

# Monthly Daily Current Affairs

## March 2024

### Iran Launches 'Pars 1' Satellite

- Iran's venture into space exploration and satellite deployment continues with the launch of the "Pars 1" satellite, facilitated by Russia from the **Vostochny Cosmodrome**.
- This event underscores the technological **collaboration between Iran and Russia**, occurring against a backdrop of heightened scrutiny and concern from Western nations.
- **Purpose is to Remote sensing** and imaging, focused on scanning Iran's topography This launch is part of Iran's broader efforts in space technology, following its claim of launching three satellites into orbit using its own rocket earlier in January.



- Such developments have sparked international debates over the **dual-use nature of satellite launch technologies**, which could be repurposed for **ballistic missile capabilities**, including those potentially carrying nuclear warheads.
- Western nations, notably the **United States**, have expressed concerns over **Iran's satellite launches**, citing the potential military applications of the technology involved.

- These apprehensions are situated within a larger context of tensions surrounding Iran's nuclear ambitions and its compliance with international agreements designed to curb such capabilities.
- **Iran, facing sanctions from the United States**, especially after the 2018 withdrawal from the nuclear deal by the US, maintains that its space activities are for civilian or defensive purposes and not for developing nuclear weapons.
- The launch of Pars 1 follows the **August 2022 deployment of Iran's Khayyam satellite**, also facilitated by Russia.



- This pattern of collaboration indicates a strengthening of scientific and technological ties between Iran and Russia, amidst broader geopolitical tensions.
- There's speculation and concern about the potential military advantages such cooperation might afford Russia, particularly in the context of its military activities in Ukraine.
- Moreover, **Iran's alleged support for Russia**, including the provision of armed drones, has led to announcements of forthcoming sanctions by the US, aimed at penalizing Iran for its role in the Ukraine conflict.

## 1st Green Hydrogen Plant In Stainless Steel Sector

- Union Steel Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia virtually inaugurated **India's 1st Green Hydrogen Plant in the Stainless Steel Sector** at Jindal Stainless Limited, Hisar.
- This plant will be **the world's first off-grid Green Hydrogen** plant for the stainless steel industry and the world's first Green Hydrogen plant with rooftop and floating solar.



- This project will **reduce carbon emissions** by around two thousand 700 Metric Tonnes per annum and 54 thousand tons of carbon dioxide emissions over the next two decades.
- Mr Scindia highlighted **India's commitment to a green and sustainable future**, emphasizing the need for responsible economic progress in the post-COVID era.
- He also highlighted **India's progress in the steel sector**, evolving from a net importer to a net exporter and aiming to become the world's largest producer of crude steel.
- The **National Green Hydrogen Mission was launched** last year with an outlay of around twenty thousand crore rupees to make India a Global Hub for the production, usage and export of Green Hydrogen and its derivatives.



## Digital Intelligence Platform and CHAKSU

- Union Minister for Communications **Ashwini Vaishnav** launched the **Digital Intelligence Platform and CHAKSHU** - Report Suspected Fraud Communication Facility on **Sanchar Saathi Portal** at a function in New Delhi.
- **Digital Intelligence Platform (DIP)** developed by the Department of Telecommunications aims at facilitating coordination among the Stakeholders to Curb the **Misuse of Telecom Resources in Cybercrime and Financial Fraud**.



- While the **Chakshu facilitates citizens to report suspected** fraud communication received over call, SMS or WhatsApp to defraud. These include **KYC expiry** or update of bank account, gas connection and impersonation as a government

official or relative for sending money and disconnection of all mobile numbers by the Department of Telecommunications.

- Mr Ashwini Vaishnaw said that the Government has laid **special focus on cyber security** to provide safeguards against cyber frauds.
- These two initiatives will further strengthen the Government's efforts in the fight against **cyber fraud**.



- Mr Vaishnaw said that since the launch of the Sanchar Saathi Portal in May last year, more than **one core fraudulent mobile connections** were delisted.
- The Portal detects fraudulent connections and triggers re-verification. He said, every day more than 2 thousand 500 such connections are being disconnected.
- On the occasion, Union Minister of State for Communications Devusinh Chauhan was also present.

## India's First Indigenous Prototype Fast Breeder Reactor

- In a historic milestone marking entry into the vital second stage of **India's three stage nuclear programme**, Prime Minister Narendra Modi witnessed, commencement of **"Core Loading"** at **India's first indigenous Prototype** Fast Breeder Reactor (PFBR) (500 MWe) at **Kalpakkam, Tamil Nadu**.
- In line with the true spirit of Aatmanirbhar Bharat, PFBR has been fully designed and constructed **indigenously by BHAVINI** with significant contribution from more than 200 Indian industries including MSMEs.



- Once commissioned, India will only be the **second country after Russia** to have commercial operating Fast Breeder Reactor.
- The PFBR reactor core consists of control sub-assemblies, blanket subassemblies and fuel sub-assemblies. With minimised nuclear waste generated from the reactor and advanced safety features, FBRs will provide a safe, efficient and clean source of energy and contribute to the goal of net zero.



- **In India's three stages of the Nuclear power programme**, BHAVINI paves the way as a forerunner in the second stage by building a 500 MWe PFBR.
- is entrusted with a mandate to construct, **commission and operate the Fast Breeder Reactors** to provide energy security for the nation in the long run. In terms of safety, the PFBR is an advanced third generation reactor with inherent passive safety features ensuring a prompt and safe shut down of the plant in the event of an emergency.

- Since it uses the **spent fuel from the first stage**, it also offers great advantage in terms of significant reduction in nuclear waste generated, thereby avoiding the need for large geological disposal facilities.
- The growth of the Indian nuclear power program, is imperative to meet the twin goals of energy security and sustainable development.
- As a responsible **nuclear power with advanced technology**, India remains committed to expand peaceful applications of nuclear technology, both in power and non-power sector, while ensuring the security of nuclear and radiological materials.

## GI Tag

- In a significant nod to **India's rich heritage of craftsmanship and artistry**, the **Cuttack Rupa Tarakasi**, more widely known as **Silver Filigree**, has recently been awarded the Geographical Indication (GI) tag by the Geographical Indications Registry in Chennai.
- This recognition, sought by the **Odisha State Co-operative Handicrafts Corporation Limited** and supported by the Department of Textile and Handicrafts, Government of Odisha, places Cuttack's Silver Filigree on the map as a unique and protected form of art.



- **Silver Filigree, or Tarakasi**, is a testament to the unparalleled skill and precision of artisans in Cuttack.
- The craft's history traces back to over 500 years ago, with influences spanning from Persia to Indonesia, and finally making its home in Cuttack, Odisha.
- **This intricate form of metalwork involves twisting** thin silver wires to create delicate and complex designs, often used in jewelry and decorative items.

- Historical evidence suggests that the art of filigree was present as early as **3500 BCE in Mesopotamia**, evolving over millennia and across continents to become what it is today in Cuttack.
- The GI filing documents reveal fascinating insights into the craft's journey to India's eastern shores. Historians believe that Tarakasi work reached Cuttack through **maritime trade routes from Persia, via Indonesia**.
- This theory is supported by the striking similarities between the filigree work found in Cuttack and Indonesia.
- Literary works like the story of Ta-Poi further underscore the ancient maritime links between Kalinga (modern-day Odisha) and Indonesia, suggesting a shared heritage of craftsmanship and trade.
- The recognition of Cuttack's Silver Filigree is part of a broader effort to protect and promote India's diverse artisanal heritage.
- Alongside **Tarakasi**, **other crafts such as Banglar Muslin**, a fine cotton fabric from Bengal, Narasapur Crochet Lace from Andhra Pradesh, and the Kutch Rogan Craft have also been honoured with the GI tag. Each of these crafts tells a unique story of tradition, skill, and cultural exchange, contributing to the rich tapestry of Indian heritage.



## Top USGA Honor

- **Legendary golfer Tiger Woods** has been named the winner of the prestigious **Bob Jones Award**, the highest honor bestowed by the **United States Golf Association (USGA)**.
- He was recognized for tremendous on-course achievements alongside an exemplary commitment to the game's traditions and integrity.





- Woods, a **15-time major champion and nine-time USGA champion**, has redefined the game of golf in the modern era, overcoming physical and personal challenges by displaying the characteristics of tenacity, mental strength and perseverance.
- The **Bob Jones Award** represents the **USGA's utmost** accolade granted since 1955 for sportsmanship in golf combined with distinguished character beyond championships.



