



FEBRUARY MONTHLY CURRENT AFFAIRS-2024

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TAMIL NADU

'Ungalai Thedi, Ungal Ooril' Scheme

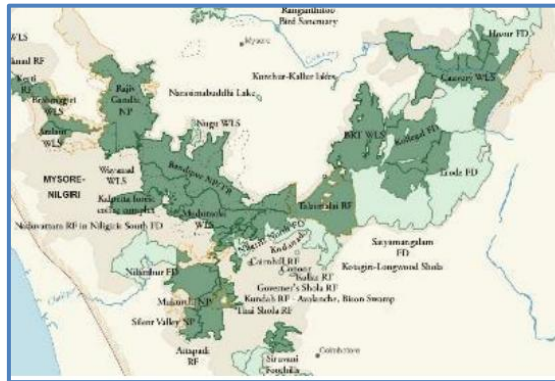
1. **Collectors and senior district-level officials** will spend **24 hours (9 a.m. to 9 a.m.)** in one taluk on the **fourth Wednesday of every month**.
2. They will review the functioning of various **projects, inspect infrastructure** and receive **representations from the public**.
3. The officials will spend the forenoon inspecting **primary health centres, ration shops, cooperative societies, schools, and government offices**, among others.

மக்களை நாடி, மக்கள் குறைகளைக் கேட்டு, உடனுக்குடன் தீர்வு காண அரசு இயந்திரம் களத்துக்கே வரும் **உங்களைத் தேடி உங்கள் ஊரில்** திட்டம் தமிழ்நாடு முழுவதும் **கின்று நடைமுறைக்கு வருகிறது.**

அரசு அலுவலகங்களை ஆய்வு செய்வதுடன், பொது மக்களின் குறைகளைக் கேட்டறிந்து அரசின் அனைத்து நலத் திட்டங்களும் **தங்கு தடையின்றி மக்களைச் சென்றடைவதை** இத்திட்டம் உறுதி செய்யும்.

18th wildlife sanctuary – Tamilnadu

1. The Tamil Nadu government has declared **80,114.80 hectares of reserve forests in Bargur Hills in Erode district**, as the Thanthai Periyar Wildlife Sanctuary.
2. This stretch of **protected forests** links the **Nilgiris Biosphere Reserve with Cauvery South Wildlife Sanctuary**.





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'No Caste, No Religion' certificate

1. The **Madras High Court** has stated that, **the revenue officials could not issue** a 'No Caste, No Religion' certificate.
2. They **don't have any power** conferred on them to issue such a certificate.
3. Also, such a certificate would have **serious implications** especially in relation to the application of **personal laws** on issues related to **inheritance of property, and of reservation in education and public employment.**
4. The **1973 Government Order** only permits a **person to not mention his/her caste or religion** in **school certificates.**

Check dam in Ponnai river

1. The first check dam along Tamil Nadu - **Andhra Pradesh border** across Poonai River, **in Vellore** was commenced recently.
2. **Poonai River**, also known as **thenpennai**, is a **tributary of Palar.**

10 achievements of Tamilnadu government

1. **State's economic growth** - 9% contribution to the Indian economy.
2. **Gross Domestic Product** - Tamil Nadu has secured the second place.
3. State's growth rate - 8.19% while the country's growth rate is 7.24%.
4. **Export Preparedness Index** - topped the list.
5. **Export of electronic goods** - Tamilnadu is ranking first.
6. **Industrial investment** - Tamil Nadu reach the third position, up from the 14th position.
7. **Education** - Tamil Nadu was elevated to the second place.
8. **Innovative industries** - secured the first place.
9. **Contolled Inflation** - which had fallen to 5.97%
10. The 10th achievement of the government is **improvement of status of that women**, young people, persons with disabilities, and persons on the margins and the oppressed.

First Mini TIDEL Park

1. Chief Minister inaugurated Tamil Nadu's first Mini-TIDEL Park in **Villupuram.**

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2. To promote **growth of IT and ITeS sectors in Tier II** cities of the state, the government is setting up **7 Neo-TIDEL parks** across the State as per the Tamil Nadu budget 2023-2024.
3. Mini-TIDEL parks are being established in **Tier II and Tier III towns**, with **eight other such parks** already in development in **Thanjavur, Salem, Thoothukudi, Vellore, Karaikudi, Namakkal, Tirupur and Ooty**.

Mahavir Statue in Tamil Nadu

1. **1,000-year-old** stone statue of Thirthangara Mahavir was found at **Manavarayanendal** near **Thiruchuli in Virudhunagar** district.
2. Based on the sculpture technique, it is assumed that the statue might belong to the **11th century AD**.



Kotravai sculpture

1. Archaeological researchers have discovered an **eighth-century Kotravai** sculpture near **Ulundurpet**.
2. They confirmed that it is **1,200 years old** and was **used for worship**.
3. The idol is depicted with **eight hands**, indicating its origin in the eighth century during the **Pallava period**.





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One-Stop Centers for Disabled Persons – Tamilnadu

1. The state **differently-abled welfare department** will soon establish 39 one-stop centres (OSCs) at the **sub-divisional level**.
2. This is held under the **World Bank-funded RIGHTS project**.
3. RIGHTS stands for **Rehabilitation Initiative for True Human Advancement Support**.

Minority Welfare measures in Tamilnadu 2024

1. **Financial assistance:**

- The **State govt** would provide financial assistance under **pre-matric (class I to VIII)** scholarship scheme for Muslim girl students facilitated **through the Waqf board**.

2. **Education loan:**

- "The **Tamil Nadu Minorities Economic Development Corporation**, through **cooperative banks**, will increase the grant given to Muslim girls to **5 lakhs**."

3. **'Pudhumani Penn' scheme:**

- Girls studying in govt-aided minority schools from **sixth to twelfth** standard in **Tamil medium** will be given **Rs 1,000 per month**.

4. **Legal heir certificates:**

- Action would be taken to issue certificates to the **second wife**, who **was married under Islamic law**, and their sons and daughters.

5. **Expiry date:**

- There would be **no expiry date** mentioned in religious minority certificates.

6. **Permanent recognition:**

- would be given for **minority educational** institutions.

