



WEEKLY
CURRENT
AFFAIRS
PDFs



November 2024



A Complete and Comprehensive Current Affairs
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NATIONAL AFFAIRS / GOVERNMENT SCHEME

1. Cairn Oil & Gas becomes India's first to join UN's Methane Reduction Initiative.

Cairn Oil & Gas, a Vedanta Group co., has become the 1st oil & gas producer in India to join UNEP's Oil & Gas Methane Partnership (OGMP) 2.0 after signing MoU with UNEP in Abu Dhabi, UAE.

- This initiative announced on Nov 4, 2024, aims to address methane emissions in the oil & gas sector, aligning with global climate change efforts.
- The partnership aligns with Cairn's goal to decarbonize ops, aiming for Net Zero Carbon by 2030.
- Under the MoU, Cairn will set a 5-year target to reduce methane emissions & will transparently report progress.

Key Points:-

- (i) The OGMP 2.0 initiative covers over 40% of global oil & gas production, providing a framework for MRV of methane emissions.
- (ii) This collaboration will contribute to the Global Methane Pledge's broader goal of a 30% reduction in global methane emissions by 2030.

2. Union Minister Dr. Virendra Kumar inaugurates 'Shilp Samagam Mela 2024' and launches 'TULIP' brand.

Union Minister Dr. Virendra Kumar, Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment (MoSJ&E) inaugurated the 'Shilp Samagam Mela 2024' at Dilli Haat, New Delhi, Delhi. The fair was organized from 5th-15th November 2024.

- He also inaugurated the 'TULIP' (Traditional Artisans' Upliftment Livelihood Programme) brand, a Digital Platform for Craft and Community Empowerment.

● The mela was organised by the Corporations under MoSJ&E - National Scheduled Castes Finance and Development Corporation (NSFDC), National Backward Classes Finance and Development Corporation (NBCFDC), and National Safai Karamcharis Finance and Development Corporation (NSKFDC).

- During the mela, the 'Rang Paridhan' programme showcased uniforms made from the products of artisans. Under this initiative, the corporations under MoSJ&E will use uniforms crafted by local artisans for their personnel.

Key Points:-

- (i) TULIP Digital Platform for e-commerce will provide a platform for economic self-reliance and global exposure to artisans via an e-marketplace.
- (ii) During the event, the Union Minister highlighted digital initiatives like 'PM-SURAKSHA Portal' and 'PM-DAKSH Portal', launched by Prime Minister (PM) Narendra Modi.
- (iii) Through initiatives like the 'Vishwas Yojana' and 'Namaste Yojana', financial assistance and protection are being extended to the SC, Backward Class (BC), and sanitation worker communities.

3. India-Bhutan's First Integrated Check Post Inaugurated in Assam's Darranga.

On November 7, 2024, Lakshman Prasad Acharya, Governor of Assam, inaugurated the first-ever Integrated Check Post (ICP) along the India-Bhutan border at Darranga village in Assam. The facility was developed by the Land Ports Authority of India (LPAI).

- This ICP allows entry and exit for third-country nationals via land.

- Prior to this, third-country nationals could only enter or exit Bhutan through Paro International Airport, located in Paro, Bhutan or the Jaigaon-Phuentsholing land route, with Jaigaon in West Bengal, India, and Phuentsholing in southern Bhutan.
- This development follows an agreement made during King Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck of Bhutan's visit to India in November 2023, where both nations decided to designate Darranga (Assam) and Samdrup-Jongkhar (Bhutan) as official ICPs for third-country nationals.

Key Points:-

- (i) The ICP was inaugurated in the presence of Prime Minister (PM) of Bhutan H.E. Lyonchhen Dasho Tshering Tobgay.
- (ii) Minister of State (MoS) Bandi Sanjay Kumar, Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA); MoS, Pabitra Margherita, Ministry of External Affairs (MEA); Dasho Pema Chewang, the Leader of the Opposition of Bhutan, and other elected representatives and senior officials from both countries were present during the event.
- (iii) ICP Darranga, covering 14.5 acres, enhances trade and cross-border transit with modern infrastructure, including an office complex, parking, loading zones, a weighbridge, a warehouse, and residential quarters for officials.

4. Air India Becomes 1st Indian Airline to Receive Design Organisation Approval from Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA).

Air India Limited has become the first-ever Indian airline to receive Design Organisation Approval (DOA) or CAR 21 approval from the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) to carry out modifications in aircraft interiors in-house. The Tata Group-owned airline is working on revamping its fleet and expanding operations.

- The approval was handed over by DGCA Director General D.C. Sharma to Air India's CEO, Campbell Wilson.
- The full-service carrier collaborates with Tata Technologies to enhance the interiors of its aircraft fleet.

Key Points:-

- (i) The DOA from the DGCA will enable the airline to independently make design changes in-house and implement modifications to its aircraft interiors more efficiently.
- (ii) This DOA is a transformative step towards enhancing Air India's in-house capabilities. It will strengthen decisions to set up its own engineering, maintenance, and training facilities, improving operational efficiency and making the airline more self-reliant.

5. PM Modi's Visit to Bihar on 13th November 2024 Highlights Key Development Initiatives.

Prime Minister (PM) Narendra Modi visited Bihar on 13th November 2024 and laid foundation stones of various projects for the development in the region.

- PM Modi laid foundation stone and dedicated to the nation multiple development projects worth around Rs 12,100 crore in Bihar.
- The development projects comprised of health, rail, road, petroleum, and natural gas sectors.
- PM laid the foundation stone of All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), Darbhanga, Bihar at a cost of Rs 1264 crore.

Key Points:-

- (i) PM Modi inaugurated multiple initiatives in the petroleum and natural gas sector worth over Rs

4,020 crore.

(ii) Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated 18 Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Jan Aushadhi Kendras located at various railway stations across India through video conferencing from Darbhanga, Bihar.

(iii) These Kendras aim to provide passengers with high-quality medicines at affordable prices, enhancing healthcare accessibility at railway stations.

6. Gujarat Becomes the First State in India to Implement a Dedicated Semiconductor Policy.

Bhupendra Patel, the Chief Minister (CM) of Gujarat, has launched the 'Gujarat Semiconductor Policy 2022-2027', making the state the first in India to implement a dedicated semiconductor policy.

- Gujarat has established the 'Gujarat State Electronics Mission' to ensure effective implementation of this policy. The mission is a dedicated institution focused on advancing Gujarat's leadership in semiconductor self-reliance.

- This initiative complements the central government's 'India Semiconductor Mission', launched in 2021 with a budget of Rs 76,000 crore to boost domestic semiconductor production.

- India's semiconductor market, valued at USD 15 billion in 2020, is projected to exceed USD 63 billion by 2026.

Key Points:-

(i) Investments by semiconductor units in Gujarat are expected to create a significant number of high-skilled job opportunities.

(ii) These state-of-the-art facilities will play a vital role in reducing India's dependence on imported

semiconductor chips while driving job creation in critical downstream sectors like automotive, electronics, medical equipment, and telecommunications.

(iii) Along with the capital expenditure support provided by the Government of India for semiconductor and display fabrication units, the Gujarat government has enhanced this assistance with an additional 40% financial support.

7. According to CEEW report, India's climate policies are expected to reduce CO2 emissions by approximately 4 billion tonnes by 2030.

According to the latest report by the New Delhi (Delhi)-based independent climate think tank, Council on Energy, Environment and Water (CEEW), India's current climate policies are expected to reduce carbon dioxide (CO2) emissions by around 4 billion tonnes between 2020 and 2030.

- This key finding of the report is important considering India, the fast-developing South Asian country, now the world's 5th largest economy, had pledged to reducing emissions by 1 billion tonnes by 2030 at the 26th Conference of Parties (COP26) United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) held in Glasgow, Scotland in 2021.

Key Points:-

(i) The report showed that policies designed for India's power, residential, and transport sectors have already saved 440 million tonnes of carbon dioxide (MtCO2) between 2015 and 2020.

(ii) As per the report, the policies promoting renewable energy only in the power sector are projected to drive a 24% decline in coal-based power generation by 2030, relative to a no-policy scenario.

8. Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman Launches National MSME Cluster Outreach Program.

Union Minister for Finance and Corporate Affairs Nirmala Sitharaman has launched the National Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) Cluster Outreach Program, which was jointly organized by the Department of Financial Services (DFS), Ministry of Finance, Government of India, and Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI).

- The launch took place in the presence of Jitan Ram Manjhi, Union Minister for MSMEs, who joined virtually from Gaya, Bihar; Pankaj Chaudhary, Union Minister of State for Finance; and Sushri Shobha Karandlaje, Union Minister of State for MSMEs, in Bengaluru. Other notable attendees included Nagaraju Maddirala, Secretary of the Department of Financial Services (DFS), and Manoj Mittal, Chairman & Managing Director of SIDBI.
- Around 150 MSME Clusters with senior bank officials of each cluster were connected virtually for the launch.
- The main aim of the MSME Outreach program was to provide easy availability of financial services and promote the growth of MSMEs across the country.

Key Points:-

(i) The Union Finance Minister also virtually launched 6 new Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI) Branches in Karnataka, located at Tumakuru, Raichur, Shivamogga, Kalaburagi, Mangaluru and Vijayapura, thus expanding SIDBI's reach and financial assistance to MSMEs in these Clusters.

(ii) All Scheduled Commercial Banks and NBFCs have been given a target of providing additional MSME credit of 1.54 lakh crore in the current

financial year.

(iii) Sanction letters were issued to five Canara Bank borrowers under the newly introduced Tarun Plus category of the Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana (PMMY).

9. India Donates Two Water Jet Propelled Fast Interceptor Crafts (FICs) to Mozambique.

Indian Navy (IN), under the Government of India (GoI), handed over two water-jet-propelled Fast Interceptor Crafts (FICs) to the Government of Mozambique as part of its capacity-building engagements with friendly foreign nations of the Indian Ocean Region (IOR).

- The FICs were delivered to Mozambique from India by the Indian Naval Ship INS Gharial to combat maritime terrorism and insurgency in the Cabo Delgado region.
- To support the regional maritime security of Mozambique, India donated two large interceptor vessels in 2019 and two similar FICs in 2022.

Key Points:-

(i) The High Commissioner of India in Mozambique Robert Shetkintong, Defence Adviser Colonel Puneet Attri, and Commander Rajan Chib of INS Gharial attended the handing over ceremony of FICs in Nacala, Mozambique. Ministry of National Defence representative Augusto Casimiro Mueio accepted the craft on behalf of the Mozambique Government.

(ii) FIC has a reaching speed of up to 45 knots and is equipped with machine guns and bullet-resistant cabins.

10. PM Modi Launched 150th Birth Anniversary Celebrations of Birsa Munda on Janjatiya Gaurav Divas.

Prime Minister (PM) Narendra Modi visited Jamui, Bihar, on 15th November 2024, on the occasion of 'Janjatiya Gaurav Divas' and paid tribute to tribal leader Dharti Aaba Bhagwan Birsa Munda.

- Janjatiya Gaurav Divas 2024 marks the commencement of the 150th Birth Anniversary Year celebration of Bhagwan Birsa Munda.

Key Points:-

- (i) PM Modi inaugurated and laid the foundation stone of multiple development projects worth over Rs 6,640 crore in Jamui, Bihar.
- (ii) Union Minister Amit Shah, Ministry of Home Affairs and Ministry of Cooperation, unveiled a grand statue of Bhagwan Birsa Munda at Baansera Park in New Delhi, Delhi, on the occasion of his 150th birth anniversary year.
- (iii) He also renamed the Sarai Kale Khan Chowk outside Sarai Kale Khan inter-state bus terminus (ISBT) in south-east Delhi as Birsa Munda Chowk.

