

# Monthly Current Affairs July - 2024

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Provision of **₹11,111 crore** for infrastructure (3.4% of GDP).

**₹1.5 lakh crore** to states as long-term interest free loans to support resource allocation.

Phase IV of PMGSY will be launched to provide all-weather connectivity to **25,000** rural habitations.

**Alliances with private sector in Nuclear Energy**

- Setting up Bharat Small Reactors
- R&D of Bharat Small Modular Reactor and newer technologies for nuclear energy

**Energy Audit**

- Financial support for shifting of micro and small industries to cleaner forms of energy
- Facilitate investment grade energy audit in 60 clusters, next phase expands to 100 clusters

**Pumped Storage Policy**

For electricity storage and facilitation of smooth integration of the growing share of renewable energy

**AJNC Thermal Power Plants**

A joint venture between NTPC and BHEL, will set up a full scale 900 MW commercial plant.



# CURRENT AFFAIRS



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## MONTHLY CURRENT AFFAIRS JULY : 2024



Near Riddhi-Siddhi Circle, Gopalpura Bypass, Jaipur



# 1. RAJASTHAN AFFAIRS

## Haribhau Kisanrao Bagde becomes the new Governor of Rajasthan



- Haribhau Kisanrao Bagde was appointed the new Governor of Rajasthan (45th Governor).
- Shri Haribhau Kisanrao Bagde took oath as the Governor of Rajasthan on 31 July 2024 at Raj Bhavan.
- Chief Justice of Rajasthan High Court Shri Manindra Mohan Srivastava administered the oath of office to Shri Bagde as Governor.
- State Chief Secretary Shri Sudhansh Pant read out the warrant of appointment of the Governor issued by President Smt. Draupadi Murmu.
- Haribhau Kisanrao Bagde was the Speaker of the Maharashtra Legislative Assembly from 2014 to 2019.
- Before this, he was also the Minister of Food and Civil Supplies and Horticulture Minister in Maharashtra.
- Bagde belongs to Aurangabad district of Maharashtra.
- He was elected MLA for the first time in 1985.
- Gulab Chand Kataria of Rajasthan (earlier Governor of Assam) has been appointed as the Governor of Punjab and also the Administrator of Chandigarh.
- Rajasthan BJP leader Om Prakash Mathur has been appointed Governor of Sikkim.
- Under Article 153 of the Indian Constitution, provision has been made for a Governor for each State.
- Note: A person can be appointed as the Governor of two or more states.

## Shri Mohan Lal Lathar

- Governor Shri Kalraj Mishra appointed Shri Mohan Lal Lathar as the Chief Information Commissioner of the state on 9 July 2024.

- Shri Mohan Lal Lathar is a retired officer of the Indian Police Service (IPS). He has been the Director General of Police (DGP) of Rajasthan.
- Apart from this, Mr. Suresh Chand Gupta, Mr. Mahendra Kumar Parikh and Mr. Tikaram Sharma were appointed as Information Commissioners.

## State Information Commission

- Established: On 18 April 2006. (Notified in the Gazette on 13 April 2006.)
- The State Information Commission is a statutory body.
- Composition : 1 Chairman + 10 members
- Annual Report: To the State Government.
- First Chief Information Commissioner: M.D. Korani.

## Justice S Chandrashekar

- The Union Law Ministry has released the list of states for Jharkhand division on 03 July 2024. Acting Chief Justice of High Court Justice S Chandrashekar has been transferred to Rajasthan High Court.
- On appointment of Justice Chandrashekar, the number of judges in the Rajasthan High Court has become 33 (including the Chief Justice) (1 + 32).
- Currently, there are 3 women judges in the Rajasthan High Court -
  1. Rekha Borana
  2. Dr. Nupur Bhati
  3. Shubha Mehta

## Rajasthan Civil Aviation Policy, 2024

- It was approved by the State Cabinet on 02 July 2024 with the aim to improve regional air connectivity and promote tourism in Rajasthan.
- The policy focuses on enhancing aviation training facilities, aviation defence services and developing aerospace activities.
- Under this, **flying schools will be established in Kishangarh, Jhalawar and Bhilwara.**
- **Greenfield airport** will be built in Kota.
- Apart from this, **Aerocity** will be built in Jaipur, in which various basic facilities including hotels and restaurants will be developed.

- Cargo facility will be started at various airports of the state.
- Existing airstrips of the state will be repaired and made airworthy again.

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**Amendment to Renewable Energy Policy, 2023**

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- In Rajasthan, on 02 July 2024, the proposal to amend the provisions of Renewable Energy Policy, 2023 and Rajasthan Land Revenue (Allotment of State Land for Establishment of Power Plants Based on Renewable Energy) Rules, 2007 was approved.
- Relevant changes have been made in the allocation rules to make proper use of the solar radiation available in the state.
- This will make it possible to get the land allotment done for solar power projects at 7.5% of the DLC rate.
- Now solar energy can be produced at the rate of one megawatt on 2 hectares of land.
- This will create new opportunities for investment and employment along with increased revenue generation.

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**3 new laws implemented in the country including Rajasthan**

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- The new criminal laws Indian Justice Code, Indian Civil Protection Code and Indian Evidence Act came into force from 01 July 2024.
- Under this, the first case in the country was registered in Madhya Pradesh.
- The first case under these laws in Rajasthan was registered in Sadari police station of Pali.

**3 new laws**

- Indian Civil Protection Code - Bhartiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS)
- Indian Justice Code - Bhartiya Nyay Sanhita (BNS)
- Indian Evidence Act - Bhartiya Sakshya Adhinyam (BSA)
- These laws were passed in the Lok Sabha on 20 December 2023 and in the Rajya Sabha on 21 December 2023.
- These were signed and enacted by the President on December 25, 2023.

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**'A - HELP' Scheme**

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- This scheme will be implemented in Rajasthan on 1st July 2024.
- 'A-HELP': Accredited Agent for Health and Extension of Livestock Production.
- This scheme is a joint initiative of the Union Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry

and Dairying and the Ministry of Rural Development.

- Rajasthan is the second state to implement this scheme in North India.
- At present this scheme is being operated in 11 states of the country.
- The scheme aims to establish recognized agents for the promotion of health and livestock production.
- Through this scheme, by joining the *pashu sakhis* together with the livestock farmers, not only will the livestock products increase, but their economic condition will also be strengthened.
- A-HELP is such a program under which all the information related to animal husbandry is made available to the livestock owners at their homes through Pashu Sakhi.
- A target has been set to train 9,000 Pashu Sakhis in Rajasthan.

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**Provisions made in the Union Budget 2024-25 for Rajasthan**

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- **Food security to 4.46 crore people**
  - In the Union Budget, the Central Government has announced to provide free food grains to 80 crore people for the next five years under the Food Security Scheme.
  - In Rajasthan, 4.46 crore people are connected to this scheme and will directly benefit from it for the next five years
- **Farmers to benefit from Oilseed Mission**
  - New missions for pulses and oilseeds and special efforts for their production, storage and marketing have been announced.
  - This will benefit 86.66 lakh farmers of Rajasthan. Every year, the state produces 80 lakh tonnes of pulses and 82 lakh tonnes of oilseeds. The production of mustard alone is 60 lakh tonnes.
- **Marwar Industrial Project**
  - Jodhpur, Pali, Marwar Industrial Project will be developed on about 1578 acres of land. It will cost Rs 922 crore.
  - Notification for acquisition of 1000 acres of land has been issued.
  - It is being developed near the Delhi-Mumbai Industrial Corridor. It will provide employment to around 5 lakh people.

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**Rajasthan's share in Central Taxes**

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- This time, Rajasthan will receive Rs 75,156 crore as its share of central taxes.
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- This represents an increase of Rs 8,600 crore compared to the Rs 66,556 crore received last time.
- Rajasthan's share of the total central taxes collected now stands at 6.026%.

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**Announcements made by the Chief Minister in response to the discussion on the Finance and Appropriation Bill**

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- The state government passed the Budget 2024-25 on 29 July 2024 in the State Legislative Assembly.

**Announcements**

- On the lines of JDA, Bikaner and Bharatpur UIT will now become Development Authorities.
- **The Rajasthan Institute of Medical Sciences (RIMS) is being planned on the model of AIIMS in Rajasthan with a budget allocation of Rs 750 crore.**
- Under the 'Aashray Yojana,' Rs 1 lakh will be provided for the construction of permanent houses in slums.
- An IT park is planned to be developed in Ajmer.
- The Dravyavati river will be beautified in Jaipur. Families covered under the National Food Security Act (NFSA) in the state will now receive cylinders at Rs 450.
- Previously, this facility was limited to Ujjwala Yojana and Below Poverty Line (BPL) families. Industries in the state will be eligible for loans up to Rs 2 crore at concessional rates.
- The salaries, allowances, and pensions of MLAs and former MLAs will automatically increase annually without requiring a separate bill.
- Cement concrete Atal Pragati Paths will be constructed in villages with a population of 10,000, with an allocation of Rs 1000 crore.
- Instead of 500, 1000 electric buses will be purchased for urban areas in Rajasthan.
- An Electropathy Board will be formed in the state with a budget of Rs 5 crore.
- Sports stadiums will be constructed in Pali, Bali, Khinvsar, Nagaur, and Lohawat.
- The Asind area will be declared a prohibited hunting zone.
- The recommendations of the committee formed to address the salary disparity of employees will be implemented from September 1, 2024.
- The state government has changed the provisions of Common Eligibility Test (CET). Those who score 40% marks in it will also be eligible for government jobs. SC-ST category will get an additional 5% relaxation.

**Key announcements from the Minister of Social Justice and Empowerment**

- SC-ST and TSP funds have been increased from Rs 1000 crore to Rs 1500 crore.
- For the first time, a provision of Rs 150 crore has been made for the social security of OBC and EWS youth.
- A provision of Rs 25 crore has been made to provide loans to EWS through Anuja Nigam.
- For the first time, it has been announced that wheelchairs costing up to Rs 1 lakh will be provided to specially abled persons suffering from muscular dystrophy.
- The monthly grant for boys and girls living in hostels has been increased from Rs 2500 to Rs 3000.
- The *Mukhya Mantri Ghumantu Aawas Yojana* will be launched.
- The Ambedkar Teerth Yojana will be launched for the SC category.

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**TSP Fund increased to Rs. 1,500 crore for development and empowerment of Scheduled Tribes**

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- The state government has constituted a Tribal Advisory Council to promote the development and empowerment of Scheduled Tribes.
- By implementing the recommendations of this council, efforts will be made to improve the living standards of the tribal community.
- In the first meeting of the Rajasthan Scheduled Tribes Consultative Council held on July 30, 2024, at the State Assembly, the TSP fund was increased from Rs 1,000 crore to Rs 1,500 crore to further support the development and empowerment of Scheduled Tribes in the state.

**Provisions made for the Welfare of Tribal Class**

- The central and state governments have taken steps to promote the welfare of the tribal class. Under the Pradhan Mantri Adarsh Gram Yojana, 4,302 tribal-dominated villages in the state will be developed in a phased manner.
- In the first two phases, 1,566 villages will be identified, and comprehensive village development plans will be prepared for their all-round development.
- Additionally, a significant announcement for the development of tribal areas was made in the state budget. The mess allowance for boys and girls of tribal categories in hostels and residential schools has been increased to Rs 3,000 per month, and for sports hostels, it has been increased to Rs 4,000 per month.

- 250 new Ma-Badi Centers will be established, and the honorarium of education associates working at existing Ma-Badi centers will be increased by 10%.
- Conservation efforts will be undertaken in community forest rights areas through the Govind Guru Tribal Area Development Scheme.

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**Doorstep Delivery of Ration**

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- The Rajasthan government is providing home delivery of ration to families in the state where all members are either under 18 years old, over 60 years old, or disabled.
- Under this scheme, more than 8.66 lakh identified families eligible for the National Food Security Scheme in the state have been receiving home-delivered ration since July 2, 2024.
- This initiative has been launched by the Food and Civil Supplies Department of the state.
- This initiative has been launched in line with the state budget announcement.
- Home delivery of ration will be provided to families where all members fall within the specified age group or disability category.

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**Groundwater Conservation Authority Bill introduced in Rajasthan Assembly**

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- To address the issue of groundwater exploitation in Rajasthan, the state government has established the 'Rajasthan Groundwater (Conservation and Management) Authority.'
- A bill was introduced in the Assembly on July 26, 2024, to create this authority.
- The authority will oversee the conservation, management, and proper use of groundwater resources. It will establish guidelines for groundwater usage for drinking, industrial, irrigation, and commercial purposes.
- The chairman of the authority will be a CS, ACS, Principal Secretary, or Secretary.
- The authority will consist of a total of 12 members.
- One of the authority's responsibilities will be to issue notices to individuals or entities that fail to implement rainwater harvesting measures.
- The authority will also have the power to impose fines of Rs 50,000 for the first violation of regulations, and for subsequent violations, the fine may increase to Rs 1 lakh, along with six months of imprisonment or both.

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**2365 Adarsh Anganwadis to be built in Rajasthan**

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- In addition to the 2000 Adarsh Anganwadis in Rajasthan, 365 Adarsh Anganwadi Centers will be established at the block level.
- Furthermore, children will receive milk three days a week as a nutritional supplement.
- The honorarium of Anganwadi workers and assistants has been increased by 10%.

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**Major announcements of the state government :**

- Nutrition Panchayats have been formed at the village panchayat level in the state.
- The honorarium of Saathins has been increased from Rs 5,313 to Rs 5,844 per month.
- Under the Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana in the state, 85,500 eligible women received the benefit of the scheme, exceeding the target of 50,000.
  - The amount provided under the scheme has been increased by Rs 1,500.
  - Eligible women will now receive Rs 6,500 instead of Rs 5,000.
  - Disabled pregnant women will receive Rs 10,000 instead of Rs 6,500.

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**Balcony solar Panel tested for the first time in the country in Jaipur**

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- A Balcony Solar System was installed in the Rajasthan Electricity Regulatory Commission (REC) building in Jaipur on July 30, 2024, as a pilot project to test the electricity production of solar systems in flats.
- Rajasthan became the first state in India to test and launch this type of solar system.
- The Balcony Solar System is a ready-to-use, plug-and-play system.
- It can generate 100 units of electricity per month with a capacity of one kilowatt.
- Guidelines for installing balcony solar systems will be issued to general consumers soon.
- The Balcony Solar System operates independently of the grid. It includes a micro inverter, which allows for direct use of electricity within the household.

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**Rajasthan Institute of Medical Science (RIMS) to be established on the lines of AIIMS in Jaipur**

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- The Rajasthan University of Health Sciences, Jaipur, will be developed as the Rajasthan Institute of Medical Science (RIMS), modeled after AIIMS.
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- In addition to the alternative facilities of hospitals attached to SMS Medical College, high-level treatment facilities will also be available.
- A budget of Rs 750 crore has been allocated for this project, to be implemented in phases.
- The RIMS will offer facilities for delivery, dialysis, cath labs, trauma, MRI, and CT scans.
- An AYUSH wing will be established for those seeking treatment through traditional medical systems.
- In the first phase, the institute plans to create departments for broad specialties, followed by super specialties and the final phase will include departments such as tropical medicine, virology, and traumatology.
- The second phase will focus on establishing departments for Transfusion Medicine, Virology Traumatology, Rare Diseases, Cancer, and Organ Transplants.

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### **Jaisalmer Solar Power Plant inaugurated**

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- A 400 MW solar power plant was commissioned in Jaisalmer on July 24, 2024, by ReNew, a leading renewable energy company.
- The remaining 200 MW capacity is expected to become operational by October.
- This project will significantly increase the renewable energy capacity of the state and enable ReNew to supply electricity to Rajasthan Discom at competitive rates.
- ReNew is investing in the renewable energy sector, which includes 5,500 MW of renewable projects and a 4 gigawatt solar module manufacturing plant in Mahindra World City Jaipur.

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### **Survey will be conducted for setting up 2 nuclear power plants of 700 MW each in Rawatbhata**

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- Given the growing energy demand in the country, a survey will be conducted for the establishment of two 700 MW nuclear power units at Rawatbhata.
- Additionally, work on four nuclear reactors will commence in Banswara, Rajasthan.
- Banswara will become the second location in the state with nuclear reactors, following Rawatbhata.
- Four nuclear reactors, each with a capacity of 700 MW, will soon be operational in Banswara.
- If two more nuclear power plants are established at Rawatbhata, the total number of nuclear power plants there will reach 10. This

project is expected to require an investment of Rs 25,000 crore.

- Currently, Rawatbhata has six nuclear power plant units with a combined capacity of 1,100 MW.
- By 2025, the production capacity will increase to 1,400 MW, and by the end of 2025, it will reach 2,500 MW.
- If additional units are established following the survey, Rawatbhata will have a nuclear energy generation capacity of 3,900 MW, making it the city with the highest number of nuclear reactors in India.

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### **‘Sampoornata Abhiyan’**

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- It was launched by NITI Aayog on July 4, 2024.
- The campaign is being conducted nationwide in 112 districts selected under the Aspiring District Programme (ADP) and 500 blocks in 329 districts chosen for the Aspiring Block Programme (ABP).
- The campaign aims to achieve excellence in six key indicators through various organized programs.
- Five districts in Rajasthan are included in the ADP, and 27 blocks are part of the ABP. These regions are actively participating in the Sampurnata Abhiyan.
- Efforts are being made to ensure the complete delivery of essential government services in areas such as health, education, nutrition, sanitation, and agriculture to promote social development.
- The campaign will continue until September 30, 2024.

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### **‘Ek Vyakti Ek Ped’ Abhiyan**

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- The Agriculture Department of the Rajasthan Government launched the ‘*Ek Vyakti Ek Ped*’ Abhiyan on July 5, 2024.
- As part of the initiative, the department will plant over 1 lakh shade and fruit-bearing trees.
- These saplings will be planted on the premises of Agriculture Department offices in all districts and other suitable locations.
- The campaign prioritizes fruit-bearing and shade-providing trees, including mango, guava, amla, bael, jamun, custard apple, tamarind, sapota, mulberry, seasonal fruits, pear, neem, peepal, banyan, fig, sheesham, acacia, drumstick, khejdi, and rohida.
- The Agriculture Department will assume responsibility for the planted trees for four years following their transplantation."



