



# Shankar School of Banking

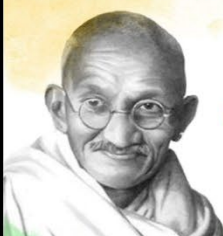
# CURRENT AFFAIRS

## OCTOBER - 2024




Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL)  
becomes the 14th Maharatna CPSE


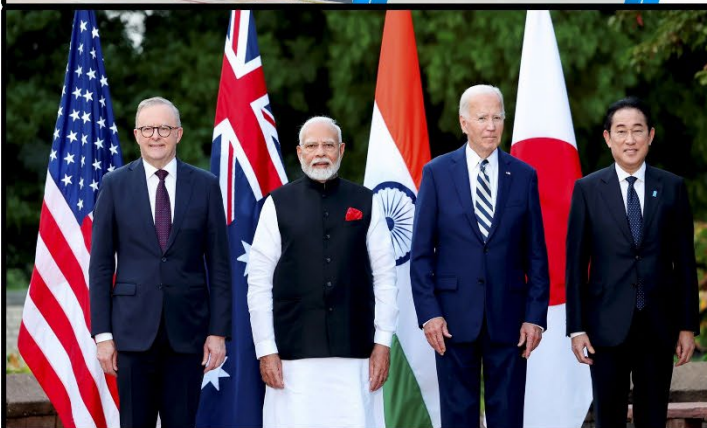
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Mahatma Gandhi



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Full List Of Nobel Prize 2024 Winners





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## **OCTOBER – 2024**

### **NATIONAL NEWS**

#### **National Centre of Excellence for AVGC-XR to be set up in Mumbai**

- ★ The Government of India has approved the establishment of a National Centre of Excellence (NCoE) for Animation, Visual Effects, Gaming, Comics, and Extended Reality (AVGC-XR) in the country.
- ★ The proposed NCoE will be in Mumbai, Maharashtra, and the hub of the Indian film industry.
- ★ The NCoE is being set up on the recommendation of the Task Force on Animation, Visual Effects, Gaming, and Comics in 2022.
- ★ The Government of India set up a Task Force on Animation, Visual Effects, Gaming, and Comics (AVGC) in 2022, headed by the then Secretary of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting Apurva Chandra.
- ★ The Task Force recommended creating a National AVGC-XR (Extended Reality) Mission with a budget outlay for the integrated promotion and growth of the AVGC sector.
- ★ It also recommended setting up a National Centre of Excellence for the AVGC sector to become an international reference point across Skilling, Education, Industry Development and Research and Innovation for the AVGC sector.
- ★ The Company will be a joint venture of the Government of India in partnership with the private sector represented by the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry and Confederation of Indian Industry.
- ★ NCoE AVGC aims to create a world-class talent pool in India to serve the Indian and global entertainment industries.

#### **Inauguration of Oxygen Bird Park (Amrit Mahotsav Park)**

- ★ Union Minister for Road, Transport and Highways, Shri Nitin Gadkari, is set to inaugurate the Oxygen Bird Park (Amrit Mahotsav Park) located on the Nagpur-Hyderabad National Highway 44 in Nagpur, Maharashtra.
- ★ It is initiative by National Highway Authority of India (NHAI), situated at Jamtha Clover Leaf along the Nagpur-Hyderabad Highway.
- ★ The park combines environmental conservation and recreational amenities with sustainable green spaces.
- ★ It integrates infrastructure development with environmental responsibility, aligning with NHAI's broader goals.
- ★ The park emphasizes sustainability through its "Oxygen Park" feature, with fast-growing oxygen-producing trees to reduce air pollution.

- ★ The park is designed to attract bird populations, creating a flourishing habitat for diverse bird species while promoting ecological balance.
- ★ The project is set to be completed at a cost of ₹14.31 crore, ensuring both environmental sustainability and recreational facilities.

### **Government's Initiative on PLI Scheme for Speciality Steel**

- ★ The Indian Government is planning a second round of the Production-Linked Incentive (PLI) scheme for speciality steel, as the initial response to the first round did not meet expectations.
- ★ This announcement was made by Steel Secretary Sandeep Poundrik during the CII Steel Summit 2024 in New Delhi.
- ★ The initial PLI scheme launched had a total outlay of ₹6,400 crore.
- ★ However, only ₹2,600 crore has been allocated so far.
- ★ Speciality steel is utilized in critical sectors such as defence, automobiles, and electrical industries, underscoring its significance for the economy and national security.

### **Telangana Government Introduces 'Telangana Darshini'**

- ★ The Telangana Government has set in motion 'Telangana Darshini', a scheme aimed at providing students with an immersive learning experience outside the classroom.
- ★ The programme, under the Youth Advancement, Tourism, and Culture (T&PMU) Department, is designed to take school and college students on educational tours across the State.
- ★ The initiative caters to school and college students, from Class 2 to graduation level, ensuring the activities are suitable for different age groups.
- ★ The Telangana Government has allocated approximately ₹12.10 crore for the program, covering travel, accommodation, and meals.
- ★ The program aims to include 100,000 students in its first year.
- ★ A committee of nodal officers from relevant departments will develop detailed tour plans, with the Telangana Tourism Development Corporation (TSTDC) co-ordinating logistics.

### **Delhi Launches "Advanced Green War Room" to Combat Air Pollution**

- ★ Delhi Environment Minister Gopal Rai inaugurated an "Advanced Green War Room" at the Delhi Secretariat, aimed at monitoring and tackling air pollution in the capital, especially as winter approaches.
- ★ This initiative is part of a broader 21-point winter action plan.
- ★ The Green War Room will operate 24/7 to track updates related to air pollution and ensure effective implementation of government measures against pollution.
- ★ The war room will be managed by an eight-member team of environmental engineers led by Nandita Moitra from the Delhi Pollution Control Committee (DPCC).

- ★ The DPCC recently took over the Delhi Government’s pollution “super-site” and mobile van, which previously provided real-time data in collaboration with IIT-Kanpur.

### **PM Modi Launched Dharti Aaba Janjatiya Gram Utkarsh Abhiyan**

- ★ Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the Dharti Aaba Janjatiya Gram Utkarsh Abhiyan in Hazaribagh, Jharkhand, on 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2024.
- ★ Prime Minister Modi was on a day-long visit to Jharkhand, where he laid foundation stones and inaugurated projects worth ₹83,000 crore.
- ★ It included Eklavya Model Residential Schools and the foundation stones of various developmental projects under the Pradhan Mantri Janjati Adivasi Nyaya Maha Abhiyan (PM-JANMAN), targeting the tribal communities.
- ★ The Abhiyan aims to fill critical gaps in social infrastructure, health, education, and livelihood through 25 intervention schemes implemented by 17 Central Government Ministries and the Department of Government of India.
- ★ The scheme’s total expenditure is ₹79,150 crore. The Abhiyan will cover around 63,000 villages in 549 districts and 2,740 blocks across 30 States and Union Territories.
- ★ It is expected to benefit more than 5 crore tribal people in the targeted areas.
- ★ Prime Minister Modi also inaugurated 40 Eklavya Model Residential Schools (EMRS) and laid the foundation stone for 25 EMRS worth over ₹2,800 crore.
- ★ The Eklavya Model Residential Schools (EMRS) was launched in 1997-98 by the Union Ministry of Tribal Affairs to provide quality education to Scheduled Tribes children in remote areas.

### **CMS Vatavaran Film Festival on Environment**

- ★ The 12<sup>th</sup> International Film Festival and Forum on Environment and Wildlife, known as CMS Vatavaran, started in New Delhi on 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2024.
- ★ Asia’s biggest green film festival, focussed on the environment and wildlife, is being held in New Delhi from 3-5 October 2024.
- ★ The festival uses films and documentaries to raise awareness about contemporary environmental issues and seeks to change the perception, practice, policy and governance regarding environmental issues.
- ★ CMS India organises the International Film Festival and Forum on Environment and Wildlife with support from the Union Ministry of Forest, Climate Change and Environment.
- ★ It has two categories: Competitive editions and Travelling Festival. The Competitive editions are held in New Delhi every two years, and films and documentaries from India and abroad are awarded.

### **Ashok Leyland Partners with FlixBus**

- ★ Ashok Leyland, a leading commercial vehicle manufacturer and flagship of the Hinduja Group, has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with FlixBus India, a global travel-tech leader focused on affordable and sustainable travel.
- ★ This collaboration aims to revolutionise India's bus transportation ecosystem through advanced technology and high-capacity vehicles.
- ★ Under this partnership, FlixBus's operating bus partners will gain access to Ashok Leyland's advanced chassis and after-sales services, facilitating seamless operations across the country.
- ★ Both companies aim to provide efficient travel options while empowering local bus operators through state-of-the-art technology.
- ★ This collaboration seeks to enhance operational efficiency, provide eco-friendly travel solutions, and contribute to the decarbonization of India's transportation sector.
- ★ Ashok Leyland aims to set new benchmarks in the commercial vehicle industry by leveraging this partnership.

### **PM-RKVY and KY Schemes for Agriculture Sector**

- ★ The Government of India has rationalised the various central sector schemes of the Union Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare into two main schemes: Pradhan Mantri Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana (PM-RKVY) and Krishonnati Yojana (KY).
- ★ The Union Cabinet, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, approved the plan in a meeting held in New Delhi on 3 October 2024.
- ★ The PM-RKVY scheme focuses on promoting sustainable agriculture, while the KY will focus on food security and achieving agricultural self-sufficiency.
- ★ Only those central sector schemes related to agriculture and implemented by the State Government have been merged. The newly approved scheme will also be implemented by the State Governments.
- ★ The total outlay for the centrally sponsored scheme Pradhan Mantri Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana (PM-RKVY) and Krishonnati Yojana (KY) is ₹1,01,321.61 crore.
- ★ The Central Government's share will be ₹69,088.98 crore, and the state's share will be ₹32,232.63 crore.
- ★ The allocation for the PM-RKVY is ₹57,074.72 crore, and the allocation for the KY scheme is ₹44,246.89 crore.

### **India to Join the Energy Efficiency Hub**

- ★ The Government of India has approved India's accession to the International Energy Efficiency Hub by giving its approval for signing the necessary 'Letter of Intent'.
- ★ The approval was given by the Union Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in a meeting held in New Delhi on 3 October 2024.



- ★ India's decision to join the International Energy Efficiency Hub is part of the Government's effort to reduce the energy intensity of the Indian economy by developing technologies and products that are energy efficient and consume less energy.
- ★ Joining the International Energy Efficiency Hub will help India gain access to a vast network of experts and resources in deploying energy efficiency,
- ★ This will help India in its effort to become a low-carbon economy and address climate change by promoting energy-efficient technologies and practices.
- ★ The Government of India has designated the Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE) as the Indian implementing agency for the International Energy Efficiency Hub.
- ★ The BEE is a statutory body established under the provisions of the Energy Conservation Act of 2001 under the Union Ministry of Power.

### **Kerala Launches India's First Supercapacitor Manufacturing Unit**

- ★ Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan inaugurated India's first supercapacitor manufacturing facility at Keltron Component Complex Limited (KCCL) in Kallyassery, Kannur, on October 1, 2024.
- ★ Keltron has been highlighted as a model public sector undertaking (PSU) in the electronics and IT sector since 1974.
- ★ The inauguration of this facility marks a significant milestone for both Keltron and India's electronics sector.
- ★ The supercapacitor manufacturing plant was developed in collaboration with the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO).
- ★ The facility, with an initial investment of ₹42 crore, is expected to boost Kerala's status as a hub for electronics industries, while also supporting the country's defence and electric vehicle sectors.
- ★ KCCL will produce up to 2,000 supercapacitors daily, meeting global standards.
- ★ The Kerala Government will invest an additional ₹1,000 crore in the electronics sector for production expansion and facility modernization.

### **Banjara Virasat Museum in Washim, Maharashtra Inaugurated by PM Modi**

- ★ Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the Banjara Museum in Washim, Maharashtra, on 5 October 2024. During his visit to Maharashtra on 5 October 2024, he visited Washim and Thane.
- ★ At Washim, the Prime Minister launched several initiatives related to the agricultural and farming sector worth ₹23,300 crore.
- ★ During his visit to Thane, he inaugurated and laid the foundation stone for various infrastructure projects.
- ★ The four-storey museum displays the rich heritage of the Banjara community and their legacies.

- ★ It tells the story of the Banjara community's history and legacies through the portraits of Banjara leaders and the Banjara movement.
- ★ Prime Minister Modi also paid floral tribute to the memorials of Banjara leaders Sant Sevalal Maharaj and Sant Ramrao Maharaj.

### **Dr. Mansukh Mandaviya Chairs the 4<sup>th</sup> General Council Meeting of the Khelo India Scheme**

- ★ The 4<sup>th</sup> meeting of the General Council (GC) for the Khelo India Scheme took place in New Delhi, chaired by Union Minister of Youth Affairs and Sports and Labour and Employment, Dr. Mansukh Mandaviya.
- ★ The meeting saw participation from senior officials from various states, prominent Sports Control Boards, National Sports Federations, and key representatives from Central Ministries.
- ★ Dr. Mandaviya announced the release of a Draft Sports Policy on the Ministry's website for public consultation.
- ★ This policy aims to modernize and update the existing framework to align with the evolving sports landscape in India.
- ★ Stakeholders, including State Governments and the general public, are invited to provide feedback. Once finalized, this policy will serve as a model for states without their own sports policies.
- ★ A dedicated portal will be created to provide information on sports recruitment across Central Ministries.
- ★ States will be encouraged to use this platform to advertise sports quota vacancies, thereby improving accessibility and transparency in recruitment.

### **Union Cabinet Approves Classical Language Status for Five Languages**

- ★ The Union Cabinet, chaired by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, has approved the conferment of Classical Language status to Marathi, Pali, Prakrit, Assamese, and Bengali.
- ★ This initiative aims to recognize these languages as custodians of India's profound cultural heritage.
- ★ The Government of India first declared a Classical Language category on 12<sup>th</sup> October 2004 by designating Tamil as a Classical Language.
- ★ A Linguistic Experts Committee (LEC) was established by the Ministry of Culture in November 2004 to examine languages for classical status.
- ★ The Ministry of Education instituted national and international awards for achievements in Classical Languages.

### **First State to Launch NITI Aayog's Women Entrepreneurship Platform Chapter**

- ★ Telangana is the first state in India to establish a chapter of NITI Aayog's Women Entrepreneurship Platform (WEP).
- ★ The WEP is aimed at fostering entrepreneurship among women by providing customized support.
- ★ It empowers women with essential digital technology skills.
- ★ It will enhance financial literacy and access to funding through partnerships with financial institutions and fintech.
- ★ It will also offers tailored mentorship programs connecting women entrepreneurs with industry leaders and experts.
- ★ It facilitates access to markets by linking entrepreneurs with investors and industry partners.
- ★ WE Hub has been designated as the nodal body for implementing the WEP in Telangana.

### **Expansion of Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana (PMUY) Gets Approval from Petroleum Ministry**

- ★ The Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas has approved the fourth expansion of the Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana (PMUY), addressing the increasing demand from economically disadvantaged households.
- ★ This expansion is crucial as over 2.6 million pending applications are yet to be covered under the scheme.
- ★ Since the launch of PMUY in May 2016, LPG penetration has significantly increased from 62% in 2016 to near saturation levels.
- ★ Despite this growth, more than 2.6 million applications are pending, primarily from economically distressed backgrounds.
- ★ The Government has approved this expansion to include more households still in need of clean cooking fuel.
- ★ It is to promote clean energy adoption and reduce the dependence on traditional cooking methods like wood and coal, improving health outcomes and reducing environmental degradation.

### **Himachal Pradesh CM Launches Sankalp Initiative to Tackle Drug Menace**

- ★ Himachal Pradesh Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu has launched a State Government initiative, 'Sankalp', to tackle drug trafficking and support the rehabilitation of drug addicts in the state.
- ★ The Sankalp initiative was announced by the Chief Minister, Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu, at an event organised by Divya Jyoti Jagriti Sansthan in the state capital, Shimla, on 6 October 2024.

- ★ The State Government will set up a state-level model of de-addiction and rehabilitation center under the Sankalp initiative at Kotla Barog in the Pachhad subdivision of the Sirmaur district.
- ★ The model center will assist drug addicts in de-addiction and help them reintegrate into mainstream society.
- ★ Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu announced that the State Government has set a goal of making Himachal Pradesh a Green Energy State by 31 March 2026.
- ★ A green hydrogen plant with a capacity of one megawatt is being set up in Nalagarh, which is expected to be operational by July 2025.
- ★ The State Government is also setting up a Center of Excellence at Kandaghat in Solan district to provide higher education to 9,000 specially-abled children in the state.
- ★ Under the Ekal Nari scheme of the State Government, free education is being provided to 23,000 children of widows and single women.

### **Assam Chief Minister Sets Target to Eliminate Child Marriage by 2026**

- ★ Assam Chief Minister (CM) Himanta Biswa Sarma announced the Government's target to eradicate child marriage in Assam by 2026.
- ★ The announcement coincided with the disbursement of the first instalment under the Mukha Mantri Nijut Moina scheme, which provides monthly financial assistance to girls pursuing higher education.
- ★ The scheme has a projected outlay of ₹1,500 crore and aims to benefit 10 lakh girl students. Girls must remain unmarried until they complete their degree courses to qualify for the payments.
- ★ The scheme excludes daughters of Ministers, MPs, and MLAs.
- ★ Beneficiaries will receive ₹1,000 for class XII, ₹1,250 for the first year of graduation, and ₹2,500 for the first year of post-graduation for 10 months.
- ★ Payments will be credited to students' accounts on the 11<sup>th</sup> of every month, starting in November.
- ★ The scheme aims to alleviate the economic burden on parents or guardians, thereby encouraging girls to pursue higher education and combat child marriage.

### **Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh Collaborate to Develop 8 GW Solar Power Projects**

- ★ Madhya Pradesh (MP) and Uttar Pradesh (UP) Governments have partnered to develop 8 gigawatts (GW) of solar power plants.
- ★ This renewable energy initiative marks a unique collaboration between two Indian states for solar power development.
- ★ The solar power generated will be shared between MP and UP, alternating every six months based on peak demand seasons:



- Madhya Pradesh: Peak demand from October to March (aligned with the rabi crop season).
- Uttar Pradesh: Peak demand from April to September (aligned with the kharif crop season).
- Initial Phase: A 2 GW solar project will be developed in the first phase, with Morena (MP) identified as a potential site.

### **Government Approves Development of Lothal National Maritime Heritage Complex**

- ★ The Union Cabinet, in a meeting held on 9 October 2024 and chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, has approved the development of the National Maritime Heritage Complex at Lothal, Gujarat.
- ★ The Heritage Complex to be developed at the ancient Indus Valley Civilisation site of Lothal will be developed in two phases.
- ★ The National Maritime Heritage Complex is being developed as an international tourist destination.
- ★ It would display India's maritime heritage from ancient to modern times and raise public awareness about it.
- ★ The Union Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways is developing the National Maritime Heritage Complex at Lothal in collaboration with the Gujarat State Government under its Sagarmala scheme.
- ★ It is being built on around 400 acres of land in the Bhavnagar district of Gujarat at a cost of around ₹4500 crore. Work on the complex started in March 2022.

### **Union Health Ministry Doubles Nutrition Support for TB Patients**

- ★ The Union Health Ministry announced a significant boost to its anti-tuberculosis (TB) efforts by doubling the monthly nutrition support for TB patients from ₹500 to ₹1,000 under the Nishchay Poshan Yojana (NPY).
- ★ This move aims to enhance the well-being of TB patients by addressing their nutritional needs during treatment.
- ★ TB patients will now receive ₹1,000 per month, up from the previous ₹500, to aid in their recovery.
- ★ Additionally, patients will be eligible for ₹3,000 to ₹6,000 in total support under the enhanced NPY.
- ★ All household contacts of TB patients will be included in the PMTB MBA initiative and will be eligible for community support to further strengthen India's TB elimination efforts.
- ★ Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) aim for global TB elimination by 2030, as India has set an ambitious target to eliminate TB by 2025.

### **NCERT Partners with Amazon for Nationwide Textbook Distribution**

- ★ The National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) has joined with Amazon to enhance textbook accessibility across India, particularly targeting remote areas.

- ★ The initiative, announced by Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan, addresses textbook distribution challenges and ensures that all students have easy access to authentic NCERT materials.
- ★ A dedicated Amazon storefront will sell NCERT textbooks at printed prices, with no extra markup.
- ★ The partnership also aims to curb the sale of pirated copies, ensuring students receive genuine books.
- ★ NCERT plans to print 15 crore textbooks for the 2025-26 academic year to meet the growing demand.
- ★ This collaboration will help NCERT extend its reach, particularly to students in remote areas who often face difficulties accessing textbooks.

### **India Eliminates Trachoma as a Public Health Problem**

- ★ The World Health Organisation (WHO) has declared that India has eliminated Trachoma as a public health problem.
- ★ India becomes the third country in the WHO South-East Asia Region to achieve this milestone.
- ★ The official certification was presented to Aradhana Patnaik, Additional Secretary and Mission Director of the National Health Mission, by Ms. Saima Wazed, Regional Director, WHO South-East Asia, at the WHO Regional Committee meeting in New Delhi.
- ★ Trachoma is a bacterial infection caused by Chlamydia Trachomatis.
- ★ It is a contagious disease, spread through contact with infected eyes, eyelids, or secretions from the nose or throat.
- ★ If untreated, it can lead to irreversible blindness.
- ★ Trachoma mainly affects underprivileged communities living in poor environmental conditions.

### **Nagaland Collaborates with Wales for 25<sup>th</sup> Hornbill Festival**

- ★ Nagaland Government has signed Wales as one of the Country Partners for the upcoming 25<sup>th</sup> Edition of the Hornbill Festival.
- ★ Chief Minister Neiphiu Rio, who is on an official visit to Wales, announced the signing of the agreement with the Welsh Government, the British Council, and Wales Arts International representatives in Cardiff.
- ★ The festival has been organised by the Nagaland Government since 2000 between December 1 and December 10 every year to showcase and promote the best of Naga culture, cuisines and music to the world.

## **Bihar Government to Establish Kaimur Wildlife Sanctuary as the State's Second Tiger Reserve**

- ★ The Bihar Government will establish the Kaimur Wildlife Sanctuary (KWLS) as the state's second tiger reserve.
- ★ Valmiki Tiger Reserve (VTR), which is the state's first national park, has reached its capacity, and now the State Government is finalising modalities for translocating the big cats to KWLS.
- ★ The Kaimur Wildlife Sanctuary is spread over an area of 1,504.96 sq km.
- ★ The number of tigers in VTR is 54 now.
- ★ The National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) granted in-principle approval for the development of KWLS as a tiger reserve during its 12<sup>th</sup> technical committee meeting.

## **ITU-World Telecommunication Standardization Assembly**

- ★ Prime Minister Narendra Modi will inaugurate the International Telecommunication Union ITU – World Telecommunication Standardization Assembly (WTSA) 2024 at Bharat Mandapam in New Delhi this morning.
- ★ The Prime Minister will also inaugurate the 8<sup>th</sup> edition of India Mobile Congress 2024 during the programme.
- ★ WTSA is the governing conference for the standardization work of International Telecommunication Union, the United Nations Agency for Digital Technologies, organised every four years.
- ★ It is for the first time that the ITU-WTSA is being hosted in India and the Asia-Pacific.
- ★ World Telecommunication Standardization Assembly is a pivotal global event that will bring together more than three thousand industry leaders, policy-makers and tech experts from over 190 countries, representing telecom, digital, and ICT sectors.
- ★ It will provide a platform for countries to discuss and decide the future of standards of next-generation critical technologies like 6G, Artificial intelligence, Internet of Things, Big Data, cybersecurity and others.

## **Hindi Language Museum to be set up in Kashi, Uttar Pradesh**

- ★ The Uttar Pradesh Government of Yogi Adityanath will set up the country's first museum of Hindi literature in Kashi (Varanasi).
- ★ The museum will be the country's first museum dedicated to a language.
- ★ There is a literary museum in Kolkata dedicated to Rabindranath Tagore, but the proposed museum in Kashi will be the first language-based museum in the country.
- ★ The Uttar Pradesh Government has allocated ₹25 crore for the project.
- ★ The museum will conserve and display the works of all the eminent Hindi scholars' old manuscripts and books.

- ★ Along with the work of famous Hindi litterateurs, their photographs, important documents, and related literature will also be available in the museum.
- ★ The museum will also have statues of the Hindi scholars, an amphitheatre and an auditorium.

### **DigiLocker has Integrated with the UMANG App**

- ★ DigiLocker, a secure cloud platform for storing and verifying documents, has integrated with the UMANG app to provide streamlined access to various government services.
- ★ This partnership significantly advances India's digital governance, allowing users to manage multiple services from a single platform.
- ★ The integration enables citizens to access multiple government services seamlessly through the DigiLocker app, making interactions with the government more efficient.
- ★ Documents stored and issued through DigiLocker are legally equivalent to physical originals, ensuring authenticity and reliability in compliance with regulatory standards.

