



**TATHASTU**  
Institute of Civil Services

# DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS



**26<sup>th</sup> & 27<sup>th</sup> January, 2024**

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S.NO.	TOPIC
1.	INDIA - FRANCE BILATERAL RELATIONS
2.	WHY WAS JANUARY 26 CHOSEN TO BE INDIA'S REPUBLIC DAY?
3.	PRELIMS POINTERS

## INDIA - FRANCE BILATERAL RELATIONS

**SOURCE:** [THE HINDU](#)

**TAG:** GS Paper II – *Effect of Policies & Politics of Developed and Developing countries on India (India's interests, diaspora)*

### **PRACTICE QUESTIONS**

#### ***Mains***

Q. "Discuss the evolution of India-France strategic partnership, highlighting key milestones and the diverse areas of cooperation. Evaluate the challenges faced and propose effective diplomatic strategies for further enhancing the bilateral relationship in the context of evolving global dynamics." (250 Words)

### **WHY IN NEWS?**

- ❖ **French President Emmanuel Macron's visit as the Republic Day chief guest highlights the enduring 25-year strategic partnership between India and France, focusing on defense, security, civil nuclear cooperation, and space collaboration.**

### **HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE**

- ❖ **Post-Independence Diplomatic Ties between India and France:**
  - Diplomatic relations were initiated after India gained independence, marking the beginning of a bilateral association.
  - French aircraft and helicopters, such as **Ouragan, Mystere, Alize, Alouette, Jaguar**, became integral parts of the Indian air fleet from the 1960s onwards.
- ❖ **Nuclear Cooperation Amidst Global Shifts (1984):**
  - In 1984, France played a crucial role by **supplying nuclear fuel** to the **Tarapur power plant** when the United States withdrew support due to domestic constraints.
- ❖ **Support for India's Space Endeavors (1970s):**
  - Since the 1970s, France consistently supported India's space program, contributing significantly. It included the establishment of the **Sriharikota launch site** and **the sharing of essential rocket technologies**.
- ❖ **Cold War Constraints:**
  - Despite positive engagements, the development of a fully-fledged relationship was hindered by constraints imposed by the Cold War dynamics.
  - The **global geopolitical landscape during the Cold War restricted the extent of the Indo-French relationship**.
- ❖ **Strategic Partnership (1998):**
  - The year 1998 marked a transformative period with the establishment of a Strategic Partnership between India and France.





- Despite India conducting **nuclear tests in 1998**, **France did not condemn India**, indicating pragmatic diplomatic relations.
- This shift signaled a departure from Cold War limitations, ushering in a more comprehensive and collaborative phase.
- ❖ **Principal Pillars of Strategic Partnership:**
  - The identification of **defense and security cooperation, space collaboration, and civil nuclear cooperation** as principal pillars symbolizes the multifaceted nature of the Strategic Partnership.
- ❖ **Post-Cold War Era Dynamics:**
  - This phase reflects a **shared understanding of the need to move beyond historical constraints** and embrace a more expansive relationship.
- ❖ **Current Era of multilateral International Cooperation:**
  - France supports India's claim for permanent membership** of the **United Nations Security Council**.
  - Support in India's accession to various international groups, including **MTCR, Wassenaar Arrangement, and Australia Group**.
  - The comprehensive roadmap adopted in 2023 classifies the partnership under **three pillars: Security and Sovereignty, Partnership for the Planet, and Partnership for People**.
  - These efforts showcase the resilience of the ties, transcending historical challenges and paving the way for a more integrated partnership.
  - PM engaged in **bilateral talks** with President Macron during the **COP 28 Summit and G-20 Leaders' Summit**, fostering dialogue on climate action, energy, and defence cooperation.
  - Celebrating 25 years of the Strategic Partnership, PM's visit during the French National Day marked a significant milestone and established the '**Horizon 2047**' roadmap.



**Horizon 2047: 25th Anniversary of the India-France Strategic Partnership, Towards A Century of India-France Relations**

## AREAS OF COOPERATION BETWEEN INDIA AND FRANCE

- ❖ **Defence Cooperation:**
  - Ongoing projects, including the **acquisition of Rafale aircraft** and the **P-75 Scorpene Project**, demonstrate the robustness of the defence partnership.
  - Annual Defence Dialogues** and High Committee on Defence Cooperation meetings contribute to strengthening collaboration and '**Atmanirbharata**' (**self-reliance**) in defence.
  - Joint military exercises like **VARUNA 2023** and **FRINJEX-23** showcase the growing scope and complexity of defence cooperation.
  - The establishment of a **DRDO office in the Embassy in 2023** underscores the commitment to advancing technology cooperation between India and France.
- ❖ **Space Cooperation:**
  - A rich history of over fifty years in space cooperation exists between ISRO and CNES, emphasizing **France's role as a major supplier of components for India's space program**.
  - The **first India-France Strategic Space Dialogue in 2023** identified areas for cooperation, including **civil space cooperation and defence space cooperation**.
  - Joint declarations and agreements between ISRO and CNES highlight collaboration on **launch vehicle technologies and Earth Observation missions**.
  - Cooperation in space extends to commercial launch services, with **Arianespace and NSIL concluding a Letter of Intent for collaboration**.



