



CURRENT AFFAIRS

MAGAZINE

For Competitive Exams

UPSC, State PCS, SSC, Bank PO/Clerk, IP-MAT, BBA, MBA, RRB, NDA, CDS, CRP

CUET & CLAT

FEBRUARY 2025

IN
COLLABORATION
WITH



SCAN QR TO
GO TO COURSE



SOCIAL MEDIA



www.edupreparator.com

9990901901,9319737316

OFFLINE CENTERS - ASHOK VIHAR, PATEL NAGAR & NOIDA

Head Office : T-1, Usha Chamber, Above Master Bakers,
Deep Market, Ashok Vihar, Delhi - 52

INDEX

INDEX	1
ECONOMICS	3
Quality of Public Expenditure Index: A measure of government spending efficiency	3
Cabinet Passes New Income Tax Bill 2025	3
Gender Budget Statement 2025-26: Emphasising Gender Equality in Fiscal Planning	3
State of India's Digital Economy (SIDE) Report 2024	4
Repo Rate Cut and its Implications	4
GEOGRAPHY AND ENVIRONMENT	5
The Delhi Earthquake of 2025	5
The International Big Cat Alliance	5
Changes in Earth's Inner Core and It's Structure	6
Inland Waterways in India	6
Climate Risk Index (CRI) 2025	7
Detection of Highest-Energy Neutrino 7	7
Waste Recycling and Climate Change 2025 Conference	8
MILITARY DEFENCE AND EXERCISES	8
Analysis of Very Short-Range Air Defence System (VSHORADS)	8
TROPEX-25: Indian Navy's Largest Maritime Exercise	8
Exercise CYCLONE: 3rd Edition of India-Egypt Joint Special Forces Exercise	9
Exercise Ekuverin: A Joint Military Exercise between India and Maldives	9
'Winged Raider' Joint Military Exercise	9
Joint Special Forces Exercise Cyclone-III	10
Exercise Dharma Guardian 2024 - Joint Military Drill by India and Japan	10
NAVDEX 2025: Display of Indian Maritime Capabilities by Goa Shipyard Ltd	11
POLITY	11
Understanding President's Rule: The case of Manipur	11
Right to Access Justice and its Limitations in India	12
Supreme Court Declares Domicile-Based PG Medical Admissions Unconstitutional	12
Bills on Parliamentary Sittings and Amendments to the POCSO Act, 2012	12
Understanding the Significance of Shankari Prasad Case and First Amendment Act, 1951 in Indian Constitutional History	13
RANK REPORTS AND AWARDS	13
NSO Time Use Survey 2024	13
Sahitya Akademi Award 2024	14
Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) 2024	14
Grammy Awards 2025: Highlights and Overview	15
BAFTA Awards 2025 Highlights and Winners	15
The Corruption Perceptions Index 2024 and India's Ranking	15
India Secures 3rd Position in Global LEED Green Buildings 2024	16
India Makes Notable Progress in Global Logistics Performance Rankings	16
Mukesh Ambani and the Global Influence of Asia's Wealthiest Families	17
Women Billionaires Global List 2025	17
Schemes And Initiative	18
The Launch of India-EFTA Desk	18
Gyan Bharatam Mission and National Manuscripts Mission (NMM)	18
Swavalambini Program	18
India - US COMPACT Initiative	19

PRAKRITI 2025: International Conference on Carbon Markets	19
SWAYATT Initiative	20
Launch of AgriHub by IIT Indore	20
Southern Hemisphere's Largest Hindu Temple Unveiled	20
Introduction to the Electronic Personnel License (EPL) for Pilots	21
Shatavari Plant	21
First WildLife BioBank in a Zoo in India	22
Government of India Enhances Haj Experience with 'Haj Suvidha App' and Healthcare Support	22
RBI's Introduction of the RBIDATA App	22
Unveiling of Jumpp by Finvasia and Yes Bank	23
SCIENCE AND TECH	23
Asteroid 2024 YR4 and the Concept of Asteroids	23
Understanding Einstein Rings: A Unique Phenomenon in Astrophysics	24
Paris AI Summit 2025 - India's Role and Key Developments	24
China's EAST Reactor and Advancements in Nuclear Fusion	25
DBT's North Eastern Programme: A Biotech Transformation in India's North East Region	25
SPORTS NEWS	26
2nd All-India State Water Ministers' Conference	26
8th Indian Ocean Conference	26
World Economic Forum Annual Meeting 2025: Overview and Highlights	26
3rd India-Japan Steel Dialogue	27
BIMSTEC Youth Summit 2025	27
WAVES 2025 and India's Creative Economy	27
India-UK Agreements at Aero India 2025 and Broadening Ties	28
MISCELLANEOUS	28
Expansion of Lok Sabha Translation Services	28
National Tribal Festival 2025 - Aadi Mahotsav	29
Recent Initiatives by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI)	29
Birth Anniversary of Sant Guru Ravidas	30
Death Anniversary of Pt. Deendayal Upadhyaya: A Reflection on Contributions	30
201st Birth Anniversary of Swami Dayanand Saraswati: Remembering a Prominent Social Reformer and Nationalist	30
India Energy Week 2025	31
QUICK HEADLINES	31
NEW APPOINTMENTS	32
BOOKS AND AUTHOR	33
IMPORTANT DAYS	33

ECONOMICS

Quality of Public Expenditure Index: A measure of government spending efficiency

Introduction to Quality of Public Expenditure Index

- The Quality of Public Expenditure (QPE) Index is an initiative by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI)
- The Index analyses the efficiency of allocation of public funds by the central and state governments, considering not just the total expenditure but also the spending's composition and its impact on long-term economic growth and development

Components and Significance of the QPE Index

- The Index is based on five significant indicators including: Capital Outlay to GDP Ratio, Revenue Expenditure to Capital Outlay Ratio, Development Expenditure to GDP Ratio, Development Expenditure as Share of Total Government Expenditure, and Interest Payments to Total Expenditure Ratio
- These indicators reflect the government's allocation towards infrastructure and development, financial burden of past borrowings, and the quality of expenditure

Key Findings from the QPE Index

- The QPE Index has categorised India's public expenditure trajectory since 1991 into six phases, each marking unique challenges and achievements
- The most recent phase (2019–2025) reflects the impact of fiscal stimulus measures during Covid-19 and subsequent recovery driven by higher capital expenditure
- As of 2024-25, India's QPE is at its highest level since the 1991 economic liberalisation

Understanding Public Expenditure

- Public Expenditure (PE) refers to government spending meant to fulfill needs such as education, healthcare, infrastructure, and welfare
- It seeks to ensure efficient resource allocation, promote income redistribution, maintain economic stability, and drive development
- PE includes routine expenses (Revenue Expenditure) and investments in long-term assets (Capital Expenditure)

Recent Trends and Challenges in Public Expenditure

- The Economic Survey of 2024-25 highlights increased government capital expenditure and state revenue expenditure
- Despite increase in spending, challenges such as excessive spending on salaries, pensions, subsidies, and welfare, and resulting fiscal deficits and debt burdens pose a threat to financial sustainability and overall economic stability

Way Forward for Quality Public Expenditure

- Approaches like Zero-Based Budgeting (ZBB) and Performance-Based Budgeting can increase efficiency and accountability in fund allocation
- Investing in high-impact sectors such as health, education, and infrastructure is crucial to enhancing economic growth and social well-being.

Cabinet Passes New Income Tax Bill 2025

Introduction

- The Union Cabinet has approved the new Income Tax Bill, which is set to replace the Income Tax Act, 1961.
- The bill aims to simplify, modernize, and streamline India's

tax system.

- The announcement was made during the Budget 2025-26 by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman.
- The proposed bill will be introduced in the next Parliamentary session for further discussion and evaluation by the Standing Committee on Finance.

Necessity of the New Income Tax Bill

- The existing Income Tax Act, 1961, has seen numerous amendments making it difficult to comprehend for taxpayers.
- The new bill aims to simplify the legal language and reduce disputes.
- It will remove redundant provisions, provide tax certainty, and modernize the tax framework.
- A clear tax structure can lead to increased compliance and reduce tax evasion.

Key Features of the New Income Tax Bill

- The bill is designed to be user-friendly and maintain tax efficiency.
- It will not introduce any new taxes, and instead will simplify tax laws.
- The language and structure of the bill will be simple and easy to comprehend.
- The bill aims to reduce litigation and introduce dispute resolution mechanisms.
- It will work towards reducing compliance burdens.
- As part of the bill's formulation, the Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) initiated a comprehensive review of the Income Tax Act and invited public input on four key areas.

Implementation Process

- Following Cabinet approval, the bill will be introduced in Parliament.
- The Standing Committee on Finance will review the bill, taking into account feedback from various stakeholders.
- After deliberation, the bill will be passed in both houses of Parliament and receive the President's assent before notification for implementation.

Impact of the New Income Tax Bill

- The bill will provide better clarity due to simplified language.
- It aims to lower dispute cases by reducing tax ambiguities.
- The bill assists in making tax filing easier for both individuals and businesses.
- The transparent tax system will potentially attract investors and boost economic growth.

Gender Budget Statement 2025-26: Emphasising Gender Equality in Fiscal Planning

Introduction to Gender Budget Statement (GBS) 2025-26

- The Gender Budget Statement (GBS) 2025-26 marks a considerable step toward gender-responsive budgeting (GRB) in India.
- This particular budget comprises increased financial allocations, along with extended participation from various ministries.

Key Points from GBS 2025-26

- The budget increased by 37.5%, making it Rs 4.49 lakh crore (8.86% of total Union Budget 2025-26).
- Constituting India's largest-ever gender budget, the GBS aims to improve women's welfare, education, and economic empowerment.
- A total of 49 ministries have reported gender-specific allocations.

Identifying Gender Budgeting in India

- The gender budgeting technique allows an efficient allocation of resources based on individual gender requirements.
- The principle behind gender budgeting in India has roots in the country's commitment to gender equality, starting with the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) ratified in 1993.
- It operates under the Samarthya sub-scheme of Mission Shakti by the Ministry of Women and Child Development (MWCD).
- The necessity of gender budgeting comes into light from the significant scope of improvement in India's gender equality since it ranks 129th out of 146 countries in the 2024 Gender Gap Report.
- Gender budgeting also promotes the implementation of women-specific legal frameworks like the Criminal Law Amendment Act, 2013 and the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013.

Challenges faced by Gender Budgeting in India

- Ambiguities in resource allocation raise issues like discrepancies and underreporting in schemes like MGNREGS.
- Funds are primarily concentrated in a few ministries, limiting its overall impact.
- The incorporation of long-term schemes could potentially divert funds from immediate-impact programmes.
- Current tracking mechanisms and gender impact assessments lack sufficient quality, which affects the efficacy of gender budgeting.
- Additionally, gender budgeting might not always align with political agendas resulting in lack of comprehensive support.

Proposed Measures for Better Implementation of Gender Budgeting

- Integrating gender budgeting across all ministries can result in more gender-sensitive allocations.
- Investment should be made in collecting and processing gender-specific data for enhanced policymaking.
- Transparency in allocation and reporting procedures and conducting regular gender audits could lead to increased accountability.
- Training of involved stakeholders on gender budgeting will enhance the expertise to integrate gender perspectives into budget allocations and assessments effectively.

State of India's Digital Economy (SIDE) Report 2024 Introduction and Background

- The State of India's Digital Economy (SIDE) Report 2024, is published by the Indian Council for Research on International Economic Relations (ICRIER based on a study by the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY).
- This report presents a comprehensive analysis of India's digital economy, highlighting its global standing, contribution to GDP, employment fraction, future projections, and state-level disparities.
- SIDE 2024 introduces the CHIPS (Connect-Harness-Innovate-Protect-Sustain) framework, which provides a holistic way of measuring digitalisation by focusing both on outcomes and potential risks.

Key Highlights of the Report

- Standing of India's Digital Economy: India is the third-largest digitalised economy globally, only behind the US and

China.

- Contribution of Digital Economy: The report highlights that during 2022-2023, the digital economy contributed to 11.74% of India's GDP. This contribution is projected to increase up to 13.42% by 2024-2025.
- Employment: The digital economy employs 2.55% of India's workforce while having a productivity rate five times higher in comparison to the overall economy.
- Future Projections: By 2029-2030, the digital economy will form 20% of India's GDP, surpassing contributions from agriculture and manufacturing.

Key Drivers of Digital Economy Growth in India

- Expansion of Digital Infrastructure: A key driver in the growth of India's digital economy is the expansion of its digital infrastructure. This includes efforts such as BharatNet, the 5G rollout, and the Open Network for Digital Commerce (ONDC).
- Rising Smartphone Penetration: The increase in affordable smartphones, coupled with low-cost data, positions India as a mobile-first economy.
- Global Capability Centers (GCCs): India houses 55% of Global Capability Centers worldwide, providing IT service and business process management.
- Startup Ecosystem: Increase in the number of startups, coupled with programmes like Start-Up India providing abundant funding, creates a unique market for tech startups.
- Digital Financial Inclusion: Programmes such as UPI and Jan Dhan accounts further fuel the digital economy's growth by providing financial services, particularly in rural areas.

Concluding Thoughts

- The report highlights the digital economy as a principal driver of economic growth and employment in India, underpinned by the digitalisation of traditional sectors and emerging digital platforms.
- With increasing digital literacy and adoption of emerging technologies, India is well-positioned to lead in digital transformation, promising sustainable and inclusive growth.

Repo Rate Cut and its Implications

Introduction and Overview

- The Reserve Bank of India's Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) has reduced the repo rate to 6.25% from 6.5%, a 25 basis point cut, marking the first such move in five years.
- This decision comes on the heels of the Union Budget 2025-26, which sought to stimulate consumption through a cut in personal income tax.
- The rate cut seeks to revive economic growth during a period of slowdown.

Factors Influencing the Repo Rate Cut

- The Union Budget 2025-26's income tax cuts and TDS limit revisions led to an increase in disposable income, a move that the repo rate cut supports.
- The Consumer Price Index (CPI) fell to a four-month low, down to 5.22% in December 2024 from 5.48% in November, opening up room for monetary easing.
- The injection of Rs 1.5 trillion by the RBI into the banking system has improved market liquidity.
- The recent US tariffs on Canada, Mexico, and China, caused the rupee to weaken and increased inflation risks. The repo rate cut could help mitigate these impacts and support domestic growth.

About Repo Rate

- The repo rate is the interest rate at which commercial

February Current Affairs

banks borrow money from the central bank.

- Banks use it to meet short-term liquidity needs by borrowing funds.
- Higher repo rates result in costlier loans for banks, increased interest rates for consumers and businesses, and slower borrowing and spending.
- Conversely, Lower repo rates correspond with cheaper loans, lower interest rates for borrowers, and increased borrowing and spending.

Implications of Repo Rate Cut

- Economic Growth: The cut in the repo rate will make it easier for businesses to expand, invest, and create new jobs due to lower borrowing costs.
- Strengthening Financial Markets: Banks may be incentivised to reduce interest on savings accounts and fixed deposits, pushing consumers toward investments in stocks, mutual funds, or real estate.
- Export Competitiveness: A lower repo rate might lead to capital outflows, which could weaken the currency but benefit export competitiveness.
- Inflation: The increased spending due to rate cuts may push prices up over time, pressuring the RBI's inflation target.

Background of the 4% Inflation Target

- The Chakravarty Committee (1982-85) under the leadership of the then RBI Governor Manmohan Singh, proposed a 4% annual inflation target.
- The Urjit Patel Committee in 2014 formalised this target with a $\pm 2\%$ band, marking the adoption of inflation targeting.

Conclusion

- The repo rate cut by the RBI aims at stimulating economic growth but poses a risk of inflationary pressures.
- The delicate balance between maintaining growth and price stability remains crucial, particularly in the light of global uncertainties.

GEOGRAPHY AND

ENVIRONMENT

The Delhi Earthquake of 2025

Overview and Significance

- An earthquake of 4.0 magnitude struck the Indian capital, Delhi, in February, 2025.
- This seismic event was triggered due to hydro fracturing beneath the Aravalli-Delhi Fold Belt.

Detailed Information on the Earthquake

- Contrary to common expectations for earthquakes in this area, the epicentre of this seismic activity was established to be located within the city and not in the Himalayan region.
- This earthquake was classified as a shallow earthquake, with the seismic origin having a depth of only 5 kilometres which led to more seismic waves reaching the surface thereby causing a greater tremor.
- For reference, shallow earthquakes are defined as those with a depth between 0 and 70 kilometres, whereas intermediate and deep earthquakes have depths between 70 - 300 kilometres and 300 - 700 kilometres respectively.
- Delhi falls in Zone 4 of the Indian earthquake hazard map,

implying a high seismic risk. This earthquake was measured at an intensity of MSK-8. The MSK (Medvedev-Sponheuer-Karnik) scale measures intensity rather than strength, which is described by magnitude.

- Importantly, the earthquake was triggered by normal faulting and hydro fracturing, a process where aquifers and underground water channels erode rock formations, causing fractures that occasionally release stress as seismic waves.

The Aravalli-Delhi Fold Belt and Importance

- Delhi is situated within the Aravalli-Delhi Fold Belt, an area marked by deformed rock layers folded millions of years ago.
- Despite reduced tectonic activities, some active faults still cause occasional mild earthquakes.

Comparative Analysis with Himalayan Earthquakes

- Unlike Himalayan earthquakes, which result from tectonic plate movement due to the subduction of the Indian plate under the Eurasian plate, the Delhi earthquake was the result of localized geological stress.
- Several local faults, such as the Mahendranagar Fault and Sohana Fault, exist in the Delhi region with potential to trigger earthquakes of up to 6 in magnitude.

Auditory Effects of the Earthquake

- While earthquakes do generate low-frequency sound waves, these are not typically heard by humans.
- Reported sounds during the quake might have been produced by vibrations in buildings and structures, not the quake itself.

Risk of Future Large Earthquakes

- A high magnitude earthquake (around magnitude 8) along the Main Central Fault (MCF) in the Himalayas could potentially trigger large earthquakes in Delhi.
- The region's topography, specifically the alluvial plains of the Yamuna, is less capable of absorbing seismic energy compared to harder rock formations.
- The MCF separates the Greater Himalayas in the north from the lesser Himalayas in the south.

The International Big Cat Alliance

Introduction and About the International Big Cat Alliance (IBCA)

- The International Big Cat Alliance became an official treaty-based intergovernmental organisation and international legal entity on 23rd January 2025.
- The IBCA was launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in 2023 during the 50th anniversary of Project Tiger.
- It later achieved formal approval by the Union Cabinet in February 2024.
- Established under the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) within the Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change.
- The IBCA's main purpose is the conservation of seven significant big cat species, namely the Tiger, Lion, Leopard, Snow Leopard, Cheetah, Jaguar, and Puma.

IBCA's Importance and Membership Details

- The Republic of Nicaragua, Kingdom of Eswatini, Republic of India, Federal Republic of Somalia, and the Republic of Liberia are part of the ratified IBCA framework agreement.
- Membership is open to all member states of the United Nations, particularly range countries where the species naturally occur and non-range countries interested in

February Current Affairs

supporting big cat conservation.

- IBCA supports the mandate of conservation of big cats which are under threat from habitat loss, poaching, climate change, and human-wildlife conflicts.
- IBCA operates as a platform for best conservation practices and provides financial and technical support for these projects.