### **Spices Board Partners with Uttarakhand Government**

- ★ The Spices Board of India, under the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Directorate of Horticulture and Food Processing, Government of Uttarakhand, to promote sustainable agricultural practices in the state.
- ★ The agreement was signed by A.B. Remashree, Director of Spices Board, during the Industry Interaction Meet held in Dehradun, in the presence of Sunil Barthwal, Secretary, Department of Commerce.
- ★ The MoU aims to identify suitable areas for expanding large cardamom cultivation and other spices in Uttarakhand.
- ★ The pilot project will enhance the green economy by improving post-harvest practices, establishing market linkages, and building farmers' capacity through forming Farmer Producer Organisations (FPOs).
- ★ This partnership aims to boost the House of Himalayas brand while contributing to sustainable development and community empowerment, creating economic opportunities for local farmers.

### **India to Host the 19<sup>th</sup> ICDRA Meeting**

- ★ India is hosting the 19<sup>th</sup> International Conference of Drug Regulatory Authorities (ICDRA) meeting in New Delhi from 14 to 18 October 2024.
- ★ India was to host the event in 2020, but due to the COVID-19 pandemic, it was postponed and is now being held in 2024. India is hosting the ICDRA meeting for the first time.
- ★ The 18<sup>th</sup> International Conference of Drug Regulatory Authorities meeting was held in Dublin, Ireland in 2018.



- ★ The meeting will bring together drug authorities from World Health Organisation (WHO) member countries to strengthen collaboration and develop international consensus on regulatory priorities.
- ★ The 19<sup>th</sup> International Conference of Drug Regulatory Authorities is hosted by the Central Drugs Standard Control Organization (CDSCO) in collaboration with the World Health Organization (WHO).
- ★ Smart Regulation: Delivering Quality Assured Medical Products for All is the theme of the 19<sup>th</sup> International Conference of Drug Regulatory Authorities meeting.

### **46<sup>th</sup> Foundation Day Celebration of Telecommunications Consultants India Limited**

- ★ Telecommunications Consultants India Limited (TCIL) marked its 46<sup>th</sup> Foundation Day on 15<sup>th</sup> October 2024 at the SCOPE Convention Center, New Delhi.
- ★ The event was attended by esteemed dignitaries, former CMDs/Directors of TCIL, and employees, celebrating the company's achievements and growth.
- ★ The event commenced with a traditional lamp lighting ceremony, followed by a recitation of Ganesh Vandana.
- ★ An audio-visual film was showcased, reflecting TCIL's journey from building communication infrastructure in remote regions to becoming a global leader in telecommunications across over 80 countries.
- ★ Shri Sanjeev Kumar, CMD of TCIL, delivered the keynote address, expressing gratitude to the employees for their dedication and contributions.
- ★ He highlighted TCIL's alignment with the government's 'Make in India' initiative and its ambitious plans for global expansion.

### **Gujarat Government Allocates ₹10 Crore for Caracal Breeding and Conservation Center**

- ★ The Gujarat Government has announced the creation of a Caracal Breeding and Conservation Center in the Chadva Rakhhal region of Kutch.
- ★ A budget of ₹10 crore has been allocated for the establishment of this center.
- ★ The center aims to protect and breed the rare and critically endangered Caracal species found in Gujarat's Kutch district.
- ★ The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) lists Caracals as a species of 'least concern' due to their larger populations in Africa, but their numbers in India are significantly lower.
- ★ A study on the historical and current extent of Caracals in India reported 19 sightings in Gujarat, all within the Kutch district, with nine authenticated by photographs.
- ★ In India, the Caracal is referred to as "siya gosh", which translates from Persian as 'black ear'.

- ★ Caracals are nocturnal animals recognized for their agility, hunting prowess, and distinctive ear tufts. They typically inhabit dry, arid regions and moist woodlands and are known to live in small herds.

### **India's National Scheme for Power Distribution and Renewable Energy Expansion**

- ★ The Central Electricity Authority (CEA) is developing a national scheme for power distribution as part of India's push to meet rising electricity demand through renewable energy.
- ★ Union Power Minister Manohar Lal announced this initiative, which aligns with India's broader goal of establishing 600 GW of renewable energy capacity by 2032.
- ★ India's peak power demand is projected to reach 708 GW by 2047, nearly three times the current demand.
- ★ The CEA aims to create 500 GW of non-fossil fuel energy capacity by 2030, increasing to 600 GW by 2032.
- ★ The CEA's plan represents an investment opportunity worth ₹9 trillion.
- ★ For the first time, the CEA is working on a National Electricity Plan to streamline power distribution, which has traditionally been managed at the state level.
- ★ This initiative is designed to enhance co-ordination between central and State Governments, as well as the private sector.

### **Delhi Implements Total Firecracker Ban to Tackle Winter Air Pollution**

- ★ The Delhi Government has imposed a complete ban on the manufacturing, storage, selling, and bursting of all kinds of firecrackers, including online sales, effective until January 1, 2025.
- ★ The Delhi police have been tasked with enforcing the ban strictly and are required to submit daily action-taken reports to a designated committee.
- ★ The firecracker ban is one of the measures under the Delhi Government's Winter Action Plan 2024 aimed at combating air pollution.
- ★ For the first time, drones will be used for real-time air quality monitoring at various pollution hotspots across the city.
- ★ The plan includes monitoring of pollution hotspots, controlling vehicle emissions, dust pollution, stubble and garbage burning, and industrial pollution.

### **CJI DY Chandrachud Inaugurated the AROHA 2024**

- ★ The Chief Justice of India, Justice Dhananjaya Yeshwant Chandrachud, inaugurated the first International Conference on Advancements of Research and Global Opportunities for Holistic Ayurveda – AROHA-2024 at New Delhi.
- ★ AROHA 2024 has been organised by the All India Institute of Ayurveda, New Delhi, an autonomous institute under the Union Ministry of Ayush.

- ★ The theme of the AROHA 2024 is Advancements in Research and Global Opportunities for Holistic Ayurveda.
- ★ The aim of the AROHA 2024 is to popularise and project Ayurveda as one of the key pillars of global health and wellness.
- ★ The conference will explore how to integrate traditional Ayurvedic practices with modern scientific advancements.
- ★ The conference will cover a wide variety of agendas, including Ayurveda, ethnomedicine, quality control, standardisation, diagnosis, drug delivery, evidence-based understanding, and globalisation.

### **Development of Border Area Roads in Rajasthan and Punjab**

- ★ The Union Cabinet, led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, has sanctioned a significant infrastructure project aimed at enhancing road connectivity in the border areas of Rajasthan and Punjab.
- ★ The project underscores the government's focus on improving facilities in these strategically important regions.
- ★ The project involves the construction of 2,280 km of roads in the border areas of Rajasthan and Punjab.
- ★ The initiative is backed by a substantial investment of ₹4,406 crore.
- ★ The development will enhance road and telecom connectivity and improve essential services such as water supply, healthcare, and education.
- ★ It aims to boost rural livelihood, ease travel, and ensure seamless connectivity between border areas and the national highway network.

### **Government Announces AI Centres of Excellence in Healthcare, Agriculture, and Sustainable Cities**

- ★ The Government of India has announced the establishment of three Centres of Excellence (CoE) in Artificial Intelligence (AI), focusing on healthcare, agriculture, and sustainable cities.
- ★ These CoEs aim to drive innovation and collaboration with industries and start-ups to address key challenges in these sectors.
- ★ AI Centres of Excellence (CoEs):
  - Healthcare: Led by AIIMS and IIT Delhi.
  - Agriculture: Led by IIT Ropar, Punjab.
  - Sustainable Cities: Led by IIT Kanpur.
- ★ These CoEs will function as solution providers and promote employment generation and wealth creation.
- ★ The CoEs are expected to play a pivotal role in AI-driven innovations across critical sectors.

## **Karnataka Government Unveils Cauvery Stage VI Project**

- ★ Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah announced the implementation of the Cauvery Stage VI project to secure Bengaluru's future water needs.
- ★ The event was held at T.K. Halli in Malavalli taluk.
- ★ The announcement followed the launch of the Cauvery Stage V project, which supplies 2,225 million litres per day (MLD) of water to Bengaluru, at a cost of ₹4,600 crore.
- ★ Prior to Stage V, Bengaluru received 1,450 MLD of water daily.
- ★ With Stage V, an additional 775 MLD has been added, benefiting 110 newly added villages in the Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP).
- ★ The Bangalore Water Supply and Sewerage Board (BWSSB) has been directed to plan the Stage VI project, which will provide an additional 6,000 million cubic feet (tmc) of water, increasing the daily supply by 500 MLD.
- ★ The Government plans to construct nine new sewage treatment plants (STPs) with a total capacity of 500 MLD to manage waste.
- ★ The total estimated cost for the Cauvery Stage VI project is ₹7,200 crore, with ₹5,200 crore allocated for drinking water supply and ₹2,000 crore for the construction of STPs.

## **2<sup>nd</sup> National Lighthouse Festival**

- ★ The 2<sup>nd</sup> National Lighthouse Festival will be observed across the country's 75 historic Lighthouses on 19 and 20 October 2024.
- ★ To mark the start of the Festival, a Lighthouse Tourism Conclave 2024 was held in Puri, Odisha, on 19 October 2024.
- ★ The first National Lighthouse Festival was held from September 23 to 25, 2023, at 75 historic lighthouses across the country.
- ★ The Lighthouse Tourism Conclave 2024 was inaugurated by the Union Minister of State for Ports, Shipping and Waterways, Shantanu Thakur, on 19 October 2024.
- ★ The Union Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways organise the 'National Lighthouse Festival'.
- ★ The main aim of the National Lighthouse Festival is to transform 75 historic lighthouses in the country into a tourist site with modern amenities such as museums, amphitheatres, children's parks, etc.
- ★ It will promote the conservation and preservation of these historic maritime Lighthouses.
- ★ It will also generation of local employment and boosting the local economy.

## **Karnataka Plans to Implement Fees for Gig Workers' Welfare**

- ★ Karnataka is set to introduce a 1-2% welfare fee on transactions conducted through aggregator platforms (e.g., Zomato, Swiggy, Ola, Uber, Rapido, Amazon, Flipkart) to support gig workers.

- ★ The Karnataka Labour Minister, Santosh Lad, stated that the state prefers to start with a lower fee of 1-2% instead of the proposed 5% under the Central Social Security Code.
- ★ The welfare fee will be passed on to consumers, leading to a slight increase in transaction costs, estimated to be a few rupees per order.
- ★ The collected fees will fund a welfare board responsible for designing social security schemes for gig workers. A sunset clause is included to prevent duplication with existing Central Government taxes related to social security.
- ★ The State Government plans to work with organizations such as IIT Bangalore and the Azim Premji Foundation to create a transaction-monitoring system for the welfare fee.
- ★ The Internet and Mobile Association of India (IAMAI) has warned that the bill could negatively affect business operations in the gig economy.

### **Uttar Pradesh Government Greenlights Development for Noida Authority and YEIDA**

- ★ The Uttar Pradesh (UP) Government approved two master plans for development projects by the Noida Authority and Yamuna Expressway Industrial Development Authority (YEIDA) over the next 15 years.
- ★ Noida Master Plan 2041 concentrates on the expansion of the Dadri-Noida-Ghaziabad Investment Region (DNGIR), also known as New Noida.
- ★ Land acquisition will involve 80 villages in Gautam Budh Nagar and Bulandshahr districts.
- ★ Approximately ₹1,000 crore has been allocated for land acquisition.
- ★ YEIDA Master Plan covers 55 villages in Bulandshahr, expanding the total area to 226 villages.
- ★ Initial area covered in phase 1 increased from 583 sq km to 769 sq km.

### **Rajasthan Government Set up Rajasthan Economic Revival Task Force**

- ★ The Bhajan Lal Sharma Government in Rajasthan has constituted a high-powered Rajasthan Economic Revival Task Force for the holistic economic development of the state.
- ★ The task force has been set up by the State Government in pursuance to the announcement made by the State Finance Minister Diya Kumari in her 2024-25 budget speech.
- ★ Chief Minister Bhajan Lal Sharma will be the Chairman of the Task Force and the Deputy Chief Minister and the Minister of Finance and Tourism, Diya Kumari will be the Deputy Chairman of the Task Force.
- ★ The Task force will identify key economic sectors, including policy formulation and implementation, skill development and education, infrastructure development, promotion of innovation and technology, promotion of Micro Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) and startups, tourism and cultural heritage, promotion of green growth.
- ★ It will also make recommendation regarding economic and employment growth of the state.
- ★ The task force will be in existence till 31<sup>st</sup> March 2028.



### **Rajasthan Government to Organise Rising Rajasthan Global Investor Summit**

- ★ The Rajasthan Government will organise Rising Rajasthan Global Investor Summit in Jaipur on 9-11 December 2024.
- ★ In order to attract potential foreign investors for the global investor summit in Jaipur, the Chief Minister Bhajan Lal Sharma led a high powered delegation to Germany and the United Kingdom.
- ★ The State Government organised a Rising Rajasthan Tourism Meet in London, United Kingdom, to attract foreign investment in the state's heritage and wildlife tourism.
- ★ The Chief Minister promoted Rajasthan as an exotic shooting location to the British filmmaker.
- ★ Speaking on the occasion the Deputy Chief Minister and Minister for Tourism, Diya Kumari said that Rajasthan attracted 1.8 crore domestic and 17 lakhs foreign visitors in 2023.
- ★ The contribution of the tourism sector in the state's gross domestic product was 12 percent.

### **Dr. Mansukh Mandaviya Launches 'eShram – One Stop Solution**

- ★ Union Minister of Labour and Employment and Youth Affairs and Sports, Dr Mansukh Mandaviya, introduced the "eShram – One Stop Solution" in New Delhi.
- ★ This event was attended by Union Minister of State for Labour and Employment, Sushri Shobha Karandlaje, and other senior officials from the Ministry.
- ★ Dr. Mandaviya noted that 60,000 to 90,000 workers are joining the eShram platform daily, indicating rising confidence in the initiative.
- ★ The One Stop Solution aims to streamline the registration for unorganised workers and enhance their access to Government welfare schemes, serving as a vital link to various benefits.
- ★ He urged all unorganised workers to register on the eShram portal to benefit from the government's social security initiatives aimed at improving livelihoods and ensuring well-being.

### **Madhya Pradesh: 'Pink Alarms' Introduced at Datia District Hospital**

- ★ In Madhya Pradesh, in a first of its kind of initiative, 'pink alarms' have been installed at the government-run district hospital and medical college in Datia.
- ★ The issue of safety of women staff at public hospitals came to the fore recently after the rape and murder of a trainee doctor at RG Kar Medical College and Hospital in Kolkata.
- ★ The pink alarm system was developed by District Collector Sandeep Makin.
- ★ Pressing the pink alarm will trigger a siren, alerting security personnel who will respond within five minutes.
- ★ The alarms are installed in the staff duty room on all three floors of the Maternity Ward, Trauma Center, and New OPD Block.

- ★ This is the first Government Hospital in Madhya Pradesh to provide such a facility aimed at enhancing the security of women.
- ★ The system ensures that security personnel can quickly reach individuals in distress, promoting a safer working environment for female staff.

### **Dharmendra Pradhan's Visit to Australia Strengthens Educational Collaboration**

- ★ Union Minister Dharmendra Pradhan's visit to Australia emphasised the critical role of education in advancing the India-Australia partnership.
- ★ He highlighted the significance of India's National Education Policy (NEP), highlighting skills-based education, digital literacy, and the potential for global collaborations.
- ★ Pradhan's engagements with Australian officials and university leaders aimed to deepen ties, explore joint initiatives, and ensure that the education systems of both nations align to prepare future-ready global citizens.
- ★ Union Minister for Education, Dharmendra Pradhan, delivered a plenary speech at the conference in Melbourne, emphasizing the evolving partnership between India and Australia.
- ★ He highlighted the 4<sup>th</sup> Industrial Revolution, stating that education should prepare students to be creators and managers of technology. India's National Education Policy (NEP) provides a framework focusing on digital literacy, soft skills, critical thinking, and interdisciplinary studies.
- ★ Mr. Pradhan highlighted the role of education as a fulcrum of the bilateral relationship, driving innovation and entrepreneurship.

### **Prime Minister Set to Launch Ayushman Bharat PM-JAY for Senior Citizens**

- ★ Prime Minister Narendra Modi is expected to launch the Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB-PM-JAY) specifically for senior citizens.
- ★ This announcement follows the recent approval by the Union Cabinet, which is chaired by the Prime Minister, for a significant expansion of the world's largest public health insurance scheme.
- ★ The scheme offers a cashless hospitalization cover of up to ₹5 lakh per year for all senior citizens aged 70 years and above, regardless of their socio-economic status.
- ★ The Central Government will finance 60% of the scheme, while states have the flexibility to expand or modify the coverage to include additional age groups.
- ★ The initiative is expected to benefit approximately 45 million families (around 60 million senior citizens).
- ★ Currently, the overall beneficiary base for the Ayushman Bharat scheme is 123 million families.
- ★ Eligible senior citizens will need to apply to access the benefits. Those covered by other health insurance schemes, like the Central Government Health Scheme (CGHS), will have the option to choose which scheme they prefer. Individuals with private insurance can also enroll in the scheme.

- ★ Beneficiaries will be issued new cards under the scheme, and the initial outlay for this upgrade is set at ₹3,437 crore. As the scheme is demand-based, there are provisions for future expansions.

### **Kerala Introduces Citizen Sentinel App**

- ★ Kerala's Minister for Transport, K.B. Ganesh Kumar, launched the Citizen Sentinel app, allowing citizens to upload photos and videos of traffic violations via the NextGen Parivahan app.
- ★ The app aims to reduce traffic violations by making enforcement unpredictable and less dependent on fixed measures like CCTV cameras.
- ★ Citizens can upload up to 8 MB photos or videos of traffic rule violations.
- ★ The app is available for download on the Play Store and includes built-in links for direct reporting to the MVD control room.
- ★ The app was developed by the National Informatics Centre (NIC) and is part of Kerala's 100-day action plan.
- ★ The app encourages public vigilance on traffic rule violations to reduce accidents, particularly affecting youth.
- ★ Kerala is the 3<sup>rd</sup> state in India to implement the mParivahan Citizen Sentinel app, following Chhattisgarh and Odisha.

### **India Pauses New Free Trade Agreements**

- ★ India has decided to pause all new Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) as part of an initiative to overhaul its strategy for maximizing trade and investment benefits.
- ★ This significant move highlights the necessity for updated guidelines that better align with India's evolving economic landscape.
- ★ The Department of Commerce is developing new Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for FTA negotiations.
- ★ The Prime Minister's Office has discussed SOPs addressing emerging issues, including labour, environment, digital trade, gender, and indigenous peoples.
- ★ The updated procedures are designed to build institutional memory for more effective future negotiations.
- ★ The new SOPs will emphasize avoiding non-tariff barriers like sustainability standards and labour regulations often imposed by developed nations.
- ★ India seeks a more balanced approach in negotiations with smaller nations, such as Sri Lanka and Bangladesh, to ensure equitable benefits from trade agreements.

### **Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma Unveils 'Mission Basundhara 3.0'**

- ★ Assam Chief Minister (CM) Himanta Biswa Sarma launches Mission Basundhara 3.0 to digitise land services to grant land rights to indigenous people.

- ★ The initiative aims to resolve land disputes and enhance governance transparency.
- ★ Applicants must prove residency in Assam since 1951 or demonstrate that three generations of their family have lived in the state for 75 years.
- ★ For certain communities (tea tribes, Adivasis, Gorkhas, Scheduled Castes, and Scheduled Tribes), eligibility can be established with refugee certificates issued before March 25, 1971.

### **Delhi Signs MoU with Education Ministry to Implement PM-SHRI Scheme**

- ★ Delhi's State Government signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Ministry of Education to implement the PM-SHRI (Prime Minister's Schools for Rising India) scheme.
- ★ Launched two years ago, the PM-SHRI scheme aims to convert over 14,500 schools into exemplar institutions across India.
- ★ The scheme spans five years with a budget of ₹27,360 crore, wherein the Centre provides 60% of the funding, and states contribute the remaining 40%.
- ★ The initiative aligns with the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 and falls under the Samagra Shiksha scheme, which covers funding needs such as teachers' salaries, uniforms, and books.

### **Central Government Approves Key Railway Projects and Launches VC Fund for Space Sector**

- ★ The Union Cabinet has approved two major railway projects worth ₹6,798 crore for the states of Bihar and Andhra Pradesh.
- ★ Additionally, a ₹1,000 crore Venture Capital (VC) fund dedicated to the space sector has been launched under IN-SPACE.
- ★ **Amaravati Rail Link Project (Andhra Pradesh)**
  - Length: 57 km, connecting Errupalem to Namburu.
  - Cost: ₹2,245 crore.
  - It connects 168 villages through nine stations.
  - It enhances connectivity to 1.2 million people.
  - It provides linkages to major ports: Machilipatnam, Krishnapatnam, and Kakinada.
- ★ **Doubling of Rail Lines (Bihar)**
  - Sections: Narkatiaganj-Raxaul-Sitamarhi-Darbhanga and Sitamarhi-Muzaffarpur.
  - Length: 256 km.
  - Cost: ₹4,553 crore.
  - It strengthens connectivity for Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, and the Northeast.
- ★ The project is strategically important as it runs parallel to the Indo-Nepal border, facilitating Indo-Nepal trade.

### **Union Labour Ministry to Convene Meeting on New Labour Codes in December**

- ★ The Union Labour Ministry is expected to organize a “Chintan Shivir” (brainstorming session) in early December to discuss the rollout of the four new labour codes and address labour-welfare policies.
- ★ The meeting will involve labour ministers from all states and Union Territories (UTs), with the aim of gauging their preparedness and ensuring a uniform approach towards implementing the codes.
- ★ The session will focus on bringing all states and UTs on board for the successful implementation of the new labour reforms.
- ★ The four labour codes, which have been part of the Centre’s long-pending reforms agenda, are designed to simplify and consolidate existing labour laws.
- ★ States have been instructed to conduct a comparative study of the draft rules they have framed concerning the new labour codes.
- ★ This analysis will be reviewed during the session to address any disparities and ensure that the new codes can be implemented uniformly across the country.
- ★ The four labour codes—Code on Wages, Industrial Relations Code, Social Security Code, and Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions Code

### **Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar Launches Panchayat Development Projects**

- ★ Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar inaugurated and laid the foundation stone for various projects worth ₹7,160 crore.
- ★ The projects include the establishment of 2,615 panchayat government buildings across different blocks in Bihar.
- ★ A panchayat resource centre was inaugurated in Sonapur, Saran district, aimed at enhancing local governance.
- ★ The launch of the e-gram kachhari court management system and the portals for several district councils were part of the inauguration.
- ★ Officials were instructed to complete the construction of all panchayat buildings by June 2025.
- ★ The Bihar Government has set a goal to construct panchayat government buildings in every gram panchayat, with initial progress reported on 330 buildings.

### **Assam Chief Minister Launches ‘Nijut Moina Scheme’**

- ★ Assam Chief Minister (CM) Himanta Biswa Sarma launched the Nijut Moina Scheme to provide monthly financial assistance, aiming to increase girls’ enrolment in higher education and fight child marriage.
- ★ The scheme targets girl students from Higher Secondary (HS) to Postgraduate (PG) levels in government and government-aided institutions.
- ★ It complements the existing free admission scheme by providing additional financial support.



- HS First Year: ₹10,000 annually (₹1,000/month for 10 months).
- Graduate Level: ₹12,500 annually (₹1,250/month for 10 months).
- Postgraduate Level: ₹25,000 annually (₹2,500/month for 10 months).
- Duration of Support: Assistance will be provided for 10 months in each academic year.
- Disbursement: The funds will be transferred via Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) starting from October 10, 2024.

## **Karnataka and University of South Wales Forge Partnership for Clean Energy Innovation**

- ★ Karnataka Renewable Energy Development Limited (KREDL) has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the University of South Wales (UNSW) in Australia to promote innovation and support start-ups focusing on clean and renewable energy technologies.
- ★ This partnership aims to accelerate the transition to sustainable energy and enhance collaboration between Karnataka and Australian institutions.
- ★ Objectives are to build capacity and support emerging technology start-ups in the clean energy sector and to foster innovation and incubation for renewable energy technologies.
- ★ The Australia-India Business Council (AIBC) played a crucial role in facilitating the MoU, reinforcing the importance of strengthening bilateral trade and investment between India and Australia.
- ★ The partnership reflects Karnataka's commitment to advancing renewable energy initiatives and building global alliances to combat climate change.

## **INTERNATIONAL NEWS**

### **NATO to Establish Northern Land Command in Eastern Finland**

- ★ The North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) will set up a new land command in eastern Finland, near the Russian border, in 2025.
- ★ This command will oversee land force operations in northern Europe during military conflicts.
- ★ The decision comes after Finland joined NATO in 2023 in response to Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2022.
- ★ Finland is organizing NATO's presence on its territory.
- ★ The new unit will be known as the Multi Corps Land Component Command and will operate under NATO's Norfolk Joint Force Command based in the United States.
- ★ The command will closely collaborate with Finland's existing land force command, which is based in Mikkeli.
- ★ Sweden, which also joined NATO in 2023, will co-ordinate foreign NATO troop visits and international drills in northern Finland.

