



**AGRASEN CIVIL SERVICES ACADEMY**

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**15<sup>th</sup> to 21<sup>st</sup> March 2023**

# **WEEKLY** **Current Affairs**

For

**UPSC / RPSC**

*and All Other Competitive*

**EXAMS**

- \* *What is ATL Sarthi*
- \* *IBA Women's World Boxing Championships 2023*
- \* *What is East African Rift*
- \* *Power Business Breakfast and Networking*
- \* *Brazil Loses Forests Due to Climate Change*
- \* *Improving Healthcare Access and Quality*



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## Current Affairs 15 MARCH to 21 march, 2023

### What is Indonesia's Dawn School Trial?

The dawn school trial is a controversial experiment implemented in the city of Kupang in Indonesia. The pilot project, implemented in 10 schools in the region, requires students of 12th grade to attend classes starting at 5:30 am in an effort to "strengthen children's discipline". However, the scheme has resulted in sleep deprivation among the students, with parents and experts raising concerns over the health hazards it might bring.

### Students Face Sleep Deprivation and Health Hazards

Students who are participating in the pilot project have to wake up as early as 4 am to make it to school on time. This has caused sleep deprivation among students, which can lead to various health issues, including obesity, depression, anxiety, and other mental health problems. In addition, parents have raised concerns about the safety of their wards, who are forced to go out for school when it is still "pitch dark" and "quiet".

### Criticism of the Pilot Project

The pilot project has been criticised for the lack of correlation with the effort to improve the quality of education. Instead, the sleep deprivation could adversely hit the students' health in the long run and result in a shift in behavior. A research by the American Academy of Pediatrics, which was released in 2014, recommended the classes of high-school and middle-school students to start at 8:30 AM or later to ensure a positive outcome.

The Indonesian Ombudsman has asked the central government to intervene in the trial being carried out by the local government. The Women's Empowerment and Child Protection Ministry and the Indonesian Child Protection Commission have also called for a review of the policy.

### Local Government Extends the Experiment

Despite calls to strike down the policy, the local government is still carrying on with its experiment. The experiment has even been extended to the local education agency, where civil servants now start their day at 5:30 am.

### What is ATL Sarthi?

Atal Innovation Mission (AIM) – NITI Aayog, a government-led think tank in India, has launched ATL Sarthi, a comprehensive self-monitoring framework to strengthen the ecosystem of Atal Tinkering Labs (ATL) in schools. AIM has established 10,000 ATLs in India to promote curiosity, imagination, and creativity among young students and to develop skills such as computational thinking, physical computing, and design thinking.

ATL Sarthi was launched to enhance the performance of ATLs and achieve the desired objectives. It aims to provide a monitoring and evaluation framework that can help improve the functioning of ATLs.

### What are the four pillars of ATL Sarthi?

The four pillars of ATL Sarthi are:

**Self-reporting dashboard:** AIM has developed a self-reporting dashboard known as the "MyATL Dashboard" to track the performance of ATLs. The dashboard is designed to provide real-time information on the activities and achievements of each ATL. The schools can self-report on their progress and accomplishments, which can be analyzed by the authorities to understand the strengths and weaknesses of each ATL.

**Compliance SOPs:** AIM has developed a set of standard operating procedures (SOPs) for schools to ensure financial and non-financial compliance. These SOPs ensure that the ATLs comply with the rules and regulations set by AIM and the government. This step will ensure that the funds allocated for the ATLs are spent efficiently.







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Cluster-based approach: AIM has introduced a cluster-based approach to enhance the performance of ATLS. This approach involves forming clusters of 20-30 ATLS in a particular region. These ATLS can learn from each other through training, collaborations, events, and best practices. The ATL Cluster aims to provide a self-sustainable model for enablement and monitoring, wherein the ATLS and local authorities work in tandem with each other on-ground.

Performance-enablement matrix: AIM has provided ownership to schools to analyze their performance through a Performance-Enablement (PE) Matrix. This matrix will enable schools to assess their performance and take corrective measures, if needed. The schools can use this matrix to evaluate their progress and achievements and improve their performance.

## **13th Exercise Bold Kurukshetra:**

The 13th edition of Exercise Bold Kurukshetra, a bilateral armour exercise between the armies of India and Singapore, was conducted from March 6 to 13, 2023, at Jodhpur Military Station, India. This joint exercise aimed to enhance cooperation, build a common understanding of mechanised warfare, combat emerging threats and adapt to evolving technologies. It also provided an opportunity for both armies to exchange ideas and best practices in a modern combat zone.

## **Participation of Both Armies in a Command Post Exercise**

The 2023 edition of the Exercise Bold Kurukshetra marked the first time that both armies participated in a command post exercise. It involved Battalion and Brigade level planning elements and computer wargaming. Soldiers from the 42nd Battalion, Singapore Armoured Regiment, and an Armoured Brigade of the Indian Army took part in the exercise. The joint training focused on developing interoperability through a computer simulation-based Wargame using joint operational and tactical procedures controlled through a joint command post.

## **Objectives of Exercise Bold Kurukshetra**

The exercise aimed to foster a common understanding of mechanised warfare in emerging threats and evolving technologies. It provided both contingents with an opportunity to learn about each other's operating drills and procedures, as well as exchange ideas and best practices being followed in a modern combat zone.

