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1. World Wetlands Day 2023 (Feb. 3, 2023)

World Wetlands Day is observed across the world on 2 February.

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An overview of the news

- Wetlands Day marks the signing of a convention called the **Ramsar Convention**.
- The Convention on Wetlands was adopted on **February 2, 1971 in Ramsar, a city in Iran**.
- This day is celebrated to raise awareness about wetlands.
- With **75 Ramsar sites** spread over an area of over **1.3 million hectares**, India has the largest number of wetlands in **South Asia**.
- The total number of Ramsar sites in the country has increased to 75. Whereas before 2014 it was only **26**.
- The theme of World Wetlands 2023 is "**It's time for wetlands restoration**".
- The theme emphasises the urgent need to prioritise wetland restoration.
- In the Union Budget 2023-24, the government has proposed two schemes - **Amrit Dharohar** and **Mangrove Initiative for Shoreline Habitats and Tangible Income (Mishti)** - to protect wetlands and mangroves.

What are Wetlands?

- Wetlands are vital not only for the ecosystems but our climate, providing essential services such as water regulation, flood control, and water purification.
- Wetlands are also capable of absorbing carbon dioxide.
- Wetlands are called "**Kidneys of the Earth**".

What are Ramsar sites?

- A Ramsar site is a wetland site specifically designated for international importance as a waterfowl habitat under the Ramsar Convention.
- Ramsar Convention is an intergovernmental environment treaty established in **1975 by UNESCO**.
- Ramsar refers to wetlands of international importance in terms of site ecology, botany, zoology or hydrology.

2. World Leprosy day (Jan. 30, 2023)

World Leprosy Day is observed on the **last Sunday of January**. In 2023, World Leprosy Day was observed on **29 January**.

An overview of the news

- The date was chosen as a tribute to the life of **Mahatma Gandhi** by **French humanitarian, Raoul Folreau**, who did a lot of work with persons affected by leprosy.
- In India, it is celebrated every year on **30 January** to mark the death anniversary of **Mahatma Gandhi**.
- It is organised by leprosy and leprosy-focused NGOs including the Leprosy Mission.
- The theme for World Leprosy Day 2023 is '**Act Now: End Leprosy**'.
- The aim of the day is to raise awareness about leprosy.

What is Leprosy?

- Leprosy is a **neglected tropical disease (NTD)** that still occurs in more than **120 countries** with more than **200000 new cases** reported every year.
- It is an infectious disease caused by the **Mycobacterium leprae**.
- It mainly affects the **skin, nerves, mucosa of the upper respiratory tract and eyes**.
- Its infection occurs due to close and frequent contact with the patient.
- Leprosy is curable with **multi drug therapy (MDT)**. If left untreated, it can cause permanent damage to the skin, nerves, organs and eyes.

Status of Leprosy in India

- According to the recent statement by the Minister of State for Health and Family Welfare, **Dr. Bharti Praveen Pawar**, it is a matter of great concern that India accounts for about **52 percent** of the total leprosy cases worldwide.
- The prevalence rate of leprosy cases in India has decreased from **0.69 per ten thousand population in 2014-15 to 0.45 in 2021-22**.
- Dr Bharti also launched the **National Strategic Plan and Roadmap for Leprosy 2023-2027**.
- The aim of the plan is to eradicate leprosy in the country by 2027. The minister also launched the National Guidelines for Surveillance for Antimicrobial Resistance in Leprosy.

3. 75th Death anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi (Jan. 30, 2023)

On January 30, 2023, India is observing **Martyr's Day** to pay homage to all the freedom fighters who sacrificed their lives for the country. The day is also marked as the death anniversary of the country's '**Bapu**', **Mahatma Gandhi**.

An overview of the news

- **Nathuram Godse** killed Mahatma Gandhi on the evening of **January 30, 1948**.
- 30th January is observed as **Martyr's Day** every year in the memory of Mahatma Gandhi and his contributions to the nation.
- Every year **23 March** is also celebrated as **Martyr's Day** to pay homage to the three revolutionaries of India **Bhagat Singh, Rajguru and Sukhdev**.

