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[Cover Story]

Indian Prime
Minister's
State Visit
to the
United
States

STATE VISIT



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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

Prime Minister Narendra Modi wrapped up his visits to the United States and Egypt recently, India has ranked 127 out of 146 countries in terms of gender parity — an improvement of eight places from last year — according to the World Economic Forum’s annual Gender Gap Report, 2023, also the DMK-led government in Tamil Nadu recently announced that it has withdrawn the general consent given to the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI). For more information, keep reading.

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QUICK BOOSTERS



INDIAN PRIME MINISTER'S STATE VISIT TO THE UNITED STATES

WHY IN NEWS?

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi wrapped up his state visit to the United States recently.
- The three-day state visit, his first in nine years, included at least three meetings with President Joe Biden, an address to members of the US Congress, and interactions with some of Silicon Valley's top CEOs.

Key Highlights

- **Strengthening Semiconductor Supply Chains** - Micron Technology, with support from the India Semiconductor Mission, will invest more than \$800 million toward a new \$2.75 billion semiconductor assembly and test facility in Gujarat, India.
 - Applied Materials will build a Semiconductor Centre for Commercialization and Innovation in India to strengthen the two nations' semiconductor supply chain diversification.
- **Critical Minerals Partnership** - India became the newest partner of the US-led Minerals Security Partnership (MSP) that has been established to accelerate the development of diverse and sustainable critical energy minerals supply chains globally.
 - The MSP, which started in June 2022, has 12 other partner countries, plus the European Union.
- **Advanced Telecommunications** - India and the US have launched public-private Joint Task Forces on the development and deployment of Open RAN systems and on advanced telecoms research and development.
 - India's Bharat 6G and the US Next G Alliance will co-lead this public-private research. This work will reduce costs, increase security, and improve the resiliency of telecommunication networks.
- **NASA-ISRO Collaboration in Space** - India has signed the Artemis Accords, joining 26 other countries committed to peaceful, sustainable, and transparent cooperation that will enable exploration of the Moon, Mars, and beyond.
 - NASA will provide advanced training to Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) astronauts with the goal of launching a joint effort to the International Space Station in 2024.
 - NASA and ISRO are also developing a strategic framework for human spaceflight cooperation by the end of 2023.
- **Quantum, Advanced Computing, and Artificial Intelligence** - The two countries have established a Joint Indo-US Quantum Coordination Mechanism to facilitate joint research between the public and private sectors across the two countries.
 - They have also signed an implanting arrangement to support joint research on quantum, Artificial Intelligence (AI), and advanced wireless technologies.
- **Cutting-edge Research** - The US National Science Foundation has announced 35 joint research collaborations with India's Department of Science and Technology, and signed a new cooperative arrangement with India's Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology on emerging technologies.
- **Innovation Handshake** - To support the US-India Initiative on Critical and Emerging Technology (iCET), the US-India Commercial Dialogue will launch a new "Innovation Handshake" to connect the startup ecosystems of the two countries.
- **Defence Partnership** - The highlight of the next-generation defence partnership is the deal to co-produce GE's F414 combat aircraft engines in India.
 - GE and Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) have signed a MoU, and a manufacturing licence agreement has been submitted for Congressional Notification.
- **General Atomics MQ-9Bs** - India intends to procure armed MQ-9B SeaGuardian UAVs. The drones will increase India's intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance capabilities.
- **Service and Repair of US Navy ships** - The US Navy has concluded a Master Ship Repair Agreement (MSRA) with Larsen and Toubro Shipyard in Kattupalli (Chennai) and is finalizing agreements with Mazagon Dock Limited (Mumbai) and Goa Shipyard (Goa). These agreements will allow mid-voyage US Navy ships to undergo service and repair at Indian shipyards.
- **Defence "Innovation Bridge"** - The India-US Defence Acceleration Ecosystem (INDUS-X) — a network of universities, incubators, corporate, think tanks, and private investment stakeholders — was inaugurated on June 21, 2023.

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- This programme will facilitate joint innovation on defence technologies and accelerate the integration of India's private sector defence industry with the US defence sector.
- **Indo-Pacific and Indian Ocean** - The US will join the Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative, a regional initiative inaugurated by Prime Minister Modi in 2015 to promote a safe, secure, and stable maritime domain and promote its conservation and sustainable use.
 - India will continue to participate as an observer in the Partners in the Blue Pacific.
- **Energy Collaboration** - The US welcomes India's decision to co-lead the multilateral Hydrogen Breakthrough Agenda to make affordable renewable and low-carbon hydrogen globally available by 2030.
- **Fighting Terror** - President Biden and Prime Minister Modi reiterated the call for concerted action against all UN-listed terrorist groups including al-Qa'ida, ISIS/Daesh, Lashkar e-Tayyeba (LeT), Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM), and Hizb-ul-Mujhahideen.



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THE STATUS OF TRANSGENIC CROPS IN INDIA

WHY IN NEWS?

- Three States, Gujarat, Maharashtra and Telangana, have deferred a proposal, approved by the Centre's Genetic Engineering Appraisal Committee (GEAC), to test a new kind of transgenic cotton seed.
- The new seed contains a gene, Cry2Ai, that purportedly makes cotton resistant to pink bollworm, a major pest.
- The conflict shows that a broad acceptance of genetically modified crops continues to be elusive.

Key Points

- The cotton seed has been developed by the Hyderabad-based Bioseed Research India with Cry2Ai which makes it resistant to pink bollworm.
- The Cry2Ai seed has passed preliminary, confined trials and was recommended by the GEAC to be tested in farmer's fields at Telangana, Maharashtra, Gujarat and Haryana.
- Agriculture is a State subject means that, in most cases, companies interested in testing their seeds need approvals from the States for conducting such tests. Only Haryana gave permission for such tests.
- Telangana requested GEAC for a 45-day extension to consider the proposal and later responded that it would not allow trials to be conducted in the current cropping season.
- Gujarat also later responded that the proposal was "unacceptable" to them, but did not furnish reasons.
- Following these responses, the GEAC has asked the Department of Biotechnology (DBT) and the ICAR to jointly organise capacity-building activities with regard to GM crops for apprising the State/UT Government(s) about the technology involved and the regulatory framework in place for evaluation of these GM crops.

Status in India

- There is an array of crops — brinjal, tomato, maize, chickpea — in various stages of trials that employ transgenic technology. However, cotton remains the only transgenic crop that is being commercially cultivated in India.
- After a long hiatus, the GEAC approved the environmental release of the Mustard hybrid DMH-11 and its parental lines for seed production and testing. This is one step away from full commercial cultivation.
- However, there is long-standing litigation in the Supreme Court on the permissibility of allowing transgenic food crops in farmer fields.
- Following the GEAC approval for DMH-11, the petitioners approached the Supreme Court asking for a stay on the release of the crop because it would encourage farmers to spray herbicides, which are banned in India. Hearings on this case are still ongoing.
- In 2017, the GEAC had accorded clearance for GM mustard but went back on its decision and imposed additional tests.
- In 2010, the GEAC had approved GM Brinjal, but this was put on an "indefinite moratorium" by the United Progressive Alliance government.

DID YOU KNOW?

- Genetically Modified Organism (GMO) and transgenic organism are two terms we use interchangeably.
- Both types of organisms have an altered genome that has been modified artificially. However, there is a slight difference between GMO and transgenic organisms.
- Although both have altered genomes, a transgenic organism is a GMO containing a DNA sequence or a gene from a different species. Thus, all transgenic organisms are GMOs, but not all GMOs are transgenic.

**GM CROPS IN INDIA
A PRIMER**

What is a GM crop?

A crop which has a gene artificially inserted into it from another species, even unrelated, to give it some desired properties. GM crops are mostly either pest-resistant or herbicide-tolerant

When did India get its first GM crop?

The first GM crop variety approved for commercialisation was Bt cotton. Bollgard-I, which provided immunity against the pink bollworm and developed by Monsanto, was given the go ahead in 2002. Monsanto released Bollgard-II in 2006. India has become the world's largest producer of cotton partly due to Bt cotton, which accounts for over 90% of the total cotton acreage in the country

Are there other GM crops in India?

No, the government has not approved commercial cultivation of other GM crops, though efforts have been made for brinjal and mustard

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TAMIL NADU WITHDRAWS GENERAL CONSENT FOR CBI

WHY IN NEWS?

- The DMK-led government in Tamil Nadu recently announced that it has withdrawn the general consent given to the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI).
- The move came on the day when its Electricity Minister V. Senthilbalaji was arrested by another central agency, the Enforcement Directorate (ED).

What is General Consent?

- The CBI is governed by The Delhi Special Police Establishment (DSPE) Act, 1946, and it must mandatorily obtain the consent of the state government concerned before beginning to investigate a crime in a state.
- Section 6 of The DSPE Act (“Consent of State Government to exercise of powers and jurisdiction”) says: “Nothing contained in section 5 (titled “Extension of powers and jurisdiction of special police establishment to other areas”) shall be deemed to enable any member of the Delhi Special Police Establishment to exercise powers and jurisdiction in any area in a State, not being a Union territory or railway area, without the consent of the Government of that State.”
- The CBI's position is in this respect different from that of the National Investigation Agency (NIA), which is governed by The NIA Act, 2008, and has jurisdiction across the country.

How does the CBI take up Cases?

- Unlike the NIA, CBI cannot take suo motu cognizance of a case in a state — whether in a matter of corruption involving government officials of the Centre and PSU staff, or an incident of violent crime.
- In order to take up corruption cases involving central government staff, it either needs general consent of the state government, or specific consent on a case-to-case basis.
 - For all other cases, whether involving corruption in the state government or an incident of crime, the state has to request an investigation by the CBI, and the Centre has to agree to the same.
- In case the state does not make such a request, the CBI can take over a case based on the orders of the High Court concerned or the Supreme Court.

