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INTERNATIONAL NEWS

US is preparing a military aid of more than \$2 billion for Ukraine

- The aid is expected to include longer-range rockets for the first time, other munitions, and weapons, two US officials told Reuters on Tuesday.
- According to the officials, the weapons aid is expected to be announced as soon as this week. The aid is also expected to include support equipment for Patriot air defense systems, precision-guided munitions, and Javelin anti-tank weapons, officials further stated, as reported by Reuters

Australia Radiation Alert: Tiny Radioactive Capsule Missing For Over 2 Weeks Found After 6-Day Search

- After a "relentless search", the team looking for a radioactive capsule lost in Western Australia around two weeks ago is learnt to have found it. The 8mm by 6mm capsule that had triggered a radiation alert and posed a "significant public health risk" was part of a secure device on a truck travelling from a mine site to Perth and believed to have fallen from it during transportation somewhere along the Great Northern Highway, the longest one in Australia. It was spotted by the side of the road south of the town of Newman, The Guardian reported.

Radiation alert in Australia

- The Australian Radiation Protection and Nuclear Safety Agency (ARPANSA) has joined a week-long hunt for a missing radioactive capsule in the west of the country. The agency has announced it is working with the Western Australian government to locate the capsule, news agency Reuters reported. The radioactive capsule, part of a gauge used to measure iron ore density, is believed to have fallen from a truck during transportation, sparking a radiation alert.

Tohoku University's Professor Gets Among The Winners Of The 2023 Japan Prize

- Masataka Nakazawa, a specially-appointed professor at Tohoku University's International Research Institute of Disaster Science (IRiDeS), has been named a co-winner of the 2023 Japan Prize in the field of Electronics, Information and Communication.
- He shares the honour with Kazuo Hagimoto, chief researcher at the National Institute of Information and Communications Technology. The award recognises their contributions to global long-distance, high-capacity optical fiber networks through the development of semiconductor laser pumped optical amplifiers.

Georgia Institute Of Technology Experts Head-Up With Tech Research With \$2.3B Qcells Solar Power Investment

- The state of Georgia is at the epicenter of what may be the largest investment in clean energy manufacturing in U.S. history, and Georgia Tech is poised to play a

key role in an investment that is slated to create thousands of jobs and boost solar power infrastructure in our state and beyond.

- Qcells, a solar power company, plans to build a \$2.3 billion manufacturing complex just north of Atlanta in Cartersville to not only make state-of-the-art components for solar panels, but also to build complete panels used in a variety of settings, from houses to large-scale commercial and industrial solar arrays.

Manu Jain Resigns from Xiaomi after 9 – Year stint

- Manu Kumar Jain on Monday quit handset maker Xiaomi. He has been credited with establishing the brand's smartphone category and he was working as the vice president of Xiaomi Global
- BBC accused of "waging an information war" against Russia and other independent global powers.
- The Russian Foreign Ministry has accused the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) of "waging an information war" not only against Russia but also against other global centres of power that pursue an independent policy. The comments were made by the ministry's spokesperson, Maria Zakharova, in response to the recent release of a controversial two-part BBC documentary about Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

President of the 77th Session of the United Nations General Assembly, Csaba Korosi arrived in New Delhi

- President of the 77th Session of the United Nations General Assembly, Csaba Korosi arrived in New Delhi today on a three-day visit to India. This is his first bilateral visit to any country since he assumed UNGA Presidency in September last year. The External Affairs Ministry spokesperson Arindam Bagchi said in a tweet that this is an opportunity to exchange views on global challenges that the United Nations is currently seized with.
- During the visit, Mr. Korosi will hold talks with External Affairs Minister Dr. S Jaishankar on key multilateral and regional issues of mutual interest. He has outlined a few priorities for his UNGA Presidency. These include standing firm on the basic principles of the United Nations Charter and making significant and measurable progress in sustainability.

MoU signed with South Africa to introduce 12 African Cheetahs into India annually; first batch to be flown in next month

- India and South Africa on Friday signed a Memorandum of Understanding to introduce 12 African Cheetahs annually over the next eight to ten year.
- In terms of the agreement, an initial batch of 12 cheetahs will be flown from South Africa to India next month. The cats will join eight Cheetah brought in India from Namibia last year.

Toyota names Koji Sato new CEO as Akio Toyoda takes chairman role

- Koji Sato, the automaker's 53-year-old chief branding officer, who is also president of Toyota's luxury brand Lexus, will take over as chief executive from April 1, as Akio Toyoda becomes chairman.
- The current chairman Takeshi Uchiyamada will drop his chairman title but remain on the board.
- Microsoft Invests \$10 Billion in ChatGPT Maker OpenAI
- Microsoft Corp. is investing \$10 billion in OpenAI, whose artificial intelligence tool ChatGPT.
- The deal will give a boost to Microsoft's Azure cloud, while providing OpenAI with additional specially designed supercomputers to run its complex AI models and fuel its research.
- Azure will remain the exclusive cloud provider for OpenAI, the company said.

Indian-American astronaut Raja Chari nominated as US Air Force Brigadier General

- Indian-American astronaut, Raja J Chari, 45, has been nominated by US President Joe Biden for an appointment to the grade of Air Force Brigadier General.
- Chari is currently serving as the Crew-3 commander and astronaut at the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, Johnson Space Center, Texas.

Indian And Australian Scientists Develop Artificial Synapse For Brain-Like Computing

- A team of Indian and Australian scientists have developed brain-like computing using scandium nitride (ScN), a semiconducting material that is highly stable and compatible with Complementary Metal-Oxide-Semiconductor (CMOS) technology.
- In the current era of artificial intelligence, brain-like computing can help meet the increasing computational demands.

Chris Hipkins sworn in as 41st Prime Minister of New Zealand

- Chris Hipkins was sworn in as the 41st Prime Minister of New Zealand in Wellington by the country's governor-general, Cindy Kiro on January 25, 2023.
- Chris Hipkins stated after formally assuming office that this was the greatest honor and responsibility of his life, and he was looking forward to the challenges ahead.
- Jacinda Ardern resigned as Prime Minister of New Zealand last week.

NASA to Test Nuclear-Powered Rocket by 2027 that will Make Space Travel Faster

- The United States space agency NASA has said the country plans to test a spacecraft engine powered with nuclear fission by 2027, an advancement seen as key to long-haul missions including a manned journey to Mars.
- NASA will partner with the US military's Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA) to develop the nuclear thermal propulsion engine and launch it into space, NASA administrator Bill Nelson said.

Chris Hipkins to replace Jacinda Ardern as New Zealand prime minister

- New Zealand's former Covid-19 response minister Chris Hipkins will replace Jacinda Ardern as prime minister after receiving the only nomination from fellow MPs, the ruling Labour Party said.
- Hipkins, currently the police and education minister, will take his party into an uphill battle to win general elections in October, as it lags in latest opinion polls.

India participates in international tourism trade fair FITUR in Madrid

- FITUR is the global meeting point for tourism professionals and the leading trade fair for inbound and outbound markets in Latin America. FITUR is the second most important tourism fair in the world. Around 10,000 national and international companies take part in each edition and there are more than 50,000 visitors spread over the different days of the event.
- FITUR 2023 has designed an extensive programme to diversify the specialised public in different thematic areas-
 1. FiturTechy brings together the world of technology
 2. FiturCruises brings together tourism platforms from the world of cruises
 3. FiturSports does the same with the world of sports, and
 4. FiturLGBT+, among others, presents the latest developments in the world of LGBT+ tourism.

India-Bangladesh Friendship pipeline to start supplying diesel to Bangladesh from June

- The India-Bangladesh Friendship Pipeline (IBFPL) would begin supplying diesel to Bangladesh on an experimental basis in June of this year, according to State Minister for Power Nasrul Hamid.

Nasrul Hamid responded to a written inquiry before the national parliament, Jatiya Sangsad, in Dhaka, by stating that a pipeline of 131.5 kilometres long has been built for importing fuel from India.

5 kilometres of the pipeline are in Bangladesh, and 5 kilometres are in India, pre-commissioning of diesel imports through this pipeline is already in progress, according to UNB.

Vietnam President Nguyen Xuan Phuc announces his resignation following corruption scandals

- The continuous anti-corruption campaign has prompted President Nguyen Xuan Phuc of Vietnam to announce his resignation. In Vietnam, the anti-corruption campaign has resulted in the dismissal of several ministers. Two of President Phuc's deputy prime ministers had resigned earlier.
- Former prime minister Phuc has been the country's president since 2021. Between April 2021, when he was elected president, and 2016, the 69-year-old was Vietnam's prime minister.
- The National Assembly must approve the president's resignation; a special vote will be held today; however, it is anticipated that this will only be a formality.
- In a statement praising Phuc's leadership, the Communist Party insisted that he was politically accountable for infractions and the misbehaviour of many officials who worked for him.

Hyderabad-Born Aruna Miller Becomes First Indian-American To Be Elected As Maryland Lieutenant Governor

- Aruna Miller has scripted history by becoming the first Indian-American politician to be sworn in as the Lieutenant Governor in the state of Maryland, adjoining the US capital. Aruna, 58, a former delegate to the Maryland House, made history when the Democrat became the 10th Lieutenant Governor of the state.
- The Lieutenant Governor is the state's highest official following the Governor and assumes the role when the Governor is out of state or incapacitated. Moore became Maryland's 63rd governor, the state's first and the country's only current Black chief executive. The newly sworn-in Lt Governor took her oath on the Bhagwat Gita.

UNGA adopts resolution on 'Education for Democracy' co-sponsored by India

- The United Nations General Assembly(UNGA) adopted a resolution titled 'Education for Democracy' that reaffirms the right of everyone to education. The resolution, which was co-sponsored by India, recognises that "education for all" contributes to the strengthening of democracy. The resolution encourages member states to integrate education for democracy into their education standards.
- This isn't the first time that an education resolution has been adopted by the UN General Assembly. Earlier in 2015, a similar resolution was passed at the Assembly encouraging all UN entities to use education to promote peace, human rights, and democracy. The resolution aimed at encouraging member states to integrate education for democracy into their education standards.

Jacinda Ardern resigns as prime minister of New Zealand

- New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern, a global figurehead of progressive politics, shocked the country. She was re-elected for a second term in 2020, the victory buoyed by her government's "go hard and go early" approach to the Covid-19 pandemic, which saw New Zealand impose some of the world's strictest border rules, separating families and shutting out almost all foreigners for almost two years.
- Ardern won international acclaim for her empathetic handling of the 2019 Christchurch mosque massacre, in which 51 Muslim worshippers were killed and another 40 wounded.
- Ms. Ardern had faced a tough election campaign this year. Her Liberal Labour Party won re-election two years ago in a landslide of historic proportions, but recent polls have put her party behind its conservative rivals.

Pakistan's economy South Asia's weakest, World Bank report says amid crisis

- World Bank forecast Pakistan's economic growth to slow further to two percent during the current year. This will mark a drop of two percentage points from its June 2022 estimates, according to the World Bank's Global Economic Prospects report. The report said that Pakistan's economic output was not only declining itself but also bringing down the regional growth rate as well. Forecasting Pakistan's GDP growth rate to improve to 3.2 per cent in 2024, the report said, "Policy uncertainty further complicates the economic outlook" of Pakistan.

- This pace reflects still robust growth in India, Maldives, and Nepal, offsetting the effects of the floods in Pakistan and the economic and political crises in Afghanistan and Sri Lanka. The deteriorating global environment, however, will weigh on investment in the region,” the report said pointing to a “sharp, long-lasting slowdown” with the global growth expected at 1.7 per cent this year.

Sri Lanka Closer to IMF Bailout as India Said to Back Debt Plan

- India will support Sri Lanka’s debt restructuring plan as the island nation looks to trim its huge public expenditure to win approval for a crucial bailout from the International Monetary Fund. India formally notified that it would support Sri Lanka’s debt restructuring plan. Sri Lanka is facing its worst economic crisis since independence from Britain in 1948, and policymakers have been grappling with multiple challenges over the past year including a shortage of dollars, runaway inflation and a steep recession.
- Sri Lanka owes India around \$1 billion that will come under the debt restructuring plan. New Delhi also separately provided Sri Lanka with about \$4 billion in rapid assistance between January and July last year, including credit lines, a currency swap arrangement and deferred import payments.
- New Delhi’s backing comes at a critical time for Sri Lanka as it has to put its massively indebted public finances in order to unlock a \$2.9 billion IMF loan that was agreed in September.

Janani Ramachandran becomes first LGBTQ of color city council

- Janani Ramachandran, a 30-year-old IndianAmerican attorney, has emerged as the youngest and the first queer woman of colour to take oath as the Oakland City Council member in the US state of California.
- Ramachandran took the ceremonial oath wearing a saree as the Oakland City Council member for District 4 in an inauguration ceremony held on January 10.
- "WE WON! Honored to be the next City Councilmember for Oakland District 4!! I will officially be the youngest Council member in Oakland's history, the 1st #LGBTQ woman of color & 1st South Asian to serve on Oakland City Council," the public interest attorney tweeted.

China's population falls, heralds a demographic crisis

- China’s population fell last year for the first time in six decades, a historic turn that is expected to mark the start of a long period of decline in its citizen numbers with profound implications for its economy. The drop, the worst since the Great Famine of 1961, also lends weight to predictions that India will become the world’s most populous nation in this year. The population dropped by roughly 850,000 to 1.41175 billion at the end of 2022. Long-term, UN experts see China’s population shrinking by 109 million by 2050, more than triple the decline of their previous forecast in 2019.
- Last year’s birth rate was 6.77 births per 1000 people, down from a rate of 7.52 births in 2021 and marking the lowest birth rate on record. The figures also logged the highest death rate since 1974, registering 7.37 deaths per 1000 people compared with a rate of 7.18 deaths in 2021.

