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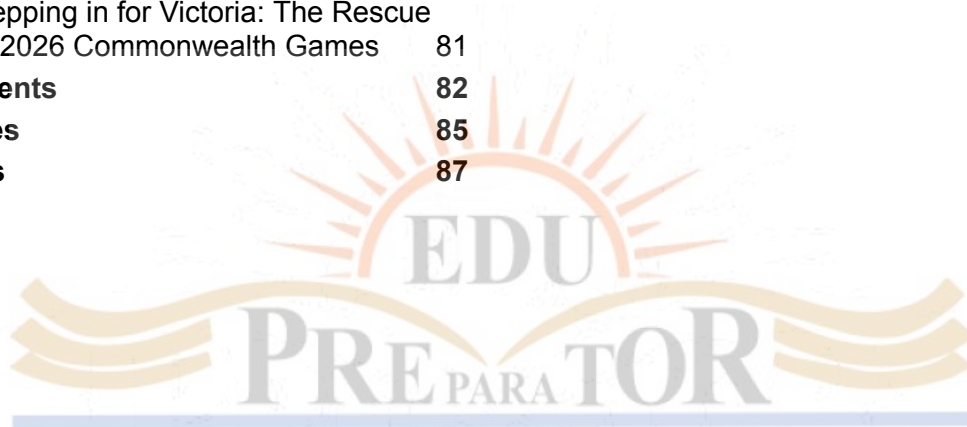
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Geography And Environment

Understanding The Havoc Wrought by Typhoon Yagi

1. Introduction to the Monstrous Typhoon Yagi

With Southeast Asia caught in the thrall of Typhoon Yagi, millions continue to battle storms, floods, and landslides. Tagged as this year's strongest tropical cyclone to batter Asia and the world's second most potent storm after Hurricane Beryl, Yagi has left an indelible impact across various nations.

2. The Impacted Nations and their Challenges

Typhoon Yagi has critically affected multiple nations, including the Philippines, China, Laos, Myanmar, and Thailand. Its wrath, however, was most felt in Vietnam where it left a staggering death toll of around 233, causing widespread displacement and infrastructural damage.

3. Formation of Typhoon Yagi: A Timeline

- Originating as a tropical storm over the warm waters of the western Philippine Sea on September 1.
- Made landfall in the Philippines on September 2 and began to weaken.
- The unusually warm waters of the South China Sea stimulated the storm to intensify again.
- By September 4, it was upgraded to a Category 3 typhoon.
- The storm evolved into a Category 5 typhoon on September 5, with winds churning at a speed of 260 km/h.

4. Understanding Tropical Cyclones

- Tropical cyclones are brewed over warm tropical ocean waters near the equator.
- Warm, moist air rising from the ocean surface creates a low pressure zone. The high pressure air from surrounding areas rushes into this zone, gets warmed, and rises.
- As this moist air cools off, it forms clouds and thunderstorms that gain strength from the ocean's heat and surface evaporation.

- The cyclones are classified into five categories based on sustained wind speeds as per the Saffir-Simpson Hurricane Wind Scale.
- Storms reaching Category 3 and beyond are declared as 'major' due to their severe damaging potential.

5. Hurricanes versus Typhoons

Though often confused, hurricanes and typhoons are essentially the same weather event known as tropical cyclones. The latter is a meteorological term defined as a rotating system of clouds and thunderstorms that originate over tropical or subtropical waters with a closed, low-level circulation.

The difference lies in their geographic occurrence. A tropical cyclone is termed a 'hurricane' in the North Atlantic, central North Pacific, and eastern North Pacific, while the same phenomenon in the Northwest Pacific is called a 'typhoon'. In the South Pacific and Indian Ocean, it remains as 'tropical cyclone', irrespective of the wind strength involved.

6. The Key Points to Remember

Understanding Typhoon Yagi's formation, influence, and geographical impact can greatly help in preparing for such drastic weather occurrences in the future. Awareness about the science of typhoons and cyclones is crucial to make timely preventive measures and mitigate potential damages.

Cyclone Asna - An Overview and Insight on Cyclonic Weather Phenomena

I. Introduction and About Cyclone Asna:

- Cyclone Asna recently formed over the Kutch coast in India's westernmost state, Gujarat.
- It proceeded towards Oman without causing significant impact or damage in the region.
- Originating from a deep depression, Cyclone Asna brought along some rain and strong winds but did not result in any major damage or casualties.

II. The Phenomenon of Cyclones:

- Cyclones are intense atmospheric systems surrounded by high-pressure areas, mainly

characterised by violent storms and adverse weather conditions.

- In the Northern Hemisphere, cyclones rotate counterclockwise, whereas they rotate clockwise in the Southern Hemisphere.

III. Etymology behind 'Cyclone':

- The term "cyclone" hails from the Greek word "Cyclos," meaning the coils of a snake.
- This term was coined by Henry Piddington, noting the resemblance between the pattern of tropical storms in the Bay of Bengal and the Arabian Sea and coiling serpents.

IV. Classification of Cyclones:

Cyclones are generally classified into two main categories:

1. Tropical Cyclones: These are borne in tropical regions and encompass hurricanes and typhoons.
2. Extra-Tropical Cyclones: Otherwise known as middle-latitude, temperate, or frontal cyclones, these form in the mid-latitudes and are associated with weather fronts and low-pressure systems.

V. Importance of Understanding Cyclones:

- The study of cyclones is vital for predicting and mitigating damage from these potentially devastating weather phenomena.
- This understanding helps in issuing early warnings, conducting evacuations if necessary, and managing disaster responses to safeguard lives and properties.
- Moreover, a historical understanding of cyclone patterns can contribute to better preparedness plans and improved infrastructure designs in regions frequently hit by these natural phenomena.

VI. Cyclone Asna in the Lens of General

Knowledge:

- The occurrence of Cyclone Asna provides a real-time illustration of the nature and impact of cyclonic activity.
- It underlines the unpredictability of cyclones, as it moves towards Oman without causing severe damage, unlike some of its devastating counterparts.
- This event offers a case study for understanding the patterns, behaviours, and potential impacts associated with cyclonic systems both in the Indian subcontinent and on a global level.

In conclusion, Cyclone Asna and cyclonic events alike warrant significant attention and understanding not only due to their powerful,

sometimes devastating impacts but also due to their larger role in our weather systems and global climate patterns.

A Critical Lens on the Disaster Management (Amendment) Bill, 2024

Overview and Key Provisions

- Recently, the Disaster Management (Amendment) Bill, 2024 was introduced by the government in Lok Sabha. The Bill seeks to modify the existing Disaster Management Act, 2005.
- The Bill proposes significant changes including letting the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) and State Disaster Management Authorities (SDMAs) directly prepare their respective disaster management plans.
- Some of the key provisions include the expansion of the NDMA's responsibilities, the creation of a comprehensive disaster database, and the establishment of Urban Disaster Management Authorities (UDMAs).
- Notably, the Bill seeks to enable state governments to form State Disaster Response Forces (SDRFs) for local response.
- Existing crisis management committees like the National Crisis Management Committee (NCMC) and High-Level Committee (HLC) also get statutory status under the new proposal.
- The Bill empowers both central and state governments to direct any person to act or refrain from acting in a disaster situation.

Potential Challenges & Concerns

- The Bill, however, has raised concerns over the centralisation of disaster management processes, which could complicate disaster response and create delays.
- There is a critique about the dilution of the National Disaster Response Fund (NDRF) and potential lack of local resources and funding to sustain UDMAs.
- There is a call for the integration of climate change into disaster risk management, considering the increasing visibility of climate-induced risks.
- The Bill has been criticised for its restricted definition of a disaster and for not making disaster relief a justiciable right.

- Some argue that this Act might disturb the federal dynamics by centralising decision-making and financial control, limiting state autonomy.

Shortcomings of the Disaster Management Act, 2005

- Previous disasters like the 2018 Kerala floods and 2013 Kedarnath floods exposed bureaucratic inefficiencies in the current Act leading to delayed disaster responses.
- The 2005 Act has been criticised for vague definitions of key terms like "disaster" and "calamity."
- Funding provisions under the Act have also been inadequate for dealing with large-scale disasters efficiently.

Current Disaster Management Landscape

- The DM Act, 2005 came into existence in the wake of the 2004 tsunami and enabled the creation of the infrastructural setup for disaster management in India.
- In the years since, this framework has helped India address several natural disasters efficiently. However, the increasing frequency of natural disasters due to climate change underscores the need for greater responsibilities and resources.

The Way Forward

- Disaster risk reduction should be integrated into national and state development policies to address the scale and complexity of current day disasters.
- Emphasising the role of technology, advancements from organisations like ISRO and IMD can be leveraged to improve early warning systems and ensure they are community-accessible.
- A national disaster response framework, with a clear command structure, resource allocation, and mechanism for rapid response, is essential for a quick, coordinated response during emergencies.

8th India Water Week (IWW) 2024: Discussing and Innovating for Water Management

India Water Week and International WASH Conference

- The 8th India Water Week (IWW) 2024 was inaugurated by the President of India in New Delhi.
- The event was organised under the Ministry of Jal Shakti and addressed issues related to water management and fostered innovation related to water technologies and practices.
- The theme for IWW 2024 was 'Partnerships and Cooperation for Inclusive Water Development and Management', stressing on collaborative efforts in dealing with water challenges.
- The International Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH) Conference organised under the same ministry focused on global cooperation regarding sanitation challenges and promoted better hygiene standards.

Participation and Non-Participation

- Several nations, including Denmark, Israel, Australia, and Singapore, participated in the series of events and shared their experiences.
- Representatives from the World Water Council, World Bank, and Asian Development Bank were present.
- However, China and Bangladesh did not participate in the events.

State of Water Affairs in India

- India, housing 18% of the global population, holds only 4% of the world's freshwater resources, indicating intense water stress.
- Over-extraction has led to drastic groundwater depletion, particularly in states like Punjab.
- India suffers from significant water pollution, with around 70% of water being contaminated, negatively affecting drinking and farming suitability.
- Constant issues regarding rural water access persist, with several areas still relying on unsafe sources.
- Climate vulnerability is another major concern, as climate change intensifies droughts and floods, thus, impacting water availability.

Factors Influencing the Water Crisis in India

- Increased demand due to rapid population growth and urbanisation.
- Dangerous depletion of groundwater reserves due to over-extraction, predominantly for agricultural use.

- Inefficient farming practices leading to carefree water consumption.
- Water pollution caused by industrial waste, untreated sewage, and agricultural runoff.
- Climate change alters rain patterns, causing disruption in water availability.
- Unjust distribution of water resources, leading to unequal access.
- Aging infrastructure and outdated water management systems cause inefficiencies and wastage.
- Dependence on monsoon rainfall for water replenishment increases vulnerability.
- Inadequate policies and poor governance hamper water management and conservation.

Government Measures for Water Management

- The Government has undertaken various initiatives, such as the National Water Policy, 2012.
- Initiatives like Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojana, Jal Shakti Abhiyan- Catch the Rain Campaign, Atal Bhujal Yojana, and Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) focus on irrigation and water conservation.
- The National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG) specifically focuses on the rejuvenation of the river.

Economics

"DICGC's Premium Structure Concerns: Implications and Way Forward"

Introduction and Background:

The Deposit Insurance and Credit Guarantee Corporation (DICGC), established in 1978 as a subsidiary of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), provides insurance cover for deposits in Indian banks. Of late, DICGC has come under scrutiny due to its premium structure that seemingly burdens commercial banks while disproportionately benefiting cooperative banks. This led to a call for reevaluating the premiums according to the risk profiles of various banking institutions.

Impetus for Concern: Disproportionate Premium Structure:

- Commercial banks contribute 94% of the premiums to the DICGC but account for a mere

1.3% of net claims. Cooperative banks, on the other hand, contribute merely 6% of the premiums but claim 98.7% of net claims.

- From 1962, commercial banks had filed gross claims of Rs 295.85 crore with net claims totaling Rs 138.31 crore. Conversely, cooperative banks filed gross claims of Rs 14,735.25 crore with net claims reaching Rs 10,133 crore.

Implications for Overcharging Commercial Banks:

1. High Compliance Costs: The fixed premium rate endorses high compliance costs for commercial banks impacting their operational efficiency and eventually, their lending capacity and customer service.
2. Biased Risk Assessment: Commercial banks, usually lower risk entities, are unjustly penalised through higher premiums, undermining risk evaluation principles fundamental to insurance pricing.
3. Influence on Financial Stability: The steep premiums could deter financial stability of commercial banks as raised costs may need to be transferred to depositors and borrowers via higher interest rates and lower returns.
4. Promotion of Poor Management Practices: The current structure inadvertently promotes poor management in cooperative banks as default risks get shifted to more secure commercial banks.

Key Facts about DICGC:

- The organisation came into existence via the merger of the Deposit Insurance Corporation (DIC) and Credit Guarantee Corporation of India Ltd. (CGCI) after the Deposit Insurance and Credit Guarantee Corporation Act, 1961 was passed.
- It manages the Deposit Insurance Fund, the Credit Guarantee Fund, and the General Fund.
- Its Deposit Insurance Scheme provides coverage up to Rs 5 lakh per account.

Need to Reevaluate Deposit Insurance Premiums by DICGC:

- A proposal to reduce the premium for commercial banks from 12 paise to 3 paise per Rs 100 insured could potentially save the banks around Rs 20,000 crore in FY26.
- Benefits of this reevaluation are multiple: premiums would now reflect actual risks, commercial banks would witness better operational efficiency, and the practice could incentivize better banking habits.

To conclude, it is essential to address the concerns regarding DICGC's existing premium structure to ensure fair regulation, economic efficiency, and promotion of best management practices in the banking sector.

Union Cabinet Unveils Seven New Schemes to Revolutionise Indian Agriculture

Introduction and Overview

Recently, the Union Cabinet approved seven innovative schemes, allocating nearly Rs 14,000 crore towards empowering and modernising India's agriculture and related sectors. These measures aim to strengthen research, enhance climate resilience, promote optimal use of natural resources, foster digitization, and support livestock and horticulture development, thereby augmenting farmer income.

New Schemes Unveiled and Their Components

1. Digital Agriculture Mission (DAM):

- ***Agri Stack:*** It is a technology stack and digital database focusing on the agricultural sector. It will establish a unified platform for farmers, providing comprehensive services throughout the agricultural food value chain.

- ***Krishi Decision Support System:*** It consolidates and organises pertinent geospatial and non-geospatial data to aid informed decision-making across various agricultural facets.

2. Soil Profile Mapping: This measure enables the creation of intricate soil profile maps, aiding in competition crop management and sustainable farming practices.

3. The Crop Science for Food and Nutritional Security Programmes: It outlines six core objectives related to research, education, genetic enhancement, and crop improvement to realise food and nutritional security.

4. Strengthening Agricultural Education, Management and Social Sciences program: This plan, under the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR), seeks to revolutionise agricultural

research and education, aligning with the New Education Policy 2020.

5. Sustainable Livestock Health and Production scheme: It's a comprehensive program for healthy livestock development and sustainable dairy production targeted at increasing farmers' income.

6. Sustainable Development of Horticulture scheme: This initiative emphasises enhancing farmers' income through the cultivation of a wide variety of horticultural crops.

7. Krishi Vigyan Kendras (KVKs) and Natural Resource Management (NRM): They focus on advancing agricultural extension services, assessing location-specific technology modules, and promoting sustainable natural resource management.

Role of Technology in Indian Agriculture

Agriculture in India has heavily adopted technology at various stages, such as crop preparation, cultivation, and harvesting. Several initiatives like soil health monitoring, agricultural machinery, Agri-Tech startups, drones, renewable energy, biotechnology, and digital platforms contribute significantly to the digitization and modernization of agricultural practices.

Relevant Key Initiatives in Agriculture Sector

Several pivotal foundational programs have been introduced concerning agriculture, including Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY), Soil Health Card Scheme, Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchai Yojana (PMKSY), e-National Agriculture Market (e-NAM), Paramparagat Krishi Vikas Yojana (PKVY), Digital Agriculture Mission, Unified Farmer Service Platform (UFSP), National e-Governance Plan in Agriculture (NeGP-A), and Mission Organic Value Chain Development for North Eastern Region (MOVCDNER).

In Summation

The Indian government's recent unveiling of the fresh spate of schemes showcases its commitment to boosting farmer income, empowering the agricultural sector, and modernising farming practices. This progression towards an advanced, digitised, and sustainable agricultural sector will significantly contribute to the country's socio-economic growth.

"Indian Government's Green Light to 12 New Industrial Smart Cities"

1. A Quick Introduction:

- The Union Cabinet, led by the Prime Minister, has recently approved the establishment of 12 new industrial smart cities.

- These cities will be set up across six major industrial corridors in ten states, under the aegis of the National Industrial Corridor Development Programme.

- These industrial cities are planned in Uttarakhand, Punjab, Maharashtra, Kerala, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, and Rajasthan.

2. Unravelling the Concept of an Industrial Smart City:

- An Industrial Smart City refers to an urban area that merges advanced technology and data analytics to improve the efficiency of industrial operations and foster sustainable development.

- These cities are designed to attract foreign investment, amplify domestic manufacturing, and generate employment.

- The key objective behind these new industrial cities is to fortify India's stance in global value chains by offering investors land ready for allocation.

3. "Plug-and-Play" and "Walk-to-Work"

Concepts Explained:

- "Plug-and-play" refers to ready-to-use infrastructure that enables businesses to start operations promptly.

- The "walk-to-work" strategy encourages reduced vehicle usage and promotes walking by enabling people to live closer to their workplaces.

4. Comprehensive Development Plan:

- These cities will be developed under the National Industrial Corridor Development Programme (NICDP), which aims to foster world-class industrial cities.

- It links large anchor industries and MSMEs to create a dynamic industrial ecosystem.

- The implementation of the programme is handled by the National Industrial Corridor Development and Implementation Trust (NICDIT) and the National

Industrial Corridor Development Corporation Limited (NICDC).

5. Key Features of the Approved Industrial Smart Cities:

- The projects fall in line with the government's objective to achieve USD 2 trillion in exports by 2030 and PM's GatiShakti National Master Plan.

- The industrial cities will be part of the 'necklace' along the Golden Quadrilateral, promoting connectivity and industrial growth.

6. Significance of the Project:

- Designed to entice Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) from nations like Singapore and Switzerland.

- The cities could generate about 10 lakh direct jobs and up to 30 lakh indirect jobs, with an investment potential of Rs 1.5 lakh crore.

7. Challenges and Potential Solutions:

- The development entails technological and infrastructure upgrades, funding, and investment challenges, along with addressing data privacy, security concerns, and issues with public acceptance.

- Solution pathways could be regulatory reforms, efficient land acquisition, sustainable development initiatives, skill development, workforce training, and fostering public-private partnerships.

The establishment of these new industrial smart cities presents a golden opportunity for India to invite significant investment, create employment, and contribute positively to the environment by integrating sustainable solutions into city planning.

"The Implications of the Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) 2023-2024"

I. Introduction to Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS)

-The Periodic Labour Force Survey is a comprehensive annual study conducted by India's National Statistical Office.

- It tracks labour market trends, assessing the change in employment and unemployment rates in the country.

-The insights gained from this survey aid policymakers in creating effective labour-related policies and programs.

II. Key Findings From PLFS 2023-2024

A. Labour Force Participation Rate (LFPR)

- The LFPR for individuals aged 15 years and above witnessed a rise from 57.9% in 2022-23 to 60.1% in 2023-24.

- In terms of gender, LFPR for females rose from 37.0% to 41.7%, while for males, the increase was from 78.5% to 78.8%.

B. Worker Population Ratio (WPR)

- An increase was noticed in the WPR, from 56.0% to 58.2%.

- For females, there was a significant jump from 35.9% to 40.3%, and an increase for males from 76.0% to 76.3% was observed.

C. Unemployment Rate (UR)

- The overall UR for both males and females was 3.2%.

- A slight decrease in the male UR was observed from 3.3% to 3.2%, while the female UR increased from 2.9% to 3.2%.

III. Objectives and Features of The PLFS

A. Objectives

- The main aim of the PLFS is to provide detailed information about the labour force, employment rates, and unemployment rates.

- The PLFS provides trends to track changes in the labour market and understand the dynamics of employment and economic conditions.

- The data collected is instrumental in policy formulation related to labour in the country.

B. Key Features

- PLFS is a household survey which gathers its information from both rural and urban Indian households.

- The survey publishes both annual and quarterly data to provide up-to-date information about labour force dynamics.

- The survey offers data on various labour market indicators such as the work participation rate, unemployment rate, and the underemployment rate.

IV. Significance in the Background of Indian Economy

- The Labour Force Participation Rate (LFPR) and Worker Population Ratio (WPR) are vital indicators of the health of the economy.

- An increase in these rates indicates positive growth in the economy and an increasing demand for labour.

- Conversely, a rise in the Unemployment Rate (UR) reflects the proportion of the labour force that is jobless, seeking work, and available to take up a job. A rise in UR is a cause of concern for the economy.

- Thus, PLFS provides the necessary data for formulating policies to stimulate economic growth and employment generation.

Recent Rate Cut by US Federal Reserve and its Implications

1. Introduction

- Recently, the US Federal Reserve has made a significant reduction in its benchmark interest rates by 0.5%. This action is a strategic response to counter inflation while promoting economic growth in the US.

- The US Federal Reserve is responsible for the nation's monetary policy aimed at enhancing maximum employment, ensuring stable prices, and fostering moderate long-term interest rates in the US economic landscape.

2. Reasons for the Rate Cut

- Economic Recovery Post-Covid-19: Post-pandemic, the Federal Reserve initially slashed interest rates to invigorate the economy.

- Moderation of Inflation: As inflation hovered closer to the Federal Reserve's target of 2% by mid-2023, a rate cut seemed like the viable option.

- Rise in Unemployment: The current US unemployment sits at 4.2% (as of August 2024), indicating high interest rates' detrimental impact on employment.

- Dual Mandate: The Federal Reserve operates on a dual mandate to maintain stable prices along with maximum employment.

3. Implications for The US

- The rate cut aims to maintain a moderate inflation rate focusing on job creation and price stability.

- It could reduce borrowing costs for businesses, thus potentially driving increased hiring and boosting economic expansion.

4. Relationship Between Inflation and Unemployment

- Inflation and unemployment typically display an inverse correlation.

- The Phillips Curve theory, proposed by A.W. Phillips in the 1950s, elucidates this inverse relationship.

5. Impact on India

- Impact on Emerging Markets: Lower US interest rates could make investment in countries like India more attractive via carry trades.

- Limited Impact: Notwithstanding the enhancement of liquidity and reduction in dollar cost of capital, the rate cut is not a standalone solution for propelling the global economy.

- Increased Foreign Investment: Lower US rates may prompt global investors to borrow in the US and invest in India, leading to a potential capital influx in the form of FDI or debt from the US.

- Stock Market Sentiment: The rate cut indicates a positive sentiment among investors, attracting investor interest in the Indian stock market.

6. RBI's Response

- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) might face pressure to cut interest rates, but it follows different inflation targets and economic mandates as compared to the Federal Reserve.

7. Federal Tapering

- Federal tapering signifies the gradual reduction in its large-scale asset purchases, frequently applied during economic crises.

8. India's Repo Rate

- The Reserve Bank of India's 50th Monetary Policy Committee meeting decided to hold the policy repo rate steady at 6.50%.

9. GK Dosage: What is Carry Trade?

- Carry trade is a financial strategy where investors borrow money in countries with low-interest rates (like the US) and invest in countries with high-interest rates (like India),

thereby capitalising on the differential in interest rates.

World Bank's Reassessment of India's GDP Growth Forecast

World Bank's Revised GDP Estimate for India

- The World Bank has revised India's GDP growth estimate for FY25 to 7% from 6.6%, attributing it to increases in household real estate investments and infrastructure investments.

- Last fiscal, India was the fastest-growing major economy with a GDP growth rate of 8.2%. This fiscal year, it is expected to curtail slightly to 7%, and further to 6.7% in FY26.

Detailed Breakdown of Economic Sectors

- Industrial growth rate is expected to slow to 7.3% in FY26 from 7.6% in FY25, but it has recovered to 9.5% in FY24 following Covid-19 induced disruption.

- Gross Fixed Capital Formation (GFCF) is predicted to fall from 9.0% in FY24 to 7.8% in FY25.

- Amid a rather weak global IT investment climate, the service sector might experience a slowdown in growth to 7.4% in FY25 and further down to 7.1% in FY26.

- On turning to agriculture, a sharp growth is expected – from merely 1.4% in FY24 to 4.1% in FY25.

- Trade forecasts foresee 7.2% growth in exports of goods and services in FY25, whereas import growth may diminish to 4.1%.

Challenges and Prospects for India's Economy

- In the export sector, India enjoys tremendous potential in electronics, green technology, textiles, garments, and footwear, in addition to its core strengths in IT, business services, and pharmaceuticals.

- Nevertheless, rising production costs and falling productivity have led to India losing its competitive edge, particularly in labour-intensive sectors like apparel and footwear.

- Countries such as Bangladesh, Vietnam, Poland, Germany, and France, have enhanced their export share in employment-intensive sectors.

- Notably, global protectionism has surged in the post-pandemic era, altering global value chains and providing India with new opportunities.

Trade Deterrents and the Current Account Deficit (CAD)

- Despite the National Logistics Policy (NLP) and various digital initiatives enhancing India's competitiveness by trimming trade costs, tariff and non-tariff barriers could potentially obstruct the prospect of trade-focused investments.
- In FY24, the CAD was low, standing at 0.7% in comparison to 2% in FY23. Simultaneously, foreign exchange reserves soared to a record high of \$670.1 billion in August 2023.
- Conversely, the World Bank anticipates a steady increase in CAD from 1.1% in FY25 to 1.2% in FY26 and further to 1.6% in FY27.

Job Market Analysis

- Even though India is the fastest-growing major economy, it confronts a high urban youth unemployment rate at 17%.
- Trade-related jobs in India, both direct and indirect, have dwindled over the preceding years.
- India needs to create more job opportunities related to trade by increasing its deep integration into global value chains, fostering innovation and productivity growth.

Awards Ranks and Reports

"Recognition for Clean Air: Unfolding the Swachh Vayu Survekshan Award 2024"

'Introduction to Swachh Vayu Survekshan Award 2024'

- The Swachh Vayu Survekshan Award 2024 was recently presented by the Union Minister of Environment, Forest & Climate Change, and Chief Minister of Rajasthan.
- The award ceremony was held at Jaipur on the International Day of Clean Air for Blue Skies, also known as Swachh Vayu Diwas, celebrated annually on 7th September.

- United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) instituted the day in 2019 aiming to heighten awareness and promote measures to improve air quality.

'Exploring the Essence of the Swachh Vayu Survekshan Award'

- Swachh Vayu Survekshan Award 2024 recognizes the top-performing National Clean Air Campaign (NCAP) cities across three different categories based on population.
- The categories include Category-1 (population over 10 Lakhs), Category-2 (population between 3-10 Lakhs), and Category-3 (population under 3 Lakhs).
- Winning cities included Surat, Jabalpur, Agra, Firozabad, Amravati, Jhansi, Raebareli, Nalgonda, and Nalagarh.
- The Municipal Commissioners of the winning cities were awarded with cash prizes, trophies, and certificates.

