



## 1. Assam-Meghalaya- Bangladesh migration corridor for elephants

Meghalaya govt is keen to create a migration corridor for wild elephants connecting Assam, Meghalaya and Bangladesh for mitigation of the burgeoning problem of human elephant conflict (HEC).

CM of Meghalaya expressed interest in working with the government of Assam and the international agencies to see how they can develop an elephant corridor which will permanently mark, protect and give ways to these large peaceful animals. Survey on the population of elephants and other wildlife in Meghalaya is already in the agenda of the department.

## 2.

Former Vice Chief of Indian Air Force (IAF), Air Marshal (retd) P K Barbora, who was instrumental in reactivation of the Daulat Beg Oldie (DBO) air strip in eastern Ladakh, passed away yesterday

Barbora, who hails from Assam, was the first person from the Northeast to reach such a coveted post in the armed forces.

Air Marshal Barbora was the vice chief of the IAF from June 1, 2009 to December 31, 2010

A qualified flying instructor and a fighter combat leader, Barbora was on the staff of Tactics and Air Combat Development Establishment which is a premier flying establishment of the



IAF.

3.

What is the significance of Daulat Beg Oldi?

Daulat Beg Oldi – Tianwendian is the highest of the five officially agreed Border Personnel Meeting points between the Indian Army and the People’s Liberation Army of China for regular consultations and interactions between the two armies, which helps in defusing stand-offs.

Daulat Beg Oldi is a traditional campground and current military base located in the middle of the Karakorum Ranges in northern Ladakh, India. Located on the historic trade route between Ladakh and the Tarim Basin, it is the last campsite before the Karakorum Pass. It is said to be named after Sultan Saeed Khan (“Daulat Beg”), who died here on his way back from the invasion of Ladakh and Kashmir

4.

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel Birth Anniversary

The integration of all states was assigned to Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel after Independence, except Jammu and Kashmir.

Additionally B R Ambedkar also declined to draft Article 370 into the Constitution back then.



# **A war based on Satyagraha is always of two kinds. One is the war we wage against injustice, and the other we fight against social, economic and moral wrongs.**

5.

Assam's Priyam Deka has secured a position in the Office of Cabinet Secretary in the Ministry of Transport Affairs, following her success in the United Kingdom Civil Service Examination.

She is the only Indian to pass the examination this year

Note: In the United Kingdom there is no upper age limit in civil services exam.

Indian Civil service conducts a proper written examination culminating with the interview. In the UK, a major portion of induction at the cabinet secretary's level is done by a group of people who select candidates after scrutinizing their CVs, through interviews and considering their academic and related performance.

6.

Kozhikode named 'City of Literature' by UNESCO



The city's journey towards this achievement began in 2022, thanks to a proposal by the Kerala Institute of Local Administration. Once the idea took root, the Kozhikode Corporation sprang into action, partnering with the University of Prague in the Czech Republic, the first city to earn this prestigious title in 2014.

The city's role as a permanent venue for the annual Kerala Literature Festival and numerous book festivals further bolstered its claim

7.

Gwalior named 'City of Music' by UNESCO

The city's rich musical history, encompassing legends like Tansen and Baliti Bawra earned it this prestigious recognition

The city is considered to be the birthplace of Gwalior Gharana, the eponymously named oldest Hindustani musical Gharana

With these latest additions, the UNESCO Creative Cities Network now boasts 350 creative cities in more than 100 countries, spanning seven creative fields: Crafts and Folk Art, Design, Film, Gastronomy, Literature, Media Arts, and Music. The newly designated creative cities will participate in the UCCN annual conference in Braga, Portugal, from July 1 to 5, 2024, under the theme 'Bringing Youth to the Table for the Next Decade.'

8.



Assam government to reserve five medical college and dental college seats for Bhutanese students

( three seats will be reserved for MBBS and two seats would be reserved for BDS. )

The move comes in as a goodwill gesture by the Assam government towards the Bhutanese government as the king of Bhutan is making a state visit to Assam on November 3 and 4.

Two seats will be reserved in Nalbari Medical College and one in Barpeta Medical College

Trivia: Sherubtse College is the first accredited college in Bhutan, founded in 1966 by a group of Jesuits under the leadership of Father William Mackey. The college was affiliated to the University of Delhi by a special act of the Indian parliament

9.

Tezpur University faculty continues to feature in world's top 2% scientists list

The cutting-edge research works of Tezpur University in the areas of Artificial Intelligence & Image Processing, Energy, Polymers, Otorhinolaryngology and Optoelectronics & Photonics have marked proven recognition globally as its faculty members of respective fields have been featured in the coveted Elsevier's lists of top 2% scientists from across the globe.

The featured faculty members, respectively, Dhruva K Bhattacharyya, Debendra Chandra Baruah, Dr. Shyamal Kumar Das, Niranjana Karak, Ramesh Chandra Deka and Partha Pratim



Sahu.

Elsevier is a globally reputed Publishing & Information Analytics Company, and the lists have been published in 2022 and 2023 by an independent study.

The lists are prepared based on publicly available database of top-cited scientists that provide standardized information on citations, h-index, co-authorship adjusted hm-index, citations to papers in different authorship positions and a composite indicator (c-score). Scientists are classified into 22 scientific fields and 174 sub-fields according to the standard Science-Metrix classification.

10.

In all, 48 Assam Police personnel have been dismissed from service so far this year, while more than 250 have been handed voluntary or compulsory retirements

close to 600 personnel have also received commendations or medals at various levels for good performance during the period.

The three important aspects in Assam Police's journey towards change - training, reward and punishment.

By bringing these three aspects together, the public of Assam will receive the active cooperation of a changed, professional and people-friendly police force



48 personnel have been dismissed from service till October 31. In all, 247 personnel have opted for voluntary retirement scheme while another seven have been given compulsory retirement

During the period, 4,807 cops were promoted

Altogether 455 have received Director General's Commendation Certificate and 88 have won the Director General's Medal. The CM Assam Medal has been conferred on 37 personnel, Union Home Minister's Medal on four and President's Gallantry Medal on eight. The President's Police Medal for Distinguished Service and the Police Medal for Meritorious Service were awarded to one personnel each this year

The total strength of the state police force is around 70,000.



1.

Engineer-turned-social worker Deenanath Rajput was awarded the Rohini Nayyar Prize for Outstanding Contribution to Rural Development for his work in changing the lives of over 6,000 tribal women in Naxalite affected areas of Chhattisgarh through the establishment of a farmers' producers organization (FPO).

This is the second edition of the Rohini Nayyar Prize, which was instituted in the memory of the eponymous economist and administrator Rohini Nayyar who passed away in 2021.

2.

The Tripura-Bangladesh railway link (about 12km) was recently inaugurated. This project, known as the Agartala-Akhaura railway, has the potential to dramatically reduce travel time between Agartala and Kolkata from 31 hours to just 10 hours, opening up new opportunities for tourism, trade, and people-to-people exchanges between the two countries. Funding for the project is entirely provided by India, with contributions from the Ministry for Development of North East Region and the Ministry of External Affairs.

3.

In a significant milestone for animal welfare and public health, Bhutan has become the world's first country to successfully sterilize and vaccinate its entire stray dog population. The achievement comes after a 14-year-long dog population control program.



4.

Tata Play, a leading content distribution and Pay TV platform has partnered with ReelDrama to introduce a new platform service called Tata Play Asomiya Monoronjan. This collaboration aims to provide a wide range of captivating and culturally rich Assamese content to viewers.

Notably, this partnership marks the first-ever collaboration between an over-the-top (OTT) platform and a television service provider, opening doors for OTT partners to explore the world of linear TV viewing.

5.

Sarbananda Sonowal inaugurated the 50-bed Ayurvedic hospital at Dudhnoi in Goalpara

The hospital – the second such hospital to be opened in Assam in less than a month after Majuli – is equipped with all the major facilities including a state-of-the-art laboratory, a Panchakarma centre, an infertility clinic, a yoga unit apart from the OPD and IPD services.

APSC viva question in 2018 CCE: what is Reiki all about?

Panchakarma is a method of cleansing the body of all the unwanted waste after lubricating it. Panchakarma are 5 (five) in number; hence the term PANCHA (five) – KARMA (procedures). Panchakarma treatment is unique in the sense that it includes preventive, curative and promotive actions for various diseases.



6.

1st India Vision Mandala Festival will commence at Mandala Top in the West Kameng district of Arunachal Pradesh on November 4

This two-day extravaganza at the breathtaking Mandala Top is poised to revolutionise the festival experience, aiming to bring people together through a diverse range of music genres in a location perched at an altitude of 10,500 feet above sea level.

About Mandala Top:

This attraction is a collection of 108 Buddhist stupas built in concentric circles where each is inscribed with the words 'Om Mani Padme Hum'. Each stupa was contributed towards by every single family, making this religious site a testament to the strong communal bonds among the people.

7.

The Justice (retd.) Biplab Kumar Sharma Commission today submitted its report of the inquiry into the allegations of anomalies and malpractices in the conduct of the CCE (Combined Competitive Examination) 2014 by the APSC

The report submitted today is crucial, as Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma was on record saying last month that his government would take the final decision after clubbing the reports of CCE-2013 and CCE-2014. The state government has already formed a five-member



committee with the Chief Secretary as the chairman to examine the reports of the judicial commissions.

8.

On October 31, *Courting India: England, Mughal India and the Origins of Empire* by Nandini Das was named the winner of the 11th British Academy Book Prize for Global Cultural Understanding

In *Courting India*, Nandini Das – Professor of Early Modern Literature and Culture in the English faculty at the University of Oxford – presents an important new perspective on the origins of empire through the story of the arrival of the first English ambassador in India, Sir Thomas Roe, in the early 17th century. The book recasts the story of Britain and India, moving beyond a Eurocentric telling with an even-handed, entertaining tale of the encounter of two cultures and the ambitions, misunderstandings and prejudices that came to the fore.

9.

Matt Mullenweg, the founder of Automattic Inc., renowned for WordPress.com, has purchased Texts.com, a messaging app developed by Kishan Bagaria, son of Mahendra Bagaria from Dibrugarh. The deal was finalised for \$50 million.

The app brings all your messaging apps together in a single dashboard, including iMessage, Slack, WhatsApp, Instagram, Telegram, Messenger, LinkedIn, Signal, Discord and X, with plans for more in the future



With the acquisition, Texts.com founder Kishan Bagaria will join the company as the new head of messaging, along with the rest of the distributed Texts.com team.

10.

UPSC tightens guidelines for appointment of State DGPs

Only police officers with at least six months of service left before retirement will be considered for appointment as the Director General of Police of a State

In another change, the Empanelment Committee constituted by the UPSC will not assess Indian Police Service (IPS) officers on central deputation for a State DGP's post if the Union Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) informs the State government that "it will not be possible to relieve the officers."

Note: the guidelines were revised to discourage States from appointing "favourite officers" about to retire, in a bid to extend their tenure.

11.

Thailand will waive visa requirements for arrivals from India and Taiwan from next month to May 2024

India has been Thailand's fourth largest source market for tourism so far this year with about 1.2 million arrivals after Malaysia, China and South Korea.



Earlier on October 24, the Sri Lanka Cabinet approved issuing of free visas to India, China, Russia, Malaysia, Japan, Indonesia and Thailand with immediate effect as a pilot project till 31 March

12.

In a significant administrative reshuffle, the Assam government has appointed Mr. Sameer Kumar Khade, a senior 1989 batch IAS officer of the Assam cadre, as the new Chairman of the Assam Administrative Tribunal (AAT). Mr. Khade, who has recently returned from a central deputation, will take over the prestigious position from Mr. Ravi Shankar Prasad, a 1990 batch IAS officer, who had been holding the additional charge of the role.

Mr. Prasad, who is currently serving as the Additional Chief Secretary for the Environment & Forest and Soil Conservation Departments, will continue in his dual role. He also holds the position of Director General at the Assam Administrative Staff College. Mr. Khade's appointment is expected to bring fresh perspectives and expertise to the AAT, marking a new phase in the tribunal's functioning.

About AAT

The Assam Administrative Tribunal was established under the provisions of the Assam Administrative Act, 1977. It provides speedy and inexpensive justice to employees aggrieved by Government decisions. The Assam Administrative Tribunal Act, 1977 further prohibits other Civil Courts from adjudicating in matters relating to service conditions of Government employees. An appeal against the orders passed by the tribunal would lie before the Gauhati



## High Court

13.

### Assam Police's New Mantra

The three important aspects in Assam Police's journey towards change – training, reward and punishment

In all, 48 Assam Police personnel have been dismissed from service so far this year, while more than 250 have been handed voluntary or compulsory retirements

Close to 600 personnel have also received commendations or medals at various levels for good performance during the period.

The total strength of the state police force is around 70,000

14.

The legendary Karbi Youth Festival (KYF) has been bestowed with the prestigious Cultures of Resistance (COR) 2023 Award.

This accolade marks the first time an ethnic festival from the Northeast region has achieved such an honour, placing the KYF in an esteemed league of awardees from around the globe recognized for their significant contribution to fostering positive change and cultural



resistance.

The COR Award, instituted in 2020 by Brazilian filmmaker and activist Lara Lee of Korean descent, aims to acknowledge and support proactive, creative individuals and organizations dedicated to societal transformation.

15.

The United Nations Environment Program on Monday honored China's Blue Circle environmental initiative with the 2023 Champions of the Earth award — the UN's most prestigious environmental recognition — for its innovative marine plastic treatment technology.

Honored in the Entrepreneurial Vision category, the Blue Circle initiative uses blockchain technology and the Internet of Things to comprehensively monitor the entire lifecycle of plastic pollution, encompassing collection, regeneration, re-manufacturing and re-sale.

To date, it has successfully gathered over 10,700 tonnes of marine debris, making it China's largest marine plastic waste program.

16.

A unique museum showcasing remnants of an aircraft that crashed in Arunachal Pradesh during World War II is nearing completion and will be inaugurated soon



'The Hump WW2 Museum' in Pasighat will pay tributes to 'Hump Operation', one of the most remarkable feats of aviation history

During World War II, the Allied Forces led by the United States flew supplies over the Himalayas.

The route was known as 'The Hump' because of the altitude of the Eastern Himalayas. Many of their aircraft went missing in Arunachal Pradesh and were never found in the remote jungles and mountains.

The Hump route traverses regions of Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Tibet, Yunnan (China) and Myanmar, and it is estimated that nearly 650 aircraft crashed in these areas during World War II due to the extreme flying conditions



1.
  - The Supreme Court of India has given the Election Commission of India (EC) a two-week deadline to provide updated data, until September 30, 2023, regarding political contributions received by political parties through the electoral bonds scheme.
  - A five-judge Bench, led by Chief Justice of India D.Y. Chandrachud, has reserved its judgment on the challenge to the electoral bonds scheme.

#### **More information on this news:**

- **The Court stressed that the purpose of the scheme is to sanitize the political donation process, reduce unaccounted-for cash in the electoral system, promote the use of authorized banking channels, and enhance transparency.**
- Chief Justice Chandrachud expressed concern that the scheme should not be used to legitimize kickbacks and quid pro quo relationships between political parties and those who financially support them.
- Solicitor-General Tushar Mehta objected to the claims made by the petitioners, arguing that the scheme has facilitated the influx of black money into political parties from anonymous sources.
- The government defended its efforts to combat black money and corruption, rejecting the petitioners' pessimistic outlook on the electoral bonds scheme.

#### **Electoral Bonds Scheme:**

- The Electoral Bonds Scheme was launched in 2018 by the Government of India **to**



**promote transparency and accountability in political funding.**

- Electoral bonds are bearer instruments that **can be purchased by any Indian citizen or company from specified branches of the State Bank of India (SBI).**
- The bonds are available in denominations of Rs.1,000, Rs.10,000, Rs.1 lakh, Rs.10 lakh and Rs.1 crore.
- The bonds **can be donated to any eligible political party registered with the Election Commission of India (ECI).**
- The political parties can redeem the bonds through their designated bank accounts with SBI.
- The identity of the purchaser of the bonds is not known to the political party that receives them.
- The scheme is aimed at reducing the use of black money in political funding.

**Analysis of the scheme:**

- The Electoral Bonds Scheme has been **criticized by some for its lack of transparency and accountability.** Critics argue that the scheme allows for anonymous donations to political parties, which could lead to corruption and undue influence. They also argue that the scheme makes it difficult to track the sources of political funding.
- However, **supporters of the scheme argue that it is a necessary step to reduce the use of black money in political funding.** They argue that the scheme is transparent and accountable, and that it provides a mechanism for citizens to donate to political parties without having to reveal their identity.

**Question:** Evaluate the Electoral Bonds Scheme in the context of its impact on transparency



and accountability in political funding in India.

2.

- The Kerala government has approached the Supreme Court seeking a declaration that Governor Arif Mohammed Khan has “failed to exercise his Constitutional powers and duties” by holding Bills passed by the State Assembly for an extended and indefinite period.
- The State government argued that the Governor’s actions subverted the Constitution and were manifestly arbitrary, keeping the Bills passed by the Assembly pending indefinitely.

### **Powers of the Governor regarding bills passed by the state legislature:**

- **Assent:**The Governor can give assent to the bill, which makes it become a law.
- **Withholding assent:**The Governor can withhold assent to the bill, which prevents it from becoming a law.
- **Returning the bill for reconsideration:**The Governor can return the bill to the state legislature for reconsideration, with or without suggestions. However the bill can be sent for the reconsideration only once.
- **Reserving the bill for the consideration of the President:**The Governor can reserve the bill for the consideration of the President. The President can then either give assent to the bill, withhold assent, or return it to the state legislature for reconsideration.

### **Issues with discretionary power of Governor:**



- **Arbitrary use of power:** The Governor's discretionary powers are subjective and can be used arbitrarily, without any clear guidelines or checks and balances.
- **Lack of transparency and accountability:** The Governor is not accountable to the state legislature or the people for the exercise of their discretionary powers.
- **Potential for misuse:** The Governor's discretionary powers can be misused to interfere with the functioning of the state government or to favor a particular political party.
- **Undermining the principles of democracy:** The discretionary powers of the Governor undermine the principles of democracy, such as the separation of powers and the rule of law.

**Question:** Discuss the issues associated with the discretionary power of the Governor in India and suggest reforms to make it more accountable and transparent.

3.

### **Worker Productivity**

- Worker productivity is the quantum of output value per unit of labour (time) cost at a micro level.
- At a macro level, it is measured in terms of the **labour-output ratio or change in Net Domestic Product (NDP) per worker in each sector.**
- In certain types of services, especially ones involving intellectual labour, measuring the value of the output is difficult, so the income of workers is usually taken as proxies to suggest productivity.



## Relationship Between Worker Productivity and Economic Growth

- An increase in productivity made through any sector is likely to affect the value added and the accumulation or growth in the economy.
- However, the relationship between the two could be quite complex.
- Increasing productivity may not lead to prosperity of the workers, as the share of profits may increase at the expense of wages.

## India's Worker Productivity

- In India, **the share of wages and salaries has declined while the share of profits has increased over the years.**
- This is perhaps linked to the **informalisation of employment, labour laws and the development and regulation regime becoming unfavourable to workers.**
- However, a US based multi-national workforce management firm has observed that **Indians are among the most hard working employees in the world.**

## Comparisons with Japan and Germany

- Comparisons of India's economy with those of Japan and Germany economies are not apt.
- Japan and Germany are neither comparable in terms of the size and quality of labour force nor in terms of the nature of their technological trajectories or their socio-cultural and political structures.

## Conclusion



- **Enhancing social investments, focusing on exploring domestic consumption potential for increased productivity with a human centric assessment of development achievements is the way to a more sustainable and desirable outcome.**

4.

- Next week, Antony Blinken and Lloyd Austin will travel to New Delhi for a '2+2' dialogue, where they will meet with India's External Affairs Minister and Defence Minister.

#### **US-India 2+2 meeting next week**

- The meeting will **discuss both bilateral and global concerns and developments in the Indo-Pacific.**
- Some of the topics that are expected to be discussed include the **Israel-Hamas conflict, the Ukraine-Russia war, the reform of international financial institutions, China, the South Asian neighbourhood, the implementation of the road map for US-India Defence Industrial Cooperation, and defence equipment co-production.**
- The Modi government's record on democratic norms and rights is also expected to be discussed.
- The 2+2 meeting is likely to see a continuation of the initiatives announced during Prime Minister Narendra Modi's state visit to Washington DC in June.

5.



- Supreme Court Collegium recommended the government to appoint new Chief Justices for the High Courts of Uttarakhand, Orissa, and Meghalaya.

### **Supreme Court Collegium System:**

- The Supreme Court Collegium is a body of **five seniormost judges** of the Supreme Court, headed by the Chief Justice of India.
- The Collegium is **responsible for recommending appointments and transfers of judges to the Supreme Court and high courts.**
- The Collegium system was evolved by the Supreme Court in the 1990s as a way to ensure the independence of the judiciary.
- The Collegium's **recommendations are binding on the government**, which cannot appoint or transfer any judge without its consent.
- In 2015, the government passed the National Judicial Appointments Commission (NJAC) Act, which sought to replace the Collegium system with a new system of judicial appointments.
- However, the Supreme Court struck down the NJAC Act in 2016.
- The Collegium system remains in place today, but there have been calls for reform.

### **Here are some of the pros and cons of the Supreme Court Collegium system:**

#### **Pros:**

- Ensures the independence of the judiciary
- Prevents the government from interfering in the appointment and transfer of judges



### **Cons:**

- Opaque and unaccountable
- Allegations of nepotism and favoritism
- Does not take into account the views of the executive or the legislature

**Question:** Discuss the role and significance of the Collegium system in the appointment of judges to the higher judiciary in India.

6.

- The National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) will introduce electoral literacy content in textbooks for students from Classes 6 to 12.
- The initiative will also extend to the curricular framework for colleges and universities.
- The Election Commission of India (EC) and the Education Ministry signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) to implement these measures.

### **Electoral literacy:**

#### **What is electoral literacy?**

Electoral literacy is the ability of citizens to understand and participate in the electoral process. It includes the knowledge of one's rights and responsibilities as a voter, the ability to cast a valid vote, and the ability to evaluate candidates and parties.



## Why is electoral literacy important?

Electoral literacy is important because it ensures that citizens are able to participate meaningfully in the democratic process. This helps to ensure that the government is elected by a representative sample of the population, and that the policies that are implemented reflect the views of the majority of citizens.

How can electoral literacy be improved?

## Benefits of electoral literacy

- **Increased voter turnout:** Electoral literacy can lead to increased voter turnout, as citizens are more likely to vote if they are informed about the electoral process and the candidates and parties on offer.
- **Reduced invalid votes:** Electoral literacy can help to reduce the number of invalid votes, as citizens are more likely to cast a valid vote if they are aware of the rules and procedures.
- **Informed decision-making:** Electoral literacy can help citizens to make informed decisions about who to vote for, as they are able to evaluate the candidates and parties based on their policies and positions on the issues.
- **Increased civic engagement:** Electoral literacy can lead to increased civic engagement, as citizens are more likely to be interested in and participate in the democratic process if they are informed about their rights and responsibilities.

**Question:** Discuss the importance of electoral literacy in a democracy. What are the



challenges faced in improving electoral literacy in India? Suggest measures to overcome these challenges.

7.

- **A recent UN assessment** highlighted the considerable lack of funding currently available to developing countries for adaption measures, with the money falling well short of the scale required, despite the rapidly growing hazards associated with climate change that demand larger efforts to adapt.

#### **Declining Funding for Adaptation:**

- A 15% drop from 2020 was observed in the amount of USD 21 billion allotted to developing nations for adaptation efforts in 2021.
- However, a recent study, as detailed in the most recent edition of the **Adaptation Gap Report by the UN Environment Programme**, shows that developing nations together need at least USD 215 billion every year throughout this decade to carry out effective adaptation activities.

#### **The Significance of Adaptation:**

- For the sake of both ecosystems and human life, adaptation is essential, especially in emerging and extremely vulnerable nations with little resilience.
- These adaptation strategies cover a broad range of activities, including strengthening coastlines, erecting seawalls (particularly for island nations), experimenting with food



crops resistant to temperature changes, developing climate-resilient infrastructure, safeguarding water supplies, and many other initiatives that assist local populations in adjusting to rising temperatures.

### **International Climate Finance Architecture:**

- Under the international framework on climate change, **developed nations have a duty to supply technology and financial support to poor nations** so they can adapt to the changing climate.
- Developing nations are free to look for outside financial assistance, even though they may use their own resources.
- As part of their climate action plans, several nations have included adaptation criteria in their **Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs)**.

### **The Adaptation Finance Gap:**

- The Adaptation Gap Report draws attention to a significant and growing disparity between the expected needs for adaptation financing which range from **USD 215 billion to USD 387 billion** and the current flows of funding which total USD 21.3 billion.
- According to the research, **the adaptation gap is at least 50% larger than earlier estimates**, ranging from 10 to 18 times greater than existing international adaptation financial flows.

### **Challenges in Closing the Gap:**



- The term “**climate finance**” refers to the efforts made to expand financial flows for all climate-related demands, including adaptation.
- Even after three years, **industrialized nations have not yet reached this goal, despite their 2009 pledge to raise at least USD 100 billion in climate money yearly starting in 2020.**
- The need for climate finance has grown significantly, with estimates currently in the trillions of dollars annually.
- Although industrialized nations pledged to increase adaptation funding at the Glasgow climate summit in 2021, the analysis suggests that this goal along with the establishment of a new climate financing target exceeding USD 100 billion annually will not be enough to address the financing gap.

### **Conclusion:**

- The UN’s Adaptation Gap Report concludes by highlighting the widening gap between the amount of money actually available and what is required for developing nations to adapt to climate change.
- Although there have been international agreements to address this issue, **the research indicates that more work is necessary to bridge the financing gap for adaptation and provide vulnerable countries with sufficient support for their adaptation efforts.**

- 8.
- **Gwalior**, in Madhya Pradesh, and **Kozhikode**, in Kerala, have just joined 55 other cities



in **UNESCO's Creative Cities Network (UCCN)**.

- Seven different creative fields—crafts and folk arts, design, film, cuisine, literature, media arts, and music are represented by these carefully chosen cities.
- **Gwalior was honored for its musical legacy, while Kozhikode was recognized for its literary accomplishments.**

### **The UNESCO Creative Cities Network (UCCN):**

- **The UCCN was founded in 2004** with the goal of promoting cooperation between communities that value creativity as an essential component of sustainable urban development.
- **This network**, which aims to maximize the creative, social, and economic potential of the cultural sectors, **spans 350 cities in more than 100 nations.**
- It is in line with UNESCO's objectives to support cultural variety and build resilience to issues like **urbanization, rising inequality, and climate change.**
- The UCCN promotes a creative culture in urban planning and problem-solving.

### **Objectives and Actions of the UCCN:**

- **Through collaborations with the public and private sectors as well as civil society**, the UNESCO Creative Cities Network empowers its member cities to acknowledge creativity as an essential component of urban development.
- **It seeks to increase opportunities for professionals in the cultural industry** while establishing centers of creativity and innovation.
- It is anticipated that member cities will support the UN's agenda for sustainable



development.

- Encouraging the exchange of experiences, knowledge, best practices, creative exchanges, research, and other activities, **the UCCN promotes its goals both locally and globally.**

### **Indian Cities in the Network:**

- Apart from Kozhikode and Gwalior, other Indian cities that are already included in the UNESCO Creative Cities Network are **Varanasi (music), Srinagar (crafts and folk arts), and Chennai (music).**

### **Kozhikode's Literary Heritage:**

- **North Kerala's Kozhikode is home to several significant characters in the state's literary and cultural scene** and has a rich literary and cultural heritage.
- The city fosters its literary legacy by serving as a center for eminent media outlets, publishing houses, and libraries.
- **The first Malayalam book, "Kundalatha," was written in Kozhikode in 1887** and is considered a seminal work of Malayalam literature by **Appu Nedungadi.**
- The city has produced a number of successful actors and filmmakers as well as well-known writers such **MT Vasudevan Nair, Vaikom Muhammad Basheer, and SK Pottekkatt.**

### **Annual Conference and Member Commitments:**



- The annual conference, which unites mayors and other stakeholders from network towns across the globe to strengthen relationships and share information on policies and initiatives, is a notable aspect of the network.
- **The next conference is planned in Braga, Portugal, in July 2024.**
- **Every four years, member cities are expected to submit Membership Monitoring Reports** that demonstrate to their continued support of the UCCN's purpose and include details about their accomplishments, action plans, lessons learned, and the effects of being named creative cities.

9.

- Eight Indians, all of whom were former members of the Indian Navy, were recently sentenced to death on espionage charges by a Qatari court, in an unexpected move.
- The Indian government is astonished by this judgment because death sentences are not usually issued by Qatar.
- Authorities in Qatar have not yet made public the exact allegations brought against the Indians.

#### **Legal Process and Indian Response:**

- **The arrests were reported to the Indian Embassy in Doha** in the middle of September, and on September 30 the inmates were given a brief opportunity to talk with their relatives.
- **Since the proceedings are confidential, the Indian government has not revealed the particular charges** and is currently considering its legal options.



- 44 Indians are now serving death sentences in nations including Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates, mostly for drug-related charges.
- **India has a history of standing by its nationals who are facing the death penalty abroad.**

### Three Possible Courses of Action:

Three solutions are being considered by India to deal with the situation:

- **The legal process:** It intends to use the legal system to contest the death sentences in higher courts.
- **Mercy Petition:** The families have petitioned the **Emir of Qatar** for forgiveness, as he is renowned for pardoning people during Ramadan and Eid.
- **Political and Diplomatic options:** India is aggressively seeking a diplomatic and political solution to the problem. This strategy includes interacting with the government of Qatar and other outside parties in an effort to win support and find a way to stop the scheduled executions. It demonstrates India's will to use diplomatic channels to defend its people and resolve the conflict peacefully.

### Challenges

- **Negotiating the accusations of spying for Israel** in the midst of geopolitical sensitivities in the region is one of the biggest issues India faces.
- **Navigating this delicate subject is critical for India at a time when the Israel-Hamas conflict is dividing the region.**



- **The results of India's diplomatic efforts** will not only decide what happens to these people, but they will also put the strength of India-Qatar relations which cover a range of topics including defense and economic cooperation to the test.

10.

- A Recent **Financial Action Task Force (FATF) report** indicates that a “violent extremist organization under investigation” in India has been successfully soliciting money via offline and online fundraising methods in well-organized networks.
- Raising money at mosques and public areas was one of the organization's strategies; the money raised was then utilized to buy guns, ammunition, and to train the group's members.
- Though it doesn't mention the group by name, **the report's findings on crowdsourcing for terrorism financing obliquely use the Popular Front of India (PFI) as a case study.**

### What is FATF?

- **It establishes global guidelines designed to stop money laundering.**
- The FATF seeks to create the political will required to implement these kinds of national legislative and regulatory reforms.
- In order to fight **organized crime, corruption, and terrorism**, the FATF has produced the FATF Recommendations, often known as the **FATF Standards.**
- These standards guarantee a coordinated global response.
- The FATF strives to halt the financing of **Weapons of Mass destruction (WMDs)** as



well.

## Complex Fundraising Networks

- According to the FATF report, **the funding networks for this extremist group are nationwide and involve both domestic and foreign transactions**, which makes the issue extremely difficult to look into.
- These money were utilized for member training in addition to the purchase of weapons and ammo.
- To provide consistent revenue for efforts related to terrorism, **a portion of the money obtained through crowdfunding was invested in companies and real estate ventures.**

## Government Actions and Banned Associations

- The PFI was deemed a “unlawful association” by the Ministry of Home Affairs in September of the previous year.
- Operations against the PFI, its offices, and its members were carried out nationally by the **National Investigation Agency (NIA) and the Directorate of Enforcement Directorate (ED).**
- The PFI, which was established in 2007 by the union of three Muslim organizations in southern India, has positioned itself as a group that defends the rights of marginalized groups, Dalits, and minorities.

## Crowdfunding for Terrorist Financing



**According to the FATF report, there are four main ways that crowdfunding platforms can be used to finance terrorism:**

- misusing websites or platforms dedicated to crowdfunding;
- using social media and messaging apps;
- misusing humanitarian, charitable, or non-profit causes; and
- combining crowdfunding with virtual assets.

Violent extremists and terrorists can raise money in a variety of ways, including by **starting crowdfunding projects, publicizing them on social media, and asking for donations in virtual goods.**

**Challenges in Regulation and Risk Assessment**

- The Financial Action Task Force (FATF) draws attention to disparities in the regulation of anti-money laundering and counter-terrorist financing (AML/CFT) in various jurisdictions, with many of them lacking comprehensive risk assessments pertaining to crowdfunding operations.
- **There is still a dearth of comprehensive data regarding the misuse of crowdsourcing for financing terrorism.**
- In the context of crowdfunding, the research emphasizes the necessity of taking more aggressive steps to reduce these risks and harmonize **AML/CFT regulations.**



1.

Researchers at the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Bombay have created carbon nanoflorets that can efficiently convert sunlight into heat.

What are Carbon nanoflorets?

Carbon nanoflorets are a unique nanostructure composed of carbon atoms arranged in a distinctive floret-like morphology. They have a high surface area and various potential applications in fields such as materials science, electronics, and nanotechnology due to their exceptional properties and structure.

These nanoflorets can absorb light at multiple frequencies, including infrared, visible light, and ultraviolet, making them highly efficient at converting sunlight into thermal energy.

2.

“Children as political citizens” refers to the concept of recognizing and involving children in the political and decision-making processes of a society or nation.

It emphasizes the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and its focus on the right to participation among children. Child participation should go beyond school-based initiatives and be recognized as a robust and sustained institutional process.

3.



Two scientists who were exploring the Earth's crust for fossil fuels discovered a large supply of hydrogen, or "white hydrogen," in northeastern France.

One of the greatest concentrations of white hydrogen ever discovered, this amazing discovery is estimated to be worth between six and 250 million metric tonnes

Naturally existing in the Earth's crust, white hydrogen is also referred to as "gold," "natural," or "geologic" hydrogen. It is called "white" because "no greenhouse gases are produced during production."

It is a greener energy source than solar or wind power since, when hydrogen burns, all that is produced is water.

In many sectors like steel, shipping, and aviation, white hydrogen can be utilised as a greener substitute

- 4.
- The Supreme Court of India has expressed support for the constitutional amendment that reserves one-third of seats in Parliament, State legislatures, and the Delhi Legislative Assembly for women as a positive step toward achieving gender parity in politics.
  - **The court, led by Justice Sanjiv Khanna, has expressed doubts about intervening to enforce the implementation of the quota law before the 2024 general election, considering it would be akin to legislating.**
  - The case has been listed for further consideration on November 22, along with a similar



petition.

### **Difficulties highlighted by the Supreme Court:**

Difficulty in implementation before 2024 general election:

- The Supreme Court observed that it would be very difficult to step in to ensure the implementation of the quota law before the general election in 2024. **This is because it would amount to virtually legislating.**
- The court explained that it would have to **consider the logistics of implementing the quota, which would involve redrawing constituency boundaries and making other changes.**
- This would be a complex and time-consuming process, and it would be difficult to complete it in time for the 2024 election.

### **Clause in the law:**

- The law says that the reservation should be implemented only after the next census followed by a delimitation exercise. The petition filed by Jaya Thakur questions this clause.
- The Supreme Court explained that this clause was included in the law to ensure that the quota is implemented in a fair and transparent manner. The census provides accurate data on the population of each state and constituency, which is essential for determining the number of seats to be reserved for women.
- **The delimitation exercise ensures that each constituency has an equal number**



**of voters, regardless of gender.**

- The court also observed that this clause is consistent with the Constitution of India, which requires that elections be held on the basis of adult suffrage and universal adult franchise.

5.

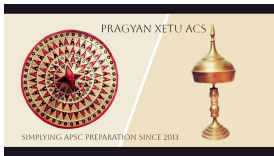
- Delhi's air quality deteriorated, reaching the 'severe plus' category for the first time in the current season.
- Lieutenant-Governor V.K. Saxena called an emergency meeting with Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal and Environment Minister Gopal Rai to address the situation.

**Air quality in Delhi deteriorates to 'severe plus'**

- Causes: Stubble burning in neighboring states, local pollutants, and unfavorable meteorological conditions
- Impact: AQI score rose from 351 at 10 a.m. on Thursday to 471 at 9 a.m. on Friday and dipped to 468 by 4 p.m.

**Emergency measures implemented**

- **GRAP Stage 3:** Ban on construction and demolition activities and plying of BS-III petrol and BS-IV diesel light motor vehicles in Delhi and a few districts in the neighbouring states. All government and private primary schools in Delhi were closed till Saturday.



## GRAP Stage 4 (not yet implemented)

- Shutting down educational institutes
- Reducing staff strength at government and private offices by 50%
- Implementing the odd-even scheme for the plying of vehicles

## Other developments

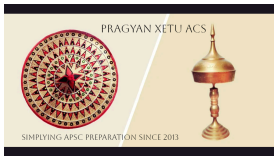
- Lieutenant-Governor V.K. Saxena called for an emergency meeting with Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal and Environment Minister Gopal Rai.
- Saxena appealed to people to remain indoors as much as possible, avoid unnecessary travel, and, if necessary, use public transport.
- He also appealed to the neighbouring states, especially Punjab, to curtail crop residue burning.

## Weather forecast

- **Unfavorable weather conditions** — low wind speed and lack of rain — are likely to persist for another two to three days.

6.

- An expert team from the National Dam Safety Authority (NDSA) examined the sinking of piers in Block-7 of Medigadda (Laxmi) Barrage in the Kaleshwaram irrigation project in Telangana.



- The NDSA team found faults in the planning and design of the project.
- They concluded that a combination of issues involving planning, design, quality control, and operation and maintenance contributed to the damage.

### Issues with Dam safety in India:

- **Lack of awareness and training:** There is a lack of awareness and training among dam owners and operators about dam safety. This leads to poor maintenance and operation of dams, which can increase the risk of dam failure.
- **Inadequate funding:** There is a shortage of funds for dam safety in India. This is due to a number of factors, including competing priorities for government spending and the lack of a dedicated funding source for dam safety.
- **Ageing infrastructure:** Many dams in India are ageing and in need of repair or replacement. However, there is a lack of resources to carry out these works.
- **Climate change:** Climate change is increasing the frequency and intensity of extreme weather events, such as floods and droughts. This puts additional stress on dams and increases the risk of dam failure.

### Way forward:

- **Increase awareness and training:** The government and other stakeholders should increase awareness and training about dam safety among dam owners, operators, and other relevant stakeholders. This will help to improve the maintenance and operation of dams and reduce the risk of dam failure.
- **Increase funding:** The government should increase funding for dam safety. This could be



done by creating a dedicated funding source for dam safety or by increasing the allocation of funds for dam safety from existing sources.

- **Improve dam safety management:**The government should improve dam safety management by developing and implementing comprehensive dam safety plans. These plans should include measures for dam inspection, maintenance, and rehabilitation.
- **Strengthen dam safety regulations:** The government should strengthen dam safety regulations and ensure that they are effectively enforced. This will help to ensure that dams are designed and constructed to meet high safety standards.
- **Address climate change:**The government should take steps to address climate change and mitigate its impact on dam safety. This could be done by investing in renewable energy, improving water management, and strengthening disaster preparedness.

**Question:** Dam safety is a critical issue in India, given the large number of dams in the country. Discuss the challenges to dam safety in India and suggest measures to address these challenges.

7.

- The Karnataka Health Department is closely monitoring Chickballapur after a positive Zika case was found in a mosquito pool in Thalakayalbetta village.
- Serum samples from 30 pregnant women from five villages in the containment zone have been sent to the National Institute of Virology (NIV) for testing.
- A containment zone has been established, covering 888 houses with a population of 4,282, and is under intense surveillance.



