

VETRI IAS STUDY CIRCLE

Current Affairs

(A book for TNPSC Examination)

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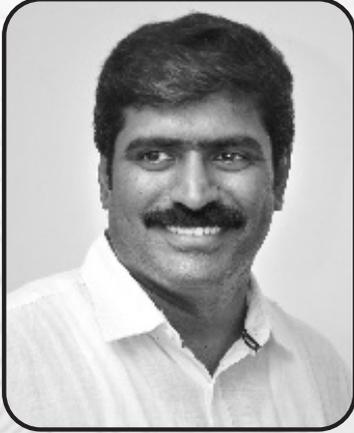
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Preface



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Director

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My Dear Aspirants,

Greetings to all of you! "What we think we become" Gautama Buddha. We all have dreams. To make dreams come into reality it takes a lot of determination, dedication, self discipline and continuous effort.

We at VETRI IAS Study Circle are committed to provide the right guidance, quality coaching and help every aspirants to achieve his or her life's cherished goal of becoming a civil servant.

The class room coaching at VETRI IAS Study Circle is meticulously planned to equip the aspirants with all the relevant facts and fundamentals of the subjects. Further the VETRI IAS Study Circle Study materials aim to support the candidate by providing the most relevant study material in a comprehensive manner.

We also thank other family members of Vetrii for making this effort a reality.

We wish the aspirants ALL THE VERY BEST for their journey in Civil Services !

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TNPSC GATEWAY

DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS

February 1 to 28, 2023

1. HISTORY

1.1. IMPORTANT DAYS

Date	Day	Theme/Remark
February 01	Indian Coast Guard Day	It aims to prevent the sea-borne smuggling of goods
February 02	World Wetlands Day	"It's Time for Wetlands Restoration"
February 04	International Day of Human Fraternity	"harmony in difference"
February 04	World Cancer Day	"Close the Care Gap"
February 06	International Day of Zero Tolerance for Female Genital Mutilation	"Partnership with Men and Boys to transform Social and gender Norms to End FGM".
February 07	Safer Internet Day	"Together for a better internet"
February 10	World Pulses Day	"Pulses for Sustainable Future"
February 11	World Unani Day	"Unani Medicine for Public Health"
February 11	International Day of Women and Girls in Science	"Innovate. Demonstrate. Elevate. Advance (IDEA): Bringing communities Forward for sustainable and equitable development"
February 12	National Productivity Day	"A chance to set goals".

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Date	Day	Theme/Remark
February 13	World Radio Day	"Radio and Peace"
February 13	National Women's Day	The day is observed every year to commemorate the birth anniversary of Sarojini Naidu, popularly known as the nightingale of India
February 13	International Epilepsy Day	"Stigma"
February 15	International Childhood Cancer Day	"Better Survival"
February 18	World Pangolin Day	It is a day to remember and celebrate pangolins
February 19	Soil Health Card Day	To remember the beginning of the Soil Health Card (SHC) Scheme and to raise awareness of its advantages
February 20	World Day of Social Justice	"Overcoming Barriers and Unleashing Opportunities for Social Justice".
February 21	International Mother Language Day	"Multilingual education - a necessity to transform education"
February 22	World Scout Day	"Our World: Our Equal Future: The Environment and Gender Equality"
February 22	World Thinking Day	"Our Planet, Our Peaceful Future"
February 27	World NGO Day	The theme for the year 2023 is "the role and influence of NGOs in advancing human rights"
February 28	National Science Day	"Global Science for Global Wellbeing"

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1.2. DEFENCE, NATIONAL SECURITY AND TERRORISM

Vayulink' platform

- The Indian Air Force has come out with an innovative solution that would help pilots to deal with bad weather.
- It also provides them jammer-proof uninterrupted communication with the base station.
- It is Known as 'Vayulink', the data link communication uses the Indian Regional Navigation Satellite System (IRNSS).

TARKASH

- The National Security Guard (NSG) and US Special Operations Forces (SOF) - are currently conducting an exercise named Operation TARKASH in Chennai.
- This marks the sixth edition of the exercise, which started on January 16 and will conclude on February 14.
- This is the first joint military exercise between India and USA in 2023.

TROPEX - 23

- The 2023 edition of Indian Navy's major maritime exercise TROPEX, is currently underway in the Indian Ocean Region.
- This operational level exercise is conducted biennially and witnesses' participation by all Indian Navy units, Indian Army, Indian Air Force and Coast Guard assets.

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SWARM Drone System

- The Indian Army has started taking delivery of its first heterogeneous swarm Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV) system for use on the battlefield.
- This is the world's first operational high density swarming UAS (Unmanned Aerial System) induction for military applications.
- They are Supplied by an Indian start up - Bengaluru based New Space Research & Technologies.

1.3. World Organisations - Pacts and Summits

World Economic Situation and Prospectus 2023

- The United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs launched the "World Economic Situation and Prospects" report.
- It is also known as World Economy Report.
- It is to reach 1.9% in 2023 from 3% in 2022.
- India's economic growth rate as predicted by the report is 5.8% in 2023 and 6.7% in 2024

Report "Countdown to 2023"

- The World Health Organization released a 4th annual status report 'Countdown to 2023 WHO Report on global trans-fat elimination 2022'.
- It stated that 5 billion people globally remain unprotected from harmful trans-fatty acids (TFA) resulting in increasing their risk of heart disease and death.