## ❖ Cyber Cooperation:

- Regular dialogues and meetings, including the **4th Cyber Dialogue in 2021**, underscore the importance of cybersecurity in the bilateral relationship.
- A **recent dialogue in Paris in 2024** focused on cybersecurity matters, further enhancing collaboration in this critical domain.

## ❖ Cooperation on Counter-terrorism:

- Robust cooperation on countering terrorism is evident in the **Joint Working Group meetings**, addressing various forms and manifestations of **terrorism under UN forums**.
- The **15th Meeting of the Joint Working Group on Counter-terrorism in 2021** highlighted the **commitment to collective efforts in combating global terrorism**.

## ❖ Civil Nuclear Cooperation:

- Discussions during PM's visit in July 2023 welcomed progress in the **Jaitapur Nuclear Power Project** and explored partnerships in **Small Modular Reactors (SMR) and Advanced Modular Reactors (AMR)**.
- The cooperation signifies a shared vision for **sustainable and efficient nuclear energy solutions**, contributing to long-term energy security.
- Bilateral engagement in civil nuclear matters** remains a cornerstone, reflecting the commitment to harnessing nuclear energy for mutual benefit.

## ❖ Economic Cooperation:

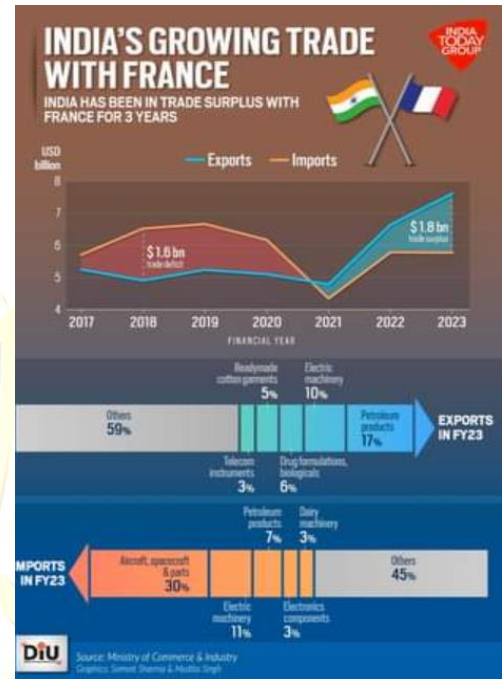
- France's significant investments in India, with an **FDI inflow of \$659.77 million for FY 2022-23**, underscore the economic dimension of the bilateral relationship.
- Over **70 Indian companies and 750 French companies** operating in each other's countries contribute to a thriving economic partnership.
- The Joint Working Groups in various fields, including **IT & Telecommunications, Roads, Sustainable Urban Development, Agriculture, and Energy**, foster comprehensive economic collaboration.
- The **16th JWG on Sustainable Urban Development** and the **11th round of the bilateral CEO Forum in 2023** identified key areas for joint cooperation, including smart cities, green hydrogen, and R&D in manufacturing.

## ❖ Digital Cooperation:

- Collaborative efforts, such as the **'INFRAStructures' workshop** in Paris in May 2023, showcased India's achievements in public digital infrastructures.
- The 'India pavilion' at **'VivaTech 2023'** highlighted the presence of around 70 Indian start-ups, promoting innovation in fintech, aerospace, healthcare, and more.
- The announcement during PM's visit to launch **Unified Payments Interface (UPI) from Eiffel Tower** demonstrates a commitment to secure and convenient digital transactions.
- The **collaboration between C-DAC and Atos**, resulting in the development of supercomputers for India, showcases joint efforts in the digital domain.

## ❖ Cultural and Tourism Cooperation:

- The bilateral relationship is rooted in **shared democratic values, multilateralism**, and a commitment to addressing global challenges through diplomatic collaboration.





- **Economic, cultural, academic, and people-to-people ties** form the foundation of the relationship, fostering mutual understanding and cooperation.
- The **'Namaste France' Festival** in July 2023 brought together Indian artists and performers, contributing to a strong public momentum and cultural exchange. It comprised 18 concerts, 16 workshops, 7 discussions, a **craft bazaar, tribal paintings exhibition**, and a food court, attracting over 20,000 visitors.
- Collaboration on broadcasting between **Prasar Bharati** and **France Media Monde**, and on the New National Museum and Museology, reflects the commitment to cultural exchange.
- The inauguration of the statue of **Indian sage poet Thiruvalluvar** near Paris in December 2023 fulfills a commitment made by PM during his visit.
- The announcement of **OCI card facilities** demonstrates the commitment to the welfare of the Indian diaspora, acknowledging their role as cultural ambassadors.
- Engagement with the Indian community strengthens **people-to-people ties** and fosters a sense of belonging and cultural exchange.
- ❖ **Maritime Cooperation:**
  - The **6th Meeting of India-France Maritime Cooperation Dialogue** in October 2023 highlighted ongoing efforts to enhance maritime security and cooperation.
  - **Indian Naval warship 'Sumedha'** patrolling for 31 days as part of G7++Friends of Gulf of Guinea and the inaugural India-EU joint naval exercises underscore the commitment to maritime stability.
- ❖ **Blue Economy and Clean Energy:**
  - The Joint Statement during PM's visit emphasized collaboration in the **Blue Economy**, acknowledging the potential for **sustainable development** and **marine biodiversity**.
  - France's support for India's membership in the **International Partnership for Blue Carbon** reflects shared commitment to addressing climate change through innovative solutions.
  - Cooperation in clean energy sectors, including hydrogen production, electric mobility, and renewable energy, is aligned with the joint commitment to **combating climate change**.
  - The cooperation in the field of **Blue Economy** aligns with efforts to promote clean energy and **responsible supply of critical minerals**.
- ❖ **Health Cooperation:**
  - Collaborative efforts during the COVID-19 pandemic included the supply of medical equipment, essential medicines, and vaccines, reflecting a commitment to global health security.