Rhodamine-B

1. **Tamil Nadu recently banned** the sale and production of cotton candy – also known as **candy floss**.
2. This step was taken by the state government after a lab test confirmed **the presence of cancer-causing chemicals**.

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- Rhodamine-B is giving **blue, pink cotton and green** which is unsafe and substandard for consumption.
- Rhodamine-B or RhB** is a chemical commonly **used for dyeing in the textile, paper, leather, and paints** industry as a colouring agent.



‘Tholkudi’ scheme

- A new scheme ‘Tholkudi’ for **development of tribals** that would be implemented over the **next four years**.
- Under the scheme, **basic amenities** such as road facilities, potable water streetlights and permanent houses would be **provided in tribal areas**.
- Dedicated programmes** would also be implemented to **improve the livelihood of members of the tribal communities** as part of this initiative.

Nemmeli Desalination Plant

- Tamil Nadu** Chief Minister inaugurated the Nemmeli desalination plant.
- It has a **capacity of 150 million litres per day** (mld), to supply drinking water to 9 lakh residents in various parts of Chennai.
- In India, **Chennai will be the first city** to produce 750MLD water from desalination plants.

National Centre for Ageing

- India’s first National Centre of Ageing commissioned at **Guindy in Chennai**.

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2. **Ayush and Siddha medicines** are also set up at the Centre.

Model plot for TN grassland restoration project

1. The **Tamil Nadu Forest Department** in **collaboration with the Forest College and Research Institute (FCRI)**, Mettupalayam, has launched works for setting up a **model grass restoration plot in Sirumugai forest range** in Coimbatore district.
2. The FCRI team has identified one hectare land in **Pethikuttai reserve forest** a **dry - deciduous forest area** of Sirumugai range for this purpose.
3. It will serve as the model plot for the Tamil Nadu Biodiversity Conservation and **Greening Project for Climate Change Response (TBGPCCR)** for its **Meipulam project**.

Maghizhchi

1. **Tamil Nadu State Police** is the only police force in the country **to allocate funds for providing mental and psychological treatment** for police personnel.
2. Inaugurating Maghizhchi, a **mental well-being programme** for **police personnel and their families in southern districts and Madurai and Tirunelveli city police** in association with M.S. Chellamuthu Trust and Research Foundation.
3. Also said that reimbursement claims for **treatment of deaddiction** were allowed by the police department as per the Government Order.
4. "**No other State police department** has such a programme."




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STATE

Caste census in Andhra Pradesh

1. **Andhra Pradesh** launched a comprehensive caste census on Friday to enumerate all the castes in the state.
2. **A special phone app** has been designed by the government to conduct the census.
3. Andhra Pradesh has become the **second state in the country, after Bihar**, to launch such a caste census.

20K STAFFERS TO BE DEPLOYED		
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ Entire process will be done through online (mobile) including taking biometrics of people	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ The questions include name, village/mandal/district, total number of family members, & relationship with the family head	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ Village/ward volunteer of the respective locality will lead the teams	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ They will also enter information about the type of house (thatched/RCC/duplex/flat) and whether its own or rented	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ There are 15 questions in section-1 mostly about family details	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ They will also collect information whether the household owns a LPG	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ Anyone of the family members can authenticate the survey by using the following options 1) Biometric 2) IRIS 3) Facial 4) OTP	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ Question 9 in section 2 is about the caste of the individual household	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ The caste column has a list of about 726 castes one of which the volunteer will select

4th National Chilika Bird Festival

1. The 4th National Chilika Bird Festival was held in **Mangalajodi, Odisha**.
2. The festival celebrates the **10 lakh winged visitors of 200 species** that visit Mangalajodi **during the winter**.
3. Chilika lies in the Central Asian Flyway for birds.
4. Mangalajodi, situated in the **North Eastern Part of Chilika**, the largest brackish water lake of Asia, is known as the "**Birds Paradise of Asia**".

India Ageing Report 2023: Jammu Kashmir's Life Expectancy

1. This is jointly conducted by the **International Institute for Population Sciences** and the **United Nations Population Fund**.
2. Jammu Kashmir emerges as a region with **remarkable resilience against elderly poverty**.

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3. It has mere **4.2% of its aged population** falling below the poverty line.
4. Jammu Kashmir stands out with the **highest life expectancy after the age of 60**.
5. Males - 20.3%, and females - 23.0%, making it the leader in this demographic indicator between 2015-19.



Rehabilitation of Jadung Village

1. In a "**first-of-its-kind**" initiative, the **Uttarakhand government** has decided to rebuild and rehabilitate Jadung village in **Uttarkashi district**.
2. It was abandoned by the residents since the **1962 Inda-China war**.
3. The village has been under the control of the Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) since then.
4. The locality - **a cold desert area like Ladakh** - has proper road connectivity, making it a potential tourist destination.

Patna Declaration

1. A **three-day international workshop** was held in the **Bihar capital** recently.
2. It aims to check **Illegal hunting of wild and migratory birds** and suggest measures to strengthen their conservation efforts in countries falling in the **Central Asian Flyway (CAF)**.

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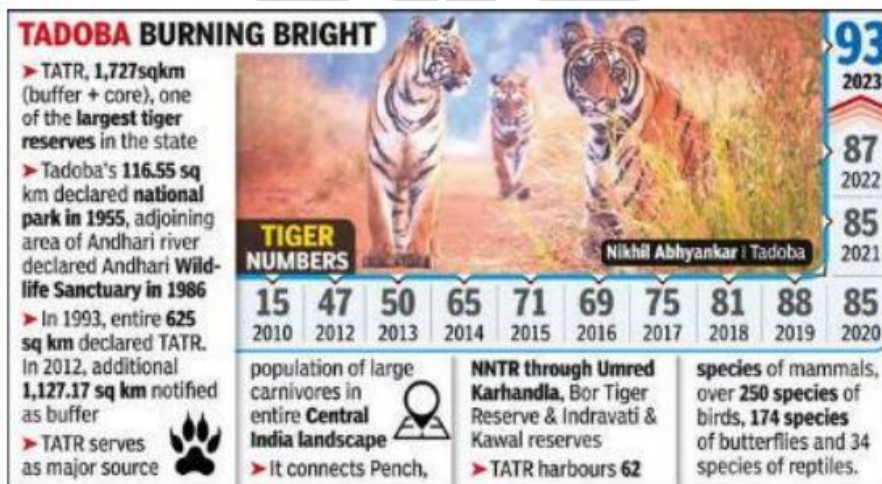
- The declaration talks about the **state's action plan** for conserving the birds with respect to CAF.
- It also aims to **developing strategies** and concerted actions for curbing illegal hunting, taking and trade of birds in the CAF Region.

