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Weekly Current Affairs

English

National

1. New Regional Airline FLY91

India witnessed the Inaugural of New Regional Airline FLY91 that operates two ATR 72-600 aircraft. The Inaugural flights will be connecting Goa to Bengaluru and Hyderabad. The Airline is backed by aviation veteran Manoj Chacko. It is the 6th regional airline launched in the past 10 years.

2. Electric Mobility Promotion Scheme 2024

The Ministry of Heavy Industries launched Electric Mobility Promotion Scheme 2024 with a total outlay of 500 crore. The scheme will be implemented from 1st April to 31st July 2024 to further accelerate the adoption of EV in the country. The scheme aims to faster adoption of electric two Wheeler and three Wheeler and promote green mobility along with Development of EV manufacturing ecosystem in the country.

3. PB-SHABD launched

A news sharing service platform called PB-SHABD was recently launched by Union Minister of Information and Broadcasting Shri Anurag Thakur. The platform will share news from Prasar Bharti and websites of DD News and Akashvani News and will provide new stories in all major Indian languages across 50 Categories. The platform was launched at National Media Centre, New Delhi.

4. Vocal for Local initiative launched by NITI Aayog

In a bid to boost local economies and Entrepreneurship, NITI Aayog under its Aspirational Blocks Programme launched the "Vocal for Local" initiative. The initiative will encourage a spirit of self reliance among people

and promote sustainable growth and prosperity. Local products from 500 Aspirational blocks have been mapped under the Aakanksha Band under the initiative.

5. Redeveloped Kochrab Ashram inaugurated by PM

The redeveloped Kochrab Ashram in Ahmedabad was inaugurated by Prime Minister of India Shri Narendra Modi to mark the 94th anniversary of the Dandi March. The Kochrab Ashram was the 1st Ashram founded by Mahatma Gandhi in 1915 and the Ashram is regarded as Gandhi's first home after returning to India.



6. Index of Industrial Production grows by 3.8%

The Index of Industrial Production (IIP) grows by 3.8% as per the recently released quick estimate for January 2024 by the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI). The Quick Estimates of IIP stands at 153.0 with a base of 2011-12. IIP is a short term indicator and is published by the Central Statistical Organisation (CSO) on a monthly basis.

7. DGFT grants exemption to import of certain goods from QCO

The Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT) under the Ministry of Commerce and Industry has granted exemption to import of certain goods including Viscose staple Fibre and steel items from Quality Control Orders (QCO). The

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exemptions have been granted under the Advance Authorisation Scheme. The DGFT is headquartered at New Delhi.

8. Uniform Code for Pharmaceutical Marketing Practices (UCPMP) 2024

The Union Government of India launched Uniform Code for Pharmaceutical Marketing Practices (UCPMP) 2024 to control unethical practices in the pharma industry. The rules also listed that names or photographs of Healthcare professionals must not be used in promotional material. Violations of the code will be dealt with by the Ethics Committee for Pharmaceutical Marketing Practices (ECPMP).

9. Gorsam Kora Festival in Tawang

The Gorsam Kora Festival annually held at Zemithang Valley along Nyamjang Chu River, Arunachal Pradesh took place between 7-10th March 2024. The festival features cultural performances and Buddhist rituals at Gorsam Chorten Monastery. The Gorsam Chorten is a 93 ft tall stupa built during the 13th Century AD by local monk Lama Pradhar.



10. Citizenship Amendment Rules Notified

The Ministry of Home Affairs notified the Citizenship Amendment Rules 2024, four years after the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) 2019 was passed by Parliament. Under the rules the Applicants will have to provide six types of documents and specify "Date of Entry" in India. The rules will help in the implementation of

Citizenship Amendment Act 2019 passed by the Parliament.

11. 24th Centre of Entrepreneurship "FinGlobe" launched in Gandhinagar

The 24th Centre of Entrepreneurship "FinGlobe" was launched by Software Technology Parks of India (STPI) in Gandhinagar, Gujarat. STPI is an Autonomous society under MeITY, Government of India. The major objective is to promote development and export of software and software services. These centres are dedicated to fostering innovation and growth in the financial technology sector.