## **India and Jamaica Signed 4 MoU**

- ★ India and Jamaica signed 4 Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to strengthen and boost their bilateral relationships.
- ★ The agreement was signed during Jamaican Prime Minister Andrew Holness's visit to India. Prime Minister Andrew Holness is the first Prime Minister of Jamaica to visit India.
- ★ During his meeting with Prime Minister Narendra Modi on 2 October 2024 in New Delhi, Prime Minister Andrew Holness supported India's bid to become a permanent member of the United Nations Security Council.
- ★ Four MoUs were also signed between India and Jamaica during the visit of the Jamaican Prime Minister. These are as follows:
  - Sharing of Successful Indian Digital Public Infrastructure with Jamaica to Promote Financial Inclusion and Social and Economic Transformation.
  - Co-operation between NPCI International Payments Limited and Egov Jamaica Limited.
  - Cultural Exchange Programme between the two countries years for 2024-2029.
  - Co-operation in Sports.

## **United Kingdom Agrees to Hand over the Chagos Islands**

- ★ The United Kingdom and Mauritius have reached an agreement under which the United Kingdom will return the Chagos Islands and the atoll of Diego Garcia to Mauritius. This agreement marks the end of British colonialism on the African continent.
- ★ The agreement was announced in a joint statement issued by the United Kingdom Prime Minister Keir Starmer and Mauritius Prime Minister Pravind Jugnauth on 3 October 2024.
- ★ Under the agreement, the natives displaced from the Chagos Islands will have the right to return and settle on the Chagos Islands, except Diego Garcia.
- ★ The United Kingdom will retain a 99-year lease of the Diego Garcia islands, where an important United States Military base is located.
- ★ The island, part of Mauritius, was occupied by the United Kingdom in 1810.
- ★ Before giving independence to Mauritius in 1968, the United Kingdom separated the Chagos archipelago from Mauritius and made it a British Indian Ocean Territory.
- ★ The main reason the United Kingdom refused to hand over the Chagos archipelago to Mauritius is the Diego Garcia atoll's military significance.

## **Mr. Joseph R. Biden Hosts Sixth Quad Leaders' Summit**

- ★ President Joseph R. Biden, Jr. hosted Prime Minister Anthony Albanese of Australia, Prime Minister Kishida Fumio of Japan, and Prime Minister Narendra Modi of India in Wilmington, Delaware, for the 6<sup>th</sup> Quad or Quadrilateral Security Dialogue Leaders' Summit.
- ★ The grouping of four democracies – India, Australia, US and Japan is known as the quadrilateral security dialogue or quad.

- ★ The aim of this grouping is to ensure a free and open international order based on the rule of law in the Indo-Pacific.
- ★ Over the past four years, Quad Leaders have met six times, including twice virtually.
- ★ The Quad is launching the historic Quad Cancer Moonshot, a collective effort to leverage public and private resources to reduce the number of lives lost to cancer in the Indo-Pacific, with an initial focus on cervical cancer.
- ★ The Quad leaders announced the Maritime Initiative for Training in the Indo-Pacific (MAITRI) to help regional partners effectively utilize tools from the Indo-Pacific Maritime Domain Awareness (IPMDA) and other Quad initiatives.
- ★ IPMDA is a co-operative initiative that aims to improve maritime awareness and response capabilities in the Indo-Pacific region.

### **Myanmar to Participate in ASEAN SUMMIT**

- ★ Myanmar will send a representative to the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) summit for the first time in three years.
- ★ The decision to participate comes as the junta struggles to address an ongoing civil war and amid diplomatic isolation since the February 2021 coup.
- ★ The civil conflict in Myanmar is expected to be a significant topic during the summit, which is being held in Vientiane, Laos from October 9, 2024.
- ★ The junta initially agreed to a “five-point consensus” plan aimed at restoring peace, but it has largely ignored the agreement while continuing a crackdown on dissent.
- ★ Myanmar’s attendance is viewed as a tacit acceptance of the five-point consensus, signaling a potential shift in its diplomatic approach.

### **EAM Dr. S. Jaishankar to visit Islamabad for SCO Summit**

- ★ External Affairs Minister Dr. S. Jaishankar will embark on a two-day visit to Islamabad to attend the Shanghai Co-operation Organisation (SCO) Summit.
- ★ The External Affairs Minister had earlier remarked that his Pakistan visit is for a multilateral event and he had ruled out bilateral talks.
- ★ This will be the first high-level visit of an Indian Foreign Minister to the neighbouring nation in nine years.
- ★ Shanghai Co-operation Organisation is a permanent intergovernmental international organisation. It comprises of nine member states – India, Iran, Kazakhstan, China, Kyrgyz Republic, Pakistan, Russia, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan.
- ★ The SCO focuses on strengthening mutual trust among the Member States, promoting their effective co-operation in politics, trade, economy, research, technology, and culture.

## **India and Colombia to Sign Audiovisual Co-Production Agreement**

- ★ The Audiovisual Co-production Agreement between India and Colombia will be signed in New Delhi.
- ★ This agreement is expected to benefit producers from both countries in pooling their creative, artistic, technical, financial and marketing resources for the co-production.
- ★ The agreement will also lead to an exchange of art and culture among the two countries. It will also create goodwill and better understanding among the people of both countries thereby boosting cultural ties between the two countries.
- ★ Currently, India has co-production treaties with 16 countries, resulting in 29 projects over the last five years. Colombia is the 17<sup>th</sup> country with which India is signing a Co-Production Agreement.

## **President Droupadi Murmu Conferred an Honorary Doctorate in Algeria**

- ★ President Droupadi Murmu was conferred the Degree of Honorary Doctorate in Political Science in Algeria.
- ★ President Droupadi Murmu is on a three-nation tour of the African nations of Algeria, Mauritania, and Malawi from 13-19 October 2024.
- ★ President Murmu is the first Indian President to visit these three African countries.
- ★ President Murmu was on a three-day official visit to Algeria from 13-15 October 2024.
- ★ President Murmu was received at the Algiers airport by the President of Algeria, Abdelmadjid Tebboune.
- ★ President Murmu held official talks with the President of Algeria, Abdelmadjid Tebboune, at the El Mouradia Palace in Algiers and discussed bilateral issues.
- ★ President Murmu was conferred an Honorary Doctorate in Political Science by the Scientific and Technological Hub, Martyr Ihaddaden Abdelhafid University of Algeria.
- ★ President Murmu also addressed the Algerian-Indian Economic Forum, jointly organised by the Algerian Economic Renewal Council and the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI).

## **S. Jaishnakar Attends 23<sup>rd</sup> SCO Council of Heads of Government Meeting**

- ★ External Affairs Minister Dr S. Jaishanakar represented India at the 23<sup>rd</sup> Meeting of the Shanghai Co-operation Organisations (SCO) Council of Heads of Government, held in Islamabad, Pakistan, on 16 October 2024.
- ★ The two-day meeting, held on 15 and 16 October 2024, was hosted by the Pakistani Prime Minister, Shahbaz Sharif.
- ★ Pakistan did not invite Afghanistan, as its observer status in the SCO has been suspended since 2021.
- ★ The SCO has two main bodies- SCO Heads of State Council and SCO Heads of Government Council.

- ★ The SCO Heads of State Council is the supreme decision-making body of the SCO.
- ★ It deals with political issues such as the organisation's objective and functioning, its relationship with other States and international organisations, and its position on various international issues.
- ★ The SCO Heads of State Council meeting is held annually, and the Indian Prime Minister attends it.
- ★ The 24<sup>th</sup> SCO Heads of State Council meeting was held in Astana, Kazakhstan, on 4 July 2024, and the 25<sup>th</sup> SCO Heads of State Council meeting will be held in China in 2025.
- ★ The SCO Heads of Government Council (Prime Minister) is the second most important body of the SCO. It deals with economic, trade, and connectivity issues and approves the organisation's budget.

### **149<sup>th</sup> Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) in Geneva**

- ★ Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla addressed the 149<sup>th</sup> Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) and emphasised the need for multilateralism in the world.
- ★ The 149<sup>th</sup> Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union was held at the IPU's headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland, from 13 to 17 October 2024. The IPU is the global organisation of the National Parliaments.
- ★ The Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union is an annual meeting in which all the members of the IPU and its various committees, including the Forum of Women Parliamentarians and the Forum of Young MPs, participate.
- ★ The Assembly provides a platform for delegates to deliberate, exchange views and galvanise parliamentary action.
- ★ The theme of the 149<sup>th</sup> Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union was Harnessing Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) for a more peaceful and sustainable future.

### **Australia's New Working Holiday Visa Program for Indian Youth**

- ★ Australia has introduced a new First Work and Holiday visa (subclass 462) for Indian citizens, enabling young Indians aged 18 to 30 to work and holiday in Australia for up to one year.
- ★ This initiative, part of the Australia-India Economic Co-operation and Trade Agreement (AI-ECTA), strengthens the economic and cultural ties between the two nations.
- ★ Indian citizens aged 18 to 30 are eligible to apply.
- ★ A total of 1,000 visas will be allocated annually to successful applicants.
- ★ The registration period for the visa ballot is from October 1 to October 31, 2024.
- ★ The visa allows working or studying short-term while spending a year in Australia.



### **India and Mauritania Sign four MoUs**

- ★ India and Mauritania signed four Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) to strengthen and deepen their bilateral ties. The MoUs were signed during President Droupadi Murmu's visit to Mauritania.
- ★ President Droupadi Murmu is on a three-nation tour of Algeria, Mauritania and Malawi from 13-17 October 2024. President Droupadi Murmu is the first Indian President to visit these African countries.
- ★ Four MoUs were signed on the occasion between the two countries include training of diplomats, cultural exchange, visa exemption and Foreign Office consultations.
- ★ India mainly exports cereals, pharmaceuticals, plastic products, cotton, ceramics, iron and steel articles, boilers, related mechanical appliances, electrical products, and chemicals.

### **First G-7 Defence Ministers Meeting Hosted by Italy**

- ★ For the first time in Group of Seven (G-7) history, the defence ministers of the G7 countries met in Naples, Italy.
- ★ Italian Defence Minister Guido Crosetto hosted the meeting. Italy holds the rotating presidency of the G-7 for 2024.
- ★ The G-7 Defence Ministers meeting was attended by the United States Secretary of Defence, Lloyd Austin, and the Defence Ministers of the United Kingdom, Canada, France, Germany, and Japan. It was hosted by the Italian Defence Minister.
- ★ The meeting was also attended by the representatives of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO), the European Union, and Ukrainian Defence Minister Rustem Umerov.
- ★ The G-7 is a group of advanced industrialised western countries: Italy, Germany, France, the United Kingdom, Japan, Canada, and the United States.

### **India Pakistan Extends Kartarpur Corridor Agreement till 2029**

- ★ The Governments of India and Pakistan have agreed to extend the validity of the Agreement on Sri Kartarpur Sahib Corridor for five years until 24 October 2029.
- ★ The latest agreement between the countries was announced by the Ministry of External Affairs on 22 October 2024.
- ★ The agreement between the two countries comes in the background of the Minister for External Affairs, Dr S Jaishnagar's visit to Pakistan for the 23<sup>rd</sup> Meeting of the Shanghai Co-operation Organisations (SCO) Council of Heads of Government, held in Islamabad on 15 and 16 October 2024.
- ★ India and Pakistan signed an agreement in 2019 to facilitate Indian pilgrims' visits to the Gurdwara Darbar Sahib Kartarpur in Pakistan for five years
- ★ The Kartarpur Corridor is a 4.1 km long road that starts in Dera Baba Nanak town in Gurdaspur district, Punjab and ends at the Gurdwara Sri Kartarpur Sahib in the Narowal district of Pakistani Punjab province.

### **World Health Organization Secures \$1 Billion for 2025-28**

- ★ The World Health Organization (WHO) has secured \$1 billion in pledges for its budget covering 2025-28.
- ★ Nearly \$700 million of this total consists of new funding commitments from various European countries, foundations, and organizations.
- ★ Meanwhile, \$300 million was made up from reaffirmed funding commitments.
- ★ The funding was announced during the WHO Investment Round Signature Event at the World Health Summit in Berlin, co-hosted by Germany, France, and Norway.
- ★ This funding is crucial for implementing WHO's Fourteenth General Programme of Work 2025-2028, which was approved by the organization's 194 Member States at the World Health Assembly earlier this year.

### **US, Japan and S. Korea to Support Digital Infrastructure in India**

- ★ The United States, Japan, and South Korea announced that they will launch a new framework to collaborate with the Indian private sector to support digital infrastructure in India.
- ★ The new framework is called the Digital Infrastructure Growth Initiative for India Framework (DiGi Framework).
- ★ The DiGi Framework will be supported by the U.S. International Development Finance Corporation, the Export-Import Bank of Korea (Korea Eximbank) and the Japan Bank for International Co-operation (JBIC).
- ★ The DiGi Framework, in partnership with the Indian private sector, will promote investments in digital infrastructure in India.
- ★ It will provide support to meet the needs of strategic digital infrastructure deals in India.
- ★ It will support projects in the information and communications technologies (ICT) sectors like Open RAN (radio access network), 5G in the telecom sector, submarine cables, optical fibre networks, telecom towers, data centres, smart cities, e-commerce, artificial intelligence (AI), and quantum technology.

## **SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY**

### **Department of Space and Technology launched the Women in Space Leadership Programme**

- ★ The Women in Space Leadership Programme (WiSLP) was inaugurated by the Department of Science and Technology (DST) in collaboration with the British Council, as part of the UK-India Education and Research Initiative (UKIERI).
- ★ The aim is to support institutions in enhancing gender-inclusive practices and fostering women's leadership in space sciences.

- ★ The initiative is supported by Coventry University.
- ★ The programme aims to develop the leadership capacity of 250 early-career researchers, providing them with tools to navigate gender biases and establish a sustainable support network.
- ★ The programme involves Building sustainable mentoring networks and Enhancing scientific innovation by integrating a gender perspective into key areas such as astrophysics and telecommunications.

### **Google Enhances its AI Capabilities in India with The Launch of Gemini AI Mobile App**

- ★ At the 10<sup>th</sup> edition of its Google for India event, Google unveiled several significant AI initiatives, including the Gemini model, which enhances Google Search and Maps.
- ★ The AI voice chat feature, Gemini Live, is being introduced in Hindi, with plans to add support for eight additional Indian languages: Bengali, Gujarati, Kannada, Malayalam, Marathi, Telugu, Tamil, and Urdu.
- ★ The Gemini app assists Indian users in various tasks, including academic support and creative inspiration, and offers services in users' preferred languages. Over 40% of Gemini's Indian language users are utilizing voice interactions, reflecting a growing trend in voice-assisted technology.
- ★ Gemini Live facilitates real-time conversations, allowing users to interrupt, ask follow-up questions, and adapt to their conversation style
- ★ Google aims to educate 10 million Indians on AI over the next few years, providing resources through platforms like YouTube and Google Cloud Skills Boost.

### **Government Allocates ₹1,000 Crore Venture Fund for Space Startups**

- ★ The Indian Government has earmarked ₹1,000 crore for a Venture Fund dedicated to space startups, as announced by Jitendra Singh, Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Science and Technology, during a media briefing.
- ★ This initiative is part of the first 100 days of the Modi 3.0 Government, highlighting the government's commitment to prioritizing the space sector.
- ★ The space sector is identified as one of the top priorities of the Government in its third term (3.0).
- ★ Four years ago, a revolutionary step was taken to open the space sector to private players.
- ★ New India Space Limited (NISL) was established as a new PSU, and IN-SPACe India serves as the interface with the private sector.
- ★ The Government allows 100% FDI in the space sector, providing a significant boost to new initiatives and entrepreneurs.
- ★ Space technology is increasingly contributing to various sectors, including agriculture, infrastructure, urban development, and healthcare.

### **Bharti Airtel and Nokia Partner to Launch “Green 5G” Initiative**

- ★ Bharti Airtel and Nokia have announced a Green 5G initiative aimed at introducing energy-efficient solutions to Airtel’s mobile network.
- ★ The project focuses on improving energy efficiency across Airtel’s 4G/5G Radio Access Network (RAN) using advanced technologies such as AI/ML and innovative software features.
- ★ The initiative is projected to reduce Airtel’s carbon emissions by an estimated 143,413 metric tons of CO<sub>2</sub> annually.
- ★ It targets energy efficiency improvements during both peak and off-peak hours.

### **Meta Unveils New AI Model “Movie Gen” Capable of Creating Realistic Video and Audio Clips**

- ★ Facebook owner Meta opens a new tab and announced that it had built a new AI model called Movie Gen that can create realistic-seeming video and audio clips in response to user prompts, claiming it can rival tools from leading media generation startups like OpenAI and ElevenLabs.
- ★ The model can generate personalized videos using actual photos of individuals, placing them in various scenarios.
- ★ Movie Gen can produce high-definition (1080p) videos.
- ★ Videos can be up to 16 seconds long at 16 frames per second (FPS).
- ★ The model supports variable resolutions, durations, and different aspect ratios.
- ★ Movie Gen can generate audio corresponding to the video content using both video-to-audio and text-to-audio techniques.
- ★ It produces 48kHz audio quality with cinematic sound effects and music synchronized with the video.
- ★ The model has been trained for both text-to-image and text-to-video tasks, enhancing its versatility in content creation.

### **National Space Commission Approves India’s Fifth Lunar Mission**

- ★ The National Space Commission has cleared India’s fifth lunar mission, named the Lunar Polar Exploration Mission (LUPEX).
- ★ LUPEX is a joint mission between the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) and the Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA).
- ★ It will also involve observation instruments from NASA and the European Space Agency (ESA).
- ★ The mission aims to explore the Moon’s southern polar region, focusing on investigating the presence of water and other elements, potentially as surface ice.
- ★ The mission intends to showcase advanced surface exploration technologies, particularly in vehicular transport and lunar night survival.

- ★ The LUPEX mission is currently scheduled for launch in 2025.
- ★ It is expected to operate for up to 100 days on the lunar surface, significantly longer than Chandrayaan-3's operational period.

### **First Woman on Moon to Wear Prada-Designed Spacesuit**

- ★ The first woman to set foot on the Moon will be dressed in a designer spacesuit, thanks to collaboration between the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) and Italian fashion house Prada.
- ★ As part of Nasa's historic Artemis III mission to the lunar South Pole, Prada has teamed up with Axiom Space to create a cutting-edge spacesuit for the astronauts heading to the Moon in 2026.
- ★ The mission is expected to be a monumental leap for space exploration, as it not only marks Nasa's return to the Moon but will also be the first time a woman walks on its surface.
- ★ The spacesuit, although highly innovative, retains a nod to the classic design worn by Apollo astronauts during their lunar expeditions more than 50 years ago.
- ★ The spacesuit, known as the Axiom Extravehicular Mobility Unit (AxEMU), is designed not just for aesthetics but for performance, durability, and adaptability.
- ★ It can withstand the coldest temperatures in one of the most hazardous environments in space, ensuring safety and functionality for male and female astronauts alike.

### **Zydus Lifesciences Receives World Health Organisation Prequalification**

- ★ Indian pharmaceutical company Zydus Lifesciences Limited announced that its typhoid vaccine, ZyVac TCV, has received World Health Organization (WHO) prequalification, making it eligible for United Nations procurement programs.
- ★ The prequalification allows Zydus to participate in UN procurement programs, which acquire around 150 million doses of typhoid conjugate vaccines annually.
- ★ ZyVac TCV is indigenously developed and manufactured at Zydus Biotech Park in Ahmedabad and is indicated for active immunization against Salmonella typhi infection for ages 6 months to 65 years.
- ★ The vaccine will be distributed primarily in regions where typhoid is most prevalent, such as India, Africa, and Southeast Asia.
- ★ According to GAVI (2022) data, typhoid fever causes 11 to 21 million cases and 117,000 to 161,000 deaths annually worldwide.
- ★ India accounts for 75% of typhoid cases and mortality in South Asia, a region heavily affected by the disease.

### **India Launches 4<sup>th</sup> Nuclear Submarine Equipped with Advanced Weapons**

- ★ India's fourth nuclear-powered ballistic missile submarine (SSBN), referred to as S4\*, was launched into water at the Ship Building Centre in Visakhapatnam.



- ★ This submarine is bigger and more capable than the first, INS Arihant (S2), which is essentially a technology demonstrator developed under the Advanced Technology Vessel programme.
- ★ The S4\* features significant indigenous content, showcasing extensive involvement from the Indian industry.
- ★ INS Aridhman (S4), is undergoing sea trials and is expected to be commissioned in 2025.
- ★ The S4\* is equipped with an improved reactor and the capability to carry K-4 submarine-launched ballistic missiles (SLBMs), with a range of 3,500 km.

### **NASA Launches Europa Clipper**

- ★ The National Aeronautics and Space Administration's (NASA's) Europa Clipper has embarked on its long voyage to Jupiter, where it will investigate Europa, a moon with an enormous subsurface ocean that may have conditions to support life.
- ★ The spacecraft launched aboard a SpaceX Falcon Heavy rocket from Launch Pad 39A at NASA's Kennedy Space Center in Florida.
- ★ Objective is to study Jupiter's moon Europa, known for its potential to harbor life due to its subsurface ocean.
- ★ Europa Clipper carries the largest solar arrays ever used for an interplanetary mission, spanning 100 feet (30.5 meters) when fully deployed.
- ★ The spacecraft weighs about 13,000 pounds (5,900 kilograms) when fully loaded with propellant.

### **IndiaAI and Meta Establish 'Srijan' Center for Generative AI at IIT Jodhpur**

- ★ IndiaAI and Meta have partnered to launch the Center for Generative AI, Srijan at IIT Jodhpur.
- ★ Additionally, they have introduced the "YuvAi Initiative for Skilling and Capacity Building", in collaboration with the All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE), to promote open-source AI development in India.
- ★ This collaboration aims to advance research, skill development, and fostering innovation in AI to support India's vision of tech sovereignty.
- ★ Meta will support the establishment of Srijan, a center dedicated to Generative AI research at IIT Jodhpur.
- ★ The center will focus on the ethical and responsible development of AI technologies, fostering open science innovation.
- ★ It aims to empower researchers, students, and practitioners through education, capacity building, and policy advisory, ensuring responsible AI development and deployment.
- ★ Meta, in collaboration with MeitY and AICTE, launched the YuvAi Initiative to bridge the AI talent gap in India.

- ★ The Srijan Center and YuvAi Initiative will play a crucial role in equipping India's youth with the skills needed to lead in the AI revolution, ultimately driving inclusive growth and contributing to the nation's economic and technological advancement.

### **NASA Introduces New Telescope for Gravitational Wave Research in Space**

- ★ The US National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) unveiled a newly developed prototype of a telescope that can be used to study gravitational waves in outer space.
- ★ The telescope is part of a collaborative mission between NASA and the European Space Agency (ESA) known as the Laser Interferometer Space Antenna (LISA).
- ★ The primary goal of the LISA mission is to detect and study gravitational waves through the deployment of three spacecraft arranged in a triangular formation.
- ★ Each side of the triangle will measure 1.6 million miles (approximately 2.57 million kilometres), with each spacecraft spaced about 2.5 million kilometres apart.
- ★ Each spacecraft will be equipped with two telescopes that will detect infrared laser beams transmitted from the other spacecraft.
- ★ The spacecraft will operate in a heliocentric orbit located around 50 million kilometres from Earth.
- ★ Researchers aim to detect gravitational waves by observing changes in the characteristic patterns of the spacecraft as they respond to gravitational waves.
- ★ The LISA mission is expected to be launched by 2030, aiming to enhance our understanding of gravitational waves and their sources.

## **BANKING, FINANCE & ECONOMICS NEWS**

### **Employees' Provident Fund Organisation Enhances Efficiency**

- ★ The Centre for Development of Advanced Computing (C-DAC), under the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY), developed new software for Employee Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO), reducing claim rejections and improving settlement efficiency.
- ★ The new software has made claim settlements 30% faster.
- ★ Rejection rates, which had increased from 13% in 2017-18 to 34% in 2022-23, have now decreased significantly after the upgrade.
- ★ In 2022-23, out of 52.1 million total claims for final PF settlement, transfer claims, and withdrawal claims, 25.8% (13.4 million claims) were rejected, while 72.4% (37.7 million claims) were successfully settled.
- ★ Rejection rates had raised due to data discrepancies and IT infrastructure issues.

- ★ The Government is working on a centralised database for EPFO, which will store subscriber records in one place, even if they change locations. This system is expected to be operational in the next two months.
- ★ Improving IT infrastructure and data accuracy has been the main area of focus post software upgrade.
- ★ This initiative promotes ease of living by streamlining the claim settlement process.

### **Amalgamation of RajapurSahakari Bank and Malad Sahakari Bank in Mumbai, Maharashtra**

- ★ The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has sanctioned the Scheme of Amalgamation of The RajapurSahakari Bank Limited., Mumbai, Maharashtra with The Malad Sahakari Bank Limited., Mumbai, Maharashtra.
- ★ The sanction has been made under Sub-Section (4) of Section 44A read with Section 56 of the Banking Regulation Act, 1949.
- ★ The Scheme of Amalgamation will come into effect from September 23, 2024.
- ★ After the amalgamation, the branches of The RajapurSahakari Bank will function as branches of The Malad Sahakari Bank starting from September 23, 2024.

