



CURRENT AFFAIRS

JANUARY – 2023

Tamilnadu News

First Education Group of G-20 countries to meet in Chennai:

- ❖ The First Education Group of G20 countries will meet in Chennai from January 31 to February 2.
- ❖ The Ministry of External Affairs, the Ministry of Education, the State government and a team from IIT Madras held a meeting on January 9 to review the preparations for the meeting.
- ❖ The 19 countries of the G20 are Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, South Korea, Mexico, Russia, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Turkey, England, USA and the European Union.
- ❖ In the last G20 summit held in November 2022 in Bali, the responsibility of chairing the next G-20 summit was handed over to India and Prime Minister Modi accepted it taking it as an honour for India to host as it celebrated 75 years of independence.
- ❖ The first 'Global Partnership for Financial Inclusion' meeting of the G20 began in Kolkata on January 9.



Tamil Nadu CM M.K. Stalin launches Global Tamil Angels platform of Start-upTN, an investment platform for Tamil diaspora:

- ❖ Tamil Nadu Chief Minister MK Stalin on Monday launched the Global Tamil Angels platform (www.tamilangels.fund) for investors from the global Tamil diaspora to make investments in the State's start-ups.
- ❖ The platform was launched at the "Global Startup Investors Summit," jointly organised by the Tamil Nadu Startup and Innovation Mission and FeTNA International Tamil Entrepreneur Network.
- ❖ A multi-crore American Tamil Fund (ATF) by investors from the Tamil Diaspora in the US was announced at the event to invest in the State's start-ups. The ATF has pledged investments to the tune of ₹16 crore before December 2023, according to a release.
- ❖ Global Tamil Angels is a platform by StartupTN that makes fundraising easy for Tamil Nadu-based start-ups and investing easy for Global Tamil Angel Investors by helping them get connected. It aims to onboard angel investors from the Tamil diaspora across countries.



- ❖ They could connect with start-ups in the pipeline based on their sectors of interest, among other criteria. Global Tamil Angels will also provide necessary support for the successful closure of deals.
- ❖ Start-ups can get started by creating a profile. They will submit basic information and upload their pitch deck, revenue model, traction, and fundraising sought. After verification by StartupTN, their profiles will be published on the portal and made visible to the investors.
- ❖ Founders can explore the personalised list of investors based on the sectors in which they would like to invest. They can also send invitations to get in touch with the investors to kick-start the investment deliberations, according to a release.
- ❖ Speaking at the event, Stain said that investments in industries operating in Tamil Nadu amounted to an all-time high of \$1.5 billion last year. This is an increase of 70 per cent when compared to 2021. He urged the global Tamil investor community to participate in a big way in various initiatives taken by the State government.

Tamil Nadu adopts Bill to make Tamil paper compulsory for State government jobs:

- ❖ Tamil Nadu Assembly passed a bill on Friday, making the Tamil paper compulsory for candidates to pass competitive exams for posts in the state government.
- ❖ The bill was tabled to amend the Tamil Nadu Government Servants Act 2016. As per the changes, even if a candidate was qualified and acquired the job, he or she should pass in Tamil paper within two years of acquiring the job.
- ❖ The Statement of Objects and Reasons of the Bill to amend The Tamil Nadu Government Servants (Conditions of Service) Act, 2016 said that as per Section 21 of this Act no person shall be eligible for appointment to any service by direct recruitment unless he has an adequate knowledge of the official language of the State, that is Tamil, reported PTI.
- ❖ Last year, Tamil Nadu Higher Education Minister K Ponmudy requested Union Home Minister Amit Shah to make Tamil the official language in central government offices.
- ❖ "Tamil as the mother tongue would help students understand their lessons better and will help them in attaining higher education and conducting further research in their subject. Tamil is one of the oldest languages in the world. Preserving and promoting the Tamil language is the responsibility of the entire nation," the union minister had said in an event in Chennai.



Chief Minister M. K. Stalin launched new software for revenue department on "Tamil Nilam" website

- ❖ A new software has been developed to enable overall creation of sub-divisions for approved housing plots and related deed changes installed on the Tamil Nilam website (<https://tamilnilam.tn.gov.in>) of Land Survey and Land Planning Directorate under Department of Revenue and Disaster Management.
- ❖ Similarly, new software has been developed for revenue tracking work in Corporations, Municipalities. These were initiated by Chief Minister Stalin.
- ❖ In the case of purchase of plots in approved housing units, there is a situation where each petitioner receives a separate petition for subdivision. Thus, in order to survey and sub-divide the houses in the same block of land, the land surveyor has to go separately on different days.
- ❖ 1.50 lakh subdivision petitions are received every month in Tamil Nadu. Most of them are plot oriented. Hence, there is a delay in getting the subdivision lease transfer.
- ❖ Now, through the new software launched by the Chief Minister, the land units are sub-divided as a whole and registered in the name of the owner, so that later requests for sub-division of the plots will be avoided.
- ❖ There will be a reduction in the number of subdivision petitions based on land units, and the people will be issued land grants sooner. Also, people don't need to apply again separately or go to District Collector's office in person for change of license.



365 contracts for translation - CM Stalin:

- ❖ CHENNAI NANDANAM YMCA The closing ceremony of the International Book Fair was held at the ground. A memorandum of understanding was signed between international publishers and Tamil publishers in the presence of Chief Minister Stalin.
- ❖ Following this, Chief Minister Stalin handed over the medical textbooks translated into Tamil to the medical students. Publishers from countries including Britain, America, Germany, Sweden and Singapore participated in it. 3 Crore rupees is being given as translation grant by the Government of Tamil Nadu.
- ❖ 365 agreements have been made with various companies to translate Tamil literature into Indian and international languages. The exhibition, which was held over three days this year, will be expanded in subsequent years.



Botanical garden in Chengalpattu:

- ❖ The Tamil Nadu government will soon set up a Botanical Garden at Kadambur village in Chengalpattu district in partnership with Kew Gardens of London at a cost of Rs 300 crore. The garden is being planned to conserve and propagate native plant species of Tamil Nadu including rare, threatened and endangered species. It will also be a recreational facility and ecotourism centre.
- ❖ The project to come up on 137.55 hectares is expected to be completed over the next five years. The project will include native species garden, arboretums and bambusetums, healing garden, herb garden, rose garden, rockery, Japanese garden, and a model landscape of ancient Tamil Nadu.
- ❖ It will also have activities such as guided walks, educational programme for students about plant bio-diversity called Kids for Nature, workshops and seminars for groups, boating, nature trails, cycling, fitness, sports and other wellness activities, extension activities for farmers, government departments, industries, and promotion of local cuisine and local handmade products for supporting local communities. The government order, issued on Wednesday, said Rs 1 crore was being released to prepare a Detailed Project Report for the proposal.



Botanical garden: Special officer appointed

Phase-I of the project will encompass, among other things, differential global positioning system survey, soil, water and environmental assessment, construction of fence around the project area, and DPR. The state has already assigned an officer on special duty to take up preliminary works such as consolidation of project area, survey, marking of boundaries, fencing and land development.

This Indian state bans mobile phones inside temple premises

- ❖ An Indian state has prohibited the use of mobile phones inside the temple premises. The Madurai bench of the Madras High Court has directed the Commissioner of Hindu Religious & Charities Endowments Department to ban cell phones inside the temple premises to maintain the purity and sanctity of temples in Tamil Nadu.



- ❖ The court issued the order after hearing a public interest case filed by one Seetharaman, seeking a ban on the use of cell phones inside the Arulmigu Subramania Swamy Temple in the state's Tiruchendur.
- ❖ The court's verdict reads, "In order to ensure the safety of the devotees and protect the sanctity of the temple, the authorities should take steps to prevent the use of cell phones inside the temple premises. The use of cell phones and cameras distracts the devotees".
- ❖ Noting that there is already a ban on mobile phones in Madurai Meenakshi Amman temple, Sri Krishna Temple in Guruvayur, and Sri Venkateswara Temple in Tirupati, the temple authorities have banned mobile phones in Tiruchendur temple.
- ❖ Judges R Mahadevan and J Sathyanarayana Prasad unanimously issued the order.
- ❖ Besides, the court directed the Hindu Religious & Charitable Endowments (HR & CE) Department to follow a decent dress code in all the temples in the states.
- ❖ Separately, yesterday, Tamil Nadu Chief Minister MK Stalin virtually inaugurated medical centres in five temples for the convenience of devotees visiting the places of worship.
- ❖ Stalin launched the services at Madurai Meenakshi temple, Irukkankudi Mariamman temple, Bannariamman temple (Bannari, near Erode), Madurai Kallazhagar temple, and the Sankaranarayana Swamy temple at Sankarankovil.



Stalin inaugurates full-day annadhanam scheme at 3 major temples:

- ❖ Chief Minister M K Stalin on Saturday inaugurated the scheme for providing annadhanam (free meal provided by temple to devotees) throughout the day at three more major temples in the state.
- ❖ Stalin inaugurated the full-day annadhanam scheme implemented by the state HR and CE department in Arulmigu Ramanathasamy temple in Rameswaram, Arulmigu Arunachaleswarar temple in Tiruvannamalai and Arulmigu Meenakshi Sundareswarar temple in Madurai, through video conference from the state secretariat on Saturday morning.
- ❖ The scheme has been extended to the three aforesaid temples in accordance with the announcement made in the State Assembly during the debate on the demand for grants for HR and CE department for the financial year 2022-23 earlier. As many as 8,000 devotees would benefit daily from the scheme's extension to the three temples, a release issued by the state government in connection with the inauguration said.



Octave 2023:

- ❖ Octave 2023 is a festival being held under the aegis of the South Zone Culture Centre, Thanjavur, Tamil Nadu to showcase the indigenous art and culture of Northeast India. Octave 2023 was inaugurated by Tamil Nadu Governor R N Ravi.

- ❖ The Governor of Tamil Nadu said that the perspective of the nation towards the Northeast has changed with the passage of time and the state have involved in the growth stories of India. The Northeast is moving towards development and advancement and is bubbling with capacities and aspirations.

Tamil Nadu Governor Inaugurated Octave 2023 at Thanjavur- Key Points

- ❖ The Governor noted that the people of Northeast are the most talented, innocent, emotional full of energy, and enthusiastic. People of the Northeast bound with culture, art, and spirituality have been resourceful in contributing to the nation's development. The Governor has urged the participants of the festival to visit Tamil Nadu and Chennai which is the spiritual and artistic capital.
- ❖ The participating states in Octave 2023 are Assam, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim, Tripura, Manipur, and Arunachal Pradesh. The Octave 2023 is being held under the aegis of the SZCC, Union Culture Ministry from 3rd January to 6th January 2023.
- ❖ Eminent personalities present in the festival who also participated in the festival were Principal Secretary, of Tourism and Culture B Chandra Mohan, Principal Secretary to Governor Anand Rao V Patil, Director of SZCC, K K Gopalkrishnan, Chairman of Bhartiya Vidya Bhavan, Chennai, N Ravi, and Director of BVB K N Ramaswamy.

Best city for women's employment:

- ❖ Chennai is India's best city for women's employment and it is followed by Pune, Bengaluru, Hyderabad and Mumbai, said a report by Avtar, a firm specialising in workplace inclusion.
- ❖ The report ranks 111 cities on parameters nurturing a conducive ecosystem for women's employment.
- ❖ Ahmedabad, Visakhapatnam, Kolkata, Coimbatore and Madurai form the rest of the Top 10 cities -- each has a population of more than one million -- in terms of women's employment.
- ❖ "The fact that the South and West regions are more women-friendly in terms of employment is not a surprise, given the politico-historic context of these regions," says Saundarya Rajesh, founder-president, Avtar Group.
- ❖ Sponsored
- ❖ "The rise of cities like Hubli, Nagpur, Ahmedabad and Coimbatore as promising hubs of women's employment, due to their high Industrial Inclusion scores is very heartening," adds Rajesh.
- ❖ "Metros like Delhi and Kolkata have fallen behind in terms of social inclusion due to lower standards of safety and poor enablers for women to pursue employment," points out Rajesh.
- ❖ Tiruchirappalli, Vellore, Erode, Salem, Tirupur, Puducherry, Shimla, Mangalore (officially Mangaluru), Thiruvananthapuram, and Belagavi are the top 10 cities in another category of cities with a population of less than one million.
- ❖ Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra, Himachal Pradesh, and Karnataka got top five state averages in the country.
- ❖ The study, apart from indexed scores, considered steps taken by states and cities in empowering women in the last one year.
- ❖ It considered key inclusion measures required for increasing women's workforce participation.



MOST WOMEN-INCLUSIVE CITIES

With over 1 mn population		With <1 mn population			
Rank	Score	Rank	Score		
1	Chennai	78.41	1	Tiruchirappalli	71.61
2	Pune	69.44	2	Vellore	70.30
3	Bengaluru	64.48	3	Erode	66.50
4	Hyderabad	62.47	4	Salem	65.86
5	Mumbai	61.11	5	Tiruppur	64.21
6	Ahmedabad	58.62	6	Puducherry	63.62
7	Visakhapatnam	56.14	7	Shimla	58.05
8	Kolkata	54.80	8	Mangaluru	58.02
9	Coimbatore	51.16	9	Thiruvananthapuram	57.19
10	Madurai	49.35	10	Belagavi	55.51

- ❖ Avtar said its report is the first such national effort in bringing a data- and evidence-based understanding of the state of women's inclusion in cities.
- ❖ The survey outlined the importance of transforming cities as spaces that can be freely navigated by women to pursue career and economic self-sufficiency goals.
- ❖ "We are very excited about the possibilities to increase women's employment being offered by cities like Visakhapatnam, Madurai and Vadodara, which are growing centres of both industrial activity and social development," says Rajesh.
- ❖ "As rightly called out by our prime minister, to reap the benefits of the fourth industrial revolution we must enable more women in workplaces, especially in the growing industries.
- ❖ "It is imperative that we look at the problem of low representation of women in India as not only something to be solved by corporates, but also as a goal for the state," adds Rajesh.
- ❖ In north India, the top three cities are Delhi, Srinagar, and Amritsar.
- ❖ In the south, the top three slots are taken by Chennai, Bengaluru, and Hyderabad.
- ❖ In the eastern region, Kolkata is at the top slot, followed by Dhanbad and Patna.

National News

New integrated Food Security Scheme to be rolled out from January 1, 2023:

- ❖ The government is set to roll out of center's new integrated food security Scheme from 1 January 2023, the Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food & Public Distribution said in a statement.

- ❖ The roll out of center's new integrated food security Scheme is set to begin on 1 January 2023. As per the decision made by cabinet, led by Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi, the new Scheme would **provide free food grains to 81.35 crore beneficiaries under NFSA, for the year 2023**. The Scheme would also ensure effective and uniform implementation of National Food Security Act (NFSA).
- ❖ For fulfilling this commitment to the most vulnerable 67% of population ie. 81.35 crore persons covered under NFSA, the cabinet decided to launch a new Central Sector scheme to fulfill the vision of **One Nation - One Price - One Ration**.



To implement the decision in the field,

- ❖ The Secretary, Department of Food and Public Distribution (DFPD) has taken a meeting with all State Food Secretaries on 29.12.2022. The issues related to distribution of free foodgrains were discussed including technical resolutions. All States and UTs assured to implement the free foodgrain scheme from 1st January 2023.
- ❖ Notification of modified Schedule I reflecting zero price of foodgrains for AAY and PHH beneficiaries from 1st January 2023 to 31st December 2023 has been issued on 31.12.22 and shared with the States/UTs.
- ❖ Also an order is issued for all General Managers of FCI to visit three ration shops every day in different areas of their jurisdiction mandatorily from 01.01.2023 to 07.01.2023 and submit a report to the DFPD Nodal Officer on a daily basis, in the given format for review and taking corrective action.
- ❖ In view of free foodgrains, an advisory is also issued to the States/UTs on the mechanism to provide Dealer's Margin for distributing foodgrains to the beneficiaries.

National Food Security Act (NFSA)

- ❖ The National Food Security Act 2013, also known as Right to Food Act, is an Indian Act of Parliament which aims to provide subsidized food grains to approximately two thirds of the country's 1.2 billion people. It was signed into law on 12 September 2013, retroactive to 5 July 2013
- ❖ The basic concept of food security globally is to ensure that all people, at all times, should get access to the basic food for their active and healthy life and is characterized by availability, access, utilization and stability of food. Though the Indian Constitution does not have any explicit provision regarding right to food, the fundamental right to life enshrined in Article 21 of the Constitution may be interpreted to include right to live with human dignity, which may include the right to food and other basic necessities.



POWER OF CENTRAL GOVERNMENT TO MAKE RULES

- ❖ Under Section 39(1) of NFSA, the Central Government may, in consultation with the State Governments and by notification, make rules to carry out the provisions of the Act. The following Rules have been notified by the Central Government:

- ❖ Provisioning of Funds to State Governments for Short Supply of Foodgrains Rules, 2014.
- ❖ Food Security Allowance Rules, 2015.
- ❖ Food security (assistance to State Government Rules) 2015
- ❖ Cash Transfer of Food Subsidy Rules, 2015
- ❖ Notification of WCD and HRD
- ❖ Section 40 of the National Food Security Act provides that the State Governments may, by notification and consistent with the Act and the rules made by the Central Government, make rules to carry out the provisions of this Act.

