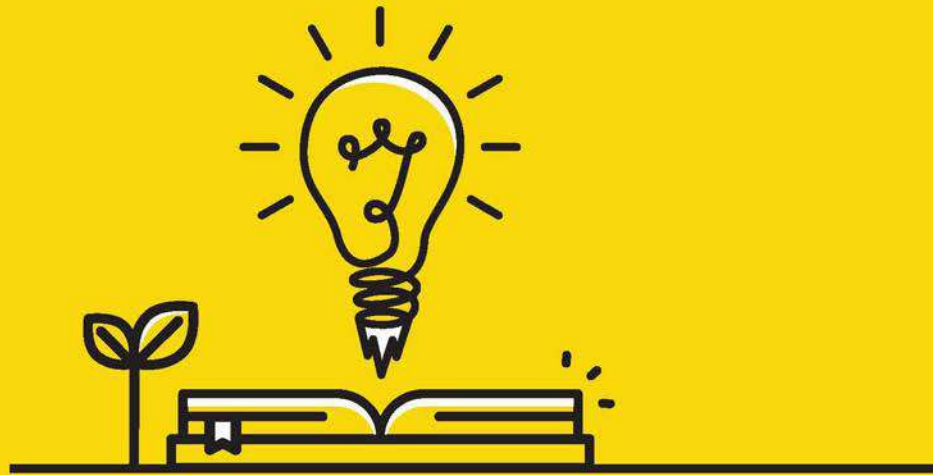




GENERAL KNOWLEDGE 2025



Manohar Pandey

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GENERAL KNOWLEDGE 2025

Manohar Pandey



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Current Affairs



Union Interim Budget 2024-25

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman presented the Union Interim Budget 2024-25 in the Lok Sabha on February 1, 2024. It is her **sixth budget presentation** as Finance Minister, and the last Budget of the current Lok Sabha. Like the previous three full Union Budgets, Interim Budget 2024 is also delivered in paperless form. The full Union Budget will be presented once the new government is elected following General Elections 2024.

Major Features

- The **capital expenditure outlay** for the next year is being **increased by 11.1% to ₹ 11,11,111 crore**, which would be 3.4% of the GDP.
- The **fiscal deficit in 2024-25** is estimated to be **5.1% of GDP**.
- A corpus of 1 lakh crore will be set-up with a **50-year interest-free loan** for the youth for the **upliftment of the 'Garib' (Poor), 'Mahilayen' (Women), 'Yuva' (Youth) and 'Annadata' (Farmer)**.
- Proposal to create a corpus of ₹ 1 lakh crore to boost **private investment in sunrise technologies**.
- **No change** was made in the **tax slab**. Tax rates for Direct and Indirect taxes to be retained.
- **Corporate tax** was reduced to 22%; Tax exemption extended for sovereign funds; **Tax exemption on sovereign funds extended** till March 2025; Scope of **tax exemption extended for startups**.
- The scope of **Ayushman Bharat scheme** will be **further expanded**; Now its benefits will also be given to **Asha and Anganwadi workers**.
- Government to launch a scheme to help deserving sections of the middle class **"living in rented houses, or slums, or chawls and unauthorized colonies"** to buy or build their own houses.
- Laid down the **strategy for 'Amrit Kaal'**. In line with **'Panchamrit' goals**, government to facilitate high and more resource-efficient economic growth; also work towards energy security.
- Promised for **stepping-up value addition in agricultural sector** and boosting farmers' income.
- Strategy to be formulated to achieve **'Atmanirbharta' for oilseeds**.
- Application of **Nano DAP on various crops** to be expanded in all agro-climatic zones.
- Government to build **two crore more houses in next five years** under PM Awas Yojana (Grameen).
- **Rooftop solarisation** to enable one crore households to obtain upto 300 units of free electricity every month.
- A **framework for rating iconic tourist centres** based on quality of facilities and services to be established.

- Government to lay **White Paper on Economy – Then and Now**.
- Target for **Lakshpati Didi** to be enhanced from **2 crore to 3 crore**.
- **Five Integrated Aquaparks** to be set-up.
- **PM Matsya Sampada Yojana** being stepped-up to enhance aquaculture productivity, double exports to ₹ 1 lakh crore and generate 55 lakh employment opportunities.
- New **Climate Resilient Scheme for Blue Economy 2.0** to be launched.
- **Comprehensive Programme for Supporting Dairy Farmers** to be formulated.
- **More Medical Colleges** to be set-up. The new medical colleges will utilise the existing hospital infrastructure under various departments.
- **Three major economic railway corridor programmes** will be implemented which include Energy, mineral and cement corridors.
- **40000 normal rail bogies** will be converted to the **Vande Bharat standards**.
- Announced **vaccination to prevent cervical cancer**. The vaccination programme will be for **girls in the age group of 9 to 14 years** for prevention of cervical cancer.
- Anganwadi Centres to be upgraded under **Saksham Anganwadi** and **Poshan 2.0** will be expedited.
- Newly designed **U-Win platform** to further strengthen **Digital India** initiative.
- The scheme of a fifty-year interest-free loan for **capital expenditure to states** will be continued this year with total outlay of **₹ 1.3 lakh crore**.
- **Coal gasification and liquefaction capacity** of 100 MT to be set-up by 2030.

‘Indian Economy : A Review – January 2024’ Report

The Finance Ministry on January 29, 2024 released ‘The Indian Economy : A Review – January 2024’ instead of ‘Economic Survey 2023-24’.

