



# WEEKLY CURRENT AFFAIRS

*Coverage of*

**27 Nov. - 03 Dec., 2024**

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**UPSC ESE, PSUs,  
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**SHUKRAYAAN**  
Government of India  
approved ISRO's  
Venus Orbiting  
Satellite Mission

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27<sup>th</sup> NOVEMBER 2024

## UDAN 2.0

- **Context:** The Government of India is launching UDAN 2.0, which aims to improve last-mile air connectivity.

### Key Highlights

- UDAN 2.0 builds on the original UDAN scheme, which started in 2016. The original scheme will continue until 2026.
- UDAN 2.0 will extend beyond this period, which focuses on over 100 underused airstrips across India.
- Under the original UDAN scheme, 86 aerodromes, including 71 airports, 13 heliports, and two water aerodromes, have been operationalized. Over 1.44 crore passengers have traveled on more than 2.8 lakh flights.
- The new draft for UDAN 2.0 identifies viable airstrips, considering nearby population, industries, and tourism. This assessment will help determine which airstrips can effectively support flight operations.
- UDAN 2.0 aims to lower operational costs at regional airports. Current annual costs range from 7 to 10 crore. The government will explore technological solutions to enhance efficiency.
- UDAN 2.0 will ease entry for new operators, which includes helicopter and light aircraft services. The draft addresses cost barriers and offers incentives to attract new players.

## Riyadh Design Law Treaty

- **Context:** India has signed the Riyadh Design Law Treaty (DLT), reaffirming its commitment to fostering inclusive growth and strengthening its intellectual property (IP) ecosystem.

### Key Highlights

- The treaty introduces several key provisions aimed at benefiting design applicants, including relaxed time limits and the reinstatement of lost rights, the option to correct or add priority claims, and the option to file multiple designs in a single application.
- The treaty encourages contracting parties to work towards implementing electronic industrial design systems and facilitating the electronic exchange of priority documents.
- The treaty has been adopted after almost two decades of negotiations under the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO).
- It ensures that the benefits of streamlined design protection are accessible to all stakeholders, with particular emphasis on small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), startups, and independent designers.

## Gelephu Mindfulness City

- **Context:** Bhutanese Prime Minister Tshering Tobgay highlighted the Gelephu Mindfulness City (GMC) as Bhutan's largest "co-operative project" during the Global Conference of The International Co-operative Alliance in New Delhi.

### About Gelephu Mindfulness City (GMC)

- It is a Special Administrative Region in Bhutan, blending economic growth with mindfulness, holistic living, and sustainability.
- It is strategically located at the crossroads of South Asia, ASEAN, and China.
- It aims to become a hub for regional connectivity and economic exchange. Leveraging Bhutan's stable governance, rich spiritual heritage, and commitment to sustainable development
- The city integrates economic progress with Bhutan's cultural values and strong governance to foster a secure, transparent environment for businesses and residents.

28<sup>th</sup> NOVEMBER 2024

## Bal Vivah Mukht Bharat Campaign

- **Context:** Union Minister for Women and Child Development launched the national campaign “Bal Vivah Mukht Bharat” which aims to eradicate child marriage and empower young girls across the nation.

### Key Highlights

- **The campaign will prioritize seven states with high rates of child marriage:** West Bengal, Bihar, Jharkhand, Rajasthan, Tripura, Assam, and Andhra Pradesh.
- The campaign will involve community mobilization and awareness-raising activities to change societal norms and attitudes towards child marriage. Action plan aimed at reducing the child marriage rates below 5% by 2029 was launched.
- The campaign will strengthen the legal framework to prevent and punish child marriage, including stricter enforcement of the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act.
- A dedicated online portal will enable citizens to report child marriage incidents and access information about legal remedies.

### Status of Child Marriage in India

- According to the latest data, child marriages in India have halved from 47.4% in 2005-06 to 23.3% in 2019-21. This decline is attributed to the implementation of the Prevention of Child Marriage Act (PCMA) in 2006 and various awareness programmes.
- As per the NFHS-5 data, there has been a substantial decrease in child marriage rates, from 47.4% in 2005-06 to 26.8% in 2015-16.
- Despite the overall decline, certain states like West Bengal, Bihar, and Tripura still report higher rates of child marriage compared to the national average.

