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**CURRENT AFFAIRS**

**JUNE 2023**

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## NATIONAL NEWS

### Cabinet Approves Introduction of the National Research Foundation Bill, 2023

- The Union Cabinet approved the introduction of National Research Foundation (NRF) Bill, 2023. This will pave the way to establish NRF that will seed, grow and promote Research and Development (R&D) and foster a culture of research and innovation throughout India's universities, colleges, research institutions, and R&D laboratories.
- The bill, after approval in the Parliament, will establish NRE, an apex body to provide high-level strategic direction of scientific research in the country as per recommendations of the National Education Policy (NEP), at a total estimated cost of ₹ 50,000 crores during upcoming five years (2023–28).
- The Department of Science and Technology (DST) will be the administrative Department of NRF which will be governed by a Governing Board consisting of eminent researchers and professionals across disciplines.
- The Prime Minister will be the ex-officio President of the Board and the Union Minister of Science & Technology & Union Minister of Education will be the ex-officio Vice-Presidents.
- NRF's functioning will be governed by an Executive Council chaired by the Principal Scientific Adviser to the Government of India.
- It will also repeal the Science and Engineering Research Board (SERB) established by an act of Parliament in 2008 and subsumes it into NRF which has an expanded mandate and covers activities over and above the activities of SERB.

### UP Launches 'Operation Conviction' for Cow Slaughter

- The Uttar Pradesh Police Department launched 'Operation Conviction' to combat criminals and mafias in Uttar Pradesh.
- This initiative will accelerate the prosecution of cases registered under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, and those involving cow slaughter, religious conversion, rape, and murder.
- It will ensure the immediate arrest of criminals, the collection of strong evidence against them, quality investigation, and effective representation of cases in courts so that they are punished in the shortest amount of time.

#### Key Points

|                        |                   |
|------------------------|-------------------|
| Uttar Pradesh CM       | – Yogi Adityanath |
| Uttar Pradesh Governor | – Anandiben Patel |
| Uttar Pradesh Capital  | – Lucknow         |

### Environment Ministry gives nod to 'Kalaignar Pen Monument'

- The Union Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC) has approved the Tamil Nadu state government's proposal to build the Kalaignar Pen Monument in Chennai's Marina Beach under the Coastal Regulation Zone (CRZ) regulation.
- MoEFCC will be helpful in the protection of ecosystem and wildlife
- The Pen Monument will be a tribute to the late chief minister, politician and Indian writer Muthuvel Karunanidhi for his legacy. The pen represents his talent and skills, which allowed him to achieve over Tamil heart and develop into a mass leader.
- The design of the monument draws on the shape of the Veena (the traditional Carnatic musical instrument) as the inspiration. The height of the monument will be 30 meters and cover an area of about 8,551 sq.m. It will include a pen pedestal, a lattice bridge above the beach, and a land pedestrian pathway extending over the sea.
- Chennai-based Hubert Enviro Care System has been appointed as the infrastructure and environmental consultant for the project. The Public Work Department will prepare the detailed project reports based on the Minister's approval.
- The clearance assumes significance as the state government is holding year-long celebrations to mark the 100th birth anniversary of M Karunanidhi born on June 3rd, 1924

#### Key Points

|  |                   |
|--|-------------------|
| Union Minister of Environment, Forest and Climate Change | - Bhupender Yadav |
| Tamil Nadu's CM  | - MK Stalin       |
| Tamil Nadu's Capital                                     | - Chennai         |
| Tamil Nadu's Governor                                    | - RN Ravi         |

### Government launches Nandi portal to grant NOC for veterinary drugs, vaccines

- Union Minister of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying Parshottam Rupala launched the Nandi portal, aimed at facilitating the process of granting “No Objection Certificates” (NOC) for veterinary drugs and vaccines.
- The Nandi portal has been developed by the Department of Animal Husbandry and Dairying (DAHD) in collaboration with the Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation (CDSCO). It will streamline the regulatory approval process for veterinary products and enhance transparency and efficiency in assessing and examining proposals for veterinary drugs and vaccines.
- It will seamlessly integrate with the SUGAM portal of the CDSCO, further simplifying the approval process for veterinary products. It will enable end-to-end coordination between departments, committees, subcommittees, and applicants, ensuring smooth and efficient operations.

### India's first hydrogen-powered train to run from Jind district in Haryana

- India will have its first indigenous hydrogen train running on the tracks between Jind and Sonapat.
- Hydrogen trains basically run on hydrogen fuel cells. These fuel cells combine oxygen and hydrogen to create electricity which drives the motors of the train. Also, hydrogen is a sustainable fuel. The first prototype of the train will have eight bogies.
- Hydrogen trains are environmentally beneficial as compared to traditional diesel trains as they do not emit dangerous pollutants like nitrogen oxides, carbon dioxide and particulate matter.
- As of now, hydrogen trains are running only in Germany.

#### Key Points

Union Railways Minister – Ashwini Vaishnaw  
 General manager of Northern Railway – Shobhan Chaudhry

### PM Narendra Modi Visits Al-Hakim Mosque in Egypt

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi visited Imam al-Hakim bi Amr Allah Mosque in Cairo, Egypt during his visit to the country.

- Al-Hakim bi Amr Allah is an 11th-century mosque that was repaired with the help of the Dawoodi Bohra community and is an important cultural site for the Dawoodi Bohra community in Cairo.
- The mosque is named after Al-Hakim bi-Amr Allah (985–1021), the 16<sup>th</sup> Fatimid caliph.
- The Dawoodi Bohra Muslims are a sect of followers of Islam who adhere to the Fatimi Ismaili Tayyibi school of thought. This sect is known to have originated from Egypt later shifting to Yemen.
- The Dawoodi Bohra Muslims settled in India in the 11<sup>th</sup> century. Notably, the seat of the sect was moved to Sidhpur (Patan district of Gujarat), India in the year 1539 from Yemen.
- According to official data, the Bohra Muslims account for 5 lakh population in our country.
- The Bohra Muslim community considers Surat in Gujarat their base, despite their presence in Maharashtra, and Madhya Pradesh as well.

### Amit Shah lays the foundation stone of ‘Balidan Stambh’ in Srinagar

- Union Home Minister Amit Shah laid the foundation stone of ‘Balidan Stambh’ in Srinagar, Jammu and Kashmir.
- The memorial is a tribute to the martyrs’ who sacrificed their lives for the nation. Balidan Stambh is a project under the Srinagar Smart City.

### India's First Omicron-Specific Mrna Booster Vaccine: Gemcovac-Om

- Union minister Jitendra Singh launched Gemovac-OM, an Omicron-specific mRNA-based booster vaccine, developed using the indigenous platform technology by Gennova with funding support from the Department of Biotechnology (DBT) and Biotechnology Industry Research Assistance Council (BIRAC).
- The vaccine got the nod from the office of the Drug Control General of India (DCGI) for Emergency Use Authorization (EUA) recently.
- Gemovac-OM is the fifth vaccine developed with support from Mission Covid Suraksha implemented by DBT and BIRAC under Atmanirbhar Bharat 3.0 package for accelerated development of Indian covid-19 vaccines.
- GEMCOVAC-OM is a thermostable vaccine and does not require ultra-cold chain infrastructure used for

other approved mRNA-based vaccines. This innovation makes it easy for the last-mile deployment. Its unique feature is that this vaccine can be administered without a needle injection.

- The vaccine is delivered intra-dermally using a needle-free injection device system and in study participants, it generated significantly higher immune responses. The clinical outcome demonstrates the need for variant-specific vaccines for desired immune response.

#### Centre Introduces 'Y-Break – Yoga at Office Chair' for Employee Stress Relief

- The central government has instructed its employees to incorporate a brief 'Y-Break – Yoga at Office Chair' to relax, rejuvenate, and enhance concentration.
- Y-Break at workplace was introduced by the Ministry of AYUSH with an aim to get de-stressed, refreshed and re-focused at the workplace. The Morarji Desai National Institute of Yoga, Ministry of AYUSH has added new features for the officials, who owing to their busy schedule, cannot go out and practice Yoga.
- The AYUSH ministry has introduced the Yoga Break (Y-Break) protocol to assist professionals in relieving stress, renewing their energy, and improving focus. This protocol includes a series of light practices that can be easily incorporated into a short break from work.
- The protocol comprises a few simple Yoga practices which include 'asanas' (postures), 'pranayama' (breathing techniques) and 'dhyana' (meditation). Eminent experts and a tested protocol have carefully developed it.

#### Key Points

Union Minister of AYUSH – Sarbananda Sonowal

Union Minister of Health & Family Welfare – Dr. Mansukh Mandaviya

#### Nehru Memorial Museum and Library (NMML) renamed Prime Ministers' Museum and Library Society

- The Nehru Memorial Museum and Library (NMML) Society housed in Teen Murti Bhavan has been renamed as Prime Ministers' Museum and Library Society.
- Teen Murti Bhavan served as the official residence of India's first Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru.
- The Defence Minister is the vice president of the Society.

#### Key Points

Union Defence Minister – Rajnath Singh

#### Dharmendra Pradhan flags off Gabon's first Agri-SEZ Project

- Union Minister of Education and Skill Development and Entrepreneurship Shri Dharmendra Pradhan flagged off Gabon's first Agri- SEZ project from New Delhi.
- The project will be implemented by AOM group with Centurion University as the technical and knowledge partner. In the first phase of the program, 30 farmers and 20 B.Sc./M.Sc. Agri and B.Tech/M.Tech Engineering students from Gajapati district, which is an Aspirational district of Odisha, will be travelling together as agri-technical and technical consultants for the agriculture SEZ which is being developed under this project.
- The establishment of an Agriculture and Food Processing Special Economic Zone in Gabon will be a significant milestone towards enhancing food security and self-sufficiency in the country

#### Key Points

Union Minister of Education and Skill Development and Entrepreneurship – Dharmendra Pradhan

#### Odisha ripple train tragedy – Coromandel Express Derails and Collides with Two Other Trains in Odisha

- On 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2023, three trains collided in Balasore district, in the state of Odisha in eastern India. The Coromandel Express travelling at 128km/hr left its line and entered a loop line, smashing into the back of a stationary goods train. The goods train was loaded with iron ore, which meant the passenger train took the entire impact on collision. The impact caused 21 carriages from the Coromandel Express to derail, throwing them across the adjacent tracks. As the accident happened, the Howrah Superfast Express was passing in the opposite direction at 126km/hr. Coaches from the derailing Coromandel Express collided with rear two coaches of the Howrah Superfast, knocking them off the track.
- Preliminary reports suggest the crash was the result of a signal fault and a "change in electronic interlocking". In railway signalling, the electronic interlocking system



sets routes for each train in a set area, ensuring the safe movement of trains along the track.

- It is one of the deadliest railway accidents in India as well as the world, in which a total of 294 people were killed in the crash and about 1,175 were injured.

### Assam's First Underwater Tunnel To Come Up Under Brahmaputra

- Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said Assam's first underwater tunnel will be constructed between Numaligarh and Gohpur at a cost of ₹ 6,000 crores.
- This will be northeast India's first-ever rail-road tunnel under the Brahmaputra River.

