



WEEKLY CURRENT AFFAIRS

DECEMBER, 2023

Week-4

22-31 Dec., 2023

★★ Useful for ★★

**CSE, ESE, PSUs, State Services Exams,
SSC and Banking Exams**

22nd DECEMBER, 2023

IMF's Annual Report on India's Economy

- **Context:** IMF's annual report on India's economy, highlighting its currency stability and government debt. The IMF changed India's currency regime classification and advised fiscal consolidation to manage debt risks, while India defends its economic policies and stability.

Key Highlights:

- The IMF observed the Indian rupee's stability against the dollar, noting a narrow fluctuation range between 81.04 and 83.29 per US dollar (a 2.8% band), compared to the Euro-dollar rate band of 7.3%. Consequently, it reclassified India's exchange rate from "floating" to a "stabilized arrangement" for the period between December 2022 and October 2023.
- **India's Response:** India, particularly the Reserve Bank of India, asserts the rupee is market-determined with interventions only for excessive volatility, contesting the IMF's short-term view.
- The IMF warns that if past economic shocks recur, debt could exceed 100% of GDP in the medium term. It also warns that long-term risks are high because considerable investment is required to meet India's climate change mitigation targets.
- **India's Position:** India counters, India argues that the sovereign debt risk is low since it's predominantly in domestic currency, (b) Despite various economic shocks, India maintains that its general government debt level has been relatively stable, barely increasing from 81% in 2005-06 to around 81% in 2022-23, (c) India suggests that the IMF's assessment might be overlooking the broader historical stability and resilience of India's debt management.

Press and Registration of Periodicals Bill, 2023

- **Context:** The Lok Sabha has passed the Press and Registration of Periodicals Bill, 2023. Rajya Sabha had already passed this bill in the previous session.

Key Highlights:

- It replaces Press and Registration of Books Act, 1867.
- The Bill provides for an online mechanism to apply for title verification and grant of certificate of registration from the Press Registrar General.
- The publishers would no longer be required to file a declaration. Furthermore, printing presses would also not be required to furnish any such declaration; instead only an intimation would be sufficient.
- Facsimile edition of a foreign periodical can be printed in India with prior approval of the Central Government and its registration with the Press Registrar General.
- Books which were part of the Act have been taken away from the purview of the bill as books as a subject are administered by the Ministry of Education.
- Now, the maximum jail term of six months applies only in extreme situations. For example, if a publication continues printing without a registration certificate despite a six-month warning from the Press Registrar General. Moreover, for certain violations, financial penalties have been proposed instead of conviction as earlier.
- A person who has been convicted by any court for an offence involving terrorist act or unlawful activity or having done anything against the security of the State shall not be permitted to bring out a periodical.
- In the 1867 Act, only the DM could cancel the declaration of a periodical. The Bill empowers the Press Registrar General to suspend/cancel the Certificate of Registration.
- It is headed by Chairperson, Press Council of India. It will deal with issues related to registration.

Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Janaushadhi Pariyojana

- **Context:** Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Janaushadhi Pariyojana (PMBJP) achieved their target of Rs. 1000 Crore in sales of generic medicines in FY 2023-24.

Key Highlights:

- It was launched in 2008 by the Department of Pharmaceuticals, Ministry of Chemicals and Fertilizers under the name Jan Aushadi Campaign.
- Its aim is to provide quality medicines at affordable prices to the masses.
- The initiative involves the establishment of Jan Aushadhi Kendras, or Jan Aushadhi Stores, which serve as retail outlets for the distribution of generic medicines.
- There has been more than 100 times growth in the number of Kendras since the scheme has been launched covering almost all the districts of the country.
- The Government launched the 10,000th Janaushadhi Kendra at AIIMS, Jharkhand in 2023.
- Accordingly, the Government has set a target to open 25,000 Janaushadhi Kendras across the country by March, 2026.

23rd DECEMBER, 2023

Green Industrial strategy

- **Context:** Green Industrial Strategy emphasized the importance of sustainable development, innovation, and securing significant investment.