Withdrawal of Consent

- Traditionally, almost all states have given CBI general consent. General consent is normally given by states to help the CBI in the seamless investigation of cases of corruption against central government employees in their states.
- This is consent by default, in the absence of which the CBI would have to apply to the state government in every case, and before taking even small actions.
- The consent of the state government to CBI can be either case-specific or general.
- However, since 2015, several states have begun to act differently.
 - In March 2023, Union Minister Jitendra Singh told the Parliament that nine States — Mizoram, West Bengal, Chhattisgarh, Rajasthan, Maharashtra, Kerala, Jharkhand, Punjab and Meghalaya — had withdrawn their general consent given to CBI.
- After the withdrawal of general consent, the CBI will not be able to register any fresh case involving officials of the central government or a private person in the state without the consent of the state government.

About CBI

- CBI, functioning under the Department of Personnel, Ministry of Personnel, Pension & Public Grievances, is the premier investigating police agency in India.
- It is also the nodal police agency in India, which coordinates investigations on behalf of Interpol Member countries.
- It is neither a constitutional nor a statutory body.



GOI-UNSDCF 2023-2027

WHY IN NEWS?

- NITI Aayog and the United Nations (UN) in India signed the Government of India - United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework 2023-2027.

Key Points

- The United Nations General Assembly designates the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework as the principal planning and implementation instrument for the UN Development System at the country level.
- GoI-UNSDCF 2023-2027 represents the UN development system's collective offer to the Government of India, in line with the national vision for development, for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, promoting gender equality, youth empowerment and human rights.
- The GoI-UNSDCF 2023-2027 is built on four strategic pillars derived from the 2030 Agenda – People, Prosperity, Planet and Participation.
- The four interlinked pillars have six outcome areas focusing on Health and Well Being; Nutrition and Food Security; Quality Education; Economic Growth and Decent Work; Environment, Climate, WASH and Resilience; and Empowering People, Communities, and Institutions.
- To further deepen cooperation in critical areas, for the first time, the GoI-UNSDCF will have a specific focus on SDG localisation and South-South cooperation, in line with India's leadership towards the implementation and acceleration of the SDGs; and India's championing of South-South cooperation.
- The implementation, monitoring and reporting of GoI-UNSDCF 2023-2027 will be co-led by the Government of India and the United Nations, India through a Joint Steering Committee.

Significance

- The Cooperation framework will focus on and support India in its transformation where it is not just accessed to basic requirements such as water/ electricity/ internet that would be important, but the quality of these issues that are more relevant for the future.
- The new Framework comes at a critical juncture as the world reaches the halfway mark to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and India envisions a 'Viksit Bharat' over the next 25 years.
- The GoI-UNSDCF, through its agreed partnerships, outcomes and outputs will contribute towards the achievement of national development priorities.

Sustainable Development Goals

- The United Nations defines sustainable development as “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”.
- In 2015, the 193 Member States of the United Nations have agreed upon the text of a new document entitled, “Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”.
- This agenda contains 17 goals and 169 targets. The goals are to be achieved by all member countries within the next fifteen years, thereby giving it the moniker of 'Agenda for 2030'.



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GANDHI PEACE PRIZE 2021

WHY IN NEWS?

- Gita Press, Gorakhpur, has been selected for the Gandhi Peace Prize for the year 2021.
- The prize was awarded to Gita Press for its 'outstanding contribution towards social, economic and political transformation through non-violent and other Gandhian methods.'

About Gita Press

- Founded in 1923, Gita Press is a unit of Gobind Bhawan Karyalaya, Kolkata, registered under the West Bengal Societies Act, 1960.
- It completes 100 years of its establishment in 2023.
- The institution's main objective is to promote and spread the principles of Hinduism via the publication of religious texts, marketed at subsidised rates.
- The institution was founded by Hanuman Prasad Poddar and Jay Dalal Goyandka.
- As per its website, the institution neither solicits donations nor accepts advertisements in its publications and any deficit in funds is met by services offered by its other departments.
- Apart from its main publishing house at Gorakhpur, Uttar Pradesh, Gita Press has branches in Kolkata and Rishikesh. Gita Press also runs a Vedic school in Churu, Rajasthan and an Ayurveda medicine center in Rishikesh.

About Gandhi Peace Prize

- Instituted in 1995, the Gandhi Peace Prize is awarded for social, economic and political transformation through non-violence, to any deserving person/s or institution/s.
- The award comprises a citation and an amount of Rs 1 crore and is open to all persons regardless of nationality, race, language, caste, creed or gender and any association, institution or organisation.
- The awardee is selected by a five-member jury comprising the Prime Minister, the Chief Justice of India, the Leader of the Opposition and two eminent personalities.
- The decision of the jury is final and cannot be challenged or appealed.
- Previous recipients include eminent personalities such as Nelson Mandela (2000), Coretta Scott King (2004), Japan's Yohei Sasakawa (2018), Qaboos bin Said Al Said (2019) and Sheikh Mujibur Rahman (2020).
- Several institutions such as Indian Space Research Organisation (2014), Akshaya Patra Foundation (2016) and Ekal Abhiyan Trust (2017) too have been awardees.

What does Gita Press do?

- The press — one of the world's largest publishers — is most famous for publishing the Hindu text Srimad Bhagwat Gita.
- As of date, the institution has published 41.7 crore books in 14 languages, including 16.21 crore copies of the Gita.
- Its most prominent publication is Kalyan (welfare) – a monthly magazine being published since 1927.
- Including copies of its monthly magazine, Kalyan, it has thus far sold approximately 93 crore copies of over 1,850 religious books, in 15 languages.



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MIGRATION AND DEVELOPMENT BRIEF OF WORLD BANK

WHY IN NEWS?

- Recently, World Bank released its latest Migration and Development Brief.

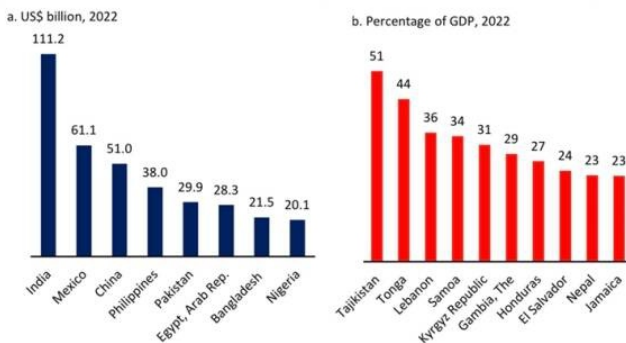
Global Remittance Trends

- The top five recipient countries for remittances in 2022 were India (\$111 billion), followed by Mexico (\$61 billion), China (\$51 billion), the Philippines (\$38 billion), and Pakistan (\$30 billion).
- Remittance flows to the other six South Asian countries will also be limited by the demand for migrants in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), a grouping of six Arab nations located around the Arabian Gulf countries where declining oil prices are expected to slow growth from 5.3% in 2022 to 3% in 2023.
- The growth of remittances is likely to be the highest in Latin America and the Caribbean (forecast of 3.3%), as the labour market in the US continues to be strong.
- Remittance growth is expected to be the lowest in South Asia (0.3%), mainly because of the high base in 2022 along with slowing demand for highly skilled IT workers in the US and Europe.

Factors Affecting Remittance Flows in India

- Slower growth in OECD economies — especially in the high-tech sector in the United States that could affect the demand for information technology (IT) workers and lead to a diversion of formal remittances toward informal money transfer channels — is likely to impact the flow of remittances in 2023.
- The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) is a grouping of 38 high-income democratic countries.
- A lower demand for migrants in the GCC countries where declining oil prices have dented growth, is another key contributing factor.

Figure 1.2 Top Recipients of Remittances among Low- and Middle-Income Countries, 2022



Source: World Bank-KNOMAD staff; World Development Indicators; IMF Balance of Payments Statistics.
Note: GDP = gross domestic product.

Indian Remittance Trends

- In 2022, India posted more than 24% growth in its inward remittances to reach \$111 billion, higher than the World Bank's earlier estimate of \$100 billion.
- Remittances to India, which account for more than 60% of South Asian inflows, are expected to grow by only 0.2% in 2023.
- Almost 36% of India's remittances are from the high-skilled and largely high-tech Indian migrants in three high-income destinations — the US, the United Kingdom, and Singapore.
- The post-pandemic recovery led to a tight labour market in these regions, and wage hikes boosted remittances.
- India's other high-income destinations also had favourable economic conditions. High energy prices and low food price inflation in the GCC countries, which remain the single largest destination for less-skilled South Asian migrants, had positive spillovers for all countries.

Remittance means "send back"

- In terms of money, a remittance is the sending of money to a recipient who lives abroad. Remittances are money transfers that migrants send to their families and friends in their home countries.
- They are an important source of income and foreign exchange for many developing countries, especially those in South Asia.

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JAGANNATH RATH YATRA 2023

WHY IN NEWS?

- This year, Jagannath Rath Yatra commenced on June 20 in Puri, Odisha, and culminated on June 28.

About Rath Yatra

- The Rath Yatra takes place on the second day of the Odia month of Ashadha Shukla Tithi (bright fortnight) every year to commemorate the journey of Lord Jagannath and his two siblings from their abode — the 12th century Jagannath Temple, to the Gundicha Temple, believed to be their aunt's home.
- Goddess Ardhāsini, also known as Mausima, is believed to be the deities' aunt.
- The deities board three huge decorated chariots following the Pahandi ritual (ceremonial procession), before marching for around 3 km to the Gundicha Temple. Millions of devotees pull chariots on the Bada Danda (Grand Road) of Puri town. It is also known as the 'Festival of Chariots'.
- The idols are taken to the Gundicha Temple, where they stay till the 'Bahuda Yatra' (returning car festival).

Significance

- It is believed that as non-Hindus are not allowed to enter the Jagannath temple, Lord Jagannath believed to be the Lord of the Universe, steps out of his sanctum sanctorum during Rath Yatra to meet all his devotees.