Here are some key highlights of the report :

- **Economic Growth Projection :** The Indian economy is expected to achieve a growth rate of 7% or higher for FY24, and there are predictions of sustaining this growth in FY25. This would mark four consecutive years of robust growth post-pandemic.
- **Global Challenges and Trends :** The global economy is facing challenges such as supply chain disruptions, a slowdown in trade, and the impact of Artificial Intelligence. India is seen as resilient, having overcome past shocks and is navigating these challenges effectively.
- **Shift in Global Manufacturing :** The era of hyper-globalisation in global manufacturing is ending. Governments are focusing on onshoring and friend-shoring, impacting transportation, logistics costs, and final product prices.
- **Artificial Intelligence and Energy Transition :** The emergence of Artificial Intelligence poses challenges to services trade and employment. Additionally, there is a significant focus on the energy transition, with international pressure on developing nations to reduce carbon emissions.
- **Domestic Economic Strength :** Over the last decade, India has invested significantly in infrastructure, leading to a 3.3X increase in public sector capital investment. The financial sector is healthy, with strong non-food credit growth.

NATIONAL**75th Republic Day Celebrated**

The 75th Republic Day function was organised at the Kartavya Path in New Delhi on January 26, 2024. President Droupadi Murmu with Vice- President Jagdeep Dhankhar and PM Narendra Modi were present at the function.

The celebration was graced by French President Emmanuel Macron as the Chief Guest. The twin themes of 'Viksit Bharat' and 'Bharat - Loktantra Ki Matruka' reflected throughout in this year's parade which witnessed the participation of 13000 special guests.

All India Survey on Higher Education 2021-22 Released

The Ministry of Education of Government of India released All India Survey on Higher Education (AISHE) 2021-22 on January 25, 2024.

Following are the key highlights of the survey:

- Enrolment in higher education increases to 4.33 crore in 2021-22 from 4.14 crore in 2020-21 and 3.42 crore in 2014-15.
- Female enrolment in Higher Education increases to 2.07 crore in 2021-22 from 1.57 crore in 2014-15.
- Significant 44% increase in enrolment of SC students since 2014-15.
- Female faculty/teachers have increased to 6.94 lakh in 2021-22 from 5.69 lakh in 2014-15.

'Exercise Desert Knight' Conducted

The Indian Air Force (IAF) conducted Exercise Desert Knight along with French Air and Space Force (FASF) and United Arab Emirates (UAE) Air Force over the Arabian Sea on January 23, 2024.

The IAF contingent comprised of Su-30 MKI, MiG-29, Jaguar, AWACS, C-130-J and Air to Air Refueller aircraft.

The French participation included the Rafale fighter aircraft and a Multi Role Tanker Transport while the UAE Air Force fielded the F-16. The main focus of Exercise Desert Knight was on enhancing synergy and interoperability between the three Air Forces.

Grand Pran Pratistha Ceremony of Shri Ram Lalla in Ayodhya

The Pran Pratistha ceremony of Ramlalla was held on January 22, 2023 in Ayodhya with PM Narendra Modi leading the rituals in the newly constructed magnificent temple.

The PM also unveiled the Ramlalla idol in the sanctum sanctorum at the temple designed by Arun Yogiraj. UP Governor Ananadiben Patel, CM Yogi Adityanath and RSS Chief Mohan Bhagwat also offered prayers to Ramlalla during the ceremony. People from all walks of life including industrialists Mukesh Ambani, Sunil Mittal and Anil Ambani, movie actors Amitabh Bachchan, Rajinikanth, Ranbir Kapoor, Chiranjeevi, Madhuri Dixit, Katrina Kaif, Alia Bhatt and Kangana Ranaut as well as sports personalities Sachin Tendulkar, Anil Kumble and Saina Nehwal were present at the Ram Janmabhoomi.

PM Suryodaya Yojana Announced

PM Narendra Modi on January 22, 2024 announced 'Pradhan Mantri Suryodaya Yojana' under which one crore households will get rooftop solar system. PM Modi said that the people of the country should have their own solar roof top system. This will not only reduce the electricity bill of the poor and middle class, but also make India self-reliant in energy sector.

Wings India 2024 Organised

The largest event in the Civil Aviation sector in Asia 'Wings India 2024' was held at Begumpet Airport in Hyderabad between January 18-21, 2024. It was organised by the Ministry of Civil Aviation, Government of India and FICCI.

The theme for the show was 'Connecting India to the World in Amrit Kaal : Setting the Stage for India Civil Aviation @2047'.

Several deliberations, panel discussion, B2B meetings, exhibitions, static display of flights and air shows marked the event.

India International Science Festival 2023 Organised

The 9th edition of the India International Science Festival (IISF) 2023 was held in Faridabad (Haryana) from January 17-20, 2024. The theme of the IISF 2023 was 'Science and Technology Public Outreach in Amrit Kaal'.

The IISF 2023 aimed to inspire a wide range of people and provide a platform for individuals with diverse levels of interests such as students, teachers, scientists, researchers, industry professionals, entrepreneurs and science communicators.

Boeing India Engineering and Technology Center Inaugurated

PM Narendra Modi inaugurated the new 'Boeing India Engineering and Technology Center' and launched the 'Boeing Sukanya' programme in Bengaluru on January 19, 2024.

The PM pointed out that the Boeing facility in Bengaluru strengthens the 'Make in India-Make for the World' resolution and reinforces the World's trust in India's talent.