Key Highlights:

- A Green Industrial Strategy is a coordinated approach to economic growth that emphasizes sustainability and innovation.
- It aims to secure substantial funding, estimated at \$5-7 trillion yearly globally, to meet environmental goals and promote sustainable development.
- This strategy involves reorienting industries towards green technologies and practices, ensuring long-term investment in clean growth, and fostering inter-sectoral collaborations. It's exemplified by Germany's transition to a circular economy in its steel industry, driven by supportive public policies.

- It aims to meet the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals, requiring substantial investment in sustainable initiatives.
- Green industries are poised to be engines of growth, potentially worth over \$10 trillion globally by 2050. It can drive innovation and create new industries and jobs in renewable energy, sustainable agriculture, and other green sectors.
- By investing in green technologies and industries, countries can maintain and advance their competitive standing globally.
- Shifting away from fossil fuels to renewable energy sources reduces dependency on imported fuels and enhances national security.

India's initiatives in green industrial strategy:

1. Renewable Energy Production: Increasing renewable energy with the aim to achieve 500 GW capacity by 2030.
2. Innovation and Infrastructure: Launched E20 fuel and emphasized biofuels, with development of waterways for greener transport logistics.
3. Green Credits and Policies: Implementing green credit, PM KUSUM Yojana, and vehicle scrapping policy to encourage sustainable practices.
4. Ethanol Blending and Incentives: Achieving 10% ethanol blending in petrol 5 months early, with a goal of 20% by 2025-26.

PM-DevINE scheme

- **Context:** Recently the Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region (DoNER) convened a meeting with the Chief Ministers of the States in the region regarding the hurdles in implementation of the projects under the PM-Devine scheme.

Key Highlights:

- The Prime Minister's Development Initiative for North-East (PM-DevINE) Scheme is a central sector scheme (100 per cent funded by the Union Government) introduced in the 2022-23 Union Budget with an initial allocation of 1,500 crore.

- The scheme is designed for the rapid and comprehensive development of the northeast region by funding infrastructure and social development projects, based on felt needs of the States.
- It also aims to fill sectoral gaps without replacing current Central and State Schemes.
- The total approved outlay for PM-DevINE scheme for the period 2022-23 to 2025-26 is 6,600 crore. But only nine projects worth 855.85 crore had been approved so far. Several project still pending for the approval from the centre.
- Prevailing law and order situation in north eastern states like Manipur has created hurdles in taking up new projects under the scheme.
- A new Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for anganwadi-cum-creche centres was also released.
- It outlines a comprehensive framework for the administration and implementation of the scheme, including administrative hierarchy, roles, and responsibilities of the workers and monitoring checklist.
- Earlier known as the National Creche Scheme, it was reorganized and renamed as Palna Scheme under the sub scheme 'Samarthya' of 'Mission Shakti'.
- Under the Palna Scheme, provision of Anganwadi cum Creches has been introduced by the Ministry of Women and Child Development.
- Its objective is to provide Quality crèche care facility by and a safe and secure environment for children of working women.
- To support nutritional, health and cognitive development of children.
- It enables mothers to take up gainful employment.
- A funding ratio of 60:40 between Union Government and State.
- The scheme enables more women to take up gainful employment amongst all socio-economic groups both in the organized and unorganized sector, irrespective of their employment status.

8th edition of Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS)

- **Context:** The 8th edition of Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS) Conclave of Chiefs (CoC) was conducted by the Royal Thai Navy at Bangkok.

Key Highlights:

- The 'Indian Ocean Naval Symposium' (IONS) is a voluntary initiative.
- It was conceived by the Indian Navy in 2008 as a forum that seeks to increase maritime co-operation among navies of the littoral states of the Indian Ocean Region by providing an open and inclusive forum for discussion of regionally relevant maritime issues.
- India is scheduled to take over as the Chair of IONS (2025-27) during 9th CoC planned to be conducted in India at the end 2025.

24th DECEMBER, 2023

Palna Scheme

- **Context:** The Women and Child Development Minister inaugurated the National Programme on Anganwadi-cum-Crèches.

Key Highlights:

- Government has planned to open 17 thousand creches all around the country.

Sovereign Credit Rating

- **Context:** Recently, the Finance Ministry released a document titled "Re-examining Narratives: A Collection of Essays".

Key Highlights:

- The first of the five essays in the document is a criticism of the opaque methodologies adopted by credit rating agencies to arrive at sovereign ratings.
- The essay seeks to flag issues with the methodology adopted by the three main global credit rating agencies (Moody's, Standard & Poor's and Fitch) and to show how these gaps affect India adversely.
- It is argued that they are opaque and appear to disadvantage developing economies" in certain ways.
- Sovereign ratings are about the creditworthiness of governments. They provide a marker for investors around the world about the ability and willingness of governments to pay back debt.

- Just as an individual's credit rating is critical to whether she gets a loan and at what interest rate, sovereign ratings affect a country's ability to borrow money from global investors.
- Governments with lower sovereign ratings have to pay higher interest rates when they borrow.
- Sovereign ratings matter also for all businesses in that country, as the government is considered to be the safest bet in a country.
- Most developing countries (such as India), while rich in either labour resources or land or mineral resources, suffer from a lack of capital (money available to put to use).
- In the absence of financial resources, developing countries struggle to make the best use of their natural strengths.
- A poor sovereign rating can inhibit the ability of these countries to borrow money from rich investors — just as a good rating can make it easier to become more productive and remove mass poverty.

25th DECEMBER, 2023

National Sports Awards 2023

- **Context:** The Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports announced the National Sports Awards 2023.

Key Highlights:

- The awardees will receive their awards from the President of India at Rashtrapati Bhavan.
- National Sports Awards are given every year to recognize and reward excellence in sports.
- It is announced by Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports.
- **Major Dhyan Chand Khel Ratna Award:** The award is conferred for the most outstanding performance in the area of sports by a sportsperson over the time period of the last four years.
- **Arjuna Awards for Outstanding Performance in Sports and Games:** The award is conferred for great performance over last four years and for demonstrating qualities of sportsmanship, a sense of discipline, and leadership.

- **Dronacharya Award for Outstanding Coaches in Sports and Games:** The award is conferred to coaches for demonstrating outstanding work consistently and for making it possible for sportspersons to ace in International events.
- **Dhyan Chand Award for Lifetime Achievement in Sports and Games:** The award is conferred to honor the sportspersons who have actually contributed to the field of sports through their performance, and who contribute to sports even post-retirement.
- **Maulana Abul Kalam Azad (MAKA) Trophy:** The award is given to the overall high-performing university in inter-university tournaments.

Good Governance Day

- **Context:** On the occasion of Good Governance Day, the Government launched the Extended Version of Mission Karmayogi.

Key Highlights:

- The day is celebrated on the 25th of December every year on the birth anniversary of former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee.
- In 2014, the government announced that December 25 would be celebrated as Good Governance Day.
- It was established with the slogan "Good Governance through e-Governance."
- In 2020, Government of India has launched Mission Karmayogi, a National Programme for Civil Services Capacity Building (NPCSCP). It is anchored by an apex body and headed by the Prime Minister. The programme aims at building a future-ready civil service with the right attitude, skills and knowledge, aligned to the vision of New India.

26th DECEMBER, 2023

Stagflation

- **Context:** Reserve Bank of India (RBI) officials believe the risk of stagflation has lowered further to 1% compared with 3% in August based on available data.

Key Highlights:

- It is an economic scenario where an economy faces both high inflation and low growth (and high unemployment) at the same time
- The idea became popular during the 1970s when the U.S. economy witnessed high price inflation due to the oil shock as well as an economic recession marked by negative economic growth.
- It had the potential to destabilize the entire macroeconomic framework of an economy by creating an environment of uncertainty.
- Some economists suggest that policymakers should focus on boosting aggregate demand in the economy.
- The central bank should further ease its policy stance and the government should spend more on infrastructure and other sectors to boost the economy.
- Some advocate supply-side reforms to bring about genuine economic growth.

Viability Gap Funding

- **Context:** The Union Minister for Power and New & Renewable Energy has approved the scheme for Viability Gap Funding (VGF) for development of Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS) with capacity of 4,000 megawatts hours (MWh).

Key Highlights:

- Under the scheme, VGF to the extent of up to 40% of capital cost for BESS shall be provided by the Union Government.
- Public and private sector entities shall be selected through the bidding process.
- The project is approved for a period of 3 years (2023-24 to 2025-26).
- For passing on the scheme to consumers of the Discoms, at least 85% of the power from VGF-funded BESS projects shall be first offered to Discoms before making it available for others.

Youth Unemployment

- **Context:** The persistent issue of high unemployment rates among young, educated people in India, despite overall falling unemployment rates. It highlights that while fewer people are unemployed now, the problem remains severe for educated youth, reflecting a long-standing issue in the Indian economy.

Key Highlights:

- According to periodic labour force survey, the overall unemployment rate in India has decreased from 6.1% in 2017-18 to 3.2% in 2022-23.
- Young graduates, specifically those aged 18-29, face a high unemployment rate of 27% as of 2022-23. This indicates a persistent challenge for this demographic despite overall improvements.
- For all individuals with graduate degrees, unemployment has seen fluctuations but shows a decreasing trend; it peaked at 17% in 2017-18 and reduced to 13% in 2022-23.
- The share of graduates in the labor force has increased, now making up around 15% by 2022-23.
- Such high unemployment rates among young, educated individuals suggest a significant underutilization of skilled human capital, which is detrimental to economic growth and productivity.
- The increasing share of graduates in the labor force, from 5% in 1993-94 to around 15% in 2022-23, highlights the expanding pool of educated yet unemployed youth, exacerbating the unemployment issue despite overall improvements.
- The problem has been longstanding since the 1990s, with unemployment among graduates peaking at 17% in 2017-18, showcasing it as a structural issue rather than a temporary fluctuation.

27th DECEMBER, 2023

T+0 Instant Settlement Cycle

- **Context:** The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) has proposed to introduce the T+0 settlement cycle on an optional basis. This facility will be in addition to the existing T+1 (trade plus one day) settlement cycle.

Key Highlights:

- Currently on Indian exchanges, the settlement cycle for all traded instruments is T+1 day, with T representing the trading day. It was introduced in 2021 in a phased manner and was fully implemented in 2023.
- T+1 means settlements will have to be cleared within one day after the actual transaction takes place. For example- trades executed on Monday gets settled on Tuesday, the next working day.
- It suggested adding a shorter settlement cycle as an option for the equity cash segment, alongside the existing T+1 cycle.
- SEBI proposes initially introducing T+0 settlement for the top 500 listed equity shares, categorized by market capitalization. This will be implemented in three phases of 200, 200, and 100 shares, progressing from the lowest to the highest market cap.
- Securities under the trade-for-trade settlement will not be permitted for T+0.
- An immediate settlement mechanism allows for the instant receipt of funds and securities, in contrast to the current T+1 day pay-out.
- It will strengthen investor protection by enhancing the control of the investor over the securities and funds.
- It can position Indian equities as a resilient, cost-effective, and time-efficient asset class, surpassing emerging contenders in alternative asset classes.

Tuberculosis (TB) Management in India

- **Context:** Studies suggest that shorter-duration treatment approaches for tuberculosis are crucial to enhance TB management in India.

Key Highlights:

- Recent studies in adults who have TB in their lungs considered using a combination of new drugs and existing ones that are currently used for other diseases.
- The results of these studies showed that the length of time patients need to stay on their regimen can be reduced from six months to four months.

- Shortening the duration for TB medication to cure the patient faster is transformational and also makes TB programme implementation more feasible.
- India accounts for around 27% of TB cases worldwide – which is the world's highest country-wise TB burden.
- India's aim to eliminate TB by 2025.
- The theme for World Tuberculosis Day (March 24) in 2023 was "Yes, we can end TB", which reflects the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to eliminate TB by 2030.

Key Steps Taken by Government of India to Eliminate TB:

- 1. Revised National Tuberculosis Control Program (RNTCP):** The RNTCP, launched in 1997, was the flagship program to control TB in India. The program has been continuously revised and strengthened over the years.
- 2. National Tuberculosis Elimination Program (NTEP):** The Government of India has developed a National Strategic Plan (2017-25) for Ending TB in the country by 2025.
- 3. Pradhan Mantri TB Mukh Bharat Abhiyan (PMTBMBA):** Launched in 2022 for community support to TB patients with the objective to provide people with TB with additional nutritional, diagnostic and vocational support.
- 4. Universal Drug Susceptibility Testing (DST):** The government has scaled up efforts to provide universal access to drug susceptibility testing, helping to identify drug-resistant strains of TB early and tailor treatment accordingly. Earlier, the patients were started on first line treatment and were tested for drug resistance only if the therapy did not work.
- 5. Ni-kshay Portal:** An online Ni-kshay portal has been set up to track the notified TB cases.
- 6. New Drugs:** Newer drugs such as Bedaquiline and Delamanid for the treatment of drug-resistant TB have been included in the government's basket of drugs provided free TB patients.
- 7. R&D for Treatment:** Researchers have been studying shorter three- and four-month courses of anti-tubercular drugs, instead of the existing six-month therapy.

8. Vaccine Development: Trials are underway to test the effectiveness of a vaccine called Immuvac, which was initially developed to prevent leprosy, in preventing TB. Researchers are also testing VPM1002, which is a recombinant form of the BCG vaccine modified to express the TB antigens better.

28th DECEMBER, 2023

'MedTech Mitra' Portal

• **Context:** Recently, the Union Health Minister has virtually launched 'MedTech Mitra' portal.

Key Highlights:

- It's a web platform with an aim to foster development of affordable and accessible indigenous Medical devices/ In-vitro diagnostics.
- It is designed to provide strategic handholding support to MedTech innovators with assessing clinical viability, regulatory facilitation, and adopting new products.
- MedTech Mitra will address the queries of the innovators and provide personalized guidance in consultation with the Regulator and other relevant stakeholders.
- The portal will be coordinated collaboratively by the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) and the Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation (CDSCO), under the guidance of NITI Aayog's Atal Innovation Mission.
- It will enable the indigenous development of cost-effective, high-quality MedTech devices and diagnostics, thereby reducing the current import dependence of around 80% in MedTech.
- It will facilitate innovation and research and development (R&D) for emerging startups in the field of medical technology.

SLIM : Japan's Moon-Landing Mission

• **Context:** Japan's Smart Lander for Investigating Moon (SLIM) spacecraft has entered lunar orbit, aiming for a moon landing on January 19, potentially marking it as the fifth country to achieve a soft landing on the moon.

Key Highlights:

- Its objective is to showcase precision landing capabilities on the Moon, targeting a landing within 100 meters of its chosen site near the Shioli crater.
- Given that the mission aims to soft-land with the smallest ever area tolerance on the moon, it is also being called as Moon Sniper.
- It is Built by Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA).
- It was launched on September 7, 2023, along with the X-Ray Imaging and Spectroscopy Mission (XRISM) space telescope. XRISM mission objective is to investigate celestial X-ray objects in the Universe with high-throughput imaging and high-resolution spectroscopy.
- SLIM is lighter because it carried much less fuel.
- It utilized earth gravity to build kinetic energy, eventually aligning its trajectory with the moon for a slower approach and capture.
- Once it gets close to the moon, it will get deflected into the deeper space by the combined forces of Earth and Moon.
- SLIM will deploy two small rovers called Lunar Excursion Vehicle (LEV) 1 and 2. They will study the lunar surface near the landing point, collect temperature and radiation readings, and attempt to study the moon's mantle.
- Success of SLIM, especially with respect to its low weight and precision landing could play a crucial role in the Lunar Polar Exploration (LUPEX) Mission, a joint effort of ISRO and JAXA.

Electronic Soil

• **Context:** A newly developed eSoil that stimulated root systems helped barley seedlings grow an average of 50 percent more in a new study.

Key Highlights:

- eSoil is a low-power bioelectronic growth substrate that can electrically stimulate the root system and growth environment of plants.

- This novel substrate is not only environmentally friendly, being derived from cellulose and a conductive polymer called PEDOT, but also offers a low energy, safe alternative to previous methods that required high voltage and non-biodegradable materials.
- This research promotes more effective and sustainable development while increasing the variety of crops that can be grown hydroponically.

29TH DECEMBER, 2023

RBI: Trend and Progress of Banking in India report

- **Context:** As per the Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) 'Trend and Progress of Banking in India' report, the Gross Non-Performing Assets (GNPA) ratio of Indian scheduled commercial banks (SCBs) consistently improved in the second quarter of FY24, reaching a decadal low.

Key Highlights:

- The asset quality, reflected in GNPA ratios, improved from 2018-19 to 2022-23.
- The SCBs' GNPA ratio dropped to 3.9% in March 2023 and further to 3.2% in September 2023, reaching a decade-low.
- Approximately 45% of the decline in SCBs' GNPA's during 2022-23 resulted from recoveries and upgradations.
- In 2022-23, the consolidated balance sheet of SCBs (excluding Regional Rural Banks) saw a 12.2% growth, the highest in nine years. The primary factor behind this expansion on the asset side was bank credit, which experienced its fastest pace of growth in over a decade.
- In 2022-23, non-banking financial companies (NBFCs) saw a 14.8% expansion in their consolidated balance sheet, driven by double-digit credit growth.
- The RBI stressed that qualitative metrics like improved disclosures, robust code of conduct, and transparent governance structures contribute to financial stability.

About Gross Non-Performing Assets (GNPA) ratio:

- Gross Non-Performing Assets (GNPA) refer to the total value of non-performing loans (NPLs) or bad loans that a bank has on its books.

NOTE: *Non performing loans refers to loans for which payments have not been made for a minimum period of 90 days.*

- The Gross NPA ratio is calculated by dividing the total value of GNPA by the total value of gross advances (loans) made by the bank, expressed as a percentage.
- It is an important indicator of the asset quality of a bank and is closely monitored by regulators and investors to assess the financial health and risk profile of the banking sector.
- A lower GNPA ratio is generally considered favorable, indicating healthier loan portfolios.

Migration and Mobility Agreement between India and Italy

- **Context:** Union Cabinet approved the Migration and Mobility Agreement between India and Italy.

Key Highlights:

- The Agreement was signed in November, 2023 by the External Affairs Minister on the Indian side and the Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation on the Italian side.
- The Agreement locks-in the current Italian visa regime including mechanisms for post study opportunities, internships, professional trainings assuring an advantage for India under the existing labour mobility pathways under the Flows Decree.
- Indian students wishing to gather initial professional experience, after completing academic/vocational training in Italy may be granted temporary residence in Italy for up to 12 months.
- The Italian side has detailed provisions related to Professional Training, Extracurricular Internships and Curricular Internships which allow Indian students/trainees to gain experience in Italian skill/training standards.

- For workers, the Italian side has reserved a quota of 5000, 6000 and 7000 non seasonal Indian workers for 2023, 2024 and 2025 under the current Flows Decree (Total reserved quota stands at 12000 for non-seasonal workers).
- Additionally, the Italian side has reserved a quota of 3000, 4000 and 5000 seasonal Indian workers for 2023, 2024 and 2025 under current Flows Decree (Total reserved quota stands at 8000 for seasonal workers).
- It would enhance people-to-people contacts, foster mobility of students, skilled workers, business people and young professionals and strengthen cooperation on issues related to irregular migration between India and Italy.
- To provide integrated security cover to certain sensitive public sector undertakings.

Climate Milestones of 2023

- **Context:** Some significant climate-related milestones that occurred during the course of 2023.

Key Highlights:

- According to Copernicus Climate Change Service (C3S), 2023 was 0.1°C warmer than the ten-month average for 2016, currently the warmest calendar year on record, and 1.43°C warmer than the pre-industrial reference period from January to October.
- Marine heat waves, which are periods of unusually warm ocean temperatures (warmer than 90% of the previous observations for a given time of year), were widespread in 2023. According to an analysis by the U.S. National Ocean and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), 48% of global oceans saw marine heat waves in August 2023, which is an area larger than for any other month since the start of the record in 1991.
- In 2023, Antarctic Sea ice maintained record low ice growth since April.
- Global carbon dioxide emissions (one of the main greenhouse gases) from burning fossil fuels are predicted to have hit a record high in 2023, up 1.1% from 2022.
- The fund, which is aimed at helping developing countries mitigate the impact of climate change, was first announced at the conclusion of COP27 in Sharm El-Sheikh, Egypt, last year.
- The fund will be based at the World Bank but managed by an independent secretariat. At COP28, Dubai, the \$792 million has been pledged.
- The 134 countries at COP28 signed a declaration pledging to tackle the climate impacts of the food industry. These countries represent over 5.7 billion people, 70% of the food we eat, nearly 500 million farmers, and 76% of total emissions from the global food system.

30th DECEMBER, 2023

First Woman to Head CISF

- **Context:** The Centre recently appointed Nina Singh as the Director General of CISF, making her the first woman to head this force.

Key Highlights:

- Nina Singh, a seasoned 1989-batch IPS officer from the Rajasthan cadre, has shattered the glass ceiling by being appointed as the Director General of the CISF.
- Currently serving as the Special DG of the CISF, her elevation to the top post is a testament to her exemplary career and leadership skills. This move underscores the government's commitment to promoting gender diversity in crucial security positions.
- CISF is one of the seven central armed police forces (CAPFs) under the administrative control of the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA).
- The other six forces are the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF), Border Security Force (BSF), Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP), Assam Rifles, NSG and Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB).

31st DECEMBER, 2023

Divya Kala Mela 2023

- **Context:** Union Government is organising the 12th 'Divya Kala Mela' from 29th December 2023 – 7th January 2024 in Surat, Gujrat. So far 11 Divya kala melas have been organised starting from 2022 in Delhi.

Key Highlights:

- It is a unique event showcasing the products and craftsmanship of Divyang entrepreneurs and artisans from across the country.
- Its nodal ministry is Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment (MoSJ&E) and it is organised by Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (Divyangjan) (DEPwD), MoSJ&E, GoI through National Divyangjan Finance and Development Corporation (NDFDC).
- Its aim is to strengthen economic empowerment of PwD/Divyangjan and to provide a bigger platform for marketing and showcasing the products and skills of Divyangjan (PwD).
- **Product Category:** Home Décor & Lifestyle, Clothing, Stationery and eco-friendly products, packaged food and organic products, Toys & Gifts, Personal Accessories – Jewellery, Clutch Bags.
- It provides a chance for everyone to support local products, particularly those crafted by determined individuals with disabilities.

National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA)

- **Context:** Achievements of National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) during the year 2023.



Key Highlights:

- Project Tiger that has put the endangered wild tigers of India on assured path of recovery has completed 50 years of successful implementation.
- India now hosts over 70% of the global wild tiger population, with a minimum of 3,167 tigers, according to the 5th cycle of the All India Tiger Estimation 2022 summary report.
- The Prime Minister inaugurated the International Big Cat Alliance (IBCA) during a special program, aiming to conserve seven major big cat species—Tiger, Lion, Leopard, Snow Leopard, Cheetah, Jaguar, and Puma through collaborative efforts of the range countries.
- Successful reintroduction of the cheetah— Project for translocation of cheetahs from South Africa and Namibia to Kuno National Park, Madhya Pradesh was launched. Work is also under progress at Gandhi Sagar Wildlife Sanctuary, Madhya Pradesh for establishing the second home for cheetah meta population.
- Tiger Reserves undergo Management Effectiveness Evaluation (MEE) every four years by NTCA following the IUCN framework. It is a crucial tool to enhance the management of Tiger Reserves and their landscape connectivity.
- With the declaration of the new "Rani Durgavati" Tiger Reserve in Madhya Pradesh, India now has a total of 54 tiger reserves, covering more than 2.30% of its geographical area.
- Currently, 23 tiger reserves in India have received CAITS accreditation. Conservation Assured Tiger Standards (CAITS) is criteria set ensuring that tiger sites meet international standards for successful conservation.
- In 2022-23, Pench Tiger Reserves in Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra, along with Satpura Tiger Reserve in Madhya Pradesh, jointly received the Tx2 award. This international recognition is bestowed by a consortium of organizations including GEF, UNDP, IUCN, WWF, and GTF.