Role in Conservation Efforts

- The IBCA serves as a platform for collaborative conservation, networking conservationists, policymakers, researchers, and governments.
- Strengthens existing agreements and initiatives, operating alongside CITES (Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species), CMS (Convention on Migratory Species), and other wildlife protection treaties.
- The IBCA initiatives contribute to climate change mitigation, ecological security and maintaining biodiversity.

Funding

- India has pledged Rs. 150 crore (2023-2028) in support to the IBCA and is in the process of securing additional funding from bilateral, multilateral, and donor organisations.

National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA)

- The NTCA, a statutory body under the Ministry of Environment, Forest, and Climate Change, came into existence in 2005 and acquired legal status through Section 38L of the Wildlife (Protection) Amendment Act, 2006.
- The NTCA grants statutory authority to Project Tiger, ensures federal accountability in tiger reserve management, and addresses local livelihood concerns linked to tiger reserves.

Conservation Efforts for Big Cats in India

- Across the landscape of India, multiple conservation projects are underway for different big cat species. These include the Asiatic Lion Conservation Project, Project Snow Leopard, and Project Cheetah.
- The Wildlife Protection Act of 1972 and the National Board for Wildlife (NBWL) also play crucial roles in big cat conservation efforts.
- Project Tiger, initiated in 1973, is one of the most prominent projects focused on big cat conservation in India.

Changes in Earth's Inner Core and It's Structure

Introduction and Overview

- New research from the Nature Geoscience journal reveals structural inner core transformations.
- Previously, the inner core has been understood as being stable, but this research suggests otherwise.

Key Discoveries of the Research

- Seismic wave analysis was conducted near the South Sandwich Islands of Antarctica between 1991 and 2024 for the study.
- It was found that the inner core's near-surface is structurally changing and the rotation seems to be decelerating.
- This rotation slow-down could subtly impact the Earth's day length.
- The modifications in the inner core are potentially due to dynamic interactions with the turbulent, molten outer core, akin to magma flow mechanisms.

Facts about Earth's Inner Core

- Comprising iron and nickel, the inner core is a dense,

warm ball that remains solid due to the immense surface pressure.

- Situated 5,150 km beneath the surface, the inner core is roughly 1,220 km in radius.
- The Lehmann Discontinuity demarcates the outer and inner core.
- The magnetic field of the Earth is influenced by the inner core and generated by the outer core's liquid iron through the geodynamo effect.
- The inner core rotates eastward, slightly faster than the Earth's surface, completing an extra turn every 1,000 years.
- The growth of the inner core is about 1 mm per year as the outer core solidifies but is unequally distributed, occurring more around subduction zones and less near superplumes.
- The core will never fully solidify due to persistent radioactive decay and slow crystallisation.

Earth's Interior Structure

- The structure of the Earth's interior is similar to concentric layers of an onion.
- The layers are formed by the crust (the thinnest layer), mantle (the thickest layer), and core (the innermost layer).
- The crust and mantle are primarily made up of silica, alumina, iron, and magnesium. The crust further divides into oceanic and continental crust.
- The core is primarily composed of nickel and iron, divided into the Inner Core and Outer Core (liquid state).
- The upper part of the mantle, called the asthenosphere, is semi-molten and is responsible for plate movements.

Inland Waterways in India

Introduction and Recent Updates

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi recently inaugurated the Inland Waterways Transport (IWT) Terminal at Jogighopa in Assam.
- This event accentuates India's potential of about 14,500 km of navigable waterways for freight transport.

Key Facts About Inland Waterways Transport Terminal at Jogighopa

- The IWT Terminal is situated on the Brahmaputra River (National Waterway-2 (NW-2)) in Assam.
- The stretch of the Brahmaputra River (891 km) connecting the Bangladesh Border (Dhubri) to Sadiya in Assam was declared NW-2 under the National Waterway Act, 1988.
- The IWT Terminal contributes to PM Gati Shakti, focusing on maximizing inland waterways for economic growth.
- The Terminal acts as an international port for Bhutan and Bangladesh, linking to the Multi-Modal Logistics Park (MMLP) at Jogighopa to strengthen cargo movement and logistics in Assam and the Northeast.
- It also boosts trade and commerce with neighbouring countries and reduces transportation costs and transit time.

Understanding Inland Waterways Transport

- Inland Waterways Transport is the movement of people and goods on navigable waterways such as rivers, canals, and lakes.
- The Inland Waterways Authority of India Act, 1985, led to the establishment of Inland Waterways Authority of India (IWAI) in 1986, an autonomous body managing the development and regulation of National Waterways.
- The National Waterways Act 2016 declared 111 inland waterways as National Waterways to enhance shipping and navigation.
- The Inland Vessels Act, 2021 replaced the Inland Vessels Act, 1917, for introducing uniform regulations for inland vessels across the country.

Growth of Inland Waterways in India

- There's been a 767% increase in operational National Waterways since 2014, resulting in a 635% rise in handled cargo.
- The government has proposed initiatives such as Maritime India Vision 2030, Sagarmala Programme, and a National Perspective Plan for interlinking rivers.

Major National Waterways in India

- Locations of few major National Waterways include the Ganga-Bhagirathi-Hooghly River System (NW-1), West Coast Canal (NW-3), Krishna River (NW-4), and Amba River (NW-10).

Examining the Benefits and Challenges of IWT Development in India

- While cost-effective and fuel-efficient, IWT does encounter challenges such as high siltation and shoal formation that increase maintenance costs.
- There's a low environmental impact with lower carbon emissions, though seasonal depth fluctuations and dredging can adversely affect riverbeds, aquatic life, causing community resistance.

Way Forward

- For cargo and passenger movement, integration of inland waterways with economic zones and development of cruise tourism could help improve transport.
- Measures to attract private investment in terminal development, vessel manufacturing, and cargo handling should be implemented.
- Sustainable development is needed by adopting green vessels, sustainable dredging techniques, and more to reduce pollution, protect aquatic ecosystems, and maintain environmental balance.

Climate Risk Index (CRI) 2025

Introduction and About the CRI

- CRI has been launched annually by 'Germanwatch', an international environmental think tank, since 2006.
- The Index ranks countries on their vulnerability to extreme weather events and assesses human and economic losses arising from such climate-induced catastrophes.
- The assessment is based on six crucial indicators: the economic fallout, fatalities, and impacted populace in both absolute and relative terms.

Key Findings of CRI 2025

- CRI 2025 revealed that between 1993 and 2022, over 765,000 lives were lost due to extreme weather phenomena, causing an economic setback of USD 4.2 trillion.
- It was noted that floods, droughts, and storms are the predominant causes of global displacement.
- Dominica, China, and Honduras have been the most affected countries during 1993-2022, with Myanmar, Italy, and India also severely impacted.
- For the year 2022 alone, Pakistan, Belize, and Italy were identified as the hardest hit.
- Seven out of the ten worst-affected nations are classified as low- to middle-income countries.
- India registered as the 6th most-impacted country during the same period with around 80,000 fatalities, which is 10% of the total deaths globally due to extreme weather conditions, and contributing to 4.3% of the total economic losses, a considerable USD 180 billion.

Challenges to Climate Change Mitigation Strategies

- A historical disregard and continued demand for climate responsibility from emerging economies disturbs burden-sharing and climate finance obligations.
- The 1.5°C temperature threshold was surpassed in 2024 for an entire year, highlighting insufficient mitigation efforts.
- The world is projected to experience a rise in temperatures between 2.6–3.1°C by the year 2100 unless more ambitious Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) are adopted.
- Inadequate climate commitments, coupled with inconsistent implementation of policies, weakens mitigation efforts.
- Insufficient funding for developing nations and operationalizing the Loss and Damage Fund obstructs support for climate-vulnerable countries.

Suggestions to Combat Climate Change

- Increased financial and technical aid for countries vulnerable to climate change to help them adapt and manage climate-induced damages is recommended.
- It is necessary to step up NDCs to restrict global warming to 1.5°C or less.
- Developed nations with high emissions need to accelerate their mitigation efforts to curb rising human and economic costs.
- Urgency for climate actions in adaptation and mitigation is underlined to evade escalating future losses.

Note: The Asia-Pacific (APAC) Climate Report 2024 by the Asian Development Bank suggests that India may potentially face a 24.7% GDP loss by 2070 due to climate change factors like rising sea levels and reducing labour productivity.

Detection of Highest-Energy Neutrino

Introduction and About

- Scientists have recently detected the most energetic neutrino known so far with the help of the KM3NeT (Cubic Kilometre Neutrino Telescope) observatory located in the Mediterranean Sea.
- This groundbreaking discovery highlights a neutrino that is 30 times more energetic than any previously observed one, proving to be 10,000 times more powerful than particles from the Large Hadron Collider, and 1015 times more energetic than photons.

KM3NeT (Cubic Kilometre Neutrino Telescope)

- The Cubic Kilometre Neutrino Telescope (KM3NeT), which assisted in the detection, is a current construction project designed to study neutrinos in the Mediterranean Sea.
- KM3NeT is aimed at capturing neutrinos from both distant cosmic sources and those originating within Earth's own atmosphere.
- A similar proposal is in place to establish India's Neutrino Observatory project at Pottipuram village in Theni, Tamil Nadu.

What are Neutrinos?

- Often dubbed as "ghost particles", neutrinos are nearly massless subatomic particles that bear no electrical charge, enabling them to travel extensively through different celestial bodies without being skewed by magnetic fields.
- This undisturbed journey qualifies neutrinos as reliable cosmic messengers.

Sources of Neutrinos

- Neutrinos can originate naturally from several sources including the Sun (solar neutrinos), nuclear reactions in stars, supernovae, and cosmic rays.
- Artificial sources can also emit neutrinos, such as nuclear reactors, radioactive decay processes, and particle accelerators.
- Additionally, Big Bang Neutrinos present a remnant from the early universe, offering a significant contribution to cosmological studies.

Types and Significance of Neutrinos in Astrophysics

- Neutrinos can undergo changes referred to as "oscillation", transitioning from one type or 'flavour' to another due to quantum mixing.
- The importance of neutrinos in astrophysics lies in the fact that they travel undisturbed, thereby providing valuable information about high-energy astrophysical events.
- Scientists carry out detection of neutrinos using deep-sea or ice observatories that are capable of capturing the Cherenkov radiation (a detectable light emission) from their rare interactions with matter.

Waste Recycling and Climate Change 2025 Conference

Overview

- Union Minister Shri Bhupender Yadav inaugurated the conference- 'Waste Recycling and Climate Change 2025'.
- The conference was organised by the Recycling and Environment Industries Association of India (REIAI).
- The increasing issues related to plastic, electronic, and hazardous waste were underlined during the conference.
- It has been estimated that India generates about 62 million tonnes of waste every year.

Objectives of the Conference

- The conference aimed to encourage the redesign of products to make them less wasteful.
- Investment in advanced recycling technologies was advocated.
- Strengthening of supply chain collaboration was among the primary objectives.
- An increase in consumer awareness and the introduction of behavior changes were also targeted.

Potential of Indian Circular Economy

- The circular economy of India is predicted to be valued at \$2 trillion by 2050.
- It aims to provide around 10 million job opportunities.
- The circular economy model focuses on the optimal usage, reuse, and recycling of resources, to prevent wastage and reduce environmental impact.

About Recycling and Environment Industries Association of India (REIAI)

- REIAI is a leading organization focused on waste management, recycling, and environmental protection.
- It encourages innovation and sustainability, promoting India's goal of zero waste.
- The dual objective of environmental protection and economic development is at the core of REIAI.

Key Roles and Activities of REIAI

- REIAI provides a platform for industry professionals, startups, and environmental experts to share and discuss recent advancements.
- It aims to promote sustainability in the plastic industry.
- REIAI encourages plastic waste recycling and works on

- sustainable alternatives such as biodegradable and compostable plastics.
- It also contributes to the development of advanced recycling technologies.

MILITARY DEFENCE AND EXERCISES

Analysis of Very Short-Range Air Defence System (VSHORADS)

Introduction and Related Details:

- The Very Short-Range Air Defence System (VSHORADS) has been developed by the Defence Research & Development Organisation (DRDO) in India.
- This air defence system successfully completed three successive flight trials off the coast of Odisha.
- The technology for VSHORADS is developed by the Research Center Imarat, collaborating with several other DRDO laboratories.

Technical Specifications:

- VSHORADS is a man-portable and lightweight defence system with a maximum range of 8 km.
- It is capable of engaging aerial targets at altitudes up to 4.5 km.
- Advanced technologies such as a miniaturized Reaction Control System (RCS) for attitude control and integrated avionics for missile control and navigation have been incorporated into the VSHORADS.

Utility and Importance in Defence:

- VSHORADS is designed to serve the requirements of all three branches of the Indian Armed Forces: Army, Navy, and Air Force.
- The system possesses the capacity to neutralize low-altitude aerial threats, such as drones, flying at considerable velocities.
- Its importance as a critical air defence tool for close protection against aerial threats in battlefield scenarios is widely accepted.
- With the growing use of drones and other loitering munitions in modern warfare, VSHORADS plays an indispensable role in combating these threats.

Recent Updates and Developments:

- Recent developments signal that DRDO has successfully completed three successive flight trials of VSHORADS off the coast of Odisha.
- This achievement signifies the potential and readiness of the system to neutralize low-altitude aerial threats effectively.

TROPEX-25: Indian Navy's Largest Maritime Exercise

Introduction and Brief Overview

- The Theatre Level Operational Exercise (TROPEX) 2025 is the Indian Navy's widespread biennial maritime exercise.
- Conducted over a period of 3 months, from January-March 2025, the exercise takes place in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR).
- It is considered the largest maritime exercise of the Indian Navy, incorporating participation from the Army, Air Force, and Coast Guard.

TROPEX's Objectives and Its Importance

- The main objective of TROPEX is to validate the Indian Navy's warfighting skills.
- It aims to ensure an integrated response to various maritime threats, including conventional, asymmetric, and hybrid threats.
- Such collective efforts are particularly crucial in countering threats from countries like China, which maintains a powerful naval presence in the IOR.
- China, possessing the world's largest navy, deploys around 7-8 naval vessels and spy ships in the IOR consistently.

TROPEX's Phases and Components

- TROPEX includes both Harbour and Sea Phases, which involve rigorous combat operations.
- Additional components feature cyber & electronic warfare and live weapon firings, further honing the skills of the participating forces.
- An essential part of TROPEX is the Amphibious Exercise (AMPHEX), demonstrating the Navy's capability to carry out complex maritime operations.

The Influence of TROPEX on India's Maritime Security

- As a significant exercise, TROPEX proves instrumental in strengthening joint operations against various maritime threats.
- It not only validates the Indian Navy's readiness and operational strength but also highlights the importance of integrated defence services to secure the nation's maritime boundaries.
- The elaborate exercise offers a substantial deterrent effect, particularly considering the constant threats originating from the powerful naval presence of countries like China in the IOR.

Exercise CYCLONE: 3rd Edition of India-Egypt Joint Special Forces Exercise

Introduction to Exercise CYCLONE

- The 3rd rendition of Exercise CYCLONE, a Joint Special Forces Exercise between India and Egypt, has recently begun in Rajasthan, India.
- This exercise is an annual event, alternately conducted in India and Egypt.
- The previous edition of Exercise CYCLONE was held in Egypt in January 2024.

Objectives of Exercise CYCLONE

- One of the primary aims of this joint military exercise is to strengthen military-to-military relations between India and Egypt.
- It focuses on enhancing interoperability, joint operational capabilities and the exchange of special warfare operations tactics between the two nations.
- Exercise CYCLONE also targets training for counter-terrorism operations in desert and semi-desert terrain, aligning with Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter.

India-Egypt Bilateral Relations

- India and Egypt have a deep-rooted bilateral relationship, with India being one of Egypt's leading trading partners in Africa.
- The two countries are bound by a Bilateral Trade Agreement, signed in 1978, based on the Most Favored Nation clause.
- In 2023, further solidifying their partnership, India and Egypt established a Strategic Partnership that encompasses

multiple facets including political, security, defence, energy, economic cooperation.

General Knowledge Pointers:

- The Most Favored Nation clause is a level of status that is given by one country to another in international trade. It means that the receiving country will be granted all trade advantages, lowest tariffs, highest trade barriers, and what others enjoy.
- Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter authorises the UN Security Council to take action on behalf of all member states to maintain or restore international peace and security. This includes measures such as the use of force.

Exercise Ekuverin: A Joint Military Exercise between India and Maldives

Introduction and About Exercise Ekuverin

- Exercise Ekuverin is a joint military endeavour initiated between the Indian Army and the Maldives National Defence Force.
- Meaning 'Friends' in the Dhivehi language, Ekuverin was started in 2009.
- The exercise is held on an annual basis and is alternately conducted in India and Maldives.
- The primary objective of this exercise is to enhance the interoperability in counter-insurgency and counter-terrorism operations.
- Exercise Ekuverin is also designed to provide joint humanitarian assistance and disaster relief operations.

Recent Developments and Current Situation

- Recently, the 13th edition of Exercise Ekuverin kicked off.
- The military exercise is taking place in Maldives this year, marking a continuation of this tradition of bilateral cooperation.
- In contrast, in 2023, the exercises were held at Chaubatia in Uttarakhand, India.

Importance and Impact of Exercise Ekuverin

- India and Maldives share strong ties in diverse areas including economic, cultural, and military cooperation.
- Exercise Ekuverin plays an instrumental role in further strengthening these relations.
- The exercises also help both nations build capacity to handle unconventional security threats, develop response mechanisms for crises, and promote peace and stability in the region.

General Knowledge Addendum on Exercise Ekuverin

- 'Ekuverin' in the local Dhivehi language translates to 'Friends', symbolising the friendship and mutual understanding between India and Maldives.
- Despite being a relatively new practice, having started only in 2009, the Exercise has greatly contributed to the deepening of defence ties between the two nations.
- Counter-insurgency and counter-terrorism operations are areas of major concern for a lot of countries and joint exercises like Ekuverin allow nations to build a shared approach to these challenges.
- The locations for these exercises alternate between India and Maldives, thereby reinforcing the bilateral nature of this strategic cooperation.

'Winged Raider' Joint Military Exercise

Introduction and Background

- The 'Winged Raider' joint military exercise was carried out

February Current Affairs

by the Indian Army and Indian Air Force (IAF) in the Eastern theatre.

- The main purpose of this exercise was to enhance the coordination and improve rapid deployment capabilities between the two forces.
- The focus was put on special airborne operations, employing both fixed-wing and rotary-wing aircraft.

New Inclusions in the Exercise

- Notably, the Chinook helicopter was utilised for the first time in this region during the 'Winged Raider' exercise.
- The emphasis was on airborne insertion techniques, special forces, and tactical manoeuvring.
- The joint military exercise offered an opportunity to showcase inter-service synergy and mission readiness.

Significance of the 'Winged Raider' Exercise

- The 'Winged Raider' joint military exercise demonstrates the preparedness and adaptability of the Indian Armed Forces.
- It reinforces the capabilities of the Indian Army and Indian Air Force in executing synchronised operations, showcasing the unity and strength of the defence forces.
- The inclusion of the Chinook helicopter in the exercise signifies its importance in the region, enhancing the operational versatility of the forces.
- This type of training also allows for a real-world application of training techniques and procedures, enhancing the effectiveness of the forces.

General Knowledge - Understanding Indian Defence Exercises

- Joint military exercises like 'Winged Raider' play a crucial role in preparing the armed forces for versatile operations and testing defence capabilities.
- These exercises provide practical experience and improve the forces' efficiency in conducting operations together.
- They strengthen defence cooperation, fostering a deeper understanding and mutual trust between different arms of the armed forces.
- Such exercises also provide invaluable lessons that contribute to the strategizing and planning of national security policies.

