National and International Weekly Current Affairs 04 to 10 December 2023

National News

Centre approves fourth phase roll-out of GIAN scheme

Context

The Education Ministry is gearing up to restart the fourth phase of the **Global Initiative of Academic Networks (GIAN)**

About GIAN
- Global Initiative of Academic Networks (GIAN) in **Higher Education was launched in 2015.**
- It is a program of the Ministry **of Human Resource and Development.**
- GIAN taps **scientists and entrepreneurs** for higher education collaboration in India.
  - **Goal:** Enhance academic resources, expedite quality reforms.
  - Focus on strengthening India's **scientific and technological capabilities.**

RS passes Post Office Bill

Context

The Rajya Sabha passed the Post Office Bill , which repeals and replaces the **Post Office Act of 1898.**

Key points

- The bill will ensure the **effective functioning of the postal department** as a messenger service and as a provider of banking facilities.
- **Section 9 o**f the Bill gives the power to intercept, open or detain any item or deliver item to customs authority by the post office officials.
- The provisions **empowering any officer to intercept, open or detain any postal item** in the interest of the security of the State is also a concern that giving such a free hand to officers will harm the right to privacy.

Maharashtra State News

40 thousand years old stone tools found

Context:
- Ongoing 10-year research on Katal Shilp Konkan in Ratnagiri reveals stone weapons in Malvan, Rajapur, Ratnagiri from **Mid-Paleolithic to Mesolithic era (40 to 10k BC).**

Key Points:
- According to the **changes in stone tools over time**, their **shapes, methods, and**

techniques of manufacture are determined by their periods.
- With the help of these stones, the Early man started **hunting, cleaning the meat of dead animals, tearing etc.**
- The **stone carvings** of Konkan are evidence of the approximate number of years that **human habitation existed here.**
- Stone tools from the **Middle Paleolithic to Mesolithic periods** found in the carving research provide insight into the evolution of tools and approximate **human habitation duration in Konkan.**

President Murmu redflags AI misuse to create deep fakes

Context:

- **President Droupadi Murmu** red-flagged the **misuse of artificial intelligence (AI)** for creating deep fakes and emphasized on the need to channelise technology for betterment of humanity.
- **Deep Fakes are a type of artificial intelligence (AI)** that **uses machine learning t**o create synthetic media, such as videos, images, and audio.
- Deepfakes **use AI to morph videos and images** of people to impact their reputation.
- Deep Fakes are **created by using a technique called deep learning.**

Mahaparinirvana Divas

Context:

- On the occasion of **Babasaheb Ambedkar's 66th death anniversary i.e. Mahaparinirvana Day**, Mumbai Traffic Police has issued traffic restrictions in Dadar
- It is done in view that a sea of people will flow to pay homage to Babasaheb and will visit **Chaityabhoomi** in Dadar.
- Mahaparinirvan Divas is observed on **December 6th** every year
- He was a prominent **Indian jurist, economist, social reformer, and political leader.**
- He was instrumental in India's constitution and advocated for the rights of Dalits and other marginalized communities.

PM Modi to attend Navy Day function in Sindhudurg

Context:

- **PM Modi** visited **Sindhudurg district** to **attend Navy Day celebrations**, **marking victory of Indian Navy in 1971 war.**
- He will **also unveil a statue of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj.**

About:

- Sindhudurg is a coastal district in the southwestern part of Maharashtra.
- It is the southernmost district of the state, bordering Goa.
- The coastline of Sindhudurg is about 120 kilometers long.
- Sindhudurg has been chosen as the venue for Navy Day celebrations this year to celebrate the **350th year of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj's coronation**; Shivaji had his own navy and Sindhudurg was one of the **best sea forts.**

Did you Know?

