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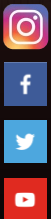
LawEx

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WOMEN'S RESERVATION BILL, 2023



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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

President Droupadi Murmu has given her assent to the women’s reservation Bill which seeks to provide 33% reservation to women in the Lok Sabha and State Assemblies. Prime Minister Narendra Modi described the law as “Nari Shakti Vandan Adhinyam”. A seven-judge bench of the Supreme Court reserved its verdict on whether lawmakers can claim immunity from criminal prosecution for taking bribes in connection with a speech or vote in Parliament or a state assembly. Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan unveiled the 108-foot-tall ‘Statue of Oneness’ of Adi Shankaracharya on Mandhata mountain at Omkareshwar on September 21. Keep reading for more information.

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CONTENTS

QUICK BOOSTERS

WOMEN'S RESERVATION BILL, 2023	1-2
INDIA'S NavIC WILL NOW BE SUPPORTED BY 'MADE IN INDIA' CHIPSETS	3
SUPREME COURT OF INDIA ONBOARDING THE NATIONAL JUDICIAL DATE GRID PORTAL	4
SANTINIKETAN BECOMES INDIA'S 41st WORLD HERITAGE SITE	5
SKILL INDIA DIGITAL	6
INDIA-MIDDLE EAST-EUROPE-ECONOMIC CORRIDOR	7
29th WORLD OZONE DAY	8
HOYSALA TEMPLES BECOME INDIA'S 42nd WORLD HERITAGE SITE	9
GLOBAL REPORT ON HYPERTENSION	10
RASHTRIYA VIGYAN PURASKAR	11
ELEPHANT CORRIDORS IN INDIA	12
SUPREME COURT TO REVIEW IMMUNITY TO LEGISLATORS ON BRIBERY	13
UNITED NATIONS CLIMATE AMBITION SUMMIT	14
'STATUE OF ONENESS' OF ADI SHANKARACHARYA	15
FIVE EYES ALLIANCE	16

QUICK FACTS

CONTEMPORARY EVENTS OF SIGNIFICANCE	17-19
INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS	20-21
ARTS & CULTURE AND HISTORICAL EVENTS	22

TEST ZONE

PASSAGE -1 (Contemporary Events of Significance)	23
PASSAGE -2 (International Affairs)	24
PASSAGE -3 (Arts & Culture and Historical Events)	25

CROSSWORD CORNER

CROSSWORD -1	26
CROSSWORD -2	27





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The Question Bank



QUICK BOOSTERS



WOMEN'S RESERVATION BILL, 2023

WHY IN NEWS?

- President Droupadi Murmu has given her assent to the Women's Reservation Bill which seeks to provide 33% reservation to women in the Lok Sabha and State Assemblies.
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi described the law as “Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam”.

Key Points

- The Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam, as the Bill is called, seeks to reserve one-third of all seats for women in the Lok Sabha, the State Legislative Assemblies, and the National Capital Territory of Delhi.
- This will also apply to seats reserved for Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs) in the Lok Sabha and the State Legislative Assemblies.
- The law, however, will be implemented after the next census and the subsequent delimitation exercise will determine the particular seats that are to be reserved for women.
- The Constitution amendment Bill was passed by the Lok Sabha with near-unanimity, with only two members opposing it and was unanimously passed by the Rajya Sabha.

The last delimitation order of the Delimitation Commission was issued in 2008, fixing the boundaries of all constituencies. However, there is currently a freeze on the readjustment of the number of seats in the State Assemblies and the Lok Sabha.

In 2002, Article 82 was amended to the effect that it shall not be necessary to readjust the allocation of Lok Sabha constituencies State-wise and the division of each State into constituencies until the figures of the first Census held after 2026 were available.

Three New Articles

- The Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam will introduce three new Articles and one new clause in the Constitution. These are:
- New clause in 239AA - Seats shall be reserved for women in the Delhi Legislative Assembly, 1/3rd of the seats reserved for SCs shall be reserved for women, 1/3rd of the total number of seats to be filled by direct elections shall be reserved for women through law determined by Parliament.
- Article – 330A - Reservations for women in LS — 1/3rd of seats reserved for SCs and STs shall be reserved for women, 1/3rd of total seats to be filled by direct elections to the Lok Sabha shall be reserved for women.
- Article – 332A - Reserved seats for women in every state legislative assembly, 1/3rd of seats reserved for SCs and STs shall be reserved for women, 1/3rd of total seats to be filled by direct elections to the legislative assemblies shall be reserved for women.
- Article – 334A - Reservations shall come into effect after delimitation is undertaken after the relevant figures for the first census have been published. The rotation of seats for women shall take effect after each subsequent exercise of delimitation.

Background

- The 81st Constitution Amendment Bill was first introduced in the Lok Sabha in 1996 by the Deve Gowda-led United Front government.
- It was referred to a Joint Committee which gave certain recommendations.
- The Bill failed to get the approval of the House in 1997 and lapsed later with the dissolution of the Lok Sabha.
- In 1998, the Atal Bihari Vajpayee-led National Democratic Alliance government introduced the Bill, but it lapsed after the government fell in 1999.
- The Bill was reintroduced in 1999, 2000, 2002 and 2003, but failed to get passed.
- In 2010, the Manmohan Singh-led United Progressive Alliance government tabled the Bill in the Rajya Sabha. However, the Bill was never taken up for consideration in the Lok Sabha and lapsed with the dissolution of the 15th Lok Sabha.

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DID YOU KNOW?

- Though it was introduced as the Constitution (128th) Amendment Bill in the Lok Sabha, now it will be known as the Constitution (106th Amendment) Act as some proposed constitutional amendments are yet to be passed by Parliament.
- The quota for women in the Lok Sabha and Assemblies will continue for 15 years and Parliament can later extend the benefit period.
- After implementation, there should be at least 181 (approximately 33.3% of seats) women members in the Lower House.
- At present, there are 82 women in the Lok Sabha which amounts to 15% of its members.
- The share of women parliamentarians has never exceeded the 15% mark in over 70 years of India's electoral history.
- When considered as a share of the total candidates who participated in the 2019 general election, their share is even lower at 9%.
- In the case of the sitting State Legislative Assemblies, the share of women MLAs is far lower with just one State — Tripura— touching the 15% mark (Chart 2).
- Women members formed less than 10% of Legislative Assemblies in 20 States and Union Territories. This includes States such as Gujarat (8.2%), Maharashtra (8.3%), Andhra Pradesh (8%), Kerala (7.9%), Tamil Nadu (5.1%), Telangana (5%) and Karnataka (4.5%).
- In the 2023 election, Nagaland got its first two women MLAs. Mizoram too has not had a women MLA in the past seven Assemblies.
- According to recent UN Women data, Rwanda (61%), Cuba (53%), and Nicaragua (52%) are the top three countries in women representation.
- Bangladesh (21%) and Pakistan (20%) are ahead of India in the case of female representation.



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INDIA'S NavIC WILL NOW BE SUPPORTED BY 'MADE IN INDIA' CHIPSETS

WHY IN NEWS?

- For the first time, the chipsets or microchips which are capable of receiving and processing the signals of the indigenous navigational system NavIC (Navigation with Indian Constellation) will be designed and manufactured in India by an Indian company.

Key Points

- After convincing Apple to support navigation technology NavIC in some new iPhone 15 models, the Union government may mandate manufacturers to embed the homegrown GPS alternative in all smartphones sold in India by 2025.
 - All 5G phones would be required to support NavIC — or Navigation with Indian Constellation — by January 1, 2025, and other phones by December 2025.
- To increase the adoption of the homegrown navigation system, the government is also considering offering additional incentives to smartphone makers in the next round of its production-linked incentive (PLI) scheme if they use chips designed or manufactured in India which support NavIC technology.
- Currently, only a handful of smartphones — from manufacturers such as Poco, Vivo and Xiaomi — support NavIC.


What is NavIC?

- NavIC is an independent stand-alone navigation satellite system developed by the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO).
- NavIC was originally approved in 2006 at a cost of \$174 million. It was expected to be completed by late 2011, but only became operational in 2018.
- NavIC consists of eight satellites and covers the whole of India's landmass and up to 1,500 km (930 miles) from its boundaries.
- Currently, NavIC's use is limited.
 - It is being used in public vehicle tracking in India, for providing emergency warning alerts to fishermen venturing into the deep sea where there is no terrestrial network connectivity, and for tracking and providing information related to natural disasters.
- In May 2023, ISRO launched the first of the second-generation satellites for its navigation constellation.
 - NavIC is currently functional with signals in the L5 and S bands.
- The second-generation satellites will send signals in a third frequency, L1, besides the L5 and S frequency signals that the existing satellites provide, increasing interoperability with other satellite-based navigation systems.
- The L1 frequency is among the most commonly used in the Global Positioning System (GPS) and will increase the use of the regional navigation system in wearable devices and personal trackers that use low-power, single-frequency chips.

DID YOU KNOW?

- The other Navigation Systems operational in the world are GPS from the US, GLONASS from Russia, Galileo from the European Union and BeiDou from China.
- Two regional systems are also operational - NavIC from India and QZSS from Japan.
- NavIC was recognised by the International Maritime Organization (IMO) as a part of the World-Wide Radio Navigation System (WWRNS) for operation in the Indian Ocean Region in 2020.

What is NavIC




NavIC, or Navigation with Indian Constellation, is a homegrown alternative to systems such as GPS

Currently used for navigation support in some mobile devices and cars; also used by Indian military

Govt has mandated NavIC support in smartphones and other devices by end of 2025

Developed by Isro, became operational in 2018



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SUPREME COURT OF INDIA ONBOARDING THE NATIONAL JUDICIAL DATE GRID PORTAL

WHY IN NEWS?

- The Supreme Court onboarded its case data on the National Judicial Data Grid (NJDG).
- With the Supreme Court of India onboarding the National Judicial Data Grid portal, the flagship project of the e-Courts project completes the full circle. Now all three tiers of the Indian judiciary are on the NJDG portal.

