

**WEEKLY**  
**CURRENT**  
**AFFAIRS**  
**PDFs**



**December 2024**



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## NATIONAL AFFAIRS / GOVERNMENT SCHEME

### 1. PM Modi Inaugurates ICA Global Cooperative Conference 2024 in New Delhi.

On 25th November 2024, Prime Minister (PM) Narendra Modi inaugurated the International Cooperative Alliance (ICA) Global Cooperative Conference 2024 at Bharat Mandapam in New Delhi, Delhi.

- The theme of the conference "Cooperatives Build Prosperity for All" aligns with the Indian Government's vision of "Sahkar Se Samridhhi" (Prosperity through Cooperation).
- PM Modi also launched the United Nations (UN)'s International Year of Cooperatives 2025 and released a commemorative postal stamp. Union Minister Amit Shah, Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA), Tshering Tobgay, PM of Bhutan, Biman Prasad, Deputy PM of Fiji, Ariel Guarco, President of ICA, Ashish Kumar Bhutani, Secretary of the Ministry of Cooperation, and other dignitaries were present during the event.
- The Conference was hosted by Indian Farmers Fertiliser Cooperative Limited (IFFCO), in collaboration with ICA, Government of India (GoI), and Indian Cooperatives AMUL and KRIBHCO.

#### Key Points:-

- (i) The conference was held from 25th to 30th November 2024. The theme of the conference "Cooperatives Build Prosperity for All" is aligned with the Indian Government's vision of "Sahkar Se Samridhhi" (Prosperity through Cooperation).
- (ii) The Union Minister stated that the National Cooperative Exports Limited (NCEL), National Cooperative Organics Limited (NCOL), and Bhartiya Beej Sahkari Samiti Limited (BBSSL) will increase the participation of farmers in world trade and work to inspire cooperatives worldwide by showing how small farmers can access global

markets.

- (iii) The GoI is committed to connecting every village and farmer with the cooperative movement. Various efforts have been made to explore new areas and expand the scope of cooperatives.

### 2. 1st BRIC Foundation Day Celebrated with the Launch of "One Day One Genome" Initiative.

The Department of Biotechnology (DBT) and the Biotechnology Research and Innovation Council (BRIC), under the Ministry of Science & Technology (MoS&T), launched the 'One Day One Genome' initiative to showcase India's vast microbial potential.

- The initiative was announced by Amitabh Kant, India's Group of 20 (G-20) Sherpa and Former CEO of the National Institution for Transforming India (NITI) Aayog, on the 1st Foundation Day of BRIC on November 9, 2024, at the National Institute of Immunology (NII), New Delhi.

#### Key Points:-

- (i) The initiative, coordinated by BRIC-National Institute of Biomedical Genomics (BRIC-NIBMG) based in West Bengal, aims to release a fully annotated bacteriological genome isolated in India.
- (ii) It highlights the unique bacterial species found in the country and emphasizes their critical roles in the environment, agriculture, and human health.

### 3. Bharat NCX 2024 Inaugurated to Strengthen India's Cyber Defense.

In November 2024, the Bharat National Cyber Security Exercise (Bharat NCX 2024) was inaugurated to enhance India's cybersecurity resilience. The initiative was launched at a



ceremony organized by the National Security Council Secretariat (NSCS) in collaboration with Rashtriya Raksha University (RRU) in New Delhi (Delhi).

- The 12-day exercise, running from November 18 to November 29, 2024, focuses on preparing India's cybersecurity professionals and leadership to tackle evolving cyber threats. The exercise emphasizes advanced cyber defense techniques, incident response capabilities, and strategic decision-making.

- The Bharat Chief Information Security Officer (CISO's) Conclave and Bharat Cybersecurity Startup Exhibition were also inaugurated alongside Bharat NCX 2024.

#### Key Points:-

(i) The exercise includes immersive training on cyber defense and incident response, live-fire simulations of cyberattacks on Information Technology (IT) and Operational Technology (OT) systems, and collaborative platforms for government and industry stakeholders.

(ii) A Strategic Decision-Making Exercise will bring together senior management from various sectors to simulate decision-making in a national-level cyber crisis, enhancing their ability to respond to high-pressure situations with strategic acumen.

(iii) The Bharat Cybersecurity Startup Exhibition showcases innovative solutions from Indian startups, emphasizing their role in strengthening the nation's cybersecurity infrastructure.

#### 4. Arjun Vajpai Becomes 1st Indian to Conquer Mount Shishapangma in China.

In November 2024, Arjun Vajpai, the youngest person to climb Mount Everest, achieved a historic milestone by summiting Mount Shishapangma in China, his eighth peak above 8,000 meters (m).

- This extraordinary achievement makes him the first Indian to summit Mount Shishapangma, the fastest to reach its summit and return (from Base Camp in under 72 hours), and the first Indian to conquer eight 8,000-meter peaks.

#### Key Points:-

(i) Arjun Vajpai began his pursuit of all 14 of the world's 8,000m peaks at age 16 and now he is on track to become the first Indian to complete this extraordinary achievement. He has now summited 8 of the 14 tallest mountains on Earth.

(ii) He was only 30 years old when he set the Guinness World Record for being the youngest person to climb Mt. Everest (2010) and Mt. Lhotse (2011) and also holds the record for the fastest ascent of an 8,000m peak in China.

(iii) His mountaineering legacy includes summits of Everest (2010), Lhotse (2011), Manaslu (2011), Makalu (2016), Cho Oyu (2016), Kanchenjunga (2018), and Annapurna (2023). Despite setbacks, including a serious injury, Vajpai's resilience continues to inspire India.

#### 5. Dr. Jitendra Singh announced the selection of 8 innovative startups under the National Quantum Mission (NQM) and NMICPS.

In November 2024, Union Minister of State (MoS) (Independent Charge, IC) Dr. Jitendra Singh, Ministry for Science and Technology (MoS&T), announced the selection of 8 pioneering startups for support under the newly framed guidelines of the Department of Science and Technology (DST).

- These startups were chosen under the National Quantum Mission (NQM) and the National Mission on Interdisciplinary Cyber-Physical Systems (NMICPS).

