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Geography and Environment

Technological Innovation for Conservation: Implementing AI in the Pench Tiger Reserve

Introduction and About the Pench Tiger Reserve:

- The Pench Tiger Reserve is identified after the Pench River, which bisects the park from north to south; establishing the boundary for Seoni District and Chhindwara District districts of Madhya Pradesh.

- Spanning over the southern Satpura hills in Madhya Pradesh's Seoni and Chhindwara districts, the reserve also extends into Maharashtra's Nagpur district.

- A notable man-made feature of the reserve is the Meghdoot dam built across the Pench River at Totladoh which has created a 72 km² water body.

- Known to be the setting of Rudyard Kipling's acclaimed novel, "The Jungle Book," the Pench region is rich in biodiversity, hosting numerous species of flora and fauna.

Why in News?

- The showcase event that places the Pench Tiger Reserve in the spotlight is the recent implementation of an advanced Artificial Intelligence (AI) system.

- This AI system is designed specifically for the early detection of forest fires.

The Need and Importance of AI System in Forest Conservation

- Forest fires pose a major risk to the wildlife and natural habitats.

- The launch of the AI system represents a significant advancement in the adoption of technology in wildlife conservation.

- The primary advantage of this system lies in the ability to detect forest fires early, thereby improving the response times and minimising the damage to the wildlife and the habitats.

Biodiversity of Pench Tiger Reserve

- The Pench Tiger Reserve houses a rich variety of flora and fauna.

- Apart from Tigers, the reserve is home to large herds of Chital, Sambar, Nilgai, and Gaur (Indian Bison).

- Over 325 species of resident and migratory birds including Malabar Pied Hornbill, Indian Pitta, Osprey, and Grey Headed Fishing Eagle can be spotted here.

- The reserve is also rich in vegetation, featuring a mosaic of plant life in its moist, sheltered valleys to open, dry deciduous forests. Teak, saag, mahua, and various grasses and shrubs are abundant in the area.

In conclusion, the Pench Tiger Reserve's initiative of employing AI for forest conservation marks a noteworthy step towards safeguarding India's rich biodiversity, and enhancing the efficiency of natural disasters mitigation strategies.

Maximum Temperature Reading at Delhi's Mungeshpur - An Anomaly Analysed by the India Meteorological Department (IMD)

Debunking the Heat Record

- The India Meteorological Department (IMD) recently discredited the maximum temperature record of 52.9 degrees Celsius at Delhi's Mungeshpur weather station on May 29.

- The abnormal reading was attributed to a sensor malfunction, as evidenced by the verification conducted at the station.

- This temperature was reportedly a record high for any location in India, leading to scrutiny and subsequent dismissal of the data by IMD.

The Role and Relevance of IMD

- Undertaking meteorological observations, weather forecasting, and seismology form the core functions of the IMD.

- The IMD operates as part of the Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES), with its principal office

located at Mausam Bhawan, Lodhi Road, New Delhi.

- IMD is a designated Regional Specialised Meteorological Centre of the World Meteorological Organisation, overseeing forecasting and alerts for tropical cyclones in the Northern Indian Ocean region.

- Established in 1875, IMD caters to meteorological, seismological, and related needs across India and Antarctica with its multitude of observation stations.

- IMD offers specialised forecasting, research, and a range of services vital to agriculture, aviation, disaster management, and more.

Tracing the Roots of Meteorology in India

- Originating from ancient philosophies and scriptures like the Upanishadas and Arthashastra, Indian meteorology has a historic legacy traced back to 3000 B.C.

- Scientific understanding of weather patterns developed during the 17th century with the advent of tools like the thermometer and barometer.

- In 1686, Edmond Halley, a British scientist, provided an early analysis of the Indian summer monsoon.

- The British East India Company established the first meteorological observatories in Calcutta in 1785 and Madras (now Chennai) in 1796, which was further propagated by the Asiatic Society of Bengal.

- Several disasters led to state-operated meteorological observatories in the 19th century, culminating in the establishment of the IMD in 1875.

- Initially based in Calcutta, the IMD headquarters was successively relocated to Shimla, Poona (now Pune), and finally to New Delhi.

This event emphasises the essential part IMD plays in safeguarding diverse sectors in India by leveraging its extensive array of meteorological services and expertise in atmospheric and geological phenomena. The historic legacy of meteorology in India underlines the nation's long-standing commitment to understanding and mitigating the impacts of weather and climate.

Addition of Nagi and Nakti Bird Sanctuaries to the Ramsar List: A Boost for India's Biodiversity Conservation Endeavours

Introduction to the Nagi-Nakti Wetland and their Ramsar Recognition

1. Nagi and Nakti bird sanctuaries, located in the Jamui district of Bihar, have recently been recognized under the Ramsar Convention.
2. These sanctuaries add to India's growing list of Ramsar sites, increasing the national total to an impressive 82.

Enriched Biodiversity of Nagi-Nakti Wetland

1. The Nagi-Nakti Wetland, found amidst the Jhajha forest range, is a man-made reservoir set amidst a backdrop of dry deciduous forests and hills.
2. These sanctuaries were created primarily for irrigation purposes.
3. Rich biodiversity thrives here, with more than 150 bird species, mammals, fish, aquatic plants, reptiles, and amphibians adding colour and life to this wetland.
4. The Nagi-Nakti wetland is recognized as Important Bird and Biodiversity Areas (IBAs) by BirdLife International.
5. These sanctuaries provide crucial habitats to several resident and migratory bird species, further enhancing their conservation importance.

Affirming the Significance of the Ramsar Convention

1. The Ramsar Convention was adopted in 1971, with its primary objective being the conservation and sustainable use of wetlands and their resources.
2. India became a party to this international treaty in 1982 and has made significant strides in its conservation commitments.
3. With 82 recognized Ramsar sites each, India and China rank joint third globally, with the United Kingdom leading the list with 175 sites and Mexico following closely with 144.
4. The number of Ramsar Sites in India has showcased a dramatic increase from 26 to 82 over the last decade, with 40 of these sites being recognized in the past three years alone.

General Knowledge Insights

1. The recognition of Nagi and Nakti bird sanctuaries under the Ramsar Convention highlights India's dedication to biodiversity conservation.
2. An increase in Ramsar Sites enhances India's global standing in terms of biodiversity conservation.
3. Bihar's bird sanctuaries are essential hotspots of biodiversity that contribute significantly to the overall ecosystem health and strength, both at the regional and national level.
4. Continued commitment to conservation efforts in line with the Ramsar Convention are vital for maintaining ecological integrity and ensuring the sustainable use of wetland resources for future generations.

- Dinosaurs encompass a diverse group of reptiles that originated somewhere between 243 and 233 million years ago.

- Over time, they burgeoned into various forms during the Jurassic and Cretaceous periods. Interestingly, the broad spectrum of dinosaurs includes birds, which are believed to have evolved from theropods and extinct non-avian dinosaurs.

- There have been over 900 genera and 1,000 species of non-avian dinosaurs identified so far by researchers.

- Earlier, dinosaurs were considered to be sluggish creatures, but modern research highlights that dinosaurs were active beings exhibiting remarkable adaptations.

- An interesting fact about dinosaurs is their size variation. They ranged from being relatively small to becoming the largest land animals ever known.

Geographical and Historical Significance of the Discovery

- The discovery of the new dinosaur species in Zimbabwe highlights the rich geological history of the Mid-Zambezi Basin.

- It further establishes this region as a significant location for archaeological and paleontological exploration.

- The recent discovery also underlines the importance of Lake Kariba and the Sanyati River from a paleontological perspective.

- The naming of *Musankwa sanyatiensis* attests not only to the biodiversity of the Late Triassic Period but also to the scientific advancements in the field of palaeontology, shaping the avenues for future explorations and research.

What to Expect Next?

- The discovery of *Musankwa sanyatiensis* opens up new avenues for deeper explorations and research in the Mid-Zambezi Basin.

- The newly found species provides an opportunity to understand more about life and the environment during the Triassic period.

- This can potentially boost local tourism in Zimbabwe, while shedding more light on the ecological history of the region.

- Lastly, this discovery encourages a renewed interest in dinosaurs and prehistoric life, influencing young minds to engage in the captivating fields of palaeontology and geology.

Unearthing History: New Dinosaur Species, *Musankwa Sanyatiensis*, Discovered in Zimbabwe

The Exciting New Discovery: *Musankwa Sanyatiensis*

- The scientific community is abuzz with the recent discovery of the fossils of a new dinosaur species called *Musankwa sanyatiensis*.

- These fossils were found along the shores of Lake Kariba in Zimbabwe.

- The dinosaur is believed to have been a plant-eater, living in swampy areas during the Late Triassic period, approximately 210 million years ago.

- An interesting fact is that the dinosaur species gets its name from the houseboat used during these excavation expeditions and the Sanyati River that flows into Lake Kariba.

- Significantly, this is the first dinosaur to have been named from the Mid-Zambezi Basin in over half a century, and just the fourth dinosaur from Zimbabwe to receive a name.

A Brief Introduction to Dinosaurs

Suspension of GM Crops Production Raises Concerns in the Philippines

An Overview of the Recent Issue

- Recently, a court in the Philippines suspended the commercial permits for the farming of Genetically Modified (GM) Golden Rice and Bt Eggplant.

- Critics claim that the suspension could detrimentally affect children suffering from vitamin A deficiency, and that the court's concerns over safety transgressions are overlooked.

GM Golden Rice and Bt Eggplant – Efforts towards Combating Vitamin A Deficiency

- GM Golden Rice was developed in the 1990s by researchers at the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology and the International Rice Research Institute.

- This yellow-hued rice has higher amounts of iron, zinc and beta-carotene, which can be converted into vitamin A by the body.

- The GM Golden Rice has the potential to provide 50% of the recommended daily intake of vitamin A, and hence, was a measure to tackle vitamin A deficiency, a dominant public health issue in developing nations.

- Bt Eggplant was introduced by the Indian hybrid seed company, Mahyco, in collaboration with the University of Agricultural Sciences, Dharwad, reducing the need for pesticide applications.

- While Bangladesh permitted the cultivation of Bt eggplant in 2013, India halted its commercial release in 2010 owing to concerns raised by environmental activists and state governments.

Global and Indian Scenario on GM Crops Cultivation

- Reportedly, 191.7 million hectares were cultivated with GM crops globally in 2020 as per International Service for the Acquisition of Agri-biotech Applications (ISAAA) data.

- In India, the only commercially approved GM crop since 2002 has been Bt cotton, which spanned 11.6 million hectares – 94% of the entire cotton area in the nation – in 2020.

Understanding GM Organisms and Transgenic Organisms

- While GMO and transgenic organism are often used interchangeably, not all GMOs are transgenic;

- GMO is an animal, plant, or microbe whose DNA has been altered genetically, while a transgenic organism is genetically modified to carry a DNA sequence or gene from a different species.

Potential Benefits of GM Crops and Food Fortification

- GM crops might offer higher yields, increased resistance to pests and diseases, better environmental stress tolerance, greater nutritional content, and reduced reliance on chemical pesticides.

- Food fortification involves supplementation of essential vitamins and minerals, such as iron, iodine, zinc, vitamins A and D, to staple foods like rice, milk, and salt to enhance their nutritional content.

Rice Fortification and Regulatory Framework for GM Crops India

- Rice fortification, a cost-effective nutritional enhancement procedure, improves its vitamin and mineral content. In recent years, nationwide fortification regulations and pilot programs like Milk Fortification Project were implemented to address India's nutrition crisis.

- Genetic Engineering Appraisal Committee (GEAC), chaired by the Special Secretary/Additional Secretary of MoEF&CC and co-chaired by a representative from Department of Biotechnology (DBT), evaluates and approves the cultivation of GM crops in India.

- The Committee also appraises proposals relating to the release of genetically engineered organisms and products, including field trials.

- GM foods also fall under regulatory purview of Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI), as per the Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006.

- The Environment Protection Act, 1986, Biological Diversity Act, 2002, Plant Quarantine Order, 2003, GM policy under Foreign Trade Policy, Drugs and Cosmetics Rule (8th Amendment), 1988, are primary regulations for GM crops in India.

Defence and Military Exercises

Pioneering Leap in Space Technology: India's First 3D-Printed Rocket Engine

Introduction to the Groundbreaking Event

- The Indian space industry made history as Chennai-based start-up company, Agnikul Cosmos, launched Agnibaan SOrTeD, the world's first-ever rocket powered by a fully 3D-printed engine.
- The objective of the launch was to undertake a test flight to demonstrate their in-house-developed technologies and collect crucial flight data.

Marking Several 'Firsts' in Space

- The event marked several milestones for the Indian space ecosystem.
- The launch was not only from a private pad, named Dhanush, but it also marked the entry of India's first homegrown semi-cryo engine-powered rocket.
- Furthermore, it carried the distinction of being the world's first rocket with a single-piece 3D printed engine.
- The rocket relies on liquid oxygen and kerosene as a propellant.