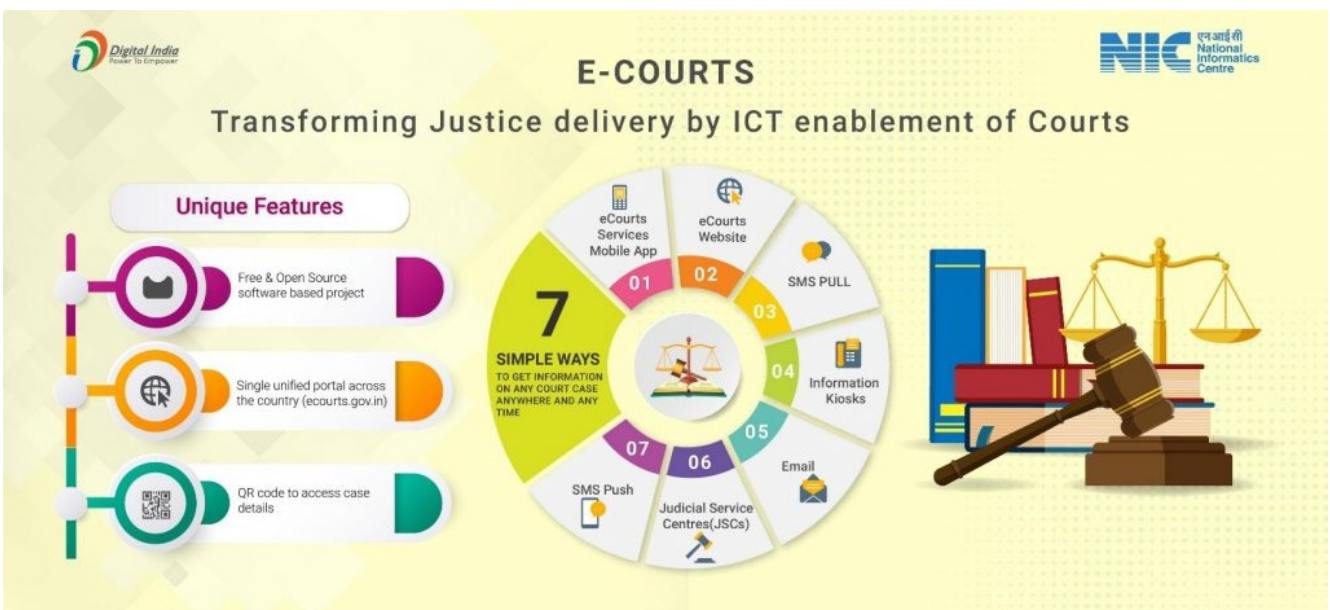
What is NJDG?

- NJDG is a database of orders, judgments and case details of 18,735 District and subordinate Courts and High Courts created as an online platform under the eCourts Project.
- Its key feature is that the data is updated in real-time and has granular data up to the Taluka level.
- The NJDG was built as part of Phase II of the e-Courts project, which is a Centrally Sponsored Scheme.
- The NJDG portal is a national repository of data relating to cases instituted, pending and disposed of by the courts across the length and breadth of the country.
- Now one may access case-related information, statistics such as institution, pendency and disposal of cases, case types, and year-wise break-up of the Supreme Court of India.
- NJDG has been developed by the National Informatics Centre (NIC) in close coordination with the in-house software development team of the Computer Cell, Registry with an interactive interface and analytics dashboard.



DID YOU KNOW?

- For the year 2023, the total pendency of registered cases in SC is 64,854. But the Cases instituted last month were 5,412 while cases disposed of in the last month were 5,033.
- There are 583 three-judge Bench matters, 288 five-judge Bench cases, 21 seven-judge Bench cases, and 135 nine-judge Bench cases, all of which are civil, pending in the Supreme Court.
- e-Courts project is being implemented in association with e-Committee Supreme Court of India and the Department of Justice.



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SANTINIKETAN BECOMES INDIA'S 41st WORLD HERITAGE SITE

WHY IN NEWS?

- Rabindranath Tagore's Santiniketan, the university town in West Bengal's Birbhum district, has been inscribed on UNESCO's World Heritage List.
- Santiniketan becomes the 41st UNESCO World Heritage Site in India and the third in West Bengal, after the Sundarbans National Park and the Darjeeling Mountain Railways.
- In 2022, the state's Durga Puja got space in "Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity" under UNESCO.

About Santiniketan

- Established in 1901 by the Nobel Laureate, Santiniketan was a residential school and centre for art based on ancient Indian traditions and a vision of the unity of humanity transcending religious and cultural boundaries.
- A 'world university' – Visva Bharati – was established at Santiniketan in 1921.
 - Visva-Bharati in Santiniketan is Bengal's only central university. The Prime Minister is the chancellor of the varsity.
- Santiniketan is directly and tangibly associated with the life, works and vision of Rabindranath Tagore and the pioneers of the Bengal School of Art.
 - It exhibits the crystallisation of their ideas of internationalism, humanism, inclusiveness, environmentalism and pan-Asian modernism.



DID YOU KNOW?

- Rabindranath Tagore - polymath, poet and artist - reshaped Bengali literature and music, introduced India's rich cultural heritage to the West and was the first non-European to receive the Nobel Prize.
- He wrote the national anthems of two countries, "Jana Gana Mana" (the Indian national anthem) and "Amar Shonar Bangla" (the Bangladesh national anthem).
- Apart from being awarded the Nobel in Literature, Britain's King George V conferred knighthood on him in 1915 but Tagore renounced it in the wake of the Jallianwala Bagh massacre of 1919.
- It was Rabindranath Tagore who gave Gandhi the title of Mahatma. He also regularly corresponded with the eminent scientist Albert Einstein and the duo held each other in great esteem.
- It is believed that the Sri Lankan composer Ananda Samarakoon, who wrote the national anthem of Sri Lanka called Sri Lanka Matha, was inspired and influenced by Tagore.



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SKILL INDIA DIGITAL

WHY IN NEWS?

- Union Minister for Skill Development and Entrepreneurship launched Skill India Digital (SID), a digital platform aimed at synergising and transforming the skills, education, employment, and entrepreneurship landscape of India.

About Skill India Digital

- SID is the Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI) for the skilling, education, employment, and entrepreneurship ecosystem of India.
 - Digital public infrastructure (DPI) refers to blocks or platforms such as digital identification, payment infrastructure and data exchange solutions that help countries deliver essential services to their people, empowering citizens and improving lives by enabling digital inclusion.
- Driven by the vision to make skill development more innovative, accessible, and personalized in its embodiment, focusing on digital technology and Industry 4.0 skills.
- The platform aligns perfectly with the vision articulated in the G20 framework for building DPI and the digital economy to promote digital skills and digital literacy.
- It is also a comprehensive information gateway for all government skilling and entrepreneurship initiatives – a go-to hub for citizens in pursuit of career advancement and lifelong learning.

Significance

- SID aims to remove existing obstacles by offering an easy-to-use interface which is adaptable to various devices.
- A major breakthrough for secure access came with Aadhaar-based eKYC. This robust verification process is the foundation of SID, ensuring only genuine participants benefit from its offerings.
- SID serves as a central information hub for all government skilling and entrepreneurship initiatives, facilitating easy access for citizens seeking career advancement and lifelong learning.

DID YOU KNOW?

- Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY) scheme was launched in 2015 to provide short-term training, and skilling through ITIs and under the apprenticeship scheme.
- The SANKALP programme which focuses on the district-level skilling ecosystem and the STRIVE project which aims to improve the performance of ITIs are other significant skilling interventions.
- India has the potential to grow at 6.5-7 per cent and become a \$5 trillion economy by 2025-26 and USD 7 trillion by 2030.



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INDIA-MIDDLE EAST-EUROPE-ECONOMIC CORRIDOR

WHY IN NEWS?

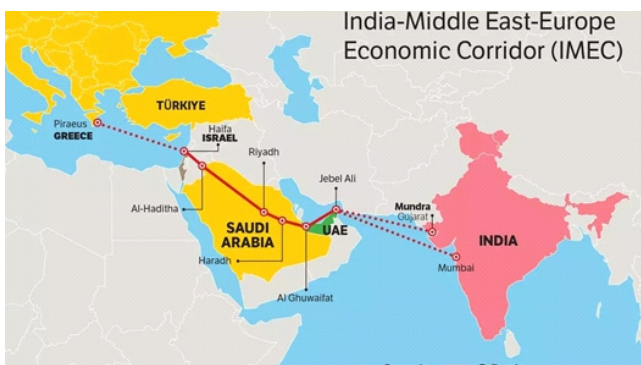
- At a special event on the sidelines of the recently concluded G20 summit in New Delhi, a memorandum of understanding (MoU) was signed to establish the 'India-Middle East- Europe Economic Corridor' (IMEC).

Key Points

- A memorandum of understanding was signed between the European Union and seven countries, namely India, the US, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), France, Germany, and Italy.
- The project, which forms part of the Partnership for Global Infrastructure and Investment (PGII), may also serve as a counter to China's economic influence in the Eurasian region, observers have suggested.

About Corridor

- The proposed IMEC will consist of railroad, ship-to-rail networks (road and sea) and road transport routes (and networks) extending across two corridors, that is, the east corridor – connecting India to the Gulf, and the northern corridor – connecting the Gulf to Europe.
- The corridor will include a shipping route connecting Mumbai and Mundra (Gujarat) with the UAE, and a rail network connecting the UAE, Saudi Arabia, and Jordan with the Israeli port of Haifa to reach the shores of the Mediterranean Sea.
 - Haifa will then be connected by sea to the port of Piraeus in Greece to eventually be connected to Europe.
- It would enable the transportation of goods and services from India to the UAE, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Israel and Europe, and back.
- All in all, it is expected that the corridor would increase efficiency (relating to transit), reduce costs, enhance economic unity, generate jobs, and lower greenhouse gas emissions.
- This is expected to translate into a “transformative integration of Asia, Europe and the Middle East.”



About PGII

- The infrastructure plan was first announced in June 2021 during the G7 (or Group of Seven) summit in the UK.
- The G7 countries include the United Kingdom, the United States, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, and the European Union (EU).
- US President Joe Biden had called it the Build Back Better World (B3W) framework. However, it did not register much progress.
- In 2022, during the G7 summit in Germany, the PGII was officially launched as a joint initiative to help fund infrastructure projects in developing countries through public and private investments.
- Essentially, in response to the infrastructure projects being undertaken and funded by China under the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) at a global level, the G7 decided to present their alternative mechanism for it.
- The stated purpose of both the PGII and the BRI is to help secure funding for countries to build critical infrastructure such as roads, ports, bridges, communication setups, etc. to enhance global trade and cooperation.

DID YOU KNOW?

- The proposed IMEC connecting India to Europe via West Asia and the Mediterranean region could serve as an “alternative trans-regional commercial transportation route” to the troubled Chabahar-based International North-South Transit Corridor.
- Instead of Chabahar, the ports of the UAE —India's third largest trading partner — would serve as the Indian Ocean connectivity node.
- Saudi Arabia and Israel do not have diplomatic ties —primarily because of differences of opinion about the Israel-Palestine conflict.
- Israel has official ties with only Egypt, Jordan, the UAE, Bahrain and Morocco in the Arab region.
- China began the Belt and Road Initiative in 2013 under its President Xi Jinping.

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29th WORLD OZONE DAY

WHY IN NEWS?

- The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF&CC) celebrated the 29th World Ozone Day.

