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# LawEx

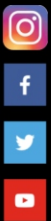
16-31 DEC, 2023

ISSUE - 21



**SRI KRISHNA  
JANMABHOOMI  
SHAHI IDGAH MASJID**

**DISPUTE**



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## About Magazine

“LawEx” is a carefully curated set of Current Events designed specifically for CLAT aspirants. To take you one step closer to realizing your dream, “LawEx” provides a fortnightly overview of the most significant current events related to politics, economics, science and technology, & sports with a wide range of infographics to ensure a smoother learning experience and enhanced retention of information.

## Editor's Note

The Allahabad High Court recently ruled that a survey will be conducted for the Shahi Idgah, a three-domed mosque in Mathura. India ranked 7th in the 2024 Climate Change Performance Index, up one spot from the 2023 CCPI. The year 2023 saw a very low number of Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) audit reports on the Union government's accounts tabled in parliament – only 18. France's President Emmanuel Macron will be India's chief guest for its 75th Republic Day celebrations to be held on January 26. Keep reading for more updates.

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## VAISHNAV BHATT

### Our Top Achiever

# AIR - 113th

## CLAT 2024

#### Q. Give us a brief intro about yourself, Vaishnav.

Ans. Hello, I'm Vaishnav and I secured AIR 113 in CLAT 2024. I completed my 10<sup>th</sup> standard in Delhi and have moved to Bangalore this year.

#### Q. When did you think about doing law?

Ans. I've had some very unpleasant experiences in life when I was staying in Delhi where my family and I had to suffer emotionally and financially and a major part of it was due to insufficient knowledge of the law and our rights. In this process I had to interact with some lawyers, and visit the court as well. These experiences made me want to pursue law as a profession as I found it interesting and also felt that having this knowledge would keep me safe and I would be able to help others as well who face similar situations due to insufficient knowledge.

#### Q. When did you seriously start preparing for CLAT?

Ans. I started my preparation in March 2023.

#### Q. What is the role of LawEx in your preparation?

Ans. LawEx helped me a lot with my preparation for CLAT. Their current affairs magazine and Maths YouTube videos are excellent and have been of great help. I also found their GK topic tests to be very useful.

#### Q. Do you think LawEx Lectures with sufficient reading and mock practice enough for CLAT?

Ans. I feel LawEx should increase the number of mock tests that they offer. Apart from this I think that they provide sufficient study material.

#### Q. What did you do for your subject-wise strategy?

Ans. My weak point was GK, so I gave it a bit more attention compared to the other subjects. For this I read The Hindu newspaper everyday for 1.5 hrs and focused on the editorial as that improved my vocabulary and helped improve my English as well. I allocated 4-5 hours for GK everyday. I gave 2 hours for legal reasoning. During this time I had not yet started giving mock tests. I watched LawEx's maths YouTube videos to improve my maths for around 30 minutes. A bulk of my preparation was focused on these 3 subjects. Apart from this I attempted around 60 mock tests, 20 of which were from LawEx and the rest I had to source from other test series.

#### Q. What was your highest and lowest score in mock tests?

Ans. My lowest score was 72 and my highest score was 96.25. On average my score was around 90 marks out of 120.

#### Q. How did you keep your confidence up when scoring low in mocks?

Ans. My performance in mocks was more or less pretty consistent throughout my preparation. So I did not face this issue.

#### Q. How to maintain mock scores?

Ans. In my opinion, analysing the mocks after attempting them is very important as it makes you understand what kind of mistakes you have made and helps you to improve upon them in the next mock. This will also make you understand your own weak points and which subject needs improvement. This will help you maintain and improve your score.

#### Q. How much GK is sufficient and how to revise it?

Ans. No amount of GK can be considered sufficient in my opinion. So I would suggest to find 2-3 sources which are of good quality like The Hindu newspaper and LawEx magazine which covers most of the topics which you need to know and for static GK you can purchase any book like A P Bharadwaj's Static GK book. I revised for GK by doing the topic tests multiple times.

#### Q. How many Mocks are sufficient for CLAT Preparation?

Ans. According to me at least 50 mock tests are required so that your speed along with accuracy improves and it doesn't make you feel anxious anymore as a calm mind will help you concentrate better and score more. Clat is a reading based exam and it can be quite draining especially in the last 30-35 minutes so practicing mocks is important here.

#### Q. What is your advice to CLAT Aspirants?

Ans. I would advise CLAT aspirants to give themselves at least one year for preparation and attempt 1-2 mock tests every week so that it doesn't drain you out. I made this mistake too by attempting around 60 mocks in 2 months. It is not feasible. CLAT is highly competitive and requires consistency and patience. As my English was at a decent level to begin with, I was somehow able to manage the stress. Also don't forget to take short breaks and have good sleep. Some books which I purchased for CLAT are A P Bharadwaj's Legal reasoning and A P Bharadwaj's static GK. Also practice 15-20 mocks on OMR printouts as well and try finishing your mocks in 115 minutes as this is the time you'll get in your actual examination. Best wishes to all of you.



# LawEx

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# **QUICK BOOSTERS**





## SHRI KRISHNA JANMABHOOMI-SHAHI IDGAH MASJID DISPUTE

### WHY IN NEWS?

- The Allahabad High Court recently ruled that a survey will be conducted for the Shahi Idgah, a three-domed mosque in Mathura.
- It is seeking the appointment of a court commission to inspect the Shahi Idgah mosque that stands adjacent to the Krishna Janmabhoomi temple in Mathura.

### Background of the Dispute

- The mosque was built by Aurangzeb in 1670 on the site of an earlier temple.
  - The area was regarded as nazul land — non-agricultural state land owned by the Marathas, and then the British.
- Before the mosque was built, the temple had been built in 1618 during the reign of Aurangzeb's grandfather Jahangir by Raja Veer Singh Bundela.
  - The temple had been patronised by Aurangzeb's brother and rival for the Mughal throne, Dara Shukoh.
- In 1815, Raja Patni Mal of Benaras bought the 13.77 acres in an auction from the East India Company.
- The Raja's descendants — Rai Kishan Das and Rai Anand Das — sold the land to Jugal Kishore Birla for Rs 13,400, and it was registered in the names of Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya, Goswami Ganesh Dutt, and Bhiken Lalji Aattrey.
- The Shri Krishna Janmabhoomi Trust was set up by Birla, and it acquired the ownership rights over the Katra Keshav Dev temple.
- In 1951, the 13.77 acres were placed in the trust, with the condition that the “trust property will never be sold or pledged.”
- In 1956, the Shri Krishna Janmasthan Sewa Sangh was set up to manage the affairs of the temple. In 1977, the word 'Sangh' in the registered society's name was replaced with 'Sansthan.'
- In 1968, an agreement was signed between the Sri Krishna Janmasthan Seva Sangh and the Shahi Idgah Masjid Trust. As part of the settlement, the temple authority had conceded a portion of the land to the Idgah.
- Now, the temple petitioners want possession of the entire parcel of the land.

### Present Status

- A survey has been ordered due to demands by Hindu representatives for complete ownership of the premises.
- The plea for a survey was filed on behalf of the Hindu deity, Shri Krishna and seven others, who in their original suit pending before this court claimed that the mosque was built over the birthplace of Shri Krishna on the orders of Mughal emperor Aurangzeb in 1670.
- Since the Babri Masjid judgment in 2019, nine cases related to the Shri Krishna Janmabhoomi and Shahi Idgah Masjid, have been filed in the Mathura court.
  - At least a dozen cases were filed in courts in Mathura by different petitioners.
  - A common thread in all the petitions is a prayer for the removal of the mosque from the 13.77-acre complex.
- In May 2023, the Allahabad High Court transferred to itself all the suits on the Sri Krishna Janmabhoomi-Shahi Idgah Masjid dispute.
- However, the Committee of Management Trust of the Shahi Idgah Masjid sought a stay on the survey from the Supreme Court, the court did not grant any relief.

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### About Places of Worship Act, 1991

- The Act was enacted to freeze the status of all places of worship in the country as on August 15, 1947.
- The Act says that no person shall convert any place of worship of any religious denomination into one of a different denomination or section.
- Significantly, it prohibits any legal proceedings from being instituted regarding the character of a place of worship and declares that all suits and appeals pending before any court or authority on the cut-off date regarding the conversion of the character of a place of worship shall abate.
- In other words, all pending cases will come to an end, and no further proceedings can be filed. However, any suit or proceedings relating to any conversion of status that happened after the cut-off date can continue.

### Exemptions

- An exception was made to keep the Babri Masjid-Ramjanmabhoomi dispute out of its ambit as the structure was then the subject of litigation.
- It will not apply to ancient and historical monuments and archaeological sites and remains that are covered by the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains Act, 1958.
- It will also not apply to any suit that has been finally settled or disposed of, any dispute that has been settled by the parties before the 1991 Act came into force, or to the conversion of any place that took place by acquiescence.

## Decoding the dispute

**1968**

The Sri Krishna Janmasthan Seva Sangh and Shahi Eidgah mosque sign an agreement for the 13.37-acre land

**Sept 25, 2020**

First of the dozen cases filed in Mathura court, seeking removal of the mosque and challenging the 1968 pact.

**2022**

**May 9**

An application to have survey of the disputed site in case number 950 of 2020 is filed in Court of Civil Judge Senior Division in Mathura

**May 12**

A petition is moved in the Allahabad high court, seeking early disposal of matter pending in Mathura court. The HC subsequently directs the Mathura court to decide on the matter in four months.

**May 17**

A Lucknow-based lawyer files petition in Court of District Judge, seeking permission to file a suit in representative capacity. The plea is dismissed

**May 19**

Mathura district judge allows a revision plea, holding that The Places of Worship Act 1991 was not applicable in the case seeking removal of Shahi Eidgah mosque. The high court later stays the order

**December 06**

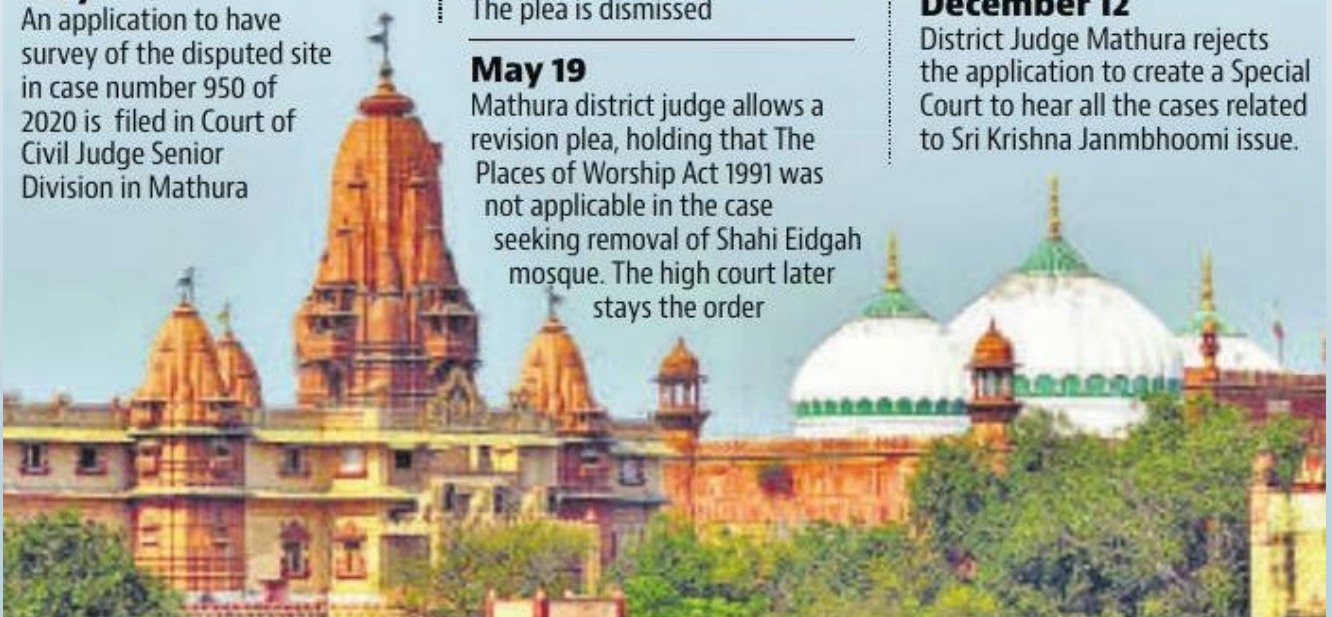
Akhil Bharat Hindu Mahasabha gives a call for reciting Hanuman Chalisa inside the Shahi Eidgah mosque to mark the anniversary of the demolition of Babri Masjid. Police foils the call.

**December 08**

Court orders an 'amin' (designated court staff) survey of the disputed mosque in a fresh petition.

