

# MONTHLY GK DIGEST

MARCH 2024

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# MONTHLY GK DIGEST: MARCH 2024

## INTERNATIONAL NEWS

### A FIVE-DAY FACULTY EXCHANGE PROGRAM OF BIMSTEC STARTED ON 3 MARCH

- The program involves faculties from foreign service academies of the BIMSTEC member countries.
- During the exchange program, diplomats of the BIMSTEC member countries will present proposals

on ways to increase cooperation among the Foreign Service training institutions of the South and South East Asian sub-regional platform.

- Thirteen faculties of Foreign Service academies from seven BIMSTEC countries are participating in the program.
- The BIMSTEC is an international organization of seven South Asian and Southeast Asian nations - Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Myanmar, Nepal, Sri Lanka, and Thailand.
- These countries are among those dependent on the Bay of Bengal.

### INDIA-EFTA \$100 BILLION FREE TRADE AGREEMENT SIGNED

- Under this agreement, EFTA has committed to investing \$100 billion in India over the next 15 years.
- The investments are planned to flow in 15 years - \$50 billion in the first 10 years and another \$50 billion in the next five.
- The agreement aims to bring significant economic benefits to both parties by creating better integrated and more resilient supply chains, opening new opportunities for businesses and individuals, facilitating job creation and economic growth, enhancing market access, simplifying customs procedures, and promoting investment opportunities.
- India is now the world’s 2nd largest producer of mobile phones.

### CII UK INDIA BUSINESS FORUM HAS BEEN RE-LAUNCHED IN LONDON

- This event marked the revival of the forum after a hiatus that began with the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The forum is now chaired by Keshav R Murugesu, the UK-based Group CEO of Mumbai-headquartered multinational business process management company WNS.
- The relaunch signifies a renewed commitment to fostering stronger economic and strategic ties between India and the UK.
- CII Director General Chandrajit Banerjee emphasized the need for deeper connections that extend beyond business, including

capacity building and preparing for the future job landscape.

- The forum **aims to bridge the knowledge gap about the bilateral relationship and explore joint ventures in emerging sectors.**
- The **relaunch comes as the two countries continue to finalize a Free Trade Agreement (FTA).**
- **Bilateral trade in goods and services reached £38.1 billion in the four quarters to the end of Q3 2023.**

#### CBI AND EUROPOL SIGN WORKING ARRANGEMENT FOR COOPERATIVE RELATIONS

- This arrangement **aims to support the Member States of the European Union and the Republic of India in preventing and combating serious crime and terrorism.**
- **The Working Arrangement establishes clear mechanisms for communication, cooperation, and collaboration, ensuring that respective law enforcement agencies can seamlessly collaborate, share best practices, and support each other.**
- The cooperation may **include the exchange of information, specialist knowledge, general situation reports, strategic analysis results, and training activities.**
- It also **allows for the provision of advice and support in individual criminal investigations.**
- The Director of the CBI, Mr. Praveen Sood, **highlighted that the international dispersal of crimes, criminals, and proceeds of crimes has necessitated the need for expeditious international cooperation.**

#### UNCTAD'S GLOBAL TRADE UPDATE (MARCH 2024): GLOBAL TRADE SET TO REBOUND IN 2024

- Here are the **key highlights:**
  - **Global Trade in 2023:** The value of global trade fell by 3% in 2023. For trade in goods, it dropped by 5% but grew by 8% for trade in services.
  - **Trade of Developing Countries:** During 2023, the trade of developing countries and South-South trade performed worse than global averages.
  - **Trade in Environmental Products:** Trade in environmental products grew in 2023, with electric cars sparking trade growth in motor vehicles.

- **Outlook for 2024:** The outlook for 2024 is positive, but geopolitical issues and shipping disruptions increase uncertainties.
- **2023: A Challenging Year for Trade:** Global trade dipped 3% to \$31 trillion in 2023 after peaking in 2022.
- **Trade in Services:** Trade in services bucked the negative trend, growing by 8%. The sector was fuelled by a nearly 40% surge in tourism and travel-related services.
- **Developing Countries:** Developing countries experienced a sharper decline in trade, with their imports and exports falling by 5% and 7%, respectively.
- **Electric Cars:** Despite the overall decline, 2023 saw a 2% rise in trade for environmental products, driven primarily by soaring electric car sales.
- **End 2023:** Signs of Stabilization: The final quarter of 2023 brought signs of stabilization, particularly in developing regions.
- **Looking Ahead to 2024:** The forecast for 2024 is broadly positive, with GDP growth expected to continue at around 3%.

#### INDIA RELEASES 2ND TRANCHE OF RS 500 CRORE TO BHUTAN FOR GYALSUNG INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECT

- This comes less than a week after Prime Minister Narendra Modi concluded a fruitful two-day state visit to Bhutan.
- During his visit, he assured Thimphu of New Delhi's firm support in its quest for development and agreed to provide Rs 10,000 crore to the Himalayan nation over the next five years.
- The second tranche was handed over by India's Ambassador to Bhutan Sudhakar Dalela to Bhutan's Minister of Foreign Affairs and External Trade, Lyonpo D N Dhungyel.
- The first tranche of Rs 500 crore was released on January 28 earlier this year.
- With this, the Government of India has released a total of Rs 1,000 crore to the Government of Bhutan under the Memorandum of Understanding on the concessionary financing arrangements for the GyalSung Infrastructure Project.

## 20% OF GLOBAL OIL-REFINING CAPACITY AT RISK OF CLOSURE, SAYS WOOD MACKENZIE

- This is **due to a variety of factors including weakening gasoline margins, increasing pressure to reduce carbon emissions, and rising operating costs.**
- The **analysis scrutinized 465 refining sites and found that about 21% of 2023 global refining capacity** is at some risk of closure.
- **Europe and China house the greatest number of high-risk sites, putting about 3.9 million barrels per day (bpd) of refining capacity** in jeopardy.
- **11 European sites account for 45% of all high-risk plants.**
- About **30 European refineries have already shut down since 2009, with nearly 90 still in operation.**
- This **spate of closures has been brought on by competition from newer and more complex plants in the Middle East and Asia**, as well as the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- **Gasoline margins are expected to weaken by the end of this decade as demand declines and sanctions on Russia ease**, while expected carbon taxes should also start to bite.

## UNESCO ADDS 18 NEW Geoparks TO UNESCO Global GEOPARKS NETWORK

- The **new geoparks are situated in Brazil, China, Croatia, Denmark, Finland, France, Greece, Hungary, Poland, Portugal, and Spain.**
- There is also an **additional new transboundary geopark spanning Belgium and the Kingdom of the Netherlands.**
- Geoparks **serve local communities by combining the conservation of their significant geological heritage with public outreach and a sustainable approach to development.**
- The **18 new designations have brought the network up to 213 UNESCO Global Geoparks, covering a total surface area of 486,709 km<sup>2</sup>, equivalent to twice the size of the United Kingdom.**
- Here are some examples of the new geoparks:
  - **Caçapava UNESCO Global Geopark, Brazil:** Known as 'the place where the jungle ends' by the Guarani, an indigenous people in Brazil. Its geological heritage, which consists of mining sulfide metals and marble,

has been vital for the region's economic development.

- **Quarta Colônia UNESCO Global Geopark, Brazil:** Located in the south of Brazil between the Pampa and Atlantic Forest biomes. Its name is a reference to the period when Italians colonised the central part of the state of Rio Grande do Sul.
- **Schelde Delta UNESCO Global Geopark, Belgium and Kingdom of the Netherlands:** Holds a unique geological position between the sinking North Sea Basin and the rising Brabant Massif.

## INTERNATIONAL NEWS ONE-LINER

- The **Union of the Comoros and the Democratic Republic of Timor–Leste have formally become members of the World Trade Organisation (WTO)** at the **13th WTO Ministerial Conference (MC13) held in Abu Dhabi** on 26th February 2024. This increases the total number of WTO members to 166.
- On March 4, 2024, **France became the first country to enshrine the right to abortion in its constitution.** This historic amendment guarantees women's freedom to choose an abortion.
- The **2023-24 El Niño event is indeed one of the strongest on record.** The World Meteorological Organization (WMO) declared the onset of this event on 4 July 2023. **It's estimated that the most significant meteorological effects will occur between November 2023 and April 2024.** These effects include droughts, heavy rains, wildfires, heat waves, tropical cyclones, flooding, and changes in wind patterns.
- **"India by the Creek" was a cultural festival held in Dubai from March 8-10, 2024.** It celebrated the cultural ties between India and Dubai with performances and workshops by artists from both regions. The Consulate General of India presented the event in partnership with Teamwork Arts.
- **Sweden officially became the 32nd member of (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) NATO on Thursday, 7th March 2024.** This is indeed a historic day as Sweden, after over 200 years of non-alignment, now enjoys the protection granted under Article 5, the ultimate guarantee of Allies' freedom and security.
- The **World Bank, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, and UNICEF have pledged nearly \$600 million to combat cervical cancer.** The funds will be

used to increase global access to vaccination, screening, and treatment. The funding aims to change this statistic. Countries like Indonesia, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, and Nigeria have also pledged their commitment to this cause.

- The **Life Protection Plan (LPP) is an insurance scheme for Indian workers in the UAE, launched on March 1**. It provides financial support to the families of deceased workers, with compensation up to Dh75,000 and Dh12,000 for repatriation of remains. The annual premium ranges from Dh37 to Dh72.
- **President Joe Biden has secured the Democratic nomination for the 2024 election after winning primaries in Georgia and Mississippi**. On the other hand, former President Donald Trump has clinched the Republican nomination. This sets up a rematch between Biden and Trump.
- On March 7, 2024, **Panama ratified the International Solar Alliance (ISA), officially becoming its 97th member**. This ratification signifies Panama's commitment to the global effort of harnessing solar energy for a sustainable and greener future.
- The **U.S. House of Representatives has passed a bill that could lead to a ban on TikTok**. This bill requires ByteDance, TikTok's parent company, to sell its controlling stake in TikTok within six months, or the app would be blocked in the U.S. TikTok's CEO has warned that this could result in the loss of 300,000 American jobs. The situation may change, so it's best to check reliable news sources for the most current information.
- **Vladimir Putin has won a fifth term as Russia's President in the elections held from 15 to 17 March 2024**. Despite criticisms regarding the fairness of the election, Putin's fifth term is now underway.
- The **latest volcanic eruption on the Reykjanes Peninsula in Iceland occurred on March 17, 2024**. The eruption opened a fissure almost 2 miles long and the lava spread across more than two square miles. **Hundreds of people were evacuated from the Blue Lagoon thermal spa**. No flight disruptions were reported at nearby Keflavik, Iceland's main airport
- **Pokhara was officially declared as the tourism capital of Nepal on March 17, 2024**. This city is known for its natural beauty, cultural richness, and diverse recreational activities. The declaration aims

to further promote its unique offerings to travellers worldwide.

- The 2014-2023 decade was **the warmest on record, with 2023 being the warmest year ever, according to the World Meteorological Organization**. Urgent action is needed to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and transition to renewable energy. The shift from La Niña to El Niño in 2023 contributed to the temperature rise, and 2024 could be even hotter.
- On 21st March 2024, **the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) of India and the European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Cooperation (Europol) signed a Working Arrangement**. This agreement is aimed at enhancing cooperation between the two organizations in tackling various forms of crime, including organized crime, financial crimes, frauds, corruption, terrorism, cybercrime, human trafficking, drug trafficking, money laundering, environmental crimes, and illicit trafficking in cultural goods.
- **New Zealand has announced that it will ban disposable e-cigarettes as part of its efforts to prevent minors from taking up the habit**. Under the new laws, retailers that sell vapes to children under 18 years of age will face fines of up to 100,000 New Zealand dollars (USD 60,000), while individuals will be fined 1,000 New Zealand dollars (USD 600).
- The **UN General Assembly adopted a resolution on March 21, 2024, promoting the use of "safe, secure, and trustworthy" AI systems**. This resolution, supported by over 120 Member States, emphasizes the importance of human rights in AI. It recognizes AI's potential to help achieve the Sustainable Development Goals and calls for the cessation of AI systems that pose risks to human rights.
- The International Telecommunication Union (ITU) **has elected India as the co-chair of its Digital Innovation Board**. Dr. Neeraj Mittal, Secretary of the Department of Telecommunications, Government of India, led a high-level delegation to the ITU Headquarters in Geneva from March 18-20, 2024.
- The **Hong Kong security law, known as 'Article 23', was passed to address five types of crimes: treason, insurrection and incitement to mutiny, theft of state secrets and espionage, sabotage, and external interference**. Despite facing criticism, it was passed unanimously by the city's parliament and took effect on March 23, 2024.

- The **Indian Coast Guard Ship Samudra Paheredar**, a **pollution control vessel**, arrived at **Manila Bay, Philippines on 25 March 2024**. This is part of an **overseas deployment to ASEAN countries**. The ship is demonstrating its marine pollution response capabilities and strengthening bilateral relationships with key maritime agencies in the region. The ship is under the command of Deputy Inspector General Sudhir Ravindran.
- The **UN Security Council has passed a resolution demanding an immediate ceasefire in Gaza for Ramadan**. The resolution, known as **Resolution 2728**, was adopted with **14 votes in favor and the US abstaining**. It also calls for the release of hostages and ensuring humanitarian access to Gaza.
- On March 26, 2024, the **Francis Scott Key Bridge in Baltimore collapsed after a container ship named Dali struck it**. This resulted in the **presumed death of six road construction crew members**. The incident has halted ship movement in and out of Baltimore, potentially impacting supply chains and the local economy. The crew of the Dali, all safe, comprised 22 members from India.
- **Thailand's lawmakers have passed a bill to recognize same-sex marriage, making it the first Southeast Asian country to do so**. The bill still needs **Senate approval and royal endorsement to become law**. If enacted, it will provide equal rights to LGBTQ+ couples in areas like tax savings, property inheritance, medical treatment consent, and child adoption.
- On March 29, 2024, **India and Ukraine held bilateral talks focused on conflict resolution**. The discussions were part of **Ukraine's Foreign Minister, Dmytro Kuleba's two-day visit to India**. The talks aimed at strengthening bilateral relations and finding peaceful solutions to the ongoing Russia-Ukraine conflict.
- On March 28, 2024, **France's lower house of parliament approved a bill to combat hair discrimination**. The bill, proposed by **Olivier Serva**, aims to **ban discrimination based on hair texture, length, color, or style**. If passed, France would be the **first country to recognize hair discrimination at a national level**. The bill now moves to the Senate for further consideration.

### J&K MUSLIM CONFERENCE FACTIONS DECLARED UNLAWFUL

- These factions have been **banned due to their involvement in activities against the sovereignty and integrity of the nation**.
- They have been **linked with supporting terrorist activities, raising funds from sources including Pakistan for unlawful activities in J&K, including sustained stone-pelting and giving election boycott calls**.
- He stated that the **government is determined to uproot terrorism and anyone involved in unlawful activities will face dire consequences**.

### IN THE LAST FOUR YEARS, THE LEOPARD NUMBER HAS INCREASED BY MORE THAN 1,000

- This is an **increase from the 12,852 leopards estimated in 2018**.
- This represents an **approximate growth of 1,022 leopards, or nearly 8%**.
- The most significant **uptick of 486 was in Madhya Pradesh**.
- However, it's important to note that while several states reported **improved leopard populations, states like Goa, Bihar, Telangana, Kerala, Chhattisgarh, Uttarakhand, and Odisha registered declines**.
- Conservation efforts **continue to be crucial for maintaining and increasing the leopard population**.

### UP HAS BECOME THE FIRST STATE IN THE COUNTRY TO ISSUE FIVE CRORE AYUSHMAN CARDS

- For those who may not be familiar, **Ayushman Bharat PM-JAY is a flagship scheme of the Government of India, launched to achieve the vision of Universal Health Coverage (UHC)**.
- This initiative has been **designed to meet Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and its underlying commitment, which is to "leave no one behind"**.
- Ayushman Bharat PM-JAY aims at **providing a health cover of Rs. 5 lakhs per family per year for secondary and tertiary care hospitalization to over 12 crores poor and vulnerable families**

## NATIONAL NEWS



(approximately 55 crore beneficiaries) that form the bottom 40% of the Indian population .

- This **achievement by Uttar Pradesh is a significant milestone in ensuring the health and well-being of every individual** in the state.
- The state has **issued 1.94 crore cards through the 'Ayushman Bhav' campaign and the average daily admission of patients** under this scheme has increased from 2,000 to approximately 8,000 per day .
- **More than 5,000 private and government hospitals have been enlisted for treatment** under this scheme in Uttar Pradesh.

#### L&T COMMISSIONED FIRST INDIGENOUSLY MANUFACTURED HYDROGEN ELECTROLYSER AT GUJARAT

- Here are **some key details about this development:**
  - The **electrolyser has a rated power capacity of 1 MW, which is expandable to 2 MW.**
  - It can **produce 200 Nm<sup>3</sup>/Hr of hydrogen.**
  - The **electrolyser is equipped with two stacks and an Electrolyser Processing Unit (EPU) ML-400**, both of which are indigenously manufactured and assembled.
  - The electrolyser will now undergo rigorous testing in the coming weeks to optimise its performance.
  - This project aligns with the **company's focus on enhancing sustainable energy solutions.**
  - **L&T Electrolysers has been allocated a significant 300 MW/annum capacity under the Production Linked Incentive (PLI) of the National Green Hydrogen Mission.**
  - This accomplishment signifies **L&T Electrolysers Limited's foray into domestic electrolyser manufacturing, underscoring** the company's steadfast dedication to propelling sustainable energy solutions.
  - It also aligns perfectly with the vision of 'Aatmanirbhar Bharat'

#### PM MODI INAUGURATES AND LAYS FOUNDATION FOR DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS IN BIHAR

- Here are some highlights:
- In Aurangabad, **PM Modi unveiled multiple development projects worth ₹21,400 crore.**

- These included several National Highway projects worth more than ₹18,100 crores.
- He also inaugurated and laid the foundation stone for a six-lane bridge over the Ganga, which will be constructed parallel to the existing JP Ganga Setu.
- **He dedicated to the nation three railway projects, which include the doubling of the Pataliputra-Pahleja line and a 26-km-long new line between Bandhua and Paimar.**
- He also inaugurated 12 projects worth more than 2,190 crore under the Namami Gange scheme.
- In Begusarai, PM Modi **inaugurated and laid the foundation stone of projects** worth more than ₹13,400.
- He dedicated to the nation the revived **fertiliser plant of Hindustan Urvarak Rasayan Limited (HURL)** at Barauni, which has been revived at a cost of ₹9,500 crore.
- He also laid the foundation stone for the ₹11,400-crore expansion of the Barauni Refinery.