Jagannath Puri Temple

- Jagannath Puri Temple is known as the "White Pagoda".
- Jagannath temple is one of the four Hindu pilgrimage centres known as Char Dham. The other three are Badrinath, Dwaraka and Rameswaram.
- It is a splendid example of Kalinga architecture, which is characterised by curvilinear towers, intricate carvings and ornate sculptures.
- Jagannath Puri temple is called 'Yamanika Tirtha' where, according to the Hindu beliefs, the power of 'Yama', the god of death has been nullified in Puri due to the presence of Lord Jagannath.

History

- As per the holy Hindu scriptures—Brahma Purana, Padma Purana, Skanda Purana, and Kapila Samhita—the sister of Lord Jagannath, Subhadra, was said to have wished to travel to Puri. To fulfill Devi Subhadra's wish, Lord Jagannath and his elder brother Lord Balabhadra drove a chariot to Puri.
- The pilgrimage from their home temple to another temple, which is believed to be their aunt's home, has been symbolised by this festival.

About the Three Chariots

- The three chariots — Taladhwaaja Rath for Lord Balabhadra, the Darpadalan Rath for Goddess Subhadra, and the Nandighosa Rath for Lord Jagannath, have their own colours, height, diameter, wooden horses, guardian deities and even charioteers.

THE THREE RATHS

	NANDIGHOSA	DARPADALAN	TALADHWAJA
Presiding Deity	Lord Jagannath	Goddess Subhadra	Lord Balabhadra
Wheels	16	12	14
Wooden pieces used	832	593	763
Height	44.2 feet	42.3 feet	43.3 feet
Colour of cloth	Red & yellow	Red & black	Red & green





GENDER GAP REPORT, 2023

WHY IN NEWS?

- India has ranked at 127 out of 146 countries in terms of gender parity — an improvement of eight places from last year — according to the World Economic Forum's annual Gender Gap Report, 2023.

Key Findings

- The global gender gap score in 2023 stands at 68.4%, indicating a modest improvement of 0.3% points compared to the previous year.
- At the current rate of progress, it would take 131 years to achieve full gender parity, showing a significant slowdown in the overall rate of change.
- Iceland is the most gender-equal country in the world for the 14th consecutive year and the only one to have closed more than 90 per cent of its gender gap.
- The index ranked India's neighbours Pakistan at 142, Bangladesh at 59, China at 107, Nepal at 116, Sri Lanka at 115 and Bhutan at 103.
- Out of the 117 countries with available data since 2017, 18 countries — including Bolivia (50.4 per cent), India (44.4 per cent) and France (42.3 per cent) — have achieved women's representation of over 40 per cent in local governance.

India's Performance

- India has closed 64.3 per cent of the overall gender gap. However, it underlined that India has reached only 36.7 per cent parity on economic participation and opportunity.
- In India, while there has been an uptick in parity in wages and income, the share of women in senior positions and technical roles has dropped slightly.
- On political empowerment, India has registered 25.3 per cent parity, with women representing 15.1 per cent of parliamentarians -- the highest for the country since the inaugural report in 2006.

About Gender Gap Report

- The World Economic Forum released the Global Gender Gap Report and the recent one is the 17th edition.
- The Global Gender Gap index "benchmarks the current state and evolution of gender parity across four key dimensions—
 - Economic Participation and Opportunity
 - Educational Attainment
 - Health and Survival
 - Political Empowerment
- On each of the four sub-indices as well as on the overall index the GGG index provides scores between 0 and 1, where 1 shows full gender parity and 0 is complete imparity.
- It is the longest-standing index, which tracks progress towards closing these gaps over time since its inception in 2006.

Gender gap

India jumped eight spots to rank 127 in the Global Gender Gap Index, 2023. A look at how select countries fared

Rank	Country	Score	Rank change
1	Iceland	0.912	-
2	Norway	0.879	+1
59	Bangladesh	0.722	+12
103	Bhutan	0.682	+23
107	China	0.678	-5
115	Sri Lanka	0.663	-5
116	Nepal	0.659	-20
127	India	0.643	+8
142	Pakistan	0.575	+3



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CONTENTION BETWEEN COAL INDIA AND CCI

WHY IN NEWS?

- On June 15, the Supreme Court of India dismissed Coal India Ltd (CIL)'s appeal, which affirmed the Competition Commission of India (CCI)'s authority to examine CIL's conduct under the Competition Act, 2002.

Background

- On March 2017, the CCI imposed a penalty of ₹591.01 crore on CIL for “imposing unfair/discriminatory conditions in fuel supply agreements (FSAs) with the power producers for supply of non-coking coal.
- CIL was found to be supplying lower-quality of essential resources at higher prices and placing opaque conditions in the contract about supply parameters and quality.
- The regulator contended that Coal India and its subsidiaries operated independently of market forces and enjoyed market dominance in the relevant market with respect to the production and supply of non-coking coal in India.

CIL's Argument

- The CCI referred to the Raghavan Committee (2020) report, which observed that state monopolies were not conducive to the best interests of the nation.
- They could not be allowed to operate in a state of inefficiency and should instead, operate amid competition.
- Furthermore, coal ceased to be an 'essential commodity' in February 2007 and the Nationalisation Act too was removed from the Ninth Schedule (laws that cannot be challenged in court) in 2017.
- Therefore, coal is subject to market dynamics and should not be exempted from the Competition Act, 2002.

DID YOU KNOW?

- India is the third largest coal-producing country in the world after China and USA.
- Coal India Limited (CIL), a Maharatna company, under the Ministry of Coal, is the single largest hard coal-producing company in the world.
- The Competition Commission of India (CCI), a statutory body, was established in March 2009 under the Competition Act, 2002 for the administration, implementation, and enforcement of the Act.

CIL's Argument

- Coal India argued that it operated with the principles of 'common good' and ensuring equitable distribution of the essential natural resource. With this objective, it was secured as a 'monopoly' under the Nationalisation Act, 1973.
- CIL said that it may have to adhere to a differential pricing mechanism to encourage captive coal production.
- Differential pricing, which may be inconsistent with market principles, was to ensure the viability of the larger operating ecosystem as well as for pursuing welfare objectives.
- Furthermore, coal supply also has a bearing on larger national policies, for example, if the government were to encourage growth in backward areas through increased allocation.

Court's Observation

- The court observed that there is “no merit” in the argument that the Competition Act would not apply to CIL because they are governed by the Nationalisation Act, and it cannot be reconciled with the Competition Act.
- The judgment reinforced the principle of “competitive neutrality” — entailing that the Competition Act equally applies to public and private sector enterprises.
- Government companies, across sectors, which may be dominant in their sector of operation, would have to conduct business in a fair and non-discriminatory manner so as to not fall foul of the principles of antitrust law.
- This allows for a level playing field between the public sector and private enterprises operating in India.

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INDIAN PRIME MINISTER'S FIRST-EVER VISIT TO EGYPT

WHY IN NEWS?

- Recently, the Prime Minister of India concluded his first-ever visit to Egypt.
- This is the first bilateral visit by an Indian Prime Minister to the country in 26 years.

Key Highlights

- Egyptian President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi conferred Prime Minister Narendra Modi with 'Order of the Nile' award, the country's highest state honour.
 - Instituted in 1915, the 'Order of the Nile' is conferred upon heads of states, crown princes, and vice presidents who offer Egypt or humanity invaluable services.
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi visited the historic 11th-century Al-Hakim Mosque in Cairo, which was restored with the help of India's Dawoodi Bohra community.
 - Over a thousand years old, al-Hakim is the fourth oldest mosque in Cairo, and the second Fatimid mosque to be built in the city. The mosque covers an area of 13,560 square metres, with the iconic central courtyard occupying 5,000 square metres.
 - The Dawoodi Bohra Muslims are a sect of followers of Islam who adhere to the Fatimi Ismaili Tayyibi school of thought. They are known to have originated from Egypt and later shifted to Yemen, before establishing a presence in India in the 11th century.
- Prime Minister also paid tributes to Indian soldiers who fought World War I in Egypt and Palestine at Cairo's Heliopolis War Cemetery.
 - The Heliopolis (Port Tewfik) Memorial commemorates nearly 4,000 Indian soldiers who died fighting in Egypt and Palestine in the First World War.
 - The Heliopolis (Aden) Memorial pays tribute to more than 600 men of the Commonwealth forces who sacrificed their lives for Aden during the First World War.
 - The Cemetery is maintained by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission. It also houses 1,700 Commonwealth burials of the Second World War as well as several war graves of other nationalities.
- Located at the south end of the Suez Canal, the original Port Tewfik memorial was unveiled in 1926.
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Egyptian President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi signed an agreement to elevate the bilateral relationship to a "Strategic Partnership". Both the leaders discussed ways to further deepen the partnership between the two nations, including in trade, investment, defence, security, renewable energy, cultural and people-to-people ties.
 - In addition, three Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) in the fields of agriculture, archaeology and antiquities and competition law were also signed between India and Egypt.
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi toured the great pyramids of Giza on the outskirts of the Egyptian capital, which were included in the Seven Wonders of the World.
 - Escorted by Egyptian Prime Minister Mostafa Madbouly, he visited the three pyramids of the 4th-dynasty erected on a rocky plateau on the west bank of the Nile River near Al-Jizah (Giza) in northern Egypt.
 - The Great Pyramid of Giza, which is the largest Egyptian pyramid and served as the tomb of pharaoh Khufu, who ruled under the Fourth Dynasty of the Old Kingdom.
 - Built in the early 26th century B.C., over a period of about 27 years, the pyramid is the oldest of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World, and the only wonder that has remained largely intact.

DID YOU KNOW?

- The 'Order of the Nile' award is the 13th state honour that Prime Minister Narendra Modi has received during his nine-year tenure.
- Over the past nine years, the Prime Minister has been conferred the Companion of the Order of Logohu, the highest civilian award of Papua New Guinea; the Companion of the Order of Fiji; the Ebaki Award by the Republic of Palau; the Order of the Druk Gyalp, the highest civilian decoration by Bhutan.
- Modi has also been conferred with the Legion of Merit by the US Government; the King Hamad Order of the Renaissance by Bahrain; the Order of the Distinguished Rule of Nishan Izzuddin, the highest honour of the Maldives; the Order of St. Andrew award, the highest civilian honour of Russia.
- Modi has also received the Order of Zayed Award, the highest civilian honour of the United Arab Emirates; the Grand Collar of the State of Palestine Award, the highest honour of Palestine; the State Order of Ghazi Amir Amanullah Khan, the highest civilian honour of Afghanistan and the Order of Abdulaziz Al Saud, the highest honour of Saudi Arabia awarded to non-Muslim dignitaries.

