

# VIDHIGYA CLAT

**CURRENT AFFAIRS MAGAZINE**

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Magazine

**MAY  
2024**

**SPECIAL  
FEATURES**

**TOPPER'S TALK WITH  
AMAN PATIDAR**

**CHECK YOUR  
QUIZDOM**

**HIGHLIGHTS**

- India signed 10-year Contract For Chabahar Port Operation with Iran
- Concerns Regarding ECI's Voter Turnout Data
- Russia - China Summit
- Death of Iranian President
- China Reclaims India's Top Trading Partner Tag

**CHABAHAR  
PORT**

# VIDHIGYA

# LAW



# PUN



A man who had been caught embezzling millions from his employer went to a lawyer seeking defense. He didn't want to go to jail. But his lawyer told him, "Don't worry. You'll never have to go to jail with all that money." And the lawyer was right. When the man was sent to prison, he didn't even have a penny..

Be  
LAWsical

# VIDHIGYA TOPPER'S TALK WITH CLAT TOPPER

**Aman Patidar** hailing from a small town called Maheshwar from Madhya Pradesh has achieved this feat and made it large. He has secured admission to National Law School of India University - (NLSIU) Bengaluru, also known as 'Harvard of East'.

Know the success secrets, habits and the prep strategy he adopted that fetched him this success in CLAT 2020.

**Vidhigya Correspondent:** Hi Aman, Many Congratulations on achieving this feat. Tell us something about yourself.

**Aman:** I completed my higher secondary education from the St. Paul's Higher Secondary School, Indore with science stream. I had PCM with Computer Science as my subjects. I come from the beautiful city of Maheshwar, some 90-odd kilometres from Indore. I gave CLAT 2020, alongside my class 12th. I studied at Vidhigya for my CLAT preparation and I would be indebted forever to them.

**Vidhigya Correspondent:** There are different



# 1<sup>ST</sup>

**RANK**  
**MP & CG STATE**

**CLAT 2020**  
**AIR 14**

**AMAN PATIDAR**

NLSIU, Bengaluru  
St. Paul H.S. School, Indore

fields after 12th, what motivated you to make a career in law?

**Aman:** There are numerous career options after 12th, albeit no less than the number of career options I had in mind at different stages in my life. I chose law, despite belonging to the science background, which often seems weird to a lot of people. But I took science stream solely out of interest and to challenge myself. That interest, I always knew, came out of curiosity and fascination. I knew I can be a great student and observer of science but would not be able to contribute significantly as an actor. And, I am sure that I would continue to be fascinated by science and read about it for the rest of my life, indeed as an observer. Social science always got equal love as science, the difference being that I was ready to have a career in some field related to social science. I looked for options and filtered out Journalism and Law. After some consideration, law seemed to invoke greater interest in me and surprisingly, for the first time in my life, I

knew what I wanted to do. A few months into the law school, I see in myself a baby-like curiosity again. And here I am, ready to take baby-steps, again. I am particularly interested in the confluence of law with start-ups, technology and sports and expect to build myself in one of these domains.

**Vidhigya Correspondent:** During your CLAT preparation, did you ever think that you would end up being CLAT STATE TOPPER and achieve AIR – 14.

**Aman:** Not even once. To be honest, my 'serious' CLAT journey had an interesting start. It began with a challenge. A little background: my father has always been proud of me, even if I fail. At times, out of his pride, he ends up overestimating me and takes up challenges for me, without ever feeling the need to ask me if I am capable or ready for them. And one of those many instances, was when my father's friend told him that CLAT is a difficult exam and takes months and maybe years to crack. There he got an opportunity to take a challenge, on my behalf, being my legal guardian and best

friend. He told his friend that I would crack CLAT in my first attempt and with a great score. Reminding me constantly that a father's pride is a son's responsibility, he made sure I am on track throughout. And I began, my preparations, not just to get admission in an NLU, but to also uphold the value and respect my father's words hold. Cut to the day CLAT took place. I was confident that I had given my best and there was little that I could do better. I still remember it, the first thing I told my parents who were waiting for me outside the test centre was that this was the best I could do, and whatever comes my way I'll take it with open arms. I knew, I had little regrets, regarding my preparation or my examination and the result, even if not the absolute best, would be my best. I still recall, quite clearly, how surprised I was and how overjoyed my family was, after seeing my result. Indeed, I am grateful for how things have turned out.

**Vidhigya Correspondent:** Tell us about your CLAT preparation?

**Aman:** CLAT 2020 was my first attempt at this examination. There were multiple postponements. Lockdown meant that I was locked in my home during my entire preparation. I made sure that I make the maximum use of every postponement of CLAT. And with each postponement, I tried to target some specific area and became a better version of myself, as an aspirant.

**Vidhigya Correspondent:** How did you prepare for the FIVE sections of the paper? Can you elaborate on your preparation strategy for each section?

**Aman:** As we know, the question paper has five sections: English, General Knowledge (GK), Logical Reasoning (LR), Data Interpretation (DI) and Legal Reasoning. Just a glance of the paper lets you know that it is heavily based on reading skills, with English, Legal and good chunk of LR based solely on how fast you can read and how well you can comprehend passages. English and the Critical reasoning portion of LR require pretty much the same skills, which are speed-reading and decent

comprehension. Both of these, indeed are skills and not subjects or topics, which means they can not be learnt or memorised in a day or two, but are rather developed with time. Reading practice is a must, not just for these two sections, but for the entire question paper. And what better source than a newspaper, when the Consortium stresses so much on newspaper reading and has explicitly told that a lot of passages would come from prominent news sources? A good national daily would do the job, which was The Hindu for me. I also occasionally surfed a few online news portals.

Reading a newspaper, would of course prepare you for the GK section. But note-making is a must for GK, unless you are a super-computer capable of storing tonnes of data for very long. Effective note-making would allow you to generate connections between facts and topics, which would help you create a story, making it easier and more interesting to prepare for GK.

For DI, consistency over everything.

Start off with learning tables, squares, cubes, formulae and tricks. Then on a daily basis, solve 3-4 DI sets and apply everything that you have learnt. Daily practice increases your speed and ensures that you come across a variety of questions.

For Legal reasoning, if you are aware of a particular development in the legal field, your understanding of the issue is much clearer and the reading of the passage faster. To practice application, a mock will be your best friend.

**Vidhigya Correspondent:** Since the CLAT pattern has witnessed a paradigm shift in CLAT 2020 specially in Legal reasoning and Logical reasoning section, how did you manage these subjects?

**Aman:** To be very honest, the change in pattern came as a breather for me. It meant that now, the skills required are very different from the earlier pattern. Having passages, instead of one-liners meant that you have to have good reading speed and comprehension abilities, and passages in GK meant you no longer need to mug up random facts

but rather relevant information related to important topics. Talking specifically regarding legal and logical reasoning sections, the maximum practice for these came through mocks for me. Since the pattern-change was recent, there wasn't a lot of ancillary material available related to these sections. Although news articles and compilations help in being comfortable with the developments in the legal field, true practice of application can be done only when you have questions based on them. I would highlight here that although the required skills like speedreading and comprehension remain the same, the approach required for Legal reasoning section is a little different from that used in English or Critical reasoning section. Legal reasoning demands, and deserves, more time than English or CR, both in reading and in questions. You have to carefully read every line of the passage in Legal reasoning section and have to

give enough time to questions to apply the rules correctly, because if you lose out on even a single detail the question

can go wrong; and as we say: ignorance of law is no excuse. The logical reasoning section on the other hand can be divided to two parts: critical reasoning (the passages) and analytical reasoning (statement-based questions, puzzles, direction sense, etc.). I found little difference in the critical reasoning part and English sections, as the approach and the skills required are nearly same for both. I practiced passages from the modules and the mocks provided from Vidhigya. For analytical reasoning portion, mocks of other entrance exams like SLAT and AILET, and the modules helped a lot.

**Vidhigya Correspondent:** COVID pandemic was a very big disruption as perceived by many, how did you manage your study during the lockdown?

**Aman:** I am saddened by the kind of loss that the world has suffered due to pandemic. My memory of getting into NLS, would remain secondary and way less significant than the lessons that the pandemic has taught me. It would be insensitive to be thankful to a pandemic

for postponements, god had certain plans, for us as individuals and as a society.

My family, as always, was the biggest support system for me during my preparations. They made sure that I remain on track and did their best to support me throughout. Being in constant touch with the mentors at Vidhigya, ensured that I have an active and seamless available route for feedbacks, solutions and plans.

**Vidhigya Correspondent:** What was your study routine and best practices for CLAT?

**Aman:** This is one aspect of my preparation, which I regret. I could not have a very healthy routine during my preparation. I sometimes slept at 10 P.M., sometimes at 3 A.M. I would suggest everyone to simply not do this at all. Please, have a healthy routine and try to set your body clock. Your body supports your mind, only when both of them are fresh and active. Try sleeping early, and waking up early for maximum efficiency, something that I am trying to do these days.

I reiterate that it's never about the numbers of hours you put in, but the intensity. When you sit down to work, have a target to achieve in terms of tasks and not in terms of hours and complete all of them with focus. Cut off all distractions while you work. Take breaks between work and don't work between breaks. Worship work and it will protect you.

**Vidhigya Correspondent:** Did you take mock tests; how many did you take? Are they useful?

**Aman:** I can't stress enough the importance of mocks in preparation for CLAT. As we know, CLAT, unlike other entrance tests like the JEE or NEET, is not a syllabus-based examination. And hence, the closest parameter you have to gauge your preparation is a mock test. I took around 60 mocks during my preparation and made sure that I make maximum use of it. Mock analysis helped me gauge my strength and weaknesses: both in terms of concepts and speed. With each mock, I knew exactly where to work on and how

much, a luxury which won't have been available otherwise.

**Vidhigya Correspondent:** There are certain times when you don't score good in your Mock Tests and you feel low about it. Did it happen to you? If yes, how did you cope with such feelings?

**Aman:** It may very well happen that you don't score well in your mocks at all times. And that's completely fine, as long as you know the exact reasons for why the scores weren't high.

Scores went down for me, in three cases: due to some fault from my end, difficult mock or some of my random experiments. In case of my fault, I analysed closely where do I lack and is there a way to fix it. That gave me exact roadmap, as to what to do in the coming days or which type of questions to refrain from attempting. In case of a difficult mock, I used to be thankful, for I encountered difficult questions during my preparation itself and not in the actual CLAT. This gave me the confidence that no matter what would be the difficulty of the CLAT, I have already seen

decent difficulty levels. In case of a failure of my experiment, either with section order or anything else, I knew which strategy doesn't work for me and hence I dropped it right away, so that when I go into CLAT, I have a fool-proof strategy ready, specifically designed for me by me.

**Vidhigya Correspondent:** Though you are not at the campus for physical classes but your online classes have started. How does it feel to be at the best law school of this country?

**Aman:** NLSIU is magical. It is an absolute privilege to study alongside some of the smartest brains of the country and being taught by some of the most renowned faculty members. The senior-junior fabric at NLS is something which one would hardly find in any university. There exist several systems, like the informal Rank family system and the formal SBA Mentor system, which ensure that the juniors get constant support from seniors. The classes follow case study method and hence, are full of discourses, discussions, debates and

active class engagement. These discourses open up one's mind to several perspectives that may exist and introduces the subjectivity associated with a lot of things, which at face value may seem objective. The opportunities at NLS are immense, both within the university and from outside the university.

Students often find themselves in a situation where they have to give up an opportunity to grab another. The opportunities, the faculty and the student body, all together make NLS an exciting place to learn. Here's hoping that we get to go to the campus in the next trimester and would finally meet the people who we've 'met' only through the boxes on our screens.

**Vidhigya Correspondent:** Your message for the other CLAT Aspirants preparing for upcoming CLAT exams?

**Aman:** Make sure you have no regrets. Regret hurts more than incapability, because capability can be built with time, but an opportunity once missed can never be grabbed again. Therefore,

regret remains and would haunt you forever, at least till humans develop a time machine, which I suppose is still far away. If you have done enough, and by enough I mean YOUR absolute best, you'll be happy with the results, and in the end that's the only thing that matters. Results are decided by how satisfied you are, and not by some numbers. Be sincere to yourself, work to the best of your abilities and then whatever comes your way, accept with open arms. Do not go very hard on yourself. Make sure you take good care of your and your family's mental and physical health. And of course, 'Just Chill' (Mustafa, 2020). If this comes from the President of the Consortium of NLUs himself, it must hold some credibility.

Khud se nahi haarna. Give YOUR best and I'll pray that all of you get what you've worked for. All the best.

**Vidhigya Correspondent:** Wish you success in all your academic and professional pursuits. Stay Blessed and Stay LAWgical !!!

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# THE BIG NEWS

**India signed 10-year Contract For Chabahar Port Operation with Iran**  
**Concerns Regarding ECI's Voter Turnout Data**  
**Russia - China Summit**  
**Death of Iranian President**  
**China Reclaims India's Top Trading Partner Tag**



# BIG NEWS

## India signs 10-year contract for Chabahar port operation with Iran

India and Iran signed a 10-year long-term agreement covering Indian operations at the Chabahar port, eight years after concluding the general framework of cooperation for the port in Iran.

- This has created the additional risk of piracy and hostage-taking in the **Gulf region**.

### Key Highlights of The Agreement

- **Agreement signed:** The long-term agreement was signed between **Indian Ports Global Ltd. (IPGL)** and **Port and Maritime Organisation (PMO)** of Iran, enabling operation of the Shahid-Beheshti terminal.
- **Funding:** IPGL will invest **approximately \$120 million** in equipping the port.
- India has also offered a credit window equivalent to \$250 million for mutually identified projects aimed at improving Chabahar-related infrastructure.
- **Significance:** This agreement has cleared the pathway for bigger investments to be made in the port.
- The signing of long-term agreement got delayed due to some tricky issues, including arbitration.
- In the absence of long-term agreement, the two countries had concluded short-term leases.

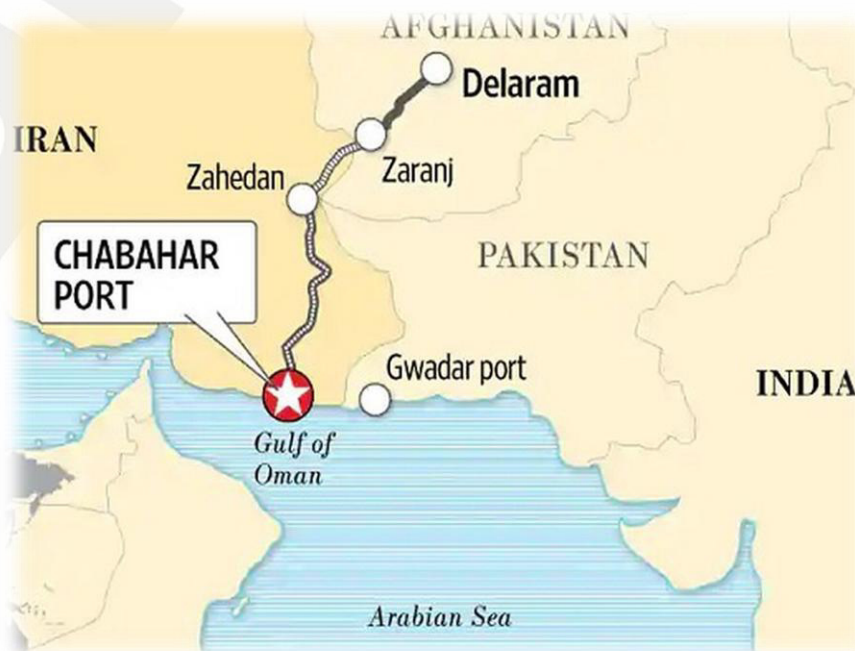
### Chabahar Port

#### About

- Chabahar is a **deep-water port in Iran's Sistan-Baluchistan province**. It is the Iranian -port that is the closest to India.
- It is located in in south-eastern Iran, on the Gulf of Oman, providing easy and secure access for large cargo ships.

#### Strategic location

- It is **Iran's first Deepwater port** that puts the country on the global oceanic trade route map.
- The port is on western side of Iran's border with Pakistan, similar to **Gwadar**, a port developed by China in Pakistan, is on the eastern side of that border.



## Development of port

- An MoU for the development of the Chabahar port by India was **signed in May 2015**.
- The contract was **executed in May 2016** during the visit of PM Modi to Iran.

## Current status

- India has so far supplied six mobile harbor cranes (two of 140-tonne and four of 100-tonne capacity) and other equipment worth \$25 million.
- India Ports Global Ltd (IPGL) has been operating Chabahar port through its wholly owned subsidiary, India Ports Global Chabahar Free Zone (IPGCFZ), since December 2018.
- The port has handled more than 90,000 twenty-foot-equivalent units (TEUs) of container traffic and more than 8.4 million metric tonnes (MMT) of bulk and general cargo since then.

## Significance of Chabahar Port

### ➤ Strategic significance to both Iran and India

- It can potentially help Tehran ward off the effect of Western sanctions.
- It offers New Delhi an alternative route that bypasses Pakistan in order to ensure access to Afghanistan and Central Asia.
- The port is partly intended to provide an alternative for trade between India and Afghanistan as it is 800 kilometers closer to the border of Afghanistan than Pakistan's Karachi port.
- Pakistan does not allow India land access for trade with Afghanistan and Central Asia.

### ➤ Humanitarian corridor

- The port has also facilitated the supply of humanitarian assistance, especially during the Covid-19 pandemic.
- Till date, a total of 2.5 million tonnes of wheat and 2,000 tonnes of pulses have been trans-shipped from India to Afghanistan through Chabahar port.
- In 2021, India supplied 40,000 litres of the environment friendly pesticide (malathion) through the port to Iran to fight locust attacks.

### ➤ Chabahar and International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC)

- The INSTC, which was **initiated by Russia, India, and Iran**, is a multi-modal transportation route envisaged to **link the Indian Ocean and Persian Gulf to the Caspian Sea via Iran, and onward to northern Europe via St Petersburg in Russia**.
- INSTC envisages the movement of goods:
  - i. from Mumbai to Bandar Abbas in Iran by sea;
  - ii. from Bandar Abbas to Bandar – e- Anzali, an Iranian port on the Caspian Sea, by road;
  - iii. from Bandar-e-Anzali to Astrakhan, a Caspian port in the Russian Federation by ship across the Caspian Sea; and
  - iv. onward to other parts of the Russian Federation and Europe by rail.

- Hence, INSTC and Chabahar Port will complement each other for optimizing Indian connectivity with Russia and Eurasia.

### ➤ Tool to strengthen India's relation with Iran & Afghanistan

- This port has potential to herald a new age of trade, marine cooperation, and transshipment while boosting trilateral trade between India, Iran, and Afghanistan.

# Concerns Regarding ECI's Voter Turnout Data

The Supreme Court (SC) recently while hearing an application filed by the NGO **Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR)** refused to issue directions to the Election Commission of India (ECI) to upload polling station-wise voter turnout data on its website within 48 hours of the conclusion of polling for each phase of the Lok Sabha elections.

- The application was filed by ADR in its PIL pending in the court since 2019 seeking identical mandamus to ECI.
- Voter turnout is a module of **ENCORE (Enabling Communications on Real-time Environment)** that runs on the poll day.
- It involves the data entry of a two hourly estimated poll percentage through ENCORE.
- ENCORE is an umbrella application of the ECI that provides the facility to process and monitor the work related to conduct of elections through a single portal.



## Form 17C and Its Significance

- As per the Conduct of Election Rules 1961, the ECI has to maintain two forms - Forms 17A and 17C - that have data on the number of electors and the votes polled.
- While the **Form 17A is used to record the details of every voter** who comes into a polling booth and casts his or her vote, the **Form 17C is an account of all the votes recorded.**
- Under the 1961 Rules, a presiding officer is mandated to furnish a copy of the entries made in Form 17C to the polling agents of the candidates at the close of polling.
- The data in Form 17C is used by candidates to verify the results on counting day by matching it with the EVM count.
- In the event of any anomalies, an election petition may also be filed with the relevant High Court.

## What the ADR Petition Is Seeking from the SC?

- The ADR is seeking a direction to the ECI to upload polling station-wise voter turnout data on its website within 48 hours of the conclusion of polling for each phase of the Lok Sabha elections.
- According to the ADR, many times polling agents are not available at polling booths to obtain the Form 17C data.

## What Is the ECI's Response to The Claims of Disparities?

- In the hearing on the issue, the SC had asked why the EC could not upload voter turnout details.
- The ECI told the SC that there is no **"legal mandate"** to provide the Form 17C to any person other than the
- candidate or his agent.