Partnerships for the Launch

- The launch was supported by prominent Indian space entities, namely the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) and the Indian National Space Promotion and Authorisation Centre (IN-SPACe).

Innovation with 3D Printing

- 3D printing, also referred to as additive manufacturing, was a key feature of this launch.

- This production method utilises materials like plastics and metals to convert designs conceptualised on computer-aided design (CAD) into tangible three-dimensional items.
- It characteristically contrasts subtractive manufacturing, a process involving cutting out or hollowing pieces of metal or plastic, typically using a milling machine.

GK Aspects:

- History: This event marks a significant chapter in the history of India's space programme, with private entities like Agnikul Cosmos stepping in to augment the country's space capabilities.
- Geography: The launch took place from a private pad called Dhanush, a notable change from the government-owned launch pads usually associated with space missions in India.
- Importance: This launch not only validates the capabilities of 3D printing in space technologies but also paves the way for private-public collaborations in space missions, thus enriching the Indian space ecosystem.
- Technology: The use of a homegrown semi-cryo engine and 3D printing technology underscores India's growth and self-reliance in cutting-edge technology innovation.

Exercise Red Flag 2024: Indian Air Force and its Globetrotting Rafales

Introduction and Overview:

- The Indian Air Force (IAF) is set to take part in 'Exercise Red Flag', a prestigious multinational advanced aerial combat training exercise hosted in the US state of Alaska.
- The IAF will participate with eight Rafale fighter jets, supported by two IL-78 air-to-air refuellers and three C-17 Globemaster-III strategic airlift aircraft.
- The exercise is set to run from 1st - 14th June 2024.

The Importance of Exercise Red Flag:

- Regarded as the most realistic air-combat training exercise across the globe, Red Flag aims

to integrate aircrews from different nations in a multinational environment.

- Participating aircrews get the opportunity to hone their skills against a diversity of targets, realistic threats, and adversary forces in simulated war scenarios.

- This year, Exercise Red Flag will see participation from over 100 aircrafts from four nations and approximately 3,100 personnel indicating its grand scale and significance.

IAF's Previous Involved in Red Flag:

- This is not the first time the IAF is participating in Exercise Red Flag. India's premier air force is a two-time participant in this esteemed exercise, showcasing its capability and skills on a global stage.

Other Multinational Exercises the IAF Participates in:

- In addition to Red Flag, the IAF partakes in a variety of other combat exercises regularly that contribute to its international presence and recognition.

Key takeaway Points for GK and Current Affairs Enthusiasts:

- Exercise Red Flag is a multinational advanced aerial combat training exercise held in Alaska, USA.

- The Indian Air Force is participating with eight Rafale jets, two IL-78 refuellers and three C-17 Globemaster-III strategic airlift aircrafts.

- Red Flag's aim is to provide realistic war scenarios to integrate and train aircrews from different nations, with participation this year from four nations, 100 aircraft, and approximately 3,100 personnel.

This participation of the Indian Air Force in the Red Flag exercise once again highlights its growing capability and strategic reach. As IAF continues to strengthen its global recognition, these intense training exercises play a crucial role in advancing the skills of its personnel and their readiness for real-world combat scenarios.

DRDO's Rudra M-II: A Vital Addition to India's Air Defence

Introduction to Rudra M-II

- The Rudra M-II is a solid-propelled air-launched missile system developed indigenously by the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) for Air-to-Surface operations.

- It is designed to neutralise various types of enemy assets, thus bolstering India's air security and defence preparedness.

- This missile can act as a 'force multiplier' by enhancing the operational capability of the military forces that it supports.

Recent Successful Flight Test

- Recently, the Rudra M-II Missile was successfully flight-tested from a Sukhoi-30 MKI fighter jet giving a significant boost to India's air prowess.

- Advanced range tracking instruments, like electro-optical systems, radar, and telemetry stations were used to evaluate its performance.

Key Specifications of Rudra M-II

- The missile has an impressive range of 300 kilometres with a speed of up to Mach 5.5.

- It can carry a payload of 200 kilograms, adding to its destructive capability.

- Additionally, it has the capacity to detect enemy radio frequencies and signals from radars from over 100 km away.

Role in Replacing Foreign Equipment

- Rudra M-II can play a crucial role in replacing Russia's Kh-31 missile, which is currently used in India's Sukhoi fighter jets.

- The successful development and test launch of Rudra M-II is part of India's efforts to develop indigenously made defence systems, contributing to the Make in India initiative.

Implications on India's Defence Preparedness

- The successful operation of Rudra M-II strengthens India's air security by offering a potent weapon for Air-to-Surface operations.

- The indigenous development of this missile system showcases India's prowess in defence technology and its move towards self-reliance.
- With the capability to neutralise various types of enemy assets and replace foreign equipment, Rudra M-II will act as a significant 'force multiplier' in enhancing India's defence preparedness.

Multinational Air Exercise: Tarang Shakti-2024

Introduction and Overview

- India is gearing up to host its premier multinational air exercise, termed as 'Tarang Shakti-2024', in August 2024.
- The event will witness participation from 10 nations, with some additional ones playing the role of observers.
- The concept of 'Tarang Shakti-2024' draws inspiration from the renowned Red Flag exercise, primarily hosted by the United States.
- The large-scale exercise will be conducted in two phases: the first in Southern India and the second in the western sector.

Participants and Demonstrations

- Australia, France, Germany, Japan, Spain, UAE, UK, and the USA are amongst the nations expected to participate.
- Germany will be taking the opportunity to showcase its A-400M aircraft, which holds relevance for the Indian Air Force (IAF), as it is expected to be a viable contender in the ongoing open tender seeking medium transport aircraft.

Recent Involvement in the Sector

- The Indian Air Force (IAF) participated in the second edition of air exercise Red Flag 2024, held from 4th to 14th June 2024 in Alaska.
- Newly induced Rafales from the Indian contingent participated in joint exercises with Singaporean and American aircraft, which included beyond-visual-range combat exercises in offensive counter-air and air defence roles, forming part of the large proceedings.

Current Affairs and GK Insights

- The Tarang Shakti-2024 exercise, India's first multinational air exercise, is a significant step in India's defence cooperation with global partners.
- The event attests to India's growing prominence in global defence circles and reflects the nation's commitment towards maintaining peace and stability.
- It also emphasises the role of the Indian Air Force in global defence cooperation, marking a crucial point in modern Indian military history.
- On the geography front, the event will spread across Southern and Western India, showcasing India's logistical capability to host multinational events.

Importance

- The Tarang Shakti-2024 carries strategic weight and can potentially provide valuable learning experiences and enhance defence capabilities.
- This also kindles the potential to strengthen diplomatic ties with the participating nations.
- Furthermore, with potential large-scale collaborations in the aerospace and defence sector, the event holds significant importance for India's defence apparatus and economy.

ABHYAS: DRDO's Novel High-Speed, Expendable Aerial Target

Introduction to ABHYAS

- ABHYAS is a High-Speed Expendable Aerial Target (HEAT) developed by the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) of India.
- The Aeronautical Development Establishment (ADE) of DRDO is primarily responsible for ABHYAS's development.

Purpose and Application of ABHYAS

- The primary purpose of ABHYAS is to provide a realistic threat simulation for weapon system training.

- It helps to enhance the preparedness of defence forces by enabling effective training in targeting and interception.

Design and Features of ABHYAS

- ABHYAS is designed for autonomous flight, leveraging an integrated autopilot system to guide its trajectory.

- It is equipped with several advanced systems like Radar Cross Section (RCS), Visual, and Infrared (IR) augmentation for versatile operational capabilities.

- With a laptop-based ground control system, ABHYAS provides easy control, pre-flight checks, and data recording options for detailed post-flight analysis.

Recency and Significance of Development

- Recently, DRDO completed the developmental trials of ABHYAS at the Integrated Test Range (ITR), Odisha.

- The successful trial of ABHYAS signifies a significant leap in India's defence capabilities as it paves the way for realistic weapon system training and efficiency testing.

Understanding Expendable Aerial Targets (EATs)

- Expendable Aerial Targets like ABHYAS are low-cost, replaceable drones, or Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs) extensively used in defence sectors.

- These systems act as simulated aerial threats, allowing military forces to carry out intensive training, testing, and evaluation activities without risking high-cost assets or human lives.

General Knowledge in the Context

- ABHYAS's completion is a credit to the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO), India's leading agency for defence technology development and R&D pursuits.

- The Integrated Test Range (ITR) in Odisha, where ABHYAS's trials took place, is a premier DRDO laboratory with the mandate of providing safe and secure testing facilities for various defence-oriented products and applications.

- Aeronautical Development Establishment (ADE) is a DRDO laboratory based in Bengaluru

focusing on the development of different aerial platforms, furthering India's aeronautical progress.

By gaining a comprehensive understanding of current developments like ABHYAS, aspirants can equip themselves better for various competitive examinations focusing on current affairs and general knowledge.

JIMEX 24: Strengthening India-Japan Maritime Ties through Bilateral Exercises

Introduction to JIMEX 24

- JIMEX, or the Japan-India Maritime Exercise, is a bilateral naval drill conducted by India and Japan.

- The eighth edition, JIMEX 24, is set to take place in Yokosuka, Japan.

- Activities include professional, sports, and social activities at the harbour, followed by joint naval war drills at sea.

- The exercise aims to strengthen interoperability across various operations between the countries.

Naval Representation and Participation

- The Indian Navy is represented by INS Shivalik while the Japan Maritime Self-Defence Force is represented by the Guided Missile Destroyer JS Yugiri.

- Integral helicopters from both navies also participate in this joint exercise.

- JIMEX 24 provides an excellent opportunity for learning from each other's best practices and operational interactions.

Impact on Indo-Pacific Maritime Security

- JIMEX 24 emphasises both countries' commitment to ensuring maritime security in the Indo-Pacific region.

- It is a testament to their shared belief in freedom of navigation, adherence to international laws, and peaceful resolution of disputes.

Overview of Other Bilateral Exercises

- Apart from JIMEX, India and Japan also partake in other bilateral exercises such as the Malabar naval exercise, 'Veer Guardian' SHINYUU Maitri involving the Air Force and Dharma Guardian involving the Army.

- These exercises further strengthen defence cooperation between Japan and India and symbolise their shared strategic objectives.

GK Implications:

Historical Relation: India and Japan have enjoyed a friendly relationship dating back centuries. In recent years, both countries have increased their defence and security cooperation, reflected in exercises such as JIMEX.

Geographical Importance: Yokosuka, a major commercial and naval port in Japan's Kanagawa Prefecture, adds to JIMEX's strategic importance. Yokosuka is known for its significant US naval base and is also home to the headquarters of the JMSDF.

Strategic Importance: JIMEX 24 comes at a time of rising regional tensions in the Indo-Pacific. The exercise is a significant step towards maintaining a rules-based international order in these waters. The exercise also solidifies India's Act East Policy, aiming to foster extensive relations with Southeast Asian countries.

In conclusion, JIMEX 24 plays a pivotal role in bolstering defence cooperation between India and Japan and maintaining stability in the Indo-Pacific region.

Economics

The Role and Expectations of the RBI's Monetary Policy Committee

Introduction and Background

- The Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) is a six-member rate-setting panel that resides within the Reserve Bank of India.

- The MPC, which is scheduled to meet from June 5 to 7, is projected to maintain the repo rate (the rate at which the RBI lends money to banks to meet their short-term funding needs) at 6.5 per cent.

- This decision is partly influenced by persistent food inflation, which continues to pose a risk to India's economy.

- The MPC is anticipated to maintain the status quo for the eighth consecutive time, reflecting an ongoing trend recognized by market experts.

About the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC)

- The MPC was established following a recommendation from the Urjit Patel committee in 2014.

- The committee is a statutory and institutionalised framework under the Reserve Bank of India Act, 1934, with the primary objective to maintain price stability while enabling growth.

- The MPC is constituted by the Central Government and led by the Governor of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI).

- It is composed of six members, three of whom are RBI officials and three are external members nominated by the Government of India.

- External members must be experts in economics, banking, finance, or monetary policy and are appointed for a four-year term, after which they are not eligible for reappointment.

Monetary Policy Committee Decision Making & Meetings

- Decisions within the MPC are determined by majority vote, with the governor acting as a tie-breaker when necessary.

- The committee is required to meet a minimum of four times each year, and it releases its decisions following each meeting.

- The current mandate of the committee, which is in effect until March 31, 2026, is to maintain 4% annual inflation with an upper tolerance cap of 6% and a lower tolerance limit of 2%.

Relevance & Role in Current Affairs

- The MPC's decision to maintain the repo rate at 6.5 per cent, as expected, can significantly impact India's economy, particularly in connection with the ongoing issue of food inflation.

- The role, decisions, and calculated movements of the MPC are essential to monitor, making them a crucial element in the study of current affairs and general knowledge, especially for those preparing for government examinations.

