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JANUARY

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MK Yadav Sir

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GATI SHAKTI PUSH

18 road projects headed for the fast lane in FY24

62 critical projects to be awarded by FY25

SHREYA NANDI
New Delhi, 29 January

In line with the thrust upon the Prime Minister Gati Shakti National Master Plan, the government will prioritise and fast-track as many as 18 critical road infrastructure projects in the fiscal year 2023-24.

The Centre has sights on 67 critical road projects that would result not only in integrated infrastructure development but also improvement of logistics efficiency across the country over the next two years, a senior government official said.

These critical projects were proposed by ministries, such as steel, chemicals and fertilisers, and ports, shipping and waterways. The projects have not only been actively discussed by an

inter-ministerial panel under the Gati Shakti initiative but also at the meeting of the Group of Infrastructure Committee (that connects ministries for infrastructure projects) last week.

Of these 67 projects, one has already been completed, while four are under implementation; the remaining 62 projects are under development. The government aims to award these remaining projects by 2024-25, another government official told *Business Standard*.

As many as three projects are likely to be awarded in the current fiscal year,



18 in FY23 and 41 projects in 2024-25.

Separately, ahead of the Budget, the industry department has also asked infrastructure departments to get critical infrastructure-gap projects approved.

All eyes would be on the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways as it would address the 'critical gap projects' suggested by the Ministry of Defence. Field officers have also been asked to take up these projects on priority, said the official cited above. [Turn to Page 6](#)

Context: In line with the thrust upon the **Prime Minister Gati Shakti National Master Plan**, the government will prioritise and fasttrack as many as 18 critical road infrastructure projects in the fiscal year 2023-24.

PM Gati Shakti National Master Plan

- About:** It is a **digital platform** that will bring 16 ministries and departments of the Government of India together and that includes the Railways and the Roadways also.
- Origin:** It was **announced by the Prime minister** of India in August 2021 and was launched in October 2021.
 - The program has been launched as an umbrella integrator of ₹111-lakh crore worth of projects under the National Infrastructure Pipeline (NIP) for 2020-25.
- Objectives:** It involves the **creation of a common umbrella platform** through which infrastructure projects can be planned and implemented in an efficacious manner by way of coordination between various ministries/departments on a real-time basis.
- Coverage:** It is a **Rs.100 lakh-crore project** for developing 'holistic infrastructure'.
 - It **incorporates the infrastructure schemes** of various Ministries and State Governments like Bharatmala, Sagarmala, inland waterways, dry/land ports, UDAN etc.
 - Economic Zones** like textile clusters, pharmaceutical clusters, defence corridors, electronic parks, industrial corridors, fishing clusters, agri zones will be covered to improve connectivity & make Indian businesses more competitive.
 - It will also **leverage technology extensively** including spatial planning tools with ISRO imagery developed by BISAG-N.

6 Pillars of Gati Shakti Scheme

- Comprehensiveness:** One centralized portal to comprehensively cover all departments
- Prioritization:** Interaction between departments to prioritize projects
- Optimization:** Identifying critical gaps and optimization of resources
- Synchronization:** coordination to achieve common objectives
- Analytical:** Data centered governance and use of GIS based spatial planning
- Dynamic:** Periodic updation of on-ground progress on the portal

PM Modi Praises Rise in Patents in India, Lays Stress on Right Disposal of E-waste

'17 precious metals like gold, silver, copper, nickel can be extracted from e-waste through different processes'

Our Political Bureau

New Delhi: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday hailed the significant rise in patents in India over the last few years, leading to conspicuous improvement in the country's ranking in the Global Innovation Index. He also cautioned the technology sector about increasing e-waste and underlined the need for its appropriate disposal to prevent harm to the environment.

In his first monthly 'Mann ki Baat' address of 2023, the PM spoke on several issues, from promotion of millets to recognition of talent among tribals through Padma awards. He also emphasised on the need to protect biodiversity and the significant jump in the number of Ramsar wetlands in the country.

