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A Crucial Piece of Advice!

We find several students discussing the issue of lack of time and digging out content regarding how to use every second of your time efficiently. Some of you must be thinking, we have 86400 seconds each day, so why should we worry about just a single one? **Does a single second hold that much importance? YES!** When it comes to competition, each & every second is very crucial.

The first question that might come to your mind is “Is that even possible to use each second of your time effectively?” or “Do I even have that much spare time?” Let's help you by looking over the top time drainers of your daily routine:

- On an average, a person spends 67 minutes per day eating and drinking beverages while watching their favorite TV series.
- Travelling is one of the most overlooked time drainers. CNBC claims that the average commute is a little over 50 minutes per day.
- 44% of people waste tons of time just sitting in the traffic, while others keep scrolling through their feeds.
- Digital Information World suggests that people spend 2 hours and 22 minutes on social media.
- More often unproductive chats on WhatsApp are the major time drainers where you waste your time on without even knowing how much time is spent.

Adding up all these, you spend nearly **4 hours** daily or 1/6th of your day doing a whole lot of **NOTHING!** Over the course of a week that amounts to over **28 hours** of wasted time, and more than **1460 hours** or **52,560,000 seconds** annually!! Scary! Isn't it?

But what if you could effectively utilize this time to validate the knowledge you just gained during your study sessions? How about competing with your friend in a live Current Affairs battle instead of just sitting and listening to the traffic horns? How about dominating the English language leaderboard instead of searching for a filter on Snapchat?

Time and tide wait for none! Team Smartkeeda perceived the importance of time and practice in your test preparation journey. We understood how each second can make a huge difference to your career. Therefore, we were determined to build an application that has the competence to save each second of your preparation time making you 100% productive. We worked diligently for 3-4 years to build an application with the single aim of making each second of your test preparation time, efficient.

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INDEX

National & States Affairs	6
International & States Affairs	9
Banking, Finance, Insurance & Economic Affairs	10
Defence Affairs	12
Sports & Games	13
Arts & Cultural Affairs	14
Science & Technology	14
Appointments & Resignations	17
Awards, Rewards, Recognition & Prizes	17
Obituaries	18
Meetings, Conferences & Summits	18
Ranks, Reports & Surveys	19
Amount & Agreements	20
Acquisitions & Mergers	20
MoUs, Collaborations & Partnership	21

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National & States Affairs

151. On February 8, Minister for Electronics & Information Technology (MeitY), Ashwini Vaishnaw, launched the “Digital Payments Utsav” and a comprehensive Campaign Plan. A comprehensive campaign “Digital Payments Utsav” was scheduled during February 9 to October 9, 2023, in coordination with all stakeholders for promotion of Digital Payments across India, with particular focus on G20 Digital Economy Working Group (DEWG) event cities namely - Lucknow, Hyderabad, Pune and Bengaluru. The event had release of G20 co-branded QR code (launched by Paytm), release of Coffee Table Book showcasing India’s journey global leadership in Digital Payments and digital inclusion, launch of innovative products from various banks that makes digital payments simplified and easy to use, flag off of Digital Payment Sandesh Yatra with the aim to make citizens aware about various digital payments solutions. 28 DigiDhan Awards were presented to top-performing banks, bankers, and fintech companies for their outstanding performance in the digital payments space. [{Read more}](#)

Smart Points:

- Ashwini Vaishnaw – launched “Digital Payments Utsav” with particular focus on G20 DEWG event cities
- G20 co-branded QR code was released at the event (launched by Paytm)
- 28 DigiDhan Awards were presented to top-performing banks, bankers & fintech companies
- **Ministry of Electronics & Information Technology:** Ashwini Vaishnaw | **Constituency –** Odisha
- **MoS in Ministry of Electronics & Information Technology:** Rajeev Chandrasekhar

152. On February 13, while addressing the 10th convocation of Babasaheb Bhimrao Ambedkar University, the President Droupadi Murmu said that India has the third largest start-up ecosystem in the world and Educational Institution should take full advantage of India’s ecosystem. They should encourage their students for research and innovation. She also said that our universities should develop themselves into a centre where new research is done for public welfare, a hub of Fourth Industrial Revolution, and an incubation centre for start-ups. [{Read more}](#)

Smart Points:

- President Droupadi Murmu – addressed the 10th convocation of Babasaheb Bhimrao Ambedkar University
- India has the 3rd largest start-up ecosystem in the world

153. On February 8, PM Narendra Modi wore a light blue “Sadri” jacket made of material recycled from plastic bottles in the Parliament. The jacket was presented to him by Indian Oil Corporation Ltd (IOCL) during India Energy Week in Bengaluru when he launched the uniforms under the “Unbottled” initiative of the company. “Unbottled” is a brand for sustainable garments launched for merchandise made from recycled polyester. [{Read more}](#)



Smart Points:

- Narendra Modi – wore a “Sadri” jacket made of material recycled from plastic bottles presented to him by IOCL
- PM Modi – launched uniforms under the “Unbottled” initiative of IOCL during India Energy Week in Bengaluru
- **HQs of IOCL –** New Delhi | **Chairperson –** Shrikant Madhav Vaidya | **Founded in –** 1959

154. In February 2023, India’s first glass igloo restaurant has opened in the ski resort town of Gulmarg in Jammu and Kashmir. The restaurant, called ‘Igloo Cafe’, offers diners a unique experience with a panoramic view of the Himalayas and starry sky through the transparent glass walls and ceiling. Kolahoi Green Heights, a hotel in Gulmarg, is the developer of this unusual glass igloo restaurant. They took this concept from Finland. [{Read more}](#)



Smart Points:

- Igloo Cafe – India’s first glass igloo restaurant opened in the ski resort town of Gulmarg in J & K
- Developer of the glass igloo restaurant – Kolahoi Green Heights (a hotel in Gulmarg)
- The concept is taken from – Finland
- J & K: Capital – Srinagar | Lt. Governor – Manoj Sinha
- Finland – Helsinki – Euro | PM – Sanna Marin