**French President Emmanuel Macron's visit to India**

**Jan 25-26, 2024**

- To be welcomed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in Jaipur on Jan 25.
- To have a meeting with the PM.
- To attend the Republic Day ceremony in New Delhi as the Chief Guest on Jan 26.
- To meet President Droupadi Murmu before departure.

**Expected:**

- A roadmap for defence industrial cooperation.
- Talks on building three additional Scorpene-class submarines in India with technology transfer from France.
- Talks on Jaitapur Nuclear Power Plant.
- Talks on procuring more Rafale fighter jets - both for Indian Navy and Indian Air Force.
- Talks on expanding cooperation in Small Modular Reactors (SMRs) and Advanced Modular Reactors (AMRs) technologies.

**Indian guests at France's Bastille Day (July 14) ceremony:**



**French guests in India's R-day celebrations in the past:**



**India-France relations:**

India and France launched a strategic partnership in 1998. It was the first strategic partnership of India.

The strategic partnership between India and France was initially based on cooperation in three areas...

- Defence and Security
- Civilian Nuclear Energy
- Space

**It now also covers...**

- Maritime Security, Digitalisation, Cyber Security and Advanced Computing, Counterterrorism, Climate Change, Renewable and Sustainable Growth and Development, and Cooperation in the Indo-Pacific region.

**Big-Ticket Defence Deals**

- India purchased 36 Rafale fighter jets for its air force from France. The delivery completed in 2022.
- India's MDL built six Scorpene-class submarines with tech transfer from Naval Group of France.

ILLUSTRATION: DEEPAK HARICHANDAN





- The **MoU on 'Global Partnership for Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR)'** in October 2023 highlights joint efforts to address the rising challenge of antimicrobial resistance.
- The **India-France Health Dialogue** provides a platform for ongoing discussions and cooperation in healthcare, pharmaceuticals, and medical research.
- ❖ **Education and Research Collaboration:**
  - **Over 6,000 Indian students pursuing higher education in France** and the establishment of joint research programs emphasize the strength of educational ties.
  - The **'Student and Researcher Mobility Agreement'** facilitates academic exchanges, fostering collaboration in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) fields.
  - The **'Young Leaders Program'** and the **'Ambassador's Scholarship'** support students' mobility and strengthen the academic bond between India and France.
  - **Research collaboration in areas such as space, artificial intelligence, and sustainable development** reflects a commitment to advancing knowledge through joint efforts.

## CHALLENGES AND ROADBLOCKS

- ❖ **Trade imbalances and Intellectual Property Rights (IPR)** concerns pose challenges to **India-France economic relations**, as France exports more to India and criticizes India for inadequate protection of IPRs.
- ❖ The **absence of a Free Trade Agreement** has hindered the deepening of economic relations between India and France, with **bilateral trade falling short of India's trade with Germany**.
- ❖ **Stalled projects**, notably the Jaitapur nuclear project, contribute to challenges in operationalizing negotiated initiatives between India and France.
- ❖ **Geopolitical differences** emerge as France openly criticizes the Russian invasion in Ukraine, while India maintains a nuanced approach. Additionally, France's stance on China's Belt and Road Initiative differs from that of India.
- ❖ **Emerging geopolitical tensions**, including the Hamas-Israel War and Chinese assertiveness in the Indian Ocean region, along with uncertainties such as the potential return of Donald Trump in the USA, further impact India-France relations.
- ❖ **Varied approaches to climate change policies and environmental regulations** may lead to differences in priorities and strategies, demanding diplomatic efforts to find common ground and collaborate on sustainable solutions.
- ❖ **Cultural and linguistic variations between India and France** may pose challenges in effective communication and understanding, emphasizing the need for cultural diplomacy and language initiatives to foster better collaboration.
- ❖ While both France and India uphold secularism, the key difference lies in **France's strict separation of religion from the state**, contrasted with India's policy of equal treatment of all religions.
- ❖ **Striking a balance between maintaining strategic autonomy and engaging in collaborative security efforts** poses a nuanced challenge, requiring continuous dialogue to align national interests with broader international security goals.