Boeing Sukanya programme will create STEM Labs at 150 locations. The programme will also provide scholarships to women who are training to be pilots.

India, Cuba Signed MoU on Digital Public Infrastructure

The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology signed an MoU with the Ministry of Communications of the Republic of Cuba on Cooperation in the field of Sharing Successful Digital Solutions Implemented at Population Scale for Digital Transformation in New Delhi on January 19, 2024. The MoU intends to promote digital transformation through capacity-building programs, exchange of best practices, and other collaborative activities to mutually benefit the digital ecosystems of both countries.

Installation of Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana-Gramin Inaugurated

PM Narendra Modi released the first installment to one lakh beneficiaries of PM Awas Yojana - Gramin under the PM-JANMAN via video conferencing on January 15, 2024. The PM-JANMAN, with a budget of around ₹24000 crore, focuses on 11 critical interventions through 9 Ministries. The initiative aims to enhance socio-economic conditions for Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs) by providing essential facilities like housing, education, healthcare etc.

India's First Dark Sky Park Announced

Pench Tiger Reserve in Maharashtra has made history on January 14, 2024 by securing recognition as India's inaugural Dark Sky Park, marking its position as the fifth in Asia. The reserve is located in the Southern reaches of the Satpura

hills in the Seoni and Chhindwara districts in Madhya Pradesh. The hills continue in Nagpur district in Maharashtra as a separate sanctuary.

Mumbai Trans Harbour Link Inaugurated

PM Narendra Modi inaugurated the Mumbai Trans Harbour Link (MTHL) on January 12, 2024, also known as Atal Setu, marking the opening of India's longest sea bridge to date. The 21.8 km link built at a cost of over ₹17840 crore aims to reduce travel time between South Mumbai and Navi Mumbai from 120 minutes to just 20 minutes.

'Engendering Land Ports in India' Report Released

The Land Ports Authority of India (LPAI) released a report titled 'Engendering Land Ports in India' in New Delhi on January 11, 2024. The primary goal of the report is to create a framework for promoting gender-inclusive cross-border trade and tourism through land ports in the country. The report aims to foster a gender-positive environment.

India will be a \$ 30 Trillion Economy by 2047

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman has announced on January 11, 2024 that India will become a \$ 30 trillion economy by 2047. She said the country will become a \$ 5 trillion economy by 2028. India has received \$ 919 billion in foreign direct investment in 23 years till 2023. Total 65% of the investments came in the last 9 years.

Vibrant Gujarat Trade Show Organised

PM Narendra Modi inaugurated the Vibrant Gujarat Global Trade Show at Gandhinagar on January 9, 2024. A total of 100 countries were participated in

the five-day trade show as visiting countries, while 33 countries were joined as partners. Trade show focused on emerging sectors such as electric vehicles, green hydrogen, renewable energy, semiconductors and cyber-security.

Indian Railways Construction Manual, 2023 Launched

Railways Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw unveiled the Indian Railways Construction Manual, 2023 in New Delhi on January 9, 2024. The construction manual will help in many activities including Land acquisition, forest clearance, bridge design, contract management, construction of tunnels and under bridges. This manual will also help in achieving the world's fastest growing rail network.

Country's First Smart Lab Started

All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) New Delhi has started the country's first smart lab in its OPD block to provide test facilities under one roof on January 5, 2024. This facility is seamlessly integrated, offering a wide range of laboratory testing services including hematology, biochemistry, serology, endocrinology and various immunoassays. The smart lab of AIIMS gets the report of 90% on the same day the sample is received.

Ayodhya Airport Renamed

The Centre approved Ayodhya airport of Uttar Pradesh will be named 'Maharishi Valmiki International Airport, Ayodhyadham' on January 5, 2024. It reflecting the historical and cultural significance of the region.

The decision aligns with the government's vision to position Ayodhya as a key economic hub and a prominent pilgrimage destination.

Country's First All-Girl Sainik School in Mathura

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh inaugurated the first all-girl Sainik School in Vrindavan (Mathura), Uttar Pradesh on January 2, 2024. Its name is 'Sanvid Gurukulam Girls Sainik School' and capacity of nearly 870 students of this school. Affiliated with the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE), the school will provide education and training under the guidance of ex-servicemen. The session of this school will start from April 2024 and 100 such schools will be opened in the country.

ISRO Launched Maiden X-ray Polarimeter Satellite

Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) has successfully launched X-ray Polarimeter Satellite (XPoSat) aboard Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle PSLV-C58 on January 1, 2024. The satellite was launched from Satish Dhawan Space Centre in Sriharikota, Andhra Pradesh. Ten other scientific payloads were also launched along with XPoSat. Now, India has become the second country in the world after the United States to send a specialised astronomy observatory to study black holes and neutron stars in our galaxy.

16th Finance Commission Constituted

The Centre constituted 16th Finance Commission with Dr Arvind Panagariya as its Chairman on December 31, 2023. IAS officer Ritvik Ranjanam Pandey will be the secretary of the Commission.

The Commission may review the present arrangements on financing Disaster Management initiatives and make appropriate recommendations thereon. The Finance Commission has been requested to make its report

available by October 31, 2025 covering a period of five years commencing on the April 1, 2026.

Historic Tripartite Peace Accord Signed

A Tripartite Peace Accord has been signed between the Centre, the Assam Government, and the United Liberation Front of Assam (ULFA) in New Delhi on December 30, 2023. The deal is intended to bring lasting peace to the North-East region.