50 of India's 3,693 centrally protected monuments are missing, according to the Ministry of Culture:

- ❖ At least 50 of India's 3,693 protected monuments have been found to be missing, a submission made in the Parliament by the Ministry of Culture said, flagging it as a matter of 'grave concern'. The Ministry said several monuments protected under the Archaeological Survey of India (Ministry of Culture) have been missing for several years for various reasons. The Ministry said some of the monuments have suffered due to constant urbanisation, while some have become submerged under the waters of dams and reservoirs. Some others, meanwhile, have been difficult to trace due to their remoteness or their locations being inside deep forest areas.
- ❖ "...It is a matter of grave concern that several monuments of national importance under the protection of Archaeological Survey of India (Ministry of Culture) have become untraceable over the years due to rapid urbanisation, (being) submerged by reservoirs (and) dams, difficulties in tracing in remote locations (and) dense forests, non-availability of their proper location, etc.," said the submissions made by the Ministry on December 8.
- ❖ The Ministry made the submission to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Transport, Tourism and Culture in a report titled 'Issues relating to Untraceable Monuments and Protection of Monuments in India'.

❖ Senior ASI officials Culture Secretary Govind Mohan, ASI Director-General V Vidyaavathi had also shared the same with the committee back in May 2022.

❖ The monuments that have been said to be missing include at least 11 from Uttar Pradesh and two each from Delhi and Haryana too. Monuments from Assam, West Bengal, Arunachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand are also in the list, the submission has said.

❖ Officials have said that many of these lost monuments are also inscriptions and tablets which could have been removed or destroyed, explaining difficulties in tracking them.

❖ "A bulk of the centrally protected monuments were identified in the 1930s, 1940s and 1950s, and that in the decades after Independence, the focus was on discovering new monuments than on conserving them,"

"50 OF 3,693 CENTRALLY-PROTECTED MONUMENTS ARE MISSING"

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- MINISTRY OF CULTURE TO PARLIAMENT



- ❖ A physical verification of the monuments for the first time since Independence had revealed in 2013 that 92 monuments were missing.

Ministry of Culture

- ❖ The Ministry of Culture is the Indian government ministry charged with preservation and promotion of art and culture of India.
- ❖ G. Kishan Reddy is the current Minister of Culture. Recently the government has established the National Mission on Libraries India under this ministry

Jurisdiction: India
Headquarters: C-wing; Shastri Bhawan; New Delhi
Annual budget: 2,687.99 crore (2021-22 est.)

Archaeological Survey of India

The Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) is an Indian government agency that is responsible for archaeological research and the conservation and preservation of cultural historical monuments in the country. It was founded in 1861 by Alexander Cunningham who also became its first Director-General.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL SURVEY OF INDIA (ASI)

Formation : 1861: 162 years ago
Founder : Alexander Cunningham
Type : Governmental organization
Head quarters : 24 Tilak Marg, New Delhi, Delhi, India
Official language : English , Hindi
Director General : V. Vidyavathi, IAS
Parent organisation : Ministry of Culture

MHA issues cyber alert for G20 Summit, shares threat, target details with ministries:

- ❖ In an effort to prevent any cyber network exploitation related with the G20 Summit, which India will host in 2023, the Union Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) has shared a list of “potential (cyber) attackers” and “reported historically targeted G20 Summits” with all ministries and departments, it is learnt.
- ❖ The ministry is also learnt to have informed the ministries that the Indian Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT-In), the country’s premier cybersecurity agency, has found that spear phishing will be the “primary vector” used to target individuals and organisations associated with the G20 Summit with email contexts, Covid-19 pandemic funds, and digital transformation.
- ❖ Spear phishing is an attempt to trick a particular person or group into giving private information over the internet or by email, especially by sending emails that seem to be from someone they know, according to the dictionary.



Defence Ministry starts process for the procurement of 100 more K9-Vajra tracked self-propelled howitzers:

The Defense Ministry has initiated the process to procure 100 more K-9 Vajra self-propelled howitzers, which are made in India by Larsen & Toubro (L&T) using technology transferred from South Korean defence major Hanwha Defence.

Important facts:

- ❖ The 100th cannon was handed over to the army in 2021.
- ❖ In the 2020 standoff in eastern Ladakh, the Army deployed a regiment of these howitzers to augment its long-range firepower in a massive move by China across the Line of Actual Control.
- ❖ Encouraged by its improved performance, the Army is looking to eventually buy an additional 100 guns.
- ❖ The induction of Dhanush, K9-Vajra and M777 Ultra Light Howitzers has increased the artillery firepower on the northern frontiers.

About K9-Vajra:

- ❖ The K-9 Vajra is a 155 mm, 52-calibre tracked self-propelled howitzer manufactured by L&T.
- ❖ It is based on the K-9 Thunder with technology transferred from South Korean defence major Hanwha Defence.
- ❖ The K-9 Vajra was primarily procured for use in the desert, but the standoff with China has prompted them to be deployed in the mountains as well.



- ❖ The Ministry of Defence is charged with coordinating and supervising all agencies and functions of the government relating directly to national security and the Indian Armed Forces. The President of India is the ceremonial commander-in-chief of the armed forces of the country.

Officeholder: Rajnath Singh (Minister)

Headquarters: New Delhi

Founded: August 1947

Jurisdiction: India

International Year of Millets (IYM) 2023 begins with Activities by Central Ministries, State Governments and Indian Embassies:

International Year of Millets (IYM) 2023

- ❖ Department of Agriculture & Farmer's Welfare aims to promote cultivation and consumption of Millets at a larger scale and bring it to the entire globe through IYM
- ❖ Central ministries, states and Indian embassies allocated a focussed month in 2023 to carry out various activities for promotion of IYM and increase awareness about benefits of millets
- ❖ January 2023 is the focussed month for the Ministry of Sports and Youth Affairs, Government of India and States of Chhattisgarh, Mizoram and Rajasthan for conducting events/ activities for IYM
- ❖ Spearheaded by the Prime Minister, the Government of India sponsored the proposal for International Year of Millets (IYM) 2023 which was accepted by the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA). The declaration has been instrumental for the Government of India to be at the forefront in celebrating the IYM. The PM of India, Shri Narendra Modi has also shared his vision to make IYM 2023 a 'People's Movement' alongside positioning India as the 'Global Hub for Millets'.

- ❖ ‘Millets’ were among the first crops to be domesticated in India with several evidence of its consumption during the Indus valley civilization. Being grown in more than 130 countries at present, Millets are considered traditional food for more than half a billion people across Asia and Africa. In India, millets are primarily a kharif crop, requiring less water and agricultural inputs than other similar staples. Millets are important by the virtue of its mammoth potential to generate livelihoods, increase farmers’ income and ensure food & nutritional security all over the world.
- ❖ Recognising the enormous potential of Millets, which also aligns with several UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the Government of India (GoI) has prioritized Millets. In April 2018, Millets were rebranded as “Nutri Cereals”, followed by the year 2018 being declared as the National Year of Millets, aiming at larger promotion and demand generation. The global millets market is projected to register a CAGR of 4.5% during the forecast period between 2021-2026.
- ❖ On 6th December 2022, the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations, organized an opening ceremony for the International Year of Millets – 2023 at Rome, Italy. The event was attended by a delegation of senior government officials from India. Next in the series, prior to the year-long celebration of ‘International Year of Millets (IYM) 2023’, the Department of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare hosted a special ‘Millet Luncheon’ for the Members of the Parliament at the Parliament house.

India will sign a “Comprehensive Migration and Mobility Partnership Agreement” (MMPA) with Austria:

Highlights:

- ❖ It has similar mobility agreements with France, the United Kingdom, Germany, and Finland.

Relevance:

- ❖ India has been keen to finalise these agreements with European countries as a stepping stone to resolving issues over the long-pending India-European Union (EU) Free Trade Agreement and facilitating Indian professionals working in these countries, the European countries also see them as a way to curb illegal immigration from India.
- ❖ This is a much-needed agreement, especially in view of the sharp increase in illegal migration Austria was confronted with last year, including over 15,000 illegal migrants from India with practically no chance of asylum.
- ❖ The agreement is now a useful tool to combat illegal migration together, as it enables the swift return of illegal migrants.
- ❖ It will regulate multiple entry visas for professionals and student exchange programmes, and will be reviewed regularly by a Joint Working Group (JWG).



Shri Anil Kumar Lahoti takes charge as Chairman & CEO, Railway Board:

❖ Shri Anil Kumar Lahoti has taken over the charge of new Chairman & Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Railway Board (Ministry of Railways). The appointments committee of the Cabinet approved the appointment of Shri Anil Kumar Lahoti as Chairman & CEO of Railway Board. Prior to this, Shri Anil Kumar Lahoti has worked as Member (Infrastructure), Railway Board.

❖ Sh. Lahoti belongs to Indian Railway Service of Engineers, 1984 batch and has been

empanelled in the first panel of Indian Railways Management Service for Level-17. During his more than 36 years of career in railways, he has worked in various capacities over Central, Northern, North Central, Western and West Central Railways and in Railway Board.



❖ The Ministry of Railways is a ministry in the Government of India, responsible for the country's rail transport. The ministry operates the statutory body Indian Railways, an organisation that operates as a monopoly in rail transport and is headed by the Chairman and CEO of Railway Board.

Supreme Court to pronounce its verdict today on pleas against Demonetization:

- ❖ Supreme Court Demonetisation Case Verdict Live Updates: SC upholds centre's decision on demonetisation by 4:1 majority
- ❖ Supreme Court Order on Demonetisation Live: Justice BV Nagarathna in her dissenting view held that though demonetisation was well-intentioned and well thought of, it has to be declared unlawful on legal grounds (and not on the basis of objects).
- ❖ Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman Monday welcomed the Supreme Court judgement upholding the decision of the BJP government at the Centre to demonetise high value currency notes in November 2016.
- ❖ "Welcome the Hon'ble Supreme Court's judgement today on Demonetization. A five-judge Constitution Bench (via a 4-1 majority) has upheld the Demonetization after carefully examining the issue & has dismissed several petitions challenging the decision," Sitharaman said in a series of tweets.



Union Minister Dr Jitendra Singh briefs media about ‘2023 Science Vision’ at New Delhi:

- ❖ Minister of State for Science and Technology Dr. Jitendra Singh has stressed on research related to science and technology reaching the local level to make the country a global hub of research and innovation during this Amrit Kaal. Briefing the media today in New Delhi Dr. Singh said that 2023 Science Vision will define India in 2047. The Minister also encouraged the citizens to think out-of-the box and said the future belongs to those with innovative ideas. He also discussed several outlines set by various science and technology departments for this year and said Indian Space Research Organisation is focusing on “Gaganyaan” program which will land an Indian on the surface of the Moon.
- ❖ The Minister added that the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research will focus on the Green Hydrogen and Biotechnology department will work towards the improvement of vaccines for the existing and emerging diseases. Dr. Singh also expressed his confidence that the country's Blue Economy will see further headway through the Earth Sciences Ministry. He informed that this year Atomic Energy Department will deliver about 21 lakh equipments for the Election Commission of India which includes Ballot Units, Control Units and Voter Verifiable Paper Audit Trail.

Ministry of Tribal Affairs, Amazon collaborate for future engineer program:

- ❖ Future engineer program: Tribal Ministry, Amazon collaborate:
- ❖ In conjunction with the Learning Links Foundation, the National Education Society for Tribal Students (NESTS) was setting up a two-day face-to-face capacity building program which was held on 28th and 29th of December 2022, for EMRS teachers to implement the Amazon Future Engineer Program (LLF).
- ❖ Tribal Ministry, Amazon collaborate:
- ❖ The relationship between NESTS and amazon, according to Union Minister for Tribal Affairs Shri Arjun Munda, will empower educators and students in the area of digital education. He further stated that the programme will aid in the beginning of digital contact with those living in remote places in the present decade. He claimed that the Future Engineer Program will be extremely beneficial to EMRS students. Additionally, he said that the Future Engineer Program would help the tribal students at EMRSs become more computer literate.

Future engineer program:

- ❖ Modern information technology will promote pupils’ readiness for future employment in STEM education by enabling early exposure to these fields.
- ❖ The Learning Links Foundation (LLF) is a charitable organisation that works for the “Amazon Future Engineer Program” and is exceptional in the area of teaching computational skills to EMRS students and instructors.
- ❖ The suggested training workshop for EMRS instructors would act as a first step in raising students’ knowledge of the potential of computer science and the availability of high-quality IT education in schools.
- ❖ On December 28 and 29, 2022, a two-day in-person training event was held for instructors from 54 EMRS in 6 States.
- ❖ The training programme included a brief discussion of how tribal and other groups might gain early access to computer science education by exposing the pupils to basic computational abilities all the way up to data-coding abilities.

NTPC and Tecnimont Signed MOU for Green Methanol Project

Tribal Ministry, Amazon: Important Takeaways

Amazon CEO: Andy Jassy

Amazon Headquarters: Seattle, Washington, USA

Minister of Tribal Affairs: Arjun Munda

Supreme Court will launch a project providing free access to official law reports of its verdicts to law students, lawyers and the general public:

- ❖ In another step towards digitalization, Chief Justice of India (CJI) D Y Chandrachud Monday announced the launch of the electronic Supreme Court Reports (e-SCR) project to provide free access to its about 34,000 judgements to lawyers, law students and the common public.
- ❖ These verdicts will be available on the apex court website, its mobile app, and on the judgment portal of the National Judicial Data Grid (NJDG), the CJI said at the outset of judicial proceedings on the first working day of 2023.
- ❖ The CJI, who was sharing the bench with Justice P S Narasimha, wished lawyers on the first working day of the year and then gave the details of the e-SCR projects.
- ❖ "This is a free service available for lawyers across the country. Young juniors do not have to pay. There is an elastic search facility.
- ❖ We are improving upon the search engine by incorporating the followed, distinguished and incorporated judgements in a few weeks.," the CJI said. He said as of now, the judgements, delivered till January 1, 2023, will be made available.

17th Pravasi Bharatiya Samman Award 2023:

- ❖ 27 Indians living overseas have been chosen by the Indian government for the **Pravasi Bharatiya Samman Awards** (PBSA), for outstanding achievements both in India and abroad.
- ❖ The award is the highest honour conferred upon Indians living abroad, including **Non-Resident Indians** (NRI), **Persons of Indian Origin** (PIO) or organisations established and run by them.

Theme: "Diaspora: Reliable Partners for India's Progress in Amrit Kaal".

Issued by : Ministry of External Affairs.

Select to choose : Ministry of External Affairs.

Chosen Jury : Vice President: Jagdeep Dhankhar

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar, among other distinguished dignitaries from different fields.

Award criteria:

Pravasi Bharatiya Samman (PBS) is conferred for outstanding contributions in any of the following areas:

- "Better understanding of India"

- "Support to India's causes and concerns in a tangible way"
- "Building closer links between India, the overseas Indian community and their country of residence;"
- "Social and humanitarian causes in India or abroad"
- "Welfare of the local Indian community"
- "Philanthropic and charitable work"
- "Eminence in one's field or outstanding work, which has enhanced India's prestige in the country of residence; or"
- "Eminence in skills which has enhanced India's prestige in that country (for non-professional workers)."

First Awarded: 2003 onwards

Total Awards : 136

Sponsored by : President of India

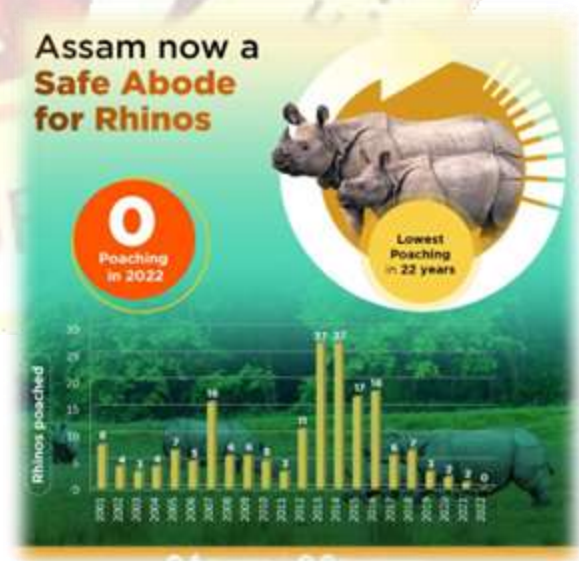
Place : held this time between January 8 and 10 in Indore.

