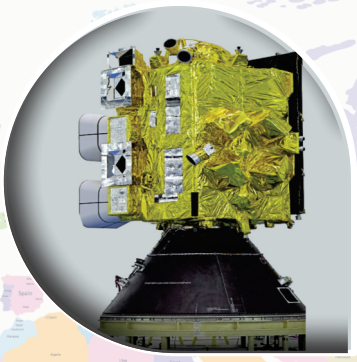
Samyak

An Institute For Civil Services

Monthly Current Affairs

February - 2024









Index

- International
- National
- Rajasthan
- Science & Tech
- Summary
- Sports

USEFUL FOR ALL COMPETITIVE EXAMS

CURRENT AFFAIRS



INDEX		
1	International Affairs	1 – 8
2	National Affairs	9 – 12
3	Economic Affairs	13 – 16
4	Rajasthan Affairs, Polity & Governance	17 – 32
5	Science and Technology	33 – 37
6	Index and reports	38
7	Place in news in Rajasthan	39 – 40
8	Person in news	41 – 42
9	Sports	43 – 44
10	Awards/Books/Appointments	45 – 46
11	Important days and weeks	46 – 47
12	Gist - Yojana-Kurukhshetra	48 – 62
13	Editorial	63 – 68
14	Terms in news	69 – 72
15	Model test paper	73 – 75

MONTHLY CURRENT AFFAIRS

February : 2024

Near Riddhi-Siddhi Circle, Gopalpura Bypass, Jaipur

1. INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

UPI was formally launched at the Eiffel Tower in Paris, France.

- It was formally launched at the Republic Day celebrations held in France.
- France has become the first European country to accept UPI.
- An agreement was signed by France's Lyra Collect and NPCI International Payments Limited (NIPL) to deploy Unified Payment Interface (UPI) in France.
- UPI is India's mobile-based payment system. It allows people to make payments through a virtual payment address created by the customer.
- NIPL was incorporated as a wholly owned subsidiary of National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) on April 3, 2020.
- NIPL is dedicated to spreading RuPay and UPI outside India.

India's UPI services were launched in Sri Lanka and Mauritius and RuPay card services were launched in Mauritius.

- The country's UPI services were launched in Sri Lanka and Mauritius by PM Narendra Modi on 12 February.
- This launch will enable the availability of UPI settlement services for Indian citizens traveling to Sri Lanka and Mauritius as well as Mauritian citizens traveling to India.

America approved the sale of 31 Predator drones to India.



- On February 1, the US approved the sale of 31 MQ-9B armed drones to India at an estimated cost of US$3.99 billion.
- The proposed mega drone deal was announced during the historic state visit of PM Narendra Modi in June 2023.
- Under the deal, India will get 31 High Altitude Long Endurance (HALE) UAVs.
- Of this, the Navy will get 15 SeaGuardian drones, while the Army and Indian Air Force will get eight each of the ground version – SkyGuardians.
- The MQ-9B Predator drone is a variant of the MQ-9 "Reaper" developed by General Atomics Aeronautical Systems (GA-ASI).
- The MQ-9B drone is classified as a high altitude, long endurance UAV, designed for extended flight duration at altitudes above 40,000 feet.

13th Ministerial Conference of the World Trade Organization (MC13)

- This four-day high-level meeting will bring together the world's trade ministers to evaluate the functioning of the multilateral trading system and chart the future of the WTO.
- Dr. Thani bin Ahmed Al Zeyoudi, Minister of State for Foreign Trade of the UAE is chairing the conference.
- Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal is leading the Indian delegation.
- Trade ministers from 164 WTO member countries are meeting against the backdrop of an uncertain global economic situation due to the Red Sea crisis, Ukraine-Russia war and Israel-Hamas conflict.
- The group stressed the urgency of action, citing the Food and Agriculture Organization's estimate of some 600 million people facing chronic hunger by 2030.
- The first ministerial conference was held in Singapore in 1996.

India advocated flexibility in existing WTO agreements.

- On the opening day of the 13th WTO Ministerial Conference, Comoros and Timor Leste became members of the WTO.

- To address the concerns of developing countries, India stressed on flexibilities within existing WTO agreements.
- On the third day of the WTO summit, India and South Africa opposed the China-led Investment Facility for Development (IFD) proposal as part of the formal WTO framework.
- The China-led grouping of over 120 countries is pushing for the Investment Facility for Development (IFD) proposal to become part of the World Trade Organization (WTO).
- India argued that WTO should deal with trade related issues and it is a non-trade issue. India is against bringing it into the WTO framework.

Malta became the 119th country to join the International Solar Alliance

- On 19 February, Malta became the 119th country to join the International Solar Alliance.
- ISA is an alliance of more than 120 signatory countries that aims to reduce dependence on non-renewable sources of energy such as fossil fuels.
- The platform seeks to develop and deploy cost-effective and transformative energy solutions powered by the sun to help member countries develop low-carbon development trajectories.

International Solar Alliance (ISA):

- International Solar Alliance (ISA) was co-founded by India and France.
- India and France jointly launched the International Solar Alliance (ISA) at COP21 in Paris, France on 30 November 2015.
- Its main objective is to reduce the use of conventional energy by using solar energy efficiently.
- Ajay Mathur is the current Director General of the International Solar Alliance.
- Its headquarters is located in Gurugram.

Abu Dhabi's first Hindu stone temple inaugurated

- The temple has been constructed byochasanwasi Akshar Purushottam Swaminarayan Sanstha (BAPS).
- At a cost of approximately ₹700 crore, the BAPS temple has been built on a 27-acre site in Abu Marekah, near Al Rahba on the Dubai-Abu Dhabi Sheikh Zayed Highway.
- In the construction of the temple, no metal has been used and fly ash has been used in place of 55% cement in the concrete mix to fill the foundation, thereby reducing the carbon footprint of the temple.
- Like the Ayodhya Ram temple, Abu Dhabi's first Hindu temple is built in the Nagara style of architecture.

Cameroon adopts Nagoya Protocol

- Cameroon in central Africa is home to vast biological resources, which have long been exploited by foreign firms, without fair and equitable benefits to the communities that own them. The country has now adopted the Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit Sharing, an international agreement that aims to ensure that the benefits of using genetic resources and traditional knowledge are shared in a fair and equitable way.

Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising from their Utilisation

- **About:** A legally binding global agreement that implements the access and benefit-sharing obligations of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD).
- **Adopted by:** CBD in Nagoya, Japan, in October 2010
- **Entered into force:** October 12, 2014, 90 days after the deposit of the fiftieth instrument of ratification.
- **Provides a transparent legal framework:** For the effective implementation of one of the three objectives of the CBD: the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising out of the utilisation of genetic resources.

Benefits

- **Establishes a framework that helps researchers access genetic resources for biotechnology R&D**.
- **Provides the R&D sector with the certainty** they need to invest in biodiversity-based research.
- **Indigenous and local communities** may receive benefits through a legal framework.

Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)

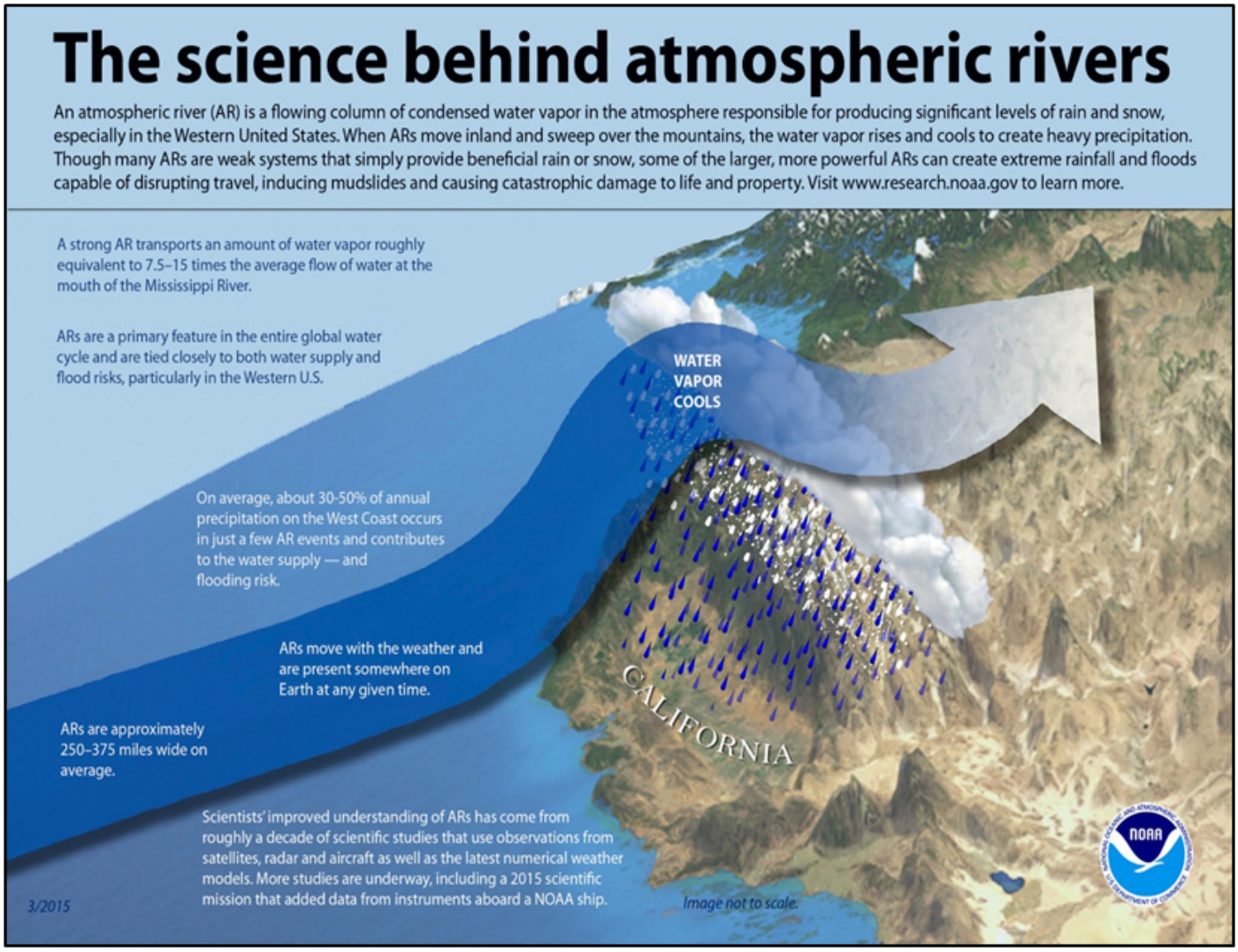
- **About:** The most comprehensive binding international agreement in the field of nature conservation and the sustainable use of natural resources.

- **Opened for signing:** UN Conference on Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro in 1992.
- **Objectives:**
  - Conservation of biological diversity (genetic diversity, species diversity, and habitat diversity).
  - Sustainable use of biological diversity.
  - Fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising out of the utilisation of genetic resources.
- **Covers biodiversity at all levels:** ecosystems, species, and genetic resources.
- **Decision making body:** Conference of the Parties (COP)
- **Secretariat:** Montreal, Canada
- 2 internationally binding agreements adopted within the framework of CBD:
  - **Cartagena Protocol:** Adopted in 2000 (entered into force in 2003) & regulates the transboundary movement of living modified organisms (LMOs).
  - **Nagoya Protocol**

'ATMOSPHERIC RIVERS'

- Southern California has been inundated with massive rainfall, with the risk of landslides rising on the soaked ground. The rainfall has been caused by an 'atmospheric river', and is likely to bring in both positives and negatives for the region.

Atmospheric river



- **Meaning:** Large, narrow sections of the Earth's atmosphere that carry moisture from the Earth's tropics near the equator to the poles. On an average, the Earth has four to five active atmospheric rivers at any time.

- **Movement:** Each moves the equivalent of the liquid water that flows through the mouth of the Amazon River. When they reach land, atmospheric rivers release this moisture, producing heavy snow and rain.
- **Rain that hit California:** Part of a weather system called the Pineapple Express, which is an atmospheric river that originates in the subtropical waters around Hawaii.

Impact

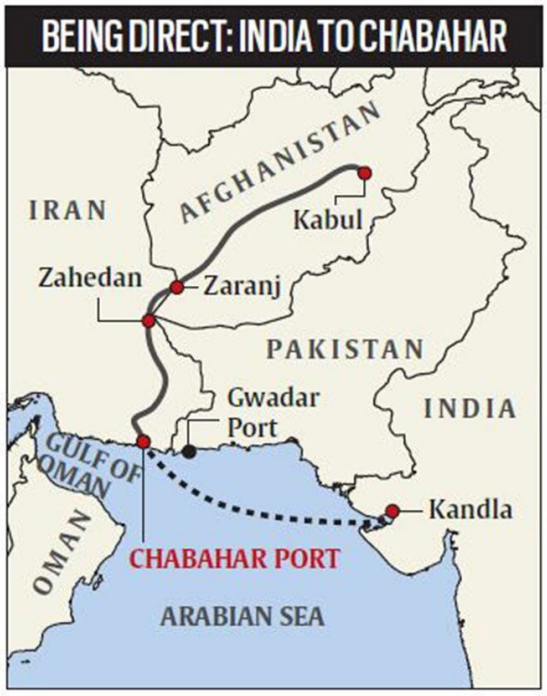
- **Reversing the drought conditions:** Before two consecutive wet years including the present one, California had experienced drought conditions for decades.
- **Area of impact:** The current storm is mostly affecting Southern California, which lacks the storage capacity of the northern part of the state and the resources to capture storm water before it drains into the Pacific Ocean.
- **Benefit for aquatic life:** Eg, Chinook salmon, which had suffered during the dry years.
- **Associated Risks:** Promotes growth of grasses and bush which may become fuel for future fires when the weather turns dry again.

India tells Central Asian countries to use Chabahar Port

- India has urged countries of the Central Asian regions to use the port of Chabahar located on the southeast coast of Iran to enhance connectivity and trade with India and other countries in the world. Participating in the 6th Regional Dialogue of Secretaries of Security Councils/ National Security Advisers on Afghanistan in Kyrgyz capital Bishkek, India's Deputy National Security Adviser called for an "inclusive and representative" government in Afghanistan and said the approach towards the Taliban-ruled country should be based on consensus.

Chabahar Port

- **About:** A seaport in the Sistan- Baluchistan province of Iran, on the Gulf of Oman, at the mouth of the Strait of Hormuz.
- **Nature:** A deep-water port with direct access to the Indian Ocean that is outside the Hormuz Strait.

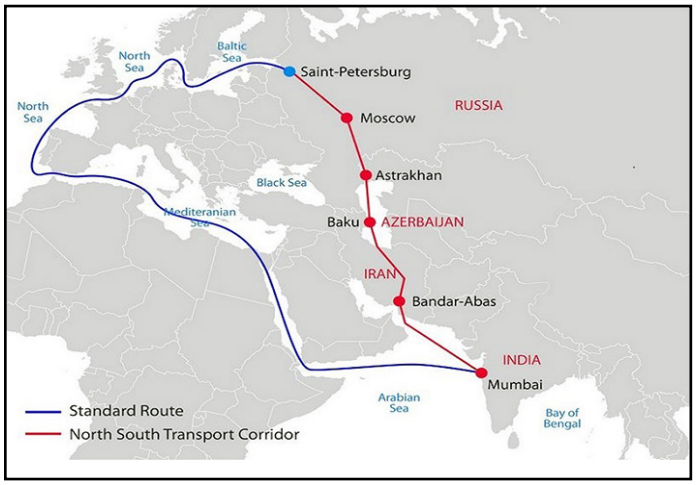


Significance:

- **Iran's only seaport** and consists of 2 separate ports - Shahid Beheshti and Shahid Kalantari.
- **Geographic proximity** to Afghanistan, Pakistan, and India
- **A key transit centre** on the burgeoning International North-South Transport Corridor

Chabahar Project

- **May 2016:** India signed a tripartite agreement with Iran and Afghanistan to develop the Shahid Beheshti Terminal at Chabahar.
- **India's first foreign port** project.



- **Aim:** To establish an International Transport and Transit Corridor in Chabahar.
- **Key highlights:** Construction of the Chabahar Port and the construction of a rail line from Chabahar Port to Zahedan.

Reason for construction:

- To enable India to bypass Pakistan and access Afghanistan, and ultimately Central Asia.
- To serve as a hub for transit trade between India, Iran, and Afghanistan.
- To provide an alternative route to the traditional Silk Road that passes through China

International North-South Transport Corridor

- **About:** A multimodal transportation agreement formed with a trilateral agreement between India, Iran and Russia at the Euro-Asian Conference on Transport in 2000.
- **Linkage:** Indian Ocean to the Caspian Sea via the Persian Gulf onwards into Russia and Northern Europe.
- **Infra:** It encompasses sea, road and rail routes.
- **Aim:** To reduce carriage costs and transit time between India and Russia to almost half.
- **Major member countries:** Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bulgaria, Armenia, India, Iran, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Oman, Russia, Tajikistan, Turkey, and Ukraine.

CMS COP14

The 14th Conference of the Parties to the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS COP14) on February 14 adopted the Single Species Action Plan for conservation of the Hawksbill Turtle (Eretmochelys imbricata) in South-East Asia and the Western Pacific Ocean Region.

International Single Species Action Plan (ISSAP)

- **Key instrument** under the Agreement on the Conservation of African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbirds (AEWA).
- **Purpose:** Implement coordinated measures to restore migratory waterbird species to a favourable conservation status.
- **Relies on international cooperation** among the species' range states for implementation

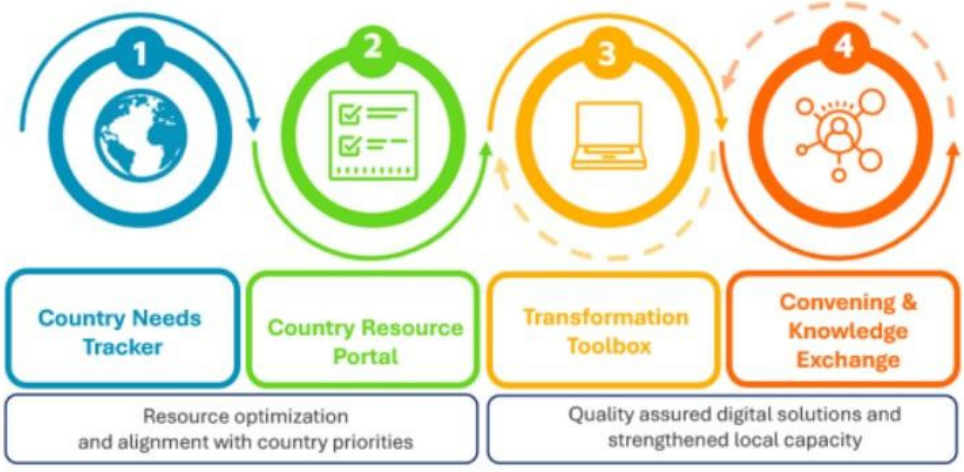
Agreement on the Conservation of African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbirds (AEWA)

- **Intergovernmental treaty for conserving migratory waterbirds** and their habitats across Africa, Europe, the Middle East, Central Asia, Greenland, and the Canadian Archipelago.
- **Developed under the framework of the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS)** and administered by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).
- **Aims** to establish coordinated conservation and management of migratory waterbirds throughout their entire migratory range.

WHO launches digital health platform

- Achieving one of the three priority areas agreed upon during India's G20 presidency in 2023, the WHO recently launched the Global Initiative on Digital Health (GIDH) virtually.

Global Initiative on Digital Health (GIDH)



- **WHO-managed network** for digital health transformation.
- **Aims to align resources** and foster collaboration.
- **Objectives:**
    - Assess and prioritise country needs.
    - Increase alignment of resources.
    - Support Global Strategy on Digital Health.
    - Build capacity and encourage local development.

Digital Health

- **Definition:** Use of technology, such as mobile devices, software applications, and other digital tools, to improve health and healthcare delivery.
- **Ex:** India's CoWIN, UNICEF's RapidPro and FamilyConnect etc.

Germany plans to store CO, underground offshore

Germany plans to allow carbon capture and sub-seabed storage technology in certain industries. Such systems capture carbon dioxide at the point of emission, remove it from the atmosphere, and store it underground.

- Germany aims to become carbon neutral by 2045.
- It is currently Europe's largest emitter of CO2.
- Certain industrial sectors, such as cement production, will use carbon capture technology for Berlin to reach its climate goals.
- The law will also need to be changed to allow the transport of CO2 captured from industrial processes.

Germany will also make use of carbon capture and utilisation technology, where captured C02 will be used for other products rather than being stored underground.

The Indus-X Summit took place on February 20-21, 2024 in New Delhi.

- It is organized by Innovation for Defense Excellence (IDEX), Department of Defense Production, Ministry of Defense of the United States of America, in collaboration with the US-India Business Council and the Society of Indian Defense Manufacturers.
- It is intended to be a key program promoting the strategic technological alliance and defense industry cooperation between the United States and India.
- The event will bring together stakeholders in defense innovation from various sectors including government agencies, academic and research institutions, investors, defense start-ups, technology incubators, industry clusters and other entities supporting start-ups.
- The Indus-X summit was launched in June 2023 when Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi was on a state visit to the US.
- Since its inception, the India-U.S. Defense Acceleration Ecosystem (INDUS-X) has been a pioneer in expanding bilateral relations in defense innovation.

7th Indian Ocean Conference

- The inaugural session of the 7th Indian Ocean Conference in Perth, Australia on 9 February was addressed by External Affairs Minister Dr. S. Jaishankar addressed.
- Sri Lankan President Ranil Wickremesinghe, Australian Foreign Minister Penny Wong and Singapore Foreign Minister Dr Vivian Balakrishnan also joined Dr Jaishankar.
- The conference was organized on 9-10 February in collaboration with the Australian Government's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade as well as the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies, Singapore and the Perth-US Asia Centre, Australia.
- The theme of the two-day Indian Ocean Conference was "Towards a Stable and Sustainable Indian Ocean".
- This conference is a major consultative forum for the countries of the Indian Ocean region.
- It is organized annually by the Ministry of External Affairs in collaboration with India Foundation since 2016.

Iran has announced a visa-free travel policy for Indian citizens

- Visa-free policy for Indian citizens has been approved by the Iranian Government.
- This visa-free policy will be valid for tourism purposes only.

- This policy allows Indian citizens holding ordinary passports to enter Iran without a visa.
- However, this entry can be made only once in every six months for a maximum stay of 15 days.

World Sustainable Development Summit 2024



- This Summit has been inaugurated by Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar in New Delhi
- The summit has been organized by 'The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI)'.
- The summit is being held on 7-9 February 2024 in New Delhi.
- The theme of this year's summit is leadership for sustainable development and climate justice.

India, Turkey and Qatar were named guests of honor for the World Government Summit.

- The 2024 World Government Summit is scheduled to take place in Dubai from February 12-14.
- The theme of the World Government Summit 2024 is 'Shaping Future Governments'.
- The delegations of Turkey, India and Qatar will be led by President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim Al Thani, respectively.
- 25 heads of government and states from across the world will participate in the summit.

The world's First Air Taxi

- Dubai signed agreements to launch the world's first air taxi service at the World Government Summit 2024.
- The Joby Aviation S4 is an innovative aircraft designed to carry four passengers along with a pilot.
- It is powered by four battery packs and has a maximum range of 161 km and a top speed of 321 kmph.
- It has vertical take-off and landing capabilities and is ideal for urban areas.
- It will reduce noise pollution compared to helicopters. The air-taxi network will begin operations in 2026.

9th edition of Raisina Dialogue

- PM Narendra Modi inaugurated the 9th edition of Raisina Dialogue in New Delhi.
- Prime Minister of Greece Kyriakos Mitsotakis attended the inaugural session as the chief guest.
- Attendees include ministers, former heads of state and government, military chiefs, business executives, technology executives, academics, journalists and scholars with expertise in strategic affairs.
- "Chaturanga: Struggle, Competition, Cooperation, Creation" is the theme of this edition.
- Raisina Dialogue is India's premier conference on geopolitics and geo-economics.
- It is dedicated to tackling the most pressing problems the world community currently faces.
- It is being organized annually since 2016. It is organized by the Ministry of External Affairs and Observer Research Foundation.

Commonwealth Legal Education Association (CLEA) – Commonwealth Attorneys and Solicitors General Conference

- PM Modi inaugurated the Commonwealth Legal Education Association (CLEA) – Commonwealth Attorneys and Solicitors General Conference in New Delhi.
- The theme of this conference is cross border challenges in delivery of justice.
- Important issues of law and justice will be discussed during the conference.

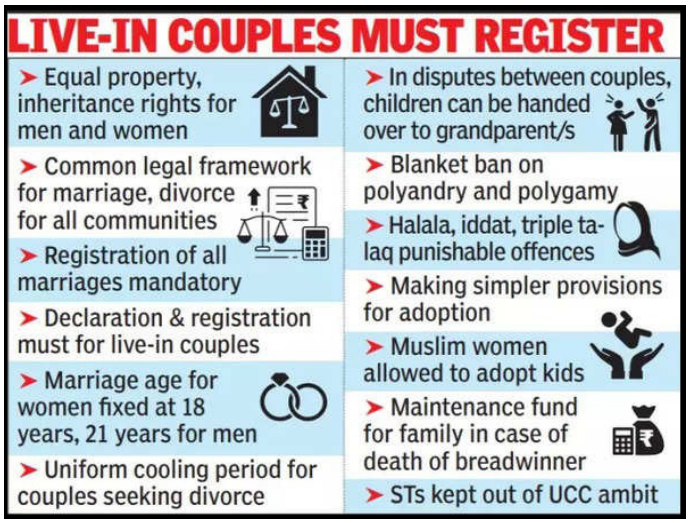
- Conference participants include Attorneys General and Solicitors from Commonwealth countries spanning Asia-Pacific, Africa and the Caribbean along with various international delegations.
- It provides a platform for interaction between various stakeholders in the Commonwealth legal fraternity.
- It aims to develop a comprehensive roadmap to address challenges in legal education and international justice delivery.

2. NATIONAL AFFAIRS

Four members of the Sixteenth Finance Commission (SFC) appointed

- Four members of the Sixteenth Finance Commission (SFC) were appointed by the government, including three whole-time members.
- Former expenditure secretary and member of the 15th Finance Commission A N Jha, former special secretary in the department of expenditure Annie George Mathew and NiranjanRajadhyaksha, executive director of Earth Global, have been appointed as whole-time members of the SFC.
- Additionally, the government has appointed Soumya Kanti Ghosh, Group Chief Economic Advisor, State Bank of India, as a part-time member of the Commission.
- In December, the government appointed former NITI Aayog vice-chairman Arvind Panagariya to lead the SFC.
- The Chairman and other members of the Commission will hold office respectively from the date of assumption of charge till the date of submission of the report or till 31 October 2025, whichever is earlier.

Uttarakhand has become the first state to pass the Uniform Civil Code Bill.



- Uniform Civil Code (UCC) Uttarakhand Bill 2024 has been passed by the Assembly.
- It will control and regulate laws relating to marriage and divorce, succession, live-in relationships and related matters.
- Now, Uttarakhand will have uniform laws on marriage, divorce, land, property and inheritance for all citizens, irrespective of their religion.
- The Uniform Civil Code will not apply to the Scheduled Tribes of the state.