Joint Special Forces Exercise Cyclone-III

Introduction and About

- Exercise "Cyclone-III" is a joint military training initiative between India and Egypt.
- The most recent instance of this exercise began on 10th February 2025 at the Mahajan Field Firing Range in Rajasthan, India.
- It functions as an annual exercise and is held alternately between the two partnering nations.
- The preceding edition was conducted in Ansas, Egypt in January 2024.
- The training exercise accommodates 25 soldiers from each participating country. The representatives from India are selected from two special forces battalions, while those from Egypt are chosen from the Special Forces Group and Task Force.

Objectives

- The chief aim of Exercise Cyclone-III is to fortify and improve the military relationships between India and Egypt.
- The exercise primarily focuses on enhancing physical fitness, joint planning, and tactical exercises of participating

troops.

- A significant purpose of the operation is to plan, rehearse, and validate tactical exercises for counter-terrorism operations in desert and semi-desert terrains.
- Besides, the exercise also serves as a platform for the demonstration of indigenous military equipment by Egypt, and for conducting an inspection of the defence manufacturing industry.

Strategic Importance and Relation to Current Affairs

- Exercise Cyclone-III has emerged as a central platform in aiding both countries to exchange strategies and practices circumscribing desert warfare and counter-terrorism operations.
- This annual operation plays a crucial role in fostering diplomatic ties and understanding between India and Egypt, contributing to regional stability and military cooperation.
- It also highlights the commitment between the two nations to address common challenges of terrorism and contribute to peace and stability.
- The demonstration of military equipment and inspection of the defence manufacturing industry underscore the shared aim to improve their military strength and readiness amidst changing global security dynamics.

Exercise Dharma Guardian 2024 - Joint Military Drill by India and Japan

Introduction and Overview of Exercise Dharma Guardian

- Exercise Dharma Guardian is a joint military exercise initiated by the Indian Army and the Japan Ground Self Defence Force.
- 2024 marked the 5th edition of this annual military event which took place from 25th February until 9th March at the Mahajan Field Firing Ranges in Rajasthan, India.
- The Exercise occurs alternatively in India and Japan, strengthening military cooperation and building combined capabilities for joint military operations.

Aims and Outcomes of the Dharma Guardian Exercise

- Under the framework of Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter, the Exercise aspires to enhance the ability to execute joint operations in a semi-urban environment, thus fostering military cooperation.
- Emphasis is given to physical fitness, joint strategic planning, tactical drills, and germane special arms skills during this military drill.
- Special operations such as establishing a temporary operating base, the creation of an ISR grid, implementing mobile vehicle checkpoints, carrying out cordon and search operations, execution of heliborne operations, and house intervention drills bolster the participants' competence.
- The mutual sharing of best practices in tactical operations and camaraderie among the troops nurtures defence cooperation and strengthens bilateral ties.

Weapon and Equipment Display

- Within the exercise, a weapon and equipment display was organised to showcase India's 'Atmanirbhar Bharat' initiative representing the country's growing defence industrial capabilities, demonstrating self-reliance in defence manufacturing.

Additional Bilateral Exercises

- Apart from the Dharma Guardian, India and Japan continually foster their defence relations through other joint drills, including JIMEX (naval), Malabar exercise (Naval Exercise), 'Veer Guardian', SHINYUU Maitri (Air Force), and more.

Significance and Impact

- The Exercise Dharma Guardian is of great importance as it offers a platform for both nations to interact at military levels, exchange best practices, and build strong defence relations.
- Such collaborations stand crucial in maintaining regional security and stability, reflecting their shared commitments to peace and prosperity in the Indo-Pacific region.

NAVDEX 2025: Display of Indian Maritime Capabilities by Goa Shipyard Ltd

Introduction

- NAVDEX 2025 refers to an international naval defence exhibition held in Abu Dhabi.
- In NAVDEX 2025, Goa Shipyard Ltd (GSL), India's premier shipbuilding company, will showcase its indigenously designed maritime vessels.
- This display of Indian maritime products is part of the "Make in India" initiative, underlining India's advanced capabilities in the sector.

Featured Vessels: Fast Patrol Vessels and Offshore Patrol Vessels

- GSL will feature its indigenously designed Fast Patrol Vessels (FPVs) and Offshore Patrol Vessels (OPVs).
- These OPVs and FPVs are designed and built in India, demonstrating both GSL's capabilities and the country's broader advances in naval production.

Capabilities of the Fast Patrol Vessels

- The FPV is 50 meters long and capable of reaching speeds of 35 knots.
- It is designed for various high-pressure naval tasks like patrolling, anti-smuggling, as well as handling anti-terrorist operations.
- The FPV is also intended to be utilised for communication during wartime.
- Fitted with three 2,720 kW diesel engines, the FPV can achieve a high degree of manoeuvrability, proving its reliability in rough sea conditions.
- It can accommodate up to 35 personnel in fully air-conditioned conditions, ensuring the comfort of crew members during sustained operations.

Significance of the Display at NAVDEX 2025

- The showcasing of the FPVs and OPVs by GSL at NAVDEX 2025 will not only boost the company's international standing but also highlight India's ability to design and produce advanced maritime vessels.
- This exhibit demonstrates the strides made by the Indian shipbuilding industry under the "Make in India" campaign.
- The event represents a significant opportunity for potential foreign purchases or collaborations, as it increases awareness of GSL's and India's shipbuilding capabilities on a global scale.

POLITY

Understanding President's Rule: The case of Manipur

Introduction - President's Rule and its Imposition in Manipur

- The central government has recently imposed President's Rule on the northeastern state of Manipur following the resignation of the Chief Minister.

- In accordance with Article 356 of the Indian Constitution, this decision effectively suspends the state assembly, placing Manipur under central government control.

Benefits of President's Rule in Manipur's Context

- Neutral Administration: The implementation of President's Rule would eliminate claims of prejudiced handling of ethnic conflict, safeguarding both the Kuki-Zo and Meitei communities.
- Governor-supervised central forces can prevent ethnic clashes and maintain peace and order in the state.
- Electoral Stability: The central intervention can help maintain governance stability by settling internal disagreements within the ruling party.
- Rehabilitation: This rule aids in providing equal relief and rehabilitation support for over 60,000 displaced individuals.

Understanding the President's Rule

- President's Rule involves suspending a state government and its legislative assembly and bringing it under central authority.
- It's instituted under Article 356 of the Indian Constitution following a constitutional mandate: Article 355, which requires the central government to assure that every state complies with the constitution.
- President's Rule, also called State or Constitutional Emergency, can be imposed if a state government doesn't operate as per the constitution.
- This can occur either on the Governor's recommendation or at the President's discretion, even without a Governor's report.
- The implementation must be approved by both Houses of Parliament within two months and lasts for an initial six-month period, extendable up to three years with Parliamentary approval every six months.
- President's Rule beyond three years requires a constitutional amendment.

The Impact of President's Rule

- Following the imposition of the President's Rule, the President acquires extraordinary powers.
- These include taking over state functions via the Governor, the suspension or dissolution of the state legislature, introducing laws, and authorising expenditure from the State Consolidated Fund.
- Laws implemented during this period remain effective unless withdrawn by the state legislature.
- The President can repeal the Rule anytime without parliamentary consent.

Supreme Court's Stand on the Imposition of President's Rule

- The Supreme Court has ruled that the imposition of Article 356 is subject to judicial review, and state government dismissals should rely on a floor test.
- The court has also widened the scope of Article 355, allowing the Union to impose wider actions to uphold constitutionality.
- The Supreme Court has raised concerns over the political misuse of Article 356.
- Judicial review of actions cannot be prevented by immunity under Article 361.

Recommendations for President's Rule Implementation

- Multiple commissions and councils have recommended sparing use of Article 356, using it only as a last resort in case of a state's constitutional breakdown.
- Suggestions for amending Article 356 have also been made to allow for continued President's Rule, even without an emergency, if elections cannot be conducted.

February Current Affairs

- It has also been suggested that the Governor's report recommending imposition of President's Rule should be detailed and that states should be warned before implementation.
- Finally, there have been calls for a special majority to ratify the proposal to impose President's Rule.

Right to Access Justice and its Limitations in India

Introduction and Background

- The Supreme Court (SC) of India recently fined a petitioner for frivolous litigation and for shopping for forums, thereby misusing judicial time and resources.
- The case is significant as it highlights legal misuse with the petitioner persistently filing meritless pleas to overturn a service dismissal.
- This person challenged his dismissal for misconduct across multiple legal platforms which included the Industrial Tribunal, High Court, and Supreme Court, despite continuous rejections.

Supreme Court Ruling on Right to Access Justice

- The Supreme Court reaffirmed that while the right to access justice is a fundamental right (Article 21), it is not absolute.
- The court stated that unnecessary petitions waste judicial time, delay justice, and undermine the integrity of the legal system.
- This ruling held that access to justice is integral but it comes with certain limitations.

Key Judicial Rulings and Precedents

- In the case of Anita Khushwa v. Pushpa Sadan, 2016, the SC reaffirmed that access to justice is a fundamental right under Articles 21 and 14 and identified 4 key points to ensure access to justice: effective adjudicatory mechanisms, reasonable accessibility, speedy adjudication, and affordable access.
- In the case of Buddhi Kota Subbarao v. K. Parasaran, 1996, the SC upheld judicial finality and ruled that higher court decisions cannot be endlessly contested without new evidence.

Provisions Related to Right to Access Justice

- The Indian Constitution provides several provisions to ensure the right to access justice. These include Article 14 (Right to Equality), Article 21 (Right to Life and Personal Liberty), Article 39A (Free Legal Aid), and Articles 32 and 226, which allow individuals to enforce their right to access justice by approaching the Supreme Court or the High Court.
- The Legal Framework in India includes The Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987, which established NALSA to provide free legal aid to weaker sections of society.
- Under this Act, eligible groups include women, children, SCs/STs, disabled individuals, and economically weaker persons, ensuring legal representation for disadvantaged populations.
- Lok Adalats and E-Lok Adalats are designed to offer fast and accessible dispute resolution while Tele-Law provides legal advice to marginalised communities.

Role of Public Interest Litigation (PIL)

- PILs have broadened the rule of locus standi, allowing public-oriented individuals or organisations to file cases for rights enforcement, and not just those directly affected.
- The case of MC Mehta v. Union of India (1987) was the first PIL filed on environmental pollution in Delhi, demonstrating the power and impact of this legal tool.

Supreme Court Declares Domicile-Based PG Medical Admissions Unconstitutional

About the Supreme Court's Decision

- The Supreme Court (SC) of India has ruled in the case "Tanvi Behl v. Shrey Goel and others, 2025", that domicile-based reservation for Post-Graduate (PG) medical admissions is unconstitutional.
- This followed appeals against a Punjab and Haryana High Court ruling, which had removed such reservations.
- The Court highlighted that these reservations cultivate inequality among students based on their state residence, contravening the Right to Equality (Article 14 of the Indian Constitution).
- Furthermore, the Court decreed that PG medical admissions should be purely merit-based, with state quota seats, barring institution-based reservations, mandatorily following merit-based selection.

Understanding Domicile and Its Implications

- The SC clarified that 'domicile' refers to a person's legal home, which is not necessarily their place of residence.
- According to the Court, the only domicile recognised by Indian law is the "Domicile of India,"; the notion of state-specific domicile is legally inadmissible.

History and Precedence

- The Bench referred to the 1984 case, Dr. Pradeep Jain vs Union of India, wherein the SC allowed residence-based reservation in MBBS courses.
- Despite this, the Court found that such reasoning does not extend to PG medical courses, and such reservations are therefore deemed unconstitutional.

Pros and Cons of Domicile-Based Reservation in Education

- The domicile-based reservation ensures local students have ample representation and opportunities in educational institutions, especially in the public sector.
- It can aid the social and economic development of local communities by providing better access to higher education.
- However, it may infringe upon the constitutional right to freely move and seek education anywhere in the country.
- These reservations can potentially divide the nation, affecting the ideal of a cohesive educational and professional space with equal opportunities for all citizens.

Future Direction

- The Court supports merit-based admissions, citing that qualifications and skills should take precedence over regional backgrounds.
- The SC recommended an investment in education infrastructure, teacher training, and skill development in rural and backward areas to enhance local student competitiveness.
- Finally, the Court stressed the need for effective social support systems to ensure vulnerable groups can access higher education and employment opportunities nationwide.

Bills on Parliamentary Sittings and Amendments to the POCSO Act, 2012

Introduction and Objective

- A private member Bill has been proposed in the Rajya Sabha for mandating a minimum number of parliamentary sittings per year.
- The aim is to compensate for disrupted sessions through extended sittings to boost productivity and improve government accountability.

February Current Affairs

- Another Bill has been introduced to amend the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, 2012 to enhance its victim-centric approach and improve its implementation.

Historical Overview and Current Scenario of Parliamentary Sittings

- Lok Sabha's General Purposes Committee explored the idea of a fixed parliamentary calendar in 1955.
 - The National Commission on Constitutional Review in 2002 recommended minimum 100 days of sittings for Rajya Sabha and 120 days for Lok Sabha per year.
 - The first Lok Sabha (1952-1957) under Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru averaged 135 sittings yearly. Contrastingly, the 17th Lok Sabha (2019-2024) recorded the lowest average of 55 days annually.

Constitutional Provisions on Parliamentary Sittings

- India's Constitution doesn't mandate a fixed number of Parliament sessions or sitting days.
 - Under Article 85, the President has the power to convene each House as required, ensuring no more than six months' gap between sessions.

Amendments Proposed for POCSO Act, 2012

- The proposed POCSO (Amendment) Bill, 2024 mandates a 24-hour reporting rule for police or the special juvenile police unit to present the child before the Child Welfare Committee.
 - Time-bound compensation and structured procedures are proposed for improved victim support.
 - Training for stakeholders including police, educational institutions, and child care personnel is highlighted to enhance Bill implementation efficiency.

Need for the Amendment

- Recent data indicates a 94% rise in POCSO cases since 2017, with over 200,000 registered cases by May 2024.
 - Victims often face prolonged delays due to unstructured compensation procedures. Shortage of trained Special Public Prosecutors also adversely impacts case handling.
 - The proposed amendment seeks to fill gaps in the existing POCSO Act, 2012, such as timely support for victims, legal implications for 16-18-year-olds engaged in consensual sexual activity, and better provisioning of specialized POCSO courts.

Brief Overview of POCSO Act, 2012

- The POCSO Act, 2012 seeks to address child sexual abuse and exploitation.
 - It recognizes the potential victimization of both genders, defining a child as anyone below 18.
 - Confidentiality is mandated regarding the victim's identity.
 - It necessitates the reporting of any instance of suspected child abuse to the appropriate authorities.

Understanding the Significance of Shankari Prasad Case and First Amendment Act, 1951 in Indian Constitutional History

The First Amendment Act, 1951 and Its Elements

- The First Amendment Act in 1951 was a pivotal moment in India's constitutional discourse as it limited the Right to Property.
 - It introduced 'Ninth Schedule' to the constitution, which houses laws that are immune to judicial review, mainly housing land reformations laws. Initially, the schedule comprised 13 laws.
 - The Amendment also inserted Articles 31A and 31B,

shielding land reform laws from judicial reviews and safeguarding them, even if they were contradicting fundamental rights.

- The Act brought about changes to restrict free speech under Article 19 and reinforced caste-based reservations aiming at social and educational upliftment and emancipation.
 - The Amendment Act became crucial, especially in the context of India's post-independence agrarian reform efforts to equalise land ownership and reducing zamindar powers.

The Shankari Prasad Singh Deo v. Union of India Case, 1951 and Its Implications

- The case in 1951 arose due to a challenge to the First Amendment Act by Sankari Prasad Singh Deo, a zamindar, as it undermined the Right to Property.
 - The Amendment sought to allow government power to acquire land from zamindars without compensation, contradicting the fundamental rights (Article 19(1)(f) and Article 31) granted originally in the constitution.
 - A Bench of five Supreme Court judges ruled in favour of the government, maintaining that constitutional amendments can alter fundamental rights while ordinary law cannot.
 - The judgement set a significant precedent, removing legal barriers to land reforms, allowing Indian states to proceed with abolition of zamindari.
 - In subsequent cases, like Sajjan Singh v. State of Rajasthan, 1964, Supreme Court upheld the Shankari Prasad judgement, although it was questioned whether fundamental rights should be alterable.
 - In Keshavananda Bharati v. State of Kerala, 1973, the Court introduced the Basic Structure Doctrine, holding that while parliament can amend the constitution, it cannot change its "basic structure", which includes fundamental rights.
 - Right to Property was later considered as a legal right, not part of the basic structure, facilitating continuous land reforms.

The Historical Background and Role of Zamindari System

- The Zamindari system, introduced by Lord Cornwallis in 1793, gave zamindars control over land and allowed them to collect rent from peasants, leading to economic disparity.
 - The system led to excessive land concentration in a few hands, leading to significant landlessness among peasants, forcing the need for its abolition.
 - The intent behind the abolition was in line with the Indian constitutional goal of creating a socialist-leaning economy and establishing equitable distribution of resources, as emphasised by the Article 39(b) and 39(c) of the constitution.
 - While the measure, in theory, promised to improve productivity by dividing large estates into smaller landholdings, its execution saw partial success, due to loopholes promoting unaccounted transactions.

RANK REPORTS AND AWARDS

NSO Time Use Survey 2024

Introduction and About NSO

- The National Statistics Office (NSO), under the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI), is

February Current Affairs

India's nodal agency for statistical development.

- NSO aims to standardise, coordinate, and disseminate statistical data.
- Within NSO are the Central Statistical Office (CSO), the Data Informatics & Innovation Division (DIID), and the National Sample Survey Office (NSSO).
- The NSO releases several important indicators including the Index of Industrial Production (IIP), conducts the Annual Survey of Industries (ASI), providing crucial insights into industrial growth and economic trends.

What's New - TUS 2024

- NSO has recently published the Time Use Survey (TUS) 2024, which marks the second nationwide survey following the first in 2019.
- Unlike traditional studies focusing only on specific aspects of work, the TUS examines time allocation across paid and unpaid activities.
- This survey provides detailed insights into various aspects of everyday life, including work, caregiving, learning, and leisure.
- Countries involved in this survey include India, Australia, Japan, Korea, the US, and China.

Key Findings of TUS 2024

- Employment Participation: In 2024, 75% of males and 25% of females, aged between 15-59 years, engaged in employment-related activities, showing an increase from 70.9% in males and 21.8% in females in 2019.
- A decrease in time spent by women in unpaid domestic work from 315 minutes/day in 2019 to 305 minutes/day in 2024 indicates a shift towards paid activities.
- Urban women experienced a more significant uptick in employment participation than rural women, owing likely to better job opportunities, education, and support systems.
- In the caregiving sector, 41% of women participated compared to 21.4% of men in the 15-59 age group. Women spent an average of 140 minutes/day on caregiving, while men spent 74 minutes/day. However, male involvement in caregiving is gradually rising.
- Cultural, Leisure, and Education Activities: In 2024, people aged six and above devoted 11% of their daily time to cultural activities, leisure, mass media, and sports, compared to 9.9% in 2019.
- A large proportion of children, 89.3% (6-14 years), engaged in learning activities, with an average spending of 413 minutes/day on education.
- Household production found participation from about 16.8% of the population, who produced goods for their personal use.