### PM Narendra Modi Visits US

- PM Narendra Modi visited the U.S. during which he lead the celebrations of the International Day of Yoga at the United Nations Headquarters and held bilateral talks with President Joe Biden in Washington.
- He met leading American economist Prof Paul Romer, investor and co-founder of the hedge fund, Bridgewater Associates Ray Dalio, and other eminent thought leaders and exchanged views and briefed them about the reform trajectory of his government to foster economic growth.
- He made his sixth visit to the U.S. as Prime Minister and was hosted by U.S. President Joe Biden and first lady Jill Biden for his first official state visit.
- In a historic moment, Prime Minister Narendra Modi addressed to the joint sitting of the US Congress. The Prime Minister has become the first Indian PM to address the joint meeting of the US Congress for the second time.

### India Joins NASA's Artemis Accords for Collaborative Lunar Exploration

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi signed the Artemis Accords with the US's national space administration. This agreement holds significant importance for India to establish itself as a global space power. The Artemis Accord outlines the "principles for cooperation in space exploration and the use of the moon, mars, comets, and asteroids for peaceful purposes."
- Artemis program focuses on making new scientific discoveries and expanding the exploration of the lunar surface. By studying the Moon, scientists hope to gain valuable insights and make discoveries that can

contribute to advancements in various fields, including technology, medicine, and a better understanding of the workings of the entire universe. One of its key goals is to land the first woman and the first person of color on the Moon. This historic event will pave the way for greater diversity and inclusivity in space exploration.

- NASA in collaboration with the US Department of State, established the Artemis Accords in 2020. The accords are agreements between the United States and seven other founding member nations.
- Furthermore, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) and the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) have also agreed to launch a joint mission to the International Space Station (ISS) in 2024.

#### Key Points

|                      |                        |
|----------------------|------------------------|
| NASA's HQ            | – Washington DC        |
| NASA's Administrator | – Bill Nelson          |
| ISRO's HQ            | – Bengaluru, Karnataka |
| ISRO's Chairman      | – Sreedhara Somanath   |

### Construction of Virat Ramayan Mandir – World's Largest Ramayan Temple In Bihar To Be Completed By 2025

- The construction work for 'Virat Ramayan Mandir', which once built is set to become the world's largest Ramayan temple, has already commenced near Kesariya in East Champaran district of Bihar. The work is scheduled to be completed by the end of 2025.
- The three-story temple will be erected on a 3.76 lakh square feet plot of land in the villages of Kaithwalia-Bahuara, approximately 120 km from Patna. The temple will span 280 feet in length and 540 feet in width, making it larger than the Ayodhya temple.
- It will feature twelve domes, with the tallest one soaring to a height of 270 ft and another structure to 198 feet. The complex will also house approximately 22 sanctum sanctorum dedicated to different deities, along with marriage halls and guest houses.
- Though the 'bhumi puja' for the temple was held in 2012, the construction could not begin due to objections raised by the Cambodia government over its proposed name resembling the 12<sup>th</sup>-century temple 'Virat Angkor Wat' in that country. This temple will be taller than the Chola era Cambodian temple.

- The Ramayan temple will consist of 12 domes, of which, the highest will be 270 ft. tall. In addition, it will also have 22 sanctum sanctorum for different deities along with marriage halls and guest houses in the complex.
- The overall measurement of the temple will be 2,800 ft in length, 1,400 ft in width, and 405 ft in height. It will also have a 33-ft-high black granite Shivling which will weigh around 200 tonnes.
- The Shivling is being made at Mahabalipuram near Chennai in Tamil Nadu. This Shivling will be the world's largest which will be completed by Mahashivratri in 2025.
- The Ramayan temple's architecture is inspired by three temples which include—the Angkor Wat complex in Cambodia, the Ramanathaswami temple in Rameshwaram, and the Meenakshi Sundareshwarar temple in Madurai.

#### **Centre launches 'Dakshta' course collection on iGOT platform to enhance skills of young professionals**

- The central government introduced a new curated collection of courses called "Dakshta" (Development of Attitude, Knowledge, and Skill for Holistic Transformation in Administration) on the iGOT Karmayogi Platform.
- The iGOT (Integrated Government Online Training) Karmayogi platform is a comprehensive portal to guide government officials in their capacity-building journey.
- The Dakshta collection, consisting of 18 courses, is designed to acquaint learners with subjects crucial to effectively discharging their duties and responsibilities. It focuses on building expertise in areas such as data-driven decision-making, code of conduct for government employees, office procedures, effective communication, public policy research, stress management, and more.
- Currently, 40 young professionals and consultants from the National Institution for Transforming India (NITI Aayog) are undergoing phased induction training through the curated collection of courses available on the iGOT Karmayogi Platform.
- In line with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision of building a 'Viksit Bharat', Mission Karmayogi (National programme for civil services capacity building) has been playing an integral role in nurturing a smart, citizen-friendly and future-ready public workforce.

- Driving the mission's core objectives, Karmayogi Bharat, a government-owned, not-for-profit special purpose vehicle, has been established by the Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT) and is entrusted with the responsibility for owning, managing, maintaining and improving the iGOT Karmayogi platform.

#### **Centre forms expert committee to suggest reforms to arbitration law**

- The Department of legal affairs has formed an expert committee led by former law secretary T K Vishwanathan to recommend reforms to the Arbitration and Conciliation Act, 1996.
- The panel will have 15 other members.
- The committee will submit its recommendations to the government within a period of 30 days. The exercise (of forming the panel) is to examine the working of the Act, suggest solutions to limit the requirement for parties to seek judicial intervention by approaching the court, and address the issue of expeditious attribution of finality to the award.

#### **Guwahati Railway Station gets FSSAI 'Eat Right Station' Tag**

- The Guwahati Railway Station in Assam under North East Frontier Railway has been awarded 'Eat Right Station' certification by FSSAI in recognition of providing high-quality, nutritious food to passengers.
- The station has been able to qualify for the guidelines established by FSSAI and becomes the first railway station in NF Railway to get this status. It is to mention that the 'Eat Right Station' certification is granted by FSSAI to railway stations adhering to standard food storage and hygiene practices.
- This certification is awarded by FSSAI to railway stations that set benchmarks in providing safe and wholesome food to passengers.

#### **Microsoft and Airjaldi Partner to expand Internet Connectivity in Rural India**

- Microsoft and Airjaldi Networks will collaborate to provide internet access for underserved communities in 12 states of India, marking a major boost to India's potential USD 1 trillion internet economy by 2030.
- The companies reported signing a three-year Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) titled 'Contentful Connectivity'. Under the MoU, the

companies will look to advance access to high-speed internet and meaningful connectivity as a fundamental right in collaboration with private, public non-profit sectors. It is further underlined in the MoU that they will build solutions for broadband adoption and digital transformation that will, in turn, benefit the underserved communities in rural regions of India.

- Over the next three years, the collaboration's key focus will be expanding AirJaldi Networks into three new states namely, Telangana, Chhattisgarh and Odisha, with an increase in the number of network locations from 40 to 62 in 12 states.
- It will also focus on strengthening AirJaldi presence in nine states by extending the wireless and wired infrastructure and reaching connectivity provision for underserved users.

#### **Nyaya Vikas Portal created for monitoring the implementation of Centrally Sponsored Schemes**

- Nyaya Vikas Portal empowers stakeholders with seamless access to information pertaining to funding, documentation, project monitoring and approval. The portal allows monitoring the implementation of this Scheme.
- The Department of Justice has been implementing the Centrally Sponsored Scheme (CSS) for the Development of Infrastructure Facilities for Districts and Subordinate Judiciary since 1993–94.
- Under the Scheme, central assistance is provided to the State Government / UT Administrations for the construction of court halls and residential units for Judicial Officers / Judges of District and Subordinate Courts. With the further extension of the scheme beyond 31.03.2021, some new features like Lawyers Hall, Toilet complexes and Digital computer rooms have been added to the scheme for the convenience of lawyers and litigants, besides court halls and residential units.
- The funds sharing pattern under the Scheme for Center and State is 60:40 in respect of States other than North Eastern and Himalayan States. The funds sharing pattern is 90:10 in respect of North Eastern and Himalayan States; and 100% in respect of Union Territories. This portal has been created for monitoring the implementation of this scheme.

#### **Government Sets Up 3-Member Panel to Probe Manipur Violence**

- The Centre government set up a Commission of Inquiry, headed by the former chief justice of the Gauhati High Court Ajai Lamba, to probe the recent series of violence in Manipur that claimed more than 80 lives. The other members of the commission are retired IAS officer Himanshu Shekhar Das and retired IPS officer Aloka Prabhakar.
- The commission will make an inquiry with respect to the causes and spread of the violence and riots targeting members of different communities, which took place in Manipur on May 3 and thereafter. It will probe the sequence of events leading to, and all the facts relating to such violence; whether there were any lapses or dereliction of duty in this regard on the part of any of the responsible authorities/individuals and whether adequacy of the administrative measures taken to prevent and to deal with the violence and riots.
- The inquiry by the commission shall look into the complaints or allegations that may be made before it by any individual or association. The commission shall submit its report to the central government as soon as possible but not later than six months from the date of its first sitting.
- The commission, however, if it deems fit, can make interim reports to the central government before the said date.

#### **Key Points**

|                    |                           |
|--------------------|---------------------------|
| Capital of Manipur | – Imphal                  |
| Chief Minister     | – Nongthombam Biren Singh |
| Governor           | – Anusuiya Uikey          |

#### **Ahmednagar renamed Ahilyadevi Nagar**

- The Maharashtra government has decided to rename Ahmednagar district as Ahilyadevi Nagar after Maratha ruler Maharani Ahilyabai Holkar.
- Chief minister Eknath Shinde made the announcement during the 298<sup>th</sup> birth anniversary celebrations of the hereditary noble queen of the Maratha Empire in Malwa.



- Ahilyabai worked for the welfare of people from all strata in society. She set an example for good governance and administration.

#### **Periodic Table, Evolution removed from Class 10<sup>th</sup>**

- National Council for Education Research and Training (NCERT) in their latest axe on the syllabus for Class 10<sup>th</sup> and Class 12<sup>th</sup> board examination has removed Periodic Table, the contribution of agriculture to the national economy, challenges to democracy and sustainable management of natural resources.
- NCERT also removed Charles Darwin's Theory of Evolution as part of dropping the theory of biological evolution from the science syllabus in the Class Xth curriculum of the CBSE.
- NCERT's recent move is part of a "rationalisation" exercise based on expert recommendations. The new textbooks with these deletions and changes have now hit the market.
- NCERT has said that the periodic table and evolution have not been removed from the school education curriculum but are available in appropriate detail for students who opt for science in classes 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup>.

#### **India removed from UNSG report on impact of armed conflict on children.**

- UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres has removed India from his annual report on the impact of armed conflict on children, citing measures taken by the Indian government to better protect them.
- India was mentioned in the report of the Secretary-General on Children and armed conflict since 2010 along with other countries of Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Lake Chad basin, Nigeria, Pakistan, and the Philippines for alleged recruitment and use of boys by armed groups in Jammu and Kashmir; detainment of boys by Indian security forces in J&K for their alleged association with armed groups, or on national security grounds.
- The report highlighted the technical mission of the office of his special representative in July 2022 to

identify areas of cooperation for child protection, and the workshop on strengthening child protection held in Jammu and Kashmir last November by the government, with the participation of the United Nations.

