

NEWS TODAY

UNITED NATIONS POPULATION FUND RELEASED STATE OF WORLD POPULATION (SOWP) 2023

• Report is titled as **SOWP 2023: 8 Billion Lives, Infinite Possibilities**. SOWP is UNFPA's annual flagship publication since 1978.

• **Key highlights**

➤ **India is most populous country in world (refer image).**

➤ More than **two-thirds of India's population (68 percent)** belongs to **age group of 15- 64 years**, followed by 10-24 years group (26%), making India **one of the youngest countries** in world.

➤ In India, **life expectancy at birth** is estimated at **71 years for men and 74 years for women** in India.

➤ **India's total fertility rate** (births per woman in the reproductive age) is estimated at **2.0 (refer image)**

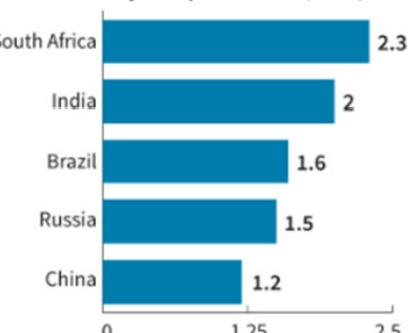
➤ **Central and Southern Asia** is expected to become the **most populous region in world by 2037**.

➤ **More than half of projected increase in global population up to 2050** will be concentrated in **eight countries** —Democratic Republic of Congo, Egypt, Ethiopia, **India**, Nigeria, Pakistan, Philippines and United Republic of Tanzania.

MOST POPULOUS NATIONS BY MID-2023



Total fertility rate per woman (2023)



United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)



Genesis: Created in 1969, it is the United Nations **sexual and reproductive health agency**.



Mandate: Supports access to a **wide range of sexual and reproductive health services** – including voluntary family planning, maternal health care and comprehensive sexuality education.

- Its mandate is established by **United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)**.



Other key facts: It is working with **governments, partners and other UN agencies to directly tackle many of SDG:** Goal 3 on health; Goal 4 on education; Goal 5 on gender equality.

SUPREME COURT (SC) VERDICTS RELATED TO LGBTQ RIGHTS IN INDIA

• Currently, SC is hearing batch of petitions on **legalising same sex marriages in the country**.

• **Key SC verdicts**

➤ **NALSA vs Union of India (UoI), 2014:** Verdict **reaffirmed rights of transgender persons under Articles 14,15,19,21** and upheld section 377 of IPC granting them **legal recognition to their gender identities**, such as male, female, or third gender.

➤ **KS Puttaswamy v UoI, 2017:** Recognized the **right to privacy as a fundamental right**.

➤ **Shafin Jahan vs UoI, 2018:** Recognized the **right to choose one's partner as a facet of fundamental right** to liberty and dignity.

➤ **Shakti Vahini vs UoI, 2018:** Recognised the right to choose a life partner as a fundamental right and considered it as an integral part of Article 19 and 21.

➤ **Navtej Johar vs UoI, 2018:** Court reaffirmed that **LGBTQ community are equal citizens and underlined that there cannot be discrimination in law based on sexual orientation and gender**.

➤ **Deepika Singh vs Central Administrative Tribunal, 2022:** Court recognised **"atypical" families, including queer marriages**, which could not be confined in the traditional parenting roles.

INDIA-UK 2ND FINANCIAL MARKETS DIALOGUE HELD IN LONDON

• Dialogue is part of **financial cooperation between India and U.K.**, a key element of 2030 Roadmap adopted in 2021.

➤ Dialogue focused on **six themes**: Banking Payments and Crypto assets, Insurance and reinsurance, capital markets, asset management, and sustainable finance.

• During the dialogue, India-UK Financial Partnership (IUKFP) released its report on **'Harnessing the power of FinTech and data'**.

➤ IUKFP was launched at **UK-India Economic and Financial Dialogue (EFD)** in 2014 to **increase trade and investment flows, and supporting policy reform.**

• FinTech (Financial Technology) is broadly used to describe **emerging technological innovations in financial services sector**, with ever increasing reliance on information technology.

