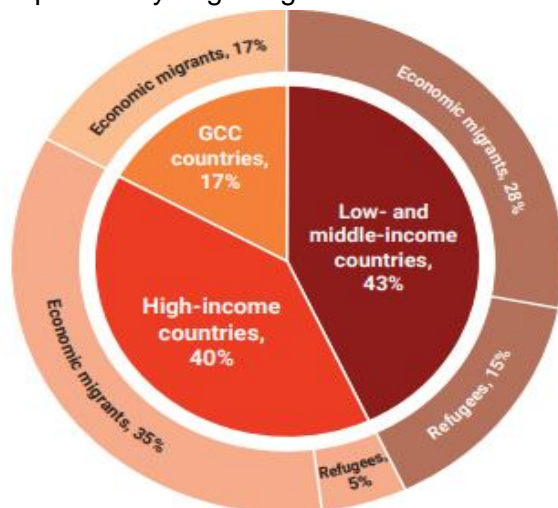
individual who is relocating or has relocated across an international boundary or within a state, departing from their usual place of residence.

■ Forms and Patterns of Migration:

- **Internal migration:** It occurs within a country, and can be categorised based on origin and destination, encompassing rural-urban migration, intra-state, and inter-state migration.
- **External Migration:** It also known as international migration, involves individuals or families moving from one country to another and can be driven by various factors, including economic opportunities (Indian IT professionals in the US or construction workers in GCC nations), education, family reunification, or seeking asylum from persecution or conflict (Rohingya in Bangladesh)
- Emigration from India to various parts of the world.
- Immigration of people from different countries to India.
- **Forced migration:** It occurs when individuals or families are compelled to move due to factors like war, persecution, or natural disasters.
- **Voluntary migration:** It involves individuals or families choosing to relocate, often driven by better economic prospects or a desire for an improved quality of life.
- **Temporary migration:** It is intended to be of short duration, such as seasonal or temporary work, whereas permanent

migration involves settling permanently in a new location.

- **Reverse migration:** It refers to individuals or families returning to their country of origin or original place of residence after previously migrating elsewhere.



What are the Various Reasons for Migration?

▪ **Economic Factors:**

- **Push Factors:** Economic difficulties like poverty, low productivity, and joblessness serve as push factors and make people want to leave where they are currently living, for example, farmers in Maharashtra facing low yields due to recurring droughts might migrate to cities like Pune or Mumbai for construction or service sector jobs.
- **Pull Factors:** On the other hand, prospects for better jobs, higher pay, and a better quality of life act as pull factors and attract people to move to a different place, for example, A young graduate from a village in Uttar Pradesh might migrate to Noida/Gurugram for a software development job due to the higher salary and the opportunity for a better life in the city.

▪ **Socio-cultural Factors:**

- Migration can be influenced by social factors such as marriage, family

reunification, or the desire to be closer to one's community or social network.

- Examples include migration due to marriage or to escape caste-based discrimination and violence.

▪ **Cultural factors Preservation:**

- People may migrate to areas where their cultural practices, traditions, and beliefs are respected and preserved.
- For example, a community might move to a region where there is a strong presence of their ethnic or religious group, allowing them to maintain their cultural identity.

▪ **Political Factors:**

- Political instability, conflicts, and persecution can force individuals to migrate in search of safety and security.
- Factors such as government policies, administrative actions, and separatist movements can also influence migration patterns.

▪ **Environmental Factors:**

- Natural disasters, climate change impacts, deforestation, water scarcity, etc. can lead to migration by causing loss of homes, livelihoods, and resources.
- As a result, affected populations may be compelled to migrate in search of safety, sustainability, and improved living conditions.
- Some estimates suggest that India could experience significant migration of around 45 million people by 2050 due to the impacts of climate Change.
- **Developmental Projects:** Projects like the Narmada Dam Project and the Ken Betwa River Linking Project lead to migration.

- For Example, Sardar Sarovar Project, a large multipurpose river project on river Narmada has displaced more than 40,000 families, primarily tribals from the 245 villages spread over three states of Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra.

source of foreign exchange for the source region.

- In 2022, India was the largest recipient of remittances, receiving over \$111 billion, which helped narrow the country's current account deficit.

Push-factors Countries of origin	Migrants	Pull-factors Countries of destination
⇒ Population growth, young age structure ⇒ Inadequate educational institutions, medicare and social security	Demographic factors and social infrastructure	⇒ Stable population, population decline, demographic ageing ⇒ Welfare state benefits, educational institutions, medicare, social security
⇒ Unemployment, low wages ⇒ Poverty, low consumption and living standard	Economic factors	⇒ Labour demand, high wages ⇒ Welfare, high consumption and living standard
⇒ Dictatorships, shadow democracy, bad governance, political upheaval ⇒ Conflict, (civil) war, terrorism, human rights violation, oppression of minorities	Political factors	⇒ Democracy, rule of law, pluralism, political stability ⇒ Peace, security, protection of human and civil rights, protection of minorities
⇒ Ecologic disaster, desertification, lack of natural resources, water shortage, soil erosion, lack of environmental policy	Ecological factors	⇒ Better environment, environmental policy, protection of natural resources and environmental protection
⇒ Decisions of the family or the clan ⇒ Information flows, media,	Migrant flows and migrant stocks	⇒ Diaspora, ethnic community ⇒ Information flows, media, transferred picture of

What are the Various Impacts Associated With Migration?

▪ **Positive Impacts:**

○ **Economic Growth:**

- Migration can contribute to economic growth by filling labour gaps, boosting productivity, and increasing consumer spending.
- Migration results in remittances from migrants, which serve as a significant

○ **Social Impact:**

- Migrants act as agents of social change, facilitating the spread of new ideas and technologies, such as family planning and education, from urban to rural areas.
- **cultural diversity:**
- Migration also fosters cultural diversity and contributes to the evolution of composite cultures, broadening people's perspectives.
- Migration enriches societies by bringing multiple languages, and traditions, fostering creativity and tolerance.

- **Improving Quality of Life:**
- Migration increases employment opportunities and economic well-being, thereby enhancing the overall quality of life for migrants.
- **Innovation:**
- Migrants often bring new ideas, skills, and technologies, driving innovation and entrepreneurship in host countries.
- **Labor Market Flexibility:**
- Migration can help balance labour supply and demand, particularly in sectors facing shortages of skilled workers.
- **Negative Impacts:**
- **Demographic Impact:**
- Migration causes population redistribution within a country, particularly contributing to urban population growth, however, selective out-migration from rural areas can negatively affect and leads to feminization of agriculture, particularly in terms of age and skill distribution.
- **Environmental Impact:**
- Rural-urban migration leads to overcrowding in urban areas, straining existing infrastructure and resulting in unplanned urban growth and the emergence of slums. For example, Mumbai's massive slum population, estimated at over half the city's residents, is a direct result of rural-urban migration.
- Increased traffic congestion and dependence on informal waste disposal due to unplanned settlements contribute significantly to air and soil pollution in Indian cities.
- **Social Tensions:**
- Migration may exacerbate social tensions, including competition for jobs, housing, and social services, as well as cultural clashes and discrimination.

- Migration can lead to family separation, emotional distress, and disruption of social networks, particularly when family members are left behind in sending countries.

What are the Different Statistics on Migration in India?

- **Migration in India Report 2020-21:**
- The Ministry of Statistics and Program Implementation's report in June 2022 compiled data for temporary visitors and migrants, around 0.7% of the population was recorded as temporary visitors from July 2020 to June 2021.
- The all-India migration rate was 28.9% for the same period, with rates of 26.5% in rural and 34.9% in urban areas.
- The female migration rate stood at 47.9%, with 48% in rural and 47.8% in urban areas and the male migration rate was 10.7%, with 5.9% in rural and 22.5% in urban areas.
- 86.8% of female migrants migrated for marriage, while 49.6% of male migrants moved in search of employment.
- **2011 Census:**
- India had approximately 45.36 crore internal migrants, accounting for 37% of the population.
- Annual net migrant flows represented about 1% of the working-age population and the country's workforce was estimated to be 48.2 crores, surpassing 50 crores by 2016.
- **Report of the Working Group on Migration, 2017:**
- 17 districts accounted for the top 25% of India's total male out-migration, with ten in Uttar Pradesh, six in Bihar, and one in Odisha.

What are the Various Challenges Associated with the Migration in India?

- **Inadequate Social Security and Health Benefits:** Migrant workers often lack access to essential social security and healthcare benefits and the enforcement of minimum safety standards laws in workplaces, exposing them to unsafe working conditions. For example, migrant construction workers in urban areas might lack access to proper safety equipment, increasing their vulnerability to accidents and injuries.
- Based on the 2021-2022 Periodic Labour Force Survey, over half (53%) of regularly employed non-agricultural workers in India lack social security benefits, encompassing migrant workers, self-employed individuals, and those working from home.
- **Limited Portability of State-provided Benefits:** Migrant workers face difficulties in accessing state-provided benefits, particularly essential food supplies distributed through the public distribution system (PDS). For example, migrant agricultural labourers may struggle to access subsidised food grains in their destination states due to residency requirements.
- **Scarcity of Affordable Housing and Basic Amenities:** Migrant workers migrating to urban areas often confront challenges in securing affordable housing and accessing basic amenities such as clean water, sanitation facilities, and electricity. This lack of access to adequate housing and infrastructure contributes to their vulnerability and perpetuates cycles of poverty.
- **Impacts of the COVID-19 Pandemic:** The COVID-19 pandemic has compounded the challenges faced by migrant workers. For example, migrant

daily wage labourers stranded in urban centres during lockdowns faced acute hardships due to loss of income and lack of access to essential services.

- **Exploitation and Discrimination:** Migrant workers are often subject to exploitation and discrimination in the labour market and they may endure wage theft, hazardous working conditions, and discrimination based on their migrant status, ethnicity, or language.
- There have been instances of migrant workers facing violence and discrimination in Maharashtra, including those from Bihar.
- The 2008 attacks on Uttar Pradesh and Bihari migrants in Maharashtra is a horrific example.

What are the Government Initiatives Regarding Migration?

- Initiatives like the draft National Migrant Labour policy prepared by NITI Aayog in 2021 discuss the importance of collective action to help migrants bargain for better conditions.
- Additionally, the One Nation One Ration Card (ONORC) project has been expanded, along with the introduction of the Affordable Rental Housing Complexes (ARHC) and the PM GaribKalyanYojna scheme.
- The launch of the e-Shram portal also brings promise to the migrant's status.
- The code on Social Security provides certain benefits for inter-state migrant workers such as Insurance and provident fund.
- **International Migration and Global Action:**
- In 2016 the United Nations General Assembly convened a high-level plenary meeting on addressing large movements of refugees and prepared the report "Safety

and Dignity: Addressing Large Movements of Refugees and Migrants”.

- United Nations member states adopted the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants, which commits to protect the safety, dignity, human rights and fundamental freedoms of all migrants, regardless of their migratory status.
- As a result of the New York Declaration, UN Member States agreed to cooperate in the elaboration of a Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration, adopted at an intergovernmental conference on international migration in December 2018 in Morocco.
- Every year, 8th December is celebrated as International Migrants Day.

What Needs to be Done to Tackle the Challenges of Migration?

- **Incorporating comprehensive social security measures:**
 - **Providing Basic Amenities:** Ensure the protection of migrants' rights, including access to housing, healthcare, education, and employment, regardless of their migration status. Schemes like PradhanMantriAwasYojana (Urban) Mission for providing housing facilities in urban areas, and One Nation One Ration Card to fulfil the integrated food requirements of migrants.
 - **Integration and Inclusion:** Promote integration and inclusion of migrants into society, fostering social cohesion and minimising discrimination and xenophobia.
- **Skill Development & Job Creation:** Investing in rural skilling

initiatives to enhance employability and create job opportunities in villages can reduce the need for migration for work. Schemes like Skill India Mission, and PradhanMantriKaushalVikashYojana can help to empower migrants.

- **Counter Magnet Cities:** By investing in infrastructure, amenities, and economic opportunities in regional cities, governments should aim to promote balanced regional development and reduce pressure on major urban hubs by offering employment opportunities, affordable housing, quality education, healthcare facilities, and a better standard of living.
- By dispersing population growth across multiple cities, rather than concentrating it in a few, counter-magnet cities help alleviate congestion, reduce strain on resources, and ease the burden on infrastructure in overpopulated areas.
- **Labour Market Policies:** Develop labour market policies that safeguard the rights of migrant workers, including fair wages, safe working conditions, and access to social security benefits.

Regulation and Worker Protection: Strictly enforce labour laws to protect migrant workers from exploitation. This includes ensuring fair wages, safe working conditions, and proper grievance redressed mechanisms.

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CARBON FARMING: A PATHWAY TO SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE

In light of escalating environmental concerns and the pressing need for climate-resilient agricultural practices, carbon farming has emerged as a crucial mechanism within the agriculture sector globally.

Carbon, present in all living organisms and numerous minerals, serves as a cornerstone of life on earth, exerting significant influence over diverse processes such as photosynthesis and respiration; farming involves caring for the land, growing crops, and raising animals for food.

Carbon Farming

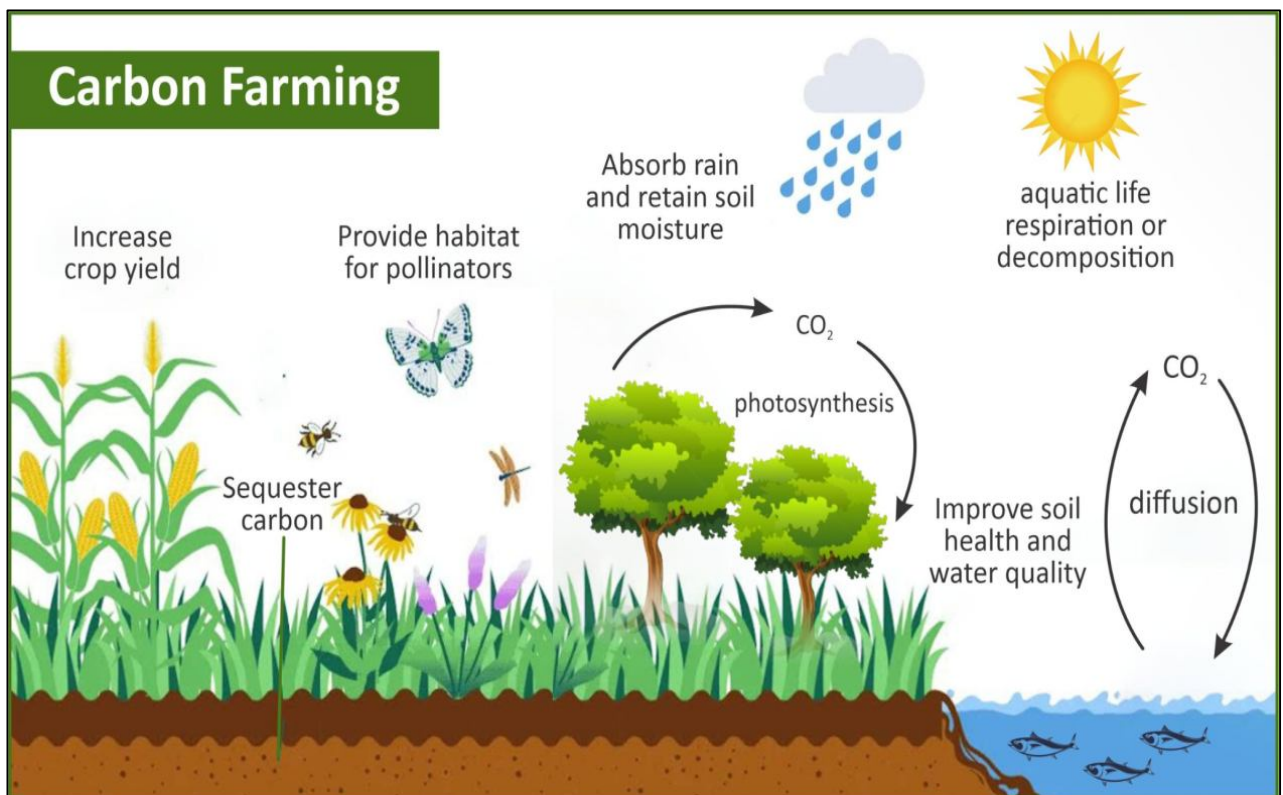
- Carbon farming represents a strategic approach aimed at maximising **carbon**

sequestration and employing agricultural practices designed to enhance the absorption of carbon dioxide (**CO₂**) from the atmosphere while facilitating its retention in both **plant biomass** and **soil organic matter**.

- This process requires **careful planning, monitoring, and adaptation to local conditions** to maximise its effectiveness in mitigating climate change.

Significance of Carbon Farming

- Climate Change Mitigation:** Carbon farming is pivotal in the fight against climate change by sequestering



carbon in soil and curbing greenhouse gas emissions.

- **Soil Health Enhancement:** By nurturing healthy soil, carbon farming bolsters water retention, diminishes erosion, and boosts nutrient availability, resulting in amplified crop yields and agricultural productivity.
- Converting organic waste into compost, which can be used as a soil amendment to improve soil structure, fertility, and carbon content.
- **Biodiversity Enrichment:** Carbon farming fosters biodiversity by fostering intricate ecosystems in agricultural settings, attracting beneficial insects and pollinators that fortify crop health and lessen dependence on pesticides.
- **Economic Opportunities:** Implementation of carbon farming practices opens avenues for farmers to tap into carbon credit markets, alongside potentially augmented yields from enriched soil, thus diversifying income streams and bolstering financial resilience.

Techniques Involved in Carbon Farming

▪ Forest Management

- Healthy forests absorb and hold carbon dioxide emissions produced from other sources and are an important source of greenhouse gas (GHG) sequestration. Carbon offsets can be created through a variety of strategies including, avoiding deforestation and permanent land conservation, reforestation and replanting activities, and improved forest management.
- Agroforestry not only sequesters carbon but also provides additional sources of income for farmers and deforestation contributes to 15-20% of the rise in greenhouse gas levels globally, activities to address this include managing forests by

thinning them out, selectively harvesting trees, encouraging regrowth, planting new trees, and using fertilisers to help forests grow in a productive and sustainable way.

▪ Grasslands Conservation

- Native grasses and other vegetation provide a natural source of greenhouse gas (GHG) absorption and sequestration.
- Carbon offsets from this category focus on maintaining native plant life through permanent land conservation and avoiding conversion for commercial development or intensive agriculture.

▪ Renewable Energy Production

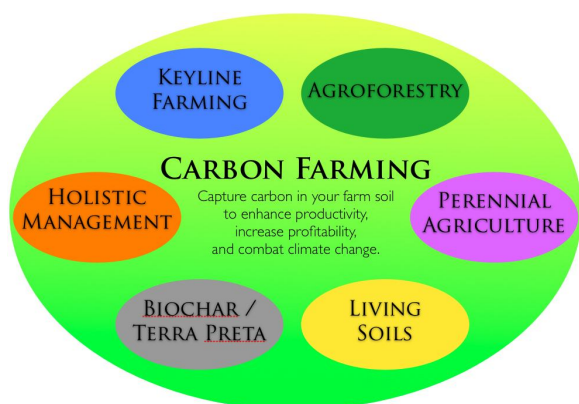
- Renewable energy facilities such as wind or solar, generate carbon offsets by displacing fossil fuel-based electricity production sources within the power grid.
- The carbon offsets derived from a certified third-party project generates the carbon credit, which is owned by the entity that develops the project.

▪ Conservation Agriculture Techniques

- Methods like zero tillage, crop rotation, cover cropping, and crop residue management minimise soil disruption while fostering organic matter accumulation.
- Planting cover crops during fallow periods to protect and enrich the soil, enhance biodiversity, and sequester carbon.

▪ Rotational Grazing

- It entails periodically relocating livestock to new pastures, this practice allows previously grazed areas to rejuvenate, minimising erosion and fostering robust regrowth.
- The flourishing vegetation, in return, absorbs carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and sequesters it in the soil through photosynthesis.



Techniques of Carbon Farming

Role of Mangrove in Carbon Sequestration

▪ Carbon Storage:

- Mangroves store large amounts of carbon in their above-ground biomass, below-ground roots, and organic-rich sediments.
- The dense vegetation and slow decomposition rates of organic matter in mangrove soils result in substantial carbon accumulation over time.

▪ Blue Carbon Ecosystem:

- Mangroves are part of the "blue carbon" ecosystem, which refers to the carbon stored in coastal and marine habitats like mangroves, sea grasses, and salt marshes.
- Despite covering less than 0.1% of the Earth's surface, mangroves sequester and store a disproportionately high amount of carbon compared to other ecosystems.

Potential Opportunities for Carbon Farming in India

- **Economic Opportunity:** India's extensive agricultural base presents significant economic opportunities through the adoption of carbon farming practices with an estimated potential of \$63 billion from approximately 170 million hectares of arable land.
- **Carbon Credit Systems:** Implementation of carbon credit systems can offer additional income streams to Indian

farmers by recognising their contributions to environmental services.

- Agricultural soils in India have the potential to sequester 3-8 billion tonnes of CO₂ equivalent annually over 20-30 years, thus providing opportunities for farmers to participate in carbon trading markets.
- **Regional Suitability:** Different regions of India offer varying degrees of suitability for carbon farming initiatives.
- The fertile plains of the Indo-Gangetic region and the expansive Deccan Plateau are particularly favourable for implementing carbon farming practices.
- However, regions such as the Himalayan foothills and coastal areas face specific challenges, including mountainous terrain and salinisation, which may require tailored approaches to carbon farming implementation.

Global Carbon Farming Initiatives:

- **Carbon Trading:** In certain nations such as the US, Australia, New Zealand, and Canada, voluntary carbon markets are emerging.
- These platforms enable farmers to earn extra income by engaging in verified carbon sequestration endeavours, thereby encouraging the uptake of carbon farming techniques.
- **Other Global Efforts:** Initiatives like the '4 per 1000' initiative.
- Kenya's Agricultural Carbon Project (backed by the World Bank) was introduced at the 2015 United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP21) in Paris.
- Australia's Carbon Farming Initiative, advocate for carbon farming on a global scale.
- **India's Legal Framework:** The Government of India passed an amendment in 2022 to the Energy

Conservation Act 2001, which lays the foundation for the Indian Carbon Market. Following this, the Council On Energy, Environment And Water (CEEW) conducted an industry stakeholder discussion to understand their concerns and perspectives.

- This issue briefly deconstructs the two key typologies of carbon markets – project-based/offset and Emission Trading Scheme (ETS) markets and outlines their key features that determine their environmental integrity and functional boundaries.

Challenges Associated to Carbon Farming

- **Soil Composition:** Soils with poor structure or low organic matter may have limited capacity for carbon storage and may require amendments or management practices to enhance fertility and carbon sequestration potential.
- **Geographic Location:** Geographic factors like elevation, slope, and proximity to water bodies also impact land use options and agricultural productivity.
- **For example,** high-altitude regions may have limited crop options due to colder temperatures, while coastal areas may face challenges related to saltwater intrusion and soil salinity.
- **Varieties of Crops:** The selection of crop varieties suitable for specific soil types, climates, and growing seasons is critical for optimising agricultural productivity and carbon sequestration potential, varieties that are well-adapted to local conditions and resilient to pests, diseases, and extreme weather events can enhance crop yields and contribute to soil health and carbon storage.
- However, limited availability of diverse crop varieties or lack of access to improved

seeds may constrain farmers' ability to maximise carbon farming benefits.

- **Water Scarcity:** Adequate water is essential for plant growth and photosynthesis, which are fundamental processes for carbon sequestration.
- Arid regions face challenges in carbon farming due to inadequate water availability, which impedes plant growth and reduces the capacity for carbon sequestration.
- **Financial Constraints:** Small-scale farmers in developing nations like India often encounter financial barriers, struggling to afford the initial costs associated with implementing sustainable practices essential for carbon farming.
- **Limited Policy Support:** The absence of robust policy frameworks and insufficient community engagement hinder the widespread adoption of carbon farming practices, impeding its potential impact on mitigating climate change.

