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LawEx

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**MATERNITY AND
CHILD CARE LEAVES**

**FOR WOMEN IN
ARMED FORCES**



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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

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh has approved a proposal for extending the rules for maternity, child care and child adoption leave for women soldiers, sailors and air warriors in the Armed Forces on a par with their officer counterparts. Recently, the Delhi High Court asked the Centre to explain the exclusion of single, unmarried women from availing the benefit of the surrogacy procedure under the law. On World Cities Day, Kozhikode in Kerala has been designated as the UNESCO ‘City of Literature’ and Gwalior as the ‘City of Music’. For more updates, keep reading.

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The Question Bank



QUICK BOOSTERS



MATERNITY, CHILD CARE AND CHILD ADOPTION LEAVES FOR WOMEN IN ARMED FORCES

WHY IN NEWS?

- Defence Minister Rajnath Singh has approved a proposal for extending the rules for maternity, child care and child adoption leave for women soldiers, sailors and air warriors in the Armed Forces on a par with their officer counterparts.

Key Points

- Under the rules, the grant of such leaves to all women in the military, whether one is an officer or any other rank, will be equally applicable.
- So far, there were no women air warriors or sailors in the Indian Air Force or Navy. Both started inducting women in their ranks after the government brought in the Agnipath military recruitment scheme last year.
- The Army had started inducting women in the ranks in just one arm — the Corps of Military Police (CMP) — in 2019. Now women are getting inducted in the CMP as Agniveers.
- Only those women soldiers, sailors and air warriors will get the benefits of the new proposal who feature among the 25% of Agniveers inducted into the three services on a merit-based selection after completing their four-year tenure.
 - This is because the terms and conditions of the Agnipath scheme state that they cannot marry till they are serving the four-year term under the scheme.

- Women officers in the three services currently are eligible for 180 days of maternity leave, with a provision for an extension of a month of leave without pay in exceptional cases and 30 days of leave in the instance of a miscarriage or abortion.
- Women officers are eligible for 180 days of leave in case they adopt a child below the age of one year.
- Permanent commission women officers are also eligible for 360 days of child care leave while short service commission women officers are eligible for 180 days of leave.

DID YOU KNOW?

- In May 2022, Captain Abhilasha Barak, created history by becoming the first woman officer to join the Army Aviation Corps as a Combat Aviator (pilot).
- In March 2023, Group Captain Shaliza Dhami became the first woman officer in the IAF to take command of a frontline combat unit in the Western sector.
- The Indian Army, being the largest of the three services, has the largest number of women officers at 1,705, followed by 1,640 women officers in the Indian Air Force, and 559 in the Indian Navy – this data was provided by the government to Parliament in 2022.
- In a landmark verdict on February 17, 2020, the Supreme Court directed that women officers in the Army be granted permanent commission, rejecting the Centre's stand on their "physiological limitations" as being based on "sex stereotypes" and "gender discrimination against women".
- India has the lowest proportion of women representatives among major contributors to the United Nations Peacekeeping (UNPK) missions across the world.
- Women form only 1.9% of Indian military personnel deployed to UN peacekeeping missions, as per the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) report.
- Nepal heads the list, with 9.3% women peacekeepers, followed by Bangladesh (6%). Other countries on the list ahead of India include Ghana, Rwanda and Cambodia.
- Captain Shiva Chouhan of the Indian Army's Fire and Fury Corps became the first woman officer to get operationally deployed at the world's highest battlefield, Siachen, in January 2023.



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ANNUAL REPORT ON 'ROAD ACCIDENTS' IN INDIA-2022

WHY IN NEWS?

- The Ministry of Road Transport and Highways released the Annual Report on 'Road Accidents in India-2022'.
- This report is based on the data/information received from police departments of States/UTs on a calendar year basis in standardized formats as provided by the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP) under the Asia Pacific Road Accident Data (APRAD) base project.

Key Highlights

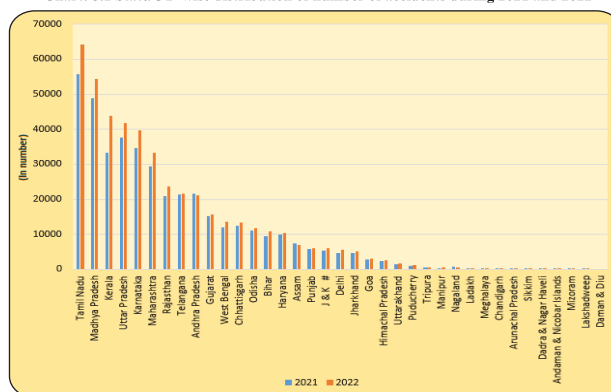
- As per the report, a total of 4,61,312 road accidents have been reported by States and Union Territories (UTs) during the calendar year 2022, which claimed 1,68,491 lives and caused injuries to 4,43,366 persons.
 - This marks an increase of 11.9% in accidents, 9.4% in fatalities, and 15.3% in injuries compared to the previous year.
 - Out of the total of 1,68,491 fatalities reported in 2022, 61,038 (36.2%) were on National Highways, 41,012 (24.3%) were on State Highways and 66,441 (39.4%) were on other roads.
- India witnessed 53 accidents and 19 deaths every hour, or an average of 1,264 accidents and 42 deaths daily due to road crashes last year.
- Tamil Nadu recorded the highest number of road accidents in 2022, with 13.9% of the total accidents, followed by Madhya Pradesh with 11.8%.
- Uttar Pradesh had the highest number of fatalities due to road accidents (13.4%), followed by Tamil Nadu (10.6%). Understanding state-specific trends is essential for targeted interventions.
- India has the highest number of total persons killed due to road accidents, followed by China and the United States.
- Venezuela has the highest rate of persons killed per 1,00,000 population.

- The expansion of the country's road network, including expressways, and an increase in vehicle ownership continue to spur a rise in fatalities due to road accidents, with the severity of crashes worsening significantly over the last decade, according to government data.
- The severity of road crashes, measured by the number of people killed per 100 accidents, has increased over the past decade from 28.2% in 2012 to 36.5% in 2022, with a consistent increase every year.
- The increasing severity "underscores the need for improved trauma care and traffic calming measures aimed at reducing crash impact parameters".

Road Network in India

- The road network in India was to the tune of 63.32 lakh km in March 2019, which is one of the largest in the world.
- The country's road network consists of National Highways, State Highways, Districts Roads, Rural and Village Roads.
- India's road density at 1,926.02 per 1,000 sq.km of area in 2018-19 was higher than that of many developed countries though surfaced/paved road constituting 64.7 per cent of the total road length is comparatively lower than that of developed countries.
- National Highways constituted 2.09 per cent of the total road length of the country in 2019.
- The balance of road networks comprises of State Highways (2.9%), District Roads (9.6%), Rural Roads (71%), Urban Roads (8.5%) and Project Roads (5.4%).

Chart: 5.1 State/UT- wise distribution of number of accidents during 2021 and 2022



Initiatives of India

- National Highways Authority of India Act, 1998
- The Control of National Highways (Land and Traffic) Act, 2000
- The Carriage by Road Act, 2007
- Motor Vehicles Amendment Act, 2019

Global Initiatives

- Brasilia Declaration on Road Safety (2015)
- Decade of Action for Road Safety 2021-2030
- The International Road Assessment Programme (iRAP)

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DELHI HIGH COURT ON SURROGACY LAW

WHY IN NEWS?

- Recently, the Delhi High Court asked the Centre to explain the exclusion of single, unmarried women from availing the benefit of the surrogacy procedure under the law.

Background

- The court was hearing a plea by a 44-year-old single, unmarried woman challenging section 2(1)(s) of the Surrogacy Act, which excludes women like her from availing the procedure while only allowing an Indian widow or female divorcee to take the benefit of the same.
 - Under Section 2(1)(s) of the Surrogacy (Regulation) Act 2021, an “intending woman” means an Indian woman who is a “widow” or “divorcee” between the age of 35 and 45 years and who intends to avail the surrogacy.
- The plea also challenges the regulation that forces a “single woman (widow or divorcee)” to use her own eggs to avail of the surrogacy procedure.

Changes made by the Supreme Court

- In March 2023, the government amended the law, banning the use of donor gametes.
 - It said “intending couples” must use their own gametes for surrogacy.
- The petition was filed in the Supreme Court challenging the amendment as a violation of a woman's right to parenthood.
- The Supreme Court stayed the operation of Rule 7 of the Surrogacy (Regulation) Act, 2021, to allow the woman suffering from the Mayer-Rokitansky-Küster-Hauser (MRKH) Syndrome —a rare congenital disorder that affects the female reproductive system — to undergo surrogacy using a donor egg.
 - Rule 7 of the Surrogacy Act bans use of donor eggs for the procedure.
 - Gestational surrogacy is a process where one person, who did not provide the egg used in conception, carries a fetus through pregnancy and gives birth to a baby for another person or couple.
- The SC also held that the amendment cannot contradict Rule 14(a) which specifically recognises the absence of a uterus or any allied condition as a medical indication necessitating gestational surrogacy.

Key Provisions of the Surrogacy Act

- First introduced in the Lok Sabha on July 15, 2019, the Surrogacy (Regulation) Bill was sent to a select committee.
- Later, during the 2021 winter session of the Parliament, both houses passed the Bill. It was signed by the President and came into force in January 2022.
- The Act defines surrogacy as a practice where a woman gives birth to a child for an intending couple with the intention to hand it over to them after the birth.
- It is permitted only for altruistic purposes or for couples who suffer proven infertility or disease.
- Surrogacy is prohibited for commercial purposes including for sale, prostitution or any other forms of exploitation.
- Abortion of such a fetus is allowed only with the consent of the surrogate mother and the authorities and must adhere to the provisions of the Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act.
- Under the Act, a couple should procure certificates of eligibility and essentiality in order to have a child via surrogacy.
 - The couple is deemed 'eligible' if they have been married for five years, the wife is aged between 25-50 years and the husband is between 26-55 years.
 - The couple must not have any living child (biological, adopted or surrogate.)
 - A child with mental or physical disabilities or one suffering from a life-threatening disorder or illness has been exempted from the above criterion.
- A surrogate mother has to be a close relative of the couple, a married woman with a child of her own, aged between 25-35 years, who has been a surrogate only once in her life.
- Offences under the Act include commercial surrogacy, selling of embryos, exploiting, abandoning a surrogate child etc. These may invite up to 10 years of imprisonment and a fine of up to Rs. 10 lakh.

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KOZHIKODE AND GWALIOR IN UNESCO CREATIVE CITIES NETWORK

WHY IN NEWS?

- On World Cities Day, 55 cities joined the UNESCO Creative Cities Network (UCCN).
- World Cities Day designated by the United Nations falls on October 31.

Key Points

- Kozhikode in Kerala has been designated as the UNESCO 'City of Literature' and Gwalior as the 'City of Music'.
- UNESCO has shared the full list of the new 55 cities which include Bukhara – Crafts and Folk Art, Casablanca – Media Arts, Chongqing – Design, Kathmandu – Film, Rio de Janeiro – Literature, and Ulaanbaatar – Crafts and Folk Art.
- The newly designated creative cities are invited to participate in the UCCN annual conference from July 1 to 5, 2024 in Braga, Portugal, under the theme 'Bringing youth to the table for the next decade'.