- In his latest report, he also called upon India to implement the remaining measures identified in consultation with his special representative and the United Nations. These include the training of armed and security forces on child protection, prohibition of the use of lethal and non-lethal force on children, including ending the use of pellet guns, ensuring that children are detained as a last resort and for the shortest appropriate period of time.

#### **PM Narendra Modi flags off five Vande Bharat trains from Rani Kamalapati Railway Station in Bhopal.**

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi flagged off Vande Bharat Express trains on five routes, taking the total number of such trains to 23.
- The five train routes – Rani Kamalapati (Bhopal)-Jabalpur; Rani Kamalapati-Indore; Goa (Madgaon)-Mumbai; Ranchi-Patna; and Dharwad-Bengaluru – will bring the state capitals of Madhya Pradesh, Goa, Jharkhand, Bihar, Maharashtra and Karnataka on the fast-expanding Vande Bharat route map.
- Vande Bharat Express train was launched in 2019 and sets offer myriad amenities which provide passengers with world-class comfortable travelling experience and advanced state-of-the-art safety features, including KAVACH technology.
- Each train has fully suspended traction motors for 160 km/hr operational speed. Unlike conventional locomotive-hauled trains, the Vande Bharat train sets are self-propelled in sets of four coaches. While the trains are currently cleared for top speeds of 160 km/hr, the tracks are yet to be upgraded to host higher average speed. The train has been designed to increase Indian Railways' green footprint by dispensing with power cars and saving about 30% electricity with the advanced regenerative braking system.

## INTERNATIONAL NEWS

### Intel and Germany Sign \$32.8 Billion Chip Plant Agreement

- Intel and the German government signed a deal in which Intel will be investing more than 30 billion euros (\$32.8 billion) in a chip manufacturing site in the German city of Magdeburg, with financial support from Berlin.
- The investment in Germany means a significant expansion of Intel's production capacity in Europe and is the biggest investment ever made by a foreign company in Germany.

#### Key Points

|                    |                           |
|--------------------|---------------------------|
| Germany Capital    | – Berlin                  |
| German President   | – Frank-Walter Steinmeier |
| Germany Chancellor | – Olaf Scholz             |
| Intel HQ           | – California, US          |
| Intel CEO          | – Pat Gelsinger           |

### China inks deal with Pakistan to set up nuclear power plant

- China inked an agreement worth a whopping USD 4.8 billion with cash-strapped Pakistan to set up a 1,200-megawatt nuclear power plant as a sign of increasing strategic cooperation between the two all-weather allies.
- Under this deal, Beijing would build a 1,200-megawatt Chashma-V nuclear plant at Chashma in the Mianwali district of Punjab.

#### Key Points

|                           |                  |
|---------------------------|------------------|
| Pakistan's Prime Minister | – Shehbaz Sharif |
| China's President         | – Xi Jinping     |

### Titanic sub destroyed in 'catastrophic implosion'

- Titan, a 21 feet submersible operated by US-based firm Ocean Gate Expeditions, was on its descent to the wreck of the Titanic ship some 12,500 feet underwater when it lost contact with the surface vehicle.
- The passengers were OceaGate CEO Stockton Rush, British billionaire Hamish Harding, French

oceanographer and Navy veteran Paul-Henri Nargeolet, Pakistani businessman Shahzada Dawood and his son Suleman. Rush was piloting the Titan.

- According to search and rescue officials, the victims likely died before military planes using sonar buoys detected what they thought could have been SOS 'banging sounds in the water.
- The implosion would have generated a significant, broadband sound that the sonar buoys would have picked up. Five major fragments of the Titan were spotted in the debris field left from its disintegration, comprising the vessel's tail cone and two sections of the pressure hull. However, no mention was made of recovering any human remains.
- Rescue teams from several nations have spent five days searching thousands of square miles of open seas with planes and ships for any sign of the Titan.

### Canada Launches 'digital nomad strategy' for foreign workers

- Canada will launch its "digital nomad strategy" which will provide a temporary arrangement for foreigners to look for jobs in the country.
- The "digital nomad strategy" will allow workers with a foreign employer to stay and work in Canada for up to six months. If they get a job offer while in the country, they can remain in Canada even longer.
- The government will create an "innovation stream" under its international mobility program for skilled workers who are "in select in-demand occupations" or are destined for work with companies the government selects as "contributing to our innovation goals."
- The third new program was specifically aimed at the United States. The government will create an open work-permit stream to allow 10,000 American H-1B visa holders to come and work in Canada. The program will also provide for study or work permits for their family members.

#### Key Points

|                  |                  |
|------------------|------------------|
| Canada's Capital | – Ottawa         |
| Canada's PM      | – Justin Trudeau |

### Pakistan Bans Holi To Save Islamic Identity

- Pakistan has banned the celebration of Holi and other Hindu festivals across educational institutions in the country to save the Islamic identity.
- The directive to ban the celebration of Holi and other Hindu festivals came after a video of students celebrating the festival at a university in Islamabad emerged on social media.
- The notice was issued by Higher Education Commission, Islamabad as, the commission said, it was sad to witness “activities that portray a complete disconnect from our sociocultural values and erosion of the country’s Islamic identity.”

#### Key Points

|                      |                  |
|----------------------|------------------|
| Pakistan’s PM        | – Shehbaz Sharif |
| Pakistan’s Capital   | – Islamabad      |
| Pakistan’s President | – Arif Alvi      |

### Japan Raises Age Of Consent From 13 To 16 After Over A Century

- Japan’s parliament has raised the age of consent to 16 years from 13 years. The move comes after a wait of more than a century since it last changed in 1907. The historic move sets the ground for rape prosecution and criminalises voyeurism.
- The changes make sexual intercourse with someone below age 16 considered rape. They specify eight scenarios of “consentless sex crimes,” a new term for forced sexual intercourse, including being assaulted under the influence of alcohol or drugs, fear, or intimidation.
- The new laws formulated by the Japan Parliament also noted that juvenile couples with an age gap of less than or up to five years will not be prosecuted if both partners are above 13 years of age.

#### Key Points

|                        |                 |
|------------------------|-----------------|
| Japan’s capital        | – Tokyo         |
| Japan’s Prime Minister | – Fumio Kishida |
| Japan’s Emperor        | – Naruhito      |

### UNGA Adopts Draft Resolution Introduced By India

- India’s Permanent Representative to the UN Ambassador Ruchira Kamboj introduced the draft

resolution titled ‘Memorial wall for fallen United Nations peacekeepers’

- The UN General Assembly has adopted a draft resolution introduced by India to establish a memorial wall in the UN Headquarters to honour fallen peacekeepers.
- The resolution was co-sponsored by nearly 190 UN Member States and was adopted by consensus.
- In 2015, the Permanent Mission of India to the UN launched a virtual memorial wall, dedicated to the Indian troops who made the supreme sacrifice while doing active service as UN peacekeepers.
- The initiative was a precursor to the eventual construction of the Peacekeepers Memorial Wall. India had proposed the construction of the memorial wall as an appropriate way to commemorate all the troops from UN member states who had given their lives while on duty under the Blue Flag of the United Nations.

#### Key Points

|                        |                    |
|------------------------|--------------------|
| UN’s Secretary General | – António Guterres |
| UN’s HQ                | – New York, US     |

### China Unveils World’s Most Powerful Hypersonic Wind Tunnel for Advancing Aerospace Ambitions

- China has recently completed the construction of the most powerful wind tunnel in the world, located in the mountainous Huairou district of northern Beijing. The wind tunnel, called JF-22, has a diameter of 4 metres (13 feet) and can generate incredibly high airflow speeds of up to 10 kilometres (6.2 miles) per second.
- This makes it capable of simulating hypersonic flight conditions up to Mach 30, which is 30 times the speed of sound.
- The Institute of Mechanics, which owns the facility, stated that the JF-22 wind tunnel will play a crucial role in advancing China’s hypersonic ambitions.
- The tunnel will support research and development efforts for China’s space transportation system and hypersonic aircraft, as well as for military purposes.

### US-UK forge ‘Atlantic Declaration’ to boost ties

- The US and Britain have announced a new strategic pact called, reaffirming their “special relationship” to address challenges posed by Russia, China, and economic instability.



- They signed Atlantic Declaration to develop a new green economy through extensive industrial subsidies instead of pursuing a post-Brexit free-trade agreement.
- The “Atlantic Declaration” aims to enhance industry collaboration in defense and renewable energy sectors in response to China’s growing competition.
- It signifies the shared commitment of the US and the UK to foster economic growth, create employment opportunities, and drive innovation in both countries. It emphasises the importance of free and fair trade, open markets, and a rules-based international trading system that benefits businesses and consumers alike.
- The declaration recognises the challenges posed by authoritarian states, disruptive technologies, non-state actors, and transnational issues like climate change.
- Both leaders affirmed the strength of the transatlantic relationship and emphasised the need to adapt to the changing world economy driven by AI and technological advancements.

#### Key Points

|                     |               |
|---------------------|---------------|
| US’s President      | – Joe Biden   |
| UK’s Prime Minister | – Rishi Sunak |

#### Ukraine’s Nova Kakhovka Dam Disaster

- In recent events, the Nova Kakhovka Dam in Ukraine has suffered a catastrophic blow, leading to concerns of devastating flooding. Ukraine’s military command has accused Russia of causing the explosion, given the dam’s strategic significance.
- The Nova Kakhovka Dam is situated on the Dnipro River in southern Ukraine. Constructed in 1956 as a part of the Kakhovka hydroelectric power plant, it holds back a massive reservoir of water, estimated to contain 18 cubic kilometers, similar in volume to Utah’s Great Salt Lake. The dam’s destruction would have severe repercussions locally and affect Ukraine’s broader war effort.
- The immediate consequences of the dam’s destruction include the potential flooding of settlements downstream, including Kherson, which Ukraine recaptured in 2022. Moreover, the water from the reservoir supplies the Crimean peninsula, annexed by Russia in 2014, and the Zaporizhzhia nuclear plant, Europe’s largest. Additionally, the dam’s destruction worsens Ukraine’s energy problems and jeopardizes the canal system that irrigates southern Ukraine, including Crimea.

#### Virgin Galactic Completes First Manned Mission To Space

- Virgin Galactic achieved a significant milestone as it successfully conducted its first commercial suborbital flight, named Galactic 01.
- Virgin Galactic is the space venture established by British entrepreneur Richard Branson. The mission featured two Italian Air Force personnel whom the organisation funded. Colonel Walter Villadei, who is also slated for a future paid SpaceX mission to orbit, and Lieutenant Colonel Angelo Landolfi, a physician trained as a crew surgeon for Russian cosmonauts, were among the passengers.
- Additionally, Pantaleone Carlucci, an engineer affiliated with Italy’s National Research Council, and Colin Bennett, a Virgin Galactic astronaut instructor who previously flew with Branson in 2021, were part of the group.

