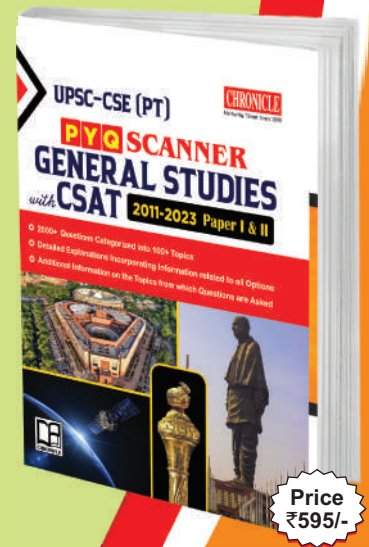


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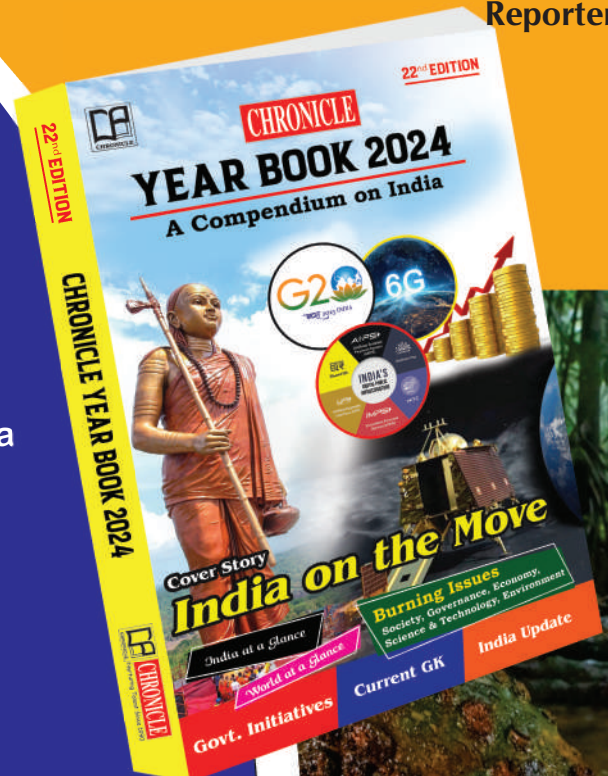
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- India's Emerging National Security Challenges
- The Threatened Ecosystem of Western Ghats
- Promoting Food Processing Sector in India
- Production Gap Report, 2023
- India-U.S. 2+2 Ministerial Dialogue
- 2nd Voice of the Global South Summit
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Editor: N.N. Ojha

Assistant Editor: Chinmaya Dash

President: Sanjeev Nandkeolyar

Vice President: Kirti Nandita

Editorial: Mob. 9582948817, cscenglish@chronicleindia.in

Advertisement: Mob. 9953007627, advt@chronicleindia.in

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India's Emerging National Security Challenges

Need for a Comprehensive National Security Strategy

New security challenges have arisen with the expansion of modern technologies. These challenges are not limited to military and nuclear attacks, but also include cyber attacks, the changing nature of terrorism and warfare, and issues related to demographic change. The emerging security challenges facing India demand comprehensive preparedness and proactive responses.

■ **Dr. Amarjeet Bhargava**

Continuous progress in the field of science and technology and the increasingly complex global geopolitical scenario have given rise to new national security challenges in the present times. These challenges are ranging from threats to land and maritime sector to cyber security.

Given the seriousness of these security challenges, various guidelines and rules have been issued by the Central Government from time to time to the concerned institutions and states. Recently, the Government of India has issued an advisory for social media intermediaries to identify Deepfakes. Thus, in the rapidly changing technological era, the Government is continuously striving to deal with the newly emerging national security challenges. But, in the absence of inclusiveness, such efforts are unable to produce comprehensive results and address the challenges.

Keeping this in mind, it is being said that India needs to formulate a comprehensive national security strategy to deal with these emerging challenges.

Key Emerging Security Challenges before India

On October 17, 2022, India's Defence Minister addressed the convocation of the Rashtriya Raksha University (RRU) in Gandhinagar, Gujarat. According to him, the government has adopted a holistic approach to strengthen all aspects of national security.

Security of land and sea borders, airspace, cyber, data, space, information, energy, economy and environment and safeguarding these elements are essential for a sovereign nation. India faces several national security challenges, both domestic and external.

Some of the major emerging challenges are:

- **Cyber Security:** The initiatives like Digital India have brought about a paradigm shift in terms of connectivity. While greater connectivity promises wider services, it also paves the way for the emergence of new vulnerabilities.
 - ◆ With increasing dependence on technology and the Internet, cyber security has become a serious national security concern. India has emerged as a highly vulnerable destination to cyber attacks due to its large number of internet users and growing IT sector.



- **Changing Nature of Border Disputes:** India has been facing border disputes with Pakistan and China since independence.
 - ◆ In recent years, the border dispute with Nepal in areas like Kalapani, Limpiyadhura and Lipulekh has not only increased India's concerns but has also affected India's acceptance in neighbouring countries.
 - ◆ Among other recent trends, India's borders have become increasingly vulnerable as China expands its reach in neighbouring countries like Myanmar and Sri Lanka.
- **Terrorism:** India's security challenges have increased due to political instability in Afghanistan and Pakistan-inspired terrorist incidents.
 - ◆ The dangers of access to modern computer and Internet technologies (Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning) by terrorist organizations operating in the region have further heightened concerns.
- **Khalistan-inspired Insurgency in Punjab:** The recent incident at the Ajnala police station in Amritsar, Punjab, and the rise in pro-Khalistan sentiments in Punjab are raising widespread fears of a return to the horrific times of the 1980s, when the Pakistan-sponsored insurgency threatened the country's internal security.

The Threatened Ecosystem of Western Ghats Conservation Imperatives for the Global Biodiversity Hotspot

The Western Ghats Region (WGR) is a unique landscape found in India along the western part of the Indian subcontinent, right from the south of Gujarat in the north to Kerala and Tamil Nadu in the south. It is recognised as a UNESCO World Heritage Site and represents one of the Earth's 36 biodiversity hotspots. However, given the pressures of unsustainable and unplanned activities, the region is facing numerous challenges.

■ Ranjeet Shah

A recent study by the Indian Institute of Technology Bombay (IITB) has revealed rapidly increasing soil erosion in the Western Ghats Region (WGR).

Among the WGR states, the state of Tamil Nadu recorded the highest soil loss rate, a staggeringly high increase of 121 per cent from 1990 to 2020. Kerala, which had a net increasing trend in soil losses (90 per cent increase from 1990 to 2020), and Karnataka, which showed an increase of 56 per cent, are also witnessing unsustainable rates of soil erosion. Thus, the study confirms a progressive increase in soil erosion rates in the WGR.

The Western Ghats is a very unique biogeographic region of the world; however, various factors have contributed to the degradation of this global biodiversity hotspot. Thus, the management of this vital ecosystem needs more focus.

Ecological Fragility of Western Ghats: Causal/Responsible Factors and Conservation Challenges

The Western Ghats is known for its rich biodiversity and ecological significance. However, it faces various threats that contribute to its ecological fragility.

Several causal and responsible factors contribute to the degradation of the Western Ghats ecosystem. Simultaneously, these factors also represent the conservation challenges in the Western Ghats. These are outlined below.

Deforestation and Habitat Loss

- ♦ **Expansion of Agriculture:** The conversion of forests into agricultural land has led to significant habitat loss and fragmentation, disrupting ecosystems and threatening plant and animal species.
- ♦ **Urbanization:** Rapid urban development and infrastructure projects contribute to habitat destruction and fragmentation, leading to the loss of biodiversity.

Mining Activities

- ♦ **Illegal Mining:** Unregulated and illegal mining operations in the Western Ghats have resulted in the destruction of habitats, soil erosion, and water pollution. Mining activities have altered the natural landscape and impacted local flora and fauna.