## WAY FORWARD

- ❖ **Foster Innovation and Technology Partnerships:** Encourage collaborations between startups, research institutions, and industries in both countries to promote innovation, technology transfer, and mutual growth in emerging sectors.
- ❖ **Cultural Diplomacy for Soft Power:** Leverage cultural diplomacy by organizing more festivals, art exhibitions, and academic partnerships to strengthen the soft power of both nations and deepen cultural understanding.
- ❖ **Engage in Track-II Diplomacy:** Facilitate Track-II dialogues and forums involving academics, think tanks, and experts to provide nuanced perspectives on complex geopolitical issues, contributing to informed policy decisions.



- ❖ **Institutionalize Diplomatic Channels:** Establish institutionalized diplomatic forums for regular dialogue on geopolitical issues, ensuring a consistent and coordinated approach to global challenges, thereby strengthening political understanding.
- ❖ **Expand People-to-People Contacts:** Promote cultural exchange programs, educational partnerships, and language initiatives to enhance mutual understanding and forge stronger people-to-people connections.
- ❖ **Joint Efforts in Climate Action:** Collaborate on joint initiatives in climate change mitigation, emphasizing green technologies, renewable energy, and sustainable practices, aligning both nations in the pursuit of environmental stewardship.

## CONCLUSION

*In conclusion, while challenges exist, **the multifaceted collaboration between India and France demands proactive measures.** A commitment to resolving **economic, geopolitical, and cultural challenges**, coupled with sustained diplomatic efforts, will pave the way for an even more **robust and integrated partnership, contributing to global stability and progress.***





## WHY WAS JANUARY 26 CHOSEN TO BE INDIA'S REPUBLIC DAY?

**SOURCE:** [THE INDIAN EXPRESS](#)

**TAG:** GS Paper II – *Indian Constitution, Parliament*

### WHY IN NEWS?

- ❖ **French President Emmanuel Macron** graced India's 75<sup>th</sup> Republic Day as the chief guest, marking the **day when India's Constitution came into effect in 1950**.

### ABOUT REPUBLIC DAY

- ❖ **Pre-Independence Celebration on January 26:**
  - ☞ From 1930 to 1947, January 26 was celebrated as "Independence Day" or "Poorna Swaraj Day" in pre-independent India.
  - ☞ It served as a day for Indians to reaffirm their commitment to sovereignty.
- ❖ **Actual Independence Day on August 15, 1947:**
  - ☞ India gained independence from British rule on August 15, 1947, marking the end of a long struggle for freedom.
  - ☞ This date coincided with the day **two years after the Japanese surrendered to the Allies**, concluding World War II.
- ❖ **Choice of January 26 for the New Constitution:**
  - ☞ Despite the actual independence occurring on August 15, leaders chose January 26 as the day to **promulgate India's new constitution**.
  - ☞ January 26 had existing nationalist significance, and the Constitution reflected the ideals of the "Poorna Swaraj" declaration from two decades earlier.
- ❖ **Imperial Pride vs. Nationalist Sentiment:**
  - ☞ Historian Ramchandra Guha notes that the choice of August 15 for independence was **more resonant** with imperial pride than nationalist sentiment.
  - ☞ The decision to celebrate Republic Day on January 26 allowed India to choose a date **with pre-existing nationalist significance**.
- ❖ **Symbolic Significance of January 26:**
  - ☞ While Republic Day celebrations today differ from the **pre-independence Poorna Swaraj Day**, January 26 remains a solemn reminder of India's journey to attain self-rule.
  - ☞ The day holds symbolic significance, representing the **culmination of India's struggle for independence** and the subsequent establishment of a sovereign republic.



### HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

- ❖ **Historical Context of the 1920s:**
  - ☞ Post the Non-Cooperation Movement (1922), the 1920s witnessed emerging leaders like Bhagat Singh and political evolution in the INC.
  - ☞ The Simon Commission (1927) triggered widespread protests, demanding political reforms in India.
- ❖ **Internal Disagreements within Congress:**





- **The Nehru Report (1928)** sought dominion status within the British Empire, **facing opposition from leaders like Bose and Nehru.**
- Disagreements centered on the **fear of continued colonial exploitation.**
- ❖ **Viceroy Irwin's Reversal:**
  - Vague promises of dominion status by **Viceroy Irwin in 1929** faced **backlash**, revealing Britain's reluctance to implement reforms.
- ❖ **Declaration of Poorna Swaraj (Total Independence):**
  - The **INC's Lahore Session (December 1929)** witnessed the historic Poorna Swaraj resolution, advocating complete independence.
  - **Officially promulgated on January 26, 1930**, it marked a shift from charity to justice in India's freedom struggle.