➤ Benefits of FinTech are **efficiency improvements, risk and cost reduction and greater financial inclusion.**

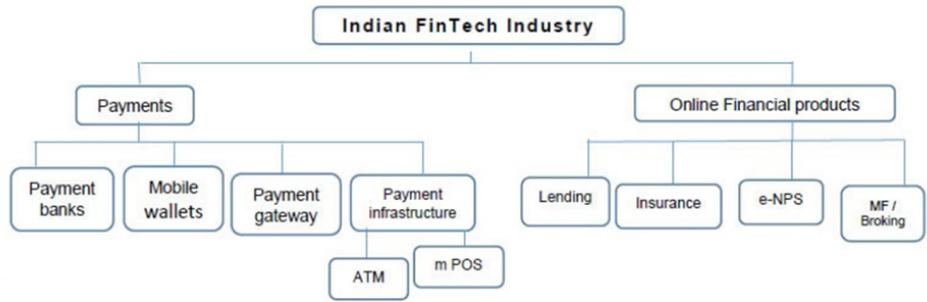
• **India's Fintech sector in other countries**

➤ Leveraging **India Stack** and taking it global.

➤ Mapping **Central Bank Digital Currency (CBDC)** to India Stack and promote interoperability between existing payment services.

➤ Create a **centralized database to harmonise bank account details across banks** and introduce **seamless bank switching services.**

➤ Enhance FinTech ecosystem with **cybersecurity and data protection** regime.



MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE & FARMERS WELFARE (MOA&FW) LAUNCHES SATHI PORTAL AND MOBILE APP

• **SATHI (Seed Traceability, Authentication and Holistic Inventory) Portal and Mobile App** is a Centralized Online System for **seed traceability, authentication and inventory** designed to **deal with challenges of seed production, quality seed identification and seed certification.**

➤ **Seeds authenticity can be traced through a QR code system.**

➤ Portal has been **developed by National Informatics Centre** in collaboration with **MoA&FW** on theme of **'Uttam Beej - Samridh Kisan.**

➤ **It'll consist of integrated 7 verticals of seed chain** - Research Organisation, Seed Certification, Seed Licensing, Seed Catalogue, Dealer to Farmer Sales, Farmer Registration and Seed DBT.

• **Seed certification** is a process designed to **maintain and make available to the general public continuous supply of high quality seeds.**

➤ Seeds with valid certification can **only be sold by valid licensed dealers to centrally registered farmers** who will receive subsidy through DBT directly into their pre-validated bank accounts.

• In India, **legal status to seed certification** was given by **Enactment of Seeds Act, 1966.** Seed certification is **voluntary but labelling is compulsory in India.**

➤ India established **Protection of Plant Varieties and Farmers Rights (PPV&FR) Authority**, under PPV&FR Act, 2001 to **ensure availability of quality seeds and planting material to farmer.**

ISSUES WITH SEED CERTIFICATION

• **Short shelf life**- certified seeds are only good for one season and must be revalidated before being used in following season.

• **Lack of effective monitoring** to control seed quality.

• **Lack of access** to certified seeds due to infrastructural gaps.

• **Unpredictability of demand** of certified seeds.

CABINET APPROVES NATIONAL QUANTUM MISSION (NQM)

• Union Cabinet has approved **₹6,003 crore from 2023-24 to 2030-31 for NQM** that will **fund research and development of quantum computing technology and associated applications.**

➤ With this, **India becomes the 7th country** to have a **dedicated quantum mission** after US, Austria, Finland, France, Canada, and China.

➤ NQM is to be **implemented by Department of Science & Technology** in partnership with other departments.

• **NQM Objectives**

➤ **Develop magnetometers with high sensitivity** in atomic systems and clocks for precision timing, communications and navigation.

➤ **Support design and synthesis of quantum materials** such as superconductors and fabrication of quantum devices.

➤ **Provide boost to National priorities** like Digital India, Make in India, Skill India Self-reliant India etc.

