



Current Affairs *Refresher* for **CAPF AC**

Exam 2023 Paper 1 & 2

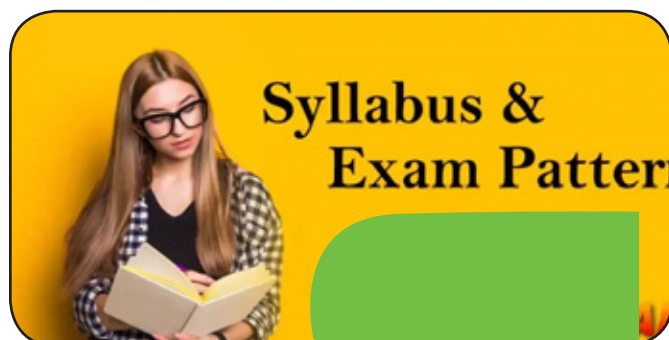
Includes

- Pattern & Syllabus
- Analysis of 2022 Previous Year Solved Paper
- Current Affairs Refresher
- Previous Year Questions
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- Paper 2 Essays Topics


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**Defence Sector
Updates**



**Current
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Practice Questions**

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**Expected Essay
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Expected Essay Topics



Exam Pattern & Syllabus

Brief About CAPF Exam:

UPSC releases a notification every year for the Recruitment of Central Armed Police Forces(CAPF) Assistant Commandants(Group A) for vacancies namely Border Security Force (BSF), Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF), Central Industrial Security Force(CISF), Indo-Tibetan Border Police(ITBP) and Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB).

The candidate has to go through the following stages to get selected for Assistant Commandant vacancies:

1. Written Examination
2. Physical Test
3. Interview

Written Examination:

Paper Name	Subject	Time Duration	Marks
Paper-I (Objective)	General Ability & Intelligence	2 Hours	250 marks
Paper-II (Descriptive)	General Studies, Essay & Comprehension	3 Hours	200 marks
Total			450 marks

- Papers I and II will be in bilingual languages (Hindi and English), excluding the English paper.
- Paper I will consist of MCQs with a negative marking of 1/3 for each wrong answer.
- Paper I is a qualifying stage; Paper II will only be checked for those candidates who clear Paper I.

CAPF Exam Syllabus for Paper I (General Ability and Intelligence)

Subject Name	Topics
General Mental ability	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Logical Reasoning,• Quantitative Aptitude• Numerical Ability• Data Interpretation.
History of India	Social Economic and political aspects. This shall also include the areas of growth of nationalism and freedom movement.
General Science	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• General Awareness• Scientific temper• Comprehension and appreciation of scientific phenomena of everyday observation• Information Technology• Biotechnology• Environmental Science.
Indian and World Geography	Physical, social and economic aspects of geography pertaining to India and the World.
Current Events of National and International Importance	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Current events of national and international importance in the broad areas of• Culture• Music• Arts• Literature• Sports• Governance• Societal and developmental issues• Industry• Business• Globalisation and interplay among nations

Indian Polity and Economy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Country's political system and the Constitution of India • Social systems and public administration • Economic development in India • Regional and international security issues and human rights including its indicators.
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CAPF Exam Syllabus - Paper II (General Studies, Essay & Comprehension)

UPSC CAPF AC Paper II is a descriptive test and questions are generally based on the English language, Comprehension, Essay, and General Studies. The candidates can answer in English or Hindi language.

Part	Subject	Topics
Part A	Essay questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Modern Indian history especially of the freedom struggle, • Geography • Polity • Economy • Knowledge of Security and Human Rights issues • Analytical Ability
Part B	Comprehension, précis writing, other communications/language skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comprehension passages, • Precise writing • Developing counter arguments • Simple grammar and other aspects of language testing.

UPSC CAPF Cut Off Previous Year Marks

The Union Public Service Commission, Central Armed Police Forces, Cut Off marks are the minimum marks that a candidate needs to score in order to qualify for the next stage of the recruitment process.

In the year 2021, cut-off marks were as follows:

Category	Minimum qualifying standards in paper-I (Out of 250)	Minimum qualifying standards in paper-I + paper-II (Out of 450)	Marks scored by last recommended candidate (Out of 600)
General	117.34	205	325
EWS	110.00	197	305
OBC	117.34	205	319
SC	101.34	186	297
ST	99.34	181	293
Ex-S	25.34	59	159

CAPF 2023 Vacancy

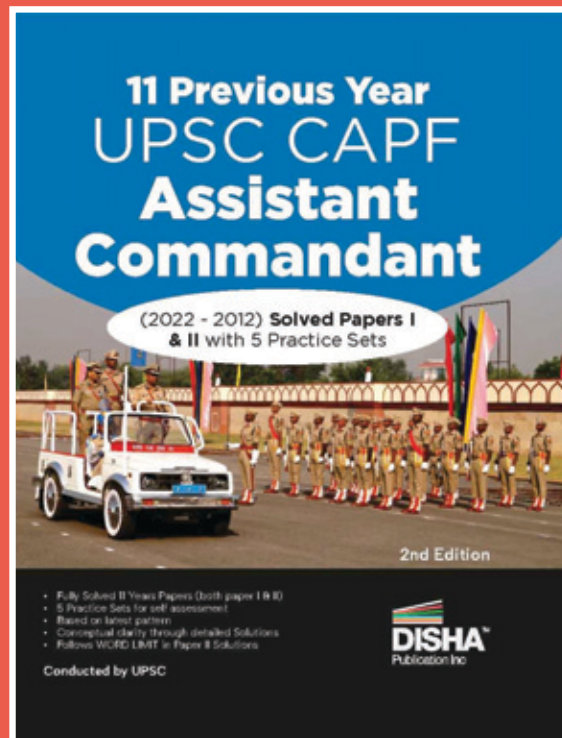
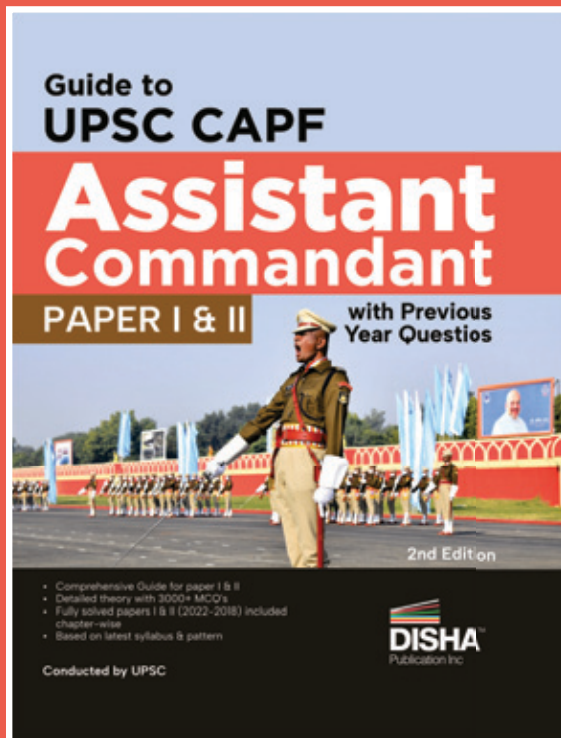
In the year 2023, there will be 322 vacancies to fill. Check out the chart below for the breakdown of vacant positions by post:

Armed Force Name	Number of Vacancies
BSF	86
CRPF	55
CISF	91
ITBP	60
SSB	30
Total Number of Vacancies	322

Final Selection for CAPF AC

UPSC will compile a final merit list based on the results of the CAPF Written Exam and Interview/Personality Test.

A unique Formula to Crack CAPF Assistant Commandant Exam



The book “Guide to UPSC CAPF Assistant Commandant Paper I & II” is the right balance between exhaustive theory and carefully selected Practice Exercises. This book covers complete syllabus of both the Papers I & II.

Paper I: General Studies, Mental Ability Test, **Paper II:** Essay, Report, Précis writing, Comprehension, Grammar.

Five important features of “Guide to UPSC CAPF Assistant Commandant Paper I & II”:

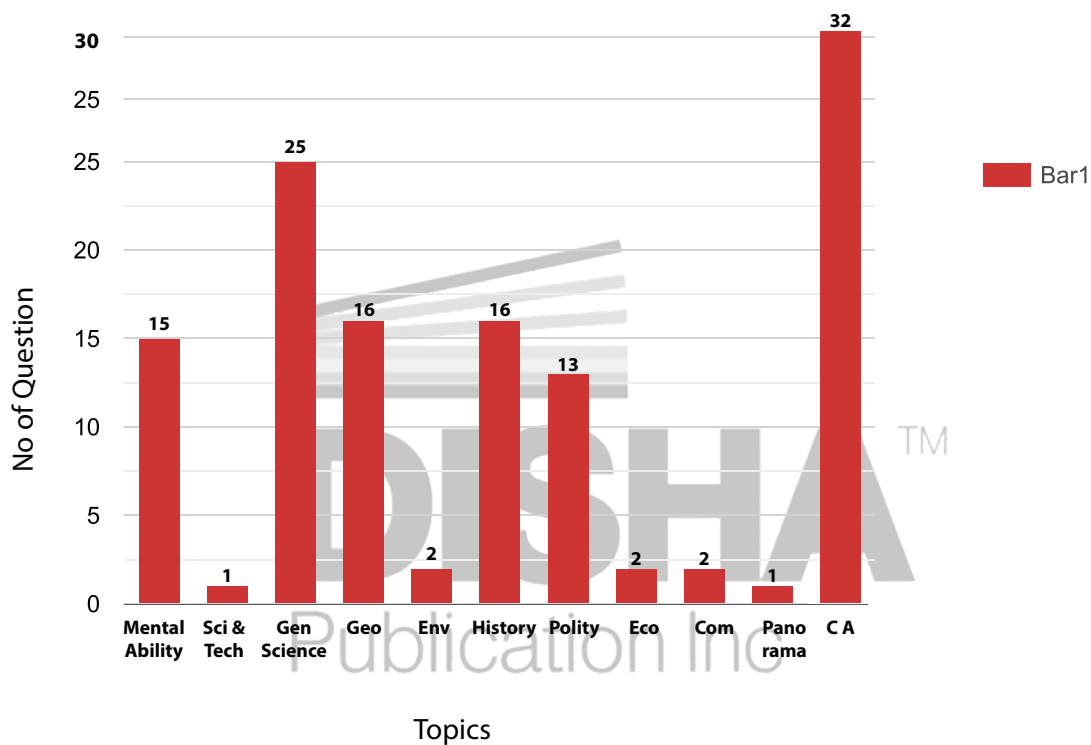
1. Includes Complete and Exhaustive Theory for Paper I & II.
2. 3000+ MCQs for Practice and Past 4 Year Questions included Chapter-wise.
3. Detailed and 100% Solutions of MCQs and Descriptive Questions (in WORD LIMIT).
4. Tips & Strategies to write the Descriptive Questions in each of the respective Chapters to enhance your writing skills.
5. Detailed Trend Analysis of Past 10 Year Papers gives an edge to your preparation.

This material will act as the best source to start preparation by analyzing the current syllabus and question pattern.

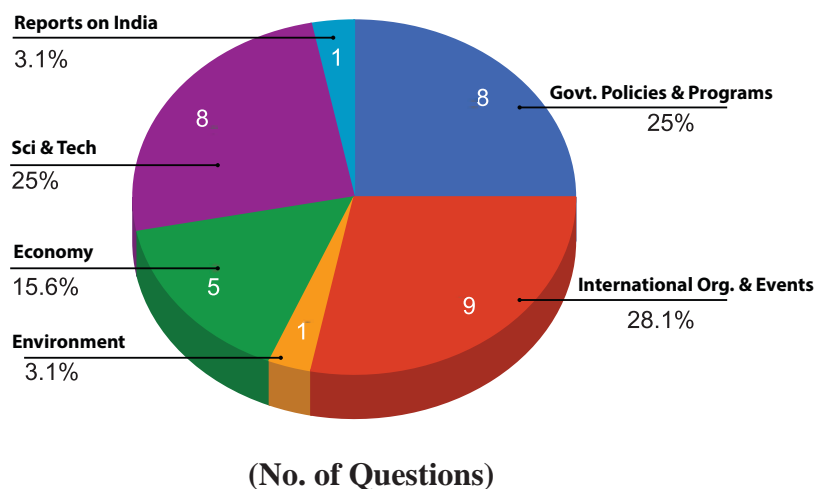
A Must have book for CAPF Assistant Commandant Exam

CAPF AC 2022 Exam Analysis

Section : General Studies



Section : Current Affairs



10000+ MCQs

with Explanatory Notes

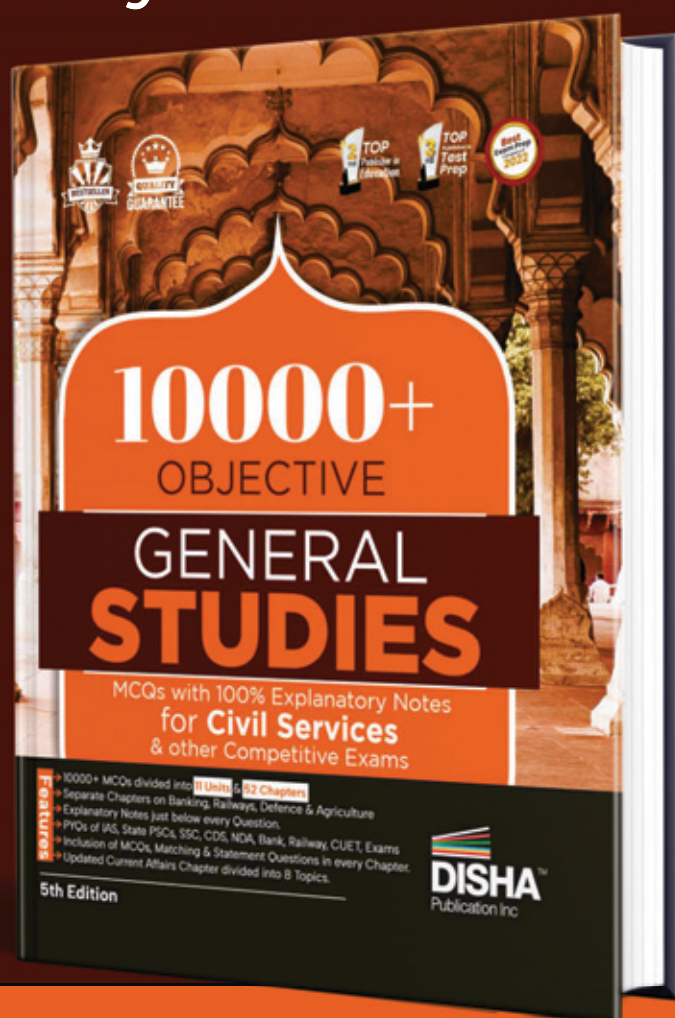
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General Knowledge

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Explanatory
Notes

5th Edition

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Updated

2000
New Questions
Added



Subjects	Chapter	Topics	Questions
History	4	25	1850
Geography	3	16	1700
Indian Polity	9	25	1370
Economy	5	18	740
Ecology, Environment & Biodiversity	3	5	400
General Science	6	28	1800
Government Key Initiatives	4	4	237
Major Events (India & World)	8	9	263
General Knowledge	4	27	825
Exam Special Updates	5	11	750
Current Affairs	1	8	275
Total	52	161	10190

Current Affairs PYQs

Government Schemes and Programs:

1. **'Operation Sankalp' was initiated and implemented by the**
 - (a) Indian Air Force
 - (b) Indian Army
 - (c) Indian Navy
 - (d) Ministry of Home Affairs
2. **Which one of the following statements is not true with regard to tribal welfare?**
 - (a) The Comprehensive Tribal Development Programme aims at land development activities, improvement of roof houses, infrastructure development and so on.
 - (b) As per the Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers Act, villages in forests are provided with community rights.
 - (c) The Special Area Development Programme aims at distribution of forest area produces to the tribals equitably.
 - (d) The Special Central Assistance to Tribal Sub-plan provides dairy cows to tribal groups living below the poverty line.
3. **Which one of the following statements is not correct?**
 - (a) The 'Swarna Jayanti Shahari Rozgar Yojana' is an urban self-employment programme.
 - (b) Drought-Prone Area Programme and Desert Development Programme were launched in 1970s.
 - (c) The 'Sampoorna Grameen Rozgar Yojana' was launched after restructuring the 'Integrated Rural Development Programme' in 2001 .
 - (d) The 'Swarna Jayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana' is a rural self-employment programme.
4. **'Operation Flood' is also popularly known as**
 - (a) the Green Revolution
 - (b) the White Revolution
 - (c) the Blue Revolution
 - (d) the Yellow Revolution
5. **Which of the following statement about 'Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat' programme is/are correct?**
 1. It was announced in the year 2014.
 2. Its aim is to create an environment which promotes learning between the States by sharing best practices and experiences.