## **India Venture Capital Report 2023:**

Bain & Company's annual India Venture Capital Report 2023 reveals that venture capital investments in India saw a decrease in deal value of 33% from \$38.5 billion to \$25.7 billion in 2022. The report highlights macroeconomic uncertainty and recessionary fears as the primary drivers of the decrease in deal value.

## **Late-Stage Large Deals Affected the Most**

Late-stage large deals were affected the most by the decrease in deal value. This could be attributed to the cautious approach adopted by investors in light of the economic uncertainty. As a result, investors focused on preserving their capital and were more selective with their investments.

## **Early-Stage Deals Continued to See Momentum**

In contrast to late-stage large deals, early-stage deals continued to see momentum in India. This resulted in a slight expansion in deal volume. The report suggests that investors are doubling down on early-stage deal making as they believe this is the best way to capture India's growth potential.

## **India Outpaced China in Terms of New Unicorns**

For the second year in a row, India outpaced China in terms of new unicorns created. This is a significant achievement for India, as it demonstrates its growing reputation as a hub for entrepreneurship and innovation.

## **Shift to More Democratic Funding Geographically**





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The report highlights a shift to more democratic funding geographically in India. This means that investors are now looking beyond the traditional hubs of Mumbai and Bangalore and are exploring opportunities in other regions of the country.

## **SaaS and Fintech Continued to See Momentum in Funding**

The report suggests that SaaS and Fintech continued to see momentum in funding in 2022. This is not surprising as these sectors have been growing rapidly in recent years and are expected to continue their growth trajectory in the future.

## **Emergent Sectors Gained Momentum**

The report also highlights the emergence of new sectors in India. Sectors such as EV, Agritech, generative AI, space tech, and climate tech gained momentum in 2022. These sectors are expected to play a significant role in India's future growth story.

## **Resilient Ecosystem to Emerge in 2023**

Despite the challenges faced in 2022, the report predicts that a more resilient ecosystem will emerge in 2023. Investors are expected to continue doubling down on early-stage deal making, and a wider investor base is likely to participate in India's growth.

## **IQAir's Fifth World Air Quality Report:**

The fifth World Air Quality Report by IQAir shows that India is still facing a severe air pollution crisis. The report revealed that 39 Indian cities were among the world's 50 most polluted cities based on PM2.5 levels in the air. This article will discuss the details of the report and its implications for public health and the environment in India.

## **Delhi: The most polluted metropolitan city**

Delhi was ranked fourth on the list of the world's most polluted cities, and it was also the most polluted metropolitan city in the world. The annual average PM2.5 level in Delhi was 92.6, almost 20 times the safe limit. This high level of air pollution can cause severe health issues like lung cancer, heart disease, and stroke. The primary source of air pollution in Delhi is vehicular emissions, industrial pollution, and construction activities.

## **Bhiwadi: The most polluted city in India**

Bhiwadi in Rajasthan was the most polluted city in India and the third most polluted city in the world with an annual average PM2.5 level of 92.7. The high level of air pollution in Bhiwadi is due to the presence of industries and factories that emit harmful pollutants into the air. The residents of Bhiwadi are at risk of developing respiratory diseases, heart diseases, and cancer.

## **Other polluted cities in India**

Apart from Delhi and Bhiwadi, many other Indian cities dominated the list of the world's most polluted cities. These cities included Patna, Muzaffarnagar, Dharbanga, Noida, Gurgaon, Bulandshahr, Meerut, Charkhi Dadri, Jind, Ghaziabad, Faridabad, and Hisar. The high levels of air pollution in these cities are primarily due to vehicular emissions, industrial pollution, and burning of agricultural waste.

## **Decline in pollution levels in Delhi's neighboring towns**

According to the report, there was a slight decline in pollution levels in Delhi's neighboring towns of Gurugram, Noida, Ghaziabad, and Faridabad. The decline ranged from 34% in Gurugram to 21% in Faridabad. This is an encouraging sign, but more needs to be done to reduce air pollution levels in these areas.

## **India's ranking among other countries**





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Out of 131 countries, India ranked eighth with a population-weighted average PM2.5 level of 53.3  $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$  in 2022. India was preceded by Chad, Iraq, Pakistan, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Burkina Faso, and Kuwait. The annual average for the country in 2022 was slightly lower than the 58.1  $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$  recorded in 2021. Although the slight decline is good news, India still has a long way to go to tackle air pollution and improve public health.

## IBA Women's World Boxing Championships 2023

India's Youth Affairs and Sports Minister, Anurag Singh Thakur, inaugurated the 13th IBA Women's World Boxing Championships in New Delhi, marking the beginning of a much-awaited event in the world of boxing. The tournament, hosted by the Boxing Federation of India, will take place from March 16 to 26, with a total prize fund of \$2.4 million.

The IBA Women's World Boxing Championships is one of the most prestigious events in the world of boxing, and the fact that India is hosting it is a testament to the growing popularity of the sport in the country.

## Indian Boxers Ready for the Challenge

India has fielded a strong contingent for the tournament, with Nikhat Zareen, Lovlina Borgohain, Saweety Boora, and Preeti all set to participate in the event. These boxers have been in impressive form recently and will be looking to make a mark in the competition. They will, however, face stiff competition from some of the world's best boxers, including several Olympic medallists.