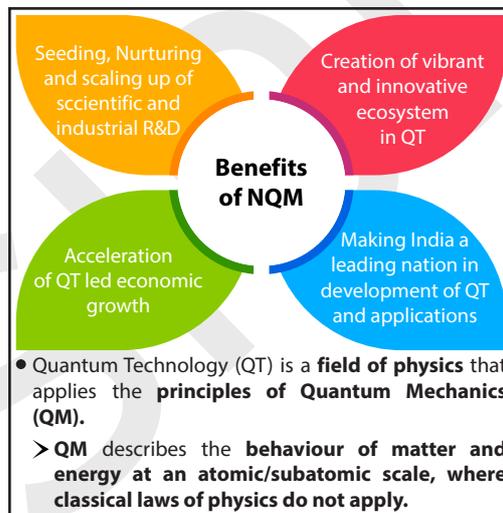
• **Key deliverables under NQM**

➤ **Developing intermediate scale quantum computers with 50-1000 physical qubits in 8 years** in various platforms like superconducting and photonic technology.

➤ **Satellite-based secure quantum communication** between ground stations over a range of 2000 kilometers within India.

➤ Long-distance secure **quantum communications with other countries.**

➤ **Four Thematic Hubs would be set up** in top academic and National R&D institutes on domains of **'Quantum Computing', 'Quantum Communication', 'Quantum Sensing & Metrology' and 'Quantum Materials & Devices'.**





INSTANCE OF VIOLENCE BETWEEN SECURITY FORCES AND KUKI INDEPENDENT ARMY MILITANTS IN MANIPUR

- Earlier, **Manipur** government **withdrew from Suspension of Operations (SoO)** agreement with **two hill-based tribal militant groups** - Kuki National Army and Zomi Revolutionary Army .
 - SoO is a **tripartite agreement signed in 2008, by Centre, state and two umbrella insurgent groups** (Kuki National Organisation (KNO) and United People's Front (UPF)), to initiate a political dialogue.
- **Terms of SoO pact**
 - Security forces, including state and central forces, are **not to launch any operations**, nor can underground groups.
 - **Signatories of UPF and KNO shall abide by Indian Constitution, laws of land and territorial integrity** of Manipur.
 - **Militant cadres are to be confined in designated camps** identified by Government.
- Kuki insurgency gained momentum after **ethnic clashes with Nagas** of Manipur in early 1990s for an **independent Kuki homeland**, spread across Manipur.
 - Clashes erupted because the **land in Manipur hills claimed by Kukis as their "homeland" coincides with the imagined Naga homeland** of Greater Nagaland or Nagalim.
 - Kuki outfits who were **initially demanding a separate Kuki state** have come down to a **'Kukiland territorial council'**.
 - It would have **financial and administrative powers independent of Manipur Assembly** and government.

ALSO IN NEWS

 <p>Cinematograph (Amendment) Bill 2023</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cabinet nod to Cinematograph (Amendment) Bill 2023. • It has provisions to curb the transmission of pirated film content on internet. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ It has provisions to classify films based on age group, instead of current practice of 'U', 'A', and 'UA'. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ "U" is for unrestricted public exhibition, "A" is restricted to adult audience, and "UA" is for unrestricted public exhibition subject to parental guidance for children below age of 12, "S" is for special category audiences such as doctors and scientists. ➢ It seeks to add new classification – "UA-7+", "UA-13+" and "UA-16+" in place for 12 years.
 <p>Millets And Other Ancient Grains International ReSearch Initiative (MAHARISHI)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participants of G20 Meeting of Agriculture Chief Scientists on "Sustainable Agriculture and Food System for Healthy People and Planet" unanimously supported launch of MAHARISHI. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Its secretariat will be housed at Indian Institute of Millets Research (IIMR), Hyderabad with technical support from ICRISAT, One CGIAR Centres and other International organisations. ➢ It will focus on Research and Awareness about agro-biodiversity, food security, and nutrition aligning with International Year of Millets 2023. • Millets are known as nutri-cereals or superfoods, mainly grown on marginal land in dry areas of temperate, sub-tropical and tropical regions.
 <p>Parvatmala Pariyojana (National Ropeways Development Programme)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government plans to develop more than 250 projects in 5 years under Parvatmala Pariyojana. • It was first announced in Union Budget for 2022-23. It is taken up on PPP (Public Private Partnership) mode which will be a preferred, ecologically sustainable alternative in place of conventional roads in difficult hilly areas. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Idea is to improve connectivity and convenience for commuters, besides promoting tourism. ➢ Nodal ministry is Ministry of Road Transport and Highways. ➢ Benefits of Ropeways: Minimal land footprint, safe and efficient means of transport for passengers as well as for material, even in harsh terrain etc.
 <p>Bharatnet</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Highways Authority of India is working towards development of around 10,000 km of Optic Fibre Cables (OFC) infrastructure across country by FY 2024-25. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ OFC are designed for long-distance, high-performance data networking, and telecommunications. • BharatNet (National Optical Fibre Network (NOFN)) is being implemented in a phased manner to provide broadband connectivity to all 2.5 lakh Gram Panchayats (GPs) in country through an optimal mix of media (OFC/ Radio/ Satellite). ➢ It is being executed by Bharat Broadband Network Limited (BBNL).