1.	Jagathish Chennupati	Australia	Science & Technology / Education
2.	Sanjeev Mehta	Bhutan	Education
3.	Dilip Loundo	Brazil	Art & Culture / Education
4.	Alexander Maliakel John	Brunei Darussalam	Medicine
5.	Vaikuntam Iyer Lakshmanan	Canada	Community Welfare
6.	Joginder Singh Nijjar	Croatia	Art & Culture / Education
7.	Ramjee Prasad	Denmark	Information Technology
8.	Kannan Ambalam	Ethiopia	Community Welfare
9.	Amal Kumar Mukhopadhyay	Community Welfare / Medicine	Germany
10.	Mohamed Irfaan Ali (Guyana President)	Guyana	Politics / Community Welfare
11.	Reena Vinod Pushkarna	Israel	Business / Community Welfare
12.	Maqsooda Sarfi Shiotani	Japan	Education
13.	Rajagopal	Mexico	Education
14.	Amit Kailash Chandra Lath	Poland	Business / Community Welfare

15.	Parmanand Sukhumal Daswani	Republic of Congo	Community Welfare
16.	Piyush Gupta	Singapore	Business
17.	Mohanlal Hira	South Africa	Community Welfare
18.	Sanjaykumar Shivabani Patel	South Sudan	Business / Community Welfare
19.	Sivakumar Nadesan	SriLanka	Community Welfare
20.	Dewanchandrabhose Sharman	Switzerland	Community Welfare
21.	Archana Sharma	Switzerland	Science & Technology
22.	Frank Arthur Seepersad	Trinidad & Tobago	Community Welfare / Education
23.	Siddharth Balachandran	UAE	Business / Community Welfare
24.	Chandrakant Babubhai Patel	UK	Media
25.	Darshan Singh	USA	Business / Community Welfare
26.	Rajesh Subramaniam	USA	Business
27.	Ashok Kumar Tiwary	Uzbekistan	Business

No rhinos were poached in the state of Assam in 2022, the first time since 2000:

- ❖ Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma took to Twitter to share the celebratory news and said the 'gentle giant' was much safer in the state.
- ❖ "Zero Poaching! 2022 was really special for our rhino conservation efforts. Not a single rhino being poached in 2022 & just 2 in 2021, the gentle giant is now much safer in Assam.
- ❖ According to Special DGP G P Singh, the last poaching attempt was recorded on December 28, 2021.
- ❖ "Anti-Rhino poaching efforts have yielded spectacular results. There has been no rhino poaching in Assam in the year 2022. The last poaching was on Dec 28th, 2021 at Hilakunda, Kohora in the Golaghat district. We would strive to keep the graph flat," said Singh.



PM addresses 108th Indian Science Congress via video conferencing:

- ❖ “India’s scientific community will ensure a deserving place for our country”
- ❖ “Abundant availability of data and technology in 21st-century India will help science”
- ❖ “Our thinking is not just that we should empower women via science but also empowering science by the contribution of women”
- ❖ “Increasing participation of women is proof that women and science are both progressing in the nation”
- ❖ “Efforts of science can turn into great achievements only when they come out of the lab and reach the land, and their impact reaches from global to grassroots, when its ambit is from journal to jameen and when change is visible from research to real life”
- ❖ “If the country takes initiative in futuristic areas we will be in a position to lead Industry 4.0”



Government Formed Committee to Protect Ladakh Culture, Language & Employment:

- ❖ The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) in India has established a High Powered Committee (HPC) to address issues related to the protection of Ladakh’s culture, language, land, and employment opportunities.
- ❖ The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) in India has established a High Powered Committee (HPC) to address issues related to the protection of Ladakh’s culture, language, land, and employment opportunities. A 17-member committee has been constituted under the Chairmanship of Minister of State for Home Affairs Nityanand Rai.



Purpose of this Committee:

- ❖ The committee has been formed with the goal of promoting inclusive development and employment generation in the region, as well as empowering the Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Councils (LAHDCs) of Leh and Kargil.
- ❖ Its mandate includes discussing measures to protect Ladakh’s unique culture and language, and to ensure that the region’s land and employment opportunities are protected for the benefit of its people.

India's manufacturing output rises to 13 month high in December **L IMAGE**

- ❖ India's manufacturing output has risen to 13-month high in December.
- ❖ Country's manufacturing sector activity ended in 2022 on a very positive note with December reporting output level best seen since November 2021.
- ❖ Posting 57.8 in December, up from 55.7 in November, the seasonally adjusted S&P Global India Manufacturing Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) signalled the strongest improvement in operating conditions since October 2020.
- ❖ The PMI average for the third quarter of the current fiscal year was the highest recorded in a year. The latest PMI data corroborates signs of robust economic activities signalled by other indicators like GST collections, which stood at 1.5 trillion rupees in December, the third highest level this fiscal and robust auto fuel sales.
- ❖ The output of eight core sector industries grew 5.4 percent on year in November, recovered from their worst performance in 20 months in the previous month.



Supreme Court observed that all religious conversions cannot be presumed by a State to be illegal:

- ❖ All Conversions Can't Be Said To Be Illegal' : Supreme Court Refuses To Stay MP HC Order Against Declaration Before DM To Change Religion
The Supreme Court on Tuesday issued notice on the special leave petition filed by the State of Madhya Pradesh against the High Court restraining the government from taking coercive action against any person who contravenes Section 10 of the Madhya Pradesh Freedom of Religion Act, 2021 which require a person desiring to convert religion to give a declaration in this regard to the District Magistrate.
- ❖ However, the bench of Justices M. R. Shah and C. T. Ravikumar refused to stay the impugned order. Finding this provision to be prima facie unconstitutional, the HC division bench of Justice Sujoy Paul and Justice Prakash Chandra Gupta, on 14.11.202 further directed the state to not prosecute.

UIDAI introduces Head of the Family (HoF)-based online address update in Aadhar:

- ❖ The Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI) has put in place a resident friendly facility to help people update their address online in Aadhaar with the consent of the Head of Family (HoF).
- ❖ This HoF based online address update in Aadhaar will be of great help to the relatives of a resident who don't have supporting documents in their own name to update address in their Aadhaar.
- ❖ It can be done by submitting Proof of Relationship document like Ration Card, Marksheet, Marriage Certificate, Passport mentioning the names and relationship of both the applicant and HOF.

- ❖ In case even Proof of Relationship document is not available, UIDAI provides the resident to submit a self-declaration by the HOF in the UIDAI prescribed format.

J&K: Raksha Mantri Rajnath Singh virtually inaugurates Bailey Suspension Bridge over river Chenab in Ramban district of Jammu division:

- ❖ In Jammu and Kashmir, Raksha Mantri Rajnath Singh today virtually inaugurated the Bailey Suspension Bridge over river Chenab in the Ramban district of the Jammu division.
- ❖ AIR Jammu Correspondent reports that 240 feet high Bailey Suspension Bridge has been completed by the Border Roads Organisation, a month before the deadline. Worth to mention, on the 1st of October, the launching of the new bailey suspension reinforced bridge was initiated and on the 30th of October, the project was completed, well before its scheduled deadline of the 30th of November.
- ❖ The bridge with a load capacity of 40 tonnes single vehicle at a time has wooden decking. The penal-launching work was completed ahead of the scheduled time by a Kolkata-based company engaged by GREF.

Captain Shiva Chouhan becomes first women officer operationally deployed at Kumar Post, Siachen:

- ❖ Located in the Karakoram range in the Himalayas, Siachen Glacier at the height of around 20,000 feet is known as the highest militarised zone in the world.
- ❖ Captain Shiva Chauhan has become the first woman army officer to get operationally deployed on the Siachen Glacier, the world's highest battlefield.
- ❖ The officer was deployed at the Kumar post, located at an altitude of around 15,600 feet in Siachen, on Monday for a period of three months after she underwent rigorous training, Army officials said.

The Leh-based Fire and Fire Corps tweeted the picture of the officer, calling her feat as 'Breaking the Glass Ceiling'.



President Droupadi Murmu Inaugurates Samvidhan Udyan in Jaipur:

The President of India Droupadi Murmu inaugurated Samvidhan Udyan, Mayur Stambh, National Flag Post, Statue of Mahatma Gandhi, and Maharana Pratap at Raj Bhavan, Jaipur on 3rd January 2023.

- ❖ The President of India virtually inaugurated the Transmission System for Solar Energy Zones in Rajasthan and laid the foundation stone for the 1000 MV Bikaner Solar Power Project of SJVN Limited.
- ❖ On the occasion, President Droupadi Murmu appreciated the artists for a description of the historical journey of three years of Constitution making displayed in the Udyan.

Hydrogen Blended PNG Project Starts Operation at NTPC Kawas Gujarat:

- ❖ India's first green hydrogen blending operation in the piped natural gas (PNG) network at NTPC Kawas, Gujarat.
- ❖ The project is a joint effort of NTPC and Gujarat Gas (GCL). The power generation company stated that the first molecular of green hydrogen from the project was set in motion by P Ram Prasad, Head of Project, Kawas in presence of other senior executives of NTPC Kawas and GCL.
- ❖ After the start of blending and operation, NTPC Kawas held an awareness workshop for township residents with help of GCL officials. The foundation stone of the project was laid by the Prime Minister of India, Narendra Modi on 30th July 2022.
- ❖ The set-up is geared up to supply H2-NG (Natural Gas) to households of Kawas township at Surat.
- ❖ Green hydrogen in Kawas is made by electrolysis of water using power from an already installed 1 megawatt (MW) floating solar project.
- ❖ Petroleum and Natural Gas Regulatory Board (PNGRB), the regulatory body has approved 5% vol./vol. blending of green hydrogen with PNG to start with and the blending level would be scaled phase-wise to reach 20%.

India is committed to eliminating Kala Azar from the country by 2023: Union Health Minister:

- ❖ Union Health Minister **Dr. Mansukh Mandaviya** chaired a high-level meeting on today to review the status of Kala-Azar disease in the four endemic states of Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Jharkhand, and West Bengal.
- ❖ The meeting was also presided over by Union Minister of State for Health and Family Welfare, Dr. Bharati Pravin Pawar.
- ❖ Elaborating on the details of the meeting, the Union Health Minister Dr. Mansukh Mandaviya said, "Chaired a meeting with State Health Ministers of Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, West Bengal & Jharkhand to review the progress of elimination of Kala Azar disease in these States. Appreciated the commitment shown by states to eliminate Kala Azar."
- ❖ India is committed to eliminating Kala Azar from the country by 2023.
- ❖ 632 (99.8%) endemic blocks have already achieved elimination status. Only one block (Littipara) of Pakur district, Jharkhand, is in the endemic category.
- ❖ We are working holistically with the state government and other stakeholders to achieve elimination in Jharkhand, the Union Health Minister said.



Investment approval for 382 MW Sunni Dam Hydro Electric Project in Himachal Pradesh:

❖ Investment approval for 382 MW Sunni Dam Hydro Electric Project in Himachal Pradesh by SJVN

❖ The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs chaired by Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has approved the investment for 382 MW Sunni Dam Hydro Electric Project in Himachal Pradesh by SJVN Limited, for an estimated cost of Rs. 2614.51 crore including Rs.



13.80 crore as budgetary support from Government of India for cost of enabling infrastructure. Ex-post facto approval is given for cumulative expenditure incurred amounting to Rs.246 crore till January, 2022.

❖ Project cost of Rs.2614 crore included hard cost amounting to Rs.2246.40 crore, Interest During Construction (IDC) and Financing Charges (FC) of Rs. 358.96 crore & 9.15 crore respectively.

❖ SJVN, formerly known as Satluj Jal Vidyut Nigam, is an Indian public sector undertaking involved in hydroelectric power generation and transmission. It was incorporated in 1988 as Nathpa Jhakri Power Corporation, a joint venture between Government of India and Government of Himachal Pradesh.



Satluj Jal Vidyut Nigam Ltd

Mukhyamantri Awasiya Bhu-Adhikar Yojana:

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan launched the Mukhyamantri Awasiya Bhu-Adhikar Yojana from Prithvipur (Niwari). Along with this, the Chief Minister also inaugurated various development works and performed Bhoomi-Poojan in Prithvipur.

- ❖ The main objective of this scheme is to provide free plots to such houses in which more than one family is residing and if they do not have any plot of land to live in.
- ❖ Apart from this, loans can also be obtained from banks on the plots provided through this scheme, so that the economic condition of the citizens of the state will also improve.
- ❖ Through this scheme, the citizens of the state will be able to lead a respectable life with minimum basic necessities. Every citizen will be able to have his own house.
- ❖ On this occasion, the Chief Minister distributed land rights letters to 5 beneficiaries of 'Mukhyamantri Awasiya Bhu-Adhikar Yojna'. Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan had announced this scheme on October 30, 2021.
- ❖ The Chief Minister distributed benefits to 13 thousand 397 beneficiaries of various government schemes and inaugurated 223 construction works costing Rs 6 crore 68 lakh 43 thousand and performed bhoomi-pujan of 23 works costing Rs 34 crore.

Union Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw launched high-speed 5G telecom services in Odisha:

- ❖ Ashwini Vaishnaw, Union Minister for Communications, Information Technology, and Railways, has launched high-speed fifth-generation (5G) communication services in Odisha.
- ❖ Following the introduction of the service, the Minister stated that by August 2024, the whole state of Odisha will be covered by telecom towers, with fibre reaching every hamlet.
- ❖ Vaishnaw went on to say that with government assistance, it will grow into a powerful organization. He stated that the administration of Prime Minister Narendra Modi has set aside 5,600 million rupees to build 5,000 towers in 7,000 villages throughout Odisha.

26th National Youth Festival Will Take Place at Hubballi-Dharwad:

- ❖ India's 26th National Youth Festival Will Take Place at Hubballi-Dharwad in Karnataka.
- ❖ It will be celebrated from 12th to 16th January 2023.
- ❖ The youth festival will mark the birth anniversary of Swami Vivekananda which falls on 12 January.
- ❖ Prime Minister Narendra Modi will inaugurate the 26th National Youth Festival.

1st All India Annual State Ministers Conference On Water To Deliberate Water Vision@2047:

- ❖ Marching forward with Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi's vision to make India a developed Nation by 2047, the Government is deliberating on the preparation of the Action Plan and Vision Document of India@2047.
- ❖ While addressing the challenges of water security as part of the India@2047 plan, the Prime Minister has proclaimed the '5P' mantra which includes Political will, Public financing, Partnerships, Public Participation and Persuasion for sustainability.
- ❖ India's water sector will play a significant role in achieving heights India strives to reach in the next crucial years. To take forward action plan, the Ministry of Jal Shakti is organizing the "1st All India Annual State Ministers Conference on Water" with the theme "Water Vision@2047" in Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh on 5th & 6th January, 2023.
- ❖ The primary objective of the 2-days Conference is to gather inputs for the India@2047 and 5P vision from the different water stakeholders of the states, water being a state subject, and also to improve engagement and partnership with the states and to share the initiatives and schemes of the Ministry of Jal Shakti.
 - **1st All India Annual State Ministers Conference on Water to be held in Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh on 5th & 6th January, 2023.**
 - **Water Vision@2047 is part of PM's India@2047 plan**
 - **Thematic sessions at the conference to focus on water security, water usage efficiency, water governance, water infrastructure and water quality**



- State Ministers of Water Resources, Public Health Engineering Department (PHED) and Irrigation from all States/ UTs of the country will participate
- Participants to prepare a blue print of Water Vision@2047 and prepare a road map to address the water problems of the country.

The Conference will have 5 thematic sessions viz.

- ❖ Water Security in Water Deficit, Water Surplus and Hilly Regions;
- ❖ Water Use Efficiency including Reuse of Waste Water/ Grey Water;
- ❖ Water Governance;
- ❖ Climate Change Resilient Water Infrastructure, and
- ❖ Water Quality.

National Security Adviser Ajit Doval met his counterpart, the visiting Diplomatic Adviser to the French President, Emmanuel Bonne:

- ❖ NATIONAL SECURITY Adviser Ajit Doval on Thursday met his counterpart, the visiting Diplomatic Adviser to the French President, Emmanuel Bonne, and reiterated their commitment to take forward their strategic partnership to ensure peace, stability and security in the Indo-Pacific based on common beliefs in rules-based international order and strategic autonomy.
- ❖ They also discussed the situation in Afghanistan, Africa, South East Asia, Eurasia; Third Country Cooperation; cooperation in the Indo-Pacific, nuclear energy, space and cyber domains.
- ❖ A statement by the Ministry of External Affairs said, “During the Strategic Dialogue and the meetings, India and France reiterated their commitment to take forward their strategic partnership to ensure peace, stability and security in the Indo-Pacific based on common beliefs in rules-based international order and strategic autonomy.
- ❖ The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said that the two sides discussed the global security environment, expanding the scope of defence cooperation to include co-development of futuristic technologies in line with India’s priorities of Make in India and Atmanirbhar Bharat.



Uttarakhand CM inaugurates 26 schemes worth Rs 306 crore:

- ❖ Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami on Thursday inaugurated 26 schemes worth Rs 30,606.75 lakh, including the Gadarpur and Khatima bypass, a long-pending demand of residents, an official statement said.
- ❖ Union Road Transport and Highways Minister Nitin Gadkari virtually addressed the event held at Pahenia Bypass in Khatima.
- ❖ Dhami said work will soon start on the 4-lane project from Tanakpur to Sitarganj and from Pilibhit to Khatima, important stretches on the route to Kailash Mansarovar. India and Nepal are jointly constructing a road to connect the two countries, he added.
- ❖ “PM Narendra Modi has special attachment with Uttarakhand. Work is being done to connect Kedarnath and Hemkund Sahib with a ropeway,” he added.