## SIGNIFICANCE OF REPUBLIC DAY IN INDIA

- ❖ **Monumental Constitution Adoption:**
  - Marks the **adoption of India's own Constitution on January 26**, a pivotal moment in history.
  - Replaces the British colonial **Government of India Act (1935)**, signifying a fresh start for the nation.
- ❖ **Preamble's Effect:**
  - The Preamble of the **Constitution comes into effect on Republic Day.**
  - Serves as a comprehensive statement, **outlining the fundamental principles of the Constitution.**
- ❖ **Sovereign Democratic Republic:**
  - India sheds the last remnants of the **colonial system**, emerging as a **Sovereign Democratic Republic.**
  - Represents a new dawn in the **country's journey towards self-governance.**
- ❖ **Values of Democracy and Republic:**
  - Republic Day serves as an occasion to **commemorate the core values of democracy and republic.**
  - Reaffirms the commitment to **liberty, fraternity, and equality among all citizens.**
- ❖ **Unity in Diversity:**
  - **Celebrates India's unity in diversity**, as a vast nation desires governance through a single constitution.
  - Reflects the **diverse yet unified spirit** of the country.

## CONCLUSION

*The **significance of Republic Day lies not only** in commemorating historical milestones but also in reflecting on the **values enshrined in the Constitution.** Moving forward, **fostering a deeper understanding and appreciation of the Constitution's principles among citizens is crucial.** Educational initiatives that promote **civic awareness and constitutional literacy** can play a pivotal role. Additionally, **encouraging active participation in democratic processes, such as voting and community engagement,** will strengthen **the democratic fabric of the nation.** Embracing the diversity that defines India and promoting inclusivity in all spheres of society will **contribute to the ideals of liberty, fraternity, and equality.***



## PRELIMS POINTERS:

26<sup>th</sup> & 27<sup>th</sup> January

### TOPIC

## PADMA AWARDS 2024

### DISCRIPTION

#### WHY IN NEWS?

*In a recent announcement on the eve of Republic Day, the Union government disclosed the recipients of the prestigious Padma Awards for the year 2024.*

#### ABOUT PADMA AWARDS

##### ❖ Significance:

- ☛ The Padma Awards are **prestigious civilian honors in India**, announced annually on Republic Day.
- ☛ They are conferred in three categories: **Padma Vibhushan, Padma Bhushan, and Padma Shri.**

##### ❖ Categories and Criteria:

- ☛ **Padma Vibhushan:** For **exceptional and distinguished** service.

- ☛ **Padma Bhushan:** For distinguished service of **higher order.**

- ☛ **Padma Shri:** For distinguished service.

- ☛ Awards recognize achievements in various **fields where public service is involved.**

##### ❖ Initiation and History:

- ☛ **Instituted in 1954**, with **Bharat Ratna and Padma Vibhushan** as the initial awards.

- ☛ **Renamed Padma Vibhushan, Padma Bhushan, and Padma Shri in 1955.**

##### ❖ Nomination Process:

- ☛ Recommendations made by the **Padma Awards Committee, constituted by the Prime Minister.**

- ☛ Open to the public, allowing self-nomination.



#### KEY HIGHLIGHTS OF PADMA AWARDS 2024

- ❖ **Notable Padma Vibhushan** recipients include **former Vice-President M. Venkaiah Naidu, actors Chiranjeevi, Vyjayanthimala Bali, and posthumously, Bindeshwar Pathak.**

- ❖ **Padma Bhushan** awardees include late **actor Vijayakanth, M. Fathima Beevi, and Young Liu, chairman of Taiwan's Foxconn Group.**

- ❖ **Padma Shri** awardees encompass **34 individuals, including sports personalities** like tennis star **Rohan Bopanna** and para badminton coach **Gaurav Khanna.**

- ❖ The President approved a total of **132 Padma awards for 2024**, comprising five Padma Vibhushan, 17 Padma Bhushan, and 110 Padma Shri awards.

- ❖ The **list features 30 women awardees, nine individuals from the category of "Foreigners/NRI/PIO/OCI,"** and nine posthumous awardees.



**ALL INDIA  
SURVEY ON  
HIGHER  
EDUCATION  
(AISHE) 2021-22**

**WHY IN NEWS?**

*The release of the All India Survey on Higher Education (AISHE) 2021-22 by the Ministry of Education has brought attention to significant developments in India's higher education landscape.*

