

22 January 2025

Sanjiv Ranjan Appointed as Secretary General of Indian Ocean Rim Association

Key Points:

- ❖ Shri Sanjiv Ranjan, a senior Indian diplomat, has been appointed as the new Secretary General of the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA).
- ❖ He brings over 30 years of diplomatic experience, having served in key international roles. On December 30, 2024, the Ministry of External Affairs announced the appointment of Shri Sanjiv Ranjan as the next Secretary General of the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA).
- ❖ A seasoned diplomat from the 1993 batch of the Indian Foreign Service, Shri Ranjan is set to assume his new role shortly.



About the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA)

- ❖ IORA is a regional organization comprising 23 member states, including India, Australia, Indonesia, and South Africa.
- ❖ The association aims to promote economic cooperation, sustainable development, and regional security among Indian Ocean bordering countries. It also has 12 dialogue partners, such as China, the European Union, and the United States. In 2015, IORA was granted observer status at both the United Nations General Assembly and the African Union, underscoring its growing influence in both regional and international affairs.



Shri Sanjiv Ranjan's Diplomatic Career

- ❖ Shri Ranjan has a distinguished career in diplomacy, with over three decades of experience in international relations and cooperation. He holds a B.A. (Honours) in Economics from Delhi University and an M.A. in International Relations from Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi. He joined the Indian Foreign Service in 1993 and has since held various diplomatic positions, including:
 - ❖ Embassies in Madrid and Lima: Served from 1995 to 2009, contributing to strengthening bilateral ties.
 - ❖ Permanent Mission of India in New York: Engaged in multilateral diplomacy.
 - ❖ Deputy High Commissioner of India to Mauritius (2006-2009): Enhanced regional cooperation.
 - ❖ Director (North) in the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) in 2009: Oversaw critical projects in India's neighborhood.
 - ❖ Joint Secretary in the Development Partnership Administration in 2012: Coordinated the third India-Africa Forum Summit held in New Delhi in 2015.
 - ❖ Ambassador to Argentina (2016-2019): Also accredited to Uruguay and Paraguay.
 - Ambassador to Colombia (2019-2022): Also accredited to Ecuador.
 - ❖ Officer on Special Duty (Secretary Rank) in the MEA: Oversaw personnel, establishment, and e-governance. Fluent in English, Hindi, and Spanish, Shri Ranjan is renowned for his diplomatic skills and commitment to fostering international partnerships.

IORA's Role and Significance

- ❖ IORA plays a pivotal role in promoting cooperation among Indian Ocean Rim Member States, Dialogue Partners, and other international stakeholders. The association focuses on key sectors such as trade, tourism, environmental sustainability, and fisheries, aiming to enhance regional collaboration and address common challenges.

ISKCON and Adani Group Collaborate to Serve Meals at Maha Kumbh Mela

Key Points:

- ❖ The ongoing Maha Kumbh Mela has witnessed a remarkable collaboration between the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON) and the Adani Group, which has significantly enhanced the food distribution services at the event.
- ❖ The ongoing Maha Kumbh Mela has witnessed a remarkable collaboration between the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON) and the Adani Group, which has significantly enhanced the food distribution services at the event.
- ❖ This partnership ensures that nearly one lakh people are provided with nutritious meals daily during the 45-day spiritual gathering.



ISKCON's Efforts in Providing Nourishment

- ❖ At the heart of this initiative, ISKCON has set up a large-scale kitchen at

Harshvardhan Marg, where food is prepared in large quantities to cater to the needs of pilgrims and visitors at the Mela.

- ❖ The kitchen is designed to serve meals in three sessions throughout the day, with each session feeding between 30,000 to 35,000 people. This totals to over one lakh meals per day, a feat made possible through the immense logistical support from the Adani Group.
- ❖ The meals provided by ISKCON are nutritionally balanced, consisting of dal, chole or rajma, various vegetables, roti, and rice, complemented by halwa or boondi laddu as sweets.
- ❖ The preparation of these meals is done with care, using traditional methods. The food is cooked over clay stoves, with wood and cow dung cakes as the fuel, which not only enhances the taste but also keeps the meals in alignment with the eco-friendly approach emphasized by the organizers.