### **YES BANK and Paisabazaar Introduce 'PaisaSave' Cashback Credit Card**

- ★ Paisabazaar, India's leading online marketplace for consumer credit and free credit score platform, has partnered with YES BANK, India's sixth largest private sector bank, to unveil their co-branded credit card – YES BANK Paisabazaar PaisaSave Credit Card.
- ★ The PaisaSave Credit Card is designed to reward frequent shoppers by offering substantial cashback on everyday purchases, both online and offline, making it a must-have for the value-conscious customers.
- ★ Cashback of 3% on online purchases across popular platforms including Amazon, Myntra, Flipkart, Nykaa, Swiggy, Zomato, Tata Cliq, Ajio, among others
- ★ After reaching a monthly cashback limit of INR 5,000 on online transactions, users will continue to earn 1.5% cashback on further online purchases
- ★ Unlimited 1.5% cashback on all offline purchases, including in-store transactions
- ★ Fuel surcharge waiver of 1% at all fuel stations
- ★ Additionally, customers can opt for a virtual YES BANK Rupay Credit Card while applying, enabling them to make UPI payments seamlessly, further expanding the card's utility.

### **EaseMyTrip unveils ScanMyTrip**

- ★ Online travel tech platform in India, com has introduced ScanMyTrip.com, the country's first travel marketplace of its kind.
- ★ It has also become the first OTA (Online Travel Agency) to both offer and purchase travel services through the ONDC Network. ScanMyTrip.com will serve as a platform where OTAs,

MSMEs, travel agents, and homestays can list services such as flights, hotels, and accommodations on the ONDC Network, expanding their reach within the digital marketplace.

- ★ With EaseMyTrip's collaboration with the ONDC Network, businesses in the travel and tourism sector can benefit from the digital infrastructure provided by ONDC.
- ★ This partnership enables even small-scale service providers to access a larger customer base.

### **Jana Small Finance Bank Introduces 'Liquid Plus Fixed Deposit' Scheme**

- ★ Jana Small Finance Bank has introduced the 'Liquid Plus Fixed Deposit' scheme.
- ★ The scheme is designed for investors looking to park extra funds for short durations.
- ★ The tenure for the Liquid Plus Fixed Deposit ranges from 7 days to 180 days.
  - Retail Deposits: Minimum deposit amount of ₹10 lakh for amounts up to ₹3 crore.
  - Bulk Deposits: Minimum deposit of ₹3 crore to ₹200 crore per customer.
  - Interest Rate: The interest rate for the Liquid Plus Fixed Deposit is 6.75% for all tenures.

### **Monetary Policy Committee of the RBI**

- ★ The Government of India has reconstituted the Monetary Policy Committee of the Reserve Bank of India and appointed three new members: Prof. Ram Singh, Saugata Bhattacharya, and Dr. Nagesh Kumar.
- ★ The Finance Act of 2016 amended the Reserve Bank of India Act 1934 and provided for a six-member Monetary Policy Committee.
- ★ The Central Government notified the first Monetary Policy Committee of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on 29 September 2016.
- ★ The term of the members appointed by the Government is four years, and they are not eligible for re-appointment.
- ★ The Government can remove them from their office on certain grounds, and they can also resign from their office.

### **Star Health Takes Legal Action against Telegram**

- ★ Insurer Star Health has filed a lawsuit against social media platform Telegram and a 'hacker' after it was discovered that the hacker was using the messaging application to leak company data.
- ★ Star has received a temporary injunction from a court in Tamil Nadu ordering Telegram to block any chatbots or websites "that make available the data online".
- ★ The hacker, identified as xenZen, allegedly shared the stolen data on Telegram, with millions of individuals' private information reportedly up for sale.
- ★ Star Health and Allied Insurance, India's largest standalone health insurer, is facing a crisis after a massive data breach exposed the sensitive information of 31 million customers.

- ★ The breach, one of the biggest in Indian history, reportedly involved 24 terabytes of data being leaked, includes personal information such as names, phone numbers, addresses, tax details, medical records, and identification documents.

### **IDFC FIRST Bank Unveils Ashva Credit Card**

- ★ IDFC FIRST Bank, a leader in innovative financial solutions, has announced the launch of the Ashva Credit Card, its newest offering for the modern, discerning customer.
- ★ The Ashva Credit Card, powered by Visa, is a celebration of the spirit and aspiration of the new India.
- ★ Deeply rooted in its rich cultural heritage the Card represents a perfect amalgamation of the beauty of Indian heritage and the sophistication of contemporary lifestyles.

### **Axis Bank Launches Corporate Credit Card Suite for Startups**

- ★ Axis Bank introduced a Corporate Credit Card Suite specifically designed for start-ups under its New Economy Group (NEG).
- ★ The credit card suite aims to streamline travel, official expenses, and vendor payments for entrepreneurs and start-ups.
- ★ Executive Corporate Credit Card: Tailored for founders with benefits like enhanced credit limits, 4 complimentary golf rounds, reduced foreign exchange markup, and exclusive insurance perks.
- ★ Purchase Reward Credit Card: Focused on expense management with features like zero joining fees, automated accounting, and expense tracking.
- ★ Axis Bank partnered with the Tech Entrepreneurs Association of Mumbai (TEAM) to further support Mumbai's start-up ecosystem.
- ★ These initiatives were announced at Axis Bank's flagship event called Start-Up Social, attended by over 200 start-up founders and ecosystem players in Mumbai.

### **SBI Chairman Setty Announces Plans to Expand the Network by adding 600 Branches**

- ★ State Bank of India (SBI) is planning to open 600 branches across the country in the current financial year in a bid to tap business opportunities in emerging areas including large residential townships.
- ★ SBI has a total of 22,542 branches as of March 2024.
- ★ In FY24, SBI opened 137 new branches, including 59 in rural areas.
- ★ SBI operates 65,000 ATMs and has 85,000 business correspondents.
- ★ SBI has launched a large-scale outreach program to boost deposit mobilization across its branch network.



### **PFRDA Permits Subscribers to Maintain 50% Equity Investment until the age of 45**

- ★ The Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority (PFRDA) is set to introduce a new National Pension Scheme (NPS) that allows subscribers to maintain 50% of their investment in equity funds until the age of 45.
- ★ Presently, the NPS permits 50% investment in equity funds only until the age of 35, after which the allocation to debt funds increases
- ★ The new NPS balance lifecycle scheme is designed to manage risks and returns effectively and is expected to launch in July or August, 2024.
- ★ Under the new scheme, subscribers can have a maximum of 50% equity allocation, with tapering starting only after they turn 45, allowing for greater corpus accumulation for retirement.
- ★ Current NPS subscribers will have the option to transition to this new scheme, and all pension funds will offer the revised NPS balance lifecycle scheme.
- ★ PFRDA aims to enhance NPS outreach through regional rural banks.
- ★ In FY24, 1.2 crore new subscribers joined APY, with a target of 1.3 crore for the current financial year.

### **PhonePe collaborates with Jar**

- ★ PhonePe announced its partnership with Jar to introduce a new 'Daily Savings' feature on its platform for purchase of digital gold.
- ★ This allows users to save in 24K digital gold through daily incremental contributions.
- ★ With 'Daily Savings', PhonePe aims to help individuals develop consistent savings habits by allowing them to save amounts starting from ₹10 up to a maximum of ₹5,000 each day in digital gold.
- ★ Jar's integrated 'Gold Tech' solution simplifies digital gold investments in under 45 seconds.
- ★ Initially exclusive to its users, it is now available to partner businesses, enabling their users to save in digital gold.
- ★ PhonePe Group is India's leading fintech company.
- ★ Its flagship product, the PhonePe digital payments app, was launched in Aug 2016.

### **National Payments Corporation of India to Create UPI-style Payment System**

- ★ The overseas arm of India's National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) will build a digital payments system for Trinidad and Tobago, modelled after India's Unified Payments Interface (UPI).
- ★ The NPCI International Payments Limited (NIPL) signed a deal with the Ministry of Digital Transformation of Trinidad and Tobago to build a digital payments system modelled after India's Unified Payments Interface (UPI) for person-to-person (P2P) and person-to-merchant (P2M) transactions.

- ★ The NPCI, a quasi-regulator under the central bank, is a public non-profit organisation that oversees India's retail payment systems, including UPI, the country's most popular mode of digital payments.
- ★ Earlier in 2024, NIPL had agreed to develop digital payments systems for Peru and Namibia, using UPI as a blueprint.
- ★ The NPIL, carved out of the NPCI to promote the adoption of India's payment systems overseas, is also in talks with African and South American countries to help them build payments systems.

### **Axis Bank Provides ₹1 billion Loan to Muthoot Capital**

- ★ Axis Bank has extended a ₹1 billion loan guarantee to non-bank lender Muthoot Capital, aimed at promoting e-mobility in India.
- ★ The loan will help Muthoot Capital offer financing to rural and non-metro customers for purchasing electric two-wheelers.
- ★ GuarantCo, part of the Private Infrastructure Development Group (PIDG), is providing a 65% on-demand credit guarantee to Axis Bank for this transaction.
- ★ The loan is part of a broader \$200 million electric vehicle (EV) framework agreement between GuarantCo and Axis Bank.
- ★ The framework agreement aims to mobilize \$300 to \$400 million (INR equivalent) to finance India's e-mobility ecosystem.
- ★ This is the third transaction under the EV framework agreement, following a ₹2.5 billion loan to Vivriti Capital in December 2023.
- ★ The initiative seeks to accelerate electric vehicle adoption in rural and non-metro areas, particularly focusing on electric two-wheelers.

### **ADB Grants \$162 MN To Support Tourism Development**

- ★ The Asian Development Bank (ADB) announced that it has sanctioned a USD 162 million loan to Himachal Pradesh to support tourism development in the state.
- ★ The loan has been provided to finance the State Government's Sustainable and Inclusive Tourism Development Project.
- ★ The State Government's Sustainable and Inclusive Tourism Development Project aims to revive the tourism economy in the five districts — Hamirpur, Kangra, Kullu, Mandi, and Shimla which were badly affected during the pandemic.
- ★ The loan will finance the promotion of heritage and cultural sites in the Mandi and Hamirpur districts and the restoration of the historic Naggar Castle in Kullu.
- ★ It upgrades to facilities along key travel routes in Kullu, Hamirpur, and Kangra are also part of the plan, focusing on incorporating environmentally friendly technologies such as solar-powered lighting and electric vehicles.
- ★ These initiatives also aim to improve accessibility for the elderly, women, children, and people with disabilities.

### **Google and Muthoot Finance Partner to Offer Gold-Backed Loans**

- ★ Global tech titan Google has tied up with Muthoot Finance to provide gold-backed loans through its mobile payments service GPay.
- ★ The collaboration offers loans with affordable interest rates and flexible usage options, providing security for lenders and flexibility for borrowers.
- ★ These announcements were made by the company officials at the 10<sup>th</sup> edition of 'Google for India' event.
- ★ Google is set to launch Gemini Flash 1.5 in India, enabling organizations to securely implement cloud and AI solutions within the country.
- ★ Google announced the launch of the Google Safety Engineering Center in India in 2025.
- ★ Google has entered into two long-term partnerships aimed at enhancing clean energy generation in India, projected to contribute 186 MW of new renewable energy capacity by 2026.
- ★ Google.org announced a USD 4 million grant to the Central Square Foundation to promote AI literacy across underserved communities in India.

### **Bank of Baroda to Divest Oman Operations to Bank Dhofar**

- ★ State-owned Bank of Baroda (BoB) proposes to sell its Oman operation to Bank Dhofar as part of the rationalisation of foreign operations.
- ★ The acquisition is proposed to occur on a going-concern basis.
- ★ The sale is subject to approval from the relevant regulatory authorities.
- ★ BoB's total business in Oman was 113.35 million Omani Rial.
- ★ The net worth of the Oman operations stood at 25.54 million Omani Rial.
- ★ BoB is rationalizing its foreign operations based on a comprehensive evaluation framework.

### **India 4<sup>th</sup> Country in The World to Have \$700 Billion Forex Reserves**

- ★ India has become the fourth country in the world, after China, Switzerland, and Japan, with a foreign exchange (forex) reserve of more than \$700 billion.
- ★ The Indian foreign exchange has been increasing for the past seven consecutive weeks due to valuation gains and the Reserve Bank of India's continuous purchase of the US dollar from the market.
- ★ China is the largest foreign exchange holder in the world, followed by Japan, Switzerland and India.
- ★ According to the latest figure released by the Reserve Bank of India, the country's total foreign exchange reserves were \$704.89 billion as of 27 September 2024.
- ★ India's foreign exchange reserves have increased by \$87.6 billion in 2024.
- ★ One of the major reasons for the increase in Indian foreign exchange reserves has been continuous foreign investment in the Indian equity and bond market.

## **India to Provide \$400 Million Credit Swap Facility to Maldives**

- ★ President of Maldives, Dr Mohamed Muizzu, was on his first official bilateral visit to India from 6-10 October 2024.
- ★ India has agreed to help Maldives manage its external debt by extending a \$ 400 million credit swap facility.
- ★ After Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Dr Mohamed Muizzu’s meeting, the leaders issued a joint statement titled “India Maldives: A Vision for Comprehensive Economic and Maritime Security Partnership”.
- ★ Both leaders launched RuPay Cards developed by the National Payment Corporation of India (NPCI) in Maldives.
- ★ The Reserve Bank of India will extend a \$400 million currency swap facility to the Maldives Monetary Authority (Central Bank of Maldives).
- ★ India will help the Maldives develop a modern commercial port at Thilafushi Island to de-congest the Malé port.
- ★ India will establish a new consulate in Addu City, and the Maldives will open its consulate in Bengaluru.

## **Reserve Bank of India Publishes Research Study**

- ★ The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) placed on its website a research study titled “Status of Digital Financial Literacy in Lakshadweep Islands: Bottlenecks and Way Forward” under the Project Research Study.
- ★ The study is based on the primary data collected from all the ten inhabited islands in Lakshadweep - Agatti, Amini, Andrott, Bitra, Chetlat, Kadmat, Kalpeni, Kavaratti, Kiltan and Minicoy - to analyse the present status of digital financial literacy and digital financial inclusion.
- ★ While about 91% of the men operated their accounts by themselves, the corresponding figure among women was 71%.
- ★ Automated Teller Machines (ATMs) were the most popularly used means of digital banking in the islands.
- ★ About 90% of the respondents in the islands had ATM cards, while 80% reported an actual usage of these cards.
- ★ Internet banking was not widely prevalent in the islands and only about 38% of the respondents used mobile banking.
- ★ Only about 30% of the survey respondents were familiar with digital hygiene habits assessed in terms of usage of public Internet connections, which can be risky; closing of digital payment apps after transactions; and usage of secure passwords.

## **Government of India Sets ₹50,000 crore Limit for Ways and Means Advances**

- ★ The limit for Ways and Means Advances for October 2024 to March 2025 has been set at ₹50,000 crore in consultations with the Government of India.
- ★ The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) may initiate the floatation of fresh market loans when the government utilizes 75% of the WMA limit.
- ★ The RBI retains the flexibility to revise the WMA limit at any time based on the prevailing circumstances.
- ★ WMA is provided under Section 17(5) of the RBI Act, 1934, which allows the RBI to extend advances to the central and State/UT Governments.
- ★ WMA serves as a temporary liquidity arrangement for governments to borrow money for up to 90 days to manage liquidity mismatches between revenue inflows and expenditure outflows.
- ★ A higher WMA limit allows the Government to have greater flexibility in raising funds from the RBI without needing to rely on market borrowing, which can be more expensive.

## **Visa Launches Platform Enabling Global Banks to issue Stablecoins and Digital Tokens**

- ★ Visa has launched the Visa Tokenized Asset Platform (VTAP), a platform aimed at helping global banks issue stablecoins and fiat-backed tokens.
- ★ It will enable banks to mint, burn, and transfer these tokens, leveraging blockchain technology.
- ★ VTAP is expected to go live in 2025 and aims to support banks in utilizing blockchain technology for stablecoin issuance and token management.
- ★ Spanish bank BBVA has been testing Visa's platform for a year and plans a pilot on the Ethereum blockchain in 2025.
- ★ Stablecoins, typically pegged to stable assets like the US dollar, have gained traction as they provide a bridge between traditional finance and cryptocurrencies with less price volatility than other cryptocurrencies like Bitcoin or Ether.
- ★ Other financial technology companies like PayPal (with PYUSD) and Stripe have already entered the stablecoin space, allowing merchants to accept stablecoin payments for online transactions.

## **SBI Classifies Mahanagar Telephone Nigam Limited as a Non-Performing Asset**

- ★ State Bank of India (SBI) has declared the loan accounts of Mahanagar Telephone Nigam Limited (MTNL) as sub-standard non-performing assets due to non-payment of instalments and interest since June 30, 2024.
- ★ The total outstanding debt on the MTNL loan account was ₹325.52 crore as of September 30, as per SBI's letter dated October 1.



- ★ SBI indicated that ₹281.62 crore is overdue, requiring immediate payment to regularise the account.
- ★ This action follows a similar downgrade by Punjab National Bank (PNB) on September 9 and actions by other public sector banks against MTNL.
- ★ Union Bank of India has frozen all accounts of MTNL for non-payment of dues, while other banks, including Bank of India, have categorized MTNL's debt as NPA.
- ★ The classification of MTNL as an NPA by SBI could lead to further actions by other lenders, including Punjab and Sind Bank and UCO Bank, potentially affecting MTNL's financial stability.

### **Reliance Nippon Life Insurance Unveils 'Nishchit Pension' Deferred Annuity Plan**

- ★ Reliance Nippon Life Insurance Company Limited has introduced a new deferred annuity plan named Reliance Nippon Life Nishchit Pension.
- ★ The plan is designed to provide a guaranteed lifelong income, ensuring financial stability during retirement.
- ★ It aims to help customers streamline their retirement income and protect against declines in long-term interest rates.
- ★ As per the Economic Survey, Govt of India, by 2041, 15.9% of India's population is estimated to be above 60 years of age (up from 9.7% in 2021).
- ★ According to the company, a lifetime rate guarantee for self and family is key to effective retirement planning and RNL Nishchit Pension solves this crucial need.

### **Paytm Money Introduces BSE Futures and Options Trading**

- ★ Paytm Money, a wholly-owned subsidiary of One97 Communications (OCL), launched BSE Futures & Options (BSE F&O) trading service on its platform, as part of the Noida-based company's efforts to expand its wealth management and financial services segment.
- ★ This would enable users to trade index derivative contracts offered by the Bombay Stock Exchange, including SENSEX, BANKEX, and SENSEX50.
- ★ The platform would enable users to trade both NSE and BSE F&O contracts in one app.
- ★ The company, ranked the 11<sup>th</sup> largest broker, said trading charges excluding taxes have been set at ₹20 per trade order.
- ★ It includes real-time market data, advanced charting tools, and an integrated margin calculator for informed decision-making. Offers various order types (market, limit, stop-loss, intraday) with real-time tracking of positions and P&L.
- ★ The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) revealed that 93% of retail traders incurred an average loss of ₹2 lakh over the past three years.

## **New Capital Instrument Guidelines for Urban Co-operative Banks in Development**

- ★ The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) is developing norms for new capital-raising instruments for Urban Co-operative Banks (UCBs), such as the issuance of shares at a premium.
- ★ These norms will provide UCBs with more flexibility to raise resources and support sector growth.
- ★ Urban Co-operative Banks (UCBs) are primary co-operative banks that are located in urban and semi-urban areas.
- ★ They are primarily concerned with serving their own communities and providing financial services to customers who fall into the lower middle class and have few resources
- ★ The initial guidelines on the issue and regulation of share capital and securities for UCBs were released in 2022, following the Banking Regulation (Amendment) Act, 2020.
- ★ However, these guidelines did not include the newly-enabled capital-related provisions.
- ★ The RBI aims to gather input to ensure the capital-raising norms are effective in providing stability and supporting the growth of UCBs.
- ★ The S. Vishwanathan Panel (2021) provided guiding principles on capital-related provisions for UCBs.

## **ICICI Bank and PhonePe Collaborate to offer UPI Credit Line to Customers**

- ★ ICICI Bank and PhonePe have partnered to provide a credit line on UPI specifically for customers of PhonePe, a major fintech firm based in Bengaluru.
- ★ Customers approved through the PhonePe app can access a short-term credit line from ICICI Bank.
- ★ The credit line can be up to ₹2 lakh.
- ★ Customers have a repayment period of 45 days.
- ★ This collaboration comes at a time when PhonePe processes transactions worth approximately ₹200 crore every month on the UPI platform.
- ★ PhonePe holds a 49% market share in the UPI space, while Google Pay is the second-largest player with about 38% of transaction volumes.
- ★ This is PhonePe's first partnership with a lender to offer a credit line service.
- ★ The initiative aligns with the National Payments Corporation of India's (NPCI) launch of the 'credit line on UPI' service last year, designed to provide low-ticket, high-volume retail loans.

## **SLCM Collaborates with Punjab National Bank and Bandhan Bank**

- ★ Sohan Lal Commodity Management (SLCM) has partnered with Punjab National Bank (PNB) and Bandhan Bank to provide 'Unified Collateral Management Solutions'.
- ★ The partnership aims to facilitate post-harvest credit for farmers and agricultural stakeholders at competitive rates across the country.

- ★ SLCM will leverage its proprietary technology platform, 'Agri Reach', to improve the efficiency of post-harvest credit and storage services for both banks.
- ★ 'Agri Reach' has been recognized for reducing post-harvest losses from 10% to just 0.5%.
- ★ SLCM has over 15 years of experience in post-harvest management and has established relationships with over 23 leading banking institutions in India and Myanmar.
- ★ SLCM is considered a market leader in post-harvest logistics and agri-solutions.

### **IOB New Loan Centres across India, Introduces Heritage-Themed ATM in Chennai**

- ★ Public-sector lender Indian Overseas Bank (IOB) has inaugurated 8 new Retail Loan Processing Centres (RLPCs) across India.
- ★ One physical RLPC is located in Chennai, while seven others were launched virtually in major cities.
- ★ The new RLPCs are situated in: Bangalore, Coimbatore, Delhi, Hyderabad, Kolkata, Lucknow, Mumbai.
- ★ The initiative aims to enhance customer experience and improve service delivery for retail customers.
- ★ The RLPCs are equipped with advanced digital technology and automation tools.
- ★ These enhancements are intended to expedite loan approvals and disbursements.
- ★ IOB has also inaugurated a heritage-themed ATM at Puratchi Thalaivar Dr. MGR Central Railway Station in Chennai.
- ★ The ATM is designed to replicate the historic Victorian-era redbrick station building, serving as a tribute to the heritage of the Central Railway Station.

### **LIC Reduces Maximum Age Limit for New Endowment Plan to 50 Years**

- ★ Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) has reduced the maximum age limit for purchasing the new endowment plan from 55 years to 50 years, effective October 1, 2024.
- ★ The revised product is the 'LIC New Endowment Plan-914', a participating endowment plan that offers a dual benefit of protection and savings.
- ★ Minimum entry age for the plan is 8 years.
- ★ It provides both death benefits and maturity benefits.
- ★ LIC currently offers six endowment products, LIC's Single Premium Endowment Plan, LIC's New Endowment Plan, LIC's New Jeevan Anand, LIC's Jeevan Lakshya, LIC's Jeevan Labh Plan and LIC's Amritbaal
- ★ All endowment products have been modified to comply with new surrender value guidelines effective from October 1, 2024.
- ★ A total of 32 products and riders have been updated for compliance.
- ★ Average premium rates for most products have been revised by 8-10% (excluding LIC's Amritbaal Plan).

- ★ The sum assured for the New Endowment Plan, New Jeevan Anand, and Jeevan Lakshya has increased to ₹2 lakh from ₹1 lakh.
- ★ LIC has introduced a Single Premium Group Micro Term Insurance Plan.
- ★ It is a Non-Participating, Non-Linked, Group, Pure Risk life micro-insurance product designed for finance institutions, co-operatives, self-help groups (SHGs), and NGOs.
- ★ The plan aims to provide affordable life insurance coverage to members of unorganized groups and homogeneous affinity groups.

### **SBI Extends Amrit Kalash and Amrit Vrishti Fixed Deposit Schemes**

- ★ The State Bank of India (SBI) has extended the Amrit Kalash and Amrit Vrishti fixed deposit schemes until March 31, 2025.
- ★ Originally set to conclude on September 30, 2024, the extension provides higher interest rates for depositors.
- ★ The Amrit Kalash scheme offers a fixed deposit with tenure of 400 days.
- ★ Interest Rate is 10% per annum for general customers and 60% per annum for senior citizens (higher than the standard rate of 6.80% for similar tenures).

