

### Jaishankar Opens Indian Embassy's New Chancery in Italy

#### Key Points:

External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar inaugurated the new Chancery of the Indian Embassy in Rome, emphasizing the deep historical ties between India and Italy. He highlighted the maritime connections and the shared commitments to global issues such as freedom of navigation and maritime security. External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar inaugurated the new Chancery of the Indian Embassy in Rome, emphasizing the deep historical ties between India and Italy. He highlighted the maritime connections and the shared commitments to global issues such as freedom of navigation and maritime security.

- ❖ The inauguration reflects the expanding partnership between the two nations and aims to strengthen services for the Indian diaspora.

### Gujarat's Gharchola Handicraft Gets GI Recognition

- ❖ Gujarat's iconic handicraft, 'Gharchola,' has been awarded the Geographical Indication (GI) tag by the Union government, taking the state's total GI tags to 27, with 23 dedicated to handicrafts.
- ❖ This recognition highlights the rich cultural heritage and exquisite craftsmanship of Gujarat's artisans. Presented during the "GI and Beyond – Virasat Se Vikas Tak" program in New Delhi, the accolade underscores the state's commitment to preserving and promoting its artistic traditions. Gujarat's iconic handicraft, 'Gharchola,' has been awarded the Geographical Indication (GI) tag by the Union government, taking the state's total GI tags to 27, with 23 dedicated to handicrafts.

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### World's AIDS Day 2024

World AIDS Day 2024 is a globally observed day dedicated to raising awareness about HIV/AIDS. It is celebrated to show support for those living with the virus and commemorate individuals who have died due to AIDS-related illnesses. Established by the World Health Organization (WHO) in 1988, this day serves as a crucial reminder to unite against the stigma associated with HIV/AIDS and advocate for prevention, treatment, and support.

- ❖ The theme for World AIDS Day 2024 is "Take the Rights Path: My Health, My Right!". This theme emphasizes the importance of health as a fundamental human right and calls for global solidarity, awareness, and action against HIV/AIDS. It encourages communities to advocate for the rights of people living with or affected by HIV, ensuring access to healthcare and reducing stigma and discrimination.

#### What is AIDS?

AIDS (Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome) is the final stage of HIV infection, characterized by a severely weakened immune system, making the body vulnerable to life-threatening infections and cancers.

#### What is HIV Full Form?

HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Virus) is the virus that causes AIDS by attacking the immune system, specifically the CD4 cells (T cells), which are critical for fighting infections.

## Difference Between HIV and AIDS

Understanding the distinction between HIV and AIDS is crucial in addressing the challenges associated with these conditions. Below is a detailed comparison of differences between HIV and AIDS:

HIV	AIDS
HIV is the virus that infects the immune system.	AIDS is the advanced stage of HIV infection.
It can be controlled with antiretroviral therapy (ART).	AIDS occurs when HIV severely damages the immune system.
Not everyone with HIV develops AIDS.	AIDS is a condition that arises due to prolonged untreated HIV.

HIV/AIDS Cases in India India, home to the world's third-largest HIV epidemic, has made significant progress in controlling the disease. Here are some key statistics:

- ❖ HIV cases in India: Approximately 2.4 million people are living with HIV. •State with the highest HIV cases: Mizoram has the highest prevalence of HIV in India, followed by Manipur and Nagaland.
- ❖ According to the UNAIDS Global AIDS Update, India has seen a significant reduction in new HIV infections and AIDS-related deaths in recent years due to targeted interventions.
- ❖ New infections: In 2021, India had an estimated 62.97 thousand new infections, a 46.3% decline from 2010.
- ❖ AIDS-related deaths: In 2021, India had an estimated 41.97 thousand AIDS-related deaths, a 76.5% decline from 2010.
- ❖ States with the highest decline in new infections: The top three states with the highest decline in new infections from 2010–2021 are Himachal Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, and Telangana.