155. In February 2023, during the India Energy Week (IEW) 2023, Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched “E20” fuel at 84 retail outlets of Oil Marketing Companies in 11 States/UTs. This pilot project has been launched through Indian Oil Corporation Ltd (IOCL). E20 is a blend of 20% ethanol with petrol. The government aims to achieve a complete 20% blending of ethanol by 2025. The Prime Minister also flagged off the Green Mobility Rally to witness participation of vehicles running on green energy sources. He also unveiled a Solar and Conventional Energy-powered Cooking System. [{Read more}](#)

Smart Points:

- During the IEW 2023, Narendra Modi launched :
 - “E20” fuel at 84 retail outlets in 11 States/UTs through IOCL
 - Green Mobility Rally
 - A Solar and Conventional Energy-powered Cooking System
- E20 is a blend of 20% ethanol with petrol
- HQs of IOCL – New Delhi | Chairperson – Shrikant Madhav Vaidya | Founded in – 1959

156. On February 9, Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M. K. Stalin launched the second phase of “Puthumai Pen” scheme for girl students. 1,860 girls received bank passbooks and ATM cards under this scheme. Under the Moovalur Ramamirtham Ammaiyar Higher Education Assurance scheme, titled ‘Pudhumai Penn’ scheme, girls studying from Classes VI to XII in government schools would receive ₹1,000 every month until they complete their undergraduate degree, diploma and ITI courses. [{Read more}](#)

Smart Points:

- Tamil Nadu – launched 2nd phase of “Puthumai Pen” scheme for girl students
- Under the scheme girls studying from Classes VI to XII in government schools would receive ₹1,000 every month
- The girls would receive the monry until they complete undergraduate degree, diploma & ITI courses
- Tamil Nadu: Capital – Chennai | CM – Muthuvel Karunanidhi Stalin | Governor – Ravindra Narayan Ravi

157. On February 9, the Geological Survey of India (GSI), for the first time, discovered Lithium inferred resources of 5.9 million tonnes in the Salal-Haimana area of the Reasi District of Jammu & Kashmir. This was one of 51 mineral blocks in 11 Indian states that were handed over to the respective state governments during the 62nd Central Geological Programming Board (CGPB) meeting held in February 2023. The meeting also discussed the proposed annual programme for the ensuing field season of 2023-24, which will see GSI taking up 966 programmes comprising 318 mineral exploration projects, 12 marine mineral investigation projects, 55 programmes on geoinformatics, 140 programmes on fundamental and multidisciplinary geosciences, and 155 programmes for training and institutional capacity building. The Central Geological Programming Board (CGPB) is an important platform of the GSI wherein the Annual Field Season Program (FSP) of GSI is placed for discussion for synergy and to avoid duplication of work. [{Read more}](#)



Smart Points:

- GSI – discovered Lithium inferred resources of 5.9 million tonnes in Reasi District of J & K
- HQs of GSI – Kolkata, West Bengal | Director General – S. Raju
- J & K: Capital – Srinagar | Lt. Governor – Manoj Sinha

158. On February 10, Pawan Hans has launched 6 new helicopter routes in Assam under the 'UDAN (Ude Desh ka Aam Nagrik) Scheme' of the Ministry of Civil Aviation (MoCA) to promote tourism and enhance connectivity in the state. These new helicopter services connect Guwahati to different parts of Assam, including Majuli, Tawang, and Dibrugarh. The UDAN scheme aims to promote regional connectivity in India and has been instrumental in enhancing air connectivity to remote and underdeveloped regions of India. For RCS UDAN Services, Pawan Hans has deployed one Twin Engine Dauphin Helicopter having a seating capacity of up to 11 passengers. [{Read more}](#)

Smart Points:

- Pawan Hans – launched 6 helicopter routes in Assam under 'UDAN Scheme' to promote tourism & enhance connectivity
- UDAN – Ude Desh ka Aam Nagrik
- HQs of Pawan Hans Ltd – Noida, Uttar Pradesh | Chairman & MD – Sanjeev Razdan
- Assam: Capital – Dispur | CM – Himanta Biswa Sarma | Governor – Gulab Chand Kataria

159. On February 11, the Uttar Pradesh government has developed a portal called "Family ID - One Family One Identity" to implement the 'One job per family' policy. The portal will issue a unique identity to each family, which will be used to create a comprehensive database of family units in the state. The 'Parivar Pehchan' (Family ID) database will help in the efficient management of beneficiary schemes, targeting of eligible individuals, transparent operation, and simplification of government facilities for the public. Families not eligible for ration cards or not covered by the National Food Security Scheme (NFSS) will be issued a 12-digit unique family ID through the Family ID portal. [{Read more}](#)

Smart Points:

- UP – developed "Family ID - One Family One Identity" portal to implement the 'One job per family' policy
- The 'Parivar Pehchan' database will help in simplification of government facilities for public
- Families not eligible for ration cards or not covered by NFSS will be issued a 12-digit unique family ID
- UP: Capital – Lucknow | CM – Yogi Adityanath | Governor – Anandiben Patel

160. On February 8, the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) has pushed back the Sangam age to 800 BCE based on findings from the first two phases of excavation at the Keeladi archaeological site along the Vaigai river, about 13 km from Madurai, Tamil Nadu. The period of the Sangam era has been placed between 8th century BCE to 3rd century CE in South India, based on the results of stratigraphy of the cultural deposits found in the first two phases. Sangam period or age (particularly referring to the third Sangam period) is the period of the history of ancient Tamil Nadu, Kerala and parts of Sri Lanka. [{Read more}](#)

Smart Points:

- ASI – pushed back the Sangam age to 800 BCE
- It is based on findings from 1st two phases of excavation at Keeladi archaeological site along Vaigai river, Tamil Nadu
- Sangam era – is placed between 8th century BCE to 3rd century CE in South India
- Sangam age – period of history of ancient Tamil Nadu, Kerala & parts of Sri Lanka
- HQs of ASI – New Delhi | Director General – V. Vidyavathi