'Insight into Swachh Vayu Survekshan (SVS)'

- The SVS, initiated by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC), ranks cities regarding their air quality and the implementation of activities approved under the city action plan (NCAP) in 131 non-attainment cities.
- Non-attainment cities are those which, over a 5-year period, continually fail to meet the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) for PM10 or NO2.
- Cities were classified according to population data from the 2011 census.
- They were evaluated on eight major areas including control of biomass, municipal solid waste burning, road dust, dust from construction and demolition waste, vehicular emissions, industrial emissions, public awareness, and improvement in PM10 concentration.

'Delving into the National Clean Air Campaign (NCAP)'

- NCAP's aim is a methodical approach to handle air pollution by fostering cooperation among stakeholders and ensuring necessary action.
- The campaign identifies 131 cities for the implementation of city-specific action plans.
- Seeking to reduce the concentration of coarse (PM10) and fine particles (PM2.5) by at least 20% in the next five years (base year for

comparison-2017), NCAP is the first endeavour in India to formulate a national framework for air quality management.

- Monitoring of the campaign is done through "PRANA" portal launched by MoEFCC for overseeing implementation of NCAP, action plans and their status, and sharing best adopted practices.

'Government Initiatives Towards Clean Air'

The government has launched various initiatives for clean air including:

- Vehicle Scrap Policy
- Waste to Wealth campaign
- "Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam" program
- The Mission LiFE
- Ideas4LiFE campaign.

Delhi's IGI Airport Makes Global Mark: Ranked Amongst World's Most Internationally Connected Airports

IGI's Impressive Ranking Globally

- The global recognition for the Indira Gandhi International Airport (IGIA) in Delhi shines a light on its growing importance in the aviation sector. As per the Official Airline Guide (OAG)'s report, IGIA ranked as the 24th most internationally connected airport worldwide.
- The OAG, a leading global travel industry data platform, placed London's Heathrow Airport at the top position followed by Kuala Lumpur International Airport in Malaysia.

Noteworthy Achievements of IGI Airport

- The IGI Airport has also been recognized as India's first NetZero Carbon Emission Compliant airport, underscoring its commitment to sustainable operations.
- The airport holds the distinction of being the only one in India with four runways, enabling it to handle heavy air traffic.

- The airport took a step further in aviation excellence by inaugurating the country's first elevated cross taxiway in 2023.

Snapshot of India's Aviation Sector

- With the third-largest domestic aviation market in the world, India trails only behind the USA and China.
- Since 2014, India's airport network has seen an impressive transformation, more than doubling from 74 to 148 operational airports by April 2023.
- The Ministry of Civil Aviation (MoCA) is actively working towards carbon neutrality and achieving net zero carbon emissions at all airports in the country.

Insights into Airports Authority of India (AAI)

- The AAI is a statutory body established in 1995 under the Directorate General of Civil Aviation, Ministry of Civil Aviation. It was formed by merging the National Airports Authority and the International Airports Authority of India.
- AAI has multiple responsibilities, including airport development, airspace control, passenger and cargo terminal management, and providing communication and navigation aids.
- The AAI also manages air traffic over Indian airspace and adjoining oceanic areas, covering a whopping 2.8 million square nautical miles of air space.

This recognition for the Delhi airport underlines the strides made in modernising India's aviation sector and could potentially provide valuable learning points for other airports in the country as they seek to enhance operational efficiency and environmental responsibility.

Understanding the Ramon Magsaysay Award and its Recent Awardee

A Glimpse into the Prestigious Ramon Magsaysay Award

- The Ramon Magsaysay Award is widely referred to as Asia's premier prize and highest honour, commending exceptional spirit and transformative leadership.

- Initiated in 1957, the award commemorates the ideals of former Philippine President Ramon Magsaysay.
- The Ramon Magsaysay Award Foundation (RMAF) Board of Trustees selects the awardees, who are given a certificate and a medallion featuring an embossed image of Ramon Magsaysay.
- The award was traditionally given in six different categories from 1958 to 2008, which are Government Service, Public Service, Community Leadership, Journalism, Literature, and Creative Communication Arts, Peace and International Understanding, and Emergent Leadership. These diverse categories cover a wide spectrum of public service and leadership roles.
- The award ceremony is held in Manila, Philippines on August 31 - to mark the birth anniversary of the late President Ramon Magsaysay.

Recent Recognition: Hayao Miyazaki Wins the Ramon Magsaysay Award

- The latest to join the prestigious list of awardees is Japanese anime director, Hayao Miyazaki.
- Known across the globe for his distinct style and storytelling in animation, Miyazaki's recognition highlights the significant role of arts in touching lives and driving societal change.

Title : Highlights of the 76th Primetime Emmy Awards 2024: A New Era in the TV Industry

Unveiling New Stars and Breathtaking Performances

Introduction:

The 76th Primetime Emmy Awards, honouring outstanding achievements in the prime time television industry, took place on September 16, 2024, at the renowned Peacock Theater in Los Angeles. The ceremony showcased the second Emmy awards in a single year, setting new precedents while adding a flair of vibrancy and excitement to the television scene.

Why in the News:

The event witnessed a plethora of new and promising talents alongside seasoned artists

sweeping the awards. The innovative series "Shogun" became a significant highlight of the event with maximum nominations.

Highlights:

- The Outstanding Drama series award was bagged by "Shogun", while "Hacks" emerged victorious in the category of Outstanding Comedy Series.
- The award for the Outstanding Limited or Anthology series went to "Baby Reindeer".
- Hiroyuki Sanada and Anna Sawai from "Shogun" bagged Lead Actor and Lead Actress in Drama Series awards respectively.
- In the comedy genre, Jeremy Allen White from "The Bear" and Jean Smart from "Hacks" won acclaim for their performances, earning them Lead Actor and Lead Actress in Comedy Series titles respectively.

Major Winners gliding on Red Carpet

Detailed Highlights:

- The bear (23), featured prominently with its nominations closely following the Shogun (25).
- Other high-ranking programs in terms of overall nominations included "Only Murders in the Building" (21), "True Detective: Night Country" (19), "The Crown" (18), and "Saturday Night Live" (17).
- The coveted Outstanding Talk Show award was won by "The Daily Show".
- "Steven Zaillian" received praise and recognition for his excellent work in "Ripley," winning him the Outstanding Directing for Limited Series or Movie Award.
- The best writing for a drama series was awarded to Will Smith for "Slow Horses". Richard Gadd from "Baby Reindeer" bagged the best writing for Limited Series.

Notable Pointers towards GK:

- The Primetime Emmy Awards are an annual professional televisual award to acknowledge outstanding Television achievements. Instituted in 1949, the awards focus on primetime content produced and initially aired during the eligibility period in the United States.
- The award ceremonies are held at the Microsoft Theater in Los Angeles, California.
- The awards are presented in various sectors of the television industry, including entertainment programming, news, and documentary shows.
- The awards are managed by three sister organisations: the Academy of Television Arts & Sciences (ATAS), the National Academy of

Television Arts & Sciences (NATAS), and the International Academy of Television Arts and Sciences (IATAS).

"Double Triumph for Sri Lanka: ICC Players of the Month, August 2024"

Introduction and About

- The cricketing world has witnessed a significant milestone for Sri Lanka, as its players Dunith Wellalage and Harshitha Samarawickrama have been bestowed the accolade of International Cricket Council's (ICC) Players of the Month for August 2024. This rare double victory is symbolic of Sri Lanka's growing presence in international cricket.

Historical Parallels

- The occurrence of players from a single nation sweeping both the men's and women's categories in the same month is substantially rare in ICC history. The only precedent to this was in June 2024 when Jasprit Bumrah and Smriti Mandhana from India made a similar mark.

"Achievers from Sri Lanka: Dunith Wellalage and Harshitha Samarawickrama"

The Rising Star: Dunith Wellalage

- Dunith Wellalage trumped over formidable contenders such as Keshav Maharaj from South Africa and West Indies' Jayden Seales to clinch the win in the men's category.

- His noteworthy contribution in the home One Day International (ODI) series against India, including a stunning five-wicket haul (5/27) in the third match, set the stage for his victory.

- With this, Wellalage becomes the fifth Sri Lankan recipient of the men's monthly award, joining the ranks of Angelo Mathews, Prabath Jayasuriya, Wanindu Hasaranga and Kamindu Mendis

Shining Through: Harshitha Samarawickrama

- Akin to her male compatriot, Samarawickrama showed fierce competition to Irish players Orla Prendergast and Gaby Lewis, outshining them to receive the award.

- Her majestic performance in the Twenty20 International (T20I) series in Dublin and her historic century in the One Day International (ODI) series in Belfast turned the limelight towards her.

- Samarawickrama is only the second Sri Lankan woman to receive the ICC Women's Player of the Month award, following the footsteps of Captain Chamari Athapaththu, a thrice winner of the award.

Sri Lanka's Growing Footprint in ICC Awards

- This double accomplishment is emblematic of Sri Lanka's growing prominence in the international cricket scene.

- The progressing ascendancy of Sri Lankan cricket is underscored by the country's increasing representatives amongst the ICC monthly winners.

- This achievement is likely to bolster the spirit of the Sri Lankan cricket squad and serve as a motivation for aspiring cricketing talents within the country.

Conclusion:

The double victory at the ICC Players of the Month signals a concrete example of how the Sri Lankan cricket team's hard work and devoted training sessions have paid off, thus solidifying their importance in the field of international cricket.

India's Slow Progress Towards Road Safety:

Analysing the India Status Report on Road Safety 2024:

- IIT Delhi's report draws attention to India's sluggish advancement towards achieving international goals for reducing fatalities from road accidents.

- The report examined data from First Information Reports across six states and reviewed the compliance with Supreme Court regulations regarding road safety governance.

Key Findings of the Report:

- In 2021, road traffic injuries ranked 13th among leading causes of mortality in India, and 12th in contributing to health loss, measured via Disability-Adjusted Life Years (DALYs).

- In some states, road traffic injuries were among the top ten contributors to health loss.

Performance of States on Road Safety:

- Road safety varies significantly across India, with certain states recording higher death rates from road accidents than others.

- The report notes pedestrians, cyclists, and motorised two-wheeler riders as the most

vulnerable, with trucks responsible for the highest proportion of accidents.

- Basic safety measures such as traffic calming, road markings, and signage are inadequate in most states.
- Helmet usage is particularly low in rural areas, and trauma care facilities are insufficient.

India on the Global Road Safety Front:

- The report indicates that most Indian states may not meet the UN Decade of Action for Road Safety objective, to halve traffic-related deaths by 2030.
- The disparity between India and countries with exemplary road safety governance like Sweden has surged to 600% by 2021 from 40% in 1990.

Government Initiatives and Judicial Interventions:

- The Supreme Court set up the Justice K.S. Radhakrishnan panel on road safety, resulting in recommendations and directives including the ban on the sale of alcohol on highways, and enforcing helmet laws.
- Government initiatives include the Motor Vehicles Amendment Act, 2019, The Carriage by Road Act, 2007, The Carriage by Road Act, 2007, The Control of National Highways (Land and Traffic) Act, 2000, and National Highways Authority of India Act, 1998.

National Injury Prevention Strategy:

- Road traffic crashes are the leading cause of unintentional injury deaths in India, with over-speeding being the primary cause.
- Road safety education needs to be included in school curriculums, and focus should be placed on improving trauma care facilities and implementing national highway audits.

The Road Ahead:

- The report stresses the necessity of state-specific strategies to address India's diverse road safety issues.
- Increased focus on rural areas, effective implementation of traffic laws, regular audits, and improvements in trauma care facilities are needed to improve the road safety scenario in India.

India Clinches Victory at the 5th Asian Champions Trophy

Indian Men's Hockey Team Secures a Commendable Win

- Introduction and Overview:

India recently made a splendid win at the 5th Asian Champions Trophy 2024 held in China, defeating the host by 1-0 in the final round. This win goes on to reaffirm India as the leading titleholder in the tournament's history, with a total of 5 victories, while Pakistan trails behind with 3 accolades, including one shared with India.

- Key Players and Performance:

Indian player Harmanpreet Singh grabbed attention as the second-top goal scorer in the tournament, making a total of 7 goals. However, Korea's Jihun Yang led the charts with 8 goals to his name.

- Unfolding the History of Asian Men's Hockey Champions Trophy:

This event is organised annually by the Asian Hockey Federation which was introduced in 2011. The maiden tournament saw participation from country members like India, Pakistan, Malaysia, Japan, South Korea, and China. The competition has always been high, with India and Pakistan alternating in snagging the trophy in the early stages. South Korea finally broke the pattern by winning the title in 2021.

- Delving Deeper: The Asian Hockey Federation:

As the governing body for hockey in Asia, the Asian Hockey Federation commands over 33 member associations and maintains its affiliation to the International Hockey Federation (FIH).

- Tracing Back India's Performance:

India rose to prominence right from the start as it bagged the trophy in the first edition in 2011, beating Pakistan in a thrilling penalty shoot-out. India and Pakistan swapped subsequent championships until South Korea stepped in with a win in 2021.

Reflecting on India's Dominance in the Tournament:

- Understanding the Importance:

India's win in the 5th Asian Champions Trophy strengthens its position in Asian Hockey. It stands as a testament to the training and skill that the team possesses, indicative of their place in global hockey. This enhances the prospects of Indian hockey in international platforms, projecting a strong image in the world of sports. This win is not just a proud moment for Indian sports but also an

important stepping stone towards nurturing future champions.

India Shines in Chess Olympiad: Grabs Gold in Both Men's and Women's Category

1. India's Remarkable Victory:

- The Indian men's and women's chess teams have won gold medals at the 45th Chess Olympiad, held recently in Budapest.
- The Indian men's team defeated the Slovenian team with a score of 3.5-0.5 in the 11th and final round.
- The women's team triumphed over Azerbaijan, securing victory with a score of 3.5-0.5.
- Previously, only China and the erstwhile Soviet Union had the honour of winning both men's and women's gold medals in the same edition of the Chess Olympiad.

2. Past Achievements:

- The Indian men's team had previously won two bronze medals in the 2014 and 2022 editions of the tournament.
- The women's team earned a bronze medal in the 2022 edition, which was held in Chennai.

3. The Chess Olympiad Overview:

- It is a biennial event where teams representing different nations compete.
- The International Chess Federation (FIDE) organises the tournament and selects the host nation.
- The inaugural Olympiad, although unofficial, occurred in 1924.

4. The Role of FIDE:

- FIDE is the governing body regulating all international chess competitions.
- It is constituted as a non-governmental institution organising the World Chess Championship.
- FIDE attained recognition from the International Olympic Committee as a Global Sporting Organization in 1999.
- Although currently headquartered in Lausanne, Switzerland, its foundation in 1924 took place in Paris under the motto "Gens Una Sumus," Latin for "We are one Family".
- Regarded as one of the first International Sports Federation, it stood alongside governing bodies of

sports like Football, Cricket, Swimming, and Auto Racing. Presently, it is among the largest, comprising 199 affiliate member countries represented by National Chess Federations.

Importance of Chess:

- Apart from being a globally celebrated sport, chess is also known to enhance cognitive skills, strategizing abilities, and memory.
- It encourages creative thinking, improves concentration, and develops problem-solving skills.
- The sport has gained global recognition and is played in almost all countries, making events like the Chess Olympiad a global spectacle.

Conclusion:

- Winning gold in both categories of the Chess Olympiad is a monumental achievement for India, placing it alongside past winners like China and the erstwhile Soviet Union.
- This accomplishment speaks volumes about the talent and potential in the Indian chess fraternity, elevating India's standing in the global chess arena.

National Florence Nightingale Awards 2024: Honouring Excellence in Nursing

The National Florence Nightingale Awards 2024: An Overview

- The National Florence Nightingale Awards 2024 were recently presented by the President of India, recognizing the exemplary services of 15 nursing professionals in healthcare and public service.
- Instituted in 1973 by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, the awards are designed to pay tribute to exceptional nursing personnel in diverse settings.
- Registered Auxiliary Nurses & Midwife, Registered Nurses and Midwives, and Registered Lady Visitors were among those awarded.

Awards Recognition and Significance

- The awards aim to honour and uplift the significant contributions of the nursing profession towards the healthcare sector, setting an encouraging precedent for others in the field.
- Each award carries a Certificate of Merit, a cash reward of Rs. 100,000, and a medal, symbolising

recognition and gratitude for commendable services in nurturing health and welfare.

- These awards are given not just to those employed in Central and State/UTs, but also in voluntary organisations.

National Nursing Initiatives: Fostering Better Healthcare

- The Indian government has initiated several steps to improve nursing education and healthcare services.

- 157 nursing colleges have been established across the country, providing robust educational infrastructure for training healthcare professionals.

- The National Nursing and Midwifery Commission (NNMC) was constituted under the National Nursing and Midwifery Commission Act, 2023, aiming to reinforce the educational and service paradigms in nursing.

The National Florence Nightingale Awards: A Legacy

- These awards, named after the legendary nurse Florence Nightingale, also known as the 'Lady with the Lamp', epitomise the essence of dedication and service in the nursing profession.

- Florence Nightingale's contribution during the Crimean War set the foundations of professional nursing, with the establishment of the first scientifically based nursing school in 1860.

- Today, her legacy stands as a beacon encouraging nursing personnel to provide selfless service and outstanding care in the healthcare sphere.

The National Florence Nightingale Awards extend beyond mere recognition, contributing to the social standing of nurses, encouraging young professionals to take up the noble profession, and ensuring a higher standard of healthcare services across India.

Indian Corporations Make Mark in TIME Magazine's 'World's Best Companies 2024'

Recognition of Indian Companies

- TIME magazine's 'World's Best Companies 2024' list has been curated to honour the most influential companies operating on the global stage.

- This esteemed collection includes 1000 companies from various nations, showcasing the interconnection and diversity of the modern corporate sphere.

- The 2024 list features a substantial number of Indian enterprises – a total of 22. This underlines the advancing influence that Indian businesses have in the global market and their expanding economic power.

Details of the Top 10 Companies

- The list is crowned by Apple from the United States, boasting the highest score of 97.75. This multinational technology company deals primarily with IT, Electronics, Hardware & Equipment.

- Accenture, headquartered in Ireland, takes the second rank with a close score of 97.70. It deals mostly with Professional Services.

- Microsoft from the United States landed the third position with a score of 97.65. It, like Apple, deals with IT, Electronics, Hardware & Equipment.

- The fourth spot is secured by BMW Group from Germany with a score of 97.41. This company is a major player in the Automotive Industry & Suppliers.

- The fifth position is occupied by Amazon from the United States with a score of 96.47. It has operations in the Technology, Media & Services domain.

- Electricite de France, based in France, ranks sixth with a score of 96.22. This company falls within the Utilities sector.

- American Express from the United States with a score of 96.08 clinches the seventh spot in the Banking & Financial Services arena.

- Meta Platforms, also from the United States, secures the eighth place with a score of 96.04. It operates in the Technology, Media & Services sector.

- The ninth place goes to Siemens from Germany with a score of 95.96. This company functions as a Conglomerate.

- The top ten list concludes with JPMorgan Chase from the United States securing the tenth spot with a score of 95.9.

Importance of the List

- The TIME's World's Best Companies list is an essential pointer of the best performing businesses from various industries and regions.

- The ranking can serve as a reference point for investors, analysts and corporate entities.

- The inclusion of a significant number of Indian companies on the list points to the growing influence and recognition of Indian corporations on the global stage.
- The list also underscores the key sectors driving the global economy, which includes IT & Electronics, Professional Services, Automotive, Technology, Media & Services, Utilities, Banking & Financial Services, and conglomerates.

Key Takeaways

- Recognition of Indian companies by a prestigious platform like TIME magazine highlights the significant progress made by Indian corporations in the global market.
- The notable presence of United States-based companies indicates the country's dominant role in the global corporate landscape.
- Diverse sectors like Technology, Banking & Financial Services, Media, Utilities, and Conglomerates have prominent representation in the top ten.
- Such rankings provide valuable insights about the current global economic trends and future directions.

IIFA Awards 2024: Unveiling the Winners

Overview of the IIFA Awards 2024

- The International Indian Film Academy (IIFA) Awards is an annual event celebrated to honour the artistic and technical abilities of professionals in Bollywood.
- The 2024 edition of the IIFA Awards had its share of remarkable talents bagging the awards for their exceptional work in the industry.

IIFA 2024 Major Awards: Bollywood

- Best Film: "Animal" emerged as the winner, directed by Sandeep Reddy Vanga who is known for his narrative style.
- Shah Rukh Khan was bestowed with the Best Actor award for "Jawan", further strengthening his position in Bollywood.
- Rani Mukerji, for her outstanding performance in "Mrs Chatterjee vs Norway", was awarded as the Best Actress.
- The Best Director award went to Vidhu Vinod Chopra for "12th Fail", marking another milestone in his career.

- In the supporting roles, experienced actors Anil Kapoor ("Animal") and Shabana Azmi ("Rocky Aur Rani Kii Prem Kahaani") were recognized as the best.

- Bobby Deol snatched the award for the Best Actor in a Negative Role with his role in "Animal".

Screenplay and Music Awards

- "Rocky Aur Rani Kii Prem Kahaani" and "12th Fail" were recognized for their stories, both original and adapted.
- For the Best Music category, "Animal" was again in the spotlight.
- The Best Lyrics went to Siddharth-Garima for the song "Satranga" from "Animal".
- Bhupinder Babbal (Best Singer Male) and Shilpa Rao (Best Singer Female) were awarded for their soulful songs "Arjan Valley" and "Chaleya".

Special Recognition Awards

- Jayantilal Gada and Hema Malini, veterans in the cinema, were bestowed with an award acknowledging their Outstanding Contribution to Indian Cinema.
- Karan Johar, well-known director and producer, received recognition for his 25-year journey in the film industry.

Glimpse of South: IIFA Utsavam 2024 Winners

- In the Tamil Cinema, "Jailer" was announced as the Best Picture.
- Acclaimed actor Vikram and actress Aishwarya Rai were named the Best Actor and Best Actress for their roles in "Ponniyin Selvan: II".
- Mani Ratnam bagged the Best Director award for the same movie.
- Legendary composer AR Rahman added another honour to his list with the Best Music Direction award, making "Ponniyin Selvan: II" the star of the night.
- Alongside RJ Suryah stood victorious in the negative role category from "Mark Antony", Jayaram and Sahasra Shree were appreciated for their supporting roles in "Ponniyin Selvan: II" and "Chithha" respectively.

The IIFA Awards 2024 spotlighted numerous talents and marked another memorable chapter in the history of Indian cinema.

India achieves Tier-1 Status in Global Cybersecurity Index (GCI) 2024

Introduction & Overview of Global Cybersecurity Index (GCI)

- Recently, India has reached a significant milestone in cybersecurity by securing Tier 1 status in the 5th edition of GCI, which was published by ITU.
- Established in 2015 by the ITU, the GCI measures the global commitment to cybersecurity and its comprehensive development.
- The report aims at improving the quality of the survey, fostering international cooperation, sharing knowledge and raising cybersecurity awareness.
- The GCI completes its assessment based on five key principles or pillars - Legal Measures, Technical Measures, Organisational Measures, Capacity Development, and Cooperation.
- It finally aggregates these assessments into an overall score for each country. Based on the scores, countries are classified into five tiers, with Tier 1 representing the highest level.

Findings & Highlights of Global Cybersecurity Index (GCI) 2024

- GCI 2024 examined 194 countries, decoding threats such as ransomware attacks, privacy violations, system outages, and breaches in critical industries.
- Globally, since 2021, countries have started prioritising cybersecurity more, thereby raising the global average score to 65.7/100.
- The 2024 edition placed 46 countries in Tier 1, showcasing an increase from 30 in the previous edition.
- It was observed that most countries (105) fall into Tiers 3 and 4. This reflects progress in enlarging digital services, but it also points out the need for stronger cybersecurity measures in their digital transformation strategies.

India's Performance in GCI 2024

- India made a remarkable improvement in its scale by securing a place in Tier 1 along with countries like the US, Japan, and Australia.
- Improving from a score of 97.5 in the 2020 edition, India scored 98.49/100 in 2024. This is largely due to its robust legal framework such as the

Information Technology Act (2000) and the recently implemented Digital Personal Data Protection Act (2023).

Key Challenges and Recommendations in the report:

- Key challenges include increasing ransomware attacks, cyber breaches in critical industries, robust system outages, and a persistent gap in cybersecurity capacity.
- The report also highlighted issues around staffing, skill, and funding limitations for cybersecurity and the difficulty in implementing cybersecurity agreements effectively.
- Recommendations suggested in the report include regularly updating the national cybersecurity strategy, investing in capacity building for cybersecurity professionals and vulnerable populations, and strengthening cooperation at home and internationally on information sharing, training, and cybersecurity initiatives.

Defence and Military exercises

"New Leap in Indigenous Defense Manufacturing: Procurement of Aero-Engines for Su-30 MKI Aircraft"

"Understanding the Purchase"

- The Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS) has recently approved the acquisition of 240 aero-engines for Su-30 MKI aircraft.
- These engines belong to the AL-31FP category, which are renowned for their high-power and improved operation capabilities.
- This procurement stands significant for Indian Air Force (IAF) as it assists in continual functioning of its Sukhoi-30 fleet, thus, boosting India's security readiness.

Adopting 'Buy (Indian)' Approach for Procurement"

- This procurement of aero-engines will be done under the 'Buy (Indian)' category from Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL).
- The 'Buy (Indian)' category implies purchase of products from Indian vendors, which are either designed, developed, and manufactured indigenously with at least 50% Indigenous Content (IC) of total contract value or have at least 60% IC of total contract value, notwithstanding indigenous design or development.
- In the case of this purchase, the engines will boast an indigenous content of over 54 %.

"Significance of Su-30 MKI & the Role of CCS"

- Su-30MKI stands as one of the most essential fleets of the Indian Air Force (IAF) with a strength of 259 aircrafts currently.
- This multirole combat fighter aircraft was developed under a joint venture of the Sukhoi Design Bureau (a Russian aerospace company) and HAL, specifically for the Indian Air Force (IAF).
- The decision regarding this procurement was made by the Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS), composed of the Prime Minister of India and other ministerial members from domains such as Finance, Defence, Home Affairs and External Affairs.
- This committee is credited for making crucial decisions related to significant appointments, national security issues, and defence expenditure in India.

"Implications and Looking Ahead"

- This procurement stands as a testament to India's growing emphasis on indigenous defence manufacturing.
- It not only enhances the military readiness but also signifies the strength of India's aerospace industry.
- The decision taken by CCS redirects the focus on enhancing indigenous defence capabilities and self-reliance in India.

INS Tabar Engages in the Maritime Partnership Exercise with Spanish Navy

Introduction and About the Maritime Partnership Exercise

- India's own Naval Ship, namely INS Tabar, recently carried out a Maritime Partnership Exercise (MPX) with Atalaya, a ship from the Spanish Navy. The exercise took place in the Mediterranean Sea.
- The exercise has been designed to bolster bilateral naval relations between India and Spain and further fortify the commitment to enhanced maritime cooperation between the two nations.

Key Aspects of the Maritime Partnership Exercise

- The joint exercise featured a series of advanced navy exercises such as Station Keeping, Replenishment at Sea Approaches (RASAPs), Flying Exercise (FYEX), Steam Past, and PHOTOEX series.
- These exercises are designed to validate and enhance reciprocity and interoperability between the two navies. It also aids in improving their efficiency in maritime operations.