#### INDIA REDUCES EXTREME POVERTY RATE TO BELOW 3%, WORLD POVERTY CLOCK

- This is a significant milestone towards achieving the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals by 2030.
- The number of people living in extreme poverty in India has declined from 4.69 crore in 2022 to nearly 3.44 crore in 2024.
- This reduction in poverty is attributed to high growth and various schemes such as the national mission for toilet construction, universal access to electricity, modern cooking fuel, and piped water.
- This achievement is a testament to India's efforts in reducing poverty and improving the quality of life for its citizens.

#### GOVERNMENT NOTIFIES RULES FRAMED UNDER SECTION 49M OF THE WILD LIFE (PROTECTION) ACT, 1972

- Here are the key points:
- **The Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972 provides the legal framework for the protection of various species of wild animals, management of their habitat, and also for the regulation and control of trade** in the products derived from various parts of wild animals.

- The Act was last amended in 2022, and the Wild life (Protection) Amendment Act, 2022 has come into force since 1st April 2023.
- Section 49 M of the Act provides for registration of possession, transfer, and birth and reporting of death of living scheduled animal species which are listed in the Appendices of CITES and as such listed in Schedule IV of the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972.
- All persons possessing a living specimen of such an animal species are required to apply for registrations of such possession within six months from the date of commencement of these rules and thereafter within thirty days of possession of such animal species to the concerned State Chief Wild Life Warden, through the PARIVESH 2.0 portal.
- Any transfer of possession and birth of offsprings of such specimen(s) shall also be registered and death of such specimen(s) shall be reported, to the concerned Chief Wild Life Warden through the said PARIVESH 2.0 portal in accordance with these Rules.

#### CENTRAL GOVERNMENT HAS IMPLEMENTED CITIZENSHIP AMENDMENT ACT (CAA)

- The Act aims to grant Indian citizenship to persecuted migrants belonging to six communities – Hindus, Sikhs, Jains, Buddhists, Parsis, and Christians – from Bangladesh, Pakistan, and Afghanistan.
- The Act was passed on December 11, 2019, and received assent from the President on December 12 the same year.
- The Ministry of Home Affairs had earlier notified that the Act would come into force from January 10, 2020.
- The implementation of the CAA has been met with both support and opposition.

#### SELA TUNNEL HAS BEEN INAUGURATED BY PM MODI IN ITANAGAR, ARUNACHAL PRADESH

- Here are some key details about the inauguration and the tunnel:
  - The **Sela Tunnel** is the world's longest twin-lane tunnel.
  - The tunnel is strategically significant as it enhances all-weather connectivity and facilitates rapid

military deployments to Arunachal Pradesh's Tawang and Kameng regions along the China frontier.

- The tunnel is constructed at an altitude above 13,000 feet, costing Rs 825 crore.
- The project consists of two tunnels and over 8 km of approach roads, with a total length of approximately 12 km.
- The tunnel's clearance is sufficiently high to accommodate all military vehicles.
- The tunnel will ensure rapid deployment of troops and heavy weaponry, including artillery guns, from the 4 Corps headquarters in the Assam plains to Tawang.

#### “GOOGLE AND ECI PARTNER TO ENHANCE VOTER INFORMATION AND FIGHT ELECTION MISINFORMATION

- Here are some key points:
  - Google is collaborating with the ECI to provide critical voting details, such as registration and voting procedures, in English and Hindi through Google Search and YouTube.
  - YouTube will feature election information panels, including candidate profiles and registration guidelines, ensuring that users have access to authoritative sources.
  - Google is employing a multi-pronged approach to combat misinformation and abuse on its platforms.
  - It's leveraging advanced AI models and machine learning techniques to identify and remove content that violates its policies.
  - Advertisers must undergo an identity verification process and obtain a pre-certificate from the ECI or authorised entities for each election ad they wish to run.
  - Google is actively collaborating with news organisations, fact-checkers, and other stakeholders to counter misinformation.
  - Through initiatives like the Google News Initiative Training Network, Fact Check Explorer tool, and partnerships with entities like Shakti, India Election Fact-Checking Collective, the company is supporting efforts to debunk misinformation, detect deepfakes, and create a shared repository for tackling misinformation challenges at scale.

### UNION MINISTER JYOTIRADITYA SCINDIA INAUGURATED FLY91 & FLAGGED ITS FIRST FLIGHT

- The inaugural flight was between Manohar International Airport (MOPA), Goa and Agatti Islands, Lakshadweep.
- Shri Scindia highlighted that the leadership of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has resulted in the birth of six new regional airlines in the past 10 years.
- He also reiterated the government's commitment to connect tier 2 and tier 3 cities through the UDAN scheme and said that the aviation industry is expecting to raise its domestic traffic to 30 crores by 2030.
- The airline informed that scheduled flights will commence from March 18, 2024, between Manohar International Airport, Goa and Bengaluru, Hyderabad, Jalgaon, Agatti, Pune, Nanded and from Bengaluru, Hyderabad, and Pune to Sindhudurg, Jalgaon, Nanded and Goa, in a phased manner.
- These new connections will enhance connectivity across the nation and increase accessibility of different regions.
- This will not only enhance tourism but also promote trade and commerce.

### IN THE ILLEGAL TRADE IN SHARK BODY PARTS, TAMIL NADU TOPPED

- The analysis found that about 16,000 kg of shark fins were seized from 2010 to 2022, constituting almost 80% of the shark-derived products.
- Significant volumes of shark cartilage and teeth were also seized.
- The confiscated products were destined for Singapore, Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, Sri Lanka, and mainland China.
- Other states involved in the illegal shark trade following Tamil Nadu are Karnataka, Gujarat, Kerala, and Maharashtra.
- This illegal trade is a serious conservation threat to sharks not just in India but globally.

### MIB NOTIFIES CINEMATOGRAPH (CERTIFICATION) RULES, 2024 TO IMPROVE FILM CERTIFICATION PROCESS

- These rules supersede the Cinematograph (Certification) Rules, 1983.
- The new rules aim to improve and modernize the entire process of certification of films for public exhibition.
- Key improvements incorporated in the Cinematograph (Certification) Rules, 2024 include:
  - Adoption of Online Certification processes for enhanced transparency, efficiency, and ease of doing business for the Film Industry.
  - Reduction in time-lines for the processing of film certification and adopting complete digital processes for eliminating all transactional time.
  - Provision of Accessibility features for certification to make watching films inclusive for disabled persons.
  - Greater representation of women in the CBFC Board & CBFC's Advisory Panels.
  - These changes are expected to foster a more efficient, transparent, and inclusive film certification process, supporting the continued growth and success of Indian cinema.
  - The Indian film industry, one of the biggest and most globalized industries in the world, produces more than 3,000 films annually in more than 40 languages.

### SIX MADHYA PRADESH HERITAGE SITES INCLUDED IN UNESCO'S TENTATIVE LIST

- Here are the details of the sites:
  - **Gwalior Fort:** A hill fort near Gwalior, Madhya Pradesh. The fort has existed at least since the 10th century, and the inscriptions and monuments found in the fort indicate that it may have existed as early as the beginning of the 6th century.
  - **Historical Group of Dhamnar:** The Dhamnar caves are located on a hill near the village of Dhamnar in the Mandasaur district of Madhya Pradesh. This rock-cut site consists of a total of 51 caves of varying sizes carved into the laterite hill.
  - **Bhojeshwar Mahadev Temple:** The Bhojeshwar Temple is an incomplete Hindu temple in Bhojpur village of Madhya Pradesh. The temple's construction is believed to have started in the 11th century, during the reign of the Paramara king Bhoja.

- **Rock Art Sites of Chambal Valley:** These sites showcase ancient artistry.
- **Khooni Bhandara:** It is an underground water management system comprising eight waterworks built in the historical city of Burhanpur in Burhanpur district of Madhya Pradesh. These Mughal period waterworks of Burhanpur form one of the most significant historic water systems in India.

#### NATIONAL NEWS- ONE LINER

- **Union Minister Sarbananda Sonowal inaugurated the first-ever Made-in-India ASTDS tug, 'Ocean Grace', on 2nd March, 2024. This 60T bollard pull tug was developed by Cochin Shipyard Limited and cost Rs. 45 crores.** It's part of the 'Aatmanirbhar Bharat' initiative and represents a significant step in India's maritime infrastructure development. A Medical Mobile Unit (MMU) was also inaugurated as part of the port's corporate social responsibility.
- According to a recent study published in The Lancet, obesity levels in India have seen a significant increase. **The number of obese adults has risen from 3.5 million in 1990 to 70 million in 2022. Similarly, the prevalence of obesity among children and teenagers has increased from 0.4 million to 12.5 million during the same period.** This rise is attributed to a shift in dietary choices and physical inactivity.
- On 5th March, **Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated and laid the foundation stone for multiple development projects in Sangareddy, Telangana.** These projects, worth more than Rs 6,800 crores, span key sectors like road, rail, petroleum, aviation, and natural gas.
- **India's first Green Hydrogen Plant in the stainless steel sector was inaugurated at Jindal Stainless Limited, Hisar, Haryana on March 4, 2024. The plant, owned and operated by Hygenco India, will produce 78 tonnes of green hydrogen per year,** replacing the grey hydrogen currently used at the JSL manufacturing unit. This initiative is expected to reduce around 54,000 tonnes of CO2 emissions over 20 years.
- **On March 4, 2024, the Supreme Court of India ruled that lawmakers cannot claim immunity from**

**prosecution in bribery cases. This decision ensures that lawmakers can be held accountable for their actions, promoting transparency and integrity in the political system.**

- **Union Minister Dr. Mansukh Mandaviya inaugurated the AYUSH-ICMR Advanced Centre for Integrated Health Research at AIIMS in New Delhi on March 4, 2024.** The centre aims to integrate traditional AYUSH practices with modern medical science. He also announced initiatives including a clinical trial on Anaemia and the launch of Indian Public Health Standards (IPHS) for AYUSH healthcare facilities.
- On March 2, 2024, **Prime Minister Narendra Modi flagged off the first tanker 'Swarna Sindhu', carrying crude oil from ONGC's Krishna Godavari deepwater block.** This project will significantly boost India's oil and gas production.
- **The National Horticulture Fair 2024 was held from 5th to 7th March 2024 at ICAR-IIHR, Hesaraghatta Lake Post, Bengaluru.** This mega event was organized in collaboration with the Society for Promotion of Horticulture (SPH); BESST- HORT, a Technology Business Incubator ICAR-IIHR; ICAR-ATARI Bengaluru and leading development departments serving for the cause and promotion of horticulture and allied sectors.
- **Keyi Panyor was inaugurated as the 26th district of Arunachal Pradesh on March 1, 2024. It was carved out of Lower Subansiri with its headquarters at Ter Gapin-Sam Sarth.** The establishment of this district was a demand by the Nyishi community and it's expected to bring development and progress to the region.
- **On March 5, 2024, Union Minister Hardeep Singh Puri inaugurated India's first Small Scale LNG Unit of GAIL at its Vijaipur LPG plant. This is a significant step towards building a Natural Gas-based economy. Additionally, 201 CNG stations were also dedicated to the nation.** These initiatives are part of the government's vision to increase the share of natural gas in the primary energy basket to 15% by 2030.
- On March 6, 2024, **Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated India's first underwater metro service in Kolkata. This significant development is part of the East-West corridor of the Kolkata Metro, which passes beneath the Hooghly River.** It promises to provide a faster and more efficient commuting

option for the residents of one of India's most densely populated cities.

- **Google has temporarily reinstated all Indian apps on its Play Store following the intervention of the Indian government. The apps were initially removed due to non-compliance with Google's in-app payment guidelines.** However, they have been reinstated while their appeals are pending in the Supreme Court. Google will continue to invoice developers for its applicable services fees during the reinstatement period.
- **Project ODISERV, launched by Union Minister Dharmendra Pradhan on March 1, 2024, is an initiative in Odisha to prepare graduates for the financial services sector. The project offers training through Bajaj Finserv's CPBFI programme, enhancing employability of the youth.** 1100 students have already been trained under this project.
- **NTPC Green Energy Limited (NGEL) and Uttar Pradesh Rajya Vidyut Utpadan Nigam Limited (UPRVUNL) have formed a joint venture to develop renewable power parks and projects in Uttar Pradesh.** The partnership was announced on March 4, 2024. The generated power will meet UPRVUNL's Renewable Generation Obligation (RGO).
- **The average daily domestic air traffic in India increased by 3.78% month-on-month to 439,464 passengers in February 2024, according to the Ministry of Civil Aviation's data.** This increase is likely due to the high demand, as four out of six major carriers recorded load factors above 90% in February. However, the average daily international air traffic decreased by 3.07% month-on-month to 205,946 passengers in the same month.
- **The Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT) of the Government of India, in collaboration with the Department of Sports, has introduced comprehensive reforms in the recruitment, promotion, and incentives framework for athletes.** Union Minister for Youth Affairs and Sports, Shri Anurag Singh Thakur, announced that Khelo India medal winner athletes will now be eligible for government jobs.
- **The government has indeed amended the Conduct of Election Rules, 1961, to raise the minimum age for senior citizens eligible for voting by postal ballot to 85 years from the previous 80 years.** This decision was made after a review by the Election

Commission found that 97-98% of senior citizens aged above 80 years preferred to vote in person in the past 11 assembly polls rather than avail of the postal ballot facility extended to them since 2020.

- **The enrollment of farmers under the Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY) has indeed increased by 27% in the financial year 2023-24. This increase has resulted in a record 40 million farmers enrolling in the scheme.** Interestingly, 42% of the farmers who enrolled under the crop insurance scheme had not availed loans from the banks.
- **The Sansad Khel Mahakumbh 3.0 was inaugurated in Bilaspur, Himachal Pradesh on 5th March 2024. The event, inspired by PM Narendra Modi's 'Kheloge To Khiloge', aims to provide a platform for players from the Hamirpur parliamentary constituency.** This year, the event includes sports like volleyball, kabaddi, cricket, basketball, and athletics, with separate categories for boys and girls. The target is to have 75,000 players participate.
- **"Operation Kamdhenu" was launched by the Jammu and Kashmir Police on March 6, 2024. The operation is a comprehensive strategy aimed at curbing cattle smuggling in the region.** It not only targets the smuggling activities but also aims to apprehend the masterminds behind these illicit operations.
- **On March 1, 2024, the Karnataka government and the World Economic Forum (WEF) signed a Letter of Intent to establish a Centre for Artificial Intelligence in Karnataka. This centre, part of the WEF's global C4IR Network, aims to foster industry-academia networks, research collaboration, and dialogue on AI ethics.** It will also support AI startups in Karnataka.
- **The Ministry of Corporate Affairs (MoCA) has notified a provision that empowers the Competition Commission of India (CCI) to impose penalties on a company's global turnover. This amendment to the competition laws allows the CCI to impose penalties derived from all products and services of a company, not just from the product under investigation.**
- **The Meghalaya State Skill Development Society (MSSDS), in collaboration with SANKALP and the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE), launched Skillerate Connect on the 5th and 6th of March, 2024. The**

event aimed to boost the Skilling ecosystem by connecting Employers, Skilled Beneficiaries, and Local Entrepreneurs.

- **Minister Hardeep S Puri inaugurated the 5th ONGC Para Games on 8th March 2024 at Thyagaraj Stadium, New Delhi. The event, attended by 371 athletes from various oil and gas public enterprises, was held from 8-10 March 2024.** Distinguished athletes including Manasi Joshi, Manoj Sarkar, and Captain SK Sangwan participated in the event. The Minister praised India's performance at international Paralympic events.
- **Bichom was inaugurated as the 27th district of Arunachal Pradesh on March 8, 2024. The district was carved out of West and East Kameng and its headquarters are at Napangphung.** The new district's responsibilities have been handed over to Deputy Commissioner Akriti Sagar and SP Sudhanshu Dhama.
- On March 12, 2024, **Union Minister Rajeev Chandrasekhar inaugurated India's first FutureLABS center at C-DAC Thiruvananthapuram. The center aims to catalyze an ecosystem for next-generation chip design, manufacturing, and research.** Several collaborations were also announced during the inauguration.
- The **Gorsam Kora Festival is a four-day event celebrated from March 7 to March 10 at Zemithang in the Tawang district of Arunachal Pradesh. It features traditional Buddhist rituals, cultural performances, and a cleanliness drive.** The festival attracts pilgrims and lamas from Bhutan, Tawang, and neighboring regions.
- The **Maharashtra government has decided to rename Ahmednagar District as Ahilya Nagar and Velha Tehsil as Rajgad. This is in honor of Queen Ahilya Bai Holkar and reflects the region's rich history and cultural heritage.**
- The **Union Cabinet of India approved an agreement with Bhutan's Food and Drug Authority on March 13, 2024. This agreement aims to facilitate trade by reducing compliance costs and promoting ease of doing business.** The Bhutanese authority will issue a Health Certificate for exports to India, ensuring compliance with India's food safety standards.
- The **Startup Mahakumbh 2024 is a 3-day event that started on 18th March 2024 in New Delhi. It's a significant platform for startups, investors, and other stakeholders to network and shape the**

**future of startups in India.** The event is expected to host more than 1,000 startups, numerous investors, and thousands of delegates from various countries.

- The **Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) sector in Kerala added over one lakh new ventures for the second consecutive year in 2023-24. This was part of the Year of Enterprises 2.0 initiative, which aimed to launch one lakh new enterprises in the financial year 2023-24.** Despite financial constraints, Kerala's economy experienced steady growth in 2022-23.
- On March 15, 2024, **the Indian Government approved a new Electric Vehicle (EV) policy. This policy allows companies that commit to invest at least \$500 million and start domestic manufacturing within three years to import up to 8,000 EVs costing \$35,000 or more a year at a lower tax rate of 15% for a maximum of five years.**
- The **Government of India approved the transfer of the Air India building in Mumbai to the Government of Maharashtra for ₹1,601 crore on March 14, 2024. The Maharashtra government agreed to waive dues of ₹298.42 crore for this transaction.** The building is expected to house the offices of the Maharashtra government.
- The **National Action Plan for Prevention and Control of Snakebite Envenoming (NAP-SE) was launched by the Union Health Ministry of India on March 12, 2024. The plan aims to reduce snakebite deaths by half by 2030.** It includes measures like improving anti-venom availability, enhancing emergency care, and promoting inter-sectoral coordination.
- The **Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE) in India issued guidelines on March 15, 2024 for setting up Hydrogen Hubs under the National Green Hydrogen Mission (NGHM).** The mission aims to promote the use of green hydrogen in various sectors of the economy. The MNRE also issued guidelines for the "Strategic Interventions for Green Hydrogen Transition (SIGHT) Programme", which includes an incentive scheme for electrolyser manufacturing.
- **Prime Minister Narendra Modi has announced that India will double its financial support to Bhutan to ₹10,000 crore over the next five years.** This support will be used to enhance cooperation in various areas.
- A recent study predicts that India could generate about 600 kilotons of solar waste **by 2030 due to the**

rapid increase in its installed solar capacity, which is expected to reach 292 GW by 2030. The majority of this waste is anticipated to be produced by five states: Rajasthan, Gujarat, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, and Andhra Pradesh.