According to Home Minister Amit Shah that after the formation of the NDA Government in 2014, violent incidents in Assam have declined by 87%, deaths by 90% and kidnappings by 84%.

First Oral Leukemia Drug for Children Introduced

Doctors from Tata Memorial Hospital, Mumbai, introduced the first and only oral suspension of 6-mercaptopurine (6-MP) in India on December 29, 2023. This Hospital and the Advanced Centre for Training, Research and Education in Cancer (ACTREC), Navi Mumbai, collaborated with IDRS Labs, Bangalore, to develop this drug. 6-MP is a chemotherapy drug used in the treatment of Acute Lymphoblastic Leukemia (ALL), the most common type of blood cancer afflicting children.

India-Australia 2 Plus 2 Ministerial Dialogue Held

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh co-chaired the 2nd India-Australia 2 plus 2 Ministerial Dialogue with Australian Deputy PM Richard Marles in New Delhi on November 20, 2023. External Affairs Dr. S. Jaishankar and Minister for Foreign Affairs Ms Penny Wong were also present in the meeting. During the meet, the two countries discussed wide-ranging issues of mutual interest.

Digital Advertisement Policy, 2023 Approved

The Ministry of Information and Broadcasting has approved a path-breaking Digital Advertisement Policy, 2023 on November 10, 2023.

It aims to enable and empower the Central Bureau of Communication (CBC) which is the advertising wing of the Govt to undertake campaigns in the Digital Media Space.

The Policy will enable CBC to empanel agencies and organisations in the OTT and Video on Demand Space.

Gwalior and Kozhikode Joined UNESCO Creative Cities Network

Indian cities of Gwalior and Kozhikode are among the 55 new cities which have joined the UNESCO Creative Cities Network (UCCN) on November 9, 2023. Kozhikode is the first city in India to receive the prestigious title of 'City of Literature' by UNESCO. Gwalior is the second city in India to be designated as the 'City of Music' by UNESCO, after Varanasi in 2015.

Mahadev App Banned

Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology on November 5, 2023 blocked 22 illegal betting apps and websites including Mahadev Book and Reddyannaprestopro.

The Ministry took the step on the recommendation of the Enforcement Directorate (ED).

The ED recommended to the Centre for restricting illegal betting app after investigation and subsequent raids on Mahadev Book in Chhattisgarh.

World Food India 2023 Organised

PM Narendra Modi Inaugurated the 2nd edition of 'World Food India 2023' in New Delhi on November 3, 2023.

The event aims to showcase India as the 'Food Hub of the World' and celebrate 2023 as the International Year of Millets.

The PM distributed seed capital assistance to over one lakh Self Help Groups (SHGs) members in this event. This support will help the SHGs to get better value in the market through better packaging and quality manufacturing.

Indian Donors Report Released

Edelgive Hurun India Philanthropy List 2023 was released on November 1, 2023. HCL Technologies founder and chairman Shiv Nadar is India's largest philanthropist and he donates ₹ 5.6 (₹ 2042 crore) crore every day.

Shiv Nadar is followed by Wipro chief Azim Premji (donated ₹1774 crore), Mukesh Ambani and Kumar Mangalam Birla.

'Mera Yuva Bharat' Platform Launched

PM Narendra Modi launched 'Mera Yuva Bharat (MY Bharat)' platform for youth of the country on October 31, 2023 at Kartavya Path on the National Unity Day.

This momentous initiative aims to empower and uplift the country's youth. Mera Yuva Bharat (MY Bharat) serves as a 'Phygital Platform,' seamlessly blending physical and digital elements.

It includes physical activities complemented by digital connectivity, creating an engaging and comprehensive experience.

India's First Home-produced Reference Fuel Launched

Petroleum and Natural Gas Minister Hardeep Singh Puri launched India's first home-produced Reference Fuel in New Delhi on October 26, 2023.

Reference Fuel is used for developing engines and assessing their performance. Earlier, India used to exclusively import it from other nations.

Namo Shetkari Mahasanman Nidhi Yojana Launched

PM Narendra Modi launched the 'Namo Shetkari Mahasanman Nidhi Yojana' at Shirdi in Ahmednagar district of Maharashtra on October 26, 2023.

It will benefit over 86 lakh people registered under the Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi Yojana in Maharashtra. This scheme will provide an additional amount of ₹6000 per year to the beneficiaries.

Two Whole-Time Directors Mandated for Indian Banks

The RBI on October 25, 2023 introduced a crucial requirement for Indian banks, stating that they must now have a minimum of 2 whole-time directors (WTDs) on their boards.

This move aims to help banks navigate the growing complexity within the banking sector and effectively tackle emerging challenges.

Replace 'India' with 'Bharat' in Upcoming NCERT Books

The NCERT on October 24, 2023 has given its approval to replace the term 'India' with 'Bharat' in all textbooks across the country.

The idea behind this recommendation is to emphasise the historical and cultural significance of the name 'Bharat' while acknowledging the nation's rich heritage.

This change aims to provide a more nuanced and comprehensive understanding of India's historical evolution.

Gaganyaan TV-D1 Mission Launched

The Test Vehicle-D1 (TV-D1), designed for the ISRO's Gaganyaan programme, successfully took flight from Sriharikota Island in Andhra Pradesh on October 21, 2023.

The TV-D1 launch aimed to achieve several critical mission objectives, bringing India closer to realizing its dream of sending humans into space.