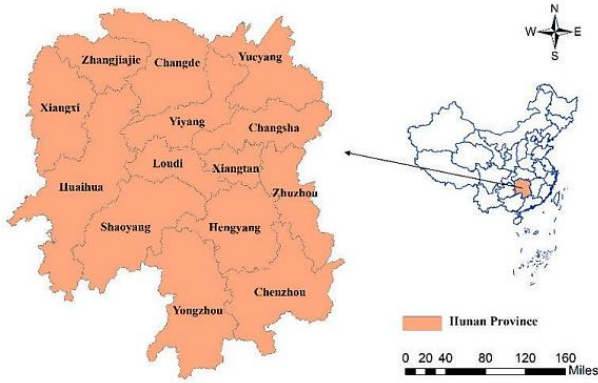
HIV/AIDS Control Programme in India India has implemented robust policies under the National AIDS Control Organisation (NACO) to combat HIV/AIDS:

- ❖ National AIDS Control Programme (NACP): This aims to reduce new infections, ensure safe blood transfusion practices, and provide free antiretroviral therapy (ART).
- ❖ Awareness Campaigns: Nationwide initiatives to educate people about HIV prevention, testing, and treatment.
- ❖ Targeted Interventions: Focus on high-risk groups, including sex workers, injecting drug users, and transgender individuals.
- ❖ HIV Counselling and Testing Services (HCTS): Established to promote early detection and prevent mother-to-child transmission of HIV.
- ❖ HIV and AIDS (Prevention and Control) Act, 2017: It is a law that aims to protect the rights of individuals living with HIV by prohibiting discrimination in employment, healthcare, and education.

## World's largest gold reserve worth \$83 billion discovered in China

A significant discovery of gold has been made in central China, with estimates suggesting a deposit of approximately 1,000 metric tons of highquality ore.

- ❖ This find, reported by Chinese state media, is valued at around US\$83 billion, potentially making it the largest gold reserve ever uncovered, surpassing the South Deep mine in South Africa, which holds about 900 metric tons.
- ❖ The Geological Bureau of Hunan Province announced that the deposit is located in Pingjiang County, where geologists have identified 40 gold veins at depths of up to 2 kilometers.



The Geological Bureau of Hunan Province announced the detection of over 40 gold veins at depths of up to 2,000 metres.

- ❖ These veins account for 300 tonnes of the gold reserve, with some areas of ore yielding as much as 138 grams of gold per tonne. Advanced geological exploration suggests that reserves could extend deeper, reaching over 3,000 metres and pushing the total reserve to more than 1,000 tonnes.
- ❖ Geologists utilised cutting-edge techniques such as 3D geological modelling to identify and estimate these reserves. Liu Yongjun, vice head of the bureau, highlighted that this approach not only facilitated accurate measurements but also uncovered additional gold deposits in the surrounding areas, signalling the potential for even larger discoveries.

As the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) manages India's gold reserves, the report of the World Gold Council highlighted that the RBI has been adding to its gold reserves every month this year, with year-to-date net purchases totalling 37 tonnes, surpassing its annual net purchases in both 2022 (33 tonnes) and 2023 (16 tonnes).

Rank	Country	Gold Reserves (in Tonnes)	Holdings (%)
1	United States of America	8,133.46	72.41%

2	Germany	3,351.53	71.46%
3	Italy	2,451.84	68.33%
4	France	2,436.97	69.99%
5	Russian Federation	2,335.85	29.47%
6	China	2,264.32	4.91%
7	Japan	845.97	5.15%
8	India	840.76	9.57%
9	Netherlands	612.45	61.61%
10	Turkey	584.93	0%

As the world's leading gold producer, accounting for 10 per cent of global output in 2023, China's domestic gold production was 268 tonnes, while consumption reached 742 tonnes in the first three quarters.

- ❖ This discovery will bolster domestic supply and reduce reliance on imports to meet growing demand.
- ❖ The Hunan Provincial Geological Institute described the find as "significant in safeguarding the country's resource security."
- ❖ Gold mining in the Wangu goldfield has received substantial investment, with more than 100 million yuan (around \$13 million) allocated for mineral exploration since 2020.
- ❖ The find is expected to strengthen China's position in the global gold market, especially as gold prices rally amid geopolitical tensions.

### 13th Edition of India -Singapore Agni Warrior Military Exercise ends

The Indian and Singaporean Army concluded their joint military exercise code-named 'Agni Warrior' on 30th November 2024.



- ❖ Field Firing Ranges, Devlali (Maharashtra), hosted the 13th edition of the Agni Warrior exercise between the armies of the two countries from 28 to 30 November 2024. The 12th edition was also held at the Field Firing Ranges, Devlali (Maharashtra), in November 2022.



This was the third bilateral exercise between the two countries in October and November 2024. In October, the 12th edition of the IndiaSingapore Joint Military Training exercise was held at the Kalaikunda Air Force Station in West Bengal, and the 31st edition of the Singapore-Indian Maritime Bilateral Exercise (SIMBEX) was held at Visakhapatnam.

