



Current Affairs - December 2023

Month Type



- 177 Current Affairs were found in Month - **December 2023** for Type - **All**

Appointments

- ▶ **Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah** has been named new **Emir of Kuwait**, after earlier emir **Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah** passed away.
- ▶ **Abdel Fattah al-Sisi** won **Egypt** presidential elections 2023, securing his **3rd** term.
- ▶ **Dinesh K Tripathi** has been named new **Vice Chief of Indian Navy**, succeeding **Sanjay Jasjit Singh**, who has been named chief of Western Naval Command.
- ▶ **Donald Tusk** has been named new Prime Minister of **Poland**.
- ▶ **Geert Wilders** won general elections 2023 in **The Netherlands**. He is known as an anti-Islam populist leader.
- ▶ **Nina Singh** has been named Director General of **Central Industrial Security Force (CISF)**, becoming first woman to hold the post.

Also, **Rahul Rasgotra** has been named Director General of Indo-Tibetan Border Police (**ITBP**).























- ▶ Govt named **Narayan Seshadri** (Former KPMG MD) as Chairman of **India Debt Resolution Company Limited (IDRCL)**, also called *bad bank*.
- ▶ Misc. Appointments (Dec 2023) -
 - ▶ Fino Payments Bank named **Rajat Kumar Jain** as its Chairman.
 - ▶ **Andry Rajoelina** has been named new president of **Madagascar** (East Africa).
 - ▶ **Kanchan Devi** has been named new (and first woman) Director General of Indian Council of Forestry Research Education (ICFRE).
 - ▶ UK govt named **Samir Shah** as new chair of British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC).
 - ▶ Israel named **Reuven Azar** as new Israeli Ambassador to India.
 - ▶ India's **Uma Sekhar** has been elected to Governing Council of Rome (Italy) based **International Institute for Unification of Private Law (UNIDROIT)**, which studies needs / methods for modernizing, harmonizing and coordinating private and commercial law among States and groups of States.
 - ▶ New Indian Ambassadors appointed -
 - ▶ **Smita Pant** - Uzbekistan.
 - ▶ **Hemant H. Kotalwar** - Finland.
 - ▶ **Santosh Jha** - Sri Lanka.
 - ▶ North East Small Finance Bank (NESFB) named **Satish Kumar Kalra** as its interim MD and CEO.
 - ▶ Notably, NESFB is merging with Fintech unicorn **Slice**.
 - ▶ **Vita Dani** became first Indian to be inducted as a governing board member of International Table Tennis Federation's (ITTF) Foundation.
 - ▶ The Foundation was established in 2018 by ITTF, to attract more people to the sport.
 - ▶ **V Srinivas** has been named chief of Southern Naval Command (Indian Navy).
- ▶ New Union Ministers Level Appointments (in addition to their existing portfolio) -
 - ▶ **Arjun Munda** - Minister of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare
 - ▶ **Shobha Karandlaje** - Minister of State in Ministry of Food Processing Industries
 - ▶ **Rajeev Chandrasekhar** - Minister of State in Ministry of Jal Shakti

 Bharti Pravin Pawar - Minister of State in Ministry of Tribal Affairs

10. ▶ RBI Approved appointment of **C S Rajan** as part-time Chairman of **Kotak Mahindra Bank**, for 2 years (Jan 01, 2024 onwards).
11. ▶ SEBI Approved appointment of **Pramod Agrawal** as Chairman of Bombay Stock Exchange (BSE).

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Awards

1. ▶ 12 projects from China, India and Nepal have been honored at *UNESCO Asia-Pacific Prize 2023* for Cultural Heritage Conservation. Awardees from India include -
 -  Award of Excellence: Rambagh Gate (Amritsar)
 -  Award of Distinction: Karnikara Mandapam at Kunnamangalam Bhagavathi Temple (Kerala)
 -  Award of Merit: Church of the Epiphany in Gurugram (Haryana), David Sassoon Library and Reading Room in Mumbai (Bikaner House in New Delhi).
 -  Peepal Haveli in Punjab and Sikami Chhen in Kathmandu were awarded *Special Recognition for Sustainable Development* for their transformative heritage practices.
2. ▶ *Dr. Hemachandran Ravikumar* has been honored with *Karmaveer Chakra Medal* and *Rex Karmaveer Global Fellowship* by ICONGO, in collaboration with United Nations, for his contributions to R&D in Physical & Bio-Science and Microbiological Studies.
 -  *Karmaveer Chakra Award* is global civilian honours given by international confederation of NGO (iCONGO) in partnership with UN, to people across globe for relentless courage. The award is tribute to Dr A P J Abdul Kalam.
3. ▶ *Indira Gandhi Prize for Peace, Disarmament and Development 2023* (also called *Indira Peace Prize* or *Indira Gandhi Prize*), was announced on **Daniel Barenboim** and Palestinian peace activist **Ali Abu Awwad**, for their efforts in bringing together people of Israel and Arab World, for a non-violent resolution of Israel-Palestine conflict.
 -  The award is conferred every year on Nov 19, Birth Anniversary of Indira Gandhi (observed as *National Integration day*).
 -  Likewise, 2023 award shall be conferred on Nov 19, 2024.
4. ▶ **Akshaya Mukul** won *2023 Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay NIF Book Prize* for *Writer, Rebel, Soldier, Lover: The Many Lives of Agyeya* (biography of writer Agyeya). The award carries cash prize of Rs 15 lakh.
5. ▶ **Earthshot prize Winners 2023** (also called Eco Oscars), presented by Queen Elizabeth II's grandson Prince William -
 -  Winners -
 -  Protect & Restore Nature - Accion Andina (The Andes Mountains)
 -  A grassroots, community-based initiative working across south america to protect native high andean forest ecosystems.
 -  Clean Our Air - GRST (Hong Kong)
 -  Honored for GRST (Green, Renewable, Sustainable Technology)'s cleaner process to make batteries that pollute less, and use components that can be more easily recycled.
 -  Revive our Oceans - Wildaid Marine Program
 -  Scales marine enforcement to end illegal fishing and strengthen ocean conservation.
 -  Build a Waste Free World - **S4S Technologies** (India)
 -  S4S technologies' solar-powered dryers and processing equipment combats food waste, enabling small-hold farmers to preserve crops and turn produce that might otherwise go to waste into valuable products.
 -  Fix our Climate - BOOMITRA (Founded by India's **Aadith Moorthy**)
 -  Uses satellite and AI technology to measure, report, and verify soil carbon credits across the globe.
 -  About -
 -  Earthshot Prize is awarded to 5 winners each year for their contributions to environment, first awarded in 2021 and is planned to run annually until 2030.
 -  Each winner receives a grant of **£1 million** to continue their environmental work.
 -  Earthshot Prize was launched in 2020 by Prince William and David Attenborough. Winners are selected by the Earthshot Prize Council.
6. ▶ **VinFuture Prize 2023** Awardees -

The VinFuture Grand Prize	Martin Green	Australia	for revolutionary innovations that contribute to establishing a sustainable foundation for green energy by utilizing solar cells for production and Lithium-ion batteries for storage.
	M. Stanley Whittingham	USA	
	Rachid Yazami	Morocco	
	Akira Yoshino	Japan	
Female Innovator	Susan Solomon	USA	for uncovering the mechanism of ozone depletion in Antarctica, which played a key role in development of the Montreal Protocol
Developing Country Innovator	Gurdev Khush	USA	for their noteworthy efforts in developing and promoting disease-resistant rice varieties, such as IR36 and IR64, thereby safeguarding global food security.
	Võ Tòng Xuân	Vietnam	
Outstanding Achievements in Emerging Fields	Daniel J. Drucker	Canada	for identifying the function of glucagon-like peptide-1 (GLP-1), leading to the development of widely utilized treatments for diabetes and obesity, and fostering new applications for addressing neurodegenerative diseases.
	Joel Habener	USA	
	Svetlana Mojssov		
	Jens Juul Holst	Denmark	

- ✎ VinFuture Prize (established in 2021) honors remarkable scientific breakthroughs and promotes innovations for mankind. It is first influential and worldwide prize to be founded in Vietnam, hosted by VinFuture Foundation.
- ✎ VinFuture Grand Prize carries approx 3 million USD Prize, and three additional prizes carry 500000 USD each.
7. ▶ American-Canadian writer **John Vaillant's *Fire Weather: A True Story from a Hotter World*** has been named winner of 50000 pound **Baillie Gifford Prize 2023**.
- ✎ Baillie Gifford Prize for Non-Fiction (formerly Samuel Johnson Prize), is an annual British book prize for best non-fiction writing in English language.
8. ▶ Awards at *29th Kolkata International Film Festival 2023* -
- ✎ Best Film (International) - Israeli film *Children of Nobody*.
- ✎ For best film, *Royal Bengal Tiger Trophy* & 51 lakh rupees were given as award.
- ✎ Best Director - Venezuela's Carlos Daniel Malave (for *One Way*).
- ✎ Best film (Bengali Panorama) - *Mon Potongo*.
9. ▶ Bhutan King **Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuk** honored India's **Poonam Khetrapal Singh** (Regional Director WHO South-East Asia) with Bhutan's *National Order of Merit Gold Medal*, for her distinguished services to Bhutan.
10. ▶ Finland's *International Gender Equality Prize* has been awarded to **Afghan Women Skills Development Center**, which works to promote and protect rights of women in Afghanistan.
- ✎ The award carries cash prize of EUR 300000.
11. ▶ Four diplomats and a US lawmaker have been honoured with annual **Diwali- Power of One** awards 2023.
- ✎ Winners -
- ✎ Ban Ki-Moon (Former United Nations Secretary-General)
- ✎ Mirsada Colakovic (Former permanent representative of Bosnia and Herzegovina to the UN)
- ✎ Kim Sook (Former permanent representative of South Korea to the UN)
- ✎ Miroslav Lajcak (72nd UN General Assembly president)
- ✎ Presented by Diwali Foundation USA since 2017, these honors are also known as Oscars of Diplomacy, presented to former top diplomats for helping to form a more peaceful world.
12. ▶ India's Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) has been honored with **Leif Erikson Lunar Prize** by *Húsavík Museum*, for ISRO's successful Chandrayaan-3 mission.
- ✎ Leif Erikson Awards are awarded annually by Exploration Museum in Húsavík (Iceland), for achievements in exploration.
13. ▶ Indian Author-translator **Arshia Sattar** has been conferred with *Knight of the Order of Arts and Letters (Chevalier dans l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres)* honour by **France**.
14. ▶ Indian actor **Kabir Bedi** has been awarded *Order of Merit of the Italian Republic* (Merito della Repubblica Italiana), **Italy's** highest civilian honour.
- ✎ It honors those who have made outstanding contributions to society, embodying Italy's values of merit and excellence.
15. ▶ Indian tennis player **Debasis Sahoo** has been honoured with 31st **Ekalabya Puraskar** for 2023, conferred by IMFA's charitable wing IMPaCT. Award includes cash prize of 5 lakh.
16. ▶ Indian-origin writer **Meira Chand** is among 3 Singaporeans that have been conferred **Cultural Medallion**, Singapore's biggest arts accolade.
- ✎ Other 2 are novelist *Suchen Christine Lim* and Malay dance veteran *Osman Abdul Hamid*.
17. ▶ Jamnalal Bajaj Foundation announced winners of Jamnalal Bajaj awards 2023 -
- ✎ Constructive Work - Regi George and Lalitha Regi Trustees (Tribal Health Initiative, Tamil Nadu)

- ✎ Application of Science & Technology for Rural Development - Ramalakshmi Datta (Vivekananda Institute of Biotechnology, West Bengal)
- ✎ Development and Welfare of Women and Children - Sudha Varghese (Nari Gunjan, Bihar)
- ✎ Promoting Gandhian Values Outside India - Raha Naba Kumar (Gandhi Ashram Trust, Bangladesh)
- ✎ About -

✎ Jamnalal Bajaj Foundation established in 1977, instituted four Awards, to globally propagate ideals of Jamnalal Bajaj. Each award carries Cash Prize of 10 Lakh.

18. ▶ Long jumper **Murali Sreeshankar** has been named winner of **Jimmy George Foundation Award 2023**, given to best sportsperson from **Kerala** state.

✎ Jimmy George Award for best Sportsperson of Kerala was instituted by Jimmy George Foundation in 1989, carrying cash prize of Rs 1 Lakh.

19. ▶ Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports announced **National Sports Awards 2023** (*to be presented by president Droupadi Murmu on January 09, 2024*) -

✎ **Major Dhyan Chand Khel Ratna** Award 2023 -

✎ Chirag Chandrashekhkar Shetty - Badminton






✎ Rankireddy Satwik Sai Raj - Badminton

✎ **Arjuna** Awards -




	Name of sportsperson	Discipline
✎	Ojas Pravin Deotale	Archery
✎	Ms Aditi Gopichand Swami	Archery
✎	Sreeshankar M	Athletics
✎	Ms Parul Chaudhary	Athletics
✎	Mohameed Hussamuddin	Boxing
✎	Ms R Vaishali	Chess
✎	Mohammed Shami	Cricket
✎	Anush Agarwalla	Equestrian
✎	Ms Divyakriti Singh	Equestrian Dressage
✎	Ms Diksha Dagar	Golf
✎	Krishan Bahadur Pathak	Hockey
✎	Ms Pukhrambam Sushila Chanu	Hockey
✎	Pawan Kumar	Kabaddi
✎	Ms Ritu Negi	Kabaddi
✎	Ms Nasreen	Kho-Kho
✎	Ms Pinki	Lawn Bowls
✎	Aishwary Pratap Singh Tomar	Shooting
✎	Ms Esha Singh	Shooting
✎	Harinder Pal Singh Sandhu	Squash
✎	Ms Ayhika Mukherjee	Table Tennis
✎	Sunil Kumar	Wrestling
✎	Ms Antim	Wrestling
✎	Ms Naorem Roshibina Devi	Wushu
✎	Ms Sheetal Devi	Para Archery
✎	Illuri Ajay Kumar Reddy	Blind Cricket
✎	Ms Prachi Yadav	Para Canoeing

 **Dronacharya Award (for outstanding coaches) -**




 Regular -

	Name of the Coach	Discipline
	Lalit Kumar	Wrestling
	R. B. Ramesh	Chess
	Mahaveer Prasad Saini	Para Athletics
	Shivendra Singh	Hockey
	Ganesh Prabhakar Devrukhkar	Mallakhamb

 Lifetime -

	Name of the Coach	Discipline
	Jaskirat Singh Grewal	Golf
	Bhaskaran E	Kabaddi
	Jayanta Kumar Pushilal	Table Tennis

 **Dhyan Chand Award for Lifetime achievement -**

	Name of sportsperson	Discipline
	Ms Manjusha Kanwar	Badminton
	Vineet Kumar Sharma	Hockey
	Ms Kavitha Selvaraj	Kabaddi


 Maulana Abul Kalam Azad (MAKA) Trophy 2023

 Guru Nanak Dev University (Amritsar)

 Rashtriya Khel Protsahan Puruskar 2023 -

	Category	Entity awarded for Rashtriya Khel Protsahan Puruskar 2023
1.	Identification and nurturing of budding / young talent	Jain Deemed to be University, Bengaluru
2.	Encouragement to sports through Corporate Social Responsibility	Odisha Mining Corporate Limited


20.  Misc. / Industrial Awards (Dec 2023) -

 Odisha Pavilion won gold medal at India International Trade Fair (IITF) 2023, held at Pragati Maidan (New Delhi). It was themed *Unity through Trade*.

 India's Employees' State Insurance Corporation (ESIC) won *ISSA Vision Zero 2023 Award* at *World Congress on Safety and Health at Work 2023* in Sydney (Australia).


 Bollywood actor *Ranveer Singh* has been honored at *Red Sea International Film Festival* in Jeddah (Saudi Arabia), for his significant contributions to cinema.

 Financial Times owned *The Banker* named *Federal Bank* as *Bank of the Year (India)*.

 Homi Bhabha Centre for Science Education (TIFR) Professor *Savita Ladage* has been named among winners of *Royal Society of Chemistry's Nyholm Prize for Education*, for her contributions to chemistry education. Award carries cash prize of £5000.

 India's Srinivas Naik Dharavath (CMD of Real Vision Homes Pvt Ltd) has been honored with *Global Icon Award* at *G20 Initiative Summit* in Colombo (Sri Lanka), organized by Global Economic Forum.

 Bengaluru's Kempegowda International Airport (KIA) Terminal 2 (T2) has been named by UNESCO among *world's most beautiful airports*, honoured with *Special Prize for an Interior*.

 New Delhi based *Latin America and Caribbean Trade Council* honored its director *L P Hemanth K Srinivasulu* with *Man of the year 2023* award, presented by Home Minister Amit Shah.

