

Monthly May Current Affairs

World's Largest Airport Terminal

- **Dubai has revealed plans** for the construction of the world's largest airport terminal at **Al Maktoum International Airport**.
- The ambitious project, approved by Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice President, Prime Minister, and Ruler of Dubai, is set to revolutionize the aviation industry and solidify Dubai's position as a global transportation hub.
- Upon completion, Al Maktoum International Airport will have a staggering capacity for **260 million passengers** annually, dwarfing any other airport in the world.

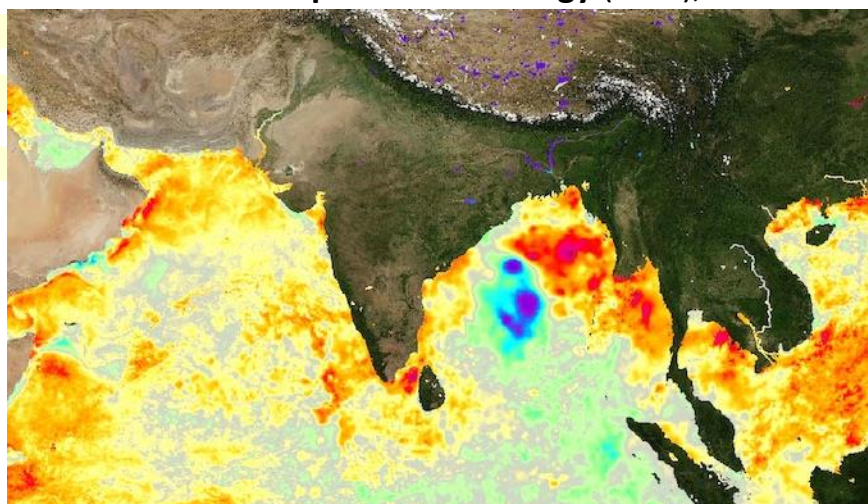


- This colossal terminal is poised to **be five times the size of the current Dubai International Airport**, signaling a significant leap forward in infrastructure and operational capabilities.
- Sheikh Mohammed emphasized that all operations at Dubai International Airport will gradually transition to Al Maktoum International in the coming years, consolidating Dubai's air traffic and streamlining passenger services.
- The new terminal, with an **estimated cost of \$35 Billion**, will boast 400 aircraft gates and five parallel runways, setting new standards for efficiency and scale in the aviation sector.

- Moreover, the project will not only redefine the skyline of Dubai but also catalyze urban development in the surrounding area.
- Plans include the construction of an entire city around the airport in Dubai South, accommodating the needs of a burgeoning population expected to reach a million people.
- This **visionary initiative underscores Dubai's unwavering** commitment to innovation and progress, setting a new benchmark for global aviation infrastructure. With cutting-edge technologies and unparalleled capacity, Al Maktoum International Airport is poised to shape the future of air travel on a monumental scale.

Rapid Warming Of Indian Ocean

- The **Indian Ocean basin**, the **world's fastest warming ocean**, is projected to experience accelerated warming at an alarming rate of **1.7°C to 3.8°C per century** between 2020 and 2100, according to a recent report led by scientists from the **Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology (IITM), Pune**.



- This unprecedented warming is expected to have severe consequences for the region. Increase in frequency and intensity of severe weather events.
- Prolonged marine heatwaves, rising from **current 20 days per year** to 220-250 days.
- Changes in **Indian Ocean Dipole (IOD)** events, with **66% increase** in extreme events and **52% decrease in moderate** events by end of 21st century. Influence on monsoon development and cyclone formation.



- Ocean warming not limited to surface; heat content increasing in depths up to **2,000 meters**.
- **Current rate of increase:** 4.5 zetta-joules per decade. Projected future rate: 16-22 zetta-joules per decade. Equivalent to energy of one Hiroshima atomic bomb detonation every second for a decade. Northwestern Indian Ocean to experience worst warming. Warming from 1950-2020: 1.2°C & Further warming projected from 2020-2100: 1.7°C to 3.8°C

Red Sea Lead To Surge In Carbon Emissions

- **Ongoing attacks by Houthi rebels** in the Red Sea area have forced hundreds of ships to divert their routes since mid-December 2023, leading to a significant **increase in carbon emissions**.
- Instead of passing through the Suez Canal, vessels are sailing around South Africa's Cape of Good Hope, adding at least a week to the journey between South Asia and northern Europe.



- According to a report by consultancy **INVERTO**, a subsidiary of Boston Consulting Group Inc., the additional fuel burned due to these diversions has led to: **Approximately 13.6 million tonnes** of extra CO2 emissions over the past four months. Equivalent to the pollution generated by about 9 million cars over the same period.



- A report by **Xeneta**, an Oslo-based freight-analytics company, focused on container shipping and showed a **63% increase in carbon emissions** on the Asia to Mediterranean route in Q1 2024 compared to Q4 2023.



- The **Xeneta and Marine Benchmark Carbon Emissions** Index reached its highest level in the first quarter of 2024 since records began in 2018. Ships are being sailed at higher speeds to make up for the longer distances, resulting in more carbon emissions.

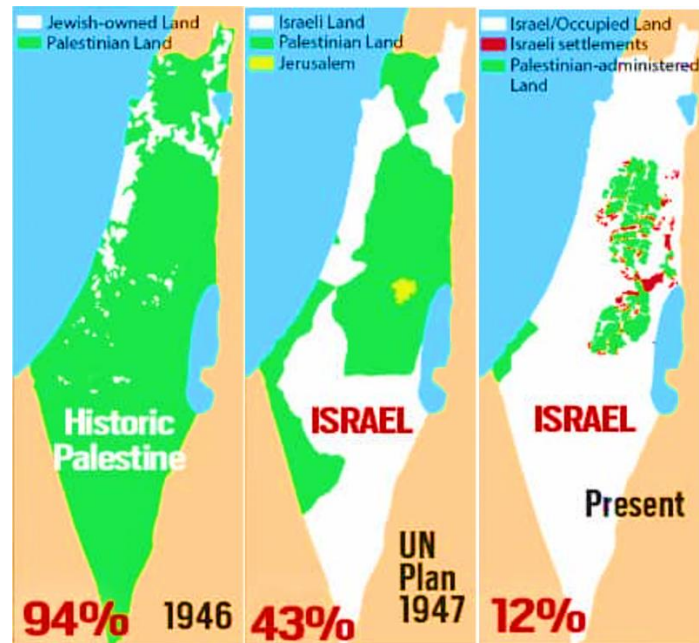
- The average speed of the world's largest container ships increased from under 15 knots to above 16 knots after the Red Sea attacks intensified in mid-December 2023.

Two State Solution

- India's Permanent Representative to the **United Nations Ruchira Kamboj** has said India is committed to a **'Two-State' solution for Palestinians and Israel**.
- Speaking at UN General Assembly, She said India supports a 'Two-State' solution where the **Palestinian people can live freely** in an independent country within secure borders.



- Mrs. Ruchira Kamboj **condemned the October 7, 2023 attack** on Israel by Hamas but also said that international laws and international humanitarian laws should be respected by everyone in all circumstances.
- She said India also demanded the unconditional **release of the Israeli hostages** stuck in Gaza.
- On humanitarian aid, Mrs. Kamboj stated that India will continue to provide help to Palestinians. She further said it is imperative that humanitarian aid to the people of Gaza be scaled up immediately in order to avert a further deterioration in the situation.
- Mrs. Kamboj expressed hope that Palestine's endeavour to become a **full member of the United Nations** will get endorsed. The US, last month, vetoed a UNSC resolution calling for Palestinian statehood, drawing the ire of many countries supporting the region's cause.



Karl Erich Muller's Lithographs

- **Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts (IGNCA)** today hosted an exhibition titled **'People and Places of India – A Retrospect'** to celebrate International Labour Day.
- The exhibit featured Lithographs by famous German artist **Karl Erich Muller** from the IGNCA Archives.

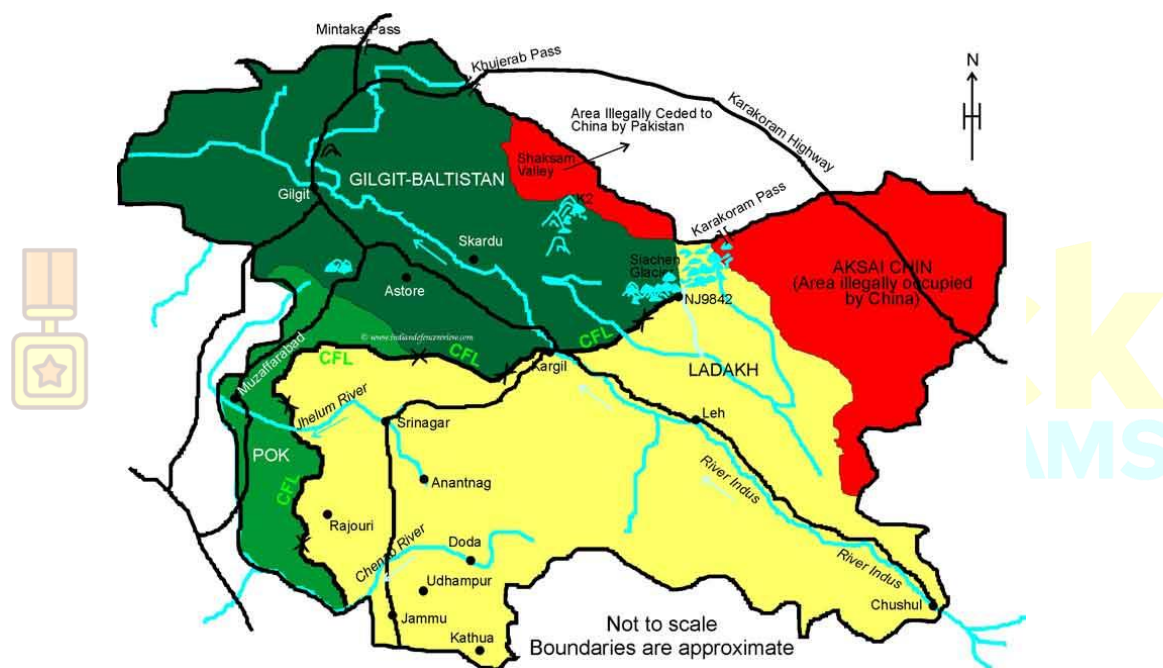


- Speaking on the occasion, Member Secretary of IGNCA, Dr. Sachchidanand Joshi expressed the uniqueness, rarity, and surreal essence of lithographs, emphasizing how they encapsulate the essence of ordinary lives.
- He reiterated that Karl Erich Muller communicates through his lithographs that not all expressions require abundant resources.

