

CURRENT AFFAIRS (OCTOBER 2023)

Section – A

Military Nursing Service (MNS)

- Military Nursing Service (MNS) celebrated its 98th Raising Day on Oct 1, 2023.
- As one of the oldest and most distinguished all-women services in the Armed Forces, the Service holds more than 5,000 officers posted at various Armed Forces hospitals.

MNS Inception

- The origin of MNS dates back to the pre-independence colonial era when British and Indian soldiers served in the British Army.
- The British Indian government established the Indian Army Nursing Services (IANS) in the year 1888.
- This marked the formal beginning of Military Nursing in India.
- The officers of IANS had played a crucial role in providing medical care to wounded soldiers during World War I and II.
- On 1st Oct 1926, the Permanent Nursing Service was raised in the Indian Army and designated as the Indian Military Nursing Service.
- Post Independence, the MNS was established as part of the AFMS.

Defence Accounts Department (DAD)

- Defence Minister Rajnath Singh launched several digital initiatives of Defence Accounts Department (DAD)

Details of the digital initiatives launched by the Raksha Mantri are given below :

SARANSH

- SARANSH (Summary of Accounts, Budget & Expenditure for Raksha Mantralaya) has been conceptualised and developed with the aim to reflect a more accurate and objective view of the defence financial data across India on payment, accounting, budgeting etc. by leveraging data analytics on the different databases of various IT systems running in the Defence Accounts Department.
- 'SARANSH' will serve as a complete Dashboard for the higher management with at-a-glance visibility of all the defence expenditure for centralized monitoring and driving towards data-driven decisions for all defence organizations.

BISWAS

- BISWAS will serve as a Dashboard to the various PCsDA/CsDA and display different infographics for the purpose of monitoring and analysis of the whole process flow of bill management, including reports on Key Performance Indicators (KPIs).
- It provides real-time detailed analysis of bill processing, with interactive visualisations of granular data flowing through the various office automation systems for a Controller office.

e-Raksha Awaas

- e-Raksha Awaas is a centralised and comprehensive software package developed to streamline and optimize the process of generating timely rent and allied charges for rentable buildings within the Defence Services and facilitating the prompt remission of rent and allied charges to Government Accounts.
- This package serves as a unified online platform for all stakeholders involved in the generation, recovery and remission of rent and allied charges

Operation Kachchhap

- The Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) apprehended 6 persons with 955 live baby Gangetic turtles of different species at Nagpur, Bhopal and Chennai
- Intelligence was developed by the officers of DRI (Directorate of Revenue Intelligence) about a syndicate involved in illegal trafficking and trading of "Turtles of Ganges", some of which are specified as vulnerable/ near threatened species under IUCN Red List and Schedule I and II of Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972.
- Illegal trade and habitat degradation are major threats to these species.
- The species of Gangetic turtles rescued are Indian Tent Turtle, Indian Flapshell Turtle, Crown River Turtle, Black spotted/Pond Turtle and Brown Roofed Turtle.
- After the initial seizure under the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972, the perpetrators and Gangetic turtles were handed over to the respective Forest Departments for further investigation.

National Turmeric Board

- The Government notified the constitution of the National Turmeric Board which will focus on the development and growth of turmeric and turmeric products in the country.
- The Board will provide leadership on turmeric-related matters, augment the efforts, and facilitate greater coordination with the Spices Board and other Government agencies in the development and growth of the turmeric sector.
- The Board will play an instrumental role in increasing awareness and consumption of turmeric and develop new markets globally to increase exports.
- The board will lay stress on exports, R&D and develop traditional value-added turmeric products, while also giving importance to quality and food safety as per established standards.
- India is the largest producer, consumer and exporter of turmeric in the world.
- More than 30 varieties of turmeric are grown in India and it is grown in over 20 States in the country.
- The largest producing states of turmeric are Maharashtra, Telangana, Karnataka, and Tamil Nadu.
- India has more than 62 percent share of world trade in turmeric.
- During 2022-23, 1.534 lakh tonnes of turmeric and products to the tune of \$207.45 million were exported to Bangladesh, UAE, the USA and Malaysia.
- With the focused activities of the board, it is expected that turmeric exports will reach ` one billion by 2030.
- The Centre will appoint the board's chairman.

27th World Road Congress

- Union Minister for Road Transport and Highways addressed the Ministerial Session at the 27th World Road Congress in Prague, Czech Republic, focusing on Road Safety.
- The World Road Congress is organised in close cooperation between PIARC (World Road Association), the Czech Road Society and PIARC Czech National Committee, with the support of the Ministry of Transport of the Czech Republic and the Slovak Road Association.

- Every four years, the World Road Association PIARC organises a World Road Congress (WRC) with the aim to share techniques and experiences worldwide in the field of road infrastructures and road transport.
- The European Union Road Federation (ERF) is a non-profit association which coordinates the views of Europe's road infrastructure sector and acts as a platform for research and dialogue on mobility issues between stakeholders and institutional players

About PIARC

- PIARC (World Road Association), founded in 1909 and comprising 125 member governments from all over the world, is the global forum for exchange of knowledge and experience on roads, road transport policies and practices.
- With consultative status to the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations, the Association is contributing to a stable and sustainable global development of the road and transport sector.

Women Entrepreneurship Platform (WEP)

- Under the aegis of NITI Aayog's State Support Mission, the Women Entrepreneurship Platform (WEP) is set to host a state-level workshop in collaboration with the Government of Goa.
- The Women Entrepreneurship Platform (WEP) incubated in NITI Aayog, and now transitioned into a public-private partnership is a one-stop shop for information relevant to women entrepreneurs, including SmartMatch feature for government schemes, incubators, accelerators and private sector initiatives, a community page, and mentorship module.
- The State Support Mission, an umbrella initiative by NITI Aayog, is strategically designed to support states and union territories in achieving their socioeconomic goals by 2047.
- Under the State Support Mission, a series of workshops are being conducted to provide a platform for Centre-State exchanges and forging partnerships.
- The primary goal is to augment awareness regarding the Women Entrepreneurship Platform (WEP) and unveil a range of pioneering initiatives that WEP has embarked upon.
- These initiatives include "Udyam Uplift," a collaborative effort with AIC-GIM-WEP, as well as the introduction of support cohorts tailored for green women entrepreneurs, among other exciting Partnerships.

Krishna Circuit

- Prime Minister inaugurated multiple projects of the Government of India which included 'tourist facilities at Nathdwara' funded by the Ministry of Tourism as part of the Krishna circuit of Swadesh Darshan scheme.
- The government of India under Swadesh Darshan scheme has provided modern facilities in this temple
- Ramayana and Krishna Circuit are among fifteen thematic circuits identified for development under the Swadesh Darshan scheme of the Ministry of Tourism.

The Ministry has initially identified the following destinations for development under Ramayana and Krishna Circuit:

- **Ramayana Circuit:** Ayodhya, Nandigram, Shringverpur & Chitrakoot (Uttar Pradesh), Sitamarhi, Buxar & Darbhanga (Bihar), Chitrakoot (Madhya Pradesh), Mahendragiri (Odisha), Jagdalpur (Chhattisgarh), Nashik & Nagpur (Maharashtra), Bhadrachalam (Telangana), Hampi (Karnataka) and Rameshwaram (Tamil Nadu).
- **Krishna Circuit:** Dwarka (Gujarat); Nathdwara, Jaipur & Sikar (Rajasthan); Kurukshetra (Haryana), Mathura, Vrindavan, Gokul, Barsana, Nandgaon & Govardhan (Uttar Pradesh) and Puri (Odisha).

Samudra Prahari

- In a significant demonstration of India's commitment to addressing regional marine pollution threats, the Indian Coast Guard Ship Samudra Prahari, a specialized Pollution-Control Vessel, arrived at the port of Tanjung Priok, Jakarta, Indonesia, on 01 Oct 23.

- This visit, a part of India's ASEAN initiatives for Marine Pollution Response
- As a part of an overseas exchange program, the ship has aboard 13 National Cadet Corps (NCC) cadets, who will participate actively in the Puneet Sagar Abhiyan
- The ship received a warm welcome from BAKAMAL (Indonesia Maritime Security Agency) band playing fanfare and other welcoming military tunes as a gesture to their Indian friends.

Pollution Control Vessels

The Samudra-class Pollution Control Vessel is a class of three vessels built by the ABG Shipyard in Gujarat for Indian Coast Guard.

1. Samudra Prahari
2. Samudra Paheredar
3. Samudra Pavak

Samudra Prahari

- It is an Indian Coast Guard Ship (ICGS)
- It is specially designed for pollution control.
- It is equipped with the most advanced pollution Response and Control equipment for mitigating oil spills in the Exclusive Economic Zone.
- It has tanks and inflatable barges for storage of oil spills.
- It is capable of unhindered oil recovery operations
- The vessel is designed to operate a twin-engine Advanced Light Helicopter and to operate and embark Chetak helicopter.

Puneet Sagar Abhiyaan

- The NCC had, on December 01, 2021, launched 'Puneet Sagar Abhiyan', a nationwide flagship campaign, to clean sea shores of plastic & other waste material, while raising awareness about the importance of cleanliness.

SAMPRITI-XI in Umroi, Meghalaya

- India and Bangladesh commenced the 11th edition of the annual joint military exercise, SAMPRITI on 03rd October 2023 in Umroi, Meghalaya.
- This exercise, alternatingly organised by both countries, signifies strong bilateral defence cooperation initiatives.
- With its inception in Jorhat, Assam in 2009, the exercise has witnessed ten successful editions till 2022.
- SAMPRITI-XI, scheduled for 14 days, will engage approximately 350 personnel from both sides.
- Centered on the conduct of Sub-Conventional Operations as per Chapter VII of the UN mandate, SAMPRITI-XI will include a Command Post Exercise (CPX) and a Field Training Exercise (FTX), culminating in a Validation Exercise.

50 lakh Street Vendors covered under PM SVANidhi Scheme

- The Prime Minister Street Vendor's AtmaNirbhar Nidhi (PM SVANidhi) scheme, an initiative under the aegis of the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA), has achieved a momentous milestone by extending its support to more than 50 lakh street vendors across the nation.

PM Svanidhi Scheme

- The PM Street Vendor's AtmaNirbharNidhi (PM SVANidhi) Scheme, launched on June 1, 2020, is a micro credit scheme for urban street vendors that aims to provide collateral-free working capital loans up to ₹50,000.
- Under the scheme regular repayments are incentivized with a 7% interest subsidy and digital transactions are rewarded with cashback up to ₹1,200 per year.

- The scheme employs Aadhaar-based e-KYC, utilizes an end-to-end IT platform, and employs SMS-based notifications for application status updates.
- All lending institutions, including NBFCs/MFIs and DPAs, have partnered with the aim to alleviate urban poverty in India.

Krishna Water Dispute

- The Union Cabinet has approved the issue of further Terms of Reference (ToR) to the existing Krishna Water Disputes Tribunal-II (KWDT-II) under section 5(1) of the ISRWD Act for its adjudication between the States of Telangana and Andhra Pradesh (AP).
- This is based on receipt of the legal opinion and in light thereof on the issues raised by Government of Telangana (GoT) in their complaint under section (3) of the Inter State River Water Disputes (ISRWD) Act, 1956.
- Krishna Water Disputes Tribunal-II was constituted by the Central Government on 02.04.2004 on requests made by the party States under Section 3 of the ISRWD Act, 1956.
- Subsequently, on 02.06.2014, Telangana, as a State of the Union of India, came into existence.

Interstate River Water Disputes Act, 1956 (IRWD Act)

- The Interstate River Water Disputes Act, 1956 (IRWD Act) is an Act of the Parliament of India enacted under Article 262 of the Constitution of India on the eve of the reorganization of states on the linguistic basis to resolve the water disputes that would arise in the use, control, and distribution of an interstate river or river valley.
- Article 262 of the Indian Constitution provides a role for the union government in adjudicating conflicts surrounding interstate rivers that arise among the state/regional governments.
- Any river water sharing treaty made with other countries, has to be ratified by the Parliament per Article 253 after deciding the share of the Indian riparian states per Article 262 to make the treaty constitutionally valid or enforceable by the judiciary as India follows dualist theory for the implementation of international treaties/laws.

Promulgation of (i) The Andaman and Nicobar Islands Tenancy Regulation, 2023 (ii) The Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Daman and Diu Tenancy Regulation, 2023 (iii) The Lakshadweep Tenancy Regulation, 2023

- The Union Cabinet, chaired by the Prime Minister has approved the proposal for promulgation of (i) The Andaman and Nicobar Islands Tenancy Regulation, 2023 (ii) The Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Daman and Diu Tenancy Regulation, 2023 (iii) The Lakshadweep Tenancy Regulation, 2023 under Article 240 of the Constitution of India.
- These Promulgations will provide a legal framework for creating an accountable and transparent ecosystem for renting premises in the Union territories of Andaman and Nicobar Islands; Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Daman and Diu; and Lakshadweep by balancing the interests and rights of both the landlord and tenant.
- The Regulations will also help to increase access to quality rental accommodation; and lead to gradual formalisation of the rental housing market

Sammakka Sarakka Central Tribal University

- The Union Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister gave its approval for introduction in Parliament, a Bill, namely, the Central Universities (Amendment), Bill, 2023 further to amend the Central Universities Act, 2009 for setting up of Sammakka Sarakka Central Tribal University at Mulugu District in the State of Telangana as provided in the Thirteenth Schedule to the Andhra Pradesh Re-organisation Act, 2014 (no. 6 of 2014).
- There would be provision of funds of Rs. 889.07 crore.
- The new university will not only increase access and improve the quality of higher education in the State but also promote avenues of higher education and advance knowledge by providing instructional and research facilities in tribal art, culture and traditional knowledge system for the benefit of the tribal population in the State.

North Koel Reservoir Project

- The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs Chaired by Prime Minister has given its approval to a proposal of Department of Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation, Ministry of Jal Shakti to complete the balance works of North Koel Reservoir Project at a revised Cost
- On completion of the balance works, project would provide additional annual irrigation to 42,301 ha in the four drought-prone districts of Jharkhand and Bihar.
- North Koel Reservoir Project is an inter-State major irrigation project with command area lying in the two States of Bihar and Jharkhand.
- The project comprises a dam on North Koel river near Kutku village (District Latehar, Jharkhand), a barrage 96 km downstream of the dam (at Mohammadganj, District Palamu, Jharkhand), Right Main Canal (RMC) and Left Main Canal (LMC) taking off from the barrage.
- The Construction of dam and ancillary activities started in the year 1972 by Govt. of Bihar from its own resources.
- The work continued till 1993 and was stopped in that year by the Forest Department, Govt. of Bihar. Due to apprehension that water accumulated in the dam would threaten the Betla National Park and Palamu Tiger Reserve, the work on dam was at a standstill.
- After the bifurcation of Bihar in November 2000, the head works i.e. Dam and Barrage lie in Jharkhand.
- In the year 2016, the Govt. of India decided to provide assistance for the completion of balance works of the North Koel Reservoir Project
- It was decided to reduce the reservoir level so as to save the core area of Palamu Tiger Reserve.
- The North Koel rises on the Chhota Nagpur plateau in Jharkhand and joins the Sone River, a few miles north-west of Haidarnagar in Jharkhand.
- The river passes through the northern part of Betla National Park.
- The main tributaries of the North Koel River are Auranga and the Amanat.

National Crisis Management Committee (NCMC) Reviews Situation in Sikkim

- The National Crisis Management Committee (NCMC), under Chairmanship of Cabinet Secretary, reviewed the situation in Sikkim.
- It is a committee set up by the Government of India in the wake of a natural calamity for effective coordination and implementation of relief measures and operations.
- It is headed by Cabinet Secretary.
- A National Crisis Management Committee (NCMC) has been constituted in the Cabinet Secretariat.
- The composition of the committee is as under:- Cabinet Secretary Chairman, Secretary to Prime Minister Member, Secretary (MHA) Member, Secretary (MCD) Member, Director (IB) Member, Secretary (R&AW) Member, Secretary (Agri & Coopn.) Co-opted Member, An officer of Cabinet Secretariat. Convenor

What happened in Sikkim

- On October 4th 2023, a devastating glacial lake outburst struck North *Sikkim*, sending shockwaves across the northeastern state.
- Flash floods occurred in north *Sikkim* after the South Lhonak Lake burst due to incessant rains.
- This caused the rise of water levels in Teesta river that flooded at least four districts, including Mangan, Gangtok, Pakyong and Namchi
- For years, numerous studies have highlighted South Lhonak Lake's rapidly growing size due to glacier melting and marked it as susceptible to glacial lake outburst flood (GLOF).

GLOF

- Glacial lakes, like the South Lhonak Lake, are large bodies of water that sit in front of, on top of, or beneath a melting glacier.