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GLOBAL LIVEABILITY INDEX 2023

WHY IN NEWS?

- The Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU) has recently unveiled its Global Liveability Index 2023.

Key Findings

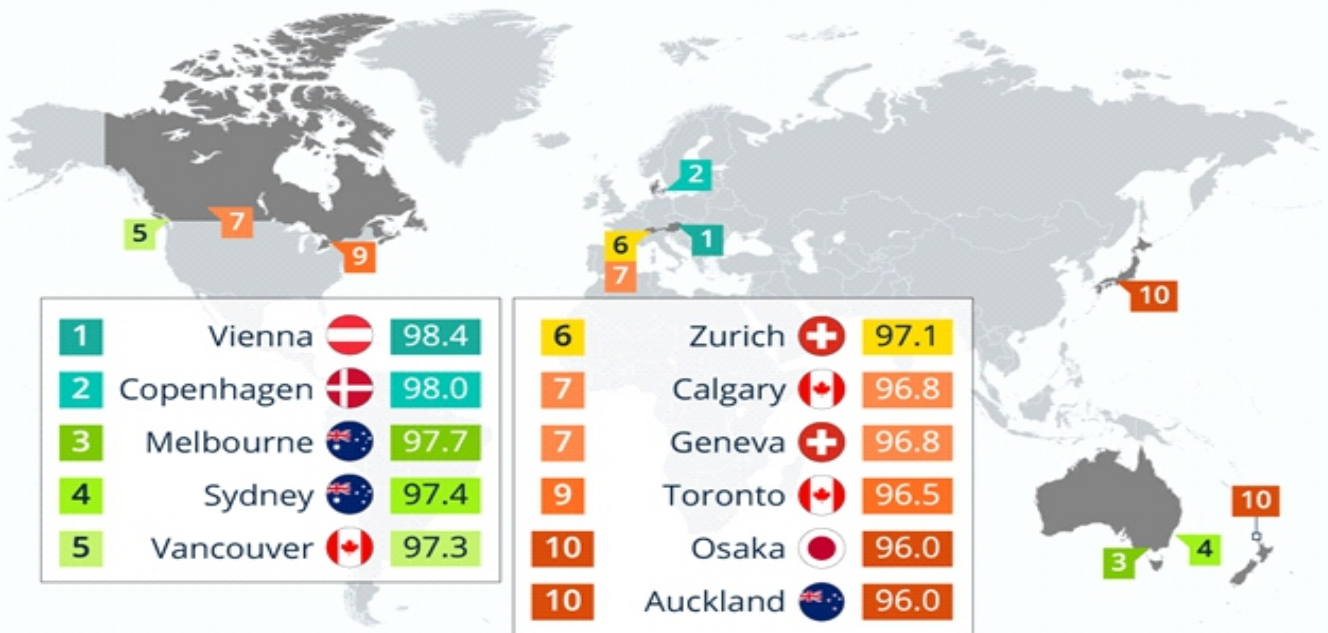
- Vienna, Austria, has been named the best city to live in the world for the second year in a row.
- Denmark's capital Copenhagen also retained its second-place position in the list. Following it are two Australian cities, Melbourne and Sydney, respectively.
- Three Canadian cities – Vancouver, Calgary and Toronto – also made it to the top ten list. From Asia, Japan's Osaka was ranked number 10 in the rankings.
- New Delhi and Mumbai are at 141st position and Chennai at 144th. Ahmedabad and Bengaluru are ranked 147 and 148, respectively.
- The war-raged Ukraine's capital Kyiv ranks a lowly 165th out of the 173 cities. Meanwhile, Moscow in Russia, which fell to 96th place in 2022, remained stable this year.
- Damascus (Syria) and Tripoli (Libya) are at the bottom of the list, like 2022.

About Index

- The 2023 Global Liveability Index covered 173 cities.
- It evaluated cities on five metrics, including healthcare, culture, environment, education, and stability.

The World's Most Liveable Cities

Global cities ranked by living conditions in 2023 (100=ideal)



The survey assess 173 cities, ranking them according to their stability, healthcare, culture and environment, education and infrastructure.

Source: The Global Liveability Index 2023 - The Economist Intelligence Unit

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QS WORLD UNIVERSITY RANKINGS 2024

WHY IN NEWS?

- Quacquarelli Symonds (QS), one of the world's leading higher education specialists, has released the latest edition of QS World University Rankings.

Key Findings

- Institutions in both Europe and America dominate the top 10 rankings, many of which received perfect scores of 100 in indicators such as: 'Academic reputation', 'Employer reputation' and 'Faculty/Student ratio'.
- Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) has emerged at the top of the rankings for the 12th year in a row.
- National University of Singapore (NUS), is the only institution from Asia to sit in the top 10.
- University of California (UCB) is the only institution to have earned a perfect score of 100 in the new 'Sustainability' indicator – followed closely by the University of Pennsylvania (ranked 12th), the University of Toronto (ranked 21st) and the University of British Columbia (ranked 34th) – all with scores of 99.9.
- This year features 85 new entrants – more than half are from Asia, with Bangladesh (11 new institutions), Indonesia (10), India and Malaysia (five each) and Kazakhstan (four) having the highest representation.

QS RANKING 2024 (OVERALL)

Universities	Countries	2024 QS Rank	2023 QS Rank
Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT)	US	1	1
University of Cambridge	UK	2	2
University of Oxford	UK	3	4
Harvard University	US	4	5
Stanford University	US	5	3
Imperial College London	UK	6	6
ETH Zurich	Switzerland	7	9
National University of Singapore	Singapore	8	11
University College London (UCL)	UK	9	8
University of California, Berkeley	US	10	27

India's Performance

- With 45 universities in the latest rankings - up from 41 last year - India is the seventh most represented country globally and the third in Asia.
- IIT Bombay achieves its highest rank ever, securing the 149th position globally, climbing 23 places to 149, up from 172 last year.
- The University of Delhi and Anna University make their debut in the top 500 universities.

QS RANKING (INDIAN INSTITUTIONS)

National Rank	2024 Rank	2023 Rank	Institution Name
1	149	172	IIT, Bombay (IITB)
2	197	174	IIT, Delhi (IITD)
3	225	155	Indian Institute of Science
4	271	270	IIT, Kharagpur (IIT-KGP)
5	278	264	IIT, Kanpur (IITK)
6	285	250	IIT, Madras (IITM)
7	364	384	IIT, Guwahati (IITG)
8	369	369	IIT, Roorkee (IITR)
9	407	521-530	University of Delhi
10	427	551-560	Anna University

About Ranking

- The rankings evaluate the performance and quality of universities worldwide.
- QS World University Rankings 2024 introduces three new indicators including a commitment to sustainability; an even greater emphasis on supporting graduate employability; and increased international research collaboration to solve the world's biggest challenges.
- The methodology considers indicators such as academic reputation, faculty-student ratio, employer reputation, sustainability, employment outcomes, international research network, citations per faculty, international faculty ratio, and international-student ratio.
- They provide rankings by subject, region, student city, business school, and sustainability.

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RANI DURGAVATI GAURAV YATRA

WHY IN NEWS?

- The government of Madhya Pradesh launched the six-day Rani Durgavati Gaurav Yatra on June 22.
- The government also marked June 24 as a day of sacrifice, when the queen is believed to have died while fighting the Mughals in the mid-16th century.

Who was Rani Durgavati?

- Rani Durgavati is said to have been born in 1524, in Mahoba's (present-day Uttar Pradesh) Chandela dynasty.
- Her father was Raja Salbahan of Ratha and Mahoba, and the Chandelas were known for building the famous Khajuraho temples in the 11th century.
- She was married to Dalpat Shah, the son of the Gond King Sangram Shah of the kingdom of Garha-Katanga. This kingdom included the Narmada Valley and parts of northern MP.
- Durgavati, however, was widowed in 1550, a few years after her marriage. Her young son Bir Narayan presided over the throne in name and she then "ruled the country with great vigour and courage."

The Mughal attack on Garha-Katanga

- During her reign, Durgavati fought with Baz Bahadur, the sultan of the neighbouring Malwa who was eventually defeated by Akbar.
- The Mughal governor of Allahabad, Asaf Khan, also took an interest in attacking Garha-Katanga. Khan then went to the region with 10,000 cavalry.
- The queen entered the battlefield and situated her troops in a place called Narhi, which was located in a thick forest, reached after crossing rivers, and was naturally difficult to breach. The first battle was won by the Gond queen.
- However, soon the Mughals fortified the area and overwhelmed the Gonds. While fighting them in battle, she was struck by two arrows and it is believed she stabbed herself with her dagger to not surrender to the Mughal forces. Her son also died in the fighting.
- Akbar then asked Khan to let go of his gains and restored the kingdom to Chandra Shah, the younger son of Sangram Shah, after he accepted Mughal suzerainty.



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DID YOU KNOW?

- The tribal population makes up around 21% of the Madhya Pradesh's total population. It is also the largest tribal population among all Indian states.
- After the Bhil community, which comprises nearly 40 per cent of the total tribal population comes the Gond tribe, constituting another 34 per cent of the 1.53 crore tribal population.
- Gonds are largely spread across eastern districts of MP, such as Mandla, Dindori, Anuppur, Umaria, and Chhindwara.
- In 2021, an award was instituted by Madhya Pradesh's government in the name of the Gond king Sangram Shah, the father-in-law of Queen Durgavati, of Rs 5 lakh for works in tribal art and culture.
- Another Gond queen, Rani Kamalapati, had Bhopal's Habibganj station renamed after her recently.