Sahitya Akademi Award 2024

Introduction

- The Sahitya Akademi Awards for the year 2024 have been announced, revealing 22 winners thus far, with Bengali and Urdu results yet to be finalised. This would bring the overall winner tally to 24.

About Sahitya Akademi Award

- The Sahitya Akademi Awards are prestigious accolades that celebrate exceptional literary contributions across various forms such as novels, poetry, essays, and plays.
- It is considered the second most prestigious literary honour in the country, following the Jnanpith Award.
- The Sahitya Akademi was established as an autonomous body under the Ministry of Culture in 1954.

Eligibility and Award Categories

- The award categories include works in the 22 languages

enumerated in the Eighth Schedule of the Indian Constitution, in addition to English and Rajasthani, totalling to 24 languages.

- The awards also recognise translations of Indian literary works.
- The author of the work must be a citizen of India to be eligible for the award.

Recipients and Other Sahitya Akademi Awards

- The 2024 award has seen winners in 22 categories, with decisions for awards in Bengali and Urdu yet to be made.
- In addition to the main Sahitya Akademi Award, the Akademi bestows other honours such as the Bal Sahitya Puraskar, which recognises children's literature, and the Yuva Puraskar, which is awarded to works by authors under the age of 35.

Other Initiatives

- Besides awarding prizes, the Akademi also runs various programmes catered towards the promotion of literature. These include the Gramalok programme, which focuses on writers from remote areas, and the Dalit Chetna initiative, which is aimed at encouraging Dalit (a historically marginalised group in India) writers.

Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) 2024

Introduction and About

- The Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) is an annual publication by independent non-governmental organisation, Transparency International, which began in 1995.
- The Index ranks 180 countries and territories worldwide based on their perceived levels of public sector corruption.
- The scale of ranking ranges from 0, which signifies highly corrupt, to 100 that implies very 'clean' or less corrupt.

CPI 2024 Findings

- In the 2024 CPI, India's ranking fell from 93rd to 96th, with a score of 38, a decrease from 39 in the previous year.
- Denmark clinched the top spot as the least corrupt nation, followed by Finland and Singapore.
- Among India's neighbours, Pakistan was ranked 135th, Sri Lanka stood at 121st and Bangladesh at 149th, while China fared considerably better, standing at 76.
- Out of the 180 countries, only 32 have successfully managed to reduce their corruption levels since 2012, while 148 have either shown no progress or have deteriorated, indicating a persisting global issue.

Importance and Implications

- Corruption strongly impedes climate action efforts by diverting funds intended for mitigation and adaptation. Such misuse primarily benefits fossil fuel interests, thereby blocking crucial policies.
- Transparency International further posits a direct link between corruption and declining democracy, increased instability, and widespread human rights violations.
- This underscores the need for urgent global action to tackle the issue of corruption, as its effects also extend beyond the public sector to more insidious, structural problems.

India's Performance and Next Steps

- India's fall by three places in the rankings makes it imperative to evaluate existing anti-corruption policies and mechanisms.
- Measures to increase transparency, strengthen regulatory bodies and enhance public participation could be some

February Current Affairs

steps moving forward.

- As a part of the global community, India also needs to actively participate in collective initiatives to combat corruption.

Global Perspective

- With 148 countries showing no significant improvement or even worsening in corruption levels, it is clear that corruption remains a pervasive issue requiring concerted international efforts.

- As significantly observed, advances and declines in corruption levels are not isolated phenomena, but rather intricately linked to the global state of democracy, environmental policies, and human rights.

- The CPI underscores the urgency for all nations to address corruption as a matter of priority to ensure not only public sector integrity but also the broader stability and progress of society.

Grammy Awards 2025: Highlights and Overview

Introduction and Overview

- The 67th Annual Grammy Awards occurred on February 2, 2025.

- The event took place at the Crypto.com Arena in Los Angeles.

- Talk-show host and comedian Trevor Noah served as the master of ceremonies.

Key Highlights of Grammy Awards 2025

- Beyoncé made history by winning the Best Country Album for "Cowboy Carter", demonstrating the versatility of her talent.

- Kendrick Lamar dominated the awards night, securing both 'Record of the Year' and 'Song of the Year' for "Not Like Us".

- Newcomer Chappell Roan was recognised as the Best New Artist.

- Sabrina Carpenter also had a successful evening, obtaining the Best Pop Solo Performance with "Espresso" and Best Pop Vocal Album for "Short n' Sweet".

Other Significant Winners and Wins

- The iconic pairing of Beyoncé & Miley Cyrus won for Best Country Duo/Group Performance with their hit song "I MOST WANTED".

- J. Cole received the Best Rap Album of the year for his work "The Off-Season".

- The Best Rock Album honour went to The Black Crowes for their album "Shake Your Money Maker".

- Best R&B song was given to Kehlani's "After Hours".

- Justice & Tame Impala's collaboration won the Best Dance/Electronic Performance for their track "We Are the People".

- Composer Bear McCreary received the Best Score Soundtrack for "God of War Ragnarök: Valhalla".

Special Award

- Alicia Keys was presented with the Dr. Dre Global Impact Award, an honour bestowed to artists who have made a significant difference across the music industry and beyond.

Notable Moments from Grammy Awards 2025

- This Grammy Awards edition is now historic as it witnessed the emergence of new talents and the recognition of established artists.

- Kendrick Lamar's multiple wins establish him as one of today's most influential artists.

- Beyoncé's groundbreaking victory in the Best Country Album category further solidifies her iconic status in the music world.

- The night tailored an extraordinary mix of performances and music, spanning various genres, which showcased the diverse talents recognised by these prestigious awards.

BAFTA Awards 2025 Highlights and Winners

Introduction and Overview

- The 78th BAFTA Awards served as a platform to honour achievements in cinema.

- Conclave and The Brutalist emerged as the most triumphant films, each securing four awards.

- The evening was marked with a variety of different winners across an array of categories, further enhancing the diversity and quality of the film industry.

Winner's Announcements

- Best Film accolade was awarded to Conclave.

- The Brutalist's director Brady Corbet scooped the Best Director award, with Adrien Brody also being recognised for his leading role in the same film.

- Anora's Mikey Madison won Best Leading Actress, whilst Kieran Culkin and Zoe Saldaña won best supporting actor and actress for their roles in A Real Pain and Emilia Pérez respectively.

- Jesse Eisenberg for A Real Pain and Peter Straughan for Conclave took home the gongs for Best Original Screenplay and Best Adapted Screenplay.

- Best Animated Film was awarded to Wallace & Gromit: Vengeance Most Fowl.

Technical Category Winners

- Dune: Part Two bagged awards in the technical categories for Best Sound and Best Special Visual Effects.

- The Brutalist was awarded for Best Cinematography and Best Original Score, evidencing the film's technical prowess.

- Best Editing was claimed by Conclave, with Best Costume Design and Best Production Design going to Wicked.

Other Notable Wins

- Emilia Pérez won the category of Best Film Not in the English Language, continuing its dominance within the international film industry.

- The Best Documentary accolade went to Super/Man: The Christopher Reeve Story.

- The Outstanding British Film award was claimed by Conclave, while Outstanding British Debut was awarded to Kneecap by Rich Peppiatt.

- The Best Children's & Family Film was also awarded to Wallace & Gromit: Vengeance Most Fowl.

Rising Star and Short Film Winners

- The much coveted EE Rising Star Award went to David Jonsson.

- The Best British Short Animation and Best British Short Film were respectively awarded to Wander to Wonder and Rock, Paper, Scissors.

The Corruption Perceptions Index 2024 and India's Ranking

Introduction and Overview

- The Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) is an annual ranking published by the non-governmental organisation, Transparency International, since 1995.

- The CPI ranks 180 countries according to their perceived

February Current Affairs

levels of public sector corruption. The scale ranges from 0, indicating a country is highly corrupt, to 100, suggesting a country is very clean.

2024 CPI Rankings

- In the 2024 edition of CPI, Denmark secured the top position as the least corrupt nation, closely followed by Finland and Singapore.
- India ranked 96th with a score of 38, marking a decline both in its position and score from the previous year when it was ranked 93rd with a score of 39.
- Among India's neighbours, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, and Bangladesh secured the 135th, 121st, and 149th positions respectively, showing poor performance, while China stood at 76.

Notable Trends and Observations

- It was observed that, since 2012, while 32 countries have made significant progress in reducing their corruption levels, 148 countries have either stagnated or worsened over the same period. This fact underscores the persisting global challenge of corruption.
- Transparency International also highlighted that corruption hinders climate action by misusing funds allocated for mitigation and adaptation efforts, with fossil-fuel interests often obstructing relevant policies.

Corruption, Democracy, and Human Rights

- The NGO also drew attention to a correlation between corruption, declining democracy, instability, and human rights violations.
- The data suggest a pressing need for global action to address these interconnected issues.

Conclusion

- The 2024 CPI results point out the serious issues countries are facing with regard to corruption, undermining economic, social, political, and environmental progress.
- There's a need to address corruption with concerted, international efforts, especially considering the pervasive issues it presents to areas like climate change, democracy, stability, and human rights.

India Secures 3rd Position in Global LEED Green Buildings 2024

Introduction

- India has achieved the third position in the U.S. Green Building Council's (USGBC) annual ranking of countries with the most LEED-certified green buildings.
- The ranking involves 370 projects that cover 8.50 million square metres of certified space, showing India's commitment to sustainable construction and eco-friendly development.

India's Performance in LEED Certifications 2024

- In 2024, India saw an impressive increase in LEED-certified projects to 370.
- The total area of green-certified space increased to 8.50 million gross square metres, indicating an increase in sustainable construction across commercial, residential, and industrial buildings.
- The increase reflects India's focus on eco-friendly infrastructure, sustainable urban planning, water conservation, and reduction in carbon footprint.

Comparison of India with Other Countries

- China topped the rankings in 2024 with over 25 million square metres of LEED-certified space, followed by Canada

with 10 million square metres.

- India placed third with 8.50 million square metres, thereby underlining its leadership in sustainable construction in the Asia-Pacific region.
- Even though the United States wasn't included in the ranking, it remains the largest market for LEED with over 56 million square metres of certified space.

Significance of India's Position in Green Buildings for Future Prospects

- Over the past few years, India has shown a steady increase in LEED-certified space.
- India held the third position in 2023 with 7.23 million square metres across 248 projects, and in 2022, it stood at the second position with 10.47 million square metres across 323 projects.
- Gopalakrishnan Padmanabhan, the Managing Director for Southeast Asia & Middle East at Green Business Certification Inc. (GBCI), highlighted India's increasing role in the green building sector.
- He also suggested that India is making considerable progress towards achieving the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for 2030 by increasing its green-certified infrastructure.

Future Outlook and Importance of India's Sustainable Development

- India is expected to further improve its position in sustainable development due to increasing awareness and government incentives promoting energy-efficient buildings.
- The growing adoption of LEED certifications is aligned with India's larger climate goals, propelling its transition towards green cities and eco-friendly real estate investments.
- These developments show India's commitment to sustainable development and environmentally responsible growth.

India Makes Notable Progress in Global Logistics Performance Rankings

Introduction about India's Logistics Performance Leap

- India has secured the 22nd position in the International Shipments category, in the World Bank's Logistics Performance Index (LPI) 2023.
- The country has also seen a significant rise in its overall ranking, moving up to the 38th spot among 139 countries.
- The improvements reveal India's concentrated efforts towards increasing logistics efficiency, minimising costs, and leveraging cutting-edge technology.

Key Causes for India's Ascension in the LPI Rankings

- Several factors contribute to India's growth in the logistics sector, including policy reformation, technological initiatives, and infrastructure development.
- Streamlining supply chains, reducing delays, and enhancing freight movement efficiency has helped India to boost its global trade competitiveness.
- In the International Shipments category, the country's rank improvement from 44th place in 2018 to 22nd in 2023 demonstrates the effectiveness of government policies in facilitating global trade.

Improvement in Turnaround Time at Ports

- Indian ports have significantly cut down their processing times leading to an average turnaround time of 0.9 days.
- This time efficiency surpasses that of several powerful economies, including the USA (1.5 days), Australia (1.7 days), and Germany (1.3 days).
- Such an achievement has been made possible by

modernising and automating ports.

Impact of Government Policies on India’s Logistics Growth

- To bolster India's logistics infrastructure and decrease inefficiencies, the government has rolled out vital policy initiatives.
- The PM GatiShakti National Master Plan, launched in 2021, focuses on multimodal connectivity to integrate various transport networks and enhance cargo movement. It aims to minimise logistics costs and promote economic growth by 2024-25.
- The National Logistics Policy, brought forth in September 2022, targets last-mile delivery hurdles, bottlenecks, and enhancing overall logistics efficiency. The policy is crucial to structuring and cost-effectively running India's logistics sector.

Technology’s Contribution to India’s Logistics Transformation

- Advanced technologies have driven remarkable changes in India’s logistics sector.
- The NICDC-operated Logistics Data Bank Project utilises radio frequency identification (RFID) tags to track containers in real-time, significantly reducing delays and promoting supply chain transparency.
- Indian ports and warehouses are increasingly adopting automation, AI, and digital tracking systems to amplify cargo handling efficiency.

Mukesh Ambani and the Global Influence of Asia's Wealthiest Families

Introduction and Overview

- Mukesh Ambani and the Ambani family top Asia’s list of wealthiest families, according to Bloomberg’s 2025 rankings.
- The rankings show Asian families continuing to shape the global economy through their influence in diverse industries including technology, finance, real estate, and energy.
- Such families have managed to expand their financial empires, showing a great ability to sustain business growth over generations.

India's Prominence in Wealth Creation

- India has made a significant mark, with six Indian families ranking in the top 20 of Asia's wealthiest families.
- Among the top-ranking Indian families are the Shapoorji Pallonji Group (Mistry family), O.P. Jindal Group (Jindal family), Aditya Birla Group (Birla family), Bajaj Group (Bajaj family), and Hinduja Group (Hinduja family).
- These family-owned businesses operate in a wide range of industries and significantly contribute to India's industrial and economic output.

A Closer Look at Mukesh Ambani and Reliance Industries

- Mukesh Ambani holds the title of Asia’s richest individual.
- He took over the family business, Reliance Industries, in 2002, following the death of his father, Dhirubhai Ambani.
- The multi-industry conglomerate has diversified into sectors including oil refining, technology, consumer goods, financial services, and green energy.
- Ambani's children hold significant roles in managing different departments within the company.

Overview of Bloomberg’s 2025 Asia’s Richest Families List

- Following the Ambani family, the richest families in Asia hail from a broad range of territories, including Thailand, Indonesia, Hong Kong, Taiwan, South Korea, China,

Singapore, Malaysia, and the Philippines.

- The business sectors these families influence are equally diverse, ranging from agro-industrial and food conglomerate (Chearavanonts' Charoen Pokphand Group) to finance (Tsai Family's Cathay Financial), to real estate (Kwoks' Sun Hung Kai Properties) and even energy (Kadoories' CLP Holdings).
- The list demonstrates the vast wealth and influence exerted by Asia's business elites, as well as their pivotal role in shaping the global economic landscape.

Women Billionaires Global List 2025

Introduction and Overview

- This global list provides information on the wealthiest women billionaires in the world as of 2025.
- The list details their net worth and the source of their wealth, which spans across various industries such as retail, cosmetics, investments, and technology.

Major Highlights

- Leading the list is Alice Walton, with a net worth of \$112.5 billion, who amassed her wealth from Walmart, the world's largest retailer.
- Following second is Francoise Bettencourt Meyers and her family with a worth of \$74.4 billion, owners of the cosmetic empire, L'Oréal.
- The third position is held by Julia Koch and her family with a net worth of \$74.2 billion from Koch Industries.

Other Notable Mentions

- Jacqueline Mars, from Mars Inc, ranks fourth with \$42.3 billion in net worth.
- Rafaela Aponte-Diamant, associated with the Mediterranean Shipping Group (MSC), holds the fifth position with a net wealth of \$39.0 billion.
- Abigail Johnson, from Fidelity Investments, ranks sixth with a net worth of \$36.0 billion.

Indian Billionaires

- Notably, Savitri Jindal and her family, associated with the JSW group is in the seventh position, signifying the representation of Indian women billionaires on the global list.

Technology and Finance Billionaires

- Mackenzie Scott, the ex-wife of Amazon founder Jeff Bezos, has a net worth of \$32.3 billion.
- Miriam Adelson and family, associated with Las Vegas Sands, have a net worth of \$31.5 billion.
- Marilyn Simons and family, whose source of wealth is hedge funds, round out the top ten with a net worth of \$31.0 billion.

Significance and Remarkable Facts

- The list portrays the increasing representation and growing influence of women in sectors traditionally dominated by men, like technology and finance.
- It also emphasises the vast fortunes to be made in these industries, with colossal net worth figures reaching up to hundreds of billions.
- The presence of various industries on this list showcases the diverse opportunities available for wealth creation in the global economy.

Conclusion

- The 2025 Global Women Billionaires list celebrates the accomplishments of these powerful women, shedding light

on their successes and influence in their respective sectors.

- Not only do these women signify enormous wealth but also embody the changing dynamics of global business leadership.

Schemes And Initiative

The Launch of India-EFTA Desk

Introduction

- The India-EFTA Desk is a contemporary development that chalks the course of economic relations between India and the European Free Trade Association (EFTA).
- This platform was initiated as part of the Trade and Economic Partnership Agreement (TEPA) to proliferate economic ties and facilitate investments.

About the India-EFTA Desk

- The India-EFTA Desk is a dedicated investment facilitation mechanism.
- Established by Invest India, it serves as a single-window platform for EFTA businesses intending to invest in India.

Objectives of the India-EFTA Desk

- The primary aim of the India-EFTA Desk is to realise the objectives of the TEPA.
- These goals include attracting an FDI of USD 100 billion over 15 years, thereby generating over 1 million direct jobs in India.
- The desk is also focused on addressing commitments related to Intellectual Property Rights stipulated in the TEPA.
- Moreover, it aims to foster Technology Collaboration and align it with India's Make in India and Atma Nirbhar Bharat initiatives.

India-EFTA Trade and Economic Partnership Agreement

- The India-EFTA TEPA is a comprehensive Free Trade Agreement that was signed in March 2024.

Overview of the European Free Trade Association (EFTA)

- EFTA is an intergovernmental organisation of Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, and Switzerland, founded under the Stockholm Convention of 1960
- It is noteworthy to mention that India is EFTA's fifth-largest trading partner. It follows the European Union, the US, the UK, and China in this regard.
- The two-way trade between EFTA and India escalated to USD 24 billion in the fiscal year 2023-24, witnessing a rise from USD 18.65 billion in 2022-23. The trade gap is largely in favour of EFTA.
- While Switzerland remains the largest trade partner for India within EFTA, it is closely followed by Norway.

Gyan Bharatam Mission and National Manuscripts Mission (NMM)

Subtopic 1: Introduction and About the Missions

- The Gyan Bharatam Mission, introduced in the Union Budget 2025-26, is a new initiative that targets the survey, documentation, and conservation of India's vast manuscript heritage.
- The aim of the mission is to conserve over one crore manuscripts that are currently present in academic institutions, museums, libraries, and private collections.
- To support this ambitious initiative, the budget allocation for the National Manuscripts Mission (NMM) has substantially increased from Rs 3.5 crore to Rs 60 crore.

- NMM, initiated by the Ministry of Culture in 2003 under the banner of the Indira Gandhi National Centre for Arts (IGNCA), also seeks to preserve and make accessible India's rich manuscript heritage.