- Rajasthan launched India's first Water Resources Information System Dashboard on March 16, 2024. The portal provides comprehensive data on the state's water resources, including data on 805 dams and 326 rain gauge stations. It aims to improve water management and is particularly beneficial for farmers by providing real-time information about water availability
- SAIC Motor and JSW Group announced a joint venture named 'JSW MG Motor India Pvt Ltd' on March 20, 2024. The venture aims to accelerate the growth of MG Motor operations in India with a focus on green mobility. It plans to increase production capacity, launch new products every three to six months, expand manufacturing footprint, and create significant employment opportunities.
- Arvind Kejriwal, the Chief Minister of Delhi, was arrested on March 21, 2024, by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) in a money-laundering case. His arrest has sparked protests and has been criticized by opposition leaders and his party, the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP). He is in custody until March 28, 2024.
- The Gyalsuen Jetsun Pema Wangchuck Mother and Child Hospital, a state-of-the-art facility in Thimphu, Bhutan, was recently inaugurated by the Prime Ministers of India and Bhutan. The hospital, built with the assistance of the Government of India, has 150 beds and houses advanced facilities for various medical departments. It is a symbol of the India-Bhutan partnership in healthcare.
- The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) has designated the Fact Check Unit (FCU) of the Press Information Bureau (PIB) as the central government's fact-checking unit under the updated Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021, which were notified on April 6, 2023. The FCU is responsible for dispelling misinformation related to government policies and schemes.
- The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) has amended the Mobile Number Portability (MNP) regulations to prevent fraudulent SIM swap

activities. From July 1, 2024, users must wait for seven days to port from one network to another after a SIM swap or replacement. This rule doesn't apply to SIM upgrades (like 3G to 4G/5G), which are authorized by a one-time password (OTP).

- The 4th Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) Startup Forum was held in New Delhi on 19th March 2024. The forum aimed to foster innovation and job creation among the SCO Member States. Over 15 SCO startups showcased their products and services. A workshop on 'Establishing a Seed Fund' was conducted by Startup India. A Special Working Group for Startups and Innovation (SWG) was created, to be permanently chaired by India in SCO.
- On March 27, 2024, the Supreme Court of India expressed concern over wealthy individuals obtaining pre-trial injunctions against the media and civil society. The court emphasized the importance of protecting journalistic expression and suggested that pre-trial injunctions should only be granted in exceptional cases.

## BANKING

### RBI APPROVES AU BANK'S ACQUISITION OF FINCARE SMALL FINANCE BANK FROM APRIL 1

- The effective date of the amalgamation is set for April 1, 2024.
- As per the agreement between the two banks, shareholders of Fincare Small Finance Bank will receive 579 equity shares of AU Small Finance Bank for every 2,000 shares held.
- Out of the 10 small finance banks that received a license in 2015 from RBI, AU and Capital Small Finance Bank had no microfinance legacy.
- While 49% of Fincare's branches are based in south India, AU had merely 2%.
- The merged bank will have 2334 branches.

### DPIIT-WORLD BANK WORKSHOP ON LOGISTICS EFFICIENCY

- Over 100 participants from various Ministries/Departments of the Government of India, officials from States, Multilateral Institutions, and Industry Associations participated in the event.
- The workshop was divided into three sessions:

- **Session I** covered discussions on the approach and methodology adopted in the calculation of the Logistics Performance Index (LPI) by the World Bank.
- **Session II** discussed the corridor approach including Bharatmala and Sagarmala Corridors which is enhancing logistics efficiency, bringing down logistics costs, and increasing first and last mile connectivity.
- **Session III**, officials from States shared best practices, reforms, and digital initiatives undertaken to improve logistics efficiency.

#### RBI UPDATES BBPS FOR EFFICIENT BILL PAYMENTS AND ISSUES NEW SUPERVISORY RETURNS DIRECTIVE

- **Revision of the BBPS Framework:** RBI has put in place a revised regulatory framework for Bharat Bill Payment Systems (BBPS) based on a review of developments in the payments landscape. The new framework, applicable from April 1, 2024, seeks to streamline the process of bill payments, enable greater participation, and enhance customer protection. The revised framework will apply to NPCI Bharat Bill Pay Limited (NBBL) and all Bharat Bill Payment Operating Units (BBPOUs). These directions spell out the roles and responsibilities of the system operator and system participants.
- **Master Direction for Filing of Supervisory Returns:** RBI has issued a Master Direction – Reserve Bank of India (Filing of Supervisory Returns) Directions – 2024. This directive aims to standardize the filing of supervisory returns by banks and non-banking financial companies (NBFCs) to bring clarity, brevity, and harmonization to the instructions issued to various supervised entities for return submission. This is part of a series of steps initiated by RBI to reduce the burden of compliance on the regulated entities.

#### RBI BANS IIFL FINANCE FROM GIVING GOLD LOANS DUE TO SERIOUS DEVIATIONS

- This **decision was taken following an inspection of the company for the year ending March 31, 2023.**
- The **regulator observed certain material supervisory concerns in the gold loan portfolio of the company,** including serious deviations in assaying and

certifying purity and net weight of the gold at the time of sanction of loans and at the time of auction upon default.

- These **violations significantly and adversely impact customers' interest.**
- The RBI's **move is expected to benefit other top gold financing companies in the country, such as Manappuram Finance and Muthoot Finance.**

#### RBI ISSUES DIRECTIONS TO CARD NETWORKS FOR ISSUANCE OF CREDIT CARD TO CUSTOMERS

- The directives **aim to ensure greater choice and flexibility for customers.**
- Here are the **key points:**
  - **Card issuers shall not enter into any arrangement or agreement with card networks** that restrain them from availing the services of other card networks.
  - **Card issuers shall provide an option to their eligible customers to choose from multiple card networks** at the time of issue.
  - **For existing cardholders,** this option may be provided at the time of the next renewal.
  - The **directive defines authorized card networks as American Express Banking Corp., Diners Club International Ltd., MasterCard Asia/Pacific Pte. Ltd., National Payments Corporation of India–Rupay, and Visa Worldwide Pte. Limited.**
  - **Both card issuers and networks must adhere to these requirements in existing agreements,** upon amendment or renewal, as well as in new agreements.
  - These directions do **not apply to credit card issuers with fewer than 10 lakh active cards.**
  - Issuers who **issue credit cards on their own authorized card network** are exempt from the circular's applicability.
  - The directive **regarding customer choice at the time of issuance will come into effect six months** from March 6, 2024.

#### INDIA AMENDS FDI NORMS IN SPACE SECTOR

- The amendment **aims to realize the vision of an Atmanirbhar Bharat as laid down by PM Shri Narendra Modi.**



- The space sector has been **liberalized for foreign direct investment in prescribed sub-sectors/activities.**
- The FDI policy reform will **enhance Ease of Doing Business in the country, leading to greater FDI inflows and thereby contributing to growth of investment, income, and employment.**
- The satellites sub-sector has been **divided into three different activities with defined limits for foreign investment in each such sector.**
- The **Indian Space Policy 2023** was notified as an overarching, composite, and dynamic framework to implement the vision for unlocking India's potential in the Space sector through enhanced private participation.
- The **Union Cabinet has eased the FDI policy on Space sector by prescribing liberalized FDI thresholds** for various sub-sectors/activities.

#### THE RBI'S UDGAM PLATFORM FOR UNCLAIMED DEPOSITS NOW HAS 30 BANKS REGISTERED

- It **helps customers search for their unclaimed deposits with banks and other financial institutions in India.**
- These **30 banks cover around 90% of unclaimed deposits (in value terms) in the Depositor Education and Awareness (DEA) Fund of RBI.**
- The **remaining banks are in the process of getting on-boarded.**
- Customers can **register on the UDGAM platform using their mobile number.**
- Once **registered, they can search for unclaimed deposits under their name and provide additional inputs such as PAN, voter ID, driving license, and passport number.**
- However, the **UDGAM portal only facilitates the search of unclaimed deposits/accounts across multiple banks at one place and provides information on claim/settlement process of each bank.**

#### VIKAS SPOORTY, A NEW LOAN SCHEME, HAS BEEN LAUNCHED BY KARNATAKA VIKAS GRAMEENA BANK

- This scheme is **designed to strengthen the rural credit delivery system and motivate the common**

**man to take up income-generating activities on a small scale.**

- The **'Vikas Spoorty' loan scheme offers hassle-free credit without the need for collateral security or surety.**
- It is **aimed at meeting the genuine credit needs of small entrepreneurs.**
- The scheme links the **repayment of the loan to the small amounts contributed by the borrowers daily to their 'Daily Deposit' scheme of the bank (Pigmy account) at their doorsteps.**
- Under this scheme, **people may avail a minimum loan of ₹50,000 and a maximum of ₹2,00,000.**

#### BANK OF BARODA OFFERS LITE SAVINGS ACCOUNT WITH LIFETIME ZERO BALANCE FEATURE

- Here are **some key features of this account:**
  - It's a **Lifetime Zero Balance Savings Account, which means there are no minimum balance requirements.**
  - Customers **get a free RuPay Platinum Debit Card if they maintain a Quarterly Average Balance (QAB) of Rs. 3000 for Metro/Urban branches, Rs. 2000 for Semi Urban branches, and Rs. 1000 for Rural branches.**
  - The account can be **opened by any resident individual, including minors above the age of 10 years.**
  - The bank also **offers attractive discounts and offers on Bank of Baroda Debit & Credit Cards.**

#### NPCI AND FONEPAY'S CROSS-BORDER PAYMENT AGREEMENT

- This arrangement will **facilitate QR-code-based, person-to-merchant (P2M) UPI transactions between the two countries.**
- In the **first phase, Indian consumers will be able to make instant, secure, and convenient UPI payments across various business stores in Nepal to merchants on the Fonepay Network.**
- This **cross-border payment solution is expected to significantly improve economic ties, commerce, and tourism between the two nations, eventually promoting economic prosperity and progress.**
- The **agreement comes after the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) and Nepal Rastra Bank (NRB) signed the Terms of Reference on the integration of the UPI of**

**India with the National Payments Interface (NPI) of Nepal for cross-border remittances.**

#### ADITYA BIRLA CAPITAL, ADITYA BIRLA FINANCE ANNOUNCE A SCHEME OF AMALGAMATION FOR LARGE NBFC

- The merger is expected to result in a reduction of **legal entities and simplification of the group structure of Aditya Birla Capital.**
- This will create a **unified large entity with greater financial strength and flexibility, enabling direct access to capital.**
- The **proposed amalgamation is expected to enhance value for various stakeholders of the company.**
- The **merger is expected to consolidate the businesses and operational synergies, resulting in expansion and long-term sustainable growth.**
- Kumar Mangalam Birla, Chairman of the Aditya Birla Group, has stated that the merger will enable the creation of a strong capital base for Aditya Birla Capital.

#### SEBI INTRODUCES SETTLEMENT SCHEME III ON ILLIQUID OPTION CASES

- The **scheme commenced on March 11 and concluded on May 10.**
- After the **expiry of the scheme period, actions as per the relevant provisions of securities laws will be continued against** the entities which do not avail this opportunity for settlement.
- The scheme would **provide a settlement opportunity to all the entities that have executed reversal trades in the stock options between April 1, 2014, and September 30, 2015, against whom proceedings have been initiated** and are pending before any authority or forum.
- By **availing the benefit of the scheme, the entities can settle such proceedings** and avoid further delay in the conclusion of the said proceedings and the associated long-drawn legal processes or expenses.

#### SEBI ANNOUNCES INTRODUCTION OF OPTIONAL T+0 SETTLEMENT CYCLE TO BOOST MARKET LIQUIDITY

- This means that the **settlement of trades will happen on the same day.**

- In the **current T+1 process, investors selling their stocks receive money** in their demat accounts on the next trading day.
- With the **T+0 settlement, the money will be credited on the same day of sale.**
- SEBI has **proposed that the new settlement process will be implemented in two phases.**
- In the **first phase, an optional T+0 settlement cycle is proposed for trades until 1:30 pm, with the settlement of funds and securities to be completed on the same day by 4:30 pm.**
- In the **second phase, an optional immediate trade-by-trade settlement for funds and securities will be introduced, allowing trading until 3:30 pm.**
- **After this phase is implemented, Phase 1 (optional T+0 settlement) will be discontinued.**

#### SEBI NOTIFIED THE REGULATIONS FOR SMALL AND MEDIUM REAL ESTATE INVESTMENT TRUSTS

- These **amendments establish guidelines for the creation of Small and Medium Real Estate Investment Trusts (SM REITs).**
- The new regulations, known as the **SEBI (REIT) (Amendment) Regulations 2024, will come into force on the date of their publication in the official gazette.**
- Under these regulations, an **SM REIT will be permitted to gather funds starting from ₹50 crore by issuing units to a minimum of 200 investors.**
- These funds will **be utilized for acquiring and managing real estate assets or properties.**
- The **amendments are expected to open the doors to fractional ownership of rent-yielding real estate assets, including uber-luxury second homes across the country.**
- This is a **significant move to regulate the fractional ownership industry.**
- It's important to note that **at least 95% of the assets for SM REIT schemes must be fully developed and generating revenue, compared to the 80% requirement for larger REITs.**

#### RBI IMPOSES PENALTY ON BANK OF INDIA, BANDHAN BANK

- **Bank of India was fined ₹1.4 crore for violating the RBI's directions on interest rates, customer service,**

and provisions of Credit Information Companies Rules, 2006.

- Bandhan Bank was penalized ₹29.55 lakh for non-compliance with certain directions on 'Reserve Bank of India (Interest Rate on Deposits) Directions, 2016'.
- The charge pertaining to opening of savings deposit account of an ineligible entity was sustained.
- These penalties were imposed after the RBI conducted a statutory inspection to evaluate the banks' financial positions.
- It's important to note that these penalties are for regulatory compliance issues and do not question the validity of any transactions or agreements with customers.
- The RBI aims to ensure that banks and financial institutions adhere to the necessary regulations to maintain transparency and protect the interests of customers.

#### BANK OF BARODA UNVEILS BOB EARTH GREEN TERM DEPOSIT SCHEME

- Here are some key details about this scheme:
  - The scheme offers **depositors attractive interest rates on various tenors.**
  - It **allows depositors to contribute to India's green economy.**
  - The funds raised through this **scheme will be used to finance eligible environment-friendly projects and sectors.**
  - This **initiative fosters India's transition to a green and sustainable economy.**
  - The **scheme is open to the General Public, Resident Indians, NRIs, and High Net worth Individual (HNI) investors.**

#### SBI PARTNERED WITH ONE97 COMMUNICATIONS FOR UPI TRANSACTIONS

- This **partnership comes as a significant move to ensure uninterrupted payment services for Paytm users.**
- The National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) **has approved One97 Communications Limited to continue Unified Payments Interface (UPI) transactions through four banks - State Bank of India (SBI), Axis Bank, HDFC Bank, and YES Bank.**

- This decision comes as a relief for Paytm users, as the Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) deadline of March 15 was looming, barring Paytm Payments Bank Ltd (PPBL) from accepting deposits, credit transactions, or top-ups in customer accounts.
- Under the new arrangement, NPCI has approved One97 Communications to participate in UPI as a Third-Party Application Provider (TPAP) under a multi-bank model.
- The four designated banks will act as Payment System Provider (PSP) banks to One97 Communications, ensuring continuity in UPI transactions for Paytm users.
- Additionally, YES Bank will serve as the merchant acquiring bank for existing and new UPI merchants for One97 Communications.
- This partnership is expected to ensure a seamless transition and minimize disruptions, thereby maintaining the trust and confidence of Paytm customers.

#### INTEREST RATES ON SMALL SAVINGS SCHEMES REMAIN UNCHANGED FOR Q1FY25

- Here are the interest rates for some of the popular schemes:
  - **Public Provident Fund (PPF): 7.1%**
  - **Savings Deposits: 4%**
  - **Kisan Vikas Patra: 7.5%** (Investments will mature in 115 months)
  - **National Savings Certificate (NSC): 7.7%**
  - **Monthly Income Scheme: 7.4%**
  - **Sukanya Samridhi Account: 8.2%**
  - **Senior Citizens Saving Scheme: 8.2%**
  - These rates **offer a range of options for investors seeking returns on their savings during this period.**

#### DECADE-LONG DECLINE IN SCBS' OWNERSHIP OF GOVERNMENT SECURITIES

- According to a report by Bank of Baroda's economic research department, the share of SCBs has **declined from 45.1% in FY13 to 35.7% in FY23.**
- However, as of **September 2023, it stands at 36.6%.**
- Interestingly, there has been a significant **improvement in the share of insurance companies and 'others' (primarily driven by pension funds).**

- The share of **insurance companies jumped to 26.3% in FY23 from 20.7% in FY13, and that of 'others' was up at 14.6% in FY23 from 9.6% in FY13.**
- The share of the **Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has declined from 13.3% in FY13 to 9.7% in FY23 (9% as of FYTD24), and that of Foreign Portfolio Investors (FPIs) has come down from 1.3% to 0.9% (1.1% in FYTD24).**

#### ADB AND MOF INK \$181M DEAL FOR AHMEDABAD URBAN MOBILITY

- This agreement **aims to build quality infrastructure and services to improve urban livability and mobility in the peri-urban areas of Ahmedabad city in Gujarat.**
- The project will **construct 166 km of water distribution network, 126 km of climate-resilient stormwater drainage, 300 km of sewerage systems, and four sewage treatment plants.**
- It will also **support 10 junction improvements along the existing Sardar Patel Ring Road to improve connectivity of peri-urban areas to Ahmedabad city.**
- The project will **benefit urban poor, women, and migrant workers through improved urban services and urban governance.**
- It will also help **strengthen the capacity of the Ahmedabad Urban Development Authority and urban local bodies in technology-based urban planning, including climate change and disaster-resilient infrastructure** that promote environmental and social safeguards, gender equality, and social inclusion.

#### RBI RECONSTITUTES COMMITTEE OF ADVISORS OF THE ABHYUDAYA COOPERATIVE BANK

- This decision was made following the **resignation of Shri Mahendra Chhajed from the Committee for personal reasons, effective from March 4, 2024.**
- The **reconstituted Committee of Advisors now includes:**
  - Shri Devendra Kumar, former Chief General Manager, SBI.
  - Shri Venkatesh Hegde, former General Manager, SBI.
  - Shri Suhas Gokhale, former MD, COSMOS Co-operative Bank Limited.