#### India-United States Defence Acceleration Ecosystem (INDUS X) launched

- India-United States Defence Acceleration Ecosystem (INDUS X) was launched at an event in Washington DC, USA. The INDUS X event was co-organised by Innovations for Defence Excellence (iDEX), Ministry of Defence, and US Department of Defence (DoD) and hosted by US-India Business Council (USIBC).
- It is expected to vitalise defense industrial cooperation and unlock new innovations in technology and manufacturing in India and the USA.
- The event also saw a first-of-its-kind joint showcasing of innovative technologies by Indian and US start-ups. 15 Indian start-ups and 10 US start-ups, from multiple domains of maritime, AI, autonomous systems, and space, showcased their technologies to Indian and US stakeholders.

#### Oman Creates History as First Foreign Government to Promote Country through Yoga

- In a pioneering initiative, the Indian Embassy in the Sultanate of Oman has introduced an innovative video called ‘Soulful Yoga, Serene Oman’ on the eve of the International Day of Yoga 2023.
- The video showcases yoga enthusiasts from different countries performing beautiful yoga poses against stunning backdrops such as mountains, beaches, and sand dunes in and around Muscat.
- The Indian Embassy partnered with ‘Visit Oman,’ a subsidiary of Oman’s Ministry of Tourism, to produce



the video. This marks the first instance of a foreign government using yoga to promote its own country.

- The video not only demonstrates the increasing popularity and acceptance of yoga as a health practice worldwide but also highlights its growing prominence in Oman.

#### **Nepal Supreme Court orders the government to register same-sex marriages.**

- The Nepal Supreme Court passed an interim order directing the Office of Prime Minister and Council of Ministers (OPMCM) and other concerned ministries to establish a transitional mechanism to ensure the registration of marriages for non-heterosexual couples, thereby reiterating the right to marry granted to the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex (LGBTI) community granted by the top court of the country in 2007.
- The court also issued a show cause notice to the government and sought a response within 15 days explaining why its directives issued 15 years ago had not been followed. It directed the government to establish a separate register of marriages till necessary amendments were made to the provisions related to

marriage and registered marriages within the existing Civil Code that only permits marriage between a man and a woman.

- In 2001, the Supreme Court passed a landmark order granting equal rights, including the right to non-discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity, to all members of the queer community. It further directed the government to form a committee to study same-sex marriage from the viewpoint of not only LGBTI persons, but also their families and society at large. In 2015, a committee set up by the Constituent Assembly put out a report recommending same-sex marriage in Nepal. However, the government did not come up with any law permitting this. On the contrary, its Civil and Criminal codes went on to ascribe marriage as existing between the binary genders of man and woman.

#### **Key Points**

|                        |                      |
|------------------------|----------------------|
| Nepal's Capital        | – Kathmandu          |
| Nepal's President      | – Ram Chandra Poudel |
| Nepal's Prime Minister | – Pushpa Kamal Dahal |

## **GOVERNMENT SCHEMES**

#### **Union Minister Parshottam Rupala launches "Report Fish Disease" app**

- The Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry, and Dairying in the Government of India have taken a significant step towards digitizing the fish farming sector with the launch of the android-based mobile app, "Report Fish Disease".
- The app aims to enhance disease reporting and surveillance in the aquaculture industry. This app serves as a central platform connecting fish farmers, field-level officers, and fish health experts. It enables seamless integration and transparent communication among stakeholders.
- It also enables quick reporting of disease cases and provides timely advice to farmers associated with aquaculture. With the help of this app, the farmers will be able to connect directly to district fisheries officers and scientists.

#### **NITI Aayog and United Nations Join Hands to Accelerate Sustainable Development in India**

- The government policy think tank Niti Aayog, and the United Nations in India have joined forces to sign the Government of India – United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework 2023–2027.
- The Government of India – United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (GoI-UNSDCF) 2023–2027 serves as a strategic roadmap for achieving the country's sustainable development targets, with a specific focus on gender equality, youth empowerment, human rights, and overall sustainable development.
- The framework, inspired by the 2030 Agenda, is built upon four pillars—People, Prosperity, Planet, and Participation—and encompasses six key outcome areas, including health and well-being, quality education, economic growth, environment and climate, and empowerment of individuals and communities.

- The formulation of the GoI-UNSDCF 2023–2027 was led by Niti Aayog, on behalf of the Government of India, with robust participation of line Ministries, State Governments, and Union Territories.
- The UN Resident Coordinator led and coordinated inputs from the UN development system in India. Partners from civil society, think tanks, the private sector, cooperatives and labour unions also contributed to the development of the document, ensuring a whole of society, whole of government and whole of UN approach.
- The GoI-UNSDCF was informed by a third-party evaluation of the previous Cooperation Framework (2018–2022) and a Common Country Analysis (CCA) undertaken by the UN in India.

#### Key Points

|                      |                       |
|----------------------|-----------------------|
| Niti Aayog Chairman  | – Narendra Modi       |
| Niti Aayog CEO       | – B.V.R. Subrahmanyam |
| Niti Aayog HQ        | – New Delhi           |
| Niti Aayog Formation | – 1st January 2015    |

#### Cabinet Approves PM-PRANAM and Urea Gold Schemes to Promote Sustainable Agriculture

- The Cabinet approved a new scheme PM-PRANAM to incentivise states to promote alternative fertilisers. Under the scheme financial assistance will be given to the states and the states will be able to strengthen the fertilizer system. PM PRANAM stands for PM Programme for Restoration, Awareness, Nourishment and Amelioration of Mother Earth and was announced in the Union Budget 2023.
- The government also approved the continuation of the Urea Subsidy Scheme with an outlay of ₹ 3,68,676.7 Crore committed for the urea subsidy for 3 years.

#### Arunachal Pradesh CM Launches 'Arunpol App' For Citizens

- Arunachal Pradesh Chief Minister launched an app called 'Arunpol App' of Arunachal Pradesh. It will facilitate common people to lodge complaints without coming to the police station. People can also apply for other clearances from the police through this app.
- The vehicle will go to different places and will try to know the issues of the people and create awareness among the masses.

- Chief Minister Pema Khandu also launched another app called E-Vigilance app for the state government employees. This app will benefit the state government employees by ensuring timely vigilance clearance.

#### 'Cm Learn And Earn Scheme' Launched By Mp Govt

- In Madhya Pradesh, Chief Minister's Learn and Earn scheme – will be launched to teach employable skills to the youth. In the scheme, 703 work areas have been identified for training.
- The most important aspect of this learn-and-earn scheme is that along with learning skills, the youth will also be given an allowance of ₹ 8,000 to 10,000. At least one lakh youth will be provided training under the scheme. The youth will start working from 1<sup>st</sup> August.

#### Key Points

|                         |                         |
|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| Madhya Pradesh CM       | – Shivraj Singh Chouhan |
| Madhya Pradesh Capital  | – Bhopal                |
| Madhya Pradesh Governor | – Mangubhai C. Patel    |

#### Sarbananda Sonowal Launches New CSR Guidelines 'Sagar Samajik Sahayog'

- The Union Minister of Ports, Shipping & Waterways and Ayush Shri Sarbananda Sonowal launched 'Sagar Samajik Sahayog' – the new guidelines of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) by the Ministry of Ports, Shipping & Waterways.
- The renewed guidelines for CSR activities allows ports to initiate, undertake and expedite projects for community welfare through a framework where local communities can also become partners of development & change.
- For the purpose of planning and implementing CSR projects, a Corporate Social Responsibility Committee shall be constituted in each major port. The Committee shall be headed by the Dy. Chairperson of the Major Port and shall have 2 other Members. Each major port shall prepare a Corporate Social Responsibility Plan for every financial year, and integrate its CSR in Business Plan with the social and environmental concerns related to the business of the entity.
- CSR Budget will be mandatorily created through a Board Resolution as a percentage of net profit. A port with an annual net profit of ₹100 crores or less can fix between 3% – 5% for CSR expenses. Similarly, ports with a net profit between ₹100 crores to ₹500 crores

annually, can fix its CSR expenses between 2% and 3% of its net profit, subject to a minimum of ₹3 crores. For ports, whose annual net profit is above ₹500 crores per year, the CSR expenses can be between 0.5% and 2% of its net profit. 20% of CSR expenses must be earmarked to Sainik Kalyan Board at district level, National Maritime Heritage Complex and National Youth Development Fund. 78% of funds should be released for the social & environmental welfare of the community in areas like drinking water, education, vocational training, skill development, electricity through non-conventional & renewable sources, health & family welfare, promotion of livelihood for economically weaker section of society, community centres, hostels etc. A sum of 2% total CSR expense has been earmarked for monitoring of the projects under the CSR programmes by the Ports.

#### **PM Modi launches Amrit Dharohar and MISHTI schemes for wetland, mangrove conservation**

- In a significant move towards environmental conservation and sustainable development, Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched two pioneering schemes – Amrit Dharohar and MISHTI (Mangrove Initiative for Shoreline Habitats and Tangible Incomes) – aimed at reviving the country's wetlands and mangroves.
- Amrit Dharohar scheme was first announced by the Union finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman in the 2023–24 Union budget. The scheme focuses on the preservation and restoration of wetlands and mangroves, which play a crucial role in maintaining ecological balance and supporting biodiversity. It involves the implementation of various measures such as ecological assessment, monitoring, capacity building, and community participation to ensure the sustainable management of wetlands. It will emphasise the importance of lakes and their conservation.
- MISHTI (Mangrove Initiative for Shoreline Habitats and Tangible Incomes) scheme was first announced by the Union finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman in the 2023–24 Union budget. It focuses on the conservation and rejuvenation of mangroves, which are vital coastal ecosystems known for their ability to withstand natural disasters like cyclones and provide a breeding ground for marine life. The initiative seeks to restore and enhance mangrove cover through scientific interventions, community engagement, and public awareness campaigns. The conservation of mangroves will contribute to climate change mitigation, coastal protection, and the preservation of marine biodiversity.

#### **Indian Navy Launches “Julley Ladakh” Outreach Program**

- The Indian Navy launched an outreach programme called “Julley Ladakh” (Hello Ladakh) with the aim of raising awareness about the naval service in the Himalayan region and engaging with youngsters and civil society members.
- The program was launched by flagging off a 5,000-km motorcycle expedition from the National War Memorial. A total of 35 naval personnel, including officers and sailors, are participating in the expedition that will reach Leh passing through Delhi, Haryana, Punjab and Jammu and Kashmir.
- Along the way, the participants will interact with students from schools and colleges, and pay homage to soldiers at the Kargil War Memorial and the memorial of the 1962 Battle of Rezang La.

#### **MP CM Shivraj Singh Chouhan Launches ‘Mukhyamantri Ladli Behna Scheme’**

- Madhya Pradesh chief minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan launched the electronic process to transfer ₹1,000 each in the bank accounts of 12 million women under the state's Ladli Behna scheme and said the amount will be gradually increased to ₹3,000.
- The minimum age required for availing benefits under the Ladli Behna scheme is 21 years. A Ladli Behna Sena will be formed that will help in implementing welfare schemes for women and help those in distress.
- This is the third scheme for women and girl child in Madhya Pradesh. Earlier, the Bharatiya Janata Party government launched Mukhyamantri Ladli Laxmi Yojana and Mukhyamantri Kanya Vivah Yojana.