- ➔ However, it was the ECI's voluntary and non-statutory initiative to disclose the voter turnout through voter turnout app, website and various press releases.
- ➔ This was an initiative for transparency at a national level as prior to the app, information was gathered in a decentralized manner from returning parties, polling agents, sector magistrates, etc.
- ➔ The NGO had ignored the disclaimer that figures in the "non-statutory Voter Turnout App" were secondary and provisional data.

## What Did the SC Say?

- ➔ Refused to Issue Directions to ECI to upload authenticated, scanned and legible copies of Form 17C as the elections to Lok Sabha were ongoing which require huge human resources and it did not want to divert the attention of the ECI in the middle of the elections.
- ➔ Adjourned the Application-unconditionally as the interim relief sought by ADR in its application for publication of voter turnout data in Form 17C was already part of relief sought in a petition pending since 2019.
- ➔ All Related Petitions Adjourned- The court adjourned the hearing on the pleas until after the court's

### What do experts say on the claim of disparities in the Voter Turnout Data?

- The ECI always discloses absolute numbers of voter turnouts. However, this time they are only disclosing percentages.
- Unlike this time, the **turnouts are generally released within 24 hours of the end of polling.**
- Also, the increase in voter turnout in the final figures is unusually high this time.
- To infuse more transparency to the electoral process, the poll body should upload a scanned copy of Form 17C as soon as it is submitted by the Presiding Officer.
- This is because smaller political parties cannot afford to have polling agents in all booths or constituencies due to financial constraints.

summer recess as the country was in the midst of elections.

# Russia China Summit

- Recently, President Vladimir Putin arrived in Beijing for a two-day state visit. During this visit, he met with President Xi Jinping.
- This was **Putin's first international visit** since the start of his **fifth presidential term**.
- During this visit, both the leaders signed and issued a joint statement on deepening China-Russia comprehensive strategic partnership of coordination for a new era.



## China – Russia Friendship

### Relationship – Historical Background

- The relationship between China and the Soviet Union did not begin well. When Chairman Mao Zedong visited Moscow after the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949, he was made to wait for weeks for a meeting with Joseph Stalin.
- **During the Cold War, China and the USSR were rivals**, competing for control of the global communist movement.
- Tensions between the countries rose dangerously in the early 1960s, and **they fought a brief border war in 1969**.
- The **relationship began to improve after the death of Mao in 1976**, but remained frosty right until the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991.
- In the post-Cold War-era, economic relations have formed the new strategic basis for Sino-Russian relations.
- **China became Russia's biggest trading partner, and the largest Asian investor in Russia.**
- China views Russia as a powerhouse of raw material and a valuable market for its consumer goods.
- The hostile approach of Western countries led by USA towards Russia after the **annexation of Crimea in 2014** brought Moscow closer to Beijing.

### Nature of Relationship

- As per the leaders of both the countries, the relations between China and Russia are not opportunistic, and are not directed against anyone.
- President Xi said the China-Russia friendship was everlasting, and had become a model for a new type of international relations.
- On the other hand, a White House spokesperson had said that the China-Russia relationship was a marriage of convenience.

### Relationship Against the Backdrop of Ukraine War

- China and Russia signed a **no-limits strategic partnership** only days before Russia invaded Ukraine on February 24, 2022.

- ➔ The Chinese role in the war has been a major concern for the West. The US believes China is supplying tech that Russia is using to build missiles, tanks, and other battlefield weapons.
- ➔ Russian imports of machine tools, computer chips, and other dual-use items from China have increased significantly.
- ➔ The sales of Chinese logistics equipment like lorries (to transport troops) and excavators (to dig trenches) to Russia have increased by four to seven times since the war began.

### China – Russia Friendship: Concerns for India

- ➔ For New Delhi, the Russia-China defence axis throws up critical questions. **About 60-70% of Indian defense supplies come from Russia**, and India needs regular and reliable supplies.
- ➔ This is crucial especially at a time when Indian and Chinese soldiers are locked in a standoff at the border for the last four years.
- ➔ Experts in India are also worried about a scenario in which Russia becomes a “junior partner” of China.
- ➔ Analysts claim that if war broke out between India and China, Russia's response would be uncertain.
- ➔ During the 1962 war, Soviet Union did not support India. In contrast, Moscow backed India during the 1971 war.
- ➔ However, today's Russia under Vladimir Putin is different from the old Soviet Union, and its stance might vary.

# Death of Iranian President

- **Iran's President Ebrahim Raisi** along with country's foreign minister and several other officials died in helicopter crashed in the country's northwest.
- Iran's Supreme Leader **Ayatollah Ali Khamenei** said that First Vice President **Mohammad Mokhber** would take over as interim president.

## Death of President of Iran - India's concern

### Iran as part of its extended neighborhood

- India, which considers Iran to be part of its extended neighborhood, has been watching Iran's dynamics in the region quite closely and cautiously.
- The assessment in Delhi is that the supreme leader Ali Khamenei being the most powerful player in the Iranian establishment is around.
- Hence, the death of President Raisi will not create a political vacuum.

### Iran's response after the war in Gaza

- Iran's response after the war in Gaza, and the Israeli attack on its consulate in Syria which killed a top Iranian military officer, was a direct attack on Israel in April 2024.
- Israel being a close friend of India, India will be keenly watching these political developments.
- Iran's active support to some of the regional groups during Raisi's regime
- Iran's active support to some of the regional groups, often referred to as the **3Hs — Hezbollah, Houthis and the Hamas** — is seen to have impacted the peace and stability in the region.
- While Hezbollah has kept Israel busy on the northern border, the Houthis attacks on the ships passing through the Red Sea had disrupted the shipping sea routes for maritime trade.



### India was actively engaging with Raisi's regime

- **In August 2023**, Prime Minister Narendra Modi met with President Raisi in Johannesburg on the sidelines of the **BRICS Summit**. As a result, both the countries signed a **long-term contract on Chabahar Port in May 2024**.
- External Affairs minister S Jaishankar had also engaged with Iranian Foreign Amir, that had been key to securing Indian interests.
- The latest one being the release of Indian sailors who were on board a ship that was seized by the Iranian navy.

## Various agreements between both the countries

- The two countries had signed a **friendship treaty on March 15, 1950**, and the **visit of PM Vajpayee to Iran** and the signing of the **Tehran Declaration in April 2001**.
- However, the relationship was hampered by Delhi's proximity to the US, signing of the Indo-US nuclear deal, and Iran's nuclear programme faced sanctions.
- India has not been able to buy oil since 2018, and managed to get a waiver on the Chabahar port citing access to Afghanistan as the key reason.
- Earlier in May 2024, India signed a long-term agreement to further develop and operate one of the two terminals of the Chabahar port.
- The fact that **India sent Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar to Tehran** to offer condolences shows that retaining the current momentum in ties remains a priority for New Delhi.

### Role of President in Iran

- Iran's President works under the authority of the Supreme Leader but is still a powerful figure in Iran's political system.
- The President mediates between the legislature and the executive, and appoints ministers and vice presidents.
- The President also makes key foreign policy decisions. Then President Hassan Rouhani acted with significant authority during the JCPOA negotiations.

## Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA)

- The Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), also known as the **Iran nuclear deal**, is an agreement signed in **2015**.
- **Purpose:** The JCPOA aims to ensure that Iran's nuclear program remains exclusively peaceful.
- **Negotiating Parties:** Iran and the **P5+1 (the five permanent members of the UN Security Council: China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom, and the United States, plus Germany)**.
- In May 2018, President Donald Trump announced the US withdrawal from the JCPOA and re-imposed stringent sanctions on Iran.

# China Reclaims India's Top Trading Partner Tag

- China has emerged as the largest trading partner of India with **USD 118.4 billion two-way commerce in 2023-24**, narrowly **overtaking the US** (India-US two-way trade came in at \$118.3 billion in FY24).
- The US was India's top trading partner during FY22 and FY23 after China was the top bilateral trading partner in FY21.
- This has been revealed by the data released by the think tank Global Trade Research Initiative (GTRI).

## Bilateral Trade Between India and China

- India's bilateral trade with China in FY24 stood at \$118.4 billion.
- India's imports increased by 3.24 per cent to \$101.7 billion and exports rose by 8.7 per cent to \$16.67 billion in FY24 compared to FY23.
- Between FY19 and FY24, India's exports to China witnessed a marginal decline by 0.6 per cent, down from \$16.75 billion.
- However, during the same period, imports from China surged by 44.7%, up from \$70.32 billion

### India's Top 5 Trading Partners

1. China
2. USA
3. UAE
4. Russia
5. Saudi Arabia
6. Singapore
7. Iraq
8. Indonesia
9. Hong Kong
10. South Korea

## Major Imports from China to India

Electrical, electronic equipment, engineering goods, chemicals and related products, telecom equipment, organic chemicals and fertilizers, plastics, other manufacturing goods and textiles.

## Major Exports from India to China

Engineering goods, agricultural and allied products, ores and minerals (copper, aluminum), cotton, diamonds/natural gems, chemicals and related products, Petroleum & crude products etc.

## Existing trade deficit

- The balance of trade is highly tilted in Favour of China.
- The growth in imports from China led to an expanding trade deficit, rising from USD 53.57 billion in FY2019 to USD 85.09 billion in FY2024.
- **Reasons behind high trade deficit:**
  - India imports goods to fill Gap between domestic production & demand for various products
  - Export of raw materials while importing finished goods
  - India's pharmaceutical industry imports about 68% of its active pharmaceutical ingredients (APIs) from China.
  - A narrow basket of commodities, mostly primary, that India exports to China.
  - Market access impediments for most Indian agricultural products and competitive markets, such as pharmaceuticals, IT/ITES etc.

## Strategic implications of widening trade deficit

- India's trade relations with China have been under scrutiny largely due to India's dependence on the neighboring country's critical products.
- These products include telecom & smartphone parts, pharma, advanced technology components among others.
- It should be noted that China is the top supplier in eight major industrial sectors, including machinery, chemicals, pharmaceuticals, and textiles.
- In the fast-emerging EV sector too, India's dependence on China is high as lithium-ion batteries for EVs are imported from China.
- These were valued at \$2.2 billion, comprising 75 per cent of such imports, and are critical for India's electrification of transport.
- The strategic implications of this dependency are profound and affects not only economic but national security dimensions.
- Now, India has undertaken significant measures to decrease its dependence on China through production linked incentive schemes (PLI), anti-dumping duties along with quality control orders.

## India – US Bilateral Trade

- India-US two-way trade came in at \$118.3 billion in FY24 after exports dipped by 1.32% to \$77.5 billion compared to FY 23.
- During this period, imports also dipped 20% to \$40.8 billion.
- During the last five years, trade with the US showed positive growth, with exports increasing significantly by 47.9 per cent from \$52.41 billion.
- Imports from the US grew by 14.7 per cent, rising from \$35.55 billion.
- This resulted in an expanded trade surplus for India, which grew from \$16.86 billion to \$36.74 billion.

# Blue Corner Notice Against Sitting MP

Amid a political storm in Karnataka over grave allegations of sexual abuse against **Prajwal Revanna**, sitting Hassan MP, Interpol has issued a Blue Corner notice against the absconding politician.

## Interpol

- **Full Name** - International Criminal Police Organisation.
- Interpol is the radio-telegraph code for the organisation.
- Interpol is made up of **196-member countries**. It does not work under UN.
- It has enjoyed a special role – that of Permanent Observer at United Nations - since 1996.
- It was **founded in 1923** and is **headquartered at Lyon, France**.

## Functions

- It is not a police force in the traditional sense—its agents are not able to arrest criminals.
- It is more of an information sharing network.
- It provides a way for national police forces to co-operate effectively and tackle international crime ranging from human trafficking and terrorism to money laundering and illegal art dealing.
- Sharing of information is done by issuing colour-coded notices in four languages - English, Spanish, French, and Arabic.
- The organization operates centralized criminal databases that contain fingerprint records, DNA samples and stolen documents.
- The agency has a National Central Bureau (NCB) in all member countries, which is a single point of contact between law enforcement agencies of that country and Interpol.

## Types of Interpol Notices

- Interpol issues different types of notices which have different objectives. **Types of notices issued – Red, Blue, Yellow, Black, Orange, Purple, Green etc.**
- **Red Notice** is a notification that a member state would like someone arrested.
- A '**Blue Corner**' notice is issued when the case is related to missing persons.
- Also called an enquiry notice, such an alert is sent for additional information from member States about a person, to verify their identity, location, or criminal record concerning a criminal investigation.

COLOUR-CODED INTERPOL NOTICES AND WHAT THEY SIGNIFY	
There are seven types of notices that help in tracing miscreants hiding in foreign countries or in announcing alerts on suspicious objects	
<b>Red  </b> For tracing miscreants against whom a chargesheet has been filed in court 	hidden in parcels, disguised weapons and other hazardous substances 
 <b>Blue  </b> This helps countries share alerts on suspects and respond to requests on information about wanted persons	<b>Green  </b> To alert foreign countries about repeat offenders involved in sex-related crimes and cybercrimes
<b>Yellow  </b> To locate missing persons, minors in particular 	<b>Purple  </b> This is meant to track, arrest and deport members of international crime syndicates, involved in piracy and drug smuggling 
 <b>Orange  </b> To warn against any imminent threat from a person, object, material	<b>Black  </b> To identify unidentified dead bodies believed to be of foreign nationals 

- The **'INTERPOL-United Nations Security Council Special Notice'** is issued for entities and individuals who are the targets of the UN Security Council Sanctions Committees.
- States are not obliged to follow these notices, but will often treat them as a warrant for someone's arrest and
- extradition.
- In the present case, the investigating team moved for a Blue Corner alert against Mr. Revanna, considering that the investigation is in the early stages and the police are yet to file criminal charges.

# confactuals

- ECONOMY
- GOVERNANCE & SCHEMES
- SOCIAL ISSUES
- INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS
- SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY
- DEFENSE AND SECURITY
- ENVIRONMENT AND ECOLOGY
- ART AND CULTURE
- SPORTS



# VIDHIGYA CONFACTUALS

## ECONOMY

### GST Appellate Tribunal

- The **Union Minister for Finance and Corporate Affairs** recently administered the oath of integrity and secrecy to **Justice (Retd.) Sanjaya Kumar Mishra** as the first President of the GST Appellate Tribunal (GSTAT).
  - The president of the national bench would be a **former judge of the Supreme Court or former Chief Justice of a High Court**.
- The appointment marks the beginning of the operationalization of the **GSTAT**, a crucial body for resolving GST related disputes.
- The GSTAT is an appellate authority established under the **Central Goods and Services Tax Act, 2017**.
- It is responsible to hear various appeals under the said Act and the respective State/UTs GST Acts against the orders of the first appellate authority.
- The Tribunal consists of a **Principal Bench** and various State Benches. The Principal Bench has been notified at **New Delhi** and **31 State Benches** have been notified at various locations across the country.
- The Principal Bench consists of the **President, a judicial member and two technical members** (one for the Centre and one for the State).

#### Significance

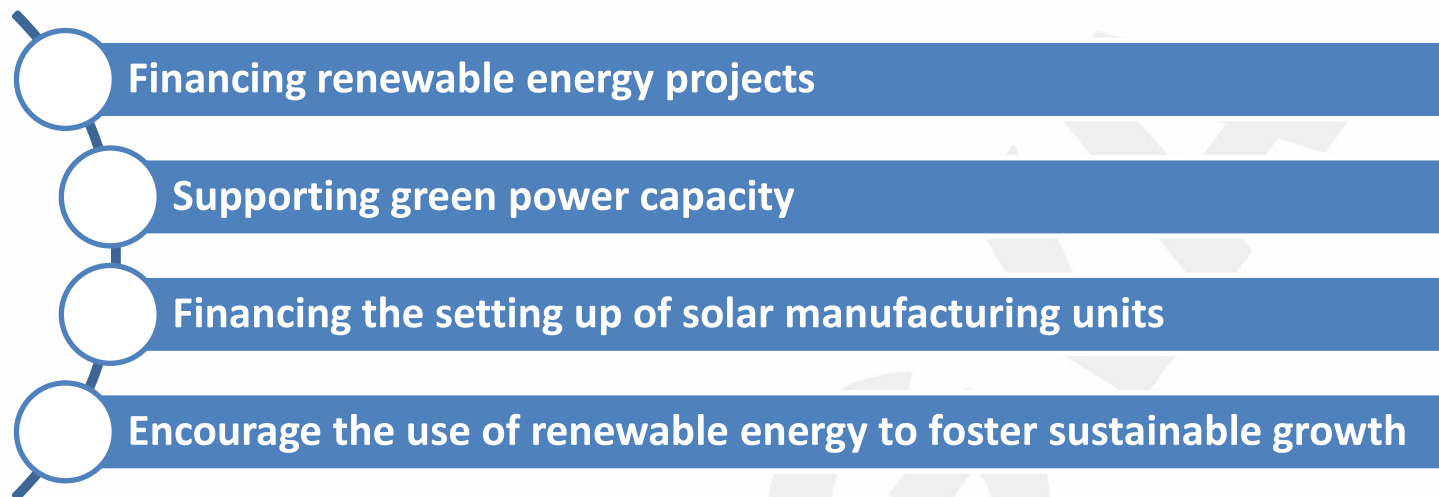
- The Tribunal will ensure **swift, fair, judicious** and **effective resolution to GST disputes**, besides significantly reducing the burden on higher courts.
  - Currently, taxpayers aggrieved with ruling of tax authorities are required to move the respective High Courts. The resolution process takes a long time as High Courts are already burdened with backlog of cases and do not have a specialized bench to deal with GST cases.
- It would further enhance the effectiveness of the **GST system in India** and facilitate a more transparent and **efficient tax environment in the country**.

### IREDA Gets Navratna Status

- The Indian Renewable Energy Development Agency (IREDA) was recently granted '**Navratna**' status by the **Department of Public Enterprises**.
- IREDA is a public sector enterprise functioning under the administrative control of **Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE)**.
- It was established as a **Non-Banking Financial Institution** in **1987** for promoting, developing and extending financial assistance for **setting up projects related to new and renewable sources of energy** and **energy efficiency/conservation**.

- It has been notified as a '**Public Financial Institution**' under the **Companies Act, 1956** and registered as Non-Banking Financial Company (NBFC) with RBI.

## Objectives



## Benefits of Navratna status

- The grant of "**Navratna**" status leads to **enhanced delegation of powers**, more operational freedom and financial autonomy which will give huge impetus to the company's progress.
- Normally, a CPSE requires permission from the Indian government to **invest a large sum of money** in a project or a deal.
- The Navratna companies are granted financial independence to **invest up to ₹ 1,000 crore** without seeking approval from the central government.
- Navratna companies are also allowed to **invest up to 15% of their net worth on a single project**, or **30% of their net worth in a given year, subject to a cap of ₹ 1,000 crore**.
- This increased financial freedom gives Navratna companies a competitive edge when competing globally.

## AI Krish and AI Bhoomi

- DD Kisan has deployed **two Artificial Intelligence anchors - AI Krish and AI Bhoomi** - as part of the initiative to present the television channel in a new avatar.
- **DD Kisan** is the **first government TV channel of the country**, to feature AI anchors. The farmer viewers will be able to see these anchors in all the states of the country.
- These news anchors are a computer, which are exactly like a human, or rather, these can work like a human.
- They can speak in **50 Indian and foreign languages** and read news 24 hours and 365 days without stopping or getting tired.
- These AI anchors will provide every necessary information about **agricultural research** happening in the country and at the global level, trends in **agriculture mandis**, changes in the weather, or any other information of government schemes.

## India International Bullion Exchange

- The **State Bank of India (SBI)** has become the first trading-cum-clearing member at the India International Bullion Exchange (IIBX).
- This enables SBI's **IFSC Banking unit (IBU)** to trade on the IIBX platform.
- **Bullion:** Bullion refers to **physical gold and silver of high purity** that is often kept in the form of bars, ingots, or coins. Bullion can sometimes be considered legal tender and is often held as reserves by central banks or by institutional investors.

### IIBX

- IIBX is India's first International Bullion Exchange set up at the **GIFT City, IFSC (International Financial Services Center), Gandhinagar**.
- IIBX has been conceptualised to provide a gateway to import bullion into India and provide world class bullion exchange ecosystem to **promote bullion trading, investment in bullion financial products and vaulting facilities in IFSCs**.
- It offers a diversified portfolio of products and technology services at a cost which is far more competitive than the Indian exchanges as well as other global exchanges in **Hong Kong Singapore, Dubai, London and New York**.
- IIBX is regulated by the **International Financial Services Centres Authority (IFSCA)**.

