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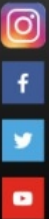
ISSUE - 13



BRICS 2023
SOUTH AFRICA



15TH BRICS SUMMIT



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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 15th BRICS Summit was held in Johannesburg, South Africa, from 22-24 August 2023. In a bid to weed out gender stereotypes that are not only demeaning and retrograde but can also cloud judgements, the Supreme Court has compiled a glossary of words that judges should avoid while writing orders, and lawyers should steer clear of while filing cases. The Prime Minister of the United Kingdom (UK) has recently endorsed plans for additional fossil fuel drilling off the British coast in the North Sea to make the UK more energy efficient. The G20 Culture Ministerial Meeting concluded in Varanasi with an outcome document that recognised the significance of repatriation of cultural property to their countries and communities. To know more, keep reading.

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The Question Bank



QUICK BOOSTERS



15TH BRICS SUMMIT

WHY IN NEWS?

- The 15th BRICS Summit was held in Johannesburg, South Africa, from 22-24 August 2023.

Key Outcomes

- The theme of the summit was "BRICS and Africa: Partnership for Mutually Accelerated Growth, Sustainable Development and Inclusive Multilateralism".
- At its conclusion, the leaders adopted an outcome document titled, 'Johannesburg II Declaration.'
- The leaders call for greater representation of emerging markets and developing countries in international organizations and multilateral fora and express support for a comprehensive reform of the UN.
- They highlight the essential role of multilateral cooperation in limiting the risks stemming from geopolitical and geoeconomic fragmentation and pledge to intensify efforts on trade, poverty and hunger reduction, sustainable development, climate change, education, and health, among other areas of mutual interest.
- On sustainable development, the leaders recognize the importance of implementing the SDGs in an integrated and holistic manner and highlight the SDG Summit in September 2023 and the Summit of the Future in 2024 as "significant opportunities for renewing international commitment" to the 2030 Agenda.
- The highlight of the 15th summit was the agreement to admit six new member countries: Argentina, Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, who will officially join the group in January 2024.

DID YOU KNOW?

- BRICS brings together five of the largest developing countries of the world, representing around 41 per cent of the global population, around 24 per cent of the global GDP, and around 16 per cent of global trade.
- The 15th Summit marks the first in-person gathering since 2019 due to the COVID-19 pandemic; the last three were held online.
- As the 2024 chair of the bloc, the Russian Federation will host the 16th BRICS Summit in Kazan. From 1 January 2024, BRICS will have eleven full members.
- India called for BRICS collaboration under the International Big Cat Alliance to protect the endangered big cats that live in their countries.
- Over 40 countries, including Algeria, Bolivia, Indonesia, Cuba, Democratic Republic of Congo, Comoros, Gabon, and Kazakhstan have expressed interest in joining the forum, according to 2023 summit chair South Africa.
- India has strategic partnerships with four of the new six members — Saudi Arabia, UAE, Iran and Egypt.
- According to the World Bank, Ethiopia is the second most populous nation in Africa after Nigeria, and one of the fastest-growing economies in the region, with an estimated 6.4% growth in FY 2021/22.
- Egypt occupies a crucial geo-strategic location — 12 per cent of global trade passes through the Suez Canal — and is a key player in the region.
- By growing to a size of 11 members, BRICS has become larger than ASEAN (10 members) and the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (9).

Origin of BRICS

- The acronym BRIC was first used in 2001 by Goldman Sachs in their Global Economics Paper, 'The World Needs Better Economic BRICs'.
 - On the basis of econometric analyses, the paper projected that the four economies of Brazil, Russia, India, and China would be among the world's largest economies in the next 50 years or so.
- As a formal grouping, BRIC started after the meeting of the leaders of Russia, India and China in St. Petersburg on the margins of the G8 Outreach Summit in 2006.
 - The grouping was formalised during the first meeting of BRIC Foreign Ministers on the margins of the UNGA in New York in 2006.
- The first BRIC Summit was held in Yekaterinburg, Russia, in 2009. It was decided to include South Africa at the BRIC Foreign Ministers' meeting in New York in 2010, and accordingly, South Africa attended the 3rd BRICS Summit in Sanya, China, in 2011.

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NUMBER OF BAIL APPEALS FILED IN INDIA'S HIGH COURTS

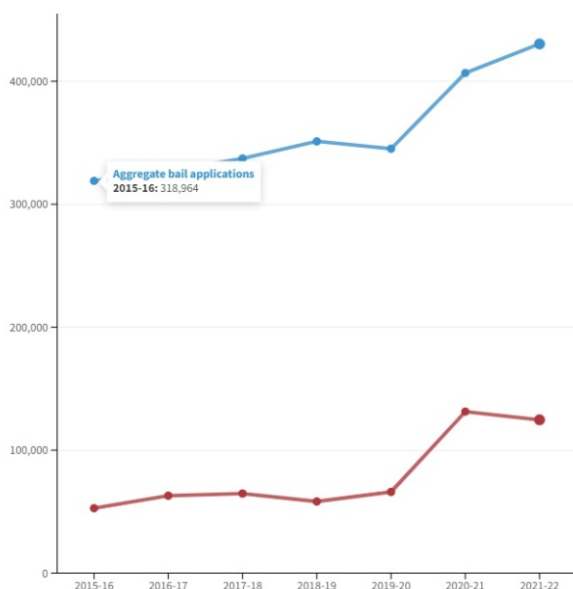
WHY IN NEWS?

- According to the 'High Court dashboard' by DAKSH, a think-tank focussed on law and justice system reforms, the number of bail appeals filed in India's High Courts surged post-2020.

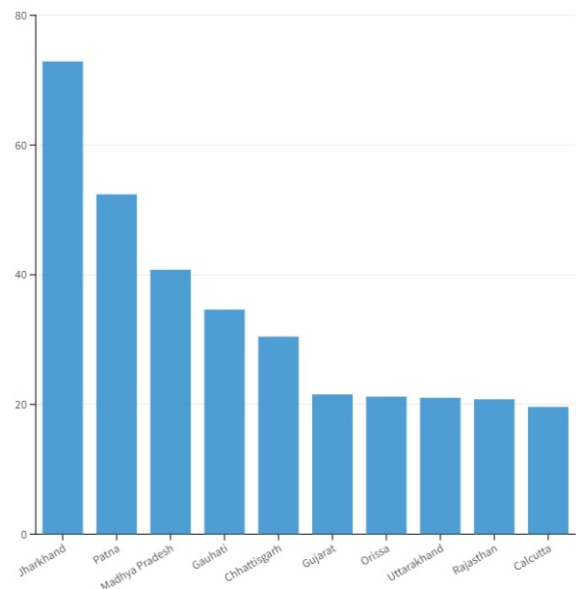
Key Points

- Across all High Courts, DAKSH analysed 9,27,896 bail cases that were filed between 2010 and 2021. Each High Court follows a unique naming pattern for bail cases. In all, there were 81 case types associated with bail across the 15 High Courts analysed.
- The data follow a July to June-cycle. For instance, between July 2021 and June 2022, 4.3 lakh bail appeals were filed in High Courts.
- Bail appeals went up from around 3.2 lakh to 3.5 lakh each year before 2020, to 4 lakh to 4.3 lakh thereafter.
- Consequently, the number of pending bail appeals in High Courts also surged from around 50,000 to 65,000 to between 1.25 lakh to 1.3 lakh.
- In some of the States like Patna, Jharkhand, Odisha, Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh — bail appeals formed more than 30% of their total caseload between July 2021 and June 2022.
- The median number of days taken from the filing date to the decision date for regular bail applications was 23. However, for some High Courts, the median days taken for disposal were much higher.
 - The median days for disposal of regular bail cases in the Jammu & Kashmir High Court were 156, for the Orissa High Court 61 days, and for the Bombay High Court, 56 days. Given the very high number of days it takes to dispose of bail cases (which are generally considered to not require much judicial time or deliberation), the lack of data to understand the reason for delay is worrying.
 - Delays in resolution have the same effect as denying bail as the accused remains in prison for the duration of their trial.
- Data regarding the outcome of bail appeals in High Courts were also missing in many cases. In close to 80% of the disposed bail cases in all High Courts, the outcome of the bail appeal — whether it was granted or rejected — was either unclear or the outcome was missing.
 - For instance, in the Bombay High Court, the bail outcome of over 95% of appeals was not known.

The chart shows the number of fresh appeals and pending appeals in High Courts over time.



The chart shows the bail applications filed in High Courts as a share of their total caseload between July 2021 and June 2022 (in %).



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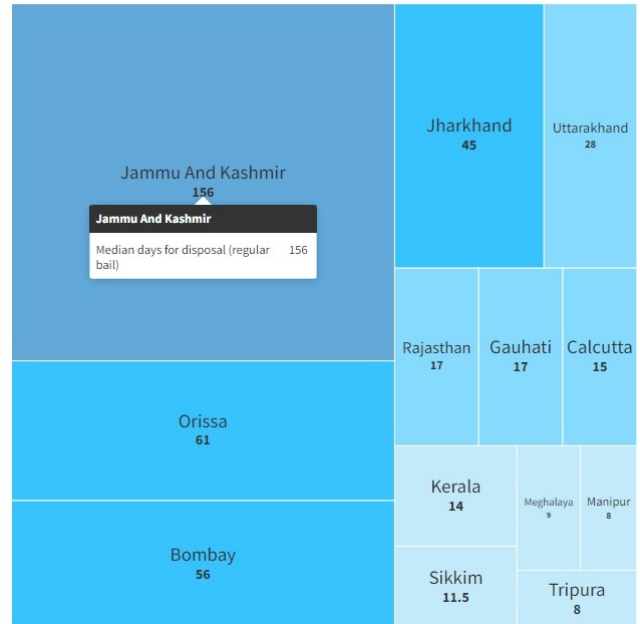
Reasons

- The sharp increase in cases related to the flouting of COVID-19-related lockdown norms during the pandemic.
- At the same time, pending bail cases piled up as the functioning of the courts was compromised during this time.
 - However, the exact reason cannot be ascertained from court data.
- The DAKSH 'High Court dashboard' explains that in 77% of regular bail cases, it was not possible to ascertain the Act under which the person seeking bail was imprisoned. It was not mentioned in the e-court data of various High Courts.
- An analysis of 23% of cases in which the Act was mentioned shows that the Epidemic Diseases Act, 1897, was ranked fourth, hinting at the possibility of cases surging under this Act as the reason for more bail appeals.

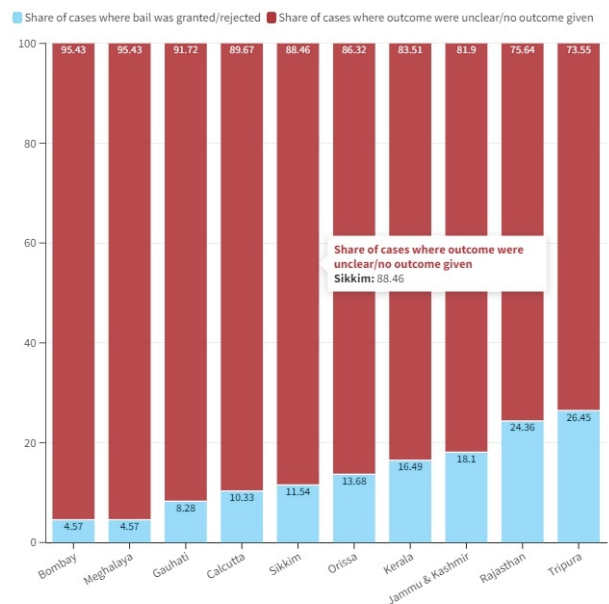
DID YOU KNOW?

