

### Architect of the Car Revolution in India Osamu Suzuki passes away

#### Key Points:

- ❖ Osamu Suzuki, founder and former chairman of the Japanese company Suzuki Motor Corporation has died in Japan. He was 94 years old and was suffering from lymphoma(a type of blood cancer). Osamu Suzuki was also the Director and honorary chairman of Maruti Suzuki India Limited.



- ❖ Osamu Suzuki who headed the Suzuki Motor Limited, for more than 40 years, transformed the company into a global automaker and brought affordable mobility to millions in India with the Maruti 800 car.
- ❖ He was instrumental in establishing the Maruti Suzuki company in India which revolutionised the car industry in the country.
- ❖ Osamu Suzuki invested in India when no foreign company was willing to invest in the country even the Japanese embassy in India was against the investment proposal. However, his success in India led to further Japanese investment in the country.

#### About Osamu Suzuki

- ❖ Osamu Suzuki was born on 30th January 1930 in Japan in a farmer's family. His marriage to the Suzuki family marked an important change in his career. The Suzuki family was in the automobile business. In 1978 he became the President of Suzuki Motor which had expertise in small cars and motorcycles.
- ❖ He expanded the company's business by forging ties with General Motors and Volkswagen to expand the company's

business in North America and Europe respectively. His most significant investment was in India where his company revolutionised the car Industry.

#### Maruti Suzuki and its Contribution

- ❖ Maruti Suzuki India Limited is a subsidiary company of the Suzuki Motor Corporation, Japan.
- ❖ The company was set up as Maruti Udyog Limited in February 1981 as a joint venture of the Government of India and Suzuki Motor Corporation, Japan.
- ❖ At present the government of India has no stake in the company and the Suzuki Motor Corporation, Japan has a 56.2 % stake in the company.

#### Contribution

- ❖ The Company introduced its iconic small car Maruti 800 in 1983 which changed the face of the passenger car industry in India. The company which started with the production of 20,000 cars per year in 1983 now produces over 20 lakh vehicles per year.
- ❖ Today India has emerged as one of the hubs of small cars in the world and a major exporter.
- ❖ Suzuki has two manufacturing facilities one in Haryana (Gurugram and Manesar) and one in Gujarat.
- ❖ India became the second country after Japan to cross cumulative production of 3 crore vehicles by the end of March 2024.
- ❖ It took Suzuki 55 years and 2 months to reach this production level while in Japan but in India, the company achieved this record in 40 years and 4 months.

#### Padma Bhushan Award for Osamu Suzuki

- ❖ The government of India conferred Osamu Suzuki with India's third-highest civilian award Padma Bhushan in 2007. He was conferred the award for his role in establishing a modern automobile sector in India and as an ambassador of India's Japanese relationship.

## ‘Dr. Sandip Shah’ Appointed new Chairperson of NABL-QCI

### Key Points:

- ❖ Government of India has appointed Dr Sandip Shah as the Chairperson of the National Accreditation Board for Testing and Calibration Laboratories (NABL). Dr Shah succeeds Prof. Subbanna Ayyappan who conceptualised and launched India's first Drivethrough COVID testing facility.
- ❖ The NABL is a constituent of the Quality Council of India (QCI) that works to improve the quality of testing and calibration services, ensuring trust in the products and services used by consumers, businesses, and regulators.



### About Dr Sandip Shah

- ❖ Dr Sandip Shah is a Gold Medalist in MD Pathology and Bacteriology from B.J. Medical College, Ahmedabad. He is an expert in pathology, transplant immunology and molecular biology.. He is the honorary Director at the Institute of Kidney Diseases and Research Center and is the Joint Managing Director at Neuberg Diagnostics.

### About Quality Council of India

- ❖ The Quality Council of India was set up in 1996 under the Union Ministry of Commerce.
- ❖ It is a joint venture of the government of India and the three premier Industry bodies Indian Industry represented by the three premier industry associations- FICCI (Federation of Indian Chambers of

Commerce and Industry); ASSOCHAM (Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industry of India); and CII (Confederation of Indian Industry).