21.  Noted **Hindi** writer **Pushpa Bharati** has been selected for **33rd Vyas Samman 2023** by K K Birla Foundation, for her 2016 memoir, *Yaadein, Yaadein aur Yaadein*.

 About the award -

- ✍️ Instituted in 1991 by K K Birla Foundation, Vyas Samman recognises an outstanding Hindi literary work by an Indian citizen published during last 10 years. It carries an award money of ₹4 lakh.
- ✍️ Awards Instituted by K K Birla Foundation in 1991 -
 - ✍️ Saraswati Samman - For literary work in any Indian language
 - ✍️ Vyas Samman - For prose/poetry work in Hindi
 - ✍️ Bihari Puraskar - For prose/poetry work in Hindi/Rajasthani, only authors from Rajasthan are eligible
 - ✍️ Shankar Puraskar - For a work in Hindi concerning Indian philosophy, culture and/or art.
 - ✍️ Vachaspati Puraskar - For any work in Sanskrit.
 - ✍️ G.D. Birla Award for Scientific Research

22. ▶ Poet-critic **Sukrita Paul Kumar** has been honored by **Rabindranath Tagore Literary Prize 2023** (6th edition) for her book *Salt & Pepper: Selected Poems*.

- ✍️ It is a literary honour in India conferred annually to published works of Indian authors in novel, short stories, poetry and drama, originally written in any of Indian official languages and dialects, but translated to English.
- ✍️ It was founded in 2018 by US-based independent and non-profit publishing house Maitreya Publishing Foundation. Winners receive USD 5000 as prize money.
- ✍️ Also Notably, **TagorePrize for Social Achievement 2023** was awarded to **Abhijit Banerjee** (noted Indian American economist and Nobel laureate for Economics) .

23. ▶ Sahitya Akademi announced annual *Sahitya Akademi Awards* in 24 languages. Awardees include -

Category	Awardees
Poetry	Vijay Verma (Dogri), Vinod Joshi (Gujarati), Manshoor Banihali (Kashmiri), Sorokkhaibam Gambhini (Manipuri), Ashutosh Parida (Odia), Swarnjit Savi (Punjabi), Gaje Singh Rajpurohit (Rajasthani), Arun Ranjan Mishra (Sanskrit) and Vinod Asudani (Sindhi)
Novel	Swapnamay Chakrabarti (Bengali), Neelum Saran Gour (English), Sanjeev (Hindi), Krushnat Khot (Marathi), Rajasekaran (Devibharathi) (Tamil) and Sadiqua Nawab Saher (Urdu)
Short Stories	Pranavjyoti Deka (Assamese), Nandeswar Daimari (Bodo), Prakash S. Parienkar (Konkani), Taraceen Baskey (Turia Chand Baskey) (Santali) and T. Patanjali Sastry (Telugu)
Essays	Lakshmisha Tolpadi (Kannada), Basukinath Jha (Maithili) and Judhabir Rana (Nepali)
Literary Study	E.V. Ramakrishnan (Malayalam)

- ✍️ Award carries 1 Lakh Cash prize.

24. ▶ Somali refugee **Abdullahi Mire** has been named *2023 UNHCR Nansen Refugee Award Global Laureate*, for his work championing the right to education for displaced children.

- ✍️ UNHCR Nansen Refugee Award was established in 1954 to honor legacy of Fridtjof Nansen, a Norwegian scientist and first High Commissioner for Refugees for the League of Nations. It consists of monetary prize of USD 100000, donated by governments of Norway and Switzerland .

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Books

1. ▶ Actress **Huma Qureshi's** first novel *Zeba: An Accidental Superhero* has been released.
2. ▶ Book *The Babri Masjid Ram Mandir Dilemma: An Acid Test for India's Constitution*, authored by **Madhav Godbole** has been released.
3. ▶ Book **Breaking the Mould: Reimagining India's Economic Future**, authored by Former RBI governor **Raghuram Rajan** & economist **Rohit Lamba**, has been released.

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Committees

1. ▶ International Financial Services Centres Authority (IFSCA) formed and Expert Committee on *Transition Finance*, to recommend a regulatory framework for transition finance instruments and measures to promote transition finance through GIFT IFSC. It will be chaired by **Dhruba Purkayastha** (India Director for *Climate Policy Initiative*).
 - ✎ Transition finance means providing financial services to high-carbon-emitting industries to help them transition to decarbonization.

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Days

1. ▶ Dec 06 is Mahaparinirvan Diwas (Death anniversary) of Babasaheb Ambedkar, Chairman of the Constitution Drafting Committee. He was also 1st Minister of Law and Justice.
 - ✎ Also, India and Bangladesh observe December 6 as *Maitri Diwas*, the day on which India formally recognized Bangladesh in 1971.
2. ▶ Dec 09 is observed by UN as **International Anti-Corruption Day**.
 - ✎ On this occasion, US State Department of State announced awardees of 2023 Anti-corruption Champions Award -
 - ✎ **Nikhil Dey (India)**
 - ✎ Veronica Mihailov-Moraru (Moldova)
 - ✎ Stanislau Ivaskhevich (Belarus)
 - ✎ Marc N. Kollie (Liberia)
 - ✎ Francisco Belo Simoes da Costa (Timor-Leste)
 - ✎ Jean-Claude Mputu (Democratic Republic of the Congo)
 - ✎ Vladimir Novovic (Montenegro)
 - ✎ Annette Planells (Panama)
 - ✎ May De Silva (Seychelles)
 - ✎ Arturo Torres (Ecuador)
 - ✎ Ali Totakunov (Kyrgyzstan)
 - ✎ Dec 9 is also observed by UN as *International Day of Commemoration and Dignity of Victims of Crime of Genocide*.
3. ▶ Dec 1 - Statehood day of Nagaland, formed on Dec 1, 1963.
 - ✎ Hornbill Festival, called the 'Festivals of Festivals', is a 10-day annual cultural fest of Nagaland that showcases diverse Naga ethnicity. It begins Dec 1 each year, on Nagaland's Statehood day.
 - ✎ Dec 1 is also formation day of Border Security Force (BSF), border defence organisation of India. It is one of the seven Central Armed Police Forces of India, and was formed on 1 December 1965.
 - ✎ Dec 1 is also observed as -
 - ✎ Indigenous Faith Day, in Arunachal Pradesh.
 - ✎ World AIDS Day, to raise public awareness about Acquired Immuno Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS), caused due to infection of Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV). 2022 theme is *Equalize*.
4. ▶ Dec 10 is observed by UN as **International Human Rights Day**. 2023 theme is *Freedom, Equality and Justice for All*.
 - ✎ On this day in 1948, Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) was proclaimed by UN. Later in December 1993, UNGA announced to celebrate Human Rights Day annually.
 - ✎ Also, Dec 10 is marked as *Swahid Diwas* in Assam, commemorating martyrs of Assam Movement, which was an uprising in Assam during 1979-1985, demanding Government to detect and deport outsiders from state.
5. ▶ Dec 11 is observed by UN as **International Mountain Day**. 2023 Theme is *Restoring mountain ecosystems*.
6. ▶ Dec 12 is observed by UN as **Universal Health Coverage Day**. 2023 theme is *Health For All: Time For Action*.
 - ✎ Dec 12 is also observed by UN **International Day of Neutrality**.
7. ▶ Dec 14 is observed as **National Energy Conservation Day** in India, observed by Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE) under Ministry of Power, since 1991.
8. ▶ Dec 16 is observed as **Vijay Diwas**, commemorating Indian victory over Pakistan in war of 1971.
 - ✎ India fought against Pakistan to help Bangladesh obtain its freedom. It resulted in win for India, along with largest Military Surrender after World War – II, when 93000 Pakistani Soldiers surrendered. On the same day, Bangladesh celebrates its independence.

9. ▶ Dec 19 is observed as **Goa, Daman and Diu Liberation Day**, which were liberated on December 19 (1961) under *operation Vijay*, after around 450 years of Portuguese rule.
10. ▶ Dec 2 is observed by UN as **International Day for the Abolition of Slavery**.
 - ▶ Dec 2 is also observed as -
 - ▶ National Pollution Control Day in India, to commemorate people who lost their lives in unfortunate incident of Bhopal Gas Tragedy that occurred on this day in 1984.
 - ▶ World Computer Literacy Day, launched by Indian IT Firm NIIT in 2001.
 - ▶ **Asom Divas**, in state of Assam, which commemorates arrival of founder and first King of Ahom kingdom in ancient Assam.
11. ▶ Dec 20 is observed by UN as **International Human Solidarity Day**.
12. ▶ Dec 21, 2023 has been observed by UN as first-ever **World Basketball Day** (to be observed annually).
13. ▶ Dec 22 is observed as **National Mathematics Day** in India, to commemorate birth anniversary of Legendary Mathematician Srinivasa Ramanujan.
 - ▶ He contributed greatly to mathematics and is also known for Hardy-Ramanujan number- '1729', which is smallest number which can be represented as sum of two different cubes in two different ways.
 - ▶ On this occasion, *SASTRA Ramanujan Awards* for 2022 and 2023 were conferred upon mathematicians *Yunqing Tang* (2022) & *Ruixiang Zhang* (2023), at SASTRA University in Kumbakonam.
 - ▶ Both awardees are affiliated with University of California.
 - ▶ The awards, instituted by SASTRA in 2005, honor individuals under the age of 32 who have made remarkable contributions to mathematics. The award carries USD 10000.
14. ▶ Dec 23 is observed as **National Farmers Day** in India, to commemorate birth anniversary of 5th Prime Minister of India, **Choudhary Charan Singh**.
 - ▶ He was a farmer's leader and introduced many policies to improve lives of farmers. The day is observed since 2001.
15. ▶ Dec 24 is observed as **National Consumer Day** in India. Consumer Protection Act 1986 was enacted on 24th December, 1986.
16. ▶ Dec 25 - Birth Anniversary of Former PM and Bharat Ratna awardee Shri **Atal Bihari Vajpayee**. It is observed as **Good Governance Day** in India, since 2014.
 - ▶ On this occasion, Union Minister Jitendra Singh launched -
 - ▶ Extended Version of *Mission Karmayogi*, which integrates 3 new features on iGOT Karmayogi platform - My iGOT, Blended Programs and Curated Programs.
 - ▶ Launched jointly by *Karmayogi Bharat & NITI Aayog*, 6 SAMARTH Curated Training Programs on iGOT Karmayogi Platform for State Government officials include SAMARTH Blocks, SAMARTH Zila, SAMARTH Rajya, SAMARTH Rajya Sachiva, SAMARTH Policy & SAMARTH Procurement.
 - ▶ A new blended learning programme named *VIKAS (Variable & Immersive Karmayogi Advanced Support)*, meant for capacity building of Middle management civil servants in Central Secretariat.
 - ▶ Dec 25 is also Birth anniversary of Mahamana Pandit **Madan Mohan Malaviya**, noted educationist and independence activist.
 - ▶ On this occasion -
 - ▶ PM Narendra Modi released first series of 11 volumes of *Collected Works of Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya*.
17. ▶ Dec 26 is marked as **Veer Bal Diwas**, to mark martyrdom of sons of Sri Guru Gobind Singh - Sahibzadas Baba Zorawar Singh Ji and Baba Fateh Singh Ji. It was marked by Govt in Jan 2022.
 - ▶ On Dec 26 in 1704, Guru Gobind Singh's two sons Sahibzada *Fateh Singh* and *Zorawar Singh Ji*, were bricked alive in wall by Mughal Governor Wazir Khan, under rule of Cruel Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb. They were killed after refusing a safe passage on converting to Islam.
 - ▶ Later, Wazir Khan was beheaded by a Sikh Khalsa warrior named Fateh Singh, during Battle of Chappar Chiri, in May 1710.
18. ▶ Dec 27 is observed by UN as **International Day of Epidemic Preparedness**, observed since 2020.
19. ▶ Dec 3 is observed by UN as International Day of **Persons with Disabilities**.
 - ▶ Dec 3 is also Birth anniversary of Dr. *Rajendra Prasad*, first President of India.
20. ▶ Dec 4 is observed as **Indian Navy Day**, being observed in commemoration of *Operation Trident*, which celebrates bravery of Indian Navy that forced Pakistan to admit defeat during Indo-Pak war of 1971.
 - ▶ About -

- ✍ Pakistani army attacked India on December 03, 1971. India launched 'Operation Trident' in retaliation, after which 1971 war began. India targeted Pakistani Navy headquarters in Karachi with a tremendous attack, resulting in port of Karachi being completely destroyed.
- ✍ Indian Navy was established in 1612, when East India Company formed an army in form of the East India Company's Marine to protect its ships. It was renamed Bombay Marine in 1686. Later in 1892, it was renamed as Royal Indian Marine.
- ✍ On this occasion, PM Narendra Modi -
 - ✍ Unveiled statue of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj at Rajkot Fort (Sindhudurg, Maharashtra).
 - ✍ Announced to revamp ranks within Indian Navy, to eliminate colonial influences and infuse a distinct Indian cultural identity.
- ✍ Dec 04 is also Birth anniversary of -
 - ✍ 8th President of India, R. Venkataraman.
 - ✍ 12th PM of India, Inder Kumar Gujral.
- ✍ Dec 4 is also observed as -
 - ✍ *International Cheetah Day and Wildlife Conservation Day.*
 - ✍ **International Day of Banks**, by UN.
- 21. ▶ Dec 5 is observed by UN as **International Volunteer Day**, to show gratitude towards people who help others without monetary benefits. 2023 theme is *the power of collective action: if everyone did.*
 - ✍ Dec 5 is also observed as -
 - ✍ *World Soil Day*, observed by Food and Agriculture Organization of UN.
 - ✍ *Honey Bee Day* in Nagaland.
- 22. ▶ Dec 7 is observed as **Armed Forces Flag Day**, being observed annually since 1949. This day marks responsibility of every citizen to take care of families and dependents of armed forces personnel.
- 23. ▶ Dec 7 is observed by UN as **International Civil Aviation Day**. 2023 theme is *Advancing Innovation for Global Aviation Development.*
 - ✍ On this day in 1944, participants from 54 nations gathered in Chicago (US), had signed Convention on International Civil Aviation, known as 'Chicago Convention'.
- 24. ▶ Dec 8 is observed as SAARC Charter Day, commemorating establishment of South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) by Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka at First Summit meeting in Dhaka (Bangladesh). Afghanistan later joined as 8th SAARC member in 2007.
 - ✍ Dec 8 is also observed by Indian Army as 260th Corps Day of the Army Service Corps. Indian Army Service Corps handles Army's logistic support function, set up on Dec 08, 1760.
 - ✍ Dec 8 is also observed by Indian Navy as Submarine Day.
- 25. ▶ December 18 is observed by UN as **International Migrants Day**. 2023 theme is *Act Today*. It marks adoption of International Convention on Protection of Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families, adopted by UN on 18 December, 1990.
 - ✍ On this occasion -
 - ✍ Govt launched Project PRAYAS (*Promoting Regular & Assisted Migration for Youth and Skilled Professionals*), assisted by International Organisation for Migration (IOM) Development Fund.
 - ✍ It aims at development of a roadmap for improved coordination between Central and State Governments to encourage sharing of best practices on matters related to international migration cycle. The project is a joint collaboration between IOM India and Indian Council of World Affairs (ICWA).
 - ✍ Dec 18 is also observed as -
 - ✍ Minorities Rights Day in India.
 - ✍ UN Arabic Language Day.
- 26. ▶ United Nations declared **2024** as **International Year of Camelids**, to build awareness of untapped potential of camelids. It was proposed by *Bolivia*.
 - ✍ Camelids are members of biological family *Camelidae*, the only currently living family in the suborder Tylopoda. The seven extant members of this group are - dromedary camels, Bactrian camels, wild Bactrian camels, llamas, alpacas, vicuñas, and guanacos.
 - ✍ Notably, 2023 was observed by UN as *International Year of Millets* (Proposed by India).