11. Govt reconstitutes ISC; PM Modi as chairman, state CMs and 9 Union ministers included as members.

The Government of India (GoI) has reconstituted the Inter-State Council (ISC), an important body for enhancing Centre-State and interstate coordination, with Prime Minister (PM) Narendra Modi as its chairman.

- The council aims to strengthen cooperative federalism by fostering dialogue and cooperation between the GoI and the states.
- The GoI also restructured the Standing Committee of the ISC and appointed Union Minister Amit Shah as its chairman.

- The committee is responsible for reviewing the implementation of ISC recommendations and addressing issues referred by the Chairman or the Council.

Key Points:-

- (i) The ISC is a key constitutional body (non-permanent) established under Article 263 of the Constitution of India.
- (ii) The Inter-State Council Secretariat (ISCS) was set up in 1991 in New Delhi (Delhi). The Secretariat is headed by a Secretary to the GoI, assisted by two Advisers.

12. India's Renewable Energy Capacity Surges by 24.2 GW, Reaches 203.18 GW in October 2024.

According to the Central Electricity Authority (CEA)'s data, India's total renewable energy-based electricity generation capacity has increased by 24.2 GigaWatt (GW) (13.5%) to reach 203.18 GW in October 2024, compared to 178.98 GW in October 2023.

- This remarkable growth in Renewable Energy (RE) aligns with the country's ambitious RE target of achieving 500 GW from non-fossil sources by 2030.
- Also, when including nuclear energy, India's total non-fossil fuel capacity has increased from 186.46 GW (in 2023) to 211.36 GW (in 2024).

Key Points:-

- (i) At present, India's total electricity generation capacity has reached 452.69 GW, with RE contributing a major portion of the overall power mix.
- (ii) Solar Power saw an increase of 27.9%, from 72.02 GW (in October 2023) to 92.12 GW (in October 2024) and has emerged as the largest contributor to RE-based power generation in

2024, followed by Wind power (47.72 GW) with a year-on-year increase of 7.7%.

(iii) According to the International Renewable Energy Agency's (IRENA) 2024 Annual Review, India's RE sector achieved a significant milestone with an estimated 1.02 million jobs generated in 2023.

13. Recently, Union Minister Hardeep Singh Puri Launches 27th Energy Technology Meet (ETM 2024) in Bengaluru.

Union Minister Hardeep Singh Puri, Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas (MoPNG) launched the 27th Energy Technology Meet (ETM 2024) which was held from 12th to 14th November 2024 in Bengaluru, Karnataka.

- The three-day Energy Technology Meet was organized by the Centre for High Technology (CHT) and Indian Oil Corporation Limited (IOCL).
- The event focused on the theme - Green Energy Horizons: Advancing Sustainable Refining and Petrochemicals.
- The meet highlighted India's efforts towards sustainable energy innovations and the shift towards greener energy solutions.

Key Points:-

(i) ETM-2024 hosted 1,200 participants from academia, R&D, and the hydrocarbon sector, featuring 60 research papers and 23 exhibitors showcasing advanced technologies.

(ii) Union Minister addressed the event at the inauguration, emphasizing that through biofuel blending, India saved Rs.91,000 crore on the import bill, which can be utilized for the agricultural sector's benefit.

(iii) He mentioned that India's current biofuel

blending rate had reached 16.9% and is on track to exceed the 20% target set for 2030, five years ahead of schedule.

14. MoEFCC Removes Approval Requirement for 'White Category' Industries from State Pollution Control Boards.

The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change of India (MoEFCC) issued a directive that 'White Category' industries are no longer required to obtain approval from the State Pollution Control Boards (SPCBs) for their operations.

- Industrial plants scoring up to 20 on the Pollution Index (PI) will be exempt from certain provisions under sub-section (1) of Section 21 of the Air (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1981, provided they inform their respective SPCBs or Pollution Control Committees in writing.
- This decision is part of a broader initiative to streamline business processes.

Key Points:-

(i) Industries categorized under the White Category, which are considered to have minimal or negligible pollution potential, will no longer need to secure permissions known as 'Consent To Establish' (CTE) and 'Consent To Operate' (CTO) from SPCBs. This change aims to streamline the process for businesses and reduce bureaucratic hurdles.

(ii) The permissions previously required from SPCBs have been merged with the environmental clearance granted by MoEFCC.

(iii) Plants that have already received environmental clearance under the 2006 notification issued by the former Ministry of Environment and Forests will also be exempt from

needing a CTE for their ongoing operations.

15. MoHUA and UN-Habitat ink MoU to promote sustainable development in urban areas.

On November 15, 2024, the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA) and the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), to promote and strengthen sustainable development in urban areas in India.

- The partnership aims at advancing the goals of sustainable urbanization and harmonizing with India's larger commitment to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), specifically SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities).
- The MoU was signed between Katikithala Srinivas, the Secretary, MoHUA and Kazuko Ishigaki (Regional Representative, Asia and the Pacific region) UN-Habitat along with the respective delegations, marking this historic step at the 12th World Urban Forum in Cairo, Egypt.
- The framework is based on four foundational principles: spatial equity, SDG localization, climate resilience, and an inclusive economy.

Key Points:-

- (i) UN-Habitat and MoHUA will collaborate through knowledge sharing, policy guidance, technical expertise, and partnerships aimed at fostering inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable development in India's urban areas and human settlements.
- (ii) As part of this collaboration, the two organizations launched the 'Urban RAASTA (Resilient and Accelerated Advancement with Sustainable and Transformative Actions)' framework.

16. FTII's short film "Sunflowers Were the First Ones to Know" Qualified for Oscar 2025.

The Ministry of Information & Broadcasting (MoI&B) announced that Pune (Maharashtra) based Film and Television Institute of India (FTII) student film "Sunflowers Were the First Ones to Know" has qualified for the 2025 Oscars in the Live Action Short Film Category.

- The Kannada short film was produced by FTII and directed by Chidananda S Naik.

Key Points:-

- (i) The 16-minute short film is inspired by Indian folklore. The story chronicles a village where chaos unfolds after an elderly woman steals a rooster.
- (ii) It won the First Prize at the Cannes Film Festival's La Cinef Selection 2024, gaining worldwide recognition for the Kannada-language project inspired by Indian folk tales and traditions. It also won the Bengaluru International Short Film Festival.
- (iii) The 97th Academy Awards will be held on 2nd March 2025, in Los Angeles, the United States of America (USA).

17. MHA Approves Establishment of First All-Women Battalion in CISF to Empower Women in Security Force.

The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) has approved the establishment of the 1st all-women battalion of Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) to enhance women's role in CISF. The addition of a 'Mahila Battalion' would encourage more aspiring young women across the country to join the force and serve India.

- Women constitute over 7% of the CISF and it has been the preferred choice for them among the central armed police forces (CAPF).
- The establishment of the all-women battalion will encourage more aspiring young women to join CISF.

Key Points:-

- (i) The CISF headquarters has started preparations for the early recruitment, training, and selection of locations for the headquarters of the new battalion.
- (ii) The training is specially designed to create an elite battalion capable of performing multifarious roles such as commandos in Very Important Person (VIP) security and security at airports, Delhi metro rail, etc.

18. NITI Aayog Hosts Symposium on "Green Transition in States" in New Delhi.

The National Institution for Transforming India (NITI Aayog) organized a symposium on the "Green Transition in States" in collaboration with the New Delhi (Delhi) based Institute for Sustainability, Employment and Growth Foundation (ISEG Foundation), as a knowledge partner at Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi.

- This initiative supports India's larger goal of achieving Net-Zero Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions by 2070 and fulfilling the vision of a "Viksit Bharat" by 2047.
- The symposium featured participation from senior dignitaries across central and state governments, including Suman Bery, Vice Chairperson of NITI Aayog, B. V. R. Subrahmanyam, Chief Operating Officer (CEO) of NITI Aayog, and officials from various ministries.

Key Points:-

- (i) NITI Aayog launched the Accelerating

Sustainable Solutions for Energy Transition (ASSET) platform in partnership with the Ministry of Power (MoP) and the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE).

(ii) The symposium focused on helping states create energy transition blueprints, develop investible projects, and promote emerging technologies like Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS), Green Hydrogen, e-mobility, and offshore wind energy.

(iii) The "Facilitating Energy Transition Across States (FETS)" initiative was launched, along with a panel discussion on enabling green transition in India and sessions showcasing best practices in e-mobility, waste-to-energy, and energy efficiency.

19. IREL and UKTMP to Establish Joint Venture for Titanium Slag Production in Odisha.

Mumbai (Maharashtra) based IREL (India) Limited (previously known as Indian Rare Earths Limited), and Kazakhstan based Ust-Kamenogorsk Titanium and Magnesium Plant JSC (UKTMP) signed a Joint Venture (JV) to establish IREUK Titanium Limited for production of titanium slag (Ti Slag) in Odisha.

- The agreement was signed by Dr. Deependra Singh, Chairman and Managing Director (CMD), IREL (India) Limited and Assem Mamutova, President UKTMP JSC in the presence of Dr. A.K. Mohanty, Secretary of the Department of Atomic Energy (DAE) & Chairman, Atomic Energy Commission (AEC) and Nurlan Zhalgasbayev (Ambassador of Kazakhstan).

Key Points:-

- (i) This partnership aims to strengthen India's titanium value chain by converting low-grade ilmenite (Titanium oxide) into high-grade feedstock, also generating local employment opportunities.

(ii) UKTMP JSC will provide the technology of producing Ti Slag and will take the agreed quantities for an input in their Ti sponge plant.

(iii) IREL (India) Limited is a Public Sector Undertaking (PSU) under the DAE. It was incorporated on August 18, 1950, with its first unit Rare Earths Division (RED) in Aluva (Kerala).

20. NTPC Marks 50th Raising Day, Commemorating Five Decades of India's Growth.

NTPC Limited, formerly known as National Thermal Power Corporation, India's leading power generation company, celebrated its 50th Raising Day on 7th November 2024 recognizing five decades of remarkable growth, innovation, and contribution to India's power sector.

- The celebrations took place at NTPC's corporate office Engineering Office Complex (EOC), Noida, Uttar Pradesh (UP) wherein Gurdeep Singh, Chairman and Managing Director (CMD) of NTPC hoisted the NTPC flag in the presence of the Board of Directors and senior officials.

Key Points:-

(i) NTPC's 50-year logo was also launched on the occasion reflecting NTPC's everlasting commitment to growth and excellence and a reminder of the 50 years of powering growth and creation of infinite possibilities.

(ii) The celebration also honored outstanding achievements of NTPC employees' children.

(iii) Moreover, new Information Technology (IT) applications and a comic book on NTPC's Girl Empowerment Mission (GEM)-a Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiative that has empowered over 10,000 girls from rural areas were also launched during the celebrations.

21. India Launches Tri-Services Military Exercise 'Poorvi Prahar' in Eastern Sector.

The Indian Army is conducting a high-intensity tri-services exercise Poorvi Prahar from 10th to 18th November 2024 in the forward areas of Arunachal Pradesh.

- This joint exercise aims to sharpen the combat effectiveness of the Indian Army, Navy, and Air Force in implementing Integrated Joint Operations in the difficult mountainous terrain of the region, thus increasing inter-service coordination and operational readiness.