## Shukrayaan

- **Context:** The Indian government has approved ISRO’s Venus Orbiting Satellite mission, named Shukrayaan.

### Key Facts

- **Launch Details:**
  - Set to launch in March 2028.
  - Estimated cost of the mission is Rs 1,236 crore.
  - LVM-3 launch vehicle has been identified to place the spacecraft in an Elliptical Parking Orbit (EPO)
- **Objectives:**
  - To Analyze the composition of Venus’s thick, carbon dioxide-rich atmosphere.
  - To study the extreme greenhouse effect and its impact on the planet’s climate.
  - To utilize advanced radar technology to map the planet’s surface, revealing hidden geological features.
  - To explore the upper atmosphere of Venus, including the ionosphere, to understand its interaction with solar radiation and the solar wind.

### About Venus

- Venus is often called Earth’s Twin.
- Venus’s atmosphere is incredibly dense, composed primarily of carbon dioxide. This dense atmosphere traps heat from the Sun, creating a runaway greenhouse effect.
- Venus is the hottest planet in the solar system and is named after the goddess of love.
- Venus rotates on its axis in the opposite direction to most other planets, a phenomenon known as retrograde rotation. This means that the Sun rises in the west and sets in the east on Venus.
- Several space missions, including Mariner 2, Venera, and Magellan, have studied Venus, providing valuable insights into its atmosphere, surface, and geology.

- Future missions, such as NASA's VERITAS and DAVINCI+, aim to further explore Venus.

## OPCW-The Hague Award 2024

- **Context:** Indian Chemical Council (ICC) has won the 2024 Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) The Hague Award.

### Key Facts

- This is the first time the award has been given to a chemical industry body.
- In 2013, OPCW was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for its extensive efforts to eliminate chemical weapons.
- To preserve the legacy of this achievement, the OPCW established the 'OPCW-The Hague Award' in collaboration with the Municipality of The Hague in 2014.
- The Award recognizes individuals and organizations that play a significant role in advancing the goals of the Chemical Weapons Convention.

### About Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC)

- Chemical Weapons Convention came into force in 1997, and presently has 193 States Parties.
- Its Secretariat is located in The Hague.
- The CWC promotes international cooperation in the field of chemical weapons, including research and development of peaceful uses of chemistry.
- India is an original signatory to the Convention.
- National Authority Chemical Weapons Convention (NACWC) is the national authority responsible for implementing the Convention in India.

### About Indian Chemical Council (ICC)

- Indian Chemical Council was established in 1938, is dedicated to the growth and promotion of the Chemical Industry in India.
- ICC represents more than 80% of the Indian chemical Industry which is valued at \$220 billion.

- This Award acknowledges the role played by ICC in promoting chemical safety, compliance with the Convention, and enhancing industry-wide security practices in India.

## Network Readiness Index 2024

- **Context:** India has been placed at 49th rank as per the Network Readiness Index 2024 (NRI 2024) report.

### Key Facts

- The report has been published by the Portulans Institute, an independent non-profit research and educational institute based in Washington DC.
- The report maps the network-based readiness landscape of 133 economies.
- **It ranks countries based on their performances in four different pillars:** Technology, People, Governance, and Impact, covering a total of 54 variables.
- The US topped the rankings for the third year in a row, followed by Singapore and Finland.
- China moved up to the 17th spot and was the only middle-income economy in the NRI's top 20.
- India climbed 11 ranks, securing the 49th position.

29<sup>th</sup> NOVEMBER 2024

## UN Peacebuilding Commission

- **Context:** India has been re-elected to the UN Peacebuilding Commission for 2025–2026.

### Key Highlights

- India's current term on the Commission was expiring on December 31.
- The Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) is an intergovernmental advisory body that supports peace efforts in conflict-affected countries and is a key addition to the capacity of the International Community in the broad peace agenda.