About World Ozone Day

- World Ozone Day is celebrated on 16th September each year to commemorate the signing of the Montreal Protocol.
- Montreal Protocol is an international environmental treaty for phasing out of production and consumption of Ozone Depleting Substances, that came into force on this day in 1987.
- The theme for World Ozone Day 2023 is "Montreal Protocol: fixing the ozone layer and reducing climate change".

- Ozone Layer exists in the Stratosphere, between 10 KM and 40 KM above the Earth's surface and protects us from UV radiation from the Sun.
- Ozone formed in the stratosphere called stratospheric ozone or good Ozone.
- Tropospheric (or ground-level) ozone is known as bad ozone. It is a short-lived climate pollutant that remains in the atmosphere for only hours to weeks.
- Without the Ozone layer, radiation from the sun would reach the earth directly, having ill effects on human health, i.e., eye cataracts, skin cancer, etc., and adverse impacts on agriculture, forestry and marine life.
- Manmade chemicals containing chlorine and bromine reach the stratosphere and undergo a complex series of catalytic reactions, leading to the destruction of ozone. These chemicals are called Ozone Depleting Substances.



About Montreal Protocol

- The Vienna Convention, an international treaty on the protection of the Ozone Layer, came into force in 1985.
- Under this convention, the Montreal Protocol came into force in 1987 to repair the ozone layer to protect the earth's Ozone Layer by phasing out production and consumption of Ozone Depleting Substances for end applications.
- The Montreal Protocol provides a set of practical, actionable tasks to phase out ozone-depleting substances.
- It is one of the most successful and effective environmental treaties ever negotiated and implemented, due to the unprecedented level of cooperation and commitment shown by the international community.

DID YOU KNOW?

- India, as a Party to the Montreal Protocol since June 1992, has been successfully implementing the Montreal Protocol.
- Currently, Hydrochlorofluorocarbons (HCFCs) are being phased out as per the accelerated schedule of the Montreal Protocol.
- The phase-out of Ozone Depleting Substances led to the growth of Hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs), used as alternatives to the ODSs, particularly in the refrigeration and air-conditioning sector.
- While HFCs do not deplete the Ozone Layer, they have a high global warming potential ranging from 12 to 14000, which have adverse impact on climate.
- The decision to add HFCs to the list of controlled substances under the Montreal Protocol in 2016 led to the Kigali Amendment to the Montreal Protocol.
- As per the Kigali Amendment, India will complete its phase down of production and consumption of HFCs for controlled uses in 4 steps from 2032 onwards with cumulative reduction of 10% in 2032, 20% in 2037, 30% in 2042 and 85% in 2047.
- India ratified the Kigali Amendment to the Montreal Protocol in September 2021.

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HOYSALA TEMPLES BECOME INDIA'S 42nd WORLD HERITAGE SITE

WHY IN NEWS?

- Three Hoysala-era temples in Karnataka recently made it to UNESCO's World Heritage List, under the collective entry of 'Sacred Ensembles of the Hoysalas'.

Three Hoysala Temples

- The three temples include the Chennakeshava temple in Belur, the Hoysaleswara Temple in Halebidu, and the Keshava Temple in Somanathapura.
- Two of the temples that made it to the UNESCO list are located in cities that served as the capital of the Hoysalas — earlier Belur, and then Halebidu (or Dwarasamudra).
- The Chennakeshava temple, dedicated to Lord Vishnu, was consecrated around 1117 AD by the mighty Hoysala king Vishnuvardhana, to mark his victories against the Cholas. It is thus also called the Vijaya Narayana temple.
- The other Vaishnava shrine, the Kesava temple, was built in Somanathapura around 1260 by Somanatha, a general of Hoysala King Narasimha III.
- The Kesava temple in Somanathapura is built in the shape of a 16-point star, and has three shrines, dedicated to Keshava, Janardhana and Venugopala.
- The Hoysaleswara temple in Halebidu is believed to be the largest Shiva temple built by the Hoysalas and is dated to the 12th century.

Hoysalas

- The Hoysalas held power in Karnataka from the 10th century to the 14th century.
- The dynasty began as provincial governors under the Western Chalukyas, but as the two dominant empires of the South, the Western Chalukyas and the Cholas, crumbled, the Hoysalas established themselves as rulers.

DID YOU KNOW?

- The most notable rulers of the Hoysala dynasty were Vishnuvardhana, Veera Ballala II, and Veera Ballala III.
- The 'Sacred Ensembles of the Hoysala' have been on UNESCO's Tentative list since April 15, 2014. The other heritage sites in Karnataka which got into the UNESCO list are Hampi (1986) and Pattadakal (1987).
- The Visva-Bharati University, founded by Nobel laureate Rabindranath Tagore in 1921 has received the UNESCO World Heritage inscription to become the world's first living heritage university.

Architecture

- Hoysala architecture is an amalgamation of three distinctive styles— the mainstream Dravidian architecture as represented in the Pallava and Chola temples; the Vesara style, the variant of the Dravida style that emerged in the Chalukya and Rashtrakuta temples; and then the North Indian Nagara style.
- The temples are generally built on stellate (star-shaped) platforms and have several structures inside the complex. The walls and pillars are covered in beautiful sculptures.
- An interesting feature of Hoysala temples is that they are 'signed' — the sculptors, and masons leave behind their names, and sometimes a few more details.
- Also, these Vaishnava and Shaivya shrines were built at the time Jainism was prominent in the region, and thus mark a turn towards Hinduism.



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GLOBAL REPORT ON HYPERTENSION

WHY IN NEWS?

- World Health Organization (WHO) recently released its first-ever report on hypertension titled “Global Report on Hypertension: The Race against a Silent Killer.”

Key Highlights

- About 76 million deaths could be averted by 2050 if coverage against high blood pressure, also known as hypertension, is scaled up globally.
- The number of people living with hypertension has doubled between 1990 and 2019, from 650 million to 1.3 billion. It is estimated to affect 33 per cent of adults aged 30-79 worldwide or roughly one in every three adults.
- Approximately four out of every five people with hypertension are not adequately treated and more than three-quarters of adults with hypertension live in low- and middle-income countries.
- In India, an estimated 188.3 million adults aged 30–79 years have hypertension.
 - About 67 million more people with hypertension would need to be effectively treated in the country to achieve a 50 per cent control rate.
 - If the progress scenario were achieved, 4.6 million deaths due to high blood pressure would be averted by 2040.
- The prevalence of high blood pressure in India is slightly lower than the global average — 31 per cent. An estimated 37 per cent of these have been diagnosed and 30 per cent are receiving treatment for it.

The global health body pointed out gaps in diagnosis — nearly half of people with hypertension globally are currently unaware of their condition. Only an estimated 54 per cent of hypertension patients have been diagnosed globally and 42 per cent are receiving treatment for it. Only 21 per cent have had their hypertension controlled.

- The treatment coverage for hypertension tends to be highly skewed in favour of high-income countries and the rate of effective treatment coverage, or hypertension control, also followed the same patterns, the report found.
- The coverage was highest in the WHO region of the Americas (60 per cent) and lowest in the African region (27 per cent). The rates of effective treatment coverage were 36 per cent and 12 per cent, respectively.
- Nearly 30% of individuals with uncontrolled hypertension exhibit blood pressure measurements above the threshold warranting urgent treatment.
- Globally, the percentage of adults aged 30–70 taking medication for hypertension has doubled from 22% in 1990 to 42% in 2019.
- The WHO called for prioritising the prevention, early detection and effective management of hypertension by countries as part of their national health benefit package offered at a primary care level.

DID YOU KNOW?

- World Hypertension Day is celebrated on May 17 every year to promote awareness about hypertension and encourage people to prevent and control this silent killer.
- The theme of World Hypertension Day, 2023 is 'Measure Your Blood Pressure Accurately, Control It, Live Longer'.
- The United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 3 (SDG 3) aims to ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all.
- The Union Health Ministry launched an ambitious initiative - 75/25 initiative - of screening and putting 75 million people with hypertension and diabetes on Standard Care by 2025.

WHO released
its first-ever
report on
Global impact
of
high BP



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RASHTRIYA VIGYAN PURASKAR

WHY IN NEWS?

- The Government of India introduced a new set of National Awards in the field of Science, Technology and Innovation known as "Rashtriya Vigyan Puraskar".

Key Points

- On the lines of civilian awards, the government introduced 56 Rashtriya Vigyan Puruskar under four categories — Vigyan Ratna, Vigyan Shri, Vigyan Yuva–Shanti Swarup Bhatnagar, and Vigyan Team.
 - Vigyan Ratna will recognise the lifetime achievement of scientists.
 - Vigyan Shri will recognise distinguished contributions to a field.
 - Vigyan Yuva Shanti Swarup Bhatnagar will encourage young scientists who have made exceptional contributions in their field.
 - Vigyan Team will recognise teams of three or more.
- The Rashtriya Vigyan Puraskar will be awarded in 13 domains – Physics, Chemistry, Biological Sciences, Mathematics and Computer Science, Earth Science, Medicine, Engineering Sciences, Agricultural Science, Environmental Science, Technology and Innovation, Atomic Energy, Space Science and Technology.
- There will only be three Vigyan Ratnas awarded yearly: 25 Vigyan Shri, 25 Vigyan Yuva, and 3 Vigyan Team.
 - Only Vigyan Yuva will have an age limit of 45 years.
- Nominations for the awards will be accepted every year between January 14 and February 28, which is recognised as National Science Day.
 - The awards will be announced on National Technology Day, May 11.
- On the other hand, the award ceremony will be held every year on the recently announced National Space Day, August 23, to mark the day India's Chandrayaan-3 landed on the Moon.



DID YOU KNOW?

- India observes National Technology Day every year on May 11 to remember the successful nuclear test in Pokhran in 1998.
- The touchdown site of Vikram Lander has been named as 'Shiv Shakti' and the crash site of Chandrayaan-2's lander in 2019 as 'Tiranga'.
- The Shanti Swarup Bhatnagar (SSB) awards, given by the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) since 1958
- Akin to the prestigious Padma awards, Rashtriya Vigyan Puraskar will not include any cash component; instead, they will likely bestow only a certificate and medallion on the awardee.



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ELEPHANT CORRIDORS IN INDIA

WHY IN NEWS?

- A new elephant corridor report released by the central government showed a 40 per cent increase in elephant corridors across 15 elephant range states in India.