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- It also set an elimination target year as 2023.

1.4. Eminent Persons

200th birth anniversary of Dayanand Saraswati (1824-1883)

- Dayanand Saraswati was born on 12th February 1824.
- He is a social reformer who founded Arya Samaj in 1875 to counter social inequities prevalent during the times.

Prestigious Space Foundation

- The James Webb Telescope recently received the Space Foundation Award.
- This is an infrared space telescope orbits the sun.
- The telescope was jointly developed by European Space Agency, NASA, and Canadian Space Agency.
- It is the successor of the Hubble telescope.
- This award is a prestigious award and it recognizes individuals and organizations that make breakthroughs in the space field.
- The James Webb telescope's first photo was of the SMACS 0723 galaxy cluster.

1.5. Sports and Games

National Ice Hockey Championship

- The 12th edition of the Ice Hockey Association of India (IHAI) National Ice Hockey Championship for men - 2023 organized in Leh, Ladakh.
- ITBP wins the Championship for the third consecutive time

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5th Khelo India Youth Games

- In the fifth Khelo India Youth Games, Maharashtra ranks first in the medal table with 90 medals including 31 gold.
- Madhya Pradesh is second with 59 medals including 25 gold medals and Haryana is third with 23 gold medals.

Khelo India Winter Games 2023 (KIWG)

- The third edition of the grassroot-level competition concluded on February 14 in Gulmarg, Jammu and Kashmir.
- The five-day meet featured over 1,500 athletes from 32 states, Union Territories of India, and other teams competing in 11 sports.
- Jammu and Kashmir topped the KIWG 2023 medal table with 26 golds, 25 silvers and 25 bronze.

India Open Badminton Championship 2023

- In India Open Badminton Championship, Korean An Seyoung wins Women's singles in New Delhi.
- She defeated the World No. 1 Japanese Akane Yamaguchi in the final.

1.6. Awards & Honours

Grammy Award 2023

- India's Ricky Kej won the Grammy this year for his album Divine Tides.
- His album was nominated in the Best Immersive Audio Album category.

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- Kej has become the only Indian to hold three Grammy Awards and only the fourth Indian to do so

President's Colour award - Haryana

- The union home minister presented the award on behalf of the President.
- President's Colour award was given to the Haryana Police in recognition of its exceptional service

Dadasaheb Phalke Awards

- Rishab Shetty, the actor-filmmaker of film Kantara, earned the award for the Most Promising Actor at the Dadasaheb Phalke Awards.
- Dulquer Salmaan won the award for Best Actor in a Negative Role, for his performance in the 'Chup: Revenge of the Artist'.
- SS Rajamouli's RRR won the Dadasaheb Phalke Award for the Film of The Year.

3. GEOGRAPHY

3.1 Environment and Ecology

First bird festival in Sundarbans

- The first-ever festival was organised by the Sundarbans Tiger Reserve (STR) division of the West Bengal Forest Department.
- The Bird Festival provides baseline data on Sundarbans' bird species diversity.

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- The total number of birds spotted during the exercise was 5,065.

Ladakh's first biodiversity heritage site

- Yaya Tso Lake was declared Ladakh's first biodiversity heritage site under the Biological Diversity Act.
- Lake Yaya Tso is known as a bird's paradise for its beautiful lake located at an altitude of 4,820 metres in Ladakh.

More Cheetahs transfer from South Africa

- India and South Africa have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to get over 100 cheetahs from South Africa over the next decade.
- This was confirmed through a press release by the South African country.
- As of now, the agreement has been signed with South Africa to translocate 12 cheetahs to the Kuno National Park in Madhya Pradesh.
- Seven male and five female cheetahs are expected to reach Kuno by February 15.
- Cheetah is the only large carnivore that got completely wiped out from India due to over-hunting and habitat loss.
- The last cheetah died in Koriya district of present-day Chhattisgarh in 1947 and the species was declared extinct in 1952

Save Wetlands Campaign

- Union Ministry for Environment, Forest and Climate Change launched the 'Save Wetlands Campaign' in Goa.

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- This campaign is structured on a “whole of society” approach for wetlands conservation.
- It was enabling affirmative actions for wetlands conservation at all levels of the society and involving all strata of the society.

3.2. Miscellaneous

Global Quality Infrastructure Index 2021

- India has been ranked as the fifth-best country in the world when it comes to its accreditation system according to recently released Global Quality Infrastructure Index (GQII) 2021.
- The ranking is based on the 184 economies' infrastructure quality.
- The country's overall ranking is still 10th in the GQII index.

World Happiness Index 2023

- The World Happiness Index 2023 Report will mark its tenth anniversary with this year's Globe Happiness Reflect, which uses data from international surveys to show how people rank their lives in more than 150 countries.
- In these dark times, there is a glimmer of optimism revealed by the World Happiness Index 2023. The pandemic not only caused anguish and suffering, but it also led to a rise in social assistance and charitable giving.
- Finland was named the world's happiest country for the fifth year in a row, according to the World Happiness Report.
- India ranked 136th out of 150 in the World Happiness Report 2023.

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4. ECONOMICS

4.1 Current Trends in Indian Economy

49th meeting of the GST Council

- The 49th meeting of the GST Council was held at Delhi under the chairpersonship of the Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman.
- Council has reduced the GST rate on raw or liquid jaggery from 18% to 5% if sold pre-packaged and labelled and nil if sold otherwise.
- Rates on pencil sharpeners has been cut to 12 percent from 18 percent earlier.
- Rates on tax trackers has been cut to 12 percent from 18 percent but that is subject to conditions.

