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INTERNATIONAL

Argentina Rejects BRICS Membership under President Javier Milei

- Argentine President Javier Milei has officially declined the invitation to join the BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa) grouping of major emerging economies.

About BRICS:

Founded: 16 June 2009

Founders: Russia, China, India, Brazil

Israel Grants Intel \$3.2 Billion for \$25 Billion Chip Plant Amid Ongoing Conflict

- Israel's government has approved a substantial \$3.2 billion grant for Intel Corp.'s ambitious plan to construct a \$25 billion chip plant in southern Israel.
- The chosen site for the expansion, Kiryat Gat, is located 42 km (26 miles) from the Hamas-controlled Gaza Strip.

Pakistan Successfully Tests Advanced Rocket System Fatah-II

- Pakistan's military successfully conducted a flight test of the indigenously developed guided multi-launch rocket system Fatah-II.

About Pakistan:

President: Arif Alvi

Capital: Islamabad

Israel-affiliated merchant vessel hit by aerial vehicle off India

- An Israel-affiliated merchant vessel was struck by an uncrewed aerial vehicle off India's west coast, British maritime security firm Ambrey said on Saturday, in the first such known attack so far away from the Red Sea since the Gaza war.
- A fire on the Liberian-flagged tanker was extinguished without crew casualties in the incident 200 km (120 miles) southwest of the Indian city of Veraval, it said, adding some "structural damage was also reported and some water was taken onboard".
- "Merchant vessels are advised these types of attacks are typically targeted at Israel-affiliated shipping, but have in the past mistakenly hit previously Israel-affiliated vessels," Ambrey said. "This event fell within Ambrey's Iranian UAV heightened threat area."
- "The safety of crew and ship has been ascertained. The Navy has also dispatched a warship to arrive in the area and provide assistance as required," the official said, declining to be named as he was not authorised to discuss the incident.
- The Indian Coast Guard ship ICGS Vikram was dispatched to respond to a merchant vessel, MV Chem Pluto, in the Arabian Sea, located 217 nautical miles off the Porbandar coast. The vessel had reported a "fire incident suspected to be caused by a drone attack."

EU Expresses Disappointment as India Rejects Interim Arbitration in WTO Dispute

- The European Union (EU) has conveyed disappointment at India's refusal to engage in interim arbitration for resolving the ongoing dispute concerning import duties on specific Information and Communications Technology (ICT) products.

About WTO:

Founded: 1 January 1995

Headquarters: Geneva, Switzerland

President: Dr. Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala

NSDC and Saudi Arabia govt Join Hands to Safeguard Indian Laborers' Rights

- National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) has recently inked a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the government of Saudi Arabia.
- According to NSDC CEO Ved Mani Tiwari, skilled labourers in India can register themselves at NSDC free of cost.
- Ahmed Al Yamani, Vice Chairman of the Global Labour Market Conference (GLMC), revealed that a wage protection system has been implemented in Saudi Arabia.
- The National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC), founded on July 31, 2008.

Bhutan Plans 1,000-sq. km. Green City on Assam Border, Linking South To Southeast Asia

- King Jigme Wangchuck positioned the Gelephu project as an "economic corridor connecting South Asia with Southeast Asia via India's northeastern States."
- Gelephu Smartcity Project is a massive international city planned by Bhutan on its border with Assam, spanning over 1,000 sq. km.

Israel Appoints Reuven Azar as New Ambassador to India with Expanded Diplomatic Role

- The Israeli government recently greenlit the appointment of Reuven Azar as the new Ambassador to India.
- Reuven Azar currently serves as the Ambassador of Israel to Romania.

TIWB Launched Saint Lucia Program, With India as the Administration Partner

- Tax Inspectors without Borders (TIWB), a joint initiative of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).
- The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), launched a significant program in Saint Lucia on 14th December 2023.

About UNDP:

Founded: 22 November 1965, United States

Headquarters: New York, New York, United States

UK Government Considers Social Media Limits for Under-16s

- The UK government, led by Prime Minister Rishi Sunak, is contemplating additional measures to protect teenagers below the age of 16 from online dangers.

China Launches Deepest Lab on Earth, More than 2,000m below Ground

- China has achieved a significant milestone in the field of physics with the operationalization of the world's deepest and largest underground laboratory.

Statue of Tamil Icon 'Thiruvalluvar' Unveiled In France

- External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar highlighted that the inauguration of the Thiruvalluvar statue in Cergy is a fulfillment of an assurance made by Prime Minister Modi during his visit to Paris for Bastille Day in July.
- Thiruvalluvar, commonly referred to as Valluvar, stood as an eminent Indian poet and philosopher renowned for authoring the Tirukkural, a compilation of couplets addressing ethics, political and economic subjects, and love.

About Tamil Nadu:

Founded: 1773

Chief Minister: M. K. Stalin

Governor: R. N. Ravi

Capital: Chennai

Ban Ki-moon Honored With 2023 Diwali 'Power of One' Award at UN

- Former UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, along with three distinguished diplomats, was honored at the annual 'Diwali Power of One Awards.'
- Ban Ki-moon, the eighth Secretary-General of the United Nations, received the esteemed Lifetime Achievement Award.
- Also included Mirsada Colakovic, Ambassador Kim Sook, and Miroslav Lajcak.

Myanmar Surpasses Afghanistan as World's Leading Opium Source in 2023: UN Report

- Myanmar has emerged as the world's largest source of opium in 2023, surpassing Afghanistan.

About Myanmar:

Capital: Naypyidaw

Currency: Myanmar Kyat

Official language: Burmese

About Afghanistan:

Capital: Kabul

Currency: Afghan Afghani

Official languages: Pashto, Dari

Poland's Parliament Elects Donald Tusk as Prime Minister

- On December 11, former EU leader Donald Tusk returned as Poland's Prime Minister.

Sri Lanka Reaches Agreement with India, Paris Club on Debt Treatment

- At the peak of last year's economic crisis, Sri Lanka made the difficult decision to default on its nearly \$51 billion foreign debt.
- The OCC, co-chaired by India, Japan and France, has been in discussing with Sri Lankan.

Italy Withdraws from China's Belt and Road Project

- Italy has officially withdrawn from China's ambitious Belt and Road Initiative (BRI).

- As the only G7 nation to participate. This move comes more than four years after Italy initially joined the initiative in 2019 under the government of then Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte.
- The Belt and Road Initiative, spearheaded by Chinese President Xi Jinping.

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

- The JT-60SA, the world's largest and most advanced experimental nuclear fusion reactor unveiled by Japan.

About Japan:

Capital: Tokyo

Prime minister: Fumio Kishida

India Provides \$250 Million Line of Credit to Kenya for Agricultural Modernization

- India has extended a \$250 million Line of Credit to Kenya for the modernization of its agricultural sector.
- The announcement was made by Prime Minister Narendra Modi during the visit of Kenyan President William Samoei Ruto.
- President William Samoei Ruto praised the contribution of the Indian community in Kenya.
- Indian High Commissioner to Nairobi is Namgya C. Khampa.

China Adopts 'One Province, One Policy' Approach to Financial Risk Management

- The second-largest global economy has faced challenges this year.
- The announcement aligns with the outcomes of the Central Financial Work Conference in late October, where President Xi Jinping was in attendance.

NATIONAL

PM Modi Inaugurated 2 New Amrit Bharat, 6 Vande Bharat Trains in Ayodhya

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi marked a significant event on Saturday by flagging off two Amrit Bharat and six Vande Bharat Express trains from the redeveloped Ayodhya Dham Railway Station.

PM Modi Unveils Airport, Station Ahead Of Ram Temple Consecration in Ayodhya

- One of the noteworthy inaugurations was that of Maharishi Valmiki International Airport Ayodhya Dham.
- A key highlight of the visit was the inauguration of the redeveloped Ayodhya Dham Railway Station. Accompanied by Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Adityanath, Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw.

Lt. Governor Inaugurated CRC Samba-Jammu for Person with Disabilities

- Lt. Governor Shri Manoj Sinha of the Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir unveiled the commemorative plaque, officially inaugurating the Composite Regional Centre (CRC) for Skill

Development, Rehabilitation & Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (Divyangjan) in Samba – Jammu.

Government Modifies Interest Rates on Small Savings Schemes

- The Sukanya Samriddhi Account Scheme (SSAS) will now yield 8.2%, up from the previous 8%, while the 3-year time deposit rate increases marginally to 7.1% from 7%. Despite expectations of a broader reset, the PPF rate remains stagnant at 7.1%.

Gujarat to Unveil India's First Submarine Tourism in Dwarka

- Gujarat government, in collaboration with Mazgaon Dock Limited (MDL), is set to make waves in the tourism industry by introducing India's first submarine tourism venture.
- Saurabh Pardhi is the managing director of Gujarat Tourism.

About Gujarat:

Capital: Gandhinagar

Chief Minister: Bhupendrabhai Patel

Governor: Acharya Devvrat

ULFA Peace Accord Marks Historic Day for Assam: Amit Shah

- Union Home Minister Amit Shah lauded the signing of the accord as "a golden day" for Assam, expressing optimism about the region's future.

About Assam:

Chief Minister: Himanta Biswa Sarma

Governor: Gulab Chand Kataria

Founded: 15 August 1947

Capital: Dispur

Kerala CM Unveils Board for Transparent PSU Hiring

- Kerala's Chief Minister, Pinarayi Vijayan, recently inaugurated the Kerala Public Enterprises (Selection and Recruitment) Board, a pivotal step toward enhancing transparency and efficiency in the recruitment processes of public sector units (PSUs).

Gujarat Claims the title of "India's Petro Capital"

- Gujarat has emerged as the nation's petrochemical powerhouse, boasting the world's largest grassroots oil refinery and a state-of-the-art petrochemical complex.
- Incorporated in 2006, ONGC Petro additions Limited (OPaL) is a private joint venture with 26% and 5% stakes from ONGC and GSPC respectively.

About Gujarat:

Capital: Gandhinagar

Chief Minister: Bhupendrabhai Patel

Governor: Acharya Devvrat

Ex-Cricketer Ambati Rayudu Joins Jagan Mohan Reddy's Party

- Former Indian cricketer Ambati Rayudu officially joined the Yuva Jana Sramika Rythu Congress Party (YSRCP) led by Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy.

Jammu and Kashmir Panchayati Raj Act Amended to Incorporate OBC Reservation

- The Administrative Council (AC), chaired by Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha, recently approved crucial changes to the Jammu and Kashmir Panchayati Raj Act, 1989.
- The draft J&K Panchayati Raj Act (Amendment) Bill 2023 was initially submitted to the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA), Government of India.

UP CM Yogi Adityanath Inaugurates Bateshwar's Intra-District Chopper Service

- Uttar Pradesh, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath inaugurated the state's first intra-district helicopter service in Bateshwar a historical village located 65 km from Agra city.

Union Minister Anurag Singh Thakur Initiated 'MY Bharat' Campaign

- Union Minister for Information and Broadcasting, Anurag Singh Thakur, recently addressed the youth after the launch of the MY Bharat campaign.

IOA Forms Ad Hoc Committee to Govern Suspended WFI

- In response to the suspension of the Wrestling Federation of India (WFI) by the Sports Ministry, the Indian Olympic Association (IOA) has established a three-member ad hoc committee to oversee the day-to-day operations of the WFI.

About Hoc:

- Chairman: Bhupinder Singh Bajwa (Wushu Association of India President)
- Member: M M Somaya (Hockey Olympian)
- Member: Manjusha Kanwar (Former International Shuttler)

About IOA:

President: P. T. Usha

Founded: 1927

Headquarters: New Delhi

Founders: Harry Buck, Arthur Noehren

MHA Declares Muslim League Jammu Kashmir (Masarat Alam faction) Unlawful Under UAPA

- The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) has designated the Muslim League Jammu Kashmir (Masarat Alam faction) as an "unlawful association" for a five-year period under the anti-terror Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA).

Incident of Ammonia Gas Leakage Reported In Ennore Region, Chennai

- On Tuesday night, a fertilizer plant in North Chennai's Ennore area experienced an ammonia gas leak.
- The Tamil Nadu Pollution Control Board (TNPCB) stated that the level of ammonia in the air was alarmingly high at 2,090 micrograms per cubic meter.

About Tamil Nadu:

Founded: 1773

Chief Minister: M. K. Stalin

Governor: R. N. Ravi

Capital: Chennai

1300 tabla players performance at 'Tansen Festival' in Gwalior enters Guinness World Records

- The '99th International Tansen Samaroh' in Madhya Pradesh's Gwalior on Monday entered the Guinness World Records for achieving the largest tabla ensemble at any event. According to the information, as many as 1300 tabla players performed together at the event and made it to the Guinness World Records comfortably.

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh to visit Rajouri on December 27

- Defence Minister Rajnath Singh Wednesday called on the security forces to not just defend the nation but also win the hearts of the countrymen.
- "I agree that the responsibility of defending the country is on all of you," he said while addressing troops at the Army's Rajouri-based 25 Div headquarters. "I want to make a very special request from all of you – while fulfilling the responsibility of defending the nation, you also have a bigger responsibility of winning the hearts of your countrymen on your shoulders."
- Pointing out that he knows security forces make efforts in that direction and there may be mistakes sometimes, he said the effort should be to avoid such mistakes in which any citizen is hurt.
- "While serving the nation, also keep yourself connected with its people and win their confidence," he said, adding that "you can play an important role in it". "I admit that you have been playing such a role, but there is a need to perform it more seriously," he said.

Cabinet approves construction of new 4.56 km long bridge on river Ganga in Bihar

- The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs chaired by the Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi, today gave its approval for the Construction of New 4556 m long, 6-Lane High Level/ Extra Dosed Cable stayed Bridge across River Ganga (Parallel to Western Side of Existing Digha-Sonepur Rail-Cum Road Bridge) and its approaches on both sides in the Districts of Patna and Saran (NH-139W) in the State of Bihar on EPC mode.
- Digha (situated at Patna & South Bank of Ganga River) and Sonepur (North Bank of Ganga River in Saran District) are presently connected by a Rail Cum Road Bridge for movement of light vehicles only. Therefore, the present road cannot be used for transport of goods and commodities which is a major economic blockade. The constraint will be removed by providing this bridge, between Digha and Sonepur and; goods and commodities can be transported once the bridge is constructed, unleashing the economic potential of the region.
- This bridge will provide direct connectivity from Patna to Golden quadrilateral corridor via NH-139 at Aurangabad and Sonepur (NH-31), Chhapra, Motihari (East-West corridor old NH-27), Bettiah (NH-727) in the Northern side of Bihar. This Project is a part of Buddha circuit. It provides better connectivity to Buddha Stupa at Vaishali and Keshariya. Also, NH-139W provides connectivity to very famous Areraj Someshwar Nath Temple and proposed Viraat Ramayan Mandir (largest religious monument in the world) at Kesariya in the East Champaran District.
- This project is falling in Patna and will provide better connectivity to North Bihar and South part of the Bihar through State Capital. The Bridge will make the movement of vehicles faster and easier resulting in overall development of the region. The Economic analysis

results have shown an EIRR of 17.6% in base case and 13.1% is worst case which may be attributed to the savings in distance and time travelled.