- The exercise will act as a platform to showcase various sophisticated platforms and assets from all three services, including fighter and reconnaissance aircraft, strategic helicopters like the Chinook and Advanced Light Helicopter (Rudra), and M777 Ultra-Light Howitzer Artillery Systems.

Key Points:-

(i) The Indian Army uses its M-777 ultra-lightweight howitzers, which are weapons designed for mountainous regions and have been recently introduced in the artillery units deployed in the eastern sector.

(ii) The exercise, Poorvi Prahar, will involve innovative technological advancements such as First Person View (FPV) Drones, and Loiter Munitions. These technologies, including Swarm Drones, will transform modern warfare by providing situational awareness and accuracy in operations.

(iii) Joint control structures will be established during the exercise to maintain the efficiency of operations.

22. Jitendra Singh Inaugurates India's First Biomanufacturing Institute, "BRIC-National Agri-Food Bio-Manufacturing Institute," in Mohali.

Union Minister of State (Independent Charge), Jitendra Singh, Ministry of Science and Technology (MOST) inaugurated the new complex of India's first Biomanufacturing Institute, "BRIC-National Agri-Food Bio-Manufacturing Institute" (BRIC-NABI) aimed at enhancing India's agri-food sector through advanced biotechnology at Mohali, Punjab.

- **BRIC-NABI, created through the strategic merger of the NABI and the Center of Innovative and Applied Bioprocessing (CIAB), is set to revolutionize India's agricultural sector by combining expertise in biotechnology and bioprocessing.**
- **As part of its mission to advance biomanufacturing, the Biomanufacturing Workshop 1.0 is scheduled to take place in December 2024.**

Key Points:-

- (i) The BioE3 (Biotechnology for Economy, Environment, and Employment) policy, which focuses on biotechnology for the economy, employment, and the environment, highlights the government's commitment to nurturing a science sector with significant impact.
- (ii) The Bioincubators Nurturing Entrepreneurship for Scaling Technologies (BioNEST) BRIC-NABI Incubation Center aims to empower local youth, women, and agriculture, food, and bioprocessing, and to accelerate the commercialization of agri-food innovations.

23. India's First 'Writers' Village' Inaugurated in Dehradun.

India's first "Writer's Village" (Lekhakh Gaon) was jointly inaugurated by former President Ram Nath Kovind, Uttarakhand Governor Lieutenant (Lt)

General Gurmit Singh (retired) and Chief Minister (CM) Pushkar Singh Dhami in Dehradun, Uttarakhand.

- **It is conceived by former CM Ramesh Pokhriyal Nishank, a renowned writer in his own right.**
- **It aims to encourage creativity and offer a supportive space for writers from all over the nation, positioning Dehradun as an emerging cultural center for literary excellence.**

Key Points:-

- (i) The village hosted its first event, the three-day International Literature, Culture, and Art Festival, "Sparsh Himalaya Mahotsav," with writers from more than 40 countries participating in person, while those from around 25 nations joined virtually.
- (ii) During the event, Nishank unveiled his book "Ram in the Himalayas"

24. Union Minister JP Nadda unveils Scheme to Strengthen the Medical Device Industry.

Union Minister Jagat Prakash Nadda, Minister of Chemicals & Fertilizers (MoC&F), launched the Scheme for Strengthening the Medical Device Industry with an allocated budget of Rs.500 crores.

- **Scheme for Strengthening the Medical Device Industry is a comprehensive initiative targeting critical areas of the medical device industry. It covers manufacturing of key components and accessories, skill development, support for clinical studies, development of common infrastructure, and industry promotion.**
- **This scheme will benefit the industry and significantly contribute to making India self-reliant.**
- **The scheme is expected to provide a boost to the entire medical device sector.**

Key Points:-

- (i) Anupriya Patel, Minister of State(MoS) for Chemicals and Fertilizers and Health & Family Welfare, and Shri Arunish Chawla, Secretary, Department of Pharmaceuticals, along with officials of the department and representatives of the industry, were also present during the event.
- (ii) India's medical device market was valued at approximately USD 14 billion in 2024, with projections to reach USD 30 billion by 2030.
- (iii) The design was developed in collaboration with the Armament Research & Development Establishment (ARDE) in Pune, Maharashtra, and the Indian Army.

Bharatanatyam by renowned artists, and folk traditions like Panchavadyam and Theyyam from Kerala.

(ii) The Amrit Parampara series has been designed to promote the continuity of India's cultural legacy through 4 key pillars: the foundation of Bharatiya Sanskriti, a blend of cultural education and entertainment, the synthesis of diverse ideas, and a multi-sensory experience.

(iii) The festival series marks the start of a two-year celebration of the 150th Birth Anniversary of Sardar Patel, honoring his achievements and his role in uniting India.

25. MoC Introduces 'Amrit Parampara' to Highlight India's Rich Cultural Heritage.

The Ministry of Culture (MoC) has launched "Amrit Parampara," a festival series to celebrate and preserve India's traditional arts, focusing on fading art forms, with innovative programs that blend tradition with modern technology.

- Union Minister S. Jaishankar, Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), inaugurated the first program of the series, "Kaveri Meets Ganga," at Kartavya Path (formerly known as Rajpath) in New Delhi (Delhi).
- It was held from 2nd to 5th November 2024 at Kartavya Path and the Centre for Cultural Resources and Training (CCRT) campus at Dwarka, Gujarat.
- The event was jointly organized by the Sangeet Natak Akademi, the Kalakshetra Foundation, and the CCRT.

Key Points:-

- (i) The event showcased a variety of art forms, including Nagar Sankirtan and Govardhan Puja from Braj, Kuchipudi from Andhra Pradesh (AP),

INTERNATIONAL**1. According to the QS Asia University Rankings 2025, IIT Delhi ranked 44th, and China's Peking University took the top spot.**

On 6th November 2024, Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) released the 16th edition of the 'QS World University Ranking Asia 2025,' revealing that Indian Institute of Technology Delhi (IITD) (75.4), New Delhi (Delhi), secured the top spot in India with the 44th position (up from 46th in 2024).

● It was followed by Indian Institute of Technology Bombay (IITB) (73.1), Mumbai, Maharashtra at the 48th position and the Indian Institute of Technology Madras (IITM) (69.6), Chennai, Tamil Nadu at the 56th position, making them the top 3 universities from India featured in the list.

● Peking University, Beijing (China) secured 1st spot in the QS Asia University Rankings 2025 with an overall score of 100, followed by the University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong (China), and the National University of Singapore (NUS), Singapore in the 2nd and 3rd spots, respectively.

Key Points:-

- (i) China leads Asian higher education with the most top-10 universities, having four institutions in the top 10, 10 in the top 50, and 22 in the top 100.
- (ii) Indonesia achieves the highest growth, adding 30 new universities.
- (iii) Singapore has become Asia's most concentrated hub of higher education excellence, producing exceptional research with three universities among the top 10 in Citations per Paper.

2. According to WHO report, India records a 17.7% decline in TB incidence from 2015 to 2023.

According to the World Health Organisation (WHO)'s Global Tuberculosis (TB) Report 2024 released on 29th October 2024, India has registered a 17.7% decline in TB incidence from 237 per lakh population in 2015 to 195 in 2023, which is more than twice the global average decline of 8.3%.

- The report has acknowledged the significant progress made by India in bridging the gap of missed TB cases since 2015.
- As per the report, the net reduction in the global number of deaths caused by TB between 2015 and 2023 was 23%, which is almost 1/3rd of the WHO End TB strategy milestone of a 75% reduction by 2025.
- The report showed that globally, the number of deaths caused by TB has declined in 2023, from 1.32 million (in 2022) to 1.25 million (in 2023).

Key Points:-

- (i) As per the report, India is estimated to have had 27 lakh TB cases in 2023, of which 25.1 lakh were diagnosed and put on treatment. With this, India's treatment coverage has increased from

72% (in 2015) to 89% (in 2023).

(ii) According to the Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW), the leap in coverage has been due to the momentum India has created around TB case finding and reflects the efforts of decentralization of healthcare services through more than 1.7 lakh Ayushman Arogya Mandirs in the country.

(iii) The WHO has downsized its projection of TB mortality in India in 2023, as its latest report shows the deaths related to TB in India have declined by 21.4%, from 28 per lakh population to 22 per lakh population.

3. According to the Global City Index 2024, London Ranked as the Leading City Brand Worldwide.

According to Brand Finance's Global City Index 2024, London, the United Kingdom (UK), has again emerged as the world's top city brand for the 2nd consecutive year, with an overall score of 90.9 out of 100. It is followed by New York City, the United States of America (USA), and Paris, France, which secured the 2nd and 3rd positions, respectively.

- This is the 2nd edition of the index, which provides the most comprehensive global survey of city perceptions, collecting opinions from more than 15,000 respondents across 20 countries worldwide.
- Tokyo, Japan has improved its overall ranking in the index by 3 places, from 7th (in 2023) position to 4th (in 2024).
- Dubai, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) has emerged as the highest-ranked city in the West Asia and Africa region for the 2nd consecutive year.

Key Points:-

- (i) London has secured the 3rd rank in two key performance indicators of the index: familiarity and

reputation.

(ii) In contrast, its performance on the "consideration" indicator is less robust with an overall rank of 19th position, despite its strong performances in the consideration to visit (2nd) and consideration to study (6th).

(iii) Globally, London has been ranked at 2nd spot in the "Education & Science" pillar.

4. India-Australia Joint Military Exercise AUSTRAHIND-2024 Conducted in Pune, Maharashtra.

The 3rd edition of the India-Australia joint military exercise "AUSTRAHIND-24" is being conducted at the Foreign Training Node in Pune, Maharashtra, from November 8 to November 21, 2024.

- The exercise aims to strengthen military cooperation between India and Australia by improving the ability of both forces to work together in joint unconventional operations.
- This annual exercise AUSTRAHIND was started in 2022 at Mahajan Field Firing Ranges (MFFR) in Mahajan, Rajasthan. Since then, it has been conducted alternately in India and Australia.
- The last edition of this exercise was held in Perth, Australia, in December 2023.

Key Points:-

- (i) This year's drill is set in a semi-urban, semi-desert environment, reflecting conditions under Chapter VII of the United Nations (UN) mandate on peacekeeping operations.
- (ii) During the AUSTRAHIND-24 exercise, soldiers from both India and Australia engaged in social and cultural activities.
- (iii) The Indian contingent, comprising 140 personnel from the DOGRA Regiment of the

Indian Army and 14 members of the Indian Air Force, joins the Australian contingent of 120 personnel from the 13th Light Horse Regiment, 10th Brigade, 2nd Division of the Australian Army.

5. India and Japan Ink Agreement on Stealth UNICORN Mast for Naval Warships.

On November 15, 2024, the Government of India (GoI) and the Government of Japan signed a Memorandum of Implementation (MoI) for the co-development of Unified Complex Radio Antenna (UNICORN) mast for fitment onboard ships of the Indian Navy (IN) under India-Japan Defence Technology Cooperation (IJDTTC).

- The initiative aims to enhance the stealth and technological capabilities of the Indian Navy and marks India's first military technology transfer pact with Japan.
- The UNICORN mast (single piece) is an integrated conical structure housing antennas atop warships, designed to enhance stealth capabilities, and will be fitted on Indian Naval warships.

Key Points:-

- (i) The mast was developed jointly by three Japanese companies: NEC Corporation, Sampa Kogyo K.K., and The Yokohama Rubber Company Limited. These antennas are currently fitted on Mogami-class frigates of the Japan Maritime Self-Defence Force.
- (ii) UNICORN's implementation would be the first case of co-development and co-production of defence equipment between India and Japan.
- (iii) The Indian Navy is pursuing the induction of these advanced systems, which will be co-developed by Bengaluru (Karnataka)-based Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL) in collaboration with Japan.