Trump signs executive order withdrawing U.S. from the World Health Organization

Key Points:

- ❖ President Donald Trump, on his Inauguration Day, January 20, announced the start of the process of ending the US membership of the World Health Organisation (WHO). The government will review, rescind, and replace the 2024 US Global Health Security Strategy as soon as practicable.
- ❖ "World Health (Organisation) ripped us off," Trump, the 47th US President, said in front of reporters as he signed executive orders.
- ❖ He previously said that the US was paying more than China to fund the health body, and how WHO had mishandled the Covid-19 pandemic and other international health crises.

ଆମେରିକାର ନୂଆ ରାଷ୍ଟ୍ରପତି ଡୋନାଲ୍ଡ ଟ୍ରମ୍ପ ଏକ ବଡ଼ ନିଷ୍ପତ୍ତି ନେଇଛନ୍ତି। ବିଶ୍ୱର ପ୍ରମୁଖ ସ୍ୱାସ୍ଥ୍ୟ ସଂଗଠନ ବିଶ୍ୱ ସ୍ୱାସ୍ଥ୍ୟ ସଂଗଠନ (ଡବ୍ଲ୍ୟୁଏଚ୍)ରୁ ସେ ନିଜ ଦେଶକୁ ଅଲଗା କରିଛନ୍ତି । ଶପଥ ଗ୍ରହଣ କରିବାର ପ୍ରାୟ ୮ ଘଣ୍ଟା ପରେ ତାରି ହୋଇଥିବା ଏକ କାର୍ଯ୍ୟକାରୀ ନିବେଶନାମାରେ ଡୋନାଲ୍ଡ ଟ୍ରମ୍ପ ଆମେରିକା ପ୍ରତ୍ୟାହାର ପାଇଁ ଅନେକ କାରଣ ଦର୍ଶାଇଛନ୍ତି।

ସେ କହିଛନ୍ତି ଯେ ଡବ୍ଲ୍ୟୁଏଚ୍ କୋଭିଡ୍-୧୯ ମହାମାରୀର ସଠିକ୍ ମୁକାବିଲା କରିପାରିଲା ନାହିଁ। ଆବଶ୍ୟକ ସଂସ୍କାରକୁ ତୁରନ୍ତ ଗ୍ରହଣ କରିବାରେ ସଂଗଠନ ବିଫଳ ହୋଇଛି ବୋଲି ଟ୍ରମ୍ପ ଅଭିଯୋଗ କରିଛନ୍ତି। ଡବ୍ଲ୍ୟୁଏଚ୍ ତକାଇବା ପାଇଁ ଆମେରିକା ଅତ୍ୟଧିକ ଟଙ୍କା ଦେଉଥିବା ବେଳେ ତା'ର ଭଳି ଦେଶ କମ୍ ଟଙ୍କା ଦେଉଛନ୍ତି ବୋଲି ସେ କହିଛନ୍ତି।

ଜନସ୍ୱାସ୍ଥ୍ୟ ବିଶେଷଜ୍ଞମାନେ କହିଛନ୍ତି ଯେ ଡୋନାଲ୍ଡ ଟ୍ରମ୍ପ ଏହି ପଦକ୍ଷେପ ବିଶ୍ୱର ନେତା ଭାବରେ ଆମେରିକାର ଖ୍ୟାତିକୁ କ୍ଷୁଣ୍ଣ କରିବା ଏହାବ୍ୟତୀତ ପରବର୍ତ୍ତୀ ମହାମାରୀ ସହ ଲଢ଼ିବା ଆମେରିକା ପାଇଁ କଷ୍ଟକର ହୋଇପାରିବ। ତେବେ ଡୋନାଲ୍ଡ ଟ୍ରମ୍ପ ଏହି ପଦକ୍ଷେପ ଅପ୍ରତ୍ୟାଶିତ ନୁହେଁ। ଟ୍ରମ୍ପ ୨୦୨୦ରୁ ଡବ୍ଲ୍ୟୁଏଚ୍ ବିରୋଧରେ ସ୍ୱର ଉତ୍ତୋଳନ କରିଆସୁଛନ୍ତି। ଏହା ପୂର୍ବରୁ ସେ କରୋନା ଭାଇରସ୍ ମହାମାରୀ ବିରୋଧରେ ଏକେଡ୍ରିକ ଆଲିମ୍ପିକ୍ସ ଉପରେ ଆକ୍ରମଣ କରିଥିଲେ ଏବଂ ଆମେରିକାରୁ ପାଣି ବନ୍ଦ କରିବାକୁ ଧମକ ଦେଇଥିଲେ। **ଜୁଲାଇ ୨୦୨୦ରେ ଟ୍ରମ୍ପ ଏକେଡ୍ରିକ୍ ଓହରିଯିବା ପାଇଁ ଆନୁଷ୍ଠାନିକ ପଦକ୍ଷେପ ନେଇଥିଲେ। କିନ୍ତୁ ୨୦୨୦ ନିର୍ବାଚନ ହାରିବା କାରଣରୁ ଏହି ଧମକ ପୂରଣ ହୋଇପାରିନଥିଲା।**