- It memorializes the spirit of amateur great **Bobby Jones – winner of 13 majors including a solitary Grand Slam in 1930** – who helped establish Augusta National Golf Club and co-founded the Masters Tournament.
- **Past recipients of the Bob Jones Award** include Arnold Palmer, Jack Nicklaus, Ben Hogan, Mickey Wright, Francis Ouimet, Byron Nelson, Nancy Lopez, President George H.W. Bush, Patty Berg and Annika Sorenstam. The 2024 Bob Jones Award will be formally presented to Woods on June 12th during the U.S. Open Tournament week at Pinehurst Resort's famed Course No. 2 in North Carolina.

## Kerala Welcomes 'Iris'

- Kerala school has introduced **Iris, a humanoid teacher**, marking a significant milestone in the realm of educational technology.
- Developed in collaboration with **Makerlabs Edutech Private Limited**, Iris represents a pioneering effort to make learning more interactive, engaging, and accessible.
- **Located in Thiruvananthapuram**, KTCT Higher Secondary School, under the aegis of Kaduvayil Thangal Charitable Trust, has become the first educational institution in Kerala to employ an AI-powered teacher.



- This initiative stems from the **Atal Tinkering Lab (ATL) project** by NITI Aayog, launched in 2021 to enhance extracurricular activities in schools across India.
- Iris is designed to be more than just a **robotic presence in the classroom**; it is a generative AI entity capable of conducting interactive learning sessions. With the ability to communicate in three languages, Iris can tackle a wide array of questions, making it a versatile and invaluable educational tool. The humanoid boasts a range of features aimed at revolutionizing the way students interact with educational content.
- These include: Iris can interact in **three different languages**, offering a more inclusive and accessible learning experience for students of diverse linguistic backgrounds.
- Equipped with voice assistant capabilities, Iris can guide students through lessons, answer queries, and engage in educational dialogues.
- Iris comes with **manipulation capabilities and is mobile**, thanks to its wheeled base, allowing it to navigate classroom spaces effectively.



- At its core, Iris integrates robotics with **generative AI, powered by a dedicated Intel processor and a coprocessor**. This setup enables the humanoid to perform a wide range of teaching tasks.
- An Android app **interface allows users to interact** with Iris effortlessly, facilitating a customized learning experience that can adapt to the individual needs of students.

## “Indira Gandhi Pyari Behna Sukh Samman Nidhi Yojna”

- Chief Minister Sukhvinder Sukhu unveiled the “**Indira Gandhi Pyari Behna Sukh Samman Nidhi Yojna,**” a scheme designed to provide financial support to women aged between **18 to 60 years**.
- Under this scheme, eligible women will receive a **monthly stipend of ₹1,500**, amounting to an annual expenditure of ₹800 crore. The initiative aims to cover over five lakh women, offering them much-needed financial assistance.

**इंदिरा गांधी प्यारी बहना सुख सम्मान निधि**

इन महिलाओं को  
हर महीने —  
**1500 रुपए**  
| देगी सरकार

₹

केवल इन महिलाओ को मिलेंगे 1500 रुपए

- One of the highlights of the scheme is its **focus on empowering young women**. Chief Minister Sukhu emphasized that all girls above 18 years of age would receive ₹18,000 per annum under the initiative.
- This ambitious endeavor not only provides financial aid but also signifies a commitment to **uplifting and supporting the women** of Himachal Pradesh.
- Chief Minister Sukhu expressed his satisfaction with the government's efforts to combat corruption and ensure the effective implementation of the scheme. By delivering on their promises, the government aims to build trust among the people and fulfill its electoral mandates.
- The introduction of the "Indira Gandhi Pyari Behna Sukh Samman Nidhi Yojna" marks a significant milestone in the state's journey towards inclusive development and women's empowerment.

## Sansad Khel Mahakumbh

- Union Information & Broadcasting Minister Anurag Singh Thakur launched the third phase of **Sansad Khel Mahakumbh at Luhnu Cricket Ground in Bilaspur** district in Himachal Pradesh.



- Speaking on the occasion, he said that the Modi government at the Center has taken several steps to promote sports, as a result of which Indian players have performed better at international level.

- Mr Thakur said that about **45 thousand youth had participated in the second** phase of Sansad Khel Mahakumbh and this program has proved effective in keeping the youth away from drugs and making them aware about sports.

## Google To Restore All Delisted Indian Apps

- **Technology conglomerate Google** has agreed to restore all the recently delisted Indian apps from its app market, Play Store.
- Information Technology Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw informed this after having a meeting with **representatives from Google and the affected app developers** over the issue.



- Mr Vaishnaw said that after very constructive discussions, both parties have agreed to re-instate the apps.
- He assured that both Google and the start-up companies will come to a long-term resolution in the coming months.
- **Recently, Google had delisted over a hundred apps** by prominent Indian tech companies including Shaadi.com, Bharat Matrimony and Info Edge. The US-based conglomerate said that it had removed the apps from Play Store for not complying with its app billing policy for an extended period of time.

## Measles And Rubella Champion' Global Award

- India has been bestowed with the **prestigious measles and rubella champion** award for its exemplary efforts in combating these diseases.
- The award was received by the ambassador **Sripriya Ranganathan** on behalf of the **Ministry of Health and Family Welfare** at American Red Cross Headquarters in Washington.

- The Health Ministry in a statement said, this accolade celebrates the country's unwavering **commitment to public health** and its outstanding leadership in curbing the spread of these infectious diseases among children.
- It said, despite facing numerous challenges, India has demonstrated remarkable progress in **reducing measles and rubella cases** and preventing outbreaks through a series of comprehensive interventions.



- The Ministry further said, the award is a testament to the dedication and hard work of country's frontline health workers, healthcare professionals, policymakers, and communities across the nation.
- It said, these efforts have resulted in 50 districts consistently not witnessing any measles case while 226 districts have not reported rubella cases over the past 12 months.
- The **measles and rubella partnership comprises a multi-agency planning committee**, including the American Red Cross, Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF), Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization (GAVI), UNICEF and World Health Organisation. All of these organisations are dedicated to reducing global measles deaths and preventing rubella illness.



## IndiaAI Mission

- Indian government, led by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, has approved a new **\$1.24 billion investment for the IndiaAI mission**.
- This initiative aims to create an **all-Indian AI ecosystem** from scratch, bolstering India's technological prowess and fostering innovation in AI.
- Building a **Robust Compute Infrastructure**, Develop a powerful high-performance computing (HPC) system to serve as India's central AI infrastructure.



- The HPC system, expected to include **10,000 “or more” GPUs** as AI accelerators, will be developed through a public-private partnership to support startups and research organizations.
- **Enhancing Language Models** for Diverse Linguistic Needs The IndiaAI Innovation Centre will develop and deploy indigenous Large Multimodal Models (LMMs) and domain-specific foundational models.
- These models will cater to India's diverse linguistic landscape, supporting the country's **23 official languages** and facilitating more inclusive AI applications.
- **IndiaAI will establish local datasets** through the IndiaAI Datasets Platform, providing access to high-quality databases.



- The IndiaAI FutureSkills initiative aims to train new skilled workers for the growing AI job market, with new “Data and AI Labs” offering courses on foundational models. IndiaAI Startup Financing program will support startups, fostering the development of the AI private sector and encouraging futuristic AI projects. IndiaAI will focus on **developing safe and “responsible”** AI initiatives through indigenous software frameworks, government guidelines, and proper guardrails

## Bjarni Benediktsson

- **Foreign Minister of Iceland, Bjarni Benediktsson**, arrived in the national capital.
- The Spokesperson of the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), extended a **warm welcome to the Icelandic Foreign Minister.**



- In a social media post, the External Affairs Ministry has said that his visit will further strengthen trade and investment relations between both countries.
- India and Iceland have, despite the distance and contrast in population size, reached out to each other to build friendships based on shared values and mutual interests.



- **Iceland was the first Nordic country** to publicly extend support to India's candidature for permanent membership in the United Nations Security Council (UNSC).