**December 12**

District Judge Mathura rejects the application to create a Special Court to hear all the cases related to Sri Krishna Janmbhoomi issue.



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## SECURITY BREACH IN PARLIAMENT

### WHY IN NEWS?

- On the anniversary of the 2001 Parliament attack (13 December), a massive security breach took place in Lok Sabha, when two intruders leapt into the chamber from the visitors' gallery and opened smoke cans.
- Meanwhile, outside the Parliament, two others were arrested for protesting with coloured smoke.

#### Rules for Parliament Visitor

- Rule 386 - Visitors' ("strangers" in parliamentary parlance) "admission, withdrawal and removal" is governed by Rule 386 of the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in the Lok Sabha.
- Rule 387 gives the Speaker the power to withdraw "strangers" from any part of the House if he/she deems it fit.
- Members can apply for visitors' cards only for individuals well-known to them personally.
- According to the rules, the names of visitors are required to be given in full and not with initials.
- There are two types of galleries – public and Speaker's – in Lok Sabha. While a member can facilitate the entry of four people on a daily basis in the public gallery, he/she is entitled to facilitate the entry of two people in the Speaker's gallery.
- Similar rules are in force for visitor entry into the Rajya Sabha.

#### Who is in-charge of Parliament Security?

- The Parliamentary Security Service of Rajya Sabha and Lok Sabha Secretariat look after the security setup in the Parliament House Complex.
- At the epicentre of the Parliament's security apparatus stands the Joint Secretary (Security), a figure entrusted with the daunting responsibility of overseeing operations involving Parliament Security Services, Delhi Police, Parliament Duty Group, and various allied security agencies.
- After the December 13, 2023, Parliament security breach, the Ministry of Home Affairs has asked the Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) to take security charge of the Parliament building from the Delhi Police.
- The CISF will first conduct a survey of the premises prior to the deployment of its security and fire wing.

#### DID YOU KNOW?

- The 2001 attack on the Indian Parliament was a terrorist attack that took place on 13th December 2001, when a group of armed militants attacked the Parliament of India in New Delhi.
- The attackers belonged to the Pakistan-based militant organizations Lashkar-e-Taiba and Jaish-e-Mohammed.
- CISF is one of seven Central Armed Police Forces (CAPF) under the MHA — the other six being the Border Security Force, the Indo-Tibetan Border Police, the Sashastra Seema Bal, the Assam Rifles, the National Security Guard, and the Central Reserve Police Force.
- CISF is currently headed by Special DG Nina Singh, the first woman to occupy the post.



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## LOGISTICS EASE ACROSS DIFFERENT STATE (LEADS) 2023

### WHY IN NEWS?

- The Ministry of Commerce & Industry released the 5th edition of “Logistics Ease Across Different State (LEADS) 2023” report.

### About LEADS

- The LEADS is an indigenous data-driven index to assess logistics infrastructure, services, and human resources across all 36 States and UTs.
- The LEADS aims to guide stakeholders in the logistics sector by offering strategic insights and fostering healthy competition among states and union territories to improve their logistics performance.
- The LEADS was conceived on the lines of the Logistics Performance Index of World Bank in 2018 and has evolved over time.
- The report evaluates logistics performance of states and UTs across the key pillars – Logistics Infrastructure, Logistics Services and Operating and Regulatory Environment.
- The 5<sup>th</sup> edition of the LEADS annual exercise - LEADS 2023 report, provides insights into improvement of logistics performance at State/UT level.
- The 5<sup>th</sup> edition emphasizes the significance of policy reforms such as industry status for logistics, digital initiatives (PM GatiShakti, Logistics Data Bank, Unified Logistics Interface Platform (ULIP), GST), and the alignment of State Logistics Policies with the National Logistics Policy.

### DID YOU KNOW?

- The Logistics Performance Index (LPI) was developed by the World Bank Group.
- LPI is the weighted average of the country's scores on the six key dimensions - customs performance, infrastructure quality, ease of arranging shipments, logistics services quality, consignment tracking and tracing, and timeliness of shipments.
- India ranked 38th out of 139 countries in LPI 2023.
- The logistics sector will play a key role in taking the country's economy to about USD 35 trillion by 2047.

### Key Highlights

Groups / Categories	Achievers	Fast Movers	Aspirers
Coastal	Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu	Kerala, Maharashtra	Goa, Odisha, West Bengal
Landlocked	Haryana, Punjab, Telangana, Uttar Pradesh	Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Uttarakhand	Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Himachal Pradesh, Jharkhand
North-East	Assam, Sikkim, Tripura	Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland	Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram
Union Territories	Chandigarh, Delhi	Andaman & Nicobar, Lakshadweep, Puducherry	Daman & Diu/ Dadra & Nagar Haveli, Jammu & Kashmir, Ladakh

*LEADS 2023: Performance Snapshot*

\* States/ Union Territories within the performance categories are listed in alphabetical order

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## SURAT DIAMOND BOURSE-THE WORLD'S BIGGEST WORKSPACE

### WHY IN NEWS?

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the newly-built Surat Diamond Bourse (SDB), claimed to be the world's biggest office space in a single project, in Gujarat.

#### What is the Diamond Bourse?

- The Surat Diamond Bourse (SDB) has been planned to expand and shift the diamond trading business from Mumbai to Surat, the hub of cutting and polishing diamonds.
- The SDB has been built on an area of 66 lakh square feet at DREAM (Diamond Research and Mercantile) city.
- The thematic landscaping is based on the 'panch tatva' theme, comprising the five elements of nature (air, water, fire, earth, and sky).
- The Surat Diamond Bourse has a capacity of about 4,200 offices ranging from 300 square feet to 7,500 square feet each. The bourse has nine towers, each with ground plus 15 floors.
- It is bigger than the biggest office space in the world, The Pentagon in the United States.
- Surat's diamond trading market is located at present in Mahidharpra Hira bazaar and Varachha Hira Bazaar, where traders make transactions standing on the streets with almost no security measures.
- A major part of the diamond trading, however, happens in Mumbai at Bandra Kurla Complex (BKC), which has the amenities for international buyers.
- All diamond-related activities and infrastructure, such as sale of rough diamonds and polished diamonds, diamond manufacturing machineries, software used in diamond planning, diamond certificate firms, lab-grown diamonds, etc. will be available in the bourse.
- Apart from this, 27 retail outlets of diamond jewellery will also be opened, for international and national buyers.

#### Diamond Industry in India

- India is the world's largest cutting and polishing center for diamonds, accounting for over 90% of polished diamond manufacturing globally.
- In 2022, India ranks first among the top exporters in cut & polished diamonds.

The G7 leaders have decided to introduce import restrictions on non-industrial diamonds, mined, processed, or produced in Russia, from January 1, 2024, followed by further phased restrictions on the import of Russian diamonds processed in third countries like India from March 1, 2024.

- According to industry experts, over 30 per cent of rough diamonds from Russia are imported to India for cutting and polishing.
- Once the diamonds are cut and polished, they are studded into jewellery and also loosely exported to other countries.
- The major consumers of polished diamond are the US and Hong Kong, followed by Thailand, Israel, UK, UAE, Belgium, Singapore, Switzerland and Netherlands, among others.

#### Lab Grown Diamond

- In Union Budget 2023-24, a five-year research grant for one of the Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs) was announced to encourage the indigenous production of lab-grown diamonds (LGD) machinery, seeds and recipe.
- It is proposed to establish an India Centre for Lab grown Diamond (InCent-LGD) at IIT Madras with the estimated cost of Rs. 242.96 crores over 5 years.
- Lab grown diamonds are produced through 2 technologies, namely High-Pressure High Temperature (HPHT) and Chemical Vapour Deposition.
- India is one of the leading producers of lab grown diamonds using CVD technology.

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## CLIMATE CHANGE PERFORMANCE INDEX (CCPI) 2024

### WHY IN NEWS?

- India ranked 7th in the 2024 Climate Change Performance Index, up one spot from the 2023 CCPI.

### India's Progress

- India received a high ranking on the greenhouse gas emissions and energy use indicators, and a medium rating on climate policy and renewable energy deployment.
- While India is the world's most populous country, it has relatively low per capita emissions.
- The report showed that in the per capita GHG category, India is on track to meet a benchmark of well below 2 degrees Celsius.
- The report also noted that India needed to agree to a faster phase-out of coal, reduce reliance on gas, and further expand its renewable energy capacity. Also, it needed to advance its 2070 net zero target.
- The experts reported that India is trying to meet its Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), with clear long-term policies in place that focus on promoting renewable energy and providing financial support for domestic manufacturing of renewable energy components.
- Despite that, India's growing energy needs are still being met by its heavy reliance on coal, along with oil and gas.

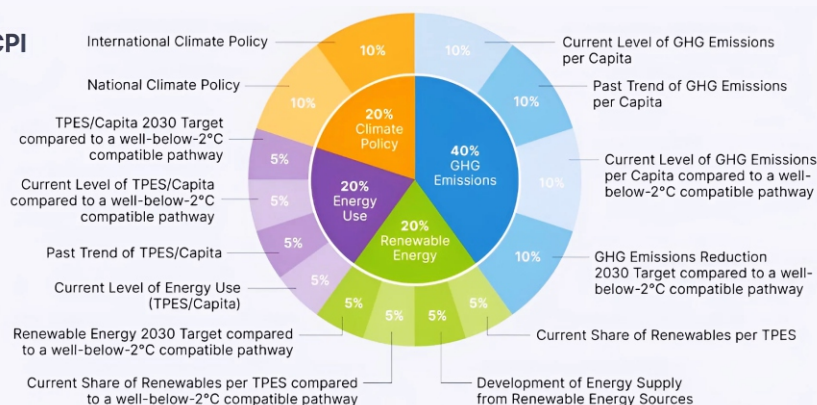
### Global Rankings

- No country performed well enough in all index categories to achieve an overall very high rating. The first three overall positions therefore remain empty.
- Denmark claimed the 4th spot, Estonia followed in 5th place, and the Philippines secured the 6th position among the top ranks.
- With India (7<sup>th</sup>), Germany (14<sup>th</sup>), and the EU (16<sup>th</sup>), only three G20 countries/regions are among the high performers in CCPI 2024.
- The G20 members account for more than 75% of the world's greenhouse gas emissions.
- Many developed countries including the United Kingdom (20<sup>th</sup>), the United States (57<sup>th</sup>), Italy (44<sup>th</sup>), and others showcased poorer performances compared to the CCPI 2023, reflecting a lack of substantial progress in countering climate change.

### About CCPI Index

- The CCPI is an instrument to enable transparency in national and international climate politics.
- The CCPI uses a standardized framework to compare the climate performance of 63 countries and the EU, which together account for over 90% of global greenhouse gas emissions.
- The climate protection performance is assessed in four categories: GHG Emissions (40%), Renewable Energy (20%), Energy Use (20%) and Climate Policy (20%).
- It is published by Germanwatch, the NewClimate Institute, and Climate Action Network International.

### Components of the CCPI



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# Ranking



**CCPI**  
Climate Change  
Performance Index

1	-	24	ROMANIA	47	BELARUS
2	-	25	THAILAND	48	UZBEKISTAN
3	-	26	FINLAND	49	HUNGARY
4	DENMARK	27	VIETNAM	50	AUSTRALIA
5	ESTONIA	28	GREECE	51	CHINA
6	PHILIPPINES	29	MALTA	52	CZECH REPUBLIC
7	INDIA	30	PAKISTAN	53	ARGENTINA
8	NETHERLANDS	31	COLOMBIA	54	ALGERIA
9	MOROCCO	32	AUSTRIA	55	POLAND
10	SWEDEN	33	LATVIA	56	TURKEY
11	CHILE	34	NEW ZEALAND	57	UNITED STATES
12	NORWAY	35	CROATIA	58	JAPAN
13	PORTUGAL	36	INDONESIA	59	MALAYSIA
14	GERMANY	37	FRANCE	60	KAZAKHSTAN
15	LUXEMBOURG	38	MEXICO	61	CHINESE TAIPEI
16	EUROPEAN UNION	39	BELGIUM	62	CANADA
17	NIGERIA	40	SLOVAK REPUBLIC	63	RUSSIAN FEDERATION
18	SPAIN	41	SLOVENIA	64	KOREA
19	LITHUANIA	42	CYPRUS	65	UNITED ARAB EMIRATES
20	UNITED KINGDOM	43	IRELAND	66	ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN
21	SWITZERLAND	44	ITALY	67	SAUDI ARABIA
22	EGYPT	45	SOUTH AFRICA		
23	BRAZIL	46	BULGARIA		

CCPI 2024

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## GOA LIBERATION DAY

### WHY IN NEWS?

- Goa Liberation Day is observed on December 19, 1961, to mark the liberation of the state from Portuguese rule in 1961.