- Dr. Joshi accentuated the significance of IGNCA as a repository of cultural artefacts, emphasising the importance of curating it with the meticulousness evident in the exhibition..

Shaksgam Valley

- **India has registered strong protests with China against their illegal attempts to alter facts in connection with construction activities in the Shaksgam Valley.**
- MEA Spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said, India considers Shaksgam Valley to be its territory and it has **never accepted the so-called China-Pakistan boundary agreement of 1963** through which Pakistan unlawfully attempted to cede the area to China.



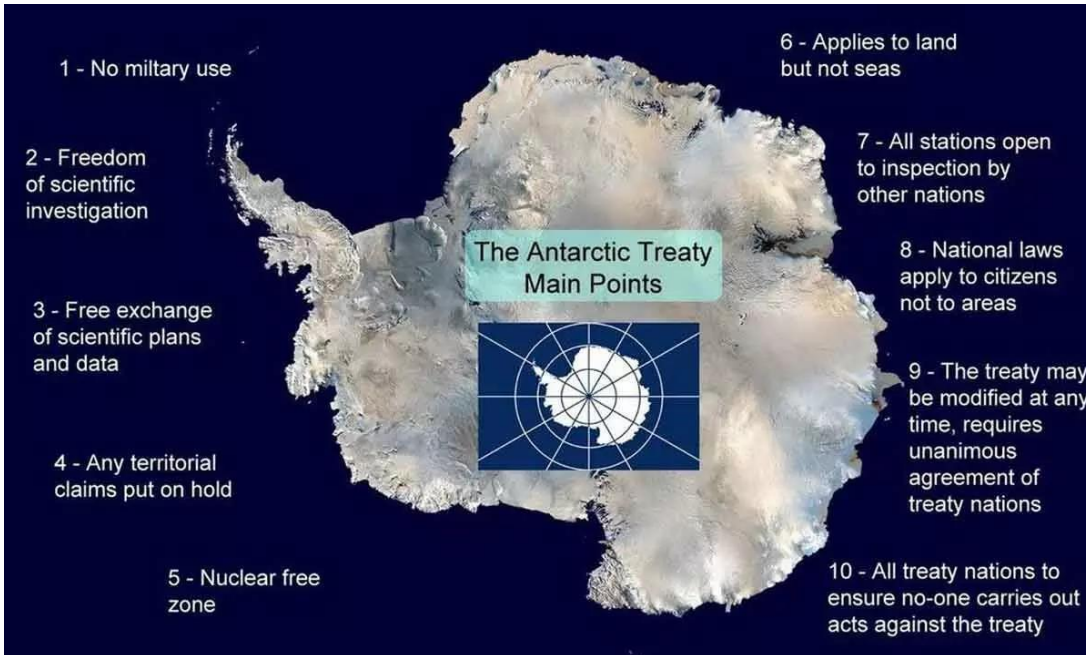
- He said, New Delhi has registered a protest with **Beijing against illegal attempts to alter** the facts on the ground. Mr Jaiswal said, India further reserves the right to take necessary measures to safeguard its interests.
- **India has rejected the findings** of a report released by the **US Commission on International Religious Freedom USCIRF** saying it is a biased organisation with a political agenda. Mr Jaiswal said, they continue to publish their propoganda on India, masquerading as part of an annual report.
- He said, New Delhi really has no expectation that USCIRF will even seek to understand India's diverse, pluralistic and democratic ethos. Mr Jaiswal said, their efforts to interfere in the largest electoral exercise in the world will never succeed.

India To Host 46th Antarctic Treaty

- India reaffirms its commitment to safeguarding **Antarctica's delicate ecosystem** and advancing scientific exploration in the region.
- The **Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES)**, Government of India, in collaboration with the **National Centre for Polar and Ocean Research (NCPOR)**, is set to host the **46th Antarctic Treaty** Consultative Meeting (ATCM 46) and the 26th Meeting of the Committee for **Environmental Protection (CEP 26 in Kochi, Kerala)**.



- **The Antarctic Treaty**, enacted in 1959 and enforced in 1961, designates Antarctica as a zone dedicated to peace, scientific collaboration, and environmental preservation.
- Over 56 countries have ratified the Treaty, showcasing global support for its principles. Established under the **Madrid Protocol in 1991**, the CEP advises the ATCM on environmental conservation and protection in Antarctica.
- India, a **Consultative Party** since 1983, actively contributes to the decision-making process alongside 28 other Consultative Parties. India's participation in the ATCM underscores its dedication to Antarctic affairs.
- With two year-round research stations – **Maitri (1989)** and **Bharati (2012)** – India conducts vital scientific expeditions in Antarctica.



World Junior Badminton Championships

- The **Badminton World Federation (BWF)** has announced that India will host the prestigious 2025 BWF World Junior Championships at the National Centre of Excellence in Guwahati.
- This marks a significant milestone as India will be hosting this premier badminton event for the **first time since 2008**, when it was **held in Pune**.
- After a gap of 17 years, the BWF World Junior Championships will once again take place in India.



- The exact dates for the 2025 edition will be announced later, but the excitement is already building among badminton enthusiasts and players alike.
- This prestigious tournament provides a platform for young badminton talents from around the world to showcase their skills and compete at the highest level.
- Hosting the event in **India is a testament** to the country's growing prominence in the sport and its commitment to nurturing the next generation of badminton stars.
- In another significant development, the 2026 edition of the BWF Thomas and Uber Cup Finals will be held in **Horsens, Denmark**.
- These prestigious team championships, featuring the world's best men's and women's badminton teams, will be **hosted by Denmark for the second time**, following the successful 2021 **edition held in Aarhus**.
- The hosting rights for both events were confirmed at the recent BWF Council meeting on April 28, 2024, highlighting the BWF's commitment to bringing top-level badminton competitions to various parts of the world.



- The **Badminton World Federation (BWF)**, established in 1934 and headquartered in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, is the international governing body for the sport of badminton.
- Recognized by the **International Olympic Committee (IOC)**, the BWF oversees and promotes the development of badminton globally.
- Under the leadership of President Poul-Erik Høyer Larsen, the BWF continues to work towards enhancing the sport's popularity, fostering international

cooperation, and providing opportunities for players and fans alike to experience the thrill of badminton at the highest level.

Blood Minerals Controversy

- **Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)** has accused **U.S. tech giant Apple** of using “blood minerals” sourced from the country’s **war-torn eastern region** in its products.
- In letter addressed to Apple CEO Tim Cook, lawyers representing the DRC alleged that the **company purchases minerals illegally** transported from the DRC to Rwanda, where their origins are concealed before entering the global technology supply chain.



- The DRC government has threatened legal action if Apple continues this practice. The DRC’s eastern region, home to **tantalum, tin, tungsten, and gold** (collectively known as 3T or 3TG), has been plagued by violence for decades.
- Tensions escalated in late 2021 when rebels from the **March 23 Movement (M23)** began recapturing territory, exacerbating conflict over mineral resources.
- **Rwanda has been accused by the DRC**, the United Nations, and Western countries of supporting rebel groups like M23 to gain control over the region’s vast mineral wealth.



- **Approximately 120 armed groups** operate in the eastern DRC, benefiting from the mining and trade of minerals to varying degrees.
- The report, titled “**Blood Minerals: Everyone sees the massacres in Eastern Congo, but everyone is silent,**” alleges that Apple’s supply chains are opaque and tainted by the blood of the Congolese people.
- **Apple has denied** any wrongdoing, citing its 2023 annual corporate report, which states that due diligence efforts found no evidence of direct or indirect financing of armed groups in the DRC or adjacent countries.

Nakshatra Sabha

- **Uttarakhand Tourism Development Board** has teamed up with **Starscapes, an astro-tourism company**, to introduce **Nakshatra Sabha**, a pioneering initiative aimed at offering a comprehensive **astro-tourism experience**.
- The collaboration seeks to create an engaging platform that brings together astronomy enthusiasts, adventurers, and travellers to marvel at the wonders of the cosmos while enjoying the natural beauty of Uttarakhand.
- **Nakshatra Sabha is an innovative astro-tourism initiative** launched by the Uttarakhand Tourism Development Board and Starscapes, aimed at providing a comprehensive celestial experience.



- It goes beyond traditional stargazing, offering activities like special solar observations, astrophotography contests, and camping under the stars. The initiative aims to attract astronomy enthusiasts, adventurers, and travellers to Uttarakhand, fostering engagement with the cosmos while enjoying the state’s natural beauty.

- Scheduled to commence in early June at **George Everest in Mussoorie**, Nakshatra Sabha will span until mid-2025, featuring immersive events across Uttarakhand.



- These events will explore **potential night sky sites in districts** like Uttarkashi, Pithoragarh, Nainital, and Chamoli, supplemented by educational seminars and webinars led by field experts.
- Nakshatra Sabha not only offers **professional development opportunities** for local residents but also aims to bolster local economies and advocate for preserving night skies. Through initiatives fostering dark sky conservation efforts and community engagement, the campaign endeavors to implement a region-wide preservation policy, ensuring sustainability for astro-tourism in Uttarakhand.