Strategies can be adopted to Encourage Carbon Farming

- **Legal Framework for Carbon Farming:** Enacting comprehensive carbon farming legislation can showcase the concept of creating carbon sinks on agricultural lands and this approach can address climate crises, improve agricultural sustainability, and promote equitable development.
- **Direct Incentives for Farmers:** Recognising the pivotal role of the agriculture and forestry sectors in carbon capture, it is imperative to provide direct incentives in form of tools and credit support for adopting climate-friendly practices, existing policies lack targeted tools to significantly incentivise the expansion and preservation of carbon sinks.

- **Utilising Carbon Credits and Banks:** Rewarding farmers with globally tradable carbon credits and establishing carbon banks can incentivise carbon sequestration efforts. These mechanisms can facilitate the sale of credits to corporations seeking emission offsets, thus promoting sustainable land management.
- **Collective Engagement:** A successful framework for carbon farming necessitates cohesive policies, public-private collaborations, precise quantification methods, and supportive financing mechanisms. Implementation at a scalable

level is crucial for achieving measurable carbon capture while ensuring soil health and resilience.

Unlocking Soil Potential: Soil, an overlooked climate defence, serves as a potent carbon sink. India must harness its potential to meet Net Zero goals and pursue decarbonisation.

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EMPOWERING WOMEN, ELEVATING INDIA

As India sets its sights on becoming a 'developed' nation by 2047, empowering women lies at the heart of this challenge. Women empowerment and socio-economic development go hand in hand, as development alone cannot address gender inequalities. Amartya Sen coined the term "missing women" to highlight ongoing gender disparities globally.

With women lagging behind on several parameters of well-being, India must adopt key policies to propel the country towards gender parity in socio-economic outcomes.

Key Provisions in Place for Women's Socio-economic Empowerment

▪ Constitutional Measures:

- **Article 14:** Guarantees equality before the law and equal protection of the laws, prohibiting discrimination on the basis of sex.
- **Article 15(3):** Allows the State to make special provisions for women and children.
- **Article 16:** Provides equal opportunities in matters of public employment.
- **Article 39(d):** Calls for equal pay for equal work for both men and women.
- **Article 42:** Directs the State to make provisions for ensuring just and humane conditions of work and maternity relief.

▪ Government Initiatives:

- **Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana:** Provides access to affordable credit for women entrepreneurs and self-help groups.
- **Beti Bachao Beti Padhao:** Focuses on generating awareness and improving women's welfare through education.
- **Mahila E-Haat:** An online marketing platform to support women entrepreneurs and self-help groups.

- **Mahila Shakti Kendra:** Facilitates empowerment programs and resources at the village level for skill development and entrepreneurship.
- **Working Women Hostel:** Supports safe and affordable accommodation for working women in urban areas.
- **Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana:** It ensures housing under women's names.
- **Maternity Benefit (Amendment) Act 2017:** Increased paid maternity leave to 26 weeks and mandated crèche facilities.
- **International Conventions/Agreements:**
 - **Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW):** Adopted by the UN in 1979, calls for ending discrimination and ensuring equal rights for women.
 - It was signed by India in 1980 and was ratified in 1993.
 - **Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action:** Adopted at the 1995 UN World Conference on Women, it laid out agenda areas for women's empowerment including economic participation (India is a part of it).
- **UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs):** Goal 5 aims to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls, including through economic empowerment measures by 2030.

Key Factors Hindering Women's Socio-economic Growth in India

- **Entrenched Social Norms and Patriarchal Mindsets:** Deeply ingrained social norms and patriarchal attitudes often restrict women's mobility, education, and economic opportunities.
- The preference for sons and discrimination against daughters persists in many parts of the country.

- **Example:** Son meta-preference leading to gender-biased sex selection has resulted in skewed sex ratios in states like Haryana, Punjab, etc.
- **Low Labor Force Participation:** India's female labour force participation rate is quite low at around 37% as compared to the global average of 47% (Periodic Labour Force Survey 2022-23).
- Also, India has a lower proportion of employed individuals in salaried work compared to China and Bangladesh.
- The shift away from agriculture and the prevalence of informal labour have disproportionately impacted women, with many rural women working in the informal sector.
- **Disproportionate Share of Unpaid Care Work:** Indian women bear a disproportionately higher burden of unpaid domestic and care work relative to men. This restricts their time available for education, skills development, and paid economic activities.
- Women spend nearly three times (2.8) as much of their day on unpaid care work as men (UN Women).
- **Gender Pay Gaps:** There exist significant gender pay gaps across various sectors and occupations in India.
- Women often experience discrimination in hiring, promotions (glass ceiling and glass clip), and wages compared to their male counterparts.
- In World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Index 2023, India ranks 127 out of 146 countries and has closed 64.3% of the overall gender gap.
- However, in economic participation and opportunity, the country has only achieved 36.7% parity.
- **Lack of Property Ownership and Financial Inclusion:** Despite laws granting equal inheritance rights, only about 20% of women own land or property in India. Limited asset ownership restricts women's economic bargaining power and access to credit.
- National Family Health Survey 2019-21 data shows a higher percentage of men owning property compared to women.
- Specifically, 42.3% of women and 62.5% of men own a house, while ownership of land, either solely or jointly, stands at 31.7% for women and 43.9% for men.
- **Exposure to Violence:** The high prevalence of different forms of violence against women, including domestic violence, sexual harassment, etc. impedes their freedom of movement and ability to participate safely in economic spheres.
- Over 28,000 complaints of crimes against women received in 2023 (National Commission for Women (NCW)).
- 50% of women suicide deaths were of housewives in 2021 (National Crime Records Bureau)
- **Limited Education:** As per the National Family Health Survey 2019-21, the overall female literacy rate is 71.5%, significantly lower than the male literacy rate of 84.7%.
- At the elementary school level, the gender parity index is close to 1, meaning equal enrollment of girls and boys. However, it declines at higher education levels.
- **Limited Political Participation:** Women's representation in Parliament is low - only 14.4% in the Lok Sabha and 13% in the Rajya Sabha.
- While the Nari Shakti Vandana Adhiniyam 2023 has been passed providing 33% reservation to women in Lok Sabha and State Assemblies, its implementation is still pending.

Measures can be Adopted to Promote Socio-economic Empowerment Among Women

- **Increasing Women's Labour Force Participation:** Raising women's labour force participation (LFP) rate from the current around 25% to 50% could bring India closer to an 8% GDP growth rate, according to World Bank estimates.
 - The government should focus on expanding manufacturing capacity, particularly in labour-intensive sectors such as readymade garments, footwear, and light manufacturing, where women form a large proportion of workers.
 - These labour-intensive sectors could be brought under the ambit of the Production Linked Incentive (PLI) scheme to address cost disadvantages.
 - India can also learn from Iceland's Equal Pay Certification that mandates companies prove they don't discriminate
- **Improving Access to Skilling:** There is tremendous scope to raise the number of training institutes that cater exclusively to women from the current 17% of Industrial Training Institutes (ITIs).
 - Career counselling, job placement cells embedded in training institutes, and harnessing alumni networks to activate women "role models" and mentors for female trainees may be effective tools to improve employment outcomes.
- **Enabling Women's Mobility in Urban Areas:** As India urbanizes at a rapid pace, cities must be planned with a gender lens to welcome, accommodate, and enable women's mobility.
 - With rapid demographic shifts and population aging, a high-quality, subsidized

urban care infrastructure will not only release women from care work but also create new jobs for them in this sector.

- **Clean Energy to Fuel Dream Energy :** The government could provide cash rebates to consumers at the point of purchase of clean technology along with production incentives that create new jobs in the clean energy sector.
 - Adopting such measures could help reduce the significant time burden women face in activities like cooking with inefficient, polluting fuels and make them more focused towards their goals.
 - **Developing Micro-credentialing Platforms:** Develop online platforms offering stackable micro-credentials focused on in-demand skills .
 - These bite-sized courses with the help of Generated AI can be completed flexibly, allowing women to gain relevant skills without disrupting childcare or work schedules.
 - **Women-led Supply Chain Networks:** Create government-backed initiatives that connect women-led self-help groups (SHGs) directly to large corporations and government procurement programs.
 - This provides women with a stable market for their products and services, bypassing middlemen and increasing profit margins.
- Women-led startups should also be encouraged. For example, FalguniNayar, a self-made entrepreneur, who has transformed the Indian beauty market with the founding of Nykaa, the country's first online beauty e-marketplace.

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INDIA'S GLOBAL RISE AND REGIONAL RETREAT

India's global stature has undoubtedly grown in recent decades, propelled by its economic might, military prowess, and demographic advantages. From being a prominent voice in global forums like the G-20 and participating in multilateral groups like the I2U2, India has established itself as a significant player on the world stage.

However, this global ascent is paradoxically accompanied by a concerning decline in its regional influence, particularly in South Asia, where it once held sway.

Factors Leading to India's Global Rise

- **Economic Boom** : The World Bank forecasts India's output growth to reach 7.5% in FY24, driven by resilient activity in services and industry
- This economic strength translates to global influence. For instance, Indian companies like Tata Consultancy Services are holding significant global presence.
- Strong economy also attracts higher investments as well.
- **Strategic Partnerships and Alliances**: India has actively pursued strategic partnerships and alliances with major powers, such as the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (Quad) with the United States, Japan, and Australia.
- These partnerships have helped India counter China's growing influence in the Indo-Pacific region and enhance its global standing.
- Additionally, India's participation in multilateral forums like BRICS and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization has strengthened its global presence.

- India's emergence as a Voice of the Global South has propelled it into a leadership position on the global stage.
- It is showcased through inclusion of the African Union in India's G20 presidency, and swift passage of G20 New Delhi Leaders' Declaration which was considered hard to achieve.
- **Rising Military Capabilities**: India has steadily modernized, indigenised and strengthened its military capabilities, making it a formidable force in the region and beyond.
- INS Sahyadri, LCA Tejas and INS Vikrant are prime examples of India's recently built military capabilities.
- India recently delivered the first batch of BrahMos Missile to the Philippines, giving a push to defense diplomacy.
- **Strategic Autonomy**: India's strategy of non-alignment and reformed multilateralism, such as abstaining from voting against Russia in the UNGA and providing humanitarian support to Israel while maintaining a clear diplomatic stance with Palestine, reflects its commitment to strategic autonomy and being globally applauded.
- India also subscribed to India First Policy that is visible in its purchase of Russian crude oil despite western apprehensions, keeping strategic interest on top.
- **Technological Prowess**: India's advancements in various fields of technology, particularly in information technology (IT), space exploration, and renewable energy, have played a crucial role in its global ascent.

- India's recent achievements with Chandrayaan-3 and the Aditya-L1 Mission highlight its capabilities in the space sector.
- Additionally, India's leadership in the International Solar Alliance and Global Biofuel Alliance demonstrates its commitment to promoting renewable energy.
- **Soft Power and Cultural Influence:** India's rich cultural heritage, vibrant democracy, and thriving diaspora have contributed to its soft power globally.
- Indian cinema, cuisine, yoga, and spirituality have found widespread appeal across the world.

Factors are Leading to Regional Decline of India in South Asia

- **Rise of China:** China's extensive economic investments, infrastructure projects through Belt and Road Initiative, and diplomatic initiatives in South Asia have eroded India's traditional sphere of influence in the region, leading to a relative decline in India's power and sway.
- **Low Regional Trade:** Intra-regional trade in South Asia is already among the lowest in the world. India's trade with the South Asian countries has remained roughly between 1.7% and 3.8% of its global trade.
- **Perception of Indian Hegemony:** Some smaller nations in South Asia perceive India's actions as an attempt to assert its hegemony in the region.
- This perception has led to a sense of mistrust and a desire to counterbalance India's influence through Balancing, Bargaining, Hedging and Bandwagoning strategies.
- **Strained Relations with Neighbours:** India's relations with some of its neighbours have been strained due to various factors, including border disputes,

cross-border terrorism, and water-sharing issues.

- **Internal Challenges:** India's own internal challenges, including domestic political issues, and resource constraints, have diverted attention and resources away from proactive regional engagement, contributing to its decline in influence within South Asia.

South Asia encompasses the southern part of Asia, delineated by geography and ethno-cultural factors, and includes Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka.

Main Challenges India faces with its Neighbouring Countries

- **Pakistan:** Kashmir dispute and cross-border terrorism remain the primary sources of tension between India and Pakistan.
- The Indus Water Treaty of 1960 allocates water rights from the Indus River system. However, disagreements over water sharing and infrastructure projects on the rivers remain a source of tension.
- **China:** While not strictly a South Asian nation, China's growing influence in the region impacts India. A long-standing unresolved border dispute exists between India and China, particularly over the Line of Actual Control (LAC).
- This has led to several military standoffs and tensions including the recent Galwan Valley Standoff.
- China's String of Pearls Strategy and China-Pakistan Economic Corridor is heavily contested by India.
- Also, China's recently released "standard map" that includes the state of Arunachal Pradesh and the Aksai Chin region as part of its territory has generated significant tensions.

- **Maldives:** Recent Maldivian politics has seen a campaign called "India Out," labelling Indian presence as a threat to sovereignty.
 - This campaign, coupled with a tourism strain stemming from a diplomatic dispute and China's rising influence in the Maldives, has sparked concerns about India-Maldives Relations.
- **Bangladesh:** India and Bangladesh have signed only 2 treaties out of 54 common rivers they share, including the Ganga Waters Treaty and The Kushiara River Treaty.
 - Negotiations are ongoing for major rivers like the Teesta and Feni.
 - Also, illegal migration from Bangladesh to India, involving refugees and economic migrants, remains a significant issue, straining Indian border states and raising security concerns.
- **Sri Lanka:** The India-Sri Lanka relationship faces challenges such as tensions regarding ownership of Katchatheevu Island, concerns about border security and smuggling.
 - It also includes sensitivity surrounding the Tamil minority issue in Sri Lanka, and India's apprehensions about China's growing influence in Sri Lanka (especially through Hambantota Port).
- **Nepal:** Although relations have improved recently, some lingering issues persist.
 - It includes Boundary disputes, especially regarding the Kalapani-Limpiyadhura-Lipulekh trijunction area in western Nepal and the Susta area in southern Nepal.
 - Nepal recently announced the printing of a new Rs 100 currency note featuring a map that includes the Indian territories of Lipulekh, Limpiyadhura, and Kalapani, a move that has been contested by India.
 - Gorkhas are increasingly deviated to China from India forces due to the new Agniveer Scheme.

Steps can India Take to Enhance its Regional Relationships

- **Development-Centric Diplomacy:** It is high time for India to move beyond just offering loans and focus on collaborative development projects that address specific needs in neighboring countries.
 - This could involve joint research in areas like agriculture, renewable energy, or disaster management.
- **Cooperative Security:** India needs to shift towards a purely military-centric approach to security and promote cooperative security measures.
 - This could involve joint counter-terrorism exercises, regional disaster response teams, or a South Asian hotline for managing border tensions.
- **Focusing on Regional Blocs:** Instead of trying to dominate the entire region, India can focus on building stronger relationships with sub-regional blocs like BIMSTEC (Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical Cooperation) or SAARC (South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation).
 - Success in these smaller groups can translate to wider regional influence.
- **Revitalising Neighbourhood First Policy:** India must relook through its Neighbourhood First policy and prioritize inclusive development projects fostering mutual trust through transparent communication, and leveraging digital connectivity for collaborative initiatives within the region.
- **South Asia at Heart of Global South:** India can enhance its regional diplomatic ties by showcasing the South Asian region as a pivotal player in the Voice of Global South Summits.

This approach can bolster India's influence and cooperation within the region.

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INDIA'S TRADE DYNAMICS

India's trade landscape is evolving amidst global challenges and opportunities. While lower international commodity prices have impacted traditional sectors like petroleum exports, emerging sectors such as electronics, pharmaceuticals, and agriculture are showing promise. India's recent free trade agreements with the UAE and EFTA signify its commitment to deepening economic ties and gaining greater market access.

India's trade push is not merely an economic imperative but a litmus test of its ability to navigate the complexities of the global trade landscape and unlock its true potential as a major exporting nation.

India's Trade Dynamics Post Independence:

- **Post-independence (1947-1990s):** India adopted a protectionist trade stance, characterized by high import barriers, strict industrial regulations, and a focus on import substitution.
 - This period saw limited trade openness and a heavily regulated economy, known for the 'license raj' system.
- **Liberalization Reforms (1991 onwards):** Triggered by a severe balance of payments crisis in 1991, India embarked on a path of economic liberalization.
 - This included dismantling the 'license raj', liberalizing trade, opening up to foreign investment, and adopting market-oriented policies.
- **Gradual Opening to Global Markets (1990s-2000s):** In the following decades, India continued to liberalize its trade policies, gradually opening up to global markets.

- It signed several regional and bilateral trade agreements, including agreements with ASEAN, Japan, South Korea, and others.

- **Focus on Global Economic Integration (2010s-present):** In recent years, India has renewed its focus on global economic integration.

- India's Foreign Trade Policy 2023 is encouraging recognition of new towns through "Towns of Export Excellence Scheme".

- It has been negotiating comprehensive trade agreements with the European Union, and the United Kingdom, aiming to diversify trade relations and enhance market access.

- **Embracing Rupee Trade and Digital Infrastructure (present and future):** India is increasingly leveraging digital infrastructure and technology, such as the Unified Payments Interface (UPI) to transform its international trade prospects.

- Overseas markets accepting UPI payments include UAE, France, Mauritius, Sri Lanka.

- India is also focusing on Internationalisation of Rupees.

- Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has allowed banks from 18 countries to open Special Vostro Rupee Accounts (SVRAs) to settle payments in Indian rupees.

Sectors are Propelling India's Trade Growth

- **Services Sector:** This is a major driver, with exports surging over 11% in 2023 according to a recent United Nations Conference on Trade and Development report. Key sub sectors include:

- **IT & IT-enabled Services (ITES):** This is the powerhouse, attracting global companies for software development, back-office operations, and call centres.
- India's large talent pool and competitive pricing are major advantages.
- **Tourism & Hospitality:** With its rich cultural heritage and diverse landscapes, India is a growing tourist destination.
- Government initiatives like Dekho Apna Desh, promoting small cities in events like G20 are further propelling this sector.
- **Medical & Wellness Tourism:** India's skilled medical professionals, coupled with affordable costs, are attracting patients from abroad. This medical tourism segment is witnessing significant growth.
- Government stated that over 1.4 million medical tourists visited India in 2022.
- **Goods Sector:** While services are strong, there's also significant growth in goods exports. Key sub sectors include:
 - **Engineering Goods:** This sector is witnessing a surge in exports of machinery, vehicles, and capital goods like generators and transformers.
 - Government's "Make in India" initiative and PLI Scheme promoting domestic manufacturing is a key factor.
 - The share of electronic goods in India's merchandise exports is increased from around 2% in 2017-18 to 6.5% in 2023-24
 - **Pharmaceuticals:** India is a leading generic drug manufacturer, supplying affordable medicines globally.
 - This sector is expected to see continued growth with rising global demand for affordable healthcare solutions.
 - The Commerce Ministry reports a 10% increase in India's pharmaceutical exports, reaching USD 28 billion in FY24.
- **Textiles & Apparel:** A traditional strength, India's textile industry is undergoing modernization to cater to international markets.
- Skilled labour and a strong cotton production base contribute to its success.
- India exported textiles worth USD 30.96 billion during April 2023-February 2024
- **Agriculture & Processed Foods:** India is a major producer of agricultural products like rice, wheat, and spices.
- Despite bans on export of non-basmati rice, wheat, and other restrictions, overall agriculture and allied exports grew healthily.
- The recent growth was driven by categories like meat, poultry products, spices, fruits, vegetables, oil meals, oil seeds, and unmanufactured tobacco.
- **Additional Factors Driving Growth:**
 - **Free Trade Agreements (FTAs):** India's FTAs with European Free Trade Association (EFTA), Mauritius and UAE reduce tariffs and trade barriers, making Indian exports more competitive.
 - A step in this direction is India's recently inaugurated 'Bharat Mart' in Dubai, which is a warehousing facility for Indian MSMEs.
 - **Startup Ecosystem:** A thriving startup ecosystem is fostering innovation and creating new products and services for global markets.
 - India remains the third largest tech start-up ecosystem globally, with over 950 tech startups founded in 2023.
 - **Demographic Dividend:** India's young population provides a large workforce and a growing domestic market, further fuelling trade.
 - 65% of the Indian population is currently under the 35 years age bracket.
 - **India's Infrastructure Push:** The government's significant investment in

infrastructure development through initiatives like Bharatmala and Sagarmala is significantly reducing transportation costs and transit times.

- This improved connectivity is making it easier and faster to move goods across the country and to international ports, enhancing India's competitiveness in global trade.

Main Roadblocks Hindering India's Trade Growth

- **Decline in International Commodity Prices:** One of the most significant hurdles India has faced is the sharp decline in international commodity prices, particularly in the energy sector.
 - The plunge in crude oil prices has dealt a substantial blow to India's export bill, with petroleum exports plummeting by a staggering USD 13.3 billion in the 2023-24 fiscal year.
 - This downturn underscores India's vulnerability to fluctuations in global commodity markets, given the substantial share of oil in its export basket.
- **Labour-intensive Sectors:** Exports from labour-intensive sectors like textiles, gems and jewelry, and leather products have declined. This trend, observed over a decade, needs to be reversed to create more jobs.
- **Rejection of Food and Pharma Products:** Stricter quality control measures in developed countries lead to rejections of Indian food and pharmaceutical exports due to concerns about safety standards or compliance with regulations.
 - Over 50 companies in India that manufacture cough syrups have failed quality tests.
 - In the past 6 months, US customs officials have rejected 31% of spice shipments from

Mahashian Di Hatti (MDH) due to salmonella contamination.

- **Geographical Concentration of Exports:** India's exports have traditionally been concentrated in a few major markets, such as the United States and the Europe region.
 - While efforts are being made to diversify export destinations, overreliance on a limited number of markets can make India's trade vulnerable to economic conditions in those regions.

Way Forward

- **Reviving Labour-Intensive Sectors:** Establishing dedicated 'Artisan Zones' with state-of-the-art infrastructure, skill development centres, and financial incentives to attract and retain skilled labour in these sectors.
 - Collaborate with international fashion houses and luxury brands to co-create unique product lines that showcase Indian craftsmanship.
 - Implement a 'Craft Tourism' initiative to promote these sectors and create sustainable livelihoods for artisans.
- **Farm to Fork Traceability:** Implement a 'Farm-to-Fork' traceability system using blockchain technology to ensure transparency and compliance throughout the supply chain.
 - Establish a 'Quality Compliance Accelerator' program to help Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) adopt international quality standards and best practices.
 - Partner with international regulatory bodies to develop harmonised standards and mutual recognition agreements for faster clearance of exports.
- **'Brand India' Global Marketing Campaign:** Launch a comprehensive 'Brand India' global marketing campaign to

promote Indian products and services, highlighting their quality, craftsmanship, and unique value propositions.

- Leverage social media, influencer marketing, and targeted advertising campaigns to reach new markets and change perceptions about Indian exports.
- Collaborate with renowned international brands and celebrities to endorse and promote Indian products, enhancing their global appeal and recognition.

Focus on Regional Trade Agreements: Pursue free trade agreements with new and emerging markets in Asia, Africa, and Latin America. This can help diversify export destinations and reduce reliance on traditional markets.

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INDIA'S ARCTIC EXPEDITION

In December 2023, when four Indian climate scientists arrived in Oslo to begin acclimatisation for India's maiden winter expedition at the Arctic, they had little idea of what lay ahead. Himadri, India's research station in the International Arctic Research Base at Svalbard in Norway, had until then hosted missions only in the summer. A winter expedition entails living in the intense cold (as low as -15 degrees Celsius) after a period of rigorous acclimatisation. More concerning for Indian researchers was the daunting prospect of polar nights. It has now become necessary for India to tide over these challenges to sustainably harness the potential of Arctic region.

Arctic Region:

▪ Location and Geography:

- The Arctic region is located at the northernmost part of Earth, centered around the North Pole.
- It includes the Arctic Ocean and parts of several countries, including Canada, Russia, the United States, Norway, and Greenland.

- The region experiences extreme cold temperatures, with ice covering much of the area, especially in the winter.