Dams and Hydroelectric Projects

- ♦ **Altered Hydrology:** The construction of dams and hydroelectric projects has altered the natural flow of rivers, affecting the hydrology of the region. This has led to changes in water availability, affecting both aquatic and terrestrial ecosystems.

Invasive Species

- ♦ **Introduction of Non-Native Species:** The introduction of invasive plant and animal species has disrupted the native ecosystems by outcompeting native species for resources, leading to a decline in biodiversity.

Climate Change

- ♦ **Temperature Changes:** Climate change has resulted in alterations to temperature and precipitation patterns, affecting the distribution and behaviour of plant and animal species. It has also led to shifts in vegetation zones and impacted the overall ecosystem health.

Pollution

- ♦ **Water Pollution:** Agricultural runoff, industrial effluents, and improper waste disposal have contributed to water pollution in rivers and streams, affecting aquatic life and ecosystems.
- ♦ **Air Pollution:** Emissions from industrial activities and transportation have led to air pollution, impacting the health of plants, animals, and humans in the region.

Unsustainable Agriculture Practices

- ♦ **Use of Pesticides and Chemicals:** The use of agrochemicals in agriculture has had detrimental effects on soil health, water quality, and the overall ecosystem.

Poaching and Illegal Wildlife Trade

- ♦ **Hunting and Poaching:** Illegal hunting and poaching of wildlife for various purposes, including pet trade and traditional medicine, have led to population declines and disrupted ecological balance.

Lack of Awareness and Conservation Initiatives

- ♦ **Limited Awareness:** A lack of awareness about the importance of biodiversity and the need for conservation measures can hinder efforts to protect the Western Ghats.

Promoting Food Processing Sector in India

Time to Leverage the Industry's Vast Potential

The food processing sector is one of the critical drivers of growth and has been acknowledged as a high priority industry by the Government of India as it has shown enormous potential for creating employment opportunities and boosting the agriculture sector in the country. India's food processing sector is one of the largest in the world and its output is expected to reach \$535 billion by 2025-26. Thus, the country has great potential to become one of the top leaders in the global food processing industry.

■ **Sharmila Senthil Kumar**

From 3rd to 5th November, 2023, as part of celebrating 2023 as the International Year of Millets and to bring the global food processing industry together, the Ministry of Food Processing Industries organized the second edition of 'World Food India 2023' in New Delhi.

The event aimed to showcase India as the 'food basket of the world'. During the event, India's Prime Minister said that India's food processing sector has emerged as a "sunrise" industry and has attracted Rs. 50,000 crore in foreign direct investment (FDI) in the past nine years.

Food processing industry has the potential to add value to farm output, create alternate employment opportunities, improve exports and strengthen the domestic supply chain.

Currently, the industry accounts for 32% of the country's total food market. Food processing combined with marketing can solve the basic problems of agricultural surpluses and wastages, create rural jobs, and provide better remuneration to the growers.

Processes foods, if marketed smartly, can make India a leading food supplier of the world.

Food Processing Sector's Contribution to Indian Economy

- ◆ **GVA:** The contribution of the food processing sector has increased continuously with Gross Value Added (GVA) in food processing sector from Rs. 1.34 lakh crore in 2014-15 to Rs. 2.37 lakh crore in 2020-21 at a Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) of 9.97%.
- ◆ **FDI:** The total FDI equity inflow in sector from April 2000 to September 2023 is \$12.35 billion.
- ◆ **Jobs:** The industry is expected to add 9 million jobs by 2024.
- ◆ **Consumption:** By 2030, India's annual household consumption is believed to quadruple, making it the fifth-largest consumer in the world.
- ◆ **Growth:** The sector's size is estimated to be around USD 322 billion and it is expected to reach USD 535 billion by 2025, growing at a CAGR of 14.6%.

Future Prospects

The future of the food processing industry in India is promising, as the country has a large and growing population, increasing urbanization, and rising disposable incomes.

Additionally, India has a diverse agricultural base, which provides a wide range of raw materials for food processing.

Some Future Prospects include:

- ◆ **Increased Demand for Convenience Foods:** With the rise in the number of working women and busy lifestyles, there is a growing demand for ready-to-eat and convenience foods. As a result, the food processing industry is expected to shift its focus towards the production of packaged, processed, and frozen foods.
- ◆ **Innovation in Product Development:** To cater to the evolving consumer preferences, food processing companies in India are expected to invest heavily in research and development to create new and innovative products. This will include the development of healthier and functional foods, as well as the incorporation of local and traditional flavours and ingredients.
- ◆ **Growing Export Market:** India's food processing industry is expected to expand its export market in the coming years. The government's focus on promoting exports, coupled with the increasing demand for Indian foods in foreign markets, is likely to boost the industry's growth.
- ◆ **Increased Adoption of Technology:** The use of technology, including automation and Artificial Intelligence, is expected to increase in the food processing industry in India. This will improve efficiency, reduce costs, and ensure quality control.
- ◆ **Food E-commerce:** The recent pandemic has resulted in an unprecedented shift in consumer preferences. As digital consumerism is on a rise in India, the demand for door-to-door online food delivery and grocery is on the upswing. This will in turn offer strong impetus to the food processing industry in the country.

- [Standing Committee Report on Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita Bill, 2023](#)
- [Production Gap Report, 2023](#)
- [India-U.S. 2+2 Ministerial Dialogue](#)
- [2nd Voice of the Global South Summit](#)

Standing Committee Report on Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita Bill, 2023

On 10th November, 2023, the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Home released its report on the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS) Bill, 2023, which is the proposed replacement law for the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC), 1973.

Key Observations & Recommendations

Power to Investigate Cognisable Cases

- Under the BNSS, any officer in charge of a police station may investigate any cognisable case within its jurisdiction without a Magistrate's order.
- However, for grave offences, the Superintendent of Police (SP) or Deputy Superintendent of Police may be required to investigate the offence.
- **Recommendations:** Recognising that the SP is in charge of the district and has a supervisory role, the Committee recommended that subordinate officers should handle such investigations.

Undertrial Prisoners

- Under the CrPC, if an undertrial has spent half of the maximum period of imprisonment for an offence in detention, he must be released on his personal bond.
- This does not apply to offences which are punishable by death. BNSS adds that this provision will also not apply to: (i) offences punishable by life imprisonment, and (ii) persons who have pending proceedings in more than one offence.
- **Recommendations:** The Committee suggested that bail be granted to undertrials who have served the maximum sentence for the most serious offence they were charged with. However, this would not apply if there are consecutive sentences for multiple offences.

Police Custody

- Under the CrPC, a Judicial Magistrate may authorise the detention of an accused person for up to 15 days.
- BNSS adds that the 15-day detention period may be carried out in parts during the initial 40, 60, or 90 days.

- **Recommendations:** The Committee noted that this clause could be susceptible to misuse by authorities, as it does not clarify why the custody was not taken in the first 15 days.
- It recommended clarifying the clause with a suitable amendment.

Investigating Officer

- The BNSS states that if an officer who prepared a document or report for an inquiry or trial is unavailable, the Court will ensure that their successor officer testifies on the document.
- Officers covered by this provision include public servants and Investigating Officers.
- **Recommendations:** The Committee noted that Investigating Officers possess crucial knowledge of the case under investigation.
- Their cross-examination is significantly valuable, especially when documents prepared by them are used as evidence.
- The Committee recommended removing Investigating Officers from this provision.

Audio-Video Recording

- The BNSS introduces the formal adoption of audio-visual and electronic means to undertake various processes such as recording evidence.
- **Recommendation:** It recommended that such recording be done with safeguards.

Special Procedure

- The Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) Bill, 2023 (which seeks to replace the Indian Penal Code, 1860) introduces the offences of organised crime and terrorism.
- **Recommendations:** While assessing the BNS, the Committee recommended adding a provision in the BNSS that requires the senior police officer to decide whether to register a FIR for a terrorist offence under BNSS or the Unlawful Activities Prevention Act, 1967.



