

## National and International Weekly Current Affairs 22 to 27 April 2024

### National News

#### Contempt of court

- The Supreme Court questioned Patanjali Ayurved about the size and cost of its apology published in newspapers.
- Patanjali is facing **contempt action from the Supreme Court for publishing misleading advertisements** about their ayurvedic products.
- They had **violated an undertaking given to the Supreme Court in 2023 to stop these advertisements.**

#### About Contempt of court:

- Contempt of Court is designed to **protect judicial institutions from unwarranted criticism and attacks**, and to **uphold their authority.**
- The Indian Constitution's **Article 129** designates the **Supreme Court as a court of record with the power to punish for contempt of itself.**
- The **Contempt of Courts Act, 1971** is the governing law for contempt in India.
- **Judges have the authority to impose sanctions**, such as imprisonment or fines, on those found guilty of contempt of court.
- Contempt of court is divided into two categories: **Civil and Criminal.**
- **Civil contempt** occurs when **someone wilfully disobeys a court order or breaches an undertaking given to the court.**
- **Criminal contempt** includes three forms:
  - Actions, signs, or words (written or spoken) that "scandalize" or "tend to scandalize" or "lower" or "tends to lower" the authority of any court.
  - Actions that prejudice or interfere with any judicial proceeding.
  - Actions that interfere with or obstruct the administration of justice.

#### National Career Service (NCS) portal

- The Central government has plans to **upgrade the NCS portal.**
- The upgrade **aims to link millions of youths with prospective employers.**
- The ultimate goal is to **prepare a future-ready workforce.**

#### About NCS

- **National Career Service (NCS)** is a **mission-mode project** under the **E-Governance Plan**, launched in **2015.**
- The portal provides **online career counseling and vocational guidance** to its registered users.
- It **aims to help jobseekers make informed career choices** based on their qualifications, skills, and interests.
- NCS provides a **nation-wide online platform for job seekers and employers for efficient and responsive job-matching.**
- The NCS portal is implemented by the **Directorate General of Employment, Ministry of Labour & Employment.**

#### National Judicial Appointments Commission (NJAC)

- The **Supreme Court Registry** has refused to accept a petition to end the **Collegium system of judicial appointments** and **revive the National Judicial Appointments Commission (NJAC).**
- The **NJAC**, which **gave an equal role to the government in judicial appointments**, had been **struck down by a Constitution Bench in October 2015.**

#### About NJAC:

- The NJAC was introduced through the **99th Constitutional Amendment Act in 2014**, along with the **National Judicial Appointments Commission Act, 2014.**
- The **purpose of the NJAC was to replace the existing Collegium system of appointing judges**, which was criticized for lacking transparency and accountability.
- In October 2015, the **Supreme Court declared the 99th Constitutional Amendment and the NJAC Act unconstitutional.**
- The **judgment reinstated the Collegium system**, stating that the **NJAC infringed upon the independence of the judiciary and violated the basic structure of the Constitution.**

## National Institute for the Empowerment of Persons with Intellectual Disabilities (NIEPID)

- The Union Government is expected to roll out a new test, which is designed by the **National Institute for the Empowerment of Persons with Intellectual Disabilities (NIEPID)**.
- The purpose of the test is to diagnose **Specific Learning Disabilities (SLDs)**.
- The test is intended for use in adults in India.

### About NIEPID:

- NIEPID, formerly known as the **National Institute for the Mentally Handicapped**, was established in **1984**.
- It is an **autonomous body** under the administrative control of the **Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (Divyangjan), Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment**.
- NIEPID is the **apex body** for training, research, and surveys in the **field of intellectual disability in India**.
- The institute is **headquartered in Secunderabad, Telangana**, and has **regional centres in Kolkata, Navi Mumbai, and Noida**.
- It empowers persons with intellectual disabilities to access **state-of-the-art rehabilitation interventions, educational, therapeutic, vocational, employment, leisure and social activities, sports, cultural programmes and full participation**.

## Authorised Economic Operator (AEO) status

- The Centre has extended **Authorised Economic Operator (AEO) status** to the **gem and jewellery sector**.
- This information was provided by the **Gem & Jewellery Export Promotion Council (GJEPC)**, the apex body of the sector.

### Key points:

- It is part of a **broader framework for ease of doing business** and has **simplified export operations across various sectors**.
- The programme has resulted in significant time and cost savings for exporters.
- The **AEO is a programme under the World Customs Organisation (WCO) SAFE Framework of Standards** to secure and facilitate global trade.

- The aim of the programme is to **enhance international supply chain security** and **facilitate movement of legitimate goods**.

## Maharashtra State News

### Dand patta

- The 'dand patta' or **gauntlet sword**, reportedly used by **Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj** and other Maratha warriors, has been **declared as the state weapon of Maharashtra**.
- The announcement was made by Chief Minister at a function in the **Shivneri fort**.

### About Dand patta:

- The 'dand patta' is a gauntlet that includes a **90-centimetre sharp blade attached to a glove-like metal extension** designed to fit the knuckles and back of the hand.
- Over the centuries, the 'dand patta' became a legendary weapon associated with the bravery and **martial traditions of Maratha warriors**.