UNESCO Guillermo Cano Prize 2024

- **Palestinian journalists** covering the crisis in Gaza have been named laureates of the **2024 UNESCO/Guillermo Cano World Press Freedom Prize**. The announcement comes from the recommendation of an **International Jury of media professionals**, emphasizing the courage and commitment of these journalists amidst challenging circumstances.
- Mauricio Weibel, Chair of the International Jury, highlights the immense debt owed to these journalists for their courage and dedication to freedom of expression.
- UNESCO Director-General Audrey Azoulay echoes this sentiment, emphasizing the importance of collective action to support journalists worldwide in their vital role of informing and investigating.



- The ongoing conflict in Gaza has had severe repercussions for journalists, with UNESCO reporting the **deaths of 26 journalists and media workers** since October 7, 2023. Dozens of other cases are under review, underscoring the dangers faced by journalists reporting from conflict zones.
- **UNESCO has been actively supporting journalists** operating in conflict and crisis zones. In Gaza, the organization is distributing essential supplies and establishing safe working spaces. Similar efforts are underway in Ukraine, Sudan, Haiti, and Afghanistan, where journalists receive protective equipment, training, and emergency grants.



- **Established in 1997, the UNESCO/Guillermo Cano World Press Freedom Prize** recognizes individuals who have made exceptional contributions to the defense and promotion of press freedom, especially in the face of danger. Named after Colombian journalist Guillermo Cano Isaza, the prize honors his legacy and is funded by various foundations and organizations committed to press freedom.

Green Oscar Whitley Gold Award 2024

- **Dr. Purnima Devi Barman**, a wildlife biologist from Assam, has been recognized with the prestigious **Whitley Gold Award** for her exemplary conservation efforts aimed at protecting the endangered **Greater Adjutant Stork** and its wetland habitat.
- This accolade, often referred to as the '**Green Oscar**', highlights her remarkable contributions to **wildlife conservation** and underscores the importance of grassroots efforts in safeguarding biodiversity.



- Dr. Barman's journey in conservation began with her childhood fascination for the **Greater Adjutant Stork**, locally known as "**Hargila**" in Assamese.
- Her intervention became crucial as the population of Hargila dwindled to a mere **450 birds in Northeast India**.
- Through her pioneering efforts, she **galvanized local communities**, particularly women, to safeguard nests and protect the storks' habitat.
- The Whitley Gold Award recognizes Dr. Barman's exceptional impact in reversing the decline of the Hargila population.



- Her collaborative initiatives, in partnership with **local wildlife NGO Aaranyak**, have led to a quadrupling of the stork population, with numbers now exceeding **1,800**.
- Dr. Barman's project focuses on **community-driven conservation** and aims to bolster the number of Greater Adjutant breeding pairs, with a special emphasis on empowering local women as advocates for conservation.
- With a goal to double the global population of the **Greater Adjutant Stork** to 5,000 by 2030, Dr. Barman plans to implement scale-up measures across India and Cambodia, the stork's range.
- Her initiatives include conservation education for Assamese students, as well as knowledge exchange programs between universities, **aiming to raise awareness** and foster a deeperThe Whitley Awards, won competitively through a rigorous selection process, provide winners with **GBP 50,000 in project funding** over one year, along with enhanced visibility, networking opportunities, and training.
- Dr. Barman's achievement not only underscores her individual dedication but also highlights the crucial role of grassroots conservationists in addressing global biodiversity and climate crises.

UNICEF India's National Ambassador

- Bollywood actress **Kareena Kapoor Khan** has been appointed as the National Ambassador for UNICEF India. This prestigious role comes as a recognition of her long-standing association with the organization since 2014, where she has served as a Celebrity Advocate.
- Alongside Kareena's appointment, **UNICEF India** also introduced its first-ever Youth Advocates, a group of four remarkable individuals who will serve as peer leaders and champions for crucial issues affecting children and young people.



- **Gauranshi Sharma** from **Madhya Pradesh**, advocating for the right to play and disability inclusion.
- **Kartik Verma** from **Uttar Pradesh**, championing climate action and child rights advocacy. **Nahid Afrin** from **Assam**, raising awareness about mental health and early childhood development. **Vinisha Umashankar** from **Tamil Nadu**, a budding innovator and STEM pioneer.
- Kareena Kapoor Khan's association with UNICEF India has been a testament to her dedication to children's rights and welfare. As a Celebrity Advocate, she has lent her voice to various campaigns, raising awareness about issues such as education, nutrition, and child protection.



Kutch Ajrakh

- Traditional artisans of '**Kutch Ajrakh**' have been bestowed with the prestigious Geographical Indication (GI) certificate by the Controller General of Patents, Designs, and Trademarks (CGPDTM).
- This remarkable achievement celebrates the intricate textile craft that has been deeply rooted in the vibrant region of Kutch for centuries.
- **Ajrakh is a textile craft** that holds a revered place in the cultural tapestry of Gujarat, particularly in the regions of Sindh, Barmer, and Kutch, where its legacy spans millennia.



- The art of Ajrakh involves a meticulous process of hand-block printing on treated cotton cloth, culminating in intricate designs infused with rich symbolism and history.
- The name **“Ajrakh”** is derived from the word “Azrak,” meaning indigo, a well-known substance most often employed as a powerful dye to achieve a bluish effect.
- Traditionally, **Ajrakh prints consisted of three colors:** blue, representing the sky; red, signifying the land and fire; and white, symbolizing the stars.
- The creation of **Ajrakh textiles involves** a laborious process where the fabric undergoes a washing cycle eight times. The fabrics are treated with vegetable and mineral colors, ensuring their vibrant hues and longevity.
- The art of Ajrakh has been practiced in the Kutch region for over 400 years, **introduced by the Sind Muslims.**
- This craft has been deeply woven into the cultural fabric of the region, with nomadic pastoralist and agricultural communities like the Rabaris, Maldharis, and Ahirs wearing Ajrakh printed cloth as turbans, lungis, or stoles.

Victoria Shi

- **Ukraine has unveiled an AI-generated spokesperson, named Victoria Shi,** to deliver official statements from its foreign ministry. This significant technological leap in diplomatic communication has captured global attention.
- During a social media presentation, Victoria Shi made her debut, appearing dressed in a dark suit and **displaying human-like gestures and speech.**



- Despite her AI-powered appearance, the Ukrainian foreign ministry has assured that the content of Shi's statements will be crafted and verified by human staff, ensuring accuracy and reliability.
- Ukrainian Foreign Minister **Dmytro Kuleba highlighted** that the introduction of a digital spokesperson is aimed at saving time and resources, allowing diplomats to focus on other crucial aspects of their work.
- By leveraging AI technology, Ukraine hopes to streamline its communication processes while maintaining transparency and authenticity. The spokesperson's name, Victoria Shi, is a combination of the words "**victory**" and the Ukrainian phrase for artificial intelligence, "**shtuchniy intelekt.**"



- She was developed by the Game Changers team, renowned for their virtual-reality content related to the ongoing war in Ukraine. Notably, Shi's appearance and voice are modeled after **Rosalie Nombre, a singer** and former contestant on Ukraine's version of "The Bachelor," hailing from the now Russian-controlled city of Donetsk. To prevent the spread of misinformation and ensure the authenticity of Shi's statements, the foreign ministry will accompany each **presentation with a QR code.**
- This code will link to text versions of the statements on the ministry's official website, providing an additional layer of verification. Victoria Shi is set to

address various issues, including **consular services**, which have recently become a contentious topic in Ukraine. The country suspended such services last week for men of fighting age living abroad, requiring them to return to Ukraine for administrative procedures and potentially face the draft.

Maldives Foreign Minister To Visit India

- Foreign Affairs Minister of Maldives, **Moosa Zameer** will be on an official visit to India on the 9th of May. During his visit to New Delhi, he will meet External Affairs Minister, Dr. S Jaishankar for discussions on bilateral and regional issues of mutual interest.



- External Affairs Ministry said in a statement that Maldives is India's key maritime neighbour in the **Indian Ocean Region** and **Foreign Minister Zameer's** visit is expected to lend further momentum to the bilateral cooperation between the two countries.

La Liga Title

- **Spanish football giants**, Real Madrid, have etched another remarkable achievement in their illustrious history by securing the **La Liga 2023-24 season** title. Los Blancos, as they are affectionately called by their supporters, sealed the championship after defeating Cadiz 3-0, while their closest rivals Barcelona suffered a 4-2 loss against Girona.



- With four games still remaining in the season, Real Madrid has amassed an impressive 87 points, establishing an unassailable lead of 13 points over their nearest competitor, Girona.
- **Currently, 20 teams participate in La Liga**, with each team playing against the others twice throughout the season. The team accumulating the most points is crowned the champion, while the top four teams secure qualification for the prestigious UEFA Champions League, and the fifth-ranked team earns a spot in the Europa League.

2024 Pulitzer Prize Winners Announced

- The prestigious **Pulitzer Prizes for 2024** were announced by Columbia University in the United States of America.
- The awards, considered the most prestigious in the fields of journalism and arts, were conferred by Columbia University on the recommendation of the Pulitzer Prize Board.
- The Pulitzer Prize was **established by Joseph Pulitzer**, a newspaper owner who, in 1904, provided funds for the foundation of the Pulitzer Prize as an incentive for excellence in journalism, arts, and culture. He donated money to the Faculty of Journalism at Columbia University to administer the prizes.
- The **first Pulitzer Prizes were awarded in 1917**, and they continue to recognize outstanding achievements in these fields annually.