Italy Man Sets World Record By 'Mirror Typing' Books In Ancient Languages

- A 63-year-old Italian man, Michele Santelia has achieved a world record by typing copies of 81 books backwards, a technique that he calls 'mirror writing', as per a report by the Guinness World Records (GWR). For the purpose of this record, the books must be typed using 'mirror writing', such that the result is the mirror image of any given language's normal writing.
- Michele's latest book, Das Nibelungenlied Backwards, a medieval German heroic epic, was typed in 2022. Michele dedicated it to "the disabled people of the whole world; to all those who suffer daily in a bigoted and clumsy society."
- Santaglia types books using four completely blank keyboards without looking backwards.
- He types each book in its original language whether it be hieroglyphs, Old Hebrew, Traditional Chinese, Mayan, Etruscan, Cuneiform or Voynich glyphs.

Gabon named its Vice-President and new Prime Minister of the country

- Gabon's President Ali Bongo appointed the country's first female Prime Minister Rose Christiane Ossouka Raponda to the role of Vice-President and named a new PM to replace her. Ossouka Raponda, 59, was appointed in July 2020 after her predecessor stepped down. She was Defence Minister before that. Ossouka Raponda was named Budget Minister in 2012 before being elected mayor of the capital Libreville in 2014, becoming the first woman to hold that position since 1956. She had to navigate a delicate political scene as Prime Minister after a coup attempt in 2019 while Bongo was on prolonged medical leave following a stroke. Former Minister Alain-Claude Bilie By Nze will replace Ossouka Raponda and form a new government, Bongo's secretary general Jean-Yves Teale said in a video statement posted on the presidency's Twitter account.

Kevin McCarthy elected U.S. House Speaker in vote 15 after chaotic week

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

Manpreet Monica Singh First female Sikh judge in US

- Indian-origin Sikh woman, Manpreet Monica Singh became the first ever female Sikh judge in the US after she was sworn in as a Harris county judge. Born and brought up in Houston, after her father immigrated to the US early in the 1970s, Singh currently lives in Bellaire with her husband and two children. In her career expanding over two decades, the newly appointed judge has been involved in numerous civil rights organizations at the local, state, and national levels.
- An estimated 5,00,000 Sikhs live in the US, with 20,000 Sikhs living in the Houston area. The state's first South Asian judge, Indian-American Ravi Sandill called it a big moment for the Sikh community. Sandill was also presiding over the ceremony which happened in a packed courtroom.

Hawaii's Kilauea volcano erupts again after brief pause

- After a brief pause, Hawaii's Kilauea volcano erupted again, spewing lava fountains and discharges of volcanic ash into the air. The eruption started January 5, 2022 afternoon at the volcano's crater, according to a notice issued by the United States Geological Service (USGS). Lava from the volcano is contained in Kilauea's crater, a closed section of Hawaii Volcanoes National Park.
- The USGS warned locals that the high quantities of volcanic fumes may still be dangerous as they travelled downstream. The Kilauea volcano is the most active of the five volcanoes that make up the Island of Hawaii. It is a shield volcano, which is a type of volcano composed of fluid lava and characterized by its vast lava flow.

Taiwan passes Chips Act, offers tax credits to local chipmakers

- Taiwanese lawmakers have passed new rules that let local chip firms turn 25% of their annual research and development expenses into tax credits, part of efforts to keep cutting-edge semiconductor technologies at home and maintain the island's technology leadership. Officials there have repeatedly said they will ensure the latest chip technologies remain in Taiwan, a point that has been reaffirmed by executives at Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Co. and other local chip giants. While Taiwan's assisted local chipmakers in the past with infrastructure construction and other measures, the island is now stepping up its efforts.
- The new incentives should take effect sometime from 2023. Chip companies in Taiwan can also claim tax credits on 5% of the annual costs of buying new equipment for advanced process technologies, the ministry said in what's been dubbed the local version of America's Chips Act. Any credits earned, however, cannot exceed 50% of the total annual income taxes a firm owes.

World's first vaccine for honeybees gets conditional nod in US

- The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) has granted a conditional license for a vaccine for honeybees to curb American foulbrood (AFB), a fatal bacterial disease for the insect.

- It is not a stress-related disease and can infect the strongest to the weakest colony in an apiary. Heavy infections can affect most of the brood, severely weakening the colony and eventually killing it.
- The disease cannot be cured, meaning that the destruction of infected colonies and hives or irradiation of infected material is the only way to manage AFB.

India identifies copper and lithium mines in Argentina

- The Indian government has proclaimed that they have identified two lithium mines and one copper mine in Argentina and they are moving forward to acquiring it or taking long term lease. The government of India said that they had sent a team of geologists to Argentina to assess and find potential lithium deposits in the month of November 2022. They have been able to identify a possible source of lithium and copper deposits in the south American country.
- Khanij Bidesh India Ltd. (Kabil) will have ownership or leasing rights to the mines. A joint venture between the National Aluminium Company (Nalco), Hindustan Copper (HCL), and Mineral Exploration Corporation Ltd. It was established in 2019 to ensure the market in India had access to strategic minerals.

Europe's melted snow due to 'winter heatwave' seen from space

- New satellite imagery reveals the effect of Europe's 'winter heatwave' in the thick of the continent's winter skiing season. An image posted by the European Union's Copernicus Programme shows a distinct lack of snow surrounding the Swiss town of Altdorf, which is close to skiing resorts. In Altdorf, the temperature reached 66.5°F (19.2°C) on New Year's Day and did not fall below 60.9°F (16.1°C) during the night, breaking a previous record set in 1864. Warsaw in Poland also hit 66°F (18.9°C), smashing its own January record by over 9°F (5°C).
- The new satellite image was captured by Sentinel 2, one of the Earth observation satellites that makes up the Copernicus Programme. According to the programme, 2023 has started with 'a historic heatwave' affecting Europe, with many countries observing the warmest temperature on record for January 1, potentially due to human-caused climate change.

China becomes the first country in Asia and second in the world to launch Hydrogen powered Train

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

Qin Gang is named China's new foreign minister

- China has appointed Qin Gang, its ambassador to the United States and a trusted aide of President Xi Jinping, to be its new foreign minister, as Beijing and Washington seek to stabilize rocky relations. This decision was made by the 13th National People's Congress (NPC) Standing Committee. Qin, 56, replaces Wang Yi, who has been foreign minister for the past decade. Wang, 69, was promoted to the politburo of the Chinese Communist Party and is expected to play a bigger role in Chinese foreign policy.
- Qin rose quickly through various positions in China's foreign ministry, including two stints as ministry spokesman between 2006 and 2014, and as chief protocol officer between 2014 and 2018, overseeing many of Xi's interactions with foreign leaders. As spokesman, he stood out among his peers for being one of the earliest Chinese diplomats to make sharp comments in defence of China's increasingly assertive foreign policy, what later became known as "wolf warrior" diplomacy.

Elon Musk becomes first ever person to lose \$200 billion after Twitter takeover

- Tesla and Twitter CEO Elon Musk became the first person to lose \$200 billion from his net worth. Elon Musk has seen a drop of up to \$137 billion in his wealth after a recent drop in Tesla Shares. The shares of his electric car company are down nearly 65 percent. Elon Musk became the richest person in the world for the first time in January 2021 with a net worth of more than \$185 billion.
- However, he was replaced by Bernard Arnault, the chief executive of luxury brand Louis Vuitton's parent company LVMH as the world's richest man.
- Elon Musk has applied a move-fast-and-break-things approach such as firing staff then asking them to come back and applying content policies haphazardly to justify banning the accounts of some prominent journalists who cover him.
- Commenting on Croatia's Schengen accession and the adoption of the euro, the President of the EU Commission, Ursula von der Leyen, expressed her warm welcome for the citizens of Croatia in the borderless zone, pointing out that border controls between Croatia and the rest of the Schengen Area will now become part of the past.

Croatia's big day: Balkan nation adopts euro and joins Schengen zone

- Starting from this Sunday, January 1, 2023, Croatia will officially become a Schengen Area Member Country and will also adopt the euro as its currency after years of intensive preparations and work.
- In honour of Croatia meeting these two milestones, the European Union Commission has released a statement congratulating the country and highlighting the importance of this date for both Croatia and Europe.
- It further points out that with Croatia joining the Schengen Area, now the zone consists of 27 Member States, 23 of which are also EU countries. The Eurozone, in the meantime, now consists of 19 EU Member States and 347 million EU citizens that will share it as their common currency.

Dhaka Lit Fest to feature speakers from five continents

- The 10th edition of Dhaka Lit Fest (DLF), the largest international literary festival in Bangladesh, which was postponed three years in a row owing to the Covid-19 pandemic, is scheduled for January 5-8, 2023. The Bangla Academy in Dhaka's historic grounds will serve as the venue for the event.
- In a press release on Friday, Sadaf Saaz, Ahsan Akbar, and Kazi Anis Ahmed—the festival's three directors—confirmed the information.
- The Dhaka Lit Fest has long been a well-liked annual occasion on Bangladesh's winter calendar. The eighth Dhaka Lit Fest, which was most recently held in 2019, attracted almost 30,000 attendees.
- Over the course of the four days, there will be a variety of discussions and dialogues as well as film screenings, art displays, musical performances, and cultural performances.
- Out of the more than 200 speakers scheduled to attend the 2023 edition, the DLF directors have released their initial roster of 25 speakers.

Lula sworn in for third term as Brazil's president

- Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva took office for a third term as Brazil's president, vowing to fight for the poor and the environment and "rebuild the country" after far-right leader Jair Bolsonaro's divisive administration. The 77-year-old veteran leftist, who previously led Brazil from 2003 to 2010, took the oath of office before Congress, capping a remarkable political comeback for the metalworker-turned-president less than five years after he was jailed on controversial, since-quashed corruption charges.
- It is the first time since the end of Brazil's 1965-1985 military dictatorship that an incoming leader has not received the yellow-and-green presidential sash from his predecessor. Foreign dignitaries including 19 heads of state were in attendance as Lula, who previously led Brazil through a watershed boom, took the oath of office for a new four-year term.

NATIONAL NEWS

PM Pranam Yojana for promotion of alternative fertilizers

- Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman in Budget 2023, announced the launch of "PM Pranam Yojana" for the promotion of alternative fertilizers and balanced use of chemical fertilizers.
- Finance Minister in her speech said, "PM Programme for Restoration, Awareness, Nourishment and Amelioration of Mother Earth' (PM Pranam) will be launched to incentivize States and Union Territories to promote alternative fertilizers and balanced use of chemical fertilizers."

Initiatives For Green Growth And Clean Energy

- To achieve India's goal of net zero carbon emission by 2070, Sitharaman announced a Rs 35,000 crore outlay towards the country's transition to cleaner energy besides listing out initiatives related to green fuel and green farming.

Delhi-Mumbai Expressway: Sohna-Dausa stretch to be inaugurated on Feb 12

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi is all set to inaugurate the first stretch (SohnaDausa) of the Delhi-Mumbai Expressway on February 12. The length of Sohna (Haryana) to Dausa (Rajasthan) is about 210 kilometers.
- The travel time between Delhi and Jaipur is now expected to come down to around two hours. Currently, Jaipur-Delhi travel via Gurgaon takes around 4-5 hours, covering around 270 km. Earlier the inauguration was scheduled on January 4 but according to the latest updates, the date has been changed. The first stretch (Sohna-Dausa) of the Delhi-Mumbai Expressway will be inaugurated on February 12.
- Andhra Pradesh CM Jagan Mohan Reddy said the state capital will be shifted Visakhapatnam. Andhra Pradesh chief minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy on Tuesday announced that the city of Visakhapatnam will be the capital of the state. Speaking at the International Diplomatic Alliance meet in Delhi, CM Jagan said, "I am here to invite you all to Vishakapatnam, which is going to be our capital in the days to come. I will also be shifting to Vishakapatnam in the months to come. We are organising this Global Investor's Summit there on March 3 and 4," he said.

President Droupadi Murmu will address the 31st Foundation Day of the National Commission for Women (NCW)

- The theme of the programme is 'Sashakt Nari Sashakt Bharat' aimed at acknowledging and celebrating the stories of women who have excelled and paved their journey to leave a mark.
- Union Minister for Women and Child Development Smriti Zubin Irani and MoS, WCD,
- Dr Munjpara Mahendrabhai will also grace the occasion. The National Commissions, State Commissions for Women, Embassies, dignitaries from the legal fraternity, other departments and NGOs will be a part of the event.
- Amrit Udyan at President's House opens for public.
- Amrit Udyan at Rashtrapati Bhavan has been opened for the general public from today. On the occasion of the celebrations of 75 years of Independence as Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav', President Droupadi Murmu has given a common name to the Rashtrapati Bhavan gardens as Amrit Udyan. The visitors will be able to see specially cultivated tulips of twelve unique varieties at Amrit Udyan which are expected to bloom in phases.

Union Minister Sonowal "Me-Dam-Me-Phi", festival

- Union Minister Sarbananda Sonowal on Tuesday hosted "Me-Dam-Me-Phi", a festival of Assam's Tai Ahom community to worship and pay respect to the ancestors, at his official residence here. Speaking on the occasion, Sonowal said the pious occasion gives an opportunity to pay respect to the ancestors and express gratitude for the rich heritage that they left behind.

Former Law Minister and senior advocate Shanti Bhushan passed away on Tuesday

Former Law Minister and senior advocate Shanti Bhushan passed away on Tuesday. He was 97. PM Narendra Modi expressed his grief, saying: "He would be remembered for his contribution to the legal field and passion towards speaking for the underprivileged."

First G20 International Financial Architecture Working Group meet

- The first G20 International Financial Architecture Working Group meeting under the G20 Indian Presidency will be held today and tomorrow in Chandigarh. Briefing the media persons at Chandigarh, Anu P Mathai, Economic Advisor, Department of Economic Affairs said that International Financial Architecture Working Group is one of the important workstreams under the G20 Finance Track with a focus on strengthening the international financial architecture. It also aims to address multiple challenges faced by vulnerable countries.

Odisha finance minister Niranjan Pujari has been allotted the Health and Family welfare department

A statement from the Chief Minister's Office confirmed the appointment and said, "With approval of governor Prof Ganeshi Lal, chief minister Naveen Patnaik allocated health and family welfare department to finance minister Niranjan Pujari."