Select the correct answer using the code given below.

 - (a) 1 only
 - (b) 2 only
 - (c) Both 1 and 2
 - (d) Neither 1 nor 2
6. **Which one of the following is not a thrust area of the 'Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation (AMRUT)'?**
 - (a) Water supply
 - (b) Storm water drainage to reduce flooding
 - (c) Motorized urban transport and capacity building
 - (d) Green spaces and park
7. **Consider the following statements about the seaports in India :**
 1. There are 4 major and 25 minor seaports in India.
 2. The major ports are under the administrative control of the Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways.
 3. The minor ports are under the jurisdiction of respective State Maritime Board/State Government.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

 - (a) 1, 2 and 3
 - (b) 3 only
 - (c) 1 and 2 only
 - (d) 2 and 3 only
8. **Which of the following statements about the Border Roads Organization (BRO) is/are correct?**
 1. BRO is concerned with the construction and maintenance of roads in strategically sensitive areas.
 2. BRO undertakes snow clearance in high altitude areas.

Select the correct answer using the code given below.

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

International Organisations and Events:

9. Recently, India gave a coastal radar system to which one of the following countries?
(a) Bangladesh (b) Maldives (c) Sri Lanka (d) United Arab Emirates
10. Mariupol city, frequently mentioned in news in the context of Russia-Ukraine conflict, is situated on the coast of
(a) Aral Sea (b) Baltic Sea (c) Caspian Sea (d) Sea of Azov
11. Recently, with which one of the following countries did India sign the 'Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement' ?
(a) Egypt
(b) Israel
(c) South Africa
(d) United Arab Emirates
12. The principle of 'common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities', often talked about in media, refers to
(a) WHO's COVID-19 Global Vaccination Drive
(b) contributions to the International Monetary Fund
(c) reduction of greenhouse gas emissions
(d) contributions to the United Nations Peacekeeping Operations
13. As part of the Look/Act East Policy, which one of the following capitals of North-East Indian States is proposed to be connected with Bangladesh via rail route?
(a) Agartala (b) Kohima (c) Imphal (d) Itanagar
14. Match List-I with List-II and select the correct answer using the code given below the lists:
- | List-I
(Regional block) | List-II
(Headquarters) |
|----------------------------|---------------------------|
| A. ASEAN | 1. Brussels |
| B. CIS | 2. Vienna |
| C. EU | 3. Minsk |
| D. OPEC | 4. Jakarta |
- Code:
- | | A | B | C | D |
|-----|---|---|---|---|
| (a) | 4 | 3 | 1 | 2 |
| (b) | 4 | 1 | 3 | 2 |
| (c) | 2 | 1 | 3 | 4 |
| (d) | 2 | 3 | 1 | 4 |
15. Which among the following countries is not a member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)?
(a) Hungary (b) Poland (c) Belarus (d) Turkey
16. Which of the following statements is/are correct?
1. The 15th ASEAN-India Summit was held virtually in March 2022.
2. European Union is India's largest regional trading partner.
Select the correct answer using the code given below:
(a) 1 only (b) 2 only (c) both 1 and 2 (d) Neither 1 nor 2
17. Which of the following sets of nations are members of the BIMSTEC Initiative?
(a) Bangladesh, Bhutan, Nepal, India and Sri Lanka
(b) Bangladesh, Bhutan, Nepal, India, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Myanmar
(c) Bangladesh, Bhutan, Nepal, India, Sri Lanka and Maldives
(d) Bangladesh, Bhutan, Nepal, India, Myanmar, Sri Lanka and Indonesia

Environment:

18. The World Wetland Day is celebrated on which one of the following dates every year?
(a) 10th June (b) 13th February (c) 9th March (d) 2nd February

Economy:

19. The 'Stand-Up India Scheme' is related to which one of the following issues?
- (a) Social security during old age
 - (b) Providing technical knowhow to young, educated or skilled workers from rural areas
 - (c) Promoting entrepreneurship amongst women, SC and ST communities
 - (d) Insurance cover to people in the age group of 18-50 years
20. Nowadays, 'nonfungible tokens' are talked about in the context of
- (a) digital assets on a blockchain
 - (b) operations of 'banking correspondents' in rural areas
 - (c) multifactor authentication security requirement in banking transactions
 - (d) transactions through 'small finance banks'
21. With reference to Indian economy, the term 'bad bank', frequently mentioned in news, refers to
- (a) an asset reconstruction company
 - (b) an asset management company
 - (c) a bank with huge 'nonperforming assets'
 - (d) a bank that has become insolvent
22. GST is a/an
- (a) destination-based consumption tax
 - (b) origin-based production tax
 - (c) destination-based sales tax on transaction
 - (d) origin-based tax on sales transaction
23. In the first quarter of fiscal year 2020-21, GDP contracted by 23.9 percent and in the second quarter, by 7.5 percent. The Economic Survey, 2020-21 preferred to call it a recovery in
- (a) U-shape
 - (b) V-shape
 - (c) K-shape
 - (d) W-shape

Science & Technology

24. The technology known as 'Electromagnetic Air Lift System' is sometimes talked about in reference to
- (a) launching guided missiles from silos
 - (b) launching aircraft from warships
 - (c) navigation of nuclear-powered submarines
 - (d) development of reusable rockets
25. Consider the following missiles :
- | | | |
|-----------|------------|------------|
| 1. Agni-I | 2. BrahMos | 3. Dhanush |
|-----------|------------|------------|
- Which of the above is/are cruise missile/missiles?
- (a) 1 and 2
 - (b) 2 only
 - (c) 1 and 3
 - (d) 3 only
26. With reference to India's defence, consider the following helicopters:
- | | | |
|------------|-----------|----------|
| 1. Cheetah | 2. Chetak | 3. Rudra |
|------------|-----------|----------|
- Which of the above has/have turret gun, rocket system and air-to-air missile?
- (a) 1 and 2
 - (b) 2 only
 - (c) 1 and 3
 - (d) 3 only
27. Consider the following statements:
1. Mirage 2000 is a twin-engine fighter jet.
 2. HAL Tejas is a delta-winged fighter jet.
 3. Rafale is a hypersonic fighter jet.
- Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
- (a) 1 and 2
 - (b) 2 only
 - (c) 1 and 3
 - (d) 3 only
28. Which one of the following aerospace companies designed and manufactured 'Falcon 9', a reusable rocket?
- (a) Blue Origin
 - (b) Boeing
 - (c) Lockheed Martin
 - (d) SpaceX
29. 'The Kh-47M2 Kinzhal', a nuclear-capable hypersonic missile, belongs to which one of the following countries?
- (a) China
 - (b) France
 - (c) Russia
 - (d) USA
30. The term 'Sagittarius A*', sometimes mentioned in news, refers to

- (a) a supermassive black hole in our Milky Way Galaxy
- (b) two giant black holes spiralling around each other several light years away from the Earth
- (c) a Supernova explosion seen in real time for the first time ever by scientists
- (d) a huge asteroid that passed by very close to the Earth

31. Consider the following statements with reference to the latest guidelines issued by the Indian Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT-In) :

1. Data centres and service providers shall compulsorily report cyber security breaches within 24 hours.
2. Virtual Private Network providers shall retain user data for at least five years and share records with authorities when required.

Which of the statements given above is/ are correct?

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

Reports on India:

32. Based on the scoring on SDG (Sustainable Development Goals) India Index, the NITI Ayog has classified various States into certain categories. Which one of the following is not one of the categories?

- (a) Aspirants
- (b) Performers
- (c) Fast runners
- (d) Achievers



Answer Keys

Government Schemes and Programs:									
1.	(c)	2.	(c)	3.	(c)	4.	(b)	5.	(b)
6.	(c)	7.	(d)	8.	(c)				
International Organisations and Events:									
9.	(b)	10.	(d)	11.	(d)	12.	(c)	13.	(a)
14.	(a)	15.	(c)	16.	(d)	17.	(b)		
Environment:									
18.	(d)								
Economy:									
19.	(c)	20.	(a)	21.	(a)	22.	(a)	23.	(b)
Science & Technology									
24.	(b)	25.	(b)	26.	(d)	27.	(b)	28.	(d)
29.	(c)	30.	(a)	31.	(b)				
Reports on India:									
32.	(c)								

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Current Affairs Refresher

Government Policies & Programs

Har Ghar Gangajal

The Bihar Government is set to launch the Har Ghar Gangajal project to deliver water from Ganga river to the dry areas in the state that do not lie along the course of the river.

Key Highlights:

- It will be launched as part of the state government's Jal, Jeevan, Hariyali scheme.
- The first phase of the project will be implemented with an outlay of Rs.4,000 crore.
- Under this phase, large pumps will lift Ganga water from Hathidah, close to Mokama, to supply water for to some 7.5 lakh homes in Rajgir, Bodhgaya, and Gaya.
- Under this scheme, every individual beneficiary will receive 135 litres (two large buckets) of Ganga water every day to be used for drinking and domestic purposes.

YUVA 2.0

The Prime Minister's Scheme for Mentoring Young Authors, known as YUVA 2.0 (Young, Upcoming and Versatile Authors), was launched by the Department of Higher Education of the Ministry of Education

Key Features:

- YUVA 2.0 aims to artistically and ingeniously emphasise the viewpoints of the younger generation of authors on the issue of "Democracy (institutions, events, people, constitutional ideals – past, present, future)" as part of the India@75 Project (Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav).
- This national initiative known as YUVA will significantly strengthen the basis of these future leaders while also celebrating India's 75th anniversary of freedom.

One Nation, One Fertiliser

The "One Nation, One Fertiliser" scheme or Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Jan Urvarak Pariyojana was launched by the Central Government.

Key Highlights:

- This is the largest fertilizer initiative implemented by the Indian Government till date.
- Under the scheme, all types of fertilizers, whether urea, DAP or NPK, will be sold under the single brand name "Bharat".
- The scheme seeks to standardize fertilizer brands across India regardless of the company that manufactures them.
- It aims to remove all confusions related to the quality of fertilizers and their availability.
- Creation of a single brand for all fertilizers will reduce the cross-country movement of fertilizers, resulting in large freight subsidies.

Foreign Trade Policy 2023

The Indian government has recently announced its new Foreign Trade Policy (FTP), which replaces the previous one launched in 2015. The new FTP came into effect on April 1, 2022, and is aimed at increasing India's overall exports to \$2 trillion by 2030, with equal contributions from the merchandise and services sectors.

Key Points:

- The new FTP has set an ambitious target of increasing India's overall exports to \$2 trillion by 2030, with equal contributions from the merchandise and services sectors.
- The policy aims to simplify the export process, reduce transaction costs, and introduce e-initiatives to ease business operations.

- The new FTP rests on four key pillars.
 - I. It aims to replace the incentive-based system of promoting exports with remission and entitlement-based regimes.
 - II. It aims to facilitate enhanced collaboration among exporters, states, districts, and Indian missions.
 - III. It aims to reduce transaction costs and introduce e-initiatives for ease in business operations.
 - IV. It aims to develop additional export hubs to promote exports from all parts of the country.

Indian Space Policy 2023

The Indian Space Policy 2023 was approved by the Cabinet Committee on Security. The policy seeks to institutionalise private sector participation in the space sector, with ISRO focusing on research and development of advanced space technologies.

Key Points:

- The policy will pave the way forward with much-required clarity in space reforms and augment private industry participation to drive the space economy opportunity for the country.
- The policy delineates the roles and responsibilities of Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO), space sector PSU NewSpace India Limited (NSIL), and Indian National Space Promotion and Authorization Center (IN-SPACe).
- Strategic activities related to the space sector will be carried out by NSIL, which will work in a demand-driven mode.
- The policy's approval by the Cabinet Committee, helmed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, is a significant step towards transforming India into a major space power.
- The private players' participation in the space sector is crucial to increase India's current share of less than two per cent in the global space economy to 10 per cent in the future.

Draft 'Sagarmala Innovation and Start-up Policy'

The Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways has recently issued the Sagarmala Innovation and Start-up Policy to encourage innovation and entrepreneurship in the maritime sector in India.

Key Points:

- The policy aims to create a conducive environment for the growth of start-ups and other entities in the maritime sector, leading to sustainable development and employment opportunities.
- The primary objective of the Sagarmala Innovation and Start-up Policy is to nurture start-ups and other entities to co-create the future of India's growing maritime sector.
- The policy aims to create an innovation ecosystem that promotes entrepreneurship, innovation and technology in the maritime sector.

Support for Poor Prisoners Scheme

The Indian government has recently launched a special scheme called 'Support for Poor Prisoners,' aimed at providing financial assistance to poor prisoners who are unable to pay the penalty or the bail amount.

Key Points:

- The scheme was announced by the Home Ministry on April 7th, 2023, to provide financial support to poor people languishing in jails.
- The primary objective of the scheme is to provide financial support to poor people who are in prisons and are unable to afford the penalty or the bail amount.
- The Centre will provide financial support to states to ensure that benefits reach the poor prisoners.
- Legal Services Authority provides free legal aid to poor prisoners at various levels, ensuring that they are not left alone to face the legal system.

Promotion of Tribal Products from North-Eastern Region (PTP-NER) Scheme

Arjun Munda, the Minister of Tribal Affairs, has recently launched the Marketing and Logistics Development for Promotion of Tribal Products from North-Eastern Region (PTP-NER) scheme in Manipur.

Key Points:

- This ambitious scheme aims to enhance procurement, logistics, and marketing efficiency of tribal products from the North-Eastern Region and strengthen the livelihood opportunities of tribal artisans.
- The PTP-NER scheme will be implemented in 8 states in the North-Eastern Region i.e., Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Tripura, and Sikkim.

Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Ko Kaam Karyakram

Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Ko Kaam Karyakram (PMKKK) has been named as Pradhan Mantri Virasat Ka Samvardhan (PM VIKAS) Scheme by the Ministry of Minority Affairs.

Key Points:

- It is a Central-Sector Scheme, which focuses on the skilling, entrepreneurship and leadership training requirements of the minority and artisan communities across the country.
- PM VIKAS aims to improve the livelihoods of the minorities, particularly the artisan communities, using the components of skill development, education, women leadership & entrepreneurship.
- These components complement each other in the ultimate objective of the scheme to increase the incomes of the beneficiaries and provide support by facilitating credit and market linkages.

Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Ann Yojana (PMGKAY)

Pradhan Mantri GaribKalyan Ann Yojana (PMGKAY) is an integrated food security scheme launched by the Central Government of India in January 2023.

Key Points:

- The entitlement of food grains per person per month is 5 kg for priority household's category and 35 kg per family per month for Antodaya Anna Yojna (AAY) families.
- Until December 2022, the NFSA beneficiaries were getting their foodgrains entitlement at a highly subsidised rate of Rs.1, Rs.2, and Rs.3 per kg for coarse cereals, wheat and rice, respectively.
- However, from January 2023, the beneficiaries will get it for free.

"Womaniya" initiative

The Government eMarketplace (GeM) has launched a new initiative called "Womaniya on GeM" to empower women entrepreneurs and women self-help groups (WSHGs) to sell their products directly to various government ministries, departments, and institutions.

Key Points:

- The Womaniya initiative is particularly important because nearly 80% of women-owned establishments are self-financed and more than 60% of 8 million units are owned and or led by women entrepreneurs from socially-challenged sections of the society.
- The initiative is represented by artist Anukta M Ghosh's artwork "Magan", an illustration of women empowerment and grace.
- Products like handicrafts and handloom, accessories, jute and coir products, home décor, and office furnishings are categorized for ease-in-procurement.

Performance Assessment Review and Analysis of Knowledge for Holistic Development (PARAKH)

The Government of India recently launched Performance Assessment Review and Analysis of Knowledge for Holistic Development (PARAKH) to assess the performance of secondary and higher secondary students.