UPSC Essentials: Case Study — IAS officer fights against Naxal violence via development

- Take a look at a case study which celebrates governance that turned a district into a fine example. Here is a quotable story of inspiring leadership by IAS Rajat Bansal and Bastar District Administration for your UPSC CSE and life in general. Don't miss the Post Read Question.

Woman shares 'Peak Bengaluru' moment as Rapido driver tells her about his IT job

- If you have spent time in Bengaluru, you may be familiar with the daily challenges of booking online rides, whether it's Ola, Uber, Namma Yatri, or Rapido.
- Navigating through normal autorickshaw fares and traffic management can often be a struggle, causing people to miss exams, meetings, flights, or trains due to pricing and congestion.
- In a 'Peak Bengaluru' moment shared by X user Shruti, @Shruwa12, she recounted an intriguing encounter with her Rapido driver. Shruti said the driver told her he was a corporate manager at a major company.

Govt app to allow live tracking of cargo across land, rail, sea & air

- India will launch an app that will enable companies to track their live cargo across land, rail, sea, and air.
- The app has garnered interest from over 700 companies across courier, logistics, shipping, and manufacturing.
- These companies have signed up on the app which the government will launch soon.
- The National Industrial Corridor Development Corporation (NICDC) is reportedly developing this app.

J&K Police file murder case over death of three civilians in Army custody

- The Jammu and Kashmir Police on Sunday registered a murder case against unidentified persons after three men picked up by the Army for questioning were found dead with multiple injuries on December 22. Eight men were detained following the ambush on an Army convoy on December 21 in Poonch-Rajouri area where four soldiers were killed and three others were injured. The terrorists involved in the ambush are yet to be identified or arrested.

Domestic Coal Based Power Generation increases by 8.38 % during April-Nov 2023

- India has witnessed a remarkable 7.71 percent surge in power generation and 11.19 percent in Coal-based power generation from April to November this year, as compared to the corresponding period of the previous year. The Ministry said that India is ranked the third-largest consumer of energy in the world, with an annual electricity demand increase of about 4.7 percent.

Indian Air Force successfully testfires 'SAMAR' air defense missile system at Exercise Astrashakti

- In a major success for its in-house design and development efforts, the Indian Air Force has successfully testfired its SAMAR air defense missile system. The IAF has developed the Surface

to Air Missile for Assured Retaliation (SAMAR) air defense missile system by using its old Russian-origin air-to-air missile systems.

Air India's 1st wide-body A350-900 aircraft lands in Delhi

- Air India's first wide-body A350-900 aircraft, sporting new brand livery, arrived in New Delhi from European aviation major Airbus' Toulouse facility in France.
- The aircraft, registered as VT-JRA, touched down at the national capital's Indira Gandhi International Airport at 1346 hrs, making the Tata Group-owned airline the first aircraft operator in India to have this type of aircraft in its fleet, a statement said.
- The delivery flight is operated using a special call sign AI350, it said.
- The aircraft is the first of Air India's 20 Airbus A350-900 on order, with five more scheduled for delivery through March 2024, the airline said.

Priyanka Gandhi Vadra no longer Uttar Pradesh in-charge; Sachin Pilot to handle Chhattisgarh

- Priyanka Gandhi Vadra is now a Congress general secretary "without any assignment portfolio" while Sachin Pilot will be the general secretary in-charge of Chhattisgarh as part of a major organisational reshuffle that Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge carried out on Saturday.
- According to the press release, issued by the Congress party, Mukul Wasnik has been assigned to take care of the state of Gujarat, while Jitendra Singh has been assigned to Assam and Madhya Pradesh.

President gives assent to Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita and Bharatiya Sakshya Bill 2023

- President Droupadi Murmu has given her assent to Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita and Bharatiya Sakshya Bill 2023.
- These three new criminal justice bills were passed by the Parliament last week. The Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023 replaced the Indian Penal Code (IPC), 1860, which is the principal law on criminal offences in the country.

Textiles Ministry Unveils 'Paat-Mitro' App for Jute Farmers

- The Ministry of Textiles has launched the "Paat-Mitro" mobile app to assist jute farmers.
- Developed by the Jute Corporation of India Limited (JCI), the app is available in six languages.
- JCI was established in 1971 as an official agency by the Government of India.

Bhupender Yadav Unveils NITI Aayog's Report on Global Green Growth

- Shri Bhupender Yadav unveiled the G20 report, 'A Green and Sustainable Growth Agenda for the Global Economy,' in New Delhi.
- NITI Aayog partnered with IDRC and GDN, presenting insights from a G20 international conference with 40 experts from 14 countries.

French President Emmanuel Macron to Grace India's Republic Day

- President Macron's presence at Republic Day celebrations signifies the enduring friendship between India and France.

- President Macron's attendance marks the sixth instance of a French leader gracing Republic Day celebrations.
- The 25th anniversary of the India-France Strategic Partnership is being commemorated during this year's Republic Day celebrations.

Rajasthan and Andhra Pradesh Lead in Solar Park Scheme Capacities

- Two prominent Indian states, Rajasthan and Andhra Pradesh, have taken significant strides in deploying higher capacities under the "Development of Solar Parks and Ultra Mega Solar Power Projects" scheme.
- This initiative, launched in December 2014 with an initial capacity of 20,000 MW.

About Rajasthan:

Founded: 30 March 1949

Chief Minister: Bhajanlal Sharma

Governor: Kalraj Mishra

Capital: Jaipur (Executive Branch)

ICAI Reveals New Logo for Chartered Accountants of India

- Institute of Chartered Accountants of India, recognized as the world's largest professional body of Chartered Accountants, recently revealed a new logo.
- ICAI is a statutory body established by an Act of Parliament, viz. The Chartered Accountants Act, 1949 (Act No. XXXVIII of 1949) for regulating the profession of Chartered Accountancy in the country.

IndiGo Becomes First Indian Airline to Carry 100 Million Passengers a Year

- Hindustan Times reported the achievement, signifying IndiGo's entry into an elite global club of carriers with massive passenger traffic.

About IndiGo:

CEO: Pieter Elbers (2022)

Founders: Rahul Bhatia, Rakesh Gangwal

India Sees 112 Deaths in 2022 Due To Tiger Attacks

- In 2022 alone, a total of 112 deaths occurred in the country due to tiger attacks.
- The Union Minister for Forest, Environment, and Climate Change, Bhupinder Yadav, shared in Lok Sabha.

NHAI Launched ERS Mobile App for Swift Emergency Response

- The Motor Vehicles Act, 1988, and Central Motor Vehicle Rules, 1989, shape traffic norms in India, evolving through amendments to enhance road safety.
- Computer Aided Dispatch System, NHAI has unveiled the NHAI ERS (Emergency Response System) Mobile Application.

Parliament Passes Post Office Bill, 2023, Replacing 125-Year-Old Indian Post Office Act, 1898

- The Post Office Bill, 2023, replaces the outdated Indian Post Office Act, 1898, marking a crucial modernization of regulations governing postal services in India.

PM Modi to Inaugurate of Eastern Dedicated Freight Corridor

- Prime Minister Modi inaugurated a crucial 402 km stretch linking New Deen Dayal Upadhyay Junction to New Bhaupur Junction.

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

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi marked a historic moment on Monday as he inaugurated the Swarved Mahamandir in Umaraha, Varanasi.
- Prime Minister Modi, along with Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, toured the meditation center.

PM Narendra Modi Launches Second Edition of Kashi Time Sangamam in Varanasi

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the second edition of Kashi Tamil Sangamam, a cultural extravaganza aimed at fostering the cultural ties between Varanasi and Tamil Nadu.
- During the event, PM Modi also flagged off the Kashi Tamil Sangamam Express.

About Uttar Pradesh:

Founded: 24 January 1950

Chief Minister: Yogi Adityanath

Governor: Anandiben Patel

Capital: Lucknow (Executive Branch)

Surat Diamond Bourse Inaugurated by PM Modi

- The Surat Diamond Exchange, marking a historic moment as it surpassed the Pentagon to become the world's largest office complex.

About Gujarat:

Founded: 1 May 1960

Chief Minister: Bhupendrabhai Patel

Governor: Acharya Devvrat

Capital: Gandhinagar

Tamilisai Soundararajan: Telangana to Decentralise Development into Three Zones

- According to Governor Tamilisai Soundararajan, the first zone will encompass the city within the Outer Ring Road (ORR), the second will extend from the ORR to the proposed Regional Ring Road (RRR), and the third will cover areas beyond the RRR.

Parliament Greenlights Sammakka Sarakka Central Tribal University in Telangana

- The approval comes in the form of The Central Universities (Amendment) Bill, 2023, which successfully passed through the Rajya Sabha.

PM Modi Unveils 7th edition of 'Pariksha Pe Charcha'

- Minister of Education, Dharmendra Pradhan, has officially announced the commencement of applications for the seventh edition of Pariksha Pe Charcha.
- In the previous edition held at New Delhi's Talkatora Stadium on January 27, 2023, over 38 lakh students registered.

Directorate General of Civil Aviation grants licence for Ayodhya Airport

- Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) has granted an aerodrome license for the Ayodhya Airport.
- The Ayodhya Airport, named Maryada Purshottam Shri Ram International Airport, not only signifies a significant boost in connectivity but also serves as a testament to the cultural and religious heritage of the region.

Pune Surpasses China, Clinches Guinness World Record for Largest Reading Activity

- Pune has etched its name in the prestigious 'Guinness World Record' books by hosting the largest reading activity in collaboration, surpassing China's previous record.
- The Pune Book Festival, commencing from December 16 to 24 at the Fergusson College Grounds.

About Maharashtra:

Founded: 1 May 1960

Chief Minister: Eknath Shinde

Governor: Ramesh Bais

Capital: Mumbai

Uttar Pradesh to Witness Aviation Boom: Nine New Airports in Two Years, Reveals Aviation Minister

- Union Civil Aviation Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia recently unveiled ambitious plans for Uttar Pradesh's aviation infrastructure.
- Uttar Pradesh currently has Kushinagar and Noida airports.

About Uttar Pradesh:

Chief Minister: Yogi Adityanath

Founded: 24 January 1950

Governor: Anandiben Patel

UIDAI Imposes Rs.50000 Penalty for Overcharging Aadhaar Services, Suspends Operator: Govt.

- The Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI) has implemented strict measures against operators found guilty of overcharging and also imposed penalty of Rs.50,000 against them.
- UIDAI imposes a Rs.50,000 penalty and suspends operators found overcharging to ensure fair and affordable access.

About UIDAI

Headquarters: New Delhi

Founded: 28 January 2009, India

Founder: Government of India

Arvind Kejriwal and Punjab CM Mann Initiate Scheme for Doorstep Services

- Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann and AAP national convenor Arvind Kejriwal recently launched the "Bhagwant Mann Sarkar, Tuhade Dwaar" scheme in Ludhiana.

India Joins UN's 'Race to Resilience' at COP28

- India join the United Nations' 'Race to Resilience' global campaign. This decision, announced during the recently concluded COP28 event in Dubai.

India Launches Forest Certification Scheme for Sustainable Management

- The Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change has introduced the Indian Forest & Wood Certification Scheme.

Indian Army Organizes 'Honour Run' in Delhi to Commemorate Kargil War Victory

- In a tribute to the historic military triumph during the Kargil War, the Indian Army orchestrated the 'Honour Run – Indian Army Veteran's Half Marathon' in Delhi on December 10, 2023.

Tiriyani Block Clinched Top Spot in NITI Aayog's Inaugural Delta Rankings

- The Aspirational Blocks Programme (ABP), Tiriyani Block of Kumuram Bheem Asifabad district, Telangana, has secured the top position in the first delta rankings announced by NITI Aayog.
- Rayagada in Odisha and Jamui in Bihar secured the first and second ranks, respectively, in this initiative.
- The event, conducted under the theme 'Honour Run.'

Indian Navy Conducts Bi-annual 'Prasthan' Exercise off Mumbai Coast

- The Indian Navy, recently concluded a comprehensive two-phased exercise named 'Prasthan' in the Offshore Development Area off the Mumbai coast.
- The first phase of the exercise focused on simulating security emergencies, including potential terrorist attacks and bomb threats involving Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs).

Indian Army Organizes Table-top Exercise to Empower ASEAN Women Officers

- The Indian Army recently conducted a table-top exercise (TTX) for women officers from the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN).
- This exercise, held at the Manekshaw Centre in New Delhi from December 4 to 8, is part of the ongoing joint military training initiatives between India and ASEAN member states.

Uttar Pradesh Delegation Heads to Davos for World Economic Forum

- Uttar Pradesh government is set to participate in the World Economic Forum (WEF) meeting in Davos, Switzerland, scheduled from January 15 to 19.
- Lucknow is India's pioneering AI city.

Union Minister Nirmala Sitharaman inaugurates 'Krishnaveni Sangeetha Neerajanam' in Vijayawada

- Union Minister of Finance and Corporate Affairs, Smt. Nirmala Sitharaman, inaugurated the Krishnaveni Sangeetha Neerajanam at Tummalapalli Kalakshetram in Vijayawada.

Supreme Court Upholds Abrogation of Article 370

- The Supreme Court's landmark decision on December 11, 2023, upheld the Union Government's 2019 move to abrogate the special status of Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) under Article 370 of the Constitution.
- The judgment, delivered by a Constitution bench led by Chief Justice of India DY Chandrachud.
- The Court addressed the modification of Article 367 through Constitutional Order 272.

Invest India to Host 27th World Investment Conference, New Delhi

- Invest India, the National Investment Promotion and Facilitation Agency of the Government of India, is set to host the 27th World Investment Conference (WIC) from December 11-14, 2023.
- The event, under the aegis of the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT).
- This year's conference will delve into the theme of "Empowering Investors: IPAs Pioneering Future Growth."

Union Cabinet Allocates Rs 2,500 Crore for Extended Interest Equalisation Scheme

- The Union Cabinet, led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, has sanctioned an additional Rs 2,500 crore for the Interest Equalisation Scheme. The scheme is extended until June 30, 2024.