Kerala's Environment Budget

- In a **first**, the Kerala government has introduced an Environment Budget as a **separate document** along with the **State Budget**.
- It is **evaluating environmental impacts** of budgetary and fiscal policies and integrating environmental concerns into the 'programmes' of the State.
- The sectors selected for the first Environment Budget are agriculture, livestock, fisheries, forests and wildlife, environment, water resources, cooperation, soil survey, and the energy sector.

Tadoba Kawal conservation reserve

- The **Telangana State** declared the corridor area between **Tadoba-Andhari Tiger Reserve and Kawai Tiger Reserve** as a conservation reserve.
- Tadoba-Andhari Tiger Reserve is located in **Maharashtra**.
- Conservation and community reserves are two more protected areas appended to the **Wildlife Protection Act, 1972**.
- As per the **Section 36(A)** of the Act, the State government may declare any areas owned by it.



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Assam's State Fruit

1. Assam's unique lemon variety, **Kaji Nemu (Assam lemon)**, was declared as the state fruit.
2. Kaji Nemu has already got the **GI tag**.
3. It is one of the **best-known fruits** that have **medicinal properties**.
4. It's proven that Kaji Nemu **boosts immunity, reduces cholesterol levels** in the human body and makes it stress free.



Smart Gram Panchayat

1. The pilot project '**Smart Gram Panchayat: Revolution towards Digitization of Gram Panchayat**' was launched recently.
2. The aim of the project is to extend **PM-WANI** (Prime Minister 's WiFi Access Network Interface) service in all gram panchayats across Begusarai district in Bihar.
3. **Begusarai** has now become the **first district in Bihar** to equip all gram panchayats with WiFi services under PM-WANI.

Statue of Bir Lachit Borphukan



1. The **125 feet statue** of Bir Lachit Borphukan at **Lahdoigarh, Hologapar** in **Jorhat of Assam** will be unveiled in March.



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2. He is known for his leadership in the **1671 Battle of Saraighat** where he thwarted the Mughal invasion.
3. This statue symbolizes the valour and spirit of the **Assamese people**.

NATIONAL

75th anniversary of Supreme Court

1. Supreme Court of India observed the **Diamond Jubilee celebration** in **Delhi**.
2. During the event, **Digital Supreme Court Reports (Digi SCR)**, **Digital Courts 2.0**, and a **new bilingual website** for the Supreme Court were launched.
3. The SC came into existence on **26 January 1950** with the coming into force of the Constitution.
4. It initially functioned from the old Parliament building where the **Federal Court of India** sat for **12 years from 1937 to 1950**.
5. It moved to the present building in **New Delhi in 1958**.



India's First Hygienic Food Street 'Prasadam'

1. Union Health Minister recently inaugurated '**Prasadam**,' the **nation's first healthy and hygienic food street**, in a grand ceremony at Neelkanth Van, Mahakal Lok, **Ujjain, Madhya Pradesh**.
2. Spanning an impressive 939 square meters, "Prasadam" stands as a **symbol of holistic development**.
3. "Prasadam" goes beyond offering a culinary delight. It provides an array of facilities, including a dedicated kids' play area, drinking water facility, CCTV



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surveillance ,ample parking, public conveniences, and spacious seating areas.

National Youth Festival

1. Prime Minister inaugurated the **27th National Youth Festival at Nashik** in Maharashtra.
2. He addressed the youth of the nation.
3. National Youth Day is celebrated every year to honour the ideals and thoughts of Swami Vivekananda.
4. The **theme** of the National Youth Festival this year is **MYBharat-ViksitBharat@2047- By the Youth, For the Youth.**
5. During the celebration, various states will showcase **cultural programmes of their diverse cultural heritage.**

India's First Dark Sky Park

1. The **Pench Tiger Reserve (PTR) in Maharashtra** is **India's first Dark Sky Park within a tiger reserve** for earmarking areas around the park that **restrict light pollution** for stargazers to access pristine dark skies.
2. Dark Sky Place certification focuses on lighting policy, dark sky-friendly retrofits, outreach and education, and monitoring the night sky.
3. This designation positions PTR as a sanctuary where tourists can **witness celestial spectacles**, shielded from the **intrusion of artificial light pollution.**
4. Pench Tiger Reserve became the **fifth such park in Asia.**

International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC)

1. INSTC is a **7,200-km long multi-mode network** of ship, rail, and road routes.
2. The route primarily involves **moving freight from India**, Iran, Azerbaijan, and the Russian Federation via ship, rail, and road.
3. The **primary objective** of the INSTC project is **to reduce costs in terms of time and money** over the traditional route currently being used.

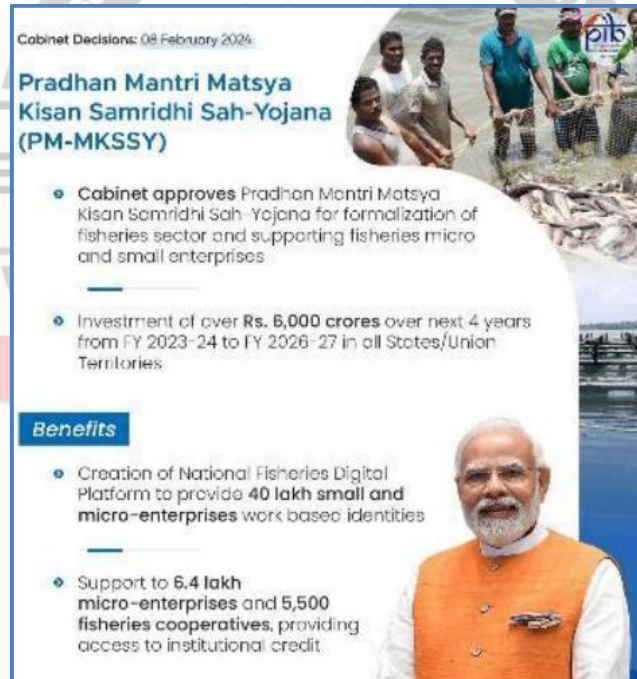
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Kilkari Programme



1. The Kilkari programme, a **Mobile Health** (m-health) Initiative, was recently launched for beneficiaries in local content in **Gujarat and Maharashtra**.
2. 'Kilkari' (meaning 'a baby's gurgle'), is a centralized **interactive voice response** (NR) based mobile health service.