#### Goa under the Portuguese

- Goa became a Portuguese colony in 1510, when Admiral Afonso de Albuquerque defeated the Sultan of Bijiapur, Yusuf Adil Shah.
- In 1947, when the rest of India became independent from the British, Goa, Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Daman and Diu continued as Estado da Índia, or the Portuguese states of India.
- After multiple agitations by freedom fighters, India made peaceful attempts for Goa's liberation through diplomatic channels.
- However, as a last resort, the Indian government then led by Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru, sent its armed forces to the coastal state after which the Portuguese surrendered and Goa was liberated on December 19, 1961.
- This moment also marked the exit of the Portuguese after more than 400 years of rule, the last of the European colonisers to leave India.

#### What happened after the Liberation of Goa?

- Goa was annexed into the Indian Union and was the Union Territory of Goa, Daman and Diu.
- In 1967, however, the question of whether the state should merge with Maharashtra or not was answered through a plebiscite in which the majority of the Goan people voted against a merger.
- It continued to remain a Union Territory until 1987 when it was accorded statehood.
- Goa became India's 25th state even as Daman and Diu continue to be Union Territories.



#### DID YOU KNOW?

- 30th May is celebrated as the Statehood Day of Goa.
- In 1961, the Indian Government launched Operation Vijay and annexed Daman and Diu and Goa with the Indian mainland on 19th December.
- In 2019, the government of India merged the Union Territories of Daman and Diu, Dadra and Nagar Haveli into a single Union Territory 'Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Daman and Diu'.
- As of now, India has 28 states and 8 UTs.
- Dadra and Nagar Haveli was occupied by the Portuguese in June, 1783. Residents of Dadra and Nagar Haveli got themselves liberated from Portuguese rule on August 2, 1954. In 1961, it was merged with the Republic of India and made a Union Territory.
- On August 5, 2019, the central government announced the abrogation of the special status given to Jammu and Kashmir under Article 370 and its division into two Union Territories – Jammu and Kashmir, and Ladakh.

### GOA LIBERATION DAY

#### 1510

The Portuguese colonised India conquering many parts of the western coast.

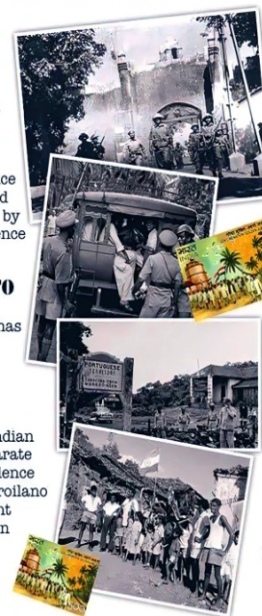
#### BY THE 1940S

the Goan independence movement had gained momentum, inspired by the Indian independence movement.

#### FROM OCTOBER TO NOVEMBER 1946

a series of satyagrahas (non-violent civil-disobedience actions) were held in Goa.

Following national Indian independence, a separate demand for independence was raised by Dr. Froilano de Mello, a prominent Goan microbiologist in the Portuguese National Assembly.



#### 1950S

Azad Gomantak Dal, a revolutionary group, vowed to fight the Portuguese using direct action strategies. The Goa Liberation Army, founded by Shivajirao Desai, an Indian army officer.

#### 18 AND 19 DECEMBER 1961

After failure of diplomacy with the Portuguese, Nehru ordered the Indian Armed Forces to take Goa by force. In a military operation conducted on 18 & 19 December 1961, Indian troops captured Goa with little resistance. The governor-general of Portuguese India signed an instrument of surrender.

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## RECORD LOWEST NUMBER OF CAG AUDIT REPORTS IN 2023

### WHY IN NEWS?

- The year 2023 saw a very low number of Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) audit reports on the Union government's accounts tabled in parliament – only 18.

#### Key Points

- A year-wise analysis shows that the number of audits on the Union Government tabled in Parliament has been decreasing for some years now.
- On average, 22 reports were tabled each year between 2019 and 2023, compared to the 40 reports tabled between 2014 and 2018.
- The number of reports tabled peaked in 2015 at 53, but in four of the past six years, 20 or fewer reports were tabled.
- The figures were arrived at by scraping over 400 audit reports on the Union government, published on the CAG website, between 2010 and 2023.
- These are reports that have been tabled in Parliament and are available in the public domain as of December 10.
- Three more reports submitted to the government in April, July, and August 2023 were yet to be tabled in Parliament.

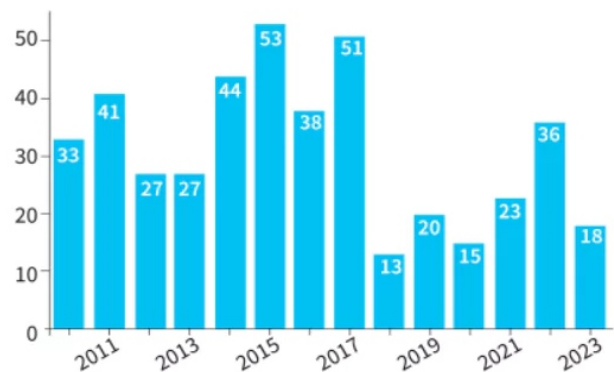
#### DID YOU KNOW?

- The Constitution of India visualises the CAG to be the Comptroller as well as the Auditor General.
- However, in practice, the CAG is fulfilling the role of an Auditor-General only and not that of a Comptroller.
- In other words, 'the CAG has no control over the issue of money from the consolidated fund and many departments are authorised to draw money by issuing cheques without specific authority from the CAG, who is concerned only at the audit stage when the expenditure has already taken place.
- In this respect, the CAG of India differs totally from the CAG of Britain which has powers of both the Comptroller as well as Auditor General.
- In other words, in Britain, the executive can draw money from the public exchequer only with the approval of the CAG.

#### Office of CAG

- The Constitution of India (Article 148) provides for an independent office of the Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG).
- The CAG heads the Indian Audit and Accounts Department (IA&AD). The two entities are known as the Supreme Audit Institution of India (SAI).
- The CAG is the guardian of the public purse and controls the entire financial system of the country at both levels—the Centre and the State.
- The CAG is appointed by the president of India by a warrant under his hand and seal.
- He holds office for a period of six years or up to the age of 65 years, whichever is earlier.
- He can resign any time from his office by addressing the resignation letter to the president.
- He can also be removed by the president on same grounds and in the same manner as a judge of the Supreme Court.
- The CAG's salary and expenses are charged to the Consolidated Fund of India.
- Upon relinquishing the office, the CAG is barred from holding any subsequent position within either the Government of India or any State Government, maintaining the independence and integrity of the office.

The chart shows the year-wise number of audit reports tabled in Parliament



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## INDIA'S MAIDEN WINTER SCIENTIFIC ARCTIC EXPEDITION

### WHY IN NEWS?

- On December 18, India sent off its first winter expedition, comprising four scientists from four different institutions to Himadri.
- Himadri, India's Arctic Research Station at Ny-Ålesund in the Norwegian archipelago of Svalbard in the Arctic Ocean, will now remain operational throughout the year.

#### Key Points

- The winter expedition by four scientists from the Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology, Pune, IIT-Mandi, Raman Research Institute, Bengaluru, and National Centre for Polar and Ocean Research, Goa, the nodal agency for India's polar explorations, will last until January 15, 2024.
- The research areas will include atmospheric sciences, astronomy, astrophysics, and climate studies.
- Scientists will study lightning over the Arctic in winter, the role of precipitation in climate change, the characterisation of radio frequency environment, and the role of aerosols on climate change.
- India has operated a research base in the Arctic named Himadri since 2008, which has been mostly hosting scientists during the summer (April to October).
- After this maiden expedition, India will join a small group of countries that operate their Arctic research bases through the winter.

#### DID YOU KNOW?

- At least 10 countries have set up permanent facilities at the International Arctic Research base in Ny-Ålesund.
- The area above the Arctic Circle, north of latitude 66° 34' N, is part of eight countries — Canada, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Russia, Sweden, and the US — who make up the Arctic Council, plus the Arctic Ocean.
- The Arctic Council is a high-level intergovernmental body set up in 1996 by the Ottawa declaration to promote cooperation, coordination and interaction among the Arctic States together with the indigenous communities and other Arctic inhabitants.
- India was admitted as an Observer to the Arctic Council in 2013.

#### Indian Bases in the Arctic

- India's permanent research station, Himadri, began operations in July 2008.
- Dakshin Gangotri in Antarctica was set up much earlier in 1983, two years after India's first expedition there. Dakshin Gangotri is now submerged under ice, but India's two other stations, Maitri and Bharti, are in use.
- India signed the Svalbard Treaty in Paris in 1920.
- Himadri has been equipped for observations during polar nights (that last longer than 24 hours), and supplied with special winter gear, transport, and logistics support from Norwegian agencies.
- Scientific research in the Arctic region is governed by international legal instruments like the Svalbard Treaty of 1920 and the UN Convention on the Law of the Seas, apart from the individual jurisdictions of the Arctic countries.



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## KAKORI TRAIN ACTION INCIDENT

### WHY IN NEWS?

- Ninety-six years ago in 1927, four revolutionaries of the Indian independence movement were hanged on December 17 (Rajendranath Lahiri) and December 19 (Ashfaqullah Khan, Ram Prasad Bismil, Thakur Roshan Singh).
- This came two years after the Kakori Train Robbery, in which members of the Hindustan Republican Association (HRA) had looted a train transporting money to the British treasury.

#### Hindustan Republican Association

- In 1920, Mahatma Gandhi declared the launch of the Non-Cooperation Movement, a campaign which asked Indians to revoke their support from any activity that "sustained the British government and economy in India."
- Gandhi had envisioned this movement to be non-violent, using his methods of satyagraha to eventually attain self-governance.
- However, an incident changed the movement's trajectory in 1922. After police firing killed three protesting men in the town of Chauri Chaura in present-day Uttar Pradesh, a mob later set fire to the police station, burning 22 policemen to death.
- This incident led to the "sudden" end of the Non-cooperation movement, with Gandhi calling it off despite significant internal disagreement within the Indian National Congress (INC).
- The HRA was thus founded by a group of young men who were disillusioned by Gandhi's tactics and what they felt was zealous preaching of "non-violence."
- Ram Prasad Bismil and Ashfaqulla Khan, both of whom had a flair for poetry, were among the group's founders.
- Others included Sachindra Nath Bakshi and trade unionist Jogesh Chandra Chatterjee. Figures such as Chandra Shekhar Azad and Bhagat Singh would also join the HRA.
- Their manifesto released on January 1, 1925, was titled Krantikari (Revolutionary).
- In 1928, a year after the execution of the Kakori Conspiracy accused, the HRA merged with various other revolutionary groups that had emerged in Punjab, Bihar and Bengal and became the Hindustan Socialist Republican Association (HSRA).

#### Kakori Train Action Incident

- The train robbery at Kakori was the HRA's first major action, in August 1925. The Number 8 Down Train ran between Shahjahanpur and Lucknow.
- On August 9, 1925, as the train was passing the Kakori station, about 15 km from Lucknow, Rajendranath Lahiri, a member of the HRA who was already seated inside, pulled the chain and stopped the train.
- Subsequently, around ten revolutionaries, including Ram Prasad Bismil and Ashfaqullah Khan, entered the train and overpowered the guard. They looted the treasury bags (containing approx Rs 4,600) and escaped to Lucknow.
- The British authorities launched a harsh crackdown, leading to the arrest of numerous HRA members.
- Among the forty arrested individuals, four received death sentences ( Rajendranath Lahiri on 17th December and Ashfaqullah Khan, Ram Prasad Bismil, Thakur Roshan Singh on 19th December) and others faced lengthy imprisonments.
- Chandrashekhar Azad was the only prominent HRA leader who managed to evade capture.
- In 2021, the Uttar Pradesh government has renamed the 'Kakori Kand' to 'Kakori Train action' as the word 'Kand' denotes a sense of insult to this incident under India's Independence struggle.





## REVISED CRIMINAL LAW BILLS

### WHY IN NEWS?

- Recently, the Parliament passed the three revised Bills to replace the existing British-era criminal laws, after withdrawing the previous versions, introduced in August this year.
- The three Bills are set to replace the Indian Penal Code (IPC), 1860; the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC), 1973 and the Indian Evidence Act, 1872.
- The IPC will be replaced by the Bharatiya Nyaya (Second) Sanhita Bill, 2023; the CrPC of 1973 will be replaced by the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha (Second) Sanhita, 2023 whereas the Indian Evidence Act of 1872 will be replaced by the Bharatiya Sakshya (Second) Bill, 2023.

### Background

- Following their introduction in August, they were referred to a 31-member Parliamentary Standing Committee, headed by BJP MP Brij Lal for review.
- After consulting experts and stakeholders, the panel adopted its report on the Bills on November 7, 2023.