### International Financial Services Centres Authority (IFSCA)

- The IFSCA was established in **2020**, under the **IFSCA Act, 2019**. It is headquartered at **GIFT City, Gandhinagar in Gujarat**.
- It is a unified authority for the development and regulation of financial products, financial services and financial institutions in the **International Financial Services Centre (IFSC)** in India.
- Prior to the establishment of IFSCA, the domestic financial regulators, namely, **RBI, SEBI, PFRDA and IRDAI regulated the business in IFSC**.
- Its main objective is to develop a strong global connect and focus on the needs of the Indian economy as well as to serve as an **international financial platform** for the entire region and the global economy.

## Initiatives to Enhance Public access to Central Bank

RBI has launched three major initiatives – the **PRAVAAH portal, the Retail Direct Mobile App and a FinTech Repository** – aimed at enhancing public access to the central bank and facilitating regulatory approvals and transactions.

### PRAVAAH portal

- The **PRAVAAH (Platform for Regulatory Application, Validation, and Authorisation)** portal is a secure and centralized web-based platform for individuals and entities to apply online for various regulatory approvals from the RBI.
- The portal streamlines the process of seeking **authorizations, licenses, or regulatory approvals** by providing a single point of contact for applicants.

## Retail Direct Mobile App

- It offers retail investors easy access to the **Retail Direct platform** and facilitates transactions in government securities (G-Secs).
- The app enables retail investors to open Retail Direct Gilt accounts with the RBI, **participate in primary auctions for G-Secs, and buy and sell G-Secs** in the secondary market.

## Fintech Repository

- The Fintech Repository is a comprehensive database containing information on the **Indian fintech sector**, their products and services.
- It aims to provide a better understanding of the sector from a **regulatory perspective** and **facilitate the design of appropriate policy approaches**.
- It includes information on **Indian fintech companies, their products and services**, and the regulatory framework applicable to them.

## EmTech Repository

- The RBI has also launched a related repository called the **EmTech Repository** meant for **RBI-regulated entities (banks and NBFCs)**.
- The EmTech Repository contains information on the adoption of emerging technologies such as **Artificial Intelligence (AI), machine learning (ML), cloud computing, distributed ledger technology (DLT)**, and quantum computing by these entities.

## Financial Services Institutions Bureau (FSIB)

- Financial Services Institutions Bureau (FSIB) is in the process of interviewing candidates for the post of **SBI chairman**.
- FSIB is a government body set up under the **Department of Financial Services (DFS)**. The board is entrusted with making recommendations for the appointment of **full-time directors** and **non-executive chairman** of state-run financial services institutions.
- It also issues guidelines for selecting general managers and directors of **public sector general insurance companies**.
- The board is also involved in formulating and developing business strategies for state-run banks and help them in their fund-raising plans.
- It replaced the **Bank Board's Bureau (BBB)**, which was declared an incompetent authority.

## Structure

- FSIB is headed by a **chairman, a central government nominee**.
- The board comprises of the **Secretaries of the DFS, the chairman of Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI)**, and a deputy governor of the RBI.
- Additionally, it has **three part-time members** who are experts in banking and three more from the insurance sector.

## India VIX

In the month of May, the India VIX has risen by around 53 percent and recently crossed the 21 mark.

### What is India VIX?

- **Definition:** India VIX is a **volatility index computed by the National Stock Exchange (NSE)** based on the order book of NIFTY Options.
- **Purpose:** It indicates investors' perception of market volatility in the near term, depicting expected market volatility over the next 30 calendar days.
- **Interpretation:** Higher India VIX values indicate higher expected volatility, while lower values indicate lower expected volatility.

### Current Market Sentiment

The recent rise in India VIX shows increased fear among traders or market participants regarding expected market volatility. This current fear is primarily driven by the uncertainty surrounding the outcome of the ongoing Lok Sabha elections.

### Trademark Information

'VIX' is a trademark of the Chicago Board Options Exchange (CBOE). Standard & Poor's has granted a license to NSE, with permission from the CBOE, to use this mark in the name of the index.

## Zimbabwe Gold (ZiG)

To address its long-standing economic instability, the **Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe (RBZ)** has launched a new **gold-backed currency** called the **ZiG**, short for Zimbabwe Gold, **replacing the Zimbabwean dollar**.

### Need for Launching a New Currency

- **Multiple Currencies:** The ZiG is now the sixth national currency used by Zimbabwe in 15 years.
- **Hyperinflation:** Zimbabwe has faced extreme inflation, with rates surpassing 500% in recent years.
- **Historical Context:** The Zimbabwean dollar, introduced in 1980, lost its value due to hyperinflation. This led the country to rely on various currencies, primarily the US dollar, resulting in limited economic control.
- **Severe Currency Crash:** The collapse of the Zimbabwean dollar in 2009, with hyperinflation peaking at 5 billion percent, marked one of the most severe currency crashes in history.
- **Objective:** By backing the currency with gold, the RBZ aims to restore public confidence, provide stability, prevent devaluation, and stabilize the exchange rate.



## Backed vs. Redeemable Currency

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- **Definition:** A critical distinction exists between a currency backed by assets and one redeemable for those assets.
- **ZiG Backing:** The ZiG is backed by a basket of assets, including gold, but is not directly redeemable for gold by currency holders.
- **Implications:** This means while the currency's value is supported by gold, holders cannot exchange it for gold on demand, unlike some gold-backed currencies that allow direct redemption for physical gold, providing additional security and liquidity.

## Convertibility

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**Current Status:** ZiG is not yet fully convertible.

**Future Plans:** The RBZ intends to work towards making ZiG a fully convertible currency.

**Convertibility Definition:** Convertibility refers to the ease with which a currency can be freely exchanged for foreign currencies without restrictions or legal obstacles.

## Way Ahead

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The success of ZiG will depend on robust economic policies, political stability, and the commitment of the government and central bank to uphold fiscal discipline and transparency.

# GOVERNANCE AND SCHEMES

## Release of Newsclick Founder by Supreme Court

The Supreme Court recently ordered the release of Newsclick founder-editor **Prabir Purkayastha** in case. Prabir was arrested under the the **Unlawful Activities Prevention Act, 1967 (UAPA)** for allegedly receiving funds for promoting Chinese propaganda.

### Why Was the Arrest Invalidated by SC?

- The top court held the police had failed to communicate the grounds of his arrest to him or his counsel.
- A bench of Justices B.R. Gavai and Sandeep Mehta said, “There is no hesitation in the mind of the court to reach to the conclusion that the copy of the remand application in the purported exercise of communication of the ground of arrest in writing was not provided to the accused appellant or his counsel before the passing of the order of remand dated 4 October 2023. Hence, it vitiates the arrest and subsequent remand of the appellant.”
- In its verdict on the Pankaj Bansal case, the apex court had ruled that before arresting anyone, the police must provide reasons for it in writing to the person taken into custody.
- The bench said “It said “the purpose of informing to the arrested person the grounds of arrest is salutary and sacrosanct inasmuch as, this information would be the only effective means for the arrested person to consult his Advocate; oppose the police custody remand and to seek bail. Any other interpretation would tantamount to diluting the sanctity of the fundamental right guaranteed under **Article 22(1)** of the Constitution of India”.”

### Article 22

- **Article 22 (1):** No person who is arrested shall be detained in custody without being informed, as soon as may be, of the grounds for such arrest nor shall he be denied the right to consult, and to be defended by, a legal practitioner of his choice.
- **Article 22 (2):** Every person who is arrested and detained in custody shall be produced before the nearest magistrate within a period of twenty-four hours of such arrest excluding the time necessary for the journey from the place of arrest to the court of the magistrate and no such person shall be detained in custody beyond the said period without the authority of a magistrate.

### UAPA and Concerns Regarding It

- The Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act is an Indian law aimed at prevention of unlawful activities associations in India. Its main objective was to make powers available for dealing with activities directed against the integrity and sovereignty of India.
- The most recent amendment of the law, the **Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Amendment Act, 2019 (UAPA 2019)** has made it possible for the Union Government to designate individuals as terrorists without following any formal judicial process.
- The UAPA, also known as the **"Anti-terror law"** has been in spotlight due to some concerns such as:
  - A remand order can be for 30 days instead of the usual 15, and the maximum period of judicial custody before the filing of a charge sheet is extendable from the usual 90 days to 180 days.
  - Under Section 43D (5) of the Act, bail cannot be granted to a suspect if the court is of the opinion that there are reasonable grounds to believe that the charges are prima facie true.

## Rules on Contesting Seats

Recently, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi announced his intention to contest from Rae Bareilly in Uttar Pradesh after the Kerala election, where he is also a contestant from Wayanad. This has raised questions about the rules governing such decisions.

### Contesting Multiple Seats

- **Legal Framework:** According to **Section 33(7) of the Representation of the People Act (RPA), 1951**, a candidate can contest an election from up to two constituencies but is allowed to hold only one seat at a time if elected from both constituencies (as per Section 70 of RPA).
- **Amendment History:** Section 33(7) was added through an amendment in 1996 to avoid the need to conduct multiple by-elections for the remaining seats after the polls were over.
- **Recommendations for Change:** The Election Commission of India and the Law Commission have recommended amending the RPA to allow one person to contest from only one seat, as a candidate cannot hold two seats simultaneously. For Assembly polls, the candidate should be a voter in the particular state they seek to contest from.
- **Current Rules:** For Lok Sabha elections, a person can be registered as a voter in any constituency of the country and can contest from any seat in India, except autonomous districts of Assam, Lakshadweep, and Sikkim.

### Prerequisites for Contesting Elections

- **Minimum Age:** The minimum age for contesting Lok Sabha and Assembly elections is 25 years.
- **Citizenship and Voter Registration:** Candidates must be Indian citizens, registered as valid voters in any constituency.
- **Criminal Convictions:** Candidates must not have been convicted of any offense punishable by more than two years.

### Disqualifications from Contesting Elections

A person shall be disqualified from being chosen as or being a member of either House if:

- **Office of Profit:** They hold any office of profit under the Government of India or the Government of any State.
- **Mental Health:** They are of unsound mind and stand so declared by a competent court.
- **Insolvency:** They are undischarged insolvents.
- **Citizenship:** They are not citizens of India or have voluntarily acquired the citizenship of a foreign state.
- **Criminal Convictions:** They are convicted of any offense and sentenced to imprisonment of two years or more, leading to disqualification under Section 8 of the RPA.
- **Pending Appeals:** They are out on bail after conviction and their appeal is pending for disposal. If the conviction is stayed, the candidate can contest elections.
- **Serious Offenses:** They are convicted for serious offenses like dowry, rape, murder, etc., regardless of the quantum of punishment.

These rules ensure that candidates meet specific qualifications and adhere to legal standards to maintain the integrity of the electoral process.

# World Press Freedom Day and the World Press Freedom Index 2023

On the **World Press Freedom Day (WPDF) (3rd May)**, the World Press Freedom Index 2023 was published by **Reporters Without Borders (RSF)**. **India ranked 161st among the 180 countries** with a score of 36.62. In 2022, India's rank was 150.

## About

- **Publication:** The Index has been published annually since 2002 by Reporters Without Borders (RSF).
- **RSF:** An independent NGO based in Paris with consultative status with the United Nations, UNESCO, the Council of Europe, and the International Organisation of the Francophonie (OIF).
- **Scope:** The report ranks 180 countries based on their level of press freedom, considering factors like censorship, media independence, and the safety of journalists, though it does not measure the quality of journalism.
- **Theme of World Press Freedom Index 2023:** "Shaping a Future of Rights: Freedom of Expression as a Driver for All Other Human Rights."

## Key Highlights:

- **India's Ranking:** India ranked 161st among 180 countries with a score of 36.62. In 2022, India's rank was 150.
- **Top Performers:** Norway, Ireland, and Denmark occupied the top three positions.
- **Bottom Performers:** Vietnam, China, and North Korea were at the bottom of the list.
- **India's Neighbors:** Sri Lanka improved to 135th, up from 146th in 2022. Pakistan is ranked 150th.
- **Worsening Situations:** The situation has deteriorated from 'problematic' to 'very bad' in Tajikistan (153rd), India (161st), and Turkey (165th).

## Evaluation Criteria:

- Each country or territory's score is evaluated using five contextual indicators:
  1. Political Context
  2. Legal Framework
  3. Economic Context
  4. Sociocultural Context
  5. Safety

These factors collectively determine each country's score and ranking, reflecting the overall press freedom environment.

# Can Parties Be De-Recognized or De-Registered for Violation Of MCC?

The Election Commission of India (ECI) in its report on enforcement of Model Code of Conduct (MCC) recently served notices to political parties for violation of MCC by their star campaigners. This has raised a debate about ECI's powers to rein in MCC violations and if it could de-recognize/de-register a party for violation of MCC.

## Types of Political Parties

- **Registered Parties** are the political parties which register themselves with Election Commission of India (ECI). As per ECI, there are 2,790 active registered political parties in India.
- **Recognized Political Parties** are recognized as a 'national' or 'State' party under the provisions of The Election Symbols (Reservation and Allotment) Order, 1968 (Symbols Order).
- **Registered Unrecognized Political Party (RUPPs)** are either newly registered parties or those which have not secured enough percentage of votes in the assembly or general elections to become a state party, or those which have never contested elections since being registered. The total number of registered unrecognized political parties in the country at present is 2,796.

## Issues Faced by ECI Regarding Political Parties

1. **All Parties Not Contesting Elections-** It has been observed that less than third RUPP contest elections and RPA does not confer explicit powers on the ECI to de-register any political party if it fails to contest elections, conduct inner-party elections or lodge requisite returns.
2. **Misuse of Tax-Exemption-** The RUPPs not contesting elections have raised concerns over the possible misuse of income tax exemption and donations collected being used for money laundering.
3. **Legal Limitation of ECI on Action Against Parties Violating MCC-** Recognized political parties are often found guilty of violating the MCC on various occasions for using caste and communal feelings to secure votes and bribing or intimidation of voters. But the ECI on such occasions only bars the leaders from campaigning for a short period of two to three days and takes no action against the political party involved.
4. **MCC lacks statutory backing and is not enforceable by law.**

## Can ECI De-register or De-recognize a Political Party?

- **De-registration-** No, ECI has no power to de-register a party under RPA except for circumstances like registration being obtained by fraud or the political party ceasing to have allegiance to the Constitution or if it is declared unlawful by the Central Government.
- **De-recognition-**
  - Paragraph 16A of the Symbols (Reservation and Allotment) Order 1968. empowers the ECI to suspend or withdraw recognition of a recognized political party for its failure to observe MCC or follow lawful directions of the Commission.
  - A party could also be de-recognized if it fails to fulfil the conditions required for being recognized as a national/state party.

## Way Forward

- ECI in 2015 suspended the recognition of the National People's Party, a recognized state party in Meghalaya due to its failure in filing the election expenditure statement of the party despite sending two reminders. It was the first case that recognition of a party was suspended for its failure to follow the Lawful directions of the Commission.
- The ECI in pursuance of SC's order in **Common Cause Vs Union of India and others, 1995** had issued instructions to all political parties, to file their election expenditure statement within 75 days of assembly general elections and 90 days of Lok Sabha general elections.
- The ECI in its 2016 Memorandum for Electoral Reforms has suggested amendments allowing itself to deregister a party.

### Conditions for Declaring a National Party

As per the ECI's Political Parties and Election Symbols, 2019 handbook, a political party would be considered a national party if:

- It is recognized as **state party in four or more states**; or
- If its candidates have secured **at least 6% of total valid votes in at least 4 states** (in latest Lok Sabha or Assembly elections) and the party has **at least 4 MPs in the last LS polls**; or
- If it has won **at least 2% of the total seats in the LS from at least 3 states**.

## PM-EAC Report

A new analysis by **Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister (PM-EAC)** shows that the share of Hindu population in India has dipped 7.82 per cent while that of Muslims, Christians and Sikhs has seen a rise in the 65-year period between 1950 and 2015.

### About Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister (EAC-PM)

- It is a non-constitutional, non-permanent and independent body constituted to give advice to the Government, specifically the Prime Minister (PM) on key economic issues.
- **Origin-** It was set up in **2017** with a term of two years replacing the erstwhile PMEAC, which was headed by former RBI governor **C Rangarajan** during the tenure of former PM Manmohan Singh.
- **Composition-**
  - It is headed by a chairperson (Now **Dr. Bibek Debroy**) consisting of eminent economists' members.
  - For administrative, logistic, planning, and budgeting purposes, the NITI Aayog serves as the nodal agency for the EAC-PM.
- **Functions-**
  - Analyzing any issue, economic or otherwise, referred to it by the PM and advising him on the same.
  - Addressing issues of macroeconomic importance and presenting its views to the PM, these could be either Suo-moto or on reference by the PM or anyone else.
  - Attending to any other task as may be desired by the PM from time to time.

## Draft Digital Competition Bill

India has proposed a new digital competition law, the Digital Competition Bill, 2024, to regulate tech giants such as Google, Facebook, and Amazon. This draft law aims to prevent these companies from favoring their own services and misusing data collected from one entity to benefit another within the same group.

The bill is also seen as necessary due to the history of anti-competitive behaviors by big tech companies. Example: Google fined Rs 1.337 crore by CCI for anti-competitive conduct in the Android ecosystem.

### Key Provisions of the Digital Competition Bill, 2024:

#### 1. Predictive Regulation:

- The bill shifts from reactive (**ex post**) regulation to proactive (**ex ante**) regulation.
- It aims to prevent anti-competitive practices before they occur by setting presumptive norms.
- Moves away from the current Competition Act, 2002, which is criticized for its delays in addressing market abuses.

#### 2. Systematically Significant Digital Enterprises (SSDE):

- Designation based on criteria such as turnover, user base, and market influence.
- Criteria include:
  - Turnover in India  $\geq$  Rs 4,000 crore or global turnover  $\geq$  \$30 billion in the last three financial years.
  - Gross merchandise value in India  $\geq$  Rs 16,000 crore.
  - Global market capitalization  $\geq$  \$75 billion.
  - Core digital services must have at least 1 crore end users or 10,000 business users.
- The Bill prohibits SSDEs from self-preferencing, anti-steering, and restricting third-party applications.
- Violations can result in fines up to 10% of global turnover.

#### 3. Associate Digital Enterprises (ADE):

- Designation for companies within a tech group that benefit from shared data.
- ADEs will have similar obligations as SSDEs based on their involvement with core digital services.
- Example: Google Maps benefiting from Google Search data.

### Concerns and Criticisms:

#### 1. Compliance Burden:

- Significant compliance costs could hinder innovation and shift focus away from research and development.
- Example: The EU's Digital Markets Act (DMA) increased compliance time significantly for companies like Google.

#### 2. Broad Criteria for SSDE Designation:

- Concerns about arbitrary decisions by the Competition Commission of India (CCI).
- Potential negative impact on smaller businesses and start-ups that rely on large platforms for market access.

#### 3. Security Risks:

- Companies like Apple argue that allowing third-party app stores could pose security risks.
- Google has similar concerns regarding sideloading of apps outside its official app store.

# SOCIAL ISSUES

## Smart Cities Mission

Despite two extensions until June 2024, the Smart Cities Mission (SCM) launched in 2015, is unlikely to meet its deadline, with 5,533 completed projects funded at Rs. 65,063 crore and 921 ongoing projects worth Rs. 21,000 crores.

### About Smart Cities Mission (SCM)

- It is a Centrally Sponsored Scheme, launched in **June 2015** to transform **100 cities** to provide the necessary core infrastructure and clean and sustainable environment to enable a decent quality of life to their citizens through the application of "**Smart Solutions**".
- It aimed to improve the quality of life for citizens through sustainable and inclusive development.
- There is no standard definition or template of a smart city. In the context of our country, the **six fundamental principles** on which the concept of Smart Cities is based are:



## Centre takes away state powers for issuing NOC for export of drugs

- Amid growing global scrutiny of Indian-made drugs, the central government has become the sole authority to issue manufacturing licenses for new drugs for export, taking back the power from state governments.
- Since 2018, export NOC and manufacturing license were granted by **State Licensing Authority** for manufacturing unapproved/banned/new drugs solely for export purposes.
- However, in recent notification sole licensing authority will be **Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation (CDSCO)**.
- All manufacturers are required to obtain NOC from respective Zonal offices of CDSCO through SUGAM Portal.
- The decision comes in view of Drug Consultative Committee's observation that process of obtaining NOCs from state drug regulators for pharmaceutical products is time-consuming, further delaying export consignment.
- The Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation is India's national regulatory body for cosmetics, pharmaceuticals and medical devices.

# INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

## Malaysia's Orangutan Diplomacy

- Recently, Malaysia announced its plans to gift orangutans to countries that import its palm oil as part of a strategy called "**orangutan diplomacy**".
- Orangutans are great apes native to the rainforests of Indonesia and Malaysia.
- **IUCN** has classified the Bornean & Sumatran orangutans as **critically endangered**.
- The plan would entail gifting the great apes to trading partners, such as the EU, India and China, that import large quantities of palm oil for use in products from food to cosmetics.
- Malaysia has planned to offer the animals as trading gifts in an effort to allay concerns about the environmental effects of growing the commodity.
- Malaysia is the **world's second-largest producer of Palm oil**.
- Palm oil is used in a wide range of products, from pizza and other foodstuffs to lipsticks, soaps and shampoos.
- However, according to experts, its production on large plantations has decisively contributed to a significant loss of orangutan habitat in both Malaysia and Indonesia.
- This move came after the EU, in 2023, decided on phasing-out commodities, like palm oil, that are linked to deforestation by 2030.



## Norway, Ireland And Spain to Recognize Palestine As State

Norway, Ireland, and Spain said that they would recognize a state of Palestine marking the first time a Western European country has committed to such recognition.

### Criteria to be recognized as a state

- **The Montevideo Convention on the Rights and Duties of States (1933)**, identified four conditions of a state:
  - a permanent population,
  - defined territory,
  - government, and
  - capacity to enter into relations with other states.
- **The United Nations – criterion for accepting states as Members.**

- **Article 4 of the UN Charter states:** Membership in the United Nations is open to all other peace-loving states which accept the obligations contained in the present Charter and, in the judgment of the Organization, are able and willing to carry out these obligations.

#### ➤ Procedure:

- Admission to the United Nations (UN) as a Member State is granted by a two-thirds majority vote in the UN General Assembly. However, the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) takes up the candidature only upon the recommendation of the UN Security Council (UNSC)
- The UNSC comprises five permanent members (P5)- the United States, the United Kingdom, Russia, China, and France. 10 temporary member countries chosen on a rotational basis.
- For the UNSC recommendation to pass there must be a vote, with at least nine members in favour and no permanent members using their veto.



### Status of Palestine at the UN

- Currently, Palestine is a **Permanent Observer State** and not a Member State at the UN. (There is one other Permanent Observer State in the UN — the **Holy See, representing Vatican City**).
- As a Permanent Observer State, Palestine is allowed to participate in all of the Organization's proceedings, except for voting on draft resolutions and decisions in its main organs and bodies, from the Security Council to the General Assembly and its six main committees.
- Palestine graduated to the status of non-member Permanent Observer State from having Observer status in 2012.
- Palestine has attempted to secure membership in the UN as a state in the past. In the UNSC, the United States had vetoed its admission.
- **Before the announcement by Norway, Ireland, and Spain, 143 of the UN's 193 members already recognized Palestine as a state. India accorded recognition in 1988.**

## United Kingdom's Graduate Route Visa (GRV) Scheme

- The British PM is contemplating tweaking the United Kingdom's Graduate Route visa (GRV) scheme with a view to curb the influx of international students to the country.
- Currently, **Indians constitute roughly 42% of GRV holders**, again, the highest among all nationalities.
- According to the UK Home Office, the number of student visas issued to Indians increased 54% between June 2022 and June 2023.

### Graduate Route Visa (GRV) scheme

- The GRV was introduced by the UK government in **July 2021**.

- **It permits individuals to remain in the UK for at least two years upon successful completion of a bachelor's, post-graduate, or other eligible courses.**
- For those with PhDs or other doctoral qualifications, the GRV extends to a three-year stay.
- A GRV applicant must be in the UK at the time of application and hold a Short-Term Study visa or a General Student Visa.
- Additionally, the applicant's education provider must notify the UK Home Office about the course's successful completion.

### Why do Indians seek GRVs?

- **Other visas:** GRV provides a window for individuals to obtain other visas (such as a work visa) by finding a good sponsor or employer.
- **Allowing family:** GRV allows families to accompany the GRV-holder if certain eligibility criteria are met.
- **Repayment of education cost:** Students repay costly student loans by working in the UK after studies and making some money to lead a comfortable life.

### Impact of possible GRV tweaks

- Restricting GRVs could significantly reduce the number of international students seeking to study in the UK by creating uncertainty.
- Restricting GRV only to the "best and brightest" will especially hinder the prospects of the 'average' student seeking to study in the UK.
- Financial viability of British Universities: The fees paid by international students help universities cover the cost of teaching British students and conducting research.

## India-Nepal Border Dispute

The Government of Nepal has decided to come out with a Rs-100 currency note that depicts the country's map with India's territories.

### Background

- In **May 2020**, the Government of Nepal had released an updated political map of the country, claiming **Kalapani, Limpiyadhura and Lipulekh of Uttarakhand** as part of Nepal's territory.
- Both India and Nepal lay claim to Kalapani region.
- The Kalapani region derives its name from the Kali River. In Nepal, the river is known as Mahakali and it holds as much significance in Nepal as the Ganga River does in India.
- The river works as a natural border between India and Nepal.
- The source of the Kali River has been a point of dispute between India and Nepal.

### India's Stand:

India states that Kalapani is in Pithoragarh, Uttarakhand where the river originates from.

## Nepal's Stand:

Nepal alleges that the river originates either from Limpiyadhura or from Lipulekh and considers both the locations as part of Nepal's Sudurpaschim province.

## Historical Background

- Under the **Treaty of Sagauli (1816)** signed between **British East India Company and Nepal**, the **Kali River was marked as Nepal's western boundary with India**.
- It, however, made no mention of ridgeline and the subsequent maps by the British surveyors showed the source of the Kali River at different places.
- This discrepancy has led to the boundary disputes between India and Nepal.
- Officially, **Nepal brought the issue of Kalapani before India for the first time in 1998**.



## Recent Dispute Between the Two Countries

- Earlier in 2020, Defence Minister of India Shri Rajnath Singh had inaugurated a new link road from India to China to shorten the travel time for pilgrims to Kailash Mansarovar via Lipulekh pass.
- The road starts from Dharchula in Uttarakhand to Lipulekh pass.
- Nepal had protested strongly against this move by India and claimed that it is a breach of agreement reached between the Prime Ministers of India and Nepal in 2014 to work out on the outstanding boundary issues on Kalapani and Susta (West Champaran, Bihar).
- In response, a Constitutional Amendment Bill was passed by Nepal's parliament to legitimize the alteration to the country's map with the addition of Kalapani, Lipulekh and Limpiyadhura.
- The passage of the Bill and the new map led to a temporary breakdown of communication between the two countries.
- India rejected the updated map of Nepal stating that the map is not based on historical facts and evidence.
- The move was described by the Ministry of External Affairs as "artificial", "unilateral" and "unacceptable". India had also asked Nepal to return to dialogue.

## 7th India-Indonesia Joint Defence Cooperation Committee

- During this meeting in Delhi, both the sides agreed to enhance collaboration in areas of defence industry, maritime security and multilateral cooperation.
- India and Indonesia have a Comprehensive Strategic Partnership and have arrived at a shared vision of the Indo-Pacific.
- Earlier, the first-ever "India-Indonesia Defence Industry Exhibition-cum-Seminar" was organised in Jakarta to mark the 75th year of establishment of diplomatic ties.

## India – UK Maritime Cooperation

- The U.K. is using a logistics support agreement with India to enhance military engagements, particularly in the maritime domain, and boost its Indo-Pacific capabilities.
- This **logistics-sharing agreement** signed in **2022**, enables logistic support, supplies, and services for joint training, exercises, authorized port visits, and Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) operations.
- In April, a U.K. warship received maintenance at Larsen & Toubro's shipyard in Kattupalli. This coincided with a visit by the Royal Navy Littoral Response Group-South (LRG-S) to India.

## BIMSTEC Charter Comes into Force

The Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) can now accept new members and observers. This follows after the first charter of BIMSTEC came into force on May 20.

### Background


- Following the pandemic, the leaders of the BIMSTEC nations met virtually on 30 March 2022 under the chairmanship of Sri Lanka and adopted the charter.
- BIMSTEC charter was adopted during its **5th Summit in March 2022 under chairmanship of Sri Lanka**.
- The chair of BIMSTEC was taken up by Thailand after the 5th leaders' summit.

### Charter Comes into Force

- **In April 2024, Nepal's parliament took up the BIMSTEC charter and ratified it** which paved the way for the coming into force of charter.
- As a result, BIMSTEC charter is said to have **come into force on May 20, 2024**.
- With the coming into force of the charter, the BIMSTEC has acquired a **'legal personality'**.
- Legal personality means that a person or entity has rights and duties in law.
- Now, it will be able to enter into structured diplomatic dialogue with other groupings and countries.

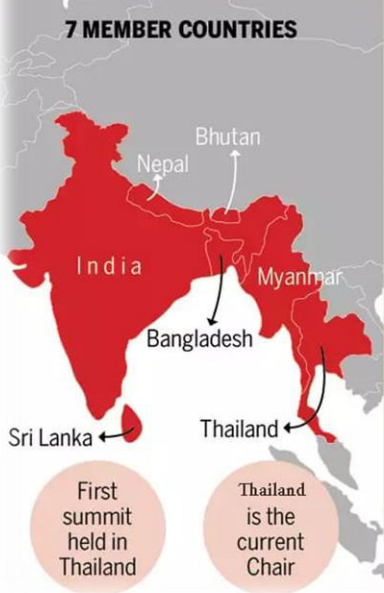
## BIMSTEC

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW



Stands for **The Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation**

**7 MEMBER COUNTRIES**



First summit held in Thailand

Thailand is the current Chair

Founded in 1997 through **Bangkok Declaration**

**Importance of BIMSTEC**

- Accounts for **22%** of the world's population
- Combined GDP of **\$2.7 trillion**
- One-fourth of the world's traded goods cross the Bay every year
- Six focus areas—trade, technology, energy, transport, tourism and fisheries

## Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC)

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- **About:** It is an economic bloc that came into being in June **1997** through the Bangkok Declaration.
- BIMSTEC was **initially formed with 4-member states- Bangladesh, India, Sri Lanka and Thailand**
- Nepal became an observer state in **1998** and became full-time member of the bloc along with Bhutan in February 2004.
- **Members** - Bangladesh, India, Myanmar, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Nepal and Bhutan.
- **Permanent Secretariat** - Dhaka, Bangladesh
- **Aim:** To counter the onslaught of globalization by accelerating regional growth through mutual cooperation by utilizing regional resources and geographical advantages.

# SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

## Digital Arrest

Following increasing reports of “digital arrests” by cybercriminals posing as law enforcement officers, the central government has collaborated with **Microsoft** to block more than 1,000 Skype IDs used for online intimidation, blackmail, and extortion. The government has advised people to file a complaint immediately after an incident.

### What is Digital Arrest?

- Digital arrests are a type of sophisticated cyber fraud used by cyber-criminals where they impersonate law enforcement officials like police, Enforcement Directorate, CBI etc. to defraud gullible victims and extort money.
- The fraudsters in this case manipulate the victims to believe that they have committed some serious crime and threaten them with imminent arrest, legal consequences, or public humiliation for not cooperating with a series of urgent demands.
- They often force the victims to self-arrest themselves, by making them believe that they have been put under ‘digital arrest’ and cannot leave their house unless they pay up. Hence, the cyber criminals often force the naive victims to self-arrest or self-quarantine themselves.

### Techniques Used in Digital Arrest

- **Impersonation:** where the criminals pose as law enforcement, bank representatives, or other authoritative figures, using forged documents and spoofed phone numbers to create a convincing facade of legitimacy. (Artificial Intelligence (AI) is used to scare victims by mimicking the voices of their family members.)
- **False Accusations:** where the victims are accused of involvement in illegal activities, money laundering, identity theft, or other serious crimes.
- **Demands and Threats:** where the cybercriminals demand sensitive information like banking credentials, passwords, and personal identification details by threatening the victims of arrest, hefty fines, or the release of compromising information.
- **Technological Trickery:** where fraudsters trick victims into downloading remote access software like TeamViewer or AnyDesk, and get extensive control over their devices. This can allow the criminals to monitor and steal the victim’s sensitive information.
- **Monitored 'Interrogation':** where criminals insist the victims to have conversation with them over video call to maintain their illusion of authority and monitor victims. They may threaten to fabricate and disseminate compromising evidence to extort large sums of money.

### Measures Taken by The Government to Tackle Digital Arrests

- The **Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre (I4C)**, under the Ministry of Home Affairs, coordinates activities related to combating cybercrime and closely works with other Ministries and their agencies, RBI and other organizations to counter these frauds.
- The Department of Telecommunications (DoT) has also issued an advisory to citizens.

- I4C provides input and technical support to Police Authorities of States/UTs for identifying and investigating the cases related to digital arrests. I4C is envisaged to act as the nodal point to curb Cybercrime in the country.
- It has blocked more than 1,000 Skype IDs involved in such activities, in collaboration with Microsoft and is also blocking SIM cards, Mobile devices and Mule accounts used by such fraudsters.
- Complaints have been registered on the **National Cyber Crime Reporting Portal (NCRP)**, prompting the cyber wing to act.
- It has also issued various alerts through infographics and videos on its social media platform '**CyberDost**' on X (formerly Twitter), Facebook, Instagram and others. CyberDost spreads awareness about cybercrimes.

## First Indian Space Tourist Completes Sub-Orbital Flight

**Gopi Thotakura**, a commercial pilot from India, made history by becoming the first person from India to go on a recreational space trip. This happened on May 19 on a Blue Origin-owned spaceship. Participants in the flight, which lasted only ten minutes from start to finish, reached an altitude of about 105 km above Earth, crossing the Karman line, which is the line between Earth's atmosphere and space.

### What are Sub-Orbital Space Flights?

Suborbital space trips, like the one Thotakura took, don't go around the Earth in an orbit. Instead, they cross the **Karman line** for a short time and then go back. People who go on these trips usually get to feel weightless for a few minutes and see Earth from space in a very different way. Over 50 people have already been on suborbital trips, which were made possible by private aerospace companies like Blue Origin and took less than a day.

## OpenAI Unveils GPT-4o

OpenAI, a major player in the field of artificial intelligence study, recently announced big improvements to their AI models, including the release of the GPT-4o model. During a livestream event, Mira Murati, Chief Technology Officer of OpenAI, stated that this new model would be available for free because it is more efficient than the ones that came before it. People in the tech world are paying close attention to changes in AI technologies right now, especially since AI skills and uses are growing so quickly.

### About GPT-4o model

OpenAI-trained GPT-4o (**GPT-4 omni**), a generative pre-trained transformer that can work with multiple languages and types of input.

Voice, multilingual, and vision standards are smashed by GPT-4o, which sets new records in audio speech recognition and translation. GPT-4 gets 86.5 on the MMLU benchmark, while GPT-4o scores 88.7.

It works with more than 50 languages, which is more than 97% of all spoken languages.



## About voice assistant capabilities

Voice assistants are pieces of software that can-do things or provide services when you tell them to. It can do simple things like play music and tell you about the weather, as well as more complicated things like controlling smart home devices, making bookings, and helping you find your way. To understand and talk back to users in a social way, they use natural language processing and machine learning. Amazon's Alexa, Google Assistant, and Apple's Siri are all well-known voice aides. The fact that they are built into speakers, tablets, and other Internet of Things (IoT) devices shows how important they are becoming in everyday digital life and automation.

## Bisphenol A (BPA)

- Bisphenol A (BPA) is a chemical that **leach out from plastics** during use have caused serious concerns.
- BPA is a synthetic chemical used to make plastics and resins, including polycarbonate plastics and epoxy resins.
- Polycarbonates (PC) are strong and hard thermoplastics that can maintain rigidity up to 140°C and toughness down to -20°C.
- PC is typically used for baby bottles, sippy cups, water bottles, water gallon, metal food can liner, ketchup container, and dental sealants.
- **Health Concerns:** BPA can contaminate food, air, soil, and beverages. It can also accumulate in human organs. It is an endocrine disruptor that can alter hormonal & enzyme synthesis. Ultimately, it can cause reproductive disorders, obesity, and increased risk of certain cancers.

## Liquid Nitrogen

- The Tamil Nadu government has banned the use of liquid nitrogen in food.
- **About Liquid Nitrogen (LN2)**
  - LN2 is a colorless, odorless, and non-toxic liquid form of nitrogen. It is produced by cooling gaseous nitrogen to extremely low temperatures, resulting in its liquefaction.
  - **Safety Considerations:**
  - **Extreme Cold:** Liquid nitrogen is extremely cold and can cause frostbite or cold burns upon contact with skin or tissue.
  - **Asphyxiation Hazard:** Liquid nitrogen vaporizes rapidly at room temperature, displacing oxygen and creating an oxygen-deficient atmosphere.

# DEFENCE AND SECURITY

## Integrated Commands Structure Plan

The Armed Forces have finalized the structure for making integrated theater commands. They are now considering appointing a **Vice Chief of Defense Staff and a Deputy Chief of Defense Staff**.

### Theaterisation of Armed Forces

- It is a concept which seeks to integrate the capabilities of the three services - army, air force and navy – in order to optimally utilize their resources for wars and operations.
- A theatre command/unit will be created by integrating elements/assets from all the three services.
- Simply put, a theatre command deploys elements of the three services under a single, unified command structure.
- Each command is assigned a specific geographical region for operational roles.
- Almost all major countries like China, Russia, US, UK and France work on a theatre command concept.
- For example, China's Western Theatre Command looks after the entire borders with India.

### Theatre commands and India

- The **Kargil Review Committee, the Naresh Chandra Committee and the Group of Ministers (GoM)** had called for structural changes in higher defence management.
- It was the **Shekatkar committee**, which had recommended the creation of the post of Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) and theatre commands.

### Current command structure in India

- At present, **India has 17 single service commands and only two tri-service commands.**
- The 17 single service commands are divided as:
- Army – 7 commands; Airforce – 7 commands; Navy – 3 commands
- The two tri-service commands are: Andaman and Nicobar Command (ANC), and The Strategic Force Command (handles the nuclear weapons).
- The Andaman and Nicobar command is a full-fledged command raised as a tri-service command in 2001.

### Recent steps taken by India towards theaterisation

- **Proposal to create a national defense committee:** There is a proposal for theatre commanders under a national defense committee likely to be headed by the Defense Minister.
- **Inter-Services Organisation (Command, Control and Discipline) Act 2023:**  
The act empowers the commander-in-chief and the officer-in-command of inter-services organisations with disciplinary and administrative powers over personnel from the other services serving in them. Limited cross-postings between the Army, Navy and IAF have already been implemented to promote jointness.  
Restructuring of the headquarters and the subsequent postings will take place after the final approval from the govt.

### ➞ **First tri-service common defence station:**

In March 2024, the decision was taken to transform Mumbai into the first tri-service common defence station.

A common defense station would merge all Army, Navy, and Air Force facilities, like logistics and maintenance, under one leadership.

It was also decided to set up additional joint logistics nodes across the country to boost integration in logistical needs and streamline their supply chains.

### Proposed organizational structure for integrated theatre commands – Key highlights

#### ➞ **Organizational structure for the creation of integrated theatre commands is ready**

- The Armed Forces have finalized the organizational structure for the creation of integrated theatre commands.
- However, the organizational structure plan may be fine-tuned after it gets government approval.

#### ➞ **Appointment of a Vice Chief of Defense Staff (CDS)**

- The Vice CDS is likely to be an officer of the rank of General or equivalent.
- He is expected to look after strategic planning, capability development and procurement-related matters.

#### ➞ **Appointment of a Deputy CDS**

- The Deputy CDS is likely to be an officer of the rank of Lieutenant General or equivalent.
- He will be responsible for operations, intelligence and will coordinate the allocation of assets between theatres.

#### ➞ **Creation of commands**

- The proposal entails creation of the western theatre command headquarters in Jaipur where the Army's South Western Command is located.
- The northern theatre command is likely to be in Lucknow.
- The maritime theatre command is likely to have its base in Coimbatore.
- It will involve the IAF's Prayagraj-headquartered Central Command and its Southern Air Command based in Thiruvananthapuram.
- Earlier, the plans were to set up the maritime theatre command headquarters in Karwar.

#### ➞ **Overall Plan is to create three adversary-based theatre commands**

- one facing Pakistan,
- another opposite China, and
- a maritime theatre command to tackle maritime threats outside the coastal borders of the country.

#### ➞ **Role of three service chiefs**

- The three service chiefs will be responsible for raising, training and sustaining the individual services.
- It is not known yet whether they will continue to retain some operational roles. The three theatre commanders will be responsible for operations.