#### Key Points:-

- (i) The Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) Industry of Academia-Centre of Excellence (DIA-CoE) at IIT Delhi achieved a significant milestone in secure communication through successful demonstrations of various quantum communication technologies in New Delhi, Delhi.
- (ii) These demonstrations primarily focused on Quantum Key Distribution (QKD), an advanced method for encrypting information securely without detection.

#### 6. The India-Singapore bilateral military exercise, 'Agni Warrior 2024,' was conducted in Maharashtra.

The India-Singapore bilateral military exercise, 'Agni Warrior (XAW-2024),' took place at the Devlali Field Firing Ranges in Maharashtra from November 28 to November 30. This annual exercise is part of the ongoing defense cooperation between the two countries and focuses on improving collaboration and interoperability between their artillery units.

- The 13th edition of the exercise aimed to demonstrate joint firepower planning and execution, using modern equipment by the artillery forces of both armies.
- The joint exercise saw the participation of 114 personnel from the Indian Army's Regiment of Artillery and 182 personnel from the Singapore Armed Forces' Singapore Artillery, fostering collaboration and mutual understanding between the two nations' military forces.
- The Agni Warrior exercise, conducted under the Army Bilateral Agreement between India and Singapore since 2004, involves extensive joint preparation and field training, where personnel from both armies collaborate on various operational tasks to enhance coordination and interoperability.

#### Key Points:-

- (i) The 12th edition of the Agni Warrior exercise was held at the same Devlali Field Firing Ranges in 2022.
- (ii) The goal of XAW-2024 was to enhance mutual understanding of drills and procedures for greater cooperation as a multinational force under the UN Charter, showcasing joint firepower planning, execution, and the use of modern equipment by the artillery units of the Indian Army and Singapore Armed Forces.
- (iii) The exercise involved sharing best practices and advanced techniques, improving operational knowledge, and building mutual trust between the Indian Army and Singapore Armed Forces.

#### 7. India's first indigenous antibiotic, Nafithromycin, has been launched to combat Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR).

Union Minister Dr. Jitendra Singh announced the soft launch of India's first indigenous antibiotic, Nafithromycin, developed by the Mumbai-based pharmaceutical company Wolkardt. This development was supported by the Biotechnology Industry Research Assistance Council (BIRAC), a unit of the Department of Biotechnology, and aims to combat Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR).

- Nafithromycin is designed to treat Community-Acquired Bacterial Pneumonia (CABP), a serious illness caused by drug-resistant bacteria. It promises 10 times more effectiveness with just a 3-day treatment, offering a safer and faster solution compared to current antibiotics.
- This drug will be marketed under the brand name "Miqnaf". It targets both typical and atypical pathogens. Clinical trials conducted in the U.S., Europe, and India have proven its safety and effectiveness.

**Key Points:-**

(i) India accounts for 23% of the global pneumonia burden and faces challenges with drug-resistant bacteria. Nafithromycin addresses these issues with minimal side effects and no major drug interactions, making it an important step in the fight against AMR (which prolongs illnesses and increases healthcare costs).

(ii) This milestone showcases India's growing innovation in biotechnology, supported by a Rs 500 crore investment and 14 years of research. It positions India as a global leader in healthcare advancements.

**8. The Department of Consumer Affairs (DoCA) has launched the e-Daakhil portal nationwide to simplify the consumer grievance redressal process.**

In November 2024, the Department of Consumer Affairs (DoCA), under the Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food & Public Distribution (MoCAF&PD), announced the successful launch of the "e-Daakhil portal" across all States and Union Territories (UTs) in India.

- This achievement followed the launch of the e-Daakhil portal in Ladakh on 22nd November 2024 by the Lieutenant Governor of Ladakh, Brig. (Dr.) B.D. Mishra (Retd.), making the portal a nationwide initiative.

- As of 31st December 2023, the e-Daakhil portal had already been launched in 35 states/UTs, excluding Ladakh.)

**Key Points:-**

(i) The e-Daakhil portal was first introduced on 7th September 2020 by the National Consumer Dispute Redressal Commission (NCDRC) as an innovative platform to simplify and streamline the

consumer grievance redressal process.

(ii) The e-Daakhil portal enables consumers and advocates to file complaints from anywhere through an intuitive interface, providing a paperless and transparent process to approach relevant consumer forums, track complaint status, and make payments without needing physical appearances.

(iii) Over 2.81 lakh users are registered on e-Daakhil. Out of 1,98,725 cases filed, 38,453 cases have been disposed of.

**9. Nagaland CM Neiphiu Rio launched Economic Empowerment Initiatives.**

In November 2024, Nagaland's Chief Minister (CM) Neiphiu Rio inaugurated a series of important initiatives at the Investment and Development Authority of Nagaland (IDAN), located at the Capital Convention Centre in Kohima, Nagaland. These initiatives aim to boost the state's tourism, transport, agriculture, and entrepreneurial sectors.

- The CM launched Ura Cabs, a local taxi platform designed to offer easy travel experiences for both tourists and local taxi operators.

- The CM also flagged off new tourism vehicles under the Nagaland Tourism Connect Scheme. This event marks the completion of extensive tourism training programs in preparation for the 25th Hornbill Festival, which will be celebrated from December 1-10, 2024, at Kisama, Nagaland.

- Digital Piggery Insurance, developed with IRDAI and Tata AIG, is an app-based system simplifying registration and claims for piggery farmers, while entrepreneurs benefit from a 12% vehicle purchase discount and up to a 42% subsidy under the CM's Microfinance Initiative (CMMFI).

**Key Points:-**

(i) The Nagaland Logistics Connect initiative was launched to improve the state's transportation and logistics infrastructure.

(ii) The CM's Universal Life (UL) Insurance Scheme was introduced to provide financial protection to families in case of unexpected events, reinforcing the government's commitment to social and financial security.

(iii) The Hornbill Festival, known as the "Festival of Festivals," is a 10-day annual event organized by the Nagaland Government since 2000 to celebrate Naga cultural heritage, with the 2024 theme "Cultural Connect."