This Test Vehicle uses existing liquid propulsion technology and features innovations, including a throttleable and restartable L110 Vikas engine.

India's First RRTS Launched

PM Narendra Modi inaugurated the priority section of Delhi-Ghaziabad-Meerut RRTS Corridor at Sahibabad RapidX Station in Ghaziabad, Uttar Pradesh on October 20, 2023.

He also flagged off the Namo Bharat RapidX train connecting Sahibabad to Duhai Depot, marking the launch of the Regional Rapid Transit System (RRTS) in India.

With a remarkable design speed of 180 km/h, the RRTS aims to provide high-speed trains for intercity commuting every 15 minutes.

Compensation Mandatory for Sewer Deaths and Disabilities

The Supreme Court of India on October 20, 2023 has taken a strong stance on the issue of sewer deaths in the country.

The compensation amount has been set at ₹ 30 lakh for the kin of the deceased and ₹ 20 lakh for those who suffer permanent disabilities due to sewer cleaning.

Additionally, if a cleaner sustains other disabilities, they will be entitled to receive up to ₹ 10 lakh in compensation.

'Apna Chandrayaan' Web Portal Launched

The Union Minister for Education and Skill Development & Entrepreneurship Dharmendra Pradhan unveiled a web portal named 'Apna Chandrayaan' on October 17, 2023.

This web portal, developed by the NCERT under the Department of School Education & Literacy, Ministry of Education. It aims to provide activity-based support materials (quizzes, puzzles, coloring books, jigsaw puzzles) related to Mission Chandrayaan-3.

Tradable Green Credit Programme Launched

The government on October 16, 2023 launched a national Green Credit programme, incentivising eco-friendly actions through market-based mechanisms.

This programme aims to encourage positive environmental contributions through market-based incentives.

The programme promotes a competitive market-based approach for green credits to incentivize environmental actions.

'Navratna' Status to 'RITES Ltd.'

RITES Ltd, a prominent Central Public Sector Enterprise (CPSE) under the Ministry of Railways, has achieved the prestigious 'Navratna' status on October 13, 2023.

RITES Ltd. became the 16th CPSE in India to be granted this distinction. The achievement of Navratna status acknowledges its contribution to the nation's growth and development.

2023 Forbes List of India's 100 Richest

Mukesh Ambani reclaimed the No. 1 position on the 2023 Forbes list of India's 100 Richest on October 11, 2023.

The collective wealth of India's 100 Richest was flat at \$799 billion this year (2023).

Ambani is followed by Gautam Adani (\$68 billion), Shiv Nadar (\$29.3b), Savitri Jindal (\$24b), Radhakishan Damani (\$23b), Cyrus Poonawalla (\$20.7b) and Hinduja Family (\$20b).

India Re-elected as President of AIBD

India has been elected as President of Asia-Pacific Institute for Broadcasting Development (AIBD) General Conference (GC) for the 3rd successive term to lead the prestigious international organisation on October 6, 2023.

India had already served two terms as President, AIBD GC from 2018-21 and 2021-23.

AIBD, established in 1977 under the auspices of UNESCO, is a unique regional intergovernmental organisation, currently has 92 member organisations from across 44 countries.

Constitution of the 'National Turmeric Board'

The Government of India on October 4, 2023 notified the constitution of the National Turmeric Board.

The National Turmeric Board will focus on the development and growth of turmeric and turmeric products in the country.

The National Turmeric Board will provide leadership on turmeric related matters, augment the efforts, and facilitate greater coordination with Spices Board and other Government agencies in development and growth of the turmeric sector.

INTERNATIONAL

Israel to Allow Humanitarian Access

The International Court of Justice (ICJ) in a landmark decision on January 26, 2024, ordered Israel to allow humanitarian access.

The top UN court also ruled that Israel must take all measures to ensure with immediate effect that its military does not commit any acts which could fall foul of the 1948 UN Genocide Convention.

The court's 17-judge panel issued such measures, ordering Israel to take steps to limit the death and destruction caused by its military campaign, as well as to prevent and punish incitement to genocide.

19th NAM Summit Organised

The 19th Summit of the NAM (Non-Aligned Movement) was held in Kampala (Uganda) from January 15-20, 2024. The theme of the Summit was "Deepening Cooperation for Shared Global Affluence".

The summit adopted the Kampala Declaration, slamming Israeli military aggression and calling for the implementation of the UN Security Council resolution to allow humanitarian aid into the besieged Gaza Strip. The External Affairs Minister of India led the Indian delegation at the Summit.

Japan's First Moon Lander

Japan's robotic SLIM (Smart Lander for Investigating Moon) spacecraft touched down on the lunar surface on January 19, 2024.

Now, Japan joined the elite group with Russia (then the Soviet Union), the US, China and India in reaching the lunar surface.

Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency's (JAXA's) President confirmed that SLIM successfully established signals after landing, though its solar capabilities malfunctioned.

54th WEF Summit in Davos

The 54th annual meeting of the World Economic Forum was held at Davos, Switzerland from January 15-19, 2024.

The theme was 'Rebuilding Trust', emphasising the focus on exploring the opportunities enabled by the new technologies and their implications on decision-making and global partnership.

Issues related to climate change, threats from artificial intelligence, cooperation amid geopolitical fragmentation and other problems across the globe were discussed.

Ongoing conflicts like the Ukraine War, Israel-Hamas war were also be part of the agenda.