Salient features of Uniform Civil Code of Uttarakhand:

- Marriage and divorce practices under Muslim personal law such as Halala, Iddat and triple talaq have been banned.
- The legal age of marriage has been kept at 21 years for men and 18 years for women.
- Couples living in a live-in relationship must submit "Particulars of Live-in Relationship" to the concerned registrar.
- If they spend a month without submitting such details, they may face jail up to three months or a fine not exceeding Rs 10,000 or both.
- The Bill abolished the concept of "illegitimate children". The new law provides legal recognition to children born out of void and invalid marriages.
- It clearly bans bigamy and polygamy in the state and lists five conditions for solemnizing a marriage.
- Marriages taking place after the implementation of the bill will have to be compulsorily registered.

The electoral bond scheme for political funding was declared "unconstitutional" by the Supreme Court.

- In a landmark judgment on February 15, Chief Justice of India DY Chandrachud said the plan was arbitrary and violated citizens' right to information.
- A five-judge Constitution bench of the Supreme Court struck down the electoral bond scheme, which allowed anonymous donations to political parties.
- The electoral bond scheme launched by the government on January 2, 2018 was seen as a solution to replace cash donations and increase transparency in political funding.

- The Supreme Court said that the scheme violates the right to information of the citizens, thereby affecting the freedom of speech and expression under Article 19(1) (a) of the Constitution.
- Electoral bond issuing bank, State Bank of India (SBI) has been ordered to submit details of political parties that have received electoral bonds since 2019 to the Election Commission of India (ECI) by March 6, 2024.
- ECI has also been asked to publish such details on its official website.
- The Supreme Court also struck down the amendments made to the Income Tax Act and the Representation of the People Act, which had made donations anonymous.

Supreme Court cancels the results of Chandigarh Mayor election.

- After finding that Presiding Officer Anil Masih had deliberately invalidated eight ballot papers cast in favor of AamAadmi Party (AAP)-Congress candidate Kuldeep Kumar 'Tita', the Supreme Court has set aside the results of the Chandigarh Mayor Cancelled.
- The Supreme Court used its power under Article 142 of the Constitution to deliver "complete justice" and protect the sanctity of electoral democracy.
- The Supreme Court bench said that the eight votes which were considered invalid were wrongly counted.
- Kuldeep Kumar has been declared the winner in the Chandigarh Mayor election by 20 votes.
- Mayor:
- The Mayor is the head of the Municipal Corporation. The mayor of a city is the first citizen of that city.
- The mayor is usually elected by the members of the municipal corporation or council.

Maharashtra Assembly passes Maratha Reservation Bill.

- Maratha Reservation Bill is passed, which will provide 10 percent reservation to Marathas above the 50 percent limit.
- The state government called a one-day special session of the state legislature to pass this bill.
- This is the third time in a decade that the state has introduced legislation for Maratha quota.
- The reservation has been increased on the basis of a report submitted by the Maharashtra Backward Classes Commission (MBCC) to the state government. It was presided over by Chairman Justice (Retd) Sunil Shukre.
- The state of Maharashtra already has a 10 percent quota for the Economically Weaker Section (EWS).
- The Maharashtra State Backward Classes Commission (MSBCC) was formed in 2017 and is headed by Justice (retd) MG Gaikwad.

The Election Commission of India has given the name and election symbol of Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) to Ajit Pawar's faction.

- Ajit Pawar's group has been officially recognized as the Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) by the Election Commission.
- The Election Commission has based its decision on the test of legislative majority.
- The Election Commission said the faction led by AjitAnantraoPawar is the Nationalist Congress Party (NCP).
- The Election Commission has ordered Sharad Pawar's faction to claim a name for its new formation.
- It directed Sharad Pawar's faction to present three priorities to the commission.
- Nationalist Congress Party was formed on 10 June 1999. It is a state party. Its election symbol is an analog alarm clock.
- The watch is made in blue colour. It has two legs and an alarm button.

5 New wetlands of India added to Ramsar sites list

- 5 new wetlands of India have been included as wetlands of international importance (Ramsar sites).
- At present the number of Ramsar sites in India has increased from 75 to 80.
- Of these, 2 wetlands belong to Tamil Nadu and 3 to Karnataka.
- Following are the 5 wetlands included in Ramsar site-

S.No.	Name of Ramsar site	State
1.	Ankasamudra Bird Conservation Reserve	Karnataka
2.	Aghanashini Estuary	Karnataka

3.	Magadi Kere Conservation Reserve	Karnataka
4.	Karaivetta Bird Sanctuary	Tamil Nadu
5.	Longwood Shola Reserve Forest	Tamil Nadu

- With the inclusion of these 5 wetlands in the list of Wetlands of International Importance, the total area covered under Ramsar Sites in India is now 1.33 million hectares, which is an increase of 5,523.87 hectares from the existing area (1.327 million hectares).
- Tamil Nadu has the maximum number of Ramsar sites in India (16). After this, there are 10 Ramsar sites in Uttar Pradesh.
- A total of 26 sites were added to the list of Ramsar sites between 1982 and 2013, while 54 new wetlands were added between 2014 and 2024.
- Presently there are 2 Ramsar sites in Rajasthan.
  1. Keoladeo National Park (1981)
  2. Sambhar Lake (1990)
- The Sundarban Wetland located in West Bengal is the largest Ramsar site in India. It is spread over an area of approximately 4230 square kilometers.
- Renuka Wetland area located in Himachal Pradesh is the smallest Ramsar site in India. It is spread over an area of approximately 0.2 square kilometre.
- The United Kingdom has the largest number of Ramsar sites in the world (175 Ramsar sites).
- The world's first Ramsar site was designated in 1974 on the Cobourg Peninsula in Australia.
- The largest Ramsar site in the world is Rio Negro in Brazil (1,20,000 square km).
- The protected area under the Ramsar Convention in Bolivia is spread over 1,48,000 square km, which is the largest in the world.

A $200 million loan agreement has been signed by the Government of India and the Asian Development Bank (ADB).

- The loan agreement aims to strengthen flood and river bank erosion risk management in or around the 650 km long stretch of the Brahmaputra River in Assam.
- This loan agreement is for the Climate Resilient Brahmaputra Integrated Flood and River Bank Erosion Risk Management Project in Assam.
- Project intervention involves the following steps.
  - Stabilizing 60 km of river banks
  - Installing 32 km of pro-siltation measures
  - Construct 4 km climate-resilient flood embankments in five high priority districts (Dibrugarh, Goalpara, Kamrup Rural, Morigaon and Tinsukia)
- The project will benefit approximately 1 million people and increase crop production by more than 50,000 hectares.
- The project activities will be managed and coordinated by the Flood and River Erosion Management Agency of Assam.
- The partner agencies will be Brahmaputra Board, Assam State Disaster Management Authority and Assam Inland Water Transport Development Society.

APAAR: One Nation One Student ID Card

- National Conference was inaugurated on 13th February in New Delhi.
- Automated Permanent Academic Account Registry (APAAR) will be an ambitious and global document for students in India.
- Till now 25 crore APAR IDs have been created.
- The interconnectivity of APAR ID, Academic Bank of Credit and DigiLocker has provided ease of operations.
- APAAR is a transformative initiative launched in line with the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 and National Credit and Qualification Framework (NCRF).
- APAAR aims to provide a unified and accessible educational experience for students across India by providing each student with a unique and permanent 12-digit ID, consolidating their academic achievements in one place.

Jal Shakti Ministry and 12 technical education institutes have signed an agreement.

- This agreement is for research and academic cooperation towards basin management of six rivers.

- These six rivers are-Narmada, Godavari, Mahanadi, Krishna, Kaveri and Periyar.
- This agreement was signed under the National River Conservation Plan.
- The Namami Gange Mission has been included by UNESCO among the ten best conservation and revitalization campaigns in the world.
- River Basin Management Responsible Institution
- Narmada Basin Management IIT Indore and IIT Gandhinagar
- Godavari Basin Management IIT Hyderabad and NEERI Nagpur
- Mahanadi Basin Management IIT Raipur and IIT Rourkela
- Krishna Basin Management NIT Warangal and NIT Surathkal
- Cauvery Basin Management IISc Bangalore and NIT Trichy
- Periyar Basin Management IIT Palakkad and NIT Calicut

Science for Women-A Technology and Innovation (SWATI) Portal

- On February 11, 'Science for Women - A Technology and Innovation (SWATI)' portal was launched by Professor Ajay Kumar Sood, Principal Scientific Advisor at the Indian National Science Academy (INSA), New Delhi.
- This portal is a completely interactive database and is the first of its kind in India.
- The portal is developed, hosted and maintained by the National Institute of Plant Genome Research (NIPGR).
- The objective of the portal is to create an online portal representing Indian women and girls in Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics and Medicine (STEMM).

Animal welfare initiative 'Vantara' launched by Reliance.

- On February 26, the launch of Vantara (Star of the Forest) program in Jamnagar was announced by Reliance Industries and Reliance Foundation.
- It is a comprehensive initiative focused on the rescue, treatment, care and rehabilitation of injured, abused and endangered animals in India and abroad.
- Vantara is spread over 3,000 acres within the green belt of Reliance's Jamnagar Refinery Complex.
- Vantara will work with leading experts in animal care and welfare.
- Vantara has transformed the site into a forest-like environment that is a natural, rich, and lush green habitat for the rescued species.
- The program has rescued more than 200 elephants and thousands of other animals, reptiles and birds from unsafe conditions over the years.

3. ECONOMIC AFFAIRS

Interim Budget 2024

- During an election year in India, the government presents an interim budget, which acts as a provisional financial plan to cover necessary expenditure until the new government takes office.
- The presentation of the interim budget will take place in a joint session of Parliament.
- The full budget will be presented after the formation of the new government after the elections. One of the features of the interim budget is the passing of the Vote on Account by the Parliament.
- It addresses critical expenses such as salaries of central government employees and financing of ongoing government projects.
- It is generally valid for two months, the vote on account can be extended if considered necessary.

Key Highlights

Housing	• **Housing for middle class:** Government will launch a scheme to help deserving sections of the middle class "living in rented houses, or slums, or chawls and unauthorised colonies" to buy or build their own houses. • **Rooftop solarization:** One crore households will be enabled to obtain up to 300 units free electricity every month. • **PM Awas Yojana (Grameen):** Two crore more houses will be taken up in the next five years to meet the requirement arising from increase in the number of families.
Health	• HPV vaccination: Vaccination for girls in age group of 9 to 14 years for prevention of cervical cancer. • Establishment of Medical Colleges: Government plans to set up more medical colleges by utilising the existing hospital infrastructure under various departments. • Upgradation of anganwadi centres: Expedition of upgradation under "Saksham Anganwadi and Poshan 2.0". • U-WIN platform: For managing immunisation and intensified efforts of Mission Indradhanush will be rolled out expeditiously. • Extension of **healthcare cover under Ayushman Bharat scheme:** To all ASHA workers, Anganwadi Workers and Helpers.
Agriculture and related sectors	• Nano DAP: Application of Nano DAP on various crops will be expanded in all agro-climatic zones. • Oil seeds: A strategy will be formulated to achieve 'atmanirbharta' for oil seeds. Focussed oil seeds: mustard, groundnut, sesame, soybean, and sunflower. • A comprehensive programme for supporting dairy farmers: The success of existing schemes such RashtriyaGokul Mission, National Livestock Mission, and Infrastructure Development Funds for dairy processing and animal husbandry will act as guiding light for such a programme. • Implementation of Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY): This scheme will be stepped up to:

	• enhance aquaculture productivity from existing 3 to 5 tons per hectare, • double exports to ₹ 1 lakh crore and • generate 55 lakh employment opportunities in near future." • **Setting up of 5 integrated aqua parks.**
Women	• **Growing SHGs in India:** "Eighty-three lakh SHGs with nine crore women are transforming the rural socio-economic landscape with empowerment and self-reliance". • **Increase in Target:** The government aims to enhance the target for LakhpatiDidi from 2 crore to 3 crore.
Youth And Technology	• **A corpus of rupees one lakh crore with fifty-year interest free loan:** The corpus will provide long-term financing or refinancing with long tenors and low or nil interest rates. • **Deep-tech technologies for defence purposes:** A new scheme will be launched for strengthening deep-tech technologies for defence purposes and expediting 'atmanirbharta'.
Infrastructure Development	• **Outlay for the next year:** Increased by 11.1% to eleven lakh, eleven thousand, one hundred and eleven crore rupees (` 11,11,111 crore). This would be 3.4% of the GDP. • **Implementation of 3 major economic railway corridor programmes:** The projects have been identified under the PM Gati Shakti for enabling multi-modal connectivity. These are: • energy, mineral and cement corridors, • port connectivity corridors, and • high traffic density corridors. • **Expansion of Metro and NaMO Bharat** in large cities focusing on transit-oriented development.
Environment and Green Energy	• **Viability gap funding:** For harnessing offshore wind energy potential. • **Clean air:** Coal gasification and liquefaction capacity of 100 MT will be set up by 2030. • **Financial assistance** for procurement of biomass aggregation machinery. • **Phased mandatory blending of compressed biogas (CBG) in compressed natural gas (CNG)** for transport and piped natural gas (PNG) for domestic purposes. • **Electric Vehicle Ecosystem:** Support for manufacturing and charging infrastructure. • **Greater adoption of e-buses for public transport networks:** To be encouraged through payment security mechanisms. • **A new scheme of bio-manufacturing** and bio-foundry for promoting green growth. • **Blue Economy 2.0:** A scheme for restoration and adaptation measures, and coastal aquaculture and mariculture with integrated and multi-sectoral approach will be launched.

Tourism	• **Comprehensive development of iconic tourist centres:** States will be encouraged to take up comprehensive development of iconic tourist centres, branding and marketing them at global scale. • **A framework for rating of the centres** based on quality of facilities and services will be established. • **Long-term interest free loans:** To States for financing such development on matching basis. • **Promotion of domestic tourism:** Projects for port connectivity, tourism infrastructure, and amenities will be taken up on our islands. It will also include Lakshadweep.
FDI	• **FDI inflow during 2014-23:** USD 596 billion which is twice the inflow during 2005-14. • **For encouraging sustained foreign investment:** Negotiating bilateral investment treaties with the foreign partners, in the spirit of 'first develop India'.
Population Growth and Demographic changes	• **High-powered committee:** The Government will form a high-powered committee for an extensive consideration of the challenges
Reforms in the States	• **Provision of seventy-five thousand crore rupees as a fifty-year interest free loan:** Proposed to support reforms by the State Governments.
Revised Estimates 2023-24	• Revised Estimate of the total receipts other than borrowings: Rs. 27.56 lakh crore, of which the tax receipts are 23.24 lakh crore. • Revised Estimate of the total expenditure: Rs. 44.90 lakh crore. • Revenue receipts: Rs. 30.03 lakh crore; expected to be higher than the Budget Estimate. • Revised Estimate of the fiscal deficit: 5.8% of GDP
Budget Estimates 2024-25	• **Fiscal deficit in 2024-25:** Estimated to be 5.1% of GDP, adhering to that path. • **Scheme of fifty-year interest free loan for capital expenditure to states:** To be continued this year with total outlay of Rs. 1.3 lakh crore. • **Total receipts other than borrowings and the total expenditure:** Estimated at Rs. 30.80 and 47.66 lakh crore respectively. • **Tax receipts:** Estimated at Rs. 26.02 lakh crore
Direct taxes	• **Increase in direct tax collections:** They have more than tripled and the return filers swelled to 2.4 times. • **New tax scheme:** Now, there is no tax liability for taxpayers with income up to Rs. 7 lakh, up from Rs. 2.2 lakh in the financial year 2013-14. • **Threshold for presumptive taxation for retail businesses**: Increased from Rs. 2 crore to Rs. 3 crore. • **Threshold for professionals eligible for presumptive taxation:** Increased from Rs. 50 lakh to Rs. 75 Lakh. • **Corporate tax rate:** Decreased from 30% to 22% for existing domestic companies and to 15% for certain new manufacturing companies.

Indirect Taxes	• **Role of GST:**
	  • GST has reduced the compliance burden on trade and industry.
	  • Tax base of GST more than doubled.
	  • The average monthly gross GST collection has almost doubled to Rs. 1.66 lakh crore.
	  • States' SGST revenue, including compensation released to states, in the post-GST period of 2017-18 to 2022-23, has achieved a buoyancy of 1.22.

Rooftop solar scheme has been started for free electricity.

- This scheme has been named PM Surya Ghar Free Electricity Scheme.
- The scheme aims to illuminate 1 crore homes by providing up to 300 units of free electricity every month.
- This scheme will provide subsidy directly into people's bank accounts.
- In this scheme, the central government will ensure that there is no cost burden on the people.
- To popularize the scheme at the grassroots level, urban local bodies and Panchayats will be encouraged to promote rooftop solar systems in their jurisdiction.
- The government has already kept a subsidy of ₹10,000 crore for solar grid rooftop in the FY 2025 budget.
- The scheme was first announced by PM Modi on January 22.

'Bharat Rice' launched at subsidized rates for consumers.

- 'Bharat Rice' brand has been launched on 06 February to provide rice to consumers at subsidized rates.
- Rice will be available in packs of 5 kg and 10 kg at a concessional rate of Rs 29 per kg.
- Under this scheme, poor families are saving Rs 1500 to 2000 every month.
- Food Corporation of India (FCI) will provide 5 lakh metric tonnes of rice to two cooperative societies in the first phase.
- It includes the National Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Federation of India Limited (NAFED) and the National Cooperative Consumer Federation of India (NCCF) as well as the retail chain KendriyaBhandar.
- Additionally, these agencies will pack the rice in 5 kg and 10 kg packets and retail through their outlets under the "Bharat Rice" brand.
- Rice will also be sold through e-commerce platforms.

The MahilaSurakshaYojanaextended till 2025-26.

- The implementation of the Umbrella Scheme on 'Women's Safety' has been extended for the period 2021-22 to 2025-26 at a cost of Rs 1180 crore.
- The government will also set up six cyber forensic science laboratories in Pune, Chandigarh, Kolkata, Delhi, Kamrup and Bhopal.
- 5000 police personnel will be trained every year for effective investigation and prosecution to curb crimes against women and children.
- The 24-hour emergency helpline service 112 will also be extended.

Reliance Industries Limited (RIL) became the first Indian company to achieve market capitalization of Rs 20 lakh crore.

- The market valuation of the company increased to Rs 20,01,279.72 crore during the intra-day session and the market capitalization at the close stood at Rs 19,81,635.72 crore.
- In the ranking of top 10 most valuable companies, Reliance Industries topped the chart, followed by TCS, HDFC Bank, ICICI Bank, Infosys, Life Insurance Corporation of India, State Bank of India, Bharti Airtel, Hindustan Unilever and ITC.

4. Rajasthan Affairs, Polity & Governance

Rajya Sabha elections 2024 in Rajasthan

- Elections were held unopposed on 3 seats for the Rajya Sabha biennial elections 2024 from Rajasthan.
  1. ShriChunniLalGarasia (BharatiyaJanata Party)
  2. Shri MadanRathod (BharatiyaJanata Party)
  3. Smt. Sonia Gandhi (Indian National Congress)

Rajya Sabha MP from Rajasthan

S.No.	MPs	Party	Period
1.	ShriChunniLalGarasia	BharatiyaJanata Party	2024 - 2030
2.	Smt. Sonia Gandhi	Indian National Congress	2024 - 2030
3.	ShriMadanRathod	BharatiyaJanata Party	2024 - 2030
4.	Shri Neeraj Dangi	Indian National Congress	2020 - 2026
5.	ShriRajendraGehlot	BharatiyaJanata Party	2020 - 2026
6.	ShriKensinVenugopal	Indian National Congress	2020 - 2026
7.	ShriGhanshyamTiwari	BharatiyaJanata Party	2022 - 2028
8.	ShriRandeep Singh Surjewala	Indian National Congress	2022 - 2028
9.	Shri Mukul Balkrishna Wasnik	Indian National Congress	2022 - 2028
10.	Shri Pramod Kumar	Indian National Congress	2022 - 2028

- Presently the number of Lok Sabha seats in Rajasthan is 25.
- The number of Rajya Sabha seats in Rajasthan is 10.
- A total of 35 MPs are elected from Rajasthan.
- Currently, there are 4 MPs from Bharatiya-Janata Party and 6 MPs from Indian National Congress in Rajya Sabha in Rajasthan.
- Currently only 1 woman MP (Sonia Gandhi) is elected to Rajya Sabha from Rajasthan.
- ShriJagdishDhankar from Jhunjhunu district of Rajasthan is currently the Vice President of India and ex-officio Chairman of Rajya Sabha.

Important facts regarding voter lists in Rajasthan

- The number of voters for the Lok Sabha General Election-2024 in Rajasthan has exceeded 5.32 crore.
- More than 15.54 lakh voters in the state will vote for the first time.
- The Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) in Rajasthan is Mr. Praveen Gupta.
- There are 616 voters of third gender registered in Rajasthan.
- The number of disabled and elderly voters has increased to 5.73 lakh and 12.86 lakh respectively.
- According to the last publication of voter lists in Rajasthan on 8 February 2024, the gender ratio in the voter lists has become 923 as compared to 920.
- The percentage of voters in the age group of 18-19 years among the total registered voters is 2-94%.
- In the last published lists in the state, the maximum increase in the number of voters in the assembly constituencies Sanganer (Jaipur) and Vidyadhar Nagar (Jaipur) has been 2%.
- Jhotwara assembly constituency of Jaipur in Rajasthan has the highest number of voters registered with the number of 4,37,479.
- Kishanpole assembly constituency of Jaipur in Rajasthan has the least number of voters registered with the number of 1,94,902.

- Jhotwara assembly constituency of Jaipur has the highest number of women voters registered at 2,10,464, while the lowest number of women voters are registered in Baseri at 93,096.

Digital channel and WhatsApp channel of Rajasthan Legislative Assembly will be created.

- A digital channel of the Rajasthan Legislative Assembly will be started to improve the functioning and reach of the common man.
- Through this, apart from the proceedings of the Assembly, topics related to democratic activities will be broadcast.
- A weekly one-hour broadcast will be conducted in schools across the state to educate the new generation about the democratic process.
- The proceedings of Rajasthan Assembly will be made paperless and screens will be arranged on every table.

Major Programs, Schemes, Campaigns

Develop India-Develop Rajasthan Program

- This is a program sponsored by the Central Government.
- Through this program, various projects related to infrastructure were started by the Central Government in the state.
- This program was addressed by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi through video conferencing on 16 February.
- Under this, development projects worth more than Rs 17,000 crore related to many important sectors including roads, railways, solar energy, power transmission, drinking water and petroleum and natural gas were inaugurated and foundation stones were laid in Rajasthan.
- Inaugurated various National Highway projects worth more than Rs 5,000 crore in Rajasthan. These will provide faster and better connectivity in the area. These are equipped with animal underpasses and animal overpasses to facilitate unhindered movement of wildlife.
- Jaipur's Jatipura railway station has been developed as a satellite station and is equipped with terminal facility where trains can originate and terminate.
- Apart from this, maintenance facility for Vande Bharat sleeper trains will be constructed at Bhagat ki Kothi (Jodhpur) in Rajasthan, maintenance facility for all types of rakes like Vande Bharat, LHB etc. will be constructed at Pratipura (Jaipur), coach care complex for maintenance of trains will be constructed at Hanumangarh.
- The foundation stone of solar projects worth about Rs 5,300 crore was laid and dedicated to the nation to promote the production of renewable energy in Rajasthan.

1. NLCIL Barsingsar Solar Project (Barsingsar, Bikaner) (Capacity 300 MW) (Foundation laid)
2. NHPC Limited Solar Power Project (Bikaner) (Capacity 300 MW) (Foundation stone laid)
3. NTPC Green Energy Limited Solar PV Project (Nora, Bikaner) (Capacity 300 MW) (Dedicated to the Nation)

Redevelopment of 21 railway stations of Rajasthan and inauguration and foundation stone of 112 ROB-URB.

- On 26 February 2024, through video conferencing, the Prime Minister inaugurated and laid the foundation stone of redevelopment work of 553 railway stations at a cost of about Rs 41,000 crore and 1500 road overbridges and underpasses across the country under the Amrit Bharat Station Scheme.
- The foundation stone of redevelopment works of 21 railway stations of Rajasthan was laid under Amrit Bharat Station Scheme.
- This includes Ajmer Junction, PaliMarwar, Sanganer, Beawar, Fatehnagar, Jawai Dam, Rani, Somesar, Gogamedi, Raisingh Nagar, Dausa, FatehpurShewati, Airthal, NeemKa Thana, Rajgarh, Deeg, Dholpur, Govindgarh, Redli, Bundi and Jhalawar City. Are included.
- These railway stations will become centers of socio-economic activities with the integration of multi-modal connectivity.
- While redeveloping these as city centres, facilities like roof plaza shopping zone, food court and children's play area etc. will be provided.

- Apart from this, entry and exit gates, multi-level parking, lift, escalator, lounge, waiting room, travelator, disabled friendly facilities will be developed.
- In order to ease the traffic in Rajasthan, the foundation stone of 112 road over bridges and underpasses was also laid and inaugurated.
- Under Amrit Bharat Station, each station will be developed as per the characteristics of the local city as a symbol of the country's heritage and development.
- In this way, the heritage and culture of the state will be engraved on the stations of Rajasthan.
- Apart from this, a plan has been made to redevelop Sanganer (Jaipur) at a cost of Rs 192 crore to make it a world class railway station.

Chief Minister JalSwavalambanAbhiyan 2.0

- For this, a provision of Rs 11,200 crore has been made by the Rajasthan government. Under this, 5 lakh water storage structures will be built in 20,000 villages in the next 4 years.
- The objective of this campaign is to promote water conservation and storage.

Chief Minister Water Self Reliance Campaign

- This campaign was started from Gardanredi village of Jhalawar district on January 27, 2016 during the tenure of the then Chief Minister Vasundhara Raje.
- Its main objective was to fulfill the minimum requirement of water in rural areas, to solve the problems arising due to water availability and lack of water during famine.
- Under this, the year 2016 was determined as the year of water revolution.
- Under this scheme, a target was set to make about 21,000 villages of the state water self-sufficient by 2020 by benefiting 3,000 priority villages in 2016 and 6,000 villages every year for 3 years.

Inauguration of mobile veterinary units

- This is a medical vehicle for animals.
- Mobile Veterinary Unit was launched in Rajasthan by Chief Minister ShriBhajanlal Sharma on 24 February 2024.
- A total of 536 mobile veterinary units will be operated in Rajasthan.
- Through these, based on the demand of the animal farmers, their animals will be able to get the benefit of medical facilities at home.
- The state government has started mobile veterinary units (helpline number 1962).
- A mobile veterinary unit will work for every one lakh animals.
- Under this scheme, a state level call center will also be established, which will provide telemedicine arrangements for the treatment of common diseases of animals and advice for animal management, nutrition etc.
- Animal herders will also be benefited by organizing veterinary camps by mobile veterinary units in each block.
- For each mobile veterinary unit in each block, there will be 1 veterinarian, 1 technical veterinary personnel and 1 driver less animal attendant.
- Mobile veterinary service has been started in the state under the centrally sponsored scheme 'Establishment and Strengthening of Veterinary Hospitals and Dispensaries (EVHD-MVU).