Key Points:

- PARAKH will bring uniformity to the analysis procedures. It is to function under NCERT.
- It will release guidelines to the state and central boards.
- PARAKH will conduct National Achievement Survey. It will work with international organizations and education boards.

Monument Mitra Scheme

Private firms will soon be able to partner with Archaeological Survey of India for the upkeep of 1,000 monuments under the Monument Mitra Scheme.

Key Points:

- Scheme would be based on the Corporate Social Responsibility model and a new website having the names of all the heritage sites, would also be launched.
- Monument Mitra is the term coined for an entity partnering with the government under the 'Adopt A Heritage' project.
- It was launched under the Ministry of Tourism earlier and then transferred to the Ministry of Culture.

BIND Scheme

The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs approved the proposal of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting regarding the Central Sector Scheme “Broadcasting Infrastructure and Network Development” (BIND) Scheme.

Key Points:

- It is a scheme for providing financial support to Prasar Bharati for expenses related to expansion and upgradation of its broadcasting infrastructure, content development and civil work related to the organization.
- PrasarBharati, as the public broadcaster of the country, is the most important vehicle of information, education, entertainment and engagement for the people especially in the remote areas of the country through Doordarshan (DD) and All India Radio (AIR).
- It will increase coverage of AIR FM (frequency modulation) transmitters in the country to 66% by geographical area and 80% by population, up from 59% and 68% respectively.
- The Scheme also envisages free distribution of over 8 lakh DD Free Dish STBs (Set Top Box) to people living in remote, tribal, LWE and border areas.

“Vibrant Villages Programme”

The Union Cabinet, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, has approved Centrally Sponsored Scheme- “Vibrant Villages Programme” (VVP) for the Financial Years 2022-23 to 2025-26 with financial allocation of Rs. 4800 Crore.

Key Points:

- This will help in encouraging people to stay in their native locations in border areas and reversing the outmigration from these villages adding to improved security of the border.
- The scheme will provide funds for development of essential infrastructure and creation of livelihood opportunities in 19 Districts and 46 Border blocks 4 states and 1 UT along the northern land border of the country.
- It will help in achieving inclusive growth and retaining the population in the border areas. In the first phase 663 Villages will be taken up in the programme.
- Vibrant Village Action Plans will be created by the district administration with the help of Gram Panchayats.
- Key outcomes that have been attempted are, connectivity with all weather road, drinking water, 24x7 electricity – Solar and wind energy to be given focused attention, mobile and internet connectivity.

‘SWAYATT’ promoting start-ups on GeM

The government e-Marketplace (GeM) held a celebration to celebrate “SWAYATT,” a programme to support start-ups, women, and youth advantage through e-Transactions on GeM, which has been a major success.

Key Points:

- It is important to note that by registering more than 8.5 lakh Micro and Small Businesses (MSEs) on the GeM portal and helping MSEs secure over Rs. 1.87 lakh crore in sales spread across 68 lakh+ orders, the GeM promotes social and financial inclusion.
- The event’s chief guest was Radha S. Chauhan, Secretary, Ministry of Personnel and Training.
- Speaking to the group, P.K. Singh, CEO of GeM, described the advancements made so far in promoting social and financial inclusion through the registration of more than 8.5 lakh Micro and Small Enterprises (MSEs) on the GeM portal, which have been successful in receiving over Rs. 1.87 lakh crore in business spread across 68 lakh+ orders.
- Singh added that about 43K SC/ST MSEs have delivered 1.35 lakh+ orders worth 2,592 crore on the GeM platform so far, while over 1.45 lakh women MSEs have fulfilled 7.32 lakh orders totaling 15, 922 crore.

International Organisations & Events

Aksai Chin Railway Line

The Chinese Government is planning to build a new railway line in the Aksai Chin region.

Key Points:

- China will lay a railway line between Xiagtse and Pakhutso which will run till Pangong Lake and will run very close to the Line of Actual control expected to be completed on 2035.
- China recently proposed a medium-term railway plan and a long-term railway plan for the Tibet area and Aksai chin railway line is a part of this plan.
- According to the plan, China is to increase the Railway connections of Tibet to 4000 km.

US resolution on Arunachal Pradesh LAC

The US senate recently passed a resolution condemning China's aggression on Arunachal Pradesh and stating A.P as integral part of India.

Key Points:

- Resolution says China is changing the status of LAC using its military force.
- And lauded India's actions to defend her against Chinese aggression at the borders.
- The resolution has been supported by both the Republican and conservative party support.

Scientists discover fifth inner core layer of the earth

The recent frequent earthquakes have helped scientists discover a new core. This fifth inner core is a solid ball of nickel and iron and is the innermost layer.

Key Points:

- So far scientists believed that there are only four layers in the earth.
- They are the outermost layer called the crust, and the middle layer called the mantle. And the innermost layer is called the core.
- Unlike the inner core and outer core, this new fifth layer is solid. It may be 650 km in diameter.

First G20 Culture Working Group meeting

The UNESCO World Heritage site KHAJURAHO is hosting the first Culture Working Group Meeting.

Key Points:

- More than 125 delegates from foreign countries will be attending the meet along with PdamShri Nek Ram the "Millet man".
- It is a group of Hindu and Jain temples built in 1000 CE during the Chandela dynasty.
- The KandariyaMahadeva Temple is one of the 12 temples that survived. This temple has various symbols and exhibits the richness of Indian art.

Operation Dost

As part of "Operation Dost", India is deploying a field hospital, supplies, and rescue personnel to the earthquake-stricken countries of Turkey and Syria.

Key Highlights:

- 7.8-magnitude earthquake that occurred on February 6th, 2023 while people were asleep destroyed thousands of buildings, trapped an unspecified number of people, and may have affected millions of people.
- 9,500 people have died as a result of the earthquake so far.
- Search teams and rescue supplies have started to arrive by plane, and dozens of countries, including the United States, China, and the Gulf States, have promised their support.
- Turkey hadn't experienced an earthquake of this size since 33,000 people died in the eastern region of Erzincan in 1939.

Egypt joins BRICS Bank

Egypt has become a member of the BRICS New Development Bank (NDB).

Key Highlights:

- The New Development Bank has admitted Egypt as a New Member.
- Egypt is the Fourth New Member admitted into New Development Bank.
- BRICS New Development Bank (NDB) is a multilateral development bank jointly founded by the BRICS countries (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) at the 6th BRICS Summit in Fortaleza, Brazil in 2014.
- BRICS New Development Bank was formed to support infrastructure and sustainable development efforts in BRICS and other underserved, emerging economies for faster development through innovation and cutting-edge technology.

Shanghai Cooperation Organization dialogue partner

The Saudi Arabian government has taken a significant step towards joining the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), a regional alliance dominated by China and Russia.

Key Highlights:

- According to sources, the decision to pursue dialogue partner status with the Shanghai Cooperation Organization is seen as the first step towards eventual full membership for Saudi Arabia.

- The decision was made after Saudi Aramco's announcement of increased investment in China, including a joint venture in northeast China and acquiring a stake in a privately owned petrochemical group.
- The growing relationship between Riyadh and Beijing has caused concern in Washington, which sees Chinese influence as a threat to U.S. interests.
- The Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) was established in June 2001 by China, Russia, and several Central Asian countries including Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan.

Finland becomes NATO Member

Finland has become the 31st member of the alliance.

Key Highlights:

- Jens Stoltenberg, the Secretary General of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), has announced that Finland has become the 31st member of the alliance.
- Despite Russia's opposition to Finland's membership, Turkey's approval has allowed the extension of NATO.
- Finland shares a long border of over 1,300 kilometers with Russia, and its decision to join NATO was prompted by security concerns following Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2022.
- NATO, or the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, is an intergovernmental military alliance established in 1949.
- The founding members of NATO were the United States, Canada, and ten European nations including Belgium, Denmark, France, Iceland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, and the United Kingdom.

UN 2023 Water Conference

A report presented by UNESCO at the UN 2023 Water Conference in New York reveals that a significant portion of the world's population still does not have access to safe drinking water and adequate sanitation.

Key Highlights:

- The report indicates that 26% of the global population lacks safe drinking water, while 46% do not have access to well-managed sanitation facilities.
- According to statistics, a significant portion of the world's population, specifically two billion individuals, lack access to safe drinking water, and 3.6 billion people do not have access to well-managed sanitation facilities.
- It is projected that by 2050, nearly half of the world's urban population will face water scarcity, up from one-third in 2016.
- India is expected to be one of the most severely affected countries in this regard.
- 80% of people living under water stress lived in Asia; in particular, northeast China, as well as India and Pakistan.

5th International Conference on Disaster Resilient Infrastructure

Recently, the Prime Minister of India addressed the 5th International Conference on Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (ICDRI) 2023.

Key Points:

- ICDRI is the annual international conference of the Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI) in partnership with member countries, organizations and institutions to strengthen the global discourse on disaster and climate-resilient infrastructure.
- CDRI is an Independent International Organization consisting of global partnership of national governments, United Nations agencies and programs, multilateral development banks and financing mechanisms, the private sector, and academic and research institutions.
- It aims to increase the resilience of infrastructure systems to climate and disaster risks, thereby ensuring sustainable development. It was launched in 2019, at the United Nations Climate Action Summit in New York.

Ukraine Security Assistance Initiative

The ongoing conflict between Ukraine and Russia has raised concerns over Ukraine's security and stability. The United States has pledged significant military aid to Ukraine to help them defend themselves against Russian aggression. One such initiative is the Ukraine Security Assistance Initiative (USAI), a funding program aimed at increasing Ukraine's capacity to defend itself.

Key Points:

- The US recently approved \$2.6 billion military assistance for Ukraine. Major portion of this funding is for the USAI and the rest is for existing US stocks.
- The USAI program is led by the U.S. Department of Defense and is designed to provide training, equipment, and advisory initiatives to Ukraine's armed forces.
- The primary purpose of the program is to counter Russian aggression and support Ukraine's sovereignty.

25 Years of Good Friday Agreement

The Good Friday Agreement, also known as the Belfast Agreement, is a historic peace agreement that ended the sectarian violence in Northern Ireland, commonly referred to as “The Troubles.”

Key Points:

- The agreement was signed on April 10, 1998, by the British and Irish governments, along with political parties in Northern Ireland.
- The aim of the agreement was to establish a power-sharing government and bring an end to the decades-long conflict that had claimed more than 3,500 lives.
- The division in Northern Ireland was primarily between Unionists, who wanted Northern Ireland to remain part of the UK, and nationalists, who wanted Northern Ireland to join the Republic of Ireland leading to a cycle of violence that lasted almost 30 years.
- The Good Friday Agreement continues to be in place, but issues have emerged due to Brexit and the Northern Ireland Protocol.

Conflict between Israel and Syria

Israel has fired retaliatory rockets after three rockets had been launched towards Israel from Syria.

Key Points:

- The situation in Israel and its neighboring countries has been tense for several months now, with an ultra-nationalist government coming to power in Israel, raising concerns among its neighbors.
- The recent raid on the Al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem by Israel sparked a wave of rocket attacks from Lebanon, Gaza Strip, and Syria.
- Israel fears that arch-rival Iran is using the long-running war in Syria to station its fighters and weapons close to Israel's borders.
- Israel has been conducting strikes in Syria in recent weeks, targeting both Iranian-linked figures and infrastructure, including the airports of Damascus and Aleppo.

Buzi Bridge in Mozambique

EAM Jaishankar inaugurated the Buzi Bridge virtually, which is a part of the 132 km Tica-Buzi-Nova-Sofala Road project. The bridge has been constructed by India.

Key Points:

- The bridge has been constructed by India and is a symbol of the solidarity and friendship between India and Mozambique.
- Buzi Bridge, constructed as part of 132 km Tica-Buzi-Nova-Sofala Road project.
- The Buzi Bridge is an essential project that demonstrates India's commitment to the development of Mozambique's infrastructure.

European Free Trade Association (EFTA)

India and the four European countries that form the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) have expressed their willingness to resume their negotiations for a Trade and Economic Partnership Agreement (TEPA) that has been stalled since 2018.

Key Points:

- EFTA is India's 9th largest trading partner, accounting for about 2.5% of India's total merchandise trade in 2020-21.
- The TEPA aims to create opportunities for trade and investment between India and EFTA by eliminating/reducing tariffs and non-tariff barriers on a wide range of products.
- It aims to ensure fair and transparent market access conditions for service providers and investors and will enhance cooperation on intellectual property rights protection and enforcement.
- TEPA aims to facilitate trade procedures and customs cooperation along with effective mechanisms for dispute resolution.

Important Dates & Days

National Minority Rights Day

National Minorities Rights Day is commemorated on December 18 every year in India. Its aim is to safeguard the individual rights of the religious, ethnic, racial, or linguistic minorities in the country.

Key Points:

- Minorities Rights Day is commemorated to uphold the right to freedom and equal opportunities for the ethnic minorities in India.
- The Union Government set up the National Commission for Minorities under the National Commission for Minorities Act 1992.
- Muslims, Sikhs, Buddhists, Christians, and Zoroastrians communities have been notified as minority communities in the Gazette of India by the Union Government all around the country.

Vijay Diwas

Nation celebrates Vijay Diwas to commemorate India's victory over Pakistan in the 1971 Bangladesh Liberation war.

Key Points:

- Vijay Diwas is celebrated to commemorate the heroes who sacrificed their lives for the nation.
- The end of the war resulted in the freedom of Bangladesh.
- Vijay Diwas is celebrated every year on 16th December to honour the victory of the Indian armed forces over Pakistan in 1971.
- On 16th December 1971, the chief of the Pakistani forces, General Amir Abdullah Khan Niazi, along with 93 thousand troops, surrendered unconditionally to the allied forces led by Lieutenant General Jagjit Singh Aurora, in Dhaka after their defeat.
- The India-Pakistan war went on for 13 days and India defeated Pakistan on 16th December 1971.

National Mathematics Day

National Mathematics Day is celebrated on December 22 across the nation every year. The National Mathematics Day is marked to recognise and celebrate the works of Srinivasa Ramanujan.

Key Points:

- Srinivasa Ramanujan, the Indian mathematical genius, was born on this day in 1887. This year nation celebrates his 135th birth anniversary of Ramanujan.
- The main objective behind the celebration of National Mathematics Day is to make people aware of the development of mathematics and its importance in the growth of humanity.
- Srinivasa Ramanujan was born on December 22, 1887, in Tamil Nadu's Erode to a Brahmin Iyengar family. He had developed a liking for mathematics at a very young age, mastering trigonometry at 12 and was eligible for a scholarship at the Government Arts College in Kumbakonam.

17th Pravasi Bhartiya Divas

Pravasi Bharatiya Divas or NRI Day is formally observed on 9 January to celebrate the day when Mahatma Gandhi returned from South Africa to Mumbai, India.

Key facts:

- Pravasi Bharatiya Divas or NRI Day is formally observed on 9 January to celebrate the day when Mahatma Gandhi returned from South Africa to Mumbai, India.
- The day is celebrated to acknowledge the contribution of the non-resident Indian community in helping in the development of the country.
- Pravasi Bharatiya Divas 2023 has been conducted in Indore, Madhya Pradesh, from 8–10 January, 2023.
- It is important to note that this is the 17th Pravasi Bharatiya Divas, or NRI Day.
- According to the Ministry of External Affairs, the official theme of the Pravasi Bharatiya Divas 2023 is "Diaspora: Reliable Partners for India's Progress in Amrit Kaal."
- The theme focuses on the importance of the Indian Diaspora in the development of the country.

National Women's Day

India celebrates National Women's Day on February 13 to celebrate and commemorate the birth anniversary of Sarojini Naidu, the Nightingale of India.

Key Points:

- India celebrates National women's day to honour the achievements of women in the country, especially in the field of politics, culture, and economy.
- Sarojini Naidu was a contributor to the Indian Constitution.
- She served as the President of the Indian National Congress in 1925.
- She was imprisoned for 21 months for participating in the Quit India Movement.

- She did her higher studies in London.
- She was born in Hyderabad and died in Lucknow.

Central Excise Day 2023

The day honours the CBIC employees who work hard to collect the taxes objective of celebrating the day is to motivate the CBIC employees to deliver their duties effectively and to prevent corruption in the country.