Crown Prince Frederik X became King of Denmark

Crown Prince Frederik X became the King of Denmark on January 15, 2024, succeeding his mother, Queen Margrethe II, who formally abdicated after 52 years as monarch. 83-year-old Margrethe is the first Danish monarch to voluntarily relinquish the throne in nearly 900 years. She stunned the nation when she announced her plans to step down on television on New Year's Eve. Australian-born wife of King, Mary is the first commoner to become Queen of Denmark.

'William Lai Ching-te' Elected as Taiwanese President

Taiwanese voters have chosen William Lai Ching-te as their President on January 14, 2024, marking a significant departure from China.

He is a pro-sovereignty candidate from the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) and the current Vice-President.

Lai secured an unprecedented third consecutive term for the DPP by defeating his conservative rival, Hou Yu-ih of the Kuomintang (KMT), by over 900,000 votes.

China, branding Lai as a 'dangerous separatist,' expressed anger over the election results.

Global Water Monitor Report 2023 Revealed

The Global Water Monitor report 2023 revealed on January 13, 2024 over 77 countries endured their highest average annual temperatures in the last 45 years. The unprecedented heat manifested across all seasons, influencing precipitation patterns along with water budgets.

Study noted that global water cycle last year was affected by an emerging El Niño phase shifting tropical rainfall zones.

Despite hotter and drier air, annual soil moisture levels increased by 3.5% above 1998-2005 averages due to multiple possible factors like evolving farm practices.

South Korea Banned Trade of Dog Meat

South Korea's Parliament made history by passing a ground-breaking bill that bans the eating and selling of dog meat on January 11, 2024.

This move marks the end of a centuries-old practice that has been increasingly criticised in the face of growing support for animal welfare.

Proposed by the ruling party and enjoying rare bipartisan support, the bill passed with an overwhelming majority of 208 votes and two abstentions in the single-chamber Parliament.

Gabriel Attal Appointed PM of France

President Emmanuel Macron appointed Gabriel Attal as France's new Prime Minister on January 9, 2024. At 34, Attal is the youngest PM in French history and the first openly gay official to hold this prestigious position. Attal's appointment comes in the midst of a Cabinet reshuffle initiated by Macron to breathe new life into his government.

Sheikh Hasina Became PM of Bangladesh

Sheikh Hasina has been elected the PM of Bangladesh for the fifth time on January 9, 2024. Bangladesh's PM Sheikh Hasina has been in power since 2009 and she belongs to Awami League party.

Hasina's party Awami League has secured 223 seats in the 300-seat Parliament. The opposition party, Bangladesh Nationalist Party has boycotted the elections.

Bloomberg Billionaires Index 2024 Released

The Bloomberg Billionaires Index released the list of the world's richest people on January 9, 2024. According to this list, Elon Musk is the richest person in the world and his total wealth is 219 billion dollars.

In second place is Jeff Bezos with a net worth of \$170 billion and Bernard Arnould of France is the third richest person in the world with a net worth of \$167 billion. Mukesh Ambani whose net worth is \$97 billion, is the 12th richest person in the world and Gautam Adani is at 14th place in this list.

Leopard Became National Symbol of Kyrgyzstan

Central Asian country, Kyrgyzstan, has declared the snow leopard as the national symbol on January 8, 2024. President Zhaparov's order highlights

the important role of snow leopards in maintaining ecological balance. The loss of these magnificent creatures in the wild poses a significant threat to the delicate balance of mountain ecosystems. The Global Snow Leopard Forum was hosted by Kyrgyzstan in the year 2013.

Javier Milei is the New President of Argentina

Javier Milei has been sworn as the new President of Argentina on December 10, 2023 in Buenos Aires. Ukrainian President Vladimir Zelensky participated in his swearing-in ceremony. Javier Milei has defeated Sergio Massa in the presidential election. Javier Milei replaces President Alberto Fernandez.

China First Country to Accord Diplomatic Status to Taliban

China has become the first country to accord diplomatic status to a Taliban nominated official, Bilal Karimi, as Afghanistan's Ambassador to Beijing on December 6, 2023. In this manner, it has formally recognised the legitimacy of the Taliban-run government in Kabul. No other country has formally recognised the Taliban government, criticising it for human rights violations and oppression of women.

Mohamed Muizzu sworn-in as 8th President of Maldives

Dr. Mohamed Muizzu has been sworn in as the eighth President of the Republic of Maldives on November 17, 2023.

Vice President Hussain Mohamed Latheef also took an oath of office. Their oath was administered by Chief Justice of the Maldives, Ahmed Muthasim Adnan. Dr. Muizzu had defeated outgoing President Ibrahim Mohamed Solih in the runoff elections held in September 2023.

US Approved First Chikungunya Vaccine

The US FDA has approved the world's first Chikungunya vaccine, 'Ixchiq' developed by Valneva on November 13, 2023. Ixchiq, administered in a single dose, contains a live, weakened version of the chikungunya virus, following the standard approach for vaccines.

The virus, causing fever and severe joint pain, is commonly found in tropical and subtropical regions of Africa, Southeast Asia, and parts of the Americas.

Portugal PM Resigned

Prime Minister of Portugal Antonio Costa has resigned from his post on November 9, 2023.

He has resigned after the allegations of corruption against him. This turn of events happened after the arrest of his Chief of Staff Victor Escaria. Antonio Costa became the Prime Minister of Portugal in the year 2015.

Oldest Black Hole Discovered

In a groundbreaking discovery on November 7, 2023, researchers have identified the most ancient black hole ever detected.