6. According to the WIPO 2024 Report, India ranks among the top 10 countries in Patents, Trademarks, and Industrial Designs.

According to the World Intellectual Property Indicators 2024, the annual report published by the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), India has shown significant growth in the global intellectual property (IP) landscape and has secured a place among the top 10 countries for all three major IP rights: patents, trademarks, and industrial designs.

- The report, published by WIPO, assesses global trends in IP filings and highlights significant growth in patent, trademark, and industrial design applications across major economies.
- India recorded an impressive 15.7% growth in patent applications in 2023, the fastest among the top 20 countries, marking the 5th consecutive year of double-digit increases in patent filings.
- India ranks 6th globally with 64,480 patent applications, with domestic applicants contributing 55.2%. Patent grants surged by 149.4% in 2023, reflecting rapid IP growth.

Key Points:-

- (i) In the industrial design sector, applications in India rose by 36.4%, reflecting the increasing emphasis on product design, manufacturing, and the creative industries.
- (ii) Between 2018 and 2023, patent and industrial design applications more than doubled, while trademark filings increased by 60%. During this period, the country's patent-to-GDP ratio rose sharply from 144 in 2013 to 381 in 2023.
- (iii) A total of 3.55 million patent applications were filed globally in 2023, marking a 2.7% increase

from 2022.

BANKING & FINANCE

1. India and ADB sign a USD 200 million loan to enhance urban services in Uttarakhand.

The Government of India (GoI) and the Asian Development Bank (ADB) signed a USD 200 million loan (about Rs 1,680 crore) to provide support in the upgradation of water supply, sanitation, urban mobility, and other urban services in the state of Uttarakhand.

- The agreement was part of the Uttarakhand Livability Improvement Project and was signed by Juhi Mukherjee, joint secretary, Department of Economic Affairs (DEA), Ministry of Finance (MoF), and Mio Oka, country director of ADB's India Resident Mission.
- The European Investment Bank (EIB) will co-finance the project with USD 191 million on a parallel basis.
- The main aim of the project was to create urban infrastructure that is strong enough to tackle climate and environmental risks such as floods and landslides, ensuring the safety and health of Uttarakhand's population.

Key Points:-

- (i) The project will develop transportation, urban mobility, drainage, flood management, and overall public services in Haldwani.
- (ii) Climate-resilient roads of 16 kilometers (km) in length will be developed in Haldwani, along with an intelligent traffic management system, providing compressed natural gas buses, and pilot electric buses.
- (iii) The project will construct 36 km of stormwater and roadside drains to improve flood management and implement an early warning system against disasters.

2. Jana Small Finance Bank(JSFL) Launched "Smart Gold" for Easy Digital Gold Investment.

Mumbai (Maharashtra)-based Jio Financial Services Limited (JFSL), registered with Reserve Bank of India (RBI) as a non-deposit taking Non-Banking Financial Company (NBFC), has launched "Smart Gold", a digital gold investment platform which will be accessible through the JioFinance application (app).

- This new offering will enable customers to purchase 24-Karat (K) physical gold anytime, with a minimum amount of Rs 10.
- Customers can buy, sell, or redeem their gold holdings either in cash or physical gold coins and jewelry, ensuring a seamless and secure investment experience.
- Customers can also buy smart gold in denominations of rupees or grams (gms).

Key Points:-

- (i) The underlying physical gold of the customer will be procured and stored in insured vaults. Customers can monitor the live market price of gold on the JioFinance app, promoting transparency in their investments.
- (ii) Jio Payment Solutions Limited (JPSSL), a wholly-owned subsidiary of Jio Financial Services (JFS), has received approval from the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) to operate as an online Payment Aggregator (PA). The certificate of authorisation came into effect from 28th October 2024.

3. Mahindra Finance and RBL Bank Unveil Co-Branded Credit Cards.

Mahindra & Mahindra Financial Services Limited (Mahindra Finance) launched a co-branded credit card in partnership with RBL Bank Limited. The credit card is designed to meet its customers' aspirational needs.

- This will be the first co-branded credit card offering for Mahindra Finance.
- This partnership aims to provide a one-stop solution that offers unmatched benefits across a wide range of categories.

Key Points:-

- (i) Mahindra Finance aims to tap into the growth potential, aligning with the adoption of e-commerce and technological advancements seen even in non-metro locations.
- (ii) Mahindra group entity holds a 3.53% stake in RBL Bank, acquired for Rs.417 crore.

4. RBI Introduces Framework for Reclassifying FPI Investments to FDI Upon Breach of Limits.

On November 11, 2024, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) announced an operational framework to facilitate the reclassification of investments from Foreign Portfolio Investor (FPI) to Foreign Direct Investment (FDI). This framework will apply in cases where an FPI exceeds the prescribed investment limit, ensuring compliance with regulatory guidelines.

- Under the existing Foreign Exchange Management (FEM) (Non-Debt Instruments) Rules, 2019, an investment made by the FPI should not exceed 10% of the total paid-up capital on a fully diluted basis.
- As per the new framework, any FPI investing more than the prescribed limit should have the option of divesting their holdings or reclassifying such holdings as FD

- The reclassification procedure must occur within 5 trading days from the date of settlement of the trades causing the breach.

Key Points:-

- (i) As per the new framework, the concerned FPI is now required to obtain necessary approvals from the government, including approvals required in case of investment from land bordering countries and the concurrence of the Indian investee company concerned when their equity holdings breach the prescribed limits.
- (ii) For reclassification, the entire investment held by such FPI should be reported within the timelines specified under FEM (Mode of Payment and Reporting of Non-Debt Instruments) Regulations, 2019.
- (iii) After reporting this reclassification, the FPI is required to instruct its custodian to transfer the equity instruments from the demat account designated for portfolio investments to the FDI account.

5. HDFC Standard Life Acquires PNB Housing Finance Shares Worth Rs 90 Crore.

Mumbai (Maharashtra) based HDFC Standard Life Insurance Company Limited acquired 0.4% shares of New Delhi (Delhi) based PNB Housing Finance Limited for Rs 90 crore through an open market transaction. This highlights HDFC Standard Life's interest in expanding its portfolio within the housing finance sector.

- The shares were picked up at an average price of Rs 900 apiece, taking the transaction value to Rs 90 crore.
- After the transaction, foreign investor Asia Opportunities V (Mauritius) Ltd reduced its holding in PNB Housing to 0.94% from 1.34%.

Key Points:-

In August 2024, Asia Opportunities V (Mauritius) divested a 3% stake in PNB Housing Finance for over Rs 676 crore, while in May 2024, Asia Opportunities V (Mauritius) and General Atlantic liquidated a cumulative 4.46% stake in PNB Housing Finance for Rs 843 crore.

6. RBI Extends Deadline for Implementing ATM Cassette Swap Mechanism until March 2025.

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has granted an extension to banks and Automated Teller Machine (ATM) operators for implementing the cassette swap mechanism for money replenishment in ATMs until March 31, 2025.

- The banking regulator has exempted Cash Recycler Machines (CRMs) from the cassette swap requirement for money replenishment.
- This exemption also applies to banks that do not use third-party agencies for cash replenishment in ATMs.
- In 2018, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) directed banks to adopt the cassette swap mechanism in ATMs, aiming for phased implementation by covering at least one-third of ATMs annually, but due to slow progress, the deadline has been extended to March 31, 2025, following recommendations from the Committee on Currency Movement.

Key Points:-

- (i) The cassette swap mechanism involves swapping lockable cassettes pre-filled with currency notes during ATM cash replenishment. Each ATM needs three sets of five cassettes, costing Rs. 15,000 to Rs. 20,000 each.
- (ii) The world's first ATM was introduced by Barclays Bank in 1967, while in India, HSBC Bank launched the first ATM in 1987. ICICI Bank became the first to introduce mobile ATMs in India. Additionally, ATMs in India are controlled by

the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI).

(iii) As of August 2024, there were 2.55 lakh ATMs in India. Of these, 2.20 lakh were bank-owned ATMs, and 35,000 were owned by White Label ATM Operators.

7. Karnataka Bank Introduces Two New Financial Products for Students KBL Peak and KBL Genius.

Karnataka Bank Limited (KBL) has launched 2 financial products, "KBL Peak" and "KBL Genius," to empower the younger generations and contribute to India's growing knowledge economy.

- 'KBL Peak' is an education loan with financing of up to Rs 2 crore and comprehensive coverage, while 'KBL Genius' is a student savings account featuring free cyber insurance.
- These products aim to help students pursue their academic goals and aspirations with financial freedom, contributing to a brighter future for both individuals and the nation.
- KBL Peak supports students pursuing higher education in India and abroad, covering tuition, accommodation, travel, books, and laptops. It offers a pre-admission sanction letter, credit life insurance for students and parents, and interest rate concessions for female STEM (Science, Engineering, Technology, and Mathematics) students, promoting financial ease and gender inclusion in education.

Key Points:-

(i) KBL Genius savings account is a student-focused product available in two variants: 'KBL Genius Signature' and 'KBL Genius Advantage.'

(ii) It comes with features like a minimum average balance requirement, seamless digital transactions, and exclusive benefits on debit

cards. KBL Genius empowers students to manage their finances effectively.

8. Punjab & Sind Bank Introduces e-Bank Guarantee Service.

New Delhi, State-owned Punjab & Sind Bank on Friday announced the launch of the e-Bank Guarantee (e-BG) facility in partnership with National e-Governance Services Ltd (NeSL). This initiative replaces the traditional paper-based BG issuance process with e-stamping and e-signatures.

- The secured transmission and enhanced transparency will help beneficiaries save time and effort in verifying physical BGs.
- Punjab & Sind Bank MD and CEO Swarup Kumar Saha said, "It is a matter of delight to join hands with NeSL for the e-BG facility. He added that this is a landmark step towards improving the ease of business for applicants and beneficiaries.

Key Points:-

The facility will significantly reduce the turnaround time (TAT) and serve as a game changer in curbing frauds and eliminating the inconveniences associated with the physical movement of documents.

9. SBI, HDFC Bank, and ICICI Bank Included in RBI's 2024 D-SIBs List.

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has designated State Bank of India (SBI), HDFC Bank Limited, and ICICI Bank Limited as Domestic Systemically Important Banks (D-SIBs) for 2024, marking them as 'too big to fail'. They must maintain higher Common Equity Tier 1 (CET1) capital buffers to ensure financial stability.

- These three banks continue to be under the same bucketing structure as in the 2023 list of D-SIBs.
- SBI remains in the top 4 D-SIBs, requiring an additional CET1 buffer of 0.80%.
- HDFC Bank, the largest private lender, is classified in bucket 2, with a CET1 buffer requirement of 0.40%.

Key Points:-

- (i) ICICI Bank is in bucket 1, needing an additional 0.20% CET1 buffer.
- (ii) The higher D-SIB surcharges for SBI (0.80%) and HDFC Bank (0.40%) will apply from April 1, 2025.
- (iii) Until March 31, 2025, the surcharge for SBI is 0.60% and for HDFC Bank is 0.20%. The classifications are based on data collected from banks as of March 31, 2024.

10. IDFC FIRST Bank introduces real-time tracking for international money transfers.

Mumbai (Maharashtra) based IDFC First Bank Limited (Infrastructure Development Finance Company) in collaboration with La Hulpe (Belgium) based Society for Worldwide Interbank Financial Telecommunication (SWIFT), has launched a new feature that enables customers to track the status of their international money transfers in real-time.

