



WEEKLY
CURRENT
AFFAIRS
PDFs



November 2024



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NATIONAL AFFAIRS / GOVERNMENT SCHEME

1. PM Modi's Cabinet Approves Key Schemes on Oct 24, 2024.

The Union Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister (PM) Narendra Modi approved various schemes and projects on October 24, 2024. The approvals are as follows:

- Establishment of ₹1,000 crore Venture Capital Fund for the Space Sector under the aegis of IN-SPACE.
- Two Railway projects worth ₹6,798 crore to be completed in 5 years.
- New Amaravati Railway line connectivity with an expenditure of ₹2,245 crore.

Key Points:-

- (i) A 3.2-km-long railway bridge will be constructed on the Krishna River to develop the railway line.
- (ii) It will offer direct connectivity with Hyderabad, Chennai, Kolkata, and Nagpur, while also connecting Nagpur to Delhi and Hyderabad to Mumbai.
- (iii) The new rail line project, Errupalem-Amaravati-Namburu, will pass through NTR Vijayawada and Guntur districts in Andhra Pradesh and Khammam district in Telangana, serving as a parallel route to the existing Howrah-Chennai line.

2. Union Minister Jyotiraditya M. Scindia Launches "International Incoming Spoofed Calls Prevention System."

On 22nd October 2024, Union Minister Jyotiraditya Madhavrao Scindia, Ministry of Communications (MoC) and Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region (MDONER) launched the "International Incoming Spoofed Calls Prevention

System" at the Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL) Bhawan in New Delhi, Delhi.

- The system aims to reduce fraudulent calls that appear with a +91 (India) prefix but originate from abroad.
- This launch marks another milestone in the Department of Telecommunications (DoT)'s efforts to create a safer digital environment and protect citizens from cyber-crime.

Key Points:-

- (i) Key People: Union Minister of State (MoS) Dr. Chandra Sekhar Pemmasani, MoC; Dr. Neeraj Mittal, Secretary of the Department of Telecommunications (DoT), and other senior officers attended the event.
- (ii) The system was developed by the DoT under the MoC in collaboration with Telecom Service Providers (TSPs) to detect and block incoming international spoofed calls intended for Indian telecom subscribers.
- (iii) The integrated system became operational on 17th October 2024 and, within 24 hours, successfully identified and blocked 1.35 crore (13.5 million) or 90% of all incoming international calls with Indian phone numbers flagged as spoofed.

3. India and WHO Jointly Host 19th International Conference of Drug Regulatory Authorities in New Delhi.

The Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation (CDSCO), Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW), India hosted the 19th International Conference of Drug Regulatory Authorities (ICDRA) in collaboration with the World Health Organisation (WHO).

- This marks the first time India has hosted the ICDRA since its inception in 1980.

- The conference was held from 14th October to 18th October 2024 at Yashobhoomi, India International Convention Centre (IICC) in New Delhi, Delhi.

Key Points:-

(i) Theme of 19th ICDRA: "Smart Regulation: Delivering Quality Assured Medical Products for All".

(ii) The conference was inaugurated by Union Minister Jagat Prakash Nadda, MoH&FW.

(iii) The first 2 days of the conference were designated as PRE-ICDRA and the remaining 3 days were designated as ICDRA.

4. ESIC Medical Benefit Council Approves Integration of ESI Scheme with AB-PMJAY.

Employees' State Insurance Corporation (ESIC) Medical Benefit Council Approves Convergence of ESI Scheme with Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB PM-JAY) to Enhance Healthcare Access for ESI Beneficiaries

- The decision was made during the 86th Medical Benefit Council meeting, chaired by Ashok Kumar Singh, Director General (DG) of ESIC, in New Delhi, Delhi.

- This initiative aims to improve medical services, with provisions for annual health check-ups and awareness camps focused on early diagnosis and better healthcare delivery.

Key Points:-

(i) The council also approved the rollout of the Common Support Mission (CSM) to strengthen ESI's medical service delivery in states, emphasizing an Insured Persons (IP)-centric

approach.

(ii) AB PM-JAY, launched on September 23, 2018, is the world's largest health assurance scheme. It provides health coverage of Rs 5 lakh per family annually for secondary and tertiary hospitalization care to over 12 crore vulnerable families, covering the bottom 40% of India's population.

5. German Chancellor Olaf Scholz Pays Official Visit to India for 7th Intergovernmental Consultations with PM Modi (24th-26th October 2024).

Olaf Scholz, Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany, paid an official visit to India, at the invitation of Prime Minister (PM) Narendra Modi, from 24th to 26th October 2024 for the 7th Intergovernmental Consultations (IGC).

- India and Germany signed several Memorandum of Understandings (MoUs) and agreements to boost bilateral relations in the presence of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and German Chancellor Olaf Scholz in New Delhi.

- The year 2024 commemorates the 50th anniversary of the signing of the Inter-Governmental Agreement on Cooperation in Scientific Research and Technological Development, which established the foundation for Indo-German collaboration in science, technology, research, and innovation.

Key Points:-

(i) On 25 October 2024, PM Modi and Chancellor Scholz co-chaired the 7th Intergovernmental Consultations (7th IGC). Chancellor Scholz was accompanied by senior Ministers in his cabinet for the IGC consultations.

(ii) PM Modi and Chancellor Scholz addressed the 18th Asia Pacific Conference of German Business (APK 2024) being held in New Delhi, Delhi.

6. Union Minister Rajeev Ranjan Singh Launches Pandemic Fund Project and 21st Livestock Census to Enhance Animal Health Security.

On 25th October 2024, Union Minister Rajeev Ranjan Singh, alias Lalan Singh, Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry, and Dairying (MoFAH&D), launched the Pandemic Fund Project, a USD 25 million initiative funded by the Group-20 (G20) Pandemic Fund.

- This project aims to strengthen animal health security in India for pandemic preparedness and response during an event held in New Delhi, Delhi.
- The "Animal Health Security Strengthening in India for Pandemic Preparedness and Response" initiative is designed to reduce risks associated with zoonotic diseases that can spread from animals to humans.
- Key activities under the project include strengthening and integrating disease surveillance and Early Warning Systems (EWS), upgrading and expanding the laboratory network, and building capacity for data analytics and risk communication, among others.

Key Points:-

- (i) The Union Minister also launched the 21st Livestock Census, which will be conducted until February 2025 at an estimated cost of Rs 200 crore.
- (ii) Union Minister of State (MoS) George Kurian, S.P. Singh Bhagel (MoFAH&D), Amitabh Kant (G20 Sherpa), Professor Dr. V.K. Paul (Member, Health, NITI Aayog), Alka Upadhyaya (Secretary, DAHD), and representatives from all 36 states and Union Territories (UTs) were present at the event.

7. "Union Ministers Launch 'Gram Panchayat-Level Weather Forecasting' Initiative at Vigyan Bhawan".

Union Minister Rajiv Ranjan Singh (Lalan Singh), Ministry of Panchayati Raj (MoPR), along with Dr. Jitendra Singh, Minister of State (Independent Charge), Ministry of Science and Technology (MoS&T), and Minister of State (MoS) Satya Pal Singh Baghel, MoPR, launched the 'Gram Panchayat-Level Weather Forecasting' initiative at Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi.

- This initiative aims to provide daily weather updates to Gram Panchayats, covering temperature, rainfall, wind speed, and cloud cover.
- This marks the first time that localized weather forecasts will be available at the Gram Panchayat level, developed in collaboration with MoPR and the India Meteorological Department (IMD), Ministry of Earth Sciences (MOES).

Key Points:-

- (i) The initiative provides 5-day daily weather forecasts and the ability to check hourly weather updates.
- (ii) Weather forecasts will be accessible via digital platforms such as the Meri Panchayat app, eGramSwaraj, Mausamgram, and Gram Manchitra, promoting local governance and transparency.
- (iii) Mausamgram, an IMD initiative, delivers location-specific weather forecasts at the Gram Panchayat level under the motto 'HAR HAR MAUSAM HAR GHAR MAUSAM' (weather information for every household, anytime). It offers hourly forecasts for up to 36 hours, 3-hourly updates for the next five days, and 6-hourly forecasts for days six to ten.

8. MoF Raised MUDRA Loan Limit under Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana (PMMY) from Rs 10 Lakh to Rs 20 Lakh.

The Department of Financial Services (DFS) under the Ministry of Finance (MoF) has raised the Mudra loan limit under the Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana (PMMY) from Rs 10 lakh to Rs 20 lakh under the new "Tarun Plus" category, effective from October 24, 2024, to encourage entrepreneurship in the country.

- Borrowers who have previously availed and successfully repaid loans under the "Tarun" category will now be eligible for funding between Rs 10 lakh and Rs 20 lakh.