- This committee is expected to assist the Administrator, Shri Satya Prakash Pathak, in managing the affairs of the bank.
- The RBI had **superseded the board of Abhyudaya Cooperative Bank due to concerns about "poor governance" and appointed an administrator to manage the affairs of the lender.**
- The bank was **allowed to continue its normal banking activities.**

#### BANK OF JAPAN HAS ENDED EIGHT YEARS OF NEGATIVE INTEREST RATES

- The decision to **end the negative interest rate regime was put forward by Governor Kazuo Ueda.**
- The BOJ's key **interest rate has been increased, and this move is seen as a reaction to changes in the Japanese economy.**
- Economists and experts predict that the next **policy rate hike is likely to occur in the second half of 2025, depending largely on economic and financial markets in Japan and abroad.**
- The **negative interest rate policy was initially adopted to encourage bank lending, spur demand, and nurture inflation.**
- Now, with **strong wage gains bringing the BOJ's inflation goal into sight, the policy's mission is nearing an end.**
- The BOJ's **lending rate for overnight borrowing by banks was raised to a range of 0 to 0.1% from minus 0.1%.**

#### IRDAI ANNOUNCES NORMS TO BOOST GOVERNANCE

- These regulations focus on **safeguarding policyholders' interests, rural and social sector responsibilities, electronic insurance marketplace, foreign reinsurance branches, and aspects of registration, actuarial, finance, investment, and corporate governance.**
- The regulator has approved **insurance products regulations to promote "good governance in product design and pricing, including strengthening of the principles governing guaranteed surrender value and special surrender value along with disclosures thereof".**

## RBI ISSUES OMNIBUS FRAMEWORK FOR RECOGNIZING SROS FOR REGULATED ENTITIES

- The **Omnibus Framework** contains broad parameters such as objectives, responsibilities, eligibility criteria, governance standards, application process, and other basic conditions for granting recognition.
- These parameters will be common for any SRO proposed to be recognized by the RBI.
- Other sector-specific guidelines like the number of SROs, membership, etc., will be issued separately by the respective departments of the RBI wherever a sectoral SRO is intended to be set up.
- The SROs will be expected to operate with credibility, objectivity, and responsibility under the oversight of the regulator, with the objective to improve regulatory compliance.
- They are expected to adhere to a set of overarching objectives for the betterment of the sector they represent, foster advancement, and address critical industry concerns within the broader financial system.
- The primary responsibility of the SRO towards its members would be to promote best business practices.
- The SROs would be a not-for-profit company registered under Section 8 of the Companies Act, 2013.

## DBS BANK INDIA ANNOUNCED USD 250 MILLION LENDING SUPPORT FOR STARTUPS & NEW ECONOMY CO.

- This initiative is part of the bank's focus on fostering innovation and entrepreneurship within the country's thriving startup ecosystem.
- The Indian startup sector, a foundational pillar of the country's development goals, has seen significant expansion over the years with over 90,000 startups and more than 100 unicorns as of 2024.
- Despite their growing resilience, access to capital for these companies in the current dynamic environment presents an ongoing challenge.
- Recognising the disruptive power of the startup segment, particularly those harnessing emerging technologies, DBS Bank India has earmarked

lending support of USD 250 million, focusing on enterprises that are set to redefine industry standards with innovative solutions.

- Rajat Verma, Managing Director & Head, Institutional Banking Group, DBS Bank India said, "We are inspired by the ability of new-age entrepreneurs to harness innovation to solve real-world challenges and hope to play a constructive role in their growth."

## RRBS RECEIVE RS 6212.03 CRORE FROM GOVERNMENT UNDER RECAPITALIZATION SCHEME

- This scheme aims to support RRBs in maintaining the minimum prescribed capital-to-risk (Weighted) assets ratio of 9 percent.
- The performance of RRBs has improved significantly, with a consolidated CRAR (Capital to Risk-weighted Assets Ratio) at an all-time high of 13.83 per cent as of December 31, 2023.
- Indian RRBs have shown the highest ever consolidated net profit of Rs 4,974 crores in FY22-23 and a net profit of Rs 5,236 crore up to the 3rd quarter of FY 2023-24.
- This comes against a backdrop of a 3-year board-approved viability plan (VP) in the financial year 2022-23, with a well-defined implementation mechanism aimed at achieving sustainable viability.
- RRBs are vital for banking and financial services to rural communities, agriculture activities and small businesses.
- There are 43 RRBs sponsored by 12 scheduled commercial banks in India.

## RBI ISSUES ADVISORY ON BANKS' INVESTMENTS IN ALTERNATIVE INVESTMENT FUNDS

- Here are the key points from the advisory:
  - The advisory is applicable to all commercial banks, including Small Finance Banks, Local Area Banks, and Regional Rural Banks, all Primary (Urban) Co-operative Banks/State Co-operative Banks/ Central Co-operative Banks, all All-India Financial Institutions, and all Non-Banking Financial Companies (including Housing Finance Companies).
  - Banks need to only set aside provisions to the extent of their investment in the AIF scheme which is further invested by the AIF in the debtor

company, and not on the lender's entire investment in the AIF scheme.

- Downstream investments shall exclude investments in equity shares of the debtor company of the RE, but shall include all other investments, including investment in hybrid instruments.
- The advisory is aimed at ensuring uniformity in implementation among the regulated entities and to address the concerns flagged in various representations received from stakeholders.

#### PAYU INTRODUCES INDUSTRY-FIRST DOWNPAYMENT EMI SOLUTION FOR ONLINE RETAIL

- This solution enables customers to make a partial payment upfront, while the remaining amount can be converted into easy EMIs.
- This makes high-ticket purchases more affordable and accessible.
- PayU merchant partners can now offer their customers the flexibility to decide the downpayment amount with Credit Card EMI, and even combine UPI with Credit Card EMIs for greater affordability and convenience.
- This no-code solution offers No Cost EMI with pre-decided downpayment options and control over subvention, helping merchants increase revenues and empower customers to save on EMI interests while fulfilling their aspirations.
- Manas Mishra, Chief Product Officer - PayU, said at the launch, "With our first-of-its-kind Downpayment EMI solution, we have replicated the flexibility & convenience of downpayment options available in offline EMIs to disrupt the online payments space."

#### NTPC SIGNS PACT WITH JAPANESE AGENCY FOR USD 200 MILLION LOAN

- The Japan Bank for International Cooperation (JBIC), a government policy-based financial institution, will provide 60% of the facility amount.
- The balance amount will be provided by other commercial banks under JBIC guarantee.
- The agreements have been signed for a JPY 15 billion loan each for NTPC Ltd and NTPC Renewables Energy Ltd (NREL).
- NTPC shall utilize the loan proceeds for funding part of its capex requirements for Flue Gas

Desulphurization (FGD) which substantially reduces the SOx emission in the flue gases of thermal power stations and is a positive step towards environmental sustainability.

- The loan proceeds shall also be utilized by NREL for funding its capex for renewable energy projects which would facilitate its mission for providing reliable, affordable, and sustainable energy.

#### A PENALTY OF RS 564.44 CRORE HAS BEEN IMPOSED ON BANK OF INDIA

- The penalty was a result of various disallowances made.
- The bank received the order under Section 270A of the Income Tax Act, 1961.
- The bank believes that it has adequate factual and legal grounds to reasonably substantiate its position in the matter and expects the entire demand to subside.
- The bank has assured that there will be no impact on its financial, operations, or other activities due to this penalty.
- The bank's shares closed at Rs 137, up 3.79 per cent over the previous close on the BSE.

#### BANK OF BARODA WINS CO-BRANDING RIGHTS FOR THREE DELHI METRO STATIONS

- The stations are:
  - Inderlok
  - South Extension
  - Rajouri Garden
- The Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC) awarded the naming rights to the bank for a period of 10 years, starting from 2024.
- In addition to the exclusive co-branding rights, the bank will also get a dedicated space for branding, display of products, and installation of an ATM/Digital Banking Unit (DBU)/kiosk to serve customers.
- This collaboration with Delhi Metro, which is India's largest and busiest metro rail system with a daily ridership of more than 60 lakh, is expected to enhance the bank's brand visibility and recall, and deepen its engagement with citizens of the National Capital Region (NCR).

#### BANKING- ONE LINER

- The National Urban Co-operative Finance and Development Corporation Limited (NUCFDC) was inaugurated by Union Home Minister Amit Shah on 2nd March 2024. The NUCFDC, a Non-Banking Finance Company (NBFC), aims to modernize and strengthen the Urban Cooperative Banking Sector in India. It plans to raise a capital base of Rs.300 crores to support Urban Cooperative Banks and develop a shared technology platform to improve service offerings and reduce costs.
- The Financial Intelligence Unit-India (FIU-IND) imposed a penalty of ₹5.49 crore on Paytm Payments Bank Ltd on March 1, 2024, for violations of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), 2002, and the PML Rules, 2005.
- In January 2024, the growth in bank credit in India moderated to 16.2% year-on-year, down from 16.7% in the previous year. This slowdown was primarily due to a decrease in credit growth to the industry, services, and personal loans sectors. However, credit growth to agriculture and allied activities improved during this period.
- On February 29, 2024, the National Electronic Funds Transfer (NEFT) system in India processed a record 4.1 crore (41 million) transactions in a single day. This system, managed by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), operates 24/7, 365 days a year. The Real Time Gross Settlement (RTGS) system, another important payment system in India, processed its highest volume of 16.25 lakh (1.625 million) transactions in a day on March 31, 2023.
- in India through technology and data analytics. Policybazaar Insurance Brokers, a subsidiary of PB Fintech, has received approval from IRDAI to operate as a composite insurance broker. This allows them to sell reinsurance products, aiming to increase insurance penetration
- Kotak Mahindra Bank launched the 'Smart Choice Gold Loan' on 29th February 2024. It offers a low monthly interest rate, no processing fee, and a loan amount up to INR 25 lacs with minimal documentation. The offer is valid till 31st May 2024.
- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has approved an interoperable payment system for internet banking transactions. This system will facilitate quicker settlement of funds for merchants and is expected to be launched in 2024.
- REC Limited has listed two bonds on the NSE and BSE, totaling over ₹5,375 crore. The first bond is

valued at ₹2,500 crore with a 10-year maturity and a yield of 7.47%. The second bond, worth ₹2,875 crore, has a maturity of 3 years and 2 months and offers a yield of 7.64%. The funds raised will be used for regular business activities. Both bonds have received high credit ratings.

- The rise in the percentage of Term Deposits (TDs) in Scheduled Commercial Banks' (SCBs) total deposits from 57.2% in March 2023 to 60.3% in December 2023, as per the Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) quarterly data, indicates a shift in the deposit patterns.
- On March 1, 2024, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman virtually launched seven infrastructure projects worth over ₹1,000 crore. These include residential quarters for Income Tax Department officers in Faridabad and Gurugram. The projects aim to boost business activities.
- The Indian government has permitted derivatives trading in 11 more commodities, taking the total to 104. The new commodities include skimmed milk powder, cement, apple, bamboo, timber, weather, freight, white butter, cashew, metal alloys, and manganese. This move aims to boost market liquidity and provide more opportunities for traders.
- Infibeam Avenues, an AI-powered fintech company in India, received the final authorisation from the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) to operate as a payment aggregator on March 4. This authorisation allows Infibeam Avenues to acquire merchants and deliver digital payment acceptance solutions under its payment gateway brand, CCAvenue.
- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has recently instructed India's major state-owned refiners to urge Persian Gulf oil suppliers to accept at least 10% of oil payments in rupees in the upcoming financial year. This move is aimed at promoting the Indian currency in international trade and reducing the country's dependence on the US dollar.
- The World Bank approved a \$452 million loan for Assam, India on March 1, 2024. The loan aims to improve connectivity for over 1.8 million people in rural areas, strengthen the resilience of roads and bridges, and promote inclusive growth in the rural sector. The loan has a maturity of 19 years with a grace period of 4.5 years.
- REC Limited, a Maharatna Central Public Sector Enterprise under the Ministry of Power and a leading

Non-Banking Finance Company, has indeed partnered with the Unit of Science and Educational Development (UNISED) to support the education of around 75,500 children of Siddharthnagar district, Uttar Pradesh.

- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has suspended JM Financial Products Limited (JMFPL) from providing any financing against shares and debentures due to serious deficiencies observed in their loan sanctioning process. However, JMFPL can continue to service its existing loan accounts.
- The Indian government is selling a 7% stake in Neyveli Lignite Corporation Limited (NLC) India through an Offer for Sale (OFS). The base offer is around 6.93 crore shares, with an additional 2.77 crore shares under the greenshoe option. The floor price is ₹212 per share. The stake sale is expected to fetch about 20.6 billion rupees. This has led to a 3% drop in NLC India's share price.
- Bloomberg is set to include India's Fully Accessible Route (FAR) bonds in its Emerging Market (EM) Local Currency Government Index and related indices. The inclusion will start from January 31, 2025, and will be phased in over ten months. Once fully included, India is expected to be the third largest country in the index after China and South Korea. This move is seen as a significant step in the development of India's financial markets.
- The 'PNB EMT Credit Card' is a co-branded travel credit card launched by Punjab National Bank (PNB) and EaseMyTrip on March 5, 2024. It offers benefits like welcome vouchers, booking discounts, reward points, insurance coverage, and lounge access. The card has a joining fee of Rs. 2000, but no annual fee if used once each quarter.
- The Competition Commission of India (CCI) approved Ring Plus Aqua Ltd's proposed acquisition of a 59.25% stake in Maini Precision Products Ltd on Wednesday, March 6, 2024. Maini Precision Products is a company that manufactures precision products for various industries.
- The Indian Banks' Association and bank employee unions have agreed on a 17% annual wage hike. This will result in an additional yearly expenditure of approximately Rs 8,284 crore for public sector banks. In addition to the wage hike, it has been agreed to recognize all Saturdays as holidays, pending government notification.

- The Ministry of Corporate Affairs (MCA) in India revised the threshold criteria for merger filings under the Competition Act on March 8, 2024. The exemption limit for small target companies has been increased to ₹450 crore in case of assets or ₹1,250 crore in case of turnover. This means that combinations below this threshold are exempted from merger filing. These changes are valid for two years from the date of publication in the official gazette.
- The Income Tax Department has expanded the list of payments received by units in the International Financial Services Centre (IFSC) that are exempt from Tax Deducted at Source (TDS). This includes 14 types of units and various types of income. The new norm will be effective from April 1, 2024.
- IIFL Finance announced that it will receive a liquidity support of \$200 million from its top shareholder, Fairfax India. This decision came after the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) directed IIFL Finance to halt gold loan disbursements, which raised liquidity concerns. Fairfax India, which holds around a 15% stake in IIFL Finance, expressed confidence in IIFL's management.
- On March 11, 2024, L&T Finance, L&T Infra Credit, and five other non-banking financial companies (NBFCs) surrendered their certificates of registration to the Reserve Bank of India. The other five NBFCs are Marudhar Food & Credit, Creative Intra, Jinvani Trading & Investment, Manjushree Fincap, and Shruti Financial Services. Following this, the central bank cancelled their Certificate of Registration (CoR) as they ceased to be a legal entity after amalgamation, merger, dissolution or voluntary strike-off.
- IndusInd Bank has launched 'Indus PayWear', a tokenizable wearable for debit and credit cards. It allows users to make contactless payments by tapping their wearable device against any contactless terminal. The wearable can be locked when not in use and is available in three forms: a watch clasp, a ring, and a mobile sticker.
- The Vadodara Municipal Corporation (VMC) in Gujarat, India, has issued Asia's first certified green municipal bond. The bond raised 1 billion rupees (approximately \$12.07 million) at a semi-annual coupon rate of 7.90%. The bonds are rated AA+ by India Ratings and have received a green security certificate from the Climate Bond Initiative. SBI



Capital Markets and Tipsons Consultancy Services arranged the bond issue.

- **Union Minister Dr. Mansukh Mandaviya launched a credit assistance program for Jan Aushadhi Kendras on 12th March 2024. The program, in collaboration with the Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI), offers project loans up to Rs. 2 lakhs at affordable interest rates for small entrepreneurs of Jan Aushadhi Kendras. The initiative aims to strengthen and modernise the network of Jan Aushadhi Kendras across the country.**
- **The Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI) secured its first project, the Avaana Sustainability Fund (ASF), valued at USD 120 million from the Green Climate Fund (GCF) on March 5, 2024. The project aims to invest in early-stage companies for climate solutions and sustainability in India.**
- **Future Generali launched a unique health insurance plan for women called 'Health PowHER' on March 7, 2024. This plan offers comprehensive coverage for women-specific health issues, wellness programs, nutritional advice, and more. It also provides 24/7 support and has affordable premiums.**

## APPOINTMENTS

Name of the Person	Designation
Anand Singhi	Member of Chief – Retail and Government Business
IPS officer Anurag Agarwal	Head of Parliament security
Ajay Kanwal	Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of Jana Small Finance Bank.
S Ravindran	Part-time chairman of Tamilnad Mercantile Bank
Sub-Inspector Suman Kumari	First woman sniper of the Border Security Force (BSF)
Brajesh Mehrotra	Chief Secretary of Bihar
Rajendra Prasad Goyal	Chairman and Managing Director of NHPC Limited
Mr. B K Divakara	Whole-time Director (Executive Director) of CSB Bank
Mian Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif	Pakistan's Prime Minister for a second term
Tamás Sulyok, a Hungarian lawyer	President of Hungary
Manish Prasad	President and Managing Director for the Indian Subcontinent

Alok Rungta	Managing Director & CEO of Future Generali India Life Insurance
Devendra Jhajharia	President of the Paralympic Committee of India (PCI)
Sardar Ramesh Singh Arora	Member of the Provincial Assembly of the Punjab
Gustavo Adrianzen	Prime Minister of Peru
Shri Kishor Makwana	Chairman of the National Commission for Scheduled Castes
Dhanaraj T	Executive Director of the Indian Overseas Bank
Nayab Singh Saini	11th Chief Minister of Haryana
Deepak Ballani	Director General of the Indian Sugar & Bio-energy Manufacturers Association
Justice Satyendra Kumar	Lokayukta of Madhya Pradesh
Gyanesh Kumar and Sukhbir Singh Sandhu	Election Commissioners
Rahul Singh	Chairperson of the Central Board of Secondary Education
Mohammad Mustafa	Prime Minister of the Palestinian Authority
Shri B. Sairam	Chairman & Managing Director (CMD) of Northern Coalfields Limited (NCL)
Arvind Kapil	CEO of Poonawalla Fincorp
Navneet Kumar Sehgal	Chairman of Prasar Bharati
Jaideep Hansraj	Group President of 'One Kotak' by Kotak Mahindra Bank
Mr. Ashwani Kumar	President of the Federation of Indian Export Organisations
Vinay Kumar	Ambassador of India to the Russian Federation
Kumar Venkatasubramanian	CEO for P&G India
Vaughan Gething	First Minister of Wales
Prabowo Subianto	President of Indonesia
Girija Subramanian	Chairman and Managing Director of the New India Assurance Company
Mariam Mammen Mathew	Chairperson of the Digital News Publishers' Association (DNPA)
Govind Dholakia	Chairman of the Surat Diamond Bourse
IPS officer Sanjay Mukherjee	Director General of Police of West Bengal
M V Rao	Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer
Justice Ajay Manikrao Khanwilkar	Chairperson of Lokpal of India
Lingappa Narayana Swamy, Sanjay	Judicial Member of Lokpal of India

