

❖ RBI reveals over 97% of Rs 2,000 notes returned

- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has received more than 97 per cent of Rs 2,000 notes, however, notes worth Rs 10,000 crore are still with public.
- In May 2023, the RBI had made an official announcement regarding the withdrawal of Rs 2,000 denomination banknotes from circulation.
- In a recent circular, the RBI shared that the total value of Rs 2,000 banknotes in circulation, which stood at Rs 3.56 lakh crore as of May 19, 2023, has now diminished to just Rs 0.10 lakh crore as of October 31, 2023.
- This signifies that more than 97 per cent of the Rs 2,000 banknotes that were in circulation as of May 19, 2023, have been returned to the banking system.
- The RBI has established 19 offices across the country where individuals can deposit and/or exchange the Rs 2,000 banknotes.

❖ UNESCO adds Gwalior and Kozhikode to their Creative Cities Network List

- UNESCO (United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organizations) on World Cities Day added 55 new cities to UNESCO's Creative Cities Network List highlighting the potential of culture and creativity in these cities towards fostering a sustainable urban environment for all.

- Among the 55 cities, Gwalior (Madhya Pradesh) and Kozhikode (Kerala) in India have joined UNESCO's Creative Cities Network.
- The UNESCO Creative Cities Network (UCCN) declared Kozhikode the first 'City of Literature', giving it the site of choice for the Kerala Literature Festival and many book fairs.
- UNESCO designated Gwalior, Madhya Pradesh, as the 'City of Music.'
- This is an appropriate tribute to the city that gave birth to the famous singer Tansen and where Scindia Gharana has maintained and spread music for decades.
- The new cities were recognised for their strong dedication to incorporating culture and creativity into their development strategies, as well as demonstrating innovative practises in human-centred urban design.

❖ **Author Nandini Das wins 2023 British Academy Book Prize**

- Indian born author **Nandini Das** has been named the winner of the 2023 British Academy Book Prize for Global Cultural Understanding, a leading international non-fiction prize worth GBP 25,000, for her book "**Courting India: England, Mughal India and the Origins of Empire.**"
- The UK-based academic's debut work, described as the "true origin story of Britain and India told through England's first diplomatic mission to the Mughal courts", was revealed as this year's winner at a ceremony at the British Academy in London.
- As a Professor in the English faculty at the University of Oxford.

➤ The 49-year-old author has sought to present a new perspective on the origins of empire through the story of the arrival of the first English ambassador in India, Sir Thomas Roe, in the early 17th century.

❖ **Aishwary Tomar wins 50m rifle 3P gold in Asian Shooting Championships**

➤ Aishwary Pratap Singh Tomar won the gold medal in the men's 50m rifle 3 positions individual event and helped India grab a team silver at the Asian Shooting Championship in Changwon, Korea.

➤ The 22-year-old Tomar shot 463.5 in the final to win the gold.

➤ China's Tian Jiaming took the silver with a score of 462.7.

➤ Another Chinese, Du Linshu, picked up the bronze with 450.3.

➤ The Indian trio of Tomar, Swapnil Kusale and Akhil Sheoran won the team silver with a total score of 1764, behind China (1777).

➤ India has already got maximum two possible Olympic quota places in this event through Kusale and Sheoran.

❖ **Record of over 7.85 crore I-T returns filed till Oct 31**

➤ Income Tax Return (ITR) filings for this assessment year crossed a record 7.65 crore till October 31.

➤ The total number of ITRs (income tax returns) filed in FY 2023-24 for all assessment years up to October 31, 2023 stands at 7.85 crore, an all-time high when compared to total number of ITRs of 7.78 crore filed in FY 2022-23.

➤ The total number of ITRs for AY 2023-24 filed till 31st October, 2023 is more than 7.65 crore, which is 11.7 per cent higher compared to the total number of ITRs of 6.85 crore for AY 2022-23 filed till November 7, 2022, the due date for filing such ITRs in the preceding year.

➤ October 31, 2023 was also the due date for filing of some crucial statutory forms like Form 10B, 10BB and Form 3CEB.

➤ Total number of various types of statutory forms filed up to 31st October, 2023 stands more than 1.44 crore.

❖ **International Day to End Impunity for Crimes against Journalists - 2 November**

➤ The International Day to End Impunity for Crimes against Journalist (IDEI) is a UN-recognized international day observed annually on 2 November.

➤ The date was chosen in commemoration of the assassination of two French journalists in Mali on 2 November 2013.

➤ This year, the day focuses on "Violence against journalists, the integrity of elections, and the role of public leadership."

➤ The Resolution urged Member States to implement definite measures countering the present culture of impunity.

➤ The focus on impunity of this resolution stems from the worrying situation that over the last eleven years 930 journalists have been killed for bringing news and information to the public.