Pradhan Mantri Matsya Kisan Samridhi Sah- Yojana



1. The Union Cabinet approved the "Pradhan Mantri Matsya Kisan Samridhi Sah- Yojana (PM-MKSSY)".
2. It is a **Central Sector Sub-scheme** under the Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada scheme.

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3. It will aid the **formalization of the fisheries sector** and supporting fisheries micro and small enterprises.
4. India's total fish output stood at **174 lakh tonnes** in **2022-23**.
5. India is the third largest fish producer in the world, contributing **8% to total global fish production**.

PM Surya Ghar: Muft Bijli Yojana



1. The Union govt announced the launching the **PM Surya Ghar: Muft Bijli Yojana**.
2. This project will be with an investment of over **Rs. 75,000 crores**.
3. It aims to **light up 1 crore households** by providing up to **300 units of free electricity every month**.

Renaming of saving schemes





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1. The central government renamed the **Sukanya Samridhi Yojana to Sukanya Samridhi Account Scheme, 2024**, and the **Post Office Time Deposit Scheme** to the National Savings Time Deposit Scheme with revised interest rates.
2. This Scheme may be called the **Sukanya Samridhi Account (Amendment) Scheme, 2024**.
3. It shall be deemed to have come into force on **January 1, 2024**.
4. The deposits made in the account on or after the **1st day of January 2024** shall earn interest at the **rate of 8.2%**.

Global Digitalization Milestone

1. The "State of India's Digital Economy Report, 2024," was unveiled by the **Indian Council for Research on International Economic Relations (ICRIER)**, a renowned Delhi-based think tank.
2. As per the findings, India has cemented its **position as the third-largest digitalized nation** in the world.
3. It stands only behind the technological **powerhouses of the United States of America (USA) and China**.

Top 5 countries in terms of digitalisation of economy			Digitalisation in large states (Top 5)	
Country	CHIPS score		State	CHIPS score
US	65.1	<div style="width: 65.1%;"></div>	Karnataka	58.7
China	62.3	<div style="width: 62.3%;"></div>	Maharashtra	52.6
India	39.1	<div style="width: 39.1%;"></div>	Telangana	50.8
UK	28.8	<div style="width: 28.8%;"></div>	Gujarat	49.7
Germany	23.8	<div style="width: 23.8%;"></div>	Haryana	48.6

India's Most Welcoming Region in 2024

1. The Popular online travel agency Booking.com unveiled its 12th Annual Traveller Review Awards 2024 .
2. It highlights the Most Welcoming Regions and Cities in India.
3. **Himachal Pradesh** secured the top spot of the '**Most Welcoming Region in India**' category.

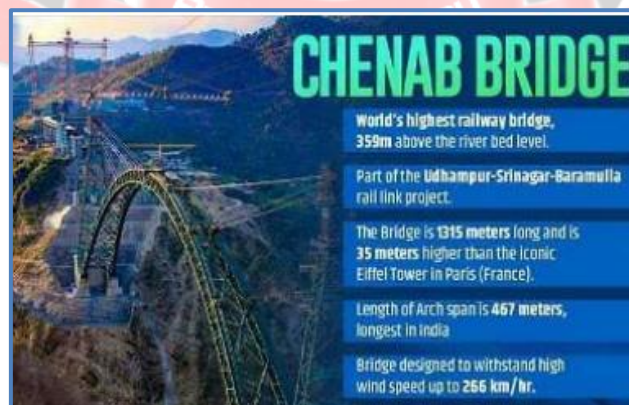
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4. It is followed by **Goa, Kerala, Rajasthan, and Uttarakhand.**
5. **Mararikulam (Kerala)** topped in the list of the ten 'Most Welcoming Cities in India.'
6. It is followed by **Jaisalmer (Rajasthan), Bir (Maharashtra) and Leh (Jammu & Kashmir).**



World's Highest Railway Bridge

1. The world's highest **single-arch railway bridge - Chenab bridge** was inaugurated recently.
2. The arch bridge **runs between Bakkal and Kauri in the Reasi district of Jammu and Kashmir.**
3. It forms a crucial link from **Katra to Banihal.**
4. It stands at the height of **1,178 feet above the riverbed**, making it **35 metres taller than Paris' Eiffel Tower.**



Cybercrime Report

1. **India** was placed on the **80th position** in a report focusing on local threats in the year 2023.

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2. Additionally, nearly **34% of users** in India were targeted by local threats, amounting to some **74,385,324 local incidents**.
3. India's cybersecurity market **reached USD 6.06 billion** in 2023.

Rashtriya Udyamita Vikas Pariyojana

1. It is specially designed for the beneficiaries of **PM SVANidhi Yojana**.
2. This unique **National Entrepreneurship Development Project** underlines the government's firm commitment to **promote employers across the country**.
3. It aims to equip individuals with **comprehensive entrepreneurship training**, creating job providers rather than job seekers.
4. Under the pilot program, street vendors of **10 big cities of the country** will be given a stipend along with training to expand their businesses.

India Unveils Largest Solar-Battery Project

1. The **Solar Energy Corporation of India (SECI)** has commissioned **India's largest solar-battery energy storage system (BESS)** in **Rajnandgaon, Chhattisgarh**.
2. This large-scale integration of solar and battery storage represents a pioneering leap in **renewable energy generation and utilization** in India.
3. The project addresses peak energy demand by **storing solar energy** during the day and releasing it during evening hours, ensuring grid stability and reliability.

INTERNATIONAL

Coltan Deposits in Kenya



1. Kenya has confirmed the discovery of its **first coltan deposits**.

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2. Coltan, short for **columbite-tantalite** , is a valuable mineral that is used in various industries.
3. **Tantalum**, derived from coltan, is used in the **production of capacitors**.
4. The Democratic Republic of Congo holds more than **70% of the world's coltan reserves**.