#### 10. Dr. Jitendra Singh Launches AI Data Bank to Drive Innovation and Enhance National Security.

In November 2024, Dr. Jitendra Singh, the Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) for the Ministry of Science and Technology (MoS&T), launched India's first Artificial Intelligence (AI) data bank at the 7th Edition of the Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industry of India (ASSOCHAM) AI Leadership Meet 2024, held in New Delhi.

● The event was focused on the theme "AI for India: Advancing India's AI Development, Innovation, Ethics, and Governance," and highlighted India's strategic plans to use Artificial Intelligence (AI) for growth and development.

##### Key Points:-

(i) The main goal of this initiative is to speed up technological progress by giving researchers, startups, and developers access to high-quality, diverse data that is needed to build effective and inclusive AI solutions.

(ii) The data bank will also help improve national security by providing real-time data analysis for areas like disaster management, cybersecurity,

and defense.

## INTERNATIONAL

### 1. First BRIC Foundation Day Celebrated with the Launch of 'One Day One Genome.'

The Department of Biotechnology (DBT) and Biotechnology Research and Innovation Council (BRIC) under the Ministry of Science & Technology (MoS&T) launched the 'One Day One Genome' initiative to showcase India's vast microbial potential.

● The launch was announced by Amitabh Kant, India's G-20 Sherpa and Former Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of National Institution for Transforming India (NITI) Aayog, on the 1st Foundation Day of BRIC on November 9, 2024, at the National Institute of Immunology (NII), New Delhi.

##### Key Points:-

(i) The initiative, coordinated by West Bengal-based BRIC-National Institute of Biomedical Genomics (BRIC-NIBMG), an institute of the Department of Biotechnology, aims to release a fully annotated bacteriological genome isolated in India.

(ii) The initiative highlights the unique bacterial species found in the country and emphasizes their critical roles in the environment, agriculture, and human health.

### 2. Bharat NCX 2024 Launched to Bolster India's Cyber Defense.

In November 2024, the Bharat National Cyber Security Exercise (Bharat NCX 2024), a landmark initiative to fortify India's cybersecurity resilience, was inaugurated at a ceremony organized by the National Security Council Secretariat (NSCS) in



collaboration with Rashtriya Raksha University (RRU) in New Delhi.

- The 12-day exercise runs from November 18 to November 29, 2024, aiming to prepare India's cybersecurity professionals and leadership to tackle evolving threats with advanced cyber defense, incident response capabilities, and strategic decision-making.

- The Bharat Chief Information Security Officer (CISO's) Conclave and Bharat Cybersecurity Startup Exhibition also inaugurated Bharat NCX 2024.

#### Key Points:-

(i) The exercise includes immersive training on cyber defense and incident response, live-fire simulations of cyberattacks on Information Technology (IT) and Operational Technology (OT) systems, and collaborative platforms for government and industry stakeholders.

(ii) A Strategic Decision-Making Exercise will bring together senior management from across sectors to simulate decision-making in a national-level cyber crisis, enhancing their ability to respond to high-pressure situations with strategic acumen.

(iii) The Bharat Cybersecurity Startup Exhibition showcases innovative solutions from Indian startups, emphasizing their role in enhancing the nation's cybersecurity infrastructure.

### 3. "PM Modi Co-Chairs 2nd India-CARICOM Summit 2024 with PM Dickon Mitchell in Georgetown, Guyana".

On 20th November 2024, Prime Minister (PM) Narendra Modi of India and PM Dickon Mitchell of Grenada, the current chairperson of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), jointly chaired the 2nd India-CARICOM Summit in Georgetown, Guyana.

- The summit was hosted by the President of Guyana, Irfaan Ali.

- The 3rd India-CARICOM Summit is set to be hosted in India.

#### Key Points:-

(i) PM Modi offered assistance to CARICOM countries in seven key areas to strengthen the bonds of friendship between India and CARICOM.

(ii) Union Minister S. Jaishankar, Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), and Amery Browne, Minister of Foreign and CARICOM Affairs of Trinidad and Tobago, signed the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) in the presence of PM Modi and Keith Rowley.

(iii) Two Dornier HAL-228 aircraft were officially commissioned into the Guyana Defence Force (GDF) Air Corps at a ceremony held at Air Station London, Timehri, Guyana. The aircraft were showcased on the sidelines of the summit.

### 4. "Anna University Tops India in THE's 'Interdisciplinary Science Rankings 2025', MIT Leads Globally".

According to Times Higher Education's (THE) first-ever "Interdisciplinary Science Rankings (ISR) 2025," Anna University, located in Chennai, Tamil Nadu, has ranked first among all Indian universities on the list. It secured the 42nd position globally with an overall score of 66.1.

- Anna University is the only Indian university to make it to the top 50 universities in the rankings.

- The Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), based in New York (USA), topped the global rankings with an overall score of 92.4. Stanford University (USA) and the National University of Singapore (NUS) (Singapore) ranked second and third, respectively.

**Key Points:-**

- (i) India, with 65 universities, has the highest representation on the list. However, no Indian university made it to the top 10 or the top 20 in the rankings.
- (ii) According to the rankings, the top 100 universities are spread across all six continents. Asia leads with 47 universities from 15 countries, followed by Europe with 24 universities, North America with 17, Africa with 5, Oceania with 4, and South America with 3.
- (iii) Times Higher Education (THE), formerly known as The Times Higher Education Supplement (The THES), is a British magazine that covers news and issues related to higher education.

**5. PM Modi proposes 7 'key pillars' to boost ties between India, CARICOM.**

On 20th November 2024, Narendra Modi, Prime Minister (PM) of India, and Dickon Mitchell, PM of Grenada and the current chairperson of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), jointly chaired the 2nd India-CARICOM Summit in Georgetown, Guyana.

- The CARICOM Summit was hosted by the President of Guyana, Irfaan Ali.
- The 3rd India-CARICOM Summit is set to be hosted in India.

**Key Points:-**

- (i) PM Modi offered assistance to CARICOM countries in seven key areas. These areas aim to promote the close bonds of friendship between India and CARICOM.
- (ii) Union Minister S. Jaishankar, Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), and Amery Browne,

Minister of Foreign and CARICOM Affairs of Trinidad and Tobago, signed the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) in the presence of PM Modi and Keith Rowley.