Kozhikode- 'City of Literature'

- The North Kerala city of Kozhikode is home to many prominent personalities of the state's literary and cultural world.
- The first Malayalam novel Kundalatha was born in Kozhikode in 1887. It was authored by Appu Nedungadi.
- Several illustrious writers like S K Pottekkatt, Vaikom Muhammad Basheer, Uroob, Thikkodiyam, NN Kakkad, P Valsala, Akbar Kakkattil, Punathil Kunjabdulla and MT Vasudevan Nair have brought laurels for Kozhikode.
- The city has also produced many film and theatre professionals in the last half a century.
- Kozhikode is India's first City of Literature.
- Edinburgh is the world's first UNESCO City of Literature.
- Prague was awarded the title UNESCO Creative City of Literature in 2014, thereby also becoming the first Czech city in the UNESCO Creative Cities Network.

UNESCO Creative Cities Network (UCCN)

- The UCCN was created in 2004 to promote cooperation among cities that have identified creativity as a strategic factor for sustainable urban development.
- The Creative Cities Network now counts 350 cities in more than one hundred countries, representing seven creative fields - Crafts and Folk Art, Design, Film, Gastronomy, Literature, Media Arts and Music.
- Sustainable Development Goal 11 aims for Sustainable Cities and Communities.

Other Indian cities in the UCCN include Jaipur: Crafts and Folk Arts (2015), Varanasi: Creative City of Music (2015), Chennai: Creative City of Music (2017), Mumbai: Film (2019), Hyderabad: Gastronomy (2019), and Srinagar: Crafts and Folk Art (2021).



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Gwalior- 'City of Music'

- Indian music history would be incomplete without the mention of Gwalior and the gharana that stemmed from there.
- Gwalior gharana, the oldest musical gharana and a significant chapter of Hindustani classical music's history flourished under the aegis of Raja Man Singh Tomar during the 15th century.
- Man Singh wrote Manakutuhala (Quest for Learning), considered the first treatise of music in Hindi, helping a wider audience to understand high art performed in kings' courts.
- It's also believed that Man Singh invented dhrupad, in a classical genre sense. His Horis and Dhamars also became quite popular.
- Khayal singing, as we know it today, emerged from dhrupad under the aegis of Gwalior gharana while incorporating the elements of qawwali.
- The city is widely regarded as the birthplace of Tansen, one of the greatest musicians and composers in Indian history, who was also one of the 'Navratnas' (nine jewels) in the court of Emperor Akbar.
- The city hosts one of the biggest annual music festivals in India, the Tansen Sangeet Samaroh, which attracts thousands of music lovers and artists from across the country and abroad.



Ministry of Culture
Government of India



unesco



**India's both the nominations have been included
in the UNESCO's Creative Cities Network
Gwalior for Music & Kozhikode for Literature**



Kozhikode



Gwalior

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STATE FOOD SAFETY INDEX 2022-2023

WHY IN NEWS?

- The State Food Safety Index (SFSI) 2022- 2023 released by the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) sheds light on the performance of Indian states in ensuring food safety.
- In the 2023 index, a new parameter called 'Improvement in SFSI Rank' was added, which assesses improvement in each state's rank from the year before.

Key Highlights

- Over the past five years, 19 out of 20 large Indian states, including Maharashtra, Bihar, Gujarat, and Andhra Pradesh, have experienced a decline in their 2022 - 2023 SFSI scores compared to 2019.
- After adjusting for a new parameter included in the 2023 index, 15 out of 20 states recorded lower 2023 scores compared to 2019.
- The steepest fall in scores over five years was seen in Maharashtra, which scored 45 out of 100 in 2023 compared to 74 out of 100 in 2019, followed by Bihar, which scored 20.5 in 2023 compared to 46 in 2019, and Gujarat, which scored 48.5 in 2023 compared to 73 in 2019.
- Over five years, the worst drop has been recorded in the 'Food Testing Infrastructure' parameter, where the average score for all large states dropped to 7 points out of 17 in 2023 from 13 points out of 20 in 2019.
 - This parameter measures availability of adequate testing infrastructure with trained personnel in each state for testing food samples.
 - Gujarat and Kerala were the best performers in 2023 with 13.5 points out of 17 while Andhra Pradesh performed the worst.
- The 'Compliance' parameter measures licensing and registration of food businesses, inspections conducted, special drives and camps organised, and other such compliance-related tasks carried out by each state's food safety authority.
 - Punjab and Himachal Pradesh received the highest scores in this parameter and Jharkhand received the lowest score.
- The 'Consumer Empowerment' parameter measures a state's performance in various consumer empowering initiatives of FSSAI including participation in Food Fortification, Eat Right Campus, BHOG (Blissful Hygienic Offering to God), Hygiene Rating of Restaurants, and Clean Street Food Hubs.
 - Tamil Nadu emerged as the top performer followed by Kerala and Madhya Pradesh.
- The 'Human Resources and Institutional Data' parameter measures availability of human resources including number of Food Safety Officers, Designated Officers, and facility of adjudications and appellate tribunals in each state.
 - Top performers in 2019 like Tamil Nadu and Uttar Pradesh, with each receiving 17 points out of 20, got merely 10.5 and 9.5 points respectively in 2023.
- In the new parameter 'Improvement in SFSI Rank,' only Punjab showed significant improvement.

About SFSI

- Launched in 2018-19, the SFSI aims to foster healthy competition and catalyze positive change in the food safety ecosystem throughout the country, ultimately ensuring the provision of safe and wholesome food to all residents.
- It is an annual evaluation that measures the performance of states and union territories on food safety.
- The Index is a dynamic quantitative and qualitative benchmarking model that provides an objective framework for evaluating food safety across all States/UTs.

STATES WITH STEEPEST INDEX FALL

State	2019	2023
Maharashtra	74	45
Bihar	46	20.5
Gujarat	73	48.5
Andhra Pradesh	47	24
Chhattisgarh	46	27

Source: SFSI reports; all scores out of 100

SAFETY MEASURE

Parameter	Weight
Compliance	28
Consumer Empowerment	19
Human Resources and Institutional Data	18
Food Testing Infrastructure	17
Improvement in SFSI Rank (added in 2023)	10
Training and Capacity Building	8
TOTAL	100

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APPLE'S 'STATE-SPONSORED ATTACKERS' ALERT

WHY IN NEWS?

- Several top opposition leaders and a few journalists have reported receiving a notification from Apple about “state-sponsored attackers who are remotely trying to compromise” their iPhones.

- This is the second time that Opposition politicians and civil society actors in India have been warned that they have been targets of spying attempts. In 2021, the Paris-based Forbidden Stories collective reported that the Pegasus spyware, which was sold only to government agencies by an Israeli firm NSO Group, was allegedly used on a range of journalists, civil society groups and politicians in India.
- On October 27, 2021, a three-judge Bench of the Supreme Court led by then Chief Justice of India (CJI) N V Ramana appointed an Expert Committee headed by Justice R V Raveendran (retd) to look into the allegations in the Pegasus spyware case.
- On August 25, 2022, the top court recorded in its order that the expert committee found no conclusive evidence for the use of the NSO Group's Pegasus spyware in the phones that it examined.
- The court also noted that the Centre “has not cooperated” with the panel.

What is Pegasus ?

- Pegasus is the hacking software – or spyware – that is developed, marketed and licensed to governments around the world by the Israeli company NSO Group.
- It has the capability to infect billions of phones running either iOS or Android operating systems.
- In 2019, WhatsApp filed a lawsuit in the US court against Israel's NSO Group, alleging that the firm was incorporating cyber-attacks on the application by infecting mobile devices with malicious software.

India's Initiatives

- Cyber Surakshit Bharat Initiative
- National Cyber Security Coordination Centre (NCCC)
- Cyber Swachhta Kendra
- Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre (I4C)
- Computer Emergency Response Team - India (CERT-IN)

Key Points

- According to Apple, state-sponsored attacks are often short-lived and are designed to evade detection and exploit vulnerabilities that may not be known to the public.
- Attackers backed by governments go after specific individuals and their devices, based on their identity or activities.
- Such attacks are very different from the ones carried out by regular cybercriminals, who usually target a large number of users for financial gain.
- Apple's threat notifications are a way of alerting and helping users who may have been targeted by state-sponsored attackers.
- As a response to these attacks, the company has developed a system that can spot activity that matches certain patterns. When an attack is detected, a “Threat Notification” is sent by email and iMessage to the email addresses and phone numbers that are linked to the affected user's Apple ID.
- Apple also suggests that users activate the Lockdown Mode, which is a feature introduced in its latest software updates to specifically protect against rare and sophisticated cyber attacks such as these.

When Does Apple Issue Threat Notifications?

When **co** discovers activity consistent with a state-sponsored attack



Attacks **flagged** by relying on threat intelligence signals, often imperfect and incomplete, Apple says

Some may be false alarms, some attacks may not be detected, says **co**



Once detected, Apple sends users notification, iMessage and email to number and email address associated with Apple ID



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WORLD FOOD INDIA 2023

WHY IN NEWS?

- The Prime Minister of India inaugurated the second edition of the 'World Food India 2023', mega food event, at Bharat Mandapam in New Delhi.
- The first edition of the event was organised in 2017 by the Ministry of Food Processing Industries, but could not be organised till this year due to the Covid-19 pandemic.
- MillInd (a robot) is the Mascot for World Food India 2023.

Key Highlights

- During the inauguration, the Prime Minister provided Seed Capital Assistance to over one lakh Self Help Group (SHG) members, reinforcing the support for these groups.
- One of the focus pillars of the event was Shree Anna (Millets): Leveraging India's Super Food for the World.
 - The primary objective of the event is to present India as the 'food basket of the world' and commemorate 2023 as the International Year of Millets.
 - Millets can enhance food security, nutrition security, and sustainability in the face of global challenges such as climate change, population growth, and malnutrition.
- The Prime Minister highlighted India's food processing sector as the 'sunrise sector.'
 - In the past nine years, the sector has attracted foreign direct investments exceeding Rs 50,000 crores, because of the government's industry-friendly and farmer-centric policies.
- Prime Minister also mentioned the progress made under the Production-Linked Incentive (PLI) scheme in the food processing sector, which has greatly aided new entrants.
- He further highlighted the ongoing projects under the Agri-Infra Fund, focusing on post-harvest infrastructure, with an investment exceeding Rs 50,000 crores.



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FIRST INTERNATIONAL ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE SAFETY SUMMIT 2023

WHY IN NEWS?

- The United Kingdom hosted the first Artificial Intelligence (AI) Safety Summit on November 1-2, 2023, at Bletchley Park.

Key Highlights

- The summit resulted in some important declarations and initiatives that give us a glimpse into the future of AI governance.
- The new Bletchley Declaration was signed by 28 countries including heavyweights like the US, UK, and China to establish global coordination and standards around AI safety.
- The declaration lays out plans for greater transparency from AI developers regarding safety practices and more scientific collaboration on understanding AI's risks.