About INS Tabar: India's Stealth Frigate

- Commissioned in April 2004, INS Tabar was built in Russia and represents the third Talwar-class frigate for the Indian navy.
- It is built to conduct a variety of operations such as air, surface, and sub-surface missions.
- The adaptive ship can function independently or as an integral part of a larger naval task force, which is crucial to extensive naval operations.
- The stealthy frigate serves in the Indian navy's Western fleet, primarily stationed in Mumbai.

Technical Panorama of INS Tabar

- INS Tabar is equipped with a plethora of weapons and advanced sensors that equip it for diverse maritime operations.
- The stealth ship is supplied with supersonic BrahMos anti-ship cruise missiles, along with Barak-1 missiles.

- This makes it the first Talwar-class frigate to carry the supersonic BrahMos missiles, further increasing its offensive capability.

Overall Significance

- The INS Tabar's participation in the Maritime Partnership Exercise with Spain's naval forces considerably strengthens the relations and cooperation between the two military forces.
- Exercises like these are of critical importance to enhance the operational readiness and collaborative efficiency of the Indian Navy on the international stage.
- The strategic location of the exercise in the Mediterranean Sea also highlights the effort to bolster maritime security in the region, contributing towards global peace and stability.
- Finally, the technological capabilities of INS Tabar, particularly its ability to carry BrahMos missiles, offer an edge to India's maritime force and underscore India's commitment to uphold maritime security.

The Launch and Validation of Agni-4 Missile

Introduction to Agni-4

- Agni-4 is the fourth missile in the Agni series of medium to intercontinental-range ballistic missiles developed by the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO).
- The missile is named after the Sanskrit term 'Agni' which means 'fire' and is regarded as one of the five elements in nature.
- This missile is an intermediate-range ballistic and surface-to-surface missile designed for launch from sea or ground to strike targets either on the ground or sea.

Technical Specifications of Agni-4

- The Agni-4 missile has a remarkable range of 4,000 kilometres and a length measuring 20 metres.
- It can carry a weighty payload of 1,000 kg.
- The launch of Agni-4 took place successfully from the Integrated Test Range in Chandipur, Odisha.

Strategic Forces Command (SFC)

- The SFC, under whose aegis the Agni-4 launch was conducted, is a part of India's Nuclear Command Authority (NCA).

- SFC is accountable for the administration and management of India's tactical and strategic nuclear weapons stockpile.

- The NCA consists of a Political Council headed by the Prime Minister, who has the sole authority to authorise the use of nuclear weapons, and an Executive Council chaired by the National Security Advisor, provides input for decision-making and enforces directives given by the Political Council.

Introduction to Agni-5 and Agni Family

- Agni-5, an Intercontinental Ballistic Missile (ICBM), is also a product of DRDO. It is capable of carrying nuclear warheads with a target range surpassing 5,000 km.
- The successful nighttime capabilities were also tested for Agni-5 in December 2022.
- The Agni family gradually increases in the range starting from Agni I (short-range) to Agni IV (intermediate-range), and lastly, to Agni Prime with an impressive range of 2,000 km.
- The future upgrade of Agni missile, Agni-6, is anticipated to be a full-fledged ICBM, with a commanding range extending over 7,000 km.

This significant development emphasises India's defensive capabilities and also showcases the successful indigenous missile technologies developed by the DRDO enhancing the country's self-reliance in critical defence technologies.

Exercise Varuna: Strengthening Naval Collaboration between India and France

Exercise Varuna: An Overview

- Exercise Varuna is a high-profile bilateral naval exercise between India and France. The exercise was recently conducted for the 22nd time in the Mediterranean Sea.
- INS Tabar, a frontline stealth frigate, a shipborne Helicopter, and LRMR Aircraft P8I represented the Indian side. From the French side, FS Provence, Submarine Suffren, Aircraft F20, Atlantique2, fighters MB339, and NH90 Dauphin helicopters participated.
- This annual exercise takes place alternatively in the Indian Ocean or the Mediterranean Sea.

Goals and Operations Conducted during Exercise Varuna

- The aim of Exercise Varuna is to bolster the naval collaboration between the Indian and French armed forces. This exercise facilitates both navies in understanding and learning from each other's operational experiences.
- Various naval operations, including tactical manoeuvres, anti-submarine warfare exercises, flight exercises, air defence exercises, conducted during this edition.
- Live weapon firings, PHOTO-EX (Photographic Exercise), and steam past were other significant aspects of the exercise.

India-France Military Collaboration: Other Joint Exercises

- Apart from Varuna, India and France conduct other joint military exercises, including Desert Knight-21 and Garuda; these are air exercises, and Shakti which is an army exercise.

Strengthening Global Ties: Other Joint Exercises Involving India

- India conducts joint exercises with numerous countries as a part of its defence diplomacy.
- These include Austra Hind with Australia, Sampriti with Bangladesh, Hand in Hand with China, Garuda Shakti with Indonesia, Khanjar with Kyrgyzstan, Ekuverin with the Maldives, Nomadic Elephant with Mongolia, and Indra with Russia among others.
- India also conducts joint exercises with the USA – Yudhabhaya and Vajra Prahar to strengthen their bilateral defence cooperation.

Geopolitical, Historical and Strategic Importance of Exercise Varuna

- Exercise Varuna strengthens the strategic partnership between India and France that dates back to 1998. This partnership plays a pivotal role in the preservation of maritime security in the Indo-Pacific and the Mediterranean Sea.
- Acknowledging France's strategic presence in the Indian Ocean, this exercise has significance in maintaining a balance in the geopolitics of the region.
- The exercise is crucial for India's national security and maritime interests, offering a platform for sharing best practices and refining operational strategies.

Exercise Eastern Bridge: Interweaving India-Oman Air Force Partnership

Exercise Eastern Bridge - An Overview

- The 7th edition of the Exercise Eastern Bridge, an air force event between the Indian Air Force (IAF) and Royal Oman Air Force is slated, broadening India's military reach in West Asia.
- The bilateral exercise will be held from 11th to 22nd September 2024 at Masirah, Oman, giving a platform to both the air forces to exchange best practices and enhance operational capabilities.
- The engagements will involve intricate aerial manoeuvring and air-to-air and air-to-ground operations, thus requiring commendable logistic coordination.

Historical Significance

- This joint air force exercise started with its first edition in 2009, held at Thumrait, Oman, marking an important milestone in the relationship between the two air forces.
- The initiative serves as a remarkable echo of the shared historical and cultural links between the two countries.

India's Other Military Engagements with Oman

- Apart from Exercise Eastern Bridge, India conducts other joint exercises with Oman, reflecting the multifaceted military cooperation.
- Naseem Al-Bahr is a joint naval exercise between the Indian Navy and Royal Navy of Oman, aimed at improving interoperability and mutual understanding.
- AL Najah is another notable joint exercise between the Indian Army and the Royal Army of Oman, aiming to enhance preparedness and operational skills.

Significance of Oman and India-Oman Relations

- Situated near the entrance to the Strait of Hormuz and overlooking the Arabian Sea, Oman holds a strategic position, making it a crucial Indian partner in West Asia and the Indian Ocean region.
- India and Oman maintain a cordial bilateral relationship, predominantly ascribed to their historical maritime trade connectivity.

- The Sultanate of Oman acts as India's strategic partner in the Gulf and a significant interlocutor at the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), Arab League and Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) forums.
- The Gandhi Peace Prize 2019 was posthumously conferred on Late HM Sultan Qaboos, acknowledging his substantial role in bolstering India-Oman ties and promoting peace in the Gulf region.

Overall, the Exercise Eastern Bridge along with India's other joint military exercises with Oman signifies the deep-rooted and ever-growing defence and strategic partnership between the two countries.

"First Joint Commander's Conference of Indian Armed Forces: A Move towards Synergised Defense"

I. Introduction and About

- On September 4-5, 2024, the Indian Armed Forces held their first-ever Joint Commander's Conference.
- The forum took place in Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh and was a landmark event charting the course of enhanced coordination and integration within the Indian military forces.
- Defence Minister Rajnath Singh presided over this two-day conference, convening the top echelons of the military to engage in critical discussions and strategize the future of India's defence capabilities.

II. Attendees and Key Discussions

- Distinguished attendees of the conference included General Anil Chauhan, Chief of Defence Staff, General Upendra Dwivedi, Chief of the Army Staff, Admiral Dinesh Kumar Tripathi, Chief of the Naval Staff, Air Chief Marshal Vivek Ram Chaudhari, Chief of the Air Staff, and Giridhar Aramane, Defence Secretary.
- These influential military dignitaries deliberated on the most pressing concerns facing the armed forces today and engaged in comprehensive strategizing for India's defence future.

III. Event Theme and Objective

- The conference was conducted under the rubric, "Sashakt aur Surakshit Bharat: Transforming Armed Forces" which translates to "Strong and Secure India: Transforming Armed Forces".
- The theme is indicative of the central government's pledge to buttress and modernise India's defence capabilities.

IV. Why in News & Current Importance

- The focal point of this event is its pioneering nature as the first congregation of all Armed Forces' leaders under one roof in India, marking a new phase in the coordination and integration of military forces.

V. General Knowledge Insights

- The establishment of the Chief of Defence Staff position in December 2019 was aimed at synergizing the operations of the three military branches - the Army, Navy, and Air Force. General Anil Chauhan serves as the present Chief of Defence Staff.
- Strengthening India's defence capabilities is a significant aspect of the government's objective for a self-reliant, or 'Atmanirbhar', India.
- Lucknow, where the event took place, is the capital city of Uttar Pradesh, the most populous state in India, and has been historically critical for its strategic location.

Strengthening India-Maldives Defence Ties: A New Chapter in Bilateral Relations

An Overview of Recent Developments

- The 5th India-Maldives Defence Cooperation Dialogue was held in New Delhi involving high-level officials.
- The discussion centred around bilateral military exercises, marking a significant momentum in Indo-Maldives relations that had witnessed strained ties in recent years.
- The Maldives' President previously pursued an "India Out" campaign leading to the withdrawal of Indian military personnel, however, the situation has recently improved marking a revival of the alliance.

Significance of India for Maldives

- India plays a pivotal role in security dynamics of the Indian Ocean Region (IOR) and is seen as a Net Security Provider.
- India has been a first respondent during crisis situations in Maldives including Operation Neer in 2014 (water crisis) and Water Maitri during the COVID-19 Pandemic.
- Tourism being a mainstay of the Maldives economy, it seeks to bring India back among the top three tourist markets. A recent decline in the number of tourists from India was a matter of concern for the island nation.

Why is Maldives Important for India?

- Maldives forms a crucial part of India's Neighbourhood First Policy (NFP) and Vision SAGAR that reflects India's commitment to the Global South.
- The strategic geographical location of Maldives between the Indian Ocean chokepoints (Gulf of Aden, Strait of Hormuz, and Strait of Malacca) offers India important maritime advantages.
- The Maldives serves as the first line of defence counteracting maritime threats such as terrorism and piracy.
- India sees the strengthening of relations with Maldives as a measure to reduce China's influence in the IOR.

India's Approach to Bolster Relations with Maldives

- India is building a new Coast Guard base at the Uthuru Thilafalhu (UTF) atoll increasing its regional presence.
- India also provides grants to Maldives for High Impact Community Development Projects (HICDPs) to aid in developmental growth.
- The Greater Male Connectivity Project, being developed by India, is one of the largest infrastructure projects in Maldives.
- To enhance the bilateral connection, both countries have an 'open skies' arrangement and visa-free entry for tourism, medical, and business purposes.

Conclusion: Though recent history witnessed some strains, the 5th India-Maldives Defence Cooperation Dialogue has set forth a new momentum in the bilateral relations of the two countries. Both nations are now keen on exploring their mutual interests and foster stronger ties in the fields of defence, tourism, and regional cooperation.

Exercise YUDH ABHYAS 2024: A Step Forward in India-US Joint Military Operations

I. Overview: Exercise YUDH ABHYAS 2024

- The annual India-US Joint Military Exercise, YUDH ABHYAS-2024, began recently at the Mahajan Field Firing Ranges in Rajasthan.
- This marks the 20th edition of the Exercise YUDH ABHYAS, a joint venture that has been held yearly since 2004.
- The event alternates its location between India and the USA, strengthening the bond and understanding between the two countries' military forces.

II. Focus of the Year: Counter-Terrorism Operations

- The exercise for this year zooms in on counter-terrorism operations in a semi-desert environment.
- The aim is to improve joint military capability and cooperation under the guidelines of Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter.

III. Chapter VII and the UN Charter Goals

- Chapter VII of the UN Charter provides a framework for the Security Council to enforce actions in response to threats to peace.
- It enables the Council to undertake non-military and military measures to uphold or restore international peace and security.
- The participation of India and the USA in conducting operations under this chapter highlights their commitment to global security.

IV. India-USA Collaboration: History and Highlights

- Major military exercises between India and the USA include VAJRA PRAHAR (Army Exercise), SALVEX (Indian Navy Exercise), and Cope India (Air Force Exercise).
- The 'Malabar Exercise' is another significant demonstration of cooperation, involving a quadrilateral naval display of power by India, USA, Japan, and Australia.

V. Importance of Exercise YUDH ABHYAS

- This exercise allows for the exchange of knowledge and military tactics between the Indian

and US armies, both of whom have extensive experience in counter-terrorism operations.

- The event reinforces the strategic ties and defence relations between the two nations, thereby fostering diplomatic relations and international military collaboration.
- Exercises like YUDH ABHYAS bolster security and peacekeeping measures globally, demonstrating the commitment of participating nations towards a secure and peaceful world.

In conclusion, Exercise YUDH ABHYAS 2024 is a significant event in the annals of India-USA military cooperation. By focusing on counter-terrorism operations, the exercise addresses one of the key threats to global peace and security in today's world. It also highlights the multifaceted military cooperation between the two countries and their dedication to a secure international order.

"Milestone in Indian Naval Dominance: Launch of the Anti-Submarine Warfare Shallow Water Craft"

Introduction and Context:

The Indian Navy's naval capabilities have recently been boosted with the launch of the fourth and fifth Anti-Submarine Warfare (ASW) Shallow Water Crafts (SWC), named Malpe and Mulki respectively. These ships were constructed by M/s Cochin Shipyard Ltd. This comes after the previous unveiling of INS Mahe, INS Malvan, and INS Mangrol, the first three ships of the ASW SWC project, in 2023. The ASW SWC ships have been christened after strategically significant ports along India's coastline.

News Significance:

- A significant boost to India's naval capabilities: The recently launched fourth and fifth Anti-Submarine Warfare Shallow Water Crafts reinforce India's strategic naval powers.
- Indigenous development: The ASW SWC ships showcase the capability of India's indigenous ship manufacturing sector, which has played a crucial role in constructing these state-of-the-art crafts.
- Maritime operations: The ASW SWC ships are envisaged to undertake complex maritime operations, notably anti-submarine operations in coastal waters.

Enhanced Features of the ASW SWC Ships:

- State-of-the-art underwater sensors: The ships are equipped with indigenously developed, cutting-edge underwater sensors to detect and neutralise enemy submarines.
- Varied Operations: These ships are designed to perform low-intensity maritime operations, and mine-laying operations, apart from anti-submarine operations.
- Optimal Speed and Endurance: These ships can achieve a maximum speed of 25 knots and have an endurance of up to 1800 nautical miles, making them resilient and versatile.

GK Points linked with Current Affairs:

- History: This ASW SWC project that resulted in the launch of these ships extends back to the Indian Navy's ambitious plans to boost its maritime capabilities.
- Geography: The ships are named after strategically important ports along India's coastline; Malpe and Mulki situated in Karnataka, highlighting India's widespread naval strategic points.
- Importance: The ASW SWC ships will be a crucial part of the country's coastal defence strategy, especially in deterring underwater threats, and become a major player in enhancing India's security scenario.

Conclusion:

The launch of the Anti-Submarine Warfare Shallow Water Crafts, Malpe and Mulki, is a landmark development in Indian naval history. These vessels, equipped with top-notch indigenous technology, will significantly strengthen India's defence capacity, particularly in anti-submarine operations. This showcases India's growing naval prowess and commitment to securing its maritime borders.

AL NAJAH - The Indo-Oman Joint Military Exercise Convergence

Insight into the India-Oman Joint Military Exercise 'AL NAJAH'

- The Indian armed forces marked its departure for the fifth edition of the Indo-Oman Joint Military Exercise, 'AL NAJAH.'

- It acts as a symbol of the strategic partnership and cooperation between the two nations.
- The exercise is set to run from 13th to 26th September 2024, at Rabkoot Training Area, located at Salalah in Oman.

Tracing the History of AL NAJAH

- Since 2015, AL NAJAH has been a biennial event organised alternately in India and Oman.
- The last edition took place in Rajasthan, India.
- Both the Indian Army and the Royal Army of Oman actively participate in the exercise.

Digging into the Specifics of AL NAJAH

- Each exercise brings in about 60 personnel from each side, specifically from the Indian Army's Mechanised Infantry Regiment Battalion and the Frontier Force of the Royal Army of Oman.
- The extensive program is designed to focus on operations applicable to Desert environments.
- Through joint planning, the troops manage a range of tactical drills. These consist of cordon and search operations, fighting in a built-up region, implementing mobile vehicle check posts and room interventions as well as handling counter-drone tactics, among others.

Understanding the Importance of AL NAJAH

- AL NAJAH exercise acts as a bridging tool, solidifying the defence relationship between India and Oman.
- It acts as a platform for exchange of best practices and experiences, thereby learning from each other's competencies and refining operational methodologies.
- This exercise further trains and prepares the forces from both nations to handle threats and challenges together, thus ensuring regional peace and stability.

GK Points:

- Oman, officially known as the Sultanate of Oman, is located in Western Asia.
- Muscat is its capital and the largest city.
- The currency of Oman is Rial.
- The Sultan is the head of state and the prime minister of Oman.
- The command of the armed forces also lies with the Sultan.

- Oman shares its land boundaries with UAE, Saudi Arabia, and Yemen. It is surrounded by Arabian Sea and Gulf of Oman from the other ends.
- Importantly, Oman controls the Musandam peninsula, which overlooks the strategic Strait of Hormuz, thus making it crucial in the sector of regional security and trade.

DRDO's Exceptional Leap: Successful Preliminary Trials of Light Tank 'Zorawar'

I. Introduction and Overview

- The Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) has triumphantly executed the preliminary automotive trials for its Indian Light Tank, christened 'Zorawar'.
- The trials took place on September 13, 2024, with Zorawar displaying superior performance under rigorous conditions in desert terrain.
- The feats achieved during these trials paint a promising picture of India's combat readiness and self-reliance in defence mechanisms.

II. Development and Indigenous Collaboration

- The Indian Light Tank, Zorawar, was developed by DRDO's Combat Vehicles Research & Development Establishment (CVRDE) in partnership with India's leading technology conglomerate, Larsen & Toubro Ltd.
- Various sectors of Indian industries, including Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs), have made significant contributions to the project, which underscores India's steadily improving domestic defence manufacturing capabilities.

III. Key Achievements and Acknowledgments

- The successful trials of Zorawar have been acknowledged and commended by Raksha Mantri Shri Rajnath Singh.
- Shri Singh appreciated DRDO, Indian Army, and industry partners for their collective effort, referring to these trials as a crucial move towards India's objective of self-reliance in the defence systems.
- Secretary of Defence R&D and DRDO Chairman, Dr. Samir V Kamat, also extended his

congratulations to the team for their splendid success.

IV. Strategic Importance

- The Indian Army has plans to deploy over 350 light tanks like Zorawar, with an emphasis on mountainous regions along the China border.
- The inclusion of these domestically-produced tanks will solidify India's battle prowess in strategically critical areas, supporting the country's dedication to self-reliance and indigenization in defence.

V. General Knowledge Tidbits

- DRDO, responsible for the R&D of military technology, was created in 1958 and operates under the Ministry of Defence.
- The 'Zorawar' is named after General Zorawar Singh of Dogra, known for his role in the conquest of Ladakh.
- As combat situations in high-altitudes necessitate specific features in battle tanks, the development of 'Zorawar' is significant. It is designed to operate at high altitudes and in rough weather conditions, suitable for the challenging geographical features of the India-China border.

The light tank Zorawar's preliminary trials mark yet another milestone for DRDO, signifying a powerful step for India's self-sufficiency in defence technology. This initiative also sends a vital message about the strategic priorities of India's defence policies, especially with respect to the nation's border security.

Successful Flight Test of VL-SRSAM: A New Milestone for Indian Navy and DRDO

Overview of VL-SRSAM

- The Vertical Launch Short Range Surface to Air Missile (VL-SRSAM) is an advanced all-weather weapon system developed for the Indian Navy.
- The primary aim of VL-SRSAM is to neutralise various aerial threats in close ranges, particularly sea-skimming targets.

- Defence Research & Development Organisation (DRDO) is the principal architect behind the creation of this missile.

Recent Development

- A successful flight test of VL-SRSAM was recently conducted by DRDO in collaboration with the Indian Navy.
- The test was carried out from the Integrated Test Range (ITR) located in Chandipur, off the coast of Odisha.
- The missile was launched from a land-based vertical launcher, highlighting its deployment flexibility.

Unique Features of VL-SRSAM

- One notable feature of VL-SRSAM is its indigenous Radio Frequency (RF) seeker.
- With this feature, VL-SRSAM is enhanced with superior accuracy and better target engagement capabilities.
- The RF seeker not only strengthens the missile's operational efficiency but also demonstrates India's self-reliance in critical defence technologies.

General Knowledge Snapshots

- The successful testing of VL-SRSAM signifies a major technological advancement in India's defence sector.
- DRDO, the developer of VL-SRSAM, is India's largest research and development organisation responsible for the military's technology needs.
- The Integrated Test Range (ITR) in Chandipur, Odisha is a premier DRDO laboratory dedicated to conducting trials for different missile systems.
- The geographical location of ITR in Chandipur, situated off the Odisha coast, provides the critical sea-based testing capabilities essential for validating missile systems like VL-SRSAM.

In conclusion, this successful test signifies a major leap in India's indigenous defence technologies, enhancing the country's maritime security capabilities and highlighting the key role of organisations such as DRDO in India's defence research and development sphere.

Exploring India's Defence Capabilities: India Defence Aviation Exposition & Tarang Shakti Exercise.

Unravelling the IDAX-24

Introduction:

- India Defence Aviation Exposition (IDAX-24) was an immense defence event, inaugurated by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh.
- The Expo held in the vibrant city of Jodhpur, Rajasthan, from September 12-14, 2024, stirred excitement with a variety of industry participation.

Highlights of the Event:

- IDAX-24 aimed to showcase the advanced technologies, products, and capabilities that India's Aviation Industry has to offer.
- It witnessed participation from notable entities such as DPSUs, DRDO, private industries, and even startups working in the defence sector.
- Creating a focal point for global air force decision-makers and end-users, the event served to highlight India's strength in Aviation defence.
- Defence Minister Rajnath Singh was in attendance, along with Army Chiefs of India and foreign Air Force Chiefs from different countries.
- The Air Show, a major part of the expo, saw performances by renowned Indian Air Force assets such as Suryakiran, Sarang, Tejas, and Sukhoi-30.

The Multinational Air Exercise – Tarang Shakti

Introduction:

- Running in parallel with the IDAX-24 was Tarang Shakti, a significant multinational air exercise observed in Jodhpur Air Force Station.

The Global Outreach:

- Tarang Shakti incorporated air forces from as many as seven countries, creating a grand spectacle of international cooperation.
- Following the interactive and experiential structure, the exercise also extended invitations to observers from 16 additional countries worldwide.

GK Part:

- Defence Minister: Rajnath Singh is India's current Defence Minister, holding the portfolio since May 2019.

- DPSUs: DPSUs stands for Defence Public Sector Undertaking. They are government-owned corporations that produce defence equipment for the Indian Armed Forces.

- DRDO: Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) is an agency under the Department of Defence Research and Development in the Ministry of Defence, responsible for the development of technology for use by the military.

- Suryakiran, Sarang, Tejas, and Sukhoi-30: These are different types of aircrafts used by the Indian Air Force. Suryakiran is an aerobatics demonstration team; Sarang is the helicopter aerobatic team; Tejas is an Indian fourth and half generation multirole light fighter, and Sukhoi-30 is a twinjet multirole air superiority fighter.

In Summary:

- The holding of these large-scale defence events not only reflect India's growing defence capabilities and technologies but also signify its deepening relations with different global players in the defence sector. The IDAX-24 and Tarang Shakti exercise indeed underscored India's robust preparedness, airmanship, and determination to protect its territorial integrity.

Advancement in Defense Innovation: The U.S.-India Defense Accelerator Ecosystem (INDUS-X) Summit

Envisioning Joint Defence Innovation - The INDUS-X Summit

- The third edition of the INDUS-X Summit recently concluded in the United States.
- This event signifies a crucial step forward in the strengthening of defence innovation partnerships between India and the U.S.
- The summit was first launched in 2023 during the state visit of the Prime Minister of India to the U.S.

Pursuing Broad Objectives

- The core objective of the INDUS-X Summit is to fuel strategic technology partnerships and defence industrial cooperation.

- These partnerships involve government entities, business organisations, and academic institutes from both India and the U.S.
- The summit seeks to advance high-tech cooperation, and foster joint research, development, and production opportunities in the defence sector.

Bridging the Gap in Defence Innovation

- INDUS X intends to serve as a defence innovation bridge, encompassing Joint Challenges, Joint Innovation Fund, Academia engagement, and Industry-startup connects.
- Innovation will spur investments by private entities in defence projects, as also ensure mentoring by experts and promote niche technology projects.
- This initiative explores possibilities for co-producing jet engines, long-range artillery, and infantry vehicles.

Steering the INDUS-X Initiative

- The INDUS-X initiative is being spearheaded by Innovations for Defence Excellence (iDEX) on behalf of the Indian Ministry of Defence and the Defence Innovation Unit (DIU) under the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD).

Introduction to Innovations for Defence Excellence (iDEX)

- iDEX is a flagship scheme launched by the Ministry of Defence, Government of India, in 2018.
- The scheme's primary aim is to foster an innovation ecosystem within the Defence and Aerospace sector in collaboration with startups, innovators, MSMEs, incubators, and academia.
- iDEX provides grants and support for significant potential R&D projects for adoption in Indian defence and aerospace.

Funding and Management of iDEX

- iDEX's funding and management are overseen by the 'Defence Innovation Organization (DIO)', a 'not for profit' company.
- The DIO was established under the Companies Act 2013 specifically for managing the activities of iDEX.
- The two primary members, Defence Public Sector Undertakings (DPSUs): Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) and Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL), founded this organisation.

Operation Sadbhav: India's Humanitarian Aid to Southeast Asian Nations

Introduction and Overview:

The Indian government has recently introduced a commendable initiative named Operation Sadbhav, aimed at alleviating the hardships of three Southeast Asian countries - Laos, Myanmar, and Vietnam. These countries are battling severe afflictions due to the devastation caused by Typhoon Yagi, Asia's most potent cyclone in 2024.

