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LawEx

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SUPREME COURT ON REMISSION OF CONVICTS

BILKIS BANO RAPE CASE



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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 Supreme Court (SC) on January 8, 2023, set aside the remission of 11 convicts sentenced to life imprisonment for the gang rape of Bilkis Bano and murder of her family, during the 2002 communal riots in Gujarat. Recently, India decided to formally join the Square Kilometer Array (SKA) project, an international scientific collaboration working to build the world's largest radio telescope. The President of India presented the Sports and Adventure Awards 2023. Indore and Surat have been adjudged India's cleanest cities as part of the Swachh Survekshan 2023 Awards. For more information, keep reading.

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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 10th 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.

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QUICK BOOSTERS



SUPREME COURT ON REMISSION OF CONVICTS BILKIS BANO RAPE CASE

WHY IN NEWS?

- The Supreme Court (SC) on January 8, 2023, set aside the remission of 11 convicts sentenced to life imprisonment for the gang rape of Bilkis Bano and murder of her family, during the 2002 communal riots in Gujarat.
 - The remission order was passed by the Gujarat government in August 2022.

Background

- During the 2002 Gujarat riots, Bilkis Bano, a pregnant woman at the time, was subjected to a brutal gangrape, while seven members of her family, including her three-year-old daughter, were killed by a mob during the riots.
- In 2003, Bilkis Bano approached the Supreme Court to transfer the investigation from the state police to CBI.
- Considering the need for a fair trial, the SC shifted the case from Gujarat to Maharashtra in 2004.
- In 2008, a CBI trial court in Mumbai sentenced the convicts to life imprisonment; seven were acquitted; two abated during the trial due to their death.
- In 2022, one of the convicts, Radheshyam Shah, moved to the Supreme Court, to seek directions to the Gujarat government to consider his remission application under the State's 'Remission policy' of 1992.
- The argument was that this was the policy in force at the time of the commission of offence (2002) and at the time of sentencing (2008).
- The Supreme Court in an order in May 2022, directed the Gujarat government to consider Shah's application for premature release under the 1992 policy.
- The Godhra Jail Advisory Committee (JAC) headed by the District Magistrate unanimously recommended the remission of sentence for the 11 convicts and they were freed in August 2022.

This decision sparked controversy and legal challenges due to concerns regarding the authority and jurisdiction responsible for granting such remissions.

- Firstly, the provisions of Criminal Procedure Code (CrPC) are quite clear, that the appropriate State government for considering the remission application should have been Maharashtra where the sentencing happened and not Gujarat where the offence was committed or jail term was being served.
 - Also, the law requires the opinion of the presiding judge of the convicting court to be obtained before considering the remission petition, which was not followed in this case.
- Secondly, the Supreme Court in Laxman Naskar versus Union of India (2000) had laid down five grounds on which remission is to be considered.
 - The first of these is whether the offence is an individual act of crime that does not affect society. It would be preposterous to surmise that such a heinous crime does not impact the conscience of a civilised society.
- Thirdly, the Supreme Court in Sangeet versus State of Haryana (2012) had held that a convict serving life imprisonment does not have a right to be prematurely released on completion of 14 years in jail and that remission should be considered only on a case-by-case basis.
 - In light of this judgment, the Union Home Ministry had issued an advisory in February 2013 prescribing that remission should not be granted in a 'wholesale manner'.

Key Highlights of SC Ruling

- In its judgment, a Bench of Justices B.V. Nagarathna and Ujjal Bhuyan said the Gujarat government is not the appropriate government to consider the remission petition.
 - It held that the May 2022 order of the Supreme Court, that asked the Gujarat government to consider the remission petitions, was obtained through fraud and suppression of facts before the court.
 - Hence, it held the May 2022 order of the Supreme Court to be a nullity.
- It further ordered the surrender of all 11 persons before jail authorities within two weeks.
 - It held that the appropriate government for considering the remission petitions in the instant case is Maharashtra and it may consider their petitions in accordance with law and the guidelines laid down by the Court.

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- Recently, all 11 convicts in the case of gangrape of Bilkis Bano moved the Supreme Court requesting more time to surrender before jail authorities.
- The Supreme Court of India refused to extend the time for surrender to the 11 convicts in the Bilkis Bano gangrape case.
- The court held that the reasons cited in their application do not prevent them from complying with the January 8 order to surrender in two weeks.

Law on Remissions

- Article 72 and 161 of the Constitution provide powers to the President and Governor respectively to grant pardon, commutation, remission, respite or reprieve to a convict.
 - These are sovereign powers vested in the heads of the Union and State executive to be exercised on the advice of the council of ministers.
- Apart from this, the appropriate State government under Section 432 of the Criminal Procedure Code, 1973 (CrPC) may remit the whole or part of the punishment to which a convict has been sentenced.
 - In the case of life imprisonment convicts, this remission can be done only after a period of 14 years in jail as per Section 433A of the CrPC.
- Prisoners are often released on the birth and death anniversaries of prominent leaders and other important occasions.

Understanding apex court's judgment

WHAT THE TOP COURT SAID

- Remission order of August 10, 2022 lacked competence
- Place of trial to decide remission-granting authority
- Maharashtra government alone could grant remission as the trial was held in Mumbai
- Gujarat government was complicit, acted in tandem with convicts
- SC order of May 13, 2022 obtained by fraud and is a nullity in law
- Gujarat 'usurped' Maharashtra's jurisdiction and did not seek review of SC order
- Remission orders lacked reasons, were stereotyped and cyclostyled orders
- Gujarat did not consult Mum trial court presiding judge



WHAT HAPPENS NEXT

- Convicts told to surrender in two weeks
- Maha govt to decide remission as per policy
- Remission orders to be reasoned
- Trial court records to be sent by district judge while giving opinion
- District judge not to be a member of state committee advising remission

Today is truly the New Year for me. I have wept tears of relief. I have smiled for the first time in over a year and half... I can breathe again."

— BILKIS BANO





X-RAY POLARIMETER SATELLITE (XPoSAT)

WHY IN NEWS?

- The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) on January 1, 2024, launched its first dedicated polarimetry mission, the X-ray Polarimeter Satellite (XPoSat).

Key Points

- XPoSat is only the second X-ray polarimetry mission in the world, after NASA's Imaging X-ray Polarimetry Explorer (IXPE) launched in 2021.
- During the mission, the PSLV Orbital Experimental Module-3 (POEM-3) experiment was also executed to meet the objective of 10 other payloads.
 - They are - the Radiation Shielding Experimental Module (RSEM) by TakeMe2Space, Women Engineered Satellite (WESAT) by LBS Institute of Technology for Women, BeliefSa-t0 Amateur radio satellite by K.J. Somaiya Institute of Technology, Green Impulse TrAnsmmitter (GITA) by Inspecity Space Labs Private Limited, Launching Expeditions for Aspiring Technologies -Technology Demonstrator (LEAP-TD) by Dhruva Space Private Limited, RUDRA 0.3 HPGP by Bellatrix Aerospace Private Limited, ARKA-200 by Bellatrix Aerospace Private Limited, Dust Experiment (DEX) by PRL, ISRO Fuel cell Power System (FCPS) by VSSC, ISRO and Si-based High Energy cell by VSSC, ISRO.
 - Among these, the FCPS payload is significant as it has potential applications in India's space station which is proposed to come up by 2035.
- Indian astronomers, using AstroSat – India's first astronomy-based space missions launched in September 2015 — performed timing and broadband spectroscopy of X-ray sources but no polarisation studies were performed.
- In 2021, NASA launched Imaging X-ray Polarimetry Explorer (IXPE). It has been designed to operate and perform X-ray polarisation measurements within the soft X-ray band (2 to 8 keV energy band).

What is XPoSat?

- X-ray Polarimeter Satellite (XPoSat) is India's maiden mission dedicated to analysing the polarisation of X-rays emanating from bright celestial sources in the medium frequency band.
- XPoSat comprises two payloads, including Indian X-ray Polarimeter (POLIX) and X-ray Spectroscopy and Timing (XSPECT).
- POLIX has been developed by the Raman Research Institute and XSPECT is by the Space Astronomy Group of URSC, Bengaluru.
 - POLIX will study X-rays with energy 8-30 keV emitted by around 40 astronomical sources in five years.
 - XSPECT will study X-rays with energy 0.8-15 keV and track changes in continuous X-ray emissions.
- The mission has an estimated mission life of about five years during which XPoSat will observe sources that emit polarised X-rays.
- The observations will be done when the magnetars or neutron stars (they are highly magnetic and display a wide array of X-ray activity) are in transit through the Earth's shadow, for instance, during the eclipse period.

Significance of the Mission

- XPoSat, however, will facilitate X-ray polarisation measurements possible from bright sources, that too, in the medium energy band (8-30 keV) energy range — which has never been attempted ever before.
- The XPoSat team has identified several tens of sources radiating X-rays.
- XPoSat will observe two kinds of sources — persistent sources (targeted and known sources) and transient sources (pulsars, active galactic nuclei, magnetars).
- Out in space, X-rays get polarised due to multiple causes. For example, X-rays when subject to strong magnetic fields or due to the interactions with material present around black holes.
 - So, by studying the polarised X-rays emanating from excellent sources like magnetars, black holes and their surrounding environments, and neutron stars, scientists can probe the nature of the radiations and the multitudes of processes involved in the generation of these radiations.



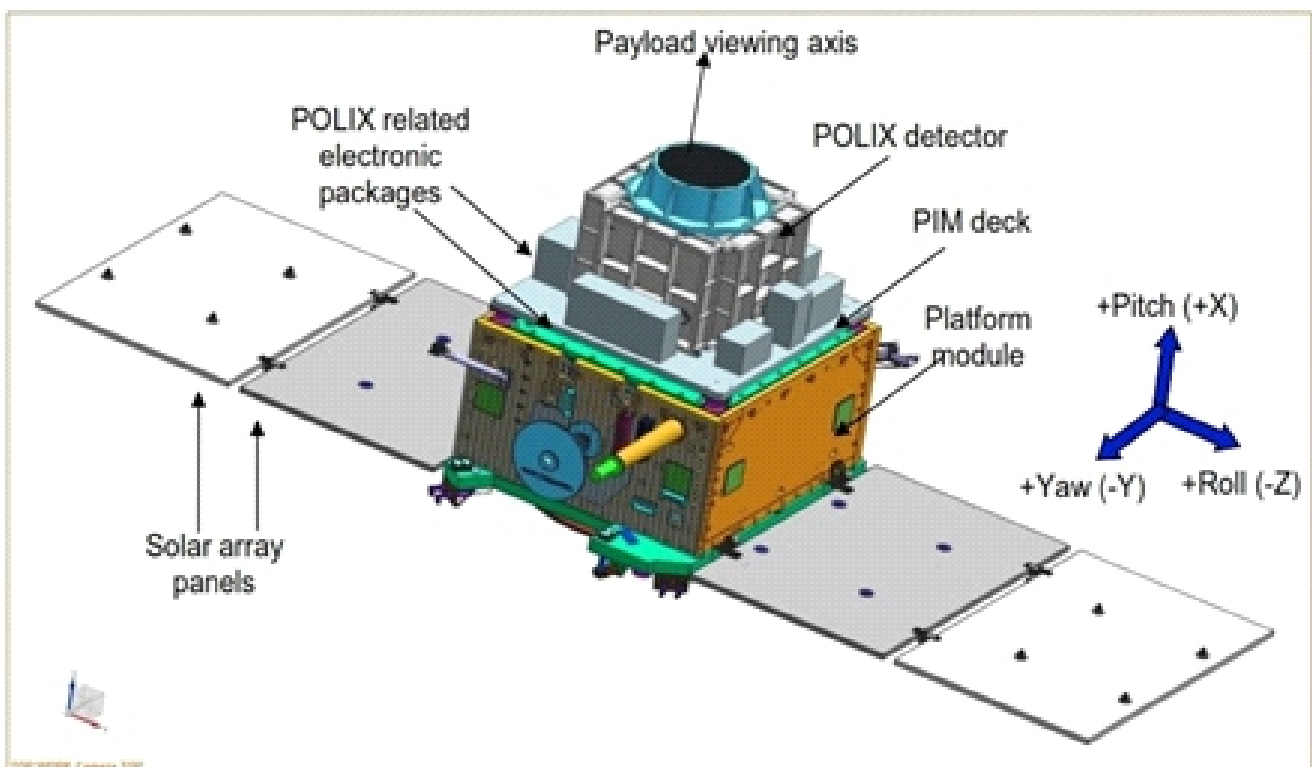
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What is the Polarisation of X-rays?

- X-rays are electromagnetic radiation whose wavelength is 0.01-10 nanometres (where 1 nanometre is one-billionth of a metre), corresponding to energies of 100-100,000 electron-volt (eV).
 - Electromagnetic radiation is characterised by an electric field and a magnetic field vibrating perpendicular to each other.
- The polarisation of electromagnetic radiation refers to the orientation of these two fields as the radiation moves through space.
- X-rays can be polarised when they get scattered.
 - For example, when an X-ray travelling through space encounters an atom, the electric field of the X-ray can energise an electron, which will then emit a photon.
 - Since X-rays are also photons, the new photon will give the impression that an X-ray photon has been scattered.
- Polarised X-rays are also produced when the path of a fast-moving charged particle is bent by a magnetic field.





FROM THE MOON TO EUROPA - SPACE MISSIONS IN 2024

WHY IN NEWS?

- The year 2023 proved to be an important one for space missions, with NASA's OSIRIS-REx mission returning a sample from an asteroid and India's Chandrayaan-3 mission exploring the lunar south pole region, and 2024 is shaping up to be another exciting year for space exploration.

Key Space Mission in 2024

Europa Clipper

- NASA will launch Europa Clipper, which will explore one of Jupiter's largest moons, Europa.
 - Europa is slightly smaller than the Earth's moon, with a surface made of ice.
 - Beneath its icy shell, Europa likely harbours a saltwater ocean, which scientists expect contains over twice as much water as all the oceans here on Earth combined.
- With Europa Clipper, scientists want to investigate whether Europa's ocean could be a suitable habitat for extraterrestrial life.
- The mission plans to do this by flying past Europa nearly 50 times to study the moon's icy shell, its surface's geology and its subsurface ocean.
- The mission will also look for active geysers spewing out from Europa.

Artemis II

- The Artemis programme, named after Apollo's twin sister in Greek mythology, is NASA's plan to go back to the moon.
 - It will send humans to the moon for the first time since 1972, including the first woman and the first person of colour.
- Artemis also includes plans for a longer-term, sustained presence in space that will prepare NASA for eventually sending people even farther – to Mars.
- Artemis II is the first crewed step in this plan, with four astronauts planned to be on board during the 10-day mission.
- The mission builds upon Artemis I, which sent an uncrewed capsule into orbit around the moon in late 2022.
- Artemis II will put the astronauts into orbit around the Moon before returning them home.

VIPER to Search for Water on the Moon

- VIPER, which stands for Volatiles Investigating Polar Exploration Rover, is a robot the size of a golf cart that NASA will use to explore the moon's south pole in late 2024.

- This robotic mission is designed to search for volatiles, which are molecules that easily vaporize, like water and carbon dioxide, at lunar temperatures.
- These materials could provide resources for future human exploration on the moon.
- The VIPER robot will rely on batteries, heat pipes and radiators throughout its 100-day mission, as it navigates everything from the extreme heat of lunar daylight – when temperatures can reach 224 degrees Fahrenheit (107 degrees Celsius) – to the moon's frigid shadowed regions that can reach a mind-boggling -240 C.