Govt Unveils 'Mera Gaon, Meri Dharohar' Project to Document Village Heritage

- The initiative, titled "Mera Gaon, Meri Dharohar" (MGMD), is set to spotlight the cultural richness embedded in villages across the nation, Union Minister G. Kishan Reddy, responsible for culture, tourism.
- Developed in collaboration with the Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts (IGNCA) under the Ministry of Culture.

'Green Rising' Initiative Launched To Empower Youth in Meaningful Eco Initiatives

- On December 8th, at COP28, UNICEF's Generation Unlimited, in collaboration with India's Ministry of Environment, Forest, and Climate Change, unveiled the "Green Rising" initiative.
- Co-hosted by UNICEF, Generation Unlimited, and Dubai Cares, the Green Rising initiative was formally launched at the RewirEd Summit.

5th Nagaland Honey Bee Day Celebrated In Kisama Village

- The 5th Nagaland Honey Bee Day was celebrated with great enthusiasm at Naga Heritage Village, Kisama, under the theme "Bee & Honey Trials."

About Nagaland:

Capital: Kohima (Executive Branch)

Chief Minister: Neiphiu Rio

Governor: La. Ganesan Iyer

RBI MPC 2023: Why RBI has kept repo rate unchanged while growth forecast revised upwards

- In a 5:1 majority decision, the Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) has decided to keep the Repo rate unchanged at 6.5%.

About RBI:

Founded: 1 April 1935, Kolkata

Founder: British Raj

Governor: Shaktikanta Das

Headquarters: Mumbai, Maharashtra, India

Wax Statue of Baba Ambedkar Installed in Jaipur Wax Museum

- The chief architect of the Indian Constitution, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, a wax statue has been unveiled at the Jaipur Wax Museum, Nahargarh Fort.
- The Founder Director of the museum is Anoop Srivastava.

Lalduhoma set to Assume office as Mizoram's Chief Minister

- Lalduhoma, the Zoram People's Movement (ZPM) leader and legislature party leader, is poised to be sworn in as the new Chief Minister of Mizoram.
- Lalduhoma met with Governor Hari Babu Khambampati at the Raj Bhavan and formally staked claim to form the government.

Taylor Swift Named Time Magazine's Person of The Year

- Taylor Swift has been named Time Magazine's Person of the Year for 2023.
- From a financial perspective, 2023 has been a banner year for Taylor Swift.

Gujarat's Garba Dance Enters UNESCO's 'Intangible Cultural Heritage' List

- The recent inclusion of Garba dance in UNESCO's list occurred during the 18th meeting of the Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage.
- This recognition was made under the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage.

About Gujarat:

Chief Minister: Bhupendrabhai Patel

Capital: Gandhinagar

Governor: Acharya Devvrat

About UNESCO:

Founders: India, United States, France, China, Brazil, Mexico, MORE

Headquarters: Paris, France

Founded: 16 November 1945, London, United Kingdom

Head: Audrey Azoulay; (Director-General)

Ministry of Panchayati Raj Launches 'Gram Manchitra' GIS App

- The Ministry of Panchayati Raj launched tools like the GIS app "Gram Manchitra" and mobile solution "mActionSoft." Utilizing geo-spatial technology.
- The Ministry of Panchayati Raj is a branch of the Government of India.

GRSE Delivers India's Largest Survey Vessel to Navy

- The Garden Reach Shipbuilders and Engineers (GRSE) Ltd delivered the largest-ever survey vessel built in the country, INS Sandhayak, to the Indian Navy.
- INS Sandhayak was launched on December 5, 2021.
- Navy Day, observed on December 4.
- The earlier INS Sandhayak, a survey vessel commissioned into the navy in 1981.

India Achieves Remarkable Environmental Milestone: Emission Intensity Falls 33% Ahead of Schedule

- India has successfully slashed its GDP emission intensity by 33% between 2005 and 2019, exceeding its target 11 years ahead of schedule. A government report.
- 'The Third National Communication to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.'

MoT Launches National Best Tourism Village and National Best Rural Homestays Competition 2024

- Ministry of Tourism, Government of India, has announced the National Best Tourism Village Competition 2024 and the National Best Rural Homestay Competition 2024.
- The competitions were officially launched on World Tourism Day, 27th September 2023.

Kolkata Inaugurated FITEXPO INDIA 2023

- The FITEXPO INDIA 2023, one of Asia's premier sports, fitness, and wellness trade expos, commenced on December 1 at the Biswa Bangla Mela Prangan in Kolkata.
- The fourth edition of this biennial event promises to provide a 360-degree view of the rapidly expanding sports.

BJP Wins Three of Four State Assembly elections

- Bharatiya Janta Party (BJP) emerging victorious in Madhya Pradesh and successfully overturning Congress-led governments in Chhattisgarh and Rajasthan.
- Congress secured a notable victory in Telangana, winning 64 seats with a 39.4% vote share.

India's Concerns Lead to Non-Signing of COP28 Health & Climate Declaration

- The ministerial event hosted by COP28 Presidency, the World Health Organisation, and the UAE Ministry of Health and Prevention.
- The COP28 Declaration on Climate and Health, signed by 124 countries.

Ministry Of Jal Shakti Organises 'Jal Itihas Utsav' In Delhi

- The National Water Mission, under the Department of Water Resources, River Development, and Ganga Rejuvenation, Ministry of Jal Shakti, hosted the 'Jal Itihas Utsav' at Shamsi Talab, Jahaz Mahal in Mehrauli, Delhi, on December 1, 2023.
- The 'Jal Itihas Utsav' marked the culmination of the "Water Heritage Fortnight".
- The theme was "Source Sustainability for Drinking Water."

About Delhi:

Lieutenant Governor: Shri Vinai Kumar Saxena

Chief Minister: Arvind Kejriwal

Bihar Launches 'Mission Daksh' To Aid 25 Lakh Academically Weak Students

- "Mission Daksh" (Dynamic Approach for Knowledge and Skill), the initiative focuses on providing specialized Hindi, Mathematics, and English classes to students in classes 3-8 statewide.

About Bihar:

Capital: Patna

Chief Minister: Nitish Kumar

Governor: Rajendra Arlekar

Union Minister Dharmendra Pradhan Lays Foundation Stone for NSTI Plus

- Shri Dharmendra Pradhan, Union Minister for Education and Skill Development & Entrepreneurship, marked a significant step by laying the foundation stone for the National Skill Training Institutes (NSTI) Plus.
- The initiative aims to enhance the skills of Odisha's youth through demand-driven and high-quality vocational education.

India Navy appointed first woman commanding officer in naval ship

- The Indian Navy has achieved a historic milestone by appointing its first woman commanding officer for a naval ship.

Amplifi 2.0: Urban Affairs Ministry's Data Initiative for Indian cities

- Union Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs in India has embarked on a groundbreaking initiative to centralize and streamline raw data from cities across the country.
- Launched as the Amplifi 2.0 (Assessment and Monitoring Platform for Liveable, Inclusive and Future-ready urban India).

India Bolsters Naval Strength with \$5 Billion Aircraft Carrier to Counter China

- A \$5 billion aircraft carrier, signaling its strategic response to China's expanding naval influence in the Indian Ocean region.
- The Defense Acquisition Council, headed by Defense Minister Rajnath Singh.

About China:

Capital: Beijing

President: Xi Jinping

Three Anti-Submarine Warfare Ships for Indian Navy Launched at Cochin Shipyard

- The first three ships in a series of eight Anti-Submarine Warfare (ASW) shallow water crafts commissioned by the Indian Navy. The vessels, names INS Mahe, INS Malva and INS Mangrol.

About Kerala:

Chief Minister: Pinarayi Vijayan

Founded: 1 November 1956

Governor: Arif Mohammed Khan
Capital: Thiruvananthapuram

PM Inaugurates 10,000th Jan Aushadhi Kendra at AIIMS Deoghar

- The Prime Minister, along the Union Minister of Chemicals and Fertilizers Dr. Mansukh Mandaviya, inaugurated the 10,000th Jan Aushadhi Kendra at AIIMS, Deoghar (Jharkhand).

About Jharkhand:

Founded: 15 November 2000
Chief Minister: Hemant Soren
Capital: Ranchi

SPORTS

Indian Wrestler Pooja Dhanda Suspended for One Year Due to Whereabouts Failures

- Indian wrestler Pooja Dhanda, a decorated athlete with international accolades, has been suspended for one year by the National Anti-Doping Agency (NADA) due to three whereabouts failures.
- NADA, established in 2005, is India's central anti-doping agency responsible for testing athletes to ensure fair competition and adherence to World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) regulations.

About NADA:

Headquarters: New Delhi
Founded: 24 November 2005
Chairman: Minister of Sports (India)

Warner picks Marcus Harris as his Test replacement

- Veteran Australian opener David Warner has picked Marcus Harris as his replacement at the top of the order after he quits the longest format of the sport.
- Warner had already said that the ongoing three-Test series against Pakistan will be his last in the format.
- While there have been talks about his ideal replacement in red-ball cricket, Warner vouched for the 31-year-old Harris, who he feels has been around for a long time and that the selectors need to show faith in him.
- "It's a tough one. It's obviously up to the selectors. But from my position, I feel like the person who's worked their backside off and has been there for a while in the background.
- "I think Harry's been that person. He's toured, he's going to have that chance. He scored a hundred the other day.
- "He missed out in a couple of other games, but he's always been that person who was next in line. If the selectors show faith in him, then I'm sure he'll come out and play the way he does," he said.

Andhra Pradesh CM Kicks Off State-Wide Sports Competition

- According to PTI, Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy on Tuesday kicked off 'Aadudam Andhra', a multi-sport competition that will be held right from the grassroots to the state level in the Guntur district of Andhra Pradesh.

- Starting today, the 47-day competition is scheduled till February 10 at Nallapadu village in the district and will encourage and identify talent in cricket, volleyball, badminton and other sports.

Ultimate Kho Kho Season 2 kicks off on Sunday as Odisha Juggernauts take on Rajasthan Warriors

- The second season of Ultimate Kho Kho will begin with defending champions Odisha Juggernauts engage in spirited competition against Rajasthan Warriors at the Jawaharlal Nehru Indoor Stadium in Cuttack on Sunday.
- A total of 145 athletes, inclusive of 33 promising youths aged between 16 and 18, hailing from diverse corners of the nation, shall engage in the competition for 21 days.

Women's Cricket: India achieve historic feat with maiden Test victory over Australia in one-off match in Mumbai

- India recorded their maiden victory against Australia in a women's test match at Wankhede Stadium in Mumbai on Sunday (24 December 2023) with their comprehensive eight-wicket win in the one-off contest.
- India had taken control of the match with a commanding 187-run lead in the first innings. They needed just 75 runs to win the match after bowling Australia out for 261 in the second innings. India reached the target just after lunch losing two wickets.
- This is India's first victory against Australia in 11 tests since the teams first clashed in the longest format in 1977.

Sakshi Malik Quits After Election of New Wrestling Federation Chief

- Acclaimed Indian wrestler Sakshi Malik, a bronze medalist at the 2016 Rio Olympics, declared her retirement in protest of the Wrestling Federation of India's (WFI) recent leadership change.

Most Expensive Player in IPL 2024

- The Australian speedster Mitchell Starc emerged as the costliest player in IPL history with a staggering bid of Rs 24.75 crore.
- Kolkata Knight Riders (KKR) secured Starc's services, banking on his stellar performance in the ICC Men's ODI World Cup 2023.
- The World Cup-winning Australian captain, Pat Cummins, fetched a whopping Rs 20.50 crore, making him the second-most expensive player in IPL history.

About IPL:

Founded: 2008, India

Format: Twenty20

Headquarters: Cricket Centre, Churchgate, Mumbai, Maharashtra

India's Hardik Singh Clinched Men's FIH Player of the Year 2023

- Indian hockey team midfielder, Hardik Singh, clinched the prestigious title of Men's FIH Player of the Year at the FIH Hockey Star Awards 2023.
- Dutch player Xan de Waard emerged victorious as the Women's FIH Player of the Year.

Maharashtra Bags Women's and AAI Wins Men's Title Events in Guwahati

- Maharashtra emerged victorious in the women's team event at the 75th Inter State-Inter Zonal Badminton Championship held in Guwahati.

Amitabh Bachchan Becomes Owner of Mumbai Team in Indian Street Premier League

- Amitabh Bachchan revealed his ownership of the Mumbai team in the upcoming Indian Street Premier League (ISPL).
- ISPL, India's first tennis ball T10 cricket tournament played within a stadium, is set to kick off its inaugural edition from March 2 to March 9 in Mumbai.

Djokovic and Sabalenka Clinch 2023 ITF World Champion Titles with Stellar Performances

- Novak Djokovic and Aryna Sabalenka have been named the 2023 ITF World Champions by the International Tennis Federation.
- Djokovic, in particular, set a new record with his eighth ITF World Champion award.
- Aryna Sabalenka, in her breakthrough season, earned her first ITF World Champion honor.

Vijay Hazare Trophy 2023

- In a historic turn of events at the Saurashtra Cricket Association Stadium in Rajkot, Haryana emerged victorious in the 2023 Vijay Hazare Trophy, securing their first-ever title with a 30-run triumph over Rajasthan in the summit clash.

Antim Panghal named UWW Rising Star of the Year

- Indian wrestler Antim Panghal has been named the Rising Star of the Year among women by the United World Wrestling (UWW), the sport's global governing body.
- Hailing from Antim Panghal embarked on her remarkable journey this season with a silver in the Asian Championships.
- In the men's freestyle category, Greece's Georgios Kougioumtsidis received the Rising Star of the Year award.

Vijay Amritraj and Leander Paes Inducted into International Tennis Hall of Fame

- Legends Vijay Amritraj and Leander Paes have etched their names into the annals of the sport as the first Asian men to be inducted into the esteemed International Tennis Hall of Fame.
- India to the 28th nation represented in this prestigious institution.
- Tennis journalist and historian Richard Evans will also be inducted into the Hall of Fame.

Italy clinches Admiral's Cup 2023 at Indian Naval Academy

- 12th edition of the eagerly awaited Admiral's Cup Sailing Regatta concluded at Ettikulam Beach, INA, Ezhimala.
- A total of 20 countries participated in the Admiral's Cup Sailing Regatta 2023.

About Italy:

Capital: Rome

Prime minister: Giorgia Meloni

President: Sergio Mattarella

Asad Shafiq Announces Retirement from All Forms of Cricket

- Pakistani batter Asad Shafiq, the middle-order batter, announces his retirement from all forms of the game at the age of 37.

Travis Head wins ICC Men's Player of Month award for November 2023

- Australian batter Travis Head and spin maestro Nahida Akter earning the prestigious ICC Men's and Women's Player of the Month awards.