### Key Highlights of the Revised 'Bharatiya Nyaya (Second) Sanhita Bill, 2023'

#### UAPA's definition of 'terrorist act' adopted

- Section 113 of the revised Bill has modified the definition of the crime of terrorism to entirely adopt the existing definition under Section 15 of the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967 (UAPA).
- The earlier version of the Bill included within the ambit of a terrorist act, vague acts such as intimidating the general public or a segment thereof, disturbing public order, creating an atmosphere or spreading a message of fear; destabilising or destroying the political, economic, or social structures of the country, or creating a public emergency or undermining public safety. Accordingly, even a non-violent speech could be categorised as a terrorist act under this definition.
- However, the new definition of a terrorist act differs from the UAPA's definition in one respect — UAPA includes the production or smuggling or circulation only of high-quality counterfeit Indian paper currency, coin or of any other material within the ambit of terrorism.
- Whereas the revised Bill widens this definition to cover the same activities with respect to any counterfeit Indian paper currency, coin or of any other material.
- Further, possessing property derived from or through a terrorist act is punishable only if it is held knowingly.
- Similarly, harbouring a terrorist is punishable if it is done both voluntarily and knowingly.
- The offence of recruiting and training persons to engage in terrorist acts has been introduced as well, mirroring sections 18A and 18B of the UAPA.

#### Cruelty defined

- Another addition to the revised Bill is that it proposes to define "cruelty" against a woman by her husband and his relatives, which is punishable with a jail term of up to three years.
- The newly inserted section 86 defines 'cruelty' as (a) wilful conduct likely to drive a woman to commit suicide or cause grave injury or danger to the life, limb, or health (whether mental or physical); or (b) harassment of a woman to coerce her or any person related to her to meet any unlawful demand for property or valuable security.
- Although the offence has now been defined in a separate provision, Section 498A of the IPC as well as Section 84 in the original Bill defined cruelty using the same terms in their "explanation" clauses. Therefore, there is no new addition in effect in the revised Bill.

#### Unauthorised publication of court proceedings

- The newly inserted section 73 stipulates that those who print or publish 'any matter' concerning court proceedings in rape or sexual assault cases without permission would be punished with a two-year jail sentence and a fine.
- The Explanation to this provision clarifies that reports on High Court or Supreme Court judgments would not amount to an offence within this provision.'

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### 'Mental illness' replaced by 'unsoundness of mind'

- In an attempt to do away with regressive terminology, the earlier version of the Bill had replaced terms such as lunacy, mental retardation, and unsoundness of mind with 'mental illness.'
- However, the panel pointed out that the term 'mental illness' is too wide in its import and could even include mood swings and voluntary intoxication.
- As a result, the revised Bill replaces the term 'mental illness' with 'unsoundness of mind' in a majority of the provisions.
- It has also added the term 'intellectual disability' along with unsoundness of mind in section 367 (competence to stand trial).

### Enhancement of minimum punishment for 'mob lynching'

- The original Bill made mob lynching and hate crime a separate category of murder for the first time. The offence dealt with cases where murder is committed by five or more persons acting in concert with one another, on grounds of race, caste or community, sex, place of birth, language, personal belief, or any other ground.
- However, it was criticised by the panel for prescribing a lesser minimum sentence of imprisonment of 7 years as opposed to the offence of murder, where the minimum sentence is imprisonment for life.
- Taking the critique into consideration, the revised Bill has removed the minimum punishment of seven years and now penalises mob lynching at par with murder.

### Adultery and Section 377

- Two crucial recommendations of the panel to include a gender-neutral provision criminalising adultery, and a clause that criminalises non-consensual sex between men, women, transpersons, and acts of bestiality have been left out in the revised Bill.
- In 2018, a Constitution Bench of the Supreme Court unanimously decriminalised adultery for being discriminatory and infringing upon a woman's autonomy.
- However, the panel reasoned that adultery should be criminalised in a gender-neutral manner since it is crucial to safeguard the sanctity of the institution of marriage.

In the landmark verdict *Navtej Singh Johar v. Union of India* (2018), the Supreme Court struck down Section 377 of the IPC to the extent that it criminalised consensual same-sex relations between adults. However, the provision could continue to be invoked in cases of non-consensual carnal intercourse with adults, all acts of consensual carnal intercourse with minors, and acts of bestiality (sex with animals).

### 'Petty organised crime' redefined

- The earlier version of the Bill contained a vague definition of 'petty organised crime' which included all crimes that cause 'general feelings of insecurity among citizens' relating to thirteen specified acts and 'other common forms of organised crime committed by organised criminal groups or gangs.'
- The parliamentary panel's report flagged that the definition was vague, poorly worded, and lacked the necessary procedural safeguards.
- The revised Bill includes a more precise definition: 'Whoever, being a member of a group or gang, either singly or jointly, commits any act of theft, snatching, cheating, unauthorised selling of tickets, unauthorised betting or gambling, selling of public examination question papers or any other similar criminal act, is said to commit petty organised crime.'

## ADDITIONS

- Definition of terrorist acts expanded to include threats to **"monetary stability"** and **"economic security"** among other things
- Clear definition clause for **"cruelty"** against women in a marital relationship
- Penalises publication of court proceedings that may disclose **identity of rape victims**

## OMISSIONS

- Panel's recommendation on **adultery and non-consensual gay sex** not accepted
- A key provision that proposed 7 yrs in jail for **mob lynching** was deleted

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### Key Highlights of the Revised 'Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha (Second) Sanhita Bill, 2023'

#### Community service defined

- The original Bill introduced the concept of 'community service' as a form of punishment for petty offences such as an attempt to commit suicide, public servants unlawfully engaged in trade, theft of property less than Rs 5,000, public intoxication, and defamation.
- In line with the panel's recommendations, this punishment has now been defined under Section 23 of the revised Bill.
- Community service is 'work which the Court may order a convict to perform as a form of punishment that benefits the community, for which he shall not be entitled to any remuneration.'
- Moreover, a Magistrate of the First or Second Class has been specifically empowered to impose this punishment, to encourage a more reparative approach to minor crimes.

#### Handcuffing

- Section 43(3) of the original Bill permitted the use of handcuffs to prevent the escape of individuals accused of serious offences and ensure the safety of police officers and staff during arrests.
- However, the panel recommended that this should be restricted to select heinous crimes like rape and murder instead of extending its usage to persons who have been accused of committing 'economic offences.'

#### Proceedings via audio-visual means

- In line with rapid technological advancement, the original Bill permitted the conduct of court proceedings through audio-visual means.
- However, certain types of proceedings mentioned in the earlier draft have been deleted, including inquiries, trials before court of sessions, trials in summary cases, plea bargaining, and trials before High Courts.

#### Police custody beyond the initial 15-days of arrest

- The revised Bill has overlooked the concerns of the panel regarding a provision in the earlier version that allowed police custody beyond the initial fifteen days of arrest.
- Section 187(3) of the Bill, which corresponds to Section 167 (2)(a) of the CrPC, does not contain the phrase 'otherwise than in the custody of the police' — implying that the prescribed 15-day-period of police custody can now be an aggregate of shorter periods of custody sought over the entire period of investigation lasting 60 or 90 days (depending on the nature of the offence.)

#### Preventive detention powers

- Section 172 of the original Bill allowed the police to detain persons who do not conform to any directions issued by the police to prevent the commission of a cognizable offence.
- However, an ambiguity in the provision permitted the preventive detention to continue until the person is produced before a Magistrate or 'the occasion is past.'
- The panel recommended that a strict timeline be specified to ensure that there is no abuse of power by the police.
- Accordingly, under the revised Bill, the detained person must now be produced before the Magistrate or released in petty cases within 24 hours.

### Key Highlights of the Revised 'Bharatiya Sakshya (Second) Sanhita Bill, 2023'

#### Admissibility of electronic evidence

- Section 61 of the original Bill allowed the admissibility of electronic evidence by underscoring that an electronic record shall have the same legal effect as a paper record.
- However, there was no requirement for a certificate under section 63 (corresponding to the requirement of a certificate under section 65B of the Indian Evidence Act).
- This provision has now been revised to state that the admissibility of an electronic record is subject to section 63.





# Understanding the 3 bills

**Indian Penal  
Code (IPC),  
1860**

REPLACED BY

**Bharatiya Nyaya  
Sanhita (second)  
Bill, 2023**

It will have 358  
sections (instead of  
511 sections in IPC)

**Code of Criminal  
Procedure (CrPC),  
1973**

REPLACED BY

**Bharatiya Nagarik  
Suraksha (second)  
Sanhita, 2023**

It will have 531  
sections (instead of  
484 sections in CrPC)

**Indian  
Evidence Act,  
1872**

REPLACED BY

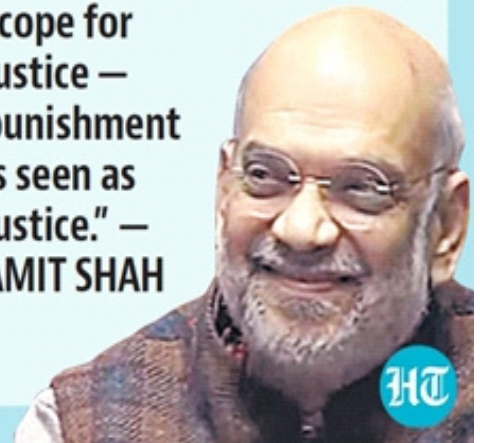
**Bharatiya  
Sakshya (second)  
Bill, 2023**

It will have 170  
sections (instead of  
166 sections in IEA)

## What the laws seek to do

- Introduce changes dealing with offences of terrorism and acts against the State
- Allow the registration of e-FIRs
- Factor in corruption in the election processes
- Make electronic evidence a form of primary proof
- Separately define crimes like mob lynching for the first time
- Include detailed provisions and enhanced punishment for crimes against women and children

"The new laws have been framed keeping in mind three basic principles -- civil liberty of citizens, human rights and equality. Some are unable to visualise this. The current (British) laws have no scope for justice -- punishment is seen as justice." — AMIT SHAH



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## PRESS AND PERIODICALS BILL 2023

### WHY IN NEWS?

- The Lok Sabha recently passed the Press and Registration of Periodicals Bill, 2023, repealing the Press and Registration of Books Act, 1867.
- The Bill has already been passed by the Rajya Sabha in August 2023 (Monsoon Session).

### Key Features

**Registration of periodicals** - The Bill provides for the registration of newspapers, periodicals, and books. It also provides for the cataloguing of books.

- The Bill provides for the registration of periodicals, which include any publication containing public news or comments on public news.
- Periodicals do not include books or scientific and academic journals.
- Books, which were part of the Press and Registration of Books Act 1867, have not been included under the purview of the PRP Bill 2023, as books as a subject are administered by the Ministry of Human Resource Development.

**Registration protocols for publications** - The Bill enables periodical publishers to register online via the Press Registrar General and specified local authority.

- Also, Publishing a periodical is prohibited for individuals convicted of terrorism or actions against state security.
- Whereas, the act mandated a declaration to the District Magistrate, who sent it to the Press Registrar for newspaper publication.

**Foreign periodicals** - An exact reproduction of a foreign periodical may be printed in India only with the prior approval of the central government.

**Press Registrar General** - The Bill provides for the central government to appoint a Press Registrar who maintains a register of newspapers and will also issue registration certificates for all periodicals.

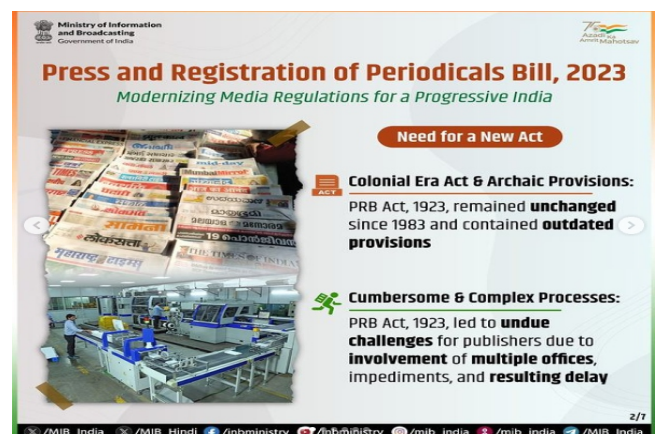
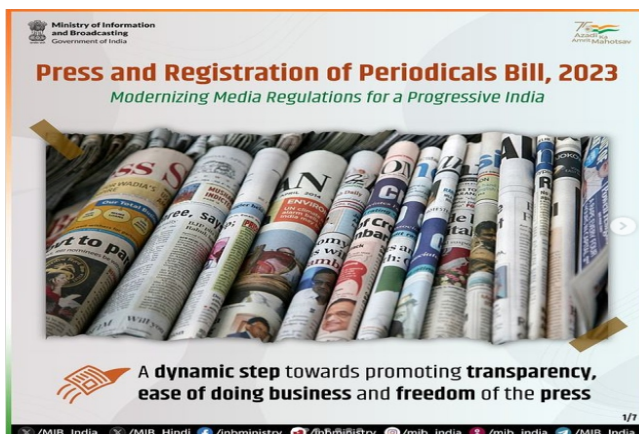
- Other functions of the Press Registrar General include: (i) maintaining a register of periodicals, (ii) making guidelines for the admissibility of title of periodicals, (iii) verifying circulation figures of prescribed periodicals, and (iv) revising, suspending, or cancelling registration.