Subtopic 2: Overview of the Indira Gandhi National Centre for Arts (IGNCA)

- IGNCA was formed as an autonomous body in 1987, functioning as a research and educational epicentre for arts, particularly those of India.
- The National Manuscripts Mission is one of the pivotal endeavours undertaken by IGNCA to safeguard India's historical and cultural legacies.

Subtopic 3: Importance and Prevalence of Manuscripts in India

- A manuscript is a handwritten composition made on a variety of materials such as paper, bark, cloth, metal, or palm leaf. To be classified as "manuscript," the composition must at minimum be 75 years old.
- India is home to nearly 5 million manuscripts, making it the possessor of the largest manuscript collection globally.
- These manuscripts are a representation of India's rich history, culture, and civilisation. They hold immense significance as they provide invaluable insights into the country's past.

Subtopic 4: Significance of the Gyan Bharatam Mission and NMM for India

- By investing in the Gyan Bharatam Mission and the National Manuscripts Mission, India systematically safeguards its historical and cultural heritage.
- The increase in funding symbolises the government's commitment and seriousness towards historical conservation efforts.
- Preserving these manuscripts prevents the loss of invaluable knowledge they hold. Simultaneously, it affords future generations the opportunity to learn from the ancient wisdom these manuscripts possess.
- Documenting and making these manuscripts accessible means India's unique and ancient knowledge can be shared not only within the country but also on a global scale.

Swavalambini Program

Introduction and Overview

- Swavalambini is a newly introduced women entrepreneurship program.
- The platform is launched by the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE) in association with NITI Aayog.
- Geographically, the initiative has started in the North-East Indian states of Assam, Meghalaya, and Mizoram.

Objective and Approach

- The primary goal of Swavalambini is to empower females in Northeast Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) by providing them with entrepreneurial mindset, resources, and mentorship for successful business operations.
- The programme is structured in stages, including Entrepreneurship Awareness Programme (EAP), Women Entrepreneurship Development Programme (EDP), Faculty Development Programme (FDP), and a funding scheme.
- The approach promises to recognize and award successful ventures, offering inspiration to others and creating a robust framework to expedite the development of women-led enterprises in India.

Expected Outcomes

- As a result of the programme, 10% of the EDP trainees are expected to launch successful businesses.
- The initiative also aims to strengthen the entrepreneurial culture in HEIs, making business creation a feasible career choice for women, and promotes women-led enterprises as a key driving force of India's economic evolution.

National Alignment

- Swavalambini aligns with the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 which promotes skill integration, industry collaboration, and entrepreneurship-based education.
- The programme further ensures financial and mentorship support for women entrepreneurs, thereby strengthening initiatives like Start-Up India, Stand-Up India, PM Mudra Yojana, and Women Entrepreneurship Platform.
- The programme also aligns with the Union Budget 2025, contributing to a Rs 10,000 crore start-up fund and extending the 100% tax exemption on start-up profits for the first five years, providing important financial support for emerging women-led enterprises.

Women Entrepreneurship Landscape in India

- The total MSMEs in India is over 63 million, with women owning 20% (12.39 million) of these enterprises.
- These women-led MSMEs employ between 22 to 27 million people, making a significant contribution to employment.
- According to the Mastercard Index on Women Entrepreneurship (MIWE) 2021, India currently ranks 57th out of 65 nations in terms of women entrepreneurship, and 70th among 77 nations in the Global Female Entrepreneurship Index (FEI) by the Global Entrepreneurship and Development Institute.
- The states with the highest proportion of women-led MSMEs include West Bengal (23.42%), Tamil Nadu (10.37%), Telangana (7.85%), Karnataka (7.56%), and Andhra Pradesh (6.76%).

India - US COMPACT Initiative

Introduction and Overview

- The India-US COMPACT (Catalyzing Opportunities for Military Partnership, Accelerated Commerce & Technology) for the 21st Century was co-launched by US President Donald Trump and Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi.
- This initiative aims to expand collaboration between the two nations in Defence, trade, energy, technology and regional cooperation, as well as people-to-people engagement.

Highlights of the COMPACT Initiative

- Defence collaboration: A new 10-year Framework for the US-India Major Defence Partnership from 2025-2035 aims to ramp up Defence sales and co-production of weapons like Javelin Anti-Tank Guided Missiles, while also improving joint military exercises such as Tiger Triumph.
- Trade and investment expansion: The 'Mission 500' is designed to boost bilateral trade to USD 500 billion by 2030, via measures like reducing trade obstacles and increasing market access for various goods and exports.
- Energy security: A major pillar of this initiative is to bolster energy ties, particularly in oil, gas and nuclear cooperation; in addition, the US is supporting India's attempt to join the International Energy Agency (IEA).
- Technology advancements: The program involves rebranding the Initiative on Critical and Emerging Technologies (iCET) as TRUST (Transforming the Relationship Utilising Strategic Technology), focusing on high-potential sectors like semiconductors, quantum

computing, and Artificial Intelligence (AI).

- Multilateral and regional cooperation: The aim is to strengthen Quad partnerships, enhance counterterrorism efforts and further Indo-Pacific security.
- People-to-people engagement: The COMPACT initiative seeks to boost academic and workforce mobility, simplify legal migration, and tighten law enforcement cooperation against trafficking and transnational crime.

Current India-US Relations and Key Challenges

- Despite evolved ties, challenges in tariff disputes, immigration policies, technology transfer, data localization and geopolitical differences exacerbate tensions between India and the US.
- Despite being the third-largest investor in India with USD 65.19 billion in cumulative Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) inflows from 2000 to 2024, conflicts persist over tariffs and trade agreements.
- Other challenges include the US's strict immigration policies, which clash with India's heavy reliance on H-1B visas for IT professionals, as well as disagreements over data sovereignty laws, and geopolitical and multilateral differences.

The Way Forward

- Finalizing a Bilateral Trade Agreement (BTA) could ease trade tensions and improve supply chain integration in vital industries, alongside harmonising regulatory norms with US standards to incentivise investments.
- India should push for increased H-1B quotas and expedited visa processing to support professional and technical talent.
- India might consider easing data localization norms selectively to facilitate US tech investments, while also developing joint cybersecurity frameworks to foster trust in digital governance.
- Strengthening India-US engagement in key multilateral forums and leveraging India's strategic role in the Global South can help address global governance differences while simultaneously enhancing economic and security influence.

PRAKRITI 2025: International Conference on Carbon Markets

About PRAKRITI 2025:

- PRAKRITI 2025 serves as a prominent international conference focused on global Carbon Markets.
- It has been organised by the Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE), bringing international experts together to discuss important carbon market-related challenges and opportunities.
- The acronym PRAKRITI stands for Promoting Resilience, Awareness, Knowledge, and Resources for Integrating Transformational Initiatives.

Insights from the Conference:

- The conference highlighted that India's carbon market is increasingly influenced by significant global policies.
- Key policies include the EU's Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM), which crucially impacts steel industries and high-emission sectors.
- The conference further underscored that urgent domestic reforms are required within India to mitigate these effects effectively.

Information about the EU's CBAM and Carbon Markets:

- The European Union's Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM) aims to impose fair carbon pricing on imports.

February Current Affairs

- It ensures parity with EU-produced goods and promotes cleaner industrial production on a global scale.
- Carbon Markets, as per Article 6 of the Paris Agreement, allow entities to purchase carbon credits. These credits help offset emissions by supporting various projects that either reduce or remove greenhouse gases in the environment.

Status of India's Carbon Markets:

- Statistically, India currently ranks 2nd in global Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) project registrations.
- Managed by the Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE), the carbon market within India demonstrates significant progress.
- The Perform, Achieve and Trade (PAT) scheme, in particular, has reported saving over 106 million tonnes of CO₂ since its implementation in 2015.

Overview of the Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE):

- Established in 2002 under the Energy Conservation Act of 2001, the BEE operates under the Ministry of Power in India.
- Its main aim is to reduce India's energy intensity, accomplished through the development of policies, promotion of self-regulation, and coordination with relevant stakeholders.

SWAYATT Initiative

Overview of the SWAYATT Initiative

- The SWAYATT Initiative, an acronym for Startups, Women & Youth Advantage through e-Transactions was launched by the government of India in 2019.
- This initiative was launched under the Government E-Marketplace (GeM), with the objective to boost market access for several sections of society, particularly women entrepreneurs, the youth, startups, Micro & Small Enterprises (MSEs), and Self-Help Groups (SHGs).
- The 6th anniversary of the initiative was recently celebrated marking its success and impact.

Functions and Achievements of SWAYATT

- SWAYATT works by facilitating seller inclusion through various means such as training, registration, and capacity-building enabling them to leverage GeM for enhanced market access and growth.
- Since its inception, the initiative has seen a significant growth in women-led enterprises and startups, from 6,300 women-led MSEs and 3,400 startups at launch to 1,77,786 Udyam-verified women MSEs.
- Currently, the women-led businesses constitute 8% of GeM's total seller base.
- The initiative facilitated Rs 35,950 Crore worth of orders from startups, thus addressing key challenges faced by them in terms of market access, finance, and value addition.
- New goals have been set by the Initiative, which include doubling the number of women entrepreneurs, increasing their procurement share (currently at 3.78%), and onboarding 1 lakh DPIIT- registered startups.

Associations of SWAYATT

- An MoU has been signed between GeM & FICCI Ladies Organisation (FICCI-FLO) with the aim to train and onboard over 9,500 women entrepreneurs.
- This association is aimed at ensuring direct market linkages and promoting inclusive growth.
- "Startup Runway" and "Womaniya" storefronts were also included to enhance visibility for startups, women entrepreneurs, and the youth among government buyers.

Overview of Government e-Marketplace (GeM)

- Government e-Marketplace (GeM), under which the SWAYATT initiative operates, is a public procurement portal

for Central & State Governments, PSUs, and affiliated entities for procurement of goods and services.

- Established in 2016 under the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, GeM serves as India's National Procurement Portal.
- It operates on a paperless, cashless, and system-driven basis that aims at minimising human intervention in public procurement.

Launch of AgriHub by IIT Indore

Subtopic 1: Introduction and Overview

- On 27th January, 2025, IIT Indore inaugurated AgriHub, a Center of Excellence (CoE) with advanced technology.
- AgriHub is dedicated to using Artificial Intelligence (AI), Machine Learning (ML), and Deep Learning (DL) to resolve the significant issues in Indian agriculture.

Subtopic 2: AgriHub's Mission and Vision

- AgriHub aspires to be a collaborative platform beckoning researchers, farmers, breeders, and policymakers.
- The project aims to promote transdisciplinary research and innovation with a focus on AI, ML, and DL to bring about sustainable agriculture.
- Both MeitY and the Madhya Pradesh Government have imparted significant support to AgriHub, acknowledging its ability to enhance agricultural productivity and sustainability.

Subtopic 3: Significance of AgriHub

- Startup Incubation: AgriHub will play a notable role in fostering the growth of startups in the agricultural technology domain.
- Job Creation: This initiative will spawn job opportunities in various sectors associated with sustainable farming.
- Patents and Publications: AgriHub will generate research outcomes consisting of innovations, patents, and scientific publications amplifying the growth of agricultural technologies.
- Industry Collaborations: It intends to partner with industries to devise practical applications for its research.
- Entrepreneurship Workshops: AgriHub will concentrate on programs that nurture entrepreneurship among students and budding professionals.
- Technological Advancements: By harnessing AI, high-performance computing, and big data, AgriHub will address hurdles such as low agricultural productivity and the impacts of climate change, like droughts and floods.

Subtopic 4: Technological Integration

- AgriHub envisages the integration of Geographic Information Systems (GIS), drone technology, and precision farming.
- This will assist in optimising resource utilization, crop monitoring and offering data-driven solutions to farmers.
- The new technological wave brought on by AgriHub will pave the way for more sustainable and innovative farming techniques. The integration of technology not only improves efficiency but also increases the quality of agricultural practices, making this initiative of high importance.

Southern Hemisphere's Largest Hindu Temple Unveiled

Introduction

- On the 2nd of February, 2025, Johannesburg in South Africa saw the grand unveiling of the largest Hindu temple in the Southern Hemisphere.
- An integral part of the BAPS Multi-Cultural Centre, this

February Current Affairs

temple was inaugurated in the presence of South Africa's Deputy President, Paul Mashatile, and the spiritual leader, Mahant Swami Maharaj.

- Besides serving as a worship place, the temple also acts as a cultural broadcast centre and supports educational pursuits and social services.

Historical Importance and Features

- The temple is the Southern Hemisphere's most extensive Hindu cultural complex, created on a rolling 14.5-acre plot in North Riding, Johannesburg.

- Its design mirrors the BAPS temple in Nairobi, Kenya.

- Inside it contains a 3,000-seater auditorium, a 2,000-seater banqueting hall, and several research and exhibition areas.

- The temple facilities also comprise classrooms, a health clinic, recreational centres, and a cultural complex.

- Another key function of the temple is to serve as a learning centre for art, dance, language, and religious studies.

Grand Inauguration Ceremony

- The 90-year-old spiritual leader of BAPS, Mahant Swami Maharaj, inaugurated the temple.

- On February 1, a nagar yatra procession was organised comprising bands, devotional music, and dancers.

- Thousands of worshippers gathered pre-dawn on February 2nd to partake in the consecration rituals.

Significance for the Hindu Community

- Hindus represent less than 2% of South Africa's demographic but are significantly implicated in the country's cultural and social life.

- The deputy president, Paul Mashatile, recognised the contribution of the Hindu community to the national culture and nation-building process.

- BAPS also aims to encourage interreligious conversations and cultural exchanges in South Africa.

Social and Humanitarian Contributions

- The temple champions social upliftment efforts, functioning not only as a religious site but also as a centre for social service.

- BAPS actively participates in poverty eradication, education, and humanitarian aid.

- Deputy President Mashatile invited BAPS to collaborate in tackling societal issues like poverty, unemployment, violence, and drug abuse.

Future Expansion (Phase 2)

- The temple's next phase involves constructing an ornate temple drawing from ancient Hindu architectural styles.

- This expansion will accommodate BAPS charities and community development schemes.

Other Major Temples in South Africa

- Other prominent Hindu temples in South Africa include the Shree Sanatan Hindu Mandir and the Durban Hindu Temple in Durban, the Sri Vishwaroopa Sanatan Hindu Union Temple.

- Johannesburg is also home to the Shree Cidambaram Maruthi Temple.

Introduction to the Electronic Personnel License (EPL) for Pilots

About the Electronic Personnel License (EPL)

- The EPL is a digital version of the traditional physical pilot license.

- The Union Civil Aviation Minister recently launched the EPL to facilitate pilots.

- This digital license will be securely accessible via the eGCA Mobile Application, making the process seamless and transparent.

- The introduction of the EPL supports the Government of India's initiatives of Ease of Doing Business and Digital India.

Implementation and International Recognition of EPL

- The EPL's implementation follows the International Civil Aviation Organization's (ICAO) Amendment 178 to Annex 1 – Personnel Licensing, which encourages nations to adopt electronic licenses for improved security and efficiency.

- India is the second country globally to adopt this advanced system, with the approval of the ICAO, which promotes the system.

- The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) in India is responsible for the implementation of the EPL.

Background, Functions and Geography of International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO)

- The ICAO is a specialised intergovernmental agency under the United Nations.

- It was established in 1947 under the Convention on International Civil Aviation (1944), also known as the Chicago Convention.

- Its headquarters is located in Montreal, Canada.

Role and Importance of International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO)

- The ICAO develops international air transport for peaceful purposes, ensuring every state gets a reasonable chance to operate international airlines.

- It sets standards and regulations for aviation safety, security, efficiency and economic improvement of air transport.

- The ICAO also focuses on enhancing the environmental performance of aviation.

- It serves as a forum for cooperation and discussion on civil aviation issues among its member states and promotes regional and international agreements aimed at liberalising aviation markets.

Shatavari Plant

Introduction and Current News

- The Ministry of State, independently in charge of the Ministry of Ayush, has launched a species-specific campaign titled "Shatavari – For Better Health".

- The campaign is aimed to raise awareness about the health benefits of the Shatavari plant, a well-known drug in Ayurveda.

About Shatavari Plant

- Shatavari, or Asparagus racemosus, belongs to the Asparagaceae family.

- The name 'Shatavari' means "acceptable to many".

- It is also commonly known as Satawar or Satamuli.

Appearance and Distribution of the Shatavari Plant

- Shatavari is a woody climber, growing to 1-2 m in height. Its leaves resemble pine needles, being small and uniform. The flowers of the plant are white and feature small spikes.

- The plant commonly grows at low altitudes in shade and tropical climates, majorly throughout Asia, Australia and Africa.

Significance in Ayurvedic Medicine

- Shatavari is acknowledged in Ayurveda as the "Queen of herbs" because it is known to promote love and devotion.

February Current Affairs

- It is listed in Charak Samhita, compiled by Charak, and Ashtang Hridayam, compiled by Vagbhata, the two primary Ayurvedic texts, as a critical component for treating women's health disorders.
- The dried roots of the Shatavari plant are used as a medicinal drug. These roots carry tonic, diuretic and galactagogue properties and are effective in healing ulcers potentially through strengthening the mucosal resistance or providing cytoprotection.
- The Shatavari herb is particularly beneficial for issues related to the female reproductive system.

First Wildlife BioBank in a Zoo in India

Introduction and About BioBank

- India's first wildlife biobank is up and running at Padmaja Naidu Himalayan Zoological Park, often known as Darjeeling Zoo.
- Established in July 2024, the biobank, also known as a frozen zoo, is a storehouse of genetic material gathered from animals that can be utilised for conservation and research purposes.
- A variety of preserved samples, including cells, tissues, and reproductive specimens from the endangered and deceased animals are being conserved.
- So far, the biobank has collected DNA and tissue samples from 60 animals representing 23 species with an emphasis on the threatened ones.
- To maintain genetic diversity, the gathered samples are stored under cryogenic conditions, i.e., -196°C in liquid nitrogen.

National Conservation Plans

- The operation of the biobank is part of the national strategy to conserve endangered species.
- It operates under the supervision of the Centre for Cellular and Molecular Biology (CCMB), a unit of the Ministry of Science and Technology.
- Future plans include launching similar biobanks at Delhi National Zoo and Nandankanan Zoo in Odisha.

Examples of Revival of Species through BioBank

- The concept of such a biobank is not entirely new. Marginal species like the American Black-footed ferret and northern one-horned rhino have been successfully revived using preserved DNA and captive breeding in the past.

About Darjeeling Zoo

- Darjeeling Zoo, the home of India's first wildlife biobank, is the nation's largest high-altitude zoo.
- The zoo specialises in the captive breeding of alpine species, including snow leopards, Himalayan wolves, and red pandas.
- Housing various endangered fauna such as gorals, Siberian tigers, and rare bird species, it plays a significant role in conservation efforts.

The Importance of BioBank

- Biobanks play a vital role in conservation, offering a necessary backup plan to protect threatened and endangered species.
- By preserving the genetic material for future use, biobanks help to safeguard overall biodiversity, as they can assist in repopulating species in case of severe decline or extinction.
- Apart from conservation efforts, biobanks also serve as essential resources for scientists conducting research in genetics and diseases, aiding the development in veterinary medicine and giving insights into animal biology and evolution.