## The Opening Ceremony

The opening ceremony of the tournament was held on March 15, with the tournament's brand ambassador, MC Mary Kom, and Bollywood star Farhan Akhtar in attendance. The event was a grand affair, with dancers and musicians putting up spectacular performances that kept the audience enthralled.

## The Tournament Format

The event will see 324 boxers from 65 countries compete in 12 weight categories. The tournament follows a knockout format, with each bout consisting of three rounds of three minutes each. The winner of each bout will proceed to the next round, with the ultimate aim of reaching the finals and winning the championship.

## The Impact of the Event

The IBA Women's World Boxing Championships is not just a major sporting event but also has a significant social impact. The tournament provides a platform for women boxers from across the globe to showcase their talent and inspire young girls to take up the sport. It is also a great opportunity for India to showcase its sporting infrastructure and organizational capabilities to the world.

## What is GPT-4?

OpenAI has made a major announcement that has generated a lot of buzz in the artificial intelligence (AI) community. The company has unveiled its latest creation, GPT-4, a large multimodal model that can process both text and image inputs. This new language model is an upgrade from its predecessor, GPT-3, which was already groundbreaking in its own right.

## Greater Accuracy and Human-level Performance

GPT-4 has been designed to solve difficult problems with greater accuracy and demonstrate human-level performance on various professional and academic benchmarks. The language model is so powerful that it can pass a simulated bar exam with a score that places it around the top 10% of test-takers. Additionally, GPT-4 can answer complex tax-related questions, schedule a meeting among three busy people, or even learn a user's creative writing style.

## Handling Over 25,000 Words of Text







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GPT-4 has an impressive capacity to handle over 25,000 words of text. This is a significant improvement from GPT-3, which could only handle up to 2,048 words of text. This capacity makes it ideal for processing long-form content such as research papers, books, and even legal documents.

## **Understanding Languages that are Not English**

One of the most exciting features of GPT-4 is its ability to understand languages that are not English. This makes it an ideal language model for processing texts in languages such as Chinese, Arabic, and French, among others. This feature is a significant improvement from GPT-3, which was mainly designed to handle English texts.

## **Potential Applications of GPT-4**

The potential applications of GPT-4 are numerous, and the technology has the potential to transform various industries. For instance, GPT-4 can be used in the legal industry to process legal documents and contracts, which can save time and increase efficiency. Additionally, the language model can be used in the medical field to process medical records and help doctors diagnose diseases accurately.

## **Saudi-Iran Détente**

China's recent announcement of the Saudi-Iran détente in West Asia has been viewed as a strategic move aimed at securing long-term economic interests and establishing political influence in the region. This deal is set to rival the traditional role played by the United States in the area and has far-reaching implications for global politics.

## **Low-risk, high-impact opportunity for China**

China sees the Saudi-Iran détente as a "low-risk, high-impact" opportunity to establish its diplomatic and political credentials in West Asia. This is a region where China has high economic stakes, and the normalization of relations between Saudi Arabia and Iran presents a unique chance for China to expand its influence in the area. With this move, China hopes to establish itself as a key mediator in the region and a force to be reckoned with in global politics.

## **Economic interests at stake**

China's interest in the Saudi-Iran détente is largely driven by economic considerations. The region is home to some of the world's largest oil reserves, and China is heavily dependent on these reserves to fuel its growing economy. The peace between Saudi Arabia and Iran has the potential to stabilize the oil market and ensure a steady supply of oil to China. In addition to oil, China also has significant investments in infrastructure projects in the region and is keen to protect these investments.

## **Establishing political influence**

The deal presents an opportunity for China to establish its political influence in the region, something it has been striving for in recent years. By playing a key role in the normalization of relations between Saudi Arabia and Iran, China hopes to establish itself as a mediator in the region and a key player in global politics. This move also allows China to challenge the traditional role played by the United States in the area and assert its dominance in a region that has long been under the influence of Western powers.

## **Implications for global politics**

The Saudi-Iran détente has far-reaching implications for global politics, and China's involvement in the deal is set to further complicate an already complex situation. The normalization of relations between Saudi Arabia and Iran has the potential to reshape the balance of power in the region and impact the ongoing conflicts in Syria, Yemen, and Iraq. With China now involved in the deal, it adds another layer of complexity to an already complicated situation.

## **What is TV-D1?**

The first test vehicle demonstration (TV-D1) under the Gaganyaan mission will be conducted on May 2023. It aims to test the abort process mid-air, the parachute system, and the recovery of crew members after splashdown. The





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demonstration involves using single liquid propellant-based rocket stage to carry the crew module to a sub-orbital level. This success of this demonstration will bring Gaganyaan mission an inch closer to the goal of sending humans to space.

## Importance of TV-D1

### Additional Demonstrations and Crewed Missions

The uncrewed mission will only take place after the success of two such demonstrations. Two more test vehicle demonstrations will follow before the second uncrewed mission, which will carry a pressurized crew module. The first crewed mission has been scheduled for late 2024 or early 2025, but its timeline will depend on the success of these tests.