## Zika Virus:

- **What is Zika?:** Zika is a mosquito-borne virus that can cause birth defects in babies born to infected mothers. It can also cause other health problems, such as fever, headache, rash, joint pain, and red eyes.
- **How is Zika transmitted?:** Zika is transmitted to humans through the bite of an infected **Aedes mosquito**. Aedes mosquitoes are the same mosquitoes that transmit dengue and chikungunya.
- **Who is at risk for Zika?:** Anyone can be infected with Zika, but pregnant women and their babies are at the highest risk for serious complications.
- **What are the symptoms of Zika?:** Most people infected with Zika do not have any symptoms, or they have mild symptoms that are similar to other common illnesses. In those who do have symptoms, they usually start 3-14 days after being bitten by an infected mosquito. The most common symptoms are fever, headache, rash, joint pain, and red eyes. Symptoms usually last for 2-7 days.

8.

- A powerful earthquake with a magnitude of 6.4 struck Nepal on Friday night, leading to tremors felt across parts of North India.
- The earthquake occurred at 11.32 p.m., prompting people to quickly evacuate their homes during their preparations for the weekend.
- The National Centre for Seismology reported that the earthquake's epicenter was located in Nepal.



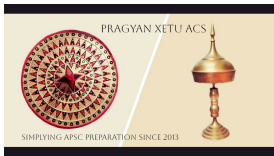
## Earthquake prone zones in India:

**Earthquake-prone zones in India are classified into four main seismic zones** based on their susceptibility to earthquakes:

- **Zone 2:** This is the least earthquake-prone zone in India and includes parts of northwestern India, the northeastern states, and the Andaman and Nicobar Islands. It has the lowest level of seismic activity.
- **Zone 3:** This zone covers most of northern India, including Delhi, Haryana, Punjab, and parts of Rajasthan. It has moderate seismic activity.
- **Zone 4:** Zone 4 includes areas with high seismic activity, such as the Himalayan region, parts of Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, and Uttarakhand. These areas are more vulnerable to earthquakes.
- **Zone 5:** This is the most earthquake-prone zone in India and includes the entire northeastern region and parts of Jammu and Kashmir. It has the highest level of seismic activity and is at the greatest risk of earthquakes.

9.

- Indian Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman met with Sri Lankan President Ranil Wickremesinghe to discuss debt treatment and other areas of cooperation.
- Sri Lanka must bring all of its major creditors on board for a debt treatment plan in order to unlock the second tranche of the IMF's EFF.
- **India has provided nearly \$4 billion in assistance to Sri Lanka during its economic crisis.**



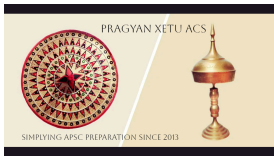
- The 12th round of negotiations on the stalled ETCA between the two countries took place from October 30 to November 1 in Colombo.

### **Debt crisis of Sri Lanka:**

- **Economic mismanagement:** The Sri Lankan government has been accused of economic mismanagement, including overspending, corruption, and a failure to diversify the economy.
- **High debt levels:** Sri Lanka has a high debt-to-GDP ratio, which means that the government owes a lot of money relative to the size of the economy. This makes it difficult for the government to borrow more money or to repay its existing debt.
- **The China factor:** the Sri Lankan government has borrowed heavily from the Chinese investors, government – it has put Sri Lanka and economy under immense pressure of debt servicing.
- **The COVID-19 pandemic:** The COVID-19 pandemic had a severe impact on the Sri Lankan economy, disrupting tourism and other key sectors.

### **Specific examples of economic mismanagement:**

- **Large subsidies:** The Sri Lankan government provides large subsidies for fuel, food, and other goods. These subsidies are expensive and have been criticized for being inefficient and benefiting the wealthy more than the poor.
- **White elephant projects:** The Sri Lankan government has invested heavily in white elephant projects, such as the Hambantota Port and the Mattala Rajapaksa International Airport. These projects have been criticized for being poorly planned and executed, and



for draining the government's finances.

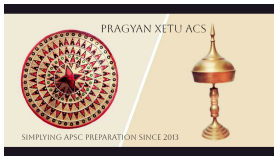
- **Corruption:** Corruption is a widespread problem in Sri Lanka. This has led to waste and inefficiency in the government, and has made it difficult for the government to raise revenue.

10.

- **The prevalent belief** that air pollution is an inevitable consequence of economic expansion is frequently rejected by the mainstream, which can lessen the urgency of developing efficient policy solutions for this problem.
- On the other hand, **new studies indicate that air pollution negatively impacts GDP growth and per capita income levels, impacting many aspects of economic activity.**
- This is especially problematic for nations like India, where frequent episodes of high pollution have a substantial negative influence on important economic centers.

### **Impact on Economic Growth:**

- The effects of air pollution on economic growth are complex. It diminishes customer footfall in services that are driven by consumption and decreases worker productivity, which results in lost labor hours.
- In addition, it reduces the productivity of assets and raises health and welfare costs, particularly for the working-age population.
- The combined effects of these factors have a significant impact on a nation's economic success.



## RBI's Assessment:

- **The Department of Economic and Policy Research (DEPR) of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** has issued a warning, stating that lost work hours stemming from climate change-related problems, such as excessive heat and humidity, could jeopardize up to 4.5% of India's GDP by 2030.
- The toll that pollution takes on annual cycles in major centers of manufacturing and services could be considerably more detrimental to economic productivity.

## Micro-Level to Macro-Level Impact:

- **According to a World Bank analysis** released in June 2023, the macro-level effects of air pollution on yearly fluctuations in GDP are a result of the micro-level consequences that the pollution has on labor supply, productivity, health, and other economically significant outcomes.
- **90% of India's actual GDP** comes from major economic districts whose data served as the basis for this analysis.

## Inter-State Variations and Economic Loss:

- **A 2021 study that was published in The Lancet Planetary Health** showed notable inter-state differences in the amount of money that India's states lost as a result of air pollution relative to their GDP.
- These losses range from 0.67% to 2.15%, with states like **Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, and Chhattisgarh** that have lower per-capita GDPs



showing the worst effects.

### **Economic Costs of Air Pollution:**

- **According to a study conducted by Dalberg Advisors** in collaboration with the Clean Air Fund, Blue Sky Analytics, and the Confederation of Indian Industry, air pollution costs Indian companies nearly \$95 billion a year, or roughly 3% of the country's GDP.
- The economic consequences are illustrated by anecdotal data gathered from different parts of India, such as decreased footfall in shopping centers and decreasing productivity in IT clusters and the solar industry.

### **Poor air quality has six main consequences:**

- higher health expenditures,
- welfare losses,
- early mortality,
- decreased consumer footfall,
- decreased asset productivity, and
- poorer labor productivity.

### **Challenges for India:**

- India's reliance on outdoor labor-intensive industries like construction, agriculture, delivery services, and security agency employment makes managing air pollution difficult.
- But even indoor jobs like working in call centers can be negatively impacted by air



pollution in terms of productivity.

## Case Study

- **A January 2019 study** that looked at the daily output of Chinese call center employees discovered that low air quality affected worker productivity.
- Employee productivity decreased by 0.35% for every ten units increase in the air pollution index.
- This resulted in longer break durations for both highly and less productive workers.

## International Rankings:

- More than 20 of the top 30 most polluted cities in the world are in India, with Delhi having the worst air quality in the world.
- Significant economic losses have resulted from this across the nation, especially when it comes to the per-capita economic losses brought on by pollution in India's largest cities.

## Conclusion:

- **There is mounting evidence that air pollution has a direct and significant influence on GDP, productivity, health, and general economic well-being**, challenging the widely held belief that it is an unavoidable byproduct of economic progress.
- **For nations like India**, addressing air pollution is becoming more and more important, with serious economic ramifications.



11.

- From October 1 to October 30, there were 66 instances of poor air quality in 16 different locations in Mumbai.
- Mumbai's air quality frequently declined to the extent that it exceeded Delhi's.

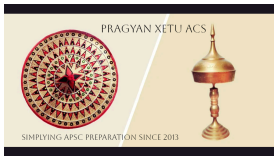
**There are multiple reasons that lead to Mumbai's air pollution problem:**

**Geographical Advantage and Climate Change:**

- **Mumbai benefits from strong breezes** that remove airborne pollution because of its coastal location.
- However, **the pattern of wind reversal**, which typically happens every 3-4 days, **is taking longer than usual** due to a shift in meteorological circumstances.
- **This delay adds to the bad air quality** in the city together with the weakened winds.

**Construction and Urbanization:**

- **October's unusually warm weather** caused winds to blow dust into the city from large construction sites in Navi Mumbai and the neighboring areas.
- Mumbai has experienced a sharp increase in building activity over the past three years, which has resulted in massive dust displacement.
- This, combined with the city's generally warm climate, prolongs the duration of dust particles trapped in the lower atmosphere.
- The issue is further made worse by refineries, industries, and the burning of trash.



- Experts do think that after these construction projects are over, the quality of the air should improve.

## Steps that should be taken

### Government and Civic Actions:

- The government and local authorities in Mumbai should first **step-up air quality monitoring** in order to address the air pollution situation.
- Although there are now 21 monitoring stations in the city, experts advise a larger network.
- Furthermore, **installing sensor-based monitoring systems** to provide hyperlocal data might help identify the sources of pollution.
- **For more efficient preventive measures**, these programs ought to be included into the current command and control framework.

### Regional Cooperation

- **Like Delhi**, Mumbai ought to think about setting up an **air quality management commission**.
- The quality of air in Mumbai can be greatly affected by pollution in nearby areas such as Thane, Navi Mumbai, and Bhiwandi.
- **Effective management of these difficulties** could be aided by the establishment of an independent commission **with the power to act beyond national boundaries**.



### **Capacity Building and Academic Involvement:**

- **To develop long-term solutions**, the government should invest in skilled labor, such as engineers, scientists, medical professionals, and legal advisors, in addition to updating the technical infrastructure.
- In order to effectively tackle air pollution, academic institutions should take a more active role in **research and implementation**.

### **Emissions-Based Policies:**

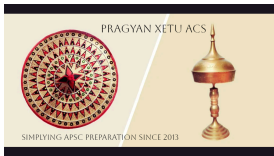
- In order to develop and implement **laws pertaining to vehicle pollution**, particularly in regions with heavy traffic, Mumbai should carry out an emissions-based analysis.
- These laws need to be strictly enforced and addressed in order to relieve traffic congestion.

### **Citizen Engagement:**

- People can help by walking and riding bicycles, which reduce vehicle pollution.
- The government ought to incentivize the populace to transition to more environmentally friendly energy sources, such as natural gas pipes, and include them in the reporting of instances of pollution and unpermitted development.

### **Learning from Other Cities:**

- **Mumbai may benefit from the knowledge that cities like Delhi and London** have



gained by establishing comprehensive networks for monitoring air quality and involving academic institutions in ongoing research.

- For example, private automobiles are prohibited in well-connected neighborhoods that are reachable by public transportation in London.
- Mumbai may explore taking similar actions, particularly in light of the Metro network's development.

### Way Forward:

- **A multifaceted strategy** is needed to address Mumbai's air pollution problem, including extensive monitoring, policy creation, regional cooperation, capacity building, citizen participation, and learning from other cities' experiences.
- Mumbai can only hope to adequately address its air quality issues by combining these initiatives.

12.

- In spite of international investors pulling out of the Indian market, **India's foreign exchange reserves increased by \$2.579 billion to \$586.111 billion.**
- This milestone was revealed by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), demonstrating the strength of the nation's foreign exchange reserves.

### Maturity of \$5 Billion Dollar-Rupee Swap:

- **The maturity of a sizable financial operation** that the RBI has been conducting is



responsible for the increase in foreign exchange reserves.

- **A \$5 billion dollar-rupee swap**, consisting of the selling of dollars and the purchase of rupees, was carried out by the RBI the year before.
- The trade was reversed on October 23, the day this swap came to maturity.

### **Smooth Delivery to RBI:**

- Indian banks successfully and without difficulty transferred the entire \$5 billion forex swap to the RBI when it matured.
- The entire \$5 billion was moved from the banking system to the account of the RBI very quickly.
- A treasury official from a public sector bank stated that this operation, which was part of a contract started by the RBI in cooperation with numerous banks around a year and a half ago, finished without any problems.

13.

- **Pakistan's borders with Afghanistan** saw long lines of trucks and a desperate trudge over the crossing as Islamabad ordered undocumented migrants to leave the country.

### **Details:**

- **While the order is meant for all foreigners**, the main brunt is being borne by Afghans, who make up the biggest group of refugees in Pakistan.
- The government had given illegal migrants the deadline of October 31 to leave, following



which they would face arrest and expulsion.

- Hours before the deadline, it began rounding up those without documents. Homes of some were razed, in order to make them leave.
- Over 4 million Afghans live in Pakistan, and the government estimates 1.7 million of these are undocumented.

### Why is Pakistan deporting Afghan migrants?

- **The government has stuck to its decision** to deport them despite appeals from the United Nations, rights groups and Western embassies.
- **Those being forced to return face an uncertain future**, with Afghanistan struggling under the weight of a collapsed economy, devastating earthquakes, food insecurity, and human rights violations under the Taliban regime. Women and girls who return will not be allowed education or jobs.
- **Many of the migrants fled Afghanistan in the 1970s during the Soviet war**, and have little ties to, or opportunities in, their home country. Many were born in Pakistan. Also, many have not been able to secure documents simply because of the long process of getting one issued.
- **Pakistan, however, maintains that it has the right to look after its own economic affairs and security.** Pakistan's economy is in dire straits, and it says undocumented migrants who pay no taxes are a drain on its scarce resources.
- More importantly, the Pakistan government has accused Afghan migrants of involvement in terror attacks, street crimes, and organised crimes such as drug trafficking. Pakistani authorities said Afghan nationals were found to be involved in attacks against the government and the army, including 14 of this year's 24 suicide bombings.



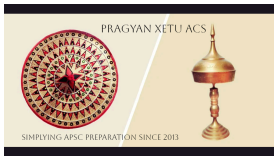
- **A particular risk upon returning** will be those who had worked for the US before the Taliban takeover of Afghanistan. Many of them had moved to Pakistan to eventually secure a passage to the US.
- According to NPR, Washington has asked Islamabad “to ensure the protection of Afghan refugees and asylum seekers, including those in the US resettlement and immigration pipelines.”

### **Why take the decision now?**

- The desperate condition of Pakistan’s economy and the terror attacks by **Tehreek-e-Taliban** Pakistan are triggers. But another important factor is that Pakistan at present is under a caretaker government, which is managing affairs till General Elections in February. This government is, thus, insulated from the potential political or electoral fallout of the expulsions.
- **The deportation order has been met with some criticism in Pakistan.** A few politicians and rights activists filed a petition with the Supreme Court challenging the “mass deportation”.

### **Conclusion**

- This deportation is a contentious move driven by economic and security concerns.
- The international community, including the Taliban, is grappling with the challenges posed by this situation, particularly as winter approaches and Afghanistan faces additional hardships.



14.

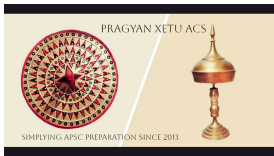
- After years of deliberations inside military and strategic circles, India is taking a major step toward developing its **first National Security Strategy**.
- Leading the charge in developing this all-encompassing plan is the **National Security Council Secretariat (NSCS)**, working in tandem with other Central ministries and departments.
- Upon completion and Cabinet approval, **the plan will become the first official national security strategy of India**.
- India's national security goals and the tactics needed to attain them are to be outlined in this project.

### **What is National Security Strategy?**

- A nation's National Security Strategy or Policy (NSS or NSP) provides a crucial framework for addressing both internal and foreign threats to the nation while also addressing the security concerns and fundamental needs of its population.
- A clear idea of the direction India should go in order to achieve its national goal is contained in a well-defined national strategy. It also offers guidelines on policy directions that all state organs must adhere to.

### **Need for National Security Strategy**

- **A modern state faces numerous, concurrent problems in a number of areas.**
- The concept of national security cannot be limited to the state's use of force to counter



dangers from both within and without. For instance, social and economic grievances may pose a threat to domestic peace and stability.

- Reacting hastily could result in these complaints going unanswered, and using force makes matters worse rather than better. For example, the ongoing exploitation of tribal tribes is the source of left-wing radicalism in India.
- **Similar to this, there is a large-scale smuggling and contraband trade that is connected to the vulnerability of our borders.** It is not possible to counter such threats only with increased military might without also addressing the factors that encourage illegal trade.
- The distinction between domestic and external affairs is getting more hazy for a contemporary state functioning in a globalized environment. For instance, terrorism poses a risk to national security even though it may have connections elsewhere. Therefore, it could be required to combine internal and external therapies.
- Such intricate interrelationships between domestic and external aspects can only be analyzed and coordinated policy responses established within the framework of a comprehensive NSS.

### Way Forward:

- A major step forward has been taken with the creation of India's first national security strategy, which attempts to address a wide variety of security issues, both conventional and unconventional.
- This plan will offer a thorough framework for defending India's interests in national security and will be updated on a regular basis to take into account shifting conditions and new threats.



1.

Russia's new strategic nuclear submarine, the Emperor Alexander III, has successfully tested a Bulava intercontinental ballistic missile

The Emperor Alexander III is the seventh of the Russian Project 955 Borei (Arctic Wind) class nuclear submarines and the fourth of the modernised Borei-A variant

2.

Israel's Heritage Minister Amichai Eliyahu was suspended indefinitely after he said in an interview that dropping a nuclear bomb on the Gaza Strip was one of the possibilities

Israel, which has one of the most powerful armies in the Middle East, is widely believed to possess nuclear weapons, although it has never publicly conducted nuclear tests

3.

Why Nepal is prone to earthquakes?

Considering recent happenings

Nepal sits on the boundary of two enormous tectonic plates — the Asian and Indo-Australian plates



Every year, these two great slabs converge at a rate of about four to five centimetres (two inches).

Even though it might not seem like much, the result of this force building up is an earthquake, which can be extremely destructive.

Nepal's situation becomes more problematic because of its flimsy buildings, which cannot withstand powerful earthquakes.

The growing population is a contributing factor to the issue

4.

Naga statesman and peace activist Niketu Iralu received the Bhupen Hazarika Integration Award (Xomonnoy Bota) 2023

Its first recipient was Lata Mangeshkar.

5.

Gajamitras of UP

A recent initiative to address the increasing incidents of human-elephant conflict. Nearly 100 villagers from areas along the Indo-Nepal border have been trained and provided with equipment to handle elephants. The initiative aims to patrol the area, act as informants, and



coordinate with forest officials from Nepal regarding elephant movement

Assam also has introduced Elephant bathing and tending as part of a tourism initiative to highlight the bond between mahouts and elephants

6.

34 km wildlife friendly elevated road coming in Kaziranga National Park

The four-lane elevated road along NH-715 (old NH-37) will be at three locations with a total length of 34.28 km and this will also include two tunnels

the methodology to be used will avoid much construction on the existing road to reduce the impact on traffic flow, use precast/prefab technology to the extent possible to minimise construction time, while there will be no work after sunset to ensure minimal disturbance to the wildlife of the KNP.

The concept of the wildlife-friendly road was developed in consultation with the Wildlife Institute of India, Dehradun, and will have elevated roads and tunnels to act as animal underpasses and overpasses respectively

7.

Sarpang district Special Economic Zone ( Bhutan King 's visit in Assam)



Sarpang SEZ would retain uniquely Bhutanese characteristics, including cultural and spiritual centres and environmentally sustainable businesses, that also incorporate high-technology innovations, and would seek to create jobs for thousands of Bhutanese youth who are increasingly moving abroad due to lack of opportunities within the country.

Note: This project is a sister concern of the earlier Gelephu project

8.

Adaptation Gap Report 2023 released by the United Nations Environment Programme

What is an Adaptation Gap?

The Adaptation Gap is the difference between the funds needed to adapt to climate change in countries (generally developing and least developed countries) and the actual financial support received. For instance, developing countries require \$215-387 billion annually for climate adaptation, but they are only receiving about \$21 billion.

9.

Arunachal Pradesh govt to designate Pre-Independence Government Schools as Heritage Sites

Besides setting up of museums in the school premises, the 'Heritage' status would also ensure special attention in terms of maintenance and infrastructure to these schools.



10.

The Restricted Area Permits (RAP) and Protected Area Permits (PAP), needed by foreigners for travel to three border states of North East, have been eased considerably with very few rejections

Now any foreign traveller can visit Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland and Mizoram through organised tours which have to be handled by a local tour operator based in that particular state

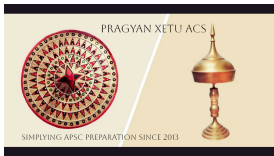
The local tour operators will have to do all the facilitation and there is very little rejection of foreign tourists in these states but they have to apply a bit early

11.

The Indian government is also planning to open border area tourism in the next few years as there are hardly any activities or industries in these areas.

In a bid to provide more opportunities to people of these areas, the Government of India is planning to open up the border areas with tourists likely to be allowed to go up to four kilometres near the China and Myanmar borders

In the meantime, many vibrant villages have been declared in terms of what is unique like the Kibithu village in Arunachal Pradesh where it is said that the sun rays fall first in the country



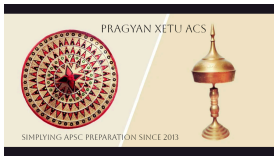
12.

The Assam government is actively considering a proposal to make available tea at a subsidized rate to all ration card holders at a time when the plantation industry is celebrating a crucial milestone of 200 years of its existence in the state

At Rs 100-150 per kg from 2024

Note: The state generates annual foreign exchange earnings estimated at an equivalent to Rs 3,000 crore.

Issues with Assam tea: rising production costs, relatively stagnant consumption, subdued prices and crop losses due to climate change. It also faces the challenge of finding a footing and holding its ground in a competitive global market.



1.

Priyanka Rajkakati, an aerospace engineer from Assam, is leaving for Antarctica for a trip, which she hopes will be a life changing experience for her.

Her sponsors for this once-in-a-lifetime trip are Assam Tourism and the Government of Assam.

Priyanka will be part of the Homeward Bound programme under which more than 80 women scientists with a STEMM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics and Medicine) background, selected from 18 countries, will be spending 19 nights in Antarctica. The journey will involve crossing the treacherous Drake's Passage which harbours some of the highest waves that can reach upto 60 feet. Landings will be near the Southern Shetland Islands and the Antarctic Peninsula.

Currently, Priyanka is working as the Head of Special Projects at vortex-io, a company aiming at creating flood warning systems.

2.

Assam's Cotton University Vice-Chancellor, Prof. Ramesh Chandra Deka, has garnered international recognition by being included in the prestigious list of the World's Top 2% Scientists by Elsevier.

Elsevier, a global leader in providing information analytics and publishing scientific research,



annually compiles the list of the World's Top 2% Scientists, recognizing the outstanding contributions of researchers and professionals across various scientific fields.

3.

Ministry of Defence will fund 20 per cent of the Numaligarh-Gohpur underwater tunnel project and the remaining will be funded by the National Highway Authority of India

As the route will also be used by the defence in order to monitor both areas and also to make it more cost-effective the funding ratio has been agreed.

4.

Parthajit Baruah, an independent filmmaker and director produced a movie based on the Nellie Massacre with the title 'The Nellie Story'.

It will be released in theatres on December 8.

The issue of immigration still poses a major concern for the state of Assam since our country attained independence. The state had witnessed violence on several occasions over the issue of identifying the 'foreigners' or illegal immigrants from Bangladesh. This violence was witnessed during the Assam Agitation, Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) protests and others.

Among these, the most violent protests on this count broke out on February 18, 1983, leading to a horrific bloodbath known as the Nellie Massacre. Nearly 2,000 people belonging



to the minority community of Bengal origin were slaughtered within six hours in Nellie.

- 5.
- Despite a virtual ban on exports and creation of a buffer stock, onion prices are still high.
  - In most metro cities, the bulb has touched the Rs 80/kg mark, with more escalation expected.

### **Government's Efforts to Control Onion Prices**

- The Indian government has taken a number of steps in recent months to rein in the skyrocketing prices of onions.
- A 40% export duty was imposed in August to boost domestic availability as part of these measures, and on October 28, a Minimum Export Price (MEP) of \$800/tonne (about Rs 67/kg) was announced.
- Together with organizations like NAFED and NCCF, the government also established a buffer stock of five lakh tonnes of onions.

### **Price Escalation Continues**

- In most metro cities, onion prices are still high despite these efforts; a kilogram of onions might cost up to Rs 80.
- The main price-setting venue of Lasalgaon's wholesale market saw a slight decline in the average transacted price, but it did not rise to the levels targeted by the government.
- Even at the retail level, onion prices are ineffectively still high, with most cities reporting



prices between Rs 70 and Rs 80/kg.

## Reasons for Continued Price Rise

- **The main causes of the high onion prices this year** are the delayed onset of the monsoon and significant damage to the harvested crop earlier in the year.
- **Rabi onions were severely damaged** by unseasonal rainfall and hailstorms in March. Rabi onions are normally harvested after March after being sown in December or January.
- **Farmers in April and May sold an estimated 60% of the onions that were supposed to be stored at cheap rates due to damage.** The transplanting of the kharif crop, which was meant to be in the market by October, was hampered by the delayed monsoon, and the late kharif crop was also delayed.
- As a result, the market's only available onions are the rabi crop that has been preserved, creating a serious supply chain mismatch.

## When Can We Expect Stabilization?

- Although kharif onions are beginning to arrive in Lasalgaon, there is not yet enough of them to have a significant impact.
- Because most farmers are clearing out their stored crop, the majority of onions on the market are still from previous stock.
- By the end of the month, when greater arrivals of the fresh crop are anticipated, things should get better and onion prices should stabilize.



- Between April and September, there was a **notable 11.6% annual decrease in India's agricultural exports.**
- **A number of reasons have been given for this decline**, including the Indian government's prohibitions and limitations on the export of certain goods, including sugar, wheat, and rice.
- In addition, since Russia invaded Ukraine, prices have decreased from their earlier highs globally.

### **Statistics and Trade Surplus**

- The Department of Commerce reports that exports of agricultural commodities totaled \$23.6 billion from April to September 2023, a decrease from \$26.7 billion during the same period in 2022.
- Agricultural trade surplus fell slightly from \$7.4 billion in April-September 2022 to \$7.2 billion in 2023 as a result of a fall in import statistics from \$19.3 billion to \$16.2 billion.

### **Factors Impacting Agricultural Exports**

#### **Impact of Global Prices**

- The agricultural trade of India, particularly its exports, is directly correlated with world prices. **The Food Price Index (FPI) of the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) showed a notable increase between 2019-20 and 2022-2023.**
- Throughout April through October of 2023, the current fiscal year, the FPI averaged 123.2 points.



- The value of agricultural commodity imports and exports is predicted to fall in 2023–2024 due to the current reduction in world prices.

## Impact of Export Restrictions

- The Indian government's implementation of export limits, motivated by worries about domestic availability and inflation, is another factor contributing to the decline in agricultural exports.
- Exports of wheat, rice, and sugar were subject to tariffs and bans, and both basmati and non-basmati rice were subject to limitations.
- The current fiscal year has seen a notable decline in wheat and rice exports, indicating the effectiveness of these efforts.
- Moreover, sugar shipments have more than half decreased.

## Concerns for Farmers

- The falling global prices have an impact on India's agricultural exports' competitiveness as well as increasing the country's farmers' susceptibility to imports.
- Edible oils and cotton are two examples of this. India's exports of cotton have sharply decreased, while imports of cotton have increased, as a result of the **considerable decline in the benchmark global Cotlook 'A' Index price for cotton.**
- Similar to this, the value of India's imports of edible oil doubled between 2019–20 and 2022–2023 as a result of the world prices surging, especially following the conflict in Ukraine.
- Edible oil imports continue at a low tax despite the price decline, which affects domestic



producers.

7.

- **A proposal to give female soldiers, sailors, and air warriors in the Armed Forces the same leave benefits as their officer counterparts for maternity**, child care, and child adoption has been accepted by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh.
- The defence ministry said that all women serving in the military, regardless of rank, will be entitled to the same leave benefits.

### **Inclusion of Women in Air Force and Navy**

- The Indian Air Force and Navy had no female sailors or airmen in the past. With the launch of **the Agnipath military recruitment** program last year, both services started admitting female members.
- Women were first inducted into the Army in 2019 as members of the Corps of Military Police (CMP), and they are currently being inducted as Agniveers.

### **Eligibility and Conditions for Leave**

- After serving a four-year tenure, women soldiers, sailors, and air warriors who are among the 25% of Agniveers accepted into the three forces based on merit selection are eligible for the extended leave benefits.
- These ladies are obligated to serve for four years before they can be married under the terms and conditions of the Agnipath program.



- Women officers in the three services are currently eligible for 180 days of paid maternity leave, which can be extended in exceptional cases for an extra month without pay.
- In addition, they are eligible for 30 days of leave in the event of an abortion or miscarriage.
- If a woman officer adopts a child under the age of one year, she is also eligible for 180 days of vacation. Short service commission women officers are entitled to 180 days of leave, whereas permanent commission women officers are eligible for 360 days.

### **Vision of Inclusive Participation**

- This choice is in line with the defense minister's goal of allowing all women, regardless of rank, to participate equally in the armed forces.
- The purpose of the leave regulations' expansion is to address family and societal challenges that are unique to women and affect the Armed Forces.
- It is anticipated to improve women's working circumstances in the armed forces and assist them in better juggling work and family obligations.



1.

Amid the global push for giving menstrual leaves, Assam has taken a leap forward with National Law University and Judicial Academy, Assam (NLUJAA) becoming the second educational institution in the northeast after Tezpur University (TU) to grant menstrual leave to its female students

While there is no law for such leaves in the country, it's the call of educational institutions to make the provision for the female students.

Such leaves shall be granted only if the student concerned has a minimum of 65% attendance per course.

there may be some flexibility and a "humane approach" may be adopted even if attendance is marginally low in certain cases.

2.

1st Time In 146 Years! Angelo Mathews 'Timed Out' At Cricket World Cup

Before this, six cricketers were ruled timed out in first-class cricket. India's Hemulal Yadav is part of that list of batters who had been rules timed out.

According to the MCC rules, "After the fall of a wicket or the retirement of a batter, the incoming batter must, unless Time has been called, be ready to receive the ball, or for the



other batter to be ready to receive the next ball within 3 minutes of the dismissal or retirement. If this requirement is not met, the incoming batter will be out, Timed out.”

3.

After seven years of planning, India is set to open its sixth consulate in Seattle (apart from Consulates in Atlanta, Chicago, Houston, New York City and San Francisco), a major hub for technology companies such as Microsoft, Amazon, Boeing, and more.

Embassy Vs Consulates:

An embassy represents one country’s government in another and is usually located in the host country’s capital, with the ambassador as the head. Consulates are smaller offices typically located in major cities of the host country, focusing on providing consular services to citizens (e.g., issuing visas and passports, providing assistance during emergencies legal aid, )living or travelling abroad.

4.

India is in the process of creating its first National Security Strategy, a document that outlines the country’s security objectives and methods to achieve them.

What is the National Security Strategy?

It is a government document that outlines a country’s security objectives and the methods to



achieve them. It addresses a wide range of threats, both traditional and non-traditional, providing a holistic view of national security and guiding defence and security policies. This strategy helps shape a nation's approach to military, economic, and diplomatic matters to protect its interests and ensure its security.

Examples: Many developed countries, including the US, the UK, and Russia, have their own National Security Strategies in place. Pakistan, too, has brought out a National Security Policy 2022-2026.

5.

Project Kusha entails operational deployment of India's own long-range air defense system by 2028-29.

This indigenous air defense system is designed to detect and destroy a wide array of threats, including stealth fighters, aircraft, drones, cruise missiles, and precision-guided munitions at ranges of up to 350 km

It seeks to establish a formidable three-layered defense system with the capability to neutralize enemy aircraft and missiles from extended distances effectively

6.

Assam Forest Minister, Chandra Mohan Patowary has released a strategy document for the conservation of the State Bird, the "White-winged duck", prepared by the Wildlife Trust of



India, in collaboration with the Assam Forest Department.

Assam and Arunachal Pradesh is the last stronghold of this species, hosting approx. 50% of its global population with an estimate of c. 450 individuals. As per the latest studies conducted in the early 1990s, 21 protected areas were known to support its population globally

The prime threats concerning the White-winged duck include destruction, degradation, disturbance of wetlands and pristine rainforests, loss of nesting habitats and poaching of eggs and the bird. The strategy document outlines action plans and frameworks for the long-term conservation of White-winged ducks in Assam.

7.

- The Supreme Court expressed displeasure over Governors withholding key Bills, especially in non-BJP-ruled states like Punjab, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, and Telangana.
- The court criticized the practice of State governments having to approach the Supreme Court for judicial intervention to push forward these Bills.

**More information on the news:**

- Chief Justice of India D.Y. Chandrachud, leading a three-judge Bench, emphasized the need for Governors and Chief Ministers to resolve such matters without court intervention.
- The Chief Justice urged everyone, including Governors and Chief Ministers, to engage in



self-reflection and emphasized that Governors are not elected by the people.

- The case in question involves a petition filed by the Punjab government, alleging that the Governor had delayed the approval of seven crucial Bills related to fiscal matters and state-affiliated colleges.

### **Impact of delaying the bills by State Governors:**

- Delaying key bills by State Governors hampers the legislative process.
- It can lead to uncertainty and impede government initiatives.
- Delays may affect the functioning of state programs and policies.
- It can result in disputes and legal challenges, necessitating Supreme Court intervention.
- The delay may also hinder economic and social development within the state.
- Governors are appointed, not elected, and should consider the democratic process and constitutional roles.

**Question:** Critically examine the impact of delaying bills by State Governors on the functioning of the state government and the lives of its citizens. Suggest measures to ensure timely assent to bills passed by the legislature.

- 8.
- Karnataka's Forest and Environment Minister, Eshwar Khandre, has directed the Forest Department to establish a dedicated rapid response leopard task force for Bengaluru city.
  - The directive follows repeated leopard sightings in residential areas of Bengaluru, driven by wild animals venturing into the city due to a lack of rainfall and food shortages.



## Reasons for increasing man animal conflict:

- **Competition for resources:**As human populations grow and demand for resources increases, humans and wildlife are increasingly competing for food, water, and space. This can lead to animals raiding crops or livestock, and humans encroaching on wildlife habitats.
- **Changing human behavior:**Changes in human behavior, such as increased recreational activities in wildlife areas and the keeping of exotic pets, can also contribute to MAC. For example, feeding wildlife can make them more dependent on humans and less wary of them, increasing the risk of attacks.
- **Climate change:** Climate change is also exacerbating MAC. Extreme weather events such as droughts and floods can displace wildlife and make them more desperate for food and water, leading them to interact with humans more frequently.

## Way Forward for Reducing Man-Animal Conflict:

- **Habitat protection and restoration:**Protecting and restoring wildlife habitats is essential to reduce MAC. This includes creating wildlife corridors to connect fragmented habitats, replanting forests, and establishing protected areas.
- **Human-wildlife conflict mitigation measures:**Implementing specific measures to reduce conflict between humans and wildlife can be very effective. For example, using fencing to protect crops and livestock, building barriers to prevent animal access to roads and settlements, and using deterrents such as sound or light devices can all help to reduce conflict.
- **Education and awareness:**Raising awareness among both humans and wildlife



communities is crucial to reduce MAC. This includes educating people about wildlife behavior, the risks of feeding or approaching wild animals, and the importance of coexisting with wildlife.

- **Community engagement:** Involving local communities in MAC management is essential for long-term success. This includes empowering communities to identify and address conflict issues, providing them with resources and training, and incorporating local knowledge and traditional practices into conflict mitigation strategies.
- **Research and monitoring:** Ongoing research and monitoring are needed to better understand the causes and patterns of MAC. This information can be used to develop more effective mitigation strategies and policies.
- **Policy and legislation:** Strong policies and legislation are needed to support MAC management efforts. This includes laws that protect wildlife habitats, regulate the keeping of exotic pets, and provide funding for conflict mitigation programs.

**Question:** Examine the factors contributing to the increasing man-animal conflict in India. Suggest measures to mitigate this conflict and promote harmonious coexistence between humans and wildlife.

- 9.
- Over 50 acres of agricultural land were destroyed by landslips near Munnar in Idukki, Kerala, due to extremely heavy rainfall.
  - The affected areas are in the Santhanpara gram panchayat, leading to significant damage to agricultural land.



## Impact of landslips:

- **Loss of life and property:** Landslides can cause significant loss of life and property damage. The sudden and destructive nature of landslides can leave little time for people to escape, and the weight of debris can crush buildings and infrastructure.
- **Disruption of infrastructure and transportation:** Landslides can disrupt transportation networks, roads, and railways, making it difficult for people and goods to move around affected areas. This can hinder economic activities and access to essential services.
- **Environmental damage:** Landslides can trigger erosion, sedimentation, and damage to natural ecosystems. They can also disrupt water supplies and contaminate water sources.
- **Social and psychological impacts:** Landslides can have a devastating impact on the social fabric of communities. Survivors may experience trauma, anxiety, and depression, and the loss of homes and property can disrupt livelihoods and social ties.

## Mitigation Strategies for Landslides:

- **Hazard mapping and risk assessment:** Identifying landslide-prone areas through detailed mapping and risk assessment is crucial for planning and implementing mitigation measures. This involves understanding the geology, topography, and land-use patterns of an area.
- **Land-use planning and regulation:** Implementing land-use regulations and zoning restrictions can help to minimize human encroachment in landslide-prone areas. This may involve restricting development in areas with steep slopes, unstable soils, or a history of landslides.



- **Slope stabilization and protection measures:** Engineering measures can be employed to stabilize slopes and reduce the risk of landslides. These measures include terracing, retaining walls, drainage systems, and vegetation cover.
- **Early warning systems and evacuation plans:** Developing early warning systems that can detect landslides and provide timely alerts to communities is essential for reducing loss of life. This may involve installing monitoring systems, training local observers, and establishing evacuation plans.

10.

- Non-BJP ruled States such as Tamil Nadu, Kerala, and Punjab accuse their Governors of delaying the passage of crucial Bills into law.
- Bills related to public health, higher education, Lokayukta, and cooperative societies have been kept pending.
- Tamil Nadu alleges that Governor R.N. Ravi has caused a “constitutional deadlock” by sitting on Bills for months.
- Kerala states that eight proposed laws have been pending with the Governor for years.
- Punjab reports that seven Bills have been stuck with the Governor since June, affecting the functioning of the administration.

### **Governors' Discretion:**

- Article 200 of the Constitution outlines the options available to the Governor when presented with a Bill passed by both Houses of the Legislature.
- The Governor can declare assent, withhold assent, or reserve the law for the



consideration of the President.

- If assent is withheld, the Bill should be returned to the Legislative Assembly for reconsideration or amendments, with the Governor ultimately assenting after reconsideration.
- The first proviso in Article 200 clarified that the Governor's discretion should not be exercised independently but on the advice of the State Cabinet.

### **Interpretation of "As Soon As Possible":**

- The Constitution states that the Bill should be returned "as soon as possible," leaving room for interpretation.
- The Supreme Court has defined this phrase as "as early as practicable without avoidable delay."
- Justice Rohinton F. Nariman suggested that a "reasonable time" would mean three months.
- The States request the Supreme Court to interpret and set a time limit for Governors to assent or return Bills, as recommended by the Sarkaria Commission in 1988.

### **Review of Purushothaman Nambudiri Case:**

- Kerala calls for the formation of a seven-judge Bench to review the 1962 Purushothaman Nambudiri case.
- The case stated that Article 200 did not specify a time limit for Governors to decide on Bills, which the State argues did not consider the possibility of indefinite delays by Governors.



11.