Yadav, Sushil Chandra, Ritu Raj Awasthi, Pankaj Kumar	
Mary Kom	Chef de Mission for the Indian contingent
Luís Montenegro	Prime Minister of Portugal
Bhupesh Sushil Rahul	Chairman and Managing Director of United India Insurance Company Limited
Hansha Mishra	Director in the UPSC
Sadanand Vasant	Director General of the National Investigation Agency
Rajeev Kumar Sharma	Director General of the Bureau of Police Research & Development
Bassirou Diomaye Faye	President of Senegal
Nidhu Saxena	Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer
Kamal Kishore	Special Representative for Disaster Risk Reduction at (UNDRR)
PR Sreejesh and Chile's Camila Caram	co-chairs of the FIH Athletes Committee
Justice Mohammad Yousuf Wani	Additional Judge of the High Court of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh
Arnab Banerjee, CEO of CEAT Ltd	Chairman of the Automotive Tyre Manufacturers' Association
Pavan Davuluri	To lead the company's Windows and Surface teams
Moushumi Basu	President of the Jawaharlal Nehru University Teachers Association
Joyshree Das Verma	41st National President of the FICCI Ladies Organisation

## INDEX AND RANKING

### INDIA RANKS 113 IN THE WORLD BANK'S WOMEN, BUSINESS, AND THE LAW 2024 INDEX

- Here are **some key points from the report**:
  - For **the first time**, **WBL assesses the gap between legal reforms and actual outcomes** for women in 190 economies.
  - The index shows that **in India, women enjoy 60% of the legal rights granted to men, which is lower than the global average of 64.2%**.
  - Despite challenges, India outperforms its South Asian counterparts, where women enjoy 45.9% of the legal protections provided to men.**
  - The **WBL 2024 report presents two sets of data**: WBL 1.0 and an expanded version, WBL 2.01. **WBL 1.0 updates its index of 8 indicators such as**

Monthly One Liner GK Digest March 2024

- Mobility, Workplace, Pay, Marriage, Parenthood, Entrepreneurship, Assets, and Pension.**
- WBL 2.0 presents a new framework for measuring the implementation gap.**

### INDIA RANKED 134TH IN GLOBAL HUMAN DEVELOPMENT INDEX: HUMAN DEVELOPMENT REPORT 2023/24

- The Human Development Index (HDI), **compiled and released by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)**, is a measure of a country's overall achievement in its social and economic dimensions.
- The HDI for 2023/24 ranked India at 134th out of 193 countries worldwide, with an HDI value of **0.644**, indicating significant improvement.
- The report highlighted that life expectancy in India rose to **67.7 years**, expected years of schooling reached **12.6**, and mean years of schooling increased to **6.57**. Additionally, Gross National Income (GNI) per capita rose to **\$6,951**.
- India's progress in reducing gender inequality was also noted**, with a Gender Inequality Index value of **0.437** in 2022, better than the global average of **0.462** and the South Asian average of **0.478**.
- The **top five countries in the HDI were Switzerland, Norway, Iceland, Hong Kong, and Australia.**

### IN HURUN RESEARCH'S LIST, MUMBAI HAS EMERGED AS ASIA'S NEW BILLIONAIRE HUB, OVERTAKING BEIJING

- Here are **some key findings from the report**:
  - The **total wealth of these billionaires has grown by 9%**, reaching a staggering **US\$15 trillion**.
  - The **USA added 109 billionaires to a total of 800**, while **China, despite a decrease of 155 billionaires, still leads with 814**.
  - India is third with 271 billionaires, up by 84**, marking the second-highest rise after the USA.
  - The **UK overtook Germany to the fourth spot with 146 billionaires**.
  - Elon Musk is the richest person in the world for the third time in 4 years**, with a net worth of **US\$231 billion**.

## AWARDS AND HONOURS

Name of the Person	Designation
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Anand Singhi	Member of Chief – Retail and Government Business
IPS officer Anurag Agarwal	Head of Parliament security
Ajay Kanwal	Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of Jana Small Finance Bank.
S Ravindran	Part-time chairman of Tamilnad Mercantile Bank
Sub-Inspector Suman Kumari	First woman sniper of the Border Security Force (BSF)
Brajesh Mehrotra	Chief Secretary of Bihar
Rajendra Prasad Goyal	Chairman and Managing Director of NHPC Limited
Mr. B K Divakara	Whole-time Director (Executive Director) of CSB Bank
Mian Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif	Pakistan's Prime Minister for a second term
Tamás Sulyok, a Hungarian lawyer	President of Hungary
Manish Prasad	President and Managing Director for the Indian Subcontinent
Alok Rungta	Managing Director & CEO of Future Generali India Life Insurance
Devendra Jhajharia	President of the Paralympic Committee of India (PCI)
Sardar Ramesh Singh Arora	Member of the Provincial Assembly of the Punjab
Gustavo Adrianzen	Prime Minister of Peru
Shri Kishor Makwana	Chairman of the National Commission for Scheduled Castes
Dhanaraj T	Executive Director of the Indian Overseas Bank
Nayab Singh Saini	11th Chief Minister of Haryana
Deepak Ballani	Director General of the Indian Sugar & Bio-energy Manufacturers Association
Justice Satyendra Kumar	Lokayukta of Madhya Pradesh
Gyanesh Kumar and Sukhbir Singh Sandhu	Election Commissioners
Rahul Singh	Chairperson of the Central Board of Secondary Education
Mohammad Mustafa	Prime Minister of the Palestinian Authority
Shri B. Sairam	Chairman & Managing Director (CMD) of Northern Coalfields Limited (NCL)
Arvind Kapil	CEO of Poonawalla Fincorp
Navneet Kumar Sehgal	Chairman of Prasar Bharati
Jaideep Hansraj	Group President of 'One Kotak' by Kotak Mahindra Bank

Mr. Ashwani Kumar	President of the Federation of Indian Export Organisations
Vinay Kumar	Ambassador of India to the Russian Federation
Kumar Venkatasubramanian	CEO for P&G India
Vaughan Gething	First Minister of Wales
Prabowo Subianto	President of Indonesia
Girija Subramanian	Chairman and Managing Director of the New India Assurance Company
Mariam Mammen Mathew	Chairperson of the Digital News Publishers' Association (DNPA)
Govind Dholakia	Chairman of the Surat Diamond Bourse
IPS officer Sanjay Mukherjee	Director General of Police of West Bengal
M V Rao	Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer
Justice Ajay Manikrao Khanwilkar	Chairperson of Lokpal of India
Lingappa Narayana Swamy, Sanjay Yadav, Sushil Chandra, Ritu Raj Awasthi, Pankaj Kumar	Judicial Member of Lokpal of India
Mary Kom	Chef de Mission for the Indian contingent
Luís Montenegro	Prime Minister of Portugal
Bhupesh Sushil Rahul	Chairman and Managing Director of United India Insurance Company Limited
Hansha Mishra	Director in the UPSC
Sadanand Vasant	Director General of the National Investigation Agency
Rajeev Kumar Sharma	Director General of the Bureau of Police Research & Development
Bassirou Diomaye Faye	President of Senegal
Nidhu Saxena	Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer
Kamal Kishore	Special Representative for Disaster Risk Reduction at (UNDRR)
PR Sreejesh and Chile's Camila Caram	co-chairs of the FIH Athletes Committee
Justice Mohammad Yousuf Wani	Additional Judge of the High Court of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh
Arnab Banerjee, CEO of CEAT Ltd	Chairman of the Automotive Tyre Manufacturers' Association
Pavan Davuluri	To lead the company's Windows and Surface teams
Moushumi Basu	President of the Jawaharlal Nehru University Teachers Association

Joyshree Das Verma	41st National President of the FICCI Ladies Organisation
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**IMPORTANT DAYS**

Date	Day	Theme
1st March 2024	World Civil Defence Day	Theme: "Honouring Heroes and Promoting Safety Skills"
1st March 2024	World Compliment Day	Theme: "Spread Kindness and Appreciation."
1st March 2024	Self-Injury Awareness Day	Theme:-
1st March 2024	Zero Discrimination Day	Theme: "To protect everyone's health, protect everyone's rights".
1st March 2024	48th Civil Accounts Day	Theme: "Improving Service Delivery Through End-to-End Digitalization for Secure and Efficient Financial Management."
1st March 2024	World Seagrass Day	Theme: "Healthy Seagrass, Healthy Planet"
1st March 2024	22nd Foundation Day	Theme: "Energy Transition through Electrification and Decarbonization in India"
3rd March 2024	World Wildlife Day	Theme: "Connecting People and Planet: Exploring Digital Innovation in Wildlife Conservation".
3rd March 2024	World Hearing Day	Theme: "Changing mindsets: Let's make ear and hearing care a reality for all!".
4th March 2024	National Security Day	Theme: "Focus on Safety Leadership for ESG Excellence" to emphasize the importance of safety leadership."
4th March 2024	World Day of Fight Against Sexual Exploitation	Theme:-
4th March 2024	National Safety Day	Theme: "Safety Leadership for ESG Excellence".
4th March 2024	National Grammar Day	Theme: "March forth on March 4 to speak well, write well, and help others do the same!"
4th March 2024	World Obesity Day	Theme: 'Obesity & Youth: Young people catalyzing change'

5th March 2024	International Day for Disarmament and Non-Proliferation Awareness	Theme:-
7th March 2024	Generic Medicine Day	Theme:
8th March 2024	International Women's Day	Theme: 'Inspire Inclusion'
10th March 2024	(CISF) Raising Day	Theme:-
10th March 2024	International Day of Women Judges	Theme: "Empathy and Action: Women and girls in carceral settings"
12th March 2024	Ramakrishna Jayanti	Theme:-
12th March 2024	Mauritius Day	Theme:-
11th-17th March 2024	World Rotaract Day	Theme: Celebrating Rotaract".
13th March 2024	No Smoking Day	Theme: 'Protecting children from tobacco industry interference'.
14th March 2024	International Day of Action for Rivers	Theme: "Water for All"
14th March 2024	Pi Day	Theme: "Engineering Solutions for a Sustainable World".
14th March 2024	World Kidney Day	Theme: "Kidney Health for All – Advancing Equitable Access to Care and Optimal Medication Practice".
15th March 2024	World Consumer Rights Day	Theme: 'Fair and Responsible AI for Consumers'.
15th March 2024	International Day to Combat Islamophobia	Theme:-
16th March 2024	National Vaccination Day	Theme: 'Vaccines Work For All'.
18th March 2024	Global Recycling Day	Theme: "#RecyclingHeroes".
18th March 2024	Ordnance Factories Day	Theme: "Operational Efficiency, Readiness, and

		Mission Accomplishment in the Maritime Domain".
20th March 2024	International Day of Happiness	Theme: "Reconnecting for Happiness: Building Resilient Communities".
20th March 2024	World Oral Health Day	Theme: "A HAPPY MOUTH IS... A HAPPY BODY,"
20th March 2024	World Sparrow Day	Theme: "I Love Sparrows".
20th March 2024	(UN) French Language Day	Theme: "Create, innovate, undertake in French."
20th March 2024	World Day of Theatre for Children and Young People	Theme:-
21st March 2024	World Poetry Day	Theme: To promote the reading, writing, publishing, and teaching of poetry
21st March 2024	World Down Syndrome Day	Theme: "End The Stereotypes".
21st March 2024	International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination	Theme: "A Decade of Recognition, Justice, and Development: Implementation of the International Decade for People of African Descent".
21st March 2024	International Day of Nowruz	Theme:
21st March 2024	World Puppetry Day	Theme: "The Climate"
21st March 2024	World Forestry Day	Theme: 'Forests and Innovation: New Solutions for a Better World'.
22nd March 2024	Bihar Diwas	Theme:-
22nd March 2024	World Water Day	Theme: "Leveraging Water for Peace".
23rd March 2024	Martyr's Day	Theme:-
23rd March 2024	World Meteorological Day	Theme: At the frontline of climate action".
23rd March 2024	Earth Hour 2024	Theme: "Biggest Hour for Earth".

24th March 2024	International Day for the Right to the Truth Concerning Gross Human Rights Violations and for the Dignity of Victims	Theme:-
24th March 2024	World Tuberculosis Day	Theme: "Yes! We can end TB!".
25th March 2024	International Day of the Unborn Child	Theme: "Honouring the Unborn".
25th March 2024	International Day of Solidarity with Detained and Missing Staff Members	Theme:
25th March 2024	International Day of Remembrance of the Victims of Slavery and the Transatlantic Slave Trade	Theme: "Stories of Courage: Resistance to Slavery and Unity against Racism"
26th March 2024	Purple Day	Theme: symbolizes hope and courage for those living with this neurological disorder.
27th March 2024	World Theatre Day	Theme: 'Theatre and a Culture of Peace', and the message, 'Art is Peace'
28th March 2024	World Piano Day	Theme: Celebrating the marriage of tradition and innovation in piano music
29th March 2024	Good Friday	Theme:-
30th March 2024	Rajasthan Day	Theme:-
30th March 2024	International Day of Zero Waste	Theme: "Towards a Circular Future"
31st March 2024	Eiffel Tower Day	Theme:-
31st March 2024	International Transgender Day of Visibility	Theme:- "Trans Love Letters".

**MOUS SIGNED**

Signed Between	Date Signed	Purpose
C-DOT & Qualcomm	1st March 2024	To foster innovation in India

		by supporting developers and startups working on innovative products and use cases.
MOD & BEML Limited	4th March 2024	To develop an indigenous Advanced Fuelling and Control System for Engines for heavy-duty applications.
(NPCI) and (IISc)	6th March 2024	To conduct joint research on Blockchain and Artificial Intelligence (AI) technology.
(RBI) and (BI)	7th March 2024	To promote the use of INR and IDR bilaterally.
Nagaland's DoIc with YES Bank & Sellmetric Pvt Ltd	7th March 2024	To Utilize ONDC platform
(NHAI) and HLL Lifecare Limited	8th March 2024	To strengthen the Incident Management System on the National Highways and provide immediate assistance to accident victims.
REC Limited with the Government of Rajasthan	10th March 2024	Provide loans of up to Rs 20,000 crores annually for the next six years for various power and non-power infrastructure projects in Rajasthan.
Easy Trip Planners & Ministry of Rural Development	11th March 2024	To foster entrepreneurial skills and financial independence among rural women.
NIELIT and ITI of Egypt	12th March 2024	At fostering mutual collaboration in the Information, Electronics, and Communication

		Technology (IECT) domain.
(MoRD) and (IIT)	12th March 2024	To use geospatial technology and artificial intelligence for monitoring and managing assets under (MGNREGA)
USOF, Prasar Bharati & ONDC	12th March 2024	To synergize connectivity, content, and commerce to empower rural India.
(MHI) and IIT Roorkee	13th March 2024	To establish a Centre of Excellence and an Industry Accelerator at IIT Roorkee.
India and Singapore	14th March 2024	To enhance cooperation in areas like international commercial dispute resolution and promotion of alternative dispute resolution mechanisms.
(DoF&PD) and (NIESBUD)	14th March 2024	To address skill development challenges faced by FPS dealers in digital literacy, financial literacy, and entrepreneurial skills.
(DoF&PD) and (SIDBI)	15th March 2024	To provide working capital assistance to Fair Price Shops (FPSs) through its GST Sahay application.
(RECPDCL) and (BHEL)	15th March 2024	To jointly develop utility-scale Renewable Energy Projects across India through a dedicated Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV).
(MoRD) with (BFIL)	15th March 2024	To enhance the livelihood

		interventions of the Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana-National Rural Livelihoods Mission
MSRTC with M/s Kings Gas	16th March 2024	For the conversion of buses to LNG in Mumbai.
NCW and RPF	19th March 2024	To enhance the capabilities of RPF personnel, enabling them to serve as an additional layer of defense against human trafficking.
(CSIR-NIIST) and (VSSC)	19th March 2024	To develop advanced materials for space missions, including high-performance composites, ceramics, and coatings.
(NCC) and (NPCIL)	21st March 2024	To raise awareness about the peaceful use of nuclear power through various programs across India.
CAG with IIT Delhi	20th March 2024	To leverage Artificial Intelligence (AI) and other emerging technologies to advance audit practices.
Starburst Accelerator & IIT Madras	25th March 2024	To boost the Aviation, Space, and Defence (ASD) ecosystem in India by creating venture capital funds for ASD technology.
CII and ETS India	26th March 2024	To enhance the global employability of India's workforce by improving English language proficiency and essential 21st-century skills.

Tejas Networks, an Indian telecom company, and Telecom Egypt	26th March 2024	To implement telecom projects in Egypt, build local capacity, establish manufacturing and R&D facilities for FTTH products, and set up technical support services.
NPTI & PTC India Ltd	28th March 2024	To establish a Centre of Excellence (CoE) for Research & Development in the Energy Domain.
(SIA-India) and ABRASAT, the Brazilian Satellite Communications Association	28th March 2024	To boost advancements in the space sector. This strategic partnership paves the way for innovative ventures and technological cooperation between India and Brazil.

## GOVERNMENT SCHEMES

### JHARKHAND CM LAUNCHES WIDOW REMARRIAGE SCHEME

- Under this scheme, **women who choose to remarry after the death of their husbands will receive an incentive of Rs. 2 lakh from the government.**
- The scheme **aims to empower women who find themselves alone and helpless after the death of their life partners.**
- **By providing financial assistance and support, the scheme hopes to help these women and challenge societal norms and perceptions surrounding the remarriage of widows.**
- **To be eligible for the scheme, the beneficiary must meet certain criteria:**
  - The **woman should be of marriageable age.**
  - The woman **should not be a government employee, pensioner, or income tax payer.**
  - The application for the incentive must be submitted within one year from the date of remarriage.