Top five States receiving GST compensation

- Tamil Nadu was among the top five GST compensation receiving States during the five-year transition period from July 2017 to June 2022.
- The Goods and Services Tax (GST) was introduced on July 1, 2017.
- Tamil Nadu was the fourth highest compensation receiving State, after Maharashtra, Karnataka and Gujarat.
- Punjab stood fifth in this.

Maiden Tranche of Sovereign Green Bonds

- The first tranche of India's debut sovereign green bonds worth ₹80 were auctioned recently.

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- These bonds that bring in resources to implement such climate-related projects are called Sovereign Green Bonds.
- They are similar to government securities.
- The Sovereign Green Bonds were launched by the Reserve Bank of India.
- Two different types of bonds have been launched.
- The one Bond maturing in 2028 and the another maturing in 2033

Economic Survey 2022-2023

- India's Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman tabled in parliament the Economic Survey 2022-2023 on 31st January.
- India's GDP growth is expected to remain robust in FY23 at 7 per cent (in real terms).
- The unemployment rates are falling from 5.8 percent in 2018-19 to 4.2 per cent in 2020-21.
- The services sector is expected to grow at 9.1% in FY23, as against 8.4% (YoY) in FY22.
- India is the largest recipient of remittances in the world receiving US\$ 100 bn in 2022.
- Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) flows into the Pharma Industry has risen four times, from US \$180 million in FY19 to US \$699 million in FY22.
- As of December 2022, Forex Reserves stood at US\$ 563 bn covering 9.3 months of imports.
- As of end-November 2022, India is the sixth largest foreign exchange reserves holder in the world.

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- Total telephone subscriber base in India stands at 117.8 crore (as of Sept, 22), with 44.3 per cent of subscribers in rural India.

5. SCIENCE

5.1. Latest inventions on Science & Technology

iNCOVACC

- India launched its first intranasal Covid-19 vaccine named Incovacc.
- It is manufactured by Hyderabad-based Bharat Biotech.
- The vaccine has been approved for use as a primary as well as a heterologous (mix-and-match) booster dose in India.

Lexi ChatGPT

- India has got its first ChatGPT called "Lexi"- launched by financial technology company Velocity.
- This chatbot helps e-Commerce founders by providing them with business insights in a simplified way
- ChatGPT was made available to the public in November 2022.

Generic version of breast cancer drug

- MSN Group has launched a generic version of breast cancer drug Palbociclib in tablet form under the brand name Palborest.
- There are a few other firms that have also launched Palbociclib in capsule dosage form.

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- It is more affordable and bioequivalent to innovator tablet.

World's First Photonic-based Quantum Computer

- Canada announced a new federal investment to build and commercialise the world's first photonic-based, fault-tolerant quantum computer.
- They will develop the quantum computer which will have the potential to provide world leading capabilities to help solve complex data problems.
- It could be used in a variety of sectors such as finance, transportation, environmental modelling, and health.

Google chatbot 'Bard'

- Google is all set to launch 'Bard', a new conversational AI chatbot.
- It aimed at challenging OpenAI's ChatGPT, backed by Microsoft.
- Two years ago, Google unveiled next-generation language and conversation capabilities powered by our 'Language Model for Dialogue Applications (LaMDA)'.

First waste-to-hydrogen plant

- The country's first solid waste-to-hydrogen plant will be set up in Pune.
- The plant will be built by a private company Green Billion Limited.
- It will produce 10 tons of hydrogen daily from 350 tons of solid waste.
- The fuel from waste will be used to generate hydrogen using plasma gasification technology.

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Cargo hyperloop

- IIT Kanpur has developed an energy-efficient compressed air-based pipeline system for transporting coal and minerals.
- The cargo-based hyperloop system will address challenges such as material loss, uncertainty in delivery time and air pollution.
- The system is designed to transport coal or slurry from one point to another with compressed air as its energy source.

Kerala: First State To Use Robotic Manhole Cleaners

- Kerala uses a BANDICOOT robot to clean sewage. With this, it has become the first state to launch robotic scavengers. BANDICOOT was launched in the temple town Guruvayur. Genrobotics developed the robot.
- The main objective of developing the robot is to eliminate manual scavenging.

5.2. Space

SSLV D2

- ISRO's Small Satellite Launch Vehicle (SSLV) placed three satellites, including earth observation satellite EOS-07, in intended orbits
- EOS-07, weighing 156.3kg, has a mission life of one year.
- SSLV is capable of launching mini-micro or nano satellites (10 to 500kg mass) into 500km planar orbits.
- SSLV is a three-stage vehicle with all solid propulsion stages

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Nuclear Fission powered Spacecraft

- NASA and the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA), have unveiled plans to test nuclear-powered rockets that would fly humans to Mars.
- DARPA will develop the nuclear reactor and engine for this nuclear rocket.
- NASA hope to fly in an in-space demonstration as early as 2027.
- This mission is called as DRACO-Demonstration Rocket for Agile Cislunar Operations

World's First Cloud-Built Demo Satellite

- JANUS-1 satellite that rode on Isro's new mini-rocket SSLV-D2 and reached its orbit successfully.
- It is the world's first satellite fully conceived, designed and manufactured using an Indian company's end-to-end cloud platform.
- It is a software defined 6U technology demonstration satellite designed and built using the Antaris cloud software platform and SatOS software.