**Printing press registration** - Declarations regarding printing presses can now be submitted online to the Press Registrar General, deviating from the previous requirement of declarations made before the District Magistrate (DM).

**Suspension and cancellation of registration** - The Bill allows the Press Registrar General to suspend a periodical's registration for a minimum period of 30 days which can extend to 180 days.

**Penalties and appeal** - The Bill empowers the Press Registrar General to impose penalties for publishing periodicals without registration (up to five lakh rupees) and failing to furnish an annual statement within the specified time (up to Rs 20,000 on first default).

- Any person may appeal against the refusal to issue a registration certificate, suspension/ cancellation of registration, or imposition of penalty. Such appeals may be filed before the Press and Registration Appellate Board within 60 days.



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## UJJAIN AND THE PRIME MERIDIAN

### WHY IN NEWS?

- Recently, Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Mohan Yadav said that India, more specifically Ujjain, set the world's time some 300 years ago before the Prime Meridian was shifted, first to Paris, and then to Greenwich (London).

#### Basis of the Claim about Ujjain

- The Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister referred to Ujjain being the Prime Meridian 300 years ago. However, there wasn't a Prime Meridian at that time, at least not in the universally recognised sense that it is understood today.
- However, the staggering achievements of Ancient Indian astronomy and mathematics do provide a kernel of truth to Yadav's claims.
- The earliest postulation of standard time in the Indian context came from the 4th century CE Sanskrit treatise Surya Siddhanta.
- An incredible astronomical work for its time, rivalling Ptolemy's Geographia from a few centuries earlier, it described a Prime Meridian passing through the cities of Rohitaka (modern-day Rohtak) and Avanti (modern-day Ujjain).
- Thus, in Indian astronomical traditions, Ujjain has always occupied a central position, with some modern scholars calling it India's Greenwich (although Indian Standard Time is mentioned with respect to the observatory in Mirzapur).
- In 1719, Sawai Raja Jai Singh of Jaipur built a famous observatory in the city, one of the five he built during his reign.

#### Concept of a National Time

- In the early part of the Industrial Age, time remained essentially local. Each factory, and each town with a clock tower, set its own time. There was no standardisation, nor was there any need for it.
- The need for standardisation first arose in the 19th century, as the world became more interconnected due to the spread of technological innovations such as railways, steamships, and telegraph.
- There was, however, no direct leap from local to global time. First came national times, seen as a means and symbol of national unification, as well as a way to better govern colonial possessions.
- Thus, there came to be national prime meridians — reference points to determine time worldwide, but differing from country to country.

#### National to Global

- In 1883, a convention of railroad executives met in Chicago and agreed to the implementation of five time zones in North America, using the Greenwich Mean Time as the basis.
- The following year, representatives from 26 countries met in Washington DC at the International Meridian Conference and agreed on the need to “adopt a single prime meridian for all nations.
- The Conference adopted “the meridian passing through the centre of the transit instrument at the Observatory of Greenwich as the initial meridian for longitude”.
- In 1983, the IERS (International Earth Rotation and Reference Systems Service) Reference Meridian, also called the International Reference Meridian, was adopted, which lay 102 m from the old Greenwich Meridian.

#### DID YOU KNOW?

- The world is divided into 24 time zones and each time zone covers 15° longitude.
- The meridian at 180° longitude is commonly known as the International Date Line.
- The International Date Line is drawn in a zig-zag manner.
- The prime meridian passes through 8 countries - the United Kingdom, France, Spain, Algeria, Mali, Burkina Faso, Ghana, and Togo.
- In India, the longitude of 82½° E (82° 30'E) is treated as the standard meridian.
- The local time at the standard meridian is taken as the standard time for the whole country. It is known as the Indian Standard Time (IST).
- Indian Standard Time is 5 hours 30 minutes ahead of Greenwich Mean Time (GMT), now called the Universal Coordinated Time (UTC).
- The standard meridian of India passes through Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Chhatisgarh, Odisha, and Andhra Pradesh.





## CHIEF GUEST FOR INDIA'S 2024 REPUBLIC DAY CELEBRATIONS

### WHY IN NEWS?

- France's President Emmanuel Macron will be India's chief guest for its 75<sup>th</sup> Republic Day celebrations to be held on January 26.

#### Key Points

- The invitation made him the fifth head of state from France to be accorded the honour, and the sixth time that a French leader will attend the celebrations as chief guest since 1976.
- The French presidents who were guests at the Republic Day celebrations are Jacques Chirac (1976 and 1998), Valéry Giscard d'Estaing (1980), Nicolas Sarkozy (2008) and François Hollande (2016).
- Macron's presence in 2024 will make France the country whose leaders have been chief guests at the event the maximum number of times.
- Till now, France and the United Kingdom were tied with five invitations each.

#### DID YOU KNOW?

- In 2023, to mark the 25th anniversary of the Indo-French partnership, both countries agreed to adopt a roadmap - 'Horizon 2047' Roadmap - to set the course for the bilateral relationship up to 2047, which will celebrate the centenary of India's independence, the centenary of the diplomatic relations between the two countries and 50 years of the strategic partnership.
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi was the guest of honour at the Bastille Day Parade held on July 14, 2023, in Paris.
- India was earlier keen on inviting the leaders of all the other three Quad nations — United States, Japan, and Australia — for the next year's Republic Day celebrations.
- An Indian tri-services contingent also participated in the parade.
- France is the only European power with significant naval assets in the Indian Ocean region because 93% its exclusive economic zone (EEZ) of more than 11 million sq km is in the Indo-Pacific.

#### Why is being India's Republic Day Chief Guest an Honour?

- Being invited as the chief guest at Republic Day celebrations is the highest honour a country accords in terms of protocol.
- They are given the ceremonial guard of honour at Rashtrapati Bhavan followed by a reception hosted by the President of India in the evening.
- They also lay a wreath at Rajghat, to honour Mahatma Gandhi. There is a banquet in their honour, a lunch hosted by the Prime Minister, and calls by the Vice-President and the External Affairs Minister.
- This symbolism serves as a powerful tool to forge and renew ties between India and the nation of its invitee, having greater political and diplomatic significance as well.

- The candidate selection process starts nearly six months in advance of the event.
- The most central consideration is the nature of the relationship between India and the country concerned.
- Another factor that has historically played a role in the choice of the Chief Guest is the association with the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) which began in the late 1950s and early 1960s.
  - The NAM was an international political movement of newly decolonised nations to stay out of the squabbles of the Cold War and support each other in their nation-building journeys.
  - The first Chief Guest of the parade in 1950 was President Sukarno of Indonesia, one of the five founding members of the NAM.
- After due consideration, the MEA seeks the approval of the PM and the President on the matter.

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## SECOND EDITION OF KASHI-TAMIL SANGAMAM

### WHY IN NEWS?

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the second edition of the Kashi Tamil Sangamam on December 17 at Varanasi's 'Namo Ghat'.

#### Key Points

- The Sangamam was held from December 17-31 and saw the participation of 1,400 dignitaries, including students, teachers, farmers, writers and spiritual leaders, from Tamil Nadu and Puducherry.
- The Sangamam aimed at rediscovering, reaffirming and celebrating the age-old links between Tamil Nadu and Kashi, two of the country's most important and ancient seats of learning.
- The Kashi Tamil Sangamam also strengthens the spirit of "Ek Bharat, Shrestha Bharat".
- The Union Ministry of Education is the nodal agency for the event with participation from the ministries of culture, tourism, railways, textiles, food processing, MSME, information and broadcasting, skill development and entrepreneurship.
- IIT Madras and BHU are the two implementing agencies for the programme.

#### History of ties between Kashi and Tamil Nadu

- Legend has it that King Parakrama Pandya, who ruled over the region around Madurai in the 15th century, wanted to build a temple to Lord Shiva, and he travelled to Kashi to bring back a lingam.
- While returning, he stopped to rest under a tree — but when he tried to continue his journey, the cow carrying the lingam refused to move.
- Parakrama Pandya understood this to be the Lord's wish, and installed the lingam there, a place that came to be known as Sivakasi.
- For devotees who could not visit Kashi, the Pandyas built the Kasi Viswanathar Temple in what is today Tenkasi in southwestern Tamil Nadu, close to the state's border with Kerala.

#### DID YOU KNOW?

- Ancient Indian philosophers from Tamil Nadu, like Ramunajacharya, travelled to Kashi to expand their spiritual learnings.
- There are also references to Kashi in Tamil texts such as Kalittokai and Thiruppugazh.
- In December 2022, Prime Minister Modi released the translation of the Thirukkural in 13 languages and announced that a chair dedicated to the Tamil poet Subramania Bharati, or Bharatiyar, would be set up in Banaras Hindu University (BHU).
- The Kashi Tamil Sangamam was proposed by the High-Powered Committee for the Promotion of Indian Languages, or Bharatiya Bhasha Samiti, appointed by the Ministry of Education.
- The Kashi Tamil Sangamam is in sync with the National Education Policy (NEP), 2020's emphasis on integrating the wealth of Indian Knowledge Systems with modern systems of knowledge.



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## ULFA PEACE ACCORD

### WHY IN NEWS?

- On December 29, 2023, the pro-talks faction of the United Liberation Front of Asom (ULFA) headed by Arabinda Rajkhowa signed a tripartite peace deal with the Centre and the Assam government.

### Key Points

- According to the memorandum of settlement, the ULFA has agreed to renounce violence, disarm, disband the armed organisation, vacate their occupied camps, and participate in a peaceful democratic process established by the law.
- The Ministry of Home Affairs will make a time-bound programme to fulfil the demands of the outfit and a committee will be formed for its monitoring.
- The most significant part of the accord is the commitment to address the political demands of the ULFA.
- These include maintaining the territorial integrity of Assam through amicable settlement of boundary disputes with neighbouring States in the Northeast and continuation of the “guidelines and methodology” adopted for the delimitation exercise conducted in 2023 in future delimitation processes.
- Apart from the legislative safeguard, the pact seeks exemption for Assam from Section 3 of the Citizenship Act of 1955 dealing with people who have renounced Indian citizenship or whose citizenship has been terminated, to conditionally stop people of one constituency from being registered in another, and prepare an error-free National Register of Citizens, whose updated complete draft had put 19.06 lakh people out of 3.3 crore applicants on the rejection list.
- Unlike similar pacts with other Assam-based outfits, the formal agreement with the ULFA faction did not signal the end of extremism in Assam.
- This is because the hardline ULFA (Independent) faction headed by Paresh Baruah continues to wage war against the “Indian occupational forces” from its hideouts in Myanmar.

### About ULFA

- The ULFA was a militant manifestation of the students' agitation against illegal migration from Bangladesh and was formed in an Ahom amphitheatre in Sibsagar on April 7, 1979.
- The ULFA is a by-product of the anti-foreigners Assam Agitation that began in 1979 and ended with the signing of the Assam Accord in August 1985.
- During its chequered history, there were three important Indian Army operations against it in Assam — namely Operation Bajrang, Operation Rhino-I and Rhino-II.
- ULFA waged war in urban settings and was protected by local sympathy in the hinterland.
- It had bases in five neighbouring countries — Bangladesh, Bhutan, China, Nepal and Myanmar — which allowed for a strategic encirclement of the Northeast.