About Australia:

Capital: Canberra

Prime minister: Anthony Norman Albanese

ICC Launches New Vibrant Logo for Men's and Women's T20 World Cup 2024

- The ICC T20 World Cup undergoes a dynamic makeover with the launch of its new brand identity on December 7.
- Six months to go until the ICC Men's T20 World Cup in the West Indies and the USA.

About ICC:

Headquarters: Dubai, United Arab Emirates

Founded: 15 June 1909

Award(s): ICC Awards

CEO: Geoff Allardice

Chairman: Greg Barclay

Kerala footballer Viknesh gets two-year ban for doping

- Kerala footballer M Viknesh's appeal against a two-year ban has been turned down by the National Anti-Doping Agency (NADA) appeal panel.

About All India Football Federation:

President: Kalyan Chaubey;

Founded: 23 June 1937;

Headquarters: New Delhi;

About NADA:

Founded: 24 November 2005;

DG & CEO: Ritu Sain

Vaishali Rameshbabu Becomes Grandmaster, Creating History with Brother Praggnanandhaa

- Vaishali Rameshbabu, a 22-year-old chess player from India, has recently earned the title of Grandmaster at the IV El Llobregat Open in Spain.
- This achievement makes her only the third woman from India to become a Grandmaster, following in the footsteps of Koneru Humpy and Harika Dronavalli.

West Indies Shane Dowrich Announces International Retirement

- Shane Dowrich, the seasoned wicketkeeper-batsman, has announced his retirement from international cricket and subsequently withdrawn from the West Indies squad set to face England in the upcoming ODI.

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

NASA to Study Asteroid 'Apophis', Approaching Earth on April 13, 2029

- This asteroid, named after the Egyptian god of Chaos, is anticipated to pass within a remarkably close distance of 32,000 kilometers from Earth's surface on April 13, 2029.
- Apophis is classified as an "S-type" asteroid, composed of silicate and nickel-iron materials.

About National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA):

Founded: 29 July 1958, United States

Founder: Dwight D. Eisenhower

Headquarters: Washington, D.C., United States

ISRO to launch 50 Geo-Intelligence satellites in next 5 years

- India's space agency is planning to develop a new fleet of 50 surveillance satellites in five years that are based on artificial intelligence technology that can "interact with each other in space to gather geointelligence" and will be able to beef up the country's border surveillance from the sky manifold, Isro chairman S Somanath has said.

About ISRO:

Headquarters: Bengaluru

Founder: Vikram Sarabhai

Founded: 15 August 1969

Navy Unveils New Admirals' Epulettes in 'True Reflection of Indian Rich Maritime Heritage'

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced the unveiling of new designs for Admirals' epulettes and a renaming of ranks within the Indian Navy. This announcement was made during Navy Day celebrations at Sindhudurg on December 4.

ISRO to Launch India's First X-Ray Polarimeter Satellite on Jan 1, 2024

- Following the successes of the Chandrayaan-3 and Aditya-L1 missions, ISRO is gearing up for its latest venture – the XPoSat mission. Scheduled for launch on January 1, 2024, this mission marks India's maiden foray into polarimetry.

About ISRO:

Founder: Vikram Sarabhai

Founded: 15 August 1969

Noma Added to WHO List of Neglected Tropical Diseases

- Noma, also known as cancrum oris or gangrenous stomatitis, has recently been added to the World Health Organization's (WHO) list of Neglected Tropical Diseases (NTDs).
- NTDs encompass a group of over 20 conditions that disproportionately affect marginalized populations in tropical and subtropical regions.

Google Announces India-First AI-Powered Experience for Maps

- Google Maps, a ubiquitous navigation tool, is set to undergo a transformative upgrade in India with a host of new features leveraging artificial intelligence (AI). Miriam Karthika Daniel, Vice President of Google Maps Experiences, unveiled these innovations.

About Google:

CEO: Sundar Pichai (2 Oct 2015–)

CMO: Lorraine Twohill

Founders: Larry Page, Sergey Brin

Founded: 4 September 1998, Menlo Park, California, United States

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

- India has achieved a global first by demonstrating the capability of its indigenous Akash missile system to engage four aerial targets simultaneously at a range of 25 kilometers.
- The remarkable feat took place during the 'Astrashakti' military exercise conducted by the Indian Air Force on December 12.

Kerala-Based Startup, Genrobotics Ranks Top 3 in Global AI Summit For Indian Startups

- The prestigious event, organized by the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology in New Delhi from December 12-14, witnessed Genrobotics securing its place in the spotlight.
- The General Hospital in Kerala became the first government hospital to deploy G Gaiter.

Bhashini AI Translates PM Modi's Speech in Indian languages

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi utilized an AI-powered Indian language translation tool, 'Bhashini', during a recent speech in Uttar Pradesh.
- 'Bhashini' operates as an AI-driven language translation system, facilitating conversations between speakers of different Indian languages.

IAF Successfully Testfires 'SAMAR' Air Defense Missile System in Andhra Pradesh

- The Indian Air Force (IAF) has proudly announced the successful test firing of its Surface to Air Missile for Assured Retaliation (SAMAR) air defence missile system.
- The IAF conducted the successful firing trials of the SAMAR air defence missile system during the AstraShakti-2023 exercise at Air Force Station Suryalanka.

About Andhra Pradesh:

Chief Minister: YS Jagan Mohan Reddy

Governor: S. Abdul Nazeer

Capital: Amaravati

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

- DRDO conducted a successful flight trial of the autonomous flying wing technology demonstrator in Karnataka's Chitradurga.
- UAV, designed and developed by DRDO's Aeronautical Development Establishment, marks a significant step leap in India's aerospace capabilities. Defence Minister Rajnath Singh.
- Maiden flight of the aircraft took place in July 2022, followed by six subsequent flight trials.

Google Reveals 'Gemini', Its Biggest AI Model

- Google parent company Alphabet made a significant announcement on December 6, unveiling Gemini, its latest and most advanced AI model to date.

- Google DeepMind is led by DeepMind CEO Demis Hassabis.

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

- The Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) has recently announced its ambitious plan to launch the country's first X-Ray Polarimeter Satellite (XPoSat).
- The primary payload of XPoSat is the Polarimeter Instrument in X-Rays (POLIX), developed by the Raman Research Institute (RRI), Bengaluru, with support from various ISRO centers.
- The XPoSat mission will be launched by the Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV) from the Satish Dhawan Space Center in Sriharikota.

About ISRO:

Headquarters: Bengaluru

Founder: Vikram Sarabhai

Chairman: S. Somanath

OBITUARY

Former EU Commission President Jacques Delors dies at 98

- Jacques Delors, a former head of the EU Commission and key figure in the creation of the euro currency, has died.

Founding Father of EU's Single Currency Project Jacques Delors Dies Aged 98

- Jacques Delors, the former European Commission chief and a key figure in the formation of the European Union (EU), has died at the age of 98.
- Delors served for a record three terms from January 1985 to the end of 1994.

About European Union:

Founded: 1 November 1993, Maastricht, Netherlands

Founders: Germany, France, Italy, Netherlands, Belgium, Luxembourg

Wolfgang Schaeuble, German Political Giant, Passes Away At 81

- Wolfgang Schaeuble, with over 50 years in the German parliament, has passed away at 81.
- He was Appointed Chancellor Angela Merkel's finance minister in October 2009.

Tamil Superstar and Politician Vijayakanth Passes Away at 71

- Tamil Nadu's beloved actor and politician Vijayakanth, fondly called "Captain," passed away.
- In 2005, Vijayakanth forayed into politics by founding the Desiya Murpokku Dravida Kazhagam (DMDK) party.

"Veteran Newsman Warren Johnston, Who Covered Six Cities Over Four Decades, Passes at 77

- Warren Johnston, a veteran newsman, who put in tours of duty in six cities over four decades died on December 9 at the Dartmouth Hitchcock Medical Center in Lebanon, NH. He was 77. The cause was complications of cardiac surgery.
- Mr. Johnston got his start in the news business in coastal SC, first as a reporter at The Georgetown Times and then as editor of a monthly literary magazine, the Pawleys Island Perspective.

- In a long and prolific career that followed, he had stints as the editor of The Natchez Democrat, as Bureau Chief at The Tampa Tribune, as an editor at the Las Vegas Sun and as editor, reporter, and columnist at the Valley News in NH. Low key and gentle, but with high standards, he was an unflappable journalist, described by his co-worker, Mark Davis as a “true Southern gentleman” who epitomized the very best traits of the expression - soft spoken and slow to anger. Long-time food writer and restaurant critic at The Tampa Tribune, Mary Scourtes remembers him as an “authoritative editor who knew how to weigh a situation critically, while helping a reporter craft a story in the best possible light.”

Martin Goetz, who received the first software patent, dies at 93

- Martin Goetz (image credit: Madhyamam), the man who secured the first U.S. software patent in 1968, has passed away at 93.
- In 1968, nearly a decade after he and several other partners started the company Applied Data Research, Goetz received his patent, for data-sorting software for mainframes.
- Goetz was known not only for earning the first U.S. software patent, but also for fighting against industry giants like IBM, helping to shape the modern software industry.

Considered last word in India’s miniature painting, art historian B N Goswamy dies at 90

- FOR ART historian and critic B N Goswamy a miniature painting was intended to ideally be read like a book, and not mounted on the wall.
- “It is meant to be held in the hand and read closely. The eye must linger over the surface, take in the luminous colours, absorb the subtlety and the details,” Goswamy had said in an interview to The Indian Express in 2016.

Stand-up comedian Neel Nanda dies at 32

- Stand-up comedian Neel Nanda died shortly after celebrating his 32nd birthday. This news about Nanda, who was also seen on ‘Jimmy Kimmel Live’ and Comedy Central’s ‘Adam Devine’s House Party’, was confirmed by his manager, Greg Weiss, who has reportedly been managing him since he was 19.

Dr. V Mohini Giri: A Champion for Women’s Rights Passes Away at 86

- Dr. Giri served as the Chair of the National Commission for Women (NCW) from 1995 to 1998 and led the Central Social Welfare Board.

Sheikh Nawab Al-Ahmad Al-Sahab, Kuwait Emir, Passed Away at the Age of 86

- Sheikh Nawab Al-Jaber Saheb passed away on December 16, 2023, at the age of 86.

Dr. Gao Yaojie, Renowed AIDS Activist Dies At 95

- Dr. Gao Yaojie, a trailblazing Chinese doctor and activist, passed away at the age of 95.
- She was known for her fearless exposure of the AIDS virus epidemic in rural China during the 1990s.
- AIDS day is observed on 1st December.

Veteran Kannada Actor Leelavathi Passes Away at 86

- The revered Kannada actor Leelavathi has passed away at the age of 86.

Former West Indies batter Joe Solomon dies at 93

- Joe Solomon, the former West Indies and Guyana cricket player, has passed away at the age of 93.

Former Mr. Universe Bodybuilder Shaun Davis, Dies at 57

- Former Mr Universe bodybuilder Shaun Davis has tragically passed away at the age of 57.
- Mr Britain and Mr Europe before reaching the pinnacle of success by being crowned Mr Universe in 1996.

About UK:

Capital: London

President: Rishi Sunak

Sandra Day O'Connor, First Woman on the Supreme Court, Passes Away at 93

- Sandra Day O'Connor, the first woman to serve as a justice on the U.S. Supreme Court, passed away at the age of 93 in Phoenix, Arizona.

APPOINTMENTS AND RESIGNATIONS

Rashmi Govil tapped as next director HR of Indian oil

- Rashmi Govil, a senior HR executive at Indian Oil Corporation (IOC), is set to be next Director (Human Resources) of the state-owned firm.
- Govil will replace Ranjan Kumar Mohapatra, who was in May denied an 8-month extension of service till his superannuation age.

About Indian Oil Corporation:

Headquarters: New Delhi

Founded: 30 June 1959

Chairman: Shrikant Madhav Vaidya

Vivek srivastava assumed charge as DG of fire service & civil defence

- Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC) has approved the appointment of Vivek Srivastava (IPS) as Director General of Fire Service, Civil Defence & Home Guards under the Ministry of Home Affairs on Friday.

Vice-President Jagdeep Dhankhar Appointed as Ex-Officio Chancellor of Pondicherry University

- Vice President of India, Jagdeep Dhankhar, has been appointed as the ex-officio Chancellor of Pondicherry University. This appointment comes as a result of a modification in Statute 1(1) of the Pondicherry University Act of 1985.

Nina Singh First Woman CISF Chief Rahul Rasgotra ITBP Chief

- Central government has appointed Nina Singh as the first woman Director General of the Central Industrial Security Force (CISF).
- In another key appointment, Rahul Rasgotra, the Special Director of the Intelligence Bureau (IB), has been named the new Director General of the Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP).

IPS officer resigns to pursue social and personal goals

- Anand Mishra, the IPS officer from Assam-Meghalaya cadre batch of 2011, who began his uniformed career in the Garo Hills, taking on the might of the then most powerful militant outfit Garo National Liberation Army in the jungles of East and south Garo Hills, has finally called it a day.
- Mishra, who is currently serving as the Superintendent of Police of Lakhimpur district in Assam, has tendered his resignation from the Indian Police Service (IPS).
- The resignation, submitted in a formal letter to the Chief Secretary of the Government of Assam, is set to take effect on January 16, 2024.
- While Anand Mishra cites in his resignation letter to the Assam government, dated December 18, 2023, a desire to pursue a life of freedom and independence through various social services and personal goals, this young officer, who earned the nickname of the Bollywood hero "Singham" for taking on militants, extortionists and mafia groups alike, hasn't been shy of his political ambitions.
- When this scribe met up with him at Lakhimpur, a month ago, Mishra spoke about the day to day challenges faced by the people and the importance of good leadership.

RBI Grants Approval for 2-Year Extension of Sandeep Batra as Executive Director at ICICI Bank

- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has approved the reappointment of Sandeep Batra as Executive Director of ICICI Bank, effective from December 23, 2023, to December 22, 2025.
- This renewed term of two years is within the five-year term previously approved by the shareholders.
- Batra is an ED on the Board of ICICI Bank and has been responsible for the Corporate Centre since July 2018.
- He is responsible for the credit, corporate communications, data science, finance, human resource, legal, operations and customer service, technology and secretarial groups.

SEBI approves Pramod Agrawal's appointment as BSE Chairman

- The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) has approved the appointment of Pramod Agrawal as the new Chairman of the Bombay Stock Exchange (BSE).
- Agrawal's tenure will start on January 17, 2024, as per a regulatory filing by the stock exchange. Agrawal, a former IAS officer, previously held the position of Chairman at Coal India till June 2023.