Government of India Enhances Haj Experience with 'Haj Suvidha App' and Healthcare Support

Introduction and About 'Haj Suvidha App'

- The Government of India has launched the 'Haj Suvidha App' to improve the pilgrimage experience for Indian Haj pilgrims.
- The app aims to assist pilgrims throughout their journey by providing various services, ensuring a smooth and fulfilling pilgrimage experience.
- This initiative demonstrates the government's commitment to enhance accessibility, support and convenience for all Indian pilgrims undertaking the sacred rituals.

Features of the 'Haj Suvidha App'

- The app offers numerous features to improve and organise the pilgrimage experience.
- It includes training modules to guide pilgrims through the rituals and practices of Haj.
- The app provides details about accommodation and flight schedules, aiding pilgrims in planning their travels.
- It incorporates a baggage tracking system and informs pilgrims about baggage policies.
- An SOS service is available in case of emergencies, and a grievance redressal feature allows for feedback from pilgrims.
- Language support tools assist in communication while in Saudi Arabia.
- A special interface for government officials helps monitor operations and improves coordination.

Efficacy of 'Haj Suvidha App' During Haj-2024

- The app left a considerable impact during Haj-2024.
- 78,000 out of 1,75,025 pilgrims registered on the platform.
- Over 8,500 grievances were successfully resolved and more than 2,100 emergency SOS calls were handled.
- The baggage tracking through QR code led to a decrease in lost baggage cases.

Government's Support for Female Pilgrims Without Mehram

- In 2024, a historical high of 4,558 women undertook the pilgrimage without a Mehram (male companion).
- This significant increase occurred since the introduction of the 'Ladies without Mehram' category in Haj-2018.
- This change demonstrates the government's ongoing commitment to inclusivity and women empowerment.

Healthcare Support Provided to Pilgrims

- The government provides healthcare facilities focusing on pilgrims' health, particularly the elderly.
- Temporary healthcare facilities are set up during Haj, including medical centres in Makkah, Madinah and 24/7 dispensaries.
- A team of 24 ambulances provides prompt medical assistance in emergencies.
- Medical teams conduct daily health checks and consultations at pilgrims' accommodation, and critically ill pilgrims get transferred to Saudi Ministry of Health hospitals.
- Indian translators are available in hospitals to assist with communication.

RBI's Introduction of the RBIDATA App

Understanding the RBIDATA App

- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has launched a new app called RBIDATA.

February Current Affairs

- This application provides smooth access to macroeconomic and financial data related to the Indian economy.
- It was designed to cater to researchers, students, policymakers, and the general public by presenting over 11,000 economic data series in an orderly and interactive platform.

App Accessibility and Main Features

- RBIDATA is available for both iOS and Android devices (version 12 and above).
- The app connects directly to RBI's Database on the Indian Economy (DBIE), enhancing the accessibility of economic data.
- It promotes data transparency and accessibility with features like interactive visualization, quick search and reports, a banking facility locator, and SAARC economic data.

Key Advantages

- RBIDATA's user-friendly approach makes it stand out.
- Users can now access important financial statistics in a structured, simplified format, eliminating the cumbersome process of navigating complex tables and documents.

How Users Can Benefit from RBIDATA

- RBIDATA is a comprehensive hub for financial insights for economists, students, analysts, and businesses.
- The data is accurate and up to date as it is integrated with the RBI's DBIE portal.
- Users have the ability to provide feedback directly on the app, facilitating RBI to enhance the app's functionality over time.

RBI's Broader Scope for Digital Transformation

- The launch of the RBIDATA app is a part of RBI's wider attempt to digitise the dissemination of financial information.
- This initiative aims to make macroeconomic and financial data available in a more organised and accessible manner.
- RBI's approach will enable stakeholders across multiple sectors to make informed decisions based on reliable data.

Unveiling of Jumpp by Finvasia and Yes Bank

Introduction and Partnership Overview

- Finvasia, a Punjab based fintech company, in collaboration with Yes Bank has developed an AI-powered super app called Jumpp.
- The app aims to simplify personal finance management by providing a wide array of services on one platform.
- With its emphasis on user-friendly navigation, Jumpp is anticipated to reform how users handle their financial affairs.

Unique Features of Jumpp

- Jumpp stands out due to its integration of AI technology, including multilingual conversational AI both in English and Hindi.
- This feature broadens its user base across India, catering to a country teeming with a number of languages.
- The app enables users to open savings accounts with Yes Bank in just a few minutes, doing away with lengthy procedures.
- Built with simplicity in design, Jumpp is ideal for those aiming to handle their personal finance efficiently and effortlessly.

Jumpp's Role in Financial Management

- Jumpp serves as a one-stop financial management tool aligning with the Account Aggregator ecosystem.
- It provides a consolidated view of all linked financial accounts, giving users an inclusive and holistic viewpoint of their monetary health.
- Jumpp aids users in monitoring their savings, investments, and expenses all under one roof, surpassing 100 million consents.
- The app's ability to offer insights into spending tendencies, saving goals, and potential investment opportunities makes it a reliable personal finance companion.

Jumpp's Contribution to Financial Inclusion

- Jumpp prioritises financial inclusion in India, focussing especially on users from Tier 2 and Tier 3 cities.
- The app aims to bring onboard 1 million users by January 2026, ensuring access to modern banking and financial services for diverse users, particularly from smaller cities.
- By extending services such as saving, investing, and borrowing on a single platform, Jumpp embodies inclusivity, addressing the needs of those underserved by conventional banking services.

About Finvasia and Yes Bank

- Finvasia, established in 2009 by Tajinder Pal Singh and Sarvjeet Singh, has made significant progress in the fintech industry.
- With presence in 12 countries, the company has diversified its portfolio with the acquisition of platforms like Ginihealth and ZuluTrade.
- Yes Bank, a leading private-sector bank in India, is recognised for its inventive banking solutions and partnerships focussed on improving client experiences and promoting financial accessibility across India.
- The partnership with Finvasia to develop Jumpp signifies Yes Bank's commitment to transforming customer interactions with banking services.

Jumpp: A Milestone for Personal Finance Management

- Jumpp's introduction marks a landmark in the mission towards fostering digital financial inclusion in India.
- The app aims to democratise personal finance management with its AI-led capabilities and emphasis on simplicity.
- Jumpp ensures that finance management is accessible, efficient, and user-friendly, regardless of whether you reside in a metro city or a Tier 3 town.
- As it continues to grow, Jumpp is expected to significantly influence the trajectory of the fintech sector in India.

SCIENCE AND TECH

Asteroid 2024 YR4 and the Concept of Asteroids

Overview and Current News

- NASA has recognised a near-Earth Asteroid, 2024 YR4, predicted to have over a 1% chance of collision with our planet in 2032.
- The first sighting of this asteroid was in December 2024, and it hovered around 800,000 km from Earth, which is double the distance to the Moon.
- This asteroid was observable until April 2025 but is expected to become visible again by 2028.
- NASA has ranked it as Level 3 on the Torino Scale, denoting the potential for localized damage if it hits Earth.
- The Torino Scale, inducted by the IAU (International

February Current Affairs

Astronomical Union) in 1999, classifies asteroid impact dangers on a scale of 0 to 10, both likelihood and severity being constitutive criteria.

- In case of an impact, this asteroid can release between 8 to 10 megatons – a destructive power that surpasses the 2013 Chelyabinsk, Russia meteor.

Understanding Asteroids

- Asteroids are essentially airless and rocky remnants from the creation of the solar system approximately 4.6 billion years ago.

- They mostly orbit the Sun within the Asteroid Belt, but some follow Earth-crossing trajectories.

- The sizes of asteroids can range from merely a few metres to hundreds of kilometres.

- Asteroids can be classified into Main Asteroid Belt, Trojans, and Near-Earth Asteroids (NEAs), each category signifying a different location and characteristic within the solar system.

- Small asteroids often disintegrate in the Earth's atmosphere whereas bigger ones occasionally land on Earth's surface but seldom cause significant destruction.

- Global-scale impacts, comparable to Mexico's Chicxulub event responsible for the extinction of dinosaurs and 75% of Earth's species, are expected about once every 260 million years.

Defending Earth from Asteroids

- To prevent catastrophic asteroid collisions, NASA among other space agencies are working on developing planetary defence mechanisms.

- NASA's DART mission in 2022 successfully modified the course of asteroid Dimorphous, demonstrating the effectiveness of deflection tactics in averting future threats.

Initiatives Related to Asteroid Monitoring

- The Double Asteroid Redirection Test (DART) Mission by NASA.

- The Hera Mission by the European Space Agency (ESA).

- The Near-Earth Object and Tracking Radar (NETRA) project to keep an eye on space debris and asteroids.

Understanding Einstein Rings: A Unique Phenomenon in Astrophysics

Introduction: Discovery of Einstein Ring Around NGC 6505

- The European Space Agency's (ESA) Euclid space telescope discovered a rare Einstein ring around the galaxy NGC 6505, located nearly 590 million light-years away from Earth.

- This Einstein ring is formed by light from an unnamed galaxy 4.42 billion light-years away, distorted by the gravitational pull of NGC 6505.

Understanding Einstein Rings: The Basics and Discovery

- An Einstein ring is a ring of light that forms around celestial objects such as dark matter, galaxies, or clusters of galaxies.

- The formation of a complete Einstein ring requires the near-perfect alignment of the observer (in this case, the Euclid telescope), the lensing object, and the background galaxy.

- The phenomenon is caused by gravitational lensing, where a massive celestial body creates a gravitational field that bends and amplifies the light from a more distant object forming the ring.

- First discovered in 1987, Einstein rings are extremely rare, found in less than 1% of galaxies.

The Science Behind Einstein Rings: Gravitational Lensing and Nomenclature

- The celestial body causing the light to bend is referred to as a gravitational lens.

- The concept of Einstein rings originates from Albert Einstein's General Theory of Relativity, which predicted that light could bend and brighten (or warp space-time and curve the path of light) around massive objects due to their gravitational pull.

Observation of Einstein Rings

- Einstein rings are not visible to the naked eye; they can only be observed through powerful space telescopes like Euclid.

The Importance of Einstein Rings in Astrophysics

- Einstein Rings act as a natural magnifying glass, revealing details of distant galaxies otherwise invisible, and thus offer a unique way to study the universe.

- They are valuable tools in astrophysics as they allow scientists to investigate dark matter and study dark energy, responsible for the accelerating expansion of the universe.

Phenomena Similar to Einstein Rings: Einstein Cross

- In addition to Einstein rings, another notable gravitational lensing phenomenon is the Einstein Cross.

- An Einstein Cross is a rare occurrence where light from a distant galaxy is bent by a massive foreground galaxy, creating four distinct images in a cross-like pattern.

Paris AI Summit 2025 - India's Role and Key Developments

Introduction and Background

- The Prime Minister of India co-chaired the Paris AI Action Summit 2025 in France.

- Alongside this summit, the 2nd India-France AI Policy Roundtable was conducted.

- The AI Action Summit, now in its 3rd edition, functions as a global forum to discuss AI governance, ethics, and societal implications.

Key Themes of the Paris AI Action Summit 2025

- The themes included Public Interest AI, Future of Work, Innovation & Culture, Trust in AI, and Global AI Governance.

- They aimed at promoting open AI infrastructure, maintaining responsible AI usage through sustained social dialogue, creating sustainable AI ecosystems, establishing scientific consensus on AI safety and security, and shaping an international AI governance framework.

Paris AI Summit - Key Outcomes

- A Joint Declaration called 'Inclusive and Sustainable Artificial Intelligence for People and the Planet' was signed by 58 countries, excluding the US and the UK.

- A Public Interest AI Platform and Incubator was established to harmonise public-private AI efforts and bolster a trustworthy AI ecosystem.

- Emphasis was placed on an ethical, safe, and inclusive AI, protecting human rights and addressing AI-driven inequalities.

- The importance of AI accessibility, transparency, job creation, sustainability, and international governance was stressed upon.

- The summit wanted to ensure consistent alignment with global AI initiatives, including resolutions by the UN General Assembly, the Global Digital Compact, UNESCO AI Ethics Recommendations, and strategies by African Union, OECD, G7, and G20.

India's Stance at the Summit

- India adopted a stance advocating open-source and sustainable AI, focusing on clean energy and workforce upskilling.
- As the 2024 lead chair of the Global Partnership on AI (GPAI), it aims to make GPAI a central platform for responsible AI development.

2nd India-France AI Policy Roundtable - Key Takeaways

- The roundtable stressed on responsible AI, equitable benefit-sharing, techno-legal frameworks, and AI safety, with focal points including data sovereignty, interoperable AI infrastructure, and sovereign AI models.
- The roundtable also targeted the promotion of energy-efficient AI models and responsible computing practices to reduce AI's energy footprint.

PM's Reference to India's Freedom Struggle

- The India's Prime minister mentioned the connection of Marseille with Veer Savarkar's escape attempt during his extradition to India and its subsequent impact on India's freedom struggle.

Challenges in AI Development

- AI's exponentially growing energy demand poses the threat of increasing data centers' power consumption significantly by 2030.
- The probable rise in carbon dioxide emissions due to the increased energy demand could cost socially around USD 125-140 billion.
- Balancing people-centric AI with AI-centric development poses a challenge due to the risk of job loss, data privacy issues, and a possible increase in digital divide.
- Insecure and inexpensive AI models increase the risk of data breaches, misinformation spread, deepfakes, and cybersecurity threats, reinforcing the need for robust AI governance.

China's EAST Reactor and Advancements in Nuclear Fusion

Introduction and Overview of EAST Reactor

- The Experimental Advanced Superconducting Tokamak (EAST) is China's nuclear fusion research facility located at the Institute of Plasma Physics, ASIPP, in Hefei, China.
- The EAST became operational in 2006 and is part of the International Thermonuclear Experimental Reactor (ITER) initiative, set to be the world's largest fusion reactor by 2035.
- The primary goal of EAST is to replicate the Sun's nuclear fusion process, advancing sustainable and clean energy production.

Working Mechanism of EAST

- EAST works based on the nuclear fusion process, where deuterium and tritium nuclei (hydrogen isotopes) fuse into a helium nucleus, releasing a substantial amount of energy.
- Hydrogen fuel is heated to over 150 million°C to form a hot plasma which is then confined within a strong magnetic field to enable sustained fusion reactions.

Achievements and Significance of EAST

- EAST has achieved significant milestones such as sustaining plasma at 50 million°C for over 60 seconds (2016) and 100 seconds (2017).
- Despite these, EAST is yet to achieve ignition or produce electricity and serves as a testbed for ITER, a multinational

project aiming at developing a tokamak capable of achieving net energy gain.

About Nuclear Reactions and Types

- Nuclear reactions result from interactions between two nuclear particles or two nuclei, forming new nuclei different from the original ones.
- The primary types of nuclear reactions include nuclear fission, which involves the splitting of a nucleus into smaller nuclei, and nuclear fusion, in which two light atomic nuclei combine to form a heavier one, releasing vast energy.

The Challenges of Achieving Nuclear Fusion Reaction

- The major challenges faced in achieving nuclear fusion include extreme temperature requirements, strong magnetic field requirements for plasma stability, scarcity of tritium, achieving a self-sustaining fusion reaction, and sustaining stable plasma conditions for extended periods.

Alternative Approaches to Fusion Energy

- Besides tokamaks, there are other alternative fusion methods being explored. These include stellarators, which offer a complex yet promising magnetic confinement method, and Laser Inertial Fusion, which uses high-powered laser beams to trigger fusion.

DBT's North Eastern Programme: A Biotech Transformation in India's North East Region

Introduction and Historical Overview

- The Department of Biotechnology's North Eastern Programme is a significant pioneer in driving a biotech-led metamorphosis in India's North Eastern Region (NER).
- The Programme was initiated in the financial year 2010-11, since when the DBT has earmarked 10% of its annual financial net for biotech initiatives in the NER.

Programmes and Initiatives

- The primary objective of the North Eastern Programme is the enhancement of education, research, and bio-entrepreneurship in the NER.
- The Programme has enabled various Research and Development projects which have given significant benefits to researchers and students.
- Six biotech hubs have been established across the NER to provide vigorous support for research and training.
- Among its initiatives is the establishment of Biotechnology Labs in Senior Secondary Schools (BLISS) aimed at promoting biotechnology education.
- High-profile scientists are engaged through the Visiting Research Professorship (VRP) scheme to expedite advancements in the field of biotechnology across NER institutions.

Support for Farmers

- Farmers remain a focal point, with support provided through initiatives such as the DBT-North East Centre for Agricultural Biotechnology (DBT-NECAB).

Major Achievements

- A significant accomplishment is the development of the "Patkai" rice variety by Assam Agricultural University, which incorporates blight resistance (protection against bacterial blight disease) from the Improved Samba Mahsuri rice variety.
- The North Eastern Programme also resulted in standardisation of a Lateral Flow Assay (LFA) for rapid brucellosis (bacterial infection) detection in livestock, which enhanced disease diagnostic capabilities.

- A mobile application, the Pig Disease Diagnosis Expert System (PDDES), was developed as part of the Programme to help veterinarians and farmers diagnose and manage pig diseases.

SPORTS NEWS

2nd All-India State Water Ministers' Conference

Introduction and About

- The 2nd All-India State Water Ministers' Conference was recently concluded in Udaipur, Rajasthan.
- Organised by the Ministry of Jal Shakti, the conference aimed to address various water management issues.
- The theme of the conference was "India@2047 – A Water Secure Nation".
- The first conference of its kind was held earlier in January 2023, in Bhopal, with focus areas including water security, water use efficiency, governance, climate resilience, and water quality.

Key Initiatives Proposed

- **Agricultural Water Management:** Recommended adoption of micro-irrigation techniques such as drip and sprinkler irrigation, expansion of Pressurized Irrigation Networks (PIN), and implementation of Evapotranspiration (ET) - based irrigation performance assessment to enhance water efficiency in agriculture.
- **River Rejuvenation:** Suggested floodplain zoning, rejuvenating water sources like springs to augment river flows, and encouraging quantification of water consumption to aid river restoration projects.
- **Strengthening Drinking Water Supply:** Endorsed sustaining the Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) through Village Water & Sanitation Committees (VWSCs). Concurrently, emphasised enhancing urban water security via AMRUT by improving water supply infrastructure.
- **Improving Water Storage:** Advocated prioritising Extension, Renovation, and Modernization (ERM) of water storage systems to maximise efficiency and lifespan while rejuvenating smaller water bodies to boost availability in rural and urban areas. Also suggested implementing automated reservoir operations for better water storage and distribution management.
- **Strengthening Water Governance:** Recommended implementing Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) with state-specific solutions and heightening grassroots participation in water governance. Also suggested scaling up the 'Jal Sanchay Jan Bhagidari' initiative nationwide to accentuate community-driven water conservation efforts.

Importance and Impact

- This strategic meet holds immense importance as it aims to address a crucial challenge - water scarcity and optimal water management.
- The initiatives and recommendations put forward by the conference aim to not only make India a water secure nation by 2047 but also improve efficiency, effect better regulation of water use and strengthen participatory water governance from the grassroots.
- The adoption and implementation of these suggested measures can significantly impact various sectors, including agriculture, urban planning, rural development, and environmental conservation.

8th Indian Ocean Conference

Introduction and About

- The 8th Indian Ocean Conference (IOC) took place in Muscat, Oman.
- The External Affairs minister of India, S Jaishankar, was the representative of India in this conference.
- The conference followed the theme 'Voyage to New Horizons of Maritime Partnership'.