Lunar Trailblazer and PRIME-1 Missions

- NASA has recently invested in a class of small, low-cost planetary missions called SIMPLEX, which stands for Small, Innovative Missions for Planetary Exploration.
 - These missions save costs by tagging along on other launches as what is called a rideshare, or secondary payload.
- One example is the Lunar Trailblazer. Like VIPER, the Lunar Trailblazer will look for water on the moon.
- But while VIPER will land on the moon's surface, studying a specific area near the south pole in detail, Lunar Trailblazer will orbit the moon, measuring the temperature of the surface and mapping out the locations of water molecules across the globe.
 - However, because it is a secondary payload, the Lunar Trailblazer's launch timing depends on the primary payload's launch readiness. The PRIME-1 mission, scheduled for a mid-2024 launch, is Lunar Trailblazer's ride.
- PRIME-1 will drill into the moon – it's a test run for the kind of drill that VIPER will use.

JAXA's Martian Moon eXploration Mission

- The Japanese Aerospace Exploration Agency Martian Moon eXploration (JAXA MMX) mission concept is to study Phobos and Deimos, Mars' moons.
- The JAXA has a robotic mission in development called the MMX, planned for launch around September 2024.
- The mission's main science objective is to determine the origin of Mars' moons.

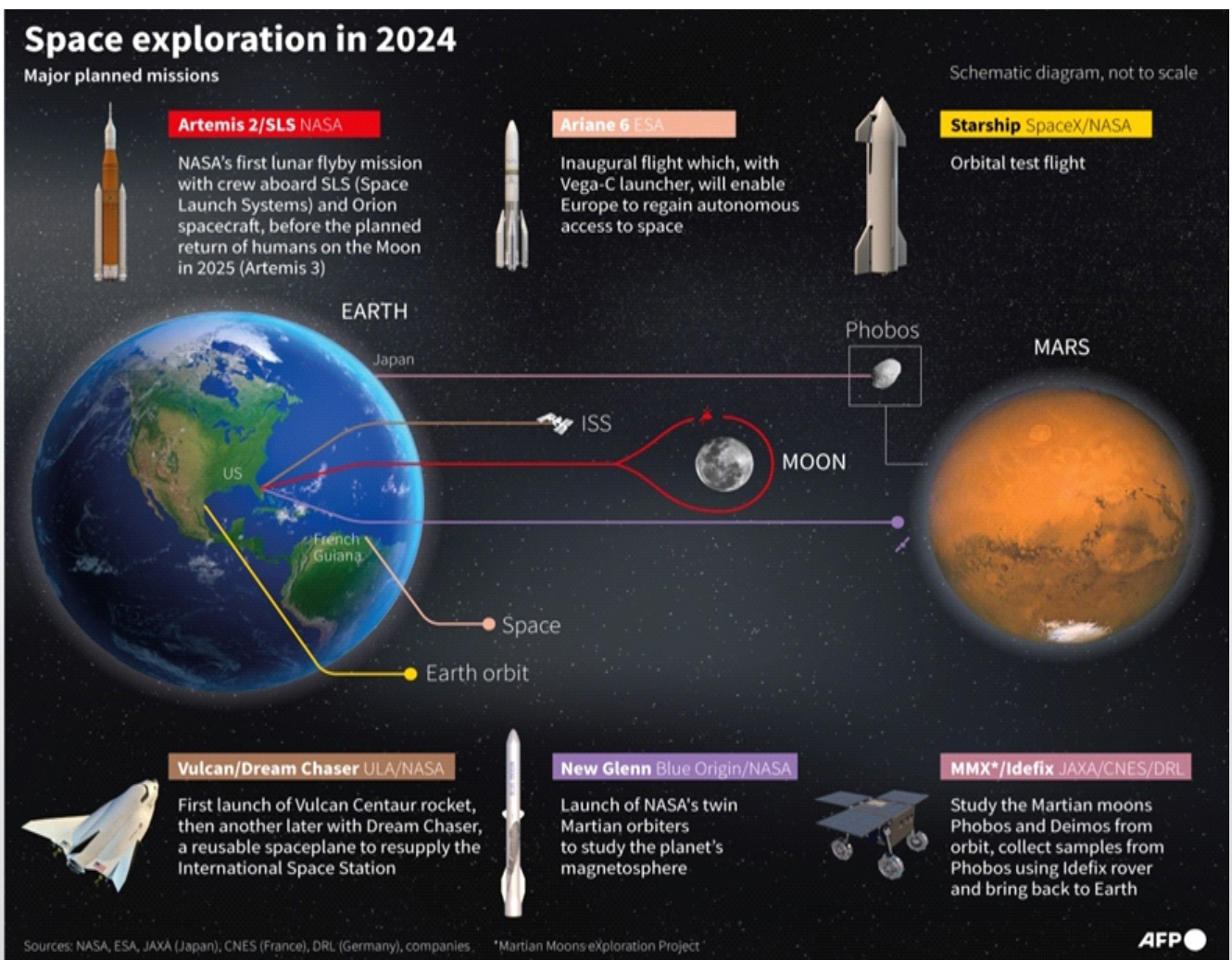




- Scientists aren't sure whether Phobos and Deimos are former asteroids that Mars captured into orbit with its gravity or if they formed out of debris that was already in orbit around Mars.
- The spacecraft will spend three years around Mars conducting science operations to observe Phobos and Deimos. MMX will also land on Phobos' surface and collect a sample before returning to Earth.

ESA's Hera Mission

- Hera is a mission by the European Space Agency to return to the Didymos-Dimorphos asteroid system that NASA's DART mission visited in 2022.
 - But DART didn't just visit these asteroids, it collided with one of them to test a planetary defence technique called "kinetic impact."
- DART hit Dimorphos with such force that it actually changed its orbit.
- The kinetic impact technique smashes something into an object in order to alter its path.
 - This could prove useful if humanity ever finds a potentially hazardous object on a collision course with Earth and needs to redirect it.
- Hera will launch in October 2024, making its way in late 2026 to Didymos and Dimorphos, where it will study the physical properties of the asteroids.



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2024 Indian Space Odyssey

NISAR

- The NASA-ISRO Synthetic Aperture Radar (NISAR) represents a groundbreaking collaboration between NASA and ISRO.
 - This dual-frequency synthetic aperture radar satellite will revolutionise remote sensing, mapping the globe every 12 days.
- The data it gathers will offer invaluable insights into Earth's ecosystems, ice mass, vegetation biomass, sea level rise, groundwater, and natural hazards, including earthquakes, tsunamis, volcanoes, and landslides.

INSAT-3DS

- The INSAT-3DS is a crucial communication satellite within the Indian National Satellite System (INSAT) series.
 - Its primary mission is to monitor weather systems, facilitate disaster management, and improve meteorological forecasts.
- Carried out by GSLV-MK-II, this satellite is poised to enhance India's capabilities in weather monitoring and emergency response.

Gaganyaan 1

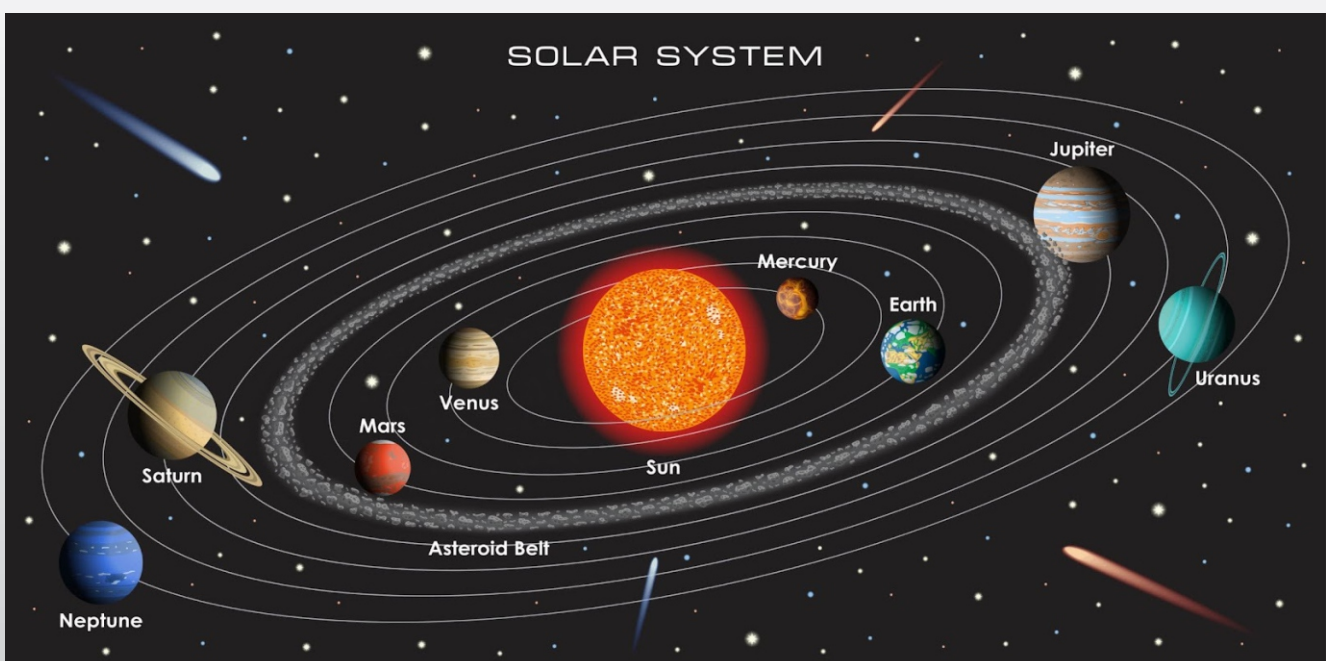
- In a collaborative effort between ISRO and Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd (HAL), the Gaganyaan 1 mission is set to launch in January or February 2024.
 - This test flight, accommodating three crew members, marks a pivotal step toward India's Human Spaceflight Programme.
- The mission aims to prepare for future manned space exploration, positioning India as a key player in human spaceflight endeavors.

Mangalyaan-2 (MOM 2)

- Mangalyaan-2, or Mars Orbiter Mission 2 (MOM 2), is ISRO's ambitious sequel to its successful Mars mission.
 - This mission, aimed at studying the surface, atmosphere, and climatic conditions of Mars, will equip the orbiter spacecraft with advanced scientific instruments, including a hyperspectral camera, magnetometer, and radar.
- MOM 2 is a testament to India's expanding prowess in planetary exploration.

Shukrayaan-1

- Under the Venus Orbiter Mission, ISRO plans to launch Shukrayaan-1, a spacecraft destined to orbit Venus for five years.
 - This ambitious mission aims to study the atmosphere of Venus, marking India's first foray into exploring the mysteries of the second planet from the Sun.



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INDORE, BHOPAL AND UDAIPUR - WETLAND CITY ACCREDITATION

WHY IN NEWS?

- Ministry of Environment, Forest, and Climate Change submitted three nominations from India for Wetland City Accreditation (WCA) of Indore (Madhya Pradesh), Bhopal (Madhya Pradesh) & Udaipur (Rajasthan) under the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands.

Key Points

- These are the first three Indian cities for which nominations have been submitted for WCA based on the proposals received from respective State Wetlands Authorities in collaboration with the Municipal Corporations.
- The ongoing Amrit Dharohar initiative of the Ministry aims to promote the unique conservation values of Ramsar Sites.
 - In this context, WCA will not only generate public awareness about the conservation of urban and peri-urban wetlands but will also help in the implementation of Amrit Dharohar across the country.
- The wetlands situated in and around these cities provide a plethora of benefits to its citizens in terms of flood regulation, livelihood opportunities, and recreational and cultural values.
- Sirpur Wetland (Ramsar site in Indore), Yashwant Sagar (Ramsar site closer to Indore), Bhoj Wetland (Ramsar Site in Bhopal), and several Wetlands (Lakes) in and around Udaipur are lifelines to these cities.

About Wetland City Accreditation

- Recognizing the importance of wetlands in urban and peri-urban environments and to take appropriate measures to conserve and protect these wetlands, during the COP12 in 2015 of the Ramsar Convention established the voluntary Wetland City Accreditation system.
- The WCA aims to further promote the conservation and wise use of urban and peri-urban wetlands, as well as sustainable socio-economic benefits for local populations.
- This voluntary scheme provides an opportunity for cities that value their natural or human-made wetlands to gain international recognition and positive branding opportunities for their efforts in demonstrating strong positive relationships with wetlands.

Three Nominated Cities

Indore

- Founded by Holkars, Indore is the cleanest city in India and the recipient of India's Smart City Award 2023 for its best sanitation, water and urban environment for the record seventh time.
- Sirpur Lake, a Ramsar Site in the city, has been recognised as an important site for water bird congregation and is being developed as a Bird Sanctuary.
- A strong network of more than 200 wetland mitras is engaged in bird conservation and sensitising the local community to protect the Sarus Crane.

Bhopal

- One of the cleanest cities in India that has proposed conservation zones around the wetlands in its draft City Development Plan 2031.
- Bhoj Wetland, Ramsar Site is the city's lifeline, equipped with the world-class wetlands interpretation centre, Jal Tarang.
- Additionally, the Bhopal Municipal Corporation has a dedicated Lake Conservation Cell. A network of more than 300 wetland mitras is engaged in wetland management and conservation of Sarus Crane.

Udaipur

- Located in Rajasthan, the city is surrounded by five major wetlands, namely, Pichola, Fateh Sagar, Rang Sagar, Swaroop Sagar, and Doodh Talai.
- These wetlands are an integral part of the city's culture and identity, help maintain the city's microclimate, and provide a buffer from extreme events.



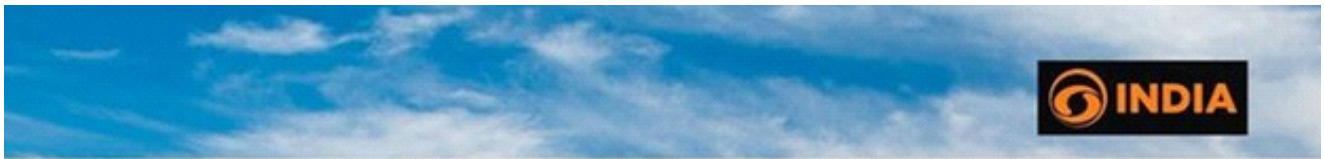
Wetland City
Network





DID YOU KNOW?

- During COP13 the Convention recognized 18 cities for their protection and wise use of urban wetlands.
- During COP14 the Convention recognized 25 cities for their efforts to safeguard urban wetlands for people and nature
- World Wetlands Day is celebrated every year on 2 February.
 - This day marks the date of the adoption of the Convention on Wetlands on 2 February 1971, in the Iranian city of Ramsar on the shores of the Caspian Sea.
- The 2023 theme for World Wetlands Day is 'Wetland Restoration' highlighting the urgent need to prioritise wetland restoration.
- India has been a party to the Convention since 1982 and has so far declared 75 wetlands as Ramsar across 23 states/UTs.
 - India has the largest network of Ramsar Sites in Asia.
- In February 2023, the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change launched the 'Save Wetlands Campaign' structured on a “whole of society” approach for wetlands conservation.



