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## VOCABULARY

1. Solace: Comfort or consolation in a time of distress or sadness.
  - Synonyms: Comfort, consolation, relief
  - Antonyms: Distress, discomfort, anguish
  - Sentence: Most of the deceased were from the economically vulnerable sections of society and were in search of spiritual solace.
  
2. Combativeness: The quality of being eager to fight or argue.
  - Synonyms: Aggressiveness, belligerence, hostility
  - Antonyms: Passiveness, peacefulness, calmness
  - Sentence: His combativeness during the debate made it difficult to reach a consensus.
  
3. Fealty: A feudal tenant's or vassal's sworn loyalty to a lord.
  - Synonyms: Loyalty, allegiance, fidelity
  - Antonyms: Disloyalty, betrayal, treachery
  - Sentence: Both sides declared their fealty to the Constitution of India.
  
4. Scrutinized: Examined or inspected closely and thoroughly.
  - Synonyms: Inspected, examined, analyzed
  - Antonyms: Overlooked, ignored, neglected
  - Sentence: The increase in Opposition numbers can help restore healthy traditions such as more Bills getting scrutinized by parliamentary standing committees.

5. Stalemate: A situation in which further action or progress by opposing parties seems impossible.
- Synonyms: Deadlock, impasse, standoff
  - Antonyms: Breakthrough, agreement, resolution
  - Sentence: The stalemate eventually led to an election between Mr. Birla and Kodikunnil Suresh.
6. Staunch: Loyal and committed in attitude.
- Synonyms: Loyal, steadfast, unwavering
  - Antonyms: Unreliable, unfaithful, wavering
  - Sentence: Both sides declared staunch loyalty to the Constitution of India.
7. Expunging: Erasing or removing completely.
- Synonyms: Deleting, erasing, obliterating
  - Antonyms: Including, retaining, preserving
  - Sentence: The Opposition has also questioned the expunging of portions of Mr. Gandhi's speech from the records by the Speaker.
8. Diatribe: A forceful and bitter verbal attack against someone or something.
- Synonyms: Tirade, rant, denunciation
  - Antonyms: Praise, compliment, commendation
  - Sentence: Parliamentary speeches could do with more humor and less diatribe.

9. Critique: A detailed analysis and assessment of something.
- Synonyms: Evaluation, review, analysis
  - Antonyms: Praise, approval, commendation
  - Sentence: Rahul Gandhi mounted an aggressive critique of the NDA government and Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

### **IDIOMS AND PHRASES**

10. Put something on ice : to postpone something
11. Cut corners : to save money or time when doing something.
12. Rain on someone's parade: to spoil someone's plans
13. Spill the beans : to reveal a secret
14. Take with a grain of salt : to not completely believe something that you are told.

## CURRENT AFFAIRS

4<sup>th</sup> July, 2024

1. International Plastic Bag Free Day is celebrated on July 3 every year. This special day aims to raise awareness about the harmful effects of plastic bags on our environment. It encourages people to stop using plastic bags and find ecofriendly alternatives.
2. Hungary's nationalist government launches its presidency of the European Union on Monday with a Trump-like call to "Make Europe Great Again" after EU lawmakers questioned whether it should be allowed to take on the role.
  - Their concerns are based on Prime Minister Viktor Orbán's many clashes with Brussels over democratic norms.
  - Hungarian diplomats say the country will be an honest broker, while analysts say Budapest's actions at the forefront of EU policy-making are likely to be restricted given that Brussels is in a transition phase following elections in June.
3. India has officially announced its participation in the annual summit of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) in Kazakhstan's Astana this week, with External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar leading the delegation. The 24th meeting of the SCO Summit will be held on July 4.

4. The 16th edition of Joint Military Exercise 'Nomadic Elephant' between armies of India and Mongolia will be conducted in Meghalaya's Umroi from July 3-16, the Indian Army stated on Tuesday.
  - Additional Directorate General of Public Information, IHQ of MoD (Army) said that the exercise set to be conducted in Meghalaya aims to enhance interoperability between two armies in carrying out semi-conventional operations in semiurban/mountainous terrain.
5. The Reserve Bank of India has joined Project Nexus, an initiative by the Innovation Hub of the Bank for International Settlements (BIS), to enable instant crossborder retail payments by interlinking domestic Fast Payments Systems (FPSs).
  - Nexus will initially connect the FPSs of four ASEAN countries, aiming to make retail cross-border payments more efficient and cost-effective by 2026.
6. Behdienkhlam Festival is a major celebration for the Pnar people of Meghalaya, held annually during the monsoon season. It's a time to give thanks for good harvests and chase away evil spirits. People come together for dances, rituals, and traditional games.

7. Department of Public Enterprises (DPE), under the Ministry of Finance(MOF), has granted the 'Navratna' status to Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Limited (MDSL), a Central Public Sector Undertaking(CPSU) under the Ministry of Defence (MoD).
  - Central Electronics Limited (CEL), a PSU under the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research (DSIR), Ministry of Science and Technology(MOST), has received the 'Mini RATNA (Category-1)' Status from the Department of Public Enterprises.
8. The Australian government entered into an \$18 million memorandum of understanding (MoU) with NewSpace India Limited (NSIL), the commercial arm of the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) under the space MAITRI mission.
9. For the first time, the Taliban, who rules Afghanistan, participated in the United Nations Conference on Afghanistan. The third United Nations Conference on Afghanistan was held in Doha, the capital of Qatar, on 30 June and 1 July 2024. However, the conference ended without any substantial progress on its agenda.
10. Puma India, a leading sports brand, announced two new brand ambassadors: Riyan Parag and Nitish Kumar Reddy.