Vita Dani, first Indian to join ITTF foundation's governing board.

- ITTF welcomes Dani, praising her passion for the sport and her vision for its growth and impact on the community. Dani's objective is to make table tennis accessible to everyone.
- Dani and her organization, the Dani Foundation, have majorly contributed to the recent upliftment of Indian table tennis.

Sanjay Singh Becomes New Chief of Wrestling Federation of India (WFI)

- Sanjay Singh, affiliated with Brij Bhushan's faction, secured victory in the WFI elections with 40 votes against Anita Sheoran's seven.
- The Wrestling Federation of India, governing wrestling nationally, is headquartered in New Delhi.

ICICI Bank Secures RBI Nod for Sandeep Batra's Re-Appointment as Executive Director

- ICICI Bank received RBI approval to reappoint Sandeep Batra as Executive Director, effective from December 23, 2023, to December 22, 2025.

About ICICI Bank:

Founder: Industrial Credit and Investment Corporation of India

Founded: 1994, Vadodara

Headquarters: Mumbai

Senior IPS Officer Maheshwar Dayal Takes Over as Director General of Prisons

- Senior IPS officer Maheshwar Dayal officially assumed the role of Director General of Prisons and Correctional Services on Monday, December 18.

Reuven Azar Appointed as Israel's New Ambassador to India

- The Israeli government, on December 17, gave its nod to the appointment of Reuven Azar as the new Ambassador to India.
- Mr. Azar, currently serving as the Ambassador of Israel to Romania, will also take on the role of the non-resident Ambassador to Sri Lanka and Bhutan.

About Israel:

President: Isaac Herzog

Capital: Jerusalem

India's Uma Sekhar Elected to Governing Council of UNIDROIT

- Ms. Uma Sekhar achieved a remarkable victory by securing 45 out of 59 votes in the initial round of elections for the Governing Council of the International Institute for the Unification of Private Law (UNIDROIT) held in Rome, Italy.
- UNIDROIT, the International Institute for the Unification of Private Law, operates as an independent intergovernmental organization headquartered in Rome, Italy.

Hardik Pandya Takes Over As Captain of Mumbai Indians

- Mumbai Indians (MI) have officially announced that Hardik Pandya as their captain for the upcoming Indian Premier League (IPL) 2024 season.

Vishnu Deo Sai Is New Chhattisgarh Chief Minister

- Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has selected Vishnu Deo Sai, a tribal leader and former Union Minister, as its candidate for the Chief Minister's position in Chhattisgarh.

Mohan Yadav Is New Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister

- Mohan Yadav will be the new Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh.

- He is an MLA from Ujjain South and has been the Higher Education Minister in the Shivraj Singh government.

Max Life Insurance appoints Rajiv Anand as Chairman

- The outgoing Chairman, Analjit Singh, stepped down from the Chairmanship and membership of the Board of Directors.
- The Board, in response, approved the appointment of Rajiv Anand as the new Chairman.

About Max Life Insurance:

CEO: Prashant Tripathy (1 Jan 2019–)

Founder: Analjit Singh;

Founded: 11 July 2000;

Headquarters: New Delhi, India.

Indian-Origin Samir Shah to Lead BBC Board

- The U.K. government has selected Samir Shah to serve as the new chair of the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC).
- The BBC found itself in hot water with the Modi government after airing 'India: The Modi Question' in early 2023.

About BBC:

Founders: John Reith, 1st Baron Reith, Government of the United Kingdom

Founded: 18 October 1922, London, United Kingdom

Captain Geetika Koul Becomes First Woman Medical Officer Deployed at Siachen

- Captain Geetika Koul, a woman army doctor, has been deployed at Siachen, the world's highest battlefield, marking a significant stride towards gender inclusivity in India's armed forces.

Kanchan Devi Becomes First Woman Director General of ICFRE

- Kanchan Devi, 1991-batch Indian Forest Service Officer from the Madhya Pradesh cadre, has been appointed as the Director General (DG) of the Indian Council of Forestry Research Education (ICFRE).
- The Indian Council of Forestry Research and Education (ICFRE) stands as an autonomous organization under the Ministry of Environment, Forest, and Climate Change, Government of India. With its headquarters in Dehradun.

About ICFRE:

Founded: 1986

Sheshadri Appointed IDRCL Chair, Incumbent Gupta to Head NARCL

- Former KPMG managing partner, Narayan Seshadri, is set to assume the role of Chairman at IDRCL.
- Gupta, in turn, is expected to take over as Chairman of NARCL.

IMPORTANT DAYS

27 December: International Day of Epidemic Preparedness

- International Day of Epidemic Preparedness is observed on December 27 to fulfil the great need to raise awareness, the exchange of information, scientific knowledge and best practices, and quality education to curb the fatality of the Epidemic.
- As exemplified by the ongoing coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic major infectious diseases and epidemics have devastating impacts on human lives, wreaking havoc on long-term social and economic development. Global health crises threaten to overwhelm already overstretched health systems, disrupt global supply chains and cause disproportionate devastation of the livelihoods of people, including women and children, and the economies of the poorest and most vulnerable countries. There is an urgent need to have resilient and robust health systems, reaching those who are vulnerable or in vulnerable situations.
- In the event of the absence of international attention, future epidemics could surpass previous outbreaks in terms of intensity and gravity. There is great need of raising awareness, the exchange of information, scientific knowledge and best practices, quality education, and advocacy programmes on epidemics at the local, national, regional and global levels as effective measures to prevent and respond to epidemics.

26 December: Veer Bal Diwas

- Veer Bal Diwas is observed on December 26 to pay homage to the courage and martyrdom of the four sons of Guru Gobind Singh Ji, the last Sikh Guru.

26 December: Boxing Day

- Boxing Day, the day after Christmas was when boxes filled with small gifts and money would be given to household servants and employees who had to work on Dec. 25.

25 December - Christmas Day

- Christmas Day is celebrated on 25 December worldwide annually to commemorate the birth anniversary of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

25 December - Good Governance Day (India)

- Good Governance Day in India is observed on 25 December to commemorate the birth anniversary of Atal Bihari Vajpayee.
- His Samadhi namely 'Sadiav Atal' was dedicated to the nation and reflects his personality as a poet, humanist, statesman, and a great leader.

National Consumer Rights Day – 24th December

- National Consumer Rights Day is on December 24th. This special day is all about the rights of people who buy and use things. It reminds us that when we purchase items or services, we have the right to be treated fairly and get what we paid for.
- On this day, we talk about how important it is to be aware of our rights as consumers. It's like a day to say, "Hey, let's make sure everyone is treated well when they buy stuff!" National Consumer Rights Day helps us understand that we deserve good service, fair prices, and safe products when we go shopping.

National Farmers Day 2023: 23rd December

- National Farmer's Day, or Kisan Diwas, is celebrated in India December 23.
- Former Prime Minister of India, known for championing farmers' causes; his birth anniversary is celebrated on this day.

National Mathematics Day 2023: 22nd December

- National Mathematics Day is observed on December 22 each year to honor the birth anniversary of the renowned Indian mathematician Srinivasa Ramanujan.

World Basketball Day 2023: 21st December

- World Basketball Day is an annual celebration held on December 21, commemorating the invention of basketball by Dr. James Naismith in 1891.
- The United Nations declared August 25, 2023, as World Basketball Day through resolution A/RES/77/324.
- The term "basketball" was first used by Naismith in 1891.
- 1898: National Basketball League, the first professional league, is founded.

International Human Solidarity Day 2023: 20th December

- International Human Solidarity Day 2023 is a significant observance held annually on December 20th. Recognized by the UN General Assembly.

About UN:

Founders: United States, India, United Kingdom, France, Brazil, MORE

Founded: 24 October 1945, San Francisco, California, United States

Awards: Nobel Peace Prize, MORE

Secretary General: António Guterres

Goa Liberation Day 2023: 19th December

- Goa Liberated Day 2023 is celebrated on December 19, 2023.
- It marks the liberation of Goa from Portuguese colonial rule after 451 years.
- The 2023 edition of Goa Liberation Day commemorates the 62nd anniversary.

International Migrants Day 2023: 18th December

- International Migrants Day 2023, observed annually on December 18.
- The theme for International Migrants Day 2023 is "Promoting Safe Migration."

Vijay Diwas 2023: 16th December

- The roots of the 1971 war lie in the oppressive actions of the Pakistani military regime led by General Yahya Khan.
- The conflict arose when the Awami League, led by Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, won the 1970 elections.

International Day of Neutrality 2023: Upholding Peace and Sovereignty: 12th December

- A Central Asian country recognized as a permanent neutral state by the UN since December 1995.

- The United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) approved Turkmenistan's proposal on February 2, 2017.

International Mountain Day 2023: Restoring Mountain Ecosystems for a Better Tomorrow

- The journey of International Mountain Day began in 2001 when the United Nations decided to shine a spotlight on mountains.
- They launched the International Year of Mountains on December 11, 2001.
- This year, the theme is "Restoring Mountain Ecosystems."

Human Rights Day 2023: 10th December

- The year 2023 marks the 75th anniversary of a monumental global commitment—the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). Adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on December 10, 1948.
- The chosen theme for the 2023 celebrations is "Freedom, Equality, and Justice for All."

International Anti-Corruption Day 2023: 9 December

- The theme for International Anti-Corruption Day 2023 is 'UNCAC at 20: Uniting the World Against Corruption.'
- The roots of International Anti-Corruption Day trace back to October 31, 2003, when the United Nations General Assembly adopted the United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC).
- The first observance took place on December 9, 2005.

International Day of Commemoration and Dignity of the Victims of the Crime of Genocide

- This day, also recognized as the International Day of Commemoration and Dignity of the Victims of the Crime of Genocide.
- This year's commemorative event centers on the theme "A Living Force in World Society: The Legacy of the 1948 Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide."

SAARC Charter Day: Celebrating 39 Years of Regional Cooperation

- SAARC Charter Day is observed annually on 8th December, marking a significant milestone in the history of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC).
- This day commemorates the signing of the SAARC Charter in 1985 during the First SAARC Summit held in Dhaka.
- This year, the regional group celebrates its 39th Anniversary.
- The SAARC Charter was signed by the Heads of State or Government of seven founding member countries: Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka.

International Civil Aviation Day 2023: 7 December

- This year's theme "Advancing Innovation for Global Aviation Development".

- The United Nations General Assembly declared December 7 as International Civil Aviation Day in 1996. This date commemorates the 50th anniversary of the establishment of ICAO.

About ICAO:

Headquarters: Montreal, Canada;

Founded: 4 April 1947;

Parent organization: United Nations;

Council President: Salvatore Sciacchitano.

Mahaparinirvan Diwas 2023: BR Ambedkar Death Anniversary

- December 6, 2023, marks the Mahaparinirvan Diwas 2023, commemorating the death anniversary of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar.
- Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, the chief architect of the Indian Constitution and Independent India's first Law Minister, was a multifaceted leader known for his tireless efforts against untouchability.
- In 1947, he established the 'Drafting Committee' to present the final constitution draft.

World Soil Day 2023: 5 December

- As we approach World Soil Day 2023, the theme 'Soil and Water, a Source of Life'.
- World Soil Day was officially adopted at the 68th UN General Assembly on December 5, 2014, following unanimous endorsement by the FAO Conference in June 2013.

International Volunteer Day 2023: 5th December

- Established by the United Nations General Assembly in December 1985.
- The 2023 theme, "The Power of Collective Action: If Everyone Did".
- The celebration of International Volunteer Day began in December 1985 when the United Nations General Assembly approved its observance on December 5th each year.

Indian Navy Day 2023: 4th December

- It commemorates the strategic and victorious Operation Trident during the Indo-Pakistan War in 1971.
- The Indian Navy, established in 1612 by the East India Company.
- The theme for Indian Navy Day 2023 is "Operational Efficiency, Readiness, and Mission Accomplishment in the Maritime Domain."

International Day of Persons with Disabilities 2023: 3 December

- The International Day of Persons with Disabilities (IDPD) or World Day of the Handicapped 2023, observed annually on December 3.
- Established by the United Nations General Assembly in 1992.
- The theme for the 2023 International Day of Persons with Disabilities, "United in action to rescue and achieve the SDGs for, with and by persons with disabilities."

World Computer Literacy Day 2023: 2 December

- World Computer Literacy Day 2023, observed annually on December 2, holds significant importance in promoting computer and technological empowerment. Instituted by the National Institute of Information Technology (N.I.I.T.) in 2001.
- Theme of the World Computer Literacy Day 2023 — A bridge over the digital divide.
- Founded in 1981 by Rajendra Singh Pawar and Vijay K. Thadani, N.I.I.T., the National Institute of Information Technology.

National Pollution Control Day 2023: 2 December

- National Pollution Control Day 2023, observed on December 2, commemorates the tragic Bhopal Gas incident in 1984.
- In 2023, the theme is “Sustainable Development for a Clean and Healthy Planet.”
- On the 2nd and 3rd of December 1984, a devastating incident occurred in Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh, where a pesticide plant operated by Union Carbide India Limited (UCIL) released poisonous chemicals, including Methyl Isocyanate (MIC).

59th Raising Day of Border Security Force (BSF)

- Border Security Force (BSF) celebrated its 59th raising day on 1st December.
- Established in the aftermath of the Indo-Pakistani War of 1965, the BSF's motto, “जीवन पर्यन्त कर्तव्य” (Duty Unto Death).

About BSF:

Founded: 1 December 1965

Headquarters: New Delhi, India

Nagaland Celebrates its 61st Statehood Day

- Nagaland celebrating its 61st Statehood Day on December 1, 2023. This marks a significant milestone in the historical journey of the Nagas, who became the 16th state of the Union of India on December 1, 1963.
- The day's festivities will commence with Chief Minister Neiphiu Rio.
- Nagaland Governor La Ganesan has extended warm greetings to the people on this auspicious occasion.

SUMMITS AND MOU'S

Aditya Birla Sun Life and IDFC First Bank Collaborate On Financial Solutions

- Aditya Birla Sun Life Insurance and IDFC First Bank form a bancassurance partnership.
- Aditya Birla Sun Life will leverage the extensive distribution network of IDFC First Bank.

IIT Kanpur Collaborated with Indian Navy to Promote Technology Development

- Indian Institute of Technology, Kanpur (IITK) and the Indian Navy have joined hands in a landmark Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed at the Naval Headquarters.
- Rear Admiral K Srinivas, Asst. Chief of Material (Dockyard & Refits) and Prof. S. Ganesh, Director of IIT Kanpur, formalized this partnership.

