

Important Monthly Current Affairs Capsule – April 2023

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IMPORTANT DAYS

Odisha Foundation Day 2023: April 1

- On April 1st, 2023, **Utkal Diwas** or **Odisha Foundation Day** is celebrated all over the state of Odisha, India.
- It is a national day observed annually on April 1st every year.
- It is celebrated on April 1 every year to remember the formation of the Odisha state after a struggle to be recognized as an independent state
- Odisha used to form a major portion of the ancient Kalinga.
- The region witnessed the epic “Kalinga War” led by King Ashoka who invaded and conquered the region in 260 BC.
- In the year 1912, Orissa and Bihar were formed and on 1 April 1936, Odisha was formed.

World Autism Awareness Day 2023: April 2

- On April 2nd of this current year **World Autism Awareness Day 2023** is observed all over the world
- The theme of World Autism Awareness Day 2023 is **Transformation: Toward a Neuro-Inclusive World for All**.
- In 2007, created by the United Nations General Assembly, World Autism Awareness Day lands on April 2 every year.

International Day for Mine Awareness 2023: April 4

- **International Day for Mine Awareness 2023** is observed all over the world on **April 4th**.
- In 2023 the United Nations Mine Action Service will promote the International Day for Mine Awareness and Assistance in Mine Action under the theme “**Safe Ground, Safe Steps, Safe Home**”.
- The United Nations’ International Day for Mine Awareness and Assistance in Mine Action is celebrated on the 4th of April every year.

National Maritime Day 2023: April 5

- Every year, **National Maritime Day** in India is celebrated on the **5th of April**.
- It is a day celebrated to show gratitude to the men who spend many months in the sea, carrying out the bulk of India’s trade and commerce at a global level.
- “**MARPOL at 50 – Our commitment goes on**” is the World Maritime theme for 2023, reflecting the need to support a green transition of the maritime sector into a sustainable future, while leaving no one behind.

World Health Day 2023: April 7

- **World Health Day 2023** is observed all over the world on **7th April**.
- The World Health Organization's physical, emotional, and mental well-being is promoted and celebrated all over the world to this day.
- The main theme of this year is “**Health For All**”.
- World Health Day was created and first celebrated on 22nd July 1949.

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- Later the date was changed to 7th April and the WHO encourage the students to participate.

World Homeopathy Day 2023- April 10

- World Homeopathy Day 2023 is celebrated on the 10th of April every year.
- The day is celebrated to spread knowledge of homeopathy medicine in public health.
- The World Homeopathy Day 2023 theme is "One Health, One Family".
- Dr. Christian Samuel Hahnemann father and founder of homeopathy were born on 10th April in 1755.

National Safe Motherhood Day 2023: April 11

- National Safe Motherhood Day is celebrated on the 11th of April every year.
- In India significance the importance of care in pregnancy, and skilled care during childbirth and the first few weeks after birth.
- The theme of the National Safe Motherhood Day 2023 is "Remain at home amid coronavirus, protect mother and infant from coronavirus".
- The National Safe Motherhood Day was first proposed by (WRAI) White Ribbon Alliance.

Jallianwala Bagh Massacre 2023: April 13

- Every year April 13th is observed as Jallianwala Bagh Massacre.
- Jallianwalla also called as Massacre of Amritsar incident on April 13, 1919, in which British troops fired on a large crowd of unarmed Indians in an open space known as the Jallianwala Bagh Massacre in the Punjab region of India.
- The people gathered at Jallianwala Bagh to protest against the arrest of the two nationalist leaders Satya Pal and Dr. Saifuddin Kitchlew on 13th April 1919.

World Hemophilia Day 2023: April 17

- World Hemophilia Day is celebrated on April 17th every year.
- The theme of World Hemophilia Day is "Access for All: Prevention of Bleeds as the global standard of care".
- World Hemophilia Day was first started in 1989 by the World Federation of Hemophilia

World Heritage Day 2023: April 18

- Every year April 18th is celebrated as World Heritage Day or International day for monuments and sites.

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National Civil Service Day 2023: April 21

- Every year April 21st is celebrated as National Civil Service Day.
- The first such function was held in Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi on 21st April 2006.

Earth Day 2023: April 22

- Every year April 22nd is celebrated as Earth Day for the past fifty-four years it has been celebrated by billions of people around the globe.
- The Earth Day 2023 theme is "Invest in our planet".
- Earth Day is first celebrated in 1969 when a US senator named Gaylord Nelson witnessed the effects of a massive oil spill in Santa Barbara, CA.
- He called to action on all Americans to take a stand for the environment in 1970 and thousands of colleges and universities across the United Nations organized protests for a healthy sustainable Earth.
- In 1968 the US Public Health Service organized the Human Ecology Symposium the event invited students to come and listen to scientists talking about the impact of the deteriorating environment on human health.
- In 1972 the US government formed the Environmental protection Agency and passed the Clean Air Act.
- In 1990 Earth Day went global with more than 140 countries participating in the event.
- In 1995 Nelson the man behind the Earth Day movement was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom.

World Book and Copyright Day: April 23

- Every year World Book and Copyright Day is celebrated on April 23 and it is also known as World Book Day.
- The theme for World Book Day 2023 is "Indigenous Languages."
- The theme is focused on the native languages of a country.
- The day is celebrated by United Nations, Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organizations and other related organizations across the world to honor authors, books, and to promote the art of reading etc.,
- United Nations, Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organizations has selected 23rd April as World Book Day to pay tribute to great literary figures including William Shakespeare, Miguel Cervantes, and Inca Garcilaso de la Vega who died this day.
- In 1995 this date was finalised by the United Nations, Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organizations general conference, held in Paris, to pay tribute and honour authors and books worldwide.
- Idea to celebrated a day of books came originally the Catalans day of books called as Dia del Llibere.
- Dia del Llibere was celebrated in Catalonia every year on April 23.

National Panchayati Raj Day: April 24

- In India, 24th April is designated as National Panchayati Raj Day.
- The day is held to remember the passing of the 73rd Amendment to the Constitution on June 17, 1992, and

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on April 24, 1993, the law went into force.

- Prime Minister Manmohan Singh designated the first National Panchayati Raj Day on April 24, 2010.
- The constitution of the 73rd Amendment act of 1992 that came into force with effect on April 24, 1993, has vested constitutional status on Panchayati Raj Institutions.
- This marks the moment in the history of decentralization of political power to the grassroots level.
- As a result, it was determined to delegate democracy's authority.
- For this reason, a panel headed by Balwantrai Mehta was established in 1957 to meet the demand.
- And for the first moment in decades, Panchayati Raj was established in India.

World Malaria Day 2022: April 25

- World Malaria Day is observed on April 25 all over the world.
- World Malaria Day will reinforce the Global Fund Investment (GFI) using the theme advance quality, building resilience, and ending malaria.
- That effort is echoed in this year's theme: "Time to deliver zero malaria: invest, innovate, implement."
- World Malaria Day which was first held in 2008 developed from Africa Malaria Day an event that had been observed since 2001 by African governments.
- The observance served as a time to assess progress towards goals aimed at controlling malaria and reducing its mortality in African countries.
- In 2007 at the 60th session of the World Health Assembly by the World Health Organization it was proposed that Africa Malaria day be changed to World Malaria Day to recognize the existence of malaria in countries worldwide and to bring greater awareness to the global fight against the malaria disease

World Intellectual Property Day 2023: April 26

- Every year April 26 is celebrated as World Intellectual Property Day to learn about the role that intellectual property rights play in encouraging innovation and creativity.
- The theme of World Intellectual Property Day is "Women and IP: Accelerating Innovation and Creativity".
- World Intellectual Property Day was launched in the year 2000 by the World Intellectual Property organization to promote and protect creative ideas, including music, art, trademarks, writings, and inventions.
- The official date of World Intellectual Property Day is April 26 but events are held all over the world throughout the springtime.
- World Intellectual Property Day is celebrated all over the globe in the form of panels, receptions, expos, and educational outreach for students of all ages.

International Dance Day 2023: April 29

- Every year April 29th is celebrated as International Dance Day also known as World Dance Day.
- International Dance Day or World Dance Day celebration for those who can see the value and importance of

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dance.

- International Dance Day or World Dance Day is celebrated through promotion by the International Dance Council.
- The day was first introduced in 1982 by the International Dance Committee of the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization.
- The French Ballet master and a great reformer of dance Jean-Georges Novvre were born in 1727.

NATIONAL NEWS

Ministry of Environment launches Aravalli Green Wall Project

- Union Minister for Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Shri Bhupender Yadav launched Aravalli Green Wall Project.
- Shri Yadav launched the project at a function organised to celebrate the International Day of Forests at Tikli Village (Gurugram) in Haryana.
- He also unveiled the National Action Plan to Combat Desertification and Land Degradation Through Forestry Interventions.
- Aravalli Green Wall Project is an initiative to green the 5 km buffer area around the Aravalli Hill Range in four states.

New small savings scheme for women, Mahila Samman Savings Certificate, launched

- The Centre said the Mahila Samman Savings Certificate Scheme has been announced in the Budget with a deposit facility up to two lakh rupees in the name of women or girls for a tenure of two years at a fixed interest of 7.5 per cent.
- This will offer deposit facility up to Rs.2 lakh in the name of women or girls for a tenor of 2 years at fixed interest rate of 7.5 per cent with partial withdrawal option.
- Limit - The maximum deposit amount for the Mahila Samman Savings Certificate is Rs 2 lakh
- Tenor and interest rate - The scheme has a two-year term i.e., up to March 2025 and a 7.5 percent annual interest rate, with the option of partial withdrawal.
- Small savings scheme taxation - This is a government-backed small-savings plan.
- Generally, Section 80C tax benefits are available for small savings plans

Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw conducts trial run on Chenab rail bridge

- Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw travelled on the first trial run of a track-mounted trolley on the world's highest arch bridge constructed on the Chenab river.
- He inspected the iconic bridge having a height of 359 metres from the Chenab riverbed.
- The track work on the Chenab bridge has been completed and now electric work will be undertaken, besides the installation of Kavach — an anti-collision safety device.

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- It is a part of the ambitious Udhampur-Srinagar-Baramulla rail link (USBRL) project.
- The arch bridge is being constructed at Rs 1,486 crore.

AAI gives a target to airports to achieve 100% use of Green Energy by 2024

- The Airport Authority of India (AAI) has given the target to most of the airports to achieve 100 percent use of Green Energy by 2024 and Net Zero by 2030.
- Currently Mumbai, Cochin and 25 other AAI Airports are using 100 per cent Green Energy.
- Cochin Airport is the first green airport in the world, fully powered by solar energy.
- The 25 airports include Puducherry, Kanpur (Civil), Hubballi, Belagavi, Mysore, Tezu, Kangra, Shimla, Kullu, Jammu, Srinagar, Leh, Imphal, Pakyong, Pantnagar, Dehradun, Dimapur, Jalgaon, Kohlapur, Pune, Aurangabad, Gondia, Akola, Sholapur and Juhu.

Govt plans to borrow Rs 8.88 lakh crore in first half of FY24

- Govt has planned to borrow ₹8.88 Lakh Crore for the first half of the financial year 2023-24.
- The Government of India has finalized its borrowing program for the first half (H1) of the financial year 2023-24 in consultation with the Reserve Bank of India.
- The Union Budget plans to borrow Rs 8.88 lakh crore (57.55%) in the first half (H1) of the estimated Rs 15.43 lakh crore gross market borrowing for FY 2023-24.
- The borrowing will be spread under 3, 5, 7, 10-, 14-, 30-, and 40-years securities.

MoD signs Rs 19,600 cr contracts for 11 Next Generation Offshore Patrol Vessels and six Next Generation Missile Vessels

- Ministry of Defence signed Rs 19,600 crore contracts for 11 Next Generation Offshore Patrol Vessels (NGOPV) and 6 Next Generation Missile Vessels (NGMV).
- The contracts have been signed with Indian shipyards for the acquisition of these vessels at an overall cost of 19,600 crore rupees.
- The contract for the acquisition of 11 NGOPV was signed with Goa Shipyard Limited (GSL) and Garden Reach Shipbuilders and Engineers (GRSE) Kolkata at the overall cost of 9,781 crore rupees.

Uttar Pradesh CM Yogi inaugurates Sericulture Fair in Gorakhpur

- Sericulture Fair was organized at Yogiraj Baba Gambhirnath Auditorium.
- UP CM also laid foundation stone of 18 Chaki rearing buildings, 9 threading machine sheds and 36 community buildings.
- In addition to this, the grant amount was distributed to the beneficiaries for the silkworm rearing house.

1000 cities to be garbage-free by 2024: Hardeep Singh Puri

- Union Minister for Urban Housing and Urban Affairs Shri Hardeep S. Puri has said that by October 2024, a target has been set to make 1,000 cities in the country 3-star garbage-free cities.
- Shri Puri was addressing an event organized on the occasion of International Zero Waste Day 2023 in

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New Delhi.

- Referring to the progress of the GFC- Star Rating Protocol launched in January 2018 to encourage the spirit of competition and mission mode in the urban local bodies, he said that since its inception, the certification has picked up significantly.
- Urban India has become open defecation free (ODF).

Centre raises interest rates on most small saving schemes, except PPF, for June quarter

- The government has raised returns on most small savings schemes for the April to June quarter, barring the Public Provident Fund (PPF) whose returns have been static at 7.1% for the last three years.
- Returns on the Sukanya Samriddhi Account were, however, increased for the first time since April 2020 — from 7.6% to 8% — while the Senior Citizens Savings scheme would now fetch 8.2% instead of 8%.
- The Finance Ministry, which notified the new rates also lifted the return on the National Savings Certificate to 7.7% from 7% and Kisan Vikas Patra to 7.5% from 7.2%.
- The monthly income account scheme will now deliver 7.4% returns instead of 7.1%.

Centre launches mobile app of National Logistics Portal Marine

- Sagar-Setu app of National Logistics Portal (Marine) has been launched in New Delhi.
- Minister for Ports, Shipping and Waterways Sarbananda Sonowal has launched the app.
- National Logistic Portal Marine was envisioned by the Ministry of Ports, Shipping Waterways, and the Ministry of Commerce and Industry in January 2023.
- SAGAR-SETU app has been launched within two months of this.

India's first ropeway transport in Varanasi: Modi sets project in motion

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi gifted India's first public transport ropeway to his parliamentary constituency Varanasi.
- Narendra Modi, along with the ropeway laid the foundation stone for nine projects worth Rs 1592.49 crore while he also inaugurated 20 other projects of Rs 189.41 crore.
- The ropeway will run from Cantonment Railway Station (Varanasi Junction) to Godaulia Square.
- The scheme is worth Rs 644.49 crore.

MeitY forms task force to make India 'product developer and manufacturing nation'

- The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) has formed a nine-member task force with the primary goal to make India a 'product developer and manufacturing nation.'
- It will be chaired by the additional secretary (MeitY), Bhuvnesh Kumar.
- Joint secretary (electronics) Amitesh Kumar Sinha will serve as its member convenor.
- HCL founder Ajay Chowdhary, Dixon Technologies chief Sunil Vachani, Lava International chairman Hari Om Rai, and Boat Lifestyle co-founder Aman Gupta are the other members of this task force.

PAN-Aadhaar linking deadline extended till June 30

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- **Prime Minister inaugurates the Global Millets (Shree Anna) Conference at IARI Campus, PUSA New Delhi.**
- A commemorative stamp and commemorative coin were unveiled in this 2-day conference.
- A compendium of Indian millet (Shri Anna) start-ups and a book of millet (Shri Anna) standards were also digitally launched.
- **The Indian Institute of Millets Research of ICAR was declared as a Global Centre of Excellence.**
- Global Millets Conference is a symbol of India's responsibilities towards the global good.
- Shree Anna is becoming a medium of holistic development in India and is linked with village as well as the poor.

The Multiple Indicator Survey (MIS) report of NSS 78th round 2020-21

- **Income Tax Department** has extended the **due date to June 30** from the earlier deadline of **March 31**.
- However, the linking will be possible only after paying a late fee of ₹1,000.
- More than 51 crore PANs have already been linked with Aadhaar so far.
- Under the provisions of the **Income-tax Act, 1961**, **every person who has been allotted a PAN as on July 01, 2017** and is eligible to obtain Aadhaar Number, is required to intimate his Aadhaar to the prescribed authority on or before **March 31, 2023**, on payment of a prescribed fee (which is ₹1,000).
- If taxpayers fail to link their **PAN with their Aadhaar**, they cannot avail income tax refunds and have to pay **TDS (tax deduction at source) and TCS (tax collection at source)** at higher rates.

IPCC released the final report of the sixth assessment cycle

- The **National Sample Survey Office (NSSO)** carried out its 78th round of the **Multiple Indicator Survey (MIS)**.
- The **Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys (MICS)** are household surveys implemented by countries under the programme developed by the **United Nations Children's Fund** to provide internationally comparable, statistically rigorous data on the situation of children and women.
- The survey was conducted for all the states except for **Andaman and Nicobar Islands**.
- The **MICS was originally developed in response to the World Summit for Children (WSC)** held in **1990** to measure progress towards an internationally agreed set of mid-decade goals.

India becomes first country to develop its own system for estimating TB cases

- **India has become the first country in the world to estimate the Tuberculosis (TB) burden in-country** and launch its own mathematical system to estimate the disease burden.
- The **TB model was drawn up by using data from several sources**, including the **Nikshay portal** of private sector drug sales, the sub-national certification system where the **TB-free status of various States is estimated and ranked**.
- **Delhi has the highest burden of all forms of TB and pulmonary TB** — at 747 per 100,000 and 534 per

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100,000 respectively.

- Gujarat has the lowest burden of all forms of TB at 137 per 100,000 while Kerala is the lowest in pulmonary TB at 151 per 100,000.

PNGRB amends regulation to allow unified tariff for natural gas pipelines

- The Petroleum and Natural Gas Regulatory Board (PNGRB) has amended PNGRB (determination of natural gas pipeline tariff) under the mission of “One Nation, One Grid and One tariff”.
- PNGRB has notified a tariff of Rs 73.93/MMBTU and created three tariff zones for a unified tariff.
- The zonal unified tariffs have become effective from April 1, 2023.
- The tariff will be apportioned over three zones, Zone 1 to Zone 3, with the tariff of Rs 39.45/ MMBtu, Rs 74.97/ MMBtu and Rs 99.90/ MMBtu respectively.
- This reform will benefit consumers located in far-flung areas.
- The Petroleum and Natural Gas Regulatory Board (PNGRB) was formed under the Petroleum and Natural Gas Regulatory Board Act, of 2006.

Revamped credit guarantee scheme for MSMEs to be implemented from April 1

- In Union Budget 2023-24, Union Finance Minister Mrs Nirmala Sitharaman announced the revamping of Credit Guarantee Scheme for Micro & Small Enterprises with effect from 01.04.2023, with an infusion of Rs 9,000 crore to the corpus to enable additional collateral-free guaranteed credit of Rs. 2 lakh crore and the reduction in the cost of the credit by about 1 per cent.
- The corpus of Credit Guarantee Fund Trust for Micro & Small Enterprises (CGTMSE) has been infused with a sum of Rs. 8,000 crore.
- CGTMSE has issued guidelines regarding reduction of the annual guarantee fee for loans up to Rs. 1 crore from a peak rate of 2% per annum to as low as 0.37% per annum.

New India Literacy Programme launched to cover a target of 5.00 crore non-literates in the age group of 15 years and above

- Government has launched a new Centrally Sponsored Scheme namely, “New India Literacy Programme” (NILP) for implementation during five years from the FYs 2022-23 to 2026-27 with financial outlay of Rs.1037.90 crore out of which Rs.700.00 crore is Central share and Rs.337.90 crore is State share.
- The scheme aims to cover a target of 5.00 crore non-literates in the age group of 15 years and above.
- The teaching-learning material and resources have been made available on the DIKSHA platform of NCERT and can be accessed through mobile apps.
- All non-literate above 15 years of age can avail the benefits of the scheme.

Education Ministry shortlists 9,000 schools for PM SHRI scheme

- Education Ministry selected 9000 schools for Pradhan Mantri Schools for Rising India (PM SHRI) scheme.
- 9,000 schools from across India have been shortlisted for the Pradhan Mantri Schools for Rising India

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(PM SHRI) programme.

- These schools have been selected from 2.5 lakh government schools, including Kendriya Vidyalayas and Navodaya Vidyalayas.

About PM SHRI:

- Pradhan Mantri Schools for Rising India (PM SHRI) scheme was approved by Union Cabinet on 5 September 2022.
- The Centre will disburse ₹18,128 crore to schools as its share under the PM SHRI (PM Schools for Rising India) scheme.
- Disbursals will be made over a five-year period from 2022-23 to 2026-27.
- PM SHRI is a centrally sponsored scheme of ₹27,360 crore, of which the majority will be contributed by the Centre, while the States will contribute the remaining ₹9,232 crore.

Foreign Trade Policy to take India's exports to two trillion dollars by 2030

- **Ministry of Commerce Piyush Goyal has unveiled Foreign Trade Policy (FTP) 2023** to raise India's goods and services exports to **two trillion dollars by 2030**.
- India is likely to end this fiscal year with **total exports of \$760-770 billion as against \$676 billion in 2021-22**.
- It will replace Foreign Trade Policy 2015-20 and will become effective from **1 April 2023**.

PFRDA raises ombudsman age limit to 70 years from 65 years

- The Centre announced that it has increased the upper age limit by 5 years of the ombudsman of the Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority (PFRDA) to 70 years.
- As per the Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority (Redressal of Subscriber Grievance) Regulations 2015, the upper age limit was 65 years.
- The ombudsman, which is appointed by PFRDA receives, considers and facilitates resolution of complaints or grievances, which fall within the ambit of the regulations.
- In the interest of Subscribers and to benefit them with timely payment of annuity income, the upload of the documents shall be mandatory with effect from **1st April 2023**.

Government sanctions Rs 800 cr for installing 7,432 EV fast charging stations

- The ministry of heavy industries said Rs 800 crore under FAME India scheme Phase-2 has been sanctioned to three PSU oil marketing companies (OMC) for setting up 7,432 public fast charging EV stations across the country.
- The ministry has released Rs 560 crore or 70 per cent of the total amount to three OMCs — Indian Oil (IOCL), Bharat Petroleum (BPCL), and Hindustan Petroleum (HPCL) — as the first instalment for the

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installation and commissioning of upstream infrastructure and charging equipment of EV public charging stations at respective retail outlets in the country.

- The installation is expected to be completed by March 2024.

National Gallery of Modern Art to organize Spring Fiesta 2023 to celebrate 69 years of museum

- The National Gallery of Modern Art organised “Spring Fiesta” to celebrate its foundation day.
- The National Gallery of Modern Art (NGMA) in New Delhi is the premier institution of modern art in the country.
- The idea of a national art gallery was first mooted in 1949.
- Vice President Dr. S. Radhakrishnan formally inaugurated the NGMA in the presence of Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru and artists and art lovers in New Delhi on March 29, 1954.

Bandipur completes 50 years as Project Tiger Reserve

- Bandipur Tiger Reserve recently completed 50 years as a Project Tiger Reserve.
- It was established in the 1930s as a wildlife sanctuary, which became a tiger reserve in 1973 under Project tiger.
- It is situated in two contiguous districts (Mysore and Chamarajangar) of Karnataka and located at the tri-junction area of the States of Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and Kerala.

Cabinet approves LIGO-India, to cost Rs 2,600 crore

- The Union Cabinet approved a project to build an advanced gravitational-wave detector in Maharashtra at an estimated cost of Rs 2,600 crore.
- LIGO-India is scheduled to begin its scientific operation from 2030.
- LIGO India will be the fifth detector after Virgo of Italy and KAGRA of Japan.
- It will be made with the exact specifications of Laser Interferometer Gravitational-wave Observatories (LIGO) in Louisiana and Washington in the U.S.
- Researchers use this instrument to detect, record, and study gravitational waves.

Govt forms panel to examine stalled real estate projects

- The Union Housing and Urban Affairs Ministry has formed a committee to examine issues related to stalled real estate projects.
- The committee has fourteen members.

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- It is headed by former NITI Aayog CEO Amitabh Kant.
- The committee will also recommend ways for the completion of stalled real estate projects.
- It also includes the chairperson of the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India.
- In April 2022, the Central Advisory Council decided to form a Committee to examine all the issues related to stalled projects.

India elected as a member of the UN Statistical Commission Narcotic Drugs :

- The United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) has elected India as member to the UN Statistical Commission, the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, and the UN HIV/AIDS Program Coordinating Board (UNAIDS).
- All three are important subsidiary bodies of the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations.
- The Drug Prevention Commission monitors the implementation of international drug control treaties.
- India has been elected to the highest statistical body of the United Nations for a term of 4 years, which will start from 1 January 2024.
- India was last elected a member of this commission in 2004.
- India won a landslide victory in the concluded United Nations Statistical Commission election by securing 46 out of 53 votes, leaving behind rivals South Korea (23), China (19) and the UAE (15).

About UNSC:

- United Nations Statistical Commission is the apex body of the global statistical system which brings together the chief statisticians of the member states around the world.
- It was established in 1947.
- It is the highest decision-making body for international statistical activities, responsible for the creation of concepts and methodologies, as well as their national and international implementation.
- The commission consists of 24 member countries of the United Nations elected on the basis of equal geographic distribution by the United Nations Economic and Social Council.

Amit Shah Unveils 54-Foot-Tall Statue Of Lord Hanuman At Gujarat

- On the occasion of Hanuman Jayanti Union Home Minister Amit Shah unveiled a 54-feet tall statue of Lord Hanuman at Sarangpur temple in Botad district of Gujarat.
- Created by Rajasthan-origin artist Nareshbhai Kunawat, the 54-feet tall, 30,000 kg 'Panchdhatu' material-made statue of Lord Hanuman will be clearly visible from a great distance due to its height.

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- The entire project is planned in the backyard of the temple in an area of 1, 35,000 square feet.

Govt approves Rs 30 crore to establish Vaikunth Mehta National Institute of Cooperative Management

- The Ministry of Cooperation has approved and released a one-time grant-in-aid of 30 crore rupees to establish the Vaikunth Mehta National Institute of Cooperative Management.
- This grant will be used for creating essential infrastructure for students and trainees.
- The Ministry said, the Government is committed to the overall development and prosperity of the Cooperative sector and the people associated with it.

About Vaikunth Mehta National Institute

- Vaikunth Mehta National Institute of Cooperative Management was established in 1967 and is an apex Centre for Cooperative Management Training, Research and consultancy.
- It also organises training programmes for cooperative sector officials from SAARC countries, Ethiopia, Mauritius and other countries.

Ministry of Finance to roll out 3 month long campaign to achieve saturation under PM Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana & PM Suraksha Bima Yojana

- To achieve saturation under Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana (PMJJBY) and Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bima Yojana (PMSBY), the Finance Ministry launched a three-month campaign.
- A special 3 months campaign has been launched by DFS at Gram Panchayat Level covering all districts in the country to saturate all eligible persons under the PMJJBY and PMSBY w.e.f 1st April 2023 to the 30th June 2023.

N Sitharaman Presents ₹ 1.18 Lakh Crore Budget For Jammu And Kashmir

- Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman presented Rs 1.18 lakh crore Budget for Jammu and Kashmir for the year 2023-24 with a thrust on providing housing in rural areas and water tap connections to 18.36 lakh households.
- All 18.36 lakh households of Jammu and Kashmir will have functional tap connections by 2023-24.
- The Budget focuses on doubling UT's GDP within five years, providing housing in rural areas and water tap connections to 18.36 lakh households.

MUDRA scheme: 40.82 crore loans amounting to ₹23.2-lakh-crore sanctioned in last 8 years

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- The Ministry of Finance said that around 41 crore loans amounting to ₹23.2-lakh-crore were sanctioned under the Pradhan Mantri MUDRA Yojana (PMMY) in the last eight years of existence of the scheme.
- The PMMY was launched on April 08, 2015.
- Since the launch of the scheme, as of March 24, 2023, about ₹23.2-lakh-crore has been sanctioned in 40.82 crore loan accounts.
- About 68 per cent of accounts under the scheme belong to women entrepreneurs and 51 per cent of accounts belong to entrepreneurs of SC/ST and OBC categories.
- These are Shishu (loans up to ₹50,000), Kishore (loans above ₹50,000 and up to ₹5 lakh), and Tarun (loans above ₹5 lakh and up to ₹10 lakh).

NGT constitutes a high-powered committee to revisit the environmental nod granted to the Great Nicobar Island project

- The eastern bench of the National Green Tribunal (NGT) has ordered a stay on the ₹72,000 crore Great Nicobar Island project and constituted a committee to revisit the environmental clearance granted by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF&CC).
- A High-Powered Committee (HPC) headed by the Secretary, MoEF&CC has been asked to submit its proceedings within two months.
- The Great Nicobar Island (GNI) is a mega project to be implemented at the southern end of the Andaman and Nicobar islands.
- The project includes an international container transshipment terminal, an international airport, township development, and a 450 MVA gas and solar based power plant over an extent of 16,610 hectares in the island.
- The Galathea bay in the island is a nesting ground for birds and the project area is part of Coastal Regulation Zones-IA and IB.

India's first post office constructed using 3D printing technology: Bangalore

- Bengaluru will soon have India's first post office constructed using 3D printing technology.
- The project at Cambridge Layout in Ulsoor is being implemented by Larsen & Toubro, which has experience in constructing 3D-printed buildings.
- The first 3D-printed post office will be located at the Cambridge Layout in Halasuru, Bengaluru.

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- The 1,100 sqft building is expected to cost 30-40 per cent less than conventional buildings because of the technological intervention.
- The post office is being built at a cost of Rs 23 lakh.
- The department has also engaged a technical expert from IIT-Madras to monitor the building construction.

EESL installed more than 1.28 Cr. LED Street Lights across 29 States under Street Lighting National Programme

- The Hon'ble Prime Minister on 5th January, 2015 launched Street Lighting National Programme (SLNP), which is being implemented by Energy Efficiency Services Limited (EESL), a joint venture company of Public Sector Undertakings (PSUs) of Ministry of Power to replace conventional Street Lights with smart and energy efficient LED Street Lights across India.
- Being a voluntary programme, no specific targets have been set for SLNP.
- Till date, EESL has installed more than 1.28 Cr.
- LED Street Lights across 29 States/UTs.

KSEB to receive Rs 919 cr German loan for Green Energy Corridor project:

- The Cabinet gave its nod for inking an agreement with the German development bank, KfW, for securing a loan for the Green Energy Corridor (GEC) project being implemented by the Kerala State Electricity Board (KSEB).
- The tripartite agreement will be signed by the State government, KSEB and KfW.
- The Central government and KfW had signed an agreement on November 11, 2022 for the ₹1,457-crore Kerala GEC project.
- To take the loan proposal forward, an agreement needs to be signed by the State government and the KSEB with the German bank.

Government to set up 16th Finance Commission in 2023

- The Union government is likely to set up the 16th Finance Commission this year to suggest, among other things, the ratio in which tax is to be divided between the Centre and states for five years, beginning April 1, 2026.
- In 2017, the 15th Finance Commission was set up with a mandate to make recommendations for the five-year periods from 2020--21, latter the mandate was extended by a year till 2025--26.

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- The Commission consists of a chairman and four other members to be appointed by the president of India.

Periyar Tiger Reserve tops management effectiveness evaluation process

- The Periyar Tiger Reserve in Kerala is the country's best-maintained tiger reserve, according to the 5th cycle of Management Effectiveness Evaluation (MEE) carried out by the Centre.
- It was declared a Tiger Reserve in 1978.
- It gets its name from the River Periyar, which has its origin deep inside the reserve.
- While Periyar reserve has obtained an MEE score of 94.3%, it is followed closely by the Satpura Tiger Reserve in Madhya Pradesh, Bandipur in Karnataka and Nagarhole in Karnataka.
- In the 5th cycle, there are 12 Tiger Reserves that scored 90% and above; therefore, a new category of 'Excellent' has been added.
- Twelve 12 tiger reserves have ranked in the "Excellent" category, followed by 20 in the 'Very Good' category, 14 in the 'Good' category and 5 in the 'Fair' category. None of the country's tiger reserves was graded as 'Poor'

Total balance in Jan Dhan accounts sees record spurt in FY23

- Total balance in bank accounts under PMJDY has reached to a record level of ₹50,000 crore in the financial year ended March 31, 2023.
- Total balance stood at ₹1.99 lakh crore at the end of FY23 against ₹1.49-lakh crore at the end of FY22.
- Addition of 5 crore new accounts has been recorded under the scheme.
- The number of beneficiaries recorded at 48.65 crore by the end of the last fiscal. The women beneficiaries were over 27 crore.
- According to RBI data, nearly 8% of Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana (PMJDY) accounts have zero balance.
- The average balance is around ₹2,400.

Network Planning Group under PM Gati Shakti approves 4 infra projects

- Four infrastructure projects have been approved by the Network Planning Group (NPG) under the PM Gati Shakti initiative.
- The infrastructure projects are related to railways.

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- At its 46th session, NPG under PM Gati Shakti recommended four infrastructure projects.

About PM Gati Shakti –

- National Master Plan was launched in October 2021.
- It was launched to develop an integrated and planned infrastructure to cut logistics costs.
- All logistics and connectivity infrastructure projects with an investment of over Rs 500 crore are routed through NPG.

MHA to provide financial assistance to States to help underprivileged inmates secure bail

- Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) has launched a scheme that envisages monetary aid to poor inmates who cannot afford the penalty or the bail amount.
- In line with one of the announcements of the Union Budget, 'Support for Poor Prisoners', the scheme envisages financial support to poor persons.
- E-prisons platform and District Legal Services Authority will be strengthened.
- The government has taken various steps to resolve the issue of undertrial in prisons such as the 'Support for Poor Prisoners' initiative.
- The Government has also inserted Section 436A in the Code of Criminal Procedure and a new chapter XXIA 'Plea Bargaining' in the CrPC for poor undertrials.

India's tiger population in 2022 is 3,167, PM calls it 'matter of pride'

- PM Modi released the latest census data of the tigers in the country at Mysuru, Karnataka.
- According to data, in the year 2022, the number of tigers in the country was 3167.
- The number of tigers has increased by 200 in the last 4 years.
- Earlier in 2018 this number was 2967.
- The figure of the number of tigers is released only at an interval of every four years.

5 States Front-runners in State Energy Efficiency Index 2021-22

- Union Minister of Power and New & Renewable Energy, Shri R. K. Singh released the report of State Energy Efficiency Index (SEEI) 2021-22.
- The SEEI was released during the RPM (Review, Planning and Monitoring) meeting of States and State Utilities in New Delhi.

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- The index developed by the Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE), a statutory body under the Ministry of Power, in association with Alliance for an Energy-Efficient Economy (AEEE), assesses, the annual progress of states and UTs in energy efficiency implementation, for FY 2020-21 and 2021-22.
- In SEEI 2021-22, 5 states - Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, Rajasthan and Telangana - are in the Front Runner category (>60 points) while 4 states - Assam, Haryana, Maharashtra, and Punjab - are in the Achiever category (50-60 points).
- Further, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Assam and Chandigarh are the top-performing states in their respective state groups.
- Telangana and Andhra Pradesh showed the most improvement since the last index.

Centre aims for low premium, coverage with new livestock insurance scheme

- The government is planning to rehaul the livestock insurance scheme and will launch a comprehensive livestock insurance scheme just like Prime Minister Fasal Bima Yojana.
- At present, less than 1% of India's cattle population is insured and the average yearly premium is 4.5% of the insured amount.
- The central government is planning to launch the scheme before the 2024 Lok Sabha elections.
- The government is considering waving premiums of cattle rearers from Scheduled Caste (SC)-Scheduled Tribe (ST) communities.
- The main focus of the revamped scheme will be to reduce the premium to attract more farmers to enroll in the insurance scheme.
- The current Centrally-sponsored livestock insurance scheme is functional in 100 districts.
- It is managed by the respective State Livestock Development Boards.

Law Minister Kiren Rijiju releases 1st edition of Dogri version of Constitution of India

- Union Minister of Law Kiren Rijiju has released the Dogri version of the Constitution of India.
- The first edition of the Constitution in Dogri version was released at the University of Jammu.
- Dogri language is mainly spoken in the Jammu region of Jammu and Kashmir.
- It is the ethnic language of the Dogras. It was included in the 8th schedule of the Indian Constitution in 2003.

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- The Ministry of External Affairs, in association with the Parliamentary Research & Training Institute for Democracies (PRIDE), also conducted a seminar titled "Seven Decades of the Constitution of India" on 28th March 2023.

EAM Jaishankar launches 'Tulsi Ghat Restoration Project' in Uganda

- 'Tulsi Ghat Restoration Project' of Varanasi has been launched by External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar, during his visit to Uganda's Kampala.
- Foreign Minister Dr. S. Jaishankar is on a 6-day visit to Uganda and Mozambique.
- He met **Ugandan President Yoweri K Museveni** and congratulated the country on assuming the chairmanship of the **Non-Aligned Movement (NAM)**.
- During the visit, **he will co-chair the 5th session of the Joint Commission Meeting with Mozambique's Foreign Minister Veronica Macamo.**
- Uganda is chairing the **Non-Aligned Movement on behalf of Africa for the period 2022 to 2025.**
- The position of chair of NAM rotates every three years during the conferences.
- The first conference was held in Belgrade in 1961.
- Members: 120 countries.

Delhi-Ghaziabad-Meerut regional rail named 'RAPIDX': NCR Transport Corporation

- The **National Capital Region Transport Corporation (NCR TC)** has announced that the **country's first semi-high-speed regional rail services will be named 'RAPIDX'.**
- These services will run on the **Regional Rapid Transit System (RRTS)** corridors, being implemented to connect key urban nodes across the National Capital Region (NCR).
- The name 'RAPID' has already been adopted and is loved as their own transit system by the citizens across the region, in both Hindi and English languages.
- **The RAPIDX services on the first RRTS corridor, Delhi-Ghaziabad-Meerut, will serve this 82-km long corridor** and will bring down the travel time between Delhi to Meerut significantly.
- NCRTC is targeting to commission the entire Delhi-Ghaziabad-Meerut corridor for the public by 2025.

Centre extends ceasefire agreements with three Naga groups for one year

- The Centre has extended ceasefire agreements with three Naga groups for one year.

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- These three groups are the National Socialist Council of Nagaland-NK (NSCN-NK), National Socialist Council of Nagaland-Reformation (NSCN-R) and National Socialist Council of Nagaland-K-Khango (NSCN-K-Khango).

Steel Ministry approves 13 task forces for 'Green Steel'

- The Ministry of Steel approved 13 task forces for 'Green Steel'.
- For defining the roadmap for 'Green Steel', the Union Minister of Steel and Civil Aviation Jyotiraditya Scindia has approved 13 Task Forces.

Government releases pre-draft of National Curriculum Framework for schools, seeks feedback

- The Ministry of Education has released a pre-draft version of National Curriculum Framework (NCF) for School Education and has sought feedback from various stakeholders, including students, parents, teachers, teacher educators, experts, scholars and professionals.
- The National Steering Committee under the chairmanship of K. Kasturirangan was set up by the Ministry to undertake and develop NCFs.
- The pre-draft version of National Curriculum Framework for School Education covers the framework of curriculum for age groups 3 to 18 years.

Finance Secretary-led panel to review NPS for government employees

- The Finance Ministry has set up a four-member committee under the chairmanship of Finance Secretary TV Somanathan to suggest measures to improve the pensionary benefits of government employees covered under the National Pension System (NPS).

Shri Parshottam Rupala launches Animal Pandemic Preparedness Initiatives and World Bank-funded Animal Health System Support for One Health

- The "Animal Pandemic Preparedness Initiative (APPI)" will be launched by the Union Minister of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry & Dairying, Shri Parshottam Rupala.
- Shri Rupala will also launch the World Bank-funded Animal Health System Support for One Health (AHSSOH) project.

Normal monsoon despite El Nino, 96% rainfall likely: IMD

- The India Meteorological Department (IMD) said that rainfall will be 96% of the long-period average of 87 cm.

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- It means that 83.5 cm of rainfall will be received from June to September of this year.
- The effect of El Nino will be felt in the second half of the season.
- El Nino conditions means that rainfall will be below normal.

Centre tightens fund flow rulebook for CSS schemes

- The Central government has tightened the fund flow rulebook on Centrally Sponsored Schemes (CSS) even further and for the first time has also brought in a 'penal interest' clause for delays in fund transfers by states.
- States have been asked to ensure that their share of funds is transferred to the Single Nodal Agency (SNA) for the CSS scheme within 30 days of receiving central funding instead of 40 days, as allowed earlier.

UGC issues new regulations for students' grievance redressal

- UGC released new regulations for the grievance redressal of students.
- The new regulation proposed the establishment of the Students Grievances Redressal Committee(s) (SGRC) in all Higher Education institutions (HEIs).

About UGC:

- University Grants Commission (UGC) was established in 1956.
- It is responsible for maintaining higher education standards in India.
- It is a statutory body set up under the UGC Act 1956.
- Mamidala Jagadesh Kumar is the current chairman of the UGC.

India to bridge language gap with neighbours

- Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) has envisaged a special project called 'The Language Friendship Bridge' to expand India's cultural footprint in nations with whom it has historical ties. As of now, the ICCR has zeroed in on 10 languages: Kazakh, Uzbek, Bhutanese, Ghoti (spoken in Tibet), Burmese, Khmer (spoken in Cambodia), Thai, Sinhalese and Bahasa (spoken in both Indonesia and Malaysia).

About ICCR:

- The Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) was founded in 1950 by Maulana Abul Kalam Azad.
- Founded: 9 April 1950, New Delhi
- Founder: Maulana Azad
- President: Vinay Sahasrabuddhe

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- Director General: Kumar Tuhin

Seven-day SCO Millets Food Festival begins in Mumbai, chefs from member countries showcase millet cuisines

- Union Minister of State for Tourism Shripad Naik inaugurated the Seven-day SCO Millets Food Festival.
- The Ministry of Tourism, Government of India is organising the seven-day festival at Hotel Taj Mahal Palace to commemorate the International Year of Millets (IYM 2023).
- The Millet Food Festival is the fourth event being organised by the Ministry of Tourism to celebrate the Presidency

PM Modi inaugurates Northeast's first AIIMS in Guwahati

- PM Modi will inaugurate Northeast's first AIIMS in Guwahati.
- In addition to AIIMS Guwahati, PM will dedicate three other medical colleges to the nation.
- He will also lay the foundation stone of the Assam Advanced Health Innovation Institute (AAHII).

Atal Innovation Mission, NITI Aayog collaborate with ATMAs to promote agri innovation

- Atal Innovation Mission (AIM) and the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare (MoA&FW) have collaborated to promote innovation in the agricultural sector.
- AIM, NITI Aayog and MoA&FW have come together to encourage innovation in the agricultural sector among school students across India.

Railways introduces HSN codes to stem losses from commodity transport

- In a first-of-its-kind move, the Ministry of Railways has started using Harmonised System of Nomenclature (HSN) codes for the classification of commodities in freight transportation.
- It is a six-digit identification code.
- It is developed by the World Customs Organization (WCO).

Businesses with an annual turnover of ₹100 cr and above get 7-day window to report old invoices

- The Government has set a seven-day timeline to report old invoices on e-invoice IRP (Invoice Registration Portal) for tax assesseees having annual turnover of ₹100 crore or more.

DRDO's Centre of Excellence inaugurated at IIT Hyderabad

- DRDO Industry Academia Centre of Excellence (DIA-CoE) has been inaugurated at the IIT Hyderabad (IITH).

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- The facility was inaugurated by DRDO Chairman Dr Samir V Kamat at the campus of the IIT-Hyderabad at Sangareddy in Telangana.

Clean energy transition panel: Ban diesel 4-wheelers in cities with million-plus population by 2027

- The Energy Transition Advisory Committee has recommended a ban on diesel four-wheelers from cities with a million-plus population by 2027.
- The committee suggested that by 2030, no city buses should be added, which are not electric.
- The committee suggested the extension of the Faster Adoption and Manufacturing of Electric Vehicles (FAME)-II scheme beyond March 2024.

Manipur: Union Minister launches scheme to promote tribal products from North East

- Tribal Affairs Minister Arjun Munda has launched a new scheme “Marketing and Logistics Development for Promotion of Tribal Products from North -Eastern Region (PTP-NER)” in Manipur.
- This scheme will be applicable in Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Tripura and Sikkim.

President inaugurated the five-day National Panchayat Awards Week

- President Droupadi Murmu inaugurated the five-day National Panchayat Awards Week.
- It began with the ‘National Conference on Incentivization of Panchayats-cum-Award Ceremony’ in New Delhi.
- The Theme of the National Panchayat Awards Week Celebrations is “Panchayaton ke Sankalpon ki Siddhi ka Utsav”.

PM Modi will inaugurate the first Global Buddhist Summit

- PM Modi will inaugurate the first Global Buddhist Summit in New Delhi.
- The two-day summit will be hosted by the Ministry of Culture in collaboration with the International Buddhist Confederation.
- “Responses to Contemporary Challenges: Philosophy to Praxis” is the theme of the Global Buddhist Summit.

'YUVA PORTAL' has been launched by Dr. Jitendra Singh in New Delhi

- 'YUVA PORTAL' has been launched by Union Minister Dr. Jitendra Singh in New Delhi.
- The portal will help in connecting and identifying potential young start-ups.

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- From 17-21 April 2023, CSIR-National Physical Laboratory (NPL) is organising the One Week - One Lab program.

AIIA has organized a two-day national conference 'SRIJNA' on infertility in women in New Delhi

- The All-India Institute of Ayurveda (AIIA), under the Ministry of AYUSH, has organized a two-day national conference 'SRIJNA' on infertility in women in New Delhi.

CJI Chandrachud-led five-judge bench to hear same sex marriage case

- SC set up a five-judge Constitution bench to hear same-sex marriage petitions.
- Five-judge Constitution bench led by Chief Justice of India D Y Chandrachud has been formed to hear petitions seeking legal recognition of same-sex marriage.
- Besides the CJI, the bench comprises Justices Sanjay Kishan Kaul, Ravindra Bhat, Hima Kohli and PS Narasimha.

Govt approves National Quantum Mission at a cost of Rs 6,000 cr

- Government approved National Quantum Mission with a budget outlay of Rs 6003.65 Crores.
- On April 19, National Quantum Mission (NQM) has been approved by the Union Cabinet to accelerate scientific & industrial R&D for quantum technologies.
- National Quantum Mission will be implemented from 2023-24 to 2030-31.
- The mission aims to nurture and develop scientific and industrial R&D in the area of Quantum Technology (QT) and create a vibrant and creative ecosystem related to it.
- It will help in Quantum Technology led economic growth and will make India one of the leading countries in the development of Quantum Technologies & Applications (QTA).
- This mission will help in the development of magnetometers with high sensitivity in atomic systems and Atomic Clocks for precision timing, communications and navigation.
- Under this mission, Four Thematic Hubs (T-Hubs) will be set up in top academic and National R&D institutes in the fields of Quantum Computing, Quantum Communication, Quantum Sensing & Metrology and Quantum Materials & Devices.
- The T-Hubs will promote R&D in their respective field and will also focus on the generation of new knowledge through basic and applied research.
- This mission will also support the development of Single-photon sources/detectors and entangled photon sources for quantum communications, sensing and metrological applications.
- It will also help in the design and synthesis of quantum materials such as superconductors, novel semiconductor structures and topological materials for the development of quantum devices.
- This mission aims to develop intermediate-scale quantum computers with 50-1000 physical qubits capability.

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- National Mission on Quantum Technologies & Applications (NM-QTA) was announced in the 2020 budget.
- National Quantum Mission will be implemented by the Department of Science & Technology (DST).

'India's first village': BRO puts up signboard on entrance of village

- The **Border Roads Organisation** has put up a signboard at the entrance of Uttarakhand's Mana village on the India-China border reading 'India's first village'.
- Now Mana will not be known as the last but the first village of the country.
- During a visit to the Chamoli village in October last year, Prime Minister Narendra Modi had said border villages of the country are its first villages and not the last as they are usually called.
- Mana is situated near Badrinath and devotees going to the Himalayan temple go up to the village for sightseeing.

Amit Shah launches IFFCO's nano DAP fertilizer

- Union Home Minister **Shri Amit Shah** launched IFFCO's liquid nano Di-Ammonia Phosphate (DAP).
- Commercially rolling out **world's first nano-DAP**, approved by the government in March, Shah said it (introduction of nano variant of fertiliser) is a new beginning towards making India self reliant on fertiliser as it will increase farm productivity without impacting the soil health.
- Though a bottle (500 ml) of nano-DAP will be equivalent to one bag (50kg) of conventional DAP, the price of nano (liquid) DAP has been kept at ₹600 per bottle (without subsidy) against ₹1,350/ bag (with subsidy) for conventional DAP.
- Nano-DAP is jointly manufactured by Indian Farmers Fertiliser Cooperative (IFFCO) in association with a private player Coromandel.
- The minister said IFFCO's nano-DAP will have 8 per cent nitrogen and 16 per cent phosphorus against 18 per cent nitrogen and 46 per cent phosphorus than the conventional granular bag contains.
- The minister said IFFCO has got a patent for nano-urea and nano-DAP for 20 years and will get a royalty of 20 per cent for the use of the products globally.
- IFFCO said it has set up manufacturing facilities for the production of **nano DAP fertilisers at Kalol, Kandla in Gujarat and Paradeep in Odisha**.
- The production at Kalol Plant has already started, and this year about 5 crore bottles of nano-DAP (equivalent to 2.5 mt) will be produced.

Centre approves 8 projects worth ₹638 cr under Namami Gange

- The Jal Shakti Ministry's National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG) cleared eight projects worth ₹638 crore under the Namami Gange Programme.
- Out of these, four projects were approved for pollution abatement in the Shamli district.
- These projects amounting to around 407 crore rupees were approved with the aim to clean River Hindon, a

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tributary of River Yamuna.