### **Mastercard Launches New Technology Hub in Pune**

- ★ Mastercard inaugurated a state-of-the-art Tech Hub in Pune, Maharashtra, India, aimed at supporting growth and innovation within the company.
- ★ The new campus covers nearly half a million square meters and is located at Bluegrass Business Park in Yerwada, Pune.
- ★ The Tech Hub will accommodate over 6,000 professionals, including technologists, engineers, and experts in fields such as software development, data architecture, finance, and cybersecurity, making it Mastercard's largest workforce in a single city globally.
- ★ The Pune Tech Hub enhances Mastercard's existing presence in India, which includes offices in Gurugram, Mumbai, Hyderabad, Bengaluru, and Vadodara.
- ★ The facility will support initiatives like the Community Pass financial inclusion platform and the Payment Passkey Service, which enhances secure online checkouts through biometrics and tokenization.
- ★ The Pune Tech Hub will facilitate collaboration to tackle complex technological challenges and ensure the reliability of critical infrastructure for secure payments worldwide.
- ★ The new facility aims to deepen co-operation between Mastercard's global teams and the vibrant Indian technology ecosystem, fostering innovation and development in financial services.

### **International Finance Corporation Grants \$500 million Loan to Axis Bank**

- ★ International Finance Corporation (IFC), part of the World Bank Group, has partnered with Axis Bank to provide a \$500 million (approx. ₹4,200 crore) loan.

- ★ The purpose of the loan is to develop a blue finance market and scale up financing for green projects in India.
- ★ This is IFC's first blue investment in India and the first blue transaction by a financial institution in the country.
- ★ Blue loans are financing instruments that raise and earmark funds for investments such as water and wastewater management, reduction of marine plastic pollution, restoration of marine ecosystems, sustainable shipping, eco-friendly tourism, and offshore renewable energy.
- ★ India's water and wastewater treatment market was valued at \$1.6 billion in 2022, with expectations to reach \$3 billion by 2029.

### **Mauritius, First Recipient of Rupee Loan Under IDEAS of Government of India**

- ★ India has extended a line of credit (loan) of ₹487.60 crores to the Government of Mauritius under the Government of India's Indian Development and Economic Assistance Scheme (IDEAS) programme.
- ★ It is the first time that India has extended a line of credit in Indian rupees to a foreign government under the IDEAS programme.
- ★ The loan offer was made to the Mauritius Foreign Minister Maneesh Gobin, by Indian External Affairs Minister Dr S. Jaishankar.
- ★ The loan was approved after the Mauritius Government accepted Dr Jaishankar's offer.
- ★ The ₹487.60 crore line of credit is given to the government of Mauritius for financing a water project in Mauritius will be provided through the State Bank of India (SBI).
- ★ The loan amount will be used to replace around 100 km of obsolete water pipeline in Mauritius.
- ★ The Indian Development and Economic Assistance Scheme (IDEAS) were launched as India Development Initiative by the Government of India.
- ★ It was announced in the 2003-2004 budget speech by the then Finance Minister Jaswant Singh with an allocation of ₹200 crore.
- ★ Under IDEAS, the Government of India provides concessional loans or grants to developing countries in Asia, Africa, and Latin America for developmental or other projects.
- ★ The aim is to promote India's strategic economic interest in the world.

### **50 New Payment Apps Express Interest in Joining UPI**

- ★ 50 new third-party application providers (TPAPs) are eager to join the Unified Payments Interface (UPI) despite the absence of a merchant discount rate (MDR).
- ★ Dilip Asbe, Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer (MD & CEO) of the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI), stated that increasing interest from new participants has been observed over the past year.



- ★ New TPAPs, including Navi, BharatPe, and super.money, have recently entered the UPI ecosystem.
- ★ An MDR is a fee levied on a merchant by a fintech or any other payment processing company for processing a digital transaction including UPI.
- ★ MDR is usually a percentage of the transaction amount, typically between 1% and 3%.
- ★ Introducing an MDR could allow companies to earn revenue from transaction processing, alleviating their payment processing expenses.

### **Tata Digital Partners with Tata AIA**

- ★ Tata Digital has collaborated with Tata AIA Life Insurance to offer life insurance products on the Tata Neu platform.
- ★ The launch follows the success of the co-branded credit card with HDFC Bank.
- ★ Tata Digital achieved ₹25 crore in annual new premium within the first 90 days of the launch.
- ★ The insurance buying process has been streamlined to just three clicks, enhancing customer experience.
- ★ Customers purchasing insurance products earn NeuCoins, which can be redeemed across the Tata ecosystem.
- ★ Available options include term life insurance (Maha Raksha Supreme Select with a pre-approved sum assured up to ₹2 crore) and wealth creation plans with access to Tata AIA equity funds.

### **Assam Government Launches SWIFT Project with ADB Support**

- ★ The Himanta Biswa Sarma Government in Assam has launched the Sustainable Wetland and Integrated Fisheries Transformation (SWIFT) project to revitalise 129 Beels and boost Indigenous fish production.
- ★ The State Government's SWIFT project is funded and supported by the Asian Development Bank (ADB).
- ★ Beel are floodplain wetlands and cover around one lakh hectares of land in Assam.
- ★ The total outlay for the project is ₹798.88 crore.
- ★ It aims to revitalise 129 Beels of the state.
- ★ The project aims to restore nearly 4,000 hectares of beel areas.
- ★ It will help with flood control, groundwater replenishment, and river flow regulation in the state.
- ★ The SWIFT project is expected to increase fish production by 1,200 kg per hectare annually in the state.

### **State-Owned Banks Eliminate Processing Fees on Home Loans to Boost Business**

- ★ Several state-owned banks, including Central Bank of India, Canara Bank, Indian Overseas Bank, Bank of Baroda, and Punjab National Bank, have waived processing fees on home loans to attract demand during the festive season, ranging from December 2024 to March 2025.
- ★ Indian Overseas Bank reported a 19% quarter-on-quarter increase in home loan disbursements, reaching ₹1,849.67 crore in Q2 of the financial year after waiving processing fees.
- ★ Unlike public sector banks, private sector banks have not announced any similar waivers. Public sector banks generally offer more competitive home loan rates, making them attractive to borrowers.
- ★ For loans up to ₹30 lakh, private banks offer the lowest rates starting at 8.70%, whereas state-run banks offer rates as low as 8.35% for similar loan amounts with tenure of up to 30 years.
- ★ Private Banks often rely on direct sales agents (DSAs) for business sourcing and typically do not waive processing fees due to the costs associated with the sanctioning process.
- ★ Home loans are long-tenure assets, providing banks with opportunities to cross-sell other products to customers over time.

### **World Bank and ADB Pledged \$1.6 Billion for Amaravati Capital Project**

- ★ The World Bank and the Asian Development Bank (ADB) have committed a total of \$1.6 billion (₹13,600 crore) for the Phase-I development of Amaravati, the capital city of Andhra Pradesh.
- ★ The funds will begin to be released from January 30, 2025.
- ★ The total cost for Phase-I development is ₹15,000 crore.
- ★ The Central Government will fund the remaining ₹1,400 crore of the project.
- ★ Both the World Bank (through the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development – IBRD) and ADB will provide \$800 million (₹6,800 crore) each for the project.
- ★ The repayment of loans from the World Bank and ADB will be managed by the Central Government.
- ★ The committed funds must be utilized within five years; otherwise, they will lapse.

### **NDB Approves Tenders for ₹1,734 Crore Shimla Ropeway Projects**

- ★ The New Development Bank (NDB) has approved the Himachal Pradesh Ropeways Corporation to float advance tenders for the construction of the Shimla ropeway project valued at ₹1,734 crore.
- ★ The project aims to decongest the state capital, Shimla, by providing an efficient transportation alternative.
- ★ The tender process is expected to begin soon, with plans to complete 50% of the 13.79-km ropeway within two years.

- ★ The Himachal Pradesh Government will contribute 20% of the project cost.
- ★ The NDB will fund the remaining 80%, comprising 90% as a subsidy and 10% as a loan.
- ★ The ropeway will connect Tara Devi and Shimla and will be executed using the engineering, procurement, and construction (EPC) mode.

### **PhonePe Introduces Firecracker Insurance Policy for Diwali Celebrations**

- ★ PhonePe has collaborated with Bajaj Allianz General Insurance to offer an affordable firecracker-related accident insurance policy for Diwali.
- ★ The policy is specifically aimed at protecting Diwali against accidents caused by firecrackers.
  - Sum insured: ₹25,000.
  - Premium: ₹9, inclusive of Goods and Services Tax (GST).
  - Duration: Coverage for 10 days from October 25, 2024, to November 3, 2024.
  - Sale of policies ends on November 3, 2024.
- ★ The insurance also covers the policyholder's family, including their spouse and two children (up to four family members).

### **Neobank Freo Receives Corporate Agent Licence**

- ★ Freo, a digital banking startup backed by Peak XV, has secured a corporate agent license from the Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI).
- ★ This license allows Freo to offer insurance products on its platform.
- ★ A neo bank is a digital bank that offers financial services online or through a mobile app, without having any physical branches.
- ★ Neo banks are also known as fintech banks, challenger banks, or digital banks.
- ★ Alongside insurance, Freo will continue to provide digital banking services such as UPI payments, savings accounts, and credit products.
- ★ The company emphasises the delivery of personalised and affordable insurance products tailored to user needs, including women's health coverage and cyber fraud protection.
- ★ Freo aims to introduce more comprehensive investment solutions, including mutual funds and other savings cum investment products, as part of its strategy to cross-sell financial services.
- ★ Freo operates through three main verticals:
  - Freo Pay: Offers UPI payments, bill payments, and co-branded credit cards with Yes Bank.
  - Freo Save: Provides savings accounts in partnership with Equitas Small Finance Bank.
  - Freo Credit: Previously known as MoneyTap, this vertical offers loans in collaboration with various financial institutions, including Incred Capital and Cholamandalam Investment and Finance.

## **PFC Infra Finance IFSC Limited Begins Operations After Receiving Approval from IFSCA**

- ★ PFC Infra Finance IFSC Limited (PIFIL), a wholly owned subsidiary of Power Finance Corporation Limited (PFC), has received approval from the International Financial Services Centres Authority (IFSCA) to commence operations as a finance company in IFSC (International Financial Services Centre) located in GIFT City, Gujarat.
- ★ PIFIL is notable for being the first finance company in IFSC specifically focused on power and infrastructure lending.
- ★ This establishment positions PFC as a global brand and strengthens India's status as a global financial hub.
- ★ PIFIL aims to provide lending services in India and other countries in foreign currency, catering to both government and private sector players.

## **Indian Overseas Bank Introduces Mahila Shaksham Scheme**

- ★ Public sector Indian Overseas Bank (IOB) has launched the 'Mahila Shaksham' scheme to finance individual women members of Self-Help Groups (SHGs).
- ★ The scheme aligns with the Centre's Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana – National Rural Livelihoods Mission initiative.
- ★ The scheme aims to empower women entrepreneurs by ensuring financial self-reliance.
- ★ It is part of the Ministry of Rural Development's 'Lakshpati Didi Yojana', which focuses on improving the financial status of women SHG members.
- ★ It provides financial support specifically for individual women SHG members to foster entrepreneurship.
- ★ It offers credit support of up to ₹10 lakh to individual members participating in the Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana - National Rural Livelihoods Mission.
- ★ The scheme is designed to enhance the financial independence of women.
- ★ It aims to expand credit access to women self-help group members, thereby facilitating their entrepreneurial ventures.

## **HDFC Bank Opens Its First Branch in Singapore**

- ★ HDFC Bank, India's leading private sector bank, has inaugurated its first branch in Singapore after receiving a wholesale banking license from the Monetary Authority of Singapore (MAS) effective 15<sup>th</sup> October 2024.
- ★ The new branch will enable HDFC Bank to offer a diverse range of financial products and services to residents of Singapore.
- ★ With this addition, HDFC Bank's international presence now includes five branches located in Hong Kong, Bahrain, Dubai, Singapore, and an IFSC Banking Unit in Gujarat, India.
- ★ Additionally, the bank has representative offices in Kenya, Abu Dhabi, Dubai, and London.

- ★ As of March 31, 2024, HDFC Bank's international business reported a balance sheet size of approximately USD 9.06 billion.
- ★ HDFC Bank joins other major banks like State Bank of India and ICICI Bank Ltd., which also hold qualifying full banking licenses in Singapore, along with eight other banks, including Bank of China Ltd. and BNP Paribas SA.

### **State Bank of India Set to Raise ₹5,000 Crore through AT-I Bonds**

- ★ State Bank of India (SBI) plans to raise ₹5,000 crore in the domestic debt capital market through non-convertible, perpetual, subordinated, unsecured Basel III-compliant Additional Tier I (AT-I) bonds.
- ★ The base issue size is ₹2,000 crore, with a green shoe option of ₹3,000 crore, allowing flexibility to raise the total amount up to ₹5,000 crore. The bonds come with a call option on October 24, 2034, which allows the bank to repurchase the bonds 10 years after issuance.
- ★ The AT-I bonds have been rated AA+ by domestic rating agencies CRISIL and CARE.
- ★ SBI is raising this amount to replace existing bonds, aligning with its capital restructuring strategy.
- ★ AT-I bonds are used by banks to augment core equity capital, which helps maintain regulatory capital requirements under Basel III norms.
- ★ In September 2024, SBI had raised ₹7,500 crore through Tier-II bonds to strengthen its capital base.

### **Maldives President Mohamed Muizzu Launches UPI Payment Service**

- ★ Maldives President Mohamed Muizzu has initiated steps to introduce India's Unified Payments Interface (UPI) in the country, aiming to significantly benefit the Maldivian economy.
- ★ UPI is developed by the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) and serves as an instant real-time payment system facilitating inter-bank transactions through mobile phones.
- ★ President Muizzu established a consortium to implement UPI in the Maldives, appointing TradeNet Maldives Corporation Limited as the leading agency.
- ★ The consortium is expected to include participation from local banks, telecom companies, state-owned enterprises, and fintech companies.
- ★ The introduction of UPI is projected to enhance financial inclusion, improve transaction efficiency, and bolster the digital infrastructure of the Maldivian economy.
- ★ The Maldives has recently implemented foreign currency regulations in response to economic challenges, limiting certain transactions and enforcing mandatory currency exchange controls on tourism establishments and banks.

### **India Grants INR 487.60 Crores Line of Credit to Mauritius**

- ★ India has provided a new Line of Credit of INR 487.60 Crores to the Government of Mauritius for financing a water pipeline replacement project.
- ★ This is the first-ever rupee-denominated Line of Credit extended by India for project financing under the Indian Development and Economic Assistance Scheme (IDEAS).



- ★ The project involves replacing approximately 100 km of obsolete water pipelines in Mauritius.
- ★ The Line of Credit, supported by the Government of India (GOI), will be financed by the State Bank of India on concessional terms.
- ★ External Affairs Minister of India, Dr. S. Jaishankar, formally offered the Line of Credit to his Mauritian counterpart, Mr. Maneesh Gobin, and it has been accepted by the Government of Mauritius.
- ★ This initiative reflects India's commitment to the socio-economic development of countries in the Global South, emphasizing that India's development projects are driven by the aspirations and needs of its partner countries.

### **IMF Retains India's Growth Forecast at 7 Per cent for 2024-25**

- ★ The International Monetary Fund has retained its forecast for the Indian economic growth rate of 7 % for 2024-25 and 6.5 % for the 2025-26 financial years.
- ★ The IMF made the latest projection on the Indian and world economies in its October 2024 edition of the World Economic Outlook report, titled 'Policy Pivot, Rising Threats'.
- ★ The IMF expects the Indian economy to grow by 6.5% from 2026-27 to 2030-31 fiscal years.
- ★ However, a senior IMF official said India is still the world's largest growing economy.
- ★ The IMF releases the World Economic Outlook twice a calendar year at a six-month interval. The report analyses the world economy and its direction in the near and medium term.
- ★ According to the IMF, the world economy is expected to grow 3.2 % in 2024 and 2025.
- ★ The world's largest economy, the United States, is expected to grow by 2.8 % in 2024 and by 2.2 % in 2025.

### **RBI Launches Scholarship Scheme for Faculty Members of Academic Institutions**

- ★ The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has introduced a Scholarship Scheme for faculty members from academic institutions.
- ★ Eligibility Criteria include full-time faculty members teaching economics or finance at any UGC or AICTE-recognized university or college in India and applicants must be below 55 years of age.
- ★ Objective is to enhance awareness of RBI's activities among faculty and students and it provide exposure to various operational areas within the RBI.
- ★ A maximum of five scholarships will be awarded.
- ★ Selection will be based on candidates' curriculum vitae, a research proposal (up to 1,000 words), and an interview with a selection panel.
- ★ Applications must be submitted by the 5<sup>th</sup> of next month.
- ★ The exact theme of the research will be determined by the RBI based on proposals submitted by candidates.
- ★ Selected scholars will receive a monthly allowance of ₹50,000 during the project.

### **Asian Development Bank Sanctions \$241 Million Loan to West Bengal**

- ★ The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has approved a \$241.3 million loan to enhance electricity distribution in West Bengal.
- ★ The programme aims to provide a reliable and sustainable power supply, improving the quality of life for 8.96 million consumers across seven districts of the state.
- ★ The initiative aligns with India's Revamped Distribution Sector Scheme, which focuses on improving the operational efficiency of power distribution companies.
- ★ Key Improvements:
  - Replacement of low-tension overhead lines with aerial bundled cables.
  - Creation of separate electricity feeders for agricultural and non-agricultural users.
  - Integration of an information and operation management system to monitor power supply quality and financial management.

### **Federal Bank Partners with Bhashini**

- ★ Federal Bank has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Bhashini, an AI-powered language translation platform, to add vernacular language support to its AI virtual assistant, Feddy.
- ★ The collaboration aims to promote banking services in vernacular languages, in line with the Reserve Bank Innovation Hub (RBIH)'s local language initiative.
- ★ With the integration of Bhashini's language translation capabilities, Feddy is now able to respond to user queries in 14 different Indian languages, including Hindi, Bengali, Tamil, Telugu, Marathi, Gujarati, Kannada, Malayalam, Odia, Assamese, Punjabi, Urdu, Manipuri, and Bodo.
- ★ The integration of Bhashini's language capabilities makes banking services more convenient and user-friendly for customers across diverse linguistic backgrounds.

### **Israel Joins Asian Development Bank as 69<sup>th</sup> Member**

- ★ Israel officially became the 69<sup>th</sup> member of the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the 20<sup>th</sup> non-regional member, effective 1<sup>st</sup> October.
- ★ Israel submitted its application for ADB membership in January 2022, and the ADB Board of Governors approved the membership on 14 April 2022 through Resolution No. 414.
- ★ The 2022 resolution required Israel to fulfill all membership requirements, which it completed before the membership became effective.

### **Bima Sugam Digital Insurance Platform Set for Launch**

- ★ Bima Sugam, a digital insurance platform, is ready for launch as confirmed by Debasish Panda, the chairperson of the Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI).

- ★ A separate portal will be established for onboarding Bima Vahaks, local intermediaries responsible for distributing insurance products.
- ★ Debasish Panda emphasized the need to simplify the insurance process, covering everything from product sales to claim settlements, aiming for universal coverage by 2047.
- ★ Bima Sugam will serve as an online platform where customers can view and choose from various insurance schemes offered by different insurers.
- ★ Bima Sugam is part of the Bima Trinity initiative by IRDAI, aimed at improving the insurance sector in India.
  - Bima Vistaar: An insurance product that encompasses life, health, and property coverage.
  - Bima Vahak: A system focused on women-centric insurance distribution channels.
  - Health Insurance Summit: The announcement was made during the 17<sup>th</sup> Health Insurance Summit 2024, organized by the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII).

### **RBI Expands 'Alert List' with 13 Additional Entities**

- ★ The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) updated the 'Alert List' of unauthorised forex trading platforms by adding 13 more entities, including TDFX and Inefex, taking the total to 88.
- ★ The Alert List contains names of entities which are neither authorised to deal in forex under the Foreign Exchange Management Act, 1999 (FEMA) nor authorised to operate electronic trading platforms (ETP) for forex transactions under the Electronic Trading Platforms (Reserve Bank) Directions, 2018.
- ★ Some entities in the list are Ranger Capital, TDFX, Inefex, YorkerFX, Growline, Think Markets, Smart Prop Trader, FundedNext, Weltrade, FreshForex, FX Road, DBG Markets, and
- ★ The Alert List also contains names of entities/platforms/websites which appear to be promoting unauthorised entities/ETPs, including through advertisements of such unauthorised entities or claiming to be providing training/advisory services.
- ★ The RBI clarifies that the Alert List is not exhaustive, meaning there could be more unauthorized entities not listed.
- ★ Entities not listed should not be assumed to be authorized.
- ★ The public can verify the authorization status of any person or ETP using the official list of authorized persons and ETPs provided by the RBI.

### **GoM Proposes GST Exemption on Life and Health Insurance Premiums**

- ★ The Group of Ministers (GoM) has proposed significant changes to the Goods and Services Tax (GST) on term life insurance and health insurance premiums.
- ★ The proposal aims to alleviate the financial burden on senior citizens, especially those facing high insurance costs.
- ★ The GoM recommends exempting GST on health insurance premiums for policies with coverage up to ₹5 lakh, except for senior citizens.

- ★ Policies exceeding this coverage limit would continue to attract an 18% GST.
- ★ If the GST exemption on health insurance premiums is approved, senior citizens could experience significant savings on their insurance costs, making healthcare more affordable.
- ★ A reduction in GST rates could benefit a broader range of consumers, aligning with efforts to make financial products like health and life insurance more accessible.

### **Aditya Birla Housing Finance Teams up with BharatPe**

- ★ Aditya Birla Housing Finance Ltd. (ABHFL), a subsidiary of Aditya Birla Capital Limited., has partnered with BharatPe, a fintech company, to enhance access to home loans and loans against property for BharatPe's merchant partners.
- ★ ABHFL is the first housing finance company to collaborate with BharatPe, aiming to streamline access to secured lending through innovative digital solutions.
- ★ The partnership focuses on significantly enhancing the user experience by providing advanced digital solutions for loan applications.
- ★ The collaboration aims to serve over 1.3 crore merchants associated with BharatPe across more than 450 cities, with an emphasis on Tier 2 and Tier 3 markets.
- ★ In August 2024, BharatPe expanded into secured loans by launching two-wheeler loans and loans against mutual funds in partnership with established financial services firms.
- ★ The partnership emphasizes the provision of Home Loans (HL) and Loans Against Property (LAP), catering specifically to the needs of small and medium merchants.

### **NPCI Teams Up with Al Etihad Payments**

- ★ National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI), through its international subsidiary NPCI International Payments Limited (NIPL), is collaborating with Al Etihad Payments (AEP) to establish a domestic card scheme called JAYWAN in the United Arab Emirates (UAE).
- ★ AEP, the national payments entity of the UAE, was established by the Central Bank of UAE (CBUAE) in 2023 as part of the UAE's National Payments Strategy to develop robust financial market infrastructure.
- ★ The JAYWAN card is based on India's RuPay card stack, developed by NPCI, which has been shared with AEP to enable the UAE's digital payment sovereignty.
- ★ This makes the UAE the first country in the GCC region to adopt the RuPay stack for its domestic payments.
- ★ The Indian and UAE Governments are working to interlink their national payment platforms, UPI (India) and AANI (UAE), facilitating real-time cross-border remittance.
- ★ This interlinking will benefit over 3 million Indians residing in the UAE by enabling seamless cross-border transactions using UPI and AANI.
- ★ The JAYWAN card scheme was launched during Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to the UAE in February 2024.

- ★ The project's first phase, the launch of the JAYWAN card, has been completed, marking a significant India-UAE partnership in digital payments.

### **Indian Bank Secures ₹5,000 Crore through Long-Term Infrastructure Bonds**

- ★ Chennai-based public sector lender Indian Bank has raised ₹5,000 crore through the issuance of long-term infrastructure bonds.
- ★ The bond issuance was highly successful, attracting bids amounting to ₹15,925 crore, which is 3.19 times the total issue size.
- ★ A total of 90 bids were received for the bond issuance, which had a base issue size of ₹2,000 crore and a greenshoe option of ₹3,000 crore.
- ★ The bonds were accepted at a coupon rate of 12% per annum.
- ★ The raised funds will be used to support credit growth and refinance existing infrastructure projects.
- ★ The funds obtained through these bonds are exempt from the statutory liquidity ratio (SLR) and cash reserve ratio (CRR) requirements.

### **RBI Cancels Authorization Certificate of UAE Exchange Centre**

- ★ The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) revoked the certificate of authorization (CoA) of UAE Exchange Centre LLC (UAEEC) for failing to comply with regulatory requirements.
- ★ UAEEC was authorized as a cross-border inbound money transfer operator (customer-to-customer) as an 'Overseas Principal'.
- ★ Following the revocation of the CoA, UAE Exchange Centre LLC is prohibited from conducting any transactions related to cross-border inbound money transfers.
- ★ The UAE Exchange Centre is registered in Dubai, United Arab Emirates.
- ★ The RBI emphasised that the action was taken due to non-compliance with the established regulatory framework.
- ★ The revocation affects the ability of UAEEC to operate in the cross-border remittance market, potentially impacting customers relying on its services.

### **ADB Approves USD 434.25 Million Loan to Support Solar Power Project in Assam**

- ★ The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has approved a USD 434.25 million (about ₹3,600 crore) loan to increase renewable energy capacity and improve energy security in Assam.
- ★ The project aims to increase renewable energy capacity, enhance energy security, and reduce dependence on fossil fuels in Assam.
- ★ The initiative will help Assam develop a renewable energy roadmap to meet its solar energy target of 3,000 megawatts (MW) by 2030.
- ★ The Assam Solar Project includes the construction of a 500 MW grid-connected solar photovoltaic (PV) facility in the Karbi Anglong district.