Category	Winner
Public Service	Pro Publica (Joshua Kaplan, Justin Elliott, Brett Murphy, Alex Mierjeski, and Kirsten Berg)
Investigative Reporting	Hannah Dreier (The New York Times)
International Reporting	Staff of The New York Times
Editorial Writing	David E. Hoffman (The Washington Post)
Breaking News Photography	Photography Staff of Reuters
Feature Photography	Photography Staff of Associated Press
Audio Reporting	Staff of the Invisible Institute and USG Audio

Category	Winner
Fiction	Night Watch by Jayne Anne Phillips
Drama	Primary Trust by Eboni Booth
History	No Right to an Honest Living: The Struggles of Boston's Black Workers in the Civil War Era by Jacqueline Jones
Biography	King: A Life by Jonathan Eig Master Slave Husband Wife: An Epic Journey from Slavery to Freedom by Ilyon Woo
Memoir and Autobiography	Liliana's Invincible Summer: A Sister's Search for Justice by Cristina Rivera Garza
Poetry	Tripas: Poems by Brandon Som
Music	Adagio (For Wadada Leo Smith) by Tyshawn Sorey
General Nonfiction	A Day in the Life of Abed Salama: Anatomy of a Jerusalem Tragedy by Nathan Thrall

Russia's Batagaika Crater

- **Batagaika Crater, also spelled as Batagay**, often referred to as the “gateway to the underworld,” is in the permafrost regions of Siberia, Russia and is known for its significant size and rapid expansion.
- Recent studies have shown that the crater is growing at an **alarming rate of 35 million cubic feet** every year due to the thawing of the permafrost.
- Originally **identified in 1991** via satellite imagery, the Batagaika Crater was formed after a section of hillside in the Yana Uplands of northern Yakutia, Russia, collapsed.



- This event revealed ancient permafrost layers that have been frozen for as long as 650,000 years, making it the oldest known **permafrost in Siberia** and the second oldest globally.
- The collapse of the hillside not only exposed these ancient icy layers but also initiated a continuous process of melting and sinking, primarily driven by global temperature rises impacting permafrost areas.



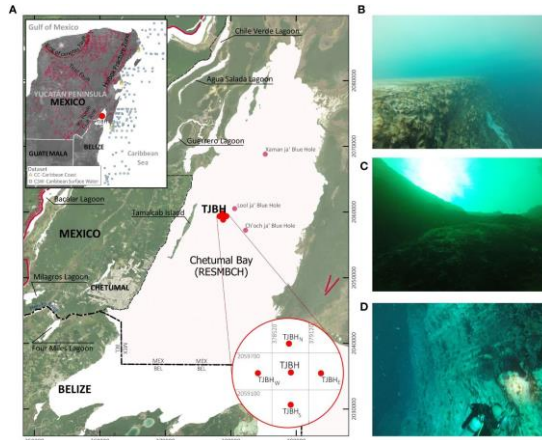
- The permafrost thaw rate around the crater's cliff face is currently estimated at approximately **40 feet (12 metres) per year**, contributing to the increasing size of this geological feature.
- The dimensions of the **Batagaika Crater** have shown significant changes over recent years. In 2014, the width was recorded at 2,600 feet (790 m), and by 2023, it had expanded to 3,250 feet (990 m).
- This rapid expansion has resulted in vast amounts of ice and sediment, equivalent to over **14 Great Pyramids of Giza**, being lost since the initial collapse event.

World's Deepest Blue Hole

- Scientists have recently unveiled the **Taam Ja' Blue Hole in Mexico's Chetumal Bay** as the deepest known blue hole globally, plunging to an astounding depth of 1,380 feet.
- Surpassing its predecessor, the **Sansha Yongle Blue Hole**, by 480 feet, this chasm presents an exciting prospect for scientific investigation and the potential unearthing of novel marine species.



- Initial measurements of the Taam Ja' Blue Hole in 2021 left much to speculate, registering only **900 feet with** echo-sounders. However, a recent expedition equipped with cutting-edge technology, including a state-of-the-art CTD profiler, provided deeper insights into its profundity.
- Despite exhaustive efforts, researchers were unable to fathom its depths, encountering potential hindrances such as underwater ledges or formidable **currents at 1,380 feet**.



- This mysterious depth prompts inquiries into the configuration and conceivable interconnectedness of subterranean cave systems within the blue hole. There is widespread conjecture regarding the presence of undiscovered life forms inhabiting the recesses of the **Taam Ja' Blue Hole**.
- Scientists postulate that this submerged domain might house a labyrinth of **caverns and passageways bustling** with unseen aquatic life, adept at flourishing in the harsh conditions of darkness and pressure.
- Drawing parallels to analogous findings in blue holes in the Bahamas, where unique bacteria were **found thriving in absolute darkness**, researchers propose that such extreme habitats offer invaluable insights into the potential for extraterrestrial life.

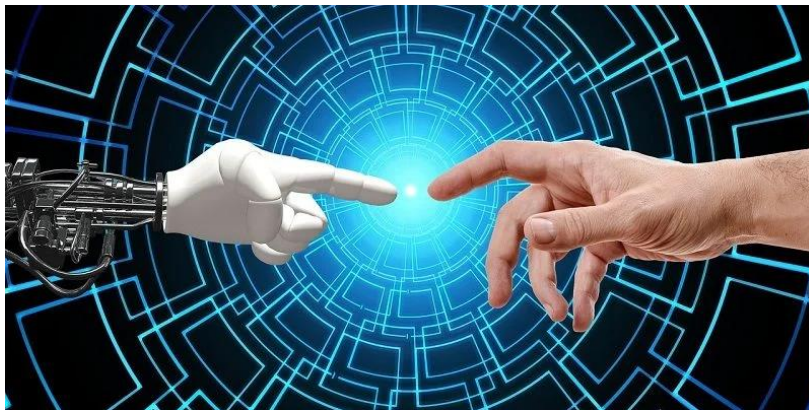
Maharana Pratap

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi paid tributes to **Maharana Pratap** on his birth anniversary. Maharana Pratap, born on May 9, 1540, was the valiant ruler of Mewar, Rajasthan.
- Renowned for his courage and resistance against the Mughal Empire, particularly exemplified in the **Battle of Haldighati**, he symbolizes Rajput valor and independence. His unwavering commitment to his kingdom and people earned him a revered place in Indian history, inspiring generations with his defiance and dedication to sovereignty.



Setu Unveils Sesame

- **Setu, a leading Indian fintech company** and part of the Pine Labs Group, has unveiled **Sesame, India's first Large Language Model (LLM)** specifically designed for the banking, financial services, and insurance (BFSI) sector.
- Developed in collaboration with indigenous **AI research firm Sarvam AI**, this groundbreaking initiative marks a significant milestone in the adoption of advanced AI technologies in the financial services industry.
- The unveiling of Sesame took place at **Adbhut India**, an event organized by the non-profit People+ai, in the presence of prominent figures from the fintech, AI, and digital public infrastructure domains, including Nandan Nilekani, Shankar Maruwada, and Tanuj Bhojwani. Setu and Sarvam AI have hailed this development as a **"ChatGPT moment"** for the BFSI sector, underscoring its potential to revolutionize financial services.



- Sesame leverages the rich data ecosystem enabled by India's digital infrastructure to power various features, including improved credit underwriting, fraud detection, loan monitoring, upsell or cross-sell, and personal finance advisory.

- By combining a domain-specific **LLM with delivery models**, Setu and Sarvam AI have created a solution that is both domain- and region-specific, tailored to the unique requirements of India's BFSI sector.
- One of the key strengths of Sesame is its ability to harness vast amounts of financial data available both internally and externally in a compliant manner.
- This approach enables enterprise customers to make smarter and faster credit decisions, while also providing hyper-personalized financial services to their customers across their entire lifecycle.

sarvam.ai

- **Sarvam was founded in July 2023** by Vivek Raghavan and Pratyush Kumar, who previously worked at Infosys co-founder Nandan Nilekani-backed AI4Bharat.
- **Sarvam develops a full-stack** offering for Generative AI, ranging from research-led innovations in training custom AI models to an enterprise-grade platform for authoring and deployment. The company received around \$41 million in funding from Lightspeed.

India Surpasses Japan

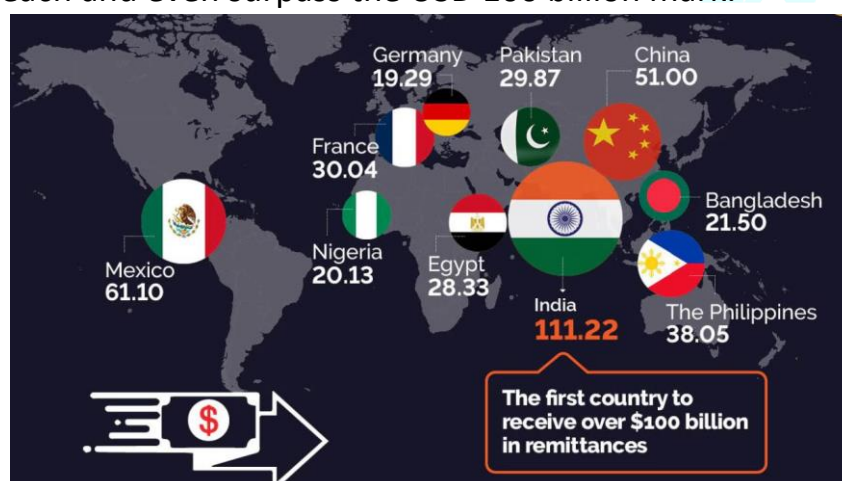
- India's remarkable **surge in solar energy deployment** propelled it past Japan, securing its position as the world's third-largest solar power generator in 2023.
- Solar energy continued its unprecedented growth streak, outpacing coal in global electricity generation for the 19th consecutive year.



- In 2015, India ranked ninth in solar energy deployment, but by 2023, it produced 5.8% of its electricity from solar, up from 0.5% in 2015. This significant increase underscores India's commitment to clean energy and its pivotal role in mitigating climate change.
- Ember's report highlights that solar energy witnessed a remarkable increase globally, with 2023's solar generation exceeding six times that of 2015.
- The top four solar growth countries, including India, **accounted for 75% of this growth**, emphasizing the widespread adoption of solar power worldwide.
- India's ambitious national plan to combat climate change **aims to achieve 50% cumulative electric power** installed capacity from non-fossil fuel-based energy resources by 2030. However, meeting this target requires substantial acceleration in annual capacity additions, as analyzed by Ember.