▪ Climate and Environment:

- The Arctic is characterized by its cold climate, with temperatures often dropping below freezing.
- The region is covered by ice, including sea ice and ice caps, which play a crucial role in regulating the Earth's climate by reflecting sunlight.
- The Arctic is home to a unique ecosystem, including polar bears, seals, whales, and various species of birds.



Significance of the Arctic Region

▪ Economic Significance:

- Arctic region has rich deposits of coal, gypsum and diamonds and also substantial reserves of zinc, lead, placer gold and quartz.
- **Greenland** alone possesses about a quarter of the world's rare earth reserves.
- The Arctic also contains a wealth of unexplored hydrocarbon resources amounting to 30% of the world's undiscovered natural gas.
- India is the 3rd largest energy-consuming country in the world, the 3rd-largest oil importer. Increasing ice-melt makes these resources more accessible and feasible for extraction.
- The Arctic can therefore potentially address India's energy security needs and deficiency of strategic and rare earth minerals.

- **Geographical Significance:**

- The Arctic helps circulate the world's ocean currents, moving cold and warm water around the globe.
- Also, Arctic sea ice acts as a huge white reflector at the pole of the planet, bouncing some of the sun's rays back into space, helping keep the Earth at an even temperature.

- **Geopolitical Significance:**

- The melting Arctic ice is also raising geopolitical temperatures to levels not seen since the Cold War. China referred to trans-Arctic shipping routes as the Polar Silk Road, identifying it as a third transportation corridor for the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), and is the only country, apart from Russia, to be constructing nuclear ice-breakers.
- As a result, it is crucial to counter China's soft power manoeuvres in the Arctic, in line India is also taking a keen interest in the Arctic states through its Arctic policy.

- **Environmental Significance:**

- The Arctic and the Himalayas, though geographically distant, are interconnected and share similar concerns. The Arctic meltdown is helping the scientific community to better understand the glacial melt in the Himalayas, which has often been referred to as the 'third pole' and has the largest freshwater reserves after the North and South poles.
- Therefore, the study of the Arctic is critical to Indian scientists. In line, India launched its first scientific expedition to the Arctic Ocean in 2007 and opened the Himadri research base in the Svalbard archipelago (Norway), and has been actively engaging in research there ever since.

Reasons Behind India's Growing Interest in the Arctic Region

- **Climatic Occurrences Similar to the Arctic Sea Region:**

- For over a decade, India's National Centre for Polar and Ocean Research saw no reason for a winter mission to the Arctic. What changed Indian policy, ostensibly, was scientific data showing that the Arctic was warming faster than previously thought. When facts tying catastrophic climatic occurrences in India to the melting of Arctic Sea ice emerged, decision-makers felt compelled to act.

- **Prospecting Trade Routes:**

- India is seized of the opening up of Arctic Sea routes, primarily the Northern Sea Route, and would like to route Indian trade through the region. This might help India reduce costs for shipping companies along with time, fuel, and security costs for transmitting goods.

- **Emerging Geopolitical Threats:**

- China's growing investments in the Arctic have raised concern in India. Russia's decision to grant China expanded access to the Northern Sea Route has deepened this anxiety.
- India's increasing focus on the Arctic comes at a time of heightened tensions in the region, fuelled by the Russia-Ukraine conflict and exacerbated by the suspension of various regional cooperative forums.
- There are concerns about the potential repercussions of these tensions, especially given Russia's growing reliance on its nuclear deterrent on the Kola Peninsula. For India, which aims to maintain constructive relations with both western nations and Russia, these developments carry significant strategic implications.

- **Consequences for the Himalayas and Indian Monsoon:**

- India is no newcomer to the Arctic. Its involvement in the region goes back to 1920, with the signing of the Svalbard Treaty in Paris. In 2007, India undertook its first research mission to investigate Arctic microbiology, atmospheric sciences, and geology.
- A year later, India became the only developing country, aside from China, to establish an Arctic research base. After being granted 'observer' status by the Arctic Council in 2013, India commissioned a multi-sensor moored observatory in Svalbard in 2014 and an atmospheric laboratory in 2016.
- The work at these stations focuses on examining Arctic ice systems and glaciers and the consequences of Arctic melt on the Himalayas and the Indian monsoon.

Different Challenges Facing the Arctic Region

- **Policy Divide in India:**

- The issue of Indian engagement in the Arctic divides the country's academic and policy communities. Opinions are split over the potential impacts of the changing climate in the Arctic on India's economy. The concern primarily stems from mining in the region for fossil fuels, an area where India has yet to articulate a clear economic strategy.
- The proponents of economic exploitation in the Arctic advocate a pragmatic approach in the region, especially around oil and gas exploration, and mining and the sceptics warn about the potential environmental consequences.

- **Arctic Amplification:**

- In recent decades, the warming in the Arctic has been much faster than in the rest of the world. The permafrost in the

Arctic is thawing and in turn releasing carbon and methane which are among the major greenhouse gases responsible for global warming amplifying the melting of ice, thereby driving the arctic amplification.

- **Rising Sea Level Concern:**

- Melting Arctic ice adds to rising sea levels, which in turn increases coastal erosion and elevates storm surge as warming air and ocean temperatures create more frequent and intense coastal storms like it can significantly impact India which has a 7,516.6 km of coastline and important port cities.
- According to the World Meteorological Organisation's report, 'State of Global Climate in 2021', sea level along the Indian coast is rising faster than the global average rate.

- **Emerging Race Course:**

- The opening of the shipping routes and possibilities in the arctic is giving thrust to the race of resource extraction leading to the geopolitical poles: US, China and Russia, jockeying for position and influence in this region.

- **Threat to Biodiversity:**

- The absence of year-long ice and higher temperatures are making the survival of Arctic animal life, plants and birds difficult. Polar bears need sea ice to hunt seals as well as to move across the large home ranges.
- Due to shrinking ice, life of polar bears along with other Arctic species are under threat. Also, warming seas have triggered a pole ward shift in fish species reshuffling the food web.
- Tundra is returning to swampy state because sudden storms are ravaging coastlines especially interior Canada and Russia, and wildfires are damaging permafrost in tundra areas.

Different Steps to be taken with respect to the Arctic Region

▪ Collaboration With Norway:

- Norway, the present chair of the Arctic Council, has close ties with India. Since the late 1980s, the two countries have collaborated to investigate changing conditions in the Arctic and Antarctic, as well as their impact on South Asia.
- As climate change ends up more deeply affecting the Arctic and the South Asian monsoon, these efforts need to be accelerated over time to address both the Himalayan and Arctic region challenges.

▪ Alignment With Arctic Countries:

- India's present policy is to cooperate with Arctic countries in green energy, and green and clean industries, as a way of bolstering its 'responsible stakeholder' credentials. With Denmark and Finland, for instance, Indian collaboration has come in areas such as waste management, pollution control, renewable energy, and green technology.

▪ Following Sustainable Mode of Resource Extraction:

- While the Indian government seems keen to benefit from seabed mining and resource exploitation in the Arctic, it ought to unequivocally back a sustainable mode of extraction.
- It is believed that a partnership with Norway could be transformational for India as it would enable greater Indian participation in the Arctic Council's working groups, tackling issues such as the blue economy, connectivity, maritime transportation, investment and infrastructure, and responsible resource development.

▪ Aligning India's Arctic Policy with the Arctic Council's Objectives:

- A partnership with Nordic Countries is likely to be focused on scientific research and climate and environmental protection. These are two of the six pillars that comprise India's Arctic Policy (the other four being economic and human development; transportation and connectivity; governance and international cooperation; and national capacity building).
- India would perhaps still look to explore economic opportunities in the Arctic. Arctic Council could, then, help India design a sustainable policy that accommodates the needs of both the scientific community and industry.
- Devising a Nodal Body:**
 - Presently, the National Centre for Polar and Ocean Research (NCPOR) deals with polar and Southern Ocean realms which includes the Arctic. The Ministry of External Affairs provides the external interface to the Arctic Council.
 - There is a need to devise a single nodal body to explicitly deal with Arctic Research and Development and coordinate all the activities of the Government of India relating to the Arctic
- Moving Beyond Scientific Approach:**
 - India needs to go beyond the purely scientific approach in the Arctic. In keeping with its growing stature and consequent say in world affairs, it should be well positioned to understand the dynamics of the Arctic demography and governance, and become the voice of arctic tribes and raising their issues in global forums.
- Adopting a Global Ocean Treaty:**
 - It is important to place global ocean governance under scrutiny and make progress towards a collaborative global ocean treaty with special attention to polar

regions and associated sea level rise challenges.

Conclusion

The Arctic region is a unique and fragile ecosystem that plays a crucial role in regulating the Earth's climate. However, it is facing unprecedented environmental changes due to climate change, including rapid ice melt and rising temperatures. These changes have

significant implications for the region's wildlife, indigenous communities, and global climate patterns.

International cooperation and sustainable practices are essential for preserving the Arctic's delicate environment and ensuring its long-term viability.

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FIXING INDIA'S FOOD SYSTEMS

India is one of the largest growing economies in the world. Agriculture is the primary occupation of nearly half the population of the country. Over the past few decades, the manufacturing and services sectors have increasingly contributed to the growth of the economy, while the agriculture sector's contribution has decreased. The unprecedented agrarian crisis in India has now been affecting farmers across the country for nearly a decade.

Agriculture and allied sectors are central to the Indian economy. Keeping this and a sustainable future in mind, the Indian government, quite rightly, promoted technology-enabled sustainable farming, including natural, regenerative and organic systems, during its G20 presidency. The government has been taking various measures to address the problems faced by the farmers, such as low productivity, high input costs, market fluctuations, climate change, indebtedness, and lack of institutional support.

Keeping pace with the same, the incumbent government has asked various ministries to prepare plans that they would like to announce in the first 100 days of their third term. The ministries are contacting various experts to help them frame the right policy framework that is in sync with the vision of Viksit Bharat@2047.

Different Challenges in Ensuring Adequate Agri-Food Systems in India

- **Overexploitation of Water Resources:**
 - With the marginal cost of using water being close to zero, farmers started growing water-intense crops in low-rainfall areas and adopted water-based practices and off-season cultivation. Though half of the

agricultural area is rainfed and without access to irrigation, the sector uses close to 90% of the total water used in the country.

- It is evident from the emergence of monoculture of paddy in traditionally groundnut and cotton growing areas in Punjab, Haryana and Rajasthan; expansion of sugarcane in Maharashtra and Uttar Pradesh; groundnut cultivation in peak summer time in Rajasthan and many such cases.
- Thus, a new geography of crops appeared in complete violation of agro-climatic suitability of various agro-climatic zones in the country.
 - **Disregard for Nature and Loss of Crop Diversity:**
 - Actual crop pattern and acreage allocated to various crops are at significant variance with what is suitable from the agro-climatic point of view. The deviation is mainly caused by policy support and disparities in advancement in technology for various crops.
 - Technological and policy bias in favour of **Green Revolution** technology and a few crops not only caused distortions in crop pattern, it also resulted in increased concentration of area under some crops and a sharp decline in crop diversity.
- In the early 1970s, paddy cultivation was undertaken on 10.8% of the net sown area in Punjab and 8% in Haryana in 2020s. This share has increased to 73.3% in Punjab and 39.5% in Haryana. Similarly, area under sugarcane cultivation quadrupled in Maharashtra and doubled in Uttar Pradesh after the onset of the Green Revolution.

▪ **Low Efficiency and Price Led Growth:**

- India's growth in agriculture sector, though impressive in most products and states, has remained lower than the potential.
- Our productivity levels are lower than major agricultural countries. The sector is witnessing slow modernisation.
- The much needed changes in technology, method of production and post-harvest value addition are not visible on a large scale.
- Agricultural practices involving prolific use of inputs like broadcasting of fertilizer and flood irrigation are not showing any significant improvement.

▪ **Imbalances and Regional Disparities:**

- Imbalances between demand and domestic production have been growing over the years. India has been accumulating a large surplus of rice, wheat and sugar, and this involves a huge cost to the state exchequer.
- The underlying reason for this is the rise in output price by the centre and payment of bonus for rice, and rise in fair and remunerative price (FRP) for sugarcane by some states ignoring the Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices (CACP) recommendations and, for that matter, demand and supply or market situations.
- On the other hand, India's deficit in edible oil is rising year after year. The country meets 55% of its domestic requirement of vegetable oils by importing them.
- There is, thus, a scope in domestic market to absorb 127% increase in domestic oilseed production.

▪ **Wasteful Investment:**

- Investment in major, medium and micro irrigation constitutes a major share of public investment in agriculture. These

investments were meant to increase area under surface water irrigation.

- The country spent more than Rs. 30,000 crore each year after 2007-08 as capital expenditure and also a huge amount as operation and maintenance of canals, but area under canal irrigation is showing either stagnation or decline.
- Several major irrigation projects even after incurring most of the expenditure are held up by minor obstacles like forest clearance in small pockets, catchment area development, construction of distributaries and field channels. Interstate and intra state disputes are another factor for delay in completion of some major irrigation works.

▪ **Technology Generation and Dissemination:**

- Agricultural problems are becoming more complex, and research is turning more capital intensive. Climate change, share of agriculture in greenhouse emissions and sustainability concerns add to the challenges to be addressed by the research and development (R&D) system.
- Scope for spill over from research in the developed world is shrinking, and intellectual property right (IPR) issues are complicating and making it costly for transfer of technology from the outside world and the private sector.
- Though agricultural research and higher education is largely a responsibility of State Agriculture Universities (SAUs), the ICAR is required to respond to any challenges and issues concerning the agriculture sector. Public opinion at large holds ICAR responsible for any adverse development in the agriculture sector. As a result, the portfolio of ICAR has been getting bigger and bigger over SAUs with time.

▪ **Viability of Smallholders:**

- Agriculture in India and most of Asian countries is dominated by small land holdings. According to Agricultural Census for year 2015-16, 68% farm holdings operate on less than 1 hectare land area. Further, 85% of farm households undertake farming on less than 2 hectares.
- This size of land holding does not generate adequate income with the usual agricultural practices and products. Small holders also face the problem of scale economy in input as well as output markets that require different type of institutional help.

▪ **Nutrition, Food Safety and Health:**

- India's nutrition indicators and child health indicators are low. According to the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) of the United Nations, the largest number of people who are hungry or undernourished live in India.
- According to the Global Hunger Index, India ranks low year after year on the hunger indices, even though the country has become the largest rice exporting country with about 15% of its rice production sold in overseas market. India represents a paradoxical situation of 'hunger in the midst of plenty'.

▪ **Mismatch between Structural Changes in Output and Workforce:**

- As an economy develops, the share of agriculture in national gross value added (GVA), a measure of national income, and employment would experience a decline. Higher the growth of the economy, faster is the transformation in the structure of economy.
- In India, between 1950-51 and 1970-71, the share of agriculture in national income at 2011-12 prices declined from 61.7% to 49.6%, whereas the sector's share in

employment remained stuck at more than 69%. In the next two decades, the sector's share in employment declined to 59% and income to 35.1%.

- After 1990-91, growth rate of economy accelerated which also resulted in faster decline in the share of agriculture. However, the decline in the share of agriculture in work force did not keep pace with the decline in the sector's share in national income. In 2010-11, agriculture had a share of 18.3% and 54.6%, respectively, in national income and employment.

▪ **Low Income of Farmers:**

- Disproportionate share of agriculture in national income and employment implies disparity in per worker income in agriculture and non-agriculture sector. At the macro level, income per worker in non-agriculture is 3.75 times the income of an average agriculture worker which includes agricultural labourers and cultivators.
- The small and shrinking land size, excess workforce, low productivity and poorly working markets are the main causes for low per farmer income in the country.

Steps Need to be Taken to Improve Agricultural Productivity

There are some of suggestions for the agri-food space. They are based on interactions with experts during the four-day forum organised by the Asian Development Bank on food security in the wake of climate change.

▪ **Raising Total Factor Productivity:**

- Agriculture has to produce not only more food, fibre and even fuel (biofuels), but it has to do so with fewer resources. India's population is likely to go to about 1.6 billion by 2047.
- So, there are more mouths to feed. With gradually rising incomes, people will demand more and better food.

- Efficiency in the use of land, water, labour, and inputs like fertilisers and farm machinery is going to be critical. In other words, we must aim to raise our total factor productivity.

- This can be done by putting in more resources in agri-R&D, innovations and extension.

▪ **Creating Climate Resilient Agriculture:**

- The production system is being threatened by extreme weather events triggered by global warming. The real solution lies in investing resources to create climate-resilient (smart) agriculture.
- This would mean more investments in

▪ **Building Efficient Value Chains:**

- By 2047, more than two-thirds of India will be living in urban areas — up from about 36% today. Migration from rural to urban areas in search of higher productivity jobs is a natural process that cannot, and should not, be wished away.
- The implication of this is that much of the food will have to be moved from the hinterlands to urban areas.
- This would require a massive logistics revolution, from transporting to stocking to processing and organised retailing.
- This would open doors for large-scale investments, primarily by the private sector.



seeds that are heat and flood-resistant, and more investment in water resources not just in augmenting their supplies but also ensuring water is being used more wisely.

- “More crop per drop” should not be just a slogan but a reality. Drips, sprinklers, and protected cultivation as part of precision agriculture will have to be adopted at a much larger scale than today.

The new government will have to facilitate this transformation by changing laws that are suitable for Bharat@2047.

▪ **Promoting Farmer Producer Organisations (FPOs) or Cooperatives:**

- In this food systems transformation, while all players from the seed industry to farm machinery to processing and retailing are scaling up, farming is still fragmenting into smaller and smaller holdings.
- The challenge is to ensure that these smallholders are brought together,

through Farmer Producer Organisations (FPOs) or cooperatives (as was done in the milk sector, a la AMUL), to create a scale that is demanded by processors, organised retailers, and exporters.

- This institutional innovation is the key to inclusive Bharat.

- **Moving Beyond Simple Food Security to Nutritional Security:**

- On the consumption front, there is need to move beyond simple food security to nutritional security. The malnutrition numbers, especially for children below the age of 5, are worrying and stunting today stands at 35%.
- For this to improve, besides sanitation, women's education and immunisation, there is also need to fortify our staples with micro-nutrients.
- The government has made a beginning with zinc-rich rice and wheat, but is shying away from golden rice with beta carotene (Vitamin A rich), when Australia, New Zealand, Canada, and the US have declared it safe, and even Bangladesh and Philippines have allowed its trials.
- Rice is our first crop, and most of those children who are malnourished today consume a lot of rice. This needs to be fortified with high nutrition.

- **Need For Public Private Partnership:**

- Public-private partnerships are the way to go. The private sector can build efficient value chains and also produce seeds that are climate-resilient and more nutritious.
- The government has to provide a conducive policy framework. When the government can devise PLI-type schemes for industry, it should also be done for food systems transformation for tomorrow.

- **Shift from Growth to Efficient-Growth:**

- This requires up gradation of agricultural technology, application of modern skills in farm practices, new innovation in farming, and lowering wastages in use of fertilizer, water and other inputs.
- This will also require change in input pricing policy to discourage prolific and indiscriminate use of inputs like water and fertiliser, and promote their optimum use.
- Digital technology can also play a significant role in improving efficiency through easy dissemination of technology and knowledge to farmers.

- **Surplus Management:**

- Domestic absorption of food has grown at a lower rate than domestic production. In the early 1980s, India produced and consumed a little more than 1 kg food per person per day. The production has gradually increased to 1.73 kg in recent years, whereas domestic absorption increased to 1.59 kg. This shows that food surplus has been continuously increasing for the last 35 years.
- This requires a complete shift in food policy from shortage management to surplus management. This also indicates that much of the under nutrition in India is not due to non-availability of food, but it is due to low food intake. India has to look for overseas market to dispose the surplus food produce.

Technology Contribute to Improving Food Systems and Agricultural Productivity

- **Enhancing Productivity:**

- **Precision**

Farming: Utilizing GPS, sensors, and drones to optimize planting, watering, and fertilizing processes, leading to higher yields and reduced resource wastage.

- **Mechanization:** Introduction of machinery such as tractors, harvesters, and planters,

reducing manual labour and increasing efficiency in farm operations.

- **Biotechnology:** Development of genetically modified crops with enhanced resistance to pests, diseases, and environmental stresses, improving yield and quality.
- **Improving Resource Management:**
 - **Water Management:** Implementing technology for efficient irrigation systems like drip and sprinkler irrigation, conserving water and improving crop yield.
 - **Soil Health Monitoring:** Using sensors and imaging technology to assess soil health and nutrient levels, enabling targeted fertilization and soil conservation practices.
 - **Weather Forecasting:** Accessing real-time weather data for better planning and management of farming activities, reducing risks from weather-related disasters.
- **Facilitating Market Access:**
 - **Digital Platforms:** Utilizing online marketplaces and mobile applications for farmers to access markets, negotiate prices, and sell produce directly to consumers, eliminating middlemen and increasing profits such as e-NAM portal.
 - **Supply Chain Management :** Implementing technology for tracking and monitoring produce from farm to market, ensuring quality control and reducing wastage.
- **Promoting Sustainability:**
 - **Empowering Smallholder Farmers :** Technology has the potential to empower smallholder farmers by providing access to information, markets, and financial services.

- Mobile applications and digital platforms offer valuable agronomic advice, market prices, and weather forecasts, enabling farmers to make informed decisions and improve their livelihoods.
- **Renewable Energy:** Using solar panels and bioenergy sources to power farms, reducing reliance on fossil fuels and mitigating carbon emissions.
- **Data-driven Decision Making:** Analyzing data from sensors, satellites, and drones to make informed decisions on crop management, leading to more sustainable farming practices.
- For instance, predictive analytics can help farmers anticipate pest outbreaks or identify optimal planting times, enabling proactive management strategies and minimizing risks.

Conclusion

A significant and sustained increase in farmers' income and the transformation of agriculture require a paradigm shift in the entire approach towards agriculture sector. Changes in archaic regulations and liberalisation of the sector are a must for creating an enabling environment for a modern and vibrant agriculture. Advancement in science led technology, an enhanced role of private sector in both pre and postharvest phases, liberalised output market, active land lease market and emphasis on efficiency will equip agriculture to address the challenges of 21st century and contribute towards the goal of a new India.

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WORLD AFFAIRS

China was the largest trading partner of India with \$118.4 billion trade in 2023-24

According to data from the Global Trade Research Initiative (GTRI), the US was India's



second largest trading partner, with trade totaling \$118.3 billion. India's exports to China increased by 8.7% to

\$16.67 billion, while imports from China rose by 3.24% to \$101.7 billion. However, India's exports to the US decreased by 1.32% to \$77.5 billion, and imports declined by about 20% to \$40.8 billion. Meanwhile, trade between India and China resulted in a growing deficit, reaching \$85.09 billion in FY2024. On the other hand, India experienced significant growth in trade surplus with the US, increasing from \$16.86 billion to \$36.74 billion. In 2023-24, the UAE emerged as India's third largest trading partner, followed by Russia, Saudi Arabia, and Singapore.

Mikhail Mishustin has been reappointed as Prime Minister of Russia

Russian President Vladimir Putin has reappointed Mikhail Mishustin as Prime Minister. On May 10, the State Duma (lower house of the Parliament of Russia) approved Mishustin as Prime Minister for a second term. Mishustin's reappointment was expected by political observers. He has been credited with keeping the Russian economy stable even after the Covid-19 pandemic and the Ukraine War. Mishustin has been serving as Prime Minister of Russia since January 16, 2020. Before becoming Prime Minister, he was the

head of the Federal Taxation Service of Russia. In Russia, the prime minister holds the office at the president's discretion. The term of the prime minister is 6 years.

The Annual Investment Meeting (AIM) Congress concluded in Abu Dhabi

The AIM Congress, held from May 6 to 9, was a dynamic three-day event that brought together industry leaders, policymakers, and innovators worldwide. The focus was on investment strategies, economic forecasts, and global challenges. The event aimed to foster cooperation, brainstorm innovative solutions, and promote investment opportunities. It featured participation from various companies and startups, including 35 Indian startups and delegations from organizations like CII and Invest India. Panel discussions highlighted India's sustainability reporting standards. Organized by the AIM Global Foundation, the congress aimed to shape investment policies, strengthen economic ties, and advance innovative solutions.