#### **UP Government Launched Nand Baba Milk Mission Scheme**

- In a bid to make Uttar Pradesh a leading state in the field of milk development and milk production, the state government has launched the Nand Baba Milk Mission scheme at a cost of ₹ 1,000 crore.
- The Nand Baba Milk Mission scheme has been implemented to provide milk producers the facility of selling their milk at a reasonable price in villages through dairy co-operative societies.



- The department was making constant efforts to ensure the development of the rural economy in the state, to provide remunerative prices to the farmers for their milk and to strengthen the agro-based infrastructure.
- Under this mission, it is proposed to form Dairy farmer producer organisation (Dairy FPO) in order to

facilitate sale of milk in producers' villages itself, he said. In the financial year 2023–24, there is a plan to set up five Dairy FPOs in as many districts of the state as a pilot project, in which women will also play a major role, he said.

## BANKING, FINANCE AND ECONOMY NEWS

### Rajnath Singh inaugurates Integrated Simulator Complex 'Dhruv'

- Raksha Mantri Shri Rajnath Singh inaugurated the Integrated Simulator Complex (ISC) 'Dhruv' at Southern Naval Command, Kochi.
- The ISC 'Dhruv' hosts modern state-of-the-art indigenously-built simulators which will significantly enhance practical training in the Indian Navy. These simulators are envisaged to give real-time experience on navigation, fleet operations and Naval tactics. These simulators will also be utilised for the training of personnel from friendly countries.
- Amongst the many simulators envisaged in the complex, the Raksha Mantri visited Multi-Station Handling Simulator (MSSHS), Air Direction and Helicopter Control Simulator (ADHCS) and Astronavigation Dome.
- The Ship Handling Simulators produced by ARI Pvt Ltd, New Delhi have been exported to 18 countries. The Astronavigation Dome developed by Infovision Technologies Pvt Ltd is the first-of-its-kind in the Indian Navy.
- The ADHCS – developed by Institute for Systems Studies and Analysis, a DRDO laboratory – would be able to provide real-time operational environment scenario to trainees. These technologically advanced simulators are indicative of the 'Aatmanirbhar Bharat' initiative and promise great defence export potential for the nation. Some of the other indigenously developed simulators in the Complex include Combat Management System and Maritime Domain Awareness Lab.

### Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI) Launches Evolve Mission With Niti Aayog

- SIDBI has launched mission EVOLVE (Electric Vehicle Operations and Lending for Vibrant Ecosystem) in association with NITI Aayog, World Bank, Korean-

World Bank and Korean Economic Development Cooperation Fund (EDCF) to finance MSMEs in the EV space.

- Under the initiative, SIDBI will give MSMEs access to affordable commercial financing for EV loans including hosting of telematics that could help reduce financing costs and provide data for other financial services.
- The programme comes in the backdrop of SIDBI's aim to support India's target for 30% EV penetration by 2030 or EV30@30.

#### Key Points

|                       |                          |
|-----------------------|--------------------------|
| SIDBI HQ              | – Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh |
| SIDBI Chairman and MD | – Sivasubramanian Ramann |

### ADB, India Sign \$130 Million Loan To Promote Horticulture In Himachal Pradesh

- The Government of India and the Asian Development Bank (ADB) signed a \$130 million loan to increase agricultural productivity, improve access to irrigation and promote horticulture agribusinesses to raise farmers' income in the state of Himachal Pradesh.
- The project interventions will help increase the income and resilience to the effects of climate change of at least 15,000 farm households across 7 districts of the state namely Bilaspur, Hamirpur, Kangra, Mandi, Sirmour, Solan, and Una. These households have stopped farming or have reduced their farming areas because of a lack of irrigation facilities and crop damage by wild and stray animals.
- It will improve on-farm irrigation and water management in about 6,000 hectares of farmland by rehabilitating or building new irrigation schemes and strengthening the capacity of WUAs for micro irrigation management through joint efforts from the state's Jal Shakti Vibhag (Water Resources Department) and Department of Horticulture (DOH).



- The project will also modernise public and private subtropical horticulture nursery facilities for improved plant health, and boost beneficiary farmers' access to information and communication technologies, and other digital agri-technology systems for real-time farm advisories and better CHPMA management.

#### Key Points

|               |                            |
|---------------|----------------------------|
| ADB HQ        | – Mandaluyong, Philippines |
| ADB President | – Masatsugu Asakawa        |

#### Paytm Collaborates with Arunachal Pradesh to Foster Startup Ecosystem

- Paytm Payment Services Limited (PPSL) signed an MoU with Arunachal Pradesh Innovation and Investment Park (APIIP) to create a startup ecosystem for the youth in the northeastern state.
- Paytm Incubation Centre will provide its product to early-stage startups at a discounted price and offer free credits through the Paytm Startup toolkit to aid the business ventures of youths in their early stage of growth. This will nurture the startup ecosystem in the state and motivate the young entrepreneurs, an official communique informed here.
- The MoU was signed at the Arunachal Pradesh Innovation & Investment Park, the first state-owned marquee incubator.
- Paytm is India's payment app, which offers consumers and merchants payment services. It is a pioneer of mobile QR payments in the country. It enables commerce for small merchants and distributes various financial services offerings to its consumers and merchants in partnership with financial institutions.

#### Key Points

|                 |                        |
|-----------------|------------------------|
| Founder and CEO | – Vijay Shekhar Sharma |
| HQ              | – Noida, UP            |

#### 'FarmersFZ' chosen by UN for food startup 'Accelerator Programme'

- A Kerala-based startup, Farmers Fresh Zone (FarmersFZ), has been selected for the 'Accelerator Programme' by the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) of the UN.
- FarmersFZ has figured in the list of 12 agri-food startups around the world for the UN body to develop business.

- It is a Kochi-based multichannel marketplace platform, which functions under the Kerala Startup Mission (KSUM), is one among India's two startups to qualify for the 'Accelerator Programme'. Its ultimate aim is to attain the UN Sustainable Development Goals.
- KSUM is the nodal agency of the Kerala government for entrepreneurship development and incubation activities in the state.
- FarmersFZ, which bridges the gap between rural farmers and urban consumers by providing healthy, premium-quality and pesticide-free vegetables from fields to the table within 24 hours of harvest, connects more than three lakh consumers and 2,000-plus farmers in Kerala.

#### India's Internet Economy Poised For \$1 Trillion Growth By 2030

- India's internet economy is expected to register six-fold growth and touch USD 1 trillion by 2030, mainly driven by the e-commerce vertical, according to a joint report by Google, Temasek and Bain & Company. The report estimates that India's internet economy was in the range of USD 155–175 billion in 2022.
- The growth will be led by the B2C e-commerce segment, followed by B2B e-commerce, software-as-a-service providers and online media led by over-the-top-players.
- While startups have led the path on digital innovation, small and medium businesses and large enterprises after the pandemic have started to use digital technologies to become more competitive.
- The B2C e-commerce is expected to grow 5–6 times to USD 350–380 billion by 2030, from around USD 60–65 billion in 2022. The report estimates B2B e-commerce to grow 13–14 times to USD 105–120 billion, from around USD 8–9 billion in 2022. The software-as-a-service segment is expected to grow 5–6 times to USD 65–75 billion by 2030, from USD 12–13 billion in 2022.

#### S&P Retains India's Growth Projection at 6% for FY24; Fastest Growing Economy in Asia Pacific

- S&P Global Ratings retained India's GDP growth forecast at 6% saying it will be the fastest-growing economy among Asia Pacific nations.
- The GDP growth forecast for the current and the next fiscal has been kept unchanged from the forecast made in March partly on account of domestic resilience.

### Infosys signs \$454 Million deal with Danske Bank for Digital Transformation

- Infosys has announced a long-term collaboration with Danske Bank to drive the bank's digital transformation ambitions with speed and scale.
- The projected agreement worth is \$454 million for a 5-year term with the possibility to renew for an extra year up to three times. This agreement shall help Danske Bank accomplish its strategic priorities of enhanced client experiences, operational excellence, and a modernised technological environment powered by next-generation technologies.
- As part of this agreement, Infosys will also buy Danske Bank's IT centre in India, which employs over 1,400 people.
- Danske Bank, headquartered in Denmark, provides banking services to individuals and businesses, as well as large corporations and institutions

#### Key Points

|                  |                        |
|------------------|------------------------|
| Infosys HQ       | – Banaglore, Karnataka |
| Infosys Chairman | – Nandan Nilekani      |
| MD and CEO       | – Salil Parekh         |

### Cabinet approves establishment of Regional Office of Universal Postal Union (UPU)

- The Union Cabinet has approved to establish a Regional Office of the Universal Postal Union (UPU) in New Delhi, India to undertake UPU's development cooperation and technical assistance activities in the region by entering into an agreement with UPU.
- The approval enables India to play active role at multilateral organisations in postal sector with emphasis on South-South and Triangular cooperation.
- India will provide a Field Project Expert, staff and office set up for UPU's regional office. Projects on capacity building and trainings, improving efficiency and quality of postal services, enhancement of Postal technology, e-commerce and trade promotion etc., will be prepared and implemented for the region by this office in coordination with UPU.
- The initiative would help expanding India's diplomatic footprint and strengthen relations with other countries, specially in Asia-Pacific region and will enhance India's presence at the global postal forums.

#### Key Points

|                      |                     |
|----------------------|---------------------|
| UPU HQ               | – Bern, Switzerland |
| UPU Director General | – Masahiko Metoki   |

### World Bank Grants USD 255.5 Million Loan to Enhance Technical Education in India

- The World Bank has granted its approval for a USD 255.5 million loan aimed at enhancing the quality of technical education in government-run institutions across India.
- This funding will support approximately 275 selected government-run technical institutions over the course of the next five years, benefiting more than 350,000 students annually.
- The Multidisciplinary Education and Research Improvement in Technical Education Project will focus on improving student skills and employability through various measures.
- The project will emphasise enhanced research capabilities, entrepreneurship, and innovation. Additionally, it aims to improve the governance of technical institutions.
- Under this initiative, students will gain access to upgraded curricula that include emerging technologies in communication and climate resilience.
- The project will also facilitate improved internship and placement services, providing students with networking opportunities within professional associations.

#### Key Points

|               |                     |
|---------------|---------------------|
| World Bank HQ | – Washington DC, US |
| President     | – Ajay Banga        |
| MD & CFO      | – Anshula Kant      |

### Railways signs pact with US agency to boost clean energy solutions

- Indian Railways (IR) is proactively working towards the achievement of Net Zero Carbon Emission by 2030. In line with this, a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed between Indian Railways, the Government of India and United States Agency for International Development/India (USAID/India) for collaboration on Renewable energy and Energy Efficiency.

- USAID is an agency of the U.S. Government that supports international development and advances its Mission objectives by supporting economic growth, agriculture and trade, clean energy, climate change mitigation and adaptation, global health, democracy and conflict mitigation and management, and humanitarian assistance.
- Through MoU, technical assistance and support would be provided to Indian Railways.