- ★ The project will support the development of a grid-connected battery energy storage system to ensure grid stability and manage peak power demand.
- ★ ADB will enhance Assam's PPP framework to attract private sector investment in renewable energy and build capacity for managing renewable energy PPP projects.
- ★ An additional 250 MW solar PV facility will be developed through a PPP agreement in the Karbi Anglong district.
- ★ The project will improve electricity distribution by replacing overhead power distribution lines with aerial covered conductor cable and installing new distribution transformers in rural areas.

### **World Bank Launches Innovative Debt-for-Development Swap Program**

- ★ The World Bank is launching its first-ever debt-for-development swap, intended to assist countries facing liquidity challenges by reducing debt servicing costs and redirecting funds towards development-focused projects.
- ★ Funds from this initiative are aimed at supporting critical areas such as development, life, and education projects, helping countries invest in long-term improvements rather than just debt repayment.
- ★ Debt swaps have recently gained popularity, especially debt-for-nature swaps, where debt savings are channelled into environmental projects.
- ★ This approach generates savings by replacing high-cost bonds or loans with cheaper financing, typically supported by development banks.
- ★ This program targets countries with liquidity not solvency issues, particularly those actively working towards debt sustainability but still encountering financial constraints.

## **BUSINESS NEWS**

### **Statistics Ministry to Publish New GDP Growth Data with 2022-23 Base Year**

- ★ The Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI) will publish GDP growth data with a new base year of 2022-23 by February 2026.
- ★ This base year revision aims to reflect the most up-to-date economic trends and will incorporate new data such as Household Consumption Expenditure Survey (HCES 2023-24), Annual Survey of Unincorporated Sector Enterprises (ASUSE 2022-23), and GST data.
- ★ The base year for retail inflation (CPI) and factory output growth (IIP) will also be revised to 2022-23.
- ★ These revisions aim to ensure the accuracy and relevance of economic indicators.
- ★ The base year must be a 'normal' year, free from major global or domestic disruptions.
- ★ Despite challenges in choosing a 'normal' year, 2022-23 has been proposed for approval by the Advisory Committee on National Account Statistics (ACNAS).



- ★ New surveys on domestic tourism expenditure, household travel, and health expenses will be included in the next round of the National Sample Survey.
- ★ These surveys are designed to identify drivers of GDP growth and address data gaps for achieving the target of Viksit Bharat by 2047.

## DEFENCE

### 8<sup>th</sup> Edition of India-Kazakhstan Military EX KAZIND

- ★ India-Kazakhstan joint military exercise KAZIND-2024 commenced at the mountainous Surya Foreign Training node in Auli, Uttarakhand, on 30 September 2024.
- ★ The 8<sup>th</sup> edition of KAZIND-2024 will be held in Auli from 30 September to 13 October 2024.
- ★ For the first time, the Air Forces of both countries and the Airborne Assault Forces of Kazakhstan participated.
- ★ The bilateral India-Kazakhstan KAZIND was first held in 2016. It is an annual military exercise held alternately in both countries.
- ★ The KAZIND exercise is a battalion-level military exercise that includes personnel from both the Army and the Air Force.
- ★ In this year's exercise, the Indian contingent comprises 120 personnel, including a battalion of the Kumaon Regiment of the Indian Army and a contingent of the Indian Air Force personnel.
- ★ The Kazakhstan contingent is represented mainly by personnel from its Army and also a contingent of its Airborne Assault Troopers.
- ★ The 8<sup>th</sup> edition of the KAZIND exercise will focus on counterinsurgency/counterterrorism operations in the mountainous, semi-urban scenario under the United Nations mandate.
- ★ Both the military forces will hone their skills in Special Heliborne Operations, Cordon and Search operations, besides employment of drones and counter-drone systems, among others.
- ★ The exercise will also increase military-to-military relations between the two armed forces and strengthen the defence ties between the two countries.

### Cruise Bharat Mission Launched to Promote Cruise Tourism

- ★ The Union Minister for Ports, Shipping and Waterways, Saraband Sonowal, launched the Cruise Bharat Mission on 30 September 2024 in Mumbai, Maharashtra.
- ★ The Minister launched the mission onboard the cruise ship Empress.
- ★ The initiative aims to achieve India's vision of becoming a global hub for cruise tourism and promote the country as the leading global cruise destination.
- ★ The Union Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways is the nodal ministry for implementing the Cruise Bharat Mission.

- ★ The mission will be implemented with the support of all regulatory agencies, such as Customs, Immigration, CISF, State Tourism Departments, State Maritime Agencies, District Administrations, and local police.
- ★ The ministry will establish a special purpose vehicle (SPV) for cruise development under the Indian Ports Association. The Indian Port Association is an association of major ports in India.
- ★ The Cruise Bharat Mission will be implemented from 1 October 2024 up to 31 March 2029 in three phases.

### **Aero India is Scheduled to Take Place in Bengaluru on February 10, 2025**

- ★ India will host the 15<sup>th</sup> edition of its largest air show, Aero India, at Yelahanka Air Force Station in Bengaluru, Karnataka, from February 10 to February 14, 2025.
- ★ The event will feature participation from leading Indian and foreign manufacturers and several delegations from friendly foreign countries.
- ★ Many fighter aircrafts and helicopters performed on air and a defence exhibition was inaugurated by PM Narendra Modi.
- ★ IAF's Tejas aircraft which is a lightweight, highly agile and multi-role supersonic fighter was a major highlight in the aero India show in 2023.
- ★ Aero India is organised by the Ministry of Defence which involves multiple agencies, including the Department of Defence Production, IAF, Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL), Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO), Department of Space, and the Union Civil Aviation Ministry.
- ★ HAL aims to secure deals for its multi-role combat jet Tejas with developing nations in the Middle East, South America, and Southeast Asia.
- ★ The 14<sup>th</sup> edition was inaugurated by PM Modi and centered around the theme "The Runway to a Billion Opportunities".

### **DRDO Successfully Tested the 4<sup>th</sup> Gen VSHORADS Air Defence System**

- ★ Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) successfully tested the 4<sup>th</sup> generation Very Short Range Air Defence System (VSHORADS) at the Pokhran Field Firing Ranges in Rajasthan on 03 and 04 October 2024.
- ★ According to the Union Ministry of Defence, the VSHORADS trial has been successful.
- ★ The VSHORADS has been designed and developed indigenously by Research Centre Imarat (RCI), Hyderabad, in collaboration with other DRDO laboratories and private companies.
- ★ VSHORADS is a Man-Portable Air Defence System (MANPADS) being developed for the Indian Army, Air Force, and Navy.
- ★ It is a surface-to-air missile system with a range of up to six kilometres.
- ★ The VSHORADS is an air defence system that can neutralise aerial threats such as low-flying aircraft and unmanned aerial vehicles flying at a low altitude.

- ★ The VSHORADS being developed by DRDO has an imaging infrared (IIR) homing system.
- ★ The homing system has the capability to image the heat source (of the aircraft) in addition to detecting and tracking it.
- ★ Due to its weight of around 21 kg, the VSHORADS missile can be launched through a tripod.

### **92<sup>nd</sup> Indian Air Force Day Celebration at Marina Beach, Chennai**

- ★ The Indian Air Force celebrated its 92<sup>nd</sup> foundation day on 8 October 2024 with a grand show at Marina Beach in Chennai, Tamil Nadu.
- ★ The Indian Air Force was founded by the British on 8 October 1932. Air Force Day is observed to honour the sacrifice of Indian Air Force personnel, celebrate the Indian Air Force's achievements, and acknowledge its role in protecting and safeguarding the nation's skies from enemies.
- ★ The Union Defence Ministry traditionally celebrated Air Force Day at the Hindon Air Base in Ghaziabad, Uttar Pradesh.
- ★ However, in 2022, the Narendra Modi Government decided that the celebration would be rotated across the country every year.
- ★ In 2022, the Air Force Day Celebration was held at Chandigarh Air Base.
- ★ The 2023 Air Force Day was held at the Prayagraj Air Base, Uttar Pradesh.
- ★ The Indian Air Force theme for the 2024 Air Force Day is 'Bhartiya Vayu Sena: Saksham, Sashakt, Atmanirbhar' (potent, powerful, and self-reliant)'.

### **Malabar Maritime Exercise 2024**

- ★ Maritime Exercise Malabar 2024 is scheduled to take place from 08 to 18 October 2024, beginning with the Harbour Phase in Visakhapatnam, followed by the Sea Phase.
- ★ Hosted by India, 2024 exercise will see the participation of Australia, Japan, and the United States of America.
- ★ Exercise Malabar originated in 1992 as a bilateral naval drill between the United States and the Indian Navy.
- ★ It has since evolved into a key multilateral event aimed at enhancing interoperability and addressing shared maritime challenges in the Indian Ocean and Indo-Pacific regions.

### **DefConnect 4.0: Defence Minister Launches ADITI 2.0 Challenges and DISC 12**

- ★ Union Defence Minister Shri Rajnath Singh launched the second edition of Acing Development of Innovative Technologies with iDEX (ADITI 2.0) challenges and the 12<sup>th</sup> edition of Defence India Start-up Challenges (DISC 12) during DefConnect 4.0 at Manekshaw Centre, Delhi Cantt. on October 07, 2024.
- ★ ADITI 2.0 features 19 challenges from the Armed Forces and allied agencies in the domains of Artificial Intelligence (AI), Quantum Technology, military communication, anti-drone systems customised for military platforms and adaptive camouflage, etc.

- ★ This scheme offers a grant of up to ₹25 crore to Innovations for Defence Excellence (iDEX) winners, focusing on critical technological areas crucial for strengthening the defence ecosystem of the country.
- ★ DISC 12 presents 41 challenges across key technology domains, including Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs), AI, Networking and Communication, with grants up to ₹1.50 crore.
- ★ Notably, it introduces the Medical Innovations and Research Advancement (MIRA) initiative, featuring nine challenges aimed at fostering the development of medical technologies.

### **Garden Reach Shipbuilders and Engineers hands over the second Survey Vessel, INS Nirdeshak**

- ★ Nirdeshak, the second of four Survey Vessel (Large) ships, was delivered to the Indian Navy on October 8, 2024.
- ★ It was built by Garden Reach Shipbuilders and Engineers (GRSE), Kolkata, and designed by the Indian Navy's Warship Design Bureau.
- ★ The first ship of the SVL class, INS Sandhayak, was commissioned on February 3, 2024.
- ★ INS Nirdeshak is the second in a series of four such vessels being constructed by GRSE, with the first delivered to the Navy 10 months ago in December 2023.
- ★ These are the largest survey vessels for the Indian Navy to be built in the country.
- ★ The vessels are designed and built as per the classification rules of the Indian Register of Shipping by GRSE, Kolkata.
- ★ The ship will also gather oceanographic and geophysical data for defense and civil applications.

### **Hindustan Aeronautics Limited Achieves Maharatna Status**

- ★ Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) has been upgraded to Maharatna status, becoming the 14<sup>th</sup> Central Public Sector Enterprise (CPSE) to receive this classification in India.
- ★ This upgrade marks a significant achievement for HAL, enhancing its role in the Indian aerospace and defence sector.
- ★ The upgrade was approved by the Finance Minister, following recommendations from:
  - ★ Inter-Ministerial Committee (IMC) led by the Finance Secretary.
  - ★ Apex Committee headed by the Cabinet Secretary.
- ★ HAL gains greater operational autonomy, higher investment capabilities, and strategic flexibility.
- ★ The company can now invest up to ₹5,000 crore or 15% of its net worth in a single project without needing government approval.
- ★ The Government of India introduced the 'Navratna' scheme in 1997 to identify and support CPSEs with competitive advantages.

### **Launch of 'Samarthak', the First Ship of the Multi-Purpose Vessel Project by L&T**

- ★ The first ship of the two Multi-Purpose Vessel projects, being built by Larsen and Toubro Limited (L&T), Shipyard for the Indian Navy, was launched on 14 Oct 24 at L&T, Kattupalli.
- ★ The ship has been named 'Samarthak' which means 'Supporter' and is synonymous with the multi-dimensional role envisaged from the platform.
- ★ The contract for two Multi-Purpose Vessels was signed between the Ministry of Defence and L&T Shipyard on 25 March 2022.
- ★ The ship was launched by Mrs. Shashi Tripathi, President of NWWA (Navy Wives Welfare Association).
- ★ The ceremony was presided over by Admiral Dinesh K. Tripathi, Chief of the Naval Staff.
- ★ The launch signifies the Indian Navy's commitment to indigenous shipbuilding in line with the Government of India's Aatmanirbhar Bharat and Make in India initiatives.

### **2<sup>nd</sup> Edition of 'Sagar Kavach' Exercise 2024**

- ★ The Indian Coast Guard successfully conducted its 2<sup>nd</sup> edition of the coastal security exercise 'Sagar Kavach' of the year on 16-17 October 2024 across Gujarat and the Union Territory of Daman and Diu coasts.
- ★ The Indian Coast Guard held its first 'Sagar Kavach' exercise of 2024 on 11 and 12 July 2024 along the coast of Andhra Pradesh.
- ★ The 2<sup>nd</sup> edition of the 'Sagar Kavach' coastal security exercise was co-ordinated by the Indian Coast Guard's North West Regional Headquarters in Gandhinagar, Gujarat.
- ★ All the agencies responsible for the coastal security of India- State Police, Indian Navy, Marine Police, Border Security Force (BSF), National Security Guard (NSG), Gujarat Maritime Board (GMB), Intelligence Bureau (IB), and the Port authorities, participated in the exercise.
- ★ The Indian Coast Guard provided extensive aerial surveillance of the coastal area by both the Indian Navy and the Coast Guard.

### **Defence Minister Inaugurates Prerna Sthal at Burdang in Sikkim**

- ★ Union Defence Minister Rajnath Singh virtually inaugurated the Prerna Sthal at Burdang in Sikkim.
- ★ The Prerna Sthal has been built in memory of 22 soldiers who lost their lives due to a massive flood caused by a lake outburst in October 2023.
- ★ Last year in the first week of October due to heavy rains the glacial South Lhonak Lake overflowed which led to release of excess water in the Teesta river.
- ★ The authorities released the excess water from the Chungthang dam built on the Teesta River, which caused flash floods.
- ★ The Army vehicles which were parked at Bardang near Singtam in the downstream area were swept away by the flood waters, resulting in the death of 22 soldiers.

- ★ Prerna Sthal memorial has been jointly constructed by the Governor of Sikkim and the Indian Army.

### **Indian Navy and Royal Navy of Oman Conduct Maritime Exercise**

- ★ The Indo-Oman bilateral naval exercise, Naseem Al Bahr, took place off the coast of Goa from October 13 to 18, 2024.
- ★ The Indian Navy participated with Indian Naval Ship (INS) Trikand and a Dornier Maritime Patrol Aircraft, while the Royal Navy of Oman was represented by RNOV Al Seeb.
- ★ The exercise was conducted in two phases:
  - Harbour Phase: Held from October 13 to 15, focused on professional interactions, including Subject Matter Expert Exchanges and planning conferences.
  - Sea Phase: Conducted from October 16 to 18, involving various naval drills and operational activities.
- ★ The exercise aimed to enhance interoperability and foster mutual understanding of naval best practices between the Indian Navy and the Royal Navy of Oman.

### **India Set to Participate in Euronaval 2024 Defence Exhibition in France**

- ★ Euronaval 2024 is the world's largest naval defence trade show, scheduled to take place in Paris, France from November 4-7, 2024.
- ★ India is among 104 countries invited to attend the exhibition.
- ★ The exhibition will showcase innovative solutions aimed at:
  - Protecting naval forces and maritime infrastructure against air and surface drones.
  - Developing next-generation anti-ship missiles and missile systems designed to target multiple hostile drones.
- ★ The event will emphasize themes such as innovation, sovereignty, and international co-operation within the naval industry.
- ★ The exhibition will feature discussions on strategic and industrial challenges facing the naval sector.
- ★ Euronaval 2024 provides a unique platform for participants to discover technological developments that will shape the navies of tomorrow.

## **RANKS, INDICES & REPORTS**

### **Global Hunger Index 2024**

- ★ The Global Hunger Index (GHI) is a comprehensive tool that tracks and measures hunger at the global, regional, and national levels.
- ★ India ranks 105<sup>th</sup> out of 127 countries in the Global Hunger Index 2024, placing it in the “serious” hunger category.



- ★ India's GHI score is 27.3, indicating a severe level of hunger.
- ★ The 2024 GHI report is the 19<sup>th</sup> edition, published by Concern Worldwide (Ireland) and Welthungerhilfe (Germany).
- ★ The report underscores that achieving the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) of Zero Hunger by 2030 is increasingly unlikely without substantial progress.
- ★ The disparity between the global right to food standards and the harsh reality faced by millions remains significant.

### **World Bank Report: Poverty in India and Global Trends (2024)**

- ★ A recent World Bank report, "Poverty, Prosperity and Planet: Pathways out of the Polycrisis", provides insights into poverty trends in India and worldwide.
- ★ The report reveals significant changes in poverty rates but highlights challenges.
- ★ The report suggests that global poverty reduction has slowed significantly, with the decade from 2020 to 2030 being considered a "lost decade" for poverty alleviation.
- ★ It notes that extreme poverty eradication by 2030 is now out of reach. At the current pace, it could take decades to eradicate extreme poverty, and more than a century to lift people above the \$6.85 per day mark.
- ★ Extreme poverty is increasingly concentrated in Sub-Saharan Africa and fragile countries.
- ★ India's contribution to global extreme poverty is expected to decline significantly over the next decade, driven by growth in GDP per capita.
- ★ Even if India manages to bring the extreme poverty rate down to zero by 2030, the global rate would only reduce from 7.31% to 6.72%, still above the 3% target set by global development goals.

## **AWARDS & PRIZES**

### **54<sup>th</sup> Dadashaeb Phalke Award**

- ★ The Union Ministry for Information and Broadcasting Ashwini Vaishnaw announced on 30 September 2024 that the jury had selected veteran Hindi and Bengali film actor Mithun Chakraborty as the recipient of the prestigious Dadasaheb Phalke Lifetime Achievement Awards for 2022.
- ★ Mithun Chakraborty will be the 54<sup>th</sup> recipient of the Dada Saheb Phalke Award.
- ★ Mithun Chakraborty will be conferred the award at the 70<sup>th</sup> National Film Festival award ceremony, which will be held on 8 October 2024.
- ★ Asha Parekh, Vipul Shah, and Khusbhu Sundar were members of the Jury that selected the Dadasaheb Lifetime Achievement Award winner for 2022.

- ★ He was successful commercial film star, whose film Disco Dancer (1982) not only popularised disco dance in the country but also made him a household name in India.
- ★ He has acted in Hindi, Bengali, Bhojpuri, Odia, and Telugu films.
- ★ He won the Filmfare Award for Best Supporting Actor for his performance in the Hindi film Agnipath in 1990.
- ★ The award is presented annually along with the National Film Awards. It carries a cash prize of ₹10 lakhs, a Swarna Kamal medallion and a shawl.

### **Lal Bahadur Shastri National Award for Excellence 2024**

- ★ Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar conferred the 25<sup>th</sup> Lal Bahadur Shastri National Award for Excellence for 2024 to Smt. Rajashree Birla on 1 October 2024 at a function held at the Vice President's residence in New Delhi.
- ★ The Delhi-based Lal Bahadur Shastri Institute of Management has instituted the Lal Bahadur Shastri National Award for Excellence in memory of former Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri.
- ★ The Award honours an Indian residing either in India or abroad each year for his/her contributions and outstanding achievements of high professional order and excellence in management, public administration, public affairs, education, Institution building, art and culture, and sports.
- ★ Smt. Rajashree Birla is the chairperson of the non-profit organisation Aditya Birla Centre for Community Initiatives and Rural Development.
- ★ She has been honoured for her contribution in implementing the Aditya Birla Centre for Community Initiatives and Rural Development initiatives, which has positively impacted the lives of millions living in rural areas.

### **48<sup>th</sup> Vayalar Ramavarma Memorial Literary Award**

- ★ Ashokan Charuvil has been awarded the 48<sup>th</sup> Vayalar Ramavarma Memorial Literary Award for his novel Kattoorkadavu.
- ★ This prestigious award, established by the Vayalar Ramavarma Trust, includes a cash prize of ₹1 lakh and a sculpture crafted by renowned artist Kanayi Kunhiraman.
- ★ The committee reviewed around 300 books in the initial screening, with six books making it to the final selection round.
- ★ Kattoorkadavu delves into the social and political upheavals experienced by a village affected by floods.
- ★ Charuvil is also known for his award-winning works, including Oru Rathrikku Oru Pakal, Amazon, and Parichitha Gandhangal.
- ★ The award ceremony is set to take place at the Nishagandhi auditorium on October 27.

### **Physics Nobel Prize 2024**

- ★ The Royal Swedish Academy of Science, Stockholm, Sweden, has chosen John J. Hopfield and Geoffrey E. Hinton for the Nobel Prize in Physics for the year 2024.
- ★ American John Hopfield and British-Canadian Geoffrey Hinton were chosen for their pioneering work in the development of artificial intelligence (AI).
- ★ They have been honoured for their discoveries and inventions that enable machine learning with artificial neural networks.
- ★ Both the winners will share the prize money of 11 million Swedish kroner, and they will be conferred the prize on 10 December 2024 in Stockholm.
- ★ John Hopfield was honoured with his invention of a network that uses a specific method for saving and recreating patterns.
- ★ Geoffrey Hinton, also known as the godfather of artificial Intelligence, developed a new type of network using the Hopfield network, which revolutionised machine learning.

### **Nobel Medicine Prize 2024**

- ★ The Karolinska Institute in Stockholm, Sweden, has chosen Victor Ambros and Gary Ruvkun for the 2024 Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine.
- ★ The American duo has been honoured for discovering microRNA and its role in post-transcriptional gene regulation.
- ★ Both will share the 11 million Kroner prize money equally and will be presented the award in a ceremony in Stockholm on 10 December, which is the death anniversary of Alfred Nobel.
- ★ Victor Ambros and Gary Ruvkun discovered the fundamental principle governing the regulation of gene activity in human beings.
- ★ Victor Ambros and Gary Ruvkun discovered a new class of tiny RNA molecules called microRNA. This molecule plays a crucial role in gene regulation.

### **Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman to Attend FE Best Banks Awards**

- ★ Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman is set to be the Chief Guest at the Financial Express (FE) Best Banks Awards, celebrating outstanding performances by banks, non-banking finance companies (NBFCs), small finance banks, and fintechs in India.
- ★ The event will be attended by top bankers and corporate leaders, highlighting the robust growth of India's financial sector.
- ★ The awards recognize exemplary performances across the financial sector, showcasing institutions and individuals who have made significant contributions.
  - Banker of the Year: V Vaidyanathan, MD and CEO of IDFC First Bank.
  - Lifetime Achievement Award: Dinesh Kumar Khara, former Chairman of the State Bank of India.
- ★ Sitharaman has played a pivotal role in shaping policies to foster growth and financial inclusion within the financial sector.

## 2024 Nobel Chemistry Prize

- ★ The Royal Swedish Academy of Science, Stockholm, has chosen David Baker, Demis Hassabis, and John M. Jumper for the 2024 Nobel Prize in Chemistry.
- ★ American David Baker was honoured for his work on ‘computational protein design’. British Demis Hassabi and American John M. Jumper were honoured for their work in predicting protein structures from their amino acid sequences.
- ★ The cash prize of 11 million kroner will be shared among the three winners.
- ★ Half of the prize will go to David Baker, and the other half will be equally shared between Demis Hassabis and John M. Jumper.
- ★ The award will be conferred to them in a ceremony in Stockholm, Sweden, on 10 December 2024.
- ★ The Nobel Prize is awarded by the Nobel Foundation, which gives prizes in Physics, Chemistry, Physiology or Medicine, Literature, Peace, and Economics.
- ★ The Nobel Foundation was set up as per the will of the Philanthropist and inventor of dynamite, Alfred Nobel.

## 2024 Nobel Prize in Literature

- ★ The Swedish Academy has selected South Korean novelist Han Kang for the 2024 Nobel Prize in Literature. Han Kang is the first Asian woman to win the Nobel Prize in Literature.
- ★ She is the second South Korean to win the Nobel Prize after former President Kim Dae-Jung. President Kim Dae-Jung was conferred the Nobel Peace Prize in 2000.
- ★ Han Kang will receive her 11 million Kroner prize at a ceremony in Stockholm, Sweden, on 10 December 2024, Alfred Nobel’s death anniversary.
- ★ The 2016 International Booker Prize-winning novelist Han Kang was selected by the Swedish Academy “for her intense poetic prose that confronts historical traumas and exposes the fragility of human life”.