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**‘PAHAL’ SCHEME CAMP**

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- This is an initiative undertaken by the Salumber District Administration.
- Under this initiative, the government offers welfare benefits to every eligible individual. By availing these benefits, individuals can link up with Central and State Government schemes to enhance their quality of life.
- Camps will be organized at the Gram Panchayat level.
- These camps will assist common citizens in obtaining Aadhaar cards, Jan Aadhar cards, power connections, bank accounts, PM Life Security Insurance, PM Jeevan Jyoti Insurance, Atal Pension Yojana, cattle shed schemes, farmer family mutations, Ujjwala Yojana benefits, eligibility for Vishwakarma Yojana, Shramyogi Maandhan Yojana, e-labor registration, benefits for specially abled persons, roadways passes, birth certificates, death certificates, pensions, foster care, Kanyadan, marriage registration, and other public welfare schemes.

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**‘Operation Seema’**

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- This is an initiative of the Sri Ganganagar district administration and district police.
- Its objective is to curb the rising trend of drug addiction in the district and create a drug-free environment.
- As part of this initiative, the Education Department organized workshops in the higher secondary schools of the district to raise awareness among the students.

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**‘Poshan Laado’ Campaign**

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- It started from 15 July 2024 in Baran district.
- This initiative by the district administration aims to eradicate anemia among girls residing in various hostels in Baran.
- This campaign has been launched to fulfil the targets identified under the ‘*Sashakt Baran - Pragati ko Shakti*’ campaign.
- This campaign will run from July 15 to October 25, 2024.
- As part of the campaign, the blood of girls in hostels will be tested monthly, and they will receive Iron Folic Acid (IFA) supplements, Albendazole tablets, and Amla candy.

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**Integrated Control and Command Center**

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- These centers have been established in the Smart Cities of Ajmer, Jaipur, Udaipur, and Kota, Rajasthan, following the model of Abhay Command.

- Their primary objective is to emulate the Abhay Command Center in combating rising crime rates within the cities.
- As a part of the Smart City initiatives, these centers have been established under the Smart City Company.
- Each center, located at the Smart City Headquarters, was constructed at a cost of Rs 36 crore.
- To support operations, 184 cameras have been installed in each city, with 10 workstations designated for monitoring purposes.

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**Rajasthan: First state to prepare an action plan for road safety**

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- Rajasthan is the first state in the country to prepare an action plan for road safety for the next 10 years in a planned manner.
- Under this plan, citizens will be made aware of road safety provisions.
- Its target is to reduce road accidents in the state by approximately 50% by the year 2030.
- To reduce road accidents, the State Road Safety Policy and Action Plan will be prepared by incorporating the best practices being adopted for road safety in different countries with the help of the World Bank.
- It will be implemented in three phases.
- The first phase will be conducted from the year 2025 to 2027, the second phase from the year 2027 to 2030 and the third phase from the year 2030 to 2033.

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**All tehsils will be notified online**

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- All tehsils of Rajasthan will be notified online.
- Currently, there are 426 tehsils in Rajasthan.
- Due to this, revenue related work will be made easy and accessible to the common people of the state.

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**Tripartite MoU for Kota Airport**

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- On July 19, 2024, a tripartite MoU was signed **between the Airport Authority, Urban Development Department and Civil Aviation Department** for Kota Greenfield Airport.
- For this, the state government will provide free land for the airport and the Airport Authority will be responsible for its construction, development and operation.
- A Detailed Project Report (DPR) is being prepared for Kota Greenfield Airport.
- Under this, AAI Chairman Sanjeev Kumar, Additional Chief Secretary to Chief Minister and Civil Aviation Shikhar Aggarwal and

Principal Secretary to Urban Development and Housing Department T. Ravikant signed the MoU for the construction of Kota Greenfield Airport.

- Construction of Greenfield Airport in Kota will provide air facilities to the residents of Hadoti.

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### **MoU worth 1 lakh crore between state government and HUDCO**

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- An MoU was signed between Housing and Urban Development Corporation Limited (HUDCO) and the State Government on 24th July 2024.
- Under this, Rajasthan will be made self-reliant in the field of energy and the infrastructure for drinking water and irrigation will be strengthened.
- HUDCO will provide a loan to the state government for 5 years for infrastructure projects like water, irrigation and electricity in the state.
- Under this, a loan of Rs 1577 crore has been given to the Jal Nigam for Jal Jeevan Mission.

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### **TIE Rajasthan's Agreement with DOIT and iStart**

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- TIE Rajasthan has partnered with the Department of Information Technology and Communication and iStart Rajasthan on 6th July 2024 to promote women entrepreneurs.
- Under this, TIE Women Global Pitch Competition will be organised.
- This initiative will connect selected women entrepreneurs and startups from Rajasthan with industries and global angel investors.
- This joint initiative will foster innovation and entrepreneurship among women, thereby increasing the participation of women entrepreneurs in industrial development.

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### **Excellence and Superiority Award to 8 Cooperative Societies of Rajasthan**

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- At the biennial National Cooperative Development Corporation award ceremony held on July 1, 2024, eight cooperative societies from Rajasthan were recognized with excellence and superiority awards across four categories.

#### **8 awards in 4 categories**

##### **1. Best Packs**

- Regional Excellence: Palsana Gram Sewa Sahkari Samiti, Sikar
- Regional Superiority: 24 APD Gram Seva Sahkari Samiti, Anupgarh

##### **2. KVSS**

- Regional Excellence: Banswara Kray-Vikray Sahkari Samiti, Banswara
- Regional Superiority: Kotputli Kray-Vikray Sahkari Samiti Limited, Kotputli

##### **3. Best Women Cooperative Society**

- Regional Excellence: Aapni Sahkari Seva Samiti Ltd., Madhorajpura,
- Regional Superiority: Kelu Mahila Dugdh Utpadak Sahkari Samiti Ltd., Ajmer

##### **4. Best Primary Milk Producer**

- Regional Excellence: Saradhana Dugdh Utpadak Sahkari Samiti Limited
- Regional Superiority: Jethana Dugdh Utpadak Sahkari Samiti

Note: The current Minister of State of Cooperative Department in Rajasthan is Shri Gautam Kumar Dak.

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### **2 Majors of Rajasthan awarded Shaurya Chakra posthumously**

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- Martyr Major Mustafa Bohra and Martyr Major Vikas Bhambu of Rajasthan were awarded the Shaurya Chakra posthumously on July 5, 2024.
- President Draupadi Murmu presented this honor at a ceremony held at Rashtrapati Bhavan in New Delhi.
- Major Mustafa and Major Bhambu were martyred in a helicopter crash in Arunachal Pradesh on October 21, 2022.

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### **Family Welfare Promotion Award**

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- In Rajasthan, on July 12, 2024, the Chief Minister gave awards and citations for outstanding work under the Family Welfare Incentive Award Scheme to individuals who demonstrated exceptional services in the field of family welfare.
  - Banswara (1st position)
  - Beawar (2nd position)
  - Kekri (3rd position)
- Similarly, in PPIUCD insertion, Beawar was awarded first place, Salumber second place, and Chittorgarh third place.
- As per Sustainable Development Goals 2030, the target of Total Fertility Rate (TFR) is 2.1, while the total fertility rate of the state is 2.0.

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### **Jaipur will become the only city in the country to have five Safaris**

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- A tiger safari has been prepared in an area of

30 hectares near Nahargarh Biological Park in Jaipur.

- It is almost ready at a cost of Rs 4 crore.
- Presently, in Jaipur, the facilities of leopard safari are available in Jhalana and Amargarh, elephant safari in Amer, and lion safari in Nahargarh Biological Park.
- Tiger safari will be the fifth safari in Jaipur, making it the only city in the country to have five safaris.

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### Domestic gas pipeline will be laid in 8 cities of Rajasthan

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- The Mines and Petroleum Department in Rajasthan will lay a domestic gas pipeline.
- On July 19, the Mines and Petroleum Department held a meeting with 13 CGD organizations supplying CNG.
- A target has been set to lay a 2,000 km long pipeline in 8 cities, including Jaipur and Kota, in the financial year.
- This will enable the provision of 1 lakh domestic connections.
- The pipeline will be laid in Jaipur, Kota, Alwar, Jodhpur, Udaipur, Bundi, Ajmer, and Pali.
- Additionally, land and other facilities will be provided on a priority basis for CNG, PNG, and LNG in RIICO's industrial areas and newly constructed parks.

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### Neena Singh

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- Neena Singh was the first woman IPS officer of Rajasthan.
- She retired on July 31, 2024.
- She is a 1989 batch Indian Police Service officer.
- Neena Singh was the first woman Director General of CISF.
- She has served on many important posts, including Sirohi SP and Ajmer Range IG.

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### Bishan Singh Shekhawat Award

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- The state government will award the Bishan Singh Shekhawat Award for excellent work in the field of journalism in Rajasthan.

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### Asia's first high speed testing rail track

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- Asia's first high-speed dedicated testing track is being built in Nawa (Didwana-Kuchaman) of Jodhpur division.
- It will be able to test speeds of up to 220 kilometers per hour.
- The total length of this track is 62 kilometers, and it is being built at a cost of Rs 810 crore in two phases.

- The first phase, 9 km of the 25 km track from Gudha station near Sambhar to Meethadi station has been completed. The second phase will involve building the remaining 37 kilometers of the testing track, including curved and blind turns.
- This track is targeted for completion by December 2025.
- Rolling stock, its components, railway bridges, and geotechnics will also be tested on this track.

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### IIT Jodhpur: The first IIT in the country to launch B.Tech in Hindi

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- IIT Jodhpur is one of the first IITs in the country to offer BTech courses in Hindi.
- This initiative is aligned with the National Education Policy 2020.
- Starting this academic year, IIT Jodhpur offers BTech courses in both Hindi and English.
- Students are admitted based on JEE Advanced counseling.

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### Sri Ganganagar ranks first in distributing Ayushman cards

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- Sriganganagar ranks first in the state in distributing Ayushman cards to eligible beneficiaries registered under the Rajasthan Government's Chief Minister Ayushman Arogya Yojana.
- The medical department has set a target of conducting e-KYC for more than 1.90 lakh eligible families and distributing Ayushman cards accordingly.
- In Sriganganagar, approximately 73% of the Ayushman cards have been delivered to eligible beneficiaries, which is the highest percentage in the state.

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### National Conference on Traditional Water Conservation Techniques

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- A three-day national conference on traditional water conservation techniques was held in Jaipur from July 27 to 29, 2024.
  - It was organized in collaboration with the Ministry of Jal Shakti, Government of India.
  - The conference reached a consensus on including a chapter on water conservation in primary education.
  - Under this initiative, traditional methods of water conservation, such as stepwells, wells, johaars, and nadis, will be renovated to improve groundwater levels.
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- Emphasis was placed on public cooperation with the government and administration in adopting traditional water conservation methods.

### International Sugar Expo

- The conference was organized on July 29-30, 2024, at JECC, Sitapura, Jaipur.
- It was organized by the Sugar Technologists Association of India (STAI).
- Experts from the sugar industry, scientists, technologists, engineers, sugar mill owners, CEOs of companies, and technology developers participated in the program.

### Civil Services Studies will be included along with Sanskrit studies in the Central Sanskrit University

- Central Sanskrit University, Jaipur, is the first university in the country to offer civil service preparation alongside Sanskrit studies.
- Until now, B.A. Honors in Sanskrit and Civil Service Studies (BA-SCS) courses have been offered at only two campuses: Jaipur and Lucknow.
- Central Sanskrit University has launched a B.A. Honors in Sanskrit and Civil Service Studies (BA-SCS) program.
- Admission to the 55 available seats will be granted through an online test.
- Students enrolling in the 2024-25 session will be eligible for up to a 50% discount on tuition fees based on their entrance exam scores.

### JAS (Jewellers Association Show) - 2024

- The conference was organized on July 5-7, 2024 in Jaipur.
- It was organized by the Jewellery Association at JECC, Sitapur.
- Jaipur is world-renowned for its gems and jewelry.
- **Note:** Gems and jewelry in Jaipur have been identified by the state government under the 'One District - One Product' Scheme.
- Under this scheme, the state government will work to further develop this sector.
- The gems and jewelry business is contributing significantly to the economic progress of the state and is also a major source of employment generation.
- **Note:** In the financial year 2023-24, the share of gem and jewelry in the total exports of Rajasthan was Rs 11,183 crore.

### India Solar Component Expo

- For the first time in Rajasthan, India Solar Component Expo was organized in Jaipur from 6th to 8th July 2024.
- It was organised by Rajasthan Solar Association (RSA).
- The solar industry got a boost after the PM Suryodaya Yojana and Subsidy Scheme to Domestic Consumers.
- MSME business in the state can reach Rs 1 lakh crore in the next 5 years.
- This expo was organized with the objective of bringing together consumers and individuals associated with the solar industry on a single platform and providing information about its components.
- Although Rajasthan is the top state in solar energy production, it lags behind other states in component production.

### Rajasthan's first dental van

- RUHS College of Dental Sciences has received Rajasthan's first modern mobile dental van.
- It is the first mobile dental hospital in Rajasthan.
- The van offers primary dental treatments, including tooth extraction, cleaning, and filling.
- This mobile dental van is equipped with air-conditioned facilities, a dental chair, a portable X-ray machine, an ultrasonic scaler, an air rotor, a compressor, and other essential equipment.
- Under the hospital's free medicine scheme, medicines available in the van will be provided at no cost.

### 'e-Evidence' App

- This app was launched in Rajasthan on July 5, 2024.
- It is designed for collecting and storing digital evidence on the cloud under the new criminal laws that took effect in India on July 1, 2024.
- The app was developed by the National Informatics Centre (NIC).
- Under the new Criminal Laws, the Indian Civil Security Code (BNSS) includes a provision for collecting and preserving evidence related to any crime in digital form.
- By installing this app on their mobile devices, Investigating Officers (IOs) can record evidence related to incidents in digital form and videotape all types of searches and seizures.
- The evidence collected on this app is directly uploaded to the cloud, ensuring that the digital evidence cannot be tampered with and promoting transparent investigations.

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**Rajasthan ranks first in terms of auction in mining**

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- Rajasthan was ranked fourth in terms of total mining auctions from 2015 to 2023, while Madhya Pradesh was ranked first.
- In 2024, Rajasthan took the lead in mining auctions.
- In Rajasthan, the auction process for 34 blocks has been completed in 2024, including gold mines, 28 limestone blocks, 4 iron ore blocks, and 1 siliceous earth block.
- These auctions will generate revenue for the state government and boost the state's economy.
- In January 2024, the Central Government implemented the Mineral (Auction) Amendment Rules 2024.
- Rajasthan has become the leader in issuing Exploration Licenses (ELs).
- Following the new rules, the state government issued the first exploration license for the state's first gold mine in Bhukia Jagpura, Ghatol (Banswara).

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**Rajasthan won 3 medals in kick boxing competition**

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- The WAKO India National Senior Kickboxing Championship was held in Mapusa, Goa.
- In the 86 kg category, Pratik Beniwal of Rajasthan won a silver medal.
- Ankit Srivastava won a bronze medal in the 75 kg low kick category.
- Unnat Singh won a bronze medal in the 81 kg category.

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**Indian Soft Hockey League**

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- The Indian Soft Hockey League, organized by the Amateur Soft Hockey Federation of India, will take place from November 7th to 10th at the Sawai Mansingh Indoor Stadium.
- The league's logo and mascot were launched. The mascot is named 'Toto'.
- Eight men's teams and four women's teams will compete in the league.
- Each team will consist of 10 players, including 6 national players and 3 international players.

- The following teams are participating in the league: Red Ranger Odisha, Delhi Fighter, Royal Challenger Rajasthan, Star of Chandigarh, UP Writer, Power Striker Uttarakhand, Maharashtra Dragon, Punjab Lion, Game Changer Bangalore, Hyderabad Tiger, Gujarat Hunter, Haryana Big Bull, Pink City Eagle, and Marwar Warriors.

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**Pawan Kumawat won gold in the World Strength Championship**

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- Pawan Kumawat won a gold medal in the 11th World Strength Championship held in Kazakhstan.
- He achieved this by lifting 245 kg in the 76 kg weight category of incline bench press.

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**Abhra bhati**

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- Playing for India in the South Asian Karate Championship held in Thimpu, Bhutan, Jaipur player Abhra Bhati won a silver medal in the Cadet-63 category.

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**Rajasthan stood Second in Junior National Wushu competition**

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- Rajasthan won a total of 19 medals, including 8 gold, 4 silver, and 7 bronze, in the 23rd Junior National (Boys/Girls) Wushu Competition held in Tamil Nadu.
- The Rajasthan team placed second in the overall team championship in the Sanshou category.
- The following Rajasthan athletes won gold medals: Kaif Mansuri, Abhimanyu Pareek, Vaibhav Sharma, Saksham Khandelwal, Kiran Pareek, Priyanshi Gautam, Divyanshi, and Renuka Sharma.
- Shiv Kumar, Himalaya Jatva, Hemendra Singh, and Chhabi Kanwar won silver medals and athletes Karmaveer, Rudra Sharma, Rudraksha Ameria, Piyush Mahera, Priya Chauhan, Manisha Bhati, and the Dual Event team (Vaidehi Pareek, Riddhi Pareek, and Mahima Chaudhary) won bronze medals.



# 2. NATIONAL AFFAIRS

## Polity and Governance

### Restructuring of NITI Aayog

- The NITI Aayog was reconstituted by the Central Government on 16 July 2024.
- The reconstituted NITI Aayog has four full-time members and 15 Union Ministers (4 ex-officio members and 11 special invitees).

**Chairman of NITI Aayog : Narendra Modi (Prime Minister) (Ex-officio)**

**Vice-Chairman of NITI Aayog : Suman Beri**

Full-time members	Ex-officio members
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• V K Saraswat</li> <li>• Professor Ramesh Chand</li> <li>• Dr VK Paul</li> <li>• Anand Virmani</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shivraj Singh Chauhan (Agriculture Minister)</li> <li>• Rajnath Singh (Defense Minister)</li> <li>• Amit Shah (Home Minister)</li> <li>• Nirmala Sitharaman (Finance Minister)</li> </ul>

### Special Invitee Members

- Nitin Gadkari (Minister of Road Transport and Highways)
- Jagat Prakash Nadda (Health Minister)
- HD Kumaraswamy (Steel Minister)
- Jitan Ram Manjhi (Minister of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises)
- Rajiv Ranjan Singh (Panchayati Raj Minister)
- Dr. Virendra Kumar (Minister of Social Justice and Empowerment)
- K. Rammohan Naidu (Civil Aviation Minister)
- Jual Oram (Minister of Tribal Affairs)
- Annapurna Devi (Minister of Women and Child Development)
- Chirag Paswan (Minister of Food Processing)
- Rao Inderjit Singh (Planning Minister)

### Policy (NITI) Commission

- Full name : National Institution for Transforming India
- Formed : On January 1, 2015 (by a resolution of the Union Cabinet)

- NITI Aayog is the premier policy-related ‘think tank’ of the Government of India, providing directional and policy inputs.
- It formulates strategic and long-term policies and programmes for the Government of India and also provides appropriate technical advice to the States and Union Territories.
- It serves as the best forum of the Government of India to promote cooperative federalism.