- Amplifi 2.0: An Assessment Platform for India's Urban Development
- Supreme Court's Directions to Streamline Adoption Process

Judiciary

- Supreme Court e-SCR Portal Launched in Hindi
- Suit for Specific Performance
- SC Guidelines for Speedy Disposal of Criminal Cases against Legislators

Plans/Policies

- Digital Advertisement Policy, 2023
- Draft Broadcasting Services (Regulation) Bill, 2023
- NHA Conducts Workshop to Operationalise NHCX
- Draft National Pharmacy Commission Bill, 2023

Polity & Governance

- Centre Exempts CERT-In From Ambit of RTI Act
- First Anniversary of Karmayogi Prarambh
- ECI Launches ENCORE Software for Comprehensive Election Management
- AAINA Dashboard for Cities

Polity & Governance

Centre Exempts CERT-In From Ambit of RTI Act

On 23rd November, 2023, the Central government in its official order exempted the Computer Emergency Response Team-India (CERT-In) from the ambit of the Right to Information (RTI) Act, 2005.

Key Points

- The Centre has used its powers given under sub-section (2) of Section 24 of the RTI Act to exempt CERT-In from the purview of the transparency law.
- After amending the Second Schedule of the RTI Act, CERT-In has been included as serial number 27.
- So far, there are 26 intelligence and security organisations that are exempted from the RTI Act. This includes Intelligence Bureau, Research and Analysis Wing, Defence Research and Development Organisation, etc.

Impact of Exemption

- CERT-In deals with sensitive information related to cybersecurity threats and responses, which might warrant confidentiality.

CERT-IN

- Founded 2004, it works within the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology.
- It is the nodal agency to deal with cyber security. It strengthens the security-related defence of the Indian Internet domain.
- The Information Technology Act of 2000 designates CERT-In to perform functions in the realm of cybersecurity, including the collection, analysis, and dissemination of information on cyber incidents and implementing emergency measures for handling cybersecurity incidents.

- The exemption effectively removes the obligation of CERT-In under the RTI Act to disclose information under the RTI Act.
- Exempting CERT-In might raise concerns about governance transparency in the cybersecurity domain.

Important Facts

Section 24 (2) of the RTI Act, 2005

- RTI Act shall not apply to intelligence and security organizations specified in the Second Schedule, with exceptions for information related to corruption allegations and human rights violations.
- Amendments to the Second Schedule require notification in the Official Gazette and subsequent presentation before each House of Parliament.

First Anniversary of Karmayogi Prarambh

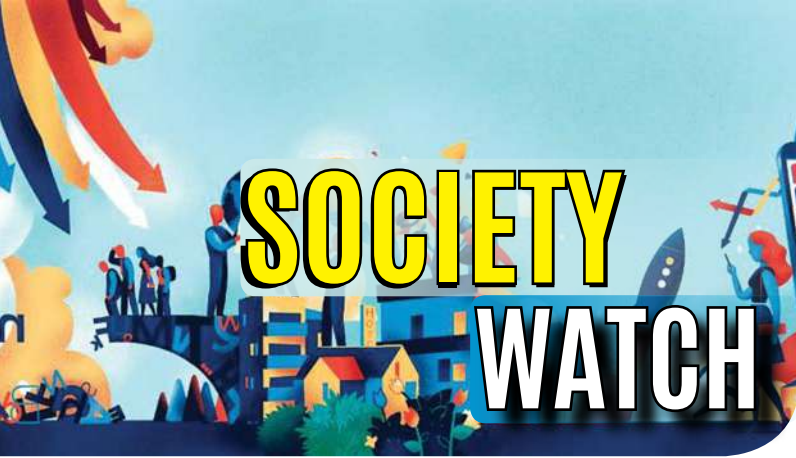
On 22nd November, 2023, Karmayogi Bharat (a Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) under Mission Karmayogi) celebrated the first anniversary of Karmayogi Prarambh, the online orientation programme on the iGOT Karmayogi Platform for all new government appointees recruited through Rozgar Melas.

About Karmayogi Prarambh

- The Karmayogi Prarambh module is an initiative under Mission Karmayogi - a National Programme for Civil Services Capacity Building (NPCSCB).

Objectives

- To prepare new recruits for becoming a future ready civil servant and thrive in a dynamic environment;
- To enhance their behavioural and functional competencies in the government;
- To enable them to apply the learnings in everyday life for personal and professional growth; and
- To empower them to deliver their duties effectively and efficiently.



Social Justice

- Judgments by Chief Commissioner for Persons with Disabilities
- Employment Opportunities for Transgenders in Armed Forces

Plans/Policies

- PM Launches Welfare Schemes for Tribal Groups
- Ayurveda Gyan Naipunya Initiative
- DAY-NRLM and SIDBI Sign MoU to Empower Women-led Enterprises
- Project Collaboration Agreement to Promote Traditional and Complementary Medicine
- Digital Life Certificate (Jeevan Pramaan)
- Bihar Seeks Special Category Status

Reports

- Global Tuberculosis Report, 2023
- NITI Aayog Releases Report on Transformation in School Education

Social Justice

Judgments by Chief Commissioner for Persons with Disabilities

On 9th November, 2023, the Court of Chief Commissioner for Persons with Disabilities delivered two landmark judgments that are poised to significantly impact our society and reshape attitudes towards Divyangjan (persons with disabilities) on a large scale.

Judgment 1

- In response to a complaint by Ms. Smrithy Rajesh regarding the ill-treatment of her son, who has Autism, at Bangalore Airport by Sri Lankan Airlines, the Court took Suo moto cognizance.
- The Court’s findings revealed a lack of awareness and sensitivity towards the needs of individuals with disabilities on the part of airline employees and the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA).
- The Court emphasized that all airlines, whether Indian or foreign, operating in the country are responsible for implementing the provisions of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act 2016, specifically outlined in sections 40 and 41, along with relevant rules and instructions.
- **Significance:** This underscores the importance of adhering to both the letter and spirit of the law to ensure the rights and dignity of persons with disabilities are protected.

Judgment 2

- In this judgment, the Court mandated that any government office in the country be it at the central, state, or local government level, operating from buildings or premises that are not accessible to Divyangjan, must relocate their services to the ground floor or another accessible location within the same facility.

- **Significance:** This decision underscores the commitment to ensuring equitable access to government services for all citizens, including those with disabilities.

Impact

- These two judgments reflect the commitment of the Chief Commissioner of Persons with Disabilities to create a more accessible and equitable society for all.
- Further, it marks a significant step towards promoting inclusivity and safeguarding the rights of Divyangjan in India.

OFFICE OF THE CHIEF COMMISSIONER FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

- It was set up under Section 57 of The Persons with Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights & Full Participation) Act, 1995.
- It is a part of the Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities under the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment.
- The office has been mandated to take steps to safeguard the rights of persons with disabilities. Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016 replaced the Persons with Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights & Full Participation) Act, 1995.
- Section 74 of Rights of Persons with Disabilities (RPwD) Act, 2016 provides for appointment of a Chief Commissioner for Persons with Disabilities and two Commissioners to assist the Chief Commissioner at the Centre.

Employment Opportunities for Transgenders in Armed Forces

Recently, the Indian Armed Forces decided to look at possible employment opportunities for transgender and the roles they could perform, while examining the Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act, 2019 and its implications.

Heritage Art & Culture

Art & Culture

- Inaugural Kambala Race Held in Bengaluru
- Kozhikode and Gwalior added in UNESCO Creative Cities Network

Art & Culture

Inaugural Kambala Race Held in Bengaluru

Recently, Bengaluru held its inaugural Kambala race with 159 pairs of buffaloes and their jockeys competing on specially constructed slush tracks in the Palace Grounds of the city.