- Bail denotes the provisional release of the accused in a Criminal Case in which court the trial is pending and the Court is yet to announce judgment.
- There are 3 types of bail Regular, Interim and Anticipatory.
- Regular Bail - It is a direction given by the Court (any Court within the country) to release a person who is already under arrest and kept in police custody. For such Bail, a person can file an application under Sections 437 and 439 of the Code Of Criminal Procedure (CrPC), 1973.
- Interim Bail – It is granted for a short period of time and it is granted before the hearing for the grant of regular or anticipatory bail.
- Anticipatory Bail - If any person has reason to believe that he/she may be arrested for a non-bailable offence, he/she may apply to Sessions Court or High Court for anticipatory bail praying that in the event of arrest, he/she shall be released on bail. (Section 438 Cr.PC).
- Statutory Bail is distinct from bail obtained in the ordinary procedure under CrPC Sections 437, 438, and 439. As the name implies, statutory bail is given when the police or investigating agency fails to file its report/complaint within a certain time frame.
- Article 21 of the Indian Constitution gives everyone the right to life and personal liberty. It provides the fundamental right to live with human dignity and personal freedom, which entitles us to seek bail when detained by any law enforcement entity.

The chart shows the median days taken for disposal of regular bail cases in various High Courts



The chart shows the cases in which bail was granted/rejected and where the outcome was not given/unclear (in %).



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SUPREME COURT LAUNCHED HANDBOOK ON COMBATING GENDER STEREOTYPES

WHY IN NEWS?

- In a bid to weed out gender stereotypes that are not only demeaning and retrograde but can also cloud judgements, the Supreme Court has compiled a glossary of words that judges should avoid while writing orders, and lawyers should steer clear of while filing cases.
- Gender stereotyping refers to the practice of assigning specific attributes, characteristics, or roles to individuals based solely on their gender.

About Handbook

- The SC handbook is a 30-page booklet that aims to assist judges and the legal community in identifying, understanding and combating stereotypes about women.
- The handbook identifies common stereotypical words and phrases used about women, many of them routinely found in judgements.
- It contains a “glossary of gender-unjust terms and suggests alternative words or phrases which may be used while drafting pleadings as well as orders and judgments”.
- The goal of the handbook is to encourage a shift towards language that reflects a more modern and respectful understanding of gender and promotes equal rights for all individuals, regardless of their gender.
- The handbook argues that the language a judge uses reflects not only their interpretation of the law, but their perception of society as well.
- Even when the use of stereotypes does not alter the outcome of a case, stereotypical language may reinforce ideas contrary to our constitutional ethos.
- Language is critical to the life of the law. Words are the vehicle through which the values of the law are communicated.

Similar Efforts in Other Countries

- There have been projects in other countries, pushed by both academia and practitioners, which hold up a mirror for the court's practices.
- For example, the Women's Court of Canada, a collective of female lawyers, academics and activists write “shadow judgements” on equality law.
- In India, the Indian Feminist Judgement Project also 'rewrites' judgements with a feminist critique.

ALTERNATIVE TO STEREOTYPE-PROMOTING LANGUAGE

'ADULTERESS'

Woman who has engaged in sexual relations outside of marriage

'AFFAIR'

Relationship outside of marriage

'BASTARD' Non-marital child or, a child whose parents were not married

'BIOLOGICAL SEX' / 'BIOLOGICAL MALE' / 'BIOLOGICAL FEMALE'
Sex assigned at birth

'CARNAL INTERCOURSE'

Sexual intercourse

'CHILD PROSTITUTE'

Child who has been trafficked

'CONCUBINE' / 'KEEP'

Woman with whom a man has had romantic or sexual relations outside of marriage

'DUTIFUL WIFE' / 'FAITHFUL WIFE' / 'GOOD WIFE' / 'OBEDIENT WIFE'

Wife

'EVE TEASING'

Street sexual harassment

'HOUSEWIFE'

Homemaker

'FEMININE HYGIENE PRODUCTS'

Menstrual products

'UNWED MOTHER'

Mother

'VIOLATED'

(e.g. 'he violated her')

Sexually harassed / assaulted or raped

'MISTRESS'

Woman with whom a man has had romantic or sexual relations outside of marriage

'PROSTITUTE'

Sex worker

'PROVIDER' / 'BREADWINNER'

Employed or earning

'PROVOCATIVE CLOTHING / DRESS'

Clothing / dress

'SEX CHANGE'

Sex reassignment or gender transition

'SPINSTER'

Unmarried woman



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GREEN HYDROGEN STANDARD FOR INDIA

WHY IN NEWS?

- The Ministry of New & Renewable Energy (MNRE) has notified the green hydrogen standards for the country.
- The government has outlined the emission threshold that must be met for hydrogen produced to be classified as 'Green', from renewable sources.

What is Green Hydrogen?

- "Green Hydrogen" shall mean Hydrogen produced using renewable energy, including, but not limited to, production through electrolysis or conversion of biomass.
- Renewable energy also includes such electricity generated from renewable sources which is stored in an energy storage system or banked with the grid in accordance with applicable regulations.

Other Key Points

- The notification specifies that the Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE) shall be the nodal authority for the accreditation of agencies for the monitoring, verification and certification of green hydrogen production projects.
- With this notification, India becomes one of the first few countries in the world to announce a definition of green hydrogen.

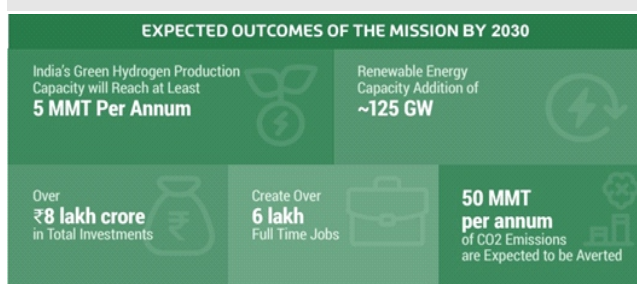
Emission Threshold

- For Green Hydrogen produced through electrolysis- The non-biogenic greenhouse gas emissions arising from water treatment, electrolysis, gas purification and drying and compression of hydrogen shall not be greater than 2 kilogram of carbon dioxide equivalent per kilogram of Hydrogen (kg CO₂ eq/kg Hydrogen), taken as an average over last 12-month period.
- For Green Hydrogen produced through conversion of biomass- The non-biogenic greenhouse gas emissions arising from biomass processing, heat/steam generation, conversion of biomass to hydrogen, gas purification and drying and compression of hydrogen shall not be greater than 2 kilogram of carbon dioxide equivalent per kilogram of Hydrogen (kg CO₂ eq/kg Hydrogen), taken as an average over last 12-month period.

National Green Hydrogen Mission

- The Union Cabinet on 4 January 2023 approved a ₹19,744 crore National Green Hydrogen mission that aims to make India a 'global hub' for using, producing and exporting green hydrogen.

Mission Outcomes



DID YOU KNOW?

- India has set its sight on becoming energy independent by 2047 and achieving Net Zero by 2070.
- India currently imports over 40% of its primary energy requirements, worth over USD 90 billion every year.
- Depending on the nature of the method of its extraction, hydrogen is categorised into three categories, namely, Grey, Blue and Green.
 - Grey Hydrogen: It is produced via coal or lignite gasification (black or brown), or via a process called steam methane reformation (SMR) of natural gas or methane (grey). These tend to be mostly carbon-intensive processes.
 - Blue Hydrogen: It is produced via natural gas or coal gasification combined with carbon capture storage (CCS) or carbon capture use (CCU) technologies to reduce carbon emissions.
 - Green Hydrogen: It is produced using electrolysis of water with electricity generated by renewable energy. The carbon intensity ultimately depends on the carbon neutrality of the source of electricity (i.e., the more renewable energy there is in the electricity fuel mix, the "greener" the hydrogen produced).





NEW UK OIL AND GAS EXPLORATION IN THE NORTH SEA

WHY IN NEWS?

- The Prime Minister of the United Kingdom (UK) has recently endorsed plans for additional fossil fuel drilling off the British coast in the North Sea to make the UK more energy efficient.

Key Points

- The North Sea Transition Authority (NTSA), responsible for regulating oil, gas and carbon storage industries, is currently running its 33rd offshore oil and gas licensing round.
- NTSA expects the first of the new licences to be awarded in the autumn, with the round expected to award over 100 licences in total.

History

- The 1958 Geneva Convention on the Continental Shelf was the first international legislation to establish the rights of countries over the continental shelves adjacent to their coastlines and paved the way for exploration in the North Sea.
- The treaty came into force in 1964, shortly after the U.K. Parliament passed the Continental Shelf Act in April of the same year.
- The Act provides for exploration and exploitation of the continental shelf based on the 1958 convention.
- It delineated the jurisdiction the U.K. had over oil and gas resources (excluding coal) under the seabed near its shores.
- The first licence for exploration in the U.K. North Sea was awarded to British Petroleum (BP) in September 1964.
- In 1970, BP made its first discovery of commercial oil in the large Forties Field east of Aberdeen, Scotland. Hamilton, an American oil company, was the first to bring North Sea oil to the shore in 1975.
- Production from the North Sea peaked in 1999, when it produced 1,37,099 thousand tonnes total of crude oil and natural gas liquids. By 2022, the total production declined to 38,037 thousand tonnes, according to U.K. government figures.

About the North Sea

- Geographically, the North Sea lies between England and Scotland on its west, the Netherlands, Belgium, and France on its south, and Norway, Denmark, and Germany on its east.

Concerns

- Drilling in seas and oceans for fossil fuels not only aggravates the threat of climate change but also warms oceans and raises sea levels.
- Offshore drilling is associated with a direct risk to marine biodiversity, as well as with indirect risks to coral reefs, shellfish and the marine ecosystem from acidic waters because of carbon pollution settling into oceans.

DID YOU KNOW?

- The U.K. has committed to achieving 'net zero' carbon emissions by 2050.
- The Climate Change Committee (CCC) reported in its March 2023 Progress Report that the U.K. had not adequately prepared for climate change under the second National Adaptation Programme.
- In the U.K., National Adaptation Programmes are statutory programmes that the government must follow to help prepare the country for climate change, as required under the Climate Change Act. The second National Adaptation Programme covered the period of 2018 – 2023.



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NATIONAL CURRICULUM FRAMEWORK

WHY IN NEWS?

- The National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) recently released the final National Curriculum Framework (NCF).

Key Highlights

- It mandates the teaching of three languages, including two Indian languages, in classes 9-10, and two languages, including one Indian language, in classes 11-12.
 - Currently, students in Classes 9 and 10 study two languages, and students in Classes 11 and 12 study one language.
- The NCF has stated that all students will be allowed to take Board exams on at least two occasions during any given school year, with only the best score being retained.
- The final NCF states that the number of mandatory subjects for Classes 9 and 10 is seven, and it's six for Classes 11 and 12.
 - Currently, the students from Classes 9 to 12 study five mandatory subjects, with an option of adding one more subject.
- Optional subjects have been grouped in three parts in the NCF.
 - The first optional group includes art education, emphasising on both visual and performing arts, with equal emphasis on making, thinking about, and appreciating artwork. It also includes physical education and vocational education.
 - The second group includes Social Science, the Humanities, and interdisciplinary areas.
 - The third group includes Science, Mathematics, and computational thinking.
- For Classes 6 to 8, the NCF states that-
 - 20% content would be from the local level for the Social Science curriculum,
 - 30% content would be from the regional level,
 - 30% would be from the national level, and
 - 20% content would be global.
- The 'Secondary Stage' has been significantly redesigned to offer more flexibility and choice for students. There is no hard separation between academic and vocational subjects, or between Science, Social Science, Art, and Physical Education.
- Students can choose interesting combinations of subjects for receiving their School Leaving Certificates.
- Responding to the challenges of climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution, and the criticality of environmental awareness and sustainability in today's world, Environmental Education is given due emphasis across all stages of schooling, culminating in a separate area of study in the Secondary Stage.