#### ➞ **No additional manpower is likely to be enrolled** for creation of the theatre commands only readjustments within organizations will be carried out.

## 2023 UN Military Gender Advocate of the Year Award

- **Major Radhika Sen**, an Indian woman peacekeeper who served with the UN mission in Congo, was honoured with a prestigious military gender advocate award.
- Major Sen is the second Indian peacekeeper to receive this award after Major Suman Gawani (in 2019), who had served with the UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS).
- As a Platoon Commander, she helped foster a safe space for men and women to operate together under her command.
- She also ensured that peacekeepers under her command are engaged in a manner that is sensitive to gender and socio-cultural norms in eastern DRC.
- This was necessary to help build trust and thereby increase her team's chance of success.
- Created in 2016, the UN 'Military Gender Advocate of the Year Award' recognises the dedication and efforts of an individual military peacekeeper in promoting the principles of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security.
- This award was created by the Office of Military Affairs within the Department for Peace Operations (DPO).
- It recognizes a military peacekeeper who has best integrated a gender perspective into peacekeeping activities.
- India is currently the 11th largest contributor of women military peacekeepers to the United Nations with 124 Indian women now deployed.



## PROJECT UDBHAV

Hon'ble Raksha Mantri Shri Rajnath Singh and other top military officials were there on a special day to mark the start of "Project UDBHAV." The event took place at the **Indian Military Heritage Festival**. This project is an innovative **partnership between the Indian Army and the United Services Institution of India (USI)**. Its goal is to combine India's extensive historical military knowledge with modern strategy methods.

### Context and Significance

The project, called UDBHAV, which means "origin" or "genesis," wants to look into and bring back to life the deep and wide-ranging military ideas that are found in India's past writings. This will be added to modern military plan to make modern warfare and defence strategies better.

## What are the Goals and Objectives of Project UDBHAV?

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The main goal of Project UDBHAV is to combine old military methods with modern military doctrines. In this way, the project hopes to encourage a strong and new way of dealing with current warfare and security issues. This combination will not only help the Indian military think more strategically and do its job better, but it will also make sure that these old strategies are kept alive and taught in modern military schools and in combat.

## Methodology and Implementation

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For Project UDBHAV, there will be a lot of study, workshops with people from different fields, and leadership seminars that look into India's strategic traditions. The project's goals are to make people think, talk, and come up with long-term military uses for the technology. Key ancient strategies will be looked at again and tried to see if they can be used in modern warfare.

# Environment and Ecology

## Antarctic Parliament Meets in Kochi

India has hosted the **46th Antarctic Treaty Consultative Meeting (ATCM 46) in Kochi**, organized by the National Centre for Polar and Ocean Research through the Ministry of Earth Sciences.

### What is ATCM (also called Antarctic Parliament)

- The Antarctic Treaty Consultative Meeting (ATCM) is an annual gathering of the parties to the **1959** Antarctic Treaty, including the original twelve signatories and other nations conducting significant research in Antarctica.
- At this year's ATCM, India will introduce a new working group focused on formulating regulations to monitor tourism and protect the continent's fragile ecosystem. Representatives from the **56-member countries** of the Antarctic Treaty will attend. **This is the first time India is hosting the meeting since 2007.**

### Key Agenda at ATCM 46

- Promoting peaceful governance in Antarctica.
- Introducing a new working group to regulate tourism and mitigate its impact on the fragile ecosystem.
- Discussing sustainable management of resources, biodiversity, research collaboration, and climate change impacts.
- Presenting India's plan for the construction of **Maitri II**.

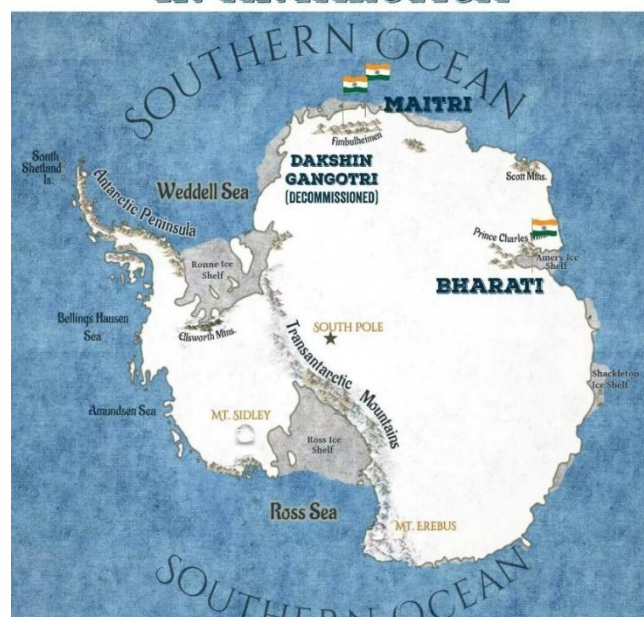
### About Antarctic Treaty

The Antarctic Treaty, **signed on December 1, 1959**, and **in force since June 23, 1961**, is an international agreement governing activities in Antarctica. It designates the continent as a scientific preserve, ensuring it remains exclusively for peaceful purposes. **Initially signed by 12 countries, the treaty now includes 56 signatories, with India joining in 1983.** Key provisions prohibit military activities, promote scientific cooperation, and ban nuclear explosions and radioactive waste disposal.

### India in Antarctica

Since 1983, India has been a consultative party to the Antarctic Treaty, participating in governance decisions. India operates three research stations: **Dakshin Gangotri (1983-1990)**, **Maitri (since 1989)**, and **Bharati (since 2012)**. India plans to establish a new station, **Maitri II**, by **2029**. In 2022, India enacted the **Antarctic Act** to reaffirm its commitment to the treaty's principles.

### INDIAN RESEARCH STATION IN ANTARCTICA



## Rangelands

About half of the world's rangelands are degraded and need policy interventions, and communities depending on them need focused support, according to a new report of the **United Nations Convention on Combating Desertification (UNCCD)**.

### What are rangelands?

- The UNCCD report defines rangelands as natural or semi-natural ecosystems that are grazed by livestock or wild animals.
- Rangelands contain vegetation such as grasses, shrubs, bushes, open forests, and agroforestry systems (land which contains trees and crops or pastures).
- The exact nature of rangelands' vegetation is influenced by rainfall, temperature, and other climate phenomena.
- Currently, rangelands cover 80 million sq. km of Earth's terrestrial surface area (over half of Earth's land), and are thus the largest land cover or land use type in the world.
- In India, rangelands occupy about **1.21 million sq km**, from the Thar Desert to Himalayan meadows.
- They act as carbon sinks (which absorb more carbon from the atmosphere than they release), storehouses of freshwater, and prevent desertification of land. Millions of people worldwide depend on rangelands for food security, and livelihoods.
- They generate 16% of global food production and 70% of feed for domesticated herbivores, most significantly in Africa and South America.

### UNCCD report findings:

- The **UNCCD report** found that nearly **50% of the world's rangelands can be considered "degraded" and are facing a "silent demise"**.
- Climate change, unsustainable land and livestock management practices, biodiversity loss, and the conversion of rangelands to farmlands are some of the primary drivers of rangeland degradation.
- Uncertainty over land rights among pastoralist communities, who depend on rangelands for their livelihood, also leads to their degradation.
- Globally, an estimated 500 million pastoralists are involved in livestock production and allied occupations. In India, while there are no official figures, research and advocacy groups peg their population at around 13 million people, across **46 groups** including **Gujjars, Bakarwals, Rebaris, Raikas, Kurubas, and Maldharis, to name a few**. India is home to **20% of the world's livestock population**. Around 77% of these animals are reared in pastoralist systems.
- This large-scale pastoralism severely affects the communities dependent on rangelands as their deterioration impacts soil fertility and biodiversity, leading to a dip in incomes and rise in conflicts with authorities over grazing rights.

# ART AND CULTURE

## Virupaksha Temple Collapse

Rainfall caused the saalu mantap (pavilion) at the Virupaksha Temple in Karnataka's **Hampi** to collapse on May 21. Despite saying that repair work was already underway, the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) said that this event made people worry about their efforts to protect the site.

### Historical Background

- The Virupaksha Temple in Hampi, Karnataka, is one of the oldest temples still in use in India. It was built around the year 700 AD and is dedicated to Lord Shiva.
- The Vijayanagara masters in the 14th century made big changes to it and made it bigger. It became very famous during the **Vijayanagara Empire in the 14th century**. During the Sangama dynasty, the temple grew a lot and became a focal point for religious and cultural events.
- Massive gopurams, intricate carvings, and the centre sanctum with a Shiva lingam make it a great example of Dravidian architecture.



### Significance of the Temple

It was an important part of South India's last great Hindu kingdom. The Virupaksha Temple is both a spiritual centre and a UNESCO-designated historical site as part of the Group of Monuments at Hampi. It is a landmark of the Vijayanagara Empire's artistic and cultural achievements.

#### ➤ Unique Features and Engineering

- The dark room of the temple has a pinhole camera effect that projects an upside-down picture of the main gopura.
- The temple is a UNESCO World Heritage site and has architecture that has survived earthquakes. This shows how well the builders of Vijayanagara architecture understood locus and joints.
- These technical marvels show how advanced the building methods were in the past.

#### ➤ Cultural and Religious Importance

- Traditional events, like weddings and the yearly chariot fair, are still celebrated at the Virupaksha Temple, which draws thousands of pilgrims and tourists.
- These celebrations keep the temple's religious and cultural importance alive.
- Traditions that still happen at the temple show how important it is to the community.

## Cause of the Pavilion Collapse

Over time, the pavilion's stone pillars and base became weaker from being exposed to the elements, especially rain. The recent heavy rains showed that the structure would not last for years as expected, so it needs to be fixed right away.

## Challenges in Preservation

The repair process faces big problems with money, getting supplies, and finding skilled workers. The latest gift of Rs 8 crore from the Central government shows how expensive it can be to carry out such large-scale conservation projects. Keeping the temple complex's heritage and current needs in balance is also hard because people are still worshipping there and people are moving into the area. ASI is still committed to restoring and protecting the Virupaksha Temple, and they plan to do so in a methodical way. Their goal is to fix any recent damage and protect the temple's cultural history for future generations.

## Vivekananda Rock Memorial

- The Prime Minister recently visited the Vivekananda Rock Memorial in **Kanyakumari, Tamil Nadu**.
- The Vivekananda Rock is a tiny rocky islet located some 500 metres from Kanyakumari's **Vavathurai beach**, the southern tip of mainland India.
- The Rock is surrounded by the Laccadive Sea where the three oceans Bay of Bengal, the Indian Ocean and the Arabian Sea meet.
- **In 1892, Swami Vivekananda, the Hindu philosopher-saint, swam from the shores of Kanyakumari to the rocky islet to meditate.**
- It is believed that he meditated there for three days and three nights and attained enlightenment.
- On the eve of Swami Vivekananda's birth centenary in 1963, the Vivekananda Rock Memorial Committee made efforts to commemorate the site of his enlightenment.
- The memorial on the rock was formally inaugurated by the **President V V Giri in 1970.**



## Indulekha

- The first true copy of the painting Indulekha by legendary artist Raja Ravi Varma was recently unveiled on his 176th birth anniversary celebrations.
- Indulekha is the protagonist of the **first modern novel (Indulekha) in Malayalam literature by O. Chandu Menon published in 1889.**
- The painting has Indulekha holding a letter addressing her lover Madhavan, the hero of the novel.
- It is believed that the famous painting 'Reclining Lady' by Ravi Varma was modelled on Indulekha.

### Raja Ravi Varma

- **Raja Ravi Varma (1848-1906)** was a great Indian painter and artist. He was born in an aristocratic family in Kilimanoor palace, in the erstwhile **princely state of Travancore.**
- **As an artist, Varma fused two styles together:** European art's technical and aesthetic knowledge, and the emotional sensibilities and storytelling from Indian art.
- He was famous for his oil portrait paintings and narrative paintings of Indian history, mythology, and paintings of Gods, which he recreated from historical sources, like Hindu epics Ramayana, Mahabharata, and the Puranas.
- In 1894, he established the **Ravi Varma Fine Arts Lithographic Press.** He was notable for making affordable lithographs of his paintings available to the public.
- Lithography is a printing process that uses a flat stone or metal plate on which the image areas are worked using a greasy substance so that the ink will stick to them, while the non-image areas are made ink-repellent
- His 1873 painting, Nair Lady Adorning Her Hair, won Varma prestigious awards including Governor's Gold Medal when it was presented in the Madras Presidency, and Certificate of Merit at an exhibition in Vienna.
- In 1904, the British colonial government awarded Varma with the Kaiser-i-Hind Gold Medal. In 2013, a crater on the planet Mercury was named in his honour.
- His most famous works include Damayanti Talking to a Swan, Shakuntala Looking for Dushyanta and Shantanu and Matsyagandha.



**VIDHIGYA**  
— Undisputed Leader in CLAT Preps —

- **PLACES IN NEWS**
- **APPOINTMENTS**
- **DAYS & THEMES**



# PLACES IN NEWS

S. No.	Place	Why in News?
International Places in News		
1.	<b>Mount Erebus</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Location:</b> Mount Erebus is situated on Ross Island, Antarctica.</li> <li>• <b>Activity:</b> The volcano is currently spewing out approximately 80 grams of gold daily.</li> <li>• <b>Value:</b> The daily output of gold is worth about \$6000.</li> <li>• <b>Type:</b> Mount Erebus is a strato-volcano.</li> <li>• <b>Characteristics:</b> It has a conical shape and is made up of layers of hardened lava.</li> </ul>
2.	<b>Atacama Desert</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Discovery:</b> Researchers have found microbes thriving 13 feet beneath the scorched surface of Chile's Atacama Desert.</li> <li>• <b>Desert Location:</b> The Atacama Desert is located in <b>Chile</b>, specifically in the Yungay Valley.</li> <li>• <b>Climate:</b> It is the driest hot desert in the world.</li> <li>• <b>Borders:</b> The Atacama Desert is bordered by <b>Argentina, Peru, and Bolivia</b>.</li> </ul>
3.	<b>Schengen Visa</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Indian nationals can now obtain long-term multi-entry Schengen visas with a <b>validity of two years</b>.</li> <li>• This is possible if they have lawfully used two visas within the previous three years.</li> <li>• The Schengen Area is the <b>world's largest free travel area</b>, encompassing 27 countries.</li> <li>• It includes <b>23 of the 27 EU member states</b>.</li> <li>• It also includes all members of the European Free Trade Association (EFTA): <b>Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, and Switzerland</b>.</li> </ul>
4.	<b>Great Rift Valley</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• At least <b>42 people died</b> when a dam burst its banks near a town in Kenya's Rift Valley.</li> <li>• The incident occurred as <b>heavy rains and floods</b> battered the country recently.</li> <li>• The Great Rift Valley is a series of <b>contiguous geographic trenches</b>.</li> <li>• It runs from <b>Lebanon in Asia to Mozambique in Southeast Africa</b>.</li> <li>• The valley contains deep, elongated lakes known as <b>ribbon lakes, such as Lake Malawi and Lake Tanganyika</b>.</li> </ul>
5.	<b>Mount Ruang</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Indonesia's Mount Ruang volcano recently erupted, triggering the <b>highest level of alert</b>.</li> <li>• Indonesia is home to many volcanoes due to its location along the Pacific Ring of Fire.</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The <b>Pacific Ring of Fire</b> is where several tectonic plates meet and interact.</li> <li>This convergence creates intense geological activity, including the subduction of oceanic plates beneath continental plates, leading to volcanic eruptions.</li> </ul>
6.	<b>Hopen Island</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The first case of a <b>walrus dying from bird flu</b> was recorded on Hopen Island in the Svalbard archipelago, Norway.</li> <li>It's unclear whether it was the <b>H5N1 or H5N8 strain</b>.</li> <li>There's a possibility that other walruses found also had bird flu.</li> <li>Hopen Island was discovered in <b>1596 during Willem Barentsz's expedition</b>.</li> </ul>
7.	<b>La Cumbre Volcano</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>La Cumbre is a <b>shield volcano</b> on <b>Fernandina Island</b> in the <b>Galápagos Islands</b>.</li> <li>Volcanic emissions from Galápagos volcanoes are typically rich in <b>sulfur dioxide and have little ash</b>.</li> <li>The La Cumbre volcano is located around <b>1,125 kilometers off mainland Ecuador</b>.</li> </ul>

### National Place in News

1.	<b>Gandhisagar Wildlife Sanctuary</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A <b>South African</b> delegation recently visited the Gandhi Sagar Wildlife Sanctuary in <b>Madhya Pradesh</b>.</li> <li>The purpose of the visit was to assess the sanctuary's readiness for the release of <b>five to eight cheetahs</b> later this year.</li> <li>The Gandhi Sagar Wildlife Sanctuary is situated on the northern boundary of <b>Mandsaur and Nimach districts</b> in Madhya Pradesh.</li> <li>It shares its <b>border with the state of Rajasthan</b>.</li> </ul>
2.	<b>Kalesar Wildlife Sanctuary</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Supreme Court has halted the construction of four dams inside <b>Haryana's Kalesar Wildlife Sanctuary</b>.</li> <li>The decision was made due to concerns about the <b>negative impact on wildlife and the ecosystem</b>.</li> <li>The sanctuary lies within the <b>Shivalik foothills</b> of the <b>Himalayas</b>.</li> <li>It derives its name from the <b>Kalesar forest</b> and <b>Kalesar Mahadev temple</b> situated within its bounds.</li> <li><b>Bounded by the Yamuna River</b> to the east, it shares borders with Rajaji National Park to the northeast.</li> </ul>
3.	<b>Shaksgam Valley</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>India has registered its protest against China's <b>"illegal attempts"</b> to build a road into the <b>lower Shaksgam valley</b> in the <b>Pakistan Occupied Kashmir (POK)</b>.</li> <li>The Shaksgam Valley, also known as the <b>Trans Karakoram Tract</b>, is part of the <b>Hunza-Gilgit region</b> of Pakistan Occupied Kashmir (POK).</li> <li>It is a <b>disputed territory claimed by India</b> but controlled by Pakistan.</li> </ul>
4.	<b>Bhadra Tiger Reserve</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Bhadra Tiger Reserve</b> in Chikkamagaluru, <b>Karnataka</b>, India, is drawing increased interest from tourists, scientists, and photographers.</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It is located in the <b>Western Ghats region</b> and is surrounded by several hill ranges, giving it a unique geographical setting.</li> <li>The reserve has been designated as both an <b>Elephant Reserve</b> and the <b>25th Project Tiger Reserve of India since 1998.</b></li> </ul>
5.	<b>Pulicat Wetland</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There is growing concern over the State government's plan to denotify a significant portion of the Pulicat wetland and sanctuary.</li> <li>This area is situated in the <b>northern part of Tamil Nadu</b> and the <b>southern part of Andhra Pradesh.</b></li> <li>Pulicat is recognized as the <b>second-largest brackish water ecosystem</b> in India.</li> <li>The Pulicat Ecosystem is home to a rich and diverse biota, serving as a breeding ground for various <b>species of birds and marine life.</b></li> </ul>
6.	<b>Sunderban</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A recent study has highlighted that air pollution from <b>Kolkata</b> and the <b>Indo-Gangetic Plain</b> poses a threat to the Sundarbans mangrove ecosystem.</li> <li>Sundarbans is a mangrove area located in the delta region formed by the confluence of the <b>Ganges, Brahmaputra, and Meghna Rivers in the Bay of Bengal.</b></li> </ul>

# APPOINTMENTS

S. No.	Person		Designation
1.	<b>Justice Sanjaya Kumar Sharma</b>		President of GST Appellate Tribunal
2.	<b>Pratima Singh</b>	----	Director in the Department of Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT)
3.	<b>Idashisha Nongrang</b>		Meghalaya's first woman Director General of Police (DGP)
4.	<b>Kapil Sibal</b>		President of Supreme Court Bar Association
5.	<b>Subodh Kumar</b>		Director in Ministry of AYUSH
6.	<b>Kareena Kapoor Khan</b>		Appointed as the National Ambassador for UNICEF India