India has nominated three cities for Wetland City Accreditation (WCA) under the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands

The cities are **Indore** (Madhya Pradesh), **Bhopal** (Madhya Pradesh), and **Udaipur** (Rajasthan)



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ANNUAL EXCHANGE OF A LIST OF NUCLEAR INSTALLATIONS BETWEEN INDIA AND PAKISTAN

WHY IN NEWS?

- India and Pakistan on January 1, 2023, exchanged a list of their nuclear installations under a bilateral pact that prohibits the two sides from attacking each other's atomic facilities, continuing an annual practice that began in 1992.

Key Points

- The lists of nuclear facilities were simultaneously exchanged through diplomatic channels in New Delhi and Islamabad in line with the provisions of the Agreement on the Prohibition of Attack against Nuclear Installations and Facilities.
 - The recent exchange was the 33rd consecutive exchange of such lists between the two countries, the first one having taken place on January 1, 1992.
- The two countries also exchanged lists of civilian prisoners and fishermen in each other's custody, with the Indian side asking Pakistan to expedite the release of 184 Indian fishermen who have completed their prison terms and seeking immediate consular access to 12 prisoners believed to be Indian nationals.
- India and Pakistan exchange lists of prisoners and fishermen twice a year, on January 1 and July 1, under the provisions of the 2008 Agreement on Consular Access.

About the Agreement

- The agreement on the Prohibition of Attack against Nuclear Installations and Facilities was signed on December 31, 1998, by the then Pakistani Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto and Indian PM Rajiv Gandhi.
 - The treaty came into force on January 27, 1991.
- The agreement mandates both countries to inform each other about any nuclear installations and facilities to be covered under the agreement on the first of January of every calendar year, providing a confidence-building security measure environment.
- According to the agreement, the term 'nuclear installation or facility' includes nuclear power and research reactors, fuel fabrication, uranium enrichment, iso-topes separation, and reprocessing facilities as well as any other installations with fresh or irradiated nuclear fuel and materials in any form and establishments storing significant quantities of radioactive materials.
- In 1986, the Indian army carried out a massive exercise 'Brasstacks', raising fears of an attack on nuclear facilities. Since then, both countries had been negotiating to reach an understanding towards the control of nuclear weapons.

India and Pakistan Relations

- India and Pakistan have not had any formal or sustained talks since they ended the so-called composite dialogue in the aftermath of the 2008 Mumbai attacks, which were carried out by a 10-member team of the Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT), a terror group based in Pakistan. The attacks killed 166 people and injured scores more.
- The political leadership of both sides made attempts to resume contact, though these efforts were derailed by a string of terror attacks based on Pakistan-based groups.
- India and Pakistan came close to hostilities following the 2019 Pulwama suicide attack that was blamed on the Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM).
- A series of back-channel contacts, primarily involving intelligence and security officials meeting in third countries, led to the revival of the ceasefire on the Line of Control (LoC) in February 2021.





SQUARE KILOMETER ARRAY PROJECT

WHY IN NEWS?

- Recently, India decided to formally join the Square Kilometer Array (SKA) project, an international scientific collaboration working to build the world's largest radio telescope.
 - India has to sign, and ratify, the SKAO convention to formally become a member.
 - The Government of India approved a financial commitment of Rs 1,250 crore, which is the initial step towards this ratification.

About SKA Project

- The SKA is not a single telescope but an array of thousands of antennas, to be installed in remote radio-quiet locations in South Africa and Australia, that will operate as one large unit meant to observe and study celestial phenomena.
- The Square Kilometre Array Observatory (SKAO) is a new intergovernmental organisation dedicated to radio astronomy, headquartered in the UK with ten countries - Australia, Canada, China, India, Italy, New Zealand, South Africa, Sweden, and the Netherlands participating.
- The SKA will be built in two phases in both places, with the first phase of construction of SKA1 having started in December 2022.
 - It is expected to begin operations by 2029.
- The project aims to answer a wide variety of long-standing questions in physics and cosmology, by observing the universe.
- It will study the Milky Way in great detail. Since our home galaxy's view is better from the Southern Hemisphere, the arrays are being constructed there.
- Once constructed, the SKA will be the most powerful telescope ever built and is expected to make unanticipated discoveries of the unknown.
- It will also be one of the world's largest collaborative research projects, involving thousands of researchers and the world's fastest supercomputers.
- It will also study the 'Dark Ages' of the universe and what happened within a few million years following the Big Bang before there was any light, of which we do not know much.
 - Through these observations, the SKA will also aim to detect and understand the role of dark matter and dark energy in the universe.
- Finally, it will aid in the search for life beyond the Earth by looking for planets that orbit stars in habitable zones and studying their atmosphere for organic compounds, as a part of a science programme called Cradle of Life.

Who is involved in SKA?

- Founded in 2019, the SKAO has 16 consortium members — Australia, South Africa, Canada, China, India, Japan, South Korea, the UK, Spain, Portugal, Switzerland, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Sweden, and Italy.
- The South African array will scan for mid-frequency signals, between 350 MHz and 15.4 GHz, while the Australian telescope will work in the low-frequency range of 50-350 MHz.
 - To improve the accuracy of triangulation of data and its resolution, the project will include additional dishes in the future in neighbouring African countries — Botswana, Ghana, Kenya, Madagascar, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, and Zambia.
- International groups working on technologies will develop technical needs at SKA.
 - These groups are classified into three — Precursors or telescopic facilities built at the SKA site, Pathfinders or an existing remote telescope carrying out research, and Design Study where construction and hardware are being worked upon.
 - The Indian Pathfinder research partner for the SKA project is Pune's Giant Metrewave Radio Telescope, operated by the National Centre for Radio Astrophysics (NCRA) of Tata Institute of Fundamental Research (TIFR).
- India has also contributed actively to the pre-construction phase of the telescopes as a part of three groups.



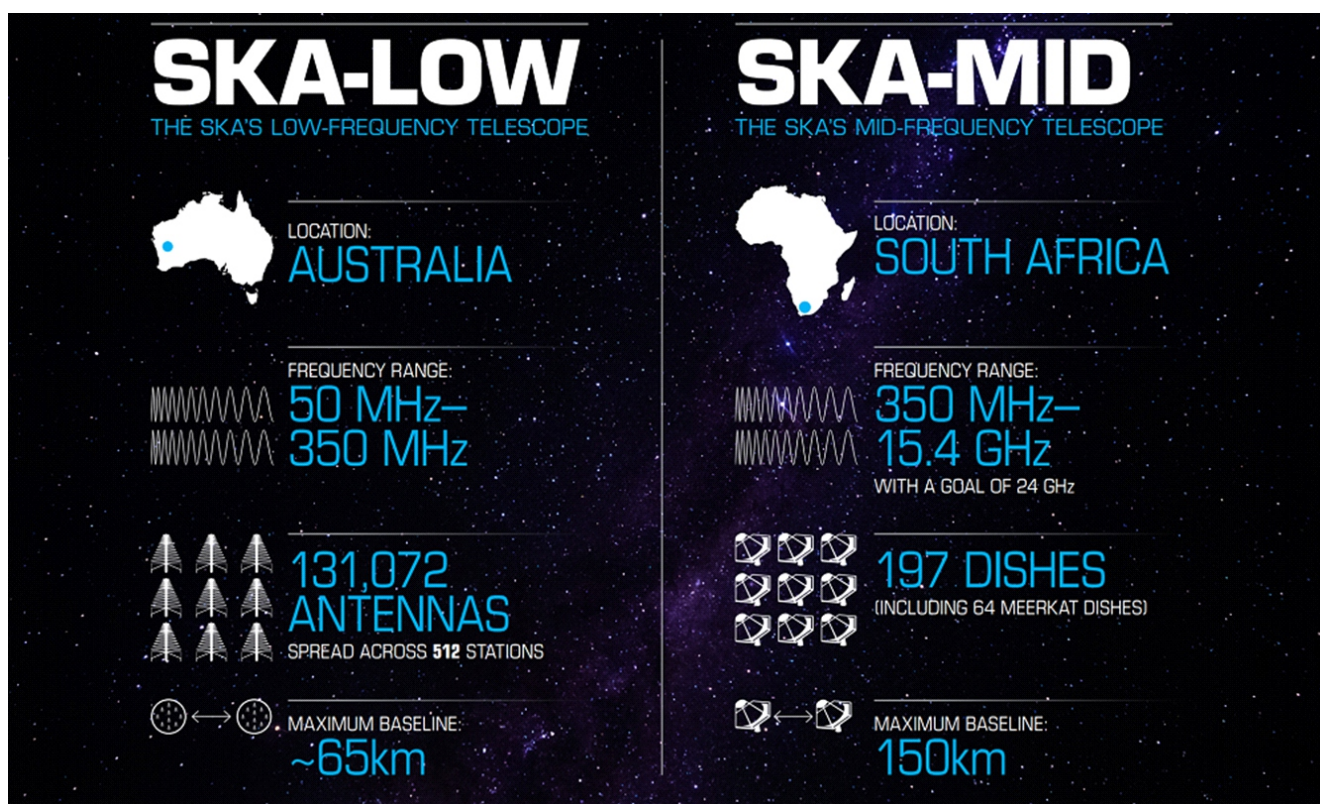


Significance for India

- Though none of the SKA facilities would be located in India, there are immense science and technology gains for the country by participating in the project as a full member.
- The SKA, which will become the most promising tool for research in the most pressing scientific questions in astronomy, offers the next logical step forward for Indian scientists working in this area.
 - A full member status would provide India preferential access to the SKA facilities.
- There are technology benefits as well.
 - The intellectual properties generated by the project, though owned by the SKA Observatory, would be accessible to all the member countries. This can offer huge learning opportunities for scientists, academics and even private industry.

DID YOU KNOW?

- India has been involved in the SKA project right from its inception in the 1990s and contributed to the design and development of the telescope.
 - The main contribution has come in the development, and operation, of the Telescope Manager, the 'neural network' or the software that will run the entire facility.
- India already has highly developed capabilities in radio astronomy - the Giant Meterwave Radio Telescope (GMRT) near Pune - is one of the most advanced facilities in the world.
- India has already decided to build the third node of the US-based Laser Interferometer Gravitational-Wave Observatory (LIGO) in the Hingoli district of Maharashtra and is a full member of the ITER project, which is working to harness energy from nuclear fusion reactions.
- India also has a strong participation in the Large Hadron Collider (LHC), the world's largest and most powerful particle accelerator that is running some of the most exciting experiments in particle physics.



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PRITHVI VIGYAN (PRITHVI) SCHEME

WHY IN NEWS?

- The Union Cabinet sanctioned the “Prithvi Vigyan (PRITHVI)” scheme, a comprehensive initiative of the Ministry of Earth Sciences.

Key Points

- The scheme encompasses five ongoing sub-schemes namely–
 - Atmosphere & Climate Research-Modelling Observing Systems & Services (ACROSS)
 - Ocean Services, Modelling Application, Resources and Technology (O-SMART)
 - Polar Science and Cryosphere Research (PACER)
 - Seismology and Geosciences (SAGE)
 - Research, Education, Training and Outreach (REACHOUT)
- The scheme was approved over a five-year period from 2021-26.
- The major objectives of the overarching PRITHVI Scheme are–
 - Augmentation and sustenance of long-term observations of the atmosphere, ocean, geosphere, cryosphere and solid earth to record the vital signs of the Earth System and change.
 - Development of modelling systems for understanding and predicting weather, ocean and climate hazards and understanding the science of climate change.
- Exploration of polar and high seas regions of the Earth towards the discovery of new phenomena and resources.
- Development of technology for exploration and sustainable harnessing of oceanic resources for societal applications.
- Translation of knowledge and insights from Earth systems science into services for societal, environmental and economic benefit.
- Earth System Sciences deal with all the five components of the earth system: atmosphere, hydrosphere, geosphere, cryosphere, and biosphere and their complex interactions. The Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES) holistically addresses all the aspects relating to the Earth System Science.
- The overarching scheme of PRITHVI will holistically address all five components of the Earth system - atmosphere, hydrosphere, geosphere, cryosphere, and biosphere - to improve the understating of the Earth System Sciences and to provide reliable services for the country.

Benefits

- The Scheme will explore and harness marine living and non-living resources in a sustainable manner for the country and to explore the three poles of the Earth (Arctic, Antarctic and Himalayas).
- The Scheme will also provide weather forecasts (both on land and in the Oceans) and warnings for various natural disasters like tropical cyclones, storm surges, floods, heat waves, thunderstorms and lightning.
- Additionally, the scheme ensures precise weather forecasts for both land and oceans, enhancing safety and minimizing property damages in adverse weather conditions.
- PRITHVI extends its reach to explore the three poles of the Earth; Arctic, Antarctic, and Himalayas facilitating valuable insights and knowledge about these regions.

Cabinet Decisions
Jan 5, 2024

Empowering Tomorrow's Earth Science

Cabinet Nods to PRITHvi Vigyan (PRITHVI) Scheme

Financial Outlay : Rs. 4,797 crore



Atmosphere & Climate Research-Modelling Observing Systems & Services (ACROSS)



Ocean Services, Modelling Application, Resources and Technology (O-SMART)



Polar Science and Cryosphere Research (PACER)



Seismology and Geosciences (SAGE)



Research, Education, Training and Outreach (REACHOUT)

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SC LEGAL SERVICES COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN

WHY IN NEWS?

- Supreme Court judge Justice BR Gavai has been nominated as the Chairman of the Supreme Court Legal Services Committee (SCLSC), replacing Justice Sanjiv Khanna – the seniormost judge of the top court after the Chief Justice of India (CJI).
- A notification issued by the Department of Justice on December 29, 2023, announced Justice Gavai's nomination.

What is the Supreme Court Legal Services Committee?

- The Supreme Court Legal Services Committee was constituted under Section 3A of the Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987, to provide “free and competent legal services to the weaker sections of society”, in cases falling under the top court's jurisdiction.
- Section 3A of the Act states that the Central Authority (the National Legal Services Authority or NALSA) shall constitute the committee.
- It consists of a sitting SC judge, who is the chairman, along with other members possessing the experience and qualifications prescribed by the Centre.
- Both the chairman and other members will be nominated by the CJI. Further, the CJI can appoint the Secretary to the Committee.
- As of date, the SCLSC consists of chairperson BR Gavai and nine members nominated by the CJI.
- The Committee, in turn, can appoint officers and other employees as prescribed by the Centre, in consultation with the CJI.
- Besides this, Rule 10 of the NALSA Rules, 1995, entails the numbers, experience, and qualifications of the SCLSC members.
- Under Section 27 of the 1987 Act, the Centre is empowered to make rules in consultation with the CJI, by notification, to carry out the provisions of the Act.

The Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987

- In 1987, the Legal Services Authorities Act was enacted to give a statutory base to legal aid programmes.
- It aims to provide free and competent legal services to eligible groups, including women, children, SC/ST and EWS categories, industrial workers, disabled persons, and others.
- NALSA** – Under the Act, NALSA was constituted in 1995 to monitor and evaluate the implementation of legal aid programmes and to lay down policies for making legal services available.
 - A nationwide network has been envisaged under the Act for providing legal aid and assistance.
 - It also disburses funds and grants to State Legal Services Authorities and NGOs for implementing legal aid schemes and programmes.
- SLSA** - Subsequently, in every state, State Legal Services Authorities (SLSA) were established to implement NALSA's policies and directions, give free legal services to people, and conduct Lok Adalats.
 - An SLSA is headed by the Chief Justice of the respective High Court and includes the senior HC judge as its Executive Chairman.
 - While the HC Chief Justice is the patron-in-chief of the SLSA, the CJI is the patron-in-chief of NALSA.
- DLSAs** - Similarly, District Legal Services Authorities (DLSAs) and Taluk Legal Services Committees were established in districts and most taluks.
 - Situated in the District Courts Complex in every district, each DLSA is chaired by the District Judge of the respective district.
 - The Taluka or Sub-Divisional Legal Services Committees are headed by a senior civil judge.
 - Collectively, these bodies organise legal awareness camps, provide free legal services, and supply and obtain certified order copies and other legal documents, among other functions.

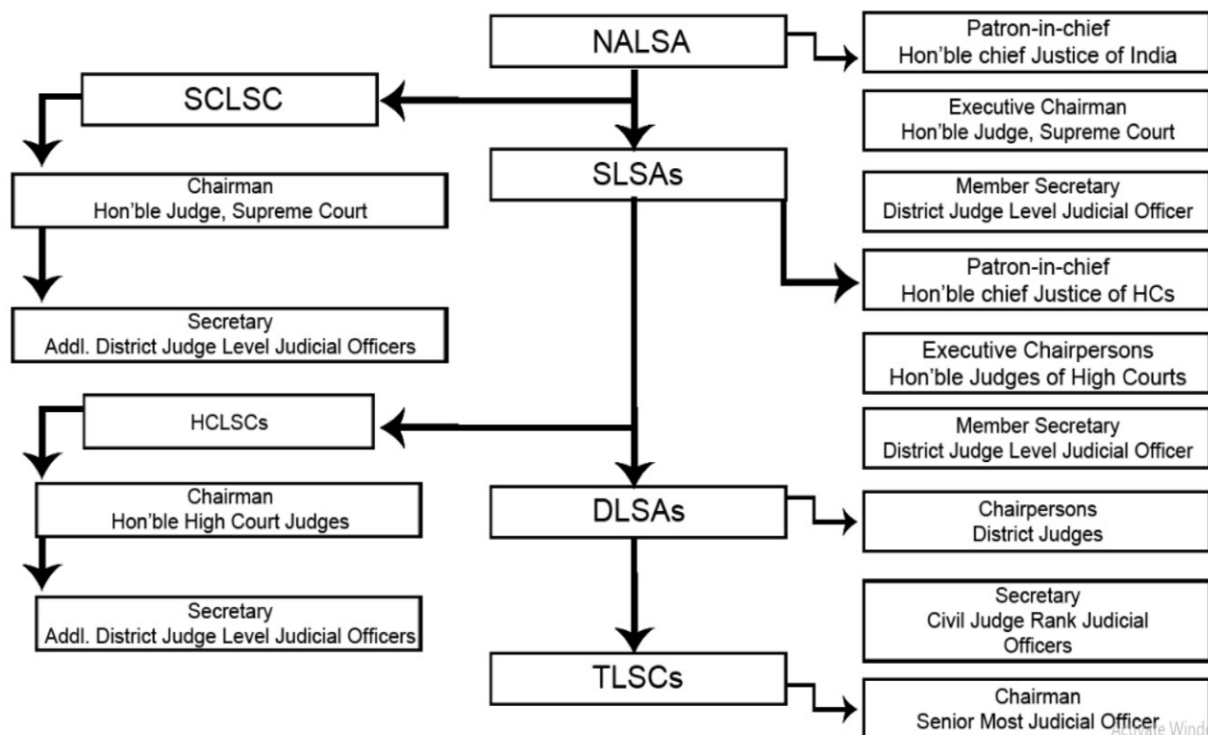




Need for Legal Services

- The need for providing legal services has been underlined in many provisions of the Indian Constitution.
- Article 39A states, "The State shall secure that the operation of the legal system promotes justice, on a basis of equal opportunity, and shall, in particular, provide free legal aid, by suitable legislation or schemes or in any other way, to ensure that opportunities for securing justice are not denied to any citizen by reason of economic or other disabilities."
- Moreover, Articles 14 (right to equality) and 22(1) (rights to be informed of grounds for arrest) also make it obligatory for the State to ensure equality before the law and a legal system that promotes justice based on equal opportunity.
- Although the idea of a legal aid programme was earlier floated in the 1950s, it was in 1980 that a committee at the national level was established under the chairmanship of then SC judge Justice PN Bhagwati.
- The Committee for Implementing Legal Aid Schemes started monitoring legal aid activities throughout India.

ORGANOGRAM OF LEGAL SERVICES AUTHORITIES/COMMITTEES



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ISRO'S COMMERCIAL ARM TO LAUNCH GSAT-20 SATELLITE

WHY IN NEWS?

- The commercial arm of the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO), NewSpace India Limited (NSIL) will launch GSAT-20 (renamed as GSAT-N2), on-board SpaceX's Falcon-9 during the second quarter of 2024.

Falcon 9 is a reusable, two-stage rocket designed and manufactured by the Elon Musk-founded company for the reliable and safe transport of people and payloads into Earth orbit and beyond.

Key Points

- The GSAT-20 is a high-throughput Ka-band Satellite which will be fully owned, operated and funded by NSIL.
 - The Ka-band refers to radio frequencies ranging from 27 to 40 GHz. It allows high-speed satellite data transfers with wide coverage through focused spot beams.
- It will provide high-speed broadband internet connectivity, digital video transmission, and audio transmission.
- According to NSIL, GSAT-20 offers Ka-Ka band HTS capacity with 32 beams having Pan-India coverage including Andaman and Nicobar and Lakshadweep islands.
 - The 32 beams are specifically designed to meet the demanding service needs of underserved areas, aiming to bridge the connectivity gap.
- The satellite, weighing 4700 kg, offers an HTS capacity of nearly 48Gpbs and has been specifically designed to meet the demanding service needs of remote and unconnected regions.

- As part of the space sector reforms announced by the Government of India in June 2020, NSIL was mandated to build, launch, own and operate satellites in "Demand-driven mode" to meet the service needs of the user.
- As part of this, NSIL successfully undertook its 1st Demand-driven satellite mission, GSAT-24 in June 2022, wherein the capacity-board of the satellite was fully secured by TataPlay.
- GSAT-24 mission was fully funded by NSIL.
- Presently, NSIL owns and operates 11 communication satellites in orbit.

About NSIL

- NSIL, incorporated on 6 March 2019 (under the Companies Act, 2013) is a wholly owned Government of India company, under the administrative control of the Department of Space (DOS).
- NSIL is the commercial arm of the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) with the primary responsibility of enabling Indian industries to take up high-technology space-related activities.
- It is also responsible for the promotion and commercial exploitation of the products and services emanating from the Indian space programme.
- The major business areas of NSIL include:
 - Production of Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV) and Small Satellite Launch Vehicle (SSLV) through industry.
 - Production and marketing of space-based services, including launch services and space-based applications like transponder leasing, remote sensing and mission support services.
 - Building of Satellites (both Communication and Earth Observation) as per user requirements.
 - Transfer of technology developed by ISRO centres/ units and constituent institutions of the Department of Space.
 - Marketing spin-off technologies and products/ services emanating out of ISRO activities.
 - Consultancy services.





PROTESTS AGAINST THE HIT-AND-RUN LAW

WHY IN NEWS?

- Recently, transporters and commercial drivers from multiple states have staged protests against the recent legislation - Section 106 (2) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023 (BNS) - concerning hit-and-run incidents.

About New Law

- Under the new law, which replaced the colonial era Indian Penal Code, drivers who cause a serious road accident by negligent driving and run away without informing the police or any official from the administration can face punishment of up to 10 years or a fine of Rs 7 lakh.

According to Section 106 (2) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023 (BNS), "Whoever causes the death of any person by doing any rash or negligent act not amounting to culpable homicide, shall be punished with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to seven years, and shall also be liable to fine,".

- However, if the driver reports the incident immediately after the accident, they will be charged under Section 106(1) instead of Section 106(2).
 - Section 106(1) provides for a punishment of up to five years for causing death by any rash or negligent act not amounting to culpable homicide.

Demand of Protesters

- The private transport operators have claimed that the law discourages drivers and may lead to unjust punishments.
- They also claim that the drivers could be subject to mob violence when they attempt to transport the injured to hospitals and demand the repeal of the law.
- Transporters have raised concerns that the offence provides for stringent punishment even where the accidents are unintentional.
- Their primary concern is the severe punishment of 10 years imprisonment and ₹7 lakh fine for drivers who flee the scene of an accident without reporting the same.
 - The widely circulated view that Section 106 (2) of the BNS is grossly incorrect.
 - While this Section discusses a maximum punishment of 10 years and a fine, there is no actual mention in the BNS about the fine being ₹7 lakh.

Section 161 of the Motor Vehicles (Amendment) Act, 2019, provides compensation for victims of hit-and-run accidents.

The compensation for death is ₹2 lakh and for grievous hurt it is ₹50,000. Unlike Section 106 (2) of BNS, the compensation in this case is not recoverable from the drivers.

- They protest that this penalty is excessive and that it fails to consider their challenging work conditions, including long driving hours and difficult roads.
- Transporters also argue that accidents may be caused by factors beyond the driver's control, such as poor visibility due to fog, and fear of mob violence against drivers if they stop to assist at accident sites.
- The drivers are also concerned that the law may be abused by law enforcement agencies to their detriment.
- They think that these harsh penalties could have a negative impact on the transport industry as a whole given that stringent punishments may deter many from joining or continuing in the profession.
- The current legislation raises concerns about the fairness of penalties imposed on truck drivers and individual vehicle drivers,
 - For instance, an exception has been made under 106 (1) of the BNS for doctors in the event of rash or negligent acts, where the punishment will be up to two years with a fine.
 - This limited categorisation is problematic and is against the principles of equality, as the liability of a wide variety of people working in other sectors also needs to be moderated.
- Section 106(2) lacks differentiation between rash and negligent driving, which are two distinct types of offences with different degrees of liability.
 - They also contend that the section does not consider the contributory factors in negligent acts, such as the behaviour of commuters, road conditions, lighting on the road, and other similar factors, which may affect the driver's responsibility.
 - Applying one clause to all situations may unfairly prejudice drivers in different circumstances.





Need for the Law


- The new law comes in the backdrop of concerning figures related to road accidents in India.
 - In 2022, India registered the highest count of road crash fatalities, exceeding 1.68 lakh deaths.
 - This unsettling statistic translates to an average of 462 deaths daily. Despite a 5% global decrease in road crash deaths, India witnessed a year-on-year increase of 12% in road accidents and 9.4% in fatalities in the same year.
 - The country averages 19 deaths due to road accidents every hour which amounts to nearly one death every three and a half minutes.
 - Over half of all road fatalities occurred on national and State highways, which form less than 5% of the total road network.
 - With only 1% of the world's vehicles, India accounts for about 10% of crash-related deaths and incurs an economic loss of 5-7% of its GDP annually due to road crashes.

Need of the 'Golden Hour'

- The 201st Law Commission Report emphasised the need to provide swift medical aid to the victim in the critical "golden hour" which can prevent 50 per cent of fatalities.
- To fulfil this objective, the government devised the Good Samaritan law to protect and encourage bystanders who provide voluntary immediate assistance.
- However, in remote areas where public presence is scarce, the erring driver might be the sole responder.
- It is for this purpose that Section 106(2) discourages a driver from abandoning the victim.
- However, there's much more to be addressed. A comprehensive plan to check overspeeding, improve infrastructure, fix the responsibility of transporters for vehicular maintenance, and ensure efficient emergency medical aid is crucial to solving the problem.

HOW THE NEW LAW IS DIFFERENT FROM THE OLD ONE

304A IPC (old law) | Whoever causes the death of any person by any rash or negligent act not amounting to culpable homicide shall be punished with imprisonment up to two years and/or a fine

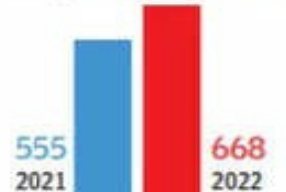


HOW THE NEW LAW CHANGES THINGS
Bharatiya Nyay Sanhita | Section 106

> Punishment changed to five years, but a sub-clause added that states that the person causing death of anyone by rash and negligent driving of vehicle not amounting to culpable homicide, and escapes without reporting it to a police officer or a magistrate soon after the incident will be punished with jail up to 10 years and/or a fine of ₹7 lakh


What Delhi Crash Report States

Fatal hit & run cases have shown an increasing trend in 2022 compared with 2021



Year	Fatal hit & run cases
2021	555
2022	668

47% of fatal accidents come under category of hit and run. Similar trend seen in simple crashes; an increase from 1,035 in 2021 to 1,104 in 2022 (26.1%)



Lack of proper identification of vehicle | Faulty/smeared numberplate, mainly responsible for offenders managing to flee

Lack of surveillance cameras at accident spots another crucial factor

Maximum hit & run cases occur from 9pm to 2am

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GI TAGS FOR OVER 17 PRODUCTS

WHY IN NEWS?

- Recently, over 17 products from Odisha, Arunachal Pradesh, West Bengal, and Jammu and Kashmir have received the Geographical Indication (GI) tag.

Products from Odisha

- Lanjia Saura Paintings**
 - The paintings are a style of wall mural art. Those paintings also called ekons or the idital, and have a significant spiritual importance for the tribe.
 - The art form belongs to the Lanjia Saura community, a PVTG largely residing in the Rayagada district.
 - It is believed that the Lanjia Sauras paint their walls with Idital artworks to show gratitude to their deities and forefathers, and also for the well-being of their community.
- Dongria Kondh Shawl (Kapdaganda Shawl)**
 - Woven and embroidered by the women of the Dongria Kondh tribe, a particularly vulnerable tribal group (PVTG) in the Niyamgiri hills in Odisha's Rayagada and Kalahandi districts, the shawl reflects the rich tribal heritage of the Dongria Kondhs.
 - The shawl is worn by both men and women and the Dongrias gift it to their family members as a token of love and affection.
 - Dharanipenu, the much adored goddess of the Dongria, has a home in every village. The art and drawings made in the Dharanipenu residence are reflected in their shawls.
- Khajuri Guda**
 - Odisha's Khajuri Guda (date palm jaggery) is a natural sweetener produced from the sweet juice of palm called neera.
- The jaggery is prepared by the tribal populations, including the Lanjia Saura, of Gajapati, Boudh, Angul, and Dhenkanal districts in Odisha.
- Koraput Kala Jeera Rice**
 - The black-coloured rice variety, also known as the 'Prince of Rice', is famous for its aroma, taste, texture and nutritional value.
 - Tribal farmers of the Koraput region have preserved the rice variety for around 1,000 years. As the rice grains resemble cumin seeds, it is also called Kala Jeera.
- Similipal Kai Chutney**
 - The chutney made with red weaver ants is a traditional delicacy of the tribals in Odisha's Mayurbhanj district.
 - The ants are found in the forests of Mayurbhanj, including in the Similipal forests – Asia's second-largest biosphere.
- Nayagarh Kanteimundi Brinjal**
 - Nayagarh Kanteimundi Brinjal is known for its prickly thorns on the stems and the whole plant.
 - The plants are resistant to major insects and can be grown with minimal pesticide.
- Dhenkanal Magji**
 - Dhenkanal Magji is a type of sweet made from cheese from buffalo milk, with distinct characteristics in terms of appearance, taste, flavour, shape, and size.

