Current Events

April 2023

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The download for Current Affairs for Recruitment Test (RTs) exams of UPSC, including ALC, LEO, APFC, EPFO EO/AO, Admin Officer, Store Officer, Deputy Director, and Investigator Grade-I is available.

The Current Events are tailored to the latest RTs trends and requirements of UPSC. To optimize exam performance, focus on the following key points:

- Cover current events from the past 18 months only, up to the date of the exam. For periodic events, such as the Budget, Economic Survey, Nobel Prize, or Tournaments, refer to only the latest ones. For instance, for an April 2023 exam, study the 2023 budget, not the 2022 budget.
- The UPSC RT exam is factual, so don't delve into details or implications.
- The return on investment (ROI) for studying current affairs is generally low. Therefore, devote an appropriate amount of time to them while prioritizing other topics that have a higher ROI. Studying 100 pages of current affairs may result in only f5 questions, while studying 100 pages of polity could yield 14-15 questions.
- A few questions will always be unsolvable, no matter how much you've studied. Don't get discouraged by them, as they won't affect your selection.
- Based on experience, you can expect to answer approximately 60-70% of question in exam, from these concise current affairs booklets.
- Current affairs for UPSC RT exams are purely factual, so self-study is better than coaching classes. In fact, coaching classes are counterproductive, as a teacher may only cover 10 events in 60 minutes, while you can cover 35-40 events in the same time frame.

Finally, note that these files are specifically prepared for RT exams of UPSC and should not be used for Civil Services Preliminary exam (GS Paper 1).

If you want to report any correction/error/feedback, you are welcome at **contact@humanperitus.com.** We will check and respond within 1 working day.

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1. Sports

Madrid Spain Masters 2023: India's P.V. Sindhu stood second
The women's title in the Spain masters was won by Gregoria Mariska Tunjunghas (Indonesia) and P.V. Sindhu stood in the second place. The tournament took place at Centro Deportivo Municipal Gallur in Madrid, Spain.

The Madrid Spain Masters 2023 is a globally recognized badminton competition classified as a Super 300 event. The prize money for the tournament amounted to USD 210,000, making it a highly lucrative event. The Spanish Badminton Federation organized the tournament with the approval and regulation of the Badminton World Federation (BWF). P V Sindhu defeated Singapore's Yeo Jia Min in the semi-finals.

Peru removed as host of 2023 FIFA Under-17 World Cup
The world football governing body, FIFA, has announced the withdrawal of the hosting right for the FIFA U-17 World Cup 2023 initially given to Peru.

Wrestler Aman Sehrawat wins Gold Medal in Asian Wrestling Championship
Aman Sehrawat has won India's first gold medal at Asian Wrestling Championships (held in Astana, Kazakhstan) in 57 kg freestyle category. He defeated Kyrgyzstan's Almaz Smanbekov. Last year, Sehrawat was the first Indian wrestler to win gold at the Under-23 world championships held in Spain.

Long Jumper Shaili Singh wins Gold Medal at the Indian Grand Prix 4
Long Jumper Shaili Singh has won a gold medal in the women's long jump at the Indian Grand Prix 4 2023 athletics meet in Bangalore, Karnataka, is associated in Long Jump. She logged a 6.76m effort, the second-best by an Indian after the legendary Anju Bobby George.

She also made the cut for the Asian Games 2023 (scheduled in Hangzhou, China, later in 2023) by breaching the women's long jump qualifying standard of 6.45m set by the Athletics Federation of India (AFI).

Nithya, Nitesh wins singles gold at Brazil Para-Badminton International
India's Nithya Sre Sumathy Sivan has claimed twin gold medals at the Brazil Para-Badminton International. She defeated Peru's Giuliana Poveda Flores in the women's singles SH6 category.

Also, in the mixed doubles SH6 final, she combined with Sivarajan Solaimalai to beat Hong Kong's Chu Man Kai and Choi Wing Kei. Also, Pramod Bhagat and Sukant Kadam also won gold in the men's doubles category.

Vedaant Madhavan wins gold medals at Malaysian Invitational Championships
Swimmer Vedaant Madhavan won 5 gold medals – (50, 100, 200, 400 and 1,500 mt) – at the Malaysian Invitational Age Group Championships 2023 held in Kuala Lumpur's Bukit Jalil. Before the Malaysian championship, Vedaant had also won 4 gold and 3 silver medals at the Aquatic Nationals 2022. Vedant is son of actor R Madhavan.

2. Science & Technology

Govt. approves Construction of LIGO
Government of India has approved the construction of the Laser Interferometer Gravitational-Wave Observatory (LIGO) project in Hingoli district of Maharashtra. It will be built by the Department of Atomic Energy and the Department of Science and Technology with the U.S. National Science Foundation and several national and international research institutions. The project aims to detect gravitational waves from the universe. The Indian LIGO would have two perpendicularly placed 4-km long vacuum chambers, that constitute the most sensitive interferometers in the world. It is expected to begin scientific runs from 2030.

Gravitational waves were first postulated (1916) in Albert Einstein's General Theory of Relativity, which explains how gravity works. These waves are produced by the movement of massive celestial bodies, such as black holes or neutron stars, and are the ripples in spacetime that propagate outward.

LIGO is an international network of laboratories that detect gravitational waves. LIGOs are designed to measure changes in distance that are several orders of magnitude smaller than the length of the proton. Such high precision Instruments are needed because of the extremely low strength of gravitational waves that make their detection very difficult.

Rare Earth Elements (REE) found in Andhra Pradesh
Scientists at the National Geophysical Research Institute (NGRI), a Council of Scientific and Industrial Research facility in Hyderabad, have reported the large deposits of 15 Rare Earth Elements (REE) in Andhra Pradesh's Anantapur city. REE is a key component in many electronic devices and various industrial applications, including medical technology, aerospace and defence. The Light Rare Earth Element minerals include Lanthanum, Cerium, Praseodymium, Neodymium, Yttrium, Hafnium, Tantalum, Niobium, Zirconium, and Scandium.

Rare Earth Metals are a set of 17 metallic elements, including the 15 Lanthanides and Scandium and Yttrium. They are called "*rare earth*" because they occur in low concentrations of minerals and were difficult to extract from their oxide forms. They have unique magnetic, luminescent, and electrochemical properties and are used in many modern technologies. They are all metals having many similar properties, and that often causes them to be found together in geologic deposits.

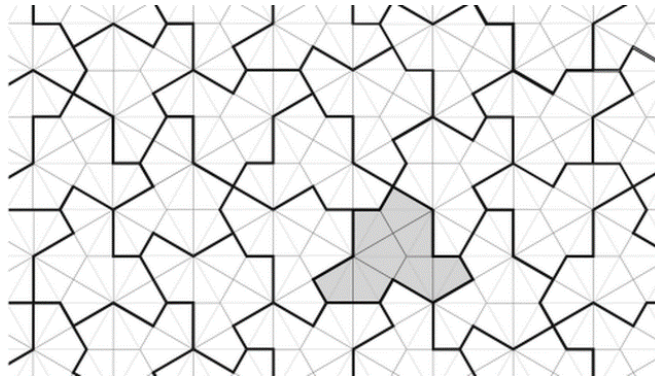**IISc researchers design supercapacitor capable of storing enormous electric charge**
Researchers at the Indian Institute of Science (IISc) have designed a novel ultramicro supercapacitor, a tiny device capable of storing an enormous amount of electric charge. It has potential to be used in many devices ranging from streetlights to consumer electronics, electric cars and medical devices. Most of these devices are currently powered by batteries. However, over time, these batteries lose their ability to store charge and therefore have a limited shelf life.

Capacitors, on the other hand, can store electric charge for much longer, by virtue of their design. For example, a capacitor operating at five volts will continue to operate at the same voltage even after a decade. But unlike batteries, they cannot discharge energy constantly – to power a mobile phone, for example.

Supercapacitors, on the other hand, combine the best of both batteries and capacitors – they can store as well as release large amounts of energy, and are therefore highly sought-after for next-generation electronic devices.

New shape with 13 sides have been discovered

A group of four scientists have discovered an entirely new shape which has 13 sides and has named it "*the hat*". It is the first 'einstein' tile to have been found: a shape that can cover a plane without overlapping, leaving gaps, or repeating patterns.

Note that the name bears no connection to Albert Einstein but means 'one stone' in German. The shape is a polykite with the edges of 8 kites to make it.

Information stealing malware – Raccoon Stealer

An information stealing malware that is usually delivered through email, known as *Raccoon Stealer*, was used to target 8 Central Government entities. The malware is usually delivered through email and is available as Malware-as-a-service (*MaaS*). It retrieves sensitive data from infected machines. In the case of browsers, targeted data typically includes cookies, saved login details, and saved credit card details. In the case of cryptocurrency wallets (*henceforth, 'crypto wallets'*), targeted data typically includes public keys, private keys, and seed phrases. The operators of Raccoon Stealer sell Raccoon Stealer samples to their customers (*called 'affiliates'*), who then use the info-stealer to gain possession of sensitive data saved on users' devices.

Raccoon is a mammal native to North America, the largest of the procyonid family.