# DAYS AND THEMES

S. No.	Date	Event
1.	1st May	<p><b>Maharashtra Day</b></p> <p>It is a state holiday in Maharashtra. The state of Maharashtra was formed from the division of the Bombay State on 1 May 1960.</p> <p><b>Gujarat Day</b></p> <p>It is a state holiday in Gujarat. The state of Gujarat was formed on 1 May 1960.</p>
2.	3 <sup>rd</sup> May	<p><b>World Press Freedom Day</b></p> <p>Every year Press Freedom Day or World Press Freedom Day is observed on 3rd May to evaluate press freedom around the world and to pay tribute to journalists who have lost their lives in the exercise of their profession.</p> <p><b>Theme: A Press for the Planet: Journalism in the Face of the Environmental Crisis</b></p>
3.	7 <sup>th</sup> May	<p><b>World Athletics Day</b></p> <p>World Athletics Day is observed on 7 May to raise awareness about sports among youth, in schools and institutions to promote athletics as the primary sport. And to introduce new talent and youngsters in the field of athletics.</p> <p><b>Theme: World Mile Challenge</b></p>
4.	8 <sup>th</sup> May	<p><b>World Red Cross Day</b></p> <p>World Red Cross Day is observed every year on 8 May to commemorate the birth anniversary of the founder of the Red Cross. Let us tell you that the founder of the Red Cross was Henry Dunant as well as the founder of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). He was born in Geneva in 1828. He became the first recipient of the 1st Nobel Peace Prize.</p> <p><b>Theme: I give with joy, and the joy I give is a reward</b></p> <p><b>World Thalassaemia Day</b></p> <p>International Thalassaemia Day is observed every year on 8 May in honour of all patients suffering from Thalassaemia and for their parents who have never lost hope for life, despite the burden of their disease. This day also encourages those who struggle to live with the disease.</p> <p><b>Theme: Empowering Lives, Embracing Progress: Equitable and Accessible Thalassaemia Treatment for All</b></p>

5.	11 <sup>th</sup> May	<p><b>National Technology Day</b></p> <p>Every year National Technology Day is observed on 11 May to highlight the important role of Science in our daily lives and encourage students to opt for science as an option for a career. On this day Shakti, the Pokhran nuclear test was held on 11 May 1998.</p> <p><b>Theme: School to Startups-Igniting Young Minds to Innovate</b></p>
6.	16 <sup>th</sup> May	<p><b>National Dengue Day</b></p> <p>The day is observed (16 May) with the recommendation of the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India. Dengue is prevalent across the country. This year due to the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown, awareness campaigns, rallies, etc. regarding Dengue is not organised in the country but can be spread through online.</p> <p><b>Theme: Dengue Prevention: Our Responsibility for a Safer Tomorrow</b></p>
7.	17 <sup>th</sup> May	<p><b>World Telecommunication Day</b></p> <p>World Telecommunication Day is observed every year on 17 May. It marks the founding of ITU when the first International Telegraph Convention was signed in Paris on 17 May 1865. It is also known as World Telecommunication and International Society Day. Since 1969, it has been celebrated annually.</p> <p><b>Theme: Digital Innovation for Sustainable Development</b></p>
8.	18 <sup>th</sup> May	<p><b>World AIDS Vaccine Day</b></p> <p>Worlds AIDS Vaccine Day or HIV Vaccine Awareness Day is observed every year on 18 May. This day marks the efforts of thousands of researchers, scientists, and health professionals who have contributed to the process of finding safe and effective AIDS medicine. It is also an opportunity to educate communities about the importance of preventive HIV vaccine research.</p>
9.	21 <sup>th</sup> May	<p><b>National Anti-Terrorism Day</b></p> <p>National Anti-Terrorism Day is observed every year on 21 May to spread awareness about the violence caused by terrorists and also in memory of former Indian PM Rajiv Gandhi who passed on this day.</p>
10.	22 <sup>nd</sup> May	<p><b>International Day for Biodiversity</b></p> <p>International Day for Biological Diversity is observed on 22 May every year to increase awareness and understanding of the issues of biodiversity.</p> <p><b>Theme: Be part of the Plan</b></p>

11.	31 <sup>st</sup> May	<p><b><i>Anti Tobacco Day</i></b></p> <p>Anti-Tobacco Day or World No Tobacco Day is observed on 31 May every year across the globe to make people aware and educate them about the harmful effects of tobacco on health which causes cardiovascular diseases, cancer, tooth decay, staining of teeth etc.</p> <p><b><i>Theme: protecting children from tobacco industry interference</i></b></p>



**CLAT  
CAM**

**SNIPPETS**

# SNIPPETS

- Researchers have discovered the **world's deepest known blue hole**, the Taam Ja' Blue Hole (TJBH), located in **Chetumal Bay off the Yucatan Peninsula in Mexico**.
- **Alok Shukla**, a 43-year-old **environmental activist from Chhattisgarh**, India, has been awarded the prestigious **Goldman Environmental Prize for 2024**. Shukla led a successful grassroots campaign to protect 445,000 acres of the biodiversity-rich Hasdeo Aranya forests from the development of 21 proposed coal mines.
- The **Indian Navy** has launched the **sixth barge of the LSAM 16 (Yard 130) series**, named 'Ammunition Cum Torpedo Cum Missile Barge, LSAM 20 (Yard 130),' built by a private firm, Suryadipta Projects Pvt Ltd, in **Thane, Maharashtra**.
- The **Indian Army's Kharga Corps**, part of the Army's Western Command, recently concluded a three-day joint military exercise **Gagan Strike-II** with the **Indian Air Force (IAF) in Punjab**.
- The **Border Roads Organisation (BRO)** celebrated its 65th Raising Day recently, with an emphasis on embracing modern technology and **techniques to accelerate project completions**.
- **Jose Raul Mulino**, a conservative candidate and former Minister of Public Security, was declared the winner of the **presidential election in Panama**.
- India has completed the **withdrawal of its military personnel from the Maldives**, an action that fulfils one of President **Mohamed Muizzu's major campaign promises**.
- **Dubai** has launched an innovative **Gaming Visa**, spearheaded by **Crown Prince Hamdan bin Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum**, aiming to transform the city into a global gaming hub by attracting 30,000 game developers by 2033.
- The **Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO)** has achieved a remarkable feat by successfully conducting a hot test of a **3D-printed liquid rocket engine**. This test represents a crucial step forward in integrating Additive Manufacturing (AM) technologies into India's space exploration program.
- **India and France** are set to conduct the 7th edition of the **Joint Military Exercise 'Shakti'** between May 13-26, 2024, in the Umroi region of Meghalaya.
- India is soon expected to sign a 10-year management agreement for **Chabahar Port in Iran**. This development is part of India's strategic effort to enhance connectivity with Afghanistan, Central Asia, and the broader Eurasian region. **Shipping Minister Sarbananda Sonowal** is scheduled to attend the signing ceremony in Iran.
- **OpenAI**, a major player in the field of artificial intelligence study, recently announced big improvements to their AI models, including the release of the **GPT-4o model**.
- **Pakistan** did a successful test launch of the **"Fatah-II" guided multi-launch rocket system**. Pakistan's weaponry is getting better, and this event is a big step in that direction. The Fatah-II rocket system was made to hit targets up to 400 kilometers away with great accuracy. It can get around and get past missile defense systems because it has a sophisticated tracking system and a unique ability to change its path and move around.
- **Japan and the US** recently decided to work together to make interceptors that can shoot down hypersonic missiles. A contract worth more than **\$3 billion was signed between the two countries** to make this deal official.

- **NASA's International Space Station** recently took a unique picture of a strange hole on **Mount Nemrut in Turkey**, which is a dormant stratovolcano. As seen in the picture, the crater was split in half, making it look like the Chinese yin-yang sign.
- **Venezuela** is the first modern country to lose all of its glaciers, which is a huge change in the environment. New research shows that the **Humboldt glacier in the Andes**, which used to be very big, has shrunk to less than 2 hectares, which means it is no longer a glacier but an ice field.
- India recently passed the important milestone of **\$100 billion in payments**. In the fiscal year 2022–23, it reached a **record \$112 billion**. At this peak, an amazing \$29 billion was sent back to India just in the December quarter. This shows that money sent back to India is strongly going up.
- The leader of the Indian national football team, **Sunil Chhetri**, has said that he is **retiring**. One of India's most famous football players' long and successful career comes to an end with this important event. Sunil Chhetri is a professional **football player** who has led the **Indian national team and Kolkata FC as captain**.
- **Ladakh** should be added to the **Sixth Schedule of the Indian Constitution**. This demand has gained a lot of support in recent years. Many groups in Ladakh have been pushing for this, especially since the area became a Union Territory in August 2019 when **Article 370 was revoked** and local government was given more freedom.
- The **2027 FIFA Women's World Cup** will be held in **Brazil**. This is a big deal in the world of international women's football. Brazil will be hosting this prestigious event for the first time. It will be a chance to show off its rich culture and love of football.
- **India** moved up to the **39th spot on the World Economic Forum's Travel & Tourism Development Index (TTDI) 2024**, as the number of tourists around the world returned to levels seen before the pandemic.
- **Head of the Defence Staff (CDS) General Anil Chauhan** started **Cyber Suraksha – 2024** on May 22, 2024. Defence Cyber Agency of India is in charge of the event, which runs from May 20th to May 24th. To protect India from new cyber threats, General Chauhan stressed how important it was to improve the country's cyber defence system.
- The **leaders of the G7** have recently kept their word to reach **net-zero emissions by 2050**. Along the same lines, the government of Albanese has put forward a plan to create a Net Zero Economy Authority in order to encourage **more investment in green technologies**.
- **Six NATO countries**—Finland, Norway, Poland, Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania—are planning to build a coordinated **drone defence system** because of increased security worries and tensions along their borders with Russia.
- **Major Radhika Sen**, an **Indian peacekeeper in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC)**, won the prestigious **UN Military Gender Advocate of the Year award in 2023**. This award was given to her because of her outstanding service and active participation in gender-sensitive projects at the UN peacekeeping operation MONUSCO.
- A big step forward in India's defence was made when the **RudraM-II missile** was successfully tested from a **Su-30 fighter jet off the coast of Odisha**. This accomplishment shows how much better India is getting at making advanced weapon systems on its own.
- A company called **Agnikul Cosmos**, which was started at IIT Madras, made history on May 30, 2024, by safely launching "**Agnibaan – SORteD**," the **world's first rocket powered by a fully 3D-printed engine**. This important event happened at Sriharikota from India's first privately built launchpad, called "**Dhanush**."

**SPECIAL FEATURE**



**CHECK YOUR  
QUIZDOM**

**QUIZ ZONE FOR CLAT ASPIRANTS**

# QUIZDOM

## Passage 1

At the global chemical weapons watchdog, both Russia and Ukraine have exchanged accusations regarding the use of banned toxins on the battlefield, according to the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW). However, the OPCW noted that these accusations were "insufficiently substantiated." Despite this, the organization expressed deep concern about the situation, highlighting the potential risk of a resurgence in the use of toxic chemicals as weapons. Notably, neither Russia nor Ukraine has formally requested the OPCW to investigate the alleged use of chemical weapons. This development underscores the complex dynamics and heightened tensions surrounding the issue. Ukraine's General Staff, earlier this month, reported a significant number of cases where Russia allegedly utilized "ammunition equipped with dangerous chemical substances" throughout the preceding year, totalling to 1891 incidents until April. In response, Russia has staunchly denied any allegations of violating the Chemical Weapons Convention. This denial adds another layer of complexity to the ongoing diplomatic and military dynamics between the two countries, underscoring the challenges in verifying and addressing such sensitive and critical allegations at the international level. The situation, as highlighted by the OPCW, remains volatile and deeply concerning, raising apprehensions about the potential re-emergence of chemical weapons as a tool of warfare in the region.

1. Where is the headquarters of Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) located?  
(a) New York, USA (b) Geneva, Switzerland  
(c) The Hague, Netherlands (d) London, United Kingdom
2. How many Member States are part of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW)?  
(a) 150 (b) 193 (c) 210 (d) 250
3. When did the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) enter into force?  
(a) April 29, 1997 (b) April 29, 1987 (c) April 29, 2007 (d) April 29, 2017
4. When was the National Authority for Chemical Weapons Convention (NACWC) established in India?  
(a) 2000 (b) 2005 (c) 2010 (d) 2015
5. What is the main purpose of the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BTWC)?  
(a) To promote the use of biological weapons  
(b) To prohibit the development, production, and stockpiling of biological weapons  
(c) To regulate the international trade of biological weapons  
(d) None of the above

## Passage 2

On the eve of the vote counting, political parties engaged in comprehensive last-minute preparations and training sessions to equip their polling agents with the necessary skills and information. The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in Delhi held extensive discussions regarding the strategic deployment of agents for the upcoming vote count. These discussions were aimed at ensuring a seamless and efficient counting process. To further prepare their polling agents, BJP candidates conducted specialized workshops designed to clarify the roles and responsibilities of the agents. These workshops were crucial in providing agents with the knowledge needed to remain vigilant during the counting process. Agents were trained on how to identify and contest any discrepancies that might arise. This preparation was underscored by the Delhi BJP president, Virendra Sachdeva, who briefed the agents on the importance of vigilance and caution. He also advised the candidates and party workers to exercise restraint and caution during their victory celebrations to maintain decorum and

avoid any untoward incidents. Similarly, the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) took significant steps to ensure their counting agents were well-prepared. AAP's national general secretary (organization) and Rajya Sabha member, Sandeep Pathak, emphasized the critical role of the counting agents in safeguarding the integrity of the counting process. He further instructed the agents to meticulously match the numbers of each Electronic Voting Machine (EVM) with the recorded data and to note the exact time of opening each machine. This level of detailed monitoring was deemed essential to ensure transparency and accuracy in the counting process. Pathak's directives were aimed at ensuring that every vote was accurately counted and that any anomalies were promptly addressed. These preparations by both the BJP and AAP highlight the high stakes and intense scrutiny involved in the vote counting process. Both parties demonstrated a commitment to ensuring the integrity of the electoral process by thoroughly preparing their agents to handle any challenges that might arise. The detailed training and clear instructions provided to the agents were critical in ensuring that the vote counting would proceed smoothly and transparently.

**6.** Who is responsible for overseeing the counting of votes in a constituency?

- |  |                             |
|--|-----------------------------|
| (a) Chief Election Commissioner of India | (b) Speaker of Lok Sabha    |
| (c) Returning Officer                    | (d) Polling Booth attenders |

**7.** Who can be appointed as a counting agent?

- (a) Any Indian citizen who is at least 18 years old and understands the counting process
- (b) Only sitting MPs and MLAs
- (c) Any Indian citizen who is at least 25 years old and understands the counting process
- (d) Only government employees

**8.** Under normal circumstances, what is the maximum number of counting agents a candidate can appoint per counting hall?

- |        |        |        |        |
|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| (a) 10 | (b) 12 | (c) 15 | (d) 18 |
|--------|--------|--------|--------|

**9.** For senior citizens, who visits their residence to facilitate the postal ballot process?

- (a) Polling Station Officer and security personnel
- (b) Election Commissioner and a videographer
- (c) A team of two polling officials, a videographer, and security personnel
- (d) Returning Officer and Election Commissioner

**10.** The EC appoints observers at each counting room, who are supposed to record the proceedings and file a report. Who are generally appointed as observers in the counting room?

- |                                 |  |
|---------------------------------|--|
| (a) Candidates' representatives | (b) Employees of the Government of India (GoI) |
| (c) Local volunteers            | (d) None of the Above                          |

### Passage 3

A recent incident at Raj Bhavan in Kolkata, West Bengal, has stirred significant controversy and raised serious allegations. An employee working there accused Governor [X] of sexual harassment on two separate occasions, also lodging a formal complaint citing molestation. This development unfolded just hours before Prime Minister Narendra Modi was scheduled to address three election rallies in the state, adding to the already charged political atmosphere. The aftermath of these allegations has been swift and dramatic. Merely two days after the accusations surfaced, Governor [X] issued a directive instructing all Raj Bhavan staff members to ignore any summonses or communications from the Special Enquiry Team (SET) of Kolkata Police regarding the matter. This incident has not only put a spotlight on the alleged misconduct within the highest echelons of state administration but has also sparked a political tussle between the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and the ruling Trinamool Congress (TMC). The TMC, which has been dealing with its own controversies regarding allegations of sexual harassment involving one of its former leaders, finds itself embroiled in a fresh wave of scrutiny and criticism. The situation remains fluid as investigations unfold and political parties engage in a

heated exchange over the handling of the allegations and the subsequent directives issued by the Governor's office. The outcome of these events could potentially have far-reaching implications not only for the individuals involved but also for the broader political landscape in West Bengal.

**11.** What has been redacted by [X] in the passage?

- (a) C.V Ananda Bose      (b) LA. Ganesan      (c) Jagdeep Dhankhar      (d) Keshari Nath Tripathi

**12.** Which amendment to the Indian Constitution brought about the change allowing one person to be appointed as Governor for two or more States?

- (a) First Amendment      (b) Second Amendment      (c) Fifth Amendment      (d) Seventh Amendment

**13.** Which Article of the Indian Constitution deals with the appointment and term of office of the Governor for each State?

- (a) Article 151      (b) Article 152      (c) Article 153      (d) Article 154

**14.** Which Article of the Indian Constitution deals with immunity for the President and Governors from being answerable to any court for the exercise of their powers and duties?

- (a) Article 356      (b) Article 360      (c) Article 361      (d) Article 362

**15.** According to Article 156 of the Indian Constitution, how long is the prescribed term of office for a Governor?

- (a) Three years      (b) Four years      (c) Five years      (d) Six years

#### Passage 4

In a significant stride towards sustainable energy, [X] officials recently inaugurated India's first multi-purpose green hydrogen pilot project. This pioneering initiative, unveiled under the stewardship of this company's Chairman and Managing Director, Geeta Kapur, marks a pivotal step aligned with the Government of India's National Green Hydrogen Mission. This mission underscores a proactive commitment to embracing green energy solutions within the power sector. The essence of this Green Hydrogen Pilot Project lies in its strategic role in advancing the development of green hydrogen production infrastructure. By catalysing the establishment of this infrastructure within the power sector, the project is set to pave the way for green hydrogen to emerge as a viable and sustainable alternative for clean energy needs. This endeavour is not only a testament to India's vision for a greener future but also signifies a concerted effort towards reducing carbon footprints and fostering eco-friendly practices in the energy landscape. The inauguration of this project underscores [X] commitment to innovation and sustainability, positioning it as a leader in the transition towards a cleaner and more sustainable energy ecosystem in India.

**16.** Which of the following will replace [X] in the passage?

- (a) SJVN      (b) TATA Group      (c) Greenco      (d) Adani Energy Solutions

**17.** Where was India's first multipurpose green hydrogen pilot project inaugurated?

- (a) Mumbai, Maharashtra      (b) Jhakri, Himachal Pradesh  
(c) Kerala      (d) Bangalore, Karnataka

**18.** What is the capacity of the fuel cell used to generate electricity from the green hydrogen?

- (a) 15 kW      (b) 20 kW      (c) 25 kW      (d) 30 kW

**19.** Which company has recently commissioned India's first 99.999% pure Green Hydrogen pilot plant?

- (a) Indian Oil Corporation (IOC)      (b) Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC)  
(c) Oil India Limited (OIL)      (d) Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited (BPCL)

**20.** What is the targeted green hydrogen production capacity per annum under the National Green Hydrogen Mission by 2030?

- (a) 1 MMT (Million Metric Tonne)      (b) 3 MMT (Million Metric Tonne)  
(c) 5 MMT (Million Metric Tonne)      (d) 7 MMT (Million Metric Tonne)

**Passage 5**

[1] is undergoing a notable transformation in its agricultural landscape as farmers are increasingly opting out of wheat cultivation in favour of more economically viable alternatives. This shift, characterized by a transition towards cultivating crops like banana, lentils, and maize in lieu of wheat, is primarily driven by the threat posed by a [2] disease known as wheat blast. The emergence of this disease in neighbouring Bangladesh in 2016 prompted the state government to impose a two-year prohibition on wheat cultivation in border areas and two districts, aimed at depriving the pathogen of its host. However, the ban had severe repercussions for farmers, leading to significant concerns about potential future outbreaks and resulting losses. This apprehension has led some farmers to diversify into crops like paddy, previously unfamiliar in the region. Agricultural authorities have noted that this prohibition acted as a catalyst for experimentation with alternative crops, contributing to the observed shift in cropping patterns. Furthermore, recent initiatives by the state government to promote hybrid maize and pulse varieties have also played a role in boosting crop cultivation diversification. While these changes indicate a positive trend towards crop diversification and resilience against disease threats, it is unlikely to have a substantial impact on national wheat security. This nuanced shift underscores the complex interplay between agricultural policies, environmental challenges, and farmer adaptations in shaping regional crop dynamics.