Modi appreciated the role of Bengaluru-based Indian Institute of Science (IISc) in innovation and research. "It is a matter of joy and pride for us that in the year 2022, there have been a total of 145 patents in the name of this institute (IISc). This means — two patents every five days... I would like to congratulate the team of IISc for this success. Today India's ranking is 7th in patent filing and 5th in trademarks," he said, adding that there has been a 50% increase in the number of patents registered in the last five years.

He also stated that in the Global Innovation Index, India has moved to the 40th position from 80th in 2015.

The PM warned that while technology is taking big strides in India, there is also the threat of growing e-waste. "Today devices like mobile phones, laptops, tablets have become common in every household. Their number will be in billions across the country. Today's latest devices are also the e-waste of the future. Whenever someone buys a new device or replaces one's old device, it becomes necessary to keep in mind whether it is discarded properly or not. If e-waste is not disposed of in the right manner it can cause harm to the environment," he said.

He said 17 kinds of precious metals can be extracted from e-waste through different processes. The list includes gold, silver, copper and nickel. Several start-ups are engaged in finding innovative and profitable ways of disposing of e-waste.



'Several start-ups are engaged in finding innovative and profitable ways of disposing of e-waste'

Context: Prime Minister hailed the significant rise in patents in India over the last few years, leading to conspicuous improvement in the country's ranking in the Global Innovation Index.

India's position in terms of patenting

- The number of patent applications rose from 45,444 in 2016-17 to 66,440 in 2021-22.
- For the first time in the last 11 years, the domestic patent filing has surpassed the number of patents filed by non-Indians at the Indian Patent office in the last quarter (Q4) of 2021-2022.
- The share of Indian residents in total applications has more than doubled in the last decade i.e., the number of patent applications from Indian residents has increased from 20 percent in 2010-11 to around 44 percent in 2021-22.
- Consequently, India's ranking in Global Innovation Index has climbed 35 ranks, from 81st in 2015-16 to 46th in 2021.

Patents

- **About:** A patent is a type of intellectual property that gives its owner the legal right to exclude others from making, using, or selling an invention for a limited period of time in exchange for publishing an enabling disclosure of the invention.
- **WTO Agreement:** Under the World Trade Organization's (WTO) TRIPS Agreement, patents should be available in WTO member states for any invention, in all fields of technology, provided they are new, involve an inventive step, and are capable of industrial application.

Sub-categorisation committee for OBCs gets 14th extension

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Justice G. Rohini-led commission for the sub-categorisation of other backward classes (OBCs) has been given yet another extension in its tenure by the President, according to a Gazette notification issued by the Union Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment last week.

This is the 14th extension in tenure that the commission has been given. The commission, formed in October 2017, was initially given 12 weeks to finish the task of sub-categorising the nearly 3,000 castes within the OBC umbrella and recommend division of the 27% OBC quota among them equitably. Initially, the government cited more time required by the panel to gather information and data and then it cited the pandemic.

The fresh six-month extension comes weeks after multiple members of the commission told *The Hindu* in December 2022 that their report was "in the final stages" and that they

The panel, formed in October 2017, was initially given 12 weeks to finish task of sub-categorising

were prepared to submit it to the government by the end of January 2023.

After the notification of the extension, one commission member told *The Hindu* on Sunday, "Nothing is left for the panel to do. We are now just attaching annexures as required and finalising the compilation of the report."

Even as the notification issued on January 25 said the commission "shall present its report by 31st July, 2023", the panel member said they might be finished with it before the fresh deadline.

As part of its work, the commission had identified dominant caste groups among all OBC communities in the Central list, finding that a small group of dominant OBC communities were crowding out a large number of communities from the 27% quota.

Context: The Justice G. Rohini-led commission for the sub-categorisation of other backward classes (OBCs) has now been given yet another extension in its tenure by the President.