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KHARCHI PUJA 2023

WHY IN NEWS?

- In Tripura, Kharchi Puja is observed on the eighth day of the new moon in July or August every year. This year, the auspicious festival began on June 26 and will go on till July 2.

What is Kharchi Puja?

- Kharchi Puja is observed annually on the Shukla Ashtami day, which falls on the eighth day of the lunar month of Ashadha. Depending on the lunar calendar, the festival's exact dates change every year. The festival is carried out for seven days in a row.
- The festival is centred around the worship of Chaturdasa Devata, the ancestral deity of the Tripuri people.
- Also called the 'Festival of 14 Gods', the people of Tripura also worship the earth along with their 14 deities.
- On the day of the main puja, the idols of all the 14 deities from the ancient Ujjayanta Palace are carried by the royal priest Chantai from the temple premises in Agartala to the holy Saidra river where they are dipped in the holy waters of the river and carried back to the temple.

History

- The word 'Kharchi' is derived from two Tripuri words-'khar' or kharta meaning sin and 'chi' or si meaning cleaning.
- Although the festival has tribal origins, it is celebrated by both tribal and non-tribal people of Tripura.
- It is believed that the Mother Goddess or Tripura Sundari, the presiding deity of the land who protects the people of Tripura, menstruates during the time of Ambubachi, which is observed in June.
- There is a popular belief that the Earth becomes impure during the menstruation period of the Goddess.
- Hence, Kharchi Puja is observed to ritualistically clean the Earth after her menstruation is over and wash away the sins of the people in the land.



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FOUNDATION DAY ROW IN WEST BENGAL

WHY IN NEWS?

- In a first, West Bengal Governor CV Ananda Bose marked the state's 'Foundation Day' at the Raj Bhavan in Kolkata on June 20.
- However, the plan to do so was earlier opposed by the ruling Trinamool Congress (TMC).
- The TMC argues that June 20 is actually a day of much sorrow and bloodshed for the people of the state as it marks the division of Bengal into West Bengal and East Pakistan (later, Bangladesh) – and should not be marked as Bengal Foundation Day.

History

- Bengal had witnessed considerable communal violence in 1946 before the partition.
- June 20 marks the day in 1947 when the Bengal Assembly saw two separate meetings of legislators. One set voted to stay in India while the other to go with Pakistan.
- It was decided in June 1947 that India would be partitioned into India and Pakistan and Punjab and Bengal, which had numerically significant non-Muslim minorities of around 44% in each province, would also be partitioned along religious lines as far as possible.
- Following this, a boundary commission was set up under the chairmanship of Sir Cyril Radcliffe, to carve out separate and contiguous districts with Hindu and Muslim majority, respectively.
- The lines that were drawn came to be known later as the Radcliffe Line.
- The composition of the population in Bengal was such that the districts of East Bengal constituted a Muslim majority and those of the West had a Hindu majority.
- Therefore, the eastern districts were all grouped under East Pakistan. This was similar to Punjab, where Muslims were concentrated more in the western districts, and Hindus and Sikhs in the eastern ones.
- In 1971, West and East Pakistan fought in the Bangladesh Liberation War. This led to the creation of Bangladesh on 16 December 1971.

Partition of Bangladesh in 1905

- In 1905, Bengal was partitioned by Curzon to break the unity of the Bengali-speaking people and also to create a separate province with a Muslim majority.
- Bengal then was virtually one-fourth of the country, with Bihar and Orissa included in it as well.
- Assam and East Bengal were grouped to constitute one province, which had a Muslim majority.
- This partition was withdrawn in 1911 and the linguistic unity of Bengal was restored. Bihar and Orissa were separated from Bengal.

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

QUICK FACTS



1. In a recent announcement, the government of India highlighted that **petrol blended with 20% ethanol (E20)** will soon be available at 1,000 outlets of oil marketing companies (OMCs) nationwide. The National Green Hydrogen Mission's aim to achieve a production capacity of 5 Million Metric Tonnes (MMT) per annum by **2030**, was also highlighted.
2. Indian Navy conducted "**Julley Ladakh**" (**Hello Ladakh**), an outreach programme to Ladakh to increase awareness about the service in the pristine state and to engage with youth and civil society there. The Navy had previously made a similar effort in the North East that was hugely successful.
3. More than 57,000 migrant workers have registered for the special **one nation one Anganwadi programme** under which even if people relocate to another State, they can avail of the benefits given to children under six years and pregnant women and lactating mothers by using the **Poshan Tracker App** on mobile phones. The Ministry of Women and Child Development (MoWCD) has launched an application called Poshan Tracker. The Poshan Tracker management application provides a 360-degree view of the activities of the Anganwadi Centre (child care centres), service deliveries of Anganwadi Workers and complete beneficiary management for pregnant women, lactating mothers and children under six.
4. The Government has launched a new fellowship programme, **Vaishvik Bhartiya Vaigyanik (VAIBHAV)**, to connect the Indian Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics and Medicine (STEMM) diaspora with Indian academic and R&D institutions. VAIBHAV fellowships programme will be implemented by the Department of Science and Technology (DST), Ministry of Science and Technology.
5. **International Energy Agency (IEA)** to review all conditions for **India's membership**. A candidate country to the IEA must be a member country of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). In addition, it must demonstrate several requirements. IEA is an autonomous intergovernmental organization established in 1974 in Paris, France. The IEA is made up of 31 member countries.
6. NTPC Vidyut Vyapar Nigam Ltd (**NVVN**) has commissioned its **first rooftop solar PV project at IIT Jodhpur, Rajasthan**. The project is set up on the roofs of 14 buildings inside the campus of the IIT. The project will generate around 14.9 lakhs units per annum and will meet 15 per cent of the electricity requirement of IIT Jodhpur. The Rooftop project will reduce 1060 tonnes of CO₂ emissions per year. The NVVN was formed by the NTPC in the year 2002 as its wholly-owned subsidiary to tap the potential of power trading in the country.
7. The **High Courts of Allahabad and Delhi** in a recent ruling said that the **right to change one's name or surname is a part of the right to life under Article 21**. Allowing a man called Shahnawaz to change his name to Md. Sameer Rao, the Allahabad HC on May 25 said the fundamental right to keep or change one's name is vested in every citizen under Articles 19(1)(a), 21, and 14 of the Constitution. The Delhi HC on May 19 allowed a plea filed by two brothers to reflect their father's changed surname — from "Mochi" to "Nayak" — on their Class 10 and 12 Board certificates, stating that the right to identity is an "intrinsic part" of the right to life under Article 21.
8. According to the chairperson of the National Commission for Backward Classes (**NCBC**), approximately **80 more castes in six States** are now likely to be added to the Central List of Other Backward Classes (OBCs) in the coming months. This comes at a time when the Union government has boasted of adding communities to the OBC list as one of the achievements of the administration under Prime Minister Narendra Modi in the last nine years.
9. Prime Minister Narendra Modi during his latest 'Mann ki Baat' episode spoke about **Miyawaki plantation**, the Japanese method of creating dense urban forests in a small area. The PM also cited the example of a Kerala-based teacher, Raafi Ramnath, who used the Miyawaki technique to transform a barren land into a mini forest called Vidyavanam by planting 115 varieties of trees.
10. Pune's Inter-University Center for Astronomy and Astrophysics (**IUCAA**) has delivered the **Solar Ultraviolet Imaging Telescope (SUIT)** to the Indian Space Research Organisation (Isro). The SUIT, designed by scientists at IUCAA, will study the Sun's ultraviolet (UV) emissions and capture high-resolution images of the Sun's





atmosphere, known as the corona, in various UV wavelengths. SUIT will be launched onboard India's maiden mission to explore the Sun — **Aditya L-1** — in the coming months. It is one of the seven instruments being launched outside Earth with the mission to unravel the secrets of the Sun.

11. A new curated collection, **DAKSHTA (Development of Attitude, Knowledge, Skill for Holistic Transformation in Administration)** For Young Professionals, is now Live on the iGOT Karmayogi Platform. Tailored for Young Professionals & Consultants engaged in Government, this collection (consisting of 18 courses) seeks to build functional, domain and behavioural competencies by acquainting learners with subjects crucial for discharging their duties, and responsibilities effectively.
12. To establish better communication with vessels in the sea and monitor Indian waters more efficiently, **NewSpace India Ltd**, the commercial arm of the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO), is setting up mobile satellite service (MSS) terminals on at least one lakh motorised and fishing boats across 13 coastal states.
13. For sharing of knowledge and innovative best practices, the **National Highway Authority of India (NHAI)** has launched a '**Knowledge Sharing**' platform. Hosted on the NHAI website, this initiative will help the authority to collaborate with experts and citizens who want to share knowledge and insights related to topics such as road design, construction, road safety, environmental sustainability and related fields. The platform will encourage sharing of best practices from around the world and will contribute towards the holistic development of the National Highway infrastructure in the country.
14. The **Ministry of Women and Child Development** in India has undertaken a significant step by merging the successful Childline emergency counselling and distress helpline for children with the Emergency Response Support System (ERSS) number **112**. The move aims to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of child helpline services by integrating them with other emergency services such as the police, fire, and ambulance departments.
15. Defence Minister Rajnath Singh recently inaugurated the **Integrated Simulator Complex (ISC) 'Dhruv'** at the Southern Naval Command in Kochi. The ISC 'Dhruv' hosts modern state-of-the-art indigenously-built simulators that will significantly enhance practical training in the Indian Navy. These simulators are envisaged to give real-time experience in navigation, fleet operations and naval tactics. These simulators will also be utilised for the training of personnel from friendly countries.
16. The United Nations Development Programme (**UNDP**) and the Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana-National Urban Livelihoods Mission (**DAY-NULM**) entered into a collaborative partnership aimed at empowering women to make well-informed career choices in the field of entrepreneurship. Focused on fostering entrepreneurship development and accelerating enterprise growth, the three-year project, extendable beyond 2025, will cover eight cities in the initial phase.
17. In order to foster competitiveness among mines and recognize their outstanding performance based on compliance with statutory provisions, adoption of advanced mining technology and economic achievements, the **Ministry of Coal** announces the commencement of the **Star Rating Registration process of Coal and Lignite Mines** for the financial year 2022-23. The Star Rating policy aims to evaluate mines based on various factors across seven key parameters namely, Mining Operations, Environment-related parameters, Adoption of Technologies, Best Mining Practices, Economic performance, Rehabilitation & Resettlement, Worker-related Compliance and Safety & security.
18. Scientists at **Gujarat Energy Research and Management Institute (GERMI)** have developed the thinnest, light-weight and biodegradable **paper-based supercapacitor**. A supercapacitor is an electrochemical charge storage device with a fast charging/discharging cycle, high power density and a longer lifecycle. This supercapacitor which can fully charge a device within 10 seconds, has been developed from seaweed (marine macroalgae). The product can be used in electronics, memory backup systems, airbags, heavy machines, electric vehicles, etc.; hence, it holds a huge business prospect.
19. The **PM-Kisan Mobile App with Face Authentication Feature** was launched by Union Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare Minister under the central government's ambitious and popular scheme for





income support to farmers "Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi". The best example of modern technology using the Face Authentication Feature from this app farmers can complete e-KYC remotely, sitting at home easily by scanning their faces without OTP or fingerprint.