Malware is defined as a software designed to perform an unwanted illegal act via the computer network. It could be also defined as software with malicious intent. Malware can be classified based on how they get executed, how they spread, and/or what they do.

Some of them are discussed below.

> 1. *Virus:* A program that can infect other programs by modifying them to include a possible evolved copy of itself.
> 2. *Worms:* Disseminated through computer networks, unlike viruses, computer worms are malicious programs that copy themselves from system to system, rather than infiltrating legitimate files.
> 3. *Trojans:* Trojan or trojan horse is a program that generally impairs the security of a system. Trojans are used to create back-doors (a program that allows outside access into a secure network) on computers belonging to a secure network so that a hacker can have access to the secure network.
> 4. *Hoax*: An e-mail that warns the user of a certain system that is harming the computer. The message thereafter instructs the user to run a procedure (most often in the form of a download) to correct the harming system. When this program is run, it invades the system and deletes an important file.
> 5. *Spyware:* Invades a computer and, as its name implies, monitors a user's activities without consent. Spywares are usually forwarded through unsuspecting e-mails with bonafide e-mail IDs.

Malware-as-a-Service (MASS) is a type of service that allows non-technical individuals to create and distribute malware. Anyone can subscribe to such a service on a pay basis. It is often used by cybercriminals to launch attacks against individuals or organizations.

Note that National Technical Research Organisation (NTRO), a specialised intelligence agency under the National Security Advisor, wrote to the affected agencies informing them of the attack.

National Technical Research Organisation (NTRO) is a technical intelligence agency under National Security Adviser in Prime Minister's Office. It also includes the National Institute of Cryptology Research and Development (NICRD). It has the same "norms of conduct" as the Intelligence Bureau and the Research and Analysis Wing.

NASA's Tropospheric Emissions Monitoring of Pollution (TEMPO)
SpaceX Falcon 9 rocket have launched the Tropospheric Emissions Monitoring of Pollution (TEMPO) instrument from Florida.

TEMPO is a NASA device that can track air pollution over North America from space. It will allow scientists to monitor air pollutants and their emission sources down to the neighbourhood level. The TEMPO instrument is a grating spectrometer, sensitive to visible and ultraviolet wavelengths of light.

Visakhapatnam beaches started glowing due to bioluminescence
It was observed that the stretch of beach at Bhimli near Visakhapatnam started glowing due to a unique natural phenomenon called '*bioluminescence*'.

Bioluminescence is the production and emission of light by living organisms. The light produced through bioluminescence is often created through a chemical reaction within the organism's body, involving special molecules known as luciferins and enzymes called luciferases. It is particularly common in marine environments, where it can be seen in organisms like deep-sea fish, jellyfish, and plankton.

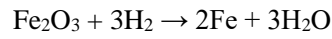### Charles Darwin's Theory of Evolution
According to a document released by NCERT on the list of rationalised content in textbooks for class X, Chapter: 9 'Heredity and Evolution' has been replaced with 'Heredity.'

Darwin's theory of evolution, often referred to as Darwinism or the theory of natural selection, is a scientific explanation for how species change over time and how new species arise. It was proposed by Charles Darwin in the mid-19th century and is considered one of the foundational principles of modern biology.

Use of Hydrogen in Steelmaking istead of Carbon
Hydrogen is a crucial part of the world's plans to greenify its manufacturing and automobile industries as a fuel whose production and use needn't emit carbon. Hydrogen can also be used as a reducing agent instead of carbon monoxide (CO), which would result in much lower greenhouse gas emissions.

Direct reduction by Hydrogen (DR-H) in steel making is a process that uses hydrogen gas to reduce iron oxide (Fe_2O_3) into metallic iron (Fe) without the use of a blast furnace. This method is also known as the "green route" for steel production, as it significantly reduces the carbon emissions associated with traditional steelmaking processes. The process typically involves mixing iron ore pellets or lumps with hydrogen gas in a reactor vessel at temperatures ranging from 600 to 800°C. The hydrogen reacts with the iron oxide to form metallic iron and water vapor, as shown in the following chemical equation:

$$Fe_2O_3 + 3H_2 \rightarrow 2Fe + 3H_2O$$

New Isotop of Uranium Discovered

Physicists in Japan have discovered a previously unknown isotope of uranium, with atomic number 92 and mass number 241, i.e., Uranium-241. Isotopes are atoms of the same element that have the same number of protons but differ in the number of neutrons in their nuclei.

In Nuclear Physics, "*magic numbers*" are specific numbers of protons or neutrons in atomic nuclei that correspond to stable configurations. The heaviest known '*magic*' nucleus is Lead (82 protons). After this nucleus becomes unstable.

Uranium was discovered in 1789 by Martin Klaproth, a German chemist. It is a silvery-white metallic chemical element in the periodic table, with atomic number 92. It has the highest atomic weight of all naturally occurring elements.

ISRO's Reusable Launch Vehicle Mission – RLV LEX

The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) has demonstrated a precise landing experiment for a Reusable Launch Vehicle at the Aeronautical Test Range (ATR), Chitradurga, Karnataka. Reusable Launch Vehicle is a launch system that allows for the reuse of some or all of the component stages. The vehicle returns to earth intact after the mission.

What is Gravitational Lensing?

An ultramassive black hole 30 billion times the mass of our Sun—one of the biggest ever found—was discovered due to a phenomenon known as gravitational lensing.

Gravitational lensing is a phenomenon in astrophysics that occurs due to the bending of light by the gravitational field of massive objects. According to Einstein's theory of general relativity, the presence of mass and energy curves the fabric of space-time, and light traveling through this curved space-time is affected by gravitational forces.

3. Environment

Copernicus Climate Change Service (C3S)

The Copernicus Climate Change Service (C3S) is a monthly climate bulletin of the European Commission to report the changes observed in global surface air temperature, sea ice cover and hydrological variables.

Copernicus is the Earth observation component of the European Union Space Programme (started in 2014). Its purpose is to provide accurate, timely and easily accessible information to improve the management of the environment, understand and mitigate the effects of climate change and ensure civil security.

India's first Digital Science Park in Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala

India's first Digital Science Park will come up at Technocity campus in Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala. Digital Science Park is a multidisciplinary cluster-based interactive-innovation zone focused on digital technologies.

West Bengal notified 4 more Biodiversity Heritage Sites (BHS)
West Bengal has notified 4 more biodiversity heritage sites (BHS), taking the tally in the State to 8. With this, Bengal now has the highest number of biodiversity heritage parks in the country. The 4 new sites are Char Balidanga and the state Horticulture Research and Development Station campus in Deypara — both in Nadia, Namthing Pokhar in Darjeeling and the Amkhoi Fossil Park in Birbhum.

Biodiversity Heritage Sites (BHS) are areas that are unique, ecologically fragile ecosystems having rich biodiversity comprising of any one or more of the components such as; species richness, high endemism, presence of rare, endemic and threatened species, keystone species, species of evolutionary significance, wild ancestors of domestic/cultivated species or land races or their varieties, past pre-eminence of biological components represented by fossil beds and having cultural or aesthetic values.

As per Section 37 of the Biological Diversity Act 2002, the State Governments are empowered to notify in the official gazette, in consultation with 'local bodies', areas of biodiversity importance as Biodiversity Heritage Sites.

Gandhi Sagar Sanctuary will be developed as a second home for Cheetahs in MP
Madhya Pradesh Government has decided to develop the Gandhi Sagar Sanctuary as a second home for Cheetahs to retain the state's tag as the "Cheetah State". The move comes after experts suggested that Kuno National Park, the current home for Cheetahs, does not have enough space for all of them.

Gandhi Sagar Sanctuary is a wildlife sanctuary situated on the northern boundary of the Mandsaur and Nimach districts in Madhya Pradesh. The Chambal River passes through the sanctuary dividing it into 2 parts.

IPES releases Who's Tipping the Scales Report
A Report has been released by the International Panel of Experts on Sustainable Food Systems (IPES) titled "Who's tipping the scales". It highlights how corporate capture of global food governance is increasingly taking place in more visible ways and raising concerns over Bluewashing.

Bluewashing is term used to describe deceptive marketing that overstates a company's commitment to responsible social practices. It can be used interchangeably with the term greenwashing but has a greater focus on economic and community factors. Alternatively, it could be phrased as a way that companies hide the social damage that their policies have caused.

Similarly, *Greenwashing* is a form of deceptive marketing in which a company falsely claims that its products, policies, or programs are environmentally friendly or beneficial, while doing little or nothing to actually assist the environment in practice.

What is Green Steel?
Ministry of Steel has approved 13 Task Forces for defining the roadmap for 'Green Steel'. 'Green Steel' refers to a steelmaking process that lowers greenhouse gas emissions, cuts costs and improves the quality of steel.

4. Scheme and Programs

Govt. launches Udaan 5.0
Ministry of Civil Aviation has launched Regional Connectivity Scheme (RCS)- UDAN (Ude Desh ka Aam Nagrik) 5.0. RCS-UDAN, a market-driven scheme, aims to enhance regional air connectivity from unserved and

underserved airports and making air travel affordable. It was formulated based on the review of National Civil Aviation Policy (NCAP)-2016.