Key Points:-

The Credit Guarantee Fund for Micro Units (CGFMU) will extend guarantee coverage for these enhanced loans, reinforcing the Government of India's (GoI) commitment to fostering a strong entrepreneurial ecosystem in India.

9. Department of Pension and Pensioners' Welfare (DoPPW) Pensioners Turning 80 are Eligible to Get Additional Pension.

The Department of Pension and Pensioners' Welfare (DoPPW), under the Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions (MoPPGP), stated that Central Government Pensioners turning 80 are eligible for an additional pension.

- On 18th October 2024, the DoPPW released an office memorandum outlining the detailed guidelines on additional pensions for pensioners turning 80.
- As per the provisions of Sub Rule 6 of Rule 44 of Central Civil Services (CCS) (Pension) Rules 2021 [erstwhile Rule 49(2-A) of CCS (Pension) Rules 1972], after completion of eighty years of age or above by a

retired Government servant, an additional pension or compassionate allowance is admissible under the rules.

- A compassionate pension is a special allowance granted by the government to an employee or their family in cases such as the employee's death (including by suicide) while in service, retirement on medical grounds before age 55 (or 57 for former Group 'D' government servants), or if the employee's disablement or death is linked to their government service.

Key Points:-

- The additional pension or compassionate allowance will be disbursed as follows: 20% of the basic pension for individuals aged 80 to less than 85 years, 30% for those aged 85 to less than 90 years, 40% for individuals aged 90 to less than 95 years, and 50% for those aged 95 to less than 100 years.
- For individuals aged 100 years or more, the additional pension or compassionate allowance will be 100% of the basic pension.

10. IndiaAI and Meta Launch "Srijan" GenAI Center of Excellence at IIT Jodhpur.

IndiaAI, an initiative under the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY), in partnership with Meta Platforms, Inc., has announced the launch of the "Srijan" Center for Generative AI (GenAI CoE) at the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Jodhpur, Rajasthan.

- The initiative, named "Srijan" (सृजन - meaning "creation"), is designed to enhance India's open-source Artificial Intelligence (AI) ecosystem by driving research, innovation, and skill development.

Key Points:-

(i) Along with this center, IndiaAI and Meta, in collaboration with the All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE), have launched the "YuvAi Initiative for Skilling and Capacity Building" to empower India's youth in AI.

(ii) S. Krishnan, Secretary of the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY), highlighted that the partnership marks a significant step toward realizing India's vision of a strong and sustainable AI ecosystem.

11. MOYAS Announces Replacement of Dhyan Chand Lifetime Award with Arjuna Lifetime Award.

The Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports (MoYAS) announced the discontinuation of the Dhyan Chand Award for lifetime achievement and the introduction of the Arjuna Award (Lifetime) starting from 2024.

- The Arjuna Award (Lifetime) will replace the Dhyan Chand Award to streamline India's various sporting honours.
- The Arjuna Award (Lifetime) will recognize lifetime contributions to sports development.
- To honor the Khelo India scheme, the Maulana Abul Kalam Azad (MAKA) Trophy will be awarded to the university with the overall top performance in the Khelo India University Games.

Key Points:-

(i) Instituted in 2002, the Dhyan Chand Lifetime Award is presented annually to individuals excelling in disciplines featured in the Olympic Games, Paralympic Games, Asian Games, Commonwealth Games, and others.

(ii) The award consists of a statue of Dhyan Chand, a certificate, a ceremonial dress, and a cash prize of 10 lakh rupees.

(iii) In 2023, the Dhyan Chand Lifetime Award was

presented to former shuttler Manjusha Kanwar, ex-hockey player Vineet Kumar, and kabaddi player Kavitha Selvaraj.

12. SIMBEX 2024 India-Singapore Naval Exercise Commences Near Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh.

On October 23-29, 2024, the 31st edition of the joint Singapore-India Maritime Bilateral Exercise (SIMBEX) 2024 was conducted off the coast of Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh. This annual event aims to enhance naval cooperation between the Indian Navy (IN) and the Republic of Singapore Navy (RSN).

- The exercise is divided into two phases: the Harbour Phase from October 23 to 25 at Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh, and the Sea Phase from October 28 to 29 in the Bay of Bengal.
- Harbour Phase (October 23-25) is Conducted at the Eastern Naval Command in Visakhapatnam, this phase focuses on fostering interpersonal relationships through cultural exchanges and sports activities among personnel from both navies. It also includes subject matter expert exchanges and pre-sail briefings.
- Sea Phase (October 28-29) is Held in the Bay of Bengal, this phase involves advanced naval drills, including live weapon firings, Anti-Submarine Warfare (ASW) training, and tactical maneuvers. RSN deployed its ship RSS Tenacious, along with helicopters, for these exercises.

Key Points:-

(i) The opening ceremony was held onboard Indian Naval Ship (INS) Shivalik.

(ii) Shivalik-class frigate INS Shivalik, equipped with an MH-60R Seahawk, a Sindhughosh-class submarine, a P-81 maritime patrol aircraft, and two MiG-29K fighter jets.

13. Maharashtra Government Renames Maharashtra State Skills University in Honor of Ratan Tata.

The Maharashtra government has decided to rename the Maharashtra State Skills University as "Padma Vibhushan Ratan Tata Skills University" in honor of the late industrialist and philanthropist Ratan Tata, recognizing his immense contributions to social causes, education, and skill development in India.

- This decision follows a proposal by the Maharashtra Cabinet, led by Chief Minister (CM) Eknath Shinde, recommending that the central government confer the Bharat Ratna, India's highest civilian award, to Ratan Tata.

Key Points:-

(i) The government also announced that the Udyog Bhavan in Mumbai will be renamed as "Ratan Tata Udyog Bhavan."

(ii) The Department of Industry, Maharashtra, revealed that the Udyog Ratna Award will be renamed the "Ratan Tata Udyog Ratna Award." Ratan Tata was the first recipient of this award in 2023.

14. "Prime Minister Narendra Modi Inaugurates Multiple Projects During Gujarat Visit on 28th October 2024".

Narendra Modi, Prime Minister (PM) of India, visited and inaugurated various projects in Gujarat on 28th October 2024. PM Modi, along with Pedro Sanchez, Prime Minister (PM) of the Government of Spain, jointly inaugurated the TATA Aircraft Complex for manufacturing C-295 aircraft at TATA Advanced Systems Limited (TASL) Campus in Vadodara, Gujarat.

- PM Modi also visited Laxmi Vilas Palace in Vadodara.

- He inaugurated and laid the foundation stone for various development projects worth over Rs 4,800 crores at Lathi, Amreli.

Key Points:-

(i) PM Modi, along with Spanish PM Pedro Sanchez, jointly inaugurated the TATA Aircraft Complex for manufacturing C-295 aircraft at TATA Advanced Systems Limited (TASL) Campus in Vadodara, Gujarat.

(ii) In addition to TATA, Bharat Electronics Ltd. and Bharat Dynamics Ltd., private Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises will contribute to this programme.

(iii) The foundation stone of the Vadodara FAL was laid by PM Modi in October 2022.

INTERNATIONAL

1. Israel Becomes 69th Member Country of the Asian Development Bank.

Israel has officially become the 69th member and 20th non-regional member of the Asian Development Bank (ADB) effective 27th September 2024, after meeting all membership requirements.

- Israeli Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich will represent Israel at the ADB.

- To become an ADB member, a country must be part of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP) or be a non-regional developed country.

Key Points:-

(i) Israel submitted its formal application for ADB membership in January 2022.

(ii) The ADB Board of Governors approved Israel's membership on 14th April 2022 through

Resolution no. 414: "Membership of Israel and Increase in Authorized Capital Stock."

(iii) By joining the ADB, Israel seeks to strengthen its influence in Asia and enhance strategic ties and trade relationships.

2. According to 2024 Global MPI Report "1.1 Billion Poor Reside in Conflict Zones".

According to the Global Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) 2024: Poverty amid Conflict, 1.1 billion (18.3%) out of 6.1 billion people across 112 countries live in acute multidimensional poverty.

- A staggering 455 million (40%) of the world's poor reside in countries experiencing war, fragility, and/or low peacefulness, hindering and even reversing progress made in poverty reduction.

- As per the report, India, with 234 million people, has the largest number of people living in poverty, followed by Pakistan (93 million), Ethiopia (86 million), Nigeria (74 million), and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) (66 million).

Key Points:-

(i) The report was jointly released by the Human Development Report Office of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative (OPHI) based at the University of Oxford on 17th October 2024, which is observed annually as the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty.

(ii) According to the report, over half of the 1.1 billion poor people, i.e., 584 million, are children under the age of 18. Globally, approximately 28% of children live in poverty compared with 13.5% of adults.