India's first hybrid rocket

- India's first hybrid sounding rocket by private players was launched from
- Pattipulam village, Chengalpattu.
- Martin Foundation, in association with Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam International
- Foundation and Space Zone India, launched the Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam Satellite Launch Vehicle Mission - 2023.

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- The rocket can be used for research in weather, atmospheric conditions and radiations.

6. NATIONAL - DIARY OF EVENTS

National Child Science Congress

- The National Council for Science and Technology operating recently organized the National Child Science Congress-2023.
- The congress was hosted by the Gujarat Council of Science City.
- It was held in Ahmedabad, Gujarat.
- The theme of the event was “Understanding Eco System for Health and Wellbeing”.
- The National Child Science Congress is being held in the country since 1993.

Budget 2023

- Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman listed seven key priorities of the Union Budget 2023.
- The seven priorities are
 - Inclusive development
 - Reaching the last mile
 - Infrastructure and investment
 - Unleashing the potential
 - Green growth

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- Youth power
- Financial sector

Agriculture Accelerator Fund

- An Agriculture Accelerator Fund will be set up to encourage agri-startups by young entrepreneurs in rural areas.
- The fund will aim at bringing innovative and affordable solutions for challenges faced by farmers.
- It will also bring in modern technologies to transform agricultural practices, and increase productivity and profitability.
- Digital public infrastructure for agriculture will be built as an open-source, open standard and interoperable platform for public good

Union Budget 2023-24 Highlights

- ❖ The rebate limit for paying income taxes is increased to Rs 7 lakh/annum.
- ❖ The income slabs under the new personal income tax regime have been revised from six to five.
- ❖ The tax exemption limit has been increased to Rs 3 lakh.
- ❖ Agriculture credit target would be raised to ₹20 lakh crore with a focus on animal husbandry and fisheries.
- ❖ PM Vishwakarma Kaushal Samman (PM VIKAS): The first-of-its-kind package assistance endeavours to improve the quality of, scale and reach of the products made by traditional artisans and crafts people.
- ❖ Pradhan Mantri PVTG Development Mission will be launched, and more teachers will be recruited for 740 Eklavya Model Residential schools.

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PM-PRANAM Scheme

- It stands for PM Programme for Restoration, Awareness, Nourishment, and Amelioration of Mother Earth.
- This scheme was launched under the GOBAR Dhan scheme.
- Under the scheme, the Government of India is planning to promote alternatives to fertilizers.
- The main objective of the scheme is to reduce the use of chemical fertilizers

Mission to eliminate Sickle Cell Anaemia

- Finance Minister announced her government's plan to launch a mission to eliminate sickle cell anaemia by 2047.
- It will entail awareness creation, universal screening of seven crore people in the age group of 0-40 years in affected tribal areas.
- In a person with sickle cell anaemia, the oxygen-carrying capacity of RBCs is affected

Amrit Dharohar Scheme

- To increase the optimal use of wetlands in the cities and to improve their biodiversity the government launched the Amrit Dharohar Scheme.
- The scheme aims to achieve sustainable ecosystem development with the help of local communities.

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Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana 4.0

- Union Finance Minister announced the launch of Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana 4.0 to skill lakhs of youth within the next three years.
- The scheme will emphasize On-job training, industry partnership, and alignment of courses with the needs of the industry.

National Data Governance Policy

- Government of India is to launch National Governance Policy.
- The policy will create an Indian Data Management Office.
- The main aim of the policy is to make the data secure and make it available to startups in the country.

MISHTI Scheme for Mangrove plantations

- Mangrove Initiative for Shoreline Habitats & Tangible Incomes', MISHTI, will be taken up for mangrove plantation along the coastline and on salt pan lands.
- The main aim of the scheme is to take up mangrove plantations along the coastline.
- The main objective of the MISHTI Scheme is to "preserve Mangrove forests".

Mahila Samman Bachat Patra

- The scheme is exclusively for women and girls and offers a deposit facility of up to INR 2 lakhs with an interest rate of 7.5%.

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- The Mahila Samman Savings Certificate offers a 7.5% interest rate, compared to 7% offered by the National Savings Certificate scheme.

Visit India Year 2023 Campaign

- Union Tourism Ministry launched the Visit India Year 2023 campaign.
- It aims to encourage inbound travel to the country which is currently chairing the G20.

20 Point Program Progress Report

- The National Statistical Office (NSO) released a report on 20 Point Program Progress.
- As per the report, only 41% of the fixed target was completed in 2022-23.
- In 2019, the scheme completed only 13% of its target.
- The Indian Government launched the 20 Point Program in 1975.
- The main objective of the program is to eradicate poverty and improve the lives of rural people using 20 points.

National Logistics Portal - Marine

- Union Minister for Ports, Shipping and Waterways Sarbananda Sonowal inaugurated the National Logistics Portal (marine) in New Delhi.
- It aims to use IT to connect all logistics community stakeholders, to improve efficiency and transparency by reducing costs and time delays and achieving easier, faster, and more competitive service offerings.

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NAMASTE scheme

- The Government of India allocated Rs 100 crores for the NAMASTE scheme in budget 2023
- NAMASTE stands for 'National Action Plan for Mechanised Sanitation Eco system'.
- The scheme aims to provide an alternate livelihood to sanitation workers.