- With this service, IDFC First Bank becomes the first Indian lender to offer live tracking for cross-border transactions. It is available on both the bank's mobile application (app) and internet banking platforms.
- It will provide updates on whether the funds are in transit or credited to the recipient's bank. It also alerts customers to issues like incorrect recipient details, helping them resolve problems quickly.

Key Points:-

- (i) To meet customers' growing expectations for transparency, IDFC First Bank's SWIFT Global Payments Innovation (CPI) integration allows users to monitor the status of their international transfers in real time.
- (ii) The bank offers this real-time tracking service for free under its "Pay Abroad" feature, with no extra processing fees.
- (iii) IDFC First Bank enables remittances up to USD 250,000/year under RBI's LRS for purposes like supporting relatives, gifting, education, medical needs, and investing abroad, reflecting its commitment to customer satisfaction.

11. World Bank Approves USD 200 Million Loan for Climate-Resilient Agricultural Transformation Project in Kerala.

The World Bank (WB) has approved a USD 200 million (Rs 1,655.85 crore) loan to support Kerala's agricultural sector through the Kerala Climate Resilient Agri-Value Chain Modernization (KERA) Project.

- The loan is provided by the WB's lending arm International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) with a 23.5-year term and a 6-year grace period.
- This initiative will help farmers adopt climate-smart practices, improve market access, and promote women-led small businesses in agriculture.

Key Points:-

- (i) The WB has approved a Rs 2,365.5 crore project submitted by Kerala's State Agriculture Department during a meeting of the WB executive directors held on 31 October 2024.
- (ii) The project has been sanctioned Rs 1,655.85 crore (USD 200 million) in assistance from the World Bank, with the Kerala state government

contributing Rs 709.65 crore.

(iii) As a leading producer of spices like cardamom, vanilla, and nutmeg, Kerala accounts for approximately 20% of India's total agri-food exports.

12. IBBI Partners with Indian Banks' Association (IBA) to List and Auction Liquidation Assets on eBKray Platform.

The Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India (IBBI) announced that it has collaborated with the Indian Banks' Association (IBA) to facilitate the auction of assets under the liquidation process through the 'eBKray platform', which is presently owned and managed by PSB Alliance Private Limited (a consortium of 12 Public Sector Banks, PSBs).

- This announcement was made by IBBI through a circular issued in the exercise of the powers given under Section 196 of the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC 2016).
- This circular will come into force with effect from 1st November, 2024.
- For the initial phase, the platform will be deployed on a pilot mode and it will be improved based on the experiences of the usage. The complete roll-out of the platform will be notified thereafter.

Key Points:-

(i) PSB Alliance has developed a module within the eBKray platform to provide the listing and auction of assets under IBC 2016.

(ii) The platform will act as a unified listing platform to host all assets being sold in liquidation cases. It will require all details such as the status of the attachment or lien, geographical coordinates, and the likely date of auction to be

provided by the liquidators.

(iii) As per IBBI directions, it is mandatory for all the Insolvency Professionals (IPs) handling the liquidation processes to list the details of all the unsold assets in respect of the ongoing liquidation processes on the eBKray platform.

13. Tata Power Renewable Energy & IndusInd Bank Partners for Collateral Free Solar Financing for MSEs.

Mumbai (Maharashtra) based Tata Power Renewable Energy Limited (TPREL), a subsidiary of Tata Power, has announced a strategic partnership with Mumbai-based IndusInd Bank Limited to facilitate accessible and affordable solar financing for Micro and Small Enterprises (MSEs) and promote solar energy adoption amongst MSEs.

- This partnership will provide collateral-free solar financing to MSEs by offering loans ranging from Rs 10 lakh to Rs 2 crore.

Key Points:-

(i) These loans, contingent on the bank's credit approval, require a 20% margin and come with competitive interest rates, offering terms of up to 7 years.

(ii) This partnership is in line with TPREL's vision of environmental responsibility and supports India's sustainability goals, including the net-zero target by 2070.

14. Cashfree Payments Granted Prepaid Payment Instrument (PPI) License by RBI.

Cashfree Payments India Private Limited, based in Bengaluru (Karnataka), has received a Prepaid Payment Instrument (PPI) license from the Reserve Bank of India (RBI).

- Currently, Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has issued PPI licenses to 46 entities.
- This license will enable Cashfree Payments to offer a variety of digital payment solutions, including mobile wallets, prepaid cards, and vouchers.

Key Points:-

- (i) The PPI license will help the company build services that allow internet businesses to retain and expand their user base.
- (ii) Cashfree Payments also received the Payment Aggregator Cross-Border (PA - CB) license in July 2024, facilitating transactions for imports and exports.
- (iii) Additionally, the company secured the payment aggregator license in December 2023, which enables it to process online merchant payments.

- A spot deal involves exchanging currencies at the current market rate, typically settled within two business days. Cash deals settle the same day, while TOM (tomorrow) deals settle the next working day.

Key Points:-

- (i) With the expanded reporting framework, the RBI effectively tracks real-time forex market trends and can better assess liquidity and volatility, making authorized dealers more responsible for the accuracy of transactions.
- (ii) The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has imposed a monetary penalty of Rs 59.20 lakh on South Indian Bank (SIB) for non-compliance with certain directions on 'interest rate on deposits' and 'customer service' in banks. This penalty has been imposed under the provisions of Section 47 A (1) (c) with Section 46 (4) (i) of the Banking Regulation (BR) Act.

15. RBI Enhances Forex Surveillance by Making "Spot Deals" Reporting Mandatory.

On November 8, 2024, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) expanded its foreign exchange (forex) reporting requirements to include spot deals in order to ensure the completeness of transaction data in the trade repository (TR) of the Clearing Corporation of India Limited (CCI) in the Indian forex market.

- With effect from February 10, 2025, authorized dealers will be required to report all inter-bank foreign exchange spot transactions, including cash and tom (tomorrow-next day) transactions, to the TR of CCIL.
- Previously, authorized dealers reported all over-the-counter (OTC) forex derivative contracts and foreign currency interest rate derivative contracts either directly or through their overseas entities to the TR of CCIL.

MOUs and Agreement

1. India Signs Agreement to Host BIMSTEC Energy Centre in Bengaluru.

India signed the Host Country Agreement (HCA) for establishing the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) Energy Centre in Bengaluru, Karnataka. This initiative aims at enhanced energy cooperation in the Bay of Bengal and littoral region, including through inter-grid connectivity.

- The agreement was formalized in New Delhi on 08 November 2024.
- The Energy Centre will be housed in the premises of the Central Power Research Institute (CPRI) Bengaluru and also function as the Secretariat of the BIMSTEC Grid Interconnection Coordination Committee (GICC).
- The agreement was signed between the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), Secretary (East) Jaideep

Mazumder, and BIMSTEC Secretary General, Indra Mani Pandey.

Key Points:-

- (i) India hosted the first meeting of the Governing Board of BIMSTEC Energy Centre (BEC) on 27 February 2023 at Shangri-La Hotel, Bengaluru.
- (ii) Indra Mani Pandey participated in the Second Edition of Raisina Down Under 2024 in Canberra, Australia.
- (iii) External Affairs Minister Dr. S. Jaishankar reiterated India's dedication to strengthening ties with BIMSTEC during a meeting of foreign ministers.

2. India-International Energy Agency (IEA) Signs MoU for Cooperation in Critical Minerals.

On November 13, 2024, the Ministry of Mines (MoM) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with International Energy Agency (IEA) at Shastri Bhawan, New Delhi (Delhi) to enhance collaboration in the field of critical minerals. These minerals are vital for economic development and national security.

- This partnership is expected to provide India with access to reliable data, in-depth analysis, and policy guidance, strengthening its ability to manage critical resources strategically.
- The MoU will support India in refining its policies and regulatory frameworks for critical minerals, informed by the experiences of other IEA members.
- Capacity Building: It will enable knowledge sharing through joint research, workshops, and training programs, improving technical expertise in mineral extraction, recycling, and technology.

Key Points:-

- (i) Data and Analysis: India will gain advanced capabilities in data collection, modeling, and analysis, enhancing institutional capacity in the critical mineral sector.
- (ii) India is an active member of the United States of America (USA)-led Minerals Security Partnership (MSP), an initiative focused on securing adequate supplies of critical minerals essential for achieving global zero-carbon emission goals.

3. Andhra Pradesh (AP) Signs MoU with RIL to Invest Rs 65,000 Crore in 500 CBG Plants.

The Government of Andhra Pradesh (AP) has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Mumbai (Maharashtra)-based Reliance Industries Limited (RIL) to establish 500 compressed biogas (CBG) plants in the state over the next three years.

- This initiative involves an investment of approximately Rs 65,000 crore, with each plant costing Rs 130 crore.
- The MoU was signed in the presence of Andhra Pradesh (AP) Chief Minister (CM) N. Chandrababu Naidu, along with representatives of RIL and other state government officials, at the State Secretariat in Amaravati, AP.
- The project is expected to create approximately 2.5 lakh jobs, both directly and indirectly.

Key Points:-

- (i) The plants will be part of Reliance's national target of setting up 2,000 CBG units.
- (ii) This initiative aligns with AP's Integrated Clean Energy (ICE) Policy - 2024, which aims to attract investments worth Rs 10 lakh crore.
- (iii) According to GOBARDhan (Galvanising

Organic Bio-Agro Resources Dhan) data, there are only 109 functional CBG/Bio CNG plants in India.

China, and India, as part of a layered defense strategy alongside longer-range systems like the S-400.

4. India Inks MOU with Russia for Advanced Pantsir Air Defence Systems.

India's Bharat Dynamics Limited (BDL), top state-owned defense manufacturer, and Russia's Rosoboronexport (ROB), Russia's main weapons export agency, signed the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to boost India's air defense capabilities, particularly with the acquisition of advanced variants of the Pantsir air defense system from Russia.

- The MoU was signed at the 5th India-Russia Inter-Governmental Commission (IRIGC) Subgroup meeting held in Goa.
- The Pantsir is a Russian self-propelled anti-aircraft gun/missile system (SPAAGM), designed for point-defense.
- The MOU was inked between BDL's Chairman and Managing Director A Madhavarao (Retired) and Mr Kovalenko German, Deputy Director General of the Naval Department of Rosoboronexport (ROB).

Key Points:-

- (i) The Pantsir air defence system is a highly versatile and mobile platform designed to protect military installations from aerial threats, including aircraft, drones, and precision-guided munitions.
- (ii) The system combines short- to medium-range surface-to-air missiles with dual 30 mm automatic cannons, creating a multi-layered defence.
- (iii) The Pantsir-S1, equipped with advanced radar and tracking systems, can detect and engage targets up to 36 km away and at altitudes of up to 15 km. It is deployed globally, including in Russia,

SPORTS

1. Hockey India begins celebration of 100 years of Indian Hockey.

On 7th November 2024, Hockey India (HI) announced a year-long celebration to mark the 100th year of Indian hockey. 2025, the centenary year of Hockey India, is a tribute to a century of unparalleled excellence and vision for the future of Hockey in India.

- Hockey India was formed as India's first national body for Hockey on 7th November 1925 in Gwalior, Madhya Pradesh (MP).