About Mahatma Gandhi

- Birth - 2nd October 1869 in **Porbandar (Gujarat)**
- **Brief Introduction** - Lawyer, politician, social activist and writer who became the leader of the nationalist movement against the British rule of India.
- In **South Africa (1893-1915)**, he successfully fought racist rule with a new method of mass movement, which he called **satyagraha**.
- He returned to India from **South Africa** on 9 January 1915.
- The **Champaran Satyagraha of 1917** was the first Satyagraha movement led by Gandhi in India.
- **In 1918**, he went to Ahmedabad to organise a Satyagraha movement among **cotton mill workers**.
- **In 1919**, he decided to launch a nationwide satyagraha against the **Rowlatt Act (1919)**.
- The Jallianwala Bagh massacre took place on **April 13, 1919**. Seeing the spread of violence, he called off the movement (April 18, 1919).
- The **non-cooperation movement** was adopted in the Congress session in **Nagpur** in December 1920.

His Social Work

- He worked for the upliftment of the **untouchables** and gave them a new name '**Harijan**' which means child of God.
- His symbol of self-reliance, the spinning wheel, became a popular symbol of the Indian independence movement.
- He was instrumental in preventing **Hindu-Muslim riots** as tensions escalated before and during the country's partition.

- **Hind Swaraj, My Experiments with Truth (Autobiography)** are popular books written by him.

4. 157th birth anniversary of great freedom fighter Lala Lajpat Rai (Jan. 29, 2023)

On 28 January 2022, the **157th birth anniversary of the great freedom fighter Lala Lajpat Rai** has been celebrated across the country.

An overview of the news

Introduction

- Lala Lajpat Rai was born on January 28, 1865 in Punjab.
- He is also known as '**Punjab Kesari**' and '**Lion of Punjab**'.
- Lala Lajpat Rai, along with Bal Gangadhar Tilak of Maharashtra and Bipin Chandra Pal of Bengal, was a member of the trinity called '**Lal Bal Pal**'.

Political and social contribution

- **Home Rule League of America (New York) founded in 1917.**
- Presided over the special session of the Indian National Congress in Calcutta in 1920. In 1920 itself, the first president of the All India Trade Union Congress was also elected.
- In 1928, a resolution was introduced in the Legislature against the Simon Commission.
- **Servants of Society was founded in 1921.**
- Played an important role in **co-founding the Punjab National Bank in 1894.**

Important literary works

- England Debt to India
- Open Letter to The Right Honourable David Lloyd George: Prime Minister of Great Britain
- The Message of the Bhagavad Gita
- **Unhappy india**
- The Political Future of India
- Young India: The Interpretation and the History of the Nationalist Movement from within

Death

- Due to injuries sustained in the lathicharge by James Scott during a protest against the Simon Commission in Lahore on **17 November 1928**.

5. Data Privacy Day (Jan. 28, 2023)

Data Privacy Day is observed across the world on **28 January every year**.

An overview of the news

- This year's **theme is "Think Privacy First"**.
- The primary objective of organising this day is to sensitise the general public about data privacy and promote the dissemination of privacy practices and principles.
- The day encourages all stakeholders to fulfil their responsibility to develop a culture of privacy.

Efforts made to ensure data privacy and security in India

- Right to privacy was upheld as a fundamental right by the Supreme Court in *KS Puttaswamy vs Union of India* in 2017, following which the central government appointed a Justice BN Srikrishna committee to propose legislation to discipline data protection. Was.
- The committee submitted its report and draft to the government in the form of the Personal Data Protection Bill, 2018.
- It was amended by the Parliament in the year 2019 and this new bill was named as 'The Personal Data Protection Bill, 2019'.

Security measures available on apps like WhatsApp

- **Two-Step Verification:** This provides an additional layer of security to their end-to-end encrypted messaging account.
- **Touch ID or Face ID Lock:** This feature is available in various types of phones manufactured by Apple, Samsung, Google etc. Some phones also offer an under-screen fingerprint sensor, which uses ultrasound to image the fingerprint.
- **Forward Limit:** Applications like WhatsApp have set a limit of forwarding messages on five chats at a time. Thus, it restricts the exchange of information and prohibits the spread of misinformation.

6. International Customs Day (Jan. 26, 2023)

International Customs Day

On the occasion of 74th Republic Day, another important day is being celebrated all over the world on **26 January** which is called **International Customs Day**.

An overview of the news

- The role and contribution of customs agencies is remembered on this day.
- The day marks the contribution of officers as well as their challenging working conditions.
- **Customs agencies** play an important role in the smooth flow of goods across borders.
- **The theme of 2023** International Customs Day is- '**Nurturing the next generation: promoting a culture of knowledge-sharing and professional pride in Customs**'.

Background of the day

- The day was first established in **1953** and ratified by the **Customs Co-operation Council (CCC)** for the first time.
- The session was inaugurated in Brussels, Belgium. Many delegates from **17 European countries** participated in it.
- Later in the year **1994**, CCC was renamed as **World Customs Organization (WCO)**.
- Presently, WCO consists of 182 member states around the world.