About NCF

- The NCF is developed based on the vision of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, and to enable its implementation.
- The NCF addresses education for the age group 3 to 18 years, across the entire range of diverse institutions in India.
- This is across the four Stages in the 5+3+3+4 Curricular and Pedagogical restructuring of School Education as envisioned in NEP 2020.
- The NCF has undergone four revisions in the past - in 1975, 1988, 2000, and 2005. The proposed revision, if implemented, would be the fifth iteration of the framework.
- There are four sections of NCF. These are -
 - NCF for School Education (NCF-SE)
 - NCF for Early Childhood Care and Education (Foundational Stage)
 - NCF for Teacher Education
 - NCF for Adult Education

National Education Policy, 2020
CURRICULUM AND PEDAGOGIC REFORM

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
मेरी सरकार

National Curriculum Framework for School Education (NCFSE)

Formulation of a new and comprehensive National Curricular Framework for School Education, NCFSE 2020-21, to be undertaken by NCERT

The NCFSE document to be revisited and updated once every 5-10 years, taking into account frontline curriculum

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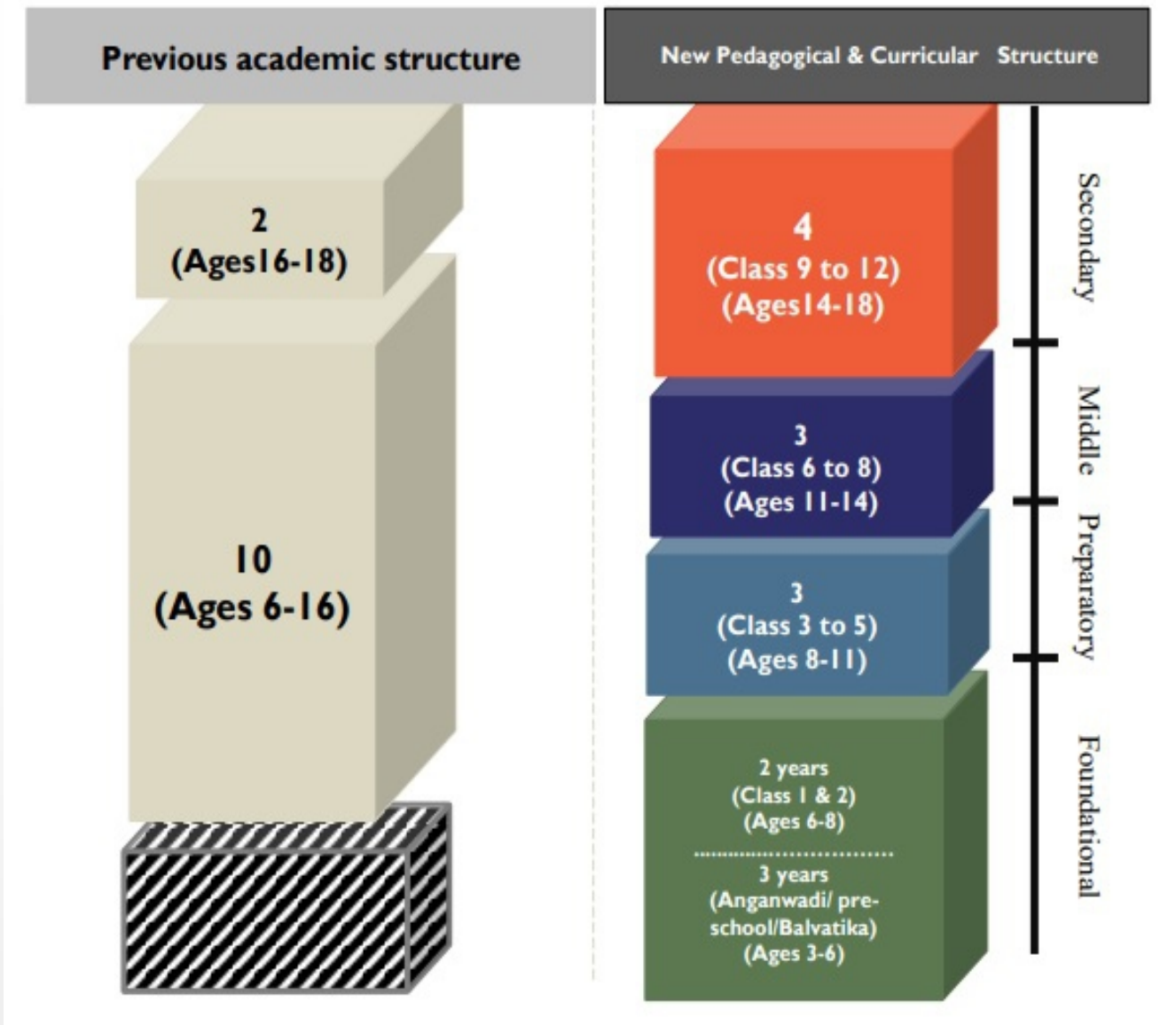
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NEP 2020

- National Education Policy 2020 has been announced on 29.07.2020.
- The NEP 2020 proposes various reforms in school education as well as higher education including technical education.
- NEP 2020 aim to increase the GER to 100% in preschool to secondary level by 2030 whereas GER in Higher Education including vocational education from 26.3% (2018) to 50% by 2035.
- This policy envisages that the extant 10+2 structure in school education will be modified with a new pedagogical and curricular restructuring of 5+3+3+4 covering ages 3-18.





BHARAT NEW CAR ASSESSMENT PROGRAMME (BHARAT NCAP)

WHY IN NEWS?

- The Union Ministry of Road Transport and Highways launched the much-awaited Bharat New Car Assessment Programme (Bharat NCAP) on 22nd August 2023.

Key Points

- The objective of the programme is to help consumers make an informed decision before purchasing a car, thereby spurring demand for safer cars.
- Under the Bharat NCAP, cars voluntarily nominated by automobile manufacturers will be crash-tested as per protocols laid down in the soon-to-be-published Automotive Industry Standard 197.
- The programme is applicable to passenger vehicles with not more than eight seats in addition to the driver's seat with gross vehicle weight not exceeding 3,500 kgs. Only the base model of a particular variant will be tested.
- Cars will be assigned a rating between one star to five stars after being evaluated on three parameters — adult occupant protection, child occupant protection and safety assist technologies present in the car.
 - The first two parameters will be calculated with the help of three different kinds of tests, which include a frontal offset test where a vehicle is driven at 64 kmph and with 40% overlap into a deformable barrier which represents the oncoming vehicle, which replicates a crash between two cars of the same weight.
 - Other tests are the side impact test at 50 kmph and the pole-side impact test (where a car is crashed into a rigid pole sideways) at 29 kmph.
- Though Bharat NCAP is voluntary, in certain cases, cars may be subjected to a crash test such as for a base model of a popular variant (minimum clocked sale of 30,000 units), or when the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways recommends a model for testing based on market feedback or in the interest of public safety.
- Bharat NCAP will be led by the Central Institute of Road Transport (CIRT).



Global NCAP

- The testing protocols adopted by the Bharat NCAP are modelled on the Global NCAP, which is a project of the U.K.-based NGO, Towards Zero Foundation.
- It serves as a platform for cooperation among new car assessment programmes worldwide, including countries such as the U.S. which has the world's oldest crash testing regime since 1978.
- The NGO launched a Safer Cars for India campaign in 2014. In 2018, Tata achieved India's first 5-star cars.

DID YOU KNOW?

- India sees nearly 1.5 lakh road fatalities in a year, accounting for 10% of deaths due to road crashes globally with only 1% of the world's vehicles.
- According to a World Bank study, road crashes are estimated to cost the Indian economy between 5 to 7% of GDP a year.
- The U.S. NCAP also includes a roll-over test which tests whether a vehicle is vulnerable to tipping up on the road in a severe manoeuvre.
- Japan's NCAP covers electric shock protection performance after a collision, performance of neck injury protection in a rear-end collision, passenger seat belt reminder evaluation, evaluation of pedestrian protection technologies apart from preventive safety performance such as autonomous emergency braking system, lane departure prevention system, rear-view monitoring system and pedal misapplication, among others.



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20TH ASEAN-INDIA ECONOMIC MINISTERS' MEETING

WHY IN NEWS?

- The 20th Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)-India Economic Ministers' meeting was held on 21st August 2023 in Semarang, Indonesia.

Key Highlights

- The Economic Ministers or their representatives from all the 10 ASEAN countries viz. Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam participated in the meeting.
- Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste also joined the Meeting as an observer.
- India and ASEAN registered a bilateral trade of USD 131.5 billion in 2022-23. The trade with ASEAN accounted for 11.3% of India's global trade in 2022-23.
- The Ministers also interacted with the ASEAN-India Business Council (AIBC) and took note of the activities undertaken by AIBC in 2023, including the 5th ASEAN-India Business Summit held on 6th March 2023 in Kuala Lumpur.
- The main agenda of this year's meeting was the timely review of the ASEAN-India Trade in Goods Agreement (AITIGA) which was signed in 2009.
- The review of the AITIGA was a long-standing demand of Indian businesses and the early commencement of the review would help in making the FTA trade facilitative and mutually beneficial.
- The Ministers agreed to follow a quarterly schedule of negotiations and conclude the review in 2025.

About ASEAN

- ASEAN was established on 8 August 1967 in Bangkok, Thailand, with the signing of the ASEAN Declaration (Bangkok Declaration) by the Founding Fathers of ASEAN: Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore and Thailand.
- Brunei Darussalam joined ASEAN on 7 January 1984, followed by Viet Nam on 28 July 1995, Lao PDR and Myanmar on 23 July 1997, and Cambodia on 30 April 1999, making up what is today the ten Member States of ASEAN.
- Its chairmanship rotates annually, based on the alphabetical order of the English names of Member States.
- ASEAN countries have an estimated 666.19 million people and a combined Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of USD USD 3.2 Trillion.

About ASEAN-India Business Council (AIBC)

- AIBC is an organization formed by the Governments of ASEAN and India in 2005 to foster closer business linkages and provide an industry perspective to the broadening and deepening of economic linkages between ASEAN and India.
- The Council comprises 2 nominated members from each of the ASEAN countries and 5 from India.
- The Council is co-chaired by Malaysia's nominated representative to the council on the ASEAN side and the President of the Federation of Indian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) from India.

ASEAN-India Trade in Goods Agreements (AITIGA)

- The ASEAN-India Trade in Goods Agreement (AITIGA) is a trade deal between the ten member states of ASEAN and India.
- ASEAN and India signed the Agreement at the 7th ASEAN Economic Ministers-India Consultations in Bangkok, Thailand in 2009.
- The Agreement, which came into effect in 2010, is sometimes referred to as the ASEAN-India Free Trade Agreement.



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DID YOU KNOW?

- India and several other countries, including the US, China, Japan and Australia, are its dialogue partners.
- ASEAN is India's 4th largest trading partner.
- India has a Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement (CECA) with various countries of the ASEAN region which has resulted in concessional trade and a rise in investments.
- India has been undertaking several connectivity projects like India-Myanmar-Thailand Trilateral (IMT) Highway and the Kaladan Multimodal Project.
- India is also trying to establish a Maritime Transportation Agreement with ASEAN and also Plans for a Railway link between New Delhi in India to Hanoi in Vietnam.
- The inaugural ASEAN India Maritime Exercise (AIME-2023) successfully culminated in the South China Sea on 08 May 2023.
- The Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) was signed into existence by 15 countries led by China, Japan, South Korea, Australia, New Zealand and the 10-state ASEAN grouping, creating one of the world's largest trading blocs.
- India had been a part of negotiations for almost nine years till it pulled out in November 2019.
- India has signed 13 Regional Trade Agreements (RTAs)/Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) with various countries/regions namely, Japan, South Korea, countries of ASEAN region and countries of South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC)Mauritius, United Arab Emirates, Australia.



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SUPREME COURT ALLOWS RAPE SURVIVOR TO TERMINATE PREGNANCY

WHY IN NEWS?

- Observing that pregnancy outside marriage is injurious and a cause of stress, the Supreme Court recently allowed a rape survivor to undergo medical termination of her over 27-week pregnancy.