'Pure diet, attack on adulteration' campaign

- 'Pure diet, attack on adulteration' campaign was started in Rajasthan from February 15, 2024.
- Its objective is to provide pure food items without adulteration to the general public and to take strict action against adulterants.
- It has been started by the State Medical and Health Department.
- Under this campaign, effective action was taken by the teams of Food and Safety Commissionerate by collecting samples.

State level rehabilitation campaign for shelterless, helpless and sick persons

- This campaign was run in Rajasthan from 29 February to 5 March 2024.
- This campaign was run from 29th February to 1st March at every divisional headquarters and from 2nd March to 5th March in all the districts.

- This campaign is being run under the joint aegis of Social Justice and Empowerment Department and Apna Ghar Sanstha, Rajasthan with the help of police administration.
- Its objective is to rehabilitate the shelterless, helpless, sick and abandoned people living in public places.
- Under this, shelterless, helpless, sick and abandoned persons found in public places were given admission in the ashram run at the divisional level.
- Free shelter, medicine, food, clothing and living services have been provided to these people.

'Operation Smile'

- This is a statewide campaign which has been started to make transgenders aware of their legal rights and to make the nodal officers of the police treat them sensitively.
- It was organized in all the police ranges and commissionerates of the state on the instructions of the police headquarters.

'Bounce of Joy' program launched

- It has been launched by the Department of School Education and Stairs Foundation (with the support of National Rail Promotion Organization - NSPO and courtesy of ITC).
- This is an initiative to promote sports and nurture sports talent in the schools of the state.
- With this strategic partnership, overall development will be promoted through trains in the schools of the state.
- Through this, the physical teachers of our schools will be given special training, so that they can nurture the young athletic talents in the schools and create a generation of champions on and off the field.

'MantriAapkeDwar' program

- This program has been started by the Government of Rajasthan.
- Its objective is to provide relief to the common people by visiting their doorsteps and listening to them.
- Its aim is to solve the problems of the general public and ensure administrative order.
- Under this, the officers investigate every complaint received from the general public and provide prompt resolution.

Sahariya dominated Baran district selected under PradhanMantriJanmanYojana

- The ambitious PradhanMantriJanman-Yojana has been launched by the Central Government for the overall development of 75 Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs) in the country.
- Under this, Baran district of Rajasthan (Saharia dominated) has been selected.
- Under this program, implementation of the scheme will be ensured in the Sahariya tribe dominated area of the district.

'PM Janman' scheme

- This scheme was launched on 15 November 2023 from Khunti in Jharkhand on the occasion of 'Tribal Pride Day'.
- This scheme is also known as Pradhan-Mantri Tribal Tribal Justice MahaAbhiyan.
- The scheme was first announced during Budget 2023-24.
- In this scheme, the budget for tribal welfare has been increased six times.
- The Center has set a budget of Rs 24,104 crore on this mega scheme, of which Rs 15,336 crore and Rs 8,768 crore will be spent by the states.
- This scheme is for the tribal groups and primitive tribes who still reside in the forests.
- The scheme will focus on 11 sectors by 9 ministries for 75 PVTGs.

Safe School Safe Rajasthan-3rd Phase

- 'No Bag Day' activity was organized to create awareness about 'unsafe touch' among the children studying in government schools of Rajasthan and to curb the incidents of 'child abuse' in the society.
- It was organized by the state school education department.
- Under this, 'No-Go-Tell' theory was explained to the children by specially trained teachers (master trainers) to make children aware about 'bad touch'.
- The first phase of this campaign was organized in August 2023, while the second phase was organized in October 2023.

'No-go-tell' theory

- In the schools of the state, children are instructed to run away from that place or person with caution by shouting 'No' in case of bad touch and without any fear

or panic to tell about it to any elder or to whom they are most responsible. Those who have more confidence were told to tell about it.

Smart City Mission Phase 2.0

- Under the Smart City Mission Phase 2-0 of the Central Government, development works will be carried out in 4 cities of Rajasthan at a cost of Rs 553-90 crore.
- Under this, budget has been allocated for Udaipur, Jaipur, Kota and Ajmer cities of the state.
- This amount will be used in the development of infrastructure with special focus on Integrated Waste Management.

- Integrated Waste Management (IWS) is a comprehensive waste prevention, recycling, recycling and disposal program.
- IWS involves assessing local needs and conditions and then selecting and combining waste management activities best suited to those conditions.
- Major IWS activities include waste prevention, recycling and incineration, and combustion and disposal in appropriately designed, constructed and managed landfills.

Innovation of Rajasthan Police "@RajPoliceHelp"

- This is a facility launched by Rajasthan Police to resolve complaints related to law and order through digital medium for the general public.
- Under this, your complaint related to law and order can be made to Rajasthan Police in just 2 steps on X ('X') (old: Twitter).
- If the general public has any complaint regarding law and order, then the first step is to go to the X (Twitter) account. In the second step, you will have to write your complaint and tweet it by tagging RajPoliceHelp.
- Complaints received in this way can be immediately forwarded to the concerned police office.

Rajasthan police helpline number

- Emergency number: 112
- Garima Helpline: 1090
- Child Helpline: 1098
- Cyber Crime Helpline: 1930
- State Centralized Call Center No.: 181

Various Agreements/MoUs

Tripartite MoU in Union Jal Shakti Ministry-Haryana-Rajasthan

- A tripartite MoU was signed in New Delhi in the presence of Union Jal Shakti Minister Shri Gajendra Singh Sherawat, Rajasthan Chief Minister Shri Bhajan Lal Sharma and Haryana Chief Minister Shri Manohar Lal Thakur.
- Under this MoU signed between the Central Government, Haryana Government and Rajasthan Government, it was agreed to prepare DPR for the flow system from Tajewala.
- Under this, Rajasthan will be able to get Yamuna river water from Tajewala headworks and the water that gets wasted during rains can also be properly utilized.
- In Rajasthan, under this, Yamuna river water will be made available to 3 districts of the state, Sikar, Churu and Jhunjhunu through underground pipelines.
- This will solve the drinking water problem of three districts of Shewati region.
- Note: Pursuant to the agreement signed in May 1994 on Yamuna water, Rajasthan is allotted 1917 cusecs of water during monsoon at Tajewala Head in Haryana.
- At present, carrier system is not available to bring water from Tajewala Head to Rajasthan.
- In the year 2017, Rajasthan sent an MoU to Haryana Government for bringing water through underground flow system, on which the consent of Haryana State could not be obtained.

MoU between Department of Women and Child Development and Children Investment Fund Foundation (CIFF)

- An MoU was signed on 26 February 2024 between the Women and Child Development Department of the Government of Rajasthan and the Children Investment Fund Foundation (CIFF) (UK).
- Under this, CIFF will spend a budget of Rs 350 crore in collaboration with various departments including the Women and Child Development Department in the next 5 years.

- In this, work will be done to improve the nutrition of adolescent girls, women and children.
- CIFF will provide technical assistance to improve the quality and coverage of government schemes.
- Note: Earlier, an MoU was signed between the state government and CIFF in the year 2015 for 7 years, which has again been extended for 5 years.

Children Investment Fund Foundation (CIFF)

- It is an independent charitable organization.
- It has offices in Addis Ababa, Beijing, London, Nairobi and New Delhi.
- It works with a wide range of partners to transform and improve the lives of children in developing countries.
- It works related to child health and development in India.

Rajasthan Police signs MoU with 'Meesho' to stop 'online fraud'

- Rajasthan Police has signed an MoU with e-commerce company 'Meeso' on 28 February 2024 to create awareness among the people about and prevent 'online fraud' in the state.
- Under this, people will be made aware about digital literacy and online transactions by running a joint campaign on social media platforms like Rajasthan Police's Facebook page, X handle and Instagram.
- Note: 'Meesho' has earlier also worked with Karnataka Police in this field.

MoU to set up 'Center of Excellence' in Blockchain technology

- This MoU was signed between Rajasthan Government and IIT Kanpur.
- A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed between Rajcomp Info Services Limited (RISL), a Rajasthan Government undertaking, and the Indian Institute of Technology Kanpur (IIT Kanpur).
- Under this, a 'Center of Excellence in Blockchain Technology' will be established in the state.
- This agreement will play an important role in making Rajasthan a leader in the field of blockchain technology and further strengthening e-governance innovations in the state.
- This will help in securing and organizing land, financial and health documents in Rajasthan.
- Under this, from 'Lab to Land' and from 'Research to Real Time Usage', the Department of Information Technology and IIT Kanpur will work together towards safe and better good governance.
- MoU signed between agriculture and horticulture universities of Rajasthan and Andhra Pradesh

Person in News

Rajendra Prasad Gupta

- He was recently appointed the 19th Advocate General of Rajasthan.
- He was appointed by the Governor.
- He replaced Mahendra Singh Singhvi.
- Rajendra Prasad is from Parbatsar tehsil of Nagaur district.

Advocate General of Rajasthan

- The Office of the Advocate General of Rajasthan came into existence upon the formation of the State of Rajasthan as per the States Reorganization Act 1956.
- Advocate General is a constitutional post. It is mentioned in Article 165 of the Constitution.
- The first Advocate General of Rajasthan State was Shri G.C. Kasliwal.
- It represents the Government of Rajasthan in the Supreme Court and High Court.
- The powers and functions of the Advocate General are mentioned in Articles 165 and 177 of the Constitution.
- The Advocate General is appointed by the Governor of the state.
- Qualification: Should be eligible to become a High Court judge.
- Tenure: The Advocate General works during the pleasure of the Governor. Their tenure is not fixed.
- Under Article 177, the Advocate General can participate in the proceedings of the Legislative Assembly, address the House, become a member of any committee, but he does not have the right to vote in the House.

Manindra Mohan Srivastava

- He has become the 42nd Chief Justice of Rajasthan High Court.
- The Chief Justice of the High Court is appointed by the President.
- He was sworn in by Governor ShriKalraj Mishra on 6 February 2024.
- Note: The notification and warrant of appointment of the Chief Justice issued by the President is read out by the Chief Secretary.

Rajasthan High Court

- It was established on 29 August 1949.
- The first Chief Justice of Rajasthan High Court was Kamalkant Verma.
- At the time of its establishment it had a Chief Justice and 11 other judges.
- At present it has 1 Chief Justice and 49 other judges.
- The Chief Justice and judges are appointed by the President on the basis of the recommendation of the Collegium of the Supreme Court.
- The tenure of a judge in a High Court is till the age of 62 years.
- The Chief Justice or other judges of the High Court are removed in the same manner as a judge of the Supreme Court.

Mr. Utkal Ranjan Sahu

- He was appointed the new Director General of Police (DGP) of Rajasthan on 10 February 2024.
- Shri Sahu is a 1988 batch senior Indian Police Service (IPS) officer.
- This will remain in place for a period of two years or until further notification.
- Utkal Ranjan Sahu is originally from Odisha.

Director General of Police

- This is the highest post in the police department of the state.
- A senior police officer of the state is appointed to this post.
- They are appointed by the state government on the basis of the recommendation of the Union Public Service Commission.
- The first Director General of Police of Rajasthan was Raghunath Singh Kapoor.
- Shri Raghunath became DGP in the year 1983. Before this, IG was the biggest post in Rajasthan.

Dr. Alok Tripathi

- He has been appointed Vice Chancellor of Sardar Patel Police Security and Criminal Justice University, Jodhpur.
- Dr. Alok is a retired officer of the Indian Police Service.
- He was appointed by the Governor and Chancellor ShriKalraj Mishra in consultation with the state government.
- Their tenure will be 3 years from the date of assuming office or till they attain the age of 70 years, whichever is earlier.

Mr. Pankaj Bhandari

- He has been nominated as the acting chairman of the State Legal Services Authority.
- He is currently a judge in the Rajasthan High Court, Jodhpur.
- They have been nominated by the state government by issuing a notification.

Pt. Laxman Bhatt Tailang

- He was the famous Dhruvpadacharya of Rajasthan who passed away recently.
- Lakshman Bhatt was announced to be honored with Paprashree for the year 2024.

Mrs. Gayatri Rathod

- He is currently the Principal Secretary of Rajasthan Tourism Department.
- She was given Nari Shakti Samman at South Asia Travel and Tourism (SATE) Indian Travel Mart.
- This award was given to Rajasthan Tourism for redefining Rajasthan tourism at the global level.
- Rajasthan Tourism has been a partner in SATE since 2016.

Conference, Meeting, Festival

LakhpatiDidi Conference in BeneshwarDham

- This conference was organized at BeneshwarDham in Dungarpur.
- President of India Mrs. Draupadi Murmu, Governor of Assam Mr. GulabchandKataria and Chief Minister Mr. Bhajanlal Sharma participated in it.
- President Murmu stressed on promoting education and skill development among women.

- There is a provision by the Central Government to make 3crore women LapatiDidi in India, in which the state government has set a target of making 11.27 lakh women of the state LapatiDidi in a phased manner in the next 3 years.
- In this conference held under the aegis of Rajasthan Rural Livelihood Development Council (Rajivika), loan amount of Rs 250 crore from banks and checks worth Rs 50crore under MahilaNidhi were distributed to the affiliated women self-help groups.
- Note: Earlier, President Smt. Draupadi Murmu had also participated in the LakhpatiDidi conference in Jaisalmer.

National Horticulture Council Conference cum International Conference

- It was organized at Rajasthan Agricultural Research Institute, Durgapura (Jaipur).
- Rajasthan: Discussion was held on promoting cluster based horticulture crops to increase the income of farmers through new technology and new varieties.
- Besides, there is a need to focus on horticulture based eco-tourism to increase the income of farmers.

5th Brassica Conference

- It was organized at Rajasthan Agricultural Research Institute (RARI) Durgapura (Jaipur).
- It was organized by Shri Karna Narendra Agricultural University in collaboration with Mustard Research Committee.
- Note: Rajasthan ranks first in mustard production and maximum mustard production occurs in the eastern districts of Rajasthan.

Rajasthan Science Festival

- It was launched at Central Electronics Engineering Research Institute (CEERI), Jaipur.
- It was held from 26-28 February 2024.
- Its main objective is to bring together scientists, academicians, youth and industry experts on one platform.
- This is an initiative started to establish dialogue between scientists and academicians for the encouragement of young scientists.

India Solar Expo-2024

- It was organized at Rajasthan International Centre, Jaipur.
- It was organized by Rajasthan Solar Association.
- Project developers, EPC companies, module and equipment manufacturers, MSMEs from different states of the country participated in this expo.
- Recently, Prime Minister SuryadayaYojana has been announced, under which solar panels will be installed in 1 crore houses.

India Stonemart 2024

- It was held from 1 to 4 February at the Exhibition and Convention Centre, Jaipur.
- This is the 12th edition of India Stonemart.
- Jaipur is an important trading center for stone in northern India.
- Held biennially, India Stonemart is one of the largest stone industry exhibitions in the country.
- It was organized by Rajasthan State Industrial Development and Investment Corporation Limited (RIICO) and Center for Development of Stones (CDOS) in collaboration with Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI).

16th meeting of RajyaSainik Board

- Its meeting was held on 29 February 2024 at Raj Bhawan, Jaipur.
- Note: The Governor is the Chairman of the RajyaSainik Board.
- Soldier Welfare Minister: Colonel Rajyavardhan Rathore
- The Governor has approved giving Rs 25,000 to the widows of ex-servicemen from the rank of Constable to Havildar for the marriage of their two daughters in addition to the assistance given by the Central Government.
- Governor ShriKalraj Mishra suggested the establishment of 'War Memorial' at the district and tehsil level.

Awards and Honors

Rajasthan Tourism Department received the award

- Rajasthan Tourism Department was awarded the India Today Tourism Survey Award in the category of Best Scenic Road Destinations, Udaipur to Mount Abu on 29 February 2024.

Best Design and Decoration Award to Rajasthan Tourism

- The award was presented at OTM 2024, Asia's largest and most influential travel trade show.
- This award was given to Rajasthan for palaces, heritage sites, infrastructure etc.
- OTM 2024 was organized from 8-10 February 2024 at Jio World Convention Centre, Mumbai (Maharashtra).

Places in News

Inauguration of Craft Village, Kunda Amer

- To promote handicraft art and tourism, Potters' Mohalla, Village Kunda, Amer, (Jaipur Rural) has been developed as Craft Tourism Village by the Union Textiles Ministry.
- It has been developed under the joint aegis of the Central and State Government.
- This will lead to development of Shilpgram and local handicraftsmen will get suitable space to sell their products.
- Its objective is to give world-class recognition to the traditional handicraft art of Jaipur and to promote modern technology.

Panorama at Sri Chalaknechi Mata Temple

- This temple is located in Chalakna village in Sedwa subdivision of Barmer district.
- In this, the panorama was unveiled by Chief Minister ShriBhajanlal Sharma.
- A religious tourism circuit will be made by the state government including Tanot Mata Temple, Bhadariarai Mata Temple and Chalaknechi Mata Temple.

ShriAlamji Temple

- This temple is situated at Alpura in Gudhamalani, Barmer.
- It was in the news recently due to Chief Minister ShriBhajanlal Sharma participating in the Pran-Pratishtha Mahotsav.

Tallest statue of Maharaja Surajmal

- On the occasion of the birth anniversary of Maharaja Surajmal, his statue was unveiled and inaugurated in the Maharaja Surajmal Brij University campus of Bharatpur in Rajasthan.
- This statue is 21 feet high and weighs 5,500 kg and was built at a cost of Rs 1.75 crore.
- This statue has been made from a special metal gun metal. It is installed on a 10 feet high base made of stone from Banshi Paharpur. That means it is a total of 31 feet high.

Western India's most modern science park

- This science park will be established in Ajmer.
- This park will be built on approximately 20 thousand square meters of land.
- The cost of its construction is approximately Rs 15.20 crore. It is being developed by the Union Ministry of Culture.
- A creativity zone will be created in it, where students will be able to develop their scientific thinking and abilities.
- It will have facilities like theme base park, fun science park, outdoor science park, planetarium, exhibit lab etc.

Important Facts

Gold mines auctioned for the first time in Rajasthan

- Rajasthan's first gold coins will be auctioned at BhukiyaJagpura in Banswara.
- There are huge reserves of gold in the 14 square kilometer area of Bhukia-Jagpura in Ghatol tehsil of Banswara.
- After extensive exploration in this area, an initial estimate of 113-52 million tonnes of gold ore has been made, of which only 222-39 tonnes of gold metal has been estimated.
- Along with gold, abundant quantities of copper, nickel and cobalt will be obtained from these gold mines in BhukiaJagpura.
- Note: Chief Minister Shri Bhajan Lal Sharma is also the Minister of Energy and Geology Department.
- Bihar has the highest gold reserves in the country, while Rajasthan is estimated to have about 25% of the country's gold reserves.

E-auction process of 79 blocks of major minerals

- For the first time in Rajasthan, auction of 79 major minerals started simultaneously from 21st February.
- In these, mining lease of 68 blocks of limestone was auctioned and 11 blocks of siliceous earth, fluorite, basemetal and iron ore were auctioned for composite license.
- E-auction of major mineral blocks was conducted on MSTC portal of Government of

India. Under this, any person can participate in the e-auction by registering on the portal from any place.

- Mining lease e-auction process of most of the limestone blocks started in Nagaur district.
- Note: Major minerals include Limestone, Manganese, Iron Ore, Copper, Lead-Zinc, Siliceous Earth, Garnet, Emerald, Gold, Lithium etc.

Wetlands in Rajasthan

- World Wetlands Day is celebrated every year on 2 February.
- Its objective is to spread global awareness about the important role of wetlands in the field of climate change and environmental protection.
- The Convention on Wetlands was adopted on 2 February 1971 in the city of Ramsar in Iran. The theme for 2024 is Wetlands and Human Wellbeing.
- There are 12,625 wetlands of area larger than 2-25 hectares located in Rajasthan.
- At present, 75 wetlands have been notified by the state government under the Wetland Conservation and Management Act 2017.
- Sambhar Lake and Keoladeo National Bird Sanctuary are two Ramsar sites of Rajasthan.
- Recently, Rajasthan State Wetland Authority, Department of Environment and Climate Change has recommended to increase the number of Ramsar sites of international importance to the Ramsar Secretariat through the Central Government.
    1. Menar Pond Udaipur
    2. Chandlai Jaipur
    3. Trichan (Jodhpur)
    4. Kanwas Bird Sanctuary (Kota)
    5. Lunkaransar (Bikaner)
- Udaipur city has been recommended by the Government of Rajasthan to be designated as Ramsar Wetland City at the international level.

Ramgarh crater area will be developed as a geo-heritage site

- Ramgarh Crater is a unique geological site located in Baran district of Rajasthan.
- Ramgarh crater is one of the few confirmed meteor impact craters in India and the world.
- Ramgarh Crater is located in the plateau of Vindhya mountain range and from the point of view of cultural heritage, this crater is the Bhanddev Temple (10th century Shiva temple).
- After a joint survey of Ramgarh Crater, a plan will be prepared to develop it as a Geo Park by the end of March 2024.
- The proposal to declare Ramgarh Crater as 'Fraya Geo-Heritage Park' will be considered.
- If this plan is successful, Ramgarh Crater will be the first geo-heritage park in the South East Asia region.

World's first Om shaped temple

- This temple is situated in Jadan of Pali in Rajasthan.
- DwadashJyotirlinga, Shri Nandi Maharaj, Sun Temple and Divya Temple are situated in it.

Rajasthan ranks first in the country in taking the oath of organ donation.

- Rajasthan tops the country in taking the oath of organ donation.
- A roadmap will also be prepared by the state government to make Rajasthan first in organ donation.
- In Rajasthan, about 25 percent of citizens above 18 years of age have pledged to donate organs, which is a record in the country.
- Now in India, the condition of domicile of states for organ donation has been removed. Now registration for organ procurement can be done anywhere in the country.
- A policy has been made for organ transplant. Nodal officers have been appointed at every airport for easy transportation of organs.
- Rajasthan is the first state in the country, where the option to express willingness to donate organs has been given on the driving license.

World record for group practice of Surya Namaskar

- A world record of Surya Namaskar has been created collectively by more than

1-33 crore people including more than 1-14 crore students from 88,000 schools of Rajasthan.

- On the occasion of Surya Saptami, a mass practice program of Surya Namaskar was organized in government and non-government schools of Rajasthan.
- This world record has been recognized by the Rajasthan Edition of the World Book of Records, London.

'Run for Legal Aid' Marathon

- This marathon was organized to commemorate the Platinum Jubilee celebrations of Rajasthan High Court.
- 'Run for Legal Aid' was organized to create awareness regarding legal aid to the poor.
- Presently the Chief Justice of Rajasthan High Court is Shri Manindra Mohan Srivastava (42nd).

Jhalawar Medical College becomes non-transplant organ retrieval center

- Rajasthan Government has issued a certificate for organ and tissue retrieval to Jhalawar Medical College.
- Under this, kidney, liver and cornea were obtained from a brain dead patient from Jhalawar. Of these, one kidney and liver were allotted to Sawai Mansingh Hospital, Jaipur and one kidney to AIIMS Jodhpur. To transport these organs to the needy patients with immediate effect, a green corridor was created with the help of Rajasthan Traffic Police.
- This step has been taken by the Rajasthan government to encourage organ donation in the state.
- Note: Rajasthan ranks first in the country in terms of online pledge of organ donation.
- Note: Jhalawar has become the first non-transplant organ retrieval center of Rajasthan, where 3 organs have been transplanted to another city after the consent of the family of a patient who was declared brain dead.

Vote on Account Budget of Rajasthan for the year 2024-25

- The State Vote on Account (Budget) for the financial year 2024-25 was presented in the Rajasthan Assembly on 8 February 2024.
- The theme of Rajasthan's State Vote on Account (Budget) 2024-25 is 'Service-Respect-Prosperity'.
- This State Vote on Account (Budget) was presented by the Deputy Chief Minister and Finance Minister of Rajasthan, Smt. Diya Kumari.
- Smt. Diya Kumari is the second woman Finance Minister to present the budget in Rajasthan. (First: Smt. Vasundhara Raje)
- Since due to the upcoming Lok Sabha elections, it is not possible to discuss the budget proposals in the Assembly and get the annual budget passed before March 31, 2024.
- Therefore, Vote on Account was presented in Rajasthan for the first 4 months of the financial year 2024-25 (for expenditure till July 31, 2024).
- The state government will present the full budget before the Vote on Account period of July 31, 2024.

Vote on Account

- It is mentioned in Article 206 of Part VI of the Constitution in the context of the state.
- The loan grant is in the form of advance grant to the state government.
- It is provided from the Consolidated Fund of the State to meet the short-term expenditure requirement.
- It is generally issued for the initial months of the new financial year (1 April to 31 March).
- It is offered during an election year.

Annual Financial Estimates 2024-25

- Total expenditure (estimated): Rs 4,86,615 crore 10 lakh
- Revenue expenditure: Rs 2,82,247 crore 65 lakh

- Revenue receipts: Rs 2,58,378 crore 29 lakh
- Revenue deficit: Rs 23,869 crore 36 lakh
- Fiscal deficit: Rs 67,240 crore 48 lakh
- State Gross Domestic Product (GSDP): 3-95:
- Debt-GSDP ratio of the state: 37-48:
- The total debt burden on Rajasthan has almost doubled to Rs 5,79,781 crore as per the budget estimates for the year 2023-24.
- Rajasthan's Debt-GSDP ratio is the highest among general category states, after Punjab (second position).
- At the end of the year 2023-24, the per capita credit in the state is likely to increase from Rs 36,880 in the year 2017-18 to Rs 70,800.

Provision

- In the context of providing solar energy to 1 crore houses in the country under the 'PradhanmantriSuryodayaYojana' announced on January 22, 2024, a PMU (Project Monitoring Unit) was formed in the State Energy Department and a target was set to install solar plants on more than 5 lakh houses. The families involved in this will be able to get free electricity up to 300 units per month.
- In order to provide pollution-free transportation facilities to the people of the state and to promote electric vehicles in public transportation to save fossil fuels (petrol and diesel), inter-state as well as big cities like Jaipur, Jodhpur, Udaipur, Kota etc. 500 electric buses will be made available for cities.
- In order to solve the problem of traffic jam in Jaipur city, DPR will be prepared to extend Jaipur Metro along Tonk Road to Vidyadhar Nagar via Sitapura, Ambabadi.

Chief Minister JalSwavalambanAbhiyan 2.0

- In the previous tenure of the BJP government (2013-2018), the Chief Minister JalSwavalambanAbhiyan was started for water conservation and conservation. Chief Minister JalSwavalambanAbhiyan 2-0 will be relaunched with a provision of approximately Rs 11,200 crore.
- Under this, 5 lakh water harvesting structures will be built in 20,000 villages in the next 4 years.
- In the first phase, 1,10,000 works with an amount of Rs 3,500 crore are proposed to be carried out in more than 5,000 villages in the coming year.

For forest conservation and development of wildlife in the state -

I. 4 crore saplings will be distributed under the Tree Outside Forest in Rajasthan (TOFIR) programme.
II. Under Rajasthan Forestry and Biodiversity Development Project, works worth Rs 300 crore are proposed to be done for tree plantation, tree development, plant distribution and livelihood promotion activities etc.
III. To protect the Aravalli Hills, tree plantation will be done in 30,000 hectare area around it.
IV. Tunnel construction work will be started for Godavan conservation.
V. Habitat development works will be carried out in Jaswantgarh-Nagaur for Black Bucks.