- **December 4 is celebrated as Navy Day**

It marks the **victory of the Indian Navy during 1971 India-Pak war.**

46.6% year-on-year drop in water storage
Context:
As per report:

- **Water storage in 11 irrigation projects** in Marathwada has **decreased by 46.6%** compared to the previous year,
- **Insufficient rainfall** this year has resulted in a significant decline in water storage
- It is **currently standing at 50.5%,** in contrast to the 97.14% recorded last year

Indian Navy Day

Context:

- **Indian Navy Day** is celebrated on **December 4th** every year to commemorate the Indian Navy's successful attack on the Karachi harbour during the Indo-Pakistan War of 1971.
- This operation was called as **Operation Trident**
- This day is also an **occasion to recognise the sacrifices made by the Indian Navy** in protecting the country's maritime borders.
- Theme 2023: **"Operational Efficiency, Readiness, and Mission Accomplishment in the Maritime Domain"**

Did you Know?

- The Indian Navy is known as the fourth largest navy in the world

MH to set up welfare board for drivers
Context:

- MH govt will set up a **welfare board for auto, and taxi drivers and owners.**
- The **welfare board will provide social security, health insurance, and other facilities**
- The board will take up the **issue of pension for drivers, health facilities, and insurance plans.**
- The board will **also work on a plan to provide auto rickshaws at affordable prices for women auto drivers and scholarships for their children.**

Women harassment cases increased in MH

Context:

As per data:

- **MH topped the country over cases registered regarding online bullying and stalking of women and children in 2022.**
- The state **also tops** when it comes to the **cases of voyeurism.**
- The state **registered maximum cases in the category of "offenses related to religion"** and **cases against people for "deterring a public servant from performing duty".**
- It also saw the **highest cases of robberies, thefts and motor vehicle thefts.**

IIT-B sets up 'Recharge Zone' for students
Context:

- **IIT-Bombay's Student Wellness Centre (SWC) has launched a 'Recharge Zone' to help students relieve stress during** the **high-pressure placement season.**
- The zone **offers various stress-relief activities** such as **foot spas, pet therapy, art therapy, and yoga.**
- The initiative **aims to provide a holistic approach to counseling and support students** during the ups and downs of the placement process.
- The **services are provided free of cost** and have received positive feedback from students and faculty alike.

PM Modi unveils statue of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj in MH
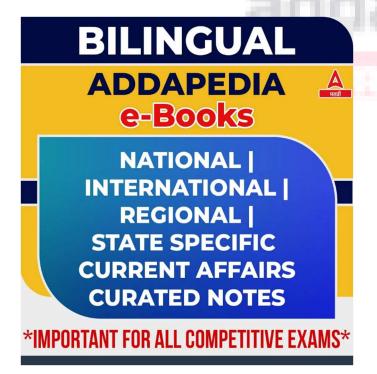
Context:

- **PM Modi unveiled the statue of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj at Rajkot Fort in Sindhudurg** district of Maharashtra.
- It paid **homage to the rich maritime heritage of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj** and **his construction of coastal and sea forts.**
- **PM Modi also attended the Navy Day 2023 celebrations in Sindhudurg** and emphasized the importance of strength in the sea for any country.

City crime rate down 14%, ranks 8th in India: NCRB

Context:

As per NCRB

- Nagpur has **reported a decline in cognizable offenses in 2022** as compared to 2021 and 2020.
- The Nagpur city police registered 19,250 cases in 2020, 22,302 in 2021 and 19,167 in 2022, which **amounts to a 14% drop**.
- In **2020, Nagpur was ranked second** in India **after** Patna as far as the crime rate is concerned.

Zero prescription policy to be implemented in MH

Context:

- The MH government announced a new initiative called the **"Zero Prescription Policy"** in 2023
- It aims to improve access to essential medicines for citizens.
- It also aims to ensure that all patients receive necessary medications directly from designated public hospitals without needing prescriptions from private doctors.

Memorial of Maharaja Yashwantrao Holkar

Context:

- **The Minister of Skill Employment Entrepreneurship and Innovation Department has assured** to take the **responsibility of erecting a memorial to Maharaja Yashwantrao Holkar** on behalf of the state government in Mumbai.
- The **248th birth anniversary** of Maharaja Yashwantrao Holkar was celebrated.