- The PBC is composed of 31 Member States, elected from the General Assembly, the Security Council, and the Economic and Social Council.
- The Commission is mandated to bring together all relevant actors to marshal resources and to advise on and propose integrated strategies for post-conflict peacebuilding and recovery; to focus attention on the reconstruction and institution-building efforts necessary for recovery from conflict.
- It is also mandated to provide recommendations and information to improve the coordination of all relevant actors within and outside the United Nations, to develop best practices, to help to ensure predictable financing for early recovery activities and to extend the period of attention given by the international community to post-conflict recovery.
- The Commission also focuses on promoting an integrated, strategic and coherent approach to peacebuilding.

## International Pathogen Surveillance Network (IPSN)

- **Context:** The International Pathogen surveillance network announced the first round of grants towards understanding disease threats.

### About International Pathogen Surveillance Network (IPSN)

- It is a global initiative led by the WHO Hub for Pandemic and Epidemic Intelligence, aimed at advancing pathogen genomics and enhancing public health decision-making.
- It focuses on monitoring and analyzing the genetic material of pathogens like viruses, bacteria, fungi, and parasites to track their evolution, spread, and inform public health actions.
- It fosters international collaboration, bringing together organizations with expertise in genomics and surveillance systems, to improve access, equity, and accelerate global efforts in pathogen genomic surveillance, as seen during the COVID-19 pandemic.

## Asian Development Bank (ADB)

- **Context:** The Asian Development Bank (ADB) Board of Governors has unanimously elected Masato Kanda as ADB's 11th President.

### About Asian Development Bank (ADB)

- It was established on 19th December 1966
- Asian Development Bank is the principal international development finance institution for the Asia-Pacific region. It supports projects in developing member countries that create economic growth and development impact.
- Its focus areas include poverty reduction, infrastructure development and regional integration.
- It has membership of 69 members (including 49 from Asia and the Pacific and 20 from outside the region). India is a founding member and one of its largest borrowers.
- Japan and the United States hold the largest shares in ADB, each owning around 15.6% of the total subscribed capital.
- **Headquarters:** Manila, Philippines.

## K-4 Ballistic Missile

- **Context:** The Indian Navy successfully tested the K-4 ballistic missile from the INS Arighat submarine, enhancing India's nuclear deterrence capabilities.

### About K-4 ballistic missile

- K-4 or Kalam-4, code-named after former President Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam, is a solid-fuelled nuclear capable ballistic missile developed by DRDO.
- Its range is extended to 3,500 km
- K-4 will strengthen India's weakest leg of the nuclear triad. The land and air vectors, with the Agni ballistic missiles and fighter jets with nuclear gravity bombs, are relatively more robust.



30<sup>th</sup> NOVEMBER 2024

## Global Wage Report 2024-25

- **Context:** The International Labour Organization (ILO) has released the Global Wage Report 2024-25.

### Key Highlights

- The wage inequality has decreased at an average rate of 11.1% per annum in about two-thirds of all countries around the world since 2000.
- Global wages have grown faster than inflation in recent times. The global real wages grew by 1.8% last year, while the projections have reached 2.7% growth in 2024, the highest increase in over 15 years.
- Africa, Northern America and parts of Europe recorded stagnant or negative real wage growth.
- Low-income countries suffer from significantly higher wage inequality compared to high-income nations, with nearly 22% of workers earning less than half the median hourly wage.
- Despite a 29% rise in productivity in high-income countries between 1999 and 2024, real wages have only risen by 15%, highlighting a failure to share productivity gains equitably with workers.
- Women, especially in lower-middle-income countries, remain disproportionately affected by wage inequality due to overrepresentation in informal, precarious and low-paid work.

### About Global Wage Report

- The Global Wage Report is an annual publication released by the International Labour Organization (ILO). The first edition was published in 2008.
- It provides a detailed look at wage trends around the world and in different regions, highlighting changes in wage inequality and real wage growth.

## Index of Eight Core Industries (ICI)

- **Context:** The Index of Eight Core Industries (ICI) showed a 3.1% growth in October 2024 compared to October 2023.

### About Index of Eight Core Industries (ICI)

- The ICI encompasses industries such as Coal, Crude Oil, Natural Gas, Refinery Products, Fertilizers, Steel, Cement, and Electricity, which together account for 40.27% of the Index of Industrial Production (IIP).
- Index of Industrial Production (IIP) is an index that tracks manufacturing activity in different sectors of an economy. IIP data is compiled and published by Central Statistical Organisation (CSO) which operates under the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI).
- The base year was changed to 2011-12 from 2004-05 in the year 2017.
- The Index of Eight Core Industries (ICI) is released by the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Government of India, through its Office of the Economic Advisor.
- This index is published monthly.

