

December 2023

CURRENT AFFAIRS

- TOPIC WISE CURRENT AFFAIRS
- 150 QUESTIONS FOR PRACTICE
- ANALYSIS OF IMPORTANT EVENTS



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PREFACE

This is our special edition of Current Affairs Magazine for various Central & State level Competitive Examinations, covering content from the month of December 2023.

The Magazine is divided into three sections:

Section 1: Topic Wise Current Affairs in Short

The first section is dedicated to Topic Wise Current Affairs with a short description to provide information about all major happenings this month.

Section 2: Practice Questions with Answers

The Second Section contains 150 Multiple Choice Questions based on daily current affairs.

Section 3: Detailed Analysis of important Event

The Third Section covers some major happenings in this month along with analysis. The content has been covered from various online & offline sources including reputed newspapers like The Hindu, Indian Express etc. All the news topics have been explained keeping in mind their underlying issues. Every issue has been covered comprehensively. Some of the information provided may not be directly relevant for the examination. As the content is very wide, we have only covered a limited set of issues. You can utilize it smartly along with Daily Study of News Papers as well as other sources.



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Section 1

Topic Wise Current Affairs

Section 2

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SECTION 1

Topic Wise Current Affairs in Short



1: Important Days



World AIDS Day : 01 December :-

World AIDS Day, marked annually on December 1st, is an international day dedicated to raising awareness of the AIDS pandemic caused by the spread of HIV infection. The World Health Organization (WHO) established World AIDS Day as an official worldwide health celebration in 1988. The day was created to provide a forum for governments, organizations, and individuals to promote awareness and take action against HIV/AIDS. It was the first-ever Global Health Day, and it was a significant step forward in the fight against the disease. The theme of the World AIDS Day 2023 is "Let communities lead".



National Pollution Control Day : 02 December :-

According to the National Health Portal of India, air pollution kills over 7 million people worldwide each year. Every year on December 2nd, the day is observed to raise awareness about the dangers posed by polluted water, land, and air. National Pollution Control Day is marked in memory of those who died in the Bhopal Gas Disaster on December 2, 1984. There are several factors that are

responsible for causing pollution like the bursting of crackers, vehicles running on the roads, bomb blasts, leakage of gases via industries, etc.



International Day For The Abolition of Slavery : 02 December :-

The United Nations General Assembly has designated December 2 as International Day for the Abolition of Slavery in order to raise awareness of the hazards of slavery, forced labor, child labor, sexual exploitation, and human trafficking, as well as to call for the abolition of modern-day slavery. Many people use this day to express themselves via works such as poetry, essays, interviews, feature pieces, stories, and other types of published material. The theme for this year's International Day for the Abolition of Slavery is - Fighting slavery's legacy of racism through transformative education.



World Computer Literacy Day

World Computer Literacy Day : 02 December :-

World Computer Literacy Day is observed on December 2. The Indian business National Institute of Information Technology (NIIT) initiated the tradition of celebrating

World Computer Literacy Day in 2001. The day was observed to commemorate the institute's 20th anniversary. Multiple members of Parliament were given computer training in the presence of then-Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee during an event in 2002 to spread the idea of digital literacy. It aims was to overcome the global digital divide affecting millions of people worldwide by improving the accessibility of computer knowledge.



International
Day of
Persons with
Disabilities

3 DECEMBER

International Day of Persons with Disabilities : 03 December:-

Every year on December 3rd, the International Day of Persons with Disabilities is observed. In 1992, the United Nations General Assembly passed Resolution 47/3, which established the International Day of Disabled Persons as an annual celebration. The commemoration of the Day strives to raise disability awareness and gather support for the dignity, rights, and general well-being of individuals with disabilities. The theme of the 2023 International Day of Persons with Disabilities (IDPD) is: "United in action to rescue and achieve the SDGs for, with and by persons with disabilities".



Indian Navy Day : 04 December :-

Every year on December 4, the country celebrates Navy Day with great zeal and pride. This memorable occasion commemorates the beginning of 'Operation Trident' by the Indian Navy to strike Karachi Harbour during the

1971 war between India and Pakistan. During the battle, Pakistan launched a nighttime assault on an Indian airbase on December 3. During Operation Trident, the Indian Navy fought heroically and sank four Pakistani ships, including the PNS Khaibar. Indian Navy Day also honors those who died in the course of making Operation Trident a success.



World Soil Day : 05 December :-

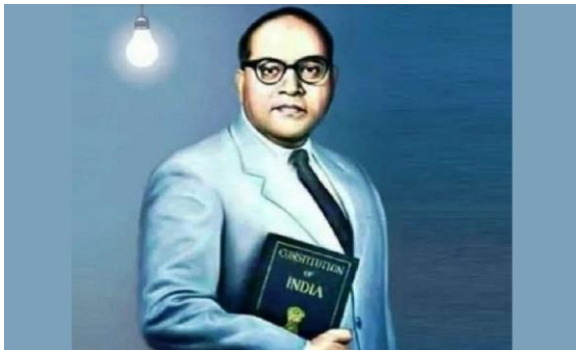
The World Soil Day (WSD) is commemorated on December 5 to emphasize the importance of healthy soil and to promote the sustainable management of soil resources. World Soil Day encourages people to think about how to manage soil resources in a sustainable way. Since the first World Soil Day in 2014, the Global Soil Partnership (GSP) has piqued the interest of soil specialists and amateurs alike, implying that more people are connecting and working together to preserve soils with each passing year. From 42 events in 2014 to roughly 781 celebrations in 125 countries in 2021, the interest in World Soil Day has increased manifold. World Soil Day 2023 is centered around the theme, 'Soil and water, a source of life.'



International Volunteer Day : 05 December :-

Every year on December 5, International Volunteer Day is commemorated to encourage the role of volunteers at the national and worldwide levels in accomplishing

sustainable development goals. This day honors the contributions of volunteers worldwide. The UNGA declared 2001 the International Year of Volunteers (IYV) in order to promote volunteerism. The day is significant as it achieves goals on local, national and international levels and the United Nations provides the opportunity to volunteer by promoting volunteerism across the globe to achieve Sustainable Development goals(SDGs). "The power of collective action: if everyone did" is theme of the 2023 International Volunteer Day.



BR Ambedkar's death anniversary : 06 December :-

Today, December 6, 2023, marks the death anniversary of Dr. Bhim Rao Ambedkar, the father of the Indian Constitution. This is also known as Mahaparinirvan Diwas. He was regarded as one of the most important social reformers. He made significant contributions to India's progressive attitude. He stood up to social discrimination. On December 6, 1956, Dr. Baba Saheb Ambedkar passed away. He became the first Minister of Law and Justice, and helped in shaping the Constitution of India and after this he established the Bahishkrit Hitakarini Sabha at Mumbai in 1924 to help address and ease the difficulties faced by the untouchables and educated them.



Armed Forces Flag Day : 07 December :-

Since 1949, Armed Forces Flag Day is observed on December 7 across the country with an aim to collect funds from people for the betterment of the Armed Forces Staff. This day has become a tradition as a tribute to India's soldiers, sailors, and airmen. The yearly event is aimed at providing rehabilitation to war victims, as well as resettlement and the well-being of ex-servicemen personnel. As a result, the Armed Forces Flag Day ceremony strengthens the cultural bond between Indians and Armed Forces personnel.

International CIVIL AVIATION DAY 07 December



International Civil Aviation Day : 07 December :-

Observed on December 7 annually, the aim behind celebrating the International Civil Aviation Day is to create awareness across the world about the importance of international civil aviation to the social and economic development of States. International Civil Aviation Day began to be observed on December 7, 1994, to commemorate the International Civil Aviation Organization's 50th anniversary of signing the Convention on International Civil Aviation. The theme of International Civil Aviation Day 2023 is "Advancing Innovation for Global Aviation Development".



International Anti-Corruption Day : 09 December :-

Every year, International Anti-Corruption Day is observed to guarantee that people unite to combat corruption and create society free of it. Corruption, according to the

United Nations, is a serious crime that can jeopardize social and economic progress in all communities. Corruption affects every country, area, and group. It can be found all over the world, whether it is political, social, or economic in nature, and it threatens and undermines democratic institutions, contributes to governmental instability, and inhibits economic development. The theme of the International Anti-Corruption Day 2023 is 'UNCAC at 20: Uniting the World Against Corruption.'



Human Rights Day : 10 December :-

The 10th of December is observed globally as Human Rights Day to commemorate the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) on this date in 1948. It was accepted and declared by the United Nations General Assembly as a universal norm to preserve and promote human rights regardless of caste, gender, race, creed, language, political belief, or other status. The NHRC, India is organizing a program on the 10th of December, 2023, at Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi at 10 am to celebrate Human Rights Day. The chosen theme for the 2023 celebrations is “Freedom, Equality, and Justice for All.”



International Mountain Day : 11 December :-

Every year on December 11th, the International Mountain Day is held to promote global awareness about the importance of mountains and the need to conserve and properly manage these critical ecosystems. Mountain freshwater is essential to more than half of humanity's daily life. 80% of the world's food is supplied by 20 plant species, six of which originated and diversified in the mountains: maize, potatoes, barley, sorghum, tomatoes, and apples. “Restoring mountain ecosystems” is the theme of this year's International Mountain Day.



UNICEF Day : 11 December :-

Every year on December 11, UNICEF Day is observed. The acronym UNICEF refers for United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund, and the organization's mission is to save children's lives by delivering humanitarian relief around the world. It also protects children's rights and assists them in reaching their full potential from childhood to adolescence. UNICEF was founded after World War II and became a permanent organization in 1953. The theme for UNICEF Day 2023 is “For every child, every right.”



National Energy Conservation Day : 14 December :-

Every year on December 14, the National Energy Conservation Day is observed to convey the message

about the necessity of conserving energy and to highlight the nation's achievements in energy efficiency and conservation. On December 14, 2023, the President of India, Smt. Droupadi Murmu, will attend the National Energy Conservation Day 2023 celebration at Vigyan Bhawan in New Delhi. The National Energy Conservation Day and the Awards are being organized by the Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE), under Ministry of Power, Government of India, which is mandated as per the Energy Conservation Act 2001, to regulate and promote energy efficiency and its conservation in India.



Vijay Diwas : 16 December :-

On December 16, the nation commemorates India's triumph over Pakistan in the 1971 war with Vijay Diwas. The Indian Army lost 3,900 courageous assets during the 1971 battle. Aside from the soldiers who risked their lives for the sake of the country, as many as 9800 soldiers were gravely injured during the fight. On December 16, 1971, India emerged victorious after bringing 93000 Pakistani soldiers to their knees. Affixing to the surrender of the Pakistani Army, India also ensured the independence of Bangladesh which was erstwhile known as East Pakistan.



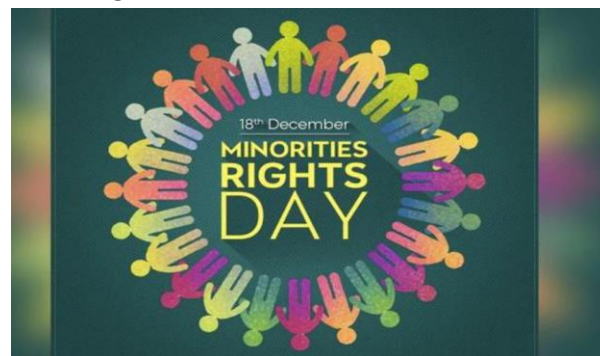
International Tea Day : 16 December :-

The first International Tea Day was held in 2005 in New Delhi, India's capital. There is some uncertainty over the actual date of International Tea Day. Although the United Nations General Assembly recognized December 15 as International Tea Day, it is worth noting that May 21 had previously been designated as International Tea Day. The goal of the United Nations-designated International Tea Day on December 15 is to honour the global cultural and economic significance of tea while highlighting its influence on livelihoods and sustainability.



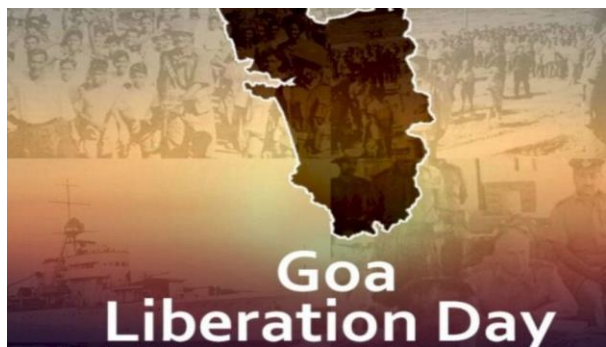
International Migrants Day : 18 December :-

Every year on December 18, International Migrants Day is honored. It has been observed that more people today reside in countries other than the one in which they were born. According to the UN, the worldwide migrant population in 2019 is estimated to be 272 million, up from 51 million in 2010. Taking into account the world's huge and growing number of migrants, the United Nations General Assembly declared December 18 as International Migrants Day on December 4, 2000. In 1990, on this day, the Assembly adopted the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families.



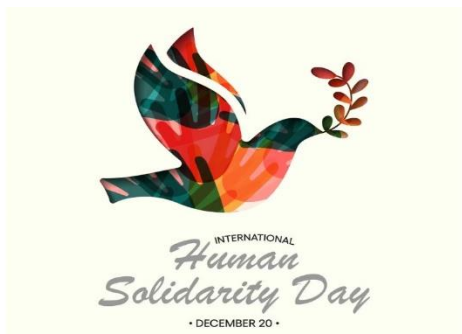
Minorities Rights Day in India : 18 December :-

Every year on December 18th, Minorities Rights Day is marked in India to preserve the rights of minority populations. Every country has many ethnic, linguistic, and religious minority groups. The Indian Constitution guarantees equal rights to all citizens and has enacted many provisions to protect the rights of linguistic, ethnic, cultural, and religious minorities. On 29 January 2006, the Ministry of Minority Affairs is carved out of the Ministry of Social Justice & Environment to ensure a more focused approach towards the issues relating to the notified minority communities namely Muslim, Christian, Buddhist, Sikhs, Parsis, and Jain.



Goa's Liberation Day : 19 December :-

On December 19, 'Goa Liberation Day' is observed to commemorate the state's liberation from Portuguese domination in 1961. As part of Operation Vijay, the Indian armed forces employed the armed forces trinity, along with local resistance formations, to end European authority in India. Goa attained freedom 14 years after India gained independence from Portuguese domination. Jawaharlal Nehru dispatched armed soldiers to the coastal state on December 19, 1961. The Portuguese surrendered and the state was liberated. As a result, Goa, Daman, and Diu became Union Territories of India.



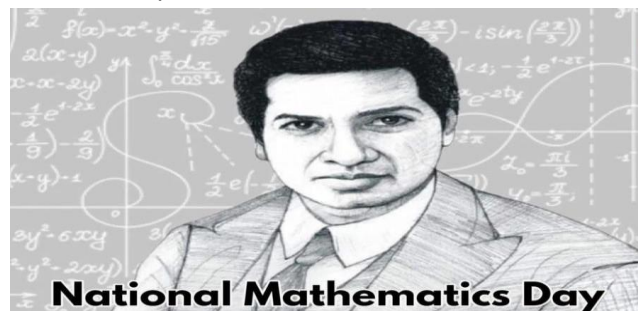
International Human Solidarity Day : 20 December :-

International Human Solidarity Day is an annual commemoration that promotes the value of togetherness, cooperation, and shared responsibility in addressing global concerns. It serves as a reminder that by working together in solidarity, we can make the world a better place for everyone and achieve common goals such as peace, social justice, and sustainable development. International Human Solidarity Day was established by the United Nations General Assembly in 2005 to promote the concept of solidarity as a fundamental value for the advancement of humankind.



World Saree Day : 21 December :-

Every year on December 21, the world celebrates World Saree Day. Sarees are highly known around the world for their rich history and heritage, as well as their popularity in India. For a vast section of the world's population, sarees represent more than just a piece of clothing. This festival primarily honors weavers who have honed their abilities over many generations in order to better their experience. Sarees have existed for thousands of years, and we are now seeing them develop into a rich source of artistic expression.



National Mathematics Day : 22 December :-

Every year on December 22nd, National Mathematics Day is observed to commemorate the birth anniversary

of famed Indian mathematician Srinivasa Ramanujan. The day honors and celebrates his contributions. On this day in 1887, the brilliant mathematician Srinivasa Ramanujan was born in Erode, Tamil Nadu, to a Tamil Brahmin Iyengar family. Dr. Manmohan Singh, the former Prime Minister of India, paid tribute to Srinivasa Ramanujan in 2012 during a gathering in Chennai commemorating the famous mathematician Srinivasa Iyengar Ramanujan's birth anniversary. 22 December was declared National Mathematics Day. Thus, on 22 December 2012, National Mathematics Day was celebrated across the country for the first time.



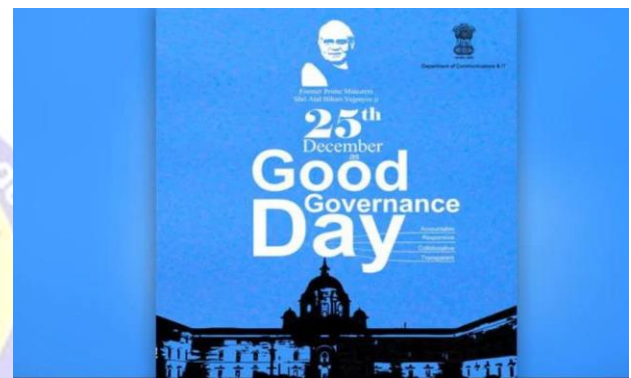
Kisan Diwas : 23 December :-

Kisan Diwas, or National Farmer's Day, is observed yearly on December 23 to commemorate the birth anniversary of former Prime Minister Chaudhary Charan Singh. He was India's fifth Prime Minister and is remembered for his contributions to the upliftment of farmers throughout the country. He was a farm leader who implemented numerous programs to better the life of farmers in India. He was born in Noorpur in 1902. His short continuance at the pinnacle has showcased a swing of agricultural reforms and policies introduced in India.



National Consumer Rights Day : 24 December :-

Every year on December 24, National Consumer Rights Day is observed to raise awareness about consumer rights and responsibilities. The Consumer Protection Act was passed in 1986 and gained the President's approval on December 24, 1986. The Consumer Protection Act safeguards consumers against defective goods, irresponsible services, and unfair business activities. The six fundamental rights of the Consumer Protection Act are Right to safety, Right to choose, Right to be informed, Right to be heard, Right to seek redressal and Right to consumer education.



Good Governance Day (India) : 25 December :-

In 2014, the then-newly elected Narendra Modi government declared December 25 to be "Good Governance Day." The Good Governance Day is marked to promote the welfare and advancement of the people on the birth anniversary of former Prime Minister and Bharatiya Janata Party doyen Atal Bihari Vajpayee. The day aims to ensure that the country's administration is extremely effective and accountable to its residents. It also aims to bring citizens closer to the government and to make them active participants in the process of good governance.



Veer Bal Diwas : 26 December :-

On 9th January 2022, the day of Sri Guru Gobind Singh Ji's Prakash Purab, the Hon. Prime Minister stated that the 26th of December will be marked as 'Veer Bal Diwas', to commemorate the martyrdom of Sri Guru Gobind Singh's sons, Sahibzadas Baba Zorawar Singh Ji and Baba Fateh Singh Ji. Anandpur Sahib was the birthplace of Guru Gobind Singh Sahib Ji's youngest sons, Sahibzada Baba Zorawar Singh Ji and Sahibzada Baba Fateh Singh Ji. The date was chosen to mark the sacrifice of the youngest Sahibzade. Though all four attained martyrdom, 26 Dec marks the sacrifice of Sahibzadas Zorawar Singh and Fateh Singh, at the tender ages of six and nine.



International Day of Epidemic Preparedness : 27 December :-

Around the world, December 27 is recognized as International Day of Epidemic Preparedness. The United Nations General Assembly established December 27 to be the International Day of Epidemic Preparedness in a

resolution voted on December 7, 2020. The United Nations General Assembly established the day to underscore the importance of epidemic prevention, preparedness, and collaboration. The need for systems to prevent, detect, and respond to infectious disease outbreaks was deemed necessary in light of COVID-19.



New Year's Eve - 31 December:-

In the Gregorian calendar, New Year's Eve, also known as Old Year's Day, is the evening or the entire day of the last day of the year. The celebrations generally go on past midnight into New Year's Day, 1 January. The celebration of New Year's Eve on December 31st has deep historical roots, intertwined with various cultural and religious practices across civilizations. One significant influence is the ancient Roman calendar, which originally designated March as the first month of the year. However, this changed with the introduction of the Julian calendar by Julius Caesar in 45 BCE.

2: Agreements



Ujjivan SFB Partners with Water.org to offer Water, Sanitation & Hygiene Loans :-

Ujjivan Small Finance Bank (Ujjivan SFB) has announced a relationship with Water.org, a global non-profit organization that provides cheap funding, such as small loans, to help people get access to safe water and sanitation. India has the world's largest population, and this collaboration has enormous promise in terms of providing inexpensive finance solutions for safe water and sanitation solutions to the masses. Under the partnership, Water.org will assist Ujjivan SFB in identifying areas that require financing for clean water and hygienic sanitation.



RBI Inks Pact With Bank Of England On Bond Clearing Settlement :-

The RBI and the Bank of England have signed a memorandum of understanding, removing ambiguity about UK banks' capacity to participate in the Indian bond market. The UK regulator will rely on the RBI's supervision to recognize the Clearing Corporation of India as a viable counterparty for British banks, according to this agreement. The MoU facilitates the exchange of information between the two central banks and establishes a framework for Bank of England to place reliance on RBI's regulatory and supervisory activities while ensuring the stability of the UK financial system.



Indian Oil And EKI Energy Ink Deal To Promote 'Surya Nutan' :-

EKI Energy Services, a global carbon credit creator and provider, and Indian Oil Corporation, a state-owned refiner, have joined forces to promote a sustainable indoor solar cooking system. According to an EKI release, EKI Energy Services and Indian Oil Corporation (IndianOil) have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to this effect. According to the statement, this strategic collaboration aims to promote 'Surya Nutan', IndianOil's innovative indoor solar cooking system. IndianOil, the country's largest fuel refiner and retailer, has a prominent presence across the entire hydrocarbon value chain, it stated.



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REC Signs 200M Euro Loan With German Bank KfW For Distribution Sector Reforms :-

The state-owned infrastructure finance corporation, REC Ltd, announced the signing of a 200 million Euro credit agreement with the German bank KfW. This is REC's sixth line of credit under the Indo-German Development Cooperation and underlines the company's commitment to improving discoms' (distribution companies') distribution infrastructure in accordance with the Government of India's (GoI's) Revamped Distribution Sector Scheme (RDSS). REC Limited, established in 1969 under the Ministry of Power, provides long-term loans and other finance products for the Power-Infrastructure sector.



Tata Power, Indian Oil Ink Deal For 500+ EV Charging Points At Pumps :-

Tata Power EV Charging Solutions Limited (TPEVCSL), a Tata Power Group firm, and Indian Oil Corporation (IOCL) have agreed to build over 500 fast and ultra-quick electric vehicle (EV) charging stations across India. These charging stations will be put at a variety of IOCL retail locations. The company said EV users will have a dual advantage of charging their vehicles via 'Tata Power EZ Charge' app as well as 'IndianOil e-Charge' mobile app that can be used to locate and book the chargers at their convenience.



India And Oman Fast-Track Free Trade Agreement Negotiations In Boost To Economic Ties:-

According to persons familiar with the subject, a planned comprehensive free trade agreement (FTA) between India and Oman is moving along quickly, with a team of officials from the department of commerce in Muscat for negotiations. The Commerce and Industry Ministry is seeking advice from various stakeholders in order to strengthen its negotiating position for the India-Oman Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA), which may greatly increase the country's yearly exports worth \$4.3 billion. India and the UAE had signed a comprehensive economic partnership agreement (CEPA) in February 2022.



SBI Signed 70 Million Euro LoC With KfW For Solar Projects :-

State Bank of India (SBI) announced a 70 million euro (about Rs 630 crore) Line of Credit (LoC) agreement with German Development Bank KfW to promote solar projects in the nation. According to a regulatory filing, the deal was inked on December 14 at the bank's IFSC Gift City Branch in Ahmedabad. According to the agreement, the LoC is intended to support solar photovoltaic (PV) projects in India. The country's largest lender SBI reported a 9.13 per cent growth in

consolidated net profit for the September quarter to Rs 16,099.58 crore as against Rs 14,752 crore in the year-ago period.



Aditya Birla Sun Life And IDFC First Bank Collaborate On Financial Solutions :-

Aditya Birla Sun Life Insurance and IDFC First Bank have formed a bancassurance alliance to provide insurance products to the bank's customers. The insurer will benefit from IDFC First Bank's broad distribution network as a result of this agreement. The collaboration will offer customers a one-stop shop for all of their financial needs, including a variety of insurance and banking products, and will improve the customer experience. The two organisations will also collaborate to create financial solutions that cater to the changing needs of customers, they said in a joint release.



Ministry Of Rural Development Collaborates With JioMart To Expand Reach Of Self-Help Groups' Products :-

The Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD) has inked a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with Reliance Retail's JioMart as part of its attempts to expand the reach of Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana-National Rural Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NRLM) products. This would bring SHGs under MoRD's SARAS collection brand into JioMart, where they will provide a variety of handlooms

and handicrafts products ranging from traditional textiles to pantry, home décor, and beauty products. JioMart will also help set-up and support them to navigate and operate their account on the marketplace.



India-ASEAN Trade Pact Undergoes Review For Modernization In February :-

In February, India and the ten-member ASEAN will begin talks to "modernize" their decade-and-a-half-old free trade agreement (FTA) and bring greater balance to the accord, which is now tilted against New Delhi. However, new sectors such as labor, the environment, SMEs, and gender are likely to be excluded, according to sources. The first round of negotiations for reviewing the FTA, officially known as the ASEAN India Trade in Goods Agreement (AITGA), will be on February 18-19 in New Delhi, the source said. The negotiations will follow a quarterly schedule to wrap up the exercise by 2025.



India's Migration and Mobility Agreement with Italy approved by Union Cabinet :-

India's Migration and Mobility Agreement with Italy received ex-post facto approval from the Union Cabinet on 27 December 2023. The pact between the two nations signed on November 2, would ensure temporary residence for Indian students in Italy for up to one year after studies to gather professional experience. The bill seeks to enhance people-to-people contacts, foster mobility of students, skilled workers, business people, and young professionals, and strengthen cooperation on issues related to irregular migration between the two sides.



Reliance Jio collaborates with IIT Bombay to develop 'Bharat GPT'.:-

India's Reliance Jio Infocomm, the telecom arm of the Reliance Industries Group, is working with the Indian Institute of Technology Bombay to develop an artificial intelligence project called 'Bharat GPT'. The joint project is looking to develop a large-language model tailored to India's needs. Reliance Jio is also planning to launch an operating system (OS) for televisions. Reliance Jio is also planning to launch a host of products and services in media space, commerce, communication and devices.

3: Appointments



Sheshadri Appointed IDRCL Chair, Incumbent Gupta To Head NARCL :-

According to persons familiar with the situation, former KPMG managing partner Narayan Seshadri will take over as chairman of the India Debt Resolution Co Ltd (IDRCL), the agent to the government-backed bad bank, after the company's board authorized the nomination. Diwakar Gupta recently resigned as chairman of IDRCL to take a job at parent company National Asset Reconstruction Co Ltd (NARCL). Seshadri, a chartered accountant, is a financial sector veteran with experience in buying and turning around distressed companies.



Kanchan Devi Becomes First Woman Director General Of ICFRE :-

Kanchan Devi, a Madhya Pradesh cadre Indian Forest Service Officer from the 1991 batch, has been appointed as the Director General (DG) of the Indian Council of Forestry Research Education (ICFRE). Kanchan is the first woman to serve on the Union Ministry of Environment, Forests, and Climate Change's Premier Council. With its headquarters in Dehradun, the ICFRE is the country's leading organization for advising the Government of

India, the state governments and other stakeholders like farmers, industries and academicians.



Jithesh John Assumes Role As IBBI Executive Director :-

According to a press statement, Jithesh John, a 2001 batch Indian Economic Service Officer, has been appointed Executive Director of the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India (IBBI). John previously worked as an economic adviser at the Ministry of Power. John has a master's degree in economics. He has served in various roles in the Government of India for over 21 years. He has worked in various sectors such as financial, energy, infrastructure and small and medium enterprises. In October, IBBI announced that Sandip Garg has taken charge as a Whole Time Member.



Max Life Insurance Appoints Rajiv Anand As Chairman :-

Rajiv Anand is the new Chairman of Max Life Insurance, a substantial subsidiary of Max Financial Services. This follows Analjit Singh's resignation from the Chairmanship and Board of Directors of Max Life Insurance. The Max Life Insurance Board of Directors accepted Analjit Singh's

retirement and authorized the appointment of Rajiv Anand as Chairman of the Board, according to a filing with the stock exchanges by Max Financial Services. Before this elevation, Anand, a non-executive director of Max Life, was nominated by Axis Bank Ltd as Chairman of Max Life Insurance.



Anand Kripalu Takes The Charge As Chairperson And Independent Director At Swiggy :-

Swiggy has announced the appointment of Anand Kripalu as an independent director and board chairperson. Kripalu is the managing director and global CEO of EPL Ltd (previously Essel Propack Limited) and has over 40 years of expertise in the fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) market. He was previously the managing director and CEO of Diageo India. He has also held leadership roles at Mondelez International (formerly Cadbury) and Unilever. Kripalu holds a bachelor of technology in Electronics from IIT, Madras, and an MBA from IIM, Calcutta.



Israel Appoints Reuven Azar As New Ambassador To India With Expanded Diplomatic Role :-

The Israeli cabinet has confirmed Reuven Azar's appointment as the country's new Ambassador to India. According to an Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs release, Azar will also serve as the non-resident Ambassador to

Sri Lanka and Bhutan. His appointment is one of 21 new Heads of Mission approved by the Israeli government for immediate duty. Foreign Minister Eli Cohen, congratulating the new appointees, said they will 'represent Israel and its citizens, strengthen its economy and strengthen international support for the State of Israel'.



ICICI Bank Secures RBI Nod For Sandeep Batra's Re-Appointment As Executive Director :-

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has approved the re-appointment of Sandeep Batra as executive director (ED) of private sector lender ICICI Bank. "RBI vide its letter approved the re-appointment of Sandeep Batra as Executive Director of the bank with effect from December 23, 2023 to December 22, 2025," the bank said in a statement. On May 29, the bank's shareholders accepted Batra's nomination as ED for five years, commencing from the date of RBI approval. The effective date of the same was from December 23.



Sanjay Singh Becomes New Chief Of Wrestling Federation Of India (WFI) :-

Sanjay Singh was elected president of the Wrestling Federation of India (WFI) after his panel easily won the majority of the positions in the postponed elections, as outgoing leader Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh obtained

indirect control of the sporting body. The much-delayed elections to the Wrestling Federation of India were finally held with little surprise and the results and responses on expected lines as the supporters of former president Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh swept into power with a thumping majority.



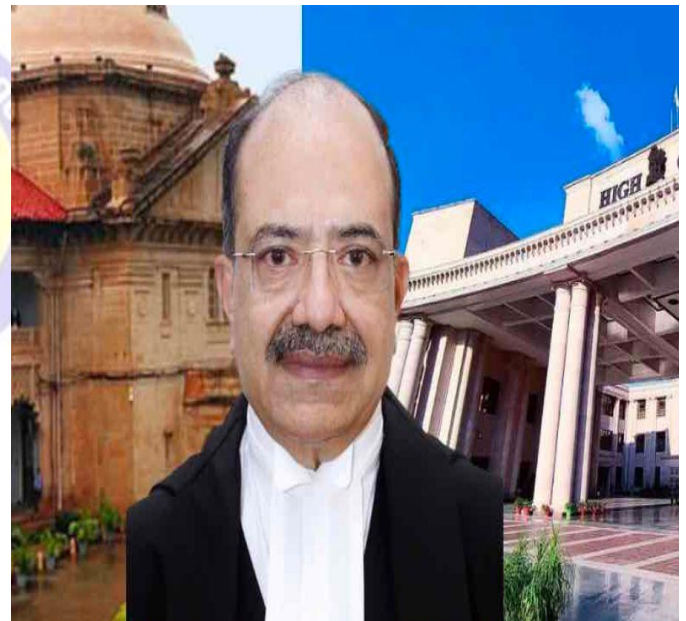
RBI Grants Approval For Satish Kumar Kalra As MD & CEO Of Slice-Backed North East SFB :-

Satish Kumar Kalra has been named interim managing director (MD) and chief executive officer (CEO) of Bengaluru-based finetch Slice-backed North East Small Finance Bank (NESFB). The appointment was approved by the bank's board of directors and the Reserve Bank of India, according to NESFB. Kalra is a banking industry veteran with over four decades of expertise. Kalra was previously working as the MD and CEO of Andhra Bank, where he drove significant growth achieving a 13% compound annual growth rate in credit and added over 1200 branches.



Nina Singh Becomes 1st Woman Appointed As CISF Chief :-

Three Manipur-cadre Indian Police Service (IPS) officers were appointed as chiefs of central paramilitary forces on 28 December 2023 with Nina Singh becoming the first woman to head the Central Industrial Security Force (CISF). A 1989-batch IPS officer, Singh currently serves as the Special Director General of CISF. Meanwhile, the Appointments Committee of the Cabinet has approved Intelligence Bureau officer Rahul Rasgotra's appointment as Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) chief and Anish Dayal Singh has been made the Director General of the CRPF.



Justice Arun Bhansali appointed as the Chief Justice of the Allahabad High Court:-

The Supreme Court Collegium, headed by Chief Justice of India D.Y. Chandrachud, has recommended the appointment of Justice Arun Bhansali as the Chief Justice of the Allahabad High Court. Justice Bhansali was appointed as a Judge of the Rajasthan High Court in January 2013. Before his elevation as the judge, he practised at the Jodhpur bench of the Rajasthan HC in civil, company, Constitutional and taxation cases. The vacancy in the office of the Chief Justice of the Allahabad High Court has arisen consequent upon the retirement of Justice Pritinker Diwaker.

4: Awards



ISRO Scientist VR Lalithambika Awarded France's Highest Civilian Award :-

V R Lalithambika, former Director of the Human Spaceflight Programme at ISRO, was awarded the highest French civilian honor, the Legion d'Honneur, for her contributions to France-India space collaboration. On behalf of the French government, the prize was presented to her by Thierry Mathou, Ambassador of France to India. Created in 1802 by Napoleon Bonaparte, the Legion d'Honneur (the Legion of Honour) is the highest civilian award given by the French Republic for outstanding service to France, regardless of the nationality of the recipients.



President Droupadi Murmu Confers President's Colour to Armed Forces Medical College at Pune :-

President Droupadi Murmu, who also serves as the Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces, bestowed the President's Colour on the Armed Forces Medical College (AFMC) in Pune. The President advised women interested in a career in the Indian Armed Forces to take inspiration from Armed Forces Medical College heroes and alumni. President's Colour, also known as

'Rashtrapati ka Nishaan', is the highest honour that can be bestowed upon any military unit. One of the highlights of the ceremonial parade was that women medical officers led the four contingents of the Armed Forces Medical Services personnel serving in the Army, Navy and Air Force.



ISRO And Team Chandrayaan-3 Honoured For Outstanding Contribution To Brand India :-

On August 23, India's Chandrayaan-3 completed a historic lunar landing, making India the first country to reach the Lunar South Pole. The mission's accomplishment, a monument to India's technological prowess, has cemented India's position as a space giant. Notably, this accomplishment was not only recognized in the scholarly community, but also in the economic sector. The Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) and the Chandrayaan-3 team were recently honored with the "Outstanding Contribution to Brand India" award at the 19th India Business Leader Awards (IBLA), held in Mumbai.



Indian-origin novelist awarded Singapore's highest arts accolade :-

Meira Chand, an Indian-origin writer, was one of three Singaporeans to receive the Cultural Medallion, the city-state's highest arts honor. The award honors artistic brilliance as well as contributions to the enrichment of Singapore's arts and cultural landscape. President Tharman Shanmugaratnam presented the award to Chand, novelist Suchen Christine Lim, and Malay dancing veteran Osman Abdul Hamid. The Cultural Medallion comes with an SGD 80,000 grant for each recipient. Chand, of Swiss-Indian parentage, is the first English-language female writer to receive the award since 1997.



Prashant Agrawal Receives National Award For 'Best Personality- Empowerment Of Differently-Abled' :-

President Draupadi Murmu presented Prashant Agrawal, President of Narayan Seva Sansthan, with the coveted National Award for 'Best Personality- Empowerment of Differently-abled' at a ceremony organized by the Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities. The event, held at Vigyan Bhavan, New Delhi, witnessed the presence of dignitaries including Dr Virendra Kumar, Minister of Social Justice and Empowerment, along with Ramdas Athawale, Pratima Bhoumik, and A. Narayan Swami.



Federal Bank Titled "Bank Of The Year 2023" In India : The Banker :-

Federal Bank, a notable financial institution, has been honored with the coveted title of "Bank of the Year (India)" by The Banker, a recognized newspaper published under the Financial Times umbrella. This honor, one of only a few global honors recognizing banks on a global scale, recognizes Federal Bank's exceptional dedication to innovation, customer-centric services, and excellent achievements to the banking industry during the past year. A standout initiative that caught the industry's attention was the introduction of the Digital Personal Loan by Federal Bank.



Nikhil Dey Named '2023 International Anti-Corruption Champion' By The US Government :-

Nikhil Dey, an Indian social activist, was named one of 11 International Anti-Corruption Champions for 2023 by the US government, noting his decades-long work to create peasant and worker empowerment campaigns and expose corruption in government service delivery. Dey is a co-founder of the Mazdoor Kisan Shakti Sangathan (MKSS), an anti-corruption and transparency organization in India. The organisation is primarily based in Rajasthan that has led workers' and peasants' struggles for minimum wages and transparency.



Veteran Actor Kabir Bedi Awarded Italy's Civilian Honour 'Order Of Merit' :-

In Mumbai, veteran actor Kabir Bedi was awarded the Order of Merit of the Italian Republic. He expressed his delight and appreciation for being awarded Italy's highest distinction. One of Italy's highest distinctions is the "Order of Merit of the Italian Republic," also known as "Merito della Repubblica Italiana" in Italian. Established on March 3, 1951, the order is bestowed to individuals who have made significant contributions to various fields, including arts, literature, economy, public service, and social, philanthropic, and humanitarian activities.



Ban Ki-Moon Honored With 2023 Diwali 'Power Of One' Award At UN :-

Former UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon and three senior diplomats were honored at the UN with the annual 'Diwali Power of One Awards,' dubbed the "Oscars of diplomacy," for their selfless efforts to "help shape a more perfect, peaceful, and secure world for all." Former permanent representative of Bosnia and Herzegovina to the UN Ambassador Mirsada Colakovic, former permanent representative of South Korea to the UN Ambassador Kim Sook, and 72nd UN General Assembly president and EU Special Representative for the Belgrade-Pristina Dialogue Miroslav Lajcak are the other awardees for 2023.



Mohammed Shami Nominated For Arjuna Award, Satwiksairaj-Chirag For Khel Ratna :-

Pacer Mohammed Shami, one of the architects of India's near successful World Cup campaign, has been nominated for this year's Arjuna Award, while men's doubles badminton pair Satwik Sairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty have been shortlisted for the Major Dhyan Chand Khel Ratna Award. Shami, 33, had a phenomenal run in the ODI World Cup, when India finished second, losing to Australia in the final. As per the ministry's sources, a special request was made by the BCCI to the sports ministry to include Shami's name as originally he didn't feature in the list of the country's second-highest sporting honour.



Noted Hindi Writer Pushpa Bharati To Receive 33rd Vyas Samman :-

Pushpa Bharati, a well-known Hindi writer, will get the 33rd Vyas Samman this year. The KK Birla Foundation established the award in 1991. It is granted each year to an outstanding work of Hindi literature by an Indian citizen that has been published during the last ten years. According to the Foundation, Ms Bharati was chosen for her memoirs Yaadein, Yaadein, aur Yaadein. The foundation added that she would be felicitated with an amount of four lakh rupees, a citation, and a plaque.



Indira Gandhi Peace Prize Awarded To Daniel Barenboim And Ali Abu Awwad” :-

Daniel Barenboim and Ali Abu Awwad have been jointly awarded the Indira Gandhi Prize for Peace, Disarmament, and Development for their work in bringing together the youth and peoples of Israel and the Arab World for a nonviolent resolution of the Israel-Palestine issue. Mr. Barenboim and Mr. Awwad have fostered meaningful, mutual social and cultural understanding, and peaceful public cooperation through the tools of music, dialogue, and people's participation, according to the International Jury of the Indira Gandhi Prize for Peace, Disarmament, and Development, chaired by former Chief Justice of India T.S. Thakur.



Javed Akhtar to Receive Padmapani Lifetime Achievement Award at Ajanta-Ellora Film Festival :-

The Padmapani Lifetime Achievement Award will be presented to veteran lyricist-screenwriter Javed Akhtar at the Ajanta-Ellora Film Festival. According to a press release, Akhtar, the co-writer of Hindi movie masterpieces such as "Zanjeer", "Deewaar", "Sholay", "Don", "Kaala Patthar" and "Mr India", would be honored for his contribution to the Indian film industry on the first day of the festival's ninth edition. On January 3, 2024, the award ceremony will be held in Rukmini Auditorium on the MGM University campus in Chhatrapati Sambhajinagar.



Dr. Srinivas Naik Dharavath Receives Visionary Leader Icon 2023 Award :-

Real Vision Homes Pvt Ltd is pleased to announce that its renowned Chairman, Dr. Srinivas Naik Dharavath, has been awarded the Advocates Association For Social Responsibility And Awareness (AASRAA) Visionary Leader Icon Award of the Year 2023. The coveted prize was presented at the Constitution Club of India's 5th National Summit in New Delhi. The 5th National Summit of AASRAA served as the perfect platform to acknowledge and honor Dr. Srinivas Naik Dharavath's significant contributions.



NTPC Kanti Receives FICCI Water Award 2023 For Industrial Water Use Efficiency:-

NTPC Kanti has won the 11th Edition of the FICCI Water Award 2023 in the category of "Industrial Water Use Efficiency." The award was handed to NTPC Kanti at the FICCI Federation House in New Delhi during the inaugural event of the 9th Edition of India Industry Water Conclave. Shri G Asok Kumar, Director General of the Government of India's National Mission for Clean Ganga, and Ms. Naina Lal Kidwai, Chairperson of the FICCI Water Mission, presented the award. The award recognizes NTPC Kanti's exceptional efforts in water conservation and efficient use of water resources in its operations.



IREDA's Pradip Kumar Das Wins 'CMD Of The Year' For The Second Straight Year:-

Pradip Kumar Das, Chairman and Managing Director of Indian Renewable Energy Development Agency Limited (IREDA), was named with the esteemed "CMD of the Year" in the Mini-Ratna category at the 13th PSE Excellence Awards, held in New Delhi by the Indian Chamber of Commerce. This prestigious recognition marks the second consecutive financial year in which Shri Pradip Kumar Das has received this accolade, acknowledging his exceptional leadership that has boosted the company's growth.