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**CONTEMPORARY EVENTS OF  
SIGNIFICANCE FROM INDIA  
AND THE WORLD**

**QUICK FACTS**

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1. **Indian Navy** commissioned **INS Tarmugli**, a Fast Attack Craft, at an impressive ceremony held at Naval Dockyard Visakhapatnam under the aegis of the Eastern Naval Command on 14 Dec 23. The ship is named after Tarmugli Island, a small island in the Andaman group. The ship was commissioned in the Indian Navy as INS Tillanchang, a Trinkat Class ship, was in active service till 2006, and thereafter gifted to the Maldives National Defence Force (MNDF) government of India in 2006 as part of diplomatic outreach in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR). The ship was returned to the Indian Navy in May 2023.
2. The **Lok Sabha** on December 12 passed **two Bills** - the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation (Second Amendment) Bill, 2023 and the Government of Union Territories (Amendment) Bill, 2023 - to extend the provisions of the Constitution (106th Amendment) Act – that **grants 33% reservation for women in Parliament** and State legislatures – to the **Union Territories of Puducherry and Jammu and Kashmir**.
3. **Nidhi Shirol, India's first Pompe disease patient**, passed away last month at the age of 24 years after battling the disease. She spent the last six years in a semi-comatose state. In 2010, her father Prasanna Shirol started the Organisation for Rare Diseases India (ORDI), the first NGO in the country for rare diseases. Also known as Glycogen Storage Disease Type II, Pompe disease is a rare genetic disorder caused by a deficiency of the enzyme acid alpha-glucosidase (GAA). This enzyme is crucial for breaking down glycogen into glucose within the lysosomes of cells.
4. **Barracuda, India's fastest solar-electric boat**, was ceremoniously launched at the Navgathi Panavally Yard in Alappuzha. This cutting-edge vessel was jointly developed by Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders and Navalt. The Barracuda, named after the swift long fish, is designed by Navalt for workboat purposes. the 14-meter-long vessel embodies efficiency and sustainability, capable of ferrying up to 12 passengers and cargo even in rough seas.
5. **SGBS Unnati Foundation** became the **first entity to list on the social stock exchanges (SSE)**. SUF is a not-for-profit organisation (NPO) incorporated in 2011 that has trained over 45,000 youth. On listing, the Zero Coupon Zero Principal (ZCZP) instruments with a face value of ₹1 each will get credited into the demat accounts of the respective donors. This will not be traded but will sit in their accounts. The value of the instrument for the donor will become zero at the end of one year when SUF's project is completed.
6. With cases of the **COVID-19 sub-variant JN.1** on the rise across several countries, the World Health Organization (WHO) on December 19, 2023, designated it as a “variant of interest” separate from its ancestor BA.2.86 that is commonly referred to as Pirola.
7. In a bid to achieve '**Insurance For All by 2047**', LIC will play a significant role and to meet that objective it is planning to launch a product especially designed for rural areas. To sell those products Bima Vahak would be engaged and it will be a women-centric distribution channel model.
8. Every year, on **December 22**, India observes its **National Mathematics Day** in honour of Srinivasa Ramanujan, regarded as one of the greatest mathematicians to ever grace the planet. In 1917, Ramanujan was elected to be a member of the London Mathematical Society. In 1918, he also became a Fellow of the Royal Society, becoming one of the youngest to ever achieve the feat.
9. To provide important information about MSP and agronomy to jute farmers, the Ministry of Textiles launched “**Paat-Mitro**” - a mobile application, developed by The Jute Corporation of India Limited (JCI). India is the largest producer of jute followed by Bangladesh and China. However, in terms of acreage and trade, Bangladesh takes the lead accounting for three-fourths of the global jute exports in comparison to India's 7%.
10. Every year, **National Consumer Rights Day** is celebrated on **December 24**. In 1986, the Consumer Protection Act was passed and received the assent of the President on December 24. Since then, National Consumer Rights Day is celebrated on this day to commemorate the occasion. National Consumer Rights Day is often confused with **World Consumer Rights Day** which is celebrated every year on **March 15**.
11. **AstroSat, India's first multi-wavelength space-based observatory**, has detected bright sub-second X-ray bursts from a new and unique neutron star with an ultrahigh magnetic field (magnetar). This is expected to help understand the intriguing extreme astrophysical conditions of magnetars. Scientists performed the timing and spectral analysis of this magnetar using two instruments onboard AstroSat: the Large Area X-Ray Proportional Counter (LAXPC) and Soft X-Ray telescope (SXT).

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12. Recently, the **Ministry of Health and Family Welfare** launched '**MedTech Mitra**, a strategic initiative to empower medtech innovators and advance healthcare solutions. MedTech refers to "Medical Technology," which encompasses a wide range of technological innovations, devices, equipment, and solutions used in the field of healthcare.
13. The **Supreme Court** has held that **physical training instructors (PTIs)** come within the **definition of "teachers"** though they may not necessarily take classes within the four walls of a building. Physical training instructors impart to students the skills and rules of various sports and games. The court upheld the case of the sports instructor, saying he was "very much a 'teacher' as he imparted instructions to the students of the college in Physical Education".
14. On December 26, 2023, **INS Imphal (Pennant D68)**, the third of four warships of **Project 15B** that together form the Visakhapatnam class stealth-guided missile destroyers was commissioned into the Indian Navy. Between 2014 and 2016, the Indian Navy commissioned three guided missile destroyers of Kolkata class under a project codenamed '15A'. The Kolkata class included INS Kolkata, INS Kochi and INS Chennai. These ships were a step ahead of their precursor Delhi class of ships, which included INS Delhi, INS Mysore and INS Mumbai, built under Project 15 and commissioned between 1997 and 2001.
15. A group of researchers from **Visva-Bharati University's botany department** have discovered a bacteria capable of boosting plant growth and named it '**Pantoea Tagorei**' after Nobel laureate Rabindranath Tagore. The bacteria will reduce the usage of commercial fertilisers and eventually help to cut costs for agriculture and boost crop yield.
16. The Union **Women and Child Development Ministry** is planning to set up 17,000 creches within Anganwadi centres across India under the '**Palna**' scheme. This initiative aims to provide safe daycare facilities, enhancing the cognitive, nutritional, and health development of children. The Ministry aims to establish 17,000 creches in Anganwadi centres across the country out of which 5,222 have been approved to date.
17. The Union Ministry of Environment and Forest has issued a draft notification declaring a one-kilometre area from the boundaries of the **Pong Dam Wildlife Sanctuary** in Kangra district as an eco-sensitive zone. The Pong Dam Wildlife Sanctuary is located around the Pong Dam Lake (also known as Maharana Pratap Sagar), a manmade reservoir formed due to the construction of the Pong Dam on the Beas River.
18. The **Indian Meteorological Department (IMD)** recently got a new logo ahead of the commencement of its **150th year** of providing weather and climate services to the country. The new logo, in a mix of orange and green colours, depicts numerical 150 embedded with the present logo showing the Indian monsoon winds crossing over India.
19. The Government of India has declared '**Muslim League Jammu Kashmir (Masarat Alam faction)**' as an '**Unlawful Association**' under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA) 1967. MLJK-MA is a separatist political organization in Jammu and Kashmir, led by Masarat Alam Bhat, a former militant. It has been involved in anti-national activities and its members have been indulging in secessionist activities in Jammu and Kashmir and supporting terrorist activities in India.
20. The Horticulture Department of the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) is set to triple its fleet of **tree ambulances in the Capital**, taking the total up to 12 — one for each of its 12 administrative zones — by 2024.
21. The Centre recently appointed **Nina Singh** as the **first woman Director General of the Central Industrial Security Force (CISF)**. She will hold the top post till July 31, 2024. The CISF is a paramilitary force that provides security to airports, Delhi Metro and key government buildings.
22. The Indian Navy unveiled the new design of senior officers' epaulettes, a shoulder piece that signals rank, inspired by the seal of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj, with the move reiterating the service's resolve to shed the "mentality of slavery" and project the country's "rich maritime heritage".
23. Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated two **Amrit Bharat Expresses** at **Ayodhya** on December 30, 2023. One Amrit Bharat train will run on the route from Ayodhya in Uttar Pradesh to Darbhanga in Bihar, while the other will travel between Malda in West Bengal and Bengaluru in Karnataka. Amrit Bharat Express has two WAP-5 locomotive (push-pull) engines at the front and rear.





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## **INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS**

# **QUICK FACTS**



1. The **first Interpol operation, known as “Operation Storm Makers II**, against fraud schemes fuelled by victims of human trafficking, has unearthed further evidence that the trend is expanding beyond the Southeast Asian region. Indian enforcement agencies also participated in the exercise. The fraud schemes included fake cryptocurrency investments, fraudulent work-from-home offers, and lottery and online gambling scams.
2. The **United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)** released a report titled **“Southeast Asia Opium Survey 2023 - Cultivation, Production, and Implications”**, highlighting that there is a significant increase in Opium Cultivation in the **Golden Triangle**. The Golden Triangle typically refers to a region in Southeast Asia known for the production of illicit drugs, particularly Opium. It's an area where the borders of three countries meet: **Myanmar (formerly Burma), Laos, and Thailand**.
3. The **Indira Gandhi Prize for Peace, Disarmament and Development for 2023** has been jointly awarded to **Daniel Barenboim** (an Argentine-born distinguished classical pianist) and **Ali Abu Awwad** (an eminent Palestinian peace activist) for their efforts in bringing together the youth and peoples of Israel and the Arab World for a non-violent resolution of the Israel-Palestine conflict. The Indira Gandhi Prize for Peace, Disarmament, and Development award has been conferred every year since 1986 by Indira Gandhi Memorial Trust in honor of Indira Gandhi, the former Prime Minister of India.
4. **India** will help **Saint Lucia** in strengthening its tax administration by transferring technical knowledge and skills to its tax administration, and sharing best practices under the **'Tax Inspectors Without Borders (TIWB) programme'**. TIWB is a joint initiative of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) where partner administrations help the country by sharing the technical, skills, know-how, and best audit practices with its tax auditors.
5. On December 15, 2023, the competent authorities of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) member states, with the support of the Executive Committee of the Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure of the SCO, conducted a **joint anti-terrorist exercise of the competent authorities of the member states** of the SCO to identify and suppress the use of the Internet in terrorist, separatist and extremist purposes. The joint anti-terrorist exercise was hosted by India.
6. In the world of large language models (LLM) like GPT-4 and Bard, **Microsoft** has just released a new small language model—**Phi-2**, which has 2.7 billion parameters and is an upgraded version of Phi-1.5. Microsoft Phi-2 SLM is trained using “textbook-quality” data, which includes synthetic datasets, general knowledge, theory of mind, daily activities, and more. It is a transformer-based model with capabilities like a next-word prediction objective.
7. According to a new study, the **oldest record ever of a yak** being domesticated by humans has been found in **Bangga, a settlement in the Shannan prefecture of the Tibetan Autonomous Region in China**. Shannan borders Bhutan and Arunachal Pradesh and the Brahmaputra river passes through it. The humans in Bangga located on the Yarlung-Tsangpo (as the Brahmaputra is known in Tibet) also domesticated cattle (cows) of the taurine variety, along with yaks some 2,500 years ago.
8. Earlier in December, the **United Kingdom's** ad regulator banned advertisements from **Air France, Lufthansa, and Etihad** for allegedly misleading consumers regarding the environmental impact of air travel. These airlines are accused of 'greenwashing'. Greenwashing is when firms or governments give a false impression that all of their products or activities are climate-friendly or help in reducing emissions.
9. The World Health Organization (WHO) on December 15, 2023, added one of the world's most under-recognised health challenges, **noma, to its official list of neglected tropical diseases (NTD)**. Also known as cancrum oris or gangrenous stomatitis, it is a severe gangrenous disease of the mouth and face with a mortality rate of approximately 90 per cent. It is also associated with extreme poverty, malnutrition and poor access to sanitation and oral hygiene.
10. Bhutan is planning to build a massive “international city” in an area of over 1,000 sq. km. on its border with Assam. The King's announcement is the first official confirmation of what is known as the **'Gelephu Smartcity Project'**. It is expected to follow environmental standards and sustainability as a goal and will aim to attract “quality investment” from “specially screened” international companies.
11. On December 25, **Japan's Smart Lander for Investigating Moon (SLIM) spacecraft** entered into orbit around the moon after a months-long journey, and ahead of its planned moon-landing attempt on January 19. If the attempt







succeeds, Japan will become only the fifth country to soft-land a robotic craft on the natural satellite, months after India succeeded with its Chandrayaan 3 mission in August.