## 'Mangrove Clean-Up drive' on Sarsole Jetty along Navi Mumbai

- The **Environment Life Foundation (ELF)** started its '**Mangrove Clean-Up drive**' on Sarsole Jetty along Navi Mumbai.
- **ELF, in coordination with the Navi Mumbai Municipal Corporation (NMMC) and the forest department**, has collected about 450 tons of trash accumulated around mangroves from Nerul to Panvel.

### About Mangroves:

- Mangroves are unique ecosystems that thrive in **coastal intertidal zones**.
- Mangroves are **salt-tolerant forest ecosystems found along coastlines, river mouths, and estuaries**.
- They are **prevalent in tropical and subtropical regions**.
- Mangrove trees have adapted to their saline environments with **specialized root systems**, such as **prop roots or pneumatophores**, which **help in stabilization and oxygen intake**.

## India Meteorological Department (IMD)

- The **India Meteorological Department (IMD)** issued a **heatwave alert**.

- The alert is for eight districts in Maharashtra: Mumbai, Thane, Raigad, Palghar, Nashik, Jalgaon, Dhule, and Nandurbar.
- Malegaon has been the hottest zone in Maharashtra so far, with a temperature of 43°C.

#### About India Meteorological Department (IMD):

- The IMD was established in 1875 under the British Raj and is one of the oldest meteorological organizations in the world.
- Its primary function is to provide meteorological observations, weather forecasts, and seismology reports. It is an agency of the Ministry of Earth Sciences of the Government of India.
- The headquarters of IMD is located in New Delhi, India.

#### Professor Shireesh Kedare

- Professor Shireesh Kedare was appointed as the director of the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Bombay.
- He is an Institute Chair Professor from the Energy Science and Engineering department of IIT Bombay.

#### BMC to double property tax for shops without Marathi signboard

- The Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) is planning to double the property tax for shops and establishments that have not set up signboards in the Marathi language, effective from May 1.
- The BMC will cancel the license of the illuminated (glow sign) boards that have not adhered to the Devnagri script, effective immediately.

#### Pench Tiger Reserve (PTR)

- The number of tourists visiting the Pench Tiger Reserve (PTR) in Maharashtra has doubled.
- It has doubled from 41,000 during the pre-Covid period (2020-21) to over 1 lakh visitors in 2023-24. This increase coincides with the silver jubilee of the park.

#### About Pench Tiger Reserve (PTR):

- Pench Tiger Reserve is located in the southern part of the Satpura mountain

ranges in Maharashtra, stretching into Madhya Pradesh.

- It covers a large area and features a mix of tropical moist, dry deciduous forest, and tropical dry deciduous forest.
- Pench Tiger Reserve gained international fame as the setting for Rudyard Kipling's classic novel "The Jungle Book," which features the fictional Mowgli's adventures.

#### Chaitra Yatra of Jyotiba

- The Chaitra Yatra of Jyotiba which is celebrated annually in Kolhapur, Maharashtra.
- The procession of Sasan-Kathis (huge decorated bamboo sticks) commenced in the presence of Kolhapur district collector.

#### About Chaitra Yatra of Jyotiba:

- The deity of the temple, Shri Jyotiba or Kedareshvar, is believed to be an incarnation of Brahma, Vishnu, and Shiva.
- According to legend, Vishnu, Brahma, and Shiva came together to incarnate as the deity Jyotiba who eventually destroyed the evil demon Ratnasura.
- Jyotiba also helped Goddess Mahalakshmi, the presiding deity of Kolhapur, in her fight with the demons.
- The original temple was constructed by Navji Saya, and the present temple was constructed by Ranoji Shinde in 1730 AD.

#### India's first Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) powered bus

- Maharashtra has launched India's first Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) powered bus.
- The bus will be operated by the Maharashtra State Road Transport Corporation (MSRTC).

#### About LNG powered bus:

- MSRTC plans to convert 5000 of its diesel vehicles to LNG alternative fuel vehicles in phases.
- MSRTC has signed an MoU with M/s Kings Gas for the conversion of buses to LNG.

#### Chief Minister Vayoshree Yojana

- The Maharashtra government has introduced a new scheme called the 'Chief Minister Vayoshree Yojana' for senior citizens.

- The scheme is set to benefit around 15 lakh senior citizens suffering from physical or mental disabilities.

**Key points:**

- Under this scheme, eligible citizens above the age of 65 will receive financial assistance of three thousand rupees.

**Digital certificates initiative in Maharashtra**

- Maharashtra is taking a significant step towards digitization by using blockchain technology to issue certificates.
- The Maharashtra State Board of Skill Development has decided to issue blockchain-based certificates to students.
- Around 10 lakh digital certificates will be issued to diploma holders of eight educational years.

**Key points:**

- The state government has partnered with blockchain startup Zupple and its blockchain-based application LegitDoc to issue tamper-proof digital documents.
- This system can help issue and verify digital documents that can be verified from anywhere around the world, within seconds.
- Zupple tied up with the Maharashtra government and started issuing blockchain “caste certificates” to up to 65,000 tribals in Gadchiroli in a bid to stop fraudulent claims on government benefits for the disadvantaged.

**Maharashtra Mangrove Cell**

- The Maharashtra Mangrove Cell has commissioned the Maharashtra Remote Sensing Application Centre (MRSAC) to conduct a new satellite-based survey of the mangroves along the state’s coastline.
- It aims to understand the spread and destruction of mangroves.