- (iii) Two Dornier HAL-228 aircraft were officially commissioned into the Guyana Defence Force (CDF) Air Corps at a ceremony held at Air Station London, Timehri, Guyana. The aircraft were showcased on the sidelines of the summit.

**BANKING & FINANCE****1. RBI Purchases Net USD 8.52 Billion in the First Half of FY25.**

In the first half of the Fiscal Year 2024-2025 (April-September 2025/H1FY25), the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) in its 'RBI-Bulletin - November 2024' reported a net purchase of USD 8.52 Billion in foreign currency assets as compared to USD 17.68 Billion in H1FY24.

- As of September 2024, the RBI had bought a net USD 32.27 billion, including USD 9.6 billion in September.
- The RBI was a net seller of dollars in April, June, and August, but bought the highest net amount in September 2024. The rupee appreciated by 0.07% in September.
- RBI sold a net USD 1.5 billion in September 2023, and its net outstanding forward sales stood at USD 14.58 billion by September 2024.

**Key Points:-**

- (i) As of November 8, 2024, India's foreign exchange reserves were USD 675.7 billion, down from a high of USD 705.8 billion in September.
- (ii) These reserves cover over 11 months of imports and nearly 99% of external debt.
- (iii) In 2024, India added USD 53.2 billion to its



reserves, the second-largest increase in Asia.

up from 2.3% during the same period last year.

## 2. MML Partners with SBI to Launch Loan Disbursement Program for Supporting Rural Entrepreneurs.

Kochi (Kerala)-based Muthoot Microfin Limited (MML), a microfinance institution, has commenced disbursing loans through its co-lending partnership with the State Bank of India (SBI), India's largest commercial bank, headquartered in Mumbai, Maharashtra.

- This initiative aims to support rural entrepreneurs, enhance financial inclusion, and promote self-sufficiency in both rural and semi-urban areas.
- Under the collaboration, SBI has approved a total loan limit of Rs 500 crore, which will be disbursed in installments of Rs 100 crore.
- Loans ranging from Rs 50,000 to Rs 3 lakh will be provided to eligible customers, with a primary focus on members of Joint Liability Groups (JLGs) involved in agricultural and allied activities, as well as other income-generating initiatives.

### Key Points:-

- (i) By collaborating with SBI, MML aims to offer loans at lower interest rates, making them more accessible and affordable for borrowers, while planning to expand its co-lending initiative nationwide from its current operations in 20 states and 369 districts across India.
- (ii) In Q2 of Financial Year 2024-25 (FY25), MML's net profit (NP) dropped 44% to Rs 61.6 crore, down from Rs 110 crore in the same period last year, due to challenges in the microfinance sector and higher employee costs.
- (iii) The gross non-performing assets (NPA) ratio increased to 2.7% at the end of September 2024,

## 3. RBI Reports Net USD 8.52 Billion Purchase in H1FY25.

In the first half of the Fiscal Year 2024-2025 (April-September 2025/H1FY25), the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), in its 'RBI Bulletin November 2024,' reported a net purchase of USD 8.52 billion in foreign currency assets, compared to USD 17.68 billion in H1FY24.

- As of September 2024, the RBI recorded a net purchase of USD 32.27 billion, including USD 9.6 billion in September alone.

### Key Points:-

- (i) The RBI is set to launch its first local cloud storage service in 2025. This initiative aims to provide cost-effective cloud solutions tailored for financial institutions, competing with global players like Amazon Web Services (AWS), Microsoft Azure, and Google Cloud.
- (ii) Exercising its powers under Section 47A(1)(c) read with Section 46(4)(i) of the Banking Regulation Act, 1949, the RBI has imposed a penalty of Rs 61.40 lakh on RBL Bank Limited for non-compliance with Know Your Customer (KYC) regulations.

## 4. ADB and Mastercard Sign MoU to Enhance MSME Financing in the Asia-Pacific Region with Support from ADB Member Countries.

On November 28, 2024, the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the Mastercard Impact Fund, administered by the Mastercard Centre for Inclusive Growth, signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to launch a transformative partnership. The partnership aims to enhance financing for Micro, Small, and Medium-sized

Enterprises (MSMEs) across the Asia-Pacific region.

- Mastercard will provide a USD 5 million grant from its Impact Fund to Financial Institutions (FIs) to increase lending to MSMEs, with a special emphasis on women-led enterprises and climate financing.
- This grant is expected to unlock USD 1 billion in ADB financing over four years.
- The partnership will initially target seven countries: Georgia, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Thailand, and Vietnam.

#### Key Points:-

- (i) At least 50% of the funding will be allocated to women-led businesses and climate-related projects over the next four years.
- (ii) Financial aid under this partnership will be utilized for risk-reduction capital, performance-based incentives, and capacity building for FIs.
- (iii) Nearly 50% of MSMEs in the Asia-Pacific region remain unserved or underserved by Financial Institutions (FIs), creating a credit gap of USD 2.5 trillion, highlighting the commitment of ADB and Mastercard to drive financial inclusion and empower these enterprises.

### 5. MML launches a loan disbursement program in collaboration with SBI to support rural entrepreneurs.

Kochi (Kerala)-based Muthoot Microfin Limited (MML), a microfinance institution, has started disbursing loans through its co-lending partnership with the State Bank of India (SBI), India's largest commercial bank, headquartered in Mumbai, Maharashtra.

- This initiative aims to support rural entrepreneurs, enhance financial inclusion, and promote self-sufficiency in rural and semi-urban areas.

- In the 2nd Quarter (Q2) of Financial Year 2024-25 (FY25), MML's net profit dropped 44% to Rs 61.6 crore from Rs 110 crore last year, due to challenges in the microfinance sector and higher employee costs, while its gross non-performing assets (NPA) ratio increased to 2.7% from 2.3% in the same period last year.

