

Over 1 Lakh Farmers Voluntarily Gave Up Their PM-Kisan Benefits Last Year

- **Over 1 lakh farmers voluntarily gave up their PM-Kisan benefits between June 2023 and May 2024.**
- **State-wise Data:**
 - Bihar: 29,176 farmers
 - Uttar Pradesh: 26,593 farmers
 - Rajasthan: 10,343 farmers
- **Reasons for Surrender:**
 - Absentee landlords
 - Land transferred to tax-paying descendants
 - Changes in land ownership status
- **Process for Surrendering Benefits:** Farmers can opt out via the PM-Kisan mobile app or website using their registration number and an OTP sent to their Aadhar-registered mobile number.
- **PM-Kisan Scheme Overview:**
 - Provides Rs 6,000 annually to eligible farmer families, disbursed in three instalments.
 - Launched on February 24, 2019.
 - Funded 100% by the central government and transferred directly to beneficiaries' bank accounts.
- **Current Beneficiary Data:**
 - 16 instalments have been released, benefiting 9.09 crore farmers as of February 2024.
 - Top recipient states: Uttar Pradesh (2.03 crore farmers), Maharashtra (89.66 lakh), Madhya Pradesh (79.93 lakh), Bihar (75.79 lakh), Rajasthan (62.66 lakh).
- **Reduction of Ineligible Beneficiaries:** The number of beneficiaries decreased from 10.47 crore in April-July 2022 to 8.12 crore in November 2023 due to a drive to weed out ineligible farmers.

"A World Of Debt 2024: A Growing Burden To Global Prosperity"

- **Report released by UNCTAD (UN Trade and Development)**
- **Key Highlights from the Report:**
 - **Global Public Debt Surge:** In 2023, global public debt hit a record high of \$97 trillion.
 - **Drivers of Debt Surge:** Multiple crises and sluggish global economic growth contribute to the increase.
 - **Regional Disparity:** Developing countries, comprising 30% of the global total, experience a faster increase in public debt compared to developed nations.
 - **India's Public Debt:** India's public debt in 2023 reached \$2.9 trillion, equivalent to 82.7% of its GDP.
 - **Implications of High Public Debt:**
 - **Heavy fiscal burden:** More than half of developing countries spend over 8% of government revenues on interest payments.
 - **Reduced spending on development:** Over 3.3 billion people live in countries where interest payments surpass combined education and health expenditures.
 - **Climate inaction:** Interest payments outweigh investments in climate initiatives in emerging and developing countries.
 - **Roadmap for Sustainable Development Financing:**
 - Establish an inclusive International Financial Architecture with increased participation from developing nations.
 - Enhance liquidity during crises by expanding contingency financing through IMF tools.
 - Increase affordable long-term financing by transforming and expanding Multilateral Development Banks.
 - **Initiatives to Address Debt Crisis:**
 - Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Initiative led by the IMF and World Bank.
 - UNCTAD's Debt Management and Financial Analysis System (DMFAS) programme.
 - Global Sovereign Debt Roundtable (GSDR) launched in February 2023 by the IMF, in coordination with the World Bank and India's G20 presidency.

Pump And Dump Scheme

- Recently, **SEBI penalized** individuals for allegedly running a 'pump and dump' scheme.
- This scheme involved manipulating stock prices by spreading false information through Telegram channels. As a result, unsuspecting shareholders purchased stocks at artificially high prices.
- **Understanding the Pump and Dump Scheme:**
 - It's a manipulation tactic where stock prices are artificially inflated using misleading information.
 - The goal is to sell the overpriced stocks for a profit.
 - This scheme is common in micro-cap and small-cap sectors where there's limited public information and lower trading volumes.
- **Impact:** It undermines trust in financial markets and causes significant losses to investors.
- **Regulation:** SEBI strictly prohibits the pump and dump scheme under its guidelines.

Clearing Corporations

- **SEBI** has formed a committee led by **Usha Thorat** to examine the ownership and economic setup of clearing corporations (CC).
- **Understanding Clearing Corporations (CC):**
 - CCs manage the clearing and settlement of trades in securities and other instruments traded on stock exchanges.
 - They are essential components of Market Infrastructure Institutions along with stock exchanges and depositories.
 - CCs play a vital role as central risk management institutions and as a primary regulatory authority.
- **Regulation:**
 - The Securities Contracts (Regulation) (Stock Exchanges and Clearing Corporations) Regulations, 2018, establishes norms for the ownership and governance framework of CCs.

Environmental Performance Index (EPI):2024

- **The Yale Center for Environmental Law & Policy** has recently released the **Environmental Performance Index (EPI) 2024**.
- **About EPI 2024:**
 - EPI evaluates **180 countries** based on **58 performance indicators** across **11 issue categories**.
 - These categories include **climate change performance, environmental health, and ecosystem vitality**.
- **Key Highlights:**
 - **Top Rank:** Estonia is ranked at the top of the list.
 - **India's Ranking:** India has been placed at 176th position.
 - **India's Environmental Challenges:**
 - India is the world's third-largest greenhouse gas (GHG) emitter, with emissions increasing by 32% over the past decade.
 - In 2022, India surpassed China as the largest emitter of anthropogenic sulfur dioxide globally.

QS World University Rankings 2025

- **The QS World University Rankings (WUR) 2025** has been released by **Quacquarelli Symonds (QS)**, a prominent network of experts in the education sector.
- **Key Points:**
 - **Ranking Criteria:** The rankings are based on **9 performance indicators**:
 - Academic Reputation, Employer Reputation, Faculty Student Ratio, Citations per Faculty, International Faculty Ratio, International Student Ratio, International Research Network, Employment Outcomes, Sustainability
 - **IIT Bombay's Ranking:** The Indian Institute of Technology Bombay (IIT-B) has been ranked at **118**.
 - **Top Rank:** The Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) in the USA has secured the top position for the 13th consecutive year.

Meity In Collaboration With Unesco Host National Workshop On Safe, Trusted, Ethical AI

- The **Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology**, in partnership with the **United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)** South Asia Regional Office, organized a Workshop on Safe, Trusted, and Ethical Artificial Intelligence in New Delhi. The goal of the workshop was to lay down the groundwork for well-informed policy creation that encourages fair and sustainable AI practices.