Defence

1. ▶ 14th Edition of Indo-US Joint Army Special Forces exercise **VAJRA PRAHAR 2023** conducted at Joint Training Node, Umroi (Meghalaya).
2. ▶ 17th edition of annual **India-Nepal** Joint **Army** exercise **SURYA KIRAN** has been conducted in Pithoragarh (Uttarakhand).
3. ▶ 2nd edition of **India-Australia** joint **Tri-services** exercise **AUSTRAHIND-23** has been conducted at Perth (Australia).
4. ▶ Arunachal Pradesh CM Pema Khandu and US Ambassador to India, Eric Garcetti jointly inaugurated **Hump WWII Museum** in Pasighat, as second museum in Asia dedicated to honoring the fallen airmen of the US forces during World War II.
 - ✍ The museum's theme reflects history of *the Hump* air route, which was used by Allied forces to transport people from Assam to Yunnan (China).
 - ✍ The Hump route traverses various regions, including Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Tibet, Yunnan, and Myanmar, and an estimated 650 aircraft crashed in these areas due to extreme flying conditions.
5. ▶ Ferrycraft *Manjula* has been delivered to Indian Navy, built by *Shalimar Works Ltd (Kolkata)*.
 - ✍ Contract for construction and delivery of 07 x 250 Men Ferry Craft was signed with *Shalimar Works Ltd*. *Manjula* is 7th (last) Ferrycraft to be delivered under the project.
6. ▶ Garden Reach Shipbuilders & Engineers (GRSE) delivered **Sandhayak** to Indian navy, as first of four Survey Vessel (Large) ships being built under the contract signed in 2018.
 - ✍ Other 3 ships under the project are Nirdeshak, Ikshak & Sanshodhak.
7. ▶ Indian Air Force conducted **Astra Shakti 2023** exercise at Suryalanka Air Force Station (Andhra Pradesh). During the exercise -
 - ✍ India became first country to demonstrate the ability to engage four targets at once, when indigenously developed **Akash** medium-range surface-to-air missile system engaged 4 targets with its single firing unit, at range 25 KM.
 - ✍ IAF also successfully tested *Surface to Air Missile for Assured Retaliation (SAMAR)* air defence missile system.
 - ✍ SAMAR is a twin-turret rail launch platform which can launch two missiles in single or salvo mode, with missiles operating in Mach 2 to 2.5 range.
8. ▶ Indian Navy Hosted 1st edition of its high level virtual interaction **MAHASAGAR** (***Maritime Heads for Active Security And Growth for All in the Region***), attended by representatives from several Indian Ocean Region (IOR) Nations.
9. ▶ Indian Navy inducted Fast Attack Craft **INS Tarmugli**, at Naval Dockyard Visakhapatnam.
 - ✍ The ship has a unique distinction of having served under the flag of 2 nations, India and Maldives.
 - ✍ It served in Indian Navy as Trinkat Class *INS Tillanchang*, till 2006. It was thereafter gifted to *Maldives* and served there till May 2023 (as *MCGS Huravee*). It was then decommissioned by Maldives and returned to India.
 - ✍ Post extensive repair and upgrade, it has now been Inducted into Indian Navy service again, as *INS Tarmugli*.
10. ▶ Indian Navy's third indigenous stealth destroyer of Project 15B class, Named **Imphal**, has been commissioned into Indian Navy service.
 - ✍ Contract for four ships of Project 15B was signed with *Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders* in 2011, as a follow-on of Kolkata class (Project 15A) destroyers.
 - ✍ 3 ships have been commissioned into Indian Navy under Project 15B - Visakhapatnam, Mormugao & Now Imphal.
 - ✍ Another ship *Surat* has also been launched. It will be commissioned into Indian Navy in 2024.
11. ▶ Joint India-Vietnam Army exercise **VINBAX-23** held in Hanoi (Vietnam).
12. ▶ Keel has been laid for 4th and 5th ship (Mulki, Malpe) to be developed by *Cochin Shipyard Limited (CSL)* under *Anti-Submarine Warfare Shallow Water Craft* project.
 - ✍ Under this project, 8 ships are being made by each of Cochin Shipyard (CSL) and Garden Reach Shipbuilders and Engineers (GRSE). 1st ship to be launched under this project was *Arnala*.
 - ✍ ASW SWC project consists 16 planned ships, with over 80% indigenous content.
13. ▶ Misc. Defence News (Dec 2023) -
 - ✍ President Droupadi Murmu conferred *President's Colour* to *Armed Forces Medical College (AFMC) Pune*, in its platinum jubilee year (75th year). *President's Colour* is highest honour conferred upon any military unit in India.
 - ✍ Indian Army conducted a Table-Top Exercise (TTX) for Women Officers of Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) at Manekshaw Centre (New Delhi), to promote gender inclusivity and enhance capabilities of women military personnel in peacekeeping operations.

- ✍ Ministry of Defence signed contract with Telecommunications Consultants India Limited (TCIL) for *Digital Coast Guard (DCG)* project, at cost 589 crores.
- ✍ Indian Navy conducted co-ordinated exercise named *Prasthan*, at Mumbai Offshore Development Area.
- ✍ Ministry of Defence signed contract with *Mazagon Dockyard Shipbuilders*, for procurement of 6 *Next Generation Offshore Patrol Vessels* for *Indian Coast Guard*, at cost 1615 Crores.
- ✍ Pakistan tested indigenously developed guided multi-launch rocket system *Fatah-II*, with range 400 KMs.

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Economy

1. ▶ *IDFC FIRST Bank* launched *FIRST SWYP* credit card in association with Mastercard, as a youth-centric offering designed to cater to unique demands of new-age customers.
2. ▶ *Poonawalla Housing Finance* has been renamed as *Grihum Housing Finance*, after its acquisition by TPG Capital Asia.
3. ▶ **Inflation and Trade Data for November 2023 -**

✍ Wholesale price Index Based (WPI) -

✍ WPI based inflation stayed at **0.26 % in November 2023**.

✍ WPI Inflation in last 12 months -

- ✍ October 2023 - (-) 0.52 % (**Negative**)
- ✍ September 2023 - (-) 0.26 % (**Negative**)
- ✍ August 2023 - (-) 0.52 % (**Negative**)
- ✍ July 2023 - (-) 1.36 % (**Negative**)
- ✍ June 2023 - (-) 4.12 % (**Negative**) (*lowest in 8 years*)
- ✍ May 2023 - (-) 3.48 % (**Negative**)
- ✍ April 2023 - (-) 0.92 % (**Negative**)
- ✍ March 2023 - 1.34 %
- ✍ February 2023 - 3.85 %
- ✍ January 2023 - 4.73 %
- ✍ December 2022 - 4.95 %
- ✍ November 2022 - 5.85 %

✍ Consumer Price Index (CPI) Based (retail inflation) -

✍ CPI-based inflation rate for **November 2023** rose to **5.55 %**.

✍ CPI Inflation in Last 12 Months -

- ✍ October 2023 - 4.87 %
- ✍ September 2023 - 5.02 %
- ✍ August 2023 - 6.83 %
- ✍ July 2023 - 7.44 % (**15 Month High**)
- ✍ June 2023 - 4.81 %
- ✍ May 2023 - 4.25 % (**25 Month Low**)
- ✍ April 2023 - 4.7 %
- ✍ March 2023 - 5.66 %
- ✍ February 2023 - 6.44 %
- ✍ January 2023 - 6.52 %
- ✍ December 2022 - 5.72 %
- ✍ November 2022 - 5.88 %

✍ Trade -

✍ Overall Trade **November 2023** (Merchandise + Services) -

- ✍ Overall Imports - 67.88
- ✍ Overall Exports - 62.58
- ✍ Overall Trade Deficit - **5.30 Billion USD**

✍ Compared to Last Month (October 2023)

- ✍ Overall Imports - 79.35
- ✍ Overall Exports - 62.26

✍ Overall Trade Deficit - **17.08 Billion USD**

✍ Notably, India's Overall Trade Deficit stood at 21 month low of 1.38 **Billion USD**, in April 2023.

✍ Notable facts about *India's Trade during Previous Financial Year (FY 23 (2022-23))* -

✍ Exports stood at highest ever USD **770.18 billion** during FY 2022-23, growing 13.84 % over FY 2021-22.

✍ Out of this, Merchandise exports stood at USD 447.46 billion & Services exports at USD 322.72 billion, both a new annual record.

✍ US and UAE retained first and second places respectively as India's largest export destinations, during FY 2022-23. Netherlands rose to third place, replacing China.

✍ In terms of overall trade too (exports + imports), US remained India's top partner in 2022-23, with \$128.55 Billion Trade (Exports \$78.31 billion & imports \$50.24 billion).

4. ▶ As per *RBI Financial Stability Report December 2023* (Released twice a year) -

✍ Indian economy and domestic financial system remain resilient despite global economy facing multiple challenges.

✍ Capital to risk-weighted assets ratio (CRAR) and common equity tier 1 (CET1) ratio of scheduled commercial banks (SCBs) stood at 16.8 % and 13.7 % respectively, in September 2023.

✍ SCBs' gross non-performing assets (GNPA) ratio continued to decline to a multi-year low of 3.2 % and net non-performing assets (NNPA) ratio to 0.8 %, in September 2023.

✍ Resilience of non-banking financial companies (NBFCs) sector improved with CRAR at 27.6 %, GNPA ratio at 4.6 % and return on assets (RoA) at 2.9 % respectively, in September 2023.

✍ In 2022-23, consolidated balance sheet of scheduled commercial banks (SCBs), grew in double digits at 12.2%.

5. ▶ As per *World Economic League Table* by *Centre for Economics and Business Research (CEBR)* -

✍ India will become third-largest economy by 2032, outpacing Japan and Germany with robust growth averaging 6.5 %.

✍ India will become largest economy by 2100, becoming 90 % larger than China and 30 % larger than US.

6. ▶ As per data based on RBI's *Dynamic Stochastic General Equilibrium (DSGE)* model -

✍ India's GDP growth for FY24 (2023-24) will be 7.1%, followed by a relatively *slower and uneven* expansion of 6% during FY25 (2024-25).

✍ It predicts annual retail inflation to ease to 4.8% in FY25 (2024-25), from 5.3% in FY24 (2023-24).

7. ▶ Govt announced interest hike on small savings scheme **Sukanya Samriddhi** (SSY), which will now yield **8.2%** (up from previous 8%).

✍ Also, 3-year term deposits will now yield 7.1% (up from 7%).

✍ All other small saving schemes will carry unchanged interest rate -

✍ Public Provident Fund (PPF) - 7.1 %

✍ Kisan Vikas Patra - 7.5%

✍ National Savings Certificate - 7.7%

✍ Senior Citizens Savings Scheme - 8.2%

✍ Term Time 1 year - 6.9%

✍ Term Deposit 2 year - 7%

✍ Term Deposit 3 year - 7.5%

8. ▶ Gross GST revenue collected in November 2023 stood at **167929 crores** (15% Increase YoY), (CGST 30420 crore, SGST 38226 crores, IGST 87009 crores and Cess 12274 crores).

9. ▶ IRDAI announced to launch **Bima Vistaar** as first of its kind all-in-one affordable insurance product for life, health, and property cover.

✍ It is set to be rolled out in 1st quarter of FY25 (2024-25).

10. ▶ India's startup sector remained at 4th position in 2023 in terms of startup funding, recording lowest funding in 5 years.

✍ After grabbing 3rd spot globally in 2021 & 2022, India ranked 4th behind US, UK and China in 2023, receiving \$7 billion funding.

11. ▶ Loans approved by ADB (Asian Development Bank) for India in Dec 2023 -

✍ **\$200 million** - to improve quality, efficiency, and reliability of power supply in **Uttarakhand**.

✍ **\$200 million** - As additional financing for *Uttarakhand Integrated and Resilient Urban Development Project*, to further expand access to reliable water supply and upgrade sanitation facilities in **Uttarakhand**.

✍ **\$250 million** - To develop industrial corridors in India to increase competitiveness of the manufacturing sector, strengthen national supply chains and links with regional / global value chains.

- ✎ **\$200 million** - To improve solid waste management and sanitation in Indian cities. It will support India's Swachh Bharat (Clean India) Mission–Urban 2.0, which commits all cities to be garbage free by 2026.
 - ✎ **\$98 million** - To improve horticulture crop farmers' access to certified disease-free planting materials, which will boost their crops' yield, quality, and resilience to climate impacts.
 - ✎ **\$100 million** - To improve urban services and tourism facilities in **Tripura**.
 - ✎ **\$175 million** - To improve connectivity and resilience of roads in **Madhya Pradesh**.
 - ✎ **\$250 million** - To continue financing construction of 82-kilometre Delhi-Meerut Regional Rapid Transit System (RRTS) corridor, to help ease traffic congestion in NCR region.
12. ▶ Maharatna PSU REC Limited signed **200 million Euro loan** agreement with German bank **KfW**, as REC's sixth line of credit under Indo-German Development Cooperation.
13. ▶ Misc. Financial / Economy News (Dec 2023) -
- ✎ HDFC Securities launched its mobile trading app *HDFC SKY*, on Amazon Web Services cloud.
 - ✎ Indian GDP Growth Forecasts (Dec 2023) -
 - ✎ Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) - 6.3% in 2023-24 (FY24) and 6.1% in 2024-25 (FY25).
 - ✎ Asian Development Bank (ADB) - 6.7% in both 2023-24 (FY24) & 2024-25 (FY25).
 - ✎ Rating agency ICRA - 6.5% in 2023-24 (FY24).
 - ✎ As per data based on RBI's *Dynamic Stochastic General Equilibrium (DSGE)* model -
 - ✎ India's GDP growth for FY24 (2023-24) will be 7.1%, followed by a relatively *slower and uneven* expansion of 6% during FY25 (2024-25).
 - ✎ It predicts annual retail inflation to ease to 4.8% in FY25 (2024-25), from 5.3% in FY24 (2023-24).
 - ✎ Ministry of External Affairs introduced *Credit Insurance* as an alternative option for financial security in tandem with existing *Bank Guarantee* system, to ensure faster resolution of grievances registered by Indian migrant workers.
 - ✎ Life insurer HDFC Life's *Insure India* campaign has been inscribed in Guinness World Records, for creation of largest online *selfie mosaic*, with compilation of over 19000 photos contributed by individuals.
 - ✎ RBI cancelled banking licence of -
 - ✎ Kolhapur (Maharashtra) based *Shankarrao Pujari Nutan Nagari Sahakari Bank Limited*.
 - ✎ Sitapur (Uttar Pradesh) based *Urban Co-operative Bank Limited*.
 - ✎ Nashik (Maharashtra) based *Faiz Mercantile Cooperative Bank Ltd.*
 - ✎ Musiri (Tamil Nadu) based *Musiri Urban Co-operative Bank Ltd.*
 - ✎ Aurangabad (Maharashtra) based *Adarsh Mahila Nagari Sahakari Bank Maryadit.*
 - ✎ Botad (Gujarat) based *The Botad Peoples Co-operative Bank Ltd.* Notably, RBI has allowed it to function as non-banking institution.
 - ✎ *Ujjivan Small Finance Bank* partnered with *Water.org*, to provide affordable loans for construction of safe drinking water and sanitation facilities in homes, to address pressing issue of water and sanitation in India.
 - ✎ RBI announced rate of interest on *Government of India Floating Rate Bond 2031 (FRB 2031)* applicable for half year (December 07, 2023 to June 06, 2024) at 8.12 % per annum.
 - ✎ Indian Renewable Energy Development Agency Limited (IREDA) launched its retail division, to enhance emphasis on providing loans to borrowers under PM-KUSUM scheme, Rooftop Solar, and other Business-to-Consumer (B2C) sectors.
 - ✎ *Bank of India* launched *Nari Shakti* Savings Account, to cater specifically to women with an independent source of income.
 - ✎ IDFC FIRST Bank launched co-branded credit card in partnership with LIC and Mastercard, tailored to cater to diverse needs of policyholders across India.
 - ✎ *Reliance Industries* partnered with *DBS Bank India*, to establish a financing program targeting farmers and aggregators, to help manage crop residue effectively, utilizing it in production of compressed biogas (CBG).
 - ✎ Global rating agency *Moody's Investors Service* reaffirmed *Baa2* rating for India's *Reliance Industries*, maintaining a stable outlook.
 - ✎ *IndusInd Bank* launched *Indus Solitaire Program*, as an innovative community banking initiative specifically designed to cater to unique needs of diamond industry.
 - ✎ *Aditya Birla Sun Life Insurance* and *IDFC First Bank* signed *bancassurance* partnership, which enables the bank to sell its partner insurer's products to its customers.