- One project for the development of **seven ghats** was approved as part of preparations for the Mahakumbh in Prayagraj in Uttar Pradesh in 2025.
- In Bihar, a project to construct three Sewage Treatment Plants was approved.
- These projects will prevent the flow of polluted water into River Kiul, a tributary of the Ganga.
- It is an integrated conservation mission, approved as 'Flagship Programme' by the Union Government in 2014 with budget outlay of Rs.20,000 Crores.
- It is administered by the Ministry of Jal Shakti's Department of Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation.
- NMCG is the implementation wing of National Ganga Council (NGC), which replaced the National Ganga River Basin Authority.

India Steel Expo 2023 – 19-21 April 2023

- The **5th edition of International Exhibition & Conference on Steel Industry – 'INDIA STEEL EXPO 2023'** is being organized by the Ministry of Steel, Government of India along with the **Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI)** from **April 19-21, 2023** at Bombay Exhibition Centre, Mumbai, India.
- The Ministry of Commerce & Industry, Government of India is extending support to the event.
- India Steel Expo 2023 will provide a unique opportunity to International Steel Producers, Technology Companies to showcase their equipment, latest technology and their best practices through Live demonstrations in 12,000 sq. meters of exhibition area and will also provide an excellent platform to buyers, sellers, technology providers, manufacturers, traders, importers, investors and other allied organizations/institutions from Steel industry to interact and develop healthy business relationship with Indian steel industry.
- India Steel 2023 is a conference and exhibition on the steel industry.
- It **started in Mumbai on 19 April 2023**.
- The Steel Ministry, the Commerce Ministry and the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry are jointly organising it.
- It is being attended by industry leaders, policymakers and experts.
- During the conference, attendees will discuss the topics like logistics infrastructure, demand dynamics and green steel production.

Bengal tops the list of States with the most ponds and reservoirs

- The **First Census of Water Bodies** has been conducted in association with the **6th Minor Irrigation (MI) Census** under the **Centrally Sponsored Scheme "Irrigation Census"**.
- In this census, 24,24,540 water bodies have been recorded out of which 97.1% (23,55,055) are in rural areas and only 2.9% (69,485) are in urban areas.
- 59.5% (14,42,993) of water bodies are ponds while 15.7% (3,81,805) of water bodies are tanks.

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- **West Bengal has the highest number of ponds & reservoirs while Andhra Pradesh has the highest number of tanks.**
- **Tamil Nadu has the highest number of lakes and Maharashtra is the leading state in the water conservation scheme.**
- Maximum Water bodies are used in pisciculture, followed by irrigation, groundwater recharge and domestic/drinking purpose.
- 13,38,735 water bodies are owned by private entities while 10,85,805 water bodies are under public ownership.
- Out of the total water bodies, 78% (18,90,463) are man-made while 22% (5,34,077) are natural water bodies.
- 12.7% (3,06,960) of all water bodies have storage capacities greater than 10,000 cubic metres, whereas 50% (12,12,283) have storage capacities between 1,000 to 10,000 cubic metres.
- 2,29,889 water bodies are covered in District Irrigation Plan/State Irrigation Plan.

Health Ministry proposes 100 Food Streets across India to promote hygienic, safe food practices

- The **Ministry of Health in association with the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs** urged States and Union Territories to **develop 100 food streets in 100 districts across India.**
- This initiative has been started as a pilot project for ensuring hygienic and safe food practices across the country.
- The initiative's main aim is to encourage safe and healthy food practices among food businesses and community members.
- Safe and healthy food practices will help reduce foodborne illnesses and improve people's overall health.
- This **initiative will be implemented through National Health Mission (NHM)** in association with the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs.
- The technical **support will be provided by FSSAI.**
- For this initiative, States/UTs will be given financial assistance of Rs 1 crore per food street/districts to address critical deficiencies. 100 food streets will be opened up in 100 districts across the country.
- The financial assistance will be provided under **National Health Mission (NHM) in the ratio of 60:40.**
- **Financial assistance will be provided in the ratio of 90:10** with the condition that standard branding of these food streets will be done as per FSSAI guidelines.

MeitY proposes rules to enable Aadhaar authentication by entities other than Government Ministries and Departments

- To make Aadhaar people-friendly, the **Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY)** has proposed rules to enable Aadhaar authentication by entities other than Government Ministries and Departments.

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- In 2019, entities were allowed to perform authentication through an amendment in the Aadhaar (Targeted Delivery of Financial and Other Subsidies, Benefits and Services) Act, 2016.
- Entities were only allowed to authenticate after UIDAI get satisfied with their privacy and security standards.
- As of now, Government Ministries and Departments are allowed to undertake Aadhaar Authentication in the interest of good governance.
- MeitY has now proposed that any entity other than Government Ministry or Department has to prepare a proposal and prove that authentication sought is in the state's interest.
- The proposal should be for promoting ease of living and enabling better access to services, preventing dissipation of social welfare benefits, innovation and spread of knowledge, etc.
- If the Ministry/Department believes that the proposal submitted fulfils the purpose and is in the state's interest, then it could forward the proposal to MeitY.
- The proposed amendments has been posted for the feedbacks of stakeholders and the general public.

Govt to release new ₹100 commemorative coin for the 100th episode of Mann Ki Baat

- New ₹100 commemorative coin will be released by the government for the 100th episode of Mann Ki Baat.
- The coin will be in the denomination of ₹100.
- It will be circular, with a diameter of 44 millimetres and 200 serrations.
- Its weight will be 35-gram.
- Coin's metal composition will be a quaternary alloy, with silver having a share of 50%, copper 40%, nickel 5%, and zinc 5%.
- The coin's obverse face will bear the Lion Capitol of Ashoka Pillar in the centre with the legend "Satyamev Jayate" inscribed below.
- The Lion Capitol will be flanked on the left periphery with the word "Bharat" in Devnagri script and on the right periphery with the word "INDIA" in English.
- The coin's reverse face will have the logo for the 100th Episode of Mann Ki Baat.
- The logo will have an image of a microphone with sound waves and year '2023' written on it.
- 'Mann Ki Baat 100' in Devnagri and in English will be written above and below of the microphone image, respectively.
- Commemorative coins are not released for general circulation.
- They are considered legal tender.
- They can be sourced from specified agencies.
- The 100th episode will be broadcasted on 30 April.
- Mann Ki Baat programme started on 3 October, 2014.
- It is broadcast on the last Sunday of every month.

FAO has released a report titled- "The Status Of Women In Agrifood Systems

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- **FAO (Food and Agriculture Organization)** has released a report titled- “**The Status Of Women In Agrifood Systems**” highlighting the importance of Gender Equality in the Agricultural Sector.
- Women make up a significant proportion of the agricultural workforce, accounting for around 40% of the global agricultural labor force.
- However, women often face significant gender-based barriers that limit their access to resources, technology, and markets, which can impact their productivity and income.
- **Closing the gender gap in agri-food systems could increase agricultural productivity by up to 4% in developing countries**, which could, in turn, boost global GDP (Gross Domestic Product) by up to 2%.
- This increase in productivity and income could help to reduce poverty and hunger and improve Food Security and nutrition.
- Closing the gender gap and empowering women would: **Increase global GDP by 1%/nearly USD 1 trillion.**
- Women earn 82 cents for every dollar earned by men and closing these gaps would greatly improve food security, nutrition and increase economic growth.

About FAO:

- FAO Headquarters: Rome, Italy,
- Founded: 16 October 1945.

Jakson Green developing green hydrogen refuelling station in New Delhi

- **Jakson Green** announced that the company is developing a Green Hydrogen fuelling station at Badarpur, **New Delhi** for a major power company in India.
- The **fuelling station is expected to produce 260 kg of green hydrogen per day** at a pressure of 350 bar that will be utilised to fuel up to five intercity FCEV (fuel cell electric vehicle) buses.
- The project is expected to aid the recently launched National Hydrogen Mission & significantly contribute towards propelling India's low carbon quotient/journey.

PM praises “Abhilekh patal” a portal with over 1 Crore Pages of Historical Records of the National Archives

- The Prime Minister of India praised “**Abhilekh Patal**” a portal with over 1 Crore Pages of Historical Records of the National Archives.
- Abhilekh Patal is a full-featured web portal to access the National Archives of India's reference media and its digitized collections through the Internet.
- **Abhilekh is a Sanskrit term used in India for records** since ancient times and Patalis a Sanskrit word meaning a board, platform, or surface.
- A combination of both these words has been adopted as an acronym for Portal for Access to Archives and Learning.
- It was established on 11 March 1891 at Calcutta (Kolkata) as the Imperial Record Department, it is the

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biggest archival repository in South Asia.

- It is the repository of the non-current records of the Government of India and is holding them in trust for the use of record creators and general users.
- It is Located at the heart of New Delhi.

Ministry of Civil Aviation Launches UDAN 5.0

- Following the four successful rounds of bidding, the Ministry of Civil Aviation has launched the **5th round of the Regional Connectivity Scheme (RCS)– Ude Desh Ka Aam Nagrik (UDAN)** to further enhance the connectivity to remote and regional areas of the country and achieve last mile connectivity.
- This round of **UDAN focuses on Category-2 (20-80 seats) and Category-3 (>80 seats).**
- The earlier stage length cap of 600 km is waived off and there is no restriction on the distance between the origin and destination of the flight.
- **Viability gap funding (VGF)** to be provided will be capped at 600 km stage length for both Priority and Non-Priority areas which was earlier capped at 500 km.
- No predetermined routes would be offered.
- Only Network and Individual Route Proposal proposed by airlines will be considered.
- The airlines would be required to submit an action/business plan after 2 months from the issuance of LoA wherein they submit their aircraft acquisition plan/availability of aircraft, crew, slots, etc. at the time of the Technical Proposal.
- Exclusivity will be withdrawn if the average quarterly PLF is higher than 75% for four continuous quarters, to prevent exploitation of the monopoly on a route.
- 25% of the Performance Guarantee to be encashed for **each month of delay up to 4 months, to further incentivize quick operationalization.**
- Airlines would be required to commence operations within 4 months of the award of the route.
- **Earlier this deadline was 6 months.**
- This new & stronger version of the scheme will raise the momentum, connecting new routes, and bring us closer to the target of operationalizing 1000 routes & 50 additional airports, heliports, and water aerodromes in the near future. **अब उड़ेगा देश का हर आम नागरिक!**
- It was launched as a **Regional Connectivity Scheme (RCS)** under the Ministry of Civil Aviation in 2016, to provide affordable, economically viable and profitable air travel on regional routes to the common man even in small towns.

MPLADS: Rs 1,500 crore remains non-disbursed in FY23

- Nearly two weeks after the launch of the **Sakshi portal** for digitising the fund flow architecture in the Members of Parliament Local Area Development Scheme (MPLADS), data provided by the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI) in Parliament earlier this month shows that more than a third of the Rs

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3,965 crore budgeted under MPLADS for 2022-23 (FY23) remain non-disbursed.

- MoSPI, informed that until March 30, only Rs 2,387 crore had been disbursed (60 per cent).
- Gujarat (35.7 per cent), Kerala (37.2 per cent), Tamil Nadu (38.9 per cent), Haryana (41.3 per cent), and Himachal Pradesh (48.6 per cent) have disbursed less than half the amount sanctioned to their parliamentarians.
- Under the MPLAD scheme, all elected and nominated members of both Houses of Parliament are provided with Rs 5 crore annually to recommend works of developmental nature with emphasis on the creation of durable community assets in their constituencies.
- Earlier, the scheme was made non-operational from April 2020 through November 2021 due to the pandemic and funds to the tune of Rs 6,320 crore were placed at the disposal of the Ministry of Finance for managing the health and the adverse impacts of the pandemic.
- It was partially restored in November 2021.
- FY23 was the first year of its full operation after 2019-20.

Shri Tomar launches Seed Traceability portal and mobile app Union Agriculture and Farmers Welfare Minister

Shri Narendra Singh Tomar launched the SATHI Portal and Mobile App.

- The **Seed Traceability, Authentication and Holistic Inventory (SATHI)** portal is a **Centralized Online System designed to deal with the challenges of seed production, quality seed identification and seed certification.**
- It has been developed by the National Informatics Centre (NIC) in collaboration with the Union Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare on **the theme of 'Uttam Beej – Samriddh Kisan.**
- There will be a QR code under this system, through which the seeds can be traced.
- It will ensure a quality assurance system, and identify the source of seed in the seed production chain.
- The system will consist of integrated 7 verticals of the seed chain - Research Organisation, Seed Certification, Seed Licensing, Seed Catalogue, Dealer to Farmer Sales, Farmer Registration and Seed DBT.
- Seeds with valid certification can only be sold by valid licensed dealers to centrally registered farmers who will receive a subsidy through DBT directly into their pre-validated bank accounts.

40 Percent Villages Have Achieved ODF+ Status Till Now

- The Union Minister for Jal Shakti, Shri Gajendra Singh Shekhawat today lauded the achievement of a fivefold increase in ODF Plus villages in India under the Swachh Bharat Mission – Grameen, Phase – II, in just one year, with more than 40 percent of India's inhabited villages having declared themselves ODF Plus.
- The Union Minister, addressing the media, asserted that ODF Plus villages increased from 46,121 villages (7.4%) in March 2022 to 2,38,973 villages (40.21%) in March 2023.
- On the performance of States, the 3 UTs' of Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Lakshadweep, Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Daman and Diu were not only ODF Plus, but all their villages were of the ODF Plus Model

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category.

- Top performing States were Telangana with 100% ODF Plus villages followed by Tamil Nadu with 95.7% ODF plus villages and Karnataka with 93.7% ODF plus villages.
- As far as the North East States were concerned, Mizoram has moved from 6% ODF Plus villages in 2022 to 35% villages in 2023.

Union Cabinet Gives Approval To Cinematograph (Amendment) Bill 2023 The Union Cabinet recently approved the Cinematograph (Amendment) Bill 2023, which has provisions to curb the transmission of pirated film content on the Internet.

- It seeks to amend the Cinematograph Act 1952.
- It has provisions for harsher punishment for film piracy and the introduction of new-age categories for classifying films.
- It has provisions to classify films on the basis of age group instead of the current practice of rating them "U" (unrestricted public exhibition), "A" (restricted to adult audiences), and "UA" (unrestricted public exhibition subject to parental guidance for children below the age of 12).
- The amendments seek to add new classifications – 'UA-7+', 'UA-13+', and 'UA-16+' in place for 12 years.
- It also seeks to bring about uniformity in categorisation of films and content across platforms.
- Stricter Laws Against Piracy:
- The Bill holds stricter punishment for those responsible for piracy.
- This includes three years of imprisonment and a Rs 10 lakh penalty for those engaged in piracy.
- Once the Bill is released, the act of piracy will be considered an offence legally and will include even transmitting pirated content punishable.

AIM, NITI Aayog, and UNCDF Team Up to Make India a Global Agri-tech Leader, Expand Innovations to Developing Economies

- Atal Innovation Mission (AIM), NITI Aayog, and the United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF) recently launched a **whitepaper** aimed at making India a global leader in agritech innovation.
- The whitepaper, meticulously prepared by experts from AIM, NITI Aayog, and UNCDF, offers actionable **steps to overcome challenges faced by Agri-Tech start-ups and facilitate their growth at national and international levels**
- The whitepaper outlines the significant observations and recommendations required to tackle challenges in the agriculture sector and promote sustainable practices that support smallholder farmers across developing economies.
- Agri-Tech innovations will help address food security, supply chain inefficiencies, and climate change concerns.

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- United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF) is the United Nations' flagship catalytic financing entity for the world's 46 Least Developed Countries (LDCs).
- It is an autonomous, voluntarily funded UN organization, affiliated with the UN Development Programme (UNDP).
- It is the only UN agency mandated to focus primarily on the least developed countries (LDCs).
- AIM, an anchor partner of the south-south collaboration initiatives, **collaborates with partner countries such as Indonesia, Malaysia, Kenya, Uganda, Malawi, and Zambia.**
- The collaboration focuses on addressing three key challenges in the agriculture sector, namely low productivity, poor risk resilience, and inefficient supply chain management.
- The Agri-Tech start-ups in emerging economies have successfully provided digital solutions to several agricultural challenges that the sector has faced in the past. AIM, in partnership with UNCDF, is committed to supporting high-impact Agri-Tech innovations, creating an enabling environment that facilitates start-up growth and sharing of knowledge across borders.
- The Indian start-up sector has the potential to play the role of a knowledge hub and support market development in less-developed start-up economies across the globe.

FOSCOS web application of FSSAI to be available in regional languages Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) has undertaken to translate Food Safety and Compliance System (FOSCOS) into Hindi, followed by all the regional languages.

About FOSCOS

- The Food Safety and Compliance System is an enhanced version of the Food Licensing and Registration System (FLRS) which was launched in 2012 for the issuance of pan-India FSSAI Licenses and Registration.
- It is a comprehensive system for registration and licensing for Food Business Operators (FBOs).
- It is a statutory body established under the Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006 (FSS Act).
- Nodal ministry: Ministry of Health & Family Welfare.

EAM Jaishankar co-chairs 4th India-CARICOM ministerial meeting with Jamaican counterpart

- India's External Affairs Minister Mr Jaishankar co-chaired the 4th India-CARICOM ministerial meeting with his Jamaican counterpart.
- CARICOM, which stands for Caribbean Community, is the oldest surviving integration movement in the developing world.
- It is an organization of Caribbean countries and dependencies originally established as the Caribbean Community and Commons Market in 1973 by the Treaty of Chaguaramas.
- It has 15 members; Antigua and Barbuda, The Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, Montserrat, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname,

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and Trinidad and Tobago.

- The Chairmanship of the Community is rotated every six months among the member countries' Heads.
- In 2007, CARICOM officially inaugurated the Caribbean Court of Justice (CCJ), which serves as the final court of appeal for CARICOM members and also handles regional trade disputes.

NHAI to develop 10,000 km of 'Digital Highways' in India by 2025 Around 10,000 kilometres of Optic Fibre Cables (OFC) infrastructure across India will be developed by the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) by the fiscal year 2025.

- The project of implementing the network of "digital highways" will be handled by State-owned NHAI's special purpose vehicle National Highway Logistics Management Limited (NHLML).
- It will develop integrated utility corridors along national highways to develop optic fiber cable infrastructure.
- The authority has identified around 512 km on the Hyderabad-Bangalore corridor and 1,367 kms on the Delhi-Mumbai Expressway to carry out the pilot tracks for the development of digital highways.
- The OFC network will facilitate internet connectivity in remote areas across India and help accelerate the country's shift to modern-age telecom technologies such as 5G and 6G.
- Recently, the 246-km Delhi-Dausa-Lalsot section of the Delhi-Mumbai Expressway was inaugurated.
- The track has a 3-metre dedicated utility corridor which will be used for the purpose of laying optical fiber cables.
- The OFC network will allow a direct plug-and-play or 'fibre-on-demand' model for telecom/internet services.

PM Modi inaugurates and lays the foundation of development projects worth Rs 4,800 crore at Silvassa PM Modi inaugurated and laid the foundation stone of different projects in the Union Territory of Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Daman and Diu.

- He inaugurated and laid the foundation stone for various projects worth 4 thousand 800 crore rupees at Silvassa.
- He dedicated to the nation NAMO Medical Education and Research Institute in Silvassa.
- He addressed a gathering at Sayli village near Silvassa.
- He launched multiple developmental works.
- He also held a 16-kilometer-long roadshow in Daman town of the UT.
- He also inaugurated the Devka Seafront at Daman.

Shri Bhupender Yadav launches new features in eShram Portal to enhance the utility of the portal

- The new features in e-Shram Portal have been launched by Union Minister for Labour, Employment, Environment, Forest and Climate Change Shri Bhupendra Yadav.
- The e-Shram Portal has been updated with new features that will enhance the utility of the portal and ease

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the registration of unorganized workers .

- Through this e-Shram portal, e-Shram registered workers can now connect with employment opportunities, skilling, apprenticeship, pension schemes, digital skills (skilling) and schemes of states.
- The facility to enter the details of the family of the migrant workers has also been added in this e-Shram portal.
- This facility will help in providing child education and women-centric schemes for migrant workers who have migrated with their families.
- In addition, a new feature has been added on sharing the data of construction workers **registered on e-Shram** with the concerned **Building and Other Construction Workers (BOCW) Welfare Board**.
- It will ensure the registration of e-shram construction workers with the concerned BOCW board and ensure access to schemes for them.
- The Data Sharing Portal (DSP) has also been formally launched for the sharing of e-Shram data with the state and UT governments.
- This portal will allow sharing of e-Shram beneficiaries' data with the respective States and UT in a secure manner for targeted implementation of social security/welfare schemes for the unorganised workers registered on e-Shram.
- On 26 August 2021, the e-Shram portal was launched to create a comprehensive National Database of Unorganised Workers which is seeded with Aadhaar.
- As on 21 April 2023, more than 28.87 crore unorganized workers have registered on the e-Shram Portal.

Union Health Ministry to hold Asia-Pacific leaders' conclave on malaria elimination in New Delhi

- **Ministry of Health and Family Welfare**, as the precursor of World Malaria Day, has **organized Asia Pacific Leaders' Conference for Malaria Elimination** in partnership with the Asia Pacific Leaders' Malaria Alliance (APLMA) in New Delhi.
- The conference was presided over by Dr. VK Paul, Member (Health), NITI Aayog.
- The purpose of the conference is to reaffirm political commitment to encourage action to eliminate malaria by 2030.
- The conference provided a forum for leaders from the Asia Pacific region to discuss ongoing efforts towards malaria elimination and **to reinvigorate national and regional progress towards the goal of a malaria-free Asia Pacific region by 2030**.
- The conference included tracking regional and national progress, leveraging research, innovation and new technologies to accelerate progress in reaching at-risk populations, and adopting the government's holistic approach to ending the disease.
- Of the 11 countries that are part of the World Health Organisation's 'High Burden to High Impact' initiative, only India has reported a decline in malaria cases during the peak of the COVID-19 pandemic.

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- From 2015 to 2022, malaria cases have declined by 85.1 percent and deaths by 83.6 percent.

Ministry of Railways will start Puri-Gangasagar Divya Ka shi Yatra from Pune

- Ministry of Railways will start Puri-Gangasagar Divya Ka shi Yatra from Pune under “Dekho Apna Desh” and “Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat” Scheme.
- The ten-day tour will cover important religious places like Puri, Kolkata, Gaya, Varanasi and Prayagraj.
- Passengers will get an opportunity to visit Lord Jagannath Temple, Konark Sun Temple, Lingaraj Temple, Kalibari, Vishnupad Temple and Kashi Vishwanath Temple during this period.
- Ministry of Railways is running Bharat Gaurav tourism trains from different parts of the country to show important places to domestic and foreign tourists.
- Consisting of 7 Sleeper Class Coaches, 3 AC-3 Tier and 1st AC- 2 Tier Coaches, Indian Railways is offering 3 classes of Economy, Comfort and Deluxe tour packages and mainly booked for 750 passengers in economy segment class is offering.
- IRCTC is offering this all-inclusive journey which includes comfortable rail travel in special LHB rake of Bharat Gaurav train, on-board and off-board meals, road transport, sightseeing and accommodation, etc.

28 States/UTs adopted National Generic Document Registration System for Land Records

- The Rural Development Ministry recently said that ULPIN has been adopted by 26 states and union territories so far.
- The ministry said that till now, 28 states and union territories have adopted the National Generic Document Registration System for land records.
- It is part of the Digital India Land Records Modernization Programme (DILRMP).
- Some states are also using ULPIN in SVAMITVA (Survey of Villages Abadi and Mapping with Improvised Technology in Village Areas) portal, according to the latest data provided by the Land Resources Division of the Department of Land Resources (DoLR).
- ULPIN or Bhu-Aadhar is a 14-digit identification number accorded to a land parcel.
- It would uniquely identify every surveyed parcel of land and prevent land fraud, especially in rural India, where land records are outdated and disputed.
- The identification is based on the longitude and latitude coordinates of the land parcel and depends on detailed surveys and geo-referenced cadastral maps.
- ULPIN is a Single, Authoritative Source of Truth for information on any parcel of land or property to provide Integrated Land Services to the citizens as well as all stakeholders.

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

India & South Asia could be worst hit if 1.5°C threshold overshoot - IPCC

- The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) released the final report of the sixth

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assessment cycle.

- As per IPCC report, Climate change is a threat to human well-being and planetary health and there is a rapidly closing window of opportunity to secure a liveable and sustainable future for all.

About IPCC :

- Established : 1988
- Headquarters : Geneva, Switzerland
- The IPCC is the **international body** for assessing the science related to climate change.
- The IPCC was set up by the **World Meteorological Organization (WMO)** and **United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)**.

Georgia Becomes First US State To Pass Resolution Condemning Hinduphobia

- The **United States (US) Georgia Assembly** has passed a **resolution condemning Hinduphobia**, making it the **first American state** to take such a legislative measure.
- Condemning Hinduphobia and anti-Hindu bigotry, the resolution stated that Hinduism is one of the world's largest and oldest religions with over **1.2 billion adherents** in over 100 countries.
- The resolution was introduced by **Representatives Lauren McDonald** and **Todd Jones** from Forsyth County in the suburbs of Atlanta, home to one of the largest Hindu and Indian-American diaspora communities in Georgia

UK signs deal to join trade pact with 11 Asia and Pacific nations

- The **United Kingdom (UK)** has signed a **deal** to join a **trade pact** with **11 Asia** and Pacific nations, **3 years** after it officially left the European Union (EU).
- The government's own estimates show being in the bloc will only add **0.08%** to the size of the UK's economy.
- The trade area covers a market of around **500 million people**.
- The deal to join the group would boost UK exports by cutting tariffs on goods such as cheese, cars, chocolate, machinery, gin and whisky.

Saudi Arabia launches new national airline Riyadh Air

- **Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman** has announced the creation of a **new national airline** called **Riyadh Air**.
- Riyadh Air will serve more than 100 destinations around the world by **2030**.
- Riyadh Air will be Saudi Arabia's **second national carrier** alongside Saudi.

About Saudi Arabia :

- Crown Prince and Prime Minister : Mohammed bin Salman
- Capital : Riyadh

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- Currency : Saudi riyal

Anjali Sharma conquer Mount Kilimanjaro in Africa, wearing Luanchari

- The Union Information and Broadcasting Minister congratulated **Anjali Sharma** of Kangra district of Himachal Pradesh (HP) for conquering South Africa's Mount Kilimanjaro peak wearing a Gaddi dress (Luanchadi).
- Lunachari is a traditional dress of Himachal Pradesh.
- Mount Kilimanjaro located in Tanzania is **Africa's tallest mountain** and the **world's largest free-standing mountain** (which means not part of a mountain range).

India & Canada agree to work on making defence an important pillar of bilateral relationship

- **India** and **Canada** have agreed to make **defence** an **important pillar** of the bilateral relationship.
- Both countries have agreed to work on taking the defence relationship to the next level.

Key Highlights :

- Defence Minister **Shri Rajnath Singh** and his Canadian counterpart discussed ways to **develop bilateral defence relations**.
- Both Ministers also talked about potential areas of defence cooperation from UN peacekeeping training to Defence Industrial Cooperation.
- Rajnath Singh invited Canadian defence companies to invest in India.
- India established diplomatic relations with Canada in **1947**.

About Canada :

- Prime Minister : Justin Trudeau
- Capital : Ottawa
- Currency : Canadian dollar

Australia to host third in-person Quad Summit in Sydney

- **Australia** is set to host the **third in-person Quad Leadership Summit** on **May 24, 2023** in **Sydney**
- This will be the **first time** that Australia will host the summit.
- The meeting will be attended by Prime Minister **Shri Narendra Modi**, US President **Mr Joe Biden**, Prime Minister **Mr Kishida Fumio** of Japan and Australian Prime Minister **Mr Anthony Albanese**.
- This will be the **fourth Quad leaders' summit** and the third held in person, with the most recent in-person meeting hosted by Japan's capital Tokyo in 2022.

Key discussions :

- How to deepen cooperation on issues that matter to the people of the Indo-Pacific, including critical and

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emerging technologies, high-quality infrastructure, global health, climate change, maritime domain awareness and other pressing issues.

- The leaders will discuss how the Quad can work alongside partners and regional groupings including the **Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)** and the Pacific Islands Forum, to strengthen cooperation.
- The **previous in-person meeting** was hosted by **Japan** in Tokyo in **2022**.

About QUAD :

- QUAD stands for the **Quadrilateral Security Dialogue**.
- It comprises **India, the United States (US), Japan and Australia**.
- It was set up to develop a strategy to keep critical sea routes in the Indo-Pacific region free of any influence.
- The **first in-person meeting** of Quad leaders was hosted by US President **Mr Joe Biden** in 2021.
- It was formalised by former Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe in 2007.

About Australia :

- Prime Minister : Anthony Albanese
- Capital : Canberra
- Currency : Australian dollar

European Union Parliament Approves MiCA for Crypto Regulation

- The **European Parliament** has approved the **world's first set of comprehensive rules** to bring **largely unregulated cryptocurrency markets** under the ambit of regulation by government authorities.
- The regulation, called the **Markets in Crypto Assets (MiCA)**, will come into force after formal approval by member states.

Key Highlights :

- **Stablecoins** are **cryptocurrencies** without volatility.
- Unlike cryptocurrencies, these coins are generally pegged to a government currency.
- The MiCA legislation will apply to '**crypto assets**', which have broadly been defined in the text.
- As per this text, the regulation will apply not only to traditional cryptocurrencies like **Bitcoin** and **Ethereum** but also to newer ones like stablecoins.
- However, it will, not regulate digital assets that would qualify as transferable securities and function like shares or their equivalent and other crypto-assets that already qualify as financial instruments under existing regulation.
- MiCA will also not regulate central bank digital currencies issued by the European Central Bank and digital

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assets issued by national central banks of EU member countries.

- India is yet to have a comprehensive regulatory framework for crypto assets.
- A draft legislation on the same is reportedly in the works.
- In the **Union Budget for 2022**, the **Finance Ministry** imposed a **30% tax** on income from the “**transfer of any virtual digital asset**”.
- In **March 2023**, the government placed all transactions involving virtual digital assets under the purview of the **Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA)**.

IIT Madras to set up its first international campus in Tanzania

- The **Chennai, Tamil Nadu (TN)** based **Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Madras** is set to establish its **first International campus** in **Zanzibar, Tanzania** with plans to start the classes by **October 2023**.
- This will be the **first IIT** to be set up in Africa.
- In February, 2023 a team of 5 professors from IIT Madras visited Tanzania and held discussions with various officials on starting the campus.
- This information was shared by IIT Madras Director **V Kamakoti** at **IIT Madras' 64th Institute Day**, on April 20, 2023.

Jitgadhi festival is being observed in Butwal

- The **Jitgadhi festival** is being observed in **Butwal** in the **Rupandehi district of Lumbini Province**.
- The festival is celebrated every year to mark the victory over the British government, then East India Company, by the Nepal Army.
- A Nepal Army led by **Colonel Ujir Singh Thapa** conquered the Jitgadhi fort on 7th Baisakh 1872 BS by taking down the British Army.
- The festival is observed in **Butwal Sub Metropolitan City** every year in celebration of the conquest of the fort.
- On this occasion, the main celebration committee of Jitgadhi Fort welcomed an army contingent, which walked **370 kilometres (km)** from Gorkha to participate in the festival.
- Jitgadhi Fort which represents the victory of the Nepalese Army over the British Army is spread over an area of 500 square feet, the east-west length of Jeetgarhi is 205 feet and the width is about 55 feet.
- **Vijayutsav** has been celebrated every year on 7th Baisakh for 200 years.

'India-built Mongolia's first oil refinery to be completed by 2025'

- **Mongolia's first oil refinery**, built and funded with **Indian assistance**, will be completed by **2025**.
- The first stage of Mongol Oil Refinery, built with a **\$1.2 billion Indian soft loan**, will be completed at the end of 2023.
- It is being developed by the **Megha Engineering and Infrastructures Limited**, a Hyderabad- based

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company.

Key Highlights :

- The development comes with strategic implications as Mongolia is entirely dependent on Russia for its energy imports.
- It would help Mongolia meet **70%** of its demand domestically.
- Mongolia also hopes to attract Indian investment in its mining and metals, with plans to start shipping coking coal to India by **2024**.
- Mongolia also has key rare earth metals, which may be crucial to India's ambitions to build cutting edge technological capabilities in semiconductors and green mobility

About Mongolia :

- President : Ukhnaagiin Khürelsükh
- Prime Minister : Luvsannamsrain Oyun-Erden
- Capital : Ulaanbaatar
- Currency : Mongolian Tugrik

France Macron signs pension reforms into law despite protests

- **France's Constitutional Council** approved an unpopular plan to **raise the retirement age** from **62 to 64**, in a victory for President Emmanuel Macron after three months of mass protests over the legislation that has damaged his leadership.
- The council rejected some other measures in the pension bill, but the higher age was central to Macron's plan and the target of protesters' anger.
- Macron can enact the bill **within 15 days**.
- The plan to increase the retirement age was meant to be Macron's showcase measure in his second term.

About France :

- President : Emmanuel Macron
- Prime Minister : Élisabeth Borne
- Capital: Paris
- Currency: Euro.

Japan's Health Ministry approves the country's first abortion pill Mifeegoo

- In a significant **boost to reproductive rights**, Japan's Health Ministry has approved the country's first abortion pill-Mifeegoo pill pack.

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- The approval came from the **Health Ministry's Pharmaceutical Board** after it approved the MeFeego Pack abortion pill manufactured by **British pharmaceutical Linepharma**.
- While abortion pills are widely available in many countries across the globe, the medication was not approved by Japan's Health Ministry.
- Japan's abortion laws also allow women to have abortions only with the consent of their partners which denies women the right to make decisions over their own bodies.

Key Highlights :

- The medication consists of **two types of pill**, and can be used within **9 weeks of pregnancy**.
- The pill pack contains **2 types of medicines**, **mifepristone** and **misoprostol**, which have been included by the **World Health Organisation (WHO)** in its list of essential medicines, shown to be safe and effective for people who are pregnant.

About Japan :

- Prime Minister : Fumio Kishida
- Capital : Tokyo
- Currency : Japanese yen

STATE NEWS

T.N. plans year-long celebrations to observe Vaikom Satyagraha centenary

- On the beginning of the **centenary** of the **Vaikom Satyagraha** Tamil Nadu (TN) Chief Minister (CM) **Shri M.K. Stalin** announced that his government was planning a **year-long celebration** of the movement that was launched to end caste discrimination in a temple in colonial **Kerala**.
- A book on the movement was also published by the **Tamil Nadu Textbook and Educational Services Corporation**.

About Tamil Nadu :

- Governor: R. N. Ravi
- Chief Minister: M. K. Stalin
- Capital: Chennai
- Dance : Bharatnatyam, Karakattam
- National Park : Mudumalai National Park, Mukurthi National Park, Guindy National Park, Gulf of Mannar Marine National Park
- Wildlife Sanctuaries : Kalakad Wildlife sanctuary, Karikili Bird Sanctuary, Vedanthangal Bird Sanctuary

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- Tiger Reserve : Anamalai Tiger Reserve
- Biosphere Reserve : Agasthyamalai Biosphere Reserve

Va Tech Wabag bags ₹4,400-crore order from Chennai Metro Water to build desalination plant

- **VA Tech Wabag Ltd**, a **Chennai**, Tamil Nadu (TN)-headquartered water technology focussed on municipal and industrial users, has bagged a **design, build, operate (DBO)** order from **Chennai Metropolitan Water Supply and Sewerage Board (CMWSSB)** for building a **400 million litres per day (MLD)** sea water reverse osmosis (SWRO) desalination plant at a total cost of about **₹4,400 crore**.
- The project will be executed by WABAG in a joint venture with **Metito Overseas Ltd**.
- Once completed, the project will be the **largest desalination plant** in **South East Asia**.

About Tamil Nadu :

- Governor: R. N. Ravi
- Chief Minister: M. K. Stalin
- Capital: Chennai
- Dance : Bharatnatyam, Karakattam
- National Park : Mudumalai National Park, Mukurthi National Park, Guindy National Park, Gulf of Mannar Marine National Park
- Wildlife Sanctuaries : Kalakad Wildlife sanctuary, Karikili Bird Sanctuary, Vedanthangal Bird Sanctuary
- Tiger Reserve : Anamalai Tiger Reserve
- Biosphere Reserve : Agasthyamalai Biosphere Reserve

India's 1st Cool Roof Policy launched in Telangana for all types of Buildings

- With urban heat islands raising an alarm, in a first in India, **Telangana** is set to launch the **Telangana Cool Roof Policy 2023-28** to **reduce temperatures** in **Hyderabad** and other urban areas in Telangana.
- To reduce heat island impact and heat stress in Telangana.

About Telangana :

- Governor : Tamilisai Soundararajan
- Chief Minister : K. Chandrashekar Rao
- National Park : Mrugavani National Park, KBR National Park
- Wildlife Sanctuary : Pocharam Dam And Wildlife Sanctuary, Kinnerasani Wildlife Sanctuary

In a first, Eravikulam National Park gets a fernarium

- **Eravikulam National Park (ENP)**, the **natural habitat** of Nilgiri tahr in **Munnar**, has a new attraction a **Fernarium** setup inside the park.
- This is the **first time** such a fern collection has been established in the hill station.

Yangli festival Celebrated in Assam

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- **Tiwa tribesmen** celebrate **Yangli festival** in Karbi Anglong district of **Assam**.
- It was last celebrated in **2018**.

About Assam :

- Governor : Gulab Chand Kataria
- Chief Minister : Himanta Biswa Sarma
- Capital : Dispur
- National Park : Kaziranga National Park, Manas National Park, Raimona National Park
- Wildlife Sanctuary : Bornadi Wildlife Sanctuary, Panidihing Bird Sanctuary

Second G20 Sherpa meet under India's G20 Presidency kick off in Kerala

- The **Second G20 Sherpas meeting** under **India's G20 Presidency** is scheduled to take place from **March 30 to April 2, 2023**, in **Kumarakom, Kerala**.
- The **four-day meeting** will be chaired by **India's G20 Sherpa Shri Amitabh Kant**.
- **120 delegates** from G20 member countries, **9 invitee countries**, and various international and regional organisations are taking part in this meeting.
- The second Sherpa meeting will work on many important issues of global concern and will cover the work being done under the **13 working groups** within the Sherpa Track.
- In addition, 11 Engagement Groups and 4 Initiatives will provide policy

India grants \$2 million to African Union Transition Mission in Somalia

- India's Permanent Representative to the United Nations **Mr Ruchira Kamboj** handed over the contribution of **USD 2 million** to the **United Nations Trust Fund** in support of the **African Union Transition Mission in Somalia (ATMIS)**.
- With this, the Government of India (GoI) reiterates New Delhi's commitment to peace and stability in Somalia and the Horn of Africa.
- Earlier, India had contributed **USD 4 million** to the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM).
- ATMIS was established on **1 April 2022** pursuant to the Security Council resolution 2628 (2022) and African Union Peace and Security Council Communique 1068th of 8 March 2022
- To support the implementation of the Somali Transitional Plan towards a full handover of security responsibility to the Somali security forces and institutions by the **end 2024**.
- The **primary role** of ATMIS is to reduce the threat posed by the terrorist group Al-Shabaad.

About Somalia :

- President : Hassan Sheikh Mohamud
- Prime Minister : Hamza Abdi Barre

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- Capital :Mogadishu
- Currency :Somali shilling

Finland becomes NATO's 31st member of military alliance

- **Finland** becomes the **31st member** of **North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO)**, in a historic strategic shift provoked by Moscow's war on Ukraine, which doubles the US-led alliance's border with Russia.
- The Finnish flag was raised at NATO headquarters in **Brussels, Belgium** to mark Russia's western neighbour becoming the 31st member of the Western alliance.
- The accession of Finland coincides with the **74th anniversary** of the **Washington Treaty** which established NATO that was signed on **April 04, 1949**.
- Finnish President **Sauli Niinisto** and the US Secretary of State joined NATO ministers for a joining ceremony.

About Finland :

- President : Sauli Niinistö
- Prime Minister : Sanna Marin
- Capital: Helsinki
- Currency: Euro.

About NATO :

- Headquarters : Brussels, Belgium
- Secretary General : Jens Stoltenberg
- NATO was set up in **1949** by the **United States (US)**, **Canada**, and several western European nations to ensure their collective security against the **Soviet Union**.
- It was the **US's first peacetime military alliance** outside the western hemisphere.
- **30 countries** are currently members of NATO.

India & Bhutan plan to set up first Integrated Check Post along border near Jaigaon

- **India** and **Bhutan** are considering setting up the **first Integrated Check Post** along the border near Jaigaon.
- The bilateral meeting was held between **Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi** and **King of Bhutan Mr Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck** in New Delhi.
- External Affairs Secretary Mr Vinay Mohan Kwatra talked about the outcomes of the meeting.

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- He stated that India would step up its support for Bhutan's upcoming **13th five-year plan**.

About Bhutan :

- Prime Minister : Lotay Tshering
- Capital : Thimphu
- Currency : Bhutanese Ngultrum

Spouses of H-1B visa holders can work in the United States

- In a big relief for foreign workers in the **United States (US)** tech sector, a judge has ruled that **spouses** of **H-1B visa holders** can work in the US.
- US District Judge **Tanya Chutkan** made the ruling while rejecting a petition filed by Save Jobs USA.
- Tech companies such as **Amazon, Apple, Google, and Microsoft** had opposed the lawsuit.
- The **Department of Homeland Security** has authorized employment not only for students, but also for their spouses and dependents.

About US :

- President : Joe Biden
- Capital : Washington, D.C
- Currency : U.S. dollar

'Kashi' declared first tourism & cultural capital of Shanghai Cooperation Organisation

- 'Kashi'(Varanasi) has been declared the **first tourism and cultural capital** of the **Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO)**.
- The declaration was made by a meeting of the SCO heads of Tourism Administrations held in **Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh (UP)**.
- The initiative will garner more attention by highlighting the spiritualism, mysticism, and learning of Kashi which is also the cradle of Indian civilization.
- The meeting also adopted the **Action Plan for "Year of Tourism Development** in the SCO Space in 2023.
- The **next meeting** of the SCO Heads of Tourism Administrations will be held in **Kazakhstan** in **2024**.

About SCO :

- Founded : 15 June 2001

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- Headquarters : Beijing, China
- The SCO currently comprises **8 Member States** (China, India, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Pakistan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan).

Ghana becomes first country to approve Oxford's malaria vaccine

- **Ghana** has become the **first country** in the world to **receive regulatory approval** to market the **malaria vaccine R21/Matrix-M** developed by the **University of Oxford** in the United Kingdom (UK).
- Ghana's **Food and Drugs Authority** has granted clearance for the use of R21/Matrix-M vaccine.
- The vaccine was **manufactured** by the **Serum Institute of India Pvt. Ltd** and submitted through the local agent DEK Pharmaceutical Ghana.

About Ghana :

- President : Nana Akufo-Addo
- Capital : Accra
- Currency : Cedi

Japan, India & France announce common platform for Sri Lanka creditors

- **Japan, India and France** have announced a **common platform** for dialogue between bilateral creditors to coordinate **debt restructuring** of **Sri Lanka**.
- This will help in solving the debt crisis of **middle-income economies**.

About Japan :

- Prime Minister : Fumio Kishida
- Capital : Tokyo
- Currency : Japanese yen

About India :

- President : Droupadi Murmu
- Prime Minister : Narendra Modi
- Capital : New Delhi
- Currency : Indian rupee

About France :

- President : Emmanuel Macron
- Prime Minister : Élisabeth Borne
- Capital : Paris

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- Currency : Euro, CFP franc

About Sri Lanka :

- President : Ranil Wickremesinghe
- Prime Minister : Dinesh Gunawardena
- Currency : Sri Lankan rupee

Cyclone Ilsa hits Western Australia coast

- **Cyclone Ilsa** hit a remote stretch of coast in **Western Australia** near **Port Hedland**.
- The speed of the wind was **218 kilometres per hour-kph (135 mile per hour-mph)** on **Bedout Island** just off the coast.
- It is the **strongest cyclone** to hit the region in the last 14 years.

What is a Cyclone?

- A cyclone is a **large air mass** that rotates around a strong centre of **low atmospheric pressure**, counterclockwise in the Northern Hemisphere and clockwise in the Southern Hemisphere.

India contributes \$500,000 to United Nations entity for women empowerment

- **India** has made a generous contribution of **\$500,000 (₹4.09 crore)** to the **United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women**, also known as **UN Women**.
- **India** is currently serving as a **member** of the **Executive Board** of the **UN Women & Women-led Development** is one of the priorities of India's **G20 presidency**.

About UN Women :

- Founded : 2 July 2010
- Headquarters : New York, United States
- Executive Director : Sima Sami Bahous
- It is a United Nations entity working for gender equality and the empowerment of women.

G7 Ministers' Meeting on Climate, Energy and Environment in Sapporo held in Japan

- The **2023 Group of 7 (G7) Ministers' Meeting on Climate, Energy and Environment** was held on **15-16 April, 2023** in **Sapporo, Japan**.
- The meeting considered priority issues in the areas of **climate, energy, and the environment**.
- Union Environment Minister **Shri Bhupender Yadav** attended the plenary session of the **G7 minister's meeting**.

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Syria becomes world's largest 'narco-state'

- Syria has become the **largest 'narco-state'** in the world.
- The production and export of **Captagon**, which is also known as the "**poor man's coke**," has become a crucial source of economic sustenance for Syria.

What is meant by Nacro State?

- "Narco-State" means a nation where a **significant portion** of the **economy** is **dependent** on the **illegal trade** in narcotic drugs.

About Captagon :

- Captagon is a **synthetic stimulant** that combines **amphetamine** and **caffeine**.
- Captagon was classified as an **illegal drug** by the **United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)** in **2021**.

About Syria :

- President : Bashar al-Assad
- Capital : Damascus
- Currency : Syrian pound

India holds 100th G20 meeting under its presidency in Varanasi

- India celebrates a key milestone in its **Group of Twenty (G20) Presidency** with the **hosting** of its **100th G20 meeting**, the **Meeting of Agriculture Chief Scientists (MACS)** in **Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh (UP)**.
- This is the **largest number of meetings ever hosted** by any country as G-20 President so far.

Key Statistics :

- The chief coordinator of India's G20 presidency is **Harsh Vardhan Shringla**.
- India took over the G-20 Presidency from Indonesia in **November 2022**.
- The 2023 G20 Summit is the **18th meeting of Group of Twenty (G-20)** to be held in **New Delhi** in **September 2023**.

About G20 :

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- The G20 comprises 19 countries (Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Republic of Korea, Mexico, Russia, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Türkiye, United Kingdom, and United States) and the European Union.

Nepal became a founding member of the International Big Cats Alliance

- Nepal has become a founding member of the International Big Cats Alliance initiated by India (IBCA), an initiative by the Government of India (GoI).

About IBCA :

- The IBCA was launched by Prime Minister (PM) of India **Shri Narendra Modi** on 9th April 2023, at **Mysore, Karnataka**, to commemorate 50 years of Project Tiger.

About Nepal :

- Prime Minister - Pushpa Kamal Dahal
- President - Ram Chandra Paudel
- Capital - Kathmandu
- Currency - Nepalese Rupee

Kerala tops India's GI tag list in Financial Year 2022-23

- According to the data from **Geographical Indication (GI) Registry**, **Kerala** has topped the list of states in India with the **most number of products** securing the **GI tag** in the financial year 2022-23.
- Various products from Kerala have been recognized with the GI tag, including **Attappadi Attucombu avara** (beans), **Attappadi thuvara** (red gram), **Onattukara elu** (sesame), **Kanthalloor vattavada veluthulli** (garlic), and **Kodungallur pottuvellari** (snap melon).
- **Karnataka** has the highest number of GI tag products followed by Tamil Nadu.

World's first Asian King Vulture Conservation & Breeding Center to be inaugurated in Uttar Pradesh

- **Uttar Pradesh's (UP) Jatayu Conservation and Breeding Centre (JCBC)** in Maharajganj district, the **world's first conservation and breeding centre built** and designed exclusively for the **conservation of Asian king vulture**, is ready to be inaugurated by UP Chief Minister (CM) **Shri Yogi Adityanath**.
- The infrastructure creation started in **2021**.
- The 1st phase of the centre was meant to have complete infrastructure in place.
- The 2nd phase is about breeding of vultures.

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About UP :

- Governor :Anandiben Patel
- Chief Minister :Yogi Adityanath
- Capital :Lucknow

Himachal Pradesh Assembly passes Sukhashraya bill for welfare of orphans

- The Himachal Pradesh (HP) Legislative Assembly passed the Himachal Pradesh Sukhashraya (Care, Protection and Self-Reliance of the Children of the State) Bill, 2023.
- To provide state-mandated benefits to **orphans**, semi-orphans and specially abled children in need.
- HP became the **first state** in the **country** to enact such a scheme.

About HP :

- Governor : Shiv Pratap Shukla
- Chief Minister : Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu
- Wildlife Sanctuary : Daranghati Sanctuary, Manali Wildlife Sanctuary

Jammu & Kashmir Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha inaugurates Jammu's first Tulip Garden at Sanasar

- Tamil Nadu (TN) Governor **Shri RN Ravi** approved a **Bill to ban online gambling**, including online rummy and poker with stakes.
- This will be a big blow to the nascent but fast-growing skill gaming sector.

About Tamil Nadu :

- Governor: R. N. Ravi
- Chief minister: M. K. Stalin
- Capital: Chennai
- Dance : Bharatnatyam, Karakattam
- National Park : Mudumalai National Park, Mukurthi National Park, Guindy National Park, Gulf of Mannar Marine National Park
- Wildlife Sanctuaries : Kalakad Wildlife sanctuary, Karikili Bird Sanctuary, Vedanthangal Bird Sanctuary
- Tiger Reserve : Anamalai Tiger Reserve
- Biosphere Reserve : Agasthyamalai Biosphere Reserve

Tamil Nadu Governor Shri RN Ravi grants assent to bill against online gambling

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- Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) Lieutenant Governor(LG) **Shri Manoj Sinha**, who inaugurated the Jammu's **first Tulip garden**, spread over 5 acres and having 2.75 lakh bulbs of 25 different varieties, was opened to the public in **Sansar, Ramban district, J&K**.
- It will provide a major impetus to **tourism** and **trade activities**.
- **Rs 447 crore** had been allocated to the **tourism sector** this year to develop J&K as a modern and smart destination.