ISRO's Chandrayaan-3 Moon Mission Earns Leif Erikson Lunar Prize :-

The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) has been awarded the Leif Erikson Lunar Prize for its indomitable spirit in promoting lunar exploration and contributing to the knowledge of celestial secrets, as well as to commemorate the first soft landing of Chandrayaan 3. This is ISRO's first time receiving this award. It is in recognition of the first soft landing of a spacecraft near the Lunar South Pole and ISRO's unwavering commitment to advancing lunar exploration. On behalf of ISRO, this was received by the Indian Ambassador to Iceland Ambassador B Shyam from the Exploration Museum in Husavik (Iceland).



UNESCO awards Rambagh Gate & Ramparts project highest honor :-

UNESCO has recognized the resilient urban revitalisation of Punjab's Rambagh Gate and Ramparts, as well as cultural conservation projects associated with Haryana's Church of the Epiphany and Delhi's Bikaner House. The Rambagh Gate and Ramparts project was awarded the highest distinction, the 'Award of Excellence,' for its inclusivity and accessibility to the larger community. Three projects, including the Church of Epiphany and Bikaner House, received an 'Award of Merit.' Twelve projects from China, India, and Nepal were acknowledged by the awards jury this year.



President Droupadi Murmu Awards Crompton For Energy Conservation 2023 :-

Crompton Greaves Consumer Electricals Ltd. (CGCEL), a renowned consumer electrical company in India, has been awarded the coveted National Energy Conservation Award 2023. On the occasion of National Energy Conservation Day, the President of India, Droupadi Murmu, and the Ministry of Power through its body Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE) bestowed the award. The company secured this achievement in the category of the Most Energy Efficient Appliance of the Year 2023 for its storage water heater.



Poet Sukrita Paul Kumar Wins Rabindranath Tagore Literary Prize For 'Salt & Pepper' :-

The Rabindranath Tagore Literary Prize was presented to poet-critic Sukrita Paul Kumar for her work 'Salt & Pepper: Selected Poems' in its sixth edition. Kumar received a USD 5,000 award, a Tagore statue, and a

diploma for her work in writing during the award event. Founded in 2018 by US-based publisher Peter Bundalo, the award is a platform for world peace, literature, art, education and human rights. It also recognises works towards human rights and world peace with the Social Achievement Prize.

5: Banking



RBI Fines Bank Of America, N.A., HDFC Bank :-

The Reserve Bank stated it fined Bank of America, N.A. and HDFC Bank Ltd Rs 10,000 each for violating certain criteria. The penalty was levied on Bank of America, N.A. for violating the Reserve Bank of India's instructions on reporting requirements under the Liberalised Remittance Scheme of FEMA 1999, according to a statement. In another statement, the central bank stated that the penalty imposed on HDFC Bank is for failing to follow instructions on accepting deposits from non-residents. Besides, penalties have been imposed on five cooperative banks for non-compliance with various regulatory norms.



RBI Cancels License Of Kolhapur Based Shankarrao Pujari Nutan Nagari Sahakari Bank Limited :-

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has revoked the license of Shankarrao Pujari Nutan Nagari Sahakari Bank Limited, Ichalkaranji, Kolhapur, because it lacks sufficient capital and earning potential. As a result, the bank will cease to provide banking operations as of the close of business on December 4, 2023, according to a statement. As per the data submitted by the bank, 99.85 per cent of the depositors are entitled to receive the full amount of their deposits from Deposit Insurance and Credit Guarantee Corporation (DICGC).



SBI Card Integrates With Bharat BillPay For Credit Cards :-

SBI Card has been onboarded by Bharat BillPay, a subsidiary of the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI), to simplify and manage the payment of credit card bills. All SBI cards clients will be able to pay and manage their credit card bill payments through all Bharat BillPay approved payment channels, including online via banks, payment applications, and physical locations. The other major credit card issuers under this category are Kotak Mahindra Bank, Bank Of Baroda Financial, Federal Bank, AU Small Finance Bank, IndusInd Bank and Canara Bank.



ACKO And PhonePe Collaborate To Make Insurance Accessible To Millions :-

ACKO General Insurance has partnered with PhonePe to provide comprehensive vehicle and bike insurance solutions to consumers directly through the PhonePe platform. This collaboration combines ACKO's customer-first strategy with PhonePe's enormous distribution network, making insurance a simple financial category for its users. The latest partnership API stack, designed for versatility and smooth integration, powers ACKO's integration with PhonePe. The API stack will enable swift and efficient collaborations with online distributors, ensuring that ACKO's personalised prices, innovative SKU and consistent experience are delivered to all partners, starting with PhonePe.



RBI Cancels License Of UP Based Urban Co-Operative Bank :-

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) announced the cancellation of the license of "Urban Co-operative Bank Ltd, Sitapur, Uttar Pradesh" because the bank lacked appropriate capital and earning potential and failed to comply with the Banking Act. "Consequently, the bank ceases to carry on banking business, with effect from the

close of business on December 7. The Commissioner and Registrar of Cooperative, Uttar Pradesh has also been requested to issue an order for winding up the bank and appoint a liquidator for the bank," the RBI said in a circular.



IDFC FIRST Bank Limited

IDFC FIRST Bank Unveils Youth-Centric "FIRST SWYP" Credit Card In Collaboration With Mastercard :-

In collaboration with Mastercard, IDFC FIRST Bank has launched the youth-focused "FIRST SWYP" credit card. According to a Bank statement, this card can be used as a no-interest charge card and includes tailored features such as flexible bill repayments via EMIs, a benefit-laden referral program, and exclusive and relevant retailer connections. The card will address demands of new-age customers, blending benefits across their favorite categories of spends and lifestyle-related offers and innovative propositions, it added.



RBI Raises UPI Limit For Healthcare And Education To Rs 5 Lakh :-

The RBI announced a Rs 5 lakh increase in the UPI transaction limit for hospitals and education sectors. For mutual fund subscriptions, insurance premiums, and card bills, the maximum for recurring digital payments without second-factor authentication has been increased to Rs 1 lakh. Customers can opt out at any

time. The RBI also plans to create a repository for fintechs to store important information. The Reserve Bank Innovation Hub aims to make the repository operational by April 2024.



RBI cautions against unauthorised campaigns on loan waiver :-

The Reserve Bank has warned the public not to be misled by false advertisements about debt waiver offers in print media or on social media platforms. The RBI stated in a statement that it has identified several misleading advertisements tempting borrowers with debt waivers. According to the report, these firms appear to be actively supporting numerous similar initiatives through print media as well as social media channels. There are also reports of such entities charging a service/legal fee for issuing 'debt waiver certificates' without any authority.



Bank Of India Launches Nari Shakti Savings Account For Women :-

The Bank of India has created the Nari Shakti Savings Account (NSSA), which is aimed at women aged 18 and up who have an independent source of income. Personal Accident Insurance coverage of up to Rs. 100 lakhs is included in the NSSA. Account holders can also receive discounts on Health Insurance and Wellness goods, as well as rebates on locker facilities for Gold and Diamond

savings accounts. For each new Nari Shakti Account opened, the bank will contribute Rs. 10/- towards the CSR fund. This fund is earmarked for the socio-economic development of underprivileged women and the girl child.



RBI Grants Authorization To Bandhan Bank For Pension Disbursement To Retired Railway Employees :-

Bandhan Bank has received permission from the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) to transfer pensions to retired railway employees on behalf of the Railway Ministry, according to a statement from the private sector bank. With around 12 lakh employees, Indian Railways is one of the country's top employers. It will provide the bank with access to all of its retirees as well as an extra 50,000 pensioners who join its ranks each year across the country. This includes the Indian Railway's 17 zonal offices and eight production units. The bank will soon integrate its payment system with the ministry to start the process.



IDFC FIRST Bank, LIC Cards, And Mastercard Introduce Exclusive Co-Branded Credit Card :-

IDFC FIRST Bank, LIC Cards, and Mastercard have announced an exclusive co-branded credit card agreement. The credit cards, which will be available in two varieties — LIC Classic and LIC Select — would allow more than 27 crore policyholders across the country to save in the form of reward points on every LIC insurance premium payment, the firms said in a joint statement. It

will also come with other benefits, including up to ₹50,000 cover for lost card liability and a personal accident insurance cover of up to ₹5 lakh.



Razorpay, Cashfree Secure RBI Approval To Operate As Payment Aggregators :-

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has lifted a one-year ban on new merchant onboarding for companies such as Razorpay and Cashfree. It has also given payment aggregator licenses to a number of firms in the process. Aside from these two, UPI payments giant Google Pay, Mumbai-based expenditure management business Enkash, payment gateway provider Paymentz, and neobanking startup Open have also received approval from the central bank. While the payment aggregator licence was thought to be routine initially, for the likes of Razorpay and Cashfree, it makes a big impact as they step out of the ban on bringing in new merchants.



RBI Boosts Liquidity Support In 7-Day VRR Auction :-

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has increased the amount it is willing to lend the banking sector in the 7-day variable rate repo (VRR) auction, which began on December 22, to Rs 1.75-lakh crore, up from Rs 1-lakh crore last week to assist banks in overcoming liquidity shortages. As on December 20, banking system liquidity deficit was near 8-year-high of Rs 2.27-lakh crore (without adjusting for daily cash reserve ratio

imbalances), per Nuvama Wealth Management's assessment. RBI conducted the last VRR auction in view of likely outflows from the banking system on account of advance tax and GST payments.



Innovative All-In-One Insurance Product, Bima Vistaar, To Debut In Q1 FY25 :-

Bima Vistaar, the first all-in-one cheap insurance policy for life, health, and property cover, is planned to launch in the first quarter of the next fiscal year. Bima Vistaar's introduction is notable because it is part of the "Insurance Trinity," which includes Bima Sugam, a one-stop digital platform; Bima Vistaar; and Bima Vahak, a women-led field distribution force. These are all significant components of IRDAI's ambition to attain universal insurance coverage by 2047 while also bridging existing gaps in product design, pricing, and distribution, among other things.



RBI Fines Four Gujarat Co-Operative Banks :-

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has imposed monetary fines ranging from Rs 50,000 to Rs 7 lakh on four cooperative banks for various non-compliances. The entities against which the penalties have been slapped are Progressive Mercantile Co-operative Bank Ltd., Ahmedabad, Gujarat (Rs 7 lakh), The Kutch Mercantile Co-operative Bank Ltd., Rapar, Dist. Kachchh, Gujarat (Rs

3 lakh), Shree Morbi Nagarik Sahakari Bank Ltd., Morbi, Gujarat (Rs 50,000), and Bhabhar Vibhag Nagarik Sahakari Bank Limited, Bhabhar, District Banaskantha, Gujarat (Rs 50,000).



Education Loans Experience 20.6% Spike From April To October :-

Education loans increased by 20.6 percent year on year to Rs 1,10,715 crore in the current fiscal year through October, compared to Rs 96,853 crore the previous year. According to data from the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), the increase in student loans was the greatest in the last five years. Foreign education loans with an average ticket size of Rs 40 lakh-60 lakh represented for roughly 65 percent of loans awarded in the previous year. Moreover, the recent action by the RBI in tightening the credit to some of the retail segments by increasing risk weights for banks as well as NBFCs have spared education loans.



RBI appoints CS Rajan as part-time chairman of Kotak Mahindra Bank:-

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has approved the appointment of CS Rajan as the part-time chairman of Kotak Mahindra Bank. The appointment, effective from January 1, 2024, is for a period of two years. CS Rajan's appointment comes as the incumbent Prakash Apte's tenure comes to an end. CS Rajan, who was appointed as an Independent Director on the board of Kotak Mahindra on October 22, 2022, has over 40 years of experience in government portfolios. He served as an IAS officer (1978 batch) and retired as Chief Secretary of the Rajasthan government in 2016.



RBI extends Payments Infrastructure Development Fund scheme till 2025:-

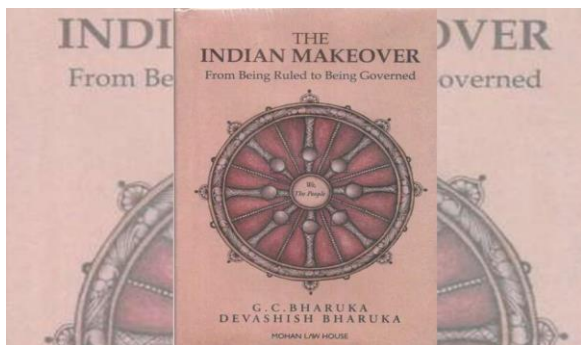
The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has announced an extension of the Payments Infrastructure Development Fund (PIDF) scheme until December 31, 2025. Initially launched in 2021 for three years, this extension aims to continue fostering financial inclusion and supporting the country's payment infrastructure. The PIDF scheme, designed to offer financial aid to banks and non-bank financial companies (NBFCs) for the deployment of point-of-sale terminals and other payment acceptance infrastructure, has seen significant enhancements and inclusivity measures.

6: Books and Author



Book on Thirayattam released :-

Thirayattam: Kavulsavangalude Anushtana Rangakala, a book written by Kerala Folklore Academy award winner and Thirayattam artiste Moorkanad Peethambaran about the ceremonial art form of the northern Kerala region, was released at K.P. Kesava Menon Hall in Kozhikode by Goa Governor P.S. Sreedharan Pillai. The new book was presented to four 'Thirayattam' performers dressed in traditional attire. Addressing the gathering, Mr. Pillai said sacred groves were places where the relationship between human being and nature got reinforced. The tradition of Thirayattam should be conserved as it had been a part of sacred groves, he added.



Book Launch Of 'The Indian Makeover: From Being Ruled To Being Governed' By Dr. Justice G.C. Bharuka And Devashish Bharuka :-

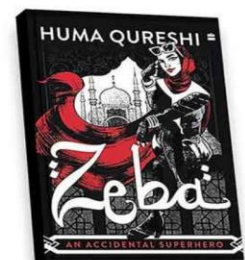
Dr. Justice G.C. Bharuka, a former Judge of the High Courts of Patna and Karnataka, and Devashish Bharuka, Advocate, Supreme Court of India, will publish a book titled 'The Indian Makeover: From Being Ruled to Being Governed' on December 8, 2023. Justice P.S. Narasimha,

Chief Justice of India, will formally launch the book. Shri Tushar Mehta, Ld. Solicitor General of India is the Guest of Honour. Prof. (Dr.) C. Raj Kumar, Founding Vice Chancellor, O.P. Jindal Global University would be gracing the occasion as a Distinguished Academician.



Jawaharlal Darda's biography 'Jawahar' launched in Delhi :-

The book 'Jawahar,' based on the life of Jawaharlal Darda, the founder of the Lokmat newspaper group, a veteran independence fighter, and a political and social leader, was launched at the Delhi Constitution Club. Notable Congress leaders Janardan Dwivedi, Adhiranjan Chaudhary, former Congress leader Gulab Nabi Azad, and many notable journalists and leaders were present on this occasion. This book explores several aspects of the life of Jawaharlal Darda, a devout Gandhian who dedicated his entire life to the welfare of the poor and the advancement of Dalits. It serves as an inspirational account for generations to come, tracing his remarkable journey from the fight for freedom to holding ministerial positions in the Maharashtra government.



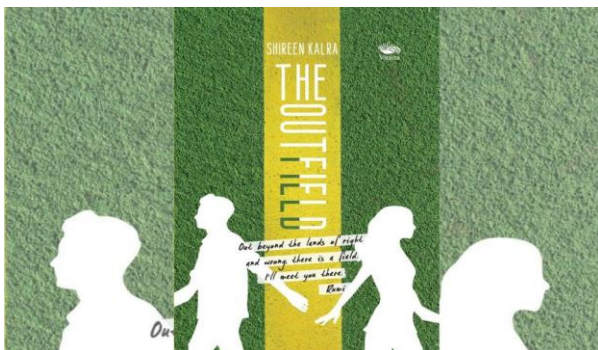
Huma Qureshi Launches 1st Novel 'Zeba: An Accidental Superhero':-

Huma Qureshi, a well-known Bollywood actor, has published her first novel, 'Zeba: An Accidental Superhero'. She debuted her work, set in a fantasy realm with its own geo- and socio-political spin, at the 12th edition of the Bangalore Literature Festival (BLF). Her book was launched on the first day of the Bangalore Literature Festival at The Lalit Ashok Bengaluru. The actor mentioned that the basic plotline of her book came to her mind when she was shooting for the dystopian television series, 'Leila'.



Books on Assam CM's daily engagements, speeches released :-

At a celebration held at the Lok Sewa Bhawan in Guwahati, Assam governor Gulab Chand Kataria published two volumes, "Mukhya Mantrir Diary 2" and "Mukhya Mantrir Boktrita Sankalan 2," written by chief minister Himanta Biswa Sarma. "Mukhya Mantrir Diary 2" is a thorough book that portrays the nuances and intricacies of Sarma's everyday activities as the state's chief minister. "Mukhya Mantrir Boktrita Sankalan 2" is a collection of 65 speeches delivered by the chief minister during his second year in office.



Shireen Kalra's book 'The Outfield' released at University of Oxford :-

Shireen Kalra's second book, 'The Outfield,' was recently published by the University of Oxford. Lady Elish Angioloni, Principal of St Hugh's College and Pro Vice Chancellor of the University of Oxford, launched the book. 'The Outfield,' published by Vitasta Publications in New Delhi, is a young adult novel set in 1970s Delhi. Shireen's debut fiction novel, All Smiles Some Tears Little Fears, was published in 2020 and received an endorsement from Dr Shashi Tharoor (Member of the Indian Parliament and Former Under-Secretary-General of the UN).



Book on coral reefs released in underwater event:-

An undersea event off the coast of Kovalam beach saw the release of a book about coral reefs and their ecological value. Shilpanjali R., scuba diver and coordinator, Sagar Mitra scheme (Thiruvananthapuram), released the 105-page Pavizhaputtukal Kadalile Mazhakkadukal (Coral reefs, the Rainforests of the Sea), written by scuba diving instructor and aquarium specialist Arun Aloysius. The book, published by Thrissur-based Samatha, talks about the world's coral treasure and the necessity for its conservation.



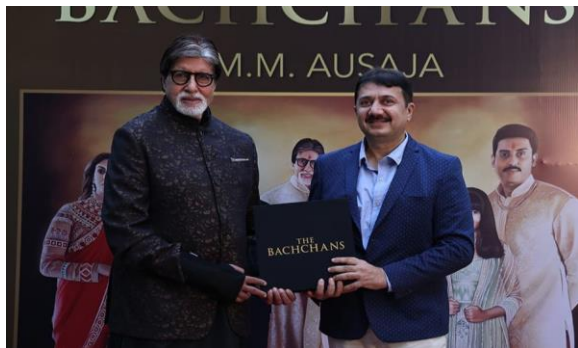
Harmonium, novel based on life of M.S. Baburaj, released :-

In Malayalam literature, fictional biography is a relatively unexplored genre. When writer N.P. Hafiz Mohammed decided to write a biography of music director M.S. Baburaj, he did so on purpose, owing to the latter's legendary status in Kozhikode. Harmonium, the novel, is a well-researched biography infused with imagination, occasionally indulging in magical realism. The novel depicts the musician himself releasing the book in his graveyard in the presence of many people who were actually present at the book release.



'Pure Laughter' book launched :-

'Pure Laughter, a book written by acclaimed author Dr Challa Krishnaveer Abhishek, was launched at All India Radio in Visakhapatnam by award-winning actor and writer LB Sriram. Abhishek discussed the importance of laughter in our lives as well as the inspiration for his book. Venkata Vinod Parimi, a Singaporean author, gave Rs.1 lakh to Tirumala's Gosamrakshana trust. He launched his spiritual book 'Daivam tho Naa Anubhavalu-3' at Lord Venkateswara's abode and handed over the donation receipt to TTD EO AV Dharma Reddy.



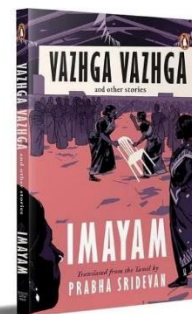
Amitabh Bachchan launches SMM Ausaja's Book "The Bachchans: A Saga of Excellence" :-

In a historic event, renowned actor Amitabh Bachchan presented the latest masterpiece in cinema history preservation, "The Bachchans: A Saga of Excellence" by SMM Ausaja. The book, published by the prestigious Om Books International, is a riveting visual chronicle spanning three generations of the renowned Bachchan family, making it an important part of India's unique cinematic heritage. At the event, Amitabh Bachchan expressed his support for the book and Ausaja's relentless dedication to archiving and documenting the lives of luminaries.



Ashwani Kumar's book 'A Democracy in Retreat: Revisiting the End of Power' launched :-

Former Union law minister Ashwani Kumar's new book, 'A Democracy in Retreat: Revisiting the End of Power,' was launched in New Delhi in the presence of significant figures from politics to the court. Former Vice President Hamid Ansari, former Supreme Court judge justice Madan B Lokur (retired), and Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) leader Manoj Kumar Jha, who is among the 143 Opposition lawmakers suspended from Parliament for the remainder of the current winter session, were among the distinguished guests at the book launch.



English translation of Imayam's 'Vazhga Vazhga and Other Stories' released :-

The English translation of Tamil literary pioneer Imayam's "Vazhga Vazhga and Other Stories" has been released, according to Penguin Random House India (PRHI). The book, translated into English by former Madras High Court judge Prabha Sridevan, is a compilation of stories that reflect society and humanity. Imayam has received numerous honors, including the Tamil Nadu State Award in 2010, the Iyal Lifetime Achievement Award in 2018, the Sahitya Akademi Award in 2020, and the Kuvempu Rashtriya Puruskar in 2022.



Coffee-table book on Srirangam temple released :-

'Srirangam - The Resplendent Kingdom of Rangaraja' is a coffee-table book published by the Hindu Group of Publications. The 454-page book is colorful and instructive, thanks to articles, reports, and rare images acquired from The Hindu Archives. There are also exclusive pieces authored by seasoned authors. The book, divided into 11 sections, portrays the peculiarity of the temple, which houses a complete town within its seven prakarams. Its rich aesthetic tradition, artistic splendour, celebration of various festivals, etc., have been presented in detail.



Posthumously published book of seven-year-old girl released in Madikeri :-

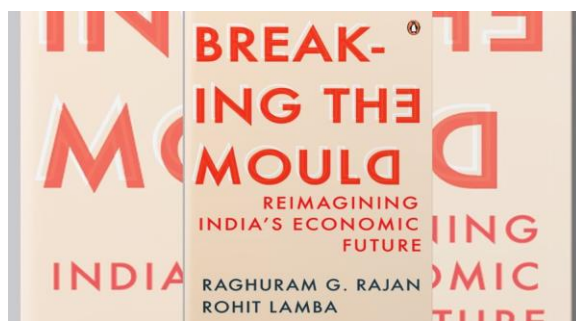
The Kodava Makkada Koota in Madikeri, Karnataka, has issued a posthumously published book authored by a

seven-year-old girl. The 78th book issued by the forum is 'The Girl Who Unleashed Magic,' authored by Maya Appachu. Maya Appachu, a Kodagu native, was the daughter of Sanchita and Karthik Appachu, who live in the United States. The forum's efforts have now resulted in the compilation of her writing into a book. Maya had an untimely death before she turned eight as she was diagnosed with Arteriovenous Malfunction (AVM).



PM Modi releases book on collected works of Madan Mohan Malaviya :-

Prime Minister Narendra Modi unveiled the first of 11 volumes of Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya's collected works. The book launch commemorated the 162nd birth anniversary of Malaviya, the founder of Banaras Hindu University. The bilingual (English and Hindi) book in 11 volumes (about 4,000 pages) is a collection of Malaviya's writings and speeches from all across the country. These volumes comprise his unpublished letters, articles and speeches, including memorandums; the editorial content of Hindi weekly 'Abhyudaya' started by him in 1907; articles, pamphlets and booklets written by him from time to time.



Raghuram Rajan's new book 'Breaking the Mould: Reimagining India's Economic Future,' released :-

Former RBI governor Raghuram Rajan, in cooperation with economist Rohit Lamba, has published a new book

titled 'Breaking the Mould: Reimagining India's Economic Future.' This latest addition to Rajan's literary efforts represents a significant investigation of India's economic trajectory's potential and limitations. Raghuram Rajan is well-known for his profound insights into the global and

Indian economies, and he has written influential works such as 'Fault Lines: How Hidden Fractures Still Threaten the World Economy,' which won the Financial Times Business Book of the Year Award.

7: Defence



Rajnath Singh Unveils Crest Guided Missile Destroyer 'INS Imphal' :-

Yard 12706 (Imphal), the Indian Navy's third stealth guided missile destroyer, with the crests 'Kangla Palace' and 'Kangla-Sa' was unveiled in New Delhi by defense minister Rajnath Singh in the presence of Manipur chief minister N Biren Singh. The Kangla Palace is depicted on the left, while 'Kangla-Sa' is depicted on the right. The Kangla Palace is an important historical and archaeological site of Manipur and was the traditional seat of the past kingdom. With a dragon's head and lion's body, the 'Kangla-Sa' is a mythical creature of Manipur and is symbolic of the guardian/protector of its people.



Three Anti-Submarine Warfare Ships For Indian Navy Launched At Cochin Shipyard :-

The Cochin Shipyard Ltd (CSL) launched the first three of eight anti-submarine warfare shallow water crafts (ASW SWCs) being built for the Indian Navy. In 2019, the Ministry of Defence and CSL secured a contract to build the ships. The Mahe Class ships will replace the Navy's in-service Abhay class ASW Corvettes and are designed to undertake anti-submarine operations in coastal waters, low intensity maritime operations (LIMO) and mine laying operations. The three ships shall bear the names INS Mahe, INS Malvan and INS Mangrol upon commissioning.



Air Marshal Makarand Ranade Assumes Role Of Director General (Inspection And Safety) At Air HQ New Delhi:-

On December 1, Air Marshal Makarand Ranade was appointed Director General (Inspection and Safety) at Air Headquarters in New Delhi. Ranade, an alumni of the National Defence College in New Delhi and the College Interarmée de Defense in Paris, France, was commissioned in the Indian Air Force's fighter stream on December 6, 1986. Ranade has held major field and staff positions during the course of his 36-year career. These include command of a fighter squadron and two flying stations. He has been a directing staff at Tactics and Air

Combat Development Establishment as well as at Defence Services Staff College.



India Navy Appointed First Woman Commanding Officer In Naval Ship :-

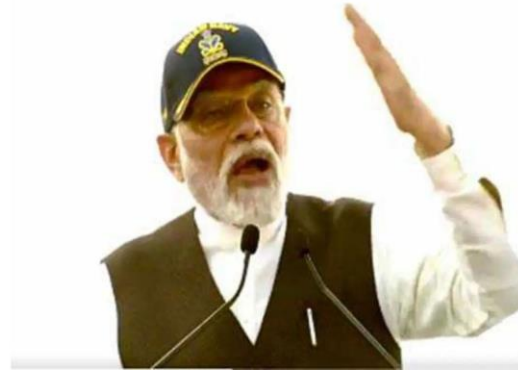
The Indian Navy has nominated its first female commanding officer of a warship, although neither her identify nor the identification of the ship she will command have been revealed. "We have appointed the first woman commanding officer of a naval ship. It is a fast attack craft that she will command in the western sea-board," stated Chief of Naval Staff Admiral R Hari Kumar. According to Admiral Hari Kumar, over 1100 women Agniveers have joined the Indian Navy in three batches, and all roles in the navy would be open to women if they are capable.



GRSE Delivers India's Largest Survey Vessel To Navy :-

According to an official, the largest-ever survey vessel built in the country, INS Sandhayak, has been given to the Indian Navy by defence PSU Garden Reach Shipbuilders and Engineers (GRSE) Ltd. INS Sandhayak, the first of four survey vessels built by GRSE for the navy, was launched on December 5, 2021, and is currently undergoing fitting out and trials. The 110-metre-long ship was delivered on

December 4, which is National Navy Day, according to a GRSE spokesperson. INS Sandhayak is the reincarnation of another ship by the same name, which was also a survey vessel.



PM Modi Announces Renaming Of Ranks In Indian Navy :-

The Indian Navy's ranks will be renamed to reflect Indian culture, and sailors' and commanders' uniforms will soon bear the legacy of Shivaji Maharaj, Prime Minister Narendra Modi declared. The Prime Minister stated at the Navy Day ceremony at Sindhudurg, where he witnessed an operational demonstration by navy personnel, that after revisions to the navy emblem that removed colonial elements, more changes were in the works. Narendra Modi lauded the Navy following the announcement that a woman officer would be commanding a Naval ship.



Captain Geetika Koul Becomes First Woman Medical Officer Deployed At Siachen :-

Captain Geetika Koul, a female army doctor, has been dispatched for the first time to the world's highest battleground, Siachen, according to the Leh-based Fire and Fury Corps. The news comes nearly a year after the

army dispatched a woman officer, Captain Shiva Chouhan, to the world's highest and coldest combat in January 2023 for the first time. Chouhan is an engineer in the Corps of Engineers. Soldiers have a three-month stint in the frozen landscape where the temperature can dip to minus 60 degrees.



Ministry Of Defence Inks Rs 588 Crore Pact With TCIL For Digital Transformation Of Indian Coast Guard :-

The Ministry of Defence has inked a contract worth Rs 588.68 crore with state-owned Telecommunications Consultants India Limited (TCIL) for an Indian Coast Guard (ICG) digital project that will enable centralized monitoring and control of deployed apps and assets. The "Digital Coast Guard (DCG)" project was inked under the Buy (Indian) category. The MoD stated that the project also leverages secured MPLS/VSAT connectivity, propelling itself to the forefront of cutting-edge defence technology, it pointed out.



Indian Army Organizes Table-Top Exercise To Empower ASEAN Women Officers :-

The Indian Army recently held a Table-Top Exercise (TTX) at the Manekshaw Centre in New Delhi to promote gender inclusion and develop the skills of female military troops in peacekeeping missions. The drill was

specifically developed for female officers from the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). The TTX is organized by the Centre for United Nations Peacekeeping (CUNPK), an Indian Army premier institution dedicated to providing training in peacekeeping operations. It aligns with CUNPK's ongoing commitment to strengthening international cooperation and capacity-building in peacekeeping missions, with a special emphasis on empowering women in the field.



Indian Naval Ship Sumedha Makes Inaugural Arrival At Port Lamu, Kenya :-

The Indian Naval Ship Sumedha has landed in Port Lamu, Kenya as part of its ongoing long-distance deployment to Africa. The visit marks the first port call by an Indian Naval Ship at Kenya's newly built Port. During the port visit, personnel from both navies will participate in a variety of professional engagements, deck visits, and sporting exchanges aimed at improving collaboration and exchanging best practices. A joint Yoga session, deck reception, medical camp and a Maritime Partnership Exercise have been planned as part of the visit.



India, Vietnam Armies Start 11-Day Hanoi Exercise :-

On December 11, the Indian and Vietnamese armies began an 11-day military exercise in Vietnam, as part of the two nations' growing strategic interaction amid

shared worries over China's increasingly aggressive behavior in the South China Sea. The exercise's goal, according to the Indian Army, is to build a collaborative collaboration and promote interoperability between the two armies. "The joint exercise will help in promoting understanding and interoperability between the two contingents and further strengthen the defence cooperation between the friendly Armies," it said.



Indian Navy Re-inducted Maldives-Gifted, Decommissioned Ship :-

The Indian Navy re-inducted a refurbished 22-year-old fast attack craft, INS Tarmugli, in a ceremonial commissioning ceremony on 14 December at the naval dockyard in Visakhapatnam, more than seventeen years after she was gifted to Maldives, which used it for years before returning to India in May this year. She was commissioned in the Indian Navy as INS Tillanchang, a Trinkat Class ship, and served until 2006 before being handed to the Maldives National Defence Force (MNDF) by the Government of India as part of diplomatic outreach in the Indian Ocean Region, according to a spokeswoman.



India Successfully Flight Tests Indigenous High-Speed Flying-Wing UAV :-

The Defence Research and Development Organization (DRDO) has successfully flown an indigenous high-speed

flying-wing Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV) from the Aeronautical Test Range in Chitradurga, Karnataka. The DRDO claimed in an official release that the successful trial of the "Autonomous Flying Wing Technology Demonstrator (FWTD)" demonstrates the country's technological preparedness levels. The Aeronautical Development Establishment of the DRDO designed and built this UAV.



Defence Ministry inks Rs 5,000 crore contract to procure electronic fuzes for army :-

The Ministry of Defence secured a 10-year deal with Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL) in Pune to supply electronic fuzes to the Indian Army. The contract was signed by the government in order to improve the Indian Army's long-distance attack capability. The contract was worth Rs 5,336.25 crore in total. The Ministry of Defence (MoD) described the contract as a "landmark" agreement, stating that it was signed for ammunition acquisition under the "Manufacture of Ammunition for Indian Army by Indian Industry," a Government program for a 10-year demand.



Imphal missile destroyer to be commissioned to Indian Navy on Dec 26 :-

Imphal, the third of the Visakhapatnam-class guided missile destroyers series, will be commissioned to the

Indian Navy on December 26 in Mumbai. On October 20, the Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Limited (MDL) handed over Imphal (Yard 12706), the third of the 15B Class stealth-guided missile destroyers, to the Indian Navy. The first ship of P15B class INS Visakhapatnam was commissioned on November 21, 2021, while the second ship—INS Mormugao—was commissioned on December 18, 2022.



IAF Successfully Testfires 'SAMAR' Air Defense Missile System In Andhra Pradesh :-

The Indian Air Force successfully tested its SAMAR air defense missile system, marking a significant achievement for its in-house research and development efforts. Using its obsolete Russian-origin air-to-air missile systems, the IAF developed the Surface to Air Missile for Assured Retaliation (SAMAR) air defense missile system. The system can fight aerial threats with missiles traveling at 2 to 2.5 Mach. The SAMAR system consists of a twin-turret launch platform with the capability of launching two missiles in single and salvo mode, depending on the threat scenario, the IAF officials said.



India's Akash Missile Achieves Global First: Engages Four Targets Simultaneously At 25km :-

According to the Defence Research and Development Organization (DRDO), India demonstrated the capacity of

the Akash missile system to engage four aerial targets simultaneously at a range of 25 kilometers. "India became first country to demonstrate the capability of engagement of 04 aerial targets simultaneously at 25Km ranges by command guidance using single firing unit. The test was conducted by @IAF_MCC using Akash Weapon System," the DRDO said in a post on 'X'. It is learnt that the capability of the home-grown missile system was displayed at the 'Astrashakti' military exercise on December 12.



Lt. Vice Admiral Benoy Roy Chowdhury Posthumously Honored With 'Vir Chakra' :-

The Indian Navy's premier technical training establishment, INS Shivaji, has received the original 'Vir Chakra' awarded to late Vice-Admiral Benoy Roy Chowdhury for his gallant actions during the 1971 India-Pakistan war. Vice-Admiral Dinesh Prabhakar, Distinguished Chair-Marine Engineering, INS Shivaji, received the Vir Chakra from Padipta Bose and Gargi Bose, the family members of Vice-Admiral Chowdhury, on behalf of the Navy at a solemn ceremony organised at the training establishment in Lonavala, around 60km from Pune city.



Army chief General Manoj Pande in Jammu to review security situation amid anti-terror operation in Poonch

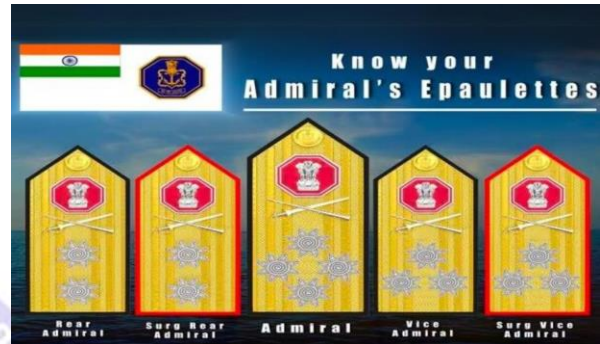
Army Chief General Manoj Pande arrived in Jammu to examine the security situation in the region, sources said, amid a large continuing operation to track down the terrorists responsible for a recent attack on Army trucks that killed four troops in the border district of Poonch. On December 21, four soldiers were killed when their trucks were ambushed by militants near Dhatyar Morh, between Dhera Ki Gali and Buffliaz in the Surankote district of Poonch. The officials said a massive search operation continues near the scene of the ambush, covering both Surankote and the Thanamandi forest in nearby Rajouri district.



Indian Navy Investigating Drone Strike On Ship Off Gujarat: Officials :-

On December 23, a drone strike off the coast of India damaged an Israel-linked commerce ship, triggering a fire on board. According to news agency ANI, the distressed vessel contains approximately 20 Indian crew members, all of whom are said to be safe. The raid took

place about 200 nautical miles southwest of Veraval, Gujarat. The Indian Navy and Coast Guard warships are making their way towards the MV Chem Pluto in the Arabian Sea. The British military's United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations, or UKMTO, said the "authorities were investigating" the attack, and noted the fire had been extinguished.



Indian Navy unveiled the new design of Admirals' epaulettes:-

The Indian Navy has unveiled the new design of Admirals' epaulettes, with the octagon in the new design, drawn from the naval ensign and inspired by Rajmudra of Chhatrapati Shivaji. The Navy is also set to rename some of the ranks from the British nomenclature to reflect an Indian connection. The new Admirals epaulettes now have the golden navy button top, followed by an octagon, and an Indian sword and a telescope crossed followed by stars indicating the ranks of Rear Admiral, Vice Admiral and Admiral.

8: Economy



Garuda Aerospace Secures DGCA's Second Type Certificate :-

According to the firm, Garuda Aerospace has received the Directorate General of Civil Aviation's second type certificate for medium category drones. According to business founder and CEO Agnishwar Jayaprakash, the accreditation for medium category drones is a critical milestone in propelling Garuda Aerospace to new heights of growth and scalability. The certification showcases Garuda Aerospace's dedication to pioneering advancements in Unmanned Aerial Vehicle technology, reinforcing its commitment to meeting stringent regulatory standards.



Uber launches 'green' services in Bengaluru, rides with EVs now available:-

Uber India has announced the introduction of 'Uber Green,' the company's premier electric cab services, in Bengaluru. On the margins of the Bengaluru Tech Summit, Karnataka IT Minister Priyank Kharge waved off the first Uber Green vehicles from the Bengaluru Palace. Uber Green was initially introduced in Mumbai in June 2023, and the company intends to expand the service to other cities. With the new offering, Singh explained that the EV rides will be 8-10 percent more expensive than the regular Uber and it will be initially hard to get an Uber Green on the back of high demand.



Bharat Coking Coal Ltd Starts 5.0 MTPA Madhuband Washery Operations :-

Bharat Coking Coal Limited (BCCL), which is part of the coal ministry, has announced the start of commercial operations at its 5.0 MTPA Madhuband washery. The washery, which was inaugurated in March 2022 by Union Minister of Coal, Mines, and Parliamentary Affairs Pralhad Joshi, has been subjected to rigorous load tests, trial runs, and performance guarantee tests (PGT) to assure its efficiency and preparedness for operations.

Marking a significant step towards fulfilling the vision of AtmaNirbhar Bharat, this washery is equipped with advanced technology, making it one of the largest Coking Coal Washeries in India.



SBI Takes Possession Of PC Jewellers New Delhi Properties Amidst Rs 3,466 Crore Loan Default :-

The State Bank of India (SBI) has taken over two prominent properties in New Delhi from PC Jeweller, following the company's massive default of over Rs 3,466 crore reported in October. This financial setback has caused operational disruptions for PC Jeweller, as shown by a significant drop in second-quarter revenues for fiscal year 2024. SBI's claim on the New Delhi properties amounts to Rs 1,267 crore, strategically pursued to recover a portion of the Rs 1,168.90 crore owed by PC Jeweller.



UPI Recorded 11.24 Billion Transactions Worth Rs 17.40 trillion :-

According to figures released by the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI), the Unified Payments Interface (UPI) recorded 11.24 billion transactions in November, with a total transaction value of Rs 17.40 trillion. Despite a 1.5% decline in volume to 11.24 billion transactions compared to October, the value increased by 1.4% from Rs 17.16 trillion in October. NPCI data revealed that the November figures were 54% higher in

volume and 46% higher in value compared to the same period last year.



iDEX Marks 300th Contract For Gallium Nitride Semiconductor Development :-

The Department of Defence Production's flagship initiative, Innovations for Defence Excellence (iDEX), has reached a new milestone with the signing of its 300th contract. The contract is for the design and development of advanced Gallium Nitride Semiconductors, which will be used in the next generation of wireless transmitters used in defense applications ranging from radars to EW (Electronic Warfare) jammers. Currently, almost all GaN components are imported being a sensitive and cutting-edge technology whose export is controlled and restricted by many countries.



Decline In FDI Inflows From Cayman Islands And Cyprus To India :-

According to government figures, FDI into India from the Cayman Islands and Cyprus fell dramatically between April and September of current fiscal year, with overall inflows falling by 24%. FDI from Cayman Islands dipped 75 per cent to USD 145 million during April-September from USD 582 million in the same period last fiscal, the data showed. Similarly, inflows from Cyprus contracted by over 95 per cent to USD 35 million during the six-month period as against USD 764 million in April-September 2022-23.



Bajaj Group Becomes Fifth Conglomerate To Breach ₹10 Lakh Crore In Mcap :-

Bajaj Group has become the fifth business to surpass the Rs 10-lakh-crore milestone in market capitalization. Previously, the Tata Group, Mukesh Ambani Group, HDFC Bank, and Adani Group have reached this milestone. Among the Bajaj Group companies, Bajaj Auto saw the greatest increase, climbing more than 72 percent this year. Bajaj Finance and Bajaj Finserv surged 12 percent and 9 percent, while Bajaj Holdings and Investment and Maharashtra Scooters increased by 36 percent and 74 percent. All five listed companies linked to the late Rahul Bajaj Group have shown varied performances.



India's Services PMI Hits One-Year Low In November:-

In November, India's services output rose at a slower rate, as the sector lost more momentum midway through the third quarter. In November, the S&P Global India Services Business Activity Index fell to a one-year low of 56.9, down from 58.4 in October. A value above 50 implies an increase in overall output. Data revealed widespread slowing in growth rates for both new orders and output across the four major sectors of the service

industry. Finance and insurance topped the rankings, while real estate and business services came last.



SBI To Acquire 20% Stake In SBI Pension Fund :-

State Bank of India (SBI) has received final clearance from its Executive Committee of the Central Board (ECCB) to acquire a 20% share in SBIPFPL (SBI Pension Funds Private Ltd) held by SBICAPS (SBI Capital Markets Ltd). According to SBI's regulatory filing, the transaction would be completed by December 15, 2023 for a cash consideration of Rs 229.52 crore. SBICAPS is a wholly-owned subsidiary of SBI. Post-acquisition, SBI will have 80 per cent stake in SBIPFPL, with the balance being held by SBI Funds Management Ltd.



India Implements Duty-Free Import Of Yellow Peas To Regulate Pulse Prices :-

An official gazette notification stated that India has permitted duty-free imports of yellow peas until March 2024. This is part of New Delhi's involvement to keep the overall pulse basket price stable. According to reports, the tariff on yellow peas was originally applied in November 2017 at a rate of 50%. Yellow peas are mostly imported into India from Canada and Russia. India is a big user and grower of pulses, and imports meet a portion of

its consumption demands. India primarily consumes chana, Masur, urad, Kabuli chana, and tur.