Details about the Indian Ocean Conference

- The IOC is an annual summit that brings together leaders, policymakers, and experts from the Indian Ocean Region (IOR) for discussing geopolitical, economic, and security challenges.
- It was established by the India Foundation in Singapore in 2016 with participation from 30 countries.
- The objective of the IOC is to unite key states and maritime partners in the IOR and enhance regional cooperation under the vision of Security and Growth for All in the Region (SAGAR).

Understanding the Indian Ocean Region

- The IOR refers to the region around the Indian Ocean, and it includes all the countries that border it.
- The region spans from the Strait of Malacca and western Australia in the east to the Mozambique Channel in the west.
- Approximately one quarter of the world's landmass, about 20% of the world's water surface, and three-quarters of global oil reserves are covered by the IOR.

Strategic Importance of the IOR

- **Economic Significance:** The IOR is a major oil shipping route, with approximately 80% of global maritime oil and 80% of India's oil imports passing through it annually.
- **Key Choke Points:** Crucial shipping routes in the region include the Strait of Malacca, the Strait of Hormuz, the Bab-el-Mandeb Strait, and the Mozambique Channel.
- **Military Significance:** The IOR is significant for naval bases and faces numerous maritime security concerns such as piracy, illegal fishing, and territorial disputes.
- **Resources:** The Central Indian Ocean Basin (CIOB) within the IOR is believed to house vast reserves of nickel, copper, cobalt, and manganese.

World Economic Forum Annual Meeting 2025: Overview and Highlights

Introduction and Background

- **Briefing:** The 2025 World Economic Forum (WEF) Annual Meeting concluded in Davos, Switzerland.
- **Theme:** The meeting was under the theme "Collaboration for the Intelligent Age."
- **Objective:** This international event brought together global leaders to discuss pressing issues affecting global economies and societies.

2025 WEF Key Takeaways

- **Sustainability:** Stressed sustainability as vital for business resilience; urged alignment of business growth with global sustainability goals.
- **Emerging Technologies:** Highlighted opportunities and challenges brought by Artificial Intelligence and green technology.
- **Responsible AI:** Emphasised the importance of responsible AI frameworks and ethical balance with progress, particularly in supply chains, reducing emissions, and

enhancing transparency.

- Partnerships: Discussed the importance of multi-sectoral partnerships for impactful solutions, and the potential for effective collaborations to unlock USD 12 trillion in market opportunities by 2030.
- Climate Action: Underlined the need for urgent climate action and ensuring decarbonisation includes a just transition for workers and communities.

India's Participation at the 2025 WEF

- Investment Commitments: India secured over Rs 20 lakh crore in investment commitments, with Maharashtra receiving nearly 80% of the total.
- States' Contributions: Telangana secured an investment of Rs 1.79 lakh crore; Kerala outlined its industrial transformation plans; Uttar Pradesh expressed its vision to become a USD 1 trillion economy by 2029, aiming for Zero poverty.

General Knowledge about World Economic Forum

- Founding: WEF was founded by German engineer and economist Klaus Schwab in 1971 as the European Management Forum, it was renamed WEF in 1987.
- Recognition: In 2015, WEF was officially recognised as an international organisation with its headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland.
- Mission: Engages leaders from business, government, and civil society to address global challenges and promote economic and social progress. Introduced the Stakeholder Capitalism concept.
- Annual Meeting: Over 3,000 participants including world leaders, business executives, and economists attend the annual meeting held in Davos, Switzerland.
- Focus Areas: Global issues like economic growth, climate change, technology, and geopolitical uncertainties are the primary focus.
- Funding: Primarily funded by global corporations with annual turnovers above USD 5 billion.
- Reports: Produces several key reports including the Global Competitiveness Report, Global Gender Gap Report, Future of Jobs Report, Global Risks Report, and Global Travel and Tourism Report.
- Index: Developed the Travel & Tourism Development Index (TTDI).
- Influence: WEF has played a role in major diplomatic breakthroughs, for instance, the creation of the G20.

3rd India-Japan Steel Dialogue

Introduction and Purpose

- The 3rd India-Japan Steel Dialogue was recently held in New Delhi.
- This meeting was an international forum where representatives from both nations discussed various matters including economic developments, steel trade, and technological cooperation.

The Institutional Mechanism

- The Steel Dialogue forms a part of the Memorandum of Cooperation (MoC) on the steel sector.
- This MoC was mutually agreed upon and signed by India and Japan in 2020 to promote sustainable growth, boost innovation and enhance workplace safety in the steel industry.

Key Outcomes of the Dialogue

- During the dialogue, India made commitments to assure ease of doing business for Japanese companies.
- Meanwhile, Japanese delegates reaffirmed their country's

- support for investments in novel steel technologies contributing to the sector's innovation.
- Both parties shared their perspectives on the European Union's Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (EU CBAM) and its potential effect on steel trade.

Understanding EU's Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (EU CBAM)

- The EU CBAM is a mechanism developed by the European Union to price carbon emissions on imported goods.
- Its primary goal is to promote cleaner and more sustainable industrial production worldwide.
- The CBAM's transitional phase, planned to take place from 2023 to 2025, includes reporting obligations.
- Full financial implementation is expected from 2026 and is set to cover several industry sectors including iron, steel, cement, fertilisers, aluminium, electricity, and hydrogen production.

BIMSTEC Youth Summit 2025

Introduction and About

- The first-ever BIMSTEC Youth Summit 2025 initiated in Gandhinagar, Gujarat focused on skill development, entrepreneurship, and regional cooperation.
- BIMSTEC or the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation is an international organisation of seven nations of South Asia and Southeast Asia.

Key Highlights

- The theme of the summit was "Youth as a Bridge for Intra-BIMSTEC Exchange."
- Drawing attention to the fact that over 60% of BIMSTEC's 1.8 billion population comprises youth, emphasizing their prominence in steering regional growth.
- Another focal point was India's objective of becoming a developed nation by 2047, reiterating the significance of youth participation.
- To encourage innovation and entrepreneurship, India proposed a startup network across BIMSTEC nations.

Role of BIMSTEC

- BIMSTEC is a regional organization consisting of India, Bangladesh, Myanmar, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Nepal, and Bhutan.
- The responsibilities encompass addressing climate change, poverty, and sustainability whilst amplifying cooperation amidst the Bay of Bengal region.

India's Commitment to Youth Empowerment

- India's Skill India Mission, National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, and PM Internship Scheme have equipped 15 million youth with modern skills like artificial intelligence, robotics, and digital technologies.
- The Indian startup ecosystem ranks third in the world and is home to 157,000 startups, where nearly half are led by women, demonstrating India's strides in supporting entrepreneurship.

WAVES 2025 and India's Creative Economy

Introduction and About WAVES 2025

- WAVES or World Audio Visual & Entertainment Summit is a prominent global event for the media and entertainment industry.
- The Prime Minister, via a virtual meeting, has chaired this

February Current Affairs

summit with the objective to bolster and amplify India's creative media and economy.

- The event is a carefully organised initiative by the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting.

Purpose and Impact of WAVES

- The main purpose of WAVES is to assemble industry leaders, stakeholders, and innovators from across the globe.
- This platform addresses challenges, explores opportunities, and encourages global trade impacting the future of the media and entertainment industry.
- The highlight of this summit was the initiation of the "Create in India Challenge," which aims to boost innovation and creativity within India's creative and media economy.

Understanding the Creative Economy

- The creative economy, or Orange Economy, is a sector primarily based on knowledge. It revolves around the creation, production, and exchange of creative goods and services.
- It encompasses various industries, including advertising, architecture, arts, fashion, film, music, photography, publishing, research and development, and software.

India's Role in Creative Economy

- The creative industry in India is estimated to be valued at USD 30 billion. This sector employs almost 8% of the country's working population.
- In 2023, India accounted for over 100 million content creators, indicating the expansive reach and influence of the creative economy within the country.

The Projection of India's M&E Industry

- In a global context, India's Media and Entertainment (M&E) industry is the fifth-largest in the world, with the United States leading the chart.
- This industry in India is projected to witness significant growth with an expected value of USD 44.2 billion by the year 2028. The projections place a spotlight on India's growing influence in the global creative economy.

India-UK Agreements at Aero India 2025 and Broadening Ties

Introduction and Recent Developments

- India and the UK have fortified their ties by signing several defence agreements at Aero India 2025.
- The 4th India-UK Energy Dialogue took place, emphasising a sustainable and inclusive energy future.

Strengthened Defence Partnership

- The Defence Partnership-India (DP-I) aims to augment bilateral defence collaboration.
- Both parties agreed to supply Laser Beam Riding MANPADs (LBRM) and produce Lightweight Multirole Missiles (LMMs) together.
- An Advanced Short-Range Air-to-Air Missile (ASRAAM) assembly and testing facility will be established in Hyderabad, India.
- An Integrated Full Electric Propulsion (IFEP) system will be developed for India's next-gen Landing Platform Dock (LPD) fleet.

Enhanced Energy Collaboration

- The second phase of the India-UK ASPIRE programme was announced, aimed at powering a resilient and sustainable energy future.
- A joint Offshore Wind Taskforce was launched, strengthening offshore wind systems and supply chains.

- The UKPACT's Power Sector Reforms programme will be continued, aiding India's transition to low-carbon growth.

UK's Contributions to Indian Defence and Energy Sectors

- The UK offers critical technologies including jet engine development and electric propulsion.
- Supports 'Make in India, Make for the World' by co-developing next-gen defence capabilities.
- Establishes a Littoral Response Group in the Indian Ocean for joint training.
- Commits significant investment to India's green projects and renewable energy sector.

Broader Trade and Cooperation Aspects of India-UK Ties

- In 2024, India was the UK's 11th largest trading partner with bilateral trade standing at 42 billion Pounds.
- India was the UK's second-largest FDI source in 2022-23.
- The Mutual Recognition of Academic Qualifications, signed in 2022, facilitates academic cooperation.
- The Young Professional Scheme (YPS) allows graduates from both countries to live and work for two years in each other's countries.

Conclusion and Looking Ahead

- Both countries are deepening their strategic partnership in defence and clean energy through technology transfers, investments, and collaborative initiatives.
- Their joint initiatives in offshore wind, electric mobility, and defence manufacturing align with India's self-reliance goals, ensuring mutual economic benefits and fulfilling global sustainability and security objectives.

MISCELLANEOUS

Expansion of Lok Sabha Translation Services

Introduction and Why in News

- Lok Sabha recently expanded its translation services to include six additional languages: Bodo, Dogri, Maithili, Manipuri, Sanskrit, and Urdu.
- This initiative was announced by Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla and marks a significant move towards linguistic inclusivity.
- The scheme is intended to enhance accessibility for Members of Parliament and bolster democratic participation.

Existing and Future Languages

- Until this addition, Lok Sabha offered translation services in ten languages: Assamese, Bengali, Gujarati, Kannada, Malayalam, Marathi, Odia, Tamil, Telugu, Hindi, and English.
- The ultimate intention is to include all 22 languages that come under Schedule 8 of the Indian Constitution, depending on resource availability.

Global Recognition

- India's legislature is acclaimed as the only democratic institution globally to offer simultaneous translation in multiple languages.
- This unique adaptation has gained global appreciation, spotlighting India's democratic ethos on a worldwide platform.

Controversy Surrounding the Inclusion of Sanskrit

- The inclusion of Sanskrit sparked a debate in the Parliament.
- DMK MP, Dayanidhi Maran, raised concerns over Sanskrit's limited use as a spoken language and its status as

February Current Affairs

a state language.

- Maran referred to the 2011 Census, which recorded a mere 73,000 speakers of Sanskrit.
- Defending the inclusion, Speaker Om Birla emphasised Sanskrit's historical and cultural significance, leading to heated exchanges between ruling and opposition members.

Concluding Thoughts

- This development symbolises Lok Sabha's commitment to embracing linguistic diversity and promoting democratic participation through inclusive communication.
- The debate over Sanskrit's inclusion demonstrates the complexity and sensitivity involved in linguistic recognition, reflecting the rich tapestry of languages that make up Indian linguistic culture.

National Tribal Festival 2025 - Aadi Mahotsav

Introduction and about National Tribal Festival 2025

- The National Tribal Festival 2025, popularly known as the 'Aadi Mahotsav,' will be inaugurated by the President of India, Smt. Droupadi Murmu on February 16, 2025.
- The festival is set to take place at Major Dhyan Chand National Stadium, New Delhi, from February 16 to 24, 2025.
- This major event is organised by the Ministry of Tribal Affairs, particularly by TRIFED.
- It celebrates India's diverse tribal heritage and economic contributions made by the tribal communities.

Role in Tribal Entrepreneurship and Recognition

- The festival serves as a prominent platform for tribal entrepreneurs, artisans, and artists to reach out to larger markets and earn acknowledgment.
- The National Tribal Festival 2025 is expected to feature over 600 tribal artisans, 500 performing artists, and 25 tribal food stalls.

Government Initiatives and Supporting Tribal Welfare

- Over the past decade, the Indian government has enacted numerous initiatives for the well-being of the tribal communities.
- The budgetary allocation for tribal welfare is almost ₹15,000 crores.
- The setting of such events fosters the economic and social development of the tribal communities.

Aadi Mahotsav 2025 - Promoting Cultural Heritage

- Aadi Mahotsav 2025 is specifically planned to present the rich cultural heritage of India's tribal communities.
- Traditional crafts, cuisine, attire, and jewellery alongside cultural performances will be the core attraction points of the festival.

Highlights and Importance of National Tribal Festival 2025

- The National Tribal Festival aims to empower tribal communities by providing them a platform to showcase their heritage and connect with wider markets.
- The festival enables tribal entrepreneurs to sell their products directly to consumers, ensuring that the earnings are fair and direct.
- This year, the festival is an essential event that encapsulates and shows the vibrant face of India's various tribal traditions.
- It offers an engaging and immersive experience of indigenous tribes' culture and craftsmanship to the visitors.

National Tribal Festival 2025 Schedule

- Detailed schedule and specifics about the event are to be released soon to help interested individuals plan their visit

and be a part of this significant event celebrating indigenous cultures.

In conclusion, The National Tribal Festival 2025 serves more than just a cultural event; it is a significant opportunity for the tribal communities to grow economically and be recognised for their immense contribution culturally. By attracting large audiences, it also helps in spreading awareness and appreciation for India's diverse tribal culture and heritage.

Recent Initiatives by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI)

Offline Payment Solutions and Financial Inclusion

- RBI has selected Exto India Technologies to test offline payment solutions under its Regulatory Sandbox.
- This aims to enable digital transactions in areas with limited or no internet connectivity, hence increasing financial inclusion.
- The initiative also addresses the limitations of internet access in rural and remote regions, thus expanding the reach of digital payments across India.

Liquidity-Boosting Measures by RBI

- The RBI has introduced several measures to boost liquidity, including a \$5 billion USD/INR buy/sell swap auction, open market operations (OMOs), and a variable rate repo (VRR) auction.
- These actions are aimed at alleviating liquidity constraints in the banking system and supporting economic stability.

Status of the ₹2000 Banknotes Withdrawal

- Only ₹6,691 crore of the ₹2000 banknotes are left in circulation, which accounts for just 1.88% of the initial ₹3.56 lakh crore value.
- The report indicates that 98.12% of the high-value notes have returned to the banking system since the withdrawal announcement on May 19, 2023.

Exclusive Internet Domain Names

- The RBI has introduced domain names exclusives for Indian banks and financial institutions. 'Banks will use 'Bank.in', while non-banking entities will utilise 'Fin.in'.
- RBI Governor Sanjay Malhotra announced this move with goals to enhance cybersecurity, lower cyber threats, and foster secure financial transactions.

Approval of Tata Communications' Stake Sale

- The RBI has approved Tata Communications' proposal to sell its entire stake in Tata Communications Payment Solutions Ltd (TCPSP) to Transaction Solutions International (TSI).
- Valued at ₹330 crore, the deal includes an extra ₹75 crore contingent on interchange rate adjustments.

Introduction of Additional Factor Authentication (AFA)

- The RBI has introduced AFA for cross-border Card Not Present (CNP) transactions to ramp up digital payment security.
- This ensures that international transactions made using Indian-issued cards are as safe as domestic transactions.
- AFA is a multi-step process demanding cardholders to verify transactions through more than one method, thereby curbing fraud and enhancing consumer protection in online transactions.

Approval of Bank Amalgamation

- The RBI has approved the voluntary amalgamation of Twin

February Current Affairs

Cities Co-operative Urban Bank Ltd. and Kranti Co-operative Urban Bank Ltd.

- Effective from August 23, 2023, the merger aims to strengthen the urban co-operative banking sector via enhanced financial stability, risk management and customer service.
- Post-merger, Twin Cities' branches will operate under the name Kranti Bank.

Review of Trading and Settlement Timings

- The RBI has set up a nine-member Working Group to review trading and settlement timings in India's financial markets.
- The aim is to augment market efficiencies and align with global standards.
- Triggered by factors like the rise of electronic trading, 24x5 Forex trading, increase in foreign investor participation, and availability of round-the-clock payment systems. The report is expected by April 30, 2025.

Birth Anniversary of Sant Guru Ravidas

Introduction and About

- Sant Guru Ravidas, born in 1377 CE in Seer Goverdhanpur (UP), was a significant figure in the Bhakti Movement, a socio-spiritual reform movement promoting devotion to a personal god while challenging caste hierarchies and ritualistic practices.
- Known by various names such as Raidas, Rohidas, and Ruhidas, he advocated for human rights, equality, and spiritual enlightenment despite hailing from a marginalised community.
- His teachings were highly regarded, with many of his verses included in the Guru Granth Sahib, a central religious scripture of Sikhism.
- He also was esteemed as the spiritual guide by Meera Bai, a revered 16th-century Hindu mystic poet and devotee of Lord Krishna.

Recent Commemoration

- Sant Guru Ravidas's 648th birth anniversary was celebrated on the Purnima Tithi of the Magha month, which, in 2025, corresponded to the 12th of February. The Prime Minister paid tribute to him on this special occasion.
- His birth anniversary celebrations are more prominent in Punjab, Himachal Pradesh, and Haryana.
- The Doaba region of Punjab houses a considerable Ravidassia Dalit community that strongly adheres to the teachings of Sant Ravidas.

The Bhakti Movement

- The Bhakti Movement was a broad socio-spiritual movement that took place between the 7th and 17th centuries.
- It advocated for devotion (bhakti) to a personal god, urging the rejection of caste hierarchies and ritualistic practices.
- This movement had a nationwide impact, influencing the principles of Hinduism, Sikhism, and Sufism.
- Other notable Bhakti saints include Kabir and Guru Nanak from North India, Alvares, Nayanars, Ramanuja, and Basava from South India.

Death Anniversary of Pt. Deendayal Upadhyaya: A Reflection on Contributions

Introduction and About

- Pt. Deendayal Upadhyaya, born on the 25th of September, 1916, was a renowned Indian politician, philosopher, and was the ideologue of the RSS (Rashtriya Swayamsevak

Sangh) and Bharatiya Jana Sangh (BJS), the predecessor party of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP).

- His demise occurred on the 11th of February, 1968 while he was contributing significantly to society and politics. The Prime Minister paid tributes on this day to honour the life and works of Pt. Deendayal Upadhyaya.

Why in News?

- His death anniversary, also known as punya tithi, brings him back into the public memory and this annual memorial has been currently highlighted due to the Prime Minister paying tribute to him.