India Leads Global Remittances

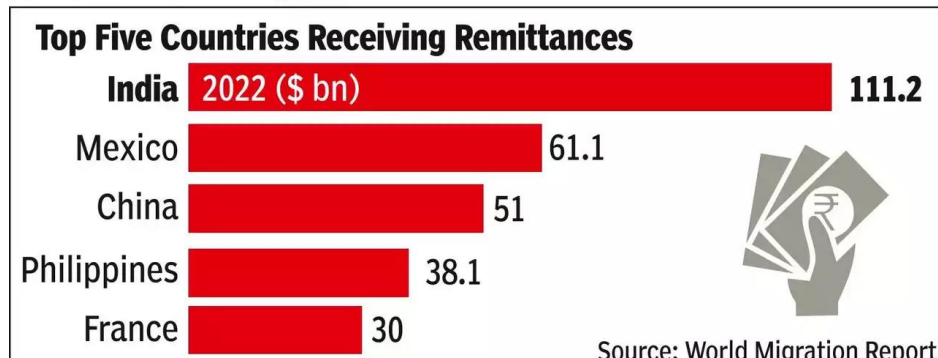
- India has become the first country to receive over **\$100 billion in remittances** in 2022, according to the United Nations migration agency. **International Organisation for Migration (IOM)** revealed in its **World Migration Report 2024** that India's remittances surged to \$111 billion last year, surpassing all other nations.
- "India was well above the rest, receiving more than **USD 111 billion**, the first country to reach and even surpass the USD 100 billion mark.



- Mexico was the second-largest remittance recipient in 2022, a position it also held in 2021 after overtaking China, which historically had been the second-biggest recipient after India," said the report.

- The report highlighted that **India, Mexico, China, the Philippines**, and France were the top five recipients of remittances in 2022.
- India's dominance in remittances has been steadily growing over the years. The report's data showed that India led in remittance receipts in 2010 (\$53.48 billion), 2015 (\$68.91 billion), and 2020 (\$83.15 billion), with \$111.22 billion in 2022.

MONEY FLOW



- **Southern Asia, benefiting from a substantial migrant worker population**, continues to attract some of the highest remittance inflows globally.
- Apart from India, Pakistan and Bangladesh also rank among the top ten recipients of international remittances, underscoring the significance of labour migration from this subregion.



- The **report shed light on the challenges** faced by migrant workers from Southern Asia, including financial exploitation, high migration costs leading to excessive debt, xenophobia, and workplace abuses.
- The Gulf States remain pivotal destinations for migrant workers, particularly from India, Egypt, Bangladesh, Ethiopia, and Kenya, employed in sectors like construction, hospitality, security, domestic work, and retail.

India And Moldova

- **India and Moldova** signed an agreement in New Delhi on visa waiver for diplomatic and official passports. This agreement will allow holders of **diplomatic and official passports** of either country to travel to the other, without a visa. External Affairs Ministry, Secretary (West), Pavan Kapoor and Moldova's Ambassador, Ana Taban signed the agreement.



Romalo Ram

- President Droupadi Murmu conferred **Padma Shri to Romalo Ram** of Jammu and Kashmir in the field of Art in New Delhi.
- Jammu Correspondent reports that **Romalo Ram is a Dogri Folk** artist of the Jammu region and is known as the real founder of the Dogri folk song Geetru. He revived the dying folk form **“Geetru and Bhakh”** with his dedication and hard work. He published a book ‘Geetruyen Di Fouhar’.



Arbitration Bar Of India

- Dr S Jaishankar stated that **Arbitrate in India** is a key facet of Make In India and arbitration will help in the journey for a Viksit Bharat.
- Inaugurating the Arbitration Bar of India at **Bharat Mandapam** in New Delhi on Saturday, Dr Jaishankar said arbitration is recognised as cornerstone of modern dispute resolution. He said it is key for India in its rapid economic progress.



- External Affairs Minister said this event is a marked redistribution of India's power and influence in the world.
- He pointed out that global order has witnessed rebalancing and economic capabilities have re-emerged for India and its dimensions will naturally spread out more in the world.
- Dr Jaishankar said the Narendra Modi government recognizes the **importance of high quality arbitration** as it improves ease of doing business. He expressed confidence that today's inauguration is one among the legal community's many contributions towards a Viksit Bharat.

Kami Rita Sherpa

- Nepal's legendary mountaineer **Kami Rita Sherpa** made history today by breaking his record for the highest number of ascents of Mt. Everest as he scaled the world's highest peak for the 29th time.

- AT Rakesh Gurung, Director at the Tourism Department in the Nepalese Ministry of Tourism and Civil Aviation, the **54-year-old veteran climber** reached the 8,849-metre peak at 7.25 a.m. local time.
- The expedition was organised by the **Seven Summit Treks** and had 20 climbers. They scaled Everest this morning, said Thani Guragain, a senior staff at the Seven Summit Treks.



Sakina Khatun

- India's **Sakina Khatun clinched two bronze medals** at the Para Powerlifting World Cup 2024 in Pattaya, Thailand on Saturday. She secured the medals in the Best Lift and Total Lift categories, with a formidable lift of 93 Kgs in the women's up to 55 kg event.



- Despite her remarkable performance, she just fell shy of securing a spot for the Paralympic Games, this year.
- Earlier in the Men's up to 65 Kg category, **India's Ashok Malik** secured the gold medal with a personal best lift of 197 kg, while in the Men's up to 49 kg category, Parmjeet Singh claimed the silver with a lift of 162 kg. In the Women's up to 67 kg event, another Indian, Kasthuri Rajamani earned the bronze with a lift of 105kg.



India's Rich Literary Heritage To UNESCO

- The **Ramcharitmanas, Panchatantra and Sahṛdayāloka-Locana** have been included in UNESCO's Memory of the **World Asia-Pacific Regional Register**.
- Culture Ministry said, this inclusion is a proud moment for India, a confirmation of the country's rich literary heritage and cultural legacy. The Ministry said, it also signifies a **step forward in global cultural preservation** efforts, highlighting the importance of recognizing and safeguarding the diverse narratives and artistic expressions that shape the shared humanity.



- It said, by honouring these literary masterpieces, society not only pays homage to the creative genius of their creators but also ensures that their profound wisdom and timeless teachings continue to inspire and enlighten future generations.
- The '**Ramcharitmanas**', '**Panchatantra**', and '**Sahṛdayaloka-Locana**' are such timeless works that have deeply influenced Indian literature and culture, shaping the nation's moral fabric and artistic expressions.
- These literary works have transcended time and place, leaving an indelible mark on readers and artists both within and outside India. It is noteworthy that **Ramcharitmanas** was authored by Goswami Tulsidas, **Panchatantra** by Pandit Vishnu Sharma and **Sahṛdayaloka-Locana** by Acharya Anandvardhan.



Congratulations
INDIA



*The Ramcharitmanas, Panchatantra, and
Sahṛdayāloka-Locana included in
UNESCO's Memory of the World Asia-Pacific
Regional Register*



- The **Indira Gandhi National Centre** for the Arts IGNA, played a vital role in securing a historic moment during the 10th meeting of the Memory of the World Committee for Asia and the Pacific MOWCAP. At the gathering in Ulaanbaatar, 38 representatives from member states convened alongside 40 observers and nominees.
- Advocating for three Indian nominations, IGNA ensured their placement in UNESCO's Memory of the World Asia-Pacific Regional Register. Professor

Ramesh Chandra Gaur, Dean (Administration) and Head of the Department, Kala Nidhi Division at IGNC, successfully presented these three entries from India.

Dubai Gaming Visa

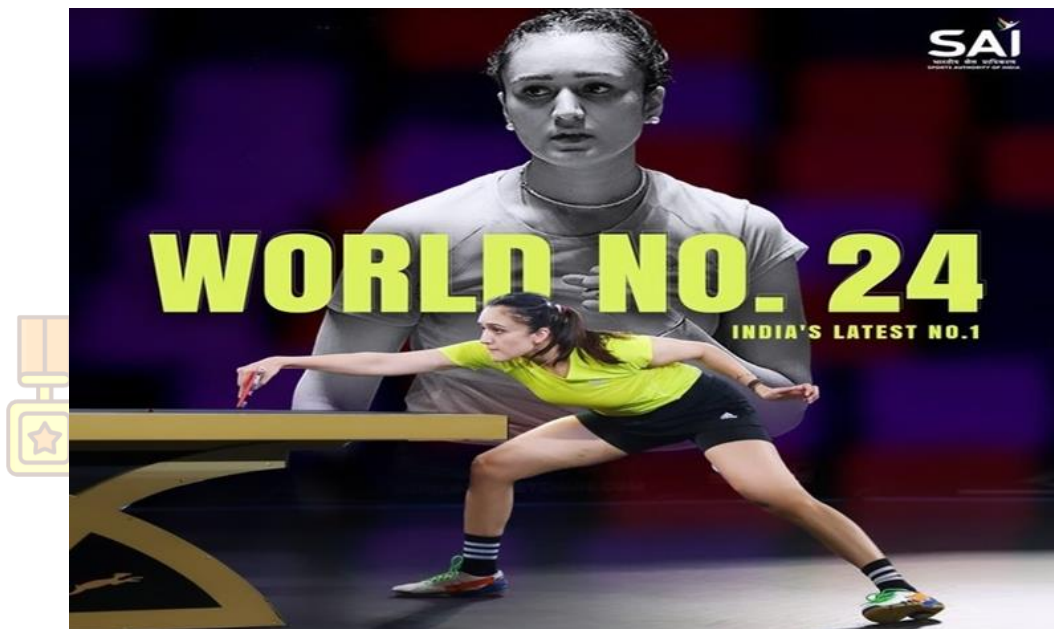
- In a strategic move aimed at positioning **Dubai as a global gaming hub** and bolstering its digital economy, His Highness **Sheikh Hamdan bin Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum**, the Crown Prince of Dubai, has unveiled the '**Dubai Gaming Visa**' as part of the Dubai Program for Gaming 2033.
- This groundbreaking initiative is poised to **revolutionize the gaming landscape**, offering a host of opportunities for talented individuals, creators, and entrepreneurs in the burgeoning e-gaming sector.