Rohini commission

- **About:** Constituted under article 340 of the Indian constitution to check on the issue of Sub Categorization within Other Backward Classes (OBCs) in the Central List.
- **Origin:** The **five-member commission**, headed by Justice G. Rohini (ret'd), was constituted in October 2017 and was initially given 12 weeks to submit its report to the President of India.
 - Union Government has **extended the term of the Justice Rohini Commission until January 31, 2023**, to submit its report on the Sub-Categorization of OBCs. This is the 13th extension in a row.
- **Objectives:** It was appointed to examine the issues on sub-categorization of Other Backward Castes with reference to the following aspects:
 - To **study the extent of inequitable distribution of benefits** of reservation among the castes listed in the broad category of OBC with reference to such classes included in the Central list.
 - To **devise the parameters, criteria, norms, and mechanisms** in a scientific approach for sub-categorization within Other Backward Classes.
 - To **initiate the task of identifying respective classes, communities, sub-castes, or synonyms** from the Central List of Other Backward Classes and categorizing them into respective sub-categories.
- **Findings and Recommendations:** The Commission has **proposed a four-category formula for the equitable redistribution** of the 27% quota for Other Backward Classes.
 - It has proposed a division of 2, 633 OBC castes in the Central list into four subcategories 1,2,3, and 4 to split the 27% OBC quota reservation.
 - **Category 1:** Category 1 includes 1,674 groups, largely the most disadvantaged groups to receive 2% reservation.
 - **Category 2:** consists of 534 caste groups with a 6% quota reservation
 - **Category 3:** includes 328 caste groups and 9% reservation
 - **Category 4:** comprises 97 caste groups with 10 % reservation
 - The sub-categorization **would ensure that though Category 4 receives the major share**, that is, 10 percent of reservation, other categories will also be guaranteed a share.
 - It also **recommended complete digitisation** of all OBC records and a standardised system of issuing OBC certificates.

Ministry of Education releases All India Survey on Higher Education (AISHE) 2020-2021

Context: The Ministry of Education, Government of India has released **All India Survey on Higher Education (AISHE) 2020-2021**.

Key Points

- The Ministry has been conducting All India Survey on Higher Education (AISHE) since 2011, **covering all higher educational institutions located in Indian Territory** and imparting higher education in the country.
- The survey **collects detailed information on different parameters** such as student enrollment, teacher's data, infrastructural information, financial information etc.
- For the first time, in AISHE 2020-21, HEIs have filled data **using entirely online data collection platform** through the **Web Data Capture Format (DCF)** developed by Department of Higher Education through the National Informatics Centre (NIC).

Highlights of the Survey

- The **total enrollment in higher education has increased** to nearly 4.14 crore in 2020-21 from 3.85 crore in 2019-20. Since 2014-15, there has been an increase of around 72 Lakh in the enrolment (21%).
- The **Female enrolment has increased** to 2.01 crore from 1.88 crore in 2019-20.
- As per 2011 population projections for 18-23 years age group, **Gross Enrollment Ratio has increased** to 27.3 from 25.6 in 2019-20.
- Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Madhya Pradesh, Karnataka and Rajasthan are the **top 6 States in terms of number of student enrolled**.
- The **total number of Universities / University like institutions** registered is 1,113, Colleges 43,796 and Standalone Institutions 11,296.
- During 2020-21, the **number of Universities has increased** by 70, and the number of Colleges has increased by 1,453.
- Since 2014-15, there has been **increase of 353 Universities (46.4%)**.
- The **Institutes of National Importance (INIs)** have almost doubled from 75 in 2014-15 to 149 in 2020-21.
- 191 new Higher Education Institutions have been established in North Eastern States since 2014-15.
- **Highest number of Universities is in Rajasthan (92)**, Uttar Pradesh (84) and Gujarat (83).
- Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, Karnataka, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Madhya Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat are **top 8 States in terms of number of colleges**.