- India and Bhutan have agreed to discuss new routes of regional connectivity and upgrade border and immigration posts.
- This development supports Bhutan's plans for a smart city at Gelephu on the border between Bhutan and Assam.

#### **More about this news:**

- The two countries will conduct a final survey for a 58-km crossborder rail link between Gelephu and Kokrajhar in Assam, and explore an 18 km rail link between Samtse in Bhutan and Banarhat in West Bengal.
- India will allow Bhutanese trade items to be transported from Haldibari in West Bengal to Chilahati in Bangladesh.
- This rail connectivity could facilitate air connectivity for India's northeastern region, as Bhutan plans to build an international airport at Gelephu.

#### **Importance of India Bhutan relation:**

- **Shared history and culture:** India and Bhutan share a long history and cultural ties, with deep-rooted ties of friendship and mutual respect.
- **Strategic partnership:** India and Bhutan have a strong strategic partnership, with close cooperation on security, border management, and defense.
- **Economic cooperation:** India is Bhutan's largest trading partner and development partner, providing significant economic assistance and support.



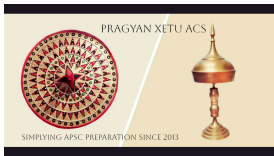
- **Hydropower cooperation:** Bhutan is a major source of hydropower for India, and the two countries are working together to develop joint hydropower projects.

### Challenges in India-Bhutan Relations

- **India's dominance:** India's size and economic power can sometimes lead to perceptions of dominance in the relationship.
- **Water sharing:** There have been occasional disputes over water sharing between India and Bhutan.
- **Third-party interference:** There have been concerns about third-party interference in the India-Bhutan relationship. For example, China - Bhutan relations.

### Way Forward for India-Bhutan Relations

- **Strengthening the institutional framework:** India and Bhutan should work together to strengthen the institutional framework of their relationship, including regular meetings of high-level officials and joint mechanisms for cooperation.
- **Promoting people-to-people contact:** India and Bhutan should promote people-to-people contact through increased tourism, cultural exchanges, and educational opportunities.
- **Addressing the issue of water sharing:** India and Bhutan should work together to develop a comprehensive framework for water sharing that is fair and equitable for both countries.
- **Maintaining vigilance against third-party interference:** India and Bhutan should maintain vigilance against third-party interference in their relationship and work together



to protect their shared interests.

**Question:** Critically examine the historical and strategic importance of India-Bhutan relations. Discuss the challenges faced by the relationship and suggest measures to further strengthen the bilateral ties.

12.

- The Delhi administration decided to bring back the odd-even road restriction plan a day after Diwali because of the city's already dangerously high air pollution levels.
- **Delhi's air quality index (AQI)**, which is classified as **"severe plus"** pollution, has continuously above 450, according to data from the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB).

### **The Odd-Even Scheme:**

- **Cars are only permitted to operate under the odd-even method** on certain days, which are determined by their registration numbers.
- Even-numbered cars are permitted on even dates, whereas odd-numbered cars are permitted on odd dates.
- By cutting traffic by about half, **this action may help to lower AQI readings.**

### **Current Vehicle Statistics:**

- **Roughly one-third of the approximately 75 lakh registered vehicles in Delhi are**



### **cars.**

- The odd-even program will result in almost 12.5 lakh cars being taken off the road every day.
- Furthermore, about 20 lakh vehicles registered in the neighboring cities of the National Capital Region (NCR) also travel in Delhi, albeit their presence at any given time doesn't greatly affect the traffic there.

### **Vehicular Emissions and Pollution in Delhi:**

- **Delhi's geographical location in an atmospheric "bowl" that traps pollutants**, particularly at times of low wind and lowering temperatures, exacerbates the city's air pollution.
- **Smog in the city is caused by the yearly crop stubble burning practices** in nearby states like Punjab and Haryana as well as the Diwali celebrations.
- According to studies, **automobiles can contribute up to 30% of Delhi's yearly PM2.5 concentration**, while NO<sub>2</sub> and other pollution emissions are rising.

### **Effectiveness of the Odd-Even Scheme:**

- There has been discussion about the odd-even scheme's effectiveness on a worldwide scale.
- Following the 2019 implementation in Delhi, a research was carried out to compare the AQI values in Delhi with those in neighboring areas such as Gurgaon, Ghaziabad, and Noida, which did not adopt the plan.
- The average AQI in Delhi had the biggest decline, according to the data, dropping by 41



points during the odd-even interval.

- Experts stress that there are many variables that affect air quality, making it difficult to pinpoint the precise effect of a measure like this on air pollution.

## Conclusion

- The odd-even road rationing program was reinstated by the Delhi government in order to alleviate the extreme air pollution in the city.
- Although the program has had some success in the past, experts agree that resolving Delhi's air quality problems calls for a multipronged strategy that takes into account a number of contributing elements.

13.

- Although there is some evidence that the odd-even vehicle policy can lower pollution levels, **experts stress that there is inconsistent data available** and that the reduction may not be enough to address health-related effects.

## Details:

- **According to experts this policy is insufficient** because it does not consistently reduce the number of vehicles on the road by 50%.
- Furthermore, because **pollutant concentration is dependent on meteorological variables like wind speed**, a decrease in emissions may not always translate into a comparable decrease in pollutant concentration.



- Reductions have occurred in certain regions but not in others, or they have occurred but not for long.

### Health Implications of Odd-Even Policy:

- **Experts believe that since a 20% reduction in PM<sub>2.5</sub>** (a common pollutant) levels beyond 500 would still result in dangerous levels above 400, it is insufficient to reduce health hazards.
- **Long-term exposure to pollution** has been associated with a higher chance of developing a number of illnesses, such as depression, diabetes, heart disease, lung disease, cancer, and hypertension.

### Findings from Studies:

- The odd-even strategy in Delhi has been shown **to lower particulate matter (PM) levels, with reductions ranging from 5% to 10%**, according to several studies.
- **Two studies published in 2016** revealed that PM<sub>2.5</sub> concentrations had decreased by 2 to 3%, while one study found that average PM<sub>2.5</sub> levels had decreased by 5.73%.
- **It was suggested that slower-moving vehicles, less engine idling, and less traffic congestion** were the reasons for the drop in PM levels during odd-even hours.
- However, midday rather than early morning saw the biggest decrease in PM levels.

### Reduction of NO<sub>2</sub> as a Benefit:

- **Nitrogen dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>)**, which is mostly produced by vehicle emissions, is one gaseous

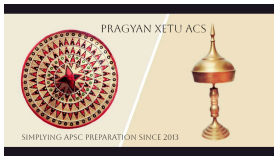


pollutant that the odd-even strategy may help reduce.

- NO<sub>2</sub> levels are predicted to drop as there are fewer cars on the road and less traffic.
- This is significant because, **according to a recent AIIMS study**, short-term exposure to NO<sub>2</sub> resulted in a 53% rise in the number of patients visiting the hospital's emergency room up to a week later.
- **The study also indicated that emergency room visits increased more with an increase in NO<sub>2</sub> levels than with PM<sub>2.5</sub>.**

### Long-Term Solutions:

- **The odd-even strategy may not be a long-term solution** to Delhi's air pollution issue, according to experts.
- Rather, they advocate for actions that will probably produce greater outcomes in the upcoming years, such as **encouraging electric vehicles and gradually phase-out of older BS-IV cars.**
- They also suggest **putting policies into action on a regional level as opposed to just in Delhi.**
- Doctors also recommend **installing air purifiers in schools** to shield students from the negative impacts of air pollution.
- **Lastly, scientists advise against using firecrackers to lessen the negative effects of air pollution,** even though the odd-even policy might assist reduce pollution after Diwali.



- **India's first written National Security Strategy (NSS)**, which is being drafted by the **National Security Council Secretariat (NSCS)** will represent a substantial change in the country's national security strategy.
- **The necessity of a clearly stated NSS** has come up for discussion in recent years as its significance in tackling many facets of national security has become increasingly apparent.

### **Importance of a Publicly Articulated NSS:**

- A clearly stated National Security Strategy (NSS) is essential since **it explains the Indian government's approach to managing national security from all angles.**
- **It is essential to nation's well-being** and continued existence because it promotes unity, mutual understanding, and a common understanding of the goals of national security.

### **Comprehensive Nature of NSS:**

- Numerous security facets, such as those pertaining to the **military, economy, diplomacy, internal affairs, people, environment, food, and water security**, will be covered by the NSS.
- Although they have important responsibilities to play, internal and military security should make other types of security possible.
- Strong defense and internal security management is therefore crucial.

### **India's Growing Significance in World Affairs:**



- **India is becoming an important player in world politics** due to its rising stature and growth forecasts.
- **The NSS will require ownership and approval at the highest levels of government** in order to withstand thorough examination and scrutiny from a wide range of nations and geopolitical scenarios.

#### **Timeline for the NSS:**

- **It is important to draft the NSS slowly and thoroughly**, allowing for revisions and adjustments as conditions evolve.
- Although a detailed progress report is not provided, **two years seems to be an acceptable amount of time to complete the NSS.**

#### **Way Forward:**

- **In tackling the complex facets of national security**, India's adoption of a widely stated National Security Strategy is a noteworthy milestone.
- It is anticipated that the NSS will include a wide range of security aspects, entail in-depth discussions, and act as a foundational framework for security planning at all planning levels.
- **The completion schedule ought to strike a balance between the necessity of thorough consideration and the dynamic nature of security threats.**



- A powerful 6.4 magnitude earthquake, the worst since 2015, struck Nepal's remote mountainous region.

### Details:

- According to the National Earthquake Monitoring and Research Centre, the epicentre of the earthquake was in Jajarkot district, about 500km west of Kathmandu.
- **Areas affected: Jajarkot and Rukum districts of Nepal, New Delhi and neighbouring areas of India.**

### Earthquake:

- Earthquakes are natural geological phenomena that occur when there is a sudden release of energy in the Earth's crust.
- **Epicenter:** The epicentre is the point on the Earth's surface directly above the underground point where an earthquake originates. It is the location where the seismic waves, generated by the release of energy during the earthquake, first reach the Earth's surface.
- **Hypocenter (or Focus):** The hypocenter, also known as the focus, is the actual point within the Earth where the seismic energy is released during an earthquake. It is underground, and its depth can vary. Earthquakes can have shallow hypocenters, which are closer to the Earth's surface, or deep hypocenters, which are further below the surface.

### Why is Nepal prone to so many earthquakes?



- **Nepal lies in one of the most active tectonic zones (seismic zone IV and V) of the world**, making the country extremely vulnerable to earthquakes.
- Large tectonic plates make up the crust of the Earth. These land masses, which contain entire continents, are in motion and colliding with one another all the time.
- **Earthquakes are common in Nepal which is situated on the ridge where the Tibetan and Indian tectonic plates meet** and advance two meters closer to one another every century which results in pressure which is released in the form of earthquakes.
- **A collision between the Indian and Tibetan plates** has been going on underground for a long time which has accumulated tremendous energy due to which western Nepal is under the threat of bigger earthquakes.

**United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)** ranks Nepal 11th on the list of the most vulnerable countries to earthquakes and Nepal's capital Kathmandu is one of the top cities prone to earthquakes.

### **The Devastating Impact of Earthquakes: Destruction and Environmental Consequences**

- **Damage to life and property:** Earthquakes of high magnitude cause total collapse of the entire structure/building. This is accompanied by disruption of underground pipelines and railway lines, collapse of dams which cause sudden floods that in turn endanger life and livelihood.
- **Changes in river courses:** Sometimes River channels are blocked or their courses are changed due to the impact of earthquake.



- **Tsunami and other associated disasters:** Earthquakes cause Tsunamis which disrupts life in settlements of coastal areas. It sinks large ships. Example: Tsunami in Indonesia  
Tsunami near Sumatra coast had cost properties worth billions of rupees.
- **Landslides and avalanches** are also caused by earthquakes.

16.

- A major controversy has erupted in poll-bound Telangana over alleged engineering lapses in the Rs 1.5 lakh crore Kaleshwaram project

### **What is the Kaleshwaram Lift Irrigation Project?**

- **Located in Kaleshwaram, Bhupalpally, Telangana**, the Kaleshwaram Lift Irrigation Scheme is a multi-use irrigation project on the Godavari River.
- The project begins where the **Pranahita and Godavari rivers converge**.
- In 2014, the Kaleshwaram project in Telangana was modified, expanded, and renamed from its original Pranahita-Chevella project in the former Andhra Pradesh.

### **What does the project entail?**

- This project is special because Telangana will build a barrage at the Medigadda confluence to capture water from two other rivers that flow into the Godavari.
- The water will then be pumped back into the main Godavari River and directed through lifts and pumps into an extensive network of reservoirs, water tunnels, pipelines, and canals.



- With the longest water tunnels, largest pumps, underground surge pools, and aqueducts in the world, the project has broken numerous records.
- The reservoirs are interconnected through a network of tunnels running about 330 km, the longest being 21 km long connecting Yellampalli reservoir with Medaram reservoir in Peddapalli district.

### How important is KLIS to Telangana?

- **Kaleshwaram will transform Telangana into an agricultural powerhouse.**
- The project will enable farmers in Telangana to reap multiple crops with a year-round supply of water wherein earlier they were dependent on rains resulting in frequent crop failures.
- **KLIS covers several districts which used to face rainfall deficit and the groundwater is fluoride-contaminated.**
- **Apart from providing water for irrigation to 45 lakh acres**, a main component of the project is supply of drinking water to several towns and villages and also to **twin cities of Hyderabad and Secunderabad.**
- **Mission Bhagiratha**, the Rs 43,000-crore project to supply drinking water to every household in villages, draws a large quantity of water from the KLIS and some quantity from projects on River Krishna.
- **There is a fresh water fishing industry in the state** as the numerous water bodies created under the project are also being used to grow fish and locals are given rights to fish and sell.



- During a meeting with Bhutan King Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck, Prime Minister Narendra Modi reaffirmed India's strong commitment to its special partnership with Bhutan.
- In line with its aims, he reaffirmed India's unwavering support for Bhutan's socioeconomic growth.

### **Advancements in Connectivity:**

- The two leaders decided on a final location survey for a **proposed cross-border railway connecting Kokrajhar in Assam to Gelephu in Bhutan**, according to a joint statement released after their discussions.
- They also talked of building **a railroad to connect Samtse, Bhutan, with Banarhat, West Bengal.**

### **Expanding India-Bhutan Partnership:**

- The extension of the India-Bhutan collaboration was warmly evaluated by both Modi and Wangchuck, especially in the **areas of connectivity, infrastructure for cross-border trade, trade, mutual investments, energy, health, education, space technology, and people-to-people interactions.**
- This indicates a dedication to expanding the range of cooperation between the two countries.

### **Significance**



- During his journey to India, King Wangchuck was part of a renewed push by China and Bhutan to resolve their long-standing boundary issue as soon as possible.
- **This visit emphasizes the value of Bhutan's connection with India and signals a strengthening of such ties.**

18.

- Prior to the Diwali celebration, **the Indian government formally started selling subsidized wheat flour** to alleviate the burden of exorbitant pricing on people.
- The wheat flour, which is marketed under the brand name **"Bharat Atta,"** is available at a heavily discounted price of Rs 27.50 per kilogram, which is far less than the going rate of Rs 36–70 per kilogram, depending on region and quality.

#### **Distribution Channels:**

- **Cooperatives like Kendriya Bhandar, the National Cooperative Consumers' Federation (NCCF), and the National Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Federation of India (NAFED)** will distribute the "Bharat Atta."
- Approximately 2,000 stores and 800 mobile trucks will help with distribution across the nation.

#### **Formal Launch and Wider Availability:**

- The official launch of 'Bharat Atta' was marked by the flagging off of 100 mobile vans by Union Food and Consumer Affairs Minister Piyush Goyal, who also said that the subsidized



wheat flour, priced at Rs 27.50 per kg, will be made available nationwide.

- Sales were modest during the trial period, but it is anticipated that increased demand will result from a wider availability through mobile vans and stores.



1.

Assam Cabinet has decided to bring the English Language Teaching Institute, Assam (ELTIA), under the administrative control of the State Council of Educational Research and Training (SCERT). This move is expected to streamline the management and development of English language education in the state.

English Language Teaching Institute, Assam (ELTIA) is a premier institute of Assam in the field of English Teacher Training. It is an autonomous organization established by the Department of Education, Govt. of Assam in 1986. ELTI, Assam was established with the objectives of

Promoting teaching and learning English Language in Assam

Training teachers in English

Improving syllabus, textbook, examination systems and related matters in English in Assam

2.

Assam government on Tuesday announced that it will be raising Dearness Allowance (DA) for the state government employees by 4%, and with that, the total DA for them will stand at 46%. The new ruling will be effective from December 1.

Meanwhile, the arrears effective from July 2023 to November 2023 will be paid in two equal installments with the first in December and the second in April, 2024



For calculation, DA is majorly divided into two categories: Industrial Dearness Allowance and Variable Dearness Allowance.

Industrial Dearness Allowance applies to employees working in public sector enterprises and government-owned corporations.

The IDA for public sector employees undergoes quarterly revision depending on the Consumer Price Index to help offset the impact of rising levels of inflation.

Variable Dearness Allowance applies to employees working in specific industries, particularly those in the labor-intensive sectors of the central government.

The rates of VDA are revised periodically by the respective wage boards or authorities to account for changes in the cost of living.

3.

The Supreme Court Tuesday ordered a ban on firecrackers across India, saying the directions against the use of barium and banned chemicals in firecrackers are applicable to all states

Why Barium is used in firecrackers?

Barium nitrate and chlorate give fireworks a green colour and also increases its shelf life

4.

**Topic: GS3 - Health sector**



## Context:

- Karnataka is awaiting reports on mosquito pool samples from Chikkaballapur that tested positive for the Zika virus.
- The Indian Centre has written to all states, including Karnataka, urging them to enhance entomological surveillance and intensify vector control activities.
- This action comes in response to recent Zika Virus Disease (ZVD) cases detected in Kerala and Maharashtra and the finding of the virus in mosquito pool samples from Chikkaballapur district, Karnataka.

## About Zika virus:

- Zika virus is a mosquito-borne virus primarily transmitted through the bite of infected Aedes mosquitoes.
- **It can also be transmitted through sexual contact, blood transfusion, and from pregnant women to their fetuses.**
- Zika virus infection is often asymptomatic, but it can cause mild to severe symptoms, including fever, rash, joint pain, and conjunctivitis.
- In pregnant women, Zika infection can lead to birth defects, such as microcephaly, in their babies.
- **There is no specific antiviral treatment for Zika**, and prevention involves avoiding mosquito bites, using barrier methods during sex, and taking precautions in areas with Zika transmission.
- Zika outbreaks have occurred in various regions, including South and Central America, the Caribbean, and Southeast Asia.



- Research and monitoring continue to better understand the virus and develop potential vaccines.

5.

**Topic: GS3 - agriculture**

**Context:**

- The Supreme Court has suggested that the Centre consider the Punjab government's proposal to phase out paddy cultivation in the state.

**What is the news?**

- The aim is to incentivize farmers to switch to traditional crops like millets by providing them with a minimum support price (MSP).
- This initiative aims to address the issue of widespread burning of paddy stubble and revive the alarmingly low water table in Punjab.
- The Supreme Court emphasized that Punjab should not transition from being a granary to a virtual desert.
- Paddy cultivation, which was promoted under the Food Security Act, has led to a significant decline in the water table in Punjab.
- The state currently cultivates 31 lakh acres of paddy, even though it is not native to Punjab.
- The proposal suggests diversifying crops and providing MSP for alternative crops like



millet and bajra to encourage farmers to shift away from paddy cultivation.

### Issues with water intensive cultivation in India:

- **Depleting Water Table:** Water-intensive crops like rice and sugarcane have led to a significant drop in the groundwater level in many regions, posing a threat to water availability.
- **Drought Vulnerability:** Excessive reliance on water-intensive crops makes regions susceptible to drought, affecting food security and livelihoods.
- **Resource Inefficiency:** Water-intensive cultivation often results in low resource efficiency, as a large amount of water is required to produce a relatively small amount of crops.
- **Energy Consumption:** Pumping groundwater for irrigation consumes a substantial amount of energy, contributing to higher production costs and environmental impact.
- **Climate Change Impact:** Water-intensive agriculture can exacerbate the impacts of climate change, as water resources become scarcer and more unpredictable.

**Question:** In light of the challenges posed by water-intensive cultivation in India, discuss the significance of promoting sustainable farming practices and crop diversification for ensuring food security and environmental sustainability.

6.

**Topic: GS2 - International relations.**



## Context:

- The Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) has experienced internal displacement of 6.9 million people, with nearly one million displaced in North Kivu due to the conflict with the rebel group M23.

## Emergence of conflict and present situation:

- The conflict in the DRC dates back to the 1990s and involves numerous rebel groups operating in the eastern provinces.
- **Factors contributing to displacement include ethnic intolerance, political uncertainty, regional tensions, and a humanitarian crisis.**
- Prominent rebel groups include M23, the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF), and the Cooperative for Development of the Congo (CODECO).
- Rwanda and the DRC accuse each other of supporting rebel groups, further increasing tensions in the region.
- The East African Community (EAC) deployed troops in eastern DRC, leading to protests demanding their withdrawal.
- **Displacement is driven by ongoing violence, political instability, and a lack of international intervention.**
- **The humanitarian crisis has left over 1.1 million people in need of food support in North Kivu, Ituri, and South Kivu.**
- Insufficient funding from international actors hampers efforts to address the crisis effectively.



7.

**Topic: GS3 - science and technology**

### **Power Transmission Basics**

- **Transmission efficiency is higher at lower current and higher voltage.**
- Transformers increase voltage and reduce current before feeding into transmission lines.
- Transmission cables can be seen transporting current at 115 kV, 230 kV,
- Cables have some resistance, which results in some energy loss.
- The longer the distance of transmission, the lower the transmission cost.

### **Three-Phase AC Power**

- The most common way to transfer electric power is in the form of three-phase AC.
- **AC frequency is equal to the voltage flipping frequency.**
- In a three-phase AC circuit, there are (at least) three wires.
- All three wires transport AC power.

### **Power Transmission**

- **In a three-phase AC circuit, each wire transmits an AC current in a different phase.**
- Wires are routed to transformers that step-up their voltage.
- Wires are suspended from transmission towers.



- **Insulators in contact with the wires draw away some current if there is a surge in the line.**
- **Circuit-breakers 'break' the circuit if there is too much current.**
- Towers are also grounded and equipped with arresters.
- Dampers prevent vibrations in the wires from affecting the towers'
- Switches are used to control the availability of current and to move currents between different lines.

## **Power Grids**

- **A national grid includes all three components of power supply: generation, transmission, and distribution.**
- Grids have storage facilities that store electrical energy when there's a surplus supply and release it in times of deficit.
- Grids also have sources like gas turbines that can provide power on short notice.
- Grids need to respond to failure in different parts of the network.
- A grid becomes a wide-area synchronous grid if all the generators connected to it are producing an AC current at the same frequency.

8.

**Topic: GS2 - Indian polity**

**Context:**



- The Supreme Court has warned the Centre against selectively bypassing individuals recommended by the collegium for judicial appointments based on their political connections or defense of cases against the government.
- The court emphasized the need for a balanced approach considering the involvement of lawyers with political parties and the expertise of criminal lawyers.
- It expressed concern over the government's pick-and-choose policy in the appointment and transfer of High Court judges, urging an end to such practices.

### **Issues with political interference in judicial appointments:**

- **Threat to Judicial Independence:** Political interference in judicial appointments poses a significant threat to the independence of the judiciary, which is essential for upholding the rule of law.
- **Erosion of Merit:** Appointments based on political considerations rather than merit can lead to less-qualified individuals becoming judges, undermining the quality of justice delivered.
- **Undermining Collegium System:** The interference can undermine the role of the judiciary's collegium system, which is designed to recommend appointments based on a consensus among senior judges.
- **Diminished Public Trust:** Public trust in the judiciary may erode when political considerations, rather than legal acumen and integrity, drive appointments.
- **Influence on Judicial Decisions:** Judges who owe their appointments to political interference may be more susceptible to making decisions that align with the interests of the appointing authority.
- **Unpredictable Judicial Outcomes:** Political interference may result in unpredictable



judicial outcomes that are inconsistent with established legal principles.

- **Potential for Corruption:** Politically influenced appointments may create opportunities for corruption in the judiciary.
- **Challenges to Checks and Balances:** An independent judiciary is crucial for maintaining checks and balances within a democracy, and political interference can disrupt this equilibrium.

**Question:** Discuss the implications of political interference in judicial appointments on judicial independence and its role in upholding the rule of law. Suggest measures to ensure a transparent and merit-based judicial appointment process in India.

9.

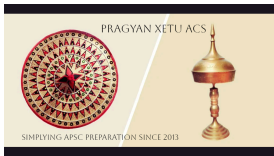
**Topic: GS3 - air pollution.**

**Context:**

- The Supreme Court clarified that its orders to minimize air and noise pollution caused by firecrackers apply to all states in India, not just the Delhi National Capital Region.
- Justices M.M. Sundresh and A.S. Bopanna emphasized the need for moderation and responsible celebrations during festivals like Deepavali.

**Highlights of the views by Supreme Court:**

- The judges noted that children are more aware of the environmental impact of



firecrackers, and it is often adults who engage in excessive and polluting fireworks displays.

- The court urged authorities and individuals to sensitize the public about the importance of protecting the environment and reducing pollution.
- The application before the court highlighted increased pollution in Rajasthan despite previous orders aimed at curbing the use of firecrackers.
- The court stressed that state governments should take proactive measures to minimize air and noise pollution not only during festivals but also on a regular basis, and that its orders are binding on all states.

10.

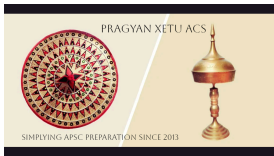
**Topic: GS3** - Indian economy

**Context:**

- **Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman stated that the Goods and Services Tax (GST) has efficiently reduced tax rates and resulted in consumers paying lower levies than under the previous indirect tax**

**Views of the Finance Minister:**

- She urged businesses that are not part of the GST system to join, emphasizing that the informal sector's economic activity needs to be formalized for a comprehensive assessment of India's true economic strength.



- Sitharaman highlighted that **GST has eliminated double taxation and overlaps, resulting in lower tax payments for essential goods and services, benefiting consumers.**
- She cautioned businesses that believe they can benefit by avoiding taxes, stating that they might lose out on potential customers and emphasizing the importance of a transparent tax regime with everyone's participation.

11.

### **Topic: GS3- Environment**

#### **Context:**

- Since work on the **Subansiri Lower Hydroelectric Project** started in 2005, there have been several obstacles and setbacks.
- When completed, this project is supposed to be the largest hydroelectric project in India.
- A huge setback happened on October 27, when a sizable section of the hill on the left side of the dam collapsed into the reservoir, obstructing the only diversion tunnel that worked and stopping the water flow into the Subansiri River, a vital Brahmaputra tributary.
- This tragedy adds to the project's already lengthy schedule of delays and casts doubt on its future.

#### **About Subansiri Lower Hydroelectric Project (SLHEP)**

- **It is the largest hydroelectric project ever constructed in India.**



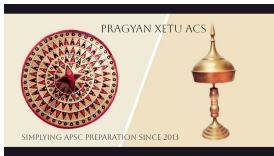
- It is a run-of-river system on the Subansiri River.
- **The project is located near North Lakhimpur on the Arunachal Pradesh-Assam border.**
- Capacity: 2000 MW
- It will produce up to 7.4 billion kWh of electricity per year.
- The project includes the construction of a surface powerhouse and a 116m-high concrete gravity dam from the river bed level.
- The dam will be 284 meters long.
- **The dam is in Assam's Dhemaji district, but the powerhouse is in Arunachal Pradesh's Subansiri district.**
- **The National Hydro Power Corporation (NHPC) is in charge of its development.**

### **Dam Construction and Spillway Operation:**

- Once the location of the dam has been determined, temporary diversion tunnels and a coffer dam, an earthen barrier are usually constructed to avoid the building site.
- When the dam is prepared, water flows via the controlled spillways and the diversion tunnels are closed, guaranteeing a controlled release of water.
- Water is also transported by a system of tunnels from the reservoir to the powerhouse, where it powers the turbines, and then back to the river.\

### **Recent Events at Subansiri:**

- The single diversion tunnel in operation became shut after a portion of the slope collapsed into the reservoir, greatly reducing the amount of water flowing downstream.



- The water flow stopped when the spillway gates opened regularly due to the landslide.
- In an attempt to restore water flow, the spillways were fully opened, which resulted in the water eventually leaving the reservoir around eleven hours later.

### **Neglected Recommendations and Landslide Incidents:**

- In April 2022, the Central Electricity Authority recommended assessing the effect of the diversion tunnels on slope stability at the project site.
- The implementing authority, NHPC Ltd., rejected this advice, arguing that no additional evaluation or stabilizing actions were necessary.
- In light of the project site's history of landslides, this neglect is especially worrisome.
- Six landslides have occurred since the CEA issued its warning, resulting in damage, blockages, or collapses of diversion tunnels.

### **Future Plans and Challenges:**

- Recently, representatives from the Geological Survey of India and the CEA, along with the NHPC board of directors, visited the location to evaluate the situation.
- Slope stabilization will be the project's top priority moving ahead. One potential approach is to isolate the under-construction spillway gates within the reservoir by building temporary sheet pile dykes, which are metal barriers with steel bracing.
- The project's budget and schedule, as well as any possible effects on aquatic life forms and the riverine ecosystem, are still unknown.

### **Way Forward:**



- The Subansiri Lower Hydroelectric Project is still beset with difficulties. The timing for the project has been further thrown off by the hill's recent slide into the reservoir.
- In order to finish building the spillway gates, the authorities are currently **concentrating on slope stabilization and looking into possible options.**
- Attention should also be paid to the project's effects on the river ecology and compliance with minimal downstream flow requirements.

12.

## Topic: GS2- Health

### Context:

- Significant differences exist between Indian states and districts when it comes to the frequency, diagnosis, treatment, and control of hypertension, according to a **study of National Family Health Survey data that was recently published in the JAMA journal.**
- The study highlights the necessity for focused, decentralized remedies in light of the significant district-level differences in hypertension that are hidden by national mean values.

## Hypertension Care in India

- **Larger percentages of people with hypertension go undiagnosed** nationwide, and even among those who are, many don't start therapy.



- Few people who do begin treatment are able to effectively manage their blood pressure.
- Notably, the research clarifies the unique variations in continuum of care levels between states and districts.

### State-level Status of Hypertension

- **According to the report**, the prevalence of hypertension is higher than the national average even if it is equivalent in the southern states.
- But in these states, the percentage of individuals having a hypertension diagnosis is similar to that of the rest of India.
- Positively, there is a greater likelihood of successful blood pressure control and treatment commencement in these states.

### District-level Status of Hypertension

- The study finds considerable differences within states.
- **In Meghalaya**, for example, the prevalence of hypertension is equal across various districts, although the rates of diagnosis vary significantly.
- **In Karnataka**, four districts have comparable prevalence rates, but two have clearly higher treatment and control rates.

### Influence of Age, Gender, Education:

- **Depending on factors like gender, age, socioeconomic status, and educational attainment**, there are also notable differences at the national level.



- **Surprisingly, women are more likely to be diagnosed with hypertension,** receive treatment, and manage their blood pressure than men, despite men having greater incidence of the condition.
- **The socioeconomic status of the population** also has an impact on the prevailing patterns; the wealthiest fifth of the population has the highest rates of diagnosis, treatment, and control.

### **Significance of Inter-State and Inter-District Variability**

- Experts emphasize the **significance of looking at district-level data**, which can help state governments allocate resources for efficient healthcare systems.
- **This data helps local governments understand the unique demands of various districts**, which facilitates continuing care for non-acute disorders like hypertension that call for a particular management approach.

### **Reformation Strategies for Hypertension Control**

- **A recent WHO analysis** indicates that if blood pressure is managed in half of the hypertensive population, approximately 4.6 million deaths in India could be avoided by 2040.
- The Indian government started a program in 2021 to treat 75 million patients with diabetes or hypertension by the year 2025 in order to accomplish this.
- **However, managing hypertension necessitates not only the expansion of infrastructure but also continuing patient follow-ups, medication availability, therapy, and screening.**



13.

## Topic: Schemes

### Context:

- At recent election rallies in Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh, Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced that the **National Food Security Act (NFSA), 2013**, which established the national government's free foodgrain program, will be extended for an additional five years.
- At least 80 crore individuals are anticipated to gain from this extension, and suspicion has mounted regarding its possible use as a selling point in the BJP's Lok Sabha election campaign **despite prior opposition to "freebies"** has been aroused.

### About PM-GKAY:

- Beginning on January 1, 2023, **the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana (PM-GKAY)**, a relief initiative that gave all NFSA participants an extra 5 kg of free foodgrains since April 2020, was stopped.
- **But under the NFSA**, foodgrains which were already extensively subsidized were **rendered free until the end of 2023**, and an additional five years of free grain supplies have been committed to.

### History of the Scheme:



- The PM-GKAY was originally designed to last three months, until June 2020, and was introduced in April 2020 in response to the Covid-19 epidemic.
- It was then repeatedly extended, frequently in the run-up to state assembly elections.
- Finally, on December 24, 2022, the program was ended, and it was announced that qualifying NFSA beneficiaries would receive free foodgrains for the entire year 2023.

### **Access to Food under NFSA:**

- Enacted by the UPA-2 administration and implemented on July 5, 2013, the NFSA provides approximately 67.5% of the population with access to sufficient, high-quality food at reasonable costs through the **Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS)**.
- The Act specifies the subsidized grain prices and quantities.
- **Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY)** households and Priority Households (PHs) are the two types of beneficiary households covered under the NFSA.

### **Financial Implications:**

- Over time, foodgrains have become more expensive.
- The food subsidy bill for the government reached its highest point in 2020-21 at Rs 5,41,330.14 crore, and then dropped to Rs 2,86,469.11 crore in 2021-2022.
- **For 2022-2023, the cost of providing free grains under the NFSA came to almost Rs 2 lakh crore.**
- Up till the program's conclusion, the government spent over Rs. 15000 crore every month on PM-GKAY, or roughly Rs. 3.91 lakh crore.



### **Potential Savings for Beneficiaries:**

- AAY families received 99.75 lakh tonnes of foodgrains from the government in the fiscal year 2022–2023.
- Each family is entitled to 35 kg of food per month, meaning that they will save an estimated Rs 2,705 crore overall.
- Likewise, 423.86 lakh tonnes of foodgrains were allotted to Priority Households, enabling them to save over Rs 11,142 crore annually.

14.

### **Topic: GS2- IR**

#### **Context:**

- In response to Russia's previous departure from the **Treaty of Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE)**, NATO has declared the official suspension of its membership in the agreement.
- According to the alliance, its signatory members have frozen their involvement in the agreement.

#### **Background on the Treaty**

- **The goal of the CFE, which was signed in November 1990**, was to stop rivals in the Cold War from amassing weapons or gathering forces in close quarters.



- It wasn't ratified in its entirety until 1992. The treaty, which placed restrictions on the quantity of tanks, combat vehicles, and other conventional weapons that may be stationed in Europe, was signed by the majority of NATO's 31 partners.

## NATO's Decision

- According to NATO, **“a situation whereby Allied state parties abide by the Treaty, while Russia does not, would be unsustainable,”** necessitated the alliance's response.
- President Vladimir Putin's measure criticizing the CFE was approved by both chambers of the Russian parliament, and Moscow announced earlier in the day that it had completed its withdrawal from the treaty.

## Russia's Withdrawal

- In 2007, Russia withdrew from the CFE, and in 2015 it declared its desire to leave the accord entirely.
- The agreement was one of several significant agreements between the US and Russia during the Cold War that have recently expired.
- Without going into detail, Russia's Foreign Ministry stated that the official withdrawal from the treaty had been finalized.

## Implications

- According to NATO, its members will keep debating and evaluating the effects of the



present security landscape on the alliance's overall security.

- In reaction to Russia's withdrawal and in order to safeguard the security of its members, **NATO is perceived to have taken a major step when it decided to suspend participation in the CFE.**

15.

## Topic: GS2- Health

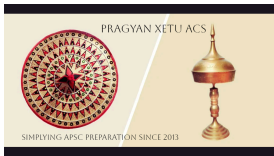
### Context:

- **According to the World Health Organization's (WHO) 2023 Global TB report,** India has become the nation with the greatest number of tuberculosis (TB) cases globally in 2022, making up an astounding 27% of the global burden.
- This figure demonstrates the enormous difficulty that tuberculosis creates in India.

### High Burden TB Countries

- The analysis also shows that in 2022, 30 high-burden TB nations accounted for 87% of all TB cases worldwide.
- **Following India among the top eight heavy load nations were Indonesia (10%), China (7.1%), the Philippines (7.0%), Pakistan (5.7%), Nigeria (4.5%), Bangladesh (3.6%), and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (3.0%).**

### India's TB Statistics



- **In India, 2.8 million cases of tuberculosis were reported in 2022, with a 12 percent case fatality rate.**
- According to the paper, TB is estimated to have killed 342,000 people in India, the bulk of whom were HIV-negative.
- The research also draws attention to the alarming problem of **multidrug-resistant tuberculosis (MDR-TB)**, of which 110,000 cases were reported in India in 2022.

### **Global Recovery and TB Services**

- After two years of disruptions brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic, WHO's Global TB Programme saw a global recovery in the number of persons diagnosed with and receiving treatment for TB in 2022.
- Better access to and delivery of health care in many nations is credited with this turnaround.
- **India, Indonesia, and the Philippines were key players in the global decline in the number of new TB diagnoses in 2020 and 2021**, accounting for more than 60% of those decreases.

### **Positive Trends in TB Services**

- The WHO report highlights a noteworthy global rebound in the expansion of tuberculosis diagnosis and treatment services in 2022, indicating a positive trend aimed at mitigating the negative consequences of COVID-19 interruptions on tuberculosis services.
- According to the report, which includes data from 192 nations and regions, **5 million people received a TB diagnosis in 2022**-the largest number since the WHO started



tracking the disease globally in 1995.

- A worrying development in the fight against tuberculosis, however, is that the incidence rate of the disease (new cases per 100,000 people annually) rose by 3.9% between 2020 and 2022, reversing the declines seen over the previous 20 years.

16.

### **Topic: GS3- Defence**

#### **Context:**

- The Indian Army is getting ready to replace its outdated Chetak and **Cheetah helicopters with Light Utility Helicopters (LUH)** manufactured in the country and other options that may be rented for a set amount of time.
- It is anticipated that over the following three to four years, this modernization program will be implemented.
- It is anticipated that the total replacement of the Chetak and Cheetah helicopters will take ten to twelve years. The Army is eager to improve its surveillance and reconnaissance capabilities, and it is projected that some 250 light helicopters would be needed to do so.

#### **Ramping Up the Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV) Fleet**

- Over the next five years, the Indian Army intends to considerably increase the number of **Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs)** it has in addition to modernizing its fleet of helicopters.



- The Israeli Heron Mk 2 and Hermes Starliner, among other UAVs, will be acquired as part of this expansion.
- In addition, the current fleet of Heron Mk 1 UAVs will receive improvements that will allow them to utilize satellite communication.

### **Exploring Multiple Options for Helicopter Replacement**

- The Army is presently evaluating a number of alternatives to replace its helicopters, the Chetak and Cheetah.
- While obtaining domestic helicopters is still the major priority, officials admit that Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) might run into capacity issues.
- Consequently, the Army is looking into other options, like short-term helicopter leasing.
- It is anticipated that a variety of strategies would be employed, with an emphasis on local solutions.