161. On February 10, Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare (MoA&FW) has approved the commercial release of nano-diammonium phosphate (nano-DAP), which is expected to reduce import dependence and subsidy for fertilisers. Nano-DAP will be produced by India Farmers Fertiliser Cooperative (IFFCO) and Coromandel International. The Indian Council for Agricultural Research (ICAR) has recommended provisional release of nano-DAP for one year, following completion of biosafety and toxicity studies. Currently, the cost of one bag of conventional DAP is Rs 1,350, while the actual cost of a bag is Rs 4,000. More than half of India's DAP requirements are imported, with West Asia and Jordan being the primary sources. IFFCO will be selling 500-ml bottles of nano-DAP for around Rs 600-650, which will have the same effectiveness as a bag of conventional soil nutrient. [{Read more}](#)

Smart Points:

- MoA&FW – approved commercial release of nano-DAP
- DAP – **Diammonium Phosphate**
- Nano-DAP – to be produced by IFFCO & Coromandel International
- 500-ml bottles of nano-DAP will have the same effectiveness as a bag of conventional soil nutrient
- **Minister of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare: Narendra Singh Tomar** | Constituency – Morena, Madhya Pradesh
- **MoS in Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare: Shobha Karandlaje & Kailash Choudhary**
- **HQs of IFFCO – New Delhi** | Chairman – Dileep Sanghani

162. On February 9, Rural Development and Panchayati Raj Minister Giriraj Singh launched the “Mission Antyodaya Survey 2022-23” to assess the outcome of various development schemes in rural areas. Singh also launched a portal and a mobile application with geo-tag feature for 36 assets in villages, developed in consultation with the NIC (National Informatics Centre)-DRD. The Department of Rural Development (DRD) has been conducting the Mission Antyodaya Survey across all gram panchayats in the country since 2017-18 to measure the outcomes through convergence of various schemes. The survey aims to support participatory planning for the Gram Panchayat Development Plan (GPDP) which will enhance citizenship, create alliances of people's institutions and groups, and improve governance at the local level. The survey will collect village-level data on 183 indicators under 216 data points of 21 sectors, and the questionnaire has been translated into 13 regional languages. [{Read more}](#)

Smart Points:

- Giriraj Singh – launched the “Mission Antyodaya Survey 2022-23”
- He also launched a portal & a mobile application with geo-tag feature developed in consultation with NIC-DRD
- DRD – conducting Mission Antyodaya Survey in India since 2017-18
- **Minister of Panchayati Raj: Giriraj Singh** | Constituency – Begusarai, Bihar
- **Mos in Ministry of Panchayati Raj: Kapil Moreshwar Patil**

International Affairs

163. On February 6, Secretary of Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Apurva Chandra, announced that 108 Buddhist pilgrims from Republic of Korea will walk over 1,100 kms over 43 days as part of walking pilgrimage being organized by Sangwol Society of South Korea. The tourists will visit Buddhist pilgrimage sites in Uttar Pradesh and Bihar in India and subsequently move to Nepal. The pilgrimage aims to increase friendship and collaboration between the two countries. The occasion gains importance as India and South Korea celebrate 50 years of establishment of diplomatic ties. [{Read more}](#)



Smart Points:

- 108 Buddhist pilgrims from South Korea will visit Buddhist pilgrimage sites in UP & Bihar in India & then move to Nepal
- This walking pilgrimage is organized by – Sangwol Society of South Korea
- India + South Korea = completed 50 years of establishment of diplomatic ties
- South Korea – Seoul – Korean Republic won | President – Yoon Suk-yeol
- Ministry of Information & Broadcasting: Anurag Singh Thakur | Constituency – Hamirpur, Himachal Pradesh
- Ministry of Education – Dharmendra Pradhan (Constituency – Deogarh, Madhya Pradesh)

164. In February 2023, India launched “Operation Dost” to extend humanitarian aid to 7.8-magnitude earthquake-hit Turkey and Syria. To conduct immediate rescue operations under Operation Dost, India has sent search and rescue teams, mainly 3 teams of the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF), a field hospital, materials, medicines, and equipment. Seven four-wheeled vehicles and trucks, apart from four canines, were sent along with the three teams that were airlifted by an Indian Air Force (IAF) C-17 heavy lift aircraft. [{Read more}](#)

Smart Points:

- India – launched “Operation Dost” to extend humanitarian aid to 7.8-magnitude earthquake-hit Turkey and Syria

Banking, Finance, Insurance & Economic Affairs

165. On February 10, Kris Peeters, Vice-President of the European Investment Bank (EIB), announced that the EIB has joined the India H2 Alliance and pledged to support green hydrogen deployment in India. The EIB and India H2 Alliance will work together to develop India’s green hydrogen economy, with the EIB providing financial assistance of up to €1 billion, subject to Indian government approvals. The India H2 Alliance was launched to drive India’s hydrogen economy forward and will work to create a hydrogen ecosystem in India. The partnership with the EIB will help India achieve its energy goals and promote the use of clean energy in the country. This also underpins the Indian government’s confirmation of a \$2 billion public finance allocation for the ‘National Hydrogen Mission’. [{Read more}](#)

Smart Points:

- EIB – joined India H2 Alliance & pledged to support green hydrogen deployment in India
- EIB – will provide financial assistance of up to €1 billion
- Indian government confirmed \$2 billion public finance allocation for ‘National Hydrogen Mission’
- HQs of European Investment Bank – Luxembourg | President – Werner Hoyer | Vice President – Kris Peeters

166. On February 10, HDFC Asset Management Co. Ltd, the investment manager of HDFC Mutual Fund, has launched three new Exchange-Traded Fund (ETF) schemes: HDFC S&P BSE 500 ETF, HDFC NIFTY Midcap 150 ETF, and HDFC NIFTY Smallcap 250 ETF. These ETFs offer diversified exposure to large, mid and smallcap segments with lower volatility than most of their underlying constituents, providing a simple and efficient way for investors to gain exposure to these segments. [{Read more}](#)

Smart Points:

- HDFC AMC (HDFC Mutual Fund) – launched 3 new Exchange-Traded Fund (ETF) schemes
- HQs of HDFC AMC – Mumbai, Maharashtra | MD & CEO – Navneet Munot