Microsoft's Project ELLORA

- To bring 'rare' Indian languages online, Microsoft launched project ELLORA or Enabling Low Resource Languages in 2015.
- Microsoft's Project ELLORA is helping small languages like Gondi, Mundari become eloquent for the digital world.
- The researchers are mapping out resources, including printed literature, to create a dataset to train their AI model

India as a "Pioneer Investor"

- Pioneer Investor refers that an early investment made in any new sector or technology. E.g., Polymetallic nodules at the ocean bed.
- The International Seabed Authority (ISA) and the Ministry of Earth Sciences also exchanged Polymetallic Nodules exploration extension contract.

Operation Sadbhavana

- The Indian Army is organising "Operation Sadbhavana" in the Union Territory of Ladakh.

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- It includes multiple welfare activities, such as running schools and infrastructure development projects.
- The activities are aimed at helping children living in remote areas of Ladakh

India Energy Week 2023

- The 'India Energy Week 2023' held in Bengaluru from February 6 to 8.
- The Prime Minister launched the uniforms under the 'Unbottled' initiative of Indian Oil.
- These uniforms are made of recycled PET bottles.

Enhancing Circularity and Sustainability Project

- Indian Government in collaboration with UNEP is implementing a project called 'Enhancing Circularity and Sustainability' in India.
- It is a "Waste to Wealth" scheme.
- The main objective of the project is to reduce the negative impacts of the textile sector on the environment.

Rooftop Solar Programme

- The government has extended PM-KUSUM scheme till March 2026.
- Pradhan Mantri Kisan Urja Suraksha evam Utthaan Mahabhiyan (PM-KUSUM) Launched in 2019.
- It aims to adding solar capacity of 30,800 MW by 2022

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Mission Antyodaya Survey 2022-23

- Rural Development and Panchayati Raj ministry launched the Mission Antyodaya Survey 2022-23.
- It aims to assess the outcome of various development schemes in rural areas.
- A portal and a mobile application linked to the survey was also launched.

Global International Biofuel Alliance

- India launched the Global Biofuel Alliance in India Energy Week 2023 event.
- It aims to create a favourable ecosystem for promoting biofuels with key stakeholders including the US, Brazil, EU, IEA etc.

World's first living heritage university

- Visva-Bharati University will soon get the 'heritage' tag from UNESCO to become the world's first living heritage university.
- It was founded in 1921 by Rabindranath Tagore at in Shantiniketan, West Bengal

Khanan Prahari Application

- The government has launched a mobile app namely 'Khanan Prahari' and a CMSMS web portal.
- CMSMS stands for Coal Mine Surveillance and Management System.
- It allows reporting unauthorized coal mining activities.

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Indian Rice Congress 2023

- The second edition of the Indian Rice Congress was recently inaugurated at National Rice Research Institute at Cuttack, Odisha.
- The theme of the 2023 congress is “Transforming Rice Research

AMRITPEX 2023

- The India Post organized the National Philatelic Exhibition, titled ‘Amritpex 2023’ in New Delhi
- The exhibits use stamps and photographic collections to highlight India’s history, culture, art, and heritage through the years.

North India's first nuclear plant

- North India’s first nuclear power plant is coming up in Gorakhpur, Haryana.
- It will generate 2800 MW

Vibrant Villages Program

- The Union Cabinet approved the ‘Vibrant Village Programme’ for financial years 2022-23 to 2025-26.
- This is the centrally-sponsored scheme.
- The programme will cover 662 villages in the first phase.
- New job opportunities will be created to curb migration of local population and sustainable economic activities will be encouraged.

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Nagaland Orange Festival

- Nagaland is celebrating the Orange Festival for two days.
- Nagaland Fruit Festival is being organized in the state to praise the hard work of orange growers.

New capital of Andhra Pradesh

- Andhra Pradesh chief minister Jagan Mohan Reddy announced that the state capital will be shifted to Visakhapatnam.

First District to register 10,000 new MSMEs

- Ernakulam has become the first district in the state to register more than ten thousand new MSMEs.

India's largest chopper plant

- Prime Minister inaugurated the India's largest helicopter manufacturing facility at Tumakuru in Karnataka.
- PM laid the foundation stone for the unit in 2016.

Asia's first floating festival

- Gandhisagar Floating Festival, touted as Asia's first floating festival held at Mandsaur, Madhya Pradesh

Lithium Reserves in Jammu and Kashmir

- Lithium reserves have been found for the first time in the country in Jammu and Kashmir.

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- 5.9 million tonnes reserves have been found in Reasi district of Jammu and Kashmir.
- Lithium is a non-ferrous metal and is one of the key components in EV batteries.'
- Currently, India is import-dependent for many minerals like lithium, nickel and cobalt.
- Totally, 51 mineral blocks including Lithium and Gold were handed over to various state governments.
- Out of these 51 mineral blocks, 5 blocks pertain to gold and other blocks pertain to commodities like potash, molybdenum, base metals etc.

First National Metro Rail Knowledge Centre

- In New Delhi, the creation of the first National Metro Rail Knowledge Centre is underway.
- National Metro Rail Knowledge Centre will demonstrate the expansion of the metro networks and transit systems in numerous cities across India.