Key Points:-

- (i) As a part of the celebration, Hockey India relaunched the Men's Hockey India League (HIL) after a 7-year pause and also announced the launch of the Women's HIL.
- (ii) Over these 100 years, the Indian Men's hockey team has won 8 gold medals, one silver and 4 bronze medals in the Olympics. They have also won the 1975 Hockey World Cup trophy.

2. India Secures Bronze at Sultan of Johor Cup Junior Hockey U21 Tournament.

The Indian men's junior team, under the captaincy of Amir Ali, defeated New Zealand 3-2 to win the bronze medal at the 12th edition of the "Sultan of Johor Cup Junior Under 21 Men's Hockey Tournament 2024" at the Taman Daya Hockey Stadium in Johor Bahru, Malaysia.

- This was India's second consecutive bronze medal at the tournament.

- **Participating Countries:** India, New Zealand, Malaysia, Germany, Great Britain, and Japan.

Key Points:-

(i) Indian goalkeeper Bikramjit Singh made three crucial saves, and strikers Gurjot Singh, Manmeet Singh, and Sourabh Anand Kushwaha scored in the shootout to secure the win.

(ii) Great Britain's U21 Men's squad defeated Australia to win the Gold medal at the 12th Sultan of Johor Cup. This was GB's fourth title at the Sultan of Johor Cup.

(iii) India won the Gold Medal at the Sultan of Johor Cup Junior Under 21 Men's Hockey Tournament in 2013, 2014, and 2022. Germany won the previous edition in 2023.

3. Wriddhiman Saha Announces His Retirement from All Forms of Cricket.

Indian wicket-keeper and batter, Wriddhiman Saha (40), has announced his retirement from all forms of cricket, marking the end of a successful career that lasted nearly 20 years. The ongoing Ranji Trophy season would be his last.

- **Wriddhiman Saha represented India in 40 Tests (1,353 runs) and 9 ODIs (One Day International). He holds the record for the second-most Test centuries among Indian keepers.**

- **He was India's first-choice wicketkeeper-batter in red-ball cricket for some time after Mahendra Singh Dhoni's retirement and also appeared in 170 Indian Premier League (IPL) matches. He made his last Test appearance in 2021 against New Zealand.**

Key Points:-

(i) He has been a key player for Bengal in domestic cricket, especially in the Ranji Trophy. He played for 5 Indian IPL franchises: Kolkata

Knight Riders (KKR), Chennai Super Kings (CSK), Punjab Kings (PBKS), SunRisers Hyderabad (SRH), and Gujarat Titans (GT).

(ii) Wriddhiman Saha won West Bengal's highest civilian award, the 'Banga Bibhushan' award.

4. Aravindh Chithambaram Wins Masters Title at Chennai Grandmasters 2024, and Pranav Clinches Challengers Championship.

Grandmaster (GM) Aravindh Chithambaram (4.5 points) clinched the Masters title after tying for first place with GMs Levon Aronian (Armenia) and Arjun Erigaisi (India) and defeating Aronian in the final of the tiebreak with a 2-0 score at the 2nd edition of the Chennai Grandmasters 2024 held from 5th November to 11th November 2024 at the Anna Centenary Library in Chennai, Tamil Nadu (TN).

- **Meanwhile, in the Challengers category, CM Pranav Venkatesh (5.5 points) emerged victorious after drawing with Leon Mendonca (India) thus ending the competition with four wins and three draws.**

- **With this win, Pranav got an opportunity to play in the Masters section of next year's event.**

Key Points:-

(i) The Chennai Grand Masters is an 8-player single round-robin with a time control of 90 minutes for the game plus 30-second increments per move.

(ii) The tournament is organised by MGD1 and sponsored by the Sports Development Authority of TN and features two categories - Masters & Challengers.

(iii) The rating average of this tournament is 2729 according to the October rating list.

5. Australian cricketer Matthew Wade announces retirement from international cricket.

Australian cricketer Matthew Wade (36-year-old) announced his retirement from international cricket and will become a wicketkeeping and fielding coach with the Australia national team for the Twenty20 (T20) series against Pakistan in November 2024.

- **Matthew Wade has played 36 Tests and scored 1,613 runs with four centuries, including a top score of 117 in the 2019 Ashes.**

- **He has played 225 international matches for Australia across the three formats.**

Key Points:-

(i) Matthew Wade played 97 ODIs, amassing 1,867 runs, and 92 T20Is with 1,202 runs.

(ii) He played for Australia for 13 years and served as the T20 captain between December 2020 and February 2024.

AWARDS

1. SBI Recognized as the Best Bank in India for 2024 by Global Finance Magazine.

The Global Finance Magazine of the United States of America (USA) has recognized the State Bank of India (SBI) as the Best Bank in India for 2024 during its 31st Annual Best Bank Awards event, held alongside the Annual Meetings of the IMF (International Monetary Fund) and the World Bank in Washington, USA.

- **Global Finance's Best Bank Awards set the standard for evaluating the world's financial institutions.**

Key Points:-

Challa Sreenivasulu Setty, Chairman of SBI, accepted the award in recognition of the bank's

dedication to providing exceptional services and advancing financial inclusion across the country by earning the trust of its customers.

2. Telangana Environmentalist M Karunakar Reddy to Receive Inaugural Jadav Payeng International Award.

Telangana-based environmentalist M Karunakar Reddy has been selected to receive the first Jadav Payeng International Award, launched by the Jyoti Protap Education Trust in Jorhat district, Assam.

- **M Karunakar Reddy, known as the Water Man and Green Man of India, will be awarded for his extraordinary efforts in environmental conservation and climate action.**

- **He is also referred to as the Crisis Man of India due to his work in disaster relief and management in areas affected by climate change.**

Key Points:-

(i) The award will be presented to Reddy in January 2025 during a ceremony at Jyoti Protap Bidyalay in Teok, Jorhat.

(ii) The Jadav Payeng International Award includes a cash prize of Rs 2 lakh, a citation, and various other mementos.

(iii) The award is named after Padma Shri awardee Jadav Payeng, known as the "Forest Man of India" for his continuous efforts in creating a 550-hectare forest in Assam's Jorhat district.

3. Samantha Harvey Wins 2024 Booker Prize for "Orbital," First Space-Set Novel to Claim the Honor.

British author Samantha Harvey won the 2024 Booker Prize award for her fiction novel "Orbital," which has become the first book set in space to win the prize.

- The winner was announced by Chair of the 2024 judges, Edmund de Waal, at a ceremony held at Old Billingsgate in London, the United Kingdom (UK).
- Samantha Harvey becomes the 1st woman to win the award since 2019. Margaret Atwood and Bernardine Evaristo shared the award in 2019.
- Samantha Harvey was awarded with 50,000 pounds (USD 64,000) and a trophy, which was presented to her by Paul Lynch, winner of the Booker Prize 2023.

Key Points:-

- (i) Orbital is the 2nd-shortest novel ever to win the Booker Prize.
- (ii) This science fiction novel, published by Jonathan Cape (UK) and Grove Atlantic (USA), is the second-shortest book to win the prize, with 136 pages and covering a 24-hour timeframe.
- (iii) This year's shortlist included five women out of six shortlistees, the largest number of women represented in the prize's 55-year history.

4. India's Rachel Gupta Crowned Miss Grand International 2024.

Rachel Gupta from Jalandhar (Punjab) won the 12th edition of "Miss Grand International (MGI) 2024," standing out among contestants from more than 70 countries at the MGI hall in Bangkok (Thailand). She became the 1st Indian and 3rd Asian to be crowned MGI.

- Thae Su Nyein, Miss Grand Myanmar 2023, was crowned as the second runner-up at MGI 2024.
- She won the Miss Grand India title in August 2024, which paved the way for her to compete for the MGI title.

Key Points:-

- (i) In addition to winning the main title, she also

won the Grand Pageants Choice Award 2024. She will now serve as the global ambassador for MGI, promoting peace and stability worldwide.

(ii) With this win, she shares the record for the most global pageant crowns won by an Indian, along with former Miss Universe Lara Dutta.

(iii) In 2022, she won the title of "Miss Super Talent of the World" at the 15th edition of the pageant held in Paris, France.

5. Elon Musk Tops Fortune's First-Ever List of 100 Most Powerful People in Business and Mukesh Ambani of Reliance Ranks 12th.

On 14th November 2024, Fortune, an American global business magazine, released the inaugural list of the "Fortune 100 Most Powerful People (MPP) in Business." Elon Musk, Founder and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Tesla and Space Exploration Technologies Corporation, commonly referred to as SpaceX, secured the top position on the list.

- He is followed by Jensen Huang, CEO of Nvidia Corporation, and Satya Nadella, CEO of Microsoft Corporation, ranked 2nd and 3rd positions, respectively, showcasing their transformative influence in technology and Artificial Intelligence (AI).

Key Points:-

(i) Mukesh Ambani, Chairman and Managing Director (CMD) of Reliance Industries Limited (RIL), who ranked at 12th spot, is the only Indian to be featured on the list.

(ii) The list has featured 18 female CEOs and business leaders, including Julie Sweet, Chair and CEO of Accenture (USA), and Emma Walmsley, CEO of the UK-based pharmaceutical company GlaxoSmithKline (GSK), ranked at 23rd and 25th positions, respectively.

6. UN Tourism Recognizes 55 Villages as the Best Tourism Villages for 2024.

On 15th November 2024, the United Nations (UN) World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) announced the names of 55 villages including Caviahue-Copahue (Argentina), Sibayo (Peru), Xito (China), Tra Que Vegetable Village (Vietnam), among others, which were recognised as Best Tourism Villages for 2024.

- This marks the 4th edition of the Best Tourism Villages initiative, highlighting the role of rural destinations in promoting sustainable tourism, preserving cultural heritage, and contributing to community development.
- These villages were selected from over 260 applications from more than 60 UN Tourism Member states.

Key Points:-

- (i) Among the 55 Best Tourism Villages for 2024, 7 villages were selected from the BTV Upgrade Programme, including Ruboni (Uganda), Bo Suak (Thailand), among others.
- (ii) Additionally, 20 villages were selected to participate in the Upgrade Programme for 2024, including Dhudmaras village located in Bastar district of Chhattisgarh, the only Indian village featured on the list.

IMPORTANT DAYS

1. World Pneumonia Day is celebrated on 12 November 2024.

World Pneumonia Day is observed every year on November 12 to raise awareness and preventive measures about pneumonia. This respiratory

illness primarily affects young children under the age of five and the most vulnerable elders.

- 1st World Pneumonia Day was observed on 12th November 2009 by the Global Coalition against Child Pneumonia, which included UNICEF, WHO, and Save the Children.
- The campaign aims to raise awareness about Pneumonia, the leading cause of child mortality worldwide, despite being both preventable and treatable.

Key Points:-

- (i) The theme of World PneumoBreathy 2024 is "Every Breath Counts: Stop Pneumonia in Its Track".
- (ii) The theme highlights the importance of every breath and emphasizes the urgent need for timely detection, and treatment to control pneumonia.

2. World Kindness Day is celebrated on 13 November 2024.

World Kindness Day (WKD) is annually observed across the globe on 13th November to encourage people to adopt empathy, kindness, and selflessness by promoting actions that encourage compassion, understanding, and goodwill around the world.

- 13th November 2024 marks the observance of 27th WKD.
- The first-ever World Kindness Day was observed on 13th November 1998.

Key Points:-

- (i) The idea of WKD was introduced in 1997 when the World Kindness Movement (WKM), a group of Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) focused on kindness, hosted the first conference

in Tokyo, Japan to unite like-minded organizations worldwide.

(ii) After the formation of the WKM, WKD was established as an annual observance in 1998.