#### Key Points:-

- (i) Under the collaboration, SBI has approved a total loan limit of Rs 500 crore, which will be disbursed in installments of Rs 100 crore.
- (ii) Loans ranging from Rs 50,000 to Rs 3 lakh will be provided to eligible customers, focusing primarily on members of Joint Liability Groups (JLGs) involved in agricultural and allied activities, along with other income-generating initiatives.
- (iii) By collaborating with SBI, MML can offer loans at lower interest rates, making them more accessible and affordable for borrowers, and plans to expand the co-lending initiative nationwide, as it currently operates in 20 states and 369 districts across India.

### MOUs and Agreement

#### 1. Tata Power and Bhutan's DGPC Partner to Develop 5,000 MW Clean Energy Projects.

Tata Power Renewable Energy Limited (TPREL), a subsidiary of Tata Power, has entered into a strategic partnership with Druk Green Power Corporation Limited (DGPC), based in Thimphu, Bhutan, to develop 5,000 MW of clean energy capacity, including 4,500 MW of hydropower and 500 MW of solar power in Bhutan.

- This collaboration aims to tap into Bhutan's vast hydropower potential to meet energy demands in both Bhutan and India.

#### Key Points:-

(i) The partnership includes the phased development of hydropower projects such as the 1,125 MW Dorjilung Hydroelectric Plant (HEP), the 740 MW Gongri Reservoir, the 1,800 MW Jeri Pumped Storage, and the 364 MW Chamkharchhu IV. Additionally, TPREL will oversee the development of 500 MW of solar projects in Bhutan.

(ii) The Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed in Thimphu, Bhutan, in the presence of Bhutan's Prime Minister Dasho Tshering Tobgay and India's Ambassador to Bhutan.

## SPORTS

### 1. Australian Swimmer Emma McKeon, a 14-Time Olympic Medalist, Announces Her Retirement.

On November 25, 2024, Emma Jennifer McKeon (30), an Australian swimmer and Olympic medalist, announced her retirement from competitive swimming. She won a gold medal in the 4 x 100 meter freestyle relay at the 2024 Paris Games. It was her final Olympics.

- Emma McKeon holds the Australian record of 14 Olympic medals across the Rio 2016, Tokyo 2020, and Paris 2024 Games, with six Olympic gold medals, three silver medals, and five bronze medals.

- She is second only to American female Olympian Katie Ledecky (14 Olympic medals - 9 Gold) in terms of Olympic swimming gold medals won.

- In the 2016 Rio Olympics, Emma McKeon won 4 medals (1 Gold, 2 Silver, and 1 Bronze) and, along with her brother David McKeon, became the first sibling duo to represent Australia in swimming at the same Olympic Games in 56 years.

#### Key Points:-

(i) Emma McKeon specializes in freestyle and

butterfly races of 200 meters or less.

(ii) At the Tokyo 2020 Olympics, Emma McKeon won 7 medals (4 Gold and 3 Bronze), becoming the first female swimmer and the second woman in history to win 7 medals in a single Olympic Games.

(iii) She won 3 medals (1 Gold, 1 Silver, and 1 Bronze) in the 2024 Paris Games.

### 2. Australian swimmer and 14-time Olympic medalist Emma McKeon announces her retirement.

On November 25, 2024, Emma Jennifer McKeon, a 30-year-old Australian swimmer and Olympic medalist, announced her retirement from competitive swimming. She won a gold medal in the 4 x 100-meter (m) freestyle relay at the 2024 Paris Olympics, which was her final Olympic Games.

- Emma McKeon holds the Australian record for winning 14 Olympic medals, which includes six gold medals, three silver, and five bronze. She earned these medals across the Rio 2016, Tokyo 2020, and Paris 2024 Olympic Games.

- She is second only to American swimmer Katie Ledecky (who has 14 Olympic medals, including 9 gold) for the most Olympic swimming gold medals won by a female swimmer.

- Emma McKeon, who specializes in freestyle and butterfly races of 200 meters or less, competed in the 2016 Rio Olympics, where she won 4 medals (1 gold, 2 silver, and 1 bronze), and along with her brother David McKeon, made history as the first brother and sister to swim for Australia at the same Olympic Games in 56 years.

#### Key Points:-

(i) At the Tokyo 2020 Olympics, Emma McKeon



won 7 medals (4 gold and 3 bronze), becoming the first female swimmer and the second woman in history to win 7 medals in a single Olympics.

(ii) McKeon's total of 11 Olympic medals surpassed the previous Australian record of 9 medals, held by Ian Thorpe and Leisel Jones, and in 2022, she was honored with the Member of the Order of Australia (AM) award, while in 2023, she was named the Gold Coast Young Australian of the Year.

(iii) In the 2024 Paris Olympics, Emma McKeon won 3 more medals (1 gold, 1 silver, and 1 bronze), bringing her total to 20 Commonwealth Games medals (including 14 golds) and 20 World Aquatics Championships medals, while also breaking the record for the most Commonwealth Games medals in 2022 with 6 golds.

### 3. India awarded hosting rights for the 2026 Asian Rifle and Pistol Cup.

The National Rifle Association of India (NRAI) announced that the Executive Committee of the Asian Shooting Confederation (ASC) has awarded India the rights to host the 2026 Asian Rifle/Pistol Cup.

- The competition will be held in New Delhi, Delhi in 2026.

#### Key Points:-

(i) India has previously hosted the 8th Asian Air Gun Competition in 2015 and the Asian Olympic Qualifier in 2016.

(ii) India has also hosted 6 major competitions organized by the International Shooting Sport Federation (ISSF), including two World Cup Finals.

(iii) In 2024, India hosted the ISSF World Cup

Final for Rifle/Pistol/Shotgun events in New Delhi.

### 4. Australian Tennis Legend & Dual Grand Slam Champion Fred Stolle Passes Away.

On 06 March 2025, Australian Tennis Icon and Dual Grand Slam Champion Frederick Sydney Stolle, nicknamed "Fiery Fred" or "Fiery," passed away at the age of 86. He was born on 8 October 1938 in Hornsby, New South Wales, Australia. He reached world No. 1 in 1966 after defeating Australian former tennis player John Newcombe in the final of the United States Open Championship (US Open).

- He won the Grand Slam singles titles at the French Open in 1965 and the US Open in 1966.