- ❖ It is registered as a non profit organisation under the Societies Registration Act XXI of 1860.
- ❖ The nodal agency of the QCI is the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT), Union Ministry of Commerce & Industry.

### Functions

- ❖ To create a mechanism for independent third-party assessments of products, services, and processes,
- ❖ To propagate the adoption and adherence to quality standards in fields like education, healthcare, environment protection, governance, social sectors, infrastructure sector and others to improve the life and well being of the Indian citizens.
- ❖ Headquarters : New Delhi
- ❖ Chairperson : Jaxay Shah

### National Accreditation Board for Testing and Calibration Laboratories (NABL)

- ❖ The National Accreditation Board for Testing and Calibration Laboratories (NABL) is a one of the five constituents of the Quality Council of India.
- ❖ The NABL grants Accreditation (Recognition) of technical competence of a testing, calibration, medical laboratory, Proficiency Testing Provider and Reference Material Producer for a specific purpose as per international standards.
- ❖ NABL plays an important role in improving the global competitiveness of Indian industry and ensuring consumer safety.
- ❖ Headquarters : Gurugram, Haryana
- ❖ Chairpersons: Dr Sandip Shah

## Malayalam writer & Jnanpith awardee M.T. Vasudevan Nair passes away

### Key Points:

- ❖ One of the most respected figures in Malayalam literature and cinema Madath Thekkepat Vasudevan Nair or M T Vasudevan Nair passed away at a hospital in Kozhikode, Kerala. He was admitted to the hospital where he was undergoing treatment for heart failure.
- ❖ The Jnanpith awardee was 91 years old. The Kerala government declared a two-day state mourning as a mark of respect for MT Vasudevan Nair. He left behind a rich legacy in the fields of literature and film, with a career spanning more than seven decades.



### About M T Vasudevan Nair

- ❖ Madath Thekkepat Vasudevan Nair was born in a Nair family in Kudallur village, Palakkad district of Kerala in 1934.
- ❖ While in college he won the best story award in Malayalam at the World Short Story Competition, conducted by The New York Herald Tribune of the United States.
- ❖ After graduation, he joined the Mathrubhumi literary magazine and later became its editor, which he held till 1981.
- ❖ He also held the post of chairman of the Thunchan Memorial Trust and Research Centre and the president of the Kerala Sahitya Akademi.

### Career in Cinema and Literature

- ❖ In 1965 he wrote his first movie script Murappennu.

- ❖ In 1973 he directed his first film Nirmalyam, which won the national award for best feature film.
- ❖ During his long career, he directed seven films and wrote scripts for 45 films.
- ❖ As an author, his work dealt with the problems faced by matrilineal families which was undergoing a transformation in modern India. His novels Naalukettu, Asuravith, and Kaalam highlighted this struggle and transformation.
- ❖ Nair in Kerala follows a matrilineal kinship system.
- ❖ His notable works are Asuravithu, Kaalam, Randamoozham, and Naalukettu. Varanasi was his last novel which was published in 2002.

### Awards and Honours

- ❖ M T Vasudevan Nair won various national and state awards during his lifetime.
- ❖ Padma Bhushan- India's third highest civilian award Padma Bhushan was conferred on him by the government of India in 2005.
- ❖ Kerala Jyothi Award; Kerala government's highest award Kerala Jyothi Award in 2022.
- ❖ Jnanapith Award: India's highest literature prize Jnanpith in 1995
- ❖ Kendra Sahitya Akademi prize in 1969 for his novel Naalukettu.
- ❖ He also won National film awards.

## 18th India -Nepal Military exercise Surya Kiran to commence in Nepal

### Key Points:

- ❖ The 334-strong Indian Army contingent has departed to Nepal to participate in the 18th edition of the bilateral military exercise Surya Kiran.
- ❖ The exercise will be hosted by the Nepali Army in Saljhandi, Nepal from 31st December 2024 to 13th January 2025. The annual bilateral military exercise Surya Kiran is alternatively hosted by the Indian Army and the Nepali Army.

- ❖ The 17th edition of the Surya Kiran was held in Pithoragarh, Uttarakhand from 24th November to 07th December 2023.