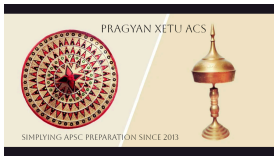
### **Progress on the LUH**

- One of the main elements of the helicopter modernization strategy is the **Light Utility Helicopter (LUH)**.
- It has an autopilot system installed, and testing for this system is still going on. By December 2024, the first batch of LUHs should be delivered; an estimated 30-35 helicopters per year will be produced each year to suit the demands of the three services.
- In terms of weight carrying capacity, the LUH is thought to be a major upgrade over the Cheetah, and its capabilities are anticipated to be further enhanced by the autopilot system, especially in high-altitude regions.



## Inductions of Other Helicopters

- Additionally, the Army is **raising one squadron of Light Combat Helicopters (LCH) as part of its induction procedure**. It is anticipated that the remaining LCH helicopters would be delivered over the course of 18 to 20 months.
- Furthermore, in accordance with an agreement reached in February 2020, the Army is getting ready to receive six Apache attack helicopters from the US in the first few months of the following year.
- Together, these initiatives show a strong commitment to upgrading the **Indian Army's operational capabilities and modernizing its aviation assets**.



1.

Recalling Operation All Clear, which Bhutan launched against Assam's insurgent groups

'Operation All Clear' was launched by the Royal Bhutan Army on December 15, 2003, and dealt a crippling blow to the United Liberation Front of Asom (ULFA), the National Democratic Front of Bodoland and the Kamatapur Liberation Organization (KLO), which had set up camps in Bhutanese territory.

Why were Indian insurgent groups present in Bhutan?

In the 1990s, the Indian military and Assam police launched successive crackdowns against militant groups in Assam, putting them under pressure. At the same time, Bangladesh ceased to be a place of refuge as well, with the pro-India Awami League government under Sheikh Hasina coming to power in 1996 and taking action against them.

2.

The Cricket World witnessed the Maxwell Mayhem on Tuesday

This is the highest individual score in an ODI run-chase. Here, Maxwell toppled Pakistan's Fakhar Zaman, who smashed 193 against South Africa in 2021.

Maxwell's double ton has surpassed Zimbabwe's Charles Coventry's 194 against Bangladesh in 2009 as the highest score by a non-opener in ODI cricket history



Maxwell's 201\* is only the third instance of a double hundred in ODI Cricket World Cups, with Chris Gayle (215 against Zimbabwe in 2015 for West Indies) and Martin Guptill (237 against West Indies in 2015 for New Zealand) being the other two instances.

- Maxwell reached his double ton in just 128 balls, making it the second-fastest double century in ODIs. India's Ishan Kishan has the fastest double century of all time, in just 126 balls against Bangladesh last year.

3.

Assam to get 10 new cancer hospitals, govt to invest Rs.135 cr in first phase

The cost for the first phase of hospitals being built in Silchar, Guwahati, and Diphu which is around Rs.135 crore will be released by the state government.

Seven cancer hospitals will be set up in Dhubri, Nalbari, Goalpara, Golaghat, Nagaon, Sivasagar, and Tinsukia in the second phase.

Note: Nearly 4% of the cancer cases detected in Mumbai's Tata Memorial Hospital (TMH) are in patients from the northeast.

It shows Oesophageal cancer is the highest in men followed by cancers of the lung and stomach.

Recently, Surgical oncologist Padma Shri Dr R. Ravi Kannan, Director of the Cachar Cancer Hospital and Research Centre (CCHRC) in Assam, received the prestigious Ramon Magsaysay



Award for 2023.

He won the award for revolutionising the treatment of cancer in Assam through his people-centered and pro-poor programmes (offering free treatment, food, lodging, and employment for caregivers).

4.

The Central government has launched a new wheat flour scheme called 'Bharat Atta' at a subsidised price of Rs 27.50 per kg. The scheme is aimed at providing affordable wheat flour to the poor and vulnerable sections of the society.

Bharat Atta is a fortified wheat flour that is made with a blend of wheat, rice, and pulses. It is a good source of protein, iron, and other essential nutrients.

The scheme will be implemented through the Public Distribution System (PDS), ensuring easy access to affordable wheat flour for the target population.

To ensure widespread availability, Bharat Atta will be sold through cooperatives NAFED, NCCF, and Kendriya Bhandar. These agencies will utilize their extensive network of 800 mobile vans and 2,000-odd outlets spread across the country to effectively distribute the subsidized wheat flour.

5.



Chile has joined the International Solar Alliance (ISA) as its 95th member

The ISA is guided by its 'Towards 1000' strategy, which aims:

To mobilize USD 1000 billion of investments in solar energy solutions by 2030

To deliver energy access to 1000 million people using clean energy solutions

To install 1000 GW of solar energy capacity.

To mitigate global solar emissions to the tune of 1000 million tonnes of CO2 every year.

Mission: Every home, no matter how far away, will have a light at home.

Headquarter: National Institute of Solar Energy (NISE) in Gurugram, India.

6.

A deepfake video of Rashmika Mandanna (actress) entering an elevator sparked outrage online, later debunked by a journalist revealing it featured British influencer Zara Patel.

Deepfake is a blend of 'deep learning' (a subset of machine learning using artificial neural networks) and 'fake.'

What is Bletchley Declaration?

Twenty-eight major countries call for collective action to address the potential risks of AI, including deepfakes.

In India: No specific laws against deepfake technology, but Section 66E of the IT Act of 2000



and the Indian Copyright Act of 1957 address related issues.

7.

Mahadev app case in news

The case involves illegal betting activities through the Mahadev Online Book. The Enforcement Directorate (ED) is conducting a money laundering probe. Several individuals, including actors, Politicians and businessmen, have been accused of promoting and facilitating illegal betting.

Sikkim permits online gambling, while Telangana maintains a zero-tolerance policy towards all forms of gambling.

The Chhattisgarh Gambling (Prohibition) Act, 2022, and the Tamil Nadu Prohibition of Online Gambling and Regulation of Online Games Act, 2022, aim to restrict gambling activities and their promotion in various media.

8.

The “Women for Water, Water for Women Campaign” launched by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs aims to empower women in water governance.

Under it, women will visit water treatment plants to learn about water treatment processes and quality testing protocols. The campaign focuses on instilling a sense of ownership among



women towards water infrastructure, with over 15,000 Self Help Groups (SHG) women participating.

It promotes inclusivity, and gender equality, and aims to enhance women's role in ensuring access to safe drinking water for their households.

9.

Recently, the Election Commission provided the facility to voters above 80 years of age & Divyanga to vote from home.

Background:-

Chief Electoral Officer Anupam Rajan informed that the Election Commission has provided the facility to voters above 80 years of age and those with more than 40 per cent Divyanga to vote from home in the assembly elections in Madhya Pradesh.

Similarly, service voters have also the facility to cast their vote before voting.

10.

Bihar assembly passes Bill to increase caste quota to 65%

The Reservation Amendment Bill, seeking an increase in reservations in government jobs and educational institutions in Bihar, was passed in the state Assembly today. The Bihar Cabinet on Tuesday had cleared the proposal to raise quotas for Other Backward Classes, Scheduled



Castes and Scheduled Tribes in the state.

Combined with the Centre's 10 per cent quota for the Economically Weaker Sections quota (EWS), the proposed reservation will go up to 75 per cent.

breakdown of the proposed reservation in Bihar:

Scheduled Castes (SC): 20%

Scheduled Tribes (ST): 2%

Other Backward Classes (OBC) and Extremely Backward Classes (EBC): 43%

Currently, there is 18 per cent reservation for EBCs, 12 per cent for OBCs, 16 per cent for SCs, 1 per cent for STs and 3 percent for women from backward classes in Bihar in state jobs and educational institutions.



1.

The Guwahati Metropolitan Drinking Water and Sewerage Board (Guwahati Jal Board) has been conferred with the prestigious “Awarding Innovation by the Center for Innovation in Public Systems” of the Administrative Staff College of India, Hyderabad. The award was conferred upon Guwahati Jal Board for its e-governance and IT initiative “Web Based Water Supply Connection Registration and Payment System” which was selected from a panel of entries through presentations and expert committee evaluation on behalf of the Administrative Staff College of India.

Guwahati Jal Board was also conferred with the “SKOCH Award” recently for the same initiative

2.

India concluded the Asian Para Games 2023 in Hangzhou, China, with its best-ever medal tally of 111 medals, including 29 gold, 31 silver, and 51 bronzes. This achievement surpassed their previous record of 72 medals, including 15 gold, from the 2018 Asian Para Games. India sent 303 athletes, its largest-ever contingent to the event. The country finished fifth in the medal tally behind China, Iran, Japan, and South Korea. Indian para-athletes also set three world records during the games.

The first Para Asian Games was held in 2010 in Guangzhou, China, where India finished 15th

Government incentives for sports:



Increase of sports budget by three times as compared to 2014

Khelo India Scheme

Target Olympic Podium Scheme

3.

Split voting is a concept in electoral systems where voters have the option to cast separate votes for different candidates or parties in an election.

During the 2019 Lok Sabha election, the state of Odisha had a state election as well. So, voters had to cast two votes. Research shows that many chose to cast their vote for different parties for the state and Lok Sabha elections. This is an example of split voting.

Similarly, New Zealand uses a mixed member proportional (MMP) system. In this system, voters have two votes: a “party vote” and an “electorate vote.” The “party vote” determines the overall composition of the parliament, where voters choose a political party. The “electorate vote” is for selecting a local Member of Parliament (MP) for their specific geographical constituency.

4.

Rangiya and Mariani Railway Stations achieves ‘Eat Right Station’ certification

‘Eat Right Station’ certification is granted by FSSAI to railway stations adhering to standard food storage and hygiene practises.



The station is awarded a certificate upon the conclusion of an FSSAI-empaneled third-party audit agency.

The certification is part of the 'Eat Right India' movement, a large-scale effort by FSSAI to transform the country's food system to ensure safe, healthy and sustainable food for all Indians.

5.

Celebration of Wangala Festival today in Meghalaya

The first day of the celebration is marked by a ritual called Ragula, which is held in the chief's residence. The second day is referred to as Kakkat.

While Tula town in Meghalaya is the hub of the Wangala celebration, the holiday is celebrated in its purest form in the West Garo Hills.

The celebrations involve presenting local rice beer to the Sun God, dressing up in colourful traditional clothing, and dancing to the rhythm of 100 drums.

6.

- The first batch of photos from the **European Space Agency's (ESA)** Euclid telescope, which was launched from Cape Canaveral, Florida, in July, have been made public.
- Even though **NASA's Hubble Space Telescope** has previously studied these celestial



landscapes, Euclid's exceptional resolution and extensive field coverage make them stand out.

## Euclid vs. JWST: Contrasting Missions

- Unlike the **James Webb Space Telescope (JWST)**, which is limited to certain areas of the sky, **Euclid is excellent in imaging large yet finely detailed parts of the universe.**
- While the JWST's ethereal space imagery captivates viewers, Euclid seeks to accomplish a similar effect by offering an alternative viewpoint.
- Because of its ability to image wide areas, the telescope is useful for jobs like finding elusive things, such free-floating worlds.

## Unraveling the Universe's 'Dark' Secrets

- **The main task of Euclid is to map one-third of the extragalactic sky.**
- Researchers hope that Euclid's data may provide light on how dark matter—the enigmatic substance that holds the cosmos together—affects the motions and forms of space's observable objects.
- By helping to chart the distribution of galaxies over cosmic time, the telescope's high-resolution imagery could also contribute to our understanding of dark energy, the force that is tearing the universe apart.
- Early photos from the telescope have already shown a wide range of cosmic structures, such as the **Perseus cluster**, which may indicate the existence of dark matter.



## Future Plans and Expectations

- **In 2025**, scientists hope to publish Euclid's initial universe maps.
- More sky space is predicted to be covered by these maps than by all of the data that the Hubble Space Telescope has so far gathered.
- **Euclid is a vital instrument for deepening our grasp of the wide cosmos** because of his contributions to solving the riddles of dark matter, comprehending cosmic structures, and figuring out the function of dark energy.

7.

- Recently, **Gwalior, Madhya Pradesh**, was granted membership in UNESCO's Creative Cities Network, specifically being designated as the 'City of Music.'
- This acknowledgement highlights Gwalior's steadfast dedication to utilizing creativity and culture.
- In addition, **Kozikodhe** in Kerala was recognized as the '**City of Literature.**'

## Royal Patronage and Musical Heritage in Gwalior

- Gwalior has a long and illustrious history in Indian music, closely linked to royal patronage. Because many of the city's leaders were also musicians, they helped to create an atmosphere that supported the arts.
- **Remarkably, Raja Man Singh Tomar** fostered the growth of the Gwalior gharana, **the earliest Hindustani classical music group**, during the 15th century.
- **Man Singh** was a king who loved music and is credited with creating the **traditional**



**form of dhrupad** and popularizing Indian music by substituting songs in basic Hindi for Sanskrit melodies.

## **Evolution of the Gwalior Gharana and Contribution to Classical Music**

- Prior to the division of Hindustani classical music into different gharanas, **Gwalior became the first legitimate gharana during the Mughal era.**
- **With early ustads like Naththan Khan and Naththan Pir Baksh**, the Gwalior gharana was crucial in the development of khayal singing, which included aspects of qawwali.
- **Persian terms were included into compositions**, and artists such as **Ustad Naththan Pir Baksh**, who established the systematic method of presenting a raga called khayal, contributed to the gharana's continued impact.

## **Tansen and the Gwalior Gharana's Legacy**

- **Gwalior's protégé Mian Tansen** developed the **Gwalior gharana style** while studying under Muhammad Ghous and Swami Haridas.
- He gained prominence in **King Ram Chandra Singh of Rewa's court** and, later, in **Akbar's court due to his musical prowess.**
- Tansen's impact grew, and via the influential Gwalior-based musician **Ustad Hafiz Ali Khan**, the **Bangash gharana was founded.**

## **Notable Figures and Legacy of Gwalior's Musical Heritage**



- **Renowned artists like Bade Inayat Hussain Khan, Vasudeva Buwa Joshi, and Balakrishnabuwa Ichalkaranjekar** are descended from Gwalior.
- Gwalior's musical history has endured over time thanks to the contributions of prominent figures from the following generation, including **Pt Venkatesh Kumar, Malini Rajurkar, Veena Sahasrabuddhe, and Pt Kumar Gandharv.**

8.

- Three weeks ago, **loto, a Japanese term for an underwater volcano** situated about one kilometer off the **southern shore of Iwo Jima**, erupted, offering a rare view of the formation of a new island.
- Volcanic ash and debris began to accumulate on the shallow seabed on October 21, and by early November, a new island roughly 100 meters in diameter and as high as 20 meters above sea level had been formed by the sequence of eruptions.

### **Significance of the New Island Formation**

- Experts from the volcano division of the **Japan Meteorological Agency** view the formation of a new island as a noteworthy event. Despite a decrease in volcanic activity, the island's size has decreased because of how easily waves may erode its "crumbly" formation.
- To learn more about the nature of the new island which might not last long unless it is made of more resilient materials like lava experts are now examining the deposits.

### **Uncertain Longevity and Historical Precedents**



- While historically new islands have been generated as a result of seismic activity and underwater volcanoes, the lifespan of these newly formed islands is yet unknown.
- Past examples of the dynamic character of these formations include the **Pacific Ocean eruption at Nishinoshima in 2013** and the creation of a small island following a **7-magnitude earthquake in Pakistan in the same year**.
- Japan, which is located on the Pacific **“Ring of Fire,”** is home to around 111 of the 1,500 active volcanoes in the world.
- The country’s volcanic environment has been further enhanced by recent volcanic activity near Iwo Jima.

### **Potential Short Lifespan and Geological Analysis**

- According to experts, **the island’s ability to survive relies on its composition**; if it is composed of lava or other strong elements, it may be able to withstand more damage over time.
- But the island might not stay long, since volcanic rocks like pumice are easily broken. The goal of ongoing geological analysis is to shed more light on the composition and structure of the island.
- The brief duration of these geological occurrences is highlighted by the historical setting of such structures.
- In addition to its geological significance, **Iwo Jima is historically significant as the location of fierce combat during World War II**.



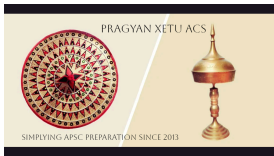
- A measure to raise the overall quota for **Scheduled Castes (SCs), Scheduled Tribes (STs), Extremely Backward Classes (EBCs), and Other Backward Classes (OBCs)** in government jobs and educational institutions **from 50% to 65%** was **unanimously passed by the Bihar Assembly.**
- With the 10% quota now in place for Economically Weaker Sections (EWS), **the effective quota is at 75%.**
- **The projected increases in the quotas of the OBCs and EBCs, from 8% to 18% and 12% to 25%,** respectively, will primarily benefit these groups.

### **Breakdown of Quota Changes**

- The state's caste survey indicates that **13% of people are classed as OBCs and 36.01% of people belong to the EBC category.**
- **The proposed new SC quota is 20%,** which is an increase from the current 14%, taking into account the estimated 19.65% SC population.
- But because there are less tribal people in Bihar than 2% of the total population, **the projected quota for STs is only going to drop from 10% to 2%.**

### **Historical Context and Supreme Court's Reservation Ceiling**

- The decision to raise the reservation quota is consistent with the state's objective of promoting inclusive growth and comes after the 1992 ruling in **"Indra Sawhney v. Union of India"** by the Supreme Court, which **established a 50% reservation cap.**
- The suggested modifications demonstrate a proactive strategy to alleviate social inequalities in Bihar.



## The Need for Increased Reservation

- The decision to raise the reservation quota in Bihar to 65% comes as a response to the pressing need for social upliftment and inclusivity.
- Historically marginalized communities, including ST, SC, and OBC groups, have faced systemic discrimination and limited access to resources, education, and opportunities.
- By increasing reservation, the government aims to bridge the gap and provide a more equitable platform for these communities to thrive.

## Challenges and Way Forward

- While the increased reservation quota in Bihar is undoubtedly a positive step, it is essential to address a few challenges in its implementation.
- Ensuring the availability of quality education, infrastructure, and training opportunities for students from underprivileged backgrounds will be crucial.
- Additionally, promoting social harmony and eradicating caste-based prejudices through awareness campaigns and inclusive initiatives will help build a truly equitable society.

## Conclusion

- The Bihar Assembly's decision to increase reservation for ST, SC, and OBC communities to 65% marks **a remarkable leap towards social inclusivity and empowerment.**
- **This progressive move** has the potential to transform the lives of millions of individuals who have long been denied equal opportunities. It signifies the government's commitment to fostering a more just and inclusive society.



- **By providing better access to education and employment**, this decision can turn the tide for marginalized communities in Bihar and set a precedent for other states to follow.
- **Ultimately, the increased reservation quota paves the way for a brighter future**, where every citizen can realize their full potential and contribute to the nation's growth.

10.

- **A “cash-for-query”** complaint is an accusation that someone took money in exchange for asking questions in Parliament.
- For example, in 2005, 11 former MPs were put on trial for a “cash-for-query” scam. The sting showed them taking cash to raise questions in Parliament

### **Evolution of Ethics Committee in Parliament:**

- **Background:** A resolution adopted at the Presiding Officers Conference held in October, 1996 which desired the legislatures to explore the possibility of constituting an Ethics Committee.
- **Rajya Sabha Committee:** Ethics Committee, Rajya Sabha, the first such Committee by any legislature in India was constituted by the Chairman, Rajya Sabha on 4 March 1997, to oversee the moral and ethical conduct of the Members.
- **Application of Rules:** It was provided that in all respects of procedure and other matters, the rules applicable to the Committee of Privileges shall apply to the Ethics Committee with such variations and modifications as the Chairman/Speaker from time to



time makes.

- **Lok Sabha Committee:** Speaker 13th Lok Sabha (Late Shri G.M.C. Balayogi) constituted the first Ethics Committee in Lok Sabha on 16 May, 2000.

### **Role and Function of Ethics Committee:**

- **Ensure Good Conduct:** To oversee the moral and ethical conduct of the Members;
- **Adjudicating Disputes:** To examine the cases referred to with reference to ethical and other misconduct of the Members.
- **In-Depth Examination:** Examine every complaint relating to the unethical conduct of a member of Lok Sabha referred to it by the Speaker and make such recommendations as it may deem fit.
- **Suggestions and Reforms:** Formulate a Code of Conduct for members and suggest amendments or additions to the Code of Conduct from time to time.

### **Challenges Faced by the Ethics Committee in Parliament**

- **Overlapping Responsibilities:** The Ethics Committee and the Privileges Committee occasionally deal with similar cases. More serious allegations typically go to the Privileges Committee.
- **Conflict with constitutional principles:** Parliamentary privileges may sometimes conflict with other constitutional principles, such as equality before the law. Example: the privilege of immunity from arrest and legal process may be seen as giving members of parliament special privileges that are not available to other citizens.
- **Short Tenure:** Members of the Committee of Ethics are appointed for a one-year tenure.

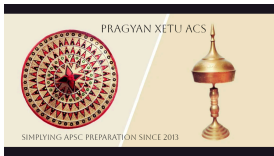


This provides very less time for in-depth examination of the Code of Conduct and long-term policy making.

- **Advisory Opinion:** Decisions of the Committee on Ethics are advisory and not binding on the Speaker. This can lead to political influence in decision-making.

### **Upholding Morality in Indian Politics: Challenges and Imperatives**

- **Hallmark of Public Life:** Ethics and morality have been the hallmark of public life in India since ancient times.
- **Importance in Freedom Struggle:** This ethical and moral legacy was inherited by its national leaders, who demonstrated a high degree of probity and honesty in public life during the freedom struggle led by Mahatma Gandhi.
- **Morality in Practicality:** He not only preached morality in public life but also practised it. He believed that politics without morality is a thing to be avoided.
- **Recent Issues:** However, in recent years there is a general feeling that all is not well with the Indian political system which is functioning under great strain. Concerns are being expressed over the general decline of values in public life.
- **Preventing Abuse of Power:** Morality and ethics serve as a check on the abuse of power by political leaders. When politicians act unethically, it can lead to corruption, authoritarianism, and the erosion of democratic institutions.
- **Distinguishing Roles:** Ethics Committee and Privileges Committee in Parliament
- **Overlapping Functions:** The work of the Ethics Committee and the Privileges Committee often overlap. An allegation of corruption against an MP can be sent to either body, but usually, more serious accusations go to the Privileges Committee.
- **Jurisdiction:** A non-MP too can be interrogated by the privilege committee for actions



that attack the authority and dignity of the House. The Ethics Committee can take up only cases of misconduct that involve MPs.

11.

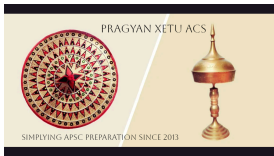
- The Nagaland Assembly unanimously approved the **Nagaland Municipal Bill 2023** at a special session, keeping the contentious **33% reservation for women in urban local bodies**.
- For almost 20 years, this reservation has been an ongoing issue that has impeded civic polls throughout the state.
- The action attempts to solve issues with women's representation in local government.

### **Exclusion of Women's Reservation for Chairperson Post**

- The new Bill eliminates the provision for women to hold the position of chairperson in municipal bodies, even though it keeps the 33% quota for women.
- This big move coincides with the State Election Commission's (SEC) impending announcement of local polling dates.
- The decision to deviate from the previous Act is to exclude reservations for the position of chairperson.

### **Repealing the Nagaland Municipal Act 2001**

- The Nagaland Assembly decided to repeal **the Nagaland Municipal Act 2001** in March of this year in response to protests and boycott demands from tribal and civil society



organizations.

- The long-standing issue of municipal elections, which were last conducted in the state in 2004, prompted the repeal.

### **Acceptance by Apex Tribal Bodies and Changes in the Bill**

- **The top tribal bodies**, which had earlier opposed women's reservation, **have now expressed their acceptance of it**, according to Chief Minister Neiphiu Rio.
- **The new Bill tackles the reservation issue as well as doing away with clauses that would have taxed immovable property**, which is in line with the Nagas' historical resistance to taxation.

### **Historical Significance and Past Opposition**

- In the past, the problems of women's reservations and municipal votes have had serious repercussions, even toppling administrations.
- Then-Chief Minister TR Zeliang resigned in 2017 as a result of violent protests against plans to enforce the 33% reservation and hold urban local body elections.
- Zeliang, the deputy chief minister in place at the moment, expressed excitement over the Bill's approval, noting that it represents a major shift in Nagaland's political climate.



1.

Japan gets a new island after undersea volcano erupts

The unnamed undersea volcano, located about 1 kilometer (half a mile) off the southern coast of Iwo Jima, which Japan calls Ioto, started its latest series of eruptions on Oct. 21.

Within 10 days, volcanic ash and rocks piled up on the shallow seabed, its tip rising above the sea surface. By early November, it became a new island about 100 meters (328 feet) in diameter and as high as 20 meters (66 feet) above the sea

2.

Even as Delhi-NCR witnessed light showers on Thursday night (November 9), the Delhi government had announced earlier this week that it was considering cloud seeding or 'artificial rain' to wash away pollutants in the air.

The now mooted proposal has been attempted previously in India but only in the monsoon season - when clouds with moisture are present - and pre-monsoon months. Besides, it has only been done before in the country with the purpose of bringing rainfall to drought-prone areas, and not to mitigate pollution.

Note: In India, it has mostly been attempted during the monsoon in India, in places such as Karnataka, Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu.



3.

### Gauhati High Court Orders To Send Notice To Barpeta Xatras For Women's Entry Ban

This is in response to Public Interest Litigation (PIL) 68/2023 filed by advocate Sandeep Chamaria

The petitioner urged the court to instruct Xatra administrations to allow women's entry without discrimination, enabling them to participate in religious activities on par with male devotees. Highlighting the religious significance and public nature of these institutions, the petitioner argued that failure to protect women's rights contradicts constitutional principles.

Notably, the petitioner who personally visited the Barpeta Xatras, emphasized the historical inclusion of women in these religious practices. He noted the recent downturn in women's status within the male-dominated society of Barpeta Xatras, attributing it to gender discrimination, a social evil.

4.

Assam has introduced Digital life certificate for pensioners so that they can submit their life certificates without visiting bank

A life certificate is a proof of existence produced to an authorised pension distributor or agency such as bank or post office by an individual stating that he/she is alive.

The government and insurance companies insist on this certificate before making pension or



annuity payments. The certificate is usually required annually.

The individual drawing the pension is required to be personally present before the pension disbursing agency.

5.

A team of scientific researchers led by Professor of Gauhati University Sofia Banu has sounded an alert that Assam's lemon may lose its original distinctive genetic characteristics.

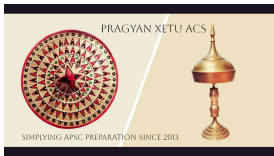
Lemons collected from 97 locations reveals that the lemon populations in Assam could be genetically diverse. In-depth genetic diversity analysis of 510 samples from 97 locations has revealed some very intriguing findings for Assam lemon populations.

There is a high possibility that the samples studied may not be exact clones of the parent plant, but may have arisen independently as other chance propagates. Each existing population must be conserved as part of a comprehensive management strategy to maintain the lemon's unique qualities and characteristics as hybridization is a natural tendency of citrus species

6.

Assam under the "Swachh Diwali, Shubh Diwali" campaign has encouraged people to keep their localities clean post the festival of lights.

Assam has taken up the 'waste to food' route, which is a unique initiative to manage and



control the post-Diwali waste.

In this regard, the state has adopted the principle of 3-Rs (reduce, reuse, recycle) to transform 'waste to food.'

To make sure that the banana tree stems are put to good use while eliminating the waste post Diwali, the Swachh Bharat Mission-Urban team in Assam has come up with a special plan - a simple waste management process which has been adopted by the urban local bodies.

The banana trees, stems and leaves that will be left unused the next day after the traditional Diwali celebrations will be handed over to the national parks around urban local bodies for use as fodder for elephants

7.

Following the suit of Uttar Pradesh and Assam, the Telangana government has sent notices to officials of religious seminaries across the state, demanding information about the students studying in madrasas.

The state government will send these details to the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights

While presented as an effort to protect child rights, this move raises questions as it indirectly inquires about the admission of non-Muslim students in these madrasas.



8.

The International Crop Research Institute for Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT) and the Government of Assam, India, have joined forces to advance climate-resilient and nutritionally enhanced food systems through the Assam Millet Mission.

At the heart of the partnership is Assam's goal of boosting the cultivation, production and consumption of three native millet crops: Finger millet (Maruadhan), Foxtail millet (Kaun), and Proso millet (Cheena Bajra).

Presently, millets are only cultivated in 6,000 hectares of land in 15 districts of Assam, including Nagaon, Bongaigaon, and Dhubri, contributing 97 per cent of the state's millet production.

Given Assam's susceptibility to floods and its historical preference for rice over millets, there's a growing imperative to transition toward diversified agriculture that incorporates resilient and nutritious millets

Assam Millet Mission (AMM) is part of the World Bank-funded Assam Agribusiness & Rural Transformation Project (APART). The Assam Rural Infrastructure and Agricultural Services (ARIAS) Society oversees the project, while ICRISAT provides technical consultancy services to support AMM under APART for approximately 18 months.

9.



The MV Kindat Pandaw, the second international voyage following the success of Ganga Vilas, anchored at Assam's Dhubri on Friday after completing its journey via the Indo-Bangladesh Protocol Route (IBPR). Now, the ship will embark on a pristine Brahmaputra odyssey from here, showcasing the rich cultural and social heritage of the state to 31 tourists from Canada, Australia, Switzerland, the USA and the UK. The thrilling 21-day international river cruise sojourn is expected to end at Guwahati's Pandu.

Kindat means a military outpost and Pandaw is the name of a place in Myanmar

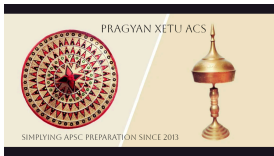
10.

Assam government launched a unified, single-window portal to provide various services under the department of housing and urban affairs on Friday.

People under 103 urban local bodies (ULBs) will now be able to avail the municipal service along with other departmental services through this portal.

The portal offers online property tax payment, instant trade license approval, e-services like drinking water supply connection requests, theatre and playground bookings, film shooting, GPS tracking of municipal vehicles and an online complaint filing and resolution mechanisms

People will also be able to avail detailed descriptions of municipal bodies, including maps and demographics, information about mayor/ chairpersons and ward members, assets, programme activities and tender details on the portal. This will bring transparency to the system



Apart from the services offered by ULBs, people will also be able to avail services offered by Guwahati Jal Board, Assam Urban Water Supply & Sewerage Board, Assam State Housing Board, GMC, Guwahati Metropolitan Development Authority and Guwahati Smart City Limited.

Example: if a streetlight is not functioning at any corner, people can lodge a complaint immediately. Click a picture of the defunct street-light and lodge a complaint, the officials will resolve the issue within a short span of time.

11.

The 69th Research Coordination Committee (RCC) meeting of the Central Silk Board (CSB), Ministry of Textiles, Government of India, took place at the Assam Administrative Staff College, Guwahati on November 7-8, 2023. The significant event marked the first time the RCC meet was hosted outside the Central Silk Board headquarters in Bangalore.

It marked the first official visit of Hon'ble Member Secretary, CSB, to the state after assuming office. P. Sivakumar, an influential Indian Forest Service Officer of the Assam-Meghalaya Cadre, played a pivotal role in revitalizing the sericulture industry in the entire Northeast and the country at large.



1.

The Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs has taken a momentous step to uplift self-help groups (SHGs) in Assam engaged in food processing activities by seamlessly converging the Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana-National Urban Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NULM) with the PM Formalisation of Micro Food Processing Enterprises (PM FME) scheme of the Ministry of Food Processing Industries

Under this strategic convergence, SHGs and SHG members with a minimum of one year experience in microfood processing activities in Assam are now eligible to apply for seed capital assistance at Rs 40,000 per SHG member, up to a maximum limit.

The initiative reached a pinnacle during the just-held World Food India 2023 event when Prime Minister Narendra Modi disbursed seed capital to approximately one lakh SHG members across all States and Union Territories with a single click on November 3, 2023

2.

Recent demise of Padmanabha Acharya

Former Governor of Assam

His illustrious career included serving as the governor of Manipur, Nagaland, Arunachal Pradesh, and Tripura, with an additional charge of Assam at one point.

He played a key role in bringing peace to Nagaland. He was instrumental in the signing of the



Framework Agreement between the Government of India and the National Socialist Council of Nagaland (NSCN-IM) in 2015.

He was also a great supporter of education and youth empowerment. He launched a number of initiatives to promote education among tribal youth and to help them develop their skills.

3.

On November 5, 2023, the Indian Astronomical Observatory (IAO) at Hanle and Merak in Ladakh captured striking images of an intense red-colored aurora.

Why aurora is being formed in Ladakh though typically it forms in the polar region?

The occurrence of auroras in regions like Ladakh, which are not near the polar regions, can be attributed to a phenomenon called geomagnetic storms and Coronal Mass Ejection (CME) — massive ejections of plasma and magnetic fields from the Sun's lower atmosphere. While auroras are most commonly associated with polar regions, geomagnetic storms can extend the auroral oval (the area where auroras are usually observed) to lower latitudes.

4.

India and Bhutan are jointly planning several development initiatives:

Rail Links: Ongoing discussions for rail connections between Kokrajhar (Assam) and Gelephu (Bhutan) and between Banarhat (West Bengal) and Samtse (Bhutan).



**Infrastructure Upgrades:** Checkpoints along the India-Bhutan border are being upgraded to facilitate smoother trade and movement

**Special Economic Zone:** Bhutan plans to establish a Special Economic Zone at its southern border with Assam to drive growth and investment.

**Airport Development:** Proposal for a new airport at Gelephu to enhance accessibility and promote economic development.

**Energy Integration:** Planning an 'energy exchange' to share hydropower resources among Bhutan, Nepal, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka, fostering intra-regional growth

Issues between the two countries:

**Border Dispute:** Disputes over the exact demarcation of the border between the two countries.

**Hydropower Projects:** Concerns in Bhutan over environmental and social impacts from the project. Also, Bhutan has sought greater revenue from these projects

**Trade Imbalance:** Bhutan is heavily dependent on India for its imports.

**Cross-Border Movement:** Bhutan has restricted the cross-border movement of Indian workers, citing concerns over the impact on Bhutan's culture and society.



Political Interference: Bhutan has accused India of interfering in its internal affairs, particularly during the 2013 elections.

5.

A 71-minute documentary film on a Guwahati home that gave Assam many of its cinematic, cultural, and sports icons took a step toward its world premiere with the release of its trailer and poster on Saturday, November 11.

Baruar Xongxar ('The House of Baruas') is based on a landmark Assam-type house near the Gauhati High Court at Latasil, one of the oldest localities of Guwahati. The film has been included in the Indian Panorama section of the forthcoming 54th International Film Festival of India (IFFI) in Goa.

The film is directed by national award-winning filmmaker Utpal Borpujari and produced by Nayan Prasad, Jemini Phukan, and Dibyajyoti Saharia under the banner of socio-cultural organisation Surjya and Jemini Phukan Production.

The poster and trailer were released on the verandah of the legendary century-old house, parked on the eastern flank of the Latasil Field area, by renowned musician Ramen Barua and popular singer Dwipen Barua, along with other members of the extended Barua family.

6.

Darrang district administration in a unique initiative to encourage and inspire the APSC



aspirants from the district appearing in the interview/ viva voce, on Friday afternoon organized a special motivational session at the conference hall of the District Commissioner's office. District Commissioner Munindra Nath Ngatey has taken up the initiative for the first time in the district to build confidence among the APSC aspirants. In the two hour duration session, Additional District Commissioner Nabadeep Changmai in his motivational speech advised them to prepare for a tension free attitude to appear in the viva voce. He also shared his personal experience of facing the same.

The participating aspirants expressed their gratitude to Darrang district administration for organizing this confidence building session for the first time in the district.

7.

mjunction services limited, India's largest B2B e-commerce company, launched its flagship social responsibility initiative Project Jyoti in Assam.

At an event organized at the Moran Blind School at Moranhat, 20 visually-challenged students were handed over mobile phones by mjunction in the first phase, with pre-loaded applications to help them read and study more effectively using mobile technology.

Note: this initiative was first launched in Chattisgarh.

8.

Gauhati University will allow female students to take menstrual leaves and also grant relaxation in their attendance to appear for exams.



Recognising the importance of menstrual health to women's overall health, the institution has relaxed the minimum class attendance requirement for female students by 2 per cent.

Note: Cochin University of Science and technology was the first in India to implement such measures

9.

Two children from Assam's Dima Hasao district are among 26 child scientists selected from Assam to participate at the National Children's Science Congress to be held in Gujarat

Awshmita Purkayastha from Vivekananda Kendra Vidyalaya (NEEPCO), Umrangso and Drishti Thaosen from Dibrari High School, Haflong.

Awshmita presented a project on the Extraction of Banana fibre for daily activities and its comparative study with commercial fibre, while Drishti submitted a project on Portable Clay Sanitary Napkin Incinerator

10.

Initiating stringent steps in order to control pollution and curb plastic wastes, Lakhimpur District Magistrate Sumit Sattawan has banned single-use plastic items in all government offices of the district

The notification has banned ear-buds with plastic sticks, plastic stick for balloons, plastic flags, candy-sticks, ice-cream sticks, polystyrene (thermocool) for decoration plates, cups,



glasses, cutlery such as forks, spoon, knives, straw, trays, wrapping or packing films around sweet boxes, invitation cards and cigarette packets, plastic or PVC banners less than 100 micron, stirrers. Plastic carry bags less than 120 microns in thickness has been banned with effect from December 31, 2022, use of plastic water bottles below 1000 ml capacity

11.

East Story and Bongaigaon district police has launched the district's first food bank near Police point, Paglasthan of Bongaigaon town.

The food bank has 6 racks to store food items. People can donate their excess food here in the bank from which, a needy one can collect it themselves. A record book is kept to get details of the donor. East Story will regularly check food and after 2 days of deposition of cooked food, if it is not taken by anybody, will be distributed among poor people.

12.

Song highlighting benefits of millets on which PM Modi, Falu collaborated nominated for Grammy Awards

The "Abundance in Millets" song, performed by Mumbai-born singer-songwriter Falguni Shah, popularly known by her stage name Falu, and her husband and singer Gaurav Shah, has been nominated for the award.

Under the best global music performance category, "Falu and Gaurav Shah (featuring Prime



12 Nov CA

Minister Narendra Modi) — Abundance in Millets” has made it to the nominations.



1.

The International Cricket Council on Friday suspended Sri Lanka cricket with immediate effect for government interference in cricketing issues in the country.

From exam perspective:

The first time the ICC handed a suspension to a full member was back in 2021 when Zimbabwe Cricket was suspended due to government interference.

2.

National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) recently announced the appointment of acclaimed Bollywood actor Pankaj Tripathi as its 'UPI Safety Ambassador' to strengthen safety awareness on digital payment platforms

It's worth noting that this isn't Pankaj Tripathi's first association with a national cause. Last year, he was honored as the 'National Icon' of the Election Commission of India (ECI) for his commitment to the cause and wide appeal across the country, particularly in creating awareness amongst voters.

3.

Recent Bhimbor Deuri award has been given to Jadav Payeng



Bhimbor Deori was born on 16 May 1903. He was a freedom fighter and a lawyer from the state of Assam. He was one of the main architects of the “Khasi Darbar Hall Resolutions”. In these resolutions, indigenous leaders of different ethnic identities resolved to restore their independent homelands. He was the General Secretary of Assam Backward Plains Tribal League in 1933. He worked to ensure that indigenous Assamese people be allotted land pattas when the British government was not stopping the remission of land revenue. With his efforts Assam province was included in the Republic of India, refusing British Viceroy’s plan to include it in Pakistan.

4.

The Santosh Trophy has been renamed as the FIFA Santosh Trophy recently following All India Football Federation’s Executive Committee meeting in New Delhi.