### Gaganyaan Advisory Council's Recommendation

The Gaganyaan Advisory Council has recommended additional testing for the Crew Escape System and deceleration systems through four abort missions using Test Vehicle (TV) and Integrated Air Drop Tests before proceeding with crewed missions. This was in addition to the two uncrewed missions that were originally planned.

### Testing Procedures

The TV-D1 is designed to test the processes for aborting the mission mid-air, the parachute system that will bring the crew module down to sea, and the recovery of crew members from the module after splashdown. The demonstration will use a single liquid propellant-based rocket stage to carry the crew module to sub-orbital level.

## Importance of TV-D1

The test vehicle demonstration is an essential step in the Gaganyaan mission's progress. The TV-D1 aims to test the safety and reliability of the spacecraft and its systems, including the escape mechanism, at a much higher altitude than before. The TV-D1's success will pave the way for further testing and the eventual crewed mission.

## Global Bottled Water Industry:

The global bottled water industry has experienced meteoric growth in the last 50 years, becoming a major economic sector. The United Nations University Institute of Water Environment and Health and McMaster University have released a report titled "Global Bottled Water Industry: A Review of Impacts and Trends: Important Findings." According to the report, the growth of the industry is masking a significant global problem – the failure of public systems to provide reliable drinking water for all.

### Impact of the Bottled Water Industry

The expansion of the bottled water industry hinders progress towards achieving the key Sustainable Development Goal of providing reliable drinking water. The report notes that the industry's growth adversely affects investments and the role of the state in developing and improving long-term public water supply infrastructure. Investments that could have gone towards improving public water systems are diverted towards the bottled water industry, resulting in limited progress in providing clean and reliable water to those who need it most. The report suggests that half of what the world spends on bottled water each year could provide clean water to millions of people without it.

### Water Depletion

The report also highlights the industry's high consumption of water and the depletion of groundwater sources. The primary source of water bottled globally is groundwater, which is a precious resource. The report cites examples of the industry extracting groundwater in the United States and France, resulting in depletion of natural recharge. Over two billion people worldwide rely on groundwater as their primary water source. The report notes that in some areas, the amount of groundwater extracted exceeds the amount naturally recharged, leading to groundwater depletion. It further states that fifteen percent of all extracted groundwater is non-renewable. Global groundwater depletion has varied between 56 to 362 cubic kilometers per year over the last three decades.





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## **Bottled Water Industry in Different Regions**

The Asia-Pacific region constitutes about half of the global bottled water market, and the Global South countries together make up about 60 percent. The United States, China, and Indonesia combined make up half of the global market, with Germany being the biggest market in Europe, Mexico in the Latin America and the Caribbean region, and South Africa in Africa. Singapore and Australia stand out as the leaders in both annual revenue and volume of bottled water sold per capita, with the USA and China per capita indicators being much smaller.

## **What is East African Rift?**

The East African Rift is a geological feature that stretches for 56 kilometers. It first emerged in Ethiopia's desert in 2005. The Rift is predicted to create a new ocean and divide Africa into two separate parts. Although the emergence of new coastlines may unlock new opportunities for economic growth, there will also be consequences such as the necessary evacuation of people, potential loss of lives, and environmental impacts.

The East African Rift is a unique geological feature that runs through East Africa from the Red Sea to Mozambique. The Rift is caused by the divergence of three tectonic plates – the Nubian Plate, the Somali Plate, and the Arabian Plate. These plates are pulling away from each other, creating tension that results in the formation of the Rift. The East African Rift is a fascinating geological marvel that has attracted the attention of scientists and geologists from around the world

## **A New Ocean and Divided Africa**

The emergence of a new ocean is predicted to occur due to the East African Rift. As the plates continue to diverge, the rift valley will deepen, and the surrounding land will sink. Eventually, the valley will fill with water, creating a new ocean that will divide Africa into two separate parts. This will result in landlocked countries like Uganda and Zambia gaining their own coastlines.

## **Potential Negative Consequences**

The rifting process will affect settlements, communities, and the natural environment, including flora and fauna. The displacement of communities and settlements will be one of the most significant challenges. People will need to be evacuated from their homes and relocated to new areas. This process will be disruptive and could potentially result in the loss of lives.

Another potential negative consequence of the rifting process is the environmental impact. The creation of a new ocean will have a significant impact on the surrounding ecosystem. Marine life will move into the new ocean, while terrestrial life will be forced to adapt to the changing landscape. The displacement of flora and fauna will have far-reaching consequences for the ecosystem and could potentially lead to the extinction of certain species.

## **Unlocking New Economic Opportunities**

Despite the potential negative consequences, the emergence of new coastlines may unlock new economic opportunities for the affected countries. Landlocked countries like Uganda and Zambia will finally have their own coastlines, which will provide access to international markets and boost trade. The creation of a new ocean could also lead to the discovery of new natural resources, which could further boost the economy of the affected countries.

## **Heal in India**

Heal in India is an initiative of the Indian Government aimed at promoting medical tourism in the country. This initiative is being led by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare and the Ministry of Ayush. The Centre for Development of Advanced Computing (CDAC) and Services Export Promotion Council (SEPC) have been working in collaboration with the Ministries to develop a 'One Step' Heal in India portal for the promotion of Medical Value Travel.