(iii) The World Kindness Movement includes representatives from over 27 countries and was registered as an NGO in Switzerland in 2019.

3. Public Service Broadcasting Day is celebrated on 12 November 2024.

Public Service Broadcasting Day (PSBD), also referred to as Jan Prasaran Diwas, is celebrated every year on 12th November to mark the historic occasion of Mahatma Gandhi's visit to the All India Radio (AIR) studios in New Delhi in 1947.

- After the Partition of India and Pakistan, Mahatma Gandhi visited the AIR studio at Broadcasting House, New Delhi, to address the refugees from Pakistan who were camped at Kurukshetra, Haryana.

- A programme was organised on 12 November 1997 to commemorate the completion of 50 years of Gandhi's AIR journey.

- In 2001, November 12 every year was declared as Public Service Broadcasting Day. The event was conceptualised by Suhas Borkar, convener of Jan Prasaran.

Key Points:-

(i) AIR is a public service broadcaster of India and the radio vertical of Prasar Bharati.

(ii) AIR's Home Service consists of 479 stations spread across India, reaching about 92% of the area and 99.19% of the total population.

(iii) AIR broadcasts programs in 23 languages and 179 dialects.

4. World Diabetes Day is celebrated on 14 November 2024.

The United Nations (UN)'s World Diabetes Day (WDD) is annually observed across the globe on 14 November to raise awareness about the impacts of diabetes, need for prevention, early diagnosis, proper treatment and equal access to care.

- WDD is the world's largest diabetes awareness campaign reaching a global audience of over 1 billion people in over 160 countries

Key Points:-

(i) Each year, WDD highlights a specific theme that continues for one or more years. The UN theme for WDD 2024-26 is "Diabetes and well-being".

(ii) The WHO theme for WDD 2024 is "Breaking Barriers, Bridging Gaps".

(iii) WDD was created in 1991 by the International Diabetes Federation (IDF) and the World Health Organization (WHO) to address the growing concerns about the health threat posed by diabetes.

5. Children's Day is celebrated on 14 November 2024.

Children's Day or Bal Diwas is annually observed across India on November 14 to honor the birth anniversary of India's 1st Prime Minister (PM), Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, who is remembered for his affection for children.

- 14th November 2024 marks the 135th birth anniversary of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru.

- After the death of Jawaharlal Nehru in 1964, India began celebrating Children's Day on November 14 in honor of his birthday.

- India's highest civilian award, the Bharat Ratna, was awarded to him in 1955.

Key Points:-

- (i) Before 1964, India celebrated Children's Day on November 20, which is the day the United Nations (UN) celebrated World Children's Day.
- (ii) In 1929, he was elected President of the Indian National Congress (INC) and was the PM of the interim Indian Government between 1946 and 1950.

6. World Usability Day is celebrated on 14 November 2024.

World Usability Day (WUD), or Make Things Easier Day is annually observed across the globe on the 2nd Thursday of November to promote the principles of usability, accessibility, and user experience in design.

- World Usability Day (WUD) 2024 falls on 14 November 2024.
- World Usability Day was established in 2004 by the Usability Professionals Association (UPA).

Key Points:-

- (i) The 2024 theme of World Usability Day (WUD) is, "Designing for a Better World".
- (ii) The first WUD was observed on 10 November 2005.

7. World Quality Week is celebrated on 11 to 15 November 2024.

World Quality Week (WQW) is celebrated annually during the second week of November to highlight the importance of quality management. It serves as a platform to raise awareness about the profession

and its role in navigating complexity in today's dynamic business landscape.

- It is an annual event organised by the Chartered Institute of Quality (CQI).
- WQW (World Quality Week) 2024 is observed from 11th to 15th November, following its observation in 2023 from 6th to 10th November and preceding its 2025 schedule from 10th to 14th November.
- The idea of World Quality Week (WQW) was first proposed by the American Society for Quality (ASQ) in 2010.

Key Points:-

- (i) The theme of WQW 2024, 'Quality: From Compliance to Performance,' emphasizes the shift from mere compliance in quality management to a focus on continuous improvement and excellence.
- (ii) The CQI is also in charge of the International Register of Certified Auditors (IRCA).

8. International Day for Tolerance is celebrated on 16 November 2024.

The United Nations (UN)'s International Day for Tolerance is celebrated annually across the globe on 16 November to raise awareness about the value of tolerance and promote understanding, respect, and appreciation across different cultures and communities.

- The day also emphasizes the harmful impact of intolerance and promotes policies that promote equality and opportunity for all.

Key Points:-

- (i) In 1993, the UN General Assembly (UNGA) adopted the resolution A/RES/48/126 and proclaimed the year 1995 as the United Nations Year for Tolerance.

(ii) In 1996, the UNGA adopted resolution A/RES/51/95 and declared November 16 each year as the International Day for Tolerance.

(iii) The first International Day for Tolerance was observed on 16 November 1996.

9. The inaugural UN International Day to Combat Transnational Organized Crime was observed on 15 November 2024.

The first-ever United Nations (UN)'s International Day for the Prevention of and Fight against All Forms of Transnational Organized Crime (TOC) was observed across the globe on 15th November to raise awareness about the dangers of various types of transnational organized crime and to strengthen global collaboration to address them.

- In March 2024, United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) Resolution 78/267 designated 15th November on each year as the International Day for the Prevention of and Fight against All Forms of TOC.

- It recognized that preventing and combating transnational organized crime is essential for achieving the goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Goals (SDG).

Key Points:-

The theme of International Day for the Prevention of and Fight against All Forms of TOC 2024 is "Organized crime steals, corrupts and kills. It's time we pull together to push back".

10. World Day of Remembrance for Road Traffic Victims is celebrated on 17 November 2024.

The United Nations (UN) World Day of Remembrance (WDOR) for Road Traffic Victims is annually observed across the globe on the 3rd

Sunday in November to pay tribute to victims of road traffic injuries and their families.

- WDOR for Road Traffic Victims 2024 falls on November 17, 2024.

- The slogan for WDOR for Road Traffic Victims 2024 is "Remember. Support. Act."

- In 1993 and 1994, the United Kingdom (UK) began church services commemorating road traffic victims, organized by RoadPeace, a charity established in 1992.

Key Points:-

(i) Starting in 1995, at the initiative of Brigitte Chaudry, the founder of RoadPeace, organizations within the European Federation of Road Traffic Victims (FEVR) united to honor road traffic victims in their respective countries on a common day and chose the 3rd Sunday of November each year.

(ii) The UN Road Safety Collaboration Forum (UNRSC), established in 2004, deliberated on a global day to underscore road safety.

(iii) On 26 October 2005, the UN General Assembly (UNGA) adopted a resolution A/RES/60/5 on improving global road safety, by "designating the 3rd Sunday in November of every year as the WDOR for Road Traffic Victims."

11. International Students' Day is celebrated on 17 November 2024.

International Students' Day is annually observed across the globe on November 17 to celebrate multiculturalism, diversity, and teamwork among students. The day aims to ensure that every child worldwide has access to equal educational opportunities.

- 17th November 2024 marks the observed of the 84th International Students' Day.

- The day marks the anniversary of the events that followed the Nazi invasion of Charles University in Prague, Czech Republic, in 1939.
- During World War II, Nazi forces invaded Czechoslovakia and occupied Charles University in Prague in 1939.

Key Points:-

- (i) To honor the courage and sacrifice of students who fought for academic freedom and human rights, this day was chosen to be International Students' Day.
- (ii) The first-ever International Students' Day was observed on 17th November 1941. It was observed by the International Students' Council in London, The United Kingdom (UK).
- (iii) The Organising Bureau of European School Student Unions (OBESSU) annually raises awareness for students' rights.

12. National Epilepsy Day is celebrated on 17 November 2024.

National Epilepsy Day (NED) is annually observed across India on 17th November to spread awareness about Epilepsy, a neurological disorder characterized by recurrent seizures. The NED also highlights epilepsy's impact on individuals, families, and communities.

- The day offers a platform to eliminate the myths and misconceptions regarding epilepsy.
- The purple ribbon is a symbol of epilepsy awareness.
- The General Body meeting of the Indian Epilepsy Association (IEA) on 17th December 1990 in Indore, Madhya Pradesh, declared 17th November as National Epilepsy Day (NED). The observance of this day was proposed by Indian physicians Dr. Eddie Bharucha and Dr. Piloo Bharucha.

Key Points:-

- (i) Around 50 million people across the globe have epilepsy, making it one of the most common neurological diseases globally.
- (ii) Nearly 80% of people with epilepsy live in low- and middle-income countries.
- (iii) It is estimated that up to 70% of people living with epilepsy could live seizure-free if properly diagnosed and treated.

13. National Press Day is celebrated on 16 November 2024.

National Press Day (NPD) is annually observed across India on 16th November to commemorate the day on which the Press Council of India (PCI) started its function as the moral watchdog to ensure that the press maintains high standards and is not fettered by any form of influence or threats.

- The 1st Press Commission held in 1954 concluded that a statutory authority body with people connected with the industry should be created to maintain professional ethics in journalism.
- Following this, the Press Council of India (PCI) was established on 4th July 1966 under the Press Council Act of 1965 and started its functions on 16th November 1966.
- PCI is a statutory quasi-judicial autonomous authority re-established in 1979 under an Act of Parliament, the Press Council Act, 1978.

Key Points:-

- (i) The theme for National Press Day 2024 is "Changing Nature of the Press".
- (ii) According to Reporters Without Borders (Reporters sans frontières - RSF)'s 22nd World Press Freedom Index (WPFI 2024), India ranked

159th position out of 180 countries with a score of 31.28.

(iii) Justice Janardan Raghunath Mudholkar (JR Mudholkar) was appointed as the 1st chairman of PCI. He served as the Judge of the Supreme Court of India from 1960 to 1966.

sectors.

(iii) Iran has also sent Shahed drones to Russia under a USD 1.7 billion deal signed in late 2022. Western countries, including the United States, have accused Russia of using these drones in Ukraine.

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

1. Russia's Soyuz-2.1b rocket launches 55 satellites, including Iran's Kowsar and Hodhod, from Vostochny Cosmodrome.

On 5th November 2024, Russia launched 55 satellites into orbit, including Iran's two domestically manufactured satellites Kowsar and Hodhod from Vostochny Cosmodrome spaceport in eastern Russia using a Soyuz-2.1b rocket.

- This is the first time Russia has launched privately built Iranian satellites. This launch marked Russia's 13th launch in 2024.
- The payload included 51 Russian satellites, one satellite jointly developed by Russian and Chinese teams, and another Russian-Zimbabwean satellite, along with two Iranian satellites.
- The rocket carried two Russian Ionosphere-M Earth observation satellites for monitoring Earth's ionosphere and space weather, along with the Kowsar satellite for land observation and the Hodhod satellite for communications, both designed and built by the Iranian private space company Omid Faza in Tehran, Iran.

Key Points:-

(i) Previously in 2022, a Russian rocket launched Khayyam, an Iranian Earth observation satellite built in Russia.

(ii) Iran and Russia have strengthened their ties in various fields, including the economic and military

2. Japan Launches H3 Rocket with Defense Satellite on Board.

Japan has successfully launched the Mitsubishi Heavy Industries (MHI) H3 rocket, carrying the Kirameki No. 3 defense satellite, from the Tanegashima Space Center, located on a southwestern island of Japan.