About Maharaja Yashwantrao Holkar

- Maharaja Yashwantrao Holkar was the **sixth Holkar Maharaja of Indore.**
- He was a skilled military leader and played a crucial role in shaping the **Maratha Confederacy.**
- Historians call him **"India's Napoleon".**

PM Modi announced special scheme for coastal areas

Context:

- On the **occasion of Indian Navy Day**, PM Modi announced special schemes for Coastal areas such as Ratnagiri, Devgad, Malvan etc
- He said that the **central government has made a special 'Mishti' scheme** (Mangrove Initiative for Shoreline Habitats & Tangible Incomes) for this
- **Priority** is to **save residential areas along the coast**.
- Also emphasis will be laid on **increasing the area of mangroves.**
- The Mishti scheme will be implemented over a **distance of 540 square km**.
- In this, **mangroves will be developed in 11 states and 2 Union Territories**.
- **Konkan** is **also involved** in this.

Maharashtra Universities announce free education for Transgender students

Context:

- As suggested by the State Gov, Public universities in Maharashtra have agreed to **provide free education to students from transgender community**.
- Accordingly, such students will get free education in these varsities and allied colleges.
- Higher and Technical Education Minister **Chandrakant Patil** asked the varsities to bear the entire fees of transgender students from their funds.

Did you know?

The **National Education Policy (NEP) 2020** has two policy interventions for transgender students:

- **Gender Inclusion Fund (GIF):** This fund is for girls and transgender students to improve the quality of education for them.
- **Socio-Economically Disadvantaged Groups (SEDGs):** This group includes gender identities, such as transgender individuals.

Crimes against women is less

Context:

- Among cities, Mumbai, however, continues to have low incidence for crimes on women and children.
- Though the number of offenses shows a gradual rise over three years, it is **ranked 12th on crime** rate—number of offenses per lakh people— involving offenses against women and 16th for the rate involving children.

Maharashtra dengue cases doubled

Context

- **Dengue cases in Maharashtra have doubled,** making it the **second highest contributor** to **dengue cases in India.**
- The state's d**engue cases have surpassed malaria cases**.
- Urban corporations in **Mumbai, Nagpur, Nashik, Pune, and Thane are the main contributors,** with an increase observed in rural areas
- **Factors** such as **urbanization, crowded living conditions, subpar waste management, and lack of robust public health infrastructure** contribute to the breeding of dengue-carrying mosquitoes

Mylab's multi-drug Resistance TB Test

Context:

- In a **significant stride towards eradicating tuberculosis (TB) the National TB Elimination Program has incorporated Pune based Mylab's multi drug resistance detection test.**
- This **detection kit** will further efforts to **eliminate TB by 2025.**
- **Recognised as the country's first multidrug-resistant TB test**, it is **now integrated into the Ni-kshay portal.**

Modi to rename Navy ranks "in line with Indian traditions

Context:

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday (Dec 4) announced that the Indian Navy will now 'Indianise' the **ranks for personnel below officer (PBOR)** while senior officers will don epaulettes highlighting the **"heritage and legacy"** of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj - founder of the Maratha empire.
- PM Modi made the groundbreaking announcement during his **Navy Day address at Sindhudurg in Maharashtra.**

Key Points:

- The PBOR ranks that will be renamed are Master Chief Petty Officer Ist Class, Master Chief Petty Officer IInd Class, Chief Petty Officer, Petty Officer, Leading Seaman, Seaman Ist Class and Seaman IInd Class.
- Modi underlined the Maratha king's foresight in recognising the importance of naval capabilities for any nation.
- He cited his words that those who controlled the seas held the ultimate power, and **pointed out how Chhatrapati Shivaji had built one of the most powerful navies in the world.**

Did you know?

- Last year, while commissioning India's first indigenous aircraft carrier INS Vikrant, PM Modi unveiled the **new naval ensign which**

carries the seal of Shivaji, replacing the St George's cross, used earlier.