## Miss World 2024

- **Krystyna Pyszková of the Czech Republic** has been crowned the 71st Miss World in a grand ceremony held in Mumbai.
- The **24-year-old Pyszková** competed against contestants from 115 countries. Last year's winner, Miss World 2022 Karolina Bielawska of Poland crowned Krystyna as the 71st Miss World. Meanwhile, Yasmina Zaytoun of Lebanon was crowned the First Runner-Up at the beauty pageant.



- According to **Miss World Organisation**, **Krystyna Pyszková** is a student, volunteer, and international model.
- The 24-year-old is studying for two degrees in Law and Business Administration while working as a model. She founded the Krystyna Pyszko Foundation and continues to support the work there.

- **Krystyna's proudest moment** includes opening an English school for underprivileged children in Tanzania. She has a passion for Music and Art having spent nine years in an Art Academy.

## Oscar Awards

- The **Oscars, Officially Named The Academy Awards**, Stand As Pinnacle Of Recognition In Film Industry Worldwide. Every Year, Artists From Diverse Corners Of The Globe Compete For Accolades Across A Broad Spectrum Of Categories.
- **"Oppenheimer" Won The Biggest Awards Of The Night**, With The Film's Director, Christopher Nolan, Taking Home The Best Director Oscar, Actor Cillian Murphy Winning The Best Actor Award, And The Film Earning The Coveted Best Picture Among Its Seven Overall Wins.



- Best Picture - "Oppenheimer"
- Best Actress - Emma Stone, "Poor Things"
- Best Director - Christopher Nolan, "Oppenheimer"
- Best Actor - Cillian Murphy, "Oppenheimer"
- Best Original Song - "What Was I Made For?" From "Barbie"
- Best Original Score - "Oppenheimer"
- Best Live Action Short Film - "The Wonderful Story Of Henry Sugar"
- Best Cinematography - "Oppenheimer" - Hoyte Van Hoytema
- Best Documentary Feature Film - "20 Days In Mariupol"

- Best Animated Short Film - "War Is Over! Inspired By The Music Of John & Yoko"
- Best Animated Feature Film - "The Boy And The Heron"
- Best Original Screenplay - "Anatomy Of A Fall" - Justine Triet, Arthur Harari

## UGC Introduces SheRNI

- The **University Grants Commission's (UGC) Information and Library Network (INFLIBNET)** Centre unveiled a groundbreaking initiative, known as the '**She Research Network in India**' (SheRNI).
- This initiative aims to **address the gender disparity** in the field of science by ensuring equal representation of women scientists.
- SheRNI challenges stereotypes and serves as a beacon of inspiration for future generations of **female scientists, researchers, and faculty members**.



- By providing a platform for visibility and recognition, it aims to encourage more women to pursue careers in science and research.
- **The primary goal of SheRNI** is to establish a national-level expert platform for women faculty members.
- This platform facilitates the exchange of expertise, insights, and experiences across various domains, promoting collaboration and networking opportunities among women in academia.
- The **SheRNI database currently hosts profiles of 81,818 women faculty members**, showcasing their vast contributions to the field of science.
- Furthermore, it houses an **impressive collection of 6,75,313 publications and 11,543 patents**, underscoring the significant role of women in advancing scientific knowledge and innovation.



ज्ञान-विज्ञान विमुक्तये  
**UGC**

**University Grants Commission**

- The **University Grants Commission is a statutory body** operating under the Department of Higher Education, Ministry of Education, Government of India. Established in accordance with the UGC Act of 1956, its mandate includes coordinating, determining, and maintaining standards of higher education in India.

## Mahtari Vandan Yojana

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi virtually launched the '**Mahtari Vandan Yojana**' in Chhattisgarh from Kashi, Uttar Pradesh.
- **The scheme aims to provide financial assistance** to women in the state. PM Modi disbursed the first installment of **Rs 1,000 to 70,12,417 women** in Chhattisgarh.



- The **state government has allocated Rs 655.57 crore** for this purpose. PM Modi assured regular monthly transfers of Rs 1,000 to eligible beneficiaries under the scheme.

- Prime Minister praised Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai and his team for the swift implementation of the 'Mahtari Vandan Yojana'.
- Under the **Mahtari Vandan Yojana**, approximately **70 lakh women** in Chhattisgarh will receive Rs 1,000 every month.

## India Becomes 2<sup>nd</sup> Largest Mobile Phone Producer

- India has emerged as **the world's second-largest producer of mobile phones**. This achievement marks a significant transition for the country's electronics manufacturing sector.
- According to the **India Cellular and Electronics Association**, the mobile phone sector has transformed from being **78 percent import-dependent in 2014** to achieving **97 per cent self-sufficiency by 2024**.



- **Only 3 per cent** of the total mobile phones sold in India are now imported. India's mobile phone production has reached an **impressive 20 lakh crore rupees** in this decade of unprecedented growth.
- During these ten years, the **country produced 2.45 billion units** of mobile phones, against a **target of 2.5 billion units**.
- This remarkable achievement highlights the growth of India's electronics manufacturing ecosystem.



- The country has successfully **reduced its reliance on imports and fostered a self-sufficient mobile phone** production industry.
- India's rise as the **second-largest mobile phone producer globally** is a testament to the country's commitment to developing a robust manufacturing sector.
- With **reduced import dependence** and substantial production volumes, India has established itself as a major player in the global mobile phone market, contributing to its economic growth and technological advancements.

## Tropical Seaweed Farm

- **Sea6 Energy, a pioneer in the Blue Economy, has launched the world's first large-scale mechanized tropical seaweed farm** off the coast of **Lombok, Indonesia**.
- The **one-square-kilometer seaweed farm** is a significant milestone in establishing the scalability of **sustainable tropical seaweed cultivation** for various industrial applications.



- Harvesting tropical seaweed at scale has been a significant barrier in the industry, limiting research on its applicability in large industrial applications.
- **Sea6's vertically integrated technology platform** automates various workflows, from seeding to harvesting, and enhances the seaweed feedstock's shelf life, increasing smallholder farmer productivity.
- The launch was attended by dignitaries in Indonesia, including ministers and ambassadors, highlighting the project's importance in promoting environmental stewardship and fostering economic growth in the region.



- The Indian Ambassador to Indonesia praised Sea6 Energy's commitment to scaling up seaweed cultivation and processing, **creating local green jobs, and building a sustainable local economy.**
- Seaweed is gaining popularity due to its potential as an **input feedstock** for various products traditionally made from **fossil fuels or land-based biomass.**
- Sea6's farm aims to **revolutionize the ocean economy** by maximizing efficiency, minimizing environmental impact, and ensuring the highest standards of product quality, safety, and traceability.
- Sea6 Energy has attracted nearly **USD \$30 million of international investment** over the past ten years, including from sustainable aquaculture funds, venture capital firms, and family offices.
- Sea6 Energy's pioneering mechanized tropical seaweed farm in Indonesia marks a significant step towards sustainable seaweed cultivation at scale.
- **With the support of investors and partnerships,** the company aims to revolutionize the ocean economy by producing renewable and versatile

seaweed-based products while promoting environmental stewardship and economic growth in coastal communities.



## World Telecommunication Standardisation Assembly

- **World Telecommunication Standardisation Assembly (WTSA 2024)** will be held in New Delhi from 15 to 24 October 2024.
- The **Telecommunication Standardisation Bureau (TSB)** of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) organises WTSA which plays a crucial role in shaping the **global agenda for the standardisation of telecom** and information and communication technologies.





- Over two thousand technology developers, industry leaders, academicians, policymakers from 193 member countries, and nine hundred plus ITU associate and sector members are expected to participate.
- Additionally, **Asia's premier digital technology exhibition**, India Mobile Congress (IMC), co-hosted by the Department of Telecommunications (DoT) and Cellular Operators Association of India (COAI) will be held from the 15th of October at Pragati Maidan in New Delhi this year.
- It will be held **concurrently with WTSA 2024**. Artificial Intelligence, Quantum technology, and Circular Economy along with a spotlight on 6G and 5G use-case showcases, cloud and edge computing, semiconductors, cybersecurity and green tech will be high on the agenda of IMC.



## Yaounde Declaration

- In a landmark gathering in **Yaoundé, Cameroon**, health ministers from **11 African nations**, along with global malaria partners and stakeholders, convened to address the escalating malaria crisis in Africa.
- Despite available tools and systems, malaria cases surged globally, with Africa bearing the brunt, **accounting for 94% of cases and 95% of deaths** in 2022.
- Global malaria cases rose from **233 million to 249 million** between 2019 and 2022.