B20 conference

- The State of Manipur hosted the Business 20 (B20) conference.
- This is the official G20 dialogue forum for the global business community.
- The theme of the conference was 'Sustainable Growth and Development

India's first Agri chatbot

- India's first AI chatbot for the agriculture sector - Ama Krush AI launched at the farewell session of 'Krushi Odisha 2023'.

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- This chatbot will help farmers with the best agronomic practices, government schemes and loan products from more than 40 commercial and cooperative banks
- It has been built using the recently launched ChatGPT system and Bhashini, a language interpretation platform developed by IIT Madras.

Sculpture Park

- Rajasthan Chief Secretary Usha Sharma inaugurated a Sculpture Park at Bikaner House, Delhi.
- The sculpture park has a glimpse of modern and contemporary art and culture.

Portal for 'One Family, One ID'

- The Uttar Pradesh government has launched the portal for creation of 'Family ID' One Family One Identity'.
- It aims to identify families as a unit for implementing the 'one job per family' proposal.

International Biotech Conclave

- Union Minister of Science & Technology on 25 February 2023 inaugurated the 'International Biotech Conclave' in Imphal, Manipur.
- It was held along with the 22nd Congress of the International Society for Ethnopharmacology and the 10th Congress of the Society for Ethnopharmacology.

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- The theme for the conclave was "Reimagine Ethnopharmacology: Globalisation of Traditional Medicine".

Atma nirbhar Horticulture Clean Plant Programme

- An Atmanirbhar Clean Plant Program will be launched to boost availability of disease-free, quality planting material for high value horticultural crops.
- A clean plant means the plant has been tested for several things before planting.
- First, the plants are checked for pathogens.
- Second, actively growing ones are identified.
- Then tissue samples are collected from these actively growing plants.
- These tissues are fused with other plants to increase their productivity as well

Pradhan Mantri Vishwakarma Kaushal Samman

- The Pradhan Mantri Vishwakarma Kaushal Samman is announced during the Budget presentation.
- It will enable the country's artisans to improve the quality, scale, and reach of their products, integrating them with the Micro, Small and Medium-scale Enterprises (MSME) value chain.
- It aims to unlock the potential of thousands of artists and craftspeople around the nation, through the provision of skills training, technology, and the opening of credit lines to them.

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73rd foundation day of Supreme Court of India

- The Supreme Court of India hosted the 73rd anniversary of its establishment.
- This year's event saw Singapore's Chief Justice Sundaresh Menon, who is of Indian origin, as the chief guest.
- On January 28, 1950, two days after India became the Sovereign Democratic Republic, the Supreme Court of India came into being.
- The inauguration took place in the Chamber of Princes in Parliament building which also housed India's Parliament.
- The original Constitution of 1950 envisaged a Supreme Court with a Chief Justice and seven puisne judges and leaving it to Parliament to increase this number.
- Parliament increased the number of Judges from eight in 1950 to 11 in 1956, 14 in 1960, 18 in 1978, 26 in 1986, 31 in 2009 and 34 in 2019 (current strength).

Hydrogen train India

- Railway Minister announced that India.
- The hydrogen train will initially run on heritage circuits like Kalka to Shimla.
- Hydrogen trains, as the name suggests, run on hydrogen fuel cells.

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India's Milk production

- India is the highest milk producer in the world contributing twenty-four per cent of global milk production in the year 2021-22.
- This is according to production data of Food and Agriculture Organization Corporate Statistical Database (FAOSTAT).
- India has registered a fifty-one per cent increase during the last eight years during the year 2014-15 and 2021-22.
- It is increased to twenty-two crore tonne in the year 2021-22.
- The National Programme for Dairy Development was launched in February 2014 by merging three existing schemes

Digital Skills Program in India

- Reliance Jio and GSMA are proud to announce the national roll-out of their Digital Skills Program.
- It is a joint initiative under the broader GSMA Connected Women Commitment initiative.
- The program aims to provide need-based training to rural women and individuals from marginalized / low-income groups to help them make meaningful use of digital access.
- As per the GSMA's Mobile Gender Gap Report 2022, women in India are 41% less likely than men to use mobile internet.

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QR Code-based Coin Vending Machine

- Reserve Bank of India will start a pilot project to launch QR code-based coin vending machines.
- These vending machines will dispense coins against debit to the customer's account.
- This will enhance the ease of accessibility to coins.
- The machine is to be launched in 12 cities in the first phase.

Aero India 2023

- Aero India 2023, Asia's largest aero show, was inaugurated in Bengaluru by Prime Minister.
- The five-day event will see the participation of 809 companies and delegates from nearly 98 countries.
- The 14th edition of Aero India is showcasing the country as an emerging hub for manufacturing military aircraft, helicopters, military equipment, and new-age avionics.

TRIFED Aadi Mahotsav Festival

- The Tribal Affairs ministry recently launched the Aadi Mahotsav festival in New Delhi.
- The main objective of the Aadi Mahotsav festival is to promote tribal products.
- TRIFED is hosting the festival on behalf of the tribal ministry.

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- The theme of the event is “A Celebration of the Spirit of Tribal Crafts, Culture, Cuisine, and Commerce”.

Jal Jan Abhiyan

- The Ministry of Jal Shakti and the Brahma Kumari's organization will implement the Jal Jan Abhiyan.
- The main objective of the campaign is water conservation.
- During the eight-month campaign, the volunteers from the organization will conduct public awareness campaign on preserving water.