Key features of UDAN 5.0:
- Focuses on Category-2 (20-80 seats) and Category-3 (>80 seats).
- Length cap of 600 km is waived off.
- No predetermined routes would be offered.
- Viability gap funding (VGF) increased to 600 km from 500 km earlier.

Over the years, depending upon priorities of government as well as market response, there have been several additions / modifications in UDAN scheme.
- Under UDAN 2, enhanced focus on hilly areas, and North-Eastern Region (NER) and island states.
- Under UDAN 3, seaplanes operations and concept of tourism routes were introduced.
- Under UDAN 4, enhancement of Viability Gap Funding support for smaller aircraft, inclusion of State routes and focus on shorter routes for development of regional hubs.
- Lifeline UDAN for transportation of medical cargo during pandemic.
- Krishi UDAN for value realization of agriculture products especially in NER and tribal districts.
- International UDAN routes for NER to explore International Connectivity from / to Guwahati and Imphal

Govt. launches PTP-NER for Tribal Products marketing
Ministry of Tribal Affairs has launched new Central Sector Scheme "Marketing and Logistics Development for Promotion of Tribal Products from North -Eastern Region (PTP-NER)" for the benefit of Scheduled Tribes of North-eastern Region. The scheme is aimed at improving the lives of the talented artisans belonging to the North-East.

Govt. launches national campaign for SHG promotion
Ministry of Rural Development's Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana – National Rural Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NRLM) have launched "Sangathan Se Samridhhi– Leaving no Rural Woman Behind". It is a national campaign under Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav Samaveshi Vikaas. Its aim is to mobilize 10 crore women from vulnerable and marginalized rural households under the Self- Help Group (SHG) fold.

SHGs are small informal groups of 10-20 individuals, mostly women from similar social and economic backgrounds, who come together to form a group for mutual support and help.

Sub Programs under DAY-NRLM:
- *Mahila Kisan Shashaktikaran Pariyojana (MKSP):* It aims to promote agro-ecological practices that increase women farmers' income and reduce their input costs and risks.
- *Start-Up Village Entrepreneurship Programme (SVEP):* It aims to support entrepreneurs in rural areas to set up local enterprises.
- *Aajeevika Grameen Express Yojana (AGEY):* It was launched in August 2017, to provide safe, affordable and community monitored rural transport services to connect remote rural villages.
- *Deendayal Upadhyaya Grameen Kaushalya Yojana (DDUGKY):* It aims at building placement-linked skills of the rural youth and placing them in relatively higher wage employment sectors of the economy.
- *Rural Self Employment Institutes (RSETIs):* DAY-NRLM, in partnership with 31 Banks and State Governments, is supporting Rural Self Employment Institutes (RSETIs) for skilling rural youth to take up gainful self-employment.

SATHI App and portal by Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare
Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare has launched the SATHI (Seed Traceability, Authentication and Holistic Inventory) Portal and Mobile App. It is a Centralized Online System for seed traceability, authentication and inventory designed to deal with the challenges of seed production, quality seed identification and seed certification. It has been developed by the National Informatics Centre (NIC) in collaboration with the Union Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare on the theme of '*Uttam Beej – Samriddh Kisan*'.

Govt. launches Sagar-Setu App
Government has launched the App Version of National Logistics Portal (Marine) 'Sagar-Setu'. The app will provide real-time information on vessel-related information, gate, container freight stations, and transactions, enabling digital transactions for payments.

National Logistics Portal (Marine) is a national maritime single window platform encompassing complete end-toend logistics solutions to help exporters, importers, and service providers exchange documents seamlessly and transact business.

Maritime India Vision 2030 aims to build ports and digitize maritime infrastructure within the country.

Union Cabinet approved the National Medical Devices Policy, 2023
The Union Cabinet has approved the National Medical Devices Policy, 2023.

Vision: Accelerated growth path with a patient-centric approach and to emerge as the global leader in the manufacturing and innovation of medical devices by achieving 10-12% share in the expanding global market over the next 25 years. Policy is expected to help the Medical Devices Sector grow from present $11 Bn to $50 Bn by 2030.

Mission: Policy lays down a roadmap for accelerated growth of the medical devices sector to achieve the following missions viz, Access & Universality, Affordability, Quality, Patient Centred & Quality Care, Preventive & Promotive Health, Security, Research and Innovation and Skilled manpower.

Also note that, the Government of India has already initiated the implementation of the Production Linked Incentive (PLI) Scheme for medical devices and support for the setting up of 4 Medical device Parks in the States of Himachal Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Uttar Pradesh

ISRO releases India Space Policy 2023
The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) has released the Indian Space Policy 2023, which envisages "encouraging, enabling and developing a flourishing commercial presence in space."

5. Polity

Kesavananda Bharati Case completed 50 years
The landmark Kesavananda Bharati judgement, 1973 which propounded the basic structure doctrine has completed 50 years. The case dealt with a petition against the Kerala Government challenging the compulsory acquisition of his land by the government under the Kerala Land Reforms Act 1963, as a violation of Fundamental Rights (FRs), as enshrined in – Articles 25, 26 and 31 of the Constitution of India. The case was heard by a Bench of 13 judges — the largest formed in the Supreme Court (SC).

4 cases are important to understand Basic Structure of Constitution:

1. *Shankari Prasad (1951):* In this case, the Supreme Court contended that the Parliament's power of amending the Constitution under Article 368 included the power to amend the Fundamental Rights guaranteed in Part III as well.

2. *Golak Nath (1967):* In this case, the court reversed its earlier stance that the Fundamental Rights can be amended. It said that Fundamental Rights are not amenable to the Parliamentary restriction as stated in Article 13 and that to amend the Fundamental rights a new Constituent Assembly would be required.

3. *Kesavananda Bharati (1973):* The SC held that although no part of the Constitution, including Fundamental Rights, was beyond the Parliament's amending power, the "basic structure of the Constitution could not be abrogated even by a constitutional amendment." The judgement implied that the Parliament can only amend the constitution and not rewrite it. The power to amend is not a power to destroy.

4. *Minerva Mills (1980):* This case again strengthens the Basic Structure doctrine. The judgement struck down 2 changes made to the Constitution by the 42nd Constitutional Amendment Act 1976, declaring them to be violative of the basic structure. The judgement makes it clear that the Constitution, and not the Parliament is supreme. In this case, the Court added two features to the list of basic structure features. They were judicial review and balance between Fundamental Rights and DPSP.

EC recognizes 6 National Party in India
Election Commission of India (ECI) has now recognized 6 national parties citing Election Symbols (Reservation and Allotment) Order, 1968 (which stipulates criteria for recognition as a national or state party): (i) Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), (ii) Indian National Congress, (iii) Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP), (iv) Communist Party of India (CPI) (Marxist), (v) National People's Party (NPP) and (vi) Aam Aadmi Party (AAP).

On the other hand, Trinamool Congress (TMC), Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) and CPI lost their national party status.

What is Doctrine of Promissory Estoppel?
In a hearing related to Agnipath scheme, plaintiff (*party moving court in a civil action*) cited doctrine of promissory estoppel.

Promissory estoppel is a concept developed in contractual laws. It essentially prevents a "promisor" from backing out of an agreement on the grounds that there is no "consideration." It is invoked by a plaintiff to ensure execution of a contract or seek compensation for failure to perform the contract.

6. Governance
RBI issued framework for acceptance of green deposits by banks, NBFCs
Reserve Bank of India has issued detailed guidelines for acceptance of 'green deposits' by banks and NBFCs wherein the funds could be used for financing activities like renewable energy, green transport and green buildings.

A '*green deposit*' refers to an interest-bearing deposit received by regulated entities (usually banks and non-banking financial institutions) for a fixed period. The proceeds are earmarked for being allocated towards green finance. The investment in this fixed tenure deposit will go towards financing eligible businesses and projects that promote the transition to a low-carbon, climate-resilient, and sustainable economy.

Track and Trace system for Exports
The Central Government has extended the date for implementation of the track and trace system for exports of drug formulations till August 1, 2023.

'*Track and Trace system*' was designed to address counterfeit and product recall issues. It is based on traceability and barcodes on the packaging, which can help identify the source and prevent sabotage. The system covers secondary and tertiary packaging initially, with primary packaging to be included at a later stage.

AI-enabled surveillance cameras to detect traffic in Kerala
The Kerala Government has operationalised AI-enabled cameras to rein in traffic rule violations and road accidents under its Safe Kerala Project. the cameras will detect offences such as failure to wear helmets and seatbelts and instances of a hit-and-run rule violations. The AI cameras are solar-powered and will use 4G LTE technology to send the data to the control room.

Operation Kaveri for evacuating Indian from Sudan
India has launched Operation Kaveri to evacuate around 4000 of its citizens who are stranded in Sudan due to conflict between the country's army and a paramilitary group.

Some of the rescue operations launched by Government of India are given below.

Operation Name	Year	Reason for Evacuation
Operation Dost	2023	Turkey-Syria earthquake
Operation Ganga	2022	Tensions between Russia and Ukraine
Vande Bharat	2020	Covid-19 pandemic
Operation Samudra Setu	2020	Covid-19 pandemic
Evacuation from Brussels	2016	Terrorist strikes
Operation Raahat	2015	Conflict in Yemen
Operation Maitri	2015	Nepal earthquake
Operation Safe Homecoming	2011	Conflict in Libya
Operation Sukoon	2006	Conflict in Lebanon
1990 Kuwait Airlift	1990	Invasion of Kuwait by Iraq

CERT-In releases Ransomware Report 2022
Indian Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT-In) has released the Ransomware Report-2022.