Two-Day Inception Meeting Of Startup-20 Begins In Hyderabad

- A two-day inception meeting of the Startup-20, the new engagement group of G20 initiated by India, has begun in Hyderabad. Union Tourism Minister G Kishan Reddy, G-20 Sherpa Amitabh Kant, Startup-20 Chair Chintan Vaishnav, Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade, DIPTYCH secretary Anurag Jain, G-20 Secretariat JS Asish Sinha JS participated while about 180 delegates from G-20 member countries and nine special invitee countries besides stakeholders including Startups, investors and innovators attended the inaugural meeting.
- The Union Minister asked the delegates to visit tourist places in India and places of cultural importance during startup meetings. Speaking on the occasion, G-20 Sherpa said the country has achieved considerable growth in the field of startups due to massive disruption in the fields of Science & Technology. This has led to the development of Digital identity and digital public platforms, he added.

Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan launches Ladli Bahina Scheme

- Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has said his government will launch a new scheme to provide Rs 1,000 per month to women from financially poor background in the state, where the Assembly polls are due this year-end.

- Indian Air Force orders inquiry to find the cause of accident of two fighter planes at Morena Indian Air Force orders inquiry to determine the cause of accident of two fighter planes at Morena. In Madhya Pradesh Morena district, two Indian Air Force fighter aircraft crashed in the Pahadgarh area. As per reports, Sukhoi-30 and Mirage 2000 aircraft have crashed. Details are awaited.

Odisha Minister Naba Kishore Das, Who Was Shot In Chest, Dies In Hospital

- Naba Kisore Das was shot in the chest when he was on his way to attend a programme. New Delhi: Naba Kisore Das, Odisha health minister who was critically injured after being shot at by a police officer, has died in hospital. The officer, who has been arrested, was undergoing treatment for mental illness, reports said.
- President Droupadi Murmu to grace opening of Gardens of Rashtrapati Bhavan in Udyan Utsav 2023 President Droupadi Murmu will grace the opening of the Gardens of Rashtrapati Bhavan – Udyan Utsav 2023 today. Among several other attractions, the visitors will be able to see specially cultivated tulips of twelve unique varieties which are expected to bloom in phases. This time the Gardens will be open for about two months. The Gardens will open for the general public on the 31st of January and will remain open till the 26th of March except on Mondays which are maintenance days. From the 28th of March to the 31st of March, the Gardens will be open for special categories.
- The garden will open for farmers on the 28th of March, for differently-abled persons on the 29th of March, for personnel of Defence Forces, Paramilitary Forces, and Police on the 30th of March, and for women including tribal women's Self Help Groups on the 31st of March.

EPFO launches massive outreach programme in all districts through revamped 'Nidhi Aapke Nikat' programme

- Employees' Provident Fund Organisation, EPFO, launched a massive outreach programme in all the districts through a revamped 'Nidhi Aapke Nikat' programme for expanding its presence across the country.
- The aim of this programme is to reach all the districts on 27th of every month and strengthen the relationship between the organization and its stakeholders.

NITI Aayog's AIM, CBSE, and Intel India Collaborate to Bring Change in Education Sector

- NITI Aayog, Central Board of Secondary Education -Ministry of Education, and Intel India have collaborated to bring a change in the education sector by embedding future skills such as AI and Tinkering in the formal curriculum.
- The larger aim is to align the NEP 2020's guidance to increase the pace of tech integration for youth, the need to bridge the future skills gap in the country, and optimize the current infrastructure (ATLs, etc.) towards making India AI-ready.
- Together, they launched the AIoT Integration in School Curriculum in September 2022 and initiated a pilot.

First edition of the SCO Film Festival begins in Mumbai

- Union Minister for Information and Broadcasting and Youth Affairs and Sports Anurag Singh Thakur and Minister of State (External Affairs and Culture) Meenakshi Lekhi inaugurated the 5-day SCO Film Festival at NPCA, Mumbai.
- The film festival is being organized by the National Film Development Corporation (NFDC) in association with SCO Council of Heads of States.

Union Health Minister Mansukh Mandaviya launched World's first intranasal COVID-19 vaccine

- Mansukh Mandaviya, Union Health Minister, launched the world's first intranasal COVID-19 vaccine, iNNCOVACC, in New Delhi on January 27, 2023.
- Bharat Biotech International Limited (BBIL) created it in conjunction with Biotechnology Industry Research Assistance (BIRAC).
- The vaccine was unveiled in the presence of Dr. Jitendra Singh, Union Minister of State (IC) for Science and Technology, and other authorities.

India elected as Vice-chair at the 12th session of FAO's Intergovernmental Technical Working Group (ITWG) on Animal Genetic Resources

- In the recently concluded 12th Session of the Intergovernmental Technical Working Group on Animal Genetic Resources at Rome. India was elected as Vice-chair and represented Asia & Pacific region. In 12th Session of ITWG, implementation of the Global Plan of Action for Animal Genetic Resources, monitoring of AnGR diversity and preparing the 3rd Country Report were reviewed.

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

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

National Child Science Congress to begin in Ahmedabad with more than 1400 delegates

- The 30th National Child Science Congress began in Ahmedabad, Gujarat. The five-day event organized at Science City will conclude on 31st January. The program will be hosted by the Gujarat Council on Science and Technology, the Gujarat Council of Science City, and SAL Education. More than 1400 delegates including child scientists, teachers will attend the congress.

Republic Day 2023

- The 74th Republic Day Parade begins at 10:30 AM from Vijay Chowk and head towards Lal Quila. The Parade ceremony commence with the visit of Prime Minister Narendra Modi to the National War Memorial.
- He lead the nation in paying solemn tributes to the brave hearts by laying a wreath. After that, the national flag unfurled followed by the national anthem with a 21-gun salute using 105-mm Indian Field Guns.

Sh. Banwari Lal Purohit inaugurates North India's largest floating Solar project of 2000kWp at Water Works in Chandigarh

- Banwari Lal Purohit inaugurated North India's largest floating Solar project of 2000kWp at Water Works in Chandigarh. He also inaugurated a 500kWp floating Solar Project with Fountains at Dhanas Lake in Chandigarh.
- Both projects have been designed and executed by CREST (Chandigarh Renewable Energy and Science and Technology Promotion Society).

President approves conferment of 106 Padma Awards

- President Droupadi Murmu approved conferment of 106 Padma Awards including three duo cases for 2023.
- The list comprises six Padma Vibhushan, nine Padma Bhushan and 91 Padma Shri awardees. A total of 19 awardees are women and the list also includes two persons from category of Foreigners/NRI/PIO/OCI and seven Posthumous awardees.

Suryakumar Yadav creates history, becomes first Indian men's player to clinch T20I Player of the Year Award

- Suryakumar Yadav has etched his name in the history books and become the 1st-ever Indian cricketer to be bestowed with the ICC Men's T20 Cricketer of the Year award. Suryakumar pipped the likes of Sikandar Raza, Sam Curran and Mohammad Rizwan to bag the top honour.
- The right-handed batsman piled up 1164 runs in 31 matches last year. He batted with a strike-rate of 187.43.

India's first Stack Developer Conference to be held in New Delhi

- The first India Stack Developer Conference will be hosted in New Delhi on January 25, 2023. The conference will focus on strategies and techniques to increase global acceptance of India's digital goods.
- Over 100 digital leaders from industry, government, start-ups and unicorns, and academia will attend the conference.
- G20 delegates and the G20 Secretariat have also been invited to the Conference.

Nagaland: 3rd edition of annual Orange festival 2023 underway in Kohima

- In Nagaland, the third edition of the annual Orange festival 2023 is being organised in collaboration with the department of Horticulture, Agriculture,

Rural Development, Land Resources and Kohima Smart City at Rusoma village, Kohima district. It is conceptualised to recognise and celebrate the hard work of the orange growers while facilitating them the market linkage.

Balkrishna Doshi, pioneer of modernist architecture in India, passes away

- Dr Balkrishna Vithaldas Doshi, who is widely revered for his contribution in the field of architecture, has passed away. He was 95.
- For his outstanding contribution to the field of architecture, he was conferred with Pritzker Prize in 2018 and the coveted Padma Shri in 1976.
- The Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) has announced that Indian architect Balkrishna Doshi will be the recipient of the 2022 Royal Gold Medal

President Draupadi Murmu confers Pradhan Mantri Rashtriya Bal Puraskar

- President, Draupadi Murmu conferred this year's Pradhan Mantri Rashtriya Bal Puraskar to the awardee children and their parents in New Delhi on January 24, 2023.
- The prizes were given to 11 youngsters for their outstanding achievements in six categories: art, culture, bravery, innovation, social service, and sports. Six boys and five girls from 11 states and union territories received awards.
- Each awardee got a medal, a one lakh rupee cash prize, and a certificate from the President.

After Co-Win, Govt Launches U-WIN To Digitise Universal Immunisation Programme

- Named U-WIN, the programme to digitise India's Universal Immunisation Programme (UIP) has been launched in a pilot mode in two districts of each state and Union Territory.
- The platform will be used to register and vaccinate every pregnant woman, record her delivery outcome, register every newborn delivery, administer birth doses and all vaccination events thereafter.

Punjab CM Bhagwant Mann launches Schools of Eminence Project

- Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann launched Schools of Eminence in Mohali and said it is a revolutionary step for ensuring golden future of the students. Inspired by Delhi's Schools of Specialized Excellence, in the first phase, 117 existing government schools will be upgraded as 'Schools of Eminence'.

IndiGrid to acquire 100% stake in Khargone Transmission for Rs 1497 crore

- India Grid Trust will acquire a 100 per equity stake in Khargone Transmission at an enterprise value of about Rs 1,497.5 crore. The acquisition will be for a cash consideration of an enterprise value not exceeding Rs 1,497. 5 crore. The Khargone Transmission was incorporated on November 28, 2015. The transmission project was awarded by the Ministry of Power for 35 years.

Business 20 inception meeting began in Gujarat; Minister Piyush Goyal asks businesses to adopt sustainable & green business

- Several policymakers, including Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal besides business leaders and senior executives represented businesses of the G20 countries are participating in the three-day B20 India inception meeting. The Business 20 is amongst the most prominent official engagement groups in G20. The three day B20 inception meeting was held in Gandhinagar.

ECI hosts 2nd International Conference on 'Use of Technology and Elections Integrity' in New Delhi

- Election Commission of India (ECI) is hosting the 2nd International Conference on the theme 'Use of Technology and Elections Integrity' at New Delhi on 23-24 January, 2023. ECI is leading the Cohort on Elections Integrity which was established as a follow up to the 'Summit for Democracy'.
- 'Summit for Democracy', was an initiative of US President and hosted in December 2021.
- Govt switches bonds with RBI in a cash-neutral deal
- The Indian government bought back bonds maturing in 2024 from the Reserve Bank of India, while also issuing bonds maturing in 2032 worth a similar quantum. The government bought back 6.18% bonds maturing in 2024 worth 226.10 billion rupees (\$2.78 billion) at a price of 98.62 rupees while it issued 8.28% 2032 bonds worth 210.26 billion rupees to the RBI at 106.05 rupees.

Vedanta Cairn Oil and Gas appoints Nick Walker as CEO

- Vedanta Cairn Oil & Gas, India's largest private oil and gas exploration and production company, announced it has appointed Nick Walker as Chief Executive Officer, effective January 5, 2023. Before this appointment, Walker was President and Chief Executive Officer at Lundin Energy, a large European independent E&P companies.

Odisha CM Naveen Patnaik inaugurates 'International Craft Summit

- Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik on Friday inaugurated an 'International Craft Summit' in Jajpur. This is the first-of-its-kind craft summit featuring a confluence of pioneering craftspeople, culture, and art enthusiasts. International delegates from 15 countries have arrived in Jajpur to engage with local artisans and other stakeholders, informed the government

Business 20 inception meeting to be held in Gujarat

- The Business 20 (B20) inaugural meeting, which is part of the G20, began on January 23, 2023, in Gandhinagar, Gujarat.
- The inaugural meeting is attended by Union ministers Piyush Goyal and Ashwini Vaishnaw, Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel, India's Sherpa for the G20, Amitabh Kant, Tata Sons Chairman N Chandrasekaran, and a slew of national and international business executives.

Fifth Kalvari class submarine INS Vagir to be inducted into Indian Navy

- The Indian Navy commissioned the fifth Kalvari class submarine Vagir, on January 23, 2023.
- Admiral R Hari Kumar, Chief of the Naval Staff, was the Chief Guest during a ceremony conducted at the Naval Dockyard in Mumbai.
- Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Limited (MDL) of Mumbai produced the submarine in conjunction with M/s Naval Group of France. Four Kalvari class submarines have already been delivered to the Indian Navy.

Deepest underground metro station in the country to start by March end

- The Maharashtra Metro Rail Corporation (MahaMetro) has announced that the Commissioner of Metro Railway Safety (CMRS) will inspect a stretch of the Pune Metro in February, and clearances are expected in March. This line features India's deepest underground station, which will be ready in a few months at the Civil Court and measures 33.1 metres (108.59 feet) in depth.
- The CMRS inspection will cover the part between Vanaz and Civil Court, as well as the section between Civil Court and Pimpri Chinchwad Municipal Corporation. MahaMetro, a joint special purpose vehicle (SPV) of Government of India and Government of Maharashtra, is the executing agency of Pune Metro rail project.

National AIDS Control Organisation forms Largest Human Red Ribbon Chain in Kalinga Stadium of Bhubaneswar, Odisha to create awareness on AIDS

- Odisha State AIDS Control Society organised an awareness program on HIV AIDS in coordination with the Department of Sports and Youth Services and Hockey India under the leadership of National AIDS Control Organization (NACO), on 19th January 2023. The spectators in the gallery included 4,800 students from various schools, Red Ribbon Club members from colleges, people from community, and participants from the Mission Shakti Department.
- Odisha continues to have a low HIV prevalence in the state with an adult prevalence of 0.14% and an estimated 52,108 people living with HIV (PLHIV).