Digital Suraksha campaign

- Meta has announced its partnership with the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology commonly known as MeitY for the G20 Stay Safe Online Campaign.
- In association with the ministry, Meta has launched the #DigitalSuraksha campaign.

Kavach 2023

- The ministries of home affairs and education, along with the All-India Council for Technical Education (AICTE), launched Kavach 2023.
- It is a national level hackathon on cybersecurity.
- Kavach is being launched to identify innovative concepts and technology solutions for addressing cybersecurity challenges faced by Indian intelligence agencies.

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World's Highest Weather Station

- The world's highest altitude weather station was destroyed due to hurricane-force winds on Mount Everest.
- This weather station located at an altitude of 8,810 metres (28,904 ft); just 39 metres (128 ft) below Everest's summit.
- This one got place on Guinness World Records.
- Previously, the weather station was located on Everest's Balcony, around 400 metres lower than the new one.
- Notably, it was the first-ever terrestrial weather station that was placed above 8,000 metres.

mPassport Police App

- The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) introduced the 'mPassport Police app'.
- The application attempts to simplify and accelerate the police verification procedure for passport issuance.
- It aims to speed up this critical procedure even further.
- This app will allow quick monitoring and issuance of passports to citizens.

New pilgrim center for PRASHAD Scheme

- The Union government has identified four pilgrim centres for development under the Pilgrimage Rejuvenation and Spiritual Heritage Augmentation Drive (PRASHAD) Scheme.

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- The 4 new centres are
 - Chamundeshwari temple in Mysuru,
 - Sri Madhwa Vana in Kunjaragiri in Udupi district,
 - Papnash temple in Bidar district and
 - Sri Renuka Yallamma Temple in Saundatti in Belagavi district

Hello Ujjivan app

- Ujjivan Small Finance Bank launched Hello Ujjivan, India's first mobile banking application with 3 V's – voice, visual, vernacular-enabled features.
- It aims to provide banking access to individuals who have limited reading and writing skills.
- The app is designed to instil banking habits in Micro Banking and Rural customers who are digitally challenged.

7. INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

Congo in International Solar Alliance

- The International Solar Alliance (ISA) is an action-oriented, member-driven, collaborative platform for increased deployment of solar energy technologies.
- The Headquarters is in India with its Interim Secretariat being set up in Gurugram.
- A total of 107 countries have signed the ISA Framework Agreement.
- Out of 107 nations, 86 have signed and ratified the ISA Framework Agreement.

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India, UAE, France - Trilateral Initiative

- India, France, and the United Arab Emirates have agreed to form a partnership to work together in the fields of nuclear and solar energy.
- They will also cooperate in tackling climate change and preserving biodiversity.
- The trilateral was first discussed when the three Ministers met on the side lines of the UN General Assembly in New York in September 2022

Operation Dost

- Team of Indian responders and medical staff deployed in quake-hit Turkey under Operation Dost
- In 2021, when India was highly affected by COVID, Turkey sent two aircraft full of COVID medicines.

Saudi Arabia's First woman to space

- Saudi Arabia will send its first ever woman astronaut on a space mission later this year.
- Rayyana Barnawi will join fellow Saudi male astronaut Ali Al-Qarni on a mission to the International Space Station.
- The astronauts "will join the crew of the AX-2 space mission" and the space flight will "launch from the USA.

18th World Security Congress

- The 18th World Security Congress 2023 held in Jaipur.

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- The three-day conclave is being held jointly by the International Union of Railways (UIC) and the Railway Protection Force (RPF).
- Theme of the event is "Railway Safety Strategy: Responses and Vision for the Future".
- International Union of Railways is headquartered in Paris, France.

Millet International Initiative for Research and Awareness

- India is planning to propose the launch of a global initiative to encourage the consumption and production of millets.
- It aims to connect the millet research organisations across the world while also supporting research on millet crops.
- Indian Institute of Millet Research located in Hyderabad will provide technical support to the initiative.
- With India's insistence, the UN declared 2023 as the International Year of Millets

Sixth-largest equity market

- The UK has surpassed India as the world's sixth-largest equity market for the first time.
- The combined market capitalization of primary listings in the UK with some exceptions reached about \$3.11 trillion.

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Major Earthquake struck Turkey and Syria

- A major earthquake struck Turkey and Syria on February 6, killing more than 3,800 people and flattening thousands of buildings.
- The first earthquake measuring 7.8 on the Richter scale struck was centred in the Pazarcik district of Turkey's Kahramanmaras province.
- Less than 12 hours later, a second magnitude 7.6 tremor struck the same region.
- Magnitude 7 earthquakes are considered major.
- Turkey is in one of the world's most active earthquake zones.

International IP Index 2023

- US Chambers of Commerce has published the International Intellectual Property Index 2023 and ranked India at 42 among 55 global economies.
- While the US topped the report, UK and France come next to the US. The report shows an in-depth assessment of intellectual property rights like patent and copyright policies of each economy across the world.
- The senior VC of the US association, Patrick Kilbride proclaimed that India is now fully prepared to head the growing markets as it is transforming itself through IPdriven innovation.

Marburg virus disease outbreak

- The World Health Organization (WHO) confirmed the first-ever outbreak of Marburg disease in Equatorial Guinea.
- Marburg is highly infectious.

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- Both the Marburg virus and Ebola virus belong to the same Filoviridae family but are caused by different viruses.
- This virus leads to haemorrhagic fever in humans with a high fatality ratio of up to 88%.
- It was first detected in 1967 after simultaneous outbreaks in Marburg and Frankfurt in Germany.