Background

- Gujarat High Court adjourned the survivor's plea for medical termination of her pregnancy and said "valuable time" has been lost during the pendency of the matter.
 - Under the Medical Termination of Pregnancy (MTP) Act, 2021, the upper limit for the termination of pregnancy is 24 weeks for married women, special categories including survivors of rape and other vulnerable women such as the differently-abled and minors.
- The Supreme Court also came down heavily upon the High Court for suggesting to explore the possibility of the woman bearing the child, saying such an unjust condition was against the "constitutional philosophy".

Law relating to Abortion in India

- Until the 1960s, abortion was illegal in India and unless the procedure was done in good faith to save the life of the mother, a woman could face three years of imprisonment and/or fine under Section 312 of the Indian Penal Code, 1860 if she tried to abort her fetus.
- Based on the recommendations of the Shantilal Shah Committee, a medical termination bill was passed by Parliament in August 1971. The title of the law, the Medical Termination of Pregnancy (MTP) Act, 1971 was strategically chosen to avoid any religious or ethical objections and impart a medical reasoning behind permitting such procedures.
- Initially, the law permitted abortion up to 20 weeks. The Act was subsequently amended in 2002 to allow the use of the then-new medical abortion pills, mifepristone and misoprostol, and in 2021 to raise the ceiling for abortions to 24 weeks for special categories of pregnant women such as rape or incest survivors, with the prior approval of two registered doctors.
- In cases of foetal disability, there is no upper gestation limit for abortion as long as it is approved by a medical board of specialist doctors set up by the governments of states and union territories.

In Justice K.S. Puttaswamy (Retd.) v. the Union Of India And Others (2017), the court recognized the constitutional right of women to make reproductive choices, as a part of personal liberty under Article 21 of the Indian Constitution, which, despite laying a robust jurisprudence on reproductive rights and the privacy of a woman, does not translate into a fundamental shift in power from the doctor to the woman seeking an abortion.

- The new Medical Termination of Pregnancy (Amendment) Act, 2021, expands access to safe and legal abortion services on therapeutic, eugenic, humanitarian and social grounds to ensure universal access to comprehensive care.
- Now, a pregnancy may be terminated up to 20 weeks by a woman-married or unmarried in the case of failure of contraceptive method or device.

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INDIA AND THE NORTHERN SEA ROUTE

WHY IN NEWS?

- Murmansk, popularly called the capital of the Arctic region and the beginning point of the Northern Sea Route (NSR), is witnessing the rising trend of Indian involvement in cargo traffic.
- In the first seven months of 2023, India got the lion's share with 35% of eight million tonnes of cargo handled by the Murmansk port, which is about 2,000 km northwest of Moscow.
- India has been showing greater interest in the NSR for a variety of reasons.

What is NSR?

- The Northern Sea Route (NSR), the shortest shipping route for freight transportation between Europe and countries of the Asia-Pacific region, straddles four seas of the Arctic Ocean.
- Running to 5,600 km, the Route begins at the boundary between the Barents and the Kara Seas (Kara Strait) and ends in the Bering Strait (Provideniya Bay).
- According to the paper on the website of the Arctic Institute in September 2011, the distance savings along the NSR can be as high as 50% compared to the currently used shipping lanes via Suez or Panama Canal.
 - The 2021 blockage of the Suez Canal, which forms part of the widely-used maritime route involving Europe and Asia, has led to greater attention on the NSR.

Significance of the Arctic Region for India

- The vulnerability of the Arctic region, which is above the Arctic Circle and includes the Arctic Ocean with the North Pole at its centre, to unprecedented changes in the climate may have an impact on India in terms of economic security, water security and sustainability.
- The region also constitutes the largest unexplored prospective area for hydrocarbons remaining on the earth.
- It is estimated that the region may hold over 40 per cent of the current global reserves of oil and gas. There may also be significant reserves of coal, zinc and silver.
 - However, the government's Arctic Policy of 2022 mentions that the country's approach to the economic development of the region is guided by the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

India's Engagement

- India's engagement with the Arctic can be traced to the signing of the Svalbard Treaty in February 1920 in Paris and India is undertaking several scientific studies and research in the Arctic region.
- Apart from setting up a research station, Himadri, at Ny-Ålesund, Svalbard, in 2008, the country launched its inaugural multi-sensor moored observatory and northernmost atmospheric laboratory in 2014 and 2016 respectively.
- Till last year, thirteen expeditions to the Arctic were successfully conducted.
- In May 2013, India became an observer state of the Arctic Council along with five others including China.

India and NSR Development

- Primarily, the growth in cargo traffic along the NSR is on the constant rise and during 2018-2022, the growth rate was around 73%. Last year, the volume of cargo traffic was 34.117 million tonnes with India increasingly importing crude oil and coal from Russia.
- Secondly, the NSR, as a transit route, assumes importance, given India's geographical position and the major share of its trade associated with sea transportation.
- Thirdly, the Chennai-Vladivostok Maritime Corridor (CVMC) project, an outcome of the signing of the memorandum of intent between the two countries in September 2019, is being examined as one linking with another organised international container transit through the NSR.
 - The 10,500 km-long CVMC, passing through the Sea of Japan, the South China Sea and Malacca Strait, will bring down transport time to 12 days, almost a third of what is taken under the existing St. Petersburg-Mumbai route of 16,000 km.
- Fourthly, experts are discussing the possibility of China and Russia gaining collective influence over the NSR.

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DID YOU KNOW?

- The Arctic region is the enormous area around the North Pole spreading over one-sixth of the earth's landmass.
- Russia is the only country in the world with a nuclear-powered icebreaker fleet.
- In December 1959, the world's first nuclear icebreaker, "Lenin," was put into operation, unveiling a new chapter in the NSR development. It was decommissioned 30 years later.
- Eight Arctic States – Canada, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Russia, Sweden and the USA form the Arctic Council.
- India holds one of the 13 positions as the Observer in the Arctic Council.



Ny-Ålesund – a research town in Svalbard, housing research stations of around 11 countries

History of India's Arctic Research



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INDIA AND ITS AGING WORKFORCE

WHY IN NEWS?

- As per an analysis of India's workforce, sourced from CMIE's Economic Outlook data, shows that while India may be the country with the most youthful population, its workforce is rapidly ageing.
- In other words, the young are increasingly getting driven out of the job market.

Ageing Workforce in India

- An ageing workforce basically means that if one looks at all the employed people in India, the share of young people is going down while the share of those closer to 60 years of age is going up.
- In CMIE's data, youth is defined as those belonging to ages above 15 years and below 25 years. It has divided the workforce into three groups:
 - Those aged 15 years or more but less than 30 years,
 - Those aged 30 years or more but less than 45 years, and
 - Those aged 45 years and older.
- The share of India's youth (aged 15-29 years) has fallen from 25% in 2016-17 to just 17% at the end of the financial year 2022-23.
- Even the share of those in the middle group (aged 30-44 years) has fallen from 38% to 33% over the same period.
- The oldest age category (aged 45 years and older) however has grown its share from 37% to 49%.
 - In other words, just in the past seven years, the workforce has aged so much that the share of people 45 years and older has gone from one-third to almost one-half.
- The population of the youth category grew by 2.64 crore (from 35.49 crore in 2016-17 to 38.13 crore in 2022-23), while the number of employed youth fell by 3.24 crore.
 - This is reflected in the sharp fall in the Employment Rate for this age-group. It fell from 29% to just 19%. In other words, while seven years ago, 29 of every 100 youth (15 to 30 ages) used to have a job, today that number has fallen to 19 out of every 100.
- While the decline in employment rates is most pronounced among the youth, the trend extends to other age groups as well, albeit to a lesser extent.
- Notably, the oldest age category (45 years and above) has experienced a relatively smaller decline in employment rates and has actually seen an increase in the absolute number of employed individuals.

Why is India's Workforce Ageing?

- The data clearly shows that even though India has a fast-growing youth population, that by itself does not guarantee more jobs for the youth.
- In fact, India's workforce is rapidly ageing. That's because the young are failing to make their mark in the job market and it appears they are increasingly getting elbowed out by the not-so-young Indians.
- Even if one accounts for the possibility that a lot of young people may be pursuing higher studies, the trend is still stark enough to merit a look by policymakers.

The Employment Rate (ER) for any population or age group tells us what proportion of that age group or population is employed. So, if there are 100 people in the ages 15 to 29 and only 10 are employed then the ER would be 10%.



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INDIA SMART CITIES AWARDS CONTEST 2022

WHY IN NEWS?

- The Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA) recently announced the India Smart Cities Award Contest (ISAC) 2022 under the Smart Cities Mission (SCM), that felicitated 66 winners in various categories.

Key Points

- Indore bagged the best "National Smart City Award", followed by Surat and Agra.
- Madhya Pradesh has won the best 'State Award' and Tamil Nadu bagged the second spot. Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh were on the third spot jointly.
- Chandigarh has been ranked the number one in the Union territory category. It has also emerged a winner in the best governance category for its e-governance services.
- In the 'built environment' category, Coimbatore was ranked the best city for its model roads, and restoration and rejuvenation of lakes, followed by Indore while the third spot was shared by New Town Kolkata and Kanpur.
- Jabalpur has emerged as the winner in the 'Economy' category with an incubation centre while Indore and Lucknow followed it on the next two spots.
- Chandigarh has been adjudged the best city in the mobility category for "Public Bike Sharing (PPP) along with cycle tracks", followed by New Town Kolkata and Sagar.
- Indore has also won the best city award in the 'urban environment' category for "air quality improvement and Ahilya Van along with vertical gardens".
- Shivamogga and Jammu, in the same category, were awarded for their initiatives in the "development of conservancies" and e-auto for the old city respectively.

About Smart Cities Mission

- Smart Cities Mission launched on June 25, 2015, aims to provide core infrastructure, clean and sustainable environment and a decent quality of life to their citizens through the application of "smart solutions".
- The 100 Smart Cities have taken up projects across diverse sectors related to mobility, energy, water, sanitation, solid waste management, vibrant public spaces, social infrastructure, smart governance, etc.

About ISAC

- The ISAC is organized under the Smart Cities Mission, Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs, Government of India.
- In the past, the ISAC has witnessed three editions in 2018, 2019 and 2020.
- The fourth edition of the ISAC was launched in April 2022 during the 'Smart Cities-Smart Urbanization' event in Surat.
- The ISAC 2022 award had a two-stage submission process consisting of the 'Qualifying Stage', which involved an overall assessment of the city's performance, and the 'Proposal Stage' which required the smart cities to submit their nominations for six award categories as follows:
 - Project Awards: 10 different themes,
 - Innovation Awards: 2 different themes,
 - National/Zonal City Awards,
 - State Awards,
 - UT Award, and
 - Partners Awards, 3 different themes

Swachh Survekshan 2022

- In October 2022, Indore was adjudged India's cleanest city for the sixth time in a row, followed by Surat and Navi Mumbai in the category of cities with a population more than a lakh.
- In the population category of less than one lakh, Panchgani and Karad from Maharashtra bagged the first and third positions respectively, while Patan from Chhattisgarh bagged the second position.
- Tirupati received the best city award in the Safai Mitra Suraksha category.
- Haridwar in Uttarakhand received the award for the best Ganga town in more than one lakh population cities.
- Shivamogga in Karnataka received the Fast Mover City Award.
- The State awards saw Madhya Pradesh emerge as the Cleanest State in the category of "more than 100 Urban Local Bodies", relegating Chhattisgarh, the cleanest State of the previous three years, to second place.
 - Maharashtra emerged as the third cleanest State.
- Tripura got the cleanest State award in the "less than 100 urban local bodies category", dislodging Jharkhand, which had won in the past two consecutive years.
 - Jharkhand and Uttarakhand received the second and third spots respectively.

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STATE OF INDIA'S BIRDS 2023 REPORT

WHY IN NEWS?

- The State of India's Birds 2023 Report (SolB 2023), which was released recently, has listed out the avian species of highest conservation priority for the State.
- The SolB 2023 is a first-of-its-kind collaborative effort of 13 government and non-government organisations, including the Bombay Natural History Society (BNHS), Wildlife Institute of India (WII), and Zoological Survey of India (ZSI), Wildlife Trust of India (WTI), Worldwide Fund for Nature–India (WWF–India) among others, which evaluates the overall conservation status of the most regularly occurring bird species in India.