#### Participants of the 13 edition of Agni Warrior

Both countries' artillery regiments participated in the Agni Warrior exercise. The Indian Army's 114 personnel from the Artillery Regiment and 182 from the Singapore Artillery participated in the exercise. The Director General of Artillery, Lieutenant General Adosh Kumar, and the Commandant of the School of Artillery of the Indian Army, Lieutenant General NS Sarna, Colonel Ong Chiou Perng, Chief Artillery Officer of the Singapore Armed Forces, witnessed the closing ceremony of the 13th edition of the Agni Warrior.

#### Outcome of the Agni Warrior Exercise

To maximise mutual understanding of drills and procedures so that they can efficiently perform in a multinational force deployed under the United Nations charter.

The exercise showcased the joint firepower planning, execution, and use of NewGeneration Equipment by the Artillery of both the Armies.

The Exercise involved extensive joint preparation, coordination, an understanding of each other's capabilities and procedures, and the evolution of a common interface between Indian and Singapore Artillery procedures.

- ❖ Extensive use of niche technologies during the exercise and exchange of best practices between the two forces.

#### India's GDP growth slows to seven-quarter low of 5.4% in July-September

The Indian real gross domestic product (GDP) growth rate dipped to 5.4 % in the July-September quarter of 2024 compared to the 2023 July-September quarter growth rate of 8.1 %. The mining and quarrying sector was the only sector which recorded a negative growth of 0.1 %. The Indian economy's second-quarter growth rate was lower than the Reserve Bank of India's forecast of 7 per cent.



India's real GDP growth rate was estimated at 6.0% in the first six months (AprilSeptember) of 2024, compared to 8.2 % in the first six months of the previous 2023-24 financial year. The National Statistics Office (NSO), Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI) released the latest data on 29 November 2024.

### **\$98 million ADB loan for Govts Building India's Clean Plant Programme**

The Manila-based Asian Development Bank (ADB) will provide a \$98 million loan to the government of India to support its Building India's Clean Plant Programme. The Indian government's Clean Plant Programme aims to improve horticulture crop farmers' access to certified disease-free planting materials across India. The Government of India and the ADB representative in India signed an agreement for this purpose on 29 November 2024 in New Delhi.

This initiative is expected to improve the long-term yields, quality, and climate resilience of horticulture crops in India. This will improve farmers' incomes and boost the horticulture sector in the country.

### **About the Building India's Clean Plant Programme**

The ADB loan will start the central government's Building India's Clean Plant Programme. The Union Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare will implement the Building India's Clean Plant Programme through the National Horticulture Board and the Indian Council of Agricultural Research. The Programme aims to enhance plant management in the country by providing horticulture farmers with access to certified disease-free planting materials.

### **'Toxic' Film bag Golden Peacock Award for Best Film at the 55th IFFI**

The 55th edition of the International Film Festival of India (IFFI) came to a close in Goa on 28 November 2024, with the Lithuanian film "Toxic" winning the Golden Peacock for Best Film. The 55th IFFI was held in Goa from 20-28th November 2024, in which India and foreign films were screened. The Director of the 55th IFFI was noted filmmaker Shekhar Kapur.

### **Organiser of the 55th IFFI**

The 55th International Film Festival of India was organised by the National Film Development Corporation (NFDC), Union Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, and Entertainment Society of Goa, Government of Goa. Since 2002, Goa has been the permanent venue of the annual IFFI.

### **Who inaugurated the 55th IFFI?**

The 55th International Film Festival of India was organised by the National Film Development Corporation (NFDC), Union Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, and Entertainment Society of Goa, Government of Goa. Since 2002, Goa has been the permanent venue of the annual IFFI.

The 55th IFFI was inaugurated by the Goa chief minister, Pramod Sawant, on 20 November 2024. He was also the chief guest at the closing ceremony of the IFFI.

### **Theme of the 55th IFFI**

The theme of the 55th IFFI was 'Young Filmmakers: The Future is Now.'

### **Opening and closing film of the IFFI**

Opening Film of the 55th IFFI - 'Better Man' by Michael Gracey of Australia.. Closing film- "Dry Season"- Directed by Bohdan Sláma of the Czech Republic.

### **Award Winners of the 55th IFFI**

Following is the list of the award winners at the 55th IFFI.

### **Satyajit Ray Lifetime Achievement Award**

Australian director Phillip Noyce for his contributions to the cinema.

- ❖ Noyce is known for his suspenseful and culturally resonant films, such as Patriot Games, Clear and Present Danger, and Salt.
- ❖ Previous recipients include film legends like Martin Scorsese and Bernardo Bertolucci.