20. The Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) has published IS 18267: 2023 "**Food Serving Utensils Made from Agri By-Products – Specification**," aimed at reducing plastic pollution and promoting sustainability. The standard provides comprehensive guidelines to manufacturers and consumers, ensuring uniformity in quality requirements across the country.
21. Recently, **West Bengal** Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee asked the Health Department to consider starting a **three-year diploma course for medical practitioners**, who would then serve in primary health centres (PHCs). This is not the first time that such a proposal has been considered in the country. India has nearly 1 lakh MBBS seats, but there continues to be a massive shortage of doctors in rural areas.
22. In a move that would make certain cancer drugs more accessible and cheaper for patients, the **Medicines Patent Pool (MPP)** signed sub-licence agreements with three India-based companies, Eugia, Hetero and Dr. Reddy's Laboratories, along with Indonesian firm BrightGene to manufacture generic versions of Novartis' cancer treatment drug Nilotinib. The drug is used for the **treatment of chronic myeloid leukaemia (CML), a type of blood-cell cancer**.
23. India's **first mRNA vaccine, GEMCOVAC® -OM**, has been developed using the indigenous platform technology by Gennova, with funding support from the Department of Biotechnology (DBT) and Biotechnology Industry Research Assistance Council (BIRAC). A few days ago this vaccine got the nod from the office of the Drug Control General of India (DCGI) for Emergency Use Authorization (EUA).
24. **Nutrient-loaded mushrooms** introduced into the midday meals in western **Assam's Kokrajhar** district, as soups, biscuits, fortified noodles, or mixed with regular food in powdered form, appear to have had a positive nutritional effect on children in schools. Mushrooms were one of the major ingredients introduced for children and mothers, in addition to vitamin and mineral supplementation.
25. Almost four years after its first unsuccessful attempt to make a spacecraft land on the Moon, **ISRO** will launch its third moon mission, **Chandrayaan-3**, on July 12, with the primary objective of executing a precise landing on the celestial body. The lander of Chandrayaan-3 will be named 'Vikram' in honour of Vikram Sarabhai, a key figure in India's space program, while the rover will be called 'Pragyan'.
26. The **Ministry of Ports, Shipping & Waterways** recently released new guidelines, '**Sagar Samajik Sahayog**', of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). The new guidelines empower ports to undertake CSR activities directly. CSR Budget will be mandatorily created through a Board Resolution as a percentage of net profit. A port with an annual net profit of ₹100 crores or less can fix between 3% - 5% for CSR expenses. Similarly, ports with a net profit between ₹100 crores to ₹500 crores annually, can fix its CSR expenses between 2% and 3% of its net profit, subject to a minimum of ₹3 crores. For ports, whose annual net profit is above ₹500 crores per year, the CSR expenses can be between 0.5% and 2% of its net profit.
27. The **Geographical Indications** Registry in Chennai has given tags to seven different products from **Uttar Pradesh**. 'Amroha Dholak', 'Mahoba Gaura Patthar Hastashlip', 'Mainpuri Tarkashi', 'Sambhal Horn Craft', 'Baghpat Home Furnishings', 'Barabanki Handloom Product' and 'Kalpi Handmade Paper' are the products that been given the Geographical Indication (GI) tag.
28. The **National Medical Commission (NMC)** has formally decided to conduct the **National Exit Test (NExT)** from the current academic year. The NExT will replace the National Eligibility cum Entrance Test (NEET) conducted for admissions to postgraduate medical courses across the country. The NExT will also serve as the licentiate exam for outgoing MBBS students.
29. On the occasion of **International MSME Day**, the Ministry of MSME celebrated '**Udyami Bharat-MSME Day**' on **27 June, 2023**. During this programme, the Ministry of MSME launched various initiatives for the growth and development of MSMEs such as the CHAMPIONS 2.0 Portal and Mobile App for Geo-tagging of Cluster Projects and Technology Centers.

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30. First time **since 2010**, the United Nations Secretary-General has **removed India from the 2023 Report on Children and Armed Conflict** in view of measures taken by the Indian government to protect children. India was previously accused of recruiting and using boys in armed groups in Jammu and Kashmir (J&K). In 2022, a higher number of violations against children were confirmed in J&K.
31. **Union Ministry of Coal and Mines** has unveiled the first-ever report of the country on “**Critical Minerals for India**”. India, for the first time, identified the comprehensive list of critical minerals taking into account the requirements of sectors like defence, agriculture, energy, pharmaceutical, telecom etc. The report identifies and prioritizes minerals essential for various industrial sectors, aligning with India's vision of achieving a robust and resilient mineral sector in line with the larger goal of attaining 'Net Zero' emissions.
32. The **Madras High Court** said in an order that “pedigree based on caste” will have no role to play in the appointment of temple priests, and that the only criteria for such appointments would be how well-versed a person is in religious texts and rituals. The court said the appointment of temple priests would be governed by Agama. However, citing past Supreme Court rulings, the order said that the caste of a priest was not integral to religion.

INDIA
TODAY

MISSIONS TO MOON

Artemis:
United States

Chandrayaan-3:
India

Chang'e Project:
China

Luna-25:
Russia

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INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

QUICK FACTS



1. **World Wind Day** or Global Wind Day is a worldwide event which falls on **June 15** every year. The first Wind Day was organized in 2007 by European Wind Energy Association (EWEA). In 2009, the European Wind Energy Association (WindEurope) and Global Wind Energy Council collaborated to make Wind Day a global event. In India, the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy celebrated Global Wind Day with the theme of “**Pawan Urja: Powering the Future of India**”.
2. The **United States** signed a new security pact with **Papua New Guinea** as it competes with China for influence in the Pacific. Papua New Guinea's location just north of Australia makes it strategically significant. It was the site of fierce battles during World War II, and with a population of nearly 10 million people, it's the most populous Pacific Island nation.
3. Scientists discovered high concentrations of **phosphorus**, an essential element for all biological processes on Earth, in ice crystals, spewed from the interior ocean of **Saturn's moon Enceladus**, adding to its potential to harbour life. Phosphorus is a fundamental unit of the structure of DNA and RNA and is a vital part of cell membranes and energy-carrying molecules existing in all forms of life on Earth.
4. **World Day to Combat Desertification and Drought** is observed every year on **17 June**. This year, the theme of the International Day Against Desertification, and Drought is “**Her land. Her rights**” essential for achieving the interconnected global goals of gender equality and land degradation neutrality by 2030 and contributing to the advancement of several other Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
5. The **excessive extraction of groundwater** for drinking and irrigation has **shifted the Earth's axis of rotation**, according to a new study, 'Drift of Earth's Pole Confirms Groundwater Depletion as a Significant Contributor to Global Sea Level Rise 1993–2010'. Noting that humans pumped out around 2,150 gigatons of groundwater between 1993 and 2010, the study says that the planet's axis has drifted at the rate of 4.36 cm per year towards the east.
6. **Women 20 Summit** was held in **Tamil Nadu**, India on 14th - 16th June 2023. The theme of this year's summit is '**Women-Led Development- Transform, Thrive and Transcend**'. The summit will consist of an exhibition, a Janbhagidari event, 8 sessions and a closed-door meeting. Under India's presidency, W20 is committed to ensuring increased grassroots-level participation and enhanced stakeholder participation of citizens in the W20 process.
7. An Indian Army contingent participated in the multinational peacekeeping joint exercise '**Ex Khaan Quest 2023**' in **Mongolia**. The exercise features participation from military contingents and observers from over 20 countries. The Indian Army is represented by a contingent from the Garhwal Rifles. The 14-day exercise is aimed at enhancing the interoperability of the participating nations, sharing experience and training the uniformed personnel for the United Nations Peacekeeping Operations.
8. According to the report by the **United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)**, The number of people who were uprooted from their hometowns due to social and climate crises in 2022 was 21 per cent higher than in 2021. More than **108.4 million** people were forcibly displaced by the end of 2022, 30 per cent of them children. In actual numbers, 19.1 million more people were pushed out of their homes last year over 2021.
9. In a significant and groundbreaking development, **Japan**, a country that previously had one of the lowest ages of consent globally, has decided to increase the minimum age at which one can say yes to sexual relations. The pivotal move has raised Japan's **age of consent** from the previous **13 years old to 16 years old**.
10. Recently, delegates representing more than 100 Parties to the Paris Agreement met in **Bonn, Germany**, paving the way to some key decisions for the UN Climate Conference (**COP 28**) in **Dubai in 2023**. The Bonn session concluded with the agreement to share "informal notes" that will guide continued work leading up to COP (Conference of Parties) 28 in Dubai.
11. **International Day of Yoga** is observed on **June 21** every year. 'Yoga for Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam' or '**Yoga for the Welfare of All as One World-One Family**,' is the theme for International Yoga Day 2023. In 2014, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi proposed the idea of observing this day on June 21 during his address to the 69th