Key Highlights

- The researchers analysed the long-term trends in bird populations (changes over 30 years) and the current annual trends (annual changes over the past eight years). They also analysed birds' distribution range sizes across India.
- Among the 338 bird species studied in India, 60% have shown long-term decline, 29% are stable and 11% have shown increases.
- Among the 359 species with determined current annual trends, 39% are declining, 18% are rapidly declining, 53% are stable, and 8% are increasing.
- The generalist species like shy Prinia, Rock Pigeon, Asian Koel, and Indian Peafowl have increased dramatically. Other common species like the Baya Weaver and Pied Bushchat are relatively stable.
- There is an urgent need for the conservation of the most critically threatened bird species in India which includes Jerdon's Courser, Great Indian Bustard, White-bellied Heron, Bengal Florican, and Finn's Weaver.
- Habitat specialists — particularly birds of grasslands and other open habitats, wetlands, and woodlands — are declining rapidly. Among the most declining birds were the Raptors, migratory shorebirds and ducks.
- In terms of diet, carnivores, insectivores, and granivores are declining more rapidly than omnivores or fruit- and nectar-eaters.
- Separately, migratory species appear to be under greater threat than non-migrants. And species endemic to the Western Ghats–Sri Lanka region are faring worse than others.
- Certain groups of birds are faring particularly poorly, including open habitat species like bustards and coursers, riverine sandbar-nesting birds like skimmers and some terns, coastal shorebirds, open-country raptors, and a number of ducks.
- The SolB 2023 report classified all 942 species into three categories for priority action. It has classified 178 species as High Priority, 323 as Moderate Priority, and 441 as Low Priority.
- The High Priority species include migratory wetland birds like Northern Shoveler, Northern Pintail, Common Teal, Tufted Duck, Greater Flamingo, Sarus Crane, Indian Courser and Andaman Serpent Eagle.
- The report also highlighted several major threats – including forest degradation, urbanization and energy infrastructure – that bird species face across the country.
- Environmental pollutants including veterinary drugs such as nimesulide still threaten vulture populations in India.

DID YOU KNOW?

- The Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) was adopted in December 2022 and pledges to halt biodiversity loss and restore ecosystems.
- The latest Living Planet report² concludes that populations of mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians, and fishes have declined by an average of 69% since 1970.



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2023 EDITION OF THE STANDARD MAP OF CHINA

WHY IN NEWS?

- China's government on August 28 released the "2023 edition of the standard map of China", which continues to show the entire State of Arunachal Pradesh and the Aksai Chin region within China's borders.

Key Points

- The 2023 map was released by the Ministry of Natural Resources.
- The territorial claims on China's western borders, as well as the so-called nine-dash line covering the entire South China Sea, are shown on the map as in previous editions.
- China's controversial - and legally baseless - Nine-Dash Line that is vaguely emblazoned on maps over the South China Sea is now a thing of the past.
 - Instead, it has grown into ten dashes! The Natuna Islands of Indonesia appear within the dashed line, for example, while the new tenth dash runs to the east of Taiwan, supposedly cementing the democratic nation as "belonging" to China.
- So far, five ASEAN countries have issued public statements denouncing China's creative cartography.
 - In the following order, Malaysia, the Philippines, Indonesia, Vietnam and Brunei have complained.
 - These five Southeast Asian states are all in dispute over China's excessive territorial claims in the South China Sea.
- The map released on August 28 shows Arunachal Pradesh which China claims as South Tibet and Aksai Chin occupied by it in the 1962 war as part of its territory.
 - The latest map follows Beijing in April announcing it would "standardise" the names of 11 places in Arunachal Pradesh, including a town close to the Arunachal Pradesh capital of Itanagar.
 - This was the third such list of "renaming" places in Arunachal Pradesh and was seen by observers as a response to India holding events in the lead-up to the G-20 summit in the State, which Beijing had opposed.
- Following the release of the standard map for public use, China will also release "digital maps and navigation and positioning" for use in various fields including "location-based services, precision agriculture, platform economy and intelligent connected vehicles.

Disagreement between India & China

- The Line of Actual Control (LAC) is the demarcation that separates Indian-controlled territory from Chinese-controlled territory.
- India considers the LAC to be 3,488 km long, while the Chinese consider it to be only around 2,000 km.
- It is divided into three sectors: the eastern sector which spans Arunachal Pradesh and Sikkim, the middle sector in Uttarakhand and Himachal Pradesh, and the western sector in Ladakh.
- The main areas of dispute are Aksai Chin, located in the western sector, and Arunachal Pradesh, in the eastern sector.

DID YOU KNOW?

- LAC came into existence after the 1962 Indo-China war.
- China claims the entire state of Arunachal Pradesh, referring to it as "Zangnan, the southern part of Tibet".
- The South China Sea is an arm of the western Pacific Ocean in Southeast Asia. It is south of China, east & south of Vietnam, west of the Philippines and north of the island of Borneo.
- The People's Republic of China, the Republic of China (Taiwan), the Philippines, Malaysia, Brunei, Indonesia, Singapore and Vietnam are the bordering countries of the South China Sea.
- The Shimla agreement of 1914 demarcated the boundary between Tibet and North East India.

NEW STANDARD MAP RELEASED BY CHINA



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G20 CULTURE MINISTERIAL MEETING

WHY IN NEWS?

- The G20 Culture Ministerial Meeting concluded in Varanasi with an outcome document that recognised the significance of repatriation of cultural property to their countries and communities.

Key Highlights

- The “Kashi Culture Pathway” document recognised threats to cultural heritage and cultural resources — “including looting and illicit trafficking of cultural property, the intentional or collateral destruction of cultural heritage and sites, desecration of relics and shrines, illicit excavations, forgery and the misappropriation of cultural heritage”.
- The document said such acts may result in the loss of irreplaceable cultural assets and the disruption of socio-cultural practices, potentially impacting peoples and communities, including cultural, human, economic and social rights.
- The meeting also underlined that destruction and illicit trafficking of cultural property can be linked to organised crimes such as money laundering, corruption, tax evasion and terrorist financing, notably in conflict or post-conflict situations, and reiterating their commitment to strengthen this fight.
- Culture ministers from G20 countries expressed concerns about the rise of online platforms enabling illicit trafficking of cultural property and emphasized the need for potential regulations to address this issue.
- The report 'G20 Culture: Shaping the Global Narrative for Inclusive Growth' was launched by the G20 Ministers of Culture during the G20 Culture Ministers' Meeting.
- It includes insights and recommendations from the expert-driven Global Thematic Webinars on the four priorities articulated by the Indian presidency that were held during March-April 2023.
- The CWG, under India's G20 presidency, had launched the 'Culture Unites All' campaign to highlight India's unwavering belief in multilateralism based on peaceful coexistence among diverse cultures and communities.



DID YOU KNOW?

- The Culture Ministers' met for the first time on the sidelines of the G20 in 2020, under the Saudi Arabian Presidency.
- In 2021, Culture was formalised as a Working Group during the Italian Presidency, leading to the inaugural G20 Culture Ministers' Meeting and the adoption of the 'Rome Culture Ministers' Declaration'.
- The 'Bali Declaration' of 2022 under the Indonesian presidency further stressed the role of culture in sustainable development.
- 1st Culture Working Group Meeting was held in Khajuraho on February 22-25, 2023.
- 2nd Culture Working Group Meeting was held in Bhubaneswar on May 15-17, 2023.
- 3rd Culture Working Group Meeting was held in Hampi on July 9-12, 2023.
- The G20 Orchestra- 'Sur Vasudha', organised by the Culture Working Group under India's G20 Presidency. 'Sur Vasudha' or a treasure trove of melodies celebrates the rich musical knowledge and heritage of G20 member nations and guest countries.



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

QUICK FACTS



1. **India's largest species of bats**, named after a canine fabled to be sly, spend 7% of their day-roosting time being environmentally vigilant, a new study has said. The nectar and fruit-eating **flying fox** (*Pteropus giganteus*) is generally considered a vermin as they raid orchards. It had a similar official status under Schedule V of the Wildlife (Protection) Act of 1972 until it was put on the Schedule II list entailing a higher degree of protection. It is a keystone species. A keystone species is one that has a disproportionately large effect on its natural environment relative to its abundance, impacting many other organisms in an ecosystem and helping to determine the types and numbers of other species in an ecological community.
2. Indian Space Research Organisation (**ISRO**) is jointly developing a nuclear-powered engine, **Radio thermoelectric generators (RTGs)**, along with the **Bhabha Atomic Research Center (BARC)**. Chemical engines, such as those that power the thrusters in satellites, are fine up to a point, but if you want to send a spacecraft deep into space, such as into inter-planetary missions, they will not do—neither can they carry that much fuel nor can they be solar powered because sunlight will not reach a solar panel at such long distances. RTGs, however, are not entirely new. US spacecraft such as the Voyager, Cassini and Curiosity have been powered by RTGs.
3. The **Central Water Commission (CWC)** under the Ministry of Jal Shakti, launched the mobile application "**FloodWatch**" for disseminating flood-related information in real-time. The in-house developed user-friendly app has readable and audio broadcast and all the information is available in 2 languages, viz. English and Hindi. The app includes real-time flood monitoring where users can check up-to-date flood situations throughout the country. The app utilizes near real-time river flow data from various sources.
4. A novel method to test the **nanomechanical properties of materials** at very minute scales with high precision and accuracy has been developed by an **Indian scientist Dr. Sudharshan Phani** in collaboration with two international institutions. The new methodology not only significantly improves the precision and accuracy of what is known as nanoindentation technique or testing of mechanical strength, but enables testing at much higher rates, thus facilitating high throughput.
5. Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced the decision to name the spot where the **Chandrayaan-3 Vikram lander made a soft landing as "Shiv Shakti Point"** and **the site where the Chandrayaan-2 lander crash-landed on the Moon's surface in 2019 would be known as "Tiranga Point"**. Also, **August 23**, the day the Chandrayaan-3 lander touched down on the lunar surface, would be celebrated as '**National Space Day**'.
6. The **National Green Tribunal (NGT)**'s principal bench ordered the **Assam government** to disburse interim compensation to the victims of the Baghjan oil and gas leak that displaced close to 9,000 people in 2020 in Tinsukia district of Assam. The blowout impacted the fragile ecology of the villages situated close to Dibru Saikhowa National Park.
7. Chennai-based start-up AgniKul Cosmos has commenced the process of integrating its cutting-edge **Agnibaan SubOrbital Technological Demonstrator (SOrTeD)**. Agnibaan SOrTeD is a single-stage launch vehicle powered by AgniKul's patented 3D-printed semi-cryogenic Agnilet engine. Agnibaan SOrTeD is a single-stage launch vehicle powered by AgniKul's patented Agnilet engine, which is an entirely 3D-printed, single-piece, 6 kilonewton (kN) semi-cryogenic engine. However, unlike traditional sounding rockets that launch from guide rails, Agnibaan SOrTeD will lift off vertically and follow a predetermined trajectory to perform a precisely orchestrated set of manoeuvres during flight.
8. **India's foreign exchange reserves** are up by **\$708 million at \$602.161 billion** for the week ending August 11, the latest data by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI). India's forex reserves include foreign currency assets, gold reserves, special drawing rights, and the reserve position with the International Monetary Fund (IMF).
9. The **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** announced a pilot programme for '**Public Tech Platform for Frictionless Credit**' which would strive to deliver frictionless credit by "facilitating seamless flow of required digital information to lenders." Frictionless credit is a borrowing approach that seeks to streamline the lending process for consumers.
10. Union Science and Technology Minister Jitendra Singh unveiled a new variety of lotus flowers with 108 petals, named "**Namoh 108**", developed by the city-based





National Botanical Research Institute (NBRI). The "NBRI Namoh 108" lotus variety flowers from March to December and is the first flower whose genome is completely sequenced for its characteristics.