5.

Three Indian scientists, Mukesh Thakur, Lalit Kumar Sharma, and Avijit Ghosh, were compelled to withdraw a paper from an international peer-reviewed journal published in China due to objections related to the mention of Arunachal Pradesh.

The paper titled ‘Two Y chromosome lineages in White-Cheeked Macaque (*Macaca leucogenys*)’ was initially accepted on February 14, 2023, and subsequently published online on April 5, 2023, in the journal *Wildlife Letters*. This journal, newly launched and internationally peer-reviewed, is published from Northeast Forestry University in China.



According to a report by The Hindu, the Indian scientists were faced with the demand to exclude Arunachal Pradesh from their study, as the Chinese government contested its inclusion, citing discrepancies with their officially defined map. The scientists refused to comply with this request, leading to the withdrawal of the paper in October 2023.

6.

Uttarakhand is on the brink of making history as it prepares to become the first state in India to implement the Uniform Civil Code (UCC). In a move towards legal uniformity and gender equality, the state government is set to convene a special session post-Diwali to clear the UCC Bill, marking a significant departure from the diverse personal laws that currently govern citizens based on their religious affiliations.

7.

### World Kindness Day 2023

It adopts a specific theme every year in alignment with its core values. This year's theme for 2023 is " Be Kind Wherever Possible ," which serves as a potent reminder of the universal significance of kindness that should permeate every corner of the world and every facet of our lives. This year's theme urges individuals to carry the essence of kindness not only on World Kindness Day but throughout every day.

8.



## Mitti Cafe

In a step towards inclusivity, Chief Justice of India, Justice DY Chandrachud, inaugurated a cafe on the Supreme Court premises on Friday, run by specially-abled people

Note:

'Mitti Cafe' has opened 38 outlets in different parts of the country, and they have served six million meals during the COVID-19 pandemic.

9.

In a recent development, the United Kingdom has put forth plans to include India in an expanded list of safe states, which will have significant implications for individuals arriving in the UK illegally from these countries. This move, which aims to expedite the process of returning Indian nationals who have traveled illegally from India and simultaneously eliminate their chances of seeking asylum in Britain, has been met with both support and criticism.

10.

Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on November 13 informed that the state government will soon construct a Kamakhya Temple in Maharashtra.



1.

Assam government today has decided to regularise the jobs of nearly 40,000 teachers working in government schools across the state on a contractual basis

a target of March next year has been taken to complete the whole process

the earlier service length of contractual teachers will not be calculated. Those who will join the regular posts, they will be treated as getting fresh appointments.

Although the 40,000 teachers were working in contractual posts, they have been receiving the regular pay scale like permanent teachers.

As such the salary of those teachers will decrease after joining the regular posts as the earlier service period will not be calculated

2.

Assam government will build a Kamakhya Temple and Namghar in the state of Maharashtra.

Additional info:

Kamakhya Temple is surrounded by many other temples dedicated to several deities like Bhubaneswari, Kali, Tara, Chinnamasta, Bagala, Bhairavi, Dhoomavati, Matangi and Kamala. All of them together with Kamakhya Temple are collectively known as the Dasamahavidya.



Apart from the Shakti temples, the Nilachal Hill also has five Shiva Temples-Kameswar, Siddheswar, Amratokeswar, Aghor and Kautilinga.

3.

Chairman Emeritus of The Oberoi Group, Prithvi Raj Singh Oberoi, widely known as the doyen of Indian hospitality, passed away today

Popularly known as the man who changed the outlook of the hotel business in India, PRS Oberoi is credited with placing Oberoi hotels on the international luxury travelers map with the opening of several luxury hotels in important cities.

4.

The annual Assam Book Fair 2023-24, organised by the Publication Board of Assam and All Assam Publishers and Book Sellers Association will be held for the first time in Silchar from December 1-10.

as per the decision taken earlier this year, besides Guwahati, the prestigious Assam Book Fair will be held in smaller towns, including Silchar and as such elaborate arrangements are being made.

The forthcoming fair will be held on the premises of the Police Parade Ground

A host of literary personalities from our state, including author-journalist Anuradha Sarma



Pujari, novelist Tilottama Mazumdar from Kolkata and noted folk researcher and academician Dr Amalendu Bhattacharjee will attend the inaugural ceremony in the presence of Selina Hossain, president of Bangla Academy Dhaka.

5.

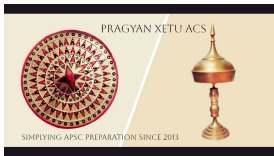
The Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council (KAAC) is now going to raise its own police force. The Council will introduce a bill to this effect in its 247th session.

The State Government will impart arms and other training, besides providing arms to the KAAC police force. However, the KAAC will be the appointing authority. The Council will deploy these personnel in its boundary areas to check infiltration, ensure the security of areas rich in mines and minerals, etc. In the first batch, the Council will recruit over 200 candidates in the ranks of inspectors, sub-inspectors, and constables.

When Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council got Sixth Schedule status in 1952, Paragraph 3 (Subparagraph f) of the Constitution of India entitled the autonomous council to raise its own police force for its towns and villages. However, over the years, neither of those at the helm of affairs executed it.

6.

A global company has recently announced that it has hired the first ever humanoid robot as its Chief Executive Officer (CEO).



Polish rum company Dictador announced that it has appointed AI-powered humanoid robot 'Mika' to lead the firm. As the first CEO female robot, Mika is a board member who steers operations on Dictador's behalf

Mika is a research project between Dictador and Hanson Robotics, a Hong Kong-based engineering and robotics company known for its development of human-like robots with AI for consumer, entertainment, service, healthcare, and research applications. The two firms customised the robotic CEO to represent the company and its unique values.

7.

To pave the way for the employment of transgender persons in defence roles, the Indian Armed Forces are looking at possible employment opportunities for them and the roles they can perform

A joint study group, formed by the Principal Personnel Officers Committee (PPOC), will deliberate on the implementation of the Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act, 2019, in the defence forces

Note: top officers cited the need for a lot of structural, administrative, and cultural changes in the forces before beginning the induction of transgender persons at any point in time

8.

- Retail inflation in India eased to a four-month low of 4.87% in October, down from slightly



over 5% in September.

- The rise in vegetable prices decelerated to 2.7% from 3.4%, contributing to the overall moderation in inflation.
- Overall consumer food price inflation remained largely unchanged at 6.6%.
- Prices of non-food items, including services, clothing and footwear, also showed some deceleration.

### **What is retail inflation?**

Retail inflation **refers to the increase in the average prices of goods and services that consumers typically purchase for personal consumption.**

- It measures the rate at which the general level of prices for consumer goods and services rises, indicating the decrease in purchasing power of a currency.
- Retail inflation is often expressed as a percentage and is used to assess the impact of price changes on the cost of living for the average consumer.
- It is based on a basket of goods and services that represents the typical consumption patterns of an average household, including items like food, clothing, housing, healthcare, and transportation.
- **Central banks and policymakers monitor retail inflation to make decisions on interest rates and other economic policies to maintain price stability and support overall economic health.**
- **High retail inflation can erode the purchasing power of consumers,** while deflation (negative inflation) can lead to economic stagnation and reduced consumer spending.



9.

- A massive fire broke out in a four-storey residential building in Nampally, Hyderabad, resulting in a tragic incident.
- Nine people lost their lives in the fire, highlighting the severity of the incident.

#### **Disaster management against fire hazard:**

- **Establish and enforce building codes and regulations to ensure fire-resistant construction materials and safety measures are in place.**
- **Conduct regular fire safety inspections and drills** in residential and commercial buildings to ensure compliance with safety standards.
- **Provide fire safety education and awareness programs** to the public, emphasizing the importance of fire prevention and preparedness.
- **Maintain a well-equipped and trained fire department** with modern firefighting equipment and personnel trained in fire suppression and rescue operations.
- **Implement a robust emergency response system** with clear communication channels to report fires and coordinate emergency services.
- **Promote the use of fire-resistant materials in building construction** and the installation of fire alarms, sprinkler systems, and fire extinguishers.
- **Establish community-based disaster management and response teams** to assist in evacuations and emergency support during fire incidents.
- **Ensure public access to fire hydrants, emergency exits, and escape routes** in buildings and public spaces.
- **Conduct regular fire hazard assessments** in high-risk areas and implement



preventive measures to reduce fire risks.

**Question:** Discuss the key components of disaster management strategies to mitigate fire hazards in urban areas.

10.

- Forest Conservation Amendment Act of 2023 has implications for forests and their inhabitants.
- Several laws and policies have been enacted over the years, but indigenous community rights have been overlooked.

### **The New Amendment**

- Aims to address climate change and deforestation.
- Focuses on effective forest management and afforestation.
- Excludes certain forest areas from the law's jurisdiction, allowing economic exploitation.
- Authorizes the construction of security measures and facilities in specified areas.
- Allows for initiatives like ecotourism, safari, and environmental entertainment.
- Aims to improve the livelihoods of forest-dependent communities, drawing criticism.

### **Reasons for the Amendment**

- Driven by industrial interests to free forest land from legal restrictions.
- Controversial interpretation of forest land following the Godavarman Thirumulkpad case.



- Aimed at restricting forest land for non-forest purposes, causing opposition from forest conservationists.
- Passed in Parliament without extensive debates or discussions.

### **Impact on Indigenous Communities**

- The removal of forests from the Forest Conservation Act may hinder indigenous communities' rights.
- The amendment omits the stipulation of 'prior consent' from tribal grama sabhas.
- State governments can proactively engage in land acquisition for various purposes through grama sabhas.
- Concerns about the environmental implications of compensatory afforestation.

### **Impact on Forest Rights Act (FRA)**

- The FRA has faced challenges in implementation, viewed as an impediment to non-forest land conversion.
- Government opts to limit Adivasi claims by reducing forest areas rather than amending the FRA.
- Growing human-animal conflicts in forest areas pose challenges.

### **Challenges and Concerns**

- Afforestation projects contradict the concept of forest governance.
- Conflict with the idea of decentralised forest governance.



- Complex definition of strategic linear projects.
- Neglect of internal environmental security and natural disasters.

## Conclusion

- The Forest Conservation Amendment Act of 2023 raises important issues related to forest management, indigenous rights, and environmental security in India.

**Question:** Critically analyze the implications of the Forest Conservation Amendment Act of 2023 on indigenous communities, forest management, and environmental security in India.

11.

- The Union Home Ministry extended the ban under the Unlawful Activities Prevention Act (UAPA) against eight “Meitei extremist organizations.”
- These organizations advocate secession of Manipur from India through armed struggle.

## About Unlawful Activities Prevention Act (UAPA):

- The Unlawful Activities Prevention Act (UAPA) is an Indian anti-terrorism law.
- It was enacted in 1967 to provide more effective control over unlawful activities and associations dealing with terrorism.
- UAPA allows for the banning of unlawful associations and the prosecution of individuals involved in unlawful activities.
- The law provides for the powers of the government to declare an organization as unlawful



and impose a ban on it.

- It grants authorities the ability to detain individuals without filing formal charges for up to 180 days.
- The law has faced criticism for potential misuse and violations of human rights.

12.

- Delhi, Mumbai, and Kolkata ranked among the world's most polluted cities, according to Swiss air purifier company IQAir.

### **Key findings of the survey:**

- Delhi was ranked the most polluted city globally with an Air Quality Index (AQI) of 287, followed by Lahore, Pakistan.
- Air pollution from firecrackers during Deepavali contributed to the spike in pollutants in Indian cities.
- Pollution in parts of Delhi was 30 times the safe limits prescribed by the World Health Organization.
- Air quality in Delhi was expected to be in the "severe" category, affecting both healthy individuals and those with existing health conditions.
- Climate Trends and Respirer Living Sciences reported that widespread firecracker burning during the festival took away gains made in reducing pollutants due to rain.
- Experts called for phasing out the firecracker industry to mitigate air pollution.
- Emergency measures, including car-use restrictions and artificial rain experiments, were previously imposed in Delhi due to hazardous air quality attributed to stubble burning in



Punjab.

13.

- **The price of wheat experienced a turbulent ride**, reaching a high of \$13.64 per bushel in March 2022 before plunging to \$5.75 per bushel.
- The Food Price Index (FPI) also experienced a sharp decline, falling from 159.7 to 120.6 points. Russia has played a major role in the sharp decline in export prices.

### **Wheat Supply and Government Management**

- **The Indian government has been supplying wheat to the public distribution system (PDS) at discounted rates**, allowing it to retain a moderate buffer of wheat inventories.
- The public stocks show that the market is reasonably balanced and that the supply of wheat is being managed in a controlled manner.

### **Rice Dilemma: Export Restrictions and Market Impact**

- On the other hand, because of its own export limitations, **India, a major rice exporter, is seeing a rise in the price of rice globally.**
- The global market has been impacted by price increases brought about by the export ban on white non-basmati rice.
- Pakistan has profited from these restrictions as well, as it has been able to expand its rice exports.



## Implications for Inflation and Market Influence

- **Cereal inflation rates have gone up**, impacted by domestic output levels. Although wheat is economically viable for import, its practicality is **hampered by political factors**.
- On the other hand, the situation in **the edible oils market is different, with most of India's needs being satisfied by imports**.
- **Both imports and the inflation of retail edible oil have decreased** as a result of recent price variations.

## Conclusion:

- **The trajectory of grain inflation highlights the intricate interplay of political, economic, and local agricultural issues.** It is mostly driven by crop production in India.
- **Due to Indian export limitations**, the price of rice has surged on the market while wheat prices have fallen dramatically worldwide.
- **This demonstrates the complex interplay between consumer behavior and governmental regulations**, which have a substantial impact on how much food costs will rise globally.

14.

- A prisoner in Jammu and Kashmir was **granted bail and given a GPS tracking device to watch his whereabouts**, marking a groundbreaking decision in Indian history.



- Ghulam Mohammad Bhat, indicted under the **Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act**, became the first individual in the country to have a GPS tracker put to his foot as a bail requirement upheld by a special NIA court.

## Understanding GPS Trackers

- **GPS trackers are tiny wearables** that work similarly to animal monitors in that they can pinpoint the exact location of the wearer, giving law enforcement and security organizations the ability to monitor them in real time.
- **These tamper-proof gadgets, often called GPS anklets and GPS wristbands, are worn on the arm or ankle.**

## Rationale Behind GPS Tracker Implementation

- As a condition of Bhat's bail, the prosecution team of the Jammu & Kashmir Police recommended that Bhat's movements be closely monitored using a GPS tracker.
- This measure was suggested as **a way to stop terror-related operations** and smuggling while also giving observers a chance to keep an eye on contacts and affiliations that might be connected to illicit activity.

## Legal Contours and Ethical Concerns

- Although Bhat's GPS anklet was approved by the court, **human rights advocates are concerned that there are no explicit legislative provisions** that permit this practice.



- **Concerns exist over the absence of accepted norms and moral principles in electronic surveillance.** GPS tracking proponents contend that it may make it easier to secure bail under the UAPA and increase police confidence in their ability to support bail.
- On the other hand, detractors claim that using GPS to track people infringes their right to privacy.

### Way Forward:

- The ramifications of this action and the lack of legislative protections pave the way for a more extensive discussion on how to strike a balance when using technical surveillance to protect individual privacy, legal precedent, and public safety.

15.

- There are speculations that Israel's goal of driving Hamas out of the Gaza Strip may open the door to regional dominance and provide a chance to embark on a massive economic undertaking: **building a canal through Israel's Negev Desert that would link the Eastern Mediterranean with the Gulf of Aqaba.**
- **The Ben Gurion Canal** is a fictitious project that seeks to undermine Egypt's hegemony over international marine trade.

### Ben Gurion Canal Project

- The Ben Gurion Canal Project or Israeli Canal is a proposed canal project through the state of Israel.



- **It would connect the Gulf of Aqaba to the Mediterranean Sea.**
- **David Ben Gurion**, after whom it would be named, is considered the **Founding Father of Israel and was the first Prime Minister of Israel.**
- The canal would rival the Suez Canal.
- The Suez Canal which runs through Egypt and has had many disturbances in its history, such as the **Israeli blockage through the Suez Canal and Straits of Tiran, the Closure of the Suez Canal (1956-1957), Closure of the Suez Canal (1967-1975), and the 2021 Suez Canal obstruction.**
- **It would be almost one-third longer than the 193.3 km Suez Canal, at around 292.9 km.**

### Significance of the Project

- The Ben Gurion symbolizes a tectonic shift in global trade dynamics.
- Significantly broader than its counterpart, the Suez Canal, its design intends to usher in a new age of maritime efficiency.
- Beyond accommodating an increased volume of ships because it would be built on hardier terrain than the sand in the Suez, the canal can be crafted to permit simultaneous two-way traffic, allowing vessels to transit in both directions concurrently.
- This project isn't just a logistical enhancement; it's a profound assertion of Israel's intention to become the fulcrum of global maritime commerce.
- Ben Gurion Canal Project, once completed, **would transform global maritime dynamics by taking away Egypt's monopoly over the shortest route between Europe and Asia.**
- By directly contesting the Suez Canal's longstanding dominance, the stage is set for



Western powers to wrestle financial and geopolitical control from Egypt. This nation has been the sentinel of this pivotal passageway for generations. This shift isn't merely about diversifying revenue streams; it's an overt strategy to re-orient the balance of power.

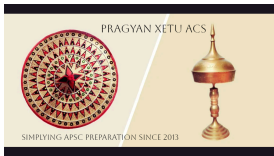
16.

- To support the urban transformation plan, the Central government and the Asian Development Bank (ADB) have finalized a \$400 million policy-based credit agreement.
- The objectives of this fund are to improve urban infrastructure, streamline service delivery, and support effective governance frameworks. A calculated step toward sustainable urban development has been taken with the signing of the loan agreement for Sub-program 2 of the Sustainable Urban Development and Service Delivery Programme.

### **Supporting Urban Investment and Reforms**

- The previous Sub-programme 1, which was allocated \$350 million, created national policies to promote urban services, laying the foundation. Sub-programme 2, on the other hand, focuses on funding reform initiatives at the state and local government levels in metropolitan areas.
- Its main objectives are to ensure inclusive, resilient, and sustainable infrastructure, as well as to make cities livable and conducive to economic growth.

### **Program Objectives and Focus Areas**



- By reducing losses, reusing treated sewage, and revitalizing water bodies, the initiative fosters urban water security and sustains groundwater levels.
- By promoting systemic and planned urbanization through institutional, governmental, and regulatory reforms, it gives priority to integrated urban planning reforms in order to minimize urban sprawl.
- It focuses on raising community awareness and urban local bodies' capacity.

### **Enhanced Planning Processes and Sustainability**

- The goals of integrated urban planning include environmental sustainability and economic growth in cities.
- It includes enhanced urban environments, nature-based solutions, and resistance to climate change and disasters.
- The objective is to augment financial sustainability by means of augmenting income production and enhancing the creditworthiness of cities.

### **Incentivizing and Mobilizing Financing**

- The initiative will encourage towns to increase their revenue, increase efficiency, and rationalize spending in order to establish their creditworthiness.
- By using creative financing strategies like municipal bonds, commercial borrowings, sub-sovereign debts, and public-private partnerships, this strategy seeks to help cities close large gaps in their spending in urban infrastructure.



- For the first time in 14 years, India has taken the lead in sending the greatest number of international graduate students to the United States, with Indian students outnumbering Chinese students, who stood at 126,000, in the academic year 2022–2023.
- Indian students pursuing postgraduate studies in the United States increased by 63% to reach 165,000.

### **Total Indian Students and Shifting Trends**

- 268,000 Indian students were enrolled in undergraduate, graduate, and optional practical training programs in the US, according to the Open Doors Report, which details international student exchanges.
- Compared to the previous academic year, this statistic represents a 35% rise.
- Fifty-two percent of the international student population in the United States is from China and India combined.

### **Demographic Shift and Statewise Dominance**

- India's proportion of overseas students in the US has changed significantly over the last ten years, nearly doubling to 25% in 2022–2023 just short of China's 27%.
- In 24 states, including Illinois, Texas, and Michigan, which are well-liked by international students, the number of Indian students surpasses that of Chinese students.

### **Education Preferences**

- **Over time, there has been noticeable shift in the educational preferences of**



## Indian students.

- The percentage of Indian students enrolled in computer science and mathematics programs has increased significantly, from 26% to 41.2% a decade ago.
- Due to this change, the percentage of engineering disciplines fell from 38.9% in 2010 to 26.9% in 2022–2023.

## Impact and Significance

- Indian students are becoming more prevalent, which is an indication of recovery after a decline prior to the pandemic.
- They are also a major source of funding for US colleges.
- While expressing the intention to increase the diversity of students studying in both nations, the US ambassador highlighted the importance of the students' decision to study in the US.

## Overall International Student Contribution

- **Although they only make up 5.6% of all college students in the US,** international students including **those from China and India** are essential to American colleges because they pay greater tuition than domestic students.
- **The top countries** that contributed to the enrollment of international students in the US were **South Korea, Canada, Vietnam, Taiwan, and Nigeria, followed by China and India.**



18.

- On November 15, Prime Minister Narendra Modi will launch “**Janjatiya Gaurav Divas,**” a comprehensive **Rs 24,000-crore initiative** aimed at the holistic advancement of Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTG).
- This effort, which was first introduced during the 2023–24 budget, aims to implement 11 initiatives across nine ministries to help 75 PVTGs.

### **Context: Political Timing and Tribal Demographics**

- Given the sizeable tribal populations in Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh and the impending Assembly elections in both states, the timing of the scheme’s introduction is politically significant.
- **As per the 2011 Census, the population of Scheduled Tribe (ST) is 21.1% in MP and 30.6% in Chhattisgarh.**

### **Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups and Scheme Objectives**

- PVTGs are the most vulnerable members of tribal communities; they have unique cultures, live in remote areas, and prefer to engage with other social groups seldom.
- By providing necessities like roads, telecom connectivity, electricity, clean water, sanitation, increased access to healthcare and education, and sustainable livelihood possibilities, the program seeks to reach these dispersed and isolated habitation regions.
- In isolated and unreachable areas of 18 states and Union Territories in India, **almost 28 lakh people from 75 PVTGs live in 22,544 villages.** Some scheme rules will be



loosened to accommodate these underserved locations.

## **Comprehensive Support and Integrated Approach**

- In addition to the 11 interventions, the program encompasses full coverage of ongoing government programs like:
  - **PMJAY health insurance scheme,**
  - **TB Elimination,**
  - **Sickle Cell Disease Elimination,**
  - **complete childhood immunization,**
  - **PM Surakshit Matrutva for free prenatal care,**
  - **PM Matru Vandana Yojana with cash benefits,**
  - **PM Poshan,**
  - **PM Jan Dhan Yojana.**

### **Way Forward:**

**This project shows the government's commitment to tribal development** and acts as a calculated move ahead of the upcoming elections, in addition to addressing the needs of especially disadvantaged tribal populations.



1.

What is Cyprus Confidential?

In news

Cyprus Confidential is an eight-month collaboration by more than 270 journalists and 69 media organisations in 55 countries, to investigate a huge trove of leaked documents from companies that administer shell companies, in Cyprus and other jurisdictions typically used by companies wanting secrecy

2.

Sahara India group chief Subrata Roy Sahara, who had been battling multiple health issues, passed away yesterday

A business baron who started off with a chit fund business in the late 1970s, at the peak of his success, Mr. Roy prevailed over an empire that included an airline, Air Sahara, television channels, finance and real estate, including the ambitious Amby Valley project near Lonavala in Maharashtra.

The Sahara group was once considered India's second largest employer after the Indian Railways, with a professed employee base of around 1.2 million, but ran into trouble with financial sector regulators over the business model of its finance entity that involved raising deposits worth thousands of crores from small-ticket investors.



3.

In a first for India, a prisoner in Jammu and Kashmir, Ghulam Mohammad Bhat, accused under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, has been released on bail with a condition to wear a Global Positioning System (GPS) tracking device.

The GPS tracker, a small wearable device, is affixed around the ankle, providing real-time location information.

The device is tamper-proof, and any attempt at tampering with it sets off an alarm. It can also not be removed by the wearer or any unauthorised person without damaging it.

The tracker can be put on the ankle or arm of a person. Thus, there are GPS anklets and GPS bracelets.

While GPS trackers are a common precondition for bail in countries like the United States, the United Kingdom, and Malaysia, this is the first instance in India.

4.

New Zealand is one of only two countries in the world—the other being Denmark—with two official national anthems of equal status: 'God Defend New Zealand' and 'God Save The Queen'

5.

The Icelandic meteorological service detected approximately 900 earthquakes between midnight and early afternoon on Monday (November 13).



Earthquakes have heightened concerns among experts regarding a potential eruption of the Fagradalsfjall volcano.

Situated between the Eurasian and North American tectonic plates, the country has declared a state of emergency

6.

Assam's Barpeta district takes AI route to teaching

Three Artificial Intelligence-based educational apps developed by a block resource person have been introduced to “reshape the way students learn and teachers instruct”.

Prasenjit Sarma from the Barpeta educational block developed the apps named Lesson Plan Creator AI, AI Proofreading Assistant, and AI Teacher.

These apps have been made accessible to a wide range of users, as they are available for download on the Google Play Store. The availability on this platform ensures that students and educators alike can easily integrate these tools into their educational processes

7.

The Government of Norway and United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) today signed an agreement for supporting smallholder farmers, especially women, in Assam through a two-year project to address the adverse impact of climate change.



World Food Program will work closely with the Government of Assam in partnership with the Department of Agriculture, the State Rural Livelihoods Mission, and the Department of Meteorology and Environment. Moreover, local organisations will be approached for community mobilisation, including engaging with women's self-help groups and federations.

WFP will also work with the Norwegian Institute of Bioeconomy Research to access their expertise on climate-neutral and resilient farming systems relevant to the project worldwide.

The project's main objective is to equip smallholder farmers with adaptive farming practices, diversification, and livelihood expansion strategies to withstand the adverse effects of climate change in the long run. Assam heavily depends on agriculture, with a large proportion dependent on it. The state is vulnerable to climate risks.

8.

Dr Sanjib Kr Borkakoti, retired professor of Nagaon ADP College has been nominated as an active member of Commission on Education and Communication under International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN).

Note:

What are the 6 commissions of IUCN?

species survival, environmental law, protected areas, social and economic policy, ecosystem management, and education and communication.



9.

### Battle of Garibpur in news

The recent movie, Pippa, based on the book “The Burning Chaffees”, which gives the account of the Battle of Garibpur in Bangladesh theatre of 1971 war, has brought into focus the role of tanks in this war and to what extent they were effective in the battle.

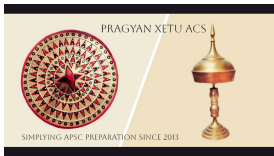
The book was written by Brig Balram Singh Mehta (retd) who took part in the Battle of Garibpur as a young officer in the 45 Cavalry. ‘The Burning Chaffees’ is a reference to the M-24 Chaffee tanks of the Pakistan Army which came out to be inferior to the PT-76 amphibious tanks of the Indian Army which are referred to in the movie as ‘Pippa’, or a tin can.

10.

India’s Wholesale Price Index (WPI) showed deflation for the seventh consecutive month in October.

### What is deflation?

- **Definition:** Deflation is a decrease in the general price level of goods and services in an economy over time.
- **Opposite of Inflation:** While inflation represents a rise in prices, deflation indicates a decline.



- **Impact on Economy:** Deflation can lead to reduced consumer spending as people anticipate lower prices in the future.
- **Business Impact:** Businesses may experience falling revenues and profits, leading to cost-cutting measures and potential job losses.
- **Debt Challenges:** Deflation increases the real burden of debt as the value of money rises, making it harder for borrowers to repay loans.
- **Central Bank Response:** Central banks may implement monetary policies, such as lowering interest rates, to counter deflation and stimulate economic activity.
- **Risk of Deflationary Spiral:** Persistent deflation can lead to a cycle where falling prices and demand create a self-reinforcing negative economic cycle.
- **Factors:** Deflation can be caused by factors such as decreased consumer demand, technological advancements, or a credit crunch.

**Question:** Discuss the economic implications of deflation on a nation's economy. Examine the challenges faced by businesses, individuals, and policymakers during a period of deflation.



1.

The Viksit Bharat Sankalp Yatra', an outreach programme to aware people of the benefits of various government schemes, was inaugurated in three districts of Assam on November 15. Assam cabinet ministers launched the programme in Baksa, Kokrajhar and Karbi Anglong districts, emphasising the state government's commitment to the welfare of people

Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched the nationwide programme from Khunti in Jharkhand to reach out to citizens who are eligible for various central schemes but have not benefitted so far. The campaign to reach out to beneficiaries of the Centre's flagship programmes both in rural and urban areas will culminate on January 25, 2024.

2.

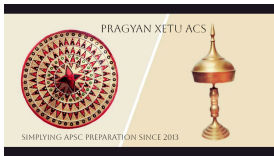
Salman Rushdie receives first-ever 'Lifetime Disturbing the Peace Award'

In the preceding month, Rushdie was also bestowed with the Peace Prize of the German Book Trade.

Additionally, the imprisoned Egyptian activist, Alaa Abdel-Fattah, was honoured with the Disturbing the Peace Award for a Courageous Writer at Risk.

Who is Abdel-Fattah?

Abdel-Fattah gained international prominence during the 2011 pro-democracy uprisings in



the Middle East, which led to the ousting of Egypt's long-standing President Hosni Mubarak.

He remains an emblem of resistance against Egypt's authoritarian regime

3.

The people from Meitei community in Assam have decided not to celebrate Ningol Chakouba, one of their most important festivals, this year to express solidarity with the victims of the ethnic violence in Manipur

Ningol Chakouba is celebrated on the second lunar day in the Hiyangei month of the Manipur calendar with the theme of strengthening the bond of love between married women (Ningol) with their paternal families.

During this festival, married women are invited to their parental home for a feast (Chakouba). Male members of the family arrange everything, and they also buy gifts for the women (sisters and daughters).

4.

In a ground-breaking development, Chinese companies have unveiled the 'world's fastest internet' network, claiming that it can transmit data at 1.2 terabits per second

the project is a collaboration between Tsinghua University, China Mobile, Huawei Technologies, and Cernet Corporation



Spanning over 3,000 kilometers, the network links Beijing, Wuhan, and Guangzhou through an extensive optical fiber cabling system and has the capacity to transmit data at an astonishing 1.2 terabits (1,200 gigabits) per second. Most of the world's Internet backbone networks operate at just 100 gigabits per second. Even The United States recently completed the transition to its fifth-generation Internet2 at 400 gigabits per second.

5.

Bodo Sahitya Sabha Foundation day 16 November

The 62nd Annual Conference of the Bodo Sahitya Sabha was held from 23 to 26 Feb 2023 in Patgaon, Kokrajhar district.

Ram Nath Kovind was the first president of India to attend the Bodo Sahitya Sabha conference.

The first president of the Bodo Sahitya Sabha was Joy Bhadra Hagjer. He was the founding president and served BSS from 1952 to 1966. The current president is Prof. Surat Narzary, and he was selected recently during the Central Committee Body formation in the 2023 BSS conference

Note: Bodo Medium Day is celebrated on 18 May every year.

6.



International Day for Tolerance, observed annually on November 16th, serves as a global platform to champion tolerance, respect, and understanding among people of diverse backgrounds and cultures

In 2023, the theme is “Tolerance: A Path to Peace and Reconciliation,” emphasizing the pivotal role of tolerance in building peaceful and inclusive societies.

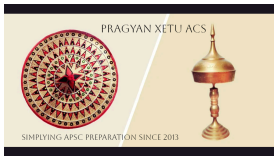
UNESCO in 1995 established the UNESCO-Madanjeet Singh Prize to commemorate the United Nations Year for Tolerance and Mahatma Gandhi’s 125th birth anniversary.

Singh played a significant role in promoting communal harmony and peace. As the founder of the South Asia Foundation (SAF) in 2000, he aimed to advance sustainable cultural, educational, and economic development

- 7.
- **According to an alarming report released by the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the World Health Organization**, in 2022, almost **11 lakh (1.1 million) Indian children** were not vaccinated against **measles** in their critical first dose.
  - According to this data, **India is among the top 10 nations** where the greatest proportion of youngsters do not receive the first dose of the measles vaccination.

### **Measles Outbreaks in India:**

- **India** is one of the 37 nations that saw notable outbreaks of measles, with an



astounding **40,967 cases reported in 2022.**

- The study emphasizes how the COVID-19 pandemic's effects led to a decline in routine immunization in 2020 and 2021, making some places particularly peri-urban areas and clusters more susceptible to measles outbreaks.

### **Global Impact of the Pandemic on Measles Immunization:**

- The pandemic caused the lowest rates of measles vaccination worldwide since 2008.
- **The measles cases increased by 18% and the alarming number of deaths increased by 43% in 2022 as a result of this reduction.**
- The study notes that these are the post-pandemic estimates of vaccination gaps.

### **Challenges and Vulnerabilities:**

- Experts claim that youngsters are more susceptible to contracting measles if even one cohort in immunization is missed.
- During the pandemic, immunization gaps were mostly seen in peri-urban regions and clusters, where outbreaks were later reported.

### **Measles Vaccine Protection:**

- It is emphasized that a single dosage of the measles vaccine may offer less protection than two doses, **which together offer 97% lifetime protection.**
- **Measles can cause serious complications** like brain swelling, pneumonia, breathing difficulties, and, in some cases, death.



- **The disease is marked by symptoms like high fever, cough, runny nose, and red rashes.**

### **Government Response and Immunization Campaigns:**

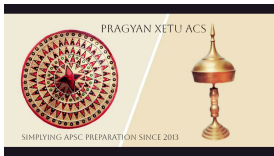
- Experts state that the three rounds of the Intensified Mission Indradhanush, which ended in October, have filled up the gaps in immunization.
- The purpose is to make sure children who were not vaccinated receive immunization treatments.
- The aim of the campaign was to eliminate the measles-rubella vaccination, thus children up to the age of five were included in its coverage.

### **Measles Surveillance and Government Initiatives:**

- Experts applaud India's sensitivity in monitoring cases of measles, noting that the nation has outperformed other nations in terms of measurability.
- However, as a result of the health apparatus's concentration on COVID-19, **immunization rates decreased, which increased the number of cases of measles that were reported, especially in states like Bihar, Gujarat, Haryana, Jharkhand, and Maharashtra.**

### **Outbreak Response and Positive Impact:**

- **The government launched an outbreak response immunization effort in response to an outbreak in Maharashtra**, immunizing 13 lakh children between the



ages of nine months and fifteen between November 2022 and May 2023.

- **Experts saw the outbreak as a “blessing in disguise,” since it allowed for natural immunization to occur** in the area and the government vaccinated residents living in affected areas.

8.

- Decades of debates and campaigns have established nations’ collective **commitment to combating climate change**, yet it is considered insufficient.
- There is an urgent need for significant results as we get closer to COP28, which will take place in Dubai from November 30 to December 12, to address the worrisome shortcomings in global climate action.

#### **Details:**

- There is no denying the catastrophic effects of climate change; **2023 is expected to top 2016 as the warmest year ever recorded.**
- The urgency of the crisis has not been met by the global reaction, despite rising temperatures.
- **According to assessment reports**, even under hopeful circumstances, existing climate action plans would only reduce emissions by 2% by 2030, falling well short of the 43% reduction in emissions that the IPCC has determined is necessary to achieve the 1.5-degree Celsius target.

#### **Financial Challenges and Adaptation Measures:**

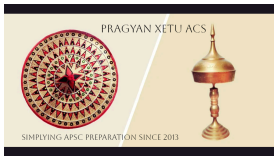


- **The implementation of adaptation measures** presents a significant financial barrier for developing nations, costing at least \$215 billion yearly.
- Nevertheless, **the Adaptation Gap analysis** indicates that just \$21 billion in funding is available, which is a significant shortfall.
- **The age-old problem of funding** presents a major obstacle, especially for countries most at danger from climate change.

### **Expectations at COP28:**

Even though the immediate effects of climate action are acknowledged to be limited, it is expected that COP28 will produce significant results in order to avert a completely dismal situation. A few major anticipations are as follows:

- **Tripling of Renewable Energy:** By 2030, efforts are being made to increase the amount of installed renewable energy capacity worldwide, with the goal of having roughly 70% of all electricity produced by renewable sources. This action might prevent 7 billion tons of emissions equivalent to carbon dioxide between now and 2030, which would be a major reduction in emissions.
- **Delivery of \$100 Billion:** After more than ten years, wealthy nations are anticipated to declare that they have provided the \$100 billion in climate funds per year starting in 2020. The true test, though, will be in moving forward with a fresh funding pledge that exceeds the \$100 billion mark, which is essential for successful climate action.
- **Money for Loss and Damage Fund:** It is expected that Dubai would contribute some funds to the establishment of a loss and damage fund, which is meant to give financial assistance to nations affected by climate change. This is especially important for small



island states, who could be the fund's main beneficiaries.

- **Global Stocktake:** The results of the first stocktake exercise are anticipated to be presented during COP28, as required by the 2015 Paris Agreement. Countries will evaluate how far they have come in combating climate change and lay out plans for the ensuing five years of action.
- **Phase-Down of Fossil Fuels:** At COP28, the divisive topic of a planned reduction or phase-out of fossil fuels, particularly coal, is probably going to come up again. Deep divides still exist, though, suggesting that a settlement in Dubai would be difficult to achieve.

### Way Forward:

- Countries have a crucial chance at COP28 to confront the shortcomings in climate action and lay the groundwork for a future that is more resilient and sustainable.
- The conference's conclusions will be very important in defining the future course of international efforts to tackle climate change.

9.

- **The prolonged fighting in Myanmar's Chin State, especially in the Rikhawdar region close to the Indian border,** has caused an inflow of Burmese nationals into Indian territory, which has deeply concerned the Ministry of External Affairs.
- Given the ongoing unrest in Myanmar following the military's takeover on February 1, 2021, the scenario is changing.



## Overview of Myanmar's Ongoing Crisis:

- Following the military takeover, there has been a great deal of turmoil in Myanmar.
- **Armed civilian groups such as the People's Defence Forces (PDFs) and ethnic armed organizations (EAOs)** have sided with the self-declared National Unity Government in exile to oppose the military regime.
- Increased fighting in recent weeks has led to the takeover of important towns close to the border between India and Myanmar and a large migration of refugees into Mizoram.

## Commencement of Current Round of Fighting:

- **The Three Brotherhood Alliance, which is made up of EAOs such as the Ta'ang National Liberation Army, the Arakan Army, and the Myanmar National Democratic Alliance Army (MNDAA),** launched surprise attacks on October 27 to start the current round of battle, known as Operation 1027.
- As a result of the offensive, which was directed against military positions in Shan State, vital border towns and checkpoints, including Chinshwehaw, were taken over.

## Unprecedented Level of Coordination:

- The extraordinary degree of coordination across the several rebel organizations sets apart the present offensive, which is the biggest threat to the junta since the coup of 2021.
- The military has found it difficult to organize a strong defense as the resistance forces have taken control of a sizable area; in some cases, entire battalions have surrendered without putting up a fight.



### **Threat to the Junta's Position - Operation 1027:**

- **Three Brotherhood Alliance's common goal is to overthrow the military regime, posing an unprecedented threat to the junta.**
- The junta is facing tremendous strain in the border regions even though it still holds control over the Bamar heartland in Central Myanmar.
- The military is facing poor combat spirit among its ranks and coordination issues, which make the ongoing offensive a major concern.

### **Role of China and Implications for India:**

- **China, Myanmar's massive trading partner and neighbor**, is apparently providing implicit support to the rebels in Shan State.
- The complexity of the problem is shown by China's pressure on the military administration to suppress criminal settlements along the Myanmar-China border and by the rebels' reference to fighting online gambling fraud along the same border.
- The analysis by the US Institute of Peace highlights the geopolitical ramifications of the conflict by suggesting that China may be implicitly supporting the rebels' advancement.