12. 125 ft bronze statue of Lachit Borphukan

The Prime Minister of India Shri Narendra Modi recently unveiled a 125 ft bronze statue of legendary army Commander of Ahom Kingdom Lachit Borphukan. The statue was unveiled at his burial site in Eastern Assam's Jorhat district. Ahom General is renowned for his able leadership during the 1671 "Battle of Saraighat" where he defeated the Mughal Forces led by Raja Ramsingh-1.

13. Revamped Pharmaceuticals Technology Upgradation Assistance Scheme launched

The Revamped Pharmaceuticals Technology Upgradation Assistance (RPTUAS) Scheme was recently launched by the Department of Pharmaceuticals(DoP) under the Ministry of Chemicals and Fertilisers. The Scheme will offer "subsidies based on quality" and enhance the domestic pharmaceutical industry to withstand global standards.

14. BIS scheme for upgradation of Labs in higher education

A scheme was initiated by the Government of India through the Bureau of Indian Standards

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(BIS) to boost quality infrastructure in the country by upgradation and strengthening of the laboratory network in the country. Testing facilities will be enhanced across critical sectors like Textiles, Food, Legal Metrology and Power Transmission. BIS was established in 1987.

15. Sashakt Nari-Viksit Bharat Programme

The Prime Minister of India Shri Narendra Modi participated in the Sashakt Nari-Viksit Bharat Programme held at Indian Agricultural Research Institute, Pusa, New Delhi. He also witnessed demonstration of Agricultural Drones by Namo Drone Didis. 1000 Drones will be handed over to Namo Drone Didis at the event.



16. 8000 crore Bank loans to Self Help Groups

The Prime Minister of India under the Self Help Group-Bank Linkage Programme disbursed 8000 crore Bank loans to Self Help Groups at subsidised interest rate. The loans will be distributed through Bank Linkage camps setup by Banks in each district. The Self Help Group-Bank Linkage Programme was launched by NABARD in 1992.

17. Economists predict Core Inflation to stay 3% till Q1 FY25

Indian Economists have predicted that Core inflation which does not involve volatile items like food and fuel is to remain 3% till first quarter of

Financial Year 2025. The reasons behind the lowering of Core inflation are weak rural demand, softness in housing inflation and lower input cost pressures. The Core Inflation represents a long term trend in price level.

18. Ore Shortage hitting steel production

The Domestic Sponge Iron Manufacturers fear collapse due to continuous shortage of Iron Ore for its production which may lead to shortage of steel production. The Sponge Iron is used as a raw material to make finished steel in electric-arc or induction furnaces. 30% of India's steel production takes place using Sponge Iron as a raw material. India is the World's largest Sponge Iron producing nation since 2003.

19. NIOT conducts key test for Samudrayaan Mission

The National Institute of Ocean Technology (NIOT) successfully tested an underwater acoustic telephone test at a depth of 500 metres in the Bay of Bengal aboard Sagar Manjusha. It was a key test for India's first manned submersible mission called Samudrayaan. Sagar Manjusha is a research and survey vessel. The Samudrayaan Mission will allow scientists to observe unexplored deep sea areas directly.

20. President's Standard and President's Colours Awarded

The prestigious President's Standard and President's Colours awards were presented to Indian Air Force units by the Supreme Commander of Indian Armed Forces, President of India Shrimati Droupadi Murmu. The President's Standard was presented to 45 Squadron and 221 Squadron of IAF while President's Colours to 11 Base Repair Depot (BRD) and 509 Signal Unit (SU) of the Indian Air Force. It is the first time in history of IAF that 4 units have

been awarded President's Standard and President's Colours awards in a single ceremony.



21. Stakeholders meeting on Right to Repair Portal

Stakeholders of 4 sectors namely Automobiles, Consumer Durables, Mobile and Electronics and Farming equipment held a meeting on the Right to Repair Portal India. The meeting was chaired by Rohit Kumar Singh, Secretary, Department of Consumer Affairs. The Right to Repair Portal was launched by the Ministry of Consumer Affairs to provide consumers with access to Repair information for their products and reduce e-Waste.