### 9th Governing Council Meeting of NITI Aayog

- Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi Chaired the 9th Governing Council meeting of the Niti Aayog on 27th July 2024
- This meeting was held in New Delhi.
- Chief Ministers and Lieutenant Governors representing 20 states and 6 Union Territories participated in the meeting.
- The theme of this year’s meeting is ‘*Viksit Bharat@2047*’.
- The Vision document on *Viksit Bharat* was discussed in the meeting.
- Its main objective is to promote participatory governance and cooperation between the central and state governments.

### Three new criminal laws came into force from July 1

- Three new criminal laws passed by the Indian Parliament have been implemented from 1 July 2024.
- The *Bhartiya Nagrik Suraksha Sanhita, 2023 (BNSS)* replaced the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC) 1973 ; the *Bhartiya Nyay Sanhita (BNS)* replaced the Indian Penal Code 1860 ; and the *Indian Evidence Act 2023* replaced the Indian Evidence Act 1872.

### SALIENT FEATURES

- The BNS has 358 sections compared to 511 in the IPC. Hence, the number of criminal charges listed in the IPC has changed.
- **New Sections of crime and *Bhartiya Nyay Sanhita***

- **Attempted Murder:** Earlier this offence was under Section 307 of the Indian Penal Code, now it falls under Section 109 of the Bhartiya Nyay Sanhita.
- **Rape:** Earlier this offence was under Section 375 of the Indian Penal Code, now it falls under Section 63 of the Bhartiya Nyay Sanhita.
- **Gang rape:** Earlier under Section 376D of the Indian Penal Code, the offence now falls under Section 70(1) of the Bhartiya Nyay Sanhita.
- **Cruelty to married woman:** Earlier under Section 498A of the Indian Penal Code, this offence now falls under Section 85 of the Indian Justice Code.
- **Dowry Death:** Earlier Section 304B of the Indian Penal Code, the offence now falls under Section 80 of the Indian Penal Code.
- **Sexual harassment:** Earlier under Section 354A of the Indian Penal Code, the offence now falls under Section 75 of the Indian Penal Code.
- **Insulting the dignity of a woman:** Earlier under Section 354 of the Indian Penal Code, now this offence falls under Section 74 of the Indian Justice Code.
- **Criminal intimidation :** Earlier this offence was under Section 503 of the Indian Penal Code, now it falls under Section 351 of the Indian Justice Code.
- **Defamation:** Earlier this offence was Section 499 of the Indian Penal Code, now it falls under Section 356 of the Indian Justice Code.
- **Cheating:** Earlier this offence was Section 420 of the Indian Penal Code, now it falls under Section 318 of the Indian Justice Code.
- **Criminal Conspiracy:** Earlier this offence was under Section 120A of the Indian Penal Code, it now falls under Section 61 of the Indian Penal Code.
- **Treason:** Earlier this offence was under Section 124A of the Indian Penal Code, it now falls under Section 152 of the Indian Penal Code.
- **Promoting hostility between different groups:** Earlier this offence was under Section 153A of the Indian Penal Code, it now falls under Section 196 of the Indian Penal Code.

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### Rule 267 and Rule 176 of Rajya Sabha

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- Recently, Rajya Sabha Chairman and Vice President of India Jagdeep Dhankhar called for introspection among MPs regarding the frequent use of Rule 267.
- Rule 267 and Rule 176 are specific rules of procedure in the Rajya Sabha. These rules regulate the conduct of business and allow Members of Parliament (MPs) to raise important issues for discussion and debate.
- **Rule 267** is part of the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in the Rajya Sabha, which allows members to postpone pending listed matters for the day to hold urgent discussions on matters of public importance.
- If the Chairman gives permission, the motion is put to vote.
- **Rule 176** is another rule of procedure in the Rajya Sabha that allows short-term discussions. These discussions do not last more than two and a half hours.
- Unlike Rule 267, Rule 176 does not require a formal motion or voting procedure.
- Rule 267 allows immediate discussion on a topic by suspending other topics, while Rule 176 facilitates short-duration discussions without the need for formal motions or voting.

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### Divorced Muslim woman is also entitled to claim Alimony - Supreme Court

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- The Supreme Court on July 10 ruled that a divorced Muslim woman is entitled to claim maintenance against her former husband under Section 125 of the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC), 1973.
- The court said that the provision under secular law cannot be dismissed by citing existing personal law because the section of CrPC does not mention any religion. Therefore, its provisions apply to all religions.
- Section 125 of the CrPC provides that “ wife ” includes a woman who has been divorced by her husband or who has obtained a divorce and has not remarried. It does not specify the religion of the woman.

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### Central Information Commission has the power to constitute benches and make rules - Supreme Court

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- The Supreme Court said that the Central Information Commission has the powers to constitute benches and make rules.
  - The court said that the power to make rules
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relating to the constitution of benches of the Commission rests with the Chief Information Commissioner (under Section 12(4) of the RTI Act).

- The Central Information Commission was constituted on 12-10-2005 under the Right to Information Act, 2005.
- The jurisdiction of the Commission extends to all central public authorities.
- The decisions of the Commission are final and binding.

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### **The state has the right to levy taxes on mining lands and mines - Supreme Court**

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- The nine-judge Constitution Bench of the Supreme Court on July 25 said that the power of state legislatures to impose taxes on mining lands and quarries is not limited by the Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act, 1957 of Parliament.
- In other words **the State Legislature has the power to impose taxes on mining lands and mines in the state.**
- The judgment held that state legislatures derive their power to levy taxes on mines and quarries from Article 246 read with Entry 49 (taxes on lands and buildings) in the State List of the Seventh Schedule to the Constitution.
- The apex court said the power to levy tax on mineral rights is mentioned in the State List i.e. List II. Parliament cannot exercise its residuary powers in respect of that subject-matter.

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### **Amendment in rules to give more power to Lieutenant Governor of Jammu and Kashmir**

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- The Union Home Ministry has amended the rules of the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation Act, 2019 to give more powers to the Lieutenant Governor.
- After this amendment, any elected government in the Union Territory will have limited powers in matters related to internal security, transfers, prosecution and appointment of government lawyers including the Attorney-General.
- According to the new rule, the Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs Department will submit the proposal for appointment of Advocate General and other law officers for approval from the Lieutenant Governor through the Chief Secretary and the Chief Minister.
- Any proposal regarding granting or rejecting sanction for prosecution or filing of an appeal shall be placed before the Lieutenant Governor through the Chief Secretary.
- It has given more powers to the Lieutenant Governor to take decisions on officers of the state police, All India Services like IAS and IPS.





# 3. ECONOMY

## ‘Sampoornata Abhiyan’

- The NITI Aayog started ‘Sampoornata Abhiyan’ for 3 months from 4th July to 30th September 2024.
- **Objective:** To make continuous efforts to achieve 100% target of saturation in 6 key indicators in aspirational districts and 6 key indicators in aspirational blocks across the country.
- ‘Sampoornata Abhiyan’ will strive to achieve full targets in each of the 6 indicators identified under the Aspirational Districts Programme (ADP) and Aspirational Blocks Programme in 112 Aspirational Districts and 500 Aspirational Blocks.

Aspirational Districts Programme	Aspirational Block Programme
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This program was started in 2018.</li> <li>• <b>Objective:</b> To ensure rapid development of relatively backward and remote areas of the country</li> <li>• It covers 112 districts of the country.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This program was launched in 2023.</li> <li>• <b>Objective:</b> To provide a gamut of essential government services in various sectors such as health, nutrition, education, drinking water and sanitation, agriculture, water resources, financial inclusion and infrastructure in 500 blocks across the country.</li> </ul>

## RBI joins “ Project Nexus ”

- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has joined “ Project Nexus ”, a multilateral international initiative to facilitate instant cross border retail payments by interlinking domestic Fast Payment Systems (FPS).
- This Project Nexus has been developed by the **Innovation Hub** of the **Bank for International Settlements (BIS)**.

- **Objective :** To connect the Fast Payment Systems of 4 ASEAN countries (Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore and Thailand).
- An agreement to this effect has been signed by the BIS, the founding countries and the RBI at Basel (Switzerland) on June 30, 2024.
- This platform is expected to go live by 2026.

## ‘Project PARI

- Project PARI (Public Art of India) is an initiative of the Ministry of Culture, Government of India.
- The project was launched during the 46th World Heritage Committee meeting of UNESCO.
- It will be implemented by the Lalit Kala Akademi and the National Gallery of Modern Art.
- **Objective :** To bring forth public art that draws inspiration from thousands of years of artistic heritage (folk art/folk culture) while incorporating modern themes and techniques.
- The first exhibition under this was held on 21-31 July 2024 in New Delhi.
- Some of the creative canvases like Rajasthan’s Phad painting, Pichwai painting, Bani - Thani painting were also included.

## Revised Model Skill Loan Scheme

- It was launched on 25 July 2024 by the Central Government.
- **Objective:** To provide financial assistance to the youth of the country for skill development courses.
- This scheme will eliminate financial barriers to new skill education.
- This initiative will facilitate access to high-cost cutting-edge skill courses required to meet emerging industrial demands.
- The scheme is based on the Credit Guarantee Fund Scheme for Skill Development (CGFSSD) launched in 2015.

## SEHER Credit Education Program

- Women Entrepreneurship Platform (WEP) and TransUnion CIBIL launched a Credit Education Programme called SEHER.
- The program will empower women entrepre-

neers in India with financial literacy content and business skills.

- This will help them obtain the necessary financial resources to stimulate further growth and job creation in the country’s economy.

**Women Entrepreneurship Platform (WEP)**

- It is a public-private partnership platform.
- It was launched by NITI Aayog in 2018.
- Objective : To create a better environment for women entrepreneurs in India.
- The platform is part of WEP’s Financing Women Collaborative (FWC), which aims to accelerate funding for women entrepreneurs.

**Producer Price Index (PPI)**

- The Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) is finalising a model for introducing Producer Price Index (PPI) in India.
- This index will replace the Wholesale Price Index (WPI).
- The PPI has been adopted by many countries around the world as it is consistent with the internationally accepted System of National Accounts (SNA) for compiling measures of economic activity.
- Since the 1970s, many developed and emerging economies have replaced WPI with PPI.

Key features of PPIs	Reasons for shift from WPI to PPI
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The PPI measures the average change in prices received by producers and excludes indirect taxes.</li> <li>• PPI also removes the multiple counting bias inherent in WPI.</li> <li>• It measures price fluctuations more accurately by subtracting additional costs on products imposed by taxes and transportation.</li> <li>• The weights in the PPI are obtained from the supply usage tables.</li> <li>• PPI also includes services while WPI includes only goods.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Elimination of bias of double/multiple counting of commodities in WPI.</li> <li>• To compile an index conceptually consistent with National Accounts Statistics (NAS) for use as a deflator.</li> <li>• All members of the G-20, including China, have adopted the PPI.</li> </ul>

**Digital Bharat Nidhi**

- Recently, the Department of Telecommunications (DoT) issued draft rules for rolling out the Digital Bharat Nidhi.
- The Digital India Fund will replace the Universal Service Obligation Fund (USOF).
- The funds collected under this fund will be used to support Universal Service by promoting access to and delivery of telecom services in underserved rural, remote, and urban areas.
- It will also be used for pilot projects to improve connectivity and for the introduction of telecom services, technologies and products.
- The contribution made by the telecom companies to this fund will first be deposited in the Consolidated Fund of India.
- Centre will appoint an “ Administrator ” who will select the “ Digital India Fund Implementers ” by inviting “ bids ” or applications from eligible persons.

launched by the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) on 16 July 2024.

- **Objective:** To enhance research in the field of agriculture and animal husbandry.
- As part of the programme, 323 varieties of 56 crops including cereals, oilseeds, fodder crops and sugarcane were released.
- These crops include 289 climate-resistant varieties and 27 bio-enhanced varieties.

**Scientific Deep-Drilling Programme**

- The programme will be implemented by Borehole Geophysics Research Laboratory (BGRL) (Karad, Maharashtra).
- **Objective :** To drill the earth’s crust to a depth of 6 km and carry out scientific study and analysis.
- This research can help us understand the reasons behind the regular seismic tremors experienced after the construction of a reservoir in the active fault zone of the Koyna-Varna area in Maharashtra.
- Under this project, boreholes are strategically dug to study and analyze the deeper parts of the Earth’s crust.

**‘One Scientist, One Product’ Scheme**

- ‘One Scientist-One Product’ programme was

- It helps scientists study earthquakes and increases our understanding of Earth's history, rock types, energy resources, life forms, and climate change patterns.

### Project ASMITA

- ASMITA stands for Augmenting Study Materials in Indian Languages through Translation and Academic Writing.
- It was launched on 16 July by the Ministry of Education and University Grants Commission (UGC)
- Under this, 22,000 books will be developed in Indian languages in the next 5 years.
- It is a joint effort of UGC and the Bharatiya Bhasha Samiti, a high-level committee under the Ministry for promotion of Indian languages in education.
- The project aims to foster a robust ecosystem for translation and original book writing in Indian languages across various disciplines of higher education.

- It aims to publish 1,000 books in 22 languages within five years, resulting in 22,000 books published in Indian languages.
- Thirteen nodal universities have been identified for this project with member universities from different regions.

### “Multilingual Dictionary”

- “Multilingual Dictionary” was launched to accelerate learning in Indian languages and preserve and promote India's language traditions.”
- This dictionary is a single-point reference for words and their meanings from all Indian languages.
- This dictionary will be developed by the Central Institute of Indian Languages (CIIL) in collaboration with the Indian Languages Committee.
- This dictionary will help in using Indian words, phrases and sentences in various modern fields like IT, industry, research, education etc.

## Union Budget 2024-25

- Union Minister of Finance and Corporate Affairs Smt. Nirmala Sitharaman presented the Union Budget 2024-25 in the Parliament on 23 July 2024.
- Nirmala Sitharaman has presented the 7th consecutive Union Budget. (Morarji Desai : 6 Budgets) She is the first Union Finance Minister to do so.
- The budget focused on 4 main communities- 'poor', 'women', 'youth' and 'farmers'.

### Main themes of the budget

- The subject matter of the Budget focuses on employment, skill training, MSMEs and the middle class.
- A package of 5 Prime Minister's schemes and initiatives to provide employment, skill training and other opportunities to 4.1 crore youth in the country over the next 5 years with a central outlay of Rs. 2 lakh crore has been announced.
- This year, Rs 1.48 lakh crore has been allocated for education, employment and skill training.

### Budget Priorities

- 9 priorities have been set for developed India-

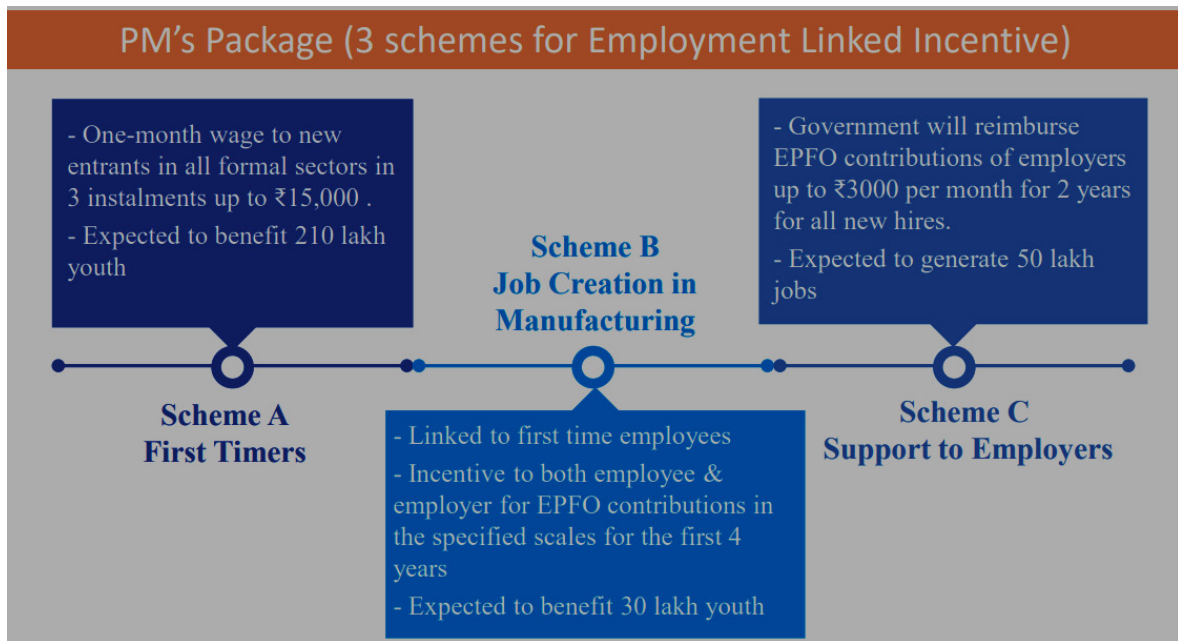
#### Priority 1: Productivity and Adaptation in Agriculture

- 109 new high yielding and climate friendly varieties of 32 agricultural and horticultural crops will be released for farmers cultivation.
- In the next two years, one crore farmers across the country will be given assistance for natural farming, which will also include certificates and branding arrangements.
- 10,000 need-based bio-input resource centres will be established.

- Government, in collaboration with the States, will facilitate the implementation of Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI) in agriculture with the aim to cover farmers and their land in 3 years.

#### Priority 2: Employment and Skills

- The government will implement three employment-linked incentive schemes, which will focus on enrolment into the EPFO and identification of first-time employed workers and assist employees and employers.



- The Government will also facilitate greater participation of women in the workplace through setting up of hostels for working women in collaboration with industry and creches.
- Referring to skill related programmes, the Finance Minister announced that a new Centrally Sponsored Scheme would be launched as the fourth scheme under the Prime Minister's Scheme for Skill Development in collaboration with State Governments and Industries.