In-depth review of Rupee Appreciation and Depreciation and its Impact

I. Introduction to the Concept of Rupee Appreciation and Depreciation

A. Brief Overview:

The value of Indian Rupee against the US dollar constitutes a significant dimension in the global economic conversation. The phenomena of Rupee appreciation and depreciation indicate the strength or weakness of the Rupee in relation to the Dollar.

B. Recent Trends:

The Narendra Modi-led government from April 2014 to 2024 witnessed the rupee depreciating by 27.6%, falling from Rs 60.34 to Rs 83.38 against the US Dollar.

II. Understanding Rupee Appreciation and Its Impact

A. Description:

- Rupee appreciation signifies the strengthening of Rupee against Dollar, which implies fewer Rupees are required to buy a Dollar.
- For instance, if the value of 1 USD falls from ₹75 to ₹70, it is termed as Rupee appreciation.

B. Consequences of Rupee Appreciation:

- Impact on Exports: Rupee appreciation often negatively impacts exporters as imports from India become more expensive, potentially leading to a loss of importers.
- Impact on Imports: Importers are benefitted as they can import more goods for less, due to the requirement of fewer Rupees to buy a Dollar.

III. Unfolding Rupee Depreciation and Its Effects

A. Explanation:

- Rupee depreciation pertains to the situation when Rupee weakens against the Dollar, indicating more Rupees are needed to purchase a Dollar.
- If the value of 1 USD amplifies from ₹70 to ₹75, it is characterised as Rupee depreciation.

B. Consequences of Rupee Depreciation:

- Impact on Exports: Rupee depreciation favours exporters as it makes exports more viable in the international market.
- Impact on Imports: Imports become expensive as more Rupees are now required to buy a Dollar.
- Inflation: Rupee depreciation can lead to a surge in inflation, especially in a country like India, which imports over 80% of its crude oil needs.
- IT Sector: Indian IT companies, largely export-oriented, may earn higher revenue from their global clients due to a lower Rupee value.

IV. Factors Influencing Rupee Appreciation and Depreciation

The constant ebb and flow in the appreciation and depreciation of the Rupee is primarily dictated by the change in demand or supply for the Rupee and the Dollar.

This thorough understanding of the concepts and implications of Rupee appreciation and depreciation equips us to better analyse the economic policies and international trade relations affecting it. Consequently, such knowledge is invaluable for those preparing for government exams that often test candidates' understanding of these critical economic phenomena and their impacts.

Understanding the Preston Curve: Economic Development and Life Expectancy

Origins and Description of the Preston Curve

- The term "Preston Curve" is derived from Samuel H. Preston, an American sociologist who first highlighted the connection between life expectancy and real per capita income in 1975.
- He identified an empirical relationship exhibiting that individuals residing in wealthier nations

typically have lengthier life spans compared to those in poorer countries. This observation is likely due to increased healthcare accessibility, improved education, cleaner living conditions, and better nutrition in wealthier nations.

Incremental Phenomenon of the Preston Curve

- The Preston Curve's progression indicates that life expectancy initially improves to a significant degree in developing nations as per capita income grows.

- As citizens are able to consume more than the bare minimum, there is an improvement in healthcare and general lifestyle.

- However, there is a point where the relationship between per capita income and life expectancy plateaus. Beyond this, further development in per capita income does not contribute significantly to the increase in life expectancy.

Contradictions and Controversies in the Preston Curve

- While the Preston Curve illustrates a clear correlation between life expectancy and increased income, experts have exhibited discrepancies regarding the causal relationship between income levels and human development indicators.

- Some economists use this correlation to argue for encouraging economic growth as a means of improving a nation's development outcomes.

- Such a conclusion is validated by observing economies like India and China, where rapid economic growth over the past few decades has coincided with improvements in life expectancy and other development indicators.

Alternate Perspectives on the Preston Curve

- In contrast, some experts argue that most enhancements in life expectancy result from a shift in the Preston curve, rather than movement along it.

- Enhancements in medical technology, such as the introduction of life-saving vaccinations, are credited by these experts for improving life expectancy even at lower income levels.

- According to critics, rich nations are responsible for most technological advancements, thus refuting the assumption that low-income nations can independently achieve advancements in life expectancy.

Technology Transfer and the Preston Curve

- Another perspective highlights that poor countries can benefit from already-developed technologies in rich countries, thereby potentially increasing their life expectancy at lower income levels.

- Rich countries, however, may not have had access to these life-saving technologies when they were at the same developmental stage, which could explain the lower life expectancies recorded in their historical data.

The Preston Curve in India

- India has witnessed a substantial increase in its average per capita income, from about ₹9,000 yearly in 1947 to approximately ₹55,000 yearly in 2011.

- In parallel to this growth, the average life expectancy in India has seen a significant rise from 32 years in 1947 to over 66 years in 2011, depicting a conformity with the Preston curve's hypothesis.

State Current Affairs

Srinagar: The New Addition to the "World Craft City" List

Srinagar and Its World Craft City Recognition

- Srinagar is the recent city to receive the reputable title of 'World Crafts City'. This declaration was made by the World Craft Council (WCC).

- This crowning makes Srinagar the fourth Indian city to be recognised as a World Craft City, following Jaipur, Malappuram, and Mysore.

- Srinagar was recognized for its rich heritage in crafts including Papier-maché, walnut wood carving, crafting exquisite carpets, Sozni embroidery, and the making of unique Pashmina and Kani shawls.

The UNESCO Creative City Network (UCCN)

- In addition to being recognized as a World Craft City, Srinagar was also designated a creative city in 2021.

- This recognition was part of the UNESCO Creative City Network (UCCN), specifically for Srinagar's illustrious tradition in crafts and folk arts.

About the World Craft Council (WCC) and the World Craft City Programme

- The World Craft Council (WCC) is the international body that acknowledged Srinagar as a World Craft City. It launched the World Craft City Programme in 2014, aimed at recognizing the influential role held by local communities, authorities, and craftspeople in promoting craft development worldwide.

- The WCC was established in 1964, with one of the founding members being Smt Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay. She was in attendance during the 1st WCC General Assembly.

- Smt Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay was an instrumental figure in India's craft development. She founded the Craft Council of India in 1964, aiming to protect and enhance India's rich craft heritage.

Significance of the Recognition

- Recognition as a World Craft City places Srinagar on the global map, promoting tourism and economic development.

- The title endorses the skills and craftsmanship of local artisans, ensuring the preservation and revitalization of their indigenous crafts.

- This recognition is also expected to boost the city's craft industry by garnering global attention and appreciation for Srinagar's unique crafts.

Quick Recap for Exams

- Srinagar has recently been recognized as World Craft City by the WCC.

- The World Craft City Programme was launched in 2014 by WCC-International.

- Smt Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay, founding member of WCC, also founded the Craft Council of India in 1964.

- Previously, Jaipur, Malappuram, and Mysore are the other Indian cities recognized as World Craft Cities.

- Srinagar is renowned for crafts like Papier-maché, walnut wood carving, carpets, Sozni embroidery, Pashmina and Kani shawls.

Kozhikode Joins UNESCO's Creative Cities Network as the 'City of Literature'

A. Introduction and Brief Overview

- Kozhikode, famously known as the city of sculptures in the Indian state of Kerala, has been recently recognised as the 'City of Literature' by UNESCO's Creative Cities Network (UCCN).

- This recognition places Kozhikode on the global map of literary heritage, acknowledging the city's significant contribution to Malayalam literature and culture.

B. The UNESCO Creative Cities Network (UCCN) – An Insight

- Established in 2004, the UCCN incorporates 350 cities worldwide, covering seven creative fields: Crafts and Folk Art, Design, Film, Gastronomy, Literature, Media Arts, and Music.

- The network's agenda is to instil creativity and integrate cultural industries as the core of their development plans at the local level while encouraging international cooperation.

- It conducts an annual conference of mayors and representatives of network cities. The session aims to foster ties between the creative cities globally. The forthcoming conference is scheduled to be held in Braga, Portugal, in July 2024.

- The primary objective of the UCCN is to accomplish Sustainable Development Goals 11 via innovative approaches that benefit urban communities.

C. Significance of the Recognition and Kozhikode's Cultural Eminence

- Being a part of UNESCO's Creative Cities, Kozhikode pledges to share best practices and establish collaborations that include public, private sectors, and civil society in strengthening the creation, dissemination, and production of cultural activities.

- Known for its vast literary heritage, Kozhikode is home to eminent personalities of Kerala's literary and cultural world, prominent media houses, several libraries, and has produced numerous film and theatre professionals.

- The first Malayalam novel, 'Kundalatha' was written here by Appu Nedungadi in 1887. Noted writers like S. K. Pottekkatt, Thikkodiyan, and P. Valsala Sanjayan have significantly contributed to the city's diverse and vibrant literature scene.

D. Indian Cities in UCCN

- Apart from Kozhikode, six other Indian cities are part of the UCCN. These include:

- Jaipur: recognised for Crafts and Folk Arts (2015)
- Varanasi: recognised as Creative City of Music (2015)
- Chennai: recognised as Creative City of Music (2017)
- Mumbai: recognised for Film (2019)
- Hyderabad: recognised for Gastronomy (2019)
- Srinagar: recognised for Crafts and Folk Art (2021).

As part of General Knowledge, it is important to be cognizant of these recognitions and their importance in preserving and promoting the regional art, literature and culture. Kozhikode's recognition as the 'City of Literature' enriches India's cultural diversity, making it an important point in the preparation for various government exams.

Ladakh: A Bright Beacon of Full Functional Literacy under ULLAS Scheme

1) Introduction:

- Recently, the Union Territory of Ladakh was proudly declared to have achieved Full Functional Literacy.

- This feat was accomplished under the aegis of the central government's ULLAS-Nav Bharat Saksharta Karyakram (New India Literacy Programme).

- It is noteworthy that the literacy rate of Ladakh is now reported to be over 97%.

2) Understanding the Achievement:

- Functional literacy refers to an individual's capability to actively participate in activities that necessitate reading, writing, and arithmetic for personal and societal development.

- This differs from basic literacy, which primarily emphasises the mastery of three Rs – Reading, Writing, and Arithmetic.

3) The ULLAS Scheme and its Impact:

- ULLAS, an acronym for Understanding Lifelong Learning for All in Society, is a centrally sponsored programme implemented from 2022 to 2027.

- Its goal is to empower adults aged 15 years and above, who were unable to access proper schooling by equipping them with functional literacy skills.

- This mission is closely aligned with the guidelines of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020.

- ULLAS has already positively impacted more than 77 lakh individuals nationwide.

- The scheme consists of 5 key components: Foundational Literacy and Numeracy, Critical Life Skills, Basic Education, Vocational Skills, and Continuing education.

4) Additional Government Initiatives in the Education Sector:

- The government has launched several other initiatives to improve the education infrastructure and literacy rates in the country such as:

- a) National Programme on Technology Enhanced Learning.
- b) Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan.
- c) PRAGYATA: Guidelines for digital education.
- d) Mid Day Meal Scheme.
- e) Beti Bachao Beti Padhao: To save and educate the girl child.
- f) PM SHRI Schools

5) Takeaways in the Context of Current Affairs:

- Ladakh's achievement in functional literacy emphasises the importance of quality education for all.

- It validates the role of government schemes like ULLAS in mitigating the literacy gap in India.

- This accomplishment is not only pivotal in the context of Ladakh's regional development but also symbolises a significant milestone in India's educational landscape.

- Familiarity with such government schemes and their progress is crucial for aspirants appearing for government exams.
- The achievement of Ladakh also stands as a testament towards the fulfilment of the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goal 4: Quality Education.
- This also underscores the importance of adult education and continuing education as vital components for societal development.

Polity

PM Narendra Modi Sworn in for Historic 3rd Term

Historic Oath-Taking Ceremony

- On a day marked with historic significance, PM Narendra Modi took the oath of office for an unprecedented third term.
- He leads a coalition government, indicating BJP's commitment to honouring its allies from the National Democratic Alliance (NDA).

Historic Feat Achieved

- Modi, aged 73, matches the achievement of Jawaharlal Nehru, India's first PM, who won three consecutive general elections.
- Modi's successful third term victory underscores his enduring popularity, indicating the dominance of the BJP in India's political landscape.

Composition of Modi's Cabinet

- The ceremony was marked by the swearing in of several crucial leaders, including Rajnath Singh, Amit Shah, and Nitin Gadkari.
- Experienced leaders like Nirmala Sitharaman retained their positions, ensuring a smooth continuity in key portfolios.
- Modi strategically inducted several MPs from NDA allies to reward them for their contribution to the alliance's electoral victory.
- Key inclusions were representatives from TDP, JD(S), and BJP from Andhra Pradesh.

NDA's Impressive Electoral Performance

- In the recent general elections, NDA clinched an impressive 286 seats securing a comfortable majority.
- However, BJP's individual tally fell short of the 272-majority mark.

International Reaction to Modi's Swearing-In

- Leaders from seven countries in South Asia and the Indian Ocean regions attended the ceremony, indicative of India's growing global prominence.
- The presence of these international leaders reinforces the necessity of strengthening regional ties and promoting cooperation.