22. Launch of DIETS of Excellence and National Mission for Mentoring (NMM)

Union Education Minister Shri Dharmendra Pradaahn launched various initiatives in School and Teacher education namely DIETS of Excellence, National professional Standard for Teachers, National Mission for Mentoring, 52 Primers of NCERT etc for effective implementation of National Education Policy 2020. The District Institute of Education and Training (DIET) will strengthen teacher training by developing centres of Excellence.

23. SELA tunnel inaugurated by Prime Minister

The Prime Minister of India shri Narendra Modi inaugurated the SELA tunnel in Arunachal Pradesh on the eve of fourth anniversary of border conflict with China in Eastern Ladakh. The SELA tunnel is the longest bi-lane road tunnel in

the world built by Border Road Organisation (BRO) under the Project Vartak. The Tunnel is situated at an altitude of 13000 ft and connects Tezpur in Assam to Tawang in Arunachal Pradesh.

24. UNNATI Scheme 2024

The Union Cabinet headed by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi recently approved the Uttar Poorva Transformative Industrialization Scheme (UNNATI) 2024. The scheme is aimed at developing industries and generating employment in the NorthEast Region leading to overall socio-economic development of the region. It is a Central Sector Scheme and it will be effective till 31st March 2034 from the date of notification.

25. School Soil Health program

The School Soil Health Program was recently launched by Union Minister for Agriculture and Farmers Welfare Shri Arjun Munda and Union Minister of Rural Development Shri Giriraj Singh at Krishi Bhawan, New Delhi. Under this initiative Soil labs will be set up in Schools and students will be taught study modules related to Soil health. Navodaya Vidyalaya, Eklavya Model Schools and Kendriya Vidyalaya schools have been taken under this programme.

26. National Cooperative Database (NCD) launched

Union Home Minister and Cooperation Minister Shri Amit Shah launched the National Cooperative Database (NCD). The Database aims to foster a Cooperative centric economic model and has been developed in collaboration with state governments, National Federation and Stakeholders. It will fulfil PMs vision of "Sahakar Se Samridhhi".

27. Orans declared as “Deemed Forests”

The Villagers oppose declaring of Oran, Dev-vans and Rundhs as forest lands as per directives of the Supreme Court of India. The notification over the declaration of oran and ecological areas as deemed forests was released on February 1, 2024. Oran are sacred groves found in Rajasthan and are rich in biodiversity and usually include a water body.

International

1. Marine Security Belt 2024

China, Iran and Russia have begun a joint Naval drill namely “Marine Security Belt 2024” in the Gulf of Oman also known as Gulf of Makran. The guided Missile destroyers Urumqi and Linyi are participating from China while Russian forces are led by Varyag, a Slava class cruiser. It is the 4th edition of the Joint Naval drill.



2. 96th Academy Awards concluded

The 96th Academy Awards popularly known as Oscars 2024 were recently concluded at Ovation Hollywood in Los Angeles, USA. The awards acknowledge artistic and technical merit in the film industry and are given annually by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences (AMPAS). “Oppenheimer” has been named as the Best Picture at the award show.

3. China claims Vietnam territory in Gulf of Tonkin

China disclosed a New Baseline thereby claiming the Northern part of the Gulf of Tonkin shared with Vietnam. China and Vietnam reached a deal in 2004 outlining the boundaries of their territorial sea, exclusive economic zone and Continental shelf in Beibu Gulf. The Gulf of Tonkin is a crescent shaped, shallow, semi enclosed water body situated in South China Sea.

4. Report on Female Genital Mutilation by UNICEF

As per the recently released report of UNICEF more than 230 million girls and women's alive have undergone Female Genital Mutation (FGM). The report highlights that Africa is home to highest number of FGM survivors followed by Asia and the Middle East. The report was released on International Women's Day by UNICEF.

Sports

1. Mumbai wins 42nd Ranji title

The Mumbai Ranji team defeated Vidarbha by 169 runs in the final to clinch 42nd Ranji Trophy title. The Mumbai team earned a winner's cheque of Rs 5 crore while the runner up received Rs 3 crore. The BCCI awarded a bonus of 5 crore to Mumbai Cricket Association apart for ending its 8 year title drought.