ଆମେରିକାର ସଦସ୍ୟତା ସମାପ୍ତ କରିବାର ଏହି ଧାରଣା ଅପ୍ରତ୍ୟାଶିତ ନୁହେଁ, କାରଣ ଏହା ୨୦୨୦ରୁ ଆସିଛି ଏବଂ କୋଭିଡ୍-୧୯ ମହାମାରୀ ସମୟରେ ସେ ହୁକୁ ବାରମ୍ବାର ସମାଲୋଚନା କରିଥିଲେ। 'ଚୀନ୍ର ମାଲିକାନା ଓ ନିୟନ୍ତ୍ରଣ' ପାଇଁ ହୁ ମନ୍ତ୍ରର ଗତିରେ ଚୀନ୍ର ଇଶ୍ଟିମାତରେ କାର୍ଯ୍ୟ କରୁଛି ବୋଲି ଟ୍ରମ୍ପ କହିଥିଲେ।

୧୯୪୮ ମସିହାରୁ ସ୍ୱାସ୍ଥ୍ୟ ସଂଗଠନରେ ଆମେରିକାର ପ୍ରମୁଖ ଆର୍ଥିକ ଯୋଗଦାନ ରହିଥିବାରୁ ଏହି ନିଷ୍ପତ୍ତିର ପରିଣାମ ଗୁରୁତ୍ୱପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ। ହୁ'ର ମୋଟ ପାଞ୍ଜିରେ ଆମେରିକାର ଯୋଗଦାନ ପ୍ରାୟ ୧୮% ରହିଛି। ନିକଟରେ ୨୦୨୪-୨୦୨୫ ପାଇଁ ଏହାର ଦୁଇବର୍ଷିଆ ବଜେଟ୍ ୬.୮ ବିଲିୟନ ଡଲାର ଥିଲା।

ଆମେରିକାର ପ୍ରତ୍ୟାହାର ଯୋଗୁଁ ହୁ' କେବଳ ନିଜର ସବୁଠାରୁ ବଡ଼ ଦାତାଙ୍କୁ ହରାଇବ ନାହିଁ, ଆମେରିକୀୟମାନେ ବି ସ୍ୱାସ୍ଥ୍ୟ ଏକେଡ୍ରିକ୍ ଗୁରୁତ୍ୱପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ ସୂଚନାକୁ ବର୍ଜିତ ହେବେ। ଆମେରିକା ଏହି ସଂଗଠନରୁ ଓହରିଯିବାକୁ ଚାହୁଁଥିବା ଯୋଗଣା ପାଇଁ ବିଶ୍ୱ ସ୍ୱାସ୍ଥ୍ୟ ସଂଗଠନ ଦୁଃଖପ୍ରକାଶ କରିଛି।

ହୁ କହିଛି, ଆମେ ଆଶା କରୁଛୁ, ଆମେରିକା ନିଷ୍ପତ୍ତିର ପୁନର୍ବିଚାର କରିବ ଏବଂ ଆମେ ସମଗ୍ର ବିଶ୍ୱର କୋଟି କୋଟି ଲୋକଙ୍କ ସ୍ୱାସ୍ଥ୍ୟ ଓ କଲ୍ୟାଣ ପାଇଁ ତଥା ଆମେରିକା ଓ ହୁ ମଧ୍ୟରେ ଭାଗାଦାରି ବଜାୟ ରଖିବା ପାଇଁ ଉପଯୁକ୍ତ ଆଲୋଚନା କରିବାକୁ ଆଗ୍ରହୀ।