**21.** Which of the following will replace [1] in the passage?

- (a) Assam (b) West Bengal (c) Mizoram (d) Meghalaya

**22.** What has been redacted by [2] in the passage?

- (a) Viral (b) Bacterial (c) Fungal (d) None of the Above

**23.** What is a key factor in the transmission of Wheat Blast?

- (a) Water scarcity (b) Airborne spores (c) Animal vectors (d) Chemical fertilizers

**24.** Which Indian state is associated with the "Mera Pani-Meri Virasat" scheme focusing on Crop Diversification?

- (a) Punjab (b) Haryana (c) Uttar Pradesh (d) Rajasthan

**25.** When was the Crop Diversification Programme (CDP) initiated by the Department of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare (DA&FW)?

- (a) 2011-12 (b) 2012-13 (c) 2013-14 (d) 2014-15

**Passage 6**

The Indian Army has recently taken delivery of the first batch of 24 Igla-S MANPADS, accompanied by 100 missiles, as part of a larger agreement that includes domestic production in India. Sources within the defence establishment have emphasized the significance of this acquisition, especially when compared to a smaller emergency purchase made in 2021. The Igla-S represents a hand-held defence system that is operable by either an individual or a crew. Its primary function is to engage and eliminate low-flying aircraft, while also possessing the capability to detect and neutralize airborne threats such as cruise missiles and drones. In November of the previous year, India finalized a contract for 120 launchers and 400 missiles, marking a significant step in bolstering the country's defence capabilities. While the initial batch has been procured from an external source, the remaining systems will undergo manufacturing within India through the Transfer of Technology (ToT) facilitated by an Indian company. This strategic approach not only furthers India's self-reliance in defence production but also strengthens its position in managing potential threats across various operational domains.

- 26.** What does MANPADS stand for in the context of the Indian Army's recent acquisition?  
 (a) Military Anti-Nuclear Platoon Deployment System  
 (b) Man Portable Air Defence Systems  
 (c) Mobile Anti-Narcotics Police Deployment System  
 (d) Missile-Assisted Naval Patrol Detection System
- 27.** From which country did India receive the first batch of Igla-S MANPADS?  
 (a) Germany (b) Turkey (c) Russia (d) Israel
- 28.** The Igla-S system boosts the Indian Army's VSHORAD capabilities, which is a MANPAD developed by Research Centre Imarat (RCI) in collaboration with DRDO labs and Indian industry partners. Where is Research Centre Imarat (RCI) located?  
 (a) Mumbai, Maharashtra (b) Bangalore, Karnataka  
 (c) Hyderabad, Telangana (d) Chennai, Tamil Nadu
- 29.** What is the maximum range of MANPADS?  
 (a) 5 kilometers (b) 8 kilometers (c) 10 kilometers (d) 15 kilometers
- 30.** The MANPADS was developed by Research Centre Imarat (RCI) in collaboration with DRDO labs and Indian industry partners. What was the first major defense project undertaken by DRDO?  
 (a) Project Indigo (b) Project Rainbow (c) Project VIBGYOR (d) Project Aatish

## V – 70s

- 31.** Which 24-seater Fuel Cell Electric Ferry was launched by Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Ltd (MDL) on May 14, 2024?  
 (a) Ruchi (b) Jamuna (c) Suchi (d) Varuchi
- 32.** Who is recently elected president of the Supreme Court Bar Association (SCBA)?  
 (a) Tushar Mehta (b) Lalit Bhasin (c) Kapil Sibal (d) Harish Salve
- 33.** Which neighbouring country has banned the sale and import of certain spice-mix products manufactured by Indian brands over alleged quality concerns?  
 (a) Bangladesh (b) Bhutan (c) Myanmar (d) Nepal
- 34.** Which digital payments app has enabled its users travelling to Sri Lanka can make payments using UPI (Unified Payments Interface) across LankaPay QR merchants?  
 (a) MobiKwik (b) BharatPe (c) PhonePe (d) Paytm
- 35.** Which midget submarine was launched by Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Ltd (MDL) on May 14, 2024?  
 (a) Drowana (b) Orowana (c) Growana (d) Arowana
- 36.** The Border Roads Organisation (BRO) on May 14, 2024 achieved a significant milestone by breaking through the 2.79-km \_\_\_\_ tunnel along the Jammu-Poonch national highway.  
 (a) Kandi (b) Verinag (c) Naushera (d) Sungal
- 37.** The Supreme Court is using SUVAS, a machine learning, AI-enabled translation tool for judgements of 16 regional languages. SUVAS is Supreme Court \_\_\_\_ Anuvaad Software.  
 (a) Vakil (b) Vidhik (c) Vishesh (d) Vividh
- 38.** BHISHM in government's "Project BHISHM" refers to Bharat \_\_\_\_ Initiative for Sahyog, Hita and Maitri.  
 (a) Health (b) Happiness (c) Heritage (d) Housing
- 39.** Where was the World Hydrogen Summit 2024 held?  
 (a) Rotterdam (b) Frankfurt (c) Lyons (d) Basel
- 40.** Which country has released a scratch-and-sniff baguette postage stamp?  
 (a) France (b) Hungary (c) Romania (d) Poland
- 41.** India sent two tranches of humanitarian aid to which flood-hit African country in May 2024?  
 (a) Niger (b) Chad (c) Algeria (d) Kenya

- 42.** New Caledonia is a territory of which country?  
 (a) France (b) Italy (c) Poland (d) Romania
- 43.** Pakistan on May 15, 2024 conducted training launch of which guided multi-launch rocket system that is capable of engaging targets up to a range of 400 kilometres?  
 (a) Fatah-II (b) Abdali-II (c) Sayyaf-II (d) Ghouri-II
- 44.** Who is the PM of Slovakia who was shot multiple times on May 15, 2024?  
 (a) Peter Kmec (b) Robert Fico (c) Mikulas Odor (d) Ivan Kiska
- 45.** India and which country signed a contract for the operation of a terminal at the strategically located Chabahar port?  
 (a) Myanmar (b) Iran (c) Bangladesh (d) Sri Lanka
- 46.** Which is the 1st bank as trading-clearing member of India International Bullion Exchange (IIBX)?  
 (a) State Bank of India (b) Punjab National Bank (c) Axis Bank (d) HDFC Bank
- 47.** The 7th edition of military exercise 'Shakti' recently commenced between India and which country?  
 (a) USA (b) France (c) Australia (d) Japan
- 48.** World Hydrogen Summit 2024 is organized in which country?  
 (a) Switzerland (b) New Zealand (c) Norway (d) Netherlands
- 49.** Panchatantra which is recently been included in 'UNESCO's Memory of the World Asia-Pacific Regional Register' is authored by  
 (a) Acharya Anandvardhan (b) Vishnu Sharma  
 (c) Kalidas (d) Bhavabhutti
- 50.** The World Wildlife Crime Report 2024 is recently released by  
 (a) World Wildlife Fund (b) UN Environment Programme  
 (c) United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (d) CITES
- 51.** Which country has become the country with the highest data center capacity in the Asia-Pacific region?  
 (a) India (b) China (c) Japan (d) Australia
- 52.** Scientists at the ICAR-National Bureau of Fish Genetic Resources (NBFG) have discovered mass sea anemone bleaching off Agatti island. It is located in  
 (a) Lakshadweep Islands (b) Andaman & Nicobar Islands  
 (c) Tamil Nadu (d) Andhra Pradesh
- 53.** What is the base year of Wholesale Price Index?  
 (a) 2004-05 (b) 2011-12 (c) 2013-14 (d) 2016-17
- 54.** Recently in news Project Astra is related to-  
 (a) Space ship (b) Space weapon (c) Artificial Intelligence (d) Anti Submarine missile
- 55.** Recently which space agency conducted a successful hot test of a liquid rocket engine created using 3D printing?  
 (a) NASA (b) JAXA (c) ESA (d) ISRO
- 56.** Exercise Tarkash is the Indo-\_\_\_\_\_ joint counter terrorism exercise.  
 (a) Japan (b) Sri Lanka (c) Australia (d) US
- 57.** Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA) was passed by parliament of India in which year?  
 (a) 2018 (b) 2019 (c) 2020 (d) 2021
- 58.** In which year central government has amended the UAPA to designate an individual as a 'terrorist'?  
 (a) 2014 (b) 2016 (c) 2019 (d) 2017
- 59.** Which country loses its last glacier to become the first nation in the Andes without a glacier?  
 (a) Peru (b) Bolivia (c) Venezuela (d) Argentina
- 60.** Recently in news, Asia's largest freshwater oxbow lake, Kanwar is situated in -  
 (a) Madhya Pradesh (b) Kerala (c) Bihar (d) Tamil Nadu

- 61.** World's first high-speed 6G prototype device is recently launched in which country?  
 (a) US (b) China (c) France (d) Japan
- 62.** According to recent report which country ranks first in adoption of Generative AI across Asia-Pacific?  
 (a) India (b) Australia (c) China (d) Japan
- 63.** Recently in news, CAATSA law is associated with which country?  
 (a) Russia (b) Israel (c) Canada (d) US
- 64.** Who will be the second Indian to fly to space?  
 (a) Captain Gopichand Thotakura (b) Group Captain Prasanth Nair  
 (c) Group Captain Ajit Krishnan (d) Group Captain Angad Pratap
- 65.** Ghost Shark is an prototype uncrewed underwater vehicles or drones, introduced recently by –  
 (a) US (b) Australia (c) India (d) China
- 66.** Recently Supreme Court has ruled that \_\_\_\_\_ cannot be sued under the Consumer Protection Act for providing faulty service.  
 (a) Lawyers (b) Engineers (c) Doctors (d) Scientists
- 67.** Recently who has conducted a test of BHISHM portable hospital cubes in Agra?  
 (a) Indian Army (b) DRDO (c) Indian Air Force (d) Indian Medical Association
- 68.** World Telecommunication Day is celebrated annually on which date?  
 (a) 14 May (b) 15 May (c) 16 May (d) 17 May
- 69.** Who recently won the gold medal in men's javelin throw at the 27th Federation Cup senior national competition?  
 (a) Neeraj Chopra (b) Kishore Jena (c) DP Manu (d) None
- 70.** Recently Indian national football team captain \_\_\_\_\_ announces retirement from international football.  
 (a) Sunil Chhetri (b) Bhaichung Bhutia  
 (c) Gurpreet Singh Sandhu (d) Sandesh Jhingan
- 71.** Which country's High Energy Photon Source (HEPS) is set to be the first fourth-generation synchrotron light source in Asia?  
 (a) Japan (b) South Korea (c) India (d) China
- 72.** Recently which platform started UPI payment services collaboration with LankaPay in Sri Lanka?  
 (a) BharatPe (b) GooglePay (c) PhonePay (d) Paytm
- 73.** Which space agency PREFIRE polar mission is set to be launched from New Zealand on May 22?  
 (a) NASA (b) ESA  
 (c) China National Space Administration (d) Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency
- 74.** Recently in news, Eaglenest Wildlife Sanctuary is located in which state?  
 (a) Sikkim (b) Himachal Pradesh (c) Ladakh (d) Arunachal Pradesh
- 75.** Lunar Polar Exploration Mission (LUPEX) is a joint moon exploration mission between the space agencies of which two countries?  
 (a) India and US (b) US and Japan (c) US and Canada (d) India and Japan
- 76.** Which country is named as the hosts of FIFA Women's World Cup 2027?  
 (a) Brazil (b) Spain (c) US (d) South Africa
- 77.** Recently who has sworn in as the new president of Taiwan?  
 (a) Tsai Ing-wen (b) Lai Ching-te (c) Li Qiang (d) None
- 78.** Recently which country's President Ebrahim Raisi died in a helicopter crash?  
 (a) Iraq (b) Syria (c) Iran (d) Egypt
- 79.** Recently, Mount Ibu erupted again, sending ash 4 km high, is located in which Country?  
 (a) Japan (b) Singapore (c) Indonesia (d) Australia

- 80.** Which Country has marked a significant milestone in its defence capabilities by successfully testing the updated ASMPA supersonic missile?  
 (a) USA (b) France (c) Russia (d) Japan
- 81.** Recently in News, Columbia University along with which IIT had developed an optical nanopatterning process?  
 (a) IIT Delhi (b) IIT Mumbai (c) IIT Guwahati (d) IIT Kharagpur
- 82.** Anasuya Sengupta won the Best Actress at Cannes Film Festival for which movie?  
 (a) The Shameless (b) The Story of Souleymane  
 (c) Black Dog (d) Megalopolis
- 83.** Recently, twelve nations signed the Zero Debris Charter at the ESA/EU Space Council, committing to making space activities debris-neutral by –  
 (a) 2026 (b) 2030 (c) 2040 (d) 2050
- 84.** Recently, which country has become the 99th member of the International Solar Alliance (ISA)?  
 (a) Spain (b) Morocco (c) Algeria (d) Brazil
- 85.** Which airport becomes the first airport in India to achieve the Zero Waste to Landfill (ZWL) accolade?  
 (a) Rajiv Gandhi International Airport (b) Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport  
 (c) Indira Gandhi International Airport (d) Thiruvananthapuram International Airport
- 86.** BIMSTEC was founded in which year?  
 (a) 1997 (b) 1975 (c) 1987 (d) 1991
- 87.** What is the name of the cyclone that made landfall between Bangladesh and adjoining West Bengal coasts recently?  
 (a) Titli (b) Fani (c) Remal (d) Nisarga
- 88.** Which Indian recently got Golden Visa from UAE Government?  
 (a) Rajnikant (b) MS Dhoni (c) Virat Kohli (d) Amitabh Bachchan
- 89.** The Kerala government recently issued an order to plant which type of trees for its financial sustenance in 2024-2025?  
 (a) Bamboo (b) Tulsi (c) Eucalyptus (d) Neem
- 90.** World Intellectual Property Organization member states approved a groundbreaking new treaty related to intellectual property, genetic resources and associated traditional knowledge. WIPO was established in which year?  
 (a) 1967 (b) 1970 (c) 1971 (d) 1973
- 91.** Recently which multilateral body under "Manama Declaration" has demanded an immediate ceasefire in Gaza and an end to forced displacement in the region?  
 (a) G7 (b) European Union (c) Arab League (d) G 20
- 92.** Recently in News, Bhabha Atomic Research Centre (BARC) headquartered is in which city?  
 (a) New Delhi (b) Chennai (c) Mumbai (d) Kolkata
- 93.** Recently, a Himalayan serow was spotted in the central part of Nameri National Park and Tiger Reserve. It is located in which state?  
 (a) Meghalaya (b) Mizoram (c) Assam (d) Manipur
- 94.** Which Indian peacekeeper, will receive the prestigious UN Military Gender Advocate of the Year award?  
 (a) Radhika Sen (b) Lalita Sen (c) Prabha Mishra (d) Savitri dev
- 95.** The National Green Tribunal (NGT) recently directed the State to stop any unlawful/illegal sand mining in which river coastal zone?  
 (a) Ganga (b) Krishna (c) Sharavathi (d) Kaveri
- 96.** Recently who has chaired meeting of National Crisis Management Committee (NCMC) to review preparedness to deal with heat wave and forest fires?  
 (a) Prime Minister (b) Home Minister (c) Environment Minister (d) Cabinet Secretary

**97.** Magellan mission a deep space mission was in news recently is associated with which space agency?

- (a) ESA (b) NASA (c) ISRO (d) None

**98.** Under which union ministry "PRAGATI- 2024" has been launched recently?

- (a) Ministry of Ayush (b) Ministry of Information & Electronics  
(c) Ministry of Earth Sciences (d) Ministry of Finance

**99.** Which NATO Country will give its Radar planes to Ukraine to combat Russia?

- (a) Finland (b) Germany (c) Sweden (d) Luxembourg

**100.** Which day is observed as the World No Tobacco Day?

- (a) 29 May (b) 30 May (c) 31 May (d) 1 June

# ANSWERS & EXPLANATIONS

**1. Ans. c**

Exp. Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW): It is the implementing body of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC). Mission: To implement the provisions of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) in order to achieve the OPCW's vision of a world that is free of chemical weapons and of the threat of their use, and in which cooperation in chemistry for peaceful purposes for all is fostered. Its headquarters are located in The Hague, Netherlands.

**2. Ans. b**

Exp. As the implementing body for the Chemical Weapons Convention, the OPCW, with its 193 Member States, oversees the global endeavour to permanently and verifiably eliminate chemical weapons.

**3. Ans. a**

Exp. Chemical Weapons Convention is a multilateral treaty that bans chemical weapons and requires their destruction within a specified period of time. It entered into force on April 29, 1997. It requires states-parties to declare in writing to the OPCW their chemical weapons.

**4. Ans. b**

Exp. The Chemical Weapons Convention Act, 2000 was passed to implement the CWC. It provided for the establishment of a National Authority for Chemical Weapons Convention or NACWC. This institution, formed in 2005, is the chief liaison between the government of India and the OPCW.

**5. Ans. b**

Exp. Biological weapons use microbiological agents (such as bacteria, viruses or fungi) or toxins to intentionally cause death or harm to humans, animals, or plants. The Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BTWC), which entered into force in 1975 prohibited the development, production, stockpiling, acquisition and retention of biological weapons. India ratified this in 1974.

**6. Ans. c**

Exp. Under the law, counting of votes is to be done by, or under the supervision and direction of, the Returning Officer of the constituency in the presence of the candidates and their agents.

**7. Ans. a**

Exp. Each candidate or their election agent may appoint an Indian citizen who is at least 18 years old and who has the capability of understanding and carefully watching the counting process as that candidate's counting agent.

**8. Ans. c**

Exp. Each candidate has been allowed to appoint as many counting agents as there are counting tables and one more to watch the counting at the Returning Officer's table. Under the instructions of the Election Commission not more than fourteen tables in addition to one table for the Returning Officer can be provided for counting in one counting hall. Thus, the maximum number of counting agents that may be appointed by a candidate should not ordinarily exceed 15, as the number of counting tables also does not ordinarily exceed 15, including the table of the Returning Officer.

**9. Ans. c**

Exp. To apply for a postal ballot, eligible voters must apply, Form 12 D, to the returning officer (RO) of their respective constituency. The application typically requires personal details, voter identification information, and the reason for seeking a postal ballot. For senior citizens, a team of two polling officials, a videographer, and security personnel will visit the residence of the elector to facilitate this process. Voters will be informed of the date and time of the officials visit via SMS.

**10. Ans. b**

Exp. Observers are designated by the Election Commission (EC) to be present in each counting room, where their responsibility is to document the proceedings meticulously and submit a comprehensive report. These observers typically hail from the Government of India (GoI) and are entrusted with the crucial task of supervising the smooth operation of the entire election machinery.

**11. Ans. a**

Exp. C. V. Ananda Bose is an Indian retired 1977-batch IAS officer, who has been serving as the Governor of West Bengal since 23 November 2022.

**12. Ans. d**

Exp. There shall be a Governor for each State – Provided that nothing in this article shall prevent the appointment of the same person as Governor for two or more States (7th CAA 1956).

**13. Ans. c**

Exp. 153 means that there shall not be a vacancy in the office of the Governor. The Constitution (Seventh Amendment) Act, 1956 made a change in Art. 153 to the effect that one person can be appointed as Governor for two more States.

**14. Ans. c**

Exp. Article 361 of the Constitution that deals with immunity to the President and the Governors. It states that they shall not be answerable: to any court for the exercise and performance of the powers and duties of his office; or for any act done or purporting to be done by him in the exercise and performance of those powers and duties.

**15. Ans. c**

Exp. Governor's Term of Office and Presidential Discretion (Art. 156) The Governor shall hold office during the pleasure of the President. The term of the Governor is prescribed as five years. They may, under his hand, resign to the President.

**16. Ans. a**

Exp. Geeta Kapur, the Chairman and Managing Director (CMD) of SJVN Limited (formerly Satluj Jal Vidyut Nigam), marked a historic milestone on April 23, 2024, by inaugurating India's first multipurpose green hydrogen pilot project, integrating both heat and power functionalities.

**17. Ans. b**

Exp. The green hydrogen pilot project, a groundbreaking initiative integrating both heat and power functionalities, unfolded at the illustrious 1,500-megawatt (MW) Nathpa Jhakri Hydro Power Station (NJHPS) nestled in the picturesque locale of Jhakri, Himachal Pradesh (HP).

**18. Ans. c**

Exp. The green hydrogen produced from the project will be utilized for high-velocity oxygen fuel (HVOF) coating facility of NJHPS to meet its combustion fuel requirements. In addition, it will also generate electricity through its fuel cell of 25 kW capacity.