Looking Forward

- As Modi begins his third term, the nation eagerly awaits the announcement of his cabinet's complete composition and allocation of vital portfolios.
- With a mix of experienced leaders and emerging faces from coalition parties, the new government is equipped to tackle future challenges and urge towards a prosperous and inclusive India.

GK Addition:

- Jawaharlal Nehru, India's first Prime Minister, also won three consecutive general elections in 1952, 1957, and 1962.
- The majority mark in Indian Lok Sabha is 272 seats out of the total 543.
- Top leaders from seven countries in the South Asia and Indian Ocean regions attended the swearing-in ceremony signifying India's improving global stature.
- Coalition governments are not uncommon in India, with partners forging alliances to access a wider voter base or secure a majority.

Inauguration and Historic Significance of Nalanda University

Inauguration and Location

- Prime Minister of India has recently inaugurated the revived Nalanda University campus.
- The University is spread across 455 acres, in Rajgir, Bihar, just 12 km from the ruins of the ancient Buddhist monastery of the same name.

Historic Milestones of Nalanda University

- Founded by Gupta Emperor Kumaragupta in 427 CE, it was a global centre of learning for six centuries.

- The university rose to prominence during the reign of Harshavardhana and the Palas monarchs.

- Nalanda received international students from Asian countries like China, Mongolia, Tibet, and Korea.

- It was a hub of spiritual and educational mastery, with luminaries like Nagarjuna, Aryabhata, and Dharmakirti being part of its scholarly tradition.

- Notably, it was destroyed in 1193 by Bakhtiyar Khilji, a Turkish general, but was later rediscovered in 1812 and identified as the ancient university in 1861.

Attacks on the University

- The university faced two major attacks, the first by the Hunas in 455-470 AD and the second by the Goudas emperors of Bengal in the 7th century.

- However, it was revived both times, notably by Emperor Skandagupta and Emperor Harshavardhana.

Revival of Nalanda University

- The idea to revive the institution was proposed in the early 2000s by former President A.P.J. Abdul Kalam, the Singapore government, and leaders of East Asian Summit (EAS) countries.

- The Nalanda University Act was passed in 2010, providing a legal framework for its reconstruction.

- The University has a green, eco-friendly campus designed by architect B.V. Doshi offers postgraduate programs.

- Notably, the ruins of the original Nalanda University were declared a UN Heritage Site in 2016.

Importance for East Asia Summit

- The revival of Nalanda University underlines the importance of regional knowledge sharing for countries involved in the East Asia Summit.

- This forum was established in 2005, focusing on political, security, and economic issues of strategic importance in the Indo-Pacific region.

Buddhist Relics as UNESCO Heritage Sites

- Other Buddhist relics recognized by UNESCO include Archaeological Site of Nalanda

Mahavihara, Buddhist Monuments at Sanchi, Mahabodhi Temple Complex at Bodh Gaya and Ajanta Caves Aurangabad.

- The Buddhist chanting of Ladakh has also been recognized in UNESCO's Representative List of Humanity's Intangible Cultural Heritage in 2012.

Bhartruhari Mahtab's Appointment as the Pro-tem Speaker of the 18th Lok Sabha

Introduction and Background

- Bhartruhari Mahtab has been administered oath as the pro-tem Speaker of the 18th Lok Sabha.

- The President of India appoints the Pro-tem Speaker.

- This appointment is done under Article 95(1) of the Constitution and serves to fulfil the duties of the Speaker until a permanent Speaker is elected.

- Speaker Protem is a Latin phrase which translates to "for the time being".

Role and Importance of a Pro-tem Speaker

- The Pro-tem Speaker presides over the initial sittings of the newly elected house, facilitating its smooth functioning.

- Typically, the senior-most member with experience and understanding of parliamentary procedures is made the Pro-tem Speaker to leverage their knowledge and expertise.

- Once the new Speaker is elected by the house members, the office of the Speaker Pro Tem becomes defunct.

Specific Duties of the Pro-tem Speaker

- As part of their first duty, the Pro-tem Speaker administers the oath of office to the newly elected Members of Parliament, ensuring the legality of their induction.

- The Pro-tem Speaker also conducts the voting process for the election of the permanent Speaker and the Deputy Speaker.

- An essential element of the Pro-tem Speaker's role is administering the floor test, a method used to determine if the incumbent government

commands the support of the majority of the house members.

GK Addition - Bhartruhari Mahtab

- Adding to your General Knowledge quotient, Bhartruhari Mahtab is an experienced and significant politician.

- This new leap in his political career only builds up his impressive journey, adding significant value to the 18th Lok Sabha's proceedings.

In conclusion, the role of a Pro-tem Speaker, like Bhartruhari Mahtab in this case, is of great importance to get the proceedings of a newly elected House started. In addition to administering the oath and hosting the Speaker and Deputy Speaker elections, the Pro-tem Speaker ensures the smooth run-up to the establishment of a functional House. After his role ceases, the elected Speaker takes over for the remaining term.

Bolstering the Examination System in India: Public Examinations (Prevention of Unfair Means) Act, 2024

Understanding the Ground Reality

- The Ministry of Education recently cancelled the June 2024 UGC-NET exam, sparking discussions about exam fairness and integrity in India.

- There were allegations of potential compromise of the integrity and fairness in the NEET-UG exam.

- Subsequently, the government passed the Public Examinations (Prevention of Unfair Means) Act, 2024 to curb illicit practices in exams.

Glimpse into the UGC-NET and NEET-UG Exams

- The UGC-NET exam, conducted twice yearly by the National Testing Agency (NTA), fills positions for Junior Research Fellowship and Assistant Professor in Indian universities and colleges.

- The University Grants Commission (UGC), a statutory body established in 1956, supervises the UGC-NET exam.

- The NEET-UG (National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test) is an entrance examination for admission into undergraduate medical programs, also conducted by the NTA.

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

- This Act, passed in the Lok Sabha, is aimed at preventing malpractices in government recruitment examinations.

- It came into effect on 21st June 2024.

- This Act defines offences related to unfair means such as paper leaks, fake websites, and collusions, and prescribes strict penalties.

- The inclusion of service providers in liability and empowering police officers for investigation align with this Act.

- The Act covers a wide range of central government recruitment exams, including those conducted by UPSC, SSC, RRBs, IBPS, and NTA.

Identified Issues in the Existing Examination System

- Declining credibility of exams due to potential scandals such as paper leaks, cheating, and fake degrees.

- Exams being more theoretical in nature and not inculcating practical skills to succeed in professions.

- Subjectivity in exams due to examiner's biases often leads to inconsistent student evaluations.

- Current system stifles creativity and critical thinking due to the pressure of performing well in standardised tests.

- Employability of graduates affected as institutional certifications are often disregarded in favour of separate employer evaluations.

Inceptive Measures for Reformation

- Several initiatives such as the Right To Education Act of 2009, New Education Policy 2020, Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan, Rashtriya Uchhatar Shiksha Abhiyan (RUSA), National Testing Agency (NTA), and National Curriculum Framework have been taken to reform the education system in India.

Meeting and Submits

Unfolding the Recent Election of Non-Permanent Members to the United Nations Security Council

Introducing the UNSC Non-Permanent Members' Election 2025

- The United Nations Security Council (UNSC), a principal organ of the UN, has its five non-permanent members elected for the 2025 two-year term.

- Pakistan, Panama, Somalia, Denmark, and Greece have been elected to these roles.

- Pakistan, like India, has now served as a non-permanent member eight times, emphasising their commitment to international peace and security.

- This election will start in 2025 and will present an opportunity for these countries to contribute towards maintaining global peace and security.

Why this is Significant

- The election of non-permanent members to the UNSC holds a crucial position in the dynamics of international diplomacy.

- It provides a platform for the countries to voice their standpoints on global matters and particularly uphold their regional interests at a larger scale.

- Each non-permanent member can influence the decision-making process in the UNSC, despite the veto power maintained by five permanent members (China, France, Russia, the UK, and the US)

A Brief Look into the UNSC

- The UNSC is a vital organ of the United Nations, composed of a total of 15 members - five permanent members with veto power and ten non-permanent members.

- Its primary responsibility is to maintain international peace and security.

- The non-permanent members of the UNSC are elected annually by the United Nations General

Assembly (UNGA) through a secret ballot for a two-year term.

- This ensures diverse geographical representations in the council and the active participation of various nations in global peacekeeping processes.

India's Presence in the UNSC

- India has been elected as a non-permanent member of the UNSC eight times, equalling Pakistan's record with its current appointment.

- The last term served by India was in the period 2021-2022.

- Being a non-permanent member offers India an opportunity to further its geopolitical interests, assert its role in global decision-making, and establish its position as a potential contender for permanent membership in the UNSC.

Conclusively, the recent election of non-permanent members to the UNSC refocuses the global spotlight on the significance of these positions within the UNSC and their potential impact on international peace and security.

The 50th Anniversary of the G7 Summit

Introduction and Background

The G7 Summit is a significant event in international affairs, involving seven of the most developed and advanced global economies - France, Germany, Italy, the United Kingdom, Japan, the United States, and Canada. Recently, the 50th G7 Summit was held in Italy from the 13th to 15th June 2024, with India's Prime Minister marking his maiden overseas visit after his third consecutive term in office.

Promotion of G7 Partnership for Global Infrastructure and Investment (PGII)

- The leaders agreed on promoting specific PGII initiatives aiming to help bridge the 40 trillion USD infrastructure gap in developing nations.

- Launched at the 48th G7 Summit in 2022, the PGII aspires to be a transparent, impactful, and values-driven partnership focused on low and middle-income countries' infrastructural needs.

- By 2027, the G7 is committed to mobilising USD 600 billion to execute infrastructure projects across middle-income and developing nations.

Support and Promotion of India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC)

- G7 nations pledged their support to the IMEC, aiming to establish a comprehensive transport network involving rail, road, and sea routes connecting India, the Middle East, and Europe.

- IMEC, signed at the G20 Summit in 2024, is part of PGII and is supported by India, the US, Saudi Arabia, UAE, the European Union, Italy, France, and Germany.

- IMEC includes a proposed railroad, ship-to-rail networks, and road transport routes across two corridors: East Corridor (connecting India to the Arabian Gulf), and the Northern Corridor (linking the Gulf to Europe).

Support for Various Infrastructure Projects

- G7 endorsed the Lobito Corridor (extending from Angola's Atlantic port city Lobito through DRC to Zambia), Luzon Corridor (strategic economic and infrastructure corridor in Luzon, Philippines), and the Middle Corridor (Trans-Caspian International Transport Route connecting Europe and Asia).

Support for the Great Green Wall Initiative

- This initiative aims at combating desertification and land degradation in the Sahel region of Africa by creating a wall of trees across Africa from west to east.

Interoperable AI Governance

- G7 leaders agreed to enhance the interoperability of their AI governance strategies to promote certainty, transparency, and accountability while balancing innovation and robust economic growth.

Extraordinary Revenue Acceleration (ERA) Loans for Ukraine

- G7 committed to delivering approximately USD 50 billion in additional funding to Ukraine by the end of 2024.

Quick Facts About G7

- Origin: Formed after the 1973 oil crisis and the subsequent financial turbulence, it started with six major industrial nations, with Canada joining in 1976. Russia was part of this group (G8) from 1997 to 2014.

- Nature: An informal grouping operating outside formal treaties with no permanent bureaucracy, decisions are taken through consensus due to the economic and political influence of its members.

- Purpose: Facilitate dialogue among the members, develop coordinated political responses to global challenges, and set the global agenda.

- Significance: Controls 60% of global net wealth, drives 46% of global GDP, and represents 10% of the global population.

World Health Assembly Approves New Resolution on Organ Transplantation

Introduction to the Topic

- The 77th World Health Assembly held its annual meeting recently where member states, initiated by Spain, approved a new resolution aimed at improving ethical access, availability, and oversight of transplantation of human cells, tissues, and organs.

- This resolution deals with increasing transplantations in line with the World Health Organization (WHO)'s guiding principles and to confront the serious public health risks posed by trafficking in people for organ removal and trafficking in human organs.

The Draft Resolution Highlights

- The new draft resolution proposes encouraging donations post neurological determination of death and, where apt, post circulatory determination of death.

- It seeks to tackle the insufficient access to transplantation therapies, which often leads to

human rights abuses and significant public health risks.

- The resolution mandates the WHO Director-General to establish an expert committee under the Regulations for Expert Advisory Panels and Committees to aid in developing a global strategy.

- It assigns countries with the responsibility to present a global strategy for approval in 2026 and encourages the proclamation of World Donor Day for enhancing public campaigns and donations.

The Role of World Health Assembly

- The World Health Assembly serves as the decision-making body of the World Health Organization, comprising delegations from all member states.

- Its main functions include determining the organisation's policies, appointing the Director-General, monitoring financial policies, and reviewing and approving the proposed program budget.

- It convenes annually in Geneva, Switzerland, focusing on specific health agendas prepared by the Executive Board.