➤ In 2016 alone, the UNESCO Director-General condemned the killing of 102 journalists, media workers, and social media producers of public interest journalism.

❖ **IAF fighter squadron converts from MiG-21 to SU-30 MKI**

➤ The Number 4 Squadron (Oorials) of the Indian Air Force (IAF) based at Air Force Station Uttarlai (Barmer) is converting from the MiG-21 to the Su-30 MKI, marking a watershed moment in the history of the squadron which was operating the MiG-21 since 1966.

➤ The MiG-21 was the first supersonic fighter in service of the IAF and was inducted in 1963.

➤ It has participated in all major conflicts since then. This change signifies the unwavering commitment of the Indian Air Force to modernise and at the same time protect the skies of the nation.

➤ The conversion of this squadron to Su-30 MKI implies that the IAF now operates only two squadrons of the MiG-21. The IAF remains committed to phasing out the MiG-21 aircraft by the year 2025.

❖ **Minister Rajeev Chandrasekhar to participate in “AI Safety Summit 2023” in United Kingdom (UK)**

➤ Union Minister of State for Skill Development & Entrepreneurship and Electronics & IT, Shri Rajeev Chandrasekhar, is set to participate in the “AI Safety Summit 2023” that is scheduled to be held at Bletchley Park, Buckinghamshire in United Kingdom (UK) on November 1-2, 2023.

- The summit will see the participation of leading global think tanks, renowned academic institutions specializing in AI, and government representatives from like-minded nations.
- **On the first day**, Shri Rajeev Chandrasekhar will address the attendees during a plenary session.
- His address will focus on India's approach and commitment to harness the transformative potential of AI to enhance the lives of its citizens while emphasizing the importance of effectively addressing user harm and mitigating risks.
- **On the second day of the summit**, the Minister will contribute to discussions regarding the establishment of a collaborative framework for AI among like-minded nations.
- He will shed light on India's perspective concerning AI risks in areas such as disinformation and electoral security.

❖ **India, Singapore strengthen bilateral defence ties**

- Singapore's Permanent Secretary Chan Heng Kee held discussions with India's Chief of Defence Staff, General Anil Chauhan, during which the leaders reaffirmed the robust and enduring bilateral defence relationship between the two nations.
- The high-level meeting also addressed issues of mutual strategic interests, further solidifying the defence cooperation between India and Singapore.
- This pivotal engagement took place on the sidelines of the 15th India-Singapore Defence Policy Dialogue, hosted in New Delhi.

- The interaction will benefit both countries on many bilateral issues that are being pursued to further strengthen our special relationship.
- The submarine rescue cooperation pact will involve India helping Singapore if one of its submarines gets disabled underwater.
- The Indian Navy in 2018 had inducted two deep submergence rescue vessels (DSRVs), which are capable of rescuing trapped sailors from a disabled submarine up to a depth of 650 meters.
- Singapore may also use the integrated test range for firing of missiles at Chandipur in Odisha in the future.

❖ **Bangalore kid wins prestigious 'Wildlife Photographer of the Year' award**

- Vihaan Talya Vikas, a remarkable 10-year-old from Bengaluru, has made headlines by clinching the top prize in his category at the renowned Wildlife Photographer of the Year (WPY) competition, held in the heart of London.
- This prestigious competition, organized by the Natural History Museum, is often referred to as the 'Oscars of Photography' and serves as a global platform for showcasing the world's most exceptional wildlife photography.
- His photo of a spider along with Krishna's carving clicked on the outskirts of the city and helped him bag the award.
- This captivating image stood out among the 50,000 entries from 95 countries, ultimately earning Vihaan the coveted award in the under-10 category.

❖ **Saudi Arabia set to host 2034 World Cup as Australia withdraws interest**

- Saudi Arabia was the only football association to present a bid to host the 2034 FIFA World Cup before the deadline closed, soccer's global governing body FIFA confirmed.
- FIFA had invited bids from Asia and Oceania for the tournament and Saudi Arabia announced it would bid only minutes after the announcement.
- It also confirmed that the sole confirmation of interest in hosting the 2030 World Cup came from Morocco, Portugal, Spain and Uruguay, hosting celebratory games.
- Instead the Australia football federation has opted to proceed with their bids for the Women's Asian Cup in 2026 and the FIFA Club World Cup in 2029.
- FIFA confirmed that Saudi Arabia was the only bidder for the 2034 tournament.

❖ **Social worker from Bastar wins Rohini Nayyar Prize**

- The 2nd Rohini Nayyar Prize 2023 for outstanding contribution to rural development was presented to Deenanath Rajput, an engineer-turned-social worker, for his work on empowering tribal women in Bastar, Chhattisgarh.
- The prize was presented in memory of late economist-administrator Rohini Nayyar.
- It came with a trophy and cash prize of Rs 10 lakh.
- His work has included providing agricultural extension services to farmers and building cold storage infrastructure.