- As they grow larger, they become more dangerous because glacial lakes are mostly dammed by unstable ice or sediment composed of loose rock and debris.
- In case the boundary around them breaks, huge amounts of water rush down the side of the mountains, which could cause flooding in the downstream areas.
- This is called glacial lake outburst floods or GLOF.
- GLOF can be triggered by several reasons, including earthquakes, extremely heavy rains and ice avalanches
- These lakes are also often found in steep, mountainous regions, which means landslides or ice avalanches can sometimes fall directly into the lakes and displace the water, causing it to over-top the natural dam and flood downstream.
- In 2013, one such event took place in Uttarakhand's Kedarnath when the region witnessed flash floods along with a GLOF caused by the Chorabari Tal glacial lake, killing thousands of people.

Gati Shakti National Master Plan

- The Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT), Ministry of Commerce and Industry and GatiShakti Vishwavidyalaya (GSV) entered into collaboration today to advance India's infrastructure and logistics sectors.
- Under this Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), GSV shall be the nodal agency across India to design, develop and deliver courses and curriculum related to PM Gati Shakti National Master Plan and National Logistics Policy at various centres in different states.

Gati Shakti Vishwavidyalaya (GSV)

- Gati Shakti Vishwavidyalaya (GSV) Vadodara was established as a Central University through an Act of Parliament in 2022, for creating best in class manpower and talent for the entire transportation and logistics sectors.
- This Central University is sponsored by the Ministry of Railways, Govt. of India and is mandated to work across railways, shipping, ports, highways, roads, waterways, and aviation etc.
- The GSV shall create a resource pool of professionals across technology, economics, management, and policy comprising multidisciplinary teaching (bachelor's/masters/doctoral), executive training, and research.
- GSV shall also undertake training for Indian Railways probationers and serving officers.

National Logistics Policy (NLP)

- To complement the PM GatiShakti NMP, the National Logistics Policy (NLP) was launched on 17th September 2022.
- Objective - to address the soft infrastructure and logistics sector development aspect, inter alia, including process reforms, improvement in logistics services, digitization, human resource development and skilling.
- National Logistics Policy, under the Comprehensive Logistics Action Plan (CLAP) talks of creating a Logistics Human Resources Development & Capacity Building Strategy under which competency frameworks for formalization of logistics professionals are being developed
- Steps are being taken to mainstream logistics and supply chain in course curriculums in different institutions.

ITU Workshop and Focus Group Meeting

- International Telecommunication Union (ITU) and the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) are jointly organizing Workshop on Cost Models for Data Services and International Connectivity
- The objective of the Workshop is to share best practices and study cost models and other tools which can be used by countries to consider and implement so as to bring down costs of data services and internet connectivity.
- The International Telecommunication Union (ITU) is a specialized agency of the United Nations responsible for many matters related to information and communication technologies.
- It was established on 17 May 1865 as the International Telegraph Union, making it the oldest UN agency.

- The ITU was initially aimed at helping connect telegraphic networks between countries, with its mandate consistently broadening with the advent of new communications technologies
- It adopted its current name in 1932 to reflect its expanded responsibilities over radio and the telephone.
- On 15 November 1947, the ITU entered into an agreement with the newly created United Nations to become a specialized agency within the UN system, which formally entered into force on 1 January 1949.
- The ITU promotes the shared global use of the radio spectrum, facilitates international cooperation in assigning satellite orbits, assists in developing and coordinating worldwide technical standards, and works to improve telecommunication infrastructure in the developing world.

The ITU/UNESCO Broadband Commission's affordability target for entry-level broadband services was set at below 2% of monthly GNI per capita for middle and low-income countries by 2025 – a target which many still have not reached.

Swavlamban 2.0

- To promote 'Aatmanirbharta' in defense and innovation, a number of big-ticket announcements were made by Defense Minister during the plenary session of Swavlamban 2.0

Swavlamban 2.0

- Two-day seminar of Naval Innovation and Indigenisation Organisation (NIIO)
- The main highlight was the release of the fifth Positive Indigenisation List of Department of Military Affairs (DMA) comprising 98 items.
- Highly complex systems, sensors, weapons and ammunition have been included in the list.
- All these items will be procured from indigenous sources as per provisions given in Defence Acquisition Procedure (DAP) 2020
- Defence Minister also launched 76 challenges for the industry under 10th Defence India Start-up Challenges (DISC 10) & DISC 10 PRIME of Innovations for Defence Excellence (iDEX) and five problem statements under iDEX for Fauji.
- In addition, two INDUS X challenges under 'INDUS-X Mutual Promotion of Advanced Collaborative Technologies' (IMPACT) challenges jointly finalised by iDEX and United States Department of Defense (US DoD) were launched by the Raksha Mantri.

SPRINT Innovative Challenge

- The SPRINT innovative challenge was launched by the Prime Minister of India during the maiden Swavlamban seminar in 2022 to promote the use of indigenous technology and products in the Navy
- It has helped in taking the country forward in becoming self-reliant in the defence sector.

Fifth Positive Indigenisation List

- The Fifth Positive Indigenisation List has been prepared by DMA after several rounds of consultations with all stakeholders.
- It lays special focus on import substitution of components of major systems besides important platforms, weapon system & sensors and munitions which are being developed and likely to translate into firm orders in the next five to ten years.
- The DMA had earlier promulgated four Positive Indigenisation Lists comprising 411 military items. Separately, the DDP has notified four Positive Indigenisation Lists consisting of a total of 4,666 items, including Line Replacement Units/Sub-systems/Spares & Components for Defence Public Sector Undertakings (DPSUs).

iDEX DISC 10 & DISC 10 PRIME Challenges

- 76 challenges were launched for the industry by the Raksha Mantri under DISC 10 & DISC 10 PRIME to celebrate the 76th year of India's independence.

- These challenges include problem statements from the three Services, Indian Coast Guard, DPSUs, Border Roads Organisation and Mission DefSpace. In addition, five problems under the iDEX for Fauji (i4F) scheme were also launched.

INDUS X Challenges

- iDEX in partnership with the US DoD had recently conducted the India-US Defence Acceleration Ecosystem (INDUS X) event in Washington DC to expand the strategic technology partnership and defence industrial cooperation between the start-up ecosystems, businesses and academic institutes of India and US.
- In a short span of three months, iDEX and US DoD have finalised two joint INDUS X challenges under the IMPACT which were launched by the Raksha Mantri during the seminar. US Ambassador to India Mr Eric Garcetti was also present at the launch.

INVENT

- The NIIO and the Defence Innovation Organisation (DIO) entered into an agreement for jointly working on facilitating the infusion of Venture Capital into the defence ecosystem through the iDEX Innovators Hub (iIH). The seminar witnessed 'INVENT' (iDEX-Navy Venture for Technology) being launched. In addition, a number of other MoUs were exchanged. These include NIIO MoUs with the academia and the industry.

Naval Innovation and Indigenisation Organisation (NIIO)

- The NIIO puts in place dedicated structures for the end users to interact with academia and industry towards fostering innovation and indigenisation for self-reliance in defence in keeping with the vision of Atmanirbhar Bharat.
- The NIIO is a three-tiered organisation. Naval Technology Acceleration Council (N-TAC) will bring together the twin aspects of innovation and indigenisation and provide apex level directives.
- A working group under the N-TAC will implement the projects.
- A Technology Development Acceleration Cell (TDAC) has also been created for induction of emerging disruptive technology in an accelerated time frame.

Defence Innovation Organisation (DIO)

- iDEX will be funded and managed by a "Defence Innovation Organisation (DIO)" formed as a "not for profit" company as per Section 8 of the Companies Act 2013 for this purpose.
- The modalities of implementation of DIF will be managed by a specialized team known as the Innovation for Defence Excellence (iDEX) within the DIO.
- DIO will provide high level policy guidance to iDEX.
- iDEX will have functional autonomy.

iDEX

- iDEX will be funded and managed by a 'Defence Innovation Organization (DIO)' which has been formed as a 'not for profit' company as per Section 8 of the Companies Act 2013 for this purpose, by the two founder members i.e. Defence Public Sector Undertakings (DPSUs) - HAL & BEL.
- iDEX will function as the executive arm of DIO, carrying out all the required activities while DIO will provide high level policy guidance to iDEX.

Defence India Startup Challenge

- Taking the iDEX initiative further, Defence India Startup Challenge "has been launched by Ministry in partnership with Atal Innovation Mission, aimed at supporting Startups/MSMEs/Innovators to create prototypes and/or commercialize products/solutions in the area of National Defence and Security.

The vision of the Challenge is two-fold :

- i. Help create functional prototypes of products/technologies relevant for national security (prototyping), and spur fast-moving innovation in the India defence sector;
- ii. Help new tech products/technologies find a market and early customer (commercialization) in the form of the Indian Defence Establishment.

IDEX 4 FAUJI

- The objective of iDEX4Fauji program is to harness the knowledge and insights of in-service soldiers and co-create those solutions sustainably with iDEX-supported startups.
- The program would create a mechanism to facilitate the service personnel in providing their feedback/ideas which could enable them to upgrade the existing equipment, or improve them with innovations.

IDEX PRIME (SPACE)

- Defence India Start-up Challenge iDEX PRIME (Space) under Mission DefSpace is launched with 12 Problem Statements (PS).
- Aimed at developing technologies addressing every stage of a space mission – from mission planning to satellite data analytics.

INDUS X

- INDUS-X Mutual Promotion of Advanced Collaborative Technologies (IMPACT) Challenges are problem statements being launched jointly by Indian Ministry of Defence's Innovations for Defence Excellence and the U.S. Department of Defense's Defense Innovation Unit for promoting co-development among the startups of the two nations under the umbrella of INDUS-X

Linguistic Financial Empowerment, Bhashini (DIBD) and RBIH Collaborate for an Inclusive Vision

- Reserve Bank Innovation Hub (RBIH) and Digital India Bhashini Division (DIBD) Bhashini collaborated to break down the language barriers prevalent in the financial services landscape.
- Through their combined efforts, both are set to explore and develop innovative solutions that foster linguistic inclusivity.
- This strategic partnership is poised to revolutionize financial services by enabling communication in local languages.
- The primary objective is to extend the reach of digital financial services to users in their native tongues, ultimately striving for seamless banking experiences for all.
- Utilizing voice as a medium, BHASHINI can promote financial inclusivity, and economic empowerment, and enhance financial literacy.
- BHASHINI, with its capabilities in language translation and voice processing, will play a pivotal role in achieving these goals.

DBID

- Digital India Bhashini Division is a Division under Digital India Corporation, section 8 Company under Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology, Govt of India.
- The vision of Bhashini is to “harness natural language technologies to enable a diverse ecosystem of contributors, partnering entities and citizens for the purpose of transcending language barriers, thereby ensuring digital inclusion and digital empowerment

RBIH

- The Reserve Bank Innovation Hub (RBIH) – a wholly-owned subsidiary of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) – is an organisation that works to enable frictionless finance for a billion Indians.

- RBIH acts as an enabler and facilitator in the ecosystem, bringing together members from financial, technological, and academic institutions to promote and accelerate innovation across the financial sector.
- RBIH aims not only to strengthen the Indian financial system but also to position India at the forefront of global financial innovation.

National Investment and Infrastructure Fund (NIIF)

- The National Investment and Infrastructure Fund (NIIF) has entered into a collaboration with the Japan Bank for International Cooperation (JBIC) to launch a \$600 million India-Japan Fund (IJF) with JBIC and Government of India (GoI) as anchor investors.
- This joint initiative signals a key dimension of collaboration between the two countries in an area that is a shared priority viz. climate and environment.
- The announcement marks NIIF's first bi-lateral fund, with the GoI contributing 49% of the target corpus and the remaining 51% contributed by JBIC.
- The Fund will be managed by NIIF Limited (NIIFL) and JBIC IG (a subsidiary of JBIC) will support NIIFL in promoting Japanese investments in India.
- India Japan Fund will focus on investing in environmental sustainability and low carbon emission strategies and aims to play the role of being a 'partner of choice' to further enhance Japanese investments into India.

World Animal Day 2023

- The Animal Welfare Board of India (AWBI), a statutory body of Department of Animal Husbandry and Dairying, Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying, Government of India celebrated the World Animal Day 2023
- World Animal Day, celebrated on October 4th, 2023, under the theme "Great or Small, Love Them All" serves as a dedicated occasion to honor and advocate for animal rights and welfare.

The Genesis of World Animal Day

- World Animal Day has been marked since 1925.
- According to World Animal Protection, it was started by Heinrich Zimmermann, a cynologist, who organised the first celebration at the Sports Palace in Berlin, which was reportedly attended by over 5,000 people.
- He dedicated countless hours to advancing World Animal Day, and in 1931, his proposal to officially celebrate October 4 as World Animal Day was approved and enacted as a resolution.

200th Birth Anniversary of Shri Ramalinga Swamy

- The Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi addressed on the occasion of the 200th birth anniversary of Shri Ramalinga Swamy also known as Vallalar.

Vallalar

- Arutprakasa Vallalar Chidambaram Ramalingam (5 October 1823 – 30 January 1874), whose pre-monastic name was Ramalingam, is one of the most famous Tamil Saints.
- He is commonly known in India and across the world as Vallalar, Ramalinga Swamikal, or Ramalinga Adikal.
- He is also one of the greatest Tamil poets of the 19th century belonging to a line of Tamil saints known as 'gnana siddhars' (gnana meaning higher wisdom).
- The Samarasa Suddha Sanmarga Sathya Sangam (The Unified Pure Path of Absolute Truth) was spread and passed on by him not only in theory but especially in practice by his way of living which is an inspiration for his followers.
- Through the notion of Suddha Sanmarga Sangam (pure path of absolute truth), the saint endeavored to eliminate the caste system.
- According to Suddha Sanmarga, the prime aspects of human life should be love, connected with charity and divine practice, leading to pure knowledge.
- Ramalinga advocated the concept of worshipping the flame of a lighted lamp as a symbol of the Eternal Power.

CHAKRAVAT 2023



- It is an Annual Joint Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) Exercise (AJHE)
- First Edition – 2015
- Outcome of PM's directive promulgated during Combined Commanders' Conference-2015.
- The exercise has been conducted by Indian Army, Indian Navy (IN) and Indian Air Force (IAF) in rotation since 2016. The last edition of the exercise was conducted at Agra by IAF.
- The 2023 edition of the exercise is being hosted by the Indian Navy at Goa from 09 to 11 Oct 23.
- CHAKRAVAT, has transformed itself into a multi-agency endeavour involving participation of all three Services, Paramilitary Forces, as well as several disaster response organisations, NGOs, academic institutions and international organisations.
- Developing collective and coordinated effective response mechanisms to address humanitarian crises and natural disasters are one of the most visible elements in India's inclusive vision for the oceans - SAGAR, or Security And Growth for All in the Region.

Agriculture Science Congress

- Union Minister for Fisheries, Animal Husbandry, and Dairying inaugurate the 16th Agricultural Science Congress (ASC)
- The primary aim of the ASC is to generate a scientific discourse around transforming India's agri-food systems into sustainable enterprises to facilitate its benefit for generations to come.
- Organised by the National Academy of Agricultural Sciences (NAAS), the Agricultural Science Congress is being held for the first time in Kerala, hosted by the ICAR-Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute (CMFRI).

National Academy of Agricultural Sciences (NAAS)

- NAAS is a Government of India-funded agency, established in 1990, and is a research platform in the fields of crop husbandry, animal husbandry, fisheries, and agro-forestry.
- It acts as a research base for agro-scientists to formulate their advice to the policymakers in discussion with the agricultural and agro-industrial communities.
- The Academy is located at the National Agricultural Science Centre Complex, Pusa, in New Delhi, India.

World Dyslexia Day

- World Dyslexia Awareness Day is a global initiative that seeks to shed light on dyslexia, a learning difference that affects millions of individuals worldwide.
- World Dyslexia Awareness Day is observed annually on October 8th.

- Dyslexia is a common learning disorder that affects a person's ability to read and write properly.
- Persons with Dyslexia are often unable to read quickly and write without committing errors. Persons with Dyslexia might struggle with reading, writing, vocabulary, and tasks that require hand-eye coordination.
- World Dyslexia Day raises awareness about these issues and what can be done to manage such a disorder.
- The Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (DEPwD) under Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, Government of India is the nodal department to look after all the development agenda of Persons with Disabilities of the country.