- Africa witnessed a **significant increase from 218 million to 233 million cases** during the same period, marking it as the epicenter of the malaria crisis.
- The 11 African countries represented at the conference face the highest burden of malaria infections and deaths.
- **Health ministers from** Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ghana, Mali, Mozambique, Niger, Nigeria, Sudan, Uganda, and Tanzania expressed unwavering commitment to eradicate malaria.



- They pledged to leverage global commitments and regional strategies, including **dedicating 15% of annual budgets to strengthen the health sector**, as endorsed by African heads of state.

- Political will must translate into tangible actions on the ground to combat malaria effectively.

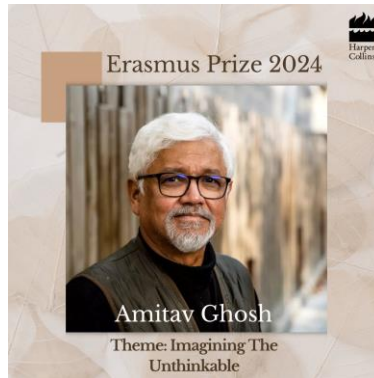


- Despite some progress, malaria incidence has only **declined by 7.6% and mortality by 11.3%**, falling short of African Union's interim goals. Only seven out of 46 member states have achieved a 40% reduction in malaria incidence or mortality.
- Urgent action is needed to fill a financial gap of **\$1.5 billion to sustain** basic malaria services, particularly for vector control.
- Without **additional funding of \$5.2 billion** annually to make progress towards elimination and \$11 billion for climate adaptation in the health sector, significant surges in cases and deaths, especially among vulnerable populations like children and pregnant women, are anticipated.

## Prestigious Erasmus Prize 2024

- The **Praemium Erasmianum Foundation** has awarded the Erasmus Prize 2024 to the Indian writer Amitav Ghosh.
- He receives this prestigious honour for his passionate contribution to the theme **"imagining the unthinkable,"** in which he explores the unprecedented global crisis of climate change through his literary works.
- Ghosh has delved deeply into the question of how to give justice to the existential **threat of climate change**, which defies our imagination. His work

offers a remedy by making an uncertain future palpable through compelling stories about the past.



- He wields his pen to show that the **climate crisis is a cultural crisis** resulting from a lack of imagination.
- Born in Kolkata in 1956, Ghosh has produced a vast body of work, including historical novels and journalistic essays that carry the reader across continents and oceans.
- His works are **grounded in thorough archival research and transcend boundaries** and time periods with literary eloquence.
- Nature has been an important character in Ghosh's work, particularly after witnessing the ravaging effects of climate change and rising sea levels in the Sundarbans region while **researching for his book "The Hungry Tide."**
- Drawing from the rich history of the Indian subcontinent, he describes how the effects of natural catastrophes have been inextricably linked with human destiny in that part of the world. Ghosh has won various prizes, including the **2018 Jnanpith Award**, the highest literary prize in India.
- In 2019, he received an honorary doctorate from Maastricht University and was ranked by "Foreign Policy" magazine as one of the most important global thinkers of our time.

## PM-SURAJ National Portal

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched the '**Pradhan Mantri Samajik Utthan Evam Rozgar Adharit Jankalyan**' (PM-SURAJ) national portal and sanctioned **credit assistance for one lakh entrepreneurs** from disadvantaged communities.
- He also interacted with **beneficiaries of various government schemes** from disadvantaged groups, including Scheduled Castes, Backward Classes and sanitation workers through video conferencing.

- **PM-SURAJ national portal for credit support** to disadvantaged sections embodies the Prime Minister's commitment to prioritize the underprivileged.
- It is a transformative initiative, **aimed at uplifting the most marginalised segments of society.**



- The program witnessed the participation of about **three lakh beneficiaries** of various government schemes from disadvantaged groups.
- Mentioning transferring **financial assistance worth 720 crore rupees** directly into the bank accounts of one lakh beneficiaries of the disadvantaged sections, Mr Modi said that such a system of Direct Benefit Transfer was unimaginable during the previous governments.
- **Referring to his interaction with the beneficiaries**, the Prime Minister expressed satisfaction with how the welfare schemes are reaching the Dalits, deprived and backward communities.



- On the goal of Viksit Bharat by 2047, Prime Minister Modi said that the goal can not be achieved without the development of the deprived segments.

- He said, he has broken the mindset of the past and it is being ensured that facilities available to others like **gas connection, bank accounts and toilets are available to Dalits, backwards, deprived and tribals.**
- He said , the biggest beneficiaries of schemes like free ration, free medical treatment, pucca houses, toilets, and Ujjwala gas connection are the deprived segments or people living on the periphery.

## India's First Automobile In Plant Railway Siding

- **Prime Minister Narendra Modi** unveiled the inaugural **automobile in-plant railway siding at Suzuki Motor Gujarat Private Limited**, a wholly-owned subsidiary of Maruti Suzuki India Limited (MSIL).



- The ceremony, conducted via video conferencing, signifies a pivotal advancement in the execution of the **Prime Minister's flagship Gati Shakti programme.**
- The primary objectives of this in-plant railway siding are to **reduce the carbon footprint in logistics**, decrease fossil fuel consumption, and alleviate road congestion.
- Upon reaching full operational capacity, the Gujarat railway siding facility is poised to dispatch an impressive 300,000 cars annually to 15 destinations across India. The collaborative effort behind this project includes Gujarat Rail Infrastructure Development (G-RIDE), a partnership between the Government of Gujarat and Indian Railways.



- Also involved in the collaboration are the Gujarat Industrial Development Corporation (GIDC) and MSIL.
- Maruti Suzuki has expressed a dedication to sustainable transportation, detailing its intentions to increase production capacity to **4 million units per year by 2030-31**.
- With increased vehicle dispatches expected via railways, the new in-plant railway facility will support Maruti Suzuki's production expansion. Maruti Suzuki's integration of a railway siding facility within its plant marks a historic milestone, advancing green logistics in India.

## Google Collaborates With ECI

- **Google has partnered with the Election Commission of India (ECI)** to provide authoritative information on voting processes for the upcoming general elections.
- Through **Google Search and YouTube videos**, voters will be able to access critical details on how to register and vote, as well as information about candidates.

# Google



- In separate initiatives, **Google has taken new measures** to combat misinformation and help people navigate AI-generated content during the upcoming election season.
- One of these measures is **Google's collaboration with Shakti**, the India Election Fact-Checking Collective.



- **Shakti is a pan-India network** comprising news publishers and fact-checkers. Google and Shakti will work together to aid in the detection of online misinformation, including deepfakes, and to create a common repository that news publishers can use to tackle misinformation challenges at scale.
- The **Shakti project will provide news organizations** and fact-checkers with essential training in advanced fact-checking methodologies, deepfake detection, and the latest Google tools like the Fact Check Explorer. This will help streamline verification processes and enhance the ability to combat misinformation effectively.

## Golden Compass Award

- **Mr. Srinivasan Swamy**, currently serving as the chairman and managing director of RK Swamy Ltd, was honored at the **45th IAA World Congress in Penang, Malaysia**.



- Governor Tun Ahmad Fuzi Abdul Razak presented him with the esteemed IAA Golden Compass Award, recognizing his significant contributions to the global marketing, advertising, and media industries.
- This accolade marks a significant milestone in his illustrious career.
- The **IAA Golden Compass Award** is a symbol of excellence and innovation in the industry.
- **Swamy is the first Indian industry leader** to receive this prestigious honor.
- Previous recipients include renowned figures such as Shelly Lazarus, Paul Polman, and Andrew Robertson.



## SIPRI Report

- According to a report released by **the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI)**, 2024, **India continues to be the world's largest arms importer**, with Russia being the prime source of its procurement despite a declining share in recent years.
- **India accounted for 9.8 percent** of the total global arms imports during the 2019-2023 period.
- The country's arms **imports increased by 4.7 percent** between 2014-18 and 2019-23, despite the government's ongoing efforts to boost domestic defence manufacturing and procurement.