Govt to bring Betting,Gaming in 28% GST slab

Key Points:

- Maharashtra Deputy CM Ajit Pawar introduces a **bill for amending GST rates in online gaming, betting, casinos, horse racing, and lottery.**
- The proposed amendment aims to place these activities under the highest GST bracket of **28 percent.**
- The amendment bill targets changes in the Maharashtra **Goods and Services Tax Act, 2017.**
- The amendment seeks to regulate taxation for specified forms of entertainment and gaming in the state.

MH 'most corrupt' for 3rd year in a row

Context:

As per the report:

- **Maharashtra** recorded the highest number of **corruption cases** in the country in 2022, with a conviction rate of **8.2%** and pendency in courts as high as 94%.
- The Maharashtra Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB) has set up an app and helpline number for complainants.
- NCRB report shows that only two persons were removed from service and six awarded jail or major punishment.

MH clocks 8% of Maoist crimes

Context:

As per report:

- The **year 2022 shows that Maoist violence in India** is **highly concentrated in Chhattisgarh and Maharashtra**
- Maharashtra is **second in the list**, but with only **8% cases of the total Maoist crimes (298)** in India registered here.
- **Chattisgarh tops with 73%** of the crimes committed by the rebels in India registered in this state.
- The NCRB data also underlined the fact that **six states** in India; **Chhattisgarh, Andhra Pradesh, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh,**

Maharashtra and Telangana, **have recorded various types of Maoists crimes.**

Environmental protection act violations surge in MH

Context:

As per report of NCRB,

- MH has seen the highest number (198) of cases being registered under the Environment Protection Act, 1986 (EPA) in 2022.
- EPA, 1986 deals with protecting and improving the quality of the environment by preventing, controlling and abating environmental pollution.

Lezim Dance

Context:

- **Lezim is** a **vibrant and energetic folk dance** of Maharashtra
- It is t**raditionally performed by women,** though men and children also participate in some variations.
- The dance is characterized by its rhythmic footwork and the **use of metal plates (tal) held in the hands.**
- The origins of Lezim are unclear, but it is believed to have originated in the rural areas of Maharashtra
- There are several variations of Lezim, some popular variations include:
  1. **Dholki Lezim:** This variation features Dholki as the primary instrument and is often performed in rural areas.
  2. **Tasha Lezim:** This variation features Tasha as the primary instrument and is known for its energetic and powerful sound.
  3. **Khadi Lezim:** This variation is performed with wooden sticks instead of metal plates.

State News

SC directs Bihar govt. to remove encroachments near the Ganga

Context

- The Supreme Court has ordered the Bihar government to clear **unauthorized constructions** from the floodplains of the Ganga, especially in and around Patna.

- The State shall also ensure **no further construction** takes place

Key impacts

- Illegal constructions on Ganga's floodplain produce waste, noise, and sewage.
- Unauthorized structures harm biodiversity and **threaten dolphins, a Schedule I species.**
- Permanent encroachments pose an environmental threat to the **Ganga's habitat.**
- Deleterious impacts on biodiversity and dolphin survival are observed.
- **The Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972,** designates dolphins as Schedule I species.
- Urgent action is needed to address the destructive consequences of these unauthorized activities.

200 million tons of dust in the world every year

Context:

- **Every year, 200 crore tonnes of dust** and **sand are entering the atmosphere** worldwide.
- About **25 percent of the total incidence** of dust and sand is d**ue to excessive human intervention in the environment**.
- The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations **(FAO)** has said that the **risk of large-scale infertility of agricultural land has increased**
- As per a 2021 **United Nations Economic and Social Commission report,** more than **500 million people in India** and about **80 percent** of the population in Turkmenistan, Pakistan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Iran face dust and sandstorms and degraded air quality

Revanth sworn in as Telangana CM

Context

- **Anumula Revanth Reddy** was sworn in as the **first Congress Chief Minister of Telangana**
- After the win he vowed to revive a tradition of inviting the public into the halls of power to present their grievances directly to him.
- He immediately signed his first file, to implement the **six welfares 'guarantees'** that headlined the Congress' poll manifesto.