3. The Philippines and UNDRR Co-Host the 2024 Asia-Pacific Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction.

The Government of the Philippines, in partnership with the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR), hosted the 2024 Asia-Pacific Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction (APMCDRR) from October 14th to 18th, 2024, at the Philippine International Convention Center in Manila, Philippines.

- The conference was officially inaugurated by Bongbong Marcos, President of the Republic of the Philippines.

Key Points:-

(i) Theme of 2024 APMCDRR: "Surge to 2030: Enhancing ambition in Asia Pacific to accelerate disaster risk reduction."

(ii) The conference was structured around 3 thematic pillars and 4 cross-cutting themes.

(iii) The Indian delegation was led by Union Minister of State (MoS), Nityanand Rai, Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA), who participated in APMCDRR 2024.

4. PM Modi's Visit to Russia from 22nd to 23rd October for the 16th BRICS Summit in Kazan.

Prime Minister (PM) Narendra Modi visited Russia from 22nd to 23rd October 2024 to attend the 16th BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa) Summit in Kazan, Russia, upon an invitation from Russian President Vladimir Putin.

- The BRICS Summit 2024 took place under the chairmanship of the Russian Federation in Kazan, Russia, from October 22 to 24, 2024.

- The summit was chaired by Vladimir Putin, President of the Russian Federation.

Key Points:-

(i) The theme of the Summit was 'Strengthening Multilateralism for Just Global Development and Security', aiming to offer an important platform for leaders to discuss key global issues.

(ii) The 16th BRICS Summit concluded with the adoption of the Kazan Declaration, a comprehensive document outlining key areas of cooperation and the bloc's unified stance on global issues.

5. According to UNESCO Report "India Allocates 4.1-4.6% of GDP to Education from 2015 to 2024".

According to the latest report released by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) Institute for Statistics (UIS) on World Education Statistics, 2024, India has allocated nearly 4.1-4.6% of its Gross Domestic Product (GDP) to education between 2015 and 2024.

- The report states that India's government spending on education has ranged between 13.5% and 17.2% from 2015 to 2024.

- The report also points out that globally, the average public expenditure on education has declined since 2010, from 13.2% in 2010 to 12.5% in 2020, particularly after the COVID-19 pandemic.

Key Points:-

(i) The report highlighted that India's expenditure on education is higher than that of countries like Japan and China when compared to the overall Asia region.

(ii) According to UNESCO's Global Education Monitoring (GEM) Report 2024, since the adoption of the UN SDG on education in 2015, over 110 million children and youth have enrolled in school.

(iii) Despite this progress, the out-of-school population has decreased by only 1% during the same period, with 251 million children and youth still not attending school.

6. India Ranked 176th in 2024 Global Nature Conservation Index, Labeled as One of the Worst Performers.

According to the 2024 Global Nature Conservation Index (NCI) released on October 24, 2024, India has been ranked 176th out of 180 countries, with an overall score of 45.5 out of 100. The country's low ranking is primarily attributed to inefficient land management and increasing threats to biodiversity.

- India is among the 5 worst performers, alongside Kiribati (180th), Turkey (179th), Iraq (178th), and Micronesia (177th).

Key Points:-

(i) Luxembourg leads the index with a score of 70.8, followed by Estonia (70.5) and Denmark (69.4) in 2nd and 3rd positions, respectively.

(ii) This is the inaugural edition of the index, developed by the Goldman Sonnenfeldt School of Sustainability and Climate Change (GSC) at Ben-Gurion University (BGU) of the Negev and BioDB.com, a non-profit web portal dedicated to maintaining biodiversity data.

7. According to UNEP Report 2024: No Progress in Limiting Global Temperature Rise to 1.5°C Above Pre-Industrial Levels".

According to the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) report titled "Emissions Cap Report 2024: No More Hot Air..... Please!", the world made no progress in limiting the temperature rise to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels in 2023 compared to the previous year.

- The report highlights that the gap in implementing policies to meet the targets set in 2030 Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) remains unchanged from the previous year's assessment by UNEP.
- The report indicates that the world is on track to experience 3.1°C (5.6°F) of warming since pre-industrial times, more than double the goal set in the 2015 Paris Agreement to limit global temperature rise to 1.5°C (2.7°F) above pre-industrial levels.

Key Points:-

(i) The report warns that if current NDCs are implemented without more ambitious commitments, which are due by February 2025, global temperatures could rise by up to 2.6°C by the end of 2100.

(ii) The report also notes that global Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions increased by 1.3% in 2023, reaching 57.1 Gigatonnes of Carbon Dioxide equivalent (GtCO_{2e}) compared to 2022.

8. "India and Pakistan Renew Kartarpur Corridor Agreement Until 2029 for Visa-Free Access to Sikh Pilgrims".

India and Pakistan have renewed their agreement on the Kartarpur Corridor, extending its operation for another 5 years, until 2029.

- The corridor provides visa-free access for Indian Sikh pilgrims to the Gurdwara Darbar Sahib in Kartarpur, Pakistan, a key religious site for Sikhs, as it marks the final resting place of Guru Nanak Dev, the founder of Sikhism, and the first of the 10 Sikh Gurus.
- The original agreement was signed on October 24, 2019.
- The extension of the Kartarpur Corridor agreement was announced on October 22, 2024.

Key Points:-

(i) Despite the renewal, India has reiterated its request for Pakistan to waive the USD 20 (Rs 1682) service charge imposed on each pilgrim. Pakistan argues that the fee is necessary to cover the costs of maintaining the corridor and its facilities.

(ii) The Kartarpur Corridor is about 4 kilometers long, connecting the Gurdwara Darbar Sahib in Narowal, Pakistan, with the Dera Baba Nanak shrine in Gurdaspur district, India. It is located on the east bank of the Ravi River in India, around 1 km from the Indo-Pakistan border.

(iii) The corridor was inaugurated in November 2019 as part of the celebrations for Guru Nanak Dev's 550th birth anniversary.

BANKING & FINANCE

1. RBI has imposed a ban on the sanctioning and disbursal of loans by four Non-Banking Financial Companies (NBFCs).

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has imposed a ban on 4 Non-Banking Financial Companies (NBFCs), including 2 Microfinance Institutions (MFIs), from sanctioning and disbursing loans due to high interest rates charged to customers, effective from 21st October 2024.

- The entities affected by this order are Asirvad Micro Finance Limited (NBFC-MFI), Arohan Financial Services Limited (NBFC-MFI), Directional Moving Index (DMI) Finance Private Limited (NBFC), and Navi Finserv Limited (NBFC).

Key Points:-

(i) The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has taken this strict action under its authority provided by Section 45L(1)(b) of the Reserve Bank of India Act, 1934.

(ii) The decision is based on significant supervisory concerns about the pricing policies of

these companies, particularly their Weighted Average Lending Rate (WALR) and the interest spread over their cost of funds, which have been deemed excessively high and not in line with RBI regulations.

2. RBI Includes 13 Additional Firms in Its List of Unauthorized Forex Trading Platforms.

On 22nd October 2024, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) added 13 more firms to its "alert list" of unauthorized forex trading platforms, bringing the total number of entities on the list to 88.

● According to the RBI, the entities listed are neither authorized to engage in forex transactions under the Foreign Exchange Management Act, 1999 (FEMA), nor authorized to operate Electronic Trading Platforms (ETPs) for forex transactions under the Electronic Trading Platforms (Reserve Bank) Directions, 2018.

Key Points:-

(i) The alert list includes entities, platforms, or websites promoting unauthorized entities or ETPs, including advertisements or claims of providing training or advisory services for such unauthorized entities. However, this list is not exhaustive.

(ii) The RBI further clarified that the absence of an entity from this list does not imply its authorization by the RBI.

(iii) As per RBI's direction, the authorization status of any entity or ETP can be verified from the list of authorized persons and authorized ETPs.

3. Adani's Ambuja Cement to Acquire 46.8% Stake in Orient Cement for Rs 8,100 Crore.

On 22nd October 2024, Ambuja Cements Limited (ACL), a leading cement company in India and part of the Adani Group, announced the signing of a

binding agreement to acquire a 46.8% stake in Orient Cement Limited (OCL), owned by C.K. Birla Group, for an equity value of Rs 8,100 crore. The acquisition will be fully funded through internal accruals.

● This marks Ambuja Cement's 4th acquisition since its promoter change and the 3rd acquisition of the ongoing Financial Year 2024-25 (FY25).

Key Points:-

(i) ACL will make an open offer at Rs 395.40 per share to the public shareholders of OCL in accordance with the provisions of the Substantial Acquisition of Shares and Takeovers (SAST) regulations.

(ii) The acquisition will take place in two phases: in the first phase, ACL will acquire a 37.9% stake from OCL's promoters along with an additional 8.9% from select public shareholders. Following this, ACL intends to launch an open offer to acquire 26% of OCL's expanded share capital at the same per-share price.