ହୁ' ବିଶ୍ୱ ସ୍ୱାସ୍ଥ୍ୟ ବିପଦ ଉପରେ ନଜର ରଖୁଥାଏ, ନୂତନ ଟିକା ଓ ଔଷଧର ଫର୍ମୁଲେସନ ଓ ଫଳପ୍ରସାର ମୁକାବଳ କରେ, ଉଦ୍‌ଯମାନ ସ୍ୱାସ୍ଥ୍ୟ ସଙ୍କଟ ଓ ଚାଲୁଥିବା ସମସ୍ୟାଗୁଡ଼ିକର ପ୍ରତିକ୍ରିୟାକୁ ସମନ୍ୱୟ କରେ ଏବଂ ଜରୁରିକାଳୀନ ପରିସ୍ଥିତିରେ ଦେଶଗୁଡ଼ିକୁ ବିଶେଷଜ୍ଞ ସହାୟତା ପ୍ରଦାନ କରେ।

ଟ୍ରମ୍ପଙ୍କ ପ୍ରଥମ ରାଷ୍ଟ୍ରପତି କାର୍ଯ୍ୟକାଳ ସମୟରେ ସେ ହୁକୁ ପାଣି ଯୋଗାଣ ବନ୍ଦ କରିଦେଇଥିଲେ। ତେବେ ତା'ର ବାଲଭେନ୍ ରାଷ୍ଟ୍ରପତି ଭାବେ ଦାୟିତ୍ୱ ଗ୍ରହଣ କରିବା ପରେ ଏହି ଆଦେଶକୁ ବଦଳାଇ ଦେଇଥିଲେ।

World Health Organization (WHO)

Key Points:

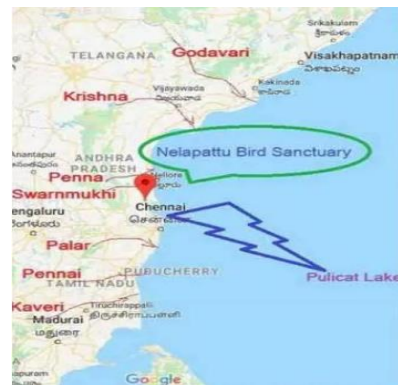
- ❖ The United Nations' specialized agency for Health was founded in 1948. Its Headquarters are situated in Geneva, Switzerland. There are 194 Member States, 150 country offices, six regional offices.
- ❖ It is an inter-governmental organization and works in collaboration with its member states usually through the Ministries of Health.
- ❖ The WHO provides leadership on global health matters, shaping the health research agenda, setting norms and standards, articulating evidence-based policy options, providing technical support to countries and monitoring and assessing health trends.

- ❖ It began functioning on April 7, 1948 – a date now being celebrated every year as World Health Day.

Flamingo Festival 2025 Concludes in Andhra Pradesh

Key Points:

- ❖ The three-day Flamingo Festival 2025 in Andhra Pradesh concluded on January 20, 2025, with calls to protect the rich biodiversity of the region, specifically in Pulicat Lake and Nelapattu Bird Sanctuary.
- ❖ The three-day Flamingo Festival 2025 in Andhra Pradesh concluded on January 20, 2025, with calls to protect the rich biodiversity of the region, specifically in Pulicat Lake and Nelapattu Bird Sanctuary.
- ❖ The event, which attracted numerous visitors, particularly bird watchers and photographers, was hailed as a major success. The closing ceremony saw the participation of Ministers Anam Ramanarayana Reddy and Anagani Satya Prasad, who expressed their gratitude to Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu for the revival of the festival, which had been dormant for some time.



- ❖ Flamingos or flamingoes are a type of wading bird in the family Phoenicopteridae, which is the only extant family in the order Phoenicopteriformes. There are four flamingo species distributed throughout the Americas (including the Caribbean), and two species native to Afro-Eurasia. A group of flamingoes is called a "flamboyance".



China Unveils World's Longest Tunnel, Enhances BRI Connectivity

Key Points:

- ❖ China has completed the Tianshan Shengli Tunnel, the world's longest expressway tunnel at 22.13 kilometers, enhancing connectivity between northern and southern Xinjiang.
- ❖ This project, part of the Urumqi-Yuli Expressway, reduces travel time across the Tianshan Mountains significantly.
- ❖ China has completed the construction of the Tianshan Shengli Tunnel, the world's longest expressway tunnel, marking a significant advancement in infrastructure development and enhancing connectivity within the Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region.