### **India's Concerns and Balancing Act:**

- **India is currently concerned about the inflow of Myanmar people into its Northeastern states.**
- The country has managed to strike a delicate balance between communicating its concerns about the disruption of democracy in Myanmar and working with the junta to



safeguard its interests.

- India's strategic considerations have taken on a new dimension with the conquest of towns close to the border with Myanmar.
- This development has ramifications for existing projects like the trilateral expressway connecting Thailand, Myanmar, and India as well as for regional stability.

10.

- Speaking with British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak and Foreign Secretary David Cameron, External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar discussed the continuing discussions of the **India-UK Free Trade Agreement (FTA)**.
- Jaishankar expressed hope about finding a middle position that benefits both countries while highlighting the FTA as a focal point of the negotiations.

#### **FTA as a Template and Shift in Trade Policy:**

- **After it is signed, the India-UK Free Trade Agreement (FTA) would likely become the model for a deal with the European Union (EU)**, which will be a departure from India's prior look-east strategy.
- To increase export growth, the administration wants to give priority to economic integration with countries in Western and African Africa.

#### **China Factor and Geopolitical Considerations:**

- **A 'China-plus-one' policy** is necessary, as disruptions in supply chains caused by the



pandemic forced Western corporations to reevaluate their reliance on China.

- The push for a trade agreement between India and the UK was aided by Australia's economic complementarities with India and its tensions with China.
- In an effort to balance regional dynamics, India is actively pursuing trade agreements with the UK, Australia, the EU, and Canada following its exit from the RCEP.

### **Brexit and UK's Incentives:**

- **A trade agreement with India is vital for the UK given the uncertainties surrounding Brexit** and the challenging election that the ruling Conservatives will face in 2025.
- The UK has a chance to make up for losing access to the European Single Market thanks to the sizeable Indian market, notwithstanding ongoing concerns over providing work permits to workers in the service industry from India.

### **Gains and Challenges for India and the UK:**

- **India aims to restore textile exports** by collaborating with competitors like Bangladesh and seeking advantages in labor-intensive sectors like clothing and gems and jewelry.
- The British Parliament has expressed worry, meanwhile, regarding possible detrimental effects on Least Developed Countries.
- **Lower tariffs may allow the UK to gain greater access to Indian markets**, particularly for products like automobiles, wine, and Scotch whiskey that are subject to high tariffs.



## Non-Tariff Barriers and Modern FTAs:

- **Modern free trade agreements (FTAs)** go beyond simply lowering tariffs; they also give India a chance to eliminate non-tariff barriers (NTBs), which have previously prevented exports.
- **Indian exporters stand to gain from the removal of obstacles** pertaining to rules, standards, certification, testing, and pre shipment inspection, especially those in the industrial and agriculture sectors.

## Challenges of Carbon Tax and Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM):

- India's exports are threatened by the UK's contemplation of a **carbon border adjustment mechanism (CBAM) similar to that of the EU.**
- **India's exports may be impacted by a possible carbon tax** on metal imports depending on carbon emissions, particularly in industries like steel, chemicals, and cement.

## Way Forward:

- The ongoing free trade agreements negotiations between India and the UK offer both opportunities and difficulties for the two countries.
- Important factors that will shape the final agreement include managing prospective carbon levies, resolving non-tariff barriers, and striking a balance between economic interests.
- The result of these talks would not only affect commerce between the two countries, but



17 and 18 Nov CA

it will also establish a standard for India's interactions with other international partners.



1.

With the aim to develop, regulate and supervise the standards and quality of school education in the state, the Assam Cabinet approved the merger of the Board of Secondary Education, Assam (SEBA) and Assam Higher Secondary Education Council, Assam (AHSEC) and it will now be constituted as the 'Assam State School Education Board' (ASSEB).

The cabinet also gave nod to the Assam Secondary Education (Government Schools) Service (2nd Amendment) Rules, 2023 and the Assam Secondary Education (Provincialised Schools) Service (2nd Amendment) Rules, 2023 for streamlining the recruitment procedure of Graduate and Post Graduate Teachers, including Subject Teacher in vocational subjects.

the amended rules seek to maintain the pupil-teacher ratio, ensure optimum utilisation of manpower for effective academic support to students and prevent adverse effects on academic activities at the Secondary level in Provincialised/Government Schools

2.

The Assam state cabinet has approved the appointment of medal winners from the 37th National Games in accordance with Assam's Integrated Sports Policy.

Gold, silver, and bronze winners will secure Grade III positions in government departments, while medal winners who are already in government service (under the provisions of the Integrated Sports Policy of Assam) will receive cash rewards—Rs 50,000 for Gold, Rs 40,000 for Silver, and Rs 30,000 for Bronze.



This aligns with CM Himanta Biswa Sarma’s commitment to provide timely jobs to Assam’s medal-winning athletes, considering their educational qualifications, as announced in September 2022.

3.

Acclaimed British author AS Byatt, who won the 1990 Booker Prize for her best-selling romance novel “Possession”, have passed away yesterday

The novelist — who was also shortlisted for the Booker Prize in 2009 for “The Children’s Book” — was made a dame in 1999.

( Dame is the female equivalent of Knight)

Her other books include four novels set in the 1950s and 60s Britain and known as the Frederica Quartet — The Virgin in the Garden, published in 1978, followed by Still Life, Babel Tower and A Whistling Woman — and Booker Prize-shortlisted historical novel The Children’s Book, which won the James Tait Black Memorial Prize in 2009

4.

The Rising Sun Water Fest—Revisiting Saraighat, 2023—hosted by the Indian Army and Eastern Command in collaboration with the Assam Government got underway at Deepor Beel in Guwahati on November 17. It is a coveted water sports event in the North East region, comprising events like rowing, sailing, motor boating, etc.



It seeks to harness the untapped opportunities within sports tourism in the region.

This edition of the festival pays tribute to the heroism and patriotism of the great Ahom General Lachit Barphukan and pays tribute to the heroic battle of Saraighat.

5.

A large stretch of the Silchar-Saurashtra East-West corridor in the hill district of Dima Hasao, which is the main hurdle for smooth connectivity between Silchar and the rest of the country, is expected to be completed soon.

The construction of the East-West corridor's Nirimbanglo-Harangajao stretch in the hill district is being done using Japanese technology and work is on at a rapid pace so that the project can be completed on time.

Construction of the corridor has been completed in other parts of India, except for two stretches — one is the Balacherra-Harangajao portion (in Dima Hasao and Cachar districts) and another is the Nirimbanglo-Harangajao stretch (in Dima Hasao district)

6.

An Assam farmer from Golaghat is promoting the healing powers of 'Black Turmeric', a plant native to Northeast India. His mission aims at boosting its use for therapeutic benefits, sustainable farming and biodiversity conservation.



What is Black Turmeric?

This perennial herb has a bluish-black rhizome and thrives well in moist deciduous forest areas in clayey soil. Mostly it is found in North-East and Central India.

The variety is known for containing the highest concentration of curcumin of any turmeric species. Black Turmeric is traditionally made into a paste and applied topically to heal wounds, skin irritations, and snake and insect bites

7.

With an aim to reduce the alarming and rising road accidents and fatalities in Assam, the state transport department is going to organise a statewide awareness campaign “Path Suraksha Jan Andolan,” kickstarting from today.

The campaign is being initiated on the World Day of Remembrance for Road Traffic Victims.

Important:

Assam transport department in collaboration with a non-profit organisation will also conduct a road safety audit of Kamrup Metropolitan and Kamrup districts as part of the “Zero Fatality District” programme. The audit, scheduled from November 20 to 25 this year, will comprehensively cover engineering, enforcement, education and emergency care.

8.



## Cyclone Midhili in news

The name 'Midhili' was given by the Maldives.

It means a huge tree, according to honorary consul of the Republic of Maldives in Kolkata, Ram Krishna Jaiswal.

Countries affected by the Arabian Sea and Bay of Bengal cyclones rotationally give names of cyclones in a sequence. This system was adopted by the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) and member countries of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission (ESCAP).

9.

## The Railway Men: The Untold Story of Bhopal 1984 webseries in news

The four-part series is a tribute to the unsung heroes of the 1984 Bhopal gas tragedy and marks the first venture in a multi-year creative partnership between Netflix and Yash Raj Films.

It is about railway workers who saved many lives during the 1984 Bhopal disaster.

Recently, the Bombay High Court has refused to stay the release of the web series "The Railway Men The Untold Story of Bhopal 1984", citing that the details of the event were already available in the public domain.



A vacation bench of Justice Arif Doctor on November 15 dismissed the petitions filed by two erstwhile employees of Union Carbide India Limited, who claimed that the series' depiction of the events leading to the tragedy and its cause may cause prejudice to them

10.

**Due to a hazardous heatwave**, Rio de Janeiro's street vendors have been forced to close, and health advisories have been issued.

- A red signal was issued by the **National Institute of Meteorology** for many states, indicating a high likelihood of significant damage, accidents, and potential hazards to human life.
- **Rio's heat index**—a measure of temperature plus humidity rose to a record 58.5 degrees Celsius, posing health risks and having an effect on day-to-day living.

#### **Impact on Residents and Energy Demand:**

- **Although the locals, referred to as Cariocas**, are used to the sun and heat, the severity of the current heatwave has presented serious difficulties.
- There is no air conditioning in public transportation, street vendors run the risk of illness, and the heat has increased demand for energy.
- **Major cities like Rio de Janeiro and Sao Paulo have suffered power disruptions.**

#### **Health Risks and Safety Measures:**



- **Severe heat can have a negative impact on kidneys, the heart, and breathing**, particularly in susceptible groups like the elderly and the young.
- In addition to **drinking plenty of water, eating fruits and vegetables, and utilizing umbrellas for shade**, the authorities have urged several safety precautions.
- Precautions are necessary to lessen the heatwave's negative effects since it poses a hazard to public health.

### **Wildfires and Environmental Consequences:**

- **The world's largest wetlands, the Pantanal biome**, has seen flames due to the heatwave in addition to health risks.
- **The Environmental Satellite Applications Laboratory** of the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro claims that the fires had destroyed an area as large as Cyprus.
- The difficulties brought on by the current heatwave are exacerbated by this environmental impact.

### **Climate Phenomenon El Niño's Influence:**

- **The El Nino climate phenomena**, a recurring event that warms surface waters in the Equatorial Pacific region, is blamed for the severe temperatures experienced in Brazil.
- El Nino's effects were exacerbated this year by an extremely rapid rise in ocean temperatures.
- **El Niño has historically resulted in severe rainfall in the south of Brazil and droughts in the north.**
- But because of the heatwave that has affected a significant portion of the nation, this



year's effects have been especially severe.

## **Conclusion:**

- Brazil is currently experiencing severe heatwave effects that are affecting the environment, public health, and energy demand.
- The El Niño phenomenon has contributed to this year's unusual heatwave severity, which has sparked worries about the nation's capacity to adjust and deal with the changing environment.



1.

For the first time a giraffe was born in the Assam state zoo.

The calf is the offspring of Vijay and Vijaya. Under an animal exchange programme, Vijay was brought from Mysore in 2019 and Vijaya from Patna in 2022

2.

A 19-minute-long animation film Lachit Borphukan written and directed by an Indian Police Service officer in Assam has been selected for the Indian Panorama section of the International Film Festival of India (IFFI) 2023 , Goa .

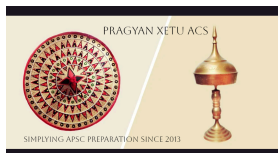
It will be screened tomorrow

Director: Partha Sarathi Mahanta, the Deputy Inspector General (Administration) of Police

Produced by Mina Mahanta and Indrani Baruah, the film was screened and awarded at 10 film festivals in India and abroad this year. They include the 15th Jaipur International Film Festival, the 6th South Asian Short Film Festival in Kolkata, the Kollywood International Film Festival in Chennai, and the Newborn Short Film Festival in Berlin.

3.

Rice research institute in Titabar is celebrating its centenary year by working towards



developing a high-yielding premium quality version of Assam's famed aromatic Joha to add to its avant garde collection that includes among others a diabetic-friendly purple rice variety.

On January 27 this year, the station was re-designated as Assam Agricultural University- Assam Rice Research Institute (AAU-ARRI).

Research on rice is undertaken in six disciplines – plant breeding, agronomy, soil science, plant pathology, entomology and plant physiology. So far, the institute has developed more than 45 rice varieties through its breeding programme which include Ranjit, Bahadur, Piyolee, Kushal and Moniram.

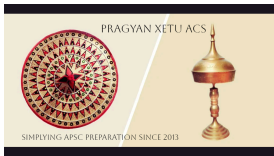
Earlier this month, three high yielding rice varieties developed by AAU-ARRI – Prachur, Satabdi and Patkai – were released for cultivation

4.

- Efforts underway to expand **cultivation of GI-tagged Onattukara sesame in Alappuzha, Kerala.**
- Incentive scheme announced in Thekkekara Krishi Bhavan limits, offering ₹40 for a cent of land to farmers.

#### **GI-tagged Onattukara sesame:**

- Onattukara sesame is a unique and high-quality sesame seed variety grown in the Onattukara region of Kerala,



- It is known for its distinctive nutty flavor, high oil content, and rich nutritional value.
- Onattukara sesame has been granted a Geographical Indication (GI) tag, recognizing its unique characteristics and origin.
- The GI tag helps protect the reputation and authenticity of Onattukara sesame and promotes its marketability.
- Onattukara sesame is used in various culinary preparations, such as sesame oil, sweets, and savory dishes.
- It is also valued for its medicinal properties and believed to have health benefits.

5.

- The Tamil Nadu Governor, R. N. Ravi, has “withheld” assent for certain Bills passed by the Tamil Nadu Legislative Assembly, prompting the Supreme Court to express “serious concern” over gubernatorial inaction on presented Bills.
- Similar delays by Governors in Telangana, Punjab, and Kerala also drew the Court’s displeasure.

### **Constitutional Framework (Article 200):**

- Article 200 of the Constitution delineates the Governor’s options when presented with a State Legislature Bill, allowing assent, withholding assent (rejecting the Bill), returning for reconsideration, or reserving for the President.
- **As per Supreme Court rulings in Shamsher Singh Case (1974)**, Governors are expected to act on ministerial advice when withholding assent or returning a Bill. Withholding assent may occur for Private Members’ Bills or in case of a government

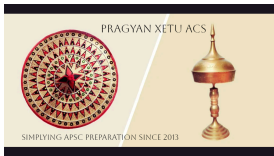


change.

- **The return of Bills to the State Legislature is typically based on ministerial advice.** However, past instances, like the Tamil Nadu Governor's action on the online gambling prohibition Bill, reveal discretionary use.
- Reserved Bills, especially those reducing High Court powers, are to be considered by the President. Governor discretion is rare, primarily exercised when provisions contravene the Constitution.
- **Recommendations from the Sarkaria Commission (1987)** emphasize limited Governor discretion, mostly reserved for President consideration in exceptional cases of unconstitutionality.
- **The Punchhi Commission (2010)** recommends a decision **timeframe of six months** for Governors on presented Bills and suggests impeachment by the State Legislature for uncooperative Governors.
- **The politicization of the gubernatorial post is identified as an issue**, with leaders, including Annadurai and Nitish Kumar, advocating for the abolition of the Governor's post.
- **Proposed constitutional amendments include Chief Ministers' consultation before Governor appointments and removal through State Legislature impeachment, aiming to foster responsible cooperation.**
- The Supreme Court calls for introspection by Governors and Chief Ministers and recommends constitutional amendments to ensure responsible cooperation in Governor appointments and functioning.

## Conclusion

- Striking a balance between a nominal head for the State executive and federalism is



crucial, with proposed amendments aiming to enhance cooperation between Central and State Governments.

**Question:** Explain the provisions of Article 200 of the Indian Constitution regarding a Governor's role in State Legislature Bills. Discuss the recommendations of the Sarkaria and Punchhi Commissions and the Supreme Court's concerns.

6.

- Air Chief Marshal V.R. Chaudhari emphasized the crucial need to invest in new and disruptive technologies.
- Chaudhari stressed the imperative of investing in new technologies and finding innovative solutions for their application in the aerospace domain.

### **Importance of investing in new technologies in defence sector:**

- **Maintaining a technological edge:** Investing in new technologies allows a country to maintain a technological edge over its adversaries, which is essential for deterring aggression and defending national security.
- **Enhancing operational effectiveness:** New technologies can significantly enhance the operational effectiveness of armed forces, making them more capable of carrying out their missions. This can include improvements in areas such as situational awareness, precision targeting, and communication.
- **Adapting to evolving threats:** The nature of warfare is constantly evolving, and new technologies are often required to adapt to these changes. Investing in research and



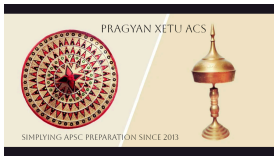
development can help a country stay ahead of the curve and prepare for future threats.

- **Boosting industrial competitiveness:** Investing in defense technologies can also have a positive spillover effect on the civilian economy, by boosting industrial competitiveness and creating new jobs.
- **Supporting national innovation:** The defense sector is often at the forefront of technological innovation, and investing in this area can help to support national innovation and competitiveness.

### Challenges in defence innovation in India:

- **Lack of funding:** The Indian government spends a relatively small amount of money on defense research and development (R&D), as a percentage of GDP. This lack of funding makes it difficult for Indian companies to develop new technologies.
- **Bureaucratic hurdles:** The Indian defense procurement process is complex and bureaucratic, which can make it difficult for innovative companies to do business with the government.
- **Lack of collaboration:** There is a lack of collaboration between the Indian military, academia, and industry, which can hinder the development of new technologies.
- **Limited access to technology:** Indian companies often have limited access to the latest technologies, which can make it difficult for them to compete with foreign companies.
- **Brain drain:** India has a significant brain drain of talented engineers and scientists, many of whom are drawn to higher salaries and better opportunities abroad.

**Question:** Despite India's growing recognition of the need for a strong domestic defense industry, innovation in the sector remains a challenge. Discuss the key hurdles to innovation



and suggest potential solutions.

7.

- The Indira Gandhi Prize for Peace, Disarmament and Development, 2022 was jointly awarded to the Indian Medical Association and the Trained Nurses Association of India.
- The award was presented to Sharad Kumar Agarwal, president, Indian Medical Association, and Roy K. George, president, Trained Nurses Association of India.

### **Indira Gandhi Peace Prize:**

- Established in 1986, it is an annual award named after the former Prime Minister of India, Indira Gandhi.

### **Purpose and Recognition:**

- Awarded for promoting international understanding and goodwill, recognizing individuals or organizations' outstanding contributions to global peace.

### **Diverse Awardees:**

- Given to individuals, organizations, or movements involved in activities such as disarmament, development, and fostering better international relations.

### **Prominent Recipients:**



- Notable awardees include individuals like Ban Ki-moon, the United Nations, and organizations like the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO).

### **Symbolic Significance:**

- Holds symbolic significance in acknowledging efforts toward global peace and harmony.

8.

- **Chimaeras are organisms composed of cells of more than one distinct genotype.**
- **Chimerism can occur naturally, as in the case of the anglerfish, or be induced in the laboratory, as in the case of rat-mouse, human-pig, and human-cow chimaeras.**
- A recent study has reported the successful generation of a live chimaera in non-human primates - Cynomolgus monkeys.
- The chimeric monkey had to be euthanised after ten days for health reasons, but its genome-sequencing investigations showed a high degree of chimerism in its tissues.
- This study opens new doors for scientists to use non-human primates to create chimaeras that could become models for basic and translational biomedical applications in the near future.
- As with other advances in science, this study is not without limitations and ethical quandaries, which must be addressed before thinking about the human biomedical applications.



9.

- **Recently, the Punjab and Haryana High Court** struck down a 2020 Haryana government law that required a 75% state resident reservation in private employment.
- **The court ruled that the law violated the fundamental rights guaranteed by Part III of the Constitution**, which prohibits discrimination against people by their state of origin by the government.

#### **Details:**

- **Enacted in January 2022, the Haryana State Employment of Local Candidates Act, 2020**, allocated 75% of private sector positions with a monthly wage below Rs 30,000 to Haryana residents.
- The Faridabad Industries Association and other associations located in Haryana opposed the bill, claiming that it violated the fundamental right to work wherever in India and breached constitutional rights by instituting a policy of **“sons of the soil”**.

#### **Legal Challenge and Grounds:**

- The Faridabad Industries Association filed the lawsuit, arguing that workers' fundamental right to work anywhere in the nation is violated and that private sector jobs are skill-based.
- They argued that the rule went against the federal structure described in the Constitution by requiring employers to hire local candidates.
- **Citing Article 16(4) of the Constitution**, which gives the state the authority to reserve



employment for members of any underprivileged class, the Haryana government supported the rule.

### Scope and Exemptions of the Law:

- **The law was applied to a wide range of organizations**, including partnerships, societies, corporations, and trusts with ten or more employees.
- **Organizations under state or central control were not covered by the Act.**
- The rule mandated that firms hire employees using a certain web portal; although there was a procedure for exemptions, it was thought to be cumbersome by some.

### High Court's Ruling and Criticisms:

- **Sections 6 and 8 of the Act**, which required quarterly reporting and verification procedures, were condemned by the High Court in its 83-page verdict for being similar to an "Inspector Raj."
- With its protections and provisions, it stated, the law gave the state **"absolute control over a private employer,"** a situation that was considered inappropriate for private employment.

### Future Course of Action:

- **The government of Haryana** declared its intention to appeal the ruling, claiming that after carefully reviewing the High Court's ruling, they would **file a Special Leave Petition (SLP) with the Supreme Court.**



- The High Court was given four weeks to determine whether the law was still legitimate after the Supreme Court had already overturned the temporary injunction.
- The decision has a big impact on the argument between individual employment rights and regional quotas.

10.

- **The entire Finding Committee for Documenta 16**, a prestigious German art exhibition slated for 2027, resigned after Indian poet and curator **Ranjit Hoskote tendered his resignation**.
- According to a German newspaper, Hoskote resigned in response to charges of **“anti-Semitism”** and purported support for the **Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) campaign**.

### Overview of BDS Movement:

- **Initiated in 2005 by more than 170 Palestinian organizations**, the BDS movement seeks to mobilize public support for Palestinian rights.
- BDS, which calls itself an “inclusive, anti-racist human rights movement,” is **against all kinds of prejudice, including Islamophobia and anti-Semitism**.
- In order to achieve its goals which include putting an end to the occupation of some areas, recognizing the rights of Arab-Palestinian residents in Israel, and permitting the return of Palestinian refugees, **the movement supports applying nonviolent pressure to Israel**.



## **BDS Campaign Strategies:**

- Boycott, divestment, and sanctions (BDS) movements are used to put **pressure on organizations that back the Israeli government, including universities, sports teams, and cultural centers.**
- The movement promotes cutting ties with foreign and Israeli businesses that violate human rights.
- Campaigns for sanctions aim to put pressure on governments to enforce their legal duties and put an end to what BDS refers to as “Israeli apartheid.”
- **The movement also calls for Israel’s expulsion from international organizations including the UN and FIFA.**

## **Israeli Government’s Response:**

- 2014 saw Israel’s Benjamin Netanyahu, the prime minister, associate BDS with anti-Semitism, claiming that the movement’s founders wanted to see the Jewish state destroyed.
- He insisted that boycotters must be shown as “classical anti-Semites in modern garb” and stressed the need of opposing them.
- In response, BDS emphasized the right to criticize a state’s behavior and made it clear that criticism of Israel’s transgressions of international law **should not be mistaken for anti-Semitism.**

## **Impact on Israel’s Economy:**



- Even if BDS has forced some companies and celebrities to stop doing business or giving concerts in Israel, **it's still difficult to estimate the total economic damage.**
- While acknowledging the strong Western support for Israel, **BDS says it has the potential to be a forceful tool to stop support for “Israeli apartheid and settler colonialism.”**

### **Conclusion and Ongoing Dynamics:**

- The debate surrounding the resignation of Ranjit Hoskote and the subsequent departure of the committee illuminates the intricate relationship between politics, art, and activism.
- **The BDS movement is still a divisive force**, provoking discussions about its effectiveness and possible repercussions for foreign support of Israel.
- The episode highlights the **difficulties in managing geopolitical sensitivities in the context of esteemed cultural events.**



1.

Assamese filmmaker Utpal Borpujari has been chosen to be a part of the jury for the International Film Festival of India (IFFI), which is set to begin in Goa from today

Renowned filmmaker Rajkumar Hirani has been appointed as the head of the five-member jury for the best web series (OTT) award category.

This year, the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting has introduced a new award category for the best web series (OTT)

Note: Utpal Borpujari has won two National Film Awards – one as a film critic and another as a filmmaker. In 2003, he was honored with the Swarna Kamal for Best Film Critic at the 50th National Film Awards of India. Additionally, in 2018, his debut feature film Ishu earned him the National Film Award and 5 Assam State Film Awards

2.

The Indira Gandhi Prize for Peace, Disarmament and Development, 2022, was Sunday awarded jointly to the Indian Medical Association and the Trained Nurses Association of India as representatives of the Covid warriors in the country.

The prize honours each and every doctor, nurse, paramedic and karmachari for their selfless service, and for their unflinching dedication and perseverance in the face of adversity



3.

Saturn's rings will seemingly disappear from view in 2025, a phenomenon caused by the planet's rotation on an axis. Saturn won't actually lose its rings in 2025, but they will go edge-on, meaning they will be essentially invisible to earthlings

Every 13 to 15 years, Earth sees Saturn's rings edge-on, meaning they reflect very little light, and are very difficult to see, making them essentially invisible

Galileo Galilei was the first person to look at Saturn through a telescope, in the early 1610s

4.

The controlled airspace of Bir Tikendrajit International Airport in Manipur's capital Imphal was closed for commercial flight operations on Sunday for nearly three hours after an unidentified flying object was seen

The object was visible from the terrace of the ATC tower; people on the ground including airline and CISF personnel also saw it. The object's colour was white

All airport operations were kept on hold till further notice and a NOTAM (Notice to Airmen) of airspace closure was flashed.

What is a NOTAM?



A NOTAM contains information about the condition or change in any aeronautical facility, service, procedure or hazard, the timely knowledge of which is essential to personnel concerned with flight operations.

5.

The Assam Police Child Rights Week campaign, which started on November 14, culminated with the 'Go Blue' campaign on World Children's Day observed globally on November 20.

The 'Go Blue' campaign was initiated by Unicef.

Participating in this campaign, iconic landmarks world over are illuminated in blue to express solidarity with the cause of child rights.

The Assam Police Headquarters, along with SP offices and police stations across the state, were also beautifully illuminated in blue.

Through its flagship Sishu Mitra programme, Assam Police has been striving towards strengthening its response mechanisms to ensure protection of child rights across the state. The programme is a collaborative partnership of the Assam Police with UNICEF and UTSAH Child Rights Org. It is one of the largest child-friendly policing programmes in the country.

6.

Assam's five non-attainment cities, Guwahati, Nagaon, Silchar, Sivasagar and Nalbari, have been identified by the National Air Quality Monitoring Programme (NAMP). These cities'



pollution levels are higher than the recommended air quality guidelines. Accordingly, the National Clean Air Programme (NCAP) has been initiated to develop action plans to bring down the fine particulate matter (like PM10 and PM2.5) by 20-30 per cent within a stipulated time frame.

The idea of clear blue skies and clean air in this part of the country is in danger as a result of the ongoing problem of air pollution in Assam and other northeastern states, according to a new warning from the Delhi-based Centre of Science and Environment.

A large chunk of the population in Assam is breathing toxic air, with Guwahati topping the chart of the highest polluted cities in the state and also having one of the highest black carbon emissions in the country.

7.

Assam Directorate of higher education has invited applications for PG Research Scholarship Scheme 2023. Students who fulfil the eligibility requirements will be able to apply on the official website, [dhe-operations.assam.gov.in/scholarship](http://dhe-operations.assam.gov.in/scholarship), from November 21 to December 5.

The selected candidates will have to execute a bond before awarding the scholarship to the effect that the entire scholarship amount drawn by the scholar shall be refunded if he/she discontinues the research work / study during the tenure of scholarship or violate any terms and conditions of the award

What is a scholarship bond?



A bond is a legal agreement between the scholarship provider and the recipient, which requires the recipient to work for a specific period of time in a particular field or industry after completing their education. The bond is typically for a longer period than the duration of the scholarship, and failure to fulfill the terms of the bond may result in the recipient having to pay back the scholarship or face legal consequences. The purpose of the bond is to ensure that the scholarship funds are used to benefit the recipient's education and to provide a return on investment to the scholarship provider by having the recipient work in a specific field or industry.

8.

- The Supreme Court considered the Tamil Nadu government's argument on the Governor's discretion to withhold 10 Bills re-passed by the State Legislative Assembly.

#### **More on this news:**

- **Chief Justice of India D.Y. Chandrachud stated that once Bills are re-passed, they are on par with Money Bills, and rejection by the Governor is not permissible.**
- **The State referred to Article 200's first provision**, emphasizing that if the Bill is re-passed and presented to the Governor, assent cannot be withheld.
- The Chief Justice questioned whether the Governor must send Bills back to the House after withholding assent, to which the State argued that it is a necessary corollary.
- Acknowledging the State's submission, **the court noted that the Governor, after withholding assent and sending back the Bills, cannot refer them to the**



### **President.**

- The State expressed concern that the Governor's indefinite withholding of Bills is depriving the people of Tamil Nadu of the benefits of crucial laws passed by the House.

**Question:** Examine the constitutional provisions related to the Governor's discretion in withholding assent to bills. Evaluate the impact on the legislative process and the rights of the state government.

- 9.
- Australian Deputy Prime Minister and Defence Minister Richard Marles **expressed that China is the "biggest security anxiety" for both India and Australia during the 2+2 dialogue.**
  - **Indian Defence Minister Rajnath Singh emphasized consensus on the importance of a strong India-Australia** partnership for the overall peace, security, and prosperity of the Indo-Pacific.

### **Why China is the biggest security anxiety for India?**

- **Territorial Disputes:** India and China have longstanding border disputes, leading to military standoffs and tensions.
- **Strategic Rivalry:** China's rising influence in the region poses a strategic challenge to India's security interests.
- **Economic Competition:** Economic and trade competition adds another dimension to the security concerns.



- **Military Buildup:** China's military modernization and infrastructure development along the border raise security apprehensions.
- **Regional Influence:** China's assertiveness in the Indo-Pacific region impacts India's geopolitical standing and security dynamics.

10.

- The Supreme Court has sought a response from Kerala Governor Arif Mohammed Khan in response to a petition by the State government.
- The petition alleges that the Governor is indefinitely withholding key Bills presented for assent, causing delays ranging from seven to 23 months.

#### **Potential implications of governor holding assent with bills:**

- **Delay in implementation of laws:** If a governor holds assent with a bill, it can delay the implementation of the law. This can have a number of negative consequences, such as uncertainty for businesses and individuals, and a lack of clarity about the legal framework.
- **Increased political tension:** A governor holding assent with a bill can also increase political tension between the governor and the legislature. This can make it more difficult for the two branches of government to work together effectively.
- **Legal challenges:** If a governor holds assent with a bill, it can also lead to legal challenges. This is because the governor may be seen as acting outside of their authority in refusing to sign a bill into law.
- **Loss of public trust: If a governor holds assent with a bill that is popular with the**

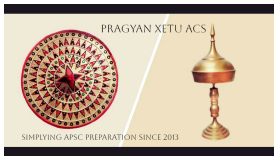


public, it can lead to a loss of public trust in the governor. This can make it more difficult for the governor to govern effectively in the future.

- **Political posturing:** In some cases, a governor may hold assent with a bill as a form of political posturing. This is especially likely if the governor is from a different party than the legislature.
- **Constitutional crisis:** In extreme cases, a governor holding assent with a bill can lead to a constitutional crisis. This is because it can raise questions about the separation of powers and the role of the governor in the legislative process.

### Way forward:

- **Establish clear guidelines for gubernatorial assent:** Clearly define the circumstances under which a governor can hold assent with a bill and establish a time frame for the governor to make a decision. This would provide greater transparency and predictability in the legislative process.
- **Enhance communication and collaboration between the governor and legislature:** Encourage regular dialogue and open communication between the governor's office and the legislature to foster mutual understanding and address concerns early on. This could help prevent disagreements from escalating to the point of withholding assent.
- **Strengthen judicial review mechanisms:** Provide clear and accessible mechanisms for judicial review of gubernatorial decisions to ensure that they are within the bounds of the constitution and do not unreasonably obstruct legislative action.
- **Empower legislative oversight:** Establish robust legislative oversight mechanisms to hold the governor accountable for their actions, including the power to override a



gubernatorial veto with a two-thirds majority vote.

- **Foster public engagement and dialogue:** Encourage public participation in the legislative process and promote open discussions about the implications of gubernatorial assent on the implementation of laws and the overall functioning of the government.
- **Consider constitutional amendments:** If the issue of gubernatorial assent proves to be a recurring challenge, consider exploring constitutional amendments to clarify the governor's role in the legislative process and address any perceived imbalances in power.

**Question:** Critically examine the implications of a governor holding assent with bills and suggest measures to address the potential challenges arising from this practice.



1.

China is “prioritising” the extension of the China-Myanmar Economic Corridor (CMEC) to Sri Lanka

The CMEC is the newest of the six land corridors under the BRI and has assumed prominence in place of the Bangladesh China India Myanmar (BCIM) corridor which has largely stalled. India and Bhutan are the only countries in South Asia that have stayed out of the BRI and China’s more recent Global Development Initiative, which Sri Lanka has also backed

2.

Researchers from the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Guwahati and the UR Rao Satellite Centre of ISRO have achieved a groundbreaking discovery by detecting polarized emissions from an extragalactic black hole (i.e., outside our Milky Way Galaxy) marking the first such observation beyond our Milky Way Galaxy.

What is Polarized emissions?

Polarized emissions refer to electromagnetic waves, such as light or X-rays, whose electric field vectors oscillate predominantly in a specific direction. In astrophysics, detecting polarized emissions from celestial objects, like black holes, provides valuable information about the object’s physical properties and surrounding environment

3.



Recently the web series Scam 2003 by Hansal Mehta brought into focus an important topic

Narco test in India was first conducted during the investigations into the Godhra incident of 2002.

Abdul Karim Telgi fake stamp paper scam

The fake stamp paper scam had created a storm in Maharashtra politics after main accused Abdul Karim Telgi named NCP chief Sharad Pawar and former Maharashtra deputy chief minister Chhagan Bhujbal during a narco test. During the narco test, Abdul Karim Telgi had claimed that he had paid money to the two high-profile politicians.

However, the narco test results became redundant when Abdul Karim Telgi recorded his statement before a chief judicial magistrate, in which he did not mention either Pawar or Bhujbal.

Note:

The substance which is used to conduct a narco test is sodium pentothal, widely known as the 'truth serum'. During a narco test, this substance is injected into the subject's body.

4.

The 2nd Voice of Global South Summit, hosted by India, focused on condemning the Hamas attacks of October 7 and called for restraint, dialogue, and diplomacy to resolve the Israel-



Hamas conflict.

What is VOGSS?

Voice of Global South Summit is a platform where countries from the Global South, often described as developing or less developed, come together to share perspectives and priorities. The summit focuses on sustaining momentum toward a more inclusive, representative, and progressive world order.

The outcome of the summit:

Indian PM unveils DAKSHIN (Global South Centre of Excellence) and calls for 5 'Cs' for the Global South: Consultation, Cooperation, Communication, Creativity, and Capacity building.

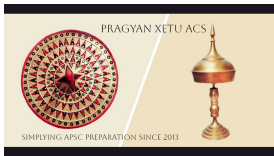
5.

Amazon Women of the World (WoW) programme

Amazon WoW is a networking platform for women engineering students in India, connecting them with Amazon leaders and recruiters. It offers skill-building sessions, career insights from alumni, and information about Amazon's culture.

Aim:

It aims to foster optimising resource utilisation, upskilling and promoting tech careers among



women in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics)

6.

The Assam Royal Global University, Guwahati is hosting the East Zone Vice Chancellors' Meet, organised by the Association of Indian Universities (AIU) on November 21 and 22. The meeting is themed on 'Integrating Bharatiya Knowledge System (BKS) with Higher Education.

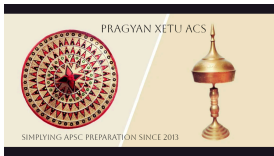
The Association of Indian Universities (AIU), is one of the premier apex higher education institutions of the Country established in 1925. It is a research-based policy advice institution to the Government of India in the field of Higher Education, Sports, and Culture.

Being an apex advisory institution, it constitutes an integral part of all major decision-making committees and commissions in the country. As a representative body of Indian universities, it facilitates cooperation and coordination among Indian universities and liaises between the universities and the Government (Central as well as the State Governments) and National and International bodies of higher education in other countries in matters of common interest.

7.

Recently, the Indian Knowledge Systems, under Education Ministry, has developed 6 indoor games that are rooted in indigenous knowledge.

These games have been divided into three segments: dice-based, strategic, and



engagement.

The games promote interdisciplinary research and align with the Ministry of Education's focus on fun-filled learning, as per the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020.

An additional 15 games are expected to be launched by the end of the year.

These indoor games will be introduced to school children in the next academic year under the Bhartiya Games program.

The Bhartiya Games program has already launched 75 outdoor games from different regions of India in the current school year.

Some popular outdoor games included are Langdi-Taang, javelin throw, Patang Uddayan (kite flying), Seeta Uddhar (prisoner's base), and Mardani Khel (a form of martial arts).

8.

Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS)

IKS is an innovative cell established under the Ministry of Education (MoE) and operates within the All-India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) in New Delhi.

The primary objective of IKS is to promote interdisciplinary research on all aspects of Indian Knowledge Systems.

IKS aims to preserve and disseminate indigenous knowledge for further research and its practical applications in society.

It plays a crucial role in spreading India's rich heritage and traditional knowledge across various domains, including Arts and Literature, Agriculture, Basic Sciences, Engineering & Technology, Architecture, Management, Economics, and more.



9.

Meghalaya's keenness to create an elephant corridor with neighbour Assam is also aimed to create a tourist destination and protect the pachyderms.

What is the umbrella effect?

By preserving a large area for elephants to roam freely, one provides a suitable habitat for many other animal and plant species of an ecosystem.

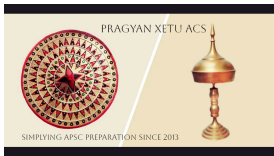
To have elephants in isolated populations, unable to move freely through their home ranges, would therefore have a devastating effect on India's natural heritage. Many animal species would suffer and the ecosystem balance of several wild habitats would be unalterably upset

10.

- Despite initiatives like PMJAY providing health insurance, cancer patients in India face catastrophic health expenses, affecting over 80% even with state-sponsored coverage.

**Private Sector Burden:**

- Free cancer care is available in government facilities, but patients resort to private healthcare due to overburdened public systems, leading to substantial out-of-pocket expenses.



### **Direct and Indirect Costs:**

- Costs encompass direct medical (consultation, medicines, tests), direct non-medical (transport, accommodation), and indirect (loss of productive hours/income).

### **Treatment Delays and Worsening Conditions:**

- Overburdened government hospitals result in treatment delays, forcing patients to opt for private facilities, worsening financial burdens as diseases progress.

### **Impact on Breadwinners:**

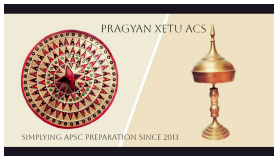
- Cancer's financial impact is severe when it affects family breadwinners, leading to job loss or cessation of work, amplifying economic distress.