EY projects India to become a US\$26 trillion economy by 2047 with a six-fold increase in per capita income to US\$15,000

- Ernst & Young, released a report titled India@100: Realizing the potential of a US\$26 trillion economy. According to the estimates Indian economy will reach GDP size of US\$26 trillion by 2047, the 100th year of the country's independence.
- The per capita income is expected to increase to US\$15,000, putting the country among the ranks of developed economies.

Growth Enablers As Per Report

1. World's Information Technology and Services Hub
2. Digitalization: A Force Multiplier
3. Filling the credit gap to fuel growth
4. Thriving entrepreneurship spurred by private capital

5. Reaping the demographic dividend
6. Making domestic manufacturing competitive
7. Building the infrastructure of the future
8. Transition to sustainable energy

PM inaugurates second phase of Saansad Khel Mahakumbh

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the second phase of Saansad Khel Mahakumbh 2022-23 via video conferencing. Saansad Khel Mahakumbh 2022-23 has been organized in Basti district, Uttar Pradesh by Harish Dwivedi, Member of Parliament from Basti since 2021.
- The Khel Mahakumbh includes various competitions in both indoor and outdoor sports like wrestling, kabaddi, kho kho, basketball, football, hockey, volleyball, handball, chess, carrom, badminton, table tennis, etc. There are several other competitions including essay writing, painting, rangoli making, etc are also organized during the Khel Mahakumbh.
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi has noted that Basti is the pious land of Maharishi Vashist which is made up of labor and meditation, asceticism, and renunciation.

J&K completely shift to digital mode of governance, becomes first UT to do so

- Jammu & Kashmir becomes the first union territory in India to completely switch to a digital method of administration, leading the way in the digital transformation of governance. All governmental and administrative services in Jammu & Kashmir are currently only offered digitally.
- The declaration was made during the meeting of the Committee of Secretaries. Chief Secretary Dr. Arun Kumar Mehta instructed the commissioner of IT during the meeting to make sure that all government services would only be accessible online.
- According to the state administration's guidelines, no service will be unavailable, and applicants won't need to go to a government office.
- Dr. Arun Mehta also instructed all the secretaries to make sure that services were delivered online without difficulty and tasked them with organizing public awareness campaigns in panchayats and educational institutions.
- The UT administration constituted a 'Coordination Cell' for monitoring the progress of the implementation of online services in Jammu and Kashmir.

Union Govt included 'Neelakurinji' in the list of protected plants

- The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF) has listed Neelakurinji under Schedule III of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972, including it on the list of protected plants. Neelakurinji has been included in the list after the Center increased the earlier protected list of six plant species to 19.
- As per the order, those uprooting or destroying the plant will be fined Rs 25,000 and imprisoned for three years, furthermore, cultivation and possession of Neelakurinji are not permitted.
- Neelakurinji is a shrub found in the Western Ghats in the Shola forests in the Southern part of India. It is peculiar that it blooms only once in twelve years. It has also given the name Nilgiris to the mountains of the region owing to its blue color. Neelakurinji usually grows at an elevation of 1300 – 2400 m and a height between 30 – 60 cm.

1200-yr-old Miniature Stupas Found In Nalanda District

- The Archeological Survey of India (ASI) of the Patna circle has unearthed 1200 years old two miniature votive stupas near the Sarai Tila mound on the “Nalanda Mahavihara” grounds in the Nalanda district. The stupas found in Nalanda are carved from stones and depict Buddha figures.
- The Superintendent Archeologist, ASI Patna circle, Goutami Bhattacharya informed that at the beginning of the 7th century CE, small miniature terracotta stupas became popular as votive offerings. Devout pilgrims visiting various holy sites and temples throughout Asia would either purchase small votive offerings or make their own.
- The Nalanda Mahavihara site comprises the archeological remains of a monastic and scholastic institution dating from the 3rd century BCE to the 13th Century CE.
- It includes stupas, shrines, viharas, and important artwork in stucco, stone, and metal.
- The archaeological remains of Nalanda Mahavihara were systematically unearthed and preserved simultaneously.

Odisha Govt to revamp Vedvyas Shrine in Sundargarh

- Odisha Government will develop the famous Vedvyas Shrine, which is located near Rourkela in Sundargarh district, the temple is not only a place of natural beauty but is also considered a pilgrimage.
- On the direction of Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik, Secretary to CM VK Pandian on Saturday visited Vedvyas Peetha and after holding a discussion with the members of the Trust Board, and local people, Pandian asked the district Collector to prepare a detailed development plan within 15 days for Vedvyas Peetha in line with 5T initiatives of the State Government.
- The development plan will be presented before the Chief Minister for approval.
- Vedvyas Peetha is one of the major pilgrimage sites in the State. Many visitors from across the State and outside come to this famous Peetha every day. Hence, the State Government is making constant efforts for the overall development of this Peetha, the 5T Secretary said.

PM shares snippets titled 'Your Exam, Your Methods-Choose

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi shared snippets titled “Your Exam, Your Methods-Choose Your Own Style” from the Exam Warriors Book and has urged students to share how they prepare for exams. PM Modi in his message shared that in the book Exam Warriors, one mantra is “Your Exam, Your Methods-Choose Your Own Style”.
- He also urged all the students to share their interesting experiences while preparing for the exams. The Prime Minister has shared that it will surely motivate Exam Warriors.
- Exam Warriors is a book published by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in 2018. Exam Warriors is written especially for young students to help them deal with the stress of exams.

Jallikattu 2023: Celebrations begin in Madurai; Tamil Nadu govt issues new norms amid Covid scare

- The renowned Jallikattu bull-taming competition got underway on Sunday in the Tamil Nadu village of Avaniyapuram. Aneesh Sekhar, the district collector of Madurai, as saying that preparations had been made to ensure a successful Jallikattu. ensuring the players’ and

bulls' safety. Bulls are protected in the play area by three levels of barricading, as are spectators.

- Several eager young men participated in the sport, which received a fawning round of applause.
- During the Pongal harvest season, which starts in mid-January, jallikattu is a well-liked sport. The winner is determined by how long the tamer stays on the bull's hump.
- It is customarily done as a part of Mattu Pongal, the third day of Tamil Nadu's four-day harvest festival.

Success of 'Womaniya on Government eMarketplace' commemorated in New Delhi

- The success of "Womaniya on Government eMarketplace" was commemorated in New Delhi. The event was held by Government eMarketplace (GeM) in partnership with the self-employed women's association, Bharat (SEWA Bharat), and attended by women entrepreneurs and participants from stakeholders' organizations and associations.
- The highlight of the event included a presentation on financial literacy by Smt. Piya Bahadur, Co-founder & CEO, MeraBills.
- Presentation by Smt Sanchita Mitra, National Coordinator, SEWA Bharat on the new opportunities created for women entrepreneurs within the informal economy through digital inclusion.
- A short film on GeM seller testimonials, "Voice from the Ground" by SEWA.

Doppler weather radar network to cover entire country by 2025

- The entire country will be covered by Doppler Weather Radar Network by 2025 to help predict extreme weather events more accurately, union minister Jitendra Singh said on Sunday, speaking at the foundation day of India Meteorological Department.
- They include two at Murari Devi and Jot in Himachal Pradesh, and one each at Banihal Top in Jammu and Kashmir and Surkandaji in Uttarakhand covering a radius of 100 km.
- The IMD has taken proactive steps to increase the number of radars from 15 in 2013 to 37 in 2023 and will add 25 more in next 2-3 years, he said in presence of Chief Ministers of Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand and LG of J&K—the three Himalayan States most prone to the extreme events in the country.
- Himachal Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh urged the union minister to provide one more DWR system at Lahaul-Spiti, which suffers from frequent cloud-burst incidents.

Old Pension Scheme benefits to be extended to CRPF, BSF, CISF, ITBP personnel; Delhi HC directs Centre to issue orders

- The Himachal Pradesh government restored the old pension scheme in its first cabinet meeting. The cabinet decided to provide OPS to all government employees who are presently covered under the defined contributory pension scheme, also referred to as NPS. This scheme will benefit about 1.36 lakh NPS employees in the state.
- The State Cabinet in its first meeting presided over by the Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu held in Shimla passed a resolution thanking the people of Himachal Pradesh for reposing their confidence in the policies and programs of congress.

- Congress government has fulfilled a key poll promise by providing the Old Pension scheme (OPS) to all government employees.

Flybig starts flight from Itanagar to Guwahati

- Regional carrier Flybig commenced its services from Itanagar to Guwahati. The Flybig carrier has commenced flights from Hollongi in Arunachal Pradesh to Guwahati in Assam. With this, Itanagar becomes the 10th destination on the Flybig network while the third destination in Arunachal Pradesh alone.
- Flybig flies six days a week to Tezu and seven days to Pasighat in Arunachal Pradesh from Guwahati. The morning flights from Itanagar to Guwahati will be operated on all days except Wednesday.
- Flybig is a regional airline based in Indore, Madhya Pradesh, India. The airline began its operations in December 2020 and is focused on connecting tier-2 cities within India. The company received a No Objection Certificate from the Ministry of Civil Aviation and received its Air Operator's Certificate (AoC) on 14th December 2020. It began operations with a single ATR-72-500.

Union Minister Arjun Ram Meghwal hands over 9th to 10th century Nataraja idol to Archaeological Department official in Chittorgarh Fort

- Union Minister of State for Culture Arjun Ram Meghwal handed over the 9th to 10th century Nataraja Idol of the Archeological Department official in Chittorgarh Fort in Rajasthan. Union Minister Arjun Ram Meghwal noted that there are only 13 idols of ancient importance that could be brought to India by the year 2023 but after 2014, Prime Minister Narendra Modi brought 229 idols to India.
- The Nataraja Idols were stolen from the Shiva temple at Badoli in Chittorgarh in 1998. The idols were brought to India in 2020 from a private museum in London after a long legal process. Union Minister has also ensured to build a ropeway on Chittorgarh fort and connect Chittorgarh with Bharatmala Yojana.
- Arjun Ram Meghwal is an Indian politician currently serving as the Minister of State for Parliament Affairs and Culture. He is a member of the Bhartiya Janata Party. He has previously served as the Chief Whip and Minister of State for Heavy Industries and Public Enterprises.

Music of the soul at Mongeet in Assam at Majuli

- Mongeet is a festival of music, poetry, art, craft, food, culinary techniques, indigenous herbs, and culture celebrated in Majuli, Assam. The Mongeet festival started in the year 2020 as a movement of arts and music and it aims to nurture the upcoming musical talents of Assam. It was started by actor Adil Hussain and Kaushik Nath, an actor-director-turned-entrepreneur.
- Mongeet festival will be held on 15th, 16th, and 17th January at Dekasang, Majuli and on 19th and 20th January at Dekasang, Sadiya.
- This edition of the Mongeet festival will witness Montulika, a creative painting workshop, and Monmritikka, a special workshop on the rich art and sculpture of Assam.

- In the Mongeet festival, renowned Assamese Chef Atul Lahkar will host a masterclass, Aharor Aakholi (food and traditional kitchen) to talk about food conservation, identification of ingredients, modern cooking methods about indigenous techniques, and ways to promote regional cuisine.

West Bengal: ICG ship 'Kamla Devi', last vessel of FPV series, commissioned

- Indian Coast Guard (ICG) ship 'Kamla Devi' the Fast Patrol Vessel (FPV) which is designed, built, and delivered by Garden Reach Shipbuilders and Engineers (GRSE) Ltd to Indian Coast Guard was commissioned in Kolkata, West Bengal. Indian Coast Guard ship Kamla Devi is officially the fifth and last vessel of the series of FPVs designed and built by GRSE as per the specifications of the Indian Coast Guard.
- Indian Coast Guard ship (ICGS) Kamla Devi is 48.8 meters long and 7.5 meters wide with a displacement of 308 tonnes. There are three engines and water jets in ICGS Kamla Devi.
- She is capable of a top speed of 34 knots and an endurance of over 1,500 nautical miles. She has an Integrated Bridge System and is fitted with 40/60 guns as the main armament.
- The ICGS Kamla Devi has advanced habitability features with fully air-conditioned accommodations for 35 personnel.

Tripura State Government launches "Saharsh" special education program

- The 'Saharsh' was launched in 40 schools of the state on a pilot basis in August last year. This year, it will be extended to all government and aided schools in Tripura from the second week of January.
- A similar program, which was found to be effective in social and economic development in research studies of Harvard and Columbia Universities is being contextualized with local realities of India before being implemented in Tripura.
- On the inauguration of the 49th state-level science, mathematics, and environment exhibition, Education Minister Ratan Lal Nath informed that the state government has been working to make Tripura self-reliant and prosperous.
- The school education department has introduced 36 reforms in the last five years and the higher education department has 19 reforms.

Vidisha becomes the 1st Indian district to implement cutting-edge 5G use cases proposed by startups

- A joint initiative by the Vidisha District Administration and the Centre for Development of Telematics (C-DOT), Department of Telecommunications (DoT), under the direction of Additional Secretary (Telecom) & Administrator USOF, made Vidisha, a district of Madhya Pradesh, the first district ever in India for on-ground implementation of groundbreaking 5G use cases proposed by startups.
- The Department of Telecommunications (DoT) has been fostering partnerships of Digital Communication Tech – startups & SMEs to potential user communities, viz. State governments, Smart cities, Aspirational districts, vertical industries, etc., through the Telecom Startups & MSMEs Mission (TSuM) & 5G Vertical Engagement Partnership Program (VEPP). This is accomplished to accelerate Digital Transformation across socio-economic verticals.

- To implement 5G/4G/IoT innovative approaches of Startups & SMEs at Vidisha (Aspirational district), Madhya Pradesh with a primary focus on Health, Agriculture, Dairy, Education & Skill Development, benefiting the Vidisha community as a whole, the “5G use case promotional pilot” is being spearheaded by the Centre for Development of Telematics (C-DOT), DoT, which is a trailblazer in emerging Digital communication Technologies.