- The **primary objective** behind the introduction of the 'Dubai Gaming Visa' is to provide comprehensive support to skilled individuals and pioneers in the e-gaming industry.
- By fostering skill development and facilitating investment opportunities, the visa program aims to nurture innovative ideas and transform them into successful ventures.
- This visionary approach **underscores Dubai's commitment** to fostering a dynamic ecosystem that encourages creativity, entrepreneurship, and technological innovation.
- The '**Dubai Gaming Visa**' initiative is set to have a profound impact on Dubai's economy, with ambitious targets to add 30,000 new jobs in the e-gaming sector by 2033.
- This concerted effort aligns with **Dubai's broader vision** of attracting top-tier talent, intellectuals, and highly skilled professionals from around the globe.
- By positioning itself as a premier destination for entrepreneurs, investors, and game developers, Dubai aims to solidify its status as a leading player in the global gaming arena.

Manika Batra

- India's ace women's table tennis player **Manika Batra** became the **first Indian woman paddler** to break into the top 25 of the world Women's singles rankings. She rose to her career-best ranking of 24, following her success in the Saudi Smash, last week. She also equalled G. Sathyan's five year old record for the highest rank achieved by an Indian in singles table tennis.
- Manika, the 2018 Commonwealth Games gold medalist in individual and team categories, jumped 15 spots following her run in Jeddah, where she reached the quarterfinals.



India Tops Global Internet Shutdowns

- **For the sixth year in a row**, India had the most number of Internet shutdowns reported anywhere in the world in the year 2023. There were **116 incidents in which** the Internet was purposefully disconnected in different regions of the country, as reported by the Keep It On coalition, which is a civil advocacy group.
- People say that these **shutdowns are happening** because of things like racial tensions, ongoing crime, and test times, among other things. Most of the time, these shutdowns are done to stop the **spread of false information** during dangerous times or to stop people from cheating on tests.



- But they have been **faulted for being too general and having big side effects.** These Internet shutdowns have huge effects, especially in places like Manipur where they made it harder to record and report serious human rights crimes like murder, violence against women, and arson.
- This, in turn, changed how the people who did these horrible things could be held responsible.
- **Disruptions also hurt companies and services** that depend on being connected to the Internet, which makes the social cost even higher. This event tended to affect bigger areas rather than small, isolated ones.
- Multiple districts in the same state or area were affected by 64 shutdown orders in 2023. Notably, racist violence caused 47 shutdowns in the state of Manipur. As a result of the search for pro-Khalistani speaker Amritpal Singh in Punjab, the whole state was not allowed to use the Internet.



NASA Captures Yin-Yang Crater

- **NASA's International Space Station** recently took a unique picture of a strange hole on **Mount Nemrut in Turkey**, which is a dormant stratovolcano.
- As seen in the picture, the crater was split in half, making it look like the **Chinese yin-yang sign**. The height of **Mount Nemrut is 9,672 feet (2,948 meters)**, and it is where **the Eurasian and Arabian tectonic plates** meet.



- The volcano erupted last time it was very **active in 1650**, creating a big caldera that is 5.3 miles (8.5 km) across and almost 2,000 feet (610 m) deep. A study done in 2012 found that this caldera was mostly made by a single big eruption about 250,000 years ago.
- The crater's eastern half had smaller blasts that caused lava flows to solidify on one side. Along time, **water filled up the other side** of the caldera, making a lake in the vent.
- This mountain's stark difference between the two sides is most clear when snow covers it, making it look like the yin-yang symbol.



- The huge eruption also made a big lava flow that blocked a river and formed **Lake Van, which is Turkey's biggest lake**, on the eastern side of the mountain.
- The **largest lake in Turkey** was created on the eastern side of Mount Nemrut when a big lava flow from a **huge eruption about 250,000 years** ago blocked a river.
- The eruptions of **Mount Nemrut** are directly linked to the formation of the lake. A Chinese philosophical idea that shows how different forces are related and can exist at the same time. When it snows, this sign looks like the strange crater on Mount Nemrut, which has two separate halves of solidified lava and a crater lake.

Gold In Federation Cup

- In men's javelin throw, **Olympic champion Neeraj Chopra** won the **gold medal** in Federation Cup 2024 in Bhubaneswar.
- The 26-year-old superstar struggled in the initial rounds of competition as he was second after three rounds.
- He took the lead in the **fourth round with an effort of 82.27m**. Neeraj Chopra last took part in a domestic competition at the same event in 2021, when he won a gold with a throw of 87.80m.
- Since then, he has won a historic **gold in the Tokyo Olympics**, became Diamond League champion in 2022, world champion in 2023 and defended Asian Games gold in China.



Calcium Carbide

- **Food Safety and Standards Authority of India**, FSSAI has alerted traders, fruits handlers and Food Business Operators operating ripening chambers to strictly ensure compliance with the **prohibition on calcium carbide** for artificial ripening of fruits.
- **Health Ministry said in a statement that FSSAI** is also advising Food Safety Departments of States and UTs to remain vigilant and take serious action against persons indulging in such unlawful practices.



- **Calcium carbide, commonly used** for ripening fruits like mangoes, releases acetylene gas which contains harmful traces of **arsenic and phosphorus**.
- These substances, also known as 'Masala', can cause serious health issues such as dizziness, frequent thirst, irritation, weakness, difficulty in swallowing, vomiting and skin ulcers.



Safe & Nutritious Food
A Shared Responsibility

- **Acetylene gas is equally hazardous** to those handling it. Health Ministry said there are chances that calcium carbide may come in direct contact with fruits during application and leave residues of arsenic and phosphorus on fruits.
- Due to these dangers, the use of **calcium carbide for ripening fruits** has been banned under Food Safety and Standards (Prohibition and Restrictions on Sales)

Regulations, 2011. FSSAI has permitted the use of ethylene gas as a safer alternative for fruit ripening in India.

Indo-Bangla Baul Music Festival

- A nine-day long **Indo-Bangla Baul music festival** began in Dhaka to celebrate the 250th birth anniversary of the mystic saint and humanist **bard Fakir Lalan Shah**.
- The event is being organised by the cultural and research organisation Lalon Biswasangha working to popularise the work and promote research on Lalon Fakir.
- The High Commission of India and the **Ministry of Cultural Affairs of Bangladesh are supporting** the event. Inaugurating the programme, Bangladesh Social Welfare Minister Dipu Moni said Fakir Lalon Shah put humanity on the highest pedestal.



- He believed in the essential unity of human beings cutting across the divisions of language, region and culture. **Renowned Baul singer and scholar Farida Parveen** said Lalon is revered as a great mystic saint, philosopher and social reformer of his time.
- He composed thousands of songs which were later compiled by his disciples. His songs celebrate the spirit of humanism blending elements of Islam, Vaishnavism, Sahajiya Buddhism and Jainism.
- The speakers highlighted the deeply humanist worldview espoused by Fakir Lalon Shah in his songs and philosophical discourses.



- **Fakir Lalon Shah is considered** the most prominent figure of the Baul tradition of Bangladesh and India. **Born in 1774 at Horishpur** in the Jhenaidah district of modern Bangladesh. He inspired and influenced people like Rabindranath Tagore, Kazi Nazrul Islam and the A

Ronaldo Tops Forbes' List

- **Cristiano Ronaldo**, despite nearing the twilight of his career, has secured the top spot on Forbes' list of the world's highest-paid athletes.
- His significant earnings in Saudi Arabia have propelled him to this position for the fourth time. According to Forbes, **Ronaldo amassed an astonishing \$260 million** over the past year.



- This figure includes \$200 million from his contract with Saudi club Al-Nassr and an additional \$60 million from off-field activities.

- The 39-year-old's financial success is unparalleled among his peers, highlighting his enduring marketability and skill.
- **Ronaldo's move to Al-Nassr in January 2023** marked a significant shift, not just for his career but also for Saudi Arabian sports. His presence has helped elevate the profile of the Saudi Pro League, which has seen Al-Nassr finishing second this season. Ronaldo is among four Saudi-based soccer players in the top 50 highest-paid athletes, indicating the country's increasing influence in global sports.
- Cristiano Ronaldo (soccer) – \$260 million
- Jon Rahm (golf) – \$218 million
- Lionel Messi (soccer) – \$135 million
- LeBron James (basketball) – \$128.2 million
- Giannis Antetokounmpo (basketball) – \$111 million
- Kylian Mbappé (soccer) – \$110 million
- Neymar (soccer) – \$108 million
- Karim Benzema (soccer) – \$106 million
- Steph Curry (basketball) – \$102 million
- Lamar Jackson (football) – \$100.5 million

First Country to Lose All Glaciers

- **Venezuela has recently witnessed** a poignant environmental milestone, marking a grim reality of the climate crisis. The nation has likely become the **first in modern history** to lose all its glaciers, with the reclassification of the Humboldt glacier as an ice field, its final icy vestige, earlier this month.



- This event serves as a stark reminder that climate change is not a distant threat but an urgent crisis demanding immediate action.

- Once home to **six glaciers nestled** in the Andes mountains at approximately 5,000 meters above sea level, Venezuela saw the **disappearance of five by 2011**.
- Scientists initially estimated that the Humboldt glacier would endure for another decade, but its rapid melting has defied expectations.



- Now **reduced to less than 2 hectares**, the Humboldt's downgrade from a glacier to an ice field underscores the alarming pace of glacial retreat.
- For nations like Venezuela, glacier loss represents not only an environmental crisis but also a cultural tragedy. Glaciers hold deep cultural significance, shaping regional identities and supporting activities like mountaineering and tourism. The loss of these icy landmarks reverberates beyond environmental concerns, profoundly affecting communities' way of life.