Key Points:

- On February 24, 1944, the Central Excise and Salt Act was passed, the Central Excise Tariff Act was introduced in 1985 and act was integrated with the Central Excise and Salt Act in 1996, called the Central Excise Act of 1944.
- CBIC operates under the Revenue Department of GoI which comes under the purview of the finance ministry and calculates central excise duties, IGST, and CGST, and prevents smuggling.
- The tax system in India started with salt the most essential ingredients in our daily life when the British Government imposed taxes on salt through the salt law.

National Science Day 2023

India celebrates National Science Day on February 28. National Science Day is celebrated in the country to mark the discovery of the Raman Effect.

Key Points:

- Raman discovered the Raman Effect on February 28, 1928, and received Nobel Prize for his discovery in 1930.
- The National Council for Science and Technology 1986 proposed to mark National Science Day on February 28. The Government of India agreed to the proposal.
- The theme for National Science Day 2023: “Global Science for Global Wellbeing”.

International Migrants Day

International Migrants Day is observed annually on December 18 to bring attention to the social and economic realities of migrants around the world.

Key Points:

- This day is observed to guarantee that the rights of migrants are equally respected and not violated.
- Currently, 281 million individuals are international migrants who reside in nations other than their own.
- International Migrants Day serves as a reminder that the challenges faced by migrants in every country remain unresolved, and policymakers must continue to develop constructive and comprehensive policies to address the issue.

International Human Solidarity Day 2022

International Human Solidarity Day (IHSD) is observed annually on December 20 across the globe to celebrate the ideal of unity in diversity.

Key Points:

- The celebration of the International Day of Human Solidarity is a significant step in the aim of the United Nations Sustainable Development Agenda for 2030, to eradicate poverty in all its forms across the globe.
- The day serves to remind governments, civil society members and other institutions that poverty can be tackled and eradicated only through a united effort to help usher in an era where social equality, dignity and justice prevails.
- On December 20, 2002, the UN General Assembly introduced a World Solidarity Fund to help counter global poverty.
- This got included in the United Nation Development Programme (UNDP) trust fund in February 2003.

World Leprosy Day 2023

World Leprosy Day (WLD) is celebrated on the last Sunday of January. In 2023, World Leprosy Day is Sunday 29 January.

Key Points:

The theme of World Leprosy Day 2023 is “Act Now. End Leprosy.” This year’s theme calls attention to three key messages:

- Elimination is possible: We have the power and tools to stop transmission and defeat this disease.
- Act now: We need the resources and commitment to end leprosy. Prioritize leprosy elimination.
- Reach the unreached: Leprosy is preventable and treatable. Suffering from leprosy is needless.

World Neglected Tropical Diseases Day 2023

World Neglected Tropical Diseases Day (World NTD Day) is observed on January 30 every year to raise awareness about neglected tropical diseases (NTDs) as a critical public health challenge so that we can progress towards their elimination.

Key Points:

- 2023 theme is “Act Now. Act Together. Invest in Neglected Tropical Diseases”.
- The proposal to recognise the day was floated by the United Arab Emirates.
- It was adopted unanimously by the delegates.
- The first World NTD Day was celebrated informally in 2020.
- NTDs are a group of infections that are most common among marginalised communities in the developing regions of Africa, Asia and the Americas.

World Wetlands Day

World Wetlands Day is celebrated annually on 2nd February.

Key Highlights:

- The day is observed to create awareness among people about the importance of wetlands and different ways to restore their rapid loss and degradation.
- The day is aimed at highlighting the vital role wetlands play in maintaining biodiversity and supporting human well-being.
- The theme for this year’s World Wetlands Day is ‘It’s Time for Wetlands Restoration’. The theme highlights the urgency to prioritize wetland restoration.

International Day of Human Fraternity

The International Day of Human Fraternity was established by the United Nations General Assembly on December 21, 2020. The International Day of Human Fraternity has been observed every year on February 4.

Key Highlights:

- The International Day of Human Fraternity recognises the importance of compassion, religious tolerance, and respect for one another.
- The International Day of Human Fraternity has been observed every year on February 4.
- The motto is “harmony in difference.”
- The day is significant as it highlights the importance of promoting interreligious and intercultural dialogue and cooperation as a way to build a more peaceful and harmonious world.

World Cancer Day

February 4th is World Cancer Day 2023, which is being observed to create a cancer-free world.

Key Highlights:

- Every year on February 4th, we observe World Cancer Day to increase public awareness of cancer prevention, detection, and treatment.
- World Cancer Day seeks to save millions of lives by educating the public, promoting awareness, and pressuring individuals and governments around the world to take action every year.
- Cancer is any of a wide range of illnesses characterized by the growth of abnormal cells with the capacity to invade and damage healthy bodily tissue while dividing uncontrollably.
- Cancer is the second leading cause of death in the world. But because to advancements in cancer screening, therapy, and prevention, survival rates for many cancer types are rising.
- “Close the Care Gap” has been the theme for World Cancer Day for the past three years (2022, 2023, and 2024).

Safer Internet Day

This year’s Safer Internet Day took place on Tuesday, 7 February 2023.

Key Highlights:

- Safer Internet Day is marked to help the younger generation understand safe practices on the Internet.
- The Internet provides a broad social platform to utilize ideas, use and research them.
- According to UK Safer Internet Center, the theme for Safer Internet Day 2023 is ‘Want to talk about it? Making space for conversations about life online.’ This year, the day will be commemorated on February 7.
- Safer Internet Day began as an initiative of the EU Safe Borders project in 2004.

- In 2009, the concept of Safer Internet Day Committees was introduced. The aim was to strengthen the bonds with countries outside the network.

World Pulses Day, 2023

The United Nations and several other international organizations and countries celebrate World Pulses Day on February 10.

Key Points:

- The main objective of the celebration is to increase awareness of the nutritional benefits of pulses.
- The day aims to promote the environmental benefits of pulses and how pulses can help countries in achieving their sustainable food delivery goals.
- The Theme of World Pulses Day 2023: Pulses for a Sustainable future.
- The UN passed the Food and Agriculture Organization led resolution of celebrating World Pulses Day in 2013.

International Epilepsy Day

International Epilepsy Day, the 2nd Monday in Feb, helps to raise epilepsy awareness.

Key Points:

- The theme of International Epilepsy Day 2023: The celebrations are to focus on “STIGMA”. Stigma means fear or feeling negative reactions.
- Significance of the 2023 theme: People with epilepsy suffer from stigma and discrimination. For this reason, it is essential to spread awareness about the disease and its cure.
- Epilepsy is a nervous disorder. It affects brain activity.
- The disease is identified late among children.
- Early symptoms of the disease are left unnoticed.
- If identified at early stages, it can be cured easily.
- Around 50 million people in the world suffer from epilepsy. 80% of them are living in low and middle-income countries.

World Radio Day

In 2023, the United Nations and other countries are celebrating the 12th edition of World Radio Day. It is celebrated on February 13.

Key Points:

- The theme of World Radio Day: Radio and Peace
- The celebrations of World Radio Day are launched by UNESCO on behalf of the UN.
- The day aims to highlight the fact that radios are the pillars of conflict prevention and play a major role in maintaining peace in the world.
- Significance of the theme: The war between countries may translate into media conflicts. This increases tensions. Radio can fuel conflicts.
- The day is celebrated to highlight the role played by radio and other broadcasting media.
- The day emphasizes the impact of news broadcasted by the radio on the public.
- Also, radio is one of the least expensive mediums of communication. It can easily reach remote areas.

World Pangolin Day

Every year the day is celebrated on the third Saturday of February month in 2023, World Pangolin Day is celebrated on February 18.

Key Points:

- The objective of the celebration is to create awareness about the Pangolin population decline.
- Indian Pangolins are hunted and exported to markets in South Asia and China.
- Of all the states, Odisha had the highest seizures, Maharashtra has the second-highest seizure incidents.

Status:

- IUCN: Critically Endangered
- CITES: APPENDIX I: This appendix prohibits international trade
- Wild Life Protection Act, 1972: Schedule I

Zero Discrimination Day

Zero Discrimination Day is celebrated on March 1. The day is mainly celebrated by organizations like UNAIDS.

Key Points:

- The first Zero Discrimination Day was celebrated in 2014.
- It was launched by UNAIDS.
- The first Zero Discrimination Day celebrations were conducted in Beijing.
- The theme of Zero Discrimination Day 2023 is Save Lives: Decriminalize.

World Wildlife Day 2023

World Wildlife Day is celebrated on March 3 by the United Nations. The main objective of the celebrations is to increase awareness of wild flora and fauna.

Key Points:

- The theme for world wildlife day is “Partnerships for wildlife conservation”.
- The 2023 World Wildlife Day is special because this year CITES is celebrating its 50th anniversary.
- The members of IUCN passed a resolution to form Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) in 1963.

International Women’s Day 2023

International Women’s Day is celebrated annually on March 8th.

Key Points:

- Its origins can be traced back to the activities of labour movements in North America and Europe at the turn of the twentieth century first observed in 1911 by a few European countries and officially recognized in 1977.
- The theme for this year’s International Women’s Day is Embrace Equity or #EmbraceEquity, which aims to highlight the importance of gender equity in every society.
- The difference between equity and equality is also emphasized, with equity recognizing that each person has different circumstances and allocating resources and opportunities accordingly to achieve an equal outcome.

International Day of Forests

The International Day of Forests, also known as World Forests Day, is celebrated each year on March 21 to raise awareness about the importance of forests and trees for the survival of humanity and the planet.

Key Points:

- The theme for 2023 is ‘Forests and Health.’
- The history of the International Day of Forests can be traced back to 1971 when the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) established World Forestry Day.
- The day was established to create and raise awareness of the importance of forests for people and the planet.
- In 2011, the United Nations declared the years 2011 to 2020 as the International Decade of Forests.
- Its objective was to promote sustainable management, conservation, and development of all types of forests.
- In 2012, the International Day of Forests was established.

International Day for Mine Awareness

April 4th is marked as the International Day of Mine Awareness and Aid in Mine Action.

Key Points:

- The goal of the International Day of Mine Awareness and Aid in Mine Action is to raise awareness and support for explosives elimination and notice the threats related to the safety, health, and lives of civilians.
- The seeks to educate people about the dangers of landmines and unexploded ordnances and promote a safer and suitable environment for civilians.
- The theme of International Day of Mine Awareness and Assistance in Mine Action 2023 is “Mine Action Cannot Wait.” The campaign will focus on Cambodia, the Lao People’s Democratic Republic, and Vietnam, where the impact of explosive hazards remains severe.

World Health Day 2023

Every Year on 7th April World Health Day is celebrated. The date of 7 April marks the anniversary of the founding of World Health Organisation in 1948.

Key Points:

- The idea of World Health Day was conceived at the First Health Assembly in 1948 and it came into effect in 1950.
- It is celebrated annually and each year it draws attention to a specific health topic of concern to people all over the world.
- To mark the occasion of World Health Day on April 7, a health camp and a flash mob was organized to create awareness on non-communicable diseases (NCD) among the public.

World Heritage Day

The International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) declared April 18th as the International Day for Monuments and Sites, also known as World Heritage Day, in 1982.

Key Points:

- The theme for this year is “Heritage Changes,” which focuses on the role of cultural heritage in climate action and its importance in protecting vulnerable communities.
- India is currently home to 40 UNESCO World Heritage Sites, making it the country with the sixth-largest number of sites in the world.
- The day is about preserving human heritage, diversity, and vulnerability of the world’s built monuments and heritage sites.

National Civil Services Day

April 21 was chosen as the date for National Civil Services Day to commemorate the birth anniversary of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, the first Home Minister of India.

Key Points:

- He is widely known as the ‘Iron Man of India’ and played a key role in the integration of the princely states into the Indian Union.
- The first National Civil Services Day was celebrated on April 21, 2006.
- The day reminds the importance of public service and encourages civil servants to continue serving the public with commitment and dedication.

World Earth Day

Earth Day is an annual event celebrated on April 22nd, observed across 193 countries worldwide. It aims to encourage people to come together for environmental protection and raise awareness about the urgent need to address climate change.

Key Points:

- The first Earth Day was celebrated in the United States in 1970, and since then, it has grown into a global movement with various events and campaigns organized by committees and organizations.
- Earth Week, celebrated from April 16th to 22nd every year, is an unofficial extended celebration of Earth Day.
- It is dedicated to educating people about Earth Day, climate change, and the need to take steps towards environmental conservation.

World Malaria Day

World Malaria Day is observed every year on 25th April.

Key Points:

- It was established by the World Health Organization (WHO) in 2007 to raise awareness about malaria.
- The theme for World Malaria Day 2023 is “Time to deliver zero malaria: invest, innovate, implement”.
- “Global technical strategy for malaria 2016–2030” The strategy aims to reduce malaria case incidence and mortality rates by at least 40% by 2020, at least 75% by 2025 and at least 90% by 2030 against a 2015 baseline.
- In 2021, WHO launched the E-2025 initiative to halt the transmission of malaria in 25 identified countries by 2025.

Economy**Union Budget 2023-24**

The Finance Minister of India called it the first Budget in Amrit Kaal. The vision for the Amrit Kaal is an empowered and inclusive economy that is technology-driven and knowledge-based with a robust financial sector.

Key Highlights:

- A key theme of Union Budget 2023-24 is the focus on inclusive development - Sabka Sath, Sabka Vikas which specifically covers Farmers, Women, Youth, Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, Other Backward Classes (OBCs), Divyangjan (PwDs) and Economically Weaker Sections (EWS).
- Key Takeaways of the Budget Changes in the new income tax regime (in rebate limit and in tax slabs).
- A 33% increase in capital investment outlay has been proposed, raising it to Rs 10 lakh crore (the biggest in the past decade).
- Changes in customs duty; reduced on import of certain inputs for mobile phone manufacturing, shrimp feed etc. and increased on cigarettes, gold articles, compounded rubber etc.
- Capital outlay for the railways increased to the highest ever – Rs 2.40 lakh crore.
- 157 new nursing colleges will be established in co-location with the existing 157 medical colleges established since 2014.
- A Mission to eliminate Sickle Cell Anaemia by 2047 will be launched.

Delhi Budget 2023-24

Delhi Budget for the present financial year 2023-24 was presented by the Delhi Finance Minister Shri Kailash Gahlot. This budget session was held in the Delhi Assembly on March 22, 2023

Key Points:

- Out of the total budget of Rs 78,800 crores, 22,000 crores has been selected for expenditure on infrastructure while Rs 550 crores are kept for advertisements.
- The allocation for advertisements remains the same.
- Focus on Clean & Modern Delhi - The government has proposed to instigate infrastructure facilities across the busiest city of Delhi.
- The aim is to enhance the city which will start by cleaning Yamuna and other waste materials will be removed, as per the budgetary allocation.
- It talks about Education, Health, Greener city, Deshbhakti, Zero Tax, and Rozgar Budgets in the session that was held.
- A senior official claimed that the theme of the 2023-24 budget is “Saaf, Sundar aur Adhunik Dilli” (clean, neat and modern Delhi).
- About 84 per cent of Delhi’s population benefitted from power subsidies.
- By 2025, a 6,000-megawatt solar infrastructure is intended to be established.

MPC’s First Bi-Monthly Monetary Policy of FY2023-24

The Reserve Bank of India’s (RBI’s) Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) recently announced the first bi-monthly monetary policy of FY2023-24.

Key Points:

- RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das revealed that the MPC has unanimously decided to keep the repo rate unchanged at 6.50%.
- This key lending rate is the rate at which the RBI lends money to commercial banks.
- The decision to pause the repo rate is only for this meeting, but the committee will not hesitate to take further action as may be required in its future meetings.

India and Malaysia Agree to Settle Trade in Indian Rupees

India and Malaysia have agreed to settle trade in Indian rupees. This mechanism is expected to enhance India-Malaysia bilateral trade which touched USD 19.4 billion during 2021-22.

Key Points:

- Malaysia is the third largest trading partner of India in the ASEAN region, after Singapore and Indonesia that account for USD 30.1 billion and USD 26.1 billion bilateral trades with India respectively.
- In July 2022, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) allowed the settlement of international trade in Indian rupees.
- In March 2023, banks from 18 countries were allowed by the RBI to open Special Rupee Vostro Accounts (SRVAs) to settle payments in Indian rupees.

Core sector growth slows to 5-month low in March

Growth in core infrastructure industries moderated to a five-month low in March at 3.6% year-on-year, partly due to the base effect but also because of unseasonal rains.