- The declaration has come days after US President Joe Biden issued an executive order aimed at safeguarding against threats posed by AI.
- The order, signed by Mr. Biden on October 30, lays down a preliminary set of guidelines for American companies and federal agencies to follow when dealing with the design, acquisition and deployment of advanced AI systems, with security as its core, and before making such technologies available to the public.
- The countries pledged to work toward “shared agreement and responsibility” about AI risks, and hold a series of further meetings. South Korea will hold a mini virtual AI summit in six months, followed by an in-person one in France a year from now.
- The UK government announced a major £225 million investment into a powerful new supercomputer called Isambard-AI. It will be built at the University of Bristol and is intended to achieve breakthroughs across healthcare, energy, climate modelling and other fields.
 - Along with another planned supercomputer called Dawn, these systems are part of the UK's aim to lead in AI while partnering with allies like the US.
- The UK Government confirmed during the Summit that its Frontier AI Task Force will evolve into the AI Safety Institute.
 - The Institute will carefully test new types of frontier AI before and after they are released to address the potentially harmful capabilities of AI models, including exploring all the risks, from social harms like bias and misinformation to the most unlikely but extreme risk, such as humanity losing control of AI completely.
- Speaking at the Summit, India's Minister of State for Electronics and IT stated India's perspective on Artificial Intelligence, emphasizing our nation's commitment to AI with a strong focus on safety, trust, and accountability.

- India called for a global framework for the expansion of "ethical" AI tools, signaling a commitment to responsible AI usage.
- India has shown interest in establishing regulatory bodies at both domestic and international levels to ensure the responsible use of AI.
- Digital India Act, 2023 which is yet to Implement , is expected to introduce issue-specific regulations for online intermediaries, including AI-based platforms.
- The "Godfather of AI", Yoshua Bengio, will lead the first frontier AI "State of the Science" report, which will be a key input for those future summits.
 - The report will provide a scientific assessment of existing research on the risks and capabilities of frontier AI and set out priority areas for further research on the risks and capabilities of frontier AI and set out priority areas for further research to inform future work on AI safety.

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About Bletchley Park

- Bletchley Park is located approximately 80 km north of London in Buckinghamshire, England.
- Bletchley Park is most known for cracking the 'unbreakable' Enigma code.
 - Enigma machines were cypher machines used by the Nazis to encrypt their radio messages.
 - They featured a set of rotors, as well as a plugboard, which helped create over a 150 quintillion combinations. Since settings were typically changed every 24 hours, manually breaking the code was near impossible.
 - This is where the Turing Bombe entered the picture. An electro-mechanical device that replicated the action of Enigma machines, British mathematician Alan Turing's device significantly expedited the process to identify the code.
- Another machine built at Bletchley Park was the Colossus, to help in the cryptanalysis of the Lorenz cipher, used specifically by the German High Command.
 - Designed by Tommy Flowers under Max Newman, a total of 10 Colossi were built at Bletchley Park from 1943-45.
 - Many regard the Colossus as the world's first programmable, electronic, digital computer, although it was programmed by switches and plugs, rather than a stored program.
 - Unfortunately, after the War, all the machines were destroyed and the people who worked on it were sworn to secrecy.
 - Consequently, for the longest time, it was not recognised as the world's first computer. But it was, and it was remarkably fast for its time.

Countries that signed the Bletchley Declaration

- | | | |
|------------------|---------------------------|--|
| ■ Australia | ■ Ireland | ■ Rwanda |
| ■ Brazil | ■ Israel | ■ Singapore |
| ■ Canada | ■ Italy | ■ Spain |
| ■ Chile | ■ Japan | ■ Switzerland |
| ■ China | ■ Kenya | ■ Türkiye |
| ■ European Union | ■ Kingdom of Saudi Arabia | ■ Ukraine |
| ■ France | ■ Netherlands | ■ United Arab Emirates |
| ■ Germany | ■ Nigeria | ■ United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland |
| ■ India | ■ The Philippines | ■ United States of America |
| ■ Indonesia | ■ Republic of Korea | |



Source: UK Government and ET Prime research

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DEEPPFAKES

WHY IN NEWS?

- Recently, Prime Minister Narendra Modi expressed concern over the misuse of AI and urged the ChatGPT team to put riders in place to stop the creation of such morphed media.
- Earlier deepfake videos showing an Indian actress sparked outrage and concern over the misuse of AI to create realistic but fake videos, also known as deepfakes.

What are Deepfakes?

- It has been dubbed as the 21st century's answer to Photoshopping.
- Deepfakes use a form of artificial intelligence called deep learning to make images of fake events, hence the name.
- The first known example of widespread use of a deepfake video was spotted on Reddit in 2017, when a user swapped the faces of celebrities to create porn clips.

How are they made?

- Deepfakes are created through a combination of machine learning techniques, particularly using generative models like Generative Adversarial Networks (GANs) and deep neural networks – a generator and a discriminator.
- The GAN detects and learns the subjects' movements and facial expressions from the source material and then duplicates these in another video or image.
- The generator tries to create fake images or videos that look realistic, while the discriminator tries to distinguish between the real and the fake ones.
- The generator learns from the feedback of the discriminator and improves its output until it can fool the discriminator.
- Deepfakes require a large amount of data, such as photos or videos, of the source and the target person, which are often collected from the internet or social media without their consent or knowledge.
- Deepfakes are a part of Deep Synthesis, which uses technologies, including deep learning and augmented reality, to generate text, images, audio and video to create virtual scenes.

Global Efforts

- Recently, the new Bletchley Declaration was signed by 28 countries including heavyweights like the US, UK, and China for greater transparency from AI developers regarding safety practices and more scientific collaboration on understanding AI's risks.
- The European Union's Code of Practice on Disinformation requires tech companies to counter deep fakes and fake accounts within six months of signing up to the Code.
- The U.S. introduced the bipartisan Deepfake Task Force Act to assist the Department of Homeland Security in countering deepfake technology.
- China introduced comprehensive regulation on deep synthesis, effective from January 2023.
- Big tech companies like Meta and Google have announced measures to address the issue of deep fake content.
- Google has introduced tools for identifying synthetic content, including watermarking and metadata.

Related Laws in India

- Deepfakes are fast becoming a problem and are used by threat actors to spread misinformation online. However, there are laws which can be invoked to deter threat actors from creating deep fake videos.
- India's IT Rules, 2021 require that all content reported to be fake or produced using deep fake be taken down by intermediary platforms within 36 hours.
- Since the deepfake videos of an Indian actress went viral, the Indian IT ministry has also issued notices to social media platforms stating that impersonating online was illegal under Section 66D of the Information Technology Act of 2000.
- The IT Rules, 2021, also prohibit "host[ing] any content that impersonates another person," and requires social media firms to quickly take down "artificially morphed images of [an] individual" when alerted to one.

On 8 November, the Indian government instructed "social media intermediaries" to remove morphed videos or deepfakes from their platforms within 24 hours of a complaint being filed, in accordance with a requirement outlined in the IT Rules 2021.

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ELECTORAL BONDS AND ELECTORAL TRUSTS

WHY IN NEWS?

- After a three-day hearing, the Supreme Court on November 3 reserved its judgment on the challenge to the central government's Electoral Bonds Scheme.
- Before the introduction of the Electoral Bonds (EB) Scheme in 2018, there was something called an Electoral Trusts (ET) Scheme, which was introduced by the UPA government in 2013.

What are Electoral Trusts?

- Under the scheme notified by the UPA-2 government on January 31, 2013, any company registered under Section 25 of the Companies Act, 1956, can form an electoral trust.
- Under Section 17CA of the Income-tax Act, 1961, any citizen of India, a company registered in India, or a firm or Hindu Undivided Family or association of persons living in India, can donate to an electoral trust.
- The electoral trusts have to apply for renewal every three financial years.
- They must donate 95% of contributions received in a financial year to political parties registered under the Representation of the People Act, 1951.
- The contributors' PAN (in case of a resident) or passport number (in case of an NRI) is required at the time of making contributions.

Electoral Trusts vs Electoral Bonds

- The electoral trusts route is transparent on contributors and beneficiaries. Where there is only one contributor and one beneficiary of a particular trust, the public can know for sure who is funding whom.
 - Electoral bonds, on the other hand, are exempt from disclosure requirements and seek to ensure anonymity for the donor.
- Data from nine financial years (2013-14 to 2021-22) show that political funding through the two government schemes shot up after the introduction of EBs, with the bulk of donations coming through the EB scheme.
 - Between 2017-18 and 2021-22, political parties got a total Rs 1,631 crore through ETs, while Rs 9,208 crore was donated through EBs.
- As per a report by the Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR), a single political party has secured 72% of the total donations facilitated by ETs in the year 2021-22 and 57% of the funding through EBs from 2013-14 to 2021-22.
 - The report also found that more than 55% of the funding for political parties came through EBs.

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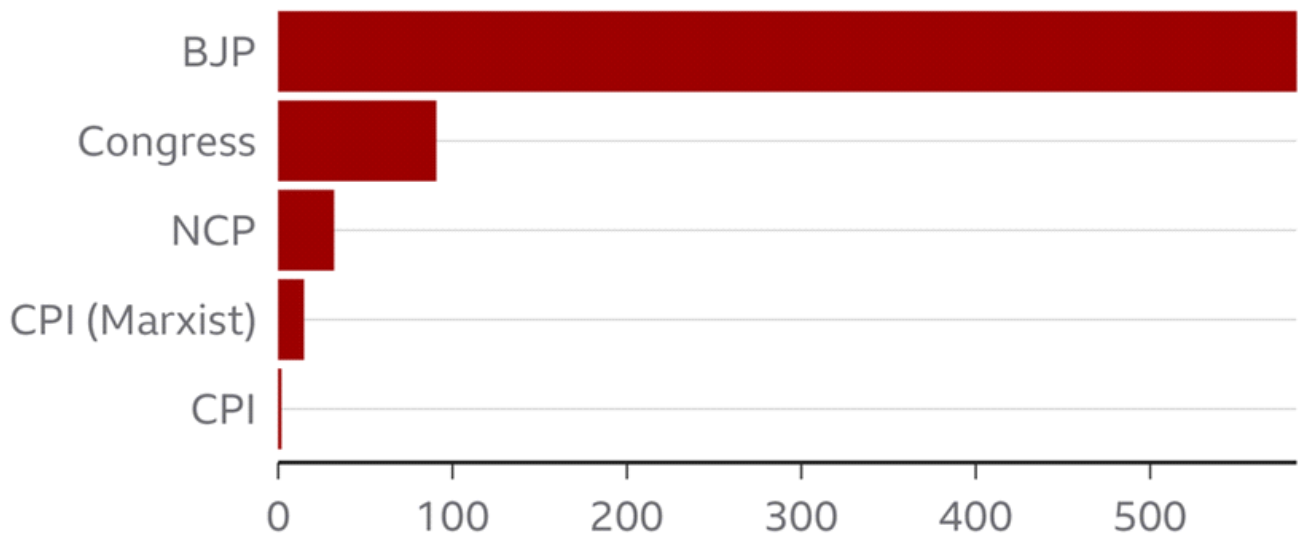


What are Electoral Bonds?