(iii) Currently, OCL has 5.6 MTPA clinker capacity and 8.5 MTPA cement capacity, and has received statutory clearance to increase clinker capacity by another 6.0 MTPA and cement capacity by another 8.1 MTPA.

4. Kotak Mahindra Bank Limited (KMBL) to Purchase Standard Chartered India's Rs 4,100 Crore Personal Loan Portfolio.

On 18th October 2024, Mumbai (Maharashtra)-based Kotak Mahindra Bank Limited (KMBL), a leading Indian private sector bank, announced that it has entered into an agreement to acquire Standard Chartered Bank India's personal loan portfolio.

- The transaction will be completed within the next 3 months, subject to regulatory approvals, other required clearances, and the fulfillment or waiver of customary closing conditions.

- KMBL will acquire the loan portfolio, with the final outstanding amount to be determined closer to the completion date.

Key Points:-

- As of 30th September 2024, the proposed transaction includes loans amounting to approximately Rs 4,100 crore (around USD 490 million), consisting of loans classified as "Standard Loans" in accordance with Reserve Bank of India (RBI) guidelines.

5. ADB Approves \$434 Million Loan to Boost Solar Energy Development in Assam.

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has sanctioned a loan of USD 434.25 million (approximately Rs 3600 crore) to support the growth of renewable energy in Assam.

- This funding will be directed towards the development of a 500 Megawatt (MW) solar photovoltaic (PV) plant in the Karbi Anglong district, a significant move towards Assam's renewable energy target of 3,000 MW by 2030.

- The loan, along with technical assistance, aims to accelerate Assam's transition to renewable energy, strengthening both energy security and environmental sustainability in the state.

Key Points:-

(i) The project features a Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) to enhance energy reliability by managing peak demand and supporting grid stability, implemented through a joint venture between Assam Power Distribution Company

Limited (APDCL) and ONGC Tripura Power Company Limited (OTPC) for effective energy management and power control.

(ii) The ADB is also working to boost private sector participation by strengthening Assam's public-private partnership (PPP) framework, with plans to expand the project by developing an additional 250 MW solar PV plant in Karbi Anglong under the PPP model.

(iii) ADB is providing an additional USD 1 million in technical assistance through its Clean Energy Fund under the Clean Energy Financing Partnership Facility.

6. Canara HSBC Life Insurance launches 'Promise4Future' plan, offering life protection and wealth creation benefits.

Gurgaon (Haryana)-based Canara HSBC Life Insurance Company Limited has launched 'Promise4Future', a non-linked, participating plan that offers policyholders a combination of life protection and savings.

- Promise4Future is a Unit Linked Individual Savings Life Insurance Plan that provides the dual benefit of long-term protection and an opportunity to benefit from returns generated in the company's participating fund.

- The plan offers a range of valuable benefits, including flexible premium payments, high-premium boosters, and options for partial or full withdrawals under deferred survival benefits.

Key Points:-

(i) The plan is available in two variants: Savings4Future and Income4Future:- Savings4Future helps policyholders grow their savings while staying protected throughout life. In case of death, the nominee receives the higher of

the sum assured plus bonuses or 105% of premiums paid.

(ii) Income4Future offers a steady income stream and lump-sum benefit for interim financial needs. In case of death, the nominee gets the sum assured on maturity along with any bonuses.

7. EIB Global Sanctions 300 Million Euro Loan for Bengaluru Suburban Railway Project.

The European Investment Bank (EIB Global) has sanctioned a loan of 300 million euros (approximately Rs 2,800 crore) for the Bengaluru Suburban Railway Project (BSRP).

- This initiative is designed to establish a new suburban railway network in the city of Bengaluru, Karnataka.
- The Bengaluru Suburban Railway Project (BSRP), as highlighted by EIB Vice-President Nicola Beer, aims to bring about a significant shift from road to rail transport.
- Bengaluru, India's third-largest city, has a current population of around 14 million, which is expected to reach 20 million by 2030. This rapid urban growth highlights the urgent need for an efficient public transportation system to meet the rising mobility demands.

Key Points:-

- (i) The suburban railway will cover a total distance of 149 kilometers.
- (ii) It will include four dedicated rail corridors to provide efficient connectivity across various city areas.
- (iii) The project will also involve the construction of 58 stations and two depots for smooth operation and maintenance of railway services.

8. ADB Approves USD 241.3 Million Loan to Boost Power Distribution in West Bengal.

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has approved a loan of USD 241.3 million to enhance power distribution in West Bengal (WB). This initiative aims to improve the quality of life for residents by ensuring a reliable, high-quality, and sustainable power supply.

- This ADB programme aligns with the West Bengal government's Revamped Distribution Sector Scheme (RDSS), which aims to strengthen the operational efficiency of power distribution companies (DISCOMs).
- In 2022, the Government of India (GoI) and the Government of West Bengal approved the RDSS, a result-based lending (RBL) programme for West Bengal State Electricity Distribution Company Limited (WBSEDCL), with a budget allocation of USD 197.39 million for implementation between 2022 and 2026.

Key Points:-

- (i) According to ADB, the West Bengal Distribution System Strengthening Programme will improve electricity distribution for 8.96 million consumers across 7 districts of West Bengal.
- (ii) The program includes initiatives like replacing overhead lines with bundled cables, creating separate feeders for agricultural and non-agricultural users, and developing a system for power supply quality, performance monitoring, and financial management.

9. HDFC Opens Its First Branch in Singapore to Broaden Financial Services Expansion.

HDFC Bank Limited has inaugurated its first branch in Singapore to offer banking services in the country. The bank has been granted a wholesale

banking license by the Monetary Authority of Singapore (MAS), effective from 15th October 2024.

- The branch was inaugurated by Rakesh Singh, Group Head of International Banking, Investment Banking, Private Banking, Digital Ecosystems, and Banking as a Service (BaaS) at HDFC Bank, along with Gaurav Khandelwal, Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of HDFC Bank, Singapore.

Key Points:-

(i) The new branch will provide a wide array of financial products and services to residents of Singapore.

(ii) HDFC Bank's international operations now include five branches: one each in Hong Kong, Bahrain, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Singapore, and an IFSC Banking Unit (IBU) in Gujarat International Finance Tec City (GIFT City), India.

10. RBI Requires NBFCs to Ensure Minimum 25% Borrowings from Capital Market.

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has mandated that Non-Banking Financial Companies (NBFCs) must ensure at least 25% of their borrowings come from capital market instruments. This step is part of RBI's ongoing efforts to strengthen financial stability and improve risk management within the NBFC sector.

- The remaining gold reserves include 324.01 metric tonnes held in safe custody at international institutions like the Bank of England and the Bank for International Settlements (BIS).

- In addition, the RBI holds 20.26 metric tonnes of gold in the form of deposits to bolster liquidity and financial stability.

- Gold now constitutes 9.32% of India's total foreign exchange reserves, up from 8.15% at the end of March 2024.

Key Points:-

(i) RBI's Digital Payments Index (RBI-DPI) rose to 445.5 by the end of March 2024, showing a 12.6% Year-on-Year (Y-o-Y) increase compared to March 2023. It was 418.77 in September 2023 and 395.57 in March 2023.

(ii) RBI has published its 'Report on Currency and Finance (RCF) for 2023'.

MOUs and Agreement

1. MoD Signs Agreement to Procure Six Air Cushion Vehicles for Indian Coast Guard.

On October 24, 2024, the Ministry of Defence (MoD) signed a Rs. 387.44 crore contract with Goa-based Chowgule & Company Private Limited for the procurement of six Air Cushion Vehicles (ACVs) for the Indian Coast Guard (ICG).

- The contract is categorized under 'Buy (Indian)', emphasizing the focus on sourcing from Indian companies and encouraging domestic manufacturing.

- The ACVs aim to enhance the Indian Coast Guard's (ICG) operational capacity. As a key agency for India's maritime and coastal security, the Coast Guard's capabilities will be strengthened with these multi-functional vehicles.

Key Points:-

(i) In alignment with the 'Aatmanirbhar Bharat' initiative aimed at self-reliance across sectors, these ACVs, also called Hovercrafts, will be entirely manufactured within India.

(ii) This milestone marks a significant first for Air Cushion Vehicle production in India, representing a

boost for the indigenous shipbuilding sector.

(iii) ACVs hover over surfaces by creating a cushion of high-pressure air underneath, facilitating smooth travel across diverse terrains without direct surface contact.

SPORTS

1. Wrestling, Cricket, Hockey, and Key Sports Removed from 2026 Commonwealth Games.

On 22nd October 2024, the Commonwealth Games Federation (CGF) announced that wrestling, badminton, hockey, cricket, and shooting, among other major sports, have been dropped from the Commonwealth Games 2026 (CWG 2026).