## 2024 Nobel Peace Prize

- ★ The Norwegian Nobel Committee Norway has chosen the anti-nuclear weapon Japanese organisation Nihon Hidankyo for the 2024 Nobel Peace Prize.
- ★ The Norwegian Committee chose the Nihon Hidankyo organisation for its efforts to achieve a world free of nuclear weapons and demonstrate through victims of nuclear weapons testimony that nuclear weapons must never be used again.
- ★ Representatives of the Nihon Hidankyo organisation will receive their 11 million Kroner prize at a ceremony in Oslo, Norway, on 10 December 2024.
- ★ Nihon Hidankyo is the shortened Japanese name of the Japan Confederation of A- and H-Bomb Sufferers Organisations. They are the largest and most influential Hibakusha organisation in Japan.
- ★ Nihon is the Japanese name of Japan.

## **Nobel in Economics 2024**

- ★ 2024 Nobel laureates in the economic sciences are Daron Acemoglu, Simon Johnson and James Robinson have demonstrated the importance of societal institutions for a country's prosperity.
- ★ Societies with a poor rule of law and institutions that exploit the population do not generate growth or change for the better.
- ★ Their research highlights the different ways in which colonization impacted institutional development in various regions.
- ★ In some colonies, the colonizers exploited the local population and established extractive systems to serve their own interests.
- ★ In others, they created inclusive political and economic systems that allowed for the long-term prosperity of the population, particularly for European migrants.

## **5<sup>th</sup> National Water Award 2023**

- ★ Odisha has bagged the best state award in the 5<sup>th</sup> National Water Awards 2023, which was announced by the Union Minister for Jal Shakti Chandrakant Raghunath Paatil on 14 October 2024 in New Delhi.
- ★ The winner of the awards in various categories will be conferred in a function to be held on 22 October 2024 in New Delhi. The award functions will be presided over by President Droupadi Murmu.
- ★ The National Water Awards was instituted by the Department of Water Resources, River Development, and Ganga Rejuvenation under the Union Ministry of Jal Shakti.
- ★ The award was instituted to create awareness among the people about the importance of water and to adopt the best water usage practices.
- ★ The award is given in 9 categories, and 38 winners have been selected for the 2023 edition.

## **IAF World Space Award for Chandrayaan-3 Achievement**

- ★ Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) announced that its Chairman S. Somanath has received the International Astronautical Federation's (IAF) prestigious World Space Award for Chandrayaan-3's remarkable achievement.
- ★ This recognition celebrates India's contributions to space exploration.
- ★ Chandrayaan-3 mission by ISRO exemplifies the synergy of scientific curiosity and cost-effective engineering, symbolising India's commitment to excellence and the vast potential that space exploration offers humanity.
- ★ Chandrayaan-3 was launched July 6, 2023 from Sriharikota spaceport and it successfully made the soft landing near the South Pole on August 23.
- ★ Achieving a historic milestone, Chandrayaan-3 becomes the first to touch down near the lunar South Pole, showcasing both aspiration and technological prowess on an international scale.

### **Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought**

- ★ The European Parliament has awarded its prestigious Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought to María Corina Machado and Edmundo González, leaders of Venezuela's democratic opposition.
- ★ This recognition honors their efforts to restore democracy and freedom in Venezuela amid political repression.
- ★ The Sakharov Prize, established in 1988, is named after Andrei Sakharov, a Soviet dissident and Nobel laureate.
- ★ It is the highest tribute the European Union pays to individuals or groups defending human rights and fundamental freedoms.
- ★ The award also highlights the international community's solidarity with those advocating for democracy and human rights.

## **APPOINTMENTS & RESIGNATIONS**

### **New President of National Rifle Association of India**

- ★ Kalikesh Narayan Singh Deo was elected as the new President of the National Rifle Association of India (NRAI), defeating VK Dhall with a vote count of 36 to 21.
- ★ Kalikesh will serve as President of the NRAI until 2025, when the next general body meeting is scheduled to take place.
- ★ Kalikesh, a former MP from Odisha, had been managing the day-to-day operations of the NRAI as the caretaker head since April 2023, following the resignation of former President Raninder Singh.
- ★ Raninder Singh resigned due to the government's National Sports Code, which prohibits heads of national sports federations from holding office for more than 12 years.

### **Managing Director and CEO of IFFCO Tokio General Insurance**

- ★ IFFCO Tokio General Insurance Company Limited (IFFCO Tokio), a general insurer, has appointed a new Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer in Subrata Mondal.
- ★ Mondal has over 36 years of experience in the insurance industry and has been with IFFCO Tokio since 2001.
- ★ Before becoming MD and CEO, he served as Chief Underwriter, overseeing underwriting for various business lines, including property.
- ★ IFFCO Tokio General Insurance is a joint venture between the Indian Farmers Fertilisers Co-operative (IFFCO) and Japan's Tokio Marine Group, with a shareholding structure of 51 : 49.



### **46<sup>th</sup> DG of Armed Forces Medical Services**

- ★ Surgeon Vice Admiral Arti Sarin became the first woman to head the Director General of the Armed Forces Medical Services (DGAFMS).
- ★ She assumed her office as the 46<sup>th</sup> DGAFMS on 1 October 2024, replacing Lt Gen Daljit Singh.
- ★ Vice Admiral Arti Sarin's appointment is seen as a boost to women's empowerment in the Armed forces.
- ★ Arti Sarin is also a member of the 14-member National Task Force for the Safety of Medical Professionals, appointed by the Supreme Court.
- ★ Earlier, Lieutenant General Sadhna Saxena Nair became the first woman to be appointed as the Director General of Medical Services (Army).
- ★ Vice Admiral Arti Sarin is an alumna of the Armed Forces Medical College, Pune and was commissioned into the Armed Forces Medical Services in December 1985.
- ★ Before being appointed as the DGAFMS, Flag Officer Arti Sarin held the coveted appointments of DG Medical Services (Navy), DG Medical Services (Air) and Director and Commandant of Armed Forces Medical College (AFMC), Pune.

### **Claudia Sheinbaum Inaugurated as Mexico's 1<sup>st</sup> Female President**

- ★ Claudia Sheinbaum was sworn in as Mexico's 66<sup>th</sup> President and the first woman to hold the office.
- ★ This marks a significant moment in Mexico's history, occurring after over 200 years of independence.
- ★ Sheinbaum will serve a six-year term that will last until 2030.
- ★ The swearing-in took place at the Legislative Palace of San Lázaro in Mexico City.
- ★ During the ceremony, legislators shouted "Presidenta! Presidenta!" using the feminine form of President for the first time in Mexico's history.
- ★ As a member of the Morena party, Sheinbaum is anticipated to follow the policies of her mentor, Andrés Manuel López Obrador, the outgoing President.
- ★ Claudia Sheinbaum is a 62-year-old scientist and former mayor of Mexico City.

### **Prime Minister of Japan**

- ★ The Japanese emperor Naruhito appointed Shigeru Ishiba as the new Prime Minister of Japan.
- ★ Shigeru Ishiba was appointed by the Japanese emperor after the lower house of the Japanese Parliament, the House of Representatives, approved Shigeru Ishiba as the 102<sup>nd</sup> Prime Minister of Japan.
- ★ The 67-year-old Shigeru Ishiba replaces Fumio Kishida, who was also from the same political party - the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP).

- ★ The House of Representatives approved Shigeru Ishiba as the new Prime Minister of Japan, with 291 out of the 461 votes cast in his favour.
- ★ Shigeru Ishiba has appointed Takeshi Iwaya as the new Foreign Minister of Japan.

### **President of Tunisia**

- ★ Tunisian President Kais Saied has been reelected for the second time for a five-year term.
- ★ The Independent High Authority for Elections of Tunisia (ISIE) announced the election result on 7 October 2024, with President Saied securing 90.7 per cent of the votes polled.
- ★ In the 2019 Presidential election, which Kais Saied won, the voter turnout was 55 per cent.
- ★ In the recent Presidential election, two other candidates were Chaab Party leader Zouhair Maghzaoui and businessman Ayachi Zammel.

### **New Chancellor of Gokhale Institute, Pune**

- ★ Sanjeev Sanyal, an economist and member of the Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister (EAC-PM), has been appointed as the new chancellor of Pune's Gokhale Institute of Politics and Economics (GIPE).
- ★ His term will begin on October 7, 2024, and last for five years.
- ★ Bibek Debroy, chairperson of the EAC-PM, resigned from the chancellorship of GIPE amid controversy over the removal of the institute's Vice-Chancellor (V-C), Ajit Ranade.
- ★ Sanyal served as the Principal Economic Adviser to the Finance Minister for five years until February 2022.
- ★ He co-authored six economic surveys of the Indian Government between 2017 and 2022.

### **Chairperson for the 77<sup>th</sup> Session of the WHO Regional Committee**

- ★ Union Health Minister JP Nadda was elected as the Chairperson of the 77<sup>th</sup> session of the World Health Organization (WHO)'s Regional Committee for Southeast Asia.
- ★ The WHO Regional Committee for Southeast Asia is the annual governing body that influences health policies across the region.
- ★ The three-day session commenced on October 7, 2024, in New Delhi, with participation from Health Ministers and delegates from member countries.
- ★ Delegates from countries including Bangladesh, Bhutan, North Korea, India, Indonesia, the Maldives, Myanmar, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Thailand, and Timor-Leste are attending the session.
- ★ The session will concentrate on improving accessible public health systems and tackling significant epidemiological and demographic challenges.

### **Sanjeev Singla and Ajit Gupte as Ambassadors to France and Germany**

- ★ Ajit Vinayak Gupte has been appointed as the next Ambassador of India to the Federal Republic of Germany.

- ★ Sanjeev Kumar Singla has been appointed as the next Ambassador of India to France.
- ★ Gupte, 1991 Indian Foreign Service (IFS) Officer served as the Ambassador of India to the Kingdom of Denmark from November 2017 to March 2021.
- ★ Singla, 1997 Indian Foreign Service (IFS) Officer served as India's Ambassador to Israel on July 19, 2019, succeeding Pavan Kapoor (1990 cadre IFS Officer).
- ★ The appointments reflect India's strategic diplomatic engagement with key European nations, Germany and France.
- ★ They are essential for enhancing bilateral relations, trade, and co-operation on international issues.
- ★ Both appointments were announced by the Ministry of External Affairs in India, underscoring the importance of these roles in India's foreign policy strategy.

### **New CMD and CEO of IRFC**

- ★ On October 10, Manoj Kumar Dubey, a 1993-batch Indian Railway Accounts Service Officer, was appointed as the Chairman and Managing Director (CMD) and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the Indian Railway Finance Corporation (IRFC).
- ★ IRFC is a miniratna public sector enterprise under the Ministry of Railways.
- ★ Manoj Kumar Dubey previously served as Director (Finance) and Chief Financial Officer at the Container Corporation of India (CONCOR).
- ★ He has a strong track record in financial management and strategic operations.

### **26<sup>th</sup> DG of Indian Coast Guard**

- ★ DG Paramesh Sivamani has taken over as the 26<sup>th</sup> Director General of the Indian Coast Guard.
- ★ DG Paramesh Sivamani was given the additional charge of Director General of the Coast Guard in August 2024 after the death of the 25<sup>th</sup> Director General of the Indian Coast Guard, Rakesh Pal, on 18 August 2024 in Chennai.
- ★ DG Paramesh Sivamani is an alumnus of the National Defence College, New Delhi and Defence Services Staff College, Wellington, Tamil Nadu.
- ★ He is considered a specialist in Navigation and Direction and commanded all the major vessels of the Indian Coast Guard.
- ★ Sivamani, over the last three and half decades, has served in various capacities in onshore and offshore appointments with distinction.
- ★ During his illustrious career, DG Paramesh Sivamani was honoured with the Tatrakshak Medal in 2014 and the President's Tatrakshak Medal in 2019.
- ★ He was also awarded the DG Coast Guard Commendation in 2012 and the Flag Officer Commanding-in-Chief (East) Commendation in 2009.

### **First CM of UT of Jammu and Kashmir**

- ★ Omar Abdullah of the National Conference party was sworn in as the first Chief Minister of the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir.
- ★ Lieutenant Governor of Jammu and Kashmir, Manoj Sinha, administered the oath of office to the Chief Minister and his council of ministers at a ceremony held at the Sher-i-Kashmir International Convention Centre (SKICC) in Srinagar.
- ★ Omar Abdullah has been sworn in as the Chief Minister of Jammu and Kashmir for the second time.
- ★ He became the Chief Minister of Jammu and Kashmir for the first time in January 2009 and remained till 8<sup>th</sup> January 2014.

### **Chairman and Managing Director of AI Assets Holding Limited**

- ★ Amit Kumar was selected by the Public Enterprise Selection Board (PESB) for the role of Chairman and Managing Director (CMD) of AI Assets Holding Limited (AIAHL), a Schedule 'B' Public Sector Undertaking (PSU).
- ★ Kumar is currently serving as the Executive Director Asset Manager at ONGC (Oil and Natural Gas Corporation).
- ★ He was chosen from a pool of seven candidates for this position.
- ★ His appointment is subject to necessary clearances and approval from the Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC).
- ★ AI Assets Holding Limited is a Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) established by the Government of India to provide unified asset holding services, as outlined in its Memorandum of Association.

### **Chief Minister of Haryana**

- ★ Nayab Singh Saini of the Bharatiya Janata Party was sworn in as the Chief Minister of Haryana for the second consecutive time on 17 October 2024.
- ★ Nayab Singh Saini is the 11<sup>th</sup> Chief Minister of Haryana.
- ★ The State Governor, Bandaru Dattatreya, administered the oath of Office to Nayab Singh Saini and his 13 ministers at a ceremony in Panchkula, Haryana.
- ★ Nayab Singh Saini led his party to a historic third consecutive victory in the recently concluded Haryana legislative assembly poll.
- ★ The Bharatiya Janata party won 48 seats in the 90-member Haryana assembly.

### **Chief Executive Officer of Public Procurement Portal GeM**

- ★ Satya Srinivas, a 1991-batch Indian Revenue Service (IRS) Officer (Customs & Indirect Taxes), has been appointed as the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the Government e-Marketplace (GeM) on an additional charge basis.

- ★ He is currently serving as the Additional Secretary in the Department of Commerce, Government of India.
- ★ Srinivas is India's Chief Negotiator for the India-EU and India-UK Free Trade Agreement (FTA) negotiations.
- ★ He oversees the Special Economic Zones and the Trade Intelligence & Analytics divisions within the Department of Commerce.
- ★ He has taken over the role of CEO following the appointment of the previous CEO, P.K. Singh, as Secretary in the Ministry of Renewable Energy.

### **Chairperson of National Commission for Women**

- ★ The Government of India appointed Mrs Vijaya Rahatkar as the 9<sup>th</sup> chairperson of the National Commission for Women.
- ★ Mrs. Vijaya Rahatkar has previously served as the chairperson of the Maharashtra State Commission for Women from 2016 to 2021.
- ★ The Central Government has also appointed Dr Archana Majumdar as a member of the National Commission for Women.
- ★ Currently, Ms Delina Khongdup and Mrs Mamta Kumari are the other members of the Commission.
- ★ Mrs Vijaya Rahatkar and Dr Archana Majumdar have been appointed for a three-year term.
- ★ As per the provisions of the National Commission for Women Act 1990, the Government of India has the power to frame rules and regulations regarding the tenure of the Chairperson and Members of the Commission.

### **First Female CFO of HSBC**

- ★ The British multinational bank Hong Kong and Shanghai Banking Corporation (HSBC) made history by appointing Pam Kaur as its first female Chief Financial Officer (CFO).
- ★ She succeeds Georges Elhedery, who has been appointed HSBC's Chief Executive Officer (CEO).
- ★ The 60-year-old Indian-born British citizen Pam Kaur joins a growing list of women who occupy top posts in the global banking system.
- ★ Pam Kaur completed her MBA and graduated from Punjabi University, Patiala, Punjab. She is also a Fellow of the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales.
- ★ She has worked at various top multinational banks, such as Citi Bank, Lloyds Banking Group, Royal Bank of Scotland, and Deutsche Bank.

### **Pranav Chawda to Become Chief Executive Officer of JP Morgan Chase Bank India**

- ★ JP Morgan Chase Bank India has announced the elevation of Pranav Chawda as its Chief Executive Officer (CEO).
- ★ The appointment received approval from the Reserve Bank of India (RBI).

- ★ As CEO, Chawda's responsibilities will expand to include heading the corporate banking entity as well.
- ★ The former CEO, Prabhdev Singh, resigned in June before completing his term.

### **MD and CEO of Axis Bank**

- ★ Axis Bank has confirmed the re-appointment of Amitabh Chaudhry as Managing Director (MD) and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the bank for another three years, starting from January 1, 2025, to December 31, 2027.
- ★ The re-appointment was approved by shareholders at Axis Bank's 30<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting in July.
- ★ Before joining Axis Bank, Amitabh Chaudhry served as the MD and CEO of HDFC Standard Life Insurance Company Limited (HDFC Life) for over nine years.
- ★ He also held senior roles at Infosys, including MD and CEO of Infosys BPO and Head of the Testing Unit at Infosys Technologies Limited.

## **SPORTS**

### **World Junior Wushu Championships 2024**

- ★ The Young Indian Wushu players ended their campaign at the 9<sup>th</sup> World Junior Wushu Championships 2024 by winning seven medals, including two golds, one silver, and four bronze medals.
- ★ The 9<sup>th</sup> World Junior Wushu Championships in 2024 was hosted by the International Wushu Federation (IWUF) and organised by the Wushu Federation of Brunei.
- ★ The Championships were held at Bandar Seri Begawan, Brunei, from 22 to 30 September 2024.
- ★ Wushu is a traditional Chinese sport, and the 9<sup>th</sup> World Junior Wushu Championships 2024 featured two main events: wushu sanda and wushu taolu.
- ★ Aryan became the first Indian player to win a gold medal in the World Junior Wushu Championships. In the final of the 48 kg boys junior category, he defeated Gong Huanran from China.
- ★ Shaurya won the second gold medal, defeating Alireza Zaman of Iran in the boy's 48 kg weight category of the children's section of the championships.
- ★ Nang Mingbi Borphukan won the lone silver medal for India in the Taolu Jian Shu C Group event.
- ★ The bronze medal was won by Tanish Nagar in the 56kg category, Abhijeet in the 60 kg category, Divyanshi in the 60 kg category (women), and Yuvraj in the 42 kg category.
- ★ India sent a 24-member contingent to participate in the 9<sup>th</sup> World Junior Wushu Championships 2024.



## Men's SAFF U17 Championship

- ★ The undefeated Indian football team lifted the 2024 Men's SAFF U17 Championship by defeating Bangladesh 2-0 in the final.
- ★ The final was played at the Changlimithang Stadium in Thimphu, Bhutan, on 30 September 2024.
- ★ The Indian boy's football team, also famously known as Blue Colts, remained undefeated throughout the tournament.
- ★ India defeated Bangladesh 1-0 and Maldives 3-0. In the semi-final, India defeated Nepal by 4-2. Bangladesh defeated Pakistan in the penalty shoot 8-7 in the other semi-final to qualify for the finals.
- ★ In the final, Mohammed Kaif scored the opening goal for India, and Mohammed Arbash scored the second goal in the 95<sup>th</sup> minute.
  - Player of the Tournament: Mohammed Arbash of India.
  - Goalkeeper of the Tournament: Aheibam Suraj Singh.
- ★ The South Asian Football Federation is a regional football association of South Asian countries.

## First China Open Title

- ★ Carlos Alcaraz secured his first China Open title after a hard-fought victory over world No. 1 Jannik Sinner.
- ★ The match was an intense contest, with Alcaraz coming from a set down to win 6-7 (6/8), 6-4, 7-6 (7/3), marking his fourth ATP title of the year and 16<sup>th</sup> career title overall.
- ★ Carlos Alcaraz defeated world No. 1 Jannik Sinner in a gripping final lasting three hours and 21 minutes.
- ★ The match ended Sinner's impressive run of 14 consecutive victories.

## Mumbai Wins the 2024-25 Irani Trophy

- ★ Mumbai won the 2024-25 season Irani Cup.
- ★ Mumbai won the trophy after 27 years, having won it in the 1997/98 season.
- ★ This was the 16<sup>th</sup> Irani Cup title for the current Ranji Champion, Mumbai.
- ★ The Irani Cup is a first-class domestic cricket tournament held at the Bharat Ratna Atal Bihari Vajpayee Eakana Stadium in Lucknow from 1-5 October 2024.
- ★ This year, the 2023-24 season Ranji Champion Mumbai, led by Ajinkye Rahane, faced the Rest of India, led by Ruturaj Gaikwad.
- ★ Batting first, Mumbai scored 527 runs, with Sarfraz Khan being the top scorer with an unbeaten 222 runs. Mukesh Kumar of the Rest of India team was the most successful bowler with five wickets for 110 runs.
- ★ Sarfraz Khan was declared the Player of the match for his unbeaten knock of 222.

## **WTA China Open Tennis Tournament**

- ★ 20-year-old American tennis star Coco Gauff defeated Karolina Muchová of the Czech Republic to win the 2024 WTA China Open Tennis tournament.
- ★ The China Open was a WTA 1000 event held in Beijing, China. The final was played on 6 October 2024.
- ★ The Women's Tennis Association (WTA) is the world's governing body of professional women's tennis tournaments. In a calendar year, it organises around 50 tournaments in 30 countries.
- ★ The 2023 US Open Champion, Coco Gauff, became the youngest China Open champion in 14 years by defeating the 2023 French Open finalist Karolina Muchova 6-1,6-3 in straight sets.
- ★ Coco Gauff is the second American to win the China Open after Serena Williams
- ★ The Italian pair Sara Errani and Jasmine Paolini defeated Chan Hao-Ching of Taiwan and Russian Veronika Kudermetova pair in the doubles final 6-4, 6-4 to win the China Open doubles title.

## **Olympian Gymnast Dipa Karmakar Retires from Sport**

- ★ Olympian and Commonwealth Games bronze medallist Dipa Karmakar has announced her retirement from Gymnastics.
- ★ Dipa Karmakar, nicknamed 'Small Wonder', was the first female Indian gymnast to establish India's name at the international level in the sport.
- ★ Dipa Karmakar is the first Indian female gymnast to compete in a Summer Olympics. She narrowly missed a medal at the vault event at the 2016 Rio Olympics.
- ★ Dipa Karmakar was honoured with India's fourth-highest civilian award, Padma Shri in 2017.
- ★ In 2016, she was awarded the country's highest sports award, the Major Dhyan Chand Khel Ratna Award (then the Rajiv Gandhi Khel Ratna Award).
- ★ In 2015, Dipa Karmakar was awarded the Arjuna Award.

## **ISSF Junior World Championships 2024 Medal Tally**

- ★ India finished at the top of the medal tally at the 4<sup>th</sup> ISSF Junior World Championships 2024 with 24 medals -13 golds, three silvers, and eight bronzes.
- ★ Italy, with 13 medals-five gold, four silver and five bronze, came second, while Norway came third with 10 medals-four gold, three silver and three bronze.
- ★ The 2024 ISSF Junior World Championships, organised by the International Shooting Sport Federation (ISSF) and hosted by Peru, was held in Lima, the capital of Peru, from 26 September to 7 October 2024.
- ★ Five hundred fifty-three shooters from 53 countries participated in the 2024 ISSF Junior World Championship, with India sending the largest contingent, 61 shooters.

- ★ The Indian medal account at the 2024 ISSF Junior World Championship was opened by Kanak, who won the bronze medal in the women's 10m air pistol individual event.
- ★ Mane Parth Prakash won India's first individual gold medal in the Championships. He won the gold medal in the men's 10m Air Rifle event.
- ★ Mukesh Nelavalli won six medals at the Championships: one individual gold, three golds in team events, and two individual bronze medals.
- ★ The Indian shooter won 15 medals in the individual event: 5 gold, 3 silver, and 5 bronze. In the team event, they won 11 medals: 8 gold and 3 bronze.

### **Uttarakhand to Host Next Summer and Winter National Games**

- ★ The Indian Olympic Association has chosen Uttarakhand to host the 38<sup>th</sup> Summer National Games.
- ★ The state will also hold the next Winter Games. The 37<sup>th</sup> National Games was held in Goa from 25 September -9 November 2023.
- ★ The Winter Games will be held outside Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh for the first time.
- ★ According to the Indian Olympic Association, Uttarakhand will hold the 38<sup>th</sup> National Games from 28 January -14 February 2025.
- ★ The National Games are organised by the Indian Olympic Association and hosted by the State Government. Their main aim is to identify talents in the country who can represent India at the Summer Olympics.

### **King of Clay 'Rafael Nadal' Announces Retirement from Tennis**

- ★ One of the greatest men's tennis players in the open era, Rafael Nadal, has announced his retirement from professional tennis.
- ★ The upcoming Davis Cup Final in Spain will be his last tournament as a professional player. The 2024 Davis Cup Final will take place from 19 to 24 November 2024 in Malaga, Spain.
- ★ Rafael Nadal will be part of the Spanish team that will take on the Netherlands in the quarter-finals on 19 November 2024.
- ★ Spanish-born Rafael Nadal turned professional in 2001 at the age of 15 and became the youngest male player to win a match in the professional tennis circuit.
- ★ During his stellar career, Rafael Nadal has won several tennis titles.
- ★ 22 Grand Slam singles titles: 14 French Open, 4 US Open, 2 Wimbledon, 2 Australian Open.
- ★ Olympic Medals: Singles gold medal at the 2008 Beijing Olympics and gold in the men's double at the 2016 Rio Olympics.