CERT-In is an organisation of the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology with the objective of securing Indian cyberspace. It was established in 2004. It is the nodal agency which deals with cybersecurity threats like hacking and phishing. The Information Technology (Amendment) Act 2008 designated CERT-In to serve as the national agency to perform certain functions.

Ransomware is a category of malware that gains access to systems and makes them unusable to its legitimate users, either by encrypting different files on targeted systems or locking the system's screen unless a ransom is paid.

Related News: LockBit ransomware was found to be targeting Mac devices, making this first major ransomware operation to specifically target Apple computers. LockBit ransomware is designed to infiltrate victims' systems and encrypt important files.

What is Bhu-Aadhaar or ULPIN?
Department of Land Resources has organized the National Conference – Bhumi Samvaad IV on implementation of Unique Land Parcel Identification Number (ULPIN) or Bhu-Aadhaar. The theme of the National Conference was - "Digitizing and Geo-Referencing INDIA with Bhu-Aadhaar (ULPIN)".

The *Bhu-Aadhaar or ULPIN*, a 14-digit alpha-numeric number generated based on the latitude longitude of the vertices of each land parcel shall be a single, authoritative source of truth of information on any parcel of land or property to provide integrated land services to the citizens as well as all stakeholders.

Karnataka High Court evolves Triple Test for Surrogacy
Karnataka High Court has evolved "triple tests" to help a couple facing legal hurdles to have a surrogate child under provisions of Surrogacy (Regulation) Act, 2021. The Act allows only altruistic surrogacy and penalizes commercial surrogacy.

The triple test include:
- Genetic test for husband to ensure child is not born with any disorder.
- Physical test for couple to ascertain their capacity to manage the child.
- Economy test for couples to ensure that they can protect the future of the child.

7. International Relations

Japan unveils New Plan for Free and Open Indo-Pacific Region
Japan has unveiled "Japan's New Plan for a Free and Open Indo-Pacific" (FOIP) and exchanged views about deepening the "Japan-India Special Strategic and Global Partnership". The New Plan for the FOIP lays stress on the need to uphold the rules-based order and respect each other's territorial sovereignty.

4 pillars of cooperation under the new FOIP:
1. Principles for peace and rules for prosperity
2. Addressing challenges in an Indo-Pacific way
3. Multi-layered connectivity
4. Extending efforts for security and safe use of the "sea" to the "air"

India elected to UN Statistical Commission
India has been elected to the highest statistical body of the United Nations for a 4-year term beginning January 1, 2024.

The United Nations Statistical Commission established in 1947 and head quartered in New York, is a Functional Commission of the United Nations Economic and Social Council. It oversees the work of the United Nations Statistics Division. Its 24 member states are elected by the Economic and Social Council on the basis of the

following geographical distribution: African states (5), Asian States (4), Eastern European States (4), Latin American and Caribbean States (4), Western European and other States (7).

India-UK NET Zero Innovation Virtual Centre
India and United Kingdom will together jointly create India-UK "NET Zero" Innovation Virtual Centre. It aims to bring stakeholders from both countries together to work in some of the focus areas including decarbonization of manufacturing processes & transport systems, and green hydrogen as a renewable source.

IBRD releases World Development Report 2023
International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) has released the 'World Development Report 2023: Migrants, Refugees, and Societies'. It is an annual report published since 1978 by the IBRD (*part of World Bank*). It provides an in-depth analysis of a specific aspect of economic development. It categorised the migrants into 4 types – Refugees with skills in demand, economic migrants with skills that match with demand, distressed migrants and India-US, India-Bangladesh and India-Gulf Cooperation Council have been considered among the top migrant corridors.

World Bank
It is an international financial institution that provides loans and grants to the governments of low and middle-income/developing countries to pursue capital projects. It was established along with the IMF at the 1944 Bretton Woods Conference.

The WB Group includes:

1. *International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD):* It provides loans, credits and grants.
2. *International Development Association (IDA):* It provides low or no-interest loans to low-income countries.
3. *International Finance Corporation (IFC):* It provides investment, advice and asset management to private companies and governments.
4. *Multilateral Guarantee Agency (MIGA):* It ensures lenders and investors against political risks such as war.
5. *International Centre for the Settlement of Investment Disputes (ICSID):* It settles investment disputes between investors and countries.

India is not a member of ICSID.

India hosts SCO Defence Ministers' Meeting
India has chaired the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation Defence Ministers Meeting held in New Delhi. India has also invited Belarus and Iran, currently observers in SCO. The theme of India's Chairmanship of SCO in 2023 is 'SECURE-SCO'.

Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) is a Eurasian political, economic, international security and defence organization. China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, and Tajikistan (not Turkmenistan) were the original 'Shanghai Five'. Uzbekistan was included afterwards. India and Pakistan joined the organization in 2017.

India, Iran, Armenia form trilateral grouping
India, Iran and Armenia have held a round of political consultations in Yerevan (*capital of Armenia*) and agreed to hold future meetings in a trilateral format.

Key Highlights:
- This is the first such meet.
- Meeting was held in New Delhi
- 3 sides discussed economic issues, regional communication channels and the prospects of deepening cultural and people-to-people contacts.

Finland becomes member of NATO
Finland has become the 31st country to join NATO.

North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) is an intergovernmental military alliance established by Washington Treaty that was signed on 4 April 1949. It is headquartered in Brussels, Belgium.

India- Central Asia hold maiden meeting on optimum use of Chabahar Port
First meeting of India-Central Asia Joint Working Group on Chabahar port has taken place in Mumbai.

Chabahar Port is located in Sistan-Baluchistan province in South-eastern Iran, on Gulf of Oman. In 2016, India signed a tripartite agreement with Iran and Afghanistan to develop the Shahid Beheshti Terminal at Chabahar.

Dakar Declaration of Africa
Dakar Declaration has been adopted in principle by 21 African countries after the first African sub-regional conference on implementing Global Plan for Road Safety. It is a guiding document to support the implementation of Decade of Action for road safety 2021–2030.

First-ever Anti-Spyware Declaration
The USA and 10 other nations have issued the first-ever significant anti-spyware declaration. It recognized the threat posed by the misuse of commercial spyware. It seeks to realize the importance of stringent domestic and international controls on the proliferation and use of this technology.

Spyware is a type of malicious software or malware that is installed on a computing device without the end user's knowledge. It invades the device, steals sensitive information and internet usage data, and relays it to advertisers, data firms, or external users.

Defence Exercises in News
SLINEX-23: It is a bilateral Maritime Exercise between India and Sri Lanka.

Exercise Kavach: Conducted by Andaman and Nicobar Command (ANC), it is joint military exercise involving the assets of Army, Navy, Air Force and Coast Guard.

Exercise Cope India 23: It is a bilateral Air Exercise between the Indian Air Force and United States Air Force.

Exercise Orion: It is a multilateral exercise. Besides Indian Airforce and French Air and Space Force (FASF), Air Forces from Germany, Greece, Italy, Netherlands, United Kingdom, Spain and United States of America would also be flying in this exercise.

INIOCHOS-23: Indian Air Force will participate in Exercise INIOCHOS-23, a multi-national air exercise hosted by the Greece Air Force.

8. Awards & Recognition

95th Academy Awards announed
The 95th Academy Awards (Oscars Awards 2023) were announced from Los Angels Dolby Theatre.

List of the significant winners Is given below.

Category	Winner
Best Picture	Everything Everywhere All At Once
Best Actress	Michelle Yeoh (Everything Everywhere All At Once)
Best Actor	Brendan Fraser (The Whale)
Best Director	Daniel Kwan and Daniel Schienert (Everything Everywhere All At Once)
Best Original Song	Naatu Naatu (RRR)
Best Animated Feature Film	Guillermo del Toro's 'Pinocchio'
Best Actor in Supporting Role	Ke Huy Quan (Everything Everywhere All At Once)
Best Actress in Supporting Role	Jamie Lee Curtis (Everything Everywhere All At Once)
Best International Feature Film	All Quiet on the Western Front (Germany)
Best Documentary Short Film	'The Elephant Whisperers' by Kartiki Gonsalves and Guneet Monga

Ramon Magsaysay Award awarded to Dalai Lama
The Ramon Magsaysay Award was awarded to Tibetan spiritual leader the Dalai Lama. It was the first international award given to his Holiness for Community Leadership in recognition of his leadership of the Tibetan community's gallant struggle in defense of the sacred religion that is the inspiration of their life and culture by the Ramon Magsaysay Award Foundation in the Philippines in August 1959.

The Ramon Magsaysay Award, often called the "Nobel Prize of Asia", is an annual award established to perpetuate former Philippine President Ramon Magsaysay's example of integrity in governance, courageous service to the people, and pragmatic idealism within a democratic society.