India's Forex Reserves Surpass \$600 Billion Mark After Four-Month Interval :-

On December 1, India's foreign exchange reserves grew to USD 604 billion, exceeding the USD 600 billion threshold after a four-month gap. On August 11 of this year, the currency reserves were last above USD 600 billion. "India's foreign exchange reserves stood at USD 604 billion as on December 1, 2023. We remain confident of meeting our external financing requirements comfortably," Reserve Bank Governor Shaktikanta Das said, while unveiling the December bi-monthly monetary policy.



Poonawalla Housing Finance Becomes Grihum Housing Finance :-

Poonawalla Housing loan has been rebranded as Grihum Housing Finance following a change in ownership, with global private equity firm TPG now owning 99.02 percent of the housing loan company. The housing financier was a part of the Magma Group before being pushed by Poonawalla Fincorp. "Each management change has occurred because of organisation stage and evolution. It largely was the need for the fillip capital, but the dream

of the institution has remained unwavering and constant,” MD and CEO Manish Jaiswal said.



Moody's Affirms Reliance Industries' Baa2 Rating With A Stable Outlook :-

Moody's Investors Service confirmed Reliance Industries Ltd's Baa2 rating, saying that the company's consumer sectors of retail and telecom will back up Ebitda growth over the next two years even as profits from the oil and gas division are expected to stay flat. Moody's has also maintained a stable outlook, owing to the expectation that the company's earnings will continue to expand across the majority of its business areas, implying that consolidated credit metrics will remain well-positioned for its ratings over the next 12-18 months.



SBI Ventures Into Paper Packaging With ₹49.99 Crore Investment In Canpac Trends :-

State Bank of India has signed documents to purchase 3,70,644 shares (6.35 percent) of Ahmedabad-based Canpac Trends Private Limited for ₹1,349 per share, for a total of ₹49.99 crore. According to an exchange filing, the Bank's investment in Canpac Trends, which is in the paper packaging industry, is made with the goal of capital appreciation. In the year ended March 2023, the

company, which was incorporated in 2004, reported total income and net profit of Rs 389.72 crore and Rs 9.82 crore, respectively.



NPS Assets Surge To ₹10.7 Lakh Crore With Impressive 16.94% Equity Returns :-

In an impressive demonstration of financial power, India's National Pension System (NPS) has seen significant asset development, reaching a new milestone of ₹10.7 lakh crore as of December 9, 25.95% higher than the previous year. The latest data from the Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority (PFRDA) shows significant insights into the performance and trajectory of NPS investments, aided by a buoyant equity market. Pension funds have achieved an impressive average annual return of 16.94% in equities, as of December 8 this year.



SBI's Market Capitalization Soars To Rs 6 Trillion: A 17% Surge In 1 Month :-

In recent quarters, SBI has achieved strong financial performance, demonstrating resilience in the face of economic headwinds. State Bank of India (SBI) shares have set a new high of Rs 659.50, representing a 17% increase in the last month. This rally has outrun the

market, with the S&P BSE Sensex and Nifty 50 up roughly 9% and the Nifty PSU Bank index up 14% during the same time period. The remarkable rally has propelled SBI's market capitalization close to Rs 6 trillion, drawing attention to the bank's positive financial performance.

roughly Rs 21,000 crore. It is still India's largest IPO. The latest round of purchasing came after brokerages upgraded the heavyweight counter with buy calls. A part of the investor optimism is also being attributed to the launch of the new Jeevan Ustav scheme, which is a life insurance plan launched with lifetime guaranteed returns.



India's Net FDI Hits 21-Month High At \$5.9 Billion In October 2023 :-

Net foreign direct investment (FDI) into the country reached a 21-month high of \$5.9 billion in October 2023, owing mostly to strong gross inflows and decreasing repatriation. According to Reserve Bank of India data, net FDI increased sequentially from \$1.54 billion in September 2023 to \$1.16 billion in October 2022. The repatriation, money taken out from the direct investments made in India, declined to \$1.10 billion in October 2023 from \$3.43 billion in September 2023 and \$2.93 billion in October 2022.

RBI Released Draft Omnibus Framework For SROs :-

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) published a "Draft Omnibus Framework for recognising Self-Regulatory Organisations (SROs) for its Regulated Entities (REs)" on its website in order to build stronger industry standards for self-regulation and solicited feedback from stakeholders. The need for this was felt following the rapid growth of the REs in terms of number as well as scale of operations, and an increase in the adoption of innovative technologies and enhanced customer outreach thus making it difficult for the RBI to regulate the sector effectively.



LIC Granted Extension Till 2032 To Achieve 25% Public Shareholding :-

State-owned The Life Insurance Corporation of India, India's largest insurer, has been exempted from the 25% minimum public shareholding standards until 2032. The government sold a 3.5% interest in the LIC IPO in May 2022, which was an altogether (offer for sale) worth

SEBI Proposes Two-Phase Transition To Instant Settlement In Indian Stock Market :-

The Securities and Exchange Board of India has advocated a gradual shift to instant settlement of

equities cash market trades. In the first phase, an optional T+0 settlement cycle for trades until 1:30 p.m. may be introduced, with funds and securities settled on the same day by 4:30 p.m. To begin, a T+0 settlement will be made accessible in three tranches of the top 500 listed equity shares, from the smallest to the largest market capitalization. In the second phase, an optional immediate trade-by-trade settlement will be carried out for trades till 3.30 p.m.



Coca-Cola Secures 8-Year Partnership With ICC As Global Cricket Partner :-

Coca-Cola has agreed to become the International Cricket Council's (ICC) global partner for an eight-year period. Until the conclusion of 2031, this agreement will cover all ICC events in all three forms. Coca-Cola replaced PepsiCo as the sport's global non-alcoholic partner in 2019, after completing a five-year arrangement with the sport's governing body. This new deal between the

beverage giant and the ICC will extend the span of the partnership to 13 years between 2019 and 2031.



LIC Reduced its stake in BHEL :-

Life Insurance Corporation of India's has reduced its shareholding in Bharat Heavy Electricals Ltd to 9.617 per cent from 11.701 per cent. In a disclosure to the exchanges, LIC said it sold the shares at an average price of ₹79.58 through secondary market between June 2019 and December 2023. While shares of BHEL closed 0.44 per cent higher at ₹193.45, that of LIC edged up 0.79 per cent at ₹833.30 on the BSE. BHEL is the largest government-owned power generation equipment manufacturer, with administrative control by the Ministry of Heavy Industries.

9: International



US Reports 'White Lung Syndrome' Outbreak :-

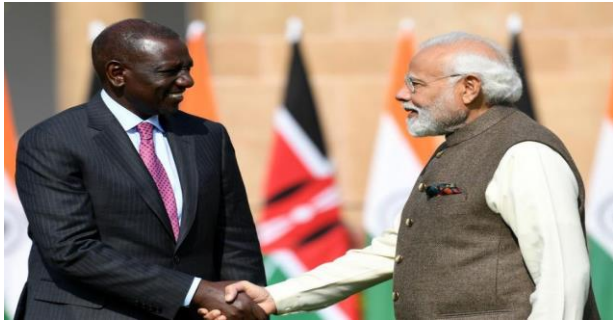
Following a recent outbreak of pneumonia in several Chinese districts, Ohio has become the first state in the United States to report an increase in instances of the ailment known as 'white lung syndrome.' According to local media accounts, the outbreak in Ohio has disproportionately afflicted youngsters, resulting in an

unacceptably high number of hospitalizations. This comes as the global health body WHO continues to monitor the sudden surge in respiratory infections among children in China with countries including India, remaining vigilant.



China Adopts 'One Province, One Policy' Approach To Financial Risk Management :-

The National Financial Regulatory Administration of China, led by Li Yunze, is implementing a novel way to addressing financial risks at the province level. This action follows concerns about the country's economic difficulties, which have been worsened by the lingering impacts of restrictive Covid Zero laws and a protracted property crisis. Local and central governments have supplied enormous assistance, which has been exacerbated by a prolonged property crisis.



India Provides \$250 Million Line Of Credit To Kenya For Agricultural Modernization :-

India has provided a \$250 million Line of Credit to Kenya for agricultural modernization. In announcing the plan, PM Modi stated that both sides will conduct cooperative military drills and coordinate on counter-terrorism measures. President William Samoei Ruto welcomed the Indian endeavors, describing the Kenyan Indian population as a "bridge" between the two countries. According to a joint statement issued after the visit, Kenya has "offered, in line with Kenyan laws, to provide land to Indian companies and institutions for cultivation of crops, including millets, in Kenya."



Poland's Parliament Elects Donald Tusk As Prime Minister :-

Poland's parliament backed Donald Tusk for prime minister, bringing an end to eight years of nationalist

leadership and setting the country on the path to normalizing relations with the European Union. Tens of billions of euros in European Union money have been frozen in Poland due to a disagreement with Brussels over democratic principles, but Tusk, a former European Council president, has vowed to heal relations and free the funds. Congratulations poured in from abroad, including from Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy and European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen.



India Backs Urgent Ceasefire In Israel-Gaza Conflict :-

India supported a United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) resolution calling on Israel to declare an immediate ceasefire, protect civilians in accordance with international law, and release all hostages. India was one of 153 countries that voted in favor of the resolution, constituting a tremendous 4/5th majority in the Assembly, while only 10 countries, including the United States and Israel, voted against it, and 23 countries, mostly from Europe, abstained. When asked about India's vote, the Israeli Embassy in Delhi said it appreciated Prime Minister Narendra Modi's "stand with Israel against terrorism" after the attacks.



UN Peacekeeping Mission In Mali Officially Ends After 10 Years :-

The UN mission in Mali has formally wrapped up its 10-year presence in the country, according to a spokesperson, as part of a departure requested by Mali's military administration. The UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) lowered the UN flag at its headquarters in Bamako, according to Fatoumata Kaba, the mission's spokesperson. In June, Mali's military government, which seized power in 2020, demanded the departure of the mission, deployed since 2013, despite being in the grip of attacks by armed groups in the Sahel region.



Myanmar Surpasses Afghanistan As World's Leading Opium Source In 2023: UN Report :-

After a third straight year of growing cultivation spurred by the country's civil strife, Myanmar has surpassed Afghanistan to become the world's top source of opium in 2023, according to a new UN report. This is attributable to a variety of circumstances, including internal insecurity and a dramatic fall in opium cultivation in Afghanistan. Following the Taliban's drug ban in 2022, opium cultivation in Afghanistan plummeted by 95%, resulting in a global shift of opium supply to Myanmar. The UNODC's report highlighted that political, social, and economic instability resulting from the 2021 coup in Myanmar prompted many individuals to turn to poppy farming.



Shah Rukh Khan Tops UKs List of World's Top 50 Asian Celebrities Post Success of Pathaan and Jawaan :-

Shah Rukh Khan, known as the "King Khan" of the Indian film industry, has topped a UK list of the "Top 50 Asian Celebrities in the World." The 58-year-old actor is currently prepping for the Christmas release of comic drama Dunki, following the success of action thrillers Pathaan' and Jawaan' this year. "By the time 2023 ends, King Khan will become the first leading man from the modern era to have three huge Bollywood blockbuster hits in a calendar year," said Eastern Eye' Entertainment Editor Asjad Nazir, who compiled the list.



Leander Paes and Vijay Amritraj have been inducted into the International Tennis Hall of Fame :-

Vijay Amritraj and Leander Paes of India made history by becoming the first Asian men to be admitted into the International Tennis Hall of Fame. This historic feat also places India as the 28th country represented in the esteemed institution. Leander Paes, an 18-time Grand Slam doubles and mixed doubles champion, has been named to the Player category, while Vijay Amritraj has been named to the Contributor category, which is evaluated every two years. A key figure in India's Davis Cup history, Amritraj led the team to its only two Finals appearances in 1974 and 1987.



UK Government Considers Social Media Limits For Under-16s :-

The UK government, led by Prime Minister Rishi Sunak, is considering restricting social media access for minors under the age of 16 in order to protect them from online damage. Despite the passage of the Online Safety Act, which requires social media firms to protect children from harmful information or face fines of up to 10% of global sales, the government is considering additional steps.



Egypt's President Sisi Secures Third Term Amid Economic Challenges :-

Egypt's President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi has won a third term, with 89.6% of the vote in the country's most recent election, conducted from December 10 to 12. Despite economic difficulties and regional tensions, Sisi's victory was expected, given the lack of opposition. The triumph comes amid heightened regional tensions caused by the Israel-Hamas conflict in nearby Gaza, compounding Sisi's administration's difficulties. This marks Sisi's third landslide victory, though with his smallest margin. In 2014 and 2018, he won over 96% of the vote.



India's Thermal Coal Imports From The US Reach Over Two-Year High In November :-

In November of this year, India raised its long haul thermal coal cargoes, with inbound shipments from the

United States reaching 1.40 million tonnes (MT), the highest level in over a year. According to the energy intelligence firm Kpler, India imported 17.51 MT of thermal coal, which was lower than the 15-month high of 18.66 MT in October 2023. According to Alexis Ellender, Kpler's Lead Major Dry Bulks Analyst, India imported 23.27 MT of seaborne coal last month, down from a five-month high of 24.37 MT in October 2023, but still up 6.92 MT year on year. At 222.43 MT, the combined January-November 2023 shipments were up by 11.39 MT on an annual basis.



UK Supreme Court Rules Against AI as Inventor for Patent Rights :-

The UK Supreme Court has declared that artificial intelligence cannot be legitimately identified as an inventor in order to gain patent rights. In a recent decision, the United Kingdom's highest court determined that "an inventor must be a person" in order to apply for patents under present law. The ruling comes after the technologist Dr Stephen Thaler, an US-based developer took his long-running dispute with the Intellectual Property Office (IPO) to the country's top court over its rejection of his attempt to list an AI he created as the inventor for two patents.



French President Emmanuel Macron To Grace India's Republic Day :-

According to sources, French President Emmanuel Macron would be the keynote guest at the Republic Day celebrations in New Delhi on January 26. India has also invited US Vice President Joe Biden, but he will allegedly be unable to come to New Delhi in January. Macron and Prime Minister Narendra Modi met in July while the latter was in France for the Bastille Day Parade. PM Modi participated in the Bastille Day celebrations as the Guest of Honour. PM Modi visited France to mark the 25th anniversary of the strategic partnership between India and France.



India To Acquire Five Lithium Blocks In Argentina :-

A senior official indicated that India is close to finalizing a deal to acquire five lithium blocks in Argentina for exploration and development, despite the fact that the government is in talks with other countries rich in essential minerals. KABIL, the State-owned joint venture founded to hunt for minerals worldwide, will sign the agreements. India, among the world's top greenhouse gas emitters, has been pursuing overseas pacts to secure key minerals in resource-rich countries such as Australia, Argentina, and Chile.



United Nations Declares 2024 As The International Year Of Camelids :-

The International Year of Camelids (IYC 2024) has been declared by the United Nations. According to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the coming year will highlight camelids' critical significance in various communities. It further stated that the year will raise awareness of how camelids are critical to the lives of many households in harsh situations in more than 90 countries. Camelids, including camels, llamas, alpacas, vicuñas, Bactrian camels, dromedaries and guanacos, are crucial, particularly for Indigenous Peoples and local communities.



PM Modi accepts invitation to inaugurate BAPS Hindu Mandir in Abu Dhabi:-

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will attend the inauguration ceremony of the Hindu temple in Abu Dhabi. PM Modi will also be attending a dedication ceremony on February 14. This ceremony will be organised after the seven deities of the temple are consecrated, said the BAPS Swaminarayan Sanstha. The UAE's first traditional hand-carved Hindu temple is located in the Abu Mureikha area of Abu Dhabi. Following the inauguration, the temple will be open to the public from February 18.



China's 'Mengxiang' Sets Sail for Earth's mantle exploration:-

China's revolutionary ocean drilling vessel 'Mengxiang' has been launched. The vessel, entitled "dream" in Chinese, was created by the China Geological Survey in partnership with 150 research institutes and corporations. The Mengxiang will be humanity's first

venture into unexplored territory, penetrating the Earth's crust and delving into the mysteries of the mantle. Mengxiang is a massive ship with outstanding capabilities, weighing 33,000 tonnes and reaching 179 meters (590 ft). It has a range of 15,000 nautical miles and can stay in port for 120 days.

10: Miscellaneous



West Indies Shane Dowrich Announces International Retirement :-

Shane Dowrich has declared his retirement from international cricket and withdrawal from the West Indies squad for the ODI series against England, according to the country's cricket authority (CWI). Dowrich was suddenly returned to the West Indies squad this month, three years and four years after his last Test and ODI respectively. Dowrich made his Test debut against Australia in 2015 and went on to play 35 Tests. His only ODI came against Bangladesh in 2019, and he was set to add to it in the upcoming ODI series against England.

The International Cricket Council (ICC) has revealed the logo for next year's T20 World Cup in Men's and Women's cricket. While the men's event will be held in the West Indies and the United States from June 4 to June 30, 2024, the women's T20 World Cup will be held in Bangladesh. While the actual dates and program have yet to be published, the ICC appears to have begun preparations for both huge events with the release of the logo. The new logo, according to ICC, captures the inherent drama the shortest forma brings with it.



BCCI Decides To Retire MS Dhoni's Iconic No.7 Jersey :-

M S Dhoni's legendary No. 7 jersey will never be worn by another Indian cricketer. Three years after he hung up his boots as an international cricketer, the Indian cricket board has chosen to 'retire' the number worn by the World Cup-winning skipper as a tribute to his commitment to the game. The only other cricketer bestowed a similar honour is Sachin Tendulkar — in 2017, his signature No. 10 jersey too was folded away for good. It is learnt that the BCCI has informed players in the national team, especially the debutants, that they don't have the option of numbers associated with Tendulkar and Dhoni.



ICC Launches New Vibrant Logo For Men's And Women's T20 World Cup 2024 :-



Hardik Pandya Takes Over As Captain Of Mumbai Indians :-

In a historic move, the Mumbai Indians have named the returning Hardik Pandya as their captain for the IPL 2024 season, succeeding Rohit Sharma after a 10-year reign. Hardik, who led Gujarat Titans to the IPL title in 2022, was moved back to MI last month after two years and is ready to take on a new position, succeeding the joint-most successful captain in IPL history. Having led GT to the IPL title last year and then to a runner-up finish in IPL 2023, Hardik, was expected to bet a bigger role.



Central Railways To Add Panic Switches At 117 Stations :-

Central Railway General Manager Ram Karan Yadav has stated that panic switches will be installed at 117 railway stations. Yadav stated during his first press conference after taking over that the Central Railway will install these panic switches at 117 stations across its network. The panic buttons will allow passengers to notify the Railway Protection Force (RPF). In an emergency, a passenger can use these switches to summon assistance from the RPF. For the installation of the switches, the Central Railway has signed an MoU with RailTel.



Indian Army empowers 40 Kashmiri youth with innovative 'Smartphone Filmmaking course' :-

In conjunction with FTII Pune, the Indian Army held a Smartphone Film Making Course to encourage creativity and skill development among Kashmiri youth. The seminar taught budding filmmakers how to use smartphones to communicate stories visually. Scriptwriting, cinematography, editing, and post-production methods were all covered. The Indian Army believes in empowering youth with valuable skills and creating opportunities. This initiative aligns with their vision of positive engagement and nation building.



Sony Sports Ropes In Kartik Aaryan As Brand Ambassador For Football :-

Sony Sports Network has named Bollywood superstar and young icon Kartik Aaryan as its football brand ambassador. Kartik will be seen promoting LIVE football action on Sony Sports Network throughout the year, with 900+ matches from marquee football tournaments and leagues such as UEFA EURO 2024, UEFA Champions League, UEFA Europa League, UEFA Conference League, UEFA Nations League, Bundesliga, Emirates FA Cup, Durand Cup, and Roshn Saudi League,

among others, during his partnership with Sony Sports Network.



South Africa's Dean Elgar Announces Retirement From International Cricket :-

Former South African captain Dean Elgar has announced his retirement from international cricket following the conclusion of a test series against India early next month. Elgar, who has amassed over 5,000 runs and 13 centuries in 84 tests, will play his final test at Newlands in Cape Town beginning January 3. Elgar made his debut against Australia in Perth in 2011, making a duck in each innings in an inauspicious start to his 12-year test career, which has yielded 5,146 runs, including a high score of 199 against Bangladesh in 2017. He is South Africa's eighth highest scorer in tests.



Mphil courses are now not recognized by UGC:-

The University Grants Commission (UGC) on December 27 directed the universities in the country to stop taking admissions for the MPhil course of the 2023-24 session, stating that it is not a recognised degree. UGC Secretary Manish Joshi also advised students not to join any MPhil programme offered by universities in India. The Regulation No. 14 of the UGC (Minimum Standards and

Procedures for Award of Ph.D. Degree) Regulations, 2022 clearly states that higher educational institutions shall not offer any MPhil programme



New reptile species, Calotes wangi, discovered in China :-

A new iguana species discovered in China received an official designation IN December 2023. Wang's garden lizard, or Calotes wangi, was identified when researchers realized specimens collected during 2009-2022 field studies were this new species. From 2009 to 2022, we conducted a series of field surveys in South China and collected several specimens of the Calotes versicolor species complex, and found that the population of what we thought was Calotes versicolor in South China and Northern Vietnam was a new undescribed species and two subspecies.



PM Modi Unveils Maharshi Valmiki International Airport:-

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on 30 December 202, inaugurated the redeveloped Ayodhya Dham Railway Station and Maharshi Valmiki International Airport. Phase 1 of the state-of-the-art airport has been developed at a cost of more than Rs 1450 crore. The

airport's terminal building has an area of 6500 sqm, equipped to serve about 10 lakh passengers annually. The facade of the terminal building depicts the temple

architecture of the upcoming Shri Ram Mandir and it's interiors are decorated with local art, paintings and murals depicting the life of Bhagwan Shri Ram.

11: National



PM Inaugurates 10,000th Jan Aushadhi Kendra At AIIMS Deoghar :-

Prime Minister Narendra Modi dedicated the 10,000th Jan Aushadhi Kendra to the country via video conference at the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) in Deoghar. He promised to build 25,000 similar institutions in the country in the near future. He also announced the establishment of the Pradhan Mantri Mahila Kisan Drone Kendra, which will assist women SHGs. Under the scheme 15,000 drones will be provided to SHGs on rent for assistance in farming. Using the drones, they could spray manures and pesticides in their farmlands.



Government Initiative To Establish Subsidized Staple Food Stores At Delhi Metro Stations:-

The central government intends to construct retail stores at important metro stations in Delhi to give consumers with subsidized kitchen basics such as onion, beans, and atta. The program intends to address the issue of rising food prices, which is a major worry for the

government ahead of the 2024 general election. If the experiment is successful, it will be expanded to additional cities with metro train networks, including Mumbai, Chennai, and Bengaluru. The first store will be located at Central Delhi's Rajiv Chowk metro station, with an aim to take advantage of its high footfall.



Indian Parliament Face Security Breach 'intruders throw smoke bombs' at MPs :-

On the 22nd anniversary of the terrorist attack on the House, Parliament witnessed a major security breach on 13 December, two people jumped from the visitors' gallery number 4 into the Lok Sabha and opened smoke canisters. As the two perpetrators attempted to advance to the presiding officer's table by hopping over MPs' desks and raising inaudible chants, they were chased down and captured midway by some MPs and security people, beaten up, and put into custody. Though none of the MPs or staff were injured in the incident, the intrusion triggered a scare.



Participate & Get an Opportunity to Interact with Hon'ble Prime Minister Narendra Modi

PM Modi's 'Pariksha Pe Charcha' announced for 2024 edition :-

Dharmendra Pradhan, Minister of Education, has announced the start of applications for the seventh edition of Pariksha Pe Charcha. Students have until January 12, 2024 to enter the competition. The competition is accessible to kids in grades 6 through 12. Students can participate using the 'self participation' and 'teacher login' options. Prime Minister Narendra Modi will also interact with parents and teachers about board exams, and related topics such as goals and dreams of students.



Parliament Greenlights Sammakka Sarakka Central Tribal University In Telangana :-

The Rajya Sabha has approved a bill to create a central tribal university in Telangana to provide higher education and research opportunities especially to tribal people. The Central Universities (Amendment) Bill, 2023 was passed overwhelmingly by voice vote after the Opposition walked out of the Lok Sabha in the middle of a debate on the security breach issue. Education minister Dharmendra Pradhan said the establishment of a central tribal university in Telangana was obligatory under the Andhra Pradesh Reorganisation Act, 2014.



Hyderabad Leads In Food Adulteration Cases: NCRB :-

According to data supplied by the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB), Hyderabad ranks first in the

country for food adulteration instances. Telangana comes in second, followed by Andhra Pradesh. In 2022, 291 incidences of food adulteration were reported across 19 major Indian cities. Surprisingly, 246 of these incidents were reported entirely in Hyderabad, indicating a worrying trend in food safety inside the city. Contaminated food items can lead to severe health consequences, including foodborne illnesses, allergies, and even death.



PM Modi Unveils Varanasi's Swarved Mahamandir, World's Largest Meditation Center :-

Swarved Mahamandir, the world's largest meditation center, was launched in Varanasi by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. PM Modi expressed gratitude for being a part of the 100th anniversary celebrations of Akhil Bhartiya Vihangam Yog Sansthan. Following the inauguration of the Swarved Mahamandir, Modi and Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath conducted a tour of the meditation center, which can accommodate 20,000 people at a time. Verses of the Swarveda have been carved upon the walls of the Mahamandir -- a seven-floor superstructure.



13 States Raise Rs 19,692 Crore In State Government Securities Auction :-

Thirteen states raised Rs 19,692 crore through the auction of state government securities, against an

announced sum of Rs 19,592 crore. According to Reserve Bank of India (RBI) data, Karnataka and Uttar Pradesh raised the most money, each raising Rs 4,000 crore. Karnataka raised the amount of Rs 4,000 crore through two papers – Rs 2,000 crore through a 15-year paper with a cut-off yield of 7.60 per cent, and Rs 2,000 crore through a 16-year paper with a cut-off yield of 7.64 per cent.



Govt Suggests 'Decriminalizing Medical Negligence' In New Criminal Law Bill :-

The Lok Sabha enacted new criminal code measures that reduced the penalties for doctors in medical negligence instances, with Union Home Minister Amit Shah informing Parliament that doctors would be exempt from criminal prosecution in situations of death caused by medical carelessness. According to Clause 106 of Bharatiya Nyaya (Second) Sanhita, 2023, which seeks to replace the IPC, the offence of "causing death by negligence" has a punishment provision of up to five years of imprisonment and a fine.



Center Releases Additional Rs 72,961 Crore In Tax Devolution To States :-

The Centre announced that it had released Rs 72,961.21 crore to states as tax devolution. Previously, a payment of Rs 72,961.21 crore was made on December 11, 2023. This is in addition to the tax devolution that the states

are due on January 10, 2024. Of this latest Rs 72,961.21 crore installment disbursed, the largest share has gone to Uttar Pradesh at Rs 13,088.51 crore, followed by Bihar at Rs 7,338.44 crore; Madhya Pradesh at Rs 5,727.44 crore; West Bengal at Rs 5,488.88 crore; Maharashtra at Rs 4,608.96 crore; Rajasthan at Rs 4,396.64 crore and Odisha at Rs 3303.69 crore.



Sakshi Malik Quits After Election Of New Wrestling Federation Chief :-

Sakshi Malik, a Rio Olympic bronze medalist, has announced her retirement from wrestling in protest of Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh supporter Sanjay Singh winning the Wrestling Federation of India (WFI) election for the top job in New Delhi. Olympic medalist grapplers Bajrang Punia and Sakshi have repeatedly asked Sports Minister Anurag Thakur to bar anyone affiliated with Brij Bhushan from running in the WFI elections. Consequently, neither Brij Bhushan's son Prateek nor son-in-law Vishal Singh entered the fray.



628 Fresh Covid Cases In India, Active Caseload At 4,054 :-

According to Union Health Ministry data, India had a single-day increase of 628 new COVID-19 cases, bringing the total active caseload to 4,054. The overall number of fatalities was 5,33,334 (5.33 lakh), with one new death reported in Kerala in the past 24 hours. The total number

of Covid cases in the country is currently 4,50,09,248 (4.50 crore). The number of people who have recuperated from the disease has risen to 4,44,71,860 (4.44 crore) while the national recovery rate stands at 98.81 per cent, according to the health ministry website.



President Draupadi Murmu Gives Assent To Three Criminal Code Bills :-

President Draupadi Murmu signed three new criminal code legislation approved by Parliament last week on December 25. These new laws — the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita and the Bharatiya Sakshya Act — will replace the Indian Penal Code, the Code of Criminal Procedure and the Indian Evidence Act of 1872. In his response to the discussion in Parliament, Union Home Minister Amit Shah stated that the new bills prioritize justice over punishment.



Home Ministry declares Muslim League faction as 'unlawful association' under UAPA :-

The Union Home Ministry on December 27 declared the Muslim League Jammu Kashmir Masarat Alam faction (MLJK-MA) as an 'unlawful association' under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967 (UAPA). The Union government banned the Masarat Alam faction for its "anti-national and secessionist activities" in Jammu and Kashmir. A gazette notification says the outfit's

leaders and members have been involved in raising funds including from Pakistan for perpetrating unlawful activities such as supporting terrorism and stone-pelting on security forces.



PM Modi flags off first-ever Amrit Bharat Express train:-

Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the first two Amrit Bharat Express trains from the 'Ayodhya Dham' Railway station on December 30. The newly introduced 'jerk-free' express trains are scheduled to operate on two routes—Darbhanga in Bihar to Anand Vihar in Delhi via Ayodhya, as well as from Malda Town in West Bengal to Sir M Visvesvaraya Terminus in Bengaluru. Passengers on these routes can expect a smoother and more comfortable travel experience due to the advanced technology implemented in these trains.



Shri Bhupender Yadav launches National Transit Pass System:-

Union Minister for Environment, Forest and Climate Change and Labour and Employment Shri Bhupender Yadav on 29 December 2023 launched the National Transit Pass System (NTPS) pan-India to facilitate the seamless transit of timber, bamboo, and other forest produce across the country. Currently, transit permits are issued for the transport of timber and forest produce

based on state-specific transit rules. The NTPS is envisioned as a "One Nation-One Pass" regime, which will enable seamless transit across the country, contributing to the ease of doing business.



Govt sanctions Rs 1,170 crore for road projects in Ladakh:-

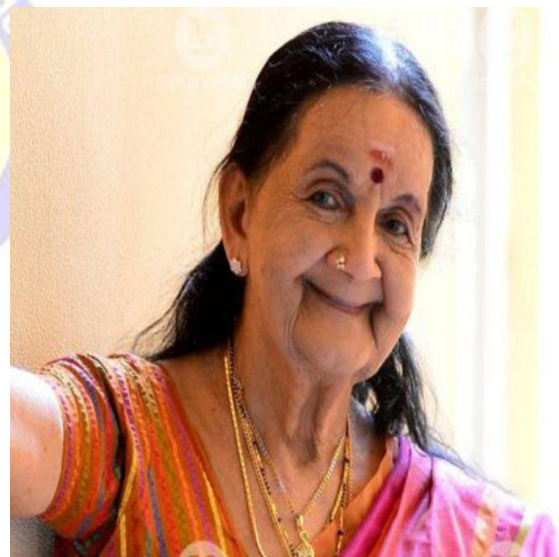
Union minister Nitin Gadkari said the government has sanctioned Rs 1,170.16 crore for 29 road projects in Ladakh, encompassing state highways and other major roads in the Union Territory. Additionally, Rs 181.71 crore has been allocated for 8 bridges under the Central Road and Infrastructure Fund (CRIF) scheme for the fiscal year 2023-24. The enhancement in road connectivity is expected to stimulate economic activities, particularly in agriculture and tourism, contributing to the overall infrastructural development of Ladakh, he added.

12: Obituaries



Henry Kissinger, Nobel Peace Prize winner, passed away :-

According to Kissinger Associates Inc., Henry Kissinger, former US Secretary of State and Nobel Peace Prize recipient, died at the age of 100. He was a diplomatic force whose tenure under two presidents left a lasting imprint on US foreign policy. While serving as Secretary of State under Republican President Richard Nixon in the 1970s, he was involved in many of the decade's defining global events. Kissinger's reign as the prime architect of US foreign policy waned with Nixon's resignation in 1974.



Popular Malayalam Actress And Musician R Subbalakshmi Dies At 87 :-

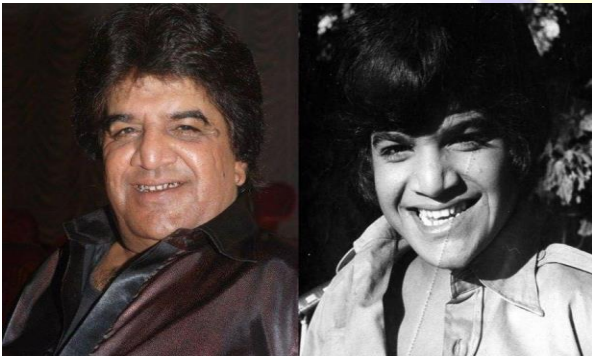
R Subbalakshmi, the mother of actress-dancer Thara Kalyan and a legendary actor and musician, died at the age of 87. Subbalakshmi is well-known for her substantial contribution to Malayalam cinema and television, particularly for her depictions of grandmothers. She was last seen playing one of the lead characters in the ongoing show, 'Sudhamani Supera'. Her notable performances in films such as "Kalyanaraman" (2002), "Pandippada" (2005), and "Nandanam" (2002) left an indelible mark on the hearts of Malayalam cinema enthusiasts.



CID fame Dinesh Phadnis passes away at the age of 57

-:

Dinesh Phadnis, who portrayed Fredricks on the renowned crime drama CID, died recently at the age of 57. Dinesh Phadnis, better known as Federicks, worked on CID, one of the most popular detective shows of all time that aired on Indian television. He quickly became a household name and drew a lot of attention from spectators. From 1998 to 2018, he worked on the show. Not just CID, Dinesh also did cameo roles in another hit sitcom Taarak Mehta Ka Ooltah Chashmah. He has also appeared in a few films in a cameo role.



Actor Junior Mehmood passes away :-

Junior Mehmood, a character actor known for his performances in Caravan, Haathi Mere Saathi, and Mera Naam Joker, died on December 8th after a battle with cancer, according to his son Hasnain. The actor was 68 years old. Junior Mehmood, born Naeem Sayyed, began his career as a child performer with Mohabbat Zindagi Hai (1966) and Naunihaal (1967). After appearing in the 1968 film Suhag Raat with the late comedic hero Mehmood, he was given the appellation Junior Mehmood. In a career of over four decades, Junior Mehmood featured in over 260 films across seven languages.



Benjamin Zephaniah, Poet And 'Peaky Blinders' Actor, Dies At 65 :-

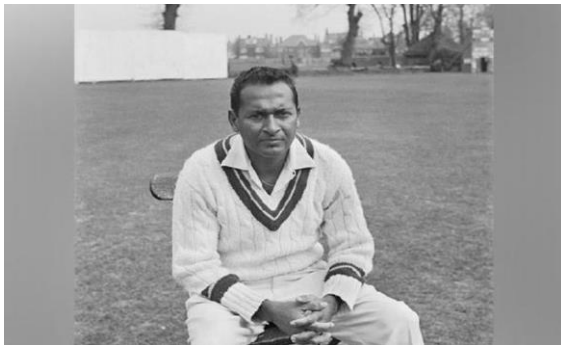
Benjamin Zephaniah, actor from 'Peaky Blinders and poet died at the age of 65. In the famous show, he played Jeremiah Jesus. According to a message on Zephaniah's official Instagram account, he died on Thursday, December 7, eight weeks after being diagnosed with a brain tumor. Zephaniah was born and reared in Birmingham's Handsworth neighborhood. He relocated to London and, at the age of 22, published his first book of poetry, Pen Rhythm. Ever since, he wrote many poetry books, novels, plays and an autobiography, The Life and Rhymes of Benjamin Zephaniah, in 2018.



Jubilant Agri & Consumer Products CEO Manu Ahuja passes away :-

Manu Ahuja, the chief executive officer and sole director of Jubilant Agri and Consumer Products Limited (JACPL), died, the firm announced in an exchange statement. Manu Ahuja graduated from XLRI Jamshedpur and Thapar Institute of Engineering and worked in a variety of industries in India and Southeast Asia. Before his current role, he spent over seven years as President of South Asia at ASSA ABLOY Asia Pacific, overseeing 18 countries. Beginning his career with Coats Viyella in

1991, he held leadership positions at Whirlpool and Akzo Nobel.



Former West Indies Batter Joe Solomon Dies At 93 :-

Joe Solomon, a former West Indies player, died recently at the age of 93. Between 1958 and 1965, he played 27 Tests for the Caribbean side, scoring 1326 runs at an average of 34. Despite the fact that he began playing first-class cricket at the age of 26, he immediately established himself in the squad. Solomon's first three innings for West Indies were centuries: 114 not out against Jamaica, 108 against Barbados, and 121 against the touring Pakistan. Following that, he was included straight into the West Indies squad against India, where in his fourth Test, he scored an unbeaten 100 in Delhi.



Dr. Gao Yaojie, Renowned AIDS Activist Dies At 95 :-

Gao Yaojie, a well-known Chinese doctor and activist who disclosed the AIDS viral epidemic in rural China in the 1990s, passed away recently at the age of 95. Dr. Gao died naturally in New York, where she had been living in exile since 2009. Dr. Gao, a certified gynecologist, became well-known and beloved throughout China in the late 1990s for her unwavering activism in exposing a man-made AIDS catastrophe and working to eradicate the stigma associated with HIV/AIDS. She discovered that AIDS was spreading through ramshackle blood

transfusion centers set up with official government backing.



Emmy-Winning Actor Andre Braugher Passes Away At 61 :-

Andre Braugher, the Emmy-winning actor best remembered for his appearances in *Homicide: Life on the Street* and *Brooklyn 99*, passed away at the age of 61. Jennifer Allen, Braugher's spokeswoman, told *The Associated Press* that the actor died after a brief illness. The Chicago-born actor had his breakthrough in 1989's *Glory*, co-starring with Morgan Freeman and Denzel Washington, who won an Academy Award for the picture about an all-Black army regiment during the Civil War. Andre Braugher won a lead actor Emmy for his role as Detective Frank Pembleton on NBC's *"Homicide: Life on Street"* in 1998.



Dr. Sailakshmi Balijepally, founder of EKAM Foundation, passes away :-

Sailakshmi Balijepally, a paediatrician and the founder of the EKAM Foundation, died after a protracted illness. She was 49 years old at the time. In 2009, she established the EKAM Foundation, an NGO that works in the fields of maternal and child health and well-being, with the goal of ensuring that no child is denied healthcare due to financial restrictions. EKAM Foundation expanded into a

global non-profit organization under her direction, with the objective of making healthcare more accessible, accountable, and effective. She has received several awards, including the “Nari Shakti Puraskar” from the Ministry of Women and Child Development, Government of India, for her leadership and achievement in 2015.



Tamil actor-comedian Bonda Mani passes away :-

Kedheeswaran, widely known as Bonda Mani, a Tamil actor-comedian, died at the age of 60 in Chennai. The actor was reportedly suffering from kidney problems. Kedheeswaran was born in Sri Lanka and migrated to Tamil Nadu as a refugee during the Sri Lankan civil war in 1983. A chance meeting with actor-director K Bhagyaraj landed him a role as a supporting actor in Pavunnu Pavunuthan (1991). Some of his notable comedy scenes came in films like Pongalo Pongal (1997), Sundara Travels (2002), Winner (2003), Englishkaran (2005), Aaru (2005) and Marudhamalai.



Award winning South Korean actor Lee Sun-Kyun dies at 48:-

Lee Sun-kyun, the award-winning South Korean actor who rose to international fame after starring in the Oscar-winning film “Parasite,” was found dead in Seoul on 27 December 2023. He was 48. Mr. Lee had recently been under police investigation on suspicion of illegal drug use, and he denied the accusations. The police said they were investigating the death as a suicide. The police found Mr. Lee’s body in a parked vehicle in central Seoul just before 11 a.m., said Jeon Yu-deung, the chief detective at Seongbuk police station, which is investigating his death.



Jacques Delors, former European Union's Commission president, dies at 98 :-

Jacques Delors, the former European Commission chief and a key figure in the establishment of the European Union's historic single currency project, passed away at the age of 98. The French socialist, known for his staunch advocacy of post-war European integration, died in his sleep at his home in Paris. Delors served as president of the European Commission for three terms - longer than any other holder of the office - from January 1985 until the end of 1994. During his tenure, the EU completed its integrated single market and agreed to introduce a single currency, the euro.

13: Ranks & Reports



Forex Reserves Jump \$2.53 Bn To \$597.93 Bn :-

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) said that India's foreign exchange reserves climbed by \$2.54 billion to \$597.94 billion for the week ending November 24. Previously, currency reserves increased by \$5.08 billion for the week ended November 17 to \$595.397 billion. Foreign currency assets (FCAs) increased by \$2.14 billion to \$528.53 billion, according to the RBI's Weekly Statistical Supplement. Expressed in dollar terms, the FCAs include the effect of appreciation or depreciation of non-US units like the euro, pound and yen held in the foreign exchange reserves.

attractiveness. While candidates for Word of the Year do not have to be newly formed phrases, they must be relevant to the current year. OUP's shortlist for 2023 aimed to capture the mood, ethos, or preoccupations of the year.



India's Fiscal Progress: GST Collections Surge To Record High In FY 2023-24:-

The gross Goods and Services Tax (GST) receipts in India increased 15.1% in November to about 1.68 lakh crore, the third biggest monthly tally from the indirect tax so far. This is the fastest increase in tax collections in 2023-24, topping the 10-month high of 13.4% in October. Domestic transaction and service import taxes increased by more than 20%, according to the Finance Ministry, marking the sixth time this fiscal year that collections have surpassed 1.6 lakh crore. Between April and November 2023, GST revenues are now up 11.9% compared to the same period of 2022-23.



"Rizz" Crowned Oxford University Press Word Of The Year By Generation Z :-

The Oxford Word of the Year for 2023 has been chosen, and it is a charismatic newcomer this time. According to CNN, the term "rizz," which is derived from the phrase "charisma," has taken the top rank, which is described by Oxford University Press (OUP) as a person's capacity to attract a romantic partner via style, charm, or



Kolkata Emerges Safest City For Third Year In A Row: NCRB Report :-

For the third year in a row, Kolkata has been named the safest city in India, with the lowest number of cognisable offenses per lakh inhabitants among cities with populations greater than 20 lakh. The city's crime rate has been progressively falling since 2016, mainly to Kolkata Police's use of technology and enhanced policing methods. This success can be credited to the government's proactive policies that prioritize female security and empowerment for all segments of society. The city has also done well in reducing violent crime, with fewer murder and rape charges.



Lahore Leads In Global Pollution Ranking :-

Lahore has the world's worst air quality, with an early air quality index (AQI) of 400, which is classified as "hazardous." The persistent pollution problem in Lahore, Pakistan's second-largest metropolis, has harmed the lives and health of millions of people. An AQI of 150-200 is considered unhealthy; 201-300 is more harmful; and 300 and beyond is extremely dangerous. Wintertime air density is higher than summertime air density, which leads to the downward movement of airborne pollutants and other harmful particles, according to experts.



India's Remarkable Climb To 7th Place In Global Climate Performance Index :-

In a big step toward more sustainable practices, India has risen to seventh place in this year's Climate Change Performance Index (CCPI), a notable improvement from its previous placement. The declaration occurred during the global COP-28 in Dubai, where India maintained its position as one of the top achievers for the sixth year in a row. The spotlight is on India's exceptional performance in renewable energy, outpacing fellow developing nations and solidifying its position in the top tier.