**Key points:**

- The survey will span two years and cover seven coastal districts:
  - Sindhurg,
  - Ratnagiri,
  - Raigad,
  - Thane,
  - Mumbai,
  - Mumbai Suburban, and
  - Palghar.

**About Maharashtra Mangrove Cell:**

- The Maharashtra Mangrove Cell is a dedicated unit established by the Government of Maharashtra for the protection, conservation, and management of mangroves.
- The Mangrove Cell was created on 5th January 2012.
- It is the first such state-wide unit in the country.
- The Cell is headed by the Chief Conservator of Forests.

**SVEEP (Systematic Voters’ Education & Electoral Participation)**

- The Nashik district in Maharashtra, India, has implemented measures to support blind voters in the upcoming 2024 Lok Sabha elections.
- The District Election Office and the Nashik District SVEEP (Systematic Voters’ Education & Electoral Participation) Committee have been organizing a series of voter awareness rallies.

**About SVEEP:**

- SVEEP is a program designed by the Election Commission of India aimed at increasing voter education and participation, ensuring that all eligible citizens are informed and motivated to vote during elections.
- It was officially launched in 2009 to address the low voter turnout in Indian elections and to tackle the issues of electoral participation across various demographics.

**National Association for the Blind, India (NAB):**

- To further facilitate the voting process, ballot papers in Braille will be provided by the National Association for the Blind, India (NAB), enabling blind voters to cast their votes on electronic voting machines (EVMs) with ease.
- Braille numbers will also be affixed to the EVMs for tactile identification.

**Bengal Monitor Lizard Hemipenes and Soft corals**

- 781 Bengal Monitor Lizard Hemipenes and 19.6 kg of soft corals were seized in Mumbai.

- The seizure was made by the **Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI)'s Mumbai zonal unit.**

**Key points:**

- The endangered Bengal Monitor Lizards are found in **Gujarat, Maharashtra, and Rajasthan.**
- The reproductive organ of a male monitor lizard is suspected to be **illegally traded as a lucky charm/aphrodisiac by traffickers.**
- **Soft corals** are trafficked for use in the **aquarium trade**, and some species are **used in traditional medicines and for extracting compounds for pharmaceutical potential.**

**Maharashtra becomes first Indian state to buy land in Kashmir**

- **Maharashtra is set to become the first Indian state to buy land** in the union territory of **Jammu and Kashmir for the construction of a tourist facility.**

**Key points:**

- The facility, named **Maharashtra Bhawan**, will be **constructed in central Kashmir's Budgam.**
- **This will be the first-ever state Bhavan in the valley.**
- **Before the abrogation of Article 370, only the permanent residents of Jammu and Kashmir could buy land in the erstwhile state.** However, the **government could lease lands for up to 99 years to industries and people from outside.**

**Ahmednagar becomes Ahilya Nagar, Maharashtra Cabinet approves name change**

- The **Maharashtra Cabinet has decided to rename Ahmednagar district as Ahilya Nagar** after the **18th-century queen Ahilyabai Holkar.**
- The proposal to rename the city was first announced by Maharashtra Chief Minister on the **298th birth anniversary of Ahilyabai Holkar.**
- Earlier, the Maharashtra government changed the names of **Aurangabad and Osmanabad to Chatrapati Sambhaji Nagar and Dharashiv, respectively.**

**Eleven heritage sites from Maharashtra on its 'Must See Monuments' list**

- The **Archaeological Survey of India (ASI)** has included **eleven heritage sites from Maharashtra** on its **'Must See Monuments' list.**

**Maharashtra's 'Must See Monuments'**

- 1) Ajanta Caves, Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar
- 2) Ancient Buddhist Stupa, Mansar, Nagpur
- 3) Buddha Caves, Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar
- 4) Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Terminus, Mumbai
- 5) Devgiri (Daulatabad) Fort, Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar
- 6) Elephanta Caves, Mumbai
- 7) Verul Caves, Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar
- 8) Fifteen temples at Lonar, Buldhana
- 9) Gavilgad Fort, Chikhaldara, Amravati
- 10) Pandava Caves, Nashik
- 11) Bibi ka Maqbara, Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar

**Maharashtra's largest co-located hybrid initiatives**

- **Mahindra** plans to invest ₹1,200 crore in a **150 MW hybrid solar and wind energy project in Maharashtra.**
- The project aims to generate **460 million kWh of clean energy.**
- This initiative marks the **entry of Mahindra Susten into the hybrid renewable energy sector.**
- The **focus** of the project is on **reducing 4,20,000 tonnes of CO2 emissions.**
- The **project** is set to be **one of Maharashtra's largest co-located hybrid initiatives.**

**Renaming of 8 Mumbai Railway Stations**

- The **Maharashtra Cabinet has approved the renaming of 8 Mumbai Railway Stations.**
  - Curry Road has been renamed to Lalbaug.
  - Sandhurst Road has been renamed to Dongri.
  - Marine Lines has been renamed as Mumbadevi.
  - Cotton Green has been renamed to Kalachowki.
  - Charni Road has been renamed to Girgaon.