The Centre is set to launch the Aspirational Blocks Programme (ABP) to raise blocks on development scale:

A new initiative called the **Aspirational Blocks Program** was launched by **Prime Minister Narendra Modi** on 7 January with an aim to improve the performance of blocks within backward districts in various development parameters.

An overview of the news

- ❖ The Aspirational Block Program (ABP) was announced in the Union Budget 2022-23.
- ❖ Under this programme, 500 blocks across states have been identified for quarterly ranking based on their performance in areas such as health, education and nutrition.
- ❖ It will initially cover 500 districts across 31 states and union territories, of which more than half of the blocks are located in six states – Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Jharkhand, Odisha and West Bengal.
- ❖ The 500 blocks for ABP have been selected based on the recommendations of a four-member committee set up by the government last year.
- ❖ ABP is based on the Aspirational District Program (ADP).

Aspirational District Program

- ❖ The program was launched in January 2018 with an aim to rapidly and effectively transform some of the most underdeveloped districts in the country.
- ❖ The scheme is implemented along with the Central and State schemes.
- ❖ At the Government of India level, the program is administered by NITI Aayog.
- ❖ Parameters for Best Aspirational District

It envisages rapid development of selected districts on the basis of a composite index based on five parameters

1. Health and Nutrition
2. Education
3. Financial Inclusion and Skill Development
4. Agriculture and water resources
5. Basic Infrastructure

India to host Voice of Global South Summit:

- ❖ India will host a special virtual Summit on 12-13Jan 2023 called 'Voice of Global South Summit'.
- ❖ Theme of the Summit is 'Unity of Voice, Unity of Purpose'.
- ❖ The summit is India's attempt to provide a common platform to discuss concerns affecting developing countries.
- ❖ The initiative is inspired by PM Modi's vision of Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas...and philosophy of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam

Supreme Court Expands fundamental rights-Article 19 Ambit:

- ❖ The Supreme Court has ruled that a fundamental right under Article 19/21 can be enforced even against persons other than the State or its instrumentalities.
- ❖ It means that Not just state, even private citizens can face challenge.
- ❖ Article 19 of the Constitution of India guarantees the right to freedom of speech and expression, and is typically invoked against the state.

BPCL launches low-smoke Superior Kerosene Oil (SKO) for Indian Army:

- ❖ Bharat Petroleum has launched low-smoke superior kerosene oil for Indian Army.
- ❖ BPCL has emerged as 1st Oil Marketing Company to commence supply of new LSLA grade SKO supplies to Army.
- ❖ Normal kerosene emits substantial smoke, which poses a health hazard to personnel who use it at higher altitudes, where oxygen level is very low.
- ❖ The low-smoke kerosene will provide cleaner fuel to soldiers.

Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited (BPCL):

- Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited (BPCL) is an Indian central public sector undertaking under the ownership of the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas, Government of India.
- BPCL is India's second-largest government-owned downstream oil producer.
- It operates three refineries in Bina, Kochi and Mumbai.
- Headquarters: Mumbai
- Chairmen: Vetsa Ramakrishna Gupta

Bihar government begins caste survey in State:

- The Bihar government has begun caste surveys in different parts of the State.
- Only castes, not sub-castes along with economic status of each family will be cataloged.
- The economic status of each family will be duly mentioned in the survey.
- The caste survey would help to take requisite measures for the upliftment of the deprived classes.

Birsa Munda

- Also known as Dharti Aaba (Father of Earth), Birsa Munda is known to have mobilised the tribal community against the British.
- Birsa started the faith of 'Birsait'.

- Munda Rebellion was led by Birsa Munda in the south of Ranchi in 1899-1900.
- The 'Ulgulan' or the 'Great Tumult' as the rebellion came to be called, aimed at establishing Munda Raj by driving out the British

Pranesh M became India's 79th Grandmaster

- Tamilnadu's Pranesh M became India's 79th Grandmaster on 6 January 2023.
- After beating GM Frode Olav Olsen Urkedal of Norway, Pranesh attained the required 2500 ELO ratings and won the Rilt on Cup in the final round to claim the title.
- With this, he also becomes India's first Grandmaster of year 2023.
- In December 2022, Koustav Chatterjee became India's 78th Grandmaster.

India Gem and Jewellery Domestic Council elects Saiyam Mehra as chairman:

- The members of the All India Gem and Jewelry Domestic Council (GJC) on January 5 2023 elected Sayam Mehra as its new chairman for a period of two years (2023-24).
- The members also elected Rajesh Rokade as the vice-chairman of the body.
- All India Gem and Jewelry Domestic Council is a national trade association for the promotion and development of the gems and jewellery trade in India.

Hyderabad to host first-ever Formula E World Championship race:

- The first-ever ABB FIA Formula E World Championship race in India is to be held in Hyderabad.
- The Formula E World Championship will be held from 11th February 2023.
- The government aims to make Hyderabad one of the top cities in the world by hosting Formula E World Championship.
- The event will be climate-friendly as it is a net zero-carbon sport

India's first inclusion festival 'Purple Fest' begins in Goa:

- Union Minister Dr Virendra Kumar inaugurated 'Purple Fest: Celebrating Diversity', India's first festival of inclusion, in Goa on 6 Jan 2023.

- The event includes panel discussions, artistic live performances, large displays, immersive experience zones and other activities.
- He also inaugurated a two day sensitization workshop on ‘Issues relating to Empowerment of persons with Disabilities

Union Government approves National Green Hydrogen Mission with initial outlay of Rs. 19,744 crore:

The Union Government has approved the National Green Hydrogen Mission with an initial outlay of 19,744 crore rupees. Briefing reporters in New Delhi Information and Broadcasting Minister Anurag Thakur said, the Mission aims to make India a Global Hub for production, utilisation and export of Green Hydrogen. He said, this Mission will play an important role in dealing with climate change. He said, India will be the global hub of Green Hydrogen.

Mr. Thakur said, Prime Minister Narendra Modi had announced the launch of the National Hydrogen Mission during his Independence Day speech on the 15th of August 2021. He said, 50 lakh tonnes of green hydrogen will be produced per year, with an associated renewable energy capacity addition of about 125 Giga Watt. The targets by 2030 are likely to bring in over 8 lakh crore rupees investments and create over 6 lakh jobs.

The Minister said, annually the Mission will help save one lakh crore rupees in the import of fossil fuels. Mr. Thakur said, through this mission, 50 million metric tonnes of carbon emissions will be averted annually.

International Kite Festival 2023 begins in Ahmedabad, Gujarat

- The festival of Uttarayana or Makara Sankranti marks the journey of the Sun in the northern direction, i.e. Uttara Disha. This festival marks the end of winter and the beginning of summer and marks the Hindu New Year.
- The first International Kite Festival was organized in Gujarat in 1989, in which master kite makers from Malaysia, Indonesia and the United States participated.
- The symbolic meaning of this festival is to awaken the gods from deep sleep. Indian history depicts that kite flying has always been an important part of our culture. Even royal families followed this tradition in pre-colonial times.
- Later in history, the Nawabs of Hindustan found kite flying to be a very interesting sport. Then soon the game became popular and started reaching people.



Indian Navy signs agreement with Sagar Defence for armed autonomous boat swarms under 'SPRINT' initiative:

- The Indian Navy has signed an agreement with Sagar Defence Engineering Pvt. Ltd for armed autonomous boat swarms under 'SPRINT', an initiative to promote development of niche defence technologies by domestic companies.
- This is the 50th contract under 'SPRINT', which aims at the development of 75 indigenous technologies by the industry for the Navy, officials said. The contract was signed.
- "We are keeping the pressure on to sign the 100th contract by January end. Our aim is to induct 75 new technologies by August 15, 2023 as part of Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav," a Navy official said.
- Sagar Defence Engineering has the know-how to create the nation's first armed autonomous unmanned boat with swarming capabilities, the company said in a statement.



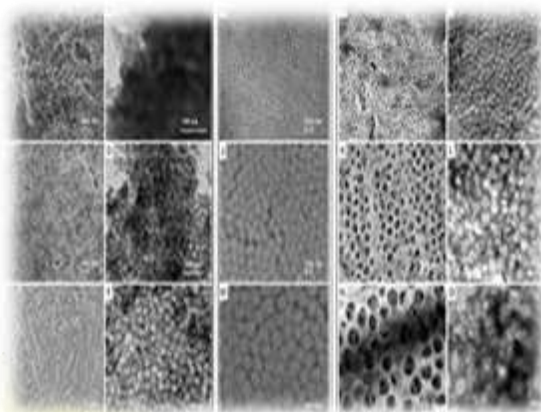
About SPRINT Scheme:

- 'SPRINT' Scheme is an initiative to promote development of niche defence technologies by domestic companies.
- The task of development of this technology is one of the 75 challenges that have been introduced by the Indian Navy under Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav last year.
- To achieve 'Aatmanirbharta' in defence, Naval Innovation and Indigenisation Organisation (NIIO), in conjunction with the Defence Innovation Organisation (DIO), aims to induct at least 75 new indigenous technologies/products into the Indian Navy till August 2023.
- This collaborative project is named SPRINT {Supporting Pole-Vaulting in R&D through Innovations for Defence Excellence (iDEX), NIIO and Technology Development Acceleration Cell (TDAC)}.

IISER Ionic organic material to remove pollutants:

Researchers at the Indian Institute of Science Education and Research (IISER) in Pune, India have developed a unique molecular sponge-like material that can effectively clean polluted water.

Access to clean and drinkable water has now not only become a local problem but global as well. Water contamination is one of the world's leading causes of death and the problem is only getting worse. To tackle this, our team at Indian Institute of Science Education and Research (IISER), Pune came up with a custom-designed unique molecular sponge-like material — macro/microporous ionic organic framework — which can swiftly clean polluted water by soaking up sinister contaminants. The results were published recently in the journal, *Angewandte Chemie*.



Systematic studies have identified various organic (organic dyes, antibiotics, pesticides, etc.) as well as inorganic toxic pollutants such as iodides, oxo-pollutants like perchlorate that are carcinogenic in fresh water sources and can pose direct threat to humanity and living organisms.

The material, called a macro/microporous ionic organic framework, is able to absorb and remove a wide range of toxic contaminants, including organic dyes, antibiotics, pesticides, iodides, and oxo-pollutants such as perchlorate.

These contaminants can pose a direct threat to human health and the environment, and are commonly found in freshwater sources.

Traditionally, sorbent materials have been used to purify water by trapping pollutants through an ion-exchange process. However, these materials often suffer from poor kinetics and specificity, leading to limited effectiveness in removing contaminants. In an effort to address this issue, the researchers at IISER Pune developed a new material called viologen-unit grafted organic-framework (iVOFm).

Uttar Pradesh launches a statewide 100-day 'UP Global City' campaign to make urban bodies of the state on par with global standards:

The 100-day 'UP Global City' campaign has been launched in all the 762 urban bodies. The campaign will focus on urban facilities, improving air quality, better cleanliness and beautification. It also aims at proper disposal of garbage.

Chairing a high-level meeting on Saturday, Sharma directed the officers to make the campaign successful.

Global Investors' summit is scheduled to take place in Lucknow February 10 to 12, 2023.

The summit will bring together business delegations, corporate and industry leaders, policy makers, academia, think-tanks and political and government leadership from across the world.

The Uttar Pradesh government has already started the preparations for the G-20 summit. The government will introduce 'Brand UP' in this global event. Several events are likely to take place in Agra, Varanasi, Greater Noida, and Lucknow.

Apart from the 'UP Global City', other similar campaigns being run by the Uttar Pradesh government are Swachh Dhaba campaign, Swachh Virasat Abhiyan etc

Former Bengal Governor Keshari Nath Tripathi dies:

- Former Governor of West Bengal and three-time Uttar Pradesh Assembly Speaker Keshari Nath Tripathi died due to prolonged illness at his residence in Prayagraj on Sunday. He was 88.
- Apart from West Bengal, Tripathi had held additional charge as the Governor of Bihar, Meghalaya and Mizoram.
- Born on November 10, 1934 in erstwhile Allahabad, Tripathi was also a senior advocate at the Allahabad High Court. He was jailed in Naini Central Jail in 1953 for participating in the 'Kashmir Andolan' and again in 1990 for taking part in the Ram Janmabhoomi movement.

The Pradhan Mantri National Apprenticeship Mela to be conducted in 242 districts of India on January 9, 2023:

- As a part of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi's vision to boost career opportunities for India's youth under Skill India Mission, the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE) is organising the Pradhan Mantri National Apprenticeship Mela (PMNAM) on January 9, 2023, across 242 districts in 28 States and Union Territories of India.
- Expressing his views on the Pradhan Mantri National Apprenticeship Mela, Shri Atul Kumar Tiwari, Secretary, Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship, said that, skills and knowledge are the driving forces of economic growth and social development for a country.
- Apprenticeship melas are hosted in the country on the 2nd Monday of every month, wherein selected individuals receive a monthly stipend in accordance with government criteria for gaining new skills. Apprenticeship is considered the most sustainable model of skill development, and it has been getting a big boost under Skill India Mission.
- The government is striving to train 1 million youth per annum through apprenticeship training and to fulfil this mission, PMNAM is being used as a platform to increase the participation of establishments and students. It is also providing awareness to the youth on various opportunities existing across the participating companies.

Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) publishes new country-specific standards for manufacturing of digital television receivers.

- BIS publishes standards for digital television receivers with built in satellite tuners
- Indian Standard for USB Type C receptacles, plug and cables published
- Indian Standards for Video Surveillance Systems also published

The Bureau of Indian Standards has published three significant Indian Standards in the area of Electronics.

The first standard is Indian Standard for digital television receivers with built in satellite tuners. Bureau of Indian standards, through its technical Committee has published an Indian Standard IS 18112:2022 Specification for television with built in satellite tuners.

TVs manufactured as per this Indian standard would enable reception of Free-To-Air TV and Radio channels just by connecting a dish antenna with LNB mounted on a suitable place, at roof top/side wall of the building.

This would facilitate transmission of knowledge about government initiatives, schemes, educational content of Doordarshan and repository of Indian culture programs to reach and benefit wide segment of population in the country at large.

At present, Television (TV) viewers in the country need to purchase set-top box for viewing various paid and free channels. The viewer is required to use set top box even for the reception of free to air channels (non-encrypted) transmitted by Doordarshan. Now Doordarshan is in the process of phasing out Analog transmission. Free to air channels will continue to be broadcast using digital satellite transmission by Doordarshan.

To enable the reception of these free to air channels without use of set top box, there is a need for television receivers with inbuilt suitable satellite tuner.

This standard provides requirements for USB Type-C port, plug and cables for use in various electronic devices like mobile phone, laptop, notebook etc. This standard would provide common charging solutions for the smartphones and other electronic devices sold in the country. This would facilitate in reduction in number of charger per consumer as consumers will no longer need to buy different chargers every time they buy a new device. This would help in achieving Government of India's mission to reduce e-waste and move towards sustainable development.

Earlier consumers have to keep different chargers for various electronic devices they possess which leads to extra expenditure, increase in e-waste and a lot of inconvenience. Countries worldwide are working to address these issues.

Report: Insured losses by climate change exceeding \$100 billion a year.

The insurance industry is struggling to adapt to a new normal in which losses fueled by climate change are now regularly exceeding \$100 billion a year, according to Bloomberg news.

As per official data compiled by Munich Re, insured losses from natural disasters hit about \$120 billion in 2022. Including uninsured losses, the total cost of storms, droughts, earthquakes and fires last year was \$270 billion.

World Weather Attribution, a scientific group that analyzes extreme



weather for evidence of climate change, found that flooding caused more than 800 deaths in Nigeria, Niger and Chad last summer, as per Bloomberg reports.

Union Minister of State for Finance informed that India's export with Nepal is over 10 million dollars:

India's export with Nepal is over 10 million dollars: Union Minister Pankaj Chaudhary:

TwUnion Minister of State for Finance Pankaj Chaudhary informed that India's export with Nepal is over 10 million dollars. Inaugurating the 12th Land Custom Station at Vamikinagar in Bihar bordering the area of Nepal Mr. Chaudhary said, trade between the two countries will be easier after opening this station. The Minister said, the Centre is committed to strengthening economic relations between India and Nepal.



All India Presiding Officers (Assembly Speakers) Conference will be held in Jaipur:

Vice President and Rajya Sabha Chairman Jagdeep Dhankhar has inaugurated the two-day-long 83rd All India Presiding Officers in Jaipur. Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla. Speakers and Deputy Speakers of various Legislative Assemblies including the Rajya Sabha Deputy Chairman also present in the conference.

The Vice President added India is privileged to be heading G20 at a critical time and the session will focus on the Leadership of India in G-20 as the mother of democracy.

Addressing the conference, Lok Sabha speaker Om Birla said that the laws will be stronger and more effective if there is a substantial contribution of people.

The closing ceremony of the conference will be held tomorrow (January 12). Governor of Rajasthan Kalraj Mishra will be the chief guest of the closing ceremony.