Contributions and Philosophy

- Pt. Deendayal Upadhyaya was significant for developing the concept of Antyodaya, a philosophy centred on uplifting the last person in society and addressing the needs of the most disadvantaged.
- His philosophy of "Integral Humanism" played a pivotal role, advocating welfare, social justice, economic equality, and self-reliance, and remains an enduring cornerstone of Indian political philosophy.

Recognition and Legacy

- The 25th of September, the day of his birth, has been designated and observed as Antyodaya Diwas since 2014 to honour his contributions to the nation.
- In 2015, the government decided to illustrate his contribution by renaming the National Rural Livelihood Mission (NRLM) as Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana-NRLM.
- Further recognition was granted in 2018 when Mughalsarai Junction in Uttar Pradesh was renamed after him which solidified his legacy and impact.

Importance and GK factors

- Pt. Deendayal Upadhyaya's ideas and political philosophy, particularly Antyodaya and Integral Humanism, are not only defining tenets of the Bharatiya Janata Party, but also became guiding principles for many social welfare policies of the Indian Government.
- His influence on the political philosophy and public policies of India are considerable and his life and works remain an important part of modern Indian history.

201st Birth Anniversary of Swami Dayanand Saraswati: Remembering a Prominent Social Reformer and Nationalist

Subtopic 1: About Maharishi Dayanand Saraswati

- Swami Dayanand Saraswati, born as Mool Shankar Tiwari, was born on 12th February 1824 in Tankara, Gujarat.
- As a child, he showed a deep interest in spiritual knowledge and questioned traditional Hindu practices like idol worship, rituals, and superstitions.
- At the age of 19, he renounced worldly life and became an ascetic searching for truth. He studied under Swami Virjanand, who guided him towards cleansing Hinduism of corrupt practices.
- He is well-remembered as a philosopher, social reformer, and religious leader of the 19th century.

Subtopic 2: Saraswati's Philosophy and Social Reforms

- Saraswati pioneered many social reforms, including opposing idol worship, untouchability, caste-based discrimination, polygamy, child marriage, and gender inequality.
- He advocated for a society free of caste and class prejudices, where these indicators were based on merit rather than birth.

February Current Affairs

- He stressed the importance of women's education, widow remarriage, upliftment of oppressed individuals, and advocated for the abolition of Sati and child marriage.
- He summarised his ideologies in the book "Satyarth Prakash" (The Light of Truth) where he criticised social evils and advocated for Vedic wisdom.

Subtopic 3: Contributions to Education and Nationalist Movement

- Saraswati was a strong opponent of the British colonial education system, advocating instead for a combination of modern, scientific, and Vedic education.
- He played a pivotal role in establishing Gurukuls and Dayanand Anglo-Vedic (DAV) schools and colleges.
- He was the first to advocate for "Swaraj" or self-rule in 1876, which later influenced other freedom fighters like Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Lala Lajpat Rai, and Mahatma Gandhi.

Subtopic 4: Legacy of Swami Dayanand Saraswati

- Despite facing resistance from orthodox sections of society, Swami Dayanand Saraswati left a lasting legacy through his teachings and establishments like Arya Samaj and DAV schools.

Subtopic 5: Understanding Arya Samaj

- Arya Samaj (Society of Nobles) is a Hindu reform movement that promotes the Vedas as the ultimate source of knowledge and truth. It was founded by Swami Dayanand Saraswati in 1875.
- The movement emphasises Vedic authority and rejects practices like idol worship, priestly rituals, animal sacrifice, and other social evils.
- It supports the principles of karma (law of deeds), samsara (cycle of rebirth), and respect for the cow.
- Arya Samaj has contributed significantly towards social reforms such as inter-caste marriage, female education, widow remarriage and has established numerous schools, orphanages, and widow homes. It has also played a role in providing famine relief and medical aid.

India Energy Week 2025

Introduction and Overview

- India Energy Week 2025, an influential event supported mainly by the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas, is a significant stage for the global energy sector with over 700 exhibitors participating.
- This event is jointly organised by the Federation of Indian Petroleum Industry (FIPI), the leading body representing entities in India's hydrocarbon sector and a major channel of communication with the Government.
- The event, based in New Delhi, focuses on energy access, security, sustainability, and decarbonisation, thus promoting a healthier and more sustainable energy industry.

Highlights and Significance of Key Agreements

- During India Energy Week 2025, several important Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) were signed to increase energy security and diversify supply sources, a move beneficial to India's energy industry.
- Bharat Petroleum Corporation Ltd (BPCL) formed a strategic partnership with Petrobras, Brazil's state-run oil company, for the import of up to 6 million barrels of crude oil.
- This agreement allows India to diversify its oil imports and lessen dependence on any one source, thus promoting energy security and stability.

Renewable Energy and Sustainability Initiatives

- In a significant commitment towards renewable energy, BPCL and Eco Wave Power from Israel announced plans to establish India's first wave energy pilot project in Mumbai.
- This novel project underscores India's commitment to renewable energy sources and signals a shift towards more sustainable and technologically advanced energy practices.

Transition to a Natural Gas-Based Economy

- Indian Oil Corporation (IOCL), one of India's leading oil and gas companies, and Abu Dhabi National Oil Company (ADNOC) from UAE have signed a significant USD 7 billion contract.
- The deal involves providing 1.2 million metric tons per annum (MMTPA) of Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) for a period of 14 years, starting in 2026.
- This agreement supports India's efforts to transition towards a natural gas-based economy and highlights the growing importance of natural gas as a cleaner and versatile source of energy.

Conclusion

- India Energy Week 2025 provided an important forum to negotiate and finalise essential agreements and partnerships that will shape India's energy industry in the years to come.
- The strategies established during this week promote energy security and sustainability, conveying India's commitment to a more diversified and greener energy sector.

QUICK HEADLINES

The Union Budget 2025-26 has extended the Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) until 2028, aimed at aiding the remaining 20% of rural households. Initiated in 2019 to provide daily tap water to every rural household, it has so far covered 15 crore households, 80% of rural India. The extension will focus on enhancing infrastructure quality and operation of rural piped water systems, with public participation and new MOUs with states and territories. The World Health Organisation estimates the initiative will save women 5.5 crore hours daily on collecting water, reduce diarrhoeal disease deaths and decrease child mortality by 30%.

Some MPs have received formal notices for a breach of parliamentary privilege, following their comments about the President's address. Breaches occur when the privileges, rights or immunities of a member or the Parliament itself are attacked or disregarded. These privileges exist to protect the effective functioning of MPs and MLAs without external interference. Privileges can include individual liberties like freedom of speech, and collective privileges such as secret sittings and judicial immunity.

A substantial pliosaur skull, dating back 145 million years, has been unearthed in the Jurassic Coast cliffs, a famed fossil hotspot, in Dorset, England. The discovery was made close to Kimmeridge Bay on the Jurassic Coast, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Featuring a prominent cranial crest and elongated jawline, the skull has a bite force exceeding that of a Tyrannosaurus rex, with potential sensory pits and a parietal eye suggesting modern crocodile-like hunting adaptations. Pliosaurus were amongst the most lethal marine predators of the Jurassic oceans.

Microsoft has unveiled Majorana 1, the first quantum chip globally to use a Topological Core architecture, promising a radical shift in quantum computing. The chip employs a Topoconductor, a new material in a topological state, made of indium arsenide and aluminium and comprises eight

qubits. Unique to Majorana 1 is its error-resistant scalability to one million qubits, made possible with Majorana fermions, particles that serve as their own antiparticles. Its wide range of applications includes resolving complex chemistry and materials science issues, and advancements in healthcare.

The Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI) has created a 7-member committee, led by Dinesh Khara, to review the Insurance Act, 1938. The review supports the proposed Insurance Amendment Bill which aims to increase the FDI limit from 74% to 100%. Key reforms being considered include the introduction of a composite license, differential capital, reduced solvency norms, and changes in investment regulations. The IRDAI, established under the IRDA Act, 1999, is the statutory body tasked with regulating and promoting India's insurance industry.

India's first wildlife biobank at Padmaja Naidu Himalayan Zoological Park, also known as Darjeeling Zoo, has been operational since July 2024. The biobank stores genetic material from animals, including cells, tissues, and reproductive samples from endangered and deceased species, in cryogenic conditions to maintain genetic diversity. The initiative is part of a national conservation plan in collaboration with the Centre for Cellular and Molecular Biology (CCMB). Future biobanks are set to be established at Delhi National Zoo and Nandankanan Zoo in Odisha.

An Independent Member of Parliament (MP) has petitioned the High Court about the potential loss of his Lok Sabha seat due to extended absence. Article 101(4) of the Indian Constitution allows for an MP's seat to be declared vacant if they fail to attend all meetings of the House for 60 consecutive days without permission, meant to foster active participation in legislative proceedings. MPs have to seek leave from the Committee on Members' Absence for periods up to 59 days, and previously in 2000, Rajya Sabha MP Barjinder Singh Hamdard was disqualified under this provision due to extended absence.

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has lowered the risk weights of bank loans to Non-Banking Financial Companies (NBFCs) and Microfinance Institutions (MFIs) to stimulate credit flow and foster the retail sector. Risk weight is a factor attached to a bank's assets, including loans, that establishes the capital required to offset potential losses. Lower risk weight allows for more lending by reducing capital needs. The decision will enhance liquidity and bolster lending by NBFCs in areas such as housing, consumer finance, and MSMEs, contributing to increased employment, income levels, and financial resilience.

The Union Cabinet has extended the term of the National Commission for Safai Karamcharis (NCSK) until 31st March 2028. Established in 1994 under the NCSK Act, 1993, the NCSK became a non-statutory body in 2004 under the Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment. It is primarily responsible for recommending policies for the welfare and rehabilitation of Safai Karamcharis, monitoring the implementation of relevant schemes and laws, and ensuring adequate compensation for sewer deaths and disabilities. The NCSK operates several schemes for sanitation workers, including the NAMASTE scheme and the National Safai Karamcharis Finance and Development Corporation (NSKFDC), aimed at socio-economic upliftment of Safai Karamcharis and their families.

The Union Cabinet has approved the continuation and restructuring of the Skill India Programme (SIP), drawing

together three key schemes into a composite Central Sector Scheme until March 2026. SIP, launched in 2015, is a skill development initiative aiming to train 40 crore individuals by 2022. Over 2.27 crore people, including rural youth, women, and marginalised communities, have benefitted from the schemes to date. With the restructuring, the integration of Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana 4.0, Pradhan Mantri National Apprenticeship Promotion Scheme, and Jan Shikshan Sansthan Scheme should ensure a seamless transition into employment and higher education.

State Bank of India (SBI) has reported an impressive 84% surge in net profit for Q3 FY25, surpassing market expectations. This significant growth is attributed to a 4% rise in net interest income and a substantial reduction in employee expenses. Despite a dip in the CASA ratio, SBI demonstrated strong loan growth, superior asset quality, and increased deposit mobilisation, ensuring a robust overall financial status.

SBI Cards and Payment Services Ltd has confirmed the appointment of Salila Pande as the new Managing Director and CEO, effective from 1st April 2025. She succeeds Abhijit Chakravorty, who is set to retire on 31st March 2025. Additionally, the company has announced an interim dividend of ₹2.50 per share for the 2024-25 financial year.

NEW APPOINTMENTS

Justin Hotard is set to replace Pekka Lundmark as the CEO of Nokia, bringing with him expertise in AI and data centres from his current role as Intel's EVP for Data Center & AI Group, a position crucial to Nokia's growth. Nokia's Chair, Sari Baldauf, commended Hotard's ability to expedite growth in technology companies. Lundmark, who served as Nokia's leader since 2020, will remain as an advisor till the year's end for a seamless transition.

Maimun Alam has been appointed as the Director of the Ministry of Steel, approved by the Government of India based on the Department of Revenue's recommendation. The Department of Personnel & Training has issued an order for her to step into her role immediately. She will serve a five-year tenure or until further orders.

CA. Charanjot Singh Nanda has assumed the position of the 73rd President of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of India. Under his leadership, the focus will be on upholding high professional standards within India's accounting profession. He is passionate about setting high ethical standards and maintaining integrity within the industry.

CA. Prasanna Kumar D is the Vice-President of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of India. Their leadership aims to uphold high professional standards in India's accounting profession.

Vivek Joshi serves as the Election Commissioner of India. Joining at 58, he is one of the youngest members ever to be part of the Election Commission of India (ECI). His tenure is set to last until 18 February 2031.

V Anantha Nageswaran's term as Chief Economic Advisor (CEA) to the Indian government has been extended. He is now set to serve in the role until March 2027.

Gyanesh Kumar has been officially appointed as the Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) of India by the Law Ministry. This is a significant appointment as Kumar is the first CEC to be selected under the new law governing Election Commission (EC) members. This highlights a key milestone for the Election Commission of India.

BOOKS AND AUTHOR

Book Title	Author/Editor	Key Points
I Am a Soldier's Wife: The Life and Love of Toni Lidder	Geetika Lidder	Honors Brigadier LS Lidder's legacy, celebrating his service, compassion, and inspirational character. Launched in the presence of Army Chief General Upendra Dwivedi.
The New Icon: Savarkar and the Facts	Arun Shourie	Critically examines Vinayak Damodar Savarkar's legacy, challenging historical narratives and potentially shaping national discourse.
I Am?	Gopichand P. Hinduja	Launched by Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar, the book's release was a high-profile event attended by political leaders, business figures, and diplomats.

IMPORTANT DAYS

Date	Special Days
1 February	Union Budget
2 February	World Wetlands Day
2 February to 8 February	International Development Week
3 February	Vasant Panchami
4 February	World Cancer Day
6 February	International Day of Zero Tolerance for Female Genital Mutilation
7 February	Surajkund Crafts Mela
10 February	International Day of the Arabian Leopard
	World Pulses Day
	International Epilepsy Day
11 February	Anti-Smuggling Day 2025
	International Day of Women and Girls in Science
12 February	Magha Purnima 2025
	International Day for the Prevention of Violent Extremism as and When Conducive to Terrorism 2025
	Guru Ravidas Jayanti 2025
13 February	World Radio Day
	Sarojini Naidu Birth Anniversary
15 February	International Childhood Cancer Day
	World Pangolin Day
17 February to 27 February	Taj Mahotsav
19 February to 9 March	ICC Champions Trophy
20 February	Arunachal Pradesh Foundation Day
	World Anthropology Day
	Mizoram Foundation Day
	World Day of Social Justice
21 February	International Mother Language Day
22 February	World Thinking Day
23 February	World Peace and Understanding Day
24 February	Central Excise Day
26 February	Mahashivratri
	Veer Savarkar's Death Anniversary
27 February	World NGO Day
28 February	National Science Day
	Rare Disease Day
	Ramadan

Space For Notes



EDUPREPARATOR

Prepare For The Best, From The Best

LIVE CLASSES + TEST SERIES

AVAILABLE COURSES

CUET 2025 FULLY A.I. BASED CHAPTERWISE TEST

HUMANITIES CUET SIMULATED MOCK TEST

DOMAINS

Live Online Classes + Test Series

STUDY MATERIAL

General Test English Language
Geography History
Economics Psychology
Info Practice Pol Science

9990901901, 9311902282
www.edupreparator.com

GENERAL TEST LIVE CLASSES + TEST SERIES

ADMISSION OPEN

- > Live 60+ hr Interactive Classes + Recorded Lecture
- > 10 Full Length Mock Test of General Test
- > 14 Month Wise Current Affairs Test (Mar23-Apr 24)
- > General Test Booklets
- > Current Affairs material in PDF

TEAM OF EXPERTS

NIKHIL SAREEN, RAJESH SHARMA & CHAITAN SHARMA

CUET 2025 CURRENT AFFAIRS LIVE CLASSES + TEST SERIES

ADMISSION OPEN

- Live Classes and recorded classes 20+ Hours
- 18 Month-wise Test (Nov 23 - April 25)
- PDF support Current Affairs material
- Recorded Video Discussion
- AI Based Test Analysis

NIKHIL SAREEN
Current Affairs Expert

CUET 2025 FULLY A.I. BASED CHAPTERWISE TEST

COMMERCE CUET SIMULATED MOCK TEST

DOMAINS

Live Online Classes + Test Series

STUDY MATERIAL

B. Studies Accountancy
Mathematics Economics
Informatics Practices

9990901901, 9311902282
www.edupreparator.com

ENGLISH LANGUAGE LIVE CLASSES + TEST SERIES

ADMISSION OPEN

- > Live 20+ hr Interactive Classes + Recorded Lecture
- > 10 Full Length Mock Test of English Language
- > English Language Booklet

TEAM OF EXPERTS

LALI MATTHEW & RISHABH SAINI

ENGLISH LANGUAGE + GENERAL TEST LIVE CLASSES + TEST SERIES

ADMISSION OPEN

- > 75 HR+ LIVE CLASSES AND RECORDED CLASSES
- > 10 FULL LENGTH TEST OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE
- > 10 FULL LENGTH TEST OF GENERAL TEST
- > 14 MONTH-WISE CURRENT AFFAIRS TEST (MAR 23-APR 24) + RECORDED VIDEO DISCUSSION
- > GENERAL TEST + CURRENT AFFAIRS MATERIAL

TEAM OF EXPERTS

LALI MATTHEW, RISHABH SAINI, NIKHIL SAREEN, RAJESH SHARMA & CHAITAN SHARMA



PREPARED BY
TEAM OF EXPERTS

TEST SERIES

AVAILABLE COURSES

CUET 2025 FULLY A.I. BASED CHAPTERWISE TEST

HUMANITIES CUET SIMULATED MOCK TEST

DOMAINS

Test Series

STUDY MATERIAL

General Test English Language
Geography History
Economics Psychology
Info Practice Pol Science

9990901901, 9311902282
www.edupreparator.com

GENERAL TEST TEST SERIES

ADMISSION OPEN

- > 10 Full Length Mock Test of General Test
- > 14 Month Wise Current Affairs Test (Mar23-Apr 24)
- > General Test Booklet
- > Current Affairs material in PDF

TEAM OF EXPERTS

NIKHIL SIR, RAJESH SIR & CHAITAN SIR

CUET 2025 CURRENT AFFAIRS TEST SERIES

ADMISSION OPEN

- 18 Month-wise Test (Nov 23-April 25)
- PDF support Current Affairs material
- Recorded Video Discussion
- AI Based Test Analysis

NIKHIL SAREEN
Current Affairs Expert

CUET 2025 FULLY A.I. BASED CHAPTERWISE TEST

COMMERCE CUET SIMULATED MOCK TEST

DOMAINS

Test Series

STUDY MATERIAL

B. Studies Accountancy
Mathematics Economics
Informatics Practices

9990901901, 9311902282
www.edupreparator.com

ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEST SERIES

ADMISSION OPEN

- > 10 Full Length Mock Test of General Test
- > English Language Booklets

TEAM OF EXPERTS

LALI SIR, RISHABH SIR

ENGLISH LANGUAGE + GENERAL TEST TEST SERIES

ADMISSION OPEN

- > 10 FULL LENGTH TEST OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE
- > 10 FULL LENGTH TEST OF GENERAL TEST
- > 14 MONTH-WISE CURRENT AFFAIRS TEST (MAR 23-APR 24) + RECORDED VIDEO DISCUSSION
- > GENERAL TEST + CURRENT AFFAIRS MATERIAL

TEAM OF EXPERTS

LALI MATTHEW, RISHABH SAINI, NIKHIL SAREEN, RAJESH SHARMA & CHAITAN SHARMA



Add : T-1, Usha Chamber, Above
Master Bakers, Deep Market,
Ashok Vihar, Delhi - 110052



9990901901
9319737316