2. Khelo India Rising Talent Identification (KIRTI) programme

The Union Minister for Youth Affairs and Sports Shri Anurag Thakur inaugurated the Khelo India Rising Talent Identification (KIRTI) programme in Chandigarh. The KIRTI programme is aimed at school children between 9 and 18 years of age with the objective to hunt talent from every corner of the country and to use Sports as a tool

to curb addiction towards drugs and gadgetry distractions. It is launched under the Khelo India Scheme.

3. Rachin Ravindra receives Sir Richard Hadlee Medal

New Zealand ace batsman Rachin Ravindra becomes the youngest recipient of the Sir Richard Hadlee Medal at the age of 24. The Medal is given to the country's best male cricketer of the year. Melie Kerr among women won major prizes at New Zealand Cricket Awards.



4. Yashasvi Jaiswal wins ICC Player of the Month Award

India's newest batting prodigy Yashasvi Jaiswal was named as the ICC Player of the month for February 2024. Jaiswal scored mammoth 712 runs in the 5 test match series against England leading to earning him title of highest aggregate by an Indian Batter in a Test Series against England.

5. Satwik-Chirag won French Open 2024

The Indian Doubles Badminton pair of Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty beat Lee Jhe Huei and Yang Po Hsuan of Chinese Taipei to win the French Open 2024 title. The Tournament was being held at Porte De LA Chapelle Arena, Paris. The scoreline of the match was 21-11, 21-17.



6. Test Cricket Incentive Scheme

The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) launched "Test Cricket Incentive Scheme" to provide financial incentives for Test Cricketers. Under the scheme players who feature in at least 75% of the Test matches in an annual cycle stand to earn Rs 60 lakh per Test Match. The Indian Players will be rewarded for prioritising red ball Cricket.

7. India wins Test series against England 4-1

The Indian team full of debutants defeated the mighty England in the fifth and final test at Dharamshala by an innings and 64 runs to clinch the series 4-1. The player of the match was Kuldeep Yadav and Player of the Series was Yashasvi Jaiswal. The fifth and final test was held at HPCA Stadium, Dharamshala.

Days

1. International Day of Mathematics observed on March 14

The International Day of Mathematics was observed on March 14, 2024 under the theme "Playing with Math". It is also known as Pi day to recognise the Mathematical constant Pi. The first Pi day was observed by Physicist Larry Shaw at San Francisco Exploratorium in 1988. The mathematical value of Pi i.e. 3.14 matches with the date March 14.

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2. 2024 Pritzker Architecture Prize

The Japanese Architect Riken Yamamoto was declared winner of the highest International award in the field of architecture “Pritzker Architecture Prize 2024” also referred to as the “Architecture Nobel”. The Pritzker Architecture Prize was first awarded in 1979 and it is awarded to a living architect for significant achievement. One of the famous projects of Riken was the Yokosuka Museum of Art in Japan.

3. International Women's day observed on 8th March 2024

The International Women's day was observed on 8th March 2024 under the theme “Invest in women: Accelerating Progress”. It is an annual event aimed to raise awareness about issues related to women like violence, abuse, Women's reproductive rights etc. 1975 was designated as the International Women's Year by the United Nations and 8th March was designated as the International Women's day in 1977.



Person in News

1. Sudha Murty nominated to Rajya Sabha

Author and Philanthropist Sudha Murty was recently nominated to Rajya Sabha by President

of India Shri Droupadi Murmu on the occasion of International Women's day. Sudha Murty is also the Chairperson of Infosys Foundation. The nomination of Sudha Murty to Rajya sabha showcases “Nari Shakti” or Women Power.



Science and tech/Defence/Space

1. India remains world's largest importer of Arms

As per the recently released report from Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), India remains World's largest importer of Arms accounting for 9.8% of global Arms sales. Russia continues to be India's largest weapons supplier accounting for 36% of its Arms imports.

2. Tri Service Exercise Bharat Shakti

The Integrated Tri Services Exercise “Bharat Shakti” was recently visited by Prime Minister of India Shri Narendra Modi in Pokhran, Rajasthan. The Exercise showcases the firepower capability of indigenous weapons thereby promoting Aatmanirbhar Bharat Initiative of the Government.