11. In just one year, Shyam Sadan School in **Rajasthan's** Jodhpur district has witnessed a transformative shift in water practices. The school's "**Jal Sansad**" (water parliament) was established in mid-2022, engaging students in a range of water conservation activities. Students conduct audits to track water usage, organize awareness campaigns, and maintain digital records.
12. Indian scientists have developed the **first-ever low-pungent mustard** that is pest and disease-resistant. It is based on **CRISPR/Cas9 gene editing** while being non-GM and transgene-free. Mustard seeds have high levels of glucosinolates, a group of sulphur and nitrogen-containing compounds contributing to the characteristic pungency of their oil and meal.
13. The long pending and vital work of **permanent diversion of the Paravanar River** course was completed on 21st August 2023. Paravanar River Basin which is a leaf-shaped river basin and the second smallest river basin of Tamil Nadu lies within the Cuddalore District of Tamil Nadu.
14. In a significant step towards bolstering the bilateral cooperation between **India** and the **Philippines**, the Indian Coast Guard has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) on enhanced maritime cooperation. The MoU seeks to enhance the professional linkage between the two Coast Guards in the domain of Maritime Law Enforcement (MLE), Maritime Search and Rescue (M-SAR) and Marine Pollution Response (MPR).
15. Making a transformative milestone in the realm of banking services, **India Post Payments Bank (IPPB)** declared the continuation of its profit streak, reiterating its steadfast dedication to sustainable financial inclusion and citizen empowerment. It was launched on September 1, 2018, with 100% equity owned by the Government of India. IPPB launched the pilot branches in Ranchi, Jharkhand, and Raipur, Chhattisgarh.
16. **Tejas**, Light Combat Aircraft (LCA) LSP-7 successfully fired the ASTRA indigenous Beyond Visual Range (BVR) air-to-air missile off the coast of Goa on August 23, 2023.
17. With the commissioning of a 5-megawatt (MW) solar power plant and taking its solar power generation capacity to 7 MW, the **Pune-based College of Military Engineering (CME)** has become **India's first carbon-negative garrison or military formation**. The CME, which was established in 1948 as a premier institute of the armed forces, trains all ranks of the Indian Army, Navy and Air Force, including those from friendly foreign countries in various technical and tactical aspects with changing character of warfare.
18. A **rare black eagle** has been spotted for the first time in the lush **Chail Wildlife Sanctuary** located in Himachal Pradesh's Solan district. They are found in the Indian states of Himachal Pradesh and Jammu & Kashmir, as well as in the forests of the Eastern and Western Ghats in peninsular India. As per the IUCN, their conservation status is categorised as "Least Concern".
19. The mobile app **Khanan Prahari**, which allows citizens to report incidents of illegal coal mining through geo-tagged photographs and textual information, is a significant step taken by the Ministry of Coal towards curbing illegal coal mining activities. The corresponding web portal called as Coal Mine Surveillance & Management System (CMSMS) has been developed in association with the Bhaskaracharya Institute of Space Application & Geoinformatics, Gandhinagar, and CMPDI, Ranchi.
20. The National Health Authority (NHA) had announced 100 Microsites project for accelerated adoption of **Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission (ABDM)** across the country. **Mizoram** became the first state in India to operationalize an ABDM Microsite in its capital city Aizawl. Under this, all healthcare facilities including the private clinics, small hospitals and labs in the region shall be made ABDM-enabled and will offer digital health services to the patients.
21. Riding on the goal from Dimitri Petratos, a 10-man **Mohun Bagan Super Giant** beat East Bengal 1-0 to win the **Durand Cup 2023** trophy at the Salt Lake Stadium in Kolkata. With this victory, Mohun Bagan SG became the first team in Durand Cup history to win 17 titles. With 16

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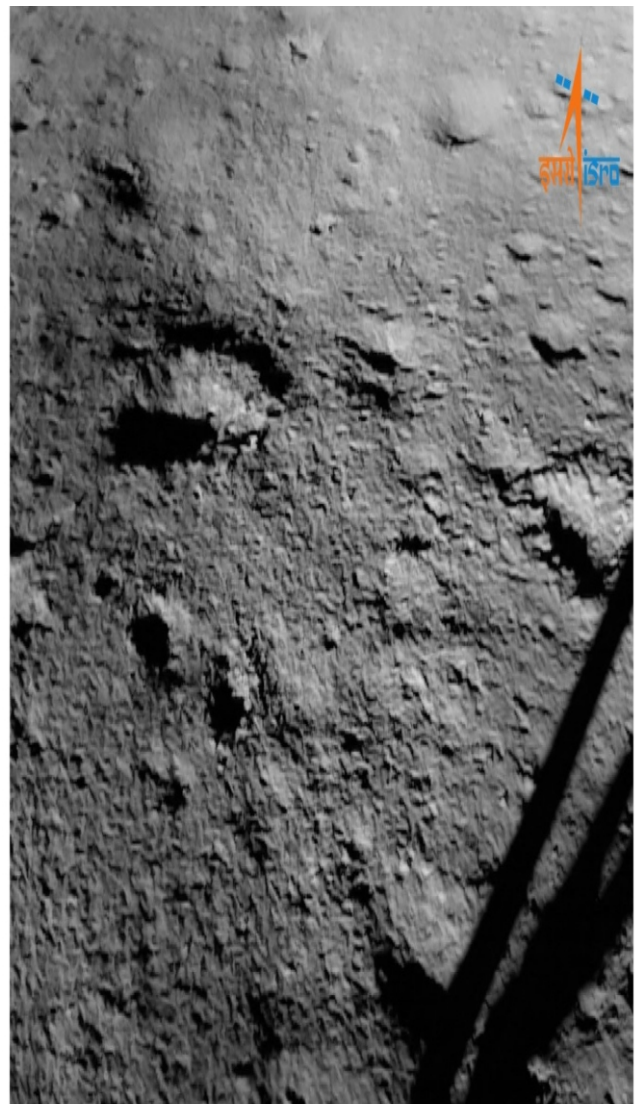


titles, East Bengal are the second-most successful team in the Durand Cup. Durand is the third oldest football tournament in the world and the oldest in Asia and India. The Durand Football Tournament was started at Shimla in 1888 by Sir Henry Mortimer Durand, who was the Foreign Secretary to the Govt of India.

22. Indian athlete **Neeraj Chopra** won the **gold medal** in the men's javelin throw event at the 2023 **World Athletics Championships in Budapest, Hungary**. He achieved a remarkable throw of 88.17m. Neeraj Chopra is also the first Indian track and field athlete to clinch gold at the Olympics (Tokyo 2020). He also won the gold medal at the Diamond League title in 2022 and conquered the junior world championships in 2016.
23. The National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) recently approved the establishment of the **54th tiger reserve** in Rajasthan's Karauli and Dholpur districts. It will be the **fifth tiger reserve in the state**, and 54th in the country, which is all set to join the ranks of Mukundra Hills, Ranthambore, Sariska, and Ramgarh Vishdhari.
24. The **National Sports Day** in India is celebrated on **29 August** every year. It is celebrated to commemorate the birth anniversary of hockey legend Major Dhyan Chand Singh. The first National Sports Day was celebrated on August 29, 2012, and hence this year marks the 12th anniversary of Rashtriya Khel Divas. The **theme** for this year's National Sports Day celebration is "**Sports are an enabler to an inclusive and fit society**".
25. **Gujarat government** announced **27% reservation for Other Backward Classes (OBCs)** in local bodies like panchayats, municipalities and civic corporations, paving the way for elections in self-governing bodies, The announcement, based on the Justice Jhaveri Commission report, comes before the Lok Sabha elections and will pave the way of holding of local body election which were postponed due to the pending quota issue after the Supreme Court mandated that reservation for OBCs should be on the basis of their population.
26. The **Ministry of Jal Shakti** released the report on the 6th census on minor irrigation schemes. As per the report, 23.14 million minor irrigation (MI) schemes have been reported in the country, out of which 21.93 million (94.8%) are Ground Water (GW) and 1.21 million (5.2%) are Surface Water (SW) schemes. Uttar Pradesh

possesses the largest number of MI schemes in the country followed by Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh and Tamil Nadu. Leading States in GW schemes are Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Telangana. In SW schemes Maharashtra, Karnataka, Telangana, Odisha and Jharkhand have the highest share. So far, five censuses were conducted in 1986-87, 1993-94, 2000-01, 2006-07, and 2013-14.

27. In a bid to honour one of the world's oldest known languages, every year **World Sanskrit Day** is celebrated on the full moon day of the Hindu calendar month of Shraavan or Sawan month. This year World Sanskrit Day, which is also known as World Sanskrit Diwas, is being observed on August 31. The celebration of Sanskrit Day and Sanskrit Diwas was declared by the government of India in 1969.



Portion of the Chandrayaan-3's landing site taken after landing





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INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

QUICK FACTS



1. The Union Cabinet has approved the signing and ratification of the **Mutual Recognition Arrangement (MRA)** between the Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC), the Department of Revenue, the Government of India and the Department of Home Affairs incorporating the Australian Border Force, Australian Government. The arrangement is aimed at providing reciprocal benefits to accredited and trusted exporters of both the signatories in the clearance of goods by the Customs authorities of the importing country.
2. **India** in collaboration with the **World Health Organization (WHO)** launched the **Global Initiative on Digital Health** on August 19. The first-of-its-kind global initiative is aimed at data convergence, the interface of health platforms and investments in the digital health space around the globe. It will include an investment tracker, an ask tracker (to understand who needs what kind of products and services) and a library of existing digital health platforms.
3. The former United States President **Donald Trump**, along with 18 of his associates, has recently been charged under the **Georgia RICO** (Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations) Act. The charges encompass a range of alleged criminal activities which mainly include forgery, making false statements, impersonating a public officer, influencing witnesses, and conspiracy. RICO Act has similarities with the Maharashtra Control of Organised Crime Act (**MCOCA**), 1999.
4. The **WHO Global Traditional Medicine Summit** was held in **Gandhinagar, Gujarat** on August 17 and 18. The summit set the tone for future activities of the WHO Global Centre for Traditional Medicine located at Jamnagar. It was co-hosted by the WHO and the Government of India which holds the presidency of the G20 in 2023.
5. In a significant development, **NASA's** (National Aeronautics and Space Administration) **Solar Terrestrial Relations Observatory (STEREO-A) spacecraft** has made its first Earth Flyby, nearly 17 years after its initial launch. The twin STEREO (Solar TERrestrial RELations Observatory) spacecraft launched on Oct. 25, 2006. STEREO-A (for "Ahead") advanced its lead on Earth as STEREO-B (for "Behind") lagged behind, both charting Earth-like orbits around the Sun.
6. The **sixth anniversary of the Minamata Convention on Mercury** is a reminder of global efforts to combat the toxic effects of mercury. On this occasion, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) reflects on the ongoing campaign to eradicate the use of mercury in small-scale gold mining. The Minamata Convention on Mercury is a global treaty to protect human health and the environment from the adverse effects of mercury and its compounds.
7. **Hurricane Hilary** is a major Category 4 hurricane that formed in the **eastern Pacific Ocean** on 16th August 2023. Hurricanes are categorized on the Saffir-Simpson Hurricane Wind Scale, which rates them on a scale of 1 to 5 based on wind speed.
8. **Spain** won its **first Women's World Cup championship** with a 1-0 victory over England. The win for Spain in just its third World Cup appearance prevented the Lionesses — the reigning European champions — from bringing the trophy back to England for the first time since 1966. England's men's team won the nation's only World Cup that year. With this win, Spain also became only the second nation to clinch both the men's and the women's World Cups after Germany. The Women's FIFA World Cup 2023 jointly hosted by Australia and New Zealand, featured 32 teams concluded recently.
9. Indian chess prodigy **Rameshbabu Pragganandhaa's** remarkable journey came to a close as he lost to the **world's No. 1 chess player, Magnus Carlsen**, in a thrilling final showdown at the FIDE World Cup chess tournament at Baku, Azerbaijan. The World Cup 2023 is organised by the International Chess Federation (FIDE), the governing body of chess in the world. FIDE currently has its headquarters in Lausanne (Switzerland), but it was initially founded in 1924 in Paris under the motto "Gens Una Sumus" (Latin for "We are one Family").
10. Voters in **Ecuador** have passed a referendum to prohibit oil drilling in a protected area of the Amazon rainforest, a move hailed as "historic" by environmental activists. Over 90% of ballots rejected oil exploration in the area located within the renowned **Yasuni National Park**, a global biodiversity hotspot. This area is the habitat of the isolated Tagaeri and Taromenani tribes, and its significance led to its designation as a UNESCO World Biosphere Reserve in 1989.