### Participants of the 18th Surya Kiran Exercise

- ❖ The Surya Kiran military exercise is a battalion-level exercise. In the 18th edition of the military exercise, a 334-member contingent from the 11th Gorkha Rifles Regiment is participating.
- ❖ The 11th Gorkha Rifles was the first regiment of the Indian Army to be raised after Independence.
- ❖ The Srijung Battalion of the Nepali Army will participate in the military exercise.

### Aim and Feature of the Surya Kiran

- ❖ Like all bilateral military exercises, the aim of the Surya Kiran is two-fold- establishing a strong bond between the army personnel of both countries and sharpening their professional skills.
- ❖ To enhance their professional skills the Surya Kiran exercise will focus on conducting joint operations in jungle warfare, and counter-terrorism operations. They will also conduct joint Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) as per the mandate of the United Nations Charter.
- ❖ The exercise is expected to enhance the operational capabilities, and combat skills, and work together with other foreign forces in a tough and challenging military environment.

### India Nepal Defence Relations

- ❖ India and Nepal have close defence ties where the Gorkhas of Nepal are recruited into the Indian Army. Both countries follow

a tradition where the newly appointed Army chief is honoured with the Honorary Rank of General by the other country's President.

- ❖ Recently the Indian Chief of Army Staff (COAS), General Upendra Dwivedi, was conferred with the honorary rank of the General of the Nepali Army by the Nepali President Ramchandra Paudel, at a special ceremony in Kathmandu.
- ❖ Similarly, the Indian President Droupadi Murmu conferred the honorary rank of General of the Indian Army on General Ashok Raj Sigdel, Chief of the Army Staff, Nepali Army, at a special Ceremony in New Delhi in December 2024.

### Putin apologises over Azerbaijan plane crash, without saying Russia at fault

#### Key Points:

- ❖ Russia's President Vladimir Putin has apologised to the president of neighbouring Azerbaijan over the downing of a commercial airliner in Russian airspace, in which 38 people were killed - but stopped short of saying Russia was responsible.
- ❖ In his first comments on the Christmas Day crash, Putin said the "tragic incident" had occurred when Russian air defence systems were repelling Ukrainian drones. Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelensky said Russia must "stop spreading disinformation" about the strike.
- ❖ The plane is believed to have come under fire from Russian air defence as it tried to land in the Russian region of Chechnya - forcing it to divert across the Caspian Sea.





- ❖ The Azerbaijan Airlines jet then crash-landed near Aktau in Kazakhstan, killing 38 of the 67 on board. Most of the passengers on the flight were from Azerbaijan, with others from Russia, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan. Flight J2-8243 had been en route from the Azerbaijan capital of Baku to the Chechen capital of Grozny on 25 December when it came under fire and was forced to divert. At the time, the cities of Grozny, Mozdok and Vladikavkaz were "being attacked by Ukrainian unmanned aerial vehicles, and Russian air defence systems repelled these attacks", he said.



- ❖ Aviation experts and others in Azerbaijan believe the plane's GPS systems were affected by electronic jamming and it was then damaged by shrapnel from Russian air defence missile blasts. Azerbaijan had not officially accused Russia this week, but the country's transport minister said the plane was subject to "external interference" and was damaged inside and out as it tried to land.
- ❖ A passenger plane burst into flames Sunday (December 29, 2024) after it skidded off a runway at a South Korean airport and slammed into a concrete fence when its front landing gear apparently failed to deploy, killing 179 people, officials said, in one of the country's worst aviation disasters.
- ❖ The National Fire Agency said the fire was almost put out but officials were still trying

to pull people from the Jeju Air passenger plane carrying 181 people at the airport in the town of Muan, about 290 kilometres (180 miles) south of Seoul.

- ❖ 1. Runway too short.
- ❖ 2. The aircraft was warned about bird activity near the airport and advised to change runways. 3. Initial investigations suggest that a bird strike may have caused the landing gear malfunction.