Mercer's Survey: Pune 2nd In India For Quality Of Living After Hyderabad :-

According to the Quality of Living Index 2023 released by Mercer, a global business consultant, Pune has the second best 'quality of living' in India after Hyderabad. In India, Pune placed 154th in Mercer's Quality of Living City Index, Hyderabad ranked 153rd, and Bengaluru ranked 156th. Vienna (Austria), Zurich (Switzerland) and Vancouver (Canada) are the top three cities in that order, according to the 2023 index. The last of these rankings were published in 2019 where Pune and Hyderabad both shared the 143rd position.



Trade Deficit Narrows To Nearly \$20.6 Billion In November :-

In November, India's trade deficit shrank to \$20.6 billion as goods exports and imports dropped. Exports of goods fell due to a drop in important product categories such as engineering items, petroleum products, and clothing. Oil and coal were the primary drivers of the decrease in imports. According to Commerce Secretary Sunil Barthwal, despite the global economic slump and high inflation, India's export numbers are solid. Services exports increased, resulting in a trade surplus and helping narrow the overall trade deficit.



Logistics Performance Index 2023: States And UTs Recognized For Achievements And Challenges :-

According to a report provided by the Commerce and Industry Ministry, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Chandigarh, and Gujarat are among the 13 states and Union Territories classified as achievers in the logistics index chart 2023. The index measures the efficiency of logistics services required to promote exports and economic growth. Other states classified as fast movers in the ranking include Kerala, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Uttarakhand, Arunachal Pradesh, and Nagaland.



India Tops Global Remittance Charts With \$125 Billion In 2023: World Bank Report :-

According to the World Bank's latest Migration and Development Brief, remittance flows to low- and middle-

income countries (LMICs) will continue to expand in 2023, albeit at a slower rate than in recent years. The research underscores India's crucial position as the leading remittance receiver, drawing attention to the changing dynamics in the remittance market, according to the World Bank. The Indian economy, buoyed by a tight labour market in the United States and robust employment growth in Europe, outperformed previous forecasts by reaching USD125 billion in remittances for the year.



IndiGo Becomes First Indian Airline To Carry 100 Million Passengers A Year :-

IndiGo, India's leading carrier, has set a new record by becoming the first Indian airline to transport more than 100 million passengers in a single calendar year. This accomplishment drives IndiGo into the league of global carriers operating on such a massive scale, solidifying its place among the world's top ten airlines by passenger volume. Marking its 17th anniversary this year, IndiGo has not only reached the 100 million passenger mark but has done so at an impressive pace, making it one of the fastest airlines to achieve this feat.



Unclaimed Deposits In Indian Banks Surge To Rs 42,270 Crore, Marking A 28% Increase In 2023 :-

Unclaimed deposits with banks have increased by 28% year on year to Rs 42,270 crore as of March 2023,

Parliament was recently informed. In comparison to Rs 32,934 crore in unclaimed deposits with public and private sector banks in FY22, the amount climbed by 28% to Rs 42,272 crore by the end of March 2023. At the end of March 2023, there were Rs 36,185 crore in unclaimed deposits with public sector banks and Rs 6,087 crore with private sector banks. Banks send unclaimed deposits of account holders lying in their accounts for 10 or more years to RBI's Depositor Education and Awareness (DEA) Fund.



India's Total Debt Surges To Rs 205 trillion In September Quarter: Report :-

According to a research, the country's overall debt, or the total outstanding bonds sold in the market, increased to \$ 2.47 trillion (Rs 205 trillion) in the September quarter. The report is based on data from the Reserve Bank of India, the Clearing Corporation of India, and the Securities and Exchange Board of India. In the March quarter of the previous fiscal year, the overall debt amount was \$ 2.34 trillion (Rs 200 trillion). The central government's debt stood at \$ 1.34 trillion, or Rs 161.1 trillion, in the September quarter, up from \$ 1.06 trillion, or Rs 150.4 trillion, in the March quarter.



Rajasthan And Andhra Pradesh Lead In Solar Park Scheme Capacities :-

Under the "Development of Solar Parks and Ultra Mega Solar Power Projects" initiative, two notable Indian states, Rajasthan and Andhra Pradesh, have made great achievements in deploying higher capacity. The scheme, which began in December 2014 with a capacity of 20,000 MW, was later increased to 40,000 MW in March 2017, with the goal of establishing at least 50 solar parks by 2023-24. The primary objective of the scheme is to facilitate Renewable Energy (RE) developers by providing ready-to-use land and transmission infrastructure.



WHO: Over 1 Million Afghan Kids In Severe Malnutrition Crisis :-

According to TOLO News, the World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that over one million children in Afghanistan are severely malnourished. TOLO News is an Afghan news channel based in Kabul. According to WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, the country requires USD 185 million to combat malnutrition. Afghanistan's Taliban-appointed Ministry of Public Health said that the number of malnourished mothers and children in the country has slightly increased compared to past years.



Foreign Exchange Reserves Soar To 20-Month High, Reaching \$616 Billion :-

In the week ending December 15, India's foreign exchange (FX) reserves increased for the fifth time,

reaching a more than 20-month high of \$615.97 billion, the highest level since March 2022. According to market participants, FX reserves grew by \$9.11 billion last week, one of the greatest weekly rises ever and the second highest in FY24 so far. The increase in reserves is likely due to a fall in imports and a softening in crude oil prices. In the previous week ended December 8, reserves had risen by \$2.82 billion to \$606.86 billion, as per the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) data.



Gwalior Achieves Guinness Record With 'Largest Tabla Ensemble' At Tansen Festival :-

On a memorable day for Gwalior's music scene, nearly 1300 tabla players, including a four-year-old boy, performed in unison to be recognized as the world's largest tabla ensemble by the Guinness Book of World Records. Chief Minister Dr Mohan Yadav accepted the Guinness World Records award on the momentous

occasion. Dr Yadav said that to make this achievement memorable and to honor all music practitioners, 'Tabla Day' will be celebrated in the entire state on December 25.



India to be world's third-largest economy by 2032 :-

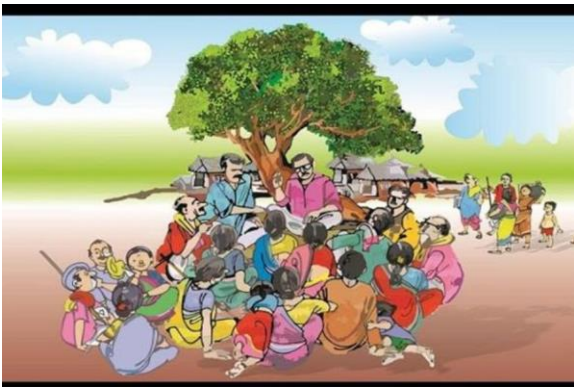
India is set to become the world's third-largest economy by 2032, and will eventually surpass China and the United States to become the "world's largest economic superpower" by the end of this century, as per a report released by the Centre for Economics and Business Research (CEBR) on December 27. India will sustain "robust economic growth", averaging 6.5 percent from 2024 to 2028, CEBR stated in its 'World Economic League Table 2024' report. This will result in the country surpassing Germany in 2027, and overtaking Japan to become the third-largest economy by 2032.

14: Schemes & Committees



Cabinet Approves Terms For 16th Finance Commission

The Union Cabinet has accepted the terms of reference (ToR) for the Sixteenth Finance Commission, which will recommend a mechanism for income sharing between the Centre and the States for the five-year period commencing April 1, 2026. The government has set an October 31, 2025 deadline for the panel to make its recommendations, according to a statement. The government had established an Advance Cell in the Finance Ministry on November 21, 2022, to oversee the preliminary work pending formal constitution of the panel.



Ministry Of Panchayati Raj Launches 'Gram Manchitra' GIS App:-

The Panchayati Raj Ministry has taken an important step in empowering Gram Panchayats through technology-driven spatial planning with the launch of the Geographic Information System (GIS) application "Gram Manchitra." This approach, emphasized in a written reply in Lok Sabha by Union Minister of State for Panchayati Raj Kapil Moreshwar Patil, expands the role of technology in improving local administration. Gram Manchitra leverages geo-spatial technology to provide a unified platform for visualizing and planning developmental works across diverse sectors.



Union Cabinet Allocates Rs 2,500 Crore For Extended Interest Equalisation Scheme :-

According to a news statement issued by the Commerce and Industry ministry, the Union Cabinet, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, has authorized an additional allocation of Rs 2,500 crore for the continuation of the Interest Equalisation Scheme until June 30, 2024. This would enable exporters from designated sectors, as well as all MSME manufacturer exporters, to obtain competitive before and post-

shipment Rupee export financing. The scheme shall be implemented by RBI through various Public and non-public Sector banks that provide pre and post-shipment credit to the exporters.



'Green Rising' Initiative Launched To Empower Youth In Meaningful Eco Initiatives :-

The "Green Rising" initiative was launched at COP28 by UNICEF's Generation Unlimited in conjunction with India's Ministry of Environment, Forests, and Climate Change. The Mission Life movement inspired India's YuWaah campaign, which focuses on engaging youth in significant environmental efforts at the grassroots level. The global "Green Rising" initiative and the "Green Rising India Alliance" involve UNICEF, Generation Unlimited, and a diverse network of public, private, and youth partners.



PM SVANidhi Scheme Disbursed Rs 9,790 Cr Loans To Street Vendors :-

The government announced in the Rajya Sabha that a total of Rs 9,790 crore in loans have been disbursed to beneficiaries of the PM Street Vendor's AtmaNirbhar Nidhi (PM SVANidhi) initiative. During the COVID-19 outbreak, the plan was introduced as a micro-credit

scheme for urban street vendors, with the goal of providing collateral-free working capital loans of up to Rs 50,000. "This scheme is available pan-India in all urban local bodies," Union Housing and Urban Affairs Minister Hardeep Singh Puri said while replying to a supplementary question.



Food Processing Industry Thrives With Rs 7,000 Crore Investment Under PLI Scheme :-

According to the Ministry of Food Processing, beneficiaries of the Production Linked Incentive (PLI) Scheme have invested Rs 7,126 crore and reported cumulative sales of Rs 49,825 crore from April to September. The PLI scheme for the food processing sector is being executed with a Rs 10,900 crore budget from FY 2021-22 to FY 2026-27. The scheme focuses on incentivising manufacturing in four categories: ready-to-cook & ready-to-eat products, processed fruits & vegetables, marine products, and mozzarella cheese.



Centre to add 270 million additional beneficiaries to Ayushman Bharat by Jan 26 :-

The Centre is preparing to cover all of the Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB PM-JAY) targeted beneficiaries by January 26, a massive task given that it implies bringing 270 million more people into the fold of its flagship health policy. The plan is part

of the new guidelines provided to all central ministries and agencies in charge of various welfare schemes to speed up the "saturation" of beneficiaries, which means covering all intended individuals. Over 280 million people have an Ayushman card, which entitles the holder – someone living below the poverty line – to access quality healthcare.



Telecom Bill 2023 Approved By Parliament :-

The Lok Sabha has approved the Omnibus Telecom Bill 2023, which would replace existing rules such as the 138-year-old Indian Telegraph Act. The Bill aims to reform and streamline the telecommunications regulatory and licensing environment, as well as to remove impediments in the development of telecom infrastructure. It also allows the government to temporarily take control of telecom services in the interest of national security and provide a non-auction route for the allocation of satellite spectrum. The Bill was passed by a voice vote after a short discussion.



Textiles Ministry Unveils 'Paat-Mitro' App For Jute Farmers :-

In its ongoing efforts to support and empower jute farmers, the Ministry of Textiles has launched the "Paat-Mitro" mobile application. This application, developed by The Jute Corporation of India Limited (JCI), is an

important step toward providing jute farmers with important information about Minimum Support Prices (MSP) and agronomy. The application, which is available in six languages, was launched during the 'Jute Symposium,' with Smt. Rachna Shah, Secretary, Ministry of Textiles, inaugurating it. All functionalities of the application are provided to users free of charge, making it easily accessible to jute farmers.



Bihar Police To Launch 'Mission Investigation@75 Days' From January 1, 2024 :-

According to a top officer, Bihar Police will initiate a new project called "Mission Investigation@75 days" making it mandatory for investigators to complete investigation of cases within 75 days of FIR registration starting from January 1 next year. Following the gazette notification by the Centre of new laws intended to replace the Indian Penal Code (IPC), Criminal Procedure Code (CrPC), and Evidence Act, the Bihar Police is ready to make major changes to the criminal justice system.



Health Minister Launched 'MedTech Mitra' To Advance Health Solution :-

The medical devices business is an important component of the healthcare sector, and India is taking a holistic approach to health with the goal of transforming its health landscape by 2047, according to Union Health Minister Mansukh Mandaviya. He made this statement shortly after digitally launching "MedTech Mitra: A Strategic Initiative to Empower MedTech Innovators and Advance Healthcare Solutions" in New Delhi. MedTech Mitra is a platform that will help the country's young talents by holding their hands and giving a final shape to their research, knowledge, logic etc.



Govt adds 34 lakh of PM-Kisan beneficiaries in special drive:-

With the number of PM-Kisan beneficiaries dropping by over 20 per cent to 8.12 crore now from a peak of 10.47 crore in April-July 2022, the government has added back 34 lakh farmers under the "saturation drive" since the launch of the Viksit Bharat Sankalp Yatra on November 15. In the latest round of PM-Kisan payments on November 15, as many as 8.12 crore farmers received the instalment of Rs 2,000. The 34 lakh farmers added now to the list of beneficiaries will be eligible to receive the next instalment of PM-Kisan before the end of 2023-24 financial year.

15: Science & Technology



Space-Tech Startup Agnikul To Flight Test 3D-Printed Engine By Year-End :-

Agnikul, a Chennai-based business that specializes in satellite launch vehicles, wants to launch its inaugural flight, powered by the world's first 3D-printed engine, before the end of this year. The mission would be a technological demonstrator, similar to Agnikul's orbital launch (the first commercial launch scheduled for 2024), although on a smaller scale. If successful, the startup incubated on the Indian Institute of Technology, Madras campus, will become India's second private company to make a small satellite launch vehicle. The first one was Skyroot Aerospace, which launched the Vikram S in November 2022.



Virgin Atlantic Flies World's 1st 100% Sustainable Aviation Fuel Flight From London To US :-

A Virgin Atlantic passenger jet powered entirely by sustainable aviation fuel (SAF) has completed a London-to-New York flight to demonstrate the possibilities of low-carbon choices that presently account for only a small portion of the industry's fuel mix. Airlines are counting on waste-derived fuel to cut emissions by up to

70%, but the high cost and limited quantity of ingredients required to create SAF make large-scale production challenging. SAF accounts for less than 0.1% of total global jet fuel in use today and costs about three to five times as much as regular jet fuel.



Scientists team synthesizes 8 compounds against malaria :-

Scientists from three separate institutions, including a current and former Allahabad University research scholar, have made a key breakthrough in the fight against malaria. The researchers synthesised eight novel chemicals over a seven-month study period that have showed enormous potential in treating infectious diseases, including Malaria. The team was led by Prof Jai Devi of the department of Chemistry, Guru Jambheshwar University, Haryana. Amit Dubey, an alumnus of Allahabad University, along with Binesh Kumar of Haryana and Aisha Tufail, a research scholar of the department of Biochemistry, AU were also the team members.



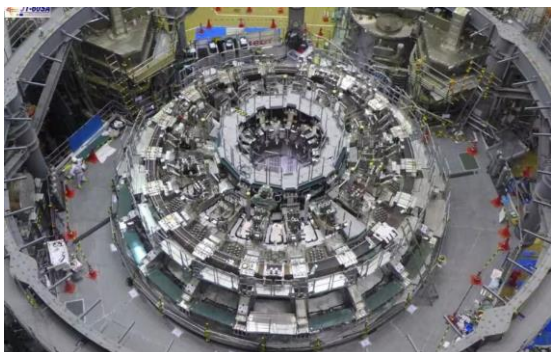
ISRO's XPoSat: India's Pioneering X-Ray Polarimeter Satellite :-

The Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) has announced that India will launch its first X-Ray Polarimeter Satellite (XPoSat) to study the polarization of powerful X-Ray sources. According to ISRO, while space-based X-Ray astronomy has been established in India, with a focus on imaging, time-domain investigations, and spectroscopy, the next XPoSat mission will bring significant value. This research, supplementing traditional time and frequency domain studies, introduces a novel dimension to X-Ray astronomy, generating anticipation and excitement within the scientific community.



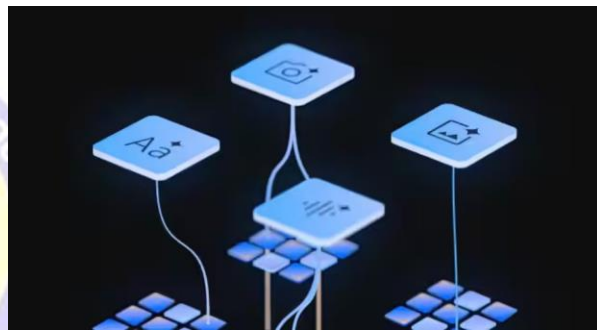
Akshata Krishnamurthy Becomes First Indian To Operate Mars Rover :-

Dr. Akshata Krishnamurthy became the first Indian citizen to drive a rover on Mars, a significant accomplishment in her career. Krishnamurthy received her Ph.D. from the famous Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) and went on to work full-time at NASA. She is one of the few Indians who has accepted a full-time position with NASA. Currently, she actively contributes to multiple space missions, notably the Perseverance rover, involved in collecting samples from Mars for eventual return to Earth.



Japan Unveils JT-60SA, The World's Largest Experimental Nuclear Fusion Reactor :-

JT-60SA, the world's largest operational experimental nuclear fusion reactor, has been unveiled in Naka, Japan, in a hangar north of Tokyo. Unlike traditional nuclear fission, the JT-60SA uses fusion to produce energy by combining two atomic nuclei, potentially providing a safer and more abundant energy source. Standing six stories high, the tokamak has been designed to contain and control plasma heat to an astonishing 200 million degrees Celsius, exploring the viability of fusion as a secure, expansive, and carbon-neutral energy source.



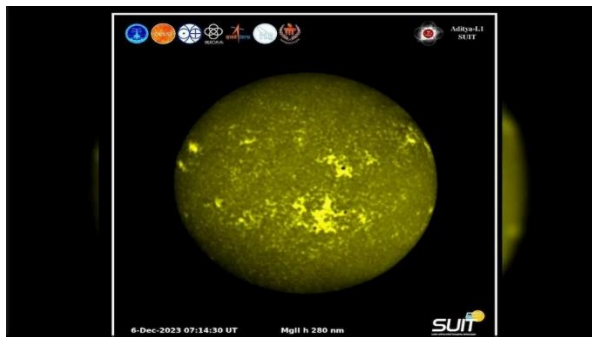
Google Unveiled 'Gemini', Its Biggest AI Model :-

Gemini, Google's next AI model, has been unveiled. This model is intended to act in more human-like ways than previous models. Gemini is a novel artificial intelligence model that surpasses previous models in areas such as comprehension, summarization, reasoning, coding, and planning. It is available in three sizes: Pro, Ultra, and Nano. The Pro version is already available, and the Ultra version will be released early next year. Gemini is a large language model (LLM) developed by Google's DeepMind division. It's designed to compete with other AI systems like OpenAI's ChatGPT and possibly outperform them.



Meta And IBM Launch 'AI Alliance' To Promote Open-Source AI Development :-

Facebook's parent company, Meta, and IBM have formed the AI Alliance to advocate for a "open-science" approach to AI development, which pits them against rivals Google, Microsoft, and ChatGPT-maker OpenAI. These two opposing camps – open and closed – argue on whether AI should be built in a way that makes the underlying technology broadly available. Safety is at the heart of the debate, but so is who gets to profit from AI's advances. The alliance is likely to lobby regulators to ensure new legislation works in their favor.



1st-Ever Full-Disk Images Of Sun Captured By India's Aditya-L1 Mission :-

The first-ever full-disk images of the Sun has been captured by India's Aditya-L1 Mission, said ISRO. The photos - in near ultraviolet wavelengths - "provide pioneering insights into the intricate details of the Sun's photosphere and chromosphere," ISRO posted on X, formerly Twitter. The Solar Ultraviolet Imaging Telescope or SUIT instrument on board the Aditya-L1 spacecraft captured the images in the 200-400 nm wavelength range, ISRO said in a statement. Aditya-L1 is the first Indian space-based observatory to study the Sun from a halo orbit around first Sun-earth Lagrangian point (L1).



Oldest Black Hole in Cosmic History Discovered :-

Astronomers have discovered the universe's earliest black hole, going back more than 13 billion years to the the universe. The James Webb Space Telescope (JWST) observations reveal it to be at the center of a galaxy 440 million years after the big bang. Astronomers believe the early black holes could help solve the mystery of how their massive cousins at the centers of galaxies like the Milky Way developed to billions of times the mass of the sun. The latest observations, of the galaxy called GN-z11, push the origins of this mystery back to black holes' infancy and suggest that they were either born big or ballooned extremely rapidly early on.



ISRO to develop ECLSS for Gaganyaan mission after failing to get it from other countries: Somanath :-

ISRO chairman S Somanath revealed that the environmental control and life support system (ECLSS) for the Gaganyaan mission will be developed in-house. The Gaganyaan project aims to demonstrate the Indian Space Research Organization's human spaceflight capacity by launching a human crew into a 400-kilometer orbit and safely returning them to Earth by landing in Indian sea waters. Somanath stated that ISRO initially hoped to acquire the ECLSS from other countries but was unsuccessful. Now, ISRO will develop the system using its own knowledge and resources.



Dr. Atul Shah's Game-Changing Innovation For Leprosy Care Earns Global Recognition :-

Dr. Atul Shah, a plastic surgeon, realized three decades ago that a simple procedure without the use of specialized equipment might correct deformities in leprosy patients. At the recently concluded UN Climate Change COP-23 at Dubai, Dr Shah was felicitated with the 2023 REACH (Recognizing Excellence Around Champions of Health)'s Game Changing Innovator award that recognises unsung heroes of global health.



Ola's Bhavish Aggarwal Unveils 'Made For India' Krutrim AI :-

Krutrim AI Designs, Ola co-founder Bhavish Aggarwal's latest artificial intelligence (AI) firm, has developed a family of multilingual artificial intelligence (AI) models to meet the unique needs of the Indian environment. Krutrim, which means 'artificial' in Sanskrit, will be available in two sizes: a base model called Krutrim that has been trained on 2 trillion tokens and unique datasets, and a larger, more complicated model called Krutrim Pro, which will be available next quarter for enhanced problem-solving and task execution capabilities. Krutrim can understand 22 Indian languages and generate content in about 10, including Marathi, Hindi, Bengali, Tamil, Kannada, Telugu, Odia, Gujarati, and Malayalam.



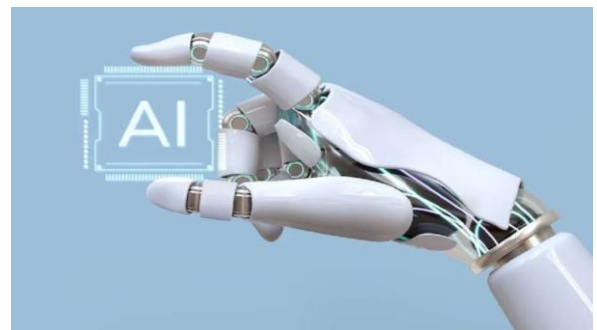
Oldest Evidence of Yak Domestication in Bangga :-

The oldest record of a yak being domesticated by humans has been discovered in Bangga, a town in the Tibetan Autonomous Region of China's Shannan prefecture. According to a new study, Shannan borders Bhutan and Arunachal Pradesh, and the Brahmaputra River flows through it. Furthermore, humans in Bangga, located on the Yarlung-Tsangpo (as the Brahmaputra is known in Tibet), domesticated taurine cattle (cows) along with yaks some 2,500 years ago. The study's authors found that the residents of Bangga also produced hybrids by crossing yaks and cattle.



Barracuda: India's Fastest Solar-Electric Boat :-

Barracuda, India's fastest solar-electric boat, was launched at the Naval Solar and Electric Boats yard off Aroor in Alappuzha, furthering the cause of environmentally responsible maritime transportation. Barracuda, named after the quick, long fish, was developed by Naval and may be deployed as a workboat in rough seas to carry up to 12 passengers and goods. The 14-metre-long, 4.4-metre-wide vessel can attain a top speed of 12.5 knots (23 kmph) and has a range of seven hours on a single charge.



Bhashini AI Translates PM Modi's Speech In Indian Languages :-

During a speech in Uttar Pradesh, Prime Minister Narendra Modi used Bhashini, an AI-powered Indian language translation technology, to deliver a real-time translation. According to Reuters, Bhashini was built by the government, with tens of thousands of people in India contributing data from their local languages to produce open source language databases upon which others can build tools. Modi was speaking to people at the Kashi Tamil Sangamam in Uttar Pradesh's Varanasi.



Google Announces India-First AI-Powered Experience For Maps :-

Google has revealed a slew of AI-powered Maps features that are exclusive to India. Address descriptors, lens integration, and live view walking navigation are among the new AI-powered features. Google stated that the new features will give a more comprehensive Maps experience that is tailored to the needs of Indian consumers. Google said its Where Is My Train app will now include real-time train location, schematic maps, platform numbers, and more for local trains in Mumbai and Kolkata.



Solar mission Aditya L1 will reach destination on January 6, says ISRO chief :-

The Lagrangian L1 point insertion of the Aditya L1 mission will take place on January 6, 2024, according to Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) chief S

Somnath. However, the ISRO chairman said that the time for L1 point insertion has yet to be determined. Notably, Aditya L1 mission, the first Indian space-based observatory to study the Sun from a halo orbit L1, was launched by ISRO on September 2 from the Satish Dhawan Space Centre (SDSC) at Sriharikota. Once Aditya L1 reaches its destination, it will help measure various events happening on the Sun for the next five years.



ISRO has made structural analysis software 'FEAST' :-

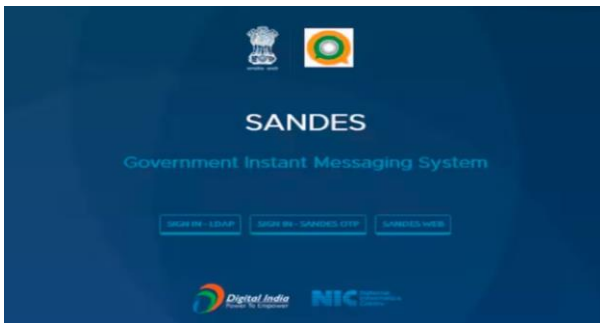
The Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre (VSSC) of the Indian space agency ISRO, has developed an analysis software that is used to perform Finite Element Analysis (FEA) of various types of structures including rockets, aircraft, satellites, buildings, etc. FEAST is the general-purpose Finite element analysis software developed indigenously by Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre, the lead centre of ISRO. The software is sold at a fraction of cost compared to other commercially available finite element packages thereby contributing a little to the clarion for an atmanirbhar Bharat.



NASA deploys spacecraft to intercept 'God of Chaos' asteroid:-

NASA has recently launched a mission to intercept a near-Earth asteroid nicknamed "God of Chaos." For this mission, the US space agency deployed OSIRIS-APEX, after the spacecraft's return from deep space. The asteroid Apophis, or God of Chaos, will brush past Earth's

orbit, only 20,000 miles away from the surface in 2029. Named after an ancient Egyptian deity, Apophis is a 1,000-foot-wide asteroid. It was first discovered in 2004 and is expected to fly by Earth on April 13, 2029.



Paramilitary forces to switch to 'Sandes App' for official communication:-

Para-Military forces will completely switch to 'Sandes App' for all official communication and sharing of documents from the first week of January. For quick and fast communication, WhatsApp was very popular among security forces for internal communication, but in the present scenario where the safety of data is paramount and document sharing on messaging apps is a regular affair. To overcome security issues, it has been decided to switch to the 'Sandes app' that has been designed and developed in India.

16: Sports



Rahul Dravid To Continue As India's Head Coach :-

The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) has extended the contract of head coach Rahul Dravid and support staff members such as bowling coach Paras Mhambrey, batting coach Vikram Rathour, and fielding coach T Dilip. "The BCCI engaged in productive discussions with Mr. Rahul Dravid after the term of his contract ended following the recently concluded ICC Men's Cricket World Cup 2023 and unanimously agreed to further the tenure," BCCI said in a statement. Dravid's first task in his second spell will be a tour to South Africa beginning December 10, which will include three ODIs and T20Is each and two Tests.



Ruturaj Gaikwad Becomes The Fastest Indian To Score 4,000 Runs In Men's T20 :-

Ruturaj Gaikwad, a gifted Indian cricketer, has reached a significant milestone in men's T20 cricket. Gaikwad became the fastest Indian to collect 4,000 runs in the shortest version of the game in the fourth T20I against Australia at the Shaheed Veer Narayan Singh International Stadium in Raipur. He accomplished this incredible achievement in only 116 innings, demonstrating his outstanding batting ability. This achievement makes Gaikwad the quickest Indian batsman to achieve the milestone, surpassing the previous record held by KL Rahul, who reached 4,000 runs in 117 T20 innings.



Vaishali Rameshbabu Becomes Grandmaster, Creating History With Brother Pragganandhaa :-

Vaishali Rameshbabu, after Koneru Humpy and Harika Dronavalli, became India's third female grandmaster after crossing the 2500 FIDE rating threshold at the IV El Llobregat Open in Spain. To overcome rating, the 22-year-old defeated Turkish FM Tamer Tarik Selbes (2238) in the second round and has opened the event with two consecutive wins. With this achievement, Vaishali and her younger brother, Rameshbabu Pragganandhaa, have become the first-ever Grandmaster siblings pair in history.



Kerala Footballer Viknesh Gets Two-Year Ban For Doping :-

M. Viknesh, a Kerala footballer who failed a dope test during the National Games in Ahmedabad in October 2022, has been sentenced to a two-year suspension beginning April 5, 2023. The forward, who was withdrawn from the Kerala team for the final round of the Santosh Trophy in February this year after testing positive for terbutaline, had appealed the judgment of the Anti-Doping Disciplinary Panel on April 5, 2023. Terbutaline is an ingredient in many cough syrups, but it is in the World Anti-Doping Agency's prohibited list under specified substances.



Travis Head Wins ICC Men's Player Of Month Award For November 2023 :-

The ICC Men's Player of the Month for November 2023 is Australian batter Travis Head, who struck an explosive century to help Australia win their sixth ICC Cricket World Cup victory. Head outlasted teammate Glenn Maxwell and India seamer Mohammed Shami to win the award. In the semi-final, he had an early impact with the ball, derailing South Africa's innings rebuild by taking the crucial wickets of Heinrich Klaasen and Marco Jansen. In the final against India, he changed the course of the game with a stunning catch, which sent back the dangerous Rohit Sharma.



Haryana Win Vijay Hazare Trophy :-

Haryana was victorious in the Vijay Hazare Trophy 2023 final, defeating Rajasthan by 30 runs at the Saurashtra Cricket Association (SCA) Stadium in Rajkot. It also happened to be Haryana's first victory in the tournament's history. Rajasthan, on the other side, finished second for the second time after the championship in 2006-07. Haryana scored 287 for the loss of eight wickets after electing to bat first. Skipper Ashok Menaria held the middle order together with a knock of 70 runs off 96 balls with eight fours. It was a partnership of 124 runs between Menaria and Kumar that put Haryana in a position of command.



U-19 Asia Cup, Bangladesh Beat UAE To Lift Trophy :-

Wicketkeeper-batter Ashiqur Rahman Shibli hit his second century in five games as Bangladesh defeated UAE by 195 runs to win the Under-19 Asia Cup in Dubai. Ashiqur Rahman hammered 12 fours and one six in his 129-ball innings as Bangladesh posted 282/8 after the UAE chose to field. In response, the UAE lost meekly, succumbing for 87 in 24.5 overs as Bangladesh clinched the eight-nation competition with five wins in five games. For Bangladesh, Ashiqur finished with 378 runs from five innings at 126.00 to be adjudged both player of the match and series.



KKR Picked Mitchell Starc By Record Rs 24.75 Crore :-

The record for the most expensive signing in Indian Premier (IPL) auctions was broken twice in a row, as the Rs 20 crore threshold was exceeded for the first time in the 15-year history of the cash-rich T20 competition. Mitchell Starc and Pat Cummins of Australia were responsible for the record-breaking figures in Dubai, securing offers of Rs 24.75 crore and Rs 20.5 crore from Kolkata Knight Riders (KKR) and Sunrisers Hyderabad (SRH), respectively. The highest bid before was Rs 18.5 crore for England's Sam Curran by Punjab Kings at the auction for IPL 2023.



Badminton : Maharashtra Bags Women's And AAI Wins Men's Title Events In Guwahati :-

Airports Authority of India (AAI) and Maharashtra won the men's and women's team titles in the 76th Inter-State-Inter-Zonal and 85th Senior National badminton championships, respectively, with identical 3-0 victories over Karnataka and AAI. Shruti Mundada of Maharashtra faced Tanya Hemanth in the inaugural women's match. While Shruti is all placements and angles, Tanya is a counterpuncher and a retrieving machine. After a marathon of one hour and 23 minutes, it was Shruti who emerged a 23-21, 23-25, 21-18 winner.



SBI Inter-Circle Cricket Tournament : 23 December To 27 December :-

Inaugurated on 23 December the SBI Inter-Circle Cricket Tournament 2023-24 is being hosted by State Bank of India, Hyderabad Circle. Rajesh Kumar, the Hyderabad Circle's main general manager, declared the event open. The competition will begin with 24 league matches, followed by semi-finals and finals on December 27 at Rajiv Gandhi International Stadium. Rajesh Kumar, speaking on the occasion, stated that the teams must be psychologically strong and tough in order to emerge triumphant and victorious. He urged all the players to play the game in the true spirit and make it entertaining, thrilling and memorable.



Sports Ministry suspends newly-elected Wrestling Federation of India body:-

The freshly elected Wrestling Federation of India (WFI) body, led by chief Sanjay Singh, has been suspended by India's Ministry of Sports. WFI was suspended after failing to respect the terms of the WFI constitution when announcing a hurried proposal to host the wrestling nationals. The WFI announced plans to hold nationals for the U-15 and U-20 age groups before the end of the current year, that is, within the next seven days. The ministry, in its statement said the announcement was made in 'haste' as it didn't give the wrestlers sufficient notice. The ministry also found the decision to hold nationals on such short notice in breach of the WFI constitution.



Women's Cricket: India Achieve Historic Feat With Maiden Test Victory Over Australia :-

India won their first women's test match against Australia at Wankhede Stadium with a decisive eight-wicket victory. With a dominant 187-run lead in the first innings, India had established command of the match. After bowling Australia out for 261 in the second innings, they needed only 75 runs to win the match. India completed the mark shortly after lunch, despite losing

two wickets. This is India's first victory against Australia in 11 tests since the teams first clashed in the longest format in 1977.



Khelo India Youth Games 2023 Set To Be Held In Tamil Nadu :-

The Khelo India Youth Games will take place across four venues beginning on January 19. According to a statement issued by the Sports Development Authority of India, Tamil Nadu has been chosen as the host state for the forthcoming Khelo India Youth Games 2023, which will be held in four cities: Chennai, Madurai, Trichy, and Coimbatore. The SDAT, in collaboration with the Sports Authority of India and other National Sports Federations, will host the tournament, which will include 27 disciplines.



Former cricketer Ambati Rayudu joins YSRCP:-

Former Indian cricketer Ambati Rayudu on 28 December 2023 joined politics. He joined Andhra Pradesh's ruling party, Yuvajana Sramika Rythu Congress Party (YSRCP), in the presence of chief minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy in Vijayawada. Deputy CM Narayan Swamy and YSRCP MP Peddireddy Mithun Reddy also attended the event. Rayudu retired from cricket in 2023 after the Indian Premier League. A native of Andhra Pradesh, he has

represented the state in domestic cricket. He also played for Team India.



Magnus Carlsen wins Fifth World Rapid Championship title:-

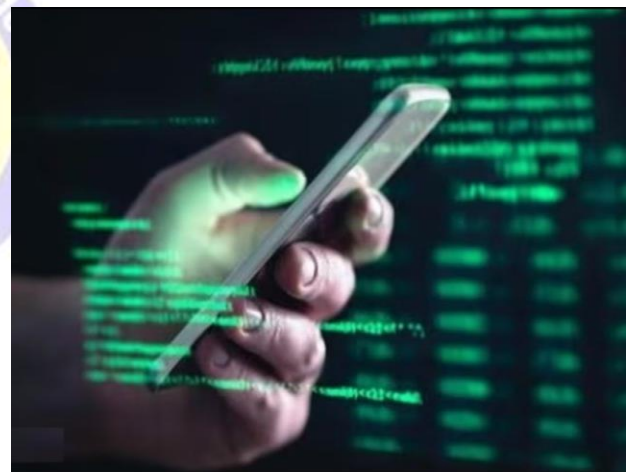
World #1 Magnus Carlsen has again made history by defending his title in the World Rapid. This is the fifth Rapid title for Carlsen, who also holds five world championship titles in Classical chess and six world titles in Blitz chess. Anastasia Bodnaruk has become the new Women’s World Rapid Champion. With 10 points out of 13 games (with seven wins, six draws and no defeats), Magnus Carlsen emerged on top in a fierce competition of 150 strong players. His outstanding performance earned him not just the championship title but also the first prize of \$60,000.

17: State



Odisha CM Launches ‘AMA Bank’ For Gram Panchayat Banking :-

Naveen Patnaik, the chief minister of Odisha, announced Ama Bank (Our Bank), an initiative to provide banking services through CSP (Customer Service Point) Plus banking facilities in all of the state's unbanked gram panchayats (GP). Launching the scheme, Naveen Patnaik said: “The CSP Plus model innovated by Odisha will become a model for the rest of the country.” He said: “Reaching out to the people at the bottom of the pyramid and delivery of public services to the last mile in a fair and transparent manner, has been one of the highest priority agenda of government.”



Uttar Pradesh Greenlights India’s First Telecom Center Of Excellence In Saharanpur :-

The Uttar Pradesh government has announced the establishment of India's first Telecom Centre of Excellence at IIT Roorkee, as part of its ongoing efforts to create new technology-related jobs in the state. The new center, according to the state government, would not only broaden UP's engagement in technology and innovation, but will also accelerate the telecommunications sector. The state government has announced plans to invest up to Rs 30 crore in the establishment of a research center at IIT Roorkee in Saharanpur. The center will focus on the intersection of 5G technology and artificial intelligence (AI) and will lay the groundwork for the launch of 6G technology.



Union Home Minister Amit Shah Approves Rs 1,658 Crore Recovery And Reconstruction Plan For Joshimath

-:

A high-level committee led by Union Home Minister Amit Shah has approved a Rs 1,658 crore recovery and rehabilitation (R&R) plan for Joshimath, which was impacted by landslides and ground subsidence. According to the R&R plan, the ministry will pay Rs 1079.96 crore in government assistance under the National Disaster Response Fund's (NDRF) recovery and reconstruction window. The state government will provide Rs 126.41 crore from its State Disaster Response Fund (SDRF) towards relief assistance and will provide Rs 451.80 crore from its state budget, including land acquisition cost for resettlement of Rs 91.82 crore, it said.



Karnataka's Ambitious Plan For Economic Growth: Targeting Rs 1.4 Trillion Annual Investments :-

The Karnataka government has announced the launch of multiple strategic initiatives targeted at generating Rs 1.40 trillion in yearly investments, a 75% increase from the existing level. The idea is to invest Rs 7 trillion over the next five years, with the goal of making Karnataka a major investment destination in Asia for future

technology and sophisticated manufacturing. Over the next five years, the government intends to develop at a rate of 15-16% per year and enhance the contribution of the industrial sector to the Gross State Value Added (GSVA). Currently, the state attracts investments of about Rs 80,000 crore per year.



Revanth Reddy Named Telangana's New Chief Minister

-:

The Congress central leadership has chosen Telangana party chairman A. Revanth Reddy as the state's Chief Minister. On December 7, he will take the oath of office. Mr. Reddy was elected as the Congress Legislature Party's (CLP) leader, and he would be the first Congress Chief Minister of Telangana, a state that was founded in 2014. On the basis of a report presented by the party's poll observers, Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge offered his approval. The Telangana Pradesh Congress Committee president was elected with a thumping majority from the Kodangal Assembly constituency.



Wax Statue Of Baba Ambedkar Installed In Jaipur Wax Museum :-

On the occasion of Mahaparinirvan Day, a wax statue of Constitution architect Baba Saheb Ambedkar was installed in Jaipur Wax Museum, Nahargarh Fort. Anoop Srivastava, founder-director of the museum, said, "We

decided to build the statue only after considering the demand of the tourists and visitors coming here. A large number of tourists from all over India have been visiting here and demanding a wax statue of Baba Saheb, the father of the Indian Constitution, in this grand museum. That is the reason the wax statue was unveiled on the occasion of his Mahaparinirvan Day (6 December)."



Damodar Rajanarasimha Appointed As Telangana's Health Minister :-

Damodar Rajanarasimha Cilarapu, a senior Congress member, has been appointed Health Minister in the third Telangana Legislative Assembly, following the distribution of the Health, Medical and Family Welfare, and Science and Technology ministries by Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy. Mr. Rajanarasimha began his political career in 1989, when he was elected as a Member of Legislative Assembly (MLA) from the Andole constituency for the Indian National Congress (INC). Although facing electoral setbacks, he emerged victorious in 2004 and 2009.



Vishnu Deo Sai Is New Chhattisgarh Chief Minister:-

Chhattisgarh's new chief minister will be Vishnu Deo Sai. Vishnu Deo, a tribal face and a political veteran who served as a Union minister, was among the top CM

contenders but was not regarded the leader in a race between Raman Singh and Renuka Singh. The new chief minister came from a prominent political family and began his political career as a rural sarpanch. In 1989, he was elected as a 'panch' of Bagia village panchayat and next year became the sarpanch unopposed.



Mohan Yadav Is The Newly Elected Chief Minister Of Madhya Pradesh :-

The BJP chose Ujjain-Dakshin (South) MLA Dr. Mohan Yadav as its legislature party leader and the next Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh, a huge surprise. Narendra Singh Tomar, who recently resigned as a Union Cabinet Minister and Member of Parliament after winning the Assembly elections, has been appointed as the next Assembly Speaker. Set to become the 19th CM of the State, Mr. Yadav's name was proposed by the outgoing CM Shivraj Singh Chouhan at the BJP legislature party meet in Bhopal.



Bhajan Lal Sharma Elected Chief Minister Of Rajasthan :-

A first-time MLA from Sanganer Bhajanlal Sharma is named Rajasthan's next Chief Minister. The oath ceremony is expected to take place on Friday, December 15, the Chief Minister-designate's birthday. Mr Sharma will be assisted by two deputies: Diya Kumari, a

former candidate for the top post, and veteran politician Prem Chand Bairwa. Former Chief Minister Vasundhara Raje, who was herself considered to be in the reckoning for the top post, proposed Mr. Sharma's name, which was seconded by Sawai Madhopur MLA Kirodi Lal Meena and a few other senior leaders.