Government launches Entity Locker for Business Documents Management

Key Points:

- ❖ The Government of India has launched Entity Locker under its e-Governance project. The Entity Locker is a digital platform that is expected to transform the management and verification of business/organisation essential documents and promote the government's effort to create a digitally empowered and efficient business environment in the country.
- ❖ The Entity Locker platform ensures safe, efficient, and streamlined document management for businesses and institutions.



India to grow by 6.4% in FY25: FICCI

Key Points:

- ❖ FICCI forecasts India's GDP growth at 6.4 per cent for the financial year 2024-25. This marks a downward revision from the 7.0 per cent projection made in September 2024 and reflects a notable slowdown from the 8.2 per cent growth recorded in 2023-24. The agricultural sector, including allied activities, is expected to grow 3.6 per cent in 2024-25, according to FICCI Survey.



Updated GDP List

- ❖ FICCI – 6.4% (FY25)
- ❖ UN – 6.6% (CY25); 6.7% (CY26)
- ❖ SBI – 6.3% (FY25)

- ❖ NSO – 6.4% (FY25)
- ❖ RBI –6.6% (FY24)
- ❖ ADB – 6.5% (FY24), 7%(FY25)
- ❖ S&P – 6.8% (FY25), 6.9% (FY26)

Amazon to acquire Bengaluru based digital lending firm Axio

Key Points:

- ❖ E-commerce major Amazon has signed an agreement to acquire fintech lending start-up Axio, formerly Capital Float, valuing the buy-now-pay-later (NBPL) at around \$190-200 million. Axio has filed an application with the regulator (RBI) for a change in control to Amazon and is awaiting approval. Post approval, Amazon's proposed acquisition of axio would be completed. Amazon has acquired nine companies in India since 2016.
- ❖ Axio has assets under management of Rs 2,200 crore and 3 per cent gross non-performing assets (GNPA).
- ❖ It has served more than 10 million customers. In August last year, it raised \$20 million in equity funding from the Amazon Smbhav Venture Fund to expand credit products.



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Shriram Housing Finance is now "Truhome Finance"

Key Points:

- ❖ Shriram Housing Finance (SHF) has rebranded itself as Truhome Finance following its acquisition by Warburg Pincus and its coinvestors, including QIA (Qatar's sovereign wealth fund), from Shriram Finance.
- ❖ Last month, Shriram Finance had announced completion of the sale of its entire stake (84.44 per cent of the shareholding on a fully diluted basis) in its affordable housing finance subsidiary SHF to Warburg Pincus for a sale consideration of ₹3,929 crores. MD & CEO of Truhome Finance – Ravi Subramanian.



India tests micro missile system Bhargavastra to counter Swarm drone

Key Points:

- ❖ The indigenously developed micro missile system Bhargavastra was successfully tested at the Gopalpur Seaward firing range, Odisha. The micro missile system has been developed to counter the threat of swarm drone attacks. The Bhargavastra has been developed by Economic Explosives Ltd (EEL), a subsidiary of the Nagpur-based Solar Group. It has been designed and developed indigenously and is said to be an effective low-cost weapon system against swarm drone attacks.



World Employment and Social Outlook: 2025 Trends

Why In News

- ❖ The International Labour Organisation (ILO) released its "World Employment and Social Outlook (WESO): Trends 2025" report.
- ❖ The report highlights that the global unemployment rate remained at a historic low of 5% in 2024.
- ❖ It addresses challenges like slow economic recovery, geopolitical tensions, climate change, and social uncertainties affecting the labor market.

Key Highlights of the WESO Trends 2025 Report

Global Jobs Gap

- ❖ In 2024, the global jobs gap stood at 402 million, including:
 - ❖ 186 million unemployed individuals.
 - ❖ 137 million discouraged workers.
 - ❖ 79 million unable to work due to caregiving responsibilities.
- ❖ Although the gap has narrowed since the pandemic, it is expected to stabilize in the coming years.

Regional Disparities in Employment

- ❖ Sub-Saharan Africa:
 - ❖ Employment growth is largely in the informal sector, with workers lacking stability and social protection.
 - ❖ Approximately 62.6% of households live on less than USD 3.65 per day.
- ❖ Developing countries:

- ❖ Employment growth remains concentrated in vulnerable, low-paying, and informal jobs.