This 83rd Conference of All India Presiding Officers is being held in Rajasthan after eleven years. Earlier this conference was held in Rajasthan in the year 2011.



Road Transport and Highways Ministry to observe Road Safety Week from 11th to 17th of January:

- Ministry of Road Transport & Highways, Government of India is observing the Road Safety Week from 11th to 17th January 2023, under "Swachhata Pakhwada", to propagate the cause of safer roads for all. During the Week, various activities is being organised throughout the Country to create awareness among general public and to give an opportunity to all stakeholders to contribute to the cause of road safety. This includes various awareness campaigns related to causes of road accidents and measures to prevent them.
- National Safety Council of India organizes every year National Road Safety Week along with the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways.
- The NSC is an autonomous body set up by the Indian government to engage the public on safety, health and environment issues.
- The Department of War Transport was formed in July, 1942, by the bifurcation of the then Department of Communications into two Departments
 - Department of Posts
 - Department of War Transport.

The functions allocated to the Department of war Transport include Major Ports, Railways Priorities, utilization of road and water transport, Petrol rationing and Producer Gas. Broadly speaking, the functions of the War Transport Department were to coordinate the demands for transport in war time, Coastal Shipping and the administration and development of major ports. Later, the planning of export was undertaken as a corollary to the Departments control of transport priorities also.

History:

- 1957: Department of War Transport was renamed as Ministry of Transport & Communications and Department of transport was placed under it.
- 1966: On 25 January, under President's order the Department of Transport, Shipping & Tourism was placed under Ministry of Transport and Aviation.
- 1967: On 13 March, the Ministry of Transport and Aviation was bifurcated into Ministry of Shipping and Transport and the Ministry of Tourism and Civil Aviation.
- 1985: On 25 September, during reorganisation the Ministry of Transport and Shipping became the Department of Surface Transport under the Ministry of Transport.
- 1986: On 22 October, the Department of Surface Transport under Ministry of Transport was renamed as Ministry of Surface Transport.
- 1999: On 15 October, Ministry of Surface Transport was subsequently re-organized into departments, namely Department of Shipping and Department of Road Transport and Highways.
- 2000: On 17 November, the Ministry of Surface Transport was bifurcated into two Ministries namely Ministry of Road Transport and Highways and Ministry of Shipping.
- 2004: On 2 October, Ministry of Shipping and Ministry of Road Transport has again been merged and renamed as Ministry of Shipping and Road Transport and Highways.

There are two departments under it:

Department of Shipping

Department of Road transport and Highways

Formed : July 1942, 80 years ago

Jurisdiction : Government of India

Headquarters : New Delhi

Minister : Nitin Gadkari, Cabinet

Deputy Minister: General V. K. Singh (Retd.),

Child agencies : National Highways Authority of India NHAI
National Highways and Infrastructure Development Corporation Limited NHIDCL



Prime Minister Narendra Modi to inaugurate Global Investors Summit in Indore:

PM Narendra Modi will virtually inaugurate the 7th edition of 'Invest Madhya Pradesh-Global Investors Summit', a flagship event of the state government in Indore today i.e. on 11 January.

The theme of the two-day summit is 'Madhya Pradesh-The Future Ready State', an official said.

Special Guests : Guyana President Dr Mohamed Irfaan Ali and Suriname President Chandrikapersad Santokhi

A total of 447 international delegates from 84 countries, 401 international buyers, more than 5,000 industrialists and representatives of various international industry associations, and representatives of all G20 countries will take part in the event, the official said.

The key objectives of the event are - showcasing industrial ecosystem of the state, promoting the state policies, consultation with industrial organisations to formulate industry-friendly policies, collaboration opportunities, promoting export potential and buyer-seller meets and vendor development, the official added.

"If you have come to Madhya Pradesh, then you must explore it. Madhya Pradesh is a tiger state along with a cheetah state.

The state is committed to move forward from the current growth rate of 19.76 per cent.



"Jadunama" A book written on writer-lyricist Javed Akhtar released:

- The author of the book is Arvind Mandloi.
- The name of the book is Jadunama as 'Jadu' was the childhood name of Javed Akhtar.



- The book is about Javed's struggle since childhood to become what he is today and to create a hallmark of success in everything he does.

Health Minister launched book titled 'Braving A Viral Storm':

- Health Minister Mansukh Mandaviya on Jan 11, 2023 launched book titled 'Braving A Viral Storm: India's Covid-19 Vaccine Story'.
- The book is co-authored by Aashish Chandorkar and Suraj Sudhir.
- The book launch comes ahead of India's second anniversary of starting its COVID-19 vaccination drive in January 2021.
- It depicts the country's strength and capability in handling Covid Crisis.



Centre named new Integrated Food Security Scheme as PMGAY:

- Centre has named the new Integrated Food Security Scheme as Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Ann Yojana, PMGKAY.
- Cabinet had approved new integrated food security scheme for providing free foodgrains to Antodaya Ann Yojna and Primary Household beneficiaries.
- . Implementation of new scheme has started from Jan 1, 2023.
- It will benefit more than 80 crore poor and poorest of poor people.

Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR):

ICCR is involved in India's external cultural relations or cultural diplomacy, through cultural exchange with other countries and their peoples.

Founded in 1950 by Maulana Abul Kalam Azad
Independent India's first Education Minister.
Headquarters: New Delhi
President: Vinay Sahasrabuddhe
37 Indian Cultural Centres all over the world.



Artificial Synapse for Brain-Like Computing Developed by Indian & Australian Scientists...

- Bengaluru's Jawaharlal Nehru Centre for Advanced Scientific research, Government of India who were working on nitride-based materials has used their background for developing hardware for neuromorphic computing.
- Scientists have used scandium nitride (ScN), a semiconducting material with supreme stability and Complementary Metal-Oxide-Semiconductor (CMOS) compatibility, to develop brain-like computing. This invention can provide a new material for stable, CMOS-compatible optoelectronic synaptic functionalities at a relatively lower energy cost and hence has the potential to be translated into an industrial product.

Visakhapatnam Railway Station awarded 'Green Railway Station Certificate'

- East Coast Railways' Visakhapatnam railway station has received the prestigious 'Green Railway Station Certification'. It secured 82 out of 100 points in six environmental categories.
- It addresses national priorities such as water conservation, handling of waste, energy efficiency, reduced use of fossil fuel, lesser dependence on usage of virgin materials and health and well-being of occupants.



India is going to get more than 100 leopards from South Africa:

- After the arrival of eight leopards from Namibia last September, an initial batch of 12 leopards will be flown to India next month.
- A further 12 are planned to be relocated annually for the next eight to 10 years," the ministry said, helping to establish a "viable and secure leopard population"



Delhi host first-ever India Stack Developer Conference

- The first-ever India Stack Developer Conference was organized in New Delhi.
- Delegates from G20 countries and G20 Secretariat have also been invited to the conference.
- India Stack is a multi-layer cluster of digital solutions such as Aadhaar, UPI, Digi Locker, Co-Win, GeM, and GSTN, and has played a key role in India's digital transformation.
- India Stack will be one of the focus areas at the World Government Summit 2023 which will be held at Abu Dhabi next month.



Andhra Pradesh CM launched veterinary ambulances:

- Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy has launched India's first government-run veterinary ambulance from Tadepalli.
- Each ambulance will have one doctor, a qualified Assistant and a driver-cum assistant.
- A small lab equipped with a microscope to perform 20 types of manure tests and 15 types of blood tests.
- The ambulances are also designed to perform minor surgery on bovine animals, sheep, goats, and pets.



G20 group to hold Startup20 Engagement meet in Hyderabad

- The G20 Startup20 Engagement Group will hold its inception meeting in Hyderabad from 28-29 January 2023.
- The group will also bridge the knowledge gap between the startup ecosystems of G20 member countries.

Naresh Lalwani has been appointed as new General Manager of Central Railway

- Naresh Lalwani has been appointed General Manager of Central Railway. He is a senior officer from the 1985 batch of the Indian Railway Engineering Service.
- He succeeded Ashok Kumar Misra, General Manager of Western Railway, who was also in charge of Central Railway

Annual Orange festival 2023 celebrated in Nagaland

- Nagaland has celebrated the 3rd edition of the annual Orange festival 2023 at Rusoma village, under Kohima district..
- The Festival is conceptualized to recognize the hard work of orange growers while facilitating them the market linkages to sell their produce.

Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF) adds Neelakurinji (*Strobilanthes kunthiana*) on the list of protected plants under Schedule III of the Wildlife (Protection) Act:

According to the Environment Ministry, those who uproot or destroy the plant will be fined Rs 25,000 and imprisoned for three years.

Cultivation and possession of this plant is not allowed.

Neelakurinji has been included in the list after the Center expanded the earlier protected list of six plant species to 19.

About Neelakurinji:

Neelakurinji is a tropical plant species and is native to the shola forests in the Western Ghats.

It is also found in Shevaroy Hills in the Eastern Ghats, Annamalai Hills in Kerala and Sanduru Hills in Karnataka.

It grows on mountain slopes at an altitude of 1300 to 2400 meters to a height of 30 to 60 cm.

The flowers of Neelakurinji are violet-blue in colour and bloom once in 12 years. The flower has no scent or any medicinal value.

Because of these flowers, the Nilgiri hills at the southern end of the Western Ghats are called the Blue Mountains.

It is one of the rarest plant species that grows in the Western Ghats and does not grow in any other part of the world.

It is classified as an endangered species.

Centre submits views of 24 States to Supreme Court on notification of religious and linguistic minority communities:

The Delhi government has suggested that the Centre can grant "migrated minority" status to Hindus who have moved to the national capital from places like Jammu and Kashmir or Ladakh where they are a religious minority.

The suggestion by the Delhi government is part of a compilation of views collected by the Centre from 24 States on whether religious and linguistic minority communities should be identified and notified by the Union or the respective States. It is part of an affidavit submitted by the Centre in the Supreme Court.



Muslims, Sikhs, Christians, Buddhists, Jains and Zoroastrians (Parsis) have been notified as minority communities under Section 2 (c) of the National Commission for Minorities (NCM) Act, 1992.

As per the Census 2011, the percentage of minorities in the country is about 19.3 of the total population of the country. The population of Muslims are 14.2%; Christians 2.3%; Sikhs 1.7%, Buddhists 0.7%, Jains 0.4% and Parsis 0.006%.

Prime Minister Modi flags off world's longest river cruise from Varanasi to Dibrugarh:

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday flagged off the world's longest river cruise – MV Ganga Vilas – and inaugurated the tent city at Varanasi. Mr. Modi, who joined the function from New Delhi through video conferencing, also laid the foundation stones for many development schemes and inaugurated projects worth more than ₹1,000 crore for Varanasi.

The longest river cruise from Kashi to Dibrugarh is starting from today, putting tourism destinations on the global tourism map, the Prime Minister said. "Our country is entering into a robust phase of tourism. With a growing global profile, curiosity about India is also increasing," said Mr. Modi. "With the tent city, tourists and devotees coming to Kashi now have an incredible means of accommodation," he said.

MV Ganga Vilas is the first indigenously made cruise vessel to be made in India. The cruise has three decks, 18 suites on board with a capacity of 36 tourists, with all the modern amenities. It will cover a distance of 3,200 km in roughly 51 days reaching Assam's Dibrugarh through Bangladesh. Built with a unique design and a futuristic vision, the MV Ganga Vilas will meander across various prominent



destinations that lie across the Ganges along with river Hooghly. The cruise will pass through 25 different river streams

Mr. Modi added the cruise journey is going to bring many spiritual, multinational and natural experiences as it will cover destinations like Kashi, Patna Sahib, Bodh Gaya, Vikramshila, Dhaka and the Sunderbans. “Those seeking spirituality will cover destinations like Kashi, Bodh Gaya, Vikramshila, Patna Sahib and those wanting to witness the natural diversity will cover destinations like Sunderbans and the forests of Assam.”

Makar Sankranti festival is being observed across the country:

The Makar Sankranti festival is being observed across the country today. This day is dedicated to Lord Surya. It is the day when Sun travels from Sagittarius to Capricorn. Makar Sankranti is also known as Uttarayan which means that the Sun moves towards the north.

With the onset of Uttarayan, the effect of cold also starts reducing gradually. The festival has different names in different parts of the country. It is celebrated as Pongal in Karnataka, Lohri in Punjab and Uttarayan, Maghi and Khichdi in some other parts of the country.

Indian Railways to introduce Bharat Gaurav Deluxe AC Tourist Train under ‘Ek Bharat Shrestha Bharat’ Scheme:

- “Garvi Gujarat” tour will depart on 28th Feb from Delhi Safdarjung Station
- This train Tour has been designed on the lines of the “Ek Bharat Shrestha Bharat” scheme of Govt. of India to showcase the heritage of vibrant Gujarat.
- State of Art Bharat Gaurav Deluxe AC Tourist Train with 1st AC & 2nd AC Class will be operated for 8 days all inclusive tour.
- Tourist Train consists of 4 first AC coaches, 2 second AC Coaches, one well equipped pantry car and two rail restaurants. It can accommodate 156 tourists onboard.
- Visit of prominent pilgrimage and heritage sites of Gujarat i.e. Statue of Unity, Champaner, Somnath, Dwarka, Nageshwar, Beyt Dwarka, Ahmedabad, Modhera & Patan will be the major attractions in the itinerary.
- Tourists can also board/deboard at Gurugram, Rewari, Ringas, Phullera & Ajmer Railway Stations on this tourist train.
- IRCTC has also tied up with payment gateways for providing EMI payment option to the customers.
- Indian Railways has come up with a very special tour Garvi Gujarat to showcase the cultural & Spiritual Heritage of Vibrant Gujarat State by running its Bharat Gaurav Deluxe AC Tourist Train. This special tourist train, operated by IRCTC, will depart on 28th February from Delhi Safdarjung Railway Station on 8 days tour. Boarding & deboarding facility is provided at Gurugram, Rewari, Ringas, Phullera & Ajmer Railway Stations for convenience of tourists.



- This train tour package has been designed on the lines of Govt. of India Scheme of “Ek Bharat Shrestha Bharat” conceptualized on the life of Great Freedom Fighter Sardar Vallabh Bhai Patel. The first stoppage of this train tour package has been kept at Kevadiya wherein the Statue of Unity will be the centre of attraction. The entire train will cover a distance of 3500 KMs approx during the course of 8 days journey.



- The visit of World’s tallest statue – Statue of Unity, Champaner archaeological park which is a UNESCO world heritage site, Adhlej Step Well, Akshardham Temple at Ahmedabad, Sabarmati Ashram, Modhera Sun Temple and the Rani ki Vao another UNESCO site at Patan are the major heritage treasures included in the tour itinerary. Beside, the visit of Somnath Jyotirlinga, Nageshwar Jyotirlinga, Dwarkadheesh Temple and Beyt Dwarka are the religious sites covered in 8 days tour. There will be two night stay in the hotels, one each at Kevadiya and Ahmedabad respectively, while the visit of places at Somnath and Dwarka will be covered in the day halt at the destination.

India’s First Centre of Excellence in Online Gaming to be set up in Shillong:

- Digital India Startup Hub, through the Software Technology Parks of India, shall set up India’s first Centre of Excellence in Online Gaming at Shillong by March 2023. This was announced by Minister of State for Electronics & Information Technology and Skill Development & Entrepreneurship, Rajeev Chandrasekhar, at a function in Meghalaya’s capital.
- The Minister announced another initiative of MeitY to set up a state-of-the-art facility under the National Institute of Electronics and IT (NIELIT) to provide training on cutting edge Digital Skills at Shillong. A 10-acre campus shall soon be ready for this purpose which shall cater to the skilling requirement of youth in the North East Region



Union Labour Minister Inaugurated Regional Office of EPFO at Alwar:

- Union Labour and Employment Minister Bhupendra Yadav inaugurated the Regional Office of Employees provident Fund Organization (EPFO) at Alwar, Rajasthan. The Regional Office will help more than 2 lakh workers, 12,000 establishments, and 8,500 pensioners from Alwar and the neighboring districts of Bharatpur and Dholpur.



- The major industrial areas served by Regional Office are Bhiwadi, Khushkhera, Tapukara, Karoli, Neemrana, Behror, Gheelot, and Khairthal.

- At the inaugural ceremony, Union Minister Bhupendra Yadav highlighted Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision of good governance providing governance and welfare services to the citizens at their doorstep.
- The upgradation of the EPFOs District Office at Alwar to the Regional Office will enable the workers and employers of Alwar, Bharatpur, and Dholpur districts to avail full scale of EPFO services.

MP's Vidisha Becomes India's 1st District for on-Ground Deployment of 5G Use Cases Offered by Startups:

- Vidisha, an aspirational district of Madhya Pradesh (MP) becomes India's first district for on-ground deployment of 5G(fifth-generation) use cases offered by startups.
- This is a joint initiative by Vidisha District Administration and Centre for Development of Telematics (C-DOT), Department of Telecommunications (DoT), Ministry of Communications, under the guidance of V.L Kantha Rao, Additional Secretary (Telecom) & Administrator of Universal Service Obligation Fund (USOF).