- Russia's share in Indian arms exports is gradually falling. During the period under review, **Russia accounted for 36 percent of India's total arms imports**, marking the first time since the 1960-64 term that Russia's share fell below the 50 percent mark.
- This trend is expected to continue as **India turns to France and the United States** for military hardware, and Russia focuses on meeting its domestic demands amidst the ongoing war in Ukraine.
- **France accounted for 33 percent of India's total arms imports**, while the United States contributed 13 percent.
- With India's recent acquisition of **31 armed MQ-9B Sky Guardian drones** from the US for \$3.9 billion and 26 Rafale-M fighters from France for \$6 billion, the share of these two countries is likely to increase in the current five-year period.

## Kovind Panel Recommendations

- HLC, popularly known as the **Kovind panel after its chairman**, former President Ram Nath Kovind, was constituted in September 2023, to go into the issue.
- The **panel had as its members** Home Minister Amit Shah, former Rajya Sabha Leader of Opposition Ghulam Nabi Azad, former Lok Sabha Secretary General Subhash C Kashyap, former chairman of the 15th Finance Commission N K Singh, Senior Advocate Harish Salve, and former Chief Vigilance Commissioner Sanjay Kothari. Law Minister Arjun Ram Meghwal was a Special Invitee to the Committee.



- The report comprises **18,626 pages**, and is the outcome of extensive consultations with stakeholders, experts and research work of 191 days, since its inception on September 2, 2023.
- The high level committee has recommended a **two-step approach for holding simultaneous elections** for Lok Sabha, state assemblies and local bodies.
- It recommended that in the first step, simultaneous elections can be held for Lok Sabha and State Legislative Assemblies.
- This can be followed in the second step by holding elections in Municipalities and Panchayats **within 100 days**.
- The **Committee recommends that in the event of a hung House**, a no-confidence motion constitutes the new House, fresh elections may be held for the **remainder of the five-year term**.



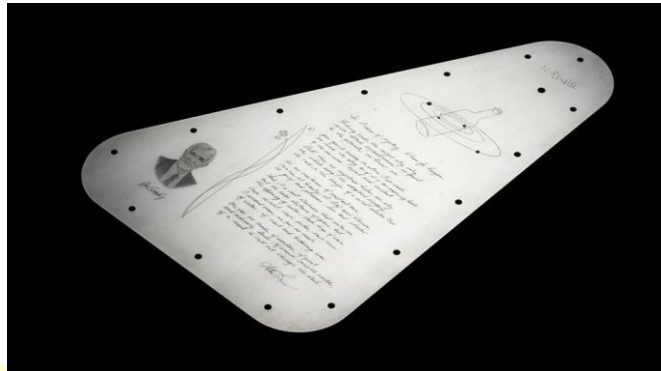
- Where fresh elections are held for the State Legislative Assemblies, then such new Legislative Assembly unless it is dissolved sooner, shall continue up to the end of the term of the Lok Sabha, the committee report stated.
- A Constitution Amendment Bill will have to be introduced in the Parliament amending Article 83 (Duration of Houses of Parliament) and Article 172 (Duration of State Legislatures). This Constitutional Amendment will not need ratification by the States, the report said.
- To synchronise Lok Sabha and assembly elections, the president shall notify the date of the first sitting of the Lok Sabha after a general election as the **"appointed date"**.
- The tenure of all state assemblies formed via polls after the "appointed date" and before the expiry of the full term of the Lok Sabha, will be only for the period ending up to the subsequent parliamentary polls.
- After this one-time transitory measure, all Lok Sabha and assembly polls will be held simultaneously.
- A single electoral roll and Elector's Photo Identity Card (EPIC) shall be prepared by the Election Commission of India in consultation with the State Election Commission and the same will substitute any other electoral roll prepared by ECI.



- For making **logistical arrangements for the conduct of simultaneous elections**, the ECI may draw up a plan and estimate in advance for the procurement of equipment, such as EVMs and VVPATs, deployment of polling personnel and security forces and make other necessary arrangements.

## NASA To Carry 'Message In Bottle'

- **NASA will carry 'message in a bottle' to Europa**, one of Jupiter's moon in October this year. The mission dubbed as **Europa Clipper mission** will explore signs of life as Scientists chose predicts a salty lake under its icy crust.
- **The Europa Clipper spacecraft** will carry a triangular metal plate with an engraving of US Poet Laureate Ada Limón's handwritten "In Praise of Mystery: A Poem for Europa," along with a silicon microchip stenciled with more than 2.6 million names submitted by the public.



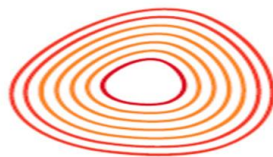
- But that is not all, it has an Indian connection as well. The other, outward-facing side of metal plate will sport etchings of 103 waveforms, a visual representation of the sound wave produced by saying the word "water" in **103 different languages – including Hindi**.
- Last year, the US space agency had conducted a "Message in a Bottle" campaign, which invited the public to send their names with the spacecraft.

## Oil Palm Processing Unit

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi virtually inaugurated **India's first integrated oil palm processing unit**, operated by 3F Oil Palm, marking a significant stride in the nation's journey towards self-reliance in edible oils.
- Situated in Arunachal Pradesh's Roing, this project aligns with Mission Palm Oil under the **National Mission on Edible Oils – Oil Palm (NMEO-OP)**.
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi virtually inaugurated the oil palm processing unit on, signaling the **beginning of its commercial operations**.



- The **integrated Oil Palm project** comprises a state-of-the-art oil palm factory (Palm Oil Processing and Refinery), a zero-discharge effluent plant, and a palm waste-based power plant, alongside supporting structures and go-downs. This initiative represents a pivotal step towards achieving Atmanirbharta (self-reliance) in edible oils and empowering farmers, particularly in the Northeast region.
- Oil Palm has **invested Rs 100 crore** in the region, with plans to invest Rs 1100 crore by 2030, generating employment opportunities for 1,700 people. Arunachal Pradesh alone has identified 1,30,000 hectares of suitable land for Oil Palm cultivation, with the Northeast region holding 33% (9.6 Lakh hectares) of the designated area.

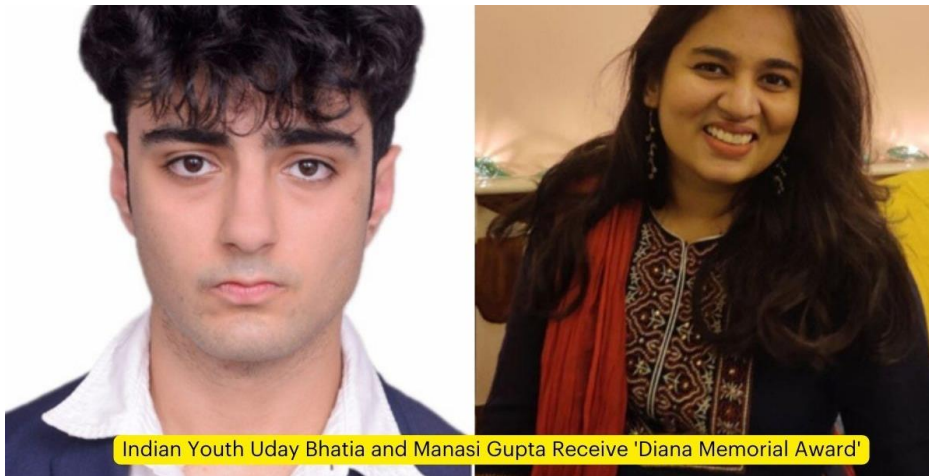


**3F OIL PALM**  
*sowing for a better future*

- However, **only 4% of this potential** has been utilized for Oil Palm Development. India currently imports 96% of its required palm oil, constituting 67% of the country's edible oil import bill, surpassing Rs. 1 Lakh crore.
- The NMEO-Oil Palm Policy aims to reduce this dependency through domestic cultivation promotion, particularly in the Northeast.

## Diana Memorial Award

- **Uday Bhatia and Manasi Gupta** from India were honored with the prestigious 'Diana Memorial Award'.
- Along with them, a total of 20 people from around the world were honored with the '**Diana Memorial Award**'. This award is given **every two years** in memory of Princess Diana.