Agricultural Sector

- Under PM Kisan Samman Nidhi Yojana, it has been announced to increase the financial assistance payable to farmers from Rs 6,000 to Rs 8,000 per family annually. Under this, an annual provision of Rs 1,400 crore is proposed.
- In the first phase in Rajasthan, it has also been decided to provide wheat at Rs 125 per quintal in addition to the Minimum Support Price (MSP) for Rabi 2023-24. Rs 250 crore will be spent on this.
- With a view to provide maximum support to the farmers in the field of agriculture, 'Rajasthan Agriculture Infra Mission' will be conducted. A provision of Rs 2,000 crore will be made for this.
- Work will be done under this -
  - 20 thousand thantauchwadke
  - 10 thousand kilometer irrigation pipeline
  - fencing for 50 thousand farmers
  - Vermi Compost units for 5 thousand farmers
  - New Agro-Processing Clusters, Food Parks and Horticulture Hub will be established.
  - 500 custom hiring centers will be established to provide drone technology.

- With a view to further promote the production of Millets (known as 'ShreeAnn' by the Central Government) in Rajasthan and to enable the rural families to produce their required grains, in the coming year 12 lakh farmers will be provided maize, 8 lakh farmers High quality seeds will be provided to millet, mustard to 7 lakh farmers, moong to 4 lakh farmers and jowar and moth seeds to 1 lakh farmers each.

'Gopal Credit Card' (GCC) Scheme

- Under this, interest free loan up to Rs 1 lakh will be provided for dairy related activities.
- This scheme will be started on the lines of Kisan Credit Card.
- In this scheme, loans will be provided to about 5 lakh cattle rearing families in the first phase.
- Rs 150 crore will be spent on this scheme in the coming year.
- For the employment of youth in Rajasthan, the state government has announced recruitment for about 70,000 posts in the coming year.
- 'Yuva Sathi Centres' will be set up at all divisional headquarters in Rajasthan to help youth build their careers in the private sector through counseling and guidance. Rs 10 crore will be spent for this.
- To prevent incidents like paper leak and to punish the culprits, a Special Investigation Team (SIT) has been formed and action has been taken.
- To ensure employment for the youth, skill development training programs will be run in every division along with job fairs and campus placements in higher educational institutions.
- To conduct the recruitment examinations in Rajasthan on time, the annual recruitment examination calendar of Rajasthan Public Service Commission, Rajasthan Staff Selection Board etc. will be released.
- Under the Chief Minister Tourism Skill Development Programme, in the next 2 years, 20,000 youth and folk artists will be given training related to Guide Hospitality/Traditional Art and made employable.
- To ensure access to education to all the deprived sections, free education will be provided from KG to PG to the students belonging to low income group, small/marginal/shareholder farmers and agricultural labor families.
- Assistance of Rs 1,000 per student will be provided to all students from class 1 to 8 studying in government schools and students from class 9 to 12 for school bags, books and uniforms required for education for students from economically weaker families. Will.
- To make optimum use of the valuable ideas and thinking of the youth of the state, 'Atal Innovation Studio and Accelerators' will be established in Jaipur, Bikaner, Bharatpur and Udaipur.
- World-class facilities related to software coding, robotics fab lab and multi-media VFX will be available in these accelerators. A provision of Rs 1,000 crore has been made for this.
- 'High Tech City' will be developed near Jaipur city in Rajasthan.
- This city will be developed on the lines of 'satellite cities' of many states. Like: Pune near Mumbai, Cyberabad near Hyderabad and Gift City near Ahmedabad have been developed.
- In this hi-tech township, special exemption will be given to establish institutions/companies of IT, Financial Management, Artificial Intelligence (AL), Machine Learning (ML) and other new age subjects.
- In this township, all the facilities will be provided to the residents as per the world class city.

Mission Olympics-2028

- All world class facilities including training/kit/coach will be provided to 50 talented youth of the state to encourage them in sports for all-round personality development of the youth and to participate in the Olympic Games.
- For this, 'Center of Excellence for Sports' will also be established in Jaipur.
- 'Residential Girls Sports Institutes' will be established for girls in Jaipur, Bharatpur and Udaipur.

'Lado Incentive Scheme'

- Under this, a 'savings bond' of Rs 1 lakh will be provided on the birth of girls from poor families.

- Its objective is to provide proper education and financial support to girls from the very beginning.
- Under the 'LakhpatiDidiYojana' launched by the Central Government, a target has been set to increase the income of 5 lakh families in Rajasthan to Rs 1 lakh annually.
- Under the 'PradhanmantriMatruVandanYojana', there is a provision to give Rs 5,000 in two installments to pregnant women for the first child. In Rajasthan, it has been announced to increase it to Rs 6,500 in the first phase.
- In Rajasthan, one Anganwadi at the block level will be developed as a model Anganwadi to make it excellent in terms of health check-up, nutrition and pre-school education.
- In Rajasthan, 'MukhyamantriAyushmanArogyaYojana' (earlier name: MukhyamantriChiranjeeviSwasthyaBima Yojana) will be added along with IPD to 'Day Care Package'.
- With the aim of saving lives in road accidents in the state, 25 advanced life support ambulances will be made available on the highways of the state in the coming year.

Chief Minister Vishwakarma Pension Scheme

- This scheme has been started to provide financial support to workers and street vendors in old age.
- It is for workers in the age group of 18 to 45 years.
- In this scheme, on paying monthly premium of Rs 60 to 100, there is a provision of pension of Rs 2,000 per month after completing 60 years of age. In this, the remaining premium of about Rs 400 per month per person will be borne by the state government.
- This pension will be in addition to the Chief Minister VridhajanSamman Pension.
- To provide concessional travel facility to senior citizens of Rajasthan aged between 60 to 80 years, the fare discount on roadways buses will be increased from 30% to 50%.
- 'Composite Regional Centre' will be established in Jaipur to bring the disabled into the mainstream of the society, provide skill development, education and medical facilities.
- To provide facilities like physiotherapy, speech therapy etc. to the disabled, 'District Disability Rehabilitation Centre' (DDRC) will also be established at all the district headquarters.
- To strengthen the Panchayati Raj institutions and local urban bodies, it was announced to increase the currently fixed SFC Grant from 6-75% to 7% of the net tax income of the state.

Rajasthan 'Anugrah' Service Delivery Act

- 'JanadharYojana' (earlier 'Bhamashah Yojana') to provide support to the economically backward families and to ensure that the assistance provided under various schemes of the government reaches the beneficiary families with complete transparency.
- This program will be equipped with new technologies like Artificial Intelligence/Machine Learning (AI/ML)/Data Cloud.
- In this, quick/transparent online process will be ensured by automatically identifying helpless and needy families through SMART System (Service Management with Artificial Intelligence and Real Time System).
- For this, it is proposed to create necessary IT infrastructure with Rs 150 crore.

Law and Order

- A 'Police Modernization and Infrastructure Fund' of Rs 200 crore will be constituted for police modernization and related infrastructure.

Provisions made for the safety of girls/women

- With the formation of 'Anti Romeo Squad' in each district, women's helpdesk will be established in the remaining 174 police stations.

'Ladli Suraksha Yojana'

- This will be started for effective prevention of molestation and crime against girls/women.
- Under this, CCTV cameras will be installed in public places, girls hostels and NariNiketans on priority basis in every district.

Rani Laxmibai Self Defense Training Campaign

- Under this, girls are given self defense training.
- To encourage girls to take up this training in greater numbers, the highest category of self defense – Black Belt, will be included in the sports quota.

Democracy Fighter Samman Pension Scheme

- This scheme was started in the year 2008-09 by the then Vasundhara Raje government.
- Under this, during the year 1975-77, a provision of pension was made for MISA/DIR etc. prisoners to give respect and support to the people struggling to protect democratic values during the Emergency.
- This scheme was discontinued in the year 2019.
- By reinstating this scheme, eligible persons will be given Rs 20,000 as pension and Rs 4,000 as medical aid.
- For the smooth operation of this scheme, 'Rajasthan Democracy Fighter Honor Fund Act' will be brought.

Support to artists associated with heritage conservation and traditional folk arts

- GovinddevJi-Jaipur, MangarhDham-Banswara, MehndipurBalaji-Dausa, Ranakpur Jain Temple-Pali, DiggiKalyanji-Tonk, BeneshwarDham-Dungarpur, Ramdevra-Jaisalmer, Tejaji Temple Kharnal-Nagaur, DevnarayanjiAsind-Bhilwara, Machkund-Dholpur, Along with beautification and development of facilities of faith centers like Jaldevi Temple, Railmagra-Rajsamand, Lautha-Deeg of Poonchhari situated on Govardhan Parikrama Marg, Shri Bade Mathuresh Ji-Kota, Trinetra Ganesh JiRanthambore-SawaiMadhopur etc. Development work will be carried out in 20 such temples/faith centres.
- A provision of Rs 300 crore has been made for this.

'Maharana Pratap Tourism Circuit'

- It will be developed by including various places related to the life of MaharanaPratap, Chavand-Haldighati-Gogunda-Kumbhalgarh-Diwar-Udaipur etc.
- A provision of Rs 100 crore has been made for this.
- To honor the bravery and sacrifice of the youth of Rajasthan in the Indian Army, a provision of Rs 2 crore is proposed for making a DPR for the establishment of 'Armed Forces Museum' in the state.
- To conserve local flora and promote environmental awareness, it is proposed to establish AmritadeviBishnoi Indigenous Plant Museum in Khejarli-Jodhpur.
- It has been decided to form 'Rajasthan Economic Revival Task Force' to bring the state's economy back on track and improve the standard of living of the common people and for effective implementation of public welfare schemes.

Provision for Government Employees

- To provide additional opportunities for promotion to government employees, a relaxation of 2 years will be given for DPC.
- All information/details related to salary and GPF will be made available to the employees online through the mobile app.
- For the convenience of the employees after retirement, approvals for pension benefits and family pension will be issued online on the day of retirement itself.
- Pensioners/family pensioners will be provided the facility to submit digital life certificate from home.
- In the implementation of public welfare schemes, honorarium workers and all the honorarium workers of urban bodies and Panchayati Raj institutions like mini Anganwadi/Anganwadi workers, assistants, Asha workers, Sahyogini, Maa-Wadi workers, mid-day meal cook cum helpers, home guards and urban bodies and The honorarium of public representatives of Panchayati Raj institutions will be increased by 10%.
- The following provisions have been made to make **'Ease of Doing Business' (EoDB) effective** in the state -
- Based on the information filled by the parties themselves, their documents for registration can be prepared automatically and the facility of uploading all the necessary information and GIS based DLC by the parties themselves can also be done through the mobile app.

- Qualified spot inspectors will be deployed by developing an online app for online registration of documents and spot inspection.
- In place of physical stamp papers, online means of stamp duty such as e-GRAS and RajSTAMP will be promoted.
- Model registration centers working 24×7 will be set up in all the districts in a phased manner with a toll free helpline for the general public as well as investors for their project related registration work.
- The rates of various fees related to stamp and registration in the state will be identified and redetermined in a phased manner.
- To ensure better adherence to the principles of clean and transparent administration, arrangements for faceless management of work in commercial tax and excise departments will be made in a phased manner.
- At present the system of e-driving license and e-registration certificate will be implemented by the Transport Department.
- Land tax will be abolished to provide relief to the entrepreneurs and investors of Rajasthan.

5. SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Female robot astronaut 'Vyommitra' will fly in space ofGaganyaan mission.

- This will be India's first manned space flight to carry Indian astronauts to space.
- On February 4, Union Minister Jitendra Singh made this announcement while talking to media persons in Delhi.
- The unmanned "Vyommitra" mission is scheduled for the third quarter of 2024, while the manned mission "Gaganyaan" is scheduled to be launched in 2025.
- Vyomamitra is a name derived from two Sanskrit words, namely "Vyoma" (meaning place) and "Mitra" (meaning friend).
- This female robotic astronaut module is equipped with the capability to monitor parameters, issue alerts and conduct life support operations.
- It can perform tasks like operating six panels and answering questions.
- In preparation for the launch of India's first manned space flight 'Gaganyaan', the first test vehicle Udan TV D1 was completed on October 21, 2023.

Four astronauts have been nominated for Gaganyaan mission.



- Four astronauts – Prashant Nair, Angad Pratap, Ajit Krishnan and Shubhanshu Shukla have been named for India's first manned space mission.
- The astronauts completed a one-year training course in the Russian city of ZvezdnyGorodok.
- Gaganyaan mission is India's first human space flight programme.
- Under the Gaganyaan project, crew members will be sent to a 400 km orbit for a three-day mission.
- ISRO has set up an Astronaut Training Facility in Bengaluru to train astronauts for manned missions.

Successfully testing of High-Speed Expendable Aerial Target 'Abhyas'.

- Defense Research and Development Organization (DRDO) successfully conducted four flight trials of High-Speed Expendable Aerial Target (HEAT) – Abhyas from the Integrated Test Range at Chandipur, Odisha.
- For this, a single booster designed by Advanced Systems Laboratory, Hyderabad was used.
- 'Abhyas' has been designed by the Aeronautical Development Establishment (ADE) of DRDO.
- It has been designed for autonomous flight with the help of an autopilot indigenously manufactured by ADE.

India's First Indigenous155 mm.Smart Ammunition

- India's first indigenously designed 155 mm smart ammunition will be developed by IIT-Madras.
- IIT Madras will develop it in partnership with Defense Public Sector Enterprise Munitions India Limited to achieve indigenization in the defense sector.
- Its objective is to increase the accuracy of the 155 mm shell to within a Circular Error Probable (CEP) of 10 m.
- Over a period of two years, the faculty of the Department of Aerospace Engineering, IIT Madras, G. Rajesh and his team of researchers will develop smart ammunition.

The Aditya-L1 mission detected the solar wind effect of coronal mass ejections.

- The Plasma Analyzer Package for Aditya (PAPA) payload on Aditya-L1 has detected the effect of coronal mass ejection (CME) on the solar wind.

- PAPA is an energy and mass analyzer designed for in-situ measurements of solar wind electrons and ions in the low energy range.
- It is operational since December 12, 2023 and has two sensors – Solar Wind Electron Energy Probe (SWEEP) and Solar Wind Ion Composition Analyzer (SWICAR).
- PAPA observations demonstrate its effectiveness in monitoring space weather conditions and its ability to detect and analyze solar events.
- Aditya-L1 mission was successfully launched by PSLV-C57 rocket on September 2. It carried seven payloads to study the Sun.

ISRO's new launch complex in Tamil Nadu.

- ISRO's new launch complex will be set up in Thoothukudi district of Tamil Nadu.
- The facility will accommodate 24 launches per year and will be built at Rs 986 crore.
- This launch complex is being built to launch SSLV-type rockets.
- PM Modi launches projects worth Rs 17,300 crore in Tamil Nadu. He also flagged off India's first indigenous green hydrogen fuel cell inland waterways vessel as part of the Green Boat initiative.
- He V.O. Layed the foundation stone of Outer Harbor Container Terminal at Chidambaranar Port.

India's first private spy satellite will be launched

- The first spy satellite made in India by a domestic private company will be launched on a SpaceX rocket in April.
- The army will use it to obtain sensitive information.
- The satellite manufactured by Tata Advanced Systems Limited (TASL) is being flown to Florida in preparation for the launch.
- It will be used to process satellite images and provide guidance.
- It will also be allowed to exchange TASL satellite images with friendly countries.

The Government has allowed 100% FDI in the space sector.

- An amendment to the Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) policy allowing 100% foreign investment in the space sector has been approved by the Centre.
- The liberalized entry routes under the revised policy are aimed at attracting potential investors to invest in Indian space companies.
- Up to 100% FDI will be permitted under the automatic route in manufacturing of components and systems or sub-systems for satellites, ground segment and user segment.
- Following are the entry routes for various activities included in the updated policy:
- Up to 74 per cent under the automated route: satellite-manufacturing and operations, satellite data products and ground segment and user segment. After 74 percent, these activities come under the government route.
- Up to 49 percent under the automated route: Launch vehicles and related systems or subsystems, construction of spaceports for launching and receiving spacecraft. After 49 percent, these activities come under the government route.
- Up to 100 per cent under the automatic route: Manufacturing of components and systems/sub-systems for satellites, ground segment and user segment.

India's largest drone pilot training organization

- India's largest drone pilot training organization has been launched by IIT Guwahati.
- IIT Guwahati launches India's largest Remote Pilot Training Organization (RPTO) in collaboration with EduRade.
- EduRade RC is a brand owned by Hobbytech Solutions Pvt Ltd and incubated at IIT Guwahati Research Park.

NASA and Japan are set to launch the world's first wooden satellite.

- To deal with space debris, Japan and the United States will launch the world's first wooden satellite, the LingoSat Probe, into space.
- It is made from magnolia wood, which is known for its stability and resistance to cracks.
- It is a joint venture between Japanese scientists and their American counterparts.
- Currently, satellites produce aluminum particles when re-entering the Earth's atmosphere. It is harmful for the upper layer of the earth.

- This innovation will provide hope that satellites and other technology can remain operational even when non-biodegradable resources are depleted.

NASA launches PACE mission

- NASA launches PACE mission to study Earth's atmosphere and oceans as the world warms.
- Plankton, Aerosol, Cloud, Ocean Ecosystems (PACE) is a NASA mission that launched on a SpaceX Falcon 9 rocket from Cape Canaveral Space Force Station in Florida.
- PACE will improve our knowledge of the ways in which ocean processes and air particles contribute to global warming.
- PACE has two polarimeter instruments. It will provide information about the interaction of sunlight with atmospheric particles.
- PACE's research will increase knowledge about the ocean's role in the climate cycle.
- Its value increases in combination with other missions such as surface water and ocean topography missions.
- PACE aims to deliver data to support coastal communities and industries.

INS Sandhayakcommissioned into Indian Navy

- Indian Navy's survey vessel INS Sandhayak was commissioned on 03 February at Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh to enhance ocean surveillance.
- INS Sandhyak has a range of 11 thousand kilometers and will monitor from ports to sea coasts.
- The ship is fitted with Bofors gun and if needed, Chetak helicopter can also be deployed in it.
- The older version of INS Sandhyak was part of the Indian Navy from 1981 to 2021, which was retired on 4 June 2021.
- The main function of this ship is to improve survey and navigation.

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- The main function of this ship is to improve survey and navigation.
- It will give many information by conducting hydrographic survey in the depth of the sea.
- Will produce multi-beam echo-sounders in deep and shallow waters and will be able to track any ship coming into the sea.
- Satellite based positioning system is also present in INS Sandhayak.

High-altitude pseudo satellite vehicle(HAPS)

The National Aerospace Laboratories (NAL) in Bengaluru has successfully completed the first test of a solar-powered "pseudo satellite".

- **About:** A new age unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) that can significantly increase India's surveillance & monitoring capabilities in the border areas.
- **Features:**
  - Can fly at altitudes of 18-20 km from the ground (almost double the heights attained by commercial aeroplanes)
  - Can generate solar power
  - Can remain in air for months, even years,
  - Does not require a rocket to get into space
  - Cost of operating is much lower than that of a satellite
- **Importance:**
  - Its success placed India among a select group of countries like China, South Korea, and the UK which are developing this technology.
  - Can increase India's surveillance and monitoring capabilities in the border areas.
  - If calamities damage normal networks, it can deploy mobile communication networks in remote areas.

National Aerospace Laboratories (NAL)

- **About:** A premier aerospace research and development organisation
- **Location:** Bengaluru, India.
- **Nodal agency:** Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR)
- **Functions:** Design, development, and testing of various aerospace technologies, including aircraft, unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), and related systems.

INSAT-3DS Launched

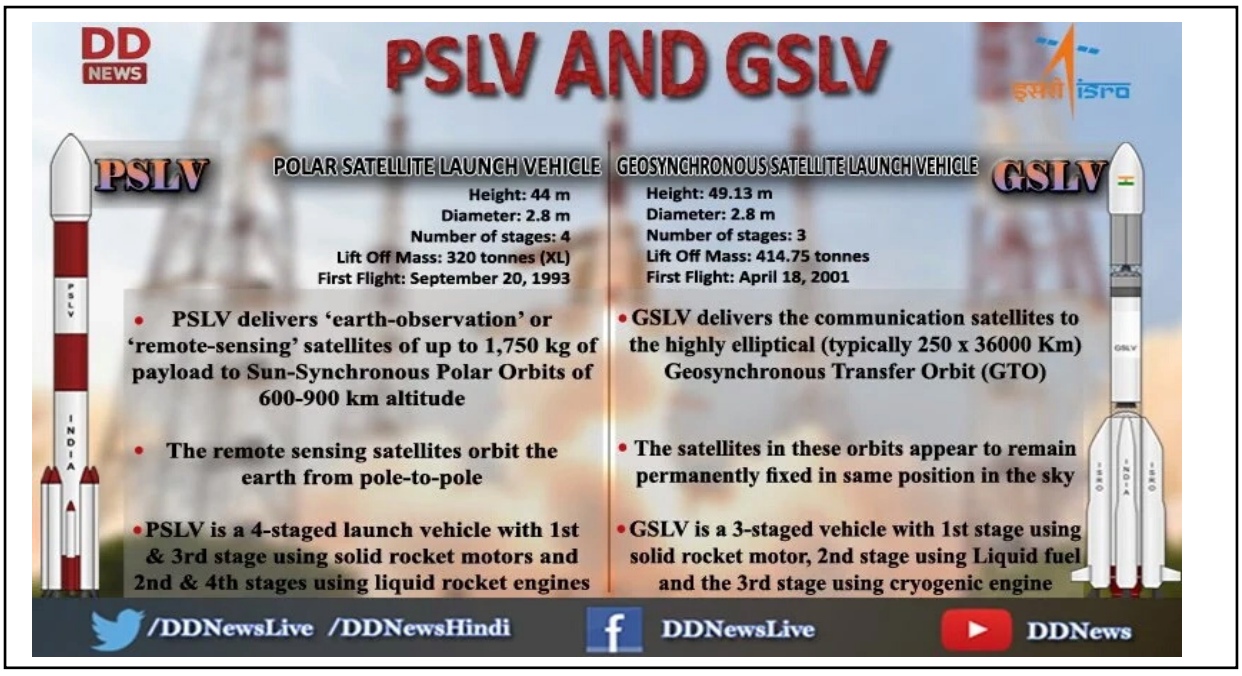
- Meteorological satellite INSAT-3DS launched into space onboard a Geosynchronous Launch Vehicle (GSLV).
- The GSLV-F14 will lift off from the Satish Dhawan Space Centre (Sriharikota) and this will be the rocket's 16th mission overall and its 10th flight using the indigenously developed cryogenic engine.

Geosynchronous Satellite Launch Vehicle (GSLV) is a Three-stage (51.7 m long) launch vehicle.

- **Usage:** To launch a variety of spacecraft capable of performing communications, navigation, earth resource surveys, and any other proprietary mission.

INSAT-3DS Mission

- **INSAT-3DS:** A follow-on mission of 3rd Generation Meteorological Satellite from Geostationary Orbit.
- **Funding:** Fully funded by the Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES)
- **Benefit:** It will augment the Meteorological services along with the presently operational INSAT-3D and INSAT-3DR satellites.
- **Mission life:** 10 years & will take over the functions of INSAT-3D (launched in 2013) and INSAT-3DR (2016) that have come to the end of their mission life.
- **Function:** Short-range forecasts of extreme weather events such as thunderstorms, provide visibility estimation for aviation, and help in studying forest fire, smoke, snow cover, climate studies.

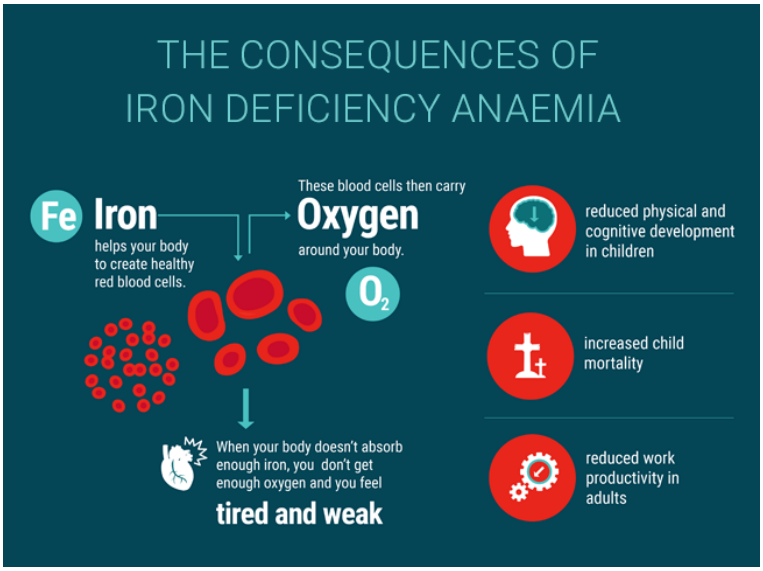


Mission Utkarsh

The Centre launched an initiative recently to improve nutrition in adolescent girls using Ayurveda. The project for anaemia control under Mission Utkarsh will be a joint public health initiative by the Ministries of Ayush and Women and Child Development and would be launched in five aspirational districts first as a pilot project.

About Mission Utkarsh

- **Provision:** Under it, 15 central ministries or departments will work to elevate districts at the bottom, to State and national averages.



- **Coverage:** ~ 10,000 Anganwadi Centres in the five districts.

Anaemia

- **Definition as per WHO:** A condition in which the number of red blood cells or the haemoglobin (needed to carry oxygen) concentration within them is lower than normal.
- **Reason:** Too few red blood cells, or not enough haemoglobin due to which the blood will not be able to carry oxygen to the body's tissues.
- **Symptoms:** Fatigue, weakness, dizziness and shortness of breath among others.
- **Factors:**
    - Iron deficiency
    - Deficiencies in folate, vitamins B12 and A
    - Chronic diseases: Kidney disease, liver disease, cancer, or autoimmune disorders which can interfere with the production of RBCs.
    - Inherited conditions: Sickle cell anaemia or thalassemia which affect the structure or function of red blood cells.
- **Anaemia in India:**
    - Anaemia burden in India has increased significantly based on NFHS-5 (2019-21) findings.
    - Among women aged 15-49, 57% are anaemic, up from 53% in NFHS-4 (2015-16).
    - For children aged 6-59 months, 67% are anaemic, compared to 58.6% in NFHS-4.

India-Japan joint exercise 'Dharma Guardian'

- This is the joint military exercise 'Dharma Guardian' between the Indian Army and Japan Self Defense Force.
- It started from Mahajan Field Firing Range in Rajasthan.
- Exercise 'Dharma Guardian' is an annual exercise. It is held alternately in India and Japan.

Exercise 'Vayu Shakti-24'

- The Indian Air Force displayed its offensive capability at the air-to-ground range in Pokhran near Jaisalmer.
- Fighter aircraft carried out precision strikes on simulated enemy aircraft and ground targets.
- Exercise Vayu Shakti-24 was based on the theme of lightning falling from the sky.
- More than 120 aircraft including Jaguar fighter jets, Sukhoi, Rafale and Apache attack helicopters participated in the exercise.

Military Exercise 'Shanti Prayas IV'

- 19 countries including India, Bangladesh and Pakistan are participating in the multinational military exercise 'Peace Prayas IV' that started in Nepal.
- The exercise is being conducted with the assistance of the Global Peace Operation Initiative of the US Government.