I. Operation Sadbhav in Action: Humanity First

- The focus of Operation Sadbhav is to provide significant humanitarian aid to the affected nations to cope with the cataclysmic effects of Typhoon Yagi.
- India has generously committed substantial aid of \$1 million to Vietnam and another \$100,000 to Laos under this operation.
- It involved deployment by the Indian Navy and Air Force, which swung into action by mobilising ships and aircraft for delivering relief materials. The help included essentials such as food supplies, clothing, medicines, and water purification items.

II. Aligning with India's Act East Policy

- The prompt and immediate response of India aligns with its 'Act East Policy,' which emphasises strengthening relationships with the ASEAN countries.
- The policy demonstrates India's intent to foster solidarity with its ASEAN neighbours by extending support in times of adversity.

III. Typhoon Yagi: Catastrophe in Southeast Asia

- Typhoon Yagi is recorded as the strongest cyclone to hit Asia in 2024, which wreaked havoc in multiple Southeast Asian nations.
- The cyclone has led to the displacement of millions of people and inflicted widespread devastation across the region.

IV. General Knowledge and Relevant History

- The ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) group includes Laos, Myanmar, and

Vietnam, among others. India's engagement with these nations has exponentially increased, particularly after the initiation of its 'Act East Policy.'

- Typhoon Yagi, named after a Japanese word for 'jade,' was notable for its strength and the widespread devastation it triggered across Southeast Asia.

- Operation Sadbhav is reminiscent of India's long-standing tradition of lending a helping hand in times of calamity. For instance, India has provided aid to Bangladesh during the 1971 liberation war and extended support to Nepal during the 2015 earthquake.

In conclusion, Operation Sadbhav is a testament to India's commitment towards ensuring welfare and promoting a sense of shared responsibility in the international community. The operation not only provides immediate aid but also reinforces India's international relations, especially with the ASEAN bloc, optimising its Act East Policy.

Unveiling of Anti-Submarine Warfare Ships: A Leap in India's Defense Sector

Introduction of INS Malpe and Mulki

- The Indian Navy has introduced the fourth and fifth Anti-Submarine Warfare (ASW) Shallow Water Craft (SWC) ships called Malpe and Mulki.

- Cochin Shipyard Ltd constructed these two latest additions to the class of Mahe, alongside INS Mahe, INS Malvan, and INS Mangrol that were inaugurated in 2023.

- Named after unquestionably significant ports along India's coastline, the inclusion of these vessels marks a vital milestone in strengthening the nation's naval prowess.

Key Features of ASW SWC Ships

- The ASW SWC vessels come equipped with state-of-the-art, indigenously developed underwater sensors, upgrading India's defence technological capabilities.

- These vessels are designed to undertake anti-submarine operations in coastal areas, Low

Intensity Maritime Operations, and Mine Laying Operations.

- With a maximum speed of 25 knots, these technologically advanced ships promise an endurance of up to 1800 nautical miles.

Background and Emergence of Defense Indigenization in India

- The dependency on the Soviet Union for defence equipment triggered India's pivot towards self-defence industrialization from the mid-1980s.

- The government initiated Research and Development funding for DRDO to embark on high-profile projects marking the beginning of defence indigenization in 1983.

- The government sanctioned the Integrated Guided Missile Development Programme (IGMDP) which facilitated the development of diverse missile systems like Prithvi, Akash, Trishul, Nag, and Agni Ballistic missiles.

Indigenous Efforts and Collaborations

- The Self Reliance Review Committee (SRRV) under the guidance of Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam had formulated a 10-year self-reliance plan intending to enhance the self-reliance index (SRI) from 30% in 1992-1993 to 70 % by 2005, but this target still remains unachieved.

- A shift in focus was observed towards co-development and co-production partnerships with foreign companies to meet the requirements of the armed forces due to insufficient indigenous efforts.

- A significant step towards collaboration was taken in 1998 when India and Russia agreed to jointly produce Brahmos supersonic cruise missile.

- Other international collaborations for various projects include countries like Israel and France.

In conclusion, the introduction of INS Malpe and Mulki ASW SWC ships not only boosts the Indian Navy's operational capacity but also highlights the nation's commitment towards enhancing self-reliance in the defence sector.

Unfolding the New Joint Doctrine for Amphibious Cyberspace Operations

Introduction and Background

- The Joint Doctrine for Amphibious Operations and the Joint Doctrine for Cyberspace Operations were recently released by Chief of Defence Staff General Anil Chauhan.
- These doctrines have been developed to the ever-changing complexities of warfare.
- They aim to provide strategic guidance to Commanders for operations in land, sea, air, and cyberspace environments, respectively.

Understanding the Joint Doctrine for Amphibious Operations

- The Doctrine is a key document that provides guidelines for Amphibious Operations in various military environments.
- It boosts the Armed Forces' capability to undertake various operations within the Indian Ocean Region, in both wartime and peacetime scenarios.
- These operations play a critical role in multi-domain military engagements and require high levels of coordination among the Armed Forces.

Insight into the Joint Doctrine for Cyberspace Operations

- Cyberspace is understood as the space encompassing entities processing, storing, and transmitting digital information and code.
- Besides traditional warfare domains of land, sea, and air - cyberspace has emerged as a critical domain in modern warfare that requires a targeted approach.
- This doctrine brings to the fore military operations in cyberspace.

- In preparation for the post, the Integrated Defence Staff was established in 2002 which would later serve as the secretariat for the CDS.
- In 2012, the Naresh Chandra Committee recommended a Permanent Chairman for the Chiefs of Staff Committee to eliminate concerns over the CDS' position.
- Finally, in 2019, based on recommendations by a committee of defence experts led by Lt General DB Shekatkar, the post of the CDS was officially created. General Bipin Rawat was subsequently appointed as the first CDS on 31st December 2019.

Responsibilities and Powers of the CDS

- The CDS heads the newly formed Department of Military Affairs (DMA) in the Ministry of Defence and serves as a single-point military advisor to the Defence Minister on matters involving all three services.
- As the head of DMA, the CDS is responsible for prioritising inter-service procurement decisions.
- While vested with the authority to provide directives to the three chiefs, the CDS doesn't enjoy any command authority over any force.
- The CDS has the rank of Secretary within the Department of Defence (DoD) and his powers are confined to the revenue budget.
- He also performs an advisory role in the Nuclear Command Authority (NCA).

Science and Technology

RHUMI-1: India's Leap Towards Sustainable and Affordable Space Exploration

Introduction of RHUMI-1

- India achieved a milestone in the field of space exploration by launching its first reusable hybrid rocket, RHUMI-1.
- This development was led by Tamil Nadu-based startup, Space Zone India, which aimed to collect relevant data on climate change and global warming.

- The rocket was launched into a suborbital trajectory carrying 3 Cube Satellites and 50 PICO Satellites.

Key Features of RHUMI-1

- RHUMI-1 integrates both solid and liquid propellants in its Hybrid Propulsion System, which enhances efficiency and minimises operational costs.
- The engine supports precise trajectory control with adjustable angles, ranging from 0 to 120 degrees.
- With an Electrically Triggered Parachute System, it offers an advanced and eco-friendly descent mechanism ensuring safe recovery of rocket components.
- The Rocket is Environmentally friendly, free from pyrotechnic elements and explosives, reflecting its commitment towards sustainability.

Cube Satellites and Pico Satellites

- Cube satellites, which weigh 1 to 10 kg, and Pico satellites, which weigh 0.1 to 1 kg, were launched with RHUMI-1.

Dr. A.P.J Abdul Kalam Students Satellite Launch Mission

- This mission was launched in 2023 and involved over 2,500 students from various schools across India who contributed to designing and constructing a student satellite launch vehicle.
- The payload for this mission was 150 Pico Satellites research experiment cubes.

Reusable Launch Vehicles (RLVs): Overview and Benefits

- RLVs are spacecraft specifically designed for multiple launch cycles, reducing construction costs by up to 65% per launch.
- By minimising discarded rocket components, they reduce space debris, making space exploration more sustainable.
- They enable increased frequency of launches due to their reduced turnaround time.

Difference from Multi-Stage Rocket

- Unlike typical multi-stage rockets that discard the first stage post-exhaustion to reduce weight, RLVs recover and reuse the first stage using engines or parachutes for a controlled landing.

ISRO's RLV Project

- ISRO is working on Reusable Launch Vehicle-Technology Demonstration (RLV-TD), as part of its efforts to enable low-cost access to space.
- In the future, this vehicle will form the first stage of India's reusable two-stage orbital (TSTO) launch vehicle.
- ISRO's RLV-TD, which resembles an aircraft, will be used to develop breakthrough technologies such as hypersonic flight, autonomous landing, return flight experiment, powered cruise flight, and Scramjet Propulsion Experiment.

"National Blockchain Framework: India's New Step towards Digital Governance"

Introduction to the National Blockchain Framework and Related Initiatives

- The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) recently unveiled the National Blockchain Framework (NBF).
- Alongside NBF, other initiatives like Vishvasya-Blockchain Technology Stack, National Blockchain Framework Lite (NBFLite), Praamaanik, and National Blockchain Portal were also introduced.

Understanding the National Blockchain Framework

- The NBF is an online platform leveraging blockchain technology to bring reliability and transparency in public service.
- It aligns with the Indian government's objective of providing trusted digital services.

Delving into the Other Associated Launches

- Vishvasya-Blockchain Technology Stack: Renders Blockchain-as-a-Service (BaaS) with a geographically spread infrastructure supporting diverse blockchain applications.
- NBFLite: Aims at encouraging startups and academia to experiment with blockchain applications.

- Praamaanik: A revolutionary concept that aids in validating the source of mobile apps via blockchain.
- National Blockchain Portal: A consolidation point for easy access to numerous blockchain resources.

Advantages of the National Blockchain Framework

- Enhancing Security and Transparency: The framework accentuates security in public service delivery, thereby increasing the trust of citizens.
- Transforming Governance: MeitY emphasises on the implementation of NBF applications across states, departments, encouraging the discovery of new platforms and applications.
- Addressing Research Challenges: NBF is designed to overcome several obstacles, including the development of skilled manpower, facing research hurdles concerning security, interoperability, and performance.

Unravelling the Vishvasya-Blockchain Technology Stack Details

- Distributed Infrastructure: Hosted on numerous NIC Data Centers across India.
- Core framework Functionality: Offers basic blockchain operations and services.
- Smart Contracts & API Gateway: Assists in managing smart contracts and application interfaces.
- Security, Privacy & Interoperability: Concentrates on maintaining data integrity, ensuring secure communication across platforms.
- Applications Development Offering BaaS: Supports the build-up and deployment of blockchain applications using the BaaS model.

Elucidating Blockchain-as-a-Service (BaaS)

- BaaS refers to a third-party cloud service that helps enterprises in building and maintaining blockchain apps.
- Benefits of BaaS:
 - Task Simplification: Accelerates the creation and deployment of blockchain applications.
 - Cost-Effective: Promotes cost-efficient usage of blockchain while improving services in a secure and transparent manner.

- Operational Agility and Scalability: Enables the blockchain infrastructure to adapt to the changing application and user-driven demands.

International Collaboration Fuels Green Hydrogen Advancement

Highlights from the Recently Held ICGH-2024:

- Green Hydrogen emerged as a promising energy solution at the second International Conference on Green Hydrogen 2024 (ICGH-2024) held at Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi.
- The Prime Minister of India highlighted the need for international cooperation for scaling up green hydrogen production and promoting research and development.
- India's early accomplishments were underlined as the nation was among the first G20 members to achieve its green energy commitments under the Paris Agreement well in advance.
- Green hydrogen was recognized as an important tool in reducing carbon emissions in tough-to-electrify industries like steel, fertilisers, and transportation. It was also recognized as a potential renewable energy storage solution.
- The importance of investment in research and development, along with fostering partnerships and promoting green hydrogen initiatives was emphasised.

Challenges to Green Hydrogen Promotion:

- High Production Costs: Green hydrogen production costs range from USD 3 to 8 per kilogram, significantly higher than conventional hydrogen produced from fossil fuels.
- Technology and Infrastructure: Steep costs associated with electricity for electrolysis and the need for more efficient electrolyzers.
- Resource Availability: The demand for rare metals for electrolysis and fuel cells can hamper scalability.
- Scaling Production: Meeting global green hydrogen production demands requires massive coordinated efforts.

How International Cooperation can Empower Green Hydrogen Promotion:

- **Scaling Production:** Collaborative efforts can help accelerate the process of scaling green hydrogen production technologies and bring major cost reductions.
- **Economies of Scale:** Shared investments and bulk purchasing can significantly bring down the costs.
- **Shared Infrastructure:** Collaborative hydrogen production, storage, and distribution facilities can reduce investment costs and make the technology more economically viable.
- **Innovation Through Partnerships:** Bringing together government, industry leaders, and research institutions on a common platform can foster innovation.
- **Coherent Policies and Regulations:** Shared regulatory frameworks can support green hydrogen development.
- **Funding and Investment:** Collective funding efforts and international investment can catalyse research in the field.

Conclusion:

International cooperation is critical in promoting green hydrogen technologies. It can help overcome manufacturing and infrastructure challenges, reduce costs, and drive public acceptance. Collaborative actions can speed up the transition towards sustainable energy and maximise the potential of green hydrogen.

Next Generation Launch Vehicle: New Era for Bharat's Space Missions

1. Brief Introduction and Overview

- Recently, the Union Cabinet, led by the Prime Minister of India, has decided to go ahead with the development of the Next Generation Launch Vehicle (NGLV), signalling a major leap forward in India's space technology and exploration agenda.

2. About the Next Generation Launch Vehicle (NGLV)

- The NGLV is set to be an advanced space vehicle that boasts a payload capability three times that of the current Launch Vehicle Mark III (LVM3) and costs only 1.5 times more.

- This launch vehicle will have a reusable staging, which will make access to space more cost-effective. Moreover, it will be equipped with

modular green propulsion systems, a step towards ensuring sustainability in space explorations.

- The aim is to design the vehicle with a maximum payload capability of delivering up to 30 tonnes to Low Earth Orbit.

3. Implementation Strategy of the Project

- The plan is to involve substantial participation from Indian industries in this development project, encouraging them to invest in the manufacturing capacity right from the start.

- This strategic participation will ensure a seamless transition into the operational phase following the development.

- The project is planned to be demonstrated through three development flights (D1, D2, and D3) over a span of 96 months (8 years).

- The total fund allocated for this project is Rs. 8240.00 Crore, inclusive of development costs, three developmental flights, initiating essential facilities, programme management, and launch campaign.

4. Significance of the Next Generation Launch Vehicle

- The NGLV project holds great significance as it is set to facilitate both national and commercial missions and human spaceflight missions to the Bhartiya Antariksh Station.

- It will be instrumental in Lunar and interplanetary exploration missions, and in launching communications and earth observation satellite constellations to Low Earth Orbit.

- All these exploratory missions will immensely benefit the entire space ecosystem in India.

- Besides garnering new scientific insights, it is also projected to give a significant impetus to the Indian space ecosystem in terms of its capability and capacity, thus setting a strong foundation for future extraterrestrial explorations.

India's Venture into the Cosmos: ISRO's Newly Approved Space Projects

Introduction: Getting a Boost in Space Endeavours

- The Union Cabinet has recently sanctioned four major space projects of the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO).

- The approved ventures consist of the Chandrayaan-4, Venus Orbiter Mission (VOM), Bhartiya Antriksh Station (BAS), and Next Generation Launch Vehicle (NGLV).

In Detail: The Newly Approved Space Projects

- Chandrayaan-4: Paving Pathway to the Moon:

- It will involve spacecraft formation, Launch Vehicle Mk III liftoffs, deep space network aid, and special tests.

- For the first time, India will attempt docking and undocking — two spacecraft coordinating and integrating in orbit.

- The project aims at making India self-reliant in technologies for manned missions and aspires to place humans on the moon by 2040.

- Venus Orbiter Mission (VOM): Exploring Earth's Twin:

- VOM is devised to orbit Venus and study various aspects, including atmospheric processes and the Sun's impact on its atmosphere.

- This project becomes important as Venus is believed to have been once habitable like Earth.

- The mission is scheduled to blast off in March 2028, making it India's second interplanetary mission, after the Mars Orbiter Mission in 2014.

- Bhartiya Antriksh Station (BAS): India's Ambitious Space Station:

- BAS will be India's indigenous space station for scientific exploration.

- India looks forward to launching its own space station by 2028 and making it fully operational by 2035.

- Next Generation Launch Vehicle (NGLV): The Payload Carrier:

- NGLV's development is also greenlit by the government.

- It is devised to carry up to 30 tonnes to Low Earth Orbit (LEO), giving a three-fold jump in payload capacity at just 1.5 times the cost.

The Perks and Trials of Building a Space Station

- Building a space station can advance scientific discoveries, boost innovation, enhance India's stature in space exploration, and provide helpful insights for long-duration missions.

- However, it also brings along challenges like advanced engineering, extensive financial investment, maintenance of crew health and safety, and handling supply chain management.

Affordability and Resource Management: A Daunting Task

- Building a space station is a hefty investment, involving expenses related to construction, launch, and development of various equipment.

- ISRO's budget for 2024-25 is roughly USD 1.95 billion, while NASA operates on a much larger budget. Talking about costs, the ISS had an investment of over USD 150 billion.

- Ensuring the well-being of the crew, who might face health issues due to extended exposure to microgravity, is another major task.

In a Nutshell: An Ambitious Leap

- India's aggressive space program entails the formulation of a space station, a Chandrayaan-4 mission with sample return, and a Venus exploration mission.

- By offering broader access to satellite manufacturing and solidifying the aerospace sector, these ventures enhance India's standing in space exploration.

- Delving deep into lunar samples and revealing parallel insights into Venus's conditions could have far-reaching consequences on understanding Earth's potential future.

Meetings and Submits

Highlights of the 6th Quad Summit

Introduction and Background

* Quad, also known as the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue, is an international diplomatic partnership between Australia, India, Japan, and the U.S.

* It largely focuses on maintaining and promoting stability and prosperity in the Indo-Pacific region.

* Recently, the 6th Quad Summit was held in-person in Delaware, U.S.

About the Quad Summit

- * The Quad Summit convenes to address regional challenges such as health security, climate change, infrastructure, technology, cybersecurity, among others.
- * It aims to create an open, stable and resilient environment in the Indo-Pacific region.

Key Highlights of the 6th Quad Summit

Health Security:

- * The Quad Health Security Partnership (QHSP) was launched for enhanced health security in the Indo-Pacific.
- * Various initiatives were announced, including the Quad Cancer Moonshot, for cervical cancer treatment.
- * The U.S. pledged over \$84.5million towards pandemic preparedness in 14 Indo-Pacific countries.

Maritime Security:

- * Several initiatives, such as MAITRI and IPMDA, were introduced for enhanced maritime security and monitoring.
- * The first-ever Quad-at-Sea Ship Observer Mission is scheduled for 2025.

Infrastructure Development:

- * The Quad set up principles for secure and inclusive digital public infrastructure development.
- * Commitment towards infrastructural development, like undersea cables and funding for regional ports.

Emerging Technology:

- * Initiatives like Open RAN, AI-ENGAGE and BioExplore were launched to harness technology for telecommunications and agriculture.
- * Collaboration in addressing semiconductor supply chain risks was facilitated.

Climate and Clean Energy:

- * The U.S., Australia, and Japan pledged to enhance regional disaster risk reduction efforts.
- * India committed to invest USD 2 million in new solar projects in Fiji, Comoros, Madagascar, and Seychelles.

Cybersecurity:

- * A Quad Action Plan was developed to protect undersea telecommunications cables and foster a resilient information environment.

Space:

- * Quad countries decided to share expertise for promoting long-term sustainability of the space environment.

Counter Terrorism:

- * Counter-terrorism threats were discussed with the focus on mitigating them through strategic messaging and information sharing.

People-to-People Initiatives:

- * India announced an initiative to award fifty Quad Scholarships to students from the Indo-Pacific region.

About the Original Quad Formation

- * The Quad originated in 2004 during the Indian Ocean tsunami where the four nations provided humanitarian assistance.
- * It was formally established in 2007 and after a brief period of dormancy, was revived in 2017.

Expansion Potential of Quad

- * The recent "Quad-plus" meetings included South Korea, New Zealand, and Vietnam, indicating a potential for future expansion.
- * The ambitious projects of the Quad primarily aim to enhance security and resilience in the Indo-Pacific region.

China Hosts Forum on China-Africa Cooperation Summit

I. An Overview of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC)

The FOCAC, established in 2000, aims to foster strategic partnerships between China and African nations. With 53 African member countries, except

Eswatini, the forum conducts summits every three years.

The African Union Commission, a body dedicated to cooperative efforts and economic integration among member countries, is also part of FOCAC.

II. Details of the 2024 FOCAC Summit: Establishing a High-Level China-Africa Community

This year's summit theme - "Joining Hands to Advance Modernization and Build a High-Level China-Africa Community with a Shared Future."

The summit attempted to address critical matters such as governance, industrialization, agricultural up-gradation & the extension of China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI).

China has committed approximately USD 51 billion to African nations to aid in thirty infrastructure projects.

The Beijing Declaration and FOCAC-Beijing Action Plan (2025-27), aimed at strengthening the China-Africa partnership, was approved during the summit.

III. China-Africa Relations: Trade & Scepticism on Loan Policies

In 2023, the trade value between Africa and China topped USD 282 billion, with China being the source of 20% of Africa's exports and 16% of its imports.

China's early engagement with Africa is marked by significant infrastructure projects, such as the Tanzania-Zambia Railway.

While BRI investments have provided opportunities to African countries, allegations of "debt trap diplomacy" raise concerns over China's geopolitical influence via massive loans.

IV. India's Current Strategy Towards Africa: Strengthening Ties

The India-Africa Forum Summit (IAFS), aimed at bolstering relations, has been dormant since 2015 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Guiding principles from 2018 emphasise the prioritisation of Africa in Indian foreign policy, promoting trade, digital innovation, and climate cooperation.

Additional platforms like the Voice of the Global South Summit (VOGSS) and India-Africa Defence

Dialogue (IADD) further enable dialogue and cooperation between India and African nations.

India is the fourth largest trading partner for Africa with about USD 100 billion in bilateral trade and investments exceeding USD 75 billion.

The African Continental Free Trade Area Agreement (AfCFTA) and India's Duty-Free Tariff Preference (DFTP) scheme promise improved economic integration.

To support Africa's digital transformation, India is banking on its expertise in digital public infrastructure.

This news underscores the strategic importance of the African continent to global powers like China and India. While China garners a more significant economic footprint, India's blended approach to fostering diplomatic and strategic ties is also noteworthy. With altering global dynamics, the continent's geopolitical importance remains an area to watch for.

PM's Recent Visits to Singapore and Brunei Darussalam: Key Takeaways and Analysis

1. Introduction

- Prime Minister of India's recent visits to Brunei Darussalam and Singapore underline India's growing engagements in Southeast Asia.

- The visits were marked with strengthened diplomatic relations, strategic agreements, and enhanced economic collaboration, aiding India's 'Act East' policy.

2. Geographical and Economical Context of Brunei Darussalam and Singapore

- Brunei Darussalam: Situated in Borneo, the nation's economy thrives on natural resources such as oil and gas.

- Singapore: An island nation, heavily dependent on banking and manufacturing sectors for its prosperous economy.

3. Key Highlights of PM's Visit to Brunei Darussalam

- Geostrategic and Economic Aspects

* The Indian PM visited the iconic Omar Ali Saifuddien Mosque, a symbol of Islamic heritage in Brunei.

- * An agreement to fortify relations in multilateral forums.
- * Discussions on potential cooperation in the arena of liquefied natural gas initiated.
 - Political Implications
- * Growing support for equitable resolution of South China Sea disputes.
- * Mutual acknowledgment of the need to address climate change

4. Outcomes of PM's Visit to Singapore

- Economic and Strategic Progress
 - * A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed to fortify the semiconductor supply chain.
 - * The bilateral relationship has been uplifted to a 'Comprehensive Strategic Partnership.'
 - * Talks on green hydrogen and ammonia projects underline progressive collaboration on sustainability.
- Cultural, Technology and Trade Aspects
 - * Agreements on digital technologies, cybersecurity, and fintech cooperation to enhance business efficiencies.
 - * Exportation of India's non-Basmati white rice to address Singapore's food security concerns.
 - * Initiation of the Thiruvalluvar Cultural Centre, celebrating Tamil culture and heritage.

5. Overview of India's Relations with Brunei Darussalam and Singapore

- Brunei Darussalam and India have shared strong ties through bilateral and multilateral engagements.
- Trade, shared cultural heritage and strategic cooperation underline the relationship between India and Singapore

6. Significance of Southeast Asia for India's Strategic Interests

- From enhancing defence relationships to promoting regional stability, Southeast Asia plays a pivotal role in India's 'Act East' policy.
- Southeast Asia's proximity to China and its strategic location enhances its importance for India's Indo-Pacific vision.
- Economically, Southeast Asia holds significant opportunities for India's growth and trade enhancement.

7. Challenges and the Way Forward

- Addressing the challenges of China's influence, diversity in political landscapes, and underdeveloped infrastructure.

- Enhancing digital and maritime connectivity and cooperation is imperative for bolstering relations with the region.
- Establishing India as a regional technology hub, promoting regional value chains, and developing a Maritime Southeast Asia-India Economic Corridor could be potential strategies to augment India's presence in the region.

Expanding Horizons: India-UAE Collaborations in Nuclear Cooperation and More

Establishing the History of the MoU

- India and the United Arab Emirates have recently signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for civil nuclear cooperation.
- The subject of cooperation in the peaceful use of nuclear energy was first discussed during Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to the UAE in 2015, touching areas such as safety, health, agriculture, and science and technology.
- The current MoU aligns with the UAE's policy to expand its investments into the nuclear energy sector.
- In a parallel development, a long-term LNG supply agreement has been signed between Abu Dhabi National Oil Company (ADNOC) and Indian Oil Corporation Limited.

Understanding India's Civil Nuclear Cooperation

- India collaborates at the international level to develop and utilise nuclear technology for peaceful objectives, such as energy production, setting regulatory and safety standards, ensuring nuclear fuel supply, and working on non-proliferation efforts.
- The country's civil nuclear program is tailored towards using nuclear energy for peaceful applications, majorly electricity generation.
- India has nuclear cooperation agreements with France, Russia, the U.S.A, and Japan.

Insight into Key Reactors and Projects

- India houses substantial nuclear power plants in places like Tarapur, Kudankulam, and Rajasthan, significantly contributing to the nation's nuclear energy production.

- The nation is advancing in developing Fast Breeder Reactors (FBRs) that utilise plutonium to manufacture more fuel than they consume.
- With a vision of utilising its rich thorium resources, India is working on thorium-based reactors such as the Advanced Heavy Water Reactor (AHWR).

Details About India's Nuclear Weapon Program

- India's first nuclear test, codenamed "Smiling Buddha," occurred in 1974. Since then, the country has developed a nuclear triad encompassing land-based, sea-based, and air-based delivery systems.
- The country is known for its "no first use" policy, vowing not to use nuclear weapons first in a conflict.

Overview of India-UAE Relations

- India and the UAE nurtured diplomatic relations since 1972, with the current value of their trade partnership reaching US\$ 84.84 billion.
- The countries are part of international platforms, such as I2U2 and UFI Trilateral. UAE was also invited as a guest country to the G-20 Summit.
- The Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) got inked in 2022, cementing their deepening trade relations.
- A Joint Defence Cooperation Committee (JDCC) handles the defence cooperation between the nations, following their 2003 Agreement on Defence Cooperation.
- Cooperation in space exploration was established when ISRO and the UAE Space Agency signed an MoU in 2016.
- Indians form the largest ethnic community in the UAE, with an approximate population of 3.5 million.