- His efforts have been instrumental in positively transforming the lives of over 6,000 tribal women in the area.
- At the heart of Rajput's initiative is the establishment of a Farmers Producers Organisation (FPO).
- The FPO was founded in 2018 with an initial membership of 337 women from Jagdalpur in Bastar.
- Since then, it has grown to encompass over 6,000 members across four districts in the region.

❖ **World Vegan Day - 1st November, 2023**

- World Vegan Day is celebrated every year on November 1 to promote the environmental and health impacts of the vegan diet.
- The theme of World Vegan Day 2023 is "**Celebrating for a Good Cause**".
- Aim: To spread awareness among people about the advantages of a vegan diet on health and well-being.
- A vegan diet consists of eliminating all animal products, including meat, eggs, poultry, and other items derived from animals.

❖ Prime Minister launches 'Mera Yuva Bharat (MY Bharat)' platform

- The Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi launched 'Mera Yuva Bharat (MY Bharat)' platform for youth of the country at Kartavya Path.
- The Union Cabinet, chaired by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, gave its approval for the establishment of an autonomous body known as "Mera Yuva Bharat (MY Bharat)."
- Mera Yuva Bharat (MY Bharat)' is envisioned as a pivotal, technology driven facilitator for youth development and youth led development, with the overarching goal of providing equitable opportunities to empower the youth in realizing their aspirations and contributing to the creation of a "Viksit Bharat", across the entire spectrum of the Government.
- It envisions a framework where the youth of our country can seamlessly connect with programs, mentors, and their local communities.
- This engagement is designed to deepen their understanding of local issues and empower them to contribute to constructive solutions.

❖ Nokia Partners with TATA Play Fiber to Launch India's First WiFi6

- Nokia has teamed up with broadband provider Tata Play Fiber to roll out India's first WiFi6-ready broadband network.
- As part of the deal, the Finnish gear maker will provide Tata Play Fiber with a variety of fiber-to-the-home (FTTH) and WiFi equipment, including optical line terminal (OLT) and optical network terminal (ONT) with WiFi6.

- The partnership with Nokia allows us to bring Wi-Fi6-ready network to our customers which is a first in the category.
- This deal is an extension of the work we have already done together and will also notch up a first for India by upgrading the network to be WiFi6 ready.
- As broadband consumption rises in homes and businesses, there's a soaring demand for robust, high capacity connections.
- Future proof fiber and in-house solutions, like the WiFi6 technology, become crucial to cater to changing user needs.

❖ **India's Fiscal Deficit Reaches 39.3% of FY24 Target in First Half of the Year**

- The central government's fiscal deficit touched 39.3 per cent of the full-year target in the first half of the current financial year, slightly higher than 37.3 per cent recorded in the year-ago period.
- The fiscal deficit, or the gap between expenditure and revenue, worked out at ₹ 7.02 lakh crore at the end of September, as per data released by the Controller General of Accounts.
- In the Union Budget, the government projected to bring down the fiscal deficit to 5.9 per cent of the GDP in the 23-24FY
- The fiscal deficit was 6.4 per cent of the GDP in 2022-23, against the earlier estimate of 6.71 per cent.

➤ The tax revenue was at ₹ 11.60 lakh crore or 49.8 per cent of the annual target. During April-September 2022-23, the net tax collection was 52.3 per cent of that year's annual Budget Estimate (BE).

➤ The Centre's total expenditure was ₹ 21.19 lakh crore, or 47.1 per cent of BE for 2023-24, marginally higher than 46.2 per cent of BE for 2022-23.

❖ **India is the biggest development partner of Bangladesh**

➤ Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his Bangladesh PM Sheikh Hasina jointly inaugurated three Indian assisted development projects.

1) The Akhaura- Agartala Cross-Border Rail Link

2) Khulna-Mongla Port Rail Line

3) Unit 2 of the Maitree Super Thermal Power Plant

➤ These projects set to strengthen connectivity and energy security in the region.

➤ Mr Modi said in his remarks that the achievements in the past nine years in bilateral ties was more than in the past several decades.

➤ The Akhaura-Agartala Cross-Border Rail Link was the first rail link between India's Northeast and Bangladesh.

➤ The Akhaura-Agartala Cross-Border Rail Link project has been executed under Government of India grant assistance of Rs 392.52 crores extended to Bangladesh.

➤ India was proud to be Bangladesh's biggest development partner and recalled how the same leadership of the two countries had both decided upon and delivered on these three projects.

➤ India is further strengthening its ties with Bangladesh at a time when China is increasing its influence in South Asia.