India-Korea Electronic Origin Data Exchange System (EODES) Launched for Swift Clearance of Imported Goods

- Mr. Sanjay Kumar Agarwal, Chairman of the Central Board of Indirect Taxes & Customs (CBIC), inaugurated the India-Korea Electronic Origin Data Exchange System (EODES) on December 6, 2023, in New Delhi.
- EODES aims to streamline the implementation of the India-Korea Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) through the electronic exchange.

Bihar Business Summit 2023: Massive Investment Inflows of Rs 50,530 Crore through MoUs

- Chief Minister Nitish Kumar, a key participant in the summit, took a significant step towards bolstering Bihar's economic landscape.
- Summit resulted in MoUs worth Rs 50,530 crore with 300 companies across sectors, showcasing Bihar's growing appeal.
- Nitish Kumar unveiled the Bihar Logistics Policy 2023, with a vision to establish world-class infrastructure for both industrial and social advancement.

Reliance Teams with DBS Bank For Biogas Initiative

- Reliance Industries has forged a strategic partnership with DBS Bank India to establish a financing program.
- The first biogas facility is in Barabanki, Uttar Pradesh, and is expected to reduce carbon emissions by 40,000 tonnes annually.

COP28 Concludes with Historic Agreement on Fossil Fuels

- The 28th Conference of Parties (COP28) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change concluded with a groundbreaking decision – the "UAE Consensus".
- The appointment of Sultan Al Jaber, CEO of the Abu Dhabi National Oil Company, as COP28 President raised concerns about potential industry influence.

PM Modi Launches AI Summit at Bharat Mandapam in New Delhi

- The annual Global Partnership for Artificial Intelligence (GPAI) Summit commenced at Bharat Mandapam in New Delhi on December 12.
- Paytm's CEO, Vijay Shekhar Sharma, shed light on the challenges faced by Indian farmers.

Youth for Unnati and Vikas with AI (YUVAi) at GPAI Summit 2023

- YUVAi-Youth for Unnati and Vikas with AI," a collaborative initiative of the National e-Governance Division (NeGD).
- Ministry of Electronics & Information Technology (MeitY), Government of India, and Intel India.

India Postpones Quad Summit Meeting amidst Strained Relations and Scheduling Issues

- India has decided to defer the Quad summit meeting, originally scheduled for January 2024.
- India's Republic Day celebrations, US President Joe Biden is unlikely to attend the Quad Summit.

REC Signs 200M Euro Loan with German Bank KfW For Distribution Sector Reforms

- REC Limited, a prominent Maharatna Central Public Sector Enterprise (CPSE) under the Ministry of Power.
- Achieved a significant milestone by signing a 200 million Euro loan agreement with the German bank KfW.
- This agreement, marking REC's sixth line of credit under the Indo-German Development Cooperation.
- Established in 1969, REC Limited stands as a Maharatna CPSE under the Ministry of Power.

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

- Currently serving as the incoming Support Chair of GPAI, India is set to take on the Lead Chair position for GPAI in 2024.
- To showcase its commitment to the advancement of AI, India is hosting the Annual GPAI Summit from December 12 – 14, 2023.
- The Global Partnership on Artificial Intelligence (GPAI), established in June 2020,

PM Modi to Address Infinity Forum 2.0 on December 9

- The event, hosted by the International Financial Services Centres Authority (IFSCA) and GIFT City.
- The first edition of the Infinity Forum, organized in 2021.
- The central theme of the 2nd edition is 'GIFT-IFSC: Nerve Centre for New Age Global Financial Services.'

About Gujarat:

Chief Minister: Bhupendrabhai Patel

Capital: Gandhinagar

Governor: Acharya Devvrat

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

- Uttarakhand government is set to host the Global Investors Summit in Dehradun from December 8-9, focusing on showcasing over 15 investor-friendly policies.
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi will inaugurate the Summit on December 8.

About Uttarakhand:

Founded: 9 November 2000

Chief Minister: Pushkar Singh Dhami

Governor: Gurmit Singh

Capital: Dehradun (Winter)

Ujjivan SFB partners with Water.org to Offer Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Loans

- Ujjivan Small Finance Bank Limited, a leading small finance bank, commenced operations in February 2017.
- Water.org, a global non-profit organization headquartered in the US, operates in more than 11 countries.

Infosys Inks Pact with Shell for Sustainable Data Centres

- Infosys EVP and Global Head of Sustainability, Services, Utilities, Resources and Energy, Ashiss Kumar Dass, emphasizes the shared goal of creating a more sustainable future.
- Data centers currently contribute to approximately 1.5% of global electricity consumption and 1% of global CO2 emissions.

About Infosys:

Founders: N. R. Narayana Murthy, Nandan Nilekani, MORE

Headquarters: Bengaluru

CEO: Salil Parekh (2 Jan 2018–)

Founded: 2 July 1981, Pune

PM Modi proposes to host COP33 in India in 2028

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi extended India's commitment to climate action by proposing to host the UN climate meet (COP33) in 2028.

AWARDS AND RECOGNITION

P Indira Devi ICAR emeritus professor got ISAE fellowship

- Dr P. Indira Devi, ICAR Emeritus Professor at Kerala Agricultural University, is conferred with title of ISAE Fellow 2023, by the Indian Society of Agricultural Economics during its 83rd Annual Conference held at Odisha University of Agriculture and Technology recently.
- The title is in recognition of the outstanding achievements in the field of agricultural economics and rural development.
- It is awarded by a distinguished panel of agricultural economists.
- Indian Society of Agricultural Economics is one of the oldest professional societies in India established in 1939.

Mr L P Hemanth K Srinivasulu Receives 'Man of the Year 2023' Award from Home Minister Shri Amit Shah

- A ceremony held on December 28, 2023, Mr. L.P. Hemanth K. Srinivasulu, the newly appointed Director of the Latin America and Caribbean Trade Council, was bestowed with the prestigious "Man of the Year-2023" award.
- The honor, presented by Shri Amit Shah, the Home Minister of India.

Kohinoor Group Clinches Best Brands 2023 Award, Standing Out Amongst Hundreds of National Brands, Reflecting Visionary Leadership and Transformative Initiatives

- At a glittery function in Mumbai, Kohinoor Group was crowned as The Best Brands of 2023, a testament to its outstanding position amidst a competitive field of hundreds of national brands.
- Mr. R. Gopalakrishnan, the Independent Director and Non-Executive Chairman of Castrol India, presented the awards to the winners. The Kohinoor Group was represented by Mr. Sameer Desai, Director of Marketing, Mr. Prasanth Gopinath, Director of Commercial BU, and Mr. Raghu Iyer, Director of Residential BU, who accepted the award on behalf of the group and expressed their gratitude.

- With a rich legacy of 40 years, Kohinoor Group has not only redefined excellence in Pune's real estate sector but has also undertaken visionary steps to adapt to the evolving industry landscape.
- Under the visionary leadership of Mr. Krishnakumar Goyal, Founder and Chairman of Kohinoor Group, the company has successfully transformed from a family-run entity to a professionally managed organization. This evolution is marked by the establishment of a professional board of experts in Commercial Real Estate, Residential Real Estate, Marketing & Branding, Finance, Strategy, and HR. These experts contribute their insights and expertise to propel Kohinoor Group's success to new heights.

UNESCO award for Amritsar's Rambagh Gate & Ramparts, Gurdaspur's Peepal Haveli

- UNESCO has awarded Rambagh Gate and Ramparts in Amritsar, Punjab.
- It has also awarded heritage conservation projects related to Haryana's Church of Epiphany and Delhi's Bikaner House.
- The Rambagh Gate and Ramparts project received the highest honour, the 'Award of Excellence'.
- It received the award for its inclusivity and access to the broader community.

Recently Crompton has been honored with the National Energy Conservation Award.

- Crompton is the country's leading electrical equipment manufacturer.
- Recently this company has been honored with the Energy Conservation Award for the year 2023.
- Crompton was presented the award by President Draupadi Murmu.
- The company achieved this feat in the category of Most Energy Efficient Appliance of the Year 2023 for its storage water heater.
- Crompton's latest recognition with a National Energy Conservation Award further strengthens its commitment to energy-efficient innovations.
- The award is testament to Crompton's consistent excellence, having achieved this prestigious honor in various categories including fans and lights in previous editions.
- The National Energy Conservation Awards is a premier annual event that highlights exceptional contributions to energy conservation.
- This award was started in the year 1991.

Khel Ratna, Padma Shri, Arjuna Award: Deeper meaning of awards & rewards in the world of sports'

- The year 2023 is ending as well as it started for Chirag Shetty and Satwiksairaj Rankireddy, the badminton doubles combination that will get the Major Dhyan Chand Khel Ratna award for 2023. They will be presented with this in January 2024.
- The dynamic combination, an energetic, eminently watchable duo on court, capped the year with an Asian Games gold medal, having begun 2023 with a semi-final appearance in the Malaysia Open in January.

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

- UNESCO's Prix Versailles 2023 recognizes Bengaluru's Kempegowda International Airport Terminal 2 as one of the world's most beautiful airports.
- The airport was honored with the prestigious 'Special Prize for an Interior' in recognition of its outstanding design.
- Hari Marar is the MD & CEO of Bengaluru International Airport Ltd.

Poet Sukrita Paul Kumar Wins Rabindranath Tagore Literary Prize for 'Salt & Pepper'

- Renowned Rabindranath Tagore Literary Prize has named poet-critic Sukrita Paul Kumar as its sixth recipient for her book, "Salt & Pepper: Selected Poems".
- Nobel laureate Abhijit Banerjee was awarded the Rabindranath Tagore Literary Prize for Social Achievement.
- The Rabindranath Tagore Literary Prize was founded in 2018 by US-based publisher Peter Bundalo.

President Droupadi Murmu Awards Crompton for Energy Conservation 2023

- Crompton Greaves Consumer Electricals Ltd. (CGCEL) has been honored with the prestigious National Energy Conservation Award 2023.
- The award ceremony unfolded at Vigyan Bhawan in New Delhi, where Promeet Ghosh, Managing Director and CEO, and Sachin Phartiyal, Business Head, Home Electricals, represented CGCEL in accepting the award.

About Crompton:

CEO: Mathew Job (Sept 2015)

Founded: 1937

Headquarters: Mumbai

IREDA's Pradip Kumar Das Wins 'CMD of the Year' for the second Straight year

- Shri Pradip Kumar Das, Chairman & Managing Director of Indian Renewable Energy Development Agency Limited (IREDA), has been honored with the esteemed "CMD of the Year" award. under the Mini-Ratna category at the 13th PSE Excellence Awards.
- The event was hosted by the Indian Chamber of Commerce in New Delhi.

About IREDA:

Headquarters: India

Founded: 1987

Poonam Khetrpal Singh Honored with Bhutan's National Order of Merit

- Dr. Poonam Khetrpal Singh, the Regional Director of the World Health Organisation (WHO) South-East Asia, has been honored with Bhutan's National Order of Merit (NOM) Gold Medal.
- The prestigious award was presented by Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck, the Druk Gyalpo (dragon king) of Bhutan, during the celebration of Bhutan's 116th National Day on December 17, 2023, in Thimphu, Bhutan.
- The National Order of Merit, instituted in 2008 by King Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck.

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

- The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) has once again soared to new heights by clinching the prestigious Leif Erikson Lunar Prize.
- Central to the mission's triumph was the lander, Vikram, equipped with the Chandra's Surface Thermophysical Experiment (ChaSTE).

NTPC Kanti Receives FICCI Water Award 2023 for Industrial Water Use Efficiency

- NTPC Kanti has been bestowed with the 11th Edition of FICCI Water Award 2023 under the "Industrial Water Use Efficiency" category.
- The Director General of National Museum for Clean Ganga, Government of India, G Ashok Kumar, and the Chairperson of FICCI Water Mission, Naina Lal Kidwai, jointly presented the award to NTPC Kanti.

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

- INS Shivaji, the esteemed Training establishment of the Indian Navy, the original 'Vir Chakra' was posthumously awarded to Late Vice Admiral Benoy Roy Chowdhury.
- Vice Admiral Benoy Roy Chowdhury's valor and contributions to the Indian Navy's legacy are deeply rooted in the 1971 Indo-Pak War.
- Admiral SM Nanda, the Chief of Naval Staff at the time, recognized Vice Admiral Chowdhury's exceptional contributions by bestowing upon him the title of 'An Engineer Par Excellence.'

Gaja Capital Business Book Prize 'Against All Odds', 'Winning Middle India' Declared Joint Winners

- Gaja Capital Business Book Prize, a prestigious annual recognition, has crowned two exceptional narratives in its 2023 edition.
- Against All Odds: The IT Story of India and Winning Middle India: The Story of India's New-Age Entrepreneurs emerged as joint winners.
- Gaja Capital is founded in 2004.

Israeli Film 'Children of Nobody' Wins Golden Bengal Tiger Award

- Israeli film 'Children of Nobody' wins Golden Bengal Tiger Award.
- Golden Royal Bengal Tiger Award for Best Film, includes a record cash prize of Rs 51 lakh.
- Venezuelan director Carlos Daniel Malave honored as Best Director.
- Special Jury Award goes to Anjan Dutt for 'Chalchitra Ekhon'.
- NETPAC Award for Best Film in the Asian Select section to 'Broken Dreams.'
- The movie, written and directed by Erez-Tadmor from Tel-Aviv.

About Israel:

President: Isaac Herzog

Capital: Jerusalem

Rijul Maini wins Miss India USA 2023

- The annual Miss India USA 2023 pageant held in New Jersey showcased the triumph of Rijul Maini, a 24-year-old medical student from Michigan.
- First Runner-up: Greeshma Bhat:
- Second Runner-up: Ishita Pai Raikar:
- The Miss India USA pageant, organized by Worldwide Pageants and founded by Indian-Americans Dharmatma and Neelam Saran.

Dr. Srinivas Naik Dharavath Receives Visionary Leader Icon 2023 Award

- Real Vision Homes Pvt Ltd's Chairman, Dr. Srinivas Naik Dharavath, who has been honored with the Visionary Leader Icon Award of the Year 2023.
- The prestigious award was presented at the 5th National Summit held at the Constitution Club of India in New Delhi on 24th Nov 2023.
- AASRAA is a Non-Governmental Organization founded in 2010.

Indira Gandhi Peace Prize Awarded to Daniel Barenboim and Ali Abu Awwad

- The prestigious Indira Gandhi Prize for Peace, Disarmament, and Development for 2023 has been jointly conferred upon renowned classical pianist and conductor Daniel Barenboim and Palestinian peace activist Ali Abu Awwad.
- International Jury, chaired by former Chief Justice of India T.S. Thakur.