- Electoral bonds are money instruments like promissory notes that can be bought by companies and individuals in India from authorised branches of the State Bank of India (SBI).
- Such bonds are sold in multiples of ₹1,000, ₹10,000, ₹1 lakh, ₹10 lakh, and ₹1 crore and can be bought through a KYC-compliant account and donated to a political party, which can then encash them.
- The name and other details of the donor are not entered on the instrument and thus electoral bonds are, in effect, anonymous.
- There is also no cap on the number of electoral bonds that a person or company can purchase.
- The electoral bonds scheme was launched through a notification on January 2, 2018, and was preceded by amendments to four legislations—the Representation of the People Act, 1951, (RP Act), the Companies Act, 2013, the Income Tax Act, 1961, and the Foreign Contributions Regulation Act, 2010 (FCRA)—through the Finance Acts of 2016 and 2017.
- Every political party registered under Section 29A of the RP Act which secured at least 1% of the votes polled in the most recent Lok Sabha or State elections is allotted a verified account by the Election Commission of India (ECI) in which the bond amounts can be deposited within 15 days of their issue.
 - If a party does not encash any bonds within this period, the SBI deposits them into the Prime Minister's Relief Fund.
- Prior to the introduction of the scheme, political parties were required to make all donations above ₹ 20,000 public and no corporate company was allowed to make donations amounting to more than 10% of their total revenue.

Donations received by Indian political parties in 2020-21

All values in USD million



Source: Association for Democratic Reforms



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QS ASIA RANKINGS 2024

WHY IN NEWS?

- QS Quacquarelli Symonds, the renowned global higher education analysts, have just released their Asian edition of the 2024 QS World University Rankings.
- This edition stands as the largest one to date, featuring a whopping 856 institutions hailing from 25 different countries and territories.

Key Findings

- Peking University from China (mainland) secured the top spot for the second consecutive year, while the University of Hong Kong climbed to second place.
 - The National University of Singapore (NUS) wrapped up the top three.
- With 148 featured universities, “India is now the most represented higher education system” in QS World University Rankings: Asia.
 - This shows 37 new entries from India compared to last year's report, which is significantly more than only seven new entries from China (mainland).
- IIT Bombay retains its top ranking in India and is ranked 40th in Asia.
- A total of seven Indian institutions feature in the top 100 ranks of QS World University Rankings: Asia; of which five are IITs, whereas the other two include the Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore and Delhi University.

About Ranking

- Quacquarelli Symonds (QS), a UK-based company specialised in the analysis of higher education institutions around the world.
- It ranked institutions on the basis of 10 indicators — academic reputation, employer reputation, faculty-student ratio, international relation network, citations per paper, paper per faculty, staff with PhD, international faculty, international students, and outbound exchange students.

Asia's top 10 universities

2023 rank	2022 rank	Institution	Location
1	2	Peking University	China
2	1	National University of Singapore	Singapore
3	5	Tsinghua University	China
4	3	University of Hong Kong	Hong Kong
5	3	Nanyang Technological University	Singapore
6	7	Fudan University	China
6	6	Zhejiang University	China
8	14	Korea Advanced Institute of Science & Technology	South Korea
9	8	Universiti Malaya	Malaysia
10	10	Shanghai Jiao Tong University	China

Source: QS WORLD UNIVERSITY RANKINGS: ASIA 2023 STRAITS TIMES GRAPHICS

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ALARMING RISE OF SCIENTIFIC MISCONDUCT RECORDED IN INDIA

WHY IN NEWS?

- According to a survey by India Research Watchdog (IRW) the escalating number of retractions in Indian research, raising substantial concerns related to Scientific Misconduct in India.

Key Points

- Retractions from India have increased 2.5 times between 2020 and 2022 over the number recorded between 2017 and 2019.
- Among thousands of cutting-edge research papers submitted across the IITs, 58 were retracted between 2006 and 2023 for three reasons: plagiarism of article, plagiarism of text, and duplication of article.
- In the same 17 years, Stanford University (US) had 3 retractions, Princeton University (US) had 2, Oxford and Cambridge (both UK) each had 5, and Tsinghua University (China) had 10.

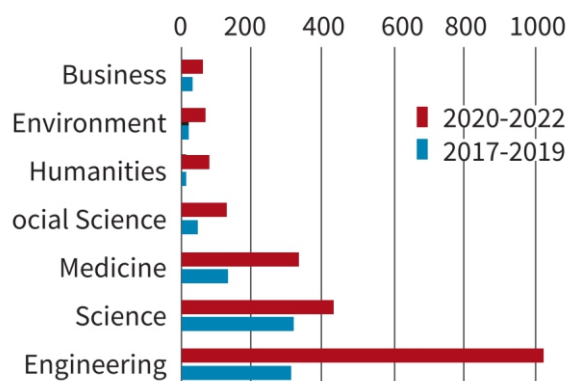
On the surface, Indian research has never been better. India recently became the third-largest producer of scientific articles in the world, a notable achievement for the world's fifth-largest economy.

- The IRW database lists 109 reasons for which papers have been retracted.
- For simplicity, the reasons can be grouped into three categories:
 - grave reasons (constituting serious breach of academic and scientific integrity), including criminal proceedings, hoax papers, and plagiarism;
 - misconduct (wherein the author knowingly indulged in misconduct), including civil proceedings, conflict of interest, and manipulation of results using computer-generated content; and
 - errors (errors in the article, which can also indicate hasty publication), including concerns/error in data, images, results, etc., requiring correction.
- The data show that the number of retractions in India rose dramatically in 2020-2022, mainly for misconduct.

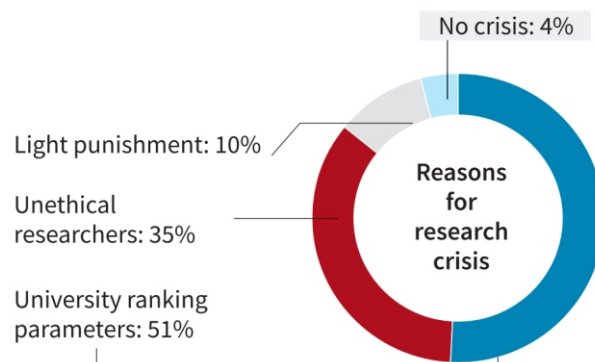
What is Scientific Misconduct?

- Scientific misconduct can be described as a deviation from the accepted standards of scientific research, study and publication ethics.
- There can be many forms of scientific misconduct such as Plagiarism, Misconduct involving experimental techniques, and Fraud.
- Retractions occur when published papers are withdrawn from the scientific literature due to various reasons, including mistakes, data fabrication, plagiarism, and other forms of misconduct.

The chart shows retractions by domains in India.



The chart shows the results of a small survey conducted by India Research Watchdog with 364 respondents.



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GPS ANKLETS

WHY IN NEWS?

- For the first time in India, a prisoner in J&K has been given bail on the condition that his movements are monitored constantly.
- Ghulam Mohammad Bhat, who is accused of offences under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA), was tagged with a Global Positioning System (GPS) tracking device to monitor his movements.

What is a GPS tracker?

- A GPS tracker is a small, wearable device like the GPS collars that have long been used to monitor the movements of animals.
- The device provides the exact location of the wearer at all times and allows law enforcement and security agencies to monitor his/her movement in real-time.
- The device is tamper-proof, and any attempt at tampering with it sets off an alarm. It can also not be removed by the wearer or any unauthorised person without damaging it.
- The tracker can be put on the ankle or arm of a person. Thus, there are GPS anklets and GPS bracelets.

GPS devices are very common these days, and some people put them on pets. The movements of wild animals such as rogue elephants in Kerala or the cheetahs in Kuno are monitored using these devices. Many new automobiles are equipped with trackers to ensure they can be traced if stolen; owners can also have them installed separately.



Global Experience

- GPS trackers are a precondition for bail in several countries including the United States, the United Kingdom, and Malaysia.
- Bhat's case is the first time this technology has been used in India for this purpose. J&K Police have indicated they might do it in the future as well.

Legal Position

- The use of the GPS anket on Bhat was sanctioned by a court. Human rights activists have, however, pointed to the absence of specific legal provisions allowing this.
- Rights activists argue that tracking individuals with GPS is a violation of their fundamental right to privacy and the dignity of the offenders.
- The Supreme Court of India in 'Maneka Gandhi vs Union of India' (1978) ruled that the right to life includes the right to human dignity.
- GPS anklets raise some legal and ethical issues, such as the lack of clear and specific laws and regulations governing their usage in India.

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KEY INITIATIVES FOR TRIBAL GROUPS

WHY IN NEWS?

- On the Occasion of Janjatiya Gaurav Diwas, the Prime Minister of India launched three key Initiatives - 'Viksit Bharat Sankalp Yatra', Pradhan Mantri Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PM PVTG) Development Mission and Pradhan Mantri Janjati Adivasi Nyaya Maha Abhiyan.
- Janjatiya Gaurav Diwas falls every year on 15th November to mark the birth anniversary of revered tribal leader and freedom fighter Birsa Munda.

About Viksit Bharat Sankalp Yatra

- The Viksit Bharat Sankalp Yatra is the largest-ever outreach initiative of the Government of India.
- Planked on the vision of inclusive development, it has been a constant endeavour to ensure that the benefits of the government schemes reach all in every corner of the nation achieving 100% saturation.
- The Yatra marks a significant step in the achievement of this objective through outreach, information dissemination, and empowering citizens to become active stakeholders in the country's development.
- The Viksit Bharat Sankalp Yatra highlighted the milestones achieved in 100% saturation of government flagship schemes.
- 83 Gram Panchayats have 100% Ayushman Card saturation, 89 GPs with 100% JJM saturation, 97 GPs with 100% Jan Dhan saturation, and 124 GPs have achieved the Open Defecation Free + status.

About PM Janjati Adivasi Nyaya Maha Abhiyan

- Under PM JANMAN, the government will reach out to tribal groups and primitive tribes most of whom still dwell in the forests.
- The government has identified 75 such tribal communities and primitive tribes with a population of lakhs who reside in more than 22 thousand villages in the country.
- PM JANMAN underscores the government's commitment to uplifting and safeguarding tribal communities, preserving their cultural heritage, and integrating them into the mainstream development process.
- It emphasizes the need to bridge the gap between tribal populations and essential services while ensuring their socio-economic empowerment.

About Pradhan Mantri Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PM PVTG)

- The PM-PVTG Development Mission program aims to improve the socio-economic status of PVTGs.
- For this, the availability of Rs 24000 Crore for Scheduled Tribes has been envisaged in the Union Budget.
- The mission includes providing basic facilities like safe housing, clean drinking water and sanitation, education, health and nutrition, and better access to roads in settlements for backward scheduled tribes.

PM PARTICULARLY VULNERABLE TRIBAL GROUPS (PM PVTG) MISSION

A Visionary Leap for
Tribal Well-being

Basic facilities like roads, telecom, electricity & housing to scattered, inaccessible tribes

Budget of ₹24,000 crore allocated for the mission

Targeting 75 PVTGs in 18 States & UTs living in 22,544 villages



PM Narendra Modi launches **two key initiatives** on

JANJATIYA GAURAV DIWAS, 2023

- Viksit Bharat Sankalp Yatra** to ensure saturation of flagship government schemes
- PM Janjati Adivasi Nyaya Maha Abhiyan (**PM-JANMAN**) to protect the tribes on the verge of extinction and nurture them



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10TH ASEAN DEFENCE MINISTERS' MEETING-PLUS (ADMM-PLUS)

WHY IN NEWS?