This celestial behemoth came into existence a mere 470 million years after the birth of the universe during the Big Bang. The discovery was made possible through the combined efforts of NASA's James Webb Space Telescope and the Chandra X-Ray Observatory.

Global TB Report 2023 Unveiled

The World Health Organisation (WHO) released its Global TB Report 2023 on November 7, 2023.

The WHO has acknowledged India's success in declining TB incidence by 16 % and TB mortality reduction by 18 % in the year 2022 since 2015.

India has made tremendous progress in improving case detection and reversed the impact of COVID-19 on the TB programme.

Philippines Announced Exit from China's Belt & Road Initiatives

The Philippines has announced its exit from China's Belt and Road Initiatives on November 4, 2023.

The full termination of major infrastructure projects has been announced by the Philippine Department of Transportation in favour of competitors from the West and Japan.

This has led to a new low point in Philippine-China relations, marking a drastic reversal from the six years of warm engagement during the pro-Beijing Rodrigo Duterte presidency.

Israel-Hamas Conflict

As on October 25, 2023 at least 6546 people have been killed in Israel-Hamas war. The armed conflict between Hamas-led Palestinian militant groups and Israel began on October 7, 2023.

The conflict began on the morning of the Shemini Atzeret Jewish holiday, exactly 50 years after the start of the 1973 Yom Kippur War.

After the Arab- Israeli war which was fought in 1948, this Israel Vs Palestine Conflict is the first direct Israel Gaza Conflict which is being fought within Israel's boundaries.

Sultan Ibrahim will be 17th King of Malaysia

Malaysia has officially announced on October 29, 2023 that its next and 17th king will be Sultan Ibrahim Iskandar from the southern state of Johor.

The appointment of Ibrahim Iskandar, who will replace King Al-Sultan

Abdullah in this post, will be effective from January 31, 2024. In Malaysia the king serves as the head of Islam and commander-in-chief of its armed forces.

Death Penalty to 8 Indians in Qatar

A lower court in Qatar has sentenced former eight Indian marines to death penalty on October 27, 2023.

These former Indian naval officer worked in 'Dahra Global Technologies and Consulting Services' of Qatar.

According to Al Jazeera's report, these eight former officers of the Indian Navy are accused of spying on the submarine program for Israel.

Sri Lanka Announced Free Visas

Sri Lanka has taken a significant step by waiving visa fees for tourists from seven countries, including India on October 24, 2023. This policy will be in effect until March 31, 2024.

The other six countries are China, Russia, Thailand, Indonesia, Malaysia, and Japan. This move aims to attract more visitors and help the country recover from recent economic challenges.

South Korea, US and Japan Hold Joint Aerial Drills

South Korea, the United States, and Japan conducted their first-ever joint aerial exercises on October 22, 2023.

It aimed at bolstering defence cooperation and preparedness against the increasing missile and nuclear threats posed by North Korea.

The drills included a US B-52 bomber capable of carrying nuclear weapons and were held in the skies over the waters south of the Korean Peninsula.

Antarctica's Melting Ice Shelves Raise Concern

A study published in the journal of Science Advances on October 15, 2023,

has shed light on the alarming state of Antarctica's ice shelves.

The research reveals that 71 out of the 162 ice shelves surrounding Antarctica have released staggering 7.5 trillion metric tonnes of meltwater into the oceans from 1997 to 2021.

The study shows a clear divide between ice shelves on the western and eastern sides of Antarctica.

Global Hunger Index 2023 Released

India has been placed 111th out of 125 countries in the Global Hunger Index (GHI) 2023 on October 12, 2023, marking a decline from its 107th position in 2022.

According to the GHI 2023 report, Belarus, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Chile, China are among the top ranked countries (i.e., low level of hunger) and Yemen, Madagascar, Central African Republic are the bottom.

Kuwait to Boost Fossil Fuel Production

Kuwait's oil minister unveiled a bold strategy aimed at enhancing the country's fossil fuel production capabilities on October 9, 2023.

This strategy also involves preparations for the Durra gas field, which is jointly shared with Saudi Arabia, amidst a dispute with Iran over ownership claims.

Largest Hindu Temple in New Jersey

The largest Hindu temple created by Pramukh Swami Maharaj, BAPS Swaminarayan Akshardham was inaugurated on October 8, 2023, in Robbinsville, New Jersey (USA).

The temple spans an impressive 255 feet in length, 345 feet in width, and 191 feet in height, covering an expansive 183 acres.

EU Approved New Standard to Fight Greenwashing

Members of European Parliament (MEPs) on October 7, 2023 adopted a new voluntary standard for the use of a "European Green Bond" label, the first of its kind in the world.

The regulation lays down uniform standards for issuers who wish to use the designation 'European Green Bond' (EuGB) for the marketing of their bond. The standards will enable investors to direct their money more confidently towards more sustainable technologies and businesses.

THE World University Rankings 2024 Released

The Times Higher Education (THE) released the 20th edition of the World University Rankings on October 1, 2023. The University of Oxford tops the ranking for the eighth year in a row. The IISc Bangalore has been listed at the top among Indian universities, and is ranked between 201-250 in the overall list.

SPORTS AND GAMES

Cricket

India-Afghanistan T20 Series 2024

India hosted Afghanistan's cricket team for a 3-match T20 series from January 11-17, 2024. This was the first multi-match white-ball series between these two nations.