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MANIPUR'S HEIMANG

(Syllabus: GS Paper 3 - Env & Eco)

Savour the tang: Manipur's heimang is a versatile ingredient in Asian cuisines and packs a nutritional punch

Despite its extraordinary versatility, heimang has not yet found widespread commercial use



RECIPES

HEIMANG TEA

Ingredients

Heimang fruits: 1 teaspoon

Tea leaves: 1/2 teaspoon

Water: Enough for 2 cups of tea Sugar to taste

Method

Boil the water and add the tea leaves and heimang fruits. Sieve them out once the decoction is ready. You can also add ginger to the boiling water for enhanced taste and medicinal value, along with a pinch of salt. Add sugar as preferred and the tea is ready to be served.

HEIMANG CHURAN

Ingredients

Heimang fruit: 100 g

Sugar: 10 g

Salt to taste

Method

Dry and powder the heimang fruits. Blitz the sugar as well. Mix the powders with salt and the digestive churan is ready to be eaten on its own or sprinkled over salads.

Context: Extracts of the **heimang fruit** inhibits the formation of calcium oxalate crystals (which make the most common type of kidney stones) and of experimentally induced urinary stones, a new study found.

Key Points

- **Heimang trees (Rhus chinensis)** grow widely across **Manipur** and the other northeastern states.
- The flowers of the tree stand out against the green leaves of the **deciduous tree**, aptly earning them the nickname of 'September beauty'.
- By November and December, **they transform into deep red cherry-like fruits** with glandular velvety hair which have been used for centuries as **food and medicine**.
- The spherical fruit has a **citrus-like tartness** and, though tiny, it is packed with nutrients such as polyphenols, flavonoids and antioxidants.
- Traditional healers of Manipur, who are called the **maibas or maibis**, prescribe heimang for **common gastro-intestinal problems** like diarrhoea and dysentery.
- They recommend eating the **water-soaked fruit for indigestion and stomach ulcer**.
- The healers say that the fruit is also useful in the **treatment of kidney diseases and urinary stones**.

DTE

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LAKE VICTORIA

(Syllabus: GS Paper 3 - Env & Eco)

Lake Victoria: CSE lays out strategy to manage water quality in Tanzania

Strategy for Mwanza city suggests greater focus on Nyashishi river needed, connecting households to sewer lines and waste segregation



NEXT NEWS >

By DTE Staff
Published: Wednesday 25 January 2023



Context: One of the largest lakes in the world, **Lake Victoria**, has been suffering from a variety of unsustainable human activities over the last five decades.

- Delhi-based non-profit **Centre for Science and Environment and National Environment Management Council (NEMC)**, Tanzania have jointly released a report on managing its water quality.

Key Points

- **Lake Victoria** and its flora and fauna support the livelihoods of about 45 million people.
- The ecologically unique water body is **shared by three countries** - Tanzania (51 per cent), Uganda (44 per cent) and Kenya (5 per cent).
- The report identified **Mwanza city** as a hotspot, contributing a substantial pollution load in the form of industrial effluents, domestic sewage and dumping of solid waste.
- It also **recognised two rivers - the Mirongo and the Nyashishi** - as the major water bodies carrying domestic and industrial pollution loads, respectively.
- The water from the **Nyashishi** is extensively used for agricultural purposes before it meets the lake.

Lake Victoria

- **About:** Lake Victoria is the **world's second largest freshwater lake** by surface area.
 - Also referred to as "**Darwin's Dreampond**", the lake is known for its high levels of unique biodiversity.
- **Catchment area:** includes parts of **Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Burundi and Rwanda**.
 - In terms of volume, Lake Victoria is the **world's ninth-largest continental lake** and occupies a shallow depression in Africa.
- **Threats:**
 - IUCN report assessed the global extinction **risk of 651 freshwater species**, including fishes, molluscs, dragonflies, crabs, shrimps and aquatic plants native to the Lake Victoria Basin, in East Africa.
 - **African Lungfish** was declining in the lake basin largely due to overfishing, poor fishing practices and environmental degradation as wetlands were being converted to agricultural land.
 - The purple flowered **Water Hyacinth** was accidentally introduced to Lake Victoria from South America in the 1980s, and at its peak covered close to 10 percent of the lake surface.
 - It **reduces the oxygen and nutrient availability** in the water column, which negatively affects native biodiversity.