State Visit of the President of Tanzania to India

Highlights of the Visit

- India and Tanzania are maritime neighbours with a long history of trade and people-to-people linkages therefore Tanzania has an important place in India's vision of SAGAR (Security and Growth for all in the Region).
- Both Nations expressed satisfaction over the first ever India-Tanzania Joint Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) surveillance exercise conducted in July 2023
- India and Tanzania held bilateral maritime exercise in October 2022
- The Tanzanian side appreciated the hydrographic surveys of Tanzanian major ports done by India in recent years.
- The conduct of the maiden trilateral maritime exercise involving India, Tanzania and Mozambique in the Mozambique Channel during the visit of the Indian Naval Ship Tarkash in October 2022.
- The two leaders commended the signing of the Technical Agreement on sharing White Shipping Information between India and Tanzania.
- India and Tanzania agreed to cooperate under the framework of the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA)
- India is amongst the top five investment sources for Tanzania
- Reserve Bank of India (Indian Central Bank) has cleared the way for trade using local currencies i.e. Indian Rupee (INR) & Tanzanian Shilling by allowing the authorized banks in India to open Special Rupee Vostro Accounts (SRVA) of correspondent banks of Tanzania
- 98% of agriculture product lines from Tanzania are imported tariff-free using India's Duty Free Tariff Preference (DFTP) scheme
- Lines of Credits (LoCs) extended by India to Tanzania that amount to over USD 1.1 billion covering fields of drinking water infrastructure, agriculture and defence.
- Water Projects in 24 towns of Tanzania worth USD 500 Million through a Line of Credit scheme are presently being implemented. Once completed, it would provide easy access to safe drinking water to about 6 million residents of these regions.
- India offers 450 Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC) scholarships for capacity building and 70 Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) scholarships for long term programmes in 2023-24.
- The Indian side announced the decision to increase the number of Long term scholarships (ICCR) from 70 to 85 for the year 2023-24.
- As part of its commitment to the Global South, India also announced 1000 additional ITEC slots for Tanzania to be used over a 5-year period in new and emergent fields like Smart Ports, Space, Biotechnology, Artificial Intelligence, Aviation Management, etc.
- The Indian side offered collaboration in areas of space technologies and digital public infrastructure under India Stack including Unified Payments Interface (UPI) and Digital Unique Identity (Aadhar).
- The Tanzanian side welcomed Indian support for establishing a Vocational Training Centre (VTC) in Pemba, Zanzibar and designing courses based on the demands of the local market.
- The Indian side offered to set up vocational training institutions on the lines of Vocational Skilling Centres of India to provide training and skill enhancement to the Tanzanian youth.

- Tanzania commended the decision by India to set up two ICT Centres at Dar es Salaam Institute of Technology and at Nelson Mandela African Institute for Science & Technology (NMAIST) in Arusha.
- Both leaders affirmed the significance of establishing the first overseas campus of the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Madras in Zanzibar.
- They also agreed that IIT in Zanzibar has the potential to become the premier centre for technical education in the African continent.
- Both sides agreed to heighten cooperation in cultural exchanges and appreciated the signing of the Cultural Exchange Program for the 2023-27 periods.
- The Indian side extended an invitation to Tanzania to be a partner country in the upcoming Surajkund Mela to be held in February 2024 in Surajkund, Faridabad, National Capital Region of Delhi.
- The Tanzanian side thanked the Government of India for the deployment of two Kabaddi Coaches from India considering the rising popularity of the sport in Tanzania.
- The Indian side welcomed Tanzania's decision to join the International Big Cat Alliance (IBCA) and the Global Biofuel Alliance (GBA)

Cotton Corporation of India launches “Bale Identification and Traceability System”

- The Ministry of Textiles marked World Cotton Day 2023 by hosting a conference centered on the theme of “Enhancing Quality & Productivity of Indian Cotton through Policy, Innovation, & Technology Upgradation.”
- This event was conducted in collaboration with the Cotton Corporation of India (CCI) and the EU-Resource Efficiency Initiative, an initiative by GIZ.
- The conference held on the eve of World Cotton Day, highlighted best practices and sustainable farming methods throughout the cotton value chain, spanning from Farm to Fibre to Factory to Fashion to Foreign.

Bale Identification and Traceability System (BITS)

- To ensure that the quality, variety, origin, and other vital parameters of cotton are transparent to both Indian and international buyers, CCI launched the “Bale Identification and Traceability System” (BITS) using Blockchain Technology.
- Each cotton bale now carries a QR code that allows easy tracking of its original source, processing factory, storage details, and associated cotton quality information, including timestamps.

Kasturi Cotton program

- Additionally, the Ministry of Textiles introduced the Kasturi Cotton program, a premium certified quality cotton with traceability.
- TEXPROCIL, in collaboration with CCI on behalf of the Ministry of Textiles, is overseeing the implementation of this program.
- All ginneries in the country are empowered to produce Kasturi Cotton following quality protocols.

Cotton Corporation of India Limited

- The Cotton Corporation of India Limited or CCI is a central public sector undertaking under the ownership of the Ministry of Textiles, Government of India, engaged in diverse activities related to trade, procurement, and export of cotton.
- CCI is a public sector agency responsible for equitable distribution of cotton among the different constituents of the industry and aid imports of cotton.
- It was incorporated on 31 July 1970 under the Companies Act 1956.
- CCI is governed by Textile Policy 1985 issued by the Ministry of Textiles, Government of India.

India Art Architecture Design Biennale (IAADB '23)

- Ministry of Culture organized the curtain raiser event for the India Art Architecture Design Biennale (IAADB '23) at the National Gallery of Modern Art, Delhi along with the Logo launch for the Biennale.
- The Ministry of Culture is hosting its inaugural India Art Architecture Design Biennale in December 2023
- The event will explore various themes through exhibitions and panel discussions, with each day centred around a specific theme, curated by experts in the field.
- The themes encompass topics such as doors and gateways, enchanting gardens, awe-inspiring stepwells, majestic temple architecture, modern wonders of independent India, the contemporary face of indigenous design, and the role of women in architecture.
- The India Art Architecture Design Biennale 2023 will serve as a precursor to India's participation in the Venice Biennale 2024, fostering a comprehensive dialogue among practitioners and professionals in the realms of art, architecture, and design.
- The Biennale aims to bring traditional grassroots artists and contemporary designers, curators, architects, and thought leaders to the forefront, transcending age, gender, and genre boundaries.

World Hydrogen and Fuel Cell Day

- On the eve of World Hydrogen and Fuel Cell Day, celebrated annually on October 8th, the Government of India held a half-day event to explore and leverage the boundless possibilities of hydrogen as a source of green and sustainable energy.
- The event, organized in New Delhi by the Ministry of New & Renewable Energy, in association with Solar Energy Corporation of India Limited, brought together hydrogen experts from the industry, academia, and government.
- It is a global initiative aimed at promoting awareness and understanding of hydrogen as a clean and sustainable energy source, along with the versatile technology of fuel cells.
- This day serves as a platform to acknowledge the potential of hydrogen and fuel cells in addressing the pressing challenges of climate change, energy security, and environmental sustainability.

National Cooperative Development Corporation (NCDC)

- Union Home Minister and Minister of Cooperation Shri addressed 89th General Council meeting of the National Cooperative Development Corporation (NCDC)
- National Cooperative Development Corporation (NCDC), a statutory corporation under the Ministry of Cooperation, Government of India was established under an Act of the Indian Parliament on 13 March 1963.
- NCDC is involved in planning, promoting, coordinating and financing of cooperative development programmes at the national level.
- It provides financial and technical support to cooperative institutions of farmers and other weaker sections associated with agriculture and allied rural economic activities.

Nobel Prizes 2023

- The prizes in medicine, physics, chemistry, literature and peace were established by the will of Alfred Nobel, a wealthy Swedish industrialist and the inventor of dynamite. The first awards were handed out in 1901, five years after Nobel's death.
- Between 1901 and 2023, the Nobel Prizes and the Sveriges Riksbank Prize in Economic Sciences in Memory of Alfred Nobel were awarded 621 times to 1,000 people and organisations.
- With some receiving the Nobel Prize more than once, this makes a total of 965 individuals and 27 organisations.

The Nobel Prize in Physics 2023

- Pierre Agostini, Ferenc Krausz and Anne L'Huillier "for experimental methods that generate attosecond pulses of light for the study of electron dynamics in matter"

The Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine 2023

- Katalin Karikó and Drew Weissman “for their discoveries concerning nucleoside base modifications that enabled the development of effective mRNA vaccines against COVID-19”

The Nobel Prize in Chemistry 2023

- Moungi G. Bawendi, Louis E. Brus and Alexei I. Ekimov “for the discovery and synthesis of quantum dots”

The Nobel Prize in Literature 2023

- Jon Fosse “for his innovative plays and prose which give voice to the unsayable”

The Nobel Peace Prize 2023

- Narges Mohammadi “for her fight against the oppression of women in Iran and her fight to promote human rights and freedom for all”
- The Sveriges Riksbank Prize in Economic Sciences in Memory of Alfred Nobel 2023
- Claudia Goldin “for having advanced our understanding of women’s labour market outcomes”

Scheme for Residential Education For Students in High Schools in Targeted Areas (SHRESHTA)

- The objective of SHRESHTA is to enhance the reach of development Intervention of the Government and to fill the gap in service-deficient SCs dominant areas, in the sector of education through the efforts of grant-in-aid institutions (run by NGOs) and residential high schools offering high quality education and to provide environment for socio economic upliftment and overall development of the Scheduled Castes (SCs).
- The Scheme is further modified to provide easier access to the meritorious SC students in the best schools in the Country for their Educational and Holistic Development, thereby securing their future opportunities.

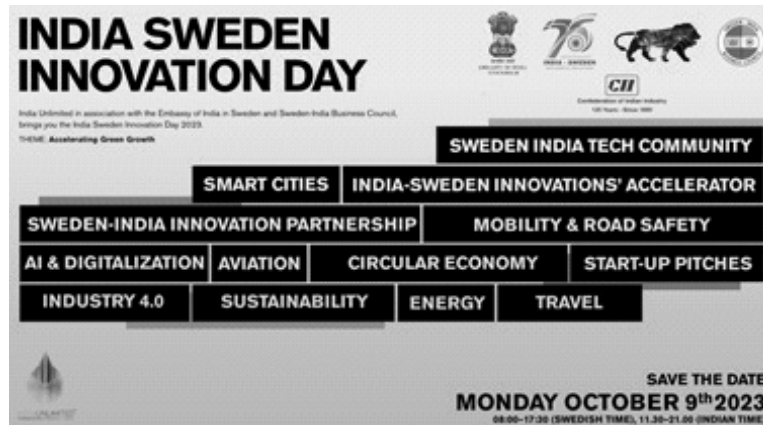
The scheme is being implemented in two Modes :

- One is SHRESHTA schools, (Best CBSE/State Board affiliated Private Residential Schools), Under this, each year a specified number of meritorious SC students in States/UTs will be selected through the National Entrance Test for SHRESHTA (NETS) to be conducted by the National Testing Agency (NTA) and admitted in the best private residential schools affiliated by CBSE/State Board in classes 9th and 11th for completion of education till 12th standard.
- Second Mode is NGO/VO operated Schools/Hostels (EXISTING COMPONENT), (Guidelines hereinafter applicable only for Mode 2 of the Scheme), Schools/Hostels run by VOs/NGOs and other organizations having higher classes (up to class 12) and who have been receiving Grant-in-aid will be continued, subject to satisfactory performance.

3rd Global Maritime India Summit 2023

- GMIS 2023 is scheduled from 17th to 19th October at MMRDA Grounds, BKC, Mumbai.
- The 3rd edition of the Global Maritime India Summit 2023 is going to be much bigger and more inclusive than the previous two summits organized in 2016 and 2021 in terms of scale and participation.
- GMIS 2023 is expected to draw participation from more than 70 countries. A host of senior ministers from the UAE, South Africa, Armenia, Italy, Sri Lanka, Turkmenistan, Belarus, Bangladesh, and Madagascar will be attending.
- The summit will host over 250 national and international speakers and CEOs
- Discussions are planned on regional cooperation in BIMSTEC countries, Chabahar and INSTC (International North-South Transport Corridor), Africa, Indo Pacific, Europe and the newly launched IMEC (India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor).

10th India-Sweden Innovation Day meet



- India and Sweden recently celebrated the '10th India Sweden Innovation Day' with a special focus on the theme "Accelerating Green Growth" on October 9, 2023.
- This event marked a significant milestone in strengthening the bilateral ties between these two nations.

India-Sweden Innovation Day

- The India-Sweden Innovation partnership is built on a shared commitment to driving prosperity and tackling global challenges like climate change and sustainable development through innovation. Guided by the principles of co-funding, co-development, and co-creation, we aim to harness our complementary strengths for mutual benefit.
- This partnership builds upon the Joint Statement issued by our Prime Ministers in Mumbai in 2016, the Joint Action Plan agreed in Stockholm in 2018, and the India-Sweden Virtual Summit held on March 5, 2021.

Other Highlights

- Recently, the Department of Science and Technology, Government of India, in collaboration with the Swedish Government Agency for Innovation Systems (VINNOVA), has announced the INDIA-SWEDEN Collaborative Industrial Research & Development call.

Protocol for Management of Malnutrition in Children

- The 'Protocol for Management of Malnutrition in Children' has been launched during a national event at Vigyan Bhawan under the Chairpersonship of Union Minister of Women and Child Development
- Malnutrition is a complex challenge necessitating collective action. Towards this objective, convergent efforts are required for achieving desired outcomes.
- Under the aegis of 'Saksham Anganwadi and Mission Poshan 2.0' of the MWCD, interventions to combat malnutrition are being orchestrated through a multi-sectoral approach in collaboration with key Line Ministries/Departments and with unwavering support and commitment from States/Union Territories.
- Identification of malnourished children and their treatment is an integral aspect of Mission Poshan 2.0.
- Identifying, treating and managing malnourished children at Anganwadi Centres and within communities and understanding when to refer them to Nutritional Rehabilitation Centres (NRC) or for medical help, are decisions highlighting the importance of close collaboration between the Ministry of Women and Child Development and the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare .

National Cyber Security Exercise 'Bharat NCX 2023'

- Principal Scientific Advisor to the Government of India, inaugurated the 'Bharat NCX 2023'
- The 2nd Edition of the National Cyber Security Exercise 2023 'Bharat NCX 2023' will be conducted as a hybrid exercise over a period of twelve days from 09 to 20 October 2023 with the aim to train senior management and technical personnel of Government/Critical Sector organizations and Public and Private agencies on contemporary cyber threats and handling cyber incidents and response.

- The program is being conducted by the National Security Council Secretariat (NSCS), Govt. of India in strategic partnership with Rashtriya Raksha University (RRU).
- This flagship event serves as an unifying platform for over 300 participants, representing a diverse spectrum of government agencies, public organizations, and the private sector, all resolutely committed to the safeguarding of critical information infrastructure through training sessions, Live Fire and Strategic exercises.
- The participants will be trained on various key cyber security areas such as Intrusion Detection Techniques, Malware Information Sharing Platform (MISP), Vulnerability Handling & Penetration Testing, Network Protocols & Data Flows, Digital Forensics, etc.
- Bharat NCX India will help strategic leaders to better understand cyber threats, assess readiness, and develop skills for cyber crisis management and cooperation.
- This will also help develop and test cybersecurity skills, teamwork, planning, communication, critical thinking, and decision-making.

Mera Yuva Bharat



- The Union Cabinet approved the establishment of an autonomous body Mera Yuva Bharat (MY Bharat)
- Mission - to serve as an overarching enabling mechanism powered by technology for youth development and youth-led development and provide equitable access to youth to actualize their aspirations
- The primary objective of Mera Yuva Bharat (MY Bharat) is to make it a whole of Government platform for youth development.
- Under the new arrangement, with access to resources & connection to opportunities, youth would become community change agents and nation builders allowing them to act as the Yuva Setu between the Government and the citizens.
- It seeks to harness the immense youth energy for nation-building.

MY Bharat

- Mera Yuva Bharat (MY Bharat), an autonomous body will benefit the youth in the age-group of 15-29 years, in line with the definition of 'Youth' in the National Youth Policy.
- In case of programme components specifically meant for adolescents, the beneficiaries will be in the age group of 10-19 years.

The establishment of Mera Yuva Bharat (MY Bharat) would lead to:

- (a) Leadership Development in the Youth:
- (b) Better alignment between youth aspirations and community needs.
- (c) Enhanced efficiency through Convergence of existing programmes.
- (d) Act as a one stop shop for young people and Ministries.
- (e) Create a centralized youth data base.
- (f) Improved two-way communication to connect youth government initiatives and activities of other stakeholders that engage with youth.
- (g) Ensuring accessibility by creating a physical ecosystem.

National Youth Policy, 2014

- The National Youth Policy, 2014 (NYP-2014) reiterates the commitment of the entire nation to the all-round development of the youth of India, so that they can realize their full potential and contribute productively to the nation-building process.

Meri Maati Mera Desh

- Recently, a web portal of the Department of Youth Affairs, yuva.gov.in, hosted a nation-wide program called “Meri Maati Mera Desh” in which 50 million young people participated.
- It helped to plant 23 million saplings to create Amrit Vatikas pan-India.