Free visa for Indians by Iran

1. **Iran announced** the initiation of a **15-day visa-free policy for Indian** tourists visiting the country.



2. Indian citizens would be allowed **to enter Iran with ordinary passports once every six months** and with a **maximum stay of 15 days** which will not be extended.
3. Earlier, **Vietnam, Thailand, Sri Lanka** have also eased visa rules for Indian tourists.
4. **Sri Lanka** has also **allowed visa-free entry** to visitors from seven countries, including **India, China and Russia**.

BAPS Hindu Mandir



1. The BAPS Hindu Mandir, **first Hindu stone temple in UAE**, was inaugurated recently.

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2. Abu Dhabi's first Hindu temple has been made in the **Nagara style of architecture.**
3. The BAPS Hindu Mandir has been built with over **300 high-tech sensors to measure temperature and monitor seismic activity.**
4. The land for the temple was donated by the UAE government.

Right to Disconnect - Australia

1. The government of Australia is looking to **pass a Jaw on "Right to Disconnect"**.
2. It **aims to regulate timings** for when bosses are allowed to contact employees beyond their working hours via phone calls, messages or emails.
3. Similar Jaws have already been passed in **France, Italy, and Belgium.**



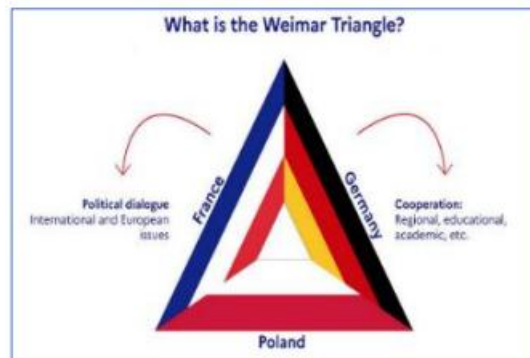
4. The concept of the 'Right to Disconnect' stems from the recognition that modern technology blurs the **boundaries between work and personal life.**
5. In **India**, the **Right to Disconnect Bill of 2018** was drafted by **Baramati MP Supriya Sule.'**
6. It aimed to empower the **employees to negotiate the terms** for out-of-work communications.

Weimar Triangle

1. The governments of **Poland, France and Germany** vowed to **make Europe a security and defence power** with a greater ability to back Ukraine.
2. They discussed for reviving the so-called Weimar Triangle.
3. It is a long-dormant regional grouping that was designed to promote cooperation between France, Germany and Poland.

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4. The Weimar Triangle was created in **1991** as **Poland** was **emerging from decades of communism** as a platform for political cooperation among the three nations.



World's fourth-largest economy

1. Japan slips to the **world's fourth-largest economy**, behind the **US, China and now Germany**.
2. Japan's nominal GDP totalled **\$4.2 trillion last year**, or about **591 trillion yen**.
3. The Japanese economy has gradually lost its competitiveness and productivity while the **population shrinks as Japanese people age** and have fewer children.
4. Japan fell from the **second-ranked economy behind the U.S.** to the third-largest in 2010 as China's economy grew.

Aspides Mission

1. The European Union launched a naval mission to **protect Red Sea shipping** from **Yemen's Houthi rebels**.
2. Several countries have expressed their intention to participate in this mission, called **Aspides ("shield" in ancient Greek)**
3. This will have orders to **fire on the Houthis** only if they attack first and will not be authorised to shoot pre-emptively.
4. Since November, the Houthis have been attacking commercial and military shipping in the busy Red Sea, across which **12% of global trade travels**.

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Pakistan's New Prime Minister

1. **Shehbaz Sharif** is all set to return as the **Prime Minister and Asif Ali Zardari** as the President of Pakistan after a power-sharing agreement.
2. He was the Prime Minister of Pakistan till August 2023, when the National Assembly was dissolved for fresh elections.

ILO Convention to End Workplace Violence and Harassment

1. **Philippines becomes first Asian Country** to ratify the **ILO Convention** to End Workplace Violence and Harassment.
2. This ratification of **Convention No. 190 marks** an important step to **preventing and eliminating violence** and harassment in the world of work.
3. With this ratification, the Philippines **joins 37 other nations** in standing against workplace violence and harassment.



SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Future Circular Collider



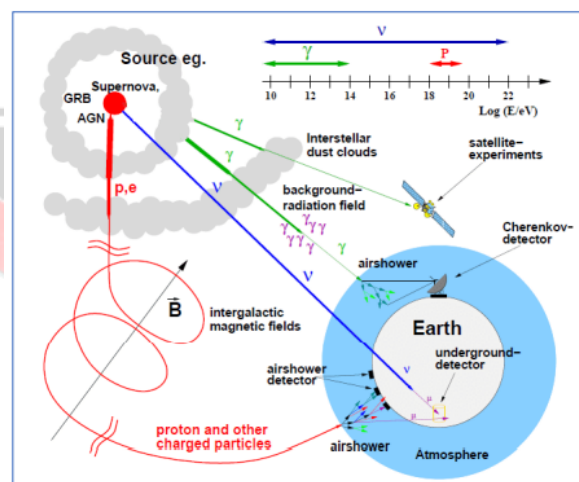
1. **CERN**, the European Organization for Nuclear Research, plans to build the **three- times bigger (and faster)** Future Circular Collider (FCC).

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2. FCC is a **particle accelerator** that will be within a **91 kilometre ring**, which will give it three times the circumference of the **Large Hadron Collider**.
3. FCC would only be **operational by 2045** by the very earliest.
4. The goal of the FCC is to push energy and intensity frontiers of particle colliders, with the aim of reaching collision energies of **100 tera electron Volts**.

GRAPES-3 experiment

1. GRAPES-3 experiment researchers have identified a **new characteristic in the cosmic-ray proton spectrum** at an energy level of around **166 tera-electron-volt (TeV)**.
2. This observation **introduces a potential shift** in our **understanding of cosmic ray origins**, their acceleration processes, and how they move **within the Milky Way**.
3. Cosmic rays discovered over a century ago, represent the universe's most energetic particle.