"2nd Asia Pacific Ministerial Conference on Civil Aviation: Delhi Declaration & The Upsurge of India's Aviation Sector"

Embracing Sustainable Growth with Delhi Declaration

- The 2nd Asia Pacific Ministerial Conference on Civil Aviation concluded successfully with the adoption of the Delhi Declaration.
- The Delhi Declaration aims at enhancing regional cooperation, addressing emerging issues and fostering sustainable growth in the civil aviation sector.
- The conference was organised by the Ministry of Civil Aviation in collaboration with the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO).
- The majority of the conference involved discussions and presentations focused on the future of aviation in the Asia Pacific region.

Sky rocketing Development of Indian Aviation Sector

- India holds the position of the world's third-largest aviation market and is among the major fastest-growing aviation markets globally.
- The International Air Transport Association (IATA) forecasts that India is anticipated to overtake China and the United States to seize the position of world's third-largest air passenger market by 2030.
- In FY24, India's airports recorded a 13.5% YoY growth in domestic passenger traffic reaching 306.79 million and a 22.3% YoY growth in international passenger traffic to be 69.64 million over the previous year.

Government Initiatives and Policies Supports for Aviation Sector

- According to the budget allocations for 2024-25, the Ministry of Civil Aviation was allotted Rs. 2,357 crore (US\$ 282 million).
- The Indian government has approved 100% FDI via the automatic route for the maintenance, Repair, and Overhaul (MRO) sector.
- NABH (NextGen Airports for Bharat) - Nirman initiative aims to expand airport capacity more than five times to handle billions of trips a year in the upcoming 10-15 years.
- AAI Startup Policy aims to provide a framework and mechanism for the interaction of AAI with various stakeholders that catalyse innovation at airports and enhance the delivery of services to passengers through technological advancements.

Regulatory Frameworks for Indian Aviation Sector

- The National Civil Aviation Policy (NCAP) 2016 guides the Indian aviation sector.
- The Aircraft Act 1934 and Aircraft Rules 1937 legally govern the aviation policy in India.
- The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) is the authority responsible for matters related to safety, licensing, airworthiness, etc.
- The Airports Authority of India (AAI) handles airport management and air traffic services.
- Bureau of Civil Aviation Security (BCAS) establishes standards and measures for the security of civil flights and airports.
- The Airport Economic Regulatory Authority (AERA) regulates tariffs and other charges for aeronautical services provided at major airports and their performance standards.
- The Regional Connectivity Scheme (RCS) - UDAN (Ude Desh ka Aam Naagrik) aims to make air travel affordable and widespread by enhancing regional air connectivity through financial incentives, subsidies, and necessary infrastructural support.

7th National Security Strategies Conference 2024: Embracing a New Approach to Tribal Security

I. Introducing the National Security Strategies Conference (NSSC) 2024

- This edition of the NSSC was recently inaugurated by the Union Home Minister in New Delhi.
- The Prime Minister has conceived the conference to address the emerging national security challenges.
- It provides a platform where senior police leadership, young police officers, and domain experts interact to devise proactive strategies.

II. Key Highlights of NSSC 2024

- A unique dashboard was launched to seamlessly implement the decisions taken at the annual Directors and Inspectors General of Police conference.

- Emphasised the need for a non-colonial approach toward tribals that promotes inclusion, respect, and empowerment.
- Security challenges related to social media radicalization, narcotics trafficking, non-major port's security, financial technology fraud, and the misuse of mobile applications and drones were thoroughly discussed.

III. Tribals and the British Colonial Legacy in India

- Several oppressive laws were established, such as the Criminal Tribes Act 1871, Indian Forest Act 1865, Forest Act 1878, Indian Forest Act 1927, severely marginalising the tribals.
- Tribals were heavily surveilled, criminalised, and their basic rights to access forests and live according to their traditional practices were denied.
- Post-colonial exploitation by the police, traders, and moneylenders continued to deepen their sufferings.

IV. India's Paradigm Shift toward a Non-Colonial Approach to Tribals

- The Habitual Offenders Act 1952 declassified tribals as "born criminals".
- National Forest Policy 1952, Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989, and Forest Rights Act (FRA), 2006 were implemented to correct past injustices.
- These laws ensure that tribals' rights to forest resources, their protection, and development are recognized and respected.

V. Lingering Challenges Faced by Tribals

- The British 'criminal tribes' stigma considerably affects the community even today.
- Tribals continue to face displacement, violence, lack of legislative protection because of the colonial mindset and weaknesses in law enforcement.
- State-wise variations in problems are evident from skyrocketing crime reports against tribals in Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, and Odisha and varying exploitation methods across states.

VI. Strategies to Overcome these Challenges

- The rampant feudal stigma can be curbed through sensitization campaigns, educational reforms, and unbiased media representation.
- Law enforcement needs to be strengthened, conviction rates increased, and expedited courts for crimes against tribals instated for assured justice.

- Efforts should ramp up for effective implementation of laws like the Forest Rights Act and enhanced mechanisms for land title verification.
- Cultural preservation initiatives are needed to foster tribal pride and identity.
- Adequate political representation is a must to ensure that tribal concerns are duly represented and addressed.

Schemes and Initiative

Prime Minister Inaugurates Jal Sanchay Jan Bhagidari Initiative: A Leap towards Water Conservation

I. Introduction and About Jal Sanchay Jan Bhagidari Initiative

The Prime Minister has recently launched the Jal Sanchay Jan Bhagidari initiative from Surat, Gujarat. This initiative emphasises water conservation and has a target to build around 24,800 rainwater harvesting structures in Gujarat. A significant aspect of this approach is its inclusivity, demonstrating a commitment to 'Whole-of-Society and Whole-of-Government.'

A. Major Objectives

- Water Conservation Initiative: The primary focus is on comprehensive water management with the primary goal of constructing rainwater harvesting structures.
- Promotion of Community Involvement: This initiative encourages active participation from the local community along with governmental entities for effective water conservation.
- Fighting Water Stress: It aims to combat the prevalent water stress in India which has just 4% of the world's water resources but sustains 18% of its total population.

II. Water Stress Situation in India

India's water stress situation is alarming with 256 out of its 700 districts reportedly having "critical" or "over-exploited" groundwater levels. Women in rural areas have to walk over 2.5 kilometres to access water sources.

A. Impact on Indian Population:

- Water Scarcity: 163 million Indians lack access to safe drinking water.
- Health Impact: Unsafe water is related to 21% of communicable diseases.

III. Other Water Conservation Initiatives

In addition to Jal Sanchay Jan Bhagidari, the Indian government has taken several other steps towards water conservation.

A. Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM):

This initiative expanded piped water connections from 3 crore to over 15 crore households, benefiting 75% of India's rural population.

B. Amrit Sarovar Construction:

The construction of 60,000 Amrit Sarovars (water bodies) has boosted water storage and management.

C. Catch The Rain Campaign:

This campaign encourages states and stakeholders to build Rain Water Harvesting Structures (RWHS).

IV. Constitutional Provisions Related to Water

The Indian Constitution provides various provisions for water management and conservation.

A. Fundamental Right:

Water is included within the right to life under Article 21.

B. Basic Government Roles:

Entry 56 of Union List empowers the central government to regulate and develop inter-state rivers. Entry 17 of State List pertains to water supply, irrigation, and water storage at state level.

C. Article 262:

This article allows Parliament to legislate solutions for disputes regarding the use, distribution or control of inter-state rivers. Here, Parliament also

has the right to exclude such disputes from any court's jurisdiction, including the Supreme Court.

In conclusion, the Jal Sanchay Jan Bhagidari initiative is a step towards a comprehensive approach to tackle water scarcity in India. It highlights the urgent need for conserving our water resources and emphasises the involvement of communities along with governmental agencies in this crucial task.

Understanding PM Surya Ghar - Muft Bijli Yojana

Introduction to PM Surya Ghar—Muft Bijli Yojana

- The Ministry of New and Renewable Energy has recently released draft guidelines for the PM Surya Ghar—Muft Bijli Yojana.
- Approved by the union cabinet, the scheme is allocated Rs 75,000 crore and is proposed to benefit 1 crore families by February 2024.

Key Highlights of the Draft Guidelines

- The guidelines were issued under the Renewable Energy Services Company (RESCO) model and the Utility Led Asset (ULA) model of the PM Surya Ghar—Muft Bijli Yojana.
- Under RESCO, the company installs and owns the rooftop solar system, maintaining it for at least five years. Consumers pay RESCO for generated electricity and receive net metering benefits.
- The ULA model allows state discoms to own the roofing solar system for a minimum of five years before transferring ownership to the household.

PM Surya Ghar-Muft Bijli Yojana Explained

- The scheme aims to promote rooftop solar systems by providing financial subsidies and installation ease.
- The objective is to provide free electricity to one crore households who opt for rooftop solar electricity units, providing them with 300 monthly free electricity units.
- Implementation is both at the National Level through the National Programme Implementation Agency (NPIA), and at the State Level through State Implementation Agencies.

Expected Benefits of PM Surya Ghar-Muft Bijli Yojana

- Households are expected to save on electricity bills and potentially earn from selling surplus power to DISCOMs.
- The scheme targets to add 30 GW of solar capacity, generating 1000 billion units (BUs) of electricity over 25 years, thus reducing CO2 emissions by 720 million tonnes.
- Potential job creation is anticipated across multiple sectors, providing 17 lakh direct jobs.

Challenges in the Implementation of the Scheme

- Reluctance from households, restricted space use, operational strain on DISCOMs, non-mandatory storage integration, and quality assurance concerns stand as potential challenges to the scheme's implementation.

Contributing to Solar Energy Adoption

- The scheme aligns with other government initiatives to harness solar energy including One Sun, One World, One Grid, Pradhan Mantri Sahaj Bijli Har Ghar Yojana (SAUBHAGYA), National Smart Grid Mission (NSGM), International Solar Alliance (ISA), National Solar Mission, Solar Park Scheme, and Kisan Urja Suraksha evam Utthaan Mahabhiyan (PM-KUSUM).

Delhi Embraces the PM-SHRI Scheme: A Promising Move for Indian Education

Introduction:

With the goal of reshaping education in India, the central government introduced the Pradhan Mantri Schools for Rising India (PM-SHRI) scheme in 2022. The scheme aims to establish over 14,500 schools across the country in alignment with the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020. Recently, the Delhi government has shown its commitment to the scheme by signing a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the central government.

Shedding Light on Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA):

- * The SSA was launched as an integrated scheme for equitable quality school education from pre-school to class XII.
- * It comprised Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA), and Teacher Education (TE).
- * The major focus of SSA was on enhancing the quality of education by harnessing teachers and technology.
- * The SSA operated as a centrally sponsored scheme with a fund-sharing pattern leaning towards the Northeastern and Himalayan States.
- * The reluctance of some states, including Delhi, Punjab, and West Bengal, resulted in suspension of SSA funds, paving the way for the PM-SHRI scheme.

PM-SHRI Scheme: A Beacon for Inclusive Education

- * The PM-SHRI Scheme is a federally sponsored initiative focused on showcasing effective implementation of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 across India.
- * It aims to provide a nurturing environment for students, promoting their well-being and safety through diverse learning experiences and quality infrastructure.
- * The central and state governments, as well as UTs with legislature, fund the scheme at a 60:40 ratio, with some exceptions.
- * The scheme is planned to be active from 2022-23 to 2026-27, following which it will be the responsibility of the states and UTs to uphold the standards achieved by these schools.

Key Highlights of PM SHRI Schools:

- * Schools under this scheme prioritise holistic student development, fostering skills like communication, collaboration, and critical thinking.
- * They incorporate modern facilities – Smart Classrooms, Computer Labs, Integrated Science Labs, Vocational Labs/Skill Labs, and Atal Tinkering Labs.
- * Schools maintain a "green" ethos, supporting initiatives for water conservation and waste recycling.
- * School Quality Assessment Framework (SQUAF) handles performance monitoring.

National Education Policy (NEP) 2020: A Game-Changer

- * The NEP 2020, being the 3rd major revamp of the education system post-independence, aims to position India as a global knowledge powerhouse.
- * It presents a new 5+3+3+4 curricular structure, encouraging universal access to education from pre-primary to grade 12.
- * A noteworthy effort is made to eliminate rigid divisions like arts and sciences, curricular and extracurricular activities, and vocational and academic streams.
- * The NEP 2020 also advocates for multilingualism, use of Indian languages and includes specific provisions to support disadvantaged groups and regions.

In conclusion, with states like Delhi joining the PM-SHRI scheme, it is a promising move towards creating a robust, inclusive, and global-standard education system in India. This initiative plays a crucial role in bringing government-driven schools on par with their private counterparts, thereby bridging the educational divide. The success of the PM-SHRI scheme depends on the continued commitment of the Central and State governments, as well as the active participation of the education community.

"Mission Mausam: Strengthening India's Response to Climate Change and Extreme Weather Events"

INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

- Mission Mausam is a recent initiative approved by the Union Cabinet, intending to enhance India's ability to predict and respond to extreme weather events and climate change impacts effectively.
- The project has been allocated a budget of Rs 2,000 crore, to be utilised over the next two years, focusing on areas like accuracy, modelling, the deployment of advanced radars and satellites, and delivering accurate agromet forecasts.

FOCUS AREAS

- Precise weather forecasting for better management of extreme weather incidents.
- Greater emphasis on modelling efforts for prediction accuracy.
- Advanced radar technologies and satellites for enhanced monitoring.
- Detailed agromet forecasts for aiding stakeholder actions.

COMPONENTS AND IMPLEMENTATION

- The plan involves the utilisation of next-generation radars and satellite systems, and the development of enhanced Earth system models.
- An integral component is a GIS-based automated decision support system for real-time data sharing purposes.
- Its implementation lies with the India Meteorological Department (IMD), the Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology, and the National Centre for Medium-Range Weather Forecasting.
- Other MoES bodies like the Indian National Centre for Ocean Information Services, National Centre for Polar and Ocean Research, and National Institute of Ocean Technology will also support the operation.

BENEFITS

- The mission is set to yield significant sectoral benefits, enhancing monitoring and early warning systems in agriculture, disaster management, and defence.
- Optimises management of energy and water resources.
- It would make aviation safer and boost sustainable tourism.

INDIA'S MARITIME TRADE HISTORY

EARLY MARITIME TRADE:

- India's history of maritime trade dates back to the period between 3300-1300 BCE with the Indus Valley and Mesopotamia, as evident from the dock at Lothal.

VEDIC AND BUDDHIST REFERENCES:

- Sanskrit scriptures like the Vedas and Buddhist texts such as the Jataka Tales and Tamil Sangam,

composed in the period from 1500-500 BCE to 300 BCE to 400 CE, bear tales of India's early maritime activities.

INTENSIFICATION OF MARITIME ACTIVITY:

- By the 1st century BCE, movement through deep seas gained momentum, driven by the demand for eastern goods in the Roman Empire.
- Monsoon winds played a vital role in ensuring the success of these long-distance sea journeys.
- Romans traded heavily, acquiring different commodities from the Coromandel Coast like horses, pearls, and spices.

Union Cabinet Approves PMGSY-IV: A Leap Towards Enhanced Rural Connectivity

1. Introduction and Brief About Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY):

- The Central government introduced the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana in 2000 to provide all-weather road connectivity to unconnected rural habitations.
- The initiative was entirely centre-sponsored at inception, but since the financial year 2015-16, both State and Central governments equally share the cost in a 60:40 ratio.
- Approximately 800,000 km of rural roads have been built, connecting 180,000 habitations under various phases of the PMGSY scheme.

2. PMGSY-IV: The Road to Better Accessibility:

- The Union Cabinet has approved the fourth phase of PMGSY (PMGSY-IV).
- Envisioned for 2024-25 to 2028-29, it aims to considerably augment rural connectivity by constructing a whopping 62,500 km of new all-weather roads.

3. Extent of Coverage:

- PMGSY-IV will connect 25,000 as-yet-unconnected habitations across areas like plains with populations of over 500, the Northeast and hill states with over 250 populations, and areas affected by Left Wing Extremism with populations surpassing 100.

4. The Potential Impact and Associated Benefits of PMGSY-IV:

- These new road networks are anticipated to catalyse socio-economic growth in distant rural areas.
- Access to essential services such as education, health care, markets, and growth centres is expected to improve.
- The scheme is meticulously crafted to create approximately 40 crore human-days of work employment.

5. The Objective and Eligibility of PMGSY:

- The scheme was launched on 25th December 2000 with the primary objective to establish a robust, all-weather network connecting unconnected habitation, thereby uplifting the socio-economic condition of the rural populace.
- Eligible unconnected habitations are those of designated population size (500+ in plain areas and 250+ in North-Eastern States, Himalayan States, Deserts and Tribal Areas) as per 2001 census data.

6. GK Part:

- Launched Date: 25th December, 2000.
- Under the scheme, the funding is shared by the Central and State governments in a 60:40 ratio since the financial year 2015-16.
- Under different phases of the PMGSY, approximately 800,000 km of rural roads have already been built.
- This scheme was designed to uplift the socio-economic condition of rural populations by providing them with all-weather road connectivity.

Madhya Pradesh Government Sets New Rural Development Precedent with Brindavan Gram Scheme and Gita Bhavan Project

Introduction and About

- The Madhya Pradesh government, directed by Chief Minister Mohan Yadav, has launched an

innovative policy named the 'Brindavan Gram' scheme.

- The proposal focuses on the progressive transformation of selected gram panchayats in the region into ideal rural communities.
- The primary focus is on cow protection and overall rural development within the state.
- This policy goes hand in hand with another project termed the 'Gita Bhavan' initiative, intended to promote spiritual knowledge across urban areas of Madhya Pradesh.

Insights into the Brindavan Gram scheme

- The scheme aims to select one gram panchayat from each of the 313 blocks in Madhya Pradesh, which would be officially recognized as 'Brindavan Gram'.
- Key focus areas of the scheme include the establishment of gaushalas (cow sheds) in each selected village to promote cow protection and welfare.
- An additional aim is to energise the dairy industry, with emphasis on augmenting milk production in rural areas.
- The scheme envisions boosting farmers' earnings through these dairy initiatives and sustainable energy integration.
- Endorsing renewable energy sources, it involves the implementation of roof-top solar policy in selected gram panchayats.

The Gita Bhavan Project: Advancing Spiritual Awareness

- A parallel to the Brindavan Gram scheme, the government has approved the creation of 'Gita Bhavan' spiritual centres throughout the state's urban locales.
- Each city body across Madhya Pradesh will witness the establishment of one Gita Bhavan centre.
- The purpose driving the initiative is to spread spiritual enlightenment, focusing on teachings derived from scriptures and influential personalities.
- These centres will house literature relating to the Bhagavad Gita and Lord Krishna, with other spiritual resources made accessible.

Existing Model: Indore's Gita Bhavan

- Currently, the only Gita Bhavan present in Madhya Pradesh is in Indore.

- It operates as a religious and cultural hub and is known for its comprehensive approach, happily accepting individuals of all faiths.
- It features a variety of religious symbols and scriptural depictions.

Conclusion: The innovative approaches of the Brindavan Gram scheme and Gita Bhavan project come at a crucial stage when rural development and spiritual enlightenment are of increasing importance. These initiatives aim to holistically improve the quality of life in both rural and urban locales across the state of Madhya Pradesh.

Poshan Tracker: An Innovative Step towards Child Nutrition and Health

Introduction and Overview

- The Ministry of Women and Child Development has recently been honoured with the National Award for e-Governance 2024 (Gold) for their innovative initiative called "Poshan Tracker."
- The main aim of Poshan Tracker is to identify and rectify growth issues among children aged between 0-6 years, using real-time monitoring and World Health Organization (WHO) growth charts.
- Anganwadi Workers (AWWs) leverage this program to assess the health of children by connecting timely interventions upon detecting deviations from their expected growth.
- This initiative is a part of the national Mission Poshan 2.0, targeted to enhance child health by ensuring appropriate nutritional means.

Features and Operation of Poshan Tracker

- Poshan Tracker provides a comprehensive view of the activities in Anganwadi Centres, service deliveries of Anganwadi Workers, and overall beneficiary management for pregnant women, lactating mothers, and children under six.
- It automates and digitalizes physical registers used by workers, thereby aiding in the improvisation of work quality.
- Under this initiative, Anganwadi workers are given smartphones purchased via Government e-Market (GeM) to ensure hassle-free and effective service delivery.
- The Ministry has appointed nodal individuals for technical support and to resolve any issues with the application.

- Registered migrant workers can access the schemes and services at the nearest Anganwadi at their current place of residence.

Importance and Impact

- Through advanced Information and Communication Technology (ICT) tools and Growth Measuring Devices (GMD), the program gathers precise data and promotes regular monitoring at each Anganwadi Centre.
- It has made significant strides in improving child health outcomes in India, positively impacting millions of children.
- This initiative is an excellent example of leveraging technology to enhance governance and delivery of social welfare schemes.

GK Points:

- The Poshan Tracker initiative is implemented by the Ministry of Women and Child Development (MoWCD).
- The National Award for e-Governance is a prestigious honour appreciating the use of ICT tools for improving effectiveness, efficiency and transparency of government processes.
- The term "Anganwadi" originates from the Indian word meaning "courtyard shelter". It is a rural mother and child care centre in India, part of the Indian public health care system.

Empowering Indian Fashion Industry through 'VisioNxt Initiative'

Introduction and About VisioNxt Initiative

- The 'VisioNxt Fashion Forecasting Initiative' has been recently launched by the Union Minister of Textiles, stepping up India's prowess in the fashion industry.
- It is regarded as India's first home-grown trend insights and forecasting initiative, established at National Institute of Fashion Technology (NIFT) Delhi (Creative Lab) and NIFT Chennai (Insights Lab) in 2018.
- The initiative centres in Chennai, aimed at delivering trend insights and forecasting for the Indian fashion and retail market.
- Providing various services, such as trend related consultancy services, academic courses, workshops etc., are among its responsibilities.

Innovations and Achievements

- VisioNxt Initiative integrates Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Emotional Intelligence (EI) to generate fashion trend insights and forecasts, making a milestone in India's fashion industry.
- It primarily focuses on identifying, mapping, and analysing geo-specific trends that reflect India's cultural diversity, socio-economic nuances, and positive plurality.
- To support various components of the Indian fashion industry including weavers, manufacturers, retailers, domestic businesses, homegrown designers, and fashion brands, this report is bilingual - available in Hindi and English on the VisioNxt portal.
- VisioNxt has developed a unique prediction model, "DeepVision," which decodes patterns and interprets fashion trends in India.

Implications and Importance

- The launch of VisioNxt Initiative marks the beginning of India's reduction in dependence on global forecasting agencies, striking a self-reliant stance.
- It offers unique insights into Indian fashion consumers, combining India's strengths in information technology and textiles, and fuses artificial and human intelligence.
- The initiative enables users to design, produce, and launch consumer-focused, targeted collections in this diverse nation.
- 'Paridhi' will mark the launch of the first inclusive fashion trend forecast by VisioNxt, along with a web portal to disseminate India-specific fashion trends, catalysing enhanced customer-centric approach in the industry.

Overall, the VisioNxt Initiative is a significant stride towards revolutionising the Indian fashion industry and carving India's unique space in global fashion forecasting. It underpins the government's commitment to the 'Make in India' campaign and supports domestic manufacturers in the fashion industry.

Jal Sanchay Jan Bhagidari: A Holistic Approach to Water Conservation

Jal Sanchay Jan Bhagidari Initiative

- The Jal Sanchay Jan Bhagidari scheme was recently launched by the Prime Minister in Surat, Gujarat.
- This initiative revolves around the conservation of water and targets the construction of around 24,800 rainwater harvesting structures in Gujarat.
- Considered a "Whole-of-Society and Whole-of-Government" approach, it underlines the crucial role of public participation and government collaboration in managing water resources.

Water Scarcity in India: A Grave Concern

- India contributes to 18% of the world's population but possesses merely 4% of its total water supply, raising alarm for potential water stress.
- A concerning 256 districts out of the total 700 in the country have "critical" or "over-exploited" groundwater levels.
- The difficulty of access to water is exemplified by the fact that rural women often traverse over 2.5 kilometres to reach a water source.
- An estimated 163 million Indians lack access to safe drinking water, further escalating health concerns as 21% of communicable diseases are ascribed to unsafe water usage.

Other Water Conservation Endeavours

- The Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) has extended piped water connections from 3 crore to over 15 crore households, thus benefiting over 75% of the rural population.
- Construction of over 60,000 Amrit Sarovars (water bodies) has bolstered water storage and management capabilities.
- The "Catch The Rain" campaign further encourages the states and other stakeholders to construct Rain Water Harvesting Structures (RWHS) expediting the process of water conservation.

GK highlights:

- The Jal Sanchay Jan Bhagidari scheme is an initiative primarily focused on the state of Gujarat.
- The lack of access to safe drinking water is an alarming concern in India, affecting over 163 million individuals.
- The Jal Jeevan Mission has demonstrated tremendous progress by extending piped water connections to over 75% of India's rural population.

- Amrit Sarovar is a key initiative that contributes significantly to water storage and management.
- The Catch The Rain campaign endorses the construction of Rain Water Harvesting Structures.

This move ignited an emphasis on society and government's overall role in water management and conservation further establishing India's commitment to fulfilling the UN's Sustainable Development Goal of ensuring availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all.

Union Government Introduces 'Rangeen Machhli' App to Boost Ornamental Fisheries Sector

Introduction and Overview of 'Rangeen Machhli' App

- The Government of India has recently unveiled the 'Rangeen Machhli' app to promote the country's burgeoning ornamental fish sector.
- This app has been developed by ICAR-Central Institute of Freshwater Aquaculture (ICAR-CIFA), under the scheme Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY).
- 'Rangeen Machhli' app is primarily aimed at providing comprehensive guidance to both newbies and professional fisheries.
- The app has multilingual information about popular ornamental fish species in eight major Indian languages and includes features for connecting users to local aquarium shops.

In-Depth Analysis - Features and Modules of 'Rangeen Machhli' App

- 'Rangeen Machhli' offers an extensive range of features to simplify the processes for fisheries. One significant feature is the "Find Aquarium Shops" tool, which connects users to local businesses.
- The app comprises multiple educational modules like the "Basics of Aquarium Care" specifically for beginners. This covers crucial aspects such as types of aquariums, fish care, water filtration techniques, and maintenance.
- Another highlighted section is "Ornamental Aquaculture," which focuses on aspects related to the breeding and rearing of ornamental fish.

The Relevance of 'Rangeen Machhli' App in Current Context

- The development and launch of this app mark a significant step for India's ornamental fisheries sector, as it aims to support and boost growth in this area.
- The multilingual aspect caters to the linguistic diversity of India, making information and resources more accessible to a larger group of people.
- By providing detailed particulars on the care, breeding, and rearing of ornamental fishes, the app helps to nurture the skills necessary for enhancing productivity and revenue generation, thus contributing to a wider economic impact.