Trilateral Coast Guard Exercise 'Dosti 16'

- Indian and Sri Lankan ships arrived in Maldives to participate in the trilateral coast guard exercise 'Dosti 16'.
- Two Indian Coast Guard (ICG) ships – ICGS Samarth and ICGS Abhinav are taking part in this exercise.

6. INDEXES AND REPORTS

International IP Index 2024.

- In the 2024 International IP Index, India ranked 42nd out of 55 countries.
- India's overall score also remained unchanged at 38.64 percent.
- The 12th edition of the International IP Index evaluated the world's top 55 economies.
- The United States topped the International IP Index 2024, while the United Kingdom took the second position.

Rank	Country	Score
1	United States	95.48%
2	United Kingdom	94.12%
3	France	93.12%
4	Germany	92.46%
5	Sweden	92.12%

Henley Passport Index 2024

- France tops Henley Passport Index for 2024.
- India's passport ranking has slipped one place from 84th to 85th compared to last year.
- The Henley Passport Index ranked countries based on the strength of their passports.
- Along with France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Singapore and Spain are also among the top ranked countries.
- Pakistan remains at 106th position as of 2023, while Bangladesh has slipped from 101st to 102nd.

Rank	**Country**	**Visa-Free Score**
1	France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Singapore, Spain	194
2	Finland, Netherlands, South Korea, Sweden	193
3	Austria, Denmark, Ireland, Luxembourg, United Kingdom	192
4	Belgium, Norway, Portugal	191
5	Australia, Greece, Malta, New Zealand, Switzerland	190
85	India	62

7. PLACE IN NEWS

'SammakkaSaralammaJatara' tribal festival

- The world's largest gathering of tribals has started in Medaram of Mulugu district of Telangana.
- President Draupadi Murmu also attended the festival.
- This is celebrated in the memory of the fight of a mother and daughter, Sammakka and Saralamma, against an unjust law.
- Tribal people from Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Odisha, Maharashtra, Karnataka and parts of Jharkhand come to celebrate Jatra in this festival.
- In 1998, this Jathra has been declared a state festival.

India's first hypervelocity expansion tunnel test facility

- Indian Institute of Technology Kanpur (IITK) successfully established India's first Hypervelocity Expansion Tunnel test facility.
- This facility can simulate hypersonic conditions observed during atmospheric entry by generating flight speeds between 3 and 10 km/s.
- Thisfacility is 24 meters long. It was indigenously designed and developed over three years. This facility is generally called 'Jigarthanda'.
- With this facility, India will be better placed to develop advanced hypersonic technologies and systems.

India's first digital National Archives

- The foundation stone of the country's first digital National Archives was laid on February 6 at the Salar Jung Museum in Hyderabad.
- It will house about one lakh ancient inscriptions from different languages and periods.
- The establishment of the Bharat Common Inscription Repository (Bharatashree) with the digitization of one lakh ancient inscriptions was announced by Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman in 2023.

The country's longest cable-stayed bridge "Sudarshan Setu" was inaugurated

- The country's longest signature-stay bridge "Sudarshan Setu" was inaugurated at Dwarka, Gujarat, which is approximately 2.32 km long.
- The bridge connects the mainland of Okha to the island of Bayt Dwarka.
- The footpaths on both sides of the Sudarshan Setu are decorated with verses from the Srimad Bhagavad Gita and images of Lord Krishna.
- Solar panels generating one megawatt of electricity are installed on the upper part of the footpath.

India's First Ammunition-Missile Manufacturing Complex

- In a first in the private sector, on February 26, AdaniDefense and Aerospace opened two facilities in Kanpur to manufacture ammunition and missiles.
- The Kanpur complex is set to become one of the largest integrated ammunition manufacturing complexes in South Asia.
- These facilities will produce high quality small, medium and large caliber ammunition for the armed forces, paramilitary forces and police.

India's First Skill India Center

- It was inaugurated in Sambalpur, Odisha
- This Skill India Center will empower youth with industry-relevant skills.
- This center will equip young Indians with contemporary skills required for the emerging job market.
- National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) will be designated as the Center Manager to monitor the implementation of the training programmes.

Sikkim's First Railway Station.

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi laid the foundation stone of Rangpo Railway Station.
- The government will develop this project in three phases. In the first phase, the Sevoke to Rangpo rail project will be developed.

- In the second phase, railway line from Rangpo to Gangtok; And in the third phase, development will be done from Gangtok to Nathula.

The world's first Vedic clock

- It was inaugurated in Ujjain.
- The Vedic clock installed on the 85 feet high tower built at Jantar Mantar in Ujjain.
- This watch displays information about Vedic Hindu calendar, planetary positions, Muhurta and astrological calculations.
- It will also show Indian Standard Time (IST) and Greenwich Mean Time (GMT).





8. PERSON IN NEWS

Justice AM Khanwilkar

- President Draupadi Murmu has appointed Justice AM Khanwilkar as the new Lokpal.
- Six other members have also been appointed along with him.
- The three judges who will serve as judicial members of the Lokpal are Justice LingappaNarayanaSwamy, Justice Sanjay Yadav and Justice Ritu Raj Awasthi.
- Ajay Tirkey, Pankaj Kumar and Sushil Chandra are the other members of the Lokpal.
- These appointments will be effective from the date they assume charge in their respective offices.
- Justice Pradeep Kumar Mohanty, judicial member of the Lokpal, is currently the acting chairman.

Lokpal

- The Chairperson and members of Lokpal are appointed by the President.
- The President appoints him after receiving recommendations from a selection committee, which is chaired by the Prime Minister.
- Apart from a Chairman, the Lokpal can have eight members – four judicial and four non-judicial.
- The tenure of the Lokpal Chairperson and members is five years or till the age of 70 years.

A S Rajeev has appointed as Vigilance Commissioner

- Former Bank of Maharashtra chief executive A S Rajeev has been appointed Vigilance Commissioner.
- Under the CVC Act, the Central Vigilance Commission is a three-member body consisting of a Central Vigilance Commissioner and two Vigilance Commissioners.
- Praveen Kumar Srivastava is serving as Central Vigilance Commissioner from May 2023.

Central Vigilance Commission:

- It is a top anti-corruption government body in India.
- It was established in 1964 by K. It was done on the recommendation of Santhanam Committee.
- It was given statutory status in 2003 under the Central Vigilance Commission Act 2003.
- The CVC Act does not prescribe specific "eligibility criteria" for the appointment of Commissioners.

ChampaiSoren

- JMM legislature party leader ChampaiSoren took oath as the Chief Minister of Jharkhand.
- He became CM after Hemant Soren resigned from the post and his arrest by ED.
- Champai has been sworn in as the 12th Chief Minister of the state.

Jay Shah

- He has been re-appointed as the president of the Asian Cricket Council (ACC) for the third consecutive term.
- Shah assumed this post for the first time in January 2021. He had replaced Nazmul Hasan as the President of Bangladesh Cricket Board.

Asian Cricket Council:

- It is a cricket organization which currently consists of 25 member associations.
- It was established in 1983. Its headquarters is in Colombo, Sri Lanka. It is subordinate to the International Cricket Council.

Vice Admiral Lochan Singh Pathania

- VADM Lochan Singh Pathania took charge as the Chief Hydrographer of the Government of India.
- He is a hydrography expertin international maritime law relating to maritime boundary delimitation.
- They have contributed to resolving issues related to the continental shelf extending beyond maritime limits and the Exclusive Economic Zone.

Abhinav Bindra

- Abhinav Bindra has been selected as the torch bearer for the 2024 Paris Olympics.
- Abhinav Bindra will be part of the Olympic torch relay to be held from April 16 to July 26.
- He is a member of the Athletes Commission of the International Olympic Committee (IOC).
- Abhinav Bindra is the first Indian to win a gold medal at the Olympic Games at the individual level.
- He won the gold medal in the men's 10 meter air rifle event at the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games.
- The Paris Olympics are scheduled to take place from July 26 to August 11, 2024.

Lieutenant General Upendra Dwivedi

- Lieutenant General Upendra Dwivedi took over as Army Vice Chief.
- Lieutenant General Dwivedi was awarded the 'Distinguished Fellow' at the National Defense College equivalent course at the US Army War College, Carlisle, USA.

Maryam Nawaz

- Maryam Nawaz has become the first woman Chief Minister (CM) of West Punjab in Pakistan.
- Maryam Nawaz is the daughter of three-time Prime Minister of Pakistan, Nawaz Sharif.
- Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) won 137 seats in the Punjab Assembly in the elections.
- Independent candidates supported by former PM Imran Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) won 113 seats.

Sultan Ibrahim Iskandar

- On January 31, billionaire Sultan Ibrahim Iskandar of the southern state of Johor was appointed Malaysia's 17th king.
- He replaced Al-Sultan Abdullah Sultan Ahmad Shah.
- Since Malaysia gained independence from Britain in 1957, nine ethnic Malay state rulers have taken turns as king for five-year terms under the world's only such system.

Ahmed Awad bin Mubarak

- Ahmed Awad bin was appointed Prime Minister of Yemen.
- He replaces Maeen Abdulmalik Saeed.
- Ahmed Awad bin Mubarak was also named as Yemen's representative to the United Nations in 2018.
- He also served as the Foreign Minister of Yemen since 2020.
- Yemen is facing tensions as a result of Houthi rebels' attacks on ships in the Red Sea.

Alexander Stubb

- Former Prime Minister Alexander Stubb became the new President of Finland.
- This is the first election after Finland joined the NATO military alliance.
- In April 2023, Finland officially became the 31st member of the Washington-led alliance.
- On March 1, Mr Stubb will officially take over from Sauli Niinistö.

OlzhasBektenov

- OlzhasBektenovwas appointed as the new Prime Minister of Kazakhstan.
- Alikhan Smylov, who had been serving as prime minister since January 2022, resigned.
- The capital of Kazakhstan is Astana and its currency is Kazakhstan Tenge.

FarooqNazki

- Famous journalist and SahityaAkademi Award winner Mohammad FarooqNazki passed away at the age of 83.
- FarooqNazki received the SahityaAkademi Award in 1995 for his remarkable poetry collection "Nar HyutunKanzalVanas".
- He also served as media advisor to two Chief Ministers, Farooq Abdullah and Omar Abdullah.

Fali S Nariman

- Constitutional jurist Fali S Nariman passed away at the age of 95.
- He was Additional Solicitor General between 1972 and 1975.
- He resigned from the post during the Emergency.
- He was awarded the Padma Vibhushan in 2007. He was awarded the Padma Bhushan in 1991.
- He was also nominated to the Rajya Sabha by the President in 1999.

Manohar Joshi

- Manohar Joshi passed away at the age of 86.
- He served as the Chief Minister of Maharashtra from 1995 to 1999.
- He served as the Speaker of the Lok Sabha from 2002 to 2004.
- He was a Rajya Sabha member from 2006 to 2012.
- He served as the Minister of Heavy Industries and Public Enterprises from 1999 to 2002.

9. SPORTS

Indian women won the Badminton Asia Team Championship 2024.

- On February 18, Indian women won a historic gold medal by defeating Thailand 3-2 in the final of the Badminton Asia Team Championships in Malaysia.
- This was India's first gold medal in this championship. Earlier, the Indian men's team had won two bronze medals in 2016 and 2020.
- Treesa Jolly-GayatriGopichand defeated JongkolphanKititharakul-RavindaPrajongjai 21-16, 18-21, 21-16.

Para-Badminton World Championships 2024.

- SuhasYathiraj along with Pramod Bhagat and Krishna Nagar won gold medals at the BWF World Para-Badminton Championships in Pattaya, Thailand.
- SuhasYathiraj, PramodBhagat and Krishna Nagar won gold medals in men's singles SL4, SL3 and SH6 categories.
- In singles SU5, Manisha Ramdas won the silver medal by defeating Yang Qiuxia of China 16-21 and 16-21.

R Ashwin became the second fastest player to take 500 Test wickets.

- India spinner Ravichandran Ashwin
- became the second Indian to take 500 wickets after Anil Kumble(619 wickets).
- Ashwin became the second bowler to score the fastest 500 dismissals in 98 Test matches, after Sri Lankan legend Muttiah Muralitharan (87 matches).
- Sri Lanka's Muralitharan is also the all-time leading wicket taker in Tests with 800 wickets in 133 matches.
- Ashwin has also become the ninth bowler to take 500 wickets.

Sumit Nagal won the Chennai Open ATP Challenger title.

- India's Sumit Nagal defeated top seed Luca Nardi of Italy to win the Chennai Open ATP Challenger title at the SDAT Tennis Stadium in Chennai.
- He became the first Indian to win a men's singles event at the Chennai Open ATP level event.
- Additionally, Nagal ranked into the top 100 in the world.
- In the doubles title, Indian pair Ramkumar Ramanathan and Saketh Myneni won by defeating Nikki KaliyandaPoonacha/RithvikChoudharyBollipalli on 10 February.

Asian Indoor Athletics Championships

- The championship was held in Tehran, Iran from 17 to 19 February.
- India won three gold, one silver in the Asian Indoor Athletics Championships.
- Athlete JyotiYarraji won the gold medal in the women's 60m hurdles with a timing of 8.12 seconds, which is also a new national record.
- Tajinder Singh Toor won the gold medal in men's shot put with a throw of 19.7 metres, breaking a nineteen-year-old national record.
- Athlete Harmilan Bains won the gold medal in the women's 1500 meters event and Ankita Dhyani won the silver medal in the women's 3000 meters event.

Archery Asia Cup 2024

- India finished the tournament with 14 medals, including nine gold, in Baghdad, Iraq on February 25.

Player	Category	Medal
PrathameshJavakar, Priyansh, KushalDalal	Men's compound team	Gold
PrathameshJavkar	Men's Compound Individual	Gold
Kushal Dalal	Men's Compound Team	Silver
Aditi Swami, PriyaGurjar, PreneetKaur	Women's Compound Team	Silver
PreneetKaur	Women's Compound Individual	Gold
Aditi Swami	Women's Compound Individual	Bronze
PrathameshJavkar, Aditi Swami	Vompound mixed team	Gold
DheerajBommadevara, Praveen Ramesh Jadhav, TarundeepRai	Men's Recurve Team	Gold
DheerajBommadevara	Men's Recurve Individual	Gold
TarundeepRai	Men's Recurve Individual	Silver
Simranjit Kaur, Deepika Kumari, Bhajan Kaur	Women's Recurve Team	Gold
Deepika Kumari	Women's Recurve Individual	Gold
SimranjeetKaur	Women's Recurve Individual	Silver
SimranjeetKaur, DheerajBommadevara	Recurve mixed team	Gold

10. AWARDS, BOOKS AND APPOINTMENTS

Lal Krishna Advani, Narasimha Rao, Chaudhary Charan Singh and MS Swaminathan will receive Bharat Ratna

- Former Prime Ministers PV Narasimha Rao and Chaudhary Charan Singh as well as agricultural scientist MS Swaminathan will receive the Bharat Ratna.

Chaudhary Charan Singh

- Chaudhary Charan Singh served as the sixth Prime Minister of India. He was sworn in on July 28, 1979, but left office 170 days later after his government failed to prove its majority.
- He formed the BharatiyaKranti Dal (BKD), which later merged with the United Socialist Party to form the BharatiyaLok Dal (BLD).

PamulaparthiVenkataNarasimhaRao

- PamulaparthiVenkataNarasimhaRao served as the 10th Prime Minister of India from 21 June 1991 to 16 May 1996. He is known for the economic reforms of 1991.

Dr. Swaminathan

- 'Father of the Green Revolution' Dr. Swaminathan played an important role in the changes brought about in farming in the 1960s and 70s.
- Reforms in agriculture helped India achieve self-sufficiency in agriculture.
- Earlier, the government had announced to give Bharat Ratna to Lal Krishna Advani and socialist icon Karpoori Thakur.

Lal Krishna Advani

- Lal Krishna Advani isVeteran BJP leader and former Deputy Prime Minister.
- The veteran BJP leader was a member of both houses of Parliament between 1970 and 2019.
- Last month the government had nominated socialist stalwart and former Bihar Chief Minister late Karpoori Thakur for the Bharat Ratna.

The Jnanpith Award for 2023 will be given to Gulzar and Rambhadracharya.

- The Jnanpith Selection Committee announced, renowned Urdu poet Gulzar and Sanskrit scholar Jagadguru Rambhadracharya for 58th Jnanpith Award.
- Sampoorna Singh Kalra, 89, better known as Gulzar, is known for his work in Hindi cinema and is considered one of the finest Urdu poets of the era.
- 74-year-old Rambhadracharya, founder and head of TulsiPeeth in Chitrakoot, is a renowned Hindu spiritual leader, teacher and author of over 240 books and scriptures, including four epics.
- Multilingual Rambhadracharya, who speaks 22 languages, is one of the current four JagadguruRamanandacharyas of the Ramananda sect.
- In 2015, he received the Padma Vibhushan award.

Jnanpith Award:

- Established in 1961, this award is a literary award presented every year by the BharatiyaJnanpith for outstanding contribution to literature.
- The award is given for literary works in the 22 "scheduled languages" recognized in the Indian Constitution.
- Under this award, a prize of Rs 21 lakh, a statue of Vagdevi and a citation is given.
- The first award was presented to G Shankar Kurup in 1965.

France's highest civilian honour to Shashi Tharoor

- Chevalier de la Légiond'Honneur France, the highest civilian honor given by France, was awarded to Shashi Tharoor.
- He was given this honor in August 2022, but the formal honor was given on 20 February 2024.
- He is a senior leader of Congress Party. He has been serving as the Member of Parliament for Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala since 2009.
- He is the current Chairman of the Standing Committee on Chemicals and Fertilizers.
- He was honored as a "Global Leader of Tomorrow" by the World Economic Forum.
- 'Ambedkar: A Life' by B.R. is a book about Ambedkar written by Shashi Tharoor and published in 2022.

India's Shankar Mahadevan and Zakir Hussain won awards at the Grammy Awards.

- On February 5, Indian musicians Shankar Mahadevan and Zakir Hussain's fusion band 'Shakti' won the Grammy Award in the category of 'Best Global Music Album'.
- The award was for his latest album 'This Moment'. The album 'This Moment', released on 30 June 2023, contains eight songs.
- Meanwhile, Zakir Hussain also won the 'Best Global Music Performance' Grammy for his contribution to 'Pashto' with Bela Fleck and Edgar Meyer, which featured Rakesh Chaurasia - an excellent flautist.
- While Hussain won three Grammy Awards in a single night, Chaurasia received two.
- The 66th Annual Grammy Awards 2024 were held in Los Angeles.
- It is an award presented by the Recording Academy to recognize achievement in the music industry.
- The winners of the 66th Grammy Awards are:

Category	Winner
Record of the Year	Flowers - Miley Cyrus
Album of the Year	Midnights – Taylor Swift
Song of the Year	What Was I Made For? (from – Barbie) by Billie Eilish O'Connell & Finneas O'Connell, songwriters (Billie Eilish)
Best New Artist	Victoria Monet
Best Pop Vocal Album	Midnights – Taylor Swift
Best Pop Solo Performance	Flowers – Miley Cyrus
Best Rap Album	Michael - Killer Mike
Best Rock Song	Not Strong Enough - Julien Baker, Phoebe Bridgers & Lucy Dacus, songwriters (Boygenius)
Best R&B Album	Snooze - Kenny B. Edmonds, Blair Ferguson, Khris Riddick-Tynes, Solana Rowe and Leon Thomas, songwriters (SZA)
Best Country Song	Bell Bottom Country- Lanny Wilson

11. IMPORTANT DAYS AND WEEKS

Indian Coast Guard Day

- Indian Coast Guard Day is celebrated every year on 1 February.
- This day is observed to commemorate the anniversary of the establishment of the Indian Coast Guard on 1 February 1977 under the Coast Guard Act, 1978.

World Wetland Day

- It is celebrated every year on 2 February as 'World Wetlands Day'.
- Theme of World Wetlands Day 2024: "Wetlands and Human Wellbeing"
- Ramsar Convention for wetland conservation was adopted on 2 February 1971,
- World Wetlands Day, first celebrated in 1997.

World Cancer Day

- It is celebrated every year on 4th February.
- Its purpose is to increase awareness about cancer and encourage its prevention, detection and treatment.
- World Cancer Day is led by the Union for International Cancer Control to support the goals of the World Cancer Declaration.

- The National Cancer Institute (NCI) is the lead agency of the Government of India for cancer research and training.
- This year 2024, the theme of World Cancer Day is "Close the Care Gap", which is a continuation of the 2022 theme and will run till 2024 (3-year campaign) with specified objectives for each year.

International Darwin Day

- It is celebrated every year on 12 February.
- The day is celebrated to reflect and act upon the intellectual, perpetual curiosity, scientific thinking and principles embodied in Charles Darwin.
- International Darwin Day was started by three people:
- In 1995, Dr. Robert Stephens inspired the Silicon Valley Humanist Community to start an annual Darwin Day celebration.

Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj's birth anniversary

- Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj's birth anniversary is celebrated every year on 19 February.
- The 394th birth anniversary of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj is being celebrated today.
- Shivaji Maharaj was born on 19 February 1630 in Shivneri Fort in Pune district in Maharashtra state.

World Social Justice Day

- It is celebrated every year on 20 February.
- Theme of the year 2024: "Global Coalition for Social Justice: Bridging Gaps, Building Alliances"
- On November 26, 2007, the United Nations General Assembly declared February 20 every year as World Social Justice Day.
- It was celebrated for the first time in the year 2009.

International Mother Language Day

- It is celebrated every year on 21st February.
- The theme of the year 2024 has been declared as 'Multilingual Education is a Pillar of Intergenerational Learning'.
- Its objective is to protect the diverse culture and intellectual heritage of different regions of the world and to preserve and promote mother languages.
- UNESCO declared 21 February as International Mother Language Day in the year 1999 and this day is celebrated all over the world since the year 2000.

World Scout Day

- It is celebrated every year on 22 February.
- It is celebrated on the occasion of the birthday of Robert Baden-Powell, the founder of Scouting.
- It reflects the principles and values of the movement and highlights the achievements of Scouts around the world.
- The theme of World Scout Day 2024 is 'Scouts for a Better World'.

Central Excise Day

- It is celebrated every year on 24 February.
- Its objective is to highlight and make people aware of the importance of the Central Board of Excise and Customs.
- The Central Excise and Salt Act came into force on 24 February 1944.

National Science Day

- It is celebrated every year on 28 February.
- The theme of the year 2024 is "Indigenous Technologies for Viksit Bharat".
- This day is celebrated to promote scientific thinking in the society and to motivate students to adopt science as a career.
- The first National Science Day was celebrated on 28 February, 1987.
- On this day, the great Indian scientist CV Raman discovered the Raman Effect, National Science Day is celebrated in India to commemorate this discovery.

2024 has been declared as 'Navy Civilian Year' by the Indian Navy.

- It is declared to improve the administration, efficiency and welfare of Naval civilians by addressing all aspects of civilian human resource management in a time bound manner.
- Key focus areas towards maximizing administrative efficiency, digital initiatives, general and specific training programs and welfare activities have been identified for implementation in 2024.

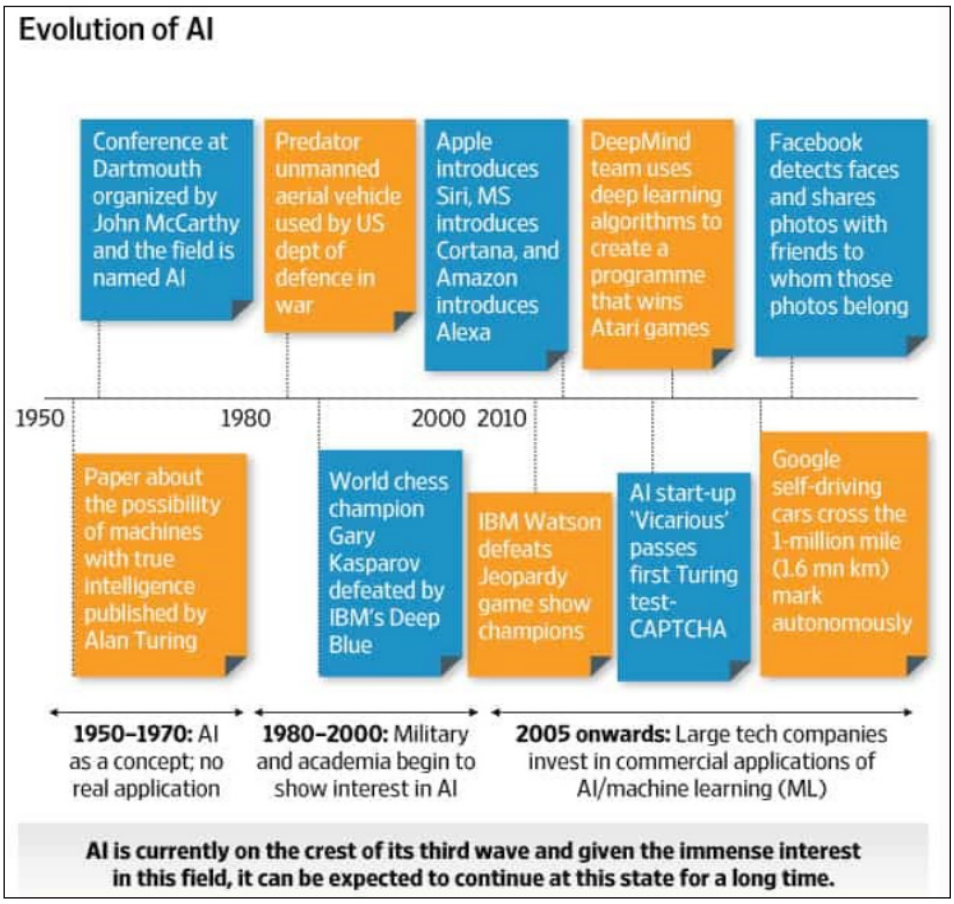
12. GIST

INDIA'S VISION FOR HARNESSING AI FOR GLOBAL GOOD

- At the forefront of the transformative journey of Digital India is the pivotal role played by AI, a force that the Government is actively shaping through the comprehensive mission named 'IndiaAI.' IndiaAI's vision not only consists of support for the AI startup ecosystem but also the development of practical applications addressing real-world challenges in healthcare, agriculture, language translation, governance, and beyond. India's approach entails setting principles and an exhaustive list of harms and criminalities associated with AI.

Global Partnership on Artificial Intelligence (GPAI)

- **About:** An international initiative established to guide the responsible development and use of artificial intelligence (AI) in a manner that respects human rights and the shared democratic values of its members.
- **Proposed by:** Canada and France (2018 44th G7 summit)
- **Launched:** (June) 2020.
- **Members:** Initially 15, now 29 member countries.
- **Major countries:** India, the US, the UK, France, Japan, Canada, etc.
- **China:** Not a part.
- **Hosted by:** Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).