About Kambala Race

- It is an annual buffalo race held in the south western Indian state of Karnataka, dedicated to an incarnation of Hindu God Shiva – Lord Kadri Manjunatha.
- Traditionally, it is sponsored by local Tuluva landlords and households in the coastal districts of Dakshina Kan-nada and Udipi of Karnataka and Kasaragod of Kerala, a region collectively known as Tulu Nadu.
- The Kambala season generally starts in November and lasts until March.
- The Kambalas are organized through Kambala samithis (Kambala Associations)
- During the race, the racers try to bring the buffaloes under control by holding their reins tight and whipping them.
- Slushy/marshy paddy field track is used for Kambala.



- Yogini Sculptures handed over to India
- Kalbelia: Folk Dance of Rajasthan
- Leather Puppetry Art Form

History

- Inscription of Nolamba Pallavas Discovered

Personality

- Bhima Bhoi (Santha Kavi of Odisha)
- Tribute to Rani Lakshmi Bai
- Lachit Borphukan

Categories in Kambala

Kambala races are typically organized into four categories:

1. **Negilu (plough):** It involves using lightweight ploughs to tether buffaloes for entry-level races.
2. **Hagga (rope):** Here jockeys race buffaloes with just a rope connecting the pair.
3. **Adda Halage:** It has jockeys standing on a horizontal plank pulled by buffaloes, distinguishing it from Hagga and Negilu where jockeys run behind the animals.
4. **Kane Halage:** This category features a wooden plank attached to buffaloes. As the plank is dragged through slush tracks, water gushes out of holes, and the height of the splashes determines the event's winner.

Important Facts

Jallikattu

- It is a traditional sport that is popular in the Indian state of Tamil Nadu.
- The sport involves releasing a wild bull into a crowd of people, and the participants attempt to grab the bull's hump and ride it for as long as possible, or attempt to bring it under control.
- It is celebrated in the month of January, during the Tamil harvest festival, Pongal.
- Bull (*Bos indicus*) breeds such as the Pulikulam or Kangayam are used in the race.
- **Various forms of Jallikattu:** Vadi manjuvirattu, Veli virattu and Vaṭam manjuvirattu.

Kozhikode and Gwalior added in UNESCO Creative Cities Network

Recently, Kozhikode in Kerala and Gwalior in Madhya Pradesh were added to the UNESCO's Creative Cities Network (UCCN) for contributions in the fields of literature and music respectively.

ECONOMY WATCH

Agriculture

- Krishi Sakhis Programme to Promote Natural Farming
- National Symposium on Promotion of Organic Products through Cooperatives

Banking & Finance

- NHA1 Accepts First Insurance Surety Bond
- RBI Increases Risk Weights for Consumer Loans
- Investor Risk Reduction Access Platform
- Section 45L (1) (b) of RBI Act, 1934
- Hammer Candlesticks Pattern in Trading
- RBI, Bank of England Sign MoU Related to CCIL
- Active and Passive Equity Funds

Plans/Policies

- New Drone Scheme for Women SHGs
- NITI Aayog Launches RISE Accelerator

Infrastructure

- e-Way Bill System
- International Container Transshipment Port

Agriculture

Krishi Sakhis Programme to Promote Natural Farming

On 24th November, 2023, the Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD) and the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare (MoA&FW) jointly launched a training programme for 'Krishi Sakhis' to promote natural farming.

- The programme was launched under the Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana-National Rural Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NRLM).

About Krishi Sakhis Training Programme

- **Aim:** To create "Samrudhhi villages" and "Lakpathi Self-Help Group (SHG) "members.
- **Target:** Training and certification of 50,000 Krishi Sakhis in a phased manner.
- **Nodal Institution:** National Centre for Organic and Natural Farming (NCONF) under MoA&FW.
- **Convergence of Schemes:** To bolster the economic status of Self-Help Groups (SHGs), the MoA&FW and MoRD have decided to converge their various schemes.
 - ✓ An MoU signed on August 30, 2023, between MoA&FW and DAY – NRLM, MoRD, aims to certify Krishi Sakhis as Para-Extension Workers by National Institute of Agricultural Extension Management (MANAGE), MoA&FW.
 - ✓ This strategic convergence ensures a unified approach to promote and support Natural Farming at the grassroots level, contributing to the overall development of rural communities.

Impact

- The Programme will help in achieving the Prime Minister's vision of enabling two crore Lakhpati Didis.
- It will help empowering Krishi Sakhis through capacity building to ensure the widespread reach of Natural Farming to farmers.

Important Facts

National Institute of Agricultural Extension Management (MANAGE)

- Formerly known as National Centre for Management of Agricultural Extension, it is an autonomous extension and agribusiness management institute located in Hyderabad, Telangana, India.
- The aim of the institute is to instill managerial and technical skills to extension officers, managers, scientists and administrators in the agricultural economy, to enable them to provide support and services to farmers and fishermen for practicing sustainable agriculture.

National Symposium on Promotion of Organic Products through Cooperatives

Recently, Union Home Minister addressed the National Symposium on 'Promotion of Organic Products through Cooperatives' organized by National Cooperative Organics Limited (NCOL).

Key Points

- On the occasion, 6 products under the 'Bharat Organics' brand of NCOL were also launched at the event.
- The six organic products- tur dal, chana dal, sugar, rajma, basmati rice, and Sonamasoori rice, will be sold through Mother Dairy's Safal outlets and online platforms.
- Besides Safal outlets and online platforms, NCOL will sell organic products via outlets of other four promoters -- Amul, NCCF, Nafed, and NCDC.
- 'Bharat Organics' is a brand under National Cooperative Organics Ltd (NCOL), targeting a trusted position in the Indian and international organic market.

About NCOL

- It has been established under the Multi State Cooperative Societies Act, 2002 in 2023.

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

Space Science

- Indian Scientists Detect Radiation from Extragalactic Black Hole
- Ladakh Set to become South East Asia's Inaugural Night Sky Sanctuary
- NISAR Completes Successful Thermal Vacuum Test

Space Science

Indian Scientists Detect Radiation from Extragalactic Black Hole

Recently, scientists from ISRO's U. R. Rao Satellite Centre and IIT Guwahati have achieved a groundbreaking feat by detecting radiation from an extragalactic black hole source.

- The Department of Science and Technology revealed that **X-ray polarimetry** was the technique employed to capture radiation emitted by an extragalactic black hole near the Large Magellanic Cloud (LMC).
- **LMC X-3, a binary system** comprising a black hole and a hot, massive star, serves as the source for the detected radiation.
- Discovered in 1971 by an orbiting X-ray telescope, LMC X-3 is a thermally dominated persistent extragalactic black hole source.
- **NASA's Imaging X-ray Polarimetry Explorer (IXPE)**, launched in 2021, played a pivotal role in the discovery, providing a unique observational technique for studying X-ray polarimetric properties.
- The mission opens a new window for **understanding emission processes** and the geometry of accreting objects around black holes.
- IITG and URSC scientists utilized IXPE to investigate the X-ray polarization properties of LMC X-3, identifying significant polarized emissions.
- The detected polarized emissions are attributed to the combined effects of direct and/or reflected emissions from a partially ionized disc atmosphere.
- The study also involved measuring the source spin using observations from the **Neutron Star Interior Composition Explorer (NICER) Mission** and Nuclear Spectroscopic Telescope Array (NuSTAR) Mission.

- NASA's AWE Mission to Decode Mysteries of Space Weather Drivers
- Saturn's Rings to Temporarily Vanish in 2025

Defence Technology

- Russia to Supply and License Igla-S Missiles to India
- Project Kusha: India's Indigenous Long-Range Air Defence System

New Technology & Innovations

- 2D Protein Monolayer Unveils Insights into Amyloidosis
- Rare Metal Tantalum Discovered in Sutlej River
- Revolutionary CO₂ to CO Technology for Carbon Capture in Steel Sector
- India's NexCAR19 CAR-T Cell Therapy Receives Market Authorization

The analysis revealed that the black hole in LMC X-3 is weakly rotating in nature, providing valuable insights into its fundamental properties.