Key Highlights

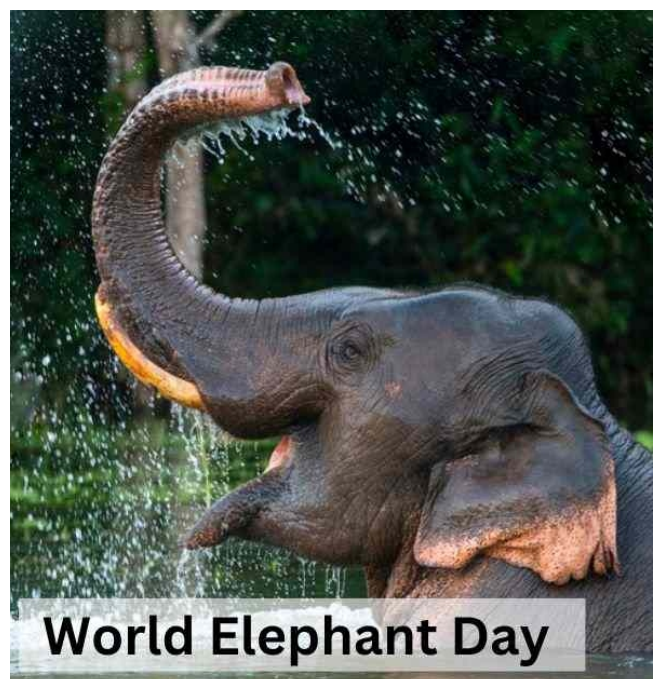
- The number of elephant corridors has increased to 150 against 88 registered by the Government of India in 2010. The elephant population in the country is estimated to be over 30,000.
- West Bengal has the most elephant corridors — 26 — amounting to 17 per cent of the total corridors.
- East central region contributed to 35 per cent, that is 52 corridors, while North East region was the second largest with 32 per cent number meaning 48 corridors in total.

Elephant corridors can be described as a strip of land that enables elephant movement between two or more friendly habitats. The corridors were reported by respective state governments and ground validation methods were used to verify them.

- Southern India registered 32, that is 21 per cent of the elephant corridors, while northern India was lowest with 18 corridors or 12 per cent.
- The increase in the elephant corridors also reflected that elephants have expanded their ranges in the Vidarbha region of Maharashtra neighbouring Chhattisgarh and southern Maharashtra bordering Karnataka.
- Elephants have also seen increased presence in Madhya Pradesh found in Sanjay Tiger reserves and Bandhavgarh.
- Besides that, ranges have also increased in northern Andhra Pradesh where the elephants access movement from Odisha.
- The majority of the corridors were noted to be within state boundaries and the intensity of the use of corridors has increased by 40 per cent.
- However, it showed that 19 per cent of the corridors, that is 29, showed a decrease in use while 10 others were seen impaired and demanding restoration for facilitating elephant movement.
 - The decrease in corridor use is attributed to habitat fragmentation, shrinkage and destruction.

DID YOU KNOW?

- Elephants are keystone species as well as the Natural Heritage Animal of India.
- According to the 2017 data, Karnataka had the highest number of elephants (6,049), followed by Assam (5,719) and Kerala (3,054).
- The Project Tiger division has been merged with Project Elephant and a new division with the name 'Project Tiger and Elephant Division' has been created under the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF&CC) in July 2023.
- On 9 April 2023, to commemorate 50 years of Project Tiger, the Prime Minister launched the International Big Cat Alliance (IBCA) in Mysuru, for conservation of seven big cats namely Tiger, Lion, Leopard, Snow Leopard, Cheetah, Jaguar and Puma harbouring our planet.
- Project Tiger was launched in 1973.
- Project Elephant was launched in 1992.
- World Elephant Day is observed globally on August 12. The theme for World Elephant Day 2023 is "Ending the Illegal Wildlife Trade".



World Elephant Day

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SUPREME COURT TO REVIEW IMMUNITY TO LEGISLATORS ON BRIBERY

WHY IN NEWS?

- A seven-judge bench of the Supreme Court reserved its verdict on whether lawmakers can claim immunity from criminal prosecution for taking bribes in connection with a speech or vote in Parliament or a state assembly.

Background

- The court was hearing a case pertaining to Sita Soren, an MLA in the Jharkhand Assembly, who was being prosecuted by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) for allegedly taking bribes for voting in the 2012 Rajya Sabha Poll.
- A seven-judge bench of Chief Justice of India DY Chandrachud, and Justices AS Bopanna, MM Sundresh, PS Narasimha, JB Pardiwala, Sanjay Kumar, and Manoj Misra is considering the correctness of the 1998 PV Narasimha Rao judgment that was referred last month to a larger bench of seven judges.
- In PV Narasimha, by a 3:2 majority, a five-judge bench of the apex court held that members of the parliament or state legislatures were immune from prosecution in bribery cases revolving around any speech or vote in the house, in the enjoyment of the parliamentary privilege conferred by Articles 105(2) and 194(2) of the Constitution.

- Article 105(2) - No member of Parliament shall be liable to any proceedings in any court in respect of anything said or any vote given by him in Parliament or any committee thereof, and no person shall be so liable in respect of the publication by or under the authority of either House of Parliament of any report, paper, votes or proceedings.
- The purpose of Article 105(2) is to ensure that members of Parliament can perform their duties without fear of consequences.
- Article 194(2) - No member of the Legislature of a State shall be liable to any proceedings in any court in respect of anything said or any vote given by him in the Legislature or any committee thereof, and no person shall be so liable in respect of the publication by or under the authority of a House of such a Legislature of any report, paper, votes or proceedings

- The majority, led by Justice SP Bharucha, however, clarified that the parliamentary privilege could only be claimed if the legislator in question upheld their end of the bargain for which they received they received a bribe.
- This verdict was doubted in an appeal by Jharkhand Mukti Morcha leader Sita Soren who was accused of accepting a bribe for a 2012 Rajya Sabha vote.
- She claimed immunity under Article 194(2) of the Constitution, but the Jharkhand High Court dismissed her plea, leading to her appeal in the Supreme Court.

DID YOU KNOW?

- It was the first time in the history of the Supreme Court that a seven-judge bench hearing was live-streamed. The bench comprised Chief Justice of India DY Chandrachud, AS Bopanna, MM Sundresh, PS Narasimha, JB Pardiwala, Sanjay Kumar, and Manoj Mishra.
- Before this, in 2017, a seven-judge sitting was held in a case related to the then Calcutta High Court judge CS Karnan.
- In 1998, a five-judge Constitution Bench in PV Narasimha Rao's case granted immunity to 10 MPs belonging to JMM and Janta Dal from prosecution for taking bribes to vote in favour of Narasimha Rao Government in a no-confidence motion.
- In 2007, another bench of the Supreme Court ruled in Raja Rampal's case that those who took money to ask questions in Parliament were liable to be expelled from the House permanently.



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UNITED NATIONS CLIMATE AMBITION SUMMIT

WHY IN NEWS?

- The United Nations Climate Ambition Summit (CAS) hosted by Secretary-General Antonio Guterres was held on September 20, 2023, in New York to accelerate climate action in the run-up to the 28th Conference of Parties (COP28) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

Key Points

- The Climate was marked by the absence of China, the United States and India — who collectively account for about 42% of global greenhouse gas emissions and are the top three emitters in that order.
- Only “first movers and doers” were invited to speak at the CAS — countries, institutions, and organisations that have shown climate leadership. Speakers touched on a range of topics including calls for phasing out fossil fuels — the “root” of the climate crisis — on the heels of a historic protest against fossil fuel expansion in New York.
- Perhaps the most stark absence was that of the United Kingdom's Prime Minister, who parallelly announced a possible rollback of climate policies, threatening the country's Net Zero goal.
- The aim of the CAS is to uphold the Paris Agreement's 1.5°C temperature limit, which seeks to prevent severe climate consequences by capping global warming at 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels.
- Brazil pledged to reinstate its original 2015 climate goals, emphasizing the need for more ambitious measures and a transition away from fossil fuels.
- Nepal announced a revised target of achieving Net Zero emissions by 2045 instead of 2050.
- Thailand expressed its determination to be Net Zero by 2050 and Portugal announced a goal to be carbon neutral by 2045, instead of 2050.
- All G-20 governments were asked to commit to presenting more ambitious NDCs featuring absolute emissions cuts by 2025.
- The summit emphasized the need to deliver climate justice, particularly to communities on the front lines of the climate crisis who are disproportionately affected.
- At the CAS, Canada, who was one of the largest expanders of fossil fuels last year, announced the development of an emissions cap framework for the oil and gas sector.
- The country was also one of the top five “Planet Wreckers” named in a recent report, on track to lead 51 per cent of oil and gas explorations by 2050 with the US, Australia, Norway and the UK.
- The European Union (EU) and Canada emphasised the call for covering at least 60 per cent of global emissions by carbon pricing.
- The EU stated that the current carbon pricing mechanisms cover only 23 per cent of global emissions and generate \$95 billion, presenting prospects of new revenue.
- Germany also announced the launch of the International Climate Club, which it will co-chair with Chile, aiming to decarbonise industrial sectors and scale up green growth.

DID YOU KNOW?

- Paris Climate Accord is a legally binding international treaty on climate change. It was adopted by 196 countries at the Conference of the Parties COP 21 in Paris in December 2015.
- India sets 2030 target to produce 50% of its energy need through non-fossil fuels.
- India aimed to create an additional carbon sink of 2.5 to 3 billion tonnes of CO₂-equivalent by 2030.
- India pledged to achieve net-zero emissions by 2070.
- The global stocktake (GST) aims to serve as a report card on the progress of countries under the 2015 Paris Agreement in achieving their climate action goals.
- The stocktake takes place every five years, with the first-ever stocktake scheduled to conclude at the UN Climate Change Conference (COP28) at the end of 2023.
- The UAE will host the 28th Conference of the Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP28) from November 30 to December 12, 2023.

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'STATUE OF ONENESS' OF ADI SHANKARACHARYA

WHY IN NEWS?

- Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan unveiled the 108-foot-tall 'Statue of Oneness' of Adi Shankaracharya on Mandhata mountain at Omkareshwar on September 21.

Key Features

- The 108-foot-high statue of Adi Shankaracharya in Omkareshwar is made of various types of metal.
- In this statue, Adi Shankaracharya is depicted as 12-year-old Acharya Shankar because he attained knowledge at this age.
- The statue of Adi Shankaracharya has been named the 'Statue of Oneness'.
- In this project of about Rs 2 thousand crores, apart from the statue, a museum focused on the life and philosophy of Shankaracharya named as Advaita Lok, Acharya Shankar International Institute of Advaita Vedanta for the study, research and propagation of Advaita philosophy will also be established.

What is Advaita Vedanta?

- It articulates a philosophical position of radical nondualism, a revisionary worldview which it derives from the ancient Upanishadic texts.
- According to Advaita Vedantins, the Upanishads reveal a fundamental principle of nonduality termed 'brahman', which is the reality of all things.
- The fundamental thrust of Advaita Vedanta is that the atman is pure non-intentional consciousness.



Who was Adi Shankaracharya?