**Skilling Programme**

- 20 lakh youth will be skilled over a 5-year period.
- 1,000 Industrial Training Institutes will be upgraded in hub and spoke arrangements with outcome orientation.
- Course content & design aligned as per skill needs of industry.

PM's Package (4<sup>th</sup> scheme)

- The Model Skill Loan Scheme will be revised with the facility of guaranteed loan up to ₹ 7.5 lakh through a Government promoted fund and is expected to support 25,000 students per year.
- A 10 lakh loan will be provided for higher education in domestic institutions to help youth who are not eligible for any benefits under

government schemes and policies.

- For this purpose, 1 lakh students every year will be directly given e-vouchers for 3 percent annual interest rebate on the loan amount.

**Priority 3: Holistic Human Resource Development and Social Justice**

**Purvodaya Scheme**

- Government will launch a *Purvodaya* scheme for the overall development of the eastern part of the country covering Bihar, Jharkhand, West Bengal, Odisha and Andhra Pradesh.
- This will include human resource development, infrastructure and creation of economic opportunities in these regions to fulfill the objective of developed India.

**Prime Minister's Tribal Advanced Village Campaign**

- To improve the socio-economic conditions of the tribal communities, the Government will launch *Pradhan Mantri Janjati Unnat Gram Abhiyan*, adopting a holistic development approach to benefit tribal families in tribal dominated villages and aspirational districts covering 63,000 villages and 5 crore tribal people.
- Expanding banking facilities, more than 100 branches of India Post Payment Bank will be set up in the North-East region.

**Priority 4: Manufacturing and services**

**Assistance for promotion of MSMEs**

- The budget has a special focus on labour incentives manufacturing as well as MSMEs and Manufacturing.

- Each applicant will be provided with a separately created self-financing guarantee fund with a guarantee cover of up to Rs 100 crore, while the loan amount can exceed this limit.
- Similarly, public sector banks will develop their in-house capacity to evaluate MSMEs for lending instead of relying on external evaluations. A new mechanism was also announced to facilitate continuous bank lending to MSMEs.

**Mudra Loan**

- The limit of Mudra loans will be increased from the current Rs 10 lakh to Rs 20 lakh. This facility will be available to entrepreneurs who have successfully repaid their old loans under the 'Tarun' category.

**MSME units for food irradiation, quality and safety testing**

- Financial assistance will be given for setting up 50 multi-product food irradiation units in the MSME sector.
- Facilitation will be provided for setting up 100 NABL accredited food quality and safety testing laboratories.
- e-Commerce Export Hubs will be set up in Public-Private Partnership (PPP) mode to enable MSMEs and traditional artisans to sell their products in international markets.

**Internships in Top Companies**

- As part of the 5th Plan under the Prime Minister's Package, the Government will launch a comprehensive scheme to provide internship opportunities to 1 crore youth in the top 500 companies over a period of 5 years.

**Internship Opportunities**

- Scheme for providing internship opportunities in 500 top companies to 1 crore youth in 5 years.
- Allowance of ₹5,000 per month along with a one-time assistance of ₹6,000 through the CSR funds.

PM's Package (5th scheme)

**Priority 5: Urban Development**

**Urban Housing**

- Under Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana Urban 2.0, the housing needs of 1 crore urban poor and middle class families will be addressed with an investment of Rs 10 lakh crore.

**Water supply and sanitation**

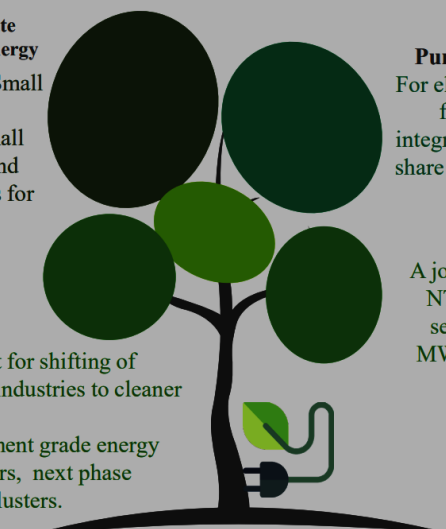
- Will promote water supply, sewage treatment, solid waste management and financially viable projects for 100 large cities through reliable projects in partnership with state governments and multilateral development banks.

**PM Swanidhi**

- Keeping in view the success of the landmark PM Svanidhi Yojana which has transformed the lives of street vendors, the Government has envisaged a scheme to support development of 100 weekly Haats and street food centres in selected cities every year over the next five years.

**Priority 6: Energy Security**

- PM Surya Ghar Free Electricity Scheme was launched to install rooftop solar plants to enable one crore households to get free electricity up to 300 units per month.



**Initiatives with private sector in Nuclear Energy**

- Setting up Bharat Small Reactors
- R&D of Bharat Small Modular Reactor and newer technologies for nuclear energy

**Pumped Storage Policy**

For electricity storage and facilitation of smooth integration of the growing share of renewable energy

**AUSC Thermal Power Plants**

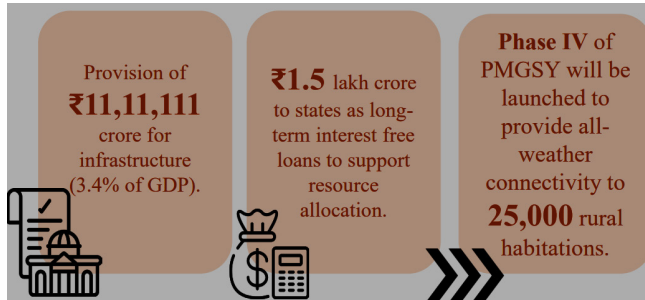
A joint venture between NTPC and BHEL will set up a full scale 800 MW commercial plant.

**Energy Audit**

- Financial support for shifting of micro and small industries to cleaner forms of energy
- Facilitate investment grade energy audit in 60 clusters, next phase expands to 100 clusters.

## Priority: 7 Infrastructure

- To maintain strong fiscal support for infrastructure over the next 5 years, consistent with priorities and fiscal consolidation requirements.



- Through Accelerated Irrigation Benefit Programme and other sources, it will provide financial assistance for projects like Kosi-Mechi inter-state link and barrages, river pollution abatement and irrigation projects, among 20 other ongoing and new schemes, at an estimated cost of Rs 11,500 crore.
- Apart from this, it will also provide assistance to Assam, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand and Sikkim for flood management, landslide and other related projects.

### Tourism

- Development of Vishnupad Temple Corridor and Mahabodhi Temple Corridor on the model of Kashi Vishwanath Temple Corridor.
- Comprehensive development initiative for Rajgir, a site of religious significance to Hindus, Buddhists and Jains.
- Development of Nalanda as a tourist destination besides giving Nalanda University its glorious place.
- Support for the development of Odisha's scenic beauty, temples, monuments, craftsmanship, wildlife sanctuaries, natural geographical beauty and picturesque coastline, which make it an excellent tourist destination.

## Priority 8: Innovation, research and development

- A National Research Fund will be launched for basic research and prototype development.
- Under this there will be an establishment of mechanisms to promote private sector-driven research and innovation at commercial scale from a financial pool of Rs 1 lakh crore, as announced in the Interim Budget.

### Space Economy

- A venture capital fund of Rs 1,000 crore will be set up with a continued thrust on growing the space economy by 5 fold over the next 10 years.

## Priority 9: Next-Generation Reforms

### Economic Policy Framework

- The Government will formulate an economic policy framework to formulate a holistic approach to economic development.

### Labor reforms

- The Government will facilitate the provision of various services for workers including those related to employment and skill training.
- Integration of e-Shram Portal with other portals having a holistic integration would facilitate such a one-stop solution.
- The Labour Facilitation and Solutions Portal will be revamped to enhance ease of compliance for industry and trade.
- The government will develop a taxonomy for climate finance to increase availability of capital for climate adaptation and mitigation.

### Foreign Direct Investment and Overseas Investment

- The rules and regulations for foreign direct investment and overseas investment will be simplified for -
  - (1) Facilitating foreign direct investment.
  - (2) Investment should be based on priorities.
  - (3) Promoting opportunities for using the Indian Rupee as a currency for overseas investments.

### NPS Vatsalya

- NPS - Vatsalya Scheme will be launched for contribution by parents and guardians on behalf of minor children.
- On attaining the age of majority, this scheme can be easily converted into a normal NPS account.

### Part- B

- In direct taxes, the Union Budget 2024-25 talked about a comprehensive review of direct and indirect taxes in the next six months.
- In Budget 2024-25, the standard deduction for salaried employees opting for the new tax regime has been increased from Rs 50,000 to Rs 75,000.
- Similarly, for pensioners, the deduction on family pension has been increased from Rs 15,000 to Rs 25,000.
- Now the period for reopening of assessments has been increased from three years to five years if the concealed income is more than Rs 50 lakh. The new tax regime rate structure has also been revised so that salaried employees can get income tax benefits of up to Rs 17,500.

**New Tax Regime Rate Structure**

Income	Tax percentage
0-3 lakh	Zero
3-7 lakh	5 percent
7-10 lakh rupees	10 percent
10-12 lakh rupees	15 percent
12-15 lakh	20 percent
Above Rs 15 lakh	30 percent

- To promote the entrepreneurial spirit and startup ecosystem, Angel Tax has been abolished for all categories of investors.
- The corporate tax rate on foreign companies has been reduced from 40 percent to 35 percent.
- The budget proposed to increase the capital gains exemption limit to Rs 1.25 lakh per annum for the benefit of the low and middle income classes.
- It also proposed *Vivaad se Vishwas* Scheme, 2024 for redressal of certain Income Tax disputes pending in appeals.

- The monetary limit for filing appeals in the High Courts, Supreme Court and Tribunals relating to direct taxes, excise duty and service tax has been increased to Rs. 60 lakh, Rs. 2 crore and Rs. 5 crore respectively.
- To reduce litigation and provide certainty in international taxation, the scope of safe harbour rules will be expanded and the transfer pricing assessment process will be rationalised.

**Budget Estimate 2024-25 (Estimated)**

Total Receipts (excluding Borrowings)	32.07 lakh crore
Total Expenditure (excluding borrowings)	48.21 lakh crore
Net tax receipts	25.83 lakh crore
Fiscal deficit (of GDP)	4.9 percent
Gross through securities market borrowings	14.01 lakh crore
Netting through securities market borrowings	11.63 lakh crore

**Economic Review 2023-24**

- ‘Economic Survey 2023-24’ was presented by Union Minister of Finance and Corporate Affairs, Smt. Nirmala Sitharaman on 22nd July, 2024.
- **Gross Domestic Product** : India’s real gross domestic product (GDP) is estimated to be 6.5 - 7% in the year 2024-25. The GDP growth rate in the financial year 2023-24 was 8.2%.
- The Indian economy recovered rapidly from the Covid pandemic, with its real GDP in FY24 being 20% higher than pre-Covid, FY20 levels.
- **Contribution of regions** : The share of agriculture, industry and services sectors in overall GVA at current prices was 17.7%, 27.6% and 54.7%, respectively in FY 2023-24.
- **Current Account Deficit (CAD)** : The Current Account Deficit (CAD) stood at 0.7% of GDP during FY24, which is better than the deficit of 2.0% of GDP in FY23.
- **Fiscal deficit**: Fiscal deficit is projected to decline from 6.4% of GDP in FY23 to 5.6% of GDP in FY24 (2023-24).
- **Total tax collection** : 55% of this came from direct taxes and the remaining 45% from indirect taxes.
- According to the economic survey As of March 31, 2024, a total of 190.57 GW of Renewable Energy (RE) capacity has been installed in the country.
- Capital expenditure for FY24 stood at Rs 9.5 lakh crore, an increase of 28.2% year-on-year and 2.8 times the FY20 level.
- The Gross Non-Performing Assets (GNPA) ratio fell to 2.8% in March 2024, the slowest improvement in asset quality of banks in 12 years.
- Domestic inflation pressures have eased in FY24. Retail inflation is projected to decline to 5.4 per cent in FY24 from an average of 6.7 per cent in FY23.
- External debt as a proportion of GDP remained at a low of 18.7 percent at end-March 2024.
- According to the survey, the number of granted patents is expected to increase by 17 times in the year 2023-24 as compared to the year 2014-15 to reach 1,03,057.
- The tourism sector in India is expanding rapidly. India is ranked 39th in the World Economic Forum’s Travel and Tourism Development Index (TTDI) 2024.
- The Indian agriculture sector provides livelihood support to about 42.3% of the population.
- The share of the agriculture sector in the country’s GDP at current prices is 18.2%.
- The manufacturing sector grew at a rate of 9.9 percent in the financial year 2024, apart from

this, construction activities also registered a growth of 9.9%.

- The manufacturing sector has been one of the leading sectors of the Indian industrial sector, achieving an average annual growth rate of 5.2% over the last decade.
- The contribution of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) in the production sector was 35.4%.
- Production Linked Incentive (PLI) Scheme proved to be helpful to MSMEs.
- With the aim of promoting 'One District, One Product', different states will be encouraged to set up Unity Malls.

**Role of MSMEs :**

- According to the survey MSMEs are the backbone of the Indian economy, contributing about 30% to the country's GDP, 45% to the manufacturing output and providing employment to 11 crore population of the country.
- The central government is encouraging the growth of the MSME sector through initiatives such as allocation of Rs 5 lakh crore under the Emergency Credit Line Guarantee Scheme for businesses including MSMEs.

**Service Area:**

- According to the Economic Survey, the services sector remains a key contributor to India's growth, accounting for nearly 55 per cent of the total size of the economy in FY24.
- Services exports have maintained a steady pace and accounted for 44% of India's total exports in FY24.
- India ranks fifth in services exports, the other countries being the European Union (excluding intra-EU trade), the United States, the United Kingdom and China.
- India's share in global digitally delivered services exports to grow from 4.4 per cent in 2019 to 6.0 per cent in 2023.

- India's exports in services reached a high of \$341.1 billion in FY24.
- Exports (goods and services) grew by 0.15% in FY24, while imports declined by 4.9%.

**Female Labour Force Participation Rate:**

- Increased access to education and skill development along with other initiatives for women empowerment have increased women's participation in the development and progress of the nation.
- Female labour force participation rate (LFPR) to increase from 23.3% in 2017–2018 to 37% in 2022–2023.
- Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana (PMJDY) has helped open 52.3 crore bank accounts till May 2024, of which 55.6 percent of the account holders are women.

**Expenditure on Social Services:**

- Expenditure on social services is set to increase from 6.7% of GDP in 2017–18 to 7.8% of GDP in 2023–24.
- This has led to a sharp decline in multidimensional poverty and the National Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) has declined from 0.117 in 2015-16 to 0.066 in 2019-21.
- Various initiatives in the social sector have led to a reduction in inequality. Over the last decade, the Gini coefficient for rural areas has declined from 0.283 to 0.266 and for urban areas from 0.363 to 0.314.

**Health Expenditure:**

- Health Expenditure is projected to increase from 1.4% to 1.9% over the period 2017–18 to 2023–24.
- As a percentage of total expenditure, expenditure on social services increased to 26% in 2023–24 (BE), of which expenditure on health was 6.5%.





# 4. INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

## 24th summit of SCO

- The 24th Summit of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO Summit) 2024 was held on 3-4 July in Astana, Kazakhstan.
- The 24th meeting of the SCO Council of Heads of State and State was held during the summit.
- This summit was hosted by the President of Kazakhstan Kassym-Jomart Tokayev.
- It included Russian President Vladimir Putin, Chinese President Xi Jinping, Pakistani Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, and United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres. 16 world leaders including took part in the meeting.
- The Indian delegation at the summit was led by External Affairs Minister Dr. S Jaishankar.
- During the summit, the Eurasian country Belarus was included as the 10th permanent member of the SCO.
- Iran was included as the 9th permanent member at the SCO Summit 2023.
- The 25th SCO summit will be held in China.

### Shanghai Cooperation Organisation

Introduction	Importance of SCO for India
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Intergovernmental organization, establishment : in 2001</li> <li>• Established in Shanghai by Russia, China, the Kyrgyz Republic, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan</li> <li>• In 2017, India and Pakistan also became its permanent members.</li> <li>• The group focuses on advancing regional security and cooperation among its member countries.</li> <li>• <b>Permanent members of SCO (10 countries):</b> Kazakhstan, China, Russia, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, India, Pakistan, Iran and Belarus</li> <li>• Headquarters : Beijing (China)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This platform expands its scope of cooperation with Central Asian countries.</li> <li>• It helps to establish communication with key countries in the region on security issues.</li> <li>• Its Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure (RATS) shares information on terrorist activities and drug trafficking.</li> <li>• India's priorities in this are inspired by the Prime Minister's vision of Towards a SECURE SCO where SECURE stands for Security, Economic Cooperation, Connectivity, Unity, Respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, and Environmental protection.</li> </ul>

## 22nd Annual India-Russia Summit

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi was on visit to Russia and Austria from 8-10 July.
- In the first leg of the visit, he went to Russia where he attended the 22nd India-Russia Annual Summit in the capital Moscow.
- This was Prime Minister Modi's first foreign bilateral visit after taking oath as Prime Minister for the third time.
- This meeting was held in the Kremlin in Moscow.
- In the bilateral meeting, the two leaders issued a joint declaration titled India-Russia Enduring and Expanded Partnership.
- Nine Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) were also signed to further cooperation in various fields between the two countries.
- Strengthening India-Russia special strategic partnership in the joint declaration ;
- This includes achieving a bilateral trade target of US\$ 100 billion by 2030.
- Russia will enter into long-term contracts with Indian companies for supply of fertilizers.
- The two countries will work to implement the Chennai-Vladivostok (Eastern Sea) Corridor and the International North-South Transport Corridor and explore the potential of the Northern Sea Route.
- Cooperation will continue in nuclear energy and space exploration.
- **Note:** Russia is setting up a nuclear power plant in Koodankulam, Tamil Nadu.

- During the visit, Russian President Putin conferred **Russia's highest state honour, The Order of St. Andrew The Apostle, on Narendra Modi.**
- **Note:** This award was announced in 2019 but will be presented in 2024.

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### PM Modi's visit to Austria

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- Prime Minister Narendra Modi was on an official visit to Austria on 9-10 July 2024.
- This was the first visit of an Indian Prime Minister to Austria in the last 41 years.