- Dockyard Road has been renamed to Mazgaon.
- King Circle has been renamed to Tirthakar Parshivnath.
- The cabinet has also decided to rename **Mumbai Central Station as Nana Jagannath Shankarsheth Station.**
- **A proposal for this has been sent to the Railways Ministry.**

### Pod taxi project

- The **Mumbai Metropolitan Region Development Authority** has approved the **Pod Taxi project in Bandra Kurla Complex (BKC), Mumbai.**
- The approval was chaired by CM.
- The project aims to ease commuting for thousands with a **Personal Rapid Transit (PRT) system.**
- The **route covers 8.8 km** with 38 stations, **connecting BKC, Kurla, and Bandra stations.**
- The project follows the **Public-Private Partnership (PPP) model.**

### Rashmi Shukla

- **Rashmi Shukla is the first woman Director General of Police (DGP) of Maharashtra.**
- She is a senior **Indian Police Service (IPS) officer.**
- She has previously served in central roles, including as the **Director General of the Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB).**
- She has also served as the **additional Director General of the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF).**
- **She has been granted an extension till January 3, 2026, from her initial retirement date in June 2024.**
- A legal opinion was sought, citing Supreme Court rulings, to ensure a minimum 2-year term for DGP appointment.

Think:

- Know about Prakash singh case

### Ellora Ajanta International Festival 2024

- The **Ellora Ajanta International Festival 2024** is a significant event spanning over 3 days.
- The festival is **organized by the District Collector-Chatrapati Sambhaji Nagar,** in

association with the **Directorate of Tourism, Government of Maharashtra.**

- The event **celebrates the art, architecture, and culture of the region.**
- A special focus of the festival is on the iconic **Ellora and Ajanta Caves,** which are recognized as **UNESCO World Heritage Sites.**
- The festival aims to promote local tourism through the celebration of these cultural landmarks.

### India's first Dark Sky Park

- **Maharashtra's Pench Tiger Reserve** has made history by becoming **India's first Dark Sky Park.**
- **It has secured the fifth position in Asia.**
- The **International Union for Conservation of Nature** recognizes the night sky as a vital natural, cultural, and historical resource.
- The establishment of 'Dark Sky Parks' is actively promoted by the **International Astronomical Union.**

### Overseas voters in India

- **Maharashtra ranks second in terms of overseas voters.**
- However, **Kerala is far ahead of all other states, including Maharashtra,** in this regard.

Key points:

- The **right to vote for Non-Resident Indians (NRIs) and Indian citizens** was granted through a **pre-2010 amendment.**
- **Overseas electors can enroll in constituencies** that match their **Indian residential address specified in their passports.**
- Any changes in their overseas residential address, including those due to employment or education alterations, must be updated with the **Electoral Registration Officer (ERO).**

### Atpadi Conservation Reserve

- A new reserve has been established that links the **Maini Conservation Area with the Maldhok Bird Sanctuary.**
- The Atpadi Conservation Reserve has been **set up to safeguard the habitat of various wildlife species including wolves, deer, foxes, and civets.**

- The reserve is **located** in the Atpadi region of **Sangli district**.

### BP Technical Solutions India

- **British Petroleum (BP)** has announced the **establishment of BP Technical Solutions India (BP TSI)** in **Pune, Maharashtra**.
- The aim of this initiative is **to enhance BP's global technical and engineering capabilities**.
- The **BP-owned center will provide high-quality services to both hydrocarbons and new energy businesses worldwide**.
- The center is expected to open in **Q2 2024**.
- **Molyama Kromah** has been appointed as the **Head of BP Technical Solutions India**.

### Light pollution

- The **recent deaths of flamingos in Navi Mumbai** have raised concerns among **environmentalists** and local authorities.
- **Light pollution is suspected to be one of the causes for these deaths**.

#### Key points:

- The **bright street lights around the water body could have blinded young flamingos flying into or out of the DPS Lake in Nerul**.

#### About Light pollution:

- Light pollution is the **presence of unwanted, inappropriate, or excessive artificial lighting in the environment**. It includes various types of light emissions such as **glare, skyglow, light trespass, and clutter**.
- **Many wildlife species depend on natural light patterns for navigation, foraging, and reproduction. Light pollution can disrupt these patterns, affecting behaviors such as migration and breeding**.

### Maharashtra Cow Service Commission Bill

- The **Maharashtra Cow Service Commission Bill** was **tabled** in the State Assembly.
- The **bill was announced** by Deputy Chief Minister **Devendra Fadnavis in the state budget**.

#### Key points:

- The bill aims at **promoting and protecting indigenous cattle breeds**.

- **Composition of the Commission:** The Maharashtra Cow Service Commission will be a **25-member body**. It will comprise members from the **Animal Husbandry and other governmental departments**, as well as members from various universities and NGOs.

- **Responsibilities of the Commission:** The commission will be responsible for **safeguarding indigenous cows, bulls, bullocks, and calves**. It will promote rearing and breeding of indigenous cows and handle the registrations and overall supervision of cow shelters.

### Maharashtra, first state to set up department for Divyang

- The **Maharashtra state government** recently **approved** the formation of a separate government department for the **divyang (differently abled)**.
- This announcement was made on the **International Day of Disabled Persons**.