Ukraine parliament has passed bill that permits prisoners to join military

Ukraine parliament has passed this bill amidst the nation's pressing need for military personnel. Ukrainian forces are facing a critical shortage of manpower. Now the bill awaits final approval from chairperson of parliament, the Verkhovna Rada, and President Volodymyr Zelenskyy before implementation. Under the bill, participation in military will be voluntary and limited to specific prisoner categories. Individuals convicted of sexual violence, severe corruption, multiple homicides, and former high-ranking officials are excluded from eligibility. Eligible prisoners

must have less than three years left on their sentence.

Australian government introduced changes in its immigration laws

Australia will enforce tougher visa rules for foreign students. The Australian government has made several changes to immigration laws to reduce the number of immigrants. The Australian government is aiming to cut net migration by half by 2025. This change will impact Indian students and professionals, who are planning to go to Australia for education and career opportunities. Measures introduced by the Australian government for international students are: It has increased the minimum savings to 16 Lakh for overseas students to obtain a visa. English language requirements for student and graduate visas will be increased. To study in Australia, a minimum score of 5.5 will be required to enrol in their chosen university and program.

EU adopted the first law to tackle violence against women

The first law devoted to combating violence against women has been passed by European Union countries. It will protect women in the 27-nation EU from gender-based violence, forced marriages, female genital mutilation, and online harassment. The European Parliament already approved the rules in April. Cyberstalking, cyber harassment, and cyber incitement to hatred or violence have been criminalized under this law across the EU. This law sets minimum sentences, from one year to five years in prison, depending on the crime. Under the rules, if the victim is a child, spouse, the punishment can be more severe.

3-member Shenzhou-18 crew sent by China to its Tiangong space station

A team of three astronauts launched aboard China's Shenzhou-18 spacecraft, heading to the Tiangong Space Station. The mission is part of China's efforts to send astronauts to

the Moon by 2030. The spacecraft, named "Divine Vessel," launched from northwest China with mission commander Ye Guangfu and crewmates Li Cong and Li Guangsu. They will spend six months in orbit, conducting scientific experiments, spacewalks, and routine maintenance on the space station.

Iraq's parliament passed a law criminalizing same-sex relationships

Iraq has amended its law to impose harsh penalties on individuals engaging in same-sex relations or promoting homosexuality.



Offenders could face up to 15 years in prison, and

and organizations

advocating for LGBT

rights are banned. The law aims to uphold religious values and protect Iraqi society from what is perceived as moral degradation. It is primarily supported by conservative Shi'ite Muslim parties, reflecting broader societal attitudes toward LGBT rights in Iraq.

'One Earth, One Family, One Future' has been endorsed at SCO Defence Ministers' Meeting in Kazakhstan

Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) Defence Ministers' meeting was held in Astana, Kazakhstan. Defence Secretary GiridharAramane took part in the meeting during which Defence Ministers of all SCO Member States signed a protocol. The Defence Secretary reaffirmed India's unwavering commitment to preserving security, stability, and peace in the SCO area at the meeting. He underlined that in order to ensure the prosperity and growth of the SCO Member States, terrorism must be tackled with a zerotolerance policy. Aramane also brought attention to India's long-standing UN request for a Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism. Additionally, he emphasised the idea of "Security and Growth

for All in the Region (SAGAR)," which India had put forth for the Indo-Pacific region.

With the relaxation of rules by the EU, Indians can now get multiple-entry Schengen visas with longer validity

The European Commission has introduced changes to Schengen visa rules for Indian frequent travellers to Europe. These changes allow Indian citizens to apply for multiple-entry visas for up to five years, based on their travel history. The new visa regime aims to enhance people-to-people contacts between India and the EU. The Schengen visa permits short stays of up to 90 days within a 180-day period in the Schengen Area, which comprises 29 European countries, including 25 EU member states.

First Rainbow International Tourism Conference held in Kathmandu, Nepal

MayakoPahichan, along with the Nepal Tourism Board, organized an event focused on LGBTQ tourism, with BhagawatiChaudhary, Minister of Women, Children, and Senior Citizen, as the Chief Guest. Sunil Babu Pant, Asia's first openly gay Member of Parliament, also participated. LGBTQ participants and experts discussed the potential of pink tourism and emphasized the importance of inclusivity in the tourism sector to boost a country's economy. Globally, LGBTQ travelers spend \$202 billion, presenting an opportunity for countries to cater to this market. Nepal has made strides in LGBTQ rights, including legalizing same-sex marriage in June 2023, making it a potentially attractive destination for LGBTQ tourists, according to EU Ambassador Veronique Lorenzo.

As per the Lancet, breast cancer is to cause millions of deaths per year by 2040

A new Lancet Commission reported that breast cancer is now the most common

cancer worldwide. Over the last five years, around 7.8 million women were diagnosed with breast cancer, resulting in about 685,000 deaths in 2020. The risk of diagnosis before age 75 is 1 in 12. By 2040, breast cancer cases are projected to exceed 3 million. While 40% of deaths occur in high-income countries, the full extent of suffering is not well understood. The commission suggests improved communication between patients and health professionals and the development of new tools to measure the costs associated with breast cancer.

Sweden becomes the 38th country to join the Artemis Accords

Sweden has recently joined the Artemis Accords, a set of non-binding agreements for space exploration and use. The accords aim to ensure the peaceful and sustainable utilization of outer space, including the moon, Mars, and other celestial bodies. Initiated by NASA and the US Department of State in 2020, the Artemis Accords now have 38 signatories, including countries like India and Japan. These accords align with the principles outlined in the 1967 Outer Space Treaty.

Pathogens that transmit through the air will be called 'infectious respiratory particles': WHO

The World Health Organization (WHO) has introduced new terminology to better describe airborne pathogens, aiming to aid in their identification and response. The term "infectious respiratory particles" (IRPs) now encompasses all particles emitted from an infected person's mouth or nose, regardless of size. This change aims to address the challenge of categorizing and managing such pathogens, especially evident during the COVID-19 pandemic. The update covers various respiratory infections like COVID-19, influenza, measles, MERS, SARS, and tuberculosis. The WHO has released a report

for extensive consultation on this new terminology.

The United Arab Emirates has had the highest rainfall on record, exceeding all data collected since 1949

Over the previous 24 hours, the rain fell in a number of areas of the United Arab Emirates. The extraordinary character of this weather occurrence was confirmed by the National Centre of Meteorology. It is predicted to rain more in the upcoming hours. The Khatm Al Shakla region of Al Ain has received the most rainfall to date, with 254 millimetres (almost 10 inches) falling in less than a day. This rainfall has caused major disruptions as well as is predicted increases in the UAE's annual average and groundwater reserves. Passengers are advised by Dubai International Airport to avoid visiting the airport unless absolutely necessary. One death has been reported so far from the emirate of Ras Al Khaimah.

Nigeria has rolled out the world's first vaccine against meningitis

Nigeria has become the first country to introduce a novel vaccine, Men5CV. It is endorsed by the World Health Organization (WHO). This vaccine will provide protection against five strains (A, C, W, Y, and X) of meningococcus bacteria. Meningitis is caused due to the meningococcus bacteria. It is a significant threat in Africa. Meningitis can be caused by viruses, bacteria, fungi, or parasites. It can impact brain and can cause hearing loss and learning disabilities. Fever, Headache, Neck stiffness, and Sensitivity to light are the Symptoms of meningitis. As per the World Health Organization (WHO), reported cases of meningitis across Africa increased by 50 percent last year. Nigeria encountered a meningitis outbreak between October 1, 2023, and March 11, 2024.

Singapore Prime Minister Lee HsienLoong has step down and hand over power to Lawrence Wong

After two decades, Singapore Prime Minister Lee HsienLoong has step down from his post



on May 15. Lawrence Wong has taken oath as the next Prime Minister. Lawrence Wong was serving as deputy Prime Minister and Finance Minister. He has been a potential candidate for the Prime Minister post since 2002. Wong was designated as the PM-in-waiting in April 2022 after a rare disruption in the leadership transition process. Wong is also deputy chairman of sovereign wealth fund GIC and chairman of the Monetary Authority of Singapore, the Southeast Asian nation's central bank. He led the education and national development ministries before becoming finance minister in 2021.

Sheikh Ahmed Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah appointed as the new Prime Minister of Kuwait by the Emir of Kuwait

The appointment came after the resignation of former Prime Minister Sheikh Mohammed Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah on April 7. Following the election of a new parliament on 4 April, Sheikh Mohammed submitted the resignation of his cabinet on 6 April. His resignation was a procedural step after the new parliament was elected. The new Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmed is a Kuwaiti economist and served as Minister of Health, Minister of Oil, and Minister of Information from 2006 to 2011. He also served as the Minister of Finance and Communications from 1999 to 2005. Its capital is Kuwait City and its currency is Kuwaiti Dinar.

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NATIONAL AFFAIRS

MSDE signed a MoU with Mahindra & Mahindra Ltd for the Drone Didi Yojana

Mahindra & Mahindra Ltd inked a pact with the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship to conduct two Pilot Projects under the Drone DidiYojana. Under this MoU, MSDE and M&M will conduct two Pilot Projects at the National Skill Training Institute (NSTI) located in Hyderabad and Noida. 500



women in exclusive batches of 20 women each will be imparted with skills. The 15-day curriculum, approved by the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA), will be delivered through Remote Pilot Training Organisation (RPTO) instructors at these Centres. Drone DidiYojana was launched to train 15,000 women to operate drones for agricultural purposes. The drones will help in monitoring crop growth and planting seeds. This scheme will help in generating new livelihood opportunities for women by imparting skills in new technology areas.

Comprehensive guidelines for exporters to prevent ETO contamination formulated by the Spices Board

The Spices Board has issued guidelines to prevent the contamination of ethylene oxide (ETO) in Indian spice exports, following concerns raised by some countries. Exporters

must avoid using ETO in any form during production, storage, or transportation of spices. These guidelines were prompted by the ban on popular spice brands like MDH and Everest in Hong Kong and Singapore due to ETO contamination. India's spice exports in 2023-24 were valued at US\$4.25 billion, constituting 12% of global spice exports.

Major exported spices include chilli powder, cumin, turmeric, and cardamom.

India has showcased its creative economy at the 77th Cannes Film Festival

From May 14th to May 25th, India has participated at the 77th Cannes Film Festival in France. The corporate Indian delegation comprises members of the Government of India, state governments, and industry, who will showcase India's creative economy in the world's leading film market. The Ministry of Information and Broadcasting said, India will host Bharat Parv at the Cannes Film Festival for the first time. The Bharat Pavilion at Cannes will serve as a platform for the Indian film community to engage in various activities. This includes fostering production collaborations, curated knowledge sessions, signing distribution deals, business-to-business meetings, and networking with major entertainment and media players from around the world. During the Bharat Parv, the official poster and trailer of the 55th International Film Festival of India to be held in Goa will also be unveiled.

ISO 42001:2023 Certification for Artificial Intelligence Management System is granted to Infosys

Infosys announced that it has been certified with ISO 42001:2023, the world's first

international standard on AI management systems. Infosys is among the first IT services companies globally to earn certification for implementing an Artificial Intelligence Management System (AIMS) framework. The Artificial Intelligence Management System (AIMS) framework will promote AI practices and adherence to regulatory requirements for enhanced efficiency and accountability in AI initiatives. This AIMS framework is part of the Infosys Topaz Responsible AI Suite. The ISO 42001:2023 certification will provide a roadmap and systematic approach for AI management. The Infosys Topaz Responsible AI Suite objective is to monitor and protect AI models and systems from risks and threats.

Defence Ministry notified the New Inter-Services Organisations Act

The Defence Ministry has notified the Inter-Services Organisations (Command, Control, and Discipline) Act, which was passed by both Houses of Parliament last year. The act empowers Commanders-in-Chief and Officers-in-Command of inter-service Organisations to maintain discipline and administration without affecting individual service conditions. It aims to enable quick disposal of cases and promote greater integration and jointness among the armed forces, aligning with plans for the reorganization of the military into integrated theatre commands.

According to the PM-EAC study, the Hindu population in India decreased by 7.8%, and the Muslim population increased by 43%

According to a study published by the Prime Minister's Economic Advisory Council (EAC-PM), the share of India's majority Hindu population declined by 7.81% between 1950 and 2015, while the share of the Muslim community increased by 43.15% over the same period. According to the study "Share of

Religious Minorities: A Cross-Country Analysis," during this period, India's Hindu population share decreased from 7.8% to 78.06%. On the other hand, during the same period, the proportion of Muslims and Christians increased from 43.15% to 14.09% and 5.4% to 2.36% of the total population respectively. Similarly, during the same period, the share of Sikh and Buddhist population witnessed an increase of 1.85% and 0.81% respectively. However, the share of Jains and Parsis in the population mix declined and stood at 0.36% and 0.004% respectively in 2015.

NHAI is exploring cutting-edge technology for self-healing roads

NHAI is exploring self-healing road technology



to revolutionize road maintenance. This innovative approach involves using a special type of asphalt mixed with steel fibers

and epoxy capsules. When minor fractures occur, heat is applied to the steel fibers through an induction machine, melting and re-binding the asphalt to repair the road. This technology aims to address potholes, a major cause of accidents in India, by extending road lifespan and reducing maintenance costs.

Setu unveiled India's first domain-specific LLM for the BFSI sector

Sesame, India's first Large Language Model (LLM) specifically designed for the banking, financial services, and insurance (BFSI) sectors, has been launched by Setu. It has been developed in collaboration with indigenous AI research firm Sarvam AI. It has been released at an event organised by a non-profit organisation, People+A. Setu's vision is to empower BFSI customers to make smarter, faster credit decisions and provide hyper-personalised financial services to their

customers. Setu was founded in 2018 by SahilKini and Nikhil Kumar. It is an application programming interface (API) infrastructure provider. Setu has received a license to operate as an account aggregator from the Reserve Bank of India.

Indian Renewable Energy Development Agency (IREDA) has been granted Navratna status by the Department of Public Enterprises

IREDA can now make investments up to ₹1,000 crore without central approval. Navratna status firms can invest up to 30% of their net worth annually, capped at ₹1,000 crore, and can engage in joint ventures, partnerships, and overseas subsidiaries. To qualify for Navratna status, a corporation must first be designated as Miniratna category-I and listed on Schedule A of CPSEs. IREDA, under the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy, funds projects related to renewable energy. Established in 1987, the government owns 75% of IREDA.

CII launched the corporate governance charter for startups

The Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) has released a corporate government charter for startups. This charter will prescribe guidelines appropriate for startups based on the specific stages of their life cycle. This charter has been designed for entities incorporated under the Companies Act, 2013 only and the term 'Startup' is used for them. This charter will assist startups in becoming responsible corporate citizens and allow them to share it with their stakeholders to establish themselves as well-governed. The early adoption of good governance practices will help startups achieve tangible and intangible benefits, including long-term value. The



governance charter for startups will enable the early adoption of good governance practices amongst startups.

Plea seeking 100% cross-verification of EVM data with VVPAT records rejected by SCI

The Supreme Court of India rejected petitions seeking 100% cross-verification of EVM data with VVPAT records. Justices SanjeevKhanna and DipankarDutta made the decision, issuing two directions to the Election Commission. They ordered sealing and securing the Symbol Loading Unit (SLU) after loading symbols into the EVMs, with signatures from candidates and their representatives. Sealed containers will be stored alongside EVMs for at least 45 days. Additionally, burnt memory semi-controllers in 5% of EVMs per assembly constituency will be examined upon written request from certain candidates, verified by engineers from EVM manufacturers after the results are declared.

In the last four years, Rs 1.3 lakh crore have been mobilized by REIT and InvITS

A real estate investment trust (REIT) and Infrastructure investment trusts (InvITs) have mobilised 1.3 lakh crore in the past four years. The market regulator SEBI has notified regulations for small and medium REITs on March 8, 2024. InvIT has raised Rs 2,500 crore through a public issue. InvITs consist of a portfolio of infrastructure assets like highways. Currently, there are 24 registered InvITs and 5 REITs. The first investment trust was registered with Sebi in 2016-17. A REIT is made up of a portfolio of commercial real estate assets. InvITs are emerging as alternative investment instruments, mainly for high-net-worth individuals.

The Supreme Court said the government should take action against FMCG companies using 'misleading' advertisements

The Supreme Court directed the Center to take action against FMCG companies for running misleading advertisements about their products. Concerns were raised about the impact of these ads, especially on families with infants and school children. This comes after reports of high sugar content in Nestle's baby food products in India and other countries. The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) has been tasked by the Union Consumer Affairs Ministry to investigate these allegations.

The government is planning to boost exports of 20 items

India's agriculture exports dropped by 9% to \$43.7 billion from April to February in FY24 due to various factors like the Red Sea crisis, the Russia-Ukraine war, and domestic restrictions. To counter this decline, the government plans to boost exports of 20 items including bananas, mangoes, potatoes, and baby corn, valued at \$9.03 billion in 2022. These items were mainly exported to the US, Malaysia, Canada, Russia, Germany, France, and Korea. APEDA is working on a sea protocol to reduce logistics costs for horticulture produce exports. India aims to increase its share in global exports from 2.5% to 4-5% in the coming years.

As per the WMO, India is among the countries worst hit by extreme heat and floods in 2023

The World Meteorological Organization (WMO) released a report titled "The State of the Climate in Asia 2023", revealing Asia as the most disaster-prone region due to weather, climate, and water-related hazards. India faced extreme heat and severe floods,

with South-East Asia also experiencing a prolonged heatwave. India recorded its warmest March, affecting wheat crop yields. The report emphasized the alarming impact of climate change in Asia, including India.

A MoU has been signed between AFMS and IIT Delhi

Armed Forces Medical Services (AFMS) has signed MoU for collaborative research and training with Indian Institute of Technology, (IIT) Delhi. Director General AFMS, Lt Gen Daljit Singh and Director IIT Delhi Prof Rangan Banerjee signed the MoU. The MoU covers research and innovation to develop novel medical devices. Its scope includes focus on solving health issues specific to serving soldiers in varied terrains. IIT Delhi's robust biomedical research ecosystem is ideal for providing the technical expertise needed for research into the diverse medical challenges faced in the Armed Forces. Joint PhD programme development, faculty exchange, and collaborative academic activities will all fall under the purview of this Memorandum of Understanding. The Armed Force Medical Services (AFMS) is an inter services organisation. It comes under the Ministry of Defence. It came into existence in 1948.

Global military spending climbed 7% in 2023: SIPRI

Global military spending reached \$2,443 billion in 2023. This increases by 6.8 per cent from the previous year. According to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), the United States, China, Russia, India, and Saudi Arabia were the top spenders in 2023. The average military spending per person was the highest since 1990, at \$306. Russian military spending increased by 24% to an estimated \$109 billion. It is equivalent to 5.9 per cent of Russia's GDP. Ukraine's military spending

increased by 51% to \$65 billion. It emerged as the eighth-largest military spender in 2023.' The Military expenditure by NATO member countries reached \$1341 billion in 2023.

Supreme Court granted permission to a rape survivor for terminating 30-week pregnancy

The Supreme Court granted permission to a 14-year-old alleged rape survivor for terminating her nearly 30-week pregnancy. A bench led by Chief Justice D Y Chandrachud directed the dean of the LokmanyaTilak Municipal Medical College and General Hospital (LTMGH) to perform the procedure. The Supreme Court changed the Bombay High Court's decision of rejecting the plea filed by the minor's father for terminating her pregnancy.

National Fertilizers Ltd received "Navratna" status

The Department of Public Enterprise has granted "Navratna" status to National Fertilizers Ltd. For the December quarter, National Fertilizers Limited's consolidated net profit was ₹150.9 crore, a decline of 73%. The revenue dropped 25.2% YoY to ₹7,581 crore for the December quarter. The 'Navratna' is a group of top-performing Central Public Sector Enterprises (CPSEs). It receives greater autonomy and financial powers from the Centre in recognition of its performance.

A MoU signed between AFMS and IIT Kanpur in the development of technologies

AnMoU was signed between the Armed Forces Medical Services (AFMS) and IIT Kanpur for collaborative research and training. The agreement aims to develop new technologies and conduct research to address health issues faced by soldiers in remote

areas. IIT Kanpur will provide technical expertise for developing AI diagnostic models for the Armed Forces Center for Computational Medicine. The MoU also includes exchange of faculty, joint academic activities, and development of training modules.

India's population is estimated to reach 144 crore: UNFPA

According to the United Nations Population Fund's (UNFPA) State of World Population – 2024 report, India's population is estimated to reach 144 crore, with 24 per cent in the 0-14 age bracket. As per this report, India's population is estimated to double in 77 years. 17 per cent of India's population is within the 10-19 age range while 26 percent of the population is the 10-24 bracket. 7 per cent of India's population is aged 65 years and above, with men having a life expectancy of 71 years and women 74 years. China with 142.5 crore is on the second spot in terms of population. India's population was recorded at 121 crore during the last census, conducted in 2011. Recent research into India's 640 districts revealed that nearly a third achieved the sustainable development goal of reducing maternal mortality ratio.

Claims of Nestle adding sugar and honey to infant cereals and milk products sold in low- and middle-income nations will be investigated by the FSSAI

According to an investigation by The Guardian, Nestle added sugar to its Nido and Cerelac products in Latin America, Asia, and Africa, using sucrose or honey. Public Eye, a Swiss investigative organization, conducted the inquiry in collaboration with the International Baby Food Action Network. The National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) acknowledged the media

reports and requested the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) to review the sugar content in Nestle's infant food products. Cerelac wheat-based cereals for six-month-old babies sold by Nestlé in Germany and the UK reportedly contain no added sugar, while the same product in India has 2.2 grams of sugar per serving, with varying amounts in other countries.

Specifications of IFFCO's Nano Urea Plus notified by the Government

The government has notified the specifications for a new fertilizer called 'Nano Urea Plus', which will be produced by the cooperative IFFCO over the next three years. Nano Urea Plus is designed to meet the nitrogen requirements of crops at critical growth stages. It will be manufactured in liquid form with 16% nitrogen content, pH value ranging from 4 to 8.5, and viscosity between 5 and 30. This advanced formulation aims to promote soil health, increase farmer profitability, and support environmental sustainability by replacing traditional urea and other nitrogen fertilizers. Commercial production will start soon at IFFCO's plants in Gujarat and Uttar Pradesh. This follows the successful launch of 'Nano Liquid Urea' in June 2021 and 'Nano DAP' in April 2023 by IFFCO, with millions of bottles sold since their introduction.

India aims to achieve debris-free space missions by 2030

ISRO chairman S Somanath announced that the country aims to achieve debris-free space missions by 2030. ISRO has a clearly laid-out plan for space exploration. The main aim of the initiative is to achieve debris-free space missions by 2030. Presently, India has 54 spacecraft in orbit, and many non-functional objects. Isro had brought several old satellites and fourth stage of PSLV rockets back to the

Earth through the deorbiting process as part of its zero orbital debris mission. India is also planning to set up its own space station 'BharatiyaAntriksh Station' by 2035.

Central government formed a panel on the issues of queer community

The government has formed a committee chaired by the Cabinet Secretary to address issues concerning the queer community, following a directive from the Supreme Court. The six-member committee includes



representatives from key ministries such as Home Affairs, Women and Child

Development, Health and Family Welfare, Social Justice and Empowerment, and the Law Ministry. Its purpose is to determine the rights of queer couples in unions and to address concerns regarding their safety and well-being. This initiative comes after a Supreme Court ruling in 2023 that did not recognize the right to marry as a fundamental right for same-sex couples.

STATE NEWS

DRDO and IIT Bhubaneswar will collaborate for AI-driven surveillance and other projects

During a meeting between DRDO and IIT Bhubaneswar officials, nine sanctioned projects of the Electronics and Communication Systems (ECS) cluster were handed over to IIT Bhubaneswar. Seven other projects are in process to be sanctioned with Rs 18 crore funding. IIT Bhubaneswar will work on the sanctioned project. This would benefit in electronics warfare, Artificial Intelligence (AI)-driven surveillance, power systems, radar systems etc. The collaboration

is expected to improve the sustainability of defence research programmes.