Labour Force Participation

- ❖ Increased participation in advanced economies, particularly among older workers and women.
- ❖ Declined participation in low-income nations, slowing global employment growth.

Youth Unemployment and NEET Statistics

- ❖ Youth unemployment reached 12.6% globally in 2024, with significant regional variations:
 - ❖ 16% in upper-middle-income countries.
 - ❖ 8% in low-income countries, often due to underemployment and informal work.
- ❖ Global NEET (Not in Education, Employment, or Training) population was 259.1 million, including:
 - ❖ 85.8 million young men (13.1%).
 - ❖ 173.3 million young women (28.2%).
 - ❖ NEET rates among young men in LICs rose 4% above pre-pandemic levels.

Economic Growth Trends

- ❖ Economic growth was recorded at:
 - ❖ 3.6% in 2022.
 - ❖ 3.3% in 2023.
 - ❖ 3.2% in 2024, with a similar forecast for 2025.
- ❖ A gradual deceleration is expected in the medium term.

Stagnant Wages Amid Shifting Labor Dynamics

- ❖ Real wage growth remains weak post-pandemic due to:
 - ❖ Low employment growth.
 - ❖ Shifts in labor market power favoring employers.

Debt Distress

- ❖ High interest rates and economic challenges have resulted in unsustainable public debt.

- ❖ Around 70 nations face debt distress, spending more on debt servicing than on essential services like health and education.
- ❖ Example: Africa's median public debt stands at 65% of GDP.

Green Transition and Digital Sector

- ❖ Renewable energy employment increased from 13.7 million in 2022 to 16.2 million in 2023, driven by investments in solar and hydrogen energy.
- ❖ 46% of these jobs are in China.
- ❖ Digital sector offers potential for job creation, but many nations lack infrastructure and skilled workforces to capitalize on it.

ILO Recommendations for Achieving Social Justice and SDGs by 2030

Youth Skill Development

- ❖ Provide quality education and training to equip youth with skills for modern labor markets and emerging industries like green energy and technology.

Structural Transformation

- ❖ Address structural bottlenecks by focusing on modern services and manufacturing to create quality jobs.
- ❖ Reduce regional disparities through investments in infrastructure, education, and skill development.

Leverage Remittances

- ❖ Channel remittances into productive investments rather than consumption, especially in LICs like Sub-Saharan Africa.
- ❖ Governments can create mechanisms to consolidate remittances into investment funds, boosting private sector growth and development.

International Collaboration

- ❖ Foster global cooperation to promote sustainable growth, inclusive fiscal policies, and monetary policies benefiting all workers.

38th National Games and Kalaripayattu

Kalaripayattu and its Significance

Current Context

- ❖ Kalaripayattu was included as a competitive sport in the 37th National Games (Goa).
- ❖ In the 38th National Games (Uttarakhand), it was relegated to a demonstration sport, which does not count toward the official medal tally.
- ❖ Kalaripayattu athletes won 22 medals, including 19 gold, during the 2023 National Games.

About Kalaripayattu

- ❖ One of the oldest and most scientific martial arts globally, originating in Kerala.
- ❖ Credited to the warrior sage Parasurama, who established the art.
- ❖ Introduced to China at the Shaolin Temple by Bodhidharma, a South Indian Buddhist monk, in the 5th century AD.

Philosophy and Techniques

- ❖ The term "Kalari" in Malayalam refers to a traditional gymnasium where "Payattu" (fight or exercise) is taught.
- ❖ Emphasizes mind-body coordination with techniques inspired by the attack and defense systems of eight animals: elephant, lion, boar, horse, snake, rooster, cat, and fish.

Types of Kalaripayattu

- ❖ **Northern Style:** Focuses on weapons and linear movements.
- ❖ **Southern Style:** Emphasizes multi-directional movements and uses fewer weapons.

Stages of Training

- ❖ **Maipayattu:** Body conditioning for combat.
- ❖ **Kolthari:** Training with wooden weapons like short and long sticks.
- ❖ **Angathari:** Training with sharp metal weapons to overcome fear.