Ladakh Set to become South East Asia's Inaugural Night Sky Sanctuary

On 26th November, 2023, during the 'Ladakh's Pride' exhibition, Union Government announced that Ladakh will soon have South East Asia's first Night Sky Sanctuary, marking a momentous stride in astro-tourism.

- The Night Sky Sanctuary, a collaboration with the Indian Institute of Astrophysics, Bengaluru, is anticipated to boost astro-tourism and house high-altitude telescopes.
- 'Ladakh's Pride' exhibition marks the fourth anniversary of Ladakh as a Union Territory, showcasing its Geographical Indication (GI)-tagged treasures.
- The Dark Sky Reserve, spanning 1,073 square kilometers within the **Changthang Wildlife Sanctuary**, is adjacent to the Indian Astronomical Observatory and aims to captivate stargazers.
- **LAHDC-Leh** commended for organizing the 'Ladakh's Pride' exhibition outside the region, featuring GI-tagged treasures such as Seabuckthorn, Raktsey Karpo apricots, wood carvings, and Pashmina wool.
- CSIR initiatives include the promotion of '**Leh Berry**' and the commercial cultivation of medicinal plants at altitudes above 15,000 feet.
- Department of Atomic Energy will establish **Gamma Irradiation Technology facilities** in the UT for fruit and vegetable preservation, promoting export, and encouraging commercial cultivation.

A tripartite MoU has been signed for the Dark Sky Reserve's establishment, emphasizing activities to boost local tourism and the economy through science and technology interventions. Top of Form



ECOLOGY & ENVIRONMENT

Climate Change

- UN Report: 86 Days Broke 1.5°C Barrier in 2023
- Reusable Plastic Packaging Can Slash Emissions by 69%

Sustainable Development

- OECD Report Reveals Developed Countries

Missed Climate Finance Pledge

- Countries Set to Exceed Fossil Fuel Production Limits

Biodiversity

- New 'Music Frog' Species Discovered in Arunachal Pradesh
- Persistent Plastic Threat to Giant Galapagos Tortoises
- Mosquitofish Introduction Backfires in India
- CITES Removes India from Red Sanders Trade Restrictions

Government Policies/Initiatives

- Mandatory Blending of Compressed Biogas (CBG)
- IEA Highlights Success of Energy Conservation Building Code

Climate Change

UN Report: 86 Days Broke 1.5°C Barrier in 2023

On 20th November, 2023, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) released the Emissions Gap Report 2023. According to the report, 86 days this year surpassed the 1.5°C temperature threshold amid a record-high surge in global greenhouse gas emissions.

- Global emissions surged to a record **57.4 billion tonnes of carbon dioxide in 2022**, marking a 1.2% increase from the previous year and surpassing the previous high set in 2019.
- Despite the dip caused by the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, emissions rebounded in 2021, **nearly reaching 2019 levels**, and continued to rise in 2022.
- Emissions from **China, the United States, and India**, among the largest emitters, escalated in 2022, while the European Union, Russia, and Brazil witnessed slight reductions.
- The report highlights that even if current climate pledges are achieved at their highest ambition, global emissions in 2030 would exceed the level needed to limit warming to 1.5°C by at least 19 billion tonnes of CO₂ equivalent.
- To bridge this gap, emissions would need an annual reduction of **at least 8.7% from 2024**, contrasting sharply with the 1.2% rise observed in 2022.
- The report underscores the **critical need for significant and immediate emissions cuts** due to the failure to take early action on climate, making it increasingly challenging to meet the 1.5°C target.
- While short-term temperature averages have breached the 1.5°C limit, the focus remains on striving to align with long-term temperature goals from pre-industrial times.

- The report indicates that earlier, in 2010, initiating serious climate action would have required annual emission reductions of 0.7% for the below 2°C scenario and 3.3% for the 1.5°C scenario by 2030.
- The current lack of stringent emission cuts amplifies the urgency, now demanding an annual reduction of **5.3% from 2024 for the below 2°C pathway** and 8.7% for the 1.5°C pathway.

The year 2023 is on track to become the hottest ever, with numerous months breaking temperature records, including September as the hottest month, setting a concerning trend with frequent breaches of the 1.5°C threshold.

Reusable Plastic Packaging Can Slash Emissions by 69%

A recent study reveals that widespread adoption of reusable plastic packaging has the potential to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by up to 69%.

- Reuse schemes not only contribute to emission reduction but also prove cost-effective for various items, highlighting the financial benefits for companies.
- The study emphasizes the need for a **systemic change to combat and reverse plastic** waste across sectors like beverages, personal care, fresh food, and food cupboard items.
- The most ambitious scenario, named **System Change**, suggests that reuse schemes could lead to a substantial decrease in **greenhouse gas emissions** (35% to 69%), **water usage** (45% to 70%), and **material usage** (45% to 76%).
- Deposit schemes play a crucial role in achieving ambitious targets, with high return rates being a key factor.
- In the System Change scenario, offering consumers a 20 euro cents refund for returning packaging could significantly lower net costs for returnable beverage and personal care bottles compared to single-use options.



WORLD WATCH

International Relations

- Sri Lanka Secures Debt Deal for IMF Tranche
- Maldives President Requests Withdrawal of Indian Military Personnel
- India-Australia: RISE Accelerator for Circular Economy Startups

International Relations

Sri Lanka Secures Debt Deal for IMF Tranche

On 29th November, 2023, Sri Lanka reached an “agreement in principle” with India and the Paris Club, including Japan, paving the way for accessing the next tranche of the nearly-\$3 billion International Monetary Fund (IMF) recovery package.

- The **Official Creditor Committee (OCC)** and Sri Lanka have agreed on the main parameters of a debt treatment aligned with the Extended Fund Facility (EFF) arrangement with the IMF.
- Last year, during a severe economic crisis, Sri Lanka defaulted on its nearly **\$51 billion** foreign debt, necessitating a comprehensive restructuring to initiate an IMF-backed economic recovery program.
- The OCC, formed in May 2023 in response to Colombo’s request for debt treatment, is co-chaired by India, Japan, and France, with discussions held over months to evaluate options for restructuring.
- **China, Sri Lanka’s largest bilateral creditor**, has chosen not to participate in the OCC but attends meetings as an observer.
- Japan and India, other major lenders, stress the importance of creditor parity and transparency, expecting other bilateral creditors to share information transparently for comparative evaluations.
- The OCC urges Sri Lanka to engage with private creditors, holding the largest portion of the island’s foreign debt, and swiftly finalize an agreement on terms as favourable as those offered by the OCC.
- The IMF considers securing an agreement with official creditors on a debt treatment plan consistent with its targets as the critical next step, making the next IMF package instalment contingent on this agreement.

- India-Malaysia Bilateral Joint Commission Meeting
- India and Bhutan to Enhance Connectivity
- U.S. and India Launch “Innovation Handshake” Agenda for Tech Collaboration
- Brazil Offers Ethanol Technology to India amid WTO Dispute

World Issues

- 2023 Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation Summit
- Philippines Terminates Belt and Road Initiative Projects
- India Slips to 103rd Rank in Global Talent Competitiveness
- China and Japan to Boost Bilateral Cooperation

International Treaties

- IPEF Members Sign Supply Chain Agreement

Maldives President Requests Withdrawal of Indian Military Personnel

On 18th November, 2023, President of Maldives formally requested the Indian government to withdraw its military personnel, citing a strong mandate from the Maldivian people and expressing hope that India will honour their democratic will.

Key Points

- The request is based on the mandate received in the September Presidential Election, emphasizing the democratic will of the Maldivian people.
- The President raises concerns about Indian military personnel operating in Maldives for medical evacuation and counter-drug trafficking.
- Both governments agree to discuss workable solutions for continued cooperation, particularly using platforms for medical evacuation and counter-drug operations.

Historical Context of India-Maldives Relations

- Maldives, a tiny island country, has been historically considered within India’s regional sphere of influence.
- The dynamics have witnessed changes, with shifts in leadership from pro-India to pro-China alignments.