Additional General Knowledge Insight

- Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY) is a flagship initiative by the Indian government, sanctioned in 2020, aimed at enhancing fish production to 200 lakh tons by 2024-25, doubling the income of the fishers, and reducing post-harvest losses from the present level of 20-25% to about 10%.
- ICAR-Central Institute of Freshwater Aquaculture (ICAR-CIFA) is a premier research institute which aims to create a positive environment for the sustainable growth of ornamental fisheries across India.

This app is an exemplary initiative by the government which utilises technology to empower a niche yet significant sector of the economy, thus encouraging sustainable and inclusive growth.

Paving Way for India as a Global Food Processing Hub: World Food India 2024 Event

Introduction and About World Food India 2024

- The World Food India (WFI) 2024 event is a paramount global event that has been launched in New Delhi.
- The highlight of the event was its inauguration by the Prime Minister of India, Narendra Modi.
- This event aims to enhance the relationship among policymakers, industry pioneers,

researchers, and entrepreneurs from all around the globe.

- Since its inception in 2017, World Food India has been earnestly promoting India as an extensive and diverse food sector.

- WFI 2024 is a continuance of this mission, focusing primarily on technology, sustainability and establishing global partnerships.

Why World Food India 2024 is in the News

- The WFI 2024 event is critical to establishing India as an international leader in the food processing sector.

- The earlier renditions of this event have showcased India's potential and capabilities as a globally recognized food-processing hub.

- WFI 2024's key focus pillars are innovation, farmer empowerment, international alliances, and infrastructural growth, all of which contribute towards the comprehensive development of the food processing industry.

Enhancing Food Processing Through Innovation and Technology

- WFI 2024 emphasises innovation as the future of the food processing industry which will dominate this sector.

- Harnessing the power of advanced technologies like Artificial Intelligence, Internet of Things, and blockchain to boost supply chain management, traceability, operational efficiency, and heighten productivity.

- The event also promotes sustainable practices and the implementation of digital transformations.

- The practice of food irradiation is encouraged for the extension of the shelf life of food products, ensuring safe consumption and low wastage.

Accelerating Growth Through Farmer Empowerment

- Recognizing the significant role of farmers in the Indian food system, farmer empowerment is underscored as indispensable for the sustainable growth of the food processing industry.

- Measures like creating direct market linkages and extending access to technology, financial inclusion facilitating credit and insurance access, are being encouraged to protect farmers from potential risks and uncertainty.

- Such steps will ensure appropriate pricing, eliminate high margins caused by intermediaries,

promote the use of modern farming tools and techniques for higher production and better quality produce.

In conclusion, World Food India 2024 represents a significant step for India's food processing industry's growth and transformation. It projects the country's potential to emerge as a global leader in this sector, through its emphasis on innovation, farmer empowerment, and sustainable practices.

The 19th Divya Kala Mela: A Boost for Divyang Artisans

Introduction and Overview

- The 19th edition of the Divya Kala Mela, a one-of-a-kind event, was recently inaugurated in Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh.

- The Mela was graced by high profile dignitaries, including the honourable Governor of Andhra Pradesh, Shri S. Abdul Nazeer, and Dr. Virendra Kumar, Union Minister for Social Justice and Empowerment, among others.

- Recognizing the talent and potential of the Divyang community or differently-abled persons, this fair presents a platform for these skilled artisans from across 20 states/UTs to display and sell their creativity.

- A significant part of this year's event was the provision of concessional loans amounting to ₹40 lakh to 10 Divyang beneficiaries under the NDFDC schemes, and distribution of assistive devices was also conducted with the support of CSR partners like HPCL, GAIL India, and IOCL.

The Significance of Mela

- The aim of Divya Kala Mela aligns perfectly with the government's "Vocal for Local" initiative, as it creates a platform for local Divyang artisans to showcase and sell their products.

- It encourages the Divyang community to seek financial independence through their artistic skills.

- Words such as handicrafts, handlooms, embroidery, and packaged foods reflect the wide range of artisanal skills exhibited at the fair.

- The Mela accomplishes two highly significant goals: uplifting the Divyang community by recognizing their skills and talent and bolstering the local economy by promoting local products.

The General Knowledge Relevant to the event

- The Divya Kala Mela event points to the government's inclusive approach towards the Divyang community, affirming their right to create and innovate.
- The event is run under the auspices of NDFDC (National Handicapped Finance and Development Corporation), a non-profit organisation working for the benefit of persons with disabilities.
- Visakhapatnam, also known as Vizag, is the executive capital of the state of Andhra Pradesh. It is also the state's largest city and is known for its booming industries and picturesque landscapes.
- CSR stands for Corporate Social Responsibility where companies make contributions towards the social, economic and environmental development of the community.

Concluding thoughts

- By shining a spotlight on their unique contributions, Divya Kala Mela serves as a stepping stone for the empowerment of the Divyang community. It paves the way for their participation in the mainstream economy and brings their talent, perseverance, and resilience to the fore.
- The event reiterates the importance of social initiatives like "Vocal for Local" in uplifting local craftsmen and -women, fostering economic development, and reinforcing cultural heritage.
- As we gear up for future editions, it is hoped that Divya Kala Mela will continue to play a crucial role in promoting inclusivity and fostering a sense of community among people of all abilities.

Implementation and Significance of the Pradhan Mantri Janjatiya Unnat Gram Abhiyan (PMJUGA)

About Pradhan Mantri Janjatiya Unnat Gram Abhiyan (PMJUGA)

- Recently, the Union Cabinet approved the Pradhan Mantri Janjatiya Unnat Gram Abhiyan (PMJUGA) aiming at amelioration of the socio-economic condition of tribal communities.

- The initiative is a centrally sponsored scheme targeted at tribal-majority villages and aspirational districts.
- The Operation will span across 549 districts and 2740 blocks in 30 States/Union Territories, encapsulating approximately 63,000 villages.
- The initiative targets more than five crore tribal people from over 705 tribal communities which constitutes 8.6% (10.42 crore) of the population according to the census data of 2011.

Objectives and Goals of the PMJUGA

- The scheme intends to address the critical discrepancies in the social infrastructure like health, education, and livelihood through numerous government schemes by ensuring an efficient delivery mechanism.
- It comprises 25 interventions implemented by 17 government ministries funded by the DAPST for a span of five years.
- The initiative aims at socio-economic up-gradation through infrastructural development, economic empowerment through skill development and entrepreneurship, improvement in the quality of education and healthy living standards.

Innovative Schemes under PMJUGA to Boost Tribal Livelihoods

- The initiative introduces the innovative 'Tribal Home Stay' under the Swadesh Darshan scheme by the Ministry of Tourism to boost tourism in tribal areas.
- Special focus is laid on 22 lakh Forest Rights Act, 2006 patta holders providing them recognition of forest rights and sustainable livelihood options through governmental schemes.
- The infrastructure of tribal residential schools, hostels, and ashram schools will also be improved to promote education.
- Advanced facilities for the diagnosis of Sickle Cell Disease will also be provided under the initiative.

Rationale behind PMJUGA

- Tribal communities generally live in poverty with restricted access to resources, which PMJUGA aims to alleviate through skill training and employment generation.
- The scheme recognizes the problem of displacement faced by tribal communities due to technical projects and aims to address the same by

issuing 22 lakh FRA pattas recognising their land rights.

- Literacy rates in tribal communities are significantly lower which the scheme aims to address by constructing hostels under SSA.
- Health issues like stunting, wasting, underweight and Sick Cell Disease prevalent in tribal communities will be catered to by deploying Mobile Medical Units.

Other Government Initiatives for Scheduled Tribes

- Alongside PMJUGA, other initiatives like PM-Janjati Adivasi Nyaya Maha Abhiyan (PM-JANMAN) Scheme, TRIFED, Digital Transformation of Tribal Schools, Development of Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups, Pradhan Mantri Van Dhan Yojana, and Eklavya Model Residential Schools are in place for the welfare of Scheduled Tribes.

By consolidating various initiatives and assigning dedicated resources for holistic development of tribal communities, PMJUGA holds the potential to significantly improve their socio-economic aspects and ensure dignified life for them.

Polity

The Complexity and Balance of Bail: Insights from the Supreme Court of India

I. Introduction: A Peek into Supreme Court's Recent Ruling on Bail

- The Supreme Court of India has recently delved into the intricacies of bail through a case involving a culprit who was given bail in 13 criminal cases but faced issues in finding adequate sureties.
- Recognizing the difficulty in securing sureties, which often rely on close friends or family members, the court stressed achieving a balance between the perpetrator's fundamental rights under Article 21 and ensuring his attendance in court.
- Article 21 safeguards the right to life and personal liberty, applicable to both citizens and non-citizens.

II. Breaking Down Bail, Parole and Furlough: Know the Difference

- Bail refers to the provisional release of someone in legal custody, tied to their promise to appear in court when required. It often requires security or collateral deposited to the court for release.
- Case highlight: the principle behind granting bail was elaborated in the Supt. and Remembrancer of Legal Affairs v. Amiya Kumar Roy Choudhry (1973).
- There are three types of Bail: Regular Bail, Interim Bail, and Anticipatory Bail or Pre-arrest bail.
- Parole is the conditional release of a prisoner with suspended sentence, often tied to good behaviour and periodic reporting to authorities.
- Whereas, Furlough is given in cases of long-term imprisonment, seen as a right granted periodically to maintain familial and social ties and to diffuse negative impacts of long-term imprisonment.
- Both parole and furlough serve as reformatory processes under the Prisons Act of 1894, aimed at humanising the prison system.

III. Relevance in the Current Context: What This Means for the Accused and Society

- This development highlights the judiciary's balanced perspective in granting bail, acknowledging the defendant's constitutional rights while safeguarding societal interests.
- The tweaked focus to the hardships of securing sureties underlines the need for a more comprehensive and inclusive legal support system.
- In addition, the discourse provides a robust understanding of the distinctions and functions of legal provisions such as bail, parole, and furlough, fostering more enlightened discussions on legal reform and prison system.

GK Part:

- Article 21 of the Indian Constitution ensures the right to life and personal liberty.
- Important cases: Supt. and Remembrancer of Legal Affairs v. Amiya Kumar Roy Choudhry (1973)
- Crucial legal provisions: Section 437 and 439 of the CrPC (Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS)), Section 438 of the CrPC (BNSS), Prisons Act of 1894.
- Types of Bail in India: Regular Bail, Interim Bail, Anticipatory Bail, or Pre-arrest Bail.
- Parole and Furlough: reformatory processes aimed at humanising prison systems.

Establishment of India's 23rd Law Commission: An In-Depth Analysis

I. Introduction: Setting up of the 23rd Law Commission

- The Ministry of Law and Justice has recently established the 23rd Law Commission.
- The tenure of the commission is set for three years, starting from 1st September 2024 until 31st August 2027.

II. The Mandate and Objectives of the 23rd Law Commission

- The 23rd Law Commission follows the terms of reference of the preceding 22nd Law Commission which was constituted in 2020.
- The newly created panel is tasked with reviewing the existing laws in congruence with the Directive Principles of State Policy.
- **Key responsibilities infused into this Commission:**
 - Examining existing laws and suggesting necessary reforms to comply with Directive Principles and Constitutional Preamble objectives.
 - Surveying the impact of globalisation on factors such as food security and unemployment.
 - Recommendations for the protection of marginalised communities' interests.
 - Evaluation and improvement of the judicial administration to increase its responsiveness and performance.
 - Additional aims include delaying reductions, High Court rules simplification, and establishing a robust case flow management system.

III. Understanding the Concept of the Law Commission

- The Law Commission is a non-statutory body set up through a notification by the Government of India's Ministry of Law and Justice for conducting law-related research.
- The commission functions for a fixed tenure and serves as an advisory body to the government.

IV. Steering through the History of the Law Commission

- The inception of the first law commission traces back to 1834 under the Charter Act of 1833, led by Lord Macaulay.
- This Commission was pivotal in endorsing the codification of the Indian Penal Code and the Criminal Procedure Code.
- Following this, the formation of the second, third, and fourth Law Commissions took place in 1853, 1861, and 1879, respectively.
- Noteworthy laws developed by the first four Law Commissions include the Indian Code of Civil Procedure, 1908, the Indian Contract Act, 1872, the Indian Evidence Act, 1872 and the Transfer of Property Act, 1882.
- Post-Independence, the first Law Commission was constituted in 1955, with the then Attorney-General of India, M. C. Setalvad, as its Chairman.
- Since then, there have been 23 Law Commissions set up, each functioning for a term of three years.

V. Roles and Responsibilities of the Law Commission

- Identification and recommendation for the repeal of outdated laws.
- Investigating laws affecting the underprivileged and conducting post-audits of socio-economic legislation.
- Proposing new laws to achieve objectives outlined in the Preamble and implement the Directive Principles
- Regular review and recommendation on issues related to law and judicial administration referred by the Government.

VI. Significant Reports Published by the Law Commission

- The Law Commission of India has produced 289 reports on a variety of issues to date.
- Some remarkable reports include:
 - Report No. 283 (September, 2023): Age of Consent Under The Protection of Children From Sexual Offences Act, 2012.
 - Report No. 271 (July 2017): Human DNA Profiling.
 - Report No. 273 (October 2017): Implementation of the United Nations Convention against Torture.
 - Report No. 274 (April 2018): Review of the Contempt of Courts Act, 1971.

The Supreme Court's Ruling on 'Effective Consultation' in Judicial Appointments: An Insight into the Collegium System

The Supreme Court's Stance on 'Effective Consultation' in Judicial Appointments

- The Supreme Court recently stressed the significance of seniority and effective consultation in the appointment of High Court judges.
- This stance was made prominent in a case involving the Himachal Pradesh High Court.
- The Supreme Court ruled that a 'lack of effective consultation' in judicial appointments falls within the scope of judicial review.
- They directed a reconsideration of two judicial officers recommended for elevation, highlighting the importance of procedural adherence.

Understanding the Case at Hand

- Two District judges recommended for elevation by the Himachal Pradesh HC collegium were asked for reconsideration by the SC collegium.
- The case reflected the necessary involvement of collective consultation among Chief Justices and senior-most judges of HC.
- This ruling reinforced the need for strict adherence to established procedures in judicial appointments and emphasised the importance of seniority.

High Court Judges Appointment Procedure

- The appointment of High Court Judges adheres to a procedure based on the collegium system established via landmark judgements like the Second Judges Case (1993) and the Third Judges Case (1998).
- The collegium system authorises the judiciary to suggest appointments and transfers of judges, primarily limiting the government's role.
- A Memorandum of Procedure (MoP) was formalised for High Court judge appointments after the Third Judges Case.

What is a Collegium System of Judicial Appointments?

- The collegium system, not established by an Act of Parliament or by a provision of the Constitution, is a method of appointing and transferring judges of the Supreme Court and High Courts, evolved through the Supreme Court's judgements.
- It was introduced from the Second Judges Case (1993), making the SC collegium's recommendations binding on the central government and providing the judiciary the power to appoint and transfer higher judiciary judges.
- The Head of the Collegium system is the Chief Justice of India (CJI) for SC and the Chief Justice of the concerned High Court in the case of HC.

Critiques of the Collegium System

- The system has been condemned for its lack of transparency, giving limited public insight into the appointment process.
- There are concerns that personal relations within the judiciary may influence appointments, possibly leading to nepotism.
- The efficiency of this system is also questioned due to the absence of a permanent commission for judicial appointments, which can lead to delays in filling vacancies.

Recent Alterations in Standards for Preventive Detention: A Thorough Insight

I. Introduction

The Supreme Court, in the case of Jaseela Shaji vs Union of India, 2024, recently introduced new standards for preventive detention, altering the provisions under the Conservation of Foreign Exchange and Prevention of Smuggling Activities (COFEPOSA) Act, 1974. This insightful move, upheld by the Kerala high court, majorly contributes to the safeguarding of individual liberties.

II. Preventive Detention: Setting New Norms

What's new in the recent ruling of the Jaseela Shaji vs Union of India case? The supreme court delineated several new standards for preventive detention.

- Enforcement of Fair and Effective Opportunity: The detaining authority shall deliver copies of all

crucial documents to the detainee, constituting the base for detention.

- Acknowledging Personal Liberty as a Constitutional Right: Avowing personal liberty as a vital constitutional right, the Supreme Court determined that any adequacy in providing the relevant documents and information can lead to the violation of the fundamental right under Article 22(5) of the Constitution.
- Upholding Non-arbitrary Actions: Authorities must ensure non-arbitrary actions by respecting detainees' rights at all stages.
- Leveraging Technology for Faster communication: Authorities are urged to employ available technology for accelerated and timely communication related to detention, thus reducing unnecessary delays.

III. An Overview of Protection Against Arrest and Detention in India

The authority for protection against arrest and detention is vested in Article 22 of the Indian Constitution.

- Understanding Punitive and Preventive Detention: Punitive detention aims to punish an individual post-trial and conviction in court, while preventive detention aims to prevent potential future offences without trial or conviction.
- Dissecting Article 22: This Article is divided into two parts dealing with rights under ordinary laws and protections under preventive detention laws.

IV. The Connection Between Detention Laws and Article 22

At both the national and state level, legislative bodies have powers vested upon them regarding preventive detention.

- Parliament's Power: Article 22 empowers the Parliament to prescribe the conditions for detention without obtaining the advisory board's opinion and the maximum period for which a person can be detained.
- Legislative Adaptations over Time: The 44th Amendment Act, 1978 reduced the period of detention without obtaining the opinion of an advisory board from three to two months.
- Preventive Detention Laws in India: Over the years, various preventive detention laws have been enacted to maintain national safety, public order and prevent crimes.

V. Critique of Preventive Detention in India

Critics argue that no other democratic country has preventive detention as an integral part of its constitution like India. This law, while co-existing with fundamental rights, has often been misused for political gains and to suppress free speech.

VI. Landmark Judicial Cases Involving Preventive Detention

Over the years, numerous cases regarding preventive detention have come forward, each contributing towards the evolution of its laws.

- Overview of Important Cases: Few of the landmark cases that contributed to shaping the preventive detention laws in India include Shibban Lal v. State of Uttar Pradesh, 1954, Khudiram v. State of West Bengal, 1975, Nand Lal Bajaj v. The State of Punjab and Anr, 1981, Rekha v. State Of Tamil Nadu, 2011, Mariappan vs the District Collector And Others, 2014, Prem Narayan v. Union of India, 2019, Abhayraj Gupta v. Superintendent, Central Jail, Bareilly, 2021.

VIII. Conclusion

While preventive detention is a powerful instrument in maintaining national security and order, it's essential to ensure its use judiciously to safeguard individual rights and liberties. Changes in its laws must continuously evolve, catering to modern human rights standards, and judicial bodies need to maintain a balance, ensuring the law's legitimate use.

West Bengal's Revolutionary 'Aparajita' Anti-Rape Bill: A Comprehensive Analysis

1. Introduction to the 'Aparajita' Bill

- The Aparajita Women and Child (West Bengal Criminal Laws Amendment) Bill, 2024, recently passed by the West Bengal Assembly, aims at curbing violence against women.
- The bill includes provisions concerning capital punishment for rape and sexual harassment, thereby enforcing severe penalties for such crimes.

2. Key Provisions of the Aparajita Bill

- Amendment to Predominant Laws: The bill seeks to amend important provisions under the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) 2023, Bhartiya

Nagrik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS) 2023, and POCSO Act 2012.

- Capital Punishment for Rape: Death penalties have been proposed in cases where the act results in the victim's death or leaves her in a vegetative state.

- Fast Investigation and Trials: Investigations for rape cases should be completed within 21 days, with the trial period not exceeding 30 days, unless justified.

- Fast-Track Courts: The bill mandates the establishment of 52 special courts for dealing with sexual violence cases swiftly.

- Aparajita Task Force: A specialized task force to investigate rape and other atrocities will be set up.

- Protection and Penalty Measures: The bill also includes provisions to protect victims' identities, penalties for authorities delaying justice, and strict measures against unauthorised publication of court proceedings.

3. Related Challenges and Hurdles

- Constitutional Validity: Potential conflicts with central law might lead to jurisdictional issues, requiring the President's assent.

- Unrealistic Time Frame: The stipulated time limit for investigations may collide with the reality of the complex legal system.

- Legal Challenges: The Supremacy of burdened central legislations is an inherent issue, seen in past cases like State of West Bengal v. Union of India (1964) and KK Verma v. Union of India (1960).

- Implementation and Court Overburden: The bill's effective implementation faces potential hurdles like requirement for infrastructure upgrades and the problem of existing case backlog.

4. Existing Laws Related to Rape in India

- Criminal Law (Amendment) Act 2013, and 2018 were enacted for legal deterrence against sexual offences, enhancing the punishment, including the death penalty for crimes against minors.

- Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act, 2012 (POCSO) primarily protects children from sexual harassment and assault.

5. Persisting Challenges in Addressing Women's Security

- High Crime Rates: The NCRB reports a significant increase in the crimes against women.

- Societal Stereotypes: Deep-rooted patriarchy and the media's role in objectifying women hinders women's safety.

- Legal Challenges and Delayed Justice: Inefficient legal processes and the infrequency of death penalties further aggravates the situation.

- Lack of Awareness and Poor Infrastructure: Disparities in education about consent and gender sensitivity along with poor safety measures in cities exacerbates the issue at hand.

This comprehensive look at the 'Aparajita' Bill and its implications can help us understand the progress and challenges in sexual violence legislation. The fight against sexual violence is not just a matter of laws; our socio-cultural practices need to evolve for creating a respectful and secure environment for all women and children.

The Genesis, Role, and Significance of the 23rd Law Commission

I. Introduction to the 23rd Law Commission

- The 23rd Law Commission of India was announced on September 2nd.

- The commission will hold a mandate between September 1, 2024, and August 31, 2027.

- The primary task assigned is to review laws against the backdrop of the Directive Principles of State Policy and Constitutional objectives.

II. The Law Commission of India: History & Role

- Originally conceptualised in 1834 by Lord Macaulay, the Law Commission has been pivotal to the formulation and codification of major legal edicts like the Indian Penal Code and the Criminal Procedure Code.

- Post-independence, the first Law Commission was established in 1955 under the chairmanship of M. C. Setalvad.

- Until now, there have been 23 Law Commissions, with each sitting for a definite period of three years to continue the legacy of legal review and reform.

- The Law Commission consists of a chairperson, four full-time members, up to five part-time members, and a few ex officio members.

- They are responsible for reviewing laws, recommending repeals, and suggesting legal reforms.

III. Progressive Impacts of Law Commissions: Important Findings

- Key actionable recommendations have been issued by Law Commissions since 1955.
- For example, the 1st Law Commission in 1955 suggested a broad codification of laws and reforms of the Indian Penal Code.
- The 21st Law Commission in 2018 made a significant observation that a Uniform Civil Code was "neither necessary nor desirable" at that stage.
- The 22nd Commission in 2022 proposed the Criminal Procedure (Identification) Act, replacing the Identification of Prisoners Act, 1920.

IV. Objectives of the Commission & Limitations

- Broad objectives include the identification of obsolete laws for repeal, devising SOPs for law reviews, amending laws as per economic needs, and evaluating laws against Directive Principles and socio-economic needs.
- However, the Law Commission does come with its own share of limitations. Notably, their recommendations are advisory and not legally binding, and they don't hold the power to ensure their suggestions are adopted.
- Other constraints include limited resources, potential political influence, delays in report submission, inconsistent follow-ups on previous recommendations, limited scope for public feedback, and dependency on government for adoption of proposals.

V. Conclusion: Improving the Effectiveness of the Law Commission

- To enhance its effectiveness, the Law Commission should focus on improving the implementation of its recommendations, broadening public engagement, streamlining processes, and maintaining independence from political pressures.
 - These measures would significantly aid the commission's stance on legal reforms and increase its impact.
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Miscellaneous

Indian Government Upgrades Four CPSEs to Navratna Status

I. Introduction: The Navratna Status

- Recently, four Central Public Sector Enterprises (CPSEs) - Railtel Corporation of India, Solar Energy Corporation of India, SJVN Limited, and the National Hydroelectric Power Corporation (NHPC) have been upgraded to 'Navratna' status by the Indian government.
- Introduced in 1997, the Navratna scheme was designed to acknowledge CPSEs with comparative advantages and equip them to become potent global leaders.
- This move takes the total tally of Navratna CPSEs in India up to 25.

II. Criteria for Navratna Status

- Navratna status is awarded by the Department of Public Enterprises (DPE) under the purview of the Ministry of Finance.
- The status is bestowed upon government-owned enterprises that were previously classified as 'Miniratna' category I.
- This recognition is given considering their exceptional financial stability and market performance.

III. Added Advantages: Benefits of Navratna Status

- Granting Navratna status comes with multiple benefits, significantly enhancing the financial and operational freedom of these enterprises.
- The companies attain the power to invest upto INR 1,000 crore or 15% of their net worth on a single project without the need for government approval.
- Increased financial autonomy permits these enterprises to embark on joint ventures, form

strategic alliances, and float subsidiaries abroad, broadening their operational domain.

IV. Know Your Navratna: Insights into the Recently Upgraded Entities

- Railtel Corporation of India is a Mini Ratna (Category-I) enterprise focusing on providing nationwide broadband, telecom and multimedia networks.
- Solar Energy Corporation of India, under the administrative control of the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy, is dedicated to the promotion and commercialization of solar energy technologies.
- SJVN Limited, a joint venture between the Government of India and the Government of Himachal Pradesh, is engaged in the generation and sale of electricity.
- The National Hydroelectric Power Corporation (NHPC) is an Indian Hydropower generation company that holds a Miniratna Category-I CPSE status.

Concluding Note: The allocation of the Navratna status to these CPSEs underscores the government's commitment to enhancing the performance of public sector enterprises and promoting self-reliance. These enterprises will now have increased operational autonomy, paving the way for higher efficiency and growth.

7th Rashtriya Poshan Maah 2024: An Initiative towards a Superhit Bharat

Introduction and Launch of the 7th Rashtriya Poshan Maah 2024

- The 7th Rashtriya Poshan Maah was recently launched by the Ministry of Women and Child Development on 1st September 2024 in the Dhar district of Madhya Pradesh.
- The same ministry was also awarded the National Award for e-Governance 2024 (Gold) for the Poshan Tracker initiative.

In-depth on the National Awards for e-Governance

- The National Awards for e-Governance are presented by the Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances (DARPG), Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions annually since 2003.
- The primary purpose of these awards is to recognize achievements in e-Governance and promote and exchange experiences in solving problems, mitigating risks, resolving issues, and planning for success.
- All Central Ministries/Departments, State/UT Governments, Districts, Local Bodies, Central & State Government PSUs, Academic/Research Institutions (Government and Non –Government) are eligible to apply for these awards.

Exploring Rashtriya Poshan Maah

- Rashtriya Poshan Maah is an annual campaign initiated to combat malnutrition while promoting better nutrition and health practices.
- Celebrated under Poshan Abhiyan, this campaign is concentrated in September, focusing on enhancing awareness about nutrition and combating malnutrition among vulnerable groups.
- The initiative is underpinned by various activities such as plantation drives, distribution of nutritional supplements, community outreach programs, exhibitions, and educational sessions.
- The 7th Rashtriya Poshan Maah 2024 commenced with a nationwide plantation drive titled "Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam," focusing on themes like Anaemia, Growth Monitoring, Complementary Feeding, Poshan Bhi Padhai Bhi, Technology for Better Governance, and Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam.