About J&K :

- Lieutenant Governor : Manoj Sinha
- Capital : Srinagar, Jammu
- National Park : Kishtwar High Altitude National Park, Kazinag National Park, Dachigam National Park
- Wildlife Sanctuaries : Ramnagar Wildlife Sanctuary, Gulmarg Wildlife Sanctuary

The Punjab government launched the 'CM di Yogshala' programme in Punjab

- Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) national convenor and Delhi Chief Minister (CM) **Mr Arvind Kejriwal** and his Punjab counterpart Mr **Bhagwant Mann** jointly launched the 'CM di Yogshala' programme.
- To create a mass movement to carve out a **healthy** and **prosperous Punjab**
- The initiative was initially launched for 4 cities of Punjab : **Patiala, Amritsar, Ludhiana, and Phagwara**

About Punjab :

- Governor : Banwarilal Purohit
- Chief Minister : Bhagwant Mann
- Capital : Chandigarh
- National Park : Abohar National Park, Bir Bhadsan National Park
- Wildlife Sanctuary : Jhajjar Bachauli Wildlife Sanctuary, Kathlour Kushlian Wildlife Sanctuary

'Mircha' rice of Bihar's West Champaran gets GI tag

- Bihar's West Champaran's 'Mircha' rice has been awarded the **Geographical Indication (GI) tag**.
- The shape and appearance of this rice resembles **black pepper**, hence it is called Mircha or Marcha rice.
- The rice is different because this rice has a **unique aroma**.
- This rice is famous for its aroma, palatability and quality for making **aromatic chura (rice flakes)**.

Centre grants GI tag for Ladakh's wood carving

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- Prime Minister **Shri Narendra Modi** has lauded the grant of the **Geographical Indication (GI) tag** for **Ladakh wood carving** also known as '**Ladakh Shingskos**'
- A total of **33 products** have been given the **GOI tag** during 2022-23, one of which belongs to Union Territory (UT) of **Ladakh**.

Himachal Pradesh to launch 'Project Sanjeevani' to empower dairy farmers

- The Government of **Himachal Pradesh (HP)** has launched a project named **Sanjeevani** to **empower the livelihood of small dairy farmers and livestock owners**.
- The project will help in improving the lives of farmers by providing them convenient and quality care for livestock at their doorsteps.
- Telemedicine and technology will help in **reducing** the turnaround time of services.
- It will also help in controlling the outbreaks of diseases.
- The **Animal Husbandry Department** has signed an agreement with **Bharat Financial Inclusion Ltd. (BFIL)** in this regard.
- This collaboration under the **National Animal Disease Control Programme-Mobile Veterinary Van (NADCP-AHD-MVU)** will improve the delivery of livestock care at doorsteps with just a phone call.
- The **toll-free telephone number** for livestock care will become operational very soon.

About HP :

- Governor : Shiv Pratap Shukla
- Chief Minister : Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu
- Wildlife Sanctuary : Daranghati Sanctuary, Manali Wildlife Sanctuary

Banarasi paan receives GI tag

- The **Banarasi Paan**, celebrated in Amitabh Bachchan's iconic song '**Khaike paan banaras wala**' received the **Geographical Indication (GI) tag**.
- The Banarasi Paan is famous for its delicious taste and make which involves several ingredients.
- Further, **Banarasi Langda Mango, Ramnagar Bhanta (Brinjal), and Adamchini Rice** also received the GI tag for the riverine city in the **Bhojpur-Purvanchal region** of India.

IndiaGrid launches first battery energy storage system linked to solar panels in Maharashtra

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- India's first listed power sector infrastructure investment trust, **India Grid Trust** has commissioned its **first battery energy storage system (BESS)** project coupled with its solar panels at the Dhule substation in **Maharashtra**.
- The project will meet the **substation's auxiliary consumption requirement**.
- The BESS solution, coupled with solar generation, also acts as a prototype for expanding its presence in energy transition opportunities in the sector.

About India Grid Trust :

- Founded : 21 October 2016
- Headquarters : Mumbai, Maharashtra, India
- Director & CEO : Harsh Shah
- IndiGrid is an **Indian power sector infrastructure investment trust (InvIT)**, sponsored by KKR & Sterlite Power (SPTL)
- It owns 17 power projects, consisting of 46 transmission lines with more than **8,416 ckms (circuit kilometers)** length, 13 substations with 17,550 MVA transformation capacity and 100 MW (AC) of solar generation capacity.

About Maharashtra :

- Governor: Bhagat Singh Koshyari
- Chief minister: Eknath Shinde
- Capital: Mumbai
- National Park : Tadoba National Park, Navegaon National Park
- Wildlife Sanctuaries : Bhimashankar Wildlife Sanctuary, Karnala Bird Sanctuary, Nagzira Wildlife Sanctuary
- UNESCO Heritage Sites : Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Terminus, The Victorian and Art Deco Ensemble of Mumbai, Ajanta Caves, Elephanta Caves, Ellora Caves

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M.K. Stalin launches Anaivarukkum IIT M initiative for government school students

- Tamil Nadu (TN) Chief Minister (CM) **Shri M K Stalin** launched **Anaivarukkum IITM' (IIT-M for All)** the initiative of the **Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Chennai**, to connect the **institution with one lakh government school students** in TN studying in rural locations to electronic science.
- He also announced a new talent support scheme, **Thiranari Thervu Thittam**, for state-run school students that carries a **Rs 1,000** monthly stipend.

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About Tamil Nadu :

- Governor: R. N. Ravi
- Chief minister: M. K. Stalin
- Capital: Chennai
- Dance : Bharatnatyam, Karakattam
- National Park : Mudumalai National Park, Mukurthi National Park, Guindy National Park, Gulf of Mannar Marine National Park
- Wildlife Sanctuaries : Kalakad Wildlife sanctuary, Karikili Bird Sanctuary, Vedanthangal Bird Sanctuary
- Tiger Reserve : Anamalai Tiger Reserve
- Biosphere Reserve : Agasthyamalai Biosphere Reserve

About IIT-M :

- Established : 1959
- Headquarters : Chennai, Tamil Nadu
- Chairman : Pawan Kumar Goenka

KSINC launches solar-powered tourist vessel Sooryamshu

- The Kerala Shipping and Inland Navigation Corporation (KSINC) has introduced its first solar-powered tourist vessel named 'Sooryamshu' in Kochi backwaters, Kerala.
- The ₹3.95-crore vessel that can carry up to 100 passengers was built at a yard in Sri Lanka and is among the few in Kochi whose safety and allied features are certified by the Indian Register of Shipping (IRS).
- The vessel will have a 6-hour day cruise priced at ₹799 per person in which it will operate in the Marine Drive-Kadamakudy corridor and later 10 km into the sea.

About KSINC :

- Headquarters : Kochi, Kerala, India
- Chairman : K. T. Chacko
- MD : R. Girija
- KSINC is a Government of Kerala undertaking that oversees the shipping and inland navigation matters of the state.

Cabinet nod for inking agreement with German bank KfW for Kerala Green Energy Corridor Project

Important Monthly Current Affairs Capsule – April 2023

- The **Union Cabinet** gave its nod for **inking** an agreement with the **German development bank, KfW**, for securing a **loan** for the **Green Energy Corridor (GEC) project** being implemented by the **Kerala State Electricity Board (KSEB)**.
- The tripartite agreement will be signed by the **State government, KSEB** and **KfW**.
- The Central government and KfW had signed an agreement on November 11, 2022 for the **₹1,457-crore Kerala GEC project**.
- Kerala needs to award the works before November 23, 2023, for securing the Central grant.

2nd Meeting of Global Partnership for Financial Inclusion concludes in Hyderabad, Telangana

- The **second Meeting** of the **Global Partnership for Financial Inclusion (GPFI)** under **G20 (Group of Twenty) India Presidency** concluded in **Hyderabad, Telangana**.
- The meeting was led by **GPFI Co-Chair** and **G20 India Presidency**.

About Ministry of Finance :

- Cabinet Minister : **Nirmala Sitharaman**
- Minister of State : **Bhagwat Karad, Pankaj Choudhary**

Yaoshang festival Celebrated in Manipur

- The **Yaoshang festival** is celebrated every year on the **full moon of Lamta month** (February-March) of the **Meitei lunar calendar**.
- The festival is celebrated by the Meitei who are predominantly **Hindu** and it is celebrated at the same time as **Holi**.
- The festival marks the rejuvenation of the spirit of life and commemorates the birthday of **Chaitanya Mahaprabhu**.
- The **5-day-long** celebration begins with the burning of 'yaoshang' (a small thatch hut/straw hut) which is constructed with bamboo and straws on the first day

About Manipur :

- Governor : **Anusuiya Uikey**
- Chief Minister : **N. Biren Singh**
- Capital : **Imphal**
- National Park : **Keibul Lamjao National Park, Shiroys National Park**

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- Wildlife Sanctuary : Zeilad Lake Sanctuary, Yangoupokpi-Lokchao Wildlife Sanctuary

Madhya Pradesh's Famous Gond Painting Receives Geographical Indication Tag

- The famed **Gond painting** of **Madhya Pradesh (MP)** has received the prestigious **Geographical Indication (GI) tag**.
- Madhya Pradesh's popular **Sharbati wheat**, also called The Golden Grain, has bagged the Geographical Indication (GI) tag.
- Also, **Morena Gajak** has received the GI tag in the **food ingredient category**.

About GI Tag :

- A geographical Indication (GI) tag is a sign used on products which have a **specific geographical origin** and possess qualities or a reputation that are due to that origin.
- It is used for **industrial products, foodstuff, agriculture products, spirit drinks, and handicrafts**.

About MP :

- Governor : Mangubhai C. Patel
- Chief Minister : Shivraj Singh Chouhan
- Capital : Bhopal
- National Park : Satpura National Park, Kanha National Park, Bandhavgarh National Park
- Wildlife Sanctuary : Nauradehi Wildlife Sanctuary, Bori Wildlife Sanctuary

Tamil Nadu's Cumbum grapes get Geographical Indication tag

- The famous **Cumbum Paneer Thratchai** from **Tamil Nadu**, commonly known as Cumbum grapes has received the **Geographical Indication (GI) tag**.
- The Cumbum valley in Tamil Nadu's Western Ghats, is regarded as the "**Grapes City of South India**".
- The **Authoor betel leaves**, (locally known as vetrilai) of Tamil Nadu has also bagged GI tag.
- Tamil Nadu's **Malai Poondur, Srivilliputhur Palkova** and **Palani Panchamirtham** have also been awarded the GI tag.

About Tamil Nadu :

- Governor: R. N. Ravi
- Chief minister: M. K. Stalin
- Capital: Chennai

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- Dance : Bharatnatyam, Karakattam
- National Park : Mudumalai National Park, Mukurthi National Park, Guindy National Park, Gulf of Mannar Marine National Park
- Wildlife Sanctuaries : Kalakad Wildlife sanctuary, Karikili Bird Sanctuary, Vedanthangal Bird Sanctuary
- Tiger Reserve : Anamalai Tiger Reserve
- Biosphere Reserve : Agasthyamalai Biosphere Reserve

Uttar Pradesh's Suhelwa sanctuary records first photographic proof of tigers

- Suhelwa Wildlife Sanctuary of Uttar Pradesh (UP) has for the first time recorded photographic proof of tigers.
- The sanctuary, located in Shravasti, Balrampur and Gonda districts of UP, was declared a wildlife sanctuary in 1988.
- It is named after King Soheldev & it is spread over an area of 452 sq km.

Festivals of Vishu, Rongali Bihu, Naba Barsha, Vaisakhadi, Meshadi, & Puthandu Pirappu being celebrated in different parts of country

- Festivals of Vaisakhi, Vishu, Rongali Bihu, Naba Barsha, Vaisakhadi, Meshadi, Naba Barsha and Puthandu Pirappu are being celebrated in different parts of the country.
- These are the names of the New Year festivals in different parts of the country.

Union Minister Shri Amit Shah urges people to visit India's 'first village' Kibithoo in Arunachal Pradesh

- Union Home Minister Shri Amit Shah urged people to visit Kibithoo - "India's first village" in Arunachal Pradesh to enjoy its natural beauty and take inspiration from its history.
- It lies on the right bank of the Lohit River.

About Arunachal Pradesh :

- Governor : Kaiwalya Trivikram Parnaik
- Chief Minister : Pema Khandu
- Capital : Itanagar
- National Park : Namdapha National Park, Mouling National Park, Nameri National Park
- Wildlife Sanctuary : Dibang Wildlife Sanctuary, Mehao Wildlife Sanctuary

Union Minister Shri Nitin Gadkari inspects Asia's longest 'Zojila tunnel' to establish all weather connectivity for Ladakh

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- Union Minister for Road Transport and Highways **Shri Nitin Gadkari** inspected **Zojila Tunnel**, Asia's **longest tunnel** which will **establish all-weather connectivity** between the Union Territories (UT) of **Ladakh** and **Jammu and Kashmir (J&K)**.

About Ministry of Road Transport & Highways :

- Cabinet Minister : Nitin Gadkari
- Minister of State : General V. K. Singh

Telangana Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao unveils 125-ft tall statue of BR Ambedkar in Hyderabad

- **Telangana** Chief Minister (CM) **Shri K Chandrasekhar Rao** unveiled the **125-ft tall bronze statue** of **BR Ambedkar** in **Hyderabad**, to mark the 132nd birth anniversary of the architect of the Indian Constitution.
- The statue in Hyderabad is **India's tallest statue of Ambedkar**.

About Telangana :

- Governor : Tamilisai Soundararajan
- Chief Minister : K. Chandrashekar Rao
- Capital : Hyderabad
- National Park : Mrugavani National Park, KBR National Park
- Wildlife Sanctuary : Pakhal Lake And Wildlife Sanctuary, Eturnagaram Sanctuary

Himachal Pradesh celebrated its 75th formation day

- **Himachal Pradesh (HP)** celebrated its **75th anniversary** of formation on **April 15, 2023**.
- Chief Minister **Shri Sukhwinder Singh Sukhu** is presiding over the State level function being held for the first time in 75 years in **Kaza** in the tribal district of **Lahaul-Spiti**.
- Himachal Pradesh celebrates Statehood Day on 25th January.

About HP :

- Governor : Shiv Pratap Shukla
- Chief Minister : Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu
- National Park : Great Himalayan National Park
- Wildlife Sanctuary : Daranghati Wildlife Sanctuary, Kalatop Wildlife Sanctuary, Kanwar Wildlife Sanctuary

Assam's Largest Bihu performance creates Guinness World Record for largest traditional dance at single venue

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- The Northeastern state of India, **Assam's Bihu dance** (traditional folk dance of Assam) made it to the **Guinness World Records** with a performance by **11,304 dancers** and **2,548 drummers** at the **Sarusajai Stadium** in **Guwahati, Assam**.
- The Bihu performance set **two world records**, one for the **largest traditional dance**, and the second record was for the **largest musical instrument group**.
- The **previous record** for the largest traditional dance was for **7,700 participants in China** set in **2015**.

About Assam :

- Governor : Gulab Chand Kataria
- Chief Minister : Himanta Biswa Sarma
- Capital : Dispur
- National Park : Kaziranga National Park, Manas National Park
- Wildlife Sanctuary : Garampani Wildlife Sanctuary, Laokhowa Wildlife Sanctuary, Bornadi Wildlife Sanctuary

Jindal Steel and Power Ltd to set up new rail mill in Odisha

- **Naveen Jindal** promoted **Jindal Steel and Power Ltd (JSPL)** will commission a **1.2 million tons per annum (MTPA)** rail and heavy structure modern mill at **Angul in Odisha**, at an estimated cost of **₹3,000 crore**.
- The new mill will take the steelmaker's total rail-making capacity to **2.2mn t/yr**.
- Currently, there are **51 steel plants** in **Odisha** with a production capacity of **33.1 MTPA**.

About JSPL :

- Headquarters : New Delhi, Delhi
- Chairman : Naveen Jindal
- Managing Director : Bimlendra Jha
- JSPL is a part of OP Jindal Group.

About Odisha :

- Governor : Ganeshi Lal
- Chief Minister : Naveen Patnaik
- Capital : Bhubaneswar
- National Park : Simlipal National Park, Bhitarkanika National Park
- Wildlife Sanctuary : Ushakothi Wildlife Sanctuary, Tikarpada Wildlife Sanctuary

A Help Program Launched in the state of Uttarakhand

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- The Chief Minister (CM) of Uttarakhand, Mr. Pushkar Singh Dhami launched 'A-HELP' (Accredited Agent for Health and Extension of Livestock Production) programme at Survey of India Auditorium Dehradun, Uttarakhand.
- The programme was successfully piloted in the State of Madhya Pradesh (MP) and Jammu & Kashmir (J&K).

About Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry & Dairying :

- Cabinet Minister : Parshottam Rupala
- Minister of State : Sanjeev Balyan, L. Murugan

About Uttarakhand :

- Governor : Gurmit Singh
- Chief Minister : Pushkar Singh Dhami
- National Park : Jim Corbett National Park, Rajaji National Park, Nanda Devi National Park

Andhra Pradesh Govt renamed Bhavanapadu Port in Srikakulam as Mulapeta greenfield Port

- The Andhra Pradesh (AP) government has renamed the proposed Bhavanapadu port in the Srikakulam district as Mulapeta greenfield port at the request of the locals.
- Chief Minister (CM) Shri YS Jagan Mohan Reddy will lay a foundation stone for this nearly Rs 4,000 crore project on April 19, 2023.

About AP :

- Governor : S. Abdul Nazeer
- Chief Minister : Y. S. Jagan Mohan Reddy
- Capital : Amaravati
- National Park : Mrugavani National Park, Mahavir Harina Vanasthali National Park
- Wildlife Sanctuary : Coringa Wildlife Sanctuary, Kambalakonda Wildlife Sanctuary

Kerala becomes the first Indian state to adopt a Water Budget to tackle summer water shortage

- The government of Kerala, under Chief Minister Shri Pinarayi Vijayan has adopted a Water Budget, a first-of-its-type initiative in India to tackle water shortage in summer.
- The Kerala govt proposed a water budget for the first time in 2019.

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- The **Centre for Water Resource Development Management** and the **state water agency** worked together to create the budget.

About Kerala :

- Governor : Arif Mohammad Khan
- Chief Minister : Pinarayi Vijayan
- Capital : Thiruvananthapuram
- National Park : Eravikulam National Park, Silent Valley National Park
- Wildlife Sanctuary : Chinnar Wildlife Sanctuary, Periyar Wildlife Sanctuary

Sabarimala greenfield airport receives clearance from Ministry of Civil Aviation

- The **Ministry of Civil Aviation (MoCA)** has granted **site clearance** for the **Sabarimala Greenfield Airport Project** in **Kottayam, Kerala**.

Aim :

- To enhance the connectivity to Sabarimala.
- It is being developed by the **Kerala State Industrial Development Corporation (KSIDC)**.

Mizoram declared as the happiest state in India

- According to research conducted by **Rajesh K Pillania**, a professor of strategy at the **Management Development Institute** in Gurugram, **Mizoram** has been **declared the happiest state** in **India**.

Key Highlights :

- The state has attained a **100% literacy rate** and provides its students with opportunities to develop their skills and abilities even under challenging conditions.
- The report further noted that **Mizoram** is the **second one in India** to have achieved 100% literacy.
- "Mizoram's happiness index is based on **6 parameters** including **family relationships, work-related issues, social issues** and **philanthropy, religion, COVID-19's effect on happiness, and physical and mental health,**"
- **India** ranked **126th** in the **2023 World Happiness Index** and **Finland** ranked **1st** in that index, following Nordic countries, such as Denmark and Iceland.

About Mizoram :

- Governor : Kambhampati Hari Babu
- Chief Minister : Zoramthanga

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- Capital : Aizawl
- National Park : Murlen National Park, Phawngpui Blue Mountain National Park
- Wildlife Sanctuary : Dampa Wildlife Sanctuary, Ngengpui Wildlife Sanctuary

Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot launches 'Mehangai Rahat Camp' in Jaipur

- Rajasthan Chief Minister (CM) **Shri Ashok Gehlot** inaugurated '**Mehangai Rahat Camp**' at the **Mahapura village** of **Sanganer** in **Jaipur district, Rajasthan**.
- This initiative has been taken with the **aim** to provide the people of the **State** relief from inflation.
- The State government aims to connect common people in the State with information on **public welfare schemes** of the state government.
- These camps will be organised in the state from **April 24 to June 30, 2023**.
- These camps are being organised at the **gram panchayat** and **ward levels**.

Key Highlights :

- **Two-day Mehngai Rahat camp** will be organised along with '**Prashashan Gaon ke Sang**' in each **gram panchayat** and along with '**Prashashan Shaheron ke Sang**' in each **city ward**.
- In this way, the camps will be organised in 11,283-gram panchayats and 7,500 wards.
- Registration has been made **mandatory** to join all the public welfare schemes.
- For this, **2700 Mehngai Rahat camps** will be organised daily.
- After free registration, the **Chief Minister's Guarantee Card** will be made available to the eligible beneficiaries on the spot.
- 2,000 permanent relief camps will be organised by the **district administration** at government offices and public places.

About Rajasthan :

- Governor : Kalraj Mishra
- Chief Minister : Ashok Gehlot
- Capital : Jaipur
- National Park : Keoladeo National Park, Ranthambore National Park
- Wildlife Sanctuary : Bassi Wildlife Sanctuary, Kumbhalgarh Wildlife Sanctuary

INOX Air Products Commissions 21.3 MWp Solar Power Plant in Uttar Pradesh for green oxygen supply

- **INOX Air Products (INOXAP)**, India's largest manufacturer of industrial and medical gases, has

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commissioned a **21.3 MWp Open Access Captive Solar Power Plant** at Bangarmau in Unnao, Uttar Pradesh (UP).

- INOXAP's **first dedicated Solar Power Plant** is also the **largest investment** made by the Company in renewable energy.
- The plant has been commissioned by one of India's leading solar energy power developers, **Sunsure Energy**.
- It is built with an investment of **₹100 crore**, the solar power plant will supply over **3.1 crore units** of green power to INOXAP's units in Uttar Pradesh, enabling an offset of **28,000 tonnes of carbon dioxide** every year, for the next 25 years.

About INOX Air Products :

- Founded : 1963
- Headquarters : Mumbai, Maharashtra, India
- Managing Director : Siddharth Jain
- INOX Air Products, also known as INOX AP, is an **India-based industrial gas company**.
- It is a joint venture between **Inox Leasing and Finance Limited** and **Air Products & Chemicals**.

About UP :

- Governor : Anandiben Patel
- Chief Minister : Yogi Adityanath
- Capital : Lucknow
- National Park : Dudhwa National Park, Rajaji National Park
- Wildlife Sanctuary : Chandra Prabha Wildlife Sanctuary, Hastinapur Wildlife Sanctuary, Kishanpur Wildlife Sanctuary

Manipur Chief Minister N. Biren inaugurates 5th edition of Hun-Thadou cultural festival at Kangpokpi

- Manipur Chief Minister (CM) **Shri N Biren Singh** inaugurated the **5th edition** of the state-level **HUN Thadou Cultural Festival**, at **Thomas Ground** in **Kangpokpi district** of Manipur.

About HUN festival :

- HUN festival is an **annual cultural festival** and a civilising act of the **Thadous community** of Manipur.
- It is celebrated at the arrival of the new year according to the community.

About Manipur :

- Governor : Anusuiya Uikey

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- Chief Minister : N. Biren Singh
- Capital : Imphal
- National Park : Keibul Lamjao National Park, Sirohi National Park
- Wildlife Sanctuary : Zeilad Wildlife Sanctuary, Jiri Makru Wildlife Sanctuary

Nagaland receives approval from NMC for setting up its first medical college

- Nagaland Institute of Medical Sciences and Research (NIMSR) at Kohima will be the first medical college of Nagaland.
- It has received the 'Letter of Intent' (LOI) from the National Medical Council (NMC)'s Medical Assessment and Rating Board (MARB).
- The medical college will begin from the academic session 2023-24 with 100 MBBS students.
- Out of 100 students, 85 would be from Nagaland while the remaining 15 will be reserved for students from other states.
- Nagaland became the **16th state** of India in 1963.
- Jawaharlal Institute of Postgraduate Medical Education and Research (JIMPER), Pondicherry is the oldest medical college in India.

About Nagaland :

- Governor : La. Ganesan
- Chief Minister : Neiphiu Rio
- Capital : Kohima
- National Park : Intanki National Park
- Wildlife Sanctuary : Fakim Wildlife Sanctuary, Puliebadze Wildlife Sanctuary

Uttar Pradesh to become the first state to have 100% electric vehicles in govt departments

- Uttar Pradesh (UP) will become the **first state** which will have **100% electric vehicles** in government departments.
- The UP government has fixed a target to convert vehicles used in all government departments into Electric Vehicles in a phased manner by **2030**.

Key Highlights :

- The UP government notified the **Uttar Pradesh Electric Vehicle Manufacturing and Mobility Policy 2022** on **14 October 2022** to encourage electric vehicles in the state.

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- Under the policy, an **exemption** has been provided from tax and registration fees for **3 years** on the purchase of Electric Vehicles.
- The exemption will be valid for **5 years** on the purchase of Electric Vehicles manufactured in UP.
- The UP government has also **relaxed** the **upper maximum expenditure limit** on the purchase of vehicles.
- The government has allowed the purchase of Electric Vehicles through nomination without tender.
- UP government's exemptions will be separate from the exemptions being granted by the central government.
- A **15% subsidy** will be given on the factory price of the Electric Vehicle as per the government policy in UP.

About UP :

- Governor : Anandiben Patel
- Chief Minister : Yogi Adityanath
- Capital : Lucknow
- National Park : Dudhwa National Park
- Wildlife Sanctuary : Bakhira Wildlife Sanctuary, Chandraprabha Wildlife Sanctuary, National Chambal Wildlife Sanctuary

India's First Mangrove Pitta Bird Census Conducted In Odisha's Bhitarkanika

- The **first-ever census** of **Mangrove Pitta Bird** was conducted by the **Odisha forest officials** in the **Bhitarkanika wildlife sanctuary**.
- In the first census, **179 mangrove pitta birds** were sighted.
- The **objective** of the census is to record the growth pattern of these birds.

About Mangrove pitta :

- Mangrove pitta are colourful birds which have black head with brown crown, white throat, greenish upper parts, buff under-parts and reddish vent area.
- It is **found** in **mangrove forests** where it feeds on crustaceans, mollusks and insects.
- The habitats of these beautiful birds are confined to mangrove forest areas in **Odisha's Bhitarkanika** and **Sundarban** in **West Bengal**.
- According to the **International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)**, the species has been assessed and classified as "**Near Threatened**".
- Bhitarkanika National Park is the **2nd largest Mangrove ecosystems of India**.

Assam & Arunachal Pradesh sign agreement to resolve boundary dispute

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- The Chief Minister (CM) of Assam **Shri Himanta Biswa Sarma** and Arunachal Pradesh (AP) Chief Minister (CM) **Shri Pema Khandu** signed a **Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)** for the settlement of an **inter-state boundary dispute** between the two States in New Delhi, Delhi.

What was the dispute :

- Assam and Arunachal Pradesh share an **804.1-km-long border** which has been in dispute since the latter was made a union territory in **1972**.
- The agreement will end the dispute relating to **123 villages** along the border.
- After the agreement, the Survey of India will conduct a detailed survey to determine the boundaries of both states.
- With the signing of this agreement over a **700-kilometre-long border dispute** between these two States which was pending for decades, has now been completely resolved.

About Assam :

- Governor : Gulab Chand Kataria
- Chief Minister : Himanta Biswa Sarma
- Capital : Dispur
- National Park : Kaziranga National Park, Nameri National Park, Manas National Park
- Wildlife Sanctuary : Chakrashila Wildlife Sanctuary, Bornadi Wildlife Sanctuary

About Arunachal Pradesh :

- Governor : Kaiwalya Trivikram Parnaik
- Chief Minister : Pema Khandu
- Capital : Itanagar
- National Park : Namdapha National Park, Mouling National Park
- Wildlife Sanctuary : Mehao Wildlife Sanctuary, Dibang Wildlife Sanctuary, Itanagar Wildlife Sanctuary

Himachal becomes India's '1st state' to create DNA database of unidentified bodies

- **Himachal Pradesh (HP)** has become the **first Indian state** to develop a **DNA database** for **unidentified bodies**.
- The process of creating this database had started in April 2022.
- So far, the database holds records of **150 DNA samples** of unidentified bodies.

Key Highlights :

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- The **Directorate of Forensics Services, Junga** had procured DNA profile databasing and matching technology (Smallpond TM software from USA) at a price of **Rs. 55 lakh** in 2022.
- The **State forensic science laboratory, Junga** was the **first lab** to acquire this technology and the facility is at par with the international standards.
- The database is still being filled and prepared.
- It has a capacity of about **20,000 DNA profiles** which can be scaled further.
- The database would help in **identification of bodies** which would turn out to be a big relief for the families searching for their loved ones and running from pillar to post with photographs and other details, Assistant Director (DNA).
- Earlier, **AIIMS Delhi**, in collaboration with the **Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR)**, had started a pilot project called **UMID (unidentified bodies and missing persons' identification and DNA database)** and created a database of over 400 unidentified/missing persons.

About HP :

- Governor : Shiv Pratap Shukla
- Chief Minister : Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu
- Capital : Shimla (Summer), Dharamshala (Winter)
- Wildlife Sanctuary : Daranghati Sanctuary, Kanwar Sanctuary, Rupri Bhawa Sanctuary

Meghalaya- Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium Shillong to be the largest multipurpose indoor stadium in Northeast

- Meghalaya Chief Minister **Shri Conrad K. Sangma** inspected the ongoing renovation, upgradation and expansion of the **Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium** at Polo in Shillong and it would be the **largest multipurpose indoor stadium** in the northeastern region.

About the Stadium :

- It will be a multi-purpose indoor stadium which will provide **state-of-the-art facilities** for various disciplines such as basketball, squash, badminton, table tennis, volleyball and many more.
- The Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium at Polo Ground in Shillong is being renovated, upgraded and expanded to include a football field with natural grass turf and a state-of-the-art facility to host track and field events.
- The stadium is being constructed to **high-quality standards**, ensuring it will be fit to host international sporting events.
- It would have a seating capacity of close to **30,000** and would be completed by **December, 2023**.

About Meghalaya :

- Governor : Fagu Chauhan

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- Chief Minister : Conrad Sangma
- Capital : Shillong
- Festival : Nongkrem Dance, Wangala Festival, Ahiya
- National Parks : Balpakram National Park, Nokrek National Park
- Wildlife Sanctuaries : Baghmara Pitcher Plant Wildlife Sanctuary, Nongkhylllem Wildlife Sanctuary, Siju Bird Sanctuary

Haryana Chief Minister announces 3 online services to digitally empower beneficiaries

- The Haryana Chief Minister (CM) **Shri Manohar Lal Khattar** launched **3 online initiatives-Pro-active Divyang Pension Service, 'Tau se pucho' WhatsApp chatbot** and an online room booking facility at PWD (B&R) rest houses.
- These initiatives have been launched under the state government's vision of paperless and transparent governance.

About Pro-active Divyang Pension Service :

- It will enable automated pension benefits for **persons with disabilities (PwDs)**.
- The data of persons with more than **60% disability** is available with the **Parivar Informatics Data Repository** that will be certified by the **Haryana Parivar Pehchan Authority** every month.

About 'Tau Se Pucho' :

- It is a **bilingual chatbot integrated with WhatsApp** and is designed to give quick responses to the queries raised by the citizens.
- A Portal has also been launched for room booking at PWD (B&R) rest houses.
- Haryana government is committed to providing all services to **Persons with Disabilities (PWDs)** at their doorsteps.
- PwDs will now get their pensionary benefits at home.
- They don't have to visit the offices to get their benefits.

About Haryana :

- Governor : Bandaru Dattatreya
- Chief Minister : Manohar Lal Khattar
- Capital : Chandigarh
- Wildlife Sanctuary : Chhilchhila Wildlife Sanctuary, Bir Shikargah Wildlife Sanctuary
- National Park : Kalesar National Park, Sultanpur National Park

Kerala launches 'One Panchayat, One Playground' to revive sports culture

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- The **Kerala** government launched the '**One Panchayat, One Playground**' project for **reviving the sports culture** in Kerala by opening quality playgrounds in every panchayat of Kerala.
- The project was inaugurated by Kerala Chief Minister **Shri Pinarayi Vijayan** at Kallikkad, Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala.
- The playgrounds would serve as a **hub** of local gatherings and social interactions.
- The project will address the lack of quality playgrounds in around 450 local bodies in Kerala.
- Within 3 years, the playgrounds will be built and for the 1st phase of the project, a list of 113 panchayats has been prepared.
- Each playground would cost around **Rs 1 crore**, half of which would be footed by the Sports department and the rest would be raised from the **Member of Legislative Assembly (MLA)** and local body funds, through **Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)**, public private partnerships (PPP).

About Kerala :

- Governor : Arif Mohammad Khan
- Chief Minister : Pinarayi Vijayan
- Capital : Thiruvananthapuram
- National Park : Eravikulam National Park, Silent Valley National Park
- Wildlife Sanctuary : Chinnar Wildlife Sanctuary, Periyar Wildlife Sanctuary

Tamil Nadu Assembly passes Bill to extend daily work hours from 8 to 12 for factory workers

- The **Tamil Nadu (TN) Legislative Assembly**, passed a **bill** amending the **Factories Act, 1948**, which **extends the daily working hours** from **8 to 12 hours** for factory workers.
- The **Factories (Tamil Nadu Amendment) Bill, 2023** was tabled on **April 12, 2023** & faced severe criticism from many quarters.
- Workers can now choose to work for **12-hour daily shifts** and they will be entitled to a **four-day work week**, with **three days off**.
- 'The remaining three days will be paid leave and the existing rules on leave, overtime, pay etc. will not change.
- By way of the amendment made to the **Factories Act, 1948**, **section 65A** is inserted into the Act, which enables the state government to exempt any factory or group of factories from **sections 51 (weekly hours), 52 (weekly holidays), 54 (daily hours), 55 (intervals for rest), 56 (spread over), and 59 (prohibition of overlapping shifts)** of the Factories Act.
- In **May 2020**, as many as **10 states - Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Goa, Uttarakhand, Assam, Punjab, Haryana and Himachal Pradesh** had proposed tweaking labour laws during the pandemic, revising the working hours to 12 hours.
- The **Uttar Pradesh (UP) government** had also issued an order **increasing the daily working hours** from 8

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hours to 12, but withdrew it in May 2020.

About Tamil Nadu :

- Governor: R. N. Ravi
- Chief minister: M. K. Stalin
- Capital: Chennai
- Dance : Bharatnatyam, Karakattam
- National Park : Mudumalai National Park, Mukurthi National Park, Guindy National Park, Gulf of Mannar Marine National Park
- Wildlife Sanctuaries : Kalakad Wildlife sanctuary, Karikili Bird Sanctuary, Vedanthangal Bird Sanctuary
- Tiger Reserve : Anamalai Tiger Reserve
- Biosphere Reserve : Agasthyamalai Biosphere Reserve

Rajasthan implements Rajasthan Platform-based Gig Workers (Registration and Welfare) Bill

- The **Rajasthan** government is working to **implement** the **Rajasthan Platform-based Gig Workers (Registration and Welfare) Bill, 2023**.
- The bill has stringent provisions **against errant aggregators**, including barring them from operating in Rajasthan.
- In February 2023, Chief Minister **Shri Ashok Gehlot** had announced his government's intention to introduce the bill in his budget speech.

Key Highlights :

- The draft bill envisages a Rajasthan platform-based **Gig Workers Welfare Board**, which will act as a mothership for over **3,00,000 people** employed with various online service providers in the state.
- It will design welfare policies and hear grievances of workers hired on a piece rate basis.
- As per the state's bill, the board shall generate a **unique ID** for each platform-based gig worker registered with one or more aggregators in the state.
- The validity of this unique ID will be for a period of **5 years**.
- A seed fund of **Rs 200 crore** has been announced by Shri Gehlot for the board to start its work.
- The Bill empowers the Board to decide how much cess each aggregator has to pay towards this social welfare fund.
- Any platform that violates the regulations stipulated in the Bill, such as not sharing transaction data or worker information, can be fined up to **₹10 lakh** for the **first contravention** and up to ₹1 crore for subsequent ones.

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About Rajasthan :

- Governor : Kalraj Mishra
- Chief Minister : Ashok Gehlot
- Capital : Jaipur
- National Park : Keoladeo National Park, Ranthambore National Park
- Wildlife Sanctuary : Bassi Wildlife Sanctuary, Kumbhalgarh Wildlife Sanctuary

Election Commission introduces Vote from Home option in Karnataka Assembly election

- The **Election Commission** has for the **first time** introduced the **Vote from Home option** in **Karnataka Assembly**.
- It is a **first of its kind initiative** by the Election Commission for those who cannot visit polling booths either due to old age or disability.
- This initiative will **encourage electoral participation** in urban areas.
- In Bengaluru, this option has been chosen by around **8900 persons** who are above 80 years old or people with disability.

Key Highlights :

Systematic Voters' Education and Electoral Participation (SVEEP):

- It is a flagship program of ECI for voter education, spreading voter awareness and promoting voter literacy in India.
- It aims to increase voter turnout to **75%** in Lok Sabha elections **2024**.

cVIGIL App:

- It stands for **Citizen Vigilance**.
- It is a mobile app designed by ECI to **report election code violations** directly by citizens.
- MCC violation portal is the extended portal of cVIGIL.

Booth App:

- It facilitates **faster identification of voters** using quick search of the electors based on serial number/EPIC number/name.

Persons with disabilities (PwD) App:

- It was launched with focus to ensure wider participation of Persons with disabilities.

Madhya Pradesh's Gandhi Sagar Sanctuary to be second new home of cheetahs

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- Madhya Pradesh (MP) chief minister (CM) **Shri Shivraj Singh Chouhan** announced that **Gandhi Sagar Sanctuary** will be developed as a **second home** for **cheetahs** within **6 months** to retain the tag of cheetah MP.
- For this **₹20 crore** will be spent on the development.

About Gandhi Sagar Wildlife Sanctuary :

- It is situated in northwestern Madhya Pradesh, with one of its boundaries running along the border of Rajasthan.
- The sanctuary was notified in **1974** and is spread over an area of **368 sq.km**.
- The move comes after experts suggested that **Kuno National Park (KNP)** does not have enough space for all cheetahs.
- A major part of the sanctuary consists of vast open landscapes with sparse vegetation and rocky terrain, with small patches of dense forests.

About MP :

- Governor : Mangubhai C. Patel
- Chief Minister : Shivraj Singh Chouhan
- Capital : Bhopal
- National Park : Satpura National Park, Kanha National Park, Bandhavgarh National Park
- Wildlife Sanctuary : Nauradehi Wildlife Sanctuary, Bori Wildlife Sanctuary

BANKING AND ECONOMY

DBS Bank India Launches 'DigiPortfolio' offers Morningstar-curated investments on risk preference

- **DBS Bank India** has launched an innovative investment solution, '**digiPortfolio**', on its digibank platform.
- DigiPortfolio uses both technology and human expertise to create a set of investment options curated by **Morningstar** that match the risk preferences of different investors.
- The platform is an **easy, one-stop solution** for users to invest money with ready-made baskets of mutual funds.

SEBI Tightens Norms For Companies Opting Share Buyback Via Stock Exchange Mechanism

- The capital markets regulator **Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI)** imposed **restrictions** on placement of bids, price and volume on companies going for **buyback** of securities through **stock exchange route**.
- At present, companies have the provision of both the **stock exchange** and **tender offer** for the share

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buyback.

- Under this, a company could not buy more than **25%** of the average daily trading volume (in value) of its shares or other specified securities in the **10 trading days** preceding purchases.

About SEBI :

- Established : 12 April 1988 as an executive body and was given statutory powers on 30 January 1992 through the SEBI Act, 1992
- Headquarters : Mumbai, Maharashtra
- Chairman : Madhabi Puri Buch
- SEBI is the **regulatory body** for securities and commodity markets in India under the ownership of the **Ministry of Finance, Gov.**

SEBI asks investors to link PAN with Aadhaar by March 31

- **Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI)** has directed all **investors** to link their **Permanent Account Number (PAN)** with their **Aadhaar numbers** by **Mar 31, 2023** for the continuation of seamless transactions in the securities market.
- The non-compliance with this would be considered **non-KYC compliant**, and there could be restrictions on securities and other transactions until the PAN and Aadhaar are linked.

PhonePe Launches E-Commerce Consumer App 'Pincode' On ONDC Platform

- Walmart-owned fintech company **PhonePe** has launched a new consumer-facing application, **Pincode**, which will be integrated into **India's Open Network for Digital Commerce (ONDC)** framework.

About Phonepe :

- Founded : 2015
- Headquarters : Mumbai, Maharashtra
- Co-Founder & CEO : Sameer Nigam

About ONDC :

- Founded : December 31, 2021
- CEO : Thampy Koshy
- ONDC, is a private **non-profit Section 8 company** established by the **Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT)** under the **Ministry of Commerce & Industry (MoCI)** of Government of India to develop open e-commerce.

Karur Vysya Bank ties up with SBI Life to market insurance schemes

- **Karur Vysya Bank Ltd. (KVB)** has entered into a pact with **SBI Life Insurance** to market the latter's **insurance schemes** through its branches.
- KVB is a major player in South India with strong presence in urban, semi-urban and rural locations viz

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Tamil Nadu (TN), Andhra Pradesh (AP), Telangana, Karnataka to market its schemes.

About KVB :

- Founded : 1916
- Headquarters : Karur, Tamil Nadu
- MD & CEO : Mr. Ramesh Babu
- Tagline : Smart Way to Bank
- KVB is a Scheduled Commercial Bank.

About SBI Life :

- Founded : March 2001
- Headquarters : Mumbai, Maharashtra, India
- MD & CEO : Mahesh Kumar Sharma
- SBI Life is an Indian life insurance company which was started as a joint venture (JV) between the **State Bank of India (SBI)** and French financial institution **BNP Paribas Cardif**.

HDFC Bank launches Regalia Gold Credit Card

- **HDFC Bank** has launched **Regalia Gold Credit Card**, a super-premium credit card in its Regalia range of credit cards.
- A Regalia Gold credit card will be available to **high-income individuals**.
- HDFC bank is targeting a wide range of potential customers such as travellers and lifestyle enthusiasts.

About HDFC Bank :

- Founded : August 1994
- Headquarters : Mumbai, Maharashtra, India
- CEO : Sashidhar Jagdishan
- Tagline : We Understand Your World

SBI Wecare Senior Citizen FD scheme last date extended by 3 months

- India's largest lender, the **State Bank of India (SBI)**, has once again **extended** the SBI "WECARE" Senior Citizens' Term Deposit programme.
- After repeated revisions, the scheme has now been extended till **30 June 2023**.
- SBI in association with Senior Citizens introduces a new Deposit Scheme "SBI WECARE" protecting their income by offering **additional interest** on Term Deposits.
- The Deposit programme was introduced in **May 2020** with an initial maturity date of **September 2020**.
- **Eligible** - Customers Senior Citizens
- **Type of Deposit** - Domestic Term Deposit
- **Period of Deposit**- Minimum- 5 years & Maximum- 10 years

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- **Payment of Interest** - Monthly or yearly interest payments are made on term deposits.
- **SBI FD latest interest rates** - For amounts less than Rs 2 crore, SBI offers interest rates between **3.50%** and **7.50%** for terms extending from 7 days to 10 years.

SBM Bank India Blocks Credit Cards Offered in Partnership With Fintechs

- **SBM Bank India**, the wholly-owned subsidiary of foreign lender State Bank of Mauritius (SBM), has **blocked the corporate credit cards** it offered in partnership with several fintech players in India following a **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** diktat to update their 'know your customer' (KYC) details.
- The block was implemented from 31 March 2023 and affected all major fintechs partnered with SBM India, including **M2P, RazorPay, Karbon, EnKash and KODO**.
- Most of these fintechs count venture capital and other private investors.

About SBM Bank India :

- Founded : 1st December 2018
- Headquarters : Mumbai, Maharashtra, India
- MD & CEO : Sidharth Rath
- It was the **first bank** to receive a **banking licence** from India's banking regulator **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** to establish a **universal banking business** in the country as a wholly owned subsidiary

RBI rejects all bids for 91-day T-bill for first time in 7 years

- The **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** **rejected** all bids received for the **91-day Treasury bill (T-bill)** for the **first time since February 2016**.
- T-bills are **short-term, zero coupon debt instruments** issued by the government.
- T-bills are currently issued in **3 tenors - 91-day, 182-day and 364-day** and pay no interest.
- Treasury bills are instead issued at a discount and redeemed at the face value at maturity.
- The RBI had auctioned **₹9,000 crore** of the 91-day T-bill, **₹16,000 crore** of the 182-day T-bill, and **₹14,000 crore** of the 364-day T-bill.

About RBI :

- Established : 1 April 1935
- Headquarters : Mumbai, Maharashtra, India
- Governor : Shaktikanta Das
- Deputy governors : Mahesh Kumar Jain, M. Rajeshwar Rao, Michael Patra and T. Rabi Shankar

World Bank approves USD 100 million to improve disaster response in Odisha

- The **World Bank's (WB)** Board of Executive Directors approved a **USD 100 million loan** from the **International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD)** to help Odisha strengthen its early

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forecasting systems for improved disaster response.

- The loan will also enhance Odisha's **social protection coverage** for poor and vulnerable households through digital platforms.
- The \$100 million loan from the IBRD uses the **Program-for-Results (PforR)** financing instrument that links disbursement of funds directly to the achievement of specific program results.
- The World Bank loan to Odisha has a maturity of **12.5 years** with a grace period of 3 years.

About World Bank :

- Established : December 1944
- Headquarters : Washington, D.C., U.S
- President : David Malpass
- Membership : 189 countries

Public Sector banks recover 14% of written-off loans in last 5 years

- **Public sector banks (PSBs)** could recover only **14%** of the **written-off loans** worth **Rs 7.34 lakh crore** in the last 5 years ending March 2022
- Of Rs 7.34 lakh crore written-off loans, state-owned lenders recovered **Rs 1.03 lakh crore**.
- So after recovery, net written-off stood at **Rs 6.31 lakh crore** in the last five years.

World Bank approves USD 363 million loan to improve drinking water supply in Karnataka

- The **World Bank** has approved a **USD 363 million** loan to **Karnataka** under “**Karnataka Sustainable Rural Water Supply Program**” (KSRWSP)
- To provide clean drinking water supply to **2 million rural households** in the state through a piped water connection in their homes.

PFRDA raises Ombudsman's age limit to 70 years from 65 years

- The **Centre** has increased the upper age limit by **5 years** of ombudsman of the **Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority (PFRDA)** to **70 years**.
- As per the **PFRDA (Redressal of Subscriber Grievance) Regulations 2015**, the upper age limit was **65 years**.
- The ombudsman, which is appointed by PFRDA receives, considers and facilitates resolution of complaints or grievances, which fall within the ambit of the regulations.
- A person appointed as an Ombudsman holds office for a period of **3 years** and would be eligible for reappointment for another 2 years.

About PFRDA :

- Founded : 23 August 2003

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- Headquarters : New Delhi, India
- Chairman : Deepak Mohanty
- PFRDA is the **regulatory body** for overall supervision and regulation of pensions in India.
- It operates under the jurisdiction of the **Ministry of Finance** in the Government of India.

SBI announces donation of ₹48 lakh for tree plantation

- The **State Bank of India (SBI)** has announced a donation of **₹48 lakh** for the **plantation** of **32,000 tree saplings** at Garden City University, **Bengaluru**, in association with an NGO, That's Eco Foundation, as part of its corporate social responsibility.
- The project is being implemented under **Miyawaki Technique**.
- The **Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)** was signed between **SBI, Garden City University**, and the **Eco Foundation** for the project.

About SBI :

- Founded: 1 July 1955
- Headquarters : Mumbai, Maharashtra, India
- Chairman : Dinesh Kumar Khara

Centre increases interest rates on small savings schemes for April-June Quarter of FY24

- The **Union Ministry of Finance** has **increased** the **interest rates** on various **small savings schemes** between **10-70 basis points (bps)** for the first quarter (Q1) of the fiscal year 2023-24 (FY24) starting from **April 1, 2023 to June 30, 2023**.
- This is the **third time** in the past 9 months that the interest rates on small savings schemes have been increased.
- The interest rates on small savings schemes range from **4.0% to 8.2%** for **April-June 2023**.

About Ministry of Finance :

- Cabinet Minister : Nirmala Sitharaman
- Minister of State : Bhagwat Karad, Pankaj Choudhary

Axis Bank enters into co-lending pact with Shriram Housing Finance through Yubi

- **Axis Bank**, India's third largest private sector bank and **Shriram Housing Finance Limited (SHFL)**, a leading Affordable Housing Finance Company, announced a strategic partnership under the **co-lending model** through the **Yubi Co.Lend platform**.
- To leverage the financial expertise of Axis Bank and the **loan processing technology** of SHFL to assess the credit profile of borrowers and **provide loans** at **competitive interest rates**.

About Axis Bank :

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- Founded : 3 December 1993
- Headquarters : Mumbai, Maharashtra, India
- MD & CEO : Amitabh Chaudhry
- Tagline : Badhti Ka Naam Zindagi

About Yubi :

- Headquarters : Chennai, Tamil Nadu, India.
- Founder and CEO : Gaurav Kumar
- Yubi, formerly known as **CredAvenue**, is an **Indian fintech company** that connects businesses with financial institutions, banks and other lenders through its digital platform.