- In doubles, he dominated by winning 10 Grand Slam men's doubles titles, including 4 French Open titles, 3 Wimbledon titles, 2 United States (US) Open titles, and 1 Australian Open title.

- He also secured 7 mixed doubles majors, including 3 French Open titles in 1961, 1962, and 1969, partnering with Lesley Turner Bowrey and Margaret Court.

#### Key Points:-

(i) He contributed to Australia's success in the Davis Cup by helping the team win 3 consecutive titles from 1964 to 1966.

(ii) As a coach, he guided Vitas Gerulaitis to the 1977 Australian Open title and served as a broadcaster for over 50 years with Australia's Nine Network and U.S. broadcasters Entertainment and Sports Programming Network (ESPN) and Fox Sports.

### AWARDS

1. 'Manifest' has been chosen as Cambridge Dictionary's "Word of the Year" for 2024.

In November 2024, The Cambridge Dictionary selected 'manifest' as its Word of the Year 2024, reflecting a significant rise in its usage. With nearly 130,000 lookups on their websites, the word gained popularity across mainstream media, self-help communities, and social media platforms.

- The phrase 'to manifest' refers to the act of imagining one's desired achievements, believing that doing so can increase the chances of success.

#### Key Points:-

- (i) Celebrities like Dua Lipa, Gabby Thomas, and Ollie Watkins popularized the term by sharing how they "manifested" their success in 2024. Despite its widespread use, the concept of manifesting remains unproven, originating from a century-old spiritual philosophy.
- (ii) In 2023, 'hallucinate' was the Cambridge Word of the Year, highlighting the evolving nature of language in our time.

## IMPORTANT DAYS

### 1. India Celebrates 75th National Constitution Day on 26 November 2024.

Recently, National Constitution Day, also known as 'Samvidhan Divas', is celebrated on 26 November every year to commemorate the adoption of the Indian Constitution in 1949 by the Constituent Assembly of India. 26 November 2024 marks the 75th Anniversary of adopting the Constitution of India.

- A commemorative coin and stamp were released to mark the 75th anniversary of the adoption of the Constitution of India.
- Two books titled "Making of the Constitution of India: A Glimpse" and "Making of the Constitution of India & its Glorious Journey" were launched.

- A booklet dedicated to the Art of the Constitution of India was also unveiled, along with the Constitution of India in both Sanskrit and Maithili.

#### Key Points:-

- (i) The theme of this year's National Constitution Day is "Humara Samvidhan, Humara Swabhimaan."
- (ii) On 19th November 2015, the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment (MoSJ&E) announced that the Government of India (GoI) would celebrate 26th November every year as 'Constitution Day' to promote constitutional values among citizens.
- (iii) The first-ever Constitution Day was observed on 26 November 2015. 2024 marks the 133rd birth anniversary of Dr B.R. Ambedkar, the chief architect of the Indian Constitution.

### 2. The 76th NCC Foundation Day was celebrated on 24 November 2024.

The National Cadet Corps (NCC), the world's largest uniformed youth organization, celebrates its Raising Day on the 4th Sunday of November every year. This day honors the NCC's contribution to shaping the youth of the country and recognizes their role in national service.

- November 24, 2024, marks the 76th NCC Raising Day.
- The 77th NCC Raising Day will be observed on November 23, 2025.

#### Key Points:-

- (i) On September 29, 1946, the Cadet Corps Committee was formed, with Pt HN Kunzru as its chairman.
- (ii) On June 15, 1948, the NCC was officially established through an ordinance by the

Government of India. It was created as an auxiliary educational organization to support the Indian Army and Navy.

### 3. National Constitution Day, also known as "Samvidhan Divas," will be observed on November 26, 2024.

National Constitution Day, also known as 'Samvidhan Divas', is celebrated every year on November 26th across India to honor the adoption of the Indian Constitution by the Constituent Assembly of India in 1949. November 26, 2024, marks the 75th anniversary of the adoption of the Indian Constitution.

- To mark the special occasion, a commemorative coin and stamp were released, along with the launch of two books titled "Making of the Constitution of India: A Glimpse" and "Making of the Constitution of India & its Glorious Journey."
- A booklet about the art of the Indian Constitution was also unveiled, along with the Constitution of India in both Sanskrit and Maithili languages.
- The theme for this year's National Constitution Day is "Humara Samvidhan, Humara Swabhimaan" (Our Constitution, Our Pride).

#### Key Points:-

(i) On November 19, 2015, the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment (MoSJ&E) announced that the Government of India (GOI) would celebrate November 26 every year as 'Constitution Day' to promote constitutional values among citizens.

(ii) 2015 was also the 125th birth anniversary of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, the chairman of the drafting committee of the Indian Constitution. Before this, November 26 was celebrated as Law Day.

(iii) Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, known as the Father of the Indian Constitution for his pivotal role in its creation, was honored on Constitution Day, first observed on November 26, 2015; 2024 marks his 133rd birth anniversary.

### 4. National Milk Day 2024 will be observed on November 26.

National Milk Day is celebrated every year in India on November 26th to honor the birth anniversary of Dr. Verghese Kurien, known as the "Father of the White Revolution in India."

- The celebration is led by the Department of Animal Husbandry and Dairying under the Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying (MoFAH&D).
- November 26, 2024, marks the 11th National Milk Day and the 103rd birth anniversary of Dr. Verghese Kurien, who is also known as the "Milkman of India."
- During the event, two important publications, "Basic Animal Husbandry Statistics (BAHS) 2024" and "Manual on the Identification of Elite Cows," were launched, and Union Minister Rajiv Ranjan Singh presented the National Gopal Ratna Awards, one of the highest national honors in the livestock and dairy sector.

#### Key Points:-

(i) National Milk Day was first introduced in 2014 by the Indian Dairy Association (IDA), the National Dairy Development Board (NDDB), and 22 other state-level milk federations.

(ii) The first National Milk Day was celebrated on November 26, 2014.

(iii) The National Milk Day 2024 celebration was attended by Union Minister Rajiv Ranjan Singh, also known as Lalan Singh, from the Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry, and Dairying



(MoFAH&D), as the Chief Guest.