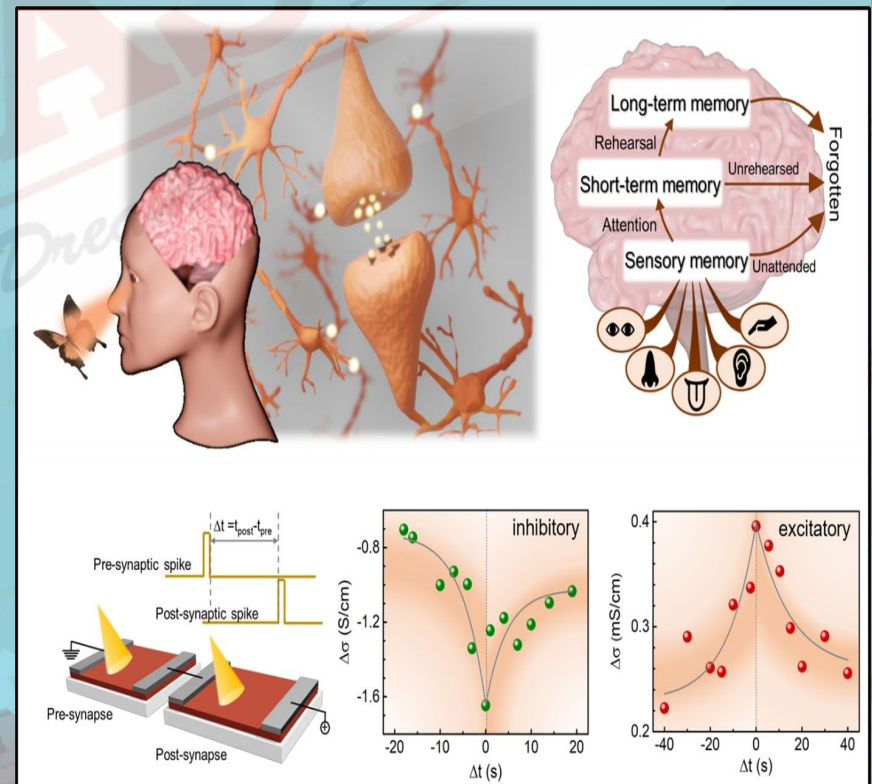
Artificial synapse developed for brain-like computing with industry-compatible Nitride Semiconductors

Context: Scientists have used **scandium nitride (ScN)**, a semiconducting material with supreme stability and **Complementary Metal-Oxide-Semiconductor (CMOS) compatibility**, to develop brain-like computing.

- This invention can provide a new material for stable, **CMOS-compatible optoelectronic synaptic functionalities** at a relatively lower energy cost and hence has the potential to be translated into an industrial product.

Key Points

- The **traditional computers** have physically separated memory storage and processing units.
- As a result, it takes **enormous energy and time** to transfer data between these units during an operation.
- On the contrary, the **human brain is a supreme biological computer** that is smaller and more efficient due to the presence of a synapse (the connection between two neurons) that plays the role of both processor and memory storage unit.
- In the current era of artificial intelligence, the **brain-like computing** approach can help meet the escalating computational demands.
- The development of **neuromorphic hardware** aims at mimicking a biological synapse that monitors and remembers the signal generated by the stimuli.
- Scientists have been trying to **create an artificial synaptic device** that does not suffer from RC delays, exhibits large bandwidth, consumes low energy, and is stable, scalable, and CMOS-compatible.