11. **World Water Week** is the yearly global water forum organized by Stockholm International Water Institute. In 2023, it was celebrated from **20th to 24th August, 2023**. This year's theme, "Seeds of Change: Innovative Solutions for a Water-Wise World," spotlights innovation in addressing current water challenges.
12. The **African Union** on August 22 suspended **Niger** from all of its institutions and activities "until the effective restoration of constitutional order" following last month's coup. The AU is a continental body consisting of the 55 member states that make up the countries of the African Continent.
13. **Meta** has created an AI model, **SeamlessM4T**, which can translate and transcribe up to 100 languages across text and speech. SeamlessM4T is the first all-in-one multilingual multimodal AI translation and transcription model. The SeamlessM4T has speech recognition for nearly 100 languages and speech-to-text translation for nearly 100 input and output languages. It also supports speech-to-speech translation in around 100 input languages and around 35 output languages, including English.
14. The **Hubble Space Telescope** has captured an image of the irregular galaxy **ESO 300-16** located at a distance of 28.7 million lightyears in the southern constellation of Eridanus. Irregular galaxies do not have a clearly defined shape and appear as diffuse clouds. A bubble of bright, blue gas is visible towards the galaxy's core. ESO 300-16 was captured as part of an imaging campaign known as Every Known Nearby Galaxy, which aims to create a complete inventory of Hubble images of all galaxies within 10 megaparsecs of the Earth, or 32.6 million lightyears.
15. **India's ultra-processed food sector** grew at a compound annual growth rate of 13.37 per cent in retail sales value from 2011 to 2021, a report by the **World Health Organization** with the **Indian Council for Research on International Economic Relations** found. The upward trend needs to be curtailed with policy interventions to prevent an obesity epidemic in India similar to what some Western countries are experiencing.
16. **Exercise BRIGHT STAR-23**, a biennial multilateral tri-service exercise, is being conducted at **Cairo (West) Air Base, Egypt**, from August 27 to September 16, 2023. Ex BRIGHT STAR-23 is also witnessing the participation of contingents from the United States of America, Saudi Arabia, Greece, and Qatar, among others. This year, 34 countries are participating in Exercise BRIGHT STAR- 23. It will be the largest-ever joint military exercise in the Middle East and North Africa region. This is the first time that the Indian Armed Forces are participating in Exercise BRIGHT STAR with a total strength of around 549 personnel.
17. A total of 48 African countries have now agreed to adopt the **Kampala Ministerial Declaration on Migration, Environment and Climate Change (KDMECC)** to address the nexus of human mobility and climate change in the continent. It was co-hosted by the Governments of Kenya and Uganda with support from the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). It also enabled the African States to develop a common position ahead of the Africa Climate Summit and the Conference of Parties (COP 28).
18. In the backdrop of the wrestlers' protest over various issues, **United World Wrestling (UWW)**, the world governing body for the sport, has provisionally suspended the **Wrestling Federation of India (WFI)** primarily for not conducting its elections on time. UWW is the international governing body for the sport of amateur wrestling. It oversees wrestling at the Olympics and the World Championships. UWW is headquartered in Corsier-sur-Vevey, Switzerland.



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

QUICK FACTS



1. The **Anduri Utsav**, popularly known as the **Butter Festival**, celebrated at **Dayara Bugyal of Uttarkashi district** culminated with much fanfare as villagers played 'Holi' by applying milk and butter instead of Gulal on each other. Bugyal means a meadow or pasture in the local Uttarakhandi dialect. Earlier this festival was celebrated by throwing cow dung at each other. Now, in place of cow dung, milk, butter, and buttermilk are used.
2. **Matti banana**, a native variety of Kanniyakumari district, **Tamil Nadu**, was recently granted the Geographical Indication (**GI**) tag for its unique features and qualities. There are six known types of the Matti banana and they are indigenous to Kanniyakumari, where it thrives in the unique climate and soil. Known as 'Baby Banana', it flourishes mainly in Kalkulam and Vilavancode taluks.
3. The auspicious festival of **Kerala, Onam**, has started in Kerala. Also known as Thiru-Onam or Thiruvonam, this is a harvest festival that celebrates the return of King Mahabali/Maveli to his beloved state. Onam is marked in the month of Chingam, which falls between August and September, according to the Malayali calendar. Onam also marks the beginning of the Malayalam year, called Kolla Varsham.
4. **Dr. Calyampudi Radhakrishna Rao**, the world-renowned statistician and one of India's greatest mathematicians and statisticians who pioneered several fundamental statistical concepts, passed away at the age of 102 (22 August 2023). Known as Dr. Rao to his colleagues and students, the former director of the Indian Statistical Institute (ISI) hit the headlines earlier this year after he was awarded the International Prize in Statistics, which many consider equivalent to the Nobel Prize.
5. The **Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC)** launched '**Khadi Rakshasoot**' to commemorate the Raksha Bandhan. This 'Khadi Rakshasoot' (Khadi-Rakhi) was introduced under the aegis of the Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises. KVIC is a statutory body established under the Khadi and Village Industries Commission Act, 1956. It functions under the Ministry of MSMEs.
6. The recent discovery of two sculptures, which resemble one belonging to 15th century A.D. and another to 17th century A.D., at Basrur, near Kundapura, in Udupi district has proved that the ancient **Mylara cult** existed in the

coastal region. The Mylara cult was a religious tradition in the Deccan region during the medieval period. The cult is centred around the worship of a goddess named Mylara, believed to be a form of Lord Shiva.

7. A **27-ft-tall bronze statue of Nataraja believed to be the world's tallest**, weighing 20 tonnes, has been installed in front of the venue at the India Trade Promotion Organisation (**ITPO**) complex in New Delhi, which will host the G20 Summit on September 9-10. The sculpture has been made using traditional casting methods and "ashta dhatu", a blend of eight metals, with copper as the primary component at 87%. Nataraja is Lord Shiva in his dynamic dance posture, called "tandava", which in a single pose captures Shiva's roles as creator, preserver, and destroyer.



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TEST ZONE



PASSAGE - 1

The Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA) on Friday announced the India Smart Cities Award Contest (ISAC) under the Smart Cities Mission (SCM), that felicitated 66 winners in various categories. A total of 845 nominations were received for ISAC 2022 from 80 qualifying smart cities. Of these, under the five awards categories, 66 final winners have been identified – 35 in the Project award, six in the Innovation award, 13 in the National/Zonal City award, five in the state/UT Award and seven in the Partner Award categories.

Coimbatore took the top spot for the built environment, Ahmedabad for the culture and Integrated Command and Control Centre (ICCC) category, Jabalpur for the economy, Chandigarh for governance and mobility, Indore for sanitation, water and urban environment, Vadodara for social aspects, Hubballi Dharwad for the innovative idea category and Surat for Covid innovation category. President Droupadi Murmu will felicitate the winners of the ISAC 2022 awards on September 27 in Indore.

The fourth edition of the ISAC was launched in April 2022 during the 'Smart Cities-Smart Urbanization' event in Surat. The ISAC 2022 award had a two-stage submission process consisting of the 'Qualifying Stage', which involved an overall assessment of the city's performance, and the 'Proposal Stage' which required the smart cities to submit their nominations for six award categories.

[Extracted, with edits and revisions, from: "ISAC Awards: wins national smart city award, adjudged state winner", by Snehil Sinha, Hindustan Times]

Q.1 Which of the following cities won the National Smart City Award in the India Smart Cities Award Contest 2022 under the Smart Cities Mission?

A Surat

B Agra

C Indore

D New Delhi

Q.2 Which of the following states won the State Award for its comprehensive approach to fostering smart city initiatives within its borders in the India Smart Cities Award Contest 2022 under the Smart Cities Mission?

A Madhya Pradesh

B Chhattisgarh

C Uttar Pradesh

D Himachal Pradesh

Q.3 Which of the following Union Territories won the UT award for its efforts to transform itself into a model smart city in the India Smart Cities Award Contest 2022 under the Smart Cities Mission?

A Jammu and Kashmir

B Chandigarh

C Ladakh

D Puducherry

Q.4 Which of the following ministries is the nodal ministry for the Smart Cities Mission?

A Ministry of Finance

B Ministry of Earth Sciences

C Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change

D Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs

Q.5 Smart Cities Mission, a Centrally Sponsored Scheme, was launched in _____ to transform 100 cities into smart cities.

A 2014

B 2015

C 2016

D 2017

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

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PASSAGE - 2

India and the 10-nation bloc ASEAN on Monday said they have directed their officials to intensify their efforts to conclude the review of the existing free trade agreement in goods between the two regions by [1]. The issue was discussed during the twentieth AEM (ASEAN Economic Ministers)-India Consultation meeting, held at Semarang, Indonesia. According to a joint media statement, the meeting welcomed the progress of the review of the ASEAN-India Trade in Goods Agreement (AITIGA). It also endorsed the terms of reference of the AITIGA Joint Committee, the Work Plan of the review negotiations and the negotiating structure.

It was a long pending demand of India to undertake the review of this agreement, which came into effect on January 1, 2010. India has asked for a review of the agreement with an aim to eliminate barriers and misuse of the trade pact. Recently, Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal stated that the India-Asean trade agreement is the 'most ill-conceived' one. In general, such review exercise includes implementation issues, rules of origin; verification process and release of consignments; customs procedures; further liberalisation of trade in goods; and sharing and exchange of trade data. Trade experts said the review demand is there because India's exports to ASEAN have been affected due to non-reciprocity in FTA concessions, non-tariff barriers, import regulations and quotas.

[Extracted, with edits and revisions, from: "India, ASEAN to intensify efforts to conclude FTA review by [1]", The Economic Times]

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

A 2030

B 2025

C 2035

D 2040

Q.2 Which country hosted the 20th ASEAN-India Summit on 06-07 September 2023?

A Cambodia

B Philippines

C Indonesia

D Singapore

Q.3 The 5th ASEAN-India Business Summit was held in –

A Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

B Hanoi, Vietnam

C Bangkok, Thailand

D Jakarta, Indonesia

Q.4 The inaugural ASEAN India Maritime Exercise (AIME-2023) successfully culminated in the _____ on 08 May 2023.

A East China Sea

B Pacific Ocean

C South China Sea

D Indian Ocean

Q.5 The ASEAN-India Trade in Goods Agreement (AITIGA), a trade deal between the ten member states of ASEAN and India, was signed in –

A 2009

B 2010

C 2006

D 2014

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

Answers

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PASSAGE - 3

The G20 Culture Ministerial Meeting concluded Saturday with an outcome document that recognised the significance of repatriation of cultural property to their countries and communities. The “Kashi Culture Pathway” document recognised threats to cultural heritage and cultural resources — “including looting and illicit trafficking of cultural property, the intentional or collateral destruction of cultural heritage and sites, desecration of relics and shrines, illicit excavations, forgery and the misappropriation of cultural heritage”. The document said such acts may result in the loss of irreplaceable cultural assets and the disruption of socio-cultural practices, potentially impacting peoples and communities, including cultural, human, economic and social rights.