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### Indian Film Personality of the Year

Actor Vikrant Massey in recognition of Massey's extraordinary contributions to Indian cinema.

- ❖ Golden Peacock for Best Feature Film
- ❖ Toxic (Lithuania)- directed by Saulė Bliuvaitė.
- ❖ She was honoured with a certificate and a cash prize of Rs 15 lakhs.

### Silver Peacock for Best Feature Film

- ❖ The New Year That Never Came (Romania) -Directed by Bogdan Muresanu.
- ❖ He was honoured with a certificate and a cash prize of Rs 10 lakhs.

### Silver Peacock Award for Best Actor (Male)

- ❖ Clément Faveau (France) for his performance in the French Film Holy Cow.
- ❖ He was honoured with a certificate and a cash prize of Rs 10 lakhs

### Silver Peacock for Best Actor (Female)

- ❖ Two actresses, Vesta Matulytė and Ieva Rupeikaitė (both of Lithuania), received the award for the film Toxic.
- ❖ They received a certificate and a cash prize of Rs 10 lakhs, which was split between them.

### Special Jury Award

- ❖ Louise Courvoisier (France) for the film 'Holy Cow.'
- ❖ She was honoured with a certificate and a cash prize of Rs 15 lakhs.

### Best Debut Feature Film of a Director

- ❖ Sarah Friedland (United States) - Film, Familiar Touch.
- ❖ She was honoured with a certificate and a cash prize of Rs 10 lakhs prize.

### First Best Debut Director of Indian Feature Film

- ❖ This award was introduced for the first time at the 55th IFFI.
- ❖ Navjyot Bandiwadkar- Director of the Marathi Film Gharat Ganpati.

### ICFT-UNESCO Gandhi Medal

The award is given to a film which promotes peace, tolerance, and dialogue.

Crossing- Directed by Levan Akin of Sweden

### Best Web Series (OTT) Award

'Lampan' (on Sony Liv)-Directed by Nipun Dharmadhikari.

### Government of India to host 1st Ashtalakshmi Mahotsav in New Delhi

As part of the central government's vision to make the North Eastern region the development engine of the country, the government of India has decided to hold an Asthalakshmi Mahotsav in New Delhi from 6-8 December 2024.

- ❖ This was announced by the Union Minister for Development of North Eastern Region, Jyotiraditya Scindia, in New Delhi on 29 November 2024. The Mahotsav will focus on the eight North Eastern States of India.
- ❖ The eight state governments of North Eastern States will support and participate in the inaugural Asthalakshmi Mahotsav.

### Who will inaugurate the Asthalakshmi Mahotsav?

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will inaugurate the Asthalakshmi Mahotsav on 6 December 2024. The Chief Minister of all the eight North Eastern States will also be present and a commemorative postal stamp will be released during the inauguration ceremony.

### Mascot of the Asthalakshmi Mahotsav

The Union Minister, Jyotiraditya Scindia, also released the mascot for the upcoming Asthalakshmi Mahotsav- Purvi. The mascot is a girl, and she is wearing attire that represents the elements of the eight states of the North East.

### About the Asthalakshmi Mahotsav

According to Jyotiraditya Scindia, the name Asthalakshmi is named after the eight avatars of Goddess Lakshmi, symbolising prosperity, wealth, knowledge, dharma, agriculture, and other features.

- ❖ The Mahotsav aims to bridge the cultural and economic gap between Northeast India and the rest of the nation.
- ❖ The Mahotsav will showcase the cultural richness and diversity of the region.
- ❖ The event will host cultural events, live demonstrations of artisanal crafts, technical sessions, buyer-seller meetings, and an investment roundtable.
- ❖ It will also host a Rural Haat Bazaar, showcasing art and produce from 320 farmers and artisans from the North-East.

### North Eastern Region

The North East refers to the eight states of - Assam, Sikkim, Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Mizoram, Nagaland, Arunachal Pradesh and Tripura.

- ❖ Earlier, the North-Eastern Region comprised seven states, which were called the Seven Sisters. Sikkim was made a member of the North Eastern Council in 2002, and the word Seven Sister was dropped to mention the states of the North-Eastern States.

### Capital of these states

- ❖ Assam- Dispur
- ❖ Arunachal Pradesh- Itanagar
- ❖ Sikkim-Gangtok
- ❖ Manipur-Imphal
- ❖ Mizoram-Aizawl
- ❖ Meghalaya- Shillong
- ❖ Nagaland-Kohima
- ❖ Tripura-Itanagar

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