5G use case promotional pilot:

- On 12th January 2023, during V.L Kantha Rao's visit to Vidisha, the startups in collaboration with C-DOT demonstrated the following 5G use cases,
- Superceuticals- 5G/4G Enabled smart health kiosk for measuring vitals & performing tests almost instantaneously with Ambupod: 5G/4G Enabled Auto Ambulance with basic life safety support & measurement of vitals with remote doctor support.
- LogyAI: Cataract Eye Screening application using smartphone for quick & effective screening of cataract disease
- Easiofy: AR/VR-3D visualization application for Lung & Brain scans (CT/XRAY etc.) for effective diagnosis.

- TechXR: AR/VR- 3D immersive experience kit for students for enhanced learning & teaching tool for innovative teaching methods.
- Dvara- Surabhi: Unique Biometric muzzle identity of cattle to be used by the state department and insurance companies, and predicting health status of cattle to be used by dairy farmers.

“Saharsh” Special Education Program Launched by Tripura State Government:

- The ‘Saharsh’ was launched in 40 schools of the state on a pilot basis in August last year. This year, it will be extended to all government and aided schools in Tripura from the second week of January.
- A similar program, which was found to be effective in social and economic development in research studies of Harvard and Columbia Universities is being contextualized with local realities of India before being implemented in Tripura.
- The school education department has introduced 36 reforms in the last five years and the higher education department has 19 reforms.
- The ‘Saharsh’ initiative is aimed at empowering children to learn with happiness.
- The state government has trained 204 schools for the ‘Saharsh’ curriculum while 200 more will be trained in the future.
- 30 assistant headmasters from different districts of Tripura were also selected to work as Saharsh implementation ambassadors



UBI Sanctions 150 Agri Drone Loans for Garuda Kisan Drones under AIF:

On 12th January 2022, Chennai-based Drone Startup, Garuda Aerospace Pvt Ltd, partnered with the Union Bank of India (UBI). Under this partnership, 150 Garuda Agri Kisan drones have received sanction for Loan under the Union Kisan Pushpak Scheme.

This partnership is for the Agriculture Infrastructure Fund (AIF) scheme and capital subsidy under sub-mission on Agriculture Mechanization (SMAM).



Important Points:

- The UBI has launched the Union Kisan Pushpak Scheme for financing Kisan Drones in the field of digitisation of land records and operations in crop production, spraying of fertilisers,

chemicals, growth promoters and pesticides which helps farmers in growing their crop yield and improving their income.

- The AIF scheme will finance 150 drone applications that will benefit the farmer community and create 150 skilled pilots who will engage to become entrepreneurs and improve farmers income.
- Garuda Aerospace is training 1 lakh youth free of cost and is targeting to sell 5,000 drones before 31st March 2023.

Union Bank of India (UBI):

Managing Director (MD) & Chief Executive Officer (CEO) - A. Manimekhalai
Headquarters - Mumbai, Maharashtra
Establishment-1919
Tagline: Good People To Bank With

Navy's vintage IL38 SD to join R-Day flypast for first and last time:

- IN 301 is the first IL 38SD aircraft of the Indian Navy.
- The aircraft was commissioned into the Indian Navy in 1977.
- It was with the induction of IL 38 aircraft that the Navy moved into the arena of airborne long-range maritime reconnaissance (LRMR).
- The IL 38 is an all-weather aircraft with long endurance.
- IN 301 was part of Indian Naval Air Squadron 315 -the 'Winged Stallions' -at Go

**NAVY'S IL 38
AIRCRAFT
TO FLY FIRST
AND LAST TIME**



Indian Navy

President of India is the Supreme Commander of the Indian Navy.
Commander of the navy is the Chief of Naval Staff, a four-star admiral.
Motto: "Sham no Varunah", means "may the god of water, Varuna is protecting us".
Indian Navy Day: December 4

Pankaj appointed as Deputy National Security Adviser:

- Former Director of Border Security Force (BSF) Pankaj Kumar Singh has been appointed as Deputy National Security Adviser. It is reported that Singh, who completed IPS in Rajasthan in 1988, will continue in this post for 2 years.
- BSF on last August 31, 2021. He took office as a director and retired on December 31 last year. He is currently appointed as Deputy National Security Adviser of the country. His father Prakash Singh served as Director of BSF from June 1993 to January 1994.



Global economic growth to slow to 1.7 percent in 2023 - World Bank forecast:

- According to a report issued by the World Bank, the world economic growth has reached its lowest level for the third time in the last 30 years.
- The global economy is growing slowly due to various reasons including high inflation, interest rate hike, lack of investment, Russia-Ukraine war. 2023-2024 global economic growth will be 1.7 and 2.7 percent respectively. This is stated by the World Bank.



Union Ministry of Coal has given permission to extract coal from three coal mines:

- The Union Ministry of Coal has approved three more coal mines to produce commercial coal. Additional Secretary of the Department, Mr. Nagaraju issued orders for this. Noting that this has ensured the contribution of the private sector in energy security, he has requested them to use their full capacity for the development of coal mines.
- The cumulative production of these three coal mines is 3.7 million tonnes per annum and the geological reserve is 156.57 metric tonnes. These coal mines are expected to generate an annual income of Rs 408 crore and attract capital investment worth Rs 550 crore.

- Also, the Ministry of Coal has said that employment will be created for five thousand people through these three mines. Currently 3 mines have been sanctioned taking the number of mines sanctioned so far to 48.

First G20 Health Working Group meeting in Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala:

- Under the leadership of G20 India, Union Minister of State for Health Dr. Bharati Pravin Pawar and Minister of State for External Affairs Mr. SV Muralitharan addressed the first G20 Health Working Group meeting in Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala.
- Speaking on the occasion, Minister of State for External Affairs Mr. SV Muralitharan highlighted India's strong medical practice and culture of innovation. He urged the delegates on the need to streamline our program to effectively deal with any health crisis. He said that we must collectively prepare ourselves to face any health challenge in the future.
- The meeting was attended by NITI Aayog Member (Health) Dr. VK Pal, Union Health Secretary Mr. Rajesh Bhushan and others.



Kerala Higher Education Minister Allows 60 days Maternity Leave for Female Students

- Cochin University of Science and Technology (CUSAT) has announced the grant of menstrual leaves to female students.
- The Kerala government is planning to extend the leave policy to all the universities under the State Higher Education Department.



Praveen Sharma appointed as Director of National Health Authority

- Sharma has been appointed to the post, for a period of five years or until further orders, whichever event takes place earlier.
- Sharma is an Indian Defence Service of Engineers (IDSE) officer of 2005 batch.



Tata Boeing Aerospace Delivers First Fuselage for Indian Army AH-64 Apache

- The Boeing AH-64 Apache is an American twin-turboshaft attack helicopter.
- It is typically a mixture of AGM-114 Hellfire missiles and Hydra 70 rocket pods.
- The AH-64 has significant systems redundancy to improve combat survivability.



“Bharat Parv” Event

- Ministry of Tourism Organized 6-days (26th to 31st January 2023) Mega event “Bharat Parv” at Red Fort Lawns, Delhi
- The highlights of which will include showcasing of the best Republic Day Parade tableaux at the venue, cultural performances by the Zonal Cultural Centres as well as cultural troupes from States/ UTs

Naresh Lalwani takes charge as General Manager of Central Railway

- He is a senior officer of the Indian Railway Engineering Service of 1985 batch.
- Before, he was working as Senior Deputy General Manager and Chief Vigilance Officer of Western Railway.
- He succeeds Ashok Kumar Misra, General Manager Western Railway.



Prime Minister inaugurated the second phase of the Parliamentary Sports Festival 2022-23 in Basti district via video:

- Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi today inaugurated the 2nd phase of the Parliamentary Sports Festival Sansad Khel Mahakumbh 2022-23 through video. This festival has been organized and celebrated in Basti district since 2021 by its Member of Parliament Mr. Harish Dwivedi
- The sports festival has indoor and outdoor sports competitions. Sports like Wrestling, Kabaddi, Go-Go, Basketball, Football, Hockey, Volleyball, Chess, Carrom, Badminton, Table Tennis are available. Apart from these competitions like Essay Writing, Painting, Rangoli are also conducted.
- Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Mr. Yogi Adityanath, Member of Parliament Mr. Harish Dwivedi and others also participated in the event.



Employees' Provident Fund Organization (EPFO) launches 'Nidhi Aapke Nikat'

- The aim of this program is to reach all the districts of the country on the same day i.e. 27th of every month.
- EPFO organized camps in 685 districts of the country.
- In the year 2015, Bhavishya Nidhi Adalat was rechristened as Nidhi Aapke Nikat.

National Logistics Portal (marine) in New Delhi.

- It is a one-stop platform aimed at connecting all the stakeholders of the logistics community using IT.
- The National Logistic Portal (marine) (NLP) is a project of national importance.
- National Logistics Portal will be a single window for all trade processes .



The Mughal Garden of Rashtrapati Bhavan has been called Amrit Udyan.

- Once a year, the gardens are made available to the public.
- This time, the public will be able to visit the Herbal Garden, Bonsai
- Herbal-I, Herbal-II, Tactile Garden, Bonsai Garden, and Arogya Vanam, were created under the administrations of former presidents Dr. A P J Abdul Kalam and Ram Nath Kovind.



Woxsen University Launched Project Aspiration for Girls in Telangana

- The project for the ambitious girls of Classes IX-XII, Telangana Model School & Junior College.
- students are selected by the school principal to take part in the “Train the Trainer” workshop which commenced in December 2022.
- The training programs will be for three weeks.
- It will help them develop SMART Goals & learn how to work towards achieving them.



India's First Green Solar Panel Factory to Build by Luminous in Uttarakhand

- It will be operational by the end of this year.
- The location of the new India's first green energy-based solar panel is Rudrapur ;
- which will be used for both residential and commercial applications.
- India's first green energy-based solar panel 's production capacity of 500 MW per annum.
- It is expandable up to 1 GW, producing a range of solar panels with a power output of 40W to 600W.

Khadi Fest-23 Inaugurated in Mumbai

- The month-long Khadi Fest- 23 was launched by the Khadi and Village Industries Commission(KVIC) in Mumbai.
- The Khadi Fest will run until the 24th of February 2023 at the KVIC Headquarters in Vile Parle.
- The fest will showcase apparel made of Khadi, Pashmina, Kalamkari, Phulkari, Tussar silk, etc



Republic Day 2023: Uttarakhand tableau wins first prize:

- Uttarakhand tableau which showcased the state's wildlife and religious sites at the 74th Republic Day parade has won the top prize.
- The central part of the tableau depicted the state animal of Uttarakhand, musk deer, national bird peacock and ghoral.
- Maharashtra and Uttar Pradesh in the second and third positions respectively.



Madhya Pradesh CM Shivraj Singh Chouhan announces 'Ladli Bahna' scheme:

- Underprivileged women would receive Rs 1,000 each month under this Yojna in order to gain financial independence.
- The funds will be deposited each month into the accounts of the recipients from every eligible family, to achieve financial independence.

LADLI BAHNA SCHEME ANNOUNCED BY
MADHYA PRADESH CM SHIVRAJ SINGH
CHOUHAN



Jeevan Raksha Padak Awards

- The President of India Droupadi Murmu has awarded to, The Railway Protection Force (RPF) /Railway Protection Special Force (RPSF).

Name	Designation
Jaipal Singh, Northern Railway	- Head Constable/
Surendra Kumar, Railway	- Constable/Northern
Bhuda Ram Saini BN/RPSF	- Constable/7th



India's First Model G-20 Summit

- India's G-20 Sherpa - Amitabh Kant
- The two-day Model G-20 Summit has been organized at the Rambhau Mhalgi Prabodhini's Uttan campus in Mumbai to celebrate India's presidency and take the idea of G-20 to the youth.
- The theme of G20 2023 'One Earth, One Family, One Future' - 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam'



Indian Air Force

- Air Marshal A P Singh has been appointed as the new Vice Chief of the Indian Air Force.
- Air Marshal A P Singh is currently serving as the Air Officer Commanding-in-Chief of the Central Air Command.
- He will take charge as the Vice Chief on 01st Feb 2023.
- He was commissioned into the fighter stream of the IAF on December 21, 1984.
- Indian Air Force Headquarters: New Delhi;
Indian Air Force Founded: 8 October 1932, India;
Indian Air Force Air chief Marshall: Vivek Ram Chaudhari



Khelo India Youth Games (KIYG)

- Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan inaugurated the fifth edition of the Khelo India Youth Games (KIYG) that will see participation from nearly in 27 disciplines
- The Games open at the Tatya Tope stadium in the state capital Bhopal.



International News

India and Asian Development Bank sign several loan agreements to boost infrastructure sector:

- The Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the Government of India today signed a \$350 million loan to improve the connectivity of key economic areas in the state of Maharashtra.
- The signatories to the Connecting Economic Clusters for Inclusive Growth in Maharashtra project were Shri Rajat Kumar Mishra, Additional Secretary, Department of Economic Affairs in the Ministry of Finance who signed for the Government of India, and Mr Hoe Yun Jeong, Officer-in-Charge of ADB's India Resident Mission, who signed for ADB.
- "This project builds on ADB's ongoing support to upgrade state highways and major district roads in Maharashtra," said Mr. Jeong. "It demonstrates approaches and practices that are not yet common practice, including road safety demonstration corridors; climate change adaptation and disaster-risk reduction; and highway works programs responsive to the needs of women, children, the elderly, and people with disability."
- At least 319 kilometers (km) of state highways and 149 km of district roads will be upgraded incorporating climate and disaster-resilient features to strengthen the state's core road network in the 10 districts of Ahmednagar, Hingoli, Jalna, Kohalpur, Nagur, Nanded, Nashik, Pune, Sangli, and Satara. This will help connect underdeveloped rural communities with off-farm opportunities and markets, improve access to health and social services and improve agricultural value chains by reducing transport costs for small and medium-sized enterprises.



India provides 75 buses to Sri Lanka as part of its 'Neighbourhood First' policy:

"You can change your friends but not neighbours," said AB Vajpayee while talking about the importance of maintaining relations with neighbours. Moving in line with this idea, India has now provided 75 buses to debt-ridden Sri Lanka to bolster their public transport services.

India handed over 75 passenger buses to Sri Lanka on January 8 as a part of assistance to strengthen the public transport infrastructure of the debt-ridden country. The move comes as a part of the nation's 'Neighbourhood First' policy. Under this policy, India has been extending multi-pronged assistance to pull Sri Lanka out of the worst economic and humanitarian crisis the country has witnessed since its independence in 1948.



India-Japan Environment Week inaugurated on Jan 12, 2023:

- India-Japan Environment Week has been inaugurated on Jan 12, 2023 in New Delhi.
- On the occasion, Environment Minister Bhupender Yadav met Environment Minister of Japan, Akihiro Nishimura.
- During the meeting, Yadav stressed that India and Japan may explore strengthening bilateral cooperation, especially on circular economy and resource efficiency, low carbon technology, and green hydrogen.



Currency: Japanese yen

Capital: Tokyo

Prime Minister: Fumio Kishida

Japan has a constitutional monarchy with a parliamentary government.

4 Main islands:

- ✓ Hokkaido,
- ✓ Honshu,
- ✓ Shikoku,
- ✓ Kyushu.

Economy is world's 3rd-largest by nominal GDP.

India and Egypt signs a MoU to facilitate content exchange, capacity building, and co-productions between Prasar Bharati and National Media Authority of Egypt:

India and Egypt signed an MOU between Prasar Bharati and National Media Authority of Egypt.

These MoUs provide for exchange of programmes with foreign broadcasters in the field of culture, education, science, entertainment, sports, news etc.

Republic Day 2023: events in Republic Day Parade:

Republic Day 2023: This year's parade witnessed multiple events for the first time

Programs to be organised for the first time in 74th Republic Day Parade

This was the first Republic Day celebrations hosted at the ceremonial boulevard after Rajpath was renamed to 'Kartavya Path' last year.

For the first time, 12 women riders were part of the Border Security Force's (BSF) camel contingent and 16 march contingents of the armed forces.

- The old howitzers with 25-pounder guns, which traditionally thundered during the 21-gun salute during Republic Day celebrations, were replaced by 105 mm Indian field guns this year.
- A team of "Daredevils" motorcycle riders from the Corps of Signals, co-led by a woman officer, became part of the parade for the first time.
- Nine Rafale aircraft and the Navy's IL-38 participated in the air show for the first time.



Besides the IL-38 aircraft, the formations like 'Bheem' and 'Vajrang' showcased over the Kartavya Path for the first time.

It is the first time that the President of the Arab Republic of Egypt, Abdel Fattah el-Sisi, has been invited as the chief guest on the Republic Day.

A military contingent from the Egyptian Army also participated in the Republic Day parade for the first time.

The Narcotics Control Bureau also presented a tableau for the first time



China building dam on Mabja Zangbo river near Indian border:

China is building a new on the Mabja Zangbo river, near north of the trijunction border with India and Nepal, according to the new satellite images a geospatial intelligence researcher, Damien Symon on his official Twitter handle.