### **MCC President Fred Oldfield reflects on awarding Sachin Tendulkar with Honorary Cricket Membership**

#### **Key Points:**

- ❖ The Melbourne Cricket Club (MCC) President Fred Oldfield on Saturday reflected on legendary cricketer Sachin Tendulkar being honoured with Honorary Cricket Membership of MCC. Oldfield confirmed that Tendulkar accepted the membership. He added that they couldn't be more pleased that the former cricketer is a part of the honoured group.
- ❖ Earlier on Friday, MCC honoured Indian legendary batter Sachin Tendulkar with Honorary Cricket Membership in regard to his contributions to the sport during his playing days.
- ❖ "The Melbourne Cricket Club, on occasions, awards honorary life memberships to cricketers who have made outstanding contributions to cricket not only for the country but for the world.

### **Koneru Humpy won the 2024 FIDE Women's World Rapid Chess Championship**

#### **Key Points:**

- ❖ India's Koneru Humpy bagged an epochal second World Rapid Chess Championship title, beating Irene Sukandar of Indonesia here on Sunday.

- ❖ Humpy had won the event back in 2019 at Georgia and the Indian No 1 is only the second player after China's Ju Wenjun to clinch the title more than once. The 37-year-old Humpy finished the tournament with 8.5 out of 11 points.



### UDAAN Yatri Café: An Affordable Alternative to Costly Airport Food

#### Key Points:

- ❖ To address the issue of overpriced food and beverages at airports, the Ministry of Civil Aviation and the Airports Authority of India (AAI) on Tuesday launched a UDAN Yatri Cafe at Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose International Airport in Kolkata.
- ❖ The cafe offers budget-friendly food options for travellers. According to the menu, passengers can get a water bottle and tea for just Rs 10 each, while coffee, samosa and sweet of the day cost Rs 20. During the launch, Civil Aviation Minister Ram Mohan Naidu said, "It is my heartfelt mission to make air travel a symbol of affordability, dignity, and comfort—an experience that every Indian can embrace with pride."
- ❖ By breaking barriers and bridging aspirations, we aim to ensure every citizen feels celebrated in India's aviation journey."

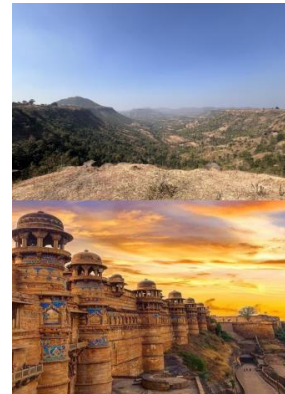
### Madhya Pradesh, known as the "Heart of Incredible India"

#### Key Points:

- ❖ Madhya Pradesh, known as the "Heart of Incredible India", was named one of the Wall Street Journal's "Must-Visit Global Destinations for 2025": Known as the

"Heart of Incredible India" The Madhya Pradesh Tourism Development Corporation chose the motto "The Heart of Incredible India".

- ❖ Natural landscapes, wildlife, and cultural heritage The state's natural beauty, wildlife, and cultural heritage are some of the reasons for its recognition. Global tourism Madhya Pradesh is expected to become a major player in global tourism due to its scenic beauty, cultural heritage, and evolving hospitality sector.



### 18th India State of Forest Report 2023

#### Key Points:

- ❖ The 18th India State of Forest Report 2023 was released by the Union Minister for Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Bhupendra Yadav at the Forest Research Institute, Dehradun, Uttarakhand.
- ❖ The first India of the state of Forest Report was released in 1987 and since then it has been released biennially.

### Who Compiles and Releases the India State of Forest Report?

- ❖ The India State of Forest Report is brought by the Forest Research Institute, Dehradun under the Union Ministry of Environment Environment, Forest and Climate Change. The Forest Research Institute uses Remote Sensing Satellite data and the field-based National Forest Inventory to assess the forest and tree cover in the country.



### Definition of Forest Cover in India?

- ❖ Forest cover is defined as all lands more than or equal to one hectare in area, with a tree canopy of more than or equal to 10 % of the area. The ownership of the area could be with the government, private, community-owned, etc. The tree canopy includes orchards, bamboo, and palm plantations. Tree Cover is defined as tree patches outside the forest areas exclusive of forest cover and on land of less than one hectare.