Mohammed Shami nominated for Arjuna Award, Satwiksairaj-Chirag for Khel Ratna

- India's premier badminton men's doubles pair of Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty is in line to receive the Major Dhyan Chand Khel Ratna Award, the country's highest sports prize.
- Mohammed Shami, who finished as the top wickettaker in the ODI World Cup with 24 scalps, is in the list for the Arjuna Award.

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

- The veteran lyricist-screenwriter Javed Akhtar is set to be honored with the Padmapani Lifetime Achievement Award at the upcoming Ajanta-Ellora Film Festival.
- The award ceremony will be held at the Rukmini Auditorium, MGM University campus, Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar.

Veteran actor Kabir Bedi awarded Italy's civilian honour 'Order of Merit'

- Kabir Bedi was awarded the "Order of Merit of the Italian Republic" (Merito della Repubblica Italiana).
- Country's highest honour awarded to civilians, at a private ceremony held in Mumbai.
- Italian, is one of Italy's highest honors. Established on March 3, 1951

Golden Globe Awards Nominations 2024

- 81st annual Golden Globe Awards were revealed, setting the tone for the much- Edition: 81st
- Ceremony Date: 7th January 2024
- First Awarded: January 20, 1944

- Awarded For: Excellence in film and television
- Country: United States
- This year's Golden Globes feature notable changes, including six nominees per category instead of five.
- Two new prizes have been introduced to celebrate box office achievements and stand-up comedy performances.

Noted Hindi Writer Pushpa Bharati to Receive 33rd Vyas Samman

- The 33rd Vyas Samman, 2023, is announced to honor the accomplished Hindi writer Pushpa Bharati for her 2016 memoir, "Yaadein, Yaadein aur Yaadein."
- This prestigious award is bestowed by the KK Birla Foundation, recognizing outstanding contributions to Hindi literature.
- Instituted in 1991, the Vyas Samman acknowledges exceptional Hindi literary works by Indian citizens published in the last 10 years.

Indian Scientist Dr. Hemachandran Ravikumar Receives Karmaveer Chakra Medal-2023

- On Nov 27, 2023, in New Delhi, Dr. Hemachandran Ravikumar was honored with the Karmaveer Chakra Medal and Rex Karmaveer Global Fellowship by ICONGO in collaboration with the United Nations.
- In recognition of his exceptional contributions to R&D in Physical & Bio-Science and Microbiological Studies.

Nikhil Dey Named '2023 International Anti-Corruption Champion' by the US Government

- Indian social activist Nikhil Dey has been honored as an International Anti-Corruption Champion by the US government for 2023.
- Dey is the co-founder of the Mazdoor Kisan Shakti Sangathan (MKSS), a Rajasthan-based organization.

Prashant Agrawal Receives National Award for 'Best Personality- Empowerment of Differently-abled'

- In a ceremony organized by the Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities, Prashant Agrawal.
- The President of Narayan Seva Sansthan, was honored with the prestigious National Award for 'Best Personality- Empowerment of Differently-abled.'
- The award was presented by President Draupadi Murmu at Vigyan Bhavan, New Delhi.

Time Magazine Names Lionel messi 'Athlete of the Year' for 2023

- Argentina's football icon, Lionel Messi, has been named Time magazine's Athlete of the Year for 2023.
- Lionel Messi's exceptional skills and consistent excellence on the field have earned him the Ballon d'Or for an unprecedented eighth time.

About time magazine:

First issue date: 3 March 1923

Based in: New York City, New York, U.S

Editor-in-chief: Sam Jacobs

Amazon India Wins National Award for Empowering Individuals With Disabilities

- Amazon India received the National Award for Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities from President Smt. Droupadi Murmu at Vigyan Bhavan on the International Day of Persons with Disabilities.
- The states of Maharashtra, Gujarat, Haryana, Tamil Nadu, and Karnataka are among those benefiting from these initiatives.
- Amit Agarwal is the country head of Amazon India.

About Amazon:

CEO: Andy Jassy (5 Jul 2021–)

Founder: Jeff Bezos

President: Andy Jassy

Founded: 5 July 1994, Bellevue, Washington, United States

Ranveer Singh Receives Prestigious Honor from Sharon Stone at Red Sea International Film Festival

- At the Red Sea International Film Festival, Bollywood actor Ranveer Singh was honored for his significant contributions to cinema.

Sheetal Devi Wins Best Young Athlete at APC Conference

- Indian para archer Sheetal Devi emerged victorious at the fourth edition of the Asian Awards in Riyadh.
- Devi's remarkable performance at the Hangzhou 2022 Asian Para Games in October played a pivotal role in earning her the coveted award.

Olympian M. Sreeshankar Clinches 35th Jimmy George Foundation Award

- Olympian M. Sreeshankar has been honored with the prestigious 35th Jimmy George Foundation Award for emerging as the best sportsperson of Kerala.

ISRO and Team Chandrayaan-3 Honoured for Outstanding Contribution to Brand India

- August 23, India's Chandrayaan-3 achieved remarkable lunar landing, making India the first country to reach the Lunar South Pole.
- The Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) and the Chandrayaan-3 team were recently honored with the "Outstanding Contribution to Brand India" award at the 19th India Business Leader Awards (IBLA), held in Mumbai on December 2.

India's President Presents National Awards 2023 for the Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities

- International Day of Persons with Disabilities witnessed a grand ceremony in New Delhi as President Droupadi Murmu bestowed the National Awards for the Empowerment of Divyangjan 2023 upon 21 individuals and 9 institutions.

Top French civilian honour for ISRO scientist VR Lalithambika

- Former Director of the Human Spaceflight Programme at the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO), was honored with the prestigious 'Légion d'Honneur.'
- The award was conferred upon her by Thierry Mathou, the Ambassador of France to India, in a ceremony held in Bengaluru.

About ISRO:

Headquarters: Bengaluru
Founder: Vikram Sarabhai
Founded: 15 August 1969

NTPC Bongaigaon Secures Double Victory at Greentech Environment Award 2023

- At a ceremony held at Sonmarg, Jammu and Kashmir, NTPC Bongaigaon was honored with two distinct awards.
- The first trophy was bestowed upon the power station in the Environment Protection Category at the 22nd Annual Greentech Environment Award 2023.
- The second accolade came in the Rural Development Category at the 10th Annual Greentech CSR India Awards.

About NTPC:

Founded: 7 November 1975
Headquarters: New Delhi
Owner: Ministry of Power, Government of India
CEO: Gurdeep Singh (28 Jan 2016–)
Founder: Government of India
Formerly: National Thermal Power Corporation

Suganthi Sundararaj Honored With PRSI National Award for Healthcare Contributions

- Suganthi Sundararaj, Regional Head of PR at Apollo Hospitals, was honored with the PRSI National Award for outstanding contributions to the Public Relations Society of India (PRSI).
- This year's festival theme, 'G20: Showcasing Indian Values and The Emerging India to the World: Opportunities for Public Relations.'

RANKING

Bhupender Yadav Unveils NITI Aayog's Report on Global Green Growth

- Shri Bhupender Yadav, the Hon'ble Minister for the Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change and the Ministry of Labour & Employment, launched a G20 report titled 'A Green and Sustainable Growth Agenda for the Global Economy' today in New Delhi.

About NITI Aayog:

Founded: 1 January 2015
Founder: National Democratic Alliance

Tamil Nadu Retains 'Achiever' Status in Logistics Infra Rankings of States

- Tamil Nadu has once again secured the coveted 'Achiever' status among coastal states in the Logistics Ease across Different States (LEADS) 2023 rankings.

- LEADS, initiated by the Ministry of Commerce and Industries in 2018.

Aster Medcity Claims the No.1 Spot as India's Leading Emerging Hospital

- Aster Medcity, located in Kochi, Kerala, and a unit of Aster DM Healthcare, has emerged as a frontrunner in the healthcare industry.
- The hospital has recently achieved the remarkable feat of being ranked No.1 in the 'Best Multi-specialty Hospital Emerging' category by The Week-Hansa Research 2023, as published in December 2023.
- Dr. Nitish Shetty is the CEO of Aster DM Healthcare.
- Aster Medcity is founded on 6th May 2015.

Logistics Performance Index 2023: States and UTs Recognized for achievements and Challenges

- The Commerce and Industry Ministry recently released the fifth LEADS (Logistics Ease across Different States) 2023 report.
- Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Chandigarh, and Gujarat are among the 13 states and Union Territories recognized as "achievers" in the logistics index chart for 2023.

Hyderabad Leads In Food Adulteration Cases: NCRB

- The National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) recently revealed alarming data that sheds light on the severity of the issue, especially in the city of Hyderabad and its surrounding areas.
- The NCRB data pointed out that Hyderabad topped the nation in food adulteration cases in 2022. In close second place was Andhra Pradesh, trailing after Telangana.

About Telangana:

Governor: Tamilisai Soundararajan

Founded: 2 June 2014

Chief Minister: Revanth Reddy

Capital: Hyderabad

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

- The 58-years-old iconic actor, Shah Rukh Khan, has etched his name in the annals of box office history with two action-packed thrillers, "Pathaan" and "Jawaan."
- While Shah Rukh Khan claimed the top position, the talented and popular actress Alia Bhatt secured the second spot on the list.
- Priyanka Chopra Jonas, a global icon, clinched the third position on the 'Eastern Eye' annual list.

Zepto founders top Hurun India's list of 'Top 100 under 30'

- Kaivalya Vohra (21) and Aadit Palicha (22), the founders of the Quick Commerce app Zepto, have claimed the top spots.
- Second is Neelakantha Bhanu Prakash (24), founder of Bhanzu.

Mercer's Survey: Pune 2nd In India for Quality of living after Hyderabad

- Pune has secured the second-best position in terms of 'quality of life' in India.

- Vienna (Austria), Zurich (Switzerland), and Vancouver (Canada) clinched the top three spots globally in that order, according to the 2023 index.

India's Remarkable Climb to 7th Place in Global Climate Performance Index

- India has clinched the 7th position in the latest edition of the Climate Change Performance Index (CCPI).
- Published annually since 2005, the CCPI serves as an independent monitoring tool, enhancing transparency in international climate politics. Developed by Germanwatch.

PM Modi Retains Title of World's Most Popular Leader with 76% Approval: Morning Consult Survey

- In a recent survey conducted by US-based consultancy firm 'Morning Consult,' Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi has secured the top position as the world's most popular leader, boasting an impressive approval rating of 76%.

Startup funding: India slips to 4th spot in global ranking after dismal 2023

- Slipping to the fourth position in the global ranking among the highest-funded geographies in 2023.
- This decline comes after securing the third spot in both 2021 and 2022.
- In the third quarter of 2023, India further slipped to the fifth position among the highest-funded countries, lagging behind the US, the UK, China, and France.

ITC becomes world's 3rd most valuable tobacco company after London-based BAT sinks

- ITC Ltd has emerged as the third most valuable tobacco company globally, overtaking British American Tobacco (BAT).
- Becoming India Tobacco Company Limited in 1970 and later I.T.C. Limited in 1974.
- BAT Plc, formed in 1902 through a joint venture of American Tobacco Co Ltd and Imperial Tobacco Co Ltd, holds a substantial 29.04% stake in ITC, valued at \$19.9 billion.

Lahore Leads in Global Pollution Ranking

- Lahore, the second-largest city in Pakistan, is grappling with a severe smog crisis that poses significant threats to the health and well-being of its residents.
- Lahore's AQI was reported as 400, categorizing it as "hazardous" in the morning.

Nirmala Sitharaman and Three Other Indians Secure Spots on Forbes' "World's 100 Most Powerful Women" of 2023

- "The World's Most Powerful Women," four notable Indian figures have garnered recognition.
- Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, HCL Corporation Chairperson Roshni Nadar Malhotra, Steel Authority of India Chairperson Soma Mondal, and Biocon Executive Chairperson Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw have earned positions on this prestigious list.

About Forbes:

Founder: B. C. Forbes

Based in: Jersey City, New Jersey, U.S

World Malaria Report 2023: Malaria Cases Surge to 249 Million in 2022

- A new WHO report reveals a concerning trend: malaria cases globally rose to 249 million in 2022, surpassing pre-pandemic levels by 16 million.
- Catastrophic events, like the 2022 flooding in Pakistan, resulted in a five-fold increase in malaria cases.
- Five million additional malaria cases in 2022, with Pakistan facing the largest increase.
- WHO-certified malaria-free countries in 2022 include Azerbaijan, Belize, and Tajikistan.

BOOKS AND AUTHORS

A Book Titled “The Babri Masjid Ram Mandir Dilemma” Authored by Madhav Godbole

- A recent publication, titled “The Babri Masjid Ram Mandir Dilemma: An Acid Test for India’s Constitution,” authored by Madhav Godbole.

Ram Nath Kovind Launches Book ‘Naye Bharat Ka Samveda’ on PM Modi

- Former President Shri Ramnath Kovind graced the launch of ‘Naye Bharat ka Samaveda,’ a seminal collection spotlighting Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi’s.
- ‘Karmayoddha Granth’: Released by Amit Shah, this book provides insights into the life of Prime Minister Narendra Modi.
- ‘Narendra Modi: A Political Biography’ by Andy Marino: Offers a comprehensive view of Modi’s political journey.

Huma Qureshi launches 1st novel ‘Zeba: An Accidental Superhero’

- Bollywood actor Huma Qureshi has ventured into a new realm as an author, marking her debut with the fantasy fiction novel titled ‘Zeba: An Accidental Superhero.’
- The book was officially launched during the 12th edition of the Bangalore Literature Festival (BLF).

CM Pushkar Dhami Releases Book Highlighting PM Modi’s Role in Transforming Disaster Management

- Book titled ‘RESILIENT INDIA: How Modi Transformed India’s Disaster Management Paradigm’s was officially released in Dehradun.
- The Chief Minister of Uttarakhand, Pushkar Singh Dhami, did the honors.

BANKING AND ECONOMY

CBDT issued guidelines under section 194-O of the income tax act

- Section 194-O of the Income-tax Act, 1961 (‘the Act’) provides that an e-commerce operator shall deduct income-tax at the rate of one per cent of the gross amount of sale of goods or provision of service, or both, facilitated through its digital or electronic facility or platform.

NPCI introduced ASBA like facility for secondary market

- National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) has announced the launch of an ASBA-like facility in the secondary market.

- ASBA-like facility of 'Trading supported by blocked amount in secondary market' through block mechanism was approved by the market regulator Sebi, based on the Reserve Bank of India.