### Salient Points

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi discussed bilateral relations with Austrian President Alexander Van der Bellen and Chancellor Karl Nehammer in Vienna.
- Following the meeting of the two leaders, a joint statement titled Enhanced India-Austria Partnership was issued.
- According to the joint statement, India and Austria will work together to contribute to international and regional peace and prosperity.
- Prime Minister Modi invited Austria to join the International Solar Alliance (ISA).
- The total membership of the International Solar Alliance is 100. Paraguay is the 100th country to join the alliance.
- This official visit of Prime Minister Modi has come at a time when India and Austria are celebrating the 75th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations.

### Austria

- Austria is a landlocked country located in Central Europe.
- Its capital is Vienna. Its language is German and its currency is Euro.
- Austria is a member of the European Union.
- Austria is bordered by Germany and the Czech Republic to the north, Slovakia and Hungary to the east, Slovakia and Italy to the south, and Switzerland and Liechtenstein to the west.

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### BIMSTEC Foreign Ministers Meeting

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- The Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) Foreign Ministers Meeting was held on 11-12 July 2024 in New Delhi.
- In this, cooperation in various fields like security, connectivity, trade and investment, people-to-people contact etc. was discussed.
- **Note :** The first meeting of BIMSTEC Foreign Ministers was held in Bangkok, Thailand in 2023.

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### 4th BIMSTEC Security Chiefs Meeting

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- The 4th BIMSTEC Security Chiefs Meeting was held on 27 July in Naypyidaw, Myanmar.
- India was represented in this by National Security Advisor (NSA) Ajit Doval.
- BIMSTEC security chiefs discussed issues related to traditional and non-traditional security challenges in the Bay of Bengal region.
- BIMSTEC was established in 1997 as a regional grouping to promote cooperation among the coastal states of the Bay of Bengal.
- The full name of BIMSTEC is Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation.
- Its seven members are India, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Bhutan, Nepal, Thailand and Myanmar.
- BIMSTEC is headquartered in Dhaka.

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### Union Cabinet by Allows India to sign BBNJ agreement

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- The Union Cabinet has given its approval for India to sign the Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ) agreement.
- This decision is an important step towards the conservation and sustainable use of marine biodiversity in areas beyond national jurisdiction.
- The “ areas beyond national jurisdiction ” known as the “ open seas ” or “ high seas ” are global commons, meaning no one has any claim over them and they are the common property of the entire world.
- These areas are open to all for internationally legitimate purposes such as navigation, overflight, laying of submarine cables and pipelines etc.
- In India, the Ministry of Earth Sciences will lead the implementation of the BBNJ agreement in the country.

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### BBNJ Agreement

- The BBNJ Agreement, or High Seas Treaty, is an international treaty under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS).
- The BBNJ agreement was agreed upon in March 2023.
- It will be a legally binding international treaty once it comes into force 120 days after ratification, acceptance and approval.
- As of June 2024, 91 countries have signed the BBNJ Agreement, and eight parties have ratified it.

- It aims to address growing concerns over the long-term conservation of marine biodiversity in the open oceans.
- Countries party to the agreement cannot claim or exercise sovereign rights over marine resources obtained from the high seas and ensure fair and equitable sharing of benefits.
- The BBNJ Agreement is the third implementation agreement under UNCLOS. The other two agreements are: the 1994 Part XI Implementation Agreement and the 1995 United Nations Fish Stocks Agreement.

### UNCLOS

- UNCLOS was adopted on December 10, 1982, and came into force on November 16, 1994.
- It is important for ocean environmental protection and for maritime boundaries, rights to marine resources, and dispute resolution.

### India-Taiwan Mutual Recognition Agreement on Organic Products

- Mutual Recognition Agreement (MRA) between India and Taiwan came into force from July 8, 2024 to facilitate trade in organically produced goods, including tea and plants with medicinal uses.
- This Mutual Recognition Agreement (MRA) will avoid double certification and export of organic products will become easier.
- The agreement will pave the way for export of key Indian organic products such as rice, processed food, green/black and herbal tea, medicinal plant products to Taiwan.
- The implementing agencies for MRA are the Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA) of India and the Agriculture and Food Agency of Taiwan.

### India's first overseas Jan Aushadhi Kendra opened in Mauritius

- Union External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar inaugurated India's first overseas Jan Aushadhi Kendra in Mauritius on 18 July 2024.
- The India-Mauritius Health Partnership Project will supply cost-effective, made-in-India medicines to enhance public health care and enhance well-being.
- A Mediclinic project with Indian grant assistance was also inaugurated in Grand Bois, Mauritius.
- This mediclinic project will provide secondary

healthcare services to 16,000 people in the Grand Bois area.

- Mauritius is an island nation in the western Indian Ocean.
- People of Indian origin make up nearly 70% of the island's population of 1.2 million.

### Ivory Coast joins the UN Water Convention

- Recently Ivory Coast joined the United Nations Water Convention.
- It is the 10th African country to join the UN Water Convention.
- It is now the 53rd party to the 1992 United Nations Water Convention.
- The UN Water Convention is also known as the "Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Waterways and International Lakes".
- It was adopted in Helsinki in 1992 and came into force in 1996.
- It is a legally binding treaty that promotes the sustainable management of shared water resources.
- Under this, the parties are required to prevent, control and work towards reducing transboundary impacts and to ensure fair and equitable use of transboundary waters.
- Following a revision process, all UN Member States can join from March 2016.
- **Note :** India is not a party to this convention.

### Rupee-Kyat Trade Settlement Mechanism

- There is a trade settlement mechanism between India and Myanmar.
- Under this, the first transaction of export of pulses worth more than Rs 1 crore from India to Myanmar was successfully completed.
- This will boost bilateral trade and increase the use of local currencies.
- The Central Bank of Myanmar issues guidelines for payment procedures under the Special Rupee Vostro Account (SRVA).

### Vostro account

- A Vostro account is an account maintained by a correspondent bank on behalf of another bank.
- These accounts are an essential aspect of correspondent banking in which the deposit-holding bank manages or acts as a custodian for an account with a foreign bank.
- These accounts are used for foreign exchange or settlement of foreign trade.

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**Chagos Archipelago dispute**

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- Recently India supported Mauritius in the Chagos Islands dispute
- The Chagos Archipelago is a group of seven atolls that includes the island of Diego Garcia, on which a US military base is located.
- Despite being claimed by Mauritius, the Chagos Archipelago is part of the United Kingdom's British Indian Ocean Territory and Diego Garcia was leased to the US in the 1960s.
- The Chagos Archipelago consists of about 58 small, very low-lying islands in the middle of the Indian Ocean.
- February 2019 the International Court of Justice issued an advisory opinion on the legal dispute over the separation of the Chagos Archipelago from Mauritius in 1965.
- In this the Court said that the United Kingdom should unconditionally withdraw its colonial administration from the territory within six months and hand it over to Mauritius.

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**Mashco Piro Tribe**

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- Recently, rare photographs of the contactless tribe Mashco Piro were released by Survival International.
- The Mashco Piro tribe lives in the forests of the Amazon and southeastern Peru.
- Their population is probably more than 750 individuals, and it is considered the largest among such tribes.
- They live in the Amazon rainforest of the Madre de Dios Region, close to Peru's border with Brazil and Bolivia.
- The Peruvian government has prohibited all contact with the Mashco Piro, fearing they could spread diseases to the population to which they have no immunity.
- The tribe is very reclusive, only occasionally contacting the natives.



# 5. SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

## SEBEX 2

- India has developed the world's most powerful non-nuclear explosive called "SEBEX 2".
- This explosive is more than 2x more lethal than Trinitrotoluene (TNT).
- It has been successfully tested and certified by the Indian Navy.
- It was developed by Economic Explosives Limited, a subsidiary of Nagpur-based Solar Industries, under the Make in India initiative.
- SEBEX 2 uses High Melting Explosive (HMX) composition.
- This formulation increases the lethality of warheads, aerial bombs, artillery shells and other munitions.
- SEBEX 2 is capable of increasing the lethality of bombs and shells without increasing their weight.
- SEBEX 2, SITBEX 1 and SIMEX 4 showcase India's growing capabilities in military technology.
- Note: The most powerful conventional explosive currently in use in India is used in the warhead of the BrahMos missile.

## SITBEX 1

- SITBEX 1 is a thermobaric explosive known for its extended detonation duration and intense heat generation.
- It is highly effective in destroying enemy bunkers, tunnels and fortified positions.

## Indigenous light tank Zorawar unveiled

- India's indigenous light tank Zorawar was unveiled on 6 July 2024.
- This tank has been developed by the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) in collaboration with Larsen & Toubro (L&T) as the prime integrator.
- This tank is currently powered by a Cummins engine.
- This tank is capable of operating in some of the most challenging environments on Earth, viz., in high altitude areas along the northern border.
- It can be rapidly deployed and transported anywhere in the mountains.
- This tank probably will be handed over to the Army for user trials by August 2025.

- The need for light tanks was felt after the Galwan clash with Chinese troops in eastern Ladakh.
- Indian Army under Project Zorawar has set a target to induct 350 light tanks weighing around 25 tonnes.

## Successful test of Rudram - 1

- This is India's first indigenous Anti-Radiation Missile.
- It is developed by the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) for the Indian Air Force (IAF).
- Rudram - 1 has been integrated with the IAF's Sukhoi-30MKI fighter aircraft, which serve as the launch platform.
- This missile features INS-GPS navigation and a passive homing head for final attack, allowing it to accurately hit targets emitting radiation.
- This accuracy is vital for Suppression of Enemy Air Defenses (SEAD) missions, allowing the destruction of enemy radar and communications sites from long range.

## DRDO successfully flight tests second stage of Ballistic Missile Defence System

- Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) successfully flight tested the Ballistic Missile Defence System Phase - II on July 24, 2024.
- The target missile was launched from LC-IV Dhamra at 1620 hrs, which was a copy of the enemy ballistic missile.
- It was detected by land and sea deployed weapon system radars and the AD interceptor system was activated.
- Stage- II AD Endo-Atmospheric Missile was test fired at Integrated Test Range, Chandipur (Odisha).
- This test demonstrated the capability of the missile to defend against enemy ballistic missiles with a range of 5,000 km. It has demonstrated the indigenous capabilities of the country.
- Stage -II AD Endo-Atmospheric Missile is an indigenously developed two-stage solid propelled ground-launched missile system
- Phase 1 of the Ballistic Missile Defence System, which can intercept ballistic missiles with a range of 2,000 km, has already been deployed.

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**H - 125 manufactured in India will be ready by 2026**

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- Airbus with Indian partner Tata Announced that it will begin building the Final Assembly Line (FAL) for H - 125 helicopters.
- Airbus has so far selected 8 locations for manufacturing units.
- Under this, the first Made-in-India helicopter will be launched in 2026.
- On the final assembly line in India, 10 helicopters will be produced annually. In the future, this number could increase to 20, 30 or even 50.
- Apart from this, the company is also focusing on Maintenance, Repair and Overhaul (MRO) of helicopters.
- To support India's helicopter MRO operations, Airbus and Indamer have entered into a partnership till December 2023 to offer services for Airbus Helicopters in Mumbai, New Delhi and Nagpur.

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**'Triput' Frigate**

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- The first of the two advanced frigates based on technology transfer from Russia for the Indian Navy was launched on 23 July 2024 at Goa Shipyard Limited, Goa.
- "Triput" is named after the powerful arrow.
- It represents the indomitable spirit of the Indian Navy and its ability to strike long and deep.
- It is built by Goa Shipyard Limited (GSL).
- **Note :** India signed a contract for four frigates from Russia in October 2016, two to be built in Russia and two at Goa Shipyard Limited.
- The Triput class frigates are 125 metres long and 15 metres wide, with a displacement of approximately 3,600 tonnes and a maximum speed of 28 knots.

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**Aditya - L1 completed its first halo orbit around the L1 point**

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- India's first solar mission, Aditya - L1 spacecraft, completed its first halo orbit around the Sun-Earth L1 point on 2 July 2024.
- The Aditya - L1 spacecraft in halo orbit takes 178 days to complete one revolution around the L1 point.
- The Aditya- L1 mission is an Indian solar observatory at Lagrangian point L1 which was launched on September 2, 2023, and entered its target halo orbit on January 6, 2024.
- Aditya - L1 spacecraft is a periodic halo orbit located on the continuously moving Sun-Earth line at a distance of about 1.5 million km from

the Earth.

- A halo orbit is a periodic, three-dimensional orbit at L1 involving the Sun, Earth, and a spacecraft.
- This specific halo orbit was chosen to ensure a 5-year mission lifetime, providing a continuous, unobstructed view of the Sun.

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**CHAPEA project**

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- CHAPEA stands for Crew Health and Performance Exploration Analog.
- Recently, four volunteer crew members of the CHAPEA project have come out of the habitat designed to live in a Mars-like environment after living there for 1 year.
- This was the first of three planned simulations to understand the challenges of Mars for space exploration.
- CHAPEA is a series of analog missions that simulate year-round living in an environment similar to the surface of Mars.
- Each mission will include four crew members who will live in Mars Dune Alpha, a separate 1,700 square-foot habitat.
- The 3D printed structure, known as Mars Dune Alpha, is located at the Johnson Space Center in Houston, Texas.

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**World's first dual tower solar thermal power plant**

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- The world's first dual tower solar thermal power plant has been inaugurated in Chaozhou, Gansu province of China.
  - The plant uses an innovative design to significantly improve energy efficiency.
  - The plant consists of two 200 metre-tall towers, each with around 30,000 mirrors around them forming overlapping circles to focus sunlight onto the towers.
  - This dual tower structure is a significant innovation that differentiates this plant from conventional solar thermal stations.
  - Concentrated sunlight heats water inside the towers, producing steam that drives turbines to create electricity.
  - Unlike conventional thermal power plants, this design incorporates molten salt storage, which acts as a thermal battery.
  - The molten salt retains excess heat collected during the day and emits it at night, allowing the plant to generate electricity continuously.
  - The mirrors used in this plant are made of special materials that can achieve a remarkable 94% reflection efficiency.
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- The mirrors are programmed to automatically track the movement of the sun, focusing rays onto the east tower in the morning and adjusting toward the west in the afternoon.

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**Dark Oxygen**

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- Recently scientists have discovered “Dark Oxygen” on the ocean floor.
- It is produced from polymetallic nodules scattered across the ocean floor.
- According to recent research, oxygen is produced from mineral deposits scattered 4,000 meters below the sea surface on the seafloor of the Clarion-Clipperton Zone (CCZ) of the Pacific Ocean.
- In the Clarion-Clipperton Zone, there are coal-like mineral rocks, called polymetallic nodules, which typically contain manganese and iron.
- According to scientists, these nodules produce oxygen without the process of photosynthesis.
- At depths in the ocean, where no sunlight can penetrate, oxygen is produced by “nodules” of the metal.
- This metal splits sea water (H<sub>2</sub>O) into hydrogen and oxygen.

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**Primary Amebic Meningoencephalitis (PAM)**

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- Recently a total of 4 cases of Primary Amoebic Meningoencephalitis (PAM) have been reported in Kerala.
- According to a notification from the state health department, PAM is caused by infection with *Naegleria fowleri*.
- *Naegleria fowleri* is an amoeba that lives in warm freshwater environments such as lakes, ponds, and rivers.
- Under rare circumstances, it can also live in poorly maintained ponds /lakes/ swimming pools.
- It is a unicellular organism and is called brain eating amoeba.
- It can infect the brain and destroy its tissues.
- Cases of infection are rare, but they are life-threatening as 97% of infected people don't survive.
- Infection usually occurs when people go swimming in lakes, ponds or rivers during the summer.
- The amoeba enters the body through the nose and reaches the brain, where it destroys brain tissue and causes inflammation.
- It is not contagious meaning i.e. it does not spread from one person to another.

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**Oropouche virus**

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- The first case of death in the world due to Oropouche virus was registered in Brazil.

- Two women died of Oropouche fever in Brazil.
- Patients suffering from Oropouche fever show symptoms similar to those of dengue.
- Oropouche virus was first detected in 1955 in Trinidad and Tobago.
- Oropouche fever is caused by the Oropouche virus, which is most commonly transmitted by the bite of the *Culicoides paraensis* midge.
- Symptoms of the disease are similar to those of dengue and usually begin between four and eight days after the bite.
- Its symptoms typically include fever, headache, aches, chills, stiff joints, and sometimes nausea and vomiting.
- Its patients recover in about seven days.
- According to WHO, severe cases are rare. As of now there is no specific vaccine or antiviral treatment available for the disease.

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**Chandipura Virus (CHPV)**

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- Recently in Sabarkantha district of Gujarat, 4 children died due to suspected infection of Chandipura virus.
- Chandipura virus is a rare virus and it is a deadly pathogen that causes fever, flu-like symptoms, and acute encephalitis (inflammation of the brain).
- The vector of the disease, CHPV, is a member of the Rhabdoviridae family, which also includes other members, such as the lyssavirus that causes rabies.
- Several species of sandflies such as the phlebotomine sandflies and *Phlebotomus papatasi*, and some mosquito species such as *Aedes aegypti* (which also carries dengue) are known to transmit CHPV.
- CHPV infection is caused by the bite of the insects called sandflies. When infected, flu-like symptoms develop initially.
- Once infected a patient feels high fever (up to 104), diarrhea, body pain and headache. After initial symptoms, this virus can turn into sensorium and encephalitis.
- Other symptoms include difficulty in breathing, bleeding and anemia.
- The infection caused by this virus can reach the central nervous system, causing encephalitis (inflammation of the brain tissue).
- Its infection mainly occurs in children (below 15 years of age).
- The virus was first identified in 1965 from Chandipura village in the Indian state of Maharashtra.
- No vaccine has been made yet to protect against this virus but this disease is being treated considering the symptoms.

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**Nipah Virus**

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- Recently, a 15 year-old boy from Pandikkad in Malappuram district of Kerala died of Nipah virus infection on July 21.
- The World Health Organization describes Nipah virus (NiV) as a zoonotic virus. That is, the virus spreads from animals to humans and can also be spread through contaminated food or direct contact with infected people.
- Fruit bats (Pteropus bat species) are common hosts of the Nipah virus, and humans can become infected by accidentally eating fruit contaminated by bats.
- The case fatality rate for infection is estimated to be 40% to 75%.
- Nipah virus can spread to humans from animals (such as bats or pigs) or contaminated foods, and can also spread directly from human to human.
- There is no treatment or vaccine available for people or animals infected with this virus.
- The Nipah virus was first identified in 1999 during an outbreak among pig farmers in Malaysia.