- session of the UN General Assembly. International Day Of Yoga was first observed in 2015 and is being celebrated in full swing every year since then.
12. **Leptospirosis** has emerged as an important infectious disease in the world today. It is a potentially fatal zoonotic bacterial disease that tends to have large outbreaks after heavy rainfall or flooding. The disease is more prevalent in warm, humid countries and in both urban and rural areas.
 13. **World Sickle Cell Awareness Day** is observed on **June 19** each year to raise awareness about sickle cell disease (SCD) and its impact on individuals, families and communities worldwide. Sickle cell disease is a genetic blood disorder characterized by abnormal red blood cells that take on a crescent or sickle shape and these irregularly shaped cells can cause blockages in blood vessels, leading to a variety of health complications. This year the theme of World Sickle Disease Day is 'Building and strengthening global sickle cell communities, formalizing newborn screening and knowing your sickle cell disease status'.
 14. **Estonia** became the first central European country to pass a law to legalise same-sex marriage. Same-sex marriage is legal in much of Western Europe but not in central European countries which were once under communist rule and members of the Moscow-led Warsaw Pact alliance but now members of NATO and, largely, the EU.
 15. Timed with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's arrival in Washington, the US Senate's India Caucus Co-Chairs announced their plan to introduce legislation to give India '**NATO plus five**' defence status. India's External Affairs Minister, S. Jaishankar, however, had already rejected the framework for India. The arrangement currently exists between the US, its NATO partners and five countries: Australia, New Zealand, South Korea, Japan and Israel.
 16. The **26th edition of the St. Petersburg International Economic Forum (SPIEF)** was held recently in Russia's second-largest city and former imperial capital, the Kremlin. As the war in Ukraine drags on, taking a heavy toll on both sides of the frontline, Russia, faced with the biggest standoff with the West in its modern history, keeps looking for alternative economic and geopolitical partnerships to navigate the "challenging times". Russia made its message clear to the entire world: the economy is holding up despite unprecedented Western sanctions.
 17. **China** recently blocked a proposal moved by the US and co-designated by India to blacklist **Sajid Mir** under the 1267 Al Qaeda Sanctions Committee of the UN Security Council as a global terrorist and subject him to an assets freeze, travel ban and arms embargo. Pakistan-based Lashkar-e-Taiba terrorist Mir is wanted for his involvement in the 26/11 Mumbai terror attacks.
 18. The recent deaths of over 300 children in Africa and Asia have prompted the World Health Organization (**WHO**) to warn about the use of "substandard and falsified" medical products. The organization has issued an alert for seven syrups produced in India, while the country's Drugs Controller General has mandated testing of cough syrups by specified labs before export.
 19. The **International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking**, or **World Drug Day**, is marked on **26 June** every year, to strengthen action and cooperation in achieving the goal of a world free of drug abuse. This year the theme is "Addressing drug challenges in health and humanitarian crises". On **December 7, 1987**, the United Nations General Assembly decided to observe June 26 as the International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking.
 20. The **Summit for a New Global Financing Pact** was recently held in **Paris** with the objective of tackling the lack of financial support for developing countries. The Summit was announced at the 27th Conference of Parties (COP27) of the UNFCCC. The summit was also attended by India's Finance Minister.
 21. **Ajay Banga**, the president of the **World Bank**, has been named by a prestigious philanthropic organisation to its annual "**Great Immigrants**" list of honourees who have enriched and strengthened America and its democracy through their contributions and actions. Mr. Banga, who became World Bank chief in June 2023, is the first-ever Indian American to lead the institution. He is the only honouree from India in this year's list of 'Great Immigrants' by the Carnegie Corporation of New York.

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

QUICK FACTS



1. A **Mesolithic period rock painting** depicting a person tilling a piece of land has been found by a former archaeologist of the Archaeological Survey of India in Guntur district, Andhra Pradesh. It was found while surveying the lower River Krishna Valley to ascertain the architectural features of shrines. Earlier, in 2018, archaeologists uncovered prehistoric rock art estimated to be from the Neolithic era, circa 1500-2000 BC, on natural limestone formations near Dachehalli in Guntur district.
2. Archaeologists in **Mexico** have discovered the remains of an **ancient Maya city** deep in the jungle of the Yucatán Peninsula. Experts found several pyramid-like structures measuring more than 15m (50ft) in height. Pottery unearthed at the site appears to indicate it was inhabited between 600 and 800 AD, a period known as the Late Classic. Archaeologists have named the site Ocomtún (Mayan for stone column). The Maya are considered to have been one of the great civilisations of the Western Hemisphere, renowned for their pyramid temples and great stone buildings in an area which is now southern Mexico, Guatemala and Belize.
3. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has gifted an eco-friendly **lab-grown 7.5-carat diamond**, placed in an exquisite **Kashmiri papier-mâché box**, to the **U.S. First Lady Jill Biden**. The diamond is considered eco-friendly as resources like solar and wind power were used in its making. The green diamond is sculpted with precision and care using cutting-edge technology. It emits only 0.028 grams of carbon per carat and is certified by the Gemological Lab, IGI (International Gemological Institute). Lab-grown diamonds are produced through two technologies — High Pressure High Temperature (HPHT) and Chemical Vapour Deposition (CVD). India is one of the leading producers of these diamonds using CVD technology.
4. The President of India, Smt Droupadi Murmu presented the **National Florence Nightingale Awards for the years 2022 and 2023** to the Nursing professionals. The National Florence Nightingale Award was instituted by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India in the year 1973 as a mark of recognition for the meritorious services rendered by the nurses and nursing professionals to the society.
5. Writer **Priya AS** has won **Kendra Sahitya Akademi's Bal Sahitya Puraskar for the year 2023**. The novel, **Perumazhayathe Kunjithalukal**, written by her in 2018, won her the prize. The novel set against the backdrop of the 2018 Kerala floods, captures the resilience and unity displayed by children from diverse backgrounds during the calamity.
6. The **Idol Wing CID (IW CID)** of the Tamil Nadu Police, with assistance from authorities of the United States (US), has taken a major step in retrieving **16 high-value antique idols** that were stolen or went missing from four **Chola-era temples** in the State and were recently traced to museums and art galleries in the U.S.
7. **India** hosted the **“Banking on World Heritage”** exhibition. Banknotes of G20 member countries were showcased in a unique exhibition focusing on the UNESCO world heritage sites from their respective countries featured on them. The exhibition features the \$100 note that features the Independence Hall of Philadelphia, a five-pound note from the United Kingdom with a part of Westminster's Abbey, and currency notes from Brazil and Argentina, both featuring the Iguazu National Park that lies on the border between the two countries, five Indian currency notes – the ₹20, which carries the image of the Sun Temple at Konark, the ₹10, with Ellora caves, the ₹500, with Red Fort and two separate notes of ₹100, with Kanchanjunga mountains and Gujarat's “Rani Ki Vav” stepwell.

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TEST ZONE



PASSAGE - 1

Hours after Tamil Nadu minister V Senthil Balaji was arrested by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) over his alleged role in a job racket scandal, the state government Wednesday withdrew the general consent accorded to the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) to carry out probes in the state.

In a communique on Wednesday, the home department said that as per Section 6 of the Delhi Special Police Establishment Act, 1946 (Central Act XXV of 1946), CBI has to secure prior permission from the concerned state government before conducting a probe in any case there. "The Tamil Nadu government has today issued orders withdrawing the general consent given to a few types of cases in 1989 and 1992 under the aforesaid rule. Accordingly, the CBI has to henceforth get the Tamil Nadu government's permission for conducting an investigation in the state," a release read.

CBI is governed by The Delhi Special Police Establishment (DSPE) Act, 1946, and it must mandatorily obtain the consent of the state government concerned before beginning to investigate a crime in a state. The consent of the state government to CBI can be either case-specific or "general".

General consent is normally given by states to help CBI to conduct a seamless investigation of corruption cases against central government employees in their states. This essentially means consent by default and CBI may begin investigations into a case in a state with the premise that consent has been already given to it.

[Extracted, with edits and revisions, from: "Tamil Nadu withdraws general consent accorded to CBI to probe cases in state", The Indian Express]

Who among the following has been appointed as the head of the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI)?

A Subodh Kumar Jaiswal

C D.P. Kohli

B Praveen Sood

D Sanjay Arora

Apart from Tamil Nadu, which of the following states has withdrawn the general consent accorded to the CBI?

A Mizoram

C Madhya Pradesh

B Karnataka

D None of the above

The Directorate of Enforcement (ED) is mandated with the investigation of offences of money laundering and violations of foreign exchange laws. ED works under the –

A Department of Personnel and Training

C Department of Internal Security

B Department of Home

D Department of Revenue

Prime Minister inaugurated the diamond jubilee celebrations of the CBI on April 3 2023. On which committee's recommendations was the CBI established?

A Shivraman Committee

C Santhanam Committee

B Tarapore Committee

D Raja Chelliah Committee

Which operation was launched by the CBI against the circulation and sharing of child sexual abuse material online in September 2022?

A Operation Megh-Chakra

C Operation Garuda

B Operation Dhvast

D Operation Trishul

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

Answers

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PASSAGE - 2

India has climbed eight places in the annual Gender Gap Report, 2023. But this improved statistic, closing 64.3% of the overall gender gap, is hardly a cause for cheer. On the four key markers of the index – economic participation and opportunity, educational attainment, health and survival and political empowerment – India has a window of opportunity to improve in each so that one-half of the most populous country in the world may contribute to the economy, growth and overall wellbeing of society. India has fared well in education, and in political empowerment, with the representation of women of over 40% in local governance, thanks to efforts on the ground after the 73rd and 74th amendments.