Tamilisai Soundararajan: Telangana To Decentralise Development Into Three Zones:-

The Telangana government has declared its intention to decentralize development in the state. As a result, it intends to divide the state into three zones, with Hyderabad serving as the focal point. Governor Tamilisai Soundararajan stated that the first zone will cover the city within the outer ring road, the second zone will cover the area between the ORR and the proposed Regional Ring Road (RRR), and the third zone will cover the areas outside the Regional Ring Road. The Governor said Hyderabad was not only the capital to the State but also a perennial revenue source that generated income for the welfare and development of the poorer sections.



Surat Diamond Bourse Inaugurated By PM Modi :-

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has opened the Surat diamond exchange, which has surpassed the Pentagon as the world's largest office building. It has a total

construction area of 6.7 million square feet and was finished in July at a cost of 32 billion. The 6.5 million square foot US landmark, which opened in 1943, has a total area of 6.5 million square feet. The bourse comprises a state-of-the-art 'Customs Clearance House' for Import-Export; a jewellery mall for retail jewellery businesses; and a facility for international banking and safe vaults.



PM Narendra Modi Launches Second Edition Of Kashi Time Sangamam In Varanasi :-

The second edition of the Kashi Tamil Sangamam was launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who stated that the program fosters the ethos of "Ek Bharat, Shresth Bharat." Last year, the first iteration was a month-long event. On the occasion, he also started off the Kashi Tamil Sangamam Express between Varanasi and Kanyakumari. The sangamam, which will take place from December 17 to 31, will be attended by 1,400 luminaries from Tamil Nadu and Puducherry, including students, professors, farmers, writers, and spiritual leaders.



Accenture Launches New Generative AI Studio In Bengaluru :-

In Bengaluru, Accenture opened a generative AI Studio. The studio will pool the company's talent and

technological assets to provide a full suite of generative AI capabilities to streamline business processes and allow corporate innovation. Accenture's data and AI team and customers will collaborate to co-create solutions that will include a modern data and AI foundation, LLM architecture, ecosystem partnerships, talent, and responsible AI frameworks. The Bengaluru studio will help clients around the globe prioritize capabilities across the entire value chain and make the shift to scale their AI investments, rapidly and responsibly.



U.P. Police Launches WhatsApp Channels For Districts :-

According to a UP Police statement, WhatsApp Channels for the Uttar Pradesh Police and all district units have been opened to publicize the activity of the district police and to disseminate information on the action taken by the police in criminal and law and order occurrences to as many people as possible. According to the press release, the state government directed that the good work of the police be publicly publicized. In compliance with the above instructions, a WhatsApp Channel of Uttar Pradesh Police and all the districts has been launched.



Bengaluru Airport's T2 Recognized Among UNESCO's 'Most Beautiful Airports' :-

Bengaluru's Kempegowda International Airport Terminal 2 (T2) stood out in a recent announcement by UNESCO's

Prix Versailles 2023, winning designation as one of the 'World's most beautiful airports.' The world judges panel, chaired by famous fashion designer Elie Saab, unveiled this prize, making T2 the only Indian airport to get such prestigious recognition. This global acknowledgment underlines the airport's dedication to exceptional design and architectural brilliance on an international level.



UP To Build India's First AI City In Lucknow :-

When States are looking at using artificial intelligence (AI), India's largest State, Uttar Pradesh, has gone a step ahead with plans to build India's first AI city in Lucknow to house and promote the AI ecosystem. A report by Grand View Research pegged the global AI market size at \$137 billion in 2022 and is projected to expand at a compound annual growth rate of 37.3 per cent from 2023 to 2030. Lucknow houses Centres of Excellence in areas like AI and MedTech (with extensive AI integration). The AI COE (centre in IIIT Lucknow) alone supports more than 15 AI/ML start-ups, nurturing a culture of creativity and entrepreneurship.



KSRTC Unveils 'Namma Cargo' Logistics In Karnataka :-

Minister Ramalinga Reddy flagged off 20 trucks for the Karnataka State Road Transport Corporation's (KSRTC) 'Namma (Our) Cargo' truck service. The Transport Minister stated on the occasion that 100 vehicles will be

admitted within a month and 500 more by the end of next year. Reddy said Basaveshwara bus station at Peenya will be utilised as a depot for operation and maintenance of these trucks and the remaining vacant space will be provided to government companies to generate commercial revenue.



Ennore ammonia gas leak left residents gasping for breath:-

Thousands of residents of Chennai’s Ennore, already grappling with the damages caused by the oil leak after the floods earlier in December 2023, are now facing yet another health threat following the ammonia gas leak from the pipeline of Coromandel International Ltd. People in several areas around Ennore, including Thalankuppam, Periyakuppam, Chinnakuppam, Ernavur Kuppam, Netaji Nagar, and Burma Nagar among others come out of their homes gasping for breath. The elderly and women with comorbidities fainted on the streets.



HUDCO to invest 14,500 crore in Gujarat’s housing and urban infra:-

In a significant move towards bolstering housing and urban infrastructure development, state-owned Housing and Urban Development Corporation Limited (HUDCO) announced on 27 December its collaboration with the Gujarat government. The partnership involves an investment commitment of up to Rs 14,500 crore dedicated to funding various housing and urban infrastructure projects in the state. HUDCO, recognized as a techno-financial institution, specializes in providing financial assistance for housing and urban development projects across the country.



Lt. Governor Manoj Sinha laid Foundation Stone for CRC in J&K:-

Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha and Union Minister of Social Justice & Empowerment Dr. Virendra Kumar in December 2023 laid the Foundation Stone of the Composite Regional Centre (CRC) in Village Chak Jawala Singh of Samba district in Jammu and Kashmir. The CRC will be housed in a new building to be constructed by NBCC in a multistory building with a barrier-free environment for persons with disabilities, in a sprawling campus in Samba near AIIMS-Jammu. The estimated cost of construction is 29 crores rupees and the construction work will be finished within a span of one year.

18: Summits & Conferences



Amritsar To Host Military Literature Festival Next Year

The second Military Literature Festival will take place in Amritsar early next year. This is the second time a district-level event of this like has been organized, the first being in Patiala in January. Lt-Gen TS Shergill (retd), chairman of the Military Literature Festival Association, stated that the event would be held in early 2024, taking into account student examination schedules and other circumstances. The event will also focus on Punjab and Punjabiyat, including military history. The strategic vision of Maharaja Ranjit Singh will also be discussed.



PM Modi Proposes To Host COP33 In India In 2028 :-

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has proposed hosting the 33rd Conference of the Parties of the UNFCCC (COP 33) in India in 2028. PM Modi announced his ambition to host the summit in India during the opening ceremony of the high-level session at COP 28 in the UAE. "India is committed to work towards UN Framework for Climate Change process. That is why, through this platform, I propose to host COP33 Summit in India in 2028," he said. In his opening remarks he also mentioned that India has achieved its emission intensity targets 11 years ahead of committed time frame.



PM Modi Launches LeadIT 2.0, Focusing On Inclusive Industry Transition:-

Prime Minister Narendra Modi introduced the Leadership Group for Industry Transition (LeadIT 2.0) on the margins of the 28th edition of the climate change conference, COP28, which is taking place in Dubai. The program intends to encourage the co-development and transfer of low-carbon technologies while giving financial help to emerging economies, with a primary focus on an inclusive and just industry transition. LeadIT, founded in 2019, has grown into a collaborative endeavor including 18 nations and 20 industry-leading companies. Emphasizing the shared commitment to Global Net Zero, Prime Minister Modi underscored the vital role of government-industry partnerships.



UAE Unveils \$30 Billion Fund For Global Climate Solutions At COP28 :-

The United Arab Emirates, which is hosting COP-28, announced a US\$30 billion pledge to the ALTERRA investment fund. The privately managed fund seeks to raise \$250 billion globally by 2030, making it the largest of its type, and to alter emerging markets and developing

economies. An undetermined sum has been set aside from the initial tranche for the development of over 6.0 GW (1 GW = 1,000 MW) of new renewable energy capacity in India. This includes establishing 1,200 MW of wind and solar projects that will begin producing clean power by 2025.



5th Edition Of The Global Ayurveda Festival Held In The Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala:-

The 5th edition of Global Ayurveda Festival was held in the Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala from December 1-5, with the theme 'Emerging Challenges in Healthcare and a Resurgent Ayurveda'. GAF 2023, the largest ever conclave on Ayurveda inaugurated by Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar, witnessed the gathering of international practitioners of this alternative medicine, researchers, policymakers, and industry leaders to explore its impact in healthcare. Delegations from over 70 countries were present at the event, which underlines the growing recognition of Ayurveda's relevance in addressing global health concerns.



Global Investors Summit In Dehradun: December 8-9, 2023 :-

The Uttarakhand government will conduct the Global Investors Summit in Dehradun on December 8-9, with the goal of highlighting around 15 investor-friendly measures. To attract potential investors, the summit will showcase good governance practices, a supportive regulatory framework, and sustainable practices. Business-to-business (B2B) and government-to-business

(G2B) discussions are on the program to help investors make educated decisions. These gatherings are intended to increase collaboration among exhibitors, private businesses, and government agencies.



PM Modi To Address Infinity Forum 2.0 On December 9 :-

The finance ministry announced that Prime Minister Narendra Modi will speak at the second edition of the premier financial technology event Infinity Forum 2.0 on December 9. The International Financial Services Centres Authority (IFSCA) and GIFT City will host the event under the auspices of the Government of India, according to the ministry. The forum is hosted by IFSCA as a global thought leadership platform on financial services, where progressive ideas, pressing problems, innovative technologies from across the world get discovered, discussed and developed into solutions and opportunities.



GPAI 2023: Artificial Intelligence Research Symposium To Be Held On December 12-14 :-

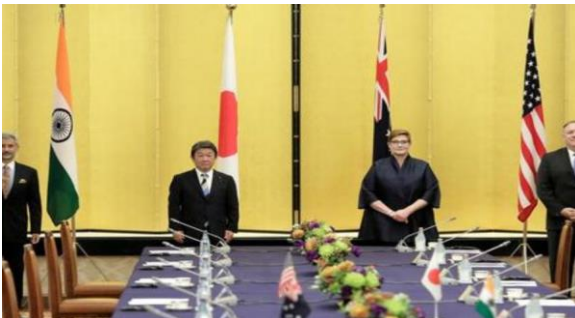
Currently serving as GPAI's incoming Support Chair, India is set to become the organization's Lead Chair in 2024. India will host the Annual GPAI Summit from December 12-14, 2023, to demonstrate its commitment to AI advancement. On December 12, 2023, the Hon'ble Prime Minister is expected to inaugurate the event. The Global Partnership on Artificial Intelligence (GPAI), established in June 2020, is a groundbreaking multi-stakeholder

initiative. India is one of the founding members of GPAI in 2020.



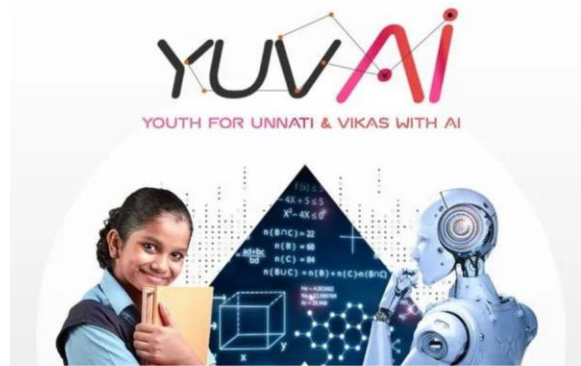
Vijayawada Book Fest from December 28 to January 7 :-

According to Book Festival Society president Manohar Naidu, the 34th edition of the Vijayawada Book Festival will be held on the premises of the Government Polytechnic College from December 28 to January 7. According to event coordinator Vijay Kumar, Governor S. Abdul Nazeer and Education Minister Botcha Satyanarayana are expected to start the festival on December 28. Mr. Vijay Kumar said that cultural programmes, seminars and release of books will be arranged every day at the venue, named after the late Varahalu Chetti Book Centre, Visakhapatnam.



India Postpones Quad Summit Meeting Amidst Strained Relations And Scheduling Issues :-

India has postponed the Quad Summit, which was scheduled to take place next month, until later next year. According to sources, finalizing the "revised dates" is now necessary because the dates under discussion were not convenient for all of the Quad partners, which include the United States, Japan, and Australia. The latest developments come amid reports that US President Joe Biden is also not expected to travel to New Delhi next month to be the Republic Day chief guest after India had extended an invitation to him a few months ago.



Youth For Unnati And Vikas With AI (YUVAi) Featured At GPAI Summit 2023 :-

The 'YUVAi- Youth for Unnati and Vikas with AI' program was highlighted during the Global Partnership on Artificial Intelligence (GPAI) Summit in New Delhi. The program, which aims to provide young people with crucial AI skills, has drawn notice for its creative approach and commitment to allowing a future-ready workforce. The programme is a collaborative initiative of the National e-Governance Division, under the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) and Intel India.



Global summit on 'Livable Cities of Tomorrow' was organized in Gujarat :-

Global summit on 'Liveable Cities of Tomorrow' was organised in Gandhinagar, Gujarat recently. Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel, along with the Union Minister of state for housing and Urban Affairs, Kaushal Kishore, inaugurated the summit. City leaders, including mayors, municipal commissioners, academicians, and industry experts, with around 800 global participants and 15 panelists from various organizations including World Bank and UNICEF took part in the summit. This summit was organised as a pre-event of Vibrant Gujarat Global Summit (VGGs) 2024.



RBI Central Board Holds 605th Meeting To Deliberate On Economic Landscape :-

The 605th meeting of the Reserve Bank of India's Central Board of Directors was conducted in Ekta Nagar

(Kevadia) under the chairmanship of Governor Shaktikanta Das. "The board reviewed the economic and financial scenario, both domestic and global, including the challenges posed by global geopolitical developments," according to a statement issued by the central bank. It also examined the actions of some central office departments, as well as the draft report on the trend and advancement of banking in India for 2022-23. The RBI board examined the current economic and financial situation, as well as the challenges posed by geopolitical developments.



SECTION 2

Practice Questions with Answers



PRACTICE QUESTIONS

1. What is the India's projected GDP growth in the second quarter of FY 2024 according to the ICRA Limited?

- A) 8.3%
- B) 8%
- C) 7.0%
- D) 6.5%

2. Who among the following was appointed as the brand ambassador of West Bengal?

- A) Leander Paes
- B) Mithun Chakraborty
- C) Shah Rukh Khan
- D) Sourav Ganguly

3. Lakshmi Ramakrishna Srinivas was appointed as the Additional Director of which of the following bank?

- A) Tamilnad Mercantile Bank
- B) South Indian Bank
- C) RBL Bank
- D) IDFC FIRST Bank

4. The acquisition of how much share capital of CaratLane Trading Private Limited (CaratLane) by Titan Company was approved by the Competition Commission of India (CCI) recently?

- A) 40.21%
- B) 36.23%
- C) 27.18%
- D) 20.19%

5. Via which of the following helicopter the DRDO along with the Indian Navy successfully conducted the 2nd flight test of naval anti-ship missile (NASM) recently?

- A) Hawk Mk 132
- B) Kamov Ka-25
- C) Sea king 42B
- D) Sikorsky SH-3

6. Kishtwar Saffron from which of the following state/UT has received the Geographical Indication (GI) tag recently?

- A) Himachal Pradesh
- B) Jammu and Kashmir
- C) Ladakh

D) Uttarakhand

7. Who among the following was elected as the vice-chair of UN external auditors' panel for the next year?

- A) Girish Chandra Murmu
- B) Rajiv Mehrishi
- C) Shashi Kant Sharama
- D) Vinod Rai

8. For satellite broadband services in India, which company received the authorizations from Indian National Space Promotion and Authorisation Centre (IN-SPACe)?

- A) Viasat India
- B) Tata Communications
- C) OneWeb India
- D) Jio Satellite Communications

9. Who among the following won the WTA Finals trophy after defeating Jessica Pegula of the US?

- A) Anhelina Kalinina
- B) Elena Rybakina
- C) Ellen Perez
- D) Iga Swiatek

10. When the World Toilet Day was observed?

- A) 19 November
- B) 21 November
- C) 22 November
- D) 23 November

11. Along with the ISKCON which government department has inked an agreement for Nasha Mukh Bharat Abhiyaan?

- A) Department of Art & Culture
- B) Department of School Education & Literacy
- C) Department of Social Justice & Empowerment
- D) Department of Youth Affairs

12. Along with Headquarters, Integrated Defence Staff (HQ IDS) which institute has inked an agreement to provide a framework for initiating collaboration in Defence Technology?

- A) Aeronautical Development Agency
- B) Central Reserve Police Force
- C) Council of Scientific and Industrial Research

D) Defence Research & Development Organisation

13. Which edition of the Joint Military Exercise AUSTRALIND-23 between Indian and Australian Army is being held in Perth, Australia?

- A) 06
- B) 05
- C) 04
- D) 02

14. To improve medical infrastructure in Maharashtra the Asian Development Bank (ADB) approved a loan package of how many USD recently?

- A) 250 million
- B) 300 million
- C) 400 million
- D) 500 million

15. Which of the following finance company has inked a USD 125 million financing pact with Asian Development Bank (ADB) to support financing in rural and peri-urban areas in India, particularly for women borrowers?

- A) Bajaj Finance Limited
- B) L&T Finance Limited
- C) Mahindra and Mahindra Financial Services Limited
- D) Shriram Finance Limited

16. Which edition of Indo-Nepal joint training Exercise 'Surya Kiran' is being held at Pithoragarh, Uttarakhand?

- A) 16
- B) 15
- C) 14
- D) 17

17. India became the Chair of which of the following organisation for 2024?

- A) International Civil Aviation Organization
- B) International Sugar Organisation
- C) Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons
- D) Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development

18. To enable Digital Rupee Transactions in Delhi NCR, which of the following bank has partnered with Indraprastha Gas Limited (IGL)?

- A) IndusInd Bank

B) IDFC FIRST Bank

C) ICICI Bank

D) HDFC Bank

19. Amid poor governance standards, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has superseded the board of directors of which of the following cooperative bank for 1 year?

- A) Lalbaug Cooperative Bank Ltd
- B) Harij Nagrik Sahakari Bank Ltd
- C) Cooperative Bank of Mehsana Ltd
- D) Abhyudaya Cooperative Bank Ltd

20. Who among the following was appointed as the President-elect of Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI)?

- A) Sanjiv Mehta
- B) Anish Shah
- C) Harsha V Agarwal
- D) Ajay Kumar

21. For the expansion of its launchpad program in Germany, which of the following organisation has inked an agreement with NRW.Global Business?

- A) Nasscom
- B) Indian Economic Trade Organization
- C) Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce & Industry
- D) Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industry of India

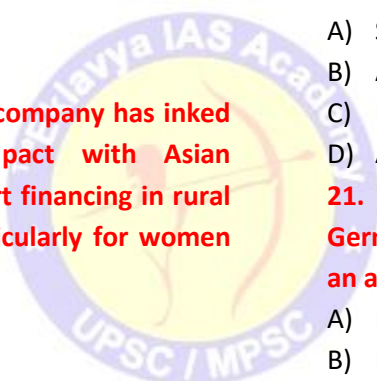
22. Angkor Wat temple of which of the following country has become the Eighth Wonder of the World?

- A) Cambodia
- B) Indonesia
- C) Thailand
- D) Vietnam

23. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has recently updated its 'alert list' of unauthorised forex trading platforms by adding how many entities?

- A) 19
- B) 60
- C) 59
- D) 45

24. To transform Kochi's water landscape, which of the following organisation has approved a USD 170 Million loan recently?



- A) United Nations Development Programme
- B) International Monetary Fund
- C) Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank
- D) Asian Development Bank

25. Which of the following airline has signed an MoU with Noida International Airport to become airport's launch carrier?

- A) Air India
- B) IndiGo
- C) SpiceJet
- D) Vistara

26. In which of the following state the 9th National Level Pollution Response Exercise (NATPOLREX-IX) was conducted by Indian Coast Guard (ICG)?

- A) Andhra Pradesh
- B) Gujarat
- C) Maharashtra
- D) West Bengal

27. S&P Global Rating hiked India's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth rate forecast for 2023-24 (FY24) to how much percent from 6 percent earlier?

- A) 6.8%
- B) 6.6%
- C) 6.4%
- D) 6.3%

28. Merriam-Webster has named which of the following word as the Word of the Year 2023?

- A) X
- B) Deepfake
- C) Authentic
- D) AI

29. Andry Rajoelina was re-elected as the president of which of the following country recently?

- A) Ethiopia
- B) Madagascar
- C) Mozambique
- D) Nigeria

30. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has approved the appointment of which of the following as the part-time chairman of Fino Payment Bank recently?

- A) Rajat Kumar Jain
- B) Rishi Gupta

- C) Shailesh Pandey
- D) Vinod Kumar

31. Along with the Ministry of Defence which of the following company has signed a deal for the procurement and manufacturing of 16 Upgraded Super Rapid Gun Mount (SRGM)?

- A) Hindustan Aeronautics Limited
- B) Bharat Heavy Electricals Limited
- C) Bharat Electronics Limited
- D) Bharat Dynamics Limited

32. Uttar Pradesh government has announced to build India's first Telecom Centre of Excellence in which of the following Indian Institute of Technology (IIT)?

- A) IIT Roorkee
- B) IIT Madras
- C) IIT Guwahati
- D) IIT Delhi

33. Which of the following Insurance Company has launched a new health insurance plan named 'Health Supercharge' with a sum insured ranging from Rs 5 lakh to Rs 20 lakh?

- A) Aditya Birla Health Insurance
- B) Bajaj Allianz General Insurance
- C) Star Health and Allied Insurance
- D) Tata AIG General Insurance

34. Who among the following was selected for the 2023 UNHCR Nansen Refugee Award?

- A) Zannah Mustapha
- B) Azizbek Ashurov
- C) Angela Merkel
- D) Abdullahi Mire

35. Who among the following was appointed as the President of the Rural Marketing Association of India (RMAI) for the 2023-2025?

- A) Biswabaran Chakrabarti
- B) Jayanth Kumar
- C) Praveen Gupta
- D) Puneet Vidyarthi

36. What is the India's GDP growth forecast of the financial year 2023-24 as per the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)?

- A) 6.2%

- B) 6.3%
- C) 6.5%
- D) 6.6%

37. Who among the following was awarded France's Highest Civilian Award for the contributions in promoting space cooperation between India and France?

- A) V R Lalithambika
- B) Ritu Karidhal
- C) Nandini Harinath
- D) Kalpana Kalahasti

38. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) gave its approval to the SBI Mutual Fund to buy 9.99% stake in which of the following bank?

- A) Axis Bank
- B) IDFC FIRST Bank
- C) Karur Vysya Bank
- D) South Indian Bank

39. The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) gave which of the following company the second type certificate for medium category drones?

- A) Thanos Technologies Private Limited
- B) Paras Defence and Space Technologies Limited
- C) Garuda Aerospace Private Limited
- D) Dhaksha Unmanned Systems Private Limited

40. Who among the following won the bronze medal in the men's 25m rapid fire pistol shooting event at the ISSF World Cup Final 2023 in Doha?

- A) Anish Bhanwala
- B) Gagan Narang
- C) Saurabh Chaudhary
- D) Vijay Kumar

41. President Droupadi Murmu conferred which of the following Institution with the President's Colour recently?

- A) Air Force Administrative College
- B) Air Force Technical College
- C) Armed Forces Medical College
- D) Mechanical Training Institute

42. Who among the following topped the IDFC FIRST Private Hurun India's Top 200 Self-made Entrepreneurs of the Millennia 2023 list?

- A) Vijay Shekhar Sharma
- B) Radhakishan Damani
- C) Deepinder Goyal
- D) Abhay Soi

43. To establish permanent peace in the northeastern region, along with the Government of India which state government has signed a tripartite Peace Agreement with United National Liberation Front (UNLF)?

- A) Assam
- B) Manipur
- C) Meghalaya
- D) Mizoram

44. To offer water sanitation and hygiene loans, which of the following Small Finance Bank has partnered with Water.org?

- A) Capital Small Finance Bank
- B) Jana Small Finance Bank
- C) Ujjivan Small Finance Bank
- D) Utkarsh Small Finance Bank

45. What is the forecast for India's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth for FY24 according to a report by the State Bank of India?

- A) 7.3%
- B) 7%
- C) 6.9%
- D) 6.8%

46. By which of the following date the SEBI has extended the timeline of linking of SEBI Complaint Redressal (SCORES) platform with the online dispute resolution platform?

- A) 01 March 2024
- B) 01 April 2024
- C) 01 June 2024
- D) 01 July 2024

47. On Amazon Web Services (AWS) which of the following company has launched its mobile trading app named SKY?

- A) Axis Securities
- B) HDFC Securities
- C) ICICI Securities
- D) Motilal Oswal Securities

48. For the 2024-2025 biennium, India has been re-elected to the which of the following organisation's council?

- A) International Finance Corporation
- B) International Maritime Organization
- C) International Telecommunication Union
- D) International Trade Centre

49. Chandra Shekhar Ghosh has been re-appointed as the Managing Director (MD) and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of which of the following bank?

- A) Bandhan Bank
- B) IDBI Bank
- C) IDFC FIRST Bank
- D) IndusInd Bank

50. Who among the following became India's 84th Grandmaster recently?

- A) Pranesh M
- B) Sayantan Das
- C) Vaishali Rameshbabu
- D) Vignesh N. R.

51. The world's first portable hospital, the 'Aarogya Maitri Aid Cube' was launched in which of the following city?

- A) Bengaluru, Karnataka
- B) Gurugram, Haryana
- C) Mumbai, Maharashtra
- D) New Delhi, Delhi

52. What is the rank of India in the International Institute for Management Development (IMD)'s World Digital Competitiveness Ranking (WDCR) 2023?

- A) 30
- B) 35
- C) 42
- D) 49

53. The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has approved how much loan for power supply upgrades in Uttarakhand?

- A) \$200 Million
- B) \$300 Million
- C) \$400 Million
- D) \$500 Million

54. To support MSME growth which of the following finance company has partnered with DBS Bank India, Visa and Amazon?

- A) Aditya Birla Finance
- B) Bajaj Finance
- C) Godrej Capital
- D) Muthoot Finance

55. Who among the following was featured in the Forbes Asia's 2023 Heroes of Philanthropy list?

- A) KP Singh
- B) Nandan Nilekani
- C) Nikhil Kamath
- D) All of the above

56. Which of the following organisation was awarded "ISSA Vision Zero 2023" Award at the 23rd World Congress on Safety and Health at Work in Sydney, Australia?

- A) Employees' State Insurance Corporation
- B) Food Safety and Standards Authority of India
- C) National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development
- D) Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority

57. Oxford University Press (OUP) has selected which of the following word as Word of the Year 2023?

- A) Authentic
- B) Deepfake
- C) Goblin Mode
- D) Rizz

58. Rajiv Anand was appointed as the chairman of which the following insurance company?

- A) Ageas Federal Life Insurance
- B) IndiaFirst Life Insurance
- C) Max Life Insurance
- D) Tata AIA Life Insurance

59. President of India has appointed who among the following as the part-time government director on the board of Rail Vikas Nigam Limited (RVNL)?

- A) Pradeep Gaur
- B) Rajesh Prasad
- C) V Natesan
- D) Vivek Kumar Gupta

60. Who among the following became the first woman Indian Armed Forces officer to be appointed as Aide-de-Camp (ADC) to a Governor?

- A) Manisha Padhi
- B) Priya Jhingan
- C) Punita Arora
- D) Ruchi Sharma

61. Which of the following state became the 1st state in the country to get GI certifications for up to 18 items in a single day?

- A) Uttarakhand
- B) Uttar Pradesh
- C) Jharkhand
- D) Assam

62. Panchayati Raj Ministry launched which of the following application based on a geographic information system (GIS) to leverage geo-spatial technology to empower Gram Panchayats in their planning endeavors?

- A) Gram Dastaavez
- B) Gram Manchitra
- C) Gram Pustika
- D) Gram Sanskaran

63. Which of the following country became a member of the Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS) Consortium recently?

- A) Indonesia
- B) India
- C) Bangladesh
- D) Australia

64. Which of the following bank has launched the Parivar Account for Savings and Current Accounts recently?

- A) Union Bank of India
- B) Bank of Maharashtra
- C) Bank of India
- D) Bank of Baroda

65. Tata Neu along with which of the following bank has launched Tata Neu Infinity and plus Credit Card recently?

- A) Axis Bank
- B) HDFC Bank

- C) ICICI Bank
- D) YES Bank

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- B) India
- C) Bangladesh
- D) Australia

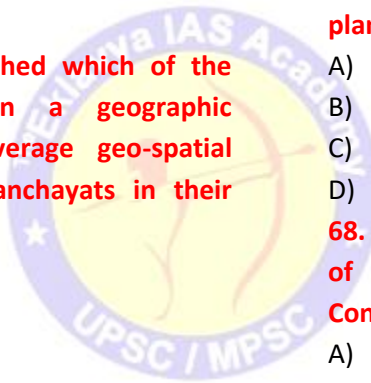
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- A) Axis Bank
- B) HDFC Bank
- C) ICICI Bank
- D) YES Bank

71. In April-October 2023-24 which of the following industry experienced the highest growth rate in cumulative production?



- A) Steel
- B) Natural Gas
- C) Electricity
- D) Coal

72. According to the Crisil report, what is the projected percentage increase in capital expenditure for 18 largest states of India in FY24?

- A) 22-25%
- B) 18-20%
- C) 15-17%
- D) 10-12%

73. To accelerate the growth and transformation of MG Motor in India, which Chinese company has entered into a strategic joint venture with the JSW Group recently?

- A) Tencent
- B) SAIC Motor
- C) Lenovo
- D) Alibaba Group

74. In the second quarter of FY24, what was the female labor force participation rate?

- A) 24%
- B) 23.2%
- C) 22.5%
- D) 21.7%

75. According to the S&P Global Market Intelligence what was India's purchasing managers index (PMI) for manufacturing in November 2023?

- A) 57.5
- B) 56
- C) 55.5
- D) 54

76. Which of the following key region witnessed significant housing demand apart from major cities in July-September quarter?

- A) Eastern states
- B) Northern states
- C) Southern states
- D) Western states

77. On December 4 Bharti Airtel became the eighth company to cross the Rs _____ lakh crore mark?

- A) Rs 6 lakh crore

- B) Rs 4 lakh crore
- C) Rs 2 lakh crore
- D) Rs 1 lakh crore

78. Which Insurance Company is the fourth largest insurer in the world, as per the S&P Global ranking?

- A) Nippon Life Insurance Company
- B) LIC
- C) China Life Insurance Company
- D) Allianz SE

79. What is the specialty of Lakadong turmeric for which it has received the Geographical Indication (GI) tag?

- A) Bright yellow color
- B) High curcumin content
- C) Organic farming practices
- D) Unique aroma

80. Who among the following was elected as the new Chief Minister of Mizoram?

- A) Hari Babu Khambampati
- B) Lalduhoma
- C) Zoramthanga
- D) None of the above

81. What is the name of IBM's new quantum computing chip?

- A) Condor
- B) Honeycomb
- C) Quantum Leap
- D) Qubit Milestone

82. Who among the following was awarded the Cultural Medallion in Singapore for artistic excellence?

- A) Abdullah Husain
- B) Meira Chand
- C) Sucheta Linda
- D) Tharman Shanmugaratnam

83. What repo rate was set in the RBI Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) meeting in December 2023?

- A) Repo rate decreased
- B) Repo rate increased
- C) Repo rate remained unchanged at 6.5%
- D) None of the above

84. The RBI will create a fintech repository that will be operational by _____.

- A) March 2025

- B) April 2024
- C) December 2023
- D) January 2023

85. What is India's projected GDP growth for the 2023-24 fiscal year as per the RBI?

- A) 8%
- B) 7%
- C) 6%
- D) 5%

86. India constituted _____ of malaria cases in the WHO's South-East Asia region in 2022 according to the 2023 World Malaria Report by the World Health Organization (WHO).

- A) 50%
- B) 54%
- C) 60%
- D) 66%

87. To promote sustainable infrastructure development, which organisation has inked an agreement with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)?

- A) Asian Development Bank
- B) Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank
- C) International Monetary Fund
- D) United Nations Development Programme

88. For the supply of various defence equipment which of the following defence manufacturing company has received multiple orders worth Rs. 3,915 crore?

- A) Bharat Dynamics Limited
- B) Bharat Electronics Limited
- C) Bharat Heavy Electricals Limited
- D) Hindustan Aeronautics Limited

89. Through an offer for sale (OFS), the government of India proposed to sell how much stake in Itron International Limited (IRCON)?

- A) 8%
- B) 10%
- C) 15%
- D) 20%

90. Which of the following company has acquired the Sanghi Industries Limited (SIL) at an enterprise value of Rs 5,185 crore recently.

- A) Ambuja Cements Limited
- B) JK Cement Limited
- C) JSW Cement Limited
- D) UltraTech Cement Limited

91. According to the Mercom Capital Group's Leading Global Large-Scale Solar PV Developers report, which Indian company is ranked as the World's 2nd largest large-scale solar PhotoVoltaic (PV) developer?

- A) Adani Green Energy Limited
- B) Power Grid Corporation of India Limited
- C) REC Limited
- D) Reliance Industries Limited

92. The central government and the Asian Development Bank (ADB) have signed a \$175 million loan to improve the connectivity and resilience of roads in which of the following state?

- A) Assam
- B) Madhya Pradesh
- C) Maharashtra
- D) Uttar Pradesh

93. Who among the following was elected as the Prime Minister of Poland?

- A) Andrzej Duda
- B) Beta Szydlow
- C) Donald Tusk
- D) None of these

94. Who among the following was named as the Time Magazine's 2023 Person of the Year?

- A) Angela Merkel
- B) Greta Thunberg
- C) Kamala Harris
- D) Taylor Swift

95. Who among the following was appointed as the Chief Minister of Telangana?

- A) Ponnampalapati Prabhakar
- B) N. Chandrababu Naidu
- C) Damodar Rajanarasimha
- D) Revanth Reddy

96. The first Indian Art, Architecture, and Design Biennale 2023 (IAADB' 23) was organized by which of the following ministry in New Delhi?

- A) Ministry of Information & Broadcasting

- B) Ministry of Culture
- C) Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region
- D) Ministry of Minority Affairs

97. In Nagaland which edition of the Hornbill festival was held recently?

- A) 22
- B) 23
- C) 24
- D) 25

98. Who among the following was honored with the ICC Women's Player of the Month award for November 2023?

- A) Annabel Sutherland
- B) Deepti Sharma
- C) Harmanpreet Kaur
- D) Nahida Akhtar

99. To reform Distribution Companies (DISCOMs) in India, REC Limited has signed a _____ million Euro loan agreement with KfW Development Bank, Germany.

- A) 150 million Euro
- B) 200 million Euro
- C) 450 million Euro
- D) 510 million Euro

100. LIC has reduced its shareholding in HDFC Asset Management Company to _____ per cent from 9.046 per cent.

- A) 5.116%
- B) 6.953%
- C) 7.817%
- D) 8.025%

101. For the acquisition of Digital Coast Guard (DCG) project which company has signed a Rs 588.68 crore contract with the Ministry of Defence (MoD)?

- A) Indian Telephone Industries Limited
- B) RailTel Corporation of India Ltd
- C) Telecommunications Consultants India Limited
- D) THDC India Limited

102. Which of the following edition of joint military exercise 'VINBAX-2023' is being held between India and Vietnam at Hanoi, Vietnam?

- A) 04

- B) 05
- C) 06
- D) 07

103. For the supply of ten diesel locomotives, which of the following company has signed an agreement with CFM Mozambique?

- A) RITES Limited
- B) RailTel Corporation of India Limited
- C) Engineers India Limited
- D) Amtek Railcar Industries

104. For women an exclusive saving bank account named 'Nari Shakti Savings Account' was launched by which of the following bank recently?

- A) Bank of India
- B) ICICI Bank
- C) Punjab National Bank
- D) State Bank of India

105. Along with Intellect Design Arena Limited which of the following bank has inked an agreement to launch eMACH.ai powered cash management system?

- A) Bank of Baroda
- B) Bank of India
- C) Indian Bank
- D) Punjab National Bank

106. The Ministry of Defence approved the purchase of 70,000 more semi-automatic assault rifles from Sig Sauer Inc. of which of the following country?

- A) France
- B) US
- C) Israel
- D) Russia

107. In which of the following city India's first bullet train terminal is being built at the Sabarmati Multimodal transport hub?

- A) Ahmedabad
- B) Bengaluru
- C) Indore
- D) New Delhi

108. According to an UN report on food security and nutrition how much percent of Indians were unable to afford a healthy diet in 2021?

- A) 69.0%

- B) 70.3%
- C) 74.1%
- D) 75.7%

109. Which of the following Life Insurance company has launched the 'Alpha Wealth' plan to provide extensive financial security for policyholders and their families?

- A) Bajaj Allianz Life Insurance
- B) Canara HSBC Life Insurance
- C) Exide Life Insurance
- D) HDFC Life Insurance

110. At which of the following naval dockyard the fast attack craft 'INS Tarmugli' was commissioned?

- A) Cochin Shipyard Limited
- B) Goa Shipyard Limited
- C) Hindustan Shipyard
- D) Visakhapatnam Dockyard

111. According to the Morning Consult survey, who among the following was ranked as the world's most popular leader?

- A) Narendra Modi
- B) Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva
- C) Joe Biden
- D) Alain Berset

112. In Vijayawada the Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman inaugurated which of the following event?

- A) Andhra Pradesh Classical Showcase
- B) Krishnaveni Sangeet Sabha
- C) Krishnaveni Sangeetha Neerajanam
- D) Telugu Cultural Festival

113. According to the report by leading global market intelligence platform Tracxn what is the rank of India in startup funding in 2023?

- A) Third
- B) Second
- C) Fourth
- D) Fifth

114. When the Universal Health Coverage (UHC) Day was observed?

- A) December 10
- B) December 08
- C) December 04
- D) December 12

115. For which of the following initiative the Rural Development Department of Bihar received global recognition?

- A) Climate Resilience Program
- B) Green Bihar Scheme
- C) Jal-Jeevan-Hariyali Abhiyan
- D) Sustainable Agriculture Project

116. For the distribution of life insurance products, along with the ICICI Prudential Life Insurance which Small Finance Bank has entered into a bancassurance partnership?

- A) AU SFB
- B) Capital SFB
- C) Equitas SFB
- D) Ujjivan SFB

117. International Finance Corporation (IFC) has recognised which of the following bank as the top performer of the 2023 Climate Assessment for Financial Institutions (CAFI) Awards for Climate Reporting?

- A) Union Bank of India
- B) State Bank of India
- C) Federal Bank
- D) Canara Bank

118. Who among the following was honoured with the Royal Society of Chemistry (RSC)'s Nyholm Prize for Education?

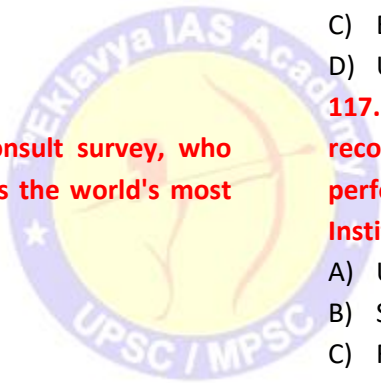
- A) Anish Ghosh
- B) Basudeb Dasgupta
- C) Jayanth Kumar
- D) Savita Ladage

119. In which of the following bank Bain Capital sold its 1.08% stake for Rs 3737 crore in a block trade?

- A) Axis Bank
- B) HDFC Bank
- C) ICICI Bank
- D) IndusInd Bank

120. India's first Sodium (Na)-Ion battery technology was launched by which of the following company?

- A) Cyient Technologies
- B) Exide Industries
- C) KPIT Technologies
- D) Zensar Technologies



121. To launch co-branded credit cards, LIC Cards and Mastercard has collaborated with which of the following bank?

- A) HDFC Bank
- B) ICICI Bank
- C) IDFC FIRST Bank
- D) IndusInd Bank

122. India's first self-hosted payments orchestration platform 'FlowWise' was launched by which of the following payment company?

- A) Amazon Pay India Private Limited
- B) Cashfree Payments Limited
- C) PhonePe Private Limited
- D) Razorpay Software Private Limited

123. Along with which of the following bank the Reliance Industries Limited (RIL) has collaborated to launch a financing program for compressed biogas (CBG) plants?

- A) Axis Bank
- B) DBS Bank India
- C) HSBC India
- D) ICICI Bank

124. The Competition Commission of India (CCI) approved the proposed acquisition of certain shareholding in Constantia Flexibles Holding GmbH (Constantia) by which of the following company?

- A) Aluflexpack Limited
- B) Bemis Limited
- C) Manjushree Technopack
- D) Capripak

125. In which of the following state India's fastest solar-electric boat named 'Barracuda' was launched?

- A) Gujarat
- B) Kerala
- C) Odisha
- D) Tamil Nadu

126. Indian coal demand is expected to increase by _____ percent annually to 1397 million tonnes (Mt) till 2026, according to a research by the International Energy Agency (IEA).

- A) 3.0%
- B) 3.5%

- C) 4.0%
- D) 4.2%

127. Along with the Indian Institute of Technology, Kanpur which of the following bank has launched India's first fully integrated school of sustainability?

- A) Axis Bank
- B) Kotak Mahindra Bank
- C) ICICI Bank
- D) YES Bank

128. In October 2023, India's industrial production reached a 16-month high of _____ percent year on year (YoY), up from contraction of 4.1 percent the previous year.

- A) 11.7%
- B) 9.3%
- C) 8.3%
- D) 7.2%

129. Along with France-based Merio which of the following company has collaborated to make Advanced Gimbals for the Indian armed forces?

- A) NAVA Design & Innovation Private Limited
- B) Precision Automation & Robotics India Private Limited
- C) HC Robotics
- D) SrishtiRobotics Technologies Private Limited

130. The Reserve Bank of India has authorised which of the following authorization to Bandhan Bank recently?

- A) Credit Card Issuance
- B) Home Loan Disbursement
- C) Mobile Banking Integration
- D) Pension Disbursement for Railway Employees

131. Which of the following state was emerged as the second-largest economy of India according to an online blogging platform soic.in data?

- A) Delhi
- B) Gujarat
- C) Uttar Pradesh
- D) Tamil Nadu

132. Which of the following company has acquired 49% stake in Ahmedabad-based Pirimid Fintech?

- A) Razorpay Software Private Limited
- B) Infibeam Avenues Limited

- C) Cashfree Payments India Private Limited
D) BharatPe Limited

133. Which of the following team won the Vijay Hazare Trophy 2023?

- A) Saurashtra
B) Mumbai
C) Karnataka
D) Haryana

134. The World Health Organization (WHO) has recognised which of the following disease as the Neglected Tropical Disease (NTD)?

- A) Noma
B) Leishmaniasis
C) Chagas
D) Buruli

135. Which of the following state topped the medal tally in the Khelo India Para Games 2023?

- A) Haryana
B) Maharashtra
C) Punjab
D) Uttar Pradesh

136. Which of the following Insurance company has launched a new life insurance term plan named 'Smart Total Elite Protection Term Plan'(STEP)?