Sarbananda Sonowal inaugurates School of Logistics, Waterways and Communication in Agartala

- Union Minister Sarbananda Sonowal, along with Tripura Chief Minister Dr. Manik Saha, inaugurated the School of Logistics, Waterways and Communication in Agartala. The school’s mission is to tap into the economic potential of the Northeast by harnessing the human resources of the region’s waterways and transportation sector, as outlined by Minister Sonowal.
- The Centre for Logistics, Communication and Waterways aims to improve the logistics and transportation sector by conducting research, training, workshops, and seminars for various stakeholders, including businesses, exporters/importers, Chambers of Commerce and Industries, local entrepreneurs, and tourist operators. The centre is established under the State Institute of Public Administration and Rural Development (SIPARD), an autonomous body funded by both the Government of Tripura and the Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India.

India’s Fastest Payment App PayRup Launched

- India’s fastest payment app PayRup was launched in India on 9th January 2023. PayRup is built with the finest technology of web 3.0. PayRup provides an advanced digital payment experience with an outstanding user experience. PayRup users can pay utility bills and landline bills, recharge their mobile, broadband, DTH, and purchase gift cards.
- PayRup services are planned to expand across various financial instruments. These instruments include multiple payment services such as school fees, pay rent, and other payment collection services.
- PayRup has announced ticketing and booking services for flights, buses, and hotels along with other USPs. PayRup opens 24/7 customer care facilities for help and support for users.
- Customer Support desk runs with leading CRM technologies and supports by the global standard. PayRup ensured the 5 dimensions of service quality and follows SERVQUAL standards to provide the best service experience.

PM Launches Aspirational Block Programme, Calls for "India-First" Approach

- Prime Minister has launched the government’s Aspirational Block Programme (ABP), which is aimed at improving the performance of blocks lagging on various development parameters. The Aspirational Blocks Programme is on the lines of the Aspirational District Programme that was launched in 2018 and covers 112 districts across the country.
- NITI Aayog in partnership with the states will release a quarterly ranking of these blocks based on their performance on development indicators covering sectors such as health, education and nutrition among others.
- The Centre had announced its intention to launch this initiative in the Union Budget 2022-23. The programme will cover 500 districts across 31 states and Union Territories initially.

Over half of these blocks are in 6 states—Uttar Pradesh (68 blocks), Bihar (61), Madhya Pradesh (42), Jharkhand (34), Odisha (29) and West Bengal (29).

International Kite Festival 2023 begins in Ahmedabad

- The International Kite Festival 2023 has begun on 8 January in Ahmedabad, Gujarat. The festival, which is being organised after a gap of two years, was inaugurated by Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel. The previous edition was held in 2020 with 153 participants from 43 countries. The festival is being organised by Gujarat Tourism on the G20 theme of 'One Earth, One Family, One Future'. Apart from Ahmedabad, the International Kite Festival will also be organised in Surat, Vadodara, Rajkot, Dwarka, Somnath, Dhordo and Kevadia.
- After a gap of 2 years, the sky above the Sabarmati river in Ahmedabad will be decorated with colourful unique kites. More than 800 kite flyers from across India and the world will participate in the festival and display their unique creations. This year kite lovers from different countries will attempt to create a Guinness World Record for the maximum number of kite flyers at the same time.

India's first-ever coal gasification based Talcher Fertiliser plant in Odisha will be ready by October 2024: Mansukh Mandaviya

- Union Health and Family Welfare and Chemicals and Fertilizers Minister Dr. Mansukh Mandaviya announced that India's first-ever coal gasification-based Talcher Fertilizer Plant in Odisha will be ready to be dedicated to the nation by October 2024. Union Minister Mansukh Mandaviya visited the site on the second day and noted that the work in the plant in Talcher is in progress.
- Along with Union Health and Family Welfare and Chemicals and Fertilizers Minister Dr. Mansukh Mandaviya, Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan was also present during the occasion.
- Under Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision of Aatmanirbhar Bharat, five out of four urea plants have become functional.
- The urea plants at Talcher which uses Coal Gasification Technology to produce urea will be ready by the end of this year.

Kerala establishes welfare board for workers under employment guarantee programmes

- The Kerala Cabinet approved a scheme to ensure those employed under the Mahatma Gandhi Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme(MGNREGS) in the poll-bound state get benefits like pension and medical assistance. It has recommended that governor Arif Mohammad Khan issue an ordinance in this regard.
- The state government and local bodies will give an equal contribution and ₹50 will be deducted from a worker's salary every month for it.
- Those who are between 18 and 55 can register for membership and they can submit their contribution every month or on yearly basis. People aged up to 75 are eligible for employment under MGNREGS.

President Droupadi Murmu lays foundation stone for SJVN's 1,000 MW solar project in Rajasthan

- President Droupadi Murmu laid the foundation stone of state-owned energy firm SJVN's 1,000 MW Bikaner Solar Power Project. The event was done virtually by the President of India in Jaipur, Rajasthan. The project is being implemented by SJVN Limited through its owned subsidiary SJVN Green Energy Limited (SGEL).
- The solar power project is being developed on 500 acres near the village of Banderwala, district Bikaner of Rajasthan. It is one of the highest solar yield areas in India.
- The development cost of the Bikaner Solar Power Project is ₹5492 crore and viability gap funding support of ₹44.72 lacks per megawatt.
- After commissioning the project will generate 2454.55 million units in the first year and approximately 56838 MU would be generated on a cumulative basis over 25 years.

Kerala declared first State to enable digital banking in all eligible accounts

- Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan declared Kerala as the first state in the country to go fully digital in its banking service and said this recognition would boost the state economy. Vijayan said this achievement was possible due to social interventions through local self-government institutions along with infrastructure development and technological advances in the banking sector.
- It is a joint venture between the Kerala State Information Technology Infrastructure Ltd (KSITIL), Kerala State Electricity Board (KSEB) and the state, in which the two companies hold 49% each and the state the remaining 2%. A consortium led by Bharat Electronics Ltd (BEL) is executing the project and will be responsible for the operation and maintenance of the 35,000-km-long network for the next seven years. Funded by the Kerala Infrastructure Investment Fund Board (KIIFB), the project is estimated to cost Rs 1,028.20 crore, which includes capital expenditure, administrative overheads and annual operational expenditure of Rs 104.4 crore.

Centre constitutes High Powered Committee to discuss measures to protect Ladakh's unique culture, language & employment

- The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) in India has established a High Powered Committee (HPC) to address issues related to the protection of Ladakh's culture, language, land, and employment opportunities. A 17-member committee has been constituted under the Chairmanship of Minister of State for Home Affairs Nityanand Rai.
- In addition to Rai, the committee will include the Lieutenant Governor of the Union Territory of Ladakh, the Member of Parliament for Ladakh, the Chairmen/Chief Executive Councilors of the LAHDCs of Leh and Kargil, and several other officials from the MHA and the Department of Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh Affairs.
- The establishment of the HPC reflects the Indian government's commitment to addressing the concerns of the people of Ladakh and ensuring that the region's unique culture and way of life are preserved. With its strategic location and importance, Ladakh plays a vital role in the security and stability of the region, and the HPC will work to ensure that the needs of the people of Ladakh are met and that the region is able to contribute to the overall development of the country.

Union Minister Dr Jitendra Singh briefs media about '2023 Science Vision' at New Delhi

- In a media interaction on the first day of the New Year, Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) Science & Technology; Minister of State (Independent Charge) Earth Sciences; MoS PMO, Personnel, Public Grievances, Pensions, Atomic Energy and Space, Dr Jitendra Singh today said, 2023 Science Vision will define India at 2047.
- Dr Jitendra Singh added that the year 2023 also happens to be the first of the last 25 years or the last quarter of the calendar before independent India turns 100 at 2047 and realizes its century dreams.
- This is also the year, the Minister said, when India under PM Narendra Modi reiterates its stature in the international fora as the host of G20 as well as the Nation on whose proposal the world is observing International Year of Millets.

Union Minister Parshottam Rupala inaugurates 29 Mobile Veterinary Units & centralised call center in Thiruvananthapuram

- Union Minister for Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying Parshottam Rupala on Thursday inaugurated 29 Mobile Veterinary Units (MVU) and centralised call center in Thiruvananthapuram in a major step for the benefit of the livestock farmers in Kerala.
- The Minister highlighted that this intervention will boost the confidence of dairy farmers to rear high productive dairy animals as most of the breeders are reluctant to take their livestock to Veterinary Hospital for treatment and usually end calling quacks for doorstep delivery of services. Each MVU will be manned by a qualified Veterinarian and a Paravet for providing specialized services to livestock farmers, he added.
- The Minister underlined that the scheme is promising and will transform the dairy sector from a subsistence-based farm livelihood to a commercially viable enterprise by giving gainful employment to the youth of the Kerala.

Experiencing History!: World's first Palm-leaf Manuscript Museum in Kerala

- Kerala Chief Minister(CM) Pinarayi Vijayan has inaugurated the Palm leaf Manuscript Museum with modern audio-visual technology at the renovated Central Archives, Fort area in Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala. The Museum, promoted as "World's First Palm-Leaf Manuscript Museum" was set up by the Archives Department in association with the Kerala Museum of History and Heritage at a cost of Rs 3 crore.
- The museum is a repository of curious nuggets of administrative, socio-cultural and economic facets of the Travancore kingdom which lasted for 650 years till the end of the 19th century. It had been the Central Vernacular Records Office since 1887 before becoming a museum.

Ghaziabad-Pt becomes longest fully ABS section of Indian Railways says Indian Railways

- Ghaziabad-Pt. Deen Dayal Upadhyay section (762 KM) becomes the longest fully automatic block signalling section of Indian Railways. In order to increase line capacity to run more trains on existing High Density Routes of Indian Railways, Automatic Block Signalling (ABS) is a cost effective solution. Indian Railways has been rolling out Automatic Block signalling on a mission mode. ABS has been commissioned on 268 Rkm during 2022-23. As on 31.12.2022,

ABS has been provided on 3706 Route km over IR. With implementation of Automatic Signalling, increase in capacity will accrue resulting in more train services becoming possible.

- Electronic Interlocking are being adopted on a large scale to derive benefits of digital technologies in train operation and to enhance safety. Electronic Interlocking systems have been provided at 347 stations during 2022-23. So far 2888 stations have been provided with Electronic Interlocking up to 31.12.2022 covering 45.5% of IR. Recently, with the commissioning of Automatic signalling system in Sath Naraini- Rundhi- Faizullapur Station section of Prayagraj Division, 762 KM long Ghaziabad-Pt. Deen Dayal Upadhyay section has been fully automated and has also become the longest automatic block signalling section of Indian Railways.

Manipur: Gaan Ngai festival of Zeliangrong community to be celebrated on 4th January

- The Gaan Ngai of the Zeliangrong Community celebrated in Manipur. The Gaan Ngai festival is one of the major festivals of Manipur which is celebrated every year after harvesting. The festival also marks the end of the year when the farmers have stored their foodgrains in their granaries. During the festival, the Zeliangrong Community shows their gratitude by offering the Almighty a good harvest and praying for a better and prosperous life in the coming year.
- It is a custom to produce new fire by rubbing dry wood and split bamboo pieces and distributing them to every household on the day of the festival to mark the beginning of the new year.
- The Gaan Ngai is a post-harvest festival. It is mainly performed by the followers and devotees of the Zeliangrong Indigenous religion of 'Poupei Chapriak' and 'Heraka'.

Second Phase of Sari Festival "VIRAASAT"- Celebrating 75 handwoven Saris of India begins

- The second phase of the Sari Festival "VIRAASAT"-Celebrating 75 handwoven Saris of India will begin from 3rd to 17th January 2023 at Handloom Haat, Janpath, New Delhi. The Sari Festival VIRAASAT is organized by the Ministry of Textile. In the second stage phase, there are 90 participants from different parts of the country.
- There are several Handcrafted varieties of Saris to be displayed in the festival including Tie and Dye, Chikan embroidered Saris, Hand Block Saris, Kalamkari printed Saris, Ajrakh, Kantha, and Phulkari. There is an addition to the exclusive handloom Saris of Jamdani, Ikat, Pochampally, Banaras Brocade, Tussar Silk (Champa), Baluchari, Bhagalpuri Sik, Tangail, Chanderi, Lalitpur, Patola, Paithani, etc.

Prime Minister Virtually Inaugurates Dr. Syama Prasad Mookerjee National Institute of Water and Sanitation in Kolkata

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the Dr. Syama Prasad Mookerjee National Institute of Water and Sanitation (SPM-NIWAS) at Joka in Kolkata via video conferencing. SPM-NIWAS has been set up with a budget of Rs 100 crore, on 8.72 acres of land at Joka, Diamond Harbour Road, Kolkata, West Bengal.
- The Department of Drinking Water and Sanitation (DDWS) aims to bridge the knowledge and capacity-building gap in the field of public health engineering, sanitation & hygiene,

through short, medium, and long-term courses which are not just related to engineering but also cover aspects of management, health, accounting, law, and public policies.

- The conference was chaired by the Union Minister for Kal Shakti, Shri Gajendra Singh Shekhawat.
- The Union Minister reiterated the Prime Minister's vision of cooperative federalism and states that under Swachh Bharat Mission, Namami Gange, and Jal Jeevan Mission, the combined efforts are being recognized around the globe.

Capt Shiva Chouhan becomes first woman officer to be deployed at Siachen, world's highest battlefield

- Captain Shiva Chauhan from the Corps of Engineers has been posted at a frontline post in Siachen Glacier, in first such operational deployment of an woman Army officer at the world's highest battlefield. The officer was posted at the Kumar post, located at an altitude of around 15,600 feet in Siachen, on Monday for a three-month stint after she underwent rigorous training. The training included endurance training, ice wall climbing, avalanche and crevasse rescue and survival drills.
- Capt Shiva Chouhan, who hails from Rajasthan, is a Bengal Sapper Officer. Chouhan lost her father at the age of 11 and her mother, a housewife, took care of her studies. She did her schooling from Udaipur and graduated from NJR Institute of Technology, Udaipur, in civil engineering. Covering a distance of 508 kms, Capt Chouhan successfully led the Sura Soi Cycling Expedition from Siachen War Memorial to Kargil War Memorial conducted on the occasion of Kargil Vijay Diwas in July 2022. She then took up the challenge of leading the men of Sura Soi Engineer Regiment at Siachen and, based on her performance, was selected to undergo training at the Siachen Battle School.