Products from Arunachal Pradesh

- Wancho Wooden Craft**
 - The Wancho Wooden Craft intimately weaves into the socio-cultural fabric of the skilful Wancho of Longding and Changlong districts.
 - In the past, the Wanchos would make wood carvings to decorate the posts and log drums in the paa or paang (boys' dormitory) or to decorate the village chief's house.
- Adi Kekir – a ginger variety**





Products from West Bengal

1. **Tangail Saree**
 - The style of saree originating from Bengal with distinct weaving patterns.
2. **Garad Saree**
 - The saree, known for its unique texture and appearance, is a traditional attire from Bengal.
3. **Korial Saree**
 - This variety is recognized for its weaving style and traditional significance in Bengal.
4. **Kalonunia Rice**
5. **Sundarban Honey**

Product from Gujarat

1. **Kachchhi Kharek**
 - Product of date palm harvested at Khalal (fresh stage), which are bold, crisp and sweet.

Product from Jammu and Kashmir

1. **Ramban Anardana**
 - Locally referred to as Dhruni, is an important fruit tree growing wild in hilly tracts and forests of Jammu & Kashmir.

What is GI Tag?

- GI is a sign used on products that have a specific geographical origin and possess qualities or a reputation that are due to that origin.
- GIs are part of the intellectual property rights that come under the Paris Convention for the Protection of Industrial Property.
- In India, GI registration is administered by the Geographical Indications of Goods (Registration and Protection) Act of 1999.
- Geographical indications are typically used for agricultural products, foodstuffs, wine and spirit drinks, handicrafts, and industrial products.





SPORTS AND ADVENTURE AWARDS 2023

WHY IN NEWS?

- Recently, the President of India presented the Sports and Adventure Awards 2023.
 - The Awards include Major Dhyan Chand Khel Ratna Awards-2023; Dronacharya Awards-2023; Arjuna Awards-2023; Dhyan Chand Awards-2023; Tenzing Norgay National Adventure Awards-2022; Rashtriya Khel Protsahan Puruskar-2023; and Maulana Abul Kalam Azad Trophy-2023.

Major Dhyan Chand Khel Ratna Awards 2023

- The Major Dhyan Chand Khel Ratna Award for the year 2023 is conferred upon Chirag Shetty and Satwik Sairaj Rankireddy (Badminton).
- Their achievements are:
 - Gold & Silver Medal in the 19th Asian Games (Men's Doubles & Team) held in Hangzhou, China in 2023.
 - One Gold Medal in the BWF 1000 Indonesia Open (Men's Doubles) held in Jakarta, Indonesia in 2023.
 - One Gold in the Thomas Cup (Team) held in Nonthaburi, Thailand in 2022.

- In August 2021, the government of India renamed the Rajiv Gandhi Khel Ratna Award, the country's highest sporting honour, after hockey wizard Major Dhyan Chand.
- The Khel Ratna Award is the highest sporting award given by the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports for the spectacular and most outstanding performance in the field of sports by a sportsperson over a period of four years.
- The Khel Ratna Award was instituted in 1991-1992 and the first recipient was Chess legend Viswanathan Anand.
- Among the other winners were Leander Paes, Sachin Tendulkar, Dhanraj Pillay, Pullela Gopichand, Abhinav Bindra, Anju Bobby George, Mary Kom and Rani Rampal.
- Achanta Sharath Kamal, the veteran table tennis player, was bestowed with the Major Dhyan Chand Khel Ratna Award 2022.



Arjuna Awards 2023

- Ojas Pravin Deotale (archery), Aditi Gopichand Swami (archery), Murali Sreeshankar (athletics), Parul Chaudhary (athletics), Mohammad Hussamuddin (boxing), R. Vaishali (chess), Mohammed Shami (cricket), Anush Agarwalla (equestrian), Divyakriti Singh (equestrian dressage), Diksha Dagar (golf), Krishan Bahadur Pathak (hockey), Sushila Chanu (hockey), Pawan Kumar (kabaddi), Ritu Negi (kabaddi), Nasreen (kho-kho), Pinki (lawn bowls), Aishwary Pratap Singh Tomar (shooting), Esha Singh (shooting), Harinder Pal Singh Sandhu (squash), Ayhika Mukherjee (table tennis), Sunil Kumar (wrestling), Antim Panghal (wrestling), Naorem Roshibina Devi (wushu), Sheetal Devi (para archery), Illuri Ajay Kumar Reddy (blind cricket), Prachi Yadav (para canoeing).

- Instituted in 1961, it was India's highest sporting honor before the Khel Ratna came into being.
- First awarded to football Olympian PK Banerjee in 1961.
- First woman awardee: Hockey player Anna Lumsden.

Dronacharya Award (regular category) for Outstanding Coaches 2023

- Lalit Kumar (wrestling), R.B. Ramesh (chess), Mahaveer Prasad Saini (para athletics), Shivendra Singh (hockey), Ganesh Prabhakar Devrukhkar (mallakhamb).

Dronacharya Award (lifetime category) for Outstanding Coaches 2023

- Jaskirat Singh Grewal (golf), Bhaskaran E (kabaddi), Jayanta Kumar Pushilal (table tennis)

- It is India's highest sports honor for coaches. It was instituted in 1985
- First woman awardee: Athletics coach Renu Kohli in 2002
- Given for both recent accomplishments and lifetime contributions

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Dhyan Chand Award for Lifetime Achievement 2023

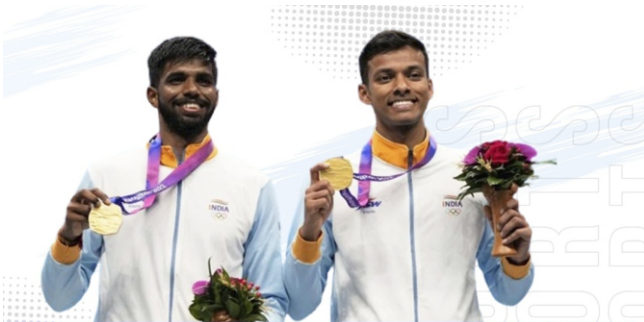
- Manjusha Kanwar (badminton), Vineet Kumar Sharma (hockey), Kavitha Selvaraj (kabaddi)

- It was instituted in 2002 to honour lifetime achievements in sports
- Recognizes contributions to the promotion of sports in an individual capacity
- The first awardees include Olympian boxer Shahuraj Birajdar and hockey player Ashok Diwan

Maulana Abul Kalam Azad (MAKA) Trophy 2023

- Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar (overall winner university)
- Lovely Professional University, Punjab (1st runner-up)
- Kurukshetra University, Kurukshetra (2nd runner-up)

- It is the oldest national sports award in India and was instituted in 1956–1957
- Given to an institution or university for top performance in inter-university tournaments.
- First awarded to Bombay University in 1956-57.



Major Dhyan Chand Khel Ratna Awardees 2023

Badminton

Shri Chirag Chandrashekar Shetty

&

Shri Rankireddy Satwik Sai Raj

Late Ms Savita Kanswal – for Land Adventure

- She was the first Indian female mountaineer to summit two 8000M peaks Mt. Everest and Mt. Makalu in 16 days.

Tulsi Chaitanya Mothukuri – for Water Adventure

- He swam the English Channel in 15 hrs 18 mins 45 seconds, Gibraltar Strait in 4 hrs 25 mins, Palk Strait in 8 hrs 15 mins and Catalina Channel in 12 hrs 40 mins.
- He is the first Indian Cop to achieve the triple crown of the open water swimming.

Anshu Kumar Tiwari – for Air Adventure

- He participated in a skydiving demonstration jump to celebrate the National event “Har Ghar Tiranga — Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav” on 15th August 2022.
- He undertook the world's highest skydiving landing along with another air warrior at Khardung-La - La, Leh in October 2020. This sets a world record for landing at the highest altitude.
- He is the recipient of the MacGregor Memorial Medal, 2021 for extreme adventure sports.

Parveen Singh - for Life Time Achievement

- He has successfully scaled more than 20 Himalayan peaks including Mt. Everest twice and Mt Kanchenjunga.

- The award was presented from 1993-1994 and is named after Tenzing Norgay, one of the first two individuals to reach the summit of Mount Everest along with Edmund Hillary in 1953.
- The recipients are honoured for their "outstanding achievement in the field of adventure activities on land, sea and air" over the last three years.

Rashtriya Khel Protsahan Puruskar, 2023

- JAIN (Deemed-to-be University) - Identification and Nurturing of Budding and Young Talent
- Odisha Mining Corporation Limited - Encouragement to sports through Corporate Social Responsibility

- The award is given to organizations and individuals for sports promotion and development
- It was instituted in 2009



NITI AAYOG'S DISCUSSION PAPER - MULTIDIMENSIONAL POVERTY IN INDIA SINCE 2005-06

WHY IN NEWS?

- Recently, the NITI Aayog released a Discussion Paper titled-'Multidimensional Poverty in India since 2005-06'.

Key Highlights

- The recent report was based on National Family Health Surveys 4 (2015-16) and 5 (2019-21).
- According to the Discussion Paper, India has registered a significant decline in multidimensional poverty in India from 29.17% in 2013-14 to 11.28% in 2022-23 i.e. a reduction of 17.89 percentage points.
- According to the Paper, 24.82 crore people escaped multidimensional poverty in the last nine years (2013-14 to 2022-23).
 - As a result, India is likely to achieve Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) Target 1.2, which aims to reduce "at least by half the proportion of men, women, and children of all ages living in poverty in all its dimensions according to national definitions" well before 2030.
 - The Paper gives credit for this remarkable achievement to significant initiatives of the government to address all dimensions of poverty between 2013-14 to 2022-23.
- All 12 indicators of the Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI).
 - MPI considers twelve different indicators of poverty included under three broad dimensions, namely health, education, and standard of living.
 - India's definition of multidimensional poverty is measured using twelve indicators including nutrition, child & adolescent mortality, maternal health, years of schooling, school attendance, drinking water, electricity, housing, and assets.
- The Paper also notes that the severity of deprivation declined at a slightly lower rate between 2015-16 and 2019-21 compared to 2005-06 and 2013-14.
 - The severity of deprivation measures deprivations the average multidimensionally poor person suffers from.
 - At the same time, the reduction of deprivation was faster after 2015-16 in terms of reduction in the share of MPI poor out of the total population compared to the decade before, owing to a lesser number of years.
 - In 2005-06, the share of MPI poor in India's total population was 55.34 per cent.
- Uttar Pradesh registered the largest decline in the number of poor with 5.94 crore people escaping multidimensional poverty during the last nine years followed by Bihar at 3.77 crore, Madhya Pradesh at 2.30 crore and Rajasthan at 1.87 crore.

- The World Bank defines the international poverty line at US \$2.15 (in 2017 purchasing power parity [PPP] terms) a day to measure monetary poverty.
- The latest World Bank data indicates that the poverty headcount ratio at US \$2.15 a day (2017 PPP) decreased from 18.73% in 2015 to 11.9% in 2021 in India (Poverty and Inequality Platform, World Bank).
- With the ongoing rate of decline in India's Multidimensional Poverty, the country is expected to reach a single digit level of poverty by the year 2024-25.



SWACHH SURVEKSHAN AWARDS 2023

WHY IN NEWS?

- The President of India conferred the Swachh Survekshan Awards 2023 at Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi hosted by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs.

Key Highlights

- Indore and Surat have been adjudged India's cleanest cities as part of the Swachh Survekshan 2023 Awards.
 - While it was Indore's seventh year in a row at the top spot, Surat won the award for the first time.
 - Navi Mumbai retained the third position in 'Swachh Survekshan Awards 2023'.
 - The list of top 10 cleanest cities with a population of more than one lakh also includes Greater Visakhapatnam, Bhopal, Vijayawada, New Delhi, Tirupati, Greater Hyderabad and Pune.
- In the category of 'best performing States' in 'Swachh Survekshan Awards 2023', Maharashtra bagged the top rank, followed by Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh.
 - Odisha is ranked fourth, followed by Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, Punjab, Gujarat, Uttar Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Sikkim, Karnataka, Goa, Haryana and Bihar.
 - Arunachal Pradesh, Mizoram, Rajasthan, Nagaland, and Tripura were ranked as the bottom five states in cleanliness.
- Saswad, located in Maharashtra, has been honoured with the cleanest city award in the category of urban centres with a population of less than 1 lakh.
 - The second and third positions for cleanliness in this category were secured by Patan in Chhattisgarh and Lonavla in Maharashtra, respectively.
- Mhow Cantonment Board in Madhya Pradesh was adjudged the Cleanest Cantonment Board.
- Varanasi and Prayagraj won the top two awards among the Cleanest Ganga Towns.
- Chandigarh walked away with the award for the Best Safaimitra Surakshit Sheher (safest city for sanitation workers).
- The theme of the 'Swachh Survekshan Awards 2023' was "Waste to Wealth", while for 2024 it is "Reduce, Reuse and Recycle."

About Swachh Survekshan

- The Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs has been conducting Swachh Survekshan since 2016. It is the world's largest urban sanitation and cleanliness survey.
- The Swachh Survekshan, which began with a modest evaluation of 73 major cities in 2016, now covers 4,477 cities.
- It has been instrumental in fostering a spirit of healthy competition among towns and cities to improve their service delivery to citizens and towards creating cleaner cities.
- A total of 4,477 urban local bodies, 61 cantonment boards, 88 Ganga towns and 18,980 commercial areas participated in the Swachh Survekshan 2023.
- The Swachh Survekshan 2023 rankings considered various factors, including:
 - Door-to-door waste collection
 - Source segregation
 - Cleanliness of public areas
 - Clean water bodies
 - Citizens' feedback on city cleanliness

Swachh Survekshan awards 2023



Indore and Surat were declared the joint cleanest cities of India as part of the Swachh Survekshan Awards. A look at the highlights

TOP 10 CITIES

Rank	Urban local body, State
1	Indore, Madhya Pradesh
1	Surat, Gujarat
3	Navi Mumbai, Maharashtra
4	Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh
5	Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh
6	Vijaywada, Andhra Pradesh
7	New Delhi (NDMC), Delhi
8	Tirupati, Andhra Pradesh
9	Greater Hyderabad, Telangana
10	Pune, Maharashtra

BOTTOM 3

Rank	ULB, State
1	Kolkata, West Bengal
2	Asansol, West Bengal
3	Haora, West Bengal

TOP STATES

Rank	State	No of ULBs
1	Maharashtra	411
2	Madhya Pradesh	378
3	Chhattisgarh	169

THE MOST IMPROVED

PANAJI, GOA
Fastest moving city with population of over 100,000

NOWROZABAD, MP
Fastest moving city with population less than 100,000

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INDIA'S OLDEST LIVING CITY - VADNAGAR

WHY IN NEWS?