About NPCI:

Headquarters: Mumbai

Founded: 2008

Founders: Reserve Bank of India, Indian Banks' Association

About Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI):

Founded: 12 April 1988

Headquarters: Mumbai, Maharashtra

Founder: Government of India

Agency executive: Madhabi Puri Buch, Chairperson

India Makes First-Ever Rupee Payment for the Purchase of Crude Oil from UAE

- India, the world's third-largest energy consumer, recently made a significant move by conducting its first-ever payment in rupees for crude oil purchased from the United Arab Emirates (UAE).
- In the financial year 2022-23 (April 2022 to March 2023), India spent a substantial \$157.5 billion on importing 232.7 million tonnes of crude oil.

CEBR Forecasts India as Third-Largest Economy By 2032, Global Economic Leader by Century's End

- According to the latest World Economic League Table by CEBR, India's GDP is poised to exceed that of China by a staggering 90% and surpass that of the United States by 30%.
- This monumental shift is anticipated to materialize post-2080.
- A critical element of this ascension is India's forecasted average growth rate of 6.5% from 2024 to 2028.
- This trajectory positions India to become the world's third-largest economy by 2032

About Centre for Economics and Business Research (Cebr):

Founded: 1992

Headquarters: 4 Bath Street; London EC1V 9DX; United Kingdom

Bank of Baroda to Sell 100% stake In Its New Zealand subsidiary

- Bank of Baroda (BoB), the second-largest public sector bank (PSB) in India, witnessed a surge in its share price, reaching a fresh 52-week high of ₹233.75 per share on the Bombay Stock Exchange (BSE).
- In a newspaper advertisement released on December 27, Bank of Baroda disclosed its intention to divest its entire 100 percent stake in Bank of Baroda (New Zealand).

About Bank of Baroda:

Founder: Sayajirao Gaekwad III

Founded: 20 July 1908, Vadodara

Headquarters: Alkapuri, Vadodara

Coca-Cola Scores a Victory Lap: Secures 8-Year Partnership with ICC as Global Cricket Partner

- Coca-Cola has signed an eight-year deal as the global partner of the ICC, extending their commitment to the sport until the end of 2031.
- This marks a significant extension from their initial five-year agreement in 2019.

About International Cricket Council (ICC):

Headquarters: Dubai, United Arab Emirates

Founded: 15 June 1909

CEO: Geoff Allardice

Chairman: Greg Barclay

Higher credit demand, lower NPAs to boost banking sector; public sector banks' total profit likely to touch Rs 1.50 lakh cr

- India's banking sector is all set to witness another good year and the total profit of public sector banks is set to touch Rs 1.50 lakh crore amid higher credit demand driven by a strong economic growth. During the first six months of the current financial year, public sector banks earned about Rs 68,500 crore and the trajectory is likely to continue unchanged in the second half as well.
- Going by the present trend, public sector banks are expected to earn a net profit of around Rs 1.50 lakh crore in FY2024 up from Rs 1.04 lakh crore recorded in FY2023.
- Stability on the non-performing assets (NPAs) side, robust credit demand and high interest rate regime are expected to help the profitability of the banks in the coming months.

Sensex closes above 72,000; Nifty gains over 200 pts to settle at 21,654

- Sensex, Nifty updates on 27 December 2023: Benchmark indices continue to advance from early trade gains. Sensex surged past 72,000 for the first time while Nifty soared above 21,650. At 3:30 pm, the BSE Sensex rose 701.63 pts or 0.98% to 72,038.43 while the NSE Nifty gained 213.40 pts or 1% to 21,654.75. Dr. V K Vijayakumar, Chief Investment Strategist at Geojit Financial Services, remarked that the market's resilience during the typically subdued holiday season suggests an underlying bullish sentiment.
- He also highlighted the noteworthy global support originating from the U.S. market, where the S&P 500 is approaching an all-time high. Meanwhile, global optimism echoed in markets as Asian indices stood firm, supported by Wall Street's positivity. There were 3,914 stocks traded on the BSE. Among them, 1,993 advanced, 1,813 declined, and 108 stocks remained unchanged. Notably, 361 stocks reached their 52-week high, while 18 stocks touched their 52-week low.

Unclaimed Bank Deposits Surge by 28% to Reach Rs 42,270 Crore, Refunds Amounting to Rs 1.4 Billion

- Unclaimed deposits with banks have seen a notable 28% year on-year increase, soaring to Rs 42,270 crore by March 2023, up from Rs 32,934 crore in the fiscal year 2022.
- Among the unclaimed deposits, public sector banks hold a significant share, amounting to Rs 36,185 crore, while private sector banks account for Rs 6,087 crore as of March 2023.

Aditya Birla Sun Life and IDFC First Bank Forge Partnership for Joint Financial

Solutions

- Aditya Birla Sun Life Insurance and IDFC First Bank have entered into a bancassurance partnership to offer insurance solutions to the bank's customers.
- Under this collaboration, the insurer will leverage the extensive distribution network of IDFC First Bank.
- Aditya Birla Sun Life will offer products and services, including those that focus on retirement planning, ensuring a steady source of second income and tax-free returns tailored to their life stages.

MOCI Minister Piyush Goyal releases 5th LEADS Survey Report:

- Union Minister Piyush Goyal, Ministry of Commerce and Industry (MOCI) released the 5th LEADS (Logistics Ease Across Different States) 2023 Survey Report in New Delhi, Delhi.
- Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Karnataka, and Tamil Nadu are categorized as achievers among the Coastal states in the 5th LEADS 2023 Survey Report.

Union MSME Minister Narayan Rane Launched 3 Sub-schemes under RAMP Programme:

- The 3 sub schemes are:
- MSME Green Investment and Financing for Transformation Scheme (MSME GIFT Scheme).
- MSE Scheme for Promotion and Investment in Circular Economy (MSE SPICE Scheme).
- MSE Scheme on Online Dispute Resolution for Delayed Payments (MSE ODR scheme).

RBI Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) Meeting Highlights December 2023: Inflation is top priority, loosening of rates is not on the table, says Shaktikanta Das

- RBI MPC Meeting Highlights | RBI's Monetary Policy News & Outcomes: RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das has said the assumption of status quo as neutral stance is not correct.
- Monetary policy continues to be actively disinflationary, the Governor added. In view of the uncertainties, RBI denies to give any forward guidance on the interest rate trajectory. The CPI for November is expected to be high, he added.
- RBI MPC has kept the key policy repo rate unchanged at 6.5% by a unanimous decision. This is the fifth meeting on the trot that the MPC decided to maintain the status quo on the repo rate. Notably, 5 out of 6 MPC members voted in favour of withdrawal of accommodation.

SEBI Proposes Two-Phase Transition to Instant Settlement in Indian Stock Market

- SEBI is proposing a two-phase implementation of same-day settlement (T+0) and instant settlement, revolutionizing stock market transactions.

About SEBI:

Founded: 12 April 1988

Headquarters: Mumbai, Maharashtra

Founder: Government of India

Agency executive: Madhabi Puri Buch, Chairperson

LIC Granted Extension till 2032 to Achieve 25% Public Shareholding

- The Ministry of Finance has granted a one-time exemption to Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) regarding the 25% Minimum Public Shareholding (MPS) rule.
- LIC announced a reduction in its stake in Tata Motors to 3.09%.
- In Dixon, LIC diluted its stake and currently holds 3% equity.

About LIC:

Founder: Government of India

Founded: 1 September 1956

Headquarters: Mumbai

RBI Proposes Draft Framework for Self-Regulatory Organisations (SROs) in Banking and NBFCs

- The move aligns with RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das's September suggestion for fintech firms to establish an industry SRO.

About RBI:

Founded: 1 April 1935, Kolkata

Founder: British Raj

Governor: Shaktikanta Das

Headquarters: Mumbai, Maharashtra, India

13 States Raise Rs 19,692 Crore in State Government Securities Auction

- According to data RBI, Karnataka and Uttar Pradesh emerged as the leading states, each successfully raising Rs 4,000 crore.

India and ADB Ink \$250M Loan for Industrial Corridor Development

- The Government of India and the Asian Development Bank (ADB) recently solidified their collaboration with the signing of a \$250 million policy-based loan on December 15, 2023.
- Ms. Juhi Mukherjee, Joint Secretary of the Department of Economic Affairs, Ministry of Finance, represented the Government of India, while Mr. Hoe Yun Jeong, Deputy Country Director, and Officer-in-Charge of ADB's India Resident Mission, signed on behalf of ADB.
- The NICDP, initiated in 2016 and updated in 2020, focuses on effective industrial corridor development.

Kotak Mahindra Bank Partners with IITK to Launch Kotak School of Sustainability

- The Indian Institute of Technology Kanpur (IIT) and Kotak Mahindra Bank Limited (KMBL) have joined forces to establish the Kotak School of Sustainability.
- Dharmendra Pradhan, Union Minister of Education and Skill Development and Entrepreneurship, graced the launch event as the chief guest.

IndusInd Bank Introduces 'Indus Solitaire Program' for the Diamond Industry

- IndusInd Bank has recently launched the 'Indus Solitaire Program,' an innovative community banking initiative.
- Primarily through IndusInd Bank's flagship branches, with a focus on Mumbai and Surat.

NPS Assets Surge to ₹10.7 Lakh Crore with Impressive 16.94% Equity Returns

- India's National Pension System (NPS) has witnessed a substantial growth in assets, reaching a new milestone of ₹10.7 lakh crore as of December 9, 25.95% higher than the previous year.

S&P Global Ratings: Positive Outlook for Asia-Pacific Economies despite Global Challenges

- Out of the 21 countries assessed by S&P in the APAC region, 19 are bestowed with a stable outlook.
- S&P acknowledges that economic growth in the Asia-Pacific region in 2024 may not match the strength seen in 2023.

Tamil Nadu's FDI Landscape: With \$10 b in 4 years, ranks fourth

- Tamil Nadu has witnessed a cumulative Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) inflow of nearly \$10 billion in the past four years (October 2019 to September 2023).
- Tamil Nadu ranks fourth in FDI attraction during the specified period.

About Tamil Nadu:

Founded: 1773

Chief Minister: M. K. Stalin

Governor: R. N. Ravi

Capital: Chennai

Food Processing Industry Thrives with ₹7,000 cr Investment under PLI Scheme

- Production Linked Incentive (PLI) Scheme investing a staggering ₹7,126 crore.

About Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO):

Headquarters: Rome, Italy

Founded: 16 October 1945, Québec City, Canada

Lok Sabha Approves Additional Spending of ₹58,378 Crore in Current Fiscal

- Lok Sabha has given its approval for a net additional spending of ₹58,378 crore in the ongoing fiscal year, set to conclude in March 2024.
- Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman highlighted the government's commitment to fiscal prudence.

Tata Power, Indian Oil Ink Deal for 500+ EV Charging Points at Pumps

- The electric vehicle (EV) infrastructure in India, Tata Power EV Charging Solutions Ltd (TPEVCSL) has entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Indian Oil Corporation Limited (IOCL).
- The collaboration aims to set up more than 500 EV charging points.
- Shri Saumitra Shrivastava, Executive Director (Retail-N&E) at IOCL, envisions providing 10,000 EV charging stations by 2024.

Bank of India Launches Nari Shakti Savings Account for Women

- This exclusive savings bank product is designed to cater specifically to women aged 18 and above.

IDFC FIRST Bank Unveils Youth-Centric “FIRST SWYP” Credit Card in Collaboration with Mastercard

- In a strategic move targeting the dynamic preferences of Millennials and Gen Zs, IDFC FIRST Bank has introduced the “FIRST SWYP” credit card.

RBI Raises UPI Limit for Healthcare and Education to Rs 5 Lakh

- As per the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) website, the existing UPI transaction limit for normal payments stands at Rs 1 lakh per transaction.

ACKO and PhonePe Collaborate To Make Insurance Accessible To Millions

- This strategic collaboration aims to provide users with a comprehensive range of car and bike insurance products directly through the PhonePe platform.

About ACKO general insurance:

Founder: Varun Dua

Headquarters: Bengaluru

Founded: 3 November 2016

CEO: Sanjeev Srinivasan

About PhonePe Insurance:

CEO: Vishal Gupta

Bajaj Group Becomes Fifth Conglomerate to Breach ₹10 Lakh Crore in Mcap

- This elite club already includes prominent names like Tata, Reliance Industries, HDFC Bank and the Adani Group.

Bharti Airtel Becomes the 8th Company to surpass ₹6 Lakh Crore Mcap

- This surge was attributed to the positive market sentiment following the Bharatiya Janata Party's resounding victory in state elections.
- Bharti Airtel joins the league of other Indian giants, including Reliance Industries, TCS, HDFC Bank, ICICI Bank, HUL, Infosys and ITC, with a market capitalization exceeding Rs.6 lakh crore.

LIC Introduces Framework for Shareholder's Director: Enhancing Board Structure

- Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC), a leading insurance and investment corporation in India.

About LIC:

Chairperson: Siddhartha Mohanty;

Founder: Government of India;

Founded: 1 September 1956;

Headquarters: Mumbai.

iVIS Partners with ICICI Bank to Boost Security with Advanced E-Surveillance Services

- iVIS, a subsidiary of Magellanic Cloud, has officially partnered with ICICI Bank.

About ICICI Bank:

CEO: Sandeep Bakhshi (15 Oct 2018–)

Founder: Industrial Credit and Investment Corporation of India

Founded: 1994, Vadodara

Headquarters: Mumbai

Cabinet Approves Terms for 16th Finance Commission

- In a press briefing on Wednesday, Information and Broadcasting Minister Anurag Singh Thakur revealed that Cabinet greenlit the terms of reference for the Sixteenth Finance Commission (SFC).
- The Fifteenth Finance Commission (FFC), chaired by N K Singh, for instance, delved into the impact of the Goods and Services Tax (GST).
- The Finance Commission, established under Article 280 of the Indian Constitution by the Indian President in 1951.

RBI inks pact with Bank of England on bond clearing settlement

- Banking regulators in India and the United Kingdom (UK) achieved a significant milestone as they signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU).

About RBI:

Governor: Shaktikanta Das

Founded: 1 April 1935, Kolkata

Founder: British Raj

Headquarters: Mumbai, Maharashtra, India

RBI Fines Bank of America, N.A., HDFC Bank

- The RBI has imposed a penalty of Rs. 10,000 on Bank of America, N.A. for violating the reporting requirements under the liberalized Remittances Scheme of FEMA 1999.

About RBI:

Governor: Shaktikanta Das

Founded: 1 April 1935, Kolkata

Founder: British Raj

Headquarters: Mumbai, Maharashtra, India

About HDFC:

CEO: Sashidhar Jagdishan (27 Oct 2020–)

Founded: August 1994, Mumbai

Headquarters: Mumbai