### Forest and Tree Covers in India at a Glance 2023

Following is a snapshot of forest and tree covers in the country as per the 18th India State of Forest Report 2023.

Class	Area (sq km)	Percentage of Geographical Area
Forest Cover	7,15,342.61	21.76%
Tree Cover	1,12,014.34	3.41%
Total Forest and Tree Cover	8,27,356.95	25.17%
Scrub	43,622.64	1.33%
Non-Forest	24,16,489.29	73.50%
Geographical Area of the Country	32,87,468.88	100.00%

### Main Highlights of the Report

- ❖ Forest and Tree cover is 8,27,357sq km which is 25.17 % of the geographical area of the country.
- ❖ Increase of 1445 sq km (156 sq km increase in Forest and 1289 sq km in Tree cover) as compared to 2021.
- ❖ In 2023 the total Forest Cover- is 7,15,343sq km (21.76%) and Tree Cover - is 1,12,014 sq km (3.41%).

### Performance of States/Union Territories

- ❖ Maximum increase in forest and tree cover areas - (1) Chhattisgarh (684 sq km) (2) Uttar Pradesh (559 sq km) (3) Odisha (559 sq km) (4) Rajasthan (394 sq km).
- ❖ Maximum decrease in forest and tree cover- (1) Madhya Pradesh (612.41sq km), (2) Karnataka (459.36 sq km), (3)Ladakh (159.26 sq km ),(4) Nagaland (125.22 sq km).

- ❖ Maximum increase in forest cover- (1) Mizoram (242 sq km), (2) Gujarat (180 sq km), and (3) Odisha (152 sq km).
- ❖ Forest Cover
- ❖ Refers to the land area covered by forests, defined by a canopy density of more than 10%.
- ❖ Includes all types of forests—natural forests, plantations, and protected forests.
- ❖ Typically measured in hectares or as a percentage of a country's total geographical area. Tree Cover Refers to individual or scattered trees outside recorded forest areas, such as:
  - ❖ Trees in urban areas
  - ❖ Roadside plantations
  - ❖ Agroforestry systems

### Tree Cover

- ❖ Maximum tree cover - (1) Maharashtra (14,524.88 sq km) (2) Rajasthan (10,841.12sq km ), (3) Uttar Pradesh (8,950.92 sq km). ▪ The maximum positive change as compared to 2021- (1) Chhattisgarh (702.75 sq km ),(2) Rajasthan (478.26 sq km) (3) Uttar Pradesh (440.76 sq km).

### State/UT having largest forest cover Area Wise and Percentage-wise

- ❖ State having the largest forest cover area wise- (1) Madhya Pradesh (85,724 sq km), (2) Arunachal Pradesh (67,083 sq km) (3) Maharashtra (65,383 sq km).
- ❖ State/Union Territories having largest forest cover percentage-wise. - Lakshadweep (91.33 percent of its area is under forest cover) (2) Mizoram (85.34 percent) (3)Andaman & Nicobar Island (81.62 percent).

### State/UT having 33% or more area under forest cover

- ❖ Mangrove cover in the country is 4,991.68sq km, which is 0.15 % of the country's total geographical area.

- ❖ 7.43 sq km decrease in mangrove forest as compared to 2021.
- ❖ Maximum decline in Gujarat( 36.39 sq km).
- ❖ Maximum increase in Andhra Pradesh (13.01sq km ), followed by Maharashtra (12.39sq km).

**Bamboo Cover in India**

- ❖ Bamboo area- 1,54,670 sq km. An increase of 5,227 sq km as compared to 2021
- ❖ Maximum bamboo area - (1) Madhya Pradesh 20,421 sq km (2) Arunachal Pradesh 18,424 sq km (3) Maharashtra 13,572 sq km (4) Odisha 12,328 sq km.

**Carbon Stock**

- ❖ The total carbon stock is estimated at 7,285.5 million tonnes in 2023, an increase of 81.5 million tonnes as compared to 2021.
- ❖ The annual increase of carbon stock is estimated at 40.75 million tonnes, which is 149.42 million tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent.
- ❖ Carbon stock refers to the capacity of a system (here forest) to store or release carbon.

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