India Post Payments Bank launches WhatsApp Banking Services for customers

- **India Post Payments Bank (IPPB)**, in collaboration with **Airtel**, has launched **WhatsApp Banking Services** for **IPPB customers** in **New Delhi**, enabling them to access banking services on their mobile phone.
- The IPPB WhatsApp Banking channel will enable IPPB customers to seamlessly connect with the bank on WhatsApp and effortlessly avail a host of banking services, including **doorstep service request**, locating nearest Post Office.

About IPPB :

- Established : 1 September 2018
- Headquarters : New Delhi, Delhi, India
- Chairman & Director : Vineet Pandey
- MD & CEO : J. Venkatramu
- IPPB, is a **division of India Post** which is under the ownership of the **Department of Post**, a department under the **Ministry of Communications** of the Government of India (GoI).

About Ministry of Communications :

- Cabinet Minister : Ashwini Vaishnaw
- Minister of State : Devusinh Chauhan

India's April-Feb fiscal deficit widens to 83% of FY23 target at Rs 14.54 lakh crore

- **India's fiscal deficit** for FY23 touched **14.54 trillion rupees** in the **11 months** through February - nearly **83%** of annual estimates.
- **Net tax receipts** through February were **17.32 trillion rupees** or 83% of the annual estimate and **17% higher than last year**, per the data.
- The country has targeted a budget deficit of **6.4%** for the fiscal year ending this month.

Ambit Finvest & Bajaj Finserv Direct join hands for a digital lending platform for MSMEs

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- **Ambit Finvest** has partnered with **SKALEUP**, the digital technology services arm of **Bajaj Finserv Direct**, to develop a **D2C (direct-to-customer) instant loan application** to give business loans to **MSME (Micro Small & Medium Enterprises)** business owners through a completely paperless and automated digital onboarding process.
- Ambit Finvest is the NBFC of the Ambit Group and has served over 50,000 MSME business owners and disbursed more than **₹3,500 crore** in loans.
- “SKALEUP’s Creditech solution is a **low-code/no-code digital platform** that enables data-driven decisions.
- SKALEUP is the digital technology services arm of the company, and will enable platform development for Ambit Finvest.

About Bajaj Finserv Direct :

- CEO of Bajaj Finserv Direct : Ashish Panchal
- Bajaj Finserv Direct is a subsidiary of Bajaj Finserv.

About Ambit Finvest :

- Headquarters : Mumbai, Maharashtra, India
- CEO : Sanjay Agarwal
- Tagline : Pragati Ke Partner

AMNS Luxembourg Holding signs \$5 billion loan agreement with a consortium of Japanese banks

- The world’s second-largest steelmaker, **ArcelorMittal**, announced that **AMNS Luxembourg Holding SA**, the parent company of **ArcelorMittal Nippon Steel India (AM/NS India)**, has entered into a **\$5 billion loan agreement** with a consortium of **Japanese banks** to finance the company’s expansion plans in India.
- The agreement is with the **Japan Bank for International Cooperation (JBIC)**, **MUFG Bank**, **Sumitomo Mitsui Banking Corporation**, **Sumitomo Mitsui Trust Bank**, **Mizuho Bank** and **Mizuho Bank Europe N.V.**

About AM/NS India :

- AM/NS India was the **5th largest producer** of crude steel in India.
- AM/NS India, a **60:40 joint venture** between **ArcelorMittal** and **Nippon Steel Corporation**.

International Monetary Fund approves 15.6 billion dollar support package for Ukraine

- The **International Monetary Fund (IMF)** has approved a **15.6 billion United States (US) dollar support package** for **Ukraine** to assist with the conflict-hit country’s economic recovery.

About Ukraine :

- Prime Minister: Denys Shmyhal
- President: Volodymyr Zelensky
- Capital: Kyiv

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- Currency : Rryvnya (UAH)

About IMF :

- Established : 1945
- Headquarters : Washington DC, United States
- Managing Director : Kristalina Georgieva (Bulgaria)
- Membership : 190 countries (189 UN countries and Kosovo)
- **India** became its **member** in **December 1945**
- IMF is an **international organization**.
- It is designed to promote global monetary cooperation.

India's current account deficit narrows to 2.2% of GDP in Q3

- According to the data released by the **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** India's current account deficit (CAD), which is the difference between the inflow and outflow of foreign exchange, has narrowed to **\$18.2 billion** or **2.2% of Gross domestic product (GDP)** in the October to December quarter (Q3FY23) from 4.4% of the GDP in the quarter ending September.
- More than half of the narrowing is due to a reduction in the goods trade deficit, suggesting weakening domestic demand in **Asia's third-largest economy**.

Union Bank of India becomes first Indian bank to open special vostro account for India-Malaysia trade settlement in rupee

- Public sector lender **Union Bank of India (UBI)** becomes the **first bank** in the country to open a **Special Rupee Vostro Account (SRVA)** through its corresponding bank in **Malaysia** i.e. **India International Bank of Malaysia (IIBM)**.
- This means that trade between India and Malaysia can now be settled in the **Indian rupee**, in addition to the current modes of settlement in other currencies.
- To facilitate the **growth** of **global trade** and to support the interests of the global trading community in Indian Rupee.

About UBI :

- Founded : 11 November 1919
- Headquarters : Mumbai, Maharashtra, India
- MD & CEO : A. Manimekhalai
- Tagline : Good People to Bank With

Geojit Credits launches digital loan against mutual fund holdings

- **Geojit Credits**, a non-banking financial company, announced the launch of 'Loan Against Mutual Fund' (LAMF).

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- Through this, investors can avail of **quick and hassle-free loans** starting from **Rs 10,000** in the **100% digital mode**.
- Geojit Credits is a subsidiary of **Kochi-based Geojit Financial Services**.

Bank of Maharashtra opens its first dedicated branch for startups in Pune

- **Bank of Maharashtra (BoM)**, a premier public sector bank in the country, has **inaugurated its first dedicated Branch for start-ups** at **Pune, Maharashtra**.
- The dedicated branch will provide all kinds of support to a startup during its growth journey.
- **A S Rajeev**, MD & CEO, Bank of Maharashtra and **Prashant Girbane**, Director General, Maharashtra Chamber of Commerce, Industries and Agriculture (MCCIA) inaugurated the Start-up Branch at FC Road, Yashomangal, Pune City Zonal Office.

About BoM :

- Established : 16 September 1935
- Headquarters : Pune, Maharashtra India
- MD & CEO : A. S. Rajeev
- Tagline : Ek Parivaar, Ek Bank (One Family One Bank)

World Bank lowers India's FY24 growth forecast to 6.3%

- The **World Bank** has **lowered its forecast for India's economic growth** in the current fiscal year that started on April 1 to **6.3% from 6.6%**.
- Asia's third-largest economy recorded year-on-year growth of **4.4%** in October-December, down from 11.2% a year back and 6.3% in the preceding quarter
- The World Bank estimated a **6.9% growth** in FY23 .

About World Bank :

- Established : December 1944
- Headquarters : Washington, D.C., United States
- President : David Robert Malpass
- Membership : 189 countries
- The World Bank is an **international financial institution** that provides loans and grants to the governments of **low- and middle-income countries** for the purpose of pursuing capital projects.
- The World Bank is the collective name for the **International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD)** and **International Development Association (IDA)**.

Asian Development Bank cuts India's economic growth to 6.4% in FY24

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- The **Asian Development Bank (ADB)** slashed its **India growth forecast** for **FY24** to **6.4%** from **7.2%** estimated earlier, citing risks arising from global and domestic factors.
- For **FY23**, ADB pared down its growth forecast to **6.8%** from **7%** estimated earlier.
- The current account deficit is projected to decline to **2.2%** of GDP in **FY24** and **1.9%** in **FY25**.
- ADB stated that private consumption will be the main driver of growth and the large domestic consumption base will mitigate the impact of a global slowdown.

About ADB :

- Established : 19th December 1966.
- Headquarters: Manila, Philippines.
- President : Masatsugu Asakawa
- Members: 68 members (49 from Asian & the Pacific & 19 outside)
- ADB is a **regional development bank**

SBI launches its Coffee Table Book – The Banker to Every Indian

- The **State Bank of India (SBI)**, the country's largest financial institution, announced the launch of its **coffee table book 'The Banker to Every Indian,'** which celebrates 75 years of India's independence and SBI's glorious 200-year history.
- The book is a **tribute** to the **spirit of India's independence** and the Bank's contribution to nation-building.
- It showcases ethics, technological advancements, and transformation with the important initiatives undertaken by the Bank.

About SBI :

- Founded : 1 July 1955
- Headquarters : Mumbai, Maharashtra, India
- Chairman : Dinesh Kumar Khara

Aditya Birla Health Insurance signed bancassurance partnership with UCO Bank

- **Aditya Birla Health Insurance Co Ltd (ABHICL)**, a part of Aditya Birla Capital Ltd.'s (ABCL) health insurance joint venture, announced a **bancassurance collaboration** with public sector lender **UCO Bank** for the distribution of **health insurance products** through the bank's branches across India.
- ABHICL will be able to reach out to more than 40 million customers of the bank.

About ABHICL :

- Founded : Oct 2016
- Headquarters : Mumbai, Maharashtra, India
- CEO : Mr. Mayank Bathwal
- ABHICL is a part of **Aditya Birla Capital Ltd. (ABCL)**, is a joint venture (JV) between **Aditya Birla Group**

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and MMI Holdings of South Africa.

About UCO Bank :

- Founded : 6 January 1943
- Headquarters : Kolkata, West Bengal, India
- MD & CEO : Soma Sankara Prasad
- Tagline : Honours Your Trust

State Bank of India & Godrej Capital sign Memorandum of Understanding to offer banking products & services

- **Godrej Capital Limited**, the financial services arm of the Godrej Group has signed a strategic **memorandum of understanding (MOU)** with the **State Bank of India (SBI)** to strengthen their partnership, where the bank would provide various **financial products** and **offerings**.
- To capitalise on synergies that will empower its customers and accelerate the growth of its economy.
- SBI and Godrej Capital will come together to make financial solutions more **accessible** and **affordable**.

IRDAI designates LIC, GIC Re & New India as DSIs for FY 23

- The **Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI)** announced that **Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC)**, **General Insurance Corporation of India Limited (GIC Re)**, and **New India Assurance Co** are still considered **Domestic Systemically Important Insurers (D-SIs)** for the financial year 2022-23.
- LIC, GIC Re., and New India continue to be identified as D-SIs, as in the 2021-22 list of D-SIs
- D-SIs are perceived as insurers that are "too big or too important to fail".

About IRDAI :

- Founded : 1999
- Headquarters : Hyderabad, Telangana
- Chairperson : Debasish Panda
- The IRDAI is a statutory body under the jurisdiction of the **Ministry of Finance**, Government of India and is tasked with **regulating** and **licensing** the insurance and reinsurance industries in India.

About GIC Re :

- Founded : 22 Nov 1972
- Headquarters : Mumbai, Maharashtra, India
- Chairman & MD : Devesh Srivastava

Axis Bank introduces 'Digital Dukaan', an enhanced Payments & Business Management solution for merchants

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- **Axis Bank**, India's third largest private sector bank, in partnership with **Visa** announced the launch of an app '**Digital Dukaan**', a comprehensive digital offering that will **empower merchants** to accept payments through various digital modes and also enable them to manage their day-to-day business digitally.
- The Digital Dukaan' has been specifically designed to address business requirements such as **accepting digital payments, inventory management and billing**, among others.

About Axis Bank :

- Founded : 3 December 1993
- Headquarters : Mumbai, Maharashtra, India
- MD & CEO : Amitabh Chaudhry
- Tagline : Badhti Ka Naam Zindagi

Reserve Bank of India released framework for the acceptance of green deposits by Regulated Entities

- The **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** has announced the framework for the **acceptance of green deposits of regulated entities (RE)**.
- The framework will come into effect from **June 1, 2023**.
- To **encourage regulated entities (RE)** to "offer green deposits to customers, protect interest of the depositors, aid customers to achieve their sustainability agenda, address greenwashing concerns and help augment the flow of credit to green activities/projects".

About RBI :

- Established : 1 April 1935
- Headquarters : Mumbai, Maharashtra, India
- Governor : Shaktikanta Das
- Deputy governors : Mahesh Kumar Jain, M. Rajeshwar Rao, Michael Patra and T. Rabi Shankar

SEBI asks alternative investment funds to provide "direct plan" option to investors; introduces trail model for distribution commission

- To bring transparency in expenses and curb mis-selling, Capital markets regulator **Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI)** has asked **alternative investment funds (AIFs)** to provide an option of "direct plan" for investors and introduced a trail model for distribution commission.
- The circular regarding the 'Direct Plan' will be applicable for onboarding from **May 1, 2023**.

About SEBI :

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- Established : 12 April 1988 as an executive body and was given statutory powers on 30 January 1992 through the SEBI Act, 1992
- Headquarters : Mumbai, Maharashtra
- Chairman : Madhabi Puri Buch
- SEBI is the **regulatory body** for securities and commodity markets in India under the ownership of the **Ministry of Finance**, Govt.

International Monetary Fund Projects India's Gross Domestic Product Growth Forecast To 5.9% For FY24 & 6.3% in FY25

- The latest bi-annual World Economic Outlook Report by the **International Monetary Fund (IMF)** has **lowered India's Gross Domestic Product (GDP)** forecast for the financial year 2023-24 (FY24) to **5.9%** from 6.1% projected earlier.
- It projects India to grow **6.3%** in **2025 fiscal**, **50 basis points** lower than estimated earlier.
- Meanwhile, the IMF projects India's retail inflation to ease to **4.9%** in **FY24** from **6.7%** in **FY23**.
- It expects consumer price inflation to further soften to **4.4%** in **FY25**.
- India's current account deficit** fell to **2.2%** of **GDP** in **FY24** from 2.6% in **FY23**.
- Global growth is expected to fall from **3.4%** in **2022** to **2.8%** in **2023** before recovering partially to 3% in 2024.

About IMF :

- Established : 1944
- Headquarters : Washington, D.C., United States of America
- Managing Director : Kristalina Georgieva
- Membership : 190 countries (189 UN countries and Kosovo)

Reserve Bank of India to launch centralized portal PRAVAAH for licencing, approval applications

- The **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** has planned to launch a secured web-based centralized **portal** named '**PRAVAAH**' (**Platform for Regulatory Application, Validation AndAuthorisation**) to simplify and streamline application processes.
- The portal will show **time limits** for deciding on the applications/approvals sought.
- The new system will bring greater efficiencies into regulatory processes and facilitate ease of doing business for the regulated entities of RBI.
- The facility will be extended to all types of applications made to RBI across all functions.

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- Currently, the application and approval processes for the same take place in varied **on-line** and **off-line** modes.

About RBI :

- Established : 1 April 1935
- Headquarters : Mumbai, Maharashtra, India
- Governor : Shaktikanta Das
- Deputy governors : Mahesh Kumar Jain, M. Rajeshwar Rao, Michael Patra and T. Rabi Shankar

State Bank of India to launch new current accounts & savings accounts in FY24 to attract deposits

- The **State Bank of India (SBI)** is planning to launch new variants of **current account** (with balances of ₹50,000 and ₹50 lakh) and “**Parivar**” (family) **savings account** in FY24 to minimise the gap between deposit growth and credit growth.
- The new plans come in the wake of deposit growth lagging credit growth over the last few quarters.
- To increase its customer base and attract more deposits, particularly from retail customers.
- **insurance/health check-up /concession** in locker rent.
- With the launch of this account, the bank is expecting that customers will open bank accounts for their family members.

About SBI :

- Established : 1 July 1955
- Headquarters : Mumbai, Maharashtra
- Chairman : Dinesh Kumar Khara

Asian Development Bank commits Rs 150 crore to Tata Power Delhi Distribution Ltd

- Multilateral funding agency **Asian Development Bank (ADB)** proposes to **subscribe non-convertible debentures** worth ₹ 150 crore of **Tata Power Delhi Distribution Ltd (TPDDL)**, to enhance Delhi's power distribution through grid enhancements.
- Besides, ADB agreed to provide a **\$2 million grant** to partially finance the purchase and integration of a pilot **battery energy storage system (BESS)**.

About TPDDL :

- Founded : 4 July 2002

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- Headquarters : New Delhi, Delhi, India
- CEO : Ganesh Srinivasan
- TPDDL formerly North Delhi Power Limited (NDPL), is a joint venture between the Government of **National Capital Territory (NCT) of Delhi** and **Tata Power Company Limited**, which holds a 51% majority stake in the venture.
- TPDDL is the distribution arm of **Tata Power**.

About ADB :

- Established : 19 December 1966
- Headquarters : Mandaluyong, Philippines
- President : Masatsugu Asakawa
- Membership : 68 countries

UPI processes 8.7 billion transactions in March, highest ever since inception

- India's homegrown payments system, **Unified Payments Interface (UPI)**, recorded its **highest-ever number of transactions** at **8.7 billion** in **March 2023**.
- This was the highest number since the **inception** of **UPI**.
- 8.7 billion transactions amounted to **Rs 14.05 trillion**.
- UPI had processed 8 billion transactions for the first time in January, 2023.

About UPI :

- Introduced: 11 April 2016
- UPI is an instant real-time payment system developed by **National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI)**.
- Currently, UPI processes about **30 crore transactions a day**.

Reserve Bank of India develops online application for Full-Fledged Money Changers & non-bank Authorised Dealers Category-II

- The **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** has developed a **software application**, known as '**APConnect**' for processing applications related to licencing of **Full-Fledged Money Changers (FFMCs)**, non-bank Authorised Dealers (AD) Category-II, authorisation as **Money Transfer Service Scheme (MTSS) Agent**, renewal of existing licences/authorisations, for seeking approval and submission of various statements/returns.

Important Monthly Current Affairs Capsule – April 2023

About RBI :

- Established : 1 April 1935
- Headquarters : Mumbai, Maharashtra, India
- Governor : Shaktikanta Das
- Deputy governors : Mahesh Kumar Jain, M. Rajeshwar Rao, Michael Patra and T. Rabi Shankar

Bank of Maharashtra launches digitised personal loans

- As part of its ease of banking initiative for customers, **Bank of Maharashtra (BoM)** has launched a **digitised personal loan** for customers in select regions & **enhanced its WhatsApp banking** with the addition of “apply for loan” and “loan balance inquiry features”
- Also BoM announced launch of several new products and utilities including digitised personal loans and upgraded mobile banking.
- The existing customers in **Pune region** (Pune West, Pune City & Pune East), **Bengaluru, Kolkata, Patna** and **Chandigarh** can avail loan up to **₹20 lakhs** through digitised medium.
- To add to the customer delight, the bank came up with features for its **Visa** and **Rupay Debit Cards**.

About BoM :

- Established : 16 September 1935
- Headquarters : Pune, Maharashtra
- MD & CEO : A. S. Rajeev
- Tagline : One Family One Bank

UPI payments emerge as 2nd most popular mode to repay digital loans

- The **Unified Payments Interface (UPI)** has emerged as the **second most preferred method** of repaying **digital loans**, coming at **27%**, only after **e-NACH** or **electronic National Automated Clearing House** which was the preferred route for **36%** of the borrowers.
- **Unforeseen medical** and **monthly expenses** were the top two reasons found for availing of short-term digital credit followed by shopping, home renovation, education, among others, which reflects the need for unsecured and accessible digital credit products.

Important Monthly Current Affairs Capsule – April 2023

- **Bengaluru** led among cities for **credit demand** followed by Hyderabad, Pune, Ghaziabad, and Gurugram. West Bengal, Punjab, Gujarat, Assam, and Kerala were the States from where millennials with the highest bureau scores have availed credit.

RBI excludes Abu Dhabi Commercial Bank PJSC from Second Schedule

- The **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** stated that the “**Abu Dhabi Commercial Bank PJSC**” (ADCB) has been **excluded** from the **Second Schedule** to the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) Act, 1934.
- The Second Schedule to the Act lists the banks that are eligible to operate in India and outlines their respective regulatory requirements.
- ADCB is a leading banking institution in the **United Arab Emirates (UAE)**.

Reserve Bank of India revised the regulatory framework for urban cooperative banks

- The **Reserve Bank of India** has **revised** the **regulatory framework** for **urban co-operative banks (UCBs)**, prescribing minimum net worth of **₹2 crore** for Tier-1 banks and ₹5 crore for all other banks
- Tier 1 UCBs operating in a **single district** shall have minimum net worth of **₹2 crore**.
- All other UCBs (of all tiers) shall have minimum net worth of **₹5 crore**.
- UCBs which currently do not meet the minimum net worth requirement, as above, shall achieve the minimum net worth of ₹2 crore or ₹5 crore (as applicable) in a phased manner.
- Such UCBs shall achieve at least **50%** of the applicable minimum net worth on or before **March 31, 2026** and the entire stipulated minimum net worth on or before March 31, 2028.

Canara Bank Launches Premium Payroll Account for Salary account holders

- **Canara Bank** has introduced “**Premium Payroll Package**” for the **Salary account holders** with competitive features.
- The product has been designed to meet **all Banking requirements** of Salaried Customers.

About Canara Bank :

- Founded : 1 July 1906
- Headquarters : Bangalore, Karnataka, India
- MD & CEO : K Satyanarayana Raju
- Tagline : Together We Can

South Indian Bank partners with Cholamandalam MS General Insurance

Important Monthly Current Affairs Capsule – April 2023

- **South Indian Bank Limited (SIB)** has announced partnership with **Cholamandalam MS General Insurance Company Ltd (Chola MS)** to offer health and general insurance products.
- This partnership would enable customers of South Indian Bank to access the diverse range of insurance products offered by Cholamandalam MS General Insurance, thus fulfilling their need for protection against damage/ loss.

About South Indian Bank Limited :

- Founded : 1929
- Headquarters : Thrissur, Kerala, India
- MD & CEO : Murali Ramakrishnan
- Tagline : Experience Next Generation Banking

About Cholamandalam MS General Insurance :

- Founded : 2001
- Headquarters : Chennai, Tamil Nadu, India
- MD : Suryanarayanan V
- Chola MS is an Indian insurance firm and a joint venture (JV) between the **Murugappa Group**, an Indian conglomerate, and the **Mitsui Sumitomo Insurance Group**, a Japanese insurance company.

RBI releases Data on India's International Investment Position for the End of December 2022

- The **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** has released data on India's International Investment Position (IIP) for the end of December 2022.
- As per data, non-resident net claims on India fell by **US\$ 12.0 billion** between October and December 2022, reaching **US\$ 374.5 billion** at the end of December 2022.
- As of the end of December 2022, **reserve assets** accounted for **64.3%** of India's international financial assets.
- In December 2022, India's international assets covered **70.0%** of its **international liabilities**, up from 72.5% the previous year.
- The proportion of debt liabilities in total external liabilities climbed to **50.2%** at the end of December 2022, up from 49.8% the previous quarter and 48.4% the previous year.

About RBI :

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Important Monthly Current Affairs Capsule – April 2023

- Established : 1 April 1935
- Headquarters : Mumbai, Maharashtra, India
- Governor : Shaktikanta Das
- Deputy governors : Mahesh Kumar Jain, M. Rajeshwar Rao, Michael Patra and T. Rabi Shankar

RBI Imposes Penalty On Mahindra & Mahindra Financial Services & Indian Bank

- The **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** has imposed a monetary **penalty** of **₹6.77 crore** on **Mahindra & Mahindra Financial Services Limited** for **non-compliance** with the “Non-Banking Financial Company-Systemically Important Non-Deposit taking Company and Deposit taking Company (Reserve Bank) Directions, 2016”.
- The **statutory inspection** of the company was conducted by RBI with reference to its financial position as on March 31, 2019 and March 31, 2020.

About MMFSL :

- Founded : 1991
- Headquarters : Mumbai, Maharashtra, India
- MMFSL is an **Indian rural non-banking financial company**.

About Indian Bank :

- Founded : 15 August 1907
- Headquarters : Chennai, Tamil Nadu, India
- MD & CEO : Shanti Lal Jain

Reserve Bank of India Allows Pre-Sanctioned Credit Lines Via UPI

- The Reserve Bank of India's (RBI's) governor **Mr Shaktikanta Das** proposed to **expand scope** of **United Payments Interface (UPI)** by permitting operations of pre-sanctioned credit lines by banks through UPI.

About RBI :

- Established : 1 April 1935
- Headquarters : Mumbai, Maharashtra, India
- Governor : Shaktikanta Das
- Deputy governors : Mahesh Kumar Jain, M. Rajeshwar Rao, Michael Patra and T. Rabi Shankar

IIFL Finance Secures \$100 million from Export Development Canada & Deutsche Bank

Important Monthly Current Affairs Capsule – April 2023

- Fairfax-backed, leading Mumbai-based **non-banking financial company (NBFC)**, **IIFL Finance Limited (IIFL)**, has secured **USD 100 million** in long-term funding, jointly, from **Export Development Canada (EDC)** and **Deutsche Bank**.
- The NBFC secured **USD 50 million** from **EDC** and **USD 50 million** from **Deutsche Bank**, respectively.

About IIFL Finance Limited :

- Founded : 1995
- Headquarters : Mumbai, Maharashtra
- Managing Director : Nirmal Jain

FY23 bank credit growth Increased by 15% & highest since FY12 - RBI data

- According to the **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** data **India's Bank credit** rose by **15% year-on-year (YoY)** in 2022-23 (**FY23**), against 9.6% YoY in 2021-22 (**FY22**).
- FY23 credit growth is highest since 2011-12, when it was **19.3%**.
- Bank deposits expanded **9.58% YoY** in FY23, against 8.9% YoY growth seen in the FY22.
- The RBI data showed that bank deposit mobilisation lagged behind credit disbursements in FY23.
- They raised **Rs 15.78 trillion** through deposits in FY23, against Rs 13.51 trillion raised in FY22.
- The **credit in absolute terms** rose **Rs 17.83 trillion** in FY23, up from Rs 10.43 trillion in FY22.

Indian Bank Launches New Fixed Deposit Scheme IND Super 400 Days With High Interest to Women

- **Indian Bank**, a public sector bank, launched a **new retail term deposit** named "**IND SUPER 400 DAYS**" with **0.05% higher interest rate** to women investors & fixed maturity tenor of **400 days** in the form of FD/MMD (Fixed Deposits/Money Multiplier Deposits)

Key Features :

• Deposit Amount	• Minimum – Rs.10000/ • Maximum – Less than Rs. 2 Crore • (Bulk deposits of Rs.2 crore & above are not eligible)
• Period of Deposit	• 400 Days
• Validity	• scheme is valid till April 30, 2023

Important Monthly Current Affairs Capsule – April 2023

IND SUPER 400 DAYS -Rate of Interest (% pa) :

	• Women	• Others
• Public	• 7.15 %	• 7.10%
• Senior Citizens	• 7.65%	• 7.60%
• Super Senior Citizen (80 yrs and above)	• 7.90%	• 7.85%

NSE Indices launches India's 1st-ever REITs and InvITs index

- **NSE Indices Limited**, a subsidiary of National Stock Exchange (NSE), has launched **India's first ever Real Estate Investment Trusts (REITs) and Infrastructure Investment Trusts (InvITs)** called Nifty REITs and InvITs Index.
- To **track the performance** of REITs and InvITs that are publicly listed and traded (listed and traded or not listed but permitted to trade) at the NSE.

About NSE Indices Limited :

- Founded : March 1998
- Headquarters : Mumbai, Maharashtra, India
- CEO : Mukesh Agarwal

Kotak General Insurance partners with actyv.ai to sell insurance products to Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises

- **Kotak Mahindra General Insurance Co. Ltd** (Kotak General Insurance) has partnered with **actyv.ai** to offer bite-sized insurance products to new-age **Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) companies**.
- Kotak General Insurance will leverage actyv.ai's **Artificial Intelligence (AI)- powered platform** to provide insurance solutions to support the business sustainability of small businesses.
- Through this partnership with Kotak General Insurance, enterprises on actyv.ai's platform will now be able to offer group insurance to all of its **distributors, retailers, and suppliers**.

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About actyv.ai :

- Headquarters : Bangalore, Karnataka
- Founder and Global CEO : Raghunath Subramanian

About Kotak Mahindra General Insurance Co. Ltd :

- Founded : 2015
- Headquarters : Mumbai, Maharashtra, India
- MD & CEO : Suresh Agarwal

JICA & Citibank to Provide \$125 Million To IndusInd Bank For Onlending To Agricultural Sector

- The Japanese lender, **Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA)** has teamed up with **Citibank** to provide a **\$125 million funding** line to domestic private sector lender **IndusInd Bank**.
- IndusInd will be utilising the co-finance funding for onlending to the agricultural sector in India.
- The funding includes a **JPY 13 billion** (approx USD 97.45 million) loan from the JICA and another **\$30 million** from Citi to IndusInd.
- According to the Citing official data, the agriculture sector accounts for **17% of Gross Domestic Product (GDP)** and employs **45%** of the people, & there is an urgent need to improve access to finance to stimulate capital investments in the agricultural sector.

About JICA :

- Established : October 1, 2003
- Headquarters : Chiyoda, Tokyo, Japan

Banks keep savings deposit rates unchanged in current cycle - RBI

- As per **Reserve Bank of India's (RBI's) Monetary Policy report for April, 2023** banks have kept **savings deposit rates unchanged** in the current tightening period.
- During this period, banks have increased term deposit rates.
- As per the report, increase in term deposit rates in the current tightening cycle has been more than increase in lending rate.
- This has helped in improving the lenders' **net interest margins (NIM)**.

Important Monthly Current Affairs Capsule – April 2023

- The net interest margin is the **difference between** the interest earned by a bank and the interest paid by it.

ICICI Bank introduces EMI facility for UPI payments by scanning QR code

- **ICICI Bank** has introduced an **easy EMI facility** for **UPI payments** made by scanning QR code.
- Customers eligible for PayLater, the Bank's '**buy now, pay later**' service can avail of the EMI facility in an instant, easy and seamless manner.
- This **first-of-its-kind facility** enhances the affordability of lakhs of the Bank's customers as they can now instantly buy products or services just by scanning the required merchant QR code at a store and making payments in EMIs.
- Customers can pay a transaction amount above **₹10,000** in easy instalments in **3,6 or 9 months**.

About ICICI Bank :

- Founded : 5 January 1994
- Headquarters : Mumbai, Maharashtra, India
- MD & CEO : Sandeep Bakhshi

Bajaj Finance partners with SBI General Insurance to offer more consumer-centric motor insurance policies

- To ensure a hassle-free purchase of motor insurance policies, **SBI General Insurance** has partnered with **Bajaj Finance** to offer one-of-its-kind **car and bike insurance policies**.
- Vehicle owners can visit the Bajaj Finance portal to buy the SBI General car and bike insurance policies online in just a few steps.

About SBI General Insurance :

- Founded : 2009 (started operations in 2010)
- Headquarters : Mumbai, Maharashtra, India
- CEO : Kishore Kumar Poludasu.

DBS Bank India to launch proprietary credit card

- **DBS Bank India Limited**, a 100% subsidiary of Singapore headquartered DBS Bank, will by **June, 2023** roll out its **proprietary credit cards**.
- Currently, DBS Bank India has a co-branded credit card with **Bajaj Finserv** and a customer base of **2,00,000**.

Important Monthly Current Affairs Capsule – April 2023

- Meanwhile, DBS Bank India has announced a partnership with **IndiaFilings**, a leading platform for **startups** and **small businesses** in India.

RBI allows Karnataka Bank to collect direct, indirect taxes

- The **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** has authorised private sector lender **Karnataka Bank** to collect **direct and indirect taxes** on behalf of the **Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT)** and the **Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC)**.
- The authorisation has been given on the recommendation from the **Controller General of Accounts (CGA)**, **Ministry of Finance (MoF)**.

About Karnataka Bank :

- Founded : 18 February 1924
- Headquarters : Mangalore, Karnataka, India
- MD & CEO : Mahabaleshwara M. S
- Tagline : Your Family Bank Across India

City Union Bank launches Voice Biometric Authentication for mobile banking

- **City Union Bank Limited (CUB)** has launched **India's first voice biometric authentication** for logging into its mobile banking app.
- The voice biometric service was developed by Chennai-based deeptech start-up, **Kaizen Secure Voiz Pvt Ltd**, under the guidance of the 5G use case lab of the **Institute for Development and Research in Banking Technology (IDRBT)**.

About CUB :

- Founded : 1904
- Headquarters : Kumbakonam, Tamil Nadu, India
- MD & CEO : N Kamakodi

Canara Bank & NPCI Bharat BillPay Ltd launch cross-border inward bill payment services for Indians based in Oman

- **Canara Bank** in partnership with **NPCI Bharat BillPay (NBBL)** has launched cross-border inward bill payment services for **Indians** based in **Oman**.

About Canara Bank :

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Important Monthly Current Affairs Capsule – April 2023

- Founded : 1 July 1906
- Headquarters : Bangalore, Karnataka, India
- MD & CEO : K. Satyanarayana Raju
- Tagline : Together We Can

HDFC Bank to raise Rs 50,000 crore via bonds over next 12 months

- The country's largest private-sector lender, **HDFC Bank**, is planning to raise up to **Rs 50,000 crore** (about \$6 billion) through bonds including **additional tier (AT) I, tier II**, and infrastructure bonds in the **next 12 months**.

About HDFC Bank :

- Founded : August 1994
- Headquarters : Mumbai, Maharashtra, India
- CEO : Sashidhar Jagdishan
- Tagline : We Understand Your World

HDFC Bank signs agreement with Export Import Bank of Korea for USD 300 million credit line

- **HDFC Bank** has signed a “**Master Inter Bank Credit Agreement**” with **Export Import Bank of Korea (KEXIM)** for a **USD 300 million line of credit**.
- This agreement will help **HDFC Bank** **raise foreign currency funds** which it would extend to Korea-related businesses.

HDFC Mutual Fund launches schemes for large, mid and small-cap segments

- **HDFC Asset Management Company (AMC)** has launched **3 index schemes** – **HDFC S&P BSE 500 Index Fund**, **HDFC NIFTY Midcap 150 Index Fund**, and **HDFC NIFTY Small-cap 250 Index Fund**.
- The three index funds will offer diversified exposure to **large-, mid- and small-cap segments**.

SEBI Unveils its New Logo on the 35th Foundation Day

- Capital Market Regulator **Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI)** unveiled its **new logo** on its **35th Foundation Day** at a ceremony conducted at the **SEBI Head Office in Mumbai, Maharashtra**.
- The new SEBI logo retains its **traditional blue colour palette**.

About SEBI :

Important Monthly Current Affairs Capsule – April 2023

- Established : 12 April 1988 as an executive body and was given statutory powers on 30 January 1992 through the SEBI Act, 1992
- Headquarters : Mumbai, Maharashtra
- Chairman : Madhabi Puri Buch (**first woman** to lead the SEBI)
- SEBI is the **regulatory body** for securities and commodity markets in India under the ownership of the **Ministry of Finance (MoF)**, Gol.

YES Bank becomes first Indian company with over 50 lakh shareholders

- Private sector lender **YES Bank** has become the **first Indian company** to have over **50 lakh shareholders**, according to the shareholding pattern of the bank on March 31, 2023.
- Tata Power** is at **number 2** in terms of maximum number of shareholders, with a total of 38.5 lakh people investing in its shares & **Reliance Industries** is at number 3 in this list with 33.6 lakh crore shareholders.

About YES Bank :

- Founded : 2004
- Headquarters : Mumbai, Maharashtra, India
- MD & CEO : Prashant Kumar
- Tagline : Experience Our Expertise

RBI simplifies the application process for registration of Core Investment Companies

- The **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** has **simplified the application process** for the registration of **core investment companies (CICs)**.
- Also, the number of documents to be furnished along with the application form has been **reduced to 18** from the existing set of 52 documents to make the registration process user-friendly.
- Core Investment Companies (CICs) are **Non-Banking Financial Companies (NBFCs)** having acquisition of shares and securities as their business.

About RBI :

- Established : 1 April 1935
- Headquarters : Mumbai, Maharashtra, India
- Governor : Shaktikanta Das
- Deputy governors : Mahesh Kumar Jain, M. Rajeshwar Rao, Michael Patra and T. Rabi Shankar

India's non life insurers report double digit growth in FY23

Important Monthly Current Affairs Capsule – April 2023

- According to provisional data released by the **General Insurance Council (GIC)**, India's non-life insurers reported growth in the high teens in fiscal 2023 due to robust performance across segments.
- The gross premium underwritten by non-life insurers in fiscal 2023 stood at **Rs 2.6 crore**, which is **16.4% higher than** the FY22.
- Underwriting is the process through which an **individual or institution** takes on **financial risk** for a fee.

PhonePe gets additional USD 100 million fund from General Atlantic

- Walmart Inc-owned Indian payments firm **PhonePe** had raised an **additional \$100 million (Rs 820 crore)** from **General Atlantic (GA)** from United States (US) based private equity firm and other investors as part of its ongoing \$1 billion fundraise to expand into the lucrative lending space.
- With this fresh funding, the Walmart group firm has raised **USD 750 million** till date.

About Phonepe :

- Founded : 2015
- Headquarters : Mumbai, Maharashtra, India
- Co-Founder & CEO : Sameer Nigam

IRB Infrastructure Trust becomes first private InvIT to get listed on National Stock Exchange

- **IRB Infrastructure Trust**, sponsored by IRB Infrastructure Developers Ltd was listed on the **National Stock Exchange (NSE)** becoming the **first private InvIT** to be listed.
- The move comes after the **Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI)** listed **guidelines** on the listing framework for non-listed infrastructure investment trusts (InvIT).

About IRB Infrastructure Trust :

- Chairman : Virendra D. Mhaikar
- **IRB Infrastructure Developers Ltd**, sponsors of IRB Infrastructure Trust, holds **51%** in the InvIT and the rest is held by GIC affiliate

Go Digit General Insurance re-files IPO papers with SEBI

- **Go Digit General Insurance Ltd** has refiled its **preliminary IPO (Initial Public Offering)** papers with **Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI)** after making certain changes to its employee stock appreciation rights scheme.

SEBI releases guidelines on upfront contribution by issuers for LPCC's Settlement Guarantee Fund

Important Monthly Current Affairs Capsule – April 2023

- The **Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI)** notified a **framework** for the **upfront collection of funds** from eligible issuers of debt securities.
- The set guideline is to build the **Settlement Guarantee Fund of the Limited Purpose Clearing Corporation (LPCC)**.
- The new framework will come into force from **1 May 2023**
- LPCC is an **entity** established to undertake the activity of **clearing and settlement of repurchase agreement transactions**.

Small Industries Development Bank of India Launches Pilot Scheme 'Mission 50K-EV4ECO' for Enhanced Financing in Electric Vehicle Space

- **Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI)** has launched the pilot financing scheme Called the **Mission 50K-EV4ECO** for better financing terms in the **electric vehicle space (EVS)** and strengthening the whole ecosystem.

Aim :

- To strengthen the EV ecosystem, including uptake for **two, three and four-wheelers** through direct and indirect lending.

About SIDBI :

- Established : April 2, 1990
- Headquarters : Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh, India
- Chairman & Managing Director : Sivasubramanian Ramann
- SIDBI is the **apex regulatory body** for overall licensing and regulation of **micro, small and medium enterprise finance companies** in India.
- It is under the jurisdiction of the **Ministry of Finance (MoF)**, Government of India (GoI).

Chennai Metro in association with State Bank of India launches Singara Chennai Card

- **Chennai Metro Rail Ltd** in association with the **State Bank of India (SBI)** (banking partner) launched the **Singara Chennai Card (NCMC – National Common Mobility Card)**.
- The technology for the RuPay NCMC cards has been developed by the **National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI)**.

About NPCI :

- Founded : 2008
- Headquarters : Mumbai, Maharashtra, India
- MD & CEO : Dilip Asbe

Important Monthly Current Affairs Capsule – April 2023

- NPCI is an umbrella organisation for operating **retail payments** and **settlement systems** in India.
- It is an initiative of the **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** and **Indian Banks' Association (IBA)** under the provisions of the Payment and Settlement Systems Act, 2007, for creating a robust Payment & Settlement Infrastructure in India.

About SBI :

- Founded : 1 July 1955
- Headquarters : Mumbai, Maharashtra
- Chairman : Dinesh Kumar Khara

SBI Reintroduced 400 Days 'Amrit Kalash' Fixed Deposit Scheme With 7.1% Interest

- The **State Bank of India (SBI)** has reintroduced its special fixed deposit scheme, '**Amrit Kalash**', for **retail customers**.
- This **400 days** term deposit offers a rate of **7.1%** for the general customer and a **50 basis point (bps)** higher (7.6%) for senior citizens
- The scheme is available from April 12, 2023 till June 30, 2023.

Northern Arc Capital facilitates \$20 million ECB loan for CreditAccess Grameen

- **Northern Arc Capital**, the technology-enabled diversified financial services platform has structured and arranged **\$20 million external commercial borrowings (ECB)** funding from **The Development Bank of Austria, Oesterreichische Entwicklungsbank AG (OeEB)** for microfinance institution, **CreditAccess Grameen Limited (CA Grameen)**.
- Northern Arc is a **technology-enabled diversified financial services** platform that provides credit to MSMEs, households, financial institutions and emerging businesses.
- **MD & CEO of CreditAccess Grameen** : Udaya Kumar Hebbar

HDFC Capital Advisors Limited receives SEBI approval for control transfer in merger process

- **HDFC Ltd** stated that the market regulator **Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI)** has cleared a proposal for change in control of **HDFC Capital Advisors Limited (HCAL)**, a subsidiary of **HDFC Limited** and a co-investment portfolio manager subject to certain conditions.

UPI Most Preferred Mode for Digital Payments in India in 2022

- As per the **India Digital Payments Annual Report for 2022** released by global payments player **Worldline India**, the most preferred medium for digital payments was **Unified Payments Interface (UPI)** in 2022.
- A total of **8,792 crore digital payments** were undertaken in 2022 worth **₹149.5 lakh crore**

Toppers of UPI Usage as of 2022 :

Important Monthly Current Affairs Capsule – April 2023

- **State Bank of India (SBI)** and **ICICI Bank** were among the **top 5 banks**, both in terms of being a **UPI remitter** and **beneficiary bank**.
- The other top UPI remitter banks in 2022 were **HDFC Bank**, **Bank of Baroda (BoB)** and **Union Bank of India (UBI)**.
- The top UPI beneficiary banks were **Paytm Payments Bank**, **YES Bank** and **Axis Bank**.

About Worldline India Private Limited :

- Headquarters : Mumbai, Maharashtra
- CEO : Ramesh Narasimhan

South Indian Bank introduces flexible savings accounts for Non-Resident Indians

- The **South Indian Bank** has launched **2 flexible saving products** namely, **SIB SEAFARER** and **SIB PULSE** for its **non-resident Indian (NRI)** customers.

Aim :

- To offer flexibility to NRI customers to either **maintain the term deposits** or the prescribed **minimum balance** in the saving account.
- The two products have been launched specifically for **mariners** and **healthcare professionals**.

About SIB :

- Founded : 1929
- Headquarters : Thrissur, Kerala, India
- MD & CEO : Murali Ramakrishnan
- Tagline : Experience Next Generation Banking

AU Small Finance Bank Partnered with Bharat Bill Payment System to launch bill payments via video banking

- **AU Small Finance Bank (AU SFB)**, India's largest small finance bank, has become the **first commercial bank in India** to integrate with the **Bharat Bill Payment System (BBPS)**, to launch bill payment services through **video banking**.

Aim :

- To **promote digital accessibility** and enhance economic capability leading to greater financial inclusion

About AU Small Finance Bank :

Important Monthly Current Affairs Capsule – April 2023

- Founded : 1996 as AU Financiers (India) Ltd.
- In 2017, AU Financiers (India) Ltd became a small finance bank.
- Headquarters : Jaipur, Rajasthan, India
- Chairman : Raj Vikash Verma
- MD & CEO : Sanjay Agarwal

ACKO partners with Ola to Introduce Battery Insurance Plan for Electric Vehicles

- Private insurer **ACKO General Insurance** in partnership with **Ola Electric** and **Ather Energy** launched an "Extended Battery Warranty" plan, targeting electric vehicle (EV) owners.
- The **first-of-its kind** policy safeguards battery life for up to 4 or 5 years and provides performance coverage for up to 60,000 km.

About ACKO General Insurance :

- Founded : 2016
- Headquarters : Mumbai, Maharashtra, India
- Chief Executive Officer : Varun Dua
- The company received its licence from the **Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India** in September 2017.

Karnataka Bank launches special home loan campaign - KBL Centenary Mahotsav

- On the occasion of the **Centenary year** of the **Karnataka Bank**, the bank has launched a **Special campaign** "KBL Centenary Mahotsav" for **Home loan** from 17, April 2023 to 17 July 2023.

About Karnataka Bank :

- Founded : 18 February 1924
- Headquarters : Mangalore, Karnataka, India
- MD & CEO (interim) : Sekhar Rao
- Tagline : Your Family Bank Across India

IndusInd Bank signs \$100 million loan agreement with JBIC

- **IndusInd Bank's** **GIFT City IBU (IFSC Banking Unit)** branch has entered into a **\$100 million long-term loan agreement** with the **Japan Bank for International Cooperation (JBIC)** to foster the growth of Japanese construction equipment companies in India.

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- This is the **first of its kind lending** by JBIC through any IFSC Banking unit at GIFT City.

About IndusInd Bank :

- Founded : April 1994
- Headquarters : Mumbai, Maharashtra, India
- MD & CEO : Sumant Kathpalia.
- Tagline : We Make You Feel Richer

About JBIC :

- Headquarters : Tokyo, Japan
- President & CEO : Tadashi Maeda
- JBIC, is a Japanese public financial institution and export credit agency .
- It was created on October 1, 1999, through the **merger** of the **Japan Export-Import Bank (JEXIM)** and the **Overseas Economic Cooperation Fund (OECF)**

SBI board approves fund raise of up to \$2 billion for FY24 via long-term debt

- The board of the country's biggest lender **State Bank of India (SBI)** approved **long term fund raising** of up to **\$2 billion (about Rs 16,000 crore)** for FY24 through bonds.
- Meanwhile, the **Board of Directors** of **Bank of India (BoI)** approved the raising of capital aggregating up to **₹6,500 crore** in FY24 via issue of fresh equity capital and Basel III compliant Tier-2 bonds.

IBA sets up 4 member working group on ARCs

- The **Indian Banks' Association (IBA)** has constituted a **4 member working group** on **asset reconstruction companies (ARCs)**.
- The 4-member group comprises
 1. **Hari Hara Mishra**, CEO of Asset Reconstruction Companies Association
 2. **Purshotam Agarwal**, chief investment officer of National Asset Reconstruction Company (NARCL)
 3. **Mythili Balasubramanian** Executive Director of Edelweiss
 4. **Tarun Kumar**, director of Encore Asset Reconstruction Company.
- The group will operate continuously on various issues and take them up with the **IBA**, the **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** and the **union government**.

What are ARCs?

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- An ARC is a **specialised financial institution** that buys the **Non Performing Assets (NPAs)** or **bad assets** from banks and financial institutions so that the latter can clean up their balance sheets.

About IBA :

- Established : 26 September 1946
- Headquarters : Mumbai, Maharashtra, India
- Chief Executive : Sunil Mehta
- Chairman : Atul Kumar Goel

Indian Bank signs MoU with TN e-Governance agency to offer payment aggregator services

- **Indian Bank** has signed a **Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)** with **Tamil Nadu (TN) e-Governance Agency (TNeGA)**, a state nodal agency under the Information Technology & Digital Services (IT&DS) Department Government of Tamil Nadu, for integrating **Indian Bank Payment Aggregator** for the e-Governance Applications of various departments in TN.

About Indian Bank :

- Established : 1907
- Headquarters : Chennai, Tamil Nadu
- MD & CEO : Shanti Lal Jain

RBL Bank launches unique digital fixed deposit scheme for new-to-bank customers

- **RBL Bank** has launched an **innovative Digital Fixed Deposit (FD) scheme** available to **new-to-bank customers**.
- With an interest rate of up to **7.8%** for a tenure of **15 months to 725 days**, the digital FD provides investors with an interesting investment option.

About RBL Bank :

- Founded : 6 August 1943
- Headquarters : Mumbai, Maharashtra, India
- MD & CEO : R. Subramaniakumar
- Tagline : Apno Ka Bank

Federal Bank signs agreement with Agri Fintech KiVi as Banking Correspondent

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- **Federal Bank** has entered into a **Banking Correspondent agreement** with **Chennai-based KiVi**, an agri fintech start-up operated by Agrosperity Tech Solutions, with a view to scaling and **expanding its agri lending portfolio** in **Tamil Nadu (TN)**.
- Federal Bank launched the instant KCC platform in **September 2022**.
- It is claimed to be the **first of its kind** in agriculture lending, it offers farmers convenience and turnaround time.

Aim :

- To provide **small-value loans** to small and marginal farmers, and is designed to facilitate efficient credit flow to underserved rural populations.
- In the initial phase of this partnership, KiVi aims to serve **10,000 farmers** in Tamil Nadu.
- KiVi employs a phygital model that combines features of the lending technology platform and the last-mile channel to serve farmer households and Micro Small & Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) such as input retailers, output aggregators or other village entrepreneurs.

About Kivi :

- CO, Founder and CEO of KiVi : Joby
- KiVi is a **first-of-its-kind technology platform** designed for farming as a business enterprise.
- It **provides digital solutions** and a phygital platform for the farmer to procure input, access credit, implement agronomy practices, and process and market output.