### 5. World Sustainable Transport Day 2024 will be observed on November 26.

The United Nations (UN) observes World Sustainable Transport Day (WSTD) on November 26th each year to emphasize the importance of safe, affordable, accessible, and sustainable transport for economic growth, better well-being, and improved international cooperation and trade.

- November 26, 2024, marks the 2nd observance of WSTD.
- This annual event was created to address the impact of transportation on climate change and the global inequality in transportation options.

#### Key Points:-

(i) On May 16, 2023, the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) passed the resolution A/RES/77/286, titled "Strengthening the Links between all Modes of Transport to Achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG)". The resolution declared November 26th as World Sustainable Transport Day every year.

(ii) The first World Sustainable Transport Day (WSTD) was celebrated on November 26, 2023.

### 6. UN Observed International Day of Solidarity with Palestinian People on November 29.

The United Nations (UN) observes the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People every year on November 29. This day provides a platform for the global community to reaffirm its commitment to the dignity, rights, justice, and self-determination of the Palestinian people.

- On December 2, 1977, the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) adopted resolution A/RES/32/40 B,

declaring November 29 as the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People every year.

#### Key Points:-

The first-ever International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People was observed on November 29, 1978.

### 7. Chhattisgarh launches the 'Bijli Sakhi Yojana' to empower women in Jashpur District.

The Chhattisgarh government launched the 'Bijli Sakhi Yojana' to empower women in the tribal-dominated Jashpur district and assist the electricity department with meter reading tasks in remote villages.

- This pilot project, introduced by Chhattisgarh Chief Minister (CM) Vishnu Deo Sai, trains women from Self-Help Groups (SHGs) to take on meter reading responsibilities in areas that are hard for the department to access.
- Under the scheme, 21 women were selected, trained, and appointed as 'Bijli Sakhis'. Each woman earns Rs 4,000-6,000 per month for their work.

#### Key Points:-

(i) This initiative not only provides economic empowerment by enabling women to earn an additional Rs 50,000-60,000 annually, but also supports the Central Government's vision of helping women become 'Lakhpati Didis' (women who earn one lakh).

(ii) This program helps fill the gap in meter reading in 21 villages, benefiting both the electricity department and the women involved.

(iii) By empowering these women, the scheme provides a sustainable source of income while contributing to the region's development.

## DEFENCE

### 1. 76th NCC Raising Day is celebrated on 24 November 2024.

Recently, the 76th NCC Raising Day was celebrated on 24 November 2024. The National Cadet Corps (NCC), the largest uniformed youth organization in the world, celebrates its raising day on the 4th Sunday of November every year.

- This day honors the contributions of the NCC towards shaping the youth of the country and recognizing their contributions to national service.

- The 77th NCC Raising Day will be observed on 23rd November 2025.

#### Key Points:-

(i) On 29th September 1946, The Cadet Corps Committee was established with Pt HN Kunzru as its chairman.

(ii) On 15th June 1948, the NCC was officially established through an ordinance issued by the Government of India, functioning as an auxiliary educational organization of the Indian Army and Navy.

(iii) Every year, on the 4th Sunday of November, NCC Day is observed to commemorate the day in 1947 when the first units of the NCC were established in Delhi.

## SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

### 1. India exports Pinaka rocket systems to Armenia.

On November 24, 2024, the first batch of the Indian-manufactured and most indigenously developed Pinaka Multi-Barrel Rocket Launchers (MBRL) were exported to Armenia.

- In 2022, Armenia and India signed a contract worth Rs 2,000 crore for the supply of rocket launchers. The Indian side confirmed that Armenia had ordered 3 models of Pinaka rocket systems, which were to be transported from New Delhi (Capital of India) to Yerevan (Capital of Armenia) by 2024.

- Armenia is one of the 3 largest buyers of Indian weapons and equipment along with the United States (US) and France.

- Pinaka rockets are manufactured by Solar Industry's Economic Explosives Limited (EEL), based in Nagpur, and Munitions India Limited (MIL), a government-owned enterprise.

#### Key Points:-

(i) MBRL was designed by the Armament Research and Development Establishment (ARDE), a laboratory of the DRDO, aimed at providing the army with firepower superiority that would reduce casualties to soldiers in war.

(ii) It was first used during the Kargil War, where it successfully neutralised Pakistan Army positions.

(iii) India simultaneously delivered two types of defense equipment to Armenia: DRDO-developed rocket launchers and the Akash air defense missile system, showcasing its commitment to strengthening Armenia's defense capabilities.

### 2. India Exports Pinaka Weapon Systems to Armenia.

On November 24, 2024, India exported the first batch of the indigenously developed Pinaka Multi-Barrel Rocket Launchers (MBRL) to Armenia.

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#### Key Points:-

- (i) MBRL was designed by the Armament Research and Development Establishment (ARDE), a laboratory of the DRDO, with the goal of providing the army with firepower superiority to reduce casualties among soldiers during wartime.
- (ii) It was first used during the Kargil War, where it successfully neutralized Pakistan Army positions.
- (iii) India recently delivered two types of defense equipment to Armenia: DRDO-developed rocket launchers and the Akash air defense missile system, demonstrating India's commitment to strengthening Armenia's defense capabilities.

### 3. NASA teams up with Microsoft to introduce Earth Copilot AI, making it easier to access and understand complex Earth data.

In November 2024, NASA partnered with Microsoft to create Earth Copilot, a special AI chatbot that answers questions about Earth with easy-to-understand information.

- The goal of this collaboration is to change how people search, explore, and analyze NASA's geospatial (location-based) data.
- This is part of NASA's "Transform to Open Science" initiative, which aims to make over 100 petabytes (1

petabyte = 1 million gigabytes) of satellite images and Earth science data freely accessible to everyone.

#### Key Points:-

- (i) Earth Copilot will use natural language processing (a technology that helps computers understand and respond to human language) to make NASA's data easier to access. This lets users ask questions in simple language.
- (ii) NASA worked with Microsoft to develop a proof-of-concept (early model) using Microsoft's Azure cloud platform and AI technology.
- (iii) The Earth Copilot chatbot will make it easier for scientists, teachers, policymakers, and the public to access and understand complex data.