## Eklavya Digital Platform

- **Context:** The Indian Army's Eklavya platform is a significant step towards modernizing military education and training.

### Key Facts

- Eklavya platform aligns perfectly with the Indian Army's "Decade of Transformation" initiative and Indian Army's theme for 2024 as the "Year of Technology Absorption."
- It has been developed by Bhaskaracharya National Institute of Space Applications and Geoinformatics (BISAG-N).
- **Key Features of Eklavya:**
  - The platform is accessible to Army officers across the country, eliminating the need for physical attendance at training institutions.
  - Officers can access a wide range of courses and resources tailored to their specific needs and career goals.
  - The platform promotes continuous learning by providing regular updates on the latest military doctrines, technologies, and best practices.

- Eklavya fosters collaboration among officers through discussion forums, webinars, and other interactive features.

1<sup>st</sup> DECEMBER 2024

## Cyclone Fengal

- **Context:** Cyclone Fengal, a tropical cyclone, made landfall over Puducherry.

### Key Facts

- Landfall is the event of a tropical cyclone coming onto land after being over water.
- As per the India Meteorological Department (IMD), a tropical cyclone is said to have made landfall when the centre of the storm – or its eye – moves over the coast.
- Landfalls can last for a few hours, with their exact duration depending on the speed of the winds and the size of the storm system.
- A landfall is different from the direct hit of a tropical cyclone. A 'direct hit' refers to a situation where the core of high winds (or eyewall) comes ashore but the centre of the storm may remain offshore.

### About Cyclones

- The word Cyclone is derived from the Greek word Cyclos meaning the coils of a snake.
- It was coined by Henry Peddington because the tropical storms in the Bay of Bengal and the Arabian Sea appear like coiled serpents of the sea.
- Cyclones are powerful, rotating storms that form over warm ocean waters, characterized by low pressure at the center and high winds.

## 59th All India Conference of Director Generals/ Inspector Generals of Police

- **Context:** Recently, the Prime Minister of India attended the '59th All India Conference of Director Generals/ Inspector Generals of Police', held in Bhubaneswar, Odisha.

## Key Highlights of the Conference

- The conference included in-depth discussions on various national security issues, including counter-terrorism, left-wing extremism, coastal security, economic security, immigration, and narco-trafficking.
- The Prime Minister has expanded on the concept of SMART policing, urging the police force to become more Strategic, Meticulous, Adaptable, Reliable, and Transparent.
- The conference highlighted the importance of leveraging technology including Artificial Intelligence (AI) to tackle challenges such as digital fraud, cyber-crimes, and the potential threats posed by AI, including deep fakes.
- The Prime Minister appreciated the initiatives taken in urban policing and suggested that these be implemented comprehensively in 100 cities across the country.
- PM Modi proposed the idea of organizing National Police Hackathons to solve key problems through innovative solutions.

## Snake Bite as a Notifiable Disease

- **Context:** The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW) has declared snakebite envenoming a notifiable disease.

### Key Facts

- Notifiable diseases are those that healthcare providers are legally obligated to report to public health authorities. This allows for surveillance, outbreak detection, and timely intervention. Other notifiable diseases in India include: AIDS, Hepatitis, Dengue, Cholera, etc.
- The World Health Organization's International Health Regulations (IHR) require countries to report certain disease outbreaks and public health events to the WHO.

- National Action Plan for Prevention and Control of Snakebite Envenoming (NAPSE) aims to halve snakebite-related deaths and disabilities by 2030 and making Snakebite a Notifiable disease is a good step in this regard.

## 2<sup>nd</sup> DECEMBER 2024

### India International Science Festival (IISF) 2024

- **Context:** The India International Science Festival (IISF) 2024 was held at the Indian Institute of Technology, Guwahati.