167. On February 8, Bajaj Finance launched “Insurance Mall” for its customers to ensure an Easy-buy experience. The new portal offers a plethora of policies and plans in the core insurance segment and also the company’s one-of-its-kind category of Pocket Insurance and Subscription. The mall offers a wide range of insurance products from leading insurance companies, including health insurance, life insurance, motor insurance, and home insurance. The insurance mall will provide customers with a one-stop solution for all their insurance needs, with the option to compare and choose policies based on their requirements. [{Read more}](#)

Smart Points:

- Bajaj Finance – launched “Insurance Mall” for its customers to ensure an Easy-buy experience
- HQs of Bajaj Finserv – Pune, Maharashtra | Chairman & MD – Sanjiv Bajaj

168. On February 10, Kotak Mahindra Bank will acquire all equity shares of Sonata Finance Pvt Ltd, a non-banking financial company-microfinance institution, for Rs 537 Crore, subject to regulatory approvals from the RBI. The acquisition will make Sonata Finance a wholly-owned subsidiary of the bank and allow it to expand its operations in rural and semi-urban markets in northern India. [{Read more}](#)

Smart Points:

- Kotak Mahindra Bank – to acquire all equity shares of Sonata Finance Pvt Ltd for Rs 537 Cr (awaiting RBI approval)
- HQs of Kotak Mahindra Bank – Mumbai, MH | MD & CEO – Uday Kotak | Tagline – “Let’s make money simple”

169. On February 10, Ujjivan Small Finance Bank has launched “Hello Ujjivan”, India’s first voice and visual vernacular banking app. The app aims to make banking services more accessible to customers who prefer regional languages. It provides customers with the option to access banking services using voice commands and vernacular languages. Hello Ujjivan, co-created with Navana.AI, is accessible by voice in 8 regional languages, including Hindi, Marathi, Bengali, Tamil, Gujarati, Kannada, Oriya, and Assamese. Hello Ujjivan also offers a range of features, including fund transfers, bill payments, and balance checks. [{Read more}](#)

Smart Points:

- Ujjivan SFB – launched “Hello Ujjivan”, India’s first voice & visual vernacular banking app
- Hello Ujjivan – co-created with Navana.AI
- HQs of Ujjivan SFB – Bengaluru, Karnataka | MD & CEO – Ittira Davis | Founded in – 2004

170. On February 9, Bank of India Mutual Funds has introduced a new fund offer called “Bank of India Multi Cap Fund”, which allows investors to diversify their portfolios by investing in large cap, mid cap, and small cap stocks. The NFO was available for subscription from February 10 to February 24, with a minimum initial investment of ₹5,000. The aim of the fund was to generate long-term capital appreciation by investing in equity and equity-related securities across various market capitalizations. The scheme will invest a minimum of 25% of its total assets in large, mid, and small-cap companies. It will be benchmarked against S&P BSE 500 TRI and managed by Mr. Nitin Gosar, Fund Manager. [{Read more}](#)

Smart Points:

- Bank of India Mutual Funds – introduced a new fund offer called “Bank of India Multi Cap Fund”
- The scheme will invest a minimum of 25% of its total assets in large, mid, & small-cap companies
- It is benchmarked against – S&P BSE 500 TRI & managed by – Mr. Nitin Gosar, Fund Manager
- HQs of BOI – Mumbai, Maharashtra | CEO – Atanu Kumar Das | Tagline – “Relationship Beyond Banking”



171. On February 8, MobiKwik, India's leading fintech, has become the first fintech app to support RuPay Credit Cards on UPI. The development brings a new level of convenience to the millions of Indians who use UPI for their daily transactions. With RuPay Credit Cards now linked directly to UPI IDs, MobiKwik's customers can easily make payments to merchants by scanning the UPI QR code and using UPI PIN for payment authentication. [{Read more}](#)

Smart Points:

- MobiKwik – become 1st fintech app to support RuPay Credit Cards on UPI
- With RuPay Credit Cards linked to UPI IDs, customers can make payments by scanning UPI QR code & using UPI PIN
- HQs of MobiKwik – Gurgaon, Haryana | MD & CEO – Bipin Preet Singh

172. On February 8, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) Governor Shaktikanta Das announced that the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC), in its February meeting, projected real GDP growth for FY24 at 6.4%. The first advance estimate projected FY23 GDP growth at 7%. The MPC has forecast Q1FY24 growth at 7.8%, Q2 at 6.2%, Q3 at 6% and Q4 at 5.8%. The RBI MPC raised repo rate by 25 bps to 6.5%. The Bank Rate & Reverse Repo Rate were unchanged at 6.50% & 3.35% respectively. Standing Deposit Facility (SDF) Rate & Marginal Standing Facility (MSF) Rate were unchanged at 6.25% & 6.75% respectively. While Cash Reserve Ratio (CRR) & Statutory Liquidity Ratio (SLR) were unchanged at 4.50% & 18% respectively. [{Read more}](#)

Smart Points:

- RBI's 6th Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) report – released on February 8, 2023
- Real GDP growth for FY24 – 6.4% | 1st advance estimate projected GDP growth for FY23 – 7%
- Forecast FY24 growth: Q1 – 7.8% | Q2 – 6.2% | Q3 – 6% | Q4 at 5.8%.
- Latest rates:
 - Repo rate – 6.5% | Reverse Repo Rate – 3.35% | Bank Rate – 6.50% | SDF – 6.25% | MSF – 6.75%
 - CRR – 4.50% | SLR – 18%

173. On February 6, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has extended the validity of authorization issued to Vakrangee to setup, own and operate White Label ATMs in India. The validity has been extended till March 31, 2024. The company currently operates 6,283 White Label ATMs and 77% of these are in Tier 4 and 6 locations. White Label ATMs are ATMs set up, owned and operated by non-banks. Non-bank ATM operators are authorised under the 'Payment & Settlement Systems Act, 2007' by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI). [{Read more}](#)

Smart Points:

- RBI – extended validity of authorization issued to Vakrangee to setup & operate White Label ATMs till March 31, 2024
- Non-bank ATM operators are authorised under – 'Payment & Settlement Systems Act, 2007' by RBI
- HQs of Vakrangee – Mumbai | Chairman and MD: Dinesh Nandwana | Founded – 28 May 1990