12. The **2024 Breakthrough Prizes** in the Life Sciences category recognised groundbreaking research set to change the lives of those suffering from three Rare Diseases: Parkinson's disease (Thomas Gasser, Ellen Sidransky, and Andrew Singleton), Cystic fibrosis (Sabine Hadida, Paul Negulescu, and Fredrick Van Goor) and Cancer Treatment Advances (Carl June and Michel Sadelain). Awards were also given in the categories of Fundamental Physics (John Cardy and Alexander Zamolodchikov) and Mathematics (Simon Brendle). Founded in 2012 by prominent Silicon Valley figures including Yuri Milner, Mark Zuckerberg, Priscilla Chan (from Facebook), and Sergey Brin (from Google).
13. **Angola**, one of Africa's two biggest oil producers, has announced it is **leaving the oil producers' organization Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC)** over a dispute on output quotas. Angola's departure from OPEC will leave it with 12 members. Angola joined the group in 2007 and is not the first country to leave the cartel. Ecuador, Indonesia and Qatar have all done the same. The OPEC (headquartered in Vienna, Austria) is a permanent, intergovernmental organization, created at the Baghdad Conference in 1960, by Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, and Venezuela.
14. The **New York Times** (NYT) has become the first major news publisher to sue **OpenAI and Microsoft, the creators of ChatGPT** and other popular artificial intelligence (AI) platforms, citing "unlawful" use of copyrighted content.
15. **China** has unveiled its first ocean drilling vessel, the Mengxiang, which is designed to delve into the Earth's crust and explore the mysteries of the mantle. If successful, this will mark humanity's first exploration into the upper mantle.
16. The National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) has relaunched a spacecraft to study asteroid **Apophis, known as the 'God of Chaos'**. The former OSIRIS-REX spacecraft has now been renamed **OSIRIS-APEx**. OSIRIS-REX had carried out a seven-year journey to bring Earth a sample of asteroid Bennu.
17. The **8th edition of the Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS) Conclave of Chiefs (CoC)** was conducted by the **Royal Thai Navy in Bangkok, Thailand** from 19 – 22 Dec 23. Chiefs of Navies/ Senior Delegates from 27 Members/ Observer countries participated in the event. Admiral R Hari Kumar, Chief of the Naval Staff, attended the event with a three-member Indian Naval delegation. India is scheduled to take over as the Chair of IONS (2025-27) during the 9th CoC planned to be conducted in India at the end of 2025.
18. The WHO recently added the **R21/Matrix-M malaria vaccine**, developed by Oxford University and manufactured by Serum Institute of India, to its list of prequalified vaccines. In October 2023, WHO recommended its use for the prevention of malaria in children, following the advice of the WHO Strategic Advisory Group of Experts (SAGE) on Immunization and the Malaria Policy Advisory Group. The R21 vaccine is the second malaria vaccine prequalified by the WHO, following the RTS,S/AS01 vaccine which had obtained prequalification status in July 2022.

## 2024 Breakthrough Prize in Life Sciences



Thomas  
Gasser



Ellen  
Sidransky



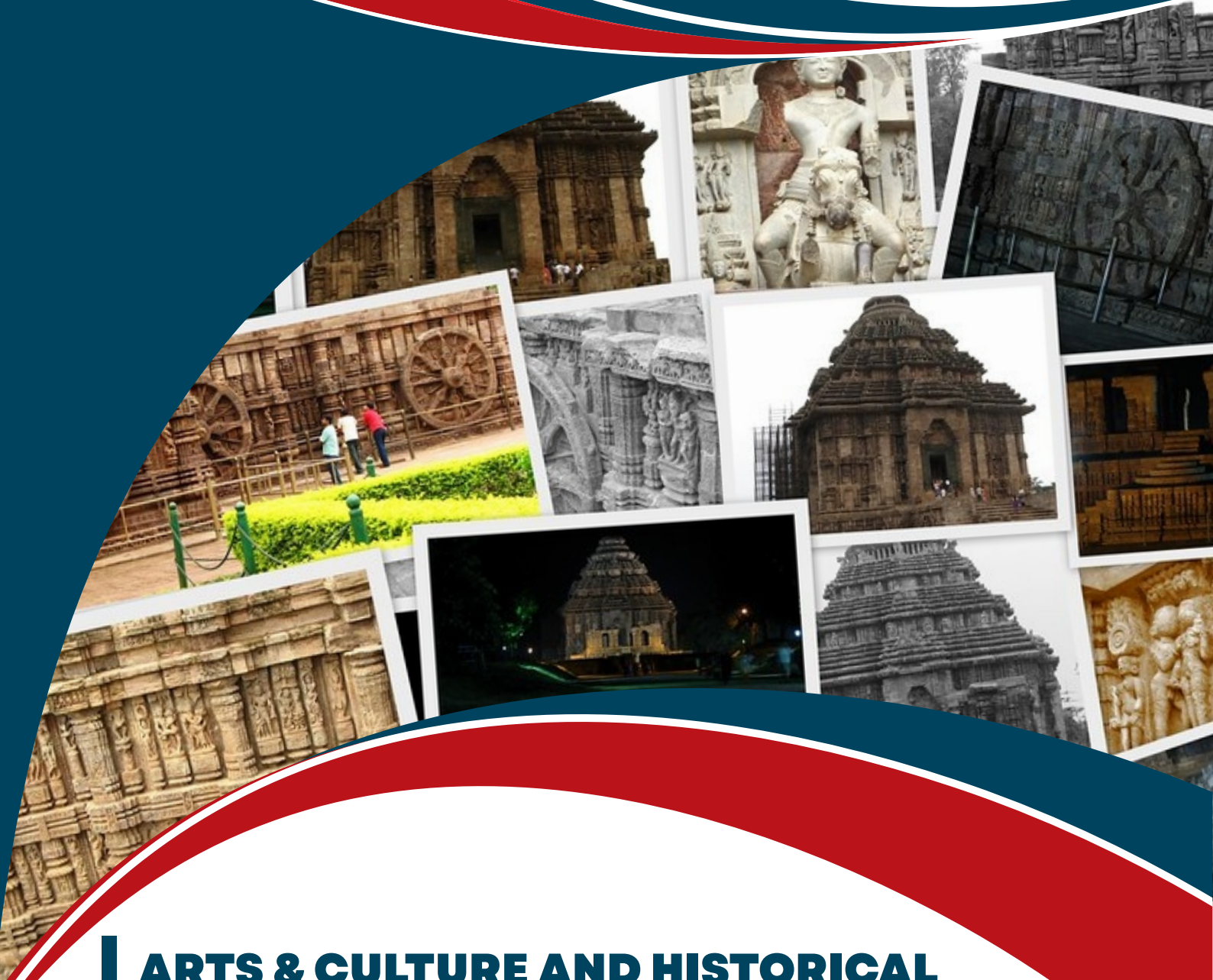
Andrew  
Singleton

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## **ARTS & CULTURE AND HISTORICAL EVENTS OF CONTINUING SIGNIFICANCE**

### **QUICK FACTS**





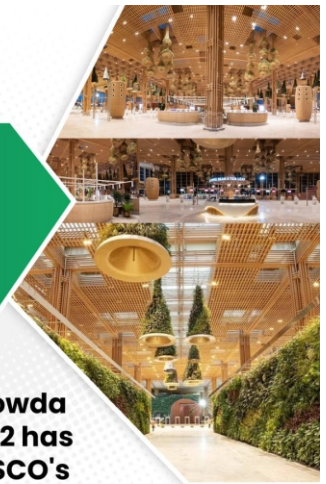
1. Recently, the **Kolattam dance** was performed during Balotsav, a children's festival, in Vijayawada, Andhra Pradesh. Kolattam is a folk dance from the states of **Andhra Pradesh** and **Tamil Nadu**. It is part of a religious offering, where women dancers pay homage to the temple Goddess in many regions of Andhra Pradesh. The Kolattam dance is predominantly a dance of women, without involving men.
2. The **Bihar government** approved a project to develop **Punaura Dham**, a temple complex in Sitamarhi district, as a major tourist attraction. Punaura Dham is believed to be the birthplace of Goddess Sita, wife of Lord Rama and a revered figure in Hinduism. The initiative aims to promote the culture and heritage of Mithila, the region where Sita was born and raised.
3. **Sahitya Akademi** has announced its annual Sahitya Akademi Awards in 24 languages. 9 books of poetry, 6 of novels, 5 of short stories, 3 Essays and 1 Literary Study have won the Sahitya Akademi Awards 2023.
4. **Raimati Ghiuria**, known as the "**Queen of Millets**", not only grew and preserved 30 varieties of rare millets but has also trained hundreds of women in cultivating these nutritious grains. She was invited to the G20 Summit held to commemorate the 'International Year of Millets'. She has preserved 72 traditional paddy varieties and at least 30 varieties of millets including Kundra bati mandia, jasra, juana, and jamkoli.
5. On the **162nd birth anniversary of Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya** on **25th December 2023**, the Prime Minister is scheduled to release the first series of the 'Collected Works of Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya.' The bilingual (English and Hindi) work features writings, speeches, unpublished letters, and other works of Madan Mohan Malaviya.
6. **Veer Bal Diwas** is observed on **December 26** to commemorate the martyrdom of the four sons of the tenth and last Sikh Guru, Guru Gobind Singh. The four sons were Sahibzada Ajit Singh, Shahibjada Jujhar Singh, Sahibzada Zorawar Singh and Sahibzada Fateh Singh. In January 2022, the Centre announced that December 26 would be observed as 'Veer Bal Diwas' to mark the martyrdom of Guru Gobind Singh's younger sons.
7. **Kempegowda International Airport Bengaluru** has earned prestigious accolades at **UNESCO's 2023 Prix Versailles**. The Terminal 2 (T2) secured recognition as one of the 'World's most beautiful airports' and was awarded the coveted 'World special prize for an interior 2023.' It has been marked as one of the 'World's most beautiful airports' and secured the coveted 'World Special Prize for an Interior 2023.'
8. **Good Governance Day, or Sushasan Diwas**, is observed on **December 25** every year to mark the anniversary of former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee. The day is celebrated to create awareness about government accountability and administration among the people. 2023 marks the 99th birth anniversary of the former PM.
9. The Union Cabinet, chaired by the Prime Minister, has approved the proposal to declare Ayodhya Airport as an international airport and name it "**Maharishi Valmiki International Airport, Ayodhyadham**".
10. Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the **Swarved Mahamandir**, a magnificent seven-floor temple located in Varanasi's Umaraha area. The temple is named after the Swarved, a spiritual text authored by Sadguru Shri Sadafal Deoji Maharaj, an eternal yogi and the founder of Vihangam Yoga. Swarved Mahamandir is dedicated to Swarveda, a scripture written by Sadafal Deoji Maharaj, founder of Vihangam Yoga.



**PROUD  
MOMENT**

**Bengaluru's Kempegowda International Airport T2 has been honored by UNESCO's Prix Versailles 2023 as one of the 'World's most beautiful airports'!**

**#POSITIVENEWS**



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**TEST ZONE**



## PASSAGE - 1

[1] has been recognised as the top performer in the Logistics Ease Across Different States (LEADS) 2023 rankings. This highlights the State's commitment to enhancing its logistics ecosystem. The achievement was the result of initiatives such as the enhancement of first/last mile connectivity, development of Multi-Modal Logistics Parks (MMLPs), and significant improvements in various logistics infrastructure components.

Some of the key initiatives taken by the government are: preparation of the logistics policy & integrated logistics plan, creation of a dedicated cell for implementing logistics initiatives, conducting sector-focused stakeholder workshops, implementation of the PM Gati Shakti State master plan, development of MMLPs at Mappedu and Coimbatore and feasibility studies for a high-speed/dedicated freight corridor.

The Ministry of Commerce and Industry (MoCI) created and introduced the LEADS index. The Government of India's unique

initiative, LEADS, aims to evaluate the performance of logistics ecosystems across States and Union Territories. LEADS paves the way for States and Union Territories to understand the main components of logistics performance, which they can utilise for sound policy-making and decision-taking. With its distinctive offerings, LEADS highlights efforts made by individual States and Union Territories to enhance their logistics performance.

This index ranked States and Union Territories based on the relative performance of their export-import logistics ecosystem, informed by the input from vital logistics stakeholders. The evaluation focuses on three critical dimensions: infrastructure, services, and operating and regulatory environment, encompassing both perception-based and objective indicators.

[Extracted, with edits and revisions, from: "[1] retains top spot in 'Logistics Ease Across Different States' 2023 rankings", The Hindu]

**Q.1 Which state's name has been replaced with '[1]' in the passage above?**

- |                     |                         |
|---------------------|-------------------------|
| <b>A</b> Karnataka  | <b>C</b> Andhra Pradesh |
| <b>B</b> Tamil Nadu | <b>D</b> Telangana      |

**Q.2 The LEADS, an indigenous data-driven index to assess logistics infrastructure, services, and human resources across all States and UTs, was introduced by the Ministry of Commerce in –**

- |               |               |
|---------------|---------------|
| <b>A</b> 2016 | <b>C</b> 2018 |
| <b>B</b> 2017 | <b>D</b> 2019 |

**Q.3 What is the rank of India in the 2023 Logistics Performance Index (LPI) of the World Bank Group?**

- |             |             |
|-------------|-------------|
| <b>A</b> 38 | <b>C</b> 25 |
| <b>B</b> 10 | <b>D</b> 65 |

**Q.4 The Multi Modal Logistic Park in \_\_\_\_\_ is the country's first international Multi-Modal Logistic Park under the Bharatmala Project of the Ministry of Road, Transport and Highways.**

- |                    |                      |
|--------------------|----------------------|
| <b>A</b> Karnataka | <b>C</b> Uttarakhand |
| <b>B</b> Gujarat   | <b>D</b> Assam       |

**Q.5 PM Gati Shakti, a Whole-of-Government approach adopted to facilitate integrated planning of multimodal infrastructure through collaboration among the concerned Ministries, was launched in –**

- |               |               |
|---------------|---------------|
| <b>A</b> 2020 | <b>C</b> 2021 |
| <b>B</b> 2018 | <b>D</b> 2019 |

Q.1 (B) Q.2 (C) Q.3 (A) Q.4 (D) Q.5 (C)  
Answers

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## PASSAGE - 2

India ranked [1] in this year's Climate Change Performance Index, up one spot from the previous one, and also remained among the highest performers, according to the report released in Dubai during the global climate talks COP28 on Friday.