About Federal Bank :

- Established : April 23, 1931
- Headquarters : Aluva, Kochi, Kerala.
- MD & CEO : Shyam Srinivasan
- Tagline : Your Perfect Banking Partner

NPCI Bharat BillPay introduces the NOCS platform to process ONDC transactions

- **NPCI Bharat BillPay Ltd (NBBL)** has launched the **NOCS platform** to provide reconciliation and settlement services for transactions undertaken on the **Open Network for Digital Commerce (ONDC) network**.
- The services, provided under the guidance of RBI, will serve as the foundation for the ONDC network and enable **smooth, secure and timely transfer of funds** to network participants.
- The NOCS platform is integrated with banks, fintechs and e-commerce players, and will soon go live with the first set of **5 banks** on ONDC-AU **Small Finance Bank, Axis Bank, HDFC Bank, IDFC First Bank**, and **YES Bank**.
- NBBL is also working closely with ONDC to bring other innovations to the ecosystem and launch more

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value-added solutions for the customers, sellers and network participants in the foreseeable future.

What is ONDC Platform?

- The ONDC platform was set up to facilitate the **rapid adoption of e-commerce**, and boost and strengthen the growth of startups in India by facilitating scalable and cost-effective e-commerce through the open protocol.

About NBBL :

- NBBL is a wholly-owned subsidiary of the **National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI)** which came into effect in April 2021.
- It operates the **Bharat BillPay platform** which processes millions of transactions per month and has over 20,000 billers.
- Headquarters : Mumbai, Maharashtra
- CEO : Ms. Noopur Chaturvedi

RBI allows AU Small Finance Bank to deal with foreign exchange

- **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** has granted **AU Small Finance Bank (AU SFB)** Licence to act as **Authorised Dealer Category-I (AD-I)** under section 10 of FEMA, 1999 to deal in foreign exchange.
- Recently, RBI approved the re-appointment of **Sanjay Agarwal** as **managing director** and **Chief Executive Officer (CEO)** of AU Small Finance Bank for a period of 3 years.
- The re-appointment is valid with effect from April 19, 2023 till April 18, 2026.
- Besides, the regulator has also cleared the re-appointment of **Uttam Tibrewal** as the **whole-time director** for a period of 3 years.

About RBI :

- Established : 1 April 1935
- Headquarters : Mumbai, Maharashtra, India
- Governor : Shaktikanta Das
- Deputy governors : Mahesh Kumar Jain, M. Rajeshwar Rao, Michael Patra and T. Rabi Shankar

About AU Small Finance Bank :

- Founded : 1996 as AU Financiers (India) Ltd.
- In 2017, AU Financiers (India) Ltd became a small finance bank.
- Headquarters : Jaipur, Rajasthan, India
- Chairman : Raj Vikash Verma
- MD & CEO : Sanjay Agarwal

Bengaluru tops highest digital transactions in 2022

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- According to a report tabled by **Worldline India**, a payment solutions provider, **Bengaluru (Karnataka)** has **topped** the list of cities rampantly using **digital transactions** with a volume of **29 million** and a value of **Rs 6,500 crore** of transactions.
- Bengaluru was followed by **New Delhi, Delhi 19.6 million transactions** worth USD 50 billion, **Mumbai, Maharashtra (18.7 million transactions** worth USD 49.5 billion), **Pune, Maharashtra (15 million transactions** worth USD 32.8 billion), **Chennai, Tamil Nadu (TN) (14.3 million transactions** worth USD 35.5 billion) are among the **top 5 cities** with the highest digital transactions.
- According to the report, physical merchants like grocery stores, restaurants, clothing and apparel, pharmacy, etc. accounted for over **43%** of digital transactions in terms of volume and about **40%** in terms of value.
- Around **85%** of digital transactions in terms of volume are related to E-commerce space, gaming, utility and financial services.
- Education, travel and hospitality sector contributed **15%** in digital transactions volume and **75%** in terms of value.

About Worldline India Private Limited :

- Headquarters : Mumbai, Maharashtra
- CEO : Ramesh Narasimhan

RBI accepts Rs 5,500-cr bids at switch and conversion auction of govt bonds

- The **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** accepted bids worth **Rs 5,500 crore** at an auction for conversion and switching of **5 government of India (GoI) bonds** against the notified amount of **Rs 11,000 crore**.
- As for **floating rate bond (FRB)** maturing in **2024**, for conversion into paper to be redeemed in 2032, it accepted **Rs 2,000-crore bids**, as against the notified amount of **Rs 4,000 crore**.

AIIB to Open First Overseas Office in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates

- The **Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB)** and the **United Arab Emirates (UAE)** signed a host member **agreement** to officially open in **Abu Dhabi** the **Bank's first overseas office**, an Interim Operational Hub (the Hub).
- **Jin Liqun**, President and Chair of the Board of Directors of AIIB, joined **His Excellency Dr. Sultan Al Jaber**, Minister of Industry and Advanced Technology and UAE Governor of AIIB, during the signing ceremony in Abu Dhabi.

Key Highlights :

- The office would serve as a strategic destination in the Middle East and the world, supporting AIIB's development agenda and **financing infrastructure projects** to achieve sustainable economic growth.

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- It also enhances client and member engagement, project monitoring and implementation services across the globe.
- The Abu Dhabi Fund for Development was mandated to represent the UAE on the bank's board and to actively participate in its periodic meetings.
- As of today, AIIB has approved **212 projects** amounting to over **USD 40 billion** in **33 member countries**, which have contributed to economic development and improved the quality of life for communities in beneficiary countries.

About AIIB :

- Established : 16 January 2016
- Headquarters: Beijing, China
- President : Jin Lique
- Membership : 106 Member States
- The AIIB is a **multilateral development bank** that aims to improve economic and social outcomes in Asia.
- It is the **world's second largest** multilateral development institution.

About UAE :

- President/Crown Prince : Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan
- Prime Minister : Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum
- Capital : Abu Dhabi
- Currency : UAE dirham

InPrime Finserv Officially Recognized as Non-Banking Financial Company from Reserve Bank of India

- InPrime Finserv, a financial services start-up catering to the informal economy, has obtained a **Certificate of Registration (COR)** from the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) to operate as a **Non-Banking Financial Company (NBFC)**.
- With this license, InPrime joins an exclusive group of startups that have received approval from the RBI to build a lending business.
- The company plans to commence operations in Bangalore in the coming months and gradually expand its presence in Karnataka and Tamil Nadu, playing a significant role in promoting financial inclusion in India.

About InPrime Finserv :

- Headquarters : Bangalore, Karnataka
- Co-founder & CEO : Rajat Singh
- InPrime Finserv is a brand owned by STK Credit Private Limited, a NBFC.

Mission :

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- To "Redefine the way informal customers access formal finance."
- It is focused on providing financial services to the "Prime" segment of India's informal economy, which consists of around 50 million households with an annual credit need of Rs. 5 Lakh Crores.
- Additionally, InPrime plans to empower customers holistically by providing multiple repayment channels and a gamified financial and digital literacy program to promote self-service.

RBI provides 3 year relaxation of HDFC bank to meet PSL

- The **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** has given a **relaxation of 3 years** for **HDFC Bank** to comply with the **priority sector lending norms (PSL)** following its merger with HDFC Ltd (HDFC).
- However, RBI **refused** to make any **exceptions on cash reserve ratio (CRR)** and **statutory liquidity ratio (SLR) requirements**.
- Under the PSL norms, commercial banks are required to devote over **40%** of their overall advances to areas marked as priority sectors for the emancipation of certain marginalized sections of society, whereas a non-bank lender like HDFC does not have to comply with such mandates.
- CRR is the **percentage of deposits** that a **commercial bank** like HDFC Bank has to park with the central bank for which it **does not earn any interest**, while SLR is a **percentage of deposits** that are **mandated** to be **invested** in **government securities**.

About RBI :

- Established : 1 April 1935
- Headquarters : Mumbai, Maharashtra, India
- Governor : Shaktikanta Das
- Deputy governors : Mahesh Kumar Jain, M. Rajeshwar Rao, Michael Patra and T. Rabi Shankar

About HDFC Bank Ltd :

- Founded : August 1994
- Headquarters : Mumbai, Maharashtra, India
- MD & CEO : Sashidhar Jagdishan
- Tagline : We Understand Your World

Union Bank of India secures 1st Rank in EASE reforms

- For the **first time**, Union Bank of India (UBI), secured **1st rank** as per the report on **Enhanced Access & Service Excellence (EASE) Reforms Index** for Q3 FY 2022-23 published by Indian Banks' Association

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(IBA).

Key Highlights :

- EASE is an initiative by the DFS (GOI) as part of the PSB Reforms Agenda.
- It is currently under its **fifth iteration** which focuses on Enhanced Digital experience, Data – driven, Integrated and Inclusive Banking.
- The performance of PSBs is measured on five themes under EASE 5.0, in which, Union Bank of India has set the benchmark under the **four themes** i.e., "Digitally - enabled customer offerings", 'Big data and analytics', 'Modern Technology Capabilities' and "Employee development and Governance" by securing 1st rank amongst PSBs.

About UBI :

- Founded : 11 November 1919
- Headquarters : Mumbai, Maharashtra, India
- MD & CEO : A. Manimekhalai
- Tagline : Good People to Bank with

Canara Bank partnered with Reserve Bank of India innovation hub

- **Canara Bank**, in collaboration with **Reserve Bank Innovation Hub (RBIH)**, has launched the "Digitalised Submission of Form 15G/15H" as one of customer friendly services adding to our pursuit of "Customer Delight".
- **Form 15G (Individual and HUF)** and **Form 15H (Individual-Senior Citizen)** are **self-declaration forms** that an individual submits to the bank requesting not to deduct TDS on interest income as their income is below the basic exemption limit.
- For this, providing **Permanent Account Number (PAN)** is **compulsory**.
- RBIH (Reserve Bank Innovation Hub) identified the problem, consulted several Banks for potential solutions and then conceptualised and created a blueprint to address the above issue.

About Canara Bank :

- Founded : 1910 (Nationalised in 1969)
- Headquarters : Bangalore, Karnataka, India
- MD & CEO : K Satyanarayana Raju
- Tagline : Together we can

Mastercard partners with India's M1xchange to roll out digital invoice discounting for farmers

- **Mastercard** announced its collaboration with **M1xchange** to offer a digital invoice discounting solution to farmers, farmer producer organizations (FPOs), and agri-Ministry of Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises

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(MSMEs) through **Farm Pass**, its cutting-edge agritech platform.

- The solution is the **first of its kind** for the **agriculture sector** & will help lenders in underwriting credit offerings through the **Trade Receivables Discounting System (TReDS)**.
- Farm Pass is part of **Mastercard's broader Community Pass platform**.

Key Highlights :

- As part of the collaboration, **M1xchange**, an RBI-approved facilitator for discounting and sale of receivables to banks and **non-banking financial companies (NBFCs)**, will bring on board its vast network of agri-businesses and lenders.
- This solution will allow **farmers** and **Farmer Producer Organisations (FPOs)** to directly connect with buyers, negotiate the **best price** for their **produce**, and get **paid faster**.

About M1xchange :

- Headquarters : Gurugram, Haryana
- Chief Executive Officer : Sundeep Mohindru

About Mastercard :

- Founded : 1966
- Headquarters : New York, U.S
- CEO : Michael Miebach

ICICI Bank Introduces EMI Facility for UPI Payments by scanning QR code

- **ICICI Bank** has introduced **equated monthly instalment (EMI) facility** for **Unified Payment Interface (UPI) payments** made by **scanning QR code**.
- This **first-of-its-kind facility** enhances affordability of lakhs of the bank's customers as they can now instantly buy products or services just by scanning the required merchant QR code at a store and making payments in EMIs.

Key Highlights :

- Customers eligible for **PayLater**, the bank's 'buy now, pay later' service can avail of the EMI facility in a seamless manner.
- The facility can be availed across a host of categories such as electronics, groceries, fashion apparels, travel and hotel bookings.
- Customers can pay a transaction amount above **Rs 10,000** in instalments in **3, 6 or 9 months**.
- **ICICI Bank** introduced **PayLater facility** in **2018** to enable customers to buy small ticket items immediately in a digital and paperless manner.

About ICICI Bank Ltd :

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- Founded : 5 January 1994
- Headquarters : Mumbai, Maharashtra, India
- MD & CEO : Sandeep Bakhshi
- Tagline : Hum Hai na khayal apka

HDFC Bank & Axis Bank to acquire a 9.94% stake each in Go Digit's life insurance business

- Two of India's largest private lenders, **Axis Bank** and **HDFC Bank**, have signed **definitive agreements** to **acquire a 9.94% equity stake** each in the **Go Digit Life**, the life insurance business of insurtech unicorn Go Digit, which is set to go public.
- In two installments, the formal agreements for HDFC Bank's investment in Go Digit-Life total **69.90 crore Indian Rupees (INR)**.
- The banks will make an initial subscription of **INR 10.93 Cr** in the **first tranche** to acquire a stake in the company, with the option to invest the remaining **INR 58.97 Cr later**.
- The transaction will be completed within **3 to 6 months** after the company receives its life insurance license.
- The first tranche investment is subject to IRDAI granting requisite approval to Go Digit Life for the application filed by Go Digit Life under Form IRDAI/R2

Key Highlights :

- The life insurance firm was established in **December 2021**, and in **May 2022** it became a **public limited corporation**.
- The **Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI)** has not yet issued a certificate of registration to Go Digit-Life for it to undertake the life insurance business.
- By an IPO, which would involve a **fresh issuance** of **INR 1,250 crore** and an offer to sell **109.45 million shares**, the business hopes to raise \$440 million.

About Axis Bank :

- Established : 3 December 1993
- Headquarters : Mumbai, Maharashtra, India
- MD & CEO : Amitabh Chaudhry
- Tagline : Badhti Ka Naam Zindagi

About HDFC Bank :

- Established : August 1994
- Headquarters : Mumbai, Maharashtra, India

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- MD & CEO : Sashidhar Jagdishan
- Tagline : We Understand Your World

SEBI issues a procedure for seeking prior approval for change in control of vault managers

- Capital markets regulator **Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI)** came out with a **procedure** for **vault managers** to seek prior approval from the watchdog in case of a change in control.
- The vault manager is regulated as a SEBI intermediary for providing vaulting services meant for gold deposited to create **electronic gold receipts (EGRs)**.
- The obligations of the vault manager include accepting deposits, storage, and safekeeping of gold, creation as well as withdrawal of EGR, grievance redressal, and periodic reconciliation of physical gold with the records of the depository.
- Any person intending to carry on the business as a vault manager can make an application to SEBI for a grant of a certificate of registration.
- The applicant shall be a body corporate incorporated in India and shall have a minimum net worth of **Rs 50 crore**.
- Every certificate of registration granted will be valid unless it is suspended or canceled by SEBI.

Regulations:

- The vault managers are required to have systems for recording all transactions in **electronic form** pertaining to vaulting services.
- They need to maintain the documents to ensure that gold is traceable; details of storage, transfer and withdrawal of gold; purity, quantity and weight of deposited gold; and creation and extinguishment of EGRs.
- They need to preserve these records and documents for a **minimum period of 5 years**.
- They need to abide by the code of conduct specified by the regulator.

About SEBI :

- Established : 12 April 1988 as an executive body and was given statutory powers on 30 January 1992 through the SEBI Act, 1992
- Headquarters : Mumbai, Maharashtra
- Chairman : Madhabi Puri Buch (first woman to lead the SEBI)
- SEBI is the **regulatory body** for securities and commodity markets in India under the ownership of the **Ministry of Finance (MoF)**, Gol.

SEBI Approves Transfer Of Controlling Stake Of HDFC AMC To HDFC Bank

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- **HDFC Ltd** revealed that the **Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI)** has **granted** its **approval** for the intended transfer of majority ownership in **HDFC Asset Management Company Limited (HDFC AMC)** to **HDFC Bank**, as a part of the amalgamation plan.
- SEBI has also advised HDFC AMC to ensure compliance with all other provisions of SEBI (Mutual Funds) Regulations, **1996**, and circulars.
- The merger, anticipated to be completed by the **third quarter** of the upcoming financial year, is being hailed as the **largest transaction** in **India's corporate history**.
- This deal, valued at approximately **USD 40 billion**, will result in the creation of a formidable financial services giant, as HDFC Bank takes over the largest domestic mortgage lender on **April 4, 2022**.
- Once the deal is effective, HDFC Bank will be **100% owned by public shareholders**, and existing shareholders of HDFC will own **41%** of the bank.
- Every HDFC shareholder will get 42 shares of HDFC Bank for every 25 shares they hold.

Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe to launch gold-pegged digital currency

- The **Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe**, or RBZ, plans to introduce a **gold-backed digital currency** as legal tender in **Zimbabwe**.
- It is believed that the government took this step to stabilizing the local currency after its continuous devaluation in comparison to the **United States (US) dollar**.
- This initiative taken by Zimbabwe will allow the exchange of Zimbabwean dollars with digital gold tokens and secure Zimbabweans **against currency volatility**

RBI cancels Adoor Co-operative Urban Bank's banking licence, allows to operate as a non-banking Institution

- The **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** has **cancelled** the **banking licence** of **Kerala-based Adoor Co-operative Urban Bank** and has allowed it to function as a **non-banking institution**.
- The cancellation of the bank's license and its new categorisation as a non-banking Institution has been done under various sections of the **Banking Regulation Act, 1949**.
- The Bank was granted a license in **January 1987**.
- Further, the bank has to repay unpaid and unclaimed deposits of non-members held by it, whenever demanded, even after being notified as a non-banking Institution.

What is the difference between Bank & NBFC?

- According to RBI, the difference between a bank and NBFC is that a **bank** is a **government-authorised entity** that provides banking services to the people, whereas **NBFC** is a **company providing banking services** to the people without holding a bank licence.

About RBI :

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- Established : 1 April 1935
- Headquarters : Mumbai, Maharashtra, India
- Governor : Shaktikanta Das
- Deputy governors : Mahesh Kumar Jain, M. Rajeshwar Rao, Michael Patra and T. Rabi Shankar

Bajaj Allianz General Insurance & actyv.ai Partners to Offer Insurance Products

- Bajaj Finserv's insurance subsidiary, **Bajaj Allianz General Insurance Company** has entered into a partnership with **actyv.ai**, the **Singapore-headquartered enterprise** under the **Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI)**, to offer insurance products to **MSME (Ministry of Micro, Small & Medium enterprises)** through their technology platform and the partner ecosystem across the Supply chain.
- Bajaj Allianz General Insurance, a private general insurer, will leverage the technology stack of the actyv.ai platform by offering innovative insurance products to champion the **sustainability of suppliers, distributors and retailers**.
- With this collaboration, Bajaj Allianz will offer bite-sized commercial insurance products like fire and burglary, in addition to group health products like personal accident, hospital cash, credit-linked health plans and group health plans.

About Bajaj Allianz General Insurance :

- Headquarters : Pune, Maharashtra
- Managing director (MD) and chief executive director (CEO) : Tapan Singhel
- Bajaj Allianz General Insurance Company Limited is a **joint venture (JV)** between **Bajaj Finserv Limited** (recently demerged from Bajaj Auto Limited) and **Allianz SE**.

About actyv.ai :

- Founded : 2019
- Founder and Global CEO of actyv.ai : Raghu Subramanian

SEBI proposals clear the air on ESG investments

- Capital Market Regulator **Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI)** came out with a holistic **regulatory framework** for **ESG disclosures** by India Inc, investors, and rating agencies to facilitate a balanced approach to ESG.
- In order to **enhance** the **reliability** of ESG disclosures, the **BRSR (Business Responsibility and Sustainability Report) Core** should be introduced, which contains a limited set of **key performance indicators (KPIs)**.

Quantifiable parameters :

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- According to SEBI, initially **top 150 listed companies** will have to disclose and obtain a reasonable assurance on BRSR Core parameters from FY24 and that will be gradually **extended** to the **top 1,000 listed entities** by FY27.
- The parameters are quantifiable under **9 broad themes** - such as change in GHG footprint, change in water footprint, investing in reducing its environmental footprint, embracing circularity (details related to waste management by the entity), enhancing employee well-being and safety, enabling gender diversity in business, enabling inclusive development, and fairness in engaging with customers and suppliers.
- Under these themes, there are about **50 KPIs** to facilitate comparability of the disclosures.
- The BRSR core contains factors that are relevant to both the manufacturing and service sectors and are more relevant especially in the Indian context, as attributes such as job creation and inclusive development are considered.
- To start with, SEBI stated that these requirements of disclosure and assurance should be applicable to the top 250 listed entities (by market capitalization), on a comply-or-explain basis from FY25 and FY26, respectively.
- SEBI also mandated ESG schemes to invest **at least 65%** of AUM in listed entities, where assurance on BRSR Core is undertaken.

About SEBI :

- Established : 12 April 1988 as an executive body and was given statutory powers on 30 January 1992 through the SEBI Act, 1992
- Headquarters : Mumbai, Maharashtra
- Chairman : Madhabi Puri Buch (**first woman to lead the SEBI**)
- SEBI is the **regulatory body** for securities and commodity markets in India under the ownership of the **Ministry of Finance (MoF)**, Govt.

Emkay Global gets SEBI's in-principle approval for mutual fund business

- **Emkay Global Financial Services** has received **in-principle approval** from the capital markets regulator **Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI)** to launch a **mutual fund business** in India.

About Emkay Global Financial Services :

- Founded : 1995
- It offers services such as institutional equity, portfolio management services, wealth management, investment banking and global investing.

Key Highlights :

- At present, there are **44 MF players** with total assets under management of about **₹40 lakh crore** with top

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10 players accounting for a lion's share of business.

- Bajaj Finserv was the latest entrant to **receive full-fledged mutual fund licence** and it has recently filed papers for launching 7 new fund offers.
- Similarly, billionaire **Nitin Kamath-led Zerodha Broking**, which has received **SEBI's in-principle approval** for **entering mutual fund business**, plans to tie-up with Vasanth Kamath-owned fintech firm smallcase.
- MF sponsors subject to having a net-worth of **₹100 crore** for contribution towards the net-worth of the Asset Management Company.
- This net-worth of the AMC has to be maintained till the time it posts profit for **5 consecutive years**.
- Existing players have to maintain a **net-worth** of **₹50 crore** and are required to show net profit in 3 out of the immediately preceding 5 years, including the 5th year.

Nexus Select Trust gets SEBI's approval for REIT IPO

- **Nexus Select Trust**, the retail-focused real estate investment trust sponsored by private equity firm **Blackstone**, has received the **final observations**, and go ahead from the **Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI)** for its **Real Estate Investment Trust (REIT)** initial public offering (IPO) of units.
- The **₹4,000-crore** IPO consists of a fresh issue of ₹1,600 crore while the remaining ₹2,400 crore is through an offer of sale from its main sponsor Blackstone and some other smaller holders.
- The REIT **aims** for a listing by **May 15, 2023** and is expected to file its final offer document.
- The REIT's portfolio comprises 17 malls with a total leasable area of **10 million square feet**.
- With an **enterprise value** of **₹23,000 crore** and a **debt** of **₹3,600 crore**, the REIT will still have about \$500 million for making acquisitions and adding to its portfolio.
- It already has an acquisition pipeline of **2.5 msf** of assets identified in places such as **Ranchi, Jharkhand** and **Chennai, Tamil Nadu (TN)**.

IndusInd Bank to enter insurance, mutual funds business & launch digital bank 'Indie'

- In a bid to expand its portfolio beyond its core banking business, **IndusInd Bank** is planning to foray into **mutual funds, insurance** and **broking sectors**.
- The bank is likely to approach the **Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI)**, the **Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI)** and other regulators to get the necessary licences.
- IndusInd Bank is also planning to launch its own digital bank '**Indie**'.
- The necessary approvals for all these expansion plans and other logistics by the bank is likely to be completed in about **2 years**.

About IndusInd Bank :

- Founded : April 1994

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- Headquarters : Mumbai, Maharashtra, India
- MD & CEO : Sumant Kathpalia.
- Tagline : We Make You Feel Richer

RBI amends norms on remittances to IFSC under liberalised scheme

- The **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** has aligned the **Liberalised Remittance Scheme (LRS)** for **International Financial Services Centres (IFSCs)** set up under the **International Financial Services Centres Authority Act, 2019**, with that for other foreign jurisdictions.
- The resident Individuals may also open a **Foreign Currency Account (FCA)** in IFSCs, for making the permissible investments under LRS.

Key Highlights : ·

- The condition of repatriating any funds lying idle in the account for a **period up to 15 days** from the date of its receipt is withdrawn with immediate effect.
- LRS for IFSCs shall now be governed by the provisions of the scheme as contained in the Master Direction on LRS.

What is LRS?

- The Liberalised Remittance Scheme (LRS) is part of the **Foreign Exchange Management Act (FEMA) 1999** which lays down the guidelines for outward remittance from India.
- LRS allows Indian residents to freely remit up to **USD \$250,000 per financial year** for current or capital account transactions or a combination of both.
- Any remittance exceeding this limit requires prior permission from the RBI.
- Budget 2023 increased **tax collection at source (TCS)** for foreign remittances under LRS from **5% to 20%**.
- This new rule will come into effect from **July 1, 2023**.

About RBI :

- Established : 1 April 1935
- Headquarters : Mumbai, Maharashtra, India
- Governor : Shaktikanta Das
- Deputy governors : Mahesh Kumar Jain, M. Rajeshwar Rao, Michael Patra and T. Rabi Shankar

NSE revises norms for exclusion from index in case of demerger

- The **National Stock Exchange (NSE)** has come out with **new norms** to retain the **demerged entity** of an index constituent in the respective index.
- A demerged company will remain part of the index, only if the exchange has decided to conduct a **Special Pre-Open session (SPOS)** for the **spun-off entity**.

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Key Highlights :

- The change would be applicable to the scheme of arrangement of all companies involving demerger which may be approved by equity shareholders of respective companies on or after **April 30, 2023**.
- Additionally, the spun-off business/entity should be included in the index at constant price (which is the **difference between the demerged company's closing price one day prior** to ex-date of demerger and price derived during SPOS).
- However, the spun-off business/entity, which is the newly listed entity, should be removed from the index after **3 days**.
- In case, during the first two days if the spun-off business/entity hits the price band on both days, the exclusion date should be deferred by another three days.

About NSE :

- Founded : 1992
- Headquarters : Mumbai, Maharashtra, India
- MD & CEO : Ashishkumar Chauhan

Reliance General becomes first insurer to accept CBDC in partnership with YES Bank

- **Reliance General Insurance** has become the **first general insurance company to accept Reserve Bank of India's (RBI's) Central Bank Digital Currency (CBDC) e-Rupee (₹)** for premium payments.
- The insurer has tied up with YES Bank to facilitate the collection of premiums in digital mode using the **bank's e-rupee platform**.
- Customers who have an active e-rupee wallet with any bank can scan Reliance General Insurance's **CBDC QR code to make easy, safe, instant, and green payments**.
- Currently, **Reliance General Insurance's physical e-rupee QR code** is available at select branches for walk-in customers to scan and pay instantly.
- Customers who have an active **₹ wallet** with any bank can scan Reliance General Insurance's ₹ QR code to make immediate payment.
- It plans to make it available at all branches across the country, on its website, and on the Reliance Self-i app in the next few months.

What is e-rupee :

- e-rupee is a **digital token**, equivalent to a banknote, and is legal tender or sovereign currency backed by the RBI.
- It removes all the issues of handling physical cash and offers the same anonymity as a banknote.
- Moreover, since all transactions are done through an RBI-regulated entity, it **reduces banknote-related**

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risks such as anti-money laundering, the counterfeiting of currency, etc.

About Reliance General Insurance :

- Founded : 17 August 2000
- Headquarters : Mumbai, Maharashtra
- CEO : Rakesh Jain

About YES Bank :

- Founded : 2004
- Headquarters : Mumbai, Maharashtra, India
- MD & CEO : Prashant Kumar
- Tagline : Experience Our Expertise

BUSINESS NEWS

UNCTAD: Global goods trade is expected to increase by 1% in the first quarter of 2023

- According to the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), Global goods trade is expected to increase by 1% in the first quarter of 2023.
- The trade-in service will grow by 3%.
- Global trade has reached to more than \$32 trillion in 2022 but turned negative in the last quarter.
- UNCTAD predicted trade stagnation for the first quarter of 2023.
- As per the report, the uncertainty for trade will remain intact due to ongoing geopolitical tensions, inflation, high commodity prices, etc.
- UNCTAD said that as most of the trade is done in dollars so a weak dollar would result in increased demand for traded goods.

In the fourth quarter of 2022, the global trade for developing countries was impacted

- **About UNCTAD:** United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) is a UN institution that deals with trade and development.
- Founded: 30 December 1964,
- Headquarters: Geneva, Switzerland,
- Head: Secretary-General; Rebeca Grynspan.

EPFO marginally raises interest rate on PF deposits to 8.15% for FY23

- EPFO has fixed 8.15% interest rate on employees' provident fund deposits for 2022-23.
- The decision has been taken by the Employees' Provident Fund Organisation's apex decision making body Central Board of Trustees (CBT).
- In March 2022, interest rate on EPF deposits for 2021-22 was lowered to four decade low level of 8.1%

Important Monthly Current Affairs Capsule – April 2023

from 8.5% in 2020-21.

- This was lowest rate since 1977-78. In 1977-78, EPF interest rate stood at 8%.
- In March 2020, interest rate on provident fund deposits was lowered to a seven year low of 8.5% for 2019-20.

About EPFO:

- EPFO is a statutory body that was established under the Employees' Provident Fund and Miscellaneous Provisions Act, 1952.
- The organization works under the aegis of the Ministry of Labour and Employment.
- It helps the central board of trustees in the administration of the Provident Fund Scheme, Pension Scheme and Insurance scheme for the organized sector workers.

Fiscal deficit touches 82.8% of annual target till February

- **India's fiscal deficit for FY23 touched 14.53 trillion rupees** in the 11 months through February - **nearly 83% of annual estimates.**
- As per government data the numbers are **17% higher than last year.**
- The country has targeted a budget deficit of 6.4% for the fiscal year ending this month.
- Data released by the Controller General of Accounts added that the fiscal deficit or gap between the **expenditure and revenue collection between April 2022 and February 2023 stood at ₹14.53 lakh crore.**

Nokia changes iconic logo for the first time in 60 years

- **Nokia has changed its iconic logo after nearly 60 years** to revamp its brand identity for the first time in the company's history.
- The new logo is made up of **five different shapes making the word NOKIA.**
- Nokia redesigned its logo to avoid being associated with mobile phones, a sector it left almost ten years ago.
- **CEO Lundmark** said that Nokia is no longer just a smartphone company, but a "business technology company."

About Nokia:

- Nokia is a Finnish multinational telecommunication company, established in 1865 in Espoo, Finland.
- Nokia 1100 was the most popular phone of its time in India with a substantial market share before the advent of smartphones.
- It was known for its durability and sturdiness.
- 1865 – Nokia is founded as a paper mill in Tampere, Finland.
- There is currently no logo.
- 1965 – Nokia begins manufacturing electronics and introduces a simple logo.

India's core sector output rises 6% on year in February 2023

Important Monthly Current Affairs Capsule – April 2023

- The combined Index of Eight Core Industries (ICI) increased by 6.0 per cent (provisional) in February 2023 as compared to the Index of February 2022.
- The production of Fertilizers, Coal, Electricity, Cement, Steel, Refinery Products and Natural Gas increased in February 2023 over the corresponding month of last year.
- The Eight Core Industries comprise 40.27 percent of the weight of items included in the Index of Industrial Production (IIP).
- The Office of Economic Adviser, Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) in the Commerce and Industry Ministry releases the Index of Eight Core Industries.

TDS on interest to be applicable even in death cases if EPF contribution exceeds ₹2.50 lakh

- Employees contributing over ₹2.50 lakh to the Employees Provident Fund (EPF) will be liable to pay tax on interest even in case of death.
- Higher Tax Deducted at Source (TDS) rate will be applicable for employees who have not linked their EPF account with PAN.
- Higher TDS will also be applicable if employees have invalid PAN.
- The rules will also apply to General Provident Fund (GPF).
- However, the threshold will be ₹5 lakh because there is no contribution from employer.

IFC to invest Rs 600 crore in Mahindra unit at valuation of up to Rs 6,020 crore

- Mahindra & Mahindra said World Bank Group arm IFC will invest Rs 600 crore in a new unit of the company, which is being incorporated to scale up the last-mile electric mobility business.
- IFC's first investment in an EV manufacturer in the country and the first in electric three-wheelers globally will be in the form of compulsory convertible instruments at a valuation of up to Rs 6,020 crore.
- The Rs 600 crore investment will result in an ownership of between 9.97 per cent to 13.64 per cent for IFC in NewCo.

India's e-commerce market is projected to grow from \$83 billion in 2022 to \$150 billion in 2026:

- India's e-commerce market is projected to grow from \$83 billion in 2022 to \$150 billion in 2026, according to FIS 2023 Global Payments Report.
- The report added that cash use declined from 71 per cent of POS transaction value in 2019 to just 27 per cent in 2022.
- The Unified Payments Interface (UPI) has helped e-commerce account-to-account (A2A) payments grow to \$12 billion, which is up 53 per cent between 2021 and 2022, and digital wallets have also grown from 5 per cent to 35 per cent of POS value.
- The Global Payments Report also shows that by 2026 A2A transaction value is expected to grow by 195 per cent to \$36 billion.

Govt caps maximum GST cess rate on tobacco products

Important Monthly Current Affairs Capsule – April 2023

- In order to limit the maximum rate of GST compensation cess on pan masala, cigarettes, the government has made amendments to the Finance Bill.
- Among other items, GST Compensation Cess has been linked to a ceiling rate of their retail selling price.
- This rule issued by the government will be implemented from the 1 April 2023.
- The maximum GST compensation cess rate for pan masala will be 51% of the retail sale price per unit, which is currently levied at 135% ad valorem [according to the estimated value of the goods being taxed]

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- The Rs 600 crore investment will result in ownership of between 9.97 per cent to 13.64 per cent for IFC in NewCo.

Women in India own 35% of bank accounts, but only 20% of total deposits

- Women own a little over one-third of deposit accounts but only one fifth of the total deposit amount in scheduled commercial banks, a report by the Statistics Ministry showed.
- It also revealed that only one of four bank employees are women.
- The report noted that not even one-fourth of the female population holds managerial position across the organisations.
- Also, their share in unpaid work is much higher than their male counterparts.
- This comes to around 35.23 per cent.
- Similarly, all the mentioned accounts have over ₹170-lakh crore of deposits, out of which women own around ₹34-lakh crore.
- The report titled, 'Women and Men in India 2022' showed that the total number of deposit accounts at the end of January 2023 was 225.5 crore, out of which over 79 crore are owned by women.

ArcelorMittal-Nippon Steel India JV signs \$5 billion loan deal with Japanese banks

- ArcelorMittal SA said its Indian steelmaking joint venture with Asian peer Nippon Steel Corp has entered into a \$5 billion loan deal with a consortium of Japanese lenders.
- The proceeds would be used to fund the expansion of the JV's annual steelmaking capacity at its Hazira plant in India to 15 million tonnes from 9 million tonnes.
- The JV, called AM/NS India, is owned by AMNS Luxembourg Holding SA, in which ArcelorMittal holds a 60% interest and Nippon Steel the rest.

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- The Japanese banks include Japan Bank for International Cooperation, MUFG Bank, Sumitomo Mitsui Banking Corp, Sumitomo Mitsui Trust Bank, Mizuho Bank, Mizuho Bank Europe NV.

Indian economy to grow 6% in 2023: UNCTAD

- United Nations, India's economic growth is projected to decelerate to 6 per cent in 2023 from 6.6 per cent in 2022.
- The UN Trade and Development Conference (UNCTAD) in its latest Trade and Development Report Update released expects global growth in 2023 to drop to 2.1%, compared to the 2.2% projected in September 2022, assuming the financial fallout from higher interest rates is contained to the bank runs and bailouts of the first quarter.
- The International Monetary Fund (IMF) lowered India's economic growth projection for the current fiscal to 5.9 per cent from 6.1 per cent earlier.

About UN:

- Founded: 24 October 1945,
- Headquarters: New York,
- Secretary general: António Guterres.

Jakson Green partners with NTPC to set up methanol plant

- Jakson Green has won a project from state-run NTPC to set up a methanol synthesis facility at its Vindhyachal thermal power plant (TPP) in Madhya Pradesh.
- The methanol synthesis plant will be a part of NTPC's Vindhyachal TPP with a production capacity of 10 tonnes per day (TPD).
- Methanol is a cleaner alternative fuel that can be used for various purposes including power generation and transportation.
- Further, it will help India meet its Paris Climate Change Agreement obligation to reduce carbon emissions by 33-35 per cent by 2030.

WTO revises upwards global trade forecast to 1.7% for 2023

- As per fresh estimates made by the WTO Global trade in goods is likely to grow by 1.7 per cent in 2023, following a 2.7 per cent growth in 2022, hit by the effects of the long-drawn war in Ukraine, high inflation, tighter monetary policy and financial market uncertainty.

Important Monthly Current Affairs Capsule – April 2023

- The revised growth projection is, however, better than the 1 per cent growth estimated earlier by the WTO, as the relaxation of Covid-19 restrictions in China has improved expectations.
- **Real global GDP growth at market exchange rates is estimated at 2.4 per cent for 2023 against 2.3 per cent predicted earlier.**
- For Indian exporters, who have been fighting a demand slowdown since July last year and may just about manage to slightly exceed FY2022 exports of \$422 billion in FY2023, the going is likely to continue to be rough in the new fiscal.

About WTO:

- The World Trade Organization is an intergovernmental organization that regulates and facilitates international trade.
- Founded: 1 January 1995,
- Headquarters: Geneva, Switzerland.

Paradip Port handles record annual traffic of 135.36 MMT

- **Paradip Port has handled a record annual traffic of 135.36 million metric tonnes in 2022-23 against 116.13 million metric tonnes in the last financial year.**
- **PL Haranadh, Chairman, Paradip Port Authority** has given this information during a press conference in Bhubaneswar.
- The Paradip port has recorded the highest-ever growth of 19.2 million metric tonnes (16.56 per cent) of traffic in a single financial year.

Apple BKC to be the first Apple Store in India

- **Apple has officially announced its first-ever flagship retail store in Mumbai called 'Apple BKC'.**
- An official teaser has also surfaced on the Apple India Store website.
- Apple has revealed the banner of its **first retail store in India** at Jio World Drive Mall, Mumbai, marking the opening of Apple BKC.
- **The store is inspired by the 'Kaali Peeli' taxis art popular in Mumbai.**
- The tech giant plans to open the gates of the store later this month.
- Apple is expected to open its second store in India in New Delhi at a later date.
- **Description** Apple Inc. is an American multinational technology company headquartered in Cupertino, California.

Important Monthly Current Affairs Capsule – April 2023

- **Timothy Donald Cook** is an American business executive who has been the chief executive officer of Apple Inc. since 2011

Reliance, Jio raise \$5 billion in largest syndicated loan in India

- **Reliance Industries Ltd** and its telecom arm **Jio Infocomm** have raised a total of **USD 5 billion** in back-to-back foreign currency loans, the largest syndicated loan in India's corporate history.
- Reliance raised **USD 3 billion** last week from 55 banks and Reliance Jio Infocomm secured additional credit of **USD 2 billion** from 18 banks.
- The **USD 3 billion financing** closed on **March 31** and the add-on facility of **USD 2 billion** was secured.
- **MLAB** refers to **Mandated Lead Arranger and Book Runner**.
- Reliance Industries Ltd's (RIL) last syndicated offshore borrowing was a **USD 1.45 billion** dual-currency financing completed in 2020.

Retail inflation declines to 5.66% in March

- **Consumer Price Index (CPI)**-based retail inflation declined to **5.66 %** in **March 2023**.
- In February 2023, Consumer Price Index (CPI)-based retail inflation stood at **6.44%**.

Cost inflation index number for FY 2023-24 (AY 2024-25) used for LTCG calculation notified by CBDT

- **Cost Inflation Index (CII)** for Financial Year 2023-24 has **been kept at 348**.
- This is an **increase of 5.14%**.
- CII was kept at 331 for Financial Year 2022-23.
- The index has **been notified by the Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT)**

Solar Energy Corporation of India gets 'Miniratna Category-I' status

- **Miniratna Category-I Central Public Sector Enterprise (CPSE)** status has been accorded to **Solar Energy Corporation of India**.
- SECI is committed to achieving the target of **500 GW** of non-fossil fuel-based capacity by 2030.
- **Till date, more than 56 GW project** capacities have been awarded to SECI.

Ashok Leyland launches 'Re-AL' electronic marketplace for used commercial vehicles

- Truck and bus maker **Ashok Leyland** has launched its e-marketplace '**Re-AL**' for used trucks.

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- The e-marketplace seeks to offer customers a range of features to easily find vehicles of their choice, such as verified vehicle images, validated documents as well as evaluation reports.

About Ashok Leyland

- Founder: Raghunandan Saran
- Parent organization: Hinduja Group
- Headquarters: Chennai
- Shenu Agarwal, MD & CEO, Ashok Leyland

Credit guarantee fund scheme for micro and small enterprises

- The Credit Guarantee Fund Trust for Micro and Small Enterprises (CGTMSE) has upped the coverage ceiling under its Credit Guarantee Fund Scheme from ₹2 crore to ₹5 crore per borrower for credit facilities extended by lending institutions to Micro and Small Enterprises (MSEs).
- The changes are effective April 1, when the loan growth to the MSE segment slowed to 13.2 per cent year-on-year as on February 24, 2023 against 24 per cent y-o-y as on February 25, 2022.
- CGTMSE is jointly set up by the Ministry of Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises (MSME), Government of India (GoI) and Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI) to catalyse flow of institutional credit to Micro & Small Enterprises (MSEs).

India's exports up 6% to \$447 billion in FY23, imports climb 16.5% to \$714 billion

- India's imports in Financial Year 2023 (FY23) rose 16.5 per cent to \$714 billion as against \$613 billion in FY22 while exports saw a rise of 6% to \$447 billion in FY23, up from \$442 billion in FY22.
- This was revealed by the data released by the Ministry of Commerce and Industry recently.
- India's CAD stood at \$18.2 billion or 2.2% of GDP in the quarter ended December 2022.
- India's exports are largely led by petroleum (\$94 billion), followed by electronic goods (\$23 billion).

WPI inflation eases to 29-month low of 1.34% in March

- India's annual Wholesale Price Index (WPI)-based inflation declined to a 29-month low of 1.34 per cent in March 2023 as input prices continued to moderate.
- This is the 10th straight month of decline in WPI-based inflation.
- The food index inflation eased to 2.32 per cent in March from 2.76 per cent in February.

Aadhaar brought down KYC cost to ₹3 from as high as ₹700

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- Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman stated that the cost of KYC has reduced from ₹700 to ₹3 because of Aadhaar.
- The cost of loan processing has been cut down by almost 75%.

About Aadhar :

- Aadhaar is a 12-digit unique number issued by the Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI).
- It was launched on 28 January 2009.

Government has raised ₹3,51,000 cr through dated securities in Oct-Dec

- According to the quarterly report on debt management for October-December released by the finance ministry government raised ₹3,51,000 crore through dated securities as against the notified amount of ₹3,18,000 crore in the borrowing calendar.
- Repayments stood at ₹85, 377.9 crore.
- During October- December 2022, the government did not raise any amount through the cash management bills.
- The net daily average liquidity absorption by RBI under Liquidity Adjustment Facility (LAF) including Marginal Standing Facility and Special Liquidity Facility was at ₹39,604 crore during the quarter.

The average ticket size of loans under PMMY nearly doubled in 8 years

- The average ticket size of loans under PMMY has almost doubled as per the State Bank of India's economic research department (ERD).
- The average ticket size of loans under Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana has increased from ₹38,000 in FY16 to ₹72,000 in FY23.
- The amount of loans disbursed under MUDRA increased from ₹1.33 lakh crore in FY16 to ₹4.50 lakh crore in FY23.
- The number of loans sanctioned stood at ₹6.23 crore in FY23 against ₹3.48 crore in FY16.
- The ERD said India's **Social Fabric Index (SFI)** shows 3.2 times jump from 0.813 in FY17 to 2.640 in FY22.
- SFI represents the participation of the underprivileged in the formal banking system.
- The SFI is constructed by SBI using principal component analysis. It includes three variables given below.
- SC, ST, OBCs Mudra Accounts and Disbursements
- Number of women deposit accounts and deposits held in them
- Revenue and Capital Expenditure of Government towards welfare of SC, ST, and OBCs
- Mudra Atmanirbhar Quotient (MAQ) has increased up to 25 times since FY16.
- MAQ measures the propensity of particular social strata to repay based purely on cash flow generated from business.

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- MAQ has increased from 0.81 for ST and SC social groups in FY16 to 2.02 and 2.20 respectively in FY22.

India attracts fifth of PE inflows into the Asia-Pacific region

- **India accounts for one-fifth of private equity inflows** into the Asia-Pacific.
- Private equity (PE) and venture capital (VC) inflows into **India reached beyond \$61 billion in 2022.**
- India's share of investments in the Asia-Pacific region increased to a fifth from less than 15% a year ago.
- As per the India Private Equity Report 2023 of Bain & Company, the current year will be a cautious optimism with momentum in sectors driven by domestic consumption and export.
- PE and VC investment declined 15-30% across most regions.
- Over 2,000 deals were transacted in 2022.
- **Venture capital and growth equity accounted for almost 90% of deals.**
- **\$1-billion investments slowed.**
- **Exits slowed to \$24 billion** from an all-time high of \$36 billion in 2021.
- Traditional sectors dominated the share of exits greater than \$100 million.
- Healthcare and manufacturing showing the largest increase in exit value.

Alibaba splits into six units, plans new IPOs in historic overhaul

- **Alibaba Group Holding Ltd. plans to split its \$220 billion empire into six units that will individually raise funds and explore initial public offerings**, the biggest overhaul of China's online commerce leader since its inception more than two decades ago.
- The move frees up the Chinese company's main divisions from e-commerce and media to the cloud to operate with far more autonomy, laying the foundation for future spinoffs and market debuts.
- Alibaba's announcement coincided with the return of its billionaire co-founder Jack Ma to China after more than a year abroad.
- Alibaba is ready to tap investors and public markets after the Xi Jinping administration's clampdown on internet spheres wiped out more than \$500 billion of its value.
- Alibaba has had previous success with spinoffs.
- It hived off Alipay in 2010, an unpopular move that led to Ant Group Co's creation.

IOCL to invest ₹61,077-cr to set up petrochemical complex at Paradip

- State-run Indian Oil Corporation (IOCL) have approved setting up a petrochemical complex at Paradip in Odisha at an **estimated cost of ₹61,077 crore.**
- The project will be the oil marketing company's (OMC) largest-ever investment at a single location.

About IOCL:

- IOCL Chairman Shrikant Madhav Vaidya,

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- Founded: 30 June 1959,
- Headquarters: New Delhi.

NSE Comes Up With New Migration Policy For SMEs To Shift To Main Board

- **The National Stock Exchange of India (NSE)** has revised the eligibility criteria for **SMEs looking to switch from its SME platform to the main board.**
- The new guidelines require SMEs to list on the SME platform for at least three years along with a **minimum net worth of Rs 50 crore and at least 1,000 public shareholders on the last day** of the preceding quarter from the date of application before moving to the main board.
- **Effective from April 20**, the applicant company should also have positive cash accruals (earnings before interest, depreciation and tax) from operations for each of the three financial years preceding the migration application.
- In addition, the company should have positive **PAT (profit after tax) in the immediate financial year** of making the migration application to the exchange.
- Moreover, the paid-up equity capital (amount received by the company from shareholders in exchange for shares of stock) of the applicant should not be less than Rs 10 crores and the **market capitalisation shouldn't be less than Rs 25 crores**

WayCool launches FMCG subsidiary 'BrandsNext'

- **WayCool**, a Chennai-based food and agri-tech platform **announced the launch of a wholly-owned subsidiary 'BrandsNext' to exclusively focus on its fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) business.**
- **Started by Karthik Jayaraman and Sanjay Dasari in 2015**, WayCool began as a farm-to-fork agri supply chain platform.
- In 2018, the company entered the consumer packaged goods (CPG) business with the launch of Madhuram (premium variety rice and pulse brand).
- It then acquired dairy and ready-to-cook brand Freshey's in 2019.
- Later, it **launched another staples brand 'Kitchenji' to expand its product portfolio.**
- Currently, these three brands together offer 108 SKUs ranging from premium rice varieties, dals and pulses, spices and masalas to idli and dosa batter.
- The three brands will now come under the BrandsNext umbrella.

Tata Steel Honored With Sustainability Champion Status For 6th Consecutive Time By World Steel Association

- **Tata Steel has been recognised as 2023 Steel Sustainability Champion** by the World Steel Association.
- The Sustainability Champions were announced today at **the worldsteel Special General Meeting of the Board of Members held in Vienna, Austria.**
- Recognised for the sixth consecutive year this year, Tata Steel has been a champion every year since the

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programme's launch in 2018.

- This prestigious award acknowledges Tata Steel's efforts to maintain its leadership as a world-class steel producer that is fully committed to the principles of sustainability.
- The **World Steel Association** (World Steel) is one of the largest and most dynamic industry associations in the world, with members in every major steel-producing country.
- World steel represents steel producers, national and regional steel industry associations, and steel research institutes.
- T.V. Narendran, CEO & Managing Director, Tata Steel.

Toyota launches 'Wheels on Web', company's first-ever online retail sales platform

- Toyota Kirloskar Motor (TKM) made an announcement of a **new digital platform for customers residing in Bangalore state**.
- This will create smooth and comfortable transactions just by sitting at their homes as they can look, buy and order their preferred vehicle.
- Named 'Wheels on Web', a **Business to Customer (B2C) platform is the first-of-its-kind in the Bangalore region**.
- This is launched to prompt online sales to give an uninterrupted experience.

About Toyota Kirloskar Motor

- Toyota Kirloskar Motor Private Limited is an Indian joint venture between Toyota Motor Corporation and Kirloskar Group, for the manufacture and sales of Toyota cars in India.
- The headquarters are located in Bidadi, Karnataka, near Bengaluru.

APPOINTMENT AND RESIGNATION

SpiceJet Chairman & Managing Director Mr Ajay Singh takes over as ASSOCHAM President

- SpiceJet's chairman & managing director Mr Ajay Singh has assumed charge as the **president of Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industry of India (ASSOCHAM)**.
- He succeeded Renew Power Managing Director (MD) Mr **Sumant Sinha** after the completion of his tenure as Chairman of ASSOCHAM on Mar 28, 2023.