Delving into POSHAN Abhiyaan

- Launched in March 2018, the POSHAN Abhiyaan addresses malnutrition by focusing on the nutritional needs of adolescent girls, pregnant women, lactating mothers, and children up to 6 years old.
- Administered by the Ministry of Women and Child Development, it aims to reduce stunting, under-nutrition, anaemia, and low birth weight.
- The Abhiyaan incorporates components like Village Health Sanitation Nutrition Day (VHSND) and ICDS-CAS (Common Application Software) for better monitoring and coordination.

Understanding the Poshan Tracker

- The Poshan Tracker is a mobile app designed to monitor the health and nutrition of children and pregnant women across India.
- This app provides the Anganwadi Workers (AWWs) with the real-time progress of their interventions and a measure of their impact.
- It uses WHO standards to measure a child's growth and recommends corrective action based on the gathered inputs.

Anaemia and its prevalence in India and Globally

- Anaemia is a medical condition characterised by a lesser number of red blood cells or a reduced concentration of haemoglobin within these cells, needed for oxygen transfer in the body.
- Caused by inadequate intake or absorption of essential nutrients including iron, folate, vitamins B12, and vitamin A, it affects 40% of children between 6–59 months and approximately 37% of pregnant women globally.
- As per NFHS 5 (2019-21), in India, 29.1% of adolescent boys, 59.1% of adolescent girls, 52.2% of pregnant women, and 67.1% of children suffer from anaemia.

In essence, the 7th Rashtriya Poshan Maah 2024 exemplifies India's vigorous efforts to combat malnutrition and push towards healthier lifestyles whilst underlining the essential role of technology in Governance and Health sectors.

The Legacy of Dadabhai Naoroji: Looking back at 199th Birth Anniversary

Introduction: About Dadabhai Naoroji

- Born on 4th September 1825, Dadabhai Naoroji was a notable Indian political leader, scholar and social reformer during the British Rule. He was fondly referred to as the "Grand Old Man of India".
- His contributions spanning various dimensions have been instrumental in shaping India's socio-political landscape.

Recent Highlight: 199th Birth Anniversary

- His 199th birth anniversary was marked on 4th September 2024, reigniting discussions and

reflections on his significant contributions and achievements.

Dadabhai Naoroji's Contributions

1. First Indian British MP:

- In 1892, Naoroji made history by becoming the first Indian member of the British parliament, representing the Central Finsbury seat as a Liberal Party candidate.

2. Pioneer in Establishing Organisations in England:

- Naoroji co-founded the London Indian Society in 1865 and further went on to establish the East India Association in 1866. These organisations aimed to promulgate India's perspectives and address its concerns in the United Kingdom.

3. Leading Role in the Indian National Congress:

- He served as the president of the Indian National Congress (INC) three times – in 1886 (Calcutta), 1893 (Lahore), and 1906 (Calcutta). His leadership proved instrumental in INC's early years.

4. Prominent Writer & Economist:

- Naoroji is particularly acknowledged for his "Drain Theory (1867)", which exposed how Britain was economically exploiting India.
- In 1901, he published the book titled "Poverty and Un-British Rule in India", further expanding on the economic issues faced by India under British rule.

5. Other Political Contributions:

- He advocated for the creation of a standing committee in the British House of Commons to address Indian legislative bodies' grievances.
- In 1893, he formed an Indian parliamentary committee in the British Parliament for lobbying for reforms in India.
- Further, in 1895, he was appointed to the Royal Commission on Indian Expenditure.

Historical Importance and General Knowledge Insights

- Dadabhai Naoroji remains a significant figure in India's journey towards independence, advocating reforms, justice, and socio-economic improvements.
- The "Drain Theory", proposed by him, has been a crucial part of economic studies related to Colonial India.
- Considered to be one of the founders of modern India, his principles of self-governance, democracy

and economic liberation for India still remain relevant.

Discovery of the World's Second Largest Diamond: A Glimmering Gem from Botswana

Discovery of the Mega Diamond

- Karowe Diamond Mine in Botswana has unveiled a new gem, a diamond weighing 2,492 carats, making it the second-largest diamond in the world.
- This find comes second only to the Cullinan diamond, a massive gem of 3,106 carats, discovered in 1905 in South Africa.
- The Mega Diamond Recovery (MDR) X-ray Transmission (XRT) technology played a considerable part in uncovering this diamond, helping in the identification and preservation of larger diamonds.

Botswana's Economic Dependency on Diamonds

- Botswana, recognized as a major diamond producer, banks heavily on this precious gemstone, which contributes to 30% of its GDP and makes up 80% of its exports.
- Thus, a discovery of this magnitude significantly boosts Botswana's economic prospects.

The Amazing Allotrope: Diamond

- A diamond is an allotrope of carbon and holds the title of being the hardest naturally occurring substance on Earth.
- They are created in the Earth's mantle and brought to the surface through volcanic eruptions, found commonly in volcanic landforms like dykes and sills.
- Uses of Diamonds: Their hardness and brilliance make them highly desirable for jewellery. Additionally, they are used in metal polishing, gem cutting, and various industrial applications such as drill cutting edges.

India's Role in the Diamond Industry

- Key Diamond Locations in India: The Panna belt in Madhya Pradesh, the Wajrakarur Kimberlite pipe,

and the Krishna River basin in Andhra Pradesh house India's significant diamond reserves.

- Major centres for the diamond cutting and polishing industry in India include Surat, Navsari, Ahmedabad and Palampur.

Worldwide Diamond Production

- Leading Diamond Producers: The major diamond-producing countries are Russia, Botswana, Canada, Australia, South Africa, and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC).
- These countries significantly contribute to the world diamond industry, with their large reserves and well-established diamond mining and refining industries.

This substantial discovery not only holds mining significance but also provides significant economic implications for Botswana and continues to maintain the relevance of diamonds in the global marketplace.

Typhoon Shanshan and the Global Cyclone Naming System

Typhoon Shanshan Hits Japan

- Typhoon Shanshan, a tropical cyclone, has recently impacted Japan, causing numerous disruptions due to heavy rainfall and strong wind gusts.
- The typhoon led to numerous airline and rail service cancellations, signifying major disruptions in the country's transportation systems.

Understanding Typhoons: A Type of Tropical Cyclone

- Typhoons are a form of tropical cyclone; they are also referred to as hurricanes or cyclones based on the geographical location where they form.
- These natural phenomena involve rapid inward air circulation centred around a low-pressure area.
- In the Northern Hemisphere, this air circulation occurs in an anticlockwise direction, while in the Southern Hemisphere, it happens clockwise.
- A typical characteristic of cyclones includes violent storms and severe weather conditions, which pose significant threats to life and property.

The Global Cyclone Naming System

- The World Meteorological Organisation (WMO) is the global body responsible for determining the names for tropical cyclones, with the procedures varying regionally.
- Naming cyclones involves an alphabetical sequence, alternately using male and female names, or following the alphabetical order of countries, depending on the regional practices.
- The naming process is performed by regional tropical cyclone bodies, which utilise pre-designated lists of names proposed by WMO Members' National Meteorological and Hydrological Services.
- This organised naming system helps in quickly identifying storms during warning and reporting processes, greatly aiding in communication and preparation efforts.

The Transformation of Port Blair to Sri Vijaya Puram: Trading Colonial Legacy for Historical Significance

The Rebirth of Port Blair as Sri Vijaya Puram

1. The Indian government recently renamed Port Blair, the capital of the Union Territory of Andaman and Nicobar Islands, as Sri Vijaya Puram.
2. The name change signifies a break from the colonial legacy of British rule and symbolises India's victory in its freedom struggle.
3. It also underlines the unique historical role of the islands in India's fight for independence.

History Behind Port Blair (now Sri Vijaya Puram):

1. Historically, the Andaman Islands functioned as a strategic naval base for the Chola Empire.
2. During the 11th century, under Rajendra Chola I, they played a crucial role in the Chola invasion of the Srivijaya Empire (modern-day Indonesia).
3. British Naval officer Archibald Blair named the place Port Blair. During British rule, it became synonymous with oppression as it served as a penal colony, particularly after the Revolt of 1857.

4. It housed the massive prison known as 'Kaala Paani', which held a number of freedom fighters, including Veer Damodar Savarkar.

5. On 30th December 1943, Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose hoisted the national flag for the first time on Indian soil in Port Blair.

Strategic Significance of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands:

1. Andaman and Nicobar Islands are strategically located in the Bay of Bengal, giving India substantial ocean space under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS).

2. The islands provide the first line of defence against any maritime threats from the east.

Historical Overview of Andaman and Nicobar Islands:

1. India's association with these islands started after the 1857 War of Independence when it was used by the British as a penal colony for Indian revolutionaries.

2. During the Japanese occupation in 1942, the islands became the first part of India that was liberated from British rule in 1943.

3. The Andaman Nicobar Command (ANC), established in Port Blair in 2001 after the post-Kargil War security review, is India's first joint and unified operational command.

Conclusion: The renaming of Port Blair is a significant step in acknowledging and honouring the historical and strategic significance of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands. The new name, Sri Vijaya Puram, marks the victory and unity of the nation, moving away from the shadows of colonial rule.

India's Leap Towards Digital Innovation: BHASKAR and Digital India Programme

Introduction:

India is stepping up its drive towards digital transformation with the imminent launch of Bharat

Startup Knowledge Access Registry (BHASKAR) by the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT). BHASKAR is all set to accelerate innovation and collaboration within the Indian startup ecosystem.

Why in the news? DPIIT's New Startup Facilitator, "BHASKAR"

- BHASKAR, being launched under the Startup India program, is aimed to centralise and streamline the interactions in the startup ecosystem.
- This initiative is expected to aid over about 1.46 lakh DPIIT-recognized startups by allowing them personalised engagement through unique BHASKAR IDs.
- Notably, the platform has been designed to foster innovation, employment opportunities, and enhance the overall growth trajectory of India's startup sector.
- The central vision is to establish India as a global leader in entrepreneurship.

Understanding India's Startup Ecosystem

- In the global arena, India holds the third position in terms of startup ecosystem.
- From 2014 to 2023, startups in India have experienced a substantial increase from around 7,000 to over 80,000.
- The rise of over 100 unicorns and a few decacorns underlines the success and maturity of Indian startups.

Digital India Programme - A Game Changer

- Launched in 2015, the Digital India Programme has facilitated several crucial Government schemes such as BharatNet, Make in India, Startup India, Standup India, among others.
- This initiative is framing the present decade as 'India's techade', owing to India's tech prowess clubbed with the data and demographic dividend.
- The programme includes several significant schemes:

1. Diksha: Targets to equip all teachers across the nation with advanced digital technology.
2. eNAM: Pan-India electronic trade portal connecting Agricultural Produce Market Committees across states.
3. eSanjeevani: A telemedicine service platform launched by the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare.

4. DigiBunai: Assists weavers in creating digital artwork to translate the saree design to be loaded onto the looms.

5. PM SVANidhi scheme: Aimed at providing affordable loans to street vendors and encouraging digital transactions among them.

- During Covid-19, the Digital India Programme further proved to be a lifesaver with offerings like the Aarogya Setu app for contact tracing.

In conclusion, the BHASKAR platform and the Digital India Programme are the perfect representation of India's striving towards digitization, innovation, and collaboration. These initiatives are clearly reinforcing India's resolve to become a global leader in technological advancement and entrepreneurship.

Vulture Count 2024 - A Pivotal Initiative to Revitalise Nature's Sanitary Workforce

1. Introduction and Background:

- WWF-India has embarked upon a noteworthy initiative, Vulture Count 2024, focused on estimating the numbers and raising awareness about the critically endangered bird species.
- The aim of this campaign is not only to study vulture populations but also to sensitise the public about their ecological importance and the existential threats they face.

2. Significance of the Initiative:

- The Vulture Count will run from September 7 to October 6, coinciding with the International Vulture Awareness Day on the first Saturday of September (September 7, 2024).
- It aspires to create comprehensive baseline data on vulture populations, enabling the systematic monitoring of these crucial bird species.
- The gathered data will help track population trends, understand critical habitats, and measure the impact of environmental changes, which can aid in formulating targeted conservation strategies and policies.

3. Importance of Vultures in Ecosystem:

- Vultures, often referred to as nature's clean-up crew, play a significant role in ecosystems, feeding on dead animals to prevent the spread of diseases affecting wildlife, livestock, and humans.
- They enhance nutrient cycling and help in maintaining ecological balance through the consumption of decomposing animal carcasses.

4. Threats to Vulture Populations:

- Vultures in India have been witnessing a dramatic decline due to factors such as the ingestion of toxic NSAIDs like diclofenac, habitat loss, electrocution, food scarcity, and human disturbances.
- The resultant reduction in these essential scavengers can lead to a rise in diseases, impacting the environment and public health adversely.

5. Key Species under the Initiative:

- Vulture Count 2024 will focus primarily on nine key vulture species including the white-rumped vulture, red-headed vulture, Indian vulture, bearded vulture, slender-billed vulture, Himalayan griffon, Eurasian griffon, Egyptian vulture, and the cinereous vulture.
- These species, often overlooked, are integral to maintaining the ecological balance and require urgent conservation efforts.

Worldwide, initiatives like Vulture Count 2024 reflect the growing recognition of the importance of these often misunderstood creatures and the essential roles they perform in our ecosystems. Through raising awareness and adopting comprehensive conservation strategies, we can hope to counter the serious threats facing these birds and facilitate a healthier ecological balance.

Nepal Joins the International Solar Alliance (ISA)

Nepal's Entry into ISA

- Recently, Nepal took formal membership of the International Solar Alliance by handing over its Instrument of Ratification to the ISA in New Delhi.

- This conveys Nepal's commitment to taking advantage of solar energy on a large scale, supporting global initiatives in dealing with climate change and enhancing collaboration and partnerships between nations.

Brief about ISA

- The International Solar Alliance (ISA) is a multinational organisation, established in 2015 by the Prime Minister of India and the President of France, at the United Nations Climate Change Conference in Paris.
- ISA primarily focuses on promoting the increased deployment of solar energy technologies by providing an action-oriented, member-driven platform.
- It is guided by its 'Towards 1000' strategy which aims to mobilise USD 1000 billion of investments in solar energy solutions by 2030, provide energy access to 1000 million people through clean energy solutions, install 1000 GW of solar energy capacity, and mitigate solar emissions of up to 1000 million tonnes of CO2 every year.

ISA's Vision and Mission

- ISA envisions to enhance the brightness of the sun collectively, indicating its ambition to boost solar power internationally.
- Its mission asserts that every home, regardless of its geographical location, should have access to light, signifying ISA's objective to provide universal energy access via clean solar energy.

Headquarters of ISA

- The headquarters of the ISA is at the National Institute of Solar Energy (NISE) in Gurugram, India.

ISA and Global General Knowledge (GK)

- ISA is a landmark collaboration in the global fight against climate change, initiating increased utilisation of solar power in the member nations.
- It presents an excellent example of strategic international cooperation around a shared vision, mutually beneficial goals, and common principles aimed at solving a complex global issue.

Algeria's Integration into BRICS New Development Bank: A Boost for Emerging Economies

1. Introduction: An Overview of Recent Development

- Algeria has recently received the official nod to join the BRICS New Development Bank (NDB).
- The announcement was made by the Bank's president, Dilma Rousseff, during the bank's ninth annual meeting in Cape Town.
- The BRICS bloc, consisting of Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa, established the bank in 2015 to offer support to infrastructure and sustainable development projects in developing nations and emerging economies.

2. Laying Foundation: Algeria's Admission into NDB

- Algeria's integration is a significant step, following a positive evaluation of its macroeconomic indicators.
- Since NDB's establishment, membership has grown beyond the founding BRICS nations.
- New entrants to the NDB in 2021 include Bangladesh, Egypt, the United Arab Emirates, and Uruguay.

3. Algeria's Economic Impact and Importance

- Known as Africa's top natural gas exporter, Algeria's admission is forecasted to strengthen its economic growth prospects.
- NDB's key role is to gather resources for developmental projects, giving an alternate route to traditional global financial institutions such as the World Bank and IMF.

4. Revision Point: Key Facts about BRICS for GK

- BRICS is an acronym representing Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa signifying a group of rising economies.
- The bloc was initially established as "BRIC" in 2009, and with South Africa's addition in 2010, it became BRICS.
- The intent behind this group is to bolster cooperation and conversation among member

countries on economic, political, and developmental subjects.

- NDB was established in 2015 to aid infrastructure and sustainable development ventures in BRICS and other emerging economies.

- BRICS countries collectively make up a significant chunk of global GDP and are pivotal players in international trade.

- To discuss and coordinate policies on various global issues, BRICS arranges annual summits.

- NDB has grown its membership further to include countries such as Bangladesh, Egypt, the United Arab Emirates, and Uruguay in addition to the founding members.

5. Future Implications: What to Look For?

- Algeria's membership could potentially set the stage for other economically promising African nations to join the NDB, marking a shift in global economic dynamics.

- The statement should be closely watched for its potential to reshape spheres of influence among major power blocs in the global economic framework.

Navika Sagar Parikrama II: Commending the Indian Navy's Women Power in Maritime Expeditions

INSV Tarini's Second Global Sojourn: A Feather in Indian Navy's Cap

I. Navika Sagar Parikrama II: An Overview

- Navika Sagar Parikrama II is the second circumnavigation expedition announced by the Indian Navy involving women officers.
- Lt Cdr Roopa A and Lt Cdr Dilna K represent the indomitable spirit and prowess of women in the Indian Navy.
- They will commence the gruelling mission on board the Indian Naval Sailing Vessel (INSV) Tarini.

II. The Guiding Force: Cdr Abhilash Tomy (Retd.)

- The brave women officers are being mentored by Cdr Abhilash Tomy (Retd.), an acclaimed

circumnavigator and hero of the Golden Globe Race.

- The Golden Globe Race is a prestigious international sailing competition, which mandates solo circumnavigation of the globe without stoppages, exclusively relying on traditional navigation techniques.

III. Significance Attached to the Expedition Logo

- The logo for Navika Sagar Parikrama II has a meaningful design.

- The octagonal shape at the centre symbolises the Indian Navy – reflecting the institutional essence, the sun portrays a celestial body – indicating navigational aids, and the compass serves as a directional tool – guiding the sailors through uncharted and challenging seas.

IV. The Historic Expeditions of Indian Navy

- Indian Navy's previous expeditions showcase its prowess in naval maritime expeditions. These include:

- A trans-oceanic voyage from Goa to Rio de Janeiro passing by Cape Town and wheeling back to Goa.

- A sailing expedition from Goa to Sri Vijaya Puram (formerly known as Port Blair) and then returning to Goa.

- A voyage from Goa to Port Louis, Mauritius symbolising maritime partnership.

V. Importance From a General Knowledge

Perspective

- The flagship initiative like Navika Sagar Parikrama II by the Indian Navy enhances the country's maritime global standing.

- The Indian Navy's exploration expeditions contribute immensely to strengthening India's position and presence in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR).

- The expedition also sets a precedent for women empowerment in the armed forces, highlighting their capabilities in challenging situations and tasks.

- It signifies the application of traditional navigation methods, promoting sustainable marine practices.

Conclusion: Navika Sagar Parikrama II is not just a naval expedition but a representation of India's growing maritime strength and the vital role of women officers in safeguarding the country's maritime interests.

"Nomination of Gingee Fort for UNESCO's World Heritage Site: A Dive into its Historical and Geographical Significance"

Introduction and Current Relevance

- The Gingee Fort, located in Tamil Nadu's Villupuram district, has been recently nominated for UNESCO's World Heritage Site list.

- This nomination forms part of the 'Maratha Military Landscapes' proposal, which includes a total of 12 forts.

Geographical Significance of Gingee Fort

- The fort is situated atop three hilltops: Rajagiri, Krishnagiri, and Chandragiri, which significantly adds to its strategic importance.

- Its enduring reputation as one of the most impregnable fortresses in peninsular India has led to it being referred to as the "Troy of the East."

- The fort's defences, which include a 60-foot-wide rampart and an 80-foot-wide moat, played a crucial role during the Carnatic Wars contested between the French and British.

Historical Overview of Gingee Fort

- The fort was originally erected by Ananta Kon of the Konar Dynasty in 1200 CE and was named Krishnagiri thereafter.

- It possessed strategic importance during several significant historical periods, including the Vijayanagar Empire, Maratha dynasty, Mughal rule, French and British occupations.

- Over time, Gingee Fort served as the last stronghold for the Marathas during their resistance against Mughal forces and was controlled by the Nawabs of Arcot and, later, the British.

Architectural Features of Gingee Fort

- The fort complex is a treasure trove of architectural marvels, housing several temples, shrines, and significant constructs such as a cannon, clock tower, armoury, elephant tank, granary, and gymnasium.

- The impressive edifices within the fort include the Kalyana Mahal, boasting an eight storey façade,

and the Indo-Islamic architectural features in the Krishnagiri Citadel.

- The fort is equipped with sophisticated water supply systems, assuring regular water flow even at the highest points of the fort.

About UNESCO World Heritage Sites

- A UNESCO World Heritage Site is a location recognized for its outstanding cultural or natural importance and significance for humanity.
- As of September 2024, India houses 43 UNESCO World Heritage Sites, with the Mound-Burial System of the Ahom Dynasty being the latest addition.

Procedure for Nominating a UNESCO's World Heritage Site

- The process of nomination involves creating a list of significant cultural and natural heritage sites by the country.
- The selected sites are then evaluated by the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) and the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN).
- The final decision to include the nominated sites in the UNESCO World Heritage List is made at the annual committee meeting, based on advisory recommendations and criteria fulfilment.

"Stepping Into the Future: The Emergence of Smart Proteins"

Introduction and Overview

- "Smart Proteins", considered the food of the future, have recently gained attention in India. The nation's government approved the Biotechnology for Economy, Environment, and Employment (BioE3) Policy, making the production of these proteins a key area of focus.

In-Depth: What are Smart Proteins?

- Alternative proteins, often termed as "Smart Proteins", are derived from unconventional sources like algae, fungi, or insects. They can also be produced through advanced techniques like lab-grown cells and fermentation.

- The spectrum of smart proteins includes plant-based proteins, which are designed to imitate the taste and nutritional aspects of animal products without the requirement of breeding livestock.

Environmental Implications of Smart Protein Production

- According to recent data, the production of alternative proteins can substantially minimise the environmental impact compared to traditional meat production.
- The statistics suggest that alternative protein production can save up to 99% water and land, contribute up to 91% less to water pollution, and reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 90%.

Significance of Smart Proteins

- The rise in income is directly proportional to the consumption of more proteins. India has witnessed an increase from 9.7% of calories coming from proteins in 1991 to 11% in 2021.
- Smart proteins not only mitigate the risk of zoonotic diseases, ensuring food safety, but also promote ethical consumption patterns. Notably, these proteins align well with the dietary habits of India.

Understanding the BioE3 Policy

- The recently approved BioE3 Policy aims at fostering high-performance biomanufacturing.
- The policy aligns with broader national objectives, like achieving a 'Net Zero' carbon economy and propelling sustainable growth, by advancing a circular bioeconomy.

GK Aspect:

Historically, alternative protein sources have existed for decades. However, the advent of biotechnology has broadened their production sources, making them integral to plans for sustainable and environment-friendly growth. This shift is also in line with the global trend of moving towards a 'Net Zero' carbon economy.

The BioE3 Policy is a clear indication of India's commitment to these global trends and practices. By prioritising the production of "smart proteins", India is making its contribution to both environmental protection and the global fight against zoonotic diseases.

Sports and Games

India's Remarkable Performance at Paralympics 2024

India's Unprecedented Achievement at Paralympics 2024

- The Paralympic Games 2024 took place in Paris, drawing global attention to para-athletes.
- This year India made history by securing the highest number of medals ever in Paralympic Games, winning 29 medals which include 7 gold, 9 silver, and 13 bronze, earning India the 18th rank.
- Having steadily improved its performance over the years, this achievement marks a significant moment in Indian sporting history.

Medal Tally Breakdown and Key Performances

- India secured 7 gold, 9 silver and 13 bronze medals in this edition of the Paralympics.
- Notable performances came from Avani Lekhara who won a gold in shooting, further complemented by Mona Agarwal who clinched a bronze in the same event; these performances marked a historic double podium finish for India.
- Additionally, on August 2nd, Kumar Nitesh bagged the first-ever gold medal for India in badminton.

The Journey of India at Paralympics 2024

- The journey to the Paralympics Games 2024 was heralded by meticulous planning, consistent practice, upgraded training facilities and increased support from government and private sectors.
- The Paralympic Committee of India in collaboration with the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, played an instrumental part in scouting for talent and promoting athletes.
- Athletes also benefited from the Target Olympic Podium Scheme (TOPS) which provided financial assistance, world-class coaching, and international exposure to athletes.

India's Expanded Representation at Paralympics 2024

- Paralympics 2024 has seen India stepping up its representation with 84 para-athletes, including 32 women athletes.

- For the first time, India participated in para-cycling, para-rowing, and blind judo, thus, extending its footprint to 12 out of the total 22 sports at the event.

In conclusion, the Paralympics 2024 held in Paris was a historical moment for India, uncovering the solid potential and determination of its athletes.

President Emmanuel Macron of France Awarded the Prestigious Olympic Order

1. Introduction and About:

- Emmanuel Macron, President of France, has been honoured with the Olympic Order in gold. The International Olympic Committee (IOC) conferred this prestigious distinction in recognition of his extensive contributions to the Olympic movement. The renowned award recognizes Macron's firm support for the Olympic Games Paris 2024 and his commitment to the Olympic ideals.

- His crucial involvement symbolised global unity and the power of sports, making the Paris 2024 Olympics a success.

2. Macron's Support For Paris 2024:

- As soon as Emmanuel Macron assumed the presidency of France in 2017, he wholeheartedly supported Paris's bid to host the 2024 Olympic Games.

- Emmanuel Macron's support was personal and not solely political. His thorough understanding of the Olympic movement and his exceptional vision ably guided the Games' path.

- Macron's early comprehension of the Olympics' huge potential to unite the global populace played a significant role in his push for France's candidature.

3. IOC President's Appreciation and Acknowledgment:

- Thomas Bach, President of the International Olympic Committee, nostalgically recollected his initial meeting with Macron, remarking that Macron brought unparalleled energy and vision to the Olympic project.

- Bach stated Macron's understanding of the project was comprehensive, and his firm belief in the unifying potential of sports played a critical part in rallying the French public around the Olympic Games.

General Knowledge:

- The Olympic Order in gold is the highest award of the Olympic Movement and is awarded for particularly distinguished contributions to the Olympic Movement, i.e., recognition of efforts worthy of merit in the cause of sport.
- Pierre de Coubertin was a French educator and historian who founded the International Olympic Committee. He is considered the father of the modern Olympic Games.
- The Olympic Games Paris 2024 will express global unity and the enduring power of sports, following the key concepts of Macron's leadership.
- Macron is the current President of France which is located in Western Europe, sharing its border with several countries including Belgium, Luxembourg, Germany, Switzerland, Italy, Spain, and Andorra.
- This event highlights the unique way in which the field of sports can create international solidarity, bringing together nations in peaceful competition.