- A) Ageas Federal Life Insurance
B) IndiaFirst Life Insurance
C) Max Life Insurance
D) Tata AIA Life Insurance

137. ICRA Limited increased its GDP growth prediction for India for the fiscal year 2023-24 (FY24) to _____ from 6.2%.

- A) 6.8%
B) 6.7%
C) 6.6%
D) 6.5%

138. Which of the following book won the Gaja Capital Business Book Prize 2023?

- A) Against All Odds: The IT Story of India
B) The Indian Entrepreneur (A Sociological Profile of Businessmen and Their Practices)
C) Winning Middle India: The Story of India's New-Age Entrepreneurs

- D) Both A & C

139. The unemployment rate among graduates in the age group of 15 years and above has declined to _____ per cent in 2022-23 from 14.9 per cent a year ago according to the Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS).

- A) 10.4%
B) 11.3%
C) 12.8%
D) 13.4%

140. As "Factory Lighthouse" which of the following company from India has joined the Global Lighthouse Network (GLN) of World Economic Forum (WEF) recently?

- A) ACG Associated Capsules
B) Alkem Laboratories
C) Cipla Limited
D) Sun Pharmaceutical Industries

141. Along with the HDFC Life which of the following bank has entered into a corporate agency arrangement to offer life insurance products to customers?

- A) Axis Bank
B) IDFC FIRST Bank
C) Karur Vysya Bank
D) South Indian Bank

142. To launch One Nation Corporate Card, along with NSDL Payments Bank and the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) which of the following payment company has entered into a partnership?

- A) Cashfree Payments
B) CCAvenue
C) Paycraft Solutions
D) Razorpay Solutions

143. MSME lender U GRO Capital has raised Rs _____ crore through non-convertible debentures (NCDs) from Dutch development bank FMO.

- A) Rs 150 crore
B) Rs 250 crore
C) Rs 350 crore
D) Rs 450 crore

144. Who has been nominated by the Pakistan People's Party to contest in the General Elections from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Buner district?

- A) Dr. Saveera Prakash
- B) Narendra Modi
- C) CS Rajan
- D) Ayodhya Dham

145. What is the new name of the Ayodhya railway station, as announced by the Indian Railway Conference Association?

- A) Ayodhya Junction
- B) Ayodhya Dham
- C) Ayodhya Central
- D) Ayodhya Renovate

146. On which date did the Marathas defeat the Adilshahi forces in the Battle of Kolhapur?

- A) January 22
- B) December 28
- C) February 8
- D) December 30

147. Who assumed the chairmanship of Kotak Mahindra Bank, succeeding Prakash Apte, with approval from the Reserve Bank of India?

- A) S Sunder Krishnan
- B) CS Rajan

- C) Pratap Chandra Paikray
- D) Anil Agarwal

148. What is the goal set by the government for Digital Life Certificates from Central Government Pensioners by March 2024?

- A) 10 lakh
- B) 25 lakh
- C) 50 lakh
- D) 1 crore

149. How many offshore cryptocurrency platforms received legal notices from India's Financial Intelligence Unit (FIU-IND)?

- A. 5
- B. 7
- C. 9
- D. 11

150. What does Section 194-O of the Income Tax Act in India mandate for e-commerce companies?

- A. 2% Tax Deduction at Source (TDS)
- B. 1% Tax Deduction at Source (TDS)
- C. No Tax Deduction
- D. 5% Tax Deduction at Source (TDS)

ANSWERS

1. Correct Answer: C

The Indian economy likely grew at 7 per cent in the second quarter of the ongoing financial year, higher than the Reserve Bank of India's rate-setting panel's estimation, research firm ICRA said. ICRA said India's GDP growth likely moderated to 7 per cent in Q2 after growing 7.8 per cent in Q1, on a normalising base and erratic monsoon.

2. Correct Answer: D

Mamata Banerjee made a major announcement during the seventh edition of the Bengal Global Business Summit (BGBS) as she declared former Indian cricket captain Sourav Ganguly as the brand ambassador for the state. This comes after Ganguly had earlier been appointed as the brand ambassador for Tripura earlier in the year before his ties worsened with the BJP-led government.

3. Correct Answer: B

Lakshmi Ramakrishna Srinivas, one of the pioneers in the field of banking, has been appointed as Additional Director of South Indian Bank. She has been appointed as a non-executive independent director of the bank for a period of three years from November 20.

4. Correct Answer: C

The Competition Commission of India (CCI) has approved acquisition of additional shareholding in CaratLane Trading Private Ltd (CaratLane) by Titan Company Ltd (Titan). The proposed combination relates to the acquisition by Titan of 27.18% share capital of CaratLane (a subsidiary of Titan), on a fully diluted basis, from Mr. Mithun Padam Sacheti, Mr. Siddhartha Padam Sacheti, and Mr. Padamchand Sacheti.

5. Correct Answer: C

India successfully conducted the second trial of its first indigenously developed naval anti-ship missile (NASM) from a Sea King 42B helicopter, following its initial trials in May last year. The test was a collaborative effort between the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) and the Indian Navy.

6. Correct Answer: B

In Jammu and Kashmir, the Saffron of the mountainous Kishtwar district, which is cultivated and harvested in the higher reaches, has received the Geographical Indication (GI) tag by the Geographical Indications Registry. The spice is grown in some parts of the Kishtwar region of Jammu, along with parts of Kashmir.

7. Correct Answer: A

Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG) Girish Chandra Murmu has been elected as the Vice-Chair of the UN Panel of Auditors for the next year. This recognition underscores India's commitment to the highest standards of external audit and its active participation in shaping the global audit landscape, the CAG said in a statement.

8. Correct Answer: C

OneWeb India, a subsidiary of Eutelsat Group and backed by Bharti Group, has received authorizations from the Indian National Space Promotion and Authorisation Centre (IN-SPACe) to launch commercial satellite broadband services in India. OneWeb India already holds necessary licenses and approvals to establish gateways in Gujarat and Tamil Nadu.

9. Correct Answer: D

Iga Swiatek defeated Jessica Pegula 6-1, 6-0 to win her maiden WTA Finals title in Cancun, Mexico. The 22-year-old Iga Swiatek is the eighth first-time winner in as many editions of the season-ending championships in the last nine years. Overall,

Swiatek is the 26th woman to win the WTA Finals, an event which was first held in 1972.

10. Correct Answer: A

Every year, World Toilet Day is celebrated on November 19. In 2001, the NGO World Toilet Organisation, founded by philanthropist Jack Sim in Singapore declared November 19 as World Toilet Day – the world toilet was consciously chosen instead of sanitation for better public approach, relevance and easier public messaging.

11. Correct Answer: C

In a significant stride towards combating drug abuse, a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed in New Delhi between the Department of Social Justice and Empowerment and the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON) under the Nasha Mukta Bharat Abhiyaan. The initiative aims to synergize efforts in curbing drug usage, especially among the youth.

12. Correct Answer: C

A Memorandum of Understanding between the Headquarters, Integrated Defence Staff (HQ IDS) and the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) was signed on November 23, 2023 in New Delhi for technical collaboration and joint research and development in the field of Defence Technology.

13. Correct Answer: D

The Indian Armed Forces contingent, comprising 81 personnel, is in Australia to participate in the second edition of Joint Military Exercise 'AustraHind-23', the Ministry of Defence stated in a press release. The exercise is being conducted in Western Australia's Perth from November 22 to December 6.

14. Correct Answer: D

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has approved a loan package worth USD 500 million to improve access to quality and affordable tertiary health care and medical education in Maharashtra. It will increase bed capacity in government tertiary care

hospitals and hire at least 500 new doctors for four new governmental medical colleges.

15. Correct Answer: B

Non-banking financial company L&T Finance said it has signed a USD 125 million loan pact with the Asian Development Bank (ADB) to support financing in rural and peri-urban areas in India, particularly for women borrowers. The funding comprises a loan of up to USD 125 million from ADB, and an agreement to syndicate an additional USD 125 million co-financing from other development partners, L&T Finance said in a statement.

16. Correct Answer: D

The Nepal Army contingent comprising of 334 personnel is in India to participate in 17th edition of Joint Military Exercise SURYA KIRAN. The exercise will be conducted in Pithoragarh, Uttarakhand from 24th November to 07th December 2023. It is an annual event and conducted alternatively in the two countries.

17. Correct Answer: B

In its 63rd council meeting, International Sugar Organisation (ISO), headquartered in London, has announced India to be the Chair of the organisation for 2024. This is a huge achievement for the country to lead the global sugar sector and reflection of growing stature of the country in this domain.

18. Correct Answer: A

IndusInd Bank has announced that it has collaborated with Indraprastha Gas Ltd (IGL) to facilitate the acceptance of the Central Bank Digital Currency (CBDC) for payments of compressed natural gas (CNG) bills in Delhi and National Capital Region (NCR). According to the bank's regulatory filing, the customers at select IGL stations will be allowed to make payments using the e-Rupee.

19. Correct Answer: D

The RBI has superseded the board of the Abhyudaya Cooperative Bank due to concerns over governance

standards. Satya Prakash Pathak, former chief GM of SBI, has been appointed as the administrator. A committee of advisors, including Venkatesh Hegde, Mahendra Chhajed, and Shri Suhas Gokhale, has also been appointed to assist the administrator.

20. Correct Answer: B

Mahindra Group's Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Anish Shah has been appointed as the President-elect of Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI). Shah will succeed Subhrakant Panda as President of the chamber at the conclusion of the 96th Annual General Meeting to be held on December 8-9 in New Delhi.

21. Correct Answer: A

Nasscom has signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with NRW.Global Business to promote innovation, investment and technological exchange between North Rhine-Westfalia (NRW) in Germany and India. Nasscom, is the apex body for the \$245-billion technology industry in India having over 3,000 member companies constituting 90 per cent of the industry's revenue.

22. Correct Answer: A

Angkor Wat temple, located in northern province of Siem Reap in Cambodia, has defeated Pompeii in Italy to become the eighth Wonder of the World. The unofficial title "Eighth Wonder of the World" is sometimes given to buildings, structures, projects, designs, or even people who are thought to be comparable to the seven Wonders of the World.

23. Correct Answer: A

The Reserve Bank has updated the 'Alert List' of unauthorised forex trading platforms by adding 19 more entities, including FX SmartBull, Just Markets, and GoDo FX, taking the total to 75. The other entities added to the list are Admiral Market, BlackBull, Easy Markets, Enclave FX, Finowiz Fintech, FX SmartBull, Fx Tray Market, Forex4you, Growing Capital Services, and HF Markets.

24. Correct Answer: D

In a significant development, the Asian Development Bank (ADB) has given the nod to a USD 170 million loan aimed at modernizing water supply services in Kochi, a bustling city in the southern Indian state of Kerala. According to ADB, this move is expected to play a pivotal role in elevating urban living standards, ensuring clean water access, and bolstering climate resilience.

25. Correct Answer: B

Noida International Airport (NIA) marked a significant milestone as it officially signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with IndiGo. With this development, IndiGo solidifies its role as the inaugural carrier for the airport, reaffirming its commitment to supporting the rapidly expanding Indian aviation market.

26. Correct Answer: B

The 9th National Level Pollution Response Exercise (NATPOLREX-IX) was conducted by the Indian Coast Guard on 25 Nov 2023 off Vadinar, Gujarat. The NATPOLREX-IX accomplished its objective of testing the level of preparedness and coordination between various resource agencies to respond to a marine oil spill invoking provisions of the National Oil Spill Disaster Contingency Plan (NOSDCP).

27. Correct Answer: C

S&P Global Ratings has hiked India's gross domestic product (GDP) growth rate forecast for 2023-24 (FY24) to 6.4 per cent from 6 per cent earlier. However, for FY25, the GDP growth projection has been slashed by 50 basis points (bps) to 6.4 per cent.

28. Correct Answer: C

In an era of deepfakes, social media personas, and carefully curated online identities, the word "Authentic" has taken on new meaning and significance. In recognition of this heightened awareness of authenticity, Merriam-Webster has

named it their Word of the Year for 2023. The word was searched in high volume in 2023.

29. Correct Answer: B

Madagascar's President Andry Rajoelina has effectively secured a third term after the electoral body (CENI) said he had obtained the most votes in an election marked by low turnout and an opposition boycott. Rajoelina garnered 58.9 percent of the vote followed by Siteny Randrianasoloniaiko, a lawmaker, who got 14.4 percent.

30. Correct Answer: A

Mumbai-based Fino Payments Bank has received approval from the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) for the appointment of Rajat Kumar Jain as Part-time Chairman of the Bank, the bank said in its regulatory filing on November 24. The payment bank said that it has got approval with effect from November 24, 2023 till November 01, 2025.

31. Correct Answer: B

The defence ministry has sealed a Rs 2,956 crore deal with state-run Bharat Heavy Electricals Ltd to procure 16 upgraded super rapid gun mount (SRGM) and accessories for Indian Navy. The SRGM is a medium caliber anti-missile and anti-aircraft defence weapon system that provides a sustained rate of fire and high accuracy.

32. Correct Answer: A

The Uttar Pradesh government has announced to build India's first Telecom Centre of Excellence in IIT Roorkee. According to the state government, the new centre will not just widen UP's participation in technology and innovation but will also propel the telecommunications sector.

33. Correct Answer: D

TATA AIG General Insurance Company has launched "Health Supercharge" with a sum insured ranging from Rs 5 lakh to Rs 20 lakh. Customers can choose from options of two plan variants (Value Plan and Geo Plan), basis their geographical location, and

other optional benefits offered under the product as per one's requirement.

34. Correct Answer: D

Abdullahi Mire, a Somali refugee, has been selected the 2023 UNHCR Nansen Refugee Award Global Laureate for his efforts advocating for displaced children's right to education. Mire, who grew up in Kenya's Dadaab refugee camps, has distributed over 100,000 books to the country's displaced children and teenagers.

35. Correct Answer: D

Rural Marketing Association of India (RMAI), the premier body of rural marketers in India said it has appointed Puneet Vidyarthi as its president for 2023-2025, taking over from Biswabaran Chakrabarti. Vidyarthi is head of marketing, business development at CASE New Holland, a construction equipment business.

36. Correct Answer: B

The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) retained its growth projection for India at 6.3 per cent for FY24 holding that surging services exports and public investment will continue to drive the economy. The organisation, however, said the economy will slow down to 6.1 per cent in FY25 due to adverse weather-related events and the weakening international outlook.

37. Correct Answer: A

V R Lalithambika, the former director of the Directorate of the Human Spaceflight Programme at ISRO, was honoured with the prestigious Légion d'honneur, the highest French civilian award. This recognition was bestowed upon her in appreciation of her significant contributions to fostering space cooperation between France and India.

38. Correct Answer: C

The Reserve Bank has given its approval to SBI Mutual Fund (SBI MF) for acquiring up to 9.99% of the paid-up share capital or voting rights of Karur

Vysya Bank Ltd (KVB). If SBI MF fails to acquire major shareholding within a period of one year from the date of RBI's letter, this approval shall stand cancelled, the private sector lender said in a regulatory filing.

39. Correct Answer: C

Drone manufacturer Garuda Aerospace said it has secured its second Type Certificate from Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) for Medium Category Drones. "Securing this second Type Certificate for our Medium Category Drones marks a pivotal step in propelling Garuda Aerospace to new heights of growth and scalability" Agnishwar Jayaprakash, Founder and CEO, Garuda Aerospace said in a statement.

40. Correct Answer: A

Indian shooter Anish Bhanwala won the bronze medal in the men's 25m rapid fire pistol event at the ISSF World Cup Final 2023 in Doha, Qatar. Competing at the Lusail Shooting Range, former Commonwealth Games champion Anish Bhanwala scored 27 out of 35 for third place in the final.

41. Correct Answer: C

The President of India and the Supreme Commander of Armed Forces Droupadi Murmu has conferred the President's Colour to Armed Forces Medical College (AFMC), Pune recently. The AFMC is a premier Armed Forces Medical Services (AFMS) establishment and one of the leading medical colleges of the country.

42. Correct Answer: B

IDFC FIRST Private Banking and Hurun India have launched the first edition of 'IDFC FIRST Private Hurun India's Top 200 Self-made Entrepreneurs of the Millennia 2023', a list of the 200 most valuable companies in India founded after the year 2000. The maiden edition saw DMart's Radhakishan Damani top the charts with a Market Cap of Rs 238,188 crore followed by Flipkart's Binny and Sachin Bansal with

Rs 119,472 crore and Zomato's Deepinder Goyal with Rs 86,853 crore.

43. Correct Answer: B

In the first known instance of a valley-based insurgent group (VBIG) from Manipur entering into a peace pact with the Centre, the Union government said that the United National Liberation Front (UNLF), a Meitei insurgent outfit, has signed a Peace Agreement with the Government of India and the Government of Manipur.

44. Correct Answer: C

Ujjivan Small Finance Bank (Ujjivan SFB) has announced a partnership with Water.org recently. Under the partnership, Water.org will assist Ujjivan SFB in identifying areas that require financing for clean water and hygienic sanitation. Water.org will provide technical assistance, market assessment, development of Information, Education and Communication (IEC) material, monitoring and evaluation support, the release said.

45. Correct Answer: B

The State Bank of India has revised its FY24 growth projection to 7 per cent from 6.7 per cent on the back of the strong growth numbers for Q2 FY24. India's economy grew at 7.6% per cent in the July-September quarter as against 7.8% in the April-June quarter, showed government data.

46. Correct Answer: B

Market Regulator SEBI announced the extension of timeline of linking of SEBI Complaint Redressal (SCORES) platform with online dispute resolution platform. Earlier, the deadline was on December 4 and the market regulator has now pushed it to April 1, 2024.

47. Correct Answer: B

Amazon Web Services (AWS) said HDFC Securities, which is among the leading investment service providers in India, has launched its mobile trading app, HDFC SKY on the AWS cloud. With AWS, HDFC

Securities is expected to reduce its annual IT infrastructure and management costs by up to 50 per cent as compared to using on-premises infrastructure.

48. Correct Answer: B

India was re-elected to the International Maritime Organisation (IMO) Council with the highest tally, and the term of council will be for the biennium 2024-25, according to an official statement. Union Minister for Ports, Shipping and Waterways Sarbananda Sonowal said the highest votes are indicative of the government's determination to strengthen India's varied contributions to international maritime operations.

49. Correct Answer: A

Bandhan Bank has approved the reappointment of Chandra Shekhar Ghosh as its Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer for three years. The re-appointment, if approved by the Reserve Bank, would be effective from July 10, 2024. The board approval for re-appointment is subject to the approval of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) and the shareholders of the bank, the lender said in a regulatory filing.

50. Correct Answer: C

Chennai's Vaishali Rameshbabu has become India's 84th Grandmaster after crossing the hallowed 2500 Elo rating during the 2023 IV Elllobregat Open in Barcelona, Spain. Vaishali and her younger brother R. Praggnanandhaa are now officially the first-ever sibling pair from India to be Grandmasters. Vaishali is the third female Grandmaster from India, after Koneru Humpy and Harika Dronavalli.

51. Correct Answer: B

The World's first portable hospital, 'Aarogya Maitri Aid Cube' was unveiled on 02 December in Gurugram, Haryana. Designed indigenously under the Project 'BHISHM', it can handle bullet injuries, burns, head, spinal and chest injuries, minor

surgeries, fractures and major bleeding. It can treat as many as 200 patients.

52. Correct Answer: D

The International Institute for Management Development (IMD) has launched its 2023 World Digital Competitiveness Ranking (WDCR) recently, revealing India's position at 49th among 64 economies. According to IMD's study, India has made significant in terms of cybersecurity knowledge but lacks on fronts like technology and future readiness.

53. Correct Answer: A

In a landmark move, the Asian Development Bank (ADB) has sanctioned a USD 200 million loan to bolster the power supply in Uttarakhand, India, aiming to enhance quality, efficiency, and reliability. According to a release by ADB, the project hailed as a key step towards Uttarakhand's goal of providing uninterrupted power and transitioning to clean energy, received acclaim from ADB Senior Energy Specialist Jaimes Kolantharaj.

54. Correct Answer: C

In a move aimed at widening its horizon, Godrej Capital Nirmaan has announced partnership with DBS Bank India, Visa and Amazon to aid MSME growth. The company also stated that the collaborations are designed to empower MSMEs, offering a diverse array of value-added services and comprehensive support throughout their business journey.

55. Correct Answer: D

This year, Forbes has honoured 15 leading philanthropists "who have shown commitment and donated generously to causes close to their hearts." Among the 15 philanthropists honoured, three were Indians. DLF's KP Singh, Infosys' Nandan Nilekani, and Zerodha's Nikhil Kamat have made the list this year.

56. Correct Answer: A

The Employees' State Insurance Corporation (ESIC) bagged the "ISSA Vision Zero 2023" Award in the recently held 23rd World Congress on Safety and Health at Work in Sydney, Australia. "Vision Zero" is a transformational approach for prevention of accidents at work places integrating the three dimensions of safety, health and well-being at all levels of work.

57. Correct Answer: D

The Oxford University Press, the publisher of the Oxford English Dictionary, has announced its Word of the Year for 2023 – "rizz." It was one of eight terms selected from a shortlist to capture the mood, ethos, or themes of the year. The ultimate selection was decided by a group of experts at OUP after the list was narrowed down through public voting.

58. Correct Answer: C

Max Financial Services Ltd, holding firm for Max Life Insurance Company said Chairman Analjit Singh has formally resigned from his position, effective end of the day on Monday, December 4. Following Singh's resignation, the board approved the appointment of Rajiv Anand as the new chairman effective from December 5. Anand, a non-executive director of Max Life, had been nominated by Axis Bank Ltd.

59. Correct Answer: D

State-owned Rail Vikas Nigam Limited (RVNL) said Vivek Kumar Gupta has been appointed as part-time government director on its board by the President of India. His appointment is with immediate effect, Rail Vikas Nigam Ltd (RVNL) said in an exchange filing.

60. Correct Answer: A

Squadron leader Manisha Padhi, a 2015 batch Indian Air Force (IAF) officer became the first woman in the country to ascend to the post of Aide-de-Camp (ADC). Mizoram Governor Hari Babu Kambhampati, on November 29, appointed Squadron Leader Padhi as the ADC from the armed forces at a brief

ceremony held at the Raj Bhawan in the state capital, Aizawl.

61. Correct Answer: A

Uttarakhand became the first state in the country to receive GI certifications for up to 18 items in a single day on December 4, 2023. Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami presented GI certificates at a ceremony held at the Chief Sevak Sadan, which is housed at the Chief Minister's residence. So far, 27 Uttarakhand products have obtained the GI tags.

62. Correct Answer: B

The Ministry of Panchayati Raj has introduced Gram Manchitra, a Geographic Information System (GIS)-based application designed to promote the spatial system of gram panchayats. This app assists Gram Panchayats in their planning and performance at the Gram Panchayat level. It also makes it easier for Gram Panchayats to adopt geospatial technology.

63. Correct Answer: B

India became a member of the Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS) Consortium, an initiative led by The Global Leadership Council (GLC) of the Global Energy Alliance for People and Planet (GEAPP). As part of this collaborative effort, India stands among the pioneering nations committed to securing 5Gw of BESS commitments by the conclusion of 2024.

64. Correct Answer: D

Bank of Baroda has launched a new scheme under its festive deal campaign called the BOB Parivar Account for both current and savings accounts. The 'My Family, My Bank' segment, which has been launched as a part of the Bank's "BOB Ke Sang Tyohaar Ki Umang" festive campaign, groups all the bank accounts belonging to members of a single family under One Family.

65. Correct Answer: B

With Tata Neu, HDFC has released Tata Neu HDFC Bank Infinity Credit Card and Tata Neu HDFC Plus Credit Card, offering diverse rewards and benefits.

The launch reflects Tata's expansion into financial services, aiming to provide customers with a seamless and rewarding payment experience.

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71. Correct Answer: D

India's eight core sectors recorded 12.1% growth in October 2023 as compared to the same period last year, according to the Ministry of Commerce and Industry data. Coal Industry surged 18.4%, while its cumulative index increased 13.1% in April-October 2023-24 period against the same period last year.

72. Correct Answer: B

Capital outlay of top 18 states, which account for around 90% of the aggregate gross state domestic product in the country, is likely to increase by 18-20 per cent in the current financial year, sharply higher than 14% growth registered in 2022-23, rating agency CRISIL said.

73. Correct Answer: B

China's SAIC Motor and the JSW Group have entered into a strategic joint venture where Sajjan Jindal-led JSW Group will hold 35% stake in MG Motor India. MG Motor UK Limited (MG Motor) is an automotive company owned by SAIC Motor UK, headquartered in London, owned by the Shanghai-based Chinese state-owned automaker SAIC Motor.

74. Correct Answer: A

The position of women in the urban job market improved further in the second quarter of FY24, with the female labour force participation rate rising to 24% compared with 23.2% in the previous quarter and 21.7% in Q2FY23, showed government data.

75. Correct Answer: B

The purchasing managers index (PMI) for manufacturing rose to 56 in November, up from 55.5 in October, though it remained below 57.5 reported in September, according to S&P Global Market Intelligence. During October, manufacturing activity recorded the slowest rate of expansion since

February. The 50-mark separates expansion from contraction.

76. Correct Answer: C

Housing demand has picked up significantly in smaller cities in the southern states of Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and Gujarat, according to construction companies who say demand has been spurred by increases in incomes and the migration of workers from rural areas.

77. Correct Answer: A

On December 4, Bharti Airtel, one of India's biggest telecommunications businesses, became the eighth company to cross the Rs 6 lakh crore mark. For the past five years, the company has continuously provided positive returns, with 2019 representing the greatest jump at about 60%.

78. Correct Answer: B

Insurance behemoth Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) is the fourth largest insurer in the world, according to a ranking based on life and accident & health reserves of companies in 2022 by S&P Global Market Intelligence. The state-owned insurer is ranked after Allianz SE, China Life Insurance Company and Nippon Life Insurance Company.

79. Correct Answer: B

Meghalaya's Lakadong turmeric has been awarded the Geographical Indication (GI) tag, state agriculture minister Ampareen Lyngdoh has said. Lyngdoh said the Lakadong turmeric, which is found in the Lakadong area of the Jaintia Hills, has high curcumin content and the GI tag will help farmers in marketing and give access to customers to the authentic product.

80. Correct Answer: B

Zoram People's Movement (ZPM) leader Lalduhoma was elected as the new chief minister of Mizoram. The ZPM, which was registered as a political party only in 2019, emerged victorious in the assembly

elections bagging 27 seats, increasing its tally from 8 in the 2018 polls.

81. Correct Answer: A

For years, IBM has been following a quantum-computing road map, and according to the company, it will now shift focus on making its machines more error-resistant rather than larger. Called Condor, the new quantum computing chip has 1,121 superconducting qubits arranged in a honeycomb pattern.

82. Correct Answer: B

Eighty-one-year-old Indian-origin writer Meira Chand was among the three Singaporeans conferred the Cultural Medallion, the city-state's most prestigious arts accolade. Meira Chand, fellow novelist Suchen Christine Lim and Malay dance veteran Osman Abdul Hamid received the award from President Tharman Shanmugaratnam at a ceremony held at the Istana.

83. Correct Answer: C

The benchmark lending rate or the repo rate will remain unchanged at 6.5 percent, Reserve Bank of India (RBI) Governor Shaktikanta Das announced on December 8, following the conclusion of the three-day meeting of the central bank's Monetary Policy Committee (MPC).

84. Correct Answer: B

The RBI will create a fintech repository that will be operational by April 2024 or earlier. It will be run by the RBI's Innovation Hub. The rationale behind this framework is to better understand developments in the fintech ecosystem as financial entities such as banks and non-banking financial companies (NBFCs) are increasingly partnering with them.

85. Correct Answer: B

Reserve Bank of India (RBI) Governor Shaktikanta Das in the Monetary Policy Committee meeting announcements announced that the GDP growth for

2023-24 is projected at 7 per cent, an increase from the previous projection of 6.5 per cent.

86. Correct Answer: D

In 2022, India accounted for 66% of malaria cases in the WHO South-East Asia Region noted the new — 2023 World Malaria Report — published by the World Health Organization (WHO). It adds that almost 46% of all cases in the region were due to Plasmodium vivax, which is a protozoal parasite and a human pathogen, which is the most frequent and widely distributed cause of recurring malaria.

87. Correct Answer: B

The Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to strengthen collaboration in promoting sustainable infrastructure development and address development challenges in Asia and beyond.

88. Correct Answer: B

Bharat Electronics Ltd. has bagged orders worth Rs 3,915 crore for the supply of various defence equipment. The company received an order of Rs 580 crore from the Indian Army for artificial magnetic conductors of radars. BEL has received orders worth Rs 18,298 crore so far in the current financial year.

89. Correct Answer: A

The Union government has proposed to sell 8% stake in IRCON International through an offer for sale (OFS). The government will offload about 3.76 crore shares, which represents 4% stake through the OFS, and in the case of oversubscription, an additional 4% stake will be under sale.

90. Correct Answer: A

Ambuja Cements said it has completed the acquisition of Sanghi Industries Limited (SIL), at an enterprise value of Rs 5,185 crore. This is higher than the earlier expected value of Rs 5,000 crore. As part

of the deal's completion, Ambuja Cements also executed a trade (in on and off-market trade) to acquire 54.51 per cent of the voting share capital from the promoters of Sanghi Industries.

91. Correct Answer: A

Adani Green Energy Limited (AGEL) has been declared the second-largest global solar PV developer in the global solar energy sector, according to Mercom Capital Group's Annual Global Report. Mercom Capital Group is a clean energy communications and research firm. In its global annual report, it has unveiled the top ten leading global large-scale solar PV developers based on data compiled from July 2022 to June 2023.

92. Correct Answer: B

The Government of India and the Asian Development Bank (ADB) have signed a \$175 million loan agreement to improve connectivity and resilience of roads in the state of Madhya Pradesh. The project will upgrade about 500 kilometres of state highways and major district roads to a standard two-lane feature.

93. Correct Answer: C

Poland's parliament has elected centrist party leader Donald Tusk as prime minister, paving the way for a new pro-EU government after eight years of national conservative rule. Tusk was elected prime minister nearly two months after a national election that was won by a coalition of parties ranging from left-wing to moderate conservative.

94. Correct Answer: D

Taylor Swift has clinched Time Magazine's Person of the Year for 2023, a nod to her record-breaking Eras tour and significant cultural influence. Recently, Swift was crowned as Spotify's Global Top Artist of 2023. The 33-year-old singer reigned across various charts and emerged as the year's most-streamed artist.

95. Correct Answer: D

Congress leader Revanth Reddy took oath as Telangana Chief Minister administered by the state Governor Tamilisai Soundararajan, in Hyderabad on 07 December 2023. While Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka has taken oath as the Deputy Chief Minister, ten others have taken oath as Ministers.

96. Correct Answer: B

Prime Minister (PM) Narendra Modi launched the 1st Indian Art, Architecture, and Design Biennale 2023 (IAADB'23), which was organised by the Ministry of Culture from the 9th to the 15th of December 2023 at the Red Fort in New Delhi, Delhi. During the program, the Prime Minister inaugurated the 'Aatmanirbhar Bharat Centre for Design' and the Samunnati Student Biennale.

97. Correct Answer: C

The 24th Hornbill Festival was held from the 1st to the 10th of December 2023 in Naga Heritage Village in Kisama 12 kilometers from Kohima, Nagaland. The Hornbill Festival, also known as the "Festival of Festivals," is held yearly in Nagaland to promote inter-tribal interaction and to maintain, safeguard, and revitalize the uniqueness and richness of Naga heritage.

98. Correct Answer: D

Bangladesh's slow left-arm spinner Nahida Akter has been announced as the ICC Women's Player of the Month for November. She became the first-ever Bangladesh women's player to win the award. Akter beat compatriot Fargana Hoque and Pakistan spinner Sadia Iqbal to win the award.

99. Correct Answer: B

REC Limited signed a 200 million Euro loan agreement with the German bank KfW on December 8. This marks REC's sixth line of credit under the Indo-German Development Cooperation and demonstrates the corporation's commitment to enhance the distribution infrastructure of DISCOMs

in line with the Revamped Distribution Sector Scheme (RDSS) of the Government of India.

100. Correct Answer: B

LIC informed in a regulatory filing to the stock exchanges that it has decreased its shareholding in HDFC Asset Management Company (AMC) from 1,93,11,744 to 1,48,44,466 equity shares. With this, the life insurance major has reduced its stake in HDFC AMC to 6.953 per cent from 9.046 per cent earlier.

101. Correct Answer: C

The Ministry of Defence has signed a contract with Telecommunications Consultants India Limited (TCIL) on December 8, at a total cost of Rs 588.68 crore, for the acquisition of Digital Coast Guard (DCG) project. The release from the Ministry of Defence said that this project is in alignment with the Government of India's strategic vision for Digital Armed Forces.

102. Correct Answer: A

A contingent of 45 personnel from the Indian Armed Forces is in Hanoi, Vietnam, to participate in the fourth edition of the Joint Military Exercise VINBAX-2023. The exercise is scheduled to take place from the 11th to the 21st of December 2023.

103. Correct Answer: A

State-owned RITES Ltd has announced that it has signed a pact with CFM Mozambique for the supply of diesel locomotives and incidental services at a total cost of USD 37,680,080 (Rs 314.1 crore). The pact has been signed for the supply of ten diesel locomotives.

104. Correct Answer: A

Bank of India (BoI) has launched an exclusive savings bank product for women (Nari Shakti Savings Account) with an independent source of income. The savings account, which was launched by MD and CEO, Rajneesh Karnatak, has features such as personal accident insurance cover of up to ₹1 crore, discounted health insurance and wellness products,

rebates on locker facilities for gold and diamond SB A/C holders, among others, per the public sector bank's statement.

105. Correct Answer: C

Intellect Design Arena Ltd, the Chennai-based FinTech company for financial and insurance clients, has signed a ₹80 crore, five-year deal with Indian Bank to deploy Intellect's eMACH.ai powered Cash Management System. This will bolster the bank's corporate banking modernisation, said SV Ramanan, Chief Executive Officer, India and South Asia, Intellect Design Arena Ltd.

106. Correct Answer: B

The Ministry of Defence has cleared a proposal to purchase 70,000 more semi-automatic assault rifles from US-based Sig Sauer for Indian Army which is already using them from 2019 onwards. The repeat order for acquisition of Sig Sauer is valued at ₹800 crore, said defence sources.

107. Correct Answer: A

Railways Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw has released a video showcasing India's first bullet train terminal, located at the Sabarmati Multimodal transport hub in Ahmedabad, Gujarat. The terminal, designed with state-of-the-art features, will welcome passengers who wish to experience India's inaugural bullet train.

108. Correct Answer: C

According to the 2023 report on food security and nutrition by five UN agencies, 74.1% of Indians, approximately 1.043 billion people, were unable to afford a healthy diet in 2021. The report also estimated India's proportion of undernourished population at 16.6% during 2020-2022.

109. Correct Answer: B

Canara HSBC Life Insurance has launched 'Alpha Wealth' plan with comprehensive features to ensure financial security for the insured and their family. The product offers an array of options by investing in

a wide variety of funds - debt/equity/liquid available in the market, Canara HSBC Life Insurance said.

110. Correct Answer: D

INS Tarmugli, a Fast Attack Craft has been commissioned into the Navy at a ceremony held at Naval Dockyard, Visakhapatnam recently. Vice Admiral Sandeep Naithani, AVSM, VSM, Chief of Materiel, Indian Navy commissioned the Trinkat Class FAC which was gifted to the Maldivian Naval Defence Forces (MNDF) in 2006 by India.

111. Correct Answer: A

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has been ranked as the world's most popular leader with an approval rating of 76 per cent, according to a survey conducted by US-based consultancy firm Morning Consult. This rating is over 10 percentage points higher than the next leader on the list.

112. Correct Answer: C

Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman recently inaugurated the first-of-its-kind Krishnaveni Sangeetha Neerajanam in Vijayawada. The Krishnaveni Sangeetha Neerajanam was held at Tummalapalli Kalakshetram in the presence of state tourism minister RK Roja, finance minister Buggana Rajendranath, Secretary to Union tourism ministry V Vidyavathi.

113. Correct Answer: D

Funding in India's tech startup ecosystem in 2023 has been the lowest in the last five years, dropping India's global ranking from 4th to 5th place, a new report showed. The year received \$7 billion in total funding until December 5, a significant decline of 72 per cent, compared to \$25 billion in the previous year.

114. Correct Answer: D

Universal Health Coverage (UHC) Day is observed on December 12 every year. As listed on World Health Organisation, Universal Health Coverage (UHC) Day 2023, global partners and communities are marking

the campaign under the overall theme of "Health For All: Time for action".

115. Correct Answer: C

Bihar garnered global recognition for its afforestation efforts under the Jal-Jeevan-Hariyali Abhiyan at the COP28 Climate Summit in Dubai, where senior officials presented detailed insights on the state's green initiatives and its commitment to climate resilience.

116. Correct Answer: D

ICICI Prudential Life Insurance and Ujjivan Small Finance Bank (Ujjivan SFB), a leading small finance bank, have entered into a bancassurance partnership for the distribution of life insurance products. Under the partnership, Ujjivan SFB, will offer the entire suite of ICICI Prudential Life's customer-friendly protection, long-term savings and retirement products to its customers through its extensive network of 700+ branches across 26 states and Union Territories.

117. Correct Answer: C

International Finance Corporation (IFC), a World Bank Group has recognised Federal Bank as the top performer of the 2023 Climate Assessment for Financial Institutions (CAFI) Awards for Climate Reporting. Out of the 258 financial institutions globally participating in climate reporting through the CAFI tool, Federal Bank emerged as a standout performer.

118. Correct Answer: D

Professor Savita Ladage from Mumbai's Homi Bhabha Centre for Science Education, Tata Institute of Fundamental Research, received the Royal Society of Chemistry's Nyholm Prize for Education in recognition of her contributions to chemistry education. Prof. Ladage bagged the award for her advocacy of the significance of chemical education.

119. Correct Answer: A

Private equity firm Bain Capital sold shares worth Rs 3,737 crore in private sector lender Axis Bank. More than 50 entities, largely comprising foreign funds, were among the buyers, including Societe Generale, Morgan Stanley, Goldman Sachs and UBS.

120. Correct Answer: C

KPIT Technologies, a software integration firm focused on the automotive and mobility ecosystem, unveiled its Sodium-ion battery technology. The technology is set to lower the cost of an electric vehicle battery by 25-30% compared to the current lithium-ion batteries, said Ravi Pandit, co-founder, and chairman, KPIT.

121. Correct Answer: C

IDFC First Bank, LIC Cards, and Mastercard has announced their collaboration to launch an exclusive co-branded credit card to meet the dynamic financial needs of the country. Available in two variants — LIC Classic and LIC Select — the credit cards will let more than 27 crore policyholders across the country save in the form of reward points on every LIC insurance premium payment.

122. Correct Answer: B

Cashfree Payments has introduced a new platform for payment orchestration, named 'FlowWise'. This platform will help Indian businesses manage different payment systems with just one setup. It allows them to send payments to different partners based on specific needs instantly.

123. Correct Answer: B

Reliance Industries Ltd has joined hands with DBS Bank India to launch a financing program for compressed biogas (CBG) plants. The financing will enable the ecosystem development for vendor partners to aggregate agri-residue as inputs for the Reliance Compressed Biogas (CBG) production plants across India, the company said.

124. Correct Answer: D

The Competition Commission of India (CCI) has approved the proposed acquisition of certain shareholding in Constantia Flexibles Holding GmbH (Constantia) by Capripack BidCo GmbH (Capripak). The proposed combination relates to the acquisition of sole control by Capripack over Constantia by way of acquisition of 100% of its shareholding and voting rights from Constantia Lux S.à r.l. (Seller).

125. Correct Answer: B

In a move towards eco-friendly maritime transportation, the Barracuda, India's fastest solar-electric boat, was ceremoniously launched at the Navigathi Panavally Yard in Alappuzha, Kerala. This cutting-edge vessel was jointly developed by Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders and Navalt.

126. Correct Answer: B

As per the International Energy Agency (IEA) research titled 'Coal 2023- Analysis and Forecast to 2026,' Indian coal demand is predicted to increase by 3.5% a year to 1397 million tonnes (Mt) by 2026. India's coal demand is expected to rise by 8%, or 98 Mt, by 2023.

127. Correct Answer: B

The Indian Institute of Technology, Kanpur (IIT-K) and the Kotak Mahindra Bank Limited has announced the launch of Kotak School of Sustainability – India's first fully integrated school of sustainability at IIT Kanpur. This initiative has been taken with the thought that global warming poses a serious threat to our existence, manifesting in untimely natural calamities, pollution, and biodiversity loss.

128. Correct Answer: A

India's industrial production in October rose to a 16-month high of 11.7 per cent in October 2023 against a contraction of 4.1 per cent in the same period a year ago, the Ministry of Statistics & Programme Implementation (MOSPI) said. In September, it had grown by 5.8 per cent.

129. Correct Answer: C

Hyderabad-based HC Robotics will make advanced gimbals for Indian Armed forces with the collaboration of French company Merio. A high level delegation from French company Merio led by its CEO Remi Plenet met the Telangana's Minister for Industries and IT D. Sridhar Babu to explain the company's plans of building new technologies in Hyderabad.

130. Correct Answer: D

The Reserve Bank of India has authorised Bandhan Bank to disburse pension through e-PPOs on behalf of the railway ministry. The Indian Railways is the biggest employer in the country, employing nearly 1.2 million people. The bank will soon work together with the Ministry of Railways to start the process of giving out pensions.

131. Correct Answer: C

Uttar Pradesh has emerged as the second-largest economy in India with a 9.2% share in the country's GDP, behind only Maharashtra according to a report by soic.in. This places UP ahead of Tamil Nadu, Gujarat, West Bengal, Karnataka, Rajasthan, Andhra Pradesh, and Madhya Pradesh.

132. Correct Answer: B

Fintech firm Infibeam Avenues has announced it had acquired a 49 per cent equity stake with an investment of Rs 25 crore in Ahmedabad-based Pirimid Fintech. The partnership aims to combine Infibeam's digital payments and AI-based frameworks with Pirimid Fintech's capital market trading software for its clients nationwide and globally.

133. Correct Answer: D

Haryana won the Vijay Hazare Trophy 2023 after beating Rajasthan in the final by 30 runs at the Saurashtra Cricket Association (SCA) Stadium in Rajkot. It also happened to be Haryana's maiden triumph in the history of the tournament. Rajasthan,

on the other hand, finished as the runners-up for the second time after the 2006-07 edition of the championship.

134. Correct Answer: A

The World Health Organization (WHO) has announced the inclusion of noma (cancrum oris or gangrenous stomatitis) in its official list of Neglected Tropical Diseases (NTDs). Noma, a severe gangrenous disease of the mouth and face, primarily affects malnourished young children (between the ages of 2 and 6 years) in regions of extreme poverty.

135. Correct Answer: A

The Khelo India Para Games 2023 wrapped up in New Delhi on December 17 with Haryana winning the inaugural title by securing 105 medals: 40 gold, 39 silver and 26 bronze. Uttar Pradesh came second on the KIPG 2023 medal tally with 62 medals: 25 gold, 23 silver and 14 bronze while Tamil Nadu finished third with 20 gold, eight silver and 14 bronze medals.

136. Correct Answer: C

Max Life Insurance Company Ltd. has announced the launch of Smart Total Elite Protection Plan (STEP), a comprehensive life insurance term plan. This plan aims to enhance financial security in today's landscape, addressing the modern consumer's need for increased protection through higher coverage solutions.

137. Correct Answer: D

Domestic rating agency ICRA revised its FY24 GDP growth forecast to 6.5 per cent from 6.2 per cent earlier. However, the revised forecast is still much lower than the Reserve Bank of India's (RBI's) 7 per cent real Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth estimate for the ongoing fiscal.