114 seats, migrant quota cleared for J&K Assembly

Context

The Lok Sabha passed the **Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation (Amendment) Bill, 2023,** and **the Jammu and Kashmir Reservation (Amendment) Bill, 2023,** the former seeking to reserve seats for **"Kashmiri migrants**, people displaced from Pakistan-occupied Kashmir [PoK] and Scheduled Tribes"** in the yet-to-be constituted **114-seat J&K Assembly.**

Key points

- The **reservation of seats for Kashmiri migrants,** who were displaced from their own homes in the 1990s, will ensure that the voice of the community is heard "loud and clear in the J&K Assembly".
- The **Reorganisation Bill increases the total number of seats in the J&K Assembly from 107 to 114**, with reservation of nine seats for the **Scheduled Tribes** for the first time.
- It also empowers the **Lieutenant-Governor to nominate three members in the Assembly** — two from the Kashmiri migrant community including one woman, and the third member being a representative of people from PoK who took refuge in India following the wars with Pakistan in **1947, 1965 and 1971.**

International News

Visa-free entry to Indian citizens

Context

- **Malaysia** has become the latest country to extend the advantage of visa-free travel to Indian citizens.
- The facility will be extended to Indian travellers till December 31, 2024 and will be **valid for 30 days** from the date of entry.

Key points

- The initiative is aimed at ensuring **hassle-free travel for Indians** who have emerged as one of the major tourist groups visiting Malaysia in the recent past.
- At present there are **around 26 countries** that extend visa-free entry to Indian citizens for various reasons.

India backs UN resolution against Israel for not leaving Syrian Golan

Context

- India has voted in favour of a draft resolution in

the **United Nations General Assembly (UNGA)** that expressed deep concern over Israel not withdrawing from the **Syrian Golan.**
- The Syrian Golan is a region in **southwest Syria** that was occupied by Israeli forces on June 5, 1967.
- The resolution also stressed the **illegality of the Israeli settlement** construction in the Golan.

India reminds Myanmar to return to 'federal democracy'

Context

As conflict intensifies between armed resistance groups and the Myanmar military in the **Chin, Shan and Sagaing provinces,** India reminded Myanmar to return to the path of federal democracy.

Key points

- India and Myanmar held discussions on a wide range of issues covering the situation along **the border, security, trade, commerce, connectivity, status of bilateral development projects** in Myanmar and concerns related to transnational crimes.
- India reiterated its support to Myanmar for a **transition towards a federal democracy**
- India continued to support people-centric socio-economic developmental projects, including connectivity projects and projects under the **Rakhine State Development Programme and Border Area Development Programme** for the benefit of the people of Myanmar

Economy News
Nov. services PMI signals slowdown

Context

- India's services sector momentum faltered to a one-year low in November, as per the seasonally adjusted **S&P Global India Services Business Activity Index**
- Taken together with the manufacturing **Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI),** November marked the weakest rise in private sector activity in the country in a year.

About Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI)

- Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) is an **economic indicator,** which is derived after monthly surveys of different companies.

- It measures activity at the purchasing or input stage.
- In this sense, it is very different from industrial production which is indicative of actual production.
- E.g., **the Index of Industrial Production (IIP)** measures output.
- There are two types of PMI — **Manufacturing PMI and Services PMI.**
- The index shows trends in both the manufacturing and services sector.
- PMI **does not capture informal sector activity.**

Agreement news
India provides $250 mn Line of Credit to Kenya

Context

- India extended a **$250 million Line of Credit** for modernisation of agriculture in Kenya.
- Both sides will carry out **joint military exercises** and will collaborate on **counter-terror projects.**

Think:

Have a look at the Bordering countries of Kenya

Summits & Conferences News
India not among 118 nations that pledged to push green energy

Context

- 118 countries pledged to triple renewable energy capacity **by 2030 at COP-28.**
- India is notable for not signing the **Global Renewables and Energy Efficiency Pledge.**
- **China,** with the largest renewable energy capacity, is also absent from the pledge.