Kiran Nadar conferred "Chevalier de la Légion d'Honneur"
Ms. Kiran Nadar has received "Chevalier de la Légion d'Honneur" (Knight of the Legion of Honour). The highest French civilian award comes in recognition of Ms Nadar's outstanding contribution in the field of art, her commitment to providing greater access to culture both nationally and internationally, and her leading role in fostering Indo-French cultural ties.

Ms. Kiran Nadar is the Chairperson of the Kiran Nadar Museum of Art (KNMA), a philanthropic initiative in art, and a trustee of the Shiv Nadar Foundation.

Instituted in 1802 by Napoleon Bonaparte, the Légion d'Honneur (Legion of Honour) is the highest civilian award given by the French Republic for outstanding service to France, regardless of the nationality of the recipients.

Indian-American receives Young Urologist of the Year Award
An Indian-American physician and professor, Dr. Nitya Abraham have been honoured with the Young Urologist of the Year Award conferred by the American Urological Association (AUA). She is an Associate Professor at Albert Einstein College of Medicine and Program Director for the Montefiore Urology residency program.

International Prize in Statistics, 2023
An Indian American Mathematician and Statistician, Calyampudi Radhakrishna Rao will be awarded the 2023 International Prize in Statistics. The award is equivalent to Nobel Prize in the field of Statistics.

In his 1945 paper published in the Bulletin of the Calcutta Mathematical Society, he demonstrated 3 fundamental results that paved the way for the modern field of statistics and provided statistical tools heavily used in science today.
- The first, now known as the Cramer-Rao lower bound, provides a means for knowing when a method for estimating a quantity is as good as any method can be.
- The second result, named the Rao-Blackwell Theorem provides a means for transforming an estimate into an optimal—estimate.
- The third result provided insights that pioneered a new interdisciplinary field that has flourished as "information geometry."

SECI accorded Miniratna Category-I Status
Solar Energy Corporation of India Limited (SECI) has been accorded the status of Miniratna Category-I Central Public Sector Enterprise (CPSE). Incorporated in the year 2011, SECI is the primary implementing agency of the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy, Govt. of India for Renewable Energy schemes/projects towards fulfillment of India's international commitments.

Femina Miss India World 2023
Miss Nandini Gupta has been announced as the winner of the Miss India 2023 pageant, while Delhi's Shreya Poonja was declared the first runner-up and Manipur's Thounaojam Strela Luwang, the second runner-up.

Nandini Gupta will now represent India at Miss World 2023 to be held in the United Arab Emirates (UAE).

Prime Minister's Award for Excellence in Public Administration 2022
National COVID-19 Vaccination Programme of the Union Health Ministry has received the Prime Minister's Award for Excellence in Public Administration 2022 under the innovation category.

Sharjah stadium stand named after Sachin Tendulkar on his 50th birthday
Sharjah cricket stadium stand has been renamed after Sachin Tendulkar in a special ceremony in the UAE, honouring the Indian cricket legend on his 50th birthday. The West Stand at the iconic stadium has been renamed the 'Sachin Tendulkar Stand.' Note that, Sharjah Cricket Stadium holds the Guinness record for most One-Day internationals played (244).

Global Gold Award 2023
Power Grid Corporation of India Ltd. (PGCIL), a Maharatna CPSU of Ministry of Power has been conferred Global Gold Award by The Green Organization. The recognition was given at the Green World Awards 2023 function held at Miami in the USA.

The award is a recognition of POWERGRID's CSR work for improving Agriculture Productivity and Rural Livelihood through watershed management, community participation and better crop management practices in 10 villages of Jaipatna Block of Kalahandi District in Odisha.

World's busiest airports in 2022
Airports Council International, the trade association of the world's airports, has released its annual ranking of the busiest airports in the world. As per it, Delhi's Indira Gandhi International (IGI) Airport has secured the 9th position in the list of the world's busiest airports in 2022. Georgia's Hartsfield- Jackson Atlanta International Airport was at number one.

SEBI unveils new logo on its 35th Foundation Day
Capital markets regulator SEBI has unveiled a new logo on the occasion of its 35th Foundation day. The new logo retains the traditional blue palette but also reflects on a more modern design. The logo seeks to reflect the unique combination of its rich traditions and its new data and technology-based approach in all the three areas of its mandate in the securities market--development and regulation of the securities market and investor protection.

Set up on April 12, 1988, Sebi was granted statutory powers in 1992.
SEBI Chairperson (*current*): Madhubai Puri Buch (*first woman to hold chairman position in SEBI*)

India's First Kochi Water Metro inaugurated
India's first water-based metro, Kochi Water Metro (KWM), was formally inaugurated by Prime Minister of India. The Kochi Water Metro is an innovative and sustainable mode of transportation that connects various parts of the city through its intricate network of waterways. The project aims to reduce traffic congestion and improve the connectivity of the city while promoting eco-friendly means of transportation. This initiative is a joint venture between the Government of Kerala and the German firm KfW.

9. Social Development

India to supply 10,000 tonnes wheat to Afghanistan
India has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the UN World Food Programme (WFP) for humanitarian food assistance of 10,000 tonnes of wheat for the people of Afghanistan reeling under a food crisis.

The World Food Programme (WFP) is the leading humanitarian organization saving lives and changing lives, delivering food assistance in emergencies and working with communities to improve nutrition and build resilience.

UN Democracy Fund (UNDEF)
It was reported that India is the 4th highest donor to the UN Democracy Fund (UNDEF), which funds projects worldwide linked to George Soros's Open Society Foundation. Top three donors are US, Sweden, and Germany.

UN Democracy Fund was established in 2005 by UN Secretary-General Kofi A. Annan as a United Nations General Trust Fund to support democratization efforts around the world. It was welcomed by the General Assembly in the Outcome Document of the 2005 World Summit.

What is rare disease?
The Central Government has exempted all foods and drugs for rare diseases imported by people for personal use from custom duty.

A rare disease (also called "Orphan" disease) is a condition that affects a small number of people compared to the general population— one or less than one per 1000 people (*as per WHO*); one or less than one in 2500 (*as per Indian definition*). Example – lysosomal storage disorder, maple syrup urine disease, severe food protein allergy, wilson's disease.

Helopeltis Theivora is affecting tea production in Southern India
The United Planters Association of South India (UPASI) has urged the government to immediately intervene and take appropriate steps to control the Tea Mosquito Bug (*Helopeltis theivora*) (TMB) problem in the tea plantations in India.

Helopeltis Theivora is a major sucking pest of tea (Camellia sinensis L.) in most teaproducing countries. The nymphs and adults of the TMB suck the sap from tender leaves, buds and young shoots, which results in heavy crop losses.

India is the second highest producer of tea (China is the largest producer and consumer of tea) in the world and makes up over 12% of world exports.

MoH&FW releases 7th NHA Estimates (for 2019-20)
Government has released the 7th National Health Accounts (NHA) Estimates (for 2019-20)

National Health Accounts (NHA) Estimates are released by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoH&FW) and prepared by National Health Accounts Technical Secretariat (NHATS). These estimates enable policymakers to monitor the progress in different health financing indicators of the country.

Health Indicator	Trend 2019-20 (in comparision to 2013-14)	Key Information
Total Health Expenditure (THE) as a percent of GDP and Per Capita	THE as declined from 4% to 3.3%	THE constitutes current and capital expenditures incurred by Government and Private Sources including External funds
Current Health Expenditure (CHE) as a percent of THE	Declined from 93% to 90.52%.	CHE constitutes only recurrent (operational) expenditures for healthcare.

Government Health Expenditure (GHE) as a percent of THE	Increased from 28.6% to 41.41%.	GHE constitutes spending under all schemes funded and managed by Union, State, and Local Governments including quasi-Governmental organizations etc.
Out-of-Pocket Expenditure (OOPE) as a percent of THE	Declined from 64.2% to 47.1%.	OOPE are expenditures directly made by households
Share of Social Security Expenditure (SSE) on health as a percent of THE	Increased from 6% to 9.3%	SSE includes social health insurance program, governmentfinanced health insurance schemes, etc. made to the government employees
Private Health Insurance Expenditures as a percent of THE	Increased from 3.4 % to 7.0%	It constitutes spending through health insurance Companies.
External/ Donor Funding for health as percent of THE	Increased from 0.3% to 0.5%	It constitutes all funding available to the country by assistance from donors

Calcium Carbide as artificial fruit ripening agents

The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) has urged food commissioners of all states and Union Territories to take action against the unauthorized use of artificial fruit ripening agents, such as calcium carbide, which has been prohibited.

Calcium carbide is a highly reactive compound that releases acetylene gas. It is commonly used in mining and metal industries, and in the production of acetylene gas. It releases acetylene gas which is used to artificially ripen fruits.

The use of calcium carbide as an artificial fruit ripening agent is prohibited under the Food Safety and Standards (Prohibition and Restriction on Sales) Regulation, 2011.

Launch of the Shingrix vaccine in India

GlaxoSmithKline Pharmaceuticals (GSK India) has announced the launch of shingles vaccine Shingrix in India.

The adult vaccine recommended for people aged 50 years and above, provides protection against shingles - a disease associated with debilitating pain and rashes caused by the reactivation of the Varicella Zoster Virus (VZV).