Government starts process to buy 100 more K9-Vajras self-propelled howitzers

- The Defence Ministry has started the process for the procurement of 100 more K9-Vajra tracked self-propelled howitzers which are built in India by Larsen & Toubro (L&T) using technology transferred from South Korean defence major Hanwha Defence. At the height of tensions in eastern Ladakh in 2020, the Army deployed one regiment of K-9 Vajra tracked self-propelled howitzers there to augment its long-range fire power in the backdrop of a massive build-up of forces by China across the Line of Actual Control. Buoyed by their performance, the Army is looking at eventually procuring 200 additional guns. The induction of Dhanush, K-9 Vajra and M777 Ultra Light Howitzers has enhanced the reach of artillery firepower on the northern borders.
- The K9 Vajra is a 155 mm, 52-calibre tracked self-propelled howitzer built by L&T with technology transferred from South Korean defence major Hanwha Defense based on its K9 Thunder.
- The K9 Vajra was mainly bought for use in deserts, but the standoff prompted them to be deployed in the mountains as well, officials had stated earlier.

Himachal Pradesh: CM donates first salary to Chief Minister Sukhashray Sahayata Kosh

- Himachal Pradesh Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu announced to set up of Rs 101 crore CM's Sukhashraya Sahayata Kosh for the destitute in the state. Chief Minister of

Himachal Pradesh informed that 40 Congress MLAs agreed to contribute Rs one lakh each from their first salary for the fund and also requested the MLAs from BJP and other parties to contribute.

- The collected fund will be spent on the higher education of destitute children to encourage them to pursue courses such as engineering, medicine, management, and other streams from reputed institutions like IIT, IIM, AIIMS, and NIT.
- CM Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu announced that there are 6,000 destitute children in Himachal Pradesh.
- The CM's Sukhashraya Sahayata Kosh with an expenditure of Rs 101 crore would provide the facility of higher education to needy children.
- Through the CM's Sukhashraya Sahayata Kosh other than bearing the educational expenses, the government would also provide Rs 4000 monthly pocket money to the destitute children and women pursuing higher education.

Uttarakhand govt abolishes system of revenue police

- The Uttarakhand government has decided to abolish the revenue policing system in the state. The Pushkar Singh Dhami government has also announced that revenue villages will be brought under the regular policing system. Law and order in 1,800 revenue villages of Uttarakhand will now be handled by the state police, according to a statement by the Chief Minister's Office.
- The demand to replace the revenue police system in Uttarakhand gained traction during the investigation into the Ankita Bhandari murder case in September 2022. Ankita, a 19-year-old who worked as a receptionist at a resort run by Pulkit Arya, the son of expelled BJP leader Vinod Arya, was found dead in the Chilla canal in Rishikesh on September 24 after going missing for six days. The area was under the jurisdiction of the revenue police. Allegations were raised against the revenue police for not registering a complaint on time and even siding with the accused.

CM to open Indian Library Congress in Kannur

- Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan inaugurated Indian Library Congress in Kannur, Kerala. The inauguration event of the Indian Library Congress was organized by the People's Mission for Social Development and Library Council.
- The event was hosted by Kannur University, Kerala from 1st January to 3rd January 2023. Higher Education Minister Dr. R. Bindu will inaugurate 100 new libraries in the district as part of the event.
- Ramachandran Gadnapally MLA, Kannur District Panchayat President PP Divya, Kasaragod District Panchayat President Baby Balakrishnan, MV Jayaranjan, Prabir Purkayastha, TK Govindan, PK Vijayan, Dr. KV Kunhikrishnan, Pramod Vellachal, and others were also present during the inauguration ceremony.

Chandrayaan-3 to Gaganyaan: 2023 is going to be about bigger, bolder, braver missions from India

- In 2022, the Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) reached new heights as it experimented with new tests to confirm its human spaceflight mission, built new facilities to

train its astronauts, and created a new connection with the private sector by putting India's first privately made rocket to the test. The year 2023 won't be any different. Instead, since the roster is set, it might be a year of bigger, bolder, and braver expeditions from India to space.

- The first test of the Gaganyaan mission, the nation's first astronaut mission that sends Indians outside the planet in an indigenously manufactured technology, is the most audacious venture the Indian space agency has ever undertaken.

'SMART' programme launched for Ayurveda professionals to boost R&D in Ayurveda

- The National Commission for Indian System of Medicine (NCISM) and the Central Council for Research in Ayurvedic Sciences (CCRAS), the two prominent institutions under the Ministry of Ayush, Government of India for regulating medical education and conducting scientific research respectively, have launched 'SMART' (Scope for Mainstreaming Ayurveda Research in Teaching Professionals). The program aimed to boost scientific research in priority healthcare research areas through Ayurveda colleges and hospitals.
- The proposed initiative is conceptualised with an objective to identify, support and promote innovative research ideas in healthcare research areas including Osteoarthritis, Iron Deficiency Anaemia, Chronic Bronchitis, Dyslipidemia, Rheumatoid Arthritis, Obesity, Diabetes Mellitus, Psoriasis, Generalised Anxiety Disorder, Non-alcoholic fatty liver disease (NAFLD)".

J&K: CRPF celebrates 'Jashn-e-Chillai-Kalan'

- On the occasion of Chillai Kalan in the Kashmir Valley, 44 Bn CRPF organized a function "Jashn – e – Chillai Kalan" on 26/12/2022 at HMT Complex, Zainakote, Srinagar. During this competition, 54 participants (including 12 Female participants) from Schools/colleges & other educational institutions were present along with their guardians & teachers. Commandant 44 Bn, CRPF inaugurated the event.
- The Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) is a federal police organisation in India under the authority of the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) of the Government of India. It is one among the Central Armed Police Forces. The CRPF's primary role lies in assisting the State/Union Territories in police operations to maintain law and order and counter-insurgency.

Ministry of Rural Development launches Prajwala Challenge

- The Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana-National Rural Livelihood Mission (DAY-NRLM) has launched the Prajwala Challenge. The Prajwala Challenge has been launched to invite ideas, solutions, and actions that can transform rural development.
- It will provide a platform where ideas are invited from individuals, social enterprises, start-ups, the private sector, civil society, community-based organizations, academic institutions, incubation centers, investors, etc having the potential to transform the rural economy.
- The Prajwala Challenge was launched by the Secretary of, the Ministry of Rural Development, Shri Shailesh Kumar Singh in New Delhi.
- The mission aims to look forward to ideas and solutions around Innovation technology solutions, inclusive growth, value chain interventions, enhanced women entrepreneurship, and cost-effective solutions.

Kolkata: India's first underwater metro worth over Rs 8000 crores to be operational by 2023

- India's first underwater metro service, The Kolkata Metro Rail Corporation (KMRC) said that the East-West Metro Corridor project, is expected to be completed by December 2023. With this, another feather is being added to the crown of Kolkata Metro, the first metro railway in the country. Kolkata Metro, which started its journey in 1984, is being expanded to cover the whole city and its outskirts. The underwater metro, which will be running through the Hooghly river will connect the twin cities of Howrah and Kolkata.
- Kolkata Metro Railway Corporation has taken up the difficult task of making the tunnel with the help of German machines and the best experts. Work inside the tunnel is still in progress.
- As far as the cost of construction of the underground metro is concerned, it costs about Rs 120 crore per kilometre to build the tunnel but the manufacturing cost of the tunnel underwater, which is deep in the Hooghly river costs increased to around 157 crores by per kilometre.

Union Home Minister Amit Shah inaugurated Mega Dairy in Karnataka

- Union Home and Cooperation Minister Amit Shah inaugurated Mega Dairy at Mandya in Karnataka. The mega dairy inaugurated at a cost of Rs 260 crore would process 10 lakh liters of milk per day and the will have the capacity to increase it upto 14 lakh liters per day. 10 lakh liters of milk is processed, prosperity reaches the homes of lakhs of farmers. There are 15,210 village level cooperative dairies in Karnataka, in which about 26.22 lakh farmers deliver their milk daily and through 16 district level dairies, Rs 28 crore is deposited into the accounts of 26 lakh farmers every day.
- Around 66,000 kg milk used to be processed daily in Karnataka in 1975 while today over 82 lakh kg milk is processed daily and 80% of the total turnover goes to the farmer.

ISRO, Andhra University set up equipment to predict rip currents, prevent drowning at sea

- Indian Space and Research Organization (ISRO), National Centre for Earth Sciences (NCES), and the Andhra University (AU) have researched and concluded that constant rip current zones at blue flag-certified Rushikonda beach and RK Beach have become a danger to the beach visitors.
- Between 2012 to 2022, over 200 people drowned in the sea at various beaches in and around Visakhapatnam and 60 percent of deaths occurred in RK Beach.
- ISRO, NCES, and Andhra University have conducted research and set up equipment to identify Rip currents to warn marines and local police.

SPORTS

Fit Again - Ravindra Jadeja to join the India squad in Nagpur

- After testing his match-fitness with a successful return to action in the Ranji Trophy, star all-rounder Ravindra Jadeja is set to join the India squad in Nagpur this week, ahead of the first Test against Australia, which begins on February 9. Jadeja played for Saurashtra in their final group-stage match against Tamil Nadu last week in Chennai and bowled 41.1 overs and bagged a seven-for in the

second innings. Since undergoing surgery in his right knee in September, it was his first match.

Women's Premier League: Jhulan Goswami Roped In By Mumbai As Bowling Coach

- Legendary Indian pacer Jhulan Goswami has been roped in by the Mumbai based franchise ahead of the inaugural season of the Women's Premier League (WPL) this year. The development was reportedly confirmed by former BCCI President and current Director of the Delhi Capitals who said that while even the Delhi side had offered Jhulan a role, she was going to Mumbai.

Legendary Sprinter Usain Bolt refuted all reports of him being BROKE

- Legendary sprinter Usain Bolt, fastest man on the planet years after his retirement, lost at least \$12 million which he had in his account with a Jamaican investment firm, reportedly leaving him on the verge of being bankrupt. The billion dollar fraud affected over 40 clients, with Bolt being one of the high-profile victims. Soon after the fraud, rumors started circulating about Bolt's account balance inexplicably dwindling from \$12 million to just \$12,000

IND vs NZ, 3rd T20 Men in Blue register their biggest-ever win in T20I in terms of runs

- While India opted to bat first and posted 234/4 with the help of Shubman's highest-ever score by an Indian in T20Is- an unbeaten 126* off 63- they later bowled out the Kiwis for 66, they defeated New Zealand by 168 runs in the third and final T20I at the Narendra Modi Stadium in Ahmedabad on Wednesday.

India beat West Indies by eight wickets in Tri-nation series in South Africa - Women's Cricket

- In Women's Cricket, India registered a dominating eight-wicket win over the West Indies in the final group match in the ongoing Tri-Nation Series at Buffalo Park, in East London in South Africa.
- Put to bat first by the Indian side, the Caribbean nation posted a mere 94 for 6 in the stipulated 20 overs. In reply, India comfortably achieved the target of 95 runs with the loss of two wickets in 13.5 overs.

Germany beat Belgium 5-4 in penalty shootout to win FIH Men's Hockey World Cup in Bhubaneswar

- In the FIH Hockey World Cup, Germany have lifted the World Cup after 17 years beating Belgium 5-4 in a penalty shootout, after the game ended 3-3 in the final at the Kalinga Stadium in Bhubaneswar. Germany now have won the World Cup three times, first in 2002 and second in 2006.
- Murali Vijay announced retirement from all forms of cricket
- Murali Vijay Retirement: Indian cricket team's veteran opener Murali Vijay announced retirement from all forms of cricket, Monday. Vijay played his last

international match for the national team in December 2018, against Australia in Perth. The red-ball specialist represented India in 61 Tests, 17 ODIs and nine T20 matches.

- For India, Murali Vijay scored 3982 runs, including 12 centuries and 15 half-centuries at an average of 38.28 in 61 Tests, 339 runs in 17 ODIs and 169 runs in nine T20 matches
- A massive setback for the Australian cricket team
- Mitchell Starc's latest announcement confirmed that he will most probably return to action in India vs Australia 2nd Test, set to be played in Delhi from February 17 to 21.

Nikhath Zareen to represent mining PSU NMDC as its brand ambassador

- Hyderabad-based Navratna mining PSU NMDC Limited has signed a memorandum of agreement (MoA) with World Boxing Champion, Nikhat Zareen to represent NMDC as its brand ambassador.
- The company in a statement said that Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games Gold Medalist Nikhat Zareen represents the strength, courage, agility and national pride that goes with the brand of NMDC. She also represents the hopes and aspirations of New India and NMDC must become a part of her journey to the 2024 Olympics. NMDC is wholeheartedly extending its support to her as she trains and prepares for the Olympics 2024.

Khelo India Youth Games to commence on 30th January in Madhya Pradesh

The next Khelo India Youth Games will kick start on the 30th of this month in Madhya Pradesh in which multiple Target Olympic Podium Scheme (TOPS) Development athletes will participate. This elevates the magnitude of the games as the TOPS athletes, who are international achievers already, will inspire the grassroots-level athletes to up the ante and provide a tough contest.

England's Ben Stokes and Nat Sciver win ICC annual awards

- England Test captain Ben Stokes and England all-rounder Nat Sciver are among the winners in the International Cricket Council's annual awards. All-rounder Stokes has been named Men's Test Cricketer of the Year while Sciver won the Rachael Heyhoe Flint Trophy for ICC Women's Cricketer of the Year.