About ASSOCHAM :

- Founded : 1920
- Headquarters : New Delhi, Delhi, India
- The ASSOCHAM is a **non-governmental trade association** and advocacy group

Prof Dr Renu Cheema Vig appointed as Vice Chancellor of Punjab University

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- The Vice-President, Shri Jagdeep Dhankhar, who is also the Chancellor of Panjab University appointed Prof. (Dr.) Renu Cheema Vig, as the Vice Chancellor of Panjab University.
- Exercising the powers conferred by Section 10 of the Panjab University Act 1947, Shri Dhankhar made the appointment of Prof. Vig for a term of **3 years**.
- Consequently, a three member search-cum-selection committee was constituted on March 21, 2023, for recommending names for the position.

Bollywood actor Ranveer Singh named Star Sports Brand Ambassador

- **Star Sports**, India's Home of Sports, announced **Bollywood superstar** and sports aficionado **Ranveer Singh** as its **brand ambassador**.
- Ranveer, in his role as 'sutradhaar' for the upcoming season of the "**Incredible League**", will be involved in creating a stream of immersive and entertaining content which brings alive compelling narratives from the past, present, and future of the league.
- Star Sports and Ranveer Singh's journey as partners starts with the Opening Weekend of **Tata IPL 2023 (March 31, 2023 – April 2, 2023)**, continues through the tournament as heroes emerge and stories develop.

UAE president names son Mr Sheikh Khaled as next crown prince of Abu Dhabi

- **United Arab Emirates (UAE) President Mr Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan** known by his initials MBZ, has appointed his eldest son **Mr Sheikh Khaled bin Mohamed** as **crown prince of Abu Dhabi**, the oil-rich capital of the Gulf state.
- Mr Sheikh Khaled bin Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan is a **member** of the **Abu Dhabi Executive Council** and **Chairman** of both the **Abu Dhabi Executive Committee** and the **Abu Dhabi Executive Office**.

About UAE :

- President : Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan
- Prime Minister : Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum
- Capital : Abu Dhabi
- Currency : UAE dirham

EPFO appoints UTI AMC & SBI Mutual Fund as fund managers

- Retirement fund manager **Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO)** approved appointment of **UTI AMC** and **SBI Mutual Fund** as its **fund managers** for **3 years**.
- Besides, the EPFO also approved a proposal for early redemption of its investment of around **₹ 700 crore** in bonds of troubled **Dewan Housing Finance Corporation Ltd (DHFL)**, at its trustees' meeting held in Hyderabad.

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Mr Praveer Sinha reappointed as Tata Power CEO & MD for 4 more years

- **Tata Power Company Limited (TATA Power)** has re-appointed Mr Praveer Sinha as the company's **Chief Executive Officer (CEO)** and **Managing Director** for a period of **4 years** from May 1, 2023, to April 30, 2027.
- His present tenure as a CEO and MD is scheduled to conclude on April 30, 2023.
- Based on the recommendation of the **Nomination and Remuneration Committee**, the Board, at its meeting held on March 30, 2023, approved the re-appointment.

About Tata Power :

- Founded : 18 September 1919
- Headquarters : Mumbai, Maharashtra, India
- Tata Power Company Limited is an **Indian electric utility company** & is part of the Tata Group.

HDFC Bank appoints Kaizad Bharucha as Deputy Managing Director & Bhavesh Zaveri as Executive Director

- Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has approved the appointment of **Kaizad Bharucha** as **Deputy Managing Director (MD)** and **Bhavesh Zaveri** as **Executive Director (ED)** of the **HDFC Bank** for **3 years** with effect from April 19, 2023.
- The RBI approval comes upon the recommendation of the **bank's Board of Directors**.
- Prior to his elevation as Deputy MD, Bharucha, who was **Executive Director**, has been with the Bank since 1995.
- Prior to his elevation as Executive Director, Zaveri was **Group Head – Operations, Cash Management & ATM Products**

About HDFC Bank Limited :

- Founded : August 1994
- Headquarters : Mumbai, Maharashtra, India
- MD & CEO : Sashidhar Jagdishan
- Tagline : We Understand Your World

Shreekant M Bhandiwad appointed as chairman of KVGB

- **Shreekant M Bhandiwad** has taken charge as the **new Chairman** of **Karnataka Vikas Grameena Bank (KVGB)**.
- He Succeeds **Puttaganti Gopi Krishna**, who was serving as the chairman of KVGB from 2019 to 2023.
- Prior to his joining as Chairman of KVGB, Bhandiwad was **heading** the Patna circle of **Canara Bank, Bihar**.
- P Gopikrishna, repatriated to Canara Bank as **Circle Head, Bengaluru, Karnataka**.

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About Karnataka Vikas Grameena Bank :

- Founded : September 12, 2005
- Headquarters : Dharwad, Karnataka, India
- KVGB is an **Indian Regional Rural Bank** sponsored by Canara Bank.
- It is under the ownership of the **Ministry of Finance** , Government of India (GoI).
- The bank was constituted after amalgamation of **4 Regional Rural Banks (RRBs)** namely **Malaprabha Grameena Bank, Bijapur(Vijayapura) Grameena Bank, Varada Grameena Bank and Netravathi Grameena Bank**.
- It is a **scheduled Bank** with share capital contributed in the ratio of **50:15:35** by the **Central Government, Government of Karnataka** and the **Canara Bank** respectively.

ANMI elects Vijay Mehta as its 28th National President

- The **Association of National Exchanges Members of India (ANMI)** , a pan-India industry body representing market intermediaries and stock brokers, has appointed **Vijay Mehta** Chairman of Mefcom Capital Markets Ltd, as its **28th President** for the year 2023-24.
- He takes over from the outgoing President **Kamlesh Shah**, the ANMI.
- The Association of National Exchanges Members of India (ANMI) is a grouping comprising around **900 stock brokers** from across the country.

RBI approves reappointment of N Kamakodi as MD, CEO of City Union Bank for 3 years

- The **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** has approved the **re-appointment** of **N Kamakodi** as **Managing Director (MD)** and **Chief Executive Director (CEO)** of private sector bank **City Union Bank (CUB)**.
- The tenure of his re-appointment would be for a period of **three years** with effect from May 1, 2023.
- From May 2011, he was serving the bank as its managing director and chief executive officer.
- Earlier, the CUB launched a facility for its customers to use **Voice Biometric authentication** for logging into its mobile banking application.

About CUB :

- Established : 1904
- Headquarters : Kumbakonam, Tamil Nadu, India

NASSCOM Appoints Microsoft India's Anant Maheshwari As new Chairperson For 2023-24

- Information technology (IT) industry body the **National Association of Software and Service Companies**

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(NASSCOM) has appointed President & Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Microsoft India **Anant Maheshwari** as its **chairperson** for 2023-24.

- He takes on the new role from his previous role as Vice Chairperson succeeding **Krishnan Ramanujam**, President, Business and Technology Services, Tata Consultancy Services, who served as Chairperson for 2022-23.
- NASSCOM also announced the appointment of **Rajesh Nambiar**, Chairman and Managing Director (CMD) of Cognizant India, as its **Vice Chairperson** for 2023-24.
- In addition, NASSCOM also announced its **Executive Council** for 2023-2025.
- The new Executive Council will play a strategic role in enabling India's tech sector to lead on the global stage through focused initiatives and programmes.
- The newly appointed leadership along with President Debjani Ghosh will spearhead the industry to carry out its wide array of objectives to achieve the tech industry's vision of **\$500 billion by 2030**.

About NASSCOM :

- Established : 1 March 1988
- The NASSCOM is an **Indian non-governmental trade association** and advocacy group, focused mainly on the technology industry of India.

Rajesh Kumar Singh takes charge as new DPIIT Secretary

- Senior IAS officer **Rajesh Kumar Singh** assumed the charge of **secretary** in the **Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT)**.
- Singh has replaced **Anurag Jain**, who was appointed as **secretary** in the **Ministry of Road Transport and Highways**.

About Rajesh Kumar Singh :

- Singh is an Indian Administrative Service officer of 1989 Batch from Kerala cadre.
- He has also held the position of **Commissioner** of the **Delhi Development Authority (DDA)**.
- He has also held the position of **Secretary** of **Urban Development and Finance Secretary** of the Government of Kerala.
- Before DPIIT, Singh was serving as **Secretary** in the **Department of Animal Husbandry and Dairying**.

About DPIIT :

- The DPIIT is a central government department under the **Ministry of Commerce and Industry** in India.
- DPIIT was established in 1995.
- It was reconstituted in 2000 with the merger of the **Department of Industrial Development**.

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- Headquarters : New Delhi, Delhi

Mohammad Shahabuddin takes oath as the 22nd President of Bangladesh

- Veteran freedom fighter, jurist and politician **Mohammed (Md) Shahabuddin** was sworn in as the **22nd President of Bangladesh** in Dhaka, Bangladesh for a five-year term.
- Jatiya Sangsad Speaker **Shirin Sharmin Chaudhury** administered the oath of office to Shahabuddin.
- He succeeded **Md Abdul Hamid**, longest serving president in the history of Bangladesh for two consecutive terms.

Note :

- According to the Constitution of Bangladesh, **No person shall hold office as President for more than two terms**, whether or not the terms are consecutive.

About Mohammed (Md) Shahabuddin :

- Shahabuddin was a leader of the **Awami League's student and youth wings** and took part in the **1971 Liberation War**.
- He was imprisoned following the 1975 assassination of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the father of Prime Minister Hasina.
- In **1982**, he was inducted into the **country's judicial service**.
- During his career, he served as District and Sessions Judge and **Anti Corruption Commissioner (ACC) Commissioner**.

About Bangladesh :

- Prime Minister : Sheikh Hasina
- Capital : Dhaka
- Currency : Taka

Center appoints Arun Sinha as National Technical Research Organisation chairman

- The **Government** has appointed **Arun Sinha** as **Chairman of the National Technical Research Organisation (NTRO)**.
- The post had been lying vacant for over three to four months.
- Arun Sinha is a 1984 batch Kerala cadre IPS officer.

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- He has served as an **advisor** of **NTRO** for **two years**.

About NTRO :

- Formed : 2004
- Headquarters : New Delhi, Delhi, India
- Motto : Aano Bhadra Kritvo Yantu Vishwatah (Meaning - May good thoughts come to me from all four directions)
- It is a **technical intelligence Agency** under the National Security Advisor in the Prime Minister's Office, India.
- It was formed to strengthen the **country's national security apparatus**.
- It is under the direct control of the Prime Minister's Office and operates as an autonomous organization.
- The agency follows the same "norms of conduct" as other intelligence agencies in India such as the **Intelligence Bureau** and the **Research and Analysis Wing**.

Virat Kohli appointed as brand influencer of HSBC India

- **HSBC India** has appointed former Indian men's cricket team captain **Virat Kohli** as **brand influencer**.
- Kohli will help to amplify HSBC's purpose of '**Opening up a world of opportunity**' as it strives to support the ambitions of an aspirational India going global.
- Additionally, HSBC India is set to launch a multimedia campaign featuring Kohli, aimed at re-establishing the value proposition of banking with the company.

About HSBC India :

- Headquarters : Mumbai, Maharashtra, India
- CEO : Hitendra Dave
- The bank has been incorporated in India since **1 January 1983**.
- It is a **foreign bank** under the Banking Regulation Act, **1949** and thus is regulated by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI).

Oliver Dowden sworn in as new United Kingdom's deputy prime minister

- The **British government** named **Oliver Dowden** as **deputy prime minister (PM)** replacing **Dominic Raab** who resigned earlier in the day following a report into claims he bullied colleagues.
- **Dominic Raab's** resignation marks the **3rd dramatic Cabinet departure** from **Rishi Sunak's** government even though Sunak has been PM for under 6 months.

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- In the same announcement, lawmaker **Alex Chalk** was appointed **new justice minister**, a position which was previously held by Dominic Raab.

About Oliver Dowden :

- He served in the Boris Johnson government as **Minister for the Cabinet Office** and **Paymaster General** from 2019 to 2020 and **Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport** from 2020 to 2021.
- In the **2021** cabinet reshuffle, he was moved to the posts of **Co-Chairman** of the **Conservative Party**
- Currently he serves as **cabinet office minister** in **Rishi Sunak's** government.

About UK :

- Prime Minister : Rishi Sunak
- Capital : London
- Currency : Pound sterling

Justice Aparesk Kumar Singh appointed as 8th Chief Justice of Tripura High Court

- **Justice Aparesk Kumar Singh**, Judge of the Jharkhand High Court (HC), was sworn-in as the **8th Chief Justice (CJ)** of the **Tripura High Court**.
- Governor **Shri Satyadeo Narain Arya** administered the oath of office to Justice Singh at a function at the Raj Bhavan.
- The Supreme Court collegium, headed by Chief Justice **D.Y. Chandrachud** recommended the name of Justice Singh for the post.
- The Tripura HC was set up in **March, 2013** along with the full-fledged High Courts in Meghalaya and Manipur.
- All the northeastern states, **excluding Sikkim**, were earlier under the Gauhati High Court.

Madhav Pai appointed as new CEO of WRI India

- The **WRI India** has appointed **Madhav Pai** as the **new Chief Executive Officer (CEO)** of the institute.
- Pai succeeds former CEO **O P Agarwal**.
- In his new role, Pai will lead and **oversee WRI India's strategy, operations and activities**.

About WRI India :

- WRI India is an **independent policy think tank** focussed on **developing a low carbon economy**.

WRI India's mission :

- To move human society to live in ways that protect Earth's environment and its capacity to provide for the needs and aspirations of current and future generations.
- It is legally registered as the **India Resources Trust**.

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- The India Resources Trust has a licence from WRI to use the trademark “WRI India”.
- WRI India is associated with the Washington DC-based **World Resources Institute (WRI)**, a global research organisation to provide cutting edge analysis to address global environment and development challenges.

About WRI :

- Established : 1982
- Headquarters : Washington, D.C. United States
- President & CEO : Ani Dasgupta

Star Sports signs Rishabh Pant as brand ambassador

- The **Walt Disney Company-owned Star Sports** has signed cricketer **Rishabh Pant** as its latest brand ambassador.
- The company also has other cricketers as its ‘Believe Ambassadors’ like **Hardik Pandya, Ravindra Jadeja, KL Rahul, and Shreyas Iyer**.
- Star Sports only had two ambassadors in **2017**.
- Cricketer **Virat Kohli** is also part of this association.
- The ambassadors will represent different parts of the country as well as different IPL Teams.
- The ‘Believe Ambassadors’ represent **different parts of the country** as well as **different IPL Teams**.

Rohit Sharma joins JioCinema as brand ambassador for IPL 2023

- JioCinema, owned by billionaire **Mukesh Ambani's Viacom18**, has signed up **Rohit Sharma**, captain of the men's cricket India, as its **brand ambassador**.
- The cricketer will build on the OTT platform's vision of making sports viewing synonymous with digital.
- In Mar 2023, The Walt Disney Company India-owned channel Star Sports has signed Bollywood actor **Ranveer Singh** as its brand ambassador.

Indian-origin engineer Mr Amit Kshatriya to head NASA's newly-established 'Moon to Mars' programme

- An **Indian-origin software** and robotics engineer **Mr Amit Kshatriya** has been appointed as **first head** of American space agency, **National Aeronautics and Space Administration's (NASA's)** newly-established **Moon to Mars Programme**.
- With this programme, NASA plans to ensure a long-term presence on the Moon to prepare for humanity's next giant leap to the Red Planet.

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- To carry out the **agency's human exploration activities** on the Moon and Mars for the benefit of humanity.
- In his new role, Mr Kshatriya will be responsible for **programme planning and implementation** for **human missions** to the Moon and Mars.

About NASA :

- Founded: 29 July 1958
- Headquarters: Washington, D.C., United States
- NASA Administrator : Bill Nelson
- NASA is an **independent agency** of the U.S. federal government responsible for the civil space program, aeronautics research, and space research.

Mr Rajib K Mishra takes over as Chairman and Managing Director of PTC India

- **PTC India Limited**, the leading provider of **power trading solutions** in India, announced that **Dr Rajib Kumar Mishra** has taken over as the **Chairman and Managing Director (CMD)** of the company.
- Dr Rajib Kumar Mishra has worked as **Executive Director PTC** since October 2011 and was responsible for operations, business development, retail & advisory services.
- He joined the PTC Board in February 2015 as **Director** (Marketing and Business Development).
- He has also served **NTPC** and **POWER GRID** in various capacities.

About PTC India Limited :

- Founded : 16 April 1999
- Headquarters : New Delhi, Delhi, India
- PTC India Limited, formerly **Power Trading Corporation of India Limited**, is an Indian company that provides power trading solutions, cross border power trading, and consultancy services.

Vice Admiral Sanjay Jasjit Singh Assumed Charge As Vice Chief Of The Naval Staff

- **Vice-Admiral Mr Sanjay Jasjit Singh** became the **new Vice-Chief of Naval Staff (VCNS)** of the Indian Navy.
- Mr Sanjay Jasjit Singh succeeds **Mr S N Ghormade**, who demitted office on March 31, **About Indian Navy** :
- Headquarters : New Delhi, Delhi
- Chief of the Naval Staff : Admiral R. Hari Kumar

Reserve Bank of India appoints Mr Neeraj Nigam as New Executive Director

- The **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** has appointed **Mr Neeraj Nigam** as the **new Executive Director (ED)**.
- In his new role, Mr Nigam will be responsible for overseeing several departments including **Consumer Education and Protection, Financial Inclusion and Development, Legal, and Secretary**.
- Before his promotion to ED, he served as the **head** of the **Bhopal (Madhya Pradesh) Regional Office** for

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the RBI.

Mr Gianni Infantino re-elected as FIFA president until 2027

- Mr Gianni Infantino was re-elected as the president of Fédération internationale de football association (FIFA) until 2027 at the 73rd Congress of the body in the Rwandan capital Kigali.
- He has been re-elected as president of FIFA for a 4 year term from 2023 to 2027.

About FIFA :

- Founded : 21 May 1904
- Headquarters : Zurich, Switzerland
- The FIFA is the international governing body of association football, beach soccer, and futsal.

Israel's Ex Envoy To India Mr Ron Malka Appointed Chairman Of Adani Group's Haifa Port

- The former Ambassador of Israel to India Mr Ron Malka has been appointed as Executive Chairman of Haifa Port Company (HPC), which is owned by a consortium of Adani Ports and Special Economic Zone Ltd (APSEZ) and Israel's Gadot Group.
- Mr Ron Malka served as the ambassador of Israel to India and non resident ambassador to Sri Lanka and Bhutan, from 2018 to 2021.

About Israel :

- President : Isaac Herzog
- Prime Minister : Benjamin Netanyahu
- Capital : Jerusalem
- Currency : New shekel

Sudha Shivakumar appointed as 40th National President of FICCI Ladies Organization (FLO)

- Sudha Shivakumar has been appointed as the 40th National President of Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) Ladies Organization (FLO), a women-led and women-focused business chamber from South East Asia for the term 2023-24.
- She succeeds Mr Jayanti Dalmia, 39th national president of FICCI FLO (2022-23)
- As National President, Shivakumar's main focus will be on empowering women by creating an enabling environment that promotes entrepreneurship, industry participation and economic growth of women.

About FLO :

- Established : 1983
- Headquarters : New Delhi, Delhi, India
- FLO was founded as a subsidiary of FICCI, India's premier industry and commerce body.
- FLO at present has 19 chapters across India with about 3,000 business women as its members.

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Suzuki Motorcycle India appoints Mr Kenichi Umeda as new Managing Director

- **Suzuki Motorcycle India Pvt Ltd (SMIPL)** announced the appointment of **Mr Kenichi Umeda** as its new **Managing Director (MD)**.
- Mr Umeda succeeds **Satoshi Uchida**, who has completed his term as the MD of the company, SMIPL.
- Mr Umeda will now be responsible for further growing and strengthening Suzuki Motorcycle India's position in the Indian and overseas markets.

About Suzuki Motorcycle India Pvt Ltd :

- Founded: 2006
- Headquarters: Gurgaon, Haryana, India.
- Suzuki Motorcycle India, Private Limited is a **wholly owned Indian subsidiary** of **Suzuki, Japan**.
- It was the **third Suzuki automotive venture** in India, after **TVS Suzuki** and **Maruti Suzuki**.

Axis Securities appoints Mr Pranav Haridasan as new MD and CEO

- **Axis Securities Limited** has appointed **Mr Pranav Haridasan** as its new **Managing Director (MD)** and **Chief Executive Officer (CEO)** for a tenure of **3 years**.
- He will succeed the current MD & CEO, **Mr B Gopakumar** who has been transferred to Axis Asset Management Company as MD & CEO.

About Axis Securities Limited :

- Incorporated on : 21 Jul, 2006
- Headquarters : Mumbai, Maharashtra, India
- Axis Securities is a **subsidiary** of **Axis Bank** which operates retail broking services through Axis Direct.

Iran appoints UAE ambassador for first time since 2016

- Iran had appointed an **ambassador** to the **United Arab Emirates (UAE)** for the **first time since 2016**, amid a realignment of relations between Gulf states and Iran.
- Iran appointed **Reza Ameri** as its ambassador to the UAE.
- He has served as the **Director General** of the **Iranian expatriates' office** in the Foreign Ministry.
- Prior to being appointed to his current role, Ameri's posts included **ambassador Islamic Republic of Iran to Algeria, Sudan and Eritrea**.

About Iran :

- President : Ebrahim Raisi
- Capital : Tehran

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- Currency : Iranian rial

Honda Motorcycle & Scooter India appoints Tsutsumu Otani as new President, CEO & MD

- One of the leading two-wheeler makers, **Honda Motorcycle & Scooter India (HMSI)** appointed **Tsutsumu Otani** as the **President, Chief Executive Officer (CEO)** and **Managing Director (MD)**.
- He has succeeded **Atsushi Ogata**, who headed Honda's Indian two-wheeler operations for three years.
- Prior to this, Otani was the **Vice President at Honda Motor Co. Japan**

About HMSI :

- Founded : 20 August 1999
- Headquarters : Gurgaon, Haryana, India
- HMSI is the wholly owned Indian subsidiary of Honda Motor Company, Limited, Japan.

Ministry of Corporate Affairs appointed Grant Thornton Bharat to Assist in Capacity Building

- The **Ministry of Corporate Affairs (MCA)** has appointed **Grant Thornton Bharat LLP**, one of the largest fully integrated Assurance, Tax and Advisory firms in India, to **assist** in the formulation of an **Annual Capacity Building Plan (ACBP)** as a part of its efforts to build capacity among its cadre/ posts and other organisations to make them 'future ready' and to meet the requirements of a vision of 'New India'.
- To **enhance** the **delivery system** and create a '**citizen centric, future ready civil service** with the right attitude, skills and knowledge aligned to the vision of New India'.

About MCA :

- Union Minister : Smt. Nirmala Sitharaman
- Minister of State : Rao Inderjit Singh

MCA extends tenure of IL&FS chairman Chandra Shekhar Rajan till September 2023

- The **Ministry of Corporate Affairs (MCA)** has **extended** the term of **Chandra Shekhar Rajan** as **non-executive chairman** of **IL&FS (Infrastructure Leasing & Financial Services Limited)** up to September 30, 2023.
- Besides, the ministry has also extended the term of **Nand Kishore** as **managing director** of IL&FS up to March 31, 2024.

About IL&FS :

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- Founded : 1987
- Headquarters : Mumbai, Maharashtra, India
- IL&FS is an **Indian state-funded infrastructure development and finance company**.
- It was an "Reserve Bank of India (RBI) registered Core Investment Company"

National Rifle Association of India

- Senior Vice President **Kalikesh Narayan Singh Deo** assumed charge as the **President** of the **National Rifle Association of India (NRAI)**.
- He replaced **Raninder Singh**.
- Raninder served as the president of NRAI from December 29, 2010 till December 29, 2022 & he **completed 12 years** of his service.
- As per the **National Sports Code**, the **Sports Ministry** issued a directive that the heads of **National Sports Federations (NSFs)** cannot hold office for more than **12 years**.
- As per the code, Raninder cannot continue as NRAI chief any further.

About NRAI :

- Founded : 1951
- Headquarters : New Delhi, Delhi, India

India was elected to United Nations Statistical Commission for a 4-year term starting in 2024

- **India** has been elected to the **United Nations (UN) Statistical Commission** for a **four-year term** starting from 1st January 2024.
- India received a resounding **46** out of 53 votes, ahead of South Korea (23), China (19), and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) (15).
- India was elected by secret ballot while **Argentina, Sierra Leone, Slovenia, Ukraine, the United Republic of Tanzania** and the **United States of America** were elected by acclamation for a 4-year term of office beginning January 1, 2024.

About UN Statistical Commission :

- Established : 1947
- Location : New York, United States

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- Chairperson of UN Statistical Commission for the year 2023 : **Ms. Gabriella Vukovich (Hungary)**

Global Brand Ambassador

- **Tommy Hilfiger**, the premium fashion brand owned by NYSE-listed PVH Corp, has signed Tollywood star **heroine Samantha Ruth Prabhu** as the new **brand ambassador** for their **women watches** category.
- From now on, Sam will appear in the women's watch ads of the Tommy Hill figure company.
- As part of the **Spring Summer 23 campaign**, Samantha will appear in the advertisements of the Tommy Hill figure release in the month of April, 2023
- Tommy company is a global brand.
- This company offers products for every person to have their own personal style and design.

Suzlon board appoints J P Chalasani as new Chief Executive Officer

- The board of members of Wind and turbine manufacturer **Suzlon Energy** has appointed **J P Chalasani** as the new **Chief Executive Officer (CEO)** of the company.
- He has replaced **Ashwani Kumar**, who resigned from the post on account of personal reasons.
- He joined Reliance Group (undivided) as a Vice President in 1995.
- He also served as the **first CEO** and the Director on the Board of BSES Rajdhani and BSES Yamuna Power Limited.
- He had been **Group CEO of Suzlon** from April 2016 to July 2020 .
- He continued as **Strategic Advisor** to the Suzlon Group thereafter.
- He was also the Group CEO and Managing Director of **Punj Lloyd**.

About Suzlon Energy Limited :

- Founded : 1995
- Headquarters : Pune, Maharashtra, India
- Suzlon Energy Limited is an **Indian multinational wind turbine manufacturer**.

K Krithivasan appointed as CEO of Tata Consultancy Services

- **Tata Consultancy Services (TCS)** has appointed **K Krithivasan** as its **new Chief Executive Officer (CEO)** and **Managing Director (MD)** of the company.
- He will take over the post with effect from **June 01, 2023** for a tenure of **5 years** which ends in Feb 2027.

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- He will replace outgoing CEO **Rajesh Gopinathan**, who was appointed in 2017.
- Rajesh Gopinathan, will continue to assist him in a smooth transition till end of **September 2023**.

About TCS :

- Founded : 1968
- Headquarters : Mumbai, Maharashtra, India
- Chairman : Natarajan Chandrasekaran
- TCS is an **Indian multinational information technology (IT) services and consulting company**.

Justice Apresh Kumar Singh appointed as new Chief Justice of Tripura High Court

- In exercise of the powers conferred by **clause (1) of Article 217** of the **Constitution of India**, the **President of India** appointed **Justice Aparesh Kumar Singh**, Judge of Jharkhand High Court as the **Chief Justice of Tripura High Court**.
- Apresh Kumar replaced **Justice T Amarnath Goud**, who was serving as the Acting Chief Justice of the Tripura High Court from November 2022.
- He was appointed as an **Additional Judge** of the High Court of Jharkhand on 24th January 2012 and confirmed as a permanent Judge on 16th January 2014.
- He has also served as the **Acting Chief Justice** of the **Jharkhand High Court** from the 20th of December, 2022 to the 19th of February, 2023.

About Tripura High Court :

- The Tripura High Court was established on **23 March 2013** following an amendment to the Constitution of India and the North-Eastern Areas Act of **1971**.

ATMA elects Anshuman Singhania as new Chairman and Arnab Banerjee as new Vice-Chairman

- **Anshuman Singhania**, the Managing Director of JK Tyre & Industries Ltd has been elected as the new **Chairman of Automotive Tyre Manufacturers' Association (ATMA)**.
- Apart from this, **Arnab Banerjee**, the Managing Director & CEO of CEAT Ltd, has taken over as **Vice-Chairman of ATMA**.
- ATMA was set up in **1975**, registered under The Companies Act, as the representative body of the automotive tyre industry in India.
- ATMA members include **Apollo Tyres, Bridgestone India, Ceat, Continental India, Goodyear India, JK Tyre & Industries, MRF and TVS Tyres**.
- **8 large tyre companies** comprising a mix of Indian and International tyre majors and representing over **90%** of production of tyres in India are members of the Association.

NPCI appoints Vishal Anand Kanvaty as chief technology officer

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- The **National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI)** has appointed **Vishal Anand Kanvaty** as its **Chief Technology Officer (CTO)**.
- In his new role, Kanvaty will be taking care of the new-age technology and shall be responsible for the transformational journey of NPCI.
- Kanvaty joined NPCI in **2017**.
- Prior to this he managed the portfolio of **Chief Market Innovation** as well as Product and Innovations profiles.

About NPCI :

- Founded : 2008
- Headquarters : Mumbai, Maharashtra, India
- MD & CEO : Dilip Asbe
- The NPCI is an umbrella organization for **operating retail payments** and settlement systems in India.
- It is an initiative of the **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** and **Indian Banks' Association (IBA)** under the provisions of the Payment and Settlement Systems Act, **2007**, for creating a robust Payment & Settlement Infrastructure in India.

RBI approves re-appointment of Sanjay Agarwal as MD&CEO of AU Small Finance Bank

- The **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** has approved the re-appointment of **Sanjay Agarwal** as **Managing Director (MD) & Chief Executive Officer (CEO)** of Jaipur-headquartered AU Small Finance Bank for 3 years with effect from 19 April 2023 till April 18, 2026.
- The central bank also approved the re-appointment of **Uttam Tibrewal** as **Whole Time Director** for 3 years with effect from 19 April, 2023.

About AU Small Finance Bank Limited :

- Founded : 1996 (Converted to a small finance bank on 19 April 2017)
- Headquarters : Jaipur, Rajasthan, India
- Tagline : Chalo Aage Badhe

Karnataka Bank appoints Sekhar Rao as interim CEO

- The **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** has approved the appointment of **Sekhar Rao** as interim managing director (MD) and chief executive officer (CEO) of Karnataka Bank.
- He has been appointed for a period of **three months** or till the appointment of regular MD and CEO whichever is earlier.

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- He replaced Mahabaleshwara M S.

About Karnataka Bank :

- Founded : 18 February 1924
- Headquarters : Mangalore, Karnataka, India
- Tagline : Your Family Bank Across India

AWARDS AND HONOUR

Maha Metro receives prestigious 'Asia Book of Record' citation

- Having being awarded Guinness World Records and two Asia Book of Records earlier, **Maha Metro Nagpur was honoured with the prestigious Asia Book of Records certification for three different categories.**
- The certification and citation was presented by Deputy Chief Minister of Maharashtra Devendra Fadnavis at Metro Bhawan on March 19.
- The categories for which Nagpur Metro was presented with Asia Book of Records certification are 'Longest Length of Metro Rail Corridor Construction in Shortest Time', 'First Solar PV System in a Metro Rail Project for Integrated Consumption' and 'Heaviest Single Span Double Decker Steel Bridge Truss over Railway tracks in Urban Area', in Asia.

Nepalese Wicketkeeper-batsman Aasif Sheikh declared winner of 2022 CMJ Spirit of Cricket Award

- **Nepalese Wicketkeeper-batsman Aasif Sheikh** has been declared the winner of the 2022 **Christopher Martin-Jenkins Spirit of Cricket Award.**
- The Award is presented every year by the **Marylebone Cricket Club (MCC), UK in conjunction with the BBC.**
- The CMJ Spirit of Cricket Award was created in 2013 by MCC and the BBC in memory of former MCC President and BBC Test Match Special commentator Christopher Martin-Jenkins (CMJ), who was passionate about promoting the spirit of the game.
- He was also awarded the ICC Spirit of Cricket Award for his actions in January of this year.

Aaliya Mir Becomes The First Woman From J&K To Receive Wildlife Conservation Award

- J&K's **Aaliya Mir gets Wildlife Conservation Award.**
- She is J&K's **only female wildlife rescuer.**
- She is best known for her work with snakes.
- She has **rescued Asiatic black bears, Himalayan brown bears, birds, leopards and other mammals.**
- She works as a project manager with Wildlife SOS, a non-governmental organisation.
- She got the award from LG Manoj Sinha on the International Day of Forests (21 March) event.

Assam NGO wins Children's Champion Award 2023

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- Students' Welfare Mission, popularly known as **Tapoban**, has won the **Children's Champion Award 2023**.
- Tapoban is working for special needs and autistic children.
- The award has been presented by Justice S. Muralidhar, Chief Justice of the Odisha High Court to Kumud Kalita, founder-President of Tapoban.
- Tapoban, established in 2005, has received award in the health and nutrition category award for its efforts to provide quality care to children with special needs.

Zelensky awarded Poland's highest honour

- Volodymyr Zelensky has been awarded Poland's highest Order of the White Eagle award.
- He has received the award for his service to security, resilience and the defense of human rights.
- Polish President Andrzej Duda presented the award to Volodymyr Zelensky.
- The Order of the White Eagle is Poland's oldest and highest decoration.

Indian-American mathematician C R Rao awarded math 'Nobel Prize'

- The Indian-American statistician C R Rao has been awarded the 2023 International Prize in Statistics, which is statistics' equivalent of the Nobel Prize.
- It was established in 2016 and is awarded once every two years to an individual or team "for major achievements using statistics to advance science, technology and human welfare."
- Rao's groundbreaking paper, 'Information and accuracy attainable in the estimation of statistical parameters', was published in 1945 in the Bulletin of the Calcutta Mathematical Society, a journal that is otherwise not well known to the statistics community.

Bharat Biotech wins award at World Vaccine Congress

- Bharat Biotech has won the 'Best Production /Process Development' award as part of the Vaccine Industry Excellence (VIE) awards at the World Vaccine Congress 2023.
- The Congress was held during April 3-6 in Washington, USA.
- Hyderabad-based Bharat Biotech was the only Indian company in the list of VIE awards in various categories, including best clinical trial company, best clinical trial network, best central/speciality laboratory award, best contract research organisation, best production/process development award, among others.
- Bharat Biotech is the world's first producer of intranasal Covid-19 vaccine, iNcovacc.
- Its intramuscular vaccine, Covaxin, is part of India's public vaccination programme and was also exported.

Kumar Mangalam Birla received AIMA's 'Business Leader of the Decade' award

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- **Kumar Mangalam Birla**, chairman of Aditya Birla Group, won the prestigious 'Business Leader of the Decade' award at All India Management Association's (AIMA) 13th Managing India Awards ceremony.
- The annual event to facilitate the titans of the industry, held in New Delhi.
- **Tata Steel Chairman T V Narendran** was facilitated with the 'AIMA-JRD Tata Corporate Leadership' award.

Amit Shah to confer Maharashtra Bhushan Award to social activist Appasaheb Dharmadhikari

- Renowned social worker and reformer **Dattatreya Narayan Dharmadhikari** alias **Appasaheb Dharmadhikari** will be honored with the Maharashtra Bhushan Award by Union Home Minister **Amit Shah**.
- **Appasaheb Dharmadhikari** was nominated for the prestigious 2022 Maharashtra Bhushan Award.
- It is the highest civilian award conferred by the government of Maharashtra.

Utsa Patnaik wins Malcolm Adiseshiah Award 2023

- **Utsa Patnaik** has been chosen for the **Malcolm Adiseshiah Award 2023**.
- **Utsa Patnaik** is a renowned economist of national and international repute.

Indian-American CEO Raj Subramaniam presented with Pravasi Bharatiya Samman

- **Raj Subramaniam**, the Indian-American CEO of global transportation giant **FedEx**, has been presented with the prestigious **Pravasi Bharatiya Samman**, the highest civilian award given by India to persons of Indian origin and Indian diaspora.

RANKING AND INDEXES

Mukesh Ambani is the only Indian in Hurun Global Rich list's top 10

- According to the **Hurun Global Rich List** released **Reliance Industries (RIL)** Chairman and Asia's richest man **Mukesh Ambani** became the only Indian to feature in the list of top 10 billionaires across the world.
- Despite a 20 per cent dip in wealth, the **RIL boss** occupied ninth rank globally with a net worth of \$82 billion.
- The billionaire has also retained the wealthiest Asian title for the third consecutive year.
- **Ambani** ranked first, followed by **Gautam Adani** with a net worth of \$53 billion among Indian billionaires.
- **Cyrus Poonawalla** stood third with a net worth of \$28 billion.
- **Shiv Nadar** and their family is fourth with \$27 billion and **Lakshmi Mittal** is fifth with \$20 billion.
- The richest new entrant from India, **Rekha Rakesh Jhunjhunwala & family**, tops the list of top 16 new Indian entrants in 2023 M3M Hurun Global Rich List.

Agriculture sector employs highest female workers

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- According to the **annual Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) Report 2021-22**, **agriculture sector has the highest estimated percentage distribution of female workers followed by manufacturing.**
- Nearly 63% workers are female in the agriculture sector at the pan-India level, while the estimated percentage distribution of female worker in the manufacturing sector is 11.2%.
- The PLFS report 2021-22 showed that the **estimated female labour force participation rate (LFPR) in Haryana on usual status for age 15 years and above is 19.1%. District-wise estimates** are not captured in PLFS reports.

26 % of world's population does not have safe drinking water: UNESCO report

- 26 per cent of the world's population does not have safe drinking water and 46 per cent lack access to **safely managed sanitation**, according to a report published by **UNESCO at the UN 2023 Water Conference in New York.**
- As per the report, between two and three billion people experience water shortages for at least one month per year, posing severe risks to livelihoods, notably through food security and access to electricity.
- The **global urban population facing water scarcity is projected to double from 930 million in 2016 to 1.7 to 2.4 billion people in 2050.**
- The growing incidence of extreme and prolonged droughts is also stressing ecosystems, with dire consequences for both plant and animal species.

About UNESCO:

- Founded: 16 November 1945, London, United Kingdom
- Headquarters: Paris, France
- Head: Audrey Azoulay; (Director-General)

Ladakh, Mayurbhanj Among TIME Magazine's 50 Greatest Places In The World 2023

- **Mayurbhanj district of Odisha has been listed by TIME Magazine among the 50 extraordinary destinations to explore in its list of the World's Greatest Places of 2023.**
- Apart from **Mayurbhanj**, **Ladakh is the second destination** from India to be included in the coveted magazine.
- The only place on earth to spot the exceedingly rare black tiger is open to visitors again.
- The Magazine also refers to the other destinations of Odisha including the state capital **Bhubaneswar.**

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Important Monthly Current Affairs Capsule – April 2023

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IIT Delhi enters list of top 50 institutions for engineering in QS Rankings 2023

- The Indian Institute of Technology-Delhi has entered the list of top 50 institutions for engineering in the QS World University Rankings by Subject 2023.
- With a ranking of 48, it is up by seven places from last year.
- As many as 44 programmes offered by Indian higher education institutions in different disciplines have figured in the top 100 globally.
- Last year, 35 Indian programmes made it to the top 100.
- The Delhi University is the Indian varsity with maximum entries (27) followed by Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Bombay, (25) and IIT-Kharagpur (23).
- The thirteen edition of the QS World University Rankings by Subject has ranked 66 Indian universities, cumulatively achieving 355 entries, a 18.7 per cent increase compared to last year (299).

India falls six spots in Passport Index 2023; UAE ranks number one

- Slipping six ranks from last year, the Indian passport has registered the largest global fall in the Passport Index 2023 — ranking at the 144th position this year, with a mobility score of 70.
- Several nations, like Serbia, have been under pressure to introduce visa requirements for Indian nationals.
- This year, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) has the highest mobility score of 181, and ranks number one.
- It was followed by Sweden, Germany, Finland, Luxembourg, Spain, France, Italy, the Netherlands, and Austria, with a joint mobility score of 174.

Elon Musk titled the Most Followed Twitter User

- Elon Musk titled as the Most Followed Twitter User
- The business tycoon Elon Musk left behind former US President Barack Obama along with Justin Bieber in the number of followers he gained on Twitter.
- Twitter records that over 450 million people across the world use this famous social networking platform.
- Out of the total Twitter users, more than 133 million follow this new owner Elon.
- He acquired this site on October 27, 2023, for worth \$44 billion.

India Is Home To The Fifth Highest Number Of Female Billionaires In The World

- India is home to the fifth highest number of female billionaires in the world.

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- According to City Index, the **United States has the highest number of female billionaires in the world with 92 in total, double that of China in second place with 46.**
- While the US might be home to some of the highest profile male billionaires, 4 out of the 5 richest women in the world, including Walmart heiress Alice Walton, also hail from the states.
- **Germany takes third place with 32 female billionaires**, just over a third than that of the US.
- As the richest woman in the world and Vice Chairman of L'Oréal, French-born **Françoise Bettencourt Meyers takes the top spot with a wealth of \$81.49 billion.**
- New York-based socialite Julia Koch (\$59.65bn) and Walmart inheritor Alice Walton (\$60.16bn) are almost tied in third and second places, respectively.

Tripura becomes best performing northeast state in e-procurement, receives award

- **Tripura became the best-performing state** among North Eastern States in implementing e-Procurement.
- Tripura received this award at a **National Workshop on e-Procurement.**
- A National Workshop on e-Procurement was organized by the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Electronic and Information Technology.
- The Tripura government has been recognized for their work in various departments in the last 5 years.
- The Tripura government **has received this award for completing the work within a specified time under the Power Department's Saubhagya Yojana.**
- Tripura also gets the title of the best performer in agriculture, and panchayat self-employment.

Mumbai among 19 cities with the best public transport in the world, and it's the only one from India

- **Mumbai, Maharashtra's capital has featured in the list of top twenty cities with best public transport in the world.**
- The city's Suburban Railways, which was the first passenger railway to be built by the British East India Company, forms the backbone of public transport for a population of 12.5 million.
- **The list that has been released by Time Out**, the publisher of global city guides.
- Maharashtra's capital city Mumbai featured in the **nineteenth rank on the list.**

The world's best cities for public transit –

- Berlin, Germany,
- Prague, Czech Republic,

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- Tokyo, Japan,
- Copenhagen, Denmark,
- Stockholm, Sweden.

MRF emerges as 'second strongest tyre brand in the world'

- MRF Limited has emerged as the second strongest tyre brand in the world according to the latest report by Brand Finance on the **Most Valuable and Strongest Tyre Brands in the world**.
- MRF has scored 83.2 out of 100 in brand strength and was awarded a **AAA-** brand rating.
- French company Michelin has been rated both the most valuable and strongest tyre brand.
- There are **two Indian tyre companies** in the Top 15 list of most valuable – MRF Tyres and Apollo Tyres.
- **MRF Tyres, ranked 13th**, sees its brand value grow 3% to \$0.3 billion and has seen a sizeable jump of 15 ranks in the latest industry ranking list.
- At No. 15 is Apollo Tyres with a brand value of \$0.6 billion.

Andhra Pradesh's Jagan Mohan Reddy most wealthiest CM in India

- Twenty-nine of the 30 incumbent **Chief Ministers** are crorepatis with Andhra Pradesh's Jagan Mohan Reddy having the highest assets totalling ₹510 crore, according to poll affidavits analysed by the Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR).
- **West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee** has the lowest total assets of about ₹15 lakh, the ADR said.
- non-bailable offences with over five years of imprisonment, the report said.
- The **top three Chief Ministers** in terms of assets are Andhra Pradesh's Jagan Mohan Reddy (over ₹510 crores), Arunachal Pradesh's Pema Khandu (over ₹163 crores), and Odisha's Naveen Patnaik (over ₹63 crores), according to the ADR.
- The **three CMs with the lowest declared** assets are — West Bengal's Mamata Banerjee (over ₹15 lakhs), Kerala's Pinarayi Vijayan (over ₹1 crore) and Haryana's Manohar Lal (over ₹1 crore).

Mumbai ranks among the world's tree-rich cities in 2022, the second time in a row

- India's commercial capital Mumbai has been included in the **World Tree City 2022** list, for the second consecutive year.
- The Arbor Day Foundation Chief Executive Dan Lambe has awarded the TCW certificate signed by **Hiroto Mitsugi** to the BMC authorities

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- The United Nations Food & Agriculture Organisation (FAO) and ADF conduct the TCW programme and in the past 50 years, the ADF has planted more than 35 crore trees worldwide, with a target of 50 crore more trees by 2027.

Shah Rukh Khan tops TIME 100 Reader Poll, defeats Lionel Messi, Prince Harry

- **Shah Rukh Khan** the man that gave Bollywood its biggest hit "Pathaan" since the industry seemed to have been suffering in box office collections in the post-covid era, **has now ranked highest in TIME 100 Reader Poll.**
- **Shah Rukh Khan, 57, topped the list of most influential people** around the world, for **TIME** magazine's 100th edition of the list.
- Shah Rukh Khan received 4 percent of the 1.2 million votes cast by readers in the 2023 TIME100 poll.
- **In second place are the Iranian women who are protesting for their rights.**
- They garnered 3% of the votes.
- The woman also won the magazine's 2022 Person of the Year reader poll.
- In third place, with 2% of the votes, were the healthcare workers who've been at the frontlines of the pandemic since 2020.
- Further, **Prince Harry and Meghan Markle took the fourth spot**, with each of them getting 1.9% of the votes.
- Harry made headlines around the world earlier this year after he released his memoir Spare.
- The **2023 TIME100 list will be released on 13 April.**
- In 2022, Gautam Adani, Karuna Nundy, Khurram Parvez were the only Indians who featured on the list.

Aaditya Thackeray selected for World Economic Forum's Young Global Leaders Class 2023

- The World Economic Forum (WEF) inducted Shiv Sena (UBT) leader Aaditya Thackeray and national vice president of BJP youth wing Madhukeshwar Desai to the list of world's most promising public figures under the age of 40.
- **Tanvi Ratna**, Founder and CEO, Policy 4.0. Research Foundation **Aakrit Vaish**, Co-Founder and CEO, Jio Haptik Technologies Limited **Sudarshan Venu**, Managing Director, TVS Motor Company Limited
- **Vibin B Joseph**, Executive Director and CEO, **BIOZEEN** are the newest members of its Young Global Leaders Class of 2023.

Delhi airport emerges as the world's 9th busiest airport in 2022

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- According to Airports Council International (ACI) list, Delhi Airport with more than 5.94 crore passenger traffic has become the ninth busiest airport in the world in 2022.
- Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport has topped the list with 93.7 million passengers.
- Dallas Fort Worth Airport and Chicago O'Hare Airport are in the second and third positions respectively.
- Dubai Airport is in the fifth spot with 66.1 million passenger traffic.
- Delhi's Indira Gandhi International Airport (IGIA) is the only airport in the top 10 list from South and South East Asia.
- Delhi Airport was ranked 13th in 2021 and 17th in 2019.
- Delhi International Airport Ltd (DIAL) manages Indira Gandhi International Airport.

World Energy Transitions: Outlook 2023 report.

- International Renewable Energy Agency released 'World Energy Transitions : Outlook 2023' report.
- This report has highlighted that significant progress has been made in the energy transition, particularly in the power sector.
- According to the report, renewables contributed 83 per cent to the global power additions in 2022.
- As per the report, the deployment of renewables should be increased from 3,000 gigawatt (GW) to 10,000 GW by 2030 to keep the rise of temperature below 1.5 degrees Celsius.

UP bags 3rd position in providing tap water connections in country, beats Rajasthan

- Uttar Pradesh superseded Rajasthan and became the third state of the country in terms of number of connections tap water connections under 'Har Ghar Nal Yojana'.
- Top 5 states providing tap connection include Bihar (1,59,10,093 connections), Maharashtra (1,09,98,678 connections), UP (97,11,717 connections), Gujarat (91,18,449 connections) and Tamil Nadu (79,62,581 connections).

India improves its ranking by 6 spots in global biz environment rankings

- India's rank improved by six spots in the global Business Environment Rankings.
- The Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU) has released the latest Business Environment Rankings (BER), India's rank has improved from 52nd to 46th position.
- According to the EIU's latest business environment Rankings, Singapore, Canada and Denmark will be the three countries with the best business environment over the next five years.
- The United States and Switzerland are in the fourth and fifth spot respectively.

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India ranks 5th in countries with most AI investments

- India is ranked 5th in the list of countries with the most AI investment as per Stanford University's annual AI Index report.
- The total amount of investments in AI startups in India was \$3.24 billion in 2022.
- The US, China, UK and Israel are placed ahead of India.

Russia becomes fourth largest import source for India in FY23

- Russia has moved up 16 ranks to become the fourth largest import source for India in FY 2022-23, with a 369.4 percent increase (year-on-year) to \$46.33 billion, comprising primarily crude and petroleum products, while its share in India's imports expanded to 6.5 per cent from 1.6 per cent in the previous fiscal.
- The top destinations for Indian exports in FY 2022-23 included the US with exports valued at \$78.31 billion, the UAE at \$31.33 billion, the Netherlands at \$20.90 billion, China at \$15.32 billion, Singapore at \$11.95 billion, Bangladesh at \$11.67 billion and the UK at \$11.46 billion.

World of Statistics releases ranking of the world's "most criminal countries"

- World of Statistics has shared the ranking of the world's "most criminal countries".
- On the list, Venezuela has been ranked top, followed by Papua New Guinea (2), Afghanistan (3), South Africa (4), Honduras (5), Trinidad (6), Guyana (7), Syria (8), Somalia (9) and Jamaica (10), respectively.
- India stood at 77 spots while the US and UK were ahead of India in the criminal ranking country.
- The USA was at 55th number and the UK at 65th rank, according to the World of Statistics.