**KEY HIGHLIGHTS OF AISHE 2021-2022 REPORT:**

- ❖ **Total Enrolment Increase:**
  - ☛ Enrolment in higher education institutions rose to nearly 4.33 crore in 2021-22 from 4.14 crore in 2020-21.
- ❖ **Undergraduate Discipline Distribution:**
  - ☛ Highest enrolment at the undergraduate level was in Arts (34.2%), followed by Science (14.8%), Commerce (13.3%), and Engineering & Technology (11.8%).
- ❖ **Postgraduate Discipline Distribution:**
  - ☛ Maximum postgraduate enrolment was in Social Science (21.1%), followed by Science (14.7%).
- ❖ **Ph.D. Enrolment Increase:**
  - ☛ Ph.D. enrolment increased by 81.2% to 2.12 lakh in 2021-22 from 1.17 lakh in 2014-15.
  - ☛ Female Ph.D. enrolment doubled to 0.99 lakh in 2021-22 from 0.48 lakh in 2014-15.
- ❖ **Overall Enrolment Growth:**
  - ☛ An increase of around 91 lakh in higher education enrolment from 3.42 crore in 2014-15.
- ❖ **Female Enrolment Increase:**
  - ☛ Female enrolment in 2021-22 increased to 2.07 crore from 2.01 crore in 2020-21.
- ❖ **Category Wise Enrolment Growth:**
  - ☛ SC category student enrolment increased to 66.23 lakh in 2021-22 from 46.07 lakh in 2014-15, a growth of 44%.
  - ☛ ST category student enrolment increased to 27.1 lakh in 2021-22 from 16.41 lakh in 2014-15, a growth of 65.2%.
  - ☛ OBC student enrolment increased to 1.63 crore in 2021-22 from 1.13 crore in 2014-15.
  - ☛ Minority student enrolment increased to 30.1 lakh in 2021-22 from 21.8 lakh in 2014-15, a growth of 38%.
- ❖ **Gender Parity Index (GPI):**
  - ☛ GPI is 1.01 in 2021-22, indicating that female Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) continues to be more than male GER for the fifth consecutive year.

**AISHE**  
ALL INDIA SURVEY ON HIGHER EDUCATION

DEPARTMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION  
MINISTRY OF EDUCATION  
GOVERNMENT OF INDIA 

**ABOUT AISHE**

- ❖ **Objective:**
  - ☛ AISHE is an annual web-based survey conducted by the Ministry of Education.



**FINANCES OF PANCHAYATI RAJ INSTITUTIONS REPORT BY RBI**

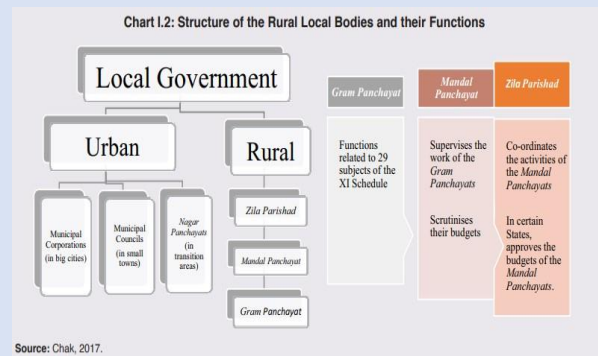
- ❖ **Initiation:**
  - ☛ Started in 2010-11 to portray the status of higher education in India.
- ❖ **Data Collection Parameters:**
  - ☛ Gathers data on various aspects, including **teachers, student enrolment, programs, examination results, and education finance.**
- ❖ **Indicators Calculated:**
  - ☛ Key indicators like **Institution Density, Gross Enrolment Ratio, Pupil-teacher ratio, Gender Parity Index, Per Student Expenditure** are derived from AISHE data.

**WHY IN NEWS?**

- ❖ *The release of the Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) report on the "Finances of Panchayati Raj Institutions" is significant news as it sheds light on the fiscal health and functioning of these grassroots governing bodies.*

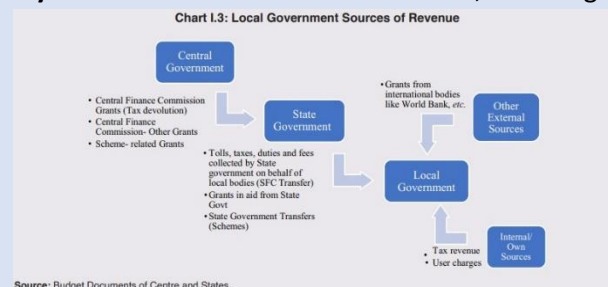
**ABOUT PANCHAYATI RAJ INSTITUTIONS (PRI):**

- ❖ Panchayati Raj Institution (PRI) is a **decentralized system of rural local self-government in India.**
- ❖ It emphasizes the management of local affairs by **elected bodies representing the local population.**
- ❖ Constitutionally established through the 73<sup>rd</sup> Constitutional Amendment Act in 1992.
- ❖ PRI aims to foster democracy at the grassroots level and is entrusted with the crucial task of rural development in the country.



**KEY FINDING OF THE REPORT:**

- ❖ **Assessment Period:**
  - ☛ The report draws upon data from 2.58 lakh Panchayats for the years 2020-21 to 2022-23.
- ❖ **Limited Own Revenue:**
  - ☛ Panchayats primarily **rely on limited own sources of revenue, including property taxes, fees, and fines.**
  - ☛ **Around 95% of their revenues come from grants, limiting their spending capacity.**
- ❖ **Inter-State Variations:**
  - ☛ **Sharp variations exist among states** in devolving powers and functions to Panchayats.
  - ☛ **States with higher devolution levels show better outcomes** in health, education, infrastructure, and water supply and sanitation.





## DOOMSDAY CLOCK'S HANDS AT 90 SECONDS TO MIDNIGHT

### ❖ Challenges in Fiscal Assessment:

- Assessing the fiscal health of Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) is challenging due to **uneven data availability on revenues and expenditures**.
- The report highlights the **need for standardized data formats to enhance fiscal transparency, accountability, and empower PRIs**.