UN State of World Population (SOWP) report 2023

United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) has released its latest report titled State of World Population (SOWP) – '8 Billion Lives, Infinite Possibilities'. As per it, India is now the most populous country in the world, having overtaken China in population. The UNFPA has said the population of the world is 8,045 million, of which the largest share (65%) is of people between the ages of 15 and 64 years, followed by those in the 10-24 years group (24%). 10 per cent of the population is above 65 years of age. Also, the world's two most populous regions are Eastern and South-Eastern Asia.

TATA trusts releases 3ʳᵈ edition of India Justice Report
The third edition of India Justice Report was released by Tata Trusts in collaboration with representatives from a number of civil society organizations including the Centre for Social Justice, DAKSH, Vidhi Centre for Legal Policy, etc. The Report assesses and ranks each state's progress in capacitating its major justice delivery mechanisms—the judiciary, police, prisons, and legal aid.

UGC announces implementation of National Credit Framework (NCrF)
The University Grants Commission has announced the implementation of the National Credit Framework (NCrF) for all regulatory organisations and universities in India. This framework is designed to integrate the credits earned through school education, higher education, vocational, and skill education, and provide lifelong learning opportunities.

According to the framework, an academic year will be defined by the number of hours a student puts in and credits will be provided to them accordingly at the end of each academic year.

NCrF is a meta-framework that consists of three verticals:
- National School Education Qualification Framework (NSEQF)
- National Higher Education Qualification Framework (NHEQF), and
- National Skills Qualification Framework (NSQF).

The NCrF has proposed several levels within this framework ranging from level 1 to level 8. The credit level that can be attained after completion of school education, i.e., Grade 5ᵗʰ will be level 1, Grade 8ᵗʰ will be level 2, Grade 10ᵗʰ will be level 3, and Grade 12ᵗʰ will be level 4. Higher education shall be from credit levels of 4.5 to level 8.

An Aadhaar-enabled student registration will take place. After student registration, an Academic Bank of Credit (ABC) account will be opened. The deposit of degree and credits will take place in those accounts. There will be a knowledge locker along the lines of DigiLocker.

SIPRI releases Trend in World Military Expenditure Report
Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) has released Trends in World Military Expenditure, 2022 Report. According to it, the top 5 biggest spenders in 2022 were United States, China, Russia, India and Saudi Arabia.

SIPRI is a Sweden-based independent international institute dedicated to research into conflict, armaments, arms control, and disarmament.

FAO releases the Status of Women in Agrifood Systems
The FAO (Food and Agriculture Organization) has released a report titled- "The Status of Women in Agrifood Systems" highlighting the importance of Gender Equality in the Agricultural Sector.

Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) is a specialised agency of the United Nations that leads international efforts to defeat hunger. World Food Day is celebrated every year around the world on 16th October. The day is celebrated to mark the anniversary of the founding of the FAO in 1945. It is one of the UN food aid organisations based in Rome (Italy). Its sister bodies are the World Food Programme and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD).

Flagship Publications:
- The State of World Fisheries and Aquaculture (SOFIA)
- The State of the World's Forests (SOFO)
- The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World (SOFI)
- The State of Food and Agriculture (SOFA)
- The State of Agricultural Commodity Markets (SOCO)

IFPRI releases Global Food Policy Report 2023
International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) has released the Global Food Policy Report 2023: Rethinking food crisis responses. The Report explores a growing body of evidence on how diverse policy responses can reduce both the immediate and longer-term impacts of food crises, and improve livelihoods, incomes, and food security and nutrition for the future.

WHO launches Preparedness and Resilience for Emerging Threats (PRET) Initiative
World Health Organisation (WHO) has launched the Preparedness and Resilience for Emerging Threats (PRET) Initiative. PRET is an innovative approach to improving disease pandemic preparedness. It recognizes that the same systems, capacities, knowledge, and tools can be leveraged and applied for groups of pathogens based on their mode of transmission (respiratory, vector-borne, foodborne etc.).

UNICEF releases Triple Threat Report
The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) has released a report which examines "triple burden" of Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) related threats faced by children. WASH is a collective term to access safe drinking water, improved sanitation facilities, and maintain basic levels of hygiene.

Related News: The State of the World's Children (SOWC) 2023: For Every Child, Vaccination Report was released by UNICEF.

10. Economy

Govt. announces Foreign Trade Policy 2023
The Union Ministry of Commerce and Industry notified the Foreign Trade Policy 2023. It is notified by the Central Government, in the exercise of powers conferred under Section 5 of the Foreign Trade (Development & Regulation) Act, 1992.

The Key Approach to the policy is based on these 4 pillars:
> (i) Incentive to Remission,
> (ii) Export promotion through collaboration - Exporters, States, Districts, Indian Missions,
> (iii) Ease of doing business, reduction in transaction cost and e-initiatives and
> (iv) Emerging Areas – E-Commerce Developing Districts as Export Hubs and streamlining SCOMET policy.

Key Highlights
- The government aims to increase India's overall exports to USD 2 trillion by 2030, with equal contributions from the merchandise and services sectors.
- The government also intends to encourage the use of the Indian currency in cross-border trade, aided by a new payment settlement framework introduced by the RBI in July 2022.
- It is a policy document which is based on continuity of time-tested schemes facilitating exports as well as a document which is nimble and responsive to the requirements of trade.

- It aims at process re-engineering and automation to facilitate ease of doing business for exporters.
- It also focuses on emerging areas like dual use high end technology items under SCOMET, facilitating e-commerce export, collaborating with States and Districts for export promotion.
- The new FTP is introducing a one-time Amnesty Scheme for exporters to close the old pending authorizations and start afresh.
- FTP 2023 encourages recognition of new towns through "Towns of Export Excellence Scheme" and exporters through "Status Holder Scheme". The FTP 2023 is facilitating exports by streamlining the popular Advance Authorization and EPCG schemes and enabling merchanting trade from India.

High Court can decide on transfer pricing litigation: rules Supreme Court
Supreme court has altered the approach to resolving transfer pricing disputes in India.

The Supreme Court set aside an earlier Karnataka High Court ruling which held that in transfer pricing matters, the determination of the Arm's Length Price (ALP) by the Income Tax Appellate Tribunal (ITAT) is final and cannot be subject to judicial scrutiny. The apex court now held that any ALP determined outside the purview of relevant Transfer Pricing (TP) provisions in the Income Tax Act can be considered as 'perverse (unjust)' and in such cases decision of the tribunal is not final. In such cases, both, the Indian Revenue Authorities (IRA) as well as taxpayers, can approach a High Court after a decision by the ITAT.

Transfer pricing is an accounting practice that allows for the establishment of prices for the goods and services exchanged between, divisions, subsidiaries or affiliates that are part of the larger enterprise. Usually, Companies use transfer pricing to reduce the overall tax burden of the parent company. This is done by charging a higher price to subsidiaries in high-tax countries (reducing profit) while charging a lower price (increasing profits) for subsidiaries in low-tax countries.

Arm's Length Price was agreed upon by all OECD member countries and adopted as an objective guideline for use by multinational companies and tax administrations in
international taxation. It means that the price the a company pays to purchase goods or services from a related company entity should be the same as if the two entities were unrelated (known as arm's length price). There should be no price adjustment or special conditions for the transaction simply because the parties are related legal entities. Its objective is to avoid the erosion of the tax base or the transfer of profits to low tax jurisdictions.

In India, Transfer Pricing and ALP provisions are contained in Chapter X of Income-tax Act, 1961 and arm's length price is determined by the Assessing Officer.

EIU releases Business Environment Ranking
Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU) has released the Business Environment Rankings (BER). It measures the attractiveness of the business environment in 82 countries on a quarterly basis across 91 indicators. The rankings for the second quarter of 2023 show that Singapore, Canada, and Denmark will be the three countries with the best business environment over the next five years. India stands at 10th position. India improved its ranking by six spots due to its improved score in parameters like technological readiness, political environment, and foreign investment among others.

World Bank releases Logistics Performance Index 2023
World Bank has released the latest edition of Logistics Performance Index 2023. LPI is a benchmarking tool created to help countries identify challenges and opportunities they face in their performance on trade logistics. LPI 2023 ranks countries on 6 dimensions of trade -- including customs performance, infrastructure quality, and timeliness of shipments.

Key Highlights:
- Singapore topped the index.
- India improved its rank to 38 (from 44 in 2018).
- Significant investments in both soft and hard infrastructure as well as technology has led to an improvement in India's port performance.

Ministry of Power releases State Energy Efficiency Index 2021-22
The Ministry of Power has released the State Energy Efficiency Index (SEEI) 2021-22.

SEEI assesses the annual progress of states and UTs in energy efficiency (EE) implementation. It improves data collection, enables cross-state collaboration, and develops EE program ideas. Index has been developed by Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE) in collaboration with Alliance for an Energy Efficient Economy (AEEE).

Key Highlights
- Categorizes states and UTs as 'Front runner' (>60), 'Achiever' (50-60), 'Contender' (30-49.5), and 'Aspirant' (<30)
- 5 states - Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, Rajasthan and Telangana - are in the Front Runner category (>60 points) while 4 states - Assam, Haryana, Maharashtra, and Punjab - are in the Achiever category (50-60 points).
- Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Assam and Chandigarh are the top-performing states in their respective state groups.
- Telangana and Andhra Pradesh showed the most improvement since the last index.