US became India's largest trading partner in FY23

- The US became India's largest trading partner in FY23.
- Bilateral trade between both countries has increased by 7.65% to \$128.55 billion in 2022-23 as against \$119.5 billion in 2021-22 as per provisional data of the commerce ministry.
- Exports to the US increased by 2.81% to \$78.31 billion in 2022-23.
- During 2022-23, the UAE was India's third largest trading partner with \$76.16 billion.
- UAE was followed by Saudi Arabia (\$52.72 billion) and Singapore (USD 35.55 billion).
- India is the world's 3rd largest consumer market.

Bengaluru tops highest digital transactions in 2022

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- Bengaluru with 29 million transactions worth USD 65 billion emerged on top in digital payment transactions.
- New Delhi with 19.6 million transactions worth USD 50 billion and Mumbai with 18.7 million transactions worth USD 49.5 billion are in second and third spots.
- Pune and Chennai are also among the top 5 in digital payment transactions in 2022

India is the 4th biggest military spender in the world: SIPRI

- India, which has sharpened its focus on building its defence capabilities and strengthening military infrastructure along the China border, was the fourth biggest military spender in the world in 2022 after the United States, China and Russia.
- Saudi Arabia was in fifth place.
- The five countries accounted for 63% of the world's military spending.
- The top three spenders in 2022 were the United States, China and Russia, who accounted for 56 percent of the world's total share of military expenditure, as per the Swedish think tank's data.
- India's military spending of \$81.4 billion was the fourth highest in the world.
- It was 6% more than in 2021 and up by 47% from 2013.
- The report comes at a time when India and China have been locked in a standoff along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in eastern Ladakh since May 2020, and negotiations are on to ease border tensions.
- Total global military expenditure increased by 3.7% in 2022, hitting a new high of \$2,240 billion, Sipri said while highlighting that Russia's invasion of Ukraine was a major driver of the growth in spending last year.
- China continues to spend more on defence than India.
- In 2022, China's military spending reached \$292 billion.
- In February, India set aside Rs. 5.93 lakh crore for defence spending in this year's budget, including a capital outlay of Rs.1.62 lakh crore for the military's modernisation, with the allocation almost 12% higher than that in last year's budget estimates, and about 2% more compared to that in the revised estimates for 2022-23.
- In another report published in March 2023, Sipri said India's arms imports fell 11% between 2013-17 and 2018-22 but the country is still the world's top importer of military hardware.
- That report came at a time when India sharpened its focus on achieving self-reliance in the defence manufacturing sector.
- Also, India's share of the global arms imports was the highest during the last five years at 11%, followed by Saudi Arabia (9.6%), Qatar (6.4%), Australia (4.7%) and China (4.7%), according to data published by Sipri that measures weapons imports over five-year periods.

About SIPRI

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- The SIPRI is an independent international institute dedicated to research into conflict, armaments, arms control and disarmament.
- Established in 1966 at Stockholm, SIPRI provides data, analysis and recommendations, based on open sources, to policymakers, researchers, media and the interested public.

India climbs 6 places on World Bank index to 38 among 139 countries

- **India has improved its ranking in the World Bank's Logistic Performance Index 2023 by six places**, owing to significant investments in both soft and hard infrastructure as well as technology, which has led to an improvement in the country's port performance.
- Singapore and Finland are the most efficient and highest-ranked LPI countries.
- **India's ranking:** According to the report, **India's rank in the index of 139 countries has risen to 38 from 44 in 2018.**
- **International shipments:** In 2023, India's ranking for international shipments improved significantly, moving up from 44 in 2018 to 22.
- **Logistics competence and equality:** The country also climbed four places to rank 48 in logistics competence and equality.
- **Timeline:** In terms of timelines, India saw a significant improvement, moving up 17 places in the rankings.
- **Tracking and tracing:** Additionally, India improved three places in tracking and tracing, now ranking at 38.
- The LPI 2023 allows for comparisons across 139 countries.
- The 2023 LPI for the first time measures the speed of trade with indicators derived from big datasets tracking shipments.
- India's logistics sector is estimated to account for about 14.4% of the GDP. The unorganized sector amounts to over 90% of the logistics sector.
- The GOI proclaimed PM Gati Shakti's initiative, a National Master Plan for multi-modal connectivity, in October 2021, which will lessen the logistics cost and work as an economic booster by 2024-25.
- The 7th edition of Connecting to Compete, the Logistics Performance Index (LPI) report, comes after three years amid the Covid-19 pandemic.

TCS tops LinkedIn's 2023 Top Companies India list showcasing best places to work

- **Tata Consultancy Services has emerged as the top company in a list**, which showcases the best places to work and grow careers, for 2023.
- **TCS is followed by Amazon (2) and Morgan Stanley (3) in the '2023 Top Companies India' list prepared by LinkedIn.**
- There has been a shift from tech companies, which dominated the list last year, with companies across financial services, oil and gas, professional services, manufacturing and gaming featuring in this year's list.
- A vast majority of the companies, that is 10 out of 25 companies are from the financial services/ banking/

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fintech space, including companies such as Macquarie Group (5), HDFC Bank (11), Mastercard (12), and Yubi (14).

- The 2023 Top Companies India list is based on LinkedIn's data to rank companies on eight pillars that have been shown to lead to career progression, including ability to advance, skills growth, company stability, external opportunity, company affinity, gender diversity, educational background and employee presence in the country.

Dalai Lama gets 1959 Ramon Magsaysay Award in person after 64 years

- The 1959 Ramon Magsaysay Award was presented to Tibetan spiritual leader the Dalai Lama after 64 years.
- The Ramon Magsaysay Award, often called the "Nobel Prize of Asia", is an annual award.
- It is established to perpetuate former Philippine President Ramon Magsaysay's example of integrity in governance, courageous service to the people, and pragmatic idealism within a democratic society.
- The prize was established in April 1957 by the trustees of the Rockefeller Brothers Fund based in New York City with the concurrence of the Philippine government.

Karnataka bags national award for Fasal Bima Yojana

- Karnataka has bagged the national award for the best implementation of Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY), a crop subsidy insurance scheme, for the year 2022-23.
- The PMFBY is a large-scale crop subsidy insurance scheme aimed to safeguard the farmers, implemented in Karnataka in 2016.
- This scheme is being managed by the Department of Agriculture, Cooperation and Farmers' Welfare, under the Ministry of Agriculture, along with empanelled general insurance companies.
- PMFBY is being implemented in Karnataka, through its own portal 'Samrakshane', designed and developed by the state through National Informatics Centre (NIC).
- The Agriculture and Farmers Welfare Department, Government of Puducherry, has secured the top rank in the smaller States category for its successful implementation of the Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY) crop insurance scheme.

Gates named after Sachin Tendulkar, Brian Lara unveiled at Sydney Cricket Ground

- The Sydney Cricket Ground (SCG) used legendary Indian cricketer Sachin Tendulkar's 50th birthday celebrations to unveil gates at the iconic Australia venue that are named after the India legend and fellow cricketing great Brian Lara from West Indies.
- All visiting players will now take the field through the newly-named Lara-Tendulkar Gates, with the duo bestowed with the honour to coincide with Mr. Tendulkar's 50th birthday.
- Mr. Tendulkar's first Test century on Australia shores came at the picturesque Sydney venue and the champion right-hander averaged a whopping 157 from five Test matches at the ground.

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- The unveiling also took place 30 years after Lara made his famous innings of 277 against Australia at the SCG in 1993 and the West Indies great was thrilled to receive the honour.

Ratan Tata Awarded Australia's Highest Civilian Honour

- **Tata Sons' Chairman Emeritus Ratan Tata** has been conferred with **Australia's highest civilian honour**, the country's High Commissioner to India Barry O'Farrell announced.
- The **Order of Australia (AO) award** was presented for the industrialist's efforts in strengthening the **India-Australia bilateral relations**.
- The 85-year-old has battled for the 2022 India-Australia Economic Cooperation and Trade Agreement, while Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) reportedly employs the biggest Australian workforce of any Indian firm with about 17,000 employees.
- In October 2022, Tata received 'Sewa Ratna' from the RSS-affiliated Sewa Bharti for his philanthropic pursuits.
- He is also a 2008 recipient of India's second-highest civilian award, the Padma Vibhushan.

Wing Commander Deepika Misra becomes 1st woman IAF officer to get Gallantry Award

- **Wing Commander Deepika Mishra** made history by becoming the **first female officer in the Indian Air Force to be honoured with a gallantry award**.
- In 2022, Deepika was among the **awardees announced for the Vayu Seva Medal for Gallantry on Independence Day**.
- On April 20, 2023, the medal has been conferred on Deepika by Indian Air Force Chief Air Chief Marshal VR Chaudhari at an investiture ceremony **held in New Delhi**.

About Deepika Mishra

- In August 2021, Deepika Mishra was deployed to conduct humanitarian assistance and disaster relief operations in response to flash floods in northern Madhya Pradesh.
- She was the first and only responder to reach the affected area and saved the lives of 47 people.
- IAF chief presented the award to two IAF officers were awarded Yudh Seva Medal, 13 officers, and air warriors received Vayu Sena Medal (Gallantry), 13 officers Vayu Sena Medal and 30 Vishisht Seva Medal.
- The IAF chief awarded a total of 58 personnel with gallantry awards, of which 57 are from the IAF and the remainder from the Indian army.

Angela Merkel received the highest order of Merit of Germany

- **Former German chancellor Angela Merkel** received the **highest order of Merit of Germany**.
- She has been honoured with this award for her achievements in office, despite growing criticism of her decisions on Russia and her energy policy.

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- President Frank-Walter Steinmeier handed over her the **Grand Cross** award.
- Former chancellors Konrad Adenauer and Helmut Kohl have received this award twice.

About Angela Merkel

- Angela Merkel led Germany from 2005 to 2021.
- She served for four terms.
- She was the first woman to take the post of chancellor.
- Germany's Order of Merit is the only federal decoration of Germany.
- It is given for special achievements in political, economic, cultural, intellectual or honorary fields.
- It was created by first President of Germany Theodor Heuss in 1951.

Synergy Group wins prestigious Tanker Operator Award

- Synergy Group, which operates a fleet of more than 560 vessels, has won the **GREEN4SEA Tanker Operator award** for its 'leadership role in global tanker management.'
- Founded in 2006 by Captain Rajesh Unni, the group took home the award through a representative during a hybrid event held in Athens.
- Instituted by the SAFETY4SEA shipping and maritime news portal, the awards recognise operational excellence and industry leadership in the tanker sector
- Capt Rajesh Unni, CEO, Synergy Group.

PM GatiShakti national master plan wins award for excellence in public administration

- PM Gati Shakti's national master plan initiative received the **award for excellence in public administration**.
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi presented the award for excellence in public administration to PM Gati Shakti national master plan initiative.
- This award is conferred for excellence in public administration for the effective implementation of priority programmes.
- This award was instituted to recognise the extraordinary and innovative work done by districts and organisations of the central and state governments for people's welfare.
- This initiative of Ministry of Commerce and Industry has received the award in innovation category.
- A GIS enabled national master plan digital platform has also been developed.
- Data related to land records, ports, forest, schools, railway stations, water bodies, telecom towers, and highways are available on the portal of this initiative.
- PM Gati Shakti National Master Plan was launched in October 2021.
- It was launched for the integrated and planned development of critical infrastructure projects to reduce logistics costs.
- It will help in developing infrastructure in different fields including transport and productivity.

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New York City tops the list of world's wealthiest cities 2023

- New York City topped a new list of the world's wealthiest cities in 2023, with Japan's Tokyo and Silicon Valley's Bay Area claiming the second and third spots.
- Mumbai featured at #21 while Delhi, Bengaluru, Kolkata and Hyderabad too found a mention.
- The list, compiled by London-based consultancy Henley & Partners, ranked the cities by taking into account the number of resident millionaires (rounded off to the nearest 100) as of December 31, 2022.
- It was dominated by cities in the United States and China — not one European city featuring in the top 10, with the exception of London.
- The report included four US cities in the top 10- New York City, The Bay Area, Los Angeles and Chicago.
- In terms of billionaires, California's Bay Area won as 63 call the region surrounding Silicon Valley and San Francisco home.
- It was followed by New York, Beijing, Los Angeles and Shanghai.
- Bengaluru got a special mention as one of the fastest-growing cities in the Asia Pacific. The report said: "Also known as the "Garden City" and the "Silicon Valley of India", Bengaluru has a booming tech sector."
- The World's Wealthiest Cities Report 2023 covered 97 cities across the world, using data from wealth intelligence firm, New World Wealth.
- Mumbai 21st, Delhi 36th, Bengaluru 60th, Kolkata 63rd and Hyderabad 65th.

India retains third spot as a unicorn hub: Hurun report

- India has retained its 3rd spot as the country with the highest number of unicorns worldwide after the US and China.
- With 68 new unicorns, India lags behind the US and China, which have 666 and 316 unicorns, respectively.
- India added 14 new unicorns since the pandemic began.
- Despite the rise, none of the start-ups made it to the top 10.
- According to the report, BYJU's is the top-most unicorn in India, with a valuation of \$22 billion, followed by Swiggy and Dream11, valued at \$8 billion each.
- The report also mentioned that India and China produce more offshore unicorns than any other country.
- Founders from India co-founded 70 unicorns outside, while China co-founded 32 outside of China, compared with 316 in China.
- San Francisco retained the title of 'World Unicorn Capital' with 181 unicorns, up 30. New York is in the second spot with 126 unicorns, up 41.
- With 79 unicorns Beijing was down 12 to the third position, followed by Shanghai with 66.
- London with 42 unicorns was fifth, followed by Bengaluru and Shenzhen with 33 unicorns each.

India to overtake China as world's most populous country by mid-2023: U.N.

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- India will overtake China as the world's most populous nation by the middle of this year.
- According to the United Nations Population Fund's World Population Report, India's population is estimated to be 1.4286 billion by mid-year of 2023, compared to 1.4257 billion for China.
- India's population will be around 3 million more than its neighbour china.
- The United States will be in third place with an estimated population of 340 million by the end of June.
- China is ahead of India on most socio-economic parameters.
- The average life expectancy for an Indian male was projected at 71.
- The life expectancy at birth for women in India is 74 years, in China it is 82 years.
- As per the International Monetary Fund, China's per capita income is projected to be 5x India's (\$2,601) in 2023.
- The total population of India was expected to be 1.388 billion in 2023 based on the 2011 census data, according to the report of the Technical Group on Population Projections under the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare presented in July 2020.
- The youth population in the age group of 15-24 years is expected to increase from 233 million in 2011 to 251 million in 2021 and then decline to 229 million in 2036.
- Its proportion to the total population is expected to fall from 19.3% in 2011 to 15.1% in 2036.
- It came to light that the world population reached 8 billion on November 15, 2022.
- And now, it is predicted that by mid-2023, the global population will spike up to 8.045 Billion.
- Eight countries will account for half the projected growth in global population by 2050
- These countries are the Democratic Republic of Congo, Egypt, Ethiopia, India, Nigeria, Pakistan, the Philippines and the United Republic of Tanzania.
- United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) is trust fund under the jurisdiction of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

MOUS AND AGREEMENT

Rural Development Ministry inks deal with 19 employers

- The Ministry of Rural Development has signed MoUs with 19 'Captive Employers' for the training and placement of 31,000 rural youths under the Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Grameen Kaushalya Yojana (DDU-GKY).
- 'Captive Employers' refer to companies or industries that select rural youths, skill them, and deploy them in one of their own establishments, sister concerns or subsidiaries.

NTPC Renewable Energy Signs Term Sheet With Greenko ZeroC To Supply Round The Clock RE Power Of 1300 MW Capacity For Its Green Ammonia Plant

- NTPC Renewable Energy Ltd, a wholly owned subsidiary of NTPC Green Energy Limited, has signed Term Sheet with Green ko ZeroCPvt Ltd (A Greenko Group Company) to Supply 1300 MW Round the

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Clock RE Power for powering Greenko's upcoming Green Ammonia Plant at Kakinada, India.

- The agreement between the two companies is one of the world's single largest contract for supply of round-the-clock renewable supply for an industrial client.

About Greenko

- Greenko, is one of the World's leading Energy Transition and Decarbonization solutions company.

About NTPC:

- NTPC Limited, formerly known as National Thermal Power Corporation Limited, is an Indian central public sector undertaking under the ownership of the Ministry of Power.
- Founded: 7 November 1975,
- Headquarters: New Delhi, India.

Vedanta's Hindustan Zinc Limited Signs MoU with RCA to Set up Anil Agarwal

- Vedanta's Hindustan Zinc Limited (HZL) signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the Rajasthan Cricket Association (RCA) for the development of world's 3rd largest cricket stadium in the village Chonp in Jaipur.
- Vedanta's HZL will spend INR 300 crore on the stadium, one of the largest corporate investments in India's sports infrastructure.
- The stadium will be named "Anil Agarwal International Cricket Stadium, Jaipur".
- The stadium facilities will be spread across 100 acres and have a seating capacity of more than 75,000.

RRI signs MoU with Indian Navy for developing secure maritime communications using quantum technologies

- The Department of Science and Technology signed a MoU with the Indian Navy for developing secure maritime communications.
- Under this MoU, the Department of Science and Technology will develop secure maritime communications using Quantum Technology.
- Raman Research Institute's Quantum Information and Computing (QuIC) lab will lead the project of developing quantum key distribution techniques.
- QuIC lab is leading India's research in the field of secure quantum communication.

Namami Gange Signs Agreement With 49 Universities To Inspire Youth Towards Water Conservation & River Rejuvenation

- The National Mission for Clean Ganga has signed an agreement with 49 universities.
- The agreement has been signed to inspire youth toward water conservation and river rejuvenation.
- The aim of the MoU is to bring students at the forefront of the mass movement for creating a sustainable ecosystem of rivers.

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Credai, Indian Green Building Council to erect 4,000 projects by 2030

- The Confederation of Real Estate Developers Association of India (Credai) has partnered with the Indian Green Building Council (IGBC) to build over 1,000 certified green projects across India in the next two years, and 4,000 projects by 2030.
- This initiative aligns with India's vision of reaching net-zero by 2070.

NHAI enables FASTag-based payments at tiger reserve

- NHAI incorporated company Indian Highways Management Company Limited (IHMCL) signed an MoU with the Nagarjunasagar-Srisailem Tiger Reserve to carry out Electronic Tolling.

Indian Oil & US-based LanzaJet to set up India's first green aviation fuel firm

- Indian Oil Corporation is planning to set up a joint venture with US-based clean energy technology company LanzaJet Inc and multiple domestic airlines for production of sustainable aviation fuel (SAF).
- Through the proposed venture, a plant will be set up to make SAF with alcohol-to-jet technology at IOCL's Panipat refinery in Haryana at a cost of Rs 3,000 crore.

India signs MoU with World Food Programme for sending wheat to Afghanistan

- India has signed an MoU with the World Food Programme for sending 10,000 metric tonnes of wheat to the people of Afghanistan.
- The officials of the Ministry of External Affairs and the United Nations WFP signed a MoU in Mumbai.
- Recently, the India Central Asia Joint Working Group on Afghanistan announced to send 20,000 MT of wheat through the Iranian port of Chahbahar.

About WFP

- World Food Programme (WFP) was founded in December 1961 and is headquartered in Rome, Italy.
- It is the world's largest humanitarian intergovernmental organization that focuses on hunger and food security.
- Cindy McCain is the head of WFP.

Tamil Nadu inks pact for Rs 2,302 crore investment with footwear firm

- The Tamil Nadu government signed a memorandum of understanding with a well-known footwear maker for an investment of ₹2,302 crore in the state.

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- The MoU was signed with High Glory Footwear, a subsidiary of Taiwan-based Pou Chen Corporation, the world's largest branded footwear manufacturer.

Godrej Agrovet signs MoU with the State Government of Andhra Pradesh

- Godrej Agrovet has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the state government on the sidelines of the Andhra Pradesh Global Investors Summit (APGIS) 2023.
- As a part of the MoU, Godrej Agrovet's oil palm business will be making an estimated investment of Rs 100 crore to set up a manufacturing facility for edible oil refinery and solvent extraction plant.
- The company already has 45,000 hectare area of oil palm plantation area in Andhra Pradesh (AP).
- The proposed new plant will have a projected refining capacity of 400 tonnes per day and will be set up in Seethanagaram, Eluru District in AP.
- This is company's first downstream project for value-added products in oil and fats.

Indian Immunologicals signs MoU with ICAR-CIFA for commercial development of fish vaccine

- Indian Immunologicals Limited (IIL) entered into a partnership with the Central Institute of Freshwater Aquaculture (CIFA), Bhubaneswar, an Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) Institute for the commercial development of vaccines against Hemorrhagic Septicemia, also called Aeromonas Septicemia, Ulcer Disease or Red-Sore Disease in freshwater fish.
- IIL is the first in India to get fish vaccines.
- India is the third largest fish producer in the global sphere and more than 65 per cent of India's fish is through Inland Fisheries and Aquaculture.

NTPC and Chempolis India to collaborate on Feasibility Study for setting up Bamboo-based Bio-Refinery at Bongaigaon.

- NTPC Ltd, the largest power-generating utility in India, and Chempolis India, a Fortum group associate company and a Finnish bio-refining technology provider, have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to explore the feasibility of setting up a bamboo-based bio-refinery in Assam's Bongaigaon.
- Chempolis will work with NTPC to conduct the feasibility study for the project which shall utilise bamboo for the production of 2G ethanol, bio-coal for thermal power plant and other value-added products.
- The bio-coal produced by the bio-refinery shall partly replace coal in the power plant, effectively converting 5 percent of the generation of the power plant to green.

Airtel partners with Secure Meters to deploy NB-IoT in Bihar

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- **Bharti Airtel (Airtel) has partnered with Secure Meters for deploying narrow band (NB-IoT) services that will power 1.3 million homes in Bihar through a smart meter solution.**
- This deployment will be **India's first NB-IoT solution on a narrow band with a fall-back option that will work on 2G and 4G and ensure real-time connectivity and uninterrupted transfer of critical data.**
- NB-IoT is a low-power, wide area, radio network technology developed by 3GPP which enables a wide variety of IoT devices and services including smart meters.
- Airtel's NB-IoT platform is future-ready and is scalable to 5G, the company said adding that the NB-IoT proposition also includes its advanced IoT platform 'The Airtel IoT Hub' which has been customised to suit the needs of advance metering infrastructure service providers (AMISPs).

Air India signs multi-year global distribution services partnership with US-based Sabre Corporation

- **Air India announced a new multi-year global distribution services partnership with US-based Sabre Corporation.**
- **The collaboration enables travel agents and corporations around the world to access Air India fares and seats through Sabre's extensive global travel marketplace.**
- In addition to the distribution services, Air India said it is utilising Sabre's consultancy expertise to help determine optimal routes for its existing and new fleet.
- Air India earlier this year announced placing a 470 aircraft order with Boeing and Airbus.
- This long-term global distribution partnership will support our ambitious growth plans while paving the ground for the airline's transition towards a more dynamic, merchandising-focused model.

About Air India:

- Air India is the flag carrier of India, headquartered in New Delhi.
- It is owned by Talace Private Limited, a fully owned subsidiary of Tata Sons, after Air India Limited's former owner, the Government of India, completed the sale.
- CEO: Campbell Wilson.

IIT Roorkee signs pact with Taiwanese centre for developing tech solutions for earthquakes, floods

- **Indian Institute of Technology Roorkee (IIT Roorkee) and the National Science and Technology Centre for Disaster Reduction (NCDR), Taiwan have signed an agreement with an aim to develop technology solutions to natural hazards, including earthquakes, landslides, floods, debris flow, and compound disasters.**
- The researchers aim to co-establish an early warning sensor network equipped with **P-Alert sensors at selected locations in Uttarakhand.**
- The signing ceremony was followed by a technical workshop on **Earthquake Early Warning Systems (EEWS).**
- India's first Earthquake Early Warning System (EEWS), namely Uttarakhand Earthquake Early Warning System (UEEWS), is established at the IIT Roorkee.

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- At present, the alert system is active only within Uttarakhand, India.

CSIR signs an Umbrella MoU with OIL India

- The Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR), New Delhi and Oil India Ltd. (OIL), a Navaratna NOC inked an umbrella Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to pursue technological partnership in select domains across the Energy value chain.
- This will be a collaborative arrangement between labs of CSIR and OIL.
- The objective of the MoU is to facilitate collaboration for pursuing research in advanced technologies for energy security.
- Oil India Limited is a central public sector undertaking under the ownership of the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas, Government of India.
- Headquarters: Noida, Dr. Ranjit Rath- Chairman & Managing Director.

Mitsubishi Electric to set up \$222-million AC manufacturing plant in Chennai

- Mitsubishi Electric India has signed an agreement with Mahindra Industrial Park Chennai Ltd, a joint venture between Mahindra World City Developers and Japan's Sumitomo Corporation, to set up an air-conditioners and compressors manufacturing plant at Origins by Mahindra, Chennai.
- The electric and electronic equipment manufacturing company will invest around \$222 million (about ₹1,819 crore) in the facility spread over 52 acres.
- According to a regulatory filing by Mahindra Lifespace Developers Ltd, the plant will be operational by October 2025.
- Kazuhiko Tamura is a Managing Director of Mitsubishi Electric India Pvt Ltd.

India, Thailand to explore mutual recognition pacts for nursing, accountancy, medical tourism

- India and Thailand have agreed to explore mutual recognition/ cooperation arrangements (MRAs) in nursing, accounting, audio-visual and medical tourism, in a meeting of the India Thailand Joint Trade Committee (JTC) in New Delhi.
- The two sides discussed the scope for collaboration in the services sector and agreed to work on possible MRAs in key sectors.
- MRAs aim to facilitate mobility of professionals with countries that sign such a pact, agreeing to recognise qualifications earned by professionals in the partner countries.
- Thailand is India's important trading partner in the 10-member ASEAN with total trade of \$16.89 billion in 2022-23.
- It accounts for 13.6 per cent of India's total trade with the ASEAN.
- Thailand is an important destination for India's gems and jewellery, mechanical machinery, auto and auto components and agricultural products, especially marine products.

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SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

ISRO releases images of Earth captured by its EOS-06 satellite

- The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) has released images of Earth captured by the Earth Observation satellite (EOS-6) satellite.
- The images are a mosaic generated by the ISRO's National Remote Sensing Centre (NRSC).
- NRSC/ISRO has generated a global False Colour Composite (FCC) mosaic from the images captured by the Ocean Colour Monitor (OCM) payload on board EOS-06.
- Mosaic with 1 km spatial resolution is generated by combining 2939 individual images, after processing 300 GB data to show the Earth as seen during February 1 and 15.

About ISRO :

- Founded : 15 August 1969
- Headquarters : Bangalore, Karnataka, India
- Chairman : Sreedhara Somanath
- The ISRO is the national space agency of India, & it operates under the Department of Space (DOS).

Nokia to launch 4G mobile network on the moon in late 2023

- Nokia has announced plans to launch a 4G mobile network on the moon.
- This initiative is in collaboration with National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), and the 4G mobile network will be launched in a SpaceX rocket near the end of 2023.
- To improve communication capabilities and provide relief to astronauts during their missions while also enhancing lunar discoveries.

About Nokia :

- Established : 1865
- Headquarters: Espoo, Finland.
- Nokia Corporation is a Finnish multinational telecommunications, information technology, and consumer electronics corporation.

Bharat Dynamics Limited Successfully Test Fires 3rd Generation Man-portable Anti Tank Guided Missile - Amogha-II

- The Bharat Dynamics Limited (BDL) has successfully conducted a field firing test of its latest 3rd generation man-portable Anti Tank Guided Missile (ATGM), Amogha-III.
- This indigenous missile has been developed under Integrated Guided Missile Development Programme (IGMDP).

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About BDL :

- Founded : 1970
- Headquarters : Hyderabad, Telangana, India
- Chairman & Managing Director : Commodore Siddharth Mishra

Indian Immunologicals signs MoU with ICAR-CIFA for fish vaccine development

- Hyderabad based Indian Immunologicals Limited (IIL) entered into a partnership with the Central Institute of Freshwater Aquaculture (CIFA), Bhubaneswar, an Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) Institute for the commercial development of vaccines against Hemorrhagic Septicemia, also called Aeromonas Septicemia, Ulcer Disease or Red-Sore Disease in freshwater fish.
- Currently there are no fish vaccines available in India on a commercial scale to prevent aquaculture infections.

Amazon to launch first of 3,000 internet satellites to space in 2024

- Amazon.com plans to launch its first internet satellites to space in the first half of 2024 as it prepares to vie with Elon Musk's SpaceX and others to provide broadband internet globally.
- Amazon's satellite internet unit, Project Kuiper, will begin mass-producing the satellites later 2023.

Skyroot Aerospace Successfully Test Fired 3D-Printed Cryogenic Engine — Dhawan-II

- The private space vehicle company Skyroot Aerospace has test-fired its 3D-printed Dhawan II engine for a duration of 200 seconds in Telangana.
- The test was conducted at Solar Industries propulsion test facility in Nagpur, Maharashtra using Skyroot's indigenously developed mobile cryogenic engine test pad.

About Skyroot Aerospace :

- Founded : 12 June 2018
- Headquarters : Hyderabad, Telangana, India
- CEO : Pawan Kumar Chandana

ISRO successfully conducts landing experiment of the Reusable Launch Vehicle

- The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) successfully carried out the landing experiment of the Reusable Launch Vehicle-Technology Demonstration (RLV-TD) programme at the Aeronautical Test Range in Challakere, Karnataka.
- The RLV took off by a Chinook Helicopter of the Indian Air Force (IAF) as an underslung load and flew to a height of 4.5 km (above Mean sea level MSL).
- ISRO conducted the first experimental mission of its Reusable Launch Vehicle - Technology

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Demonstrator (RLV-TD) on May 23, 2016, from Satish Dhawan Space Centre, Sriharikota.

About ISRO :

- Founded : 15 August 1969
- Headquarters : Bangalore, Karnataka
- Chairman : Sreedhara Somanath

NASA Names 4 Astronauts to Next Moon Mission - Artemis II lunar Mission

- The **National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA)** and the **Canadian Space Agency (CSA)** announced the **4 astronauts** crew for the **Artemis II mission** which includes **3 American nationals** and **1 Canadian astronaut**.
- Artemis II mission is a mission to **explore** more **areas** of the **moon**.
- The **10-day Artemis II mission** will test the agency's powerful Space Launch System rocket as well as the life-support systems aboard the Orion spacecraft.
- Artemis II is expected to reach a point more than **230,000 miles (370,000 km)** away from the Earth.
- It will be launched from the **Kennedy Space Center** in **Florida** using the **SLS rocket**.
- **Artemis I mission** was successfully completed in **December 2022**.

About NASA :

- Established : July 29, 1958
- Headquarters : Washington, D.C, United States
- Administrator : Bill Nelson

Kenya Space Agency to launch its first operational Satellite

- The **Kenya Space Agency (KSA)** is set to launch its **first operational Earth observation satellite "Taifa-1" or "Nation-1"** in **Swahili**, on **April 10, 2023**.
- The launch is in partnership with **SpaceX** & the satellite will be on board its **Falcon 9 rocket** from **Vandenberg Base** in **California** in the **United States of America (USA)**.

About Kenya :

- President- William Ruto
- Prime Minister- Raila Odinga
- Capital- Nairobi
- Currency- Kenyan Shilling(KES)

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China's Space Pioneer launched first liquid-fueled commercial rocket Tianlong-2 into orbit

- The Chinese space startup '**Space Pioneer** (also known as **Beijing Tianbing Technology Company Limited**) successfully launched '**Tianlong-2 rocket (TL-2)** into orbit from **China's Jiuquan Satellite Launch Center** located in the Gobi Desert, Inner Mongolia.
- This is the **first time** that a **liquid fueled rocket** was launched into orbit by a Chinese aerospace company.
- Also, it was the **first time** that a **startup company** Space Pioneer successfully reached orbit on its first attempt.

About China :

- President :Xi Jinping
- Capital :Beijing
- Currency :Renminbi

Twitter's iconic blue bird logo replaced with 'Doge' meme of Dogecoin blockchain and cryptocurrency

- The **classic blue bird logo** of the social media giant **Twitter**, has been **replaced** with the "**doge**" meme.
- The 'doge' meme has the face of a **Shiba Inu**.

About Twitter, Inc :

- Founded : March 21, 2006
- Headquarters : San Francisco, California, United States
- CEO :Elon Musk

Iran successfully tests homemade kamikaze drone equipped with 50 kg warhead

- **Iran's Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC)** has successfully tested a homemade long-range, high-precision kamikaze drone named **Meraj-532**, equipped with a **50-kg warhead**.
- It is a **kamikaze drone** equipped with a piston engine.
- It has a range of **450 km**.
- It is capable of flying at a maximum altitude of **12,000 feet** for three straight hours.
- It has a 50-kg warhead and can be assembled and prepared for flight easily, making it suitable for rapid reaction operations.

About Iran :

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- President : Ebrahim Raisi
- Capital : Tehran
- Currency : Iranian rial

Unique Identification Authority of India- IIT Bombay join hands to develop touchless biometric capture system

- The Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI) signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the Indian Institute of Technology, Bombay (IIT-Bombay), to develop a touchless biometric capture system for easier use, anytime and anywhere.
- Under the MoU, UIDAI and IIT Bombay will carry out joint research to build a mobile capture system for fingerprints along with a liveness model integrated with the capture system.
- The NCETIS is a joint initiative by IIT Bombay and the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY), under its flagship Digital India Programme.

About UIDAI :

- Headquarters : New Delhi, Delhi
- CEO : Saurabh Garg
- It is a statutory authority established under the provisions of the Aadhaar (Targeted Delivery of Financial and Other Subsidies, Benefits and Services) Act, 2016 ("Aadhaar Act 2016") in 2016 under the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY).

About IIT Bombay :

- Established : 1958
- Headquarters : Mumbai, Maharashtra, India
- Chairman : Dr. Sharad Kumar Saraf

About MeitY :

- Cabinet Minister : Ashwini Vaishnaw
- Minister of State : Rajeev Chandrasekhar

Drone start-up Garuda Aerospace becomes first to receive agri drone subsidy

- Chennai-based drone startup Garuda Aerospace Private Limited has become the first company to receive the government's agri-drone subsidy for the agricultural drones.
- This subsidy is part of the Indian government's efforts to promote the use of agricultural drones.
- Garuda Kisan Drones were given to 8 farmers under the Agri-drone subsidy at an event held in Pune, Maharashtra.

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- This subsidy is just one of many initiatives launched by the Union government to support the development of India's drone industry.
- This will benefit farmers not only by making their jobs easier and more efficient, but it will also help to **increase agricultural productivity and reduce food waste.**

About Garuda Aerospace Private Limited :

- Established : 2015
- Headquarters : Chennai, Tamil Nadu
- CEO : Agnishwar Jayaprakash

European Space Agency set to launch Jupiter Icy Moons Explorer

- The **European Space Agency (ESA)** is all set to launch the **Jupiter Icy Moons Explorer**, or **Juice**, mission from its spaceport in **French Guiana** on an **Ariane 5** launcher.
- ESA's Juice mission will make detailed observations of gas giant Jupiter and its **3 large ocean-bearing moons** - **Ganymede, Callisto and Europa.**

Elena Geo Systems launches NavIC chip to reduce dependence on GPS

- **Elena Geo Systems**, a Bengaluru-based space technology company, launched **Indigenous Navigation with Indian Constellation (NavIC)** chip at the Defence Space Symposium, to reduce dependence on the American Global Positioning System (GPS).

Russia conducts test launch of 'advanced' intercontinental ballistic missile

- The **Russian defence ministry** has conducted the **successful test launch** of an "advanced" intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM).
- The missile was launched from the **Kapustin Yar test site** in **Russia's southern Astrakhan region.**

Purpose :

- To **test advanced combat equipment** of intercontinental ballistic missiles.

About Russia :

- President : Vladimir Putin
- Prime Minister : Mikhail Mishustin
- Capital : Moscow
- Currency : Ruble

Kenya successfully launches first operational satellite Taifa-1 into space onboard SpaceX Falcon-9 rocket

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- **Kenya** successfully launched its **first operational earth observation satellite, 'Taifa-1 satellite,'** into orbit.
- The launch took place on a **SpaceX rocket Falcon-9** from the **Vandenberg Base** in **California, United States (US)**.

Key Statistics :

- **Egypt** was the **first African country** to send a satellite into space in **1998**.
- In **2018, Kenya** launched its **first experimental nanosatellite** from the International Space Station (ISS).

About Kenya :

- President : William Ruto
- Capital : Nairobi
- Currency : Kenyan shilling

NASA's Lucy Spacecraft Spots Jupiter's Trojan Asteroids for the First Time

- **NASA's asteroid-hunting spacecraft, Lucy,** captured its **first views** of **four Jupiter Trojan asteroids** that are thought to be leftover from the formation of the solar system.

About Lucy Mission :

- It was launched by NASA from the **Cape Canaveral Space Force Station** in **Florida** in **2021**.
- It is a **12-year mission** which will take close observations of nine of Jupiter's Trojans and two main belt asteroids along with that.
- It is the **first spacecraft** sent to study the Trojan asteroids, which orbit the Sun in the same path that the planet Jupiter takes.

Türkiye launches its largest warship and world's first drone carrier - TCG Anadolu

- Turkish President Mr Recep Tayyip Erdogan unveiled **Türkiye's largest warship** and the **world's first unmanned combat aerial vehicle (UCAV) carrier, TCG Anadolu**, has been delivered to the country's navy.

About Türkiye :

- President : Recep Tayyip Erdoğan
- Capital : Ankara
- Currency : Turkish lira

North Korea Tests Second Underwater Drone 'Haeil-2'

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- To show off its strength against the United States of America (USA) and South Korea's giant military exercise, **North Korea** tested its **second nuclear-capable underwater attack drone "Haeil-2" test**.
- The Haeil-2" test was carried out in **Kajin Port, Kumya Country, South Hamgyong Province**.

About North Korea :

- President : Kim Jong Un
- Capital : Pyongyang
- Currency : Korean People's won

IIT Indore in collaboration with NASA-Caltech develops low-cost camera for multispectral imaging of flame

- The **Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Indore** in collaboration with **NASA-Caltech** from the **United States (US)** and **Sweden's University of Gothenburg** has developed a **low-cost camera** setup which can provide multispectral imaging of 4 chemical species in a flame using a **single DSLR camera**.
- The low-cost DSLR camera device named "**CL-Flam**" has been developed after 3 years' research.

NISAR satellite to map Himalayas' seismic zones

- The **Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO)** and the **US National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA)** have jointly developed the **NISAR (NASA-ISRO Synthetic Aperture Radar) satellite**.
- The forthcoming satellite will **map the most earthquake-prone regions** in the Himalayas with unprecedented regularity.
- The data it will generate could potentially provide **advance warning of landslides**, as seen recently in Joshimath, Uttarakhand, as well as pinpoint locations most at risk from earthquakes.

Key Highlights :

- The cost of the NISAR satellite is expected to be around **\$900 million** (with ISRO contributing about one-tenth).
- It will use **two frequency bands: L-band and S-band** to photograph the seismically active Himalayan region, creating a "**deformation map**" every **12 days**.
- These 2 frequency bands will simultaneously provide high-resolution, all-weather data from the satellite, which is expected to follow a Sun-synchronous orbit.

About NISAR :

- NISAR was envisioned by NASA and ISRO in **2014** for the powerful demonstration of the capability of radar as a science tool.

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- It will be launched in **January 2024** from **Satish Dhawan Space Centre**.
- NISAR will be the **first radar** of its kind in space to systematically map Earth.
- It will provide data and information to manage natural disasters such as **earthquakes, tsunamis, and volcanic eruptions**.

About NASA :

- Established : July 29, 1958
- Headquarters : Washington, D.C, United States of America
- Administrator : Bill Nelson

About ISRO :

- Established : 15 August 1969
- Headquarters : Bangalore, Karnataka, India
- Chairman : S. Somanath

NASA successfully extracts oxygen from lunar soil simulant

- The **National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA)** scientists have successfully **extracted oxygen** from **simulated lunar soil**.
- This was the **first time** that this extraction has been done in a vacuum environment, paving the way for astronauts to one day extract and use resources in a lunar environment, called in-situ resource utilisation.
- Lunar soil refers to the **fine-grained material** covering the **Moon's surface**.

Key Highlights :

- NASA's **Carbothermal Reduction Demonstration (CaRD)** team at **Johnson Space Center** in Houston conducted the test in conditions similar to those found on the Moon by using a special spherical chamber with a **15-feet diameter** called the **Dirty Thermal Vacuum Chamber**.
- The chamber is considered "dirty" because unclean samples can be tested inside.
- A carbothermal reactor is where the process of heating and extracting the oxygen takes place.

About NASA :

- Founded : July 29, 1958
- Headquarters : Washington, D.C, United States of America
- Administrator : Bill Nelson

Japanese Startup Ispace Prepares for World's First Private Lunar Landing

- Japanese start-up, **ispace inc**, is preparing to land its **Hakuto-R Mission 1 (M1) spacecraft** on the moon in what would be the **world's first lunar landing** by a private company if it succeeds.

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- The M1 lander is set to touch down after taking off from **Cape Canaveral, Florida**, on a SpaceX rocket in December.
- In one of the biggest blows, **Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA)** in March 2023 lost its new medium-lift H3 rocket to forced manual destruction after it reached space.
- That was less than 5 months since JAXA's solid-fuel Epsilon rocket failed after launch in October.

Key Highlights :

- The **2.3-metre-tall (7.55 ft) M1** will begin an hour-long landing phase from its current position, in the moon's orbit some 100 km above the surface moving at nearly **6,000 km/hour (3,700 mph)**.
- Only the **United States**, the **former Soviet Union**, and **China** have soft-landed a spacecraft on the moon, with attempts in recent years by India and a private Israeli company ending in failure.
- After reaching the landing site at the edge of Mare Frigoris, in the moon's northern hemisphere, the M1 is to deploy a two-wheeled, baseball-sized rover developed by **JAXA**, Japanese toymaker, Tomy Co, Sony Group, and United Arab Emirates' four-wheeled "**Rashid**" Rover.
- The M1 is also carrying an **experimental solid-state battery** made by NGK Spark Plug Co, among other objects to gauge how they perform on the moon.
- In its **second mission** scheduled in **2024**, the M1 will bring ispace's own rover, while from 2025, it is set to work with U.S. space lab, Draper, to bring NASA payloads to the moon, targeting building a permanently staffed lunar colony by 2040.

ISRO's PSLV-C55 successfully places 2 Singapore satellites into orbit

- The Indian Space Research Organisation's (ISRO) successfully launched the **Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle C55 (PSLV-C55)** mission carrying **2 Singaporean satellites TeLEOS-2 and Lumelite-4** from **Satish Dhawan Space Center** at **Sriharikota** in **Andhra Pradesh (AP)** into a low-earth orbit.
- At the end of a 22.5 hour countdown, the **44.4 metre tall rocket** lifted off majestically from the first launch pad at the pre-fixed at the **Satish Dhawan Space Centre**, located about 135 km from Chennai.
- PSLV-C55 is a dedicated commercial PSLV mission of **NewSpace India Limited (NSIL)**, which is the commercial arm of ISRO, for an international satellite customer.
- It is the **57th flight** of PSLV, and the **16th mission** of the PSLV Core Alone configuration (PSLV-CA) variant.
- This is the **lightest version** of PSLV.

About TeLEOS-2 :

- TeLEOS-2 is a **synthetic aperture radar satellite** developed under a partnership between **Defence Science and Technology Agency (DSTA)**, representing the Government of Singapore and ST Engineering.
- After deployment of the satellite into the about **586 km orbit**, it would be used to support the **satellite**

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imagery requirements of various agencies within the Government of Singapore.

- It would be used to provide **all-weather day** and **night coverage** and is capable of imaging at one metre full polarimetric resolution for Singapore.

About Lumelite-4 :

- The co-passenger satellite is **Lumelite-4**, co-developed by the **Institute for Infocomm Research and Satellite TEchnology and Research Centre** of the **National University of Singapore**.
- It is an advanced **12U satellite** developed for the technological demonstration of the **High-Performance Space-borne VHF data Exchange System (VDES)**.
- This mission follows the successful deployment of the **TeLEOS-1** satellite in a **PSLV-C29** rocket along with 5 other satellites of Singapore in **December 2015**.

About ISRO :

- Founded : 15 August 1969
- Headquarters : Bangalore, Karnataka
- Chairman : Sreedhara Somanath

SpaceX Starship, world's biggest rocket, explodes during first flight test

- **SpaceX's Starship Spacecraft** created history, as the most powerful & biggest **rocket ever built** lifted off on its **first test flight**.
- It was blasted off from **Starbase**, the SpaceX spaceport in **Boca Chica, Texas**.
- The Starship capsule had been scheduled to separate from the **first-stage rocket booster** 3 minutes into the flight but separation failed to occur and the rocket blew up.
- The vehicle experienced multiple engines out during the flight test, lost altitude, and began to tumble.
- The flight termination system was commanded on both the booster and ship.
- It is standard procedure to destroy a wayward rocket to prevent damage to people or property below.
- The US space agency **National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA)** has picked Starship to **ferry astronauts** to the **Moon** in late **2025** for the **first time** since the Apollo programme ended in **1972**.
- Starship comprises a **164-ft tall craft** for **crew** and **cargo**, placed on top of a 230-ft-tall first-stage Super Heavy booster rocket.

IIT Madras Scientists develop an 'Easy-to-use Screening Device for reliable assessment of Blood Vessel Health

- Researchers at the **Indian Institute of Technology-Madras (IIT-M)** developed a device called '**ARTSENS**' to **assess the health** and **age of blood vessels** and thereby provide **early screening** for **cardiovascular diseases**.

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Research Team :

- The research was led by **Dr. Jayaraj Joseph**, Assistant Professor, Department of Electrical Engineering, IIT Madras.

About 'ARTSENS' :

- It is a **novel, non-invasive device**.
- It can be used in routine **medical examinations** by even non-experts, to assess and **predict vascular health**.
- It is powered by a **proprietary non-imaging probe** and an **intelligent computing platform** and is developed by the **Healthcare Technology Innovation Centre (HTIC)** at IIT Madras.

Solar Industries to supply UAV 'Nagastra' to Indian Army

- **Solar Industries India Limited, Nagpur, Maharashtra** had bagged an order to supply the **400 unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) 'Nagastra'-I** to the Indian Army, beating competitors from Israel and Poland.
- With government's initiative to bring Atmanirbharta in ammunition and defence systems, the **first indigenous Loiter Munition (LM)**, Nagastra-1, has been designed and developed by **Economics Explosives Ltd (EEL)**, a 100% subsidiary of Solar Industries Nagpur, in association with **Z-Motion, Bangalore**.
- A model of 'Nagastra -1' loitering munition was recently displayed in the **Army Commanders conference** held in **New Delhi**.

About Nagastra -1 :

- Nagastra -1 having an indigenous content of **more than 75%** has many world class features.
- In a 'Kamikaze mode' it can neutralise any hostile threat with **Global Positioning System (GPS)** enabled precision strike with an **accuracy of 2 m**.
- The fixed wing electric UAV has an endurance of **60 min** with a man-in-loop range of 15 km and autonomous mode range of 30 km.
- In addition to **day-night surveillance cameras** the loiter munition is equipped with a fragmentation warhead to defeat soft-skin targets.
- In case a target is not detected or if the mission is aborted, the loiter munition can be called back and made a soft landing with a parachute recovery mechanism enabling it to be reused multiple times.

China launches Fengyun-3G, first satellite dedicated to monitoring heavy rainfalls

- **China** successfully launched **Fengyun-3G** into **space**, its first satellite dedicated to **measuring precipitation**, especially **heavy rainfalls** during catastrophic weather in global regions of low- and mid-latitude, which could provide a powerful tool for monitoring and forecasting of global meteorological

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disasters.

- It was launched by **China's Long March 4B rocket** from the **Jiuquan Satellite Launch Center** in **Northwest China's Gansu Province**.
- It is **one of only three such satellites** in the world.

About Fengyun-3G :

- With a lifespan of **6 years i.e. 2023-2029**, the **FY-3G** is developed by an institute of **China Aerospace Science and Technology Corporation (CASC)**, and its ground system will be built and operated by the **China Meteorological Administration (CMA)**.
- It can provide information on the **3D structure** of precipitation in the Earth's low- and mid-latitude regions.
- The satellite can accurately sense minute changes in precipitation intensity in the atmosphere, such as the intensity of drizzle at 0.2 millimeters per hour.
- The satellite adopts a **low-inclination orbit**, with an inclination of 50 degrees.
- It will provide precipitation data mainly within the range of 50 degrees north latitude to 50 degrees south latitude.
- After the launch, the satellite observation data in China's global weather prediction model can have an update every 4 hours with a **3-percent increase** in accuracy.
- While the efficiency of monitoring meteorological disasters can be doubled.
- China currently has **eight Fengyun meteorological satellites** in orbit, providing data and services to 126 countries and regions.

About China :

- President : Xi Jinping
- Capital : Beijing
- Currency : Renminbi

ISRO to launch Singaporean satellite TeLEOS-2 on the PSLV rocket

- The **Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO)** is preparing to launch a **Singaporean Earth Observation satellite** named **TeLEOS-2** on April 22, 2023.
- The satellite will be launched aboard ISRO's **Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV)**, from the **Satish Dhawan Space Centre** in **Sriharikota, Andhra Pradesh (AP)**.
- This launch will be the **PSLV's 55th mission**.

What is TeLEOS-2?

- ISRO launched **TeLEOS-1** in **2015**.
- **TeLEOS-1** was the **first Singapore commercial Earth Observation Satellite**.

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- It was developed by ST Engineering and it will provide imagery which will be used for hotspot monitoring and haze management, along with assistance in aviation accidents, search and rescue operations
- TeLEOS-2 is a **750kg earth observation satellite** that has synthetic aperture radar capable of providing data in 1-metre resolution.
- It was launched into a **low Earth orbit** for remote sensing applications.
- It features synthetic aperture radar which can provide data in **1-metre resolution**.
- ISRO has till now launched **9 satellites** from Singapore.
- The PSLV-C55 is **ISRO's 3rd launch** this year.