Manipur Governor Anusuiya Uikey launched a 'School on Wheels' initiative

An initiative by Vidya Bharati Shiksha Vikas Samiti aims to support students affected by ethnic violence in relief camps. A school bus equipped with a library, smart TV, computer, and sports items will visit these camps, accompanied by a teacher. Currently, around 18,000 students are residing in 480 relief camps. The violence, which began on May 3 last year, led to thousands being displaced and over 219 deaths. The initiative aims to provide educational and recreational support to these students during a challenging time.

Mumbai and Delhi listed among the top 50 richest cities in the world

Mumbai and Delhi have secured positions in the top 50 wealthiest cities worldwide for 2024, with Mumbai at 24th and Delhi at 37th. The rankings were released by Henley & Partners and New World Wealth. New York holds the top spot, with 11 cities from the USA among the top 50. Five out of the top 10 wealthiest cities are from the Asia-Pacific region, including Tokyo, Singapore, and Beijing. Singapore is noted as a prime destination for migrating millionaires, with a significant increase in millionaire numbers over the past decade.

Bru migrants participate in Lok Sabha for the first time as Tripura Voters

Around 37,000 Bru migrants from Mizoram, who sought refuge in Tripura due to ethnic clashes, cast their votes in the Lok Sabha elections in Tripura for the first time. They had been living in transit camps in North Tripura since 1997 but were permanently resettled across six districts of Tripura following an agreement signed on January 16, 2020. Previously, they had voted in Mizoram's

elections, but in 2023, they participated in Tripura's state assembly elections.

Rare butterfly species discovered in Tail Sanctuary of Arunachal

A team of butterfly enthusiasts discovered a rare butterfly species named *Neptis phyllora*, also known as the long-sided sailer, in the Tail Valley Wildlife Sanctuary in Arunachal Pradesh. This is the first time this species has been found in India. The butterfly has serrated wings, dark brown-black on top and yellowish brown underneath, with distinctive white cell stripes on the forewing. The discovery has been published in the journal "Tropical Lepidoptera Research".

Vizhinjam Port got approval to run as India's first transshipment hub

Adani's Vizhinjam Port in Kerala has got approval from the centre to operate as India's first transshipment port. It will help India to become a manufacturing hub. A transshipment port is a crucial hub where cargo is transferred from one big vessel to several smaller ones. India's 75% of transshipment cargo is currently processed at ports overseas with destinations such as Colombo, Singapore, and Klang. This approval will pave the way for customs to set up an office at Vizhinjam port. It will be India's first full-fledged deep-water transshipment port.

Bhagwan Mahaveer Nirvan Mahotsav inaugurated in New Delhi

Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated Mahotsav at Bharat Mandapam in New Delhi on Mahaveer Jayanti, celebrating the birth of Bhagwan Mahavir, the 24th Tirthankar of Jainism. He highlighted India's progress in reducing poverty • and launched a commemorative stamp and coin. Mahaveer Jayanti, also known as Mahavir Janma Kalyanak, is a significant religious festival for Jains, celebrating

Mahavira's birth on the 13th day of the Chaitra month.

Three new archaeological sites have been discovered in Telangana

Archaeologists found an Iron Age megalithic site at Ooragutta near Bandala village in Telangana's Mulugu district. The team, led by K P Rao and Ch Praveen Raju, discovered over 200 megalithic monuments arranged uniquely with side slabs after the shape of the capstone. Additionally, two new rock art sites were found at Damaratogu in Bhadrachalam district, with one site featuring animal depictions dating back to 8000 – 3000 BCE.

GMR Hyderabad International airport wins award for 'best airport staff'

GMR Hyderabad International Airport Ltd (GHIAL) has received the 'Best Airport Staff in India & South Asia 2024' award by Skytrax. The award was announced at a ceremony held on April 17 at the Passenger Terminal EXPO 2024 in Frankfurt, Germany. The award is announced on the result of audits and evaluations that analyse a wide range of

factors including the combined quality of staff service (attitude, friendliness, efficiency). Skytrax is a global air transport rating organisation. It is evaluating airports and airlines worldwide since 1989. It assigns star ratings from 1 to 5 stars based on diverse assessments.

The Nyishi tribe of Arunachal Pradesh joyfully celebrates the Longte festival

The Longte festival, celebrated by the Nyishi people in Arunachal Pradesh, stands out for its cultural significance and its unique tradition of abstaining from animal sacrifice. Instead, they use symbolic decorations made of feathers and bamboo. The Nyishi community, the largest ethnic group in the state, is known for their agricultural practices like Jhoom farming and traditional longhouses called Namlo. Arunachal Pradesh hosts various cultural events such as Losar, Torgya, Saka Dawa, and Nyokum Yullo, each with its own customs and importance.

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INDIA AND THE WORLD

India and Iran have signed long-term deal for Chabahar Port operations



India and Iran signed a new 10-year agreement for India Ports Global Ltd (IPGL) to operate the Shahid-Beheshti Port Terminal at Chabahar. Union Minister Sarbananda Sonowal led the Indian delegation and oversaw the deal, which involves IPGL investing about 120 million USD in the port. Additionally, India offered a 250 million USD credit window. The Chabahar Port, a key project for India-Iran trade with Afghanistan and Central Asia, is located in Iran's Sistan-Baluchistan province and is the closest Iranian port to India. The partnership began with a trilateral agreement in 2016 between India, Iran, and Afghanistan to establish the International Transport and Transit Corridor. IPGL took over port operations in December 2018.

India participated in the 19th Session of the United Nations Forum on Forests in New York

The 19th Session of the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF) was organized. In this session, India highlighted significant advancements in forest conservation and sustainable forest management. Between 2010 and 2020, India ranks third in the net gain in average annual forest area. India also shared information about the 'Green Credit Program', which is designed to incentivize entities to take up tree plantation and restoration of degraded forest lands. India also highlighted the creation of the

International Big Cat Alliance at this session. In October 2023, India Led Initiative under UNFF was hosted at Dehradun. Representatives from 40 countries and 20 international organizations have participated in this initiative. The Ministry of India hosted a side event on 'Principles and Strategies for Landscape Integrated Fire Management through Collaborative Governance'.

UAE-India CEPA Council (UICC) and the Indian Chamber of Commerce (ICC) signed an MoU

To enhance economic and trade relations, the UAE-India CEPA Council (UICC) and the Indian Chamber of Commerce (ICC) have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU). The main aim is to promote awareness of the UAE-India bilateral economic partnership and the benefits of the UAE-India CEPA. The MoU established a comprehensive collaboration between the UICC and the ICC, focusing on public promotion, and increasing awareness. Both organizations will engage in dialogue, and information sharing, and host joint events. This partnership will boost trade volumes and bring the benefits of favourable trade policies to enterprises.

Khanij Bidesh India is to acquire lithium asset in Australia in FY25

Khanij Bidesh India Ltd (KABIL) is likely to acquire a lithium block in Australia this year. KABIL is owned by three public sector undertakings -- National Aluminium Company Ltd (NALCO), Hindustan Copper Ltd (HCL) and Mineral Exploration and Consultancy Ltd (MECL). It is entrusted with the important mission of identifying, exploring, acquiring,

and developing critical & strategic mineral assets overseas. Recently, the Registered Office of KhanijBidesh India Limited (KABIL) has been inaugurated in New Delhi. Lithium is the most important mineral for the energy transition. It is a fundamental part of lithium-ion batteries, which power electric vehicles and battery energy storage systems. Argentina is part of the 'lithium triangle' along with Chile and Bolivia. They have more than 50% of the World's total lithium reserves. Australia is one of the leading producers of Lithium and Cobalt.

India and France has carried out the 7 edition of the Joint Military Exercise 'Shakti' from 13-26 May

This exercise has been carried out in the Umroi region of Meghalaya. The aim of the exercise is to enhance the joint military capacity of India and France to undertake Multi-Domain Operations in a Sub Conventional scenario. This exercise will facilitate the development of interoperability between the Armed Forces of India and France. The sixth edition of the exercise, Ex Shakti 2021 was carried out at the Military School of Draguignan, France in November 2021. A composite team consisting of three officers, three junior commission officers, and 37 soldiers from a battalion of the Gorkha Rifles represented the Indian Army contingent.

India is poised to become the world's third-largest consumer market by 2026, surpassing Germany and Japan

According to UBS's 'India Economic Perspectives' report, India is projected to become the world's third-largest consumer market by 2026, overtaking Germany by 2024 and Japan by 2026. The country's consumer market has shown strong growth and resilience over the past decade. In 2023, India's household consumption is expected to

reach US\$2.1 trillion, with a compound annual growth rate of 7.2%, outpacing major economies like China, the USA, and Germany. This positions India as one of the fastest-growing economies and the fifth-largest consumer market globally.

A visa waiver agreement for diplomatic passports has been signed by India and Moldova

India and Moldova signed an agreement on visa waiver for diplomatic and official passports. After this agreement, holders of diplomatic and official passports of either



country will be allowed to travel to the other, without a visa. The agreement was signed by the External Affairs Ministry, Secretary (West), Pavan Kapoor and Moldova's Ambassador, Ana Taban.

India supported Palestine's bid to become a full UN member

The 193-member General Assembly met to vote on a resolution to make Palestine a full UN member. India voted in favour of the draft resolution to make Palestine a full UN member. This resolution was presented by the United Arab Emirates. As per this resolution, Palestine is qualified to be admitted as a full member of the United Nations. The resolution got 143 votes in favour, nine against, and 25 abstentions. Currently, Palestine is a non-member observer state at the UN. It got this status from the General Assembly in 2012. In 1974, India was the first non-Arab state to recognize the Palestine Liberation Organization as the sole and legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. India was one of the first countries to recognize the State of Palestine.

Export of non-Basmati white rice to Mauritius allowed by India

The Central Government has allowed the export of 14,000 tonnes of non-Basmati white rice to Mauritius. This comes despite a ban on such exports since July 2023 to control domestic prices and ensure food security. The rice will be exported through National Cooperative Exports Limited. Previously, India had permitted limited exports of this rice variety to several countries, including Nepal, Cameroon, and Malaysia. Exports to other countries will be allowed based on their food security needs and government requests. Benin is a major importer of non-Basmati rice from India.

Japan's Ambassador inaugurated the Kohima Peace Memorial in Nagaland

Ambassador of Japan to India, Hiroshi Suzuki and Nagaland Chief Minister Neiphiu



inaugurated the Kohima Peace Memorial and laid the foundation stone of Eco Park Kohima. The Kohima Peace

Memorial and Eco Park represent a collaborative effort between the Government of Japan and the Japanese International Corporation Agency with the Government of Nagaland. The Japanese remember the "Battle of Kohima" as one of the most devastating battles of World War II, along with the "Battle of Imphal". In 2023, a Japanese organization called ARMS signed an MOU with Nagaland University to establish a Japanese language course in Kohima. This year is being celebrated as the 80th Anniversary of the Battle of Kohima.

India is planning to build a research station in Antarctica

India plans to propose the construction of a new research station in Antarctica at the 46th

Antarctic Treaty Consultative Meeting (ATCM) in Kochi from May 20–30. India currently operates two research stations in Antarctica—Maitri and Bharti—and aims to build a new one named Maitri-2. After its completion, the existing Maitri-1 will be converted into a summer camp. The Antarctica region is governed by the Antarctic Treaty System (ATS), established in 1961.

Global energy think tank Ember released a new report stating that in 2023, India surpassed Japan as the world's third-largest producer of solar power

India's solar energy deployment has seen significant growth, ranking ninth globally in 2015 and generating a record 5.5% of the world's electricity in 2023. In India, solar power contributed 5.8% to the electricity production in the same year. Solar energy has been the fastest-growing electricity source globally for nineteen consecutive years, producing twice as much new electricity as coal in 2023. India ranked fourth in global solar generation growth, trailing behind China, the United States, and Brazil. The world's solar generation increased sixfold between 2015 and 2023, with India's share rising from 0.5% to 5.8%. At COP28, world leaders committed to tripling global renewable energy capacity by 2030 to combat climate change.

The second consultation held by India and the EU on security and defence

The European Union and India held the second round of security and defence consultations in New Delhi. Vishwesh Negi from India's Ministry of Defence and Joanneke Balfourt from the European External Action Service co-chaired the meeting. Discussions covered international and regional issues like Russia's actions in Ukraine and developments in South Asia and the Middle East. The EU updated India on its strategic compass and Indo-Pacific strategy,

along with initiatives like the European Defence Industrial Strategy and ongoing operations such as EUNAVFOR Aspides. Both sides pledged to enhance cooperation in areas like cyber, maritime security, and crisis management.

The 5 Joint Group of Customs (JGC) meeting between India and Bhutan held in Leh, Ladakh

India and Bhutan co-chaired a meeting to strengthen bilateral ties and address customs and trade facilitation issues. They discussed topics such as opening new Land Customs Stations, infrastructure development, and automation of transit processes. Measures to prevent smuggling were also on the agenda. Bhutan thanked India for support in skill development and capacity building for its customs officials. The annual India-Bhutan Joint Group of Customs meetings aim to improve customs procedures and promote cooperation in line with global best practices. India is Bhutan's top trade partner, with trade between the two countries reaching \$1,615 million in 2022-23, representing nearly 80% of Bhutan's overall trade. Land Customs Stations play a crucial role in Bhutan's economy due to its landlocked status.

Germany lifts restrictions on the sale of small arms to India

Germany has decided to lift restrictions on the sale of small arms to India, allowing the sale of such weapons to the Indian military and state police forces. Previously, restrictions were in place for sales to non-NATO countries. This decision opens up opportunities for military engagement between India and Germany, including potential collaborations on naval exercises and provision of engines for India's light tanks program.

In the maritime partnership exercise, the Indian Navy participated with the UK Littoral Response Group

In the Maritime Partnership Exercise, the Indian Navy's indigenous, INS Sahyadri participated with the Royal Navy's RFA Argus and RFA Lyme Bay, part of the UK Littoral Response Group South at sea. An opportunity provided by the exercise for both the navies to exchange best practices. The exercise demonstrates the Indian Navy's commitment to strengthening maritime partnerships and promoting regional stability.

India will sign a trade deal with Oman to strengthen its ties with West Asia

India and Oman will sign a trade deal in the coming months. It will strengthen India's ties with West Asian countries. India and Oman have annual trade of less than \$13 billion. Oman is the gateway to the narrow Strait of Hormuz between Oman and Iran, which is a



major transit point for global oil shipments. India is seeking bilateral deals with GCC member nations such as Oman and United Arab Emirates. Oman has agreed to eliminate duties on Indian export products, including agricultural products, gems and jewellery, leather, automobiles, etc. India has agreed to reduce duties on some petrochemicals, including aluminium and copper from Oman. The trade deal with Oman will give a competitive edge as GCC is negotiating trade agreements with Pakistan and China.

After the UAE, the Indian passport is the second cheapest passport in the world

Indian passports are among the cheapest globally, with a cost of US\$18.07 for 10 years of validity, making it the second cheapest overall. However, Indian passport holders can travel visa-free to only 62 countries. A study by Compare the Market AU found that passports are most expensive in Mexico, while the UAE offers the cheapest option at US\$17.70 for 5 years of validity. In terms of cost per year of validity, India's passport is the cheapest at US\$1.81, followed by South Africa and Kenya.

The 10 round of India-Japan consultations on disarmament, non-proliferation, and export controls held in Tokyo

Both sides exchanged views on developments in the areas of nuclear, chemical, and biological domains, outer space security, nonproliferation issues, disarmament, and non-proliferation related to conventional weapons and export controls. Muanpui Saiawi, Joint Secretary (Disarmament and International Security Affairs), Ministry of External Affairs led the Indian delegation. Katsuro Kitagawa, Director General of the Department of Disarmament, Nonproliferation and Science of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs led the Japanese delegation.

Papua New Guinea has appointed First Defence Adviser to India

Col Edison Napyo has been appointed as 1st defence advisor to India. PNG's acting Chief of Defence Force Commodore Philip Polewara gave Col Edison Napyo a farewell on April 17. This is a key step towards improving defence cooperation between India and Papua New Guinea (PNG). PM Modi visited Papua New Guinea (PNG) in May 2023. He attended the third summit of the Forum for India Pacific Islands Cooperation

(FIPIIC). Diplomatic relations between India and Papua New Guinea (PNG) were formalised in 1976. Last August, the Prime Minister of PNG James Marape visited the two Indian Naval ships that made a call at Port Moresby. The FIPIIC includes Cook Islands, Fiji, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Nauru, Niue, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Palau, PNG, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu.

Russia-India signed an agreement to operate a large research hub in New Delhi

The Higher School of Economics, located in Russia, and the University of Delhi signed a



pact on strategic cooperation and joint actions. They will also operate a large research hub in New Delhi. It will start operating at the partner

university from India. HSE University is a national research university located in Moscow, Russia. Recently, the Indo-Russian Education Summit was held in New Delhi from 11-13 April. It is the largest event of its kind in the history of India-Russia bilateral relations. 60 Russian universities arrived at this summit from Moscow, Saint Petersburg, Siberia, Crimea, the Urals and other regions. The summit brought diplomats, politicians, scientists, and businessmen to one platform to explore new opportunities for cooperation in education, science and innovative technologies.

The first batch of BrahMos was sent by India to the Philippines

India handed over the first batch of BrahMos supersonic cruise missiles to the Philippines, marking a significant military export milestone. The Philippines signed a \$375 million deal

with India in January 2022 for three batteries of the BrahMos missiles, becoming the first export customer for this joint venture missile between India and Russia. The delivery is part of the Philippines' efforts to enhance its defensive capabilities amid tensions in the South China Sea. The BrahMos missile, named after the Brahmaputra and Moskva rivers, can be launched from various platforms and has been inducted into the Indian Armed Forces for a considerable period.

A state-of-the-art IT lab inaugurated by General Manoj Pandey to boost India-Uzbekistan defence cooperation

India and Uzbekistan strengthened bilateral relations by inaugurating a high-tech IT laboratory at the Uzbek Armed Forces Academy. Army Chief General Manoj Pandey led the inauguration during his visit to Uzbekistan. The laboratory, funded through India's Ministry of External Affairs, was initiated after a commitment made during a Defence Ministers' meeting in 2018. Initially proposed in 2019, the project saw increased budget allocation due to higher bids. An Indian firm won the contract, ensuring timely completion of the laboratory. Equipped with

advanced technology, including cyber security facilities, the laboratory aims to enhance training resources for the Uzbek Armed Forces and foster deeper cooperation between the two countries.

India and Mauritius have signed a protocol to amend tax treaty

Both nations signed the new protocol on Double Taxation Avoidance Agreement (DTAA) on 7th March 2024. This has closed lacuna in their Double Taxation Avoidance Agreement (DTAA). This has tightened the scrutiny on tax avoidance on investments coming into India. The amendment includes a Principal Purpose Test (PPT). PPT is to decide whether a foreign investor is actually eligible for treaty benefits. PPT is also to decide if the tax benefit the primary reason to route investments via Mauritius. Double Taxation Avoidance Agreement (DTAA) is a bilateral agreement. It is aimed at preventing double taxation of income earned in one country by residents of the other country.

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BUSINESS AND ECONOMY

Retail inflation in India decreased slightly in April, hitting an 11-month low of 4.83%



India's retail inflation eased to an 11-month low of 4.83% in April, down slightly from 4.85% in March, staying within the RBI's 2-6% tolerance range. The National Statistical Office (NSO) reported that food basket inflation rose to 8.7% from 8.52% in March. Vegetable inflation was 27.80%, down from 28.30%, while cereals and pulses inflation stood at 8.63% and 16.84% respectively. Fuel and light inflation decreased by 4.24% in April.

India's industrial production increased by 4.9%

The Index of Industrial Production (IIP) increased by 4.9% in comparison to the same period last year. As per Ministry of Statistics & Programme Implementation's latest data, the quick estimates of IIP for March 2024 stood at 159.2. Manufacturing sector has shown the highest growth rate of 5.2%. It is followed by electricity at 8.6%, and mining at 1.2%. Within the manufacturing sector, basic metals, pharmaceuticals, and other transport equipment have shown growth rates of 7.7%, 16.7%, and 25.4% respectively. The cumulative growth rate for April-March 2023-24 was 5.8% in comparison to the previous year. In March 2024 compared to March 2023, primary goods, capital goods, intermediate goods, infrastructure/construction goods, consumer durables, and consumer non-durables all have shown growth.

RBI lifted restrictions from Bank of Baroda's BoB World app

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has decided to lift restrictions on Bank of Baroda's BoB

World app. RBI has allowed the Bank of Baroda's BoB World app to onboard customers. In October 2023, the RBI directed the Bank of Baroda to suspend any onboarding of customers onto its 'BoB World' mobile application due to certain supervisory concerns. Before the ban (September 2023), the app saw 7.95 million daily transactions which dropped to 7.19 million by December 2023 (postban). The percentage of fixed deposits (FDs) and recurring deposits (RDs) opened through Bob World also declined. As per the RBI directive, the Bank of Baroda has implemented corrective actions to rectify the issues. Bank of Baroda has improved its security procedures for onboarding new customers.

A MoU has been signed between the Indian Coast Guard (ICG) and Jindal Steel & Power (JSP)

This MoU is aimed at increasing indigenous content in ship building. The partnership will support the supply of indigenous marine-grade steel. The MoU highlights the pivotal role of public-private partnerships in trying to deal with complex security challenges. It emphasizes the need of collaboration between the private sector and government agencies to strengthen national interests. The MoU includes key benefits aimed at making sure quality, grades, and dimensions of the marine-grade steel. It earmarks the designated steel plants for manufacturing the product. This will ensure a timely supply to shipbuilding yards serving the ICG.

In FY23, 83,000 patents were filed in India, a growth of 24.6%

According to a Nasscom report, 83,000 patents were filed in India in FY23, the highest

in two decades, with filings more than doubling since FY2019. Over 100,000 patents were granted between March 2023 and March 2024. The share of patents filed by Indians rose from 33.6% in FY2019 to over 50% in FY2023. DeepTechstartups focused on AI, IoT, and Neurotechnology, while the health sector saw many patents in medical imaging, diagnosis, and testing. AI patents were primarily in image processing, NLP, and predictive modeling. The patent filing process has improved in the past two years.

NABARD has partnered with RBI's RBI Innovation Hub (RBIH)

NABARD has partnered with RBIH to integrate its e-Kisan Credit Card (KCC) loan portal with RBIH's Public Tech Platform for Frictionless Credit (PTPFC), aiming to speed up agricultural loan processing. This integration will enable instant doorstep credit delivery to farmers, reducing loan turnaround time from three to four weeks to just five minutes. The partnership, signed by NABARD chairman Shaji K V and RBIH CEO Rajesh Bansal, involves 351 cooperative banks and 43 Regional Rural Banks (RRBs), providing access to digitized land records, satellite data, KYC, and credit history. Initially, a few RRBs will pilot the implementation, with plans to extend the platform to about 5 crore KCC loans nationwide.

Reliance Jio became the world's largest mobile operator in data traffic

Reliance Jio has become the world's largest mobile operator in terms of data traffic by surpassing China Mobile. The total traffic on the Jio network has reached 40.9 exabytes, with a 35.2% year-on-year increase. Jio has a very strong and wide subscriber base of 481.8 million. It is transforming India with 108 million True 5G customers. The monthly per capita

data usage has increased from 13.3 GB three years ago to 28.7 GB. Jio has also become the first Indian company to cross ₹100,000-crore in pre-tax profits.

NABARD released its Climate Strategy 2030 document

On the occasion of Earth Day, the National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development



(NABARD) released its Climate Strategy 2030 document. The Climate Strategy 2030 document has been released by Shaji KV, Chairman of NABARD.

Its main aim is to address India's need for green financing. As per the NABARD, India requires \$170 billion annually to reach a cumulative total of over \$2.5 trillion by 2030. NABARD's Climate Strategy 2030 is based on four key pillars: accelerating green lending across sectors, playing a broader market-making role, internal green transformation and strategic resource mobilization. Until 2019-20, about \$49 billion has been collected by India in green financing. The majority of funds were for mitigation while \$5 billion was allocated towards adaptation and resilience. This strategy will make NABARD a pivotal player in India's transition towards a resilient and sustainable economy.