#### Key points:

- **Maharashtra is the first state in India to set up a separate department for Divyang (differently-abled)**.
- The department is established to **serve the physically and mentally disabled people in the state, both educationally and professionally**.
- The department seeks to **ensure the welfare of the Divyangs and effectively implement various government schemes targeting them**.

### Electronic Manufacturing Cluster (EMC)

- The **Union Ministry of Electronics and IT** recently **approved** the **greenfield Electronic Manufacturing Cluster (EMC)** at **Pune**.

#### Key points:

- An **Electronic Manufacturing Cluster (EMC)** is a manufacturing cluster designed to **provide the necessary facilities and amenities for manufacturing electronic products like mobile phones, cables, etc**.
- **Maharashtra's first greenfield EMC project** is to be **established in Ranjangaon, near Pune**.
- The **Central Government's approval was given to Maharashtra's State Industrial**

## Agency and Maharashtra Industrial Development Corporation (MIDC).

### Dahi Handi

- Dahi Handi has been given the **status of a game in Maharashtra** and will be **considered a type of adventure sports**.
- **Govindas participating in Dahi Handi will receive benefits of government schemes**, including a **5 percent reservation in government jobs**.
- **Insurance protection** will be provided to Govindas. In case of an accident during Dahi Handi:
- **If a Govinda dies**, an amount of **Rs 10 lakh will be given to the family members of the concerned Govinda as help**.
- **If a Govinda suffers a serious injury**, such as losing both eyes, both legs, both hands, or any two important parts of the body, an amount of **Rs 7.5 lakh will be given as help from the state government**.
- **If a Govinda loses an arm, a leg, or any part of the body in an accident**, an amount of **Rs 5 lakh will be given as help**.

### International News

#### Safeguard Measures

- **India**, along with other nations have **criticised the EU for not terminating its safeguard measure on imports** of certain steel products after a review.
- Most of these countries argued that the **EU's safeguard duty was inconsistent with WTO rules**.

#### About Safeguard Measures:

- **Safeguard measures** are **emergency actions** introduced by a country under the **World Trade Organization (WTO) Agreement on Safeguards**.
- These measures are **taken to protect a specific domestic industry from an increase in imports of any product** which is causing, or threatening to cause, serious injury.
- Safeguard measures can take the **form of suspension of concessions or obligations**, and can **consist of quantitative import restrictions or duty increases to higher than bound rates**.

- They are **one of three types of contingent trade protection measures available to WTO members**, the other two being **anti-dumping and countervailing measures**.

Think:

- Know about **Anti-dumping** and **Countervailing measures**.

#### Schengen visa

- **Indian nationals can now be issued long-term multi-entry Schengen visas** valid for **two years**.
- The **European Union** has announced this new visa 'cascade' regime.

#### About Schengen visa:

- The Schengen Visa is a **permit that allows one to enter and travel freely within the Schengen Area**, which **comprises 29 European countries**.
- It's **primarily for short stays up to 90 days** within a **180-day period for tourism or business purposes**.
- The visa can be obtained in the form of a **single-entry visa**, which allows the holder to **enter the Schengen area once**, or a **multiple-entry visa**.

#### ASEAN Future Forum

- The **External Affairs Minister of India (EAM)** spoke at the **First ASEAN Future Forum virtually**.
- He highlighted the **synergy between India's Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative (IIPOI) and the ASEAN Outlook on Indo-Pacific (AOIP)**.

#### Key points:

- This synergy provides a **strong framework of cooperation, addressing challenges to comprehensive security**.
- EAM emphasized that **ASEAN is central to India's Act East policy** and is a **crucial pillar in India's wider Indo-Pacific mission**.
- He called for the **global south** to present its perspective and assume a greater role in international affairs.
- He stressed the importance of respecting and facilitating **freedom of navigation, overflight, and unimpeded commerce**.



## Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO)

- The **Defence Secretary** led the **Indian delegation** at the **Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) Defence Ministers' meeting** in **Astana, Kazakhstan**.
- The **SCO Defence Ministers** agreed to **develop** the idea of **'One Earth, One Family, One Future'**, which is **rooted** in the **ancient Indian philosophy** of **'vasudhaiva kutumbakam'**.

### About SCO:

- The **SCO** was **founded** in **June 2001** in **Shanghai** by **China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan**.
- **India** and **Pakistan** joined in **2017**, expanding the organization's membership.
- The **main objectives of the SCO** include
  - **Strengthening mutual trust and neighborliness** among member countries,
  - **Promoting effective cooperation** in political, trade, economic, research, cultural, and other fields,
  - **Making joint efforts** to maintain and ensure peace, security, and stability in the region.

## Schemes and Committees News

### Longevity India Initiative

- The **Indian Institute of Science (IISc)** has announced the launch of a project called the **Longevity India Initiative**.

### About Longevity India Initiative:

- The initiative is aimed at **extending the human health span**, the period during which a person remains healthy, and **tackling ageing-related challenges**.
- It is a **Multidisciplinary Collaboration**.
- It seeks to **develop interventions** that can **effectively manage age-related diseases** and promote healthy ageing across India.
- **Research areas include**
  - **Identifying biomarkers of ageing,**
  - **Early disease indicators, and**
  - **Developing new therapeutics and technologies.**

### Rashtriya Arogya Nidhi (RAN) scheme

- The **Delhi High Court** has instituted a case regarding the grant of financial assistance

under the Centre's **Rashtriya Arogya Nidhi (RAN) scheme**.