- ❖ **Verumkai:** Bare-hand combat focusing on vital points for strategic strikes.
- ❖ **38th National Games and National Games 2025**

About National Games

- ❖ Olympic-style multi-sport event where athletes from states and Union Territories compete for medals.
- ❖ The 38th edition will be held in Uttarakhand from 28th January to 14th February 2025.

Competition Structure

- ❖ Features 32 sporting disciplines for competitive events.
- ❖ Four demonstration sports included: Kalaripayattu, Yogasana, Mallakhambh, and Rafting.

Theme and Mascot

- ❖ The mascot for the games is **Mouli**, inspired by Uttarakhand's state bird, the Monal, symbolizing the region's natural beauty and cultural diversity.
- ❖ Tagline: "**Sankalp Se Shikhar Tak**" (From resolution to zenith).

Concerns Regarding Kalaripayattu

- ❖ The Indian Kalaripayattu Federation criticized the Indian Olympics Association (IOA) for downgrading Kalaripayattu to a demonstration section.
- ❖ Demonstration events are meant for promotion and are excluded from the official medal tally.



Nigeria Becomes the 9th BRICS Partner Country

- ❖ **Nigeria's Admission to BRICS**

- ❖ Brazil, holding the BRICS presidency in 2025, announced Nigeria's inclusion as a **partner country** of the BRICS bloc.
- ❖ Nigeria joins other BRICS partner countries: Belarus, Bolivia, Cuba, Kazakhstan, Malaysia, Thailand, Uganda, and Uzbekistan.

Significance of Nigeria

- ❖ Nigeria has the **6th largest population globally** and is Africa's largest.
- ❖ It is the **4th largest economy in Africa** and is located on the Western coast of Africa.
- ❖ Often referred to as the "**Giant of Africa**" for its economic and geopolitical importance.

About BRICS Partner Status

- ❖ A **partner country** in BRICS refers to nations or organizations invited to summits, ministerial meetings, or joint ventures.
- ❖ These countries do not hold **membership status or formal decision-making power** within the bloc.

About BRICS

Formation and Evolution

- ❖ BRICS was formed in **2009** by Brazil, Russia, India, and China, with South Africa joining in **2010**.
- ❖ Originally established as a counterweight to **G7 countries**.

Expansion in 2023

- ❖ BRICS added **Iran, Egypt, Ethiopia, and the UAE** in 2023.
- ❖ **Saudi Arabia** has been invited to join, further expanding the bloc.

Future Membership

- ❖ **Indonesia** will officially join BRICS as the **10th member** in January 2025.
- ❖ **Turkey, Azerbaijan, and Malaysia** have formally applied for membership, showcasing the growing appeal of BRICS.

Mission SCOT

Overview of Mission SCOT

- ❖ The Prime Minister of India lauded Indian space startup **Digantara** for the success of Mission SCOT (Space Camera for Object Tracking).
- ❖ It is the **world's first commercial Space Situational Awareness (SSA)** satellite, launched aboard SpaceX's **Transporter-12 mission**.
- ❖ Mission SCOT tracks **Resident Space Objects (RSOs)** as small as **5 cm in Low Earth Orbit (LEO)**.
- ❖ The project is supported by **Aditya Birla Ventures** and the **Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI)**.

Space Situational Awareness (SSA)

- ❖ SSA involves the **tracking and characterization of space objects** and their orbits.
- ❖ It is crucial for monitoring space debris and ensuring the safety of satellites and other space assets.

Transporter-12 Mission

About the Mission

- ❖ Part of **SpaceX's rideshare program**, designed to provide cost-effective access to space for multiple customers in a single launch.

- ❖ Aimed at fostering collaboration and reducing launch costs for small satellites and commercial payloads.

India's Efforts in Space Situational Awareness

ISRO's Initiatives

- ❖ Conducts **proximity analyses** and **Collision Avoidance Manoeuvres (CAM)** to prevent satellite collisions.
- ❖ Released the **Indian Space Situational Assessment Report (ISSAR)** under the **ISRO System for Safe and Sustainable Operations Management (IS4OM)** for insights into the space environment.

Infrastructure Development

- ❖ India has a **Multi-Object Tracking Radar** at the Sriharikota range, though it has limited range.
- ❖ The **NETRA Project** (Network for Space Objects Tracking and Analysis) aims to establish a **Space Surveillance and Tracking (SST)** network with advanced radars and optical telescopes for enhanced threat analysis and protection of space assets.