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**R21/Matrix-M vaccine**

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- R21 is a malaria vaccine (world's second) developed by the combined efforts of Serum Institute of India & Oxford University.
- Ivory Coast is the first country in the world to use this vaccine.
- World Health Organization in 2023 The use of this vaccine was recommended for children under five years of age in Africa.
- Mosquirix (Mosquirix or RTS,S/AS01 or RTS.S) is the world's first malaria vaccine.
- It was developed by GSK Plc and its partners.
- A booster is developed by Novavax Inc to help increase the immune response to Malaria.

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**Ladakh : Magnetofossils discovered in rock varnish layers**

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- Researchers have discovered magnetofossils in rock varnish layers in Ladakh.
- Known as the “ Cold Desert of India ”, Ladakh experiences extreme climatic conditions such as high ultraviolet radiation, significant temperature variations, and limited water availability, making it a suitable terrestrial analog for the study of Mars.

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**Magnetofossils**

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- Magnetofossils are the fossilized remains of magnetic particles produced by magnetotactic bacteria.
- Magnetotactic bacteria are mostly prokaryotic organisms that orient themselves along the Earth's magnetic field.

- These organisms follow the magnetic field and reach the places where the amount of oxygen is highest.

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**Exercise MAITREE 2024**

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- This is a joint military exercise between India and Thailand Is.
- It was held from 1 to 15 July at Fort Vachira Prakan in Tak Province, Thailand.
- Its aim is to promote military cooperation between India and Thailand.
- The previous edition of the same exercise was held in September 2019 at Umroi, Meghalaya.

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**Nomadic Elephant Exercise 2024**

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- This is an India-Mongolia joint military exercise.
- Its 16th edition was organized in Umroi (Meghalaya) from 03 to 16 July 2024.
- It is an annual training programme held between India and Mongolia.
- It aims to enhance joint military capabilities of both sides to conduct counter-terrorism operations.

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**‘Interaction- 2024’**

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- This is the first joint counter-terrorism exercise of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO).
- It focused on live exercises and special operations such as “elimination of terrorist groups”.
- It was organized in Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region of China.
- The SCO has emerged as one of the largest inter-regional international organisations focused on deepening security cooperation with its Regional Anti-Terrorism Structure (RATS).

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**Pitch Black Exercise 2024**

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- It is a biennial, multinational exercise.
- This exercise was conducted in Darwin (Australia) from 12 July to 02 August. Went.
- From India's side the Indian Air Force participated in it.
- The exercise focuses on large force deployment warfare with the aim to strengthen international cooperation and facilitate experience building.

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**Khan Quest Exercise 2024**

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- It is a multinational military exercise
- A team of the Indian Army is participating in this.
- The exercise is being conducted from 27 July to 9 August 2024 in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia.
- The exercise first started in the year 2003 as a bilateral event between the USA and Mongolian Armed Forces.
- Subsequently, from the year 2006, this exercise turned into a multinational peacekeeping exercise.





## 6. SPORTS

### Paris Olympics 2024

- Paris Olympics 2024 is being organised from 26 July to 11 August.
- The 2024 Summer Olympics is the 33rd edition of the Olympic Games.
- The mascot of Paris Olympics 2024 is the “ Phrygian Cap “.
- India’s PV Sindhu (Badminton) and Achanta Sharath Kamal (Table Tennis) led the Indian contingent as the flag bearers at the opening ceremony of Paris Olympics 2024.
- The Indian contingent at the Paris 2024 Olympics comprises 117 athletes, including 70 men and 47 women, across 16 sporting disciplines.
- Paris has hosted the Summer Olympics in 1900 and 1924
- Paris became the second city after London to host the Summer Olympics three times.
- Indian shooter Manu Bhaker won the bronze medal in the women’s 10 meter air pistol event at the Paris Olympics and she became the first Indian woman to win an Olympic medal in shooting.
- Apart from this, Manu Bhaker and Sarabjot Singh won the bronze medal in mixed 10 meter air pistol.
- Manu Bhaker became the first Indian athlete since independence to win two medals in the same Summer Olympic Games.
- At the 1900 Summer Olympics, British-Indian athlete Norman Pritchard won silver medals in both the men’s 200 metres and 200 metres hurdles.
- After PV Sindhu, Manu Bhaker became the second Indian female athlete to win an Olympic medal.
- Wrestler Sushil Kumar is the only male athlete to win 2 medals at the Olympic Games.
- The first modern Olympic Games were held in April 1896 in Athens, Greece, the birthplace of the ancient Olympics.
- India sent its first official contingent to the 1920 Antwerp Olympic Games.
- Wrestler KD Jadhav created history by winning India’s first individual Olympic medal, a bronze, at the Helsinki 1952 Olympics.
- Shooter Abhinav Bindra won the first individual gold medal for the country in the 10 metre air rifle event at the Beijing 2008 Olympics.
- In the 2020 Tokyo Olympics 2020 India won a total of 7 medals.

### China win first gold medal of Paris Olympics

- China won the first gold medal in the 2024 Paris Olympics.
- China won the gold medal in the 10m air rifle mixed team event.
- Huang Yuting and Sheng Lihao defeated the South Korean pair of Keum Ji-hyeon and Park Ha-jun 16-12.

### Wimbledon Championships 2024:

- The Wimbledon 2024 Tennis Championships was played in London from 24 June to 14 July.

Category	Winner	Runner - up
<b>Men's Singles</b>	Carlos Alcaraz (Spain)	Novak Djokovic (Serbia)
<b>Women's Singles</b>	Barbora Krejčíková (Czech Republic)	Jasmine Paolini (Italy)
<b>Men's Doubles</b>	Harri Heliövaara (Finland) and Harry Patton (Britain)	Max Purcell and Jordan Thompson (both Australian)
<b>Women's Doubles</b>	Taylor Townsend (USA) and Katerina Siniakova (Czech Republic)	Gabriela Dabrowski (Canada) and Erin Routliffe (New Zealand)
<b>Mixed Doubles</b>	Jan Zielinski (Poland) Hsieh Su-wei (Taiwan)	Santiago Gonzalez and Giuliana Olmos (both Mexican)

- Alcaraz has played four Grand Slam finals so far. He is the youngest player to win Grand Slam trophies on all three types of courts - grass, clay and hard courts.

- Alcaraz has won the French Open in 2024, the US Open in 2022 and the Wimbledon title in 2023 and 2024.
- Novak Djokovic holds the record for winning the most Grand Slam singles titles. (24 Grand Slam singles titles)
- Barbora Krejčíková of the Czech Republic won her second Grand Slam singles title. Krejčíková had earlier won the 2021 French Open women's singles title

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**Wimbledon**

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- It is the oldest tennis tournament in the world.
- Wimbledon was first held in 1877.
- It is one of the four Grand Slam tennis tournaments. The other Grand Slams are the Australian Open, the French Open, and the US Open.
- It is the only competition still played on the game's original surface, grass.

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**Spain became the first country to win the Euro Cup 4 times**

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Spain won the Euro Cup 2024 football title for a record fourth time. Spain defeated England 2-1 in the final on 14 July in Berlin.

- This was the 17th edition of the Euro Cup
- Also, the Spain men's football team (also known as La Roja) has become the team that has won the Euro Cup title the most number of times.

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**Euro Cup**

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- The UEFA European Football Championship is known as the Euro Cup.
- It is organised by the European football governing body, the Union of European Football Associations (UEFA).

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**Argentina won the Copa America title for the 16th time**

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Argentina has won the Copa America title Football 2024 for a record 16th time by beating Colombia 1-0 in Miami, USA. on 15 July 2024

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**Copa America**

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- The Copa America is the world's oldest international football competition
- It was started in 1916 by the South American football governing body.
- Currently, countries from South America, North America, Central America and the Caribbean participate in the competition.
- Argentina is the most successful team in the history of the Copa América competition.

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**Dhruv Sitwala wins third Asian Billiards title**

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- Dhruv Sitwala defeated Pankaj Advani to win the Asian Men's Billiards Championship 2024.
- It was organized from 27 June to 5 July 2024 in Riyadh, the capital of Saudi Arabia.

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**Sabeera Haris wins bronze medal at Shotgun Junior World Cup**

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- India's Sabeera Haris has won the bronze medal in the women's trap event at the ISSF Junior World Cup in Porpetto, Italy.
- Carrie Garrison of America won the gold medal by hitting 40 out of 50 targets.
- Italy's Sofia Gori won the silver medal by hitting 39 of the full quota of 50 targets.

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**Khelo India Rising Talent Identification (KIRTI) Initiative second phase of**

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- The second phase of Khelo India Rising Talent Identification (KIRTI) initiative was inaugurated on 19 July 2024.
- KIRTI aims to create an integrated talent identification system that is based on global best practices and modern ICT tools.
- This initiative will streamline talent identification at the grassroots level and bring it on a single platform.
- It aims to conduct 20 lakh assessments in 2024-2025.
- Earlier, the first phase of KIRTI was launched in Chandigarh on March 12, 2024.
- Aspiring players were evaluated across 11 sports. These sports were archery, athletics, badminton, boxing, football, hockey, kabaddi, kho-kho, volleyball, weightlifting and wrestling.

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**Shaurya Bawa won bronze medal at World Junior Squash Championship 2024**

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- Shaurya Bawa became the second Indian male squash player to win a medal at the Junior World Championships.
- Shaurya Bawa in the semi-finals lost to Egypt's Mohamed Zakaria in straight games (11-5, 11-5, 11-9) in 41 minutes.

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**Yuki Bhambri won the doubles title of Swiss Open 2024.**

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- Yuki Bhambri and his French partner Albano Olivetti won the doubles title of Swiss Open 2024.
  - They defeated France's Fabrice Martin and Ugo Humbert 3-6, 6-3, and 10-6 in the final.
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- This is the second ATP Tour title of the year for Yuki Bhambri and his French partner Albano Olivetti.
- Earlier, they defeated German pair Andreas Mies and Jan-Lennard Struff to win the Bavarian International doubles title.
- Bhambri won his first title on the ATP Tour in 2023 at the Mallorca Championships in Spain partnering Lloyd Harris.
- The 56th edition of the Swiss Open was held at the Roy Emerson Arena in Gstaad, Switzerland.

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**Leander Paes and Vijay Amritraj inducted into Tennis Hall of Fame**

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- Leander Paes and Vijay Amritraj on 21st July Inducted into the International Hall of Fame
- Both these players have become the first Asians to be inducted into the Hall of Fame from the sport of tennis.
- Leander Paes has won men's singles bronze at the 1996 Atlanta Olympic Games, eight men's doubles and 10 mixed doubles Grand Slam titles, as well as Davis Cup titles.
- Highest career ranking - 1 in world doubles rankings and won 54 doubles titles.
- Vijay Amritraj reached the men's singles quarterfinal at Wimbledon and US Open twice and also led India to the Davis Cup final twice in 1974 and 1987.
- He was inducted into the Hall of Fame in the Contributor Category along with Richard Evans.
- With the induction of these three, the Hall of Fame now has 267 legends from 28 countries.

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**Rohan Bopanna announces retirement**

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- Rohan Bopanna announces retirement from Indian tennis after exit from Paris Olympics 2024.
- Rohan Bopanna will continue to play for India in ATP Tour events.
- In 2024, Rohan Bopanna became the oldest player to win a Grand Slam championship in the Open Era of tennis.
- In 2017 he won the mixed doubles title at the French Open.

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**James Anderson retires from international cricket**

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- England cricketer James Anderson retired from international cricket on 12 July 2024.
- He played his first international match in the 2002–03 series against Australia
- James Anderson is the second highest Test match player after Sachin Tendulkar of India.
- Anderson has taken 704 wickets in his 188 Test matches.
- He is the third highest wicket - taker in Test cricket after Sri Lanka's Muralitharan (800 wickets) and Australia's Shane Warne (708).



## 9. AWARDS AND HONOURS

### **Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi conferred with Russia's highest national award**

- President of Russia Vladimir Putin conferred "Order of St. Andrew the Apostle" Russia's highest national award on Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi.
- This award is given for the contribution of Prime Minister Modi in promoting India-Russia relations and it was announced in 2019.
- The "Order of St. Andrew the Apostle" was established 300 years ago.
- Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi is the first Indian leader to be awarded this award.

### **Abhinav Bindra honoured with Olympic Order**

- Abhinav Bindra has been awarded the Olympic Order for his outstanding contribution to the Olympic movement.
- Abhinav Bindra is the first Indian to win an individual gold medal at the Olympics.
- Bindra is the first Indian to receive this prestigious award.

### **Olympic Order**

- The Olympic Order is the highest award presented by the International Olympic Committee (IOC).
- Established in 1975, the award is presented to individuals who have rendered distinguished service to the Olympic Movement.
- Abhinav Bindra won the gold medal in the men's 10 metre air rifle event at the 2008 Beijing Olympics.

### **Roshni Nadar Malhotra awarded France's highest civilian honour**

- Roshni Nadar Malhotra has been awarded the "Chevalier de la Légion d'Honneur" (Knight of the Legion of Honour) award.
- On behalf of the President of the French Republic, his Excellency Mr. Thierry Mathou, Ambassador of France to India, presented the award to Roshni Nadar Malhotra in Delhi.
- Roshni Nadar Malhotra is the Chairperson of HCL Tech which is an IT services company.
- The award is given to those who have rendered exceptional service to France.

### **COSPAR Harrie Massey Prize 2024**

- Indian astrophysicist Prahlad Chandra Agarwal has been awarded the COSPAR Harrie Massey Prize 2024.
- Prahlad Chandra has been associated with major Indian space programmes, including the AstroSat space telescope and the Chandrayaan 1 lunar mission.
- Mr Aggarwal was given this award on July 15, 2024 in Busan, South Korea.
- He received a medal and a citation along with a minor planet which is named after him, "20064 Prahlad Agrawal".
- Mr. Agarwal was the principal investigator of India's first multi-wavelength space telescope Astrosat, launched by the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) on September 28, 2015.

### **Anil Bhardwaj awarded with Vikram Sarabhai Medal**

- Anil Bhardwaj was awarded the Vikram Sarabhai Medal, which honours outstanding space science research in developing countries.
- This medal has been jointly instituted by COSPAR and ISRO.
- Bhardwaj is the director of the Ahmedabad-based Physical Research Laboratory.
- The award consists of a medal and a citation, as well as naming a minor planet after the scientist.

### **Gulbenkian Prize for Humanity 2024**

- Andhra Pradesh Community Managed Natural Farming (APCNF) has won the Gulbenkian Prize for Humanity 2024.
- APCNF is an initiative of the State Government started 7 years ago through Rythu Sadhikara Sanstha (RySS).
- It is an award established by the Portugal-based Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation (CGF).
- It is presented annually to individuals and organizations contributing to global food security, climate resilience, and ecosystem conservation.
- APCNF shares this year's one million euro prize money with two others—renowned soil scientist Rattan Lal and Egypt-based SEKEM.

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**Gandhi Mandela Award 2020**

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- Nobel Peace Prize winner Rigoberta Menchú Tum was awarded the Gandhi Mandela Prize 2020 on July 18, 2024.
- The Gandhi Mandela Award for the year 2019 was given to His Holiness the Dalai Lama.
- Rigoberta Menchú Tum, Guatemalan human rights activist, has dedicated her life to promoting indigenous rights.
- Rigoberta Menchu Tum was awarded the Princess of Asturias Award in 1998 and the Nobel Peace Prize in 1992.
- The Gandhi Mandela foundation launched the Gandhi Mandela Award to recognise people who uphold the values of both Mandela and Gandhi.

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**Nagaland declared Best State in Horticulture**

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- Nagaland was declared the best state in horticulture at the 15th Agriculture Leadership Conference 2024 held in New Delhi.
- The award was given for the exceptional work done by Nagaland in implementing innovative policies and strategies for the development of horticulture.
- Nagaland has successfully obtained GI registration for three horticultural crops. These crops are Naga Mircha, Naga Tree Tomato and Naga Sweet Cucumber.
- The Agriculture Leadership Awards were instituted in 2008.
- These awards honour the leadership and extraordinary contributions made by individuals and groups towards the advancement of Indian agriculture and bringing about rural prosperity.

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**Maharashtra gets Best Agricultural State Award- 2024**

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- Maharashtra has been selected for the Best Agricultural State Award – 2024.

- This was announced on July 5 by the 15th Agriculture Leadership Awards Committee headed by Justice P Sathasivam, former Chief Justice of India and former Governor of Kerala.
- Maharashtra has been selected for the Best Agricultural State Award for the year 2024 for adopting new policies and developmental initiatives for agriculture and rural prosperity
- The Maharashtra government has recently launched the country's largest bamboo mission covering 21 lakh hectares of area in the agricultural sector.
- The Maharashtra government had recently announced plans to set up a green belt spanning 1.20 lakh acres in Nandurbar district with the support of the Centre.
- The Maharashtra Government has also set a target to increase irrigation potential in about 17 lakh hectares through the implementation of 123 projects.
- Maharashtra is the state with the largest economy in India. The state's share in the country's GDP is 12.92%.

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**K. Chockalingam awarded "Hans von Hentig Award"**

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- Renowned Indian professor of victimology K. Chockalingam has been selected for the Hans von Hentig Award by the World Society of Victimology.
- It is the highest award given by the Society and is given in memory of Hans von Hentig, a renowned pioneer of victimology.
- The award is given once every 3 years to a person who has made a significant contribution to the field of victimology.
- Dr. Chockalingam has received several awards for his studies in criminology and victimology.
- Dr. Chockalingam is Professor Emeritus in Victimology at RV University in Bengaluru.



## 8. PERSON IN NEWS

### **New Governor in 9 states and new LG in Puducherry**

President Draupadi Murmu appointed new governors in 9 states and new LG of Puducherry on 28 July 2024.

#### **Newly appointed governor and state**

1. Jishnu Dev Verma – Telangana
2. Om Prakash Mathur – Sikkim
3. Santosh Kumar Gangwar - Jharkhand
4. Ramen Deka – Chhattisgarh
5. CH Vijayshankar – Meghalaya
6. Haribhau Kisanrao Bagde – Rajasthan
7. C.P. Radhakrishnan – Maharashtra (He was earlier the Governor of Jharkhand with additional charge of Telangana)
8. Gulab Chand Kataria – Governor of Punjab and appointed as Administrator of the Union Territory of Chandigarh (he was earlier Governor of Assam)
9. Laxman Prasad Acharya - Governor of Assam and additional charge of Governor of Manipur (he was earlier Governor of Sikkim)
10. K. Kailasanathan - Lieutenant Governor of Puducherry

#### **Constitutional provisions:**

- Article 153 provides for a Governor for each state in India.
- The Governor is the head of the state executive.
- Governors are appointed by the President on the advice of the Union Council of Ministers.