BharatPe One has been launched by BharatPe

BharatPe One is all-in-one payment device. It integrates a point of sale, QR code, and speaker into one device. In the 1st phase, BharatPe One will be launched in 100 cities and in 450 cities over the next six months. BharatPe One offers payment options including QR code, tap-and-pay and traditional card payment. BharatPe One is having a high-definition touchscreen display,

4G and Wi-Fi connectivity. It is powered by the latest Android operating system.

For the fiscal year 2023–2024, India's net direct tax collections increased 17.7% to 19.58 lakh crore rupees

In the preceding fiscal year, India's net direct tax receipts totaled 16.64 lakh crore rupees, exceeding the FY24 budgetary forecast by 1.35 lakh crore rupees (7.4%). The initial forecast was 18.23 lakh crore rupees, later revised to 19.45 lakh crore rupees, with actual receipts being 13,000 crore rupees higher. Gross direct tax collection increased by 18.5% to 23.37 lakh crore rupees. Personal income tax gross revenue was 12.01 lakh crore rupees, growing by 24.26%. Net personal income tax receipts grew by 25.23% to 10.44 lakh crore rupees. The government refunded 3.79 lakh crore rupees in direct taxes, a 22.74% rise from the previous year's 3.09 lakh crore rupees.

IRDAI abolished the age limit for individuals buying health insurance policies

The IRDAI has removed the age limit of 65 years for individuals buying health insurance policies to expand the market and foster adequate protection from healthcare expenses. It marks a significant change from the old rules that stopped people from getting full coverage. It will ensure adequate protection against unforeseen medical expenses. As per the IRDAI, insurers may design products specifically for senior citizens, students, children, maternity, and any other group. Insurers cannot deny coverage to individuals with serious medical issues such as cancer, heart or kidney failure, and AIDS.

A fine of Rs.60.3 lakhs imposed by RBI on 5 cooperative banks for violating rules

A fine of Rs.43.30 lakh has been imposed on Rajkot NagrikSahakari Bank for non-compliance with RBI instructions. RBI has

'prohibited granting of loans and advances to directors and their relatives and firms in which they have interest' and 'prohibited opening of savings bank accounts in the name of certain organizations'. A monetary penalty of Rs.5 lakh each has been imposed by the central bank on The Kangra Co-operative Bank (New Delhi), Rajdhani Nagar Co-operative Bank (Lucknow), and District Co-operative Bank, Garhwal (Kotdwar, Uttarakhand). Apart from this, a fine of Rs.2 has been imposed on the District Cooperative Bank (Dehradun). In each case, the RBI said the penalty is based on deficiencies in regulatory compliance. It is not intended to affect the validity of any transaction entered into by the banks with their respective customers.

Vedanta firm Hindustan Zinc has become the third-largest silver producer globally

According to a survey, its SindesarKhurd mine in Rajasthan has now become the world's second-largest silver-producing mine, up from fourth place last year. Silver plays a key role in the global energy transition and Hindustan Zinc's 5% year-on-year growth in production is attributed to increased ore production and improved grades. This strengthens its position as a major player in the global silver market. Hindustan Zinc is a Vedanta Group company in the zinc, lead, and silver business. It is the world's second-largest integrated zinc producer and now the third-largest silver producer. Udaipur headquartered, Hindustan Zinc has a 75% market share in the growing zinc market in India with zinc, lead mines, and smelting complexes spread across Rajasthan.

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

A rocky planet has been finally detected by astronomers with an atmosphere



Astronomers have discovered a rocky planet called Janssen or 55 Cancri e, which is larger than Earth but

smaller than Neptune. It orbits very close to its star, completing an orbit every 18 hours. This super-Earth has a surface of molten rock, making it uninhabitable. Infrared observations from the James Webb Space Telescope suggest the presence of a substantial atmosphere, likely formed by gases escaping from a magma ocean. The atmosphere is likely rich in carbon dioxide or carbon monoxide, along with other gases like water vapor and sulfur dioxide. Janssen is about twice the size of Earth and 8.8 times more massive, with a scorching surface temperature of approximately 3,140 °F (1,725 °C/2,000 °K).

ISRO Chief Somanath unveils the Zero emission initiative of SFO technologies

Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) Chief Somanath unveiled the carbon reduction initiative of SFO Technologies, the flagship company of the NeST Group. The Carbon Reduction initiative of the NeST Group aims to achieve a 50 per cent reduction by 2035 and zero emissions by 2040. Around 400 enterprises in the country have benefited from the technologies developed by ISRO for its various missions. The Indian space sector is supposed to become a USD 9-10 billion business in the next 5-10 years from the current 2 billion dollars. SFO Technologies has worked closely in association with ISRO for many years. Both have worked on multiple

programmes, such as the RF sub-systems for Chandrayaan and Aditya Missions. SFO Technologies and NeST Group are committed to protecting the environment and reducing carbon emissions.

New liquid rocket engine successfully tested by ISRO in Tamil Nadu

ISRO successfully tested a new liquid rocket engine made using 3D printing technology. The test was conducted at the ISRO Propulsion Complex in Tamil Nadu. The redesigned PS4 engine has reduced parts from 14 to one and eliminated 19 weld joints, leading to significant material and time savings. The engine will be used in the PSLV launch vehicle, and ISRO plans to integrate it into regular PSLV missions. ISRO collaborated with Wipro 3D for the hot testing of the engine, marking a milestone in India's space program's adoption of advanced manufacturing technology.

The joint exercises conducted by the Army and Indian Air Force at many places in Punjab

The Khadga Corps of the Indian Army, along with the Indian Air Force, conducted a three-day joint exercise in Punjab under the Western Command. Named Gagan Strike-II, the exercise aimed to refine procedures and validate the use of combat helicopters in mechanized operations. It involved Apache and ALH-WSI helicopters, drones, and special forces. The objective was to enhance coordination and proficiency between the two forces, focusing on ground attacks and live firing by helicopters to support offensive maneuvers.

The smallest AI model ever introduced by Microsoft is Phi-3-Mini

Microsoft recently unveiled its latest AI model called Phi-3-Mini, following Meta's Llama 3 Large Language Model (LLM). Phi-3-Mini is part of Microsoft's Phi-3 family of open AI models, designed to be the most capable and cost-effective small language models (SLM) available. It has outperformed similar-sized models in benchmarks for language, logic, coding, and math. These language models are essential for AI applications like ChatGPT and others. Phi-3-mini, a 3.8b language model, is available on platforms like Microsoft Azure AI Studio, HuggingFace, and Olama. Compared to larger models like LLMs, Phi-3-mini is more cost-effective and performs better on smaller devices like laptops and smartphones.

Many glacial lake sizes increased in the Himalayan region: ISRO

The number of glacial lakes larger than 10 hectares has increased since 1984, posing a higher risk of glacial lake outburst floods (GLOFs). Out of 2,431 such lakes identified, 676 have expanded, with 601 doubling in size. Most of these lakes are located at high altitudes, with some in the Indus, Ganga, and Brahmaputra River basins. The growth of these lakes is attributed to climate change causing glaciers to shrink and form lakes, increasing the risk of GLOFs downstream.

Indian Navy carried out Exercise Poorvi Lehar on the East Coast

The goal of the exercise was to validate the protocols for evaluating the Indian Navy's readiness to handle difficulties related to maritime security in the area. Ships, submarines, planes, and Special Forces all took part in the exercise. The exercise was carried out in stages, with combat training in an authentic setting taking place in the

Tactical Phase and different firings being executed successfully in the Weapon Phase. The exercise included assets from the Indian Air Force, the Coast Guard, and the Andaman and Nicobar Command in addition to those from Eastern Naval Command. This suggested that there was a very high level of service interoperability. The Indian Navy's commitment to addressing the increasing security threats in the maritime environment is reaffirmed by the exercise.

The world's first "Miss AI" contest will be held to select a winner based on beauty and social media influence

The world's first AI beauty pageant, "Miss AI," will feature models and influencers created



through artificial intelligence. Contestants will be judged based on their appearance, online presence, and technical skills. The competition offers a \$20,000 prize, with

cash prizes for the winner, runner-up, and third-place winner. The panel of judges includes both AI-generated and human judges, with the winners announced in May during an online awards ceremony.

Indigenous flight control modules handed over to HAL for the LCA Tejas MK-1A variant by DRDO

DRDO handed over the first batch of indigenous Leading Edge Actuators and Airbrake Control Modules to Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL). The collaboration between DRDO's Aeronautical Development Agency, Research CenterBhadra, and Central Institute of Manufacturing Technology has achieved self-reliance in aeronautical technologies. HAL is now equipped to install these components in the Mk-1A variant of the

LCA Tejas, enhancing its flight controls. The production of these components is underway at HAL's Accessories Division in Lucknow.

DRDO carried out a successful flight test of Indigenous Technology Cruise Missile

The missile was fired for testing from the Integrated Test Range, Chandipur off the coast of Odisha. The flight of the missile was also monitored from the Indian Air Force's Su-30-Mk-I aircraft. This successful flight test has also demonstrated the reliable performance of the indigenous propulsion system, which has been developed by the Gas Turbine Research Establishment. The missile is also having advanced avionics and software to make sure its better and more reliable performance. The successful development of indigenous long-range subsonic cruise missiles powered by indigenous propulsion is a significant achievement according to Defence Minister Rajnath Singh.

GopiThotakura to become the first Indian space tourist

Entrepreneur and pilot GopiThotakura is set to become first Indian to venture into space as a tourist. He will be part of the NS-25 mission of Blue Origin — a company founded by Jeff Bezos. He has been selected as one of the six crew members for the mission. Thotakura would be the second Indian to go into space. Rakesh Sharma was the first Indian to go into space in 1984. As per media reports, in 2023, the space tourism market was valued at \$848.28 million. It is likely to grow to \$27,861.99 million by 2032. GopiThotakura is a graduate of the US-based Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University. Space tourism is an important section of the aviation sector. The NS-25 mission is a sub-orbital mission.



Astronomers have detected the largest stellar black hole in the Milky Way galaxy

Researchers have discovered a black hole named "Gaia BH3" that's 33 times the mass of the Sun and only 2,000 light years away, making it the second closest black hole to Earth. It was found using data from the Gaia mission. This black hole is the most massive of its kind in the Milky Way, where around 50 similar black holes have been identified. Stellar black holes form when massive stars explode as supernovae and collapse. The Milky Way also hosts a supermassive black hole, much larger at 4 million solar masses, located 26,000 light years away. Scientists are looking for intermediate black holes, which are between stellar and supermassive in size.

ISRO has developed Carbon-Carbon (C-C) nozzle for rocket engines. It is a lightweight, innovative nozzle and a breakthrough in rocket engine technology

ISRO's Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre (VSSC) has developed a new innovation to enhance rocket engine performance. This involves a unique silicon carbide anti-oxidation coating for rocket nozzles, improving thrust levels and efficiency. This coating also increases resistance to high temperatures and corrosion, allowing for higher operating temperatures. It particularly benefits the Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV) by reducing engine weight and increasing payload capacity. For example, replacing Columbium alloy nozzles with C-C counterparts can decrease mass by 67% and increase payload capacity by 15 kg.

A new species of tiger cat has been discovered in Brazil

A new species of tiger cat, the clouded tiger cat, has been found in Brazil. It is facing threats from deforestation and illegal hunting. They are among the shyest and smallest wild cats in the Americas, weighing between 1.5 to 3 kilograms (3.3 to 6.6 pounds). It has been discovered in the lush rainforests of Brazil. It is small in stature. Its unique feature is its distinctive spotted coat, which provides camouflage in its natural habitat. The clouded tiger cat is found in the cloud forests of the southern Central American and Andean mountain chains. The researchers believe their latest findings represent the need for greater protection of tiger cats.

Meta unveils Llama 3 and real-time image generator

Meta released its latest large language model Llama 3 and a real-time image generator. Its main objective is to fill the gap with OpenAI in the rapidly evolving field of artificial intelligence (AI). The newly unveiled models will be integrated into Meta's virtual assistant-Meta AI. Meta's Llama 3 is the latest in its Llama series of open-source AI models. It came in two versions: one with 8 billion

parameters and a second with 70 billion parameters. The models are trained on sequences of 8,192 tokens. It grouped query attention (GQA) for both the 8B and 70B parameter models.

An international team of scientists discovered 50 unknown species near Salas y Gomez underwater mountain chain

After exploring the Salas y Gómez underwater mountain chain in the Southeastern Pacific Ocean, Scientists announced the discovery of 160 marine species. At least 50 of those species are new to science. Squid, fish, corals, mollusks, glass sponges, sea urchins, crabs, and squat lobsters have been discovered. The findings came after a 40-day expedition across the Salas y Gómez Ridge to Rapa Nui. The data collected from this expedition will help establishing new marine protected areas. 2,900-kilometre-long ocean ridge Salas y Gómez has over 110 seamounts and it supports the migration of many marine animals. After the ratification of the UN High Seas Treaty, Salas y Gómez Ridge is one of the many global locations under consideration for being designated as high seas marine protected area.

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SPORTS

Aman Sehrawat has become first Indian male wrestler to qualify for 2024 Paris Olympics

He has become the first Indian male wrestler to secure a quota place for the 2024 Paris



Olympics. He got a Paris quota in the men's 57kg freestyle category at the World Wrestling Olympic Qualifiers in Istanbul, Türkiye. He defeated Chongsong Han of Korea 12-2

in the semi-final for India's 6th quota in wrestling for the 2024 Olympics. Indian women wrestlers obtained all of the previous five quotas. Aman Sehrawat is an Indian freestyle wrestler from Haryana.

World wrestling body suspends Bajrang Punia until 2024

UWW's decision comes after the national doping body suspended Bajrang Punia for refusing to undergo a dope test. Bajrang Punia said that he never refused to give his sample for testing but only asked the Dope Control Officer to explain the presence of expired kits. Recently, under the Mission Olympic Cell (MOC), Bajrang has been sanctioned Rs 8,82,000 for his proposal to train in Dagestan, Russia. Doping is the use of banned performance-enhancing drugs in sports. The use of drugs will enhance the performance of sportspeople, which is considered unethical.

The Indian contingent won 43 medals in the ASBC Asian U22 and Youth Boxing Championship in Astana, Kazakhstan

The Indian contingent won a total of 43 medals at the ASBC Men's and Women's U22 and Youth Asian Boxing Championships held in Kazakhstan. This included 12 gold, 14 silver, and 17 bronze medals across both categories. India ranked second in medal count after the host country, Kazakhstan, which secured 48 medals.

India won the gold medal in the Archery World Cup in the men's recurve event

India secured the men's recurve team gold at the Archery World Cup Stage 1 by defeating South Korea 5-1. The team of Rai, Dhiraj, and Jadhav defeated Korea's champion team. Deepika Kumari won silver in the women's individual event, and India also claimed bronze in the mixed-team event. This success boosts confidence for the upcoming Olympic qualifier in June. India won a total of eight medals: five gold, two silvers, and one bronze. This is India's first World Cup men's team gold in 14 years.

Legendary Indian cricketer Yuvraj Singh appointed ambassador for ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2024

Yuvraj Singh has been named an ambassador for the ICC Men's T20 World Cup. He will join Chris Gayle and Usain Bolt in promoting the event, which will be held in the United States and West Indies from June 1-29. Yuvraj's appointment celebrates his famous achievement of hitting six sixes in an over during India's 2007 T20 World Cup. He will participate in promotional events, including

the India vs Pakistan match in New York on June 9.

D Gukesh became the youngest person to win the Candidates tournament

Grandmaster Gukesh Dommaraju created history by becoming the youngest person to win the prestigious Candidates Tournament. He earned the right to challenge for the world championship crown in 2024. 17-year-old Gukesh emerged as the sole leader at the end of the thrilling 14-round Candidates Tournament in Toronto, Canada. In addition,

Gukesh also became the second Indian after Vishwanathan Anand to win Candidates Chess. Gukesh will face reigning world champion Ding Liren for the world title at the end of the year. Gukesh will have the opportunity to become the youngest world champion by challenging Ding Liren. Magnus Carlsen and Garry Kasparov became world champions at the age of 22 years.

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AWARDS

Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) has been conferred the Outstanding Public Sector Undertaking (PSU) of the Year award

At the All India Management Association (AIMA) Managing India Awards ceremony,



Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) received the Outstanding Public Sector Undertaking (PSU) of the Year award. The award was presented by Vice-

President Jagdeep Dhankhar in Delhi. In the last financial year, HAL collected the highest-ever revenue of more than ₹29,810 crore from operations. It registered a double-digit growth of around 11% as against 9% in the previous financial year. It has maintained growth momentum and has achieved an all-round improved performance in diverse areas. All India Management Association (AIMA) was established in 1957. It is the apex body of the management profession in India. It works closely with industry, government, academia, and students to further the cause of the management profession in India.

Bangladeshi Singer Rezwana Chowdhury received the Padma Shri Award

Renowned Bangladeshi singer Rezwana Chowdhury Bannya received the prestigious Padma Shri Award. Droupadi Murmu presented the Padma Vibhushan, Padma Bhushan, and Padma Shri Awards for the year 2024 at the Civil Investiture Ceremony held at Rashtrapati Bhavan. She received the award for her contribution to the field of Art. She is a practitioner of Rabindra Sangeet. She sang

“Vaishnav Jan To” to commemorate the 150th Birth Anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi. She runs ‘Shurer Dhara’, a prestigious music school in Dhaka. She has also written many books on Rabindra Sangeet.

Deepika Soreng received the Asunta Lakra Award

Deepika Soreng, an India Women's Hockey Team player, won the Asunta Lakra Award. She made her debut for India in the Women's Junior Asia Cup. She helped the Indian team to win the Gold medal by scoring 7 goals in 6 matches. She was also a key player for the Indian team that won the Silver medal in the FIH Women's Hockey World Cup Oman 2024. She was also named the Young Player of the Tournament in Oman. She travelled with the team to the 2023 FIH Junior Women's World Cup. She received the Asunta Lakra Award for Upcoming Player of the Year during the Hockey India 6th Annual Awards 2023.

International Literature Prize awarded to Kannada poet Mamta G Sagar

Mamta G Sagar, a Kannada poet, playwright, and academic, received the World Literary Prize from the World Organization of Writers (WOW) for her literary contributions. The award was presented at WOW's first congress in Abuja, Nigeria, held at the Association of Nigerian Authors (ANA) Writers Village. Sagar, based in Bengaluru, addresses gender, politics, and human rights issues in her works, including anthologies like 'Kaada Navilina Hejje' and 'Nadiya Neerina Teva'.

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MISCELLANEOUS

APPOINTMENT

Idashisha Nongrang has been appointed the first woman Director General of Police (DGP) of Meghalaya

As the state police chief, she will serve till May 19, 2026. Currently, Ms Nongrang is the



Director General of Meghalaya Civil Defense and also belongs to the Khasi community. In 2021, she served as the acting DGP. Meghalaya is a hilly state

dominated by three matrilineal ethnic communities. Khasi is a matrilineal community. The other two matrilineal communities in the state are the Garo and the Jaintia.

Rana Ashutosh Kumar Singh's name for the position of State Bank of India MD has been recommended by the FSIB

Financial Services Institutions Bureau (FSIB) has also recommended the appointment of AsheeshPandey for the position of MD & CEO in Indian Bank. RanaAshutosh Kumar Singh is currently Deputy Managing Director (Retail- Personal Banking & Real Estate) at SBI. Presently, SBI has four MDs. They are ChallaSreenivasuluSetty, Alok Kumar Choudhary, Ashwini Kumar Tewari, and Vinay M Tonse. The tenure of Alok Kumar Choudhary as MD will end on June 30, 2024, when he will superannuate. AsheeshPandey is currently the Executive Director at Bank of Maharashtra. Presently, Shanti Lal Jain is the MD and CEO of Indian Bank.

Intel has made Santhosh Viswanathan as its India region head

SanthoshViswanathan assumed charge as Vice President and Managing Director for the Indian market. Now Computer chip maker Intel has carved out India as a separate region. Intel also announced the appointment of Hans Chuang as General Manager (GM) of SMG Asia Pacific and Japan (APJ). Hans will have the responsibility for Intel's overall business in the APJ region. Intel is an American multinational corporation and technology company. It is headquartered in Santa Clara, California.

Vice Admiral Dinesh Kumar Tripathi has been appointed as next chief of Indian Navy

He is a communication and electronic warfare specialist. He had served as Flag Officer Commanding-in-Chief of the Western Naval Command. He has commanded INS Vinash. He also served as Flag Officer Commanding of the Eastern Fleet. He is a recipient of the AtiVishistSeva Medal and NauSena Medal.

World Economic Forum names Nykaa's Adwaita Nayar as a 2024 Young Global Leader

AdwaitaNayar, the co-founder of Nykaa and CEO of Nykaa Fashion, has been included in the World Economic Forum's Young Global Leaders Community. Nayar joined a group of 90 individuals from across the world for her work as a change-maker and entrepreneur. She is one of the world's most powerful political and business leaders. She played a pivotal role in the inception of the company

and in shaping it into a business. She led at Nykaa in dealing with the complexities of fundraising, marketing and operations. The World Economic Forum's Forum of Young Global Leaders aims to celebrate change-makers under 40 years old and help to devise solutions to the world's problems

Following retirement, Supreme Court Justice Aniruddha Bose was named the next Director of the National Judicial Academy

The NJA was founded in 1993 and functions under the direction of the Supreme Court with the objective of improving judicial administration and judge competency. Aniruddha Bose, who was born in Kolkata on April 11, 1959, attended Surendranath Law College to study law after completing her upper secondary schooling. He began practicing civil, constitutional, and intellectual property law at the Calcutta High Court in 1985. In January 2004, he was named a permanent judge there, and in August 2018, he was promoted to the position of Chief Justice of the Jharkhand High Court.

Kristalina Georgieva has been reappointed as the Managing Director (MD) of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) for another five-year term beginning October 1, 2024

She was the only candidate nominated for the position this year, and she was appointed by the IMF executive board. The IMF's managing director is appointed by the executive board, which has the option of voting or reaching a consensus. In 2004, the IMF implemented a policy of appointing Managing Directors through consensus. An IMF Fund Governor or Executive Director

may nominate candidates for the position of MD.

OBITUARIES

Yakshagana exponent Subrahmanya Dhareshwar passes away at the age of 67 in Bengaluru

Yakshagana singer Subramanya Dhareshwar has earned the fame of 'Bhagwat Shrestha'



for his magnificent voice. He was honored to fill the vacuum created after the departure of Kalinga Navada, who had created a new wave in Yakshagana in the

Badguthittu version. Subrahmanya Dhareshwar had served for 46 years in the field of Yakshagana, a unique dance form of coastal Karnataka, consisting of distinctive singing, dancing, and drama styles. It bears similarities to the Theyyam art form of the neighboring state of Kerala. Dhareshwar had worked as the lead singer for 28 years in Perdoor Mela alone and before that, he started his journey at Amritheshwari Mela.

Father of Indian psychoanalysis, Sudhir Kakar passed away

Sudhir Kakar, known as the father of Indian psychoanalysis, passed away at the age of 85. He was a famous author and cultural critic. He left an unforgettable mark on the field of psychoanalysis in India. He has written more than 20 non-fiction and fiction books. The Inner World (1978) was one of Kakar's first major works. He tackled rarely discussed subjects in India including the influence of religion, social norms, intimate relationships and sexual expression. He obtained his doctorate in economics from the University of Vienna and later trained in

psychoanalysis at the Sigmund Freud Institute in Frankfurt.

BOOKS

The book 'India — the Road to Renaissance: A Vision and an Agenda' has been launched

The book is written by former UN official Bhimeswara Challa. The book was launched at Administrative Staff College of India

(ASCI) campus. The launch event was attended by former IAS officer Dr Jayaprakash Narayan, former ASCI chairman K. Padamanabhaiah and former RBI Governor Dr D. SubbaRao.