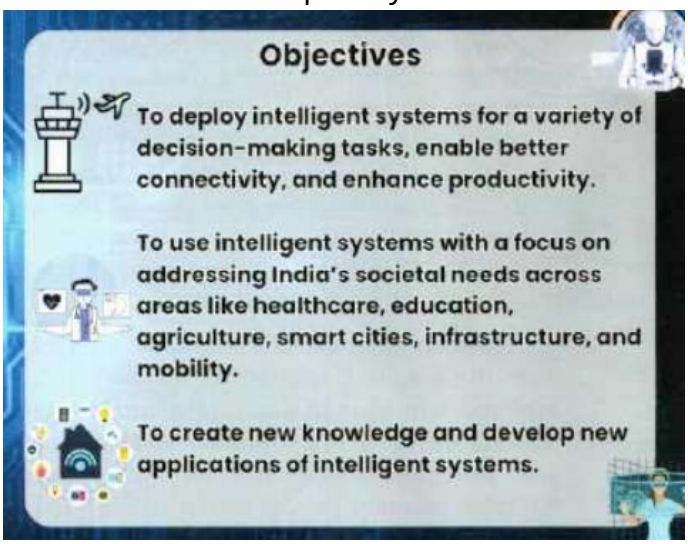
- **Objectives:**
  - A multi-stakeholder initiative to bridge the gap between theory and practice on AI by supporting cutting-edge research and applied activities on AI-related priorities.
  - Brings together engaged minds and expertise from science, industry, civil society, governments, international organisations and academia to foster international cooperation.

GPAI New Delhi declaration on AI

- **Objectives:**
  - A global framework for use of AI should be rooted in democratic values and human rights.
  - Safeguarding dignity and well-being;
  - ensuring personal data protection;

- the protection of applicable intellectual property rights, privacy, and security
- fostering innovation
- promoting trustworthy, responsible, sustainable, and human-centred use of AI

- **Focus on agri sector:** Agreed to support AI innovation in the agriculture sector as a new "thematic priority".



AI IN INDIAN GOVERNANCE AND PUBLIC SERVICES

- Artificial Intelligence has been around for a long time; the term 'Artificial Intelligence' was first used by John McCarthy in 1956. However, in the last year or so, with the advent of Generative Al and the launch of ChatGPT by OpenAl, Al has become a buzzword.
- A recent industry report focusing on Generative Al (GenAl) suggests that GenAl holds the potential to contribute up to 1.5 trillion dollars to India's GDP by 2030. The Stanford Al Index 2023 also ranks the nation as the foremost country in Al skill penetration. India has a robust startup ecosystem, ranking 5th in the number of newly Funded Al Companies by geographic area and attracting significant investments exceeding $475 million in GenAlstartups in the past two years.

Initiatives for AI

1. National Programme on Artificial Intelligence (NPAI)

- **Aim:** To nurture the building blocks of the domestic Al ecosystem
- **4 key interventions:**

National Data Management Office (NDMO)	• **Aim:** To enhance data quality, utilisation, and accessibility, modernising government practices to fully unlock the potential of data and the Al innovation ecosystem.
National Centre on AI (NCAI)	• **About:** A sector-agnostic entity that identifies Al solutions for public sector problem statements and facilitates their nationwide deployment. • **Aim:** To drive large-scale socio-economic transformation.
Skilling for Al	• **Aim:** To revamp technical education infrastructure, particularly ITIs and polytechnics by building data labs that can help equip the workforce with Al-ready skills and mitigate the disruptions caused by the accelerated adoption of Al.
Responsible Al	• **To address potential biases and discrimination** in Al adoption through the development of indigenous tools, guidelines, frameworks etc., & suitable governance mechanisms.

2. UMANG (Unified Mobile Application for New- Age Governance)

- **Launch:** 2017
- **About:** A unified platform, offering all Indian citizens a singular point of access to pan-India e-government services, spanning from central to local government bodies.
- **Aim:** To propel India towards mobile governance by enabling citizens to get access to all public services with one super app.
- **Access to 1836 vital government services:** Has a wide spectrum of areas like education,

Covid-19 vaccinations, public transport, employment guidance, passport applications, utilities, cybercrime reporting, and more.

- **Has a voice-based chatbot, or virtual assistant:** Enables users to inquire about various Government services in both Hindi and English using either voice or text inputs.

3. **DigiYatra**
   - **Nodal Ministry:** Ministry of Civil Aviation
   - **About:** A biometric-based boarding system for Indian airports implemented through the DigiYatra App.
   - **Technology:** The app uses facial recognition technology, where users upload a selfie, enhancing security and expediting the boarding process.
   - **Significance:**
     - **Eliminates the need for passengers** to present their boarding pass or identification at multiple checkpoints, reducing queuing time.
     - **A system maps each passenger** to their Passenger Name Record (PNR), ensuring that only legitimate passengers gain entry at every checkpoint.
     - **Real-time information on passenger load** obtained by the airport operator facilitates improved resource planning.
     - **A streamlined process enhances airport throughput**, providing a more efficient and secure travel experience for passengers.
     - **Eases entry into airports**, security checks, and boarding with a seamless registration process.

4. **Digital India Bhashini/ National Language Translation Mission**
   - **Nodal Ministry:** Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology
   - **About:** Building speech-to-speech machine translation systems for various Indian languages and dialects and evolving a Unified Language Interface (ULI).
   - **Aim:** Creating a 'voice-based internet' accessible in vernacular Indian languages and building multilingualism as well by developing the next generation of conversational government apps and websites.
   - **Benefit:**
     - Enables citizens to access digital services in their own language, further increasing digital inclusion and accessibility.
     - Leverages AI to establish its building blocks, such as language and speaker identification, precise speech-to-text conversion, accurate translation across multiple languages, transliteration, semantic comprehension for actions like responding to queries, and sophisticated speech synthesis, which includes the ability to produce speech output in the language of choice with options for selecting the preferred speaker gender (male or female).

Applications of AI

Urban Governance	• **Government departments are using image recognition** and AI for near-real-time monitoring of traffic and the infrastructure of the city.
Health Care	**ATMAN AI** • **Developed by:** DRDO's Centre for Artificial Intelligence and Robotics (CAIR): • **About:** An AI-based COVID detection application software using Chest X-rays (CXRs), which can classify the images into normal, Covid-19, and pneumonia classes using a limited number of sample images. • **Aim:** To optimise Chest X-rays for rapid detection of Covid-19-triggered lung abnormalities.

Al-Based Pest Management System	**Cotton Ace** • **An Al-driven early warning system** to aid farmers in safeguarding their crops by offering timely, localised advice on pesticide application. • **Developed by:** Wadhwani Al, the Al system has undergone successful piloting. In collaboration with the Better Cotton Initiative and the Maharashtra Government. • **Operation:** Gujarat, Maharashtra, and Telangana, benefiting over 18,000 farmers. • **Benefit:** Farmers have witnessed a significant 25% increase in cotton crop yields.
Agriculture	**Government of Telangana** • **Deployed an Al solution** that can leverage agricultural data and provide actionable inputs that can potentially increase crop yield. • **Benefit:** Can accurately delineate field boundaries for approximately 60,000 agriculture fields, provide precise data on acreage, forested areas, and irrigation structures with an impressive 85% accuracy. • **Smart Agriculture**: Al is used to analyse agricultural data and provide farmers with real-time information on weather patterns, crop health, and best farming practices.
Attendance Monitoring (Shiksha Setu)	**Shiksha Setu** • **Developed by** the government of Assam • **Aim:** Recording the digital attendance of both students and teachers. • **Al-based facial recognition attendance system:** The attendance is recorded in real-time, and analysis can be conducted on a group or individual basis.
Al in the Digital India Initiative	• **Integrating Al with Aadhaar- enabled services:** The Government can ensure a more efficient and secure delivery of various public and private services while maintaining the privacy and integrity of individuals' identity information. • **Incorporating Al into DigiLocker:** By integrating Al into Government mobile applications, administrations can create more intelligent, responsive, and citizen-centric platforms that streamline processes, improve service delivery, and foster better communication between the Government and its citizens.
Public Safety and Security	• **Surveillance systems** powered by Al can enhance security measures and help in the early detection of potential risks. • **Al technologies,** including facial recognition and video analytics, are employed for public safety and security.
AI in Financial Inclusion	• **Eg,** Mobile banking, digital payments, and Al-driven credit scoring. • **Advanced fraud detection algorithms:** They influence Al to monitor transactions in real-time, identifying unusual patterns and preventing fraud activities.

Smart Cities Mission	• **It involves the integration of AI and IoT technologies** to enhance urban living. AI can analyse data from various sources, such as sensors and IoT devices, to optimise infrastructure use. • **It includes traffic management, waste management, energy distribution**, and water supply, leading to reduced congestion, energy savings, and more efficient resource allocation. • **AI can improve waste collection and recycling processes** by optimising collection, identifying areas with higher waste generation, and promoting recycling initiatives.
Power Management	• **Artificial Intelligence is increasingly playing a significant role** in power management, contributing to improved efficiency, reliability, and sustainability in the energy sector. • **AI algorithms analyse historical data**, weather patterns, and other relevant factors to predict future energy demands.

Potential Areas of Opportunity for the Industry

- **Expansion in the Addressable Market:** This expansion includes new services and offerings that align with the evolving needs of the industry.
- **Delivery Excellence:**Eg, in application development and BPM services, a 20 to 30% productivity improvement is anticipated. It begins with a 10 to 15% gain in the first 12 to 18 months, reaching 20 to 30% in 2 to 3 years.
- **Sales Excellence:** Generative AI will streamline the entire sales lifecycle, from lead generation to sales strategy formulation. It will optimise the sales process, increasing productivity, & reducing sales costs.
- **Productivity Gains:** Generative AI can automate time-consuming tasks such as summarisation, workflow generation, and report preparation.

Generative AI

- **About:** A form of artificial intelligence (AI) in which algorithms automatically produce content in the form of text, images, audio, & video.
- **Difference from traditional AI:** Unlike traditional AI systems that are designed to recognize patterns & make predictions, generative AI creates new content.
- **Working:** It works by using a Machine Learning (ML) model to learn the patterns and relationships in a dataset of human-created content. It then uses the learned patterns to generate new content.
- **Popular Generative AI Tools:**
    - **ChatGPT:** An AI-powered chatbot developed by OpenAI, which xcan generate written content & converse with users fluently.
    - **Bard:** A generative AI chatbot created by Google which can answer questions asked by users or create new content from text or image prompts.

Concerns about AI

- **Gender-Bias:** Large language models (LLMs) are trained on text from the internet, which reflects some of humanity's best qualities but also some of its worst, including some of our prejudices, hatreds, and misconceptions.
- **Job Losses:** A second major concern is who will be able to make a living when AI can do our jobs faster and cheaper than any human can?
- **Hallucinations and Misinformation:** AI can sometimes 'hallucinate' inaccurate information with complete confidence & can even invent its own references, sources, and deep fakes that are non-existent.
- **Plagiarised Content:** LLMs sometimes output plagiarised content. If any enterprise uses that in their operations, only they are held accountable when the plagiarism is discovered, not the Generative AI model.
- **Transparency and User Explainability:** Generative AI models give a disclaimer that the data they have presented may be inaccurate.

Implementing Responsible AI

- **Fairness of information** to ensure that Al doesn't perpetuate or amplify gender biases.
- **Transparency of information** is vital to ensuring ethical decision-making. Users should have accessible, non-technical explanations of Generative Al, its limitations, and the risks it creates.
- **Privacy** is another dimension for implementing responsible Al by protecting user data and ensuring confidentiality.
- **Safeguarding the Al systems** from malicious attacks.
- **Ethical use of data**, ensuring that Al is used only for beneficial purposes.

AI in Media

- Technological advances have a paradox associated with them; Man creates technological advances and these advances brought about by man have the potential of being detrimental to man himself. Artificial Intelligence, more commonly referred to as AI has a similar story. It is permeating every aspect of human work including Media.

Use of AI in Media

- Content discovery
- Document analysis
- Translations (in multiple languages)
- Processing tips (verifying tips, moderating story ideas)
- Social media content creation (generating optimised posts of pictures and videos for various platforms in various formats)
- Automated writing (from structured data) e.g., school, college events, natural events, business, real estate and community calendars
- Automated writing (from unstructured data) e.g., obituaries, press briefs, event previews Newsletters (personalised with optimised delivery time)
- Text summarisation
- Comment moderation
- Content transformation and reuse (format articles to enable reuse in different platforms, formats and platforms)
- Search Engine Optimisation
- Push-alert personalisation

Human qualities linked with journalism that AI would find difficult to replicate

- **Emotions:** Data definitely plays an important role in driving a story, but what truly drives a story is the underlying emotion that connects the audience to the story. Al- at least in its current iteration - runs on data and algorithms not emotions.
- **Adaptability:** The toughest among the tough survive in Media that puts forth daily challenges, necessitates daily adapting to change situations and also requires an immense will to not just survive but thrive; that too while being 'me first, me best! Al engines are yet to reach this optimisation.
- **Branding and Connect:** Journalists have spent years building a brand and it's almost impossible for Al to do that with no time and earn the audience's trust.
- **Ethics:** While new generation Al, can follow a basic paradigm of ethical behaviour laid down by its creators, there's only so far machine learning can go. It is yet not programmed to discern what is morally correct or acceptable.
- **Ground Connect:** Al is doing a fine job of creating stories from sourced data, but it is not reaching ground zero anytime soon.
- **Limited Ability to Take Decisions**: Another reason why Al will not completely take over human jobs in media is that Al is still limited in its ability to make decisions based on context.
- **Social and Environmental Consequences**: There is a rapid and unstudied dash to deploy Al in the media but chatbots consume vast amounts of energy..

There is no denying that the human factor is an absolute essential for Media; Al is actually moving in to make transformative changes in Media. The SEO optimised revenue benefits and expenditure cuts are a sure shot attraction for adopting Al in Media. But, the faith that democracies place in Media, makes it absolutely essential that the fourth pillar of Democracy - the Media is not transformed to the point that Al takes over newsrooms.

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE AND THE EASE OF LIFE FOR VISUALLY CHALLENGED

Al is replacing the centuries-old standardised operational procedures in almost every branch of

knowledge and discipline. The present analysis is addressing the extent to which Artificial Intelligence can improve the lives of divyangs. There is evidence of such initiatives from Indian metro rail services where AIs are progressively incorporated to reduce risk due to clear audio communications for the divyangs.



Visually challenged and AI

1. **Detection of impairment**
   - If you cannot negotiate and react to visual inputs like any other person, you are technically termed as Visually Impaired (VI).
   - The life of a VI can be improved right at the time of its diagnosis and locating the means for rehabilitation.
   - Early detection using AI assistive technology can invariably interfere with the medication or other management process right from the womb.
2. **Education**
   - **Visually impaired students have wide voice manoeuvrability** interfaces with such AI learning models, which is unveiling the fantastic world of knowledge at their fingertips.
   - **Machine learning programmers can certainly change the destiny of conventional education**, but the virtue of meeting the special requirements of persons with disabilities can make the learning meaningful.
3. **AI and Social Life**
   - **An AI device has been carefully tailored in the spectacles** to meet the specific requirements of blind or low-vision people by socially committed developers (Envision).
   - **The familiar faces can be fed into the devices**, like the menu cards of hotels, contents of medicines, products, GPS, and things that can be described in words like gender and the approximate age of strangers, which can add to the psycho-social competence of visually impaired persons.
   - **Digital magnifiers assist the low-vision category** of VIs in reading print materials with assistive technology developers.
4. **AI and Governance**
   - **AI can help with biometric verification** and thereby relieve a 'acid' test on existence.
   - **With the Unique Disability Identity cards in India**, AI can certainly reshape the entire landscape.
   - **On all the platforms of public utility driven by AI,** it will be easy to validate the individual's locus standi for an automated mode shift.
   - **The State administrative mechanisms** can also make use of AI in locating the pivots in which such terminals need to be dispensed with.
5. **AI and Accessibility**
   - **Visually impaired persons are susceptible to risking themselves by collision**; a State is largely held responsible for creating a hassle-free physical atmosphere wherein mobility of such persons is challenged.
   - **Buildings with public funds, transportation systems, financial institutions, and educational centres** of all types can make effective use of Artificial Intelligence to impart security.

The Rise of India's Drone Industry

- The rise of unmanned flight technology over the last few years has sparked the imagination of innovators across the country, and today, India is building an ecosystem to become a global drone hub by 2030.
- Active efforts by the Government towards making drone services easily accessible while encouraging industries to embrace drone innovation to leverage the benefits of this technology are touching the lives of every citizen.
- The impact of this was observed during the Covid-19 pandemic when deliver vac-

cines drones were used to and medicines, for sample collection or delivery, spraying disinfectants, and lockdown patrolling. They are set to have a definite impact on education, agriculture, weather forecasting, healthcare, disaster management, defence, and other sectors.

Use of Drones in India

- **Kisan Drones:** Crop assessment and spraying insecticides
- **i-Drones:** To develop an ecosystem for healthcare drone deliveries
- **Use of drones for Kedarnath reconstruction** and the Namami Gange Programme
- **Monitoring and combat operations** to meet the requirements of frontline troops
- **PM SVAMITVA Yojana:** Under this scheme, for the first time, the country's villages are being digitally mapped, and digital property cards are being given to the people.
- **Mission 'Drone Shakti':** To support and promote Drone-as-a-Service (DrAAS) among emerging drone start-ups.

Govt efforts for promoting drone usage

- **Atal Innovation Mission:** Young minds are trained in using drone technology through Atal Tinkering Labs.
- **Liberalised Drone Rules 2021:** To promote and streamline the commercial and industrial use of drones through the DigitalSky platform is a testament to India's swift adoption of drones.
- **PLI Scheme for drones and drone components:** To make India a global hub for the R&D, testing, manufacturing, and operation of drones.
- **Drone Airspace Map 2021:** It opens nearly 90% of Indian airspace as a green zone up to 400 feet;
- **UAS Traffic Management policy** framework 2021
- **Drone Certification Scheme 2022:** To simplify the process of obtaining type certificates for drone manufacturers
- **Drone Import Policy 2022:** It bans the import of foreign-made drones; and the setting up of drone schools to train pilots and providing licence for drone operations.

CYBER SECURITY CHALLENGES IN THE ERA OF AI

As India, a rapidly growing digital economy, embraces Al, it faces unique vulnerabilities and requires a proactive approach to address emerging cyber threats. Integrating AI responsibly into cyber security solutions can be a game-changer. The government, private sector, academia, and civil society must come together to build a robust cyber security ecosystem, promote responsible AI development and empower individuals to navigate the digital world safely.

Cyber Security Challenges faced by India

- **Large digital divide:** A significant portion of the population lacks access to digital literacy and awareness, making them vulnerable to phishing attacks and online scams.
- **Fragmented cyber security infrastructure:** The responsibility for cyber security is often distributed across various government agencies and private entities, leading to a lack of coordination.
- **Data privacy concerns:** Data security and potential misuse of personal information may be a cause of concern for digital payments.
- **Skill shortage:** India faces a shortage of qualified cybersecurity professionals, hindering effective threat detection & response capabilities.

Way Forward

- **Building a robust cyber security ecosystem:** Strengthening government agencies like CERT-In, promoting public-private partnerships, and fostering collaboration among stakeholders.
- **Investing in Al-powered cyber security solutions:** AI holds immense potential for proactive threat detection and response. Investing in research and development of secure Al solutions is crucial.
- **Promoting digital literacy and awareness:** Educating the public about cyber hygiene, online scams, and data privacy practices is essential to build a resilient digital society.
- **Developing a strong legal framework:** India needs robust cyber security laws and regulations to deter cybercrimes, protect critical infrastructure, and ensure data privacy.
- **Investing in cyber security training and skills development:** Addressing the skill shortage by providing training programs and attracting talent to the field is essential for long-term cybersecurity preparedness.

Other areas of focus

- **Threat detection and response:** AI-powered systems can analyse network traffic, user behaviour, and system logs to identify anomalies and threats in real-time, enabling faster response times and minimising damage.
- **Vulnerability management:** AI can automate vulnerability scanning and patching, ensuring systems are constantly updated and protected from known exploits.
- **Fraud prevention:** AI can analyse financial transactions and identify suspicious patterns to prevent online fraud and financial theft.
- **Cybercrime investigation:** AI can assist in analysing forensic data, identifying attackers, and predicting future attack patterns to improve cybercrime investigations.
- Cyber security in the era of AI is a complex challenge, but by proactively addressing the vulnerabilities and leveraging the opportunities, India can create a secure and resilient digital future for its citizens and contribute to a safer global digital landscape.

PM-JANMAN: Empowering Tribals



- Kicking off the campaign for the PM-JANMAN package for the Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs) recently, the Centre has set a target of one week to achieve Aadhaar, caste certificate, and Jan Dhan account saturation across 15,000 PVTG habitations in 100 districts.
- The Tribal Affairs Ministry said that the campaign would cover 18 States and the UT of Andaman and Nicobar Islands; in the next phase, habitations in other parts of the country would be covered.

Pradhan Mantri- Janjati Adivasi Nyaya Maha Abhiyan (PM-JANMAN) Scheme

- **About:** A government scheme that aims to bring tribal communities into the mainstream.
- **Composition:** Many Central Sector and Centrally Sponsored Schemes
- **Implementation:** Ministry of Tribal Affairs, in collaboration with the State governments and the PVTG communities.
- **Focus:** 11 critical interventions overseen by 9 line Ministries, ensuring the implementation of existing schemes in villages inhabited by PVTGs.
- **Sectors included:**
    - Safe housing under the PM-AWAS Scheme
    - Access to clean drinking water
    - Improved healthcare, education, nutrition, road and telecommunications connectivity
    - Opportunities for sustainable livelihoods.
    - Establishment of Van DhanVikasKendras for trading in forest produce
    - Off-grid solar power systems for 1 lakh households
    - Solar street lights
- **Importance:** It is expected to enhance the quality of life and well-being of the PVTGs, by addressing their multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination and exclusion, and by recognizing and valuing their unique and valuable contribution to national and global development.

Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups

- **Tribal population:** It makes up for 8.6% of the total population.
- **1973:** Dhebar Commission created Primitive Tribal Groups (PTGs) as a separate category, who are less developed among the tribal groups.
- **2006:** The Government of India renamed the PTGs as PVTGs.
- **Characteristics:**
    - Mostly homogenous
    - Small population
    - Relatively physically isolated
    - Absence of written language
    - Relatively simple technology
    - Slower rate of change
- **Total PVTGs:** Among the 75 listed PVTG's the highest number are found in Odisha.

Kurukshetra

- Shaping Sustainable Food Systems with Storage Infrastructure - A Pathway to Viksit Bharat
- Agriculture is the mainstay of the Indian economy, which has witnessed a magnificent transition from being a food deficit to a food surplus and is now an agriculture produce exporter to the world. India holds the second-largest agricultural land in the world, with over 200 countries in its export basket (Ministry of Commerce & Industry, 2023). Food production in India has increased significantly since the last decade, from 244 million tonnes during 2010-11 to 310 million tonnes during 2021-22.

Advantages of advancement in building storage infrastructures

- **Addressing Food loss and waste:** As per the FAO's State of Food and Agriculture (2019) report, around 14% of the world's food (valued at $400 billion per year) is lost after it is harvested and before it reaches the shops.
- **Wastage in retail and by consumers:** UNEP's Food Waste Index Report (2021) showed that a further 17% of the food ends up being wasted in retail and by consumers, particularly in households.
- **Food Security:** The enhanced storage infrastructure will support meeting the food-demand, supply, and access to the nationals across the country.

Sustainable Food Systems

- **Definition:** A "food system that delivers food security and nutrition for all in such a way that the economic, social and environmental bases to generate food security and nutrition for future generations are not compromised".
- **Encompasses the entire value-adding activities:** Includes all activities involved in the production, aggregation, processing, distribution, consumption, & disposal of food products.
- **Classification of storage structures:** Traditional storage structures, improved storage structures, modern storage structures, and farm silos
- **Importance:**
    - Adds resilience to the food system
    - Positively impacts food security and food availability
    - Can reduce these losses to as low as 1%-2%

Food Corporation of India (FCI):

- Set up under the Food Corporation's Act of 1964
- The only government agency entrusted with the movements of food grains from procuring states to consuming states through a network of storage infrastructure, owned or hired by FCI in the whole of India.
- Monitors the storage capacity and based on the storage gap assessment, storage capacities are created/hired.

Initiatives taken to encourage storage infrastructure and strengthen food systems

- Agriculture Infrastructure Fund (AIF)



- Agricultural Marketing Infrastructure Scheme (AMI)
- Sub-Mission on Agricultural Mechanization (SMAM)
- Pradhan Mantri Formalization of Micro Food Processing Enterprises Scheme (PM-FME)
- Pradhan Mantri Kisan Sampada Yojana (PMKSY)
- Mission for Integrated Development of Horticulture (MIDH)

Warehousing - Changing Gears to meet Present Challenges

A warehouse is a house for goods, analogous to rented accommodation or a guest house, for the material in its journey along the supply chain. Warehouses are now seen as vital links within supply chains, as key areas that enable an organisation to regulate the flow of goods between supply and demand points.

Aim of establishing warehouses

- To minimise operating costs while maintaining quality service. It aims
- To achieve this through an optimal blend of the following actions:
    - Maximising storage space use;
    - Deploying handling equipment;
    - Preserving the quality of the goods;
    - Guaranteeing access to goods as and when needed; and
    - Maintaining necessary security measures.

Warehouse Receipts

- **Meaning:** An acknowledgement in writing or in electronic form issued by warehouseman or his duly authorised representative on receiving goods, not owned by him, for storage.
- **Prehistoric use:** Warehouse receipts were recorded as grain receipts in Mesopotamia around 2,400 BC. Athens, Egypt, Persia, Jerusalem, and Rome too traded some form of warehoused goods.

Issues faced by the warehouse receipts

- **Did not enjoy the complete fiduciary trust of banks** due to fears about the quality and quantity of underlying goods, fraud.
- **Mismanagement by warehousemen**, which would make it difficult to recover the loans given against receipts.
- **Time consuming** available legal remedies
- **Non-uniform format** of warehouse receipts
- **Impediments to the negotiability of warehouse receipts** (Negotiability is defined as the power to transfer the title over underlying goods from a seller to buyer through endorsement of the receipt).
- **Difficulties for depositors and farmers** in taking full advantage of their stock at the time of harvest by obtaining pledge finance against the goods.

Solution: Negotiable Warehouse Receipts (NWRs)

- **Meaning:** Such receipts can be issued "to the bearer," i.e., to anyone in physical possession of the receipt, in which case the ownership of the goods is transferred simply by delivery of the warehouse receipt. To sell the receipt and the underlying goods, one needs only to physically give the receipt to the buyer.
- **Mechanism:**
    - Negotiable warehouse receipts can also be issued to the order of a named person.
    - In that case the "negotiation" or sale of the goods is complete when the receipt is delivered and the buyer (i.e., the subsequent holder of the warehouse receipt) endorses the receipt.
    - In India, delivery of goods through a negotiable warehouse receipt can be made to the order of a named person, and that person or a subsequent endorsee can endorse it.

Non-negotiable Warehouse Receipts

Such receipts are issued to a specific individual. Their transfer requires three steps:

- An agreement between the receipt holder and the buyer;
- Sending a written notice to the warehouse operator; and
- A confirmation from the warehouse operator that the goods are now held in the warehouse on behalf of the buyer.