- The court observed that the **threshold income to claim benefit under this scheme is prima facie "extremely low"**.

### Key points:

- Under the new umbrella scheme of RAN, the **threshold of monthly income for benefit is ₹1,571 for rural and ₹1,605 for urban areas**.
- The **annual income** of the applicant is **₹96,000**.

### About Rashtriya Arogya Nidhi (RAN) scheme:

- The **Rashtriya Arogya Nidhi (RAN)** is a scheme **under the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare** in India.
- The RAN is a **centrally sponsored scheme**.
- It was set up to **provide financial assistance to patients living below the poverty line**.
- It is designed to **help those suffering from major life-threatening diseases receive medical treatment** at any of the **super specialty Government hospitals or institutes**.
- The **scheme provides one-time financial assistance to poor patients living below State/UT wise threshold poverty line and suffering from life-threatening diseases relating to heart, kidney, liver, cancer, etc.**

## Awards News

### Padma awards 2024

- **Padma awards** were conferred by the **President of India**.

### About Padma awards 2024:

- **Padma Vibhushan:**
  - **Vyjayantimala Bali** (Art, Tamil Nadu)
  - **Konidela Chiranjeevi** (Art, Andhra Pradesh)
  - **M Venkaiah Naidu** (Public Affairs, Andhra Pradesh)
  - **Bindeshwar Pathak** (Posthumous, Social Work, Bihar)
  - **Padma Subrahmanyam** (Art, Tamil Nadu)
- **Padma Bhushan:**
  - **M Fathima Beevi** (Posthumous, Public Affairs, Kerala)
  - **Hormusji N Cama** (Literature & Education - Journalism, Maharashtra)
  - **Mithun Chakraborty** (Art, West Bengal)

- Sitaram Jindal (Trade & Industry, Karnataka)
- Young Liu (Trade & Industry, Taiwan)
- Ashwin Balachand Mehta (Medicine, Maharashtra)
- Satyabrata Mookherjee (Posthumous, Public Affairs, West Bengal)
- Ram Naik (Public Affairs, Maharashtra)
- Tejas Madhusudan Patel (Medicine, Gujarat)
- Olanchery Rajagopal (Public Affairs, Kerala)
- Dattatray Ambadas Mayaloo alias Rajdutt (Art, Maharashtra)
- Togdan Rinpoche (Posthumous, Others - Spiritualism, Ladakh)
- Pyarelal Sharma (Art, Maharashtra)
- Chandreshwar Prasad Thakur (Medicine, Bihar)
- Usha Uthup (Art, West Bengal)
- Vijaykanth (Posthumous, Art, Tamil Nadu)
- Kundan Vyas (Literature & Education - Journalism, Maharashtra)
- This category features a diverse range of recipients including
  - Parbati Baruah for social work in animal welfare (Assam),
  - Rohan Machanda Bopanna for sports (Karnataka), and
  - Joe D Cruz for literature and education (Tamil Nadu), among many others.

Think:

- Know about the **Bharatratna**.

### Defense News

## 2 women Navy officers return after historic transoceanic expedition

- The Indian Naval Sailing Vessel **INSV Tarini** returned to her base port at **Goa** on April 21 after a **historic transoceanic expedition** of nearly **two months**.
- The expedition was **undertaken by two women officers of the Indian Navy, Lieutenant Commander Dilna K. and Lieutenant Commander Roopa A.**
- They are the **first from India to accomplish such a feat**.
- The **two officers are now preparing for their next monumental voyage, a**

**circumnavigation of the globe, the Sagar Parikrama-IV expedition, on INSV Tarini, scheduled to commence in September this year.**

### Exercise Poorvi Lehar or XPOL

- The **Indian Navy** conducted a **maritime exercise Poorvi Lehar** along the **East Coast of India**.
- The exercise aimed at **validating procedures to assess the Indian Navy's preparedness to meet Maritime Security challenges in the region**.
- It was conducted in multiple phases, including a **Tactical Phase** and a **Weapon Phase**.

### Ranks & Reports News

## Global Financial Stability Report 2024

- The **International Monetary Fund (IMF)** released the latest **global financial stability report**.
- The report warns about **risks to the global financial system from several factors**:
  - Persistent high inflation
  - Rising lending in the unregulated credit market
  - Increasing cyber-attacks on financial institutions.

### Key points of report:

- **Geopolitical risks**, such as the **ongoing war in West Asia and Ukraine**, could **affect aggregate supply** and **lead to higher prices**. This might **prevent central banks from lowering rates** in the near future.
- In 2023, **India was the second-largest recipient of foreign capital after the U.S.** However, this could change quickly if western central banks indicate that they could maintain high interest rates for a prolonged period.
- The report also highlights **concerns about the growing unregulated private credit market**, where **non-bank financial institutions lend to corporate borrowers**.

### Did you know:

- IMF also publishes **World Economic Outlook (WEO)** twice a year, typically in **April and October**.

- It Provides **detailed analysis of global economic performance and projections.**

### Global report on food crises

- Almost 282 million people suffered from acute hunger in 2023, **according to a UN-led report.**
- The report said that **conflicts, extreme weather events and economic shocks** were fueling food insecurity worldwide.