- ✎ Govt granted one time exemption to Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) till May 2032, to comply with Minimum Public Shareholding (MPS) norms prescribed by Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI).
- ✎ As per updated terms, LIC has to achieve 25 % Minimum Public Shareholding (MPS) within 10 years from date of listing.
- ✎ Also, LIC announced opening a branch office at India's International Financial Services Centre GIFT City (Gujarat), to boost overseas offerings.
- ✎ *Bank of Baroda* announced to divest entire 100 % stake in its New Zealand Subsidiary.
- ✎ India made its first-ever payment in rupees for crude oil purchased from UAE, to promote local currency globally and diversify oil suppliers, cut transaction costs.
- ✎ Earlier -
 - ✎ In July 2022, RBI allowed importers to pay in rupees and exporters to receive payments in local currency.
 - ✎ In July 2023, India formalised an agreement with UAE for rupee settlements.
- 14. ▶ Notable Points in RBI Report *State Finances: A Study of Budgets of 2023-24*, an annual publication that provides an assessment of finances of State governments -
 - ✎ Improvement in State finances continued in 2022-23, with combined States' gross fiscal deficit (GFD) contained at 2.8 % of gross domestic product (GDP) - below budget estimates for 2nd consecutive year. States aim at consolidated GFD to stay under 3.1 % of GDP.
 - ✎ Alongside near elimination of revenue deficit, capital outlay is budgeted to increase by 42.6 % in 2023-24 to 2.9 % of GDP.
 - ✎ States' total outstanding liabilities are budgeted to fall to 27.6 % of GDP for 2023-24, from peak of 31 % in 2020-21.
- 15. ▶ RBI Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) kept key interest rates unchanged, raising its GDP growth projection for FY24 (2023-24) to 7% from 6.5% earlier, and retained average inflation forecast at 5.4%.
 - ✎ Current key MPC Rates -
 - ✎ Repo Rate - 6.50 %
 - ✎ Reverse Repo - 3.35 %
 - ✎ Bank Rate - 6.75 %
 - ✎ CRR (Cash Reserve Ratio) - 4.5 %
 - ✎ SLR (Statutory Liquidity ratio) - 18.00 %
 - ✎ Marginal Standing Facility (MSF) Rate - 6.75 %
- 16. ▶ RBI increased UPI payment limits for medical and educational purposes, from 1 to **5 lakh**.
- 17. ▶ RBI released *2023 list of Domestic Systemically Important Banks (D-SIBs)*, which includes **SBI, HDFC Bank and ICICI Bank**.
 - ✎ While ICICI Bank continues to be in same bucketing structure as last year, SBI and HDFC Bank move to higher buckets - SBI shifts from bucket 3 to bucket 4 and HDFC Bank from bucket 1 to 2.
- 18. ▶ State Bank of India (SBI) signed **€70 million** Line of Credit (LoC) agreement with **German Development Bank KfW**, to support solar projects in India.
- 19. ▶ World Bank approved **\$300 million** loan for India, for *Tamil Nadu Climate Resilient Urban Development Program*.
 - ✎ It will help 21 Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) in Tamil Nadu, to update their delivery systems and provide quality and efficient water supply and sewerage services to consumers.
- 20. ▶ World Bank approved **100 Million USD** Loan for India, for *Integrated Service Provision and Innovation for Reviving Economies (INSPIRES)* project in **Sikkim**.
 - ✎ It aims to train, upskill, and provide jobs for over 3 lakh women and youth in Sikkim, in high-growth and priority sectors.

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International

1. ▶ *Asian Development Bank (ADB)* and *Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA)* partnered to establish **Leading Asia's Private Infrastructure Fund 2 (LEAP 2)**, with capital of up to \$1.5 billion, to be provided by JICA. It aims to cofinance high-quality, resilient, and sustainable infrastructure projects in Asia and the Pacific.
2. ▶ *Myanmar* surpassed *Afghanistan* as world's largest source of opium in 2023, amid domestic instability and a significant decline in opium cultivation in Afghanistan After Taliban imposed a ban on drugs in 2022.
 - ✎ Opium, the base from which morphine and heroin are produced, is harvested from poppy flowers.
3. ▶ **Argentina** govt, led by newly elected president *Javier Milei*, withdrew its application to join **BRICS** Bloc of Nations.

- ✎ BRICS was formed in 2009, with founding members *Brazil, Russia, India, China & South Africa*.
- ✎ *Argentina, Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, Saudi Arabia, and UAE* were later invited to join the bloc, whose Full membership will take effect on 1 January 2024. However, Argentina has now withdrew its membership, and Saudi Arabia is also not yet formalised to be a BRICS member.
- 4. ▶ **Italy** formally withdrew from **China's** Belt and Road infrastructure initiative (**BRI**).
 - ✎ BRI is a global infrastructure development strategy adopted by China in 2013, to help China assume a greater leadership role in global affairs, by investing in over 150 countries.
- 5. ▶ **Sri Lanka** reached an *agreement in principle* with *India* and *Paris Club* group of creditors, on a debt treatment plan that will help the crisis-hit island nation tap the next tranche of the International Monetary Fund's \$3 billion recovery package.
 - ✎ *Paris Club* is a group of officials from major creditor countries whose role is to find co-ordinated and sustainable solutions to payment difficulties experienced by debtor countries. It currently has 22 permanent members.
- 6. ▶ **Tax Inspectors Without Borders (TIWB)**, a joint initiative of United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) has been launched in caribbean nation **Saint Lucia**, with India as Partner.
 - ✎ Under it, India will help Saint Lucia in strengthening its tax administration by transferring technical knowledge and sharing best practices.
 - ✎ Saint Lucia's is 7th TIWB programme which India has supported by providing Tax Experts.
- 7. ▶ As per WHO *World Malaria Report 2023*, Malaria Cases Surged To 249 Million In 2022, 16 Million Above Pre-Pandemic Levels.
- 8. ▶ As per World Bank's latest *Migration and Development Brief* -
 - ✎ Remittances to *low-and middle-income countries* slowed to 3.8 % in 2023, after averaging 9 % in 2021 and 2022.
 - ✎ India saw highest amount of remittance inflows in the world in 2023, at USD 125 billion.
- 9. ▶ As per report by *S&P Global Market Intelligence* -
 - ✎ India's Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) is world's 4th largest insurer in terms of life and accident & health reserves of companies for 2022.
 - ✎ Top 3 - Germany's Allianz SE (\$750.20 billion), China's Life Insurance Company (\$616.90 billion), Japan's Nippon Life Insurance Company (\$536.80 billion) and India's LIC (\$503.7 billion).
- 10. ▶ Central African oil-producing Nation **Angola** exited from **Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC)**, after similar exits from OPEC by Ecuador in 2020 and Qatar in 2019.
- 11. ▶ China's financial regulator adopted *One Province One Policy* approach, asking all provinces to come up with their own plans to handle financial risks, and resolve local debt issues.
- 12. ▶ India has been elected as a member of Executive Committee of *Codex Alimentarius Commission (CAC)*, representing Asian region.
 - ✎ CAC is an international food standards body established jointly by Food and Agriculture organization (FAO) and World Health Organization (WHO) in 1963, with the objective of protecting consumer's health and ensuring fair practices in food trade.
- 13. ▶ India has been re-elected to International Maritime Organisation (IMO) Council for 2024–25 biennium, with the highest tally.
 - ✎ India's re-election falls under Category of 10 states with *the largest interest in international seaborne trade*.
- 14. ▶ India-Korea *Electronic Origin Data Exchange System (EODES)* has been launched, for faster clearance of imported goods.
 - ✎ It will facilitate implementation of India-Korea Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) by electronic exchange of origin information between two customs administrations for goods traded under the CEPA.
- 15. ▶ Israel govt approved \$3.2 billion grant for Intel, to set up a \$25 billion chip plant in southern Israel, as largest investment ever by a company in Israel.
 - ✎ Notably, it came amidst israel's war with islamic militant group Hamas, ignited after Hamas' massacre of over 1500 innocent Israelis.
- 16. ▶ United Nations officially ended its decade-long peacekeeping mission in **Mali**, responding to Mali government's claim that the force was inadequate in addressing the escalating threat of violent islamic extremism.
- 17. ▶ World Health Organization (WHO) included *noma* (cancrum oris or gangrenous stomatitis) in its official list of neglected tropical diseases (NTDs).
 - ✎ Noma, a severe gangrenous disease of the mouth and face, primarily affects malnourished young children (between ages 2-6 years) in regions of extreme poverty.

NTDs are a diverse group of conditions caused by a variety of pathogens and associated with devastating health, social and economic consequences.

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Meetings

1. ▶ India hosted **Global Partnership on Artificial Intelligence (GPAI)** summit 2023 at Bharat Mandapam (**New Delhi**).
 - During the summit, *YUVAi-Youth for Unnati and Vikas with AI* was launched as a collaborative initiative of National e-Governance Division (NeGD) & Intel India, designed to equip the youth with essential AI skills.
 - Launched in June 2020 with 15 members, GPAI's membership has expanded to 28 member countries and European Union (EU). India is GPAI Chair in 2023.
2. ▶ 8th edition of **Global Technology Summit** held in New Delhi, as India's annual flagship event on Geotechnology, co-hosted by Ministry of External Affairs and Carnegie India. 2023 theme is *Geopolitics of Technology*.
3. ▶ **2023 Conference of the Parties of the UNFCCC** (known as **COP28**, or *28th United Nations Climate Change conference*) hosted in **Dubai (UAE)** -
 - About -
 - Held annually since first UN climate agreement in 1992, this event is intended for governments to agree on policies to limit global temperature rises and adapt to impacts associated with climate change. Next (29th) UN Climate Change Conference (COP29) will be held in Baku (Azerbaijan) in 2024.
 - Further, 30th UN Climate Change Conference (COP30) will be held in Belém (Brazil) in 2025.
 - Notably, India proposed to host COP33 in India in 2028.
 - Notable Highlights -
 - Sultan Ahmed Al Jaber* (minister of industry and advanced technology of UAE) was named president of COP28 climate talks.
 - Ahead of COP28 summit, *Global Faith Leaders Summit* was also organized, gathering different faith leaders with climate experts to fight climate change.
 - For the first time in history of COP summits, the global pact explicitly mentioned necessity to shift away from all kinds of fossil fuels. However, no clear commitment to *phase out* fossil fuels was reached.
 - During the summit -
 - A **loss and damage fund** to compensate poor states for effects of climate change was agreed on, to be administered by World Bank. Initial promises were made by host (UAE) to donate \$100 million, and by United Kingdom (\$75 million), United States (\$24.5 million), Japan (\$10 million) and Germany (\$100 million).
 - Joint consortium of *United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR)* and *United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS)* were selected as host of *Santiago network* secretariat, which aims to avert, minimize and address loss and damage from impacts of climate change, by accelerating countries' access to technical assistance.
 - Climate Change Performance Index (CCPI 2024)** was released, framed by Germanwatch -
 - Top 5 - Denmark (4), Estonia (5), Philippines (6), **India (7)**.
 - India improved its rank compared to 8th place last year.
 - No country got ranked in CCPI's top 3 places.
 - World Bank announced a new Climate and Health Program to urgently respond to rising negative health impacts of climate change in low- and middle-income countries.
 - World Bank data shows that a warmer climate could lead to at least 21 million additional deaths by 2050, from 5 health risks - extreme heat, stunting, diarrhea, malaria, and dengue.
 - New program will help countries to assess their climate and health vulnerabilities and increase investments in climate-resilient health systems to reduce impacts of climate change on people's health and livelihoods.
 - Michelle Zárata Palomec** (Mexico) & **Sebastian Mwaura** (Kenya) have been named winners of **UN Global Climate Action Awards**, for their outstanding efforts to make their communities more sustainable, resilient and equitable places to live.
 - As per **Emissions Gap Report 2023: Broken Record**, released by UNEP during COP28,
 - Progress since Paris Agreement (signed in 2015) -
 - Greenhouse gas emissions in 2030, were projected to increase by 16 % at the time of agreement's adoption. Today, the projected increase is 3 %.

- ✎ However, predicted 2030 greenhouse gas emissions still must fall by 28 % for Paris Agreement 2°C pathway and 42 % for 1.5°C pathway.
- ✎ Fully implementing unconditional Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) made under Paris Agreement would put the world on track for limiting temperature rise to 2.9°C above pre-industrial levels (by 2100). Fully implementing conditional NDCs would lower this to 2.5°C.
- ✎ Report calls for all nations to accelerate economy-wide, low-carbon development transformations
- ✎ Global GHG emissions reached record high of 57.4 GtCO₂e in 2022, growing by 1.2 % from previous year. Atmospheric CO₂ concentrations grew to 417.9 ± 0.2 PPM in 2022.
- ✎ Global GHG emissions must decline to levels between 33 and 41 GtCO₂e by 2030, to get on a least-cost pathway to meet temperature goal of Paris Agreement.
- ✎ Facts about India -
 - ✎ India has so far contributed 5 % of global warming (1850-2021).
 - ✎ India's GHG emissions increased by 5.1 % in 2022.
 - ✎ India is 3rd largest emitter, after US & China.
 - ✎ India's per capita greenhouse gas emissions of 2.4 tCO₂e (tonne carbon dioxide equivalent) are far below world average of 6.5 tCO₂e.
 - ✎ Per capita GHG emissions are highly unequally distributed across countries, with emissions as low as 1.3 tCO₂e in Nepal and as high as 73 tCO₂e in Qatar.
 - ✎ Global median estimates of per capita emissions by 2050 consistent with 2°C and 1.5°C scenarios are 2.2 tCO₂e and 1.0 tCO₂e respectively.
 - ✎ Notably, As per updated NDC, India stands committed to reduce Emissions Intensity of its GDP by 45 % by 2030, from 2005 level and achieve 50 % cumulative electric power installed capacity from non-fossil fuel-based energy resources by 2030.
- ✎ Notable Pledges / Declarations -
 - ✎ **Coalition for High Ambition Multilevel Partnerships (CHAMP)** for Climate Action (*signed by 71 countries*) - includes commitments to promote global climate action, make more ambitious Nationally determined contributions by 2025, increase efforts for climate change adaptation, preserving biodiversity for limit warming to 1.5 degrees.
 - ✎ **Declaration on a Global Climate Finance Framework** (*signed by 13 countries* including India) - Aims to mobilize 100 billion USD by 2025 and 5-7 trillion USD by 2030 to climate action.
 - ✎ **Declaration on Climate and Health** (*endorsed by 143 countries*) - Includes commitments to reduce negative health impacts from climate change.
 - ✎ Notably, India refrained from endorsing *COP28 Declaration on Climate and Health*, amid India's apprehensions about practicality and achievability of reducing greenhouse gas emissions for cooling within its healthcare infrastructure.
 - ✎ **Global Renewables and Energy Efficiency Pledge** (*signed by 130 countries*) - Countries pledge to refer to energy efficiency as *first fuel* and double rate of energy efficiency increase *from 2% to over 4% every year until 2030*. Pledge also includes tripling capacity of renewable energy by 2030.
 - ✎ **Global Cooling Pledge** (*Endorsed by 61 countries*) - Mentions effects of increasing heat waves on health and economy and contribution of cooling industry to climate change. Pledge includes cutting GHG emissions from cooling industry by 68% by 2050.
 - ✎ Declaration to **triple nuclear energy capacity from 2020 to 2050** (*signed by 25 countries*) - Signing countries pledged to implement policies to extend their nuclear capacities, stating that nuclear power can play key role in cutting carbon emissions to net zero.
 - ✎ UAE announced **US\$30 billion** commitment to newly launched catalytic climate vehicle **ALTÉRRRA**, which aims to boost international efforts to create a fairer climate finance system, with an emphasis on improving access to funding for Global South.
 - ✎ This makes ALTÉRRRA world's largest private investment vehicle for climate change action, aiming to mobilize US\$250 billion globally by 2030.
- ✎ PM Narendra Modi Attended the event on India's Behalf, along with Environment minister Bhupender Yadav -

- ✍ India & UAE co-hosted meet on *Green Credits Programme*, which has been conceptualized as a mechanism to incentivize voluntary pro-planet actions, to combat climate change. It envisions issue of *Green Credits* for plantations on waste/degraded lands and river catchment areas, to rejuvenate and revive natural eco-systems.
 - ✍ India co-hosted *LeadIT (Leadership Group for Industry Transition) Summit 2023*, along with Sweden. On the occasion, LeadIT 2.0 (second phase of LeadIT) was launched, with 3 pillars - A global forum for dialogue; Technology transfer and co-development; and an Industry Transitions Platform.
 - ✍ India attended *Mangrove Alliance for Climate (MAC)* ministerial meet, an initiative to raise awareness of significance of mangroves and their role in reducing global warming. It was launched during COP27 in Egypt.
 - ✍ Notably, India launched *Mangrove Initiative for Shoreline Habitats and Tangible Incomes (MISHTI)*, in Budget 2023-24. Under this, mangrove plantations along coastline / salt pans are being taken up.
 - ✍ UNICEF's Generation Unlimited in collaboration with India's *Ministry of Environment, Forest, and Climate Change*, launched *Green Rising* initiative, to mobilize youth to drive climate action.
 - ✍ *Green Rising* initiative, a part of *YuWaah* campaign in India, focuses on engaging youth for impactful environmental actions at grassroots level, aligning with global effort to address severe impacts of climate change.
 - ✍ **Global River Cities Alliance (GRCA)** has been launched at COP28, led by India's National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG) under Ministry of Jal Shakti.
 - ✍ It will widely expand reach of existing River Cities Alliance (RCA), formed by NMCG in association with National Institute of Urban Affairs (NIUA) in 2021.
 - ✍ Earlier, in this regard, River Cities Alliance (RCA) had signed Memorandum of Common Purpose (MoCP) with *Mississippi River Cities and Towns Initiative (MRCTI)*, representing 124 cities/towns situated along banks of Mississippi River (USA).
 - ✍ PM Narendra Modi also attended **World Climate Action Summit**, held as High-Level Segment of COP28.
 - ✍ Indian plastic surgeon *Atul Shah* has been honored with *2023 REACH Game Changing Innovator* award at COP28, for his groundbreaking contribution to leprosy care.
 - ✍ India joined United Nations' *Race to Resilience* global campaign, which aims to enhance resilience of most vulnerable communities to impacts of climate change by 2030.
4. ▶ Invest India (National Investment Promotion and Facilitation Agency of India) hosted *WAIPA (World Association of Investment Promotion Agencies) World Investment Conference 2023 (WIC)* at *India International Convention & Expo Centre - Yashobhoomi (New Delhi)*.