‘India Out’ Campaign

- The ‘India Out’ campaign, starting around 2020, gained traction with protests and social media activities.
- Allegations of a significant Indian military contingent in Maldives were denied by the Solih government.

Cooperation and Development Projects

- Despite geopolitical shifts, India and Maldives have collaborated on projects like the Greater Male Connectivity Project (GMCP).
- Ongoing initiatives indicate continued cooperation, although the current request raises questions about the future trajectory.

Prelims GS Roundup-4

Dear Readers,

In this **January 2024** issue of *Civil Services Chronicle*, we have come up with the **Prelims GS Roundup-4**. The **Prelims GS Roundup Series** was started from the October issue of the magazine (**CSE Prelims GS Roundup-1, October 2023**). The content published in this section will cater to the needs of the UPSC/State PCS Civil Services Prelims exams.

A careful analysis of the past 10 years Prelims questions reveals that the questions (especially in UPSC CSE) are never repeated but the topics are repeated. Questions are framed from different dimensions of the topics.

Accordingly, the **Prelims GS Roundup-4** covers **47 most important topics of History and Indian Polity** from which questions are frequently asked in the Civil Services Preliminary Examination.

The **GS Roundup Series** will cover the entire syllabus of the Prelims exam, comprising Indian History, Art & Culture, Geography, Indian Polity & Governance, Economy, General Science & Science & Technology, and Ecology & Environment.

We hope you find the content helpful in your preparation for the Civil Services Examinations.

We encourage you to send us your feedback at cscenglish@chronicleindia.in

Happy reading!

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Indian History & Culture

Republics in Ancient India

In ancient India, republics were distinctive political entities characterized by democratic governance. These republics, often known as Ganas or Sanghas, were autonomous states with elected officials and popular assemblies. They functioned with a degree of self-governance, where decisions were made collectively through assemblies, and the head of the state was elected rather than being hereditary.

The Sakyas of Kapilavastu

- This region held significant importance as a republican state during that era, positioned adjacent to Nepal's border in the Terai region of the Himalayas.
- Mahatma Buddha was part of the Sakya family lineage.
- The Sakya republic operated under a federal constitution, its leader chosen through elections and bearing the title of King.
- Administrative decisions were collective, involving all adult Sakya members in crucial matters, decided within a general assembly.
- The presence of a specific number of members was mandatory for a quorum.
- With eighty thousand families inhabiting its territories and boasting multiple cities, the Sakya republic eventually fell to the Kosala state around the conclusion of the sixth century B.C.

The Lichchavis of Vaisali

- It stood as the most extensive and dominant republican state during that period, comprising nine Malla republics and eighteen Kasi and Kosala republics.
- Vaisali served as the capital of the Lichchavis, accommodating nearly 42,000 families in its prosperous and aesthetically appealing cityscape.
- The state leadership was determined by elections, with the chosen leader holding the title of King.
- Additionally, there were 7,707 Rajans who presumably functioned as principal officers within their respective territories.
- Its power was such that Ajatasatru, ruler of the formidable Magadha state, had to prepare militarily and diplomatically for years before finally annexing it.
- This achievement was only possible when his diplomacy succeeded in dividing the Lichchavis.

The Mallas of Pava

- Pāvā was an important city of the Malla tribe of ancient

India at the time of the Haryanka dynasty of Magadha.

- It is located about 20 kilometres (12 mi) southeast of Kushinagar in the state of Uttar Pradesh, India.
- It was a republican state of the Kshatriyas, the capital of which was Pava.

The Mallas of Kushinara

- Mallas, tribal people in the time of the Buddha (c. 6th–4th century bce), who settled in the northern parts of modern Bihar state, India.
- Their two most important towns were at Kushinagara (Kusinara) and Pava (located east of modern Gorakhpur).
- The Mallas had a republican form of government, with an assembly.

The Koliya of Ramagrama

- Situated eastward of the Sakya state, it held its capital at Ramagrama.
- The Koliyas and the Sakyas engaged in continuous conflict over the utilization of the Rohini River's water.
- Nonetheless, a lasting peace was brokered between the two states through the mediation of Mahatma Buddha.

The Bhagya of Sunsamagiri

- This state was affiliated with the Aitrey Brahmanas and was situated close to the areas of the present-day Mirzapur district.
- Its capital stationed at Sunsamagiri.

The Mauryas of Piphallivana

- Located in the foothills of the Himalayas, this state is believed to have connections to the family of Emperor Chandra Gupta Maurya from Magadha.

The Ghvatrikas of Kollanga

- This state was also situated in the Terai-region of the Himalayas near the boundary of Nepal and its capital was Kollanga.

Prominent Scholars & Literary Works of Ancient Period

In ancient India, a tapestry of profound scholars and influential literary works emerged, defining the landscape of wisdom and knowledge. From the Vedas and Upanishads to luminaries like Panini and Kautilya, their contributions sculpted India's intellectual legacy.

Indian Polity & Constitution

Principle of Natural Justice

The principle of natural justice represents a fundamental legal concept centered on fairness, impartiality, and equity in legal proceedings. It embodies the idea that individuals involved in a legal matter should be treated fairly and justly.

Two Principles of Natural Justice

- (i) **‘Nemo judex in causa sua’** means no one should be made a judge in his own cause, and the rule against bias.
- (ii) **‘Audi alteram partem’** means to hear the other party, or no one should be condemned unheard.

Constitutional Status

- **Preamble:** It mentions equality of status and of opportunity, which not only ensures fairness in socioeconomical activities of the people but also acts as shield to **individual’s liberty against the arbitrary action (base for principles of Natural Justice)**.
- **Article 14:** This Article guarantees equality before law and equal protection of law.
- **Article 21:** It ensures that **due process of law procedure must satisfy certain requisites** in the sense of being fair and reasonable. The procedure **cannot be arbitrary, unfair or unreasonable**.

Judicial Pronouncements

- The Supreme Court pronouncement of “due process of Law “in **Maneka Gandhi case (1978)**, court asserted the principle of reasonableness while deciding a case.

Appointment & Transfer of Judges

In India, the appointment and transfer of judges involve a structured process guided by constitutional provisions and judicial norms to ensure an independent and impartial judiciary.

Appointment of Judges

Supreme Court

- According to the Constitution of India, every Judge of the Supreme Court shall be appointed by the President by warrant under his/her hand and seal after consultation with such of the Judges of the Supreme Court and of the High Court in the States.

High Court

- The Judges of the High Court are appointed by the President in consultation with the Chief Justice of India and the Governor of the state in question.

District Court

- The judges of subordinate (district) courts are appointed by the Governor in consultation with the Chief Justice of the High Court of the concerned State.

Transfer of Judges

The initiation of the proposal for the transfer of a Judge should be made by the Chief Justice of India (CJI). The opinion of the CJI “is determinative”.

- CJI is expected to take into account the views of the Chief Justice of the High Court from which the Judge is to be transferred and Chief Justice of the High Court to which the transfer is to be affected.

Constitutional Status

- Article 222(1) of the Constitution deals with the transfer of judges and states that the President may, after consultation with the Chief Justice of India transfer a judge from one high court to another.

Judicial Pronouncements

- The **First and Second Judges’ cases** resulted in the formation of the Collegium System by interpreting “consultation” with the CJI to really mean “concurrence” which is arrived at by the CJI upon discussion with the two senior-most judges.
- The **Third Judges’ case** expanded the collegium to include the five senior-most judges, including the CJI.
- The **K Ashok Reddy case** relied on the decision of the Second Judges’ case and held that the primacy of the judiciary in the matter of appointments

Doctrine of Eminent Domain: State Property, Common Property & Community Property

The Doctrine of Eminent Domain is a legal principle that grants governments the authority to take private property for public use, provided fair compensation is offered to the property owner. This concept is rooted in the idea that the



Competition CHRONICLE

For State PSC & General
Competitive Examinations

- ✓ News Snippets
- ✓ Terms in Vogue
- ✓ State Watch
- ✓ News Notes
- ✓ GS PT Pointers
- ✓ Exam Pointers
- ✓ Current Affairs
Model MCQs
- ✓ Parliament Q & A
- ✓ Fact Sheet
- ✓ PIB/AIR/PTI
Info Bytes

From the last issue of Civil Services Chronicle (December 2023), we have started this special section called 'Competition Chronicle'. This section has been conceptualized to cater to the needs of aspirants preparing for general competitive examinations. It has been designed keeping in mind the questions related to general knowledge and current events asked in competitive examinations.