### **Hemant Soren**

- Jharkhand Mukti Morcha Working President Hemant Soren took oath as the Chief Minister of Jharkhand.
- Earlier, Chief Minister Champai Soren submitted his resignation to Governor CP Radhakrishnan on July 3.
- Hemant Soren was arrested by the Enforcement Directorate on January 31 in the land scam money laundering case.

### **Preeti Sudan**

- Preeti Sudan became the chairperson of Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) on 1 August 2024.

- Preeti has been a member of UPSC and Union Health Secretary.
- Her term will last until April 2025, when she turns 65.
- 1983 batch (retired) IAS officer of Andhra Pradesh cadre.
- She replaced Manoj Soni.

### **Union Public Service Commission**

- It is a constitutional body.
- It is mentioned in Articles 315 to 323 of the Constitution.
- It has 1 chairman and a maximum of 10 members.
- Its Chairman and members are appointed by the President of India.
- Their tenure is for a term of 6 years or till attainment of the age of 65 years, whichever is earlier.

### **N. Kotiswar Singh and R. Mahadevan**

- Justice N. Kotiswar Singh (Chief Justice of Jammu and Kashmir High Court) and R. Mahadevan (Acting Chief Justice of the Madras High Court) on July 18 took oath as Judge of the Supreme Court.
- Chief Justice of India DY Chandrachud administered the oath of office to both the judges.
- With the swearing-in of two judges, the number of judges in the Supreme Court has currently increased to 34.
- The appointment of judges in the Supreme Court is made by a 5-member collegium headed by the Chief Justice by the President on the recommendation of the Is performed.

### **Dr. Soumya Swaminathan**

- Dr. Soumya Swaminathan appointed as Principal Advisor for National Tuberculosis Elimination Programme
- Prof. Swaminathan will provide technical advice on the overall strategy for achieving the programme goals, suggest necessary curriculum improvements, and advise on research strategy.
- She will also help build an expert group comprising top talent globally.

- Prof. Swaminathan was the former chief scientist of the World Health Organization.
- She has also been the Director General of the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR).

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### Gautam Gambhir

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- Gautam Gambhir has been appointed the new head coach of the Indian men's cricket team.
- He has replaced Rahul Dravid.
- He will be holding the post for 3 years.
- Earlier, Gautam Gambhir was a member of the 17th Lok Sabha from 2019 to 2024.
- He was awarded the Arjuna Award in 2008. He received the Padma Shri in 2019.

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### Vinay Mohan Kwatra

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- Vinay Mohan Kwatra has been appointed as the next Ambassador of India to the United States of America.
- He is a 1988 batch officer, who was appointed Foreign Secretary in April 2022.
- He has served as the Ambassador of India to France from August 2017 to February 2020.

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### Nita Ambani

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- Nita Ambani re-elected as member of International Olympic Committee (IOC)
- She was re-elected unanimously at the 142nd IOC Session in Paris.
- Nita Ambani was first inducted into the IOC in 2016 at the Rio de Janeiro Olympic Games.
- Nita Ambani is the first Indian woman to join the IOC.
- She is the founder and chairperson of Reliance Foundation.
- Reliance Foundation promotes various sports in India, especially in remote areas.

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### Jiya Rai

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- Jiya Rai (16 years) has become the world's youngest and fastest female paraswimmer to successfully cross the English Channel.
- Jiya covered a distance of 34 kilometres in 17 hours and 25 minutes.
- She competes internationally as a para swimmer.
- She is a recipient of the Pradhan Mantri Rashtriya Bal Puraskar 2022, the highest award for civilians below the age of 18.
- The English Channel is an arm of the Atlantic Ocean. It separates southern England from northern France.

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### K.P. Sharma Oli

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- KP Sharma Oli took oath as the Prime Minister of Nepal on July 15, 2024.
- Nepal President Ram Chandra Paudel appointed the new Prime Minister from a coalition between the Communist Party of Nepal-Unified Marxist Leninist (CPN-UML) and the Nepali Congress (NC).
- Until the next general elections in Nepal in 2027, K.P. Sharma Oli and Congress President Sher Bahadur Deuba will serve as Prime Minister for 18 months on a rotating basis.
- He replaced Pushpa Kamal Dahal Prachanda.

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### Keir Starmer

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- Keir Starmer has been elected the new Prime Minister of the United Kingdom.
- He was appointed as the new Prime Minister of the United Kingdom by King Charles III, the monarch of the United Kingdom, at Buckingham Palace on 5 July 2024. Starmer is the 58th Prime Minister of the United Kingdom.
- Keir Starmer's Labour Party won a landslide victory in the parliamentary elections in the United Kingdom on 4 July 2024.
- Keir Starmer replaced Conservative Party leader Rishi Sunak
- The United Kingdom Parliament consists of two houses:
  - House of Lords (Upper House)
  - House of Commons (Lower house)
- The House of Commons is a popularly elected house with 650 seats.
- In this election, the Labour Party won 412 seats while the ruling Conservative Party got only 119 seats.

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### United Kingdom

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- The United Kingdom is a sovereign country that includes England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.
- The United Kingdom came into existence in 1801 when Northern Ireland joined the Kingdom of the Great United Kingdom.
- The monarch of the United Kingdom is the head of state, while the prime minister is the head of government.

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### Masoud Pezeshkian

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- Reformist leader Masoud Pezeshkian was elected the 9th President of Iran.
- He defeated radical leader Saeed Jalili.
- Voting for the presidential election in Iran was held on 28 June 2024 in which there were four

candidates.

- In this election, no candidate received the required majority of votes. Masoud Pezeshkian got approximately 42.5 percent of the votes and Jalili got 38.7 percent of the votes.
- The necessary run-off presidential election was held on 5 July 2024 to elect the president. This time Pezeshkian got 53.7 percent of the vote and Jalili got 44.3 percent.
- 19 May 2024, the then President of Iran Ibrahim Raisi died in a helicopter crash
- Masoud Pezeshkian is a heart surgeon by profession. He is known as an anti-hijab and liberal leader.

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### Antonio Costa

- Former Portuguese Prime Minister Antonio Costa has been elected the new President of the European Council of the European Union.
- He will replace current President Charles Michel of Belgium and will take office on October 1, 2024.

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### European Council of the European Union

- The European Council is the apex body of the 27- member European Union.
- It sets the political agenda of the European Union.
- The President of the European Council is elected by voting by the 27 member states of the European Union.
- The President of the European Council can be elected a maximum of two times for a term of 2.5 years.
- The President of the European Council also works to promote cohesion and consensus within the European Council.
- The president represents the 27 member European Union at international summits.

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### European Union

- **Members:** 27 countries located mainly in Europe
- It came into existence through the Maastricht Treaty.
- The Maastricht Treaty came into force on 1 November 1993.

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### Kamala Harris

- Kamala Harris officially announced her candidacy for the US presidential election on behalf of the Democratic Party.
- Kamala Harris is the first female Vice President of the United States.
- She is currently a Senator from California and a leader of Indian-African origin.

- Former President Donald Trump is the Republican Party's candidate.
- The President and Vice President of the United States are elected indirectly through the Electoral College for a term of four years.

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### Paul Kagame

- Paul Kagame has been elected President of Rwanda for the fourth time.
- Rwandan President Paul Kagame received 99.15% of the vote.
- Democratic Green Party candidate Frank Habineza received just 0.53% of the vote.
- Kagame won elections in 2003, 2010 and 2017 with over 93% of the vote.

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### Roberta Metsola

- Roberta Metsola was re-elected President of the European Parliament on 16 July.
- Metsola is a Maltese legislator who would become the first woman in 20 years to lead the EU Assembly in 2022.
- Since the inception of the EU in 1979, she's the second president after Germany's Martin Schulz to be re-elected.

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### Ursula von der Leyen

- Germany's Ursula von der Leyen becomes President of the European Commission for the second time.
- She received 401 votes in the 720 seat chamber of the European Parliament.
- She pledged to continue the European Green Deal, a key policy of her first term.
- The European Green Deal aims to make Europe the first climate-neutral continent by 2050.

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### Kristen Michel

- Recently Kristen Michel was approved by the Parliament as the Prime Minister of Estonia.
- Kristen Michel replaced Kaja Kallas.
- Michel, like Kallas, belongs to the liberal Reform Party.
- Estonia is a country in Northern Europe. It is bordered by the Baltic Sea and the Gulf of Finland. Tallinn is its capital.

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### Nicolás Maduro

- Nicolás Maduro was declared the winner of Venezuela's presidential election on July 28.
  - Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro won a third term with 51% of the vote.
  - Opposition candidate Edmundo González received 44% of the vote.
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- Venezuela is a country located on the northern coast of South America.
- Its capital is Caracas. The currency of Venezuela is Venezuelan Bolivar.

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### **Kamala Pujari**

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- Renowned agriculturalist Padma Shri Kamala Pujari passed away in Cuttack at the age of 74.
- Kamala Pujari was born in Patraput village in Koraput district of Odisha.
- In 2019 for her significant contribution in the field of agriculture was honoured with the prestigious Padma Shri award.
- He received worldwide appreciation for his contribution to organic farming and preservation of indigenous rice varieties.

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### **Ismail Haniyeh**

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- Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh was assassinated on 31 July in Iran.
- Haniyeh attended the swearing-in ceremony of Iran's new President Masoud Pezeshkian.
- Haniyeh served as the face of the Palestinian organization in foreign affairs.
- In 2017, Haniyeh was elected as head of the Hamas Political Bureau, replacing Khaled Meshaal.

- An attack occurred in Israel on 7 October 2023 in which 1,195 people lost their lives, responsibility for which was claimed by Hamas.

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### **Nguyễn Phú Trọng**

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- Recently, Vietnam's most powerful leader and former President Nguyễn Phú Trọng passed away.
- He was the President of Vietnam from 2018 to 2020 and at the foreign policy level he is known for bamboo diplomacy.
- Under this diplomacy, he maintained better relations with both China and America.
- Thus he advocated having "more friends, fewer enemies" while remaining flexible like a bamboo.
- Under this, the country's approach to strengthening relations with major powers and increasing foreign investment amid growing geopolitical competition was described as similar to bamboo which bends in the wind without breaking.



## 9. PLACE IN NEWS

### **Moidam in Assam becomes India's 43rd UNESCO heritage site**

- Moidam of Assam has been included in the cultural category of UNESCO World Heritage Site list.
- It is the 43rd site in India to be included in the UNESCO World Heritage Site list.
- The decision to include Moidam was taken unanimously in the meeting of the World Heritage Committee held in New Delhi.
- Moidam is a hollow cellar made of brick and stone which is around 700 years old.
- These contain the remains of Tai-Ahom kings and members of royal families.
- Moidams is the third heritage site and the first cultural site in the Northeast to be included in the World Heritage List.

- The other two are Kaziranga and Manas which were inscribed under the natural heritage category.
- UNESCO classifies heritage into cultural, natural and mixed categories.
- Italy has the highest number of sites on UNESCO's World Heritage List at 59, followed by China with 57 sites. India is at the sixth place with 43 sites.
- In 1983, the Ajanta Caves, Ellora Caves, the Taj Mahal in Agra and the Agra Fort were the first Indian sites to be added to the UNESCO list.

### **UNESCO World Heritage Sites in India**

- UNESCO has given the status of World Heritage Site to 43 places, cities, buildings, caves etc. in India. These include 35 cultural, 7 natural and 1 mixed heritage. The heritage sites of India included in UNESCO are as follows:

S.No.	WORLD HERITAGE SITE	YEAR	RELATED STATES
1.	Agra Fort	1983	Uttar Pradesh
2.	Ajanta Caves	1983	Maharashtra
3.	Ellora Caves	1983	Maharashtra
4.	The Taj Mahal	1983	Uttar Pradesh
5.	Monuments of Mahabalipuram	1984	Tamil Nadu
6.	Sun Temple	1984	Odisha
7.	Manas Wildlife Sanctuary	1985	Assam
8.	Kaziranga National Park	1985	Assam
9.	Keoladeo National Park	1985	Rajasthan
10.	Churches of Goa	1986	Goa
11.	Fatehpur Sikri	1986	Uttar Pradesh
12.	Monuments of Hampi	1986	Karnataka
13.	Temples of Khajuraho	1986	Madhya Pradesh
14.	Elephanta Caves	1987	Maharashtra
15.	Great Chola Temple	1987/2004	Tamil Nadu
16.	Monuments of Pattadakal	1987	Karnataka
17.	Sundarbans National Park	1987	West Bengal
18.	Nanda Devi National Park and Valley of Flowers	1988/2005	Uttarakhand
19.	Sanchi Stupa	1989	Madhya Pradesh
20.	Humayun's Tomb	1993	Delhi
21.	Qutub Minar	1993	Delhi

S.No.	WORLD HERITAGE SITE	YEAR	RELATED STATES
22.	Mountain Railways of India (Darjeeling/ Nilgiri/Shimla)	1999/2005/2008	West Bengal/ Tamil Nadu/ Himachal Pradesh
23.	Mahabodhi Temple	2002	Bihar
24.	Bhimbetka Caves	2003	Madhya Pradesh
25.	Champaner – Pavagadh Park	2004	Gujarat
26.	Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Terminus	2004	Maharashtra
27.	Red Fort	2007	Delhi
28.	Jantar Mantar	2010	Rajasthan
29.	Western Ghats	2012	Gujarat, Maharashtra, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Kerala
30.	Hill Forts of Rajasthan	2013	Rajasthan
31.	Rani ki Vav	2014	Gujarat
32.	Great Himalayan National Park	2014	Himachal Pradesh
33.	Nalanda	2016	Bihar
34.	Kanchenjunga National Park	2016	Sikkim
35.	The architectural works of Le Corbusier	2016	Chandigarh
36.	Ahmedabad City	2017	Gujarat
37.	Victorian Gothic and Art Deco	2018	Maharashtra
38.	Jaipur	2019	Rajasthan
39.	Kakatiya Rudreshwara Temple	2021	Telangana
40.	Dholavira	2021	Gujarat
41.	Shantiniketan	2023	West Bengal
42.	Hoysala Group of Temples	2023	Karnataka
43.	Moidam	2024	Assam

### Provisions in the Indian Constitution

According to Article 51 of the Indian Constitution, 'It is the duty of every citizen to respect and preserve our rich mixed cultural heritage'.

### UNESCO

- **UNESCO** : United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
- It is a constituent body of the United Nations. Its function is to promote international peace through education, natural and social sciences, culture and communication.
- **Formation** : On 4 November 1946.
- **Headquarters** : Paris (France)
- **Current President** : André Azoulay.

### Mahabodhi Temple (Bodh Gaya): Evidence of presence of 'Vast architectural treasures'

- Recently in the Mahabodhi Temple Complex in

Bodh Gaya, Bihar evidence of the presence of "immense architectural wealth" in and around the site was found.

- This inspection was done by Bihar Heritage Development Society (BHDS), a branch of the Department of Art, Culture and Youth, in collaboration with Cardiff University, United Kingdom.
- The Mahabodhi Temple is to the west of the Phalgu River, and the Sujata Stupa and several other archaeological remains are located to the east of the river.
- The monuments and other archaeological remains located east of the river are considered independent of the Mahabodhi Temple.
- According to the latest discovery, both the temple and Sujata Stupa were on the same river bank in the past along with other archaeological remains.

**Mahabodhi Temple Complex**

- The Mahabodhi Temple Complex is a UNESCO World Heritage Site.
- It is one of the four holy places related to the life of Lord Gautam Buddha.
- Bodh Gaya Lord Buddha attained enlightenment here.
- It was built by Emperor Ashoka in the 3rd century BCE, and the present temple dates from the 5th or 6th century.
- It is one of the oldest Buddhist temples built entirely of bricks.

**Gevra and Kusunda coal mines : Included in the 10 largest coal mines in the world**

- Gevra and Kusunda coal mines of Chhattisgarh-based Coal India subsidiary South Eastern Coalfields Limited (SECL) have secured second and fourth positions in the list of 10 largest coal mines of the world released by World Atlas.
- Both these mines are located in Korba district of Chhattisgarh state.
- These mines produce more than 100 million tonnes of coal annually, which is about 10% of India's total coal production.

**Faridabad : Asia's first pre-clinical network facility related to health research**

- Recently, Asia's first health research related "Pre-clinical Network Facility" has been launched at the Translational Health Science and Technology Institute (THSTI), Faridabad under the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations (CEPI).
- This facility is the 9th network laboratory in the world and the first such laboratory in Asia.
- The Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations (CEPI) has developed BRIC-THSTI as a pre-clinical network laboratory based on its capability to handle BSL3 pathogens.
- Apart from this, a Genetically Defined Human Associated Microbial Culture Collection (Ge-HuMic) facility was also inaugurated.
- It will act as a repository to make microbial cultures available to research institutes, universities and industries for research and development.

**Rajkot : International Centre for Auditing of Local Governance (iCAL)**

- Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG) Girish Chandra Murmu inaugurated the International Centre for Auditing of Local Governance (iCAL) in Rajkot on 18 July.
- iCAL is the first institute of its kind in the country.
- **Objective :** To set global standards for auditing local governance bodies.
- iCAL will be a collaborative platform for policy makers, administrators and auditors associated with local governments.
- This will enhance the independence of local government auditors to ensure better financial performance assessment, service delivery and data reporting.
- It will also serve as a Centre of Excellence for capacity building of local government auditors.

**Chennai : Centre of Excellence on Classical and Quantum Communications for 6G**

- Recently a Centre of Excellence on " Classical and Quantum Communications for 6G " was inaugurated at IITM Research Park, Chennai.
- It is a sub-centre of Telecom Centre of Excellence (TCoE)- India and will lead the development and deployment of 6G technology.
- The centre will bring together academic and industry experts to collaborate on cutting-edge projects.
- The centre is located at IIT Madras 5G will also facilitate interconnection between test beds.
- Note : Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi released the " India 6G Vision " document related to India's 6G vision on March 23, 2023.