But, as the report points out, women represent only 15.1% of parliamentarians, “the highest for India since the inaugural 2006 edition.” This should spur Parliament to take it to the next level by acting on the long-pending Women's Reservation Bill, which proposes to reserve 33% of seats in the Lok Sabha and State Legislative Assemblies for women and was first introduced in the House way back in 1996. On providing even access for men and women to economic participation and opportunity, India ranks near the bottom with less than 40% parity. On the one hand, there are upticks in parity in wages and income, but then shares of women in senior positions and technical roles have dropped.

[Extracted, with edits and revisions, from: “Bridging the gap: On India and Gender Gap Report”, The Hindu]

What is India's ranking in the 2023 Gender Gap Report?

A 137

B 117

C 127

D 107

Which year marks the 30th anniversary of the 73rd and 74th Amendments to the Indian Constitution?

A 2025

B 2023

C 2022

D 2024

Which Indian state gets women MLAs for the first time since its formation in 1963, in the 2023 state assembly elections?

A Nagaland

B Meghalaya

C Tripura

D Manipur

What is the sex ratio in India as per the Census 2011?

A 945

B 941

C 942

D 943

Which international organization releases the Global Gender Gap to evaluate the status of gender parity across countries?

A World Economic Forum

B World Bank

C UN Women

D International Monetary Fund

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

Answers

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PASSAGE - 3

India is known for its rich cultural heritage with each Indian state having its distinct traditions and festivals. One such fascinating festival is Kharchi Puja, which is celebrated in the Northeastern state of Tripura. Also called the 'Festival of 14 Gods', Kharchi Puja is observed on the eighth day of the new moon in July or August every year. This year, the auspicious festival began on June 26 and will go on till July 2.

The festival is centred around the worship of Chaturdasa Devata, the ancestral deity of the Tripuri people. It holds immense religious and cultural importance and showcases the rich history and traditions of the community. The word 'Kharchi' is derived from two Tripuri words—'khar' or kharta meaning sin and 'chi' or si meaning cleaning. During the festival, the people of Tripura also worship the earth along with their 14 deities. Although the festival has tribal origins, it is celebrated by both tribal and non-tribal people of Tripura.

It is believed that the Mother Goddess or Tripura Sundari, the presiding deity of the land who protects the people of Tripura, menstruates during the time of Ambubachi, which is observed in June. There is a popular belief that the Earth becomes impure during the menstruation period of the Goddess. Hence, Kharchi Puja is observed to ritualistically clean the Earth after her menstruation is over and wash away the sins of the people in the land, according to Tripura.org.in.

[Extracted, with edits and revisions, from: "Kharchi Puja 2023: Know more about the auspicious festival celebrated in Tripura", The Indian Express]

The Ambubachi Mela marks the annual menstruation of the presiding Goddess in the Kamakhya Temple. In which state is Kamakhya Temple located?

A Tripura

B Assam

C Mizoram

D Sikkim

Apart from Kharchi Puja, which of the following festivals belongs to Tripura?

A Mimkut Festival

B Nongkrem Festival

C Neermahal Festival

D Monpa Festival

In which year was Durga Puja in Kolkata inscribed on UNESCO's Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) of Humanity?

A 2020

B 2021

C 2022

D 2023

In January 2023, India's first School of Logistics, Waterways, and Communication was launched in –

A Assam

B Manipur

C Tripura

D West Bengal

Who among the following is the incumbent chief minister of Tripura?

A Manik Saha

B Biplab Kumar Deb

C Conrad Sangma

D N. Biren Singh

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

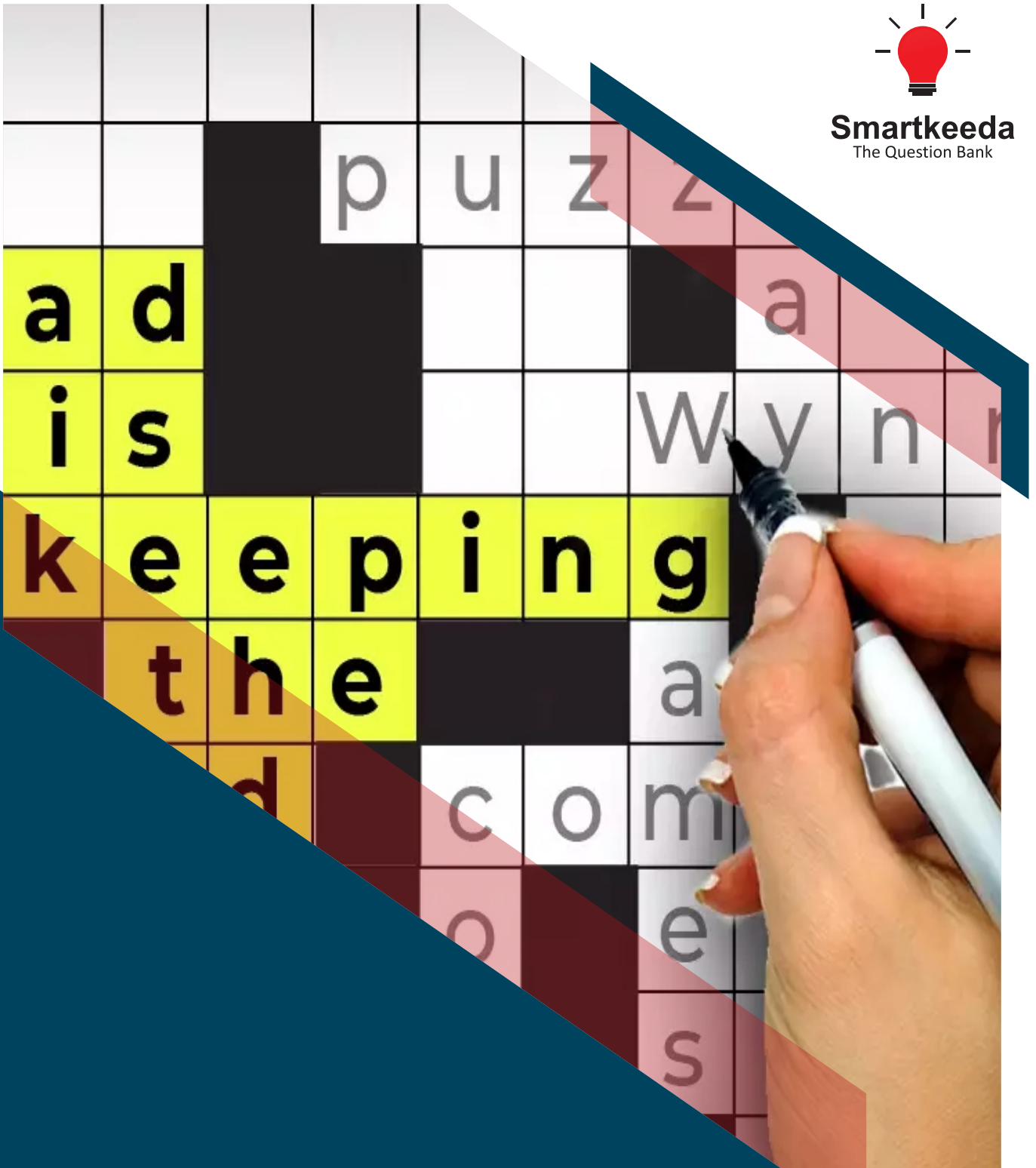
Answers

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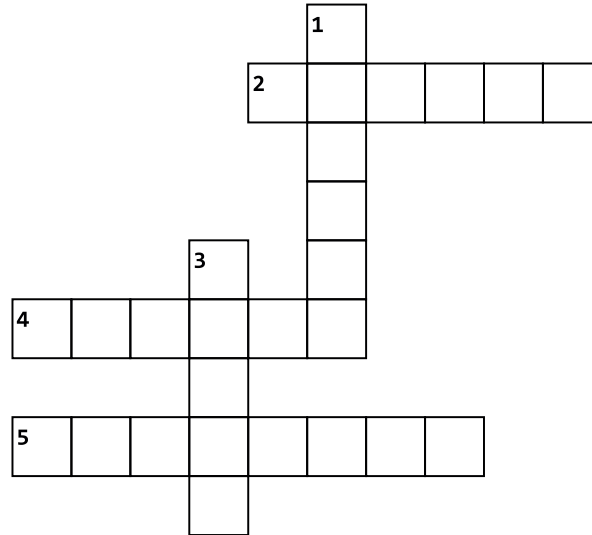
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CROSSWORD CORNER



CROSSWORD - 1



Across

2. International MSME Day
4. World Wind Day
5. Japanese method of creating dense urban forests in a small area

Down

1. World Day to Combat Desertification and Drought
3. COP28 will be held in 2023

Answers

- | | |
|---|----------|
| 3 | Dubai |
| 2 | 27 June |
| 1 | 17 June |
| 5 | Miyawaki |
| 4 | 15 June |

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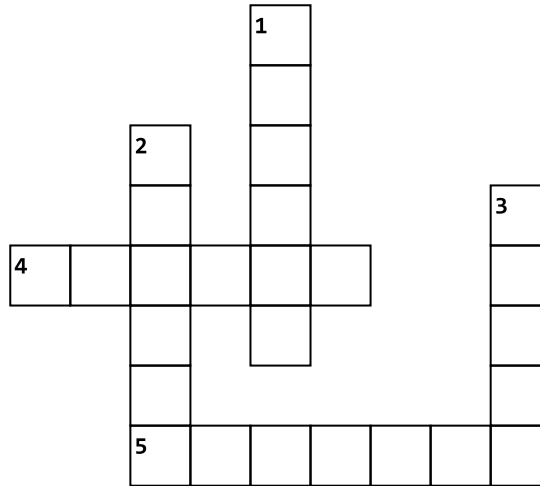
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CROSSWORD - 2



Across

- 4.** International Day of Yoga
5. Became the first central European country to pass a law to legalise same-sex marriage

Down

- 1.** World Sickle Cell Awareness Day
2. World Drug Day
3. Hosted the "Banking on World Heritage" exhibition

Answers

- | | |
|---|---------|
| 3 | India |
| 2 | 26 June |
| 1 | 19 June |
| 5 | Estonia |
| 4 | 21 June |

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