3. Maiden flight test of AGNI-5 under Mission Divyastra

The premier Defence Research organisation of the country DRDO conducted a successful maiden test flight of AGNI-5 Missile under codename Mission Divyastra. AGNI-5 is an

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indigenously developed Missile with Multiple Independently Targetable Reentry Vehicle (MIRV) technology. It has a range of more than 5000 km and uses a three stage solid fuelled engine.

4. Sensor detects harmful forever chemicals

Chemists at MIT have developed a sensor that can detect harmful “Forever Chemicals” in drinking water. The sensor can detect tiny quantities of Perfluoroalkyl and Polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) chemicals found in food packaging, nonstick cookware and other consumer products. These chemicals are also known as Forever chemicals because they do not break down naturally in the environment.

5. INS Tushil begins Sea trials

India's latest Naval asset INS Tushil which is the first Krivak-III frigate acquired under Project 11356M, initiated its sea trials from Baltiysk Naval Base, Russia. Project 11356M was signed between India and Russia in 2016 to purchase four additional Admiral Grigorovich class frigates. Under the Project, Russia commits to deliver two frigates including INS Tushil and INS Tamala while the remaining two will be constructed domestically.

6. Exercise Cutlass Express-24 (CE-24)

The premier multimodal maritime exercise namely “Cutlass Express-24” (CE-24) was recently conducted at Port Victoria, Seychelles. The Lead ship of First Training Squadron (1TS) of India “INS TIR” participated in the Exercise. The Exercise sponsored by AFRICOM and led by US Naval Forces Europe-Africa is conducted in East African Coastal regions and West Indian Ocean with the aim to counter malign Influence, aggression etc.

7. Design and development of Advanced Medium Combat Aircraft (AMCA)

A 15000 crore project to design and develop India's fifth generation fighter multirole fighter jet “Advanced Medium Combat Aircraft” (AMCA) was cleared by the Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS). The Nodal agency executing the project and designing the Aircraft is the Aeronautical Development Agency (ADA) under DRDO.

8. Sea Defenders - 2024 Joint Exercise

The Joint Exercise Sea Defenders - 2024 is being held between Indian Coast Guard and United States Coast Guard off the coast of Port Blair, Andaman and Nicobar Islands. It is a two day exercise with the aim to counter maritime Piracy and asymmetric threats. The United States Coast Guard (USCGs) Bertholf ship is participating in the exercise.



Health/Agriculture/Environment

1. Atmospheric Research Testbed in Central India (ART-CI) inaugurated

The Minister of Earth Sciences Shri Kiren Rijju inaugurated the first phase of the Atmospheric Research Testbed in Central India (ART-CI). It is a lab located in Sehore district, 50 km northwest of Bhopal in Madhya Pradesh to monitor sea water quality and testbed to track monsoon systems. It is established by Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology (IITM).

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2. US tops in Methane emissions

According to the Global Methane Tracker 2024 of International Energy Agency (IEA), Methane emissions from fuel use in 2023 were close to the highest ever at 120 million tonnes. The US was declared as the largest emitter of Methane from oil and gas operations followed by Russia. As per the report out of 120 Mt of Methane emitted, 80 Mt was contributed by Top 10 emitter countries.

3. Unknown species of Scorpion Euscorpions Krachan discovered

Researchers have discovered an unknown species of Scorpion with 8 eyes and 8 legs namely Euscorpions Krachan in the Thai National Park. The species belongs to subgenus Euscorpions and has a limited distribution range with high degree of endemism. The species are brown in colour with females exhibiting a darker hue than males.

4. Lyme Disease reported in Kerala

A case of vector borne infectious disease "Lyme Disease" has been reported in the Ernakulam district of Kerala. The disease is caused by Bacterium Burgdorferi and is transmitted to humans primarily through the bite of infected black-legged ticks. Its treatment involves use of antibiotics such as doxycycline or amoxicillin.