World Health Organization (WHO) Overview

- Founded in 1948, the WHO is a dedicated agency of the United Nations that collaborates with nations, partners, and people to advance health, ensure global safety, and attend to the vulnerable.

- Its aim is to ensure that everyone, everywhere, can attain the highest level of health, thus contributing significantly to global health and wellbeing.

Implications for Government exams

- Candidates should understand the significance of this new resolution, how it impacts global health policies, and Spain's role in the same.

- Information about the World Health Assembly, like its annual meeting location, its function, and its correlation with the WHO, can be subject to questions.

- Insights on the WHO, the problems it strives to confront, and its guiding principles on organ transplantation may also appear in General Knowledge sections.

India Ascends as Chair of Colombo Process: Key Points to Note down

1. Introduction and Background

The Colombo Process, a consultative forum established in 2003 for predominantly Asian countries with migrant workforce overseas, has recently seen India elected as chair. India will helm this regional grouping for the period of 2024-26 – marking the first time that it has assumed this vantage since the inception of the Process.

2. What is the Colombo Process?

- The Colombo Process brings together 12 Asian nations as its member states, aiming to foster sharing of best practices related to overseas employment and policies for migrant workers.

- The current participating nations include Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Cambodia, China, Indonesia, India, Nepal, Pakistan, the Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand, and Vietnam. The founding states were India, China, Indonesia, Nepal, Bangladesh, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand, and Vietnam.

- Past chairs of this group have been Afghanistan, Nepal, Sri Lanka, the Philippines, Indonesia, and Bangladesh.

3. Key Features and Working Mechanism

- The Colombo Process functions on a non-binding, consensus-based decision making, creating a participatory ecosystem.

- The primary objectives: Sharing experiences, discussing issues related to migrants, offering solutions for the same, reaping developmental benefits from regulated employment overseas, and tracking the progress of ministerial recommendations.

- The International Organisation for Migration (IOM) provides the necessary technical and administrative support, and the Colombo Process Technical Support Unit (CPTSU) in Sri Lanka aids in its thematic areas of focus.

4. Focused Areas and Achievements

The Colombo Process zeroes in on five themed areas:

- Skills and Qualification Recognition
- Fostering Ethical Recruitment Practices
- Pre-departure Orientation and Empowerment
- Remittance Transfers
- Labour Market Analysis

Some distinguished achievements comprise:

- Conducting a regional workshop in Manila for employment agencies across Asia.
- Conducting feasibility study for establishing an Overseas Workers Resource Centre (OWRC) in Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries.
- Organising the inaugural "Asia-EU Consultation on Labour Migration" in Brussels in 2008.

5. Understanding the International Organisation for Migration (IOM)

As the leading inter-governmental organisation, IOM has been promoting humane and orderly migration practices since 1951. Under the United Nations system, it boasts of 175 member states and extends its presence to 171 countries.

This appointment of India as the chair is significant, presaging its strengthening role in addressing migrant worker issues in South and Southeast Asia, particularly in the light of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Sports Current Affairs

India Seals Victory at the 2024 T20 World Cup: A Recap

India Lifts the 2024 T20 World Cup Trophy

The Indian cricket team recently marked a splendid achievement by winning the ICC T20 World Cup 2024 in Barbados.

- Breaking their major ICC tournament title drought since 2013, India clinched their second T20 World Cup.
- The victory is celebrated as a milestone considering the team's journey through the tournament.

Evolution of the T20 World Cup:

1. Origin & Growth

The T20 World Cup, with its genesis in 2007, is an international cricket championship that generally takes place biennially.

- The championship initially started as a 12-team contest.
- However, the 2014 edition saw an increase to 16 teams, while the most recent 2024 edition highlighted a 20 teams contest distributed in four groups.

2. Indian Odyssey in T20 World Cup

India's journey through the T20 World Cup over the years has been a rollercoaster ride.

- India claimed the inaugural T20 World Cup in 2007 under the leadership of MS Dhoni by defeating Pakistan.
- The Indian team reached the finals in 2014 but unfortunately lost to Sri Lanka.
- India clinches its second T20 World Cup in 2024, marking an end to their title drought in ICC tournaments.

3. Dual Title Winners

Only three teams so far have managed to claim the T20 World Cup twice.

- India (2007 & 2024)
- West Indies (2012 & 2016)
- England (2010 & 2022)
- Notably, with its 2022 victory, England became the first team to simultaneously hold both men's World Cups - the 2019 ODI World Cup and the 2022 T20 World Cup.

Outstanding Performances of 2024 T20 World Cup

- Virat Kohli of India leads the charts as the top run-getter in T20 World Cup history with a record

1292 runs from 35 matches since his debut in 2012.

- Shakib Al Hasan from Bangladesh holds the record as the top wicket-taker in T20 World Cup history, with a remarkable total of 50 wickets in 43 matches between 2007 and 2024.

Highlights from the 2024 T20 World Cup Final

- Virat Kohli, the Indian sensation, was named Player of the Match.

- Jasprit Bumrah, known for his exceptional bowling skills, was awarded the Player of the Tournament.

- With 17 wickets, Arshdeep Singh of India and Fazalhaq Farooqi of Afghanistan were the top wicket-takers in the 2024 edition.

- Showcasing remarkable control, Jasprit Bumrah had the lowest economy rate of 4.17 in the 2024 T20 World Cup.

- India registered an extraordinary feat by becoming the first team to win a T20 World Cup while remaining unbeaten throughout the tournament.

Post World Cup Highlights

- Following this victory, three Indian cricket greats, namely Virat Kohli, Rohit Sharma, and Ravindra Jadeja, announced their retirement from T20 internationals.

- The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) celebrated the phenomenal victory by announcing a grand prize of Rs 125 crore for Team India.

Emerging Stars Shine At French Open 2024: Game-Changer On The Court

Carlos Alcaraz: The Prodigy of Tennis

- In one of the most thrilling conclusions, Carlos Alcaraz, a young Spanish tennis player, emerged victoriously in the men's singles final of the French Open 2024.

- Alcaraz showcased his remarkable skill and resilience in an intense five-set match against the

formidable Alexander Zverev, winning with a score of 6-3, 2-6, 5-7, 6-1, 6-2.

- At only 21, Alcaraz has registered his name in tennis history by becoming the youngest man in the Open era to achieve the impressive feat of winning Grand Slam titles on all three surfaces, namely hard court, clay, and grass.

Iga Swiatek: The Undaunted Champion

- In the women's singles final, Iga Swiatek continued her unbeatable streak at the renowned Roland Garros stadium.

- The 23-year-old Polish sensation clinched her fourth French Open title, establishing herself as a true master of clay court.

- She overpowered Jasmine Paolini with an emphatic 6-2, 6-1 victory, further cementing her position in tennis' elite group.

- With this victory, she joined Belgium's Justine Henin in the third place on the all-time list of most French Open titles won by a woman.

General Knowledge Part:

- The French Open, also known as Roland Garros, is one of the four Grand Slam tennis tournaments and is held annually in Paris, France.

- It is named after Roland Garros, a French aviator and World War I hero.

- The tournament takes place on a clay court, making it a unique and challenging event since the clay surface slows down the ball and produces high bounce compared to hard and grass courts.

- The French Open is particularly valued for its democratic seeding system. It is the only Grand Slam tournament that uses both the ATP and WTA rankings equally when seeding players.

Significance:

- The French Open is a significant event to study for competitive exams due to the players' performances, their records, and the historical context provided by the tournament.

- The emergence of young players like Carlos Alcaraz and Iga Swiatek can potentially boost a country's international reputation and further fuel interest in the sport, leading to infrastructure development and youth engagement in sport.

- Knowledge about this Grand Slam event could help contextualise questions related to sports, international competitions, and sports diplomacy in

General Knowledge sections of competitive exams.

Ranks and Reports

The Growth of High Net-Worth Individuals in India: Insight from World Wealth Report 2024

Overview and New Highlights

- According to the Capgemini World Wealth Report 2024, there has been an impressive surge in India's high net-worth individuals (HNWIs) by 12.2% in 2023 as compared to 2022.

- As a result of this growth, India presently is home to a total of 3.589 million HNWIs.

- In terms of financial wealth, India's HNWIs saw an increase by 12.4% in 2023, amounting to USD 1,445.7 billion, a notable rise from USD 1,286.7 billion the previous year.

Global comparison and HNWIs Explained

- Globally, the wealth and population of HNWIs rose by 4.7% and 5.1% respectively in 2023, with India contributing significantly to this growth.

- Noteworthy to the term, HNWIs are individuals possessing investable assets of USD 1 million or more, which excludes primary residence, collectables, consumables, and consumer durables.

Ascending India's Economic Statistics

- In 2023, India displayed promising economic progress with the unemployment rate reducing from 7% in 2022 to 3.1% in 2023.

- The economic growth recorded was 7.3% along with a surge in market capitalisation by 29.0% in contrast to a small 6% boost in 2022.

- National savings as a percentage of GDP also observed a significant climb from 29.9% in 2022 to 33.4% in 2023.

Surge of Ultra-high Net Worth Individuals (UHNWIs) in India

- The rising economic wealth in India is mirrored in the steady expansion of Ultra-high Net Worth Individuals (UHNWIs) reaching 13,263 in 2023, with a forecast of growth to approximately 20,000 by 2028, as highlighted in Knight Frank's 'The Wealth Report 2024'.

- UHNWIs are individuals possessing a network of above USD 30 million.

- Following a 6.1% growth in India's UHNWI population in 2023, a 50% rise is anticipated by 2028.

Global UHNWI Scenario and Growth Forecast

- As of 2023, global UHNWI growth illustrates a yearly expansion of 9.7% in Turkey, followed by the US, South Korea, and Switzerland.

- Anticipated worldwide, by 2028, the number of affluent individuals is set to escalate by 28.1% to 8,02,891.

The World Wealth Report 2024 offers an interesting glimpse into the expanding high net-worth individuals and their financial wealth in India, a trend that is evidently encouraging for the nation's overall economic health.

Enhanced Global Presence: Indian Universities Shine in QS World University Rankings 2025

Scope and Key Outcomes of the QS World University Rankings

- The QS World University Rankings by Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) analyses comprehensive data about universities around the world. Their expertise offers invaluable insights to the higher education sector.

- For the 2025 rankings, QS conducted a thorough examination of 17 million research papers and 176 million citations, additionally considering the perspectives from over 280,000 academics and employers.

- Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) continues its dominance by holding the top global position for the 13th consecutive year. In a notable development, Imperial College London leaped to

the second position, while Harvard University and University of Oxford jointly held the third rank.

Recognising the Towering Titans: Regional Highlights of The Rankings

- Representing Continental Europe's prowess is ETH Zurich, which stands as the top institution in the region for 17 consecutive years.

- National University of Singapore (NUS) maintains its status as a key player in the Asian context by securing the eighth spot globally.

India's Ascend: An Examination of India's Performance

- Indian Higher Education system made its robust presence felt, with 46 universities making it to the list. This places India as the seventh globally represented nation and the third in Asia, only behind Japan (49 universities) and China (71 universities).

- It's noteworthy that about 61% of Indian universities have escalated in their rankings, with IIT Bombay leading in India. Meanwhile, 24% of Indian universities managed to maintain their ranking positions.

Analysing Research Strengths and Areas of Opportunity

- One remarkable achievement for India is in the sphere of Citations per Faculty, where it scored 37.8, surpassing the global average of 23.5. This is the second-highest in Asia, validating the strength of India's research capabilities.

- A key area of improvement for India lies in International Faculty Ratio and International Student Ratio indicators. This stresses the importance of India focusing on international collaborations and exchanges to further solidify its standing on the world stage.

Spotting the Indian Champions: Top Indian Institutions in The Rankings

- IIT Bombay made impressive strides forward, moving from 149th position in 2024 to 118th in 2025, thus securing the top spot among Indian Institutions.

- IIT Delhi also demonstrated significant progress, escalating 47 ranks up from 197th to 150th.

- Despite overall progress, IIT Indore saw a decline in its ranking, dropping from 454th to 477th.

- Symbiosis International (Deemed University) made its debut in the top 20, securing a position within the 641-650 global range.

Disquieting Patterns Unveiled: Global Peace Index 2024

A Brief Overview of GPI 2024

- The Global Peace Index 2024 was released by the Institute for Economics & Peace (IEP) to shed light on the global state of peace.

- It provides an analysis of peacefulness in 163 nations and territories.

- The report marks trends, consequences, and economic impacts of violence globally.

Findings on Global Peacefulness

- In 2024, global peace levels dropped by 0.56%, marking its fifth annual deterioration.

- A record-breaking figure shows 97 countries suffering a decline in peacefulness even though 65 nations saw improvement.

Region-Specific Outcomes

- Iceland retained its title as the most peaceful nation, supported by Ireland, Austria, New Zealand, and Singapore.

- On the other hand, Yemen was declared the least peaceful, followed by Sudan, South Sudan, Afghanistan, and Ukraine.

- Despite a few setbacks, Europe remains the most peaceful region, while the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) live up to its reputation of being the least peaceful.