India won the series by the score of 3-0. India won the first two matches by a margin of 6-6 wickets, while the third match was a tie which India won after the super over.

Indian allrounder Shivam Dube was adjudged as the 'Player of the Series'.

ICC World Cup 2023

The 13th edition of ICC Men's Cricket World Cup was hosted by India, from October 5 to November 19, 2023. Australia defeated India by 6 wickets in the final to win the title. Australia have won this title for the sixth time. Indian cricketer Virat Kohli won the 'Player of the Tournament' award. It was the first men's Cricket World Cup which India hosted solely.

Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy 2023

Punjab clinch maiden Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy title with 20-run win over Baroda on November 6, 2023. Abhishek Sharma (Punjab) won Player of the Series in this tournament. It was the sixteenth edition of the Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy, a Twenty20 cricket competition that was held in India.

Irani Cup 2023-24

The Rest of India beat Saurashtra to win the Irani Cup 2023-24 at the Saurashtra Cricket Association (SCA) stadium in Rajkot (Gujarat) on October 3, 2023. Rest of India defeated Saurashtra by 175 runs to win their 31st Irani Cup title. Saurabh Kumar (Rest of India) was named as the 'Player of the Match'. The Irani Cup 2023-24 was the 60th edition of the Irani Cup.

Multi-sport Event

37th National Games 2023

The 37th National Games of India were held from October 25 to November 9, 2023 in the state of Goa. Maharashtra has continued its dominance in National Games from its beginning and retained its first position. Maharashtra has bagged 228 medals including 80 gold.

Services Sport Control Board stood at second position in medal tally with a total of 126 medals including 66 Gold medals.

While Haryana stood at third position with a total of 192 medals including 62 gold medals. Best Woman Athlete Trophy was given to 'Pranati Naik' and 'Sanyukta Kate' while Best Man Athlete Trophy was given to 'Shrihari Natraj'.

Asian Games 2023

The 19th Asian Games were held in Hangzhou (China) from September 23 to October 8, 2023.

India finished the Asian Games on a high note in the medal tally (4th position), with an unprecedented overall of 107 medals (28 gold, 38 silver and 41 bronze). China has topped the medals tally with total 382 medals (200 gold, 111 silver and 71 bronze).

Japan finished second (186 medals), while Republic of Korea finished third (190 medals).

Asian Para Games 2022

The Asian Para Games 2022 for Asian athletes with disabilities was held in Hangzhou (China) from Oct 22-28, 2023.

The official emblem of the Asian Para Games 2022 was "Ever Forward". While the official motto of Asian Para Games 2022 was "Hearts meet, Dreams shine".

Top-10 in Medals Tally

Country	G	S	B	Total
China	214	167	140	521
Iran	44	46	41	131
Japan	42	49	59	150
South Korea	30	33	40	103
India	29	31	51	111

Badminton

India Open 2024

The India Open badminton tournament 2024 took place at the KD Jadhav Indoor Stadium (New Delhi) from January 16-21, 2024.

The winners list is as follows

- **Men's Singles** : Shi Yu Qi (China)
- **Women's Singles** : Tai Tzu Ying (Taipei)
- **Men's Doubles** : Kang Min Hyuk/Seo Seung Jae (South Korea)
- **Women's Doubles** : D. Puavaranukroh/S. Taerattanachai (Thailand)
- **Mixed Doubles** : Mayu Matsumoto/Wakana Nagahara (Japan)

Abu Dhabi Masters 2023

The Abu Dhabi Masters badminton tournament 2023 took place in Abu Dhabi (UAE) from October 17 to 22, 2023.

16-year-old Unnati Hooda (India) defeated the 20-year-old Samiya Imad Farooqui (India) in Women's singles and it is her 2nd BWF Super 100 World Tour title.

Mads Christophersen of Denmark won Men's singles in Abu Dhabi Masters 2023.

Athletics

Chicago Marathon 2023

Kenya's Kelvin Kiptum shattered the men's world record, clocking a time of two hours and 35 seconds, to claim victory at the Chicago Marathon on October 8, 2023.

The 30-year-old Ethiopian-born runner and Dutch sensation clinched the Chicago Marathon women's title in an unofficial time of two hours, 13 minutes and 44 seconds.

Hockey

Sultan of Johor Cup 2023

The Indian junior men's hockey team secured the bronze medal at the Sultan of Johor Cup 2023, in Johor, Malaysia on November 6, 2023.

Germany have lifted the Sultan of Johor Cup title for a second time after an 11 year wait by beat Australia 3-1 in a penalty shootout.

The junior men's hockey team of India had previously won the prestigious Johor Bahru Cup twice in 2013 and 2014.

Women's Asian Champions Trophy 2023

The seventh edition of the Women's Asian Champions Trophy in hockey, was held in Ranchi (Jharkhand) from October 27 to November 5, 2023.

India beat Japan 4-0 in the final to win the title. China beat South Korea 2-1 to secure the third place.

It was India's second Asian Champions Trophy title, with the first one coming in 2016.

Football

Spanish Super Cup 2024

Real Madrid defeated by Barcelona by 4-1 in the Spanish Super Cup final that was played on January 14, 2024.

It took place in Riyadh (Saudi Arabia). Vinicius Junior was the hero of the game and he scored three goals (a hat-trick) for Real Madrid.

Barcelona scored one goal which was scored by Robert Lewandowski.

Table Tennis

Paris Masters 2023

The Paris Masters tennis tournament 2023 was held in Paris (France) from October 30 to November 5, 2023.