Thai shuttler Kunlavut Vitidsarn wins India Open Badminton title

Thai shuttler Kunlavut Vitidsarn won the India Open title. He defeated World No.1 Denmark's Viktor Axelsen in the men's singles final of the India Open Badminton Championship 22-20, 10-21 and 21-12 today at K. D. Jadhav Indoor Stadium in New Delhi. Korean sensation An Seyoung won the Women's singles final. She beat World No.1 Japanese Akane Yamaguchi 15-21, 21-16, 21-12.

ICC Under 19 Womens T20 World Cup 2023

- The first edition of Women's U19 T20 World Cup 2023 has been launched by International Cricket Council (ICC) and it is scheduled from 14th January to 29th January 2023. The first match of the Women's U19 T20 World Cup 2023 was played between Australia Women U19 and Bangladesh Women U19 at Willowmoore Park, Benoni. A total of 16 teams are participating in the Women's U19 T20 World Cup 2023.
- The Women's U19 T20 World Cup 2023 has been scheduled from 14th January 2023 to 29th January 2023. Each day, four matches will be played. The super six round will begin on 20th January 2023 with the Semi-finals set to take place on the 27th of January and the Finals scheduled on 29th January 2023 at the JB Marks Oval in Potchefstroom.

Hockey World Cup: Netherlands breaks record of most goals in a men's HWC match, beats Chile 14-0

- The three-time champion Netherlands defeated Chile's debutants by a score of a record-breaking 14-0 to qualify as the first team to the quarterfinals of the FIH Men's Hockey World Cup. The Netherlands finished at the top of Pool C with a maximum of nine points after racking up three victories in as many games.
- The largest margin of victory in a World Cup game was recorded by the third-ranked Netherlands against the 23rd-ranked Chile in the day's second play.
- World No. 1 Australia previously held the record for the largest margin of victory in a hockey World Cup match after thrashing South Africa 12-0 in New Delhi.
- The Netherlands, who have won the World Cup three times and placed second in the previous two tournaments, earned 18 penalty corners in the match, of which they converted six, while Chile only received two.

Rohit Sharma breaks MS Dhoni's record of most ODI sixes at home in IND vs NZ 1st ODI

- Indian captain Rohit Sharma has shattered a long-standing record held by MS Dhoni to become India's most prolific six-hitter in the history of ODI cricket. At the Rajiv Gandhi Stadium in Hyderabad, Rohit achieved this remarkable feat during the first ODI between India and New Zealand. The Indian captain's knock included two maximums, breaking MS Dhoni's long-standing record.
- Rohit is now India's leading six-getter in the history of ODI cricket, with a total of 125 sixes to his name.

Denmark Viktor Axelsen wins Men's singles at Malaysia open 2023

- Danish ace Viktor Axelsen stormed to victory in the final of badminton's Malaysia Open on Sunday, successfully defending his title by outgunning Japan's Kodai Naraoka.
- The world number one only needed 40 minutes in Kuala Lumpur to secure his first trophy of the year, displaying top form to walk away with the match 21-6, 21-15.
- Wasting no time in the first game, Axelsen immediately went on the offensive, raining his signature pinpoint smashes on a defenceless Naraoka.
- He then kept up the pressure in the second game against a visibly exhausted opponent to clinch the win.

Barcelona wins Spanish Super Cup after beating Real Madrid 3-1 in final hosted by Saudi Arabia

- Barcelona have won the Spanish Super Cup for the first time since the competition was revamped and moved to Saudi Arabia with a 3-1 victory over Real Madrid. Robert Lewandowski, Gavi and Pedri scored a goal each at King Fahd Stadium in Riyadh to give Barcelona its first Super Cup trophy since 2018, and the first since the tournament's Final-Four format began in 2020 in a lucrative deal for the Spanish football federation. It was also Barcelona's first title since former player Xavi took over as the team's coach in 2021, and since Lionel Messi left for Paris Saint-Germain. Barcelona have now won the Super Cup a record 14 times. Madrid have 12 to their name.
- The Super Cup used to be played between the Spanish league champion and the Copa del Rey winner. Now the runners-up in both competitions also participate.

Badminton Malaysia Open 2023: Viktor Axelsen Yamaguchi Akane win titles in Kuala Lumpur

- Akane Yamaguchi and Viktor Axelsen won the Malaysia Open Super 1000 women's and men's singles titles in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. Yamaguchi, the reigning world champion, registered a come-from-behind win over world no. 4 An Se Young to clinch the Super Series Premier title. Yamaguchi won her maiden Super Series Premier title at the China Open in 2017.
- The men's singles final saw a repeat of last month's World Tour Finals. Axelsen, the regaining Olympic and world champion, won the Malaysia Open title in straight games, beating Japanese youngster Kodai Naraoka in 40 minutes. This was Axelsen's ninth Super Series Premier title and third Malaysia Open crown.
- China's Chen Qingchen-Jia Yifan, the world no. 1 pairing in women's doubles, blew away South Korea's Baek Hana-Lee Yulim 21-16, 21-10 in 52 minutes.

'Per match value of Rs 7 cr': Women's IPL media rights for 2023-27 bagged by Viacom for Rs 951 cr

- The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) has announced that Viacom 18 have grabbed the media rights for the upcoming Women's IPL for a whopping Rs 951 crore for five years, pipping other bidders, including Disney Star and Sony, in the auction. The auction for the T20 League was conducted by the cricket board in Mumbai. The global rights comprise three categories linear (TV), digital and combined (TV and digital). In the men's IPL, separate rights are sold across regions. The inaugural Women's IPL is likely to begin in the first week of March. Five teams will compete and all the matches will be held in Mumbai.
- Viacom18 had won the IPL digital rights for Rs 23,758 crore while Disney Star had retained the TV rights for Rs 23,575 crore for a five-year period starting 2023 during a three-day auction held in June, 2022. There will be a total of 134 matches in the five-team WIPL over five years, with 22 matches each in the first three years. The number could touch 34 matches each in the final two years. BCCI is anticipating growth in WIPL over the next few years.

Virat Kohli beats Mahela Jayawardene to become 5th highest run scorer in ODI cricket

- Star cricketer Virat Kohli became the fifth-highest run-scorer in history of ODI cricket, overtaking Sri Lankan legend Mahela Jayawardene to enter into top-five. At the time of

becoming the fifth-highest run-scorer, Virat had 12,652 runs in 268 ODIs at an average of 57.78, with 45 tons and 65 half-century. His best score in the format is 183.

- As per records, the highest run-scorer in ODI history is Indian legend Sachin Tendulkar, who has scored 18,426 runs at an average of 44.83. He has 49 centuries and 96 fifties in this format, with the best of 200*. Followed by Sachin, Sri Lankan great Kumar Sangakkara (14,234 runs in 404 matches), Australian great Ricky Ponting (13,704), Sri Lankan all-rounder Sanath Jayasuriya (13,430 in 445 matches) and Virat.
- 10 Kohli's ODI hundreds against Sri Lanka. He's the first player to hit ten ODI centuries against an opponent. Kohli also has nine hundreds against West Indies, while Tendulkar also has nine against Australia.
- 96 ODI wins for India against Sri Lanka, the most by a team against an opponent in this format, surpassing Australia's 95 wins against New Zealand.

Odisha CM Naveen Patnaik inaugurates FIH Men's Hockey World Cup 2023 in Cuttack

- Men's Hockey World Cup, 2023 has began with a spectacular opening ceremony at the picturesque Barabati Stadium in Cuttack that was witnessed by thousands of hockey lovers in attendance from across the country and abroad. Union Sports Minister Anurag Thakur, Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik, International Hockey Federation president Tayyab Ikram and Hockey India chairman Dilip Tirkey were present at the glittering ceremony. 16 teams are participating in the global tournament.
- The matches will be held at two venues, Birsamunda Hockey Stadium in Rourkela and Kalinga Stadium in Bhubaneswar, from January 13 to January 29.

Former Indian Captain MS Dhoni, Garuda Aerospace launched surveillance drone named Droni

- Former India cricket team captain Mahendra Singh Dhoni and drone market Garuda Aerospace have launched a surveillance drone named 'Droni.' Dhoni is an ambassador-cum-investor in the low-cost drone manufacturer. Dhoni had unveiled the camera drone called Droni at The Global Drone Expo in Chennai last year. Droni is a battery-operated quadcopter surveillance drone.
- At the launch, MS Dhoni has said that he got interested about drones during the COVID-19 lockdown and learned about the important role drones can play for farmers and agriculturalists. Garuda Aerospace recently became the first-ever drone company in India to get dual DGCA approvals for both drone manufacturing type certificate and RTPO. Recently, MS Dhoni and Garuda had also launched a short film 'Kheton Ke Kaptan', aimed at encouraging youth and farmers to lead in their respective farms.

Brook and Gardner crowned ICC Players of the Month for December 2023

- Harry Brook received the ICC Men's Player of the Month award after a blistering run of scores that helped England claim a historic World Test Championship (WTC) series victory in Pakistan. On the other hand, Australia's Ashleigh Gardner bagged the ICC Women's Player of the Month award for her contributions with bat and ball in the T20I series against India.
- The 23-year-old Brook scored 468 runs in three matches in the recently concluded Test series against Pakistan. England won the series 3-0 in which Brook made his important contribution.

- Gardner won the award after his impressive individual performance in the series against India in December 2022. He received this award leaving behind Charlie Dean of England and Suzie Bates of New Zealand.

France Goalkeeper Hugo Lloris Announces Retirement from International Football

- France team captain Hugo Lloris has announced his decision to retire from international football at the age of 36. Lloris represented France in four World Cups and three Euros and captained Les Blues to the World Cup trophy in 2018. The Tottenham Hotspur shotstopper led his team to the World Cup final in Qatar, where they were beaten by Argentina on penalties.
- The 36-year-old holds many records and is France's most capped player with 145 appearances to his name. Lloris made his debut for Les Blues back in November 2008. He was handed the armband two years after his international debut and would go on to captain France in 121 matches.
- Deschamps paid tribute to the 36-year-old and called him a great servant of the France national team. The France coach went on to say that it was a honour and pleasure to be Lloris' trainer and thanked him for his contributions to the team.

South Africa All-Rounder Cricketer Dwaine Pretorius Announces International Retirement

- Cricket South Africa (CSA) has confirmed that Proteas all-rounder Dwaine Pretorius has retired from international cricket with immediate effect. Since making his international debut in 2016, the 33-year-old has represented South Africa across all three formats in 30 T20 Internationals (T20I), 27 One-Day Internationals (ODI) and three Tests. He has also featured in two World Cups. Pretorius showed his prowess both with the bat and ball in the international arena, aggregating 1895 runs and scalping 77 wickets across formats.
- Announcing his retirement, the 33-year-old expressed his desire to play more franchise cricket around the world 'to have a better balance in my career and family life.' The all-rounder will be seen in the IPL this year as he is part of the Chennai SuperKings squad.

Suryakumar Yadav becomes fastest batter to notch up 1500 T20I runs in terms of balls taken

- Suryakumar Yadav has become the fastest player to reach 1,500 runs in T20 International cricket in terms of balls faced. He took only 843 balls to reach this landmark. In 45 matches and 43 innings, Suryakumar has scored 1,578 runs at an average of 46.41. He has three centuries and 13 half-centuries in the format, with the best individual score of 117.
- However, he is the third-fastest batter to reach the 1,500-run mark in terms of innings. The fastest batters to reach this landmark are Indian batter Virat Kohli, KL Rahul, Australian veteran Aaron Finch and Pakistan skipper Babar Azam, who all took 39 innings to score 1,500 runs in T20 International cricket. Pakistan wicketkeeper-batter Mohammed Rizwan reached the milestone in 42 innings and Suryakumar did so in 43 innings.

Sania Mirza announces her retirement from professional Tennis

- Indian Tennis Player Sania Mirza (36-year-old), the former doubles World No. 1, has confirmed her retirement from professional Tennis. She announced that the Dubai Tennis Championships, a Women's Tennis Association (WTA) 1000 event in Dubai in February 2023

will be her last match. Prior to her last appearance, she is going to play in women's doubles at the Australian Open in 16 to 29 January 2023 alongside Kazakhstan's Anna Danilina.

- She has won six Grand Slam doubles titles. She won her first grand slam in 2009 by winning Australian Open Mixed doubles title with Mahesh Bhupathi. The pair also won the French Open 2012.
- Sania Mirza and Martina Hingis of Switzerland won 3 women's doubles – Wimbledon 2015, the US Open 2015 and the Australian Open 2016.
- In 2007, She was ranked among the 30 and also reached her career-high ranking of world number 27 (Singles).

Tallon griekspoor wins maharashtra open tennis tournament

- Tallon Griekspoor was coming into the Maharashtra Open ATP 250 final winning a staggering 96.77 % of his service games. His opponent, Frenchman Benjamin Bonzi, 26, had dropped just one set leading into the title clash, and after piercing a hole through the Dutchman's serve to go a break up 5-4 in Saturday's opener, looked to be the favourite for the crown.
- But Griekspoor, ranked 95, had very different plans. And egged on by a packed, noisy, underdog-loving Pune crowd, turned around the one-set deficit to win 4-6, 7-5, 6-3 for his first title at this level.
- The two had played a lot of junior tennis together, and in the 2021 season, had gone on a Challenger-winning spree, Griekspoor taking eight of those titles, Bonzi claiming six. Both were in their first-ever ATP World Tour final, serving quite well – and it was only that mistake late in the first set when Griekspoor double-faulted that gave the Frenchman an edge.

Chetan Sharma retained as chairman of selectors

- Chetan Sharma was reappointed as the chairman of the senior selection committee, exactly two months after his entire panel was disbanded by the BCCI for the Indian team's semifinal exit in the T20 World Cup. Salil Ankola, Shiv Sunar Das, Subroto Banerjee and Sridharan Sharath are new members of the selection committee. The new committee has been picked by the Cricket Advisory Committee comprising Ashok Malhotra, Jatin Paranjape and Sulakshana Naik. The committee further recommended Chetan Sharma for the role of Chairman of the senior men's selection committee.
- Salil Ankola, the former chief selector of the Mumbai cricket team, played 20 ODIs and 1 Test match between 1989 to 1997. His Test debut came along with Sachin Tendulkar against Pakistan in 1989.