- It recognizes exceptional youth for their social work or humanitarian services. The Diana Award charity, established in memory of the late Princess of Wales, is celebrating its 25th anniversary.
- **Uday Bhatia and Manasi Gupta** received the award from Prince William at the awards ceremony at the Science Museum, London.
- Prince William is the elder son of the late Princess Diana. Uday Bhatia is an inventor from Delhi.
- His company, **Uday Electric, founded by the 18-year-old**, is headquartered in Delhi.
- Uday's low-cost invention can provide relief from power cuts. He started mentoring **16-year-old school students** in a slum in Uttar Pradesh, where he found that power cuts were hampering their education.



- His invention provided uninterrupted lighting for 10 hours during power cuts, benefiting 950 families and increasing their education and employment opportunities.
- **Manasi Gupta is a mental health campaigner** from Haryana. The Huesothemind Foundation, founded by Manasi Gupta, is headquartered in Gurugram. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the 24-year-old's mental health services were appreciated, and she received recognition.

## EU Unveils Partnership With Egypt

- **European Union has announced a landmark partnership agreement with Egypt**, elevating the bloc's relationship with the **North African nation** and unveiling a substantial funding package to support Egypt's faltering economy and address shared challenges.
- The deal, unveiled during a high-level delegation visit to Cairo, encompasses **cooperation in key areas such as** renewable energy, trade, security, and managing migration flows.





- At the heart of the partnership is a comprehensive **funding package totaling €7.4 billion** over the next three years.
- The proposed assistance, designed in close coordination with **the International Monetary Fund (IMF)**, includes: €5 billion in concessional loans, €1.8 billion in investments, €600 million in grants, including €200 million specifically for managing migration, The majority of the funding is newly allocated, with €1 billion of the macro-financial loan to be delivered this year, subject to approval by the European Parliament.
- The substantial financial support underscores the EU's commitment to fostering **stability and economic recovery in Egypt**, a country of 106 million people grappling with high inflation, foreign currency shortages, and increasing migration pressures.



## **Pokhara as Its Tourism Capital**

- In a significant move to **boost its tourism industry**, the **government of Nepal** has officially declared Pokhara, a picturesque city in the Gandaki province, as the tourism capital of the Himalayan nation.
- The formal declaration was made during a special ceremony held at the **Barahi Ghat**, situated on the shores of the **stunning Phewa Lake**.
- **Pokhara, known** for its natural beauty and adventure tourism, has long been recognized as a tourism hub in Nepal.



- The decision to officially declare Pokhara as the tourism capital is expected to further enhance its reputation and attract more visitors from around the world.
- The special ceremony to declare Pokhara as the tourism capital was graced by the presence of **Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda'**.
- The choice of Barahi Ghat as the venue for the ceremony was particularly significant, as it showcased the city's natural beauty and its close connection **with Phewa Lake, one of Pokhara's most iconic attractions.**
- The declaration of **Pokhara as the tourism capital** will help establish the city as a recognizable 'brand' on the international stage.



- This move is expected to attract more foreign tourists and boost the local economy. The tourism industry is a major contributor to Nepal's economy, and the government's decision to prioritize Pokhara is seen as a strategic step towards further developing the sector.

- In a related development, the government also announced that business activities, including discos, nightclubs, and live music venues in Pokhara, will remain open all night.

## **SAKHI: The Lifeline for Gaganyaan Crew**

- **Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre (VSSC)** has developed SAKHI, a revolutionary app aimed at aiding astronauts during the Gaganyaan space flight mission. **SAKHI, or Space-borne Assistant and Knowledge Hub** for Crew Interaction, offers indispensable support across various critical aspects of the mission.



- SAKHI provides astronauts with **digital access to technical documents** and training manuals, eliminating the need for cumbersome manual documentation.
- The app monitors **astronauts' physical condition by tracking key parameters** such as blood pressure, heart rate, and oxygen saturation. It also alerts them about dietary schedules, hydration levels, and sleep patterns, ensuring their well-being throughout the mission.



- Astronauts can use SAKHI to maintain a **detailed log of the mission**, utilizing multiple formats including voice recordings, texts, and images for efficient documentation.
- SAKHI facilitates **continuous communication between the crew, the onboard computer, and ground-based stations**, ensuring uninterrupted connectivity with Earth. Gaganyaan Human Spaceflight Mission Overview
- The Gaganyaan mission aims to **launch a crew of three members into a Low Earth Orbit for a three-day mission**, with a safe return to Earth by landing in Indian sea waters.

## Gaganyaan Mission



- Mission will **utilize LVM3, consisting of solid, liquid, and cryogenic stages**, ensuring safe and reliable transportation for the crew.
- Responsible for coordinating the Indian Human Spaceflight Programme, the centre oversees the implementation of the Gaganyaan project, ensuring its successful execution.
- **ISRO has conducted key experiments** and tests for the mission, with a projected cost of less than Rs. 10,000 crore.
- **Four astronaut-designates**, all IAF test pilots, have been identified for the mission. The final crew will be selected from among these candidates.
- Upon successful completion, **India will join the elite group of nations**—Soviet Union/Russia, United States, and People’s Republic of China—as the fourth nation to conduct independent human spaceflight.

## World Happiness Report

- **The World Happiness Report** is an annual survey conducted by the United Nations. It ranks countries based on factors like life satisfaction, GDP per capita, social support, healthy life expectancy, freedom, generosity, and corruption.
- For the **seventh year in a row, Finland has been named the happiest** country in the world. Other Nordic countries like Denmark, Iceland, and Sweden also ranked among the top 10 happiest nations.



- At the bottom of the list is **Afghanistan, which has been plagued** by a humanitarian crisis since the Taliban regained control in 2020.
- The United States and Germany dropped out of the top 20 happiest countries for the first time, ranking 23rd and 24th, respectively.
- **Costa Rica and Kuwait** entered the top 20 at positions 12 and 13.

- The report noted that the happiest countries no longer include any of the world's largest countries.
- **India ranked 126 in the happiness index**, the same as the previous year.
- Factors like marital status, social engagement, and physical health also influence life satisfaction among older Indians.
- **Satisfaction with living arrangements** emerges as a critical factor, reflecting the strong desire among older Indians to age in place and maintain autonomy and social bonds.



- India has the **second-largest older population** globally, with 140 million individuals aged 60 and above, trailing only China.
- The report said that older Indian men, particularly those in higher age brackets, presently married, and those with an education, tend to report greater life satisfaction compared to their counterparts.
- Among older Indians, **factors such as dissatisfaction with living arrangements**, perceived discrimination, and poor self-rated health are linked to lower life satisfaction. Education level, social caste, and contentment with living arrangements also play a significant role in life satisfaction.

Rank	Country
1	Finland
2	Denmark
3	Iceland
4	Sweden
5	Israel
6	Netherlands
7	Norway
8	Luxembourg
9	Switzerland
10	Australia

## BhashaNet portal

- National Internet Exchange of India (NIXI)** is proud to announce the launch of the **BhashaNet portal** for the upcoming Universal Acceptance (UA) Day, scheduled to take place on March 21, 2024, at Dr Ambedkar International Centre in the National Capital.



- This will be the second event hosted between **NIXI and the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY)**, underscoring their joint commitment to promote the UA and advancing digital inclusion across the nation. In addition, it's noteworthy that Internet Corporation for Assigned

Names and Numbers (ICANN) and the Internet Governance division, MeitY, Government of India are actively supporting UA Day.



- The theme of the event, **”BhashaNet: Impetus Towards Universal Acceptance,”** highlights NIXI’s dedication to ensuring that individuals, regardless of language or script, can fully participate in the digital world.
- Through **UA Day, NIXI and MeitY aim to mobilise stakeholders** and raise awareness about the importance of UA readiness in today’s digital landscape. The event will feature engaging sessions, including keynote addresses, panel discussions and technical workshops, led by distinguished speakers from various sectors. These discussions will focus on the significance of UA and the steps needed to achieve widespread acceptance.

## **CBI & Europol**

- The **Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI)** and European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Cooperation (Europol) on Thursday signed a Working Arrangement for establishing cooperative relations between the law enforcement authorities of these two organisations.
- The Working Arrangement was signed by CBI Director Praveen Sood and **Executive Director of Europol, Catherine De Bolle.**





- This arrangement promotes **direct cooperation between both organizations** to build on their respective mandates, strategies and to explore the potential for synergies.
- During the signing ceremony, Director, CBI expressed his appreciation for the collaborative spirit demonstrated by both parties. He said, this moment marks a significant milestone in the ongoing efforts to combat crime and enhance cooperation between these two agencies.