- A joint study conducted by experts from the Archaeological Survey of India and institutions like the Indian Institute of Technology-Kharagpur and Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) has found evidence of human settlements as old as 800 BCE at Gujarat's Vadnagar town which suggests that the 'Dark Age' might be a myth.
 - Incidentally, Vadnagar in Mehsana district of Gujarat is also the hometown of Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Key Highlights of Excavation

- The study found evidence of a human settlement that is as old as 800 BCE contemporary to late-Vedic/pre-Buddhist Mahajanapadas or oligarchic republics.
 - This period continues into the Mauryan rule and ends with its fall around 150 BCE.
 - After the downfall of the Gupta Empire, large scale deurbanisation, drying up of water bodies, famines and population contraction across India occurred.
 - Travelogues of Hiuen Tsang (7th century CE) who visited Vadnagar, and Al Biruni refer to the collapse of almost all major towns with only few continuing into the early Chalukya rule.
- The study also indicates that the rise and fall of different kingdoms during the 3,000-year period and recurrent invasions of India by central Asian warriors were driven by severe changes in climate like rainfall or droughts.
- Describing Vadnagar as a “multicultural and multireligious” settlement, the excavation revealed the presence of seven cultural stages – Mauryan, Indo-Greek, Indo-Scythian or Shaka-Kshatrapas (aka 'Satraps', descendants of provincial governors of ancient Achaemenid Empires), Hindu-Solankis, Sultanate-Mughal (Islamic) and Gaekwad-British colonial rule.
- One of the significant discoveries is the presence of one of the oldest Buddhist monasteries in Vadnagar, adding to the historical and cultural richness of the settlement.
- During the excavation, the team found archaeological artefacts like pottery, copper, gold, silver and iron objects and intricately designed bangles and coin moulds from the Indo-Greek rule.
- Some of the recent unpublished radiocarbon dates suggest that the settlement could be as old as 1400 BCE contemporary to the very late phase of the post-urban Harappan period.
 - If true, then it suggests a cultural continuity in India for the last 5,500 years and the so-called Dark Age may be a myth.

- The period between the collapse of the Indus Valley civilization at 4,000 years before the present (early 2nd millennium BCE) and the emergence of the Iron Age and cities of Mahajanapadas like Gandhar, Koshal, Avanti (6th-5th century BCE) somewhere between 3,000 to 2,500 years ago is often depicted as the 'Dark Age' by archaeologists.
- According to Sarkar, archaeological records related to the 'Dark Age' are rare and the earliest evidence dates back to a rock-inscription of Ashoka created during the Mauryan period (320-185 BCE) at Sudarsana Lake near the Girnar hill in Gujarat.

DID YOU KNOW?

- Archaeological Survey of India (ASI), under the Ministry of Culture, is the premier organization for the archaeological research and protection of the cultural heritage of the nation.
- ASI was founded in 1861 by Alexander Cunningham—the first Director-General of ASI. Alexander Cunningham is also known as the “Father of Indian Archaeology”.
- World Heritage Day or International Day for Monuments and Sites (IDMS) is celebrated every year on April 18.
- India has 42 UNESCO World Heritage Sites overall, which includes 34 in the cultural category, seven in the natural category and one mixed property.
- Presently, India has the sixth largest number of (UNESCO) sites in the world. The countries that have 42 or more world heritage sites are Italy, Spain, Germany, China and France.





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

QUICK FACTS



1. The government of India recently appointed former vice-chairman of NITI Aayog and Columbia University professor **Arvind Panagariya** as the chairman of the **16th Finance Commission** for recommending a devolution formulated for tax revenues between the Centre and states, according to an official order. The Commission has also been tasked with reviewing disaster management financing arrangements under the Disaster Management Act, 2005, and making recommendations for improvements. The Commission has been requested to make its report available by 31 October 2025.
2. Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the **Maharishi Valmiki International Airport** in the temple city of **Ayodhya** after inaugurating the Ayodhya Railway Station. The facade of the terminal building depicts the temple architecture of the upcoming Shri Ram Mandir of Ayodhya. The terminal building of Ayodhya Airport is also equipped with various sustainability features, like an insulated roofing system, rainwater harvesting, a water treatment plant, a sewage treatment plant, a solar power plant and many other such features have been provided to meet GRIHA - 5-star ratings.
3. Defence Minister Rajnath Singh inaugurated the **first all-girls Sainik School** at **Vrindavan, Uttar Pradesh** and termed it as a beacon of light for girls who aspire to join the armed forces and protect the motherland. Samvid Gurukulam Girls Sainik School with a strength of about 870 students, has been inaugurated under the initiative of establishing 100 new Sainik Schools in partnership with NGOs/private/state government schools in all states/Union territories.
4. **2024** has been designated as the '**Year of Human Resource Development and Discipline**' for the **Indian Renewable Energy Development Agency Limited (IREDA)**, signifying the organization's strategic expansion into new sectors and regions. IREDA is a Mini Ratna (Category – I) Government of India Enterprise under the administrative control of the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE).
5. More than 1 crore people have been screened for Sickle Cell Disease (SCD) under the **National Sickle Cell Anaemia Elimination Mission**. The Mission endeavours to screen a 7 crore population in 3 years. The National Sickle Cell Anemia Elimination Mission **launched in 2023**, aims to eliminate sickle cell anemia **from India by 2047**.
6. **Gujarat's** ambitious project to **reintroduce wolves bred in captivity** to the wild shows early signs of success. The project, undertaken by Gujarat's Forest Department, to introduce wolves bred in captivity into the wild is the first of its kind outside the US. It is aimed at restocking the population of wolves in the wild, where they can perform their role as biocontrol agents that keep the population of wild herbivores, like nilgai (blue bulls) and wild boars under control.
7. **Buxa Tiger Reserve (BTR) in West Bengal** witnessed the return of a tiger for the second time in two years after a 23-year absence, sparking hope for a flourishing ecosystem and a potential resurgence of tiger populations. Buxa Tiger Reserve and National Park covers 760 square kilometres and is located in North Bengal's Alipurduar district. Its Northern boundary runs along the border with Bhutan.
8. The Indian Space Research Organisation (**ISRO**) has placed the **Aditya-L1 spacecraft** in a halo orbit around the Lagrangian point (L1). India's maiden solar mission Aditya-L1 reached the L1 point on **January 6**, 127 days after it was launched on September 2, 2023.
9. The **Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology** launched an integrated web portal for educational institutions in the country. The portal, known as **ERNET**, will offer domain registration, DNS and value-added services including Website as a Service (WaaS) and Learning Management as a Service (LMaaS) to educational institutions. Users can select from the variety of available templates for schools, colleges, and universities as per their requirements and create their own website and Learning Management System.
10. The Prime Minister of India inaugurated the **Kochi-Lakshadweep Islands Submarine Optical Fiber Connection (KLI-SOFC) project in Kavaratti, Lakshadweep**. For the first time since independence, Lakshadweep will be connected through Submarine Optic Fibre Cable. The dedicated submarine OFC will ensure a paradigm shift in communication infrastructure in the Lakshadweep islands, enabling faster and more reliable internet services, telemedicine, e-governance, educational initiatives, digital banking, digital currency usage, digital literacy etc. The project is funded by the Universal Services Obligation Fund (USOF), Department of Telecommunication.





11. A recent study on **child marriage in India** published in the **Lancet** noted the overall decrease in child marriage across the country but pointed out that four States, mainly Bihar (16.7%), West Bengal (15.2%), Uttar Pradesh (12.5%), and Maharashtra (8.2%) accounted for more than half of the total headcount burden of child marriages in girls.
12. The **Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS)** celebrated its **77th Foundation Day on 6th January 2024**. The BIS is a statutory body functioning under the aegis of the Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution, Government of India. It operates various schemes like Product Certification (ISI mark), Management Systems Certification, Hall Marking of Gold and Silver Jewellery/Artefacts and Laboratory Services for the benefit of the industry and in turn aiming at consumer protection.
13. **Pravasi Bharatiya Divas (PBD)**, also known as Non-Resident Indian (NRI) Day, is celebrated on **January 9** to mark the contribution and achievements of the overseas Indian community to the development of India. The day also commemorates the return of Mahatma Gandhi, the greatest Pravasi, from South Africa to India in 1915. PBD was first celebrated in 2003. Its format was later revised in 2015 to celebrate the event once every two years.
14. The Indian Space Research Organisation (**ISRO**) has successfully tested a **100 W class Polymer Electrolyte Membrane Fuel-based Power System (FCPS)** in its orbital platform, **POEM3** which was launched onboard PSLV-C58 on January 1, 2024. The objective of the experiment was to assess Polymer Electrolyte Membrane Fuel cell operation in space and to collect data to facilitate the design of systems for future missions.
15. **Padmaja Naidu Himalayan Zoological Park (PNHNP)**, also known as **Darjeeling Zoo** in West Bengal has achieved international recognition from the World Association for Zoos and Aquariums (WAZA) for its successful **conservation breeding programme (CBC) for snow leopards**. It now has the world's largest number of snow leopards in captivity — 14 in total with 7 males and 7 females. Snow leopards are in the “vulnerable” category of the International Union for Conservation of Nature or IUCN “Red List of Threatened Species”, with an estimated global population of 4,000 to 7,500.
16. Recently, Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the **country's longest bridge over the sea**, the 22 km Mumbai Trans Harbour Link, officially the **Atal Setu Nhava Sheva Sea Link**. The Mumbai Trans Harbour Link (MTHL) is a 22-km-long twin-carriageway six-lane bridge over the Thane Creek in the Arabian Sea, connecting Sewri in the island city of Mumbai to Chirle in Raigad district on the mainland. The MTHL includes a 16.5 km sea link and viaducts on land at either end with a cumulative length of 5.5 km.
17. In a bid to reduce cases of **cervical cancer**, the government is likely to roll out an immunisation campaign against **Human Papillomavirus (HPV)** in the second quarter of 2024. **Girls between the ages of 9 and 14 years** across India will be vaccinated for free in three phases under the government's programme over the next three years. The National Technical Advisory Group for Immunisation (NTAGI) has recommended the HPV vaccination for adolescent girls between the ages of nine and 14 years.
18. Amid the standoff with China, the **Indian Army** is planning to get **insulated 'pup tents'** for the thousands of troops deployed on the icy heights along the **Line of Actual Control (LAC)** — where temperatures are extreme and plunge as low as minus 50 degrees Celsius. These 'pup tents' — relatively lighter, easier to set up and better insulated — will accommodate up to four soldiers each. They are meant to replace the existing **'Tent Arctic Small Mk II'**, which can accommodate two to three troops, and, as per an Army Request for Information (RFI), has limitations that affect troop productivity and safety in high-altitude areas.
19. Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) Science & Technology Dr Jitendra Singh presented “**Indian of the Year Award**” for the year 2023 in the category **'Outstanding Achievement'** to Team **ISRO** (Indian Space Research Organisation). The award recognised the remarkable contribution made by ISRO in pushing the boundaries of Space exploration, especially highlighting the historic soft landing of Chandrayaan-3 on the Moon's uncharted South Polar region.

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20. The **Supreme Court** recently approved the **Shimla Development Plan 2041** which is aimed at regulating construction activities in Himachal Pradesh's capital city, terming it prima facie "sustainable" even as the court underlined the need to balance development with ecological concerns.
21. A **heat-tolerant vaccine** developed by the **Indian Institute of Science (IISc)** researchers is said to be effective against all current strains of SARS-CoV-2 besides having the potential to be quickly adapted for future variants as well.
22. **India Meteorological Department (IMD)** celebrated the **150th Year** of its establishment on **January 15**. To mark this milestone, IMD plans a nationwide celebration in all sub-offices from January 15, 2024, to January 15, 2025. IMD is an agency of the Ministry of Earth Sciences, Government of India.
23. Almost seven years after an **Indian Air Force (IAF)** An-32 transport aircraft with 29 personnel onboard went missing over the Bay of Bengal while going from Chennai to Port Blair, debris possibly of the aircraft has been located by an **Autonomous Underwater Vehicle (AUV)** on the sea bed approximately, 140 nautical miles from Chennai coast. The National Institute of Ocean Technology (NIOT), which functions under the Ministry of Earth Sciences, had recently deployed an Autonomous Underwater Vehicle (AUV) with deep-sea exploration capability at the last known location of the missing An-32.
24. Every year on **January 15**, India celebrates its **Army Day**. The purpose of the day is to remember troops and all they have sacrificed for the country. Additionally, Army Day commemorates the year 1949, when Field Marshal Kodandera M Cariappa became the first Indian Commander-in-Chief of Independent India, succeeding General FRR Bucher, the last British-serving chief of the Indian Army.
25. The Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) has launched an **indigenous assault rifle named 'Ugram'**, intended to meet the operational requirements of armed forces, paramilitary, and state police entities. It has been developed by the Armament Research and Development Establishment (ARDE), a unit of DRDO and Hyderabad-based private firm Dvipa Armour India Private Limited. The 'Ugram' is intended to replace the ageing INSAS rifle currently used by the Indian Armed Forces.
26. In a major step towards thwarting Pakistan's attempts to increase terrorist activities in Jammu and Kashmir, the **Indian Army** is launching **Operation Sarvashakti**, where the security forces will be targeting the terrorists operating on both sides of the Pir Panjal mountain ranges in the Union Territory. The operation will be on the lines of Operation Sarpinash of 2003, which was launched against terrorists south of the Pir Panjal range.
27. The Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) **Delhi** has developed a '**Work4Food**' solution that guarantees government-mandated minimum wages for food delivery workers and seeks to reduce costs for delivery platforms while ensuring customer satisfaction.
28. **IIT Bombay** has developed an instrument named **GoldN (pronounced as Golden)** for the melt-mixing of waste thermoplastic polymers and inorganic particulate fillers to manufacture polymer composites. At present, commercially available melt-mixing equipment is not designed for handling waste thermoplastic polymers that are often adhered by contaminants, as the barrel and screw system are not robust enough.
29. The **Supreme Court** on January 3 refused to transfer the investigation being carried out by market regulator SEBI into **Hindenburg Research's allegations** against the **Adani Group** to a separate Special Investigation Team (SIT) saying that the power of the court to enter the regulatory domain of SEBI is "limited".