Significance of the day

- It is the customs department that establishes a strong bond between the countries.
- The Customs Department is the agency that collects tariffs and manages the flow of goods across borders.
- The day is a reminder of the hard work done by customs agents to hold government securities.

7. Himachal Pradesh Foundation Day (Jan. 26, 2023)

January 25 is celebrated as Himachal Pradesh Statehood Day, Himachal Pradesh was granted full statehood on January 25, 1971.

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An overview of the news

Background of the State

- After India's independence, Himachal Pradesh was formed on April 15, 1948 by uniting 30 hill princely states of the region.
- It was **granted the status of a Union Territory on November 1, 1956**.

- After this, in the year 1966, the hilly areas of Punjab were included in Himachal Pradesh.
- On December 18, 1970, the Parliament passed the Himachal Pradesh Act, and on January 25, 1971, Himachal Pradesh came into existence as a full-fledged state and **became the 18th state of India.**

Himachal Pradesh State

- The state is bordered by Jammu and Kashmir to the north, Punjab to the west and southwest, Haryana to the south, Uttarakhand to the southeast, and China to the east.
- Capital: Shimla
- Chief Minister - **Sukhwinder Singh Sukhu**
- Governor: Rajendra Vishwanath Arlekar
- **State Symbol**
- State Animal: Snow Leopard
- State Bird: Western Tragopan
- State Flower: Pink Rhododendron

8. 13th "National Voter's Day" (Jan. 25, 2023)

13th "National Voter's Day"

On **January 25, 2023**, the country's **13th "National Voters' Day"** is being celebrated.

An overview of the news

- The **theme of this year's** National Voters' Day (NVD) is '**Nothing Like Voting, I Vote for Sure**'.

Background Of The Day

- **It was started in the year 2011** in the context of the establishment of the Election Commission of India.
- The **Election Commission came into existence on January 25, 1950**, on the eve of the first Republic Day of independent India.

Purpose

- The main objective of National Voters' Day is to create electoral awareness among the citizens and encourage them to participate in the electoral process.

Organising Events

- A national function will be organised by the Election Commission in New Delhi in which President Draupadi Murmu will attend as the chief guest and present the National Awards for the year 2022.
- The **first copy of the book 'Electing the First President - An Illustrated Chronicle of India's Presidential Election', published by ECI, will be presented to the President** by Chief Election Commissioner Rajeev Kumar on the occasion.
- The **song "Main Bharat Hoon - We are the Voters of India"** produced by ECI in association with Subhash Ghai Foundation **will also be launched.**

9. International Education Day (Jan. 24, 2023)

International Education Day

International Day of Education is celebrated every year on **24 January** to spread awareness about education globally and to make education accessible to all.

An overview of the news

- The **theme** of the International Day of Education for the year 2023 is '**To Invest in People, Prioritise Education**'.
- This year is the fourth edition of International Education Day.
- **It was announced** by the United Nations General Assembly on **3 December 2018** to celebrate International Education Day on 24 January every year.
- This proposal of International Education Day was prepared by 58 countries including Nigeria.
- **UNESCO has decided to dedicate the International Day of Education for the year 2023 to Afghan girls and women.**

National Education Day

- **National Education Day in India is celebrated every year on 11 November.**
- National Education Day in India is celebrated to **commemorate the birth anniversary of Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, the country's first education minister.**
- National Education Day was **started in the year 2008.**

10. National Girl Child Day (Jan. 24, 2023)

National Girl Child Day

National Girl Child Day is celebrated across the country on **24 January**.

An overview of the news

- National Women Child Day aims to highlight the prejudice and injustice towards girls.
- The day also encourages awareness of women's rights in our country.
- **The main objective** of this day is to change the attitude of the society towards the girl child, reduce female feticide and create awareness about the declining sex ratio.
- The Government of India has not officially announced the theme of National Girl Child Day 2023.
- An event is being organised with the theme "**Self Defence Training for Girls**".
- '**Empowering Girls for a Brighter Tomorrow**' was the theme of 2019.
- In 2020, the theme was '**My voice, our common future**'. The theme of National Girl Child Day in 2021 was 'Digital Generation, Our Generation'.

Background of the day

- National Girl Child Day was first started in the **year 2008** by the **Ministry of Women and Child Development**.
- The main objective of this day is to raise awareness about the **inequalities that girls face in education, employment, dress** and various other fields.
- To mark the occasion this year, the Department of Women and Child Development is celebrating **National Girl Child Week from 24 to 30 January**.