Key Points:

- Only two sectors — coal and crude petroleum — registered sequential improvement.
- The data comes at a time when there is expectation of a slowdown in economic activities, but is at odds with other high frequency indicators such as the PMI and revenue from the Goods and Services Tax registering robust expansion in the month.
- This is the slowest growth in core sector industries since October 2022 when it registered a mere 0.7% expansion.
- March's core sector growth was also the second-lowest in FY23.
- The eight core industries grew by 4.8% in March, 2022 and by 7.2% in February, 2023.

Pakistan's inflation rises to 48 year high

Inflation has risen to a 48-year high in crisis-hit Pakistan, where the International Monetary Fund (IMF) is visiting for urgent talks, according to data released on February 1 by the country's statistics bureau.

Key Highlights:

- Year-on-year inflation in January 2023 was recorded at 27.55 percent, the highest since May 1975, with thousands of containers of imports held up at Karachi port.
- Pakistan's economy is in dire straits, stricken by a balance-of-payments crisis while it attempts to service high amounts of external debt.
- Food prices rose by a staggering 43 percent in January year-on-year.
- Inflation rate in Pakistan averaged 8.05 per cent from 1957 until 2023, reaching an all-time high of 37.8 per cent in December 1973 and a record low of minus 10.32 per cent in February 1959.

Mission Har Payment Digital

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has launched a new mission called "Har Payment Digital" as part of its efforts to make every Indian a user of digital payments during "Digital Payments Awareness Week". The week was celebrated by RBI

Key Points:

- The initiative was launched during Digital Payments Awareness Week between (March 6, 2023, and March 12, 2023) and aims to reinforce the ease and convenience of digital payments, while also onboarding new users.
- The central bank has started an initiative to adopt 75 villages and transform them into digital payment-enabled villages. These villages are to be adopted by payment system operators.
- Banks and payment system operators will promote the Har Payment Digital campaign and highlight the various payment channels available.
- The RBI's Regional Offices will also promote the acceptance and use of digital payments through the Jan Bhagidari activities as part of this initiative.

SBI reintroduces 'Amrit Kalash' scheme

SBI has announced the re-introduction of its retail term deposit scheme, Amrit Kalash.

Key Points:

- The scheme offers a special tenor of 400 days and provides an interest rate of 7.6% for senior citizens and 7.1% for others.
- This deposit scheme had previously been launched by SBI on February 15, 2023, and was valid till March 31, 2023.
- The reintroduction of this scheme provides customers with another opportunity to avail themselves of the attractive interest rates offered by SBI.

First Republic Bank Collapse

The bank's stock has plummeted about 75% in the last week of April, after a disappointing first-quarter earnings report revived Wall Street's fears about a banking crisis and catalyzed an exodus out of First Republic stock.

Key Points:

- Trouble for First Republic started brewing after the company reported that its total deposits fell 41% in the first quarter to \$104.5 billion.
- Analysts had expected deposits of around \$136.7 billion.
- About two-thirds of First Republic's deposits were uninsured with the FDIC when the banking turmoil took hold in March, lower than the 94% at Silicon Valley Bank.
- But at the end of 2022, First Republic had a whopping ratio of 111% for loans and long-term investments to deposits, according to S&P Global.
- In other words, the bank has loaned and invested more money than it has in deposits, subjecting it to liquidity risk.

Science & Technology

ALMA Telescope

ALMA telescope is to get a new brain. The ALMA is set to get a hardware and software upgrade for the collection of more data and produce sharper images.

Key Points:

- The Atacama Large Millimetre/submillimetre Array is a cutting-edge radio telescope featuring 66 high-precision antennas.
- This telescope is situated in the Atacama Desert in northern Chile.
- The telescope provided detailed images of protoplanetary discs around HL Tauri. It is a star in the Taurus constellation.

New security mechanism for Aadhaar-based fingerprint authentication

The Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI) has recently launched a new security mechanism for Aadhaar-based fingerprint authentication.

Key Points:

- The UIDAI is a statutory body that was established by the Indian Government in January 2009.
- It comes under the aegis of the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology.
- It functions based on the provisions of the Aadhaar (Targeted Delivery of Financial and other Subsidies, benefits and services) Act, 2016.

VLT Survey Telescope

The VLT Survey Telescope has recently captured a detailed image of IC 4701, an emission nebula found in the Sagittarius constellation.

Key Points:

- The VLT Survey Telescope (VST) is located at the Paranal Observatory in the Atacama Desert of northern Chile and is adjacent to the four Very Large Telescope (VLT) Unit Telescopes.
- It is located atop the Cerro Paranal mountain.
- The VST is unique as it is the world's largest telescope specifically designed to survey the sky in visible light.
- The program is collaboration between Italy's OAC and the European Southern Observatory (ESO).
- It is cooperation between Italy and 16 other European countries. These 16 countries formed the ESO – Earth Southern Observatory that signed the agreement with Italy to build the VLT Survey Telescope. ESO is a research facility.

'Sagar Manthan', the Real-time Performance Monitoring Dashboard

The Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways has demonstrated its commitment to promoting the growth of India's maritime transport sector by launching the 'Sagar Manthan' Dashboard, which represents a step towards digitalization and transparency in the sector.

Key Highlights:

- The newly launched dashboard is expected to enhance the functioning of different departments by providing well-coordinated and up-to-date information in real-time.
- The digital platform is designed to have all integrated data related to the ministry and other subsidiaries.
- The Real-time Performance Monitoring Dashboard of MoPSW called 'Sagar Manthan' was virtually launched by Union Minister for Ports, Shipping and Waterways and Ayush Shri Sarbananda Sonowal.
- Data visualization, Real-time monitoring, Improved communication, Data-driven decision making, Increased accountability are the features of Sagar Manthan dashboard.

"Call Before You Dig" App

Prime Minister Modi has recently launched an app called "Call Before You Dig" to prevent uncoordinated digging.

Key Highlights:

- Prime Minister Modi has recently launched an app called "Call Before You Dig" to prevent uncoordinated digging that can cause damage to underground utility assets, such as optical fibre cables.
- The app has been developed jointly by the Department of Telecommunications and the Bhaskaracharya Institute for Space

Applications and Geoinformatics, which operates under the Gujarat government. Its primary aim is to protect the country's underground public infrastructure.

- The “Call Before You Dig” app will facilitate coordination between excavators and asset owners through SMS/email notifications and click-to-call options.
- By using the app, excavators can get information about the location of underground utility assets and their depth, which will help them plan their work accordingly and avoid any damage to these assets.
- The app is designed to help avoid these costly accidents by allowing people to get in touch with the concerned authorities before starting any excavation work.

Heat index warning system

The India Meteorological Department (IMD) is planning to introduce a ‘heat index’ warning system in Delhi and other parts of the country.

Key Highlights:

- The IMD has conducted a study on the impact of meteorological factors on heatwaves and the “heat wave hazard zonation” of the country.
- According to “Hot Weather Analysis over India,” IMD revealed that the mechanism by which heat impacts humans is complex, it is a result of the interactions between temperature, radiation, wind, and humidity.
- Heat Index will calculate the temperature along with the humidity levels to provide a more accurate measure of what the temperature actually feels like.
- The IMD is planning to introduce a similar color-coded warning system in India.

India's First Quantum Computing-based Telecom Network Link

India's first quantum computing-based telecom network link has been made operational between Sanchar Bhawan and National Informatics Centre office in New Delhi.

Key Highlights:

- A quantum computing-based telecom network uses the principles of quantum physics to transmit information, providing a more secure method than traditional networks.
- Telecom Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw announced prize money of Rs 10 lakh for ethical hackers who can break the encryption of the system and also launched a hackathon challenge for anyone who can break the system developed by C-DoT, with a reward of Rs 10 lakh per break.
- Quantum communication relies on quantum mechanics properties, making it hard to intercept or hack the communication.

Google introduces a new Chatbot named 'Bard'

Google recently declared a new Chatbot named ‘Bard’ in competition with ChatGPT. In an online blog, the multinational company provided that interested people can join as users on the waiting list to access this newly designed AI system.

Key Points:

- Global Tech Company Google unveils a classy futuristic model that is made using Artificial Technology.
- The firm welcomes ‘Bard’ and calls it an experiment and only some specifically selected users will be able to access ChatGPT's rival in the market.
- It was informed that on March 22, early access has been initiated which will let the users collaborate with a generative AI system.
- During the announcement of the developed product, it said that it will continue to bring helpful and modern experiences for people, businesses and several communities around the world.

Digitization of Schengen Visa

The European Union member states' ambassadors have approved a new proposal that aims to digitise the visa application process.

Key Points:

- This move will replace the current ‘Schengen’ sticker with a digital barcode to streamline the process and reduce visa processing delays among the 27 European nations that comprise the Schengen area.
- The new visa will come in the form of cryptographically-signed 2D barcode and reduce counterfeiting and fraud by replacing the current stickers.
- The digital platform will automatically identify the country responsible for examining the application. Applicants can also indicate if the application needs to be processed by a specific member state.

- The new digital platform will provide applicants with the availability of visa after they upload their data and soft copies of their travel documents and pay the visa fees which will simplify the visa application process and reduce visa processing delays.

National Quantum Mission

Recently, the union cabinet chaired by the Prime Minister has approved the National Quantum Mission (NQM) to aid scientific and industrial research and development in quantum technology.

Key Points:

- National Quantum Mission will be implemented by the Department of Science & Technology (DST) under the Ministry of Science & Technology.
- The mission planned for 2023-2031 aimed to seed, nurture, and scale up scientific and industrial R&D and create a vibrant & innovative ecosystem in Quantum Technology (QT).
- With the launch of this mission, India will be the seventh country to have a dedicated quantum mission after the US, Austria, Finland, France, Canada and China.
- Quantum computers are very much faster than the computers we today have. They also have the capability to solve complex problems that are currently beyond our reach.
- Quantum communication networks can transmit information faster and more securely than traditional networks, with the potential for completely unhackable communication.

CE-20 Cryogenic Engine

The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) has successfully completed the flight acceptance hot test for the CE-20 cryogenic engine, which will power the LVM3 launch vehicle's Cryogenic Upper Stage for the upcoming Chandrayaan-3 mission.

Key Points:

- The test was carried out at the ISRO Propulsion Complex in Mahendragiri, Tamil Nadu.
- The cryogenic rocket engine uses cryogenic rocket fuel and an oxidiser. Cryogenic means the process or product requires very low temperatures.
- The Ce-20 cryogenic engine was produced by HAL and designed by ISRO. It is a liquid-fuel engine.

Megha-Tropiques-1

The Indian Space Agency ISRO is conducting a controlled re-entry of a decommissioned Indo-French satellite, Megha-Tropiques-1 (MT1), jointly developed to study tropical weather and climate.

Key Points:

- Rather than letting it become space debris for over 100 years, ISRO is using its remaining on board fuel to precisely maneuver the satellite for a controlled atmospheric re-entry, predicted to splash down in the Pacific Ocean.
- This is in line with ISRO's commitments to the UN Inter-Agency Space Debris Coordination Committee. The UN requires the de-orbiting of end-of-life satellites.
- The MeghaTropiques was launched in 2011 with objective of the satellite mission was to study the water cycle developed by ISRO and CNES.

OneWeb India-2 Mission

In its second commercial launch, ISRO's (Indian Space Research Organisation) heaviest launch vehicle LVM-3 (Launch Vehicle Mark 3) will launch a fleet of 36 OneWeb satellites, completing the first generation of the huge broadband constellation.

Key Points:

- This will be the 18th launch of OneWeb and will add to the UK-based company's (OneWeb) existing constellation of 582 satellites.
- ISRO's commercial arm NSIL had signed a contract with OneWeb to launch 72 satellites in two phases. The first set of 36 satellites was launched in LVM3-M2/OneWeb India-1 mission on October 23, 2022.
- This is the second OneWeb fleet that India is launching. This initiated India's journey into the commercial heavy lift-off space.

Brightest Gamma Ray Burst Detected

Astronomers recorded the brightest gamma-ray radiation (named GRB 221009A) of all time, which could overturn a long-standing theory of GRB jets.

Key Points:

- Gamma-Ray Bursts are the most powerful class of explosions in the universe, and they occur when massive stars die.
- When a massive star collapses, it creates a black hole, and the energy released during this process produces jets of high-energy particles that travel almost at the speed of light.
- These jets pierce through the collapsing star, producing X-rays and gamma rays, which can be detected by observatories on Earth and in space.

PSLV-C55/TeLEOS-2 Mission

Recently, ISRO successfully launched the PSLV-C55/TeLEOS-2 mission to send two Singapore-made satellites into space. An Orbital Experimental module was also launched as part of this mission to carry out tests in the space vacuum.

Key Points:

- TeLEOS-2 and Lumelite-4 are the two Singapore-made satellites that were launched aboard the Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV) from the Satish Dhawan Space Centre in Sriharikota.
- TeLEOS-2, weighing 741 kg, is a commercial Earth Observation satellite developed by the Government of Singapore and Singapore Technologies Engineering Limited.
- Lumelite-4, on the other hand, is a small, 16 kg satellite developed by the Singapore-based ST Engineering Geo-Insights Pte Ltd, with the purpose of augmenting the maritime safety of the city-state.

Mars' Core

A new study has revealed fascinating insights into the innermost layer of Mars – its core.

Key Points:

- The Red Planet's core is estimated to have a radius of approximately 1,780-1,810 kilometres, smaller and denser than previously thought. It is likely in a liquid state, according to the research published in the journal PNAS.
- In order to gain insight into the makeup and architecture of Mars, a team of international scientists scrutinized seismic information collected by NASA's InSight Mars Lander, which was sent into orbit in May 2018.
- The lander put a seismometer and other geophysical equipment on the planet's surface. Seismometers detect and measure seismic waves – shockwaves generated after an earthquake.
- The Earth's magnetic field is generated in its outer liquid core, which allows it to protect us from solar winds, keeping water on our planet. In contrast, Mars' surface environment is not conducive to life as the planet's core does not produce this defensive barrier.

Reports & Indices on India**Henley Passport Index 2023**

2023 Henley Passport Index is out for the year, with Japan grabbing the first spot for the fifth year in a row.

Key Points:

- The passport index has ranked India at the 85th position, meaning that Indian passport holders can access 59 countries without needing a visa.
- India has climbed up in the ranking by two positions from the past year, when it was at the 87th position.
- The Henley Passport Index is prepared by London-based Henley and Partners, a global citizenship and residence advisory firm.
- Top countries - 2) Singapore/South Korea ,3) Germany/Spain,4) Finland/Italy/Luxembourg ,and Afghanistan at bottom.

The annual Status of Education Report (ASER) 2022

According to the Annual Status of Education Report (ASER) 2022 released on 18 January 2023, the number of children enrolled in government schools in the state was 78 percent. During this period, the number of children enrolled in government schools has increased by 5 percent.

Key Points:

- The total children enrolled in schools up to class 8 in rural areas, 83.3 percent study in government schools. According to the 2022 report, only 14.6 percent of children study in private schools in rural areas.
- According to this report, in the year 2018, 36.9 percent of the children of classes 1 to 8 were studying tuition, this year their number has increased to 45.3 percent.

- The number of children studying tuition also increases as the class increases in the state. The survey was conducted in 720 villages in 24 districts of the state. These included 28196 children from three years to 16 years.
- Only 18.2 percent of class 5 students can read class 1 level text.
- According to the report, 30.7 percent of children studying in class 5 recognize marks from 11 to 99, while 78 percent of children are unable to participate in subtraction and 76 percent of the children are unable to participate.

Annual Death Penalty Report, 2022

The National Law University released a report called the Annual Death Penalty Report, 2022. According to the report, the number of death penalty prisoners in India increased to 539 in 2022. It was 490 in 2021.

Key Points:

- According to the report, the number of death penalty prisoners in India increased to 539 in 2022. It was 490 in 2021.
- 3% of death rows were judged by trial courts. SC pronounced 11 death penalty judgments and High Courts in the country pronounced 68 death sentences.
- Of all the crimes, sexual violence received the maximum death penalty. Almost one-third of the capital punishments were for sexual violence.
- No death sentences were pronounced in the courts of J&K, Delhi, Telangana, and Manipur.
- UP had the highest death sentences followed by Gujarat and Jharkhand.
- India has 539 death-sentenced prisoners as of 2022. This is a 40% increase as compared to the numbers in 2015.