[Top](#)















National

1. ▶ High-Level Committee headed by Home Minister Amit Shah approved *Recovery and Reconstruction (R&R)* plan of 1658 crores for **Joshimath** (Uttarakhand), which was recently affected by large scale landslides and ground subsidence.
2. ▶ **Bihar** government launched ***Mission Daksh (Dynamic Approach for Knowledge and Skill)***, aimed at supporting 25 lakh children facing significant academic challenges in state-run schools.
 - ✍ It focuses on providing specialized Hindi, Mathematics, and English classes to students in classes 3-8 statewide. Each teacher will mentor five students.
3. ▶ **Garba of Gujarat** has been inscribed in **Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) of Humanity** by **UNESCO**, during meet of Intergovernmental Committee for Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Kasane (Botswana).
 - ✍ Garba is 15th ICH Element from India to Join the List.
4. ▶ **Winter Session of Parliament 2023** (Dec 4-21, 2023) -
 - ✍ Notable Info disseminated during session -
 - ✍ Share of agriculture in India's GDP has dropped from 35% in FY1991 (1990-91) to 15% in FY23 (2022-23), due to expansion of industrial and service sector GVAs.
 - ✍ Unclaimed deposits in Indian banks witnessed 28% annual rise during last financial year, reaching 42270 crores by end of FY23 (2022-23).
 - ✍ Public sector banks account for majority of these unclaimed deposits (36185 crores).
 - ✍ Govt announced initiative *Mera Gaon, Meri Dharohar*, developed in partnership with Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts (IGNCA).
 - ✍ It seeks to explore life, history, and ethos of Indian villages, highlighting their cultural richness.





- ✎ India has been selected as pioneer lead country for International Maritime Organization (IMO) *Green Voyage2050 Project*, which aims to assist developing countries in their efforts to reduce Green House Gases (GHG) emissions from ships.
- ✎ To encourage Spatial Planning by Gram Panchayats, Ministry of Panchayati Raj launched Geographic Information System (GIS) application *Gram Manchitra*, which facilitates planning at Gram Panchayat level using geo-spatial technology.
- ✎ India will operationalize a new research station in East Antarctica, named Maitri-II (near existing Indian research base Maitri). It will be operationalized in beginning of 2029.
- ✎ Govt has been implementing SHREYAS (Scholarships for Higher Education for Young Achievers) scheme, as an umbrella scheme comprising 4 central sector sub- schemes - *Top Class Education for SCs, Free Coaching Scheme for SCs and OBCs, National Overseas Scheme for SCs and National Fellowship for SCs*.
 - ✎ Rates under the scheme have been revised - 37000 pm for JRF and 42000 pm for SRF.
- ✎ Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment implements Central Sector Scheme namely *Scheme for Residential Education for Students in High Schools in Targeted Areas (SHRESHTA)* -
 - ✎ It aims to enhance reach of development Intervention of Government, to fill gap in service deficient SCs dominant areas, in the sector of education.
- ✎ Bills -
 - ✎ 19 Bills were passed by Both Houses of Parliament (Lok Sabha & Rajya Sabha) -
 - ✎ **Advocates (Amendment) Bill 2023** -
 - ✎ Bill amends **Advocates Act 1961**, which consolidates law related to legal practitioners and constitutes Bar Councils and the All-India Bar. The bill also repeals certain sections related to touts under *Legal Practitioners Act 1879*.
 - ✎ Key features -
 - ✎ Bill provides that any HC/District/Sessions judge/district magistrate / revenue officer (not below rank of district collector) may frame and publish lists of touts.
 - ✎ Tout refers to a person who Proposes to procure or procures employment of a legal practitioner in a legal business, in return of a payment.
 - ✎ Court / judge may exclude from the premises of the Court any person whose name is included in the list of touts.
 - ✎ Authorities empowered to publish list of touts may order subordinate courts to hold an inquiry into conduct of persons alleged or suspected to be touts.
 - ✎ No person will be included in such lists without getting an opportunity of showing cause against his inclusion.
 - ✎ Any person who acts as a tout while his name is included in the list of touts will be punished with imprisonment up to 3 months and / or a fine up to 500.
 - ✎ **Jammu and Kashmir Reservation (Amendment) Bill 2023** -
 - ✎ It amends *Jammu and Kashmir Reservation Act 2004*, which provides for reservation in jobs and admission in professional institutions to members of Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, and other socially and educationally backward classes.
 - ✎ Key features -
 - ✎ Under the Act, socially and educationally backward classes include people residing in villages declared as socially and educationally backward by UT of Jammu and Kashmir, people residing in areas adjoining Actual Line of Control and International Border, and weak and under-privileged classes (social castes).
 - ✎ Bill substitutes weak and under-privileged classes with other backward classes as declared by UT of Jammu and Kashmir.
 - ✎ **Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation (Amendment) Bill 2023** -
 - ✎ It amends *Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation Act 2019*, which provides for reorganisation of state of Jammu and Kashmir into UTs of Jammu and Kashmir (with legislature) and Ladakh (without legislature).
 - ✎ Key Features -

- ✎ 2nd Schedule of *Representation of the People Act 1950* provides for number of seats in legislative assemblies. 2019 Act amended 2nd Schedule of 1950 Act to specify total number of seats in Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly to be 83. It reserved six seats for Scheduled Castes. No seats were reserved for Scheduled Tribes.
 - ✎ Bill increases total number of seats to **90**. It also reserves 7 seats for Scheduled Castes and 9 seats for Scheduled Tribes.
- ✎ Bill adds that Lieutenant Governor may nominate up to 2 members from Kashmiri migrant community to Legislative Assembly, with 1 nominated member being a woman.
 - ✎ Migrants are defined as persons who migrated from Kashmir Valley or any other part of state of Jammu and Kashmir after November 1, 1989, and are registered with Relief Commissioner.
 - ✎ Migrants also include individuals who have not been registered due to being in government service in any moving office, having left for work, or possessing immovable property at place from where they migrated but are unable to reside there due to disturbed conditions.
- ✎ Bill adds that Lieutenant Governor may nominate to the Legislative Assembly 1 member representing displaced persons from Pakistan-occupied Jammu and Kashmir.
 - ✎ Displaced persons refer to individuals who left or were displaced from their place of residence in Pakistani-occupied Jammu and Kashmir and continue to reside outside such place.
 - ✎ Such displacement should have taken place in 1947-48, 1965, or 1971 due to civil disturbances.
- ✎ **Central Universities (Amendment) Bill 2023 -**
 - ✎ The Bill amends *Central Universities Act 2009*, which establishes central universities for teaching and research in various states.
 - ✎ Bill establishes a *Central Tribal University in Telangana*, to be named *Sammakka Sarakka Central Tribal University*. It will provide avenues of higher education and research facilities primarily for tribal population of India.
- ✎ **Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation (Second Amendment) Bill 2023 -**
 - ✎ The Bill amends *Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation Act 2019*, which provides for reorganisation of state of Jammu and Kashmir into UTs of Jammu and Kashmir (with legislature) and Ladakh (without legislature).
 - ✎ The Bill reserves one-third of all elected seats in Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly for women. This reservation will also apply to seats reserved for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in the Assembly.
 - ✎ Reservation will be effective once the census conducted after commencement of this Bill has been published. Based on census, delimitation will be undertaken to reserve seats for women. The reservation will be in place for 15 years. However, it will continue till such date as determined by a law made by Parliament.
 - ✎ Seats reserved for women will be rotated after each delimitation, as determined by a law made by Parliament.
- ✎ **Government of Union Territories (Amendment) Bill 2023 -**
 - ✎ The Bill amends *Government of Union Territories Act 1963*, which provides for establishing Legislative Assemblies and constitution of Councils of Ministers for certain UTs.
 - ✎ Bill reserves one-third of all elected seats in the Puducherry Legislative Assembly for women. This will also apply to the seats reserved for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in the Assembly.
 - ✎ Reservation will be effective once the census conducted after the commencement of this Bill has been published. Based on census, delimitation will be undertaken to reserve seats for women. Reservation will be provided for 15 years. However, it will continue till such date as determined by a law made by Parliament.
 - ✎ Seats reserved for women will be rotated after each delimitation, as determined by a law made by Parliament.
- ✎ **Post Office Bill 2023 -**
 - ✎ It repeals **Indian Post Office Act 1898**.
 - ✎ Bill provides for matters related to the functioning of the Post Office, an undertaking of the central govt (also known as India Post).






Key Features -






















-  Act provides that wherever central govt establishes posts, it will have exclusive privilege of conveying letters by post, as well as incidental services such as receiving, collecting, sending, and delivering letters. The Bill does not contain such privileges.
-  Bill states that Post Office will have the exclusive privilege of issuing postage stamps, similar to the Act.
-  Act specifies services provided by Post Office include delivery of postal articles and money orders. Bill provides that Post Office will provide services prescribed by central govt.
-  Act allows for interception of a shipment being transmitted through post on certain grounds, in case of any public emergency.
 -  Bill provides that interception of a shipment may be carried out on grounds of security, friendly relations with foreign states, public order/ emergency and contravention of provisions of the Bill or any other law.
-  The Act, as well as the Bill, provides for the appointment of the Director General of Postal Services.
 -  Under the Act, DG can decide time and manner of delivery of postal services, and Govt can notify charges for postal services.
 -  Bill enhances DG's rights by stating that he/she may make regulations regarding any activity necessary to provide postal services, make regulations to specify charges & may also make regulations on supply and sale of postage stamps and postal stationery.
-  Under the Act, a designated officer may examine a shipment if he suspects that it contains goods which are prohibited, or are liable to be paid duty upon.
 -  Officer must invite addressee to attend the examination. DG may direct the presence of two witnesses in the absence of the addressee.
 -  Bill removes the powers of examination. It instead provides that in such cases, govt may empower an officer to deliver the shipment to the customs / any other specified authority, who will then deal with the item in question.
-  Act specifies various offences and penalties. Bill does not provide for any offences or consequences, except one. Amounts not paid or neglected by a user will be recoverable as arrears of land revenue.
-  Act exempts govt from any liability related to loss, mis delivery, delay or damage to a postal article. Officers are also exempt from such liability unless they have acted fraudulently or wilfully.
 -  Bill retains these provisions. However, it provides that instead of central govt, the Post Office may prescribe the liability regarding its services.

National Capital Territory of Delhi Laws (Special Provisions) Second (Amendment) Bill 2023 -

-  Bill amends *National Capital Territory of Delhi Laws (Special Provisions) Second Act 2011*, which protects unauthorised development and encroachment by specified persons in UT of Delhi from punitive action.
 -  These include slum dwellers, hawkers, unauthorised colonies, schools, religious and cultural institutions, and agricultural godowns.
 -  It requires central govt to take certain measures to address these issues. These include: (i) finalising norms, policy guidelines, and strategies, and (ii) making orderly arrangements for relocation and rehabilitation.
-  Act was initially valid until December 31, 2014, with subsequent amendments extending it until December 31, 2023. The Bill further extends the validity until December 31, 2026.

Central Goods and Services Tax (Second Amendment) Bill 2023 -

-  It amends *Central Goods and Services Tax (CGST) Act 2017*, which provides for levy and collection of CGST on the intra-state supply of goods and services.
-  Act allows central govt to set up an Appellate Tribunal on recommendation of GST Council.
 -  The Tribunal comprises President, a judicial member, and two technical members.
 -  Persons eligible to be appointed as judicial member are: (i) judge of High Court, or (ii) district judge or additional district judge having served for at least 10 years.
 -  Bill allows advocates with at least 10 years of experience to be appointed as the judicial member, with substantial experience in matters relating to indirect taxation.

-  Minimum age to be appointed as a member or president of the Tribunal will be 50 years.
-  Bill increases the age limit: (i) for the president of the Tribunal from 67 to 70 years, and (ii) for members from 65 to 67 years.
-  **Provisional Collection of Taxes Bill 2023 -**
 -  Bill repeals *Provisional Collection of Taxes Act 1931*, which provides for interim imposition or increase of customs or excise duty. The Bill retains all the provisions under the Act, including *Interim collection of taxes & Refund of taxes and duties in certain cases*.
-  **Bharatiya Nyaya (Second) Sanhita 2023 -**
 -  The Bill will replace *Indian Penal Code 1860*.
 -  Key Changes include -
 -  **Offences against the body:** The IPC criminalises acts such as murder, abetment of suicide, assault and causing grievous hurt. The BNS2 retains these provisions. It adds new offences such as organised crime, terrorism, and murder or grievous hurt by a group on certain grounds.
 -  **Sexual offences against women:** The IPC criminalises acts such as rape, voyeurism, stalking and insulting the modesty of a woman. The BNS2 retains these provisions. It increases threshold for victim to be classified as a minor, in the case of gangrape, from 16 to 18 years of age. It also criminalises sexual intercourse with a woman by deceitful means or making false promises.
 -  **Sedition:** The BNS2 removes the offence of sedition. It instead penalises the following: (i) exciting or attempting to excite secession, armed rebellion, or subversive activities, (ii) encouraging feelings of separatist activities, or (iii) endangering the sovereignty or unity and integrity of India. These offences may involve exchange of words or signs, electronic communication, or use of financial means.
 -  **Terrorism:** Terrorism includes an act that intends to: (i) threaten the unity, integrity, security or economic security of the country, or (ii) strike terror in the people or any section of people in India. Punishment for attempting or committing terrorism includes: (i) death or life imprisonment, and a fine, if it results in death of a person, or (ii) imprisonment between five years and life, and a fine.
 -  **Organised crime:** Organised crime includes offences such as kidnapping, extortion, contract killing, land grabbing, financial scams, and cybercrime carried out on behalf of a crime syndicate. Attempting or committing organised crime will be punishable with: (i) death or life imprisonment and a fine of Rs 10 lakh, if it results in death of a person, or (ii) imprisonment between five years and life, and a fine of at least five lakh rupees.
 -  **Mob lynching:** The BNS2 adds murder or grievous hurt by five or more people on specified grounds, as an offence. These grounds include race, caste, sex, language, or personal belief. The punishment for such murder is life imprisonment or death.
 -  **Rulings of the Supreme Court:** The BNS2 conforms to some decisions of the Supreme Court. These include omitting adultery as an offence and adding life imprisonment as one of the penalties (in addition to the death penalty) for murder or attempt to murder by a life convict.
 -  The Bill also exempts Doctors from *criminal prosecution* in alleged *medical negligence cases* when a patient dies during medical proceedings.
-  **Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha (Second) Sanhita 2023 -**
 -  It seeks to replace *Criminal Procedure Code 1973 (CrPC)*, which provides for procedure for arrest, prosecution, and bail.
 -  Key features of CrPC include -
 -  CrPC classifies offences into two categories: cognisable and non-cognisable. Cognisable offences are those in which the police can arrest and initiate an investigation without a warrant. Non-cognisable offences require a warrant, and in some cases, a complaint by the victim or a third party.
 -  CrPC deals with various types of criminal offences, ranging from traffic violations to murder. It distinguishes between bailable and non-bailable offences, specifying the offences for which an accused has the right to bail from police custody.
 -  Key changes included in new Bill -

- ✎ **Detention of undertrials:** As per CrPC, if an accused has spent half of maximum period of imprisonment in detention, he must be released on personal bond. This does not apply to offences punishable by death. BNSS2 adds that this provision will also not apply to: (i) offences punishable by life imprisonment, and (ii) persons against whom proceedings are pending in more than one offence.
- ✎ **Medical examination:** CrPC allows medical examination of accused in certain cases, including rape cases. Such examination is done by a registered medical practitioner on the request of at least a sub-inspector level police officer. BNSS2 provides that any police officer can request such an examination.
- ✎ **Forensic investigation:** BNSS2 mandates forensic investigation for offences punishable with at least 7 years of imprisonment. In such cases, forensic experts will visit crime scenes to collect forensic evidence and record the process.
- ✎ **Signatures and finger impressions:** CrPC empowers a Magistrate to order any person to provide specimen signatures or handwriting. BNSS2 expands this to include finger impressions and voice samples. It allows these samples to be collected from a person who has not been arrested.
- ✎ **Timelines for procedures:** BNSS2 prescribes timelines for various procedures.
 - ✎ For instance, it requires medical practitioners who examine rape victims to submit their reports to the investigating officer within seven days.
 - ✎ Other specified timelines include: (i) giving judgement within 30 days of completion of arguments (extendable up to 45 days), (ii) informing the victim of progress of investigation within 90 days, and (iii) framing of charges by a sessions court within 60 days from the first hearing on such charges.
- ✎ **Hierarchy of Courts:** CrPC establishes a hierarchy of courts for adjudication of criminal matters in India.
 - ✎ These courts include: (i) Magistrate's Courts: subordinate courts responsible for the trial of most criminal cases, (ii) Sessions Courts: presided over by a Sessions Judge and hear appeals from Magistrate's Courts, (iii) High Courts: have inherent jurisdiction to hear and decide criminal cases and appeals, and (iv) Supreme Court: hear appeals from High Courts and also exercise its original jurisdiction in certain matters.
 - ✎ CrPC empowers state governments to notify any city or town with a population of more than one million as a metropolitan area. Such areas have Metropolitan Magistrates. BNSS2 removes the classification of metropolitan areas and Metropolitan Magistrates.
- ✎ Notably, the Bill may also **expand powers of the police**, related to detention, police custody and use of handcuffs.