What are Advance Pricing Agreements?
Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) has entered into a record 95 Advance Pricing Agreements in FY 2022-23 with Indian taxpayers. With this, the total number of APAs since the inception of the APA programme (2012) has gone up to 516.

Advance Pricing Agreements (APA) is an agreement between a taxpayer and a tax authority that sets out how international transactions between related companies will be priced, to avoid any confusion or disagreement about the pricing of those transactions.

The Central Board of Direct Taxes is a statutory authority functioning under the Central Board of Revenue Act, 1963. The officials of the Board in their ex-officio capacity also function as a Division of the Ministry dealing with matters relating to the levy and collection of direct taxes.

India and Malaysia agreed to settle trade in the Indian Rupees
India and Malaysia have agreed to settle trade in Indian Rupees. This mechanism is expected to enhance India-Malaysia bilateral trade.

Earlier in July 2022, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) allowed the settlement of international trade in Indian rupees. In December 2022, India saw its first settlement of foreign trade in rupee with Russia – as part of the 'International Settlement of Trade in Indian Rupee' mechanism initiated by the RBI. In March 2023, banks from 18 countries were allowed by the RBI to open Special Rupee Vostro Accounts (SRVAs) to settle payments in Indian rupees.

India initiates anti-dumping probe into import of sodium cyanide from China, EU, Japan, Korea

India has initiated an anti-dumping probe into imports of poisonous chemical Sodium Cyanide from China, the European Union, Japan and Korea following a complaint by domestic players. A product is considered to be dumped if its export value is below its actual levels, that really is, much less than sale of a similar product in the local market, as defined by Article VI of the GATT 1994.

Sodium cyanide is used for extraction of gold and silver from their respective ores, manufacturing insecticides, dyes, pigments, and bulk drugs.

An Anti-Dumping Duty is a protectionist tariff that a domestic government imposes on foreign imports that it believes are priced below fair market value. Dumping is a process wherein a company exports a product at a price that is significantly lower than the price it normally charges in its home (or its domestic) market. It is recommended by the Directorate General of Trade Remedies (DGTR) and the Ministry of Finance within three months of its recommendation imposes/levies such duty.

Countervailing Duties or CVDs are tariffs on imported goods that are imposed to offset subsidies given by the exporting country's government. It is a special measure used to neutralize the negative effects that subsidies for the production of a good in one country have on that same industry in another country, in which the production of that good is not subsidized. While the Department of Commerce recommends the CVD, the Department of Revenue in the finance ministry acts upon the recommendation within three months and imposes such duties.

PNGRB introduced implementation of Unified Tariff

Petroleum and Natural Gas Regulatory Board has introduced implementation of Unified Tariff.

Unified Tariff is a way to calculate the price of transporting natural gas across different pipelines in India. This helps to ensure that the cost of transporting gas is fair and consistent across the country. PNGRB (the regulator) has notified a levelized unified tariff of Rs. 73.93 per metric million British thermal units (MMBTU) and created 3 tariff zones for unified tariff:

      (i) First zone is up to a distance of 300 km from the gas source

      (ii) Second zone is 300 – 1200 km

      (iii) Third zone is beyond 1200 km

One Nation, One Gas Grid refers to the integration of the regional grids thus establishing a National Grid for providing energy produced by natural gas to various stakeholders.

WTO Dispute Resolution Mechanism

World Trade Organization (WTO) panel has ruled that India has violated global trading rules by imposing import duties on IT products, such as mobile phones and components, and integrated circuits.

The WTO panel gave its ruling related to a 2019 dispute with the European Union, Japan and Taiwan over import duties on IT products. The international agreement was signed in 1996, in which the members finalised the Ministerial Declaration on Trade in Information Technology Products (ITA). India became a party on March 26, 1997. As per the agreement, India is required to eliminate tariffs on products such as computers, telecom equipment, semiconductors and scientific instruments.

WTO Dispute Resolution

The WTO's Understanding on Dispute Settlement provides WTO members with a legal framework for resolving trade disputes that arise between them in implementing WTO agreements.

Ideally disputes are resolved through negotiations. If this is not possible, WTO Members can request the establishment of a panel to settle the dispute. The panel will issue a report, which can subsequently be appealed before the WTO's Appellate Body on questions of law.

The Appellate Body is a standing body of seven persons that hears appeals from reports issued by panels in disputes brought by WTO members. The Appellate Body can uphold, modify or reverse the legal findings and conclusions of a panel. If a WTO member does not comply with recommendations from dispute settlement, then trade compensation or sanctions, for example in the form of increases in customs duties, may follow.

SIDBI launches new financing solution for Electric Vehicle Space
The Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI) has announced the launch of the 'Mission 50K-EV4ECO' pilot scheme, which seeks to enhance the EV ecosystem by facilitating direct and indirect lending for two, three, and four-wheeler vehicles. The pilot scheme, which is the precursor to EVOLVE scheme by SIDBI-World Bank, has two components -- direct lending and indirect lending.

Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI) (*est.1990 as a subsidiary of IDBI bank; statutory body under Ministry of Finance; HQ: Lucknow*) is the apex regulatory body for overall licensing and regulation of micro, small and medium enterprise finance companies in India.

International Finance Corporation (IFC)
The International Finance Corporation (IFC) has said it will stop supporting investments in new coal projects. Earlier, in 2020, IFC unveiled a policy requiring clients to reduce their exposure to coal projects by half by 2025, and to zero by 2030, but did not prevent new investments.

The International Finance Corporation (IFC) is an international financial institution that offers investment, advisory, and asset management services to encourage private sector development in developing countries. It is a member of the World Bank Group.

EU Introduces MiCA for Crypto Regulation
The European Parliament has approved the world's first set of comprehensive rules to bring largely unregulated cryptocurrency markets under the ambit of regulation by government authorities. The regulation, called the Markets in Crypto Assets (MiCA), will come into force after formal approval by member states. The MiCA legislation will apply to '*cryptoassets*', which have broadly been defined in the text. As per this text, the regulation will apply not only to traditional cryptocurrencies like Bitcoin and Ethereum but also to newer ones like stablecoins.

Stablecoins are cryptocurrencies without the volatility. Unlike cryptocurrencies, these coins are generally pegged to a govt currency. They share a lot of the same powers as other cryptos, but their value is steady, more like a traditional currency, i.e., the US Dollar, Indian Rupee, etc.

Andhra Pradesh to become India's first Zero Budget Natural Farming State
The Government of Andhra Pradesh has today launched a scale-out plan to transition 6 million farms/farmers cultivating 8 million hectares of land from conventional synthetic chemical agriculture to Zero-Budget Natural Farming (ZBNF) by 2024, making Andhra Pradesh India's first 100 % natural farming state. The programme is a contribution towards the UN Sustainable Development Goals, focusing on 'No Poverty', 'Clean Water and Sanitation', 'Responsible Consumption and Production', and 'Life on Land'.

Zero Budget Natural Farming (ZNBF) means raising crops without using any fertilizers and pesticides or any other external materials.

11. Books & Authors

Book Released: Gandhi: Siyasat aur Sampradaiykta
Gandhi: Siyasat aur Sampradaiykta is written by journalist-turned-author Piyush Babele. He cites extracts from Dr. Ambedkar's book Pakistan or the Partition of India and other sources and claims to contextualise the developments leading up to India's Partition in 1947 to bust the illusion spread by that Mahatma Gandhi was responsible for the Partition.

Book Released: Courting India: England, Mughal India and the Origins of Empire
Courting India: England, Mughal India and the Origins of Empire is written by Nandini Das. The book explores the complex relationship between England and Mughal India in the early modern period. This book also focuses on the cultural and literary exchanges that took place between these two worlds.

Book Released: War and Women
War and Women is written by Dr. M.A. Hasan. It was launched during the 52nd Session of the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) held in Geneva, Switzerland. The book highlights the suffering of Bengali women who were victims of sexual violence perpetrated by the Pakistan Army during the 1971 war.

Book Released: Why Can't Elephants be Red
"Why Can't Elephants be Red" is written by Vani Tripathi Tikoo, an actor and member of the Indian censor board. The book is about a two-and-a-half-year-old girl named Akku who is imaginative, adventurous, and growing up in Gurgaon and Singapore.

Book Released: The Great Bank Robbery: NPAs, Scams and the Future of Regulation
The Great Bank Robbery: NPAs, Scams and the Future of Regulation is written by Pattabhi Ram & Sabyasachee Dash. This book discusses 11 scams that have rocked India since its Independence.

Book Released: In Pursuit of Peace – India-Pakistan Relations Under Six Prime Ministers
In Pursuit of Peace: India-Pakistan Relations Under 6 Prime Ministers is written by Satinder Kumar Lambah. Satinder Kumar Lambah had served 2 tenures in Pakistan as Deputy Chief of Mission and High Commissioner and was Chairman of the National Security Advisory Board. He also served as a Special Representative for Afghanistan under Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vaipayee.

Book Released: Smoke and Ashes – A Writer's Journey Through Opium's Hidden Histories
Smoke and Ashes: A Writer's Journey Through Opium's Hidden Histories is written by Amitav Ghosh. This book explores the opium trade's effect on world history and how it continues to hugely impact our lives today.