### **Asian TT Championships 2024**

- ★ The Indian men's and women's teams won bronze medals in their respective events at the 27<sup>th</sup> Asian Table Tennis Championships 2024, held in Astana, Kazakhstan.

- ★ This was the first medal for the women's team in the championships after 1960, when they won bronze at Bombay, while for the men's team; it was their third consecutive bronze medal.
- ★ The Indian women's Table Tennis team of Ayhika Mukherjee, Manika Batra, and Sutirtha Mukherjee lost their semi-final match against the eventual winner, Japan, 3-1. In the Asian Table Tennis Championships, the losing semi-finalists are awarded the bronze medal.
- ★ This was the first medal for the Indian women's team at the Asian Table Tennis Championships since the Asian Table Tennis Union (ATTU) started organising the competition in 1972.
- ★ The India men's team of Sharath Kamal, Manav Thakkar and Harmeet Desai lost their semi-final match against the Chinese Taipei (Taiwan) 3-0 to settle for a bronze medal in the Championships.
- ★ The Asian Table Tennis Championships were earlier organised by the Table Tennis Federation of Asia (TTFA).

### **ATP Shanghai Masters 1000 Singles Title**

- ★ World Number One male tennis player Jannik Sinner of Italy defeated 24 Grand Slam winners Novak Djokovic of Serbia in the final to win the ATP Shanghai Masters 1000 singles title.
- ★ The ATP Shanghai Master 1000 was held in the Chinese city of Shanghai from 2 to 13 October 2024. The Shanghai Master is played on a hard court.
- ★ In the final of the Shanghai Masters, played on 13 October 2024 in Shanghai, Jannik Sinner defeated Novak Djokovic 7-6 (7/4), 6-3.
- ★ The pair of Wesley Koolhof of the Netherlands and Nikola Mektic of Croatia defeated the Argentinian pair of Maximo Gonzales and Andres Molteni 6-4, 6-4 to win the doubles title of the Shanghai Masters tennis championships.
- ★ ATP, or the Association of Tennis Professionals, was founded in 1972 to promote men's professional tennis worldwide. It is the global governing body of professional men's tennis.
- ★ It organises a series of events known as the ATP Tour every year.

### **Aryna Sabalenka Wins WTA Wuhan 1000 Singles Title**

- ★ World No.2 Aryna Sabalenka of Belarus defeated World No.7 Zheng Qinwen of China to win her third consecutive WTA Wuhan 1000 singles title.
- ★ The WTA Wuhan 1000 Tennis tournament was held in the Chinese city of Wuhan from 7-13 October 2024. Wuhan Open is played at the Hard Court.
- ★ Aryna Sabalenka defeated the local favourite Zheng Qinwen 6-3, 5-7, 6-3 in the final played on 13 October 2024 at Wuhan.
- ★ This was Aryna Sabalenka's third title at Wuhan, having won it in 2018 and 2019.
- ★ The pair of Anna Danilina of Kazakhstan and Irina Khromacheva of Russia defeated the American pair of Asia Muhammad and Jessica Pegula 6-3, 7-6(6) in the final of the Wuhan Open.

### **2024 Bendigo International Badminton Tournament**

- ★ 21-year-old Tanya Hemanth of India won the 2024 Bendigo International badminton tournament women's singles final.
- ★ She defeated Tung Ciou-tong of Chinese Taipei in the final at Bendigo, Australia, on 13 October 2024 in straight sets 21-17, 21-17.
- ★ This was Tanya's third international title after the 2022 India International and the 2023 Iran Fajr International.
- ★ The Bendigo International badminton tournament was held in Bendigo, Australia, from 9-13 October 2024. It is a Grade 3 International Challenge tournament.

### **ISSF World Cup Final 2024**

- ★ Indian shooters finished their ISSF World Cup Final 2024 campaign with 4 medals, 2 silver and 2 bronze.
- ★ The season-ending ISSF World Cup Final 2024 was held at the Dr Karni Singh Shooting Range in New Delhi from 13 to 18 October 2024. It included competition in the rifle, pistol, and shotgun categories.
- ★ New Delhi was hosting the ISSF World Cup final for the second time, having hosted it in 2017.
- ★ Sonam Maskar won India's first medal, a silver medal in the women's 10m air rifle shooting event. This was Sonam's third medal at the 2024 ISSF World Cup.
- ★ At the 2024 ISSF World Cup in Cairo, Sonam and Arjun Babuta won a silver medal in the 10m air rifle mixed team event. Sonam also claimed an individual silver medal in the 10m air rifle.
- ★ Vivaan Kapoor won a silver medal in the men's skeet event. It was the first-ever medal for Vivaan Kapoor in the senior shooting events.
- ★ Akhil Sheoran won the bronze medal in the men's 50m rifle 3 positions shooting event.
- ★ Analjaet Singh Naruka won the final medal for India, a bronze medal in the men's trap event.

### **Neetu David Inducted into ICC Hall of Fame**

- ★ Former Indian spinner Neetu David, who holds the record for the best bowling figures (8/53) by a woman in individual Test innings, has been inducted into the ICC Hall of Fame.
- ★ She becomes only the second female cricketer from India to receive this prestigious honor, following in the footsteps of former captain Diana Edulji.
- ★ Neetu David joins South African legend AB de Villiers and former England captain Alastair Cook in the ICC Hall of Fame.
- ★ David's career includes over 100 international appearances (10 Tests and 97 ODIs) as a prolific left-arm spinner.

- ★ She is the second-highest wicket-taker for India in ODIs, with 141 wickets, and the first Indian woman to claim 100 wickets in ODIs.

### **Thomas Tuchel Appointed Head Coach of England National Team**

- ★ German Manager Thomas Tuchel has been named the head coach of the England national soccer team, marking him as the third non-Englishman to take on this prestigious role.
- ★ The Football Association (FA) announced the appointment, confirming that Tuchel will officially start on January 1, alongside his English assistant, Anthony Barry.
- ★ Tuchel, aged 51, is recognized as one of the top coaches globally, having previously managed Chelsea and Bayern Munich.
- ★ FA Chief Executive Mark Bullingham expressed excitement over Tuchel's hiring, highlighting his status as a top-tier coach.

### **New Zealand Wins Maiden ICC Women's T20 World Cup**

- ★ The New Zealand women's cricket team won their first ICC Women's T20 World Cup by defeating South Africa in the final, played at the Dubai International Cricket Stadium, Dubai, United Arab Emirates, on 20 October 2024.
- ★ This was the first major title for the New Zealand Women's team, nicknamed 'White Ferns' since their triumph in the ICC Women's One Day International Cricket World Cup on home soil in 2000.
- ★ The 9<sup>th</sup> ICC Women's T20 Cricket World Cup was originally allotted to Bangladesh, but due to political instability in the country, it was shifted to the United Arab Emirates.
- ★ Bangladesh shared the hosting rights with the UAE, and the matches were played in Dubai and Sharjah in the UAE from October 3-20, 2024.

### **Sreeja Akula Becomes Highest Ranked Indian Table Tennis Player in World**

- ★ Indian women's table tennis player Sreeja Akula became the highest-ranked Indian player in the world after her strong performance in the 2024 Paris Olympics.
- ★ In the latest ranking released by the International Table Tennis Federation, she is ranked World No.22 in the women's singles.
- ★ She broke the record of Manika Batra, who achieved her career-best World No. 24 rank in the singles event.
- ★ Only two Indian table tennis players, Sreeja Akula and Manika Batra, have ever reached the top 25 world rankings in the singles event.
- ★ The International Table Tennis Federation is the world governing body of men's and women's table tennis.



### **Deepika Kumari wins a Silver at the Archery World Cup Final 2024**

- ★ Four-time Olympian Deepika Kumari won a silver medal on 20 October 2024 in the women's recurve event at the 2024 Archery World Cup Final held in Tlaxcala, Mexico.
- ★ She lost to the Chinese archer Li Jiaman 6-0 in the final. Li Jiaman was part of the Chinese women's archery team that won the silver medal in Paris 2024.
- ★ The 18<sup>th</sup> Archery World Cup Final was organised by World Archery and hosted by Mexico on 19 and 20 October 2024 at Tlaxcala, Mexico.
- ★ Thirty-year-old Deepika Kumari won silver medals in the 2011, 2012, 2013, 2015, and 2024 editions, while she won a bronze medal in the 2018 edition.

### **Rajasthan to Set Up World-Class Sports Hub in Jaipur**

- ★ During his visit to London Chief Minister Bhajan Lal Sharma, the State Government signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with Royal Multisport Pvt Ltd, the owner of Indian Premier League's Rajasthan Royals cricket team, at the Lord's Stadium.
- ★ As per the MoU, a world-class sports hub will be established in Jaipur in partnership with Royal Multisport Pvt Ltd.
- ★ The sports hub will include a world-class stadium, training infrastructure for all sports, essential sports medicine, and other sports facilities.
- ★ The MoU was signed after a discussion between the Chief Minister, the owner of the Rajasthan Royals, Manoj Badale, and the Director of Cricket for the Rajasthan Royals, Kumar Sangakkara.

### **World Wrestling Championships 2024**

- ★ The Indian wrestling contingent finished its U23 World Wrestling Championships 2024 campaign with nine medals — one gold, one silver, and seven bronze.
- ★ The U23 World Wrestling Championships 2024 was organised by the world wrestling governing body United World Wrestling (UWW) and hosted by Albania in Tirana from 21 to 27 October 2024.
- ★ Chirag Chikkara won the solitary gold medal for India in the U23 World Wrestling Championships 2024. He won the gold medal in the men's freestyle 57 kg event.
- ★ At the Tirana event, competitions were held in 10 weight categories of freestyle and Greco-Roman wrestling. Both men and women wrestlers under the age of 23 years participated in the Championships.

### **Japan Para-Badminton International 2024**

- ★ Indian para-badminton players delivered an impressive performance at the Japan Para-Badminton Internationals 2024 by winning 24 medals-six gold, nine silver and nine bronze.
- ★ The Japan Para-Badminton Internationals 2024 was held in Tokyo, Japan, from 22-27 October 2024. It was a level 2 category Para-Badminton tournament.

- ★ Sivarajan Solaimalai won two gold medals in the Tokyo event. He won the gold in the men's singles SH6 class and then won gold in the doubles in partnership with Sudarsan Saravanakumar Muthusamy.
- ★ Ace Indian para-shuttler Sukant Kadam won gold in the men's singles SL4 class by defeating fellow Indian Tarun in the final.
- ★ Umesh Vikram Kumar and Surya Kant Yadav defeated the fellow Indian pair of Sukant and Dinesh Rajaiiah to win gold in the doubles of the SL3-SL4 class.
- ★ In women's SU5 class, Manisha Ramdass won gold by defeating Japan's Mamiko Toyoda in the final.
- ★ Hardik and Ruthick Ragupathi won India's sixth gold medal in the men's SU5 doubles. In the final, they defeated the Indo-Polish pair of Dev Rathi and Bartlomiej Mroz.

## IMPORTANT DAYS

### International Translation Day

- ★ International Translation Day is celebrated on 30<sup>th</sup> September of every year.
- ★ The theme for International Translation Day (ITD) in 2024 is "Translation, an art worth protecting".
- ★ On 24 May 2017, the General Assembly approved resolution 71/288 and declared September 30 as International Translation Day in order to identify the role of Translators in interconnecting nations.
- ★ They chose September 30 as International Translation Day because the 30<sup>th</sup> of September is the day of the feast of St. Jerome, the Bible translator who is considered the patron saint of translators.
- ★ The celebration has been promoted by the International Federation of Translators (FIT) which was started in the year of 1953.
- ★ In 1991 the FIT launched the idea of International Translation Day to represent the solidarity of the translation community and to promote the profession of translation.

### International Day of Older Persons

- ★ The 34<sup>th</sup> International Day of the Older Persons is being observed worldwide on 1 October 2024.
- ★ The day is observed to attract the worlds and policymakers' attention in responding to the opportunities and challenges of population ageing in the 21<sup>st</sup> century and promoting the development of a society for all ages.
- ★ The day also recognises the contributions of older persons to society and their wisdom.

- ★ The United Nations defines an old person as someone 65 years or older, while in India, old persons or senior citizens are 60 years or older.
- ★ The United Nations General Assembly passed a resolution on 14 December 1990 to observe 1 October as the International Day of Older Persons.
- ★ The first International Day of Older Persons was observed on 1 October 1991.
- ★ The theme of the 34<sup>th</sup> International Day of Older Persons is Ageing with Dignity: The Importance of Strengthening Care and Support Systems for Older Persons Worldwide”.
- ★ The Union Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment celebrates the International Day of Older Persons in India. The Ministry is the nodal ministry for the cause of senior citizens.

### **World Vegetarian Day**

- ★ World Vegetarian Day is observed on the 1<sup>st</sup> of October of every year.
- ★ In 1977, the North American Vegetarian Society (NAVS) founded World Vegetarian Day.
- ★ In 1978, the International Vegetarian Union endorsed the World Vegetarian Day.
- ★ According to the North American Vegetarian Society, World Vegetarian Day was observed in order to create some awareness about the health, humanitarian, and ethical of a vegetarian lifestyle.
- ★ World Vegetarian Day aims to promote life-enhancing possibilities and the joy of eating vegetarian dishes.

### **International Day of Non-Violence**

- ★ The International Day of Non-violence is observed on the 2<sup>nd</sup> October of every year.
- ★ In 2004, Iranian Nobel laureate Shirin Ebadi had a proposal of an International Day of Non-Violence.
- ★ This idea was gradually attracted by some leaders of India’s Congress Party.
- ★ In January 2007, they called upon the United Nations to adopt the idea.
- ★ On 5<sup>th</sup> June 2007, the UN General Assembly adopted the resolution and established the International Day of Non-Violence.
- ★ The International Day of Non-Violence is observed on 2<sup>nd</sup> October in order to commemorate the birth anniversary of the Non-violent freedom fighter Mohandas Karmchand Gandhi.

### **National Wildlife Week**

- ★ As National Wildlife Week approaches from October 2 to 8, 2024, India is gearing up to celebrate its diverse ecosystems and emphasize the vital importance of wildlife conservation.
- ★ This year’s (2024) theme, “Wildlife Conservation Through Coexistence”, aims to raise awareness about the pressing challenges faced by wildlife and the urgent need for collective action to preserve these invaluable resources.

- ★ The roots of Wildlife Week in India date back to 1957, when the first Wildlife Week was commemorated.
- ★ It was established by the Indian Board of Wildlife in 1952 to promote awareness about long-term wildlife protection goals across the country.
- ★ Initially observed as Wildlife Day in 1955, it was later expanded and renamed Wildlife Week in 1957.

### **World Habitat Day**

- ★ World Habitat Day is observed on the first Monday of October of every year. This year World Habitat Day is celebrated on the 7<sup>th</sup> of October.
- ★ In 1985, The UN General Assembly adopted resolution 40/202 and established World Habitat Day on the first Monday of October.
- ★ Since 1986, World Habitat Day has been celebrated on the First Monday of October of every year.
- ★ This day is a global observance day, so every year it is held in different countries along with some specific theme.
- ★ It was first celebrated in Nairobi, Kenya in the year of 1986 along with the theme “Shelter is my right”.

### **World Cerebral Palsy Day**

- ★ Every year 6<sup>th</sup> October is observed as a World Cerebral Palsy Day.
- ★ This year’s theme, ‘#UniquelyCP’, celebrates the uniqueness of the cerebral palsy community - their interests, passions, and identities - showing that they are not solely defined by their disability.
- ★ In 1853, Dr. John Little recognized and studied Cerebral Palsy.
- ★ Around 1861, he presented his research to the Obstetrical Society of London and he provided the first definition of Cerebral Palsy.
- ★ Little said that Cerebral Palsy may occur at birth due to difficult labour.
- ★ Sigmund Freud was the first person who stated that Cerebral Palsy may be caused by abnormal development before birth.
- ★ With a small thrust “Change My World in One Minute” World Cerebral Palsy Alliance and United Cerebral Palsy created World Cerebral Palsy Day in the year of 2012.

### **World Post Day**

- ★ World Post Day is celebrated on 9<sup>th</sup> October of every year.
- ★ The theme for 2024 is: “150 years of enabling communication and empowering peoples across nations”.

- ★ World Post Day was first declared by the Universal Postal Union (UPU) Congress in Tokyo, Japan in the year of 1969.
- ★ World Post Day was observed on 9<sup>th</sup> October because on this day the Universal Postal Day was started in the year 1874 in Switzerland.
- ★ The Universal Postal Union started the global revolution in communication and it started the ability to write letters to others in the world.
- ★ Since World Postal Day started, countries from all over the world took part in the celebrations which are conducted on this day.

### **World Mental Health Day**

- ★ World Mental Health Day 2024 falls on the 10<sup>th</sup> of October.
- ★ World Mental Health Day with the theme 'It is Time to Prioritise Mental Health in the Workplace'
- ★ A non-governmental organization called the World Federation for Mental Health (WFMH) was established in 1948.
- ★ On October 10, 1992, Richard Hunter, who was the Deputy Secretary General of the WFMH at the time, declared the first World Mental Health Day.
- ★ Every year since 1994, a unique theme has been chosen for the international celebration.

### **International Day of Rural Women**

- ★ International Day of Rural Women 2024 is observed on the 15<sup>th</sup> of October 2024.
- ★ This year's theme, "Rural Women Sustaining Nature for Our Collective Future: Building climate resilience, Conserving Biodiversity, and Caring for land towards gender equality and Empowerment",
- ★ The United Nations (U.N.) has been working to keep the world's nations peaceful and friendly since its founding in 1945.
- ★ The United Nations has undertaken a number of humanitarian initiatives and adopted resolutions and laws aimed at protecting the environment.
- ★ The U.N.'s efforts to improve the status and wellbeing of women, particularly those in rural areas, rank among its most impressive accomplishments.

### **International Day for the Eradication of Poverty**

- ★ The International Day for the Eradication of Poverty 2024 will be observed on October 17<sup>th</sup>, focusing on global efforts to eliminate poverty and uphold human rights.
- ★ The day was first commemorated on October 17, 1987, at the Trocadéro in Paris, where more than 100,000 people gathered.
- ★ It marked the unveiling of a memorial stone by Joseph Wresinski, a French priest and humanitarian activist.

- ★ The event honored those who had died from extreme poverty, violence, and hunger, and proclaimed that poverty is a violation of human rights. It emphasized the need for collective action to protect these rights.
- ★ On December 22, 1992, the United Nations General Assembly declared October 17<sup>th</sup> as the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty.

### **International Stuttering Awareness Day**

- ★ International Stuttering Awareness Day 2024 is observed on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of October 2024.
- ★ This year, the theme of International Stuttering Awareness Day 2024 is 'The Power of Listening'.
- ★ International Stuttering Awareness Day was established in the year 1998 to bring attention to the millions of people across the world who are living with his specific Communication Disorder.
- ★ People think that stuttering means repetitions of some words.
- ★ Stuttering is also mentioned for persons who have an elongation of a vowel or syllable.
- ★ This condition may also vary because sometimes a person may stutter once in a while and sometimes they stutter continuously while talking.

### **World Polio Day**

- ★ World Polio Day 2024 is observed on the 24<sup>th</sup> of October 2024.
- ★ World Polio Day was first initiated and Celebrated by Rotary International for the birthday of Jonas Salk, the Medical Researcher who led the first team to develop a vaccine against polio.
- ★ He developed the Inactivated Poliovirus Vaccine in 1955.
- ★ Later Albert Sabin developed the Oral Polio Vaccine in 1962.
- ★ Rotary International and WHO established the Global Polio Eradication Initiative (GPEI) in 1988.
- ★ At the time there were around 3,50,000 cases across the world. Now the European Countries have completely eradicated polio and now announced themselves as Polio-free Countries.
- ★ But still Asian Countries like Afghanistan, Pakistan, and India still find rare cases across the country.

### **Global Media and Information Literacy Week**

- ★ Global Media and Information Literacy (MIL) Week is observed annually from October 24 to 31.
- ★ It aims to raise awareness about the importance of Media and Information Literacy (MIL) and celebrates the progress made towards ensuring that people around the world are equipped with the skills to critically navigate the information landscape.



- ★ The event is organized globally with UNESCO co-hosting a conference along with a Member State, bringing together the MIL community.
- ★ This year's theme is "The New Digital Frontiers of Information: Media and Information Literacy for Public Interest Information."
- ★ The theme addresses the challenges posed by the rise of digital platforms and generative AI, which have blurred the lines between fact and fiction, human-generated and AI-generated content.

## **OBITUTARY NEWS**

### **Malayalam Actor Mohan Raj, Known for His Role as 'Keerikkadan Jose**

- ★ Veteran actor Mohan Raj, popularly known by his stage name Keerikkadan Jose, passed away at the age of 70.
- ★ Mohan gained fame for his iconic villainous role as "Keerikkadan Jose" in the film Kireedam, starring Mohanlal.
- ★ Over a career spanning more than three decades, Mohan Raj appeared in over 300 films across different languages.
- ★ His notable works include Uppukandam Brothers, Chenkol, Aaram Thampuran, and Narasimham, among others.
- ★ He widely recognized for his impactful portrayal of villain characters, leaving a lasting legacy in Malayalam cinema.

### **Padma Vibhushan Business Tycoon Ratan Naval Tata**

- ★ One of the icons of Indian business in the modern era, Ratan Naval Tata, passed away on 9 October 2024 at the Breach Candy Hospital in Mumbai, Maharashtra.
- ★ Ratan Naval Tata was 86 years old, suffering from age-related medical complications and was in a critical condition.
- ★ Jamsetji Tata founded the Tata Group by establishing a cotton mill in Maharashtra.
- ★ The Tata Group is a diversified business group operating in Steel, cement, textiles, hydroelectric power, agricultural equipment, trucks, locomotives, software, the hospitality sector, etc.
- ★ In 1991, Ratan Tata was appointed the Chairman of the Tata Sons after Jehangir Ratanji Dadabhoy Tata (JRD Tata) death.
- ★ 1991 also saw the introduction of a new economic policy in the country, which encouraged the private sector and promoted the globalisation of the Indian economy.
- ★ Under Ratan Tata, the Tata Group expanded its business and aimed to become a multinational company.

### **Indranand Singh Jha, Former Radio Presenter of Akashvani Darbhanga**

- ★ Indranand Singh Jha, the famous former radio presenter and compere of Akashvani Darbhanga passed away at his ancestral village Chanaur in Darbhanga at the age of 77.
- ★ Jha was well-known for his rural radio talk programme called Gamghar, broadcast from Akashvani Darbhanga.
- ★ He was affectionately known by his pen name, Khur Khur Bhai.
- ★ Jha enjoyed significant popularity among radio listeners, particularly for his engaging style and rural-centric content throughout his career.
- ★ His work contributed to the promotion of rural issues and culture through radio, making him a beloved figure in the community.

### **Renowned Sanskrit scholar Vasant Anant Gadgil**

- ★ Sanskrit scholar and the founder of Sharda Gyan Peetham, Vasant Anant Gadgil, passed away in Pune, Maharashtra at the age of 94.
- ★ Gadgil studied Sanskrit at Tilak Maharashtra University and learned ancient Sanskrit texts like the Vedas and the Upanishads.
- ★ He traveled to the US and Africa to promote the Sanskrit language.
- ★ He was well-versed in ancient Sanskrit texts, including the Vedas and Upanishads.
- ★ Gadgil was previously associated with Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, contributing to Sanskrit scholarship.
- ★ In 2012, he was honored by then Gujarat Chief Minister Narendra Modi.
- ★ He received the Mahakavi Kalidas Sanskrit-Vrati National Award for his efforts in Sanskrit propagation, research, and development from Kavikulaguru Kalidas Sanskrit University.

### **Tito Mboweni, South Africa's First Black Central Bank Governor**

- ★ Tito Mboweni, who was the first Black Governor of the South African Reserve Bank was heralded by financial markets and business for keeping tight fiscal controls on the nation's public spending, has passed away at the age of 65.
- ★ Mboweni served as the Governor of the South African Reserve Bank from 1999 to 2009.
- ★ He was recognized for maintaining tight fiscal controls on the nation's public spending, which earned him praise from financial markets and the business community.
- ★ He served as Finance Minister from October 2018 to August 2021.
- ★ One of his significant achievements as Governor was increasing the country's foreign-exchange reserves from less than \$10 billion to nearly \$40 billion.

### **Nobuyo Oyama, Iconic Voice Actor of Japanese Cartoon Doraemon**

- ★ Nobuyo Oyama, the iconic voice actor for Doraemon, passed away at the age of 90.

- ★ Oyama began her career in the 1960s and became famous for her voice acting in anime and children's programs.
- ★ She voiced Doraemon in the popular Japanese anime series from 1979 to 2005, gaining a large fan following in Japan and internationally.
- ★ Doraemon, a character created by Fujiko F. Fujio in 1970, became a cultural icon, with its manga and anime translated into multiple languages.
- ★ Oyama voiced a piglet in a children's puppet show in the 1960s.
- ★ She also voiced Katsuo in the anime show "Sazaesan".
- ★ Nobuyo Oyama retired from her role as Doraemon in March 2005.