- The 23rd edition of CWG is scheduled to take place in Glasgow, Scotland, from 23rd July 2026 to 2nd August 2026.

- The excluded sports for CWG 2026 are hockey, cricket, badminton, wrestling, table tennis (TT), diving, rugby sevens, beach volleyball, mountain biking, squash, and rhythmic gymnastics.

Key Points:-

(i) This decision reduces the total number of sport events to 10 compared to 19 sports events at the 2022 Birmingham CWG.

(ii) CWG 2026 will now feature 10 sports including: Athletics and Para Athletics (Track & Field), Swimming and Para Swimming, Artistic Gymnastics, Track Cycling and Para Track Cycling, Netball, Weightlifting and Para Powerlifting, Boxing, Judo, Bowls and Para Bowls, and 3x3 Basketball and 3x3 Wheelchair Basketball.

2. Kho Kho Federation of India (KKFI) unveils logo and tagline for first-ever Kho Kho World Cup.

The Kho Kho Federation of India (KKFI) unveiled the logo and tagline - #TheWorldGoesKho, for the inaugural Kho Kho World Cup set to take place in 2025, during a grand event held at Thyagraj Stadium in New Delhi, Delhi.

- The tournament is scheduled to take place from 13th to 19th January 2025 in New Delhi, Delhi. The event will witness participation from 24 countries in both men's and women's competitions.

Key Points:-

(i) The tournament will feature 16 teams each in the men's and women's divisions, making it a truly global competition.

(ii) The tournament will introduce new rules, including a concept called "wazir," designed to make the game more spectator-friendly and engaging.

3. Deepika Kumari Clinches Silver Medal at Archery World Cup Final 2024.

Indian female archer Deepika Kumari has secured a silver medal in the women's recurve event at the Tlaxcala 2024 Hyundai Archery World Cup Final, held in Tlaxcala, Mexico, on October 19-20, 2024. This achievement marks her 6th medal at the World Cup Finals and her 9th appearance in the finals.

- China's Li Jiaman clinched the gold medal.

- The 18th edition of the Archery World Cup was hosted by World Archery.

Key Points:-

(i) Deepika Kumari defeated Yang Xiaolei of China 6-0 in the quarter-finals and Mexico's Alejandra

Valencia 6-4 in the semi-finals.

(ii) Her past achievements include four silver medals (2011, 2012, 2013, and 2015) and one bronze (2018) at the World Cup Finals. Notably, Dola Banerjee is the only Indian to have won a gold in the World Cup Final, achieved in Dubai, UAE, in 2007.

(iii) The Indian team, consisting of five archers (three in compound and two in recurve), concluded the tournament with one silver medal.

4. Rani Rampal, Padma Shri Awardee and Former Captain of Indian Women's Hockey Team, Announces Retirement.

Rani Rampal, Former India Women's Hockey Team Captain and Padma Shri Awardee, Announces Retirement from Hockey.

- Hockey India honors Rani Rampal's remarkable contributions by retiring her iconic No.28 jersey.
- The Indian Railways' Modern Coach Factory Stadium in Raebareli, Uttar Pradesh, was renamed "Rani's Girls" in her honor.
- Rani was named "Best Young Player of the Tournament" at the 2010 Women's Hockey World Cup and "Player of the Tournament" at the 2013 Junior World Cup, where India won its first-ever bronze medal in the event.

Key Points:-

(i) Rani Rampal, from Haryana, made her international debut in 2008. She scored 205 goals in 254 matches for India.

(ii) The Government of India honored her with the Padma Shri Award for sports in 2020 and the Rajiv Gandhi Khel Ratna Award (now Major Dhyan Chand Khel Ratna Award) in 2020.

(iii) She received the Arjuna Award in 2016 and the World Games Athlete of the Year award in 2019.

AWARDS

1. European Parliament Awards 2024 Sakharov Prize to María Corina Machado and Edmundo González.

On 24th October 2024, Roberta Metsola, President of the European Parliament, announced María Corina Machado Parisca, the leader of the democratic forces in Venezuela, and Edmundo González Urrutia, former Venezuelan presidential candidate, as the recipients of the 'Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought 2024 (Sakharov Prize)', the highest recognition awarded by the European Union (EU) for their work in defending human rights.

- María Corina was selected as the Venezuelan opposition's presidential candidate in 2023 under the "Unity Democratic Platform (PUD)". However, she was disqualified by the regime-controlled National Electoral Council (NEC).
- Edmundo González Urrutia is a Venezuelan politician, diplomat, international analyst, and writer. He was the presidential candidate of the Unitary Platform political alliance for the 2024 Venezuelan presidential election.

Key Points:-

(i) This award honors their efforts to restore democracy and freedom in Venezuela.

(ii) The official award ceremony for the Sakharov Prize 2024 will take place on 18th December 2024 in Strasbourg, France, during the European Parliament's plenary session.

2. Maria Sharapova, Bob Bryan, and Mike Bryan are set to be inducted into the International Tennis Hall of Fame.

Russian tennis player Maria Sharapova and American doubles tennis players Bob Bryan and Mike Bryan have been selected to be inducted into the International Tennis Hall of Fame - Class of 2025.

- Maria Sharapova won five Grand Slam singles titles during her career and is one of the 10 women players who have achieved the "Career Grand Slam" in singles.
- She won Wimbledon in 2004, the US Open in 2006, the Australian Open in 2008, and the French Open in 2012 and 2014.
- She became the first Russian woman to achieve the world No. 1 ranking in 2005 and held the position for 21 weeks.

Key Points:-

- (i) They will be officially inducted into the Hall of Fame during the Induction Celebration in Newport, Rhode Island, the United States of America (USA) from 21st to 23rd August 2025.
- (ii) Sharapova and the Bryans will join an elite group of 267 inductees from 28 countries.

3. Yang and Liu Announced as ISSF Athletes of the Year 2024.

Yang Ji-in from South Korea and Liu Yukun from China were named the International Shooting Sport Federation (ISSF) Athletes of the Year 2024 during the ISSF World Cup Final Opening Ceremony on 14th October 2024, held at Dr Karni Singh Range, Tughlakabad, New Delhi, India.

- Yang is a 21-year-old South Korean sport shooter who won a gold medal in the women's 25m pistol at the Paris 2024 Olympic Games held in France.

- She also won gold medals in the 25m pistol event at the 2024 Asian Rifle/Pistol Championships in Jakarta and the 2024 ISSF World Cup in Baku.

- Liu Yukun is a Chinese sport shooter and Olympic champion. He set an Olympic record with a score of 594 in qualification and won a gold medal in the men's 50m rifle 3 positions final at the Paris 2024 Olympics with a score of 463.6.

Key Points:-

- (i) Yang Ji-in from South Korea has been named the female ISSF Athlete of the Year 2024.
- (ii) Liu Yukun from China has been named the male ISSF Athlete of the Year 2024.

4. Bibhab Talukdar Receives IUCN's Harry Messel Award for Leadership in Conservation in UAE.

Bibhab Talukdar, Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Aranyak, has received the Harry Messel Award for Conservation Leadership from the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN).

- This award acknowledges his exceptional efforts in wildlife conservation and his leadership in initiatives focused on safeguarding biodiversity in India.
- Bibhab Talukdar, a distinguished conservationist from Assam, has led several conservation projects in Northeast India since 1991.

- Talukdar has been an active member of IUCN SSC since 1991 and became the Chair of the Asian Rhino Specialist Group in 2008.

Key Points:-

- (i) The award ceremony took place at the 5th IUCN Species Survival Commission (SSC) Leaders' Meeting in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates (UAE).

(ii) Established in 2004, the award recognizes exceptional service to the IUCN's SSC. It honors individuals who have made significant contributions to conservation leadership.

IMPORTANT DAYS

1. International Stuttering Awareness Day Observed on 22 October 2024.

International Stuttering Awareness Day (ISAD), also known as International Stammering Awareness Day, is observed globally every year on 22 October to raise awareness about stuttering (a speech disorder), foster understanding, and provide support to those affected by it.

- Since 2009, the Sea-Green Ribbon has been used as the stuttering awareness ribbon for ISAD.

Key Points:-

(i) The theme for ISAD 2024 is "The Power of Listening: People Who Stutter Have the Unique Opportunity to Teach the World to Listen."

(ii) In 1998, the European League of Stuttering Associations (ELSA), the IFA, and the International Stuttering Association (ISA) declared 22 October each year as "International Stuttering Awareness Day."

(iii) The first ISAD was observed on 22 October 1998.