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MATCH POINT

- World Hydrogen Summit 2024 was organized in - **Netherlands**
- Recently this England cricketer announced his retirement from international cricket- **James Anderson**
- This person has become the first Indian male wrestler to get quota for Paris Olympics 2024- **Aman Sehrawat**
- In this state is the 7th edition of India-France joint military exercise 'Shakti' was organized- **Meghalaya**
- Senior Nationals Sailing Championship 2024 was organized at - **Mumbai**
- This person has made the record of climbing the world's highest peak Mount Everest the most number of times- **Kami Rita Sherpa**
- India has signed a bilateral contract with Iran to operate Chabahar port for - **10 years**
- India has announced the establishment of a new research station in- **Antarctica**
- India has recently withdrawn its military personnel from - **Maldives**
- Recently this country has extended the time limit for visa free entry of Indians- **Sri Lanka**
- 46th Antarctic Treaty Consultative Meeting was held in - **Kochi**
- Shinku-La pass, which was in the news recently, is located in - **Himachal Pradesh**
- 'School on Wheels' initiative was recently launched in - **Manipur**
- 26th ASEAN-India Senior Officials Meeting was held in - **New Delhi**
- This Bollywood actress has been appointed as the National Brand Ambassador of UNICEF India- **Kareena Kapoor Khan**
- Jeremiah Manele has recently been appointed as the Prime Minister of this country- **Solomon Islands**
- NPCI International Payments Limited has signed an agreement with this African country for services like UPI- **Namibia**
- This country has recently released its new currency- **Zimbabwe**
- Recently this person has been awarded the title of Grandmaster by the International Chess Federation- **Vaishali Ramesh Babu**
- This IIT was awarded the patent on indigenously developed compact inverter by the Government of India- **IIT Patna**
- Actor Randeep Hooda was recently honoured with this award for his contribution to Indian cinema- **Lata Dinanath Mangeshkar Award**
- World Energy Congress 2024 was organized in - **Netherlands**
- In this state India's first multipurpose (heat and power) green hydrogen pilot project was started- **Himachal Pradesh**
- According to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, this country is the fourth highest spender on defence in 2023- **India**
- Prabowo Subianto has been appointed as the new President of - **Indonesia**
- Archery World Cup 2024 was organized in - **China**

- Tata Power Solar Systems has announced strategic collaboration with - **Indian Bank**
- With this organisation has C-DOT tied up to increase the efficiency of 5G network- **IIT Jodhpur**
- This organisation develops India's lightest bulletproof jacket for protection against highest threat level- **DRDO**
- Volcano Mount Erebus was in the news recently, It is located in this continent - **Antarctica**
- National Defence University has joined hands with Starburst Aerospace of this country for defence innovation- **France**
- Recently this sports person has won the title of Shanghai Grand Prix 2024- **Max Verstappen**
- Theme of World Book and Copyright Day 2024- **'Read Your Way'**
- This personality has been appointed as the first woman Vice Chancellor of Aligarh Muslim University- **Professor NaimaKhatoon**
- BJP candidate MukeshDalal has been elected unopposed from this Lok Sabha seat of Gujarat- **Surat**
- Indian milk brand 'Nandini' has become the sponsor of these two teams in the upcoming T20 Cricket World Cup- **Scotland and Ireland**
- This personality has been appointed as the head of 'National Security Guard'- **NalinPrabhat**
- Indian Navy's Eastern Naval Command conducted 'Eastern Wave Exercise'. Headquarters of Eastern Command is - **Visakhapatnam**
- This personality has been appointed as the next Chief of the Indian Navy- **Dinesh Kumar Tripathi**
- This Indian airport won the Skytrax Award 2024 for 'Best Airport Staff'- **GMR Hyderabad International Airport**
- Recently 'Tricolour Barfi' has been given GI tag, it is related to this city- **Varanasi**
- Recently India is supplying Brahmos supersonic cruise missile to - **Philippines**
- Hindustan Zinc has reached which position in silver production globally- **third**
- This Airport has won the Best Airport Award at the Skytrax Awards 2024- **Hamad International Airport (Doha)**
- World Future Energy Summit 2024 was organized in - **Abu Dhabi**
- This Indian institute played an important role in Shri Ram 'Surya Tilak' program in Ayodhya- **Indian Institute of Astrophysics**
- Theme of World Heritage Day 2024- **'Discover and Experience Diversity'**
- Sheikh Ahmed Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah has become the new Prime Minister of - **Kuwait**
- Greenfield Noida International Airport has signed an agreement with this organisation for fuel pipeline- **BPCL**
- 23rd session of the 'United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues' was held in - **New York**
- The joint military exercise Dustlik was organized between India and the army of - **Uzbekistan**
- This Airport is the world's busiest airport- **Atlanta International Airport (US)**
- Bharat Electronics Limited has signed an agreement with this organisation for cooperation in quantum technology- **IIT Mandi**
- Rank of Delhi Airport in the list of world's busiest airports - **10th**

●●●

MCQ ON CURRENT AFFAIRS

1. Consider the following statements with reference to the Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre (I4C):

1. It has been established under the Ministry of Science and Technology to act as a nodal point in the fight against cybercrime in the country.
2. It brings together academia, industry, public and government in the prevention, detection, investigation, and prosecution of cybercrimes.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only
 - (b) 2 only
 - (c) Both 1 and 2
 - (d) Neither 1 nor 2
2. The Great Pyramid of Giza, recently seen in the news, is located in which one of the following countries?
- (a) Peru
 - (b) Mexico
 - (c) Egypt
 - (d) Iraq
3. With reference to Geomagnetic Storms, consider the following statements:
1. The primary cause of such storms are gravitational disturbances from other planets.
 2. These storms can heat the ionosphere, causing auroras on earth.
 3. They can increase satellite drag and make their orbits difficult to control.

How many of the above given statements are correct?

- (a) Only one

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

4. With reference to the Wholesale Price Index (WPI), consider the following statements:

1. It measures the changes in the prices of goods and services sold and traded in bulk by wholesale businesses to other businesses.
2. It is calculated and published by the Office of Economic Advisor in the Ministry of Commerce and Industry.
3. It is published quarterly and is used to measure the level of wholesale inflation in both goods and services.

How many of the above given statements are correct?

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

5. 'Exercise Tarkash, a joint counter terrorism exercise is held between India and:

- (a) Japan
- (b) United States of America
- (c) United Kingdom
- (d) Nepal

6. Consider the following statements with reference to the Nancy Grace Roman Space Telescope:

1. It monitors millions of stars that haunt the outskirts of our solar system.
2. It is developed by the European Space Agency.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only

- (b) 2 only
(c) Both 1 and 2
(d) Neither 1 nor 2
7. Consider the following statements regarding the Armoured Sailfin Catfish:
1. It is considered an invasive species.
 2. It has the ability to endure in oxygen-deprived conditions.
- 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. With reference to Memory of the World programme, consider the following statements:
1. It is an initiative launched by UNESCO.
 2. It aims to facilitate preservation of the world's documentary heritage.
 3. Ramcharitmanas written by Tulasidas has been included under this programme.
- How many of the above statements are correct?
- (a) Only one
(b) Only two
(c) All three
(d) None
9. Consider the following statements about Vibrant Village Programme
1. It is a Centrally Sponsored Scheme of Ministry of Home Affairs.
 2. It aims for comprehensive development of villages and blocks on the northern border of the country
 3. Vibrant Village Action Plans to be created by the district administration with the help of Gram Panchayats.
- How many of the statements given above are correct?

- (a) Only one
(b) Only two
(c) All three
(d) None of the above
10. Consider the following statements about Soil Nailing
1. It is a geotechnical engineering technique that involves the insertion of reinforcing elements into the soil in a specified area to strengthen it.
 2. This process uses steel tendons which are drilled and grouted into the soil to create a composite mass similar to a gravity wall.
- Choose the correct statements:
- (a) 1 only
(b) 2 only
(c) Both 1 and 2
(d) Neither 1 nor 2
11. 'Exercise Shakti' is a joint military exercise between India and which one of the following countries?
- (a) USA
(b) Russia
(c) United Kingdom
(d) France
12. With reference to Chabahar Port, consider the following statements:
1. It is the only Iranian port with direct access to the Indian Ocean.
 2. It is situated on the Persian Gulf.
 3. It is a key transit center on the International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC).
- How many of the above statements are correct?
- (a) Only one
(b) Only two
(c) All three
(d) None
13. Consider the following statements with reference to the GPT-4o:
1. It can recognize the voice of the speaker or multiple speakers.

2. It can pick up user's emotions and come up with different kinds of emotive styles of conversation.
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. Widal Test, is performed to detect which of the following disease?
(a) Typhoid Fever
(b) COVID-19
(c) Malaria
(d) Hepatitis C
15. Consider the following statements with reference to Zero-Day Vulnerability (ZDV):
1. It is a system or software vulnerability unknown to the vendor.
2. It is a vulnerability for which no mitigation is available at the time it is discovered.
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
16. With reference to Credit Information Companies (CICs), consider the following statements:
1. They are licensed by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI).
2. Both banks and Non-Banking Financial Companies (NBFCs) can refer to the CIC report to assess the creditworthiness of borrowers.
3. Every Credit Institution (like banks) should be a member of at least one CIC.
How many of the above statements are correct?
(a) Only one
(b) Only two
(c) All three
(d) None
17. Rat-Hole Mining is a method of manual drilling most common in which one of the following States in India?
(a) Odisha
(b) Meghalaya
(c) Jharkhand
(d) Bihar
18. Consider the following statements with reference to Mammoth carbon capture Plant:
1. It is situated in the Antarctica region.
2. It draws in air and chemically extracts carbon dioxide, which can then be stored underground.
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 with reference to the ASEAN-India Trade in Goods Agreement:
1. It was signed at the 7th ASEAN Economic Ministers-India Consultations in Bangkok in 2009.
2. It only applies to trade in physical goods and does not apply to trade in services.
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 United Nations Forum on Forests
1. It was established in 2000 by the United Nations Environment Programme and International Union for Conservation of Nature.

2. India is a founding member of United Nations Forum on Forests.
3. United Nations Strategic Plan for Forests by UNFF aims to increase forest area by 3% worldwide by 2030.

Select the correct statement(s)

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

21. Consider the following statements about Aadharshila

1. It is the first-ever national curriculum framework for children aged 3 to 6 years.
2. It aims to strengthen pre-school learning in 14 lakh anganwadis across India.
3. It was released by the Ministry of Women and Child Development (MWCD).

How many of the statements given above are correct?

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

22. Humboldt Glacier, sometimes seen in the news recently, is located in?

- (a) Argentina
- (b) Peru
- (c) Chile
- (d) Venezuela

23. 'Bletchley Declaration', which was in the news recently, is associated with which field?

- (a) Global terrorism
- (b) Plastic pollution
- (c) Artificial Intelligence
- (d) UNSC reforms

24. Which of the following statements about the 'Hague Convention' of UNESCO is true?

- (a) The Hague Convention aims to regulate maritime navigation and

prevent conflicts over territorial waters.

- (b) The Hague Convention addresses issues related to international trade and tariffs on agricultural products.
- (c) The Hague Convention primarily focuses on the protection of cultural heritage during armed conflicts.
- (d) The Hague Convention is concerned with the establishment of diplomatic relations between nations.

25. Consider the following statements with reference to the Deadbots:

1. They are AI-enabled digital representations of departed loved ones.
2. They are conversational AI models and simulates human conversation.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

26. Consider the following statements with reference to Sea anemones:

1. It is a vertebrate aquatic species found in sea bottoms.
2. It is known to form symbiotic relationships with Hermit Crab.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

27. Cook Islands, recently seen in the news, are located in:

- (a) Pacific Ocean
- (b) Atlantic Ocean
- (c) Arctic Ocean
- (d) Southern Ocean

28. 55 Cancri e Planet, recently in news, is located in:
 (a) Magellanic Clouds Galaxy
 (b) Andromeda Galaxy
 (c) Black Eye Galaxy
 (d) Milky Way galaxy
29. Consider the following statements with reference to constructed wetlands:
 1. They are engineered structures that direct wastewater through gravel beds to promote microbial activity.
 2. They are constructed to convert pollutants into benign compounds through natural processes.
 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
30. Consider the following statements with reference to the Hanooman AI platform:
 1. It is a largest Generative Artificial Intelligence platform.
 2. It can perform complex technical tasks like coding and tutoring.
 Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
 (a) 1 only
 (b) 2 only
 (c) Both 1 and 2
 (d) Neither 1 nor 2
31. Consider the following statements with reference to PS4 engine:
 1. It is used in uppermost stage of Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV).
 2. It uses a bipropellant combination of nitrogen oxide as the oxidizer and monomethyl hydrazine as the fuel.
 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
32. Which of the following methods, through the use of Directive principles, does the Constitution guarantee worker welfare and protect labor rights?
 1. It makes provision for just and humane conditions for work and maternity relief.
 2. It exhorts the government to take steps to secure the participation of workers in the management of industries.
 Which of the above statements is/are correct?
 (a) 1 only
 (b) 2 only
 (c) Both 1 and 2
 (d) Neither 1 nor 2
33. Which of the following statements about anti-dumping duties is correct?
 (a) Anti-dumping duties are imposed by importing countries to subsidize foreign producers.
 (b) Anti-dumping duties are taxes levied on goods that are exported below fair market value to protect domestic industries from unfair competition.
 (c) Anti-dumping duties are imposed solely to encourage free trade and open markets.
 (d) Anti-dumping duties are only applicable to goods imported from developed countries.
34. Consider the following statements with reference to the Indian Agricultural Research Institute (IARI):
 1. It is administered by the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR).
 2. It has been granted the status of 'Deemed University'.
 Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
 (a) 1 only

- (b) 2 only
(c) Both 1 and 2
(d) Neither 1 nor 2
35. Consider the following statements with reference to the UN Counter-Terrorism Trust Fund:
1. It was established under the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime.
 2. It is only funded by the member states of the United Nations (UN).
- 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
36. Consider the following statements about Indian Ocean Dipole
1. IOD is characterised by a difference in sea surface temperature between tropical Western Indian Ocean and tropical Eastern Pacific Ocean.
 2. A positive IOD event is often seen developing at times of an El Nino, while a negative IOD is associated with La Nina.
- Choose the correct statements:
- (a) 1 only
(b) 2 only
(c) Both 1 and 2
(d) Neither 1 nor 2
37. Consider the following statements
1. Antarctic Treaty Consultative Meeting is an annual meeting of the original 12 parties to the Antarctic Treaty.
 2. The Antarctic Treaty, signed in 1959 establishes Antarctica as a region for peaceful purposes, scientific cooperation, and environmental protection.
 3. India is a Consultative Party to the Antarctic Treaty.
4. In 2022, India enacted the Antarctic Act, reaffirming its commitment to the Antarctic Treaty.
- How many of the statements given above are correct?
- (a) Only one
(b) Only two
(c) Only three
(d) All four
38. AlphaFold3, recently seen in news is related to?
- (a) An AI model that can predict the structure and interactions of all life's molecules
(b) A 'crypto virus' designed to block user access to computer systems.
(c) India's first indigenous unmanned bomber aircraft
(d) None of the above
39. Consider the following statements about UDAN (UdeDeshkaAamNagrik) Scheme:
1. It was launched by the Ministry of Civil Aviation.
 2. It is a part of the National Civil Aviation Policy 2016.
 3. The scheme is jointly funded by the central government and state governments.
- How many of the above statements are correct?
- (a) Only one
(b) Only two
(c) All three
(d) None
40. Consider the following statements about West Nile Fever
1. It is caused by the West Nile Virus, a member of the flavivirus genus.
 2. Birds are the natural hosts of West Nile Virus.
 3. WNV spread through the air from one person to another.

Select the correct statement(s)

- (a) 1 and 2 only
(b) 1 and 3 only
(c) 2 and 3 only
(d) All three
41. What was the primary objective of China's Chang'e-6 mission?
(a) To establish a colony on Mars
(b) To study the atmospheric composition of Moon
(c) To explore the outer reaches of the Kuiper Belt
(d) To investigate the surface of Jupiter's moon, Europa
42. Shinkun La Tunnel, is an upcoming motorable tunnel, that connects which one of the following regions?
(a) Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand
(b) Jammu and Kashmir and Punjab
(c) Ladakh and Himachal Pradesh
(d) Ladakh and Uttarakhand
43. Consider the following statements with reference to the Leber congenital amaurosis:
1. It is a rare genetic eye disorder which affects infants.
2. It prevents the proper functioning of the protein-CEP290.
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
44. Glyptothorax punjabratai, recently in news, is a:
(a) Catfish
(b) Butterfly
(c) Plant
(d) Frog
45. 'Lipulekh, Limpiyadhura, and Kalapani' are in news related to:
(a) Border disputes between India and Pakistan
(b) Territorial disputes between Israel and Syria
(c) Conflict between India and Nepal
(d) Maritime disputes in the South China Sea
46. Consider the following statements with reference to the FWD-200B, recently seen in the news:
1. It is an indigenous military-grade bomber Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV).
2. It is designed and manufactured by the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO).
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. Consider the following statements with reference to carbon farming:
1. It is a whole farm approach to optimise carbon capture on working landscapes.
2. It can help ameliorate soil degradation and challenges related to climate variability.
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
48. Consider the following statements about Climate Promise 2025
1. It aims to prevent global temperatures from exceeding the critical 1.5°C limit set by the Paris Agreement.
2. It is a flagship initiative of the UN Development Programme (UNDP).
3. Indigenous communities are also included under this initiative.

- How many of the statements given above are correct?
- Only one
 - Only two
 - None of the above
 - All three
49. Consider the following statements about Goldene
- It is the first free-standing 2D metal and is only one atom thick.
 - It is developed by a joint collaboration between IISC and IIT-Bombay.
 - It can be used for carbon dioxide conversion and hydrogen-generating catalysis.
- 1 and 2 only
 - 1 and 3 only
 - 2 and 3 only
 - All three
50. World Press Freedom Index is published by
- International Press Institute
 - The Associated Press
 - UNESCO
 - Reporters Without Borders
51. Which one of the following statements best describes the term "Drip Pricing"?
- A pricing technique where the full price of a product is disclosed upfront.
 - A pricing technique where additional charges are revealed gradually during the buying process.
 - A pricing technique where the seller offers discounts on products.
 - A pricing technique where the seller charges different prices for the same product from different buyers.
52. 'MQ-9B Predator', recently seen in news, is a:
- Next-generation space exploration rover
 - Nuclear-powered submarine
 - High-altitude Unmanned Aerial Vehicle
 - Cutting-edge military stealth fighter jet
53. Which one of the following has recently organized '#PlayTrue Campaign'?
- Reserve Bank of India
 - Sports Authority of India
 - National Anti-Doping Agency
 - Election Commission of India
54. The Atacama Desert is renowned for being:
- The wettest desert on Earth
 - The coldest desert on Earth
 - The hottest desert on Earth
 - The driest desert on Earth
55. Consider the following statements about Lakshya Aircraft
- It is a re-usable high subsonic aerial target system powered by a gas turbine engine.
 - It is an indigenously developed micro-light and pilot-less target aircraft.
 - It is designed and developed by Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL).
- Select the correct statement(s)
- 1 and 2 only
 - 1 and 3 only
 - 2 and 3 only
 - All three
56. Bhavishya platform, recently launched by the Government of India, primarily aims to:
- Facilitate online voter registration
 - Track pension sanction and payment process online
 - Simplify the process of issuance of passport
 - Streamline the income tax returns filing process
57. Consider the following statements with reference to the Blue Corner notice:

1. It is issued to collect information about a person's location or activities in relation to a criminal investigation.
2. It is issued by the Interpol's General Secretariat at the request of a member country's Interpol National Central Bureau.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

58. Koothandavar festival, recently in news, is celebrated in:

- (a) Gujarat
- (b) Manipur
- (c) Maharashtra
- (d) Tamil Nadu

59. Consider the following statements with reference to the Paliyar Tribe.

1. They mainly reside in the State of Karnataka.
2. They never burn the dead bodies but have the customary practices of burying them.

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. With reference to Goods & Services Tax Appellate Tribunal, consider the following statements:

1. It is established under the Central Goods and Services Tax Act, 2017.
2. Its members have a term of 5 years or until they attain the age of 62 years.
3. It is equivalent to a Civil Court for trying a case.

Select the correct statement(s)

- (a) 1 and 2 only

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

61. With reference to Section 498A of the Indian Penal Code (IPC), consider the following statements:

1. It aims to protect married women from cruelty inflicted upon them by their husbands or their relatives.
2. There is no limitation as to the number of years within which the complaint has to be filed under this Section.
3. Any offence under this Section is a cognizable and non-compoundable offence.

How many of the above statements are correct?

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

62. Consider the following statements with reference to C295 Transport Aircraft:

1. It is a new-generation tactical airlifter indigenously designed and developed by Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL).
2. It is powered by turboprop engines and designed to provide low-level flight characteristics.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

63. Consider the following statements with reference to Swing Trading:

1. It is a form of trading in which investors hold onto stocks for several days or weeks.
2. It allows investors to capitalise on both upward and downward movements in the market.

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

64. Consider the following statements about Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive (CSDDD)

1. It is a set of directives to large companies to prevent, end or mitigate their adverse impact on human rights and the environment.
2. The Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive is a European Union (EU) law.
3. Companies will also have to adopt a transition plan to make their business model compatible with the Paris Agreement global warming limit of 1.5°C.

How many of the statements given above are correct?

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

65. Which of the following is not an objective of the Vibrant Village Programme?

- (a) Enhancing the quality of life in border villages
- (b) Reversing the outmigration from border areas
- (c) Improving security of the border areas
- (d) Comprehensive development of villages along coastal states

66. Which one of the following major infrastructure projects is linked to the Shaksgam Valley?

- (a) International North–South Transport Corridor (INSTC)

- (b) Bangladesh-China-India-Myanmar (BCIM) Economic Corridor
- (c) Karakoram Highway
- (d) Trans-Asian Railway

67. Consider the following statements regarding the Commission on Population and Development:

1. It was established by the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC).
2. It consists of 47 member countries elected for a period of four years.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

68. With reference to regulation and administration of Geographical Indication (GI) in India, consider the following statements:

1. In India, GI registration is governed by the Geographical Indications of Goods Act of 1999.
2. The GI tag is issued by the Geographical Indication Registry under the Department of Industry Promotion and Internal Trade, Ministry of Commerce and Industry.

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

69. Which among the following best describes Antares, recently seen in the news?

- (a) A type of flowering plant native to the Amazon rainforest
- (b) A newly discovered exoplanet

- (c) A famous landmark in ancient Egyptian architecture
(d) A red supergiant star
70. With reference to Hindu Marriage Act, 1955, consider the following statements:
1. The definition of Hindu under the Act includes Buddhist, Jain and Sikh.
 2. Registration of a Hindu marriage is subject to laws applicable in particular States.
 3. Unlike any other matrimonial laws in India, the Act contains provisions for restitution of conjugal rights.
- How many of the above statements are correct?
- (a) Only one
 - (b) Only two
 - (c) All three
 - (d) None
71. Which event marked the origins of International Labour Day?
- (a) Signing of the Treaty of Versailles after World War I
 - (b) Formation of the Knights of Labor organization in the United States
 - (c) Boston Tea Party
 - (d) Haymarket Affair incident
72. Consider the following statements regarding the Supersonic Missile-Assisted Release of Torpedo (SMART) System:
1. It is developed by the Defence Research and Development Organisation.
 2. It consists of two-stage solid propulsion and precision inertial navigation.
- Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
- (a) 1 only
 - (b) 2 only
 - (c) Both 1 and 2
 - (d) Neither 1 nor 2
73. Consider the following statements Blue Hole
1. Blue holes are water-filled sinkholes, found in coastal regions where the bedrock is made of soluble material.
 2. They form when water on the surface percolates through the rock, eventually causing the rock to collapse
 3. Dean's Blue Hole in the Bahamas is the deepest known underwater sinkhole in the world.
- Select the correct statement(s)
- (a) 1 and 2 only
 - (b) 1 and 3 only
 - (c) 2 and 3 only
 - (d) All three
74. Consider the following statements regarding Thrombosis with Thrombocytopenia Syndrome:
1. It is characterized by blood clots combined with low levels of platelets in human body.
 2. It is more common among younger age groups.
- 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. La Cumbre volcano, recently in news, is located in:
- (a) Andaman and Nicobar
 - (b) Galápagos Islands
 - (c) Baffin Island
 - (d) Sicily Island
76. The term biohacking seen in news, best refers to which of the following?
- (a) It is the art and science of self-improvement applied to everyday life.
 - (b) It is the term that describes the future world which will be dominated by AI.