POLAR VORTEX

Chilly weather in Asia is due to the same phenomenon that brought extreme cold to the US last month



A train stops due to a power outage in Kyoto last week. Snow and cold weather hit road, air and train travel in Japan. *kyodo News via AP*

IT HAS been a cold January in Asia — from China, Japan, and the Korean Peninsula where heavy snow and blizzards temporarily shut down highways, to unusually chilly weather across South Asia, including many parts of India.

The polar vortex

Scientists say Asia's extreme cold is largely the result of the so-called 'polar vortex', the same weather phenomenon that brought exceptionally cold weather to the United States last month. The term refers to an expanse of cold air that generally circles the Arctic but occasionally shifts south from the North Pole. The phenomenon itself has always been present, even if the expression polar vortex has become popular only in recent years.

The polar vortex is held in place by the Earth's rotation and temperature differences between the Arctic and midlatitudes. When those variations in temperatures grow, the polar vortex can shift south.

This month, the polar vortex brought Arctic air to Central Asia before slowly moving eastward, said Woo Jin-kyu, a meteorologist at the Korea Meteorological Administration. Its southward bulge is accompanied by a shift in the jet stream, a ring of strong wind that blows from west to east along the vortex's edges, he said.

"It looks like the rails of a roller coaster," Woo said. "And the larger the

amplitude of the rails, the larger the area of the polar vortex and the farther south the Arctic air extends."

Climate change?

Scientists aren't sure what role, if any, climate change plays in the process of southward shift of the polar vortex. This happens naturally, but some scientists think that as the planet warms, shifts in the polar vortex are likely to become more frequent and pronounced. But there is no consensus on whether the number of extreme freezes will increase as warming continues.

It's likely that recent droughts in Asia made the region even more susceptible to temperature extremes, said Mark Howden, the director of the Institute for Climate, Energy and Disaster Solutions at the Australian National University.

There has been a general decrease in the frequency and intensity of cold extremes across much of the world since the 1950s, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change noted in a report last year. But Howden, the vice chair of an IPCC working group, said the trend is an average that doesn't account for local variations.

"What's happening in parts of the world is that we're getting more cold weather and more extreme weather," he said. "Hotter hot days and colder cold days."

THE NYT, AP

POLAR VORTEX

(Syllabus: GS Paper 1 - Geography)

Context: Scientists say that Asia's extreme cold is largely the result of the so-called **polar vortex**, the same weather phenomenon that brought exceptionally cold weather to the United States last month.

- The term refers to an expanse of cold air that generally circles the Arctic but occasionally shifts south from the North Pole.

Polar vortex

- **About:** A polar vortex is a **constant, upper-level low pressure area** that rotates counter-clockwise at the North Pole and clockwise at the South Pole.
 - A polar vortex is a **spinning cone of low pressure over the North and South poles** which manifests itself in a stronger form due to a temperature increase on account of the contrast in temperature between the polar regions of North America and Europe.
 - **Weather patterns develop** when the polar vortex spins above the stratosphere, a layer of atmosphere 10-48 km above the ground. At its strongest, the accumulated cold air descends into the polar regions of North America and Europe.
- **Strength:**
 - A Polar vortex is at its **highest during the winter** and its lowest during the summer.
 - In the event of a **volcanic eruption**, a polar vortex will be further strengthened and it can stay that way for upto two years after the initial eruption
 - There will be a **single vortex when the Arctic Vortex is elongated** in shape with two cyclone centers.
 - The **Antarctic polar vortex** is far more persistent than the Arctic variant.
 - Climate phenomena related to the **La Nina** will significantly strengthen a polar vortex.
- **Duration:**
 - The **Arctic polar vortex breaks up between mid-March to mid-May**. This event marks the end of winter and the beginning of spring. Farming activities, ecosystems, and other weather cycles are impacted by this event
 - The same transition also **impacts sea ice, ozone, air temperature, and cloud formation as well**.
 - An early breakup of the **polar vortex leads to one warming period** that lasts from late February to mid-March. A late breakup period will lead to two warming periods, one in January and one in March.
 - There are times when the **polar vortex breaks off before the end of the last warming period**. If it is big enough then it can move into Canada and the Midwestern, Central and Northeastern United States.