Monitoring Climate Mitigation Efforts of 63 Countries plus the EU – covering more than 90 per cent of the Global Greenhouse Gas Emissions, India has received a high ranking in the greenhouse gas Emissions and Energy Use categories, but a medium in Climate Policy and Renewable Energy, as in the previous year.

While India is the world's most populous country, it has relatively low per capita emissions, the index said.

“Our data shows that in the per capita GHG category, the country is on track to meet a benchmark of well below 2 degrees Celsius. While it shows a slightly positive trend in the share of renewable energy,

this trend is advancing too slowly,” the report based on the index said.

The Climate Change Performance Index (CCPI) country experts reported that India is trying to meet its Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), with clear long-term policies in place that focus on promoting renewable energy and providing financial support for domestic manufacturing of renewable energy components.

Despite that, India's growing energy needs are still being met by its heavy reliance on coal, along with oil and gas, the report pointed out. “This dependence is a major source of greenhouse gas emissions and causes severe air pollution, especially in the cities,” it said.

[Extracted, with edits and revisions, from: "India ranks [1] on climate change performance index, up 1 spot from last report", India Today]

**Q.1 Which rank has been replaced with '[1]' in the passage above?**

**A** 6th

**B** 7th

**C** 8th

**D** 9th

**Q.2 The 2024 UN Climate Change Conference (UNFCCC COP 29) will take place in –**

**A** Azerbaijan

**B** Brazil

**C** Saudi Arabia

**D** Germany

**Q.3 The 2025 UN Climate Change Conference (UNFCCC COP 30) will take place in –**

**A** India

**B** Oman

**C** China

**D** Brazil

**Q.4 According to the World Air Quality Report 2022, India was the \_\_\_\_\_ most polluted country in the world in 2022 with an annual average PM2.5 concentration of 53.3 micrograms per cubic metre.**

**A** Ninth

**B** Eighth

**C** Seventh

**D** Sixth

**Q.5 The CCPI is published by the New Climate Institute, Climate Action Network International and –**

**A** UNEP

**B** IPCC

**C** Climate Group

**D** Germanwatch

Q.1 (B) Q.2 (A) Q.3 (D) Q.4 (B) Q.5 (D)

Answers

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## PASSAGE - 3

[1], India's Arctic Research Station at Ny-Ålesund in the Norwegian archipelago of Svalbard in the Arctic Ocean, will now remain operational throughout the year. On Monday (December 18) India sent off its first winter expedition, comprising four scientists from four different institutions, to Himadri.

At least 10 countries have set up permanent facilities at the International Arctic Research base in Ny-Ålesund, a small town above the 78th parallel N, about 1,200 km from the North Pole. The Svalbard group of islands is the closest human habitation to the North Pole.

The mean temperature in Ny-Ålesund in February, the coldest month, is minus 14 degree Celsius, and that in July, the warmest, is 5 degree Celsius. Due to the extreme cold, taking scientific observations or sampling has remained largely limited to the summer months. India will join a small group of countries that operate their Arctic research bases through the winter.

Temperatures in the Arctic region have risen by about 4 degree Celsius on average over the last 100 years; 2023 was the warmest year on record. The extent of Arctic sea-ice has been declining at the rate of 13 per cent/ decade, according to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. At this rate, the Arctic could become ice-free in less than 20 years.

The melting sea ice can have global impacts reaching beyond the Arctic region. Rising sea levels can influence atmospheric circulation. An increase in tropical sea surface temperatures could lead to increased precipitation in the tropics, a shift in the Inter Tropical Convergence Zone, and high chances of an increase in extreme rainfall events.

[Extracted, with edits and revisions, from: "India set to man its Arctic base around the year with new expedition: Here's why", by Anjali Mathur, The Indian Express]

**Q.1 Which name has been replaced with '[1]' in the passage above?**

- |                           |                  |
|---------------------------|------------------|
| <b>A</b> Dakshin Gangotri | <b>C</b> Himadri |
| <b>B</b> Maitri           | <b>D</b> Bharati |

**Q.2 When did India sign the Svalbard Treaty in Paris to conduct scientific research in the Arctic Region?**

- |               |               |
|---------------|---------------|
| <b>A</b> 1975 | <b>C</b> 1948 |
| <b>B</b> 1920 | <b>D</b> 1962 |

**Q.3 Which of the following is the nodal agency facilitates the Indian scientific expeditions to the Earth's poles (the Arctic and the Antarctic)?**

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <b>A</b> National Centre for Polar and Ocean Research          | <b>C</b> National Institute of Ocean Technology   |
| <b>B</b> Indian National Centre for Ocean Information Services | <b>D</b> Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology |

**Q.4 When did India admit as an Observer to the Arctic Council, a high-level intergovernmental body set up in 1996 by the Ottawa declaration to promote cooperation, coordination and interaction among the Arctic States?**

- |               |               |
|---------------|---------------|
| <b>A</b> 2013 | <b>C</b> 2010 |
| <b>B</b> 2005 | <b>D</b> 2015 |

**Q.5 When did India deploy IndARC, India's first moored-underwater observatory in the Kongsfjorden fjord, Svalbard, to monitor the impact of the changes in the Arctic Ocean?**

- |               |               |
|---------------|---------------|
| <b>A</b> 2014 | <b>C</b> 2016 |
| <b>B</b> 2015 | <b>D</b> 2017 |

Q.1 (A) Q.2 (B) Q.3 (A) Q.4 (A) Q.5 (A)

Answers

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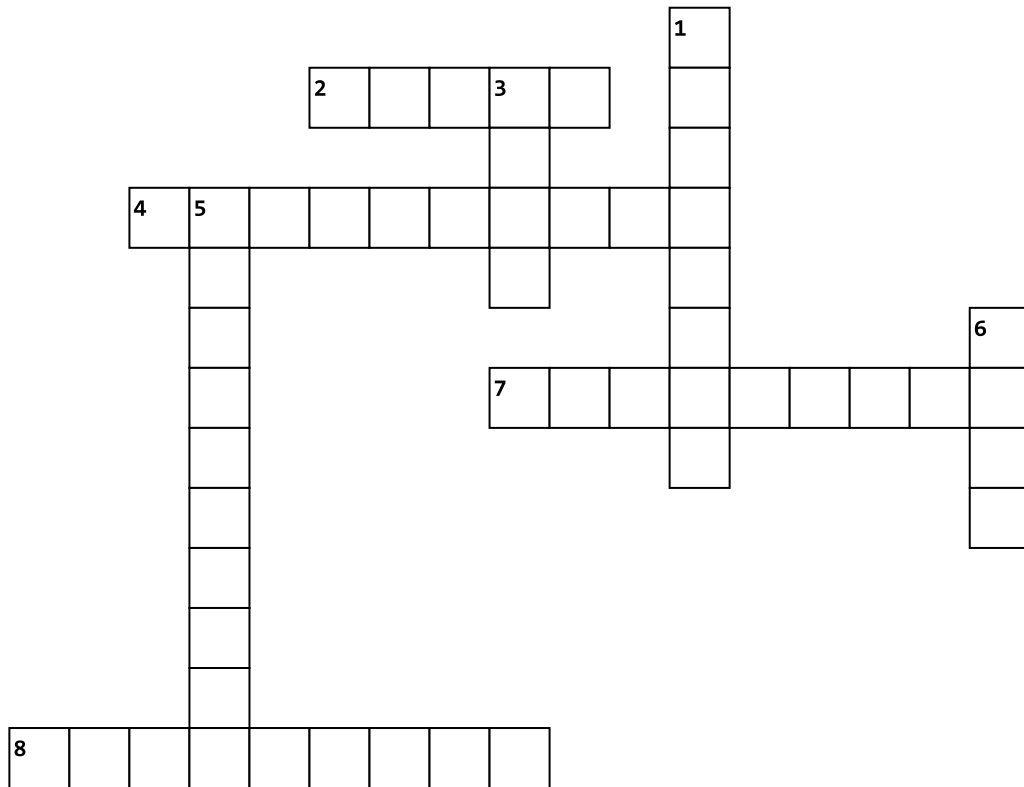
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The Question Bank



# **CROSSWORD CORNER**



## CROSSWORD - 1



### Across

2. Scheme of Women and Child Development Ministry to set up 17,000 creches
4. National Mathematics Day
7. First woman Director General of the CISF
8. India's fastest solar-electric boat

### Down

1. India's first multi-wavelength space-based observatory
3. Added to the WHO's official list of neglected tropical diseases
5. National Consumer Rights Day
6. Microsoft's new small language model released recently

### Answers

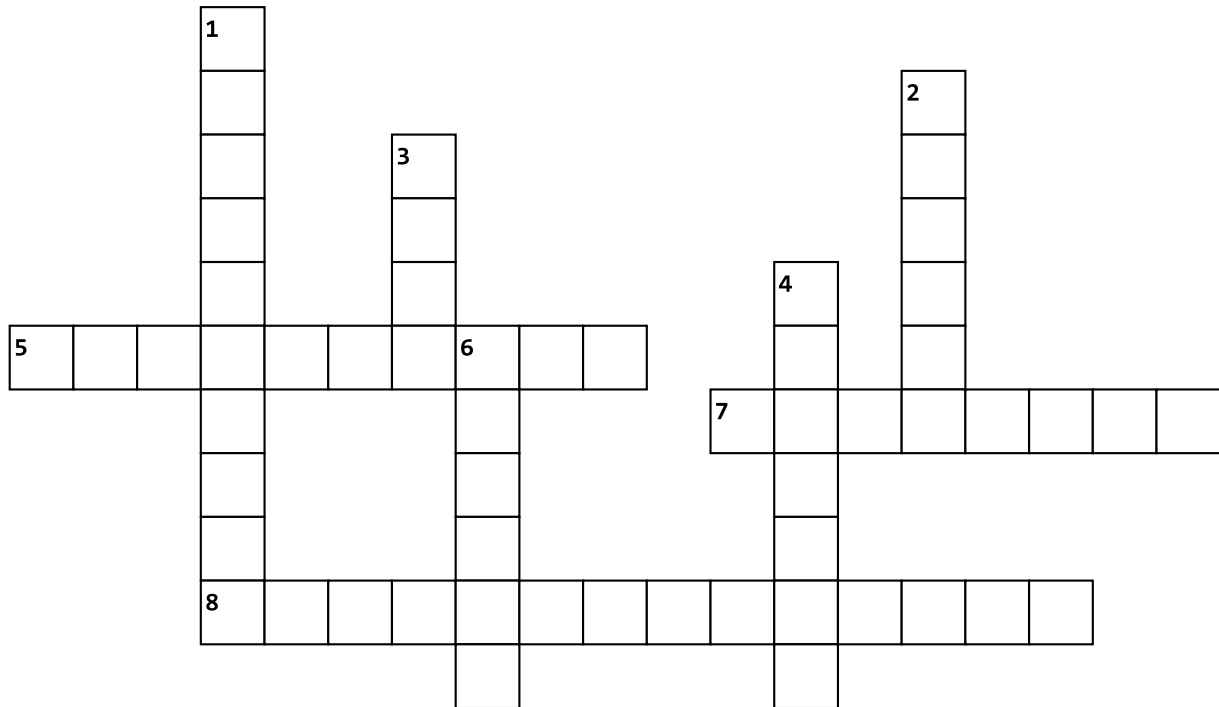
8	Barracuda	4	22December
7	NinaSingh	3	Noma
6	Ph12	2	Palna
5	24December	1	AstroSat







## CROSSWORD - 2



### Across

5. Good Governance Day or Sushasan Diwas
7. Folk dance from the states of Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu
8. Known as the "Queen of Millets"

### Down

1. Veer Bal Diwas
2. African country announced its exit from OPEC
3. Japan's spacecraft entered into orbit around the moon
4. Asteroid, known as the 'God of Chaos'
6. Country to develop Gelephu Smartcity Project

### Answers

8 RaimatGhuria  
7 Kolattam  
6 Bhutan  
5 25December

4 Apophis  
3 SLIM  
2 Angola  
1 26December

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