- The **death certificate of the late husband must be provided.**
- During the launch event, Chief Minister Champai Soren **distributed a total of Rs. 14 lakh among seven beneficiaries of the scheme.**
- This **initiative sets a precedent for other states to follow in their efforts to uplift and support women in need.**

#### UP CM YOGI LAUNCHED MYUVA PROGRAM TO NURTURE YOUTH ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN UP

- This initiative is **aimed at nurturing entrepreneurship among the youth in Uttar Pradesh.**
- The **MYUVA scheme is designed to empower young entrepreneurs by providing them with interest-free loans** and support for their entrepreneurial ventures.
- The government has **allocated a budget of Rs 1,000 crore for the upcoming fiscal year to support this initiative.**
- Under this scheme, the Yogi **government aims to prepare one lakh young entrepreneurs every year by providing interest-free loans for projects of up to Rs 5 lakh.**
- The goal is to directly **benefit one million units (10 lakh units) over the next 10 years by financing 1,00,000 units annually.**
- This innovative scheme is designed **to empower educated and skilled youth across the state, facilitating self-employment opportunities and fostering the establishment of new Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs).**

#### RODTEP SCHEME BENEFITS EXTENDED TO EOUS, SEZ UNITS, AND AA HOLDERS

- This move is **aimed at supporting exporters amid global economic uncertainties and supply chain disruptions.**
- The **key highlights of this extension are:**
  - **Amendments in Eligibility and Scheme Provisions:** Certain items/categories previously ineligible under the RoDTEP scheme have been made eligible with effect from March 11, 2024.
  - **Extension and Implementation Dates:** The scheme is now extended to include AA holders (excluding Deemed Exports), EOU, and SEZ units, with specific

implementation periods and conditions outlined for each group.

- **Budgetary and Rate Adjustments:** Adjustments, including revisions or deletions, may be made to ensure the scheme's outgo remains within the approved budget.
- **Extension of the RoDTEP Scheme:** The notification also extends the overall duration of the RoDTEP scheme beyond the previously set deadline of June 30, 2024, to now continue until September 30, 2024.
- This decision **reflects the government's commitment to promoting exports by providing necessary incentives and rebates on exported products, thus facilitating the overall growth of India's export sector.**
- The extension of **RoDTEP benefits to SEZs, EOUs, and AA holders is expected to provide significant relief to key export sectors, including engineering, textiles, chemicals, pharmaceuticals, and food processing.**

#### THE 'ONE STATION ONE PRODUCT' (OSOP) IS A SCHEME LAUNCHED BY THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA

- Under this scheme, **stalls are set up at railway stations to showcase and sell local/indigenous products.**
- As of **May 1, 2023, 728 stations were covered with 785 OSOP outlets in 21 States and 3 Union Territories across the country.**
- Recently, on March 12, 2024, **Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the OSOP stalls at 205 railway stations across Southern Railway, including 168 in Tamil Nadu, through video conferencing.**

#### DEPARTMENT OF PHARMACEUTICALS LAUNCHES RPTUAS SCHEME

- This scheme is a **significant step in the government's efforts to upgrade the technological capabilities of the pharmaceutical industry and align it with global standards.**
- Here are some key features of the revised scheme:
  - **Broadened Eligibility Criteria:** The eligibility for the PTUAS has been expanded beyond Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises to include any pharmaceutical manufacturing unit with a turnover of less than 500 crores that requires technology and quality upgradation.



- **Flexible Financing Options:** The scheme introduces more flexible financing options, emphasizing subsidies on a reimbursement basis, over the traditional credit-linked approach.
- **Comprehensive Support for Compliance with New Standards:** The scheme now supports a broader range of technological upgrades.
- **Dynamic Incentive Structure:** Pharmaceutical units with a certain average turnover for the last three years will be eligible for incentive subject to a maximum of Rs. 1.00 crore per unit.
- **State Government Scheme Integration:** The revised scheme allows integration with state government schemes, enabling units to benefit from additional top-up assistance.
- **Enhanced Verification Mechanism:** The scheme introduces a robust verification mechanism through a Project Management Agency.
- This scheme is expected to **contribute to industry growth and compliance with global manufacturing standards.**

#### CHHATTISGARH'S KRISHAK UNNATI YOJNA FOR PADDY CULTIVATORS LAUNCHED BY CM VISHNU DEO SAI

- This scheme is **designed to provide input assistance to farmers, primarily paddy cultivators.**
- Under this initiative, **the difference between the Minimum Support Price (MSP) and Rs 3100 per quintal from the price of paddy is being provided to farmers.**
- In the recently **concluded paddy procurement for the Kharif season, which took place between November 1 and February 4, around 145 lakh metric tonnes of paddy was procured from more than 24 lakh farmers at the MSP.**
- The **MSP for common grade paddy was Rs 2,183 per quintal, and Rs 2,203 for Grade A paddy.**
- The **difference amount over the MSP was given to farmers as input assistance at Rs 917 per quintal paddy under the Krishak Unnati Yojana.**
- The **Chhattisgarh government has transferred a sum of Rs 13,320 crore to farmers' bank accounts, benefitting over 24.75 lakh farmers.**
- **More than 24.72 lakh farmers who sold paddy this year will receive a difference amount of Rs 13,289 crore.**

- Additionally, over **2,829 paddy seed producers will also receive a difference amount of over Rs 31 crore through the Seed Corporation.**

#### SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

##### “CORE LOADING” HAS COMMENCED AT THE KALPAKKAM NUCLEAR POWER PLANT

- The **Prototype Fast Breeder Reactor (PFBR) has been fully designed and constructed indigenously by Bhartiya Nabhikiya Vidyut Nigam Ltd (BHAVINI) with significant contributions from more than 200 Indian industries.**
- Once commissioned, **India will be the second country after Russia to have a commercial operating Fast Breeder Reactor.**
- The **Fast Breeder Reactor (FBR) will initially use the Uranium-Plutonium Mixed Oxide (MOX) fuel.**
- The **Uranium-238 “blanket” surrounding the fuel core will undergo nuclear transmutation to produce more fuel, thus earning the name ‘Breeder’.**
- **By transmutation, Thorium will create fissile Uranium-233 which will be used as fuel in the third stage.**
- **It also offers a great advantage in terms of significant reduction in nuclear waste generated, thereby avoiding the need for large geological disposal facilities.**

##### SPACEX'S FALCON9 LAUNCHES METHANESAT TO TRACK METHANE EMISSIONS GLOBALLY

- It will **collect data about methane leaks from 300 targets worldwide while circling Earth 15 times a day from its orbit 360 miles (580 kilometers) above ground.**
- The MethaneSAT is the **first satellite by a nonprofit environmental group, the Environmental Defense Fund (EDF), which built and is operating the satellite.**
- The satellite will **help policymakers independently verify industry reports by pinpointing hotspots of methane, a potent greenhouse gas.**
- **Google will provide the MethaneSAT team with cloud computing services to process the satellite's data.**

- The **first images from the satellite are expected in early summer** and will be made publicly available later this year.

### SCIENTISTS HAVE DISCOVERED A 'GIANT' VOLCANO ON MARS

- This **gigantic volcano stands at approximately 29,600 feet tall and stretches 450 kilometers wide.**
- The **volcano is located in the eastern part of Mars' Tharsis volcanic province near the planet's equator.**
- The discovery is significant as it **points to an exciting new location to study Mars' geologic evolution through time, search for life, and explore with robots and humans in the future.**
- The **volcano's gigantic size and complex modification history indicate that it has been active** for a very long time.
- Interestingly, the **volcano had been hiding in plain sight for decades in one of Mars' most iconic regions, at the boundary between the heavily fractured maze-like Noctis Labyrinthus and the monumental canyons of Valles Marineris.**

### INSIGHTS INTO THE HISTORY OF THE MILKY WAY REVEALED BY THE GAIA TELESCOPE

- Here are some key insights:
- Gaia has **discovered two ancient streams of stars, named Shakti and Shiva,** that helped form our galaxy more than 12 billion years ago.
- Each stream **contains the mass of about 10 million Suns, with stars of 12 to 13 billion years** in age all moving in very similar orbits with similar compositions.
- The stars in **these streams are so ancient that they lack many of the heavier metal elements** created later in the Universe's lifetime.
- The **discovery of these streams has provided unprecedented insights into the early growth of the Milky Way.**
- *These findings highlight the importance of Gaia's mission in unraveling the intricacies of our galaxy and its formation.*

### ZERO ORBITAL DEBRIS MISSION ACCOMPLISHED BY ISRO'S POEM-3 MISSION

Monthly One Liner GK Digest March 2024

- This mission has practically left zero debris in orbit.
- The **POEM-3 was used as an orbital experimental module for ISRO's X-ray Polarimeter Satellite (XPoSAT) mission.**
- This was the **third time PSLV's spent fourth stage (PS4) was used as an orbital experimental module.**
- As a **stabilised platform, the PS4 stage orbited the Earth.**
- **ISRO, being a responsible space agency, is committed to mitigating the threat of space debris through the development and implementation of advanced debris tracking systems and space-object deorbiting.**

### SKYROOT AEROSPACE SUCCESSFULLY TEST-FIRED KALAM 250, STAGE 2 OF VIKRAM-1

- Here are **some key details about the test:**
  - The test was **conducted at the Indian Space Research Organisation's (ISRO) Satish Dhawan Space Centre (SDSC) in Sriharikota** on March 27, 2024.
  - The **test lasted 85 seconds and achieved a peak sea-level thrust of 186 kilonewtons (kN),** expected to reach around 235kN in the vacuum of space.
  - The **Kalam-250 stage is constructed from high-strength carbon composite materials and runs on solid fuel alongside** an advanced Ethylene-Propylene-Diene terpolymers (EPDM) thermal protection system.
  - It **features a carbon ablative flex nozzle and high-precision electro-mechanical actuators for thrust vector control,** ensuring the rocket maintains its intended trajectory.
  - With this successful test, **Skyroot is hopeful of conducting the maiden launch of Vikram-I by the third quarter of 2024.**

### SPORTS

#### SATWIKSAIRAJ RANKIREDDY AND CHIRAG SHETTY WIN DOUBLES TITLE AT FRENCH OPEN BADMINTON TOURNAMENT

- They won **the men's doubles final against Chinese Taipei's Lee Jhe-Huei and Yang Po-Hsuan.**
- The match **ended with a scoreline of 21-11, 21-17 in 36 minutes.**

- This is their **second French Open title, with their first win in 2022.**
- They also **reached the summit clash for the third time in 2023.**
- **This victory marks their eighth title on the BWF World Tour.**

#### THE 4TH KHELO INDIA UNIVERSITY GAMES (KIUG) 2023 CONCLUDED IN GUWAHATI

- Here are some highlights from the event:
  - **Chandigarh University clinched the overall championships of KIUG 2023**, for the first time in four editions, with a total of 71 medals, including 32 gold, 18 silver, and 21 bronze.
  - **Boxers of Chandigarh University sealed the top spot in the medal tally as they added five gold, one silver, and four bronze medals.**
  - **Lovely Professional University was a distant second with 20 gold, 14 silver, and eight bronze while Guru Nanak Dev University finished third with 12 gold, 20 silver, and 19 bronze.**
  - **Defending champions Panjab University came up with a late surge winning five gold, two silver, and three bronze medals from the boxing competitions** to finish fourth with a tally of 12 gold, 12 silver, and 16 bronze.
  - **Second edition champions Jain University, which led the chart for the first few days, thanks to their domination of the swimming races, finished fifth with a total of 12 gold, seven silver, and six bronze medals.**
- The **games were held at the I.G. Athletic Stadium Sarusajai in Guwahati, Assam.**
- The event **saw five new Games records set in athletics.**

#### SPORTS- ONE LINER

- **Cristiano Ronaldo** became the **highest goal scorer with headers in football** he scored the second goal for **Al Nassr against US Monastir in a King Salman Club Cup game** at the King Fahd International Stadium in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia,
- **Iga Swiatek** is currently ranked as the World No. 1 in women's singles by the Women's Tennis Association (WTA).
- The **Indian women's hockey team** achieved a momentous victory in the prestigious **Torneo del**

**Centenario** 2023 tournament held in Terrassa, Barcelona.

- **Commonwealth Games bronze medallists Treesa Jolly and Gayatri Gopichand** progressed to the second round of the Australia Open Super 500 badminton tournament with a straight game win over Canada's Catherine Choi and Josephine Wu.
- **Ace Indian players Kidambi Srikanth and PV Sindhu** have progressed into the Singles quarter-finals of the Australian Open on August 3rd.
- The **7th Men's Asian Champions Trophy is set to begin in Chennai, Tamil Nadu at the Mayor Radhakrishnan Stadium.**
- **Olympic badminton champion Viktor Axelsen** added the Japan Open 2023 title to his haul, beating Indonesian star Jonatan Christie in the men's singles final.
- The **Indian men's hockey team** beat the People's Republic of China 7-2 in its opening match of the **Asian Champions.**
- **Jyothi Yarraji**, a star Indian athlete, achieved a remarkable feat at the World University Games in Chengdu by smashing her own national record in the women's 100m hurdles and winning a bronze medal.
- **Gukesh** overtook India's chess pioneer **Viswanathan Anand** in the live ratings, ranking ninth, ahead of Anand at 10.
- **Prarthana Thombare**, in partnership with Anastasia Tikhonova, defeated Estelle Cascino and Diana Marcinkevica 3-6, 6-1, [10-7] in the doubles final of the \$60,000 ITF women's tennis tournament in Barcelona
- The world No. 1 men's doubles pairing of **Pramod Bhagat and Sukant Kadam** won a gold medal in the SL3-SL4 category at the Four Nations Para-Badminton International in Sheffield, England.
- The Indian under-31 bridge team won a bronze medal in the **18th World Youth Teams Bridge Championships** held in **Veldhoven, the Netherlands.**
- India ended its **World University Games (WUG) campaign** on Tuesday with its best-ever performance, winning a record haul of 26 medals, including 11 gold.
- **Kuldeep Yadav, the Indian leg spinner**, has become the fastest Indian bowler to complete 50 wickets in T20 Internationals.
- **Arjun Erigaisi joined Vidit Gujrathi** in the pre-quarterfinals after Koneru Humpy bounced back

with a resolute victory to stay alive in the race of women's quarterfinals in the FIDE World Cup in Baku, Azerbaijan

- **India beat Malaysia 4-3 to win the Asian Champions Trophy 2023.** India thrashed Japan 5-0 in the last-four clash to set up a title showdown of the Asian Champions Trophy with Malaysia.
- **Lima, Peru** has been reinstated as the host city for the 2024 **World Athletics Under-20 Championships**.
- **Dipa Karmakar**, the Indian gymnast who achieved a historic fourth-place finish at the 2016 Rio Olympics, has been excluded from the Indian squad for the upcoming Hangzhou Asian Games.
- **Four Indian chess players** have entered the quarterfinals of the **FIDE World Cup 2023**. They are **Gukesh D, Arjun Erigaisi, R Praggnanandhaa, and Vidit Gujrathi**.
- **Aditi Swami**, a 17-year-old Indian archer, won the senior world championship in the compound women's category at the **World Archery Championships**.
- The new **Chennai Formula Racing Circuit** has been launched and is set to host India's first-ever night street race later this year.
- The Indian men's and women's compound archery teams both made their way into the finals of the ongoing **2023 Archery World Cup Stage 4 in Paris**.
- **Indian Grandmaster R Praggnanandhaa** defeated compatriot **Arjun Erigaisi** 5-4 via the sudden death tie-break to enter the semifinals of the FIDE World Cup chess tournament in Baku on Thursday (August 17).
- **Indian wrestler Priya Malik** won the gold medal in the women's 76kg category at the 2023 U20 World Wrestling Championships in Jordan.
- The Indian men's 10m air pistol team, comprising **Shiva Narwal, Sarabjot Singh, and Arjun Singh Cheema**, won a **bronze medal at the ISSF World Championship 2023** in Baku, Azerbaijan.
- **Akhil Sheoran** secured a **Paris 2024 Olympics quota** and **won a bronze medal at the ISSF World Championships** in Baku, Azerbaijan. He finished third in the men's rifle 3-position competition with an aggregate of 450.0 in the eight-man final.
- **Indian Grandmaster R. Praggnanandhaa** held the **fancied American player Fabiano Caruana** to a **draw in the first game of their semifinal clash** at the **FIDE World Cup in Baku, Azerbaijan**.

- The Indian junior men's hockey team defeated Spain 6-2 in their opening match at the 4-Nations Tournament in Dusseldorf, Germany.

## DEFENCE

### LSAM 18 (YARD 128): INDIAN NAVY'S 4TH ACTCM BARGE LAUNCHED IN THANE

- This barge was built by MSME Shipyard, M/s Suryadipta Projects Pvt Ltd, Thane for the Indian Navy.
- These barges are designed to facilitate the transportation, embarkation, and disembarkation of ammunition articles to Indian Navy warships, both alongside jetties and at outer harbors.
- They are indigenously designed and built under relevant Naval Rules and Regulation of the Indian Register of Shipping.
- The model testing of the barge during the design stage was undertaken at the Naval Science and Technological Laboratory, Visakhapatnam.
- The contract for building these 11 ACTCM Barges was signed between the Ministry of Defence and M/s Suryadipta Projects Pvt Ltd, Thane on March 5, 2021.
- These barges are a part of the 'Make in India' initiative of the Government of India.

### DRDO CONDUCTS SUCCESSFUL FLIGHT TEST OF VSHORADS MISSILE IN CHANDIPUR, ODISHA

- These tests were carried out on 28th & 29th February 2024 from a ground-based portable launcher off the coast of Odisha from the Integrated Test Range, Chandipur.
- The tests were performed against high-speed unmanned aerial targets under different interception scenarios.
- During all the test flights, the targets were intercepted and destroyed by the missiles, meeting the mission objectives.
- The VSHORADS is a Man Portable Air Defence System (MANPAD) designed and developed indigenously by the Research Centre Imarat (RCI) in collaboration with other DRDO laboratories and Indian Industry Partners.

- The missile incorporates many novel technologies including a miniaturized Reaction Control System (RCS) and integrated avionics which have been successfully proven during the tests.
- The missile is propelled by a dual thrust solid motor and is designed to neutralize low altitude aerial threats at short ranges.

#### DEFENCE MINISTER RAJNATH SINGH LAUNCHES ADITI SCHEME TO PROMOTE DEFENCE INNOVATION

- Here are some key details about the ADITI scheme:
  - The scheme is under the iDEX (Innovations for Defence Excellence) framework of the Department of Defence Production (DDP), Ministry of Defence.
  - It aims to provide start-ups with grants worth up to Rs 25 crore for defence technology research, development, and innovation.
  - The ADITI scheme has a budgetary support of Rs.750 Crore for the period from FY 2023-2024 to FY 2025-2026.
  - It aims to develop about 30 deep-tech critical and strategic technologies in the proposed timeframe.
  - It also envisages creating a 'Technology Watch Tool' to bridge the gap between the expectations and requirements of the modern Armed Forces and the capabilities of the defence innovation ecosystem.

#### IAF'S C-17 AIRCRAFT SUCCESSFULLY AIRDROPS INDIGENOUSLY BUILT PLATFORM

- This platform, developed by the Aerial Delivery Research and Development Establishment (ADRDE), can carry a maximum load of over 22 tonnes.
- This successful trial marks a leap forward in indigenous defence capabilities.
- The combat capabilities of the C-17 aircraft will be further enhanced in its varied missions to air-deliver critical loads to troops on the ground.
- This achievement is a major step towards Atmanirbhar Bharat.