- Adi Shankara, who is believed to have lived between 788 and 820 AD, was born in Kerala's Kaladi, situated on the bank of the Periyar River.
- He became a sannyasi at an early age and left his Brahmin household, where he is said to have made his way to Omkareshwar.
 - Here, he studied under his guru Govinda Bhagavatpada and soon became a proponent of Advaita Vedanta, challenging prevailing philosophical traditions – including Buddhism and Jainism.
- In his lifespan of 32 years, he is said to have visited all the important spiritual centres of the time — from Kanchi (Kancheepuram in Tamil Nadu) to Kamrup (Assam), and Kashmir and the Kedar and Badri dhams, as well as Sringeri, Ujjain, Kashi, Puri, and Joshimath.
- He is said to have authored 116 works. The most notable among them are the commentaries on the 10 Upanishads, the Brahmasutra and the Gita.

DID YOU KNOW?

- Statue of Equality – Installed in Hyderabad to commemorate the 11th-century Bhakti saint Sri Ramanujacharya on his 1,000th birth anniversary.
- Statue of Unity - In 2018, the PM inaugurated the in Gujarat's Kevadia in memory of former deputy Prime Minister Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel.
- The “largest” statue of B R Ambedkar outside India was inaugurated recently in Maryland on October 14.
- The 19-foot statue, named “Statue of Equality”, has been made by renowned artist and sculptor Ram Sutar, who also built the statue of Sardar Patel installed in Ahmedabad, Gujarat.

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FIVE EYES ALLIANCE

WHY IN NEWS?

- The recent allegations by Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau linking the killing of Khalistani leader Hardeep Singh Nijjar on Canadian soil to the Indian government has put the spotlight on the intelligence-sharing alliance 'Five Eyes' (or FVEY), which is believed to have provided the information that "helped" Canada.

About Five Eyes Alliance

- The 'Five Eyes' is a multilateral intelligence-sharing network shared by over 20 different agencies of five English-speaking countries — Australia, Canada, New Zealand, the United Kingdom and the United States.
- It is both surveillance-based and signals intelligence (SIGINT).
- Intelligence documents shared between the member countries are classified 'Secret—AUS/CAN/NZ/UK/US Eyes Only,' which gave the group its title 'Five Eyes.'
- The alliance's origins can be traced back to the Second World War to counter the Cold War Soviet threat.
- The UK and the US decided to share intelligence after successfully breaking German and Japanese codes, respectively.
- In 1943, the Britain-USA (BRUSA) agreement laid the foundations for what would become the UK-USA (UKUSA) agreement.
- BRUSA was signed to share intelligence information between the two countries to support US forces in Europe.
- Following this, the UKUSA (UK-USA) was signed in 1946. Canada joined it in 1949, and New Zealand and Australia did so in 1956, forming the alliance.
- The Agreement was not officially acknowledged though its existence was known about from the 1980s. But in 2010, the UKUSA agreement files were released.

How does the 'Five Eyes' network work?

- The five partner countries share a broad range of information and access to their respective intelligence agencies.
- Initially, the partners are assigned respective SIGINT mandates.
- The goalpost of the Five Eyes, however, has shifted following the collapse of the Soviet Union and the emergence of new global challenges like terrorism and the growing influence of China.
- The Five Eyes have become involved in ocean and maritime surveillance, scientific and defence intelligence analysis, medical intelligence, geospatial intelligence, counterintelligence, counterterrorism, and the continuous sharing of intelligence products via a secret collective database known as 'Stone Ghost'.
- In 2016, to increase cooperation and maintain closeness, the Five Eyes Intelligence Oversight and Review Council came into being. It includes the non-political intelligence oversight, review, and security entities of the Five Eyes countries.

5 EYES



9 EYES



14 EYES



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

QUICK FACTS



1. The **Maharashtra Government** is mulling the idea of **sterilising leopards** in the wake of its rise in population and instances of man-animal conflict. The government is likely to send a proposal on the same to the central government for approval. Gujarat's forest department has also proposed sterilisation of leopards, especially in and around Gir National Park.
2. The **National Green Tribunal (NGT)** recently pulled up the Madhya Pradesh government over the "very drastic" damage to water bodies and ordered it to stop the operation of cruise vessels as well as other motor-propelled boats in the **Bhoj wetland**. Also known as Bhopal Lake, the Bhoj wetland is a designated Ramsar site, making it a wetland of international importance according to the Convention of Wetlands signed in 1971.
3. The President of India inaugurated the '**National e-Vidhan Application**' (NeVA) and addressed the **Gujarat Legislative Assembly** at Gandhinagar today (September 13, 2023). NeVA is one of the 44 Mission Mode Projects (MMPs) under the "Digital India Programme" which aims to make the functioning of all the State Legislatures paperless by transforming them into a 'Digital House'.
4. **Bharat** becomes the 13th country in the world that can issue Internationally Accepted **OIML** (International Organization of Legal Metrology) Certificates. To sell a weight or measure in the International market an OIML Pattern Approval certificate is mandatory, which the Department of Consumer Affairs can issue now. OIML is an Intergovernmental organization which was established in 1955. Bharat became its member in 1956. It has 63 Member States and 64 Corresponding Members.
5. Union Minister for Skill Development and Entrepreneurship, Dharmendra Pradhan launched **Skill India Digital (SID)**, a digital platform aimed at synergising and transforming the skills, education, employment, and entrepreneurship landscape of India. SID is the digital public infrastructure (DPI) for the skilling, education, employment and entrepreneurship ecosystem of India.
6. Prime Minister Narendra of India inaugurated the first phase of the **India International Convention and Expo Centre (IICC)**, named **Yasho Bhoomi**, in Dwarka. With a total project area of over 8.9 lakh sqm and a total built-up area of more than 1.8 lakh sqm, it will find its place among the world's largest MICE (meetings, incentives, conferences, and exhibitions) facilities. Yasho Bhoomi also offers one of the largest exhibition halls in the world.
7. **Chief Justice of India DY Chandrachud** said that the process of **appointment of judges** will become more transparent. Objective parameters will be laid down for the appointment of judges to the high courts and the Supreme Court. He added that the assessment will be done on the basis of data available on the judges and judgments delivered by them.
8. In 2022, 17th September was declared to be celebrated annually as the **Hyderabad Liberation Day**. The day signifies the merger of the erstwhile Hyderabad State under Nizam rule with the Indian Union. The erstwhile Hyderabad princely state included regions now spread over Karnataka and Maharashtra, apart from Telangana. September 17, 1948 is the day Nizam of Hyderabad Mir Osman Ali Khan, the seventh in the line of the Asaf Jahi dynasty, had surrendered in the wake of Operation Polo, the military invasion of Hyderabad by Indian forces.
9. The Indian Coast Guard conducted **International Coastal Clean-up Day – 2023** (ICC-2023) across all Coastal States and Union Territories on 16 Sep 2023. The **International Coastal Clean-up Day** is held worldwide on the third Saturday of September every year under the aegis of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and South Asia Co-operative Environment Programme (SACEP) in the South Asian Region. The Indian Coast Guard has been coordinating this activity in India since 2006.
10. The **Indian Coast Guard Ship Samudra Prahari**, a specialized Pollution Control Vessel, has embarked on an overseas deployment to ASEAN countries from 11th September 2023 to 14th October 2023. This deployment is part of India's ASEAN initiatives for Marine Pollution Response, showcasing the Pollution Response capabilities of the Indian Coast Guard (ICG) and its commitment to addressing marine pollution issues and enhancing capacity in the region.
11. '**Operation Sajag**', a drill involving all stakeholders of the coastal security construct, was conducted by the Indian Coast Guard along the west coast on September 18, 2023. The drill facilitates revalidation of the coastal security mechanism and brings awareness among the





fishermen at sea. During the drill, extensive checking and verification of documents and crew passes of all fishing boats, barges and craft at sea was undertaken. A total of 118 ships including those from Customs, Marine Police, Ports & Indian Navy participated in the drill.

12. The **Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare** launched three initiatives, namely the **Kisan Rin Portal (KRP)**, **KCC Ghar Ghar Abhiyaan**, an ambitious campaign aiming to extend the benefits of the **Kisan Credit Card (KCC) Scheme** to every farmer across the nation and a manual on Weather Information Network Data Systems (WINDS). These initiatives aim to revolutionize agriculture, enhance financial inclusion, optimize data utilization, and improve the lives of farmers across the nation.
13. The umbrella scheme of "**SHREYAS**" comprises 4 central sector sub-schemes namely "Top Class Education for SCs", "Free Coaching Scheme for SCs and OBCs", "National Overseas Scheme for SCs" and "National Fellowship for SCs". Since all these sub-schemes are central sector schemes, state-wise data is not maintained for these schemes.
14. The Prime Minister Wi-Fi Access Network Interface (**PM WANI**) scheme is set to revolutionize public Wi-Fi in India. PM-WANI can be a potential game-changer for India's digital public infrastructure. It was launched by the Department of Telecommunication in December 2020, is one key scheme launched by the Indian government to bolster the penetration of public WiFi hotspots to establish a robust digital communication infrastructure throughout the nation, especially in rural areas.
15. The **National Medical Commission (NMC)** has been awarded the World Federation for Medical Education (WFME) Recognition Status for 10 years, the highest standards in medical education and accreditation. Indian medical graduates will now be able to practice or pursue post-graduation in countries including the USA, Canada, Australia and New Zealand.
16. **University Grants Commission (UGC)** has finalised the **National Higher Education Qualifications Framework (NHEQF)** to standardise qualifications and promote academic mobility. However, the implementation of this framework has raised concerns due to the presence of multiple guidelines, and frameworks, leading to confusion among stakeholders.
17. **Agumbe Rainforest Complex (ARC)**, in Karnataka long renowned for its exceptional rainfall and often referred to as the '**Cherrapunji of the South**,' is losing its historical status due to the installation of new rain gauges in the region. While Agumbe has been a rain gauge site for over a century, recent installations in areas like Nadpal and Mudradi have revealed higher rainfall levels, pushing Agumbe down the ranking. A rain gauge is a meteorological instrument used to measure the amount of precipitation, typically rainfall, that falls over a specific period of time in a particular location.
18. Union Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare launched an **AI Chatbot** for the **Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi (PM-KISAN) Scheme**. The AI Chatbot launch marks a significant step towards enhancing the efficiency and reach of the PM-KISAN scheme and also providing farmers with prompt, clear, and accurate responses to their queries.
19. Insurance regulator Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (**IRDAI**) has formed a steering committee, which will act as the apex decision-making body for the creation of its ambitious **Bima Sugam platform**, and it indicated that it will soon appoint a project consultant for which Request for Proposal (RFP) has already been issued.
20. The Forest Department conducted combing operations in the **Mukurthi National Park** and forest areas adjoining it to ensure that there was no illegal movement of people and poachers. Mukurthi National Park is located in the northwest corner of Tamil Nadu in the Western Ghats. It is a part of Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve (UNESCO World Heritage Site) along with Mudumalai Wildlife Sanctuary, Bandipur National Park, Nagarhole National Park, Wayanad Wildlife Sanctuary and Silent Valley.
21. In a remarkable initiative to revive and preserve the **2000-year-old technique** of shipbuilding known as the '**stitched shipbuilding method**', the Ministry of Culture and the Indian Navy have entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU). Throughout history, India has had a strong maritime tradition, and the use of stitched ships played a vital role in trade, cultural exchange, and exploration. These ships, constructed by stitching wooden planks together rather than using nails, offered flexibility and durability, making them less susceptible to

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damage from shoals and sandbars. Although the arrival of European ships led to a shift in shipbuilding techniques, the art of stitching ships has survived in a few coastal regions of India, primarily for small local fishing boats.