Indigenous Laser Weapon DURGA-2

1. DRDO is preparing to **test a real prototype of its indigenous laser weapon** system, DURGA-2.
2. DURGA stands for **Directionally Unrestricted Ray Gun Array**.
3. The present generation of **anti-aircraft or anti-missile systems** are not considered fool-proof.

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4. But the laser weapon promises to have **100% kill probability**.



World's 1st Pigeonpea speed breeding protocol

1. The **International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT)** has announced the world's first Pigeonpea Speed Breeding Protocol'.
2. These new lines of pigeon pea will be crucial in **bringing food security** in the **drylands of Asia and Africa**.
3. The **breeding cycle** that takes **around seven years**, can be **reduced to two-four years**.
4. The scientists have successfully **restricted vegetative growth and triggered early flowering**.
5. It is rich in thiamine, riboflavin, niacin, vitamin B-6, folate, vitamin A, calcium, zinc, iron, magnesium and phosphorus.



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Frozen Smoke Discovery

1. Researchers have developed sensors made from **highly porous materials** known as '**frozen smoke**' (aerogels).
2. By precisely engineering the shape of the holes in the **aerogels**, the sensors were able to **detect the fingerprint of formaldehyde** at room temperature.
3. Formaldehyde is a **common indoor air pollutant**.
4. It uses **artificial intelligence techniques** to detect formaldehyde.
5. It is **far beyond the sensitivity** of most indoor air quality sensors.



High-Energy Particle "Amaterasu"

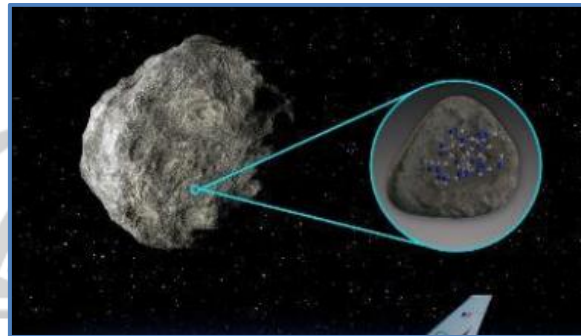
1. Scientists have detected an extremely powerful particle with **ultra-high energy**.
2. They believed that it has **travelled to Earth** from beyond the **Milky Way galaxy**.
3. It has been named the "**sun goddess**" (**Amaterasu in Japanese**) particle and is extraordinary.
4. This particle has an **energy level one million times** greater than what can be generated in most powerful particle accelerators.
5. It rivals the **single most energetic cosmic ray** ever observed, the "**Oh-My-God**" particle that was **detected in 1991**.



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Water on asteroid

1. Researchers for the first time, detected the **presence of water molecules** on the surface of an **asteroid Iris and Massalia**.
2. The discovery is based on the analysis of data gathered by **Stratospheric Observatory for Infrared Astronomy (SOFIA)**.
3. Both Iris and Malissa are **rich in silicates**.
4. Iris (with a diameter of 199 km) and Massalia (with a diameter of 135 km) have similar orbits, travelling an **average distance of 2.39 astronomical units (AU)**.



High Altitude Pseudo Satellite Vehicle

1. The **National Aerospace Laboratories (NAL) of Bengaluru** has successfully flown a prototype of a **new-generation unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV)**.
2. This one can **fly at great heights**, about 20 km from ground, runs entirely on **solar power**, and can remain in the air for months on end.
3. Such UAVs belong to a **class of flying objects called HAPS, or high-altitude pseudo-satellite vehicles, or HALE**, that is **high-altitude long-endurance vehicles**.

India's first hypervelocity expansion tunnel test facility

1. The **Indian Institute of Technology Kanpur (IITK)** has successfully built and tested India's **first hypervelocity expansion tunnel test facility**.
2. The facility is capable of **generating flight speeds** ranging from 3 to 10 km/s, simulating hypersonic conditions.
3. It is crucial for various applications such as atmospheric entry of vehicles, asteroid entry, scramjet flights, and ballistic missiles.

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4. The facility called S2 is **nicknamed "Jigarthanda"**.



India's first smart bullets

1. **IIT Madras** has joined hands with Munitions India (MIL) to develop **India's first indigenous 155mm guided smart ammunition**.
2. This collaboration **aims to enhance the accuracy and range** of the existing shells **used in artillery guns**.
3. Additionally, the project **aims to increase the impact and lethality** when the ammunition hits the target.



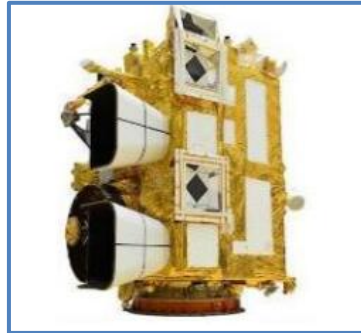
INSAT-3DS Satellite

1. India is set to enhance its **meteorological monitoring capabilities** with the launch of INSAT-3DS by using **GSLV-F14 rocket**.
2. The satellite is designed for **enhanced meteorological observations and monitoring of land and ocean surfaces** for weather forecasting and disaster warning.
3. It will provide **continuity of services** to the **existing in-orbit INSAT-3D and 3DR** satellites.



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4. It aiming to **provide uninterrupted services** and significantly improve the overall capabilities of the INSAT system.



ISRO Young Scientist Program 2024 (YUVIKA)

1. **Indian Space Research Organization** (ISRO) has introduced the **Yuva Vigyani Karyakram Young Scientist Program (YUVIKA) 2024**.
2. Yuvika aims to **provide fundamental knowledge on space science, technology** and applications, especially targeting rural areas.
3. The program aims to **spark interest in STEM fields and nurture future talents** in space exploration.

Gaganyaan Mission - 4 Astronaut – Designates



1. Mr. Modi reviewed preparations for the **Gaganyaan Mission** and revealed the names of 4 astronaut-designates selected for the Gaganyaan mission.
2. They are **Group Captain Prasanth Balakrishnan Nair**, Group Captain Ajit Krishnan, Group Captain Angad Pratap and Wing Commander Shubhanshu Shukla.
3. The Gaganyaan Mission is **India's first human space flight program** for which extensive preparations are underway at various ISRO centres.

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4. Speaking on the occasion, the Prime Minister said, **that by 2035**, India will have its space station in space that will help us study the unknown expanses of space.