UN Ranks 'Namami Gange' Project in World's top 10 Initiatives

The United Nations has recognised the Namami Gange initiative to rejuvenate India's sacred River Ganga as one of the top 10 World Restoration Flagships to revive the natural world.

Key Points:

- Namami Gange was selected from over 150 such initiatives from 70 countries across the globe.
- They were selected under the banner of the United Nations Decade on Ecosystem Restoration, a global movement coordinated by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO).
- Namami Gange was approved as a 'Flagship Programme' by the Central Government in June 2014. It was launched to serve the twin objectives of effective abatement of pollution and conservation and rejuvenation of the national river Ganga.
- Namami Gange is being operated under the Ministry of Water Resources, Department of River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation and Ministry of Jal Shakti.

Global Food Security Index 2022

The 2022 Global Food Security Index (GFSI) report was released by the British weekly The Economist.

Key Points:

- The 11th Global Food Security Index shows a deterioration in the global food environment for the third year, threatening food security.
- In this report, South Africa overtook Tunisia to become the most food-secure country in Africa.
- India is ranked at 68th position along with Algeria with the overall score of 58.9. China's position is at 25th with the score of 74.2.
- India was ranked at 71st position in the Global Food Security (GFS) Index 2021 of 113 countries with an overall score of 57.2 points on the GFS Index 2021.

UN World Social Report 2023

United Nations (UN) World Social Report 2023: Leaving no one behind in an ageing world, the number of persons aged 65 years or older worldwide is expected to double over the next three decades.

Key Points:

- North Africa, West Asia and sub-Saharan Africa are expected to experience the fastest growth in the number of older people over the next three decades.
- According to the National Commission on Population, the share of the elderly in India's population, close to 9% in 2011, is growing fast and may reach 18% by 2036.
- Life expectancy in India has more than doubled since Independence from around 32 years in the late 1940s to 70 years or so today.

Survival of the Richest Report: The India Story

Oxfam's Report "Survival of the Richest: The India story", the richest 1% in India now own more than 40% of the country's total wealth, while the bottom half of the population together share just 3% of wealth between 2012 and 2021.

Key Points:

- Gender Inequality: The report also highlighted gender inequality in India, stating that female workers earned only 63 Paise for every 1 rupee earned by male workers.
- Social Inequality: Oxfam India stated that the country's marginalized communities such as Dalits, Adivasis, Muslims, Women, and informal sector workers are continuing to suffer in a system that prioritizes the survival of the richest.

World Economic Outlook 2023

The IMF has released the January update of its World Economic Outlook, according to which the global growth is projected to fall from an estimated 3.4 percent in 2022 to 2.9 percent in 2023, then rise to 3.1 percent in 2024.

Key Points:

- The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has informed it is expecting some setbacks in the Indian economy next fiscal year and projected the growth of 6.1 percent in the fiscal year 2023.
- Growth in India is set to decline from 6.8 percent in 2022 to 6.1 percent in 2023 before picking up to 6.8 percent in 2024, with resilient domestic demand despite external headwinds.
- According to the January update, growth in emerging and developing Asia is expected to rise in 2023 and 2024 to 5.3 percent and 5.2 percent, respectively, after the deeper-than-expected slowdown in 2022 to 4.3 percent attributable to China's economy.
- Global inflation is forecast to rise from 4.7% in 2021 to 8.8% in 2022 but to decline to 6.5% in 2023 and to 4.1% by 2024.

QS Rankings 2023

The Indian Institute of Technology-Delhi has been ranked among the top 50 engineering institutions in the QS World University Rankings by Subject 2023.

Key Highlights:

- Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) has released a statement indicating that Delhi University has the highest number of entries (27) among Indian universities, followed by the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Bombay (25), and IIT Kharagpur (23).
- In the thirteenth edition of the QS World University Rankings by Subject, 66 universities from India have been ranked.
- The universities were evaluated in five broad areas, including engineering and technology, arts and humanities, life sciences and medicine, natural science, and social sciences and management.

India's Tiger Census - 2022

The country conducts a scientific estimation of its tiger population once every four years, and the latest report was released by Prime Minister Narendra Modi recently.

Key Points:

- The report revealed that as of 2022, India's tiger population stands at 3,167, which is a significant increase from the 2006 figure of 1,411.
- The report also shows a decrease in tiger population in the Western Ghats landscape due to the overlap between "wildlife and humans" caused by developmental activities.
- The report further highlights that the Nilgiri cluster that is Nagarhole to BRT Hills in Karnataka has the largest tiger population in the world.
- The report has shown a decline in tiger populations in the Indian states of Jharkhand, Odisha, Chhattisgarh, Andhra Pradesh and Telangana.
- The report indicates that several landscapes have shown a substantial increase in tiger population, such as Shivalik and Gangetic floodplain, central India, northeastern hills, Brahmaputra flood plains, and Sundarbans.

Global Terrorism Index 2023

India ranks 13th on The Global Terrorism Index (GTI). The report shows that Afghanistan continues to be the country most affected by terrorism for the 4th year in a row, even though attacks and deaths decreased.

Key Points:

- The GTI report is produced by the Institute for Economics & Peace (IEP), a think tank, using data from TerrorismTracker and other sources.

- The dataset contains almost 66,000 terrorist incidents for the period 2007 to 2022.
- Globally, deaths from terrorism fell by 9% to 6,701 deaths, marking a 38% decrease from its peak in 2015.
- Pakistan recorded the second largest surge in terror-related deaths worldwide in 2022, the toll increasing significantly to 643.
- South Asia remains the region with the worst average GTI score.
- South Asia recorded 1,354 deaths from terrorism in 2022.

Passport Index 2023

According to the latest update from the Passport Index, India's Mobility Scores have decreased, resulting in the country experiencing the largest global drop on the Index this year.

Key Highlights:

- The Passport Index has released its latest update, which reveals that India's Mobility Score has dropped.
- Other large Asian economies such as Vietnam, Indonesia, China, and Thailand have also experienced declines in their mobility scores, indicating a missed opportunity to capitalize on the global uptick in mobility recorded last year.
- India's sharp decline has been linked to the European Union's policy of introducing visa requirements for Indian nationals, placing pressure on countries like Serbia in 2023.
- China continues to underperform in comparison to countries like the USA and Germany due to its lack of visa-free agreements with blocs like the EU or regional competitors like India and Japan.
- South Korea and Japan are the exceptions to the downward trend in mobility, with both maintaining their strong positions.
- Only 10 countries have seen a rise in their mobility score this year, with Sweden overtaking Germany to rise to second overall.

UN Population Report 2022

Recently, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) has released the State of World Population report 2023, which states that India will overtake China to become the world's most populous country by the middle of 2023.

Key Points:

- The State of World Population is published annually which covers and analyses developments and trends in world population and demographics, as well as shedding a light on specific regions, countries and population groups and the unique challenges they face.
- India's population is pegged to reach 142.86 crore against China's 142.57 crore by July 2023.
- The United States is a third populated country, with a population of 340 million.
- Population growth in both India and China has been slowing, despite accounting for more than one-third of the estimated global population.
- India's total Fertility Rate, was estimated at 2, lower than the world average of 2.3.
- More than half of the projected increase in global population up to 2050 will be concentrated in eight countries the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Egypt, Ethiopia, India, Nigeria, Pakistan, the Philippines and the United Republic of Tanzania.

World Development Report 2023: Migrants, Refugees, and Societies

A Report from the World Bank, titled "World Development Report 2023: Migrants, Refugees, and Societies", proposes policies for better migration management in destination, transit and origin countries, underscoring its urgency.

Key Points:

- The world population has reached eight billion and is expected to grow for decades, but many countries are facing a sharp drop in working-age adults.
- The competition for workers and talent will intensify globally, and many countries will be reliant on migration to realise their long-term growth potential.
- The report introduces the "Match-Motive Framework," a labour economics-based approach that emphasizes how well migrants' skills and attributes match the needs of the destination countries.
- The framework also considers the reasons why migrants move in search of opportunity and determines the extent to which migrants, origin countries and destination countries gain from migration. The framework combines "match" and "motive" to determine policy priorities for countries of origin, transit, destination, and the global community.

State Ranking Index for NFSA 2022

The State Ranking Index 2022 was released by the Union Food and Consumer Minister Piyush Goyal.

Key Points:

- Odisha has ranked number one for the implementation of the National Food Security Act (NFSA). It is followed by Uttar Pradesh and Andhra Pradesh.

- It was released during a conference of the state food ministers on the food and nutrition security of India.
- In a special category which includes the north eastern states, Himalayan states, and Island states, Tripura was ranked at first position.
- The National Food Security Act (NFSA) was enacted in 2013.
- This act legally entitles up to 75% of the rural population and 50% of the Urban population to receive subsidized food grains under the targeted public distribution system.

Corruption Perceptions Index

Transparency International has released the Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) 2021 in which India has been ranked at 85th spot (Score of 40).

Key Points:

- The ranking has been topped jointly by three countries- Denmark, Finland and New Zealand (Score of 88).
- This ranking measures how corrupt each country's public sector is perceived to be. The results are given on a scale of 0 (highly corrupt) to 100 (very clean).

World Happiness Report

India has improved its rank by three spots to acquire 136th position in the United Nations' World Happiness Report for the year 2022, which ranked 146 countries.

Key Points:

- Finland has topped the 2022 World Happiness Report, for the fifth continuous year.
- Afghanistan has been ranked as the unhappiest country in the world, at 146th position.
- In 2021, India's rank was 139.

World Press Freedom Index 2022

Reporters Without Borders (RSF) has released the 20th World Press Freedom Index 2022, which assesses the state of journalism in 180 countries and territories. India's ranking in the Index has fallen down to 150th position from last year's 142nd rank. The ranking of India's neighbours, except that of Nepal, has also slid down, with the index placing. Nepal has climbed up by 30 points in the global ranking at 76th position.

The State of the World's Forests 2022

The State of the World's Forests 2022 explores the significance of three forest pathways for achieving green recovery and addressing environmental crises. It was released by Food and Agriculture Organization.

Key Points:

- The report is published bi-annually and is widely regarded as one of the most important stock takes on forest ecosystems.
- The 420 million hectares (mha) of forests have been lost between 1990 and 2020, due to deforestation, though forests cover 4.06 billion ha of the earth's geographical area.
- 15% of 250 emerging infectious diseases have been linked to forests.
- Supporting local producer organizations and protecting land tenure rights are also crucial for allowing small communities and Indigenous groups to continue sustainably managing their forests.

Environment Performance Index 2022

Environment Performance Index 2022 was released by the World Economic Forum in collaboration with the Yale Center for Environmental Law and Policy and the Columbia University Center for International Earth Science Information Network.

Key Points:

- The Environment Performance Index (EPI) is an international ranking system that measures environmental health and sustainability of countries.
- With a paltry score of 18.9, India's 180th ranking comes after Pakistan, Bangladesh, Vietnam and Myanmar.
- India was ranked 168th in EPI-2020, with a score of 27.6.
- Denmark topped the 2022 rankings. The United Kingdom and Finland were placed on 2nd and 3rd position, respectively.

World Population Prospects 2022

United Nations released the report titled World Population Prospects 2022.

Key Points:

- As per the report, the world's total population is expected to hit 8 billion in 2022.
- It further projected that the world's population is expected to hit 8.5 billion in 2030 and 9.7 billion in 2050.
- The world's total population is expected to peak at around 10.4 billion people in 2080s.
- As per the report, over half the projected rise in population is expected to be in just eight countries: India, Pakistan, Egypt, Congo, Ethiopia, Nigeria, Tanzania and the Philippines.
- India is projected to surpass China as the world's most populous country in 2023.

Global Gender Gap Index 2022

Global Gender Gap (GGG) Index for 2022 was released by the World Economic Forum.

Key Points:

- India has been ranked at 135 out of 146 countries in the Index.
- It benchmarks countries on their progress towards gender parity in four Key dimensions with Sub Metrics - Economic Participation and Opportunity, Educational Attainment, Health and Survival and Political Empowerment.
- Iceland has retained its position as the world's most gender-equal country, among 146 nations on the index.
- Finland, Norway, New Zealand and Sweden are the top five countries on the list respectively.
- Afghanistan is the worst-performing country in the report.

Henley Passport Index 2022

Henley Passport Index was released by the Henley & Partners.

Key Points:

- Three Asian nations Japan, Singapore and South Korea bagged the top three positions.
- The Japanese passport provides hassle-free entry to 193 countries, while Singapore and South Korea both provide entry to 192 countries.
- India has been ranked at the 87th position.
- The index is based on exclusive data from the International Air Transport Association (IATA) and is corroborated by a research team Henley and Partners.

"Air Quality and Health in Cities" Report

Health Effects Institute (HEI) released "Air Quality and Health in Cities" on air quality. As per report, biggest cities and urban areas of the world are witnessing worst air quality on the Earth.

Key Highlights:

- In 2019, 7239 cities reported 1.7 million deaths due to exposure to PM2.5.
- Greatest health impacts can be seen across cities in Asia, Africa, and Eastern & Central Europe.
- By 2050, around 68% of the world's population is likely to live in urban areas. Due to rapid urbanization, it would be challenging for top cities, especially in low- and middle-income countries, to reduce the health effects of air pollution.
- As per the report, India is home to 18 of the 20 cities with the most severe increase in fine particle pollutants (PM2.5) from 2010 to 2019. Delhi has the highest average level of fine PM 2.5 among the world's most populated cities.

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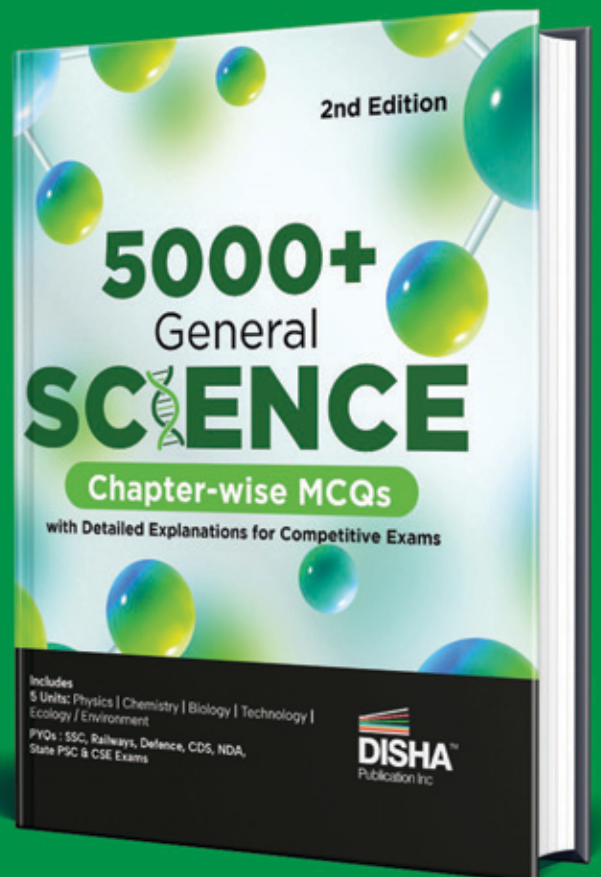
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Defence Sector Updates

Steadfast Noon

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), also called the North Atlantic Alliance announced had started its annual nuclear exercise code-named “Steadfast Noon”.

Key Highlights:

- The week-long exercise is taking place over Southern Europe and involves aircraft and personnel from 14 NATO countries.
- Steadfast Noon involves training flights with dual-capable fighter jets, as well as conventional jets, backed by surveillance and refuelling aircraft. No live weapons are used.
- This exercise helps to ensure that NATO’s nuclear deterrent remains safe, secure and effective.
- Of the 14 nations involved, Dutch F-16s and German Tornados are operating out of Ghedi AB alongside Italian Tornados, while U.S. and Belgian F-16s and possibly Czech Gripen are operating out of Aviano AB.

SIMBEX 2022

From October 26 to October 30, 2022, Visakhapatnam will play host to the 29th Singapore-India Maritime Bilateral Exercise (SIMBEX).

Key Highlights:

- The two phases of SIMBEX-2022 are the Harbour Phase at Visakhapatnam and the Sea Phase in the Bay of Bengal.
- On October 25, 2022, RSS Stalwart (a Formidable Class Frigate) and RSS Vigilance (a Victory Class Corvette), two ships from the Republic of Singapore Navy, arrived at Visakhapatnam to take part in the exercise.