India has assumed the position of Vice Chair in the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA)

- The 23rd Council of Ministers of IORA met in Colombo as Sri Lanka assumed the chairmanship from Bangladesh.
- The Council of Ministers is the highest decision-making body of IORA.
- India has assumed the Vice Chair in the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) for the next two years
- External Affairs Minister Dr. S. Jaishankar (EAM) attended the 23rd Council of Ministers’ (COM) meeting of the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) The meeting was hosted by Sri Lanka, the current IORA Chair.
- It was held under the theme of “Strengthening Regional Architecture: Reinforcing Indian Ocean Identity”.
- Dr. Jaishankar said that India would endeavour to give practical shape to the IORA Outlook for Indo-Pacific (OIP). With India’s initiative, the IORA OIP was adopted in 22nd Council of Ministers held in Dhaka last year.

IORA

- The IORA, an intergovernmental organization established in 1997, comprises 23 member states and 11 dialogue partners hailing from regions surrounding the Indian Ocean.
- From its inception with 14 member states, the membership has expanded to 23 countries: Australia, Bangladesh, the Comoros, France, India, Indonesia, Iran, Kenya, Madagascar, Malaysia, Maldives, Mauritius, Mozambique, Oman, Seychelles, Singapore, Somalia, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Tanzania, Thailand, the United Arab Emirates and Yemen.
- IORA has 10 dialogue partners: China, Egypt, Germany, Italy, Japan, Russia, Turkey, the Republic of Korea, the United Kingdom and the United States of America.
- IORA became an observer to the UN General Assembly and the African Union in 2015.
- The IORA Secretariat is based in Mauritius.

Arctic Puffins



- A hybrid species of Atlantic puffins that formed in the last century was recently discovered by scientists.
- The hybrid group formed when two of three subspecies of Atlantic puffins began mating six generations ago, around 1910

Atlantic Puffin

- It is a species of small seabird in the auk family.
- It's the only puffin species found in the Atlantic Ocean.
- Scientific Name: *Fratercula arctica*
- It is found on rocky coasts in the Northern Atlantic Ocean during the breeding season and on the open ocean in the non-breeding season.
- It is a migratory species, spending most of the time traveling back and forth across the Atlantic Ocean, returning every breeding season to its native breeding areas.
- Sixty percent of the individuals inhabit the coast of Iceland during the breeding season.
- They fly through the air like most birds, but they also “fly” through the water, using their wings as paddles.

Intensified Mission Indradhanush 5.0 (IMI 5.0)



- Intensified Mission Indradhanush (IMI 5.0), the flagship routine immunization campaign of the Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare will conclude all 3 rounds on 14th October 2023.

- IMI 5.0 ensures that routine immunization services reach the missed-out and dropped out children and pregnant women across the country.
- This year, for the first time the campaign is being conducted across all the districts in the country and includes children up to 5 years of age (Previous campaigns included children up to 2 years of age).
- IMI 5.0 campaign aims to enhance immunization coverage for all vaccines provided under the Universal Immunization Programme (UIP) as per the National Immunization Schedule (NIS).
- Special focus is on improvement of Measles and Rubella vaccination coverage with the aim of Measles & Rubella elimination by 2023 and use of U-WIN digital platform for Routine Immunization in pilot mode across all districts in the country.

Universal Immunization Programme (UIP)

- UIP is one of the largest public health programmes targeting close of 2.67 crore newborns and 2.9 crore pregnant women annually.
- It is one of the most cost-effective public health interventions and largely responsible for reduction of vaccine-preventable under-5 mortality rate.

Total of 12 vaccine-preventable diseases are covered against which free immunization is provided :

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1. Diphtheria | 2. Pertussis |
| 3. Tetanus | 4. Polio |
| 5. Measles | 6. Rubella, severe form of Childhood Tuberculosis |
| 7. Hepatitis B | 8. Meningitis |
| 9. Pneumonia caused by Hemophilus Influenza type B | 10. Rotavirus diarrhoea |
| 11. Pneumococcal Pneumonia and | 12. Japanese Encephalitis |

What is the difference between UIP and Mission Indradhanush?

- The Mission Indradhanush aims to cover all those children who are either unvaccinated, or are partially vaccinated against vaccine-preventable diseases.
- India's Universal Immunisation Programme (UIP) provide free vaccines against 12 life-threatening diseases, to 26 million children annually.

Setu Bandhan Scheme

- Centre has approved seven bridge projects worth 118 Crore 50 lakh rupees in Arunachal Pradesh under the Setu Bandhan Scheme.
These projects will enhance connectivity and boost economic growth across all sectors.
- The Setu Bandhan works have been introduced to improve inter-state connectivity, especially on the rural areas at the borders where state roads do not get the required attention.

Mukundra Hills Tiger Reserve

- The forest department started the inaugural jungle safari at the Mukundra Hills Tiger Reserve (MHTR)
- Established in 2013, MHTR encompasses the area of Mukundra Hills National Park, Darrah Sanctuary, Jawahar Sagar Sanctuary, and part of Chambal Sanctuary (from Garadia Mahadev to Jawahar Sagar Dam).
- It was a protected hunting ground of the erstwhile rulers of Kota.
- It is spread across 4 districts– Bundi, Kota, Jhalawar, and Chittorgarh in Rajasthan.
- The park is situated in a valley formed by two parallel mountains, Mukundra and Gargola.
- It is located on the eastern bank of the Chambal River and is drained by its tributaries.

Gaza Strip

- Israel recently ordered a full siege of the Gaza Strip and vowed to obliterate Hamas after its all-out offensive entered the next phase.
- The Gaza Strip is a self-governing Palestinian territory located on the eastern coast of the Mediterranean Sea.
- The territory takes its name from Gaza, its main city.
- It forms the smaller of the two Palestinian territories — the other being the West Bank.
- It is bordered by Israel to the north and east and Egypt to the south.
- It is a 41km (25-mile) long and 10 km wide territory.
- It has a temperate climate, with mild winters, and dry, hot summers.
- It is one of the most densely populated areas in the world. More than 2 million people live in the territory.
- The population is predominantly Palestinian, with the majority being Sunni Muslims.

History of Gaza

- After Israel declared its statehood in 1948, Egypt controlled the Gaza Strip for nearly two decades
- Israel then gained control of the Gaza Strip and the West Bank after its victory in the 1967 Six-Day War against its Arab neighbours.
- For the next 38 years, Israel controlled the strip and enabled the construction of 21 Jewish settlements.
- In 2005, under international and domestic pressure, Israel withdrew around 9,000 Israeli settlers and its military forces from the Gaza Strip, leaving the enclave to be governed by the internationally recognized Palestinian Authority, which also controlled parts of the occupied West Bank.
- Hamas, a Palestinian Islamist organisation, currently governs the Gaza Strip.
- It took control in 2007 after it won elections there the year before. Since then, no elections have been held.
- Hamas, unlike the Palestinian Authority, doesn't recognize Israel's right to exist.
- Israel has maintained a land, air and sea blockade on Gaza since 2007.

Operation Ajay

- India launched Operation Ajay to bring back Indians from Israel as the conflict escalated with Israel retaliating against Hamas's attack
- Israel has declared war against Hamas and set up a war cabinet
- India being a strategic partner of Israel condemned the Hamas attack and PM Modi expressed solidarity with Israel.

Yom Kippur War 1973

- Hamas carried out the biggest attack on Israel in 50 years since the 1973 Yom Kippur War, resulting in over 2,000 casualties on both sides.
- The Yom Kippur War was an armed conflict fought from 6 to 25 October 1973, between Israel and a coalition of Arab states led by Egypt and Syria.
- The majority of combat between the two sides took place in the Sinai Peninsula and the Golan Heights—both of which were occupied by Israel in 1967
- The war began on 6 October 1973, when the Arab coalition jointly launched a surprise attack against Israel on the Jewish holy day of Yom Kippur
- Israel and its Arab neighbors were unable to reach a compromise over the occupied territories.
- With negotiations stalled, Egyptian and Syrian forces attacked Israeli forces on October 6, 1973 in the Sinai and the Golan Heights in an effort to regain territory they had lost during the 1967 war.

Rare Earth Elements (REEs)

- The Union Cabinet approved the amendment of the Second Schedule of the Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act, 1957 ('MMDR Act') for specifying rate of royalty in respect of 3 critical and strategic minerals, namely, Lithium, Niobium and Rare Earth Elements (REEs).
- Recently, the Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Amendment act, 2023 was passed by the Parliament, which has come into force from 17th August, 2023.
- The Amendment, among other things, delisted six minerals, including Lithium and Niobium, from the list of atomic minerals, thereby allowing grant of concessions for these minerals to private sector through auction.
- Further, the amendment provided that mining lease and composite license of 24 critical and strategic minerals including Lithium, Niobium and REEs (not containing Uranium and Thorium), shall be auctioned by the Central Government.
- This approval of the Union Cabinet of specification of rate of royalty will enable the Central Government to auction blocks for Lithium, Niobium and REEs for the first time in the country.
- Royalty rate on minerals is an important financial consideration for the bidders in auction of blocks.

Critical Minerals

- Critical minerals have become essential for economic development and national security in the country.
- Critical minerals such as Lithium and REEs have gained significance in view of India's commitment towards energy transition and achieving net-zero emission by 2070.
- Lithium, Niobium and REEs have also emerged as strategic elements due their usages and geo-political scenario.
- Critical minerals such as copper, lithium, nickel, cobalt and rare earth elements are essential components in many of today's rapidly growing clean energy technologies – from wind turbines and electricity networks to electric vehicles.
- Demand for these minerals is growing quickly as clean energy transitions gather pace.
- The types of mineral resources used vary by technology. Lithium, nickel, cobalt, manganese and graphite are crucial to battery performance.
- Rare earth elements are essential for permanent magnets used in wind turbines and EV motors.
- Electricity networks need a huge amount of aluminium and copper, the latter of which is the cornerstone of all electricity-related technologies.

Super Power Retailer Program

- To empower the retailer community in the states of Odisha and Uttar Pradesh, the National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC), working under the aegis of the Ministry of Skill Development & Entrepreneurship (MSDE), announced a partnership with Coca-Cola India today to launch the Super Power Retailer Program under the Skill India Mission. The program is being piloted in the state of Odisha.
- The launch of the Super Power Retailer will empower retailers and provide them with training to expand their businesses and enhance consumer experiences.
- The initiative will play a pivotal role in strengthening India's economy by skilling, reskilling, and upskilling the retailers

World Health Summit 2023

- The World Health Summit is a unique international strategic forum for global health.
- Held annually in Berlin
- The event takes place in Berlin, Germany, and online from 15–17 October under the theme "A Defining Year for Global Health Action".
- It brings together stakeholders from politics, science, the private sector, and civil society from around the world to set the agenda for a healthier future by inspiring innovative solutions for better health and well-being for all.

- The World Health Summit was founded in 2009 on the occasion of the 300th anniversary of Charité – Universitätsmedizin Berlin.
- It is traditionally held under the patronage of the German Chancellor, the French President, the President of the European Commission, and the Director-General of the World Health Organization (WHO).

India's Participation and Speech Highlights

- India has launched the 75/25 initiative, aimed at screening and providing a standard of care for 75 million individuals with hypertension and diabetes by 2025.
- The Govt of India had launched the National Programme for Prevention and Control of Non-Communicable Diseases (NP-NCD) under the National Health Mission (NHM) in 2010 with the aim of strengthening infrastructure, human resource development, health promotion, early diagnosis, management and referral.
- The Ayushman Bharat initiative is translating the policy intent to budgetary commitment, to meet Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and to achieve Universal Health Coverage (UHC)
- The Union Health Ministry has implemented Population-Based Screening (PBS) under the umbrella of Comprehensive Primary Health Care (CPHC) across Ayushman Bharat- Health and Wellness Centres (AB-HWC).
- The individuals in the age groups of 30 years and above are targeted for risk assessment and screening of common NCDs (hypertension, diabetes, oral cancer, breast cancer and cervical cancer).

Ferry Services between India – Sri Lanka

- India and Sri Lanka launched a ferry service across the Palk Strait under a new roadmap for greater connectivity, nearly four decades after the link between Nagapattinam in Tamil Nadu and Kankesanthurai in Jaffna was disrupted by the civil war in the island nation.
- The ferry service is expected to boost travel and trade with Kankesanthurai, the Sri Lankan port located closest to ports on India's west coast.
- The service, operated by the government-owned Shipping Corporation of India, runs between Nagapattinam in India and Kankesanthurai in Jaffna, northern Sri Lanka.
- The high-speed craft, Cheriyaipani, can carry up to 150 passengers and will make the 60 nautical mile journey in three to four hours
- During the civil war in Sri Lanka, Jaffna was a key stronghold of the former Tamil Tiger rebels. The port at Kankesanthurai was closed by the Sri Lankan Navy after it was targeted by the rebels, and this disrupted the ferry service to India in the 1980s.
- The service is part of the economic partnership vision, a roadmap for maritime, air and energy connectivity that was finalised during Sri Lankan President Ranil Wickremesinghe's visit to India in July.

Palk Strait

- It lies between the Tamil Nadu state of India and the island nation of Sri Lanka.
- It is bounded on the south by Pamban Island (India), Adam's Bridge, the Gulf of Mannar, and Mannar Island (Sri Lanka).
- It connects the Bay of Bengal in the northeast with the Gulf of Mannar in the southwest.
- The southwestern portion of the strait is also called Palk Bay.
- The strait is 40 to 85 miles (64 to 137 km) wide, 85 miles long, and less than 330 feet (100 metres) deep.
- Several rivers flow into it, including the Vaigai River of Tamil Nadu.
- The port of Jaffna, the commercial centre for northern Sri Lanka, lies on the strait.

Adam's Bridge

- Adam's Bridge, also known as Rama's Bridge or Rama Setu, is a chain of limestone shoals, between Pamban Island, also known as Rameswaram Island, off the south-eastern coast of Tamil Nadu, India, and Mannar Island, off the north-western coast of Sri Lanka.

- Geological evidence suggests that this bridge is a former land connection between India and Sri Lanka.
- The bridge is 50 km long and separates the Gulf of Mannar (south-west) from the Palk Strait (northeast).
- Scientists believe Ram Setu is a natural structure formed due to tectonic movements and sand getting trapped in corals.
- The structure has significance in both Hindu and Muslim mythology. While the Hindus believe this is the bridge built by Lord Ram and his army to cross to Lanka and fight Ravan, as per Islamic legend, Adam used this bridge to reach Adam's Peak in Sri Lanka, where he stood on one foot for 1,000 years in repentance.

Exercise Sagar Kavach

- A two-day comprehensive Coastal Security Exercise Sagar Kavach 02/23 involving all maritime security agencies was conducted by the Indian Navy in Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and the UT of Puducherry from 11-12 Oct 2023.
- About 2500 personnel from the Indian Navy, Coast Guard, State and U/T Administration, Marine Police, Fisheries, Customs, Intelligence Agencies, Light Houses, Ports Forest etc were engaged in the exercise.
- The exercise aimed to assess the efficacy and robustness of the coastal security mechanism while dealing with asymmetric threat emanating from the sea.
- Indian Naval Ships along with assets of the Coast Guard and other coastal security agencies were deployed to augment surveillance in the area.
- The exercise was closely monitored at Joint Operations Centre (East) at Visakhapatnam which is the nodal hub for all coastal security operations and exercises in the area of operations.
- The exercise witnessed close coordination and synergy among all coastal security stakeholders. Lessons learnt from the exercise would be incorporated to strengthen the coastal security architecture.

India's Self-declaration of Freedom from Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI)

- In a significant development for India's poultry industry, the World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH) has approved India's self-declaration of freedom from Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) in specific poultry compartments.

Background on Zoning and Compartmentalization

- Zoning and compartmentalization are strategic tools used to establish and maintain groups of animals with specific health statuses for the purposes of international trade and disease prevention or control.
- Compartmentalization involves defining a sub-population of animals with a specified health status within the national territory.
- The maintenance of this status relies on stringent management and husbandry practices that adhere to the standards outlined in the WOAH Terrestrial Code

Avian Influenza in India

- Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI), commonly known as Bird Flu, was first detected in India in the state of Maharashtra in February 2006.
- The disease has been reported in 24 states and union territories, resulting in the culling of over 9 million birds to control its spread.
- India's approach to controlling HPAI follows a "detect and cull" policy as outlined in the National Action Plan for Prevention, Control, and Containment of Avian Influenza (revised - 2021).

Compartmentalization: A Key Control Measure

- Despite these challenges, India has taken a proactive approach to mitigate the risks associated with HPAI by adopting the concept of poultry compartmentalization.

- Compartmentalization is a crucial tool that enhances animal health, reduces the risk of disease outbreaks within and outside the compartment, and facilitates the trade of poultry and poultry-related products.