ENVIRONMENT

New Ramsar wetlands sites in India

1. **Five more** Indian wetlands have been added to the global list of wetlands of international importance **under the Ramsar Convention**.
2. It is taking the total number of such highly recognised waterlogged ecosystems in the **country to 80**.
3. The five wetlands added to the Ramsar list are
 - Magadi Kere Conservation Reserve - Karnataka
 - Ankasamudra Bird Conservation Reserve - Karnataka
 - Aghanashini Estuary - Karnataka
 - Karaivetti Bird Sanctuary - Tamil Nadu.
 - Longwood Shola Reserve Forest - Tamil Nadu.
4. With the 2 news sites, Tamil Nadu is solidifying its position with a total of **16 Ramsar sites**, the highest in the country.

STAR Metric



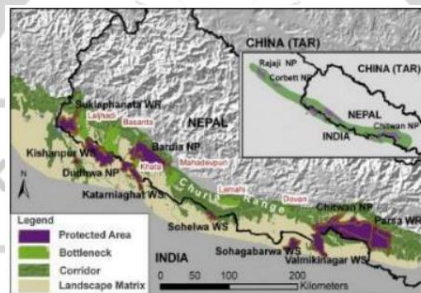
1. The **International Union for Conservation of Nature** (IUCN) has introduced the **Species Threat Abatement and Restoration** (STAR) metric.

FEBRUARY MONTH CURRENT AFFAIRS – 2024

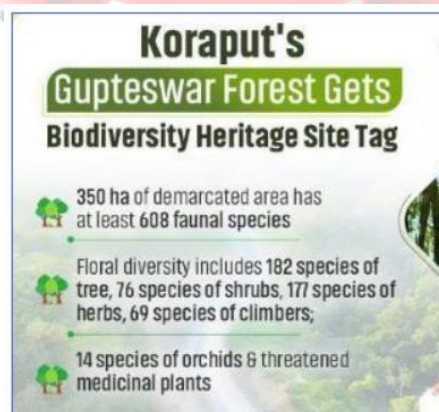
2. It aims to **quantify actions aimed** at **halting biodiversity loss in oceans**.
3. It was **first unveiled in 2021** for use in terrestrial areas.
4. STAR helps measure progress towards global biodiversity targets and supports decision-making by governments, businesses, and organizations in conservation efforts.

Terai Arc Landscape

1. **Nepal's Terai Arc Landscape (TAL)** initiative receives global recognition from the U.N. as **one of seven World Restoration Flagships**.
2. It was **launched in 2004** and aimed at **restoring ecosystems and creating space for tigers**.
3. This initiative **restored 66,800 hectares** (165,000 acres) of forest and significantly **increased the Bengal tiger population** in the region.



Gupteswar Forest



1. The Gupteswar Forest in **Odisha's Koraput district** has been declared as the **fourth Biodiversity-Heritage Site (BHS)** of the state.

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2. The site is spread over **350 hectares of demarcated** area.
3. The **limestone caves** of Gupteswar are **adorned with eight species of bats** out of the total 16 species found in southern Odisha.

Mahmudia wetland in Romania

1. **World Wildlife Fund (WWF)** has **urged the Romanian government** to classify Mahmudia wetland as a '**national interest ecological restoration area**'.
2. It aims to **protect its natural progress and foster community** prosperity.
3. A significant portion of the **naturally regenerated wetlands within the Romanian Danube Delta** faces the possibility of reversion to agricultural land.
4. In **June 2023**, the **Danube River's high waters** has breached the **dyke enclosing a marshland in Mahmudia**.
5. The ensuing **flood** submerged **1,000 hectares of farmland**, converting them into a **typical delta ecosystem**.



Qinling Station For Antarctic Study

1. **China's fifth scientific** outpost **in the Antarctic**, was officially named as Qinling Station.

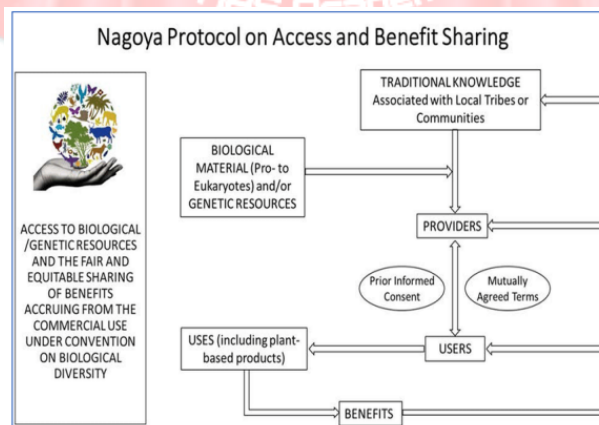
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2. It is the **third Chinese research base in Antarctica** and will be operational all year.
3. China already built **four other research stations - Zhongshan, Taishan, Kunlun, and Great Wall** - in the **Antarctic from 1985 to 2014**.



Nagoya Protocol - Cameroon

1. **Cameroon in central Africa** has now adopted the Nagoya Protocol on **Access and Benefit Sharing**.
2. It is an **international agreement** that aims to ensure that the **benefits of using genetic resources and traditional knowledge**.



3. The Nagoya Protocol is an **offshoot of the Convention on Biological Diversity** that **addresses fair and equitable benefit** sharing in the context of biodiversity access.