India-Mozambique-Tanzania Trilateral Exercise

The Defence Ministry has informed that the first edition of the India-Mozambique-Tanzania Trilateral Exercise commenced at Dar Es Salaam, Tanzania.

Key Highlights:

- The Indian Navy has participated in the Maiden Trilateral Exercise with Mozambique and Tanzania.
- Indian Navy is represented by the guided missile frigate, INS Tarkash, a Chetak Helicopter, and MARCOS.
- The exercise has three main objectives including capability development to address common threats through training and sharing of best practices, Enhancing interoperability, and strengthening maritime cooperation.

Exercise Sea Vigil-22

Exercise Sea Vigil-22 was organized by the Indian Navy on November 15 and 16 this year.

Key Highlights:

- This is the third edition of the Pan-India coastal defence exercise. The previous edition was held in January 2021.
- Exercise Sea Vigil was conceptualized in 2018 to strengthen India’s coastal defence by improving coordination between various stakeholders.
- It is a build-up towards the larger TROPIC exercise.
- It covers India’s entire 7,516 km coastline as well as 2 million sq km of Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ).
- This national-level exercise provides the opportunity at the apex level to assess India’s preparedness in the maritime security domain and the coastal defence.

Operation Vigilant Storm

The U.S. Air Force and several of its allies in the Asia-Pacific area will improve combat readiness and interoperability through Operation Vigilant Storm.

Key Highlights:

- It is a four-day training exercise involving hundreds of aircraft.
- The Operation Vigilant Storm exercise, which is scheduled to take place between October 31 and November 4, has already drawn criticism from North Korea's Foreign Ministry.
- Armed units from the United States and the Republic of Korea (South Korea) started the planned exercise, according to Air Force Brig. Gen. Pat Ryder, the Pentagon's press secretary.

World's first anti-ship, carrier-based ballistic missile

China has launched the 'Eagle Strike 21' also known as the 'YJ-21'.

Key Highlights:

- It is China's much-awaited hypersonic, ship-borne anti-ship missile.
- It is currently on display at the Zhuhai Air Show.
- YJ-21 is known as the world's first anti-ship, carrier-based ballistic missile.
- It was displayed alongside the two air-to-surface anti-ship Tianlei (TL) missiles.
- The YJ-21 is considered one of China's most lethal weapons, wholly hidden from the public until now.
- While specifications concerning its performance remain unknown until now, its range is between 1000 and 1500 km.
- As per the South China Morning Post, the anti-ship missile boasts a terminal velocity of Mach 10, which is ten times the speed of sound.

Ghaem 100

Iran's powerful paramilitary Revolutionary Guard launched a new satellite-carrying rocket, Ghaem 100 seeking to demonstrate the hard-line force's prowess even as anti-government protests rage across the country.

Key Highlights:

- The Ghaem 100, Iran's first three-stage launch vehicle, will be able to place satellites weighing 80 kg (180 pounds) in an orbit 500 km (300 miles) from the earth's surface, IRNA said.
- Amirali Hajizadeh, the commander of the Guard's aerospace division, which developed the Ghaem-100, said the rocket would be used to launch Iran's Nahid satellite for the Telecommunications Ministry.
- Iran has one of the biggest missile programs in the Middle East. The country says its satellite program, like its nuclear activities, is aimed at scientific research and other civilian applications.
- Iran successfully launched its first military satellite in April 2020, drawing a sharp rebuke from Washington.

Naseem Al Bahr-2022

The 13th edition of bilateral exercise between the Indian and the Royal Oman navies Naseem Al Bahr-2022, commenced off the coast of Oman on 20 November 2022.

Key Highlights:

- The exercise is being conducted in two phases: the Harbour Phase and the Sea Phase.
- The Indian Navy's guided missile frigate Trikanth and Offshore Patrol Vessel Sumitra, with their integral helicopters, and the maritime patrol aircraft, Dornier, are participating in the exercise.
- The exercise facilitates operational-level interaction between the two navies to foster mutual cooperation and enhance good order at sea.
- The exercise also aims to strengthen the ancient maritime and cultural linkages between India and Oman.
- The exercise aims to intensify maritime exchanges between the two countries and enhance maritime security in the region.

Yudh Abhyas

Exercise 'Yudh Abhyas' India-US joint military exercise to start in Uttarakhand.

Key Highlights:

- The Yudh Abhyas is a 15-day-long exercise that will focus on high altitude and extremely cold climate warfare.
- Exercise Yudh Abhyas is conducted annually between India and US to exchange best practices, Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures between the two nations' Armies.
- The previous edition of the exercise was conducted at Joint Base Elmendorf Richardson, Alaska (USA) in October 2021.
- US Army soldiers of the 2nd Brigade of the 11th Airborne Division and Indian Army soldiers from the Assam Regiment will be participating in the exercise.

Austra Hind 22

The Austra Hind 22 exercise commenced recently in Rajasthan. It is being held after the 26th edition of the quadrilateral maritime drill Exercise Malabar was concluded off the coast of Japan in early November 2022.

Key Highlights:

- The Austra Hind 22 is a bilateral training exercise between the Indian Army and the Australian Army.
- It is being held from November 28 to December 11 this year in Mahajan Field Firing Ranges (Rajasthan).
- The Australian Army is represented by soldiers from the 13th Brigade of the 2nd Division.
- The Indian side is represented by the troops belonging to the Dogra Regiment.
- This is the inaugural edition of the Austra Hind series. This joint exercise will involve all arms and services contingents of both countries' armies. It will be hosted alternatively by India and Australia.

Indian female peacekeepers

India is set to deploy a platoon of female peacekeepers to the United Nations Interim Security Force in Abyei (UNISFA) on the border of Sudan and South Sudan.

Key Points:

- This is the largest single unit of women peacekeepers in a UN mission since India deployed the first all-female contingent in Liberia in 2007.
- The United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA) was created by the United Nations Security Council in 2011 to address the critical situation in the Abyei region of Sudan.
- India is one of the largest contributors of troops to UN peacekeeping missions and this deployment marks a significant increase in the proportion of women in its peacekeeping contingents.

Indian Navy 'SPRINT' initiative

As part of the "SPRINT" initiative, the Indian Navy recently announced collaboration with Sagar Defence Engineering Private Limited to develop armed autonomous boat swarms.

Key Points:

- SPRINT (Supporting Pole-Vaulting in R&D through Innovations for Defence Excellence) launched by PM Modi aims to promote the development and usage of indigenous defence technologies by domestic companies.
- The task of developing this technology is one of 75 challenges introduced by the Indian Navy as part of the "Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav" celebrations.
- Sagar Defence Engineering has stated that it possesses the know-how to develop India's first armed autonomous unmanned boat with swarming capabilities.

VSHORAD (IR Homing) missile system

The Defence Acquisition Council (DAC) granted Acceptance of Need (AoN) to purchase the VSHORAD (IR Homing) missile system.

Key Points:

- Man Portable Air Defence System (MANPAD) designed and developed indigenously by DRDO.
- Is meant for target low altitude aerial threats at short ranges.
- Is lightweight and portable surface-to-air missiles.

Indo-Egypt Joint Training Exercise Cyclone-I

Indian and the Egyptian Armies are to conduct the first-ever joint exercise Cyclone-I. It is to be held in Jaisalmer, Rajasthan for 14 days.

Key Points:

- It will focus on skills necessary to fight in desert terrain undertaking reconnaissance, counter-terrorism, and other special operations.
- 30-40 Special Forces are participating in the exercise.
- The armies will engage in combat and receive training in sniping, surveillance, free fall, etc.

Exercise Desert Flag VIII

Exercise Desert Flag VIII is set to be organized from February 27 to March 17 this year. It is a multilateral air exercise involving the participation of UAE, France, Kuwait, Australia, the UK, Bahrain, Morocco, Spain, the Republic of Korea, and the US.

Key Points:

- It aims to bring about the interoperability of different fighter engagements and sharing of best practices of various Air Forces. UAE is hosting the exercise.
- The India Air Force Contingent, which is taking part in this exercise, includes 110 Air Warriors along with 5 LCA Tejas and two C-17 Globemaster III aircraft.
- This is the first time that LCA Tejas aircraft is included in an international flying exercise outside India.

IMX/CE-23

The International Maritime Exercise/Cutlass Express 2023 (IMX/CE-23) is being organized in the Gulf region from February 26 to March 16, 2023.

Key Points:

- The exercise aims to enhance maritime security and ensure safe sea lanes for maritime commerce, with over 50 nations and international maritime agencies participating.
- It is one of the largest multinational maritime exercises.
- INS Triakand, an Indian Navy ship, is participating in IMX/CE-23 and this is the Indian Navy's first IMX participation.
- It was held in the East African coastal region and the West Indian Ocean. Countries from North America, East Africa, and the West Indian Ocean countries participate in the exercise.
- Sponsor of the International Maritime Exercise is US Africa Command led by the US Naval Forces.

Advanced Towed Artillery Gun System

The Indian Army has proposed the acquisition of an indigenous Advanced Towed Artillery Gun System (ATAGS) to fill critical capability gaps in high-altitude regions.

Key Points:

- The ATAGS has been designed by the Defense Research and Development Organization (DRDO) to replace the current 155 mm artillery system in service, the Bofors towed guns.
- It's manufactured by Bharat Forge and Tata Defence and Aerospace and its acquisition could significantly enhance the Indian Army's capabilities.
- The ATAGS is a Towed Howitzer which falls between cannon and a mortar, weighs 18 tonnes and can be elevated to 75 degrees.
- It can fire five rounds in 60 seconds with the firing range of ATAGS is 48,074 km.

FRINJEX-23

FRINJEX-23, the first-ever joint military exercise between Indian Army and French Army between the 7th and 8th of March 2023 at Pangode Military Station in Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala. Both contingents consist of a Company Group.

Key Points:

- India was represented by Indian Army troops based in Thiruvananthapuram and France was represented by the French 6th Light Armoured Brigade.
- The exercise's objective is to enhance inter-operability, coordination, and cooperation between both forces at the tactical level.
- It will involve establishing and operationalizing a joint command post to secure an area for joint humanitarian assistance and disaster relief, setting up an Internally Displaced Population (IDP) camp, and moving disaster relief material.

South Korea introduces Kill Web

The South Korean military has introduced a concept known as the "Kill Web" in response to the escalating nuclear threat from North Korea.

Key Points:

- This concept is a key part of Military Innovations 4.0, which seeks to utilize the latest AI technologies to ensure the country's army can win a war with minimal casualties in the shortest possible time.
- Kill Web is a multi-layered system that uses advanced warfare techniques such as cyber operations and electronic warfare.
- "Kill Web" strategy aims to counter Pyongyang's advancing nuclear and missile capabilities even before they are launched, by employing a multilayered integrated system that incorporates cyber operations, electronic warfare, and other tactics.
- Currently, the nation uses the Kill Chain mechanism, under its Three Axis System. Unlike the Kill Web, the Kill Chain uses a single path and is less flexible.

Successful test-firing of MRSAM

On March 7 this year, the Indian Navy conducted a successful test-firing of a Medium Range Surface-to-Air Missile (MRSAM) from INS Visakhapatnam, a frontline warship.

Key Points:

- The successful test-firing validated the capability to use the weapon as an anti-ship missile, demonstrating the Navy's preparedness to safeguard its assets from attacks by adversary forces.
- The MRSAM was developed by the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) and produced at Bharat Dynamics Limited (BDL).
- The MRSAM can be used against any kind of airborne threat (helicopters, combat jets, cruise missiles, aircraft, etc) is jointly developed by India and Israel.
- MRSAM is a medium-range theatre ballistic missiles (1000 km - 3000 km)
- Agni, Prithvi, and Shaurya are all theatre ballistic missiles and BARAK-8 is the land-based configuration of MRSAM.

INS Sumedha

Recently INS Sumedha reached Port Algiers, Algeria for an operational turn around.

Key Highlights:

- INS Sumedha is an indigenously built Naval Offshore Patrol Vessel deployed for multiple roles independently and in support of Fleet Operations.
- INS Sumedha is part of the Indian Navy's Eastern Fleet based at Visakhapatnam and functions under the operational command of the Flag Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Eastern Naval Command.
- INS Sumedha is the third ship of the indigenous Naval Offshore Patrol Vessel (NOPV) Project to be inducted into the Indian Navy.
- The ship has been designed and built by Goa Shipyard Limited.
- The primary role of the ship is to undertake EEZ surveillance, anti-piracy patrols, fleet support operations, provide maritime security to offshore assets and carry out escort operations for high-value assets.

Defence Ministry's Rs 5,400 crore Defence Contract

The Ministry of Defence of India has recently signed three defence contracts with Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL) and NewSpace India Limited (NSIL) on March 29, 2023. The total cost of these three contracts is nearly Rs 5,400 crore.

Key Points:

- This decision was taken to support the modernization of India's armed forces and make them more self-sufficient.
- The first project contracted with BEL is Project Akashteer, which costs Rs 1,982 crore. This project's goal is to empower the Indian Army's Air Defence units with indigenous, state-of-the-art capabilities.
- The Indian Army will be the primary beneficiary of this project, which will enhance their Air Defence capabilities and enable them to operate in an integrated manner. This project will help reduce India's dependence on foreign technologies, making it more self-reliant.

Combined Commanders Conference

Combined Commanders Conference (CCC) is an annual event where India's top military commanders come together to discuss and brainstorm on military matters and national security and serves as a platform for the country's military leaders to exchange ideas, review the preparedness of the Armed Forces.

Key Points:

- Theme of the CCC was 'Ready, Resurgent, Relevant.'
- Theaterisation in the Armed Forces is one of the topics that was discussed during the CCC.
- The CCC 2023 reviewed the progress made towards attaining 'Aatmanirbharta' or self-reliance in defence.
- Prime Minister complimented the Armed Forces for their role in nation-building and providing Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) assistance to friendly countries.
- India's defence exports have been steadily increasing over the years, with the defence ministry setting a target of \$5 billion for annual defence exports by 2024-25. In the financial year 2022-2023, the current value of India's defence exports is Rs 15,920 crore.

Next Generation Maritime Mobile Coastal Batteries (Long Range)

The defence ministry recently signed a deal worth over Rs 1,700 crore for the procurement of the Next Generation Maritime Mobile Coastal Batteries (Long Range), commonly known as NGMMCB (LR).

Key Points:

- The Next Generation Maritime Mobile Coastal Batteries (Long Range) is a weapon system designed to be mobile in the battlefield. It will be deployed along the Indian coast.
- The NGMMCB (LR) is equipped with supersonic BrahMos missiles, which can be used to target enemy platforms operating close to the Indian coast.
- The NGMMCB (LR) is being developed and produced indigenously by BrahMos Aerospace Private Limited (BAPL).
- The NGMMCB (LR) is part of the 'Make in India' initiative.
- The delivery of the NGMMCBs is scheduled to commence from 2027, will be deployed from Mumbai to Gujarat and envisaged to be linked to the Coastal Radar chain and various other systems, as well as a multi-tiered patrol and surveillance mechanism.

Weapon Locating Radars Swathi (Plains)

India developed the Weapon Locating Radar (WLR) Swathi, a mobile artillery-locating, phased array radar system.

Key Points:

- The Ministry of Defence signed a contract with BEL to procure the WLR Swathi, with a cost of over Rs 990 crore.
- WLR Swathi has been jointly developed by the Electronics and Radar Development Establishment (LRDE) and Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL) with the purpose is to detect and track incoming artillery rounds, mortar, and rockets, and locate their launchers.
- The WLR Swathi has an impressive range, with a detection range of up to 30 km for large caliber artillery rounds and up to 40 km for unguided rockets and can track up to 7 targets simultaneously and is capable of tracking rounds fired at both low and high angles.
- The WLR Swathi can store up to 99 target locations with broad digital map displays. The data-linking feature allows for remote operation and better situational awareness at higher echelons of the command hierarchy.

India-Japan Defence Policy Dialogue

Recently, the 7th India-Japan Defence Policy Dialogue was co-chaired by Defence Secretary of India and the Vice Minister of Defence for International Affairs of Japan in New Delhi.

Key Points:

- The Defence Policy Dialogue is an institutionalized mechanism between India and Japan to discuss bilateral defence cooperation.
- The purpose of the meeting is to discuss a wide range of issues related to defence cooperation between the two countries.
- Both sides agreed to diversify cooperation in new and emerging domains like defence space and cyber.