Key point

- The **Global Renewables and Energy Efficiency Pledge** commitment aims for a global installed renewable energy generation **capacity of 11,000 GW.**
- The pledge also targets doubling the global average annual rate of energy efficiency improvements to **over 4% by 2030.**

Global Stocktake draft calls for phasing out fossil fuels

Context

- For the first time, a key document being

negotiated at the **UN's annual climate summit** has underlined the need for the world to do away with all fossil fuels, in its draft text.

- In previous years, climate talks have generally circled around the need for the world to wean itself away from coal, but negotiations have generally ended in a stalemate.

About Global Stocktake

- The Global Stocktake is a **periodic review mechanism** established under the Paris Agreement in 2015.
- The stocktake takes place every five years, with the first-ever stocktake scheduled to conclude at the **UN Climate Change Conference (COP28)**
- Its primary objectives are to assess individual countries' efforts to reduce Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions and transition to renewable energy sources.
- The stocktake is **designed to keep countries accountable** and encourage them to increase their climate ambitions over time.

Schemes and Committees News

Major oil and gas firms pledge to go carbon neutral by 2050

Context

- Several oil and gas companies have committed to become net zero — or carbon neutral — by 2050, according to the 28th Conference of Parties (COP-28) president-designate Sultan Al Jaber
- The **International Energy Agency (IEA)** estimates that oil and gas operations account for **around 15% of total energy-related emissions globally**, or about 5.1 billion tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions.

Defense News

U.S., U.K., Australia defence chiefs tout deep space radar and AI in joint deal

Context
- U.S., Australia, and Britain defense chiefs meet in California.

Key Points:
- Emphasis on high-tech collaboration in **deep space radar, AI, and quantum computing.**
- **Aim** is to strengthen forces against global threats, particularly from **China.**

- Highlight on the **"Deep Space Advanced Radar Capability"** program development.
- Plans for radar detection sites in all three countries by the end of the decade.
- Sites will have the capability to peer **35,000 km into space.**

Ranks & Reports News

World Malaria Report, 2023
Context
In 2022, India accounted for 66% of malaria cases in the WHO Southeast Asia Region, noted the **World Malaria Report, 2023,** published by the **World Health Organization (WHO).**

Key highlights
- Almost **46% of all cases** in the region were due to **Plasmodium vivax**, a protozoan parasite
- The WHO Southeast Asia Region accounted for **about 2% of malaria cases globally,**
- These malaria cases declined by 76% from 23 million in 2000 to about five million in 2022.
- Malaria case incidence in this region decreased by **83%,** (from about 18 cases per 1,000 population at risk in 2000 to about three cases per 1,000 population at risk in 2022)
- In 2022, there were an **estimated 249 million cases globally,** exceeding the pre-pandemic level of 233 million in 2019 by 16 million cases.

One-third of all 2022 suicides were of daily wage earners, farmers, says NCRB report
Context

India reported a total of over **1.7 lakh suicides** in 2022, nearly **one-third of whom were daily wage earners, agricultural labourers,** and farmers, according to the **National Crime Record Bureau's (NCRB) Accidental Deaths and Suicides in India (ADSI) 2022 report**

Key points

- The suicide data published in the **ADSI-2022 report** showed that the **maximum suicides** in the year were reported **from Maharashtra (22,746),** Tamil Nadu (19,834), Madhya Pradesh (15,386), Karnataka (13,606), Kerala (10,162), and Telangana (9,980).
- Apart from daily wage earners, and agricultural workers and farmers, the ADSI data showed that **9.6% of the suicides in 2022** were of

persons who were **self-employed or salaried professionals.**

- This was followed by unemployed persons, who comprise **9.2% of all suicides reported in India in 2022.**
- Among all suicides reported in the year, over **12,000 were of students.**

Muslim student strength in higher education fell by 1.79 lakh in 2020-21

Context

Report based on analysis of UDISE+ and AISHE data shows:

- Muslim student enrolment in higher education (18-23 age group) **dropped over 8.5% in 2020-21.**
- This Reflects a significant decline in educational participation among Muslim youth.