✎ **Bharatiya Sakshya (Second) Bill 2023 -**

- ✎ It seeks to replace Indian Evidence Act 1872 (IEA). It retains most provisions of the IEA including those on confessions, relevancy of facts, and burden of proof.
- ✎ Bill retains most of the provisions of the IEA, including -
 - ✎ **Admissible evidence:** Parties involved in a legal proceeding can only present admissible evidence. Admissible evidence can be classified as either 'facts in issue' or 'relevant facts'. Facts in issue refer to any fact that determines the existence, nature, or extent of any right, liability, or disability claimed or denied in a legal proceeding. Relevant facts are facts that are pertinent to a given case. The IEA provides for two kinds of evidence – documentary and oral evidence.
 - ✎ **A proved fact:** A fact is considered proven when, based on the evidence presented, the Court believes it to either: (i) exist, or (ii) its existence so likely that a prudent man should act as if it exists in circumstances of the case
 - ✎ **Police confessions:** Any confession made to a police officer is inadmissible. Confessions made in police custody are also inadmissible, unless recorded by a Magistrate. However, if a fact is discovered as a result of information received from an accused in custody, that information may be admitted if it distinctly relates to the fact discovered.
- ✎ Key changes proposed in Bill include -

- ✎ **Documentary evidence:** Under IEA, a document includes writings, maps, and caricatures. BSB2 adds that electronic records will also be considered as documents. Documentary evidence includes primary and secondary evidence.
 - ✎ Primary evidence includes the original document and its parts, such as electronic records and video recordings. Secondary evidence contains documents and oral accounts that can prove the contents of the original. The BSB2 retains this classification.
- ✎ **Oral evidence:** Under IEA, oral evidence includes statements made before Courts by witnesses in relation to a fact under inquiry. BSB2 allows oral evidence to be given electronically. This would permit witnesses, accused persons, and victims to testify through electronic means.
- ✎ **Admissibility of electronic or digital records as evidence:** Documentary evidence includes information in electronic records that have been printed or stored in optical or magnetic media produced by a computer.
 - ✎ BSB2 provides that electronic or digital records will have the same legal effect as paper records. This will also include records on emails, server logs, smartphones, locational evidence and voice mails.
- ✎ **Secondary evidence:** BSB2 expands secondary evidence to include: (i) oral and written admissions, and (ii) the testimony of a person who has examined the document and is skilled to examine the documents.
- ✎ **Joint trials:** A joint trial refers to the trial of more than one person for the same offence. IEA states that in a joint trial, if a confession made by one of the accused which also affects other accused is proven, it will be treated as a confession against both. BSB2 adds an explanation to this provision. It states that a trial of multiple persons, where an accused has absconded or has not responded to an arrest warrant, will be treated as a joint trial.

✎ **Chief Election Commissioner and Other Election Commissioners (Appointment, Conditions of Service and Term of Office) Bill 2023 -**

- ✎ It repeals *Election Commission (Conditions of Service of Election Commissioners and Transaction of Business) Act 1991*.
- ✎ Key Features -
 - ✎ As per Article 324 of the Constitution, the Election Commission consists of Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) and such number of other Election Commissioners (ECs), as the President may decide. CEC and other ECs are appointed by the President.
 - ✎ Bill specifies same composition of Election Commission, and adds that CEC and other ECs will be appointed by President on recommendation of a Selection Committee.
 - ✎ Selection Committee will consist of Prime Minister as Chairperson, Leader of the Opposition in Lok Sabha as member, and a Union Cabinet Minister nominated by Prime Minister as member.
 - ✎ A Search Committee will prepare a panel of 5 persons for consideration of Selection Committee.
 - ✎ Search Committee will be headed by Cabinet Secretary. It will have two other members, not below the rank of Secretary to central government.
 - ✎ Persons who are holding or have held posts equivalent to rank of Secretary to central government will be eligible to be appointed as CEC and ECs.
 - ✎ Act provides that salary of ECs will be equal to that of a Supreme Court judge.
 - ✎ Bill provides that salary, allowance, and service conditions of the CEC and other ECs will be the same as that of Cabinet Secretary.
 - ✎ Act mandates that CEC and other ECs will hold office for a term of 6 years or until they reach age of 65 years, whichever is earlier. If an EC is appointed as the CEC, his total term cannot exceed six years.
 - ✎ Bill retains the same tenure. Further, under the Bill, the CEC and other ECs will not be eligible for re-appointment.
 - ✎ Under Article 324 of Constitution, the CEC can only be removed from his office in a manner similar to that of a Supreme Court judge.
 - ✎ This is done through an order of the President, based on a motion passed by both Houses of Parliament in same session. The motion for removal must be adopted with majority support of

total membership of each House, and at least two-thirds support from members present and voting.

- ✎ An EC can only be removed from office on recommendation of the CEC.

- ✎ The Bill retains this removal procedure.

- ✎ 1991 Act provides that CEC and other ECs may submit their resignation to the President. The Bill has the same provision.

✎ **Press and Registration of Periodicals Bill 2023 -**

- ✎ It repeals **Press and Registration of Books Act 1867**.

- ✎ Key Features -

- ✎ Act provides for registration of newspapers, periodicals, and books, along with cataloguing of books.

- ✎ Bill provides for registration of periodicals, which include any publication containing public news or comments on public news. Periodicals do not include books or scientific and academic journals.

- ✎ Act provides that a declaration specifying printer/ publisher be made to District Magistrate. DM sends it to Press Registrar, who then issues certificate of registration. Such declaration and authentication by DM is necessary for publication of newspaper.

- ✎ Bill allows publisher of a periodical to obtain a registration certificate by filing an online application with Press Registrar General and specified local authority.

- ✎ Any person convicted of a terrorist act or unlawful activity, will not be allowed to publish a periodical.

- ✎ An exact reproduction of a foreign periodical may be printed in India only with prior approval of govt.

- ✎ Act provides for govt to appoint a Press Registrar who maintains a register of newspapers.

- ✎ Bill provides for *Press Registrar General of India* who will issue registration certificates for all periodicals. Press Registrar General will also maintain a register of periodicals, make guidelines for admissibility of title of periodicals, verify circulation figures of prescribed periodicals, and revise/ cancel registration.

- ✎ Act requires a printing press to be declared before DM.

- ✎ Bill allows for information regarding printing presses to be submitted to Press Registrar General through an online portal.

- ✎ Bill allows *Press Registrar General* to suspend a periodical's registration for minimum 30 days (extendable to 180 days).

- ✎ Registration may be suspended due to registration obtained by furnishing false information, failure to publish periodicals continuously and giving false particulars in annual statements.

- ✎ Bill empowers *Press Registrar General* to impose penalties for publishing periodicals without registration (up to 5 lakh), failing to furnish annual statement within specified time (up to 20000 on first default).

- ✎ Any person may appeal against refusal to issue a registration certificate, suspension/ cancellation of registration, or imposition of penalty. Such appeals may be filed before Press and Registration Appellate Board within 60 days.

✎ **The Telecommunications Bill 2023 -**

- ✎ The Bill seeks to replace *Indian Telegraph Act 1885* and *Indian Wireless Telegraphy Act 1933*. Key features of the Bill include -

- ✎ **Authorisation for telecom-related activities:** Prior authorisation from central government will be required to: (i) provide telecommunication services, (ii) establish, operate, maintain, or expand telecommunications networks, or (iii) possess radio equipment. Existing licences will continue to be valid for the period of their grant, or for five years, where the period is not specified.

- ✎ **Assignment of spectrum:** Spectrum will be assigned by auction, except for specified uses, where it will be allocated on an administrative basis. Specified purposes include: (i) national security and defence, (ii) disaster management, (iii) weather forecasting, (iv) transport, (v) satellite services such as DTH and satellite telephony, and (vi) BSNL, MTNL, and public broadcasting services. Govt may re-purpose or re-assign any frequency range, and may permit sharing, trading, leasing, and surrender of spectrum.

- ✎ **Powers of interception and search:** Messages or a class of messages between two or more persons may be intercepted, monitored, or blocked on certain grounds.
 - ✎ Such actions must be necessary or expedient in the interest of public safety or public emergency, and must be in the interest of specified grounds which include: (i) security of the state, (ii) prevention of incitement of offences, or (iii) public order.
 - ✎ These actions will be subject to procedure, safeguards, and duration as may be prescribed.
 - ✎ Telecom services may be suspended on similar grounds.
 - ✎ Govt may take temporary possession of any telecom infrastructure, network, or services on occurrence of any public emergency or public safety.
 - ✎ An officer authorised by government may search premises or vehicles for possession of unauthorised telecom network or equipment.
- ✎ **Protection of users:** Govt may provide for measures to protect users which include: (i) prior consent to receive specified messages such as advertising messages, (ii) creation of Do Not Disturb registers, and (iii) a mechanism to allow users to report malware or specified messages. Entities providing telecom services must establish an online mechanism for registration and redressal of grievances.
- ✎ **Right of way:** Entities laying telecommunication infrastructure may seek right of way over public or private property. Right of way must be provided on a non-discriminatory and non-exclusive basis to the extent possible.
- ✎ **Appointments to TRAI:** Bill amends TRAI Act to also allow individuals with: (i) at least 30 years of professional experience to serve as the Chairperson, and (ii) at least 25 years of professional experience to serve as members.
- ✎ **Digital Bharat Nidhi:** Universal Service Obligation Fund has been established under Indian Telegraph Act 1885 to provide for telecom services in underserved areas. The Bill retains this provision, renames the fund as *Digital Bharat Nidhi*, and also allows its use for research and development in telecom.
- ✎ **Offences and penalties:** Bill specifies various criminal and civil offences.
 - ✎ Providing telecom services without authorisation, or gaining unauthorised access to a telecom network or data, are punishable with imprisonment up to three years, a fine up to two crore rupees, or both.
 - ✎ Breaching terms and conditions of authorisation is punishable with a civil penalty of up to five crore rupees.
 - ✎ Possessing unauthorised equipment, or using unauthorised network or service, is punishable with a penalty of up to ten lakh rupees.
- ✎ **Adjudication process:** Govt will appoint an adjudicating officer to conduct inquiries and pass orders against civil offences under the Bill.
 - ✎ The officer must be of the rank of joint secretary and above.
 - ✎ Orders of adjudicating officer may be appealed before the Designated Appeals Committee within 30 days.
 - ✎ Members of Committee will be officers of the rank of at least Additional Secretary.
 - ✎ Appeals against the orders of the Committee, in connection to breach of terms and conditions, may be filed with TDSAT within 30 days.

5. ▶ A Constitution Bench of Supreme Court unanimously upheld power of the President to abrogate **Article 370** of the Constitution, which in August 2019 led to reorganisation of the State of Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) into 2 UTs and denuded it of its special privileges.

✎ It reasoned that -

- ✎ Article 370 was only a 'temporary provision' to ease accession of the then princely State to Union at a time of internal strife and war.
- ✎ Special privileges of J&K as well as a separate Constitution were held to be a mere feature of 'asymmetric federalism' and not sovereignty.

6. ▶ Cabinet Approvals (Dec 08, 2023) -

✎ General -

- ✎ Approved additional allocation of 2500 crores for continuation of Interest Equalisation Scheme till 30th June 2024.

- ✎ This would help exporters from identified sectors and all MSME manufacturer exporters to avail pre and post shipment Rupee export credit at competitive rates.
- ✎ It shall be implemented by RBI through banks who provide pre / post shipment credit to exporters. The Scheme is jointly monitored by DGFT and RBI.
- ✎ Benefit shall be continued till 30-06-2024 to manufacturer / merchant exporters of identified 410 tariff lines, and to all manufacturer exporters from MSME sectors at mentioned rates -

	Category of Exporters	Rate of interest Equalisation
1	Manufacturer and Merchant Exporters exporting products listed in the 410 tariff lines	2%
2	MSME exporters of all tariff lines	3%

- ✎ CCEA (Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs) -

- ✎ Approved reservation norms for mandatory use of jute in packaging for Jute Year 2023 -24 (July 2023 to June 2024), under JPM Act, 1987.
- ✎ It provides for 100% reservation of foodgrains and 20% of sugar to be compulsorily packed in jute bags.

7. ▶ Cabinet Approvals (Dec 15, 2023) -

- ✎ General -

- ✎ Approved to declare **Surat Airport** (Gujarat) as an *International Airport*, aimed at unlocking economic potential of Surat airport and to boost trade.

- ✎ MOUs -

- ✎ Saudi Arabia - Cooperation in field of Digitization and Electronic manufacturing .
- ✎ Italy - Cooperation in field of Industrial Property Rights.
- ✎ Tanzania - Cooperation in field of sharing successful Digital Solutions implemented at Population Scale for Digital Transformations.
- ✎ USA - To enhance innovation ecosystems through an innovation handshake.

- ✎ Background -

- ✎ During 5th *India-US Commercial Dialogue* held in New Delhi in March 2023, the Commercial Dialogue was re-launched with strategic focus on several key areas. It also included launch of a new *Working Group on Talent, Innovation and Inclusive Growth (TIIG)*, with special focus on Start-ups working towards goals of iCET (Initiative on Critical and Emerging Technologies (iCET)).
- ✎ Further, The Joint Statement released by US President Joe Biden and PM Narendra Modi in June 2023 (During PM Modi's state visit to USA) established an *Innovation Handshake* that shall connect two sides' dynamic startup ecosystems, particularly in critical and emerging technologies (CET).
- ✎ To formalize the cooperation under the Innovation handshake and implement the guidance, an MoU was signed between India and US in Nov 2023 (during Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal's visit to USA). Concerned MOU has now been approved by union cabinet.

8. ▶ Cabinet Approvals (Dec 27, 2023) -

- ✎ Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA Approvals -

- ✎ Approved Minimum Support Prices (MSPs) for copra for 2024 season.
- ✎ MSP for Fair Average Quality of milling copra has been fixed at 11160 per quintal and for ball copra at 12000 per quintal for 2024 season.
- ✎ This will ensure a margin of 51.84 % for milling copra and 63.26 % for ball copra.
- ✎ Approved Construction of 4556 m long, 6-Lane High Level/ Extra Dosed Cable stayed Bridge across River Ganga and its approaches on both sides in Districts of Patna and Saran (NH-139W) in Bihar, at cost 3064 crores.
- ✎ Approved Improvement & Widening to two lane with paved shoulder of road covering 135 kms, in Tripura (on NH-208).
- ✎ Project involves investment of 2487 crores, which includes a loan component of 1512 crores, from Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) under its Official Development Assistance (ODA) scheme.

- ✎ General

- ✎ Approved proposal to open of a Consulate General of India in Auckland (New Zealand).