In this section, contemporary developments have been presented for the examinations conducted by State Public Service Commissions, Staff Selection Commissions, State Subordinate Commissions and other equivalent graduate level examinations like CDS, Railway, Banking, etc.

The nature of current affairs questions asked in the UPSC Civil Services Examination has seen a drastic change over the years; now these questions are asked from the general studies background of current events. Therefore, there is a need to study current affairs as per the interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary nature of questions for UPSC-CSE. Keeping this in mind, the initial part of the magazine covering Articles, In Focus, Regular Columns and Special Section has been dedicated exclusively to UPSC-CSE.

Current affairs questions asked in general competitive examinations are directly related to current events and the nature of these questions is factual. For these examinations, point-wise and factual study of general knowledge and contemporary events is required, not analytical study. Keeping this need of the candidates in mind, we have started this new section.

News Snippets

India Watch

Viksit Bharat Sankalp Yatra

- On 15th November, 2023, on the occasion of Janjatiya Gaurav Divas, the Prime Minister launched the Viksit Bharat Sankalp Yatra in Khunti, Jharkhand.
- He flagged off IEC (Information, Education and Communication) Vans which will be initially visiting the districts having significant Scheduled Tribe population and the remaining districts from third week of November 2023 onwards up to 26 January 2024.
- The focus of the Yatra will be on reaching out to people, creating awareness and providing benefits of welfare schemes like sanitation facilities, essential financial services, electricity connections, access to LPG cylinders, and housing for the poor, food security, proper nutrition, reliable healthcare, clean drinking water, etc.
- Enrolment of potential beneficiaries will be done through details ascertained during the Yatra.

Mutual Legal Assistance Treaty (MLAT)

- Recently, the Indian government has sought evidence in the San Francisco consulate case under the Mutual Legal Assistance Treaty (MLAT).
- The MLAT is an agreement between two or more countries which sought to gather and exchange information in matters that aims to enforce public or criminal laws.
- A mutual legal assistance request is commonly used to formally interrogate a suspect in a criminal case, when the suspect resides in a foreign country.
- A “Central Authority” has to be established within each country to make, receive, and facilitate the execution of requests for evidence intended for use in criminal investigations, prosecutions, and related proceedings.
- India’s Ministry of Home Affairs deals with any such matters.
- India has signed such an agreement with about 45 countries as of 2022, including the U.S.

National Press Day

- It is observed on November 16 every year to celebrate the importance of a free and responsible press in a democratic society.
- The day commemorates the establishment of the Press Council of India (PCI) in 1966, which acts as a regulatory body for the news media in the country.
- PCI is a statutory and quasi-judicial body that ensures the freedom of the press, maintains and improves the standards of journalism.
- It was re-established in 1979 under the Press Council Act, 1978.
- It has the power to receive complaints of violation of the journalistic ethics, or professional misconduct by an editor or journalist.
- It emphasizes the need for ethical journalism that upholds truth, accuracy, and fairness.

Digital India Land Records Modernization Programme (DILRMP)

- Recently, the Central government presented felicitation certificates to several Gram Panchayats in tribal districts for their achievements in the digitisation of land records.
- DILRMP is a Central Sector Scheme being implemented by the Department of Land Resources (DoLR) with 100% funding by Government of India.
- It has 3 major components – (a) Computerization of land record (b) Survey/re-survey (c) Computerization of Registration.
- It aims to accelerate digitisation of land records, both textual and spatial to facilitate land related information to the citizens.
- It aims to develop a modern, comprehensive and transparent land record management system.
- Substantial progress has been made in respect of land related matters through DILRMP.

Terms in Vogue

Fractal

- Physicists are using the fractal geometry approach to study quantum systems.
- A fractal is a never-ending pattern.
- Fractals are infinitely complex patterns that are self-similar across different scales.
- In essence, a fractal is a pattern that repeats forever, and every part of the fractal, regardless of how zoomed in or zoomed out you are, looks very similar to the whole image. They are created by repeating a simple process over and over in an ongoing feedback loop.
- Fractals are distinct from the simple figures of classical, or Euclidean, geometry—the square, the circle, the sphere, and so forth.
- Fractal patterns are extremely familiar since nature is full of fractals. For instance, trees, rivers, coastlines, mountains, clouds, seashells, hurricanes, etc.
- Fractals are useful in modelling structures (such as eroded coastlines or snowflakes) in which similar patterns recur at progressively smaller scales, and in describing partly random or chaotic phenomena such as crystal growth, fluid turbulence, and galaxy formation.

Freemartins

- In animal husbandry, cattle that are born exhibiting characteristics of both sexes are called freemartins.
- Freemartins are sterile female cattle that result from the twinning of a male and a female within the same uterus.
- This phenomenon occurs in approximately 90% of such twin pregnancies in cattle.
- The key reason behind the phenomenon is the exchange of blood between the male and the female fetuses during gestation.
- Genetically, freemartinism is attributed to the sharing of cells carrying the Y chromosome from the male twin with the female twin.
- This chromosome triggers the development of male reproductive organs in the male foetus, while the female foetus, affected by the presence of male hormones, experiences incomplete development of its reproductive system.

Scattered Spiders

- The U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) recently issued a warning to organisations about a hacking group called Scattered Spiders.
- It is a hacking group notorious for invading various organisations across the world.
- This hacker group is known by other aliases as well, including Starfraud, UNC3944, Scatter Swine, and Muddled Libra.
- The members of the group break into the IT environments of victims, exfiltrate as much valuable data as possible, and then demand payment to keep a lid on that information and not leak or sell it.

MIKA

- It is the world's 1st ever AI humanoid robot CEO of Polish rum company Dictador.
- It is developed by Dictador and Hanson Robotics, a Hong Kong-based engineering and robotics company which is behind the renowned AI robot Sophia.
- Mika is a more advanced version of her sister prototype, Sophia, who was activated in 2015.

5G NTN

- 5G NTN stands for 5G Non-Terrestrial Network. It lets phones tap satellites for data when they can't reach land-based 5G towers, helping users stay connected for sending messages, GPS, and voice and video calls.
- One of the most significant advantages is that it offers much wider coverage than traditional terrestrial networks.
- Since the NTN network operates from a high altitude, it can cover a vast area without the need for large numbers of ground-based infrastructure. This makes 5G NTN networks a reliable way to provide connectivity to remote and rural areas, where traditional infrastructure is not practical.

STATE WATCH

Telangana

World's First 3D-Printed Temple

- Telangana has unveiled the world's first 3D-printed temple, a groundbreaking structure situated in Burugupally, Siddipet district.
- This innovative construction, achieved through a three-month 3D printing process, marks a significant technological milestone.
- The temple spans 4,000 square feet and stands at a height of 35.5 feet. It comprises three distinct parts, each dedicated to a different deity:
- Modak for Lord Ganesha: This sanctuary is shaped like a modak, a sweet dish that is traditionally offered to Lord Ganesha.
- Square Shivalay for Lord Shankar: This sanctuary is square-shaped and dedicated to Lord Shiva.
- Lotus-Shaped Sanctuary for Goddess Parvati: This sanctuary is shaped like a lotus flower and dedicated to Goddess Parvati.