ATAL SETU: India's Longest Bridge

Also called Mumbai Trans-Harbour Link, bridge inaugurated on January 12 by PM Modi

<p> Longest bridge and sea bridge in India</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 12th longest sea bridge in the world ● Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macau Bridge in China is longest sea bridge at 55 km 	<div style="background-color: #007bff; color: white; padding: 10px; text-align: center; border-radius: 10px;"> <p>Length 21.8 km (16.5 km on sea, 5.5 km on land)</p> <p>Width 6 lanes</p> </div>
<p> Fare</p> <p>One way: ₹250 Daily pass: ₹650 Monthly pass: ₹12,500</p>	<p> Connectivity</p> <p>Connects South Mumbai and Navi Mumbai; reduces 2-hour journey to just 15-20 minutes</p>
<p> Max Speed</p> <p>100 kmph</p>	<p> Building Cost</p> <p>₹17,840 crore</p>
<p> Restricted Vehicles</p> <p>Motorcycle, autorickshaw and tractor</p>	<p>Foundation stone laid on December 2016</p>





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INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

QUICK FACTS



1. The Union Cabinet gave its ex-post facto approval to the proposal of the Ministry of External Affairs to sign and ratify the **Migration and Mobility Agreement between the Government of the Republic of India and the Government of the Italian Republic**. The Agreement would enhance people-to-people contacts, foster mobility of students, skilled workers, business people and young professionals and strengthen cooperation on issues related to irregular migration between the two sides.
2. **India's** state-owned firm Khanij Bidesh India Ltd (KABIL) signed a 2 billion-rupee (\$24 million) **lithium exploration** pact for five blocks in **Argentina**. India, among the world's top greenhouse gas emitters, has been pursuing overseas pacts to secure key minerals in resource-rich countries such as Australia, Argentina and Chile.
3. **India** and the **United Arab Emirates (UAE)** conducted the inaugural edition of the joint military exercise '**Desert Cyclone 2024**' in Rajasthan from January 2 to January 15. The aim of the exercise was to enhance interoperability by learning and sharing best practices in urban operations. India has also been a regular participant at the biennial International Defence Exhibition (IDEX) in Abu Dhabi.
4. **Kyrgyzstan** has officially declared the **snow leopard** as its **national symbol**, underscoring its commitment to conservation and ecological balance. Kyrgyzstan has taken a leading role in snow leopard conservation at the international level, hosting the inaugural **Global Snow Leopard Forum in 2013** in the capital, Bishkek. During this event, the Bishkek Declaration on Snow Leopard Protection was unanimously adopted. Additionally, the **Global Snow Leopard and Ecosystem Protection Programme (GSLEP)** was initiated with the collaboration of representatives from 12 snow leopard range countries and the global environmental community to safeguard these majestic mountain cats.
5. **World Braille Day** is celebrated every year on **4 January** to commemorate the birth anniversary of Louis Braille - the Inventor of braille writing for blind and visually-impaired people. Braille, a universal code rather than a language, serves as a tool to write and read in various languages, including Sanskrit, Arabic, Chinese, Hebrew, Spanish, and many others.
6. **Biodiversity credits or biocredits** are increasingly being pushed as a means for financing work on the various targets set under the **Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KMGBF)** adopted in **2022** at the **15th Conference of Parties (CoP15)** of the Convention on Biological Diversity (**CBD**). KMGBF has 23 targets to meet the core goals of CBD — conservation of biodiversity, its sustainable use and fair and equitable benefit sharing of the profits arising from its use.
7. **Reverse flipping** has become a trend among Indian startups, especially in the fintech sector, as they plan for Initial Public Offers (IPOs) or seek long-term benefits in the home market. Reverse flipping is the process of shifting the domicile of an Indian company back to India after it had moved its headquarters overseas, usually for tax or regulatory reasons. It is also known as 're-domiciling'.
8. The **United States** embarked on the **Peregrine Mission One**, its first attempt to land on the **Moon** in over 50 years. However, the landing attempt was seemingly doomed after the spacecraft developed a "critical" fuel leak just hours after launch. The Peregrine Lander is expected to be one of the first American spacecraft to land on the Moon since the Apollo program.
9. Every year, **National Birds Day** is celebrated on **January 5**. Since 2002, National Birds Day has been celebrated in America. The day also aims to raise awareness for the conservation of avian species affected by habitat destruction, reducing food choices, and climate change. National Bird Day is different from occasions such as **International Migratory National Bird Day**, **World Migratory National Bird Day** (May 13), and several other National Bird Days.
10. **2023** broke the **record for the planet's hottest year** by a significant margin and is likely the world's warmest in the last 100,000 years, according to the European Union's climate agency. The average temperature in 2023 was 0.17 degrees Celsius (°C) higher than in 2016, the previous warmest year. On average, the planet was 1.48°C warmer than in the 1850-1900 pre-industrial period, when humans began burning fossil fuels on an industrial scale, pumping carbon dioxide into the atmosphere.





11. The **Indian government** has recently signed a **Bilateral Haj Agreement** for the year 2024 with Saudi Arabia, marking a significant development in the facilitation of the annual Haj pilgrimage. The agreement sets a total quota of 1,75,025 pilgrims from India for Haj 2024, with 1,40,020 seats reserved for the Haj Committee of India and 35,005 for Haj Group Operators. Saudi Arabia appreciated India's digital initiatives to aid Haj pilgrims. The initiative by the Indian government towards encouraging participation under the Ladies without Mehram (LWM) category.
12. Every year, **World Hindi Day** is celebrated on **January 10**. In 1949, Hindi was spoken for the first time in the United Nations General Assembly. In 2006, the first Vishwa Hindi Diwas was observed by the then Prime Minister of the country – Dr. Manmohan Singh. Since then, January 10 has been observed as World Hindi Day everywhere.
13. A recent **United Nations** report titled **World Economic Situation and Prospects Report for 2024** forecasts a decline in global inflation in 2024, but warns of a simultaneous rise in food inflation, particularly in developing nations. The implications of this phenomenon, coupled with climate-related challenges and geopolitical tensions, pose threats to food security, poverty alleviation, and economic growth.
14. Recently, the **World Economic Forum** released the **Global Risk Report 2024**. The Report highlighted that information, rising conflicts and economic uncertainty are among the most widespread risks facing this year. The report is based on a survey of nearly 1,500 experts, industry leaders and policymakers.
15. In its **World Employment and Social Outlook Trends: 2024 report**, the **International Labour Organisation** has projected the global unemployment rate a tad higher at 5.2% in 2024 compared to 5.1% in 2023. In India, real wages are “positive” compared to other G20 countries, according to the report.
16. With the launch of the **International Classification of Diseases (ICD 11)**, Traditional Medicine Module 2 by the **World Health Organization** recently, preparations have started for its implementation. The data and terminology relating to diseases based on Ayurveda, Siddha and Unani Medicine have been included in the WHO ICD-11 classification. With this effort, the terminology defining diseases in Ayurveda, Unani and Siddha medicine has been indexed as a code and included in the WHO Disease Classification Series ICD-11.
17. The **World Bank's Global Economic Prospects Report 2024** highlighted that the global economy has recovered from last year after the impact of global recession fears was factored in. However, 2020s will go down as a decade of wasted opportunity on January 9, 2023. The global economy is set to “rack up a sorry record by the end of 2024 —the slowest half-decade of GDP growth in 30 years.”
18. The **Himalayan Wolf (Canis lupus chanco)**, a prominent lupine predator found across the Himalayas the taxonomic status of which was a puzzle till late, has been assessed for the first time in the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)'s Red List. The animal has been categorised as '**Vulnerable**' on the IUCN Red List.
19. The maiden Bilateral Maritime Exercise between the **Indian Navy (IN) and Royal Thai Navy (RTN)** was conducted from 20 to 23 December 2023. The Indo-Thai Bilateral Exercise is being named as '**Ex-Ayutthaya**', which literally translates to 'The Invincible One' or 'Undefeatable', and symbolises the significance of two of the oldest cities Ayodhya in India and Ayutthaya in Thailand, the historic legacies, rich cultural ties and shared historical narratives dating back to several centuries. The 36th edition of India-Thailand Coordinated Patrol (Indo-Thai CORPAT) was also conducted along with the maiden bilateral exercise. Maritime Patrol Aircraft from both navies participated in the Sea Phase of the exercise.
20. **Gabriel Attal** was named on January 9 as **France's youngest-ever Prime Minister**. Gabriel Attal, 34, rose to prominence as the government spokesman and Education Minister. He is France's first openly gay Prime Minister. His predecessor Elisabeth Borne resigned on January 8 following recent political turmoil over an immigration law that strengthens the government's ability to deport foreigners. Emmanuel Macron was France's youngest-ever President when he came to power in 2017.
21. **Microsoft** has announced the launch of an initiative called **AI Odyssey** recently to train 100,000 developers

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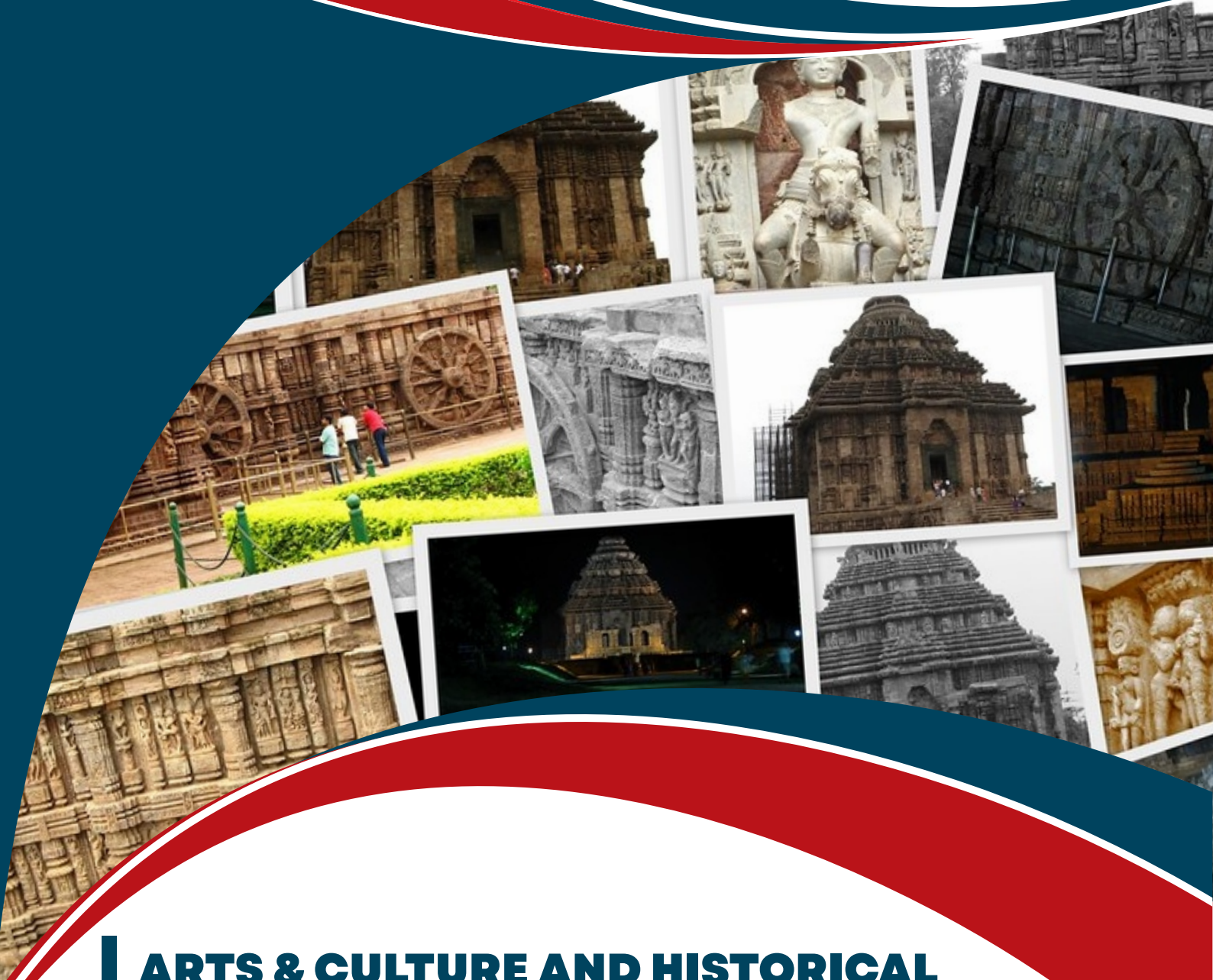
in India in AI tools and applications. The month-long program is open to all AI enthusiasts regardless of their background or experience in the industry.

22. **Denmark** has announced its **Green Fuels Alliance India (GFAI)** initiative to boost collaborative efforts between the two countries in the sustainable energy solutions sector and advance their joint global goal towards carbon neutrality. GFAI's primary objective is to promote sustainable energy growth in India by establishing an ecosystem that encourages collaboration among businesses, government entities, research institutions, and financial stakeholders from both the Indian and Danish sectors.
23. **Alvaro**, the first cyclone of 2024, made landfall near **Morombe in Madagascar on January 1, 2024**. It is the first cyclone to hit Madagascar during the 2023-2024 season, which in the southwest Indian Ocean runs from around late October to May.
24. The Union Cabinet has approved the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the Indian Space Research Organisation (**ISRO**) and the Mauritius Research and Innovation Council (**MRIC**) concerning cooperation on the development of a **joint small satellite**.





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QUICK FACTS



1. The Prime Minister of India paid tributes to **Savitribai Phule** on her birth anniversary (**3rd January 1831**). Savitribai Phule, known as the country's first woman teacher, along with her husband, shaped the education system for girls and helped change many social norms. By the time of 1851, Savitribai Phule established three schools for women in Pune showing her commitment to education for all.
2. The Prime Minister of India has paid tributes to **Rani Velu Nachiyar (3rd Jan 1730 – 25th Dec 1796)** on her **birth anniversary**. Rani Velu Nachiyar - an 18th-century warrior who belonged to the Sivagangai estate in present-day Tamil Nadu - was the only daughter of the royal couple of the Sethupathi dynasty. She is revered as the first queen to fight against the British colonial power in India.
3. The over-a-century-old **Yakshagana mela**, the Kateel Durgaparameshwari Prasadita Yakshagana Mandal, in Dakshina Kannada reverted to all-night shows from January 14, after the High Court of Karnataka gave the go-ahead for the same last month subject to adherence to noise pollution rules.
4. **National Youth Day** is celebrated every year on **January 12**. It is an occasion that celebrates the birth anniversary of Swami Vivekananda. As a part of National Youth Day celebrations, India organizes an annual National Youth Festival from January 12 to 16. The theme of this year's festival is **"Viksit Bharat@ 2047: Yuva ke liye, yuva ke dwara"**. Vivekananda was Ramakrishna Paramhansa's chief disciple in the 19th century. He founded the Ramakrishna Math, a monastic order in Kolkata based on his guru's teachings, and the Ramakrishna Mission, a global spiritual movement based on Vedanta, an ancient Hindu philosophy.
5. **Gangireddu Melam** is a traditional **folk performance** associated with the Sankranti harvest festival in **Telangana and Andhra Pradesh**. The bulls, adorned with colourful flowers and garments are the central motif of the dance. The performance also incorporates elements of local folklore and storytelling, showcasing the region's rich cultural heritage. The harvest festival of 'Sankranti' is celebrated in Andhra Pradesh and Telangana for three days as Bhogi, Sankranti, and Kanuma.
6. Prime Minister Narendra Modi on January 12 visited the **Kalaram Mandir** on the banks of the Godavari in the Panchavati area of **Nashik**. The Kalaram temple derives its name from a black statue of the Lord — Kala Ram translates literally to "Black Ram". The sanctum sanctorum has statues of Ram, Sita, and Lakshman, and a black idol of Hanuman at the main entrance.
7. An ancient palace where **Alexander The Great** was crowned **King of Macedonia** will reopen to the public recently after a 16-year 20 million euro renovation aiming to restore its past glory. The 4th century BC site spread over 15,000 square meters was one of the most important in classical Greece alongside the Parthenon in Athens. Aigai was the capital of the Macedonian kingdom, the dominant military power of the time, and archaeologists say the palace was the kingdom's spiritual centre.



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TEST ZONE

PASSAGE - 1

India has nominated Indore, Bhopal and Udaipur for the Wetland City Accreditation (WCA) scheme under the Ramsar Convention, which helps cities gain international recognition for their efforts to protect their natural or human-made wetlands.

These are the first three Indian cities nominated for WCA based on the proposals received from state wetlands authorities in collaboration with municipal corporations.

Sirpur Wetland (Ramsar site in Indore), Yashwant Sagar (Ramsar site closer to Indore), Bhoj Wetland (Ramsar Site in Bhopal), and several wetlands in and around Udaipur are lifelines to these cities.