- The Defence Minister of India participated in the 10th Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) Defence Ministers' Meeting-Plus (ADMM-Plus) in Jakarta, Indonesia on November 16 and 17.

Key Points

- India reiterated its commitment to freedom of navigation, overflight and unimpeded lawful commerce in the international waters in accordance with international laws, including United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) 1982.
- India also called for regional security initiatives that are consultative and development-oriented to reflect the larger consensus among various stakeholders.
- India is also committed towards nurturing practical, forward-looking and result-oriented cooperation with ADMM-Plus to enhance maritime security in the region.
- India stressed the significance of dialogue and diplomacy for enduring peace and global stability, emphasizing moving away from an "us versus them" mindset, asserting that this is not an era of war.
- India appreciated ASEAN Member States' participation in joint initiatives like the Initiative for Women in UN Peacekeeping Operations, Initiative for Marine Plastic Pollution Response, ASEAN-India Maritime Exercise, and Expert Working Group (EWG) on Humanitarian Assistance & Disaster Relief (HADR).
- India proposed to co-chair the EWG on Counter-Terrorism, a concern endorsed by ADMM-Plus due to terrorism's serious threat in the ASEAN region.
- In the present cycle from 2021-2024, India is co-chairing EWG on HADR along with Indonesia.

About ADMM-Plus

- The ADMM is the highest defence consultative and cooperative mechanism in ASEAN.
- The ADMM-Plus is a platform for the ASEAN member-states — Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Vietnam — and its eight dialogue partners — India, U.S., China, Russia, Japan, South Korea, Australia and New Zealand — to strengthen security and defence cooperation.
- India became the dialogue partner of the ASEAN in 1992 and the inaugural ADMM-Plus was convened in Hanoi, Vietnam, on October 12, 2010.
- Since 2017, the ADMM-Plus Ministers have been meeting annually to bolster the cooperation amongst the ASEAN and the Plus countries, the statement noted.
- The ADMM-Plus progresses practical cooperation amongst member countries through seven Experts Working Groups (EWGs) namely maritime security, military medicine, cyber security, peacekeeping operations, counter-terrorism, humanitarian mine action, and Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR).

ADMM / ADMM-Plus



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

QUICK FACTS



1. The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (**FSSAI**) has recommended the inclusion of QR codes on food products for accessibility by visually impaired individuals stating that this will ensure access to safe food for all including individuals with special needs such as visually impaired individuals.
2. The fourth edition of the **Goa Maritime Conclave** (GMC) was hosted by the **Indian Navy** from 29 – 31 Oct 23 under the aegis of the Naval War College, Goa. The conclave's theme "Maritime Security in the Indian Ocean Region: Converting Common Maritime Priorities into Collaborative Mitigating Frameworks" aptly highlights the present and necessary imperative for 'harmonising and collaborating capacities and capabilities' in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR) towards realising the vision of **SAGAR** (Security and Growth for All in the Region).
3. Indian para-athletes mark a monumental achievement in the history of **Para Asian Games** held in Hangzhou, China with an all-time high medal tally of **111**, including an impressive 29 gold medals. With this India clinches the 5th position in the overall medal tally behind China, Iran, Japan and the Republic of Korea. Out of the 111 medals secured, female para-athletes have contributed significantly, accounting for 40 medals, constituting 36% of the total medal tally.
4. The **National Medical Commission (NMC)** plans to transform India's medical registration system with the '**One Nation, One Registration Platform**' for easy access to medical practitioner information. The NMC's initiative aims to eliminate duplication and bureaucratic hurdles, offering public access to information about every physician in India. A National Medical Register(NMR) patch pilot will provide doctors with unique identification numbers for cross-state practice.
5. The Indian Defence Acquisition Council recently cleared the procurement of the Indian Long Range Surface Air Missile(LRSAM) system under **Project Kusha**. Project Kusha led by the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) is an ambitious defence initiative by India aimed at developing its long-range air defence system **by 2028-29**. It will consist of three types of interceptor missiles, with ranges of 150 km, 250 km, and 350 km, and advanced long-range surveillance and fire control radars.
6. The central government formally launched the sale of wheat flour at a subsidised rate of Rs 27.50 per kg under the brand name '**Bharat Atta**' across the country. Bharat Atta will be sold through cooperatives NAFED, NCCF and Kendriya Bhandar via 800 mobile vans and 2,000-odd outlets of these three agencies spread across the country to provide relief to consumers from high prices.
7. Department of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare (DA&FW) in collaboration with the Wadhvani Institute for Artificial Intelligence (Wadhvani AI) developed **Krishi 24/7**, the first-ever AI-powered solution for automated agricultural news monitoring and analysis, with support from Google.org. Krishi 24/7 will aid DA&FW in identifying relevant news, generating timely alerts, and taking prompt action to protect farmers' interests and promote sustainable agricultural growth through improved decision-making.
8. In a significant move towards the internationalisation of India's higher education system, the University Grants Commission (**UGC**) has introduced the "**University Grants Commission (Setting up and Operation of Campuses of Foreign Higher Educational Institutions in India) Regulations, 2023.**" These regulations, aligned with the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, aim to establish a robust framework for the entry and operation of foreign higher educational institutions (FHEIs) in the country.
9. The **Winter Session of Parliament** will begin on **December 4 and end on December 22**, the Union government announced recently. Several important Bills are likely to be taken up for consideration and passage during the Winter Session, including three legislations seeking to replace the Indian Penal Code, the Evidence Act, and the Code of Criminal Procedure, as well as a Bill related to the appointment of the chief election commissioner and election commissioners.
10. The **Supreme Court** welcomed three new judges recently, taking the judicial strength to its **sanctioned capacity of 34**, even as the pendency clock on the National Judicial Data Grid (NJDG) dashboard threatens to hit a high of 80,000 cases in the next 24 hours. Delhi High Court Chief Justice Justice Satish Chandra Sharma and Rajasthan and Gauhati Chief Justices Augustine George Masih and Sandeep Mehta were sworn in as Supreme Court judges.
11. The **Bihar Assembly** on November 9 unanimously passed a Bill to increase reservation for Backward Classes, Extremely Backward Classes, Scheduled Castes, and Scheduled Tribes from the existing 50% to 65%. Together with the 10% Economically Backward Class (EWS) quota, the Bill will **push reservation in Bihar to 75%, well past the 50%** ceiling set by the Supreme Court.





12. **National Education Day** is celebrated every year on **November 11** across India to mark the birth anniversary of Maulana Abul Kalam Azad who was the first education minister of independent India. He served as the education minister from August 15, 1947, to February 2, 1958, and passed away in Delhi on February 22, 1958. He was responsible for setting up the top education bodies including the All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) and the University Grants Commission (UGC). Maulana Abul Kalam Azad also established the first Indian Institute of Technology – IIT Kharagpur.
13. On October 15, Resecurity, an American cyber security company, said that **personally identifiable information of 815 million Indian citizens**, including Aadhaar numbers and passport details, were **being sold on the dark web**. The threat actors selling the data claimed it was sourced from the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), which has been subjected to numerous cyber-attack attempts with 6,000 incidents being reported last year alone.
14. **Ao and Sümi Naga communities in Nagaland** follow practices passed down through generations, Traditional Seed Preservation Practices, preserving seeds from successful harvests for successive cycles. Traditionally agrarian, the Ao and Sümi Naga communities practise jhum or shifting cultivation.
15. **Project Beacon** of the **Border Roads Organisation (BRO)** has been working on restoring and improving the road to the **Amarnath cave shrine**, located in the snow-clad Himalayas of Kashmir's Lidder Valley. The BRO has completed the construction of a motorable road that connects the Amarnath cave shrine in Kashmir's Lidder Valley with the Baltal base camp, making the pilgrimage more accessible and comfortable for the devotees.
16. **Children's Day**, also known as '**Bal Diwas**' is celebrated across India every year on **November 14**. This day commemorates the birth anniversary of India's first Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, famously known as Chacha Nehru. Nehru was a strong advocate for children's education and rights.
17. The scheme Scholarships for Higher Education for Young Achievers Scheme- **SHREYAS**, has been proposed to implement during 2021-22 to 2025-26 by placing two ongoing Central Sector schemes for OBC and others namely – (i) National Fellowship for OBC (ii) Dr Ambedkar Central Sector Scheme of Interest Subsidy on Educational Loans for Overseas Studies for Other Backward Classes (OBCs) and Economically Backward Classes (EBCs).
18. Prime Minister Narendra Modi's declaration in Hyderabad that his government will be setting up a committee to consider the **sub-categorisation of the Madiga community in Telangana** within the Scheduled Castes category. The Madiga community constitutes at least 50% of the total Scheduled Castes in Telangana, with the 2011 census putting the total SCs at a little over 15% of the population of the State. For years, the Madiga community has said that the benefits of reservation under the SC category has been cornered by the Mala community, with the Madigas being left out.
19. **National Epilepsy Day** is celebrated every year in India on **17th November** to raise awareness about the brain disorder and bust myths surrounding the disease. Every year the second Monday of February is observed as International Epilepsy Day.
20. **National Press Day** is observed on **November 16**, every year, in India to celebrate the importance of a free and responsible press in a democratic society. National Press Day is observed to commemorate the establishment of the Press Council of India (PCI) in 1966.
21. The **Parliamentary Committee on Home Affairs** has suggested that **adultery should be re-instituted as a crime** in the **Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), 2023**, the proposed law to replace the Indian Penal Code (IPC), 1860. The Parliamentary Committee adopted reports on the three Bills meant to replace the IPC, The Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC), 1973, and The Indian Evidence Act, 1872.
22. The **Indian patent office** has granted the "**highest**" number of **41,010 patents** till November 15 this fiscal year. In 2013-14 fiscal year, 4,227 patents were granted. According to a World Intellectual Property Organization report, patent applications by Indians grew 31.6 per cent in 2022, extending an 11-year run of growth unmatched by any other country among the top 10 filers.
23. The **Indian Navy** has completed its **second anti-piracy patrol in the Gulf of Guinea (GoG)** in the Atlantic Ocean. Offshore Patrol Vessel INS Sumedha which is on an extended range operational deployment, currently operating in the Atlantic Ocean along the West Coast of Africa, undertook a 31-day anti-piracy patrol. The maiden Gulf of Guinea anti-piracy patrol was undertaken by INS Tarkash in September/October 2022.