Book Released: Collective Spirit, Concrete Action
"Collective Spirit, Concrete Action" is written by Shashi Shekhar Vempati. Shashi Shekhar Vempati is a former CEO of Prasar Bharat. This book was launched at 100th episode of 'Mann Ki Baat'.

Collective Spirit, Concrete Action' is a literary journey that not only documents one of the most popular radio programmes, 'Mann Ki Baat', but also depicts a dynamic discourse that traverses through India's present, draws lessons from its past, and shapes its future. The literary piece demonstrates the potential of community-driven social transformation, penetrating the gloom of negativity and holding up the beacon of hope and optimism.

12. Important Days

World Autism Day, April 2
World Autism Day is observed annually on April 2 to promote awareness and advocacy for the rights of people with autism. This year the theme was *"Contribution of Autistic Individuals at Home, at Work, in the Arts, and Policymaking."* In 2007, the United Nations General Assembly officially declared April 2nd as World Autism Awareness Day, following a proposal put forward by the State of Qatar.

World Heritage Day, April 18
Every year, 18th April is celebrated worldwide as World Heritage Day to create awareness about Heritage among communities. The theme of World Heritage Day 2023 was *'Health for All'*.

A World Heritage site is classified as a natural or man-made area or a structure that is of international importance, and a space which requires special protection. These sites are officially recognised by the UN and the UNESCO (United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation). UNESCO believes that the sites classified as World Heritage are important for humanity, and they hold cultural and physical significance. The list is maintained by the International World Heritage Programme, administered by the UNESCO World Heritage Committee, composed of 21 UNESCO member States which are elected by the General Assembly.

World Chagas Disease Day
On April 14, 2023, World Chagas Disease Day was being observed for the first time. The 72nd World Health Assembly approved the designation of Chagas Disease Day on May 24, 2019. The Day was celebrated for the first time in 2020.
Theme: "*Time to integrate Chagas disease into primary health care.*"

The Chagas disease is called silent because it progresses slowly, and silenced because it mainly affects the poor people who often lack political voice and proper health care. It is classified as a Neglected Tropical Disease (NTD), meaning it affects the low-income populations in developing countries across the globe.

Ambedkar Jayanti, April 14
India has commemorated the 132nd birth anniversary of Dr. Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar on 14th April 2023, as Ambedkar Jayanti. This day has been declared a public holiday by the central government. He is widely recognized as the "father of the Indian Constitution. He was born on April 14, 1891, in Mhow, Madhya Pradesh.

National Civil Services Day, April 21
National Civil Services Day was first celebrated on April 21, 2006. April 21 was chosen because it is on this day that the first Home Minister of Independent India, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, 1947 addressed the probationers of Administrative Services Officers at Metcalf House in Delhi.

Earth Day, April 22
Earth Day is being celebrated every year on 22nd April to honour the environmental movement and raise awareness to protect natural resources.
Theme for Earth Day 2023: "*Invest in Our Planet*".

American Senator Gaylord Nelson founded the Earth Day for environmental education in 1970. Generally, Earth Day is either celebrated on 22nd April or on the day when the spring equinox occurs around the world.

World Malaria Day, April 25

World Malaria Day 2023 was being celebrated by the World Health Organisation (WHO) on April 25 with the theme *"Time to deliver zero malaria: invest, innovate, implement."* It was established in April 2007 by the 60th session of the World Health Assembly, WHO's decision-making body.

Malaria is caused by a parasite that commonly infects a certain type of mosquito, which feeds on humans.

National Panchayati Raj Day, April 24

National Panchayati Raj Day is celebrated every year on 24th April every year in India to commemorate the historic day when the Panchayati Raj System was introduced in the country.

Panchayati Raj System is a decentralized system of governance in India, where local bodies or Gram Panchayats are given the power to govern themselves and make decisions for the development of their respective areas. This system was introduced in 1992 by the 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act, which aimed at bringing democracy at the grassroots level and empowering people in rural areas.

International Day of Zero Waste, March 30

The first-ever International Day of Zero Waste was celebrated on March 30, 2023, to encourage people to prevent and minimize waste and promote a circular economy and help achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (11 and 12). It is established by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and UN Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat). The objective is to raise awareness about zero-waste initiatives and their importance in tackling the global waste crisis.

13. Culture

PM attended the 125th anniversary celebration of Sri Ramakrishna Math

Prime Minister has attended the 125th anniversary celebration of Sri Ramakrishna Math at Vivekananda House in Chennai, Tamil Nadu.

Ramakrishna Math is the administrative legal organization of the Ramakrishna Order, considered part of the Hindu reform movements. It was set up by sannyasin disciples of Ramakrishna Paramhansa headed by Swami Vivekananda at various places in India.

Ramakrishna Paramahansa was an Indian Hindu mystic and spiritual leader who practised various religious traditions, including Hinduism, Islam, and Christianity, and proclaimed that all religions are different paths leading to the same goal.

Ministry of Culure's 'Mera Gaon Meri Dharohar' program

Ministry of Culture has been documenting the unique cultural heritage of rural India under the National Mission for Cultural Mapping's 'Mera Gaon Meri Dharohar' program.

The *National Mission on Cultural Mapping (NMCM)* was launched by the Ministry of Culture in 2017 to develop a comprehensive database of art forms, artists, and other resources across the country. The programme got off to a slow start and was handed over to the Indira Gandhi National Centre for Arts (IGNCA) in 2021.

Seven Liberation destinations in India

Ministry of Tourism is promoting tourist destinations in India, including the Saptha Moksha Puri (*Seven Liberation destinations*). It is undertaking promotional campaigns in domestic and global markets through electronic, print and digital media to promote the various tourist destinations and products of the country.

Saptha Moksha Puri

Sapth means seven; Puri means city and Moksha means liberation from the cycle of birth and death. In Hindu Mythology, 7 such places have been named where renouncing the body is considered valuable and one is said to attain liberation. These are:

- Ayodhya, Mathura, Kashi (Varanasi) in Uttar Pradesh
- Maya (Haridwar) in Uttarakhand
- Kanchipuram (Tamil Nadu)
- Avantika (Ujjain) in Madhya Pradesh
- Puri (Odisha) and
- Dwaravati (Dwaraka, Gujarat)

India makes record of 33 new GI Registrations

India has reached the highest-ever GI registrations in 2022-23 by completing 33 new GI registrations. Much recently, the European Commission (EC) has granted geographical indication (GI) for India's Kangra tea, which is grown in Himachal Pradesh's Kangra district. Also, Kerala topped among the States.

Geographical Indications are part of our collective and intellectual heritage that needs to be protected and promoted. These invaluable treasures, rooted in Indian traditions, deserve to be shared with people across the globe.

Some of these items are:

- Basohli Painting in Jammu and Kashmir
- Ladakh's Wood Carving in Ladakh
- Banarasi paan, langda mango of Varanasi, Ramnagar Bhanta (brinjal) and Chandausi's adamchini chawal (rice) from Uppar Pradesh
- Chhattisgarh's aromatic rice, Nagri Dubraj from Chhattisgarh

175th birth anniversary of Raja Ravi Verma celebrated

175th birth anniversary of Raja Ravi Varma was celebrated.

Often referred to as the father of modern Indian art, Raja Ravi Varma is widely known for his realistic portrayal of Indian gods and goddesses.

Key Points

- He is remembered for giving Indians their western, classical representations of Hindu gods and goddesses.
- Through his printing press, Varma's humanized depiction of Hindu pantheon travelled beyond the surfaces of costly canvases, and into the prayer and living rooms of working-class homes.
- He achieved this by making affordable lithographs, which were accessible even to the poor.
- Ravi Varma first started a press in Mumbai and later shifted it to a place near Lonavala.

Honours
- 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 prominent works: A Family of Beggars, A Lady Playing Swarbat, Arjuna and Subhadra, Damayanti Talking to a Swan, Jatayu (a bird devotee of Lord Rama), Lady Lost in Thought, Shakuntala.

Global Buddhist Summit 2023 held in New Delhi
Global Buddhist Summit 2023 was held in New Delhi and concluded with New Delhi Declaration. The Summit was organised by Ministry of culture, in collaboration with Delhi-based International Buddhist Confederation, to engage global Buddhist dhamma leadership and scholars on matters of Buddhist and universal concerns.

Varanasi hosted Pushkaralu Festival of Telugu-speaking people
12-day Pushkaralu festival of Telugu-speaking people commenced in Varanasi. Pushkaralu refers to the worship of the 12 sacred rivers in which the god Pushkar appears every 12 years. The festival is marked as the confluence of Ganga and Godavari rivers.

Sanchi in Madhya Pradesh to become India's first solar city
Sanchi (Madhya Pradesh) is all set to become the country's first solar city.

Sanchi is renowned for its ancient Buddhist monuments, particularly the Great Stupa, which is one of the oldest stone structures in India and a UNESCO World Heritage site. The Great Stupa of Sanchi was commissioned by Emperor Ashoka in the 3rd century BCE and serves as an important pilgrimage site for Buddhists from around the world. Buddhist Monuments at Sanchi is a UNESCO world heritage site.