The Ministry of Ayush signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with India Tourism Development Corporation (ITDC), Ministry of Tourism to work together for the promotion of Medical Value Travel in Ayurveda and other







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traditional systems of medicine. This partnership will help in promoting traditional Indian systems of medicine and therapies and position India as a global leader in the field of medical tourism.

## **Champion Service Sector Scheme for Medical Value Travel**

The Ministry of Ayush developed a Central Sector Scheme called the Champion Service Sector Scheme for Medical Value Travel. Under this scheme, financial assistance in the form of Interest Subsidy is provided to private investors for the establishment of Super Specialty Hospitals/ Day Care Centres of the systems recognized under The National Commission for Indian System of Medicine (NCISM) Act, 2020, or The National Commission for Homeopathy (NCH) Act, 2020 in FY 2021-22. This will help in the development of the infrastructure required for the promotion of Medical Value Travel in India.

## **Chintan Shivir and Global Ayush Investment and Innovation Summit**

The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare organized a couple of Chintan Shivirs to promote Heal in India and Heal by India. The Ministry of Ayush also participated in these Chintan Shivirs. Certain action points were identified in this shivir to promote traditional medicine through tourism in India.

A Round Table and Plenary Session on Heal in India- Medical Value Travel were organized during the Global Ayush Investment and Innovation summit at Gandhinagar, Gujarat to promote India as the top destination for Medical Value Travel.

## **Women and Men in India 2022 Report**

The Union Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation released the Women and Men in India 2022 report on March 16, 2023. The report revealed that India's sex ratio, or the number of females per 1,000 males, is expected to improve from 943 in 2011 to 952 by 2036. However, the report also highlighted the gender disparity in labor force participation rates in the country.

## **Improvement in Age-Specific Fertility Rate**

### **Improvement in Sex Ratio**

The report noted that the sex ratio at birth increased by three points to 907 in 2018-20 from 904 in 2017-19. The projected sex ratio improvement to 952 by 2036 is a positive development, but the report also indicates that women in India are still largely excluded from the labor force, restricting their financial independence.

### **Gender Disparity in Labor Force Participation Rates**

The Women and Men in India 2022 report revealed that women are severely lagging behind men in labor force participation rates. The report showed that the Labor Force Participation Rate for those above 15 years of age has been increasing since 2017-2018. However, the rate was 77.2% for males and only 32.8% for females in 2021-22, with no improvement in the disparity over the years.

The low participation rates for women could be due to social factors, educational qualifications, and gender discrimination in terms of wages and opportunities at the workplace.

## **Gender Disparities in Wages**

The report further highlighted the gender disparity in wages, with men in rural areas earning more than women in urban areas. The average wage earned per day by casual laborers in work other than public works only exacerbates this disparity.

## **Population Trends**





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The Women and Men in India 2022 report also features India's age and sex structure. The population growth, which has been on a downward trend since 1971, is projected to fall further to 0.58% in 2036. The report notes that the population pyramid will undergo a shift, with the base of the pyramid narrowing down while the middle is broadened.

## Access to Healthcare

The report also highlights that gender influences people's access to and experience with healthcare, with women and girls facing more difficulties than men and boys due to restrictions on mobility, lack of access to resources and decision-making power.

## Improvement in Age-Specific Fertility Rate

The age-specific fertility rate has improved, with the number of live births in the 20-24 years and 25-29 years age group between 2016 and 2020 reducing from 135.4 and 166.0 to 113.6 and 139.6, respectively. This improvement is likely due to economic independence through proper education and securing a job.

## Generative AI

Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) has been making headlines this year, as major tech companies like Microsoft and Alphabet race to launch products that utilize the technology. In this article, we will discuss everything you need to know about generative AI, including its definition, uses, concerns, and involvement of industry giants like Google and Microsoft.

Generative AI, like other forms of AI, learns to take actions from past data. However, it goes beyond simply categorizing or identifying data and creates brand new content, such as text, images, and computer code, based on that training. One famous example of generative AI is ChatGPT, a chatbot released by Microsoft-backed OpenAI in 2022. It utilizes a large language model to generate human-like responses based on a text prompt. OpenAI also recently announced GPT-4, a new multimodal model that can perceive text and images, allowing it to generate real websites from hand-drawn mock-ups.

## What is Generative AI Good For?

Generative AI has various practical applications, such as creating a first draft of marketing copy, taking notes during virtual meetings, personalizing emails, and generating slide presentations. For example, CarMax Inc has used a version of OpenAI's technology to summarize customer reviews and help shoppers decide which used car to buy.

## What are the Concerns About Generative AI?

Although generative AI has many benefits, there are concerns about its potential misuse. School systems worry that students may turn in AI-drafted essays, undermining the value of learning. Cybersecurity researchers fear that bad actors, including governments, could use generative AI to produce more disinformation. Additionally, the technology is prone to making mistakes, such as factual inaccuracies and erratic responses.