Biofire Launches World's First Smart Gun with Fingerprint Unlock

- **Biofire Technologies**, a Colorado-based company, has launched the **world's first-ever biometric handgun**, the **Biofire Smart Gun**.
- The Biofire Smart Gun is the **first and only biometric firearm** on the market.

About Biofire Smart Gun :

- It is a **9mm handgun** that uses fingerprint and **facial recognition biometrics** to ensure only authorised users can fire it.
- Designed for home defense, the Biofire Smart Gun enables firearm owners to defend themselves against external threats while preventing unauthorised access and misuse.
- Identification systems have been integrated with its **firing mechanism**.
- The smart gun is powered by a **battery**.
- Some recent models of smart guns were simply based on adding sensors to existing weapons.

About Biofire :

- Founded : 2016
- CEO and Founder : Kai Kloepper

Mission :

- To provide gun owners with advanced tools for keeping their families safe.

ACQUISITION AND MERGERS

LIC increases stake in BATA India Ltd

- **Life Insurance Corporation (LIC)** has **increased** its shareholding in **BATA India**.
- LIC's shareholding has jumped from **57,48,071 to 64,36,692 Equity Shares** increasing its shareholding from **4.472% to 5.008%** of the paid-up capital.
- The holding in the LIC crossed 5% and the acquisition of shares were done during the period from Jan 2022 to Mar 2023 at an average cost of INR 1569.33.

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About LIC :

- Founded : September 1956
- Headquarters : Mumbai, Maharashtra, India
- Chairperson : Siddharth Mohanty

Adani Ports & APSEZ acquires Karaikal Port for Rs 1,485 Cr

- The **National Company Law Tribunal** has approved the **acquisition** of **Karaikal Port (KPPL)** by the **Adani Ports and Special Economic Zone (APSEZ)**, the largest transport utility in India.
- Earlier, APSEZ was declared as the successful resolution applicant under the **Corporate Insolvency Resolution Process (CIRP)** of KPPL.
- The amount considered for the acquisition is **₹1,485 crore (\$181.2 million)**.

About APSEZ :

- Founded : 26 May 1998
- Headquarters : Ahmedabad, Gujarat, India
- Chairman & MD : Gautam Adani
- CEO : Karan Adani

CCI approves acquisition of certain shareholding of BTS Investment & Bodhi Tree Systems VCC by NBC Universal Media

- The **Competition Commission of India (CCI)** approves the **acquisition** of certain shareholding of **BTS Investment 1 Pte. Ltd. (BTS Investment) & Bodhi Tree Systems VCC (BTS VCC) (Targets)** by **NBC Universal Media, LLC (NBC Universal) (Acquirer)** a wholly-owned subsidiary of Comcast Corporation under Section 31(1) of the Competition Act, 2002.

About CCI :

- Established : 14 October 2003
- Headquarters : New Delhi, Delhi, India
- Chairman : Sangeeta Verma
- Secretary : P K Singh
- The CCI is the **chief national competition regulator** in India.
- It is a statutory body within the **Ministry of Corporate Affairs**.

CCI approves acquisition of stake in Mukand Sumi Special Steel Limited by Jamnalal Sons Private Limited from

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Mukand Limited

- The Competition Commission of India (CCI) approves acquisition of 5.51% of the equity share capital in Mukand Sumi Special Steel Limited (MSSSL) by Jamnalal Sons Private Limited (JSPL) (Acquirer) from Mukand Limited (Mukand).

Monetary Authority Of Singapore Clears Merger Of HDFC Investments With HDFC Bank

- HDFC Bank stated that the Monetary Authority of Singapore (MAS) has given approval for the merger of HDFC Investments Limited and HDFC Holdings Limited with parent HDFC Ltd.
- As part of a composite scheme of amalgamation, Griha Pte, a wholly-owned subsidiary of HDFC Investments and a foreign step-down subsidiary of HDFC Ltd., received approval for the merger with HDFC Bank.

Key Highlights :

- The acquisition would result in the bank acquiring 20% or more of the issued share capital of Griha Pte.
- The proposed amalgamation is subject to receipt of final approvals from the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) in respect of change in control of certain subsidiaries of HDFC Ltd
- This approval will help pave the way for the merger of HDFC and HDFC Bank, expected to be finalised by the third quarter of this financial year.
- The proposed entity will have a combined asset base of around Rs 18 lakh crore.
- Once the deal is effective, HDFC Bank will be 100 per cent owned by public shareholders, and existing shareholders of HDFC will own 41% of the bank
- Earlier HDFC bank has received permission from the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) to increase stake in HDFC Life and HDFC ERGO to more than 50%.

Godrej Consumer Products Limited acquires Raymond's FMCG business for Rs 2,825 crore

- Godrej Consumer Products Limited (GCPL) will acquire the FMCG business of Raymond Consumer Care Limited (RCCL) for ₹2,825 crore.
- Both the brands—Park Avenue and KamaSutra are under Raymond Consumer Care, which is a step-down unit of the Singhania-family owned Raymond, known for its shirting and lifestyle business.
- Raymond has two fundamental businesses: lifestyle and real estate.
- Its revenue from FY22 was ₹4,260.66 crore.
- GCPL is expanding its play in the consumer & earlier, it had acquired Bblunt.

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About Godrej Consumer Products Ltd :

- Founded : 2001
- Headquarters : Mumbai, Maharashtra, India
- Chairman & Managing Director : Mr. Nadir Godrej
- MD & CEO : Sudhir Sitapati
- Godrej Consumer Products Limited is an **Indian consumer goods company**.

Hinduja Get In-Principal Approval To Raise Stake In IndusInd Bank

- **Hinduja Group**, Promoters of **India's IndusInd Bank** have received **in-principal approval** from the country's central bank **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** to **increase** their **stake** in IndusInd Bank.
- The promoters have filled out a form to increase the stake and the due diligence process takes about **90-180 days** as per the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) norms.
- IndusInd's promoters currently hold a stake of about **16.5%** in the bank. In 2021, the RBI raised the cap on the stake promoters can hold in a bank to **26%** from 15%.
- IndusInd International Holdings Ltd, an entity belonging to promoters **Hinduja Group**, have a **12.57% stake** in the lender, while **IndusInd Ltd** has a **3.93% stake** as per the company's latest shareholding pattern available with the Indian stock exchange BSE.

About IndusInd Bank :

- Founded : April 1994
- Headquarters : Mumbai, Maharashtra, India
- MD & CEO : Sumant Kathpalia.
- Tagline : We Make You Feel Richer

CCI Approves Acquisition of Blackstone-Emerson Electric Co by BCP Emerald Aggregator LP

- The **Competition Commission of India (CCI)** has granted its **approval** for the **stake acquisition** in climate technologies' business of **Emerson Electric Co** by **BCP Emerald Aggregator LP**.
- The deal has been cleared under the **green channel route**.
- BCP Emerald Aggregator LP is an affiliate of United States (US)-based alternative asset manager Blackstone.
- The CCI has also approved the proposed investment by **Stamford Bridge Investment Pte Ltd, an Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV)** of GIC (Ventures) and Platinum Falcon B 2018 RSC Ltd (Platinum), in BCP Emerald Aggregator LP.
- GIC (Ventures) is a subsidiary of **Singapore's sovereign wealth fund GIC**, while Platinum is an affiliate of

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the Abu Dhabi Investment Authority (ADIA).

- In **October, 2022** Emerson announced that it will sell a majority stake in its climate technologies business to Blackstone.

About CCI :

- Established : 14 October 2003
- Headquarters : New Delhi, Delhi, India
- Chairman : Sangeeta Verma
- Secretary : P K Singh
- The CCI is the **chief national competition regulator** in India.
- It is a statutory body within the **Ministry of Corporate Affairs**.

DEFENCE NEWS

10th Edition of Indian – Sri Lanka bilateral maritime exercise SLINEX-2023

- The **10th Edition of Indian Navy(IN)- Sri Lanka Navy(SLN)** bilateral maritime exercise **SLINEX-2023** is scheduled at **Colombo, Sri Lanka** from 03 - 08 April 2023.
- The exercise is being conducted in **two phases**: the **Harbour Phase** from 03-05 April 2023, Colombo, Sri Lanka followed by a **Sea Phase** from 06-08 April 2023, Colombo.

About MoD :

- Defence Minister : Rajnath Singh
- Minister of State : Ajay Bhatt
- Defence Secretary : Giridhar Aramane

India & U.S. air exercise 'Cope India' begins

- The **Indian Air Force (IAF)** and the **US Air Force (USAF)** are set to conduct the **Cope India exercise** from April 10 to 21, 2023 at the **Kalaikunda airbase** in **West Bengal**.
- The **Japanese Air Self Defence Force (JASDF)** participated in Cope India as an **observer** for the first time in **December 2018** based on the Agreement of Defence Ministerial Meeting on August 20, 2018.
- The IAF is set to field its frontline fighters **SU-30MKI, Rafale** and the indigenous Light Combat Aircraft along with force multipliers, while the U.S. Air Force is expected to bring in **F-15 fighter jets**.
- The last edition of the exercise was held in **2019**.

Ministry of Defence signs 3 defence contracts worth ₹5,400 cr for Indian Army & Navy

- The **Ministry of Defence (MoD)** has signed **3 contracts** at a total cost of nearly **5400 crore** for **Indian Army (IA) & Indian Navy (IN)** under Buy (Indian – IDMM (Indigenously Designed Developed and Manufactured))

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category to bolster the defence capabilities of India.

About MoD :

- Defence Minister : Rajnath Singh
- Minister of State : Ajay Bhatt
- Defence Secretary : Giridhar Aramane

Indian Coast Guard Conducts Regional Search And Rescue (SAR) Exercise in Kakinada, Andhra Pradesh

- The Indian Coast Guard (ICG) conducted Regional Search and Rescue (SAR) exercise during 28 -29 March 2023 at Kakinada, Andhra Pradesh (AP).
- To simulate a real time maritime distress scenario and highlight the functioning of SAR organisation for a mass rescue operation.
- The exercise involved all stakeholders with effective use of available resources towards M-SAR (Maritime Search and Rescue) contingency efficiently.
- The exercise simulated an Offshore Support vessel (OSV) carrying more than hundreds of passengers that reported a distress call of major fire onboard off Kakinada.

About ICG :

- Founded: 1 February 1977
- Headquarters : New Delhi, Delhi, India
- Director General : Virender Singh Pathania
- Motto : Vayam Rakṣāmaḥ means We protect

Ministry of Defence signs Rs 19,600 cr contracts for 11 Next Generation Offshore Patrol Vessels and 6 Next Generation Missile Vessels for Indian Navy

- The Ministry of Defence (MoD) signed contracts with Indian shipyards for acquisition of 11 Next Generation Offshore Patrol Vessels (NGOPV) and 6 Next Generation Missile Vessels (NGMV) at an overall cost of approx. Rs 19,600 crore, in a huge boost to achieve 'Aatmanirbharta' in defence,

About Ministry of Defence :

- Defence Minister : Rajnath Singh
- Minister of State : Ajay Bhatt
- Defence Secretary : Giridhar Aramane

Ministry of Defence inks Rs 1,700 crore deal with BrahMos Aerospace Private Limited

- Ministry of Defence (MoD) inked a contract with BrahMos Aerospace Private Limited (BAPL) for procurement of Next Generation Maritime Mobile Coastal Batteries (Long range) {NGMMCB (LR)} and BrahMos Missiles at an approximate cost of over Rs 1,700 crore under Buy (Indian) Category.
- The delivery of NGMMCBs is scheduled to commence from 2027.
- These systems will be equipped with supersonic BrahMos Missiles and will significantly enhance multi-

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directional maritime strike capability of the Indian Navy.

- This contract is going to give further boost to indigenous production of critical weapon systems and ammunition with active participation of indigenous industries.
- This project will generate an employment of more than **90,000 man-days** over a period of **4 years**.

About BAPL :

- Founded : 12 February 1998
- Headquarters : New Delhi, India
- MD & CEO : Shri Atul Dinkar Rane
- BrahMos Aerospace is an **Indo-Russian multinational aerospace and defense corporation**.
- It was founded as a joint venture (JV) between **India's Defence Research and Development Organisation** and **NPO Mashinostroyeniya of Russia**.

Defence Ministry signs contract with Bharat Electronics Limited for 13 Lynx-U2 Fire Control Systems for Indian Navy worth Rs 1700 cr

- The **Ministry of Defence (MoD)** signed a contract with **Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL)**, Bangalore, Karnataka for procurement of **13 Lynx-U2 Fire Control Systems** for Indian Navy at a total cost of over **Rs 1,700 crore** under Buy {Indian – IDMM (Indigenously Designed Developed and Manufactured)} category.

About Ministry of Defence :

- Defence Minister : Rajnath Singh
- Minister of State : Ajay Bhatt
- Defence Secretary : Giridhar Aramane

Indian Navy conducts offshore security exercise 'Prashthan'

- **Indian Navy** conducted the **offshore biannual security exercise 'Prashthan'** in the offshore development area (ODA) off **Mumbai, Maharashtra**.
- The current exercise was conducted on the **Greatdrill Chaaya platform** about 30 nm South West of Mumbai harbour.
- To validate measures and procedures to address contingencies that may occur in oil production platforms.

Andaman & Nicobar Command Conducts Large Scale Joint Military Exercise 'KAVACH'

- **India's only tri-services Andaman & Nicobar Command** conducted a joint military exercise '**EX-KAVACH**'.
- To improve joint warfighting capabilities and operational synergy.
- The exercise was **previously** conducted from **21-25 Jan 2021** in the **Andaman and Nicobar Islands** as **AMPHEX-21**.

Turkey launches its first aircraft carrier & eyes drone capabilities

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- **Turkey** launched its **first amphibious assault ship** aiming to **extend its drone capabilities** from land-based to naval operations amid increased regional tensions as war rages in Ukraine on the other side of the Black Sea.
- The **TCG Anadolu** can handle only light aircraft, chiefly helicopters and jets that can take off from shorter runways.
- It is **232 metres long** and **32 metres wide**, and can carry some **1,400 personnel** – one battalion of soldiers – combat vehicles and support units to operate overseas.
- The amphibious assault ship was built in **Istanbul's Sedef Shipyard** by a Turkish-Spanish consortium, based on the design of **Spanish light aircraft carrier Juan Carlos I**.

About Turkey :

- President : Recep Tayyip Erdoğan
- Capital : Ankara
- Currency : Turkish lira

Ministry of Defence signs ₹667 crore deal with Hindustan Aeronautics Limited to procure 6 Dornier aircraft for Indian Air Force

- The **Ministry of Defence (MoD)**, signed a **contract** for procurement of **6 Dornier-228 aircraft** for the **Indian Air Force (IAF)** from **Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL)** at a cost of **Rs 667 crore**.
- The aircraft was used by IAF for Route Transport Role and communication duties.
- Subsequently, it has also been used for training of transport pilots of the IAF.
- The present lot of 6 aircraft will be procured with an upgraded fuel-efficient engine coupled with a **5 bladed composite propeller**.
- The aircraft is ideally suited for **short haul operations** from semi-prepared/short runways of the North East and island chains of India.

About Dornier-228 :

- The Dornier-228 aircraft is a **highly versatile multi-purpose light transport aircraft**.
- The Dornier 228 is a **twin-turboprop Short Takeoff and Landing (STOL)** utility aircraft, designed and first manufactured by Dornier GmbH from 1981 until 1998.

About MoD :

- Defence Minister : Rajnath Singh
- Minister of State : Ajay Bhatt

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- Defence Secretary : Giridhar Aramane

Anti-Submarine Rocket Developed by DRDO Successfully Test-fired from INS Chennai

- The **Extended Range Anti Submarine Rocket (ER-ASR)** designed by two Pune-based facilities of the **Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO)** was successfully test-fired for the 1st time from Navy's **INS Chennai**.
- The ER-ASR was designed and developed by **Pune-based Armament Research and Development Establishment (ARDE)** and **High Energy Materials Research Laboratory (HEMRL)**.
- The rocket has been designed to **replace** the existing **Russian-origin Rocket Guided Bombs (RGBs)**.
- It is designed to intercept submarines at specific depths.

Hindustan Aeronautics Limited's 3rd Light Combat Aircraft production line inaugurated in Maharashtra

- Defence Secretary **Shri Giridhar Aramane** inaugurated the **third production line** of the **Light Combat Aircraft (LCA)** set up by **Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd. (HAL)** at **Nashik** in **Maharashtra**.
- The new production line will enable the company to enhance production of **LCA Tejas (MK1A)** from its current capacity of 16 jets to 24 aircraft per year.
- The HAL has **2 manufacturing facilities** for LCA Tejas in **Bengaluru**.
- He also handed over the **100th Sukhoi-30 MKI ROH (Repair and Overhaul)** aircraft to the Indian Air Force (IAF).

About HAL :

- Founded : 1964
- Headquarters : Bangalore, Karnataka, India
- Chairman and Managing Director : CB Ananthakrishnan

China Successfully undertakes military drill 'Operation Joint Sword' encircling Taiwan

- The **Chinese military** successfully held **three days of military drills** dubbed **Operation Joint Sword**, around Taiwan Island.
- To rehearse an **encirclement of Taiwan**.
- China wants to reunify Taiwan with the motherland and views the democratic, self-ruled Taiwan as part of its territory.

About China :

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- President : Xi Jinping
- Capital : Beijing
- Currency : Renminbi

Exercise Cope India 23 begins between Indian Air Force & United States Air Force in West Bengal

- The first phase of Exercise Cope India-23 (CI23) began at West Bengal's Panagarh Air Force base, also known as Air Force Station Arjan Singh.

Participants :

- The exercise will witness participation of **B1B bombers** of the United States Air Force (USAF).
- **F-15 fighter aircraft** of the USAF will also join the exercise subsequently.
- The Indian Air Force (IAF) element will include the **Su-30 MKI, Rafale, Tejas and Jaguar fighter aircraft**.
- Cope India began in **2004** as a fighter training exercise held at Air Station Gwalior, India.

About Ministry of Defence :

- Defence Minister : Rajnath Singh
- Minister of State : Ajay Bhatt
- Defence Secretary : Giridhar Aramane

Raman Research Institute & Indian Navy partners to develop secure maritime communications using Quantum Technology

- The Indian Navy is set to collaborate with the Bengaluru, Karnataka based **Raman Research Institute (RRI)** to develop secure maritime communications using quantum technology.
- The Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between RRI, an autonomous institute of the Department of Science and Technology (DST), and the Weapons and Electronics Systems Engineering Establishment (WESEE), the Research & Developments (R&D) establishment of the Indian Navy, was signed for a period of **5 years**.

About RRI :

- Established : 1948
- Location : Bangalore, Karnataka, India
- Director : Tarun Souradeep
- It was founded by Nobel laureate C. V. Raman.

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Indian Navy Conducts Offshore Biannual Security Exercise 'Prasthan' In Mumb

- Indian Navy conducted the bi-annual coordinated exercise **Prasthan** along with other defence, state and civilian agencies in the offshore area development off **Mumbai, Maharashtra**.

Aim :

- To integrate the efforts of all maritime stakeholders involved in offshore defence.
- The previous edition of the exercise was held in **October 2022** in the **Krishna Godavari Basin Offshore Development Area (ODA)** under the aegis of headquarters, Eastern Naval Command, **Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh (AP)**.
- The exercise is held **every 6 months**, to verify the policies and methods for handling potential emergencies on oil production platforms.

About Indian Navy :

- Headquarters : New Delhi, Delhi
- Chief of the Naval Staff : Admiral R Hari Kumar

Indian Air Force participated in multilateral international exercise Orion in France

- An **Indian Air Force (IAF)** contingent will depart for **France**, to participate in **Multilateral Military exercise, Exercise Orion** at **Mont-de-Marsan**, an Air Force base of the **French Air and Space Force (FASF)**.
- The exercise will be conducted from **17 April 2023 to 05 May 2023**, with the IAF Contingent comprising 4 Rafale, 2 C-17, 2 Il-78 aircraft and 165 air warriors.
- This would be the **first overseas exercise** for the IAF's Rafale aircraft.

India Acquires Weapons Worth \$300 Million From US For Indian Navy

- The **Indian Navy** is procuring weapons and equipment worth more than **USD 300 million (over Rs 2,400 crore)** from the **United States of America (USA)**.
- The weapons are for the **MH 60 'Romeo' helicopters**, the most advanced multi-role helicopters currently in service with the Indian Navy.
- The deal to procure the MH 60 choppers was signed on **February 24, 2020**, at an estimated cost of **USD 2 billion (over Rs 16,300 crore)**.

APPS AND PORTALS

BharatPe founder Ashneer Grover launches fantasy sports app Crickpe

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- **BharatPe** cofounder Ashneer Grover's new venture **Third Unicorn Pvt Ltd** has launched a fantasy sports app **Crickpe** – almost a week ahead of Indian Premier League (IPL) tournament.
- With this Grover has marked his entry into a space crowded by fantasy sports startups such as **Dream11**, **Mobile Premier League**, **My11Circle**, and is backed by marquee investors such as **Tiger Global**, **Sequoia Capital**, **TPG**, **Falcon Edge**, **DST Global**.
- Through **Crickpe**, a real-money gaming app, users over 18 years of age will be able to create a virtual team of cricket players, and enter paid contests to earn cash prizes based on the players' performance in real games.

'Call Before You Dig' app launched by PM Modi to help prevent uncoordinated digging

- The **Prime Minister** has launched an app called '**Call Before u Dig**'.
- To help prevent uncoordinated digging that results in damage to underground utility assets like optical fibre cables, costing the government thousands of crores every year.
- The '**Call Before u Dig**' (**CBuD**) app aims to facilitate coordination between excavation agencies and underground utility owners to prevent damage to utilities due to digging.
- With this, it would help to protect underground public infrastructure across the country.

Defence forces to acquire 250 more Pralay ballistic missile for China front

- **India** is planning to buy **250 more Pralay ballistic missiles** for the services to strengthen them on the northern borders, further boosting the firepower of the defence forces.
- The use of **Pralay tactical ballistic missile** will be the **first time** in the history of the service, as ballistic missiles have been cleared by the government for use in tactical operations.
- The **Pralay missile** will now be mass-produced and it is expected to be ready for operational service shortly.
- The **Pralay missile** was successfully tested **twice** in **December 2021**.

About Pralay missile:

- It is a **quasi-ballistic surface-to-surface missile**.
- It has a range of **150 to 500 kilometres**, is propelled by a **solid-propellant rocket motor** and other novel technologies.
- Capacity: The missile can carry **350-700 kg** of high-grade explosives.
- It is developed by the **Defence Research Development Organisation (DRDO)**.

Indian Air Force to participate in exercise INIOCHOS-23 in Greece

- The **Indian Air Force (IAF)** will be participating in **Exercise INIOCHOS-23**, a multi-national air exercise hosted by the **Hellenic Air Force**.
- The exercise will be conducted at the **Andravida Air Base** in **Greece** from **24 Apr 2023** to **04 May 2023**.

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Aim of the exercise :

- To enhance international cooperation, synergy and interoperability amongst the participating Air Forces.

Participants :

- **4 Su-30 MKI and 2 C-17 aircraft** will participate in the exercise.
- Sukhoi Su-30MKI is a **twinjet multirole air superiority fighter** developed by Russia while the C-17 Globemaster III is a **strategic transport aircraft**.
- Additionally, the USA with **F-16s** and **MQ-9s**, Austria with INTEL personnel and Canada with Air Battle Managers will also take part in the exercise.
- Cyprus with an **AW139 Helicopter**; France with **Rafales**; Italy with **Tornados**; Jordan with **F-16s**; Saudi Arabia with **F-15s**; Slovenia with **PC-9s** will participate in the exercise.
- The exercise will be conducted in a realistic combat scenario involving multiple types of air and surface assets.
- It will also enable the participating contingents to engage in professional interactions, providing valuable insight into each other's best practices

About Ministry of Defence :

- Defence Minister : Rajnath Singh
- Minister of State : Ajay Bhatt
- Defence Secretary : Giridhar Aramane

About IAF :

- Established : 1932
- Headquarters : New Delhi, Delhi, India
- Chief of the Air Staff : Air Chief Marshal Vivek Ram Chaudhari

DRDO & Indian Navy Conducted Successful Trial of BMD Interceptor from Naval Platform

- The **Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO)** and **Indian Navy (IN)** successfully conducted a **maiden flight trial** of sea-based **endo-atmospheric Ballistic Missile Defence (BMD)** interceptor missiles off the coast of **Odisha** in the Bay of Bengal.
- With this test, **India** has entered an **elite club of nations** having Naval BMD capability.

Purpose of the trial :

- To engage and neutralize a hostile ballistic missile threat.
- Only a few countries like the **United States (US)**, **Russia**, **Israel** and **China** have fully-operational BMD systems.

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- Prior to this, DRDO has successfully demonstrated **land-based BMD systems** with capability to neutralize ballistic missile threats, emerging from adversaries.

What is meant by Endo-atmospheric interception :

- Endo-atmospheric interception means the missile destroyed the **incoming enemy ballistic missile** within the Earth's atmosphere.
- Also it means destroying incoming enemy ballistic missiles **outside** of the **Earth's atmosphere** at a **higher altitude**

About Ministry of Defence :

- Defence Minister : Rajnath Singh
- Minister of State : Ajay Bhatt
- Defence Secretary : Giridhar Aramane

About Indian Navy :

- Headquarters : New Delhi, Delhi
- Chief of the Naval Staff : Admiral R Hari Kumar

About DRDO :

- Established : 1958
- Headquarters : New Delhi, Delhi, India
- Chairman : Dr Sameer V Kamath

8th India-Thailand Defence Dialogue to be held in Bangkok

- The **8th Defense Dialogue** between **India** and **Thailand** was held in **Bangkok**.
- The meeting was co-chaired by **Nivedita Shukla**, Special Secretary in the Ministry of Defense and General **Nuchit Sribunsong**, Deputy Permanent Secretary of Defense of Thailand.
- Defense cooperation between the two countries reviewed in the dialogue and new initiatives sought to strengthen bilateral relations.
- The two sides also exchanged views on regional and global issues of common interest.
- India and Thailand have an important partnership and the defense sector is a major pillar of this cooperation.

India-Thailand relations :

- India is a **member** of the **Asia Cooperation Dialogue (ACD)** initiated by **Thailand** in 2002 and the **Mekong-Ganga Cooperation (MGC)** grouping of six countries.
- The India-AESAN Agreement on Trade in Goods was implemented in **January 2010**.

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- Since **2015**, India has been participating in the **largest Asia Pacific military exercise X-Cobra Gold**.
- **Exercise MAITREE (Army)** and **exercise SIAM BHARAT (Air Force)** are Bilateral exercises between both countries.
- It includes Defence Dialogue meetings, military-to-military exchanges, high-level visits, capacity building and training programmes and bilateral exercises.

About Thailand :

- Prime minister : Prayuth Chan-ocha
- Capital : Bangkok
- Currency : Baht

Jack Dorsey introduces Bluesky for Android

- The **Bluesky app**, a **Twitter alternative** by **Jack Dorsey**, has been recently launched for **Android beta**.
- The **app was first launched in 2019** as a Twitter-backed side platform, but in 2021 it separated from Twitter.
- The **Bluesky app debuted in February on the iOS platform**.
- Bluesky has similar features to those of Twitter: followers and follow, create posts, different sections for posts and replies, and more.
- At present, the platform has about 25,000 users.

ENVIRONMENT

New species of Moray eel discovered off Cuddalore coast named after Tamil Nadu

- A **Moray Eel fish of the Genus Gymnothorax** has been discovered by the Indian Council of Agriculture Research (ICAR) from the **Cuddalore coast, Tamil Nadu**.
- The fish has **been named after Tamil Nadu as - "Gymnothorax Tamilnaduensis" with a common name as "Tamil Nadu brown moray eel"**.
- P Kodeeswaran and G Kantharajan, marine researchers from ICAR's National Bureau of Fish Genetic Resources (NBFGR), conducted an exploration survey along the coast in the Parangipettai and Mudasalodai fish landing centres in the Cuddalore district.

India's first cloned Gir calf 'Ganga' produced at NDRI

- In another major achievement in the animal science field after getting success in **buffalo cloning**, the **National Dairy Research Institute (ICAR-NDRI)** has become the first institute in the country to produce a **cloned calf of cattle**.
- **Scientists of the institute have produced a female cloned calf from the somatic cell of the tail of the indigenous Gir cow breed**, which is a **native tract in Gujarat** and is popular for its docile nature, disease-resistance, heat-tolerance and high milk producing qualities.
- The **newborn cloned female calf of the cow has been named "Ganga"**, which weighs 32kg and is growing

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well.

- The scientists used three animals for producing this calf of a cow.

SPORTS NEWS

Ex-Germany, Arsenal midfielder Mesut Ozil announces retirement

- Germany's World Cup-winning midfielder Mesut Ozil announced his retirement from football at the age of 34.
- The former Real Madrid and Arsenal player was a key member of Germany's World Cup-winning side in Brazil in 2014.
- Ozil made 645 appearances for club and country, in which he scored 114 goals and had 222 assists.

'Ironman' Krishna Prakash becomes first person to swim from Gateway of India to Elephanta Caves

- The Krishna Prakash set another record by swimming from the Gateway of India (located on Chhatrapati Shivaji Marg in South Mumbai) to the famous Elephanta Caves (located at the Elephanta Island in Mumbai Harbour).
- He swam the opposite direction of the famed swimming route from Elephanta Caves to the Gateway of India, covering 16.20 kilometres in five hours and 26 minutes.
- This achievement earned Prakash the title of 'Iron Man' and earned him a mention in the World Book of Records.

Chennai to host Street Child Cricket World Cup in September

- The city of Chennai has always welcomed the sport of cricket with open arms, and has played the perfect host to several national and international tournaments.
- Come September, Chennai will witness another cricket tournament, but one with a difference - the Street Child Cricket World Cup 2023.
- Organised by Street Child United in partnership with Shree Dayaa Foundation, the tournament will take place at Amir Mahal, the official residence of the Nawab of Arcot from September 20 to 30.
- This is the second edition of the Street Child Cricket World Cup.

PV Sindhu loses to Gregoria Tunjung of Indonesia in final of Madrid Spain Masters

- The two-time Olympic medallist and former World Badminton Champion P.V. Sindhu has lost to Indonesia's Gregoria Mariska Tunjung in the summit clash of the Madrid Spain Masters.
- Sindhu lost in straight sets 8-21, 8-21.
- In Men's singles, Kenta Nishimoto has won the final.

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- The ace shuttler has defeated second seed Kanta Tsuneyama 15-21, 21-18, 21-19 in the all-Japanese men's singles final.

Royal Enfield partners with Indian Ice Hockey Women's Team

- **Royal Enfield has partnered with the Indian women's Ice Hockey team** to strengthen its Olympic ambitions.
- The partnership is an extension of the relationship of Royal Enfield with the Union Territory of Ladakh **to develop winter sports in the region.**
- Royal Enfield along with the Ice Hockey Association of India unveiled the new jersey for Team India.
- The Indian women's Ice Hockey team is participating in the **2023 IIHF Ice Hockey Women's Asia and Oceania Championship from April 30 to May 7, 2023 in Thailand.**

About Royal Enfield:

- Founded: 1955
- Parent organization: Eicher Motors
- Headquarters: Chennai
- CEO: B. Govindarajan

About International Ice Hockey Federation

- Headquarters: Zürich, Switzerland
- Founded: 15 May 1908
- President: Luc Tardif

Sony Sports Network extends its partnership with UEFA

- **Sony Sports Network, has extended its collaboration with the Union of European Football Associations (UEFA), the governing body of football in Europe.**
- This gives the broadcaster exclusive media rights for all the **UEFA National Team competitions scheduled between 2022-2028 and will showcase the UEFA EURO 2024 and 2028,** along with its European Qualifiers and Friendly Matches.
- The network will televise the 2024 and 2028 European Qualifiers and the upcoming two editions of the UEFA EURO.
- Sony Sports Network continues to be the official broadcaster for the UEFA Champions League, UEFA Europa League, UEFA Europa Conference League, Bundesliga, Emirates FA Cup, and more.

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About UEFA:

- Current champion: Real Madrid CF (14th title)
- Next date: Tue, 27 Jun, 2023 – Sat, 1 Jun, 2024
- Founded: 1955
- Founders: Gabriel Hanot, Jacques Ferran

Indian GM Gukesh wins title at World Chess Armageddon Asia & Oceania event

- Teenaged Indian Grandmaster D Gukesh stunned former world rapid champion Nodirbek Abdusattorov of Uzbekistan in the final to win the World Chess Armageddon Asia & Oceania event.
- Both Gukesh and Abdusattorov have earned a spot at the Armageddon's Grand Finale in September.
- An Armageddon game is a variant of blitz chess to determine a winner after a series of drawn game.
- A drawn game in the Armageddon is counted as a win for Black.

About FIDE

- The International Chess Federation or World Chess Federation, commonly referred to by its French acronym FIDE, is an international organization based in Switzerland that connects the various national chess federations and acts as the governing body of international chess competition
- Headquarters: Lausanne, Switzerland
- Founded: 20 July 1924, Paris, France
- President: Arkady Dvorkovich

Peru removed as host of this year's men's Under-17 World Cup

- Peru was pulled out of hosting the men's Under-17 World Cup after FIFA stated that the country is not ready to hold the tournament later this year.
- The decision comes one week after FIFA took the men's Under-20 World Cup from Indonesia because it did not want to host Israel at its tournament in May.

About FIFA

- President: Gianni Infantino
- Headquarters: Zürich, Switzerland
- Founded: 21 May 1904, Rue Saint-Honoré, Paris, France

About Peru

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- Capital: Lima
- Currency: Sol

New Zealand's Kim Cotton becomes first woman on-field umpire in full-member men's T20Is

- New Zealand's Kim Cotton becomes first woman on-field umpire in full-member men's international cricket.
- Kim Cotton became the first-ever female umpire to stand in a men's international cricket match.
- Claire Polosak is the first female umpire to stand in a men's international cricket in 2019 between Oman and Namibia.

MS Dhoni, Yuvraj Singh among 5 India legends to receive Honorary Life Membership of MCC

- Legendary Indian cricketers MS Dhoni, Yuvraj Singh, Mithali Raj, Suresh Raina and Jhulan Goswami have received the Honorary Life Membership of the Marylebone Cricket Club (MCC).
- Starring in the honoured MCC list, former India skipper Dhoni, legendary all-rounder Yuvraj and ex-India batter Raina have also received life membership of the club.

India rise five places to 101 in latest FIFA rankings

- Indian men's football team jumped to the 101st position in the latest ranking released by football's world governing body FIFA.
- Argentina jumped to top spot, while France are the new number two in the list, Brazil have slipped to the third spot.
- India earned 8.57 points courtesy their victories over Myanmar and Kyrgyzstan in the tri-nation tournament to leapfrog five places.
- Among 46 Asian nations, India is placed at 19th.
- Japan is top ranked among all the Asian nations.

Indian Women wrestlers bag seven medals to finish third at Asian Wrestling Championship

- A total of seven medals have been won by Indian women wrestlers at the Asian Wrestling Championships held in Astana, Kazakhstan.
- These include two silver and five bronze medals.
- With this, India has secured the third position in the women's team rankings.
- Japan ranked first and China ranked second in the women's team rankings.

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- The **36th edition of the Asian Wrestling Championships** was held in Astana, Kazakhstan from April 9 to 14, 2023.

Suryakumar Yadav named Wisden's leading T20I cricketer

- The Indian duo of **Suryakumar Yadav and Harmanpreet Kaur** has added another feather to their outstanding crown after **bagging the Wisden Almanack's leading cricketer in the World awards**.
- **Suryakumar** won the honour of Wisden Almanack's leading T20I cricketer while **Harmanpreet Kaur** became the first Indian woman to win the Cricketer of the Year award.
- England captain **Ben Stokes** has been named Wisden's leading cricketer in the world.
- Australia batter **Beth Mooney** was named the world's top women's cricketer.

Chennai litmus test for Asian Games for India men's hockey team

- The **Men's Hockey Asian Champions Trophy** will take place in Chennai from August 3 to 12.
- India is hosting the event for the first time.
- It will be the seventh edition of the tournament.
- **Chennai last hosted an international hockey event in 2007**.
- **India, South Korea, Malaysia, Pakistan, Japan and China** will take part in the tournament.
- Tamil Nadu Sports Minister **Udhayanidhi Stalin** said that hosting the tournament will revive hockey in the region.

HSBC India ropes in Virat Kohli as their brand influencer

- **HSBC India** has roped in Indian cricketer **Virat Kohli** as their Brand Influencer.
- Virat Kohli will help to amplify HSBC's purpose of '**Opening up a world of opportunity**' as it strives to support the ambitions of an aspirational India going global.
- The company mentioned that as part of the association, a multi-media campaign featuring Virat Kohli will also be launched.
- **Hitendra Dave**, CEO, HSBC India.

Alcaraz beats Tsitsipas, wins second straight Barcelona Open title

- Spain's **Carlos Alcaraz** defeated Greece's **Stefanos Tsitsipas** and won the **Barcelona Open** title.
- **Alcaraz** won his third ATP Tour title of the year and the ninth overall.
- Alcaraz won in Barcelona Open for the second consecutive year.
- It was Tsitsipas's fourth consecutive loss to Alcaraz.
- Alcaraz was defeated by **Jannik Sinner** in the semi-finals of the Miami Open.
- In December, Alcaraz became the youngest year-end world number 1 since the ATP rankings began.

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- 2023 Barcelona Open was a men's tennis tournament played in **Barcelona, Spain**, from 17 to 23 April 2023.
- It was the **70th** edition of the **Barcelona Open**.

BOOKS AND AUTHOR

Ghulam Nabi Azad's memoirs to be released on April 5

- Ghulam Nabi Azad's autobiography "**Azaad**" will be released on April 5 in New Delhi.
- '**Azaad**' published by **Rupa Publications India** will be a candid autobiography about the life and career of one of the most powerful leaders of India and the world as well.
- In "**Azaad**," he will provide description of his interactions with the Gandhi Parivar, which includes former Prime Ministers Rajiv and Indira Gandhi, Sanjay, Maneka, Sonia Gandhi, and her children Rahul and Priyanka.
- Ghulam Nabi Azad is an Indian politician who served as the Leader of the Opposition in the Rajya Sabha between 2014 and 2021.

English translation of Nepali novel 'Phoolange' to release on April

- Penguin Random House India (PRHI) announced, the English version of Nepali novel "**Phoolange**" will be released on April 17.
- "**Fruits of the Barren Tree**," written by Darjeeling-based writer **Lekhnath Chhetri**, is about the unsuccessful Gorkha separatist movement.
- In 2021, the original novel was nominated for Nepal's most prestigious literary award, the '**Madan Puraskar**'.
- Anurag Basnet is the editor-translator for the forthcoming edition.

The Great Bank Robbery by V. Pattabhi Ram & Sabyasachee Dash

- A New Book Titled '**The Great Bank Robbery**' is authored by **V Pattabhi Ram and Sabyasachee Dash**.
- Co-authored with Pattabhi Ram **Published by Rupa Publications India**
- In '**The Great Bank Robbery**', the authors, both chartered accountants, explore how a bank works, the scandals that have rocked the banking world and focus on the role played by auditors, bankers, credit raters and directors.

Vinod Rai authored a book titled 'Transforming the Steel Frame: Promise and Paradox of Civil Service Reform

- **Vinod Rai** is the author of the book titled '**Transforming the Steel Frame: Promise and Paradox of Civil Service Reform**
- **Published by Rupa Publication**
- Curated by a veteran bureaucrat, **former Comptroller and Auditor General Vinod Rai**

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The new book 'Gandhi: Siasat aur Sampradayikata' written by Piyush Babel

- The new book 'Gandhi: Siasat aur Sampradayikata' written by journalist, and writer Piyush Babel is available in Hindi.
- The book is published by New Delhi-based **Genuine Publications & Media Private Limited**.

Bureaucrat Ashish Kundra's new book 'A Resurgent Northeast: Narratives of Change' launched in New Delhi

- A new book 'A Resurgent Northeast: Narratives of Change' launched.
- This book is written by **Ashish Kundra**, who is an IAS officer and senior bureaucrat.
- This book is on the history of Northeast India and its people.
- The book was launched in the presence of **Kiren Rijiju, Hardeep Singh Puri, Pema Khandu, Amitabh Kant** and others.
- The book was launched at an event in New Delhi.
- The event began with a performance by the famous vocal quartet of Tetseo sisters.
- In this book, senior bureaucrat-author Ashish Kundra has written about the transformational changes that are happening in the remotest parts of the Northeast.

OBITUARIES

Veteran BJP MP & member of LS Leader Girish Bapat passed away

- Veteran **Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) Member of Parliament (MP), Girish Bapat**, passed away, at the age of 73.
- Girish Bapat became a **member of legislative assembly (MLA)** for the **first time** in **1995** and was re-elected for the next four terms.
- He was elected to the **Lok Sabha** in the **2019** general elections as a member of the **BJP**.
- He was a member of **13th Maharashtra Legislative Assembly** and one of top **Bharatiya Janata Party** leaders in **Vidhansabha**.

Malayalam Novelist and short story writer Sarah Thomas passed away

- Veteran **Malayalam novelist, short story writer & two-time Kerala Sahitya Akademi Award winner Sarah Thomas** passed away at the age of 88 in **Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala**.
- Sarah Thomas was born in **September 1934, Trivandrum, Travancore**. British Raj (now in **Kerala**).
- Sarah, who has written **17 novels** and over **100 short stories**.
- Her debut work '**Jeevitham Enna Nadi**' (**The river that is life**) was published at the age of 34.

Japanese pop pioneer & Oscar-winning composer Ryuichi Sakamoto Passed away

- Oscar-winning Japanese pop pioneer **Ryuichi Sakamoto** has passed away at the age of 71 in **Tokyo**,

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Japan.

- Ryuichi Sakamoto was born on January 17, 1952, in Tokyo, **Japan**.
- He was a Japanese composer, record producer, and actor who pursued a diverse range of styles as a solo artist and as a **member of Yellow Magic Orchestra (YMO)**.

Former Indian Cricket Legend Salim Durani Passed Away

- Former India all-rounder **Salim Durani** has passed away at the age of 88 in Jamnagar, Gujarat.
- Salim Durani was born on 11 December 1934 in Kabul, **Afghanistan**.
- He was an Afghan-born Indian cricketer who played in **29 Test matches** from 1960 to 1973.
- He is the **only Indian Test cricketer** to have been born in Afghanistan.
- He was the hero of India's series victory against England in 1961–62.
- At a BCCI award ceremony in Mumbai in May 2011, he was also given the **CK Nayudu Lifetime Achievement Award** by the Indian Cricket Board.

Lance Reddick, 'The Wire' and 'John Wick' star Passed away

- An **actor** in the popular HBO series The Wire, **Lance Reddick**, passed away. at the age of 60.
- Lance Solomon Reddick was born in Baltimore, Maryland, **United States (US)**.
- He was an **American actor**, and **musician**.
- He was best known for playing Cedric Daniels in **The Wire** (2002–2008), Phillip Broyles in Fringe (2008–2013), and Chief Irvin Irving in Bosch (2014–2020).
- In film, he was best known for starring as Charon in the **John Wick franchise** (2014–2023) and David Gentry in Angel Has Fallen (2019) and the Amazon series Bosch.

Jharkhand Education Minister Jagarnath Mahto passed away

- **Jharkhand Education Minister Jagarnath Mahto** passed away at the age of 56 in Chennai, Tamil Nadu (TN).
- Jagarnath Mahto born on 1 January 1967, in Alargo, Bokaro, **Jharkhand**.
- He was an Indian politician and cabinet minister from Jharkhand.
- He represented the **Dumri Vidhan Sabha constituency** as a **Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM)** Member of the Legislative Assembly (**MLA**)
- He was actively involved in a separate statehood movement, led by **Shibu Soren**.

Former Tamil Nadu Chief Electoral Officer Naresh Gupta passed away

- **Former Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) of Tamil Nadu (TN) Naresh Gupta** passed away at the age of 72 in Chennai, TN.
- Naresh hailed from Lucknow in **Uttar Pradesh (UP)**.

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- He served as the CEO of Tamil Nadu between 1998 and 2000, and 2005 and 2010.
- He has served in multiple positions, including being the **first collector** of **Sivaganga district** in 1985-86, and Home Secretary for the then CM M Karunanidhi in 2001-02.

Former Mahindra Group chairman Keshub Mahindra Passed away

- **Former Mahindra Group chairman** and industrialist Anand Mahindra's uncle **Keshub Mahindra** has passed away at the age of 99
- In 1987, he was awarded the **Chevalier de l'Ordre National de la Légion d'honneur** by the French government.

Theatre veteran Jalabala Vaidya Passed away

- A renowned theatre **artist** and co-founder of Delhi's Akshara Theatre **Jalabala Vaidya** passed away at the age of 86.

Renowned National Award-Winning actress Uttara Baokar passed away

- Noted **actress** and theatre artist **Uttara Baokar** passed away at the age of 79 in Pune city of Maharashtra.

Bangladesh Freedom fighter & public health pioneer Dr Zafrullah Chowdhur passed away

- Veteran Liberation War **fighter** and legendary public health activist **Dr. Zafrullah Chowdhury** passed away at the age of 81 in Dhaka, Bangladesh.
- He was called the '**doctor of the poor**' for his excellent work in providing health services to the poor.

Virginia Norwood, satellite imaging systems 'mother', Passed away

- **Virginia Norwood**, an **American aerospace pioneer** who invented the scanner that has been used to map and study the earth from space for over 50 years, has passed away at the age of 86 in Topanga, Calif.
- She was best known for her contribution to the **Landsat program**, having designed the **Multispectral Scanner** which was first used on **Landsat 1**.
- The scanner has been used for more than 50 years for scanning safe landing sites and mapping our planet from space.
- For this invention, NASA has called her "**the mother of Landsat**."

Ireland's top rally driver Craig Breen passed away

- **Ireland's top rally driver Craig Breen** has passed away at the age of 33 in an **accident**, due to a crash while driving his Hyundai i20 N Rally1 rally car in a testing session for the **2023 Croatia Rally**.

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Former Odisha MP & 3 Time MLA Trilochan Kanungo Passed away

- Veteran **politician** and former Jagatsinghpur Member of Parliament (MP) **Trilochan Kanungo** passed away at the age of 83 in Bhubaneswar, Odisha.

About Trilochan Kanungo :

- Trilochan Kanungo was born on 24 November 1940 in Cuttack, **Odisha**.
- He was elected to the **Odisha Assembly** in 1971, 1974 and 1985.
- In 1999, he was elected from the **Jagatsinghpur Lok Sabha seat** on a BJD ticket.
- He served as **Chairman of Cuttack municipality** (1979-80 and 1992-95).
- He was also **chairman** of the **second Odisha Finance Commission**.

Tripura's first Padma Awardee Himangshu Mohan Choudhury passed away

- **Tripura's first Padmashree awardee** and Former Indian Administrative Services (IAS) Officer, in Tripura government **Himangshu Mohan Choudhury** Passed away at the age of 84 in Agartala, Tripura.

About Himangshu Mohan Choudhury :

- Himangshu Mohan Choudhury was credited with efforts in providing relief to refugees and army deserters during the **Bangladesh Liberation War** in 1971.
- While working as the **sub-divisional officer (SDO)** at Sonamura in the Indian border state of Tripura, Choudhury is reported to have supervised the task of providing food and shelter to over **250,000 refugees**.

Awards & Honors :

- He was honoured by the Government of India in 1972 with **Padma Shri**, the fourth-highest Indian civilian award.
- The Government of Bangladesh presented him with the **Outstanding Friend of Bangladesh** honour in 2013.

5-Time Punjab Chief Minister Parkash Singh Badal Passed away

- **Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) veteran leader** and 5-time chief minister (CM) of Punjab **Parkash Singh Badal** passed away at the age of 95 in Mohali, Punjab.

About Parkash Singh Badal :

- Parkash Singh Badal was born on 8 December 1927 in Abul Khurana, near Malout, **Punjab**.
- He held the **Chief Minister** of Punjab for **5 terms** from 1970 to 1971, from 1977 to 1980, from 1997 to 2002, from 2007 to 2012 and from 2012 to 2017.

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- In 2012, he became the **only person** in **Punjab** politics to have been the **youngest** chief minister of Punjab at 43 in 1970 and the oldest chief minister of Punjab at the age of 84.
- He was also **Leader** of the Opposition in the **Punjab Legislative Assembly** from 1972 to 1977, 1980 to 1983 and from 2002 to 2007.
- He served as **11th Union Minister of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare** in the Morarji Desai ministry from 1977.
- In 2022, Badal was the **country's oldest candidate** in the fray for the state polls, but lost to AAP's first candidate, Gurmeet Singh Khudian & this was Badal's **13th assembly election**.

Awards & Honors :

- In 2011, he was awarded the **Path Ratan Faqar-e-Qoum (Jewel of community's Panth Pride)**.
- The Government of India (GoI) awarded him the second-highest civilian award, **Padma Vibhushan**, in **2015** however he returned this award to support the 2020–2021 Indian farmers' protest on 3 December 2020.

Pakistani-Canadian journalist Tarek Fatah passed away

- Renowned **Pakistan-born Canadian columnist** and famous television personality **Tarek Fatah** passed away at the age of 73 in Canada.

About Tarek Fatah :

- Tarek Fatah was born on November 20, 1949, in Karachi, Pakistan.
- He was an **award-winning reporter, columnist, and radio and television commentator**, both in Canada and abroad.
- He **advocated LGBT (Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender) rights**.
- He called himself "an Indian born in Pakistan" and "a Punjabi born into Islam"
- He also authored several **books** including, 'Chasing a Mirage: The Tragic Illusion of an Islamic State' and 'The Jew is Not My Enemy: Unveiling the Myths that Fuel Muslim Anti-Semitism.'