24. In **Ladakh**, after GI Tag for Apricot (Raktsey Karpo), Pashmina, and Ladakhi Wood Carving, the Geographical Indication Registry, operating under the Ministry of Commerce & Industry, granted the GI tag to the Department of Industries & Commerce, Ladakh for '**Ladakh Sea Buckthorn**'. In another region, the Onattukara Vikasana Agency (OVA), the registered owner of the GI-tagged **Onattukara sesame in Kerala**, is actively working to expand the cultivation of this unique sesame variety.
25. The President of India graced the inaugural session of the **36th Annual Conference and Literary Festival of All India Santali Writers' Association at Baripada, Odisha**. **Santali language** is a Munda language spoken primarily in the east-central Indian states of West Bengal, Jharkhand, and Orissa. The Santhali language was included in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution in 2003. Santhali literature, historically oral, saw notable contributions from Pandit Raghunath Murmu, who created the Ol Chiki script, also known as Ol Cemet.
26. **Cyclone Midhili**, which stemmed from a deep depression in the Bay of Bengal and **was named by the Maldives**, underwent a downgrade from a "deep depression" to a "depression" as confirmed by the India Meteorological Department (IMD) after its landfall on the Bangladesh coast.
27. A team of researchers from the **Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Ropar** led by Dr Resmi Sebastian has uncovered the presence of **tantalum, a rare metal**, in the **sands of the Sutlej River** in the Indian state of Punjab.
28. A day after announcing a **ban on halal-certified products in the state**, the **Uttar Pradesh** Food Safety and Drug Administration started a crackdown on such products in all 75 districts. The ban order covering the production, storage, distribution, and sale of all halal-certified food products except those meant for export was brought into effect, claiming that it was a "parallel system that created confusion about the quality of food items".



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INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

QUICK FACTS



1. **World Cities Day** brings Urban October to an end on **October 31** each year and was first celebrated in 2014. Urban October was launched by UN-Habitat in 2014 to emphasize the world's urban challenges and engage the international community towards the New Urban Agenda. The month begins with World Habitat Day on the first Monday of the month and ends with World Cities Day on October 31. World Cities Day 2023 focuses on the theme of "**Financing Sustainable Urban Future for All**" to explore how to unlock transformative investment in urban planning and achieve adequate fiscal decentralization.
2. **Lionel Messi** won the eighth **Ballon d'Or** of his remarkable career, while **Spain's World Cup**-winning star **Aitana Bonmati** took the women's prize at a glittering ceremony in Paris. The Ballon d'Or is an annual football award presented by French news magazine France Football since 1956. The award was temporarily merged with the FIFA World Player of the Year from 2010 to 2015 and is known as the FIFA Ballon d'Or. However, in 2016, this partnership concluded.
3. **Bangladesh** Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's daughter, **Saima Wazed**, was nominated as the next **Regional Director for the World Health Organization's South-East Asia** region. She defeated Shambu Acharya, a public health veteran from Nepal, in a vote held during the 76th session of the WHO Regional Committee for South-East Asia Region. Bangladesh, Bhutan, DPR (North) Korea, India, Indonesia, Maldives, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Thailand, and Timor-Leste — 10 of the 11 member countries — took part in the vote. Myanmar did not send a delegation to the meeting.
4. The second anniversary of **International Biosphere Reserve Day** highlighted the critical importance of biosphere reserves (BR) in safeguarding our environment and promoting sustainability. Established by UNESCO in 2022, to be observed annually on November 3. It aims to raise awareness, share best practices, and showcase achievements of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves (WNBR).
5. The **Sixth Assembly of the International Solar Alliance (ISA)** was convened at Bharat Mandapam in New Delhi. The Assembly discussed the ISA's broader strategy, emphasizing the need to focus on energy access before transitioning to renewable sources, echoing the organization's philosophy of "access first and then transition." The assembly announced an increase in Viability Gap Funding (VGF) for projects, raising it from 10% to a range of 10% to 35% to foster greater investments, particularly in African countries.
6. Recently, 11 Asian and South American countries signed a landmark deal, the **Global Declaration for River Dolphins**, in Bogota, Colombia to save the world's six surviving species of river dolphins from extinction. Countries that adopted the declaration include Bangladesh, Bolivia, Brazil, Cambodia, Colombia, Ecuador, India, Nepal, Pakistan, Peru, and Venezuela.
7. Olympic and world champion javelin thrower **Neeraj Chopra** was named as one of the 11 nominees for the **2023 men's World Athlete of the Year** award. The other nominees are shot putter Ryan Crouser of the U.S., pole vaulters Mondo Duplantis of Sweden, 3000m steeplechaser Soufiane El Bakkali of Morocco, Jakob Ingebrigtsen of Norway (1500m/5000m), marathoner Kelvin Kiptum of Kenya, decathlete Pierce LePage of Canada, sprinter Noah Lyles of USA, race walker Alvaro Martin of Spain, long jumper Miltiadis Tentoglou of Greece and 400m hurdler Karsten Warholm of Norway.
8. **Sri Lankan batsman Angelo Mathews'** timed-out dismissal during the recently concluded ICC Men's Cricket World Cup 2023 match against Bangladesh stands as the first instance of timed-out dismissal in the 146-year chronicle of International Cricket. As per the ICC Men's Cricket World Cup 2023 playing conditions, the incoming batter must be ready to face the next ball within a strict 2-minute time limit.
9. India's **Vidit Santosh Gujrathi (FIDE Grand Swiss)** and **Vaishali Ramesh Babu (FIDE Women's Grand Swiss)** secured victories in the FIDE Grand Swiss Open, earning coveted spots in the 2024 Candidates Tournament for a chance to challenge the World Chess Champion. The World Chess Championship 2024 is scheduled to take place in Toronto, Canada in April 2024.
10. **Russia** signed a law withdrawing its ratification of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (**CTBT**) banning nuclear weapons tests, a step condemned by the organisation which promotes adherence to the landmark arms control pact. The CTBT was signed by 187 states, including Russia and the United States, but has not entered into force as eight countries, including the United States, have not ratified it. India has not yet signed the treaty.





11. The **World Health Organization** released its **Global TB Report 2023** on **7th November**. According to the report, India has made tremendous progress in improving case detection and reversed the impact of COVID-19 on the TB programme. The treatment coverage has improved to 80% of the estimated TB cases, an increase of 19% over the previous year.
12. The **Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)** released a new report titled '**The State of Food and Agriculture 2023**'. It reveals the staggering hidden costs of unhealthy diets and ultra-processed foods, impacting both our health and the environment. These costs reach over USD 7 trillion annually and have far-reaching consequences.
13. The **10th of November** is celebrated as **National Heroes Day** in Indonesia to commemorate the heroism of Indonesian patriots during the 1945 Battle of Surabaya. The Battle of Surabaya, fought between Indonesian nationalists and British and British Indian forces, lasted from 1945 to 1949.
14. **Innovations for Defence Excellence (iDEX)** under the Department of Defence Production, Ministry of Defence and US Department of Defence, organised the maiden **INDUS-X Investors Meet** on 8 November 2023 at New Delhi as a pre-cursor to the 2+2 Indo-US Ministerial Dialogue. The **INDUS-X Educational Series (Gurukul)** was also launched during the event. The Gurukul initiative is aimed to help the innovators /startups to navigate in the defence eco-system of the US and India.
15. Paris-based **International Energy Agency (IEA)**, in its **World Energy Outlook 2023**, report has highlighted that India's Energy Conservation Building Code (ECBC), 2017 for commercial buildings sets it apart from other developing economies where "energy efficiency in buildings stands out as a laggard". India was cited as a "notable exception" for being among the few emerging market and developing economies to have energy efficiency building codes.
16. The **4th edition** of Bilateral Exercise between Indian Navy and Bangladesh Navy, **BONGOSAGAR-23**, and the **5th edition** of Coordinated Patrol (**CORPAT**) by the two navies was conducted in the Northern Bay of Bengal from 07 - 09 Nov 2023. Ships and aircraft from both navies undertook joint patrolling along the International Maritime Boundary Line (IMBL), and subsequently conducted maritime exercises to enhance interoperability. CORPAT-23 also included the maiden Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) drills conducted by the two navies, wherein a search-and-rescue scenario at sea was done.
17. **Saturn's** famous rings will soon disappear from Earth's view due to an optical illusion caused by the planet's tilt. By **2025**, the rings will become almost invisible, but they will return in **2032** when Saturn rotates and showcases the other side of its rings. The rings are thin and when they are edge-on to Earth, they appear to disappear. However, experts believe that the rings themselves could be about 100 million years old and may erode within a few hundred million years.
18. **Indian Defence Minister** Rajnath Singh and **External Affairs Minister** S Jaishankar met **their counterparts from the US government**, Defence Secretary Lloyd Austin and Secretary of State Antony Blinken respectively, for the **fifth 2+2 Ministerial Dialogue** held in New Delhi on November 11. The 2+2 meetings have been held annually with the US leaders since 2018.
19. **World Diabetes Day (WDD)** is celebrated annually on **14 November**, coinciding with the birthday of Sir Frederick Banting, the co-discoverer of insulin in 1922 alongside Charles Best. The theme for 2021-2 is "Access to Diabetes Care". WDD originated in 1991 as a response to the increasing health threat of diabetes, established by the International Diabetes Federation (IDF) and the World Health Organization.
20. The **wild tiger status** is good in South Asia and Russia, but the picture in Southeast Asia is grim, posing challenges to the global tiger population recovery. Global Tiger Recovery Program (GTRP) evolved under the Global Tiger Initiative in 2010. The St Petersburg Declaration in 2010 saw 13 tiger range countries commit to reversing the decline of the species population and double their numbers by 2022. The submissions were made under GTRP 2.0 and CITES, that aim to pave the way for tiger conservation from 2023-2034.
21. A **state of emergency** has been declared in **Iceland**, after a swarm of 800 earthquakes rocked the island country's southwestern Reykjanes peninsula in under 14 hours on November 10. Iceland is located on the Mid-Atlantic Ridge, technically the longest mountain range in the world, but on the floor of the Atlantic Ocean. The ridge separates the Eurasian and North American tectonic plates — making it a hotbed of seismic activity.