22. The **Parliament Standing Committee on Education** tabled a report during the special session of Parliament on the “**Implementation of the National Education Policy (NEP), 2020** in Higher Education.” The report noted that of the 1,043 universities functioning in the country, 70% are under the State Act and that 94% of students are in State or private institutions with just 6% of students in Central higher educational institutions, stressing the importance of States in providing higher education.
23. The Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas flagged off **India's first Green Hydrogen fuel cell bus** in **Delhi** on Monday while informing that the government is planning to roll 15 additional buses soon in the National Capital Region (NCR). Green Hydrogen Fuel Cells are a clean, reliable, quiet, and efficient source of high-quality electric power.
24. President of India inaugurated the annual general meeting and Biennial Conference of the **Asia Pacific Forum on Human Rights** in New Delhi celebrating the landmark **75th anniversary** of the Universal Declaration on Human Rights (**UDHR**).
25. Multiple Grand Slam winner **Leander Paes** emerged as the first Asian man to be nominated for the **International Tennis Hall of Fame** in the player category. Paes is a winner of 18 Grand Slam titles in doubles and mixed doubles, besides being a former doubles world No. 1. A Davis Cup mainstay for India for 30 years, Paes holds the competition's record with 43 doubles ties victories. In 1996, he became India's only Olympic medalist in tennis, earning bronze at the Atlanta Games.
26. **UNFPA** (United Nations Population Fund) India, in collaboration with the International Institute for Population Sciences (IIPS), unveiled the highly anticipated "**India Ageing Report 2023**." According to the UNFPA's India Ageing Report 2023, is that the population above 60 years will double from 10.5% or 14.9 crore (as on July 1, 2022) to 20.8% or 34.7 crore by 2050. With one in five individuals set to be senior citizens, there will be implications for health, economy, and society.
27. The **Election Commission** (EC) has told the Supreme Court that it is not mandatory to provide **Aadhaar numbers for linking** with the electoral roll, and it is considering issuing “appropriate clarificatory changes” in enrolment forms to reflect this.



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INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

QUICK FACTS



1. **South Korea** has expressed its will to join the **Quad grouping** and now the decision of expansion rests with the latter. Currently, Quad is a grouping of India, Australia, the US, and Japan formed on a common ground of democratic values of the countries. It aims to ensure and support a “free, open and prosperous” Indo-Pacific region.
2. **Ian Wilmut**, the British embryologist who led the team that created the first mammal cloned from an adult cell, popularly known as Dolly the Sheep, died at the age of 79. In 1996, the birth of Dolly, a cloned sheep at the Roslin Institute in Scotland, rocked the world, sparking both excitement and fear about the possibilities of cloning technology.
3. The **World Suicide Prevention Day (WSPD)** is observed on **September 10** every year and raises awareness about the far-reaching consequences of suicides. The World Suicide Prevention Day theme for 2021-2023 is "Creating Hope Through Action," which promotes the initiative to take action and create hope for those having suicidal thoughts.
4. Out of the **nine planetary boundaries**, humans have breached six: climate change, biosphere integrity, freshwater change, land system change, biogeochemical flows and novel entities. While atmospheric aerosol loading and ozone depletion remain within the constraints, ocean acidification is close to being breached. The broken boundaries show Earth's life-support systems have been driven far away from the safe operating space for humanity that existed during the Holocene period. The period, which began with the end of the last ice age (about 10,000 years ago) and during which modern civilizations evolved, was characterised by relatively stable and warm planetary conditions.
5. The **World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH)** released a landmark report showing encouraging progress in combatting antimicrobial resistance. Global antimicrobial use in animals has declined by 13% in 3 years, marking again a significant shift in the continuous efforts to preserve the efficacy of these critical medicines. Antimicrobial drugs, such as antibiotics, paved the way for better living conditions for humans and animals.
6. The **12th meeting of the Malaysia-India Defence Cooperation Committee (MIDCOM)** was held in New Delhi on September 19, 2023. During the meeting, both sides reviewed the outcomes of the two sub-committee meetings namely Sub Committee on Military Cooperation held on July 27, 2023, and Joint Sub Committee on Defence Science Technology and Industry Cooperation held on September 18, 2023.
7. **Biohacking** is a term used to describe various tips and tricks for enhancing the body's ability to function at peak performance—and maybe even extend one's lifespan. While certain modalities of biohacking may seem extreme, forms like meditation and intermittent fasting are fairly commonplace and time-tested, with extensive research supporting their use. The most well-known type of biohacking is genetic engineering, where individuals experiment with new technologies to enhance their physical appearance or capabilities.
8. A **new technology called "String"** has emerged, with the potential to **streamline the extraction of lithium**, a crucial component in batteries used in smartphones and electric vehicles. It involves the use of porous fibres twisted into strings, which have been meticulously engineered. Lithium production is a resource-intensive and time-consuming process as most of the Lithium produced in the world is extracted from Brine Reservoirs, located in Salt flats.
9. The self-declared republic of **Nagorno-Karabakh will cease to exist from next year (2024)**. This comes as the region's president signed a decree dissolving state institutions following its defeat to Azerbaijan, according to CNN. As per CNN, the Azerbaijani victory last week triggered a huge exodus of ethnic Armenians living in Nagorno-Karabakh and marked the end of decades of conflict, and potentially the end of centuries of Armenian presence in the region.
10. The **Year 2023** has recorded unprecedented temperatures. Scientists believe one of the reasons for this may be an underwater volcanic eruption of Hunga Tonga-Hunga Ha'apai in the South Pacific in 2022. The Hunga Tonga-Hunga Ha'apai volcano is in the western South Pacific Ocean, west of the main inhabited islands in the Kingdom of Tonga.
11. Three years ago, the United States mediated an agreement between the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain and Israel, promising to normalise ties between these Arab Gulf states and Israel. Since formalising the **Abraham Accords** in September 2020, the UAE and Israel have deepened their relations across a number of economic domains, as well as defence. Months after the two Arab nations signed on, two more joined the accords, Morocco and Sudan, and it seemed like the US was possibly on track to sign up even more Arab countries.





12. Indian Naval Ships Ranvijay and Kavaratti and submarine INS Sindhukesari participated in the 30th edition of the Singapore India Maritime Bilateral Exercise (**SIMBEX**), an annual bilateral Naval exercise between the Indian Navy and Republic of Singapore Navy (RSN), which is being conducted since 1994. SIMBEX holds the distinction of being the longest continuous naval exercise that the Indian Navy has with any other country. SIMBEX-2023 was held in **Singapore**.
13. The **International Rhino Foundation (IRF)** published the report, **State of the Rhino, 2023** which documents current population estimates and trends for the five surviving rhino species in Africa and Asia. Every year, World Rhino Day is observed on 22nd September to spread awareness for all five species of rhino and the work being done to save them. It was first announced by the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) - South Africa in 2010.
14. The **Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF)**, a partnership of 16 global organisations chaired by the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), has launched the **Joint Call to Action for Forests towards 2030**. They aim to highlight the need for increased action and political commitment to implement forest solutions in pursuit of the United Nations-mandated Sustainable Development Goals (SDG). The Call to Action for Forests Towards 2030 has four focal areas: Implementation and action; data, science and innovation; finance for forests; and communication and awareness-raising.
15. The **International Day of Sign Languages** is observed on **23 September**, every year. "A World Where Deaf People Can Sign Anywhere" is the theme of this year's Sign Language Day 2023. In 2018, as part of the International Week of the Deaf, the International Day of Sign Languages was observed for the first time. The International Week of the Deaf was first observed in September 1958.
16. The **Indian Navy's** warship, INS Sahyadri, participated in the **first trilateral Maritime Partnership Exercise** with the **Royal Australian Navy (RAN)** and **Indonesian Navy** from September 20-21, 2023. The exercise allowed the three nations to strengthen their partnership and improve their collective capability to support a stable, peaceful, and secure Indo-Pacific region.
17. NASA's Origins, Spectral Interpretation, Resource Identification, and Security-Regolith Explorer (**OSIRIS-REx**) **spacecraft**, launched on 8th September 2016, has successfully delivered the first asteroid samples from the **near-Earth asteroid Bennu** (formerly 1999 RQ36) to Earth after a seven-year journey, bringing valuable 4.5 billion-year-old samples.
18. **Philippine** officials vowed Monday to remove a **floating barrier placed by China's coast guard** to prevent Filipino fishing boats from entering a disputed lagoon in the South China Sea. They said the 300 metre-long barrier at the entrance to the lagoon at Scarborough Shoal is "illegal and illegitimate." The Chinese barrier denies Filipinos access to the rich fishing lagoon surrounded by underwater coral outcrops.
19. The **World Coffee Conference(WCC) & Expo 2023** arrived for the first time in Asia in the Indian city of **Bengaluru**. The 5th edition of the WCC was organized by the International Coffee Organization (ICO) in collaboration with the Coffee Board of India, the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, the Government of India, and the Government of Karnataka.
20. On the occasion of **World Tourism Day 2023**, the Ministry of Tourism organised the Global Launch of 'Travel for LiFE', a sectoral program under Mission LiFE, targeted towards the tourism sector, in partnership with the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC), United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO), and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) at Bharat Mandapam. Every year, World Tourism Day is celebrated on September 27. The theme for this year's World Tourism Day is "**Tourism and Green Investments**".
21. A total of **91 Indian universities** have secured spots in the World University Rankings 2024 announced by the **Times Higher Education (THE) magazine** recently, surpassing last year's count of 75. The most prominent Indian university in these rankings is the Indian Institute of Science (IISc) Bangalore, which has secured the top spot for the first time since 2017.
22. The **first UrbanShift Forum (Asia)** was held recently in New Delhi. UrbanShift is a Global Environment Facility(GEF)-funded program within Urban Development and the WRI Ross Center for Sustainable Cities. It is led by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and implemented in partnership with C40 Cities, the International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives (ICLEI), UNDP, the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the World Bank.