2. World Development Information Day Observed on 24 October 2024.

The United Nations (UN)'s World Development Information Day (WDID) is observed annually on October 24 to raise global awareness about development issues and promote international cooperation to address them. It coincides with United Nations (UN) Day.

- The main aim of this day is to disseminate information and mobilize public opinion to draw attention to and create awareness about the problems surrounding development, promoting efforts in the field of international cooperation for growth and development.

- Why October 24? The date of the observance was chosen to coincide with UN Day (24th October) and to mark the date of adoption of the 1970 International Development Strategy for the Second United Nations Development Decade.

- The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) tackles three major challenges globally: eradicating poverty, driving sustainable development, and strengthening resilience to crises and shocks.

Key Points:-

(i) In 1972, the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) adopted resolution A/RES/3038(XXVII) and declared October 24 of every year as World Development Information Day (WDID).

(ii) The first WDID was observed on 24 October 1973.

(iii) The International Development Strategy for the 2nd UN Development Decade (1971-1980) was adopted on 24th October 1970.

3. "World Day for Audiovisual Heritage Celebrating" on 27 October 2024.

The United Nations (UN)'s World Day for Audiovisual Heritage (WDAH) is celebrated annually on October 27 worldwide to highlight the significance of preserving audiovisual (AV) heritage and protecting the world's audiovisual records. It also acknowledges the professionals and organizations dedicated to the preservation of audiovisual materials.

- The WDAH is an initiative by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the Coordinating Council of Audiovisual Archives Associations (CCAAA).

Key Points:-

(i) In October 2005, UNESCO adopted resolution (33 C/Resolution 53) during the 33rd session of UNESCO's General Conference and declared October 27 as World Day for Audiovisual Heritage (WDAH) every year.

(ii) In 2005, the UNESCO General Assembly approved the WDAH to commemorate the 25th anniversary of UNESCO's "Recommendation for the Safeguarding and Preservation of Moving Images," adopted by the 21st General Conference on October 27, 1980.

(iii) The first-ever WDAH was observed on October 27, 2006.

4. Disarmament Week Observed from October 24 to 30, 2024.

The United Nations (UN) observes Disarmament Week annually, beginning from 24 October, the anniversary of the UN's founding, to raise awareness about disarmament initiatives aimed at promoting international peace and security.

- Disarmament Week is observed from 24-30 October.

Key Points:-

In 1978, the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) adopted resolution A/RES/S-10/2 (The Final Document of the 10th Special Session of the UNGA), declaring the week starting on 24 October, the UN's foundation day, as a time dedicated to promoting disarmament objectives.

5. 63rd Raising Day of Indo-Tibetan Border Police Celebrated on 24th October 2024.

Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) Raising Day is observed annually on 24th October to commemorate the establishment of the ITBP, a Central Armed Police Force under the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA), in 1962.

- The day honors ITBP's commitment to securing India's borders and instills a sense of safety and confidence among the communities living in remote border areas.

- The Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) was established on 24th October 1962 to reorganize intelligence and security along the Indo-Tibetan border.

- Initially, the force started with the sanction of just 4 Battalions and operated under the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) Act, 1949.

Key Points:-

(i) The ITBP emblem features the national symbol, Ashoka's Lion Capital, mounted on a chakra crossed by two loaded rifles, symbolizing the courage and readiness of the force.

(ii) ITBP is tasked with diverse responsibilities, including border guarding, counter-insurgency operations, and internal security.

(iii) The number of ITBP Battalions has gradually increased, and currently, ITBP has 62 battalions (56 regular and 4 specialist), 17 training centers, and 7 logistics establishments, with a total strength of approximately 90,000 personnel.

6. 9th National Ayurveda Day Observed on 29 October 2024.

National Ayurveda Day is observed annually across India to raise awareness about the importance of

Ayurveda in the prevention and treatment of various health issues.

- The day is celebrated on Dhanwantri Jayanti or Dhanteras, a festival dedicated to Dhanvantari, the Hindu god of Ayurveda. This festival typically falls on the 13th day of Krishna Paksha in the month of Ashwin, according to the Hindu calendar.
- National Ayurveda Day 2024 will be observed on 29th October 2024, marking the 9th National Ayurveda Day.

Key Points:-

- (i) The theme for National Ayurveda Day 2024 is "Ayurveda Innovations for Global Health."
- (ii) Narendra Modi, the Prime Minister of India, inaugurated several projects worth over Rs 12,850 crore related to the health sector, underscoring India's commitment to promoting Ayurveda and accessible healthcare.

7. Global Media and Information Literacy Week Celebrations from 24 to 30 October 2024

The United Nations (UN)'s Global Media and Information Literacy (MIL) Week is observed annually worldwide from October 24th to 31st to raise awareness and celebrate the progress made towards Media and Information Literacy (MIL) for all.

- The observance of this week is coordinated by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).

Key Points:-

- (i) 2024 marks the 13th edition of Global MIL Week.
- (ii) The theme for Global Media and Information Literacy Week 2024 is "The New Digital Frontiers

of Information: Media and Information Literacy for Public-Interest Information.

8. World Stroke Day Observed on 29 October 2024.

World Stroke Day is observed globally every year on October 29 to raise awareness about the serious nature and high incidence of strokes, as well as the effective treatment options available to encourage action for stroke prevention.

- World Stroke Day was established during the World Stroke Congress in Vancouver, Canada, in 2004, and it is observed on October 29.

Key Points:-

- (i) The theme for WSD 2024, set by the World Stroke Organisation (WSO), is "#Greater Than Stroke active challenge."
- (ii) The first World Stroke Day was observed on October 29, 2006.

9. International Animation Day Was Celebrated on 28 October 2024.

International Animation Day (IAD) is observed annually across the globe on October 28 to commemorate the birth of animation, marking the first public performance of projected moving images at Emile Reynaud's Theatre Optique in Paris, France, on October 28, 1892.

- In 2002, the Association Internationale du Film d'Animation (ASIFA) decided to observe October 28 every year as International Animation Day (IAD) to commemorate the birth of animation.
- The first public performance of projected moving images by Emile Reynaud's Theatre Optique in Paris on October 28, 1892, is considered the birth of animation.

- The Praxinoscope was an animation device invented by Charles-Émile Reynaud (a French inventor) in France in 1877. It helped create moving images.

Key Points:-

- (i) 28th October 2024 marks the observance of the 23rd IAD.
- (ii) The day is coordinated and promoted annually by the Association Internationale du Film d'Animation (ASIFA).
- (iii) The first IAD was observed on October 28, 2002.

10. World Savings Day Celebrated on 31 October 2024 to promote financial awareness.

"World Savings Day (WSD)", also known as World Thrift Day, is observed annually on October 31 worldwide to raise awareness about the importance of saving and ensuring the financial security of individuals.

- In India, the observance is shifted to October 30 due to the tragic assassination of then-Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, whose death anniversary falls on October 31, 1984.
- The "National Savings Institute (NSI)" of India, which is responsible for managing savings schemes, actively promotes financial literacy.

Key Points:-

- (i) World Thrift Day was established on "October 31, 1924" by the founding members of the "World Savings and Retail Banking Institute (WSBI)". October 31 marks the birth of the "International Savings Banking Institute, now known as WSBI.
- (ii) The first "WSD" was observed on "October 31, 1924.
- (iii) WSBI" celebrated its "100th anniversary" in

"Rome, Italy" during the '27th WSBI World Congress' on 'October 30-31, 2024'..

11. World Vegan Day was celebrated on 1st November 2024, highlighting plant-based lifestyles.

World Vegan Day is observed annually on November 1st worldwide to raise awareness about the health and well-being benefits of a vegan diet.

- In 1994, World Vegan Day was established by Louise Wallis, a vegan and animal rights activist, who was also the then-chair of The Vegan Society in the United Kingdom (UK).

Key Points:-

- (i) The celebration of World Vegan Day originated to mark the 50th anniversary of The Vegan Society, which was held on November 1st, 1994.
- (ii) The first World Vegan Day was observed on November 1st, 1994.

12. International Day to Combat Impunity for Crimes Against Journalists is celebrated on 2 November 2024.

The United Nations (UN)'s International Day to End Impunity for Crimes against Journalists (IDEI) is observed annually worldwide on 2nd November to raise awareness about the dangers of impunity for crimes against journalists.

- The day also honors journalists who lost their lives while performing their duties.
- It provides a platform to emphasize the importance of journalism and media in preventing violence and discrimination.

Key Points:-

- (i) On 18th December 2013, the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) adopted resolution

A/RES/68/163, declaring 2nd November as the International Day to End Impunity for Crimes against Journalists (IDEI).

(ii) The first-ever IDEI was observed on 2nd November 2014.

13. National Unity Day is Celebrating on 31 October 2024.

National Unity Day, or Rashtriya Ekta Diwas, is celebrated every year across India on October 31 to honor the birth anniversary of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, known as the "Iron Man of India." He earned the title "Sardar" for his exceptional leadership.