**19. Ans. c**

Exp. Oil India Limited (OIL) has taken the first significant step towards Green Hydrogen Economy in India with the commissioning of India's First 99.999% pure Green Hydrogen pilot plant, with an installed capacity of 10 kg per day at its Jorhat Pump Station in Assam.

**20. Ans. c**

Exp. The National Green Hydrogen Mission was approved by the Union Cabinet on 4 January 2022 with objective of developing green hydrogen production capacity of at least 5 MMT (Million Metric Tonne) per annum, alongside adding renewable energy capacity of about 125 GW (gigawatt) in India by 2030. It will also lead to a cumulative reduction in fossil fuel imports by over Rs 1 lakh crore and an abatement of nearly 50 MT of annual greenhouse gas emissions.

**21. Ans. b**

Exp. West Bengal's agricultural scene has recently experienced a significant transformation characterized by a shift towards crop diversification. This shift entails farmers moving away from the conventional practice of wheat cultivation and turning towards alternative crops such as bananas, lentils, and maize.

**22. Ans. c**

Exp. Wheat Blast (WB) is a fungal disease caused by the pathogen *Magnaporthe oryzae* pathotype *Triticum* (MoT). It was first identified in Brazil in 1985.

**23. Ans. b**

Exp. Wheat Blast spreads via infected seeds, posing threat to new crops as the fungus can persist within them. Airborne spores are key in wheat blast transmission, travelling long distances and swiftly infecting nearby wheat fields upon release. Infected crop residues containing the fungus aid in disease spread by surviving and infecting new plants under favourable conditions.

**24. Ans. b**

Exp. The "Mera Pani-Meri Virasat" Scheme in Haryana provides financial support to farmers who shift from growing paddy to water-saving options such as pulses, oilseeds, millets, and vegetables.

**25. Ans. c**

Exp. The Department of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare (DA&FW) has been implementing the Crop Diversification Programme (CDP) since 2013-14, as part of the Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana (RKVY), specifically targeting the Original Green Revolution States- Haryana, Punjab, and Western Uttar Pradesh.

**26. Ans. b**

Exp. MANPADS are short-range, lightweight and portable surface-to-air missiles that can be fired by individuals or small groups to destroy aircraft or helicopters. MANPADS stands for Man Portable Air Defence Systems.

**27. Ans. c**

Exp. The Indian Army has received the first batch of Igla-S Man Portable Air Defence Systems (MANPADS) from Russia, part of a larger deal for 120 launchers and 400 missiles.

**28. Ans. c**

Exp. Research Centre Imarat (RCI) is a DRDO laboratory located in Hyderabad, Telangana. The lab is responsible for Research and Development of Missile Systems, Guided Weapons and advanced Avionics for Indian Armed Forces. It was established by APJ Abdul Kalam in 1988.

**29. Ans. b**

Exp. MANPADS have a maximum range of 8 kilometers and can engage targets at altitudes of 4.5 km. They weigh anywhere between 10 to 20 kilograms and are not longer than 1.8 meters.

**30. Ans. a**

Exp. The DRDO, formed in 1958 by merging key entities, focuses on military research and development for achieving defense self-reliance. Project Indigo marked its initial major defense project, centering on Surface-to-Air Missiles (SAM) development.

## V – 70s

**31. Ans. c**

Exp. A 24-passenger Fuel Cell Electric Ferry named 'SUCHI', conceptualised by MDL and co-developed with indigenous technology partner was also commissioned.

**32. Ans. c**

Exp. Senior advocate Kapil Sibal was elected president of the Supreme Court Bar Association (SCBA). He would be serving the SCBA for the fourth time as its president. He was previously elected the president of the lawyers' body in 2001.

**33. Ans. d**

Exp. After Singapore and Hong Kong, Nepal has also banned the sale and import of certain spice-mix products manufactured by Indian brands over alleged quality concerns.

**34. Ans. c**

Exp. Phonepe App has enabled its users travelling to Sri Lanka can make payments using UPI (Unified Payments Interface) across LankaPay QR merchants.

**35. Ans. d**

Exp. The MDL has successfully completed the platform design and hull of the midget submarine named 'Arowana' which was launched by Shri Giridhar Aramane.

**36. Ans. d**

Exp. The Border Roads Organisation (BRO) on Tuesday achieved a significant milestone by breaking through the 2.79-km Sungal tunnel along the Jammu-Poonch national highway.

**37. Ans. b**

Exp. Supreme Court has developed Supreme Court Vidhik Anuvaad Software (SUVAS) which is a machine assisted translation tool trained by Artificial Intelligence.

**38. Ans. a**

Exp. "Project BHISHM" refers to Bharat Health Initiative for Sahyog, Hita and Maitri.

**39. Ans. a**

Exp. The Indian Pavilion, organised by the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy, stands as one of the largest at the esteemed World Hydrogen Summit 2024 in Rotterdam, Netherlands.

**40. Ans. a**

Exp. France releases scratch-and-sniff postage stamps that smell like French baguettes.

**41. Ans. d**

Exp. The Government of India is providing humanitarian aid to Kenya following severe floods that have devastated the country.

**42. Ans. a**

Exp. New Caledonia is a territory of France.

**43. Ans. a**

Exp. Fatah-II capable of engaging targets with high precision, defeating any missile defense system. Pakistan on Wednesday conducted a successful training launch of Fatah-II guided rocket system which has a range of 400 kms (248 miles).

**44. Ans. b**

Exp. PM of Slovakia Robert Fico was shot multiple times on May 15, 2024, now he is out of danger.

**45. Ans. b**

Exp. India and Iran signed a contract for the operation of a terminal at the strategically located Chabahar port.

**46. Ans. a**

Exp. SBI is the 1st bank as trading-clearing member of India International Bullion Exchange (IIBX).

**47. Ans. b**

Exp. The 7th edition of Joint Military Exercise SHAKTI commenced between India and France.

**48. Ans. d**

Exp. World Hydrogen Summit 2024 is organized in Rotterdam, Netherlands.

**49. Ans. b**

Exp. Panchatantra which is recently been included in 'UNESCO's Memory of the World Asia-Pacific Regional Register' is authored by Vishnu Sharma.

**50. Ans. c**

Exp. The World Wildlife Crime Report 2024 is recently released by United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime.

**51. Ans. a**

Exp. India has become the country with the highest data center capacity in the Asia-Pacific region.

**52. Ans. a**

Exp. Scientists at the ICAR-National Bureau of Fish Genetic Resources (NBFGGR) have discovered mass sea anemone bleaching off Agatti island in the Lakshadweep group.

**53. Ans. b**

Exp. The new series of Wholesale Price Index(WPI) with base 2011-12 is effective from April 2017.

**54. Ans. c**

Exp. Project Astra, an ambitious vision of what he believes will be the future of artificial intelligence (AI) assistants.

**55. Ans. d**

Exp. ISRO achieved a milestone by conducting a successful hot test of a liquid rocket engine created using Additive Manufacturing (AM) technology, commonly known as 3D printing.

**56. Ans. d**

Exp. Exercise Tarkash is the Indo-U.S. joint counter terrorism exercise.

**57. Ans. b**

Exp. The Citizenship (Amendment) Act, 2019 was passed by the Parliament of India on 11 December 2019.

**58. Ans. c**

Exp. central government has amended the UAPA to designate an individual as a 'terrorist' in 2019.

**59. Ans. c**

Exp. The demise of La Corona makes Venezuela the first nation in the Andes without a glacier.

**60. Ans. c**

Exp. Recently in news, Asia's largest freshwater oxbow lake, Kanwar is situated in North Bihar.

**61. Ans. d**

Exp. A Japanese consortium recently unveiled the world's first high-speed 6G prototype device.

**62. Ans. a**

Exp. India ranks first in adoption of Generative AI across Asia-Pacific.

**63. Ans. d**

Exp. CAATSA is a US law targeting countries engaged with Russia, North Korea, and Iran through economic sanctions.

**64. Ans. a**

Exp. Capt Gopichand Thotakura to tour space on Blue Origin flight. Successful trip could make Thotakura the first Indian in space since Rakesh Sharma.

**65. Ans. b**

Exp. Ghost Shark is an prototype uncrewed underwater vehicles or drones, introduced recently by Australia.

**66. Ans. a**

Exp. Supreme Court has ruled that lawyers cannot be sued under the Consumer Protection Act for providing faulty service.

**67. Ans. c**

Exp. The Indian Air Force conducted a test of BHISHM portable hospital cubes in Agra. BHISHM cubes are part of "Project BHISHM" aimed at providing a rapid medical response for up to 200 casualties.

**68. Ans. d**

Exp. Every year on May 17, the world celebrates World Telecommunication Day.

**69. Ans. a**

Exp. Neeraj Chopra won the gold medal in men's javelin throw at the 27th Federation Cup senior national competition.

**70. Ans. a**

Exp. Recently Indian national football team captain Sunil Chhetri announces retirement from international football.

**71. Ans. d**

Exp. China's latest scientific milestone, the High Energy Photon Source (HEPS), set to be the first fourth-generation synchrotron light source in Asia.

**72. Ans. c**

Exp. PhonePay has recently platform started UPI payment services collaboration with LankaPay in Sri Lanka

**73. Ans. a**

Exp. NASA PREFIRE polar mission is set to be launched from New Zealand on May 22.

**74. Ans. d**

Exp. An endangered species, Red panda was recently captured on camera in the Eaglenest Wildlife Sanctuary (EWS).

**75. Ans. d**

Exp. It is a collaborative endeavor between Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) and Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA).

**76. Ans. a**

Exp. Brazil named as hosts of FIFA Women's World Cup 2027

**77. Ans. b**

Exp. Lai Ching-te of Taiwan's ruling Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) was sworn in as the self-governing island's new President.

**78. Ans. c**

Exp. Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi and foreign minister have passed away in a helicopter crash.

**79. Ans. c**

Exp. Recently, Mount Ibu erupted again, sending ash 4 km high, as streaks of purple lightning flashed around its crater.

**80. Ans. b**

Exp. France has marked a significant milestone in its defence capabilities by successfully testing the updated ASMPA supersonic missile.

**81. Ans. c**

Exp. Nanopatterning has come a long way thanks to scientists from the Indian Institute of Technology Guwahati (IIT Guwahati) and Columbia University in the United States.

**82. Ans. a**

Exp. Anasuya Sengupta won the Best Actress at Cannes Film Festival for The Shameless.

**83. Ans. b**

Exp. Recently, twelve nations signed the Zero Debris Charter at the ESA/EU Space Council, committing to making space activities debris-neutral by 2030.

**84. Ans. a**

Exp. Spain has joined the International Solar Alliance (ISA) as its 99th member.

**85. Ans. d**

Exp. Thiruvananthapuram International Airport receives zero waste to landfill accolade.

**86. Ans. a**

Exp. BIMSTEC was founded as BIST-EC in June 1997, with the adoption of the Bangkok Declaration, with Bangladesh, India, Sri Lanka and Thailand as members.

**87. ans. c**

Exp. Cyclone Remal that made landfall between Bangladesh and adjoining West Bengal coasts recently.

**88. Ans. a**

Exp. Rajnikant recieved Golden Visa from UAE Government.

**89. Ans. c**

Exp. The Kerala government recently issued an order allowing the Kerala Forest Development Corporation (KFDC) to plant eucalyptus trees for its financial sustenance in 2024-2025.

**90. Ans.a**

Exp. The World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) was established in 1967 through the WIPO Convention.

**91. Ans. c**

Exp. Arab League under "Manama Declaration" has demanded an immediate ceasefire in Gaza and an end to forced displacement in the region.

**92. Ans. c**

Exp. It is headquartered in Trombay, Mumbai, Maharashtra.

**93. Ans. c**

Exp. It is situated in the northern part of the Sonitpur district of Assam, along the foothills of Arunachal Pradesh.

**94. Ans. a**

Exp. Major Radhika Sen will receive the prestigious UN Military Gender Advocate of the Year award in 2023.

**95. Ans. c**

Exp. The National Green Tribunal (NGT) has directed the State Environment Impact Assessment Authority (SEIAA) and mines and geology department to stop any unlawful/illegal sand mining in Sharavathi river coastal zone.

**96. Ans. d**

Exp. Cabinet Secretary Shri Rajiv Gauba chaired meeting of NCMC to review preparedness to deal with heat wave and forest fires.

**97. Ans. b**

Exp. Magellan Mission was a deep space mission launched by NASA on May 4, 1989, to explore the planet Venus.

**98. Ans. a**

Exp. The Central Council for Research in Ayurvedic Sciences (CCRAS), an autonomous body under the Union Ministry of Ayush, today launched "PRAGATI- 2024" (Pharma Research in AyurGyan And Techno Innovation).

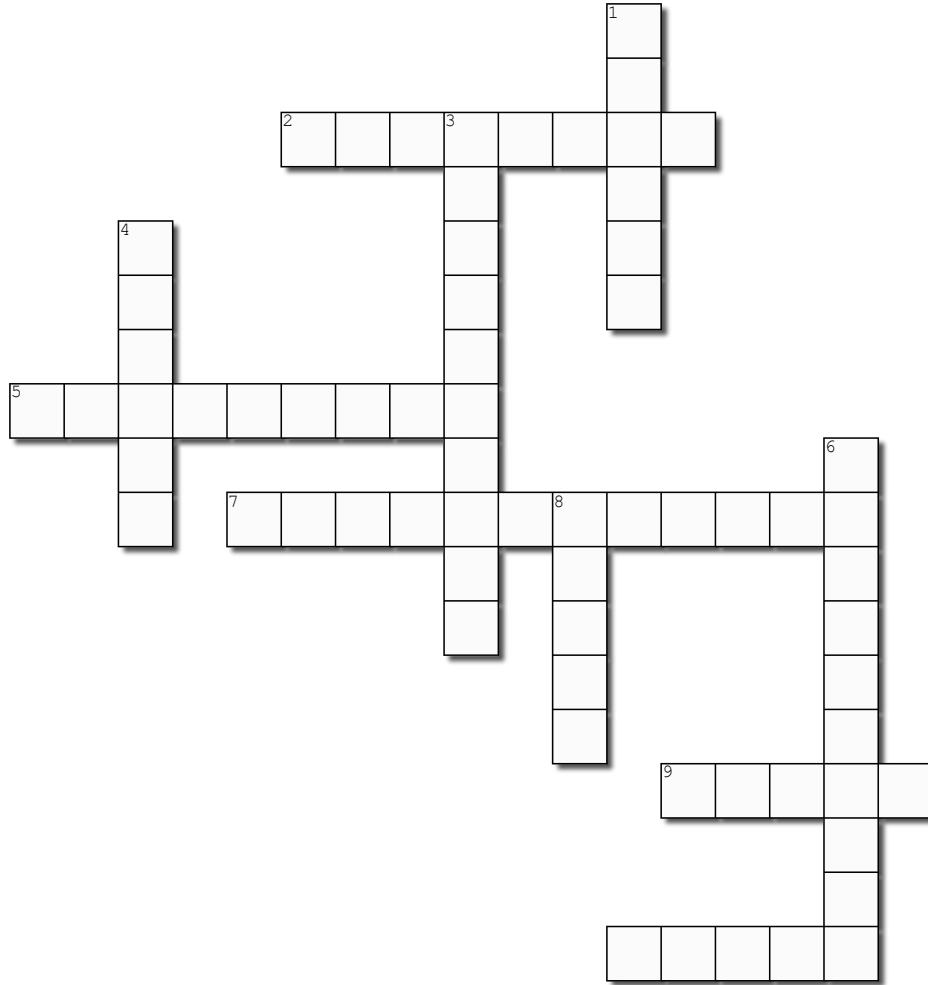
**99. Ans. c**

Exp. Sweden will give its advanced radar planes to Ukraine to combat Russia.

**100. Ans. c**

Exp. World No Tobacco Day (WNTD) is observed around the world every year on 31 May.

# Vidhigya Crossword



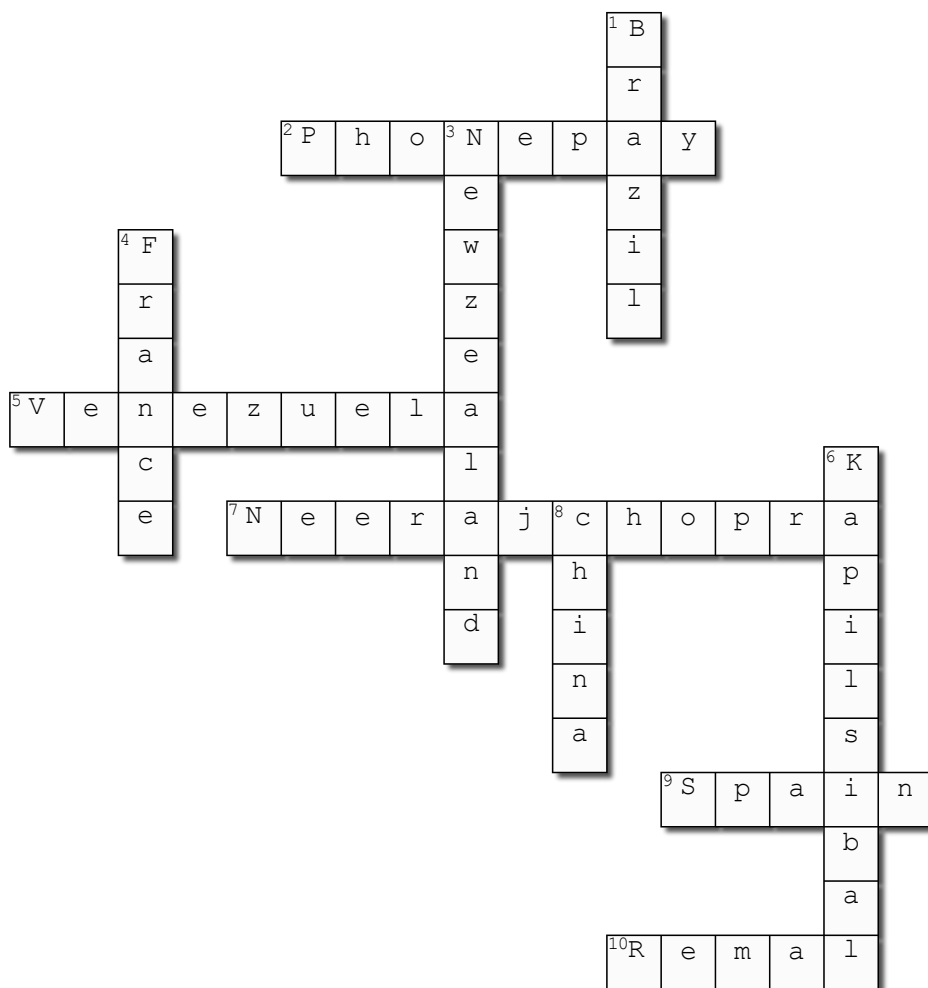
## Across

2. Recently which platform started UPI payment services collaboration with LankaPay in Sri Lanka?
5. Which country loses its last glacier to become the first nation in the Andes without a glacier?
7. Who recently won the gold medal in men's javelin throw at the 27th Federation Cup senior national competition?
9. Recently, which country has become the 99th member of the International Solar Alliance (ISA)?
10. What is the name of the cyclone that made landfall between Bangladesh and adjoining West Bengal coasts recently?

## Down

1. Which country is named as the hosts of FIFA Women's World Cup 2027?
3. New Caledonia is a territory of which country?
4. The 7th edition of military exercise 'Shakti' recently commenced between India and which country?
6. Recently who has been appointed as the President of Supreme Court Bar Association?
8. Which country's High Energy Photon Source (HEPS) is set to be the first fourth-generation synchrotron light source in Asia?

# Vidhigya Crossword



### Across

2. Recently which platform started UPI payment services collaboration with LankaPay in Sri Lanka? (**phonepay**)
5. Which country loses its last glacier to become the first nation in the Andes without a glacier? (**venezuela**)
7. Who recently won the gold medal in men's javelin throw at the 27th Federation Cup senior national competition? (**neerajchopra**)
9. Recently, which country has become the 99th member of the International Solar Alliance (ISA)? (**spain**)
10. What is the name of the cyclone that made landfall between Bangladesh and adjoining West Bengal coasts recently? (**remal**)

## Down

1. Which country is named as the hosts of FIFA Women's World Cup 2027? (**brazil**)
3. New Caledonia is a territory of which country? (**newzealand**)
4. The 7th edition of military exercise 'Shakti' recently commenced between India and which country? (**france**)
6. Recently who has been appointed as the President of Supreme Court Bar Association? (**kapilsibal**)
8. Which country's High Energy Photon Source (HEPS) is set to be the first fourth-generation synchrotron light source in Asia? (**china**)