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

QUICK FACTS



1. **Paryushan** is one of the most important festivals of **Jain community people**. Digambar and Shwetambar both celebrate this festival with great enthusiasm and happiness. The festival is believed to have originated in the 6th century BC when the Jain teacher Mahavira taught his followers to abstain from violence and to focus on spiritual purity.
2. **Dr Swati Nayak**, an Indian scientist at the **International Rice Research Institute (IRRI)**, has been named the 2023 recipient of the prestigious Norman E Borlaug Award - **Borlaug Field Award** - for Field Research and Application, with the World Food Prize Foundation describing her as an "outstanding young scientist."
3. Veteran Bollywood actress **Waheeda Rehman**, 85, has been conferred with the **Dadasaheb Phalke Award**, which is given for "outstanding contribution to the growth and development of Indian cinema", for the year **2021**. She also received accolades such as the National Award for Best Female Actor, Padma Shri, and Padma Bhushan for her unwavering dedication, commitment, and professional excellence. The award is named after Dadasaheb Phalke, an Indian filmmaker who directed India's first full-length feature film, Raja Harishchandra (1913).
4. Prime Minister Narendra Modi paid rich tributes to freedom **fighter Bhagat Singh** on his **birth anniversary**, saying he will forever be a symbol of India's relentless fight for justice and liberty. Bhagat Singh was **executed by the British in 1931** at the age of 23. March 23 is observed as Martyrs' Day in their honour. He started a militant youth organization called the Naujawan Bharat Sabha.
5. The survival drama "**2018-Everyone is a Hero**," which is based on the devastating Kerala floods of that year, has been chosen as India's official entry to the **96th Academy Awards**, commonly known as the Oscars, set to take place on March 10, 2024, in Los Angeles. India won two Oscars at the 95th Academy Awards in 2023. "Naatu Naatu" from RRR won Best Original Song, and "The Elephant Whisperers" secured Best Documentary Short.
6. Jharkhand Chief Minister Hemant Soren has written to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, seeking recognition of the '**Sarna' religious code for tribals**, a long-standing demand in the tribal-dominated state. Concerns have been raised regarding the neglect of the Sarna Code, which could adversely affect tribal development policies under the Fifth Schedule and Sixth Schedule of the Constitution. Sarna religion, followed by a significant tribal population in Jharkhand, is unique, based on nature worship, and distinct from mainstream religions.



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TEST ZONE



PASSAGE - 1

For the first time, the chipsets or microchips capable of receiving and processing the signals of the indigenous navigation system NavIC will be designed and manufactured in India by an Indian company.

NavIC is a satellite-based navigation system, developed by the Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO), which enables users to determine their precise geographic location and track their movements anywhere in India and 1500 km beyond India's territorial boundary.

Not all smartphones and navigational gadgets (or navigators) are compatible with NavIC. To use and decode NavIC signals, a navigating gadget should have a NavIC-compatible chipset or microchip incorporated inside it.

NavIC is like GPS in its functioning and operational principles. The only difference is that GPS is owned and operated by the United States government while NavIC is owned and operated by India. NavIC covers all of the Indian subcontinent and offers a positional accuracy of 5 mtrs compared to 15-20 mtrs of GPS.

The receivers of NavIC signals such as NavIC-compatible smartphones and other navigators, typically incorporate these chipsets or microchips which are designed to decode and process the signals coming from the seven Indian satellites. Currently, they have been using chipsets made by foreign companies such as Qualcomm Technologies of USA and Mediatek Inc.

[Extracted, with edits and revisions, from: "NavIC navigation system will now be supported by microchips manufactured in India", ETGovernment.com]

Q.1 After convincing Apple to support navigation technology NavIC in some new iPhone 15 models, the Union government may mandate manufacturers to embed the homegrown GPS alternative in all smartphones sold in India by _____.

A 2025

C 2024

B 2026

D 2030

Q.2 Apart from India's NavIC, QZSS (nickname of Michibiki - meaning to 'guide' or 'show the way') is a _____ regional satellite navigation system.

A Chinese

C Japanese

B Russian

D European

Q.3 NavIC was recognised by the IMO as a part of the World-Wide Radio Navigation System (WWRNS) for operation in the Indian Ocean Region in 2020. What does IMO stand for?

A International Maritime Organization

C International Meteorological Organization

B Indian Maritime Organization

D Indian Meteorological Organization

Q.4 Currently, there are four navigation global systems viz., GPS, GLONASS, Galileo, and BeiDou are operational. GLONASS, a space-based global navigation satellite system, is developed by –

A Japan

C European Union

B Russia

D China

Q.5 India's navigation system was earlier known as IRNSS (Indian Regional Navigation Satellite System). The name NavIC was coined by the Prime Minister of India on the occasion of the completion of the constellation in –

A 2014

C 2016

B 2015

D 2017

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

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PASSAGE - 2

The delicate ozone layer is a shield of gas that protects our planet from harmful parts of the Sun's radiation, playing an important role in preserving life on Earth. [1] this year is celebrated as Ozone Day under the theme "Montreal Protocol: Fixing the ozone layer and reducing climate change."

The ozone layer is on track to recover completely within the next four decades, thanks to the global phaseout of ozone-depleting chemicals. A panel of experts backed by the United Nations confirmed this during research presented at the American Meteorological Society's 103rd annual meeting in January.

According to the report, the ozone layer should recover to values before the appearance of the ozone hole by around 2066 over the Antarctic, 2025 over the Arctic and 2040 for the rest of the world if current conservation policies remain in place.

Ozone is a molecule that is made up of three oxygen atoms. A layer of this gas sits in our planet's stratosphere between 15 and 30 kilometres above the surface. It absorbs a portion of the radiation from the Sun, preventing it from reaching the planet. Importantly it prevents UVB radiation from reaching the Earth and harming humans and other living beings.

Ozone molecules are constantly formed and destroyed in the stratosphere. If it were not for humans, the total amount of ozone in the layer would remain constant over time. But the ozone molecules in the atmosphere get destroyed when they come in contact with bromine and chlorine atoms released by human-made chemicals.

[Extracted, with edits and revisions, from: "Ozone Day 2023: Celebrating the success of the Montreal Protocol", by The Indian Express]

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

- | | |
|----------------------|-----------------------|
| A October 5 | C September 16 |
| B November 21 | D December 15 |

Q.2 Ozone Layer exists in the Stratosphere, between 10 KM and 40 KM above the Earth's surface and protects us from UV radiation from the Sun. Ozone formed in the stratosphere is called stratospheric ozone or –

- | | |
|--------------------------|----------------------|
| A Good Ozone | C Bad Ozone |
| B Saturated Ozone | D Light Ozone |

Q.3 Under _____, the Montreal Protocol came into force in 1987 to repair the ozone layer to protect the earth's Ozone Layer by phasing out the production and consumption of Ozone Depleting Substances for end applications.

- | | |
|---------------------------|----------------------------|
| A Kigali Amendment | C Basel Convention |
| B Earth Summit | D Vienna Convention |

Q.4 When did India successfully join the Montreal Protocol?

- | | |
|---------------|---------------|
| A 1987 | C 1995 |
| B 1991 | D 1997 |

Q.5 India has to reduce its Hydrochlorofluorocarbons (HCFCs) use by 80% by the year _____, while China and the United States have to achieve the same target by the year 2045 and 2034 respectively.

- | | |
|---------------|---------------|
| A 2035 | C 2050 |
| B 2040 | D 2047 |

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

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PASSAGE - 3

Ahead of the Madhya Pradesh Assembly polls, Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan unveiled a 108-foot statue of Hindu saint Adi Shankaracharya. The “Ekatmata Ki Pratima” statue, also known as the [1], was built in Omkareshwar, a temple town that is home to one of Lord Shiva’s 12 Jyotirlingas. It serves as a monumental tribute to the legacy and profound teachings of Adi Shankaracharya.

The multi-metal towering statue is located in Omkareshwar, positioned atop the scenic Mandhata hill beside the Narmada River. The monument is an 11-year-old representation of the renowned saint, who is considered by Hindus as the reincarnation of Lord Shiva. It is a unique statue in the world since it is standing in a walking position.

Adi Shankaracharya’s main contribution, the commentary on Bharmasutrabhasya, a foundational text of the Vedanta school of Hinduism that emphasises the idea of Oneness, is commemorated together with his life and philosophy.

A foundation-laying ceremony for Advait Lok, a projected corridor that would follow the path of the Mahakal Lok established in the Mahakaleshwar Temple in Ujjain, was also scheduled by the Chief Minister.

A total of 15.6 hectares will be used to construct the projected Advait Lok. At the location, a museum dedicated to Adi Shankaracharya’s life is also being considered.

Born in present-day Kerala, Saint Shankaracharya attained enlightenment in Omkareshwar. “He had walked over 1600 kilometres through forests. He found a Guru there and after gaining knowledge from there he moved towards Kashi (Varanasi in Uttar Pradesh). The entire country, which was in a state of cultural disintegration at that time, was completely united.

[Extracted, with edits and revisions, from: “[1]”: All about the new 108-feet Adi Shankaracharya statue in MP’s Omkareshwar”, Firstpost]

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

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="radio"/> A Statue of Equality | <input type="radio"/> C Statue of Oneness |
| <input type="radio"/> B Statue of Unity | <input type="radio"/> D Statue of Equity |

Q.2 The “largest” statue of B R Ambedkar outside India was inaugurated recently in Maryland on October 14. The 19-foot statue is known as “_____”.