- CBI in a statement said that this **working arrangement not only brings together CBI and Europol** but also enables wide cooperation between all law enforcement agencies in India and all law enforcement agencies of 27 European countries that Europol represents as well as third countries and organizations associated with Europol.
- This will **enhance cooperation in jointly tackling** various forms of crime including organized crime, financial crimes, terrorism, cybercrime, human and drug trafficking and money laundering.

## Russian And Belarusian Athletes

- **The International Olympic Committee (IOC)** has announced that the Russian and Belarusian athletes will not be allowed to participate in the parade of nations at the **opening ceremony of the Paris Games**.
- The IOC director James McLeod said , the athletes who will be competing in the Games under a neutral flag will not participate in the parade and teams during the opening ceremony since they are individual athletes.



- He said, a decision on whether they would participate in the closing ceremony had not yet been made.
- Meanwhile, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said that the move amounted to the destruction of the Olympic idea.
- Russian and Belarusian athletes who qualify for the Games will do so without their flags and anthems. Following Russia's conflict with Ukraine, athletes from Russian and Belarusian were banned from many international sporting events.

## Trinetra App

- The **Uttar Pradesh police force** is set to adopt the advanced **Trinetra app 2.0**, a cutting-edge digital platform that promises to revolutionize crime prevention and investigation in the state.
- **With over 9.32 lakh criminal records** digitized within the Trinetra database, frontline officers will now have the capability to swiftly identify suspects during security checks.
- The integration of this innovative app will expedite access to crucial information, enhancing operational efficiency, according to UP DGP Prashant Kumar.
- The **Trinetra app 2.0 offers seamless accessibility** via Android and iOS mobile applications.



- Police personnel can input and access comprehensive **crime-related information, including:** Crime histories , FIR details , Interrogation reports, Audio recordings, Photographs, Rewards, Incarceration details, Seizure records. The app empowers law enforcement with facial recognition capabilities, enabling swift identification of suspects based on photographic data.
- Leveraging **audio-based search functionality**, Trinetra 2.0 can also identify criminals based on voice samples, which will be particularly beneficial in cybercrime cases where only the criminal's voice is available.
- The Crime GPT feature enables instant access to comprehensive information regarding criminals and criminal activities, streamlining investigative processes. **Trinetra 2.0 also facilitates** the inclusion of seizure details and related documentation, allowing for in-depth analysis through the Crime GPT feature.



- **State police stations can generate QR codes** for seized goods, simplifying the retrieval of pertinent information regarding confiscated items.

- The app also facilitates the search for missing individuals through photograph linking and facial recognition technology, bolstering efforts to locate and reunite missing persons with their families.
- With its **comprehensive features and integration of cutting-edge technologies like facial and voice recognition, the Trinetra app 2.0 aims to empower law enforcement in UP with advanced tools for efficient crime prevention, investigation, and public safety.**

## India - Bhutan

- India will provide support of **ten thousand crore rupees** to Bhutan over the next five years.
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi assured Bhutan's top leadership that India will stand by the **Himalayan kingdom in its quest** for development and that their unique bilateral ties would create avenues for greater cooperation in connectivity, infrastructure, trade and energy sectors.



- The two countries exchanged several MoUs and signed agreements in the fields of **energy, trade, digital connectivity, space and agriculture**, and finalised the MoU on the establishment of rail links between the two nations.
- Informing about the **Prime Minister's economic aid to Bhutan**, Foreign Secretary Vinay Mohan Kwatra said, the assistance also includes India's support to Bhutan's economic stimulus package.
- Mr Modi called on the King of Bhutan, Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck and held talks with Prime Minister Tshering Tobgay.



- Mr Modi and his Bhutanese counterpart reviewed the entire gamut of India-Bhutan friendship and agreed to boost the developmental partnership as well as deepen cultural linkages. Mr Modi said the MoUs and agreements will add momentum to India-Bhutan relations.
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated **the Gyalsuen Jetsun Pema Mother and Child Hospital**, a state-of-the-art hospital in Thimphu, built with the assistance of the Government of India.
- Bhutan Prime Minister Tshering Tobgay was also present on the occasion a short while ago. king of Bhutan **Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck** conferred Bhutan's highest civilian award, the Order of the **Druk Gyalpo**, on **Prime Minister Narendra Modi** in Thimpu.



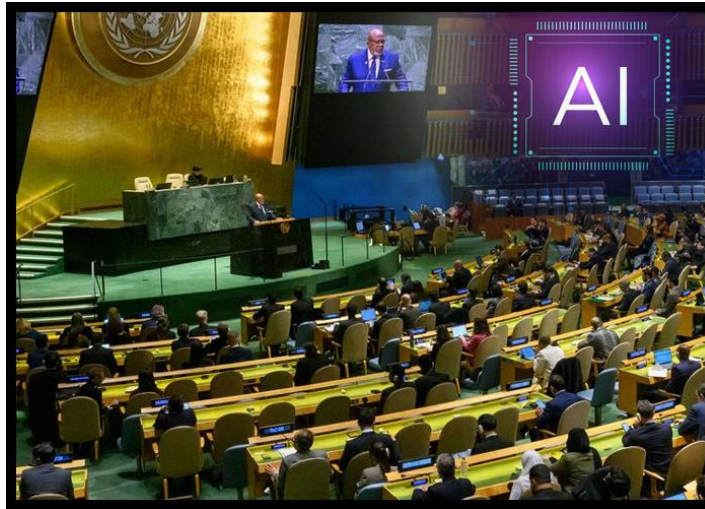
- Speaking on the occasion, Mr Modi said it is a very big day in his life. He said every award is special, but when one receives an award from another country, it shows that both countries are moving on the right path.
- He said, this honour is not his personal achievement, but the honour of India and 140 crore Indians. He accepted the honour on behalf of all Indians and expressed gratitude upon being conferred the award.

## First Resolution On AI

- The **UN General Assembly** has approved the first resolution on Artificial Intelligence, AI.
- The resolution gives **global support to an international effort** to ensure the powerful new technology benefits all nations, respects human rights and is safe, secure and trustworthy.
- The resolution, sponsored by the United States and **co-sponsored by 123 countries** was adopted by consensus with a bang of the gavel and without a vote.



- It means the resolution has the **support of all 193 U.N. member nations**.
- Over the past few months, the **United States worked with more than 120 countries** at the United Nations including Russia, China and Cuba to negotiate the text of the resolution that was adopted yesterday.
- The resolution **aims to close the digital divide between** developed rich countries and poorer developing countries and make sure they are all at the table in discussions on AI.



- It also aims to make sure that **developing countries have the technology** and capabilities to take advantage of AI's benefits, including detecting diseases, predicting floods, helping farmers and training the next generation of workers.

## Operation Indravati

- **Haiti is facing a severe crisis** due to escalating gang violence. Armed gangs have launched attacks in the **suburbs of Port-au-Prince**, prompting India to launch **Operation Indravati** to evacuate its nationals to the **Dominican Republic**.
- Similarly, the **US has airlifted more than 15 Americans** to Santo Domingo. The situation has deteriorated since the 2010 earthquake, with gangs staging attacks, burning police stations, shutting down the airport, and freeing prisoners.
- **Haiti declared an emergency** and imposed a curfew.



- Gang leader **Jimmy Cherizier** demanded the resignation of acting Prime Minister Ariel Henry, who later announced his intention to step down but remains in power.
- **Operation Indravati**—Gangs Unleash Violence in Haiti : Armed gangs launch attacks in **Port-au-Prince suburbs**, Gangs burn police stations, shut down airport, storm prisons, Thousands of prisoners freed in gang attacks, Haiti declares emergency, imposes nighttime curfew, Gang leader Jimmy Cherizier demands PM's resignation.
- **India launches "Operation Indravati"** to evacuate Indians , Indians being evacuated to Dominican Republic , US airlifts over 15 Americans to Santo Domingo



## India's First Battery Storage Gigafactory

- **GoodEnough Energy** has announced that it will start operations at **India's first battery energy storage gigafactory** in the northern region of **Jammu and Kashmir** by October 2024 According to GoodEnough, the facility will help industries cut more than **5 million tons of carbon emissions** in a year.
- India has set a goal to become net zero by 2070. GoodEnough has already invested **1.5 billion rupees** (\$18.07 million) in the **7 gigawatts per hour (GWH)** facility.