#### DEFENCE MINISTRY AND HAL SIGN AGREEMENTS WORTH ₹8,733 CRORE

- Here are the details:

- **HTT-40 Basic Trainer Aircraft:** A contract for the procurement of 70 HTT-40 Basic Trainer Aircraft from HAL was signed. The HTT-40 is a turbo prop aircraft designed for training newly-inducted pilots. The aircraft is fully aerobatic with a tandem seat, an air-conditioned cockpit, modern avionics, hot re-fueling, running change over, and zero-zero ejection seats. The procurement also includes associated equipment and training aids, including simulators.
- **Advanced Light Helicopters:** Another contract was signed for the acquisition of 34 Advanced Light Helicopters. These helicopters are designed to carry out search and rescue, troop transportation, internal cargo, and casualty evacuation operations.
- These contracts are part of the government's efforts to achieve 'Aatmanirbharta' (self-reliance) in defence.
- The procurement will not only meet the future requirements of the Indian Armed Forces but also has the potential to provide direct and indirect employment to thousands of people spread over more than 100 MSMEs.

#### INDIA, BRAZIL HOLD FIRST '2+2' DEFENCE AND FOREIGN MINISTERIAL DIALOGUE

- The dialogue was co-chaired by officials from both countries.
- They discussed expanding cooperation in various key areas, including energy, critical minerals, technology, and counter-terrorism.
- The '2+2' Defence and Foreign Ministerial Dialogue involves the participation of the defence and foreign ministers of two countries, along with their respective counterparts, to discuss strategic and security-related issues, as well as diplomatic matters.
- This is a significant step in strengthening the bilateral ties between the two nations.

#### DGQA REORGANIZATION BY DEFENCE DEPARTMENT

- This re-organisation is aimed at speeding up Quality Assurance processes and trials and reducing layers of decision-making.
- This major reform is towards 'Ease of Doing Business' and to achieve Aatmanirbharta in Defence.

- The re-organisation also factors change in the **Quality Assurance methodology and revised role of DGQA post corporatization of Ordnance Factory Board.**
- The new structure **under implementation will enable single point technical support for complete equipment/ weapon platform at all levels** and also ensure uniformity in product-based QA.
- The new **structure also provides for a separate Directorate of Defence Testing and Evaluation Promotion to facilitate transparent allocation of Proof Ranges** and testing facilities.

			maritime security.
Third Summit for Democracy	South Korea	Seoul	Theme: 'Democracy for Future Generations'.
Army Commanders' Conference	Indian Army	New Delhi	Focused on critical agendas impacting the field army and veterans' welfare

**ECONOMY- ONE LINER**

- In January 2024, the growth rate of India's eight core industries fell to a 15-month low of **3.6%**. These industries include **Cement, Coal, Crude Oil, Electricity, Fertilizers, Natural Gas, Refinery Products, and Steel**. The performance varied across industries with some like Cement, Coal, and Natural Gas seeing an increase in production, while others like Fertilizers and Refinery Products saw a decline.
- **Gross GST collections rise 12.5% to Rs 1.68 lakh crore in February. A total of 1,68,337 crore rupees gross GST revenue has been collected during February. This marks a robust 12.5 percent increase compared to that in the same month last year.**
- **Moody's has upgraded India's GDP growth projection for 2024 to 6.8% from the earlier estimate of 6.1%. This is due to India's strong economic performance in 2023 and easing global economic challenges. Despite some divergence between the Gross Value Added (GVA) and GDP in Q4 2023, the economy's momentum is expected to continue into Q1 2024. For 2025, the GDP growth is estimated at 6.4%.**
- **According to a CRISIL report, India's economy is projected to grow by 6.8% in FY25, moderated from an estimated 7.6% in FY24. Inflation is expected to fall to 4.5% in FY25. The Indian economy is predicted to near the \$7 trillion milestone by FY31, positioning it as an upper-middle-income country within the next seven years.**
- **India's industrial output growth slowed to 3.8% in January 2024, mainly due to a slowdown in the manufacturing and mining sectors. The manufacturing sector's output grew by 3.2%, down from 4.5% in the same month of the previous year. The eight core industries that contribute around 40% of the Index of Industrial Production (IIP)**

**SUMMITS AND CONFERENCES**

Name of the Summit	Organized/ Led by	Venue	Aim/Theme
9th Annual Shakti International Women Entrepreneurs	India SME Forum and the Ministry of MSME	New Delhi	To inspire and promote entrepreneurship among women by providing a platform for successful women entrepreneurs
13th WTO Ministerial Conference	Department of Economic Development and the Ministry of Economy	Abu Dhabi	To review the functioning of the multilateral trading system, take action on the future work of the WTO, and chart the future course of the WTO.
54th DG-level BGB-BSF Border Conference	BSF and BGB	(BGB) headquarters in Dhaka	To enhance coordination and cooperation between the two forces.
Naval Commanders' Conference	Indian Navy	INS Vikramaditya	Served as a platform for Naval Commanders to deliberate on strategic, operational, and administrative matters concerning

include coal, refinery products, crude oil, natural gas, fertilizers, steel, cement, and electricity.

- India was the world's top arms importer from 2019-23, with a 4.7% increase in imports compared to 2014-18. Russia supplied 36% of these imports. **The Defence Ministry's budget for 2024-25 is ₹6.2 lakh crore, with ₹1.72 lakh crore allocated for new procurements. Efforts are underway to build a strong defence-industrial base in India.**
- **The inflation rate has remained relatively stable. A slight decrease from 5.1% in January to 5.09% in February indicates a marginal deflationary trend. However, this change is very small and it's too early to predict if this will continue. Economists will monitor various factors like monetary policy, supply chain issues, and global economic conditions to forecast future inflation trends.**
- On March 14, 2024, Fitch Ratings, a globally recognized credit rating agency, revised its GDP growth forecast for India for the fiscal year 2025 (FY25). **The new estimate is 7%, up from the previous estimate of 6.5%. This upward revision was primarily driven by robust domestic demand and investment in the Indian economy.**
- **An 11.86% year-over-year increase indicates a strong growth in the country's export sector.** This could be due to various factors such as increased production, improved quality of goods, favorable international market conditions, or effective trade policies. The export value of \$41.4 billion itself is quite substantial, contributing positively to the country's economy.
- **The Finance Ministry of India has imposed an anti-dumping duty on imports of Cast Aluminium Alloy Wheels or Alloy Road Wheels (ARW) from China. This duty is valid for five years and ranges from \$0.23 per kg to \$1.71 per kg. The decision was made to protect domestic industries from unfair trade practices.**
- **As of March 8, 2024, India's foreign exchange reserves have increased to \$636.1 billion USD.** This is a significant rise from the \$617.23 billion USD reported on February 9, 2024. The reserves are composed of foreign currency assets, gold, special drawing rights, and the IMF reserve position.
- **In February 2024, India's goods exports increased by 11.86% YoY to \$41.4 billion. Major contributors were Engineering Goods, Electronic Goods, Organic & Inorganic Chemicals, Drugs & Pharmaceuticals,**

and Petroleum Products. Agricultural products also showed growth. **The overall trade deficit improved by 37.80% from April-February 2022-23 to April-February 2023-24.**

- **The HSBC Flash India Composite Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) rose to an eight-month high of 61.3 in March 2024, led by the strongest manufacturing output in nearly three-and-a-half years.** The growth was attributed to efficiency gains, robust consumer appetite, investment in technology, and favourable market conditions.
- **The insurance sector in India received Rs 54,000 crore as FDI in the last 9 years. This was due to the increase in the permissible FDI limit from 26% in 2014 to 74% in 2021. The number of insurance players increased from 53 to 70 as of January 2024.** Insurance penetration increased from 3.9% in 2013-14 to 4% in 2022-23, while insurance density rose from USD 52 in 2013-14 to USD 92 in 2022-23.
- **The inflation rate in the United Kingdom, as measured by the Consumer Prices Index (CPI), was reported to be 3.4% for the month of February 2024. This marked a decrease from the previous month's rate of 4.0%.** The data was officially released on 20th March 2024. This change in inflation rate is influenced by various factors including the prices of goods and services, and economic policies.
- **The Indian Direct Selling industry grew by 12% in the fiscal year 2022-23, reaching a turnover of Rs 21,282 crore. The wellness and nutraceutical products contributed 73.5% to the turnover. The number of active direct sellers increased to around 86 lakh.** The report was released on March 20, 2024.
- **The Department of Economic Affairs (DEA) in India has projected that the country's growth will be between 6.5% and 7% in FY25. This projection is based on factors like improving global investor confidence in India, declining core inflation, and stable retail inflation.** The report was updated on March 22, 2024.
- **UBS predicts India's GDP growth to be 7% in FY 2024-25, a slight decrease from the estimated 7.6% in the current fiscal year. This is due to weaker global growth and local factors such as a decrease in public capital expenditure.** Despite this, India is likely to remain one of the fastest-growing economies in the world.

- In February 2024, Indian refiners exploited the US sanctions waiver on Venezuela to import more than 1,75,000 barrels per day (b/d) of crude oil from the South American country, making Venezuela the fifth largest supplier to India. This was a significant development in the global oil market.
- India's Current Account Deficit (CAD) for Q3 FY2024 has reduced to 1.2% of GDP, or USD 10.5 billion, due to increased services exports and secondary income. The CAD for April-December 2023 also moderated to 1.2% of GDP, with a lower merchandise trade deficit. Positive foreign direct and portfolio investment inflows kept the Balance of Payments in surplus.
- Morgan Stanley revised India's GDP growth forecast on March 27, 2024. The estimate for FY24-25 was raised to 6.8% from 6.5%. The forecast for FY24 is 7.9%. The revision is due to continued industrial and capex activity. The growth is expected to be broad-based.
- The Combined Index of Eight Core Industries, which is a key indicator of industrial performance in a country, has shown a provisional growth of 6.7% in February 2024. This growth is in comparison to the index of February 2023. The data for this was released on March 28, 2024.
- The Centre's fiscal deficit increased to ₹15.01 lakh crore between April and February of 2024, which is about 86.5% of the full-year revised target of ₹17.34 trillion. The total expenditure incurred was ₹37.47 lakh crore, or 83.4% of the Revised Estimate for 2023-24. The Centre aims to reduce the fiscal deficit to 5.8% of the GDP during FY24.
- The Government e-Marketplace (GeM) doubled its Gross Merchandise Value (GMV) to ₹4 lakh crore at the end of the fiscal year on March 29, 2024. This was achieved with contributions from central entities, states like Gujarat, Uttar Pradesh, and Delhi, and through initiatives like 'Vocal for Local', 'One District, One Product', 'Startup Runway', 'Womaniya' etc.
- In the fiscal year 2023/24, the Indian government raised Rs 16,500 crore by selling stakes in state-run companies. This was 9% lower than its target. However, higher dividends from these companies partly offset this shortfall.
- In March 2024, India experienced a significant influx of foreign funds. Foreign institutional investors (FII) made gross purchases amounting to a

record high of Rs 4.06 lakh crore (\$49 billion). This resulted in a net inflow of Rs 35,098 crore (\$4.2 billion) in equities for India, pushing the 12-month cumulative equity inflow to a 32-month high of Rs 2.08 lakh crore (\$25 billion).

- The Centre's dividend receipts from Central Public Sector Enterprises (CPSEs) for the fiscal year 2023-24 surpassed the revised estimate on March 2, 2024. By the end of the fiscal year on March 31, 2024, the actual dividend collections were about 26% higher at Rs 62,929.27 crore.

## OBITUARY- ONE LINER

- Brian Mulroney, the 18th Prime Minister of Canada, has passed away at the age of 84. He served as the Prime Minister from 1984 to 1993 and was known for his significant contributions to Canadian politics and international affairs.
- Aziz Qureshi, a veteran leader of the Congress party and former Governor of Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, and Mizoram, passed away on March 1, 2024. He was undergoing treatment at a hospital in Bhopal due to a prolonged illness.
- Padma Shri awardee Dr. Arun Kumar Sharma, a renowned archaeologist, passed away at the age of 91. He was instrumental in the Ram Janmabhoomi case, providing archaeological evidence for a Hindu Mandir at the disputed site in Ayodhya.
- Akira Toriyama, the creator of the influential manga Dragon Ball, passed away at the age of 68 due to an acute subdural hematoma. His death was on March 1. His works, including Dragon Ball and Dr. Slump, have left a significant impact on the manga industry. He had several projects in progress at the time of his death. His legacy continues to inspire manga artists and fans worldwide.
- Kapildev Prasad, a renowned artisan and Padma Shri awardee, known for his contributions to the handloom industry and the revival of Bababuti sarees, has passed away at the age of 71. His work over six decades earned him recognition and respect, and his death is a significant loss to the handloom industry.
- Paul Alexander, known as the 'man in the iron lung', passed away at 78. He contracted polio at six and spent over 70 years in an iron lung. Despite his condition, he earned a law degree and practiced law.



- **Admiral Laxminarayan Ramdas, the former Chief of Naval Staff of the Indian Navy, passed away at the age of 90 on March 15, 2024. He was a decorated officer, known for his role in the 1971 Indo-Pakistan war, and a peace activist post-retirement.**
- **Renowned Rabindra Sangeet singer Sadi Mohammad passed away on March 13, 2024, at his residence in Mohammadpur. He was around 70 years old and was a respected figure in the music industry.**
- **Lama Lobzang, a prominent tribal leader and Buddhist monk from Ladakh, passed away at the age of 94. He served the National Commission for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes for 19 years and was appointed as its member for two terms from 1995 to 2001.**
- **Frans de Waal, a renowned Dutch-American primatologist and author, passed away at the age of 75. He was known for his work on the inner lives of animals, particularly apes.**
- **David Seidler, the Oscar-winning British screenwriter best known for his work on the Academy Award-winning film "The King's Speech," passed away at the age of 86 on March 16, 2024. He was on a fly-fishing trip in New Zealand at the time of his death.**
- **Popular Tamil actor Lakshmi Narayanan Seshu, known for his work in films and the comedy show Lollu Sabha, passed away at the age of 60 on March 26, 2024. He was undergoing treatment after a heart attack.**
- **Dr. Gurulinga Kapse, a renowned writer and former chairman of the Karnataka Sahitya Academy, passed away on March 26, 2024. He was known for his work in Kannada literature and contributions to children's literature.**
- **Daniel Kahneman, a Nobel laureate and pioneer in behavioral economics, has passed away at 90. His work transformed economics into a behavioral science, challenging the notion that people are fully rational. His book, "Thinking, Fast and Slow", was a global bestseller.**
- **The Zoological Survey of India has indeed published a book titled 'An Illustrated Guide to the Lepidoptera of India: Taxonomic Procedures, Family Characters, Diversity and Distribution'. The book is authored by Dr. Dhriti Banerjee, Director, Zoological Survey of India (ZSI), along with Dr. Navneet Singh,**

Dr. Rahul Joshi, Dr. P. C. Pathania, Scientists of ZSI, and a Lepidoptera expert from Hong Kong, Dr. R.C. Kendrick.

- **Louis Gossett Jr., the American actor best known for his role as Gunnery Sergeant Emil Foley in the 1982 film "An Officer and a Gentleman", has recently passed away. He was the first Black man to win a supporting actor Oscar and an Emmy winner for his role in the seminal TV miniseries "Roots".**

## BOOKS

- **Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik released a coffee table book titled 'FIH Odisha Hockey Men's World Cup 2023'. The book, published by Sportstar, captures the highlights of the FIH Odisha Hockey Men's World Cup 2023 and showcases Odisha's commitment to hockey.**
- **"The Gems of Indian Art" is a recently launched book that showcases the late Harish Khullar's collection of 20th century Indian modern and contemporary art. The book, edited by Vinod Bhardwaj, contains beautiful photographs of the artists' works and documents the Khullar family's internationally renowned collection.**
- **Sri Lanka's former President Gotabaya Rajapaksa authored the book 'The Conspiracy to Oust Me from the Presidency'. In this book, he defends his regime and attributes his political downfall to a "conspiracy" involving foreign and local parties. He announced the book on March 6, 2024.**
- **Union Minister Shri Parshottam Rupala released a book and a video on "Sagar Parikrama" on 15th March 2024 in Rajkot, Gujarat. The book and video document the Sagar Parikrama Yatra, a journey that covered 7,986 Kilometres of India's coastal length, touching 3,071 fishing villages of 80 coastal districts.**
- **The book 'Israel War Diary' by Vishal Pandey was unveiled on March 15, 2024. It provides an in-depth account of the Israel-Hamas war from the perspective of a reporter on the ground. The author, Vishal Pandey, was the first Indian journalist to reach Israel from India when the war started. The book was unveiled by Union Minister Anurag Singh Thakur.**
- **Sivasubramanian Ramann, the Chairman and Managing Director of the Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI), presented two**

books to the Union Minister of Finance, Nirmala Sitharaman. The first book, “Prabhaav”, is an impact study of the Fund of Funds for Startups (FFS), conducted by CRISIL. It highlights the transformative effects of the scheme on the startup ecosystem in India. The second book is a comprehensive study on “Cluster Development”, compiled by the team at SIDBI.

- ‘Phool Bahadur’ is the first Magahi novel translated into English by Abhay K, a renowned writer from Bihar. The novel, originally written by Jayanath Pati, was first published in 1928 and is based in Biharsharif, Bihar. The English translation was launched at the Dibrugarh University International Literary Festival in March 2024.
- The Animal Husbandry Minister of Kerala, J. Chinchurani, released a book titled “A Compendium on Non-Native Organisms of India” on March 24, 2024. The book, co-authored by K.V. Jayachandran, Sheela S., Jasmin Anand, and Vinod Haridas, provides information about invasive species identified from different parts of Alappuzha, the challenges they pose, and measures to check their spread.
- “From A Car Shed To The Corner Room & Beyond” is a book written by S. Raman. It is an inspiring life story that has been praised by many influential figures, including N.R. Narayana Murthy, the founder of Infosys, and Dr. D. Subbarao, the former Governor of the Reserve Bank of India.
- The Zoological Survey of India has indeed published a book titled ‘An Illustrated Guide to the Lepidoptera of India: Taxonomic Procedures, Family Characters, Diversity and Distribution’. The book is authored by Dr. Dhriti Banerjee, Director, Zoological Survey of India (ZSI), along with Dr. Navneet Singh, Dr. Rahul Joshi, Dr. P. C. Pathania, Scientists of ZSI, and a Lepidoptera expert from Hong Kong, Dr. R.C. Kendrick.

e) None of the above

**Answer (a):** “Swallowing the Sun” is a debut novel by Lakshmi Murdeshwar Puri, former Assistant Secretary-General of the United Nations.