22. The **77th meeting** of the Standing Committee of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (**CITES**) was held in Geneva, Switzerland from 6th to 10th November 2023. India is a Party to the CITES since 1976.
23. The **European Space Agency's (ESA) Euclid mission**, which launched in July 2023 to investigate the mystery of dark matter and dark energy, released its first five science images recently. They include views of large clusters with thousands of distant galaxies, close-ups of two nearby galaxies, a nebula, and a gravitationally bound group of stars called a globular cluster. Euclid, ESA's dark universe detective, was designed to investigate how dark matter and dark energy made the cosmos what it is. About 95 per cent of the universe seems to be made of these units that we have no idea about.
24. North Atlantic Treaty Organization (**NATO**) has announced the formal suspension of the **Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE)**, a key Cold War-Era Security Treaty in response to Russia's pullout from the deal. Most of NATO's 31 allies have signed the Treaty of Conventional Armed Forces in Europe, which was aimed at preventing Cold War rivals from massing forces at or near mutual borders. It was signed in November 1990, but not fully ratified until two years later in 1992.
25. **Mount Etna, the towering volcano on the east coast of Sicily, Italy**, has once again captured the world's attention with its eruption. The event was so significant that it was observed from space by the Copernicus Sentinel-2 mission, which used shortwave-infrared bands to highlight the lava flow at the time of acquisition.
26. The **Cambridge Dictionary** named '**hallucinate**' as its **Word of the Year for 2023**, after updating its meaning to reflect its new-found usage in the world of artificial intelligence (AI). "To seem to see, hear, feel, or smell something that does not exist, usually because of a health condition or because you have taken a drug." This used to be the definition of 'hallucinate' in the Cambridge Dictionary prior to 2023.
27. The **ninth edition** of the joint military exercise between the armed forces of **India and Sri Lanka** commenced on November 16 in Aundh, Pune. Taking place from November 16 through 29, the exercise, named "**MITRA SHAKTI-2023**", involves a contingent of 120 personnel from India, primarily representing the Maratha Light Infantry Regiment.
28. The **United States Food and Drug Administration (FDA)** on November 9 approved the **world's inaugural vaccine** targeting **chikungunya**, a virus transmitted by infected mosquitoes. Developed by Europe's Valneva, the vaccine will be marketed as **Ixchiq**.
29. Recently, the **Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Leaders' Summit 2023** took place in **San Francisco, United States**. The APEC 2023 summit's theme is "Creating a Resilient and Sustainable Future for All". The summit concluded with the adoption of the Golden Gate Declaration.
30. **Oxygen-producing materials** made from meteorites found on Mars have been produced using a robotic artificial intelligence (AI)-chemist. The research, published in Nature Synthesis, provides a proof-of-concept for generating oxygen and may have implications for future manned **missions to Mars**. By converting meteorites into compounds and creating catalysts, this AI chemist demonstrated a capacity to produce oxygen under simulated Martian conditions, marking a crucial leap towards self-sustaining Martian exploration.
31. In the final showdown of the **Cricket World Cup 2023**, **Australia clinched victory against India** by a margin of six wickets at the Narendra Modi Stadium situated in Ahmedabad. This triumph marked Australia's sixth World Cup title, establishing a new record as they had previously secured victories in 1987, 1999, 2003, 2007, and 2015 editions of the tournament. India secured triumph in the World Cup twice, in 1983 and 2011.
32. **Javier Milei**, a 53-year-old libertarian and self-proclaimed political outsider, is set to be Argentina's new president after winning 56 per cent of the vote in the national elections.
33. As per the latest **Emissions Gap Report** released by the **UN Environment Programme (UNEP)** on November 20, the current pledges under the Paris Agreement put the world on track for a 2.5-2.9°C temperature rise above pre-industrial levels this century, far higher than the limit of restricting global warming to a 1.5 or 2°C temperature rise. This points to the urgent need for increased climate action.
34. Recently, the **2nd India-Australia 2+2 Ministerial Dialogue** was held in New Delhi, India, where foreign Affairs Ministers and Defense Ministers of both countries attended the Meeting. The inaugural 2+2 ministerial dialogue took place in New Delhi in September 2021. India and Australia are pursuing a Comprehensive Strategic Partnership.

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35. The **14th edition** of the Indo-US joint special forces exercise '**Vajra Prahar, 2023**' began at the joint training node in Meghalaya's Umroi Cantonment. The 20-day exercise 'Vajra Prahar' is a joint exercise conducted between the Indian Army and US Army special forces with the aim to share best practices and experiences in areas such as joint mission planning and operational tactics. The first edition was conducted in the year 2010 in India and the 13th edition of the Indo-US joint special forces exercise was conducted at the special forces training school (SFTS), Bakloh (HP).
36. **Thailand's** Cabinet recently approved an amendment to its civil code to **allow same-sex marriage**, with an expectation for the draft to be submitted to Parliament next month. The change in language within the code, replacing "men and women" with "individuals" and "husband and wife" with "marriage partners," aims to grant equal rights to same-sex couples.



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

QUICK FACTS



1. On **Karnataka Rajyotsava Day**, celebrated on **1st November**, the Karnataka government bestows the prestigious Rajyotsava Award, the state's second-highest civilian honour. The Rajyotsava Award is the state's second-highest civilian award given by the Karnataka government annually. The year 2023 is the golden jubilee of renaming Mysore state as Karnataka.
2. Prime Minister Narendra Modi laid the foundation stone for **Amrit Vatika and Amrit Mahotsav Memorial** and launched the **Mera Yuva Bharat (MY Bharat)** platform, designed for the country's youth, at an event marking the culmination of the "Meri Maati Mera Desh" campaign's Amrit Kalash Yatra at Kartavya Path in New Delhi, coinciding with the closing ceremony of the Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav.
3. The **Foundation Day of the eight states** and five union territories, namely Punjab, Chandigarh, Haryana, Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Karnataka, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Delhi, Lakshadweep and Puducherry was celebrated on 1st of November. Formation Years - Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala (1956), Haryana was carved out of Punjab (1966), Chhattisgarh (2000).
4. India-born author **Nandini Das** has been named the winner of the **2023 British Academy Book Prize for Global Cultural Understanding**, a leading international non-fiction prize worth GBP 25,000, for her book 'Courting India: England, Mughal India and the Origins of Empire'. The British Academy Book Prize, formerly known as the Nayef Al-Rodhan Prize, was established in 2013 to reward and celebrate the best works of non-fiction that demonstrate rigour and originality and have contributed to public understanding of other world cultures and their interaction.
5. Engineer-turned-social worker **Deenanath Rajput** was awarded the **Rohini Nayyar Prize for Outstanding Contribution to Rural Development** for his work in changing the lives of over 6,000 tribal women in Naxalite affected areas of Chhattisgarh through the establishment of a farmers' producers organization (FPO). This is the second edition of the Rohini Nayyar Prize, which was instituted in memory of the eponymous economist and administrator Rohini Nayyar who passed away in 2021.
6. Annually, **9th November** is celebrated as **Uttarakhand State Foundation Day**, as on this day Uttarakhand became India's 27th state on November 9, 2000, when it was carved out of northern Uttar Pradesh. The state was originally named Uttaranchal, but was renamed Uttarakhand in 2007. The name Uttarakhand comes from the Sanskrit dialect and means "northern city".
7. The Prime Minister of India has paid tributes to **Acharya Jivatram Bhagwandas (JB) Kripalani** on his **birth anniversary (11th November)**. He Joined Gandhi's cause in 1917, associated with the Non-Cooperation Movement, Civil Disobedience Movement, and Quit India Movement. J.B. Kripalani was the president of the Indian National Congress(INC) in 1947. He is the author of several books, including "Gandhi: His Life and Thought" (1970). The autobiography titled "My Times" was published posthumously in 2004.
8. On the occasion of the **birth anniversary** of tribal freedom fighter Amar Shaheed **Bhagwan Birsa Munda**, Prime Minister Narendra Modi paid tribute to the tribal freedom fighter. The birth anniversary is also celebrated as Janjatiya Gaurav Divas, acknowledging tribal contributions.
9. **Gujarati New Year or Bestu Varas** was celebrated on **14 November**. Gujarat New Year starts on Shukla Paksha Pratipada in the month of Kartik. This day is also referred to as Nutan Varsh. As per Drik Panchang, the Gujarati New Year also marks the time to close old account books and to open new account books. The traditional account books are known as Chopda.
10. **November 15** marks the **Jharkhand Foundation Day**. The beautiful state is located in the northeastern part of India and is also called 'The land of forest' or 'Bushland'. It was on November 15 in 2000 when the Chhotanagpur area was segregated from the southern half of Bihar to give rise to another state named Jharkhand. By doing so, the latter became the 28th Indian state. Right now, the forests of Chhotanagpur plateau and Santhal Pargana make up Jharkhand.
11. The Prime Minister of India paid tributes to former Prime Minister Smt. **Indira Gandhi** on her **birth anniversary (19th November)**. Indira Gandhi, also known as the Iron Lady of India, was the third and the only female Prime Minister of India, who served from 1966 to 1977 and from 1980 to 1984. She imposed a state of emergency in 1975, suspending civil liberties and democratic rights.
12. The Prime Minister has paid tributes to the symbol of the bravery of Indian women power, **Rani Lakshmibai on her birth anniversary(19th November 1828 in Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh)**. Rani Lakshmibai, originally named Manikarnika was one of the brave warriors of India's struggle for Independence and the Queen of the Maratha-ruled princely state of Jhansi. She was one of the leading figures of the Indian Revolt of 1857.





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TEST ZONE



PASSAGE - 1

As per the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MoRTH) report titled 'Road accidents in India -2022', "During 2022, a total of 4,61,312 accidents were recorded in the country, of which, 1,51,997 (32.9%) took place on the National Highways including Expressways, 1,06,682 (23.1%) on State Highways and the remaining 2,02,633 (43.9%) on other roads."

"Out of the total of 1,68,491 fatalities reported in 2022, 61,038 (36.2%) were on National Highways, 41,012 (24.3%) were on State Highways and 66,441 (39.4%) were on other roads", the report said.

As per the report, the fatal road accident victims largely constituted young people in the productive age groups.

"Young adults in the age group of 18 - 45 years accounted for 66.5 per cent of victims during 2022," the MoRTH said, adding that "people in the working age group of 18 – 60 years constitute 83.4% of total road accident fatalities."

It is interesting to note that, about 68% of road accident deaths took place in rural areas, whereas urban areas accounted for 32% of total accident deaths in the country.

The MoRTH report further said "Among vehicle categories involved in road accidents, two-wheelers for the second consecutive year, accounted for the highest share in total accidents and fatalities during 2022. Light vehicles comprising of cars, jeeps and taxis together come at distant second."

In terms of road-user categories, the share of two-wheeler riders in total fatality has been the highest (44.5%) during 2022 followed by pedestrian road-users with 19.5% of persons killed in road accidents.

[Extracted, with edits and revisions, from: "Road accidents claimed 19 lives in India every hour in 2022, govt report says 1.68 lakh killed last year", livemint]

Q.1 According to the report titled 'Road accidents in India -2022', Tamil Nadu recorded the highest number of road accidents on National Highways in 2022. Which state recorded the highest number of persons killed in road accidents in 2022?

- A** Madhya Pradesh
B Uttar Pradesh

- C** Maharashtra
D Bihar

Q.2 When was the Brasilia Declaration on Road Safety signed at the second Global High-Level Conference on Road Safety held in Brazil?

- A** 2007
B 1998

- C** 1989
D 2015

Q.3 The World Day of Remembrance for Road Traffic Victims was started by RoadPeace in 1993. In 2005, the United Nations endorsed it as a global day to be observed every third Sunday in _____ each year.

- A** September
B October

- C** November
D December

Q.4 Every year, the National Road Safety Week is organised by the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways celebrated from –

- A** January 11 to 17
B February 11 to 17

- C** March 11 to 17
D April 11 to 17

Q.5 India has the highest number of total persons killed due to road accidents, followed by China and the United States. But which country has the highest rate of persons killed per 1,00,000 population?

- A** Mexico
B Pakistan

- C** Venezuela
D Brazil

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

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PASSAGE - 2

India's sunrise food processing sector has attracted Rs 50,000 crore FDI in the last nine years, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Friday, as he stressed on reducing post-harvest losses and food wastage.

He also said India's food processing capacity has witnessed significant growth in the last nine years leading to 150 per cent growth in exports of processed food. The capacity of the food processing sector too has increased from a meagre 12 lakh tonne to over 200 lakh tonne.

He also spoke on the benefits of the consumption of millets and pitched for diversification of the food basket in the public distribution system.

The prime minister disbursed seed capital assistance to over one lakh Self Help Groups (SHGs) and inaugurated a 'food street' as part of

'World Food India 2023'. The event aims to showcase India as the 'food basket of the world' and celebrate 2023 as the International Year of Millets.