- ✎ MOUs -

- ✍ Malaysia - To strengthen cooperation in field of broadcasting, exchange of news, and audio-visual programmes.
 - ✍ Approved proposal of Ministry of External Affairs to sign and ratify *Migration and Mobility Agreement* between India and Italy.
 - ✍ It will enhance people-to-people contacts, foster mobility of students, skilled workers, young professionals and strengthen cooperation on issues related to irregular migration.
9. ▶ Commerce & Industry Minister Piyush Goyal released *Logistics Ease Across Different State (LEADS) 2023* report (5th edition).
- ✍ LEADS report classifies states / UTs under Achievers / Fast Movers / Aspirers groups, as per their performance in logistics sector.
 - ✍ States / UTs ranked under *Achievers* category include -
 - ✍ Coastal - Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu
 - ✍ Landlocked - Haryana, Punjab, Telangana, Uttar Pradesh
 - ✍ North-East - Assam, Sikkim, Tripura
 - ✍ Union Territories - Chandigarh, Delhi
10. ▶ Environment Minister *Bhupender Yadav* launched **National Transit Pass System (NTPS)** pan-India, to facilitate seamless transit of timber, bamboo, and other forest produce across country.
- ✍ NTPS is envisioned as a *One Nation-One Pass* regime, to enable seamless transit across country by replacing permits based on state specific transit rules.
 - ✍ This will streamline issuance of timber transit permits by providing a unified, online mode for tree growers and farmers involved in agroforestry across country.
11. ▶ General Elections to State Assemblies of **Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Mizoram, Rajasthan and Telangana 2023** -
- ✍ **Chhattisgarh** -
 - ✍ **Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)** won clear majority by winning **54** out of 90 seats, followed by *Indian National Congress* (35 seats).
 - ✍ **Vishnu Deo Sai** has been named New (4th) **Chief Minister** of Chhattisgarh, for his 1st term.
 - ✍ Deputy CM - Arun Sao, Vijay Sharma.
 - ✍ Speaker - Raman Singh.
 - ✍ **Madhya Pradesh** -
 - ✍ **Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)** won clear majority by winning **163** out of 230 seats, followed by *Indian National Congress* (66 seats).
 - ✍ **Mohan Yadav** has been named New (19th) **Chief Minister** of MP, for his 1st term.
 - ✍ Deputy CM - Rajendra Shukla, Jagdish Devda.
 - ✍ Speaker - Narendra Singh Tomar
 - ✍ **Mizoram** -
 - ✍ **Zoram People's Movement** won clear majority by winning **27** out of 40 seats, followed by *Mizo National Front* (10 seats).
 - ✍ **Lalduhoma** has been named New (6th) **Chief Minister** of Mizoram, for his 1st term.
 - ✍ **Rajasthan** -
 - ✍ **Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)** won clear majority by winning **115** out of 200 seats, followed by *Indian National Congress* (69 seats).
 - ✍ **Bhajan Lal Sharma** has been named New (14th) **Chief Minister** of Rajasthan, for his 1st term.
 - ✍ Deputy CM - Diya Kumari, Prem Chand Bairwa.
 - ✍ Speaker - Vasudev Devnani
 - ✍ **Telangana** -
 - ✍ **Indian National Congress (INC)** won clear majority by winning **64** out of 119 seats, followed by *Bharat Rashtra Samithi* (39 seats).
 - ✍ **Anumula Revanth Reddy** has been named New (2nd) **Chief Minister** of Telangana, for his 1st term.
 - ✍ Deputy CM - Bhatti Vikramarka Mallu.
 - ✍ Speaker - Gaddam Prasad Kumar
12. ▶ General News / Events (Dec 1-10, 2023) -
- ✍ 2nd Edition of flagship Financial Technology event *Infinity Forum 2.0* hosted by International Financial Services Centres Authority (IFSCA) and GIFT City (Gujarat).

- ✎ *Uttarakhand Global Investors Summit 2023* held at Dehradun, with theme *Peace to Prosperity*.
 - ✎ Transport and Highways Minister Nitin Gadkari virtually inaugurated luxury vessel *Classic Imperial*, as biggest of its kind tourist vessel in Kerala.
 - ✎ 4th edition of ASEAN India Grassroots Innovation Forum (AIGIF) launched in Langkawi (Malaysia).
 - ✎ India announced US\$1 million immediate relief assistance to *Papua New Guinea*, after major volcanic eruption at Mount Ulawun.
 - ✎ National Water Mission (Ministry of Jal Shakti) hosted *Jal Itihas Utsav* at Mehrauli (New Delhi).
 - ✎ As per 1st Delta Ranking of Aspirational Blocks Programme (ABP) released by NITI Aayog -
 - ✎ Tiriyani Block of Kumuram Bheem Asifabad district (Telangana) ranked at top, followed by Kaushambi block of Kaushambi District (Uttar Pradesh).
 - ✎ Word of the year 2023 -
 - ✎ Merriam-Webster Dictionary - Authentic
 - ✎ Oxford University Press - *Rizz* (reflecting linguistic choices of Generation Z)
 - ✎ 10-day long cultural fest *Hornbill Festival 2023* hosted across Nagaland, named after hornbill bird.
 - ✎ As per report by National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB), Kolkata has been named safest city in India for 3rd onsecutive year.
13. ▶ General News / Events (Dec 11-20, 2023) -
- ✎ *ASEAN-India Millet Festival 2023* held at New Delhi.
 - ✎ Jammu and Kashmir administration framed *Jammu and Kashmir Anand Marriage Registration Rules 2023*, for registration of marriages under *Anand Marriage Act*, which provides statutory recognition to marriage rituals of Sikhs.
 - ✎ Revered Tamilian cultural icon Thiruvalluvar's statue has been inaugurated in French town of Cergy.
 - ✎ Punjab CM Bhagwant Mann launched *Sarkar, Tuhade Dwaar* scheme, to provide doorstep delivery of 43 essential govt services to citizens across state.
 - ✎ *International Gita Mahotsav 2023* held in Kurukshetra (Haryana).
 - ✎ Bhutan announced to build an international city in area over 1000 sq km, on its border with India's Assam.
14. ▶ General News / Events (Dec 21-31, 2024) -
- ✎ Environment Minister *Bhupender Yadav* launched G20 report *A Green and Sustainable Growth Agenda for the Global Economy*, prepared jointly by *NITI Aayog*, *International Development Research Centre (IDRC)* and *Global Development Network (GDN)*.
 - ✎ Health Minister *Mansukh Mandaviya* launched *MedTech Mitra*, as a Strategic Initiative to Empower MedTech Innovators and advance healthcare solutions.
 - ✎ Memorandum of Settlement signed Central Govt, Assam Govt & United Liberation Front of Assam (ULFA), for ending insurgency in Assam.
 - ✎ Home Minister Amit Shah released a commemorative Postal Stamp, to mark 50 years of *Pandit Motiram Pandit Maniram Sangeet Samaroh*, held annually at Chowmahalla Palace in Hyderabad.
 - ✎ Govt declared J&K Based islamic militant groups *Tehreek-e-Hurriyat & Muslim League (Masarat Alam faction)* as *Unlawful Association* under *Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA) 1967*.
 - ✎ Kerala govt inaugurated *Kerala Public Enterprises (Selection and Recruitment) Board*, to enhance transparency and efficiency in recruitment processes of public sector units (PSUs) in state.
 - ✎ Karnataka govt launched initiative named *Namma Cargo*, to introduce cargo services on KSRTC buses.
 - ✎ Union Minister Anurag Singh Thakur launched *Government of India calendar 2024*, with theme *Hamara Sankalp Viksit Bharat*.
15. ▶ Govt constituted **16th Finance Commission**, in pursuance to Article 280(1) of the Constitution.
- ✎ It will be chaired by **Arvind Panagariya** (former NITI Aayog Vice-Chairman), while *Ritvik Ranjanam Pandey* has been named as Secretary to the Commission.
 - ✎ 16th FC has been asked to make its report available by 31st October 2025, to give recommendations for devolution of taxes and other fiscal matters for 5 fiscal years (covering FY27 (2026-27) to FY31 (2030-31)).
 - ✎ Earlier, 15th FC was constituted in November 2017 and submitted its final report On 01 Feb 2021, chaired by *Nand Kishore Singh* (covering FY22 (2021-22) to FY26 (2025-26)).
 - ✎ About -

- ✎ Finance Commissions are constituted by President of India under Article 280 of the Indian Constitution, to define financial relations between central and state governments.
 - ✎ First Finance Commission was established in 1951, chaired by K C Neogy.
 - ✎ Finance Commission consists of a chairman and four other members.
 - ✎ Notably, 4 members of 16th FC will be notified shortly.
16. ▶ In a move towards eco-friendly maritime transportation, *the Barracuda*, India's fastest solar-electric boat, has been launched at Navgathi Panavally Yard in Alappuzha.
 - ✎ It has been jointly developed by Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders and Navalt.
 17. ▶ Indian Railways announced to build new **287 km** circular railway around **Bengaluru**, connecting major nearby towns.
 - ✎ It will be largest such network in India, aimed at easing traffic congestion and improving connectivity in the region.
 18. ▶ J& K Administration amended *Jammu and Kashmir Panchayati Raj Act 1989*, to incorporate definition of OBCs in the Act for ensuring their reservation in this grassroots democratic institution.
 19. ▶ MSME Minister *Narayan Rane* launched 3 sub-schemes under RAMP (Raising And Accelerating MSME Productivity) programme -
 - ✎ *MSME Green Investment and Financing for Transformation Scheme (MSE GIFT Scheme)* - Aims to help MSMEs adopt green technology with interest subvention and credit guarantee support.
 - ✎ *MSE Scheme for Promotion and Investment in Circular Economy (MSE SPICE Scheme)* - Aims to support circular economy projects to be done through credit subsidy, to help MSME sector reach zero emissions by 2070.
 - ✎ *MSE Scheme on Online Dispute Resolution for Delayed Payments* - Aims to synergise legal support with modern IT / AI tools, to address incidences of delayed payments for MSMEs.
 - ✎ Also -
 - ✎ *Zero Defect Zero Effect (ZED) Scheme* has now been made completely free for women led MSMEs.
 - ✎ Ministry exchanged MoUs with implementing agencies SIDBI (for MSME GIFT and MSME SPICE schemes) and with *National Informatics Centre Services Inc.* (for MSE ODR scheme).
 20. ▶ Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change launched **Indian Forest & Wood Certification** Scheme, offering voluntary third-party certification designed to promote sustainable forest management and agroforestry in country.
 - ✎ The scheme includes forest management certification, tree outside forest management certification, and chain of custody certification. It can provide market incentives to various entities that adhere to responsible forest management and agroforestry practices in their operations.
 - ✎ Forest Management certification is based on Indian Forest Management Standard, which is an integral part of National Working Plan Code 2023, launched earlier this year. A separate Trees Outside Forests Standard, is now introduced as a part of the newly launched *Indian Forest & Wood Certification Scheme*.
 21. ▶ Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs launched *Amplifi 2.0 (Assessment and Monitoring Platform for Liveable, Inclusive and Future-ready urban India)* portal, to make raw data from Indian cities available on a single platform. It aims to enable academics, researchers, and stakeholders in data-driven policy making.
 22. ▶ Ministry of Textiles launched *Paat-Mitro* mobile application (developed by *Jute Corporation of India*), to provide important information about MSP and agronomy to jute farmers.
 23. ▶ Misc. MOUs (Dec 2023) -
 - ✎ Between *Reserve Bank of India (RBI)* and *Bank of England (BoE)*, concerning cooperation and exchange of information in relation to Clearing Corporation of India Limited (CCIL).
 - ✎ It establishes a framework for BoE to place reliance on RBI's regulatory and supervisory activities while safeguarding UK financial stability.
 - ✎ Between Indian firm *Bharat Biotech International* and Australia's University of Sydney Infectious Diseases Institute (Sydney ID), to advance vaccine research initiatives.
 - ✎ Between *Union Bank of India* & IT Firm *Accenture*, for digital transformation of bank's systems through implementation of advanced analytics and cutting-edge technologies.
 - ✎ Between *Indian Navy* and *IIT Kanpur*, to promote technology development, innovative solutions and joint R&D.
 - ✎ *National Institution for Transforming India (NITI Aayog)* and *International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI)* signed a 5-year Statement of Intent (SoI), aiming to fortify policy and program frameworks contributing to India's agricultural transformation and rural developmental objectives.

- ✎ Between *Tata Steel* and *Imperial College London*, to establish *Centre for Innovation in Sustainable Design and Manufacturing* in London.
 - ✎ Between *Indian Navy* and *IIT Bombay*, to enable Naval personnel to pursue MTech course in *Systems & Control Engineering*.
 - ✎ Between *IIT Kanpur* and *Kotak Mahindra Bank*, to establish India's first full integrated institution dedicated to sustainability education, named *Kotak School of Sustainability*.
 - ✎ Between *Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD)* & with *Reliance Retail's JioMart*, to help enhance outreach of the products of Self-Help Groups (SHGs) of Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana-National Rural Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NRLM), to empower rural SHG artisans.
 - ✎ Between *Arunachal State Rural Livelihoods Mission (ArSRLM)* & *State Bank of India (SBI)*, to provide comprehensive banking services to self-help groups (SHGs) in Arunachal Pradesh.
 - ✎ Between India's *Khanij Bidesh India Ltd (KABIL)* and Argentina's *Catamarca Minera Y Energética Sociedad Del Estado (CAMYEN)*.
 - ✎ Under it, India will invest 200 crores to explore and develop five lithium mines in Argentina.
 - ✎ Between *IIT Bombay* & *Reliance Jio*, to launch Artificial Intelligence project *Bharat GPT*.
 - ✎ Between *Gujarat govt* & *Mazgaon Dock Limited*, to introduce India's first submarine tourism in *Bet Dwarka*, a small island off the coast of Dwarka city.
24. ▶ New Zuari Bridge (commonly known as Manohar Setu) became fully operational, as country's second longest cable-stayed Bridge with length 640 metres. It connects North and South Goa, and will help ease traffic woes in Goa. Notably -
- ✎ Phase 1 of Zuari Bridge was inaugurated by Road and Transport Minister Nitin Gadkari in Dec 2022.
 - ✎ Longest cable-stayed Bridge in India is *Vidyasagar Setu*, over Hooghly River in West Bengal, linking cities of Kolkata and Howrah.
 - ✎ The 3rd Narmada Bridge in Bharuch (Gujarat) (opened in 2017) is longer than Vidyasagar Setu, but it's an extradosed bridge, not a cable-stayed bridge.
25. ▶ Newly elected Telangana govt (led by CM Anumula Revanth Reddy) launched *Maha Lakshmi Scheme*, enabling free travel for women and transgender persons in state-run buses. Other notable announcements made by new state govt -
- ✎ Dividing state into 3 development zones - Hyderabad City covering area inside Outer Ring Road (ORR), Region between ORR and proposed Regional Ring Road (RRR) and Rest of area outside of RRR.
 - ✎ Announced to build new *Telangana Bhavan* in national capital New Delhi.
26. ▶ Notable Points from PM Narendra Modi's visit to Ayodhya (Uttar Pradesh) -
- ✎ Inaugurated newly built *Ayodhya Airport* (named Maharishi Valmiki International Airport), developed at cost over 1450 crores. It can handle upto 10 lakh passengers annually.
 - ✎ Inaugurated Phase I of redeveloped *Ayodhya Dham Railway Station*, equipped with several modern features.
 - ✎ Flagged off a new category of superfast passenger trains in country - **Amrit Bharat Express**.
 - ✎ Amrit Bharat train is an LHB push pull train with non air-conditioned coaches. It provides improved facilities for rail passengers.
 - ✎ 2 Amrit Bharat Trains have been flagged off initially - *Darbhanga-Ayodhya-Anand Vihar Terminal*, and *Malda Town-Sir M. Visvesvaraya Terminus (Bengaluru)*.
 - ✎ PM also flagged off 6 new Vande Bharat Trains.
27. ▶ Notable points from PM Narendra Modi's visit to Varanasi (Uttar Pradesh) & Surat (Gujarat) -
- ✎ Surat (Gujarat) -
 - ✎ Inaugurated New Integrated Terminal Building of Surat Airport, with annual handling capacity increased to 55 lakh passengers.
 - ✎ Notably, cabinet had recently designated Surat Airport (Gujarat) as an International Airport, aimed at unlocking economic potential of Surat airport, and boost trade.
 - ✎ Inaugurated *Surat Diamond Bourse*, as World's largest and modern centre for international diamond and jewellery business.
 - ✎ It is also world's largest office complex, with over 67 lakh square feet floor area.
 - ✎ It will be a global centre for trading of both rough and polished diamonds as well as jewellery.
 - ✎ Varanasi (Uttar Pradesh) -
 - ✎ Inaugurated *Kashi Tamil Sangamam 2023* (2nd edition).