Fuel XP100 to Sri Lanka

- **Indian Oil Corporation Ltd. (IOCL)** has marked a significant milestone by exporting its first-ever consignment of **100 octane premium fuel, XP100**, to Sri Lanka. The high-quality fuel, designed for premium high-end vehicles, was shipped from the Jawaharlal Nehru Port Trust in Mumbai.



- This event highlights IOCL's commitment to expanding its global reach and showcasing the quality of its products.
- **XP100, India's first domestically developed 100 octane petrol**, leverages IndianOil's indigenous **Octamax Technology**.
- Tailored for high-end vehicles, it offers superior anti-knock properties, enhancing engine performance, faster acceleration, smoother drivability, and improved fuel economy.



- **XP100's advanced formulation reduces engine** deposits and emissions in high compression ratio engines, optimizing vehicle performance and longevity while minimizing maintenance.
- Exceeding IS-2796 specifications, **XP100 is also an eco-friendly** fuel with significantly reduced tailpipe emissions.

'Let's Move India'

- **International Olympic Committee (IOC)** has announced the launch of 'Let's Move India', an initiative to inspire people to celebrate the athletes participating in the upcoming Olympic Games in Paris.
- The move invites people from across the country to join the movement through a digital challenge on social media.



- According to a press release, **young people** can take part in a series of regional school initiatives to coincide with Olympic Day on June 23.
- People are encouraged to recreate their favourite athlete celebrations or create their own, aiming to inspire and celebrate the Olympians heading to Paris 2024, who will be representing their 1.4 billion compatriots from July 26.
- The **IOC has joined forces** with Abhinav Bindra, India's first individual Olympic gold medallist, and an **IOC Athletes' Commission member**, and together, they will extend invitations to schools across the nation to join the movement, as part of the Olympic Values Education Programme.

AI Anchors Krish And Bhoomi

- **Doordarshan Kisan** (DD KISAN) is going to become the first government TV channel of the country to launch two AI anchors – **AI Krish and AI Bhoomi**.
- Agriculture Ministry said DD Kisan is coming with a new look and a new style among the farmers of India on 26th May where the presentation of the channel is going to be in a new avatar.



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- It said the AI anchors can speak in **fifty languages** and read news 24 hours and 365 days without getting tired. The viewers will be able to see these anchors in all the states of the country. These AI anchors will provide necessary information about agricultural research in the country and global level, trends in Krishi Mandis, changes in the weather and information about government schemes.

Jenny Erpenbeck's

- German author **Jenny Erpenbeck** and translator **Michael Hofmann** have won the prestigious International Booker Prize for their **novel "Kairos."**

- The book, which tells the story of a tangled love affair during the final years of East Germany's existence, beat out five other finalists from a pool of 149 submitted novels.



- The **International Booker Prize recognizes** fiction from around the world that has been translated into English and published in the UK or Ireland. **The £50,000** (\$64,000) prize money is divided equally between the author and the translator, celebrating their collaborative efforts in bringing literary masterpieces to a wider audience.
- The **translator, who is the first male to win** the International Booker Prize since its current form in 2016, acknowledged the synergy between his style and the author's, describing the English-language book as "a mixture of her order and my chaos."
- The **International Booker Prize** was established to boost the profile of fiction in other languages and to recognize the vital work of literary translators, who often go unacknowledged. By honoring Erpenbeck and Hofmann, the prize celebrates the rich diversity of voices and perspectives in global literature.

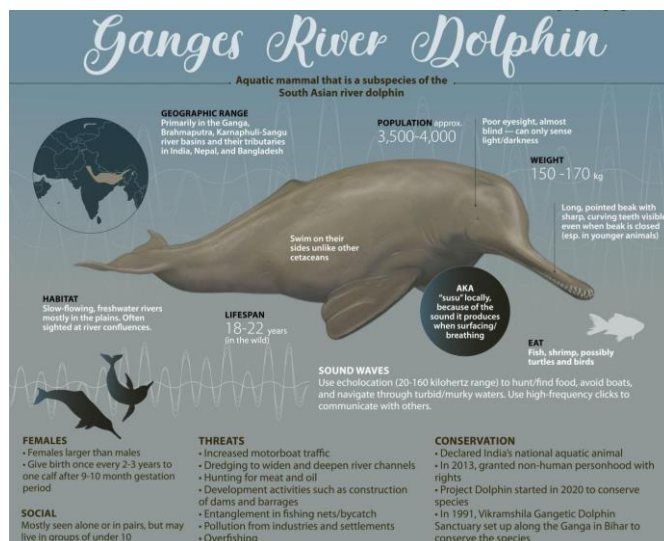
Gangetic Dolphins

- According to a recent report by the **Wildlife Institute of India**, there are more than 4000 Gangetic dolphins in the Gangetic River basin.
- Over **2000 of these dolphins** are found in Uttar Pradesh, primarily in the Chambal River.

- This increase suggests that the **river's pollution levels are declining**, and the government's conservation efforts are proving effective. The Ganges river dolphin, also known as the blind dolphin, **Ganges susu**, or **Hihu**, has the scientific name **Platanista gangetica**.



- **Historically found** in the Ganga-Brahmaputra-Meghna and Karnaphuli-Sangu river systems, the dolphin is now present in specific stretches of the Ganga-Brahmaputra-Barak river system in India, as well as in river systems in Nepal and Bangladesh.
- **Gangetic dolphins are blind and live exclusively in freshwater.** They hunt using sonar, emitting ultrasonic sound waves that bounce off prey. These dolphins are usually found alone or in small groups.
- As mammals, they must surface every 30-120 seconds to breathe, producing a distinctive 'susu' sound when exhaling.



- Gangetic dolphins has **declined due to** several factors: Unintentional killing through entanglement in fishing gear., Poaching for oil used in traditional medicine. , Habitat destruction from development projects, pollution, and noise from vessel traffic.
- **Government of India has implemented** various measures to protect Gangetic dolphins: , Listed in Schedule I of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972, providing the highest degree of legal protection. Declared the National Aquatic Animal of India on May 18, 2010. Included in the list of 22 critically endangered species under the Centrally sponsored scheme 'Development of Wildlife Habitats.' Established the Vikramshila Dolphin Sanctuary in Bhagalpur, Bihar. Developed a comprehensive action plan (2022-2047) for river dolphin and aquatic habitat conservation. Declared a Dolphin Sanctuary in the Chambal Sanctuary by the Uttar Pradesh government. Launched Project Dolphin in 2019 under the Arth Ganga part of the Namami Ganga Project, aiming to double the dolphin population by 2030.
- **Established in 1982 under the Union** Ministry of Forest and Climate Change, the Wildlife Institute of India trains personnel, conducts research, and advises on wildlife conservation and management. Its headquarters is in Dehradun, Uttarakhand.

International Day of the Markhor

- **United Nations General Assembly** has proclaimed May 24 as the **International Day of the Markhor**. This resolution, **sponsored by Pakistan** and eight other countries, aims to raise awareness and promote the conservation of this iconic and ecologically significant species found across the mountainous regions of Central and South Asia.



- **The markhor** (*Capra falconeri*), also known as the “**screw-horned goat**,” is the national animal of Pakistan. It is a majestic wild goat known for its striking spiral-shaped horns, which can grow up to 1.6 meters (5.2 feet) in length, making them the largest horns of any living caprid species.
- Once believed to be on the brink of extinction, the markhor population has gradually increased, doubling in a couple of decades, with a particular jump since 2014.



- According to Saeed Abbas, an official with the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) in Pakistan, “The population of the Markhor has been increasing with an annual ratio of 2% since 2014.” The current estimated population of the markhor ranges between 3,500 and 5,000, with the majority found in the **Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) province of Pakistan**, followed by Gilgit-Baltistan and Balochistan. Despite this positive trend, the markhor remains categorized as “**near threatened**” on the **IUCN Red List** of Threatened Species and is included in Appendix I of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) since 1992.
- The resolution adopted by the UN General Assembly underlines the **ecological significance of the markhor** and its role in the overall ecosystem. It also recognizes the opportunity to bolster regional economies, foster conservation efforts, and promote sustainable tourism and economic growth through the preservation of the markhor and its natural habitat.
- The markhor is not only valuable for its **ecological importance** but also contributes to the local economy. Conservation efforts aimed at preserving this species and its habitat will benefit the entire ecosystem, providing a significant boost to regional economies and promoting sustainable development.

World's Highest Observatory

- **University of Tokyo** has inaugurated the **Atacama Observatory (TAO)**, which has been awarded a Guinness World Record for being the highest observatory in the world. Situated at a **staggering 5,640 meters** above sea level on the summit of Cerro Chajnantor in the Antofagasta Region of Chile, TAO stands as a testament to human ingenuity and determination.
- At the **heart of TAO** lies a **6.5-meter optical-infrared telescope**, designed to unravel the mysteries of the universe. This state-of-the-art instrument will focus on exploring the fundamental nature of the cosmos, contributing to our ever-expanding knowledge of the universe we inhabit.



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- TAO's location was carefully chosen for its exceptional atmospheric conditions. With minimal water vapor in the atmosphere, the observatory offers an unparalleled vantage point for observing mid-infrared wavelengths, which are typically absorbed by water vapor at lower altitudes.
- The construction of TAO was a monumental undertaking, spanning 26 years of meticulous planning and execution. To address the risks of altitude sickness for construction workers and astronomers, especially during nighttime operations when symptoms can worsen, a base facility has been constructed in **San Pedro de Atacama**, approximately 50km from the summit. This facility allows for remote operation of the telescope, ensuring the safety and well-being of those involved in TAO's operations.

Payal Kapadia

- **Prime Minister Narendra Modi** has said that India is proud of **Payal Kapadia** for her historic feat of winning the **Grand Prix at the 77th Cannes Film Festival** for her work **'All We Imagine as Light'**.
- Mr Modi said that this prestigious accolade not only honours her exceptional skills but also inspires a new generation of Indian filmmakers.