- He was the first Deputy Prime Minister and the Home Minister of Independent India from 1947 to 1950.

- 31 October 2024 marks the 149th birth anniversary of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel.

- On 15 August 1947, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel took oath as the first Deputy Prime Minister, as well as the first Home Minister of independent India in the newly formed government under PM Jawaharlal Nehru.

Key Points:-

(i) In 2014, the Government of India (GoI), under Prime Minister Narendra Modi, announced the observance of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel's birth anniversary as National Unity Day, or Rashtriya Ekta Diwas, to honor his contributions to unifying the nation.

(ii) The first National Unity Day was observed on 31 October 2014.

(iii) Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel was born on October 31, 1875, in Nadiad, Gujarat, and was a lawyer by profession.

14. International Day for Biosphere Reserves Observed on 3 November 2024.

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) celebrates the International Day for Biosphere Reserves (BR) or World Biosphere Reserve Day on November 3 each year. This day aims to raise awareness about the importance of Biosphere Reserves and promote their conservation and sustainable use.

- The day serves as a platform to protect the delicate balance between human activities and the environment.

Key Points:-

(i) November 3, 2024, marks the observance of the 3rd International Day for Biosphere Reserves.

(ii) The 41st session of the UNESCO General Conference adopted resolution (41 C/37) and declared November 3 as the International Day for Biosphere Reserves in 2021.

(iii) The first-ever International Day for Biosphere Reserves was celebrated on November 3, 2022.

15. Andhra Pradesh Government Unveils 'Deepam 2.0' Scheme as Diwali Gift for Women.

Andhra Pradesh (AP) Chief Minister (CM) Chandrababu Naidu launched the 'Deepam 2.0' scheme as a Diwali gift in Edupuram, AP. The initiative will provide 3 free Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) cylinders per year to eligible women starting from 31st October 2024.

- The Deepam (light) scheme is part of the "super six" poll promises made by the Telugu Desam Party (TDP) ahead of the 2024 elections.

- The AP government will provide 3 gas cylinders free of cost to eligible beneficiaries at the rate of one every four months.

Key Points:-

- (i) The 1st cylinder can be applied for before 31st March 2025, the 2nd cylinder can be booked from 1st April to 31st July 2025, and the 3rd cylinder from 1st August to 30th November 2025.
- (ii) The 'Deepam' scheme will cost the state government Rs 2,684 crore annually, totaling Rs 13,423 crore over the next 5 years.

16. World Tsunami Awareness Day observed on 5 November 2024.

World Tsunami Awareness Day is observed annually on 5 November to raise awareness about the devastating impacts of tsunamis, promote safety measures, and implement early warning systems for such natural disasters.

- - The UN Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR) facilitates the observance of World Tsunami Awareness Day in collaboration with the broader UN system.
- On 22 December 2015, the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) adopted resolution A/RES/70/203, declaring 5 November as World Tsunami Awareness Day every year.

Key Points:-

- (i) The theme for World Tsunami Awareness Day 2024 is "Youth and Future Generations."
- (ii) The projects also include the operationalization of 10 government medical colleges across Maharashtra.
- (iii) The first WTAD was observed on 5 November 2016.

17. Telangana Government Announces 'Sadar Sannam' as a State Festival.

On 1st November 2024, Telangana Chief Secretary Santhi Kumari officially declared the Sadar Sannam as the state festival of Telangana. The state government has instructed the Commissioners of CHMC (Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation) and all District Collectors (except Hyderabad District) to annually celebrate the Sadar Sannam as a State Festival.

- The Sadar Sannam, held two days after Diwali, is a lively event organized primarily by the Yadav community since 1946.

Key Points:-

- (i) The Youth Advancement, Tourism, and Culture Department is responsible for organizing and funding the festival.
- (ii) The festival showcases a grand procession of decorated buffaloes, symbolizing pride and devotion.

18. United Nations Day Celebrated on 22nd October 2024.

The United Nations (UN) Day is observed annually on 24th October worldwide to commemorate the day when the UN Charter came into force in 1945.

- 24th October 2024 marks the 79th Anniversary of the founding of the UN.
- On 26th June 1945, the UN Charter was signed by representatives of 50 nations during the UN Conference on International Organization (UNCIO) in San Francisco, USA, and came into force on 24th October 1945.
- The UN was established upon ratification and notification by key nations, including China, France, the United Kingdom (UK), the Soviet Union, and the USA, along with the majority of other signatory states.

Key Points:-

(i) On 31st October 1947, the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) adopted Resolution A/RES/168(II), declaring 24th October as United Nations Day each year.

(ii) The name 'United Nations' was proposed by Franklin Delano Roosevelt, the 32nd President of the USA.

19. World Polio Day Observed on 24th October 2024 to Raise Awareness and Support for Polio Eradication Efforts.

World Polio Day is observed globally on 24th October each year to emphasize the importance of efforts aimed at eradicating poliomyelitis (polio), the infectious disease that primarily affects children under the age of 5.

- Various organizations, including the World Health Organization (WHO), Rotary International, and UNICEF, organize events to educate communities about polio and the importance of vaccination.
- The World Health Organization (WHO) declared the European Region polio-free in 2002.
- India was declared polio-free on 27th March 2014 by the WHO.

Key Points:-

(i) The first World Polio Day was celebrated on 24th October 2002.

(ii) World Polio Day was established by Rotary International (RI) to commemorate the birth anniversary of Jonas Salk, an American virologist who developed the first successful polio vaccines.

(iii) Jonas Salk led the first team to create a polio vaccine and began testing it in 1953.

20. 78th Infantry Day was celebrated on 27th October 2024.

The Indian Army (IA)'s Infantry Day is annually observed across India on 27th October to commemorate the contributions of the Infantry in protecting India's sovereignty and security.

- 27th October 2024 marks the observance of the 78th Infantry Day.
- The day commemorates the landing of the 1st Battalion of the Sikh Regiment at Srinagar airfield in 1947 to protect Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) from Pakistani Kabaili Raiders and the Pakistan Army.
- The Indian Army also celebrates Shaurya Diwas to commemorate the successful landing of the Indian Army at Srinagar Airfield on October 27, 1947.

Key Points:-

(i) Lt Col Rai was killed in action on the outskirts of Baramulla (Kashmir). He was posthumously honoured with the Maha Vir Chakra (MVC) for his gallant action and exceptional valour.

(ii) During Shaurya Diwas celebrations at the National War Memorial in New Delhi, Chief of Defence Staff General Anil Chauhan and Chief of Army Staff General Upendra Dwivedi laid wreaths in tribute to the courageous infantry soldiers who sacrificed their lives for India's security and freedom.

21. Care and Support Day Observed Globally on 29 October 2024.

The United Nations (UN)'s International Day of Care and Support (IDCS) is observed annually on 29 October worldwide to raise awareness about the significance of caregiving and support for individuals requiring assistance due to illness, disability, or other challenges.

- **29 October 2024 marks the 2nd observance of the IDCS.**

- **On 24 July 2023, the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) adopted resolution A/RES/77/317, proclaiming 29 October each year as the International Day of Care and Support (IDCS).**

Key Points:-

(i) The theme of IDCS 2024 is "Transforming care systems to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) in the context of Beijing+30."

(ii) The First IDCS was observed on 29 October 2023.

22. World Cities Day Celebrating Urban Sustainability on 31 October 2024.

World Cities Day is observed annually on October 31 across the globe to raise awareness about global urbanization, foster international cooperation in addressing urbanization challenges, and promote sustainable urban development worldwide.

- **The United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) adopted resolution "A/RES/68/239" on "27th December 2013" and declared October 31 of every year as World Cities Day.**

- **The first World Cities Day was observed on *31st October 2014* in *Shanghai, People's Republic of China.***

Key Points:-

(i) 31st October 2024 marks the 11th World Cities Day.

(ii) The theme of WCD 2024 is "Youth Leading Climate and Local Action for Cities." This theme emphasizes the importance of youth advocacy for bold actions to tackle the climate crisis and the

need to transform ambitious ideas into real-world solutions.

(iii) "Better City, Better Life" is the overarching theme of WCD, which remains the same each year.

23. Vigilance Awareness Week is Celebrated from 28 October to 3 November 2024.

The Vigilance Awareness Week (VAW) is observed annually across India during the week marking the birth anniversary of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel (31st October).

- **The observance of VAW 2024 began on 28th October 2024, with the integrity pledge being taken by public servants in Ministries, Departments, Central Public Sector Enterprises (CPSEs), Public Sector Banks (PSBs), and other government organizations.**

- **"The annual observance of the week, led by the Central Vigilance Commission (CVC), aims to promote integrity, transparency, and ethical practices.**

- **The week also emphasizes the crucial role of vigilance in preventing corruption.**

Key Points:-

(i) CVC has decided to observe VAW 2024 from 28th October to 3rd November 2024.