**JN Port (Mumbai) : India's first Integrated Agri-Export Facility**

- India's first Integrated Agri-Export Facility will be set up at Jawaharlal Nehru Port in Mumbai.
- The Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways has approved the project for Development of Export-Import cum Domestic Agro Commodity Based Processing and Storage Facility on PPP Mode.
- This facility will eliminate inefficiencies in logistics, reduce multiple handling and increase the shelf life of agricultural products.
- The facility will help in export of key commodities like non-basmati rice, maize, spices, onion and wheat.
- Jawaharlal Nehru Port is the first major port in the country to be a 100% landlord port with all berths being operated on the Public-Private Partnership model.

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**Humayun's Tomb (Delhi): India's first Sunken Museum**

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- Recently India's first sunken museum was inaugurated at Humayun's Tomb Complex in Delhi West.
- The museum includes Mughal miniature paintings, manuscripts, important architectural elements, coins, contemporary art, astrolabes, stone inscriptions, glassware and textiles.
- Its layout is inspired by medieval Baoli or traditional water tanks, reflecting the legacy of the Mughal emperor Humayun.
- This museum is developed by Aga Khan Trust for Culture in partnership with ASI.
- Note : Humayun's Tomb Complex is a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

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**San Francisco : World's first Hydrogen-Powered Commercial Ferry launched**

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- The world's first commercial passenger ferry powered by 100% hydrogen, MV Sea Change, was launched at the San Francisco Ferry Building on July 19.
- This boat is capable of carrying 75 passengers.
- Unlike current diesel-powered boats that emit pollutants, the hydrogen-powered Sea Change produces only heat and water vapor as byproducts.
- Under the pilot project, this service will be free for six months.
- Sea Change can travel approximately 300 nautical miles and operate for up to 16 hours before requiring refueling.
- Hydrogen fuel cells produce electricity by combining oxygen and hydrogen in an electrochemical reaction.
- The project was funded and managed by Switch Maritime.

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**Gurugram : National Feeder Monitoring System Control Centre inaugurated**

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- National Feeder Monitoring System (NFMS) Control Centre was inaugurated on 25th July at REC Headquarters, Gurugram on the 55th Foundation Day of REC Limited.
- It is a subsidiary company of REC Limited developed by RECPDCL.
- **Objective** : To achieve 24x7 uninterrupted power supply and monitor power quality and reliability at the national level.
- NFMS provides access to real-time power supply, power cuts and detailed information of around 2.5 lakh feeders across the country.

- This system will enable stakeholders to make informed and implementable decisions.
- It is going to enhance efficiency and accountability in the distribution utilities (DISCOMs) and ultimately improve the quality and reliability of power supply to the end consumers.

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**Shinkun La Tunnel : the world's highest tunnel**

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- The construction work of the Shinkun La Tunnel Project was inaugurated by Prime Minister Modi on 26 July on the 25th anniversary of Kargil Vijay Diwas.
- It is located on the Nimu-Padam-Darcha road at an altitude of about 15,800 ft.
- Under this, a 4.1 kilometre long twin-tube tunnel will be constructed.
- This tunnel will be constructed by the Border Roads Organisation (BRO).
- It will provide all-weather connectivity between Himachal Pradesh and the Union Territory of Ladakh
- This tunnel will provide all-weather connectivity between Western Ladakh and Zaskar Valley.
- When this tunnel is completed, it will be the highest tunnel in the world. Currently, China's Meila Tunnel is at a height of 15,590 feet.
- It will prove helpful in dealing with the challenges on the China border.
- This will make it easier to deliver logistics and weapons to the army at the border.

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**Prakasam (Andhra Pradesh): World's oldest known ostrich nest discovered**

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- 41,000 year-old ostrich nest in Prakasam, Andhra Pradesh Is.
- This nest is 9-10 feet wide, and at one point it contained 9-11 eggs.
- This unprecedented discovery sheds light on the life and extinction of ancient ostriches.

**Ostrich**

- Ostrich (*Struthio camelus*) is a native species of Africa and this bird cannot fly.
- The ostrich is known as the " Camel Bird " because of its long neck.
- Ostriches can tolerate high temperatures and live without water for long periods of time.
- The ostrich, found in the hot savannas and open forests of Africa, is the largest bird in the world.



# 10. IMPORTANT FACTS

## “Republic Pavilion” and “Ashoka Pavilion”

- The iconic Darbar Hall of Rashtrapati Bhavan has been renamed as Ganatantra Mandap.
- Traditionally it is used for important ceremonies and celebrations such as the presentation of National Awards.
- The Ashoka Hall, designed as a ballroom in Rashtrapati Bhavan, will now be known as the Ashoka Mandap.
- The recent change in name was made to align with India’s rich cultural heritage.

## 46th World Heritage Committee Session

- The Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi inaugurated the 46th Session of the World Heritage Committee on 21 July 2024 at Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi.
- The World Heritage Committee meeting was held for the first time in India.
- The World Heritage Committee meets annually.
- The Committee manages all matters relating to World Heritage and decides on the sites to be included in the UNESCO World Heritage List.

## World Audio Visual Entertainment Summit (WAVES)

- It will be organized in Goa from 20 to 24 November, 2024.
- WAVES will prove to be a significant milestone in the growth of India’s entertainment sector.
- WAVES is a leading platform for discussion, business collaboration and innovation in the Media and Entertainment (M&E) sector.

## ‘Ladka Bhau’ Job Training and Stipend Scheme

- This scheme is launched by the Maharashtra government for the youth in the state.
- It was started in Pandharpur of Solapur district of Maharashtra.
- Under this scheme, candidates who have passed 12th standard can apply. An employable person will get Rs 6,000, diploma holders will get Rs 8,000 and those with a graduate degree will get Rs 10,000 per month.
- The eligible person will get this stipend from the government during his training in the industry.

- Earlier, the Chief Minister Majhi Ladki Behan Scheme was announced in the state budget.
- Under this scheme, provision of financial assistance of Rs. 1,500 per month was made to all women between the age of 21 to 60 years.
- For eligibility, annual family income of the beneficiaries should be limited to Rs 2.5 lakh.

## Madhya Pradesh became the best performing state under PM Swanidhi Yojana

- Madhya Pradesh came first in the best performing state category in the PM Swanidhi Scheme.
- This scheme launched a micro-credit scheme for street vendors in 2020
- There is a provision for providing collateral-free loans up to Rs 50,000.
- In the category of Best Performing Urban Local Body (ULB) – Mega and Million Plus Cities with Loans, the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) secured the first position.
- Apart from this, the National Urban Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NULM) awards were announced, in which Kerala ranked first in the Systematic Progressive Analytics Real Time Ranking (SPARK) category.
- Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan stood second and third respectively in this category.

## MeDevIS Platform

- The World Health Organisation (WHO) has launched an online platform called MeDevIS (Medical Devices Information System),
- It is the first global open access clearinghouse for information on medical devices.
- It is designed to assist governments, regulatory bodies and users in making decisions on the selection, purchase and use of medical devices for the diagnosis, test and treatment of diseases and health conditions.
- The MeDevIS platform covers 2301 types of medical devices used for a wide range of health issues.
- This includes reproductive, maternal, newborn and child health, non-communicable diseases such as cancer, heart disease, diabetes as well as infectious diseases such as COVID-19.

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**Sangyaan App**

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- Railway Protection Force (RPF) has launched a mobile application - Sangyaan App.
- It has been designed and developed by the technical team of RPF to provide in-depth knowledge on three new criminal laws: Bhartiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) 2023 (previously Indian Penal Code (IPC), 1860), Bhartiya Nagrik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS), 2023 (previously Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC), 1973)) and Bhartiya Sakshya Adhinyam (BSA), 2023 (previously Indian Evidence Act, 1872).
- It aims to educate and empower RPF personnel by providing comprehensive information to understand the provisions of both new and old criminal laws

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**MANAS Helpline**

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- MANAS helpline launched to curb drug trafficking.
- This is the National Narcotics Helpline whose full name is Drug Prohibition Information Centre.
- It consists of a toll-free number 1933, a web portal, a mobile app and Umang App.
- This allows citizens to share information on drug trafficking or seek counselling on problems such as drug abuse, de-addiction and rehabilitation. We can connect secretly.

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**National Landslide Forecasting Centre (NLFC) and Bhusanket Web Portal**

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- Union Minister for Coal and Mines Shri G. Kishan Reddy inaugurated the National Landslide Forecasting Centre (NLFC) in Kolkata on 19 July.
- Apart from this, Bhusanket Web Portal and Landslide Mobile App were also launched.

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**National Landslide Forecasting Centre (NLFC)**

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- NLFC is a pioneer initiative aimed at reducing the risk of landslides in India.
- Residents of Kalimpong, Darjeeling and Nilgiri districts will benefit from live forecast reports shared from July 20, 2024.
- It will issue early warning bulletins for all landslide-prone states in due course.
- It will operationalise regional Landslide Early Warning Systems (LEWS) across the country by 2030.

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**Bhusanket Web Portal**

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- This web portal will facilitate dissemination of relevant data and information on landslide hazards.
- This will mark the beginning of short range and medium range landslide forecasting in the country.

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**Environment**

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**COP 29, 2024**

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- It will be held in Baku (Azerbaijan) on 11 – 22 November 2024.
- The COP 29 presidency's plan for the climate summit will aim to phase out fossil fuels.

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**Climate Finance Action Fund**

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- The host of the COP29 climate summit, Azerbaijan launched the "Climate Finance Action Fund".
- "Climate Finance Action Fund" (CFAF) will receive annual contributions from fossil fuel producing countries and companies.
- This fund will help developing countries as well as other countries to reach the 1.5°C temperature target.
- Initially, \$1 billion will be raised through members with annual contributions in the form of a fixed amount or based on production volume.

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**Ideas4LiFE Portal**

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- Ideas4LiFE was launched by Union Minister for Environment, Forest and Climate Change Shri Bhupender Yadav on 29th July to invite ideas related to products and services.
- It will inspire behaviour change related to eco-friendly lifestyle.
- **Objective :** To encourage and inspire students, teachers and researchers to contribute their innovative ideas to Mission Life's global initiatives.
- This portal will provide an opportunity to participants to present their ideas and innovations online.



# 11. INDEX AND REPORTS

## SDG India Index 2023-24

- The 4th edition of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) was released by NITI Aayog.
- This index measures progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals at the national and sub-national (state) level.
- The SDG India Index 2023-24 measures national progress on 113 indicators linked to the National Indicator Framework.
- Under this, India's target for the year 2023-24 SDG score is 71 (It was 66 in 2020-21).
- 32 states and union territories of the country are in the front runner category.
- The index, which evaluates progress across 16 goals on a scale of 1 to 100
- In this, Kerala and Uttarakhand have become the best performing states with a score of 79-79 points each.
- Bihar is at last place with 57 points.
- The fastest growing state between 2018 and 2023-24 is Uttar Pradesh (score increased by 25).
- This has improved due to progress made in poverty alleviation, economic growth and climate action.
- Among Union Territories, the top five performers are Chandigarh, Jammu and Kashmir, Puducherry, Andaman and Nicobar Islands and Delhi.

## Henley Passport Report 2024

- This report is released by Henley & Partners.
- This ranking depends on the strength of the passports of the countries.
- In this, the country which allows travel to the maximum number of countries without visa or visa on arrival through its passport has the best ranking.
- India is ranked 82nd in this report.
- India's ranking has improved by 2 places from the previous ranking report.
- Singapore has become the world's most powerful passport, surpassing Japan.
- Indian passport holders can travel visa-free to 58 countries, including Bhutan, Cambodia,

- Indonesia, Macau, Maldives, Myanmar, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Kenya, Mauritius, Seychelles, Zimbabwe, Uganda, Iran and Qatar.
- Singapore's Passport holders can travel visa-free to 195 countries.
- France, Germany, Italy and Spain are jointly in second place.
- Afghanistan's passport is ranked lowest, 103rd, in the 2024 Henley Passport Index.

## Global Liveability Index 2024

- This index is released by the Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU).
- The index ranks 173 cities on liveability across five key categories, including sustainability, healthcare, culture and environment, education and infrastructure.
- Vienna, Austria has been named the best city to live in in the world.
- Next comes the city of Zurich in Switzerland.
- Four cities in the Asia-Pacific region—Melbourne and Sydney in Australia, Osaka in Japan, and Auckland in New Zealand—have featured in the world's top ten most liveable cities this year.
- Caracas (Venezuela) is the world's worst city, ranked 173rd.

## State of the World's Forests 2024 Report

- It was released by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) (released on July 22).
- According to this report, India has recorded an increase of 2,66,000 hectares of forest area annually from 2010 to 2020.
- India ranked third among the top 10 countries with highest forest area increase during this period.
- According to this report, China ranks first globally with the maximum forest area increase of 19,37,000 hectares.
- Australia is second with 4,46,000 hectares and India is third.
- This report also mentions a significant reduction in deforestation.
- Deforestation in Indonesia declined by 8.4% from 2021 to 2022.



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**World Population Prospects 2024 Report**

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- The report was released by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN-DESA) on July 11.
- In this report, India's population is projected to reach around 1.7 billion in the early 2060s and then decline by 12%, but India will remain the most populous country in the world throughout this century.
- India will become the world's most populous country in 2023, overtaking China, and will remain the most populous country until 2100.

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**India accounts for nearly half of global digital payments**

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- As per Reserve Bank of India report, 48.5% of global digital payments are done in India.
- Currently the digital economy makes up nearly a 10th of India's GDP.
- Digital payments in India have registered a Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) of 50% in terms of volume and 10% in terms of value over the last 7 years.
- According to this report India ranked first in global remittances by receiving US\$ 115.3 billion in 2023.



# 12. IMPORTANT DAYS AND WEEKS

## **World Zoonosis Day 2024**

- This day is celebrated every year on 6th July.
- This day is celebrated in honor of Louis Pasteur, who administered the first successful vaccine for rabies, a zoonotic disease, on July 6, 1885.
- Zoonosis are diseases that can spread from animals to humans.
- Zoonosis are infectious diseases that can be transferred between animals and humans, such as rabies, anthrax, influenza (H1N1 and H5N1), Nipah, COVID-19, brucellosis, and tuberculosis.
- These diseases are caused by a variety of pathogens including bacteria, viruses, parasites, and fungi.

## **102nd International Day of Cooperatives 2024**

- This day was celebrated on 6th July this year.
- The theme of this year was “ Cooperatives Building a Better Future for All”.
- This day is celebrated every year on the first Saturday of July.
- It was first celebrated in 2005 under the auspices of the United Nations.
- In India, the Central Government has formed three multi-state cooperative institutions – Organic Committee, Export Committee and Seed Committee.
- PACS (Primary Agricultural Credit Society) are co-operative societies and it is a State List subject under Entry 32 of the State List of the Seventh Schedule of the Constitution of India.

## **World Population Day**

- Every year 11th July is celebrated as World Population Day.
- This day is celebrated with the aim to focus on the problems related to increasing population.
- The main theme of the year 2024 is -'Leave no one behind, count everyone'.
- In 1989, the United Nations declared July 11 as World Population Day.
- This day was celebrated for the first time on 11 July 1990.

## **World Youth Skills Day**

- World Youth Skills Day is celebrated every

year on 15 July.

- This day is celebrated with the aim of making the youth more and more aware about skill development.
- The theme of the year 2024 is ‘Youth Skills for Peace and Development’.
- The celebration of World Youth Skills Day was declared by the United Nations General Assembly on 11 November 2014.
- This day was celebrated for the first time on 15 July 2015.

## **Nelson Mandela International Day 2024**

- It is celebrated every year on 18 July to commemorate the birthday of Nelson Mandela.
- The United Nations officially declared Nelson Mandela International Day in November 2009.
- It was first celebrated on 18 July 2010.
- The theme of the year 2024 is ‘Combating poverty and inequality is in our hands’.
- Nelson Madnela is known as the Father of the Nation in South Africa.

## **International Chess Day 2024**

- It is celebrated every year on 20th July.
- The day highlights chess players and their positive impact on society.
- UNESCO proposed the idea of celebrating 20 July as International Chess Day.
- This day has been celebrated since 1966 to commemorate the establishment of the International Chess Federation (FIDE - Fédération Internationale des Échecs).

## **National Income Tax Day 2024**

- It is celebrated every year on 24th July.
- On this day in 1860 Income Tax was introduced in India by Sir James Wilson.
- The Income Tax Department decided to celebrate this day for the first time in 2010 to mark the completion of 150 years of imposing tax.

## **Kargil Vijay Diwas**

- It is celebrated every year on 26th July to pay tribute to the soldiers who fought in the Kargil war.

- The year 2024 marks the 25th anniversary of the Kargil War.
- The Kargil War took place between 3 May and 26 July 1999 on the Line of Control (LOC).
- Under this war, “ Operation Vijay ” was conducted by the Indian Army.

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### World Hepatitis Day 2024

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- It is celebrated every year on 28th July.
- It is celebrated to raise awareness and encourage global action against viral hepatitis.
- The theme of the year 2024 is “It is time to act”.
- It also marks the birth anniversary of Nobel Prize-winning scientist Dr. Baruch Blumberg.
- Initially, World Hepatitis Day was celebrated on 19 May but later in 2010 it was celebrated on 28 July.

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### International Tiger Day

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- Tiger Day is celebrated every year on 29 July.
- This day is celebrated with the aim of creating awareness about the conservation of tigers and their natural habitat.
- In 2010, at a conference in St. Petersburg, Russia, it was decided to celebrate Tiger Day every year on July 29.
- The theme of 2024 is ‘Call for Action’.

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### Status of tigers in india

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- India started Project Tiger in 1973 to save tigers from extinction in the country.
- In 1973-74, there were only 9 tiger reserves in the country and now their number has increased to 54. India ranks first in the world in terms of the total number of tigers.

- The Ministry of Environment had constituted the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) in 2005.
- The responsibility of implementing Project Tiger was given to NTCA.
- The tiger is the national animal of both India and Bangladesh.
- According to the Tiger Estimation Report - 2023, currently about 75 percent of the total number of tigers in the world are in India.
- Madhya Pradesh has the largest population of tigers (785).

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### The Central Government will observe 25th June every year as “Samvidhan Hatya Diwas”

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- National Emergency was declared by former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi on 25 June 1975 on the grounds of internal discontent.
- Constitution Assassination Day will be celebrated by the Government of India to create awareness about the misuse of power during emergency.

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### Important Facts

- This emergency came into effect in the country from 25 June 1975 and ended on 21 March 1977.
- It was officially started by President Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed.
- After the 44th Constitutional Amendment Act of 1978, the ground of internal disturbance was removed and replaced with “armed rebellion”.



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