- Due to increased crime rates, North America reported the most prominent regional drop in peace.

Insights on Peacefulness Trends

- The largest yearly decline was in the Militarisation sector, as the military expenditure (% of GDP) rose in 86 nations.

- Ongoing war circumstances in Gaza and Ukraine significantly affected the Ongoing Conflict category.

- There was a slight improvement in the Safety and Security domain due to decreased violent demonstrations, terrorist impacts, and homicide assaults.

Violence and its Economic Impact

- Violence had cost the global economy a staggering amount of \$19.1 trillion in 2023, accounting for 13.5% of the global GDP.

- Severe impact on Ukraine's economy due to the conflict led it to shrink by an estimated 30% in 2022, while the Syrian civil war has caused a GDP drop of 85% since its outbreak.

- Military and internal security expenditure constitutes over 74% of the total economic impact of violence, with military spending alone standing at \$8.4 trillion.

This understanding of the GPI 2024 could be specifically useful in comprehension and analysis tasks, answer writing, group discussions and interviews during the overall preparation for government exams. It provides an insight into world peace and helps to predict future global relations based on the provided trends, which can be crucial for candidates appearing for higher-level examinations that include international relations and global issues in their syllabus.

Indian Universities Shine Bright in QS World University Rankings 2025

1. Introduction and Overview: QS World University Rankings 2025

QS Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) recently released its World University Rankings for 2025, presenting some significant accomplishments for Indian universities on a global scale. QS is an established name in the global higher education sector, providing invaluable insights and data. The 2025 rankings involved an extensive analysis of 17 million research papers, 176 million citations, data from 5,600 international institutions, and feedback from 175,798 academics and 105,476 employers.

2. Key Achievements in Global Rankings

- Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) managed to uphold its top position for the 13th consecutive year.

- Imperial College London moved up two places to secure the second position.

- Harvard University and the University of Oxford shared the third rank.

- ETH Zurich remains the leading institute in Continental Europe for 17 years.

- Lastly, The National University of Singapore proved its mettle by maintaining the eighth spot in Asia.

3. India's Impressive Stand in QS Rankings

- India has shown impressive improvement in the rankings with 46 universities participating.

- The country stands as the seventh most represented globally, and the third in Asia, behind only Japan and China.

- Interestingly, 61% of Indian universities improved their rankings while 24% maintained their existing positions.

- IIT Bombay emerged as the highest-ranked Indian university.

4. Research and International Collaboration from Indian Universities

- Compared to the global average of 23.5, India scores high with 37.8 in the 'Citations per Faculty' metric, which is the second-highest in Asia among countries with more than 10 ranked universities.

- However, when it comes to the International Faculty Ratio and International Student Ratio indicators, India needs to work towards fostering greater international collaborations and exchange.

5. Noteworthy Performances by Indian Universities

- IIT Bombay made the nation proud by moving up from 149th rank in 2024 to the 118th rank in 2025.

- IIT Delhi also achieved a massive leap, climbing 47 ranks from 197th to 150th.

- But, IIT Indore saw a decline, slipping from 454th to 477th rank.

- Symbiosis International (a deemed University) made its entrance into the top 20, sitting at a global rank between 641-650.

The 2025 QS World University Rankings clearly demonstrate India's potential and progress in the realm of higher education. The impressive scores and improvements herald the bright future of India's academic sector.

Unveiling the Key Highlights and Noteworthy Points of Environmental Performance Index 2024

EPI 2024 - An Overview

- The authoritative source of this report is the combined effort of the Yale Center for Environmental Law and Policy and the Columbia Center for International Earth Science Information Network.

- Based on 58 performance indicators grouped into three primary categories: Environmental Health, Ecosystem Vitality and Climate Change, countries receive a score from 0–100, with 100 being the best possible performance.

- The EPI 2024, a biennial report, is fundamentally designed to assess the efforts undertaken by nations to meet international environmental policy targets established through agreements like the U.N. sustainability goals, the Paris Climate Change Agreement (2015), and the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework.

Key Highlights From The EPI 2024

- Leading the global index, Estonia managed to reduce its greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by an impressive 59% compared to 1990 levels.

- India's performance was subpar, ranking 176th out of 180 countries, majorly due to heavy reliance on coal and poor performance in Air quality, Emissions, and Biodiversity Conservation sectors.

- Notably, India was identified as the major contributor to transboundary pollution in South Asia.

- New indicators have been introduced in the 2024 edition of EPI, designed to gauge the effectiveness of protected areas.

Issues Raised and Concerns Highlighted

- India has expressed reservations over the calculation of projected GHG emissions and the non-inclusion of crucial factors such as carbon sinks.

- Other issues include balancing national priorities between economic development and environmental protection and the struggle that

developing countries face due to funding and resource constraints.

- Countries heavily dependent on resource extraction or fossil fuels are likely to face a challenging road towards embracing more sustainable practices.

Significance of the Environmental Performance Index

- The EPI is instrumental in showcasing the importance of strong governance frameworks, transparency, accountability, effective policy making, and substantial financial resources for promoting environmental regulations and initiatives.

- Apart from assessing a nation's environmental endeavours, EPI's indication of human development level assists in identifying nations that prioritise environmental sustainability and effective measure implementation.

- Additionally, the EPI underlines the correlation between regulatory quality and successful mitigation of environmental degradation.

On the whole, the Environmental Performance Index continues to serve as a critical method of evaluating countries' commitment and effectiveness in environmental conservation, providing both analysis and areas of improvement. Its implications and findings are particularly pertinent considering the advent of global challenges such as climate change and biodiversity loss.

India's Progress in Global Energy Transition: A Comprehensive Overview

Understanding the Global Energy Transition Index

- The World Economic Forum (WEF) releases the Global Energy Transition Index annually in partnership with Accenture.

- This index evaluates countries based on their readiness and progress toward building a secure, equitable, and sustainable energy future.

- It focuses on the effectiveness of government policies in reducing carbon dioxide emissions, promoting non-fossil power sources, and enhancing energy efficiency.

Global Energy Transition Index 2024: Key Rankings

- India improved its position to rank 63rd out of 120 countries in 2024, advancing three places from the previous year.

- Sweden retained the top position in 2024, reflecting its continued commitment to energy transition.

- European countries registered strong performances, dominating the top five positions with Denmark, Finland, Switzerland, and France following Sweden.

India's Role in Global Energy Transition

- India has made significant progress in broadening its energy equity, security, and sustainability.

- The WEF praised India's initiatives, particularly in promoting non-fossil-based energy sources like solar energy.

- With its advancements, India has become a central player in the global energy transition, ranking fourth in the global renewable energy market.

- Renewable energy and biomass constitute 42% of India's power generation capacity, indicating a positive shift towards clean energy sources.

The World Economic Forum (WEF): A Primer

- Established in 1971 by German economist Klaus Schwab, the WEF is internationally recognized for fostering collaborations to find solutions for shared global challenges.

- It releases a series of authoritative reports, including the Global Gender Gap Report, Global Competitiveness Report, Global Travel and Tourism Report, and Global IT Report.

- WEF has its headquarters located in Cologny, Switzerland.

Learnings from India's Energy Transition: Implications and Recommendations

- The WEF suggests that countries worldwide can adopt India's innovative policies and initiatives to achieve a green energy transition.

- Despite the commendable progress, WEF urges India to further reduce coal usage and emissions, stressing on the importance of green technology in shaping the future energy systems.

Key Points about the World Economic Forum

- The WEF serves as a platform fostering collaboration among leaders from business, political, academic, and other realms to tackle global challenges.

- It has been in operation since 1971, founded by German economist Klaus Schwab.

- The Headquarters of WEF is situated in Cologny, Switzerland.

- It organises annual meetings in Davos, Switzerland, inviting leaders from various sectors globally.

- It publishes influential reports across a variety of topics and spearheads initiatives to address issues like climate change, economic development, and social inclusion.

Assessing Global Nuclear Landscape: Insights from SIPRI Report on Nuclear Arsenal

Introduction and Current Developments

- The Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) recently published a report on the state of global nuclear arsenals.

- According to the report, the risk and instability associated with the ongoing modernisation and expansion of nuclear arsenals across the globe have grown significantly.

A Snapshot of the Report's Highlights

- The report examines the nuclear strategies of all nine nuclear-armed states including the United States, Russia, the United Kingdom, France, China, India, Pakistan, North Korea, and Israel.

- One alarming revelation from the report was that all these countries have been consistently

working on the modernization of their nuclear arsenals.

- As of January 2024, the total global inventory of nuclear warheads stood at approximately 12,121, with about 9,585 in military stockpiles.

- A sizable number of these warheads, around 2,100, were kept on high operational alert, with Russia and the USA being the main countries to do so.

- Additionally, the report pointed out that China may have put some warheads on high alert for the first time.

Relevance from Global Perspective & GK Facts

- On a global level, the increasing modernisation and expansion of nuclear arsenals by the nuclear-armed states could further escalate geopolitical tensions and conflicts, posing serious threats to international security and peace.

- This SIPRI report holds significant importance as it provides key insights into global nuclear strategies and arms race dynamics, crucial for understanding the overall geopolitics.

- Familiarity with the nuclear-armed states, their strategies, and their status regarding nuclear arsenal modernisation is essential from a general knowledge point of view, especially for government exams.

- Knowledge about SIPRI, a globally recognised institute for research into conflict, armaments, arms control, and disarmament, holds pertinence for exams with an international affairs component.

India's Position in Nuclear Landscape

- In the larger nuclear landscape with the reported modernisation and expansion, India's position as one of the nine nuclear-armed states holds significance.

- Understanding the nuclear dynamics of India in relation to other global powers forms a critical part of strategy-based questions in competitive exams focusing on international relations and security issues.

Schemes and Initiative

Tracing the PM-Kisan Scheme: A Voluntary Surrender by Over 1 Lakh Farmers

Introduction and Background

- The Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi (PM-Kisan) scheme emerged to address the financial needs of land-holding farmer families in India.

- The top-notch states, where over 1.16 lakh farmers willingly relinquished their benefits of the PM-Kisan scheme are Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, and Rajasthan.

- This event stretched between June 2023 and May 2024, as per the information from the Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare.

Probing into the Voluntary Benefit Surrender

- Potential reasons for farmers' retreat from the scheme could be absentee landlords refraining from availing the subsidy, lands transferred to tax-paying descendants ineligible for the scheme, or amendments in the land-owner status.

All About PM-Kisan Scheme

- The PM-Kisan Scheme is a Central Sector scheme entirely funded by the Government of India. Launched on December 1, 2018, the scheme aims to provide financial support to farmer families.

- The scheme facilitates an annual income support of ₹6,000/-, delivered in three equal instalments.

- The beneficiaries of the scheme, defined as a family consisting of husband, wife, and minor children, are identified by the State Government and UT administration based on the scheme's guidelines.

- The benefit is directly transferred into the beneficiaries' bank accounts.

The Exclusion Categories

- The scheme has certain exclusion categories. High economic stakeholders are ineligible for the scheme.

- These include all institutional land regulators and families with members holding or previously holding constitutional posts, current or past ministers, state ministers, Members of Lok Sabha, Rajya Sabha, State Legislative Assemblies/Councils, and Mayors of Municipal Corporations.

- Also excluded are all serving or retired members of Central/ State Government ministries/offices/departments and its peripheral unit, Central or State PSUs, and Attached offices /Autonomous Institutions, along with regular employees of the Local Bodies.

The 16th Instalment and eKYC

- On February 28, 2024, the Prime Minister released the 16th instalment of the PM-KISAN scheme. As a part of the scheme, eKYC has been marked mandatory for the farmers registered under PM-KISAN.

The Current Affairs and General Knowledge (G.K.) Propagation

- G.K. Aspects: Considering the decline in the beneficiaries of the PM-Kisan scheme, this event propounds an essential G.K. component highlighting the governmental provision of financial support to farmers in India. It also emphasises various states' substantial participation.

Geography and Its Importance

- The geographical contexts relevant to the scheme include states like Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, and Rajasthan leading in the voluntary surrender of benefits. This signifies the farmers' socio-economic status in these geographical areas.

Upskilling the Data Interpretation.

- The comprehensive data interpretation of the volunteers' proposition to decline the PM-kisan benefits are significant for exams, enhancing aspirants' understanding of the scheme's effectiveness and acceptability.

Ayushman Bharat's 'Scan and Share' Milestone and Uttar Pradesh 'Stop Diarrhoea Drive'

Ayushman Bharat's 'Scan and Share' Health Revolution

1. The Milestone

- Recently, the National Health Authority (NHA) has hit a new height by generating over three crore tokens for Out-Patient Department (OPD) registrations via the ABHA (Ayushman Bharat Health Account)-based Scan and Share service.

2. About the Service

- The Scan and Share service allows individuals to swiftly register for OPD appointments via scanning a QR code exhibited at the OPD registration counter. This innovative feature was introduced under the Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission (ABDM) in 2022.