#### **GoI approved Micron's \$2.7 bn semiconductor packaging plant**

- The Indian cabinet has given its approval to US chipmaker Micron Technology's plan to invest \$2.7 billion to set up a semiconductor testing and packaging unit in Gujarat.
- The government will provide production-linked incentives worth ₹11,000 crores for the semiconductor plant.
- Micron Technology's plans come as the White House presses US chip companies to invest in India with talks ongoing about possible further investments.
- This investment is expected to boost India's semiconductor industry and aligns with Prime Minister Modi's vision of making India a global hub for semiconductor production.
- The new facility is anticipated to create jobs and enhance India's capabilities in the sector, contributing to its digital ambitions and self-reliance in advanced technologies.

#### **GE Aerospace Signs MoU with HAL to Produce Fighter Jet Engines for IAF**

- In a landmark deal that gives a massive boost to ties between the US and India, General Electric (GE) Aerospace signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) to produce fighter jet engines for the Indian Air Force.
- This pact marks "a major milestone" and is "a key element in strengthening defence cooperation between the two countries".
- The agreement includes the potential joint production of GE Aerospace's F414 engines in India, for which it is working with the US government to receive necessary export authorisation. The F414 engines will power the IAF's Light Combat Aircraft Mk2 jets.

- India's first indigenous fighter jet LCA Tejas is powered by GE's F404 engines.

#### **India gifts missile corvette INS Kirpan to Vietnam**

- India gifted the indigenously-built in-service missile corvette INS Kirpan to Vietnam to enhance that country's naval capabilities.
- Missile Corvette INS Kirpan is a Khukri class warship and was commissioned in 1991.

#### **RBI Chief Shaktikanta Das Named 'Governor Of The Year' At London's Central Banking Awards**

- RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das was chosen for the prestigious Governor of the Year Award 2023. The RBI Governor was honoured because he has cemented critical reforms, overseen world-leading payments innovation and steered India through difficult times with a steady hand and well-crafted turn of phrase.
- He was conferred the award by 'Central Banking' which definitively covers and analyses issues around the world's central banks and financial regulators.

#### **RBI not to regulate social media influencers**

- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has stated that it does not have any immediate plans to introduce distinct regulations governing the activities of social media influencers in the financial markets.
- However, the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) already has measures in place to address this issue. SEBI has been actively considering directives to restrict the influence of financial influencers, such as brokers and mutual funds, in order to combat the proliferation of financial advice disseminated through social media platforms.
- The Advertising Standards Council of India has laid down guidelines for influencers, who can influence purchasing and investing decisions.
- Abusive market practices are prohibited under the provisions of the SEBI Act of 1993 and the SEBI (prohibition of fraudulent & unfair trade practices relating to securities market) regulations 2003.
- Section 12 A of the SEBI Act prohibits any action of commission or omission relating to securities or issues, via any scheme or device amounting to deceptive practices, fraudulent trade practices, unfair trade practices or manipulative trade practices (collectively referred to as abusive market practices).



**Key Points**

- |                    |                       |
|--------------------|-----------------------|
| SEBI's HQ          | – Mumbai, Maharashtra |
| SEBI's Chairperson | – Madhabi Puri Buch   |

**India and UAE Target \$100 Billion Non-Oil Trade by 2030**

- India and the UAE set a target to increase the non-oil trade from USD 48 billion to USD 100 billion by 2030. At present, the non-oil bilateral trade stands at \$48 billion.
- The new target was agreed upon during the first meeting of the Joint Committee of India-UAE Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA). The agreement was implemented on May 1 last year.
- The UAE is a major supplier of crude oil to India.

**Indo-Maldives Joint Military Exercise "Ekuverin" Commences At Chaubatia, Uttarakhand**

- The 12<sup>th</sup> edition of joint military exercise "Ex Ekuverin" between the Indian Army & the Maldives National Defence Force commenced at Chaubatia, Uttarakhand.
- Ekuverin meaning 'Friends' is a bilateral annual exercise conducted alternatively in India and Maldives.
- A platoon strength contingent from Indian Army and Maldives National Defence Force will be participating in 14 days long exercise. The exercise is aimed at enhancing interoperability in Counter Insurgency/Counter Terrorism Operations under the UN mandate and carry out joint Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief operations.
- The focus is to share best practices and enhance coordination and cooperation between both the forces at tactical level.
- The 11<sup>th</sup> edition of the exercise was held in Maldives in December 2021. The defence cooperation between the two countries extends from joint exercises to assisting Maldives with defence training and equipment requirements. Both the nations have very close and friendly relations in economic, cultural and military cooperation. 'Ex Ekuverin' will assist in further bolstering of these ties between the two nations.

**Exploration of Coal and Lignite Scheme Extended: Unveiling India's Energy Potential**

- The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) has approved the continuation of the "Exploration of

Coal and Lignite Scheme" which entails an estimated expenditure of ₹2,980 crore.

- The time period for the extension is from 2021–22 to 2025–26 co-terminus with the 15<sup>th</sup> Finance Commission cycle, a statement from the government said.
- Under the scheme, exploration for coal and lignite is conducted in two broad stages. For promotional (regional) exploration, the outlay is ₹ 1650 crore and for detailed drilling in areas other than that of Coal India Ltd is ₹1330 crore.

**KFON internet connectivity launched by Kerala govt**

- The Kerala government officially launched the Kerala Fibre Optical Network (KFON), which is one of its flagship projects.
- KFON is an optical fibre cable network of 30,000 km, with 375 Points-of-Presence across the state. Along with the cable operators, the KFON infrastructure will be shared with all service providers. However, individual beneficiaries will have to depend on private, local internet service providers, while others will do the cable work for government offices. KFON will be provided by local ISP/TSP/cable TV providers.
- The KFON claims an internet speed from 10 Mbps to 10 Gbps and is planning to speed up the transition to 4G and 5G, once KFON is connected to mobile towers.
- KFON is a joint venture of Kerala State Electricity Board (KSEB) and Kerala State IIT Infrastructure Limited and is estimated to be ₹1,611 crore. Announced in 2017, it started working in 2019. A consortium led by Central PSU Bharat Electronics Limited took up the project implementation, where Price Water house Coopers is the consultant.
- Kerala was the first state to declare the right to the Internet as a basic right.

**Reckitt Launches First Dettol Climate Resilient School In Uttarakhand**

- Reckitt inaugurated the first Dettol Climate Resilient School in Uttarkashi, a district in Uttarakhand under its flagship campaign Dettol Banega Swasth India.
- Uttarakhand often referred to as Dev Bhoomi or the land of gods, is renowned for its natural beauty and spiritual significance. However, the state is highly vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change due to factors such as melting glaciers, increasing population pressure, seismic activities, and overexploitation of natural resources.



- Recognising the urgency to address these challenges, Reckitt aims to equip schools with the necessary tools and knowledge to create climate-resilient communities.
- The Dettol Climate Resilient School project is part of Reckitt's flagship campaign, Dettol Banega Swasth India, and aligns with the LiFE (Lifestyle for the Environment) framework introduced by India at the Glasgow summit in 2021. The initiative focuses on educating and empowering the younger generation to become climate champions, driving positive change in their communities. By integrating sustainability practices into the curriculum, the project aims to reduce carbon footprint, enhance energy efficiency, and promote awareness about climate change among students, teachers, and the wider community.

#### **RBI Governor Launches Financial Inclusion Dashboard 'Antardrishti'**

- RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das launched a financial inclusion dashboard named 'Antardrishti'.
- The dashboard would, as its name suggests, provide the necessary knowledge to evaluate and track the development of financial inclusion by recording relevant data. This tool will also make it possible to assess the degree of financial exclusion at a local level across the nation so that such places may be addressed.
- The dashboard, presently intended for internal use in the RBI, will further facilitate greater financial inclusion through a multi-stakeholder approach.
- To measure the extent of financial inclusion, RBI constructed the Financial Inclusion (FI) Index in 2021. In collaboration with the government and the relevant sectoral regulators, the FI-Index was conceptualised as a complete index that includes information on the banking, investments, insurance, postal, and pension sectors.
- The index records data on different aspects of financial inclusion in a single value ranging from 0 to 100, where 0 denotes total financial exclusion and 100 denotes complete financial inclusion.
- According to RBI, the FI-Index comprises of three broad parameters (weights indicated in brackets) viz., Access (35 per cent), Usage (45 per cent), and Quality (20 per cent) with each of these consisting of various dimensions, which are computed based on a number of indicators.

#### **RBI Launches '100 Days 100 Pays' Campaign to Settle Unclaimed Deposits**

- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) launched a '100 Days 100 Pays' campaign to trace and settle the top 100 unclaimed deposits of every bank in every district within 100 days.
- As of February end, the total amount of so-called unclaimed deposits, which are accounts that have not been operated for 10 years or more, transferred to the RBI by state-run banks was ₹ 35,012 crores.
- The campaign will complement its efforts to cut the quantum of unclaimed deposits in the banking system and return such deposits to their rightful owners/claimants.
- RBI has also announced the setting up of a centralised web portal for the public to search unclaimed deposits across multiple banks. The search results will be enhanced with the use of artificial intelligence (AI) tools to improve the access of depositors or beneficiaries to such data, the RBI has said.
- RBI terms balances in current / savings accounts which are not operated for 10 years, or term deposits not claimed within 10 years from the date of maturity as "unclaimed deposits".
- The RBI, via its public awareness initiatives, has been encouraging members of the public to identify and approach the bank concerned for claiming such deposits.
- These amounts are transferred by banks to the Depositor Education and Awareness (DEA) fund maintained by the RBI. Banks display the list of unclaimed deposits on their website.
- State Bank of India (SBI), the country's largest lender, tops the chart of unclaimed deposits worth ₹ 8,086 crore followed by Punjab National Bank ₹ 5,340 crore and Canara Bank ₹ 4,558 crore.

#### **Microsoft joins Indian Government to train 6K Students, 200 Educators in Cybersecurity**

- Microsoft signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with Directorate General of Training (DGT) under the Ministry of Skills Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE) to train 6,000 students and 200 educators in digital and cyber-security skills in the country.

- As part of this collaboration, Microsoft will offer a wide range of courses, including training in AI, cloud computing, web development and cybersecurity skills for students and 200 faculty members at government-led Industrial Training Institutes (ITIs) and National Skills Training Institutions (NSTIs).
- The 'CyberShikshaa' programme focusing on basic and intermediate cybersecurity skills training will also be expanded to students and educators at 10 NSTIs for women.
- Following the completion of a merger with Housing Development Finance Corp., HDFC has secured the fourth position in terms of equity market capitalisation. This achievement places HDFC in direct competition with leading American and Chinese lenders, including JPMorgan Chase & Co., Industrial and Commercial Bank of China Ltd., and Bank of America Corp.
- The new HDFC Bank entity will have around 120 million customers. The total business of the merged entity stood at ₹ 41 lakh crore at the end of March 2023. With the merger, the net worth of the entity would be over ₹ 4.14 lakh crore. The combined profit of both entities was to the tune of about ₹ 60,000 crore at the end of March 2023. It will have combined assets of over ₹ 18 lakh crore.