This will also provide an opportunity for cities that value their natural or human-made wetlands to gain international recognition and positive branding opportunities for their efforts in demonstrating strong positive relationships with wetlands, he said.

Sirpur Lake has been recognised as an important site for the water bird congregation and is being developed as a bird sanctuary. A strong network of more than 200 wetland mitras is engaged in bird conservation and sensitising the local community to protect the sarus crane.

Bhoj Wetland is Bhopal's lifeline, equipped with the world-class wetlands interpretation centre, Jal Tarang. The Bhopal Municipal Corporation also has a dedicated Lake Conservation Cell. It is supported by a network of more than 300 wetland mitras engaged in wetland management and the conservation of the sarus crane. Udaipur in Rajasthan is surrounded by five major wetlands -- Pichola, Fateh Sagar, Rang Sagar, Swaroop Sagar, and Doodh Talai. These wetlands are an integral part of the city's culture and identity, helping maintain the city's microclimate and providing a buffer from extreme events.

[Extracted, with edits and revisions, from: "Indore, Bhopal, Udaipur nominated for International Wetland city tag", Business Standard]

Q.1 Which of the following cities is named the cleanest city as a joint winner with Indore in the Swachh Survekshan Awards 2023?

- | | |
|------------------|----------------------|
| A Bhopal | C Navi Mumbai |
| B Udaipur | D Surat |

Q.2 World Wetlands Day is celebrated each year on _____ to raise awareness about wetlands.

- | | |
|---------------------|------------------|
| A January 2 | C March 2 |
| B February 2 | D April 2 |

Q.3 India has 75 Ramsar Sites which is the largest network of Ramsar Sites for any country in South Asia. When did India sign the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands?

- | | |
|---------------|---------------|
| A 1972 | C 1981 |
| B 1971 | D 1982 |

Q.4 Which of the following Indian states has the maximum number of Ramsar sites?

- | | |
|------------------------|---------------------|
| A Uttar Pradesh | C Tamil Nadu |
| B Kerala | D Telangana |

Q.5 In _____, the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change launched the 'Save Wetlands Campaign' structured on a "whole of society" approach for wetlands conservation.

- | | |
|------------------------|------------------------|
| A January 2023 | C January 2022 |
| B February 2023 | D February 2022 |

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

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PASSAGE - 2

The share of India's population living in multidimensional poverty is estimated to have fallen to 11.28 per cent in 2022-23 from 29.17 per cent in 2013-14, according to a discussion paper released by NITI Aayog on Monday. In absolute numbers, NITI Aayog estimates a total of 24.82 crore people escaped multidimensional poverty in the last nine years.

States like Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, and Rajasthan recorded the sharpest decline in the number of people classified as poor based on the Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI), which considers twelve different indicators of poverty included under three broad dimensions, namely health, education, and standard of living.

The discussion paper also notes that the severity of deprivation declined at a slightly lower rate between 2015-16 and 2019-21 compared to 2005-06 and 2013-14.

The severity of deprivation measures deprivations the average multidimensionally poor person suffers from. At the same time, the reduction of deprivation was faster after 2015-16 in terms of reduction in the share of MPI poor out of the total population compared to the decade before, owing to a lesser number of years. In 2005-06, the share of MPI poor in India's total population was 55.34 per cent. The discussion paper, which uses previously released MPI data based on National Family Health Surveys (NFHS) conducted in 2015-15 and 2019-21, also uses NFHS-3 data from 2005-06 to understand long-term poverty trends.

[Extracted, with edits and revisions, from: "India's multidimensional poverty rate down to 11.28% in 2022-23 from 29.17% in 2013-14", by Aggam Wallia, The Indian Express]

Q.1 Which of the following states recorded the sharpest decline in the number of people classified as poor based on the NITI Aayog's National Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) 2023?

- | | |
|-------------------------|------------------------|
| A Bihar | C Uttar Pradesh |
| B Madhya Pradesh | D Rajasthan |

Q.2 At a time when hardly any statistics were available for the Indian economy, _____ presented the first estimates of poverty in his 1877 paper 'Poverty in India', subsequently published in his book Poverty and Un-British Rule in India in 1899.

- | | |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| A Gopal Krishna Gokhale | C Surendranath Banerjee |
| B Mahatma Gandhi | D Dadabhai Naoroji |

Q.3 According to the 2023 Global Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI), a total of 415 million people moved out of poverty in India within just 15 years from 2005/2006 to 2019/2021. MPI was released by the Oxford Poverty, Human Development Initiative and –

- | | |
|---|---|
| A World Economic Forum | C World Bank |
| B United Nations Development Programme | D United Nations Economic and Social Council |

Q.4 International Day for the Eradication of Poverty is celebrated every year on –

- | | |
|-----------------------|----------------------|
| A September 17 | C November 17 |
| B October 17 | D December 17 |

Q.5 World Population Day is observed to raise awareness about global population issues and their impact on society every year on –

- | | |
|---------------------|---------------------|
| A January 11 | C July 11 |
| B May 11 | D October 11 |

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

Answers

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PASSAGE - 3

The commercial arm of ISRO, NewSpace India Limited (NSIL) will launch GSAT-20 (renamed as GSAT-N2), on-board SpaceX's Falcon-9 during the second quarter of 2024.

The GSAT-20 is a high-throughput Ka-band Satellite which will be fully owned, operated and funded by NSIL.

According to NSIL, GSAT-20 offers Ka-Ka band HTS capacity with 32 beams having Pan-India coverage including Andaman and Nicobar and Lakshadweep islands.

The satellite, weighing 4700 kg, offers an HTS capacity of nearly 48Gbps and has been specifically designed to meet the demanding service needs of remote and unconnected regions.

As part of the space sector reforms announced by the Govt. of India in June 2020, NSIL was mandated to build, launch, own and operate satellites in "Demand-driven mode" to meet service needs of the user.

As part of this, NSIL successfully undertook its 1st Demand-driven satellite mission, GSAT-24 in June 2022, wherein the capacity-board of the satellite was fully secured by TataPlay. GSAT-24 mission was fully funded by NSIL. Presently, NSIL owns and operates 11 communication satellites in orbit.

It added that NSIL is realising the GSAT-20 satellite through ISRO and will be launched on-board Falcon-9 under a launch service contract between NSIL and SpaceX, USA.

According to SpaceX, Falcon 9 is a reusable, two-stage rocket designed and manufactured by the Elon Musk-founded company for the reliable and safe transport of people and payloads into Earth orbit and beyond. It added that Falcon 9 is the world's first orbital-class reusable rocket.

[Extracted, with edits and revisions, from: "ISRO's commercial arm to launch GSAT-20 satellite on SpaceX's Falcon-9 in 2024", The Hindu]

Q.1 NewSpace India Limited (NSIL), the commercial arm of ISRO, was incorporated as a wholly owned government company in –

- | | |
|---------------|---------------|
| A 2016 | C 2018 |
| B 2017 | D 2019 |

Q.2 Which country recently became the fifth country in history to reach the moon when one of its spacecraft, Smart Lander for Investigating Moon (SLIM), made a successful landing on the lunar surface?

- | | |
|-----------------|-------------------------------|
| A Japan | C South Korea |
| B Israel | D United Arab Emirates |

Q.3 In 1986, the Government of India, designated _____ as National Science Day to commemorate the announcement of the discovery of the "Raman Effect".

- | | |
|----------------------|---------------------|
| A February 28 | C July 18 |
| B November 10 | D January 30 |

Q.4 The second spaceport of ISRO, which will be dedicated exclusively to Small Satellite Launch Vehicles (SSLVs) developed by the private sector, is being constructed in -

- | | |
|--------------------|-------------------------|
| A Telangana | C Tamil Nadu |
| B Kerala | D Andhra Pradesh |

Q.5 What is the name of India's first privately developed rocket, which was launched in November 2022?

- | | |
|-------------------|-------------------|
| A Skyroot | C Dhawan |
| B Vikram-S | D Prarambh |

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

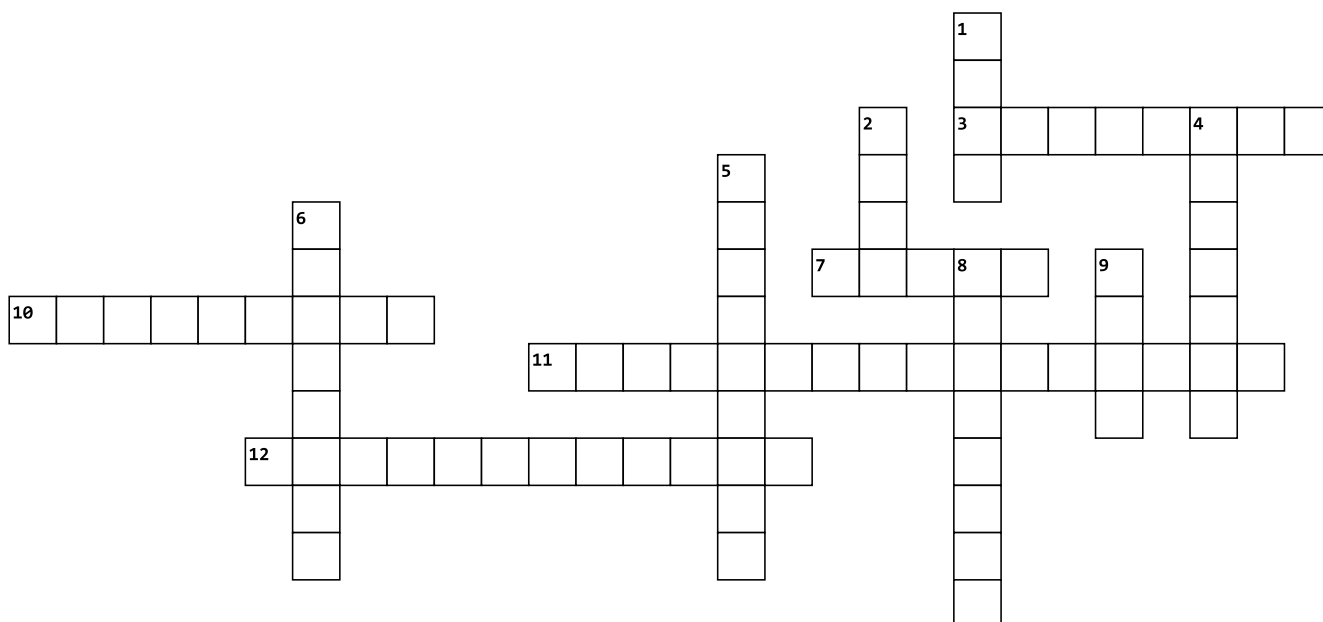
Answers

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CROSSWORD - 1



Across

3. World Braille Day
7. International Migratory National Bird Day
10. Army Day
11. Chairman of the 16th Finance Commission
12. France's youngest-ever Prime Minister

Down

1. India aims to eliminate sickle cell anemia
2. Broke the record for the planet's hottest year
4. Maharishi Valmiki International Airport
5. World Hindi Day
6. Pravasi Bharatiya Divas 2024
8. India's longest bridge over the sea
9. "Indian of the Year Award" for the year 2023

Answers

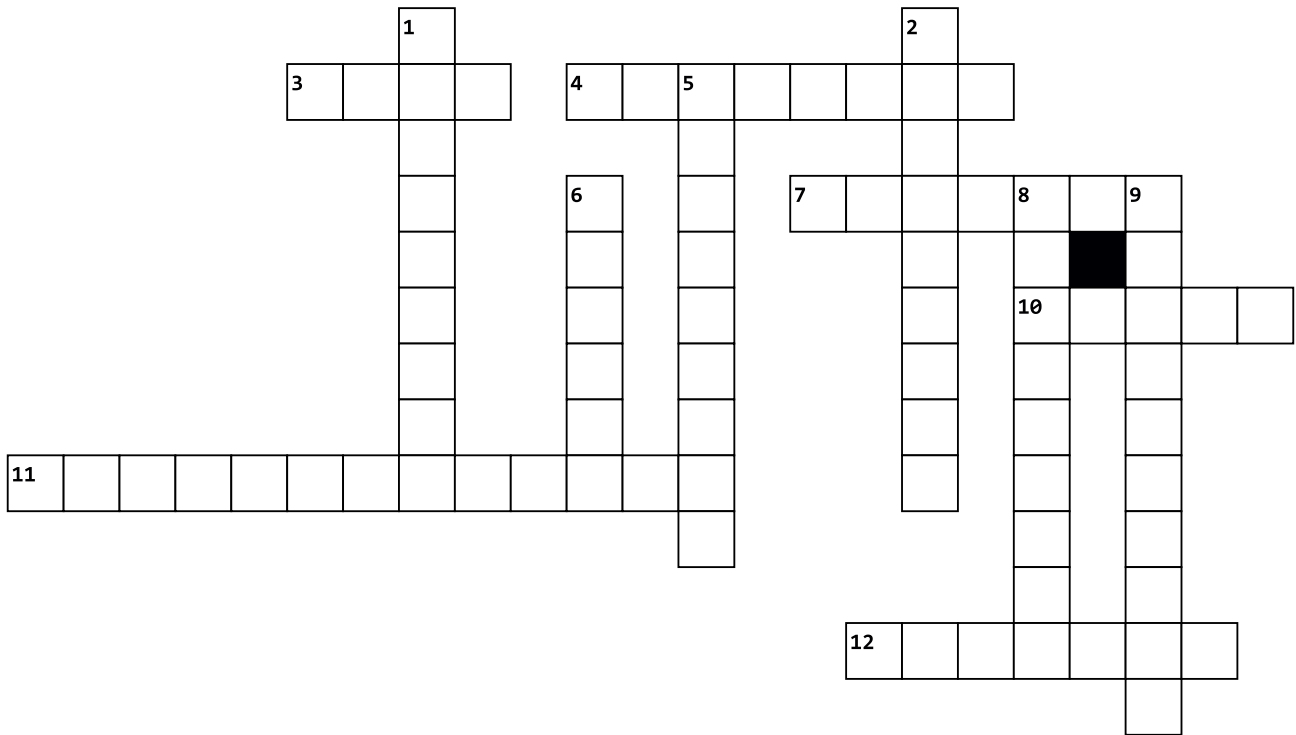
12	Gabriel Attal	6	January
11	Arvind Panagariya	5	10 January
10	15 January	4	Ayodhya
9	ISRO	3	4 January
8	Atal Setu	2	2023
7	13 May	1	2047

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CROSSWORD - 2



Across

- 3.** Year of HR Development and Discipline for IREDA
4. National Birds Day
7. Country announced its Green Fuels Alliance India
10. DRDO launched an indigenous assault rifle
11. India and the UAE conducted the maiden joint military exercise
12. Project to introduce wolves into the wild

Down

- 1.** National Youth Day
2. First all-girls Sainik School
5. Microsoft launched an initiative to train developers in AI
6. First cyclone of 2024, made landfall in Madagascar
8. Maiden bilateral maritime exercise between India and Thailand
9. Country officially declared the snow leopard as its national symbol

Answers

12	Gujarat	6	Alvaro
11	Desert Cyclone	5	Alodyssey
10	Ugram	4	January
9	Kyrgyzstan	3	2024
8	Ayutthaya	2	Vindavan
7	Denmark	1	January

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