Approval of Self-Declaration by WOA

- The Department of Animal Husbandry & Dairying, Government of India, has submitted a self-declaration of freedom from High Pathogenicity Avian Influenza in 26 poultry compartments to the World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH).
- On October 13, 2023, the self-declaration was approved by WOA, coinciding with World Egg Day.
- These poultry compartments are located in four states of India, namely Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh, and Chhattisgarh.
- This recognition by WOA signifies India's commitment to international biosecurity standards and will contribute to enhancing the export potential of Indian poultry and poultry products, including meat and eggs.
- India, as the third-largest producer of eggs (129.60 billion) and the fifth-largest producer of poultry meat (4.47 million tonnes) globally, is poised to capitalize on this achievement.

India AI Report

- Seven working groups of Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) submitted the first edition of IndiaAI report today.
- This report is set to serve as India's guiding roadmap for the development of its AI ecosystem.
- IndiaAI has a mission-centric approach which ensures a precise and cohesive strategy to bridge the gaps in existing AI ecosystem viz-a-viz Compute infrastructure, Data, AI financing, Research and Innovation, targeted Skilling and institutional capacity for Data to maximize the potential of AI for advancing India's progress.
- IndiaAI will not only catalyse and support the startup and entrepreneurship ecosystem but also other areas like that of India datasets program and India AI Compute Platform.

India Datasets Platform

- The India AI program will comprise several key components. One crucial component will be that of India Datasets Platform, which will be one of the largest collections of anonymized datasets that will be used by Indian researchers to train their multi parameter models.
- Then there will be the India AI Compute Platform, a public-private partnership project that will create substantial GPU (Graphics processing unit) capacity for our startups and researchers.
- In addition to skilling, India AI will also support the development of AI chips in partnership with the Semicon India program.

141st Session of the International Olympic Committee (IOC)

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the 141st Session of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) in Mumbai.
- The 141st session of the IOC will be held in Mumbai from October 15 to 17.
- During the opening ceremony, he announced that India aspires to host the 2036 Summer

International Olympic Committee (IOC)

- IOC is the authority responsible for organising the modern (Summer, Winter, and Youth) Olympic Games. It is based in Lausanne, Switzerland, the Olympic Capital
- The International Olympic Committee is the guardian of the Olympic Games and the leader of the Olympic Movement.
- It is the governing body of the National Olympic Committee (NOCs).
- In 1892, Pierre de Coubertin of France declared his intention to spearhead a movement to revive the ancient Greek Olympics.

- His efforts led to the establishment of IOC in June 1894 as a not-for-profit independent international organisation.
- An IOC session is the annual meeting of the members of the IOC. It comprises 101 voting members and 45 honorary members.
- India is conducting the IOC session for the first time in 40 years. The country hosted its previous IOC session in New Delhi in 1983.
- The Prime Minister of India announced that India is eager to host the Olympics in the country and it will leave no stone unturned in the preparation for the successful organisation of the Olympics in 2036.
- 2036 is the earliest available slot to host the Summer Olympic Games.
- The next edition will be held in Paris in 2024 followed by Los Angeles in 2028 and Brisbane in 2032.

IOC Session approves proposal for 5 additional sports

- Baseball/softball, cricket, flag football, lacrosse, and squash have been officially included as additional sports on the programme for the Olympic Games Los Angeles 2028.

Jaderi namakatti

- The Jaderi namakatti was given the GI tag by the Geographical Indications Registry in Chennai recently.
- Jaderi namakatti are clay sticks that are white in colour, usually available in finger-like shape with a smooth texture.
- The application seeking tag for this product was filed by Jaderi Tiruman (Namakatti) Producers Society.
- Jaderi is a small village in Tiruvannamalai district. There are around 120 families in Cheyyar taluk whose primary occupation has been making namakatti for more than hundreds of years now.
- Namakatti is made up of the rich deposit of hydrous silicate mineral that form fine grain particles of clay.
- The production of namakatti depends on the climatic condition as it needs a lot of sunlight to dry.
- It is used to adorn the foreheads of idols, men, and temple elephants as well as traditionally to treat stretch marks caused by childbirth.

Geographical Indication

- It is a sign used on products that have a specific geographical origin and possess qualities or a reputation that are due to that origin.
- This is typically used for agricultural products, foodstuffs, wine and spirit drinks, handicrafts and industrial products.
- The Geographical Indications of Goods (Registration and Protection) Act, 1999 seeks to provide for the registration and better protection of geographical indications relating to goods in India.
- This GI tag is valid for 10 years following which it can be renewed.

Methamphetamine

- In a significant joint operation, a team comprising Assam Rifles and the Excise & Narcotics Department successfully seized a staggering 40,400 Methamphetamine tablets valued at a whopping Rs 12.12 crore. The operation took place in the Zote Area of Champhai district, Mizoram.
- Methamphetamine, commonly referred to as “Meth” or “Crystal Meth,” is a potent and highly addictive stimulant.
- The drug is known for its severe health risks and has been a target for law enforcement agencies worldwide due to its harmful effects on individuals and communities.
- The meth trade’s epicentre is South Asia, with Afghanistan emerging as a huge source. Recently, the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) highlighted the surge in meth trafficking in Afghanistan, which was earlier a big source of heroin supply.
- India dubbed its exercise to target maritime trafficking of drugs originating in Afghanistan as Operation Samudragupt. In 2018 it destroyed 4.2 kg of seized meth and by 2022, the number increased to 357 kg.

India's Space Exploration Endeavours



- Prime Minister of India chaired a high-level meeting to assess progress of India's Gaganyaan Mission and to outline the future of India's space exploration endeavours.
- Prime Minister directed that India should now aim for new and ambitious goals, including setting up 'Bharatiya Antariksha Station' (Indian Space Station) by 2035 and sending the first Indian to the Moon by 2040.
- Prime Minister also called upon Indian scientists to work towards interplanetary missions, including a Venus Orbiter Mission and a Mars Lander.

Gaganyaan Mission Overview



- ISRO is going to launch its two uncrewed space flights in 2023 and one crewed space flight in 2024.
- ISRO has created an empty module which will be sent to space to test whether Astronauts can be sent or not and to test the empty spacecraft
- The module has been created which will have 2 parts: the crew module and the service module.
- The test for First Flight Mission 2023 will be conducted at Satish Dhawan Space Center in India and will be brought back safely to Earth.
- The main purpose of launching this spacecraft is to check whether we can send Astronauts to space or not. Now the mission will be launched with the hope of safely landing on Earth after 3 days in the Bay of Bengal.
- As of now only the test will be created and the ultimate Mission will be launched in 2024 where three Astronauts including one female Astronaut will be sent to Space. The Crew module will have the space for the Astronauts and has a proper safety system to splash it in the Indian Ocean.
- The Gaganyaan project envisages a demonstration of ISRO's human spaceflight capability by launching a human crew to an orbit of 400 km and bringing them safely back to Earth.

- The first crewed space mission is going to conduct its test on 21 October 2023 where an empty spacecraft will be sent and its expected landing is within 3 days.
- The module will have its touchdown in the Bay of Bengal and it will be recovered back to Earth.
- The Test Development Vehicle Flight (TV-D1) will be carried at Satish Dhawan Spacecraft Centre in Andhra Pradesh.
- Once the test gets successful, the mission will be accomplished in 2024 where the Astronauts will be sent in this spacecraft.

Global Maritime India Summit 2023



- The Prime Minister of India inaugurated the third edition of Global Maritime India Summit 2023 in Mumbai
- The Prime Minister also unveiled 'Amrit Kaal Vision 2047', a blueprint for the Indian maritime blue economy.
- In line with this futuristic plan, the Prime Minister inaugurated, dedicated to the nation and laid the foundation stone for projects worth more than Rs 23,000 crores that are aligned with the 'Amrit Kaal Vision 2047' for the Indian maritime blue economy.
- The summit provides an excellent platform for attracting investment in the country's maritime sector.

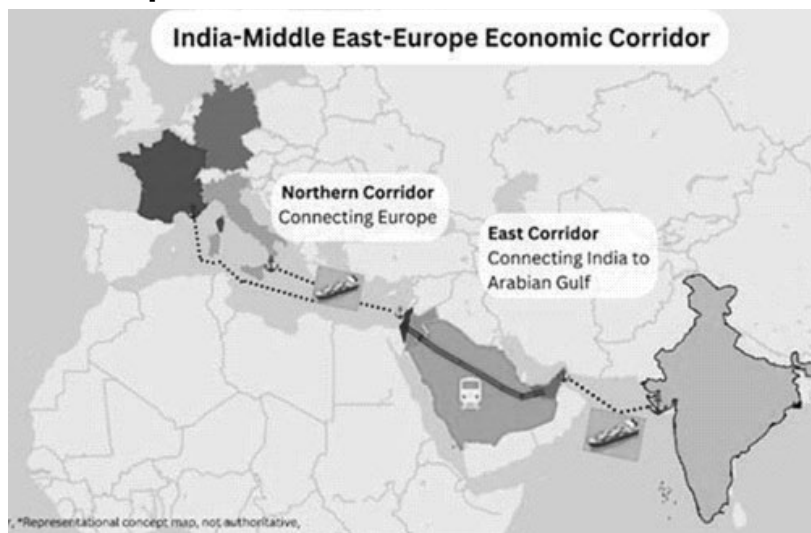
Tuna Tekra

- The Prime Minister laid the foundation stone of Tuna Tekra all-weather deep draft terminal, to be built at a cost of more than Rs 4,500 crores at Deendayal Port Authority in Gujarat.
- This state-of-the-art greenfield terminal will be developed in PPP mode.
- The terminal, which is likely to emerge as an international trade hub, will handle next-gen vessels exceeding 18,000 twenty-foot equivalent units (TEUs) and will act as a gateway for Indian trade via the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEEC).
- The Prime Minister also dedicated more than 300 Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) worth more than 7 lakh crore for global and national partnerships in the maritime sector.

The Summit

- The summit is the biggest Maritime Event in the country and will witness the participation of Ministers from across the globe representing countries from Europe, Africa, South America, and Asia (including central Asia, Middle East and BIMSTEC region).
- The summit is also to be attended by Global CEOs, Business leaders, Investors, Officials, and other stakeholders worldwide.
- The summit provides an excellent platform for attracting investment in the country's maritime sector.
- The first Maritime India summit was held in 2016 in Mumbai while the Second Maritime Summit was held virtually in 2021.

India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor



- Last month, during the G20 Summit, India, the US, UAE, Saudi Arabia, France, Germany, Italy and the European Union signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to establish the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor.
- The India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor will consist of two separate corridors, the East corridor connecting India to West Asia/Middle East and the Northern corridor connecting West Asia/Middle East to Europe.

Pramod Mahajan Grameen Kaushalya Vikas Kendras

- Prime Minister will launch 511 Pramod Mahajan Grameen Kaushalya Vikas Kendras in Maharashtra on 19th October, 2023
- These Kendras are being established across 34 rural districts of Maharashtra.
- The Grameen Kaushalya Vikas Kendras will conduct skill development training programs across various sectors to provide employment opportunities to rural youth.
- Each Kendra will train about 100 youngsters in at least two vocational courses.
- The training is being provided by empanelled industry partners and agencies under National Skill Development Council.
- The establishment of these Kendras will help the region attain significant strides towards developing a more competent and skilled manpower.

National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC)

- It is a not-for-profit public limited company incorporated on July 31, 2008, under section 25 of the Companies Act, 1956 (corresponding to section 8 of the Companies Act, 2013).
- NSDC was set up by the Ministry of Finance as a Public Private Partnership (PPP) model.
- The Government of India through the Ministry of Skill Development & Entrepreneurship (MSDE) holds 49% of the share capital of NSDC, while the private sector has the balance 51% of the share capital.
- NSDC aims to promote skill development by catalyzing creation of large, quality and for-profit vocational institutions.
- Further, the organisation provides funding to build scalable and profitable vocational training initiatives.
- Its mandate is also to enable support system which focuses on quality assurance, information systems and train the trainer academies either directly or through partnerships.
- NSDC acts as a catalyst in skill development by providing funding to enterprises, companies, and organizations that provide skill training.

Robotic Process Automation (RPA)

- Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) inaugurated Robotic Process Automation (RPA) Lab in NIELIT Gorakhpur
- The state-of-the-art RPA lab has been built under the Future Skill PRIME Project funded by MeitY with an objective to upskill/reskill manpower in emerging technology of RPA.
- This is the First-of-its-kind lab in Uttar Pradesh under the FutureSkill PRIME Project, which has been established to bridge the gap between Industry and Academia.

National Institute of Electronics and Information Technology (NIELIT)

- National Institute of Electronics and Information Technology (NIELIT), formerly known as the DOEACC Society, is a society that offers Information Technology and Electronics training at different levels.
- It is an autonomous scientific society under the administrative control of the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology, Government of India.
- NIELIT currently has 47 centers across the country, with its headquarters at New Delhi.[2][3][4]
- DOEACC (Department of Electronics and Accreditation of Computer Courses) Society was founded on 9th November 1994 by MeitY, later it changed to NIELIT on October 10, 2011.

Future Skills Prime

- It is a joint initiative by Nasscom & MeitY, aimed at making India a Digital Talent Nation.
- Future Skills Prime is an innovative and evolutionary ecosystem designed to equip learners with cutting-edge skills essential in today's rapidly evolving digital landscape.
- Its Nasscom certification programs are aligned with National Occupational Standards (NOS) and National Skills Qualification Framework (NSQF), enabling learners to acquire in-demand skills that are highly valued by employers.

Fast Track Special Courts (FTSCs)



- Ensuring the safety & security of women and girl child, the Department of Justice is implementing a Centrally Sponsored Scheme, to set up 1023 Fast Track Special Courts (FTSCs) including 389 exclusive POCSO Courts across the nation for expeditious trials relating to Rape & POCSO Act cases.
- Since October 2019, the Department of Justice is implementing a Centrally Sponsored Scheme, to set up 1023 Fast Track Special Courts (FTSCs) including 389 exclusive POCSO Courts across the nation for expeditious trial relating to sexual offences.

- A new standardised Protocol for Management of Malnutrition in Children (Protocol) was launched by Union Minister of Women and Child Development
- The Protocol for Management of Malnutrition in Children has been jointly prepared by the Ministry of Women and Child Development and the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Govt of India.
- The protocol will be a core component of the efforts by MoWCD to reduce malnutrition through Mission Saksham Anganwadi and Nutrition 2.0.
- The protocol clearly describes the process of assessing and caring for malnourished children through the Anganwadi and medical ecosystem.”
- The key steps, explained in the protocol, include, Growth Monitoring & Screening, Appetite Test for SAM children, Medical Assessment, Decision-making regarding level of care, Nutritional Management, Medical Management, Nutrition, Health Education & counselling including WASH practices, Home Visit by AWW and Referral, Duration of Monitoring and Follow-up Care.

World Sight Day

- World Sight Day observed annually on the second Thursday of October, is a global event meant to draw attention to blindness and vision impairment.
- Objective - to create awareness about Visual impairment among the masses
- This year it falls on 12th October.
- LOVE YOUR EYES AT WORK is the theme of this year.
- This World Sight Day, our focus is on helping people understand the importance of protecting their vision in the workplace and calling on business leaders to prioritise the eye health of workers, everywhere.
- The Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (DEPwD) under the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, Government of India is the nodal department to look after all the development agenda of Persons with Disabilities of the country.

Changes notified in Production Linked Incentive Scheme for White Goods

- The government tightened its oversight over the selected applicants under the Production Linked Incentive for white goods by coming out with a revised formula for calculating the value of production for captive use, sales to group companies and related parties.

White Goods

- White goods are large home appliances such as stoves, refrigerators, freezers, washing machines, tumble driers, dishwashers, and air conditioners.
- They are large consumer durables for the house which were traditionally available only in white.
- Even though you can purchase them today in a wide range of different colors, they continue being called white goods.
- White goods are known for their durability and longevity, as they are designed to withstand the demands of daily use.
- The term may also refer to white fabrics, especially linen or cotton – articles such as curtains, towels, or sheets that historically used to be made of white cloth.
- In the beverage industry, white goods are colorless spirits, such as vodka or gin.

Brown Goods

- They are relatively light electronic consumer durables such as computers, digital media players, TVs and radios.
- Unlike large household appliances (white goods), brown goods are more focused on entertainment, communication, and convenience.
- These devices often have electronic components, and their primary function is to provide audio, video, or data-related services.

A-HELP Programme

- The Department of Animal Husbandry and Dairying, Government of India launched the 'A-HELP' (Accredited Agent for Health and Extension of Livestock Production) programme in the State of Jharkhand
- A-HELP (Accredited Agent for Health and Extension of Livestock Production) and has already initiated across different States/UTs including Bihar, Gujarat, Jammu and Kashmir, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Uttarakhand, and Jharkhand.
- The Department of Animal Husbandry and Dairying (DAHD) has launched the novel initiative through an MoU signed between DAHD and the National Rural Livelihoods Mission (NRLM) under the Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD), Govt. of India.
- A-HELP will act as a "Livestock Resource Person" for the designated area/village.
- The selected person will serve as a last-mile extension worker providing 24x7 services at the doorstep of farmers.
- She will sensitise livestock owners on ear-tagging, registration on the Information Network for Animal Productivity & Health (INAPH), scientific health management of livestock, basic sanitation and hygienic practices.
- Department of Animal Husbandry and Dairying came up with a new band of community-based functionaries; named A-HELP to fill this void by utilising the existing cadre of Pashu Sakhis under DAY-NRLM, which is a cadre of community animal care providers.
- The A-HELP training was undertaken using a "consortium" approach with DAHD, NRLM, and NDDDB on board to have a complete approach towards livestock health, welfare, and women's empowerment to make it a sustainable model.