### **Rural Challenges:**

- Rural patients face additional challenges like travel expenses, accommodation costs in cities, and borrowing money, exacerbating financial strain.

### **Government Efforts and Challenges:**

- Some states offer concessions and schemes, but awareness gaps, inadequate coverage, and regional variations limit their effectiveness.

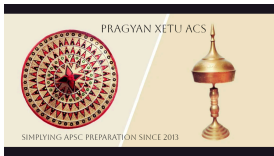


### **Need for Accessible Cancer Care:**

- Establishing publicly funded cancer care centers across India is essential to address post-cancer financial challenges effectively and prevent impoverishment.

### **Continuous Financial Support:**

- Until cancer care becomes widely accessible, ongoing financial support is crucial to alleviate the suffering of patients and their families.



1.

Javier Milei, a 53-year-old libertarian and self-proclaimed political outsider, is set to be Argentina's new president after winning 56 per cent of the vote in the national elections.

Much like former United States President Donald Trump, who many have compared him to, Milei rode on a wave of voter anger against the country's political establishment and has promised "a new political era."

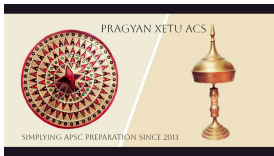
Experts have called Sunday's result a "protest vote". Argentina has long been trapped in recurring cycles of deep and destructive economic contractions, brought on by decades of economic mismanagement and corruption. It currently faces nearly 150 per cent inflation, plummeting Argentinian peso, rising poverty, and near-empty government coffers.

Copping most of the blame: the left-leaning Peronists that have dominated Argentine politics since the 1940s.

2.

Producer Ekta Kapoor on Monday, November 20, was awarded the Directorate Award at the 51st International Film Awards, becoming the First Indian Woman Producer to receive the International Emmy Directorate Award.

Additionally, Vir Das, along with Derry Girls season 3, were honoured with the International Emmy for Comedy. It was Vir Das's second nomination for an International Emmy.



The comedian and actor won the award for his Netflix comedy special, Vir Das: Landing. This made him the first Indian comedian to accomplish this honour.

3.

The Assam government's recently updated tax policies have stirred dissatisfaction among citizens and political groups. Now, individuals are required to pay Rs 300 as a permission fee for arranging cultural processions, including Bihu celebrations.

These changes, introduced by the Governor of Assam, are a response to the user charges and service fees associated with various services offered through the Assam Police Citizens Service Portal, known as "Assam Police Sewa Setu."

The revised charges fall under the provisions of Section 4 of the Assam Right to Public Services (Amendment) Act, 2019. This legal framework provides the basis for the updated taxation and fee structure for citizens seeking permission for several services.

4.

Ladakh has secured its fourth Geographical Indication (GI) tag, this time for "Ladakh Sea Buckthorn."

Sea Buckthorn is a highly profitable crop in Ladakh, with 90% of its production coming from the region.



About Sea buckthorn:

A shrub which produces an orange-yellow coloured edible berry.

In India, it is found in the Himalayan region, generally in dry areas such as the cold deserts of Ladakh and Spiti.

5.

Uttarakhand tunnel collapse

About 40 workers are trapped inside a tunnel after the under-construction tunnel structure collapsed in Uttarakhand on November 12.

Silkyara Tunnel

The total length of the tunnel, which is meant to connect Silkyara to Dandal gaon in Uttarkashi district, is 4.5 km.

The double-lane tunnel is pegged as one of the longest tunnels under the Char Dham all-weather road project and aims to reduce the journey from Uttarkashi to Yamunotri Dham by 26 kilometres.

Char Dham all weather road project

It is a highway expansion project to widen 889 km of hill roads to provide all-weather connectivity in the Char Dham circuit.



The project, envisaged in 2016, covers Uttarakhand's four major shrines — Badrinath, Kedarnath, Gangotri and Yamunotri— in the upper Himalayas.

6.

Recent passing out parade at the North East Police Academy (NEPA) at Umiam, Meghalaya

Altogether 377 trainees in the ranks of deputy superintendents of police to sub-inspectors from five NE states of Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Mizoram, Nagaland and Tripura passed out after completing the basic course at NEPA.

Having undergone training in different aspects of policing, including law, social science, cyber laws and police operations, they will also receive post-graduate diploma in police administration and investigation from the Sardar Patel University of Police, Security and Criminal Justice, Jodhpur.

Note: In India, the concept of 'smart police' by integrating technology with policing was floated in 2014 and this has changed the face of modern policing in the country.

7.

Recently Assam CM mentioned the term Predictive Policing in Meghalaya

Meaning:



Predictive Policing involves using algorithms to analyze massive amounts of information in order to predict and prevent potential future crimes. For this purpose, it uses methods of Advanced Hotspot Identification models, Risk Terrain analysis, Regression, Classification, and Clustering models. It was used prominently in the NYPD COMPSTAT model. Recently, DGP Sanjay Kundu along with the police team in Himachal Pradesh has successfully decreased crimes in the area using this method.

8.

About 3,000 candidates have applied for the post of priests for the upcoming Ram temple in Ayodhya.

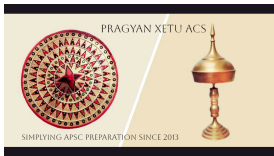
The Trust has shortlisted 200 candidates on the basis of merit for the interview. The interviews are being held at Karsevakpuram, the Vishva Hindu Parishad's (VHP) headquarters in Ayodhya.

Candidates were asked different set of questions like — What is 'Sandhya Vandan' , what are its procedures and what are the 'mantras' for this worship? What are the 'mantras' for worshipping Lord Ram and what are 'karma kand' for this?

The training will be based on the religious syllabus prepared by top seers.

A total of 20 candidates will be selected eventually.

9.



Recently, a team of researchers from the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Ropar, found the presence of tantalum, a rare metal, in the Sutlej river sand in Punjab.

Uses:

It is most prominently used in the electronic sector.

The capacitors made from tantalum are capable of storing more electricity in smaller sizes without much leakage than any other type of capacitor.

This makes them ideal for use in portable electronic devices such as smartphones, laptops, and digital cameras.

10.

NASA recently shared a picture taken from the International Space Station showing the Earth's airglow outlining the planet's horizon with the Moon above.

Airglow is the natural "glowing" of the Earth's atmosphere.

It happens all the time and across the whole globe.

The phenomenon is similar to auroras, but where auroras are driven by high-energy particles originating from the solar wind, airglow is energized by ordinary, day-to-day solar radiation.

Unlike the aurora, airglow does not exhibit structures such as arcs and is emitted from the entire sky at all latitudes at all times.

There are three types of airglow: dayglow, twilightglow, and nightglow.

11.



The Advisory Committee of the Directorate of Village & Town Planning approved the Master Plan for 8 cities in Assam.

The eight cities are Rangapara, Gohpur, Sootea, Jamugurihat, Bokakhat, Lakhipur and Badarpur along with Dibrugarh

These cities will see a complete transformation & overhaul of their urban & civic infrastructure

#### About Master Planning

It is an instrument of governance for urban local bodies (ULBs).

It is a statutory plan document, prepared for stream-lining the land use within the delineated planning area.

It is a long-term plan that provides a conceptual layout for future urban growth and development.

It includes analysis, recommendations, and proposals for a site's population, economy, housing, transportation, community facilities, and land use.

12.

NCERT panel recommends inclusion of Ramayana, Mahabharata in school textbooks

A high-level committee constituted by the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) to revise the school curriculum for social sciences, has recommended to

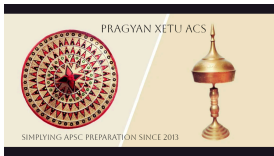


include these epics and to write the Preamble of the Constitution on classroom walls

NCERT is revising the school curriculum in line with the national education policy (NEP) 2020. The new NCERT textbooks are likely to be ready by the next academic session.

13.

In conservation circles, Anwaruddin Choudhury is a well-known name, with a resume that includes Divisional Commissioner of Barak valley, Development Commissioner for Hill Areas, Deputy Commissioner of Baksa and Lakhimpur districts in Assam and Commissioner and Secretary to the Government of Assam. Ornithologist, mammalogist, wildlife photographer, artist and author, his efforts saw the establishment of 13 sanctuaries and two elephant reserves in the Northeast, the notification of Dibru-Saikhowa as a national park, and the addition of Laokhowa and Burhachapori Sanctuaries to the Kaziranga Tiger Reserve. He also pushed to get the White-winged Wood Duck declared as a state bird of Assam. This guardian of India's Northeast is now working on protecting two roosting sites of the Amur Falcon in Assam



1.

- The Supreme Court has issued a significant judgment emphasizing the procedure a Governor must follow when withholding assent to a Bill.

**More information on this news:**

- The ruling states that if a Governor withholds assent, they must send the Bill back to the State legislature “as soon as possible” with a message for reconsideration.
- If the Assembly reiterates the Bill, with or without amendments, the Governor is bound to give assent, eliminating discretion.
- The judgment, based on a petition by the Punjab government against a Governor’s action, is seen as favorable for Tamil Nadu, where 10 Bills were returned by the Assembly to Governor R.N. Ravi.
- The court underscores the Governor’s obligation to follow the course of action indicated in the first proviso of Article 200, mandating communication to the State Legislature for reconsideration.
- It establishes that the ultimate decision on accepting the Governor’s advice belongs solely to the legislature, emphasizing the non-binding nature of the Governor’s message.
- Withholding a Bill without further action would be deemed unconstitutional, as it could potentially veto the functioning of a duly elected legislature, contrary to democratic principles.
- The judgment safeguards the parliamentary pattern of governance and prevents undue interference by an unelected Head of State in the legislative domain.



- 2.
- Congress and BJP political rivals in Karnataka, Puttur Congress MLA Ashok Kumar Rai and BJP leader Umesh Shetty, have collaborated to organize the Kambala buffalo race in Bengaluru.
  - The event, scheduled for November 25 and 26, marks the first time both parties are jointly hosting a mega event.

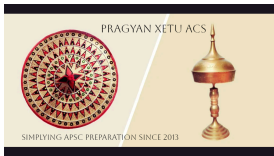
### **About Kambala:**

#### **Origin and History**

- Kambala is a traditional buffalo race practiced in the coastal districts of Dakshina Kannada and Udupi of Karnataka,
- It is believed to have originated centuries ago as a way to train buffaloes for agricultural work and to assess their strength and speed.
- Kambala is deeply ingrained in the cultural identity of the Tuluva people, who are the primary practitioners of this sport.

#### **The Race**

- Kambala races are typically held during the winter months, between November and March, after the paddy harvest.
- The races take place on a pair of parallel, waterlogged paddy fields, approximately 140 meters in length.



- Two buffaloes are paired together and guided by a kambalakar (racer) who runs behind them, holding a rope connected to a wooden plough.
- The kambalakar encourages the buffaloes to run as fast as possible by shouting commands and using a whip.
- The buffaloes that complete the race in the shortest time are declared the winners.

### Cultural Significance

- Kambala is more than just a sport; it is a celebration of the Tuluva people's agricultural heritage and their connection to the land.
- The races are accompanied by a vibrant cultural atmosphere, with traditional music, dance, and food stalls.
- **Kambala also serves as a social gathering for the Tuluva community**, bringing people together from different villages and towns.

### Conservation Efforts

- In recent years, there have been concerns about the welfare of buffaloes participating in Kambala races.
- Animal rights activists have raised objections to the use of whips and the potential for injuries to the buffaloes.
- The Supreme Court of India has issued guidelines to ensure the humane treatment of buffaloes during Kambala races.
- Kambala organizers are working to address these concerns and ensure the sustainability of this traditional sport.



## Additional Points

- **Kambala is often referred to as the “sport of kings” due to its association with the Tuluva royalty.**
- The buffaloes participating in Kambala are specially trained and groomed for the races.
- Kambala has become a popular tourist attraction, drawing visitors from around the world to witness this unique spectacle.

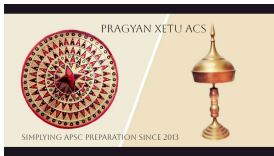
3.

- A near-linear relationship exists between global warming and cumulative carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) emissions, impacting the global climate.
- The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the Paris Agreement emphasize the ‘common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities’ (CBDR-RC) principle, recognizing different responsibilities of states in tackling climate change.

## Global Carbon Budget Definition:

- The ‘global carbon budget’ refers to the maximum cumulative global anthropogenic CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, aiming to limit global warming to a specified level with a given probability.
- The remaining carbon budget indicates the allowable CO<sub>2</sub> emissions to meet temperature targets.

## Historical Cumulative Emissions:



- Developed countries have historically appropriated a disproportionately larger share of the global carbon budget.
- South Asia, including India, has contributed only around 4% to historical cumulative emissions, despite having nearly 24% of the global population.

### **Importance for India:**

- India must recognize its 'fair share of the carbon budget' as a strategic national resource, depleting rapidly due to over-exploitation by developed countries.
- Failure to assert control over this resource might result in India being shortchanged by developed countries.

### **Challenges and Realities:**

- In most emissions scenarios, the world breaches a 1.5-degree Celsius temperature increase by the early 2030s.
- Developed countries have pressured developing nations for rapid, economy-wide changes, creating challenges for countries' growth trajectories.

### **India's Stance at COP 28:**

- India should assert its demand for a fair share of its carbon budget or equivalent reparations at COP 28.
- The government's initiatives, such as the International Solar Alliance, Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure, and Global Biofuel Alliance, highlight India's commitment



to sustainable practices.

- India must emphasize the need for stronger and more fruitful commitments from developed countries, including promised climate-specific finance and technology.

### **Addressing Carbon Debt:**

- Scientists estimate developed countries' carbon debt to the world at over \$51 trillion, with India's historical emissions granting it a carbon credit equivalent of 338 GtCO<sub>2</sub>-eq.
- The Glasgow Climate Pact recorded "regret" for the failure of developed countries to provide the promised US \$100 billion a year, emphasizing the need for more finance and less rhetoric.

### **Call for Action:**

- India needs to challenge developed countries to fulfill their commitments, bringing about fairness in the global order.
- The demand for a fair share of the carbon budget and the fulfillment of promised financial assistance are essential for addressing climate change challenges and promoting sustainable development.

**Question:** Examine India's stance on the global carbon budget at COP 28, highlighting key considerations and challenges.

4.



- A deepfake video featuring Rashmika Mandanna's likeness surfaced, raising concerns about AI misuse.
- The video morphed her facial features onto British-Indian social media personality Zara Patel.

### **Entertainment Industry and AI Applications:**

- Entertainment media, particularly the film industry, has showcased AI applications through deepfake videos.
- Examples include AI-generated videos featuring popular actors, creating both fascination and concern.

### **Misuse of Generative AI and Deepfakes:**

- Deepfakes pose a high-risk aspect due to generative AI's ability to create nearly perfect renditions.
- Threats include the creation of new, realistic content with potential for misuse and personal attacks.

### **Challenges and Threats Associated with Deepfakes:**

- Existing cybercrime measures for morphing and revenge porn may seem inadequate against the advanced capabilities of generative AI.
- Deepfakes challenge traditional methods, making systems designed for previous cyber threats less effective.



## **Government Initiatives and Vigilance:**

- The Indian government has been vigilant in implementing measures to tackle AI-related issues.
- High-level meetings and discussions involving social media platforms and AI experts aim to address challenges posed by deepfakes.

## **Legal Recourse for Deepfake Victims:**

- Victims are advised to report deepfake incidents to social media platforms, which are legally bound to address and remove such content.
- Legal remedies under Section 66 of the Information Technology Act, Copyright Act, and other relevant provisions can be pursued.

## **Role of AI in Countering Deepfakes:**

- AI models are being developed to counter dark AI activities, providing tools to prevent misuse and alert consumers to AI-altered content.
- Open-source tools and initiatives like the Coalition for Content Provenance and Authenticity (C2PA) aim to authenticate digital media.

## **Support for Deepfake Victims:**

- Victims can lodge complaints with the National Cyber Crime Helpline and seek assistance from cyber lawyers.



- Online forums such as stopncii.org offer support, especially in cases involving intimate or non-consensual content.

### **Concerns for Actors and Influencers:**

- Actors and influencers, especially women and marginalized genders, often face the brunt of cybercrimes, including deepfakes.
- Lack of a national union in Indian cinema raises concerns about potential AI misuse by studios, affecting actors' livelihood.

### **Hope for AI Solutions:**

- Ongoing developments in AI include tools to combat deepfakes, such as Intel's FakeCatcher and the use of innovative techniques to detect AI-altered content.
- Transparency initiatives and open technical standards contribute to the fight against deepfakes and AI misuse.

### **Conclusion and Future Outlook:**

- Increased awareness, legislative efforts, and human-friendly AI models are crucial in addressing the challenges posed by deepfakes.
- The evolving landscape of AI and deepfakes necessitates a proactive approach to safeguard individuals and prevent malicious uses of technology.

**Question:** How does the emergence of deepfake technology impact societal and individual



security, and what measures should be adopted to address the challenges posed by deepfakes in the context of artificial intelligence and cybercrime?

5.

- Fathima Beevi, the pioneering woman who served as the first female judge in the Supreme Court, has passed away.

### **Educational and Judicial Milestones:**

- In 1950, Justice M. Fathima Beevi was the first student to achieve full marks in all subjects and complete a law degree.
- Eight years later, she secured the top position in a Public Service Commission exam, joining the judicial services as a munsiff.
- Later, she became the inaugural woman member of the Income Tax Appellate Tribunal and, in 1983, the first Muslim woman judge in the Kerala High Court.

### **Historic Entry into Supreme Court:**

- Committed to reshaping the role of women in the Indian judiciary, she broke more barriers, becoming the first woman judge in the Supreme Court of India in 1989.

### **Governorship and Controversial Decision:**

- Served as the Governor of Tamil Nadu from 1997 to 2001.



- Her controversial decision involved administering the oath of office to Jayalalithaa after the AIADMK's electoral victory in 2001, despite disqualification due to convictions.
- The Supreme Court unseated Jayalalithaa in September 2001, and Fathima Beevi's tenure concluded abruptly a few months after Jayalalithaa's swearing-in.

### **Displeasure and Resignation:**

- Fathima Beevi faced displeasure from the Centre for her report on the midnight arrest of then DMK president M. Karunanidhi, leading to her resignation.

6.

- India is planning to establish norms for regulating artificial intelligence (AI), according to Sanjiv Sanyal, a member of the Prime Minister's Economic Advisory Council (PMEAC).

### **More on this news:**

- **Sanyal suggests a regulatory model similar to the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) for the AI sector, emphasizing the need for a regulator that comprehends the technology's evolution.**
- He argues against relying solely on self-regulation or bureaucratic regulation in the AI space and proposes the establishment of a regulatory system with manual overrides, comparable to circuit breakers in financial markets.
- The suggested approach includes introducing skin in the game, ex-ante accountability, and regular audits to ensure transparency and accountability in AI operations.



- Drawing parallels with the financial world, Sanyal believes that similar principles can be applied to regulate the evolution of AI, and he anticipates the evolution of regulatory norms in this regard.

7.

- Reserve Bank of India (RBI) deputy governor M. Rajeshwar Rao emphasizes the need for banks to shift from a sectoral approach to an ecosystem approach.

#### **More information on this news:**

- Rao envisions the future of banking as hyper-personalized, suggesting a transition from isolated service provisions to hyper-personalized embedded banking.
- He anticipates a change in the traditional form of business segmentation, with a shift towards customer preferences-based verticals.
- The break-up of assets and liabilities in banks is likely to undergo drastic changes in the evolving banking landscape.
- Rao emphasizes that banks will remain primary drivers of India's growth but underscores the importance of their trajectory during the transition period.
- In the new paradigm, markets are expected to be central points for intermediation, with banks becoming one among many entities interacting in the marketplace.
- The traditional banking business model needs to pivot to align with the changing dynamics of the banking industry.

#### **What is hyper-personalized banking:**



Hyper-personalized banking is a strategy that uses data and analytics to tailor banking products and services to the unique needs and preferences of each individual customer. **This can be done in a variety of ways, such as:**

- Analyzing customer spending patterns to identify opportunities for cross-selling or upselling products and services.
- Using machine learning to predict customer behavior and proactively offer assistance or recommendations.
- Personalizing marketing campaigns and communications to target specific customer segments.
- Developing customized financial plans and recommendations based on individual customer goals and risk tolerance.

The goal of hyper-personalized banking is to create a more engaging and satisfying customer experience that leads to increased loyalty and profitability.

**Here are some of the benefits of hyper-personalized banking:**

- Increased customer satisfaction and loyalty
- Improved customer acquisition and retention rates
- Higher cross-selling and upselling rates
- Reduced marketing costs
- Improved risk management

**Here are some of the challenges of hyper-personalized banking:**



- Collecting and analyzing large amounts of customer data
- Protecting customer privacy
- Ensuring that personalization is ethical and non-discriminatory
- Measuring the ROI of hyper-personalized banking initiatives

**Despite the challenges, hyper-personalized banking is a growing trend in the financial industry.** As banks collect more data about their customers and develop more sophisticated analytics tools, they are able to tailor their products and services in ways that were never before possible.

**Question:** Critically examine the potential benefits and challenges of hyper-personalized banking in the context of financial inclusion and responsible banking practices.

8.

- **The World Health Organization (WHO)** has formally asked China for information regarding a **significant rise in respiratory diseases and the formation of pediatric pneumonia clusters.**
- This action comes in response to reports from an international infectious disease monitoring service and anonymous media sources that highlight outbreaks of pneumonia in children in northern China that go undetected.

### **Uncertain Link to Chinese Authorities' Reports**

- WHO voiced doubts in a statement about any possible link between these pneumonia



clusters and the increase in respiratory illnesses that Chinese officials had noted.

- **As of right now, it's unknown how the two phenomena relate to one another.**

### **Chinese National Health Commission's Report on Respiratory Diseases**

- On November 13, the Chinese National Health Commission announced a rise in respiratory illnesses, which they linked to the relaxation of COVID-19 lockdown regulations.
- This rise is reported to be consistent with a trend seen in other nations as well, where respiratory illnesses such as **respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) increased following the lifting of pandemic-related restrictions.**

### **WHO's Request for More Details from China**

- In light of the developing situation, WHO has formally asked China for more information in order to better understand the factors surrounding the rise in pediatric respiratory infections and pneumonia clusters.
- World Health Organization is still actively looking into and responding to this possibly alarming development.

9.

- **The Governor, as the leader of the state who is not elected,** is granted constitutional powers, but the **Supreme Court has made it clear that these powers cannot be used to impede the state legislature's regular legislative session.**



- The court emphasized the constitutional requirement for swift action, noting that a Governor cannot keep a law pending indefinitely without taking any action.

### **Constitutional Authority and Withholding Assent**

- The Chief Justice of India, D Y Chandrachud, led the three-judge panel that explained the Governor's powers under Article 200, emphasizing the ability to refuse to sign a law.
- Nonetheless, the court made it clear that the Governor must take a prescribed measure in certain situations.
- This is getting in touch with the state legislature as soon as possible and letting them know that the bill needs to be reexamined.

### **Judgment on Punjab Government's Plea**

- **The Punjab administration had appealed to the Supreme Court against Governor Banwarilal Purohit for delaying bills sent by the state legislature.**
- The court emphasized the necessity of speed in the Governor's acts by elaborating on the constitutional importance of the phrase **"as soon as possible" in Article 200.**

### **Implications for Tamil Nadu and Kerala Governments**

- The Supreme Court's decision takes on greater significance in light of recent judicial challenges against the governors' inactivity on bills filed by the governments of Kerala and Tamil Nadu.
- The Governor cannot, as a symbolic head, stall the passage of bills that the state



legislature has duly passed, according to the court's ruling.

## **Preservation of Federalism and Democratic Functioning**

- **The court emphasized how important the governor is to maintaining federalism, which is thought to be a fundamental component of the Constitution, as its symbolic head.**
- It issued a cautionary note about unchecked discretion, claiming that doing so **could jeopardize democratic institutions.**
- The ruling emphasized how essential federalism and democracy are to preserving citizens' basic liberties and goals in life.

## **Governor's Advisory Role and Legislative Autonomy**

- The court made it clear that the legislature has the last say over whether or not to follow the Governor's recommendations, even if it acknowledged the Governor's position as a leading statesman.
- The democratically elected legislature makes the final decision, maintaining the independence of the legislative procedures even though the governor may suggest revisions or reconsideration.

10.

- The Uttar Pradesh government banned halal-certified products on November 18, 2023.
- **This ban applies to all halal-certified food products and medicines, excluding**



**those for export and Meat items.**

- The ban covers the production, storage, distribution, and sale of these products.

## **What is 'Halal Certification'?**

- **Halal certification is a process that ensures that a product or service complies with Islamic Law.**
- It guarantees that the food is prepared in accordance with Islamic law and is unadulterated.
- It also ensures that the product does not include any “forbidden” components, and has not been in contact with any substances or objects considered “impure”.
- **Halal certification is mainly applied to meat products** and other food products such as milk, canned food, and additives. It also applies to the cosmetic and pharmaceutical sectors.
- **In India, halal certification** is usually provided by a third-party body.
- Some private companies that provide halal certification in India include: **MTR, Venky's, Sufi, and McDonald's.**

## **Halal certification in India**

- Halal certification in India serves as documentation affirming a product or service's adherence to Islamic dietary laws.
- It ensures that the food is prepared in accordance with Islamic principles and is free from adulteration.
- Typically, halal certification in India is applicable to the food, cosmetic, and



pharmaceutical sectors. While it is commonly associated with meat products, it also extends to various food items like milk, as well as food additives.

- In India, third-party bodies, including many private companies, are involved in providing halal certification. The certification process incurs certain costs, encompassing consignment certification charges for non-meat products, auditor expenses per man day, and professional fees.
- **However, a recent development in the most populous state of India, Uttar Pradesh**, involves the prohibition of the distribution and sale of Halal-certified products.
- This ban was prompted by a police case against a company and several other organizations accused of **“exploiting people’s religious sentiments”** to enhance sales through the issuance of allegedly **“forged” halal certificates**.

### Who issues Halal Certificate?

- In India, various third-party entities, including **Halal India Private Limited, HALAL Certification Services India Private Limited, Jamiat Ulama-E-Maharashtra, and Jamiat Ulama-i-Hind HALAL Trust**, issue Halal certification to companies and products.
- Certification is granted to products sourced acceptably and slaughtered according to Islamic law.
- Halal foods adhere to Islamic cleanliness standards in production, processing, and storage, ensuring they are free from prohibited components.



1.

## Karbi film Mirbeen

A total of 15 selected films will vie for the prestigious 'Golden Peacock Award' at the ongoing 54th edition of the International Film Festival of India (IFFI) being held in Goa. The stellar line-up of exceptional films consists of 12 international and three Indian films-Mirbeen, Kantara and Sanaa.

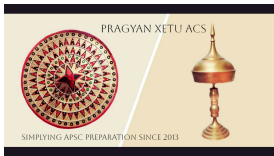
'Mirbeen,' is a Karbi feature film, directed by renowned filmmaker Mridul Gupta and produced by Dhaniram Tisso. 'Mirbeen' has been selected in the feature film category, the only film from Assam to find a place in the prestigious forum

2.

The NGT (National Green Tribunal) has taken suo motu cognisance of the allegations concerning "the felling of approximately 2,000 trees for a road expansion project between Guwahati and Goalpara in Assam."

Amid growing noises criticising the cutting down of trees for the four-lane highway, the NGT issued directions to the National Highways & Infrastructure Development Corporation Limited (NHIDCL) and the Assam government on November 21.

The case is set to be heard by the Eastern Zone Bench of the NGT on January 10 next year.



3.

- The Afghanistan Embassy in Delhi has permanently closed down as of November 23, according to an official statement.

#### **Additional information on the news:**

- **The closure is attributed to pressure from both the Taliban rulers in Kabul and the Government of India.**
- The embassy had ceased operations on September 30 when Afghan diplomats and the ambassador left India, citing unmet objectives related to visa extensions and the Indian government's conduct.
- The official statement notes that despite an eight-week wait, the desired outcomes were not realized, leading to a challenging decision for the embassy.
- **The closure is deemed to be in the “best interest of Afghanistan,” and the responsibility now lies with Indian authorities to decide on the future course of action.**
- The diplomatic presence of the pre-Taliban regime in Afghanistan concludes with the permanent closure of the embassy.

4.

- In Gujarat, a shocking incident involves a businesswoman and six others allegedly forcing a 21-year-old Dalit youth to apologize by putting her footwear in his mouth.



## Why discrimination against Dalits still exist in India:

- **Historical Social Hierarchy:** Deep-rooted caste system and historical social hierarchy have perpetuated discrimination against Dalits, creating ingrained prejudices.
- **Economic Disparities:** Dalits often face economic marginalization, limited access to resources, and fewer opportunities, contributing to their vulnerable position.
- **Landownership Patterns:** Unequal landownership patterns, with Dalits often having limited or no land, contribute to economic disparities and social discrimination.
- **Limited Educational Opportunities:** Dalits may face obstacles in accessing quality education, limiting their upward mobility and reinforcing socio-economic inequalities.
- **Cultural Practices:** Certain cultural practices and social norms contribute to the perpetuation of discriminatory behavior against Dalits.
- **Political Underrepresentation:** Limited representation in political structures can lead to policies that inadequately address the specific challenges faced by Dalits.
- **Enforcement Gaps:** Weak implementation of protective laws and insufficient law enforcement contribute to the persistence of discrimination against Dalits.
- **Social Stigma:** Deep-seated social prejudices and stereotypes contribute to the perpetuation of discrimination, affecting various aspects of Dalits' lives.
- **Inadequate Legal Protection:** While there are legal provisions to safeguard Dalit rights, the effectiveness of these laws is hindered by enforcement challenges and loopholes.

## Way forward:

- **Educational Reforms:** Implementing educational reforms to ensure equal access and quality education for Dalits, addressing historical disparities.



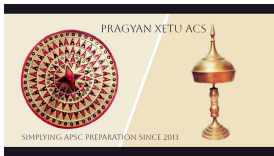
- **Economic Empowerment:** Promoting economic empowerment through initiatives such as skill development, entrepreneurship, and land redistribution.
- **Legal Reforms and Enforcement:** Strengthening legal frameworks, ensuring effective enforcement, and closing gaps in the implementation of laws protecting Dalit rights.
- **Political Representation:** Encouraging increased political representation of Dalits to influence policies that address their unique challenges.
- **Awareness and Sensitization:** Conducting awareness campaigns and sensitization programs to challenge stereotypes, prejudices, and discriminatory cultural practices.
- **Intersectional Approaches:** Recognizing and addressing the intersectionality of discrimination by considering factors like gender and religion in policy formulations.
- **Community Integration:** Fostering community integration and social cohesion to break down barriers and reduce social stigma associated with Dalits.
- **Empowering Civil Society:** Supporting and empowering civil society organizations working towards Dalit rights to amplify advocacy efforts.

**Question:** How can India effectively combat discrimination against Dalits through education, economic empowerment, and legal reforms?

5.

- The Union government includes CERT-In in the list of organizations exempted from the RTI Act.

**More information on the news:**



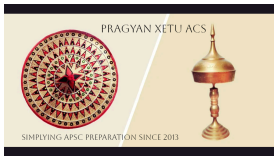
- CERT-In, the national agency for responding to cyber incidents, enhances security awareness.
- The exemption applies to 27 intelligence and security organizations specified in the Second Schedule.
- The RTI Act, enacted in 2005, excludes these organizations but not information related to corruption and human rights violations.
- The recent amendment, made under section 24(2) of the RTI Act, adds CERT-In to the Second Schedule.
- CERT-In has played a crucial role in investigating major cyber attacks, including the AIIMS ransomware incident in November 2022.

### **What is CERT-In?**

- CERT-In stands for Indian Computer Emergency Response Team.
- It is a government organization under the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY),
- CERT-In is responsible for cybersecurity in India and plays a crucial role in preventing and responding to cyberattacks.

### **Key Responsibilities of CERT-In:**

- Collect, analyze, and disseminate information about cybersecurity threats and vulnerabilities.
- Issue advisories and guidelines to protect against cyberattacks.
- Respond to cybersecurity incidents and provide assistance to affected organizations.



- Coordinate with other cybersecurity agencies and organizations.
- Carry out research and development in cybersecurity.

### **Powers of CERT-In:**

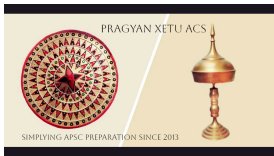
- CERT-In has the power to direct service providers, intermediaries, and data centers to take steps to protect against cyberattacks.
- It can also order the blocking of websites and applications that are found to be harmful.
- CERT-In can impose penalties on organizations that fail to comply with its directions.

### **Importance of CERT-In:**

- CERT-In plays a critical role in protecting India's critical infrastructure from cyberattacks.
- It also helps to raise awareness of cybersecurity among Indian organizations and individuals.
- CERT-In's work is essential for maintaining India's cybersecurity posture.

6.

- The Union Health Ministry has initiated a crucial effort to provide relief to patients with rare diseases in India.
- The focus is on making generic drugs available for the treatment of specific rare ailments.
- The identified rare diseases include Tyrosinemia-Type 1, Gauchers Disease, Wilson's Disease, and the Dravet-Lennox Gastaut Syndrome.
- The availability of generic drugs for these conditions is expected to substantially reduce



their cost.

## What are generic drugs?

- **Definition:** Generic drugs are copies of brand-name drugs that have the same active ingredient, strength, dosage form, and route of administration as the brand-name drug. They are also bioequivalent, which means that they work the same way in the body as the brand-name drug.
- **Cost:** Generic drugs are typically much cheaper than brand-name drugs. This is especially true in India, where the government has implemented policies to make generic drugs more affordable.
- **Quality:** Generic drugs in India must meet the same rigorous standards as brand-name drugs before they can be approved for sale by the Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation (CDSCO).
- **Prevalence:** Generic drugs are widely available in India and account for a significant portion of the pharmaceutical market.
- **Role in healthcare:** Generic drugs have played a crucial role in improving access to affordable medications in India. They have helped to reduce healthcare costs and improve the health of millions of people.

## Additional points:

- The Indian pharmaceutical industry is one of the largest in the world and is a major producer of generic drugs.
- India exports generic drugs to many countries around the world.



- The Indian government is committed to promoting the use of generic drugs as a way to improve access to affordable healthcare.

## What are rare diseases?

Rare diseases are characterized by their low prevalence, typically affecting fewer than 65 per 100,000 individuals. In India, with its vast population, this prevalence translates to an **estimated 8.4 crore to 10 crore cases**.

### Key characteristics of rare diseases:

- **Low prevalence:** Rare diseases affect a small percentage of the population, often less than 1 in 2,000 individuals.
- **Diverse range of conditions:** Rare diseases encompass a wide spectrum of disorders affecting various parts of the body and ranging in severity from mild to life-threatening.
- **Complex and often undiagnosed:** Rare diseases often present with complex symptoms and may be challenging to diagnose due to their rarity and lack of specialized expertise.
- **Limited treatment options:** Due to the rarity of these conditions, research and development of effective treatments for rare diseases often receive less attention and funding, leading to limited treatment options.

### Challenges associated with rare diseases:

- **Delayed diagnosis:** The rarity of rare diseases often leads to delayed diagnosis, sometimes taking years for individuals to receive a proper diagnosis.



- **Limited access to specialized care:** Access to specialized healthcare providers and treatment facilities for rare diseases is often limited, particularly in resource-limited settings.
- **Financial burden:** The high cost of treatments and limited financial support can place a significant financial burden on individuals with rare diseases and their families.
- **Psychosocial impact:** The challenges associated with rare diseases can have a significant psychosocial impact on individuals and their families, including social isolation, anxiety, and depression.

**Question:** Discuss the challenges posed by rare diseases and the role of government and healthcare institutions in addressing these challenges.

- 7.
- **A novel gene therapy was recently approved by the UK drug Regulator,** which is a major step forward in the **treatment of sickle cell disease and thalassemia.**
  - **This treatment, called Casgevy, uses the Crispr-Cas9 gene editing technique,** which was awarded the Nobel Prize in 2012 and has completely changed the field of biotechnology.

#### **Mechanism of Action:**

- **Casgevy functions by utilizing the patient's own blood stem cells to modify the defective gene that causes sickle cell disease and thalassemia.**
- **The goal of the therapy is to increase the creation of fetal hemoglobin,** which is



devoid of the defects associated with adult hemoglobin, by targeting the BCL11A gene, which is essential for the transition from fetal to adult hemoglobin.

- Compared to the current bone marrow transplant process, this strategy offers a permanent remedy and may even be able to cure individuals with severe blood abnormalities.

### **Understanding Sickle Cell Disease and Thalassaemia:**

- Red blood cells with sickle cell disease are malformed, which clogs blood arteries and causes excruciating pain, infections, anemia, and strokes.
- **Conversely, thalassaemia causes low hemoglobin levels, which lead to exhaustion, dyspnea, and erratic heartbeats.**
- A large number of children are born with these illnesses every year in places like India; therefore, the authorized gene therapy offers a ground-breaking alternative to the current treatments.

### **Clinical Trial Results:**

- **Casgevy's clinical trial findings have been encouraging.**
- For at least a year following treatment, 29 out of 45 trial participants with sickle cell disease did not develop acute pain crises.
- When it comes to thalassaemia, 39 out of 42 patients did not need a transfusion for at least a year following the medication, demonstrating its effectiveness in lowering the need for transfusions for the rest of their lives.



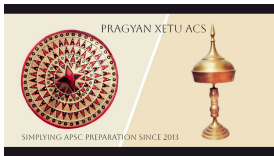
## **Administration of the Therapy:**

- The administration of casgevy is a one-time procedure.
- Apheresis is used to extract blood stem cells from the patient's bone marrow.
- The cells are then edited and tested at a manufacturing facility. After the bone marrow has been prepared, the patient receives another transplant of the modified cells.
- In order to guarantee that the modified cells integrate into the bone marrow and begin generating regular red blood cells that contain hemoglobin, patients usually remain in the hospital for at least a month.

## **Challenges and Future Prospects:**

- Even if the therapy is revolutionary, there are still issues because of its potentially exorbitant cost—up to \$2 million per patient.
- This is a major obstacle, especially in developing nations where a large number of people with these illnesses live.
- Establishing local manufacturing facilities and addressing pricing difficulties are essential steps toward greater accessibility.
- Researchers are still hopeful that as more people work on this technology, costs may come down and a wider range of people will be able to access it.
- Enhancing accessibility and cost could also be greatly aided by local manufacturing facilities.

8.



- NASA's Psyche spacecraft has successfully sent a laser signal to Earth from a distance of more than 16 million kilometers while it is now traveling to a metal-rich asteroid between Mars and Jupiter.
- The mission's objectives are to investigate the asteroid and learn more about Earth's iron core.
- Moreover, Psyche conducts a groundbreaking laser-based deep space exploration expedition

### **Space Data Transmission Challenges:**

- The difficulty with space communication is moving large amounts of data quickly over long distances.
- Spacecraft use a variety of electromagnetic frequencies to encode data, just like terrestrial wireless communication does.
- Due to their advantageous propagation characteristics, radio waves are now used for the majority of space communication.
- However, researchers are looking at wider bandwidths for increased data transmission, which presents a unique set of difficulties.

### **NASA's Deep Space Optical Communications (DSOC):**

- The use of near-infrared laser signals for spacecraft communication is being introduced by NASA through the DSOC project.
- With data speeds at least ten times faster than current radio communications networks, this technology allows for the transport of bigger volumes of data, including streaming



high-definition video.

- As it travels, Psyche—the first spaceship equipped with a DSOC transceiver tests high-bandwidth optical communications.