Symon stated that the project will raise concerns regarding China's future control on water in the entire region. He said that construction is still incomplete at the site.

“Since early 2021, China has been constructing a dam on the Mabja Zangbo river just a few kilometers north of the trijunction border with India & Nepal, while the structure isn't complete, the project will raise concerns regarding China's future control on water in the region,” Damien Symon tweeted.



This came after China unveiled plans to build a super dam close to the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in Tibet on the lower reaches of the Yarlung Zangbo river which flows into Arunachal Pradesh and then in Assam, according to the Hindustan Times report.

Recently, India and China held the 17th Round of Corps Commander Level Meeting at the Chushul-Moldo border meeting point on the Chinese side on December 20 where both sides agreed to maintain security and stability on the ground in the western sector.

India-Bangladesh Friendship pipeline to begin supplying diesel:

- The India-Bangladesh Friendship Pipeline (IBFPL) would begin supplying diesel to Bangladesh on an experimental basis in June of this year.

- The international pipeline will transport diesel from Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation's Parbatipur depot to the Numaligarh Refinery Limited's Siliguri-based marketing terminal (BPC).

Aruna Miller becomes Maryland's first Indian-American Lieutenant Governor:

- Aruna Miller has the first Indian-American politician to be sworn in as the Lieutenant Governor in the state of Maryland, adjoining the US capital.
- Moore became Maryland's 63rd governor, the state's first and the country's only current Black chief executive. The newly sworn-in Lt Governor took her oath on the Bhagwat Gita.



UAE and India discussing settling non-oil trade in Rupees :

- Agreement signed in 2022, which aimed to increase trade excluding oil between the two countries to \$100 billion by 2027



India & Japan concludes "Veer Guardian 2023" Air exercise -japan:

- 'Veer Guardian 2023', involved precise planning and skilful execution by both the air forces.
- The JASDF (Japan Air Self-Defence Force) participated in the exercise with its F-2 and F-15 aircraft, while the IAF contingent participated with the Su-30 MKI aircraft.



WORLD NEWS

China Becomes First Country in Asia to Launch Hydrogen Powered Train:

- China's CRRC Corporation Ltd. Launched a hydrogen urban train, and it is the first in Asia and the second such train in the world. Germany introduced green trains a few months back. The hydrogen trains have a speed of 160 km per hour and the operational range without refueling is 600 km.
- The trains launched by Germany have a record of 1175 km range set. The Indian Railway on the other hand is moving fast to induct the 'World's Greenest Train' soon.
- India will get its first-ever Indigenous Hydrogen trains by December 2023. Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnav informed that Indian Railways is working on new environment-friendly trains and the engineers are designing them.

Some important Points

- The hydrogen train was developed on the basis of a high-speed platform and includes 4 cars with it.
- CRRC also introduced such a shunting locomotive in 2021 and hydrogen trams were produced earlier in the mid-2010s.
- The train will also get Digital solutions from the CRRC including GoA2 automation, component monitoring sensors, and 5G data transmission equipment.
- It is expected that the operation of the train will reduce CO2 emissions compared to diesel traction by 10 tons per year.

World's First Hydrogen Train

- Germany became the first country to operate the world's first-ever hydrogen-powered passenger train fleet. The German government has informed that 15 diesel trains will be replaced.
- These trains were previously being operated on tracks that lacked electric supply in Lower Saxony, Germany. The fleet comprises 14 trains, which use fuel cells to generate power, making it the cleanest-greenest train fleet ever.

Bangladesh: 10th edition of Dhaka Lit Fest begins:

- The 10th edition of the Dhaka Lit Fest (DLF) kicked off to a colourful start on Thursday at the Bengal Academy grounds. The DLF is being organised after a gap of three years due to the Corona pandemic. The DLF is one of the largest literary festivals of Bangladesh in which more than 500 literary personalities, film makers, artists and people from the field of science are participating.

- The 4-day event began with Buddhist Chants followed by a mesmerising dance performance by Manipuri dancers at the Abdul Karim Sahitya Bisharad Auditorium of Bangla Academy. State Minister for Cultural Affairs K M Khalid formally inaugurated the Lit Fest. Nobel Prize Winner for Literature Abdur Razzak Gurnu and Amitav Ghosh spoke during the inaugural event.



- Australian player Steve Smith broke record of highest test centuries of Sir Donald Bradman
- On January 5, 2023, Australia's Steve Smith smashed another century, breaking the great Sir Donald Bradman's record for the most Test hundreds in Australian history.

Republican leader Kevin McCarthy elected as new speaker of the US House of Representatives:

About Kevin McCarthy:

- Kevin McCarthy is a member of the Republican Party. He was elected as the House Minority Leader from 2019 to 2023. He previously served as the House Majority Leader from 2014 to 2019 under Speakers John Boehner and Paul Ryan. McCarthy has been elected as a member of the US Parliament 9 times. He was born in Bakersfield, California.
- The United States Parliament has elected Kevin McCarthy of the Republican Party as the speaker of the House of Representatives after 15 rounds of voting. He is the 55th speaker of the US House of Representatives. He was serving as the House Minority Leader in the House. He has replaced Nancy Pelosi, the leader of the Democratic Party in the House of Representatives.
- After the midterm elections held on November 8, the number of members of former President Donald Trump's Republican Party has increased to 222 in the 435-member House of Representatives. With this, President Joe Biden's Democratic Party has come in the minority in the House of Representatives. Kevin McCarthy has become the third most senior US position after US President Joe Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris.

European Union Inaugurates First Mainland Orbital Launch Complex:

- European officials and Swedish King Carl XVI Gustaf inaugurated the EU's first mainland orbital launch complex. The European Union wants to bolster its capacity to launch small satellites into space with a new launchpad in Arctic Sweden. The new facility at Esrange Space Centre near the city of Kiruna should complement the EU's current launching capabilities in French Guiana.



- European officials and Swedish King Carl XVI Gustaf inaugurated the EU's first mainland orbital launch complex during a visit to Sweden by members of the European Commission.
- European Commission President Ursula Von der Leyen noted that small satellites are crucial to track natural disasters in real-time

Science and Technology

Centre signs pact with Institute of Veterinary Biological Products (IVBP) for commercial production of 'Lumpi-ProVac', a vaccine for lumpy skin disease in cattle:

New Delhi: The government on Saturday said it has signed a pact with the Pune-based Institute of Veterinary Biological Products (IVBP) for commercial production of indigenously developed vaccine 'Lumpi-ProVac' for the control of lumpy skin disease in cattle.

The vaccine has been developed by the Haryana-based National Centre for Veterinary Type Culture and ICAR- National Research Centre on Equines in collaboration with Uttar Pradesh-based ICAR-Indian Veterinary Research Institute.

Agriinnovate India Ltd, the commercial arm of Department of Agriculture Research and Education under the aegis of Union Agriculture Ministry, has granted 'non-exclusive rights' for commercial production of 'Lumpi- ProVac' to IVPB for ten years, an official statement said.

After signing the memorandum of understanding (MoU), Union Minister of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying Parshottam Rupala asked IVBP to "start manufacturing the vaccine at large scale without any delay."

Lumpi-ProVac is used for the prophylactic immunization of animals against lumpy skin disease which gives protection for about one year. The vaccine is stored at 4 degree celsius and must be shipped on ice and used within a few hours after reconstitution. The patent has been filed by the ICAR for the technology, the statement added.

The Lumpy Skin Disease was reported in India in 2019, while the first case was reported in Odisha. After that, it has spread to multiple states across the country. In 2019, death of a large number of cattle was reported from different states with high morbidity, especially in the North-West region of the country.

The disease has been controlled and contained with the available Goat Pox vaccine in the country. Considering the heavy production losses and mortality of a sizable number of cattle, ICAR initiated research on development of indigenous homologous vaccine against Lumpy Skin Disease.

Indian Council of Agricultural Research Deputy Director General B N Tripathi and other top officials from IVRI, NRCE, and AgIn were also present at the event

An invertebrate survey was undertaken in the Thiruvananthapuram Wildlife Division:

Survey reaffirms biodiversity richness of Thiruvananthapuram wildlife division

An invertebrate survey undertaken in the Thiruvananthapuram Wildlife Division has reaffirmed the relevance of the region as a biodiversity hotspot.

The four-day exercise to survey the invertebrates of Neyyar and Peppara wildlife sanctuaries and the Agasthyavanam Biological Park with emphasis on arachnids was jointly conducted by the Forest Department and the Travancore Nature History Society (TNHS).



ISRO to launch Space Kidz India satellite made by 750 school girls studying in government schools:

Space Kidz India satellite made by 750 school Girls:

ISRO launch vehicle will carry a satellite built by 750 girls attending government schools across the nation.

Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) launch vehicle will carry a satellite built by 750 girls attending government schools across the nation, according to Space Kidz India, a Chennai-based space tech business.



Space Kidz India satellite:

- Skyroot Aerospace's Vikram-S launch vehicle carried Space Kidz's payloads, as the first Indian private rocket to launch into orbit last year,
- The AzaadiSAT satellite has a target launch date of January 16, however this date may vary for a variety of reasons.
- Space Kidz India chose 10 female students from 75 government schools across the nation.
- The website for Space Kidz India stated that "the selected youngsters are primarily from class VIII to XII."
- Lumina Datamatics has collaborated with Space Kidz India, and Niti Aayog also supports the project.
- ISRO and Microsoft Signed MoU to Boost Indian Space Tech Ecosystem

Part of this Space Kidz India satellite:

Students also created the payloads for Space Kidz aboard board Vikram S. 160 students from India, the US, Indonesia, and other nations completed 80 experiments as part of the payload, known as FunSAT.

All 37 CSIR Labs to turn into Global Centers of Research & Innovation:

All 37 Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) Labs in India will be turned into Global Centers of Research and Innovation in their fields of specialisation.

CSIR Labs spread across the country are dedicated to different exclusive areas of work.

Each CSIR laboratory is unique in itself and specialises in diverse areas such as genomes to geology, food to fuels, etc

Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR)

- CSIR was established on 26 September 1942.
- It was registered as the CSIR Society under the Societies Registration Act, 1860.
- The first meeting of the Governing Body was held on 09 March 1942.
- It is the largest public funded R&D organisation in India.
- Started with 5 laboratories in 1942, CSIR in its journey has grown into an organisation with 37 laboratories

Microsoft and ISRO tie up to help Space-Tech Startups in India:

Indian Space Research Organization and Microsoft signed an MoU to help Indian Space tech startups in January 2023.

Microsoft will provide mentoring support to space tech entrepreneurs in areas ranging from space engineering to cloud technologies and marketing.

Through this MoU, the space tech startups identified by ISRO will be onboarded onto the Microsoft for Startups Founders Hub

India Successfully Carries Out Test Launch Of Prithvi-II Missile: Defence Ministry:

- India on Tuesday successfully carried out a test launch of Prithvi-II missile from a firing range in Odisha, according to the Ministry of Defence (MoD).
- Prithvi-II is a nuclear-capable missile and is an upgraded version of Prithvi-I missile. It has a range of around 350 kms, according to the Missile Defense Project of think tank Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), which adds that it has been in service since 2003.
- The MoD in a statement said that the missile struck the target with high accuracy and all test objectives are fulfilled.
- A successful training launch of a Short-Range Ballistic Missile, Prithvi-II was carried out on January 10, 2023 from the Integrated Test Range, Chandipur off the coast of Odisha...The missile struck its target with high accuracy.
- The Prithvi-II is a a short-range ballistic missile and an "integral part of India's nuclear deterrence", as per the MoD.
- The Missile Defense Project of CSIS notes that there could be up to 30 nuclear-capable Prithvi-II missiles.



For ISRO's Aditya L1 project, IIA handed over Visible Line Emission Coronagraph payload

- The Visible Line Emission Coronagraph (VELC) payload for the Aditya-L1 mission was handed over to ISRO by the Indian Institute of Astrophysics (IIA) .
- The event was organized at the Centre for Research and Education in Science and Technology (CREST) Campus at Hosakote, near Bengaluru.
- The VELC payload was conceived and built on the CREST site.

Earth's inner core has started rotating in the opposite direction Case Study

- Xiaotong Chang and Yi Yang of Peking University, China, who studied the Earth's core region, found that the rotation of the inner core "almost stopped in 2009 and then turned in the opposite direction."
- They also predict that it changed direction in the early 1970s and that the next cycle change will be in the mid-2040s

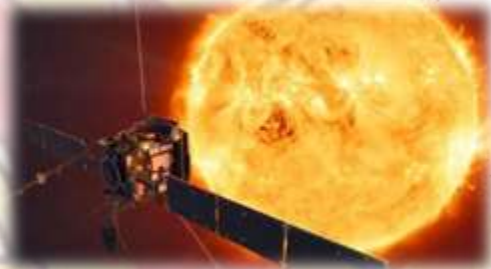


Introduction to technology for air quality monitoring systems:

- Mr. Alkesh Kumar Sharma, Secretary of the Ministry introduced the technology for air quality monitoring system developed under the projects implemented with the support of the Union Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology.
- TEXMIN, in collaboration with ISM, under the National Program for Electronics and Information Technology in Agriculture and Environment, Center for Advanced Computing (C-Doc), Kolkata, has designed an outdoor air quality monitoring station to monitor environmental pollution.
- JM for commercialization of this technology for use in mining and cement industries. Technology of air quality monitoring system was transferred to private company Enviro Lah.

Aditya-L1, will be Launched by June-July: ISRO chairman - Shri S. Somanath

- Indian Institute of Astrophysics (IIA) handed over to ISRO, the Visible Line Emission Coronagraph (VELC), the primary payload on board Aditya-L1, which is India's first dedicated scientific mission to study the Sun, to be launched by June or July.
- IIA has successfully finished the VELC, which is the seven payloads/telescopes that will fly on Aditya-L1, at its CREST campus.



Sports

Vaidehi Chaudhari wins ITF women's tournament singles in Gwalior after beating top seed Ksenia Laskutova:

Second seed Vaidehi Chaudhari was at her fighting best as she beat the top seed Ksenia Laskutova 7-5, 6-4 to clinch the title in the \$15,000 ITF women's tennis tournament at the City Centre Tennis Complex in Gwalior on Sunday.

Watched by an appreciative audience which came alive as the match hotted up, Vaidehi bounced back from being down 1-4 and facing set points at 3-5 to make it a straightforward affair.

It was Vaidehi's maiden singles title in the professional circuit. She had won her maiden doubles title on Saturday with Laskutova as her partner..



Pranesh M became India's 79th Grandmaster:

Tamilnadu's Pranesh M became India's 79th Grandmaster on 6 January 2023.

After beating GM Frode Olav Olsen Urkedal of Norway, Pranesh attained the required 2500 ELO ratings and won the Rilt on Cup in the final round to claim the title.

- With this, he also becomes India's first Grandmaster of year 2023.
- In December 2022, Koustav Chatterjee became India's 78th Grandmaster.

Shubman Gill scored a double century at a very young age:

• The New Zealand team that has come to India has participated in 3 ODIs and 3 T20Is. Accordingly, the first ODI match between India and New Zealand is underway at the Rajiv Gandhi Stadium in Hyderabad

• Gill send 208 runs off 149 balls (19 fours, 9 sixes). Subman Gill holds the distinction of senring a double century at the youngest age (23). Subman Gill became the fastest Indian to cross 1000 runs in ODIs hased on his innings (19) which he scored in this match.

- Gill overtook Virat Kohli and Shikhar Dhawan (24 innings) to become the fastest Indian and joint second fastest. He equaled Iman-ul-Haq to cross 1000 runs in 19 innings, while Faqar Zaman is the fastest to cross 1000 ODI runs in 18 innings.



ECONOMY

Indian Overseas Bank elevates Ajay Kumar Srivastava as its MD & CEO:

- Public sector Indian Overseas Bank has elevated Ajay Kumar Srivastava as its managing director and chief executive officer with effect from January 1, the bank said on Saturday. Prior to taking up the new role, Srivastava was serving the city-headquartered bank as its executive director.
- Srivastava commenced his banking career as a probationary officer in Allahabad Bank in 1991. After serving over 27 years, he joined Indian Overseas Bank in October 2017. At Indian Overseas Bank, he had a very challenging journey and handled all the departments and portfolios.
- He made strategies for each of the key areas and successfully implemented them at the ground level with the support from the Board, the statement added.
- Indian Overseas Bank is an Indian public sector bank based in Chennai. It has about 3,214 domestic branches, about 4 foreign branches and representative office. Founded in February 1937.