Ordinary Warehouse Receipt/ Stock Receipt	NWR
Not regulated	Regulated by a statutory authority
No uniformity of information in the receipt	Receipts contain information in a standard format, as prescribed under the regulatory act and rules
Problems in valid transferability of goods in case of transfer/ endorsements, due to lack of legal negotiability of warehouse receipts.	Transfers are easier due to the regulatory backup

Paper Based Warehouse Receipt	e-NWR
Can be shared with prospective buyer in a one-to-one mode only	Help farmers / depositors to have access to a large number of buyers nationwide with better bargaining powers
Cannot be split	eNWRs can be split with obligation to transfer only a part of the commodity
Prone to loss, mutilation, tampering, fudging WR information etc.	No possibility of any such eventuality
Inherent difficulties in efficient clearing and trading in a transparent manner	Promote an efficient clearing, settlement and delivery system with transparency in trading of agricultural produce
Difficult to share vital information of the WR with multiple stake holders	It is easy to share vital information of the receipts with multiple stake holders. Market participants can view and manage their receipts via an online portal
Assaying is not mandatory	Reporting the quality of goods in eNWR is mandatory
Raising finance/ selling the goods underlying the receipts is a cumbersome process.	Easing access to finance by enabling multiple transfers without physical movement of goods.
Risk of issuing of duplicate NWR without following the procedure	Not possible
Fraudulent overstatement of the value of goods is possible	Agmark.net prices are retrieved in the electronic portal issuing eNWRs, to serve as a benchmark
Monitoring and surveillance are costly	Regularly monitored by WDRA at reduced monitoring costs. This builds credibility amongst market participants
Problems in valid transferability of receipts in case of transfer/ endorsements	Being electronic in nature multiple transfers are easy, with due backup of W(D&R) Act 2007
There are cases of Multiple finance against the same warehouse receipt	Multiple finance against the same eNWR is not possible due to electronic lien marking.

Institutionalised Management of Food Security

The nodal institution managing this herculean task is Food Corporation of India (FCI), a Government of India undertaking. The contemporary status of the food storage infrastructure required for food security management, along with the related supply chain of transportation and distribution of food grains across the country need to be pondered upon.

Govt initiatives to ensure food security in India

- Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Ann Yojana (PMGKAY): Under it, the Government of India distributes free food grains to about 81.35 crore people across the country, identified under the National Food Security Act (NFSA), 2013.
- Antodaya Anna Yojana (AAY): Under it, 8.93 crore people (in families with an average size of 3.76 persons) are covered & given 35 kg of free food grains per family per month.
- Other welfare schemes (OWS): ICDS, PM-POSHAN, Annapurna, hostels, welfare institutions, etc.

- Green Revolution: To augment food production with the use of high yielding varieties of seeds and deployment of technology in agriculture.
- Establishment of FCI: This long institutionalised journey had started with four mandates given to FCI. They included:
    - To provide remunerative prices to the farmers,
    - To provide food grains to vulnerable sections of the society at affordable prices,
    - To maintain buffer stock reserves for exigencies
    - To intervene in market for price stabilisation'

CAP (Covered and Plinth) Storage: A Phased Out Method in FCI

- **About:** A low-cost and short-term storage facility for wheat was in use earlier, particularly at the time of harvest in major wheat procuring states due to a lack of covered storage space.
- **Mechanism:** Bags are stacked on a wooden frame (dunnage) placed on a raised platform (plinth), and the lot is covered with 800-1000-gauge thick polyethylene sheets.
- **Use:** Common for the storage of wheat and paddy at present in India.
- **Disadvantage:**
    - Fumigation is not very effective.
    - Covers are damaged at times of high wind and rain, bird attack, monkey attack, etc., which make food grains vulnerable.
- **Phased out** since 2022.

Bulk Storage - Silos

- **About:** A relatively modern technique of storage consisting of a vertical container used for storing food grains and other granular materials in loose and bulk form.
- **Construction:** Made of masonry, reinforced concrete, or metals (plain or corrugated), with a conical hopper or flat bottom.
- **Benefit of hopper-bottom bins:** The grains flow under gravity and do not deposit in the bin while unloading (self-cleaning system), and shovelling equipment is not required.

Mega Food Storage Plan - Challenges and Way ahead

Currently, India has a food grain storage capacity of 145 million metric tonnes (MMT) against the total food production of 311 MMT - leaving a gap of 166 MMT. This means the existing storage infrastructure can only accommodate approximately 47% of the total produce. When compared to the USA and China, which process 65% and 23%, respectively, of their perishables, India is able to process a meagre 7%, which is quite negligible.

World's largest grain storage plan in the cooperative sector - Integrated grain storage facilities

- **About the integrated facility:** Spread over 1 acre of land, it will be built at a cost of Rs. 2.25 crore; Rs. 51 lakh will come as a subsidy, while the remaining will come as margin money or a loan.
- **Integrated modular PACS:** It will have a custom hiring centre, procurement centres, primary processing units for cleaning and winnowing, a storage shed and container storage, and silos as well.
- **Aim:**
    - To enhance food grain storage capacity by 70 MMT in the cooperative sector.
    - To reduce the burden on the Food Corporation of India
    - To cut wastage of farm produce
    - To help farmers plan their sales better
- **Benefits:**
    - It will let cooperatives set up decentralised storage facilities across the country.
    - It will converge existing schemes of various ministries
- **Components:** Various types of agri-infrastructures at the PACS level, including warehouses, custom hiring centres, processing units, fair price shops, etc. by leveraging the 'Whole-of- Government' approach.
- **Need for a Mega Plan:** To ensure food security of a billion plus population, a robust network of food grain storage facilities becomes essential.
- Implementing Agencies: National Cooperative Development Corporation, with the support of NABARD, NABARD Consultancy Services, the Central Warehousing Corporation, FCI, etc..

Benefits

- Reduction in transportation costs for farmers: It will enable them to maximise their profits.
- Choice for farmers: Farmers can sell their produce depending on the market conditions and not be forced into distress sale.
- Computerised real-time monitoring systems
- A more stable and consistent supply of food grains across the country: It will reduce our dependence on imports.
- Numerous employment opportunities in rural areas: The construction of godowns and the subsequent management and maintenance of these facilities will generate jobs.
- Empowers PACS, which play a significant role in the agricultural and rural landscape.
- Enhances the economic viability of PACS and contributes to the growth of the Indian agricultural sector.

Challenges

- **Conflict with FPOS:** Farmer Producer Organisation (FPOS) addresses the well-recognised limitations of cooperative societies & cover all the blocks of the country & are also involved in post-harvest handling of the produce that may come in conflict with the agriculture cooperatives.
- **Agri-Cooperatives:** Agriculture cooperatives have been given financial responsibilities and storage infrastructure implementation. This decision is unclear, especially since FPOs have better governance as businesses.
- **Infrastructure Management and Maintenance:** It is easy to create infrastructure, but managing & maintaining it is a bigger challenge. In India, capital maintenance expenditure is rarely incorporated into annual budgets.
- **Food Quality Management:** Often the poor quality grains are distributed under PDS, due to low quality storage infrastructure with primitive technologies (FCI godowns) and long spans of storage.
- **Multiplicity of institutions with cross-cutting objectives** is likely to dilute their effectiveness.
- Policies formulated for small and marginal farmers often end up **serving the interest of medium and large farmers only.**

Way Forward

- **Implementation in Public-Private Partnership mode:** Implementing it through Farmers Producer Organisations seems to be a better option.
- **Modernisation of the existing storage infrastructure:** Storage facilities for not only food grains but also other perishable goods like fruits, vegetables, milk, and meat need to be modernised.
- **Adequate storage facilities** for horticultural crops.

One District One Product

The PMFME scheme with its flagship intervention through 'One District One Product (ODOP)' helps in imparting the benefits of scale in managing inputs, providing common services, and marketing/promoting the local products in the food processing sector.

Objectives of the PMFME scheme through ODOP:

- improved access to financial assistance to micro food processing entrepreneurs for technological upgradation;
- capacity building through skill training, enhanced technical knowledge, and hand holding & anchoring services;
- support to Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOS), Self-Help Groups (SHGs) and Cooperatives;
- enabling the existing informal entities into formal registration as 'agri-based business enterprises'.
- The Government of India approved 137 unique products in 713 districts of 35 States and UTs.

ODOP Prospects and Benefits

- Local and community development like in-situ employment, empowering rural women and youth, nurturing the sustainable livelihoods, thus improved standard of living;
- Promoting and preserving the local best practices/ micro-enterprises, thereby creating the local ecosystems of self-reliance;

- Skilling, upskilling. reskilling and training of local talent to enable localised entrepreneurship and region-specific innovations; and
- Local to global approach thereby enhancing exports/foreign exchange earnings to nation, thus boosting the inclusive and integrated development, which includes agri-based MSME development and therefore contributing to the 'Aatmanirbhar Bharat' movement.

Entrepreneurial Opportunities in Food Storage Infrastructure

India's food industry is one of the biggest in the world in terms of their contribution to the country's manufacturing, export, growth, and consumption potentialities. The rising demand for processed food could be a great potential opportunity for the country's farmers. Opportunities abound in terms of increased production, greater demand for raw material for value-added products, diversification from grain- based crops to horticulture, and production of high-value process-able varieties, all tend to boost the farmers' income, especially small and marginal farmers.

Entrepreneurial Possibilities in Food Storage Infrastructure

Agri Supply chains involve:

- **Production:** Inputs such as seed, feed, and harvesting services and equipment;
- **Processing:** Activities such as washing, drying and freezing food;
- **Aggregation and Distribution:** Things such as marketing cooperatives, storage facilities, brokerage services, logistics management, and delivery trucks;
- **Retailing:** All those who sell or serve food to consumers, from restaurants, grocery stores and hospitals, to schools, caterers, and fast-food outlets etc
- **Marketing:** The effort that goes into promoting products such as advertising, campaigns, packaging Burmaterials, branding and so on; and
- **Capital:** Finance, natural capital (i.e. land, water and other ecological resources), human capital, and social capital.

Schemes and programmes to promote entrepreneurship in food storage infrastructure development

- **Mega Food Parks:** To link agricultural production to markets by using a cluster approach, implemented by an SPV. It supports the creation of infrastructure for setting up modern food processing units in the park.
- **Cold chain, Value Addition & Preservation Infrastructure:** To provide integrated cold chain and preservation infrastructure facilities along the entire supply chain of food processing. Until March 2019, 299 approved cold chain projects were under various stages of implementation.
- **Creation of Food Processing and Preservation Capacities:** To create and modernise processing and preservation capacities by increasing the level of processing and value addition, leading to a reduction in wastage.
- **Creation of Backward and Forward Linkages:** To provide effective and seamless backward and forward integration in the processed food industry. Financial assistance is provided for setting up primary processing centres, collection centres, and modern retail outlets.
- Food Safety and Quality Assurance Infrastructure: To make India's food and agro-processing sector have a competitive edge in the market by creating infrastructure for safety and quality assurance services.
- Agro Processing Cluster: Cluster approach based development of modern infrastructure and common facilities to encourage a group of entrepreneurs to set up food processing units.
- PM Formalisation of Micro Food Processing Enterprises (PMFME): Providing financial, technical, and business support for the upgradation of existing micro food processing enterprises.
- Common Facility Centres (CFCs) under MSE- CD: Under cluster development programme of Ministry of MSME, there is provision of establishing Export Promotion Facilities for FPO such as for processing, storage (cold chains), Pack Houses, testing, and packaging.
- Mission for Integrated Horticulture (MIDH): Besides Cold Storage, financial assistance is also provided for setting up of Pre-cooling Unit, Cold Room, Pack Houses, Integrated Pack House, Preservation unit, Reefer Transport, Ripening Chamber, etc.

13- EDITORIALS

All India Survey of Higher Education (AISHE) 2021–22

- The report of the All India Survey of Higher Education (AISHE) 2021–22, made public on January 25, found that 4.33 crore students are currently enrolled in a higher educational institute, up from 4.14 crore in 2020-21, and 3.42 crore in 2014-15.
- The survey captures total student enrolment in eight different levels: undergraduate, postgraduate, PhD, MPhil, diploma, PG diploma, certificate, and integrated programmes.
- In all, 10,576 standalone institutions, 42,825 colleges, and 1,162 universities/ university level institutions responded to the survey.

Key takeaways

1. **Female enrolment greater than male**
   - **Increase in the number of women enrolled in higher educational institutes:** From 1.5 crore women enrolled in 2014-15, there has been a jump of 32% to 2.07 crores enrolled in 2021-22.
   - **High proportion of women enrolled in higher education as compared to men:** Of the 91 lakh more students to have joined higher educational institutes in 2021-22 (when compared to 2014-15), 55% were women (highest at the postgraduate level, where 55.4% students are female).
2. **GER and Gender Parity**
   - **Gross Enrollment Ratio:** Indicates how many students are part of the higher education system in a given population. The estimated GER for the age group 18-23 years in India is 28.4.
   - **State-wise data:** Chandigarh, at 64.8%, boasts of the highest GER, followed by Puducherry at 61.5%, Delhi at 49%, and Tamil Nadu at 47%.
   - **Gender Parity Index (GPI):** It shows the ratio of the female GER to male GER. A GPI of 1 indicates parity between the two genders; any number between 0 and 1 shows a disparity in favour of males, whereas a GPI greater than 1 indicates a disparity in favour of females.
   - **GER in favour of women:** At the all-India level, GPI is 1.01, and for SC and ST categories, the GPI is 1.01 and 0.98 respectively.
3. **Arts over the sciences in graduation, PG**
   - **Higher enrollment in arts:** Bachelor of Arts (BA) programme has the highest enrolment, with 1.13 crore students — 34.2% of total undergraduate enrolment across India.
   - **At undergraduate level:** In 2021-22, the enrollment is highest in Arts (34.2%), followed by science (14.8%), commerce (13.3%) and engineering and technology (11.8%). BA(Hons) accounts for 20.4 lakh (6.2%).
   - **Social science stream has the highest number of PG students:** Master of Arts (MA) programme has the highest enrolment, with 20.9 lakh students, which is 40.7% of total postgraduate enrolment
   - **PhD level:** Social sciences stood at third spot after engineering and science.
4. **Primacy of government institutions**
   - **Majority of admissions in govt universities:** 73.7% of all students attend government universities, which make up only 58.6% of all universities.
   - **State public universities have the largest share of enrollment:** They account for around 31% of the total enrollment for universities.
5. **Demographics of students graduating**
   - **Category-wise data:** In 2021-22, around 35% of the students belong to Other Backward Classes (OBC), 13% are from Scheduled Caste (SC) community and 5.7% of the graduates are from Scheduled Tribe (ST) community.

The Public Examinations (Prevention of Unfair Means) Bill, 2024

The Public Examinations (Prevention of Unfair Means) Bill, 2024, was introduced in Lok Sabha recently. The Bill aims to prevent “unfair means” in order to “bring greater transparency, fairness and credibility to the public examinations system”.

Section 3 of the Bill

- **Explains the meaning of use of "unfair means" in an examination:** It lists at least 15 actions that amount to using unfair means in public examinations "for monetary or wrongful gain".
- **These acts include:**
  - **leakage of question paper** or answer key or part thereof and colluding in such leakage;
  - **accessing or taking possession of question paper** or an Optical Mark Recognition response sheet without authority;
  - **tampering with answer sheets** including Optical Mark Recognition response sheets;
  - **providing solutions to one or more questions** by any unauthorised person during a public examination,
  - **directly or indirectly assisting the candidate** in a public examination
  - **tampering with any document necessary for short-listing of candidates** or finalising the merit or rank of a candidate;
  - **tampering with the computer network** or a computer resource or a computer system;
  - **creation of fake website** and conduct of fake examination, issuance of fake admit cards or offer letters to cheat or for monetary gain as illegal acts

Which exams are "public examinations" as defined in the Bill?

- **Defined under Section 2(k):** A "public examination" is any examination conducted by a "public examination authority" listed in the Schedule of the Bill, or any "such other authority as may be notified by the Central Government".
- **Five public examination authorities listed:**
  - **Union Public Service Commission (UPSC),** which conducts the Civil Services Examination, Combined Defence Services Examinations, Combined Medical Services Examination, Engineering Services Examination, etc.;
  - **Staff Selection Commission (SSC)**, which recruits for Group C (non-technical) and Group B (non-gazetted) jobs in the central government;
  - **Railway Recruitment Boards (RRBs)**, which recruit Groups C and D staff in the Indian Railways;
  - **Institute of Banking Personnel Selection (IBPS),** which hires at all levels for nationalised banks and regional rural banks (RRBs);
  - **National Testing Agency (NTA)**, which conducts the JEE (Main), NEET-UG, UGC-NET, the Common University Entrance Test (CUET), etc.
- **Other entities coming under the purview of the law:** All Ministries or Departments of the Central Government and their attached and subordinate offices for recruitment of staff.
- **Power to the govt:** The central government can add new authorities in the schedule through a notification as and when required.

Penal provisions in the proposed law for violations

- **Section 9:** All offences shall be cognizable, non-bailable, and non-compoundable which means that an arrest can be made without a warrant and bail will not be a matter of right; rather, a magistrate will determine whether the accused is fit to be released on bail.
- **Non-compoundable offence:** The one in which the case cannot be withdrawn by the complainant even when the complainant and the accused have reached a compromise, and a trial must necessarily follow.
- **Punishment for any person or persons resorting to unfair means and offences:** Three to five years in prison, and a fine up to Rs 10 lakh.
- **Section 10(1):** If the convict fails to pay the fine, an additional punishment of imprisonment shall be imposed.
- **Section 10(2):** A service provider who is engaged to provide support of any computer resource or any material, by whatever name it may be called" for the conduct of the examination can be fined up to Rs 1 crore, along with other penalties.
- **Organised crime:** Defined as unlawful activity by a group of persons colluding in a conspiracy to pursue or promote a shared interest for wrongful gain in respect of a public examination.

- **Section 11(1):** The punishment for organised crime will be imprisonment for a term not less than five years but which may extend to ten years and a fine which shall not be less than one crore rupees.

Uttarakhand civil code

The Uttarakhand government tabled the Uniform Civil Code (UCC) 2024 Bill in the Assembly recently. It makes important changes in areas such as marriage, divorce, and succession.

What changes for Muslims

- **Change in minimum age of marriage:** The minimum age of marriage was brought to 18 and 21 for Muslim women and men, in line with the Hindu Marriage Act, 1955 and the Special Marriage Act, 1954.
- **Reason for the change:** The Muslim law allows puberty (~ 13 years) as the age of marriage for girls. Since POCSO criminalised sexual activity between minors & Prevention of Child Marriage Act prohibited marriage between minors, the Muslim age of marriage was at odds with these laws.
- **On Succession:** Currently, Muslims may bequeath up to ⅓ rd of their property to anyone through a will. The remaining or the entire property, when there is no will, must then be divided in the manner provided in the Quran and the Hadith. However, under the proposed UCC, in situations where the deceased person leaves a will behind, there is no restriction on how much of their property they can bequeath, or to whom.
- **Inspiration from Indian Succession Act, 1925:** In cases of intestate succession, the property will pass on to Class-1 heirs(children, widow and parents etc). In their absence, the property will pass on to Class-2 heirs (siblings, nieces, nephews and grandparents). If no such heir exists, anyone most closely related to the deceased person may receive the property.
- **Practices of bigamy or polygamy outlawed:** This is done by placing a condition for marriage under Section 4 of the Bill that neither party can have a living spouse at the time of their marriage.
- **Criminalises certain Muslim marriage practices:** For eg, Iddat and Nikah Halala, without explicitly naming them. Anyone convicted can be punished with imprisonment up to three years and also be liable to fine of Rs 1 lakh.

What changes for Hindus

- **Distinction under Hindu law between ancestral and self-acquired property ended:** Coparcenary rights under the Hindu Succession Act do not find mention in the UCC Bill.
- **Elevation of both mother and father as Class I heirs in case of intestate succession:** Currently under Hindu law, the Class I legal heirs (children, widow and mother and other lineal descendants of the deceased) does not include the father (he is a Class II heir). Now, Class I heirs would include children, widows, and both parents.

Coparcenary rights: In a joint Hindu family governed by the Mitakshara school of law, a son/daughter; grandson/granddaughter; great-grandson/ great-granddaughter are deemed joint owners of the property from the time of their birth. Each of them is a coparcener. It means that the father cannot sell or will away the joint family property on his own accord if his descendants are alive. The ancestral property is held jointly across four generations. However, in the case of self-acquired property, the father is free to dispose of it.

Other provisions in the code

On live-in relationships	• Definition: A relationship in the "nature of marriage" between a man and a woman cohabiting in a shared household, and requires compulsory registration of live-in relationships through a "statement of live-in relationship". • Termination: A live-in relationship may be terminated by either of the parties to the live-in relationship by submitting a "statement of termination". • Penal provisions: Failure to register a live-in relationship within one month of entering into the relationship has been criminalised, with punishment up to three months in jail or fine not exceeding Rs 10,000. • Registration: The Registrar may require the parties to submit the statement of live-in relationship, through a notice, on his/ her own motion or on a complaint filed by a third party.

Children born out of wedlock	• Abolishment of the concept of "illegitimate children". • Current provision: Parent-child relations are governed by both secular and personal laws on guardianship, which discriminate against children born out of wedlock by deeming them illegitimate and not granting them rights at par with children born within wedlock. The concept of an "illegitimate" child continues to prevail. • New provision: The new UCC treats children born in void and voidable marriages, as well as children born in live-in relationships, as legitimate. • Lacunae: It fails to address the discrimination faced by mothers under guardianship laws that treat only fathers as legal guardians of the child, thus vesting in them the power to take decisions in relation to the child, and mothers as custodians of the child, thereby reducing them to caretakers.

Where the code lags

- **Leaves out most LGBT persons from its ambit:** It is a missed opportunity to follow through on the SC's decision in the marriage equality matter, wherein it had clarified that state legislatures are competent to ensure marriage equality for all.
- **On conjugal rights:** Restitution of conjugal rights or resumption of cohabitation on a court order, has been retained as a matrimonial remedy under the Code.
- **Improper grounds of divorce:** Irretrievable breakdown of marriage has not been included as a ground for divorce despite being recognised in several Supreme Court judgments.
- **Division of the matrimonial estate:** It still is governed by court discretion based on separation of matrimonial property to the extent it is not jointly owned, although pre-nuptial agreements have received a nod, and would need to be considered by a court in deciding division of property.

Criminalised provisions in the Code

- **Non-registration** of live-in relationships.
- **Child marriage** and marrying within prohibited degrees of relationship.
- **Dissolution of marriage through modes other than the judicial mode** of divorce prescribed under the Code.
- **Compelling, abetting, or inducing any person** to observe any condition for remarrying (imprisonment up to three years).

The new rule on surrogacy

The Centre recently amended the surrogacy Rules to allow couples to use donor eggs or donor sperm for surrogacy. This overturned a previous amendment made in March 2023 that banned the use of donor gametes.

About the new amendments

- **Conditions for allowing surrogacy:** If District Medical Board certifies that if the husband or wife (the intending couple) suffers from a medical condition necessitating use of donor gamete, then surrogacy is allowed.
- **Provision for a divorced/ widowed woman:** If a divorced or widowed woman opts for surrogacy, she must use self-eggs and donor sperm to avail surrogacy procedure.

Implications of this amendment

- **It will keep surrogacy open to older women** as well as those who cannot produce eggs because of certain medical conditions.
- **The women who opt for surrogacy are likely to be older**, having tried other methods of getting pregnant before considering surrogacy due to which some of them would need a donor egg.
- **Surrogacy with donor egg will be required only for women who do not have a uterus** or have conditions that affect the functioning of the uterus along with certain conditions affecting their ability to produce eggs.

Contentions with surrogacy for single women

- **Allows access to surrogacy only to 2 categories of single women** - widowed or divorced: Even in these cases, the regulations stipulate that the woman's own eggs have to be used.
- **Question on the association of marital status** with eligibility for surrogacy
- **Issue on the provision mandating the use of the mother's own eggs**, stating that at an older age, the use of donor eggs are recommended.
- **Restriction on access to surrogacy for single persons**, live-in couples, and LGBTQ couples.

In general, for which categories of women is surrogacy intended?

- Women who have a **missing or abnormal uterus**
- Women who have had the **uterus surgically removed** due to a medical condition
- It can also be availed by women who have failed to **conceive after multiple rounds of IVF**
- **Women living with conditions** that make it impossible for them to carry the pregnancy to term, or which make a pregnancy life-threatening.
- **Women who have a thin endometrial layer** (thinner than 8 mm)

Complications of surrogacy

- **Child may inherit the immune system of the surrogate** and not receive breast milk during the initial months.
- **The womb milieu** — nutrition and hormones of the surrogate — determines the long term health of the child.

Key Provisions of the Surrogacy (Regulation) Act, 2021

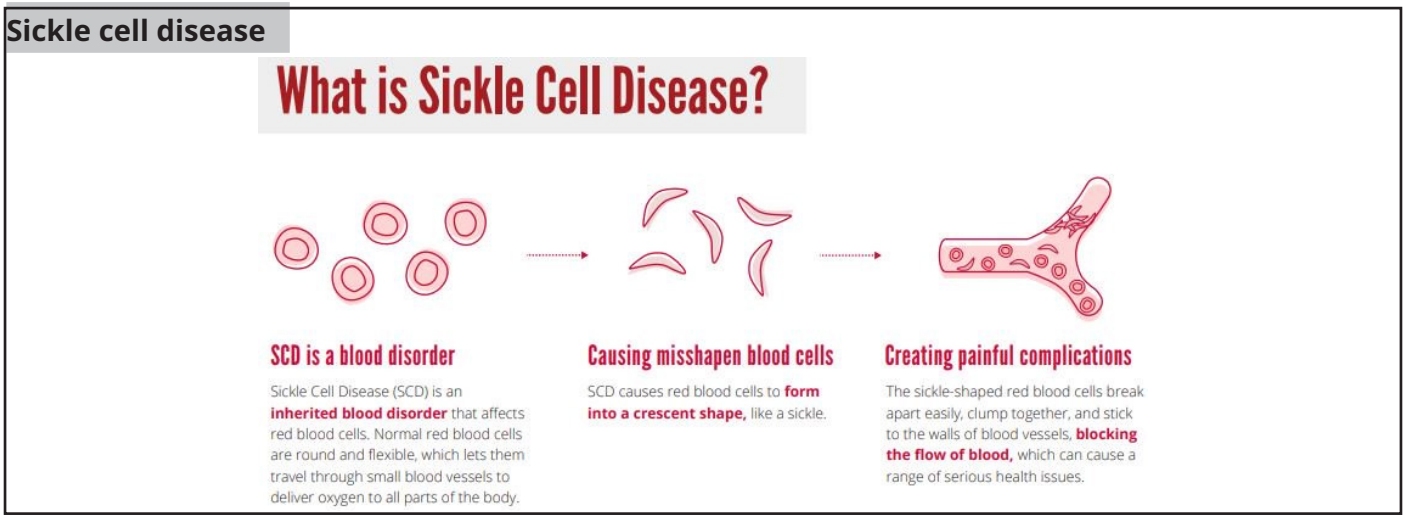
- **Prohibition of commercial surrogacy:** It only allows altruistic surrogacy.
- **The Act permits surrogacy when it is:**
  - for intending couples who suffer from proven infertility;
  - altruistic;
  - not for commercial purposes;
  - not for producing children for sale, prostitution or other forms of exploitation; and
  - for any other condition or disease specified through regulations.
- **Eligibility Criteria for Surrogate Mother:**
  - Close relative of the intending couple;
  - An ever-married woman having a child of her own;
  - 25 to 35 years old;
  - Not have been a surrogate mother earlier; and
  - Have a certificate of medical and psychological fitness.
  - Cannot provide her own gametes for surrogacy.
- **National and State Surrogacy Boards:** Constituted by the central and state governments.
- **Offences & Penalties: For offences like:**
  - undertaking or advertising commercial surrogacy;
  - exploiting the surrogate mother;
  - selling or importing human embryo or gametes for surrogacy, and
  - Abandoning, exploiting or disowning a surrogate child/
- **Penal charges:** Penalty of up to 10 years and a fine of up to 10 lakh rupees.