5. Specialised cylinders for Green Hydrogen Storage

The Ministry of New and Renewable Energy along with stakeholders convened a meeting for the development of specialised cylinders for Green Hydrogen Storage. Green Hydrogen is produced using electrolysis of water using electricity generated by renewable energy. The Green Hydrogen has enormous potential to decarbonise several sectors and can also be used in fuel cells.



6. Yaounde Declaration

The Yaounde Declaration was signed between the Health Ministers of 11 African countries with the aim to end malaria deaths. Currently the African Continent has the highest burden of Malaria and deaths related to it globally. The Yaounde Conference was co-sponsored by the Government of Cameroon and the World Health Organization (WHO).

7. Kerala facing outbreak of Mumps

The southern state of India, Kerala is facing an outbreak of contagious viral infection "Mumps" with over 10,000 cases in 70 days. The Indian Academy of Paediatrics reveals that one in 20 children reporting at outpatient clinics in Kerala now has Mumps. Mumps has an incubation period of 16-18 days and is caused by Mumps Virus belonging to the Paramyxoviruses group.

8. More than 7000 Golden Langurs in India

Comprehensive Population Estimation of Endangered Primate "Golden Langur" was carried out by Primate Research Centre NE India (PRCNE) and Assam Forest Department. The survey stated that there are an estimated 7396 Golden langurs in India. The Golden Langurs are limited to Assam and neighbouring Bhutan. The species is protected under Schedule 1 of Wildlife Protection Act, 1972.

9. Global Mass Coral Bleaching

The Aerial Surveys conducted by Reef Authority

and Australian Institute of Marine Science (AIMS) reveals a widespread Coral bleaching event in the Great Barrier Reef (GBR). The dying of Coral reefs was observed over two-thirds of the GBR marine park as per the survey. High Ocean Temperatures due to Climate Change and El Nino are some of the factors that triggered the fourth global mass Coral bleaching.

10. Blue Leaders High-level event on Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction

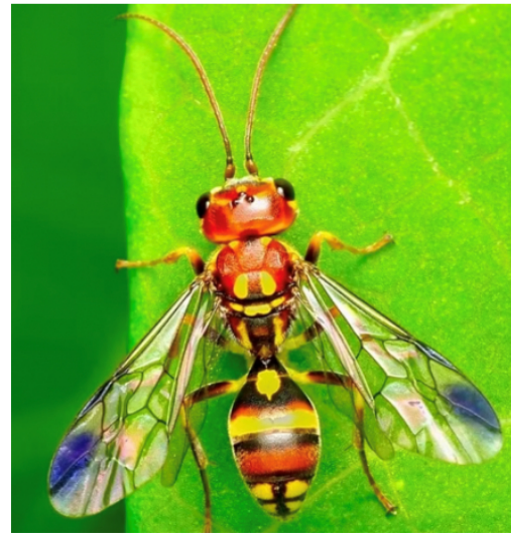
The Blue Leaders High-Level event on Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction was recently held in Belgium. The meeting urged Nations to ratify a new Treaty to protect High seas from pollution, Climate change and overfishing. Blue Leaders is a group of Countries formed to take action to save the global ocean. The first Blue Leaders meeting took place in New York in 2019.

11. Parrot Fever leads to death of five

The Parrot Fever also known as Psittacosis has led to the death of 5 individuals across Europe this year. It is a bacterial Infection caused by Bacterium Chlamydochlamydia Psittaci and it primarily affects birds but can be transmitted to humans through inhalation of contaminated particles. The treatment of the doses involves use of antibiotics like doxycycline or tetracycline.

12. New Species of Wasp Taeniogonals Deepaki discovered

A new species of Wasp named Taeniogonals Deepaki was recently discovered by entomologists in the Western Ghat region of Karnataka. The species is named after medical doctor and nature enthusiast Deepak Deshpande who collected the specimen. The species was discovered in Belgaum region of Karnataka.



13. Resistance to Dolutegravir (DTG) increasing

The HIV Drug Resistance (HIVDR) Report of WHO highlighted the increasing resistance to the antiretroviral drug Dolutegravir (DTG) among the HIV patients. Dolutegravir is an antiviral drug used with other medications to treat HIV and its class of medication is called HIV integrase inhibitors. The drug increases the number of immune cells in the blood thus decreasing the amount of HIV.