- Information and Broadcasting **Minister Anurag Singh Thakur** has congratulated the Film and Television Institute of India- FTII alumnus Payal Kapadia.
- In a social media post, Mr Thakur said that this makes it the **first Grand Prix win** for the country and a nomination in the Palme d'Or after 30 years.
- The Minister added that **Bharat's creative economy** is indeed shining with 3 films winning awards this year at Cannes. Mr Thakur said that he is proud to share that this film is also the official co-production of the Information and Broadcasting Ministry and is **supported by its Film Incentive Scheme**.
- He added that the government is committed to provide resources, platforms and support to every aspiring filmmaker.
- He said, India is already **the largest producer of feature films** in the world and together we can make Bharat a formidable force in the creative sphere.
- **Grand Prix is an award** given by the jury at the Cannes Film Festival to one of the feature films in competition slate. It is the runner-up to the Palme d'Or prize and is considered the second most prestigious prize at the festival.

Mission ISHAN

- India is embarking on **Mission ISHAN**, aimed at consolidating its fragmented **airspace management** into a single, unified system **headquartered in Nagpur**.
- This move promises to revolutionize **air traffic management**, benefitting both airlines and passengers.
- Currently, India's airspace is divided into **four flight information regions (FIRs)** and a sub-FIR, each managed independently.



- This **decentralization poses challenges** in terms of coordination, efficiency, and capacity handling. **Under Mission ISHAN**, all FIRs will be integrated into a single airspace managed from Nagpur.
- This centralization is expected to **optimize operations**, enhance safety, and increase capacity, crucial for accommodating the soaring demand in the aviation sector.



- By streamlining operations, ISHAN will enable India to **handle a higher volume** of flights, essential for accommodating the projected growth in passenger traffic.
- **Optimized routes and improved coordination** will result in shorter flying durations, translating to cost savings for airlines and enhanced convenience for passengers.
- Implementing ISHAN will require significant technological upgrades, process revisions, and personnel training.
- These challenges necessitate careful planning, investment, and policy formulation.
- The **Airports Authority of India (AAI)** has highlighted the need for a comprehensive study to address current and projected air traffic demands. Minimizing surveillance and communication gaps will be critical for reaping the full benefits of ISHAN.
- Air Marshal Anil Chopra underscores the safety and efficiency gains of ISHAN. Centralized control from Nagpur will provide a macroscopic view of air traffic flow, enabling flexible routing, reduced fuel consumption, and lower carbon emissions. Additionally, workload reduction for air traffic controllers will enhance operational safety.



REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. IUCN Status Of Nilgiri Tahr

- A. Vulnerable
- B. Endangered
- C. Critically Endangered
- D. Least Concern

ANSWER: B

2. World's Largest Airport Terminal Being Built In

- A. France
- B. USA
- C. UAE
- D. India

ANSWER: C

3. Chakisaurus Nekul Seen In News Is Species Of

- A. Lizard
- B. Dinosaur
- C. Rabbit
- D. Plant

ANSWER: B

4. Who Has Been Appointed As President Of The Indian Vaccine Manufacturers Association

- A. Krishna M Ella
- B. S.B. Rajan
- C. Z. Nahar
- D. S. Sivakumar

ANSWER: A

5. Antarctic Treaty, Enacted In 1959 & Enforced In

- A. 1959
- B. 1960
- C. 1961
- D. 1962

ANSWER: C

6. Which Trade Association Launched A Corporate Governance Charter For Startups

- A. India Trade Promotion Organization (ITPO)
- B. Confederation of Indian Industry (CII)
- C. ASSOCHAM
- D. Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI)

ANSWER: B

7. Hangor Class Submarines Are Launched By Which Country

- A. Russia
- B. China
- C. India
- D. Pakistan

ANSWER: B

8. India Will Host 2025 BWF World Junior Championships At

- A. Guwahati
- B. Kolkata
- C. Pune
- D. Hyderabad

ANSWER: A

9. Blood Minerals Controversy Seen In News Related To

- A. Africa
- B. Australia
- C. USA
- D. UK

ANSWER: A

10. Devon Thomas Seen In News Is Related To

- A. Soccer
- B. Cricket
- C. Badminton
- D. Football

ANSWER: B

11. Hargila Seen In News Is Species Of

- A. Bird
- B. Spices
- C. Invasive Species
- D. Crocodile

ANSWER: A

12. Which Trade Association Launched A Corporate Governance Charter For Startups

- A. India Trade Promotion Organization (ITPO)
- B. Confederation of Indian Industry (CII)
- C. ASSOCHAM
- D. Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI)

ANSWER: B

13. Which State's Education Department Recently Released The 'Guidelines For Elimination Of Corporal Punishment

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

ANSWER: D

14. Thomas & Uber Cup 2024 Is Held In

- A. Paris
- B. New York
- C. Chengdu
- D. Muscat

ANSWER: C

15. Which Organization Advised All States And Uts To "Completely Prohibit" All Harmful Sharp Threads Or "Manjha"

- A. National Green Tribunal
- B. Animal Welfare Board of India
- C. National Afforestation and Eco-Development Board
- D. Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change

ANSWER: B

16. GSI Discovered Ancient Fossils In Which Hills Of Meghalaya

- A. South Garo Hills
- B. East Khasi Hills
- C. West Khasi Hills
- D. Jaintia Hills

ANSWER: A

17. Which Country Clinched Men's AFC U-23 Asian Cup 2024 By Defeating Uzbekistan

- A. China
- B. Indonesia
- C. Japan
- D. Kazakhstan

ANSWER: C

18. José Raúl Mulino Elected As New President Of Which Country

- A. Guatemala
- B. Cuba
- C. Panama
- D. Nicaragua

ANSWER: C

19. What is ' Goldene '

- A. Ancient irrigation technique
- B. First free standing 2D metal
- C. Invasive weed
- D. Asteroid

ANSWER: B

20. What is FWD-200B

- A. Chemical weapon
- B. Indigenous bomber unmanned aircraft
- C. Indian naval ship
- D. Exoplanet

ANSWER: B

21. What Is Projected Percentage Of Milk Production Reduction In India By 2085, As Per The Lancet Report

- A. 25%
- B. 30%
- C. 35%
- D. 40%

ANSWER: A

22. Sanglaphu Lake Is Located In Which State

- A. Mizoram
- B. Assam
- C. Manipur
- D. Sikkim

ANSWER: D

23. Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation Operates Under Which Ministry

- A. Ministry of Health & Family Welfare
- B. Ministry of Home Affairs
- C. Ministry of Women & Child Development
- D. Ministry of Defence

ANSWER: A

24. Maravakandy Dam is located in which state

- A. Tamil Nadu
- B. Uttar Pradesh
- C. Maharashtra
- D. Telangana

ANSWER: A

25. Konda Reddi Tribe Is Primarily Inhabits In Which State Of India

- A. West Bengal
- B. Andhra Pradesh
- C. Sikkim
- D. Meghalaya

ANSWER: B

26. Who Was The First Indian To Win A Pulitzer Prize

- A. Gobind Behari Lal
- B. Geeta Anand
- C. Siddhartha Mukherjee
- D. Adnan Abidi

ANSWER: A

27. Who Designed The Pulitzer Prize Gold Medal

- A. Daniel Chester French and Henry Augustus Lukeman
- B. Barbara Kingsolver & Henry Augustus Lukeman
- C. Joseph Pulitzer & Daniel Chester French
- D. Gobind Behari Lal & Barbara Kingsolver

ANSWER: A

28. When Was Pulitzer Prize For Poetry Category Introduced

- A. 1920
- B. 1921
- C. 1922
- D. 1923

ANSWER: C

29. Where Was The 26th ASEAN- Indian Senior Officials' Meeting Held

- A. New Delhi
- B. Jaipur
- C. Chennai
- D. Hyderabad

ANSWER: A

30. What is 'MQ-9B Predator'

- A. A technique used to remove pest from crop
- B. High Altitude Unmanned Aerial Vehicle
- C. Nuclear Ballistic Submarine
- D. Earth Observation Satellite

ANSWER: B

31. Which Asset Management Company Has Launched India's First Nifty Non-Cyclical Index Fund

- A. Groww Mutual Fund
- B. Axis Mutual Fund
- C. UTI Mutual Fund
- D. Invesco Mutual Fund

ANSWER: A

32. Border Road Organization Comes Under Which Ministry

- A. Ministry of Civil Aviation
- B. Ministry of Earth Sciences
- C. Ministry of Road Transport and Highways
- D. Ministry of Defence

ANSWER: D

33. What is 'Choline'

- A. Nutrient
- B. Pesticide
- C. Virus
- D. Invasive plant

ANSWER: A

34. What is the IUCN Status Of Orangutan

- A. Endangered
- B. Critically endangered
- C. Vulnerable
- D. Least concern

ANSWER: B

35. What Is The Main Objective Of Indian National Center For Ocean Information Services

- A. To provide agricultural data and services
- B. To monitor and forecast weather patterns
- C. To provide ocean data, information, and advisory services
- D. To conduct research on space exploration

ANSWER: C

36. Moldova Seen In News Is _____ Country

- A. Asian
- B. African
- C. European
- D. Arab

ANSWER: C

37. Romalo Ram Associated With Which Language

- A. Tamil
- B. Dogri
- C. Gujrati
- D. Bhojpuri

ANSWER: B

38. In Top 50 Wealthiest Cities Which City Is At Top

- A. New York
- B. Paris
- C. New Delhi
- D. Mumbai

ANSWER: A

39. Where Was 5th Joint Group Of Customs Meeting Between India & Bhutan Held

- A. Ladakh
- B. New Delhi
- C. Jaipur
- D. Bhopal

ANSWER: A

40. Which State Launched ' Pirul Lao-paise Pao' Campaign To Prevent Forest Fires In State

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

ANSWER: B