 <p>Global Unicorn Index (GUI)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● India retains 3rd spot, in the list of countries with most number of Unicorns as per Hurun's GUI. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Unicorn refers to a privately held startup company with a value of over \$1 billion ● Key findings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ As per the index, India (68 unicorns) added 14 new unicorns since pandemic began and stands behind USA (666) and China (316). ➢ BYJU's (\$22 billion) is top-most unicorn in India, followed by Swiggy and Dream11 (both at \$8 billion). ➢ India and China produce more offshore unicorns than any other country. ➢ Number of offshore unicorns by Indians is more than that of Chinese.
 <p>Coral Reef</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Scientific expedition found previously unknown thousands of years old coral reef off Ecuador's Galapagos Islands. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Reef has more than 50% living coral. ➢ Corals are invertebrate animals belonging to a large group of colourful animals called Cnidaria. ➢ In India, Coral reefs are found in Gulf of Kutch, Gulf of Mannar, Andaman & Nicobar, Lakshadweep Islands and Malvan (Maharashtra). ● Galapagos Islands, a UNESCO world heritage site, are situated in Pacific Ocean at confluence of three ocean currents (Humboldt current, Panama Flow and Cromwell current). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ They are home to giant tortoises, albatrosses, cormorants etc. 
 <p>Garbh-Ini programme</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● As a first in South Asia, Indian scientists working in Garbh-Ini programme have identified genetic markers that have been associated with preterm or premature birth. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Preterm birth (PTB) is largest cause of neonatal deaths and complications globally and is defined as births before 37 completed weeks of gestation. ● GARBH-Ini is an initiative under Department of Biotechnology as a collaborative interdisciplinary programme. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Its objective is to elucidate biological and non-biological risks of PTB to create important knowledge-driven interventions and technologies that can be sustainably implemented in clinical practice and in community for this disease.
 <p>Kamakhya Temple</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Kamakhya temple corridor is to be revamped on lines of Kashi Vishwanath and Shree Mahakal Mahalok corridor. ● Temple dedicated to Goddess Kamakhya is one of the 51 Shakti Peethas in country. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ It is located in Nilanchal Hills near Guwahati by banks of Brahmaputra River. ➢ Temple has four chambers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Garbha griha (sanctum sanctorum), which is a cave under the ground level that houses a rock fissure instead of an idol. ■ Three mandapas known as calanta, pancharatna and natamandira. ● Ambubachi mela of Kamakhya temple is considered as the biggest religious congregation in North East India.
 <p>Tribes in news</p>	<p>Pahadi Korvas</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● An event of Mass suicide in Chattisgarh has brought the tribe to limelight. ● They are one of the 75 Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs) in country. ● They live mostly in mountainous regions and live in houses made of wood and bamboo. ● They are Hunter gatherers and practice subsistence farming. <p>Hakki Pikki</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Few members of the tribe are stranded in Sudan amidst internal war. ● They are predominantly living in Shivamogga, Davanagere and Mysuru districts of Karnataka. ● They are known for knowledge of traditional and herbal medicine that is in high demand in African countries. ● Hakki-Pikkis are said to be a matriarchal group. ● They speak an Indo-Aryan language. They communicate in 'Vaagri' (mother language) at home but speak in Kannada when conducting daily business. ● UNESCO has listed 'Vaagri' as one of the endangered languages.