'Hindustan Ka Dil Dhadka Do'... Khelo India gets josh anthem & mascot

- The anthem, mascot and a 'smart torch' for the fifth edition of the youth games were unveiled by chief minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan, Union MoS sports Nisith Pramanik and state sports minister at a glittering event in Bhopal on Saturday evening.
- The 5th KIYG 2022 will be held from January 30 to February 11. There are 27 sporting disciplines on the schedule, with over 6,000 athletes competing. 'Hindustan Ka Dil Dhadka

Do' – this is the heartpounding anthem of the Khelo India Youth Games 2022. And cheetah Asha, who was named by PM Narendra Modi, the Games mascot.

- The importance of sports and fitness in one's life is invaluable. Playing sports inculcates team spirit, develops strategic & analytical thinking, leadership skills, goal setting and risk taking. A fit and healthy individual leads to an equally healthy society and strong nation.

India's first-ever Formula E World Championship to take place on feb 11

- The countdown of the first-ever ABB FIA Formula E World Championship race in India is to be held in Hyderabad. The Formula E World Championship will be held from 11th February.
- The first ticket for the Formula E World Championship was booked by Telangana Special Chief Secretary (Municipal Administration) Arvind Kumar. During the event, Akbar Ebrahim, President Federation of Motor Sports Clubs of India, and other dignitaries were also present.
- The government aims to make Hyderabad one of the top cities in the world by hosting Formula E World Championship.
- Hyderabad race on 11th February will be the fourth race of the season, season 9 of Formula E, the first three include Mexico City and Riyadh.
- A total of 11 teams with 23 cars with 22 cars would be racing here and they include some of the top racing companies.

Chess: Tamil Nadu's Pranesh M becomes India's 79th Grandmaster after winning Rilton Cup

- Pranesh M became India's 79th Grandmaster, having completed his three norms prior to this event. IM Pranesh M emerged as the winner of the Rilton Cup, the first tournament of the FIDE Circuit. The 16-year-old from India, seeded 22nd, made a clean sweep of the field in Stockholm, winning eight games and finishing a full point ahead of IM Kaan Kukuksari (Sweden) and GM Nikita Meshkovs (Latvia).
- The 2022/2023 Rilton Cup, the strongest open tournament in Sweden, ran from December 27 to January 5 and brought together 136 players representing 29 national federations. Pranesh M is now the early leader of the FIDE Circuit with 6.8 circuit points that he gets for this victory. The one who accumulates the most points by the end of the year qualifies for the 2024 FIDE Candidates.

Jaydev Unadkat's historic first-over Ranji Trophy hat-trick wrecks Delhi

- Saurashtra's Jaydev Unadkat made a slice of Ranji Trophy history, becoming the first bowler to take a hat-trick in the opening over. The left-arm pacer destroyed Delhi by adding two more in the next over in a career-best eight-wicket haul in the Elite Group B match in Rajkot. Unadkat's hat-trick victims included opener Dhruv Shorey, Vaibhav Rawal and young Delhi captain Yash Dhull, all of whom departed for duck. Unadkat's finishing with career-best figures of 8/39 in his 12 overs. Delhi, who lost 7 wickets for just 10 runs, didn't face ignominy of lowest first-class score of 6 by a team called 'The B's' against England in an official match held in 1810.
- No one had managed a first-over hat-trick in the 89-year history of the premier domestic competition. The previous record of the fastest Ranji hat-trick belonged to Karnataka pacer Vinay Kumar, who achieved the feat in the 2017-18 quarter-final against Mumbai. Kumar's effort was spread across the first and third overs of the match. Unadkat, playing in his 98th

first-class match was playing in his first Ranji game of the season, having recently made his Test return in Bangladesh following a 12-year wait.

Belinda Clark becomes first women cricketer to have a statue cast, sculpture unveiled at Sydney Cricket Ground

- Australia's Belinda Clark has become the first female cricketer to have a statue cast in her honour, a bronze sculpture of the trailblazing former captain unveiled outside Sydney Cricket Ground. Clark played 15 tests and over 100 limited overs matches between 1991-2005, and became the first cricketer to score a double-hundred in one-day internationals when she made an unbeaten 229 against Denmark in 1997.
- The 52-year-old's statue stands alongside Richie Benaud, Fred Spofforth, Stan McCabe and Steve Waugh as cricketers honoured with sculptures in the SCG precinct. at the ground. Her bronze cast now stands alongside former captain Richard Benaud and Steve Waugh. The 52-year-old Clark who has held several roles in Australian Cricket board was excited on this honour. Known for scoring the first double century in ODI cricket, Clark played 15 Tests and over 100 limited-over matches between 1991-2005. His historic double hundred came against Denmark in 1997 with an unbeaten knock of 229.

Bengal gets 10th GM, India 78th in Koustav Chatterjee

- Nineteen-year-old Kolkata-based chess player, Koustav Chatterjee became India's 78th Grandmaster. He is also the tenth GM from West Bengal. Koustav earned his first GM norm in October 2021 at a Grandmasters' chess tournament in Bangladesh. He got his second GM norm at the Asian championship in the first week of November 2022. He crossed FIDE rating 2500 in August. Koustav is in the joint-lead with GM Abhijeet Gupta at the National Senior Chess Championship with a score of 8/10 after 10 rounds.
- GrandMaster is the highest title apart from World Champion awarded to Chess players International Chess Federation FIDE. India's 1st Chess GrandMaster was won by Viswanathan Anand at the age of 14 in 1988.

Chess: India's Koneru Humpy wins silver medal at World Blitz Championships

- Former World rapid champion K. Humpy produced a superlative performance to claim India's first-ever silver medal from the World blitz chess championship that concluded in Almaty, Kazakhstan. Humpy defeated China's Zhongyi Tan to win Silver in the 17th and final round. Fourth-seeded Humpy scored an impressive 12.5 points, just half a point behind the gold medal winner Bibisara Balabayeva of Kazakhstan. Humpy is the second Indian to win a medal at World Blitz, after Viswanathan Anand.
- The International Chess governing body FIDE organises World Rapid and Blitz chess championship at the end of the year. This year it was held in Kazakhstan's capital Almaty from 26-30 December 2022.

Hockey Haryana Women's U-18 team wins Khelo India Youth Games 2022

- Hockey Haryana's women's team won the Khelo India Youth Games 2022 Women's Under 18 Qualifiers after defeating Madhya Pradesh (2-0) in the final at Bhubaneswar. In the final match, Pooja and Gurmail Kaur scored a goal each for Haryana to end the contest in their

favour. Odisha stepped up to claim third place after beating Hockey Jharkhand 2-1 in the 3rd and 4th place encounter. Haryana, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha and Jharkhand have qualified for the Khelo India Youth Games (Women) to be held in Madhya Pradesh next year.

Hockey Madhya Pradesh clinch KIYG 2022 (Men's Under 18) Qualifiers title

- In Hockey, Madhya Pradesh defeated Odisha 6-5 to clinch Khelo India Youth Games 2022 Men's Under-18 Qualifiers title in Bhubaneswar. In a thrilling final, Jamir Mohammad was the star of the final, scoring a hat-trick, while Ali Ahmed, Mohammad Zaid Khan and captain Ankit Pal scored one goal each for Madhya Pradesh. On the other hand, Anmol Ekka, Paulus Lakra, Deepak Minz and Akash Soreng scored one goal each for Odisha. Haryana defeated Jharkhand 2-0 to secure the third position in the competition. Amandeep and Roshan scored the goals for Haryana. With this, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, Haryana and Jharkhand have qualified for the Khelo India Youth Games to be held in Madhya Pradesh next year.

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

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

- The Visible Line Emission Coronagraph (VELC) payload for the Aditya-L1 mission was handed over to ISRO by the Indian Institute of Astrophysics (IIA) on January 26, 2023.
- The event was organized at the Centre for Research and Education in Science and Technology (CREST) Campus at Hosakote, near Bengaluru.
- The VELC payload was conceived and built on the CREST site. At URSC, the payload would be integrated with the satellite.

International Customs Day

- The World Customs Organisation (WCO) marks International Customs Day on 26th January every year. The occasion commemorates the WCO's maiden session held in 1953.
- The day is dedicated to spreading awareness about the role Customs authorities play in the seamless movement of goods across borders and their importance in the cross-border regulatory apparatus.
- Every year, such authorities of WCO's member administrations organise events to celebrate International Customs Day

Indian Army launched a joint training exercise Cyclone-1 with Egypt

- The first-ever combined exercise between the Indian Army's special forces and the Egyptian Army, dubbed "Exercise Cyclone-I," has been underway at Jaisalmer, Rajasthan, since January 14, 2023.
- The exercise intends to strengthen bilateral defense cooperation by focusing on the exchange of professional skills and interoperability of Special Forces in a desert environment while conducting counter-terrorism, reconnaissance, raids, and other special operations.

Centre will launch National Urban Technology Mission for Municipal Services and ULBs

- The Centre is about to launch a five-year National Urban Technology Mission which is able to infuse technological improvements in municipal providers and infrastructure of 4,500 city native bodies within the nation. The mission, to be spearheaded by the ministry of housing and urban affairs, can have three main sub-heads. A be aware ready for the approval of the expenditure finance committee (EFC) pegs the mission outlay at ₹15,000 crore for 5 years.
- The primary sub-head is online governance. The mission will establish six primary frequent citizen providers which each city native physique should provide on-line. These would essentially embrace issuing beginning and loss of life certificates, offering water and electrical energy connections, computation and assortment of property tax and grievance redress.

DAC gives nod to purchase indigenous defence systems

- In an effort to shore up the air defence systems all along the Line of Actual Control(LAC) facing China, the Defence Acquisition Council (DAC) cleared the proposal for procurement of VSHORAD (IR Homing) missile system under design and development by the Defence Research and Development Organisation(DRDO). In view of the recent developments along the Northern borders(China) there is a need to focus on effective Air Defence (AD) weapon systems which are man portable and can be deployed quickly in rugged terrain and maritime domain. Procurement of VSHORAD, as a robust and quickly deployable system, will strengthen the Air Defence capabilities.
- India has been in talks with Russia since 2018 to procure the Igla-S air defence missiles at a cost of \$1.5 billion under the VSHORAD programme in a bid to replace the Russian Igla-M systems which have been in use with the Army. However, with a strong pitch for 'Atmanirbharta' in defence, there has been little progress on this front in the last two years, with sources indicating that the deal has been put on hold for now.

Anti-tank, air defence missile systems: Defence ministry approved capital procurement proposals worth Rs. 4276 crore

- Defence Acquisition Council(DAC) approved three proposals worth 4,276 crore rupees to strengthen the country's deterrence and combat readiness. Defence Ministry said, a meeting of Defence Acquisition Council held under the chairmanship of Defence Minister Rajnath Singh. The DAC has accorded approval for procurement of HELINA Anti-Tank Guided Missiles, launchers and associated support equipment which will be integrated to the Advanced Light Helicopter.
- There were three proposals – two for the Army and third was for the Indian Navy. The defence ministry said the DAC accorded Acceptance of Necessity (AoN) for three capital acquisition proposals, amounting to ₹4,276 crore. The DAC granted approval for procurement of Brahmos Launcher and Fire Control System (FCS) for the Shivalik class of ships and next generation missile vessels (NGMVs) for the Indian Navy.

NABI, Mohali, gets genome editing and training centre

- Union Minister Dr Jitendra Singh today inaugurated "National Genome Editing & Training Centre" at National Agri-food Biotechnology Institute (NABI) Mohali, Punjab. The Minister

also, at the same time, inaugurated a 4-day International Conference on Food and Nutritional Security 2023.

- “National Genome Editing & Training Centre” (NGETC) is a one-roof state-of-the-art facility that will serve as a national platform to cater to the regional needs to adapt different genome editing methods, including CRISPR-Cas9 mediated genome modification. It will also empower young researchers by providing them with training and guidance about its know-how and application in crops. In the current climatic scenario, improving crops for better nutrition and tolerance to the changing environmental condition is a significant challenge. Genome editing could be a promising technology that Indian research could adapt to offer the desired tailor-made traits in crops. NABI has shown ability and can expand the genome editing tools to vast arrays of crops, including Banana, Rice, Wheat, Tomato, Maize and Millets.

OBITUARY

World's oldest known person Lucile Randon dies at 118 in France

- The world’s oldest person, French nun Lucile Randon, has died aged 118. Randon, also known as Sister Andre, was born in southern France on February 11, 1904, a decade before World War I. She was long regarded as the oldest European, but the death of Japan’s Kane Tanaka at the age of 119 last year made her the world’s oldest person. The record for oldest confirmed age reached by a human belongs to Jeanne Calment, also of southern France, who died in 1997 at the age of 122. Guinness World Records had officially recognised her status in April 2022.
- At the age of 26, she converted to Catholicism and was baptized. Driven by a desire to “go further,” she entered the Daughters of Charity order of nuns at the rather late age of 41. Sister Andre was thereafter posted to a Vichy hospital, where she stayed for 31 years. Spending most of her life dedicated to religious service, Sister André also held the record for the oldest nun living.

Italian film legend Gina Lollobrigida passes away at age 95

- Italian film legend Gina Lollobrigida, the diva who came to represent Italy's vibrant rebirth after World War Two during the 1950s has passed away at the age of 95. Lollobrigida was dubbed as “the most beautiful woman in the world” after the title of one of her movies.
- The agent, Paola Comin, didn't provide details. Lollobrigida had surgery in September to repair a thigh bone broken in a fall.
- A drawn portrait of the diva graced a 1954 cover of Time magazine, which likened her to a “goddess” in an article about Italian movie-making. More than a half-century later, Lollobrigida still turned heads with her brown, curly hair and statuesque figure, and preferred to be called an actress instead of the gender-neutral term actor.

Mukarram Jah Bahadur, Hyderabad’s Last Nizam passes away

- The last Nizam of Hyderabad, Mukarram Jah Bahadur, who passed away on Saