



WEEKLY CURRENT AFFAIRS

SEPTEMBER, 2023

Week-4

22-30 Sept., 2023

★★ Useful for ★★

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

22nd SEPTEMBER, 2023

Telecom Technology Development Fund (TTDF) Scheme

- **Context:** Centre for Development of Telematics (C-DOT) and CSIR-National Physical Laboratory (NPL) has signed an agreement for 'Development of NavIC based IST traceable Primary Reference Time Clock (PRTC) for Telecom Sector'. The agreement is signed under the Telecom Technology Development Fund (TTDF) scheme.

Key Highlights:

- Universal Service Obligation Fund (USOF), a body under the Department of Telecommunications, had launched the Telecom Technology Development Fund (TTDF) Scheme in 2022.
- Its aim is to fund R&D in rural-specific communication technology applications and form synergies among academia, start-ups, research institutes, and the industry to build and develop the telecom ecosystem.
- To promote technology ownership and indigenous manufacturing, create a culture of technology co-innovation, reduce imports, boost export opportunities and create Intellectual Property.
- The following Indian entities are only eligible for support from this fund: Domestic Company(ies) with focus on telecom R&D, Use case development, Start-ups / MSMEs, Academic institutions, R&D institutions, Section 8 companies with focus on telecom research and development among others.

Bima Sugam Portal

- **Context:** Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI) has formed a steering committee to act as the apex decision-making body for the creation of its ambitious 'Bima Sugam' online platform.

Key Highlights:

- Bima Sugam aims to simplify the process of purchasing insurance for consumers.

- This online platform is where customers can choose a suitable scheme from multiple options given by various companies.
- All insurance requirements, including those for life, health, and general insurance (including motor and travel) will be met by Bima Sugam.
- Life insurance and general insurance companies will own a 47.5 per cent stake each, while brokers and agent bodies will own 2.5 per cent each.
- The portal will provide benefits such as it act as a centralized database, it will assist the insured/buyers in porting their respective policies based on coverage and pricing, it will give people a wide choice to pick and choose policies and view all their policies, it will reduce commission paid to intermediaries and Settlement of claims and renewal of policies will also become faster as paperwork is reduced drastically, making it easier for the customers.

International Congress on the Chemistry of Cement (ICCC)

- **Context:** India has won the bid to host the prestigious International Congress on the Chemistry of Cement (ICCC) at New Delhi in 2027.

Key Highlights:

- International Congress on the Chemistry of Cement (ICCC) is the largest and most prestigious event of its kind which reviews the progress of research in the area of Cement and Concrete.
- The congresses have been held generally at intervals of four to six years since 1918.
- The 9th Congress was organized at New Delhi in 1992 by National Council for Cement and Building Materials (NCCBM) and the present 16th ICCC is being held at Bangkok, Thailand.
- National Council for Cement and Building Materials (NCCBM) is an apex Research and Development organization under the administrative control of Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT), Ministry of Commerce & Industry.

- NCCBM is dedicated to research, technology development & transfer, education & industrial services for cement, allied building materials & construction industries.
- NCCBM has a proven track record of executing biennial NCB International Seminars/Conferences of similar magnitude, ensuring a seamless and memorable event.
- India is the fifth largest economy and is likely to become third largest by the next five years.
- India's cement industry is second largest in the world with installed cement capacity of 600 million tonnes.
- The cement industry in India plays a key role in the circular economy framework in the country by utilizing various industrial wastes and is having one of the lowest CO2 footprints and most energy efficient in the world.
- The main advantages of vanadium redox batteries (VRB) are It can offer almost unlimited capacity simply by using sequentially larger storage tanks , it can be left completely discharged for long periods of time with no ill effects , it can be recharged by replacing the electrolyte if no power source is available to charge, it suffers no permanent damage if the electrolytes are accidentally mixed and it has also been shown to have the least ecological impact of all energy storage technologies.
- Vanadium holds significant importance as a crucial raw material in strategic domains like defense and aerospace.
- For example, alloys combining vanadium with titanium and aluminum are employed in the manufacturing of components for jet engines and high-speed aircraft frames.

23rd SEPTEMBER, 2023

Vanadium

- **Context:** Vanadium, a rare metal, has been discovered from the Gulf of Khambhat in Gujarat.

Key Highlights:

- Vanadium is a medium-hard, steel-blue metal. It rarely exists as a free element in nature but can be found in about 65 different minerals, including magnetite, vanadinite, carnotite and patronite.
- Brazil is the world's largest exporter of vanadium followed by Russia and South Africa. Brazil alone is responsible for nearly one-quarter of the metal's global export market.
- China has the highest vanadium reserves in the world
- Vanadium is used primarily as an alloying element in Iron & Steel Industry as it imparts toughness and strength to steel.
- Modern applications of vanadium include its use as vanadium secondary batteries for power plants and rechargeable vanadium redox batteries (VRB) for commercial applications.

Artificial Reef

- **Context:** The Department of Fisheries has approved 732 artificial reef units for 10 coastal states. This initiative falls under the "Integrated Modern Coastal Fishing Villages" program which is part of Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY).

Key Highlights:

- An artificial reef is a sheltered human-built structure, placed on the seabed as a substitute for natural habitats.
- They represent innovative engineering interventions designed to restore and enhance natural habitats, boost productivity, and efficiently manage aquatic resources.
- Artificial reefs, similar to their natural counterparts, serve as gathering points for fish, providing them with a habitat to thrive. These structures also mitigate wave damage along the coasts, facilitate marine ecosystem regeneration and act as carbon sinks.
- These reefs provide a solid substrate for various marine life forms, including corals, algae, and plankton, to attach and grow. They create favorable conditions for sea ranching and serve as crucial spawning and nursery grounds for fish.

- Artificial reefs enhance recreational fisheries and create suitable areas for activities like snorkeling and diving. This not only contributes to local tourism but also reduces conflicts over fishing grounds.
- These structures help restrict bottom trawling in nearshore areas, aiding marine ecosystem regeneration. Small-scale fishermen also benefit from higher catch rates.
- A single artificial reef unit of 300m³ is expected to support 25-30 non-mechanized boats, further boosting the livelihoods of traditional fishermen.

24th SEPTEMBER, 2023

Truenat test to detect Nipah

- **Context:** Kerala has been given permission by the Indian Council for Medical Research (ICMR) to use Truenat test to diagnose Nipah.

Key Highlights:

- Truenat is a chip-based, point-of-care, rapid molecular test for diagnosis of various diseases.
- It is a portable, chip-based and battery-operated machine developed by Goa-based Molbio Diagnostics Private Limited.
- Truenat tests use real-time micro polymerase chain reaction (PCR) technology.
- This test has been approved by WHO and ICMR for TB diagnosis, Covid and other diseases.
- Traditional RT-PCR tests can take up to eight hours to complete. The True Nat tests used the same scientific principle used in RT-PCR tests, but the results can be achieved in half an hour.

Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM)

- **Context:** Commission for Air Quality Management, (CAQM) has directed the State Government concerned to ensure effective, intensified and strict enforcement of the District Plans and State Action Plan with special focus on hotspot districts to eliminate stubble burning in the States.

Key Highlights:

- CAQM has been set up under the Commission for Air Quality Management in National Capital Region and Adjoining Areas Act, 2021.
- The Commission has been setup for better coordination, research, identification, and resolution of problems related to air quality in the National Capital Region (NCR) and adjoining areas.
- Adjoining areas have been defined as areas in Haryana, Punjab, Rajasthan, and Uttar Pradesh, adjoining the National Capital Territory of Delhi and NCR, where any source of pollution may cause adverse impact on air quality in the NCR.
- The act also dissolved the Environment Pollution Prevention and Control Authority established in the NCR in 1998.
- **The Commission will consist of:** (i) a chairperson, (ii) an officer of the rank of a Joint Secretary as the member-secretary and Chief Coordinating Officer, (iii) a serving or former Joint Secretary from the central government, (iii) three independent technical members with expertise in air pollution, and (iv) three members from non-government organizations.
- The Chairperson and members of the Commission will have a tenure of three years or till the age of seventy years, whichever is earlier.
- **Functions of the Commission include:** (i) coordinating actions by concerned state governments (Delhi, Haryana, Punjab, Rajasthan, and Uttar Pradesh), (ii) planning and executing plans to prevent and control air pollution in NCR, (iii) providing a framework for identifying air pollutants, (iv) conducting research and development through networking with technical institutions, (v) training and creating a special workforce to deal with issues related to air pollution, and (vi) preparing action plans such as increasing plantation and addressing stubble burning.
- **Powers of the Commission include:** (i) restricting activities influencing air quality, (ii) investigating and conducting research related to environmental pollution impacting air quality, (iii) preparing codes and guidelines to prevent and control air pollution,

- and (iv) issuing directions on matters including inspections, or regulation which will be binding on the concerned person or authority.
- The Commission will be the sole authority with jurisdiction over matters defined in the Act such as air quality management). In case of conflicts, directions of the Commission will prevail over the orders of the respective state governments, the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB), state PCBs, and state-level statutory bodies.
 - Contravention of provisions of the Act or orders and directions of the Commission will be punishable with imprisonment of up to five years, or fine of up to one crore rupees, or both. The act excludes farmers from the scope of these penalties.
 - However, the Commission may collect environmental compensation from farmers causing pollution by stubble burning. This compensation will be prescribed by the central government.
 - Appeals against the Commission's orders will lie with the National Green Tribunal.

25th SEPTEMBER, 2023

Statue of Oneness

- **Context:** Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister has unveiled the 108-foot-tall 'Statue of Oneness' of Adi Shankaracharya at Omkareshwar, Madhya Pradesh.

Key Highlights:

- The statue depicts Shankaracharya as a 12-year-old child when he is said to have visited Omkareshwar.
- The Government of Madhya Pradesh has invested a lot to develop the Omkareshwar town located on the Mandhata island which will form an important tourism circuit, along with Ujjain, Maheshwar and Mandu religious towns.
- Adi Shankara is believed to have lived between 788 and 820 AD. He was born in Kerala's Kaladi, situated on the bank of the Periyar River.

- He became a sanyasin at an early age and went to Omkareshwar. He then studied under his guru Govinda Bhagavatpada.
- Shankaracharya's central philosophy revolved around the concept of "Brahman," the ultimate reality or cosmic consciousness, being the only true and unchanging reality. He argued that the individual self (Atman) is ultimately identical with Brahman and that the perceived duality of the world is an illusion (maya). This non-dualistic perspective is a cornerstone of Advaita Vedanta.
- Shankaracharya is known for his extensive writings and commentaries on various Hindu scriptures, particularly the Vedas, Upanishads, and the Bhagavad Gita.
- His commentaries helped to clarify and systematize the teachings of Advaita Vedanta. Some of his most famous works include the "Brahma Sutra Bhashya," the "Vivekachudamani," and the "Atma Bodha".
- He is said to have visited all the important spiritual centres of the time — from Kanchi (Kancheepuram in Tamil Nadu) to Kamrup (Assam), and Kashmir and the Kedar and Badri dhams, as well as Sringeri, Ujjain, Kashi, Puri, and Joshimath.

India-UN Capacity Building Initiative

- **Context:** India and the United Nations have jointly launched 'India-UN Capacity Building Initiative'.

Key Highlights:

- Its aim is to build the capacity of countries in the Global South by sharing India's development experiences, best practices, and expertise through capacity-building and training programs.
- Under the initiative, the UN-India team and the Gates Foundation will collaborate, utilizing India's technical and economic cooperation platform to share India's development experiences and best practices worldwide.
- The initiative will also put into action the development goals established during India's G20 Presidency, including the G20 Action Plan for advancing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and enhancing technology and digital infrastructure.

- The initiative represents a significant step in accelerating progress toward the SDGs through South-South Cooperation, demonstrating India's commitment to strengthening its development partnership with the Global South.

Swachh Bharat Mission (Grameen) Phase II

- **Context:** India has achieved a significant milestone under the Swachh Bharat Mission (Grameen) Phase II, with 75% of its villages now attaining the ODF Plus status.

Key Highlights:

- Swachh Bharat Mission Grameen (SBMG) was launched in 2014.
- It is the world's largest sanitation campaign that led to the construction of over 100 million individual household toilets over a five-year period, taking sanitation coverage from 39% in 2014 to 100% in 2019.
- More than 6 lakh villages declared themselves Open Defecation Free (ODF) by 2nd October, 2019.
- Having achieved ODF status SBM-G Phase II was launched in 2020-21 with the objective of transforming all the villages from ODF to ODF Plus.
- An ODF Plus village is one which has sustained its Open Defecation Free (ODF) status along with implementing either solid or liquid waste management systems.
- The major components of the Phase-II of SBM-G are Sustaining Open Defecation Free Status (ODF-S), Solid (Bio-degradable) Waste Management, Plastic Waste Management (PWM), Liquid Waste Management (LWM), Faecal Sludge Management (FSM), GOBARdhan, Information Education and Communication/Behavior Change Communication (IEC/BCC) and Capacity Building.
- SBM-G Phase-II has set the ambitious target of making all villages ODF Plus by 2025.

- Three-fourth of the total villages in the country i.e 75% villages have achieved ODF Plus status under Phase II of the Swachh Bharat Mission (Grameen).
- The top performing States/UTs which have achieved 100% ODF Plus villages are – Andaman & Nicobar Islands, D&N Haveli, Goa, Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir, Karnataka, Kerala, Ladakh, Puducherry, Sikkim, Tamil Nadu, Telangana, and Tripura.
- Among States/UTs – Andaman & Nicobar Islands, Dadra Nagar Haveli & Daman Diu, Jammu & Kashmir and Sikkim have 100% ODF Plus Model villages.

26th SEPTEMBER, 2023

NASA's OSIRIS-Rex mission

- **Context:** The National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) is preparing for the final phase of the OSIRIS-REx mission as the spacecraft is set to drop a capsule containing samples from the asteroid Bennu on Earth.

Key Highlights:

- OSIRIS-REx stands for Origins, Spectral Interpretation, Resource Identification, Security, Regolith Explorer. The mission was launched by NASA in 2016.
- Its aim is to travel to a near-Earth asteroid named Bennu and bring a small sample back to Earth for study.
- It is the first U.S. mission to successfully collect a sample from an asteroid.
- Japan is the only other country to bring back asteroid samples. It gathered samples of about a teaspoon in a pair of asteroid missions.
- Samples like the one carried by the OSIRIS-REx mission are important because asteroids like Bennu can act as "time capsules" for the earliest history of our solar system.
- They can also preserve chemical signatures from a long time ago when the universe was a younger place. In fact, it is even possible that they contain samples of the ancient building blocks of life.

Norman E. Borlaug Award for 2023

- **Context:** Indian agriculture scientist Swati Nayak has become the third Indian agriculture scientist to win the prestigious Norman E. Borlaug Award for 2023. The other two include Aditi Mukherjee (2012) and Mahalingam Govindaraj (2022).

Key Highlights:

- "Bihana Didi" (Swati Nayak) wins Borlaug Award for introducing drought-tolerant rice in Odisha
- Dr. Norman E. Borlaug Award is presented every year by the World Food Prize Foundation. It is presented in memory of the Nobel awardee Dr. Norman Borlaug,
- This award recognizes exceptional, science-based achievement in international agriculture and food production by an individual under the age of 40.
- Swati Nayak is credited with the successful dissemination and adoption of more than 20 climate-resilient and bio-fortified rice varieties.
- Among these are 'Sahbhagi Dhan', a drought-tolerant variety suitable for hilly uplands, and 'BINA Dhan-11', which is flood-tolerant.

27th SEPTEMBER, 2023

New Angel Tax Mechanism in the Finance Act 2023

- **Context:** The Finance Ministry has notified final rules outlining valuation methods for non-resident and resident investors under the new Angel Tax Mechanism in the Finance Act 2023.

Key Highlights:

- Angel tax is levied when an unlisted company issues shares to an investor at a price higher than its fair market value (FMV).
- It was introduced in 2012 as a measure to prevent generation and circulation of unaccounted money, experts said.
- It was called the angel tax as it initially applied primarily to Indian angel investors – usually high net worth individuals who invest in startups at a very early stage

- Earlier, angel tax was levied only on investments made by resident or local investors. However, the Budget expanded its scope to cover non-resident investors.
- Angel tax has been criticized by startups and investors, who argue that it discourages investments in startups as it is common practice to sell shares at a steep premium.

Remission of Duties and Taxes on Exported Products (RoDTEP)

- **Context:** Government of India has extended support under the Scheme for Remission of Duties and Taxes on Exported Products (RoDTEP) till 30 June 2024.

Key Highlights:

- Remission of Duties and Taxes on Exported Products (RoDTEP) launched by Ministry of Commerce & Industry
- To provide a mechanism for reimbursement of taxes, duties and levies, which are currently not being refunded under any other mechanism, at the central, state and local level, but which are incurred by the export entities in the process of manufacture and distribution of exported products.
- When the scheme was announced on 1st January 2021, it covered 8,731 items from most export sectors except for organic and inorganic chemicals, pharmaceuticals and iron & steel, which covered most engineering items.
- However, the government later decided to extend the scheme to the excluded sectors as well.
- The tax refund rates under the scheme range from 0.5% to 4.3% depending on the sector and the product.

India's Salt Intake: A Concern

- **Context:** Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) has published a study on salt intake among Indians in the journal Nature.

Key Highlights:

- The estimated mean daily salt intake in India is 8 g, which exceeds the World Health Organization's recommended limit of up to 5 g per day.
- This excessive salt intake is more common among men, people in rural areas, and those who are overweight or obese.
- Salt intake was higher in employed people, and current tobacco users and those with high blood pressure.
- According to the World Health Organisation (WHO), restricting salt intake is one of the most beneficial and cost-effective methods to reduce the incidence of blood pressure by 25%.
- A high sodium level in the diet also increases the stroke and cardiac failure severity. Salty diet is responsible for 3 million deaths globally because of cardiovascular diseases.
- In India, cardiovascular diseases account for an estimated 28.1% of the total deaths in India. In 2016, 1.63 million deaths were attributable to hypertension as against 0.78 million deaths in 1990.

28th SEPTEMBER, 2023

Indo-Pacific Armies Chiefs' Conference (IPACC)

- **Context:** The Defence Minister delivered the inaugural address at the 13th Indo-Pacific Armies Chiefs' Conference (IPACC) in New Delhi.

Key Highlights:

- It was organized by Indian Army with the US Army
- To provide an opportunity for the delegates to exchange ideas and views on security and other contemporary issues of mutual interest, with core efforts directed to promote 'Peace and Stability' in the Indo-Pacific region.
- The conference witnessed participation from 30 countries. 18 countries were represented by Chiefs of their respective Armies and 12 countries were represented by Heads of Delegations.

- The Indo-Pacific is no more a maritime construct, but a full-fledged geo-strategic construct, and the region is facing a complex web of security challenges, including boundary disputes & and piracy.

The India Ageing Report 2023

- **Context:** The India Ageing Report 2023 has been released by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the International Institute for Population Sciences (IIPS).

Key Highlights:

- India Ageing Report 2023 represents a thorough review of the living conditions and welfare of older individuals in India.
- The report is based on the latest data available from the Longitudinal Ageing Survey in India (LASI), 2017–18, Census of India, Population Projections by the Government of India (2011–2036) and World Population Prospects 2022 by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs.
- India's elderly population is growing significantly, with a projected 41% increase in the decadal growth rate. By 2050, the share of elderly individuals in the total population is expected to double, reaching over 20%.
- It is anticipated that by 2046, the elderly population will surpass the population of children (aged up to 15) in India.
- More than 40% of the elderly in India are in the poorest wealth quintile, and about 18.7% of them live without an income. This level of poverty may negatively impact their quality of life and healthcare utilization.
- The report predicts a 279% growth in the population aged 80 and above between 2022 and 2050, with a predominance of widowed and highly dependent very old women.
- In India, a man aged 60 years can live another 18.3 years, while women can live 19 years. Apart from this, it also depends on the different life expectancy of the states. In Kerala and Himachal Pradesh, women can have up to 4 years more than men.

- The sex ratio among the elderly has been increasing since 1991, indicating more elderly women than men. For instance, in 1991, there were 930 elderly women per 1,000 men. After this, the ratio started to change and will continue to do so. The report estimates that by 2031, there will be 951 men for 1,078 women.
- Poverty among the elderly is often gendered, with older women more likely to be widowed, living alone, without income, and dependent on family support.
- There are significant regional variations in the elderly population's absolute levels and growth. Southern and select northern states have a higher share of the elderly population, while central and northeastern regions have younger populations.

29th SEPTEMBER, 2023

Five Eyes Intelligence Alliance

- **Context:** The Canadian Prime Minister has linked the killing of a Khalistani leader on Canadian soil to the Indian government. This has put the spotlight on the intelligence-sharing alliance 'Five Eyes', which is believed to have provided the information that "helped" Canada.

Key Highlights:

- The 'Five Eyes' alliance is a multilateral intelligence-sharing network of five countries, Australia, Canada, New Zealand, the U.K. and the U.S.
- The alliance is both surveillance-based and tracks signals intelligence (SIGINT).
- Intelligence documents shared between the member countries are classified as 'Secret—AUS/CAN/NZ/UK/US Eyes Only,' which gave the group its title 'Five Eyes'.
- In 1943, the Britain-USA (BRUSA) agreement laid the foundations for the UK-USA (UKUSA) agreement.
- BRUSA was signed between the US War Department and the UK's intelligence and security agency Government Code and Cypher School (GC&CS) to share intelligence information between the two

countries to support US forces in Europe, exchange personnel and develop joint regulations for the handling and distribution of highly sensitive material.

- Following this, the UKUSA was signed in 1946. Canada joined it in 1949, and New Zealand and Australia did so in 1956 forming the alliance.
- The objective of the Five Eyes alliance has shifted following the collapse of the Soviet Union and the emergence of new global challenges like terrorism and the growing influence of China.
- The alliance have now become involved in ocean and maritime surveillance, scientific and defence intelligence analysis, medical intelligence, geospatial intelligence, counterintelligence, counterterrorism and the continuous sharing of intelligence products via a secret collective database known as 'Stone Ghost'

Pipe Composting Technology

- **Context:** Assam is actively promoting Pipe Composting among its rural communities during the ongoing Swachhata Hi Seva campaign.

Key Highlights:

- Pipe composting technology is a method of converting organic waste into compost using PVC pipes 8 – 10 inches in diameter and 1.25 metres in length. The pipes are placed vertically keeping them 25-30 cm inside the ground.
- Only degradable waste can be disposed of into the pipes including leftover food, fruit and vegetable peels, flowers, dung, agricultural waste, etc.
- Once in two weeks, a little cow dung and dry leaves are mixed with water and poured inside to accelerate the growth of the worms.
- This should remain closed so that rainwater does not enter the pipes. Compost manure can be removed by lifting the pipe after 2 months.
- It rapidly transforms biodegradable waste into valuable compost, contributing to waste reduction and environmental preservation.

- Pipe composting is eco-friendly, as it doesn't harm the environment.
- It helps maintain a clean and hygienic environment within school campuses, promoting health and well-being.
- This composting method is odorless and prevents the attraction of flies, ensuring a pleasant atmosphere.
- It doesn't require much space, making it suitable for places with limited area for waste management.
- The system is sustainable, as the same pipes can be used repeatedly, reducing the need for additional materials.
- It offers a valuable educational opportunity for students to learn about decomposition science, the role of microorganisms and invertebrates, waste management, and sustainability, fostering environmental awareness.

30th SEPTEMBER, 2023

CRIIIIO 4 GOOD Initiative

- **Context:** The Union Minister for Education and Skill Development & Entrepreneurship has launched 'CRIIIIO 4 GOOD', a new online, life skills learning module to promote gender equality among girls and boys.

Key Highlights:

- It is launched by International Cricket Council (ICC), UNICEF and Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI).
- CRIIIIO 4 GOOD is a series of 8 cricket-based animation films to promote gender parity, equip girls with life skills and encourage their participation in sports.
- The themes of the eight modules are leadership, problem-solving, confidence, decision-making, negotiation, empathy, teamwork and goal setting and are visualized through state-of-the-art animation using cricketing examples.

- The programme uses the power of sports and the popularity of cricket as a medium to empower the girl child and spread awareness about gender equity.

Global Innovation Index 2023

- **Context:** Global Innovation Index 2023 has been published by the World Intellectual Property Organization. India retains 40th rank in the Global Innovation Index 2023

Key Highlights:

- Top Five countries are Switzerland, Sweden, the United States, the United Kingdom and Singapore are the world's most innovative economies in 2023.
- India has maintained its 40th rank in the Global Innovation Index (GII) 2023. In 2015, India stood at the 81st spot and has been rising in the past eight years.
- India ranked first among the 37 lower-middle group of income and first among the 10 economies in Central and South America.
- India holds top rankings in key indicators such as: ICT services exports, flow of venture capital, graduates in science and engineering and global corporate R&D investors.
- The areas where India needs to improve a lot are infrastructure, business sophistication and institutions

19th Asian Games

- **Context:** The 19th Asian Games in Hangzhou, China, from 23rd September 2023 to 8th October 2023, which was originally scheduled to be held in 2022 and was postponed due to the Covid-19 pandemic

Key Highlights:

- The Asian Games is the biggest sports competition in Asia, held once every four years. They are organized by the Olympic Council of Asia (OCA).

- The symbol for the Asian Games is the rising sun with interlocking rings.
- India is a founder member of Asian Games and also the host of the first Asian Games.
- A total of 40 sports and 61 disciplines will take center stage across 54 competition venues in Hangzhou and five co-host cities.
- Competitions in archery, artistic swimming, boxing, breaking, hockey, modern pentathlon, sailing, tennis, and water polo will also serve as Olympic qualifiers, with Paris 2024 quota spots available in those nine sports.
- The mascots of the 19th Asian Games are a group of robots named: Chenchen, Congcong and Lianlaian.
- The torch of the 19th Asian Games is named "Eternal Flame". The design was inspired by the Liangzhu Culture of ancient Chinese Civilization.
- Esports and Breaking (Breakdance) are scheduled to make their inaugural appearances as recognized and official sporting events.