### Key Points

Union Skills Development – Dharmendra Pradhan and Entrepreneurship (MSDE) Minister

### HDFC Set to Join Ranks of World's Most Valuable Banks Following Merger

- In a historic milestone for India's banking industry, homegrown company HDFC will soon be counted among the world's most valuable banks.
- Post-merger, the key HDFC Bank subsidiaries include HDFC Securities Ltd, HDB Financial Services Ltd, HDFC Asset Management Co Ltd, HDFC ERGO General Insurance Co Ltd, HDFC Capital Advisors Ltd and HDFC Life Insurance Co Ltd.

## PEOPLE IN NEWS/APPOINTMENTS

| Name                     | Designation   |
|--------------------------|---|
| Rohit Jawa               | MD & CEO of Hindustan Unilever  |
| Kyriakos Mitsotakis      | PM of Greece  |
| Nutan Roongta            | Director of USA East Coast  |
| Rajat Verma              | MD of DBS Bank India  |
| Ajay Bhatnagar           | Special Director in the CBI   |
| Aarti Holla-Maini        | Director of UNOOSA  |
| Swaminathan Janakiraman  | RBI deputy governor   |
| Kamal Kishore Chatiwal   | MD of Indraprastha Gas Ltd. (IGL)                                     |
| Uttam Lal                | NHPC's Director of Personnel  |
| V Anantharaman           | TransUnion Cibil chairman   |
| Janardan Prasad          | Director-General of Geological Survey of India                        |
| Dennis Francis           | 78 <sup>th</sup> UNGA president                                       |
| Nirmala Lakshman         | Chairperson Of The Hindu Group  |
| Ajay Yadav               | MD of SECI  |
| Sanjay Varma             | MRPL Managing Director  |
| Ashwani Kumar            | MD of UCO bank  |
| Praveen Kumar Srivastava | Central Vigilance Commissioner  |
| Amarendu Prakash         | Chairman and Managing Director of Steel Authority of India Ltd (SAIL) |
| Eddie Yongming Wu        | CEO of Alibaba  |
| Hasmukh Adhia            | GIFT city, Chairman   |

| Name                | Designation  |
|---------------------|--|
| Ruby Sinha          | President of BRICS CCI women vertical  |
| Ravi Sinha          | Chief of Research and Analysis Wing (RAW)  |
| Aalok Kumar         | Member of the Asian Development Bank's (ADB) High-level Advisory Group on Digital Technology |
| Gopichand P Hinduja | Chairman of the Hinduja Group  |
| Amit Agrawal        | UIDAI CEO  |
| Subodh Kumar Singh  | Director general of the National Testing Agency  |
| Manoj Kohli         | Senior advisor of Deloitte   |
| Pieter Elbers       | Chair-elect of the International Air Transport Association (IATA) Board of Governors         |
| Petteri Orpo        | PM of Finland  |
| Jane Marriott       | UK's First Woman Envoy To Pakistan   |
| Nusrat Chowdhary    | First Muslim woman federal judge in US history   |
| V Anantharaman      | TransUnion Cibil chairman  |
| Sanjay Swarup       | Chairman & Managing Director (CMD) of Container Corporation of India (CONCOR).               |
| Muthamizh Selvi     | First Tamil Nadu woman to scale Mt Everest   |
| Rajesh Kumar Anand  | Air Officer-in-Charge Administration (AOA)   |
| Janardan Prasad     | Director General of the Geological Survey of India (GSI)                                     |
| Shalini Singh       | First female NCC cadet   |
| Edgars Rinkevics    | President of Latvia  |
| Sanjay Varma        | MRPL Managing Director   |
| Amarendu Prakash    | Chairman and Managing Director of Steel Authority of India Ltd (SAIL)                        |
| Nirmala Lakshman    | Chairman of Hindu Group  |
| Smriti Mandhana     | Brand Ambassador of Wrangler   |

### DAYS AND THEMES

| Date    | Day   | Theme   |
|---------|---|---|
| 1 June  | National Doctor's Day   | Family Doctors on the Front Line  |
| 5 June  | International Day for the Fight against Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing |   |
| 8 June  | World Oceans Day  | Planet Ocean: The Tides are Changing  |
| 9 June  | International Archives Day  |   |
| 12 June | World Day Against Child Labour  | Social Justice for All. End Child Labour!   |
| 13 June | International Albinism Awareness Day  | Inclusion is Strength   |
| 14 June | World Blood Donor Day   | Give blood, give plasma, share life, share often  |
| 15 June | World Elder Abuse Awareness Day   | Closing the Circle: Addressing Gender-Based Violence (GBV) in Older Age Policy, Law, and Evidence-based Responses |
| 15 June | Global Wind Day   |   |
| 16 June | International Day of Family Remittances   | Digital remittances towards financial inclusion and cost reduction  |

| Date    | Day  | Theme   |
|---------|--|---|
| 18 June | International Day for Countering Hate Speech                         |   |
| 18 June | Sustainable Gastronomy Day   | Local Flavours, Preserving Global Heritage  |
| 19 June | International Day for the Elimination of Sexual Violence in Conflict | Bridging the gender digital divide to prevent, address and respond to conflict-related sexual violence                |
| 19 June | National Reading Day   |   |
| 19 June | World Sickle Cell Awareness Day                                      |   |
| 20 June | World Refugee Day  | Hope away from home   |
| 21 June | World Music Day  |   |
| 21 June | International Yoga Day   | Yoga for Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam  |
| 21 June | International Day of the Celebration                                 |   |
| 21 June | World Hydrography Day  |   |
| 23 June | International Widows Day   | Innovation and Technology for Gender Equality   |
| 23 June | International Olympic Day  |   |
|         | Let's Move   |   |
| 23 June | UN Public Service Day  |   |
| 24 June | International Day of Women in Diplomacy                              | Breaking Barriers, Shaping the Future: Women in Diplomacy for Sustainable Development                                 |
| 26 June | World Drug Day   | People first: Stop stigma and discrimination, strengthen prevention   |
| 26 June | United Nations International Day in Support of Victims of Torture    |   |
| 27 June | International MSME Day   | Future-ready MSMEs for India@100  |
| 28 June | National Insurance Awareness Day                                     |   |
| 29 June | International Day of the Tropics                                     |   |
| 29 June | National Statistics Day  | Alignment of State Indicator Framework with National Indicator Framework for Monitoring Sustainable Development Goals |
| 30 June | International Day of Parliamentarism                                 | Parliaments for the Planet  |
| 30 June | International Asteroid Day   |   |

### OBITUARIES (NATIONAL)

| Name               | Occupation/ Field          | Place             |
|--------------------|----------------------------|-------------------|
| Hardwar Dubey      | Politician                 | Uttar Pradesh     |
| Rakesh Master      | Choreographer              |                   |
| Alby D'Cruz        | Defence personnel          | Kerala            |
| Gitanjali Aiyar    | News Anchor                |                   |
| Aamir Raza Hussain | Theater actor and director |                   |
| Gufi Paintal       | Actor                      |                   |
| Sulochana Latkar   | Actress                    |                   |
| Ved Kumari Ghai    | Sanskrit scholar           | Jammu and Kashmir |



## OBITUARIES (INTERNATIONAL)

| Name                      | Occupation/ Field                          | Place |
|---------------------------|--|-------|
| John Bannister Goodenough | Scientist                                  | USA   |
| Daniel Ellsberg           | US Military analyst                        |       |
| Cormac McCarthy           | Novelist                                   |       |
| Silvio Berlusconi         | Politician (Former Italian Prime Minister) | Italy |
| Ama Ata Aidoo             | Writer and feminist                        | Ghana |

## BOOKS AND AUTHORS

| Book  | Name of the writer        |
|---|---------------------------|
| The Yoga Sutra for children                                       | Roopa Pai                 |
| India's Finance Ministers   | Ashok Kumar Bhattacharya  |
| A Life Well Spent – Four Decades in the Indian Foreign Service    | Ambassador Satish Chandra |
| Master Residential Real Estate                                    | Ashwinder Singh           |
| Ajay to Yogi Adityanath   | Shantanu Gupta            |
| Nalanda   | Abhay K                   |
| The Power of One Thought  | BK Shivani                |
| Kathakali Dance Theatre: A Visual Narrative of Sacred Indian Mime | KK Gopalakrishnan         |
| Ringside  | Dr. Vijay Darda           |

## RANKS AND INDICES

### Times Asia Rankings 2023: IISc Tops Among Indian Universities

- The Indian Institute of Science (IISc) has secured the highest position among Indian universities in Times Higher Education's (THE) Asia University Rankings 2023 with 48th position.
- Eighteen Indian universities have made their way into the top 200 in the Times Higher Education's (THE) annual Asia university rankings for 2023.
- Overall, India has one university in the top 50, four universities in the top 100, and 18 universities in the top 200.
- China's Tsinghua University leads the rankings with the top spot, followed by Peking University and the National University of Singapore.
- It's important to note that the prestigious first-generation IITs, including those in Delhi, Bombay, Kanpur, Madras, and Kharagpur, continue to boycott the ranking over concerns regarding transparency.

- This is the 11<sup>th</sup> annual edition of the Asia University Rankings by THE, a British magazine that reports on higher education. In its assessment, THE uses performance indicators in the areas of teaching, research, citations, international outlook, and industry income. Universities from 31 countries participate in the rankings.

### India ranked 67<sup>th</sup> on Energy Transition Index, Sweden on top: WEF

- The World Economic Forum ranked India at 67<sup>th</sup> place globally on its Energy Transition Index and said it is the only major economy with energy transition momentum accelerating across all dimensions.
- Sweden topped the list and was followed by Denmark, Norway, Finland and Switzerland in the top five on the list of 120 countries.
- The report was published in collaboration with Accenture. The global energy transition has plateaued

amid the global energy crisis and geopolitical volatilities, but India is among the countries that have made significant improvements.

- Besides India, Singapore is the only other major economy showing true momentum by advancing sustainability, energy security and equity in a balanced way.

#### **Global Startup Ecosystem Report 2023: Bengaluru Startup Ecosystem Ranks 20<sup>th</sup>**

- According to the Global Startup Ecosystem Report 2023, Bengaluru(Karnataka) startup ecosystem has positioned to the 20<sup>th</sup> spot, moving two places from 2022.
- While Silicon Valley remained on top, New York City and London were tied at No 2. With this, the top three ecosystems have all held on to their positions from 2020.
- Among the emerging ecosystems, Pune has moved into the 31–40 range in 2023, from 51–60 in 2022.
- GSER is a comprehensive analysis of startup ecosystems around the world. The report, now in its 11<sup>th</sup> year, offers a detailed look into the world's top startup ecosystems, while tracking emerging trends and challenges faced by entrepreneurs.

#### **Global Competitiveness Index 2023**

- India has ranked 40<sup>th</sup> on the latest world competitiveness ranking released by the International Institute for Management Development (IMD). India has slipped three spots from last year but is still positioned better than the 43<sup>rd</sup> rank in 2019–21.
- It ranked 64 economies across the world. Denmark, Ireland and Switzerland claimed the top three spots, while the Netherlands, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Sweden, the US and the UAE completed the top 10.
- According to the IMD's World Competitiveness Centre (WCC) report, India progressed in government efficiency but lagged in business efficiency, infrastructure and economic performance.
- The IMD World Competitiveness Yearbook (WCY), first published in 1989, is a comprehensive annual report that serves as a global reference point for a country's competitiveness. It employs surveys, statistical data and trends to evaluate and rank the competitiveness of 64 countries on various aspects, including GDP, productivity, and how countries manage political,

social and cultural factors to achieve long-term value creation.