#### Key Highlights

- This event was led by Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR), which is supported by the National Institute for Interdisciplinary Science and Technology (CSIR-NIIST).
- The theme of IISF 2024 was “Transforming India into an S&T-driven Global Manufacturing Hub.” This reflects the government’s vision for integrating science and technology with industrial growth.
- IISF 2024 featured numerous events and activities for the public and scientific communities. **One major attraction was “Chandrayaan: The Museum of the Moon,”** showcasing an artistic model of the moon.

### SKOCH Award for Public Service

- **Context:** The Maharashtra government received the SKOCH Award the ‘Shaasan Aplya Daari’ initiative.

#### Key Highlights

- The project was selected from 280 submissions across India, which delivered over five crore benefits to citizens within a year.

- ‘Shaasan Aplya Daari’ translates to ‘Government at your doorstep’, which aims to provide essential services directly to citizens.
- The program was launched on May 15, 2023, in Patan, Satara district, which prioritises accessibility and efficiency in public service delivery.
- The initiative won the SKOCH Award in the Citizen-Centric Administration category.
- The programme facilitated various government services, which included tractor subsidies, farmer insurance grants, and housing allocations.
- Citizens also received financial assistance for irrigation and job creation support. These services eliminated the need for travel to Mumbai for government tasks.

### Mission Arun Himveer

- **Context:** The government of Arunachal Pradesh has launched ‘Mission Arun Himveer’, which aims to improve market access for agricultural and horticultural products.

#### Key Highlights

- Mission Arun Himveer was announced in Itanagar with the signing of an agreement between the Arunachal Pradesh Agriculture Marketing Board (APAMB) and the Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP).
- Mission Arun Himveer focuses on supplying locally grown produce to the ITBP, which includes fruits, vegetables, meat, and poultry. The products will be sourced from local farmers, self-help groups (SHGs), farmer-producer organizations (FPOs), and cooperatives.
- The mission aims to create markets for produce from remote villages, which is expected to enhance farmers’ income and provide employment opportunities. The initiative will also strengthen ties between local communities and ITBP forces.



3<sup>rd</sup> DECEMBER 2024

## Brain Rot: Oxford Word of the Year 2024

- **Context:** Oxford University Press (OUP) has announced 'Brain Rot' as the Oxford Word of the Year 2024, reflecting a defining cultural and societal theme of the year.

### Key Highlights

- The term 'Brain Rot' gained prominence due to concerns over the detrimental effects of consuming excessive amounts of low-quality online content, especially via social media.
- Selected through a global public vote involving over 37,000 participants and expert analysis of language trends, 'brain rot' captures the zeitgeist of 2024, where digital consumption and its consequences have been central topics of discussion.
- First recorded in 1854 by Henry David Thoreau in Walden, the phrase has evolved to gain renewed relevance in the digital age.
- Initially popularized on platforms like TikTok, the term is now being used more broadly, including in mainstream journalism, to articulate concerns about the societal and individual impacts of online habits.

## Harimau Shakti 2024

- **Context:** The 4th edition of the India-Malaysia Joint Military Exercise, HARIMAU SHAKTI, commenced recently at Bentong Camp, Pahang district, Malaysia.

### Key Highlights

- This exercise, scheduled to run until December 15, 2024, is an annual event designed to enhance the military cooperation between the two nations.
- **Objectives:**
  - To improve joint military capabilities in conducting counterinsurgency operations in jungle terrain.
  - To enhance defense cooperation between India and Malaysia, thereby fostering stronger bilateral relations.
  - It also improves the bilateral military relations between India and Malaysia.
- This is the 4th edition of the joint exercise, with the previous edition conducted in November 2023 at Umroi Cantonment, Meghalaya, India.

## World Maritime Conference 2024

- **Context:** The 2024 edition of WMTC to be hosted in Chennai, from December 4-6, by the Chennai Branch of Institute of Marine Engineers (India).

### Key Highlights

- The World Maritime Technology Conference (WMTC) is a premier global event held every three years under the auspices of the World Maritime Technology Congress.
- This conference brings together industry leaders, professionals, and experts in maritime technology and allied sectors from across the globe.
- World Maritime Technology Conference held once every three years.
- **Participants:** 21 member organizations from 17 countries representing professionals in maritime technology and related sectors.