FEBRUARY MONTH CURRENT AFFAIRS – 2024

4. Cameroon is a biodiversity hotspot, with an **estimated 11,000 plant, animal, and microorganism species.**
5. Nagoya Protocol was adopted by the **CBD in Nagoya, Japan**, in October 2010 and entered into **force in 2014.**

Underwater Canyon Near Cyprus

1. **Israeli scientists** uncovered a never before known about underwater canyon near Cyprus.
2. The **canyon is known as Eratosthenes** for the **underwater mountain** it is near.
3. It dates **back to the Messinian Event** that transpired about **5.5 million years ago.**
4. The canyon is about **10 km wide and 500 m deep** and was buried at the beginning of the Messinian period before the **deposition of the salt layer.**



SPORTS

Khelo India youth games 2024

1. The sixth edition of the flagship event under the **Indian government's Khelo India initiative**, concluded recently.
2. **Tamil Nadu** hosted the KIYG 2024 in **four cities - Chennai, Madurai, Trichy and Coimbatore.**
3. **Maharashtra** defended their Khelo India Youth Games title after topping the medals tally with **57 gold medals, 48 silver and 53 bronze.**



FEBRUARY MONTH CURRENT AFFAIRS – 2024

4. Host state **Tamil Nadu** finished second with 38 gold, 21 silver and 39 bronze for their best-ever finish.

Rank	State	Gold	Silver	Bronze	Total medals
1	Maharashtra	57	48	53	158
2	Tamil Nadu	38	21	39	98
3	Haryana	35	22	46	103
4	Delhi	13	18	25	56
5	Rajasthan	13	17	17	47
6	Telangana	13	4	7	24
7	Uttar Pradesh	11	13	18	42
8	Punjab	11	13	15	39
9	Kerala	11	9	15	35
10	Manipur	10	11	10	31

Sportstar Aces Awards 2024

1. **India cricketer Mohammed Shami** and **chess Grandmaster R. Vaishali** won the ‘Sportsman of the year (Team Sports)’ and ‘Sportswoman of the year (Individual)’ awards respectively.

Frozen Lake Marathon

1. Pangong Frozen Lake Marathon 2024 was held in **Leh-Ladakh**.
2. **Bhagwan Singh and Mahesh Khurana** from **Bhopal** have joined the select group of athletes after completing the **Pangong Frozen Lake Marathon**.
3. The **second edition** of the Ladakh’s Pangong frozen lake marathon is known as the ‘**World’s Highest Frozen Lake Marathon**’.
4. **Bhagwan** is also the **first mountaineer from Madhya Pradesh** to scale the world's highest peak, **Mount Everest**.

AWARDS AND EVENTS

Kalaignar Ezhudhukol Award

1. **Senior journalist V.N.Samy** was awarded the Kalaignar Ezhudhukol Award recently for the year 2022.
2. 'Kalaignar Ezhudhukol Award' is awarded for **journalists who strive for the welfare of the society**.
3. The award carries **Rs. 5 lakh cash prize** and a certificate.

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Grammy Awards 2024

1. The 66th Annual Grammy Awards 2024 were held in **Los Angeles, USA**.
2. Indian musicians **Shankar Mahadevan and Zakir Hussain's** fusion band '**Shakti**' bagged the Grammy's award for '**Best Global Music Album**'.
3. Zakir Hussain also secured the '**Best Global Music Performance**' Grammy for his contribution to '**Pashto**'.
4. **Taylor Swift** becomes the **first performer** to win the prize for album of the year **four times**.
5. **South African singer Tyla** made history by picking up the first ever award for **best African performance**.



Wildlife Photographer of the Year 2024

1. An image of a **polar bear sleeping on a small iceberg** has bagged the 2023 Wildlife Photographer of the Year People's Choice Award.
2. The photo was captured by **Nima Sarikhani of British** in **Norway's Svalbard archipelago**.
3. Each year, this photography competition is organised by the **Natural History Museum**.



Jnanpith Award 2023

1. The Urdu poet and Bollywood writer and director **Gulzar and Sanskrit scholar Jagadguru Rambhadracharya** have been selected for the Jnanpith award 2023.



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5. At the time, he was widely regarded as the only candidate with a chance of challenging **Russian President**.

First Transwoman TTE of Southern Railway

1. **Sindhu Ganapathy**, 37, has emerged as the first transwoman **Travelling Ticket Examiner** (TTE) of Southern Railway.

REPORTS AND INDICES

Corruption Perceptions Index 2023

1. **India ranked 93 out of 180** countries on the corruption perceptions index for 2023.
2. Its overall score remained largely unchanged, according to a Transparency International report.
3. **Denmark topped the index** for the sixth consecutive year.

Henley Passport Index 2024

1. **France** leads the list, with its passport granting visa-free access to **194 countries**.
2. India's passport ranking has slipped one place from last year, moving from **84th to 85th position**.
3. Last year Indian passport holders could travel visa-free to **60 countries**, this year that number has **increased to 62**.

PASSPORT	RANK IN 2024	ACCESS
 France	<u>1st</u>	<u>194</u>
 Germany	<u>1st</u>	<u>194</u>
 Italy	<u>1st</u>	<u>194</u>
 Japan	<u>1st</u>	<u>194</u>
 Singapore	<u>1st</u>	<u>194</u>
 Spain	<u>1st</u>	<u>194</u>



FEBRUARY MONTH CURRENT AFFAIRS – 2024

TomTom Traffic Index

1. Two Indian cities, **Bengaluru (6th) and Pune(7th)**, found themselves on the list of the ten **worst traffic-hit** cities globally in 2023.
2. **London** continues to lead the chart as the **worst traffic-hit city**.
3. The **‘worst day’** for travelling in the **Silicon City in 2023** was Wednesday, **September 27**.
4. **Delhi** secured the **44th position** and **Mumbai** followed closely at **52nd place**.

IMPORTANT DAYS

Date	Day	Theme / Importance
World Interfaith Harmony Week – First week of February		
February 01	Indian Coast Guard Day	
February 02	World Wetlands Day	‘Wetlands and human wellbeing’
February 04	World Cancer Day	‘Close the care gap: Everyone deserves access to cancer care.’
February 06	International Day of Zero Tolerance for Female Genital Mutilation	‘Her voice. Her future’
February 10	World Pulses Day	‘#Pulses: nourishing soils and people’.
February 11	International Day of Women and Girls in Science	“Women and Girls in Science Leadership, a New Era for Sustainability”. (Main Theme) “Think Science... Think Peace”. (Sub theme)
February 13	World Radio Day	‘Radio: A century informing, entertaining and educating’.
February 17	Global Tourism Resilience Day	Navigating the future of Tourism Resilience.



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February 20	World Day of Social Justice	"Bridging Gaps, Building Alliances".
February 21	International Mother Language Day	"Multilingual education is a pillar of intergenerational learning".
February 22	World Thinking Day	"Our World, Our Thriving Future."
February 27	World NGO Day	"Building a Sustainable Future: The Role of NGOs in Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)"
February 27	World Protein Day	"Solve with Protein"
February 28	National Science Day	'Indigenous Technologies for Viksit Bharat'.