## Is Generative AI Only for Google and Microsoft?

**While Google and Microsoft are at the forefront of research and investment in large language models, other companies are also creating their own competing AI or packaging technology from others. For example, Salesforce Inc and Adept AI Labs are among the companies that have embraced generative AI.**

## International SME Convention 2023

The 3rd edition of the International SME Convention 2023 (ISC) is organized from March 19 to 21 this year. The event is focusing on India's major four sunrise sectors, namely Cleantech & Green Energy, Manufacturing, Services Sector, and Agro food Processing & Agri Implements sector. These sectors are crucial for India's economic growth and have immense potential for job creation and sustainable development.





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ISC 2023 is a platform that brings together SMEs, policymakers, and industry experts to discuss critical issues and explore opportunities for growth and sustainability. It is jointly organized by the union ministries of MSME and external affairs, and India SME Forum. The Madhya Pradesh Government is the key state partner and the Uttar Pradesh Government is the associate state partner for this event.

The convention will host several panel discussions that will aim to provide actionable insights and recommendations for building sustainable ecosystems for MSMEs and plugging SMEs into global value chains. The discussions will cover topics such as building strategic partnerships, leveraging digital platforms, focusing on innovation, complying with standards and regulations, and accessing finance.

## **Power Business Breakfast and Networking**

Apart from the conference sessions, the ISC 2023 will also feature three days of power business breakfast and networking with like-minded, successful entrepreneurs, and business leaders. The sessions will provide a platform for SMEs to network, share ideas, and explore business opportunities.

## **International Partners and Insurance Partner**

The ISC 2023 has partnered with the International Network for SMEs (INSME) and the World Union of Small and Medium Enterprises (WUSME) as international partners. TATA AIA is the insurance partner for the convention, which underscores the importance of risk management for SMEs.

## **Rajasthan Advocates Protection Bill, 2023**

The Rajasthan Advocates Protection Bill, 2023, was tabled by the Rajasthan government in the state legislative assembly on March 16. The Bill aims to prevent offenses against advocates, such as assault, grievous hurt, criminal force, and criminal intimidation, along with damage or loss to their property. The Bill was introduced in response to the increasing violence and false implications against advocates, which resulted in a deterioration of law and order and delay in the justice system.

The proposal for the Bill followed the stabbing of Jugraj Chauhan, a Jodhpur-based lawyer, by two men in broad daylight on February 18. Following the incident, advocates from several courts in the state called for a strike and an indefinite boycott of judicial work. They demanded a law for the protection of advocates and their families. On February 28, the Rajasthan High Court took suo-moto cognizance of the lawyers' strike and reiterated that any attempt made to obstruct any lawyer or litigant from entering the court and appearing in the court to argue the matter would be viewed strictly.

## **Objective of the Bill**

The objective of the Bill is to enact an effective law that prohibits increasing violence and false implications against advocates in the state. It aims to make offenses against advocates cognizable in the territory of Rajasthan, providing police protection to advocates. The Bill defines an advocate as someone who is entered on any role under the provisions of the Advocates Act, 1961.

## **Penalties**

The Bill provides for a maximum of two years imprisonment, along with a fine of up to Rs 25,000 for assault or criminal force against an advocate under Section 5(1). For voluntarily causing grievous hurt to an advocate, Section 5(2) provides for a maximum of seven years imprisonment and a fine of up to Rs 50,000. Meanwhile, Section 5(3) punishes the voluntary commission of the offense of criminal intimidation against an advocate with a maximum of two years imprisonment and a fine of up to Rs 10,000.

## **Compensation and Damages**

Section 8 of the Bill provides for compensation to advocates when a court imposes a sentence of fine or any other sentence of which fine forms a part. Section 10 states that in addition to the punishment specified in Section 5, the







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offender shall also be liable to pay for the loss or damage caused to an advocate's property, as may be determined by the court. The offender will also be liable to reimburse the medical expenses incurred by an advocate.

## **Prosecution of Advocates**

Under Section 9 of the Bill, advocates themselves can be prosecuted if a report of cognizable offense is received from their client or opposing client against an act done by the advocate during the discharge of their professional duties. The complaint may be registered only after an inquiry has been conducted by a police officer not below the rank of Deputy Superintendent of Police within seven days.

## **YUVIKA**

The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) has initiated the Yuva Vignani Karyakram (YUVIKA) program to encourage students to pursue careers in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) and develop a passion for space science. Through this program, ISRO aims to identify and nurture talented students who have a keen interest in science and technology and inspire them to become future space scientists. Applications have been opened for this programme recently.

The YUVIKA program is open to students in the 9th standard (or equivalent) from all over India. The program selects three students from each state/union territory, and they are invited to participate in a two-week residential training program at various ISRO centers across the country. The program aims to provide an opportunity for young children to explore the wonders of space science, space applications, and space technology.

## **The Curriculum of YUVIKA Program**

The YUVIKA program offers a comprehensive curriculum that covers a wide range of topics related to space science, space applications, and space technology. The program includes lectures, interactive sessions, and hands-on training on various aspects of space science. The curriculum is designed to enhance the knowledge and skills of students and inspire them to pursue careers in the space sector.

## **Creating Awareness Among Students**

One of the key objectives of the YUVIKA program is to create awareness among young children about the emerging trends in space science and technology. The program provides a platform for students to interact with experts in the field of space science and technology and gain insights into the latest developments and advancements in the field. This helps students to stay updated with the latest trends in the space sector and prepare for the future challenges.