138. Correct Answer: D

"Against All Odds: The IT Story of India" and "Winning Middle India: The Story of India's New-Age Entrepreneurs" have been announced as joint

winners of the 'Gaja Capital Business Book Prize' 2023. The award, now in its fifth edition, offers a prize money of Rs 15 lakhs and aims to encourage Indian entrepreneurs, writers, and journalists.

139. Correct Answer: D

Unemployment rate among graduates in the age group of 15 years and above has declined to 13.4% in 2022-23 from 14.9% in year ago, according to a government survey. As per the latest Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS), conducted by the Ministry of Statistics & Programme Implementation, the lowest unemployment rate among graduates aged 15 years and above witnessed in Chandigarh at 5.6%.

140. Correct Answer: A

ACG has joined the World Economic Forum's (WEF) Global Lighthouse Network, following the certification of its capsule manufacturing facility in Pithampur, India. WEF's Global Lighthouse Network is a community of manufacturers that show leadership in using fourth industrial revolution technologies to transform factories, value chains and business models, for compelling financial and operational returns, the ACG note said.

141. Correct Answer: C

Private sector Karur Vysya Bank and HDFC Life have entered into a corporate agency agreement to offer life insurance products to their respective customers. This corporate agency arrangement would enable customers of Karur Vysya Bank to avail HDFC Life's wide range of life insurance products which include solutions for protection, savings and investment, retirement and critical illness.

142. Correct Answer: C

PayCraft, a fintech entity in online and offline payments processing, said it launched One Nation Corporate Card in partnership with NSDL Payments Bank and National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI). The Mumbai-based company said the card, built on an indigenously developed multi-wallet

platform with transit issuance and processing capability, serves as a tax benefit instrument for corporate employees.

143. Correct Answer: B

DataTech NBFC U GRO Capital has raised Rs 250 crore from the Dutch Entrepreneurial Development Bank FMO through rupee-denominated non-convertible debentures (NCDs). Aleksandra Gazy, Senior Investment Officer at FMO, said that the association will help strengthen the fund's commitment towards greater financial inclusion in India.

144. Correct Answer: A

Dr. Saveera Prakash, a member of the PPP women's wing, has been nominated by the Pakistan People's Party to contest in the General Elections from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Buner district. This decision aligns with the mandate of the Pakistan Electoral Commission, which requires a minimum representation of 5% women candidates on general seats.

145. Correct Answer: B

The Ayodhya railway station has been renamed "Ayodhya Dham" ahead of the Ram Temple consecration ceremony. The announcement was made by the Indian Railway Conference Association, with the station retaining its existing alphabetical code. Prime Minister Narendra Modi is scheduled to inaugurate the renamed railway station on December 30.

146. Correct Answer: B

On December 28, 1659, the Marathas achieved a significant victory over the Adilshahi forces in the historic Battle of Kolhapur. This event is a notable chapter in Indian history, showcasing the military prowess of the Maratha Empire during that period.

147. Correct Answer: B

CS Rajan officially assumed the chairmanship of Kotak Mahindra Bank from January 1, 2024,

succeeding Prakash Apte. The Reserve Bank of India has provided approval for Rajan's two-year tenure in this key leadership role.

148. Correct Answer: C

The government has set an ambitious goal to collect 50 lakh Digital Life Certificates from Central Government Pensioners by March 2024 as part of the DLC Campaign 2.0. This initiative aims to streamline the pension verification process and ensure timely disbursement of pensions.

149. Correct Answer: C

The FIU-IND issuing legal notices to 9 offshore cryptocurrency platforms highlights India's commitment to regulating the digital asset space, ensuring compliance with domestic regulations to combat money laundering.

150. Correct Answer: B

Section 194-O's mandate for a 1% Tax Deduction at Source (TDS) by e-commerce companies is a measure introduced to streamline tax procedures, ensuring fair contributions from online business transactions.



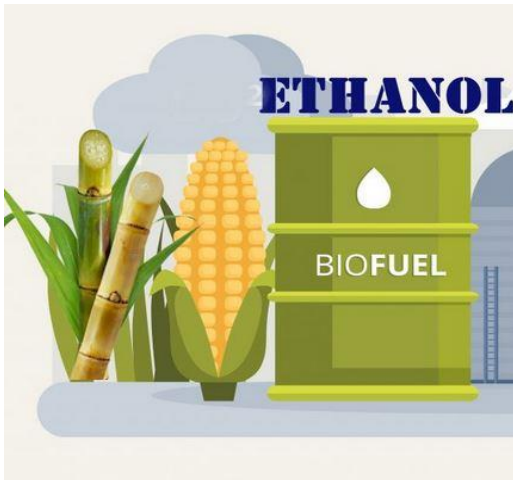
SECTION 3

Detailed Analysis of Important Events



Economics

Ethanol Production Policy: New Directive on Sugarcane Usage



The Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution issued a directive to sugar mills and distilleries, not to use sugarcane juice or syrup for ethanol production in the ethanol year 2023-2024.

No Sugarcane Juice for Ethanol Production

- **Sustaining Current Supplies:** In accordance with the order, Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs) may continue to receive offers for the supply of ethanol made from B-Heavy molasses.
- **Regulatory Oversight:** This directive is implemented in accordance with the Sugar (Control) Order by the Department of Food and Public Distribution, which is in charge of keeping an eye on sugar production and supply.

Rationale behind the Directive

- **Ensuring Sugar supply:** Taking into account the reduced sugar output in the nation, the government's decision attempts to assure enough sugar supply in India.
- **Eating vs. Fuel to Consider:** Companies hailed this action as striking a balance between the production of petroleum and food security.
- **Effect on Ethanol Blending Objectives:** The directive is important given that India wants to blend 20% ethanol by the ethanol year 2025–2026.

Implications for Industry

- The Indian Sugar Mills Association (ISMA) has responded by evaluating the order's consequences.
- **Impact on Domestic Sugar Supply:** According to industry sources, this move will guarantee a sufficient domestic sugar supply, particularly given that less sugarcane is produced in areas like Maharashtra and Karnataka.
- **Impact on Ethanol Blending Program:** One of the main pillars of India's renewable energy policy is the ethanol blending program, which is anticipated to be impacted by the ban.
- **Effects on Units Sold Only in Ethanol:** These new regulations may provide difficulties for facilities that are only used to produce ethanol.

Conclusion

- The decree is an example of the Indian government's strategic choice to put indigenous sugar supply ahead of sugarcane-derived ethanol.
- In the upcoming years, it will be critical to track how this instruction affects the ethanol blending program as well as the sugar business.

Centre's Ethanol Policy Shift: Impact on Sugar and Ethanol Industries



The Centre has taken significant steps to increase domestic sugar availability, including banning sugar exports and restricting the diversion of sugar for ethanol production. On December 7, the Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution directed mills and

distilleries not to use sugarcane juice/syrup for ethanol production.

Ethanol Blended Petrol (EBP) Programme

- Success of the Program: One of the government's major accomplishments, the EBP program, has increased the percentage of gasoline blended with ethanol from 1.6% in 2013–14 to 11.8% in 2022–2023.
- Feedstock Diversification: The key to the success is a variety of feedstocks, such as cereals, sugarcane juice or syrup, B- and C-heavy molasses, and sugarcane juice.

Ethanol Production from Different Feedstocks

- C-heavy Molasses: Historically used to produce ethanol, this type of molasses produces 220-225 liters of ethanol per tonne.
- Comparing B-heavy molasses to C-heavy molasses, the former yields more ethanol (290–320 liters per tonne).
- Direct Sugarcane Fermentation: One tonne of sugarcane can produce 80–81 liters of ethanol if the entire plant is fermented without any sugar being extracted.

Centre's Ethanol Blending Scheme: Food vs. Fuel Debate

- Growth in Ethanol Production After 2017: Ethanol production was increased by using B-heavy molasses and sugarcane juice/syrup in addition to additional substrates such as leftover rice, broken grains, and maize.
- Differential Pricing Policy: Higher pricing were used by the government to encourage the manufacture of ethanol from non-C-heavy molasses feedstocks.
- Effect on Industry: Businesses such as Triveni Engineering & Industries Ltd (TEIL) have evolved to use a variety of feedstocks in the off-season, including grain.

Challenges and Setbacks for the Industry

- Impact of the Directive: The December 7 directive represents a setback, particularly for

businesses that can make ethanol from cane juice or syrup.

- contract for Ethanol Supply: The 135 crore liters of ethanol derived from sugarcane juice/syrup in the OMCs' contract for 825 crore litres of ethanol for 2023–2024 may be impacted.
- Pricing Uncertainty: Despite the fact that the ethanol supply year coincides more closely with the sugar year, the Center has not disclosed prices for the major ethanol feedstocks for 2023–2024.

Sugar Supply Concerns and Policy Implications

- Low Sugar supplies: The government prioritized the local sugar supply when the sugar year of 2022–2023 ended with low supplies.
- Production Forecasts: Uncertainty: For 2023–2024, the National Federation of Cooperative Sugar Factories projects a drop in sugar production.
- Government Prioritization: As evidenced by the most recent actions, the government prioritizes domestic supply and consumer demands over fuel production and exports.

Conclusion

- Change in Government Policy: The Center's latest moves suggest a move away from ethanol production and toward a greater emphasis on the availability of homegrown sugar.
- broader Implications: These choices have an effect on the ethanol and sugar industries, illustrating the difficult balancing act between efforts to promote renewable energy sources and food security.

In news: DigiYatra Initiative



DigiYatra gates, allowing passengers to use facial scans and barcoded e-tickets for terminal and security check entry, are installed at 13 airports, with 25 more set for deployment next year.

About DigiYatra

- DigiYatra uses facial recognition technology to provide paperless airport access.
- It seeks to identify passengers using facial traits associated with boarding cards at paperless, contactless airport checks.
- Using facial recognition, this technology automates boarding, security checks, and airport admission for passengers.
- ID cards and boarding passes are no longer required for passengers to show.
- The initiative is being carried out by the DigiYatra Foundation, a joint venture involving major Indian airports and the Airports Authority of India as stakeholders.
- Five significant airports split the remaining 74% of the shares, with the Airports Authority of India owning 26% of the shares.

How to Use DigiYatra?

- Travelers register using a self-captured photo and Aadhaar confirmation on the DigiYatra app.
- They then share credentials with airport authorities by scanning their boarding permit.
- Passengers scan their boarding card at the airport e-gate, and their identification and travel credentials are verified by a facial recognition system.
- Passengers can enter via the e-gate after validation.
- The standard processes for boarding and security clearance still hold true.

Need for DigiYatra

- Airport congestion is lessened and flying is more efficient with facial recognition technology.
- Airports like Dubai, Singapore, Atlanta, and Narita (Japan) have already used this technology, which increases efficiency.

India's Disinvestment Strategy amidst upcoming Elections



India's disinvestment process, primarily focusing on minority stake sales rather than full privatisation, is expected to fall short of its fiscal year 2024 target. The government's cautious approach, influenced by the upcoming general elections, has led to a slowdown in the privatisation of major public sector undertakings (PSUs).

Disinvestment Performance and Targets

- Past Performance: Disinvestment has generated approximately ₹4.20 lakh crore over the last ten years, but the aim for the current fiscal year looks difficult.
- FY24 Target: The government lowered its disinvestment target from the previous year to ₹51,000 crore for FY24.
- Major PSUs on Hold: The privatization of Shipping Corporation of India (SCI), CONCOR, and Bharat Petroleum Corporation Ltd. (BPCL) has been postponed.
- Progress to Date: Through IPOs and OFS, about ₹10,049 crore, or 20% of the planned amount, has been raised.
- Pipeline Projects: Various procedural obstacles are causing delays in the planned strategic sales of CPSEs such as SCI, NMDC Steel Ltd, BEML, HLL Lifecare, and IDBI Bank.

Factors Influencing Disinvestment

- Political Considerations: A cautious approach to strategic disinvestment is being driven by the impending elections.

- **Obstacles in the Strategy of Sales:** The sale process is a drawn-out affair that involves numerous parties and intricate procedures.
- **Public and Political Resistance:** Opposition to privatization exists in several areas, most notably in the defense and shipping industries. This resistance results in delays and policy reviews.
- **Views from Economic Think Tanks:** PSU stake sales have recently slowed down, which observers ascribe to changes in government priorities, regulatory procedures, and uncertainty in the world economy.

Historical Context and Government Policy

- **Post-2014 Strategy:** In 2014, the government brought back its program of disinvestment, emphasizing stake sales and PSE listing on the public market.
- **Union Budget for 2023–2024:** The government has not yet met the 2022–2023 disinvestment target, making the FY24 aim the lowest in the last seven years.
- **Disinvestment is done by the government in order to pay down debt, finance deficits, invest in development, and lighten the fiscal load.**
- **Disinvestment Types:** Under the direction of the Department of Investment and Public Asset Management (DIPAM), the procedure entails majority divestiture, minority disinvestment, and full privatization.

Recent Disinvestment Performance

- **Reaching Goals:** Since 2014, the administration has just twice achieved its disinvestment goals.
- **Execution Challenges:** A number of circumstances, such as political opposition and market instability, have hindered strategic sales.

Future of Disinvestment in 2023-24

- **No New Additions:** The administration does not intend to add any new companies to the already announced privatization of state-owned enterprises.
- **Obstacles and Vision:** Critics argue that rather than being purely motivated by fiscal exigencies,

disinvestment should be in line with the government's long-term goals of privatization and sectoral presence.

Conclusion

- **Changes in Strategic Policy:** The government's disinvestment plan is changing as it strikes a balance between controlling public and political emotion and increasing revenue.
- **Effect of Upcoming Elections:** As general elections get near, disinvestment may become less of a focus, which could affect the direction and goals of stake sales.

SEBI's Proposal for T+0 Instant Settlement Cycles



The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) has proposed introducing T+0 (same day) and instant settlement cycles in the equity cash segment, alongside the existing T+1 cycle.

Current Settlement Cycle

- **Evolution:** In 2002, SEBI reduced the settlement cycle from T+5 to T+3, and in 2003, to T+2. Introduced in 2021, the T+1 cycle was completed by January 2023.
- **T+1 Cycle:** Funds and securities are currently settled the day following the trade.

About T+0 Settlement Cycle

- **Phased Implementation:** T+0 Settlement for Phase 1 and Instant Settlement for Phase 2 will be the two stages in which SEBI introduces the shorter cycle.
- **Details of the T+0 Settlement:** Trades completed up until 1:30 PM in Phase 1 will be finalized by 4:30 PM the same day.

- Mechanics of Instant Settlement: Phase 2 calls for trade-by-trade settlement that happens instantly, with trading lasting until 3:30 PM.

Scope and Implementation

- Focus at First: The T+0 settlement will be applied in three tranches to the top 500 listed equity shares based on market capitalization.
- Observational Techniques: The T+0 cycle will be subject to the same surveillance mechanisms as are in place for the T+1 cycle. Securities used for trade settlements won't qualify for T+0.

Rationale behind Introducing a Shorter Settlement Cycle

- Market Growth and Efficiency: SEBI wants to improve market safety and efficiency, particularly for retail investors, in light of the notable increase in market volumes and participants.
- Technological Progress: The viability of shorter settlement cycles is supported by the development of payment technologies such as UPI and the sophistication of market infrastructure.

- Attracting Investors: Indian securities are a more attractive asset class because of their faster transactions, dependability, and low costs.

Features of the Proposed T+0 Settlement Mechanism

- Early Pay-In Trend: A significant portion of retail investors already pay in monies and securities early, demonstrating their preparedness for immediate settlement.
- Benefits of Instant Receipt: By facilitating instantaneous receipt of securities and money, the method lowers settlement shortages and improves investor control.
- Investor Protection is strengthened when money and assets are directly credited into investors' accounts, particularly for UPI clients.

Benefits of the New Mechanism

- Flexibility for Clients: The new system gives buyers and sellers more power and flexibility by paying out money and securities more quickly.
- Benefits of the Market Ecosystem: It is anticipated that the quicker settlement cycle will improve the securities market's operating effectiveness, which will benefit the overall ecosystem.

Environment & Diversity**India pitches for Green Credit Scheme at COP28**

India introduced the Green Credits Scheme at COP28 in Dubai. PM Modi emphasized that this program goes

beyond the commercial nature of carbon credits, offering a broader environmental impact.

What is Green Credits Programme?

- The initiative's goal is to grow on deteriorated wasteland in order to produce Green Credits.
- Origin: The Environment Ministry introduced it in October with the goal of providing incentives for a range of environmentally friendly activities.
- Action areas include planting trees, managing water, managing trash, managing sustainable agriculture, reducing air pollution, protecting mangroves, creating ecomark labels, and developing sustainable buildings.
- Extent beyond Carbon This initiative, in contrast to current carbon credit schemes, offers incentives for activities other than lowering

carbon emissions, such improving soil and conserving water.

Distinctive Features

- **Based Approach:** The program's objective is to establish a market where businesses can acquire and exchange green credits—akin to carbon credits—for their environmental initiatives.
- **Development Stage:** The market for these credits has not yet been created, and methodologies and criteria for quantifying and certifying such actions are being developed.
- **First Purchasers:** These green credits are expected to be bought by private enterprises in order to satisfy their Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) requirements.
- **broader recipients** The green credit scheme has advantages for both individuals and communities, in contrast to carbon markets, which mainly target businesses and industry.

UAE launches ALTÉRRRA Fund for Climate Investments



The United Arab Emirates, as the host of COP-28, has committed US\$30 billion to establish ALTÉRRRA, a climate investment fund.

What is ALTÉRRRA Fund?

- **Fund Objective:** In order to become the largest fund devoted to climate investments, ALTÉRRRA wants to raise \$250 billion worldwide by 2030.

- **Focus:** By making investments in climate change, the fund aims to alter poor economies and emerging markets.
- **India's Clean Energy:** The fund's initial share is designated for the development of about 6.0 GW of new clean energy capacity in India, which includes 1,200 MW of solar and wind projects that are anticipated to come online by 2025.
- **Financial Requirements:** It is estimated that by 2030, developing and emerging markets will need to spend US\$2.4 trillion year on climate change mitigation.
- **Important Verticals:** Energy Transition, Industrial Decarbonization, Sustainable Living, and Climate Technologies are the four primary sectors that ALTÉRRRA will concentrate on.

Leadership and Management

- **COP-28 as the chair** The chair of the ALTÉRRRA fund will be Sultan Ahmed Al Jaber, the President.
- **Management Entity:** ALTÉRRRA was founded by independent international investment manager Lunate.
- **Residence:** The Abu Dhabi Global Market serves as the fund's residence.

Mission and Impact

- **Transformational Solution:** In order to draw private finance into ventures with a climate focus, ALTÉRRRA is positioned as a transformative solution.
- **Multiplier Effect:** It is anticipated that the fund's size and structure will have a major influence on climate investment.
- **A reflection of the Action Agenda of the COP Presidency:** The introduction of ALTÉRRRA is consistent with the Action Agenda of the UAE Presidency and its endeavors to increase the availability, affordability, and accessibility of climate finance.

Places in news: Mount Merapi



Mount Merapi in Indonesia has erupted yet again this year, spewing an ash tower 3,000 metres into the sky.

Merapi Volcano: A Brief Overview

- Location: Merapi, also known as the "Mountain of Fire" in Javanese, is a town in Central Java, Indonesia.
- Activity: Known for its frequent and frequently violent eruptions, it is one of the most dangerous and active volcanoes in the world.
- 2010 Eruption: More than 350 people died and massive damage was caused to the surrounding areas during the last major eruption in 2010.
- Travel Attraction: Merapi's beauty and geological significance draw hikers and tourists despite its perils.

Other active volcanoes in Indonesia



Indonesia is home to many active volcanoes, with over 120 active volcanoes located across the country. Some of the other major volcanoes in Indonesia include:

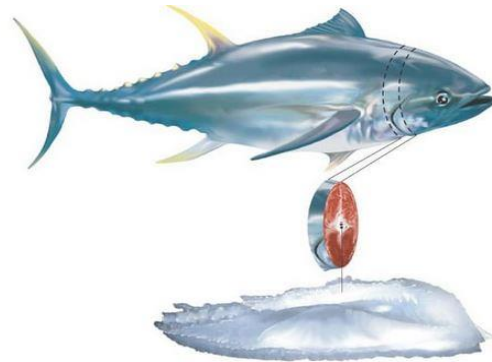
- Situated in the Sunda Strait, Mount Krakatau gained notoriety for its disastrous eruption in 1883.

- Mount Rinjani is the second-highest volcano in Indonesia and a popular trekking destination on the island of Lombok.
- Mount Tambora: Located on Sumbawa Island, it is well-known for its 1815 eruption, which resulted in the "year without summer."
- Bali's Mount Batur is renowned for its hot springs and picturesque views.
- Mount Merbabu is the highest point in Central Java and a popular climbing destination.

Why so many volcanoes in Indonesia?

- Pacific Ring of Fire: Indonesia's high level of volcanic activity can be attributed to its location on this seismic hotspot.
- Volcanic Density: Indonesia has more than 120 active volcanoes, which can erupt often and endanger the country's infrastructure and people.

Case Study: Climate Change Impact on Bluefin Tuna



It is vital to research how animals adjust to their environments, particularly in light of climate change. New studies on bluefin tuna shed light on how they use energy and how they cope with the climate problem.

Ear Stones study of Bluefin Tuna

- Otoliths, a form of stone found in fish ears, are used by scientists as biological records to examine a fish's life history in a manner akin to that of tree rings.
- Chemical Decoding: The group has created a technique to interpret the chemicals in these

otoliths in order to calculate the energy used by the fish during their living lives.

Temperature’s Role in Animal Metabolism

- Impact on Metabolism: Chemical reaction rates are influenced by temperature, which has an impact on an animal's metabolism and energy consumption.
- Energy Allocation Analogy: Just as inflation has an impact on human finances, rising temperatures can also put a burden on an animal's energy budget.

Differential Impact of Warming Waters

- Range of Adaptation: While animals at the warmer end of their species' temperature range may find it difficult to adapt, those in the middle can do so by raising their metabolism.
- Energy Debt: As temperatures rise, organisms may be forced to redirect their energy from development to vital life functions, which may result in adaptation, migration, or even extinction.

Otolith Analysis and Metabolic Traces

- The technique used by researchers at the University of Southampton allows them to examine the chemistry of otoliths and determine the temperature and metabolic rates that fish experience.
- Ear-mounted fitness trackers: Otoliths serve as inbuilt fitness monitors, logging vital biological data.

Case Study: Atlantic Bluefin Tuna

- Features of the species: The massive, quick, and high metabolism of Atlantic bluefin tuna allow them to flourish in colder seas.
- Population Recovery: The North Atlantic's bluefin tuna stocks have rebounded as a result of conservation measures.
- Variations in Recovery Rates: The study investigated the reasons for the different recovery rates displayed by bluefin tuna populations in the Gulf of Mexico and the Mediterranean.

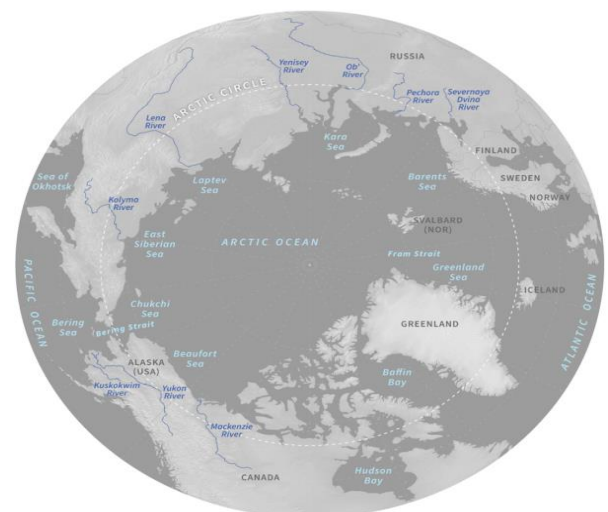
Temperature’s Impact on Tuna Metabolism

- Metabolic Peak: At about 28°C, young tuna reach their maximum metabolic rates.
- Consequences of Rising Above the Ideal Temperature: Juvenile tuna face greater energy expenses in the Gulf of Mexico, where temperatures frequently rise beyond 28°C, which hinders their growth.
- Mediterranean Conditions: The Mediterranean now has summer temperatures below 28°C, which is better for young tuna.

Future Projections and Conservation Challenges

- Climate Model Predictions: Within 50 years, even mild forecasts indicate that the eastern Mediterranean will reach temperatures above 28°C.
- Long-Term Solutions Are Needed: In order to protect tuna, changes in spawning and nursery locations as well as ocean warming must be addressed.
- Bycatch Risks: Young tuna may be more vulnerable to fishing risks in newly established spawning grounds in colder climates.
- Culinary and Ecological Significance: In addition to being prized as a delicacy, tuna are markers of larger problems facing marine biodiversity.

How the Hottest Summer ever affected the Arctic?



The summer of 2023 was the warmest on record in the Arctic, warming at a rate almost four times faster than the global average since 1979. The essential effects of this warming are described in depth in the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) Arctic Report Card, a peer-reviewed report by 82 scientists from 13 countries.

Key Findings and Consequences of the Arctic Warming

[1] Thawing of Subsea Permafrost

- **Accelerated Thawing Process:** The organic matter-containing subsea permafrost is thawing more quickly as a result of warmer water temperatures.
- **Ocean acidification and global warming** are exacerbated by the thawing of organic matter, which releases carbon dioxide and methane into the atmosphere.
- **Research Challenges:** Due to a lack of data, it is still unclear how much greenhouse gas is released from submerged permafrost and how this may affect global warming in the future.

[2] Food Insecurity

- **Salmon Population Decline:** In Western Alaska, the 30-year mean for chum and Chinook salmon populations was 92% and 81% lower, respectively.
- **Size Reduction and Species Variation:** Sockeye salmon counts were 98% higher than the 30-year norm, despite a fall in Chinook and chum salmon sizes.
- **Effect on Indigenous Communities:** Fisheries closures and major effects on food security and culture have resulted from these developments in Indigenous communities.

[3] Raging Wildfires

- **Severe Wildfire Season in Canada:** The Northwest Territories saw the burning of almost

10 million acres during Canada's worst wildfire season.

- **Evacuations and Air Quality Impact:** The flames caused widespread evacuations and had an impact on the air quality that extended to the southern states of the United States.

[4] Severe Flooding

- **Mendenhall Glacier Thinning:** Every year floods are brought on by the significant thinning of Alaska's Mendenhall Glacier.
- **Major floods Event:** In August 2023, a glacier lake broke through its ice dam, causing Juneau to experience unparalleled floods and significant property destruction.

[5] Greenland Ice Sheet Melting

- **Seldom Occurring Melting Events:** In the past 34 years, melting has only occurred at Greenland's highest point five times.
- **Continued Mass Loss:** Between August 2022 and September 2023, the ice sheet lost almost 350 trillion pounds of mass, despite above-average winter snow accumulation.
- The second-largest cause of the global rise in sea level is the melting of Greenland's ice sheet.

Conclusion

- **Short- and Long-Term Effects:** The Arctic's record temperatures have short-term effects on nearby communities and long-term effects on global climate patterns.
- **Research Needed Further:** To fully comprehend the extent of Arctic warming and create efficient mitigation plans, more study is essential.
- **Worldwide Accountability:** The results emphasize how urgently coordinated international actions are needed to combat climate change and its extensive effects.

Governance

Essential Services Maintenance Act (ESMA) and Its Implications



The Odisha Government invoked its Essential Services (Maintenance) Act (ESMA) prohibiting strikes by paramedical staff, including nurses, pharmacists and technicians to ensure that medical services are not disrupted.

About Essential Services Maintenance Act (ESMA)

- Enacted by the Parliament in 1968, the Essential Services Maintenance Act (ESMA) is a noteworthy legislative measure.
- Constitutional Placement: It is included as number 33 in the seventh schedule of the Indian Constitution's concurrent list.
- Goal: States mostly use ESMA to handle employee strikes, particularly in critical services.
- Essential Services: The Act gives the government the authority to label any economic activity or service as "essential" if its interruption would negatively affect people's ability to go about their daily lives.

Provisions and Powers under ESMA

- Police Authority: If demonstrators break any of the ESMA's rules, the Act gives police the right to arrest them without a warrant.
- State-Specific requirements: The ESMA has specific requirements that are different in every Indian state.

Right to Strike in Context

- The fundamental right of workers to lawfully advance and defend their social and economic interests is the ability to strike.
- Legal Status: The Indian Constitution's Article 19 guarantees the fundamental right to protest, although there are several limitations on the right to strike.
- The Industrial Dispute Act of 1947 delineates the legal parameters and limitations surrounding strikes, particularly with regard to public sector and critical services.
- Limitations in Particular Sectors: Employees in the public sector, the banking, oil, metropolitan transportation, and education sectors under state supervision are exempt from the general ban on strikes.

International Labor Organization (ILO) and the Right to Strike

- ILO Position: The right to strike is governed by principles set forth by the ILO Committee on Freedom of Association.
- The definition of essential services is those whose disruption could jeopardize the lives, well-being, or safety of a portion or the entire population.
- Examples of Services That Are Essential: Hospitals, power, water supply, telephone services, and air traffic control are among the industries that the committee lists as important services.
- Strike Restrictions: Generally speaking, workers providing these vital services are not allowed to go on strike.

Problems and Criticisms of ESMA

- Improper Use: The Act has come under fire for occasionally being applied in an imprudent and careless manner.
- Suppression of Democratic Rights: ESMA is perceived as consolidating authority and stifling

stakeholders' democratic rights, especially the freedom to demonstrate or go on strike.

- The dominant role of the government: Detractors claim that ESMA dangerously tilts the industrial relations landscape in favor of the government in the public sector.

Conclusion

- Discussion of ESMA's Role: The Essential Services Maintenance Act is still a hotly debated subject since it strikes a balance between the right of workers to strike and the necessity of continuous essential services.
- Requirement for Responsible Implementation: To preserve this equilibrium, ESMA must be applied responsibly and democratically.
- Continued Conversations: The Act keeps igniting discussions about the proper scope of governmental authority and the defense of workers' rights in vital industries.

Advisory issued against drug 'Meftal'



Pharma standard body Indian Pharmacopoeia Commission (IPC) has issued a drug safety alert for commonly used painkiller mefenamic acid, popularly sold under the brand name Meftal.

What is Meftal used for?

- Non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs, or NSAIDs, like Meftal 500 are typically used to address pains like headaches, menstrual discomfort, muscle, joint, or tooth pain.
- It is suggested that you take the table laden with food.

- The medication's most frequent adverse effects include headaches, dizziness, nausea, mild vomiting, and stomach pain.

What does the alert against Meftal say?

- IPC reported that drug responses associated with eosinophilia and systemic symptoms (DRESS) syndrome were found in an initial review of adverse drug reactions from the Pharmacovigilance Programme of India (PvPI) database.
- Medication-induced hypersensitivity syndrome, or DRESS for short, is a potentially fatal adverse medication reaction.
- Many organs could be harmed by it, particularly the heart, lungs, pancreas, and kidneys.
- The death rate is approximately 10%, which is a high rate.

What are Foreigners' Tribunals?



Since 1966, Foreigners Tribunals (FTs) in Assam have identified 32,381 people as foreigners.

Foreigners Tribunals in Assam

- Specialized Quasi-Judicial Bodies: FTs are Assamese-specific and responsible for assessing if an individual is in India illegally residing as a "foreigner."
- The context of the NRC in Assam: Guidelines for the identification, arrest, and deportation of undocumented foreign nationals have been established by the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) with reference to the National Register of Citizens (NRC) in Assam.
- Modification to the 1964 Foreigners (Tribunals) Order: This order has been revised by the MHA

to let district judges to create tribunals in all States and Union Territories.

- Change in Power: Before, the Central Government was the only entity with the ability to create these tribunals.

Need for Foreigners Tribunals

- Legal Procedure for Foreigners: In certain areas, individuals who are detained for an unauthorized stay are prosecuted under the Passport Act of 1920 or the Foreigners Act of 1946, which include jail time and possible deportation as punishments.
- Detention Facilities: Following their sentencing, the accused are housed in detention facilities until their home country grants them permission to return.

Recent Amendments and Their Implications

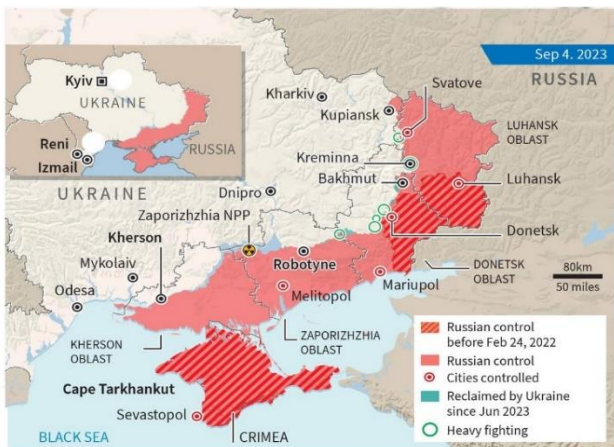
- Constitutional changes for Tribunals: Originally, the 1964 ruling only permitted the Central Government to send cases to the Tribunals.

District Collectors, District Magistrates, State Governments, and UT administrations are now able to do so thanks to the change.

- Empowerment of Individuals: The modified Foreigners (Tribunal) Order, 2019 removed the previous restriction that only the State could challenge a suspect and allowed anybody to seek Tribunals.
- Context of NRC: This amendment seeks to give individuals not on the list proper opportunities with the final NRC publication.
- Steps for Non-Listed Individuals: Those who are not included in the final NRC may file an application with the Tribunals. District Magistrates may also forward cases involving people who have not yet submitted a claim challenging their NRC exclusion.
- Issuance of New Summons: In order to establish their citizenship, these people will be sent new summonses.

International Relations

Is Russia winning the Ukraine War?



It has been six months since Ukraine launched its counteroffensive against Russian forces. Despite initial expectations, Ukraine has failed to achieve significant advancements on the battlefield. President Zelensky is actively touring Western capitals, including Washington, to secure ongoing military assistance.

Ukraine’s Counteroffensive: Progress and Challenges

- Initial Plan and Objectives: The counteroffensive was launched on three fronts with the intention of upending Russia's land bridge to Crimea and gaining territory in the east and south.
- Difficulties with Advancement: Ukrainian forces faced difficulties against Russia's strong fortifications, especially in the south, even with the assistance of Western friends and cutting-edge weapons and training.
- Setbacks and Losses: Minefields, electronic warfare, and a lack of air power impeded Ukrainian advances, resulting in heavy casualties and minimal frontline change.

Russia’s Current Position in the War

- Reconstruction and Defense-Building: Russia has strengthened its defensive positions and launched an offensive in some locations, like as Avdiivka, following its first withdrawals.
- Mobilization and Military Production: In response to Western sanctions and supply

issues, Russia has increased military production and recruited more troops.

- **Economic Stability Despite Sanctions:** By diversifying its energy trade, especially with China and India, Russia has been able to retain economic stability despite sanctions imposed by the West.

Waning Western Support for Ukraine

- **Change in the Position of the US and EU:** There are hints that the US and EU may be pressuring Ukraine to start negotiations with Russia.
- **Political and Financial Difficulties:** Republican resistance and dwindling popular support in the United States are impeding aid to Ukraine, perhaps having an impact on the 2024 presidential elections.
- **Uncertainty About Continued Aid:** If Ukraine doesn't make major military gains, there is uncertainty about the continuation of Western help.

Future Outlook: No End to the Conflict in Sight

- **Putin's Position on Peace Talks:** By concentrating on accomplishing Russia's goals, Russian President Vladimir Putin has shown no sense of urgency in the peace negotiations.
- **Ukraine's View on Negotiations:** At this time, Ukraine is also not considering engaging in negotiations.
- **Prospective Approaches and Obstacles Ahead:** As winter approaches, it is anticipated that frontline movements would temporarily cease, with both sides presumably getting ready for next offensives and counteroffensives.

Conclusion

- **Continued Reliance on Western Assistance:** Ukraine's chances of winning the war continue to be greatly dependent on ongoing military and financial assistance from the West.
- **Ukraine's Uncertain Future:** A complex and dynamic conflict landscape is put Ukraine in a vulnerable situation as a result of the ongoing

war, in addition to geopolitical and economic factors.

Iran announces Visa-free Travel for Indian Citizens



Iran has announced the removal of visa requirements for Indian citizens and nationals from 32 other countries. The decision is aimed at increasing tourism and improving global perceptions of Iran.

Iran's Visa-Free Travel Initiative

- Russia, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Kuwait, Lebanon, a number of Central Asian and African countries, Japan, Singapore, Southeast Asian countries, and a few Latin American and European countries are on the list.
- Iran had previously waived the need for visas for China, Turkey, Azerbaijan, Oman, Armenia, Lebanon, and Syria.
- **Figures on Tourist Inflow:** In the first eight months of the current Iranian year, 4.4 million tourists visited Iran, a 48.5% rise in visitor numbers.

Proposal for Wider Visa-Free Travel

- **Initial Proposal from the Ministry:** Although it wasn't entirely accepted, the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts suggested granting visas for travel to 60 nations.
- **Flights to Saudi Arabia for Umrah:** Iranians will be able to go to Saudi Arabia for Umrah starting on December 19, which will be the first time in eight years.

India's Growing Outbound Tourism Market

- Currently, 27 countries (Kenya, Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, and Sri Lanka are among the newest additions) allow Indian residents to enter without a visa.
- Top Travel Destinations for Indian Citizens: Many Indian diasporans travel to the United Arab Emirates, the United States, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, and Thailand, ranking first through fifth.

Maldives decides to end Hydrographic Survey Pact with India



The Maldives government has chosen not to renew a hydrographic survey agreement with India, marking a significant change in bilateral relations.

Hydrographic Survey Pact: A Background

- The purpose of hydrographic surveys is to chart bodies of water in order to enable effective and safe maritime transit.
- 2019 Consent: An agreement was inked in June 2019 by Prime Minister Modi to collaborate on hydrography between the Maldives National Defence Force (MNDF) and the Indian Navy.

Activities under the Pact

- Joint Hydrographic Surveys: INS Darshak and INS Sutlej, among other Indian Naval Ships, participated in three joint surveys that took place in 2021, 2022, and 2023.

- The surveys' objectives were to promote industries like tourism and fishing and to update nautical charts. They also included observing tide movements and locating new shoals.
- Assistance to MNDF: In keeping with its goal of aiding the Maldives in developing hydrographic skills, India furnished MNDF staff with hydrographic equipment and training.

India's Hydrographic Survey Agreements with Other Countries

- International Hydrographic Efforts: India has carried out hydrographic surveys in Bangladesh, Myanmar, and Sri Lanka, among other nations.
- International Cooperation: The potential for international hydrographic cooperation is emphasized by the National Hydrographic Office, particularly in areas with limited resources.

Reasons behind Maldives' Decision

- Change of Regime: Mohamed Muizzu, the Progressive Party of the Maldives (PPM) leader, was elected. His pro-China views are in contrast to those of his predecessor, President Solih, who was friendly with India.
- Geopolitical Dynamics: India's traditional area of influence in the Maldives has been impacted by China's growing influence in the Indian Ocean region, notably through the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI).
- "India Out" Initiative: This decision has been influenced by claims of an Indian military presence as well as the current administration's emphasis on national security and hydrographic self-reliance.

Possible outcomes

- Changing Geopolitical Landscape: China's increasing influence in the Indian Ocean is posing a challenge to India's long-standing dominance, as seen by the Maldives' choice.
- Effect on Maldives-India Relations: This would mean a reevaluation of the Maldives' foreign

policy, which could have an effect on India's strategic objectives in the area.

Why only 5 countries have Veto Power in UNSC?



UN Security Council

A recent UN resolution vote highlights the power of a few countries in world affairs, with 153 voting in favor and 10 voting against, including the USA's backing for Israel. The vote pattern highlights the veto rights that have been in place inside the UN Security Council (UNSC) for more than 70 years.

What is the Veto Power in the UNSC?

- **Exclusive Membership:** Ten non-permanent members and the United States, United Kingdom, France, Russia, and China make up the UNSC's five permanent members (P5).
- **Resolution Power:** UNSC resolutions have legal force behind them, in contrast to General Assembly resolutions.
- **Veto Mechanism:** A resolution can be vetoed by any P5 member, preventing its passage even if it has the necessary majority of votes.

Rationale behind Veto Power for Permanent Members

- **Post-World War II Context:** In acknowledgment of their contribution to the UN's formation, the

P5 were given exceptional rights, including the ability to veto legislation.

- **Strategic Necessity:** It was thought that the veto was essential to securing these powerful nations' involvement in international peacekeeping missions.

Formation and Evolution of the UN and Veto Power

- **Foundational Discussions:** At significant gatherings like the Yalta and Dumbarton Oaks Conferences, the framework for veto power was established.
- **Franklin D. Roosevelt's Influence:** At the center of the UN's post-war peacekeeping mission were the "Four Policemen"—the United States, the Soviet Union, the United Kingdom, and China.
- **USA's Diplomatic Efforts:** To obtain veto power in the UN Charter, the US used a variety of tactics, including information gathering.

Debate and Criticism of the Veto Power

- **Worldwide Discontent:** Many nations have taken issue with the veto power's exclusive character.
- **Opposition to Change:** The permanent members' strong interests have made attempts to alter veto rights or increase the P5 mainly fruitless.
- **Recognizing Changes:** In 1965, the number of non-permanent UNSC members increased in recognition of the evolving global landscape.
- **Agenda for reforms:** There are plans to impose term limits and lobbying, make all 15 seats transitory with five-year mandates, and promote open competition for seats.

Conclusion

- **Sustained Conversations:** Because of the complexity of world politics, the use of veto power in the UNSC is still a sensitive topic.
- **Getting Used to the New Era:** There might be increasing demand to change the UNSC's veto procedure and structure in order to better conform to the present international order as the political climate around the world changes.

Bab El-Mandeb: A Strategic Choke Point



Concerns regarding Hezbollah's involvement in the October confrontation between Israel and Hamas were aroused, but the attention turned when the Houthis in Yemen extended the fighting to the Red Sea. Hezbollah and Israel avoided a full-scale conflict despite their disagreements, with Israel focusing on Gaza.

Houthi Involvement and Shift in Tactics

- **First Moves:** The Houthis, who support Iran, used drones and intercepted missiles to attack Israel in a show of support for the Palestinian people.
- **Change in Strategy:** Subsequently, they turned their attention to assaulting Red Sea commercial ships, endangering international shipping lanes.

Understanding the Houthis

- **Background:** The Houthis, officially known as Ansar Allah, are a Shia militia group in Yemen that bears the names of their late leaders, Hussein and Badr al-Din al-Houthi.
- **Iranian backing:** They have substantial military capabilities, such as ballistic missiles and drones, and they receive direct backing from Iran.

Strategic Importance of Bab el-Mandeb Strait

- **Geographic Significance:** Bridging the Indian Ocean and the Gulf of Aden with the Red Sea, the

Strait of Bab el-Mandeb is a vital maritime chokepoint.

- **Effect on International Shipping:** Red Sea traffic has significantly decreased and shipping expenses have soared as a result of Houthi activity near the strait.