Meghalaya

Water Smart Kid Campaign

- In a significant move to instill a sense of responsibility and awareness among the younger generation regarding water conservation, Meghalaya Chief Minister launched the 'Meghalaya Water Smart Kid Campaign.'
- The campaign's primary goal is to inspire action and educate children on water conservation and the protection of the state's water bodies, intending to cultivate them into Water Conservation Ambassadors within their communities.
- Additionally, the Chief Minister recognised and awarded the "Water Guardians," including villages and community members who have demonstrated innovative and inspiring efforts in the conservation of water bodies.
- The recipients of this commendation were the Lumshyiap Village Water and Sanitation Committee (VWSC) in Ri Bhoi District, Darechikgre VWSC in West Garo Hills District, and Dura Kantragre VWSC, also in West Garo Hills District.

Jharkhand

Jharkhand Foundation Day

- Jharkhand became the 28th state of India on 15th November, 2000, after the Chota Nagpur area was segregated from the southern half of Bihar to become a new Indian state, a division enabled by the Bihar Reorganization Act, 2000.
- The state shares its border with the states of West Bengal to the east, Chhattisgarh to the west, Uttar Pradesh to the northwest, Bihar to the north and Odisha to the south.
- It is the 15th largest state by area, and the 14th largest by population.
- Jharkhand is famous for its rich mineral resources like Uranium, Mica, Bauxite, Granite, Gold, Silver, Graphite, Magnetite, Dolomite, Fireclay, Quartz, Feldspar, Coal (32% of India's reserves), Iron, Copper (25% of India's reserves), etc.

Tamil Nadu

Kalaignar Magalir Urimai Thittam

- Under this scheme, an estimated 1.06 crore women, recognised as heads of families and enrolled as beneficiaries, would be given a monthly rights grant or basic income of Rs 1,000 each.
- The entitlement of Rs 12,000 per annum is meant to improve the livelihood of women, enhance their standard of living and pave the way for them to live with self-respect in society.
- A woman, hailing from eligible families, who has completed 21 years of age (born before September 15, 2002), would be qualified to be a beneficiary of the scheme.

News Notes

Appointments	
Person	Brief Description
Girish Chandra Murmu	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Girish Chandra Murmu, the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) of India, has been elected as the vice-chair of the UN Panel of External Auditors.
Manoranjan Mishra	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> He has been appointed as Executive Director (ED) of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI). Prior to being promoted as ED, Mishra was serving as Chief General Manager in the Department of Regulation.
Aparna Gupta	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Microsoft has recently announced the appointment of Aparna Gupta as the new Global Delivery Center (GDC) leader.
Vinay M. Tonse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> He has been appointed as the Managing Director of the State Bank of India (SBI) until November 30, 2025.
Alok Sharma	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> He has been appointed as the new director of the Special Protection Group (SPG), the elite security unit responsible for safeguarding the Prime Minister.
Shakuntla L Bhaya	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> United States President Joe Biden has appointed Shakuntla L Bhaya, an accomplished and dedicated legal professional, as a member of the Administrative Conference of the United States Council.
Pankaj Tripathi	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) has appointed Bollywood actor Pankaj Tripathi as the “UPI Safety Ambassador.”
Heeralal Samariya	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> He has been appointed as the new Chief Information Commissioner (CIC).
Surendra Adhana	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Senior Indian diplomat, Surendra Adhana, has been re-elected to serve on the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ) at the United Nations for the term 2024-26.

Person in News	
Person	Why in News
Sheynnis Palacios	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Miss Nicaragua Sheynnis Palacios is the winner of 72nd Miss Universe pageant.
Saurav Ganguly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee named Sourav Ganguly as ‘Brand Ambassador of Bengal’.
Sheikh Hasina	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> TIME has featured Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, who, at 76 years old, is the longest-serving female head of government in Bangladesh’s history, in its recent cover story.

Obituary	
Person	Brief Description
Henry Alfred Kissinger	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> He served as United States secretary of state and national security advisor in the presidential administrations of Richard Nixon and Gerald Ford. He pioneered the policy of détente with the Soviet Union, orchestrated an opening of relations with China, engaged in “shuttle diplomacy” in the Middle East to end the Yom Kippur War, and negotiated the Paris Peace Accords, which ended American involvement in the Vietnam War. For the latter, he was awarded the 1973 Nobel Peace Prize.
Fatima Beevi	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Justice Fathima Beevi, the first female Supreme Court judge, passed away at the age of 96. Appointed to the apex Court in 1989, she became the first female judge to be a part of the Supreme Court of India and the first Muslim woman to be appointed to any of the higher judiciaries in the country.

PIB/AIR/PTI Info Bytes

- Which species has recently been declared as the 'state fish' of Gujarat? - **Ghol Fish**
- Where was the recent India-Nordic Baltic Business Summit held? - **New Delhi**
- With whom has India Post recently signed an MoU for better services? - **Blue Dart**
- Who recently won the Billiards Championship, 2023 title at the IBSF? - **Pankaj Advani**
- From whom did ICC India recently take the hosting of the Under-19 World Cup? - **Sri Lanka**
- What recent position has India's CAG assumed at the United Nations Auditor Panel? - **Deputy Head**
- Who has recently been honored with the Dr. Pritam Singh Transformational Leader Award? - **C. Raj Kumar**
- What resolution did the United Nations General Assembly recently pass for building a better world through sport and the Olympics? - **'Building a Peaceful and Better World through Sport and the Olympics'**
- Which government recently extended the deadline for the 'Friendship Agreement' with Fukuoka Prefecture of Japan? - **Delhi**
- Where did the 'Vajra Prahar' joint military exercise recently commence? - **Meghalaya**
- Who recently achieved a record seventh ATP title win? - **Novak Djokovic**
- Who has recently been appointed as the brand ambassador of West Bengal? - **Sourav Ganguly**
- Who has recently taken the position of Managing Director at the State Bank of India? - **Vinay M. Tonse**
- Who recently became the first Indian woman to win the International Emmy Awards? - **Ekta Kapoor**
- Who has been awarded the JCB of the year 2023 Literature Award? - **Perumal Murugan**
- In which event did Ajay Bhatt represent India at the recently held Dubai Air-Show? - **Science and Tech**
- What achievement did the Indian Navy recently mark in the field of missile technology? - **Successfully tested the country's first indigenous anti-ship missile**
- Where the International Film Festival of India was recently organised? - **Goa**
- Which state government recently banned food items with halal certification? - **Uttar Pradesh**
- Where was the International Tourism Mart currently organized? - **Shillong**
- Who recently signed a Project Collaborative Agreement on Traditional and Complementary Medicine with the Ministry of AYUSH? - **WHO**
- Where was the United Nations Forum on International Humanitarian Law and Peacekeeping currently being held? - **New Delhi**
- Where was the Global Fisheries Summit held recently? - **Ahmedabad**
- Which Indian city has the highest number of women-led startups? - **Bengaluru**
- Who recently became the new Prime Minister of Luxembourg? - **Luke Frieden**
- Who has been recently appointed as the acting Chief Justice of the Allahabad High Court? - **Justice Manoj Gupta**
- Who (Indian stand-up comedian) recently won the International Emmy Award? - **Vir Das**
- Which organizations were awarded the Indira Gandhi Peace Prize for the year 2023? - **Indian Medical Association and Trained Nurses Association of India**
- Who was removed and reinstated from the post of CEO at Open AI recently? - **Sam Altman**
- When is 'World Fisheries Day' celebrated every year? - **21 November**
- What is the name of the campaign recently launched by the Uttar Pradesh government to ensure equal opportunities for students? - **'Every Right for Every Child'**
- Which state is at the top position in providing water connections under the Jal Jeevan Mission? - **Uttar Pradesh**
- Where will the first India Art Architecture Design Biennale (IAADB'23), organised by the Union Culture Ministry, be held? - **New Delhi**
- Where was the 2+2 Ministerial Dialogue between India and Australia held? - **New Delhi**
- What directive has the National Payment Corporation of India recently given regarding UPI? - **Close Inactive UPI by December 31, 2023**
- Which country became the winner of the ICC Cricket World Cup? - **Australia**
- Who recently became the new President of Argentina? - **Javier Miley** ■■