- ✍ Inaugurated newly built *SwarVed Mahamandir*, as world's largest meditation centre. It can accommodate 20000 people at a time for meditation.
 - ✍ Inaugurated 402-km-long *Pandit Deendayal Upadhyay Nagar-New Bhaupur Dedicated Freight Corridor* Project.
 - ✍ Constructed at cost 10903 crores, this section is a crucial link for 1337 km long *Eastern Dedicated Freight Corridor* (between Ludhiana in Punjab and Dankuni in West Bengal), which has now been completed.
28. ▶ PM Narendra Modi inaugurated *Aatmanirbhar Bharat Centre for Design*, at Red Fort.
- ✍ Set up by Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts (IGNCA), the centre aims to pave way for a sustainable cultural economy derived from indigenous crafts of India, by empowering artisan communities with new designs and innovations.
 - ✍ Named as *Project Aatman*, this centre is housed in a colonial barrack from year 1861, in the Red Fort premises.
 - ✍ PM also inaugurated 1st *Indian Art, Architecture & Design Biennale (IAADB) 2023*, held at Red Fort (New Delhi).
29. ▶ PM Narendra Modi launched **Viksit Bharat @2047: Voice of Youth** initiative, aiming to provide a platform to youth of the country to contribute ideas to vision of *Viksit Bharat @2047*.
- ✍ *Viksit Bharat @2047* is the vision to make India a developed nation by 2047, the 100th year of independence. It encompasses various aspects of development, including economic growth, social progress, environmental sustainability, and good governance.
30. ▶ Power and New & Renewable Energy Minister R K Singh launched **4E Wave**, as a student-led National Movement for Energy Conservation.
- ✍ It strives to promote sustainable practices and instil a sense of responsibility in individuals and communities to save energy.
 - ✍ 4E Wave encapsulates four key elements -
 - ✍ Eco-friendliness: Promoting energy-saving practices that are environmentally friendly
 - ✍ Economy: Emphasizing energy-saving solutions that lead to economic benefits for individuals and communities
 - ✍ Education: Focusing on educating the public about energy-saving methods and their importance
 - ✍ Empowerment: Empowering individuals and communities to take active roles in conserving energy
 - ✍ Originating from Jammu based Government College of Engineering & Technology (GCET), this youth-led movement invites individuals across nation to contribute to cause of energy conservation.
31. ▶ Telangana govt launched *Praja Palana programme*, as a 10-day public outreach programme of newly elected Congress government, for taking governance to doorsteps of citizens.
32. ▶ Uttar Pradesh govt announced to build India's first AI city in state capital Lucknow, to promote AI (Artificial Intelligence) ecosystem.







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Persons


1. ▶ 3 Indian businessperson – Nandan Nilekani (Infosys), KP Singh (DLF) and Nikhil Kamath (Zerodha), have been named in *Forbes Asia's Heroes of Philanthropy list 2023*.
2. ▶ 4 Indians have been named in *Forbes' The World's Most Powerful Women 2023*, including Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, HCL Chairperson Roshni Nadar, SAIL Chairperson Soma Mondal and Biocon Chairperson Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw.
3. ▶ **Drita Ziri** (Albania) won **Miss Earth 2023** global beauty pageant, hosted in Ho Chi Minh City (Vietnam).
 - ✍ India was represented by *Priyan Sain* (Miss Earth India 2023).
4. ▶ Actress *Dia Mirza* has been named *PETA India's 2023 Person of the Year*, for her work in saving lives of animals.
5. ▶ American Singer **Taylor Swift** has been named *2023 Person of the Year* by Time magazine.
 - ✍ She is first Person of the Year to be recognized for their *achievement in the arts*. Swift is also first woman to be recognized more than once, as she was also part of 2017 Person of the Year, called *Silence Breakers*.
 - ✍ Also, Argentinian Footballer **Lionel Messi** has been named Time magazine's Athlete of the Year 2023.
6. ▶ Obituaries (Dec 2023) -
 - ✍ Joseph Solomon - Former Guyanese cricketer, who played for West Indies team.
 - ✍ Clyde Butts - Former Guyanese cricketer, who played for West Indies team.
 - ✍ Subbalakshmi - Noted Malayalam Carnatic musician and actress.
 - ✍ Benjamin Zephaniah - Noted British writer & actor.
 - ✍ Naeem Sayyed (Also known as Junior Mehmood) - Noted actor.
 - ✍ Leelavathi - Noted Kannada & Tamil actress.
 - ✍ V Mohini Giri - Noted Padma Bhushan awardee social activist.

 Vijayakanth - Noted Tamil Actor & former MLA.

7. ▶ Visits from India (Dec 2023) -








-  Raksha Rajya Mantri Ajay Bhatt visited Ghana, to attend *2023 United Nations Peacekeeping Ministerial Meeting*, in Accra.
-  External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar visited Russia. During the visit -
 -  Three documents relating to *Kudankulam Nuclear Power Plants*, and an MoU on cooperation in pharmaceuticals and healthcare and a Protocol on Foreign Office Consultations were signed.
 -  Situated in Kudankulam in Tirunelveli district of Tamil Nadu, Kudankulam Nuclear Power Plant is largest nuclear power station in India. It is scheduled to have six VVER-1000 reactors built in collaboration with Russia's Atomstroyexport and Nuclear Power Corporation of India Limited (NPCIL), with an installed capacity of 6000 MW.
 -  Phase 1 of the project (comprising 2 units of 1000 MW Each) is operational since 2016. Phase 2 & 3 are under construction (targeted to be completed by 2027).
 -  Another Phase (Phase IV) comprising of 2 units of 1200 MW each has been proposed.

8. ▶ Visits to India (Dec 2023) -

-  Sultan Haitham bin Tarik - Head of State of Sultanate of Oman.
 -  MOUs Signed -
 -  Culture, Information Technology.
 -  Agreement concerning Gainful Employment of Accompanying Persons of Official Employees.
 -  Cooperation in exchange of intelligence related to money laundering, associated predicate offences and terrorism financing.
 -  Establishment of ICCR Chair of Indian Studies- Hindi Language.
-  Albert Ramdin - Foreign Minister of Suriname.
-  Vincent Biruta - Foreign Minister of Rwanda.
-  Olushegun Adjadi Bakari - Foreign Minister of Benin.
-  William Samoei Ruto - President of Kenya.
 -  India announced to provide a line of credit of USD 250 million to Kenya for modernizing its agricultural sector.
 -  MOUs -
 -  Cooperation on digital solutions at a population scale.
 -  Cooperation in field of standardization, expertise sharing, and mutual trade between Bureau of Indian Standards and the Bureau of Kenya Standards.

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Science

1. ▶ China launched its first ocean drilling vessel named *Mengxiang*, designed to delve into Earth's crust and explore the mantle.
 -  It aims to be first drilling ship to reach Earth's mantle, after piercing through Earth's crust.
2. ▶ China operationalized world's *deepest and largest subterranean laboratory*, known as *Deep Underground and Ultra-low Radiation Background Facility for Frontier Physics Experiments* (DURF), at depth of 2400 meters below ground, beneath Jinping Mountain in Sichuan's Liangshan Yi autonomous prefecture.
 -  It has been jointly built by Tsinghua University and Yalong River Hydropower Development Company Ltd.
 -  It will enable researchers to pursue invisible substance known as *dark matter*, as cosmic rays here will only be one hundred-millionth of those on earth's surface.
3. ▶ JT-60SA, dubbed as world's *largest and most advanced nuclear fusion reactor*, started operations in Japan's Ibaraki Prefecture, as a joint initiative of European Union and Japan.
 -  6-storey high JT-60SA reactor is kept in a hangar in Naka north of Tokyo, comprising a doughnut-shaped *tokamak* vessel set to contain swirling plasma heated up to 200 million degrees Celsius.
4. ▶ Misc. Science News (Dec 2023) -
 -  Airline *IndiGo* launched its Artificial Intelligence (AI) powered chat assistant named *6Eskai*, powered by Microsoft's GPT-4.
 -  Google parent firm Alphabet unveiled **Gemini**, as its most advanced AI model so far.
 -  Gemini is Alphabet's first AI model after merger of its AI research units DeepMind and Google Brain. It can comprehend and process diverse types of information concurrently.

- ✍ IT Firm IBM and Facebook parent Meta Launched **AI Alliance**, as an International Community of Leading Technology Developers, Researchers, and Adopters Collaborating Together to Advance Open, Safe and Responsible AI.
- ✍ IT Firm IBM unveiled *Condor*, as its latest quantum processor with 1121 qubits, showcasing a quantum machine with over 1000 qubits for the first time.
- ✍ IT Firm *Accenture* established its *Generative AI Studio* in Bengaluru, to boost research in field of artificial intelligence.
- ✍ China launched *MisrSat-2* satellite onboard Long March-2C carrier rocket, Developed along with Egypt.
- ✍ Earth Sciences Minister Kiren Rijiju flagged off *India's first winter scientific expedition to the Arctic*.
 - ✍ Scientific expeditions to the Arctic during winter (November to March) will allow researchers to conduct unique scientific observations during polar nights, where there is no sunlight for nearly 24 hours and sub-zero temperatures.
 - ✍ Since 2008, India operates a research base in the Arctic named *Himadri*, which has so far hosted scientists during summer only (April to October).
- ✍ Researchers from Visva-Bharati University identified a new bacteria strain capable of boosting plant growth, and named it *Pantoea Tagorei* (in honor of Nobel laureate Rabindranath Tagore).
 - ✍ *Pantoea Tagorei* has the potential to significantly reduce need for commercial fertilizers, and may possibly lead to cost savings for farmers and boost crop yields.
- 5. ▶ To shift away from traditional coal-fired power plants, **China** began commercial operations of *Shidao Bay nuclear power plant* in eastern Shandong province, as **world's first 4th-generation**, gas-cooled nuclear reactor power plant.
 - ✍ The plant distinguishes itself by utilizing 2 high-temperature reactors cooled by gas, a departure from conventional pressurized water cooling systems.
- 6. ▶ World's first portable hospital, *Aarogya Maitri Aid Cube* has been unveiled in Gurugram (Haryana), Designed indigenously under Project *BHISHM*.
 - ✍ This modular trauma management and aid system is made up of 72 detachable mini-cubes, each being a specialized station for emergency response and humanitarian efforts. It can treat upto 200 patients.

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Sports

1. ▶ 1st **Khelo India Para Games** held in **New Delhi**, with participation in 7 para disciplines (athletics, shooting, archery, football, badminton, table tennis and weight-lifting).
 - ✍ *Ujjwala* (a sparrow) was named as mascot for 1st Khelo India Para Games.
 - ✍ Top 3 -
 - ✍ Haryana (40 gold, 39 silver, 26 bronze)
 - ✍ Uttar Pradesh (25 gold, 23 silver, 14 bronze)
 - ✍ Tamil Nadu (20 gold, 8 silver, and 14 bronze).
2. ▶ 2023 **FIFA U-17 World Cup** (Indonesia) -
 - ✍ **Germany** won the title (their 1st), defeating *France* in Final. The event was contested by 24 teams.
 - ✍ Best player - Paris Brunner (Germany)
3. ▶ 2023 **ACC Under-19 Asia Cup** Cricket (UAE) -
 - ✍ **Bangladesh** won the title (their 1st), defeating *UAE* in final.
4. ▶ **FIH Hockey Star Awards 2023** -
 - ✍ Men's Player of the year - **Hardik Singh (India)**
 - ✍ Women's Player of the Year - Xan de Waard (The Netherlands)
 - ✍ Men's Goalkeeper of the Year - Pirmin Blaak (The Netherlands)
 - ✍ Women's Goalkeeper of the Year - **Savita (India)**
5. ▶ **World Athlete of the Year awards 2023** (Conferred by *World Athletics*) -
 - ✍ Winners -
 - ✍ Men - American track and field athlete **Noah Lyles**
 - ✍ Women - Kenyan middle-distance runner **Faith Kipyegon**
 - ✍ Rising Stars -
 - ✍ Men - Kenyan middle-distance runner **Emmanuel Wanyonyi**
 - ✍ Women - Kenyan runner **Faith Cherotich**
6. ▶ As per Forbes' **World's Highest-Paid Female Athletes 2023** -

- 🏸 Indian badminton player **PV Sindhu** is only Indian player in List, with 7.1 million USD earnings. She has been ranked 16th (Jointly with American gymnast *Simone Biles*).
- 🏸 Top 5 -
 - 🏸 Polish Tennis Player **Iga Świątek** (23.9 Million USD)
 - 🏸 Chinese Freestyle Skier *Eileen Gu* (22.1 Million USD)
 - 🏸 American Tennis Player *Coco Gauff* (21.7 Million USD)
 - 🏸 British Tennis Player *Emma Raducanu* (15.2 Million USD)
 - 🏸 Japanese Tennis Player *Naomi Osaka* (15 Million USD)
- 7. ▶ Former Indian tennis players **Vijay Amritraj** and **Leander Paes** became first Asian (and Indian) players to be inducted into **International Tennis Hall of Fame**.
- 8. ▶ Hockey India Senior National Championships 2023 -
 - 🏒 Men - *Punjab* won by defeating *Haryana* in Final.
 - 🏒 Women - *Madhya Pradesh* won by defeating *Maharashtra*.
- 9. ▶ IBA **Junior World Boxing Championship 2023** (Yerevan, Armenia) -
 - 🏊 India won 17 medals, including 3 gold, 9 silver and 5 bronze medals.
 - 🏊 Gold medalists - Akansha (70 kg), Pari (48 kg), Nisha (52 kg).
- 10. ▶ International Tennis Federation (ITF) World Champions 2023 -
 - 🏸 Men's - Novak Djokovic (Serbia). Its his record extending 8th title.
 - 🏸 Women's - Aryna Sabalenka (Belarus).
 - 🏸 Men's doubles - Joe Salisbury (UK) & Rajeev Ram (US). Its their 2nd title.
 - 🏸 Women's doubles - Storm Hunter (Australia) & Elise Mertens (Belgium).
- 11. ▶ Misc. Sports News (Dec 2023) -
 - 🏊 Indian Snooker player *Vidya Pillai* won *IBSF 6-Red Snooker World Championship title* in Doha (Qatar).
 - 🏏 Windies cricketer *Shane Dowrich* announced his retirement from international cricket.
 - 🏏 England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) launched *Cricket Regulator*, as an independent body responsible for monitoring compliance with game's regulations, and enforcement of adherence to those regulations.
 - 🏁 *Vaishali Rameshbabu* became India's new chess Grandmaster, at IV El Llobregat Open in Spain. She is 3rd female Grandmaster from India (after *Koneru Humpy* and *Harika Dronavalli*).
 - 🏹 Indian para archer *Sheetal Devi* won *Best Youth Athlete award* at *Asian Awards 2023* organised by *Asian Paralympic Committee* in Riyadh (Saudi Arabia).
 - 🏹 Sheetal Devi had won gold in individual and team compound events, and silver in compound doubles, at Hangzhou 2022 Asian Para Games.
 - 🏆 Team Italy won *Admiral's Cup 2023* Sailing Regatta held at Ezhimala-based Indian Naval Academy (INA).
 - 🏏 Pakistan cricketer Asad Shafiq announced his retirement from International Cricket.
 - 🏏 *Haryana* won *2023-24 Vijay Hazare Domestic Cricket Trophy*, defeating *Rajasthan* in Final.
 - 🏏 As a tribute to former cricketer M S Dhoni, BCCI retired No.7 jersey worn by him.
 - 🏏 Earlier in 2017, BCCI had retired No 10 jersey worn by *Sachin Tendulkar*.
 - 🏏 Mitchell Starc (Australia) became costliest player in history of IPL, after he was acquired by *Kolkata Knight Riders* for 2024 season for *24.75 crores*.
 - 🏪 Sports Ministry suspended Wrestling Federation of India (WFI), shortly after *Sanjay Singh* was elected as WFI Chief.
 - 🏪 2016 Olympics bronze medalist Wrestler Sakshi Malik also announced her retirement.
 - 🏏 South African Cricketer *Dean Elgar* announced his retirement from international cricket.
 - 🏪 Wrestler *Pooja Dhanda* has been suspended for 1 year by National Anti-Doping Agency (NADA), for doping violations.
- 12. ▶ UWW (United World Wrestling) Awards 2023 -
 - 🏪 Freestyle Wrestler of the Year - Akhmed Tazhudinov (Bahrain)
 - 🏪 Greco-Roman Wrestler of the Year - Luis Orta (Cuba)
 - 🏪 Women's Wrestler of the Year- Aisuluu Tynybekova (Kyrgyzstan)
 - 🏪 Rising Stars - **Antim Panghal** (India), Georgios Kougioumtsidis (Greece) and Hasrat Jafarov (Azerbaijan).