Global and Regional Consequences

- **Impact on Israel:** There has been a significant reduction in port traffic in the country's south, especially at Eilat.
- **broader commerce implications:** The strait is traversed by about 12% of the world's marine traffic. Any disturbances in this area could intensify global inflationary pressures.
- **Other Routes:** Shipping firms are rerouting their ships around Africa, which adds a great deal of time and expense to the journey.

International Response

- **US Naval Task Force:** To combat the Houthi menace, the US has formed a naval force.
- **Arab World's Position:** A number of Red Sea nations, such as Egypt, have expressed dissatisfaction with American policies by declining to join the task force.
- **Possible Offensive Measures:** In reaction to ongoing attacks on maritime lines, the United States has not ruled out bombing Houthi targets.

Conclusion

- **Houthi Threat Persists:** The Houthis promise to keep up their activities as long as Israel and Gaza are at odds.
- **Challenges to Global Trade:** The state of affairs highlights the vulnerability of international maritime routes and the possibility of significant economic fallout from regional wars.
- **Need for Diplomatic Solutions:** In order to ease regional tensions and safeguard crucial marine commerce routes, diplomatic measures are crucial, as this complex scenario makes clear.

Polity

Expulsion of MP from Lok Sabha

Ethics panel report: What ministries said

As the Lok Sabha Ethics Committee advocated the expulsion of **TMC MP Mahua Moitra**, a look at how different ministries contributed to the investigation.

MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS

Use of login details abroad

The member portal of Moitra has been 'operated 47 times from UAE' between July 2019 and April 2023

Security threat

- Darshan Hiranandani is an Indian national with residency rights in UAE and has foreign nationals as relatives, posing a 'serious risk of leakage of sensitive material to foreign agencies'
- Transfer of login credentials to unauthorised elements could 'impact national security' through 'fake documents and false narratives'



MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

Authenticity of Darshan Hiranandani's affidavit

- Hiranandani's affidavit has been examined at the Consulate General of India in Dubai, which affirmed its authenticity
- He signed the affidavit in the presence of Vice Consul Urmil Asiwai, whose seal and signature are found to be genuine

MINISTRY OF ELECTRONICS AND IT

Details of the logins abroad

- The ministry has provided information regarding the place/venue, date, time and IP address from where LS login credentials of Moitra were operated for raising parliamentary questions between 2019 and 2023

regulations that forbade the use of electronic devices for protesting, the destruction of documents, the posting of posters, and the yelling of slogans.

- Similar Rules of the Rajya Sabha: Similar norms are in place for the Rajya Sabha and Lok Sabha to guarantee efficient operation of the legislature.

Power of Suspension in Parliament

- Authority of the Presiding Officer: If an MP becomes disorderly in the chamber, the Presiding Officer of each House has the authority to order their withdrawal, making them absent for the remainder of the day.
- Naming and Suspension Procedure: The presiding officer may "name" members of the House who are impeding proceedings, which may result in a move for suspension by the Minister of Parliamentary Affairs.
- Suspensions may continue until the conclusion of the session.

Legal Recourse: Approaching the Supreme Court

- Option for Judicial Review: According to former Lok Sabha Secretary General P D T Achary, the expelled MP may choose to appeal the expulsion in the Supreme Court.
- Constitutional Provisions: Parliamentary proceedings are shielded from judicial scrutiny due to procedural irregularities under Article 122 of the Constitution.
- Judicial Review's Scope: In spite of this exemption, the Supreme Court made it clear in the Raja Ram Pal case of 2007 that judicial review is permissible in situations of serious or substantive illegality.

The Raja Ram Pal Case (2007)

- Background of the Case: In the 2005 cash-for-query scandal, 12 MPs were ousted, including BSP leader Raja Ram Pal.
- The Supreme Court's View: The Court maintained the expulsion but pointed out that

Expulsion of Mahua Moitra

- A West Bengal lawmaker was dismissed from the Lok Sabha because to accusations of a cash-for-query scam.
- Her removal serves as a reminder of how crucial it is to uphold high moral standards and proper parliamentary behavior throughout legislative sessions.

Parliamentary Etiquette and Rules

- MPs are expected to conduct themselves in accordance with the rules of parliamentary etiquette, which include refraining from interjecting during speeches, keeping quiet, and not getting in the way of discussions.
- Revisions to the Rules for Contemporary Protests: In 1989, the House adopted new

serious illegality taints processes and makes them subject to judicial review.

- Judicial Evaluation of Legislative Actions: The Court upheld its jurisdiction to examine legislative measures that violate basic rights.

Article 105 of the Constitution

- Parliamentary Privileges and Powers: Article 105 addresses the immunities, privileges, and powers of the Parliament and its Members.
- Judicial Scrutiny of Privilege Enforcement: The Court acknowledged that, within specific constitutional bounds, judicial review may be applied to the legislature's enforcement of privilege.

Grounds for Challenging Expulsion

- Privilege and Process Examination: The court has the authority to carefully consider whether the expulsion-citing privilege was valid and whether the correct procedures were carried out.
- Committee Functions: The Ethics Committee and the Privileges Committee have different responsibilities, with the former looking into misbehavior and the latter maintaining decorum in the House.
- Investigative Procedures: Fairness and the pursuit of the truth depend on using appropriate investigative techniques, which include the ability to cross-examine and depose.

Determining Offense and Punishment

- Article 20 of the Constitution states that an offense must be defined by an existing law in order to be punished.
- Case-Specific Issues: In the instance of the expelled MP, rules are checked for infractions pertaining to sharing Parliament login credentials and receiving payment in exchange for inquiries.
- Breach of Privilege and Inquiry: Taking payment in exchange for asking questions in parliament is a violation of privilege that calls for a Privileges Committee investigation.

Conclusion

- Persistent Discussion and Consequences: The case keeps bringing up questions about the boundaries of parliamentary privilege, the function of the courts, and the moral obligations placed on elected officials.
- Maintaining a difficult balance between parliamentary authority and member rights is shown by the expulsion case.
- Importance of Judicial scrutiny: The possibility of judicial review highlights how crucial legal scrutiny is to upholding democratic values and procedural justice in the legislative branch.

Who is a J&K Resident?



Discussions in Parliament, the Supreme Court, and among civilians have revolved around the rights and interests of the people of Jammu and Kashmir. The J&K Reservation (Amendment) Bill, 2023 and the J&K Reorganisation (Amendment) Bill, 2023 were discussed by the Union Home Minister, who emphasized the benefits of the bills for women, migrant Kashmiris, and other groups who had been denied rights for 70 years.

Defining J&K Subjects and Residents

- Origins: The concept of “state subjects” and “permanent residents” in J&K originated during the rule of the Dogra dynasty.

1927: Maharaja Hari Singh’s State Subject Classification

- Government Order No. I-L/84: Issued on April 20, 1927, by Maharaja Hari Singh, this order divided inhabitants into four classes.
 1. Class I: Those who lived in J&K prior to the reign of Maharaja Gulab Singh (1846) and those who settled there before to 1885 were included.
 2. Class II: People covered who moved to J&K and bought real estate before to 1911.
 3. Class III: consists of long-term inhabitants who have property that was obtained through particular exemptions.
 4. Class IV: Those companies that were registered in the state and had a financial or government stake were included
- Privileges and Rights: The order prioritized Class I over others in scholarships, land grants, and state service recruitment.

1932: State Subjects Abroad and Foreign Nationals

- Order No. 13L/1989: Hari Singh issued this order on June 27, 1932, addressing the status of foreign nationals residing in J&K and state subjects of J&K who were living abroad.
- Provisions for Emigrants: J&K emigrants were granted some internal rights, but they were also regarded as state subjects for up to two generations of their ancestors.
- Foreign nationals: After purchasing a property and residing continuously for ten years, they are eligible to obtain state nationality at the age of eighteen.

1956: J&K’s Separate Constitution

- Adoption of the Constitution: The Constituent Assembly of J&K established a distinct constitution on November 17, 1956, which

redefined state subjects as “permanent residents.”

- Criteria for Permanent Residency: included particular residency or property requirements, as well as Indian citizenship as of May 14, 1954. There were also provisions for Class I/II subjects who went to Pakistan and came back.

1980-1982: J&K Resettlement Bill

- Laws enacted during Sheikh Abdullah's administration: the 1982 J&K Resettlement Bill permitted the permanent return of a number of migrants.
- Supreme Court Intervention: Prof. Bhim Singh was able to secure a stay order from the Supreme Court, which caused the implementation to be stopped.

2003-04: High Court Ruling and Subsequent Legislative Actions

- 2003 saw a ruling by the High Court holding that women who marry non-permanent residents retain their status as permanent residents.
- Legislative Response: In 2004, the PDP-Congress administration enacted a bill that disqualified these women. The NC first backed the bill, but the Congress later opposed it in the Legislative Council, preventing it from passing.

Post-2019: Changes in Domicile Status

- Amendment to Article 370 and J&K Bifurcation: After Article 370 was amended and the country was divided into two Union Territories, the central authority reinterpreted “permanent residents” as “domiciles.”
- The term “New Domicile Definition” refers to those who have lived in J&K for 15 years, completed seven years of schooling, passed Class 10 or 12 examinations, are registered migrants and their offspring, and are the offspring of central government officials who have worked in the region for 10 years.

Science, Technology, Art & Culture

What is Kalbeliya Dance?



Recently, at the Rajasthan International Folk Festival, performers showcased the Kalbeliya dance.

What is Kalbeliya Dance?

- Rajasthan is the birthplace of the traditional Indian dance style known as Kalbeliya Dance.
- Members of the Kalbeliya, a nomadic clan of snake charmers in Rajasthan, perform this colorful, vivacious dance.
- With their complex footwork and flowing arms and bodies, the dancers create a really sensual dance.
- The Rajasthani Kalbelia traditional songs and dances were added to UNESCO's Intangible Cultural Heritage List in 2010.

Performance details

- The dancers are females dressed in voluminous black skirts who spin and dance like serpents.
- They cover their heads with an odhani and cover their upper bodies with an angrakhi; their lower body is covered with a lehenga.
- These garments are all embroidered and come in a variety of red and black colors.

- To generate the rhythm on which the dancers perform, the male participants play musical instruments like the "pungi," the dufli, the been, the khanjari, a percussion instrument, the morchang, the khuralio, and the dholak.
- The dancers have traditional tattoos on their bodies and adorn jewelry and clothing that is intricately woven with tiny mirrors and silver threads.
- The dancing moves quicker and faster as the show goes on, matching the rhythm.

Features of the Kalbeliya Dance

- Quick footwork: The Kalbeliya dance's precise, quick footwork is its most notable feature. The dancers create complex patterns on the floor with rapid, precise foot motions.
- Skirts that swirl: The female dancers' vibrant skirts contribute to the dance's beauty as they glide in a graceful manner.
- Hand and arm motions: The dancers make beautiful, flowing motions that are essential to the dance with their hands and arms.
- Singing: To enhance the performance's atmosphere, Kalbeliya dancers frequently sing along to the music while they dance.
- Cymbals and drums: The lively, energetic ambiance of traditional Kalbeliya music is enhanced by the accompaniment of drums and cymbals.

India set to launch its first X-Ray Polarimeter Satellite (XPoSat)



The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) has announced its ambitious project, the X-Ray Polarimeter Satellite (XPoSat), marking India's first foray into X-ray polarization studies in space.

About XPoSat Mission

- Specifics of the Orbit: XPoSat will fly in a Low Earth Orbit at a height of roughly 650 kilometers and a low inclination of about 6 degrees.
- Two scientific payloads on board the satellite allow for in-depth analyses of X-ray sources, including their temporal, spectral, and polarization properties.
- The principal goals of XPoSat are to measure X-ray polarization in the 8-30 keV energy region and carry out long-term research in the 0.8-15 keV area.
- Mission Lifespan: It is anticipated that the satellite will be in operation for about five years.
- Observation Strategy: In order to maximize efficiency, XPoSat observations will mostly take place during the Earth's eclipse phase.

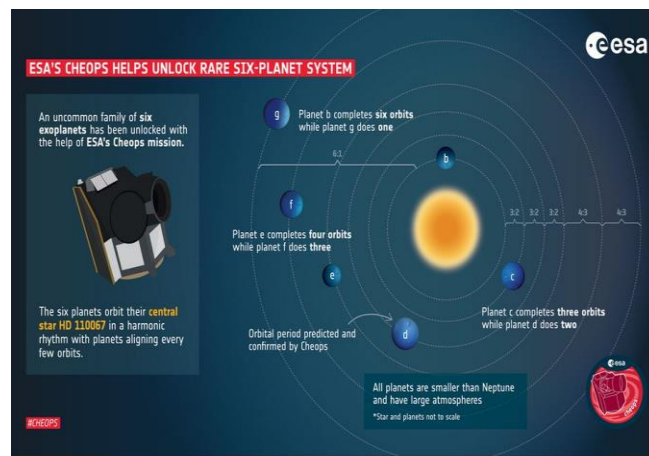
Payloads aboard XPoSat

- POLIX - Primary Payload: Designed to measure the degree and angle of polarization in medium X-ray energy levels, the Polarimeter Instrument in X-rays (POLIX) was created by Bengaluru's Raman Research Institute (RRI) in cooperation with ISRO.
- XSPECT - Secondary Payload: Developed by ISRO's U.R. Rao Satellite Centre (URSC), the X-ray Spectroscopy and Timing (XSPECT) payload will collect spectroscopic data in the 0.8–15 keV range.

Significance of XPoSat

- The orientation of light waves is referred to as polarization. One type of electromagnetic radiation that can also be polarized is X-rays.
- Investigating it from cosmic sources yields important insights into the physical properties and processes that take place in harsh environments, like those around black holes, neutron stars, and supernova remnants.

Six Exoplanets found in the Coma Berenices Constellation



Six exoplanets have been discovered orbiting HD 110067, a bright star in the Coma Berenices constellation, approximately 100 light-years away. The planets' radii range between that of Earth and Neptune, classifying them as 'sub-Neptunes'.

About Sub-Neptune Exoplanets

- Prevalence: Nearly half of all Sun-like stars have close-in orbits including Sub-Neptunes.
- Mysteries: These planets are common, but nothing is known about their makeup, formation, or history.

Observational Details

- TESS Observations: In 2020 and 2022, NASA's Transiting Exoplanet Survey Satellite (TESS) noticed decreases in the brightness of HD 110067.
- Contribution of CHEOPS: Extra observations obtained with the Characterising EXOPlanets Satellite (CHEOPS) enabled the confirmation of six planets transiting around the star.
- Orbital Calculations: The study computed the orbits of all six planets, with the outermost planet taking roughly 54 days to orbit, and the innermost planet taking roughly nine days.

Characteristics of the Planets

- Estimates of mass and density indicate that there may be substantial, hydrogen-rich atmospheres on the planets due to their very low densities.

- All six planets are in resonant orbits, which suggests that their gravitational interactions are regular.
- Age of the System: Based on the resonant orbits, it appears that the system has not changed much since it formed, which is thought to have happened at least four billion years ago.

HD 110067's Uniqueness

- : The brightest star that is known to contain more than four transiting exoplanets is HD 110067.
- Possibility of More Findings: Although no such observations have been made to yet, it is possible that there are more planets within or outside of the star's temperate zone.
- Possibility for Learning: The HD 110067 system offers a singular chance to investigate sub-Neptunes and comprehend the formation and evolution of such planetary systems.

What is Vo5G (Voice over 5G)?



VoLTE (Voice over Long-Term Evolution) networks were introduced in India in 2016, resulting in a notable improvement in call quality over 3G and 2G networks. The introduction of 5G in India has raised expectations for Vo5G, or Voice over 5G, a new calling standard that has already been implemented in a number of nations.

What is Vo5G?

- Definition: Voice over New Radio (VoNR), or Vo5G, is the next generation of voice calling that sends voice messages over 5G networks.

- Benefits: It uses 5G's speed, capacity, and reactivity to improve the quality of voice calls.
- Global Trend: Although Vo5G is starting to catch on, its uptake in nations like India is still in its infancy.

VoNR vs. VoLTE: The Advancements

- Call Quality: Due to 5G's increased bandwidth, VoNR provides better call quality with cutting-edge audio codecs.
- Connection Time: Faster call connections with VoNR are guaranteed by 5G's lower network latency.
- Reliability: VoNR claims to improve call continuity and minimize packet loss, which may lessen voice cut-outs.
- Network Transition: VoNR seeks to do away with call dropouts that occur when VoLTE calls go from 5G to 4G.

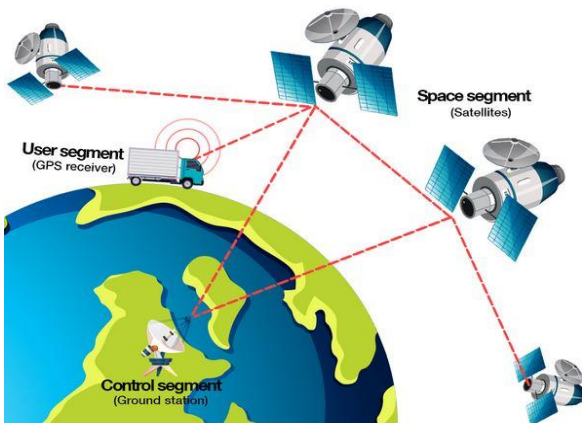
Requirements for Vo5G

- Compatibility Device: Vo5G-capable phones, which are generally offered in models with 5G capabilities introduced after 2022, are required for users.
- Carrier Support: Vo5G calling plans and a network operator offering Vo5G services are a must-have combination.
- 5G Coverage: Being in an area with 5G network coverage is necessary for using Vo5G effectively.

VoNR in India

- Availability: Despite the continuing 5G rollout in key cities, VoNR is not currently available in India.
- Carrier Testing: VoNR is apparently being tested by top carriers, including Reliance, to provide a smooth transition to current 4G and 5G networks.
- Timeline: It's unclear exactly when VoNR will be widely accessible in India.

How does GPS work?



GPS has revolutionized various sectors, including military, scientific research, urban planning, and disaster management.

Global Positioning System (GPS): Structure and Components

- **Origins:** The first GPS satellite was launched in 1978, but the program was started by the US Department of Defense in 1973.
- 24 satellites in six orbits make up the satellite constellation, which ensures worldwide coverage by having each satellite complete two orbits per day.
- The space segment (satellites), the control segment (antennae and ground-based control stations), and the user segment (applications across diverse industries) are the three main segments.

Control Segment and Standards

- **Global Network:** Consists of ground antennae located all over the world as well as master control stations located in Colorado and California.
- The Standard Positioning Service (SPS) establishes GPS performance standards to guarantee accuracy and dependability.

GPS Functionality

- Satellites transmit signals that carry information about their location, condition, and time.
- **Signal encoding:** For both military and civilian applications, code-division multiple access is used using two encoding variants.

- GPS receivers use the signal travel time to determine the distance to satellites.
- **Accuracy Adjustments:** To guarantee accurate measurements, relativistic influences are taken into account.

Timekeeping in GPS

- Precision is important since GPS relies on precise timekeeping, which is synchronized with atomic clocks.
- **Atomic Clock Function:** This method of precisely measuring time makes use of the constant energy levels of electrons in atoms.

Other such services

- **International Cooperation:** The GPS system in the United States works together with other GNSS that are run by different nations.
- **Other GNSS:** These include China's BeiDou, the EU's Galileo, Russia's GLONASS, and others.
- Under the auspices of the UN Office of Outer Space Affairs, the International Committee on GNSS fosters collaboration.
- **NavIC:** India's seven-satellite regional navigation system, which largely covers India and its surroundings and uses the Rubidium Clock.
- **GAGAN:** Created for GPS corrections and aviation applications by ISRO and the Airports Authority of India.

Garba makes it to UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage list



Garba, a traditional dance form from Gujarat, was included in the UNESCO list of Intangible Cultural Heritage. This recognition makes Garba the 15th cultural item from India to be featured on the UNESCO list,

following Kolkata's Durga Puja, which was added two years ago.

About Garba

- What's that? Traditionally performed during the Navratri festival to honor the Hindu goddess Durga, garba is a dance form from Gujarat, India.
- Origins and Significance: "Deep" (lamp) and "Garbha" (womb) are the sources of the term "Garba." The dance is done around a center lamp or a goddess figure that stands for rebirth, death, and life.
- Garba is an explosive dance style that reflects the cyclical aspect of life with its circular moves, clapping hands, and precise footwork.
- Music and Instruments: Traditionally, the dhol (drum), harmonium, and flute are used to accompany the dance; more recently, electronic instruments have also been incorporated.
- Traditional Clothing: Men and women dress in kediya and dhoti, or pajamas, which are frequently embroidered and adorned with mirrors. Women wear chaniya choli, a vibrant skirt combination.
- Dandiya Raas: Dandiya Raas is a stick dance that is performed after Garba, particularly after the Aarti (worship ceremony).
- Community Aspect & Inclusivity: The dance emphasizes community involvement and is inclusive, drawing participants of all ages and backgrounds.

About UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH)

- ICH refers to the behaviors, representations, expressions, knowledge, and abilities that communities, organizations, and occasionally even individuals acknowledge as a part of their cultural heritage. It also includes the tools, materials, artifacts, and cultural spaces that are linked with these behaviors.
- Moreover, the amount of information, expertise, and abilities that are passed down from one generation to the next is what gives it

significance rather than the cultural manifestation itself.

- An important step in the preservation of intangible cultural heritage was the General Conference of UNESCO's 2003 adoption of the Convention for the Safeguarding of the ICH.
- The Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity list was created by UNESCO in 2008.

Criteria for the selection

- There are three criteria for an intangible cultural heritage to be inscribed in the United Nations list.
- The entity must-
 1. Be passed down from generation to generation and continuously recreated by communities and groups in response to their surroundings, their interactions with nature, and their history.
 2. This gives them a sense of continuity and identity and fosters respect for cultural diversity and human creativity.
 3. Be acknowledged by communities, groups, and, in some cases, individuals as part of their cultural heritage.

India's ICH on the UNESCO list

- The nodal organization for this task is Sangeet Natak Akademi, which also submits nominations of Indian intangible cultural entities for assessment by the global body.
- India's ICH include the Durga Puja in Kolkata (2021), the Kumbh Mela (2017), Navroz (2016), Yoga (2016), the traditional art of manufacturing brass and copper utensils by Punjabi coppersmiths (2014), Sankirtana, a Manipur (2013) ritual musical performance, and the Buddhist chanting of Ladakh (2012).
- Prior to 2011, the list featured Vedic chanting (2008), Kutiyattam, or Sanskrit theater, and Vedic songs; Chhau dance; Rajasthani folk songs and dance; Mudi yettu, a dance drama from Kerala (2010); and Ramman, a religious festival and theater performance of Garhwal in the Himalayas (2009).

- In 2008, there was also a traditional Ramayana performance called Ramlila.

Google unveils 'Gemini AI Model'



Google has introduced Gemini, a new multimodal general AI model, available globally through Bard. It is seen as Google's response to ChatGPT, offering advanced capabilities in the realm of GenAI.

What is Google Gemini?

- Gemini is able to process and function with multiple formats, such as text, code, audio, image, and video, in contrast to ChatGPT.
- According to Google, Gemini Ultra is the first model to outperform human experts in massive multitask language understanding (MMLU) and beats existing models in academic benchmarks.

Different versions available

- **Three Variants:** Gemini comes in three sizes – Ultra, Pro, and Nano – each designed for specific levels of complexity and tasks.
1. Gemini Ultra: Currently in trial with a small number of users, this system is designed for extremely difficult jobs.
 2. Gemini Pro: Provides sophisticated comprehension and reasoning and is available in Bard for general users. Developers can use Gemini Pro with Google Cloud Vertex AI or Google AI Studio.
 3. Concentrated on on-device activities, Gemini Nano is already a part of Pixel 8 Pro and will be made available to Android developers via AICore in Android 14 soon.

Comparing Gemini and ChatGPT 4

- Flexibility and Capabilities: Gemini seems more adaptable than GPT4, particularly in light of its offline capabilities and video processing.
- Cost and Accessibility: Gemini is now free to use, which may increase its user base compared to ChatGPT4, which is a paid service.

Global Partnership on Artificial Intelligence (GPAI) Summit



The Prime Minister officially opened the Global Partnership on Artificial Intelligence (GPAI) Summit on December 12 in New Delhi. India is attempting to come to an agreement with the other 28 members on a proclamation that will center on democratizing AI, defining its boundaries, and ensuring that it is used responsibly.

GPAI and India

- **Founding Member:** With the goal of bridging the gap between AI theory and practice, India became a founding member of GPAI in June 2020.
- **International Cooperation:** The program promotes cooperation between scientists, businesspeople, government officials, members of civil society, and institutions of higher learning worldwide.
- **Past Summits:** Montreal, Paris, and Tokyo hosted previous GPAI summits.
- **India's Position:** Building on the Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI) strategy employed in the Aadhaar and UPI systems, the IT Minister emphasized India's emphasis on collaborative AI and sustainable agriculture.

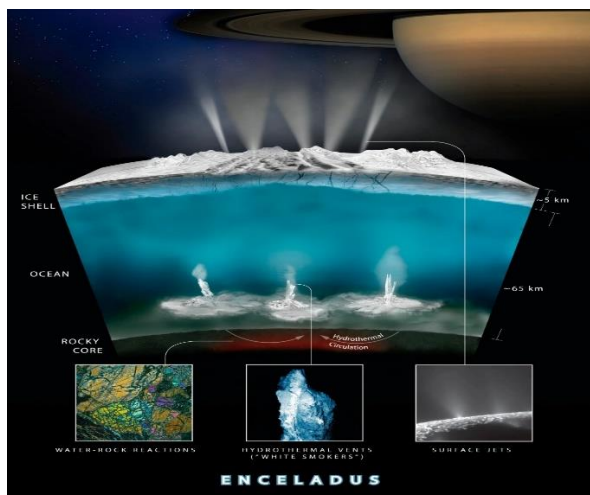
Content of the Proposed Declaration

- **Themes and Focus:** It is anticipated that the declaration will address the use of AI to climate action, resilient society development, healthcare, and sustainable agriculture.
- **Regulatory Aspects:** It will conform to international consensus and previous agreements about AI regulation.
- **India's Contribution:** India is focusing on encouraging collaborative AI and assessing AI in sustainable agriculture.

Global Conversation on AI Regulation

- The European Union enacted the AI Act, which established procedures for reporting infractions and provided protections and guidelines for the application of AI, particularly in law enforcement. It places severe limitations on AI's ability to control human behavior and facial recognition.
- Major nations came to an agreement at the UK's AI Safety Summit on a worldwide action plan to address the risks associated with AI, including the perils of misuse, cybersecurity concerns, biotechnology, and disinformation issues.
- US Executive Order: To protect against AI risks and manage safety standards for generative AI bots such as ChatGPT and Google Bard, the Biden Administration issued an order.

Cassini Data reveals organic molecules in Enceladus's Plume



A re-analysis of data from the Cassini mission has revealed a complex mix of molecules in the gaseous plumes of Saturn's moon Enceladus.

About Cassini Mission

	Details
Launch Date	October 15, 1997
Mission Agencies	NASA, European Space Agency (ESA), Italian Space Agency (ASI)
Primary Focus	Study of Saturn, its rings, moons, and magnetosphere
Key Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Study Saturn's atmosphere – Investigate Saturn's rings – Detailed studies of Saturn's moons – Explore Saturn's magnetosphere
Major Achievements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Successful landing of the Huygens probe on Titan – Discovery of geysers on Enceladus – Identification of new moons – Detailed analysis of Saturn's rings
Enceladus Discoveries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Detection of water-ice geysers erupting from the south pole – Indications of a subsurface ocean – Analysis of organic compounds in the plumes
Significant Milestones	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Jupiter Flyby: December 2000 – Saturn Orbit Insertion: July 1, 2004 – Huygens Titan Landing: January 2005
Mission Duration	1997-2017 (including extended missions)

Discovery of Plumes and Initial Analysis

- The Cassini mission made its first discovery in 2005 when it noticed huge plumes escaping from the southern hemisphere of Enceladus.

- **Origin of Plumes:** It is thought that the plumes come from cracks in the frozen surface of the moon, which lead to an ocean beneath the surface.
- **Preliminary Molecular Results:** Previous examinations revealed that the plume samples contained molecular hydrogen, water, carbon dioxide, methane, and ammonia.

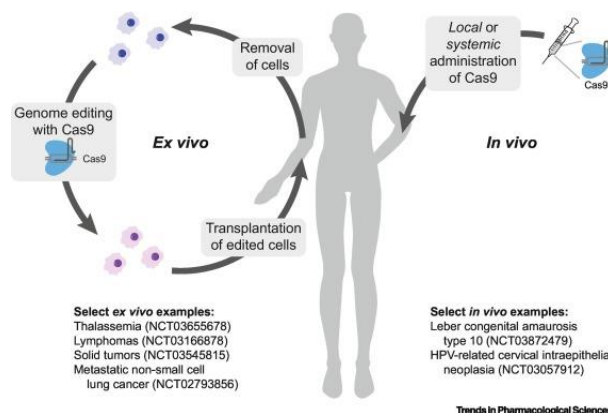
Re-examination of Cassini Data

- **Jonah Peter**, from the California Institute of Technology in Pasadena, California, is in charge of the research team.
- **Methodology:** Using a large library of known mass spectra as a guide, the team reexamined the data using a statistical analytic technique.
- **Recently Discovered Molecules:** Hydrocarbons such as hydrogen cyanide (HCN), acetylene (C₂H₂), propylene (C₃H₆), and ethane (C₂H₆) were found, along with methanol and molecular oxygen, according to the analysis.

Significant Discovery of Nitrogen

- **Definite Presence of Nitrogen:** The investigation resolved prior doubts resulting from overlapping signals in mass spectrometry data by confirming the presence of nitrogen in the form of HCN.
- **Possibility of Habitability:** Enceladus may have circumstances consistent with a habitable environment due to the variety of chemicals found beneath its surface.
- **Support for Microbial Life:** These substances may be able to sustain complicated organic synthesis or microbial populations in conjunction with mineralogical catalysts and redox gradients.
- **Warning on Life Support:** The concentration of these substances in Enceladus's subterranean ocean determines whether or not they can sustain life.

CRISPR-Based Therapies: A New Era in Genetic Disease Treatment



Why in news?

- **Revolutionary Development:** The U.K. and the U.S. have approved CRISPR-based medicines for β -thalassemia and sickle-cell disease, marking a major milestone in the medical field.
- **Global Impact:** Millions of people who suffer from these genetic blood illnesses could have their lives completely changed by these developments.

CRISPR Technology: From Discovery to Application

- **Origins:** CRISPR (Clustered Regularly Interspaced Short Palindromic Repeats) elements were first identified in archaea in 1993. Later research revealed that these elements formed an antiviral defense system in bacteria that have Cas (CRISPR-associated) proteins.
- **Innovation that Won the Nobel Prize:** Emmanuelle Charpentier and Jennifer Doudna won the 2020 Nobel Prize in Chemistry for their work developing CRISPR-Cas9 as a "molecular scissor."
- **Eukaryotic Genome Editing:** Later studies proved that CRISPR-Cas9 can modify the genomes of eukaryotic organisms, opening the door to a number of uses in agriculture and genetic therapy.

CRISPR in Medicine: Recent Approvals and Applications

- **CRISPR-Based Therapy for Blood Disorders:** "Casgevy" was approved by the FDA and the MHRA in the United States to treat transfusion-dependent β -thalassemia and sickle-cell disease, respectively.

- **Treatment Mechanism:** In order to treat sickling, a patient's blood stem cells are modified to fix the genetic flaw that is causing it, and then they are regenerated to create healthy red blood cells.
- **Historical Context:** With this approval, the description of sickle-cell disease as a molecular illness made 74 years ago by Linus Carl Pauling comes full circle.

Emerging CRISPR Technologies and Approaches

- **Base-editing:** This method enables single-nucleotide genome editing.
- **Prime Editing:** A more recent technique for precise genome alterations based on a search-and-replace approach.
- **Epigenetic Modifications:** To target epigenetic effects, CRISPR methods are also being developed.

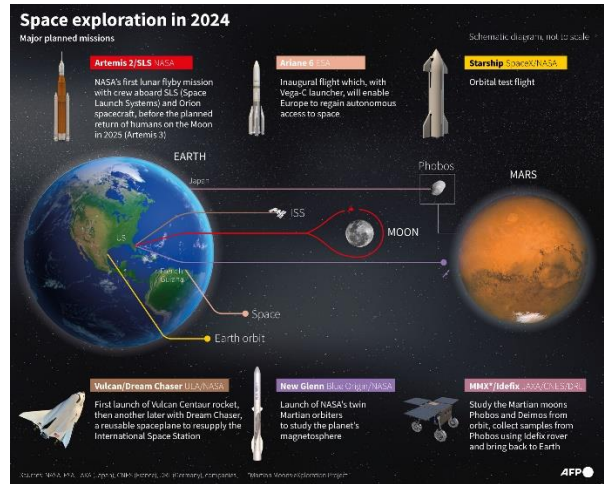
Challenges and Future Prospects

- **Questions about Safety and Accuracy:** There are a lot of problems, such as off-target events, where CRISPR-Cas9 changes portions of the genome that are not intended.
- **Weighing Risks and Benefits:** Although these technologies have a lot of promise, it is important to consider both the short- and long-term benefits of each technology.
- **Research and Monitoring Always:** It takes constant observation to find any previously unidentified negative effects.

Conclusion

- **Honoring Progress:** For the millions of people afflicted with hereditary illnesses, the approval of treatments like Casgevy marks the beginning of a new era.
- **Positive Prognosis:** The development of CRISPR technology points to a bright future for genetic therapy and illness treatment.

Space Exploration in 2024: Key Missions and Scientific Endeavors



The year 2024 is set to be a landmark year in space exploration, following significant achievements in 2023, including NASA's OSIRIS-REx and India's Chandrayaan-3 missions.

Upcoming Missions

- The year will feature several key missions under NASA's Artemis plan and Commercial Lunar Payload Services, along with other international endeavors.

[1] Europa Clipper Mission

- **Goal:** NASA's Europa Clipper will investigate Europa, the moon of Jupiter, which is thought to have an ocean of saltwater beneath its surface and an icy surface.
- **Significance:** By examining Europa's icy shell, geology, and ocean, the mission seeks to determine whether the planet is habitable for extraterrestrial life.
- **Launch Specifics:** slated for a SpaceX Falcon Heavy rocket launch on October 10, 2024, with a 2030 arrival time at Jupiter.

[2] Artemis II Mission

- **Program Objectives:** Included in NASA's Artemis program, which aims to bring people back to the Moon, are strategies for a long-term stay there as well as upcoming trips to Mars.
- **Mission Specifics:** Artemis II, scheduled for November 2024, will be the first crewed mission to orbit the Moon since 1972, having come after the unmanned Artemis I.

[3] VIPER Lunar Mission

- **Mission Overview:** The mission of the Volatiles Investigating Polar Exploration Rover, or VIPER, is to search for volatiles such as carbon dioxide and water on the Moon's south pole.
- **Technology and Timetable:** Launched in November 2024, VIPER is designed to withstand the intense heat of the moon and will provide supplies for upcoming human exploration.

[4] Lunar Trailblazer and PRIME-1 Missions

- **NASA's Small, Innovative projects for Planetary Exploration (SIMPLEx)** program includes these projects, which provide affordable ridesharing options.
- **Goals:** In mid-2024, Lunar Trailblazer will map the Moon's water spots via orbit, while PRIME-1 will test drilling technologies.

[5] JAXA's Martian Moon eXploration (MMX) Mission

- **Mission Focus:** The goal of JAXA's MMX mission is to investigate Mars' moons, Deimos and Phobos, in order to ascertain their origin.
- **Science Operations:** The spacecraft is scheduled to launch in September 2024 and carry out a three-year mission that includes landing on Phobos and returning a sample to Earth.

[6] ESA's Hera Mission

- **Mission Purpose:** After the kinetic impact of NASA's DART mission in 2022, the European Space Agency's Hera mission will investigate the Didymos-Dimorphos asteroid system.
- **Planetary Defense:** Hera's launch is scheduled for October 2024, and its mission will evaluate the effects of DART's collision and investigate the physical characteristics of asteroids.

Security Issues

Exercise MILAN



Scheduled for February 2024, Exercise MILAN is set to be India's largest multilateral naval exercise, with over 50 countries expected to participate.

Exercise MILAN

- **Origin:** Initiated every two years at the Andaman and Nicobar Command by the Indian Navy in 1995.
- **Initial Participation:** Started in 1995 with four nations: Singapore, Thailand, Sri Lanka, and Indonesia.
- **Growth over Years:** Both the number of participants and the complexity of the activities have increased greatly for this exercise.

- **Expansion with Policies:** Under the SAGAR program and India's "Act East policy," expansion has taken place.
- **Enhanced Coverage:** Currently encompasses island countries in the Western Indian Ocean Region (WIO) as well as IEO littoral states.

Significance of Exercise MILAN

- **Showcasing Naval Strength:** The Indian Navy's increasing involvement and capabilities to support as a first responder and Preferred Security Partner in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR) is demonstrated by this exercise.
- **Enhanced Operational Reach:** India's dedication to solid defense partnerships is demonstrated by the Indian Navy's growing presence and operational reach through Mission Based Deployments and other engagements.
- **The significance of naval drills** These exercises, which take place every year in 17 multilateral and 20 bilateral formats, are essential for improving operational capabilities, fostering interoperability, and fortifying diplomatic and maritime security relationships.

Exercise VINBAX 2023



The Indian Armed Forces contingent, consisting of 45 personnel, has arrived in Hanoi, Vietnam, to participate in the fourth edition of the Joint Military Exercise VINBAX-2023.

Exercise VINBAX-2023

- Origins: VINBAX was founded in 2018, and the first edition took place in Jabalpur, Madhya Pradesh, India.
- Annual Event: Every year, Vietnam and India alternate hosting this training session. In August 2022, Chandimandir Military Station hosted the most recent edition.
- Collaborative Partnership: The goal of the exercise is to encourage interoperability and collaborative partnerships between the two countries.
- Pay attention to peacekeeping It is in accordance with United Nations Charter Chapter VII on Peacekeeping Operations.
- Training Emphasis: Using an Engineer Company and a Medical Team in a Command Post Exercise/Field Training Exercise style is the main focus of the training.

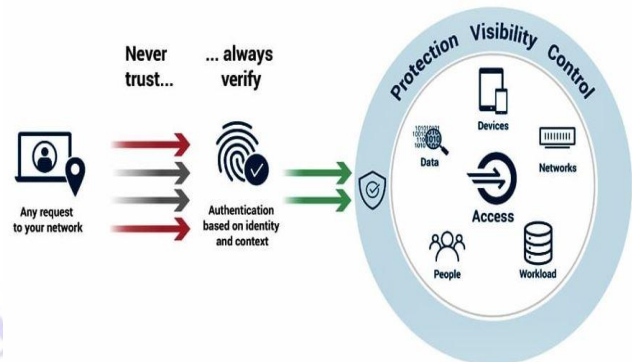
Activities and Training Modules

- Tactical Exchange: The exercise will make it easier for the contingents to share strategies, methods, and practices.
- Drills in Engineering and Medicine: Participants will discuss how to build helipads, roadways, culverts, observation posts, and ammo shelters using contemporary techniques. Drills in combat

engineering and medicine are also included in the curriculum.

- Exercise for Validation: To demonstrate the standards met by both contingents, a validation exercise will be held at the end of the exercise.

What is Zero Trust Authentication (ZTA)?



In response to rising cyberattacks, the Centre has established a secure e-mail system for 10,000 users across critical ministries and departments. The National Informatics Centre (NIC) has designed this system, incorporating Zero Trust Authentication (ZTA).

What is Zero Trust Authentication (ZTA)?

- ZTA is a paradigm and idea for security that follows the tenet of "never trust, always verify."
- Compared to earlier security models that worked under the presumption that everything inside a company's network should be trusted, this approach to cybersecurity represents a substantial departure.
- On the other hand, Zero Trust postulates that regardless of a user's location or the network's perimeter, trust is never given implicitly and must instead be regularly assessed and validated.

Key Principles of ZTA

- Least Privilege Access: Users are only given the minimal amount of access required to carry out their duties. This reduces the possible harm in the event of a security breach.
- Strict User Verification: Prior to granting access to applications and data, all users—whether within or outside the organization's network—

must undergo authentication, authorization, and ongoing validation for security configuration and posture.

- Micro-segmentation: To preserve distinct access for various network segments, the network is split up into tiny zones. The other segments stay safe even if one is compromised.
- Multi-Factor Authentication (MFA): ZTA frequently needs several pieces of proof in order to verify a user's identity. This could involve the user's knowledge (password), possessions (security token), and identity (biometric verification).
- Continuous Monitoring and Validation: The system keeps an eye on things to make sure that data and traffic are safe and that user behavior is consistent with what is intended.

Implementation of Zero Trust Authentication

- Technology: Identity and access management (IAM), data encryption, endpoint security, and network segmentation tools are some of the technologies needed to implement Zero Trust.

- Policy and Governance: Establishing thorough security policies that uphold the Zero Trust principles is vital for organizations. These rules should cover data protection and access.
- User Education and Awareness: It is essential to educate users about the value of cybersecurity and their part in keeping it up to date.

Benefits of Zero Trust Authentication

- Enhanced Security Posture: Zero Trust lowers the attack surface and lessens the possibility of internal threats by authenticating each user and device.
- Data protection: Strict access controls and encryption provide greater protection for sensitive data.
- Compliance: By offering thorough logs and reports on user activity and data access, compliance aids in meeting regulatory standards.
- Flexibility: Zero Trust may be easily integrated into a wide range of IT environments, such as cloud and hybrid systems.

Trivia

Vaishali Rameshbabu: India's New Chess Grandmaster



- Grandmaster Title: At the IV El Llobregat Open in Spain, Indian chess player Vaishali Rameshbabu—the sister of Praggnananda—achieved the Grandmaster title by surpassing 2,500 FIDE ranking points.

- Significance: She joins Koneru Humpy and Harika Dronavalli as the only other Indian female player to win this title.

Understanding the Grandmaster Title

- Highest Chess Honor: Granted by the International Chess Federation (FIDE), the Grandmaster title represents the highest accolade in chess.
- Prestige: It denotes being acknowledged as one of the best chess players in the world, as demonstrated in intensely competitive settings.

Other Recognized Chess Titles

- Titles awarded by FIDE: In addition to Grandmaster, FIDE grants seven further titles: Candidate Master (CM), Woman Grandmaster (WGM), Woman International Master (WIM), Woman FIDE Master (WFM), and Woman Grandmaster (IM).

- Lifetime Validity: Unless they are revoked for reasons such as cheating, all FIDE titles, including the Grandmaster title, are valid for life.

History and Criteria of Grandmaster Title

- Origins: The word "grandmaster" was first used approximately a century ago, and FIDE formalized it in 1950.
- First Prize Recipients: In 1950, Mikhail Botvinnik, the world champion at the time, was among the 27 players who received Grandmaster titles in the inaugural group.
- Present Requirements: A player needs to obtain three Grandmaster norms and a FIDE Classical or

Standard rating of 2,500 in order to be titled Grandmaster.

- Grandmaster Norms: Based on strict guidelines for tournament performance, like as a performance rating of 2,600 or higher in a FIDE tournament under particular circumstances, these norms are set forth.

Vaishali Rameshbabu's Path to Grandmaster

- Performance: Vaishali's Grandmaster title attainment is evidence of her outstanding play in international chess competitions.
- Representation: Her accomplishments strengthen India's standing as a major player in the world chess scene.



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