#### About Global report on food crises:

- The **Food Security Information Network (FSIN)** released a **global report on food crises**, describing the outlook as “bleak”.
- The report noted an increase of **24 million people facing food insecurity in 2023 compared to 2022.**
- The **report was a joint effort** by several **UN agencies, the European Union, various government bodies, and NGOs.**
- **Major food crises** were ongoing in **Afghanistan, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Nigeria, Syria, and Yemen.**

### National Centre for Polar and Ocean Research

- The **National Centre for Polar and Ocean Research report** details the conditions that have led to **significant changes in Antarctic ice.**
- These conditions have **caused an unprecedented hindrance in the expansion of Antarctic ice.**
- Additionally, these conditions have **led to the retreat of Antarctic ice.**

#### About National Centre for Polar and Ocean Research:

- It is an **autonomous research institute** under the **Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES)**, established in **1998.**
- It is **India’s premier R&D institution** responsible for the **country’s research activities in the Polar and Southern Ocean realms.**
- The institute is **tasked with planning and executing polar expeditions and scientific research in Antarctica, Arctic, Himalayas and Southern Ocean.**

- It undertakes research on strategically vital projects like **mapping of Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ), continental shelf margins and the Deep Ocean Mission.**
- It is **located in Vasco da Gama, Goa** and was formerly known as the **National Center for Antarctic and Ocean Research (NCAOR).**

### Sports News

#### Asian Under-20 Athletics Championships

- **Harshit Kumar** won the **men’s hammer throw gold** at the **21st Asian under-20 athletics championships** in Dubai.
  - He threw a **distance of 66.70m.**
- His teammate **Prateek** took the **bronze with a throw of 65.97m.**
- **Laxita Vinod Sandilea** won a **silver medal** in the **women’s 800m event.**
- The **Indian 4x400m mixed relay team**, comprising **P. Abiram, Kanista Teena, Navpreet Singh and Sandramol Sabu**, **claimed a silver medal** with a time of **3:24.86.**
- **China** won the **gold** in the **4x400m mixed relay race.**

### Science and Technology News

#### Pink hydrogen generation

- **Nuclear energy** can be **utilized to stimulate the production of ‘pink’ hydrogen** in India.
- This can be achieved by **amending the nuclear law.**

#### About Pink hydrogen:

- **Pink Hydrogen** is **generated through electrolysis powered by nuclear energy.**
- It can also be referred to as **purple hydrogen** or **red hydrogen.**
- The **very high temperatures from nuclear reactors could be used in other hydrogen productions by producing steam** for more efficient electrolysis or fossil gas-based steam methane reforming.
- Nuclear power offers significant **advantages** for pink hydrogen production, including **reducing production costs and emissions.**
- **Applications of Pink Hydrogen:**
  - Promising **replacement for fossil fuels** in the **cement industry, steel industry, aviation and heavy transportation.**

- Can be used as a **feedstock and energy source with no greenhouse gas emissions.**

### INCOIS study on Ocean floor

- The **Andaman and Nicobar Islands** and the **Maldives Islands** significantly influence the currents in the Indian Ocean, altering their direction and speed.
- Scientists at the **Indian National Centre for Ocean Information Services (INCOIS)** found that **deep-swirling patterns in the ocean depths are opposite to the surface currents.**

#### About Indian National Centre for Ocean Information Services (INCOIS):

- INCOIS was **established in 1999** as an **autonomous organization** under the **Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES).**
- **Mandate:** It serves as a **repository of ocean data** and information, providing operational oceanographic services, modeling, and advisory services.
- **Location:** INCOIS is located in **Hyderabad, Telangana.**
- **Objectives:**
  - To provide ocean information and advisory services to various stakeholders.
  - To develop and implement operational oceanography systems for the Indian Ocean region.
  - To conduct research in various aspects of oceanography and related fields.

### Advanced Composite Solar Sail System (ACS3)

- **NASA** has successfully launched its spacecraft.
- It is the **Advanced Composite Solar Sail System.**

#### Key points:

- **ACS3 is a NASA technology demonstration mission** launched in 2024.
- It is **designed to characterize solar sail structures technologies for future small spacecraft to engage in deep space missions** requiring long-duration, low-thrust propulsion.

### World Earth Day 2024

#### Why in the news?

- Earth day is dedicated to **demonstrating support for environmental protection.**

#### About World Earth Day 2024:

- **Date:** Earth Day will be observed on **April 22, 2024.**
- **Theme:** The theme for 2024 is "**Planet vs. Plastics**", focusing on **reducing plastic pollution and its impact on human and environmental health.**
- **Goals:** The aims include a **60% reduction in plastic production by 2040**, phasing out **single-use plastics by 2030**, and **promoting innovative technologies for a plastic-free future.**
- **Negotiations:** Concurrent with Earth Day, the fourth round of negotiations for the **United Nations Global Plastic Treaty** will take place, aiming for stringent commitments against plastic pollution.

#### Think:

- Know about the **Global Plastic Treaty**

### Places in news: Rafah crossing

- **Israeli strikes** occurred overnight in the **southern Gaza city of Rafah.**
- The strikes resulted in the death of 22 people.