### ❖ Importance of Data Standardization:

- Standardized data provision would **contribute to better fiscal management and governance**, emphasizing the **need for transparency and accountability** in the functioning of Panchayati Raj Institutions.

### WHY IN NEWS?

- The **Doomsday Clock's recent adjustment to 90 seconds to midnight, the closest ever, has captured global attention due to heightened concerns about the threat of a new nuclear arms race, the ongoing conflict in Ukraine, and the escalating impacts of climate change.***

### ABOUT DOOMSDAY CLOCK

#### ❖ Symbolic Timepiece:

- The Doomsday Clock symbolizes **the world's proximity to potential global catastrophe**.

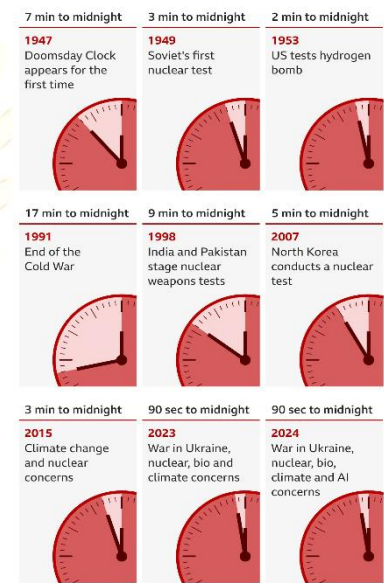
#### ❖ Hands Movement:

- The clock's hands are **adjusted based on scientists' assessments of existential threats, moving closer to or away from midnight**.

#### ❖ Origin and History:

- Created in 1947 by atomic scientists, including Albert Einstein, post-Manhattan Project.**
- Initially focused on the **nuclear threat**; expanded in **2007 to include climate change considerations**.
- Record-setting furthest position: 17 minutes to midnight in 1991** after the Soviet Union's collapse.

Doomsday Clock – minutes to midnight



Source: Doomsday Clock timeline (thebulletin.org)



### CURRENT POSITION

#### ❖ Unprecedented Setting:

- Scientists set the Doomsday Clock's hands closest ever to "Doomsday" at **90 seconds to midnight**.
- First adjustment since being set at 100 seconds to midnight in 2020.**

#### ❖ Reasons for Adjustment:

- Shift attributed to the threat of **a new nuclear arms race, the Ukraine war, and climate change**.
- Israel's Gaza war and **disruptive technologies like AI and biological research** also mentioned.



## INDIA- WORLD'S 4<sup>th</sup> LARGEST STOCK MARKET

### ❖ Global Concerns:

- ☛ **China, Russia, and the US spending heavily to modernize and expand nuclear arsenals raised alarm.**
- ☛ **Concerns about the lack of action on climate change and potential misuse of emerging technologies.**

### WHY IN NEWS?

*Recently, India's stock market has surged to new heights, surpassing Hong Kong to claim the title of the world's fourth-largest stock market by market capitalization.*

### FACTORS DRIVING INDIA'S STOCK MARKET RANKING:

#### ❖ Economic Indicators:

- ☛ **India's strong GDP growth forecast and manageable inflation contribute to a positive economic outlook.**

#### ❖ Political Stability:

- ☛ **The stability of the central government in India is a key factor attracting investors.**

#### ❖ Global Monetary Policies:

- ☛ **Tightening of global monetary policies globally creates favourable conditions for India.**

#### ❖ Consumption-Driven Economy:

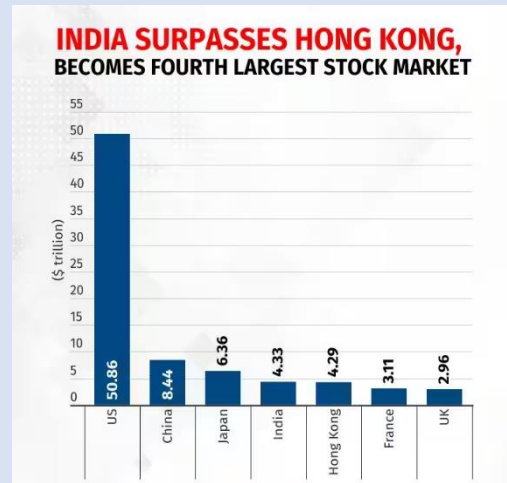
- ☛ **India's status as one of the fastest-growing consumption-driven economies attracts global capital.**

#### ❖ Shift in Investor Preference:

- ☛ **Pessimism towards China's stock market has led to a shift in global funds towards India.**

#### ❖ Challenges in Hong Kong:

- ☛ **Factors such as stringent anti-Covid measures, regulatory crackdowns, property-sector crisis, and geopolitical tensions have led to a decline in Hong Kong's stock market.**



### IMPLICATIONS OF INCREASED RANKING:

- ❖ **Rising stock prices boost overall economic confidence.**
- ❖ **Increased optimism leads to higher spending in the market.**
- ❖ **More investors entering the stock market stimulate greater economic development.**
- ❖ **Higher foreign investment strengthens the Indian Rupee.**
- ❖ **Stock market performance influences pension funds and bond markets.**