**Q.2 Who discovered the new species of head-shield sea slug?**

- The Botanical Survey of India
- The Zoological Survey of India
- The Geological Survey of India
- The Anthropological Survey of India
- None of these

**Answer (b):** The Zoological Survey of India (ZSI) discovered a new species of head-shield sea slug and named it Melanochlamys droupadi after President Droupadi Murmu.

**Q.3 Who inaugurated the National Urban Co-operative Finance and Development Corporation Limited (NUCFDC)?**

- Narendra Modi
- Amit Shah
- Rajnath Singh
- Nirmala Sitharaman
- None of these

**Answer (b):** The National Urban Co-operative Finance and Development Corporation Limited (NUCFDC) was inaugurated by Union Home Minister Amit Shah on 2nd March 2024.

**Q.4 Who was appointed head of Parliament security on 1st March 2024?**

- Anurag Agarwal
- Ramesh Kumar
- Suresh Singh
- Rajesh Sharma
- None of these

**Answer (a):** IPS officer Anurag Agarwal has been appointed as the head of Parliament security on 1st March 2024.

**Q.5 Who has been appointed as the part-time chairman of Tamilnad Mercantile Bank (TMB)?**

- R. Gandhi
- S Ravindran
- Shaktikanta Das
- Urjit Patel
- None of these

## MONTHLY CURRENT AFFAIRS QUESTION BANK: MARCH 2024

**Q.1 Who is the author of the novel “Swallowing the Sun”?**

- Lakshmi Murdeshwar Puri
- Malati
- Assistant Secretary-General of the United Nations
- All of the above

**Answer (b):** The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has approved the appointment of S Ravindran as the part-time chairman of Tamilnad Mercantile Bank (TMB).

**Q.6 Who is the founder of StemRx Hospital and Research Centre?**

- a) Dr. Pradeep Mahajan
- b) Dr. Ramesh Kumar
- c) Dr. Suresh Verma
- d) Dr. Anil Gupta
- e) None of these

**Answer (a):** Dr. Pradeep Mahajan, the founder of StemRx Hospital and Research Centre, was awarded the Maharashtra Bhushan Award 2024 on March 1, 2024.

**Q.7 Who were the NASA astronauts on the SpaceX Crew-8 mission?**

- a) Matthew Dominick, Michael Barratt, Jeanette Epps
- b) Matthew Dominick, Michael Barratt, Alexander Grebenkin
- c) Michael Barratt, Jeanette Epps, Alexander Grebenkin
- d) Matthew Dominick, Jeanette Epps, Alexander Grebenkin
- e) None of these

**Answer (a):** The crew, including NASA astronauts Matthew Dominick, Michael Barratt, Jeanette Epps, and Roscosmos cosmonaut Alexander Grebenkin, traveled to the International Space Station (ISS) aboard the SpaceX Dragon spacecraft, Endeavour.

**Q.8 Which country became the first to enshrine the right to abortion in its constitution?**

- a) United States
- b) Germany
- c) France
- d) Canada
- e) None of these

**Answer (c):** France became the first country to enshrine the right to abortion in its constitution.

**Q.9 In which city is the underwater metro service located?**

- a) Delhi
- b) Mumbai
- c) Chennai
- d) Kolkata

- e) None of these

**Answer (d):** Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated India's first underwater metro service in Kolkata.

**Q.10 Where is the headquarters of Keyi Panyor district located?**

- a) Ter Gapin-Sam Sarth
- b) Itanagar
- c) Ziro
- d) Pasighat
- e) None of these

**Answer (a):** Keyi Panyor was inaugurated as the 26th district of Arunachal Pradesh on March 1, 2024. It was carved out of Lower Subansiri with its headquarters at Ter Gapin-Sam Sarth.

**Q.11 Who organized the Naval Commanders' Conference of 2024?**

- a) Indian Army
- b) Indian Air Force
- c) Indian Navy
- d) Indian Coast Guard
- e) None of these

**Answer (c):** The first edition of the Naval Commanders' Conference of 2024, organised by the Indian Navy, commenced on March 5, 2024.

**Q.12 Who has been appointed as the Whole-time Director (Executive Director) of Catholic Syrian Bank Limited (CSB) Bank?**

- a) Mr. A K Divakara
- b) Mr. B K Divakara
- c) Mr. C K Divakara
- d) Mr. D K Divakara
- e) None of these

**Answer (b):** The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has approved the appointment of Mr. B K Divakara as a Whole-time Director (Executive Director) of CSB Bank.

**Q.13 What is the primary aim of "Operation Kamdhenu"?**

- a) To curb drug trafficking
- b) To curb cattle smuggling
- c) To curb human trafficking
- d) To curb illegal mining

- e) None of these

**Answer (b):** “Operation Kamdhenu” was launched by the Jammu and Kashmir Police on March 6, 2024. The operation is a comprehensive strategy aimed at curbing cattle smuggling in the region.

**Q.14 Who has been appointed as the new President and Managing Director for the Indian Subcontinent by SAP on March 6, 2024?**

- a) Kulmeet Bawa
- b) Satya Nadella
- c) Sundar Pichai
- d) Manish Prasad
- e) None of these

**Answer (d):** SAP has appointed Manish Prasad as the new President and Managing Director for the Indian Subcontinent on March 6, 2024.

**Q.15 What is Sweden’s position in the list of (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) NATO members?**

- a) 30<sup>th</sup>
- b) 31<sup>st</sup>
- c) 32<sup>nd</sup>
- d) 33<sup>rd</sup>
- e) None of these

**Answer (c):** Sweden officially became the 32nd member of (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) NATO on Thursday, 7th March 2024.

**Q.16 Who was honored with the ‘Measles and Rubella Champion’ Award in 2024?**

- a) India
- b) China
- c) USA
- d) Australia
- e) None of these

**Answer (a):** India has indeed been honored with the prestigious ‘Measles and Rubella Champion’ Award.

**Q.17 What is the estimated population of the endangered golden langur in India according to the latest survey?**

- a) 6,000
- b) 7,396
- c) 5,566

- d) 1,830
- e) None of these

**Answer (b):** The latest survey estimates the population of the endangered golden langur in India to be around 7,396.

**Q.18 Who was elected as the President of the Paralympic Committee of India (PCI) on March 9, 2024?**

- a) Deepa Malik
- b) Rajyavardhan Singh Rathore
- c) Abhinav Bindra
- d) Devendra Jhajharia
- e) None of these

**Answer (d):** Devendra Jhajharia, a three-time Paralympic medalist in javelin throw, was elected as the President of the Paralympic Committee of India (PCI) on March 9, 2024.

**Q.19 What is the She Research Network in India (SheRNI)?**

- a) A women’s rights organization
- b) An initiative by the University Grants Commission’s (UGC), Information and Library Network (INFLIBNET) Centre
- c) A social media platform for women
- d) A women’s health initiative
- e) None of these

**Answer (b):** The She Research Network in India (SheRNI) is an initiative by the University Grants Commission’s (UGC), Information and Library Network (INFLIBNET) Centre.

**Q.20 Who has been appointed as the Executive Director of the Indian Overseas Bank?**

- a) Dhanaraj T
- b) Ramesh Kumar
- c) Suresh Patel
- d) Anand Mehta
- e) None of these

**Answer (a):** Dhanaraj T has been appointed as the Executive Director of the Indian Overseas Bank.

**Q.21 Who was conferred an honorary Doctor of Civil Law degree by the University of Mauritius on March 12, 2024?**

- a) Prime Minister of India
- b) President of Mauritius
- c) President of India
- d) Prime Minister of Mauritius

e) None of these

**Answer (c):** The University of Mauritius conferred an honorary Doctor of Civil Law degree on the President of India, Smt Droupadi Murmu.

**Q.22 Where is the FutureLABS center located?**

- a) C-DAC Thiruvananthapuram
- b) C-DAC Hyderabad
- c) C-DAC Bangalore
- d) C-DAC Pune
- e) None of these

**Answer (a):** Union Minister Rajeev Chandrasekhar inaugurated India's first FutureLABS center at C-DAC Thiruvananthapuram.

**Q.23 What is Panama's member number in the ISA?**

- a) 57<sup>th</sup>
- b) 67<sup>th</sup>
- c) 77<sup>th</sup>
- d) 97<sup>th</sup>
- e) None of these

**Answer (d):** Panama ratified the International Solar Alliance (ISA), officially becoming its 97th member.

**Q.24 Where is Maruti Suzuki India's (MSIL) plant located where the in-plant railway siding project was inaugurated?**

- a) Delhi
- b) Mumbai
- c) Hansalpur, Gujarat
- d) Kolkata
- e) None of these

**Answer (c):** Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated India's first in-plant railway siding project at Maruti Suzuki India's (MSIL) plant in Hansalpur, Gujarat.

**Q.25 Which country secured the top spot in the 2022 Gender Inequality Index (GII)?**

- a) India
- b) United States
- c) Denmark
- d) Australia
- e) None of these

**Answer (c):** Denmark secured the top spot in the index, showcasing the least gender inequality among the surveyed countries.

**Q.26 Who is the author of the book 'Israel War Diary'?**

- a) Anurag Singh Thakur
- b) Vishal Pandey
- c) Israel-Hamas
- d) All of the above
- e) None of the above

**Answer (b):** The book 'Israel War Diary' by Vishal Pandey was unveiled on March 15, 2024.

**Q.27 Who was awarded the PV Narasimha Rao Memorial Award on March 15?**

- a) Mukesh Ambani
- b) Ratan Tata
- c) Anand Mahindra
- d) Azim Premji
- e) None of these

**Answer (b):** Ratan Tata, the former chairman of Tata Sons, was awarded the PV Narasimha Rao Memorial Award on March 15 for his significant contributions to philanthropy.

**Q.28 Where was 'ETHANOL 100' launched?**

- a) Mumbai
- b) Bangalore
- c) New Delhi
- d) Chennai
- e) None of these

**Answer (c):** Union Minister Hardeep Singh Puri launched 'ETHANOL 100', a new automotive fuel, at the Indian Oil Retail Outlet in New Delhi.

**Q.29 Who has been appointed as the Group President of 'One Kotak' by Kotak Mahindra Bank?**

- a) Shripal Shah
- b) Jaideep Hansraj
- c) Ratan Tata
- d) Mukesh Ambani
- e) None of these

**Answer (b):** Jaideep Hansraj, former CEO of Kotak Securities, has been appointed as the Group President of 'One Kotak' by Kotak Mahindra Bank.

**Q.30** Who is the author of the book “Breaking Free Embracing Me: Healing from Childhood Abuse and Toxic Conditioning”?

- a) J.K. Rowling
- b) Dan Brown
- c) Stephen King
- d) Rakhi Kapoor
- e) None of these

**Answer (d):** Rakhi Kapoor won the 2024 Golden Book Award for her book “Breaking Free Embracing Me: Healing from Childhood Abuse and Toxic Conditioning”.

**Q.31** What does SIMA stand for?

- a) Simple Instructional Multiworld Agent
- b) Scalable Instructable Multiworld Agent
- c) Scalable Instructional Multi-Agent
- d) Simple Instructable Multi-Agent
- e) None of these

**Answer (b):** SIMA, stands for Scalable Instructable Multiworld Agent.

**Q.32** Who won the Indian Wells title on March 17, 2024?

- a) Daniil Medvedev
- b) Novak Djokovic
- c) Rafael Nadal
- d) Carlos Alcaraz
- e) None of these

**Answer (d):** Carlos Alcaraz, the world number two, successfully defended his Indian Wells title at the Indian Wells Tennis Garden in Indian Wells, California.

**Q.33** According to the International Labour Organization (ILO) report, how many people were engaged in forced labour?

- a) 3.5 million
- b) 27.6 million
- c) 10,000
- d) 19 million
- e) None of these

**Answer (b):** According to International Labour Organization (ILO) report 27.6 million people engaged in forced labour, which translates to 3.5 people for every thousand globally.

**Q.34** What is the title of the novel for which Prabha Varma was awarded the 33rd Saraswati Samman?

- a) The God of Small Things
- b) Interpreter of Maladies
- c) Roudra Sathwikam
- d) Gitanjali
- e) None of these

**Answer (c):** Renowned Malayalam poet Prabha Varma was awarded the 33rd Saraswati Samman on March 19, 2024, for his novel ‘Roudra Sathwikam’.

**Q.35** What is the full form of STEAG?

- a) Signals Technology Evaluation and Adaptation Group
- b) Systems Technology Evaluation and Adaptation Group
- c) Signals Technology Evaluation and Application Group
- d) Systems Technology Evaluation and Application Group
- e) None of these

**Answer (a):** The Indian Army established a new unit called the Signals Technology Evaluation and Adaptation Group (STEAG) on March 18, 2024.

**Q.36** Who is the President of COP28?

- a) Dr. Ali Al Jaber
- b) Dr. Ahmed Al Jaber
- c) Dr. Mohammed Al Jaber
- d) Dr. Sultan Al Jaber
- e) None of these

**Answer (d):** Dr. Sultan Al Jaber, the President of COP28, received the ‘CERAWeek Leadership Award for Building Global Consensus towards a Sustainable Energy Future’ on March 19, 2024.

**Q.37** Who was honored with Bhutan’s highest civilian award, the ‘Order of the Druk Gyalpo’ on 22nd March 2024?

- a) President Ram Nath Kovind
- b) Prime Minister Narendra Modi
- c) President Joe Biden
- d) Prime Minister Boris Johnson
- e) None of these

**Answer (b):** Prime Minister Narendra Modi was honored with Bhutan’s highest civilian award, the ‘Order of the Druk Gyalpo’ on 22nd March 2024.

**Q.38 Who launched the MARLIN@CMFRI app?**

- ICAR-Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute (CMFRI)
- National Institute of Oceanography
- Indian Space Research Organisation
- National Centre for Polar and Ocean Research
- None of these

**Answer (a):** The MARLIN@CMFRI app, launched by the ICAR-Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute (CMFRI) on March 18, 2024.

**Q.39 Who has been appointed as the Chairman and Managing Director (CMD) of the New India Assurance Company?**

- Ramesh Kumar
- Girija Subramanian
- Anand Mehta
- Suresh Prabhu
- None of these

**Answer (b):** Girija Subramanian, the former CMD of the Agriculture Insurance Company of India, has been appointed as the Chairman and Managing Director (CMD) of the New India Assurance Company by the Financial Services Institutions Bureau (FSIB).

**Q.40 Who has been elected as the co-chair of the Digital Innovation Board of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU)?**

- China
- United States
- India
- Australia
- None of these

**Answer (c):** The International Telecommunication Union (ITU) has elected India as the co-chair of its Digital Innovation Board.

**Q.41 What is the name of the new species of deep-sea isopod discovered off the coast of Kollam in Kerala, India?**

- Brucethoa NASA
- Brucethoa Isro
- Brucethoa SpaceX
- Brucethoa blue origin
- None of these

**Answer (b):** A new species of deep-sea isopod, Brucethoa isro, was discovered off the coast of Kollam in Kerala, India on March 20, 2024.

**Q.42 Who was honored with the Aviation Week Laureates Award on March 24, 2024?**

- NASA
- SpaceX
- ISRO
- European Space Agency
- None of these

**Answer (c):** The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) was honored with the prestigious Aviation Week Laureates Award on March 24, 2024.

**Q.43 Who is the author of the original Magahi novel 'Phool Bahadur'?**

- Abhay K
- Jayanath Pati
- Biharsharif
- Dibrugarh University
- None of these

**Answer (b):** 'Phool Bahadur' is the first Magahi novel translated into English by Abhay K, a renowned writer from Bihar. The novel, originally written by Jayanath Pati,

**Q.44 What is the projected growth of India in FY25 according to the Department of Economic Affairs (DEA)?**

- Between 5% and 5.5%
- Between 7.5% and 8%
- Between 6.5% and 7%
- Between 8.5% and 9%
- None of these

**Answer (c):** The Department of Economic Affairs (DEA) in India has projected that the country's growth will be between 6.5% and 7% in FY25.

**Q.45 Who won the women's singles title at the WTT Feeder Beirut II 2024 table tennis tournament?**

- Sarah De Nutte
- Sreeja Akula
- Al Kawthar
- None of the above

**Answer (b):** Sreeja Akula, the world No. 47, won the women's singles title at the WTT Feeder Beirut II 2024 table tennis tournament.

**Q.46 Who was appointed as India's ambassador to Myanmar on March 26, 2024?**

- a) Narendra Modi
- b) Rajnath Singh
- c) Sushma Swaraj
- d) Abhay Thakur
- e) None of these

**Answer (d):** Abhay Thakur, a senior diplomat of the Indian Foreign Service, was appointed as India's ambassador to Myanmar on March 26, 2024.

**Q.47 Who is the author of the book "From A Car Shed To The Corner Room & Beyond"?**

- a) S. Raman
- b) Dr. D. Subbarao
- c) N.R. Narayana Murthy
- d) None of the above

**Answer (a):** "From A Car Shed To The Corner Room & Beyond" is a book written by S. Raman. It is an inspiring life story that has been praised by many influential figures, including N.R. Narayana Murthy, the founder of Infosys, and Dr. D. Subbarao, the former Governor of the Reserve Bank of India.

**Q.48 How many TB cases were unaccounted for in India in 2023 according to the report?**

- a) 1.5 lakh
- b) 2.3 lakh
- c) 3.2 lakh
- d) 27.8 lakh
- e) None of these

**Answer (b):** The "India TB Report 2024" released by the Union Health Ministry of India reveals that the gap between estimated and actual TB cases in India is narrowing, with only 2.3 lakh cases unaccounted for in 2023.

**Q.49 What was the Centre's fiscal deficit between April and February of 2024?**

- a) ₹10 lakh crore
- b) ₹15.01 lakh crore

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- c) ₹20 lakh crore
- d) ₹25 lakh crore
- e) None of these

**Answer (b):** The Centre's fiscal deficit increased to ₹15.01 lakh crore between April and February of 2024, which is about 86.5% of the full-year revised target of ₹17.34 trillion.

**Q.50 Who has been appointed as the new Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer (MD & CEO) of the Bank of Maharashtra?**

- a) AS Rajeev
- b) Vigilance Commissioner
- c) Union Bank of India
- d) Nidhu Saxena
- e) None of these

**Answer (d):** Nidhu Saxena has been appointed as the Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer (MD & CEO) of the Bank of Maharashtra.

**Q.51 In 2023, how much did India expand its solar manufacturing capacity?**

- a) 20 GW
- b) 30 GW
- c) 24 GW
- d) 35 GW
- e) None of these

**Answer (c):** In 2023, India significantly expanded its solar manufacturing capacity by adding 24 GW, with Gujarat, Rajasthan, and Tamil Nadu leading the way.

**Q.52 Who has been awarded the Times Power Icon 2024 Award?**

- a) Ravi Sharma
- b) Vijay Jain
- c) Anil Kapoor
- d) Suresh Kumar
- e) None of these

**Answer (b):** Vijay Jain has indeed been awarded the prestigious Times Power Icon 2024 Award.