Key points

- While 21 lakh Muslim students enrolled for higher education in 2019-20, the **number fell to 19.21 lakh in 2020-21.**
- The enrolment percentage of Muslim students in Classes 11 and 12 is lower than that in the previous classes.
- The States such as **Bihar and Madhya Pradesh** have relatively low Gross Enrolment Ratio for Muslim students
- **Assam (29.52%) and West Bengal (23.22%)** recorded high dropout rates among Muslim students, while **Jammu and Kashmir** recorded 5.1% and **Kerala** 11.91%.

Unemployment rate in urban areas comes down: survey

Context

- The unemployment rate in urban areas of the country decreased from 7.2% in July–September 2022 to 6.6% in July–September 2023, according to the **Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS)**
- The survey is conducted by the **National Sample Survey Office (NSSO).**

Key points

- If 6.6% is the unemployment rate for persons of age 15 years and above, for men, it was 6%. For women, it decreased from 9.4% in July–September last year to 8.6% this year.
- The **labour force participation rate (LFPR)** in urban areas increased to 49.3% in July–

September 2023 for persons aged 15 years and above.
- While for males, **LFPR increased to 73.8%, for females, LFPR increased to 24.0%**
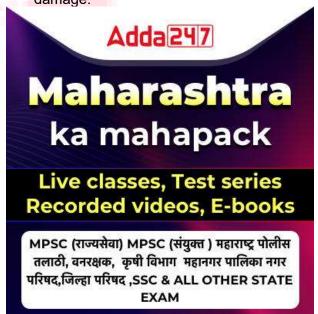
Glaciers shrank 1 m a year in a decade: WMO

Context

According to **The Global Climate 2011-2020: A Decade of Acceleration report** by **World Meteorological Organisation,** the 2011-2020 decade, though warmest ever recorded in history, saw the lowest number of deaths from extreme events

Key points

- The **2011-2020 decade was the first since 1950** when there was not a single short-term event with 10,000 deaths or more
- The report also says that this was the first decade that the depleted ozone hole visibly showed recovery.
- Glaciers that were measured around the world **thinned by approximately 1 metre per year on an average between 2011 and 2020.**
- **Greenland and Antarctica lost 38% more ice** during the period than during the 2001-2010 period.
- The report further underlined that human-caused climate change significantly increased the risks from extreme heat events.
- **Heatwaves were responsible for the highest number of human casualties,** while tropical cyclones caused the most economic damage.

Sports News

Five Indian weightlifters to take part in IWF Grand Prix II

Context

- Five Indian weightlifters will be representing the country at the **International Weightlifting Federation (IWF) Grand Prix II Weightlifting** competition starting in Doha.
- The event is a **qualifier for the 2024 Paris Olympics**

Key points

- India will be sending a total of five lifters, including two women.
- **Ajith Narayan and Achinta Sheuli** will be in the men's 73 kg.
- **Mirabai Chanu** will be attending the event for a weigh-in.
- **Bindyarani Devi** will figure in the non-Olympic women's 55kg weight division while **Gurdeep Singh** will be in action in the +109kg, another non-Olympic weight division.

Science and Technology News

Six exoplanets found orbiting a nearby bright star

Context

- Six exoplanets orbiting around a nearby **bright star (HD 110067)** in the Coma Berenices constellation has been discovered.

Key points

- HD 110067 is the bright star in the **Coma Berenices constellation** (around 100 light-years away), which is visible from Earth's Northern Hemisphere
- The masses of the planets and estimated **densities are relatively low**
- The low densities could be explained by large, hydrogen-rich atmospheres.
- All six planets are **in resonant orbits**, in which the planets exert regular forces on each other as they orbit.
- This feature suggests that the system remains practically unchanged since its birth, at least four billion years ago.
- **Scientific Significance:** Enhances understanding of exoplanetary systems.