CRISPR/Cas 9 Genome Editing Technology

With the first gene editing technology securing approval for the treatment of sickle cell anaemia and beta-thalassemia, we transcend into a new revolutionary phase. The possibilities are endless.

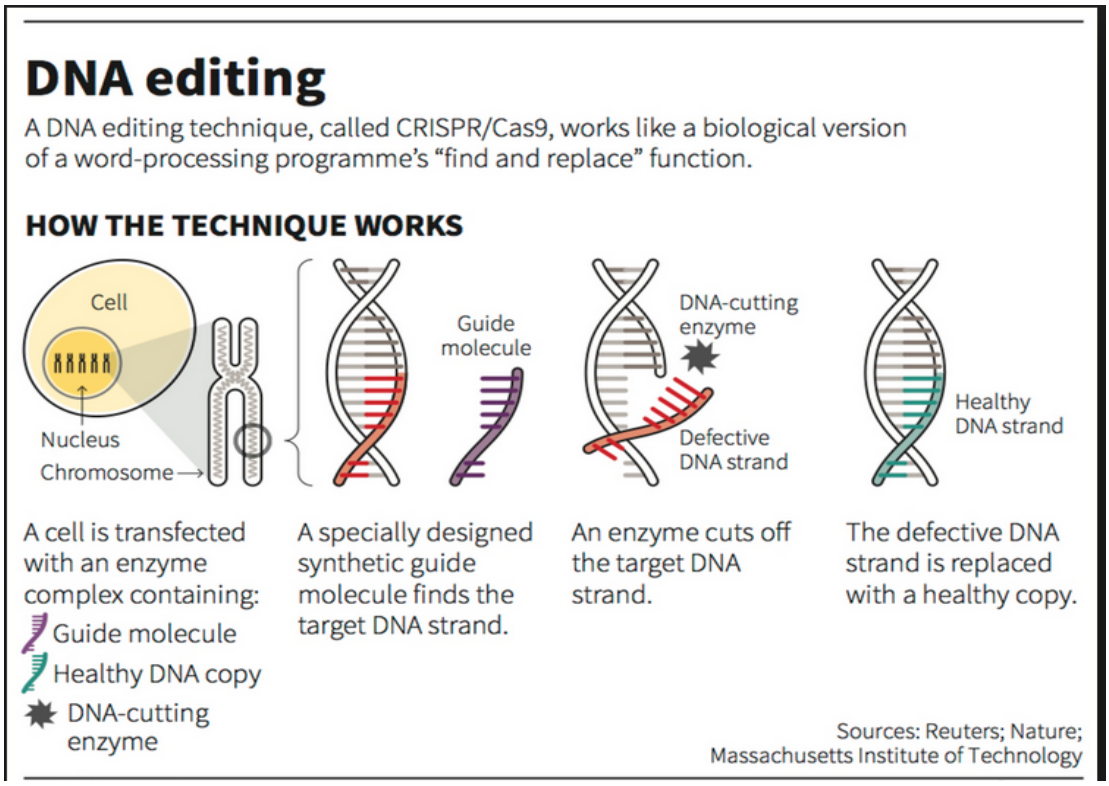
Casgevy and Lyfgenia, the two cell-based gene therapies approved by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for sickle cell anaemia treatment and beta-thalassemia utilise the Nobel-winning CRISPR/Cas 9 genome editing technology.

Sickle cell disease



Vertex/CRISPR gene therapy

- **About:** It uses the breakthrough gene editing technology that won its inventors the Nobel Prize in 2020.



Casgevy

- **About:** A gene therapy that utilises the gene-editing tool CRISPR.
- **Mechanism:** The process works by taking the patient's bone marrow stem cells and editing them to express the foetal version of haemoglobin before transplanting these edited stem cells back into the patient.
    - Foetal haemoglobin is the version expressed in utero, before birth.
    - In most people, expression of the foetal version is turned down and the non-fetal version is turned on when they are a baby, although there is still usually a very small amount of foetal haemoglobin expressed.
    - Casgevy edits this by turning up the expression of the foetal version.
- **Significance:** The functional haemoglobin produced from this version of the gene compensates for the non-functional haemoglobin that the non-fetal version of the gene is producing.
- **Benefit:** The edited stem cells are the patient's own cells, just slightly edited, and as such there is no risk of rejection.
- **Promising results:** The results have the potential to be life-long.

Lyfgenia

- **About:** A cell-based gene therapy.
- **Mechanism:**
    - Lyfgenia uses a lentiviral vector (gene delivery vehicle) for genetic modification and is approved for the treatment of patients 12 years of age and older with sickle cell disease and a history of vaso-occlusive events.
    - With Lyfgenia, the patient's blood stem cells are genetically modified to produce HbAT87Q, a gene-therapy derived haemoglobin that functions similarly to haemoglobin A, which is the normal adult haemoglobin produced in persons not affected by sickle cell disease.
    - Red blood cells containing HbAT87Q have a lower risk of sickling and occluding blood flow.
    - These modified stem cells are then delivered to the patient.

14- TERMS IN NEWS

Zero Markup Forex Card

- A Zero Markup Forex Card is a credit or debit card that does not charge any foreign exchange markup fee when used for transactions in foreign currency. Essentially, this means that you can make purchases or withdraw cash in a foreign country without paying any additional fees for currency conversion. These cards are particularly beneficial for international travelers, as they simplify overseas transactions and help save money by eliminating hidden charges associated with currency exchange.

NATO's Article 5

- Article 5 is the cornerstone of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). It states that an attack on one member of NATO is an attack on all of its members. Despite its importance, NATO has only invoked Article 5 once in its history—in response to the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. If any NATO ally is the victim of an armed attack, every other member will consider it an attack against all and take necessary actions to assist the ally under attack.

Windfall Tax

- A windfall tax is a higher tax levied by the Indian government on specific industries when they experience unexpected and above-average profits. It is imposed when there is a dramatic and unanticipated increase in profits due to external events, such as geopolitical situations or market dynamics. For instance, during the recent Russia-Ukraine war, oil and gas industries benefited from a sudden rise in their profit, leading to the imposition of a windfall tax on these industries.

Sora

- OpenAI'sSora is an AI model that can create realistic and imaginative scenes from text instructions1. It can generate videos up to a minute long while maintaining visual quality and adherence to the user's prompt1. The goal of Sora is to understand and simulate the physical world in motion, which can help people solve problems that require real-world interaction1.
- As of February 2024, Sora is not yet available to the public.

Quasars

- Quasars(short for quasi-stellar object, or QSO) are amongst the brightest objects in space, powered by gases falling into a supermassive black hole at the center of a distant galaxy. As the gases spiral into the black hole, they heat up and emit a lot of light. Hence this makes quasars some of the brightest and most distant objects we can see in the universe. They help astronomers learn about the early universe and the life cycles of galaxies.

CERT-In

- CERT-In is the National Incident Response Centre for major computer security incidents in India. It is also known as the Indian Computer Emergency Response Team. Its primary role is to raise security awareness among the Indian cyber community and to provide technical assistance and advice to help them recover from computer security incidents. CERT-In also identifies trends in intruder activity, works with other similar institutions to resolve major security issues, and disseminates information to the Indian cyber community. It is established by and runs under the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology, Government of India.

MSP (Minimum Support Price)

- The Minimum Support Price (MSP) is a pivotal policy intervention in India designed to guarantee farmers a fair price for their crops by shielding them from market volatility and ensuring income stability. The MSP is determined by the Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices (CACP) while keeping factors such as production costs, market trends, and regional disparities in mind.

- The MSP serves as a safety net, preventing distress sales during periods of surplus production. Keeping CACP recommendations in consideration the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA), chaired by the Prime Minister, finalizes MSP levels. In essence, MSP is instrumental in safeguarding farmers' economic interests and promoting agricultural sustainability, providing support to farmers nationwide.

Payment Gateway

- A payment gateway is an online service that allows businesses and individuals to accept payments from customers through their websites or mobile applications. It acts as an intermediary between a merchant and the financial institution processing the payment. Essentially, a payment gateway enables merchants to accept electronic payments such as credit or debit cards from online shoppers for their purchases of products or services. Examples - PhonePe, Paytm, Razorpay.

Moonlighting

- Moonlighting refers to the act of working at an extra job, especially without informing your primary employer. For example, if you have a full-time job but also take on part-time work elsewhere, that would be considered moonlighting. It's essential to be aware of any company policies regarding moonlighting to avoid potential conflicts.

Business Payment Service Provider (BPSP)

- A Business Payment Service Provider (BPSP) acts as a middleman between businesses and various financial institutions, making it easy to accept and process online payments. They handle everything from securing credit/debit card transactions and UPI payments to preventing fraud and managing refunds. Think of them as the tech backbone that powers seamless online payments for your company. Popular PSPs in India include Razorpay, Paytm, CCAvenue, Instamojo, and Cashfree Payments. They allow you to accept payments effortlessly on your website or app, giving customers a smooth checkout experience and ultimately boosting your sales.

Mutual funds

- Mutual funds are like a basket of stocks, bonds, or other investments professionally managed for you. Instead of buying individual stocks yourself, you pool your money with other investors in the fund. A professional fund manager then uses that combined money to invest in a variety of assets, aiming to grow your investment over time. Mutual funds offer a way to diversify your portfolio (spreading your money across different investments) with less hassle and often lower fees than buying individual stocks directly.

Makha Bucha

- A religious celebration commemorating Lord Buddha's teaching to his disciples. Celebrated on the full moon day of the third lunar month according to the traditional lunar calendar.

Rhodamine-B

- A Water-soluble chemical compound that is commonly used in textile, paper, leather, and paint industries as a colouring agent. Its use in food is prohibited under the Food Safety Standards Act, 2006, due to its toxicity as consumption of food containing Rhodamine-B can damage brain tissue, affecting motor functioning.

Electoral Bonds (EBs)

- Interest-free bearer bonds or money instruments purchasable from authorised SBI branches available in Rs 1,000, Rs 10,000, Rs 1 lakh, Rs 10 lakh, and Rs 1 crore denominations. Introduced by the Centre in 2018, EBS allowed individuals and corporations to anonymously fund political parties by purchasing electoral bonds from the State Bank of India.

Nazool land

- It is owned by the government but most often not directly administered as state property. The state generally allots such land to any entity on lease for a fixed period, generally between 15 and 99 years. One can approach the authority to renew the lease by submitting a written application to the Revenue Department of the local development authority. The government is free to either renew the lease or cancel it — taking back Nazool land.

Adverse Possession

- A legal concept that allows a person who has unlawfully occupied someone else's land for a certain period of time to claim legal ownership of that land. A negative and consequential right that arises due to the negligence of the true owner.

G33

- A Coalition of developing and least-developed countries established prior to the 2003 Cancun ministerial conference during the Doha Round of WTO negotiations. It Advocates for defensive concerns regarding agriculture in WTO negotiations & seeks to limit the degree of market opening required of developing countries.

Digital Health

- It is defined as the use of technology, such as mobile devices, software applications, and other digital tools, to improve health and healthcare delivery. Its components are telemedicine, electronic health records, wearable devices, health information exchange, and more.
- Ex: India's CoWIN, UNICEF's RapidPro and FamilyConnect etc.

Mission Aspides

- A European Union (EU) naval mission to protect cargo ships in the Red Sea from attacks from Yemen's Houthi rebels. It will send European warships and airborne early warning systems to the Red Sea, Gulf of Aden and surrounding waters.

DAP (di-ammonium phosphate)

- The second most commonly used fertilisers in India after urea which is high in phosphorus (P) that stimulates root establishment and development — without which plants cannot grow to their normal size, or will take too long to mature.

Non-fungible tokens (NFTs)

- Blockchain-based tokens that each represent a unique asset like a piece of art, digital content, or media. An NFT can be thought of as an irrevocable digital certificate of ownership and authenticity for a given asset, whether digital or physical.

Genie: Generative Interactive Environments

- A foundation world model that is trained on videos sourced from the Internet which can generate an endless variety of playable (action-controllable) worlds from synthetic images, photographs, and even sketches. First generative interactive environment trained in an unsupervised manner from unlabelled internet videos.

Large Language Models (LLMs)

- A type of artificial intelligence (AI) program that can recognize and generate text, among other tasks. It is fed enough examples to be able to recognize and interpret human language or other types of complex data.

Coronal Mass Ejections (CMEs)

- Large expulsions of plasma and magnetic field from the sun's atmosphere - the corona, that propagate outward into interplanetary space. The sun releases a colossal amount of material, including electrons, protons, and heavier ions, as well as magnetic fields.

Hanooman

- A series of large language models (LLMs) designed to respond in 11 Indian languages initially, with plans to expand to over 20 languages. Its focus areas include healthcare, governance, financial services, and education. It is not limited to chatbot functionality; can generate text, speech, videos, and more in multiple Indian languages.

Smishing:

- A form of phishing targeting individuals via text messages or SMS. It is similar to phishing emails, it aims to extract personal info or install malware & is executed through various tactics:

Magnetoelectric multiferroics

- Magnetoelectric multiferroics are a special class of materials popular among researchers for their rarity and unique properties. These materials can exhibit both magnetism and ferroelectricity simultaneously. These dual materials are particularly attractive because the materials usually possess magnetism

or ferroelectricity. Therefore it is rare and valuable to achieve both of these properties in a single material especially for advanced technology applications such as spintronics, electronic memory devices, and other electronic components such as actuators and switches.

Artificial Neural Networks

- A computer system that mimics the information processing of the human brain & are self-learning, they perform better when there is more data available.
- **Applications:** Regression problems, pattern recognition, recommendation systems, and weather forecasting.

Deep tech

- Deep tech or deep technology startups refers to a class of businesses that develop new products based on physical engineering innovations or scientific discoveries and advances. Its aim is to address complex global challenges like climate change, hunger, epidemics, energy access, mobility, physical and digital infrastructure, and cyber security.

Forever Chemicals

- These are man-made chemicals used to make nonstick cookware, water-repellent clothing, stain-resistant clothing, cosmetics, fire extinguishers, and many other products that resist grease, water, and oil. Environment, rainwater And because of their tendency to remain in the soil for a long time, they are called forever chemicals.

Nanoplastics

- Nanoplastics are synthetic polymers whose dimensions range from 1 nm to 1 micron. They are released directly into the environment or obtained from the decomposition of plastics in the environment. Nanoplastics are widely found in environmental samples and the food chain, therefore, their potential toxic effects have been widely explored.

Horse-trading

- An unethical practice where a political party lures the member of its rival political party to ditch their party and join the other party so that they get the majority in the house and form the government. When a party poaches members from other parties to form a government, then the term horse trading can be used.

Brumation

- A period of dormancy or slowed activity in reptiles, similar to hibernation in mammals during colder months when temperatures drop and food becomes scarce to conserve energy and survive adverse environmental conditions. Metabolism significantly slows, allowing them to go weeks or months without eating.

Carbon Sequestration

- Long-term storage of carbon in plants, soils, geologic formations, and the ocean occurring both naturally and as a result of anthropogenic activities and typically refers to the storage of carbon.

Anoxic Marine Basins

- An anoxic basin is a body of water without oxygen.Permanent anoxic basins form when there is a strong layering of the water column created in a cup-like formation on the ocean floor.The layering is caused by density differences due to salt concentration or temperature.Once stratification occurs, circulation with the rest of the ocean is minimised, and microorganisms consume the oxygen in the water. In most anoxic basins, the water is extremely stagnant and can have mixing times of many thousand years.

15- MODEL TEST PAPER

1. Which is the first country in Europe to launch India's Unified Payment Interface (UPI) system?
   (A) Germany (B) France
   (C) Italy (D) Spain
2. Who is the 119th country to join the International Solar Alliance (ISA)?
   (A) Malta (B) Eritrea
   (C) Kenya (D) Nigeria
3. Which has become the first state in the country to pass the Uniform Civil Code (UCC) Bill?
   (A) Sikkim (B) Himachal Pradesh
   (C) Haryana (D) Uttarakhand
4. Using which article in the context of Chandigarh Mayor election, the Supreme Court gave complete justice for the first time by exercising prerogative power in the election related decision?
   (A) Article 131 (B) Article 137
   (C) Article 142 (D) Article 143
5. What is India's position in the world in terms of launching Initial Public Offering (IPO) in the stock exchange in the year 2023?
   (A) first (B) Second
   (C) Fourth (D) Third
6. What is the name of "One Nation One Student" ID launched by the Central Government under the National Education Policy 2020?
   (A) 'Aadhaar' (B) 'PAARTH'
   (C) 'APAAR' (D) 'ODOS'
7. Consider the following statements with reference to 'PM Surya Ghar: Free Electricity Scheme'-
   A. This scheme was launched by the Central Government on 13 February 2024.
   B. Under this, 200 units of electricity will be provided free of cost every month.
   Select the correct statements -
   (A) Only A (B) Only B
   (C) Both A and B (D) Neither A nor B
8. How much maximum subsidy is there to be given under the Pradhan Mantri Surya Ghar – Free Electricity Scheme?
   (A) Rs 55,000 (B) Rs 38,000
   (C) Rs 78,000 (D) Rs 85,000
9. At present the number of Ramsar sites in India has increased to how much?
   (A) 75 (B) 78
   (C) 82 (D) 80
10. Which is the first state in the country to launch wireless EV charging infrastructure project for electric vehicles?
    (A) Kerala (B) Tamil Nadu
    (C) Karnataka (D) Odisha
11. Who launched INSAT-3DS satellite on 17 February 2024 for accurate weather information and forecasting of disasters?
    (A) GSLV-F14 (B) GSLV-F11
    (C) GSLV-F05 (D) GSLV-F15
12. Where will trains running on hydrogen fuel cell technology be manufactured in India?
    (A) Chennai (Tamil Nadu)
    (B) Bengaluru (Karnataka)
    (C) Thiruvananthapuram (Kerala)
    (D) Bharatpur (Rajasthan)
13. What is the name of the indigenous lab developed by the Indian National Ocean Information Services Center to predict tsunami signals in the sea?
    (A) WinIndia (B) Synopsis
    (C) Chinoy (D) Preinfo
14. Where will the country's first Astro Tourism Center be established to create awareness about space?
    (A) Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh
    (B) Cuttack, Odisha
    (C) Bengaluru, Karnataka
    (D) Sitapur, West Bengal
15. Where is the country's first defense cargo plane assembly plant being set up?
    (A) Bengaluru (Karnataka)
    (B) Ghaziabad (Uttar Pradesh)
    (C) Indore (Madhya Pradesh)
    (D) Vadodara (Gujarat)
16. India's first indigenously designed 155mm smart ammunition (shell) will be developed in collaboration with which organization?
    (A) IIT Madras (B) IIT Kanpur
    (C) IIT Delhi (D) IIT Roorkee
17. India's first private rocket launch pad has been developed by?
    (A) Skyroot Aerospace (B) Pixel
    (C) Agnikul Cosmos (D) Bellatrix Aerospace

18. Which is the first country in the world to land a commercial spacecraft on the South Pole of the Moon?
(A) China (B) Japan
(C) Russia (D) United States

19. With which company has Rajasthan Police signed an MoU to prevent online fraud?
(A) Amazon (B) Meesho
(C) Flipkart (D) India Mart

20. Where will the first Patent Information Center of Rajasthan be established?
(A) Jaipur (B) Quota
(C) Udaipur (D)Ajmer

21. How many stations have been selected from Rajasthan for redevelopment of railway stations under the Amrit Bharat Station Scheme of the Central Government?
(A) 21 (B) 33
(C) 50 (D) 15

22. Where was the world's first Om (Om) shaped temple inaugurated in Rajasthan?
(A) Osian (Jodhpur Rural)
(B) Nareli (Ajmer)
(C) Nathdwara (Rajsamand)
(D) Jadan (Pali)

23. Which of the following is not included in the context of recently elected Rajya Sabha MPs from Rajasthan?
(A) Sonia Gandhi (B) SatishPoonia
(C) Madan Rathod (D) ChunnilalGarasia

24. Consider the following statements in the context of Mukhyamantri Ayushman Arogya Yojana (MAA-Yojana):
1. This is the new name of Chief Minister Chiranjeevi Health Insurance Scheme
2. There is a provision for health insurance up to Rs 10 lakh.
3. 1806 packages for treatment have been included in this scheme.
(A) 1 and 2 (B) 2 and 3
(C) 1 and 3 (D) All are correct

25. Where will the gold mines be auctioned for the first time in Rajasthan?
(A) Rampur Agucha (Bhilwara)
(B) Bhukiya-Jagpura (Banswara)
(C) KhedaMundiyawas (Alwar)
(D) Rohil (Khandela, Sikar)

26. At which place will 'Center of Excellence for Sports' be established in Rajasthan for international level training and facilities?
(A) Jodhpur (B) Ajmer
(C) Udaipur (D) Jaipur

27. Which districts have been selected from Rajasthan in the first phase of PM Sarvodaya Yojana?
(A) Jaipur, Jodhpur, Barmer
(B) Jaisalmer, Jodhpur, Phalodi
(C) Jaipur, Jodhpur, Sikar
(D) Jaisalmer, Jodhpur Barmer

28. Who has been appointed as the 42nd Chief Justice of Rajasthan High Court?
(A) Pushpendra Singh Bhati
(B) Manindra Mohan Srivastava
(C) Vijay Bishnoi
(D) Arun Bhansali

29. How much amount of savings bonds has been made in the interim budget 2024-25 of Rajasthan under 'Lado Incentive Scheme' on the birth of a girl child in an eligible family?
(A) Rs 50,000 (B) Rs 1 lakh
(C) Rs 2 lakh (D) Rs 1.5 lakh

30. Which player has recently achieved India's first Olympic quota in sailing?
(A) Varsha Gautam (B) Dhruv Bhandari
(C) Farooq Tarapore (D) Vishnu Sarvanan

31. Which state secured the first position in the 6th Khelo India Youth Games 2023?
(A) Maharashtra (B) Kerala
(C) Tamil Nadu (D) Gujarat

32. Which team won the title of Under-19 Cricket World Cup 2024?
(A) India (B) England
(C) New Zealand (D) Australia

33. Which country stood first in the medal table in the World Aquatics Championship 2024?
(A) India (B) China
(C) Singapore (D) Australia

34. Who recently won the title of Chennai Open Tennis Tournament 2024?
(A) Saket Myneni
(B) Ramkumar Ramanathan
(C) Luca Nardi
(D) Sumit Nagal

35. Which Indian player won the gold medal in the Shooting World Cup 2024 held in Granada (Spain)?

(A) Devanshi Sharma (B) Lakshya
(C) Anvi Rathod (D) Abhinav Shaw

36. Which team recently won the title of Badminton Asia Team Championship 2024 for the first time?
(A) Japan (B) Thailand
(C) Sri Lanka (D) India

37. Who among the following is not among India's gold medal winners at the Para Badminton World Championship 2024?
(A) Pramod Bhagat (B) Sukant Kadam
(C) SuhasYathiraj (D) Krishna Nagar

38. Who will be honored with the 58th Jnanpith Award 2023?
(A) Jagadguru Rambhadracharya and Javed Akhtar
(B) Swami NischalanandaSaraswati and Nida Fazli
(C) Swami Sadanand Saraswati and Gulzar
(D) JagadguruRambhadracharya and Gulzar

39. Who among the following is not included in the list of recently announced Bharat Ratna awardees?
(A) Chaudhary Charan Singh
(B) M.S. Swaminathan
(C) P.V. Narasimha Rao
(D) Kanshi Ram

40. Who among the following is not included among the Indian winners of the prestigious 'Grammy Award 2024' in the field of music?
(A) Shankar Mahadevan (B) Zakir Hussain
(C) Selvaganesha (D) Kailash Kher

41. Who among the following is not included as full-time members in the 16th Finance Commission?
(A) Ajay Narayan Jha
(B) Soumya Kanti Ghosh
(C) Annie George Mathew
(D) Dr.NiranjanRajadhyaksha

42. Who among the following is not included among the 4 Indian astronauts selected for the Gaganyaan mission?
(A) Prashant Balakrishna Nair
(B) Atharva Venkatraman
(C) Angad Pratap
(D) Sudhanshu Shukla

43. Who has recently made the world record of spending the most time in space?
(A) Reyna Barnawi (B) Oleg Kononenko
(C) James Adamson (D) Bill Andres

44. Ahmed Awad bin Mubarak, who was in news recently, has become the new Prime Minister of which country?
(A) Libya (B) Sudan
(C) Yemen (D) Syria

45. Recently, Fali Sam Nariman, who was in news, is related to which field?
(A) Politics (B) Sports
(C) Judiciary (D) Literature

46. Which Indian-origin woman has been included in Time Magazine's Women Person of the Year 2024?
(A) Leena Nair (B) Kamala Harris
(C) Nikki Haley (D) Geeta Gopinath

47. Which is the first AIIMS in the country to start a transgender clinic?
(A) Rishikesh (B) Jodhpur
(C) Delhi (D) Bhopal

48. According to the report published in the World Co-operative Monitor, which has become the largest cooperative institution in the world on the basis of the ratio of turnover to GDP per capita?
(A) Aavin (B) Amul
(C) Kribhko (D) IFFCO

49. India's first tube rail tunnel will be established in which state?
(A) Gujarat (B) Madhya Pradesh
(C) Karnataka (D) Maharashtra

50. Where has India's first indigenous hydrogen fuel cell vessel been launched?
(A) Kakinada (Andhra Pradesh)
(B) Kolkata (West Bengal)
(C) Thoothukudi (Tamil Nadu)
(D) Kasaragod (Kerala)

February 2024 Answer Key									
1.	B	11.	A	21.	A	31.	A	41.	B
2.	A	12.	A	22.	D	32.	D	42.	B
3.	D	13.	B	23.	B	33.	B	43.	B
4.	C	14.	D	24.	D	34.	D	44.	C
5.	A	15.	D	25.	B	35.	A	45.	C
6.	C	16.	A	26.	D	36.	D	46.	A
7.	A	17.	C	27.	C	37.	B	47.	D
8.	C	18.	D	28.	B	38.	D	48.	D
9.	D	19.	B	29.	B	39.	D	49.	D
10.	A	20.	A	30.	D	40.	D	50.	C

RAS-2021 RESULT

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1st RANK



VIKRANT SHARMA

सम्यक् मार्गदर्शन=सर्वश्रेष्ठ परिणाम

सम्यक् ने पुन: रचा इतिहास, सम्यक् सितारों ने फहराया परचम

राजस्थान में पहली बार TOP 10 में 9 TOPPERS

650+ SELECTION



RANK 2 PRIYA BAJAJ



RANK 4 VISHWAJEET



RANK 5 BHARTI GUPTA



RANK 6 AKANKSHA DUBEY



RANK 7 KANCHAN CHOUDHARY



RANK 8 SHUBHAM SHARMA



RANK 9 NIDHI UDSARIA



RANK 10 SATYA NARAYAN

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