### 4. India tests 3,500-km range K-4 nuclear missile from INS Arighaat submarine.

On November 28, 2024, the Indian Navy (IN) successfully tested the K-4 nuclear-capable ballistic missile from its newly commissioned submarine, INS Arighaat.

- The K-4 missile has a range of 3,500 km, making it an upgrade over the K-15 missiles used on INS Arihant, which have a range of 750 km.
- INS Arighaat, India's 2nd nuclear-powered ballistic missile submarine, was commissioned in August 2024, featuring advanced technology developed by the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO).
- The submarine is equipped with 4 launch tubes capable of carrying 12 K-15 Sagarika Submarine-Launched Ballistic Missiles (SLBMs) with a range of 750 km or 4 K-4 SLBMs with a range of 3,500 km.

#### Key Points:-

- (i) The commissioning strengthens India's nuclear



triad with land-based missiles like Prithvi-II (350 km), Agni-I (700 km), Agni-2 (2,000 km), Agni-3 (3,000 km), Agni-5 (over 5,000 km); air-based assets like Sukhoi-30MKI, Mirage-2000, Jaguar, and Rafale fighter jets; and sea-based deterrence through INS Arihant and INS Arighaat.

(ii) India's sea-based nuclear deterrence is reinforced by INS Arihant and INS Arighaat, with the third submarine, INS Aridhaman, scheduled for commissioning in 2025.

(iii) Future missile developments include K-5 and K-6 SLBMs, with ranges of 5,000–6,000 km, further enhancing India's strategic capabilities.

#### 5. China launched the world's first 'self-driving' satellites.

In November 2024, China successfully launched the world's first 'self-driving' satellites, developed by the Shanghai Academy of Spaceflight Technology (SAST), which is a part of the China Aerospace Science and Technology Corporation (CASC). This launch marked a significant achievement in China's commercial space program. It was also the 547th mission of the Long March series of rockets.

- The two satellites, named Siwei Gaojing-2 03 and Gaojing-2 04, were launched aboard a Long March-2C rocket from the Jiuquan Satellite Launch Centre (JSLC) in northwest China.
- These satellites will provide high-resolution radar images that can be captured all day and in all weather conditions.
- These satellites are designed to change or maintain their flight paths on their own, without needing help from ground control. This innovation will revolutionize surveying and mapping in space.

#### Key Points:-

(i) The satellites, developed by SAST, feature advanced Synthetic Aperture Radar (SAR) technology and high-precision radar tools, enabling 100-meter orbital accuracy and formation flying with precision better than 1 meter.

(ii) The goal of this project is to build a network of at least 28 satellites to provide comprehensive Earth observation data for various industries and uses.

(iii) China's space advancements include the constellation set to be fully operational by 2025, the Ludi Tance 4-01 (world's first geosynchronous orbit SAR satellite) launched in August 2023, and plans to send a humanoid robot to the moon in 2028.

#### 6. NASA Joins Forces with Microsoft to Launch Earth Copilot AI, Simplifying Access to Complex Earth Data.

In November 2024, National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) partnered with Microsoft to develop the Earth Copilot, a custom Artificial Intelligence (AI) chatbot designed to respond to users' queries related to Earth with easy-to-understand data.

- The collaboration aims to transform how users can search, discover, and analyse NASA's geospatial data.
- It is part of NASA's Transform to Open Science initiative, which seeks to democratize access to over 100 petabytes of satellite imagery and Earth science data.

#### Key Points:-

(i) The Earth Copilot will use natural language processing to simplify access to NASA data. This allows users to interact with NASA's data repository using plain language queries.

(ii) NASA collaborated with Microsoft to create a proof of concept model using Microsoft's Azure

cloud platform and AI capabilities.

(iii) The Earth Copilot chatbot will simplify the process, making the data more simplified and accessible to scientists, educators, policymakers, and the general public.

## ENVIRONMENT

### 1. New Freshwater Fish Genus 'Koima' Discovered in Western Ghats.

In November 2024, a team of researchers discovered Koima, a new genus of freshwater fish endemic to the Western Ghats. This genus includes two known species - Mesonoemacheilus remadevii and Nemacheilus monilis, which were previously assigned under the genus Nemacheilus.

- The fish named Mesonoemacheilus remadevii and Nemacheilus monilis are now renamed as Koima remadevii and Koima monilis respectively. Both species are found in the tributaries of the Cauvery River.

- The research was published in the leading international taxonomy journal Zootaxa.

#### Key Points:-

(i) Koima is distinguished from other genera of the Nemacheilidae family by its unique colour pattern, which includes a yellowish-brown ground colour, a single row of black spots on the lateral line, all fins hyaline, and the absence of a uniform banding pattern on the dorsal side.

(ii) The Nemacheilidae family includes a diverse group of freshwater fish found in Asia and Europe. These species are valued as food sources for local communities and as ornamental fish.

In November 2024, a team of researchers discovered Koima, a new genus of freshwater fish found only in the Western Ghats. This genus includes two species, Mesonoemacheilus remadevii and Nemacheilus monilis, which were previously classified under the genus Nemacheilus.

- The two species, Mesonoemacheilus remadevii and Nemacheilus monilis, have now been renamed as Koima remadevii and Koima monilis. Both species are found in the tributaries (smaller rivers that flow into a larger river) of the Cauvery River.

- The research was published in Zootaxa, a leading international journal on the classification of species.

#### Key Points:-

(i) A team of botanists, led by scientist L. Rasingam from the Botanical Survey of India (BSI) in Hyderabad (Telangana), discovered a new flower species called Dicliptera srisailamica. This flower was found in the Nagarjunasagar-Srisailem Tiger Reserve, located in the Eastern Ghats of Andhra Pradesh (AP) and Telangana. The species was named after the town of Srisailem, which is known for its temple.

(ii) This new flower belongs to the Acanthaceae family, which includes 223 known species worldwide.

### 2. New Genus "Koima" of Freshwater Fish Discovered in Western Ghats.