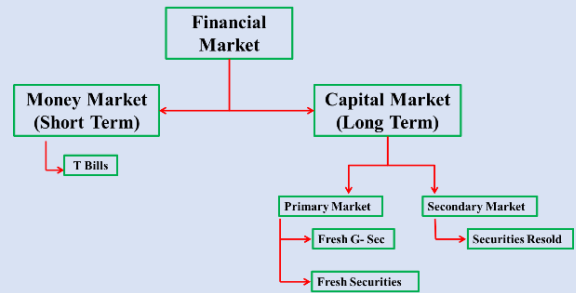
### STOCK MARKET OVERVIEW:

- ❖ **The stock market, also known as the equity market, facilitates the buying and selling of shares of publicly-held companies.**
- ❖ **In India, Stock Market is controlled and regulated by the non-statutory body "Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI)" under the SEBI Act, 1992.**



- ❖ Key participants include investors, brokers facilitating trades, and stock exchanges like BSE and NSE.

- ❖ **Primary Market:** Companies debut with **Initial Public Offerings (IPOs)** to raise capital.



**BULLS VS. BEARS**

- ❖ Bulls are **optimistic investors** expecting **rising market prices**.
- ❖ Bears are **pessimistic investors anticipating falling market prices**.

**GOLDEN TIGER**

**WHY IN NEWS?**

- ❖ *Assam Chief Minister shared a captivating photograph of a golden tiger on **National Tourism Day (January 25)**. **More than one tiger with a golden coat** is believed to be in **Kaziranga National Park**, but the exact count is unknown.*

**ABOUT THE GOLDEN TABBY TIGER**

- ❖ A golden tiger, also known as a golden tabby tiger, is a **Bengal tiger** exhibiting a color variation caused by a **recessive gene**.
- ❖ The golden tiger is considered a color form and **not a distinct subspecies**.
- ❖ Their presence is primarily a result of breeding for **specific color variations in captivity**.
- ❖ Recognizable by its **blonde or pale-golden color and distinctive red-brown stripes**, in contrast to the black stripes seen in typical Bengal tigers.
- ❖ The golden tiger's unique coloring is attributed to a recessive trait known as "**wideband**," which influences the production of black color during the hair growth cycle.
- ❖ **Bengal tigers**, which can carry the recessive gene for the golden coloration, are typically found in parts of **India, Bangladesh, Nepal, Bhutan, and Myanmar**.



**AI KRUTRIM**

**WHY IN NEWS?**

- ❖ ***Ola's Krutrim is first AI unicorn in India***

**About –**

- ❖ **Origin:**
  - ☛ **Krutrim was launched by Bhavish Aggarwal, the CEO of Ola, in partnership with Krishnamurthy Venugopala Tenneti, a board member at ANI Technologies Ltd, which owns Ola Cabs and Ola Electric**
- ❖ **Meaning:**
  - ☛ The term "**Krutrim**" means "**artificial**" in Sanskrit.
- ❖ **Aim:**
  - ☛ To encourage the **adoption of indigenous AI products and to create India's own AI technology**. Aggarwal believes in the potential of AI to transform the country's economic and cultural lives
- ❖ **Capabilities:**



- ☛ **Krutrim is a large language model (LLM)** that has been trained on over 2 trillion to tokens. It understands 20 Indian languages and can generate text in **10 Indian languages, including Marathi, Hindi, Telugu, Kannada, and Oriya.**

❖ **Voice-Activated:**

- ☛ It can also respond to voice inputs and can seamlessly switch between written and spoken communication which will enhance user interaction and accessibility.

❖ **Future Developments:**

- ☛ **Ola plans to launch Krutrim Pro in the next quarter**, which is a larger multimodal AI model with enhanced problem-solving and task execution capabilities.



## OPERATION SARVASHAKTI

### WHY IN NEWS?

- ❖ *Recently, **Operation Sarvashakti**, a strategic initiative undertaken by the Indian Army, has been launched to eliminate all terrorist activities in the Rajouri and Poonch regions of Jammu and Kashmir.*

### OPERATION SARVASHAKTI LAUNCH:

- ❖ Indian Army initiates Operation Sarvashakti to counter terrorists in Jammu and Kashmir.
- ❖ Joint effort with security forces from both sides of Pir Panjal range.
- ❖ **Objective:** Flush out terrorists responsible for recent ambushes on Indian troops in Rajouri and Poonch areas.
- ❖ **Collaborative Forces:** 15 Corps (Srinagar) and 16 Corps (Nagrota) working in coordination.
- ❖ **Intelligence Inputs:** Collation and action based on intelligence inputs at all levels.
- ❖ **Troop Movement:** Additional troops from reserve formations deployed in Rajouri-Poonch region.
- ❖ **Historical Context:** Operation modeled after 2003's Operation Sarpvishash, lasting three months.
- ❖ Sarpvishash brought peace till 2017-2018 through large-scale area domination.