Founder: M. Ct. M. Chidambaram Chettyar
Founded: 10 February 1937, Chennai
Headquarters: Chennai

Launch of Utkarsh 2.0 – Reserve Bank of India’s Medium-term Strategy Framework:

- The Reserve Bank of India’s Medium-term Strategy Framework for the period 2023-2025 – ‘Utkarsh 2.0’ – was launched today by Shri Shaktikanta Das, Governor, RBI.
- The first strategy framework (Utkarsh 2022) covering the period 2019-2022 was launched in July 2019. It became a medium-term strategy document guiding the Bank’s progress towards realisation of the identified milestones.
- Utkarsh 2.0 harnesses the strengths of Utkarsh 2022 by retaining the six Vision statements as well as Core Purpose, Values, and Mission statement. Collectively, they create a strategic guiding path. The Vision in Utkarsh 2.0 that will guide the Reserve Bank of India over the period 2023-25 are:

Excellence in performance of its functions;

- Strengthened trust of citizens and Institutions in the RBI;
- Enhanced relevance and significance in national and global roles;
- Transparent, accountable and ethics-driven internal governance;
- Best-in-class and environment-friendly digital and physical infrastructure; and Innovative, dynamic and skilled human resources.
- The desired outputs are proposed to be realised in terms of strategies calibrated through milestones.
- The Reserve Bank of India attaches high importance to its medium-term strategy and monitors its implementation and progress through a Sub-committee of its Central Board.

Governor: Shaktikanta Das

Founded: 1 April 1935, Kolkata

Founder: British Raj

Currency: Indian rupee

Reserves: \$532.30 billion

Central bank of: India

Ownership: Ministry of Finance, Government of India

UPI Payments Touch Record High of ₹12.82 lakh crore in December:

"UPI has made major contribution in ushering digital payment revolution in the country. In December 2022, UPI has crossed 7.82 billion transactions worth ₹12.82 trillion," the Department of Financial Services said.

Payments through [UPI](#) had crossed the ₹12 lakh crore mark in October this year.

In November, as many as 730.9 crore transactions worth ₹11.90 lakh crore had taken place via UPI.

UPI is an instant real-time payment system which facilitates inter-bank peer-to-peer (P2P) transactions. The transaction is done through mobile in easy steps. Besides, there are no charges applicable for UPI transactions.

Bandhan Bank launches new brand campaign with Sourav Ganguly:

- Bandhan Bank has launched an integrated marketing campaign featuring the bank's brand ambassador, cricketer, Sourav Ganguly. The 'Jahaan Bandhan, Wahaan Trust' campaign, the company said, emphasises the 'trust' that the brand has been able to earn in a span of seven years as a bank and over the last two decades in the various avatars prior to the bank.
- The marketing campaign will have a 360 degree approach across TV, print, OOH, cinema and digital media. The campaign first went live on digital media today and will go live on other media this week.
- The campaign draws parallels with Ganguly's career, who became its customer soon after the bank was launched seven years ago, to showcase the trust of customers.

Reserve Bank of India has selected six entities for 'Test Phase' under regulatory sandbox for theme 'Prevention and Mitigation of Financial Frauds':

As many as six applicants have been selected by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) to test products which prevent and mitigate financial frauds, according to a press release issued by the central bank.

The testing is a part of the fourth cohort which was announced under the bank's regulatory sandbox regime in June 2022. The bank had started accepting applications from June 15, 2022, to August 1, 2022. Why it matters: A regulatory sandbox can be imagined as a ground for conducting financial experiments. It helps companies avoid the stress of jumping through regulatory hurdles.

They can check the relevance of their products before jumping through the hoops in order to launch them in the market. A successful experiment in this particular cohort can help identify and rein in financial frauds which have been on the rise since the dawn of the pandemic. How many applications were received: The release revealed that the RBI received nine applications out of which six were selected to begin trials from February 2023.

Who was selected: The six applicants picked by the central bank cover a broad range of issues including surveillance, and credit monitoring, among others.

Here is a list provided by the bank— Bahwan CyberTek Private Limited: It will test a product which provides a surveillance mechanism to monitor transactions and events from loan accounts on a “continuous and real time basis”.

SEBI allows Government to re-classify its IDBI Bank stake as ‘public’ for ease of divestment:

India's market regulator has allowed the government's shareholding in IDBI Bank (IDBI.NS) to be reclassified as "public" after its stake sale on condition that its voting rights do not exceed 15%, the lender said.

The government, with a more than 45% stake in IDBI Bank, is currently classified as a co-promoter of the lender. The government is looking to sell its 30.48% stake in IDBI Bank, while state-backed LIC will offload its 30.24% share in the lender.

Axis Bank partners with OPEN to launch a fully digital current account:

- Axis Bank has partnered with OPEN, to provide a fully native digital current account for its customers.
- This digital current account will help customers save time and effort, as the authentication process will be completely digital using PAN and Aadhaar followed by a Video KYC.
- This is Axis Bank’s first-ever partnership with a fintech firm to launch a fully digital current account

Centre approves ₹2,600 cr incentive scheme to promote digital payment:

- Cabinet has approved a 2,600-crore incentive scheme to promote Rupay debit card and low-value BHIM- UPI transactions.
- Under the scheme, banks would be provided financial incentives for promoting Point of Sale (POS) and e- commerce transactions using RuPay and UPI in the financial year 2023.
- The scheme would also promote UPI Lite and UPI123PAY as economical and user-friendly digital payments.

Centre approves 3 national-level multi-state cooperative societies

- Centre approves setting up of 3 national-level multi-state cooperative societies to promote exports and organic products.
- The move will help in achieving the government's goal of 'Sahakar-see-Samridhi'.
- Society will work as an umbrella organization for the export of surplus goods and services.
- They will be set up under the Multi-State Cooperative Societies Act, 2002.

RBI Proposes Stressed Assets Securitisation Framework For Quicker Resolution:

- As per bank inputs, banks had set-up a Committee on Resolution of Stressed Assets, which has given its Report suggesting a five-pronged approach for stressed assets resolution by the banking industry
- The Banking Regulation Act, 1949 has been amended.
- The Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 has been amended

SEBI has allowed the stock exchanges to launch multiple contracts of a commodity to attract more participation by value chain industry:

SEBI endeavours to frame policies that encourage broader participation of investors in commodity derivatives market. The stock exchanges have represented to SEBI that due to requirement of single contract of a particular commodity, especially in metal contracts except for gold, silver and precious metals, the participation of investors is limited.

The stock exchanges have expressed their desire to launch multiple contracts of the same commodity to cater to all value chain participants, said SEBI.

The matter has been discussed in Commodity Derivatives Advisory Committee of SEBI. Accordingly, after due consultation, it has been decided that the stock exchanges may be allowed to launch multiple contracts of the same commodity, it added. The decision will come into force with immediate effect.

The exchanges are advised to make necessary amendments to the relevant bye-laws, rules and regulations for the implementation of the same, bring the provisions to the notice of the members of the exchange and communicate the status of the implementation to SEBI, it said.

International Monetary Fund (IMF) holds its forecast for 2.7 % growth in 2023; MD Kristalina Georgieva said 2023 would be another tough year for global economy:

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) is not expected to downgrade its forecast for 2.7% growth in 2023, the head of the global lender said on Thursday. It noted that the concerns about an oil price spike had failed to materialize and labor markets remained strong.

"2023 would be another tough year for the global economy, and inflation remained stubborn, but it did not expect another year of successive downgrades like those seen last year, barring unexpected developments," said IMF Managing Director Kristalina Georgieva, as quoted by Reuters.

In last October, the IMF cut its outlook for global economic growth in 2023, reflecting the continuing drag from the war in Ukraine as well as inflation pressures and the high interest rates engineered by central banks like the U.S. Federal Reserve aimed at bringing those price pressures to heel.

Since then, China has scrapped its zero-COVID policy and embarked on a chaotic reopening of its economy, though consumers there remain wary as coronavirus cases surge. In his first public comments since the change in policy, President Xi Jinping on Saturday called in a New Year's address for more effort and unity as China enters a "new phase."

SBI Launches E-Bank Guarantee (E-BG) Facility:

State Bank of India (SBI) has launched an e-Bank Guarantee (e-BG) facility in association with National e-Governance Services Limited (NeSL) to enhance transparency and reduce turnaround time from days to minutes. NeSL's Digital Document Execution (DDE) platform, which provides e-Stamp and e-Sign functions, will facilitate the e-Bank Guarantee process and also the beneficiaries will instantly receive an e-Bank Guarantee on NeSL's platform without further verification.

- The introduction of e-BG will replace the existing issuance of guarantees through physical stamping and wet signatures with e-stamping and e-signature.

Google Pilots 'Soundpod By Google Pay' For UPI Payments In India:

Google piloted a Soundbox for Indian market —similar to the Paytm or PhonePe ones which gives a sound alert on the digital payment.

The 'Soundpod by Google Pay' is accompanied by a QR code of a merchant linked with their Google Pay for business account.

Users can use any UPI-based app to make a payment by scanning the code.

The Soundpods are being built by Amazon-backed ToneTag.

Indian Stock Markets Migrating to T+1 Settlement Cycle

- India will become the first major economy to move to a T+1 (trade plus one) market settlement cycle on January 27.
- The Chinese market is currently partly T+1.
- With the move, all stock settlements will be done the next day, making financial transactions faster in the stock market.
- Currently the market follows a T+2 settlement cycle, which means the investors receive shares or dividends as well as bonus shares in their accounts within two days after the transaction.

Awards

World Habitat Award 2023 for its JAGA Mission:

- Odisha won the UN-Habitat World Habitat Awards 2023 for the state's 5T (Transparency, Technology, Teamwork, Time, Transformation) initiative Jaga Mission.
- Jaga Mission is a land ownership and slum upgradation program aimed at empowering the lives of slum dwellers.
- Under the leadership of Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik, the Odisha government has set an ambitious target of becoming the first slum-free state in India.
- The state of Odisha is spearheading the Jaga Mission program to upgrade all 2,919 slums.
- The initiative has provided land patta security to 1,75,000 families in the last five years.
- 100 percent households in 2,724 slums have been provided with piped water connections, 707 slums have been converted into fully livable housing, 100 percent households in 666 slums have individual toilets and 8 cities have become slum-free.
- Earlier in 2019, Odisha's Jaga Mission received the World Habitat Award for its success in providing land security for slum dwellers.
- World Habitat is a charity organisation recognized by the United Nations Department of Public Information.

The Madras Sanskrit College presented 'Spirit of Mylapore' award:

- The Madras Sanskrit College, an over century-old educational institution was selected for the 'Spirit of Mylapore' award.
- The award is given by non-banking finance company Sundaram Finance.
- The College commenced operations in 1906.
- The award was given during the 19th edition of Sundaram Finance-Mylapore Festival.

Jnanpith Award:

- It is the highest literary award in India and is given annually for the best creative literary writing to writers

- in any of the 22 "scheduled languages" recognized in the Indian Constitution.
- It is sponsored by Bharatiya Jnanpith.
- It was instituted in 1961, and the first award was given in 1965.
- The prize carries a cash award, a citation, and a bronze replica of Vagdevi (Saraswati).

RRR's song Naatu Naatu wins prestigious Golden Globe award for Best Original Song:

The film's catchy musical number, Naatu Naatu, was awarded best original song, beating heavyweights like Taylor Swift and Rihanna.

The hit song was filmed in front of Ukraine president Volodymyr Zelensky's official residence in 2021.

Accepting the award, composer MM Keeravani said he was thrilled by the song's success.

Back home, several Indians including Prime Minister Narendra Modi expressed their joy at the news.

Mr Modi congratulated the team, saying the "prestigious honour has made every Indian very proud".

Oscar-winning music composer AR Rahman called the win a "paradigm shift".

Padma Awards 2023 Winners

- The Awards namely Padma Vibhushan, Padma Bhushan, and Padma Shri have been given for excellence in the fields of art, social work, public affairs, science and engineering, trade and industry, medicine, literature and education, sports, civil service.
- Ms. Vani Jairam from Tamil Nadu has been announced as the winner of the Padma Bhushan award for the Art field. Moreover, Shri Vadivel Gopal & Shri Masi Sadaiyan, Shri Palam Kalyana Sundaram (social work), and Dr. Gopalsamy Veluchamy (Medicine) are also to get the Padma Shri award for the year 2023.
- Zakir Hussain, KM Birla, and Sudha Murty are among 106 Padma Award recipients this year

Important Days

1 January – Global Family Day

- It is celebrated as a day of peace and sharing.
- Its aim is to that Earth is one Global Family

2 January- World Introvert Day

- January 2, is observed as World Introvert Day in order to better understand the numerous introverts all over the world.
- It is the ideal day to honor introverts by giving them the time and space they require.

3 January- International Mind Body Wellness Day

- On January 3, it's International Mind-Body Wellness Day,
- A time to recommit to loving both our bodies and minds by putting new strategies for development and wellness into action.

4 January - World Braille Day

- In remembrance of the birth of Louis Braille, January 4 is marked as World Braille Day.
- The day also recognizes that people with visual impairments should have the same access to human rights as everyone else.

5 January- National Birds Day

- National Bird Day
- The Avian Welfare Coalition, which works hard to promote awareness for birds that are captured or produced in captivity

6 January - World Day of War Orphans

- World Day of War Orphans is celebrated to create awareness about the plight of war orphans and to address the traumatic conditions faced by them

7 January- Mahayana New Year

- Buddhists all over the world will celebrate Mahayana New Year on January 7 of this year.,
- Mahayana is practiced in Northeast Asia,
- like Tibet, Taiwan, Mongolia, China, Japan, Korea, and Taiwan.

8 January - African National Congress Foundation Day

- South African Native National Congress (SANNC) was founded on 8 January 1912 .
- The primary motive was to give voting rights to black and mixed-race Africans or to unite African people and spearhead the struggle for fundamental political, social, and economic change.

8 January- Earth's Rotations Day

- Earth Rotation Day.
- Today marks the anniversary of French physicist Leon Foucault's 1851 proof that the Earth revolves on its axis

9 January – NRI (Non-Resident Indian) Day or Pravasi Bharatiya Divas

- NRI (Non-Resident Indian) Day or Pravasi Bharatiya Divas
- To mark the contribution of the overseas Indian community towards the development of India.
- This day also commemorates the return of Mahatma Gandhi from South Africa to Mumbai on 9 January 1915.

12 January – National Youth Day

- The birth anniversary of Swami Vivekananda also called Swami Vivekananda Jayanti.
- He was born on 12 January 1863.
- The government had decided to observe it as Rashtriya Yuva Diwas

15 January – Indian Army Day

- Indian Army Day

- on this day in 1949 field Marshal Kodandera M Cariappa took over as the first Commander-in-Chief of the Indian Army from General Sir Francis Butcher, the last British Commander-in-Chief.
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi declared January 16 as National Startup Day in the year 2021.
- With an aim to honour the extraordinary contributions and achievements of our entrepreneurs in shaping the startup landscape of India, DPIIT is collaborating with entrepreneurs and key ecosystem stakeholders across the length and breadth of the country to organise a series of startup related events and workshops across the week

National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) celebrates 18th Raising Day:

NDRF Raising Day is commemorated on January 19, every year.

It was formed in year 2006 under Disaster Management Act, 2005.

It plays a crucial role in the country's disaster management and community awareness for Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR).

NDRF at present consists of 12 Battalions.

These battalions are located at 16 different locations on the basis of the vulnerability profile

19 January- Kokborok Day

- Tripuri Language Day,
- with the goal of fostering the Kokborok language.

20 January- Penguin Awareness Day:

- Because humans typically don't live in penguins' natural habitats, the species' annual population decline goes largely unnoticed.
- This day is a fantastic effort to increase awareness of this important issue.

21 January - Tripura, Manipur, and Meghalaya Foundation Day

- On 21 January 1972, the states of Tripura, Manipur, and Meghalaya became full-fledged states under the North Eastern Region (Re-organisation) Act, of 1971.

23 January - Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose Jayanti

- Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose was born on 23 January 1897 in Cuttack, Orissa.
- He was one of the most prominent Indian freedom fighters.
- His army was known as Indian National Army (INA) or Azad Hind Fauj.

25 January- National Voters Day

- National Voter's Day or Rashtriya Matdata Diwas is celebrated to encourage young voters to participate in the political process.
- In 2011 the first time this day was celebrated to mark Election Commission's Foundation Day.

25 January- National Tourism Day

- To raise awareness and educate people about the importance of tourism and the role it plays in the Indian economy.

26 January- Republic Day

- On 26 November, 1949 the Indian Constituent Assembly adopted the Constitution the supreme law of the land
- It came into effect on 26 January 1950 with a democratic government system.
- This day marks the largest parade that took place at Rajpath, Delhi every year

26 January – International Customs Day

- To recognize the role of customs officials and agencies in maintaining border security.
- It also focuses on the working conditions and challenges that customs officers face in their jobs

27 January- National Geographic Day

- It is a day set aside to honour the "National Geographic Magazine," which has been published continuously for more than a century.

29 January- Indian Newspaper Day

- A day set aside to honour the beginning of newspapers in India is known as Indian Newspaper Day.
- This day is intended to raise awareness of Indian newspapers.

30 January – World Leprosy Day

- World Leprosy Day is observed on the last Sunday of January to focus on the target of zero cases of leprosy-related disabilities in children.

30 January – Martyr's Day (Shaheed Diwas) 2023

- On January 30, 2023, India observed Martyrs' Day or Shaheed Diwas to pay tribute to all the freedom fighters who sacrificed their lives for the country.
- The day is also marked as the death anniversary of the nation's 'Bapu', Mahatma Gandhi.