Exercise INIOCHOS-23

Exercise INIOCHOS-23 is a multi-national air exercise hosted by the Greece Air Force, in which the Indian Air Force (IAF) will be participating.

Key Points:

- It is one of the three exercises that the IAF will be taking part in simultaneously, along with Exercise Cope India with the U.S.
- Underway at Kalaikunda and a multilateral exercise Orion hosted by France, in which four Rafale fighters are participating.
- Exercise INIOCHOS-23 will be held at the Andravida Air Base in Greece from April 24 to May 4.

Guided Bombs

The conflict between Ukraine and Russia has been ongoing for several years now. Recently, the Ukrainian government has reported an increase in the number of guided bomb attacks carried out by the Russian forces.

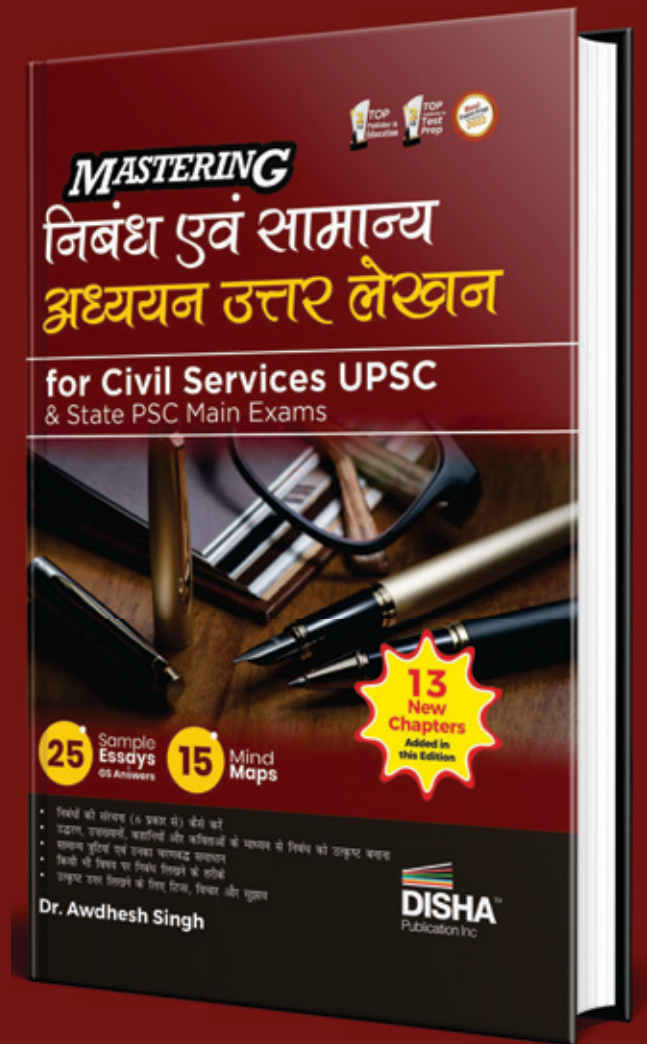
Key Points:

- The Russian forces are using guided bombs to attack Ukraine.
- These bombs are equipped with wings and a satellite control system that allows for precision targeting.
- The modern, satellite-guided bomb that Russia has called the UPAB-1500B.
- Additionally, the Russian army uses FAB-type bombs, which are high-explosive bombs.
- Ukrainian military experts believe that Russia currently has two types of guided bombs.

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निबंध एवं सामान्य अध्ययन उत्तर लेखन के लिए चरणबद्ध मार्गदर्शन

- निबंध लिखने के 10 तरीके
- उत्कृष्ट भूमिका लेखन हेतु 10 तरीके
- निबंधों को रोचक बनाने के लिए 10 युक्तियाँ
- दार्शनिक विषयों पर निबंध लिखना
- प्रभावशाली निष्कर्षों से पाठकों को प्रभावित करना
- सर्वोत्तम विचारों को उत्पन्न करने के लिए विचार-मंथन और माइंड मैप्स तकनीकें
- निबंध अविरलता हेतु अनूठी पद्धति
- 30 नमूना निबंध; निबंध लेखन को आसान बनाने के लिए माइंड मैप्स।
- निबंधों के लिए माइंड मैप कैसे बनाएं
- मुख्य परीक्षा प्रश्न पत्र 1 से 4 के सामान्य अध्ययन के लिए उत्तर लिखने के टिप्स
- मुख्य परीक्षा की तैयारी की रणनीति और संसाधन
- लेखन कौशल में सुधार करने के लिए युक्तियाँ, विचार और सुझाव
- सामान्य गलतियाँ और उनका चरणबद्ध तरीके से समाधान
- अपने निबंध को विशिष्ट बनाने के लिए उद्धरण, उपाख्यान, कहानियाँ और कविताएँ



Current Affairs Practice Questions

1. Which of the following are recognised as “Three Sisters” by the World Trade Organization’s (WTO) Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (SPS) Agreement?
(i) Pacific Plant Protection Organization
(ii) Codex Alimentarius Commission
(iii) International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC)
(iv) World Organization for Animal Health (OIE)
Select the correct answer code:
(a) (i), (ii), (iii) (b) (ii), (iii), (iv) (c) (i), (iii), (iv) (d) None of these
2. Manamadurai pottery recently earned a Geographical Indication (GI) tag. It belongs to
(a) Tamil Nadu (b) Kerala (c) Telangana (d) Andhra Pradesh
3. The Financial Stability Report is published by
(a) International Monetary Fund (b) World Bank
(c) Niti Ayog (d) Reserve Bank of India
4. Operation Kaveri, recently seen in news is related to
(a) Evacuate Indian citizens during Russian invasion of Ukraine
(b) Help fleeing Hindus and Sikhs from Afghanistan
(c) Evacuate Indians stuck in Sudan
(d) To prevent kaveri river from pollution
5. The term ‘Grey Zone Operations’ is associated with
(a) Early warning system of tropical storms
(b) Strategic intervention to prevent malnutrition
(c) Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons
(d) Cyber Warfare
6. Consider the following statements regarding Artemis program.
(i) The Artemis program is a robotic Moon exploration program led by National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA).
(ii) The goal is to establish a permanent base on the Moon, to facilitate human missions to Mars became feasible.
Which of the above statement is/are correct?
(a) (i) only (b) (ii) only (c) Both (d) None of these
7. MARPOL Convention, sometimes seen in news is related to
(a) Sustainable Development
(b) Prevention of Transnational Organized Crime
(c) Prevention of Pollution from Ships
(d) Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
8. The 16th Edition of Indo-Nepal joint training Exercise was conducted to enhance interoperability in jungle warfare & counter terrorism operations in mountainous terrain. What is the name of this exercise?
(a) Yudh Abhyas (b) Sampriiti (c) Hand in Hand (d) Surya Kiran

9. Consider the following statements regarding Jal Jeevan Mission.

- (i) It aims to provide safe and adequate drinking water through tap connections to all households in India by 2024.
- (ii) It is based on a community.
- (iii) It also includes elements such as recharge and reuse through grey water management, water conservation and rain water harvesting.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

- (a) (i), (ii) (b) (i), (iii) (c) (ii), (iii) (d) All of the above

10. Consider the following statements.

- (i) India accounts for more than 50% of all TB cases in the world.
- (ii) Elimination of Tuberculosis is one of the sustainable development goals.
- (iii) India has set the target of elimination of Tuberculosis by 2025.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

- (a) (i), (ii) (b) (iii) (c) (ii), (iii) (d) All of the above

11. The Department of Telecommunication recently launched an app to facilitate coordination between excavation agencies and underground utility owners to prevent damage to assets like optical fibre cables due to digging.

What is the name of this app?

- (a) Call Before u Dig (b) Umang (c) Y-Break App (d) E-Sampada

12. Consider the following statements regarding Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO).

- (i) Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) has been an observer in the United Nations General Assembly.
- (ii) Varanasi is the first tourism and cultural capital of SCO.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

- (a) (i) only (b) (ii) only (c) Both (i) and (ii) (d) Neither (i) nor (ii)

13. Golden Triangle is a tri-junction where the Mekong River, at a confluence point, splits the landmasses of which of the following countries?

- (i) Myanmar
- (ii) Vietnam
- (iii) Thailand
- (iv) Laos

Select the correct answer code:

- (a) (i), (ii), (iii) (b) (ii), (iii), (iv) (c) (i), (iii), (iv) (d) (i), (ii), (iv)

14. Rocket Boys series, an OTT show in India focuses mainly on the life of

- (a) A. P. J. Abdul Kalam (b) Homi J. Bhabha (c) C. V. Raman (d) Sachin Tendulkar

15. Vigyan Jyoti' scheme, sometimes seen in news is related to

- (a) Empowering girls in Science Technology Engineering and Mathematics (STEM)
- (b) Empowering girls in foundational literacy and numeracy
- (c) Providing scholarships to meritorious students of economically weaker sections
- (d) Providing support to out of school children

16. Consider the following statements.

- (i) The National Population Register is a register of all the usual residents of India which includes both citizens and non-citizens.
- (ii) At present it is mandatory to link the electoral rolls with Aadhaar.
- (iii) The Criminal Procedure (Identification) Rules, 2022 enables enforcement agencies to collect biological samples, retina scan, biometrics and behavioural attributes of convicted and detained persons.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

- (a) (i), (ii) (b) (iii) only (c) (ii), (iii) (d) (i), (iii)

- 17. E-Kuber, a core banking platform, was launched by the**
- (a) Reserve Bank of India (b) Ministry of Finance
(c) Securities and Exchange Board of India (d) Insurance Regulatory & Development Authority
- 18. Hasdeo movement, recently seen in news is related to**
- (a) Anti-immigrant protest
(b) Anti-coal mining movement
(c) Against the development of River Valley Project
(d) Language right agitation
- 19. 'High Ambition Coalition for Nature and People' aims**
- (a) to promote an international agreement to protect at least 30% of the world's land and ocean by 2030.
(b) to promote an international agreement to protect at least 25% of the world's land and ocean by 2025.
(c) to promote an international agreement to protect at least 40% of the world's land and ocean by 2040.
(d) to promote an international agreement to protect at least 25% of the world's land and ocean by 2030.
- 20. Atacama Large Millimetre/submillimetre Array (ALMA) is a**
- (a) Satellite (b) Telescope (c) Meteorite (d) Asteroid
- 21. The MIIRA scheme, recently in the news, aims**
- (a) To encourage the consumption and production of millets.
(b) To encourage girl nutrition and education.
(c) To improve the nutritional and health status of children in the age-group 0-6 years.
(d) At enhancing the safety and security of women in the country.
- 22. CAR T-cell therapy, recently seen in news, can be helpful to fight which of the following diseases?**
- (a) New variant of Covid-19 (b) Hepatitis-B (c) Tuberculosis (d) Cancer
- 23. Swapnil Tripathi vs Supreme Court of India 2018 Case, sometimes seen in India is related to**
- (a) Uniform Civil Code (b) Live streaming of court cases
(c) Validity of Aadhar (d) Rights of LGBT community
- 24. Kessler syndrome, sometimes seen in news is associated with**
- (a) Black Holes (b) Meteor shower (c) Space junk (d) Gravitational lensing
- 25. The Sinthan Pass connects**
- (a) Himachal Pradesh to Tibet (b) Leh to the Pangong Lake
(c) Kashmir to the Chenab Valley (d) Leh and Siachen glacier
- 26. Survival International sometimes seen in news advocates the rights of**
- (a) Tribal people (b) Refugees (c) Trafficked human beings (d) Leprosy patients
- 27. Nord Stream gas pipeline, recently seen in news runs through the**
- (a) Sargasso Sea (b) Mediterranean Sea (c) Baltic Sea (d) Black Sea
- 28. Partnership for Global Infrastructure and Investment (PGII), recently seen in news is the initiative of**
- (a) G20 countries (b) G7 countries
(c) International Monetary Fund (d) World Bank
- 29. Consider the following statements regarding Mangroves.**
- (i) Mangroves are salt-tolerant plants found in both tropical and subtropical intertidal regions.
(ii) In India, there has been increase in the mangrove cover from 1987 to 2021.
Which of the above statements is/are correct?
- (a) (i) only (b) (ii) only (c) Both (i) and (ii) (d) None of these
- 30. Following are the recent new Ramsar wetland sites in India.**
- (i) Karikili Bird Sanctuary- Tamil Nadu
(ii) Pala Wetland- Mizoram
(iii) Sakhya Sagar- Madhya Pradesh
Which of the above wetlands correctly matches their state?
- (a) (i), (ii) (b) (ii), (iii) (c) (i), (ii), and (iii) (d) None of these



Answer Keys

1.	(b)	2.	(a)	3.	(d)	4.	(c)	5.	(d)
6.	(c)	7.	(c)	8.	(d)	9.	(c)	10.	(c)
11.	(a)	12.	(c)	13.	(c)	14.	(b)	15.	(a)
16.	(d)	17.	(a)	18.	(b)	19.	(a)	20.	(b)
21.	(a)	22.	(d)	23.	(b)	24.	(c)	25.	(c)
26.	(a)	27.	(c)	28.	(b)	29.	(c)	30.	(c)





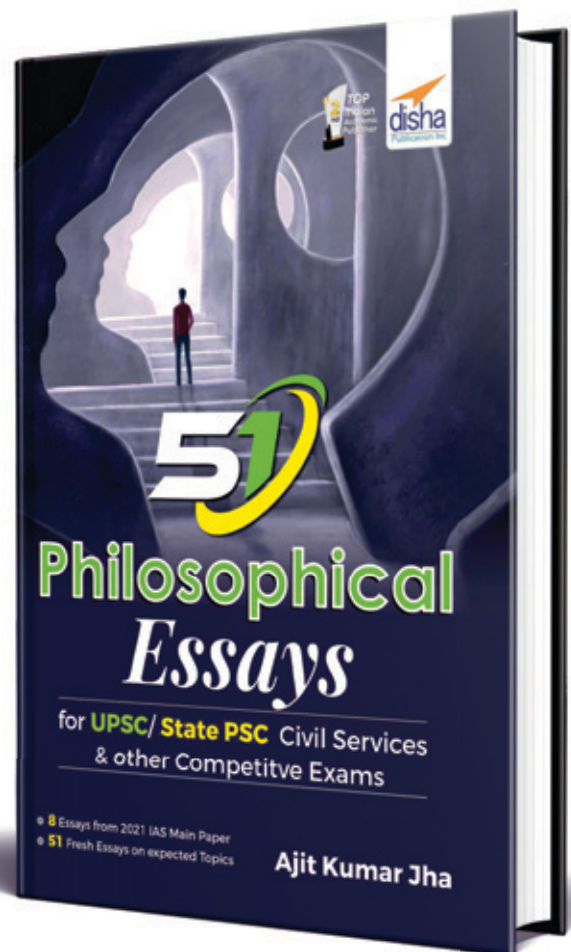
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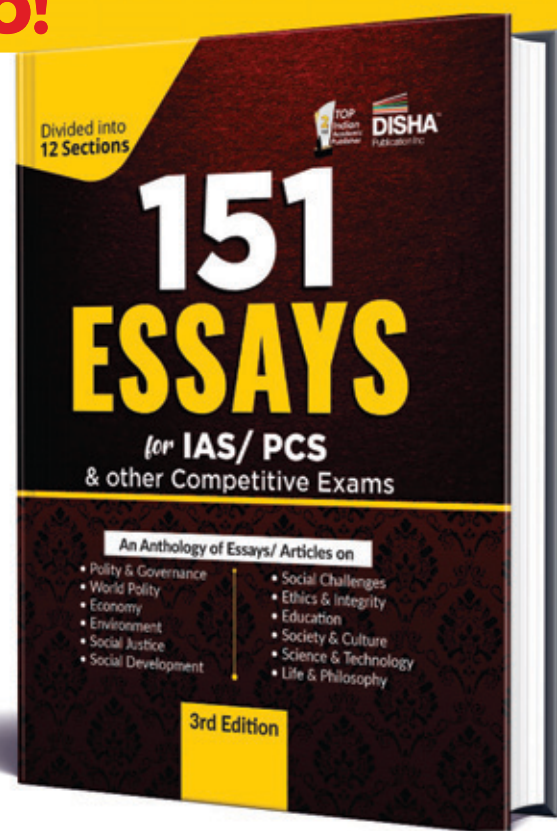
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