3. Impactful Applications

- The introduction of this service has effectively removed the need for people to stand in lengthy queues for appointments, providing notable advantages for vulnerable groups such as the elderly, pregnant women, and physically challenged individuals.

- Uttar Pradesh topped the chart by generating the maximum tokens, closely followed by Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, and Jammu and Kashmir.

4. Ayushman Bharat Yojna

- Also known as the Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (PMJAY), Ayushman Bharat Yojna was a groundbreaking scheme launched by the Indian Government in September 2018 as advised by the National Health Policy 2017, to accomplish the vision of Universal Health Coverage (UHC).

- Meanwhile, ABDM is the driving force that seeks to establish the required backbone to facilitate the integration of the country's digital healthcare infrastructure and to connect all healthcare stakeholders through a common digital platform.

Uttar Pradesh's 'Stop Diarrhoea Drive' Initiative

1. Drive Details

- Uttar Pradesh's health department is gearing to launch the 'Stop Diarrhoea' campaign on July 1, 2024.

2. Objectives of the Campaign

- The campaign focuses on reducing the prevalence of diarrhoea precipitated by accumulation of infected water during the monsoon season. The risk of diarrhoea, which is known to escalate dehydration problems, is significantly high as it gets transmitted through contaminated food and water.

3. ASHA Workers' Role

- ASHA workers are tasked to educate families about the preparation of Oral Rehydration Salt (ORS) solutions, benefits of using ORS and zinc, and the importance of cleanliness and hygiene.

4. Target Areas

- The campaign aims to prioritise the vulnerable areas, which include urban slums, remote areas, and the residences of labourers involved in construction work, nomads, and families dwelling in brick kilns.

5. Diarrhoeal Disease and its Implications

- Diarrhoea is diagnosed when an individual passes three or more loose or liquid stools per day or more frequently than their normal pattern. The major threat posed by this condition is dehydration, which hampers the body's balance of water and electrolytes, resulting in adverse health complications.

Science and Technologies

CHANG'E-6 CRAFT: China's Landmark Lunar Mission

About CHANG'E-6 CRAFT Lunar Mission

- In a significant development, China successfully landed an uncrewed spacecraft named Chang'e-6 on the far side of the moon marking a key step in its ambitious moon exploration plan.

- This event puts China at a pivotal position in the international space race, especially as it competes with the United States in lunar exploration and exploitation of lunar minerals to support future long-term astronaut missions and moon bases.

- Chang'e-6 mission constitutes the sixth exploration program in the Chang'e moon exploration series. The program gets its name from a Chinese moon goddess and is the second mission aimed at collecting lunar samples.

- The predecessor to this mission, Chang'e-5, successfully brought back 1.7kg of lunar material from Oceanus Procellarum on the Moon's near side in 2020.

Latest Developments

- The Chang'e-6 mission took off on 3 May 2024 and succeeded in landing on the far side of the moon on 1 June 2024, choosing a large crater known as the South Pole-Aitken Basin as its touchdown site.

- The two-day mission plan involves the lander using a mechanical arm and a drill to gather up to 2 kilograms of surface and subterranean material.

- Post collection, an ascender on the lander is tasked with carrying the samples in a metal vacuum container back to another module orbiting the moon. The container is then transferred to a re-entry capsule set to return to Earth around June 25.

Challenges and Significance

- Missions to the moon's far side are fraught with challenges namely, maintaining reliable communication due to its non-facing aspect towards Earth, necessitating a relay satellite, and its rugged terrain with fewer flat areas for safe landing.

- Despite the challenges, this mission stands pivotal in unravelling the moons uncharted far-side and drawing comparisons with its well-explored Earth-facing side.

- Remarkably, the South Pole-Aitken Basin, one of the largest known impact craters in our solar system, is the chosen landing site for this mission.

- China has etched its name in space history by being the only nation to have successfully touched down the far side of the moon twice, once with Chang'e-4 in 2019 and now with Chang'e-6 in 2024.

The Chang'e-6 lunar mission highlights China's growing capabilities in space exploration and its determination to position itself as a significant player in the international arena. Time will tell what this advancement will mean for the future of lunar exploration and our understanding of the universe.

AI Washing: Unmasking The Illusion of Artificial Intelligence

Introduction: About AI Washing

- AI Washing, a phenomenon that is gaining increasing attention, refers to the practice by companies to exaggerate their use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) to appear technologically advanced.

- The term is derived from 'greenwashing,' where companies falsely represent their contribution to environmental sustainability.

- In the same vein, AI washing characterises firms that claim integration of AI into their operations while actually employing less advanced technology.

- Different forms of AI washing exist, with companies either falsely claiming use of AI, overstating the effectiveness of their AI compared to existing technologies, or suggesting their AI solutions are fully functional when they are merely prototypes.

Unfolding the AI Washing History

- Although the origin of the term is unknown, the United States Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) brought it to the limelight.

- The SEC fined two investment advisory firms - Global Predictions and Delphia, in March 2024, stating that they had misled their customers by claiming to provide 'expert AI-driven forecasts' and use machine learning to manage client portfolios when this was not the case.

Illustrating AI Washing with Real-life Examples

- Amazon recently came under scrutiny as it removed its cashierless checkout systems from several grocery stores. This followed a revelation by Business Insider that the 'Just Walk Out' technology, which was purported to apply AI and sensors, largely relied on human employees in India.

- Multinational brands like McDonald's and Coca Cola have also been accused of falsely advertising AI use.

- McDonald's had to abandon its AI technology at its drive-thru outlets in the US after a series of complaints from customers about incorrect orders.

The Rising Concern Around AI Washing

- AI washing is gradually becoming a major concern due to its potential impact on both consumers and the tech industry.

- By focusing on mere appearances, AI washing diverts management attention and resources from creating genuine AI innovations, thereby slowing the progression of technology within the industry.

- It can also distort decision-making processes for businesses that are keen on implementing authentic AI solutions, undermining their digital transformation efforts and inhibiting innovation.

- For consumers, substandard AI technology can potentially compromise data security and privacy, and further deter the adoption of AI technology.

The International Forum on AI Washing

- The international forum on AI washing is scheduled to take place from July 3-4 in Astana. Kazakhstan takes over the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) presidency from India.

- Previous SCO summits have included discussions on AI and have allowed for

multinational dialogues regarding the technology's regulation and misuse.

- The SCO's focus on AI washing stands as an international commitment to ensuring ethical practices in the tech industry and fostering consumer trust in AI capabilities.

Essence of New Android Malware - The Snowblind

Overview of the Snowblind Malware

- The new Android software malware, named Snowblind, specifically targets apps that contain sensitive user information.

- Identified by cybersecurity firm Promon, this Trojan malware disguises as legitimate software to penetrate Android phones and tablets unregulated.

- The stealthy nature of Snowblind allows it to remain hidden from users and security software until certain actions or commands ignite its activities.

- Upon activation, Snowblind has the capability to seize banking login details and enable unauthorised transactions without the user's knowledge.

Method of Infiltration

- The usual mode of Snowblind's infiltration into a system is through the download of an app that appears legitimate but is malicious.

- The malware skillfully repackages an application to evade detection and misuses accessibility features to mine sensitive data and control the app remotely, as explained by Vidar Krey, VP of Engineering at Promon.

Unique Functioning of Snowblind Malware

- Distinguishing itself from other Android malware, Snowblind evades Android's inbuilt security by taking advantage of a feature known as "seccomp" present in the Linux kernel. This feature is crucial as it checks for interference.

- By injecting code before seccomp initialises, Snowblind bypasses additional security checks and utilises accessibility services to scrutinise your

screen. This makes it easier to confiscate your login details or disrupt your banking app sessions.

- This action effectively disables biometric and two-factor authentication (2FA) protections, thereby increasing your vulnerability to fraud and identity theft.

- The function of this malware is executed quietly in the background, which could make you oblivious to its presence on your device.

Significant GK Points:

- Studying the functioning of malware like Snowblind is critical to understanding the importance of practising secure internet usage and avoiding downloads from untrustworthy sources.

- Knowledge about the coding technique ("seccomp" exploiting) used by Snowblind will augment understanding of operating systems like Linux and their potential vulnerabilities.

- Understanding Snowblind allows insight into how certain modern tech protections like biometric and two-factor authentication can be nullified, thus highlighting their limitations.

- Understanding how such malware can affect sensitive data is important for both personal data security and cyber laws.

Miscellaneous

Historic Milestone: Claudia Sheinbaum Charts a New Path as Mexico's First Female President

Introduction and Overview of the Development

- Claudia Sheinbaum has been elected as the first female president of Mexico, marking a significant milestone in the country's history.

- She will officially take office as the President on October 1st, representing the progressive National Regeneration Movement (Morena) party.

Geographical and Demographic Glimpse of Mexico

- Mexico, officially known as The United Mexican States, is the 13th largest nation globally by land mass and the world's tenth most populous country.

- It boasts the largest population of Spanish speakers in the world.
- The country shares borders with the United States in the north and southeastern borders with Guatemala and Belize.
- Over half of Mexico's population resides centrally, with a significant urban migration trend observed in recent years.

Historical & Cultural Significance of Mexico

- The Yucatán Peninsula, extending into the Gulf of Mexico, was once home to the Maya civilization, adding a rich cultural tapestry to the nation's history.
- Its diverse terrain, primarily characterised by the Sierra Madre mountain ranges and the Central Plateau, is rich in valuable resources such as silver and copper.
- Mexico sits geographically in a highly dynamic tectonic location and is a part of the circum-Pacific "Ring of Fire," leading to frequent volcanic activity and seismic episodes.

Why is the Election of a Female President a Big Deal?

- Claudia Sheinbaum's election to the highest office is a monumental stride towards gender parity in Mexican politics.
- As the first female president, she is expected to bring a fresh perspective and address pressing issues, especially those concerning women and girls.
- This development is a major step in recognizing women's capabilities and could inspire female leadership in other spheres and regions as well.

Conclusion:

The election of Claudia Sheinbaum as Mexico's first female President opens a new chapter in the country's progressive politics. It sets the stage for advocates of equality and diversity and establishes a precedent for other nations striving for gender equality in leadership roles. It is indeed a proud moment not just for Mexicans but for people across the globe.

Ruchira Kamboj - India's First Woman Permanent Representative to the United Nations

Introduction to Ruchira Kamboj and Her New Appointment

- Ruchira Kamboj is a seasoned Indian diplomat, who is a part of the 1987 batch of the Indian Foreign Service.
- Recently, she has been elevated to the esteemed position of Ambassador and Permanent Representative of India to the United Nations, becoming the first Indian woman to hold this position.
- Prior to this, Kamboj was serving as India's Ambassador to Bhutan.
- In her new role, she will succeed TS Tirumurti.

About the United Nations

- The United Nations (UN) is an international organisation responsible for maintaining international peace and security, promoting sustainable development, and upholding international law.
- The UN was founded on 24 October 1945, with its headquarters located in New York, USA.
- The UN Security Council, a critical component of the organisation, consists of fifteen members. Five of these members - China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom, and the United States - hold permanent posts.
- Ten other members are elected regionally for a term of two years. For the term of 2023-2024, Ecuador, Japan, Malta, Mozambique, and Switzerland have earned seats as non-permanent members.

United Nations Global Compact: An Initiative for Sustainable Development

- Apart from conflict resolution, the UN also focuses on fostering global corporate sustainability through its non-binding pact, the United Nations Global Compact (UNGC).
- UNGC encourages businesses and firms worldwide to adopt sustainable and socially responsible policies and mandates them to report on their implementation.
- Initiated on 26 July 2000, UNGC operates from the same headquarters in New York as the UN.

- Currently led by CEO and Executive Director Sanda Ojiambo, UNGC represents another significant face of the UN's global sustainability and developmental efforts.

Importance and Implications of Kamboj's Appointment

- Ruchira Kamboj's appointment as India's first female Permanent Representative marks a significant milestone in gender parity, bolstering the representation of women in high-ranking international roles.

- Her role will be pivotal in representing India's interests at the global platform that the UN represents. Her influence will be felt in areas from policy decisions to diplomatic negotiations.

- Furthermore, her appointment will have potential implications on India's ongoing engagements with the UN, particularly in matters of international conflict resolution, peacekeeping, sustainability and development initiatives.

The appointment of Ruchira Kamboj, an accomplished diplomat, as the first female Permanent Representative of India to the United Nations, marks a historic moment for India in the sphere of international diplomacy. As an individual and in her new position, Kamboj is set to steer India's role and representation at the UN towards new horizons.

The Launch of Global Biopharmaceutical Alliance: A Major Step Towards a Resilient Supply Chain

Introduction:

In the ever-evolving world of biopharmaceuticals, a revolutionary step has been taken by India, the United States, Japan, South Korea, and the European Union. These global powerhouses came together to unveil the Global Biopharmaceutical Alliance during the prestigious Bio International Convention 2024, the world's most significant global event for the biotech industry.

Why Is This In The News?