## **Developing Problem-Solving Skills**

The YUVIKA program is designed to help students develop a sense of curiosity, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills. The program encourages students to think out of the box and come up with innovative solutions to real-world problems. This approach not only enhances their scientific temperament but also prepares them for the challenges of the future.

## **Civil-20 India 2023 Inception Conference**

The Civil-20 India 2023 Inception Conference kicked off its first plenary session in Nagpur, Maharashtra, with the theme of "Balancing Development with Environment". The session covered four working groups of C20 India 2023, including Integrated Holistic Health, Sustainable and Resilient Communities, LiFE, and Revival of Rivers and Water Management. The session was chaired by former Chief Information Commissioner Satyananda Mishra and included speakers from various fields who addressed the pressing need for a sustainable and environment-centric approach to development.

The speakers highlighted the interdependence of humans on their surroundings and nature, emphasizing that we are not separate from nature but a part of it. They discussed how climate change and other environmental challenges have far-reaching impacts on human health and well-being, particularly for vulnerable communities. To address these





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challenges, they emphasized the need for an integrated and holistic approach to health that includes mental, physical, and environmental health.

## **Sustainable and Resilient Communities**

The working group on Sustainable and Resilient Communities addressed the urgent need for sustainable development that balances economic growth with environmental protection. They discussed the importance of community-driven solutions that take into account local knowledge and practices, as well as the need for partnerships between government, civil society, and the private sector.

## **LiFE: Livelihoods, Forests, and Environment**

The LiFE working group emphasized the need to protect forests and biodiversity, which are critical for sustaining livelihoods and ensuring food security. They discussed the importance of integrating environmental considerations into policies and programs related to agriculture, forestry, and other sectors.

## **Revival of Rivers and Water Management**

The working group on Revival of Rivers and Water Management discussed the need for an integrated approach to water management that takes into account the needs of all stakeholders, including farmers, urban residents, and industries. They emphasized the importance of sustainable water use, conservation, and management practices to ensure water security for all.

## **Call to Focus on Environment-Centric Lifestyle**

The session concluded with a call to focus on an environment-centric lifestyle that prioritizes conservation and sustainable use of natural resources. The speakers urged the need for individual and collective action to address the challenges of climate change, pollution, and environmental degradation. They emphasized that a sustainable and resilient future is only possible if the priority is given to the environmental considerations in all aspects of development.

## **Utility Bidder's Deforestation Report**

The Deforestation Report by Utility Bidder has revealed that India has seen the highest surge in deforestation in the past 30 years. The country lost 384,000 hectares (ha) of forests between 1990 and 2000, but the figure rose to 668,400 ha between 2015 and 2020. This trend makes India the second-largest country with deforestation after Brazil. The report analyzed the deforestation trends of 98 countries using data aggregator Our World In Data's figures from 1990 to 2000 and 2015 to 2020. Here are some key points from the report.

Logging is the Third Highest Factor Responsible for Deforestation

India Compensates for Increase in Population at the Cost of Deforestation

Brazil Loses Forests Due to Climate Change

Cattle Rearing and Oil Seed Cultivation Responsible for Most Deforestation

The report highlights that cattle rearing and oil seed cultivation are the leading causes of global deforestation. Cattle rearing alone causes an annual loss of 2,105,753 ha of forests, followed by the cultivation of oil seeds causing a loss of 950,609 ha.

Palm Oil Cultivation Leads to Deforestation in Indonesia

Indonesia witnessed a significant loss of forests due to palm oil cultivation, leading to the destruction of 650,000 ha of forests. It ranks third globally in terms of deforestation.





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## Soybean Cultivation is Another Driver of Deforestation

While palm oil has been a big driver of deforestation for many years, soybean cultivation is also responsible for significant deforestation globally. The report states that many ha of grassland and forests have been destroyed to make room for soybean cultivation.

## Logging is the Third Highest Factor Responsible for Deforestation

Logging is the third highest factor responsible for deforestation, causing around 678,744 ha of annual deforestation globally.

## India Compensates for Increase in Population at the Cost of Deforestation

The report suggests that India has had to compensate for the increase in residents due to its status as the country with the second-largest population in the world. This has come at the cost of deforestation, making it the country with the largest increase in deforestation from 1990 to 2020, with a difference of 284,400 ha in forestry loss.

## Brazil Loses Forests Due to Climate Change

Brazil ranks first globally in terms of deforestation, having lost 1,695,700 ha of forests between 2015 and 2020. However, this is much lower than the 4,254,800 ha it lost between 1990 and 2000. Most of the forests were lost due to climate change.

## Global Conference on Digital Health – ‘Taking Universal Health Coverage to the Last Citizen’

India’s Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, in partnership with the World Health Organization South-East Asia Regional Office, is organizing a Global Conference on Digital Health in New Delhi on March 20 and 21, 2023. With the theme “Taking Universal Health Coverage to the Last Citizen,” the conference focused on exploring the potential of digital health solutions to improve healthcare delivery and achieve universal health coverage targets.

In his virtual address to the conference, Dr. Mansukh Mandaviya, India’s Union Minister for Health and Family Welfare, emphasized the critical role of digital health in revolutionizing healthcare systems. The conference was attended by global health experts, policymakers, and leaders from the public and private sectors.