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="radio"/> A Statue of Oneness | <input type="radio"/> C Statue of Equity |
| <input type="radio"/> B Statue of Equality | <input type="radio"/> D Statue of Unity |

Q.3 In 2018, the Prime Minister of India inaugurated the world’s largest statue of former deputy Prime Minister Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel in Gujarat’s Kevadia. This statue is known as –

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="radio"/> A Statue of Oneness | <input type="radio"/> C Statue of Equity |
| <input type="radio"/> B Statue of Equality | <input type="radio"/> D Statue of Unity |

Q.4 In July 2022, the Union Home Minister virtually unveiled a statue of Swamy Ramanujacharya in Srinagar, located in a temple in the Sonwar region. This statue is known as -

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="radio"/> A Statue of Peace | <input type="radio"/> C Statue of Equality |
| <input type="radio"/> B Statue of Oneness | <input type="radio"/> D Statue of Unity |

Q.5 In February 2022, Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the 216-foot tall statue of the 11th-century Hindu saint Ramanujacharya. This statue of Ramanujacharya is known as –

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="radio"/> A Statue of Peace | <input type="radio"/> C Statue of Equality |
| <input type="radio"/> B Statue of Oneness | <input type="radio"/> D Statue of Unity |

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

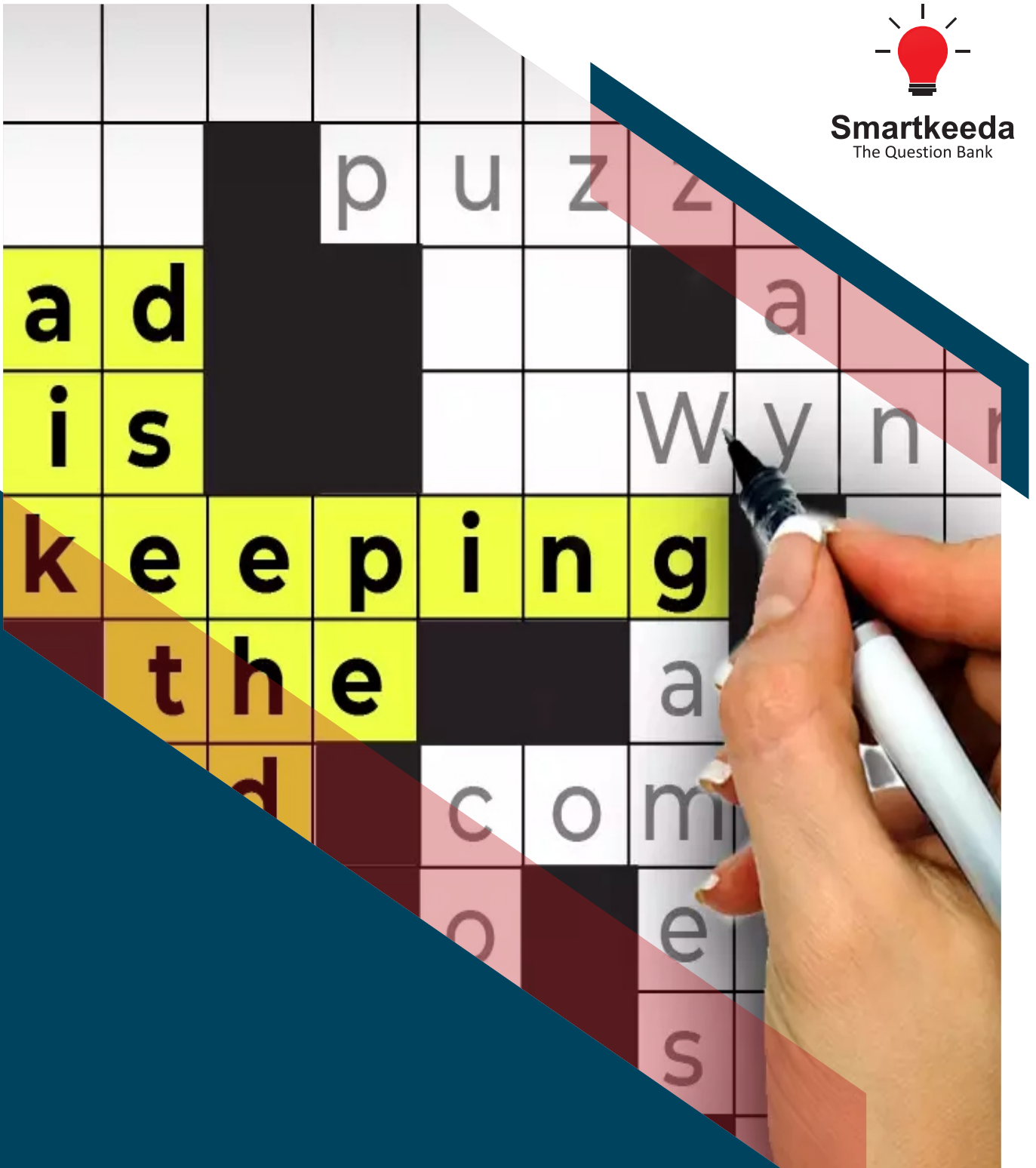
Answers

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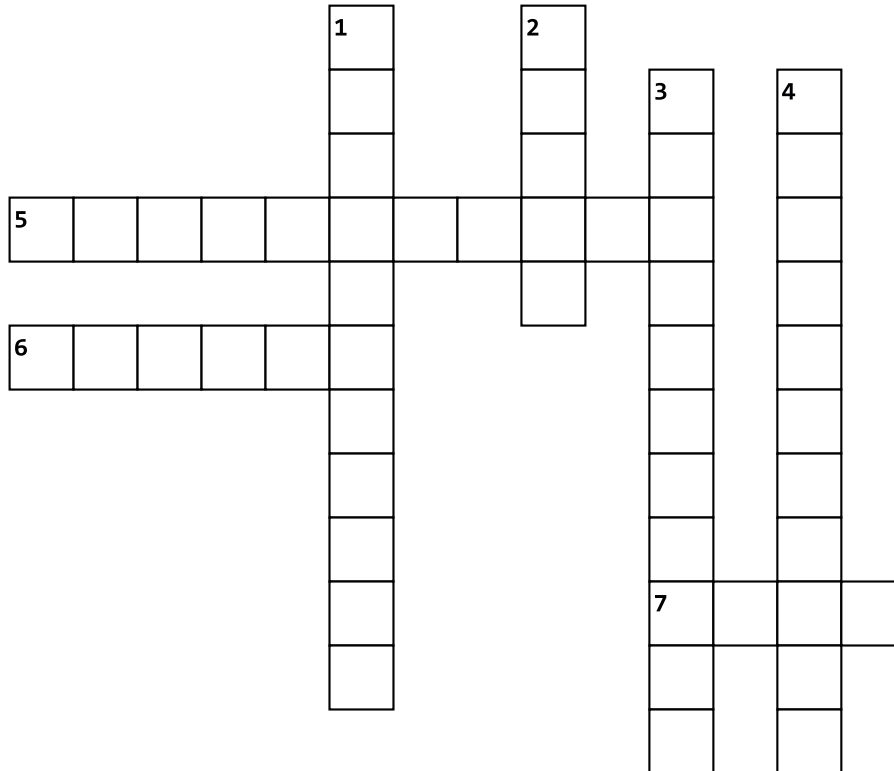
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CROSSWORD CORNER



CROSSWORD - 1



Across

- 5.** Emerged as the first Asian man to be nominated for the International Tennis Hall of Fame in the player category
- 6.** Becomes the 13th country in the world that can issue internationally accepted OIML Certificates
- 7.** A wetland of international importance in Bhopal

Down

- 1.** International Coastal Clean-up Day
- 2.** Operation which is conducted by Indian Coast Guard along the west coast on September 18, 2023
- 3.** Hyderabad Liberation Day
- 4.** India International Convention and Expo Centre (IICC), named located in Dwarka

Answers

- | | | | |
|---|--|---|--------------|
| 1 | 16 September | 4 | Yashobhooni |
| 2 | Safag | 3 | 17 September |
| 3 | Hyderabad Liberation Day | 6 | Bharat |
| 4 | India International Convention and Expo Centre (IICC), named located in Dwarka | 7 | Bhopal |
| 5 | Leander Paes | | |

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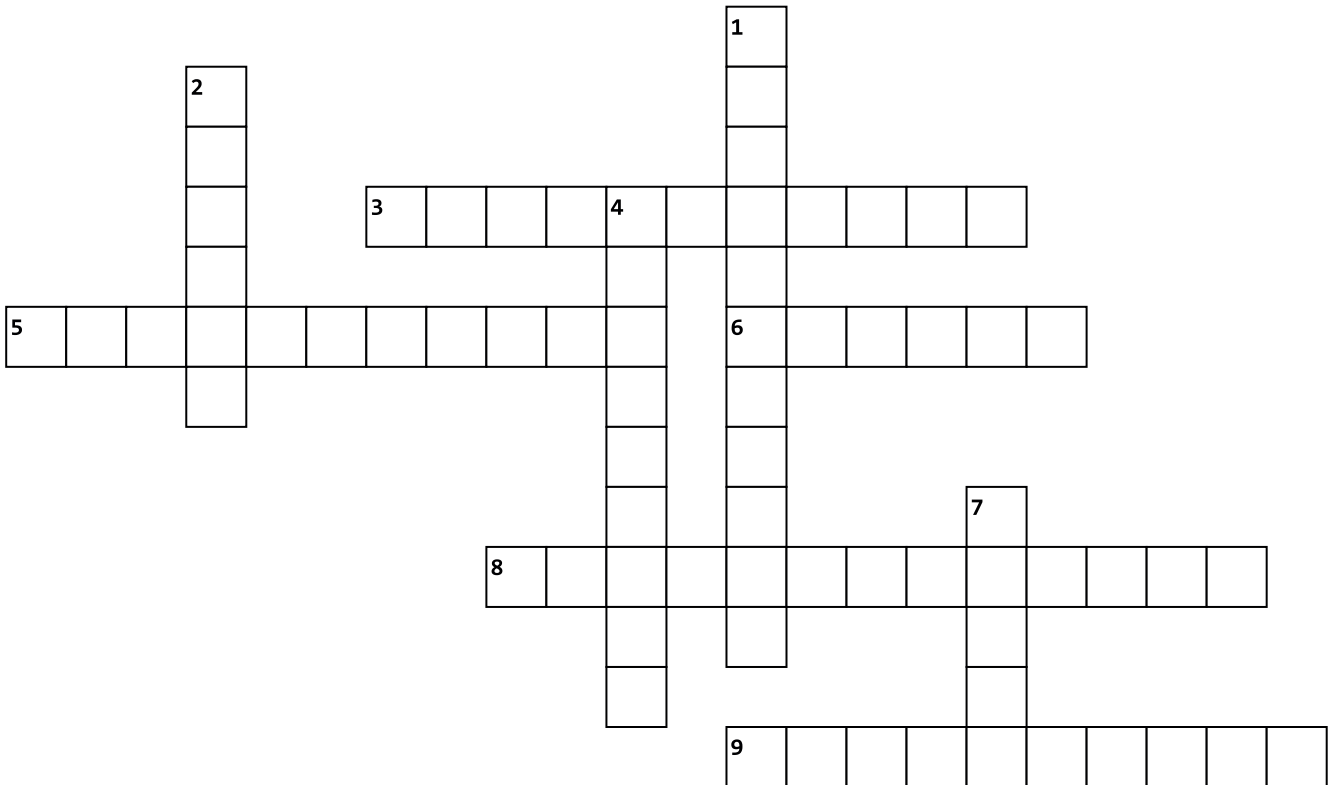
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CROSSWORD - 2



Across

3. World Tourism Day
5. World Suicide Prevention Day
6. 2000-year-old technique of shipbuilding known as the 'stitched shipbuilding method' in India
8. Conferred with the Dadasaheb Phalke Award for the year 2021
9. Recipient of the prestigious 2023 Borlaug Field Award

Down

1. International Day of Sign Languages
2. Singapore India Maritime Bilateral Exercise
4. One of the most important festivals of Jain community people
7. India's first Green Hydrogen fuel cell bus was flagged off

Answers

3	SwatiNayak	6	Tankai	3	27September
2	Waheedarehman	5	10September	2	SIMBEX
1	Delhi	4	Paryushan	1	23September

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