- The company plans to spend an additional **3 billion rupees by 2027** to increase the **capacity to 20 GWH**.
- **Battery energy storage projects** are crucial for India's ambitious plan to expand its renewable energy capacity to **500 gigawatts (GW)** by 2030, up from the **current 178 GW**.
- The Indian government is offering **incentives worth \$452 million** to companies under a program to promote **battery storage projects**.



- Battery storage systems enable the storage of energy from solar, wind, and other renewable sources.
- This stored energy can be released when needed, making renewable energy more reliable and consistent.
- The establishment of **India's first battery storage gigafactory** is a significant step towards meeting the country's renewable energy targets and reducing its carbon footprint. The facility's operations in Jammu and Kashmir will play a pivotal role in supporting the growth of the renewable energy sector in India.

## Aviation Week Laureates Award

- The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) has been honored with the prestigious **Aviation Week Laureates Award** for its remarkable achievements in the Chandrayaan-3 mission. Sripriya Ranganathan, Deputy Ambassador at the Indian Embassy in the US, accepted the award on behalf of ISRO.



- The Aviation Week Network's Laureate Awards are highly esteemed accolades in the aviation and aerospace industry.
- These awards celebrate **exceptional accomplishments** that embody the spirit of exploration, innovation, and vision.
- The ceremony, attended by over 400 industry professionals and influencers, recognizes groundbreaking achievements.
- ISRO's successful Chandrayaan-3 mission exemplifies the Laureate's tradition of honoring outstanding contributions to aerospace exploration.

## REVIEW QUESTIONS

**1. Pars 1' Satellite Is Launched By**

- A. China
- B. Japan
- C. India
- D. Iran

**ANSWER: D**

**2. 1<sup>st</sup> Country In World To Enshrine Right To Abortion In Constitution**

- A. Sweden
- B. Italy
- C. France
- D. Denmark

**ANSWER: C**

**3. 1st Green Hydrogen Plant In India in Stainless Steel Sector Made In**

- A. Haryana
- B. Gujarat
- C. Kerala
- D. Odisha

**ANSWER: A**

**4. What Is 'Homosep Atom', Recently Seen In The News**

- A. Ancient Irrigation Technique
- B. Septic Tank/Manhole Cleaning Robot
- C. Nuclear Ballistic Submarine
- D. Ancient Medicinal Practice

**ANSWER: B**

**5. MYUVA Scheme Is Launched To Support**

- A. Entrepreneurs
- B. Students
- C. Artisans
- D. Farmers

**ANSWER: A**

**6. Election Commission Of India Started The 'Mera Pehla Vote Desh Ke Liye' Campaign With Which Ministry**

- A. Ministry of Education
- B. Ministry of Home Affairs
- C. Ministry of Corporate Affairs
- D. Ministry of Defence

**ANSWER: A**

**7. Koraput Kalajeera Rice Got GI Status, Is Cultivated In Which State**

- A. Punjab
- B. Odisha
- C. Andhra Pradesh
- D. Uttar Pradesh

**ANSWER: B**

**8. Kulasekarapattinam Spaceport Is Located In Which State**

- A. Karnataka
- B. Tamil Nadu
- C. Maharashtra
- D. Gujarat

**ANSWER: B**

**9. "Indira Gandhi Pyari Behna Sukh Samman Nidhi Yojna" Women Will Be Given**

- A. Rupees 1200
- B. Rupees 1300
- C. Rupees 1400
- D. Rupees 1500

**ANSWER: D**

**10. Sansad Khel Mahakumbh 3.0 Is Organised In**

- A. Chattisgarh
- B. Kerala
- C. Himachal Pradesh
- D. Gujarat

**ANSWER: C**

**11. South Eastern Coalfield Limited's Gevra Mine Located In**

- A. Chattisgarh
- B. Kerala
- C. Punjab
- D. Gujarat

**ANSWER: A**

**12. Operation Kamdhenu Is Launched By Which State/UT To Curb Cattle Smuggling**

- A. Jammu & Kashmir
- B. Delhi
- C. Tamil Nadu
- D. Kerala

**ANSWER: A**

**13. Which Country Became 32nd Member Of North Atlantic Treaty Organization**

- A. Egypt
- B. Sweden
- C. India
- D. Malaysia

**ANSWER: B**

**14. School Soil Health Programme Is A Joint Initiative Of Which Ministries**

- A. Ministry of Power & Ministry of Panchayati Raj
- B. Ministry of Rural Development & Ministry of Jal Shakti
- C. Ministry of Tribal Affairs & Ministry of Mines
- D. Ministry of Education & Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare

**ANSWER: D**

**15. Which Country Hosted 17th Annual International Biocuration Conference**

- A. Myanmar
- B. Nepal
- C. India
- D. Bangladesh

**ANSWER: C**

**16. Which Day Is Celebrated As 'Jan Aushadhi Day' Every Year**

- A. 6 March
- B. 7 March
- C. 8 March
- D. 9 March

**ANSWER: B**

**17. Taeniogonalos Deepaki Belongs To Which One Of Following Species**

- A. Flowering plant
- B. Wasp
- C. Frog
- D. Snake

**ANSWER: B**

**18. Coral Reef Watch Programme Is Developed By Which Agency**

- A. Indian Council of Forestry Research and Education
- B. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
- C. National Biodiversity Authority
- D. National Ganga River Basin Authority

**ANSWER: B**

**19. Recently, Where Was The 125-foot Statue Of Lachit Borphukan Unveiled**

- A. Golaghat, Assam
- B. Dibang Valley, Arunachal Pradesh
- C. Jorhat, Assam
- D. Aizawl, Mizoram

**ANSWER: C**

**20. Poshan Pakhwada Is Organized By Which Ministry**

- A. Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment
- B. Ministry of Women and Child Development
- C. Ministry of Rural Development
- D. Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare

**ANSWER: B**

**21. Recently, Maldives Has Signed A Defense Agreement With Which Country For Obtaining Non-lethal Weapons And Training**

- A. Russia
- B. India
- C. Sri Lanka
- D. China

**ANSWER: D**

**22. Which Organization Marked The Completion Of The Second Phase Of The Dak Karmayogi Project By Releasing A Special Cover**

- A. Department of Posts
- B. Ministry of Education
- C. Ministry of Health and Family Welfare
- D. Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation

**ANSWER: A**

**23. Where Did Bharat Tex 2024, Largest Global Textile Event In India, Conclude**

- A. Bengaluru
- B. New Delhi
- C. Mumbai
- D. Chennai

**ANSWER: B**

**24. Which Institution Collaborated To Develop India Specific AI Model Named Garbhini GA2 For Determining Gestational Age Accurately**

- A. Indian Institute of Technology Bombay
- B. Indian Institute of Technology Madras
- C. Indian Institute of Science
- D. Indian Institute of Technology Delhi

**ANSWER: B**

**25. What Material Have Indian Scientists Used To Create Eco Wound Dressings**

- A. Bamboo
- B. Guar gum
- C. Chitosan
- D. Banana Fibers

**ANSWER: D**

**26. In Which State HURL Sindri Fertiliser Plant Inaugurated By The Prime Minister**

- A. Maharashtra
- B. Uttar Pradesh
- C. Jharkhand
- D. Gujarat

**ANSWER: C**

**27. Which State/UT Conducted All-women Maritime Surveillance Mission**

- A. Andaman & Nicobar
- B. Tamil Nadu
- C. Lakshadweep
- D. Karnataka

**ANSWER: A**

**28. Where Was Khelo India Rising Talent Identification Programme Inaugurated**

- A. Bhopal
- B. New Delhi
- C. Chandigarh
- D. Lucknow

**ANSWER: C**

**29. Revamped Pharmaceuticals Technology Upgradation Assistance Scheme Introduced By Which Ministry**

- A. Ministry of Chemicals and Fertilizers
- B. Ministry of Commerce and Industry
- C. Ministry of Road Transport and Highways
- D. Ministry of Rural Development

**ANSWER: A**

**30. What Are “Carmoisine, Tartrazine, And Rhodamine”**

- A. Infectious diseases
- B. Industrial pollutants
- C. Food coloring agents
- D. Medicinal plants

**ANSWER: C**