Methane

Context

At the ongoing COP-28 climate talks in the United Arab Emirates, a group of well-endowed philanthropic bodies, including the **Sequoia Climate Foundation and the Bezos Earth Fund,** announced that they would collectively invest **$450 million i**n solutions to tackle methane emissions.

About

- Methane is an **organic compound.**
- Its molecule consists of carbon and four hydrogen atoms (CH_4).
- It's in the news of late because of its character as a **potent climate pollutant.**
- Methane has a **greater global warming potential (GWP) than carbon dioxide.**
- However, while carbon dioxide lasts for several decades at a time in the atmosphere before breaking down, methane breaks down in a matter of years. That is, it's a **short-lived climate pollutant.**
- Its sources include cattle-farming, landfills, wastewater treatment facilities, rice cultivation, and some industrial processes.

What is GWP?

- The GWP is a **measure of the warming caused by a substance relative to that due to the same mass of carbon dioxide**; the GWP100 measures this over a century at a time.
- If carbon dioxide has a GWP100 of 1, methane is 28, nitrous oxide is 265, and sulphur hexafluoride is 23,500.

Miscellaneous News

Armed Forces Flag Day

- Armed Forces Flag Day on **December 7** honors soldiers, sailors, and airmen for safeguarding borders and ensuring peace at the cost of their lives.
- Armed Forces Flag Day, established on **August 28, 1949,** serves as a remembrance and fundraising initiative by the **Ministry of Defence.**
- Citizens contribute by purchasing badges and stickers on this day, with funds aimed at improving armed forces personnel's lives.
- Funds raised are crucial for providing better facilities and resources to selfless soldiers, sailors, and airmen.

Cyclone Michaung

Context

Cyclone Michaung has intensified in its move across the southwest Bay of Bengal and is likely to make **landfall on the Andhra Pradesh coast between Nellore and Machilipatnam**

What are cyclones?

- A cyclone is a **large-scale system of air that rotates** around the center of a low-pressure area. It is usually accompanied by violent storms and bad weather.
- As per NDMA, a cyclone is characterized by inward spiraling winds **that rotate anticlockwise in the Northern Hemisphere and clockwise in the Southern Hemisphere.**

Think:

Why are cyclones more frequent in Bay of bengal compared to the Arabian sea?

How are Cyclones named?

- IMD uses a specific naming convention for cyclones in the **North Indian Ocean**, including the Arabian Sea and Bay of Bengal.

History

- In the **mid-1900s,** storms were named alphabetically, and the practice of **using feminine names started**.
- WMO/ESCAP**(World Meteorological Organisation/United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific)** nations agreed to name cyclones in 2000.
- WMO/ESCAP member nations, including India, decided to assign names to cyclones.
- The decision was made in **Muscat in 2000,** involving 13 countries.

Member Nations:

- The WMO/ESCAP group, deciding cyclone names, includes India, Qatar, Maldives, Myanmar, Oman, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Thailand, UAE, and Yemen.

RSMC(Regional Specialized Meteorological Centre) Role:

- IMD, as one of the six RSMCs globally, names cyclones in the North Indian Ocean based on suggestions from 13 countries in the WMO/ESCAP region.

Naming Criteria:

- Cyclone names must be neutral, non-offensive, short, easy to pronounce, under eight letters, and unique.
- Countries provide names with pronunciation and voice over.

Type of Disturbance	Wind Speed (km/h)
Low-Pressure Area	Less than 31
Depression	31-49
Deep Depression	50-61
Cyclonic Storm	62-88
Severe Cyclonic Storm	89-117
Very Severe Cyclonic Storm	118-167
Super Cyclonic Storm	168 and higher

Garba dance of Gujarat makes it to UNESCO list

Context

Gujarat's traditional dance form 'Garba' was included in the list of Intangible Cultural Heritage by the **United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).**

Key points

- The popular dance form is the **15th cultural item** from India to make it to the UNESCO list.
- **Kolkata's Durga Puja was the last one added** two years ago.
- The inclusion has been made under the provisions of the 2003 **Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage.**
- The international cultural body described the 'Garba' as a ritualistic and devotional dance performed in India.