Defence Affairs

174. On February 8, Ministry of Defence (MoD) approved the proposal for indigenous manufacturing of 41 sets of Modular Bridges for the Corps of Engineers of the Indian Army. According to the Ministry of Defence, these bridges have been designed and developed by Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) and shall be produced by Larsen & Toubro (L&T) as DRDO-nominated production agency. The contract for the procurement of Modular Bridges was signed with L&T on 8 February, 2023 at an estimated cost of over ₹2,585 Crore. The modular bridges will replace the manually launched Medium Girder Bridges (MGB) that are currently being used in the Indian Army. [{Read more}](#)



Smart Points:

- MoD – approved proposal for indigenous manufacturing of 41 sets of Modular Bridges for Engineers of Indian Army
- Bridges are designed by – DRDO | Production Agency – Larsen & Toubro | Estimated cost – ₹2,585 Cr
- HQs of Indian Army – New Delhi | Chief – Lt. Gen. Manoj Pande | Vice Chief – Lt. General Baggavalli Somashekar Raju
- HQs of DRDO – New Delhi | Chairman – Samir V. Kamat | Established in – 1958

175. On February 10, Ministry of Defence announced that Ammunition Cum Torpedo Cum Missile (ACTCM) Barge, 'Yard 125' (LSAM 15), was launched by Capt Prashant Saxena, AWPS (Mbi) at M/s Suryadipta Projects Pvt Ltd in Thane. Suryadipta Projects will be constructing 11 ACTCM barges for the Indian Navy. The Indian Navy will use the ACTCM barges to undertake the mission needs for embarking or disembarking ammunition, torpedo and missile. [{Read more}](#)

Smart Points:

- Capt Prashant Saxena – launched Ammunition Cum Torpedo Cum Missile Barge, 'Yard 125' (LSAM 15) in Thane
- Suryadipta Projects – will be constructing 11 ACTCM barges for the Indian Navy
- HQs of Indian Navy – Delhi | Chief – Admiral R. Hari Kumar | Vice Chief – S. N. Ghormade

176. As of February 2023, Indian Army is undertaking multiple welfare activities for the children living in remote areas of Ladakh as part of 'Operation SADBHAVANA'. The welfare activities include running of Army Goodwill Schools, Infrastructure Development Projects and Education Tours etc. To improve the standard of Education and to provide them with quality education, Indian Army is presently running 7 Army Goodwill Schools (AGS) under 'Operation SADBHAVANA' in Ladakh Region. More than 2,200 Students are currently studying in these schools. In addition, a total of Rs 8.82 Crore of 'Operation SADBHAVANA' funds have been allotted for Ladakh during FY23. [{Read more}](#)

Smart Points:

- Indian Army – conducted multiple activities for children in remote areas of Ladakh as part of 'Operation SADBHAVANA'
- Indian Army is presently running 7 Army Goodwill Schools (AGS) under 'Operation SADBHAVANA' in Ladakh Region
- A total of Rs 8.82 Cr of 'Operation SADBHAVANA' funds allotted for Ladakh during FY23
- HQs of Indian Army – New Delhi | Chief – Lt. Gen. Manoj Pande | Vice Chief – Lt. General Baggavalli Somashekar Raju

Sports & Games

177. On February 9, Indian MMA fighter Anshul Jubli won the "Road to UFC" finals by defeating Jeka Saragih of Indonesia at the UFC Apex in Nevada, US and securing a UFC contract in the lightweight division. With this win, Jubli became the second Indian after Bharat Khandare to sign a UFC contract. [{Read more}](#)



Smart Points:

- Anshul Jubli (MMA Fighter) – won "Road to UFC" finals (defeating – Jeka Saragih of Indonesia)
- Jubli – 2nd Indian after Bharat Khandare to sign a UFC contract

178. On February 10, the 8th edition of the “ICC Women’s T20 World Cup 2023” commenced in South Africa. The tournament started with host South Africa taking on Sri Lanka in Group 1 in Cape Town. The women’s T20 World Cup was first played in 2009 in England, two years after the first men’s edition. However, Australia has emerged as the dominant team in the tournament, reaching the final in the subsequent six editions. [{Read more}](#)



Smart Points:

- 8th “ICC Women’s T20 World Cup 2023” commenced in – South Africa
- The women’s T20 World Cup was first played in 2009 in England

Arts & Cultural Affairs

179. On February 9, Union Ministry of Culture organised the “Rashtriya Sanskriti Mahotsav-2023” at Azad Maidan in Mumbai, from 11 to 19 February. The Mahotsav aims to promote National Unity and Integrity through cultural exchange. The Mahotsav included a variety of cultural programs such as dance, music, theater, and folk art. More than 350 folk and tribal artists from all over India along with 300 local folk artists, some transgender and differently-abled artists participated in the nine-day event. The event was held in collaboration with the Maharashtra government. [{Read more}](#)

Smart Points:

- Ministry of Culture – organised the “Rashtriya Sanskriti Mahotsav-2023” at Azad Maidan in Mumbai
- The Mahotsav aims to promote National Unity and Integrity through cultural exchange
- Minister of Culture: G. Kishan Reddy | Constituency – Secunderabad, Telangana
- MoS in Minister of Culture: Arjun Ram Meghwal & Meenakashi Lekhi

Science & Technology

180. On February 7, Chinese tech-giant Baidu announced to launch its own ChatGPT-style AI chatbot called “Ernie”. Ernie, meaning ‘Enhanced Representation through Knowledge Integration’, is a large AI-powered language model introduced initially in 2019. It has gradually grown to be able to perform tasks including language understanding, language generation, and text-to-image generation. [{Read more}](#)

Smart Points:

- Baidu – announced to launch its own ChatGPT-style AI chatbot called “Ernie”
- Ernie – Enhanced Representation through Knowledge Integration
- Ernie – a large AI-powered language model introduced initially in 2019
- China – Beijing – Renminbi | President – Xi Jinping

181. On February 6, an Israeli team developed a bio-hybrid robot with a biological sensor that utilises the antennae of locusts, which could be used to help advance disease diagnosis and improve security checks. Locusts possess an acute sense of smell, which has been harnessed by the researchers in Tel Aviv University to create a robot with far greater sensitivity than existing electronic sniffers. [{Read more}](#)



Smart Points:

- Israel – developed a bio-hybrid robot with a biological sensor that utilises the antennae of locusts
- It will help advance disease diagnosis and improve security checks
- Israel – Jerusalem – Israeli Shekel | President – Isaac Herzog | PM – Benjamin Netanyahu

182. On February 10, the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) launched its small satellite launch vehicle, the Small Satellite Launch Vehicle-D2 (SSLV-D2), from Satish Dhawan Space Centre (SDSC), carrying ISRO's earth observation satellite EOS-07 and two co-passenger satellites Janus-1 and AzaadiSat-2. The launch is significant as it is the second flight of the SSLV-D2 and has been specifically designed to cater to the growing demand for small satellite launches. The launch vehicle uses three solid stages followed by a liquid-fuel-based Velocity Trimming Module (VTM) to place satellites in orbit. Janus-1 is a technology demonstrator satellite built by United States-based Antaris and its Indian partners XDLinks and Ananth Technologies. While AzaadiSat2 is built by 750 girl students from across India. [{Read more}](#)

Smart Points:

- ISRO – launched SSLV-D2 from Satish Dhawan Space Centre carrying ISRO's EOS-07 & 2 satellites Janus-1 & AzaadiSat-2
- It was 2nd flight of SSLV-D2
- Janus-1 is a technology demonstrator satellite built by = Antaris (US) + XDLinks & Ananth Technologies (India)
- AzaadiSat2 – built by 750 girl students from across India
- HQs of ISRO – Bengaluru, Karnataka | Director – S. Somanath | Formed on – August 15, 1969

183. On February 8, the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO), along with the Indian Navy, has conducted an important trial for the Gaganyaan, human space flight mission. They carried out initial recovery trials of the Crew Module in the Navy's Water Survival Test Facility (WSTF) in Kochi, Kerala. A Crew Module Recovery Model (CMRM), that simulates the mass, center of gravity, outer dimensions, and external of the actual Crew Module at touchdown, was used for the trials. The Gaganyaan project envisages demonstration of human spaceflight capability by launching a crew of three members to an orbit of 400 km for a three day mission and bringing them back safely to earth, by landing in Indian sea waters. The first trial (uncrewed flight) for Gaganyaan is being planned by the end of 2023 or early 2024. This will be followed by sending Vyom Mitra, a humanoid and then with the crew onboard. [{Read more}](#)

Smart Points:

- ISRO + Indian Navy = carried out CMRM trials in Navy's Facility (WSTF) in Kochi
- The trials are conducted for – Gaganyaan, human space flight mission
- Gaganyaan project – to launch a crew of 3 members to 400 km orbit for 3 day mission & bring them back safely to earth
- The first trial (uncrewed flight) for Gaganyaan is being planned by the end of 2023 or early 2024
- After uncrewed flight, Vyom Mitra, a humanoid and then with the crew onboard will be sent
- HQs of Indian Navy – Delhi | Chief – Admiral R. Hari Kumar | Vice Chief – S. N. Ghormade
- HQs of ISRO – Bengaluru, Karnataka | Director – S. Somanath | Formed on – August 15, 1969





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Appointments & Resignations

184. On February 8, Madras High Court Acting Chief Justice (ACJ) T. Raja administered oath of office to L. Victoria Gowri, P. B. Balaji, K. K. Ramakrishnan, R. Kalaimathi and K. Govindarajan Thilakavadi as additional judges of the High Court for a period of two years. With the appointment of five new judges, the working strength of the High Court had increased from 52 to 57 as against the sanctioned strength of 75 judges. The number of women judges in the court also increased to an all time high of 14 after the induction of the three new women judges. [{Read more}](#)

Smart Points:

- T. Raja (ACJ Madras HC) – administered oath of office to 5 new judges (including 3 women) as additional judges of HC
- Now working strength of Madras HC – 57 (against 75) | Women Judges – 14 (all time high)
- 5 newly appointed judges are:
 - L. Victoria Gowri, P. B. Balaji, K. K. Ramakrishnan, R. Kalaimathi & K. Govindarajan Thilakavadi
- Chief Justice of Madras High Court – T. Raja (Acting)

185. On February 10, Maia Sandu, President of Moldova, appointed presidential adviser Dorin Recean as the new Prime Minister of Moldova. His appointment came after Natalia Gavrilita's resignation from the post due to a political crisis caused by Russian aggression. Natalia was the 3rd woman PM of Moldova. [{Read more}](#)



Smart Points:

- Dorin Recean – appointed as the new PM of Moldova (succeeding - Natalia Gavrilita)
- Natalia was the 3rd woman PM of Moldova
- [Moldova – Chişinău – Moldovan leu](#) | [PM – Dorin Recean](#) | [President – Maia Sandu](#)

186. On February 9, Pfizer India has appointed Meenakshi Nevatia as an Additional Director and new Managing Director for 5 years. Nevatia will take over from outgoing MD S Sridhar on April 1, 2023. Nevatia, who is currently the CFO of Pfizer India, has been with the company for more than two decades and has experience in various roles in finance, commercial and business operations of companies including McKinsey & Co, Novartis Pharmaceuticals, and more recently with Stryker Corporation. [{Read more}](#)



Smart Points:

- Pfizer India – appointed Meenakshi Nevatia as an Additional Director & new MD for 5 years (replacing - S Sridhar)

Awards, Rewards, Recognition & Prizes

187. On February 10, Maharashtra's Akshata Rakshe was announced the winner of "Taj Miss India 2023" at the grand finale of Taj Miss & Mrs India 2023. The ceremony was held at Hotel Sadanand Regency in Balewadi, Pune. Natasha Sadaphal was announced as the first runner-up and Isha won the title of second runner-up. The winner was selected from the top 40 finalists. [{Read more}](#)



Smart Points:

- Akshata Rakshe (Maharashtra) – winner of "Taj Miss India 2023"
- Natasha Sadaphal – 1st runner-up | Isha – 2nd runner-up
- The ceremony was held at – Hotel Sadanand Regency in Balewadi, Pune