PM praises Vitasta programme showcasing rich culture, arts and crafts of Kashmir

Context: The Prime Minister has lauded the Ministry of Culture's Vitasta programme showcasing rich culture, arts and crafts of Kashmir.

Key Points

- **Culture Ministry** is organising Vitasta program from 27th-30th January 2023 to **showcase the rich culture, arts and crafts of Kashmir**.
- The programme extends the historical identity of Kashmir to other states and it is a symbol of the spirit of 'Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat'.

Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat

- **Launch:** It was announced by Prime Minister on 31st October, 2015 **on the occasion of the 140th birth anniversary of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel**.
- **Nodal Ministry:** Ministry of Education.
- **Features:** **All States and UTs will be covered** under the programme.
 - There will be **pairing of States/UTs at national level** and these pairings will be in **effect for one year**, or till the next round of pairings.
 - The State/UT level pairings would be utilized for state level activities.
 - District level pairings would be independent of the State level pairings.
- **The broad objectives of the initiative are as follows:**
 - **Celebration:** to **celebrate the unity in diversity of our nation** and to maintain and strengthen the fabric of traditionally existing emotional bonds between the people of our country.
 - **Promotion:** **promote the spirit of national integration** through a deep and structured engagement between all indian states and union territories through a year-long planned engagement between states.
 - **Showcase:** to **showcase the rich heritage and culture, customs and traditions** of either state for enabling people to understand and appreciate the diversity that is india, thus fostering a sense of common identity.
 - **Shared practices:** to create an environment which **promotes learning between states by sharing best practices** and experiences.

U-19 WOMEN'S T20 WORLD CUP

(Syllabus: GS Paper 1 - Sports)

INDIA WIN 1ST U-19 WOMEN'S T20 WC

India clinched the inaugural ICC U-19 Women's T20 World Cup final in SA, beating England by 7 wickets. The women in blue had till date never won a WC at any level



SEE P16

Skipper Shafali Verma (with the trophy) is also part of India's squad for the senior T20 World Cup that begins from Feb 10

➤ **Player of the match** Titas Sadhu (2/6) and Archana Devi (2/17) struck early as England lurched from 22/4 to **68 all out – lowest in the final of any ICC tournament** (men/women) – in 17.1 overs. India (69/3) wrapped up the match in 14 overs

➤ Shweta Sehrawat (297 runs at an average of 99 in 7 matches), the top scorer in this WC, and Parshavi Chopra (11 wickets in 6 matches) shone for India
➤ India is the only team to have won the men's ODI World Cup, T20 WC, U-19 WC and women's U-19 WC

Hardik's India beat New Zealand by 6 wickets in the 2nd T20 to square the series 1-1, P 16

Context: India beat England in the first-ever ICC U-19 Women's T20 World Cup final in Potchefstroom, South Africa.

Key Points

- This is the **first ICC trophy** India has won in women's cricket.
- The **Indian women's cricket team has never won a World Cup** at any level. The seniors reached the World Cup final on three occasions across formats but failed to go the distance.
- Bowling first, **India cleaned up the English side** for mere 68 runs in 17.1 overs.
- **England captain and stellar all-rounder Grace Scrivens has been named Player of the Tournament** after a run of outstanding performances with bat and ball.
- **Titas Sadhu** of India poses after being named **Player of the Match** following the ICC Women's U19 T20 World Cup 2023 Final match.

ICC Women's Under-19 Cricket World Cup

- **About:** The ICC Under-19 Women's Cricket World Cup is an **international cricket tournament** organised by the **International Cricket Council (ICC)** contested by the national women's under-19 teams.
- **Tournament:** The **first tournament took place in January 2023** in South Africa, with matches being played in the T20 format.

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