### **Precision and Technological Innovations:**

- By separating the transceiver from spacecraft vibrations, correcting for changes in the craft's and Earth's position, and using signal-processing techniques to recover information from weak laser signals, DSOC achieves precise communication.
- Reaching this degree of accuracy is critical because it allows for communication that is similar to striking a dime as it is moving from a distance of a mile.

### **Transformative Impact on Space Travel:**

- DSOC brings this technology into deep space, which is significant for humanity's aspirations to travel beyond the Moon, even though similar technology has been proven in Earth-orbiting satellites.
- Future deep space missions must prioritize improved communication. NASA's Trudy Kortez noted that the successful completion of "first light" is a significant step toward humanity's next great leap—the landing of humans on Mars.

9.

- The Union Health Ministry of India has said that it is keeping a close eye on a situation in which reports of pneumonia patients in clusters have been received from northern China.



- According to the ministry, India is currently at low risk, based on information that is already available.
- According to the ministry's statement, the rise in respiratory infections that has been recorded in China over the past few weeks is due to common causes in children, and no unique pathogen or unexpected clinical manifestation has been found.

### **Caution but No Cause for Alarm:**

- Officials with knowledge of the situation say that while respiratory illnesses are on the rise, there is currently no need for concern.
- The seasonal rise in respiratory infections is consistent with the reported increase in illnesses.
- The ministry of health highlighted that no novel pathogen has been found to be linked to the cases that have been reported.

### **Preparedness Measures and Low Risk to India:**

- The Union Health Ministry is keeping an eye on cases of pneumonia as well as a case of human H9N2 avian influenza that was detected in China in October.
- The Director-General of Health Services presided over a meeting where preparations for this circumstance were discussed.
- A low likelihood of human-to-human transmission and a low case fatality rate among humans are indicated by the WHO's overall risk assessment.
- The H9N2 avian influenza case and the reported pneumonia clusters pose a low overall danger to India, according to the health ministry, which also guarantees that the country



is ready for any future public health emergency.

10.

- Manufacturing medicines for four rare conditions—Tyrosinemia Type 1, Gaucher’s Disease, Wilson’s Disease, and Dravet-Lennox Gastaut Syndrome is an impressive undertaking undertaken by Indian drug companies.
- Thanks to this approach, the cost of these medications has been drastically reduced leading to savings up to 100 times.
- By addressing a significant obstacle in the treatment of uncommon diseases, the action increases accessibility to these vital drugs.

### **What is a Rare disease?**

- An illness is considered rare if there are less than 1,000 cases of it in the general population.
- It is estimated that 8.4 crore to 10 crore Indians, or 6% to 8% of the population, suffer from these uncommon illnesses.
- Since there are either no viable remedies or they are too expensive, many of these people do not have access to treatment.
- This highlights the major healthcare obstacles that a large segment of the Indian population with uncommon diseases must overcome.

### **Significant Price Reductions in Rare Disease Treatments**



- There has been a significant decrease in the cost of drugs for rare conditions.
- The yearly cost of eliglustat capsules for Gaucher's illness, which is known to cause fatty deposits in essential organs, has decreased from Rs 1.8 crore to Rs 3.6 crore to Rs 3 lakh to Rs 6 lakh.
- Trientine capsules, which were formerly priced at Rs 2.2 crore for a 10 kg infant, are now used to treat Wilson's illness, which is characterized by copper deposition.
- The yearly cost of nitisinone capsules, which treat Tyrosinemia Type 1, has dropped from around Rs 2.2 crore to about Rs 2.5 lakh.
- Furthermore, the cost of the oral cannabidiol solution for Lennox-Gastaut and Dravet syndrome has significantly decreased, going from Rs. 7 lakh to Rs. 34 lakh annually to Rs. 1 lakh to Rs. 5 lakh.

## Way Forward

- The government is stepping up its efforts to guarantee that treatments for at least 13 priority illnesses may be obtained at a lower cost from domestic manufacturers.
- These disorders are increasingly prevalent, have treatments now in place, or are developing at a rapid pace in science and may one day result in treatments that could change people's lives.
- In order to improve distribution beyond the existing centers of excellence for rare diseases, plans are in place to make these treatments available to patients nationwide.
- One potential solution being considered is the establishment of Jan Aushadhi stores.
- This all-encompassing strategy represents a major advancement in tackling the difficulties related to treating uncommon diseases in India.



1.

Scientists have identified a new species of 'music frog,' named *Nidirana noadihing*, in Arunachal Pradesh.

This unique discovery is marked by the distinct feature that both male and female frogs are vocal.

The frogs emit a distinctive call pattern consisting of two to three notes, resembling the sounds of wild duck species.

The male frogs, characterized by their robust bodies, were observed calling loudly in various locations, including marshy areas, the edges of a newly constructed pond, and along a nearby road.

The frog is named after the Noa-Dihing River where it was found.

2.

India's Success in Protecting Children's Rights:

For the first time since 2010, India has been removed from the 2023 United Nations Report on Children and Armed Conflict. This decision reflects the measures taken by the Indian government to safeguard children, particularly addressing previous accusations of recruiting and using boys in armed groups in Jammu and Kashmir (J&K).

3.



Devashish Sharma from Assam has been appointed as the chairman of Cancer Care India.

He is a distinguished member of the Indian Administrative Service who earned accolades for his enduring dedication to healthcare.

Born in Jorhat, Debashish Sharma is an alumnus of Ramjas College in Delhi University and the founder of the Deepsikha Cancer Foundation, a pioneer organisation in cancer care in Assam

4.

- Chief Justice of India D.Y. Chandrachud emphasized the solemn duty of the current generation to uphold the idea of India as outlined in the Constitution.

#### **Views expressed by the CJI:**

- He highlighted the importance of honoring the existence and functionality of the Constitution during the Constitution Day celebrations at the Supreme Court.
- The Chief Justice's words gain significance as both the Constitution and the Supreme Court mark their 75th year of adoption and founding, respectively.
- He asserted that the Constitution is based on principles of individual liberty, equality, and fraternity.
- The Chief Justice encouraged the common man to approach the courts without fear, emphasizing that the courts are an extension of constitutional governance.
- Over the past seven decades, the Supreme Court has acted as a "people's court," with citizens having faith in obtaining justice through this institution.



- The Chief Justice highlighted the unique feature of the Supreme Court, where citizens, regardless of their background, can write to the Chief Justice of India to set the constitutional machinery in motion for justice.

5.

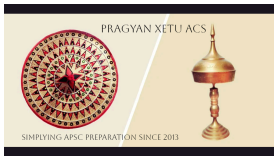
- The Union government has decided to rename **Ayushman Bharat Health and Wellness Centres (AB-HWCs)** as **'Ayushman Arogya Mandir'** with the tagline **'Arogyam Parmam Dhanam.'**

#### **Additional information on the news:**

- States and Union Territories are urged to complete the rebranding process by the end of 2023, as communicated by the Union Health Ministry.
- The rebranded centres will retain the National Health Mission (NHM) logo, emphasizing the success of wellness centres in shifting healthcare delivery from illness to wellness.
- **The renaming aligns with the goal of Ayushman India, aiming to further promote holistic health and well-being.**
- The use of scripts other than Devanagiri (Hindi) or English is allowed, with translations into State languages, while the tagline must be transliterated in the respective State languages.
- The funds required for renaming each facility are proposed at ₹3,000.
- India has over 1.6 lakh AB-HWCs, providing comprehensive primary healthcare, maternal and child health services, and free essential drugs and diagnostic services.
- AB-HWCs offer screenings for various health issues, including hypertension, diabetes, and



oral, breast, and cervical cancer.



1.

- A recent study by the UNODC and UN Women reveals that about 88,900 women and girls were intentionally killed worldwide in 2022 due to gender-related factors, marking the highest number in the past 20 years.
- Despite a decrease in the overall number of homicides worldwide in 2022, femicide increased, indicating a troubling trend.

### **What additional information does the article give?**

- Globally, men constitute 80% of total homicide victims in 2022, while women make up 20%. However, women are more likely to be murdered by their partners or someone known to them.
- Of the 88,900 female homicide victims in 2022, 55% were killed by family members or intimate partners, contrasting with only 12% of male homicide victims killed by persons known to them.
- The trend of women being more vulnerable to gender-related violence from family members is consistent globally, as demonstrated in continent-wise data.
- In 2022, Africa had the highest number of female victims of intimate partner/family-related homicide (20,000), surpassing Asia for the first time in 13 years.
- The Americas reported 7,900 cases, with a rate of 1.5 femicides per 100,000 female population, the second-highest after Africa (2.8). Asia's rate was 0.8.
- The data indicates a general reduction in gender-related killings of women before 2021, but a drastic increase in 2021 and 2022, particularly in Africa.
- South Africa, according to national studies, witnessed a halving of female intimate partner



homicide rates between 1999 and 2017, but recent years have shown an increase from 9 to 12.7 victims per 1 lakh women by the end of 2022.

- India has experienced a slight decline in gender-based killings over the past decade, with dowry-related reasons consistently being the leading cause. Honour killings and murders related to witchcraft accusations formed a smaller share during this period.

2.

- On November 22, Bihar's Chief Minister Nitish Kumar-led Cabinet passed a resolution seeking the grant of Special Category Status (SCS) for Bihar.
- The demand is based on findings from the "Bihar Caste-based Survey, 2022," revealing that nearly one-third of Bihar's population continues to live in poverty.

### **Special Category Status (SCS): Overview:**

- SCS is a classification granted by the Centre to assist the development of states facing geographical or socio-economic disadvantages.
- Introduced in 1969, it considers factors like hilly terrain, low population density, tribal population share, strategic location along borders, economic and infrastructural backwardness, and non-viable state finances.

### **Benefits Attached to SCS:**

- SCS states used to receive grants based on the Gadgil-Mukherjee formula, earmarking nearly 30% of total central assistance.



- After the abolition of the Planning Commission, assistance to SCS states has been subsumed in increased devolution of divisible pool funds (41% in the 15th FC).
- In SCS states, Centre-State funding for centrally sponsored schemes is in a more favorable ratio of 90:10.
- Other incentives include concessions in customs and excise duties, income tax rates, and corporate tax rates to attract investments.

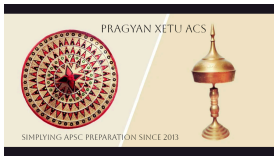
### **Reasons Behind Bihar's Demand:**

- Bihar's poverty and backwardness attributed to factors like lack of natural resources, water for irrigation, floods in the north, and severe droughts in the south.
- The bifurcation of the state led to the shift of industries to Jharkhand, creating unemployment and reducing investment opportunities.
- Bihar's per-capita GDP is around ₹54,000, making it one of the poorest states.

### **Other States Seeking SCS:**

- Andhra Pradesh, post-bifurcation in 2014, seeks SCS due to revenue loss with Hyderabad going to Telangana.
- Odisha requests SCS, citing vulnerability to natural calamities and a large tribal population.
- Central government, citing the 14th Finance Commission report, has consistently denied these demands.

### **Evaluation of Bihar's Demand:**



- Bihar meets most criteria for SCS but lacks hilly terrain and geographically difficult areas.
- The Raghuram Rajan Committee in 2013 categorized Bihar as “least developed” and suggested a multi-dimensional index for fund devolution, which could be revisited.

3.

- Decentralised Autonomous Organisations (DAOs) represent a groundbreaking intersection of blockchain technology and governance.
- Operate without centralised control, governed by smart contracts and consensus of members.
- Leverage blockchain and cryptocurrencies for transparent, democratic, and self-executing systems.

### **Genesis of DAOs:**

- DAOs are organisations governed by rules encoded as computer programs.
- Represent self-sustaining, community-driven entities with transparent, code-based governance.
- Emphasize decentralised decision-making through smart contracts.

### **Various Use Cases:**

- Found in diverse industries: finance (Compound, MakerDAO), art (tokenising creations), supply chain management, and online community governance (DAOstack).
- Showcase versatility and potential to reshape industries across sectors.



## **Implications for the Digital World:**

### **Decentralisation of Power:**

- Shifts power from centralised authorities to collective decision-making.
- Token holders participate in shaping direction, reducing dominance of central entities.

### **Transparency and Trust:**

- Smart contracts ensure transparency and immutability, fostering trust.
- Eliminates opacity associated with centralised organisations.

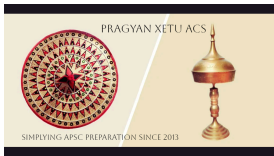
### **Inclusivity and Diversity:**

- Democratizes access to resources and opportunities.
- Transcends geographical and socio-economic barriers, promoting global participation and diversity.

### **New Forms of Collaboration:**

- Facilitates global cooperation without intermediaries.
- Fosters innovation and cooperation in a dynamic, collaborative environment.

### **Challenges and Controversies:**



## **Security Concerns:**

- DAO hack in 2016 exposed vulnerabilities, leading to a contentious Ethereum hard fork.
- Emphasizes the need for rigorous security audits.

## **Legal and Regulatory Uncertainty:**

- Traditional legal systems grappling with decentralised nature of DAOs.
- Regulatory uncertainty regarding classification, compliance, legal liability, taxation, and dispute resolution.

## **Addressing Challenges:**

- Stakeholders collaborating to establish legal frameworks balancing innovation with compliance.
- Focus on governance, intellectual property, cross-border operations, transparency, and fairness in token-based decision-making.

## **Conclusion:**

- DAOs represent a pivotal shift in digital collaboration.
- Potential for positive change in various sectors is vast.
- Collaborative efforts crucial for harnessing DAOs' transformative potential while addressing legal complexities.



**Question:** Discuss the transformative potential and challenges associated with Decentralised Autonomous Organisations (DAOs) in reshaping governance and collaboration in the digital era.

4.

- President Droupadi Murmu emphasized the need for equal representation of India's diversity in the judiciary during an event at the Supreme Court marking Constitution Day.

#### **More on this news**

- She proposed the establishment of an all-India judicial service to diversify the judiciary, recruiting judges from various backgrounds through a merit-based, competitive, and transparent process.
- The suggested system aims to nurture and promote talent from lower to higher levels, providing opportunities to less-represented social groups.
- President Murmu highlighted barriers to justice, including cost and language, and called for a citizen-centric approach to enhance access to justice.
- She acknowledged the progress made in clearing colonial vestiges from legal systems and urged conscious efforts to speed up further decolonization.
- The President praised the Constitution's values of justice, liberty, equality, and fraternity, emphasizing their role in guiding the nation-building efforts.
- She commended the Supreme Court for its role as the final interpreter of the Constitution, recognizing its contribution to elevating standards of jurisprudence.
- President Murmu expressed confidence that with a vibrant judiciary, the health of India's



democracy would not be a cause for concern.

## **Need for all-India judicial service:**

### **Here are some arguments in favor of an All-India Judicial Service (AIJS):**

- **Efficiency and efficacy of judiciary would be increased.** An AIJS would create a pool of highly qualified judges who could be deployed to any court in the country. This would help to reduce the backlog of cases and improve the overall efficiency of the judiciary.
- **Transparent and efficient method of recruitment would be followed.** An AIJS would ensure that judges are recruited through a transparent and merit-based process. This would help to eliminate nepotism and corruption in the judiciary.
- **The pendency and issue of delay of cases would be done away with.** An AIJS would help to reduce the backlog of cases by ensuring that there are enough judges to handle the workload. This would help to speed up the justice process and ensure that people get justice in a timely manner.
- **Corruption, nepotism etc would be strongly dealt with.** An AIJS would make it more difficult for judges to be corrupt or nepotistic, as they would not be beholden to local interests. This would help to improve the public's trust in the judiciary.

Here are some arguments against an All-India Judicial Service (AIJS):

- **It would be difficult to implement.** An AIJS would require a significant change to the current system of judicial appointments. This would be a complex and time-consuming process.



- **It would be expensive.** An AIJS would require a significant investment in training and infrastructure. This would be a major financial burden for the government.
- **It would not address the root causes of judicial inefficiency.** The root causes of judicial inefficiency are complex and multifaceted. An AIJS would not be a silver bullet for solving these problems.

### **Conclusion:**

Overall, the arguments in favor of an All-India Judicial Service (AIJS) outweigh the arguments against it. An AIJS would be a major step towards improving the efficiency, transparency, and accountability of the Indian judiciary.

5.

### **Piezoelectricity Overview:**

- Piezoelectricity is a phenomenon exhibited by certain materials, including quartz, lead zirconate titanate (PZT) ceramics, and even biological substances like bone and tendons.
- It involves the generation of an electric charge in response to mechanical stress applied to the material.
- The unique crystal structures of these materials contribute to their piezoelectric properties.

### **Mechanism:**



- In materials with piezoelectric properties, the charges on atoms in the molecules are symmetric on two sides of an axis under normal conditions.
- When mechanical stress is applied, the molecule becomes distorted, creating an asymmetry of charges and generating a small electric current.

### **Origins of the Term:**

- The term “piezoelectric” is derived from the Greek words “piezein,” meaning ‘to squeeze,’ and “elektron,” referring to amber—a material associated with static electricity.

### **Applications:**

- Both direct and inverse piezoelectric effects are utilized in various applications.
- Direct piezoelectric materials convert mechanical signals into electrical signals, and they are used in pressure sensors, accelerometers, and acoustic devices.
- Inverse piezoelectric materials undergo mechanical deformation when subjected to an electric current.

### **Technological Impact:**

- Piezoelectric materials have played a crucial role in technologies such as quartz watches, where they contribute to the conversion of electrical signals into precise timekeeping mechanisms.
- These materials have enabled the development of affordable and widely used devices over time.



### **Common Usage:**

- Piezoelectricity is commonly observed in everyday items such as stove lighters, where the spark is generated by the piezoelectric effect.

### **Versatility:**

- The phenomenon's versatility extends to various material types, including synthetic ceramics and natural biological substances.

6.

- Mathematician Robert Langlands, recipient of the Abel Prize, is known for his Langlands Program connecting representation theory to number theory.
- The Langlands Program, initiated in 1967, aims to establish connections between disparate mathematical domains: number theory and harmonic analysis.

### **Complexity of Langlands Program:**

- Acknowledged as highly intricate, the Langlands Program involves theoretical abstractions challenging even specialist mathematicians.
- It seeks to bridge the worlds of number theory, focusing on arithmetic relationships, and harmonic analysis, concerned with periodic phenomena.

### **Purpose of the Program:**



- The Langlands Program originates from efforts to explore symmetries between roots of polynomial equations, following the work of mathematicians Abel and Galois.
- It connects Galois groups, representing symmetries of polynomial roots, with automorphic functions, allowing the use of calculus tools in investigating polynomial equations.

### **Automorphic Functions:**

- Automorphic functions exhibit self-similarity when variables undergo specific transformations.
- Illustrated by examples involving infinite series and the sine function, these functions play a pivotal role in the Langlands Program.

### **Contributions and Impact:**

- The Langlands Program, utilized by Andrew Wiles and Richard Taylor, played a key role in proving Fermat's last theorem in 1994.
- It facilitates the creation of new automorphic functions, with potential applications in addressing unsolved problems like the Ramanujan conjectures.

### **Evolution of the Program:**

- Since its inception, the Langlands Program has evolved into a distinct field of mathematics, exploring areas such as Geometric Langlands.
- Geometric Langlands investigates connections between algebraic geometry, representation theory, and even extends to potential links with physics.



## Recent Developments:

- Mathematicians have explored connections between Geometric Langlands and physics, with findings suggesting signs of electromagnetism in number theory.
- Ongoing research by scholars like David Ben-Zvi, Yiannis Sakellaridis, and Akshay Venkatesh showcases the program's adaptability and relevance.

## Conclusion:

- The Langlands Program serves as a mathematical endeavor to build bridges across different mathematical cultures, translating concepts between diverse objects and languages.

7.

- **Russia's retaliation for Finland's recent NATO membership** has taken the form of an abrupt surge in migrants reaching Finland's border from the Middle East and Africa.
- According to Finnish officials, **Russia is orchestrating this surprise spike** as a planned retaliation for Finland's NATO membership rather than being a coincidence.

## The Surge:

- **More than 900 migrants have reached Finland since August, including more than 800 in November alone.**
- Most of the asylum seekers are from war-torn nations including **Afghanistan, Iraq,**



### **Somalia, Yemen, and Syria.**

- Notably, many of these people are utilizing unusual forms of transportation, like bicycles, to get around Finland's tough winter weather.
- According to Finnish officials, Russian border guards actively assist unauthorized people in reaching the border zone, not simply by permitting them to approach the Finnish border.

### **Hybrid Warfare Tactics:**

- **It is not a recent phenomenon that migration is being weaponized to undermine Western democracies.**
- Finland and other Western countries charge that **Russia and Belarus, which is an ally, are using migrants as weapons in hybrid warfare**, a term that refers to a variety of tactics including disinformation campaigns, cyberattacks, and election meddling.
- This strategy, according to European officials, is a type of "hybrid warfare" meant to stoke internal conflicts within the communities it targets.
- According to experts Russians have been sowing instability in countries they view as unfriendly by combining aggressive disinformation with migration.

### **Wider Context:**

- This strategy is not exclusive to Finland; **Poland, Lithuania, and Latvia have also seen comparable migration pressures** along their borders with Belarus for more than two years.
- The larger trend points to a concerted attempt by Russia and its allies to use migration as



a geopolitical tool, which presents difficulties for European countries juggling the intricate relationship between national security and humanitarian concerns.

- 8.
- **The Indian government has asked states and Union Territories** to swiftly examine public health and hospital readiness in light of a discernible spike in respiratory infections in China.
  - **Citing concerns over the influenza season and the surge in occurrences of respiratory illnesses,** the Union Health Ministry stressed the preventative nature of this evaluation.

### **China's Respiratory Illness Spike:**

- Following the release of Covid-19 restrictions in December, China has experienced a spike in the number of recorded respiratory sickness cases during its first full winter season.
- Hospitals are struggling to keep up with the surge in cases, especially in the northeast, where Beijing and Liaoning are important centers.
- **The World Health Organization (WHO) requested more data from China** in response to allegations of pediatric pneumonia outbreaks going undetected.

### **Demographic Impact:**

- Due to the disproportionate impact on children, Beijing schools have significant absence rates.



- **According to experts, this could mean that elderly people have some immunity, which could mean they are protected from current vaccinations.**
- Although children are most impacted, pregnant women and the elderly may also be at risk.

### **Known Pathogens and Causes:**

- Chinese officials link the increase in infections to the spread of known viruses such **SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19), mycoplasma pneumoniae, influenza, and respiratory syncytial virus (RSV).**
- One common factor among individuals under the age of eighteen is the presence of Mycoplasma pneumoniae, a common bacterial infection.

### **Factors Contributing to the Outbreak:**

- The outbreak is associated with the relaxation of Covid-19 restrictions; it is comparable to **“lockdown exit waves”** that have been seen in other nations.
- A possible “immunity debt” is suggested by Chinese officials after a rigorous and protracted shutdown that decreased the spread of respiratory viruses.
- In addition, the issue is probably getting worse with the arrival of winter.

### **Response and Recommendations:**

- Instead of reverting to the limits of the Covid-19 era, Chinese officials have urged for heightened awareness and preventative actions.



- The WHO advises against doing things like being close to sick people, staying at home while sick, getting tested and getting medical attention when necessary, using masks, making sure there is adequate air, and often washing your hands.

### **Future Outlook and Concerns in India:**

- Chinese officials predict that influenza will peak in the winter and spring, with mycoplasma pneumoniae levels still being high in certain regions.
- Stronger reporting procedures have been implemented in response to concerns about a possible rebound in Covid-19 infections.
- India is encouraged not to worry too much even if the outbreak is now controlled because precautions are being taken and the situation is being closely watched.
- The availability of medications and vaccines allays worries about the outbreak possibly spreading outside of China.

9.

- India had a wake-up call after the 26/11 attacks on Mumbai, which made it reevaluate its security posture and exposed gaps in its preparedness to counter large-scale asymmetric warfare.
- The article examines what happened following the attacks, what action the Indian government took, and how several security aspects changed as a result.

### **Maritime Security Revamp:**



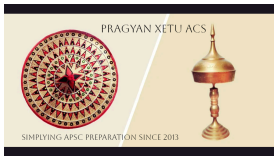
- **The militants from Lashkar-e-Tayyeba (LeT)** demonstrated the weaknesses in India's marine security when they were able to cruise from Karachi to Mumbai with such ease.
- Following September 26, 2011, the Indian Coast Guard was in charge of territorial waterways, while the Indian Navy took overall command of maritime security.
- To improve monitoring and identification, mandatory regulations were implemented, such as the Automatic Identification System (AIS) for vessels longer than 20 meters.

### **Intelligence Coordination and Legal Framework:**

- **The Multi Agency Centre (MAC) of the Intelligence Bureau** was to be strengthened, with a focus on real-time information sharing and analysis.
- The mandate of the MAC grew to encompass ecosystems of terror and radicalization.
- **The Unlawful Activities Prevention Act (UAPA)** was amended to expand the definition of terrorism, and the National Investigation Agency (NIA) was established as a federal investigative agency.

### **Modernization of Police Forces:**

- After the 26/11 attacks, the Indian government realized **local police** were inadequate and concentrated on updating state police forces.
- More money was set aside to supply stronger weaponry, train staff to tackle today's policing issues, and outfit police stations with cutting-edge equipment.
- The development of special commando squads received particular attention, and the National Security Guard (NSG) set up regional centers around the nation.



## Cooperation from the West:

- The 26/11 attacks spurred Western countries to cooperate more on security-related issues.
- After the attacks, the United States in particular showed that it was willing to work with India.
- Real-time intelligence sharing during the attacks and vital FBI evidence, which helped reveal Pakistan's complicity, were examples of this cooperation.
- Pakistan was included to the Financial Action Task Force's (FATF) gray list in 2018 as a result of the cooperative spirit.

## Remaining Challenges:

- There are still issues in spite of major advancements.
- State police agencies deal with problems like limited training, inadequate equipment, and political meddling.
- Challenges in maritime security include the inability to track ships without AIS signals and the lack of transponders on smaller vessels.
- **There are gaps that need to be addressed because transponders are absent from over 60% of India's 2.9 lakh fishing vessels.**

## Conclusion:

- India's security apparatus has been reinforced by the revolutionary steps made after 26/11, however there are still issues that need to be addressed.



- In order to combat cross-border terrorism, cooperation with Western countries is still essential.

This emphasizes the necessity for ongoing efforts to strengthen India's defenses against changing threats.

10.

- In order to boost diversity in the judiciary, President Droupadi Murmu suggested an All-India Judicial Service should be established in order to select judges.
- She highlighted that this method would raise representation for neglected social groups in the court.

### **Barriers to Justice:**

- President Murmu emphasized the obstacles that still need to be removed in order to ensure that justice is available to all residents.
- She mentioned cost as a big impediment and mentioned additional barriers, such as language, which most individuals could find difficult to understand.
- The demand for an inclusive legal system is a reaction to these difficulties.

### **Merit-Based Recruitment for Diversity:**

- In order to further the cause of justice, the President underlined the necessity of having a more diverse representation on the Bench and Bar.



- Her proposal was to establish an All-India Judicial Service, promoting a transparent, competitive, merit-based selection procedure for judges with a range of experiences.
- She thinks that this would hasten the judiciary's diversification.

### **Nurturing Talent Across the Country:**

- President Murmu had an idea for a system that would allow bright children from different origins to be chosen and raised from lower to higher levels.
- The planned All-India Judicial Service seeks to choose prospective judges from all throughout the nation in an effort to increase the pool of talent.
- Less-represented social groups would therefore have opportunities as a result of this.

### **Chief Justice of India's Perspective:**

- DY Chandrachud, the Chief Justice of India (CJI), has emphasized the Supreme Court's function as a people's court during its 70 years in office.
- He noted that thousands of people come before the court believing that the institution will provide them with justice.
- The court's dedication to upholding justice and attending to a broad range of citizen expectations was emphasized by CJI Chandrachud.

### **Deepening Democracy and Upholding Justice:**

- In his reflections on India's history since achieving independence, President Murmu emphasized the nation's dedication to preserving justice and equality while enabling each



and every person.

- She cited the varied backgrounds of those holding prominent positions and achieving success in a range of disciplines as evidence of India's developing democracy.

### **Conclusion:**

- The demand for an All-India Judicial Service indicates a dedication to promoting diversity in the judiciary and making sure that the legal system accurately reflects the distinct variety of India's population.



1.

## Bengaluru hosts Kambala races

Lakhs of people are expected to visit the venue, even as the traditional racing event has come under the scrutiny of the Supreme Court in the past – Kambala, along with Jallikattu and bullock-cart racing, was outlawed in 2014. Subsequently, state governments amended legislation to allow them to continue.

Though the popularity of the races is restricted to coastal Karnataka, the organisers believe that popular depictions of the sport, such as in the 2022 movie 'Kantara', have given the event a pan-Karnataka appeal.

2.

The Assam education department has offered a special optional 12-day leave for teachers to learn Vipassana meditation.

Vipassana is an ancient mindfulness meditation technique and being introduced for capacity building of teachers in a institutionalised way

This move comes at a time when Vedic maths has been introduced in Assam's school education.

Based on a government order, Axom Sarba Siksha Abhiyan Mission has written to district commissioners of all districts and principal secretaries of the autonomous councils to take necessary steps for wide propagation of the information among teachers to attend the



course.

3.

The UK drug regulator recently approved Casgevy, a gene therapy for sickle cell disease and thalassaemia, marking a breakthrough as the world's first licensed therapy using Crispr-Cas9 gene editing technology.

What is Casgevy?

It is a groundbreaking gene-editing therapy for sickle cell anaemia, utilizing the CRISPR-Cas9 tool. Casgevy edits the faulty gene causing these blood disorders, potentially providing a lifelong cure

4.

Angkor Wat Temple, in the heart of Cambodia, has replaced Pompeii of Italy to be crowned the eighth wonder of the world.

Eighth Wonder of the World is an unofficial title given to new buildings or projects or designs, among others.

Angkor Wat is a huge temple complex and a UNESCO World Heritage Site. This place is the largest religious monument in the world that attracts lakhs of visitors from across the globe annually.



Built in the 12th century by King Suryavarman II, Angkor Wat was originally dedicated to the Hindu deity Vishnu.

5.

Assam will be joining hands with Nagaland as partner state for the upcoming Hornbill festival.

Also for the first time, the Nagaland Beekeeping and Honey Mission (NBHM) will be launching the 'Bee tourism' at this year's Hornbill festival from December 1-10 at Kisama Heritage Village.

This year only one village under Kohima district i.e. Mima will be covered.

Mima has been recognised as the 'honey village' because of its vast and unique style of traditionally practiced underground beekeeping that has been in existence for generations.

6.

The Meghalaya government has declared Chigitchakgre village in West Garo Hills District as 'Bee Village'.

the objective of declaring villages as Bee Village is a specific program under the Apiculture Mission to help bee farmers through assistance.

Rs 10 Lakhs from the CM's Special Development Fund (CMSDF) has been given to the village



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to support apiarists in their endeavours to boost honey production.



1.

The two labourers from Assam who were trapped in the Silkyara Tunnel in Uttarakhand were among the 41 workers who were rescued safely on Tuesday

For Prelims: Silkyara-Barkot Tunnel, Char Dham Project, National Highways and Infrastructure Development Corporation Ltd, Drill and Blast Method, Atal Tunnel, Pir Panjal Railway Tunnel, Dr Syama Prasad Mookerjee Road Tunnel.

For Mains: Issues Related to Tunnel Construction in India, Challenges Related to Indian Himalayan Region.

2.

The Assam Pavilion, showcasing the state's various agricultural products and traditional attires, was adjudged second for excellence in display in the category of 'State Government and Union Territory' at the just concluded 42nd edition of India International Trade Fair (IITF), 2023 held in New Delhi

Santanu Deuri, Director, Assam Pavilion at IITF 2023 received the silver medal from India Trade Promotion Organisation (ITPO)

Odisha bagged the gold while Rajasthan received the bronze medal.

3.



'Manipur Files' book based on the ethnic violence in Manipur

A case was recently filed against the writer Pranabananda Das, based in Silchar, under several sections of the Indian Penal Code, including Section 153 A (promoting enmity between groups on grounds of religion, race or place of birth), 200 (using as true such declaration knowing it to be false) and 295 (injuring or defiling place of worship with intent to insult the religion of any class).

For Prelims: Meitei Tribe, Kuki Tribe, Naga Tribe, 6th schedule, Inner Line Permit (ILP), Lokur Committee 1965, Bhuria Commission, Xaxa Committee, Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act (AFSPA).

For Mains: Issues related to North-East region, Ethnic conflicts, Demand for 6th Schedule and issues related to ILPs.

4.

Students Experience in Inter-State Living (SEIL) initiative of ABVP

Here, students get an opportunity to travel from one state to another of the country, especially from Northeastern states to MP, North India, etc., and get experience in different fields like study, culture, and food habits.

SEIL has been found to be effective in students' personal lives, mindsets, and thought processes, developing or guiding them about what to choose in life for a better future. It is



pertinent to mention that SEIL was initiated in 1966 and is still being preferred, which has enabled thousands of students from different educational institutes to travel to other parts of the country. It also allowed them to learn about their culture, lifestyles, and educational systems, compare them with their own, and make sensible rectifications or corrections. This year, also in accordance with the SEIL system, 75 students from different states joined the SEIL programme, and 10 delegates from across the country visited Tripura. They stayed for 15 days in different districts of the state and visited various educational institutes, examined the quality of education they provide, and checked the culture and food habits of different people, especially the 19 tribes of Tripura. They also shared views in the relevant field and were surprised that, despite having different customs and food habits, they had identical philosophies and ideologies of life, which was adorable and admirable

5.

Assam government is planning to complete the construction work of the state's longest flyover, stretching from Dighalipukhuri to Bamunimaidan.

Promising to alleviate crowding and ease connectivity in the choked stretch, the state government is all set to complete the 6-km-long flyover by 2026.

This announcement to start the construction work comes after the inauguration of the Shradhanjali Flyover over Zoo Road in Guwahati on October 18, 2023, which coincides with the auspicious occasion of Maha Panchami. The installation of this flyover has already proven to be a vital component in relieving the city's traffic woes.



In addition to that, the construction of Assam's longest flyover linking Dighalipukhuri with Bamunimaidan on the Maniram Dewan Road in Guwahati has started at a cost of Rs 888 crore.

The momentum for reducing traffic congestion and improving infrastructure kicked off with the inauguration of the Nilachal Flyover in Maligaon on August 30, 2023. In the inaugural ceremony of the Nilachal Flyover, the chief minister informed that the bidding process for the construction of the 6-kilometre flyover between the RBI office (Dighalipukhuri) and Bamunimaidan was accomplished and the construction work was set to begin soon.



1.

The seventh edition of the Military Literature Festival is slated to be held in Chandigarh on December 2-3. This year's theme is 'world in turmoil'.

Panel discussions will be held on various subjects including China, its modernisation plans, followed by a debate on the brutal methods adopted by its emperor Ying Zheng during his reign from 247 to 221 BC and the blind faith of the present leadership in his methods and the frightening signals it sends to Asia and the world.

Israel-Hamas conflict will also feature in the festival panel discussions.

2.

Northeast Frontier Railway (NFR) has opened rail coach restaurants in Rangiya, Lumding and Tinsukia railway stations as part of an initiative to provide a unique dining ambience to passengers.

The three restaurants are among the 13 restaurants currently operational under the jurisdiction of NF Railway.

The coach restaurants are being designed with an aesthetic appeal and heritage look for attracting travellers.

These restaurants aim to cater to the needs of passengers and the public apart from



generating non-fare revenue for railways. This initiative of N.F. Railway is also expected to create employment for both skilled and unskilled workers

3.

Himanta Biswa Sarma, chief minister of Assam has expressed that the development of 264 schools in the state, as part of the PM Shri School scheme, will propel the implementation of the New Education Policy (NEP). During the launch of the scheme, the CM announced that the state government has identified and selected these 264 schools, marking a significant milestone in Assam's education sector

The PM Shri School scheme, a centrally sponsored initiative aimed at developing over 14,500 schools nationwide, is expected to directly benefit more than 20 lakh students. The implementation of the scheme will unfold over a five-year period starting in 2022, as per the statement.

During the event, the chief minister also conferred the Anundoram Barooah award, featuring a monetary reward of Rs 15,000 each, to 27,183 students who achieved 75% or more marks in the grade 10th examinations. Sarma announced that from the next year onwards, this award will transform into a scholarship, fostering a competitive environment among students. The state government plans to invest Rs 45 crore in this initiative, benefiting 30,000 students from grades 5th, 8th and 10th, subject to their performance in a competitive examination

In a significant administrative change, Sarma disclosed that the Secondary Education Board of Assam (SEBA) and the Assam Higher Secondary Education Council (AHSEC) will merge into



a unified body next year. This consolidated body will oversee higher secondary examinations. Aligning with the NEP, the chief minister highlighted the shift in focus from grade 10th examinations and the introduction of a comprehensive report card for institutions to monitor the performance of students appearing in higher secondary exams

4.

The Assam government on Wednesday received nine Guinness World Records certificates for a mega plantation drive in September-October

Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma received the certificates from Guinness World Records Adjudicator Swapnil Dangarikar for the state's 'Amrit Brikshya Andolan'.

As part of the drive, a total of 1,11,17,781 seedlings of commercially valuable tree species were planted across the state on a single day on September 17.

The entire exercise was carried out in the 'Jan Bhagidaari' model through the involvement of the Self-Help Groups, ASHA workers, Anganwadi workers, educational institutions, police personnel, tea garden workers, government officials and other citizens.

In the first category, that is in the Longest Line of Potted Saplings, record was made at Veterinary College Field in Guwahati by Kamrup East Forest Division and 22.22 km long line of 3,22,444 poly potted saplings were arranged in a spiral form with lighting.

In the second category, that is in the Largest Number of Saplings Distributed at one venue in



24 hours, record was made when saplings arranged in the spiral form at the Veterinary College Field were distributed. A total of 3,22,444 seedlings were distributed. In the third category, that is the Most Trees Planted by a Team in 24 hours, a record was made when 9,21,730 saplings were successfully planted in 100 hectares degraded forest land in Bhairabkunda Reserve Forests of Udalguri district.

In the fourth category, that is the Most Trees Planted by a Team in One Hour, a record was made when a total of 3,31,929 saplings were successfully planted in one hour by a team of 8,900 persons.

In the fifth category, that is the Largest Potted Saplings Mosaic, the record was achieved in Tinsukia district by Digboi Forest Division when potted saplings mosaic in 8,563.01 sq metres was made depicting map of Assam and showing rhinoceros in the centre of the mosaic.

A total of 6,32,000 saplings were used in making this mosaic.

In the sixth category, the record was made at Geleki in Sivasagar district when a total of 1,229 girl students planted 1,229 agar seedlings simultaneously in just 58 seconds. In the seventh category, the record was made when a lesson on Environmental Conservation and Sustainability was given online by the Principal Chief Conservator of Forests and Head of Forest Force of Assam on September 11 that was viewed by 70,490 persons and more than 10 lakh people later.

In the eighth category, a record was made when a total of 71,82,358 photographs of people planting trees were uploaded online on the Amrit Brikhya Andolan portal. In the ninth



category, that is the Most Pledges Received for an Environmental Sustainability Campaign in one month (Online), a total of 47,28,898 online pledges have been taken to plant trees and protect them.

5.

**Bengaluru**, the bustling IT hub of India, is poised to witness a groundbreaking development in its transportation infrastructure with the announcement of a **287-km circular railway**. Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw disclosed this ambitious project during a press conference after a comprehensive review of railway projects in Bengaluru.

The circular railway seeks to link key towns around Bengaluru, forming **India's most extensive network**. It transcends current needs, envisioning a transportation solution for the **next 40-50 years**. In tandem with the Bengaluru Suburban Railway Project (BSRP), it emerges as the ultimate response to the city's evolving transport demands.