188. On February 8, former German Chancellor Angela Merkel has been awarded the “Felix Houphouet-Boigny UNESCO Peace Prize” for her 2015 decision to allow more than 1.2 million refugees into Germany, including those from Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan, and Eritrea. The prize is awarded each year to individuals or organizations that have made significant efforts to promote, research or secure peace. In 2015, Germany had implemented an ‘Open-door’ refugee policy. The honour, which is officially called “Felix Houphouet-Boigny-Unesco Peace Prize”, is named after the former president of Ivory Coast. It has been awarded each year since 1989. [{Read more}](#)



Smart Points:

- Angela Merkel (former German Chancellor) – awarded “Felix Houphouet-Boigny UNESCO Peace Prize”
- Germany had implemented an ‘Open-door’ refugee policy in 2015
- Official name of award – “Felix Houphouet-Boigny-Unesco Peace Prize” | Named after former president of Ivory Coast
- [Germany – Berlin – Euro](#) | [President – Frank-Walter Steinmeier](#) | [Chancellor – Olaf Scholz](#)

Obituaries

189. In February 2023, B.K.S. Verma, a popular artist known for his romantic style of art and stage performances, passed away at the age of 74. He was born in Karnur village, Attibele, on the outskirts of Bengaluru in 1949 and was born into a family of artists, with his father being a musician and his mother a painter. Mr. Verma was awarded the Rajyotsava Award in 2001 and an honorary doctorate by Bangalore University in 2011. [{Read more}](#)



Smart Points:

- B.K.S. Verma (Karnataka) – a Popular Artist – passed away (Rajyotsava Award in 2001)

190. On February 10, Legendary American pop composer, songwriter, and pianist, Burt Bacharach, passed away in Los Angeles, US. Bacharach was a proud recipient of Oscars, Emmys, and Grammys. Some of his memorable musical compositions are "What The World Needs Now", "Raindrops Keep Falling on My Head", "Walk On By", and "Say A Little Prayer". [{Read more}](#)



Smart Points:

- Burt Bacharach (US) – Pop Composer, Songwriter & Pianist – passed away (recipient of Oscars, Emmys & Grammys)

Meetings, Conferences & Summits

191. The World Government Summit 2023 began on February 13 in Dubai, UAE. The Summit was held under the theme of “Shaping Future Governments”. It brought together global thought leaders, global experts, and decision makers to share and contribute to the development of tools, policies, and models that will be critical in shaping future governments. The Summit featured 20 Presidents from various countries. This year’s edition brought together over 250 ministers from around the world, as well as over 10,000 government officials, thought leaders, and global experts. [{Read more}](#)

Smart Points:

- World Government Summit 2023 – held in Dubai, UAE
- Theme – “Shaping Future Governments”



Ranks, Reports & Surveys

192. In February 2023, according to production data of Food and Agriculture Organization Corporate Statistical Database (FAOSTAT), India is the highest milk producer i.e., rank first position in the world contributing 24% of global milk production in the year 2021-22. This information was given by Parshottam Rupala, Union Minister of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying in a written reply in Lok Sabha. India is followed by the USA & China in global milk production. [{Read more}](#)

Smart Points:

- FAOSTAT data:
- India – highest milk producer in the world contributing 24% of global milk production in the year 2021-22
- India is followed by the USA & China
- HQs of FAO – Rome, Italy | DG – QU Dongyu | Formation – 16th October, 1945

193. On February 9, India's national accreditation system, under the Quality Council of India (QCI), has been ranked 5th in the world in the "2021 Global Quality Infrastructure Index (GQII)". The GQII measures the relative development of countries' quality infrastructure (QI) and ranks the 184 economies in the world based on their QI. India's overall QI system ranking continues to be in the Top 10, at the 10th position, with the standardization system (under BIS) at the 9th position and the metrology system (under NPL-CSIR) at the 21st position in the world. The rise in India's accreditation ranking is attributed to the steady growth of conformity assessment bodies (CABs) under the national accreditation system, which are testing & medical labs, product certification bodies, and management systems certification bodies. [{Read more}](#)

Smart Points:

- India's national accreditation system – ranked 5th in the world in "2021 Global Quality Infrastructure Index (GQII)"
- India's overall QI system – 10th position | Standardization system – 9th (BIS) | Metrology system – 21st (NPL-CSIR)
- HQs of QCI – New Delhi | Chairman – Jaxay Shah | Secretary General – Dr. Ravi P. Singh | Established – 1997

194. On February 11, India's ranking for aviation safety oversight has significantly improved, jumping from 112th to 55th place under the International Civil Aviation Organization's (ICAO) Universal Safety Oversight Audit Programme (USOAP) Continuous Monitoring Approach. An ICAO Coordinated Validation Mission (ICVM) was conducted in India in November 2022, and the team assessed the Effective Implementation (EI) of 6 different areas. The ICAO team reviewed the progress in addressing 137 Protocol Questions (PQs) and subsequently. The USOAP audit of India's civil aviation system in 2017 generated an overall EI of 55.15%, which increased to 69.95% during the ICVM conducted in 2018 & 85.65% in 2022. [{Read more}](#)

Smart Points:

- As per the ICAO's Universal Safety Oversight Audit Programme (USOAP) Continuous Monitoring Approach:
 - India's ranking for aviation safety oversight has significantly improved to 55th position (from 112th)
 - USOAP audit of India's civil aviation system in 2022 generated an overall EI of 85.65%
- HQs of ICAO – Montreal, Canada | Council President – Salvatore Sciacchitano | Members – 193



Amount & Agreements

195. On February 10, the Asian Development Bank (ADB) has approved a USD 130 million (over Rs 1,072 crore) loan to increase agricultural productivity and promote horticulture agribusinesses to raise farmers' income in Himachal Pradesh under the "Himachal Pradesh Subtropical Horticulture, Irrigation, and Value Addition Project". The project aims to increase the income and resilience of at least 15,000 farm households in seven districts of the state by improving on-farm irrigation and water management, introducing modern agronomic techniques and skills, and creating a state-level Farmer Producer Company to lead agribusiness development. Farmers will be organised into cluster-wide Community Horticulture Production and Marketing Associations (CHPMAs) and district-wide CHPMA cooperative societies. [{Read more}](#)