- The Kirameki No. 3 satellite was successfully deployed into geostationary orbit.
- The Kirameki No. 3 satellite is designed for military communication and intelligence gathering, using X-band technology for reliable, secure, and stable communications in all weather conditions.
- It will enhance Japan's military operations by enabling high-speed data transfer across the Self Defense Forces' ground, maritime, and air units, as well as supporting international peacekeeping missions.

Key Points:-

(i) The H3 rocket, developed by Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA) and Mitsubishi Heavy Industries, is set to replace the aging H-2A series with a more cost-effective and versatile design for both civilian and military missions.

(ii) This launch marks the H3's third consecutive successful flight after a problematic debut last year, which ended in mid-flight failure.

3. DRDO Successfully Tests Long-Range Land Attack Cruise Missile off Odisha Coast.

On 12th November 2024, The Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) conducted the first flight-test of the Long Range Land Attack Cruise Missile (LRLACM), with a range of 1,000 kilometers(km), from Integrated Test Range (ITR), Chandipur, Odisha.

- This is a new variant of the Nirbhay LRLACM with improved features. It was launched from a mobile articulated launcher.

- The LRLACM was developed by Bengaluru(Karnataka)-based Aeronautical Development Establishment(ADE) with contributions from other DRDO laboratories and other industries.

Key Points:-

(i) On 11th November 2024, DRDO handed over the Authority Holding Sealed Particulars (AHSP) of P-7 Parachute System to the Directorate General of Quality Assurance (DGQA) by the Agra (Uttar Pradesh-UP) based Aerial Delivery Research and Development Establishment (ADRDE), a DRDO laboratory.

4. Zimbabwe Unveils 'ZIMSAT-2' Satellite to Strengthen Space Program.

Republic of Zimbabwe successfully launched its second satellite, ZIMSAT-2 on the Soyuz-2.1b spacecraft from Vostochny Cosmodrome, in Amur Oblast, Russia.

- The launch was a joint effort between the Zimbabwe National Geo-Spatial and Space Agency (ZINGSA) and Southwest State University in Kursk, Russia, with help from Zimbabwean engineers and Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) students based in Russia.

- This launch follows the success of Zimbabwe's first satellite, ZIMSAT-1, which was launched in 2022, highlighting the country's ongoing advancements in space technology and innovation.

Key Points:-

(i) ZIMSAT-2, a low Earth observation satellite equipped with a high-resolution multispectral camera (8-meter spatial resolution), is designed to support agriculture by monitoring crop health and resource mapping, aid disaster response through early warning systems, enhance environmental surveillance for sustainable practices, and assist geographical research, including the identification of potential mineral resources.

(ii) The satellite is equipped with a data transmission system that enables it to send collected information back to a ground control station and operates across multiple spectra, including visible and infrared, significantly enhancing its observation capabilities.

5. Defense Space Agency successfully conducts first-ever 'Exercise Antariksha Abhyas 2024'.

Defence Space Agency (DSA) of Headquarters Integrated Defence Staff (IDS) successfully conducted the Space Table Top Exercise Antariksha Abhyas-2024 from 11th to 13th November 2024 in New Delhi, Delhi.

- This first-of-its-kind exercise helped in strengthening India's space-based operational capabilities, enhancing the integration of Indian Navy, Army, and Air Force services for space security.

Key Points:-

(i) The exercise consisted of focused discussions on emerging space technologies, space situational awareness, and India's space program.

(ii) The 3-day exercise engaged participants in scenario-based exercises conducted by subject experts from various Ministries and Departments of the Government of India, alongside military, scientific, and academic representatives.

(iii) The successful implementation of the exercise provided strategies for operational preparedness, a strong framework for future collaboration, and a clear roadmap for advancing India's space capabilities to meet national security objectives.

6. Scientists at PRL Discover "TOI-665 1b," a New Planet Five Times Larger Than Earth.

An international team of scientists from the Physical Research Laboratory (PRL) in Ahmedabad (Gujarat) has discovered a new Saturn-sized exoplanet named "TOI-665 1b" orbiting a Sun-like star, TOI-6651.

- TOI-665 1b, an exoplanet outside our solar system, is five times bigger and 60 times heavier than Earth.

- The planet was identified using the advanced PARAS-2 (PRL Advanced Radial velocity Abu Sky Search-2) spectrograph. This is the 4th exoplanet discovery by PRL scientists.

- The planet is located at the edge of the "Neptunian desert," a sub-Jovian desert defined as the region close to a star (period < 2-4 days) where no Neptune-sized (> 0.1 MJ) exoplanets are found.

Key Points:-

(i) The planet orbits TOI-6651 in a close, 5.06-day cycle.

(ii) The planet's orbit is slightly oval in shape, or eccentric, further distinguishing it from typical gas giants like Saturn in our solar system.

(iii) The star, TOI-6651, is a G-type sub-giant that's slightly larger and hotter than our Sun, with a

surface temperature of about 5940 Kelvin (K).

7. DRDO Successfully Conducts Flight Test of Guided Pinaka Weapon System.

On 14th November 2024, the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) successfully completed the flight test of Guided Pinaka, a Multi-Barrel Rocket Launcher (MBRL) Weapon System as part of Provisional Staff Qualitative Requirements (PSQR) Validation Trials.

- These trials were conducted by DRDO in three phases across different field firing ranges.

- During these tests, various parameters of PSQR including ranging, accuracy, consistency and rate of fire for multiple target engagement in a salvo mode were examined by extensive testing of rockets.

- These tests involved 12 rockets from each production agency from two in-service Pinaka launchers upgraded by the launcher production agencies.

Key Points:-

(i) Guided Pinaka Weapon System is named after Lord Shiva's divine Bow "Pinak". It has replaced the Russian Grad BM-21 rocket launcher for the Indian Army (IA).

(ii) It consists of two pods, each containing 6 rockets and is capable of firing 12 rockets in salvo mode within 44 seconds (s), covering a target area of 700x500 meters (m).

(iii) It is an indigenous weapon system designed and developed by DRDO's Pune (Maharashtra)-based laboratory, Armament Research & Development Establishment (ARDE) in partnership with various agencies such as: High Energy Materials Research Laboratory (HEMRL), Research Centre Imarat, Defence Research and

Development Laboratory (DRDL) and Proof & Experimental Establishment (P&EE).

8. Japan Launches "LignoSat" the World's First Wooden Satellite, to Test Space-Grade Wood.

Japan launched 'LignoSat', the world's first wooden satellite into space from NASA's Kennedy Space Center in Florida, USA. The satellite is scheduled to orbit the Earth for six months.

- The satellite was launched on an unmanned SpaceX rocket with the goal of proving that wood is a space-grade material and understanding the feasibility of timber in space.
- This 10-cubic centimeter (cm³) satellite was designed by researchers at Kyoto University and homebuilder Sumitomo Forestry in Japan.
- The satellite was sent to the International Space Station (ISS) on a SpaceX mission and will be positioned approximately 400 kilometers (km) above Earth.

Key Points:-

- (i) The mini-satellite was launched to test the viability of a renewable material in future space habitation and exploration.
- (ii) The Doi's team is planning an ambitious 50-year strategy to send timber structures to the Moon and Mars. The spacecraft is developed with NASA-certified wooden satellite, validating wood as a space-suited material.
- (iii) Wooden satellites offer an environmental advantage as they produce minimal pollution and a low environmental footprint during re-entry, unlike metal satellites that release aluminum oxide; their success could potentially lead to a future ban on metal satellites.

9. SpaceX Successfully Launches Koreasat-6A Communications Satellite into Orbit.

On 11 November 2024, SpaceX (Space Exploration Technologies Corporation) successfully launched Koreasat-6A, a South Korean communication satellite, onboard the Falcon 9 rocket from Kennedy Space Center (KSC), Cape Canaveral, Florida, The United States of America (USA).

- The satellite was launched for KT SAT Corporation Limited (South Korea's national satellite operator).
- It was deployed into geosynchronous transfer orbit about 35 minutes after liftoff.
- This marks the 23rd flight of the Falcon 9 first-stage booster.

Key Points:-

- (i) This launch marks the 107th successful mission for SpaceX this year and the 364th successful booster landing across all Falcon 9 and Falcon Heavy missions.
- (ii) The launch of the Koreasat-6A satellite is part of KT SAT's strategy to enhance its satellite infrastructure, including its shift towards multi-orbit satellite capabilities.
- (iii) Koreasat 6A was developed by France-based Thales Alenia Space, a joint venture (JV) between French company Thales Group (67%) and the Italian defense company Leonardo (33%).

BOOKS & AUTHORS

1. Ashwin Fernandes presents his new book "Modialogue" on PM Modi's Mann Ki Baat to former President Ram Nath Kovind.

Dr. Ashwin Fernandes, Executive Director of the United Kingdom (UK)-based QS World ranking, presented his new book titled "Modialogue:

Conversations for a Viksit Bharat" to Ram Nath Kovind, former President of India. The book was launched at the Pradhanmantri Sangrahalaya in New Delhi, Delhi.

- The book highlights the widespread influence of Prime Minister (PM) Narendra Modi's renowned radio show, "Mann Ki Baat".
- The title "Modialogue", a fusion of 'Modi' and 'dialogue', highlights the unique communication approach that has bridged the gap between citizens, offering them a platform to voice their aspirations, concerns, and dreams for a brighter future.

Key Points:-

The book also includes an analysis of a nationwide survey with responses from over 4,200 people, highlighting the overwhelmingly positive impact of Mann Ki Baat across diverse demographics.

OBITUARY

1. Renowned Folk Singer and Padma Bhushan Awardee Sharda Sinha Passes Away at Age 72.

Renowned folk singer Sharda Sinha, popularly known as 'Bihar Kokila' (Nightingale of Bihar), passed away at the age of 72 due to complications of blood cancer in New Delhi, Delhi. She was born on 1st October 1952 in Bihar.

- Sharda Sinha was a Nritya Visharad (Manipuri) and also held a master's degree in Indian classical music-vocal and a Ph.D.
- Sharda Sinha is known for her songs in Bhojpuri, Maithili, Magahi, and Hindi and is famous for her songs during Chhath Puja, a popular festival celebrated in Bihar, Jharkhand, and Uttar Pradesh (UP).

Key Points:-

- (i) She was honored with Padma Shri for outstanding contribution to music in 1991 and Padma Bhushan in the Art-Music field in 2018.
- (ii) In 2000, she was conferred with the Sangeet Natak Akademi Award.
- (iii) She has also received several awards including Rashtriya Devi Ahiliya Samman, Bihar Kala Puraskar, Bihar Ratna, Bhojpuri Ratna, Mithila Vibhuti Samman.

2. BPL (British Physical Laboratories) Group Founder TP Gopalan Nambiar Passes Away at the Age of 94.

TP Gopalan Nambiar (also known as TPG), the founder of British Physical Laboratories (BPL) group, passed away at the age of 94 in Bengaluru, Karnataka. He was born on 25 November, 1929 in Kannur, Kerala.

- T P Gopalan Nambiar was a prominent Indian entrepreneur and business leader, best known for establishing BPL, one of India's leading consumer electronics companies.
- He actively supported the evolution of the Indian electronics industry between the years 1960 and 1990 and had established itself as a leader in the Indian consumer electronics market.

Key Points:-

- (i) TP Gopalan Nambiar was honored with the Electronics Man of the Year Award (1992), National Citizen's Award (2000), and Lifetime Achievement Award (2007).
- (ii) He was also recognized by the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) (2008) for his leadership in building a strong Indian brand in the global electronics market.
- (iii) BPL was founded in 1963. Its first manufacturing facility was set up in Palakkad,

Kerala.