India's Defence Exports

- As the Make in India initiative expands, India's defence exports have skyrocketed to an all-time high, touching nearly the ₹16,000 cr mark in FY 2022-23.
- India had managed to successfully expand its exports with sale of major defence systems including the BrahMos supersonic cruise missiles, Akash air defence systems and artillery guns to a friendly country.
- India is also gearing up to manufacture BrahMos missiles in Uttar Pradesh's Lucknow from March next year (Uttar Pradesh Defence Industrial Corridor)

Heartland Tripura

- Heartland Tripura - a skill development initiative in collaboration with Deloitte and the National Institute of Electronics and Information Technology (NIELIT) in Agartala launched.
- The project will aim to provide skill development and employment opportunities to undergraduate students in engineering and non-engineering disciplines.
- "Heartland Tripura" is being implemented by Deloitte in association with NIELIT, Agartala, with the support of the Government of India and the Government of Tripura.
- The "Heartland Tripura" project will deliver a specific set of skill development certification courses through NIELIT-Agartala for the state.
- Select professionals will also have the opportunity to be selected in internships, which could lead to promising job prospects after they successfully complete the certification and internship requirements.
- The certification courses offered under "Heartland Tripura" will cover a wide range of new-age technical and professional development skills, such as cybersecurity, internal audit, and analytics, as well as softer skills such as business communication and executive presence.

Kati Bihu

- The Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi extended best wishes on the auspicious occasion of KatiBihu to the people of Assam.

- The festival of Kati Bihu is also known as Kongali Bihu and kongali means poor.
- Kati means to cut and this day marks the time of relocation of rice saplings.
- It is a unique festival observed in India's North-Eastern state of Assam. It usually falls in the middle of October
- There are another two Bihu festivals celebrated in Assam - Bhogali or Magh Bihu is observed in January and Rongali or Bohag Bihu is observed in the month of April.
- This year, Kati Bihu is being celebrated today i.e., on October 18, 2023.
- There are total three Bihu festival that are connected with each other and they all have one similarity that these are connected with agriculture.
- Kati Bihu is celebrated during the time of relocation of the rice sapling which is observed with great enthusiasm and fervor.

Kati Bihu Timeline

- 1228 - Tai prince, Sukhapaa establishes the Ahom kingdom in the Brahmaputra Valley of India.
- 1401 - The Ahom Kingdom's name changes from Mong Dun Shun Kham to Assamese — later Assam.
- 1500 - The Vaishnava Movement — led by Srimanta Sankardeva — builds a united culture for the state and lays the foundation for the official Assamese language.
- 2016 - The Government of Assam declares a state-wide public holiday on Kati Bihu.

India's first Regional Rapid Transit System (RRTS)

- Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi will inaugurate the priority section of the Delhi-Ghaziabad-Meerut RRTS Corridor at Sahibabad RapidX Station

Delhi-Ghaziabad-Meerut RRTS Corridor

- The 17 Km priority section of Delhi-Ghaziabad-Meerut RRTS Corridor that will be inaugurated, will connect Sahibabad to 'Duhai Depot' with stations at Ghaziabad, Guldhar and Duhai on the way.
- The foundation stone for Delhi-Ghaziabad-Meerut corridor was laid by the Prime Minister on 8th March 2019.

Regional Rapid Transit System (RRTS) project

- RRTS is a new rail-based, semi-high-speed, high-frequency commuter transit system.
- With a design speed of 180 Km/h, RRTS is a transformational, regional development initiative, which is designed to provide high-speed trains for intercity commuting every 15 minutes, which can go up to a frequency of every 5 minutes as per requirement.
- A total of eight RRTS corridors have been identified to be developed in NCR, out of which three corridors have been prioritised to be implemented in Phase-I including Delhi – Ghaziabad – Meerut Corridor; Delhi – Gurugram – SNB – Alwar Corridor; and Delhi – Panipat Corridor.
- The Delhi-Ghaziabad-Meerut RRTS being developed at a cost of more than Rs 30,000 crore, and will connect Delhi to Meerut in less than an hour of travel time going through the urban centres of Ghaziabad, Muradnagar, and Modinagar.

Green Energy Corridor (GEC) Phase-II

- The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs approved the project on Green Energy Corridor (GEC) Phase-II – Inter-State Transmission System (ISTS) for 13 GW Renewable Energy Project in Ladakh.
- The project is targeted to be set up by FY 2029-30
- Power Grid Corporation of India Limited (POWERGRID) will be the Implementing Agency for this project.
- The project will contribute to achieving the target of 500 GW of installed electricity capacity from non-fossil fuels by year 2030.

- The project will also help in developing long term energy security of the country and promote ecologically sustainable growth by reducing carbon footprint.

Background

- The Prime Minister, during his Independence Day Speech on 15.08.2020, announced the setting up of 7.5 GW Solar Park in Ladakh.
- To evacuate this huge quantum of power, it will be necessary to create an inter-state transmission infrastructure.

Green Energy Corridor Project

- The Green Energy Corridor Project aims at synchronizing electricity produced from renewable sources, such as solar and wind, with conventional power stations in the grid
- It aims to achieve the target of 450 GW installed RE capacity by 2030.
- The objective of the GEC is to evacuate approx. 20,000 MW of large-scale renewable power and improvement of the grid in implementing states.
- In the year 2012, a study was conducted by Power Grid Corporation of India Limited (PGCIL) wherein it was found that power evacuation and transmission infrastructure in near vicinities of potential sites was less and therefore, dedicated transmission infrastructure for large scale solar and wind power plants was planned.
- The Green Energy Corridor (GEC) report was submitted by PGCIL in September 2012. Based on PGCIL's report, the states prepared their own transmission plans & submitted to Central Electricity Authority (CEA) for appraisal. The implementation work started in 2015, after due approval process.

There are two schemes under the Green Energy Corridors :

Intra-State GEC Phase-I

- Phase 1 of the Green Energy Corridor is already under implementation in Gujarat, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Himachal Pradesh, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, and Rajasthan.
- It is working for the grid integration and power evacuation of about 24GW of Renewable Energy.

Intra-State GEC Phase-II

- It will facilitate grid integration and power evacuation of approximately 20 GW of Renewable Energy (RE) power projects in seven States namely, Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu and Uttar Pradesh.

Yuva Sangam

- The registration portal for Phase III of Yuva Sangam, under Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat (EBSB), was launched recently.
- Yuva Sangam is an initiative by the Government of India to strengthen people-to-people connect between youth belonging to different States/UTs of India.
- Interested youth in the age group of 18-30 years, mainly students, NSS/ NYKS volunteers, employed/self-employed persons, etc. may register through the YUVA SANGAM portal to participate in the forthcoming Phase.
- The idea of a sustained and structured cultural connect between people of different regions was mooted by Prime Minister during the Rashtriya Ekta Divas held on 31st October 2015 to commemorate the birth anniversary of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel. To take this idea forward, EBSB was launched on 31st October 2016.
- Yuva Sangam, launched under EBSB, draws inspiration from the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 and focuses on experiential learning and imbibing knowledge of the rich diversity of India on a first-hand basis.
- Yuva Sangam is a Government of India initiative that focuses on organizing exposure tours for the youth, including on-campus and off-campus students, from one state to another.
- Multi-dimensional exposure under five broad areas will be provided to them, which are Paryatan (Tourism), Parampara (Traditions), Pragati (Development), Paraspar Sampark (People-to-people connect), and Prodyogiki (Technology).

- Youths across various states will visit other states for 5-7 days during which they will get an immersive experience of various facets of the state they are visiting and interact with the local youth.
- The participating ministries of EBSB include M/o Education, Home Affairs, Culture, Tourism, Youth Affairs & Sports, I&B, and Railways, having distinct roles and responsibilities for the implementation of their respective duties.
- The Ministry of Education is responsible for the selection of youth and conducting tours through Higher Education Institutes.
- Yuva Sangam has been organized collaboratively on the model of Kashi Tamil Sangamam (KTS) and has garnered immense response and participation from all corners of India.

MEITY signs MoU with IBM on Quantum, AI & Semiconductor

- IBM announced the signing of three Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) with three entities engaged with the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) to advance and accelerate innovation in AI, Semiconductor, and quantum technology for India.
- This body of work will aim to accelerate India's comprehensive national strategy for AI, strengthen efforts to be self-reliant in Semiconductors, and advance its National Quantum Mission.

The Activities are Intended to focus on the following:

- IBM and IndiaAI – Digital India Corporation intend to collaborate to establish a world-class national AI Innovation Platform (AIIP) for India that will focus on AI skilling, ecosystem development, and integrating advanced foundation models and generative AI capabilities to support India's scientific, commercial, and human-capital development in this technology.
- IBM would be a knowledge partner of India Semiconductor Mission (ISM) for a semiconductor research center.
- IBM and Centre for Development of Advanced Computing (C-DAC) will also explore opportunities for working together to support the advancement of India's National Quantum Mission by building competency in quantum computing technology, applications in areas of national interest, and a skilled quantum workforce.

National Quantum Mission

- The Centre has launched the National Quantum Mission with a budget of Rs 6,003 crore
- The mission will aim to seed, nurture and scale up scientific and industrial resource and development programmes, and create a vibrant and innovative ecosystem for quantum technology.
- The timeline of the mission is 2023-24 to 2030-31, he added.
- Quantum technology can also find applications in medicine, the healthcare sector, pharmaceuticals, security, employment generation and navigation.
- Six ministries — Department of Space, Department of Atomic Energy, Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology, Information, Department of Telecommunication, and Department of Science and Technology — will be involved in this mission.
- Quantum technology uses the laws of quantum mechanics. Unlike classical computers that use zeroes and ones (bits and bytes), quantum technology is atom-based. It uses quantum bits (qubits), which can be in a combination of zero and one simultaneously.
- Quantum technology makes information processing faster, more authentic, more precise, more secure

Tribal Youth Exchange Program (TYEP)

- The Ministry of Home Affairs has been running the Tribal Youth Exchange Programme (TYEP) for the last 15 years.
- The programme is being run through Nehru Yuva Kendra Sangathan (NYKS) under the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports.
- Under this programme, young men and women of the tribal community from the interior areas most affected by Left Wing Extremism are taken on a tour to major cities and metros across the country.

The main objectives of this programme are :

- a. Promoting the aspirations of the youth in areas affected by Left Wing Extremism.
- b. Countering the propaganda against the government being spread by CPI Maoists.
- c. Informing the youth of tribal areas about the development activities and industrial progress and to sensitize them about the rich cultural heritage of India.
- d. Deepening the confidence in democratic system in these areas.
- e. Spreading awareness about major development and welfare schemes among the youth of the tribal community.
- f. Developing an emotional bonding between youth belonging to the tribal community and their peer groups in other parts of the country.

6th Assembly of International Solar Alliance

- The Sixth Assembly of the International Solar Alliance is being held in New Delhi from October 30 - November 2023.
- The Assembly will be presided over by the President, ISA Assembly and Union Minister for Power and New & Renewable Energy, Government of India, Shri R.K. Singh.
- Ministers, missions and delegates from 116 Member and Signatory Countries of the ISA will participate, along with delegates from prospective countries, partner organizations, private sector and other stakeholders.
- The ISA was launched jointly by India and France after COP21 in Paris.

The Sixth Assembly of the ISA will deliberate on ISA initiatives that impact energy access, energy security and energy transitions, with a focus on:

- Universalisation of energy access through solar mini-grids
- Mobilising Finance for accelerated solar deployment
- Diversifying supply chains and manufacturing for solar

STAR-C Initiative

- ISA is also facilitating the availability of trained human resources through STAR-C initiative.
- STAR-C initiative aims to boost solar power ecosystems in the poorest countries.
- The initiative is run by the International Solar Alliance in partnership with the United Nations Industrial Development Organisation (UNIDO).
- The Virtual Green Hydrogen Innovation Centre was launched steered by ISA has been launched at the Energy Transitions Ministerial Meeting in July under India's G20 Presidency.

ISA will also be releasing three flagship reports providing updates on Solar Technology, Solar Market, and Solar Investments.

- **World Solar Technology Report 2023** focuses on solar photovoltaics (solar PV), highlighting the remarkable advancements in crystalline silicon technology.
- **World Solar Market Report 2023** offers a comprehensive analysis of the evolution of the solar market, from its European origins to its current leadership in the Asia-Pacific region
- **World Solar Investment Report 2023** highlights the surge in global solar investments in 2022, exceeding \$300 billion (a 36% increase from 2021).

ISA Assembly

- The ISA Assembly is the apex decision-making body of ISA, in which each Member Country is represented.
- This body makes decisions concerning the implementation of the ISA's Framework Agreement and coordinated actions to be taken to achieve its objectives.
- The Assembly meets annually at the ministerial level at the ISA's seat.
- It assesses the aggregate effect of the programmes and other activities in terms of deployment of solar energy, performance, reliability, cost and scale of finance.

- 109 countries are signatories to the ISA Framework Agreement, of which 90 countries have submitted the necessary instruments of ratification to become full members of the ISA.
- The Republic of India holds the office of the President of the ISA Assembly, with the Government of the French Republic as the co-president.

International Solar Alliance

- The International Solar Alliance is an international organisation with 109 member countries.
- It works with governments to improve energy access and security worldwide and promote solar power as a sustainable way to transition to a carbon-neutral future.
- ISA's mission is to unlock US\$ 1 trillion of investments in solar by 2030 while reducing the cost of the technology and its financing.
- It promotes the use of solar energy in the Agriculture, Health, Transport and Power Generation sectors.
- ISA member countries are driving change by enacting policies and regulations, sharing best practices, agreeing on common standards, and mobilising investments.
- Through this work, ISA has identified, designed and tested new business models for solar projects; supported governments to make their energy legislation and policies solar-friendly through Ease of Doing Solar analytics and advisory; pooled demand for solar technology from different countries, and drove down costs; improved access to finance by reducing the risks and making the sector more attractive to private investment
- ISA was formed at the 21st Conference of Parties (COP21) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) held in Paris in 2015 and is partnering with multilateral development banks (MDBs), development financial institutions (DFIs), private and public sector organisations, civil society, and other international institutions to deploy cost-effective and transformational energy solutions powered by the sun, especially in the least Developed Countries (LDCs) and the Small Island Developing States (SIDS).

Operation Nanhe Faristey and Other operations of Indian Railways

- Railway Protection Force (RPF) is entrusted with the responsibility of security of railway property, passenger areas and passengers.

A brief of the achievements of RPF during the month of September 2023 is as under –

- **Rescue of children & Operation Nanhe Faristey:-** RPF plays an important role in reuniting the children lost/separated due to several reasons from their family. In this regard, operation 'Nanhe Faristey' was launched on Indian Railways and under this drive, more than 895 Children (Boys-573 & Girl-322) in need of care & protection who came in contact with Indian Railways in the month of September-2023 were rescued and handed over to concerned authorities before being restored to their families.
- **Human Trafficking & Operation AAHT-** In order to have an effective counter to evil plans of Human traffickers, Anti Human Trafficking Units of RPF are operational at the Post level (Thana level) over the Indian Railways. These AHTUs are in regular touch with agencies and NGOs involved in preventing human trafficking and have assisted them in rescue of children being trafficked.
- **Operation "Jeevan Raksha":** - Due to alertness and swift action by RPF, lives of 265 passengers were saved by Team RPF, who had come close to getting run over by trains, at platforms and railway tracks in the month of September 2023 under operation 'Jeevan Raksha'.
- **Women Security :-** Safety and security of women passengers has been an important concern of Indian Railways. In this regard, an initiative "Meri Saheli" has been launched to provide security to lady passengers in long-distance trains, particularly those travelling alone or those who are vulnerable to crime.
- **Action against touts & Operation "Uplabdh" :-** In this regard during the month of September 2023, 405 nos. of the touts were arrested and legal action was taken against them as per law and future tickets valued Rs. 36.43 lacs were seized.

- **Operation “NARCOS”** :- During the month of September 2023, 70 persons have been arrested along with seizure of NDPS valued at Rs.2.65 Crores and the arrested criminals were handed over to empowered agencies for further legal action.
- **Emergency Response & Operation ‘Yatri Suraksha’** - In order to redress security related complaints of passengers in distress and for immediate assistance, passengers can make complaint on Rail Madad Portal or through helpline No. 139 (integrated with Emergency Response Support System No. 112).