He highlighted some of the measures, like the production-linked incentive (PLI) scheme, and the establishment of mega food parks, which his government has taken towards further development of the food processing sector.

Modi also said investments of about Rs 50,000 crore has been made to set up post-crop harvest-related infrastructure projects under a central scheme (Agri Infra Fund).

[Extracted, with edits and revisions, from: "Rs 50,000 crore FDI in food processing sector in last 9 years: PM Modi", The Indian Express]

Q.1 As proposed by India, the United Nations General Assembly has declared 2023 as the International Year of Millets. However, India already celebrated the year _____ as the 'National Year for Millets' to promote millets for nutrition security.

A 2017

B 2018

C 2019

D 2020

Q.2 The Ministry of Food Processing Industries organized the second edition of 'World Food India 2023' to showcase India's rich food culture and attract global investments in the diverse food processing sector. When was the first edition of World Food India organised?

A 2021

B 2019

C 2017

D 2015

Q.3 A 'seed bank', for native plant species of plants found in the Aravallis region, is gradually taking shape at a nursery at the Asola Bhatti Wildlife Sanctuary. The Asola Bhatti Wildlife Sanctuary is located in which state?

A Haryana

B Gujarat

C Delhi

D Rajasthan

Q.4 The theme for the 2023 World Food Day is "Water is Life, Water is Food. Leave no one Behind." Every year, World Food Day is observed on –

A 16 October

B 22 March

C 7 June

D 28 May

Q.5 On 31st March 2021, the Union Cabinet approved the "Production Linked Incentive Scheme for Food Processing Industry", to be implemented from 2021-22 to 2026-27. The Production Linked Incentive Scheme was launched in –

A 2017

B 2018

C 2019

D 2020

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

Answers

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PASSAGE - 3

Four years after the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) published a state-wise index to spur food safety improvement, 19 out of 20 large states — including Maharashtra, Bihar, Gujarat and Andhra Pradesh — recorded a drop in their 2023 scores from 2019.

After adjusting for a new parameter included in the 2023 index, 15 out of 20 states recorded lower 2023 scores compared to 2019.

The steepest fall in scores over five years was seen in Maharashtra, which scored 45 out of 100 in 2023 compared to 74 out of 100 in 2019, followed by Bihar, which scored 20.5 in 2023 compared to 46 in 2019, and Gujarat, which scored 48.5 in 2023 compared to 73 in 2019. Ensuring food safety is the task of each state's apex food safety authority.

Since 2019, FSSAI has released the State Food Safety Index (SFSI) each year on the occasion of World Food Safety Day. Over five years, the worst drop has been recorded in the 'Food Testing Infrastructure' parameter, where the average score for all large states dropped to 7 points out of 17 in 2023 from 13 points out of 20 in 2019. States including Maharashtra, Bihar, Andhra Pradesh and Chhattisgarh all recorded lower scores for this parameter. Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh and Jharkhand, meanwhile, recorded lower scores for the 'Compliance' parameter.

[Extracted, with edits and revisions, from: "In FSSAI index, nearly all major states slip on food safety compared to 2019", by Aggam Walia, The Hindu]

Q.1 Since 2019, FSSAI has released the State Food Safety Index (SFSI) each year on the occasion of World Food Safety Day. The World Food Safety Day is observed every year on -

- | | |
|-------------------|---------------------|
| A 7 June | C 20 August |
| B 15 March | D 24 January |

Q.2 The 'Eat Right Station' certification is awarded to railway stations that set benchmarks in providing safe and wholesome food to passengers. The 'Eat Right Station' certification is awarded by -

- | | |
|--|-------------------------------|
| A NITI Aayog | C FSSAI |
| B Ministry of Health & Family Welfare | D Ministry of Railways |

Q.3 What is India's rank in the 2023 Global Hunger Index?

- | | |
|--------------|--------------|
| A 108 | C 125 |
| B 115 | D 111 |

Q.4 Which state secured the first ranking in the States' Overall Rankings in the 5th State Food Safety Index (SFSI) 2022-2023?

- | | |
|---------------------|------------------|
| A Punjab | C Kerala |
| B Tamil Nadu | D Gujarat |

Q.5 The National Food Security Act provides a legal mandate for the distribution of food grains at subsidised prices through a network of schemes such as TPDS, ICDS, and MDM schemes. When was the Act enacted?

- | | |
|---------------|---------------|
| A 2009 | C 2005 |
| B 2013 | D 2010 |

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

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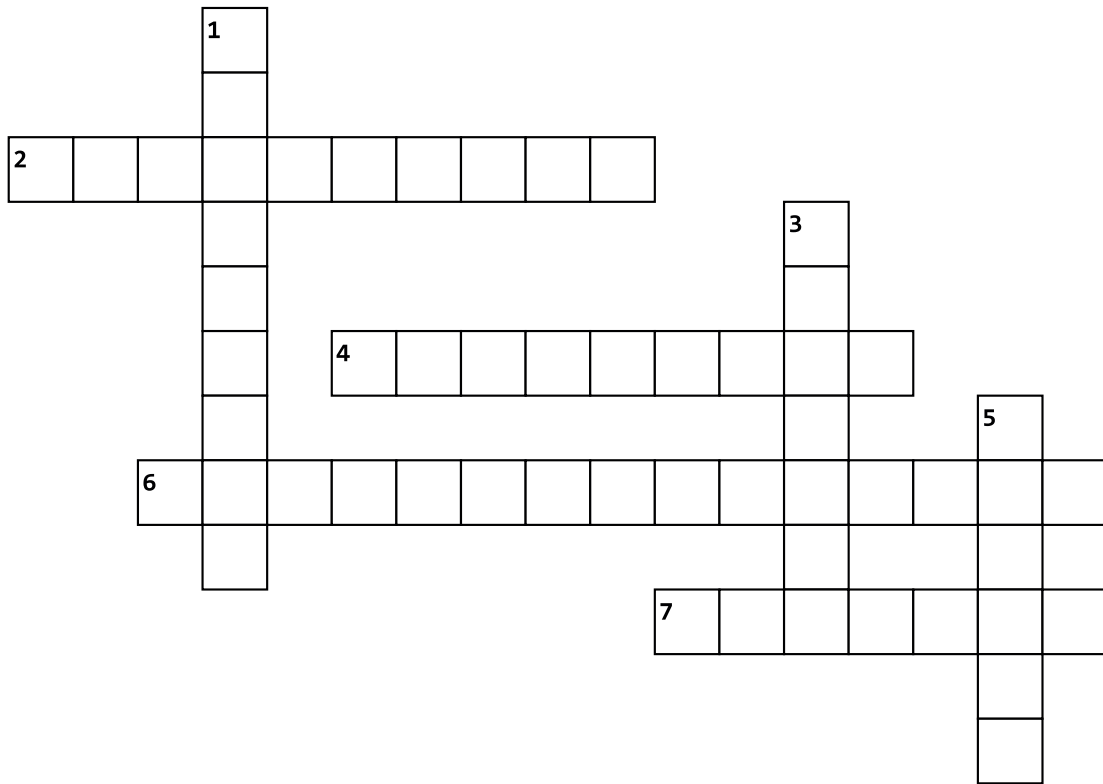
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CROSSWORD CORNER



CROSSWORD - 1



Across

- 2.** World Diabetes Day
4. International Biosphere Reserve Day
6. Winner of Rohini Nayyar Prize for Outstanding Contribution to Rural Development
7. Name given to a deep depression in the Bay of Bengal by the Maldives

Down

- 1.** World Cities Day
3. Country in which a state of emergency has been declared after a swarm of 800 earthquakes
5. The European Space Agency's mission to investigate the mystery of dark matter and dark energy

Answers

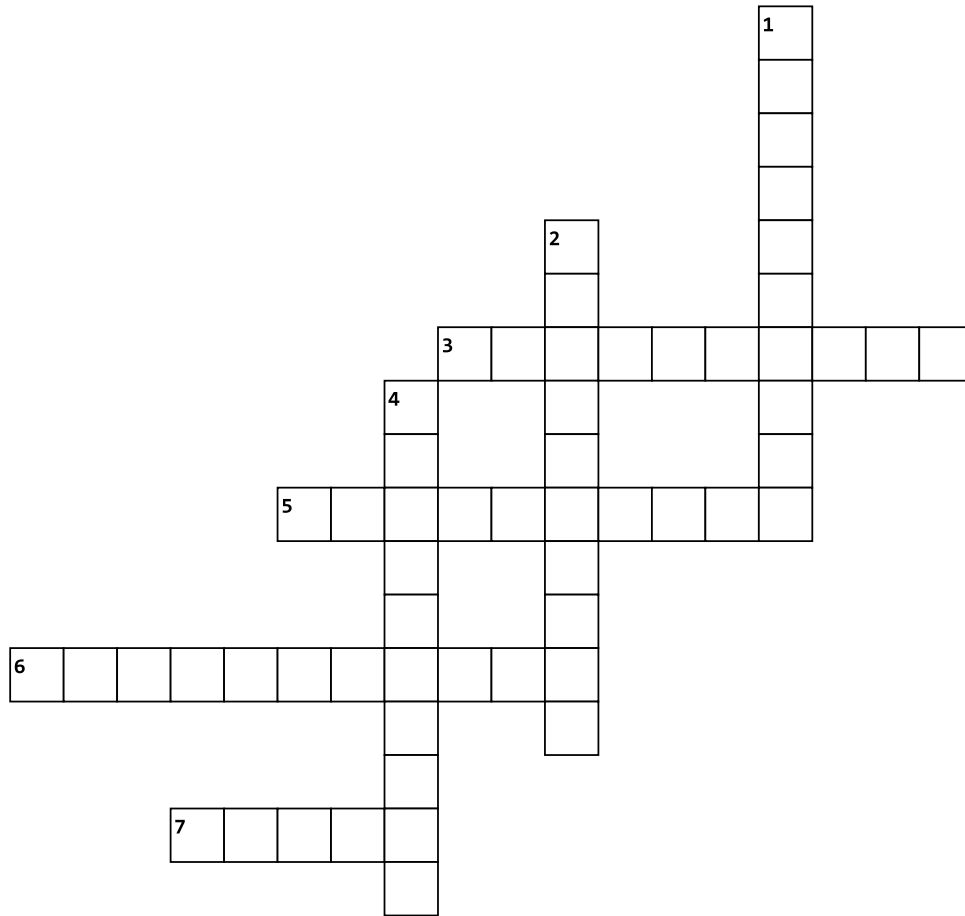
1	31 October
2	14 November
3	Iceland
4	3 November
5	Euclid
6	Deenatharajput
7	Midhill

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CROSSWORD - 2



Across

3. National Press Day
5. National Education Day
6. Word of the Year for 2023 named by the Cambridge Dictionary
7. Project of Indian government to develop its long-range air defence system by 2028-29

Down

1. Children's Day, also known as 'Bal Diwas'
2. National Epilepsy Day
4. Winner of the 2023 British Academy Book Prize for Global Cultural Understanding

Answers

4	NandiniDas
3	16November
2	17November
1	14November
7	Kusha
6	Hallucinate
5	11November

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