In conclusion, President Emmanuel Macron's receipt of the Olympic Order underlines his significant contribution to the Olympic movement and the successful bid for Paris 2024. His recognition extends beyond France, highlighting the influential role sports play in uniting nations regardless of geopolitical disputes.

US Open 2024: Landmark Victories in Tennis

Overview of Winners and Runners-up

- The 2024 US Open in Flushing Meadows, Queens, New York City, spanned from August 19 to September 8.
- In the Men's Single category, Jannik Sinner of Italy triumphed over Taylor Fritz of the USA.
- The Women's Single trophy went to Aryna Sabalenka from Belarus, defeating Jessica Pegula from the USA.
- The Men's Double was claimed by Australians Max Purcell and Jordan Thompson, leaving Germans Kevin Krawietz and Tim Puetz in the second spot.
- The Women's Double was won by Lyudmyla Kichenok from Ukraine and Jelena Ostapenko from Latvia, beating Kristina Mladenovic from France and Zhang Shuai from China.

- In Mixed Doubles, Italians Sara Errani and Andrea Vavassori stood victorious against Americans Donald Young and Taylor Townsend.

Milestone Victory for Jannik Sinner

- Jannik Sinner, the current World No. 1, carved history as the first Italian man to win the US Open men's singles title in the Open Era.
- His victory is a significant achievement for Italian tennis and consolidates his position atop the sport.

Grand Slam Triumph for Aryna Sabalenka

- Aryna Sabalenka achieved her third Grand Slam title with this US Open victory.
- Her previous titles include the Australian Open women's singles champion in 2023 and 2024.
- This achievement completes a remarkable trifecta of success for the Belarusian tennis ace.

Historical Perspectives

- In the Open Era, Serena Williams and Chris Evert, both from the USA, hold the record for the most US Open women's singles titles with six victories each.
- In Men's Singles, the record for most victories (five each) in the Open Era is held by Roger Federer from Switzerland, and Americans Pete Sampras and Jimmy Connors.

Significance of the Event

- The US Open serves as an important platform for global tennis players to showcase their skills and ambitions.
- The 2024 results reflect the power shift in tennis with rising stars from Italy, Belarus, and Australia, among others.
- These achievements contribute to the nations' standing on the global tennis platform and inspire upcoming tennis players.

Given the current success of Sinner and Sabalenka, it will be interesting to monitor their performance in upcoming tournaments, their contribution to their respective countries' standings in international tennis, and their potential influence on the future generations of tennis.

"Deepali Thapa's historic win: India's triumphant performance at the Asian Youth Boxing Championships"

I. Introduction:

- Deepali Thapa has carved out a niche for herself in the annals of Indian boxing history by clinching the title at the Asian Youth Boxing Championships, thus becoming the first-ever schoolgirl champion.
- The iconic event took place in Al Ain, UAE, marking an impressive victory that underscores India's rising talent in women's boxing on the international platform.

II. Deepali Thapa's Journey to the Top:

- Thapa competed and triumphed in the 33 kg category, marking her journey to the gold medal as outstanding.
- In the semifinals, her victory over Kazakhstan's Anelya Ordabek displayed her skill and grit.
- In the final bout, Thapa's superior technique and steadfast control dominated the match against Ukraine's Liudmyla Vasylenko, resulting in her landmark title.

III. India's Stellar Performance in The Championship:

- This Championship became a platform to showcase India's rich talent in women's boxing, with multiple victories across several weight classes.
- Notable victories included Bhoomi in the 35 kg category, Nischal Sharma in the 37kg category, and Rakhi in the 43 kg class.
- Laxmi Manjunath Lamani, despite a valiant effort in the 40 kg final, was the only Indian boxer who could not clinch the gold.

IV. India's Impressive Medal Tally:

- The women boxers exhibited an impressive performance at the Championship, taking home a total of seven titles.
- This achievement stands as a testament to the flourishing prominence of Indian women boxers in the Asian platform.

V. Geography & History:

- Al Ain, an oasis city in the UAE, was the host city for the Asia Youth Boxing Championship— a crucial event in the world of boxing.

- Deepali Thapa's win is a pivotal moment in India's boxing history, being the first schoolgirl champion in this event.

VI. Significance & Impact:

- Thapa's win is a significant milestone that illustrates the potential and growing dominance of women's boxing in India.
- This historic victory serves as an inspiration for young Indian sportswomen and underscores the country's emerging prowess in the world of sports, especially boxing.

VII. Conclusion:

- Deepali Thapa's feat coupled with a stunning performance by Indian women boxers at the Championships reflects a promising future for Indian women's boxing at an international level.
- These consistent successes are indicative of India's increasing stature in this sport, setting a high bar for future events and competitions.

Glasgow Stepping in for Victoria: The Rescue Deal for the 2026 Commonwealth Games

1. Introduction and Overview

- Glasgow, Scotland, has been selected to host the 2026 Commonwealth Games, a prominent multi-sport event involving athletes from the Commonwealth of Nations.
- The decision comes after several discussions and agreements between the Scottish government and Australian authorities, who pledged significant financial support.
- This step was taken as a rescue manoeuvre following Victoria, Australia's withdrawal from hosting the event.

2. The Victorian Withdrawal: Why it Matters

- In July 2023, Victoria decided to back out of its initial commitment to host the 2026 Games, attributing the decision to mounting costs.
- This sudden pull-out raised pertinent questions about where the games would now be held, creating uncertainty for the Games' planning and execution.

3. Glasgow as the New Host City: What Sets it Apart?

- Glasgow is no stranger to the dynamic world of the Commonwealth Games, having successfully hosted the event back in 2014.
- The city's prior experience, coupled with its proven dedication to sports, puts it in good light for the upcoming 2026 Games.
- Despite some speculation about the feasibility, most believe Glasgow is well-equipped to navigate the complexities of organising the Games.

4. Financial Aid to the Rescue: A Tale of Two Governments

- The Australian authorities, feeling the responsibility for Victoria's withdrawal, have committed to a generous financial contribution to support Scotland's hosting endeavours.
- The Commonwealth Games Federation (CGF) has pledged nearly \$A200 million (£100 million) as part of the owed compensation to assist Scotland in hosting.
- This contribution demonstrates the collective resolve of the Commonwealth nations to ensure the successful conduct of the Games.

5. Final Approval and Alliances: Working Together

- This rescue deal hinges on formal approval from Commonwealth Games Scotland and the CGF, making both parties key stakeholders in the games' future.
- Health Secretary and representatives from Commonwealth Games Australia and Commonwealth Games Scotland have been active in discussions, indicating an integrated effort to ensure the Games' success.

General Knowledge Insights

- The Commonwealth Games is an international, multi-sport event which takes place every four years, first started in 1930.
- Glasgow, famed for its rich history and cultural vibrancy, is the largest city in Scotland and the third largest in the United Kingdom.
- Australia's state, Victoria, is the most densely populated state and the second most populous state overall. It has hosted the Games twice before, in 2006 (Melbourne) and 1982 (Brisbane).
- The Commonwealth Games Federation, founded in 1930, is the organisation that is responsible for the direction and control of the Commonwealth Games.

New Appointments

- Air Marshal Ashutosh Dixit assumed the position of Air Officer Commanding-in-Chief of Central Air Command on 01 September 2024. He was commissioned into the fighter stream of the Indian Air Force (IAF) on 06 December 1986.
- V. Satish Kumar, previously the director of marketing at Indian Oil Corp. Ltd (IOCL), took up additional duties as chairman in September. This comes after Shrikant Madhav Vaidya completed his tenure as chairman of the state-run oil company.
- Bharath Sesha has been appointed as the new Managing Director for Philips India, a Dutch multinational conglomerate. The announcement was made effective from September 1.
- The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) has announced the appointment of former India wicketkeeper, Ajay Ratra, as a selector for the men's cricket team. This marks a significant change in Indian cricket's selection process, opening a new chapter in the national team's selection committee.
- Senior IAS officer Tuhin Kanta Pandey has been appointed as the Finance Secretary by the government. He is a 1987 batch officer from the Odisha cadre. Currently, he is serving in the Finance Ministry, overseeing two crucial departments: the Departments of Public Enterprises (DPE) and Investment and Public Asset Management (DIPAM).
- L'Oreal Paris has made the announcement of welcoming Alia Bhatt as their new Global Brand Ambassador. As the new face for the brand, Alia Bhatt is expected to not only represent the company at a global level but also influence an immense sector of their target audience.

- On 8th September 2024, veteran sports administrator, Randhir Singh, became the first Indian to be elected as the president of the Olympic Council of Asia (OCA), marking a milestone in Asian sports history. The election took place during the 44th General Assembly of the continental institution in New Delhi. Singh's tenure will span from 2024 to 2028, with his primary role being to lead the OCA, the peak body for Olympic sports in Asia.
- RS Sharma has been appointed as the Non-Executive Chairperson of the Open Network for Digital Commerce (ONDC). Having held positions such as Director General and Mission Director of the Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI), Chairman of the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) and CEO of the National Health Authority, Sharma's new role will guide ONDC into a new phase of growth and innovation.
- Hockey India has announced that the Hockey Women's Asian Champions Trophy 2024 will be taking place in Rajgir, Bihar. This major sporting event, scheduled from November 11 to 20, marks a significant step in the development of sports infrastructure in Bihar. The tournament will be held at the newly constructed Rajgir Hockey Stadium, with India set to defend their title against teams from China, Malaysia, Japan, Thailand, and Korea.
- The President revealed the new flag and insignia of the Supreme Court to mark its 75th anniversary since establishment on 26th January 1950. The emblem prominently features the Ashoka Chakra, the Supreme Court building, and the book of the Constitution of India. Furthermore, the Prime Minister released a commemorative postage stamp highlighting 75 years of the Supreme Court of India.
- Reliance Industries Limited (RIL) has become the first Indian company to surpass ₹10 lakh crore in annual revenue. The record-breaking turnover of ₹10,00,122 crore (USD 119.9 billion) for the financial year 2023-24 was announced by Chairman Mukesh Ambani at RIL's Annual General Meeting. The company also posted a net profit of ₹79,020 crore (USD 9.5 billion).
- POP, a fintech startup, has launched India's first multi-brand co-branded credit card with RuPay and Yes Bank, known as the YEB BANK POP-CLUB RuPay credit card. This innovative card integrates major brands such as Zomato, Blinkit, Cult, Rapido, Cleartrip, and Pharmeasy. The card aims to cater to daily spending areas like e-commerce, groceries, food and beverages, travel, and health and fitness.
- SBI Foundation has launched the 3rd edition of its Asha Scholarship Program, aimed at supporting 10,000 meritorious students from underprivileged backgrounds across India. The scholarship, ranging from ₹15,000 to ₹20,00,000 annually, covers students from Class 6 to postgraduate levels. The application period is from August 16 to October 1, 2024. Since its initiation in 2022, the program has provided ₹3.91 crore to 3,198 students and targets to contribute to India's vision of becoming a developed nation by 2047.
- The "Khel Utsav 2024" was organised by the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting in commemoration of Hockey Legend Major Dhyan Chand's birth anniversary and in tandem with National Sports Day 2024. The event, in accordance with the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, occurred from August 27 to August 30, 2024, at Major Dhyan Chand Stadium and Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium, New Delhi.
- The Consumer Price Index for Industrial Workers (CPI-IW) is compiled monthly by the Labour Bureau within the Ministry of Labour & Employment. The index is not only crucial in measuring retail inflation but also used in determining the dearness allowance for central/state government employees and industrial sector workers, as well as

influencing minimum wage revisions. The inflation rate fell to 3.86% in May 2024, down from 4.42% the previous May. Other forms of CPI submitted by the Labour Bureau and the National Statistical Office include CPI for Agricultural and Rural Labourer and a combined rural/urban index.

- Mexico, the first country to allow popular election of judges, gained independence from Spain in 1821 and now follows a presidential form of government. It is one of the world's most biodiverse countries, boasting 10% of the global biodiversity and is the 14th largest country by landmass, holding diverse landscapes from deserts to tropical rainforests. Economically, the largest contributor to Mexico's GDP is the service sector, with key industries including finance, tourism, retail and telecommunications, bolstered by rich natural resources such as oil, silver and minerals.
- Typhoon Bebinca, the most potent typhoon to strike Shanghai since 1949 and the 13th to hit China this year, battered the Chinese east coast, causing millions to remain indoors. It forcefully disrupted transport and the city swung into action, deploying thousands of relief and rescue workers in the Lingang area. The storm caused the relocation of over 414,000 people from Shanghai. Typhoons, a specific type of tropical cyclone, typically form over warm ocean waters in the NorthWest Pacific.
- HDFC Bank, a leading private bank in India, aims to raise the income of 500,000 marginal farmers earning less than 60,000 yearly by 2025 via its Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) scheme, Parivartan. The programme highlights the bank's commitment to sustainable growth and supports vulnerable communities through a focus on skill development, financial literacy, healthcare and hygiene, education, and rural development. Since 2014, Parivartan has been active in 28 Indian states and 8 Union Territories, making it one of the country's largest CSR schemes. In previous CSR efforts, HDFC Bank invested in

irrigation, organic farming, scholarship provision, and sanitation drives.

- The Sharjah Investment Forum (SIF) 2024 marked a significant milestone in global business and technology, hosting over 5,000 attendees from various industries. The event established itself as a platform for knowledge sharing, learning and networking between local and international stakeholders. The highlight of SIF 2024 was the unveiling of the world's first AI-powered trade licence service, an innovation representing a significant advancement in business facilitation and government services.
- The Telangana government is planning to create an AI City, aiming to become a global hub for Artificial Intelligence, featuring a dedicated research, development and application centre. An AI School will also be established in the city to foster AI expertise and education, in a project overseen by the Telangana AI Mission in partnership with Nasscom. This initiative will also involve the establishment of Centres of Excellence in collaboration with the private sector, targeting advancements in AI within critical and emerging sectors, and benefiting over 2.5 lakh students and professionals. Furthermore, an AI Research Lab will be set up in affiliation with the Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab (J-PAL), focusing on utilising AI to improve governance services and processes.
- The Union Cabinet recently approved the Bio-RIDE (Biotechnology Research Innovation and Entrepreneurship Development) scheme. The aim of this scheme is to encourage research, innovation, and entrepreneurship in biotechnology, with a vision to make India a global leader in this field and transform it into a USD 300 billion bioeconomy by 2030. The proposal allocates a budget of ₹9,197 crore for implementation between 2021-22 and 2025-26. Key components include supporting innovation in various biotechnology sectors, nurturing startups,

promoting sustainable practices in biomanufacturing, and supporting a circular bioeconomy to develop eco-friendly solutions to tackle climate change.

Quick Headlines

- The Prime Minister of India recently launched three PARAM Rudra supercomputers in Pune, Delhi, and Kolkata. The supercomputers, part of the National Supercomputing Mission (NSM), are to be used for research in fields such as astronomy, material science, atomic physics, cosmology, and earth sciences. NSM is a joint initiative by the Department of Science and Technology (DST) and the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY), aiming to network advanced computing systems across India. The mission, launched in 2015, is anticipated to boost research capacities and support the government's 'Digital India' and 'Make in India' initiatives.
- The Union Ministry of Education has chosen two Bihar educators, Sikendra Kumar Suman and Dr Meenakshi Kumari, for the National Teachers Award 2024. The award ceremony will be held on Teacher's Day at Vigyan Bhawan in Delhi, where President Draupadi Murmu will felicitate the winners. The award recognises teachers for their exceptional contribution in the field of education, winners receive a ₹50,000 cash prize, a silver medal and a citation. A total of 50 teachers from across India have been chosen for this distinguished award.
- Hockey India, in a move to boost sports infrastructure in Bihar, has announced that the Women's Asian Champions Trophy 2024 will be held in Bihar's Rajgir from November 11 to 20. The tournament will occur at the newly constructed Rajgir Hockey Stadium. India will defend their title against teams from China, Malaysia, Japan, Thailand, and Korea.
- To commemorate the 75th year of its establishment, the President unveiled the new flag and insignia of the Supreme Court, which was established on 26th January 1950. The flag incorporates the Ashoka Chakra, the Supreme Court building, and the book of the Constitution of India. Alongside this, a commemorative postage stamp marking 75 years of the Supreme Court of India was released by the Prime Minister.
- Reliance Industries Limited (RIL) has become India's first company to go beyond ₹10 lakh crore in annual revenue. This milestone was announced by Chairman Mukesh Ambani at RIL's Annual General Meeting. For the financial year 2023-2024, the company achieved a record consolidated turnover of ₹10,00,122 crore (USD 119.9 billion), and a net profit of ₹79,020 crore (USD 9.5 billion).
- Fintech startup, POP, established by ex-Flipkart employees, has launched India's first multi-brand co-branded credit card, in collaboration with RuPay and Yes Bank. The 'YEB BANK POP-CLUB RuPay' credit card unifies major brands like Zomato, Blinkit, Cult, Rapido, Cleartrip, and Pharmeasy, catering to significant daily spending areas, such as e-commerce, groceries, food and beverages, travel, and health and fitness.
- The 3rd edition of the Asha Scholarship Program, initiated by SBI Foundation, aims to support 10,000 promising students from disadvantaged backgrounds nationwide in India. Ranging from ₹15,000 to ₹20,00,000 annually, the scholarship is available to students from class 6 to postgraduate level. Since its inception in 2022, it has already granted ₹3.91 crore to 3,198 scholars. The application period for the next round is August 16 to October 1, 2024, and it includes specialised categories for school, undergraduate, postgraduate, and students enrolled in IITs and IIMs.

- The Ministry of Information and Broadcasting marked the birth anniversary of Hockey Legend Major Dhyan Chand by organising "Khel Utsav 2024". The event, also in line with the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports' National Sports Day 2024, ran from August 27 to August 30, 2024. It was hosted at both Major Dhyan Chand Stadium and Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium, New Delhi.
- The Consumer Price Index for Industrial Workers (CPI-IW) is compiled monthly by the Labour Bureau under the Ministry of Labour & Employment. This index, set out to determine dearness allowance among others, saw inflation moderating to 3.86% in May 2024 from 4.42% a year earlier. Other types of Consumer Price Index include those for Agricultural and Rural Labourers, and a combined Rural/Urban index compiled by the National Statistical Office. These metrics are integral to understanding inflation in retail prices, and for revising minimum wages.
- Mexico, the 14th largest country globally, has become the first to approve the popular election of judges. Located in North America with its capital in Mexico City, it gained independence from Spain in 1821 and follows a Presidential form of government. A biodiverse nation, it hosts around 10% of the world's species across diverse landscapes from deserts and mountains to tropical rainforests. Its economy is largely dependent on the service sector, contributing approximately 60% to its GDP, with key industries in finance, tourism, retail, and telecommunications.
- Typhoon Bebinca, the fiercest storm in 75 years to strike Shanghai, caused massive destruction and led to the displacement of over 414,000 residents, necessitating the deployment of thousands of emergency workers. With a maximum wind force reaching 151 km/h, Bebinca is considered the most potent typhoon since 1949 and the 13th to hit China this year. The typhoon, a type of tropical cyclone specific to the Northwest Pacific, led to the grounding of all flights at Shanghai's two main airports and suspension of ferry services and some trains. Typhoon-prone regions include the Philippines, China, Taiwan, Japan, and Vietnam.
- HDFC Bank, an Indian private sector bank, plans to increase the income of 500,000 marginal farmers earning less than 60,000 annually by 2025 under its Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiative, Parivartan. One of India's largest CSR programmes since its 2014 inception, Parivartan targets sustainable growth and upliftment of vulnerable communities. The programme is committed to skill development, financial literacy, healthcare, hygiene, education, and rural development. Recent contributions to CSR activities have seen HDFC invest ₹945.31 crore in FY24, introduce rural development programmes in Varanasi, support organic farming, and grant scholarships to underprivileged students.
- The Sharjah Investment Forum (SIF) 2024 has recently concluded, attracting over 5,000 attendees including officials, entrepreneurs, and industry leaders globally. The event, held at Al Jawaher Reception and Convention Centre, served as a key platform for knowledge sharing, networking, and learning. The standout feature of SIF 2024 was the launch of the world's first AI-powered trade licence service, seen as a major advancement in business facilitation and government services.
- The Telangana government intends to construct an AI City, aspiring to become an international hub for Artificial Intelligence (AI). The city will act as a centre for AI research and development, featuring an AI School aimed at fostering expertise and education in AI. Implementation of the AI framework will be overseen by the Telangana AI Mission with Nasscom, and private sector collaboration will set up Centres of Excellence to drive AI in crucial and emerging sectors. The project aims to cultivate talent among the youth, benefitting over 250,000 students and professionals,

and a partnership with the Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab will establish an AI Research Lab to improve governance services and processes.

- The Union Cabinet recently approved the Biotechnology Research Innovation and Entrepreneurship Development (Bio-RIDE) scheme with the aim to promote research, innovation, and entrepreneurship in biotechnology. The scheme's ultimate goals are to transform India into a global leader in biotechnology and help the country become a USD 300 billion bioeconomy by 2030. The Bio-RIDE scheme will utilise a budget of ₹9,197 crore during the 15th Finance Commission period (2021-26) to support areas such as synthetic biology and biopharmaceuticals, foster startups, and promote sustainable bio manufacturing practices. Furthermore, it aligns with the Lifestyle for Environment (LiFE) initiative to develop eco-friendly solutions for climate change, healthcare, agriculture, and bio-based products.

official language. The Union Minister for Home Affairs and Cooperation released a commemorative postage stamp to commemorate this milestone. The Constituent Assembly designated Hindi in Devanagari script as the official language of the Union of India on this date in 1949, a decision stemming from the Munshi-Ayyangar formula. Despite some protests, English was also upheld as an official language alongside Hindi following the Official Languages Act of 1963.

- World Coconut Day (WCD) is celebrated every year on September 2nd to highlight the significance and diverse uses of coconuts. Established by the International Coconut Community (ICC), WCD was first observed in 2009. The ICC represents 21 coconut-producing countries and was formerly known as the Asian and Pacific Coconut Community. The theme for WCD 2024 is "Coconut for a Circular Economy Building Partnership for Maximum Value." Coconuts are beneficial for cardiovascular health, red blood cell production, and offer antioxidant protection. They are extensively cultivated in India, with Kerala, Karnataka, and Tamil Nadu being the top producing states.

Important Days

- The Vice-President of India lauded the power of literacy during the International Literacy Day (ILD) 2024 celebrations in New Delhi. The National Education Policy 2020 was praised for empowering youth and recognising linguistic diversity; coupled with the launch of ULLAS DTH Channel to reach remote learners. The roots of ILD are traced to a 1965 conference in Tehran, Iran with the date being officially recognised by UNESCO in 1967. The 2024 theme was "Promoting multilingual education Literacy for mutual understanding and peace," and Indian literacy initiatives such as the New India Literacy Programme, Saakshar Bharat, and Pradhan Mantri Gramin Digital Saksharta Abhiyan were highlighted.
- India Post Payments Bank (IPPB) observed its 7th Foundation Day on 1st September 2024, recognised for significantly advancing financial inclusion across India since its national launch in 2018. The bank has accumulated over 9.88 crore customer accounts and over 12 lakh merchants. It has also successfully dispersed over ₹45,000 crore in Direct Benefit Transfers (DBT) under various government schemes, facilitated mobile number updates for Aadhaar cards for over 7.10 crore customers, and enabled Digital Life Certificate services for over 20 lakh pensioners.
- Teachers' Day was celebrated in India on 5th September 2024 to mark the birth anniversary of Dr. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan. The President of India

confers the National Teachers' Award on this day to honour and recognise teachers' contributions. Dr. Radhakrishnan was a notable philosopher, Vice-Chancellor at several universities, first Vice-President and the second President of India. He played a significant role in strengthening the understanding of Hinduism globally and received numerous awards, including the Bharat Ratna and a knighthood from King George V.

- The 'International Day of Democracy' is an annual event observed on September 15, established by the United Nations General Assembly in 2007 to underline the worldwide importance of democracy. The date coincides with the anniversary of the Universal Declaration on Democracy, passed in Geneva on September 15, 1997. It asserts that democracy allows people to freely determine their own political, social and cultural systems and stresses the necessity of their full participation in representative government. Karnataka recently celebrated this day by forming a 2,500-km long human chain symbolising equality, unity, and participative governance. The Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), founded in 1889 in Paris to promote democracy and world peace, comprises 179 member parliaments and 13 associate members.
- World Rhino Day is observed annually on September 22nd with the aim to raise awareness about the five endangered rhino species – Javan, Sumatran, Black, Greater One-Horned, and White rhinos. The 2024's theme 'Keep the Five Alive' emphasised the vital importance of preserving all species. Historical records reveal Mughal Emperor Zaheeruddin Muhammad Babur hunted rhinoceros in the northern regions of current India and Pakistan, marked in his autobiography, Baburnama. On this day in 2024, the Prime Minister reiterated the commitment to rhino conservation.
- The International Day of Sign Languages (IDSL) is annually observed on 23rd September, as decreed by the 2017 UN General Assembly Resolution. The 2024 theme, Sign Up for Sign Language Rights, supports advocacy for sign language rights. The day commemorates the establishment of the World Federation of the Deaf (WFD) in 1951, which champions deaf individuals' rights globally. The UN's 2006 Convention acknowledging sign languages as equal to spoken languages was promptly endorsed by India in 2007, where the Indian Sign Language Research and Training Centre (ISLRTC) observes IDSL celebrations.
- The 450th Jyoti Jot Diwas of Sri Guru Amardas Ji, the third Sikh Guru, was recently commemorated. The Sikh guru, born in 1479, was appointed at the age of 73 and institutionalised the 'Guru ka Langar' (communal kitchen), divided the Sikh community into 22 administrative districts, and abolished social injustices including Sati and Purdah. His interaction with Emperor Akbar abolished the toll-tax for non-Muslims. Additionally, he composed 869 verses, constructed a Baoli at Goindwal Sahib, a significant Sikh pilgrimage site, and passed away on 1st September 1574. His legacy continues to inspire the Sikh community today.

Date	Important Days
September 1, 2024	National Nutrition Week
September 2, 2024	World Coconut Day
September 5, 2024	International Day of Charity
September 5, 2024	Teacher's Day
September 5, 2024	Hartalika Teej
September 7, 2024	International Vulture Awareness Day 2024
September 7, 2024	Ganesh Chaturthi
September 7, 2024	International Day of Police Cooperation 2024
September 8, 2024	International Literacy Day
September 9, 2024	International Day to Protect Education from Attack
September 11, 2024	National Forest Martyrs Day
September 14, 2024	Hindi Diwas
September 15, 2024	National Engineer Day
September 15, 2024	International Day of Democracy
September 16, 2024	International Day of Science, Technology and Innovation for the South
September 16, 2024	World Ozone Day
September 17, 2024	World Patient Safety Day
September 21, 2024	International Day of Peace
September 22, 2024	World Rhino Day
September 23, 2024	International Day of Sign Languages
September 25, 2024	World Pharmacists Day
September 25, 2024	Antyodaya Day
September 26, 2024	World Maritime Day
September 26, 2024	International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons
September 26, 2024	World Contraception Day
September 26, 2024	World Environmental Health Day
September 27, 2024	World Tourism Day
September 27, 2024	Google Birth Anniversary
September 28, 2024	World Rabies Day
September 28, 2024	International Day for Universal Access to Information
September 29, 2024	World Heart Day
September 30, 2024	International Translation Day

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