Cyclone Tej

- The IMD outlined that a low-pressure area is likely to develop over the southeast and adjoining east-central Arabian Sea in the next 48 hours.
- October to December is among the favorable periods for the development of cyclones in the Bay of Bengal and the Arabian Sea due to warmer ocean temperatures.
- If a tropical storm is formed in the Indian seas, it will be called “Tej”, according to a formula followed for naming cyclones in the Indian Ocean region. (name submitted by India)
- At present, the probability of the system intensifying into a cyclonic storm is not notably high.
- In 2022, no tropical storm was formed over the Arabian Sea during the post-monsoon season, while the Bay of Bengal witnessed two tropical storms -- Sitrang and Mandous.
- Cyclones in the Arabian Sea have a history of uncertain tracks and timelines
- Once the cyclones are over the central parts of the Arabian Sea, their preferred track is towards Somalia, the Gulf of Aden, Yemen, and Oman.

Global Hunger Index 2023

- India ranked 111th out of 125 countries, indicating a serious level of hunger.
- India's GHI score 2023 stands at 28.7, categorized as “serious” on the GHI Severity of Hunger Scale.
- Neighboring countries, such as Pakistan (102nd), Bangladesh (81st), Nepal (69th), and Sri Lanka (60th), scored better than India.
- Belarus, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Chile, China are among the top ranked countries (i.e., low level of hunger) and Yemen, Madagascar, Central African Republic are the bottom

Global Hunger Index

- The Global Hunger Index (GHI) is a peer-reviewed report, published on an annual basis by Concern Worldwide and Welthungerhilfe (Concern Worldwide is an international humanitarian organization dedicated to tackling poverty and suffering in the world's poorest countries and Welthungerhilfe is a private aid organization in Germany. It was established in 1962, as the German section of the “Freedom from Hunger Campaign”)
- The GHI is a tool designed to comprehensively measure and track hunger at global, regional, and national levels, reflecting multiple dimensions of hunger over time.
- The GHI score is calculated on a 100-point scale reflecting the severity of hunger - 0 is the best score (implies no hunger) and 100 is the worst.

Each country's GHI score is calculated based on a formula that combines four indicators that together capture the multidimensional nature of hunger:

- **Undernourishment** : The share of the population whose caloric intake is insufficient;
- **Child Stunting** : The share of children under the age of five who have low height for their age, reflecting chronic undernutrition;
- **Child Wasting** : The share of children under the age of five who have low weight for their height, reflecting acute undernutrition; and
- **Child Mortality** : The share of children who die before their fifth birthday, reflecting in part the fatal mix of inadequate nutrition and unhealthy environments.

India's Response to GHI Report 2023

- The Ministry of Women and Child Development has raised concerns about the report's methodology, suggesting "serious methodological issues" and "malafide intent."

Reference Fuels

- Minister of Petroleum & Natural Gas launched 'Reference Gasoline and Diesel Fuels' produced by IndianOil for the first time in India.
- Reference Fuels' are of superior quality and are crucial for gasoline and diesel vehicle manufacturers.
- These are used extensively for engine development, performance assessment, and ensuring operability across global climatic conditions.
- Indian Oil has successfully commenced the production of Reference Gasoline and Diesel Fuels for the first time in India.
- These fuels are used for calibration and testing of vehicle by Automobile manufacturers and testing agencies like ICAT (International Centre for Automotive Technology) and ARAI (Automotive Research Association of India).
- Reference fuels (Gasoline and Diesel) are premium high-value products, used for calibration and testing of vehicles by Auto OEMs and organizations involved in testing and certification in the automotive field.
- Specification requirements of Reference Fuels are more stringent than commercial gasoline and diesel.
- The demand for Reference Fuels in India is currently met by importing from other countries.
- IOC's Paradip refinery in Odisha will produce 'reference' grade petrol and its Panipat unit in Haryana will produce such quality diesel.

Octane Number

- Fuel retailers like IOC sell petrol and diesel of primarily two kinds - regular and premium, through their fuel station network. The biggest difference between the normal and premium fuel lies in the octane number.
- The regular fuel has an octane number of 87, but premium fuel has an octane number of 91. Reference grade fuel comes with a 97-octane number.
- The octane number is nothing but a unit to measure the ignition quality of petrol or diesel.
- For vehicle testing purposes, the fuel has to be of a higher grade than regular or premium petrol and diesel.
- The host of specifications -from Cetane number to flash point, viscosity, sulphur and water content, hydrogen purity, and acid number-are listed under government regulations, such fuels are referred to as 'reference' petrol/diesel.
- These reference fuels are used for emission testing of vehicles equipped with spark ignition engines.

Dark Patterns Buster Hackathon 2023

- The Department of Consumer Affairs, Government of India in collaboration with IIT (BHU), launched Dark Patterns Buster Hackathon 2023
- The objective of the initiative is to provide protection to consumers from all types of unfair trade practices.

Few of the comments/suggestions being considered for inclusion in the revised guidelines are provided below:

- **"Trick Question"** is a dark pattern, which means the deliberate use of confusing or vague language; in order to misguide or misdirect a user.
- **"Saas Billing"** is a process of generating and collecting payments from consumers on a recurring basis in a software as a service (SaaS) business model by exploiting positive acquisition loops in recurring subscriptions to get money from users.
- **"Rogue Malwares"** is a dark pattern using a ransomware or scareware to mislead/trick user into believing there is a virus on their computer and aims to convince them to pay for a fake malware removal tool that actually installs malware on their computer.
- **Forced action** shall mean forcing a user into taking an action that would require the user to buy any additional good(s) or subscribe or sign up for an unrelated service *or share personal information*, in order to buy or subscribe to the product/service originally intended by the user.

- “**Confirm shaming**” means using a phrase, video, audio or any other means to create a sense of fear or shame or ridicule or guilt in the mind of the user, so as to nudge the user to act in a certain way that results in the user purchasing a product or service from the platform or continuing a subscription of a service, where, primarily, the purpose of the platform is to make commercial gains by subverting consumer choice.
- “**Nagging**” shall mean a dark pattern due to which a user is worn down by repeated and persistent interactions, in the form of requests, information, options, or interruptions, to effectuate a transaction and make some commercial gains, unless specifically permitted by the user.’

Chanakya Defence Dialogue 2023

- The event, ‘Chanakya Defence Dialogue 2023’ is being organised by the Indian Army in partnership with Centre for Land Warfare Studies (CLAWS).
- The first edition of Chanakya Defence Dialogue will be held on 3rd & 4th November 2023 in Manekshaw Centre, New Delhi.
- This is the first event of its kind being organised by the Indian Army.
- This Dialogue will carry out a comprehensive analysis of security challenges in South Asia and the Indo-Pacific.
- It will focus on crafting a roadmap for collaborative security measures in the region to fortify India’s position as a ready, resurgent, and relevant stakeholder among the nations of this region.

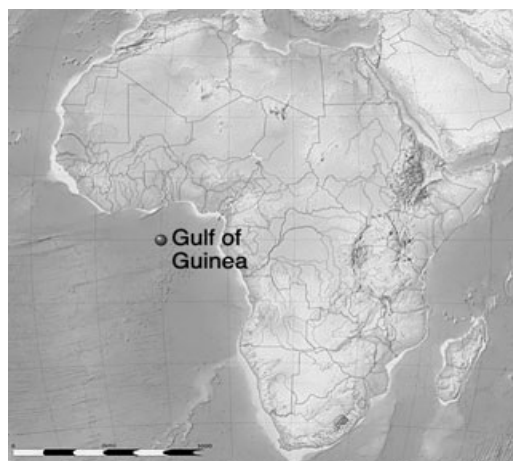
Centre for Land Warfare Studies (CLAWS)

- It is an autonomous think tank on strategic studies and land warfare.
- The mandate of CLAWS covers national security issues, conventional military operations and sub-conventional warfare.
- CLAWS is registered under the Societies Registration Act, 1860 and is a membership-based organisation.
- It is governed by a Board of Governors and an Executive Council.
- Research at CLAWS is futuristic in outlook and policy-oriented in approach.
- The objective of the organization is to convey policy recommendations based on interactions, consensus and research projects to policymakers and experts.

Gulf Of Guinea

- India and EU ships conducted joint activities in the Gulf of Guinea, in an effort to reinforce naval maritime security cooperation in support of the region.
- European Union (EU) and India conducted their first joint naval exercise in the Gulf of Guinea.
- The exercise followed the third meeting of the EU-India Maritime Security Dialogue

Gulf of Guinea – Map Location



- The Gulf of Guinea is the northeasternmost part of the tropical Atlantic Ocean from Cape Lopez in Gabon, north and west to Cape Palmas in Liberia
- Null Island, defined as the intersection of the Equator and Prime Meridian (zero degrees latitude and longitude), is in the gulf.

Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana (PMMVY)

- The National Event on Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana (PMMVY) held at Yashwantrao Chavan Centre, Mumbai, Maharashtra
- The primary objective of Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana (PMMVY) launched on 1st January 2017 and revised and incorporated as a component of Mission Shakti from 1st April 2022, as PMMVY 2.0 is to provide cash incentive for partial compensation of the wage loss during pregnancy so that women can take adequate rest before and after delivery of the child; and to improve health seeking behaviour amongst the Pregnant Women & Lactating Mothers (PW&LM).
- PMMVY 2.0 is its commitment to promote a more positive societal attitude towards the girl child by offering incentives for the birth of girl child.
- For women coming from socially and economically disadvantaged backgrounds, the PMMVY provides a maternity benefit of Rs. 5,000/- distributed in two instalments.
- The scheme's benefits have now been extended to include support for a second child, provided that the second child is a girl.
- In this revised framework, mothers are eligible to receive an incentive amount of ₹6,000 in a single installment following the birth of the second girl child.

Science & Technology Clusters

- Principal Scientific Adviser to the Government of India Professor Ajay Kumar Sood Chaired the first joint Science and Technology (S&T) Clusters' Meet held on October 26-27, 2023 in Jodhpur, Rajasthan.
- The meeting was organised by the Jodhpur City Knowledge and Innovation Foundation (JCKIF) and hosted by the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Jodhpur.
- Launched in 2020, the *City S&T Clusters* is a flagship initiative of the Office of the Principal Scientific Adviser to the Government of India, established on the recommendation of the Prime Minister's Science, Technology, and Innovation Advisory Council (PM-STIAC).
- This initiative aims to tackle local challenges through S&T interventions by bringing together academia, R&D institutions, industries, startups and local governments.
- Currently, there are seven S&T clusters operating in Bengaluru, Bhubaneswar, Delhi, Hyderabad, Jodhpur, Pune, and the recently established Northern Region Cluster in Chandigarh, all working together to find solutions to regional issues through collaborative efforts.

Meri Mati-Mera Desh' Campaign

- Meri Maati Mera Desh campaign is a tribute to the Veers and Veeranganas who have made the supreme sacrifice for the country.

Activities and ceremonies under the campaign

- Building of Shilaphalakam (Memorial) to express heartfelt gratitude to all the bravehearts who have made the supreme sacrifice
- Panch Pran pledge taking by the people at Shilaphalakam
- Planting of saplings of indigenous species and developing 'Amrit Vatika' (Vasudha Vandhan)
- 'Meri Maati Mera Desh' campaign also includes the Amrit Kalash Yatra, which comprises collection of mitti and rice grains from over 6 lakh villages in rural areas and from wards in urban areas, which is sent to block level (where mitti of all villages in the block is mixed) and then to the state capital.

- The mitti from state level will be sent to the National Capital, accompanied by thousands of Amrit Kalash Yatris.
- On 30th October 2023, the Amrit Kalash Yatra will witness all the states and UTs represented by their respective blocks and Urban Local bodies putting mitti from their Kalash in one giant Amrit Kalash in the spirit of 'Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat'.
- Under this yatra, the soil of the birthplace of immortal martyrs is being taken in Amrit Kalash to the National Martyrs Memorial in Delhi.
- Amrit Kalash Yatra' carrying soil in 7500 urns from every corner of the country reached Delhi
- On 31st October, Prime Minister will address thousands of Amrit Kalash Yatris joining the programme from across the country.
- The Amrit Vatika and Amrit Mahotsav Memorial, whose foundation stone will be laid by the Prime Minister, will be built from the soil collected from every part of the country.
- Meri Maati Mera Desh campaign was envisaged as a culminating event of 'Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav'. Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav began on 12th March 2021 to celebrate the 75 years of India's independence.

MY Bharat

- 'Mera Yuva Bharat (MY Bharat) is being established as an autonomous body to serve as a one stop whole-of-government platform for youth of the country.
- In line with the Prime Minister's vision to provide equitable opportunities to every youth of the country, MY Bharat will leverage technology to provide an enabling mechanism across the entire spectrum of the Government so that they can realise their aspirations and contribute in building of 'Viksit Bharat'.
- The aim of MY Bharat is to inspire youth to become community change agents and nation builders, and enable them to act as the 'Yuva Setu' between the Government and the citizens.

Amrit Sarovars

- Mission Amrit Sarovar has been launched on 24th April 2022 with an objective to harvest and conserve water for future generation. The salient features of the Mission Amrit Sarovar is as follows-
- Mission Amrit Sarovar is based on "Whole of Government" approach with the participation from the Ministry of Rural Development, Ministry of Jal Shakti, Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Panchayati Raj, Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change and technical organizations.
- Under the Mission every district of the country will construct or rejuvenate at least 75 Amrit Sarovars.
- Every Amrit Sarovar will have a pondage area of at least 1 acre with a water holding capacity of about 10,000 cubic metre.
- Every Amrit Sarovar will be surrounded by trees like Neem, Peepal and Banyan etc.
- Every Amrit Sarovar will be a source of generation of livelihoods by using the water for different purposes like irrigation, fisheries, duckery, cultivation of water chestnut, water tourism and other activities.
- The Amrit Sarovar will also act as a social gathering point in that locality.

National Unity Day

- National Unity Day is celebrated in India on 31 October. It was introduced by the Government of India in 2014.
- The day is celebrated to mark the birth anniversary of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel who had a major role in the political integration of India.
- Vallabhbhai Patel was dubbed "Sardar" (chief) for his leadership skills in leading the country through the struggle for independence and beyond, and most notably during the integration of the princely states and the India-Pakistan War of 1947.
- Sardar Patel achieved the incredible feat of persuading almost every single one of the 565 self-governing princely states that had been released from British suzerainty, to accede to the Union of India. For his commitment to the national integration of the newly independent country, Sardar Patel earned the sobriquet "Iron Man of India".

World Occupational Therapy Day

- The Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (DEPwD) under the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment observed the World Occupational Therapy Day
- Every year on October 27th, World Occupational Therapy Day is observed and promotes the mission and goals of occupational therapy.
- The day also increases awareness of occupational therapists and their global impact.
- “Unity through Community” is the theme of this year which promotes our role in working together with others to facilitate participation and community interaction.
- Occupational therapists provide treatment to injured or disabled patients.
- They also work with children who have special needs or need help in acquiring certain skills.
- Occupational therapists make recommendations on types of equipment and home modifications necessary for seniors or those with disabilities

Hostile Activity Watch Kernel (HAWK) system

- The Karnataka Forest Department and Wildlife Trust of India (WTI) launched HAWK (Hostile Activity Watch Kernel) system.
- This is a specialized software system, which will be the nerve center of the state forest department as part of their modernization initiatives.

HAWK

- HAWK is used to monitor all aspects of forest and wildlife crime, such as the death of wildlife, suspected criminal activities, and movement of suspicious vehicles.
- Information regarding these and other incidents of interest from the field are input into a centralized system so that effective and pre-emptive responses, including counteraction, can be initiated.
- The HAWK system will help the department to manage and monitor data regarding forest and wildlife crime across the state in real-time. This will increase the overall efficiency of the department in crime management.
- The development of HAWK started in 2017 in the state of Kerala by a joint team of Kerala Forest Department & Wildlife Trust of India.
- The system was officially launched in 2019 in Kerala, and since then it has been the official system of the state forest department.
- The implementation of a customised version of HAWK was initiated in 2022 in Karnataka in partnership with the ICT cell of Karnataka forest department, and the system is being implemented across the state.

Ejecta Halo

- The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) revealed that the “Chandrayaan-3 Lander Module generated a spectacular ‘ejecta halo’ of lunar material” as it descended towards the Moon’s south pole on August 23, 2023.
- This simply means that as the lander module of the Chandrayaan-3 mission descended towards the Moon’s surface, it underwent descent stage thrusters and then a subsequent soft-landing happened.
- During this process, a significant amount of lunar surficial epiregolith material got ejected.
- Epiregolith is lunar rocks and soil, or regolith, or Moon dust.
- Around 2.06 tonnes of this lunar epi-regolith or material were ejected during the landing event.
- The material was displaced over an area of 108.4 m² around the landing site.
- This, subsequently, resulted in formation of an ‘ejecta halo’. This halo appeared “as an irregular bright patch surrounding the lander”.