The culture ministers from G20 countries present at the meeting, along with delegates from guest countries and international organisations, expressed concern over the illicit trafficking of cultural property “through the rise of the online market and other digital and social platforms”, and added that this may require specific regulation. The ministers also underlined that destruction and illicit trafficking of cultural property can be linked to organised crimes such as money laundering, corruption, tax evasion and terrorist financing, notably in conflict or post-conflict situations, and reiterated their commitment to strengthen this fight.

While there was consensus on all issues pertaining to culture, there was discord between Russia and China with regard to two paras labelled as 'Geopolitical Issues', which mentioned Russia's aggression on Ukraine.

[Extracted, with edits and revisions, from: “G20 Culture Meet ends with consensus on battling threats to cultural heritage”, by Divya A, TheIndianExpress]

Q.1 Which city hosted the First G20 Culture Working Group (CWG) meeting in February 2023?

A Khajuraho

B Bhubaneswar

C Hampi

D Varanasi

Q.2 Which campaign was launched by the Culture Working Group, under India's G20 presidency to highlight India's unwavering belief in multilateralism based on peaceful coexistence among diverse cultures and communities?

A Sur Vasudha

B Culture Unites All

C Inclusive Growth through Culture

D Culture for All

Q.3 Under which country's G20 Presidency the Culture Ministers of the G20 countries met for the first time in 2020?

A Italy

B Indonesia

C Brazil

D Saudi Arabia

Q.4 Who among the following is the incumbent Union Cultural Minister of India?

A Pralhad Joshi

B Dr. Virendra Kumar

C G.Kishan Reddy

D Giriraj Singh

Q.5 The city of _____ has been nominated as the first-ever SCO Tourism and Cultural Capital during the period 2022-2023.

A Varanasi

B Khajuraho

C Bhubaneswar

D Hampi

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

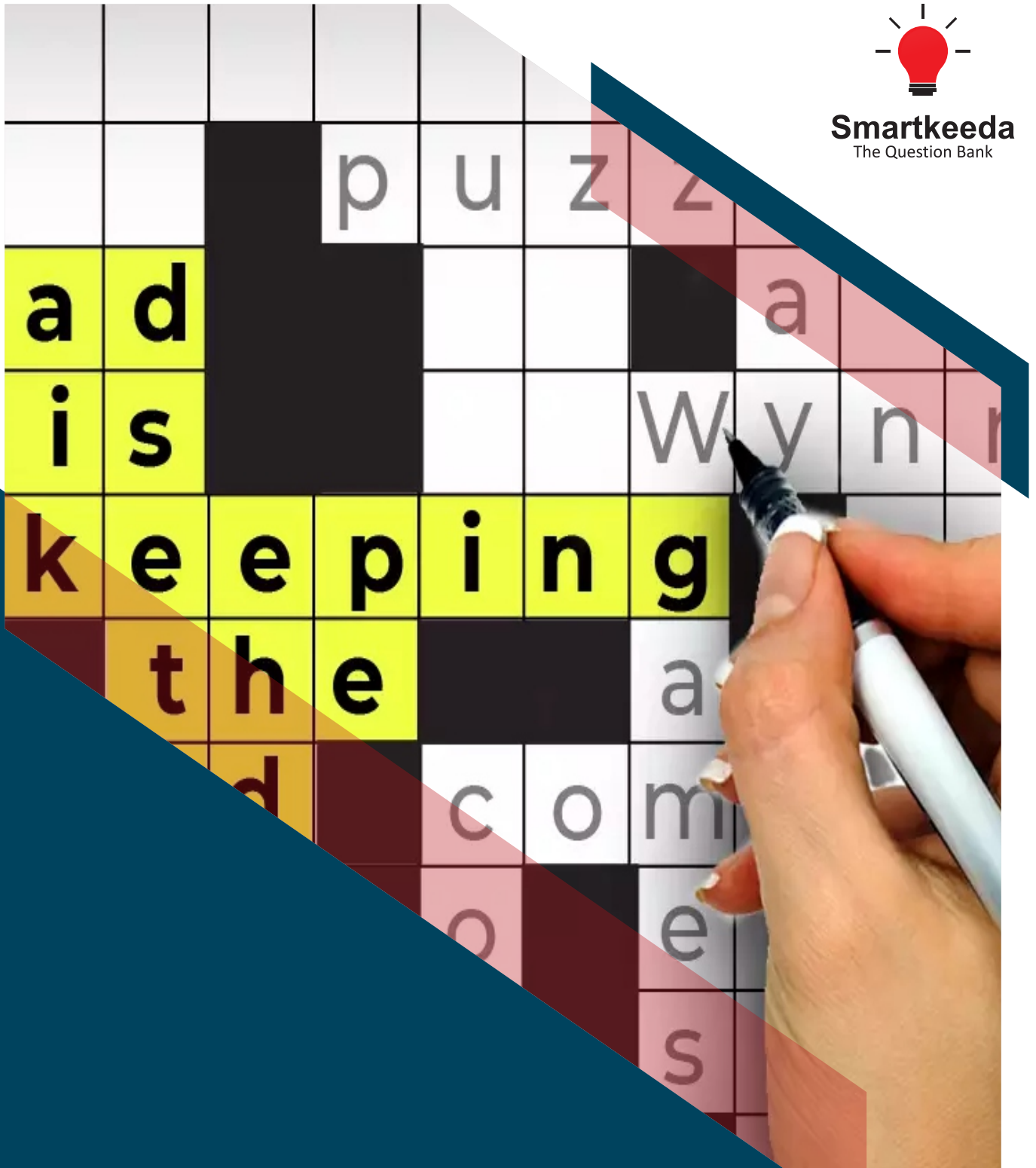
Answers

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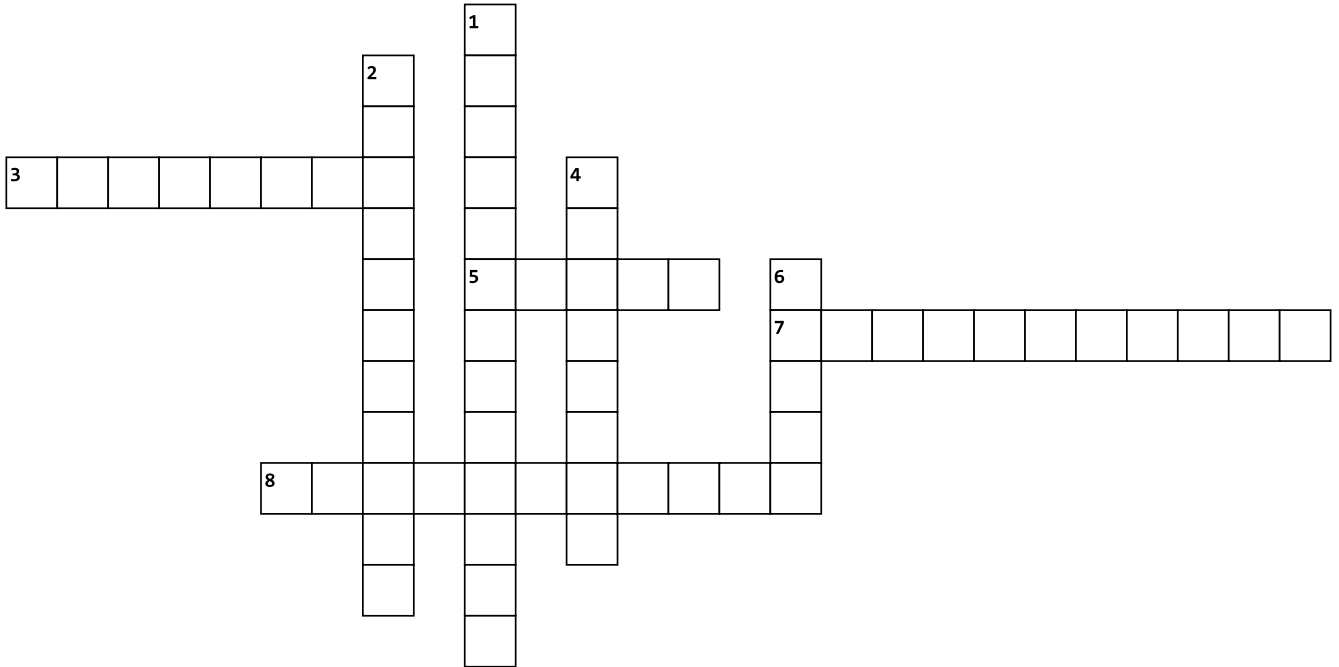
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CROSSWORD CORNER



CROSSWORD - 1



Across

3. World Sanskrit Day 2023
5. Winner of FIFA Women's World Cup 2023
7. Location of the WHO Global Traditional Medicine Summit 2023
8. Meta's first all-in-one multilingual multimodal AI translation and transcription model

Down

1. Winner of FIDE World Cup Chess Tournament 2023
2. Place where Anduri Utsav is celebrated
4. National Sports Day
6. Place where Exercise BRIGHT STAR-23, a biennial multilateral tri-service exercise conducted

Answers

8	SeamlessM4T	4	29 August
7	Gandhinagar	3	31 August
6	Egypt	2	Uttarakhand
5	Spain	1	Magnus Carlsen

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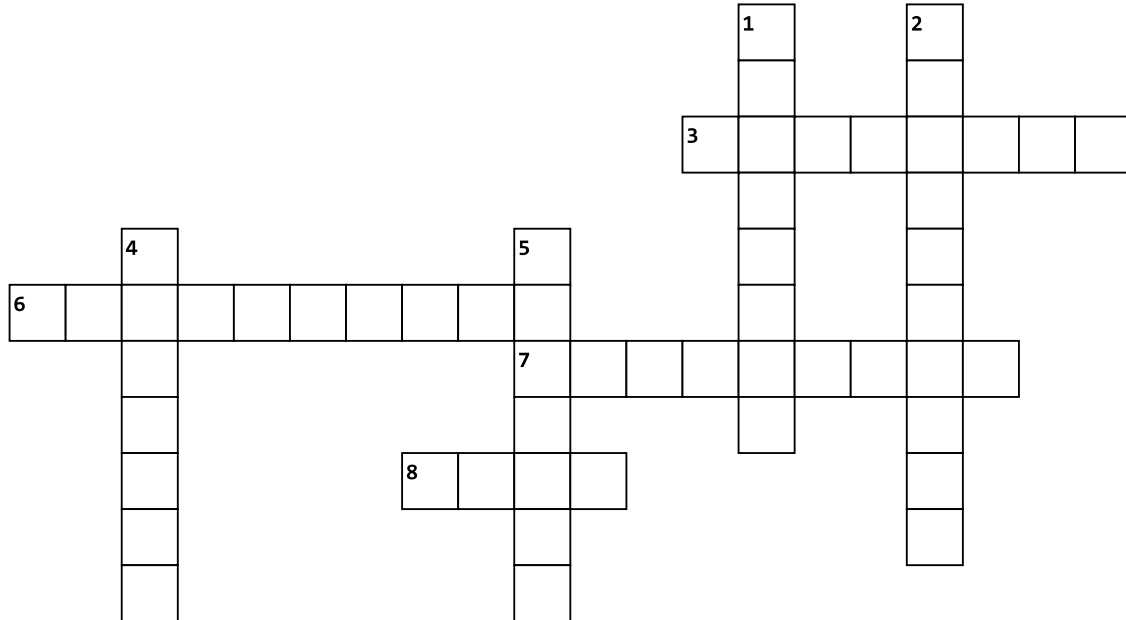
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CROSSWORD - 2



Across

3. A new variety of lotus flowers with 108 petals
6. Point where Chandrayaan-3 Vikram lander made a soft landing
7. Location of the 54th Tiger Reserve of India
8. Location of India's first carbon-negative garrison

Down

1. National Space Day
2. Winner of the Durand Cup 2023
4. Became the first state in India to operationalize an ABDM Microsite
5. Point where the Chandrayaan-2 lander crash-landed on the Moon's surface in 2019

Answers

1	23August	4	Mizoram
2	MohunBagan	3	Namoh108
3	ShivShakti	5	Tiranga
4	Rajasthan	6	Pune
5		7	
6		8	

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