8. TAMIL NADU AFFAIRS

2nd phase of 'Pudhumai Penn

- The scheme is aimed at providing financial assistance worth Rs 1,000 per month to girl students who had studied classes VI to XII at government schools.
- The CM kick-started the first phase of the scheme in September and it has been benefitting 1.16 lakh students.

Sangam Age as 800 BCE

- In the latest development, the Sangam age has been pushed to 800 BCE based on the archaeological findings.
- The new report repositions the Sangam age between 800 BCE and 300 CE.
- Even this period of history has been classified into three periods.
 - The pre-early historic period between 800 BCE to 500 BCE,
 - Mature early history between 500 BCE to the end of 1st century BCE and
 - Post early history from 1st century BCE to 300 CE

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New e-vehicles policy

- The Tamil Nadu Electric Vehicles Policy, 2023, was released by Chief Minister M.K. Stalin.
- It provides a capital subsidy for public and private charging stations and battery swapping stations.
- The State shall endeavour to increase the share of electric buses to 30% of the fleet [operated by State Transport Undertakings] by 2030."
- As on April 30, 2022, over 1.15 lakh EVs have been registered in Tamil Nadu, of which 93% were non-commercial vehicles.

Best police station in Tamil Nadu

- The Union Ministry of Home Affairs has declared the Musiri Police Station in Tiruchi district as the best police station in Tamil Nadu.
- Based on the assessment, the Aska police station in the Ganjam district of Odisha bagged the first position in the country.

Compulsory Tamil for All State Government Jobs

- The Tamil Nadu Assembly adopted a Bill that makes a Tamil language paper compulsory for recruitment to the State government services.
- It sought to include a fresh provision in the Tamil Nadu Government Servants (Conditions of Service) Act, 2016, to give effect to this mandate.
- It got retrospective effect from December 1, 2021.

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11th century Tamil inscription

- Two epigraphists have discovered inscriptions referring to a collapsed temple dating back to the Chola era near Lalgudi in Trichy district.
- It refers to an ancient temple which probably existed during the Chola period.
- They estimated that the period of the lost temple to be 11th century.

Hero stones in Thenpennai banks

- Researchers from the Tiruvannamalai district Historical Research Centre (TDHRC) dug out two hero stones from the banks of Thenpennai near Alambadi.
- They found the two stones from the Vediappan temple near Alambadi.
- The stones were rare 'Aanirai' stones of a tribal leader who died in the war.
- The inscriptions indicate that it was erected during the rule of Pallava king Singa Vishnu during his 11th year of rule.
- They could belong to 6th century AD.

Perasiriyar Anbazhagan School Development Scheme

- On February 1, Chief Minister M K Stalin - launched the Rs. 2,400 crore Perasiriyar Anbazhagan school development scheme at the inaugural function held in Katpadi government boys higher secondary school in Vellore.

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- The new scheme, named after the late DMK leader K Anbazhagan, seeks to renovate government schools, construct new classrooms and other facilities across the state.

Lab-Grown Diamonds (LGD)

- Indian Institute of Technology, Madras - has got a grant of Rs.242 crore for five years from the Union department of commerce to promote research and development on lab-grown diamonds (LGD).
- This is in line with the 2023-24 Union Budget recommendation, as announced by Union Finance Minister.
- The India Centre for Lab Grown Diamonds (InCent-LGD) at IIT Madras was identified for this prestigious project
- Lab-grown diamonds are chemically, physically, and optically the same as those found beneath the earth's surface

'Maaperum Tamil Kanavu

- The Tamil Nadu Virtual Academy (TVA) - has jointly launched a programme, 'Maaperum Tamil Kanavu' (The Big Tamil Dream), in coordination with various government departments.
- The new programme seeks to create awareness among college students on Tamil culture and heritage and kindle their interest in the language as well as make them aware of various opportunities available in different fields.

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DNA Sequencing Facility

- The state forest department - inaugurated a DNA sequencing facility at the Advanced Institute for Wildlife Conservation (AIWC) in Vandalur on February 16.
- The new facility will function under the Centre for Wildlife Forensics and wildlife histopathology laboratory at the Centre for Animal Care Sciences.
- This is the first such facility established and run by a state forest department in the entire country.

Fortified Rice

- Tamil Nadu civil supplies corporation (TNCSC), along with the food safety department - will start the distribution of fortified rice through fair price shops in Chennai to the Priority Household (PHH) and Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY) cardholders.
- The initiative was taken to combat malnutrition and chronic anaemia, especially among the underprivileged sections of society.

Sagarmala Programme

- The first ever short-haul coastal container feeder service between Chennai and Puducherry ports - will be flagged off on February 27 under the Centre's Sagarmala Programme.
- The vessel, named 'Hope Seven', will be operated twice a week.

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- The Indian government, under its Sagarmala programme, has been promoting the economic and environmental benefits of coastal shipping as compared to transport by the road mode.

Organ Donation - 2022

- Tamil Nadu – is ranked at second place in organ donation in 2022 with 156 donations.
- Telangana, which was far behind Tamil Nadu till a few years ago, is now at the top of the table with 194 donations.
- The state has been the leader in organ donations till 2018.
- Tamil Nadu was among the first states to make it mandatory for all government hospitals to declare brain deaths.