- The ranking results rely on a combination of hard data and survey responses. Two-thirds of the overall ranking results are based on hard data, which includes 164 competitiveness criteria, while the remaining one-third is derived from 92 survey questions answered by 6,400 senior executives.

#### **India moves up 8 places to 127 in WEF Global Gender Gap Report**

- India was ranked at 127 out of 146 countries in terms of gender parity— an improvement of eight places from last year, according to the annual Gender Gap Report, 2023 of the World Economic Forum (WEF).
- India was ranked 135 in the report's 2022 edition. The country had improved by 1.4 percentage points and eight positions since the last edition, marking a partial recovery towards its 2020 parity level.
- The Global Gender Gap Report serves as a crucial tool for policymakers, organisations, and society as a whole to identify areas where progress is needed and take targeted actions. It provides valuable insights into the gender disparities that persist and highlights the importance of concerted efforts to achieve gender equality.

#### **Madhya Pradesh Tops National Water Awards In Best State Category**

- Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar conferred the fourth National Water Awards in New Delhi. The awards focus on encouraging good work and efforts made by various individuals and organisations to conserve water.
- Madhya Pradesh was awarded the first prize in the best State category. In the best district category, the award was given to the Ganjam District of Odisha. The best Village Panchayat award was presented to Jagannadhapuram Village Panchayat, Bhadradi Kothagudem district of Telangana. Akashvani, Guwahati also received the second-best award in Media category.
- The Jal Shakti Ministry had announced a total of 41 winners, covering 11 categories, including joint winners, for the National Water Awards, 2022.
- Each award winner was conferred with a citation and a trophy as well as cash prizes.

## SPORTS NEWS

**Gautam Adani launches 'Jeetenge Hum' with 1983 Heroes Ahead of Cricket World Cup 2023**

- The Adani Group celebrated its Foundation Day, honoring the Indian cricket team that won the 1983 World Cup.
- The event, dubbed "Adani Day," took place on the 61<sup>st</sup> birthday of the group's founder, Gautam Adani. The Adani Group launched the "Jeetenge Hum" campaign during the event, with the goal of rallying support for Team India and boosting morale ahead of the upcoming ICC ODI Cricket World Cup 2023.
- The launch of the campaign commemorates the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of India's historic victory in 1983. This campaign draws inspiration from the Adani Group's ethos, "Kar ke dikhaya hai, Kar ke dikhayenge," symbolizing an indomitable spirit of achievement in both cricket and business.

**ICC Men's Cricket World Cup Trophy Tour 2023 launches into space**

- The International Cricket Council (ICC) unveiled the ODI World Cup 2023 trophy in a very unique way. It was launched into the space stratosphere, at an altitude of 1,20,000 feet above the Earth. The temperature at that altitude was -65 degree Celsius. The trophy has been brought back to the host country India and will now be taken across 18 countries. The ODI World Cup 2023 will be played between October and November.
- The ODI World Cup 2023 trophy landed at the Narendra Modi Cricket Stadium in Ahmedabad, where India will kick off their campaign against Australia on October 8.

**Key Points**

|          |                |
|----------|----------------|
| ICC's HQ | – Dubai, UAE   |
| Chairman | – Greg Barclay |

**Fifa Appoints Indonesia as U-17 World Cup Host**

- The International Federation of Association Football (FIFA) has announced Indonesia as the host of the 2023 U-17 World Cup, replacing Peru.
- In addition to appointing Indonesia as the host of the U-17 World Cup, FIFA also announced Colombia as the host of the 2024 U-20 Women's World Cup and

Dominica as the host of the U-17 Women's World Cup.

- Initially, the host of the youngest World Cup event was Peru. However, Peru then submitted its resignation on April 3, 2023 because their budget was prioritised for domestic needs such as economic recovery and natural disasters.

**Key Points**

|                  |                       |
|------------------|-----------------------|
| FIFA's HQ        | – Zurich, Switzerland |
| FIFA's President | – Gianni Infantino    |

**Cristiano Ronaldo Sets Guinness World Record to make 200 International Caps**

- Cristiano Ronaldo has been honoured with a Guinness World Record for achieving 200 international caps for Portugal. He reached this milestone during Portugal's Euro 2024 qualifier against Iceland.
- At the age of 38, Ronaldo has surpassed another record and now holds the title of the most-capped player in international football.
- In recognition of his accomplishment, Cristiano Ronaldo was presented with a certificate by the Guinness Book of Records before Portugal's match against Iceland. This accolade celebrates his remarkable career and his significant contribution to the sport at the international level.

**Egypt Retains World Squash Championship**

- Egypt has retained the World Squash Championship by beating Malaysia 2-1 in the final in Chennai.
- The third place was shared jointly by hosts India and Japan. India was beaten by Malaysia 3-0 in the semi-final.

**Intercontinental Cup 2023: India lifted the Intercontinental Cup after Beating Lebanon**

- India lifted the Intercontinental Cup by defeating Lebanon 1-0 in the final of the tournament in Kalinga Stadium, Bhubaneswar, Odisha. India beat Lebanon for the first time since 1977.
- Lallianzuala Chhangte and Sunil Chhetri of India were joint-top scorers of the tournament. Sandesh Jhingan of India was awarded best player of the tournament.

### Special Olympics World Games 2023: India ends campaign with 202 medals.

- India ended their Special Olympics World Games campaign with a whopping 202 medals, including 76 gold. The Indian contingent is made up of 198 athletes

and unified partners and 57 coaches who competed in 16 sports.

- India secured 76 gold, 75 silver and 51 bronze medals in the global multi-sport spectacle that celebrates unity, diversity and special skills among people with intellectual disabilities.

## AWARDS AND HONOURS

### Priya A.S. received Sahitya Akademi Award 2023 for children's literature

- Priya A S has won the prestigious (Kendra) Sahitya Akademi Bal Sahitya Puraskar 2023 for children's literature in the Malayalam language for her 2018 novel Perumazhayathe Kunjithalukal.
- The (Kendra) Sahitya Akademi Bal Sahitya Puraskar consists of ₹ 50,000 and an engraved copper plaque. She won the Kerala Sahitya Akademi Award for Children's Literature for the same novel in 2020.
- Priya drew inspiration for "Perumazhayathe Kunjithalukal" from the devastating Kerala floods that occurred in 2018.

### Alappuzha doctor K. Venugopal bags IMA award

- Dr. K Venugopal, a doctor at Alappuzha's General Hospital, has been honored by the Indian Medical Association (IMA) for his contribution to the medical field.
- He has been selected for the award in the category of community service. He is Chief Consultant in Respiratory Medicine at General Hospital, Alappuzha (city in Kerala).

### PM Modi honoured with Egypt's national honour

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi received the highest state honour of Egypt – 'Order of the Nile' – from President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi.
- This is the 13<sup>th</sup> such highest state honour that various countries across the world have conferred upon PM Modi. In the nine years of his tenure, PM Modi has received many international awards including Legion of Merit by the US Government, Companion of the Order of Fiji, and Ebakl Award by the Republic of Palau among others.

### Eminent poet Acharya Gopi to be conferred with the first Prof. Jayashankar Award

- Eminent poet, literary critic, and Sahitya Akademi Award recipient, Acharya N. Gopi has been selected

for Kothapalli Jayashankar Award instituted by Bharat Jagruthi, a cultural organisation and extended arm of Bharat Rashtra Samithi.

- The award has been instituted earlier this year for honouring the litterateurs every year.
- Acharya Gopi has so far penned 56 books including 26 compilations of poems, 7 compilations of essays, 5 translations and 3 research books.
- His books were translated to several Indian languages as also into foreign languages such as German, Persian, Russian and others.

### Salman Rushdie wins Prestigious German Peace Prize 2023

- Salman Rushdie, celebrated British-American author of Midnight's Children and The Satanic Verses has been recognized with Peace Prize of the German Book Trade.
- The Peace Prize of the German Book Trade, endowed with €25,000 (\$27,300), will be handed out in a ceremony in October during the Frankfurt Book Fair.
- The prize, created in 1950, recognises a personality committed to serving international understanding between nations and cultures through their work.

### Gita Press, Gorakhpur awarded Gandhi Peace Prize for 2021

- The Gandhi Peace Prize for the year 2021 is being conferred on Gita Press, Gorakhpur. Gandhi Peace Prize 2021, recognises the important and unparalleled contribution of Gita Press, in contributing to collective upliftment of humanity, which personifies Gandhian living in true sense.
- Gandhi Peace Prize is an annual award instituted by the Government of India in 1995, on the occasion of the 125<sup>th</sup> Birth Anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi as a tribute to the ideals espoused by Mahatma Gandhi. The award is open to all persons regardless of nationality, race, language, caste, creed or gender.



- The award carries an amount of ₹ 1 crore, a citation, a plaque and an exquisite traditional handicraft/handloom item.

#### **Ramachandra Guha's Book wins Elizabeth Longford Prize**

- Ramachandra Guha's *Rebels against the Raj: Western Fighters for India's Freedom* was announced the winner of the 2023 Elizabeth Longford Prize for Historical Biography. He was awarded £5,000 and a bound copy of Elizabeth Longford's memoir, *The Pebbled Shore*.
- Founded in 2003 by Flora Fraser and Peter Soros to honour the life of British historian Elizabeth Longford, the prize honours a historical biography that combines scholarship and narrative drive. Longford died in 2002.

#### **Child rights advocate Lalitha Natarajan wins 2023 Iqbal Masih Award**

- Chennai-based lawyer and activist Lalitha Natarajan has won the US Department of Labor's 2023 Iqbal Masih Award for the Elimination of Child Labour.
- The Iqbal Masih Award is a US Congress-mandated award established by the Secretary of Labor in 2008 that honors extraordinary contributions to combat child labour.
- The award commemorates the World Day Against Child Labour that is observed on June 12 every year to raise awareness and activism to prevent child labour.

#### **Paterson Joseph won the RSL Christopher Bland Prize 2023**

- Renowned actor Paterson Joseph has emerged as the recipient of the esteemed RSL Christopher Bland Prize for the year 2023.
- This prestigious accolade serves as a testament to Joseph's remarkable talent, versatile performances, and substantial contributions to the field of performing arts.
- The RSL Christopher Bland Prize, established by the Royal Society of Literature, is awarded annually to individuals who have made exceptional contributions to literature, theater, or broadcasting.
- This year, Paterson Joseph's outstanding body of work and his influential presence on stage and screen have been recognised with this prestigious honor.

#### **Rajindar Singh Dhatt Receives Points of Light Award**

- British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak has honoured Rajindar Singh Dhatt, one of the last surviving Sikh soldiers who fought in the Second World War with a Points of Light honour at a UK-India Week reception at 10 Downing Street.
- Dhatt, 101, was recognised for his service and his work running the "Undivided Indian Ex-Servicemen's Association" to help bring together British Indian war veterans.
- Dhatt, based in Hounslow in southwest London since 1963, was born in pre-Partition India in 1921 and fought with the Allied forces during the British colonial period.