(ii) VAW 2023 was observed from 30th October to 5th November 2023, and VAW 2022 was observed from 31st October to 6th November 2022.

(iii) The theme of Vigilance Awareness Week (VAW) 2024 is "Culture of Integrity for Nation's Prosperity."

DEFENCE

1. Indian Navy Commissions GRSE-Designed Anti-Submarine Warfare Vessel, INS Abhay.

The Indian Navy (IN) launched 'Abhay', the 7th vessel in the Anti-Submarine Warfare Shallow Water Craft (ASW SWC) series, built by Garden Reach Shipbuilders and Engineers (GRSE). The launch took place at L&T Kattupalli, Tamil Nadu (TN), and was presided over by Vice Admiral Rajesh Pendharkar, Flag Officer Commanding-in-Chief Eastern Naval Command/FOC-in-C (East).

- Sandhya Pendharkar, President of the Navy Welfare and Wellness Association (NWWA), Eastern Region, launched the ship.
- The contract for constructing eight ASW SWC vessels was signed between the Ministry of Defence (MoD) and Garden Reach Shipbuilders and Engineers (GRSE) in April 2019.
- This project aligns with the Aatmanirbhar Bharat (Self-Reliant India) initiative, with over 80% indigenous content.

Key Points:-

- The ASW SWC vessels are equipped with advanced surveillance systems, including a Hull Mounted Sonar and a Low-Frequency Variable Depth Sonar, enhancing underwater detection capabilities.
- The vessels feature a comprehensive anti-submarine warfare suite, consisting of lightweight torpedoes, ASW rockets, and mines.
- They are armed with a 30 mm Close-in Weapon System (CIWS) and 12.7 mm Stabilized Remote-Control Guns, ensuring effective defense against aerial and surface threats.

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

1. China Successfully Launches New Satellite Group Yaogan-43 03.

China successfully launched a new group of satellites, the Yaogan-43 03 satellite group, onboard the Long March-2C carrier rocket from the Xichang Satellite Launch Center in Sichuan province, China.

- This mission marks the 542nd flight of the Long March rocket series.
- The Yaogan-43 03 satellites are primarily intended for testing new technologies related to low-orbit constellations, which will enhance China's capabilities in various applications, including remote sensing and communication.

Key Points:-

- The Yaogan-43 03 satellites will aid in improving China's navigation and Earth observation capabilities for military purposes.
- The Long March-2C rocket, a reliable launch vehicle, continues to support China's space exploration missions successfully.

2. GE Aerospace's LM2500 Engine to Power Indian Navy's Next-Generation Missile Vessels.

General Electric (GE) Aerospace, based in the United States of America (USA), has selected its LM2500 marine gas turbine engines, engineered for reliability and performance, to power the Indian Navy's (IN) Next Generation Missile Vessels (NGMV), which are being built by Cochin Shipyard Limited (CSL) in Kochi (Kerala).

- GE will provide six kits of LM2500 engines, which will be assembled and tested by the Industrial and Marine Gas Turbine Division of Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) in Bangalore (Karnataka).

- HAL previously assembled and tested LM2500 turbines for the IN's P17 and P17A frigates and the Vikrant aircraft carrier.

Key Points:-

(i) This decision comes more than a year after CSL signed a contract worth Rs. 9,805 crore to build six NGMVs for the Indian Navy.

(ii) The delivery of the vessels is expected to begin in March 2027, as the Indian Navy aims to safeguard the country's maritime interests in the strategically contested Indo-Pacific region, especially against aggressive Chinese vessels.

(iii) The NGMV is a new design for the Indian Navy, capable of reaching a maximum speed of 35 knots, and is equipped with an array of advanced anti-surface weapons.

3. China Launches Three Tianping-3 Satellites into Orbit.

On 22nd October 2024, China successfully launched three Tianping-3 satellites from the Taiyuan Satellite Launch Center in Shanxi Province using a Long March-6 carrier rocket, placing the satellites into their designated orbit.

- The three launched satellites are Tianping-3A (01), B (01), and B (02) satellites.

- This mission marked the 13th launch of the Long March 6 model and China's 50th space launch of the year. It also marked the 541st flight mission of the Long March carrier rocket series.

Key Points:-

(i) The satellites will primarily be used for calibrating ground radar equipment and measuring radar cross sections.

(ii) The satellites will support imaging tests for

ground optical equipment, conduct detection and monitoring tests of the low-orbit space environment, and provide services for atmospheric space environment surveys and corrections to orbit prediction models.

BOOKS & AUTHORS

1. Dr. M.K. Ranjitsinh's New Book 'Mountain Mammals of the World' Launched in Delhi.

Author Dr. MK Ranjitsinh, a member of the royal family of Wankaaner in Saurashtra (Gujarat), has released his 4th book titled "Mountain Mammals of the World". The book is published by Penguin Random House.

- The book serves as a definitive guide to larger mammals found on the mountains of the world, featuring 62 species and 78 subspecies, accompanied by spectacular photographs.

Key Points:-

(i) The book was launched by former politician-author and Padma Vibhushan awardee Dr. Karan Singh at the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) in New Delhi.

(ii) Jigme Jungney, a representative of spiritual leader Dalai Lama, and Ravi Singh, Secretary General and CEO of WWF-India, were present during the event.

(iii) Dr. MK Ranjitsinh, an Indian Administrative Service (IAS) officer, contributed to India's Wildlife (Protection) Act of 1972. He has served as Chairman of the Wildlife Trust of India and Regional Coordinator of the WWF Tiger Conservation Programme, among other roles, making him a leading authority on wildlife in India.

OBITUARY

1. Eminent Physicist and Padma Shri Awardee Rohini Godbole Dies at 71.

Dr. Rohini Godbole, a distinguished physicist known for her remarkable contributions to both science and the promotion of gender equality, passed away at the age of 71 in Bengaluru, Karnataka.

- With an exceptional academic career, she made significant advancements in elementary particle physics and was a strong advocate for women in science.

- Born in Pune, Maharashtra in 1952, Dr. Godbole's academic journey began at Sir Parashurambhau (SP) College in Pune, followed by a Master of Science (MSc) at the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Bombay, where she earned the institute's prestigious silver medal.

- Dr. Godbole also contributed to accelerator design at the European Organization for Nuclear Research (CERN) in Geneva, Switzerland.

Key Points:-

For her outstanding contributions, Dr. Godbole received the Padma Shri in 2019, the Ordre national du Mérite (French National Order of Merit) in 2021, and Karnataka's Lifetime Achievement Award in Science and Technology.

2. Padma Shri Awardee Gussadi Dance Master Kanaka Raju Dies.

Kanaka Raju, a celebrated Gussadi dance master and Padma Shri awardee, passed away at the age of 84 due to age-related health issues in his village of Marlavai, Telangana.

- Gussadi is a famous folk dance of Telangana.

Key Points:-

(i) Kanaka Raju, born into the Raj Gond tribe, began learning Gussadi dance at the age of eight and dedicated over four decades to preserving and promoting this traditional dance form, which is performed by unmarried men during the Dandari festival in Telangana.

(ii) He was honored with the Padma Shri (Art) in 2021 for his contribution to spreading this folk dance globally.

(iii) In 2022, he was appointed as the Chief Dance Master at the Kanaka Raju School of Gussadi Dance in Adilabad, Telangana.

3. "Bibek Debroy, Chairman of EAC-PM, Passes Away at 69 in New Delhi on 1st November 2024".

On 1st November 2024, Bibek Debroy, the Chairman of the Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister (EAC-PM), passed away at the age of 69 in New Delhi due to prolonged illness. He was born on 25th January 1955 in Shillong, Meghalaya.

- Bibek Debroy was a renowned economist who began his career at the Gokhale Institute of Politics and Economics (GIPE) in Pune (1983-87) and later at the Indian Institute of Foreign Trade (IIFT), Delhi (1987-1993).

- He worked as Director of a Ministry of Finance (MoF) and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) project on legal reforms from 1993 to 1998. He also worked with the Department of Economic Affairs (DEA), MoF, in 1994-95.

- Debroy served as a member of the National Institution for Transforming India (NITI Aayog) from its inception in 2015 until 5th June 2019.

Key Points:-

(i) He was honored with the Padma Shri, India's

4th highest civilian award, in 2015 for his exceptional contributions to literature and education.

(ii) He received the Lifetime Achievement Award from the US-India Business Summit in 2016.

(iii) In 2022, he was bestowed with the Lifetime Achievement Award by the Australia-India Chamber of Commerce (AICC).