- The formation of this alliance transpired during the Bio International Convention 2024, held in San Diego, California.
- The aim of this alliance is to amalgamate joint efforts for developing a robust, reliable, and sustainable supply chain within the biopharmaceutical sector.
- This breakthrough revelation was announced during the inaugural meeting of the Biopharmaceutical Alliance, generating much excitement within the industry and making news headlines worldwide.

The Alliance's Objective:

- The alliance's primary focus is creating a sustainable and resilient supply chain in the biopharmaceutical sector.
- Member nations decided to coordinate their respective bio policies, regulate and support research and development measures, to streamline their collective efforts effectively.
- They highlighted and agreed upon the paramount importance of proper supply chain management for the sector's healthy growth.

Geographical Relevance:

The geographical distribution of the participant countries offers considerable diversity and advantage due to the different strengths they bring into the alliance. Covering Asia, North America, and Europe, this comprehensive collaboration expands the diversification of resources and expertise.

Historical and Global Importance:

- Historically, each participating country has contributed significantly to the pharmaceutical and biotechnological arena. This alliance marks a new chapter, fostering more substantial cooperation and collaboration.
- The alliance is globally significant as it collectively forms a major part of the global pharmaceuticals market.

Implications for the Future:

- The alliance is a leap toward a more collaborative and united global health landscape.
- It promises a future of cooperative growth, with less dependency on individual nation's resources and capabilities.

• It paves the way for international cooperation in other scientific fields, setting an example for global collaboration.

In Conclusion:

It is exciting to see countries come together for a cause like this, a testament to the power of collaboration. This alliance is expected to accelerate the growth and resilience of the biopharmaceutical sector in the coming years - a milestone event to better global biopharmaceutical supply chains.

PV Sindhu Joins Hands with Greenday, as Brand Ambassador to Promote Nutritional Health

An Endorsement Backed by Commitment

- Two-time Olympic medallist and world champion in badminton, PV Sindhu, has become an investor in 'Better Nutrition,' a brand under the startup Greenday. This move is significant as Sindhu is not just endorsing but also investing in this cause showcases her commitment towards tackling the widespread issue of micronutrient deficiencies in India.

Aiming for a Nutrient-Enriched India

- In a bid to tackle micronutrient deficiencies in India, Sindhu has also taken up the role of being the brand ambassador for Greenday. This collaboration is aimed at promoting nutrient-rich, biofortified foods that contribute towards enhancing consumer health while also enriching the livelihoods of the involved farmers.

About Greenday and Its Nutritional Mission

- Greenday is a startup initiated by IIM Ahmedabad alumni Prateek Rastogi and Aishwarya Bhatnagar. This company is pioneering in the development and promotion of staple crops packed with essential micronutrients like Iron, Zinc, Pro-Vitamin A, Calcium, and Protein.

- In their mission to increase the nutritional value of staple crops, the company educates, empowers, and incentivizes farmers to cultivate

nutrient-enriched crop varieties further contributing to a healthier India.

General Knowledge Part:

- PV Sindhu hails from Hyderabad, India, and she is the first Indian woman to win an Olympic silver medal during the Rio Olympics 2016.

- She also created history by becoming the first Indian to clinch the World Badminton Championships title.

- In terms of nutrition, the deficiency of micronutrients is a prevalent issue in India due to the consumption of monotonous, cereal-based diets lacking in diversity. Essential micronutrients like Iron, Zinc, Pro-Vitamin A, Calcium, and Protein are often found missing in regular diets, leading to various health ailments.

- Biofortified crops, like those promoted by the Greenday company, can help in tackling this widespread issue as they are conventionally bred crops with higher nutrient contents. This not only addresses the problem of nutrient deficiency but can also enhance the profitability of farmers by increasing the crop's commercial value.

This collaboration marries sports and nutrition, highlighting the importance of a balanced diet for enhanced physical performance, and can impact the sporting scenario positively by emphasising healthier lifestyles.

The GM Mosquito Gamble: Djibouti's Innovative Malaria Control Strategy

Introduction to Genetically Modified (GM) Mosquitoes

- Djibouti, an East African country, has embarked on a groundbreaking mission against malaria through the introduction of genetically modified (GM) mosquitoes.

- The pilot plan, initiated in May 2024, signals a significant milestone in the ongoing war against this lethal disease.

Why the advent of Genetically Modified (GM) Mosquitoes for Malaria Control?

- GM mosquitoes are crafted in labs, equipped with a self-limiting gene that hinders the survival of

female offspring and a fluorescent marker gene for easy identification in the wild.

- This new breed of mosquito is intended to decrease the number of female *Anopheles stephensi*, which are responsible for malaria transmission.

- The approach aims to disrupt the transmission cycle of malaria by directly reducing the population of this vector.

The Need for GM Mosquitoes

- Djibouti has experienced a surge in malaria cases in recent years, particularly due to the proliferation of *Anopheles stephensi*—an invasive urban mosquito species.

- Traditional methods of malaria control, like insecticide-treated bed nets and indoor spraying, are progressively becoming less effective due to growing mosquito resistance.

The Mechanism of GM Mosquitoes

- The GM mosquitoes are all males carrying a self-limiting gene. When they mate with female *A. stephensi* mosquitoes, their female offspring inherit this gene and cannot survive to adulthood.

- The ultimate goal is to significantly lower mosquito populations and disrupt malaria transmission.

Environmental Concerns Associated with GM Mosquitoes

- There have been issues raised by environmental organisations regarding potential unintended environmental consequences following the release of GM mosquitoes.

- Unforeseen survival skills or adaptability may emerge among GM mosquitoes. For example, similar to resistance seen in Bt cotton, GM mosquitoes could develop resistance to gene-editing mechanisms.

- Mosquitoes are integral for nectar consumption and thus aid in pollination. Their drastic reduction could negatively affect these plant species.

- Dwindling mosquito populations could also disturb local food chains and biodiversity.

Global Precedent and Note on GM Mosquitoes

- GM mosquitoes have shown success in Brazil, the Cayman Islands, Panama, and India in controlling *Aedes aegypti* mosquitoes, with over 1 billion mosquitoes released since 2019.

- The Djibouti initiative reflects similar moves in Burkina Faso, expanding the trend of using biotechnology to combat malaria.

Background on Malaria

- Malaria is a severe disease transmitted by infected female *Anopheles* mosquitoes.

- Symptoms may include fever, chills, headache, and fatigue. Severe cases may result in organ failure, coma, and death.

- Malaria is especially prevalent in tropical and subtropical areas.

- To control vector-borne diseases, especially malaria, India has adopted various measures including the National Vector-Borne Disease Control Programme and the National Malaria Control Programme.

Prestigious Nelson Mandela Award for Health Promotion Bestowed on NIMHANS, Bengaluru

Introduction and Background:

- The renowned National Institute of Mental Health and Neuro Sciences (NIMHANS), located in Bengaluru, has recently earned the prestigious Nelson Mandela Award for Health Promotion for the year 2024.

- This esteemed accolade, presented by the World Health Organization (WHO), is a testament to the nation's dedicated efforts to tackle mental health-related challenges and work towards accessible for everyone.

Current Focus: Mental Health in India

- The accolade recognizes India's substantial strides in the sector of mental health.

- Notable achievements include the inception of a tele-mental health helpline known as Tele MANAS and the establishment of Mental Health Units in nearly every district, supported by the National Health Mission.

About NIMHANS

- NIMHANS concentrates on the aspects of mental health and neuroscience through a variety of approaches such as clinical care, educational programs (undergraduate, postgraduate, PhD), and research initiatives.

- The institution was established in 1974 and declared a Deemed University in 1994.
- It was named an Institute of National Importance by the Government of India in 2012.
- NIMHANS operates under the NIMHANS Act, 2012, enacted by the Parliament of India.

Nelson Mandela Award for Health Promotion: An Overview

- The Nelson Mandela Award for Health Promotion was established in 2019 following the propositions of African Region Health Ministers.
- This award is granted to individuals, institutions, or non-governmental organisations that have contributed significantly to promoting health.

GK and Fact File

- NIMHANS was established in 1974 and declared a Deemed University in 1994.
- NIMHANS Act, 2012, governs the institution and was declared an Institute of National Importance in the same year.
- The World Health Organization established the Nelson Mandela Award for Health Promotion in 2019.
- The award recognizes significant contributions in the field, be it by individuals, institutions, or NGOs. Therefore, raising awareness, and understanding the importance of mental health in India and devising methods to promote accessible mental health services is a crucial takeaway from this news event.

Commemoration of the 647th Birth Anniversary of Sant Kabir Das

Introduction to Sant Kabir Das: The Weaving Mystic of Bhakti Movement

- Sant Kabir Das was a revered 15th-century Indian mystic poet and saint born in Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh.
- He was born to a Muslim family but brought up by a Hindu weaver couple which shaped his equitable vision towards all religions.
- He was a significant figure in the Bhakti Movement, stressing on individual devotion and

love for the divine above institutional religious practices.

Sant Kabir Das in History: Deep-seated Root in Bhakti Movement

- The Bhakti Movement commenced in the 7th century in South India and expanded its reach to North India during the 14th and 15th centuries.
- Sant Kabir Das, along with other popular poet-saints like Ramananda, made a significant contribution to the movement with their devotional songs in vernacular languages.
- Kabir's philosophy was shaped by the spiritual guidance of spiritual teachers such as Ramananda and Sheikh Taqi.

Universal Reverence and Following of Sant Kabir Das's Teachings

- Sant Kabir Das's influence surpasses religious boundaries, being revered by both Hindus and Muslims alike.
- His followers are referred to as "Kabir Panthis," who seek to promote his message of universal love and harmony.

Sant Kabir Das's Historic Literary Works: Prolific Contribution to Indian Literature

- His literary works including Kabir Bijak (poems and verses), Kabir Parachai, Sakhi Granth, Adi Granth (integral to Sikhism), and Kabir Granthawali (Rajasthan) reflect his mystical experiences and philosophical stance.
- His works, written mainly in the Brajbhasha and Awadhi dialects, played a pivotal role in shaping Indian literature and the development of the Hindi language.

Commemoration of 647th Birth Anniversary of Sant Kabir Das

- On 22nd June 2024, the 647th birth anniversary of Sant Kabir Das was commemorated by the Prime Minister, emphasising his perennial relevance in promoting unity and peace amidst religious diversity.

Sant Kabir Das's Relevance in Current Scenario

- Sant Kabir Das's messages of love, peace, and unity hold great importance in today's diverse and often divided society. His teachings perhaps serve as a timely reminder of the shared humanity that transcends religious and social divisions.

Important Dates of June 2024

Date	Important Days
June 1, 2024	World Milk Day
June 1, 2024	Global Day of Parents
June 2, 2024	International Sex Worker's Day
June 2, 2024	Telangana Formation Day
June 3, 2024	World Bicycle Day
June 4, 2024	International Day of Innocent Children Victims of Aggression
June 5, 2024	World Environment Day
June 5, 2024	International Day for the Fight against Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing
June 6, 2024	UN Russian Language Day 2024
June 7, 2024	World Food Safety Day
June 7, 2024	World Oceans Day
June 8, 2024	World Brain Tumour Day

June 9, 2024	World Accreditation Day
June 9, 2024	International Archives Day
June 11, 2024	International Day of Play 2024
June 12, 2024	World Day Against Child Labor
June 13, 2024	International Albinism Awareness Day
June 14, 2024	World Blood Donor Day
June 15, 2024	World Elder Abuse Awareness Day
June 15, 2024	World Father's Day
June 16, 2024	International Day of Family Remittances
June 17, 2024	World Day to Combat Desertification and Drought
June 18, 2024	International Day for Countering Hate Speech 2024
June 18, 2024	Sustainable Gastronomy Day 2024
June 19, 2024	International Day for the Elimination of Sexual Violence in Conflict 2024
June 19, 2024	World Sickle Cell Day
June 20, 2024	World Refugee Day

June 21, 2024	World Music Day
June 21, 2024	World Hydrography Day
June 21, 2024	International Yoga Day
June 21, 2024	Summer Solstice
June 22, 2024	World Rainforest Day
June 23, 2024	International Olympic Day
June 23, 2024	United Nations Public Service Day
June 23, 2024	International Widows Day
June 24, 2024	International Day of Women in Diplomacy 2024
June 25, 2024	International Day of the Seafarer 2024
June 26, 2024	International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking
June 26, 2024	International Day in Support of Victims of Torture
June 27, 2024	Micro-, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises Day 2024
June 27, 2024	International Pineapple Day 2024

June 28, 2024	National Insurance Awareness Day 2024
June 29, 2024	National Statistics Day
June 29, 2024	International Day of Tropics
June 30, 2024	World Asteroid Day

Books and Author

Bill Gates Unveils "Source Code": A Memoir Revealing His Remarkable Journey
Maharashtra Governor Unveils Maritime History Book: 'Gateways To The Sea'
R. Ashwin's 'I Have The Streets: A Kutti Cricket Story' – A Glimpse Into The Life Of A Cricketing Legend
A Book Titled "A Fly On The RBI Wall" Authored By Alpna Killawala

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