- (c) It is the process of hacking biometrics through video games
- (d) It is unauthorized access or disclosure of sensitive patient information
77. What is the primary objective of Project ISHAN initiated by the Indian government?
- (a) To provide clean drinking water to rural communities.
- (b) To make air traffic operations more efficient to handle more capacity.
- (c) To promote renewable energy sources.
- (d) To improve agricultural productivity through advanced technology.
78. What is the primary purpose of 'acceptance sampling' in quality control?
- (a) To ensure 100% defect-free products
- (b) To eliminate all defects in the production process
- (c) To select a representative sample for testing for defects.
- (d) To reduce the production costs
79. TacticAI, recently seen in news, is developed by:
- (a) Microsoft
- (b) Google
- (c) Nvidia
- (d) Facebook
80. "REACH" a comprehensive framework to ensure the safe use of chemicals is implemented by which of the following?
- (a) European Union
- (b) World Economic Forum
- (c) United Nations Environment Program
- (d) International Union for Conservation
81. Army Tactical Missile Systems (ATACMS), recently seen in the news, is developed by which one of the following countries?
- (a) Israel
- (b) United States
- (c) India
- (d) Russia
82. Raja Ravi Varma is best known for his contributions to which of the following fields?
- (a) Literature
- (b) Music
- (c) Painting and art
- (d) Philosophy
83. Consider the following statements with reference to critical minerals:
1. It is a metallic or non-metallic element that is essential for the functioning of modern technologies.
 2. Cobalt, Copper and Gallium are examples of critical minerals.
- 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
84. Consider the following statements regarding the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions:
1. It is a United Nations recognized body established for the promotion and protection of human rights.
 2. It ensures the compliance of individual National Human Rights Institutions to the Paris Principles.
- Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 only
- (c) Both 1 and 2
- (d) Neither 1 nor 2
85. Fentanyl, recently in news, is a/an:
- (a) Newly discovered marine species
- (b) TB vaccine

- (c) Active pharmaceutical ingredient.
(d) Synthetic opioid drug
86. Consider the following:
1. Taking possession of a polling station
 2. Preventing voter from going to the polling station
 3. Seizure of a vote counting place
- How many of the above activities are considered as part of 'Booth Capturing'?
- (a) Only one
 - (b) Only two
 - (c) All three
 - (d) None
87. "Towards a Regenerative Blue Economy – Mapping the Blue Economy" is published by which of the following?
- (a) UNEP
 - (b) IUCN
 - (c) WTO
 - (d) UNESCO
88. Consider the following statements regarding the Climate Technology Centre and Network (CTCN):
1. It is the operational arm of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change's (UNFCCC) Climate Change Technology Mechanism.
 2. It is hosted by the World Bank in collaboration with the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC).
- 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
89. Sympathetic Solar Flare, recently seen in the news, refers to:
- (a) Massive gravitational disturbances on the Sun's surface
 - (b) Coronal mass ejections
 - (c) Regions of strong magnetic fields on the surface of the sun
 - (d) Solar outbursts that occur when sunspots are invisibly linked by massive magnetic field loops
90. Chakisaurusnekul, recently seen in news, is a:
- (a) Frog
 - (b) Fishing cat
 - (c) Lizard
 - (d) Herbivorous dinosaur
91. Consider the following statements with reference to Bambi Bucket:
1. It is a specialised aerial firefighting tool.
 2. It discharges a solid column of water and useful in extinguishing forest fires.
- Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
- (a) 1 only
 - (b) 2 only
 - (c) Both 1 and 2
 - (d) Neither 1 nor 2
92. With reference to Raman Spectroscopy, consider the following statements:
1. It is a technique where scattered light is used to measure the vibrational energy modes of a sample.
 2. It can provide both chemical and structural information of substances.
 3. It is based on the interaction of light with the chemical bonds within a material.
- How many of the above statements are correct?
- (a) Only one
 - (b) Only two
 - (c) All three
 - (d) None
93. Consider the following statements with reference to BimaVistaar:

1. It aims to provide a basic social safety net cover with combined features of life and health insurance coverage.
2. The sum assured under the scheme for property cover is Rs 2 lakh.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

94. Consider the following statements with reference to Dooars:

1. They are the alluvial floodplains in northeastern India that lie south of the outer foothills of the Himalayas.
2. They consist of fertile soil rich in hummus that is beneficial for tea plantation.

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

95. Consider the following statements

1. A payment gateway is a software that allows online transactions, while a payment aggregator is the inclusion of all these payment gateways.
2. While a payment gateway is an intermediary, the payment aggregator is the interface where the payment gateway processes the transactions.
3. Amazon (Pay) India, Google India, Razorpay are the examples for Payment Aggregator.

How many of the statements given above are correct?

- (a) Only one
- (b) Only two

- (c) All three
- (d) None of the above

96. "Mission ISHAN" often recently seen in news is related to which of the following?

- (a) One Nation, One Ration Card
- (b) One Nation, One Tax
- (c) One Nation, One Grid
- (d) One Nation, One Airspace

97. Which of the following statements correctly distinguishes between a Cyclone and an Anticyclone?

- (a) Cyclones are characterized by inward spiraling winds and low-pressure centers, while anticyclones have outward spiraling winds and high-pressure centers.
- (b) Cyclones are associated with calm weather conditions and clear skies, while anticyclones bring stormy weather and heavy precipitation.
- (c) Cyclones typically rotate clockwise in the Northern Hemisphere and counterclockwise in the Southern Hemisphere, whereas anticyclones rotate counterclockwise in the Northern Hemisphere and clockwise in the Southern Hemisphere.
- (d) Cyclones form over landmasses and are driven by the cooling of air masses, while anticyclones form over warm ocean waters and are fueled by evaporation.

98. With reference to the Indian National Centre for Ocean Information Services (INCOIS), consider the following statements:

1. It is a unit of the Earth System Science Organization (ESSO).
2. It provides round-the-clock warning services for the coastal population on storm surges

through the Indian Tsunami Early Warning Centre (ITEWC).

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
99. Which one of the following is the primary characteristic of Nephrotic Syndrome?
- (a) Decrease in body weight
 - (b) Decreased blood pressure
 - (c) Excessive protein in the urine
 - (d) Increased appetite
100. Which one of the following is the primary objective of NASA's Advanced Composite Solar Sail System (ACS3) mission?
- (a) To study the composition of asteroids
 - (b) To observe the dynamics of the Sun's chromosphere
 - (c) To search signs of life on Mars
 - (d) To develop technologies for future small spacecraft
101. Consider the following statements with reference to the ASEAN Future Forum:
- 1. It aimed at creating a common platform for ASEAN member states as well as partner countries.
 - 2. It was proposed by India at the 43rd ASEAN Summit, 2023.
- 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
102. Phi-3-Mini, an AI model developed by:
- (a) OpenAI
 - (b) Meta
 - (c) Google
 - (d) Microsoft

103. Consider the following statements about Global Report on Food Crises (GRFC) 2024

- 1. GRFC is produced annually by the Food Security Information Network (FSIN).
- 2. According to 2024 report, India was among the top 5 countries with the world's largest food crisis in 2023.
- 3. The Gaza Strip became the area with the most severe food crisis in the last eight years of GRFC reporting.

Select the correct statement(s)

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

104. Consider the following statements about World Energy Council (WEC)

- 1. WEC is a global body established in 1923, with the aim of promoting sustainable supply and use of energy.
- 2. The World Energy Council has developed an interactive tool-The World Energy Issues Monitor.

Choose the incorrect statements:

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

105. NABARD's Climate Strategy 2030 is a comprehensive blueprint designed to tackle India's growing demand for green financing. It is structured around four key pillars.

Consider the following pillars

- 1. Strategic resource mobilisation
- 2. Accelerating green lending across sectors
- 3. Playing a broader market-making role
- 4. Internal green transformation of NABARD

How many of the above given pillars is/are the part of NABARD's Climate Strategy 2030?

- (a) Only one
- (b) Only two
- (c) Only three
- (d) All four

106. Consider the following statements about Aryabhata (satellite):

- 1. It was India's first satellite.
- 2. It was built by the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO).
- 3. It was launched from SatishDhawan Space Centre, Sriharikota, India.

Select the correct statement(s)

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

107. In which one of the following States is the Kalesar Wildlife Sanctuary located?

- (a) Bihar
- (b) Karnataka
- (c) Haryana
- (d) Kerala

108. Which one of the following is the primary objective of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee (INC) on Plastic Pollution?

- (a) To develop a global framework for regulation of only plastic production.
- (b) To develop an International Legally Binding Instrument (ILBI) on plastic pollution.
- (c) To establish import/export restrictions on plastic materials.
- (d) To promote plastic recycling initiatives worldwide.

109. Consider the following statements with reference to Article 244(A) of the Constitution of India:

- 1. It allows for the creation of an 'autonomous state' within Assam.

2. It was added by the Seventy-third Constitutional Amendment Act, 1992.

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 Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI)

- 1. CDRI is a major global initiative by India launched at the United Nations Climate Action Summit, 2019.
- 2. The CDRI Secretariat is based in New Delhi, India.
- 3. Infrastructure for Resilient Island States and Infrastructure Resilience Accelerator Fund are the initiatives taken under CDRI.

How many of the statements given above are correct?

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

111. Crystal Maze 2, an air-launched medium-range ballistic missile, designed to target high-value stationary and relocatable assets, such as long-range radars and air defence systems, is a ballistic missile developed by which of the following country?

- (a) Israel
- (b) Japan
- (c) South Korea
- (d) USA

112. 'Ensuring safety and health at work in a changing climate' report is released by the

- (a) WEF
- (b) UNDP
- (c) ILO
- (d) UNEP

113. Consider the following statements with reference to the Marburg Virus Disease (MVD):

1. It is a rare and severe hemorrhagic fever, with an average case fatality rate of around 50%.
2. It affects both people and non-human primates.

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. Consider the following statements with reference to the National Career Service:

1. It is one of the mission-mode projects under the umbrella of the E-Governance Plan.
2. It aims to bridge the gap between job-seekers and employers.

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

115. Consider the following statements with reference to the Pink Hydrogen:

1. It is generated through electrolysis by using nuclear energy.
2. It can be used as replacement for fossil fuels in cement industry and heavy transportation.

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. State of the Climate in Asia Report, recently seen in news, is published by:

- (a) Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)
- (b) United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)
- (c) International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)
- (d) World Meteorological Organisation (WMO)

117. Consider the following statements about Tundra Ecosystem

1. Tundra ecosystems are treeless regions found in the Arctic and on the tops of mountains, where the climate is cold and windy.
2. The tundra acts as a significant carbon storage area due to slow decomposition rates.
3. A layer of permanently frozen soil called permafrost lies beneath the surface of Tundra ecosystem.

How many of the statements given above are correct?

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

118. Consider the following statements with reference to the RashtriyaArogyaNidhi Scheme:

1. It is a centrally sponsored scheme to provide healthcare benefits to all rural households.
2. It provides one-time financial assistance to patients suffering from life threatening diseases.

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 with reference to the National Service Scheme:

1. It was launched during the birth centenary year of Mahatma Gandhi.
 2. It provides for the participation of school students in various Government led community service activities.
- 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. "UmeshSinha" committee often recently seen in news is related to which of the following?
- (a) Voluntary code of Ethics
 - (b) Protection of promotion of women' rights
 - (c) Electoral reforms
 - (d) Banking reforms
121. Which celestial body is the primary target of NASA's Dragonfly mission?
- (a) Mars
 - (b) Venus
 - (c) Saturn's moon Titan
 - (d) Jupiter's moon Europa
122. Mount Erebus is an active volcano located in which one of the following continents?
- (a) Europe
 - (b) Asia
 - (c) South America
 - (d) Antarctica
123. Consider the following statements with reference to Exercise Poorvi Lehar (XPOL):
1. It is a bilateral maritime exercise conducted between the navies of India and Vietnam.
 2. It is aimed at the validation of procedures towards assessment of Indian Navy's preparedness to meet Maritime Security challenges.
- Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
- (a) 1 only
 - (b) 2 only
 - (c) Both 1 and 2
 - (d) Neither 1 nor 2
124. Pact for the Future, an action-oriented outcome document, is related to:
- (a) UN Summit of the Future
 - (b) World Economic Forum
 - (c) World Health Organisation
 - (d) World Bank
125. Consider the following statements with reference to the World Earth Day:
1. The first World Earth Day was celebrated in 1992 during the Earth Summit.
 2. The theme of World Earth Day 2024 is 'Planet vs. Plastics'.
- 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
126. Global Financial Stability Report, a semiannual report recently seen in news is published by?
- (a) International Monetary Fund
 - (b) World Bank
 - (c) World Economic Forum
 - (d) Asian Development Bank
127. Euvichol-S, recently in news, is primarily used in the treatment of:
- (a) Cholera
 - (b) Mange disease
 - (c) HIV
 - (d) Malaria
128. Consider the following statements with reference to the World Heritage Day:
1. It is celebrated to raise awareness about monuments that form a part of history and culture.

2. The theme of World Heritage Day 2024 is 'Discover and Experience Diversity'.
- Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
- 1 only
 - 2 only
 - Both 1 and 2
 - Neither 1 nor 2
129. Consider the following statements with reference to soil acidification:
1. It is a process where the soil pH decreases over time.
 2. It leads to depletion of soil inorganic carbon.
- Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
- 1 only
 - 2 only
 - Both 1 and 2
 - Neither 1 nor 2
130. Consider the following statements with reference to Llama 3:
1. It is a Large Language Model developed by Google.
 2. It is an instruction-tuned version designed to augment performance in specific tasks.
- Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
- 1 only
 - 2 only
 - Both 1 and 2
 - Neither 1 nor 2
131. Longevity India Initiative, recently in news, was launched by which one of the following?
- Ministry of Health and Family Welfare
 - NITI Aayog
 - Ministry of Finance
 - Indian Institute of Science
132. With reference to Panhala fort, consider the following statements:
1. It is located in Maharashtra.
 2. It was controlled by both Yadavas of Devgiri and the Bahamani of Bidar.
 3. Teen Darwaja of this fort was built by Sultan Ibrahim Adil Shah I.
- How many of the above statements are correct?
- Only one
 - Only two
 - All three
 - None
133. Which one of the following is the best description of 'Vasukiindicus', that was in the news recently?
- A newly discovered species of flowering plant.
 - A revolutionary medication derived from rare Himalayan plants.
 - A giant prehistoric snake
 - A rare species of butterfly discovered in the mountains of Nepal.
134. With reference to Section 144 of the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC), consider the following statements:
1. It authorises the Executive Magistrate to issue an order to prohibit the assembly of four or more people in an area.
 2. It empowers the authorities to block internet access.
 3. It restricts carrying any sort of weapon in the area where it has been imposed.
- How many of the above statements are correct?
- Only one
 - Only two
 - All three
 - None
135. Consider the following statements regarding the National Curriculum for Early Childhood Care and Education 2024:

1. It is a detailed curriculum meant for learning in the age group of three to six-year-olds in anganwadis.
2. It has been finalized by a committee consisting of the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare and the Ministry of Education.

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. Salas y Gómez mountain chain, sometimes seen in news, is located in:

- (a) Pacific Ocean
- (b) Arctic Ocean
- (c) Indian Ocean
- (d) Antarctic Ocean

137. Consider the following statements with reference to the Parkinson's plus syndrome:

1. It is a neurodegenerative disorder.
2. It negatively impacts the nerves and can lead to movement disorder.

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

138. Consider the following statements with reference to Ringwoodite:

1. It is a mineral that exists in the transition zone of Earth.
2. It has a crystal structure that allows it to absorb water and hydrogen.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 only

- (c) Both 1 and 2
- (d) Neither 1 nor 2

139. Consider the following statements

1. The Global Positioning System functions by sending signals from satellites to GPS receivers on Earth.
2. These receivers then calculate their position based on the time it takes for these signals to arrive.
3. GPS Spoofing refers to the practice of manipulating or tricking a GPS receiver by broadcasting false GPS signals.

How many of the above statements are correct?

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

140. Mount Ruang, initiated its eruption recently, propelling an ash cloud upwards of a mile into the sky. Mount Ruang is located in?

- (a) Indonesia
- (b) Philippines
- (c) Fiji
- (d) Ecuador

141. The Clouded Tiger Cat, recently seen in the news, is primarily found in:

- (a) African savannahs
- (b) Southeast Asian rainforests
- (c) European Alps
- (d) Southern Central American and Andean Mountain chains

142. Consider the following statements regarding the Global Alliance for Incinerator Alternatives (GAIA):

1. It is an alliance of European Union (EU) countries which envisions a just, zero-waste world.
2. It aims to power a transition away from the current linear economy towards a circular system.

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 with reference to the Directionally Unrestricted Ray Gun Array (DURGA) system:

- 1. It destroys its target using focused energy by means of microwaves or particle beams.
- 2. It has been indigenously developed by the Defence Research and Development Organisation.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

144. Consider the following statements with reference to the Cruise missile:

- 1. It is a guided missile used against terrestrial or naval targets.
- 2. It has a low trajectory and is difficult to detect it.

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

145. Consider the following statements about National Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission (NCDRC)

- 1. It is a quasi-judicial commission set up in 1988 under the Consumer Protection Act of 1986.
- 2. NCDRC have jurisdiction to entertain a complaint valued more than five crore.

3. The appeal against an order of NCDRC lies before the Supreme Court.

Select the correct statement(s)

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

146. Consider the following statements about Inter-Agency Space Debris Coordination Committee (IADC)

- 1. It is an international intergovernmental forum that coordinates activities related to only natural debris in space.
- 2. The IADC is recognized as the internationally recognized technical authority on space debris.
- 3. India, through DRDO, aims to achieve debris-free space missions by 2030 as declared by IADC.

Select the correct statement(s)

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

147. Which of the following statements about rogue waves is true?

- (a) Rogue waves are always caused by underwater earthquakes.
- (b) Rogue waves are typically less than twice the height of surrounding waves.
- (c) Rogue waves are more likely to occur in shallow waters.
- (d) Rogue waves are unpredictable and can appear suddenly without warning.

148. Consider the following statements regarding UN Women:

- 1. It maintains a database on violence against women that tracks measures to end violence taken by Member States.

2. It provides grants to fuel innovative, high-impact programmes by government agencies and civil society groups.
Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
(a) 1 only
(b) 2 only
(c) Both 1 and 2
(d) Neither 1 nor 2
149. Consider the following statements regarding Heat wave:
1. It is decided based on the temperature thresholds over a region in terms of actual temperature.
2. In India, the maximum temperature recorded at a station is 40 degrees Celsius or more in the plains is known as Heat wave.
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
150. Consider the following statements about Men5CV Vaccine
1. It protects people against 5 strains (A, C, W, Y and X) of the meningococcus bacteria.
2. It is recommended by the World Health Organization.
3. The vaccine and emergency vaccination activities are funded by Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance.
How many of the statements given above are correct?
(a) Only one
(b) Only two
(c) All three
(d) None of the above
151. Consider the following statements with reference to the imported inflation:
1. It is a general and sustainable price increase due to an increase in the cost of imported products.
2. The more the currency appreciates in the foreign exchange market, the higher the imported inflation.
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. Gaia-BH3, recently seen in the news, is a/an:
(a) Massive stellar black hole
(b) Invasive alien species
(c) Exoplanet found in Goldilocks' zone
(d) New macaque species discovered in Arunachal Pradesh
153. Veeranam Lake, recently seen in news, is located in:
(a) Andhra Pradesh
(b) Kerala
(c) Karnataka
(d) Tamil Nadu
154. Consider the following statements with reference to the KAVACH system:
1. It is an indigenously developed Automatic Train Protection (ATP) system.
2. It makes use of high frequency radio communication and operates on the principle of continuous update of movement to prevent collisions.
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

155. Which of the following best describes 'Shrinkflation'?
- The process of reducing the size or quantity of a product while maintaining its price.
 - The act of inflating the size of a product without changing its price.
 - The reduction of production costs by increasing the efficiency of manufacturing processes.
 - The expansion of a company's product line to include more options for consumers.
156. Which of the following statements best describes the Kármán Line?
- It is the boundary between the Earth's crust and mantle.
 - It marks the point where the Earth's atmosphere ends and outer space begins.
 - It indicates the separation between the Earth's core and mantle.
 - It defines the boundary between the Earth's lithosphere and asthenosphere.
157. Pompeii, an ancient city recently seen in news, is located in which one of the following countries?
- Greece
 - Spain
 - Italy
 - Turkey
158. Consider the following statements with reference to the Chagas Disease:
- It is an infectious disease caused by a virus.
 - There are no vaccines or medicines to prevent the disease.
- Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
- 1 only
 - 2 only
 - Both 1 and 2
 - Neither 1 nor 2
159. Exercise Dustlik is an annual joint military exercise between India and which one of the following countries?
- USA
 - Oman
 - Vietnam
 - Uzbekistan
160. Consider the following statements with reference to the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII):
- It is an advisory body to the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC).
 - It is the only international body that is mandated to deal specifically with Indigenous Peoples' issues.
- Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
- 1 only
 - 2 only
 - Both 1 and 2
 - Neither 1 nor 2
161. Consider the following statements with reference to the Mudumalai Tiger Reserve:
- It is located at the tri-junction of three States, viz., Karnataka, Kerala and Tamil Nadu.
 - It is part of the Nilgiris Biosphere Reserve.
- Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
- 1 only
 - 2 only
 - Both 1 and 2
 - Neither 1 nor 2
162. Consider the following statements about Exo-Atmospheric missiles, recently seen in news
- These are surface-to-air anti-ballistic missiles.
 - The anti-ballistic missiles operate beyond the Earth's atmosphere.
 - It uses a three-stage solid rocket booster to propel itself out of

Earth's atmosphere at near-hypersonic speed.

How many of the statements given above are correct?

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

163. Consider the following statements about Global Forest Watch (GFW)

- 1. It is an open-source web application to monitor global forests in near real-time using satellite data and other sources.
- 2. It is a joint initiative of World Economic Forum and IUCN

Choose the incorrect statements:

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

164. For the 2024 Lok Sabha elections, the Election Commission of India (ECI) has unveiled a revolutionary plan that offers the choice of "home voting," which is accessible for

- (a) For all elderly citizens
- (b) For all Persons with Disabilities (PwDs)
- (c) Both (a) and (b)
- (d) None of the above



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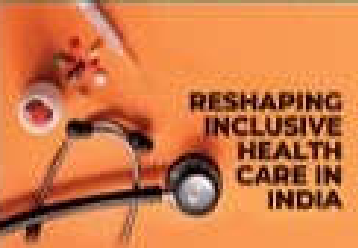




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ANSWER KEYS

1	B	51	B	101	A	151	A
2	C	52	C	102	D	152	A
3	B	53	C	103	B	153	D
4	B	54	D	104	D	154	C
5	B	55	A	105	D	155	A
6	A	56	B	106	A	156	B
7	C	57	C	107	C	157	C
8	C	58	D	108	B	158	C
9	C	59	B	109	A	159	D
10	C	60	B	110	C	160	A
11	D	61	C	111	A	161	C
12	B	62	B	112	C	162	C
13	C	63	C	113	C	163	B
14	A	64	C	114	C	164	D
15	C	65	D	115	C		
16	C	66	C	116	D		
17	B	67	C	117	C		
18	B	68	C	118	B		
19	C	69	D	119	C		
20	B	70	C	120	A		
21	C	71	D	121	C		
22	D	72	C	122	D		
23	C	73	A	123	B		
24	C	74	C	124	A		
25	C	75	B	125	C		
26	B	76	A	126	A		
27	A	77	B	127	A		
28	D	78	C	128	C		
29	C	79	B	129	C		
30	C	80	A	130	B		
31	A	81	B	131	D		
32	C	82	C	132	C		
33	B	83	C	133	C		
34	C	84	C	134	C		
35	D	85	D	135	C		
36	B	86	C	136	A		
37	D	87	B	137	C		
38	A	88	A	138	C		
39	C	89	D	139	D		
40	A	90	D	140	A		
41	B	91	C	141	D		
42	C	92	C	142	B		
43	C	93	C	143	C		
44	A	94	D	144	C		
45	C	95	C	145	B		
46	A	96	D	146	A		
47	C	97	A	147	D		
48	D	98	C	148	C		
49	B	99	C	149	C		
50	D	100	D	150	C		



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