11 Countries Sign Declaration for Global Protection of River Dolphins by 2030

- Representatives from the 14 countries that are home to the world's populations of river dolphins, came together on October 23 and 24 for the Global Declaration of River Dolphins and their Rivers convening.
- Eleven countries signed a first-of-its-kind global declaration for the protection of river dolphins by 2030.
- Countries that adopted the declaration include Bangladesh, Bolivia, Brazil, Cambodia, Colombia, Ecuador, India, Nepal, Pakistan, Peru, and Venezuela.
- The countries involved agreed to improve water quality in the dolphins' habitat, create protected areas, tackle overfishing, and involve Indigenous communities in the affected regions in protecting the animals.

About river dolphins

- River dolphins are any of six species of small, usually freshwater aquatic mammals that are related to whales (Order Cetacea).
- A seventh river dolphin species, the Chinese river dolphin, or baiji, was declared extinct in 2007.
- These dolphins are found in rivers of south-central Asia, China, and South America and in the coastal waters of Brazil, Argentina, and Uruguay.
- They have slender beaks lined with lots of teeth, small eyes, flexible necks and bodies, pronounced forehead melons, large flippers, and small dorsal fins.
- The six surviving species of river dolphins are the Amazon, Indus, Ganges, Irrawaddy, Tucuxi, and Yangtze finless porpoises.
- All six species of river dolphins are classified as Endangered or Critically Endangered on the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species.
- The largest is the Amazon River dolphin (*Inia geoffrensis*).
- They are important indicators of the health of rivers. Where freshwater dolphin populations are thriving, it is likely that the overall river systems are flourishing.

Banni Festival

- It is a traditional stick-fight celebrated on the night of Dussehra (Vijaya Dasami) every year.
- The objective of this event was to snatch the idols from God's team, leading to a fierce battle known as the Banni Fight.
- People under the Vijayanagara Empire celebrated this festival.
- It is celebrated on account of the victory of Lord Mala Malleswara Swamy and Goddess Parvati over demonish Mani and Mallasura, who troubled the people in the Devaragattu region.
- The ritual takes place at midnight when the procession idols of the ruling deities Malamma (Parvati) and Malleshwara Swamy (Shiva) are brought down the hill temple at Neraneki.
- Devotees carry long sticks or lathis with them for hitting each other with these sticks on the head. The basic idea of this fight is to capture the procession idol.

Project Kusha

- India's own long-range air defence system, titled 'Project Kusha', is being developed by the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO).
- It will be capable of detecting and destroying enemy projectiles and armour, including cruise missiles, stealth fighter jets, and drones at long range.
- The ambitious project is believed to not only perform better than Israel's Iron Dome system, but also rival the effectiveness of Russia's S-400 system and the 'Patriot' system of the United States.

Abua Awas Yojna (AAY)

- The Jharkhand Cabinet recently approved the 'Abua Awas Yojna' (AAY), a housing scheme designed to provide eight lakh pucca houses to homeless individuals in the state.

- With a total budget of Rs 16,320 crore, the scheme will be executed in three phases, targeting 2 lakh houses in the current financial year, 3.5 lakh houses in FY 2024-25, and 2.5 lakh houses in FY 2025-26.
- Under the 'Abua Awas Yojna' scheme, beneficiaries will receive a three-room house with one kitchen, covering a total area of 31 sq m.
- The government has allocated Rs 2 lakh per beneficiary in its budget, disbursed in four instalments.
- In comparison, Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana-Rural constructs houses with two rooms and one kitchen, with a provision of Rs 1.2-1.3 lakh per beneficiary.
- AAY offers beneficiaries the opportunity to work under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS) and earn wages for up to 95 unskilled man-days at the prevailing wage rate, which can be used for building their houses.
- There is also a provision to include a toilet in the house's construction, using funds from the Swachh Bharat Mission or other available schemes.
- All houses built under AAY will be registered in the name of women from the beneficiary families.

Section – B

Practice Questions for Preliminary Examination based on October 2023 Current Affairs

1. Consider the following statements with respect to CHAKRAVAT 2023

It is an Annual Joint Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) Exercise

The exercise was conducted by the Indian Navy (IN)

It involves the participation of all three Services, Paramilitary Forces, as well as several disaster response organisations

How many of the statements given above are correct?

- (a) Only one (b) Only two (c) All three (d) None

Answer – (b)

- The exercise has been conducted by Indian Army, Indian Navy (IN) and Indian Air Force (IAF) in rotation since 2016. The last edition of the exercise was conducted at Agra by IAF.

2. _____ substances are those which ignite spontaneously or very quickly when in contact with oxygen

- (a) Pyrophoric (b) Pyrophospic (c) Pyromorphic (d) Pyrosulfide

Answer – (a)

3. Consider the following statements about the National Academy of Agricultural Sciences (NAAS)

1. It is a Government of India-funded agency

2. It is a research platform in the fields of crop husbandry, animal husbandry, fisheries, and agroforestry.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only (b) 2 only (c) Both 1 and 2 (d) Neither 1 nor 2

Answer – (c)

- NAAS is a Government of India-funded agency, established in 1990, and is a research platform in the fields of crop husbandry, animal husbandry, fisheries, and agro-forestry.
- It acts as a research base for agro-scientists to formulate their advice to the policymakers in discussion with the agricultural and agro-industrial communities.

4. Bale Identification and Traceability System (BITS) has been launched by?

- (a) Cotton Corporation of India (b) Competition Commission of India
(c) Department of Science and Technology (d) Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment

Answer – (a)

- To ensure that the quality, variety, origin, and other vital parameters of cotton are transparent to both Indian and international buyers, Cotton Corporation of India launched the “Bale Identification and Traceability System” (BITS) using Blockchain Technology.

5. _____ deals with the production of extremely short light pulses and using them to study super-fast processes
 (a) Atrophysics (b) Attophysics (c) Astrophysics (d) Femtophysics

Answer- (a)

6. Consider the following statements about BHASHINI

1. It is India's Artificial Intelligence (AI) led language translation platform
2. It was created under Digital India Corporation, Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology
3. It is a part of the National Language Translation Mission

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only (b) 3 only (c) 2 and 3 only (d) 1 2 and 3

Answer - (d)

- Digital India Bhashini Division is a Division under Digital India Corporation, section 8 Company under Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology, Govt of India.
- The vision of Bhashini is to “harness natural language technologies to enable a diverse ecosystem of contributors, partnering entities and citizens for the purpose of transcending language barriers, thereby ensuring digital inclusion and digital empowerment

7. Consider the following statements about the National Cooperative Development Corporation (NCDC)

1. It is a statutory corporation under the Ministry of Cooperation.
2. It is involved in planning, promoting, coordinating and financing of cooperative development programmes at the national level
3. It provides financial and technical support to cooperative institutions of farmers

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only (b) 3 only (c) 2 and 3 only (d) 1 2 and 3

Answer - (d)

- National Cooperative Development Corporation (NCDC), Government of India was established under an Act of the Indian Parliament on 13 March 1963.
- NCDC is involved in planning, promoting, coordinating and financing of cooperative development programmes at the national level.
- It provides financial and technical support to cooperative institutions of farmers and other weaker sections associated with agriculture and allied rural economic activities.

8. Consider the following statements about the Reserve Bank Innovation Hub (RBIH)?

1. It is a wholly-owned subsidiary of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI)
2. RBIH promotes and accelerates innovation across the financial sector.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only (b) 2 only (c) Both 1 and 2 (d) Neither 1 nor 2

Answer - (c)

- The Reserve Bank Innovation Hub (RBIH) – a wholly-owned subsidiary of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) – is an organisation that works to enable frictionless finance for a billion Indians.

9. Consider the following information

It is a Government-owned company that maintains infrastructure investment funds for international and Indian investors anchored by the Government of India. The objective behind creating this organization was to catalyze capital into the country and support its growth needs across sectors of importance.

The above statement talks about which of the following organisations?

- (a) India Infrastructure Finance Company Limited
- (b) Infrastructure investment trusts
- (c) Institute of International Finance
- (d) National Investment and Infrastructure Fund Limited (NIIFL)

Answer - (d)

10. Find the incorrect statement about Shri Ramalinga Swamy.

- (a) He is commonly known in India and across the world as Vallalar
- (b) He is also one of the greatest Tamil poets of the 19th century
- (c) Through the notion of Suddha Sanmarga Sangam, he endeavored to eliminate the caste system.
- (d) None of the above

Answer - (d)

- He is commonly known in India and across the world as Vallalar, Ramalinga Swamigal, or Ramalinga Adigal.
- He is also one of the greatest Tamil poets of the 19th century belonging to a line of Tamil saints known as 'gnana siddhars' (gnana meaning higher wisdom).

11. Find the incorrect statement about the Cotton Textiles Export Promotion Council (TEXPROCIL)

- (a) It is the first Council set up after Independence by the Government of India in 1954
- (b) It is an autonomous body
- (c) It is a non-profit body dedicated to the promotion of exports.
- (d) TEXPROCIL, in collaboration with the Ministry of Commerce, is overseeing the implementation of Kasturi Cotton program

Answer - (d)

- The Ministry of Textiles introduced the Kasturi Cotton program, a premium certified quality cotton with traceability. TEXPROCIL, in collaboration with the Cotton Corporation of India on behalf of the Ministry of Textiles, is overseeing the implementation of this program.

12. Which of the following is the Greenfield city planned by Saudi Arabia on the banks of the Red Sea and Gulf of Aqaba?

- (a) Neom (b) Neam (c) Nemi (d) Nemon

Answer - (a)

13. Environmental Performance Index is released jointly by the Yale and Columbia Universities in collaboration with _____

- (a) World Economic Forum
- (b) World Bank
- (c) International Monetary Fund
- (d) Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

Answer - (a)

14. Institute of Company Secretaries of India (ICSI) is under the ownership of which of the following ministries?

- (a) Ministry of Commerce and Industry (b) Ministry of Corporate Affairs
- (c) Ministry of Finance (d) Ministry of Education

Answer - (a)

- The Institute of Company Secretaries of India (ICSI) is a national professional body in India under the ownership of Ministry of Corporate Affairs, Government of India with the objective of promoting, regulating, and developing the profession of company secretaries in India.

15. NAVECash Card is a dual-chip debit card developed jointly by

1. Reserve Bank of India
2. State Bank of India
3. Indian Navy
4. Ministry of Defence
5. Ministry of Finance

Codes :

- (a) 1 and 4 (b) 2 and 3 (c) 2 and 4 (d) 1 and 5

Answer - (a)

- Raksha Mantri Shri Rajnath Singh also launched SBI NAVECash Card – a one-of-its-kind dual-chip debit card developed by the State Bank of India (SBI) and the Indian Navy.
- The card can be used in online mode (as a regular debit card) as well as in offline mode while at sea with no direct connectivity with the bank.

16. The SPRINT innovative challenge was launched by the Prime Minister of India during the maiden Swavalamban seminar in 2022 to promote the use of indigenous technology and products in the _____

- (a) Army (b) Navy (c) Air Force (d) Defence Sector

Answer - (b)

- The SPRINT innovative challenge was launched by the Prime Minister of India during the maiden Swavalamban seminar in 2022 to promote the use of indigenous technology and products in the Navy

17. Find the correct statement with respect to defence Indigenisation

- (a) Defence India Startup Challenge “has been launched by Ministry in partnership with Atal Innovation Mission
- (b) The Defence Innovation Organisation (DIO) was formed as a not-for-profit company
- (c) DEX aims at the creation of an ecosystem to foster innovation and technology development in Defence and Aerospace by engaging Industries including
- (d) All of the above

Answer - (d)

18. Consider the following statements about Mera Yuva Bharat (MY Bharat)

1. It is an autonomous body
2. It will act as the Yuva Setu between the Government and the citizens.
3. It will benefit the youth in the age group of 15-29 years
4. It will also create a centralized youth database

How many of the statements given above are correct?

- (a) Only one (b) Only two (c) Only three (d) All four

Answer - (d)

- Mera Yuva Bharat (MY Bharat), an autonomous body will benefit the youth in the age-group of 15-29 years, in line with the definition of ‘Youth’ in the National Youth Policy.
- In case of programme components specifically meant for adolescents, the beneficiaries will be in the age group of 10-19 years.

19. The Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) is ?

- (a) inter-governmental organisation
- (b) inter-ministerial organisation
- (c) inter-continental organisation
- (d) specialised body of the United Nations

Answer - (a)

- The IORA, an intergovernmental organization established in 1997, comprises 23 member states and 11 dialogue partners hailing from regions surrounding the Indian Ocean.

20. Find the incorrect statement about Atlantic Puffin
- It is a species of small seabird in the auk family.
 - It's the only puffin species found in the Atlantic Ocean.
 - It can fly through the water, using its wings as paddles.
 - It is a migratory species, spending most of the time traveling back and forth across the Pacific Ocean

Answer - (d)

- It is a migratory species, spending most of the time traveling back and forth across the Atlantic Ocean, returning every breeding season to its native breeding areas.

21. Consider the following statements about Intensified Mission Indradhanush (IMI 5.0)
- For the first time the campaign is being conducted across all the districts in the country and includes children up to 5 years of age
 - It aims to enhance immunization coverage for all vaccines provided under the Universal Immunization Programme (UIP)

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- 1 only
- 2 only
- Both 1 and 2
- Neither 1 nor 2

Answer - (c)

- IMI 5.0 ensures that routine immunization services reach the missed-out and dropped out children and pregnant women across the country.
- This year, for the first time the campaign is being conducted across all the districts in the country and includes children up to 5 years of age (Previous campaigns included children up to 2 years of age).
- IMI 5.0 campaign aims to enhance immunization coverage for all vaccines provided under the Universal Immunization Programme (UIP)

22. Centre has approved seven bridge projects worth 118 Crore 50 lakh rupees in Arunachal Pradesh under which of the following schemes?

- Setu Bharatam Scheme
- Setu Bandhan Scheme
- Setu Samagam Scheme
- Dhanush Setu Scheme

Answer - (b)

- Centre has approved seven bridge projects worth 118 Crore 50 lakh rupees in Arunachal Pradesh under the Setu Bandhan Scheme.

23. Mukundra Hills Tiger Reserve is located on the banks of which of the following rivers?

- Kalisindh
- Chambal
- Son
- Gandak

Answer - (b)

- Mukundra Hills Tiger Reserve is located on the eastern bank of the Chambal River and is drained by its tributaries.

24. Find the incorrect statement about Gaza Strip

- It is a self-governing Palestinian territory
- It is located on the eastern coast of the Mediterranean Sea.
- It is bordered by Israel to the north and east and Egypt to the south.
- The population is predominantly Palestinian, with the majority being Shia Muslims.

Answer - (d)

- Israel recently ordered a full siege of the Gaza Strip and vowed to obliterate Hamas after its all-out offensive entered the next phase.

25. The Yom Kippur War was an armed conflict fought from 6 to 25 October 1973, between Israel and _____
- Coalition of Arab states led by Egypt and Lebanon
 - Coalition of Arab states led by Egypt and Syria.
 - Coalition of Arab states led by Iraq and Syria.
 - Coalition of Arab states led by Iran and Syria.

Answer - (b)

- The Yom Kippur War was an armed conflict fought from 6 to 25 October 1973, between Israel and a coalition of Arab states led by Egypt and Syria.

Section-C

Practice Questions for the Main Examination based on October 2023 Current Affairs

- How do you differentiate Green Hydrogen, Brown Hydrogen, and Grey Hydrogen?
- What is the International Thermonuclear Experimental Reactor (ITER) Project? What Is ITER-India?
- India has ambitious goals of establishing a Space Station by 2035 and a Manned Mission to the Moon by 2040. Critically examine the complexities.
- Discuss the significance of India joining the Artemis Accords.
- How the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) can be considered as safe space for India and other countries of the region?
- Why does Israel get bipartisan support from United States of America?
- What do you understand by Middle Income Trap? Why many economies in Latin America and the Middle East regions have been stuck in a middle-income trap?
- Discuss the features of the Identification of Prisoners Act 1920.
- Discuss the features of the Criminal Procedure (Identification) Act 2022.

Section-D

Probable Interview Questions based on October 2023 Current Affairs

Mock Transcript

Mock Chairman

Q. Can you explain the “environmental release” of GM Mustard?

Mock Member 1

Q. The government rejected India’s rank in Global Hunger Index (GHI) citing methodology errors”. Do you justify government’s viewpoint on this?

Mock Member 2

Q. What’s your viewpoint on Operation Al-Aqsa Flood?

Mock Member 3

Q. Gender equality and environmental goals are mutually reinforcing and create a virtuous cycle that will help accelerate the achievement of the SDGs. Throw some light on this statement.

Mock Member 4

Q. Why India took a side in the Israel-Hamas war?