#### About Rafah crossing:

- **Location and Function:** Rafah Crossing is the **only border crossing between Egypt and the Gaza Strip.** It serves as the **primary passage for Gazans to access the outside world** and for the delivery of humanitarian aid.
- **Control:** The crossing is controlled by **Egypt**, following an **agreement with Israel made in 2007.**

### Mpox or Monkeypox

- A study published on April 18 by **Nature Communications** extensively **sequenced the genome of the mpox virus** implicated in the **2022 outbreak** using **advanced genome sequencing technologies.**

#### About Mpox:

- It is a **DNA virus.**
- **Cause:** Mpox is caused by the **monkeypox virus**, which is a **member of the Orthopoxvirus genus** in the family **Poxviridae.**

#### Miscellaneous News

- **Transmission:** The virus can spread from person to person through close contact with respiratory secretions, skin lesions of an infected person, or recently contaminated objects. Transmission can also occur via droplets during prolonged face-to-face contact.
- **Vaccination:** Vaccines used for smallpox such as the JYNNEOS (also known as Imvamune or Imvanex) vaccine are effective against Mpox.

**Think:**

- Know about genome sequencing technologies.

**C-CAMP joins BFI Biome Virtual Network Program**

- The Centre for Cellular and Molecular Platforms (C-CAMP) has joined the Blockchain for Impact (BFI) Biome Virtual Network Program.
- The BFI-Biome Virtual Network aims to nurture cutting-edge biomedical science and innovation and accelerate the impact of transformative scientific advances in India.
- C-CAMP has a robust pipeline of biomedical innovations in several critical areas such as
  - Infectious disease diagnostics,
  - Antimicrobial resistance,
  - Cell therapy,
  - Immuno-oncology,
  - Regenerative tissues, and
  - Digital health tech.

**Places in news: Black sea**

- The Ukrainian army announced that it hit and damaged the Russian ship 'Kommunua' in the city of Sevastopol by the Black Sea.

**About Black sea:**

- The Black Sea is a large inland sea located at the southeastern extremity of Europe.
- It has various countries bordering it:
  - Ukraine,
  - Russia,
  - Georgia,
  - Turkey,
  - Bulgaria and
  - Romania.

**Glacial Lake Outburst Floods (GLOF)**

- ISRO's long-term satellite imagery from 1984 to 2023 shows significant changes in glacial lakes in the catchments of Indian Himalayan river basins.
- It provides valuable insights for understanding glacial lake dynamics, which are essential for assessing environmental impacts and developing strategies for Glacial Lake Outburst Floods (GLOF) risk management and climate change adaptation in glacial environments.

**About Glacial Lake Outburst Floods (GLOF):**

- Glacial Lake Outburst Floods (GLOF) are a phenomenon that occurs when large bodies of water, located in front of, on top of, or beneath a melting glacier, expand.
- These situations become more dangerous due to the fact that glacial lakes are primarily dammed by unstable ice or sediment composed of loose rock and debris.
- If the boundary around these lakes breaks, it can result in massive amounts of water rushing down the mountainside, potentially causing flooding in downstream areas.

**Kalesar Wildlife Sanctuary**

- The Supreme Court recently issued a stay on the construction of four proposed dams were to be constructed inside the Kalesar Wildlife Sanctuary.

**About Kalesar Wildlife Sanctuary:**

- **Location:** The sanctuary is situated in the Shivalik foothills of the Himalayas in Haryana, with the Yamuna River running to its east.
- **Topography:** The landscape varies from plains to hills, interspersed with narrow valleys locally called 'khols'. These valleys house seasonal rivulets, known as 'soats', which remain dry for most of the year.

**Tiger Conservation Coalition**

- The Sustainable Finance for Tiger Landscapes Conference was recently held.
- Bhutan and the Tiger Conservation Coalition made a significant commitment of US\$1 billion for the conservation of tigers.

**About Tiger Conservation Coalition:**

- The Tiger Conservation Coalition is a **group of NGOs** that has worked for many years to **conserve tigers**.
  - The **eight NGOs** in the coalition include
    - The Environmental Investigation Agency (EIA),
    - Fauna & Flora,
    - The International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN),
    - Panthera,
    - TRAFFIC,
    - United Nations Development Programme (UNDP),
    - Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS), and
    - World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF).
  - The members co-developed **Tiger Conservation Landscapes 3.0**, an **integrated habitat modelling system to measure and monitor changes in tiger habitat** at range-wide, national, biome, and landscape scales in near real-time.
- United Nations Development Programme (UNDP),
  - United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR),
  - European Union,
  - European Investment Bank, and
  - The Private Sector alliance for Disaster Resilient Societies (ARISE).

### Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI)

- The Prime Minister of India recently addressed the **6th edition of the International Conference on Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (ICDRI)**.
- The conference was organized by **Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI)**.

### About Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI):

- CDRI is a **multi-stakeholder global partnership** that includes **national governments, UN agencies and programmes, multilateral development banks and financing mechanisms, the private sector, and academic and knowledge institutions**.
- It was launched during the **United Nations Climate Action Summit** in **2019** in New York.
- The objective of CDRI is to **promote the resilience of infrastructure systems to climate and disaster risks**, thereby ensuring sustainable development.
- **The international organisations include**
  - The Asian Development Bank (ADB),
  - World Bank Group,