Smart Points:

- ADB – approved \$130 million loan to increase agricultural productivity & promote horticulture agribusinesses in HP
- HP – to use the loan under "Himachal Pradesh Subtropical Horticulture, Irrigation, and Value Addition Project"
- HP: Capital – Shimla & Dharamshala | CM – Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu | Governor – Shiv Pratap Shukla
- HQs of ADB – Mandaluyong, Philippines | President – Masatsugu Asakawa | Members – 68 | Established in – 1966

Acquisitions & Mergers

196. On February 10, Chinese multinational Alibaba sold its entire stake of 3.4% equity stake in Paytm for around Rs 13,600 Crore. In January, the Chinese multinational had sold around 3.1% of 6.26% equity in Paytm. With this, Alibaba is no longer a stakeholder in Paytm. The sale of shares has been made to a range of investors, including T Rowe Price, Discovery Capital and D1 Capital. The move comes amid tightening regulations and strained relations between India and China, which has resulted in several Chinese firms facing scrutiny in India. Prior to this, Jack Ma's founded firm had sold its stakes in Zomato and BigBasket. [{Read more}](#)

Smart Points:

- Alibaba (China) – sold its entire stake of 3.4% equity stake in Paytm for Rs 13,600 Cr
- Alibaba is no longer a stakeholder in Paytm
- HQs of Paytm – Noida, Uttar Pradesh | MD & CEO – Vijay Sekhar Sharma | Founded in – 2010

197. On February 10, the Competition Commission of India (CCI) has approved the National Investment and Infrastructure Fund's (NIIF) proposed acquisition of a 25% stake in Hindustan Ports Pvt Ltd (HPPL), a subsidiary of Hindustan Infralog Private Limited. The regulator also approved the merger of Hindustan Infralog Pvt Ltd (HIPL) into HPPL. NIIF is an alternative investment fund and is sponsored and anchored by the government. HIPL and HPPL are engaged in providing container terminal services. In a separate notification, the CCI also gave its nod to acquisition of 100% equity shareholding of Lanco Anpara Power Ltd (LAPL) by Megha Engineering and Infrastructures Ltd Group (MEIL). [{Read more}](#)

Smart Points:

- CCI – approved NIIF's proposed acquisition of a 25% stake in HPPL
- HPPL – subsidiary of Hindustan Infralog Pvt Ltd | NIIF – an alternative investment fund, sponsored & anchored by govt
- CCI – gave its nod to acquisition of 100% equity shareholding of LAPL by MEIL



MoUs, Collaborations & Partnership

198. On February 10, the Department of Collegiate and Technical Education (DCTE), Karnataka and Samsung Semiconductor India Research (SSIR) inked a MoU to set up “Industrial Internet of Things Labs” (IoT Innovation Labs) in 35 Government Polytechnics across the State. The project costs Rs 1.52 crore and also includes setting up of AI labs in at least two institutions. The ‘IoT Innovation Lab’ would help foster innovations in solving local problems using IoT. These labs will also be available for students at nearby government institutions. Students will also have opportunities to experiment and learn hands-on service of mobile phones, used as tools in IoT projects. [{Read more}](#)

Smart Points:

- DCTE (Karnataka) + SSIR = an MoU to set up “Industrial Internet of Things Labs” (IoT Innovation Labs)
- The labs will be set up in 35 Government Polytechnics across the State | Cost – Rs 1.52 Cr
- Karnataka: Capital – Bangalore | CM – Basavaraj Bommai | Governor – Thaawarchand Gehlot

199. On February 11, Air India, now under the ownership of the Tata Group, signed a historic agreement with Airbus SE and Boeing Co to purchase around 500 new planes worth over \$100 billion at list prices, split equally between the two companies. This could be the largest order ever placed by any airline as Air India prepares to revamp itself with a fuel-efficient fleet. Recently, Air India also announced plans to borrow Rs 18,000 Crore from SBI and Bank of Baroda to refinance its existing debt over the short term. Air India will get 250 Airbus planes - 210 single-aisle A320neos and 40 widebody A350s. It plans to get 220 Boeing aircraft - 190 of its 737 MAX narrowbody jets, 20 787 wide-bodies and 10 777Xs. [{Read more}](#)

Smart Points:

- Air India – signed an agreement with Airbus SE & Boeing Co to purchase around 500 new planes worth over \$100 billion
- Recently, Air India also announced plans to borrow Rs 18,000 Cr from SBI & BoB
- HQs of Air India – New Delhi | MD & CEO – Campbell Wilson (subsidiary of Tata Group)

200. On February 10, GAIL (India) Limited signed an advance pricing agreement (APA) with the Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) to determine the transfer pricing margin payable on its long-term liquefied natural gas (LNG) sourcing contract from the United States for a period of 5 years. GAIL is the first public sector undertaking in the oil and gas sector in India to sign an APA. The APA scheme was launched in 2022 to enhance the government’s goal of promoting a non-adversarial tax system and improve the ease of doing business in India. GAIL is depending on the US to secure a stable supply of LNG cargoes and currently has two contracts to buy a combined 5.8 million tons per year of LNG from the US. Up to 55% of India’s local gas demand is met through imports. Qatar & the US & Australia, the largest producers of LNG globally, currently supply India with LNG through multiple contracts. Third largest producer Australia mostly supplies China. [{Read more}](#)

Smart Points:

- GAIL + CBDT = an APA to determine transfer pricing margin payable on its long-term LNG sourcing contract from US
- GAIL – 1st public sector undertaking in oil & gas sector in India to sign an APA
- APA scheme –launched in 2022 to promote a non-adversarial tax system & improve ease of doing business in India
- Up to 55% of India’s local gas demand is met through imports
- India Imports LNG from – Qatar, US & Australia
- HQs of CBDT – New Delhi | Chairman – Nitin Gupta | Formed in – 1944
- HQs of GAIL – New Delhi | MD & Chairman – Sandeep Kumar Gupta | Established in – 1984





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