## Building Consensus on Digital Public Goods

India aims to launch a global initiative on digital health as an institutional framework to build consensus on the promotion of digital public goods as a key enabler in achieving universal health coverage targets. The initiative will focus on leveraging digital technologies to strengthen health systems, increase access to quality health services, and reduce health inequities.

Digital health solutions, such as telemedicine, health information systems, and mHealth, have the potential to bridge gaps in healthcare delivery and improve health outcomes. By leveraging these technologies, healthcare providers can reach more patients, even in remote and underserved areas, and provide them with timely and cost-effective care.

## Improving Healthcare Access and Quality

Digital health solutions can also improve healthcare access and quality by enabling remote consultations and monitoring. Patients can consult with healthcare providers from the comfort of their homes, reducing the need for travel and minimizing the risk of exposure to infectious diseases.

Remote monitoring technologies, such as wearables and sensors, can provide healthcare providers with real-time data on patients’ health status, enabling early detection and intervention for chronic conditions. This can lead to better health outcomes and reduced healthcare costs.







## Strengthening Health Systems

Digital health solutions can also strengthen health systems by improving data collection and analysis. Digital health information systems can capture patient data in real-time, enabling healthcare providers to make informed decisions and track progress towards health targets.

Moreover, digital solutions can enable the sharing of health data across different healthcare providers and systems, improving care coordination and continuity of care. This can be particularly beneficial for patients with complex health needs who require care from multiple providers.

## Burundi: First Polio Outbreak in 30 Years

Burundi, a landlocked east-African country, has declared its first polio outbreak in 30 years. The outbreak was confirmed after a four-year-old child in the Isale district of western Burundi, along with two other children he was in contact with, were diagnosed with vaccine-linked polio. Additionally, poliovirus type 2 was detected in five samples from environmental surveillance of wastewater from the region.

Low immunity and prevalence of poliovirus type 2 in Africa

Burundian government's response

Safety and efficacy concerns of the oral polio vaccine

The need for timely action in protecting children

Vaccine-derived polio outbreak in Democratic Republic of Congo

## Poliovirus type 2: a weakened strain of the virus contained in the oral polio vaccine

Poliovirus type 2 is a weakened strain of the virus contained in the oral polio vaccine. The virus can circulate among under-immunised populations for a long time, leading to vaccine-linked infections. The WHO has noted that the type 2 infection can cause acute flaccid paralysis in children, which is characterized by the acute onset of weakness or paralysis with reduced muscle tone.

## Low immunity and prevalence of poliovirus type 2 in Africa

Burundi's last vaccination drive against polio was in 2016, and the country's immunity against the virus is considered to be very low. The WHO has also reported that circulating poliovirus type 2 is the most prevalent form of polio in Africa, with more than 400 cases reported in 14 countries in 2022.

## Burundian government's response

The Burundian government is planning a polio vaccine campaign in the coming weeks for children up to 7 years of age, and is also collecting more samples and considering the idea of opening more environmental surveillance sites for stronger monitoring.

## Safety and efficacy concerns of the oral polio vaccine

While the four-dose vaccine is the best protection against polio, the oral vaccine can cause the disease in about two to four children per 2 million doses. In recent years, the oral polio vaccine has caused more cases of polio than the wild polio virus, leading to concerns about the safety and efficacy of the vaccine.

## The need for timely action in protecting children

There is no treatment for polio, which mostly affects children under the age of five. The WHO has lauded the Burundian government for its effective disease surveillance, and stressed that timely action is critical in protecting children through effective vaccination.





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## **Vaccine-derived polio outbreak in Democratic Republic of Congo**

In addition to Burundi, the vaccine-linked polio virus has also been found in six children in the Democratic Republic of Congo's eastern Tanganyika and South Kivu provinces. The global spread of vaccine-derived polio is still considered a high risk by the WHO, and the organization has emphasized the need for continued efforts to eradicate the disease.

## **World Sparrow Day –**

On March 20, 2023, the world once again came together to celebrate World Sparrow Day. This special day is dedicated to raising awareness about the conservation and protection of sparrows and other common birds whose populations have been declining globally. With the theme "I Love Sparrows," the goal of World Sparrow Day 2023 is to encourage more people to appreciate the relationship between humans and sparrows.

The idea for World Sparrow Day was born out of a casual conversation over tea at the Nature Forever Society's office. The first commemoration of the day occurred in 2010, and it has been celebrated annually since then. The founder of The Nature Forever Society, Mohammed Dilawar, was named a conservation hero by TIME Magazine for his efforts to raise awareness about sparrows.

The goal of World Sparrow Day is to promote conservation efforts for the house sparrow and other common birds, as well as to commemorate the beauty of common biodiversity that we often take for granted.

## **Significance of World Sparrow Day**

Sparrows are known to be an indicator of a region's environmental health, and their declining populations are a cause for concern. The day is celebrated in a variety of ways around the world, including bird-watching, building birdhouses, and educational programs.

World Sparrow Day is a celebration of the human-sparrow relationship and a call to action to protect these beloved birds and their habitats. Sparrows have been human companions for thousands of years, but their populations have been rapidly declining in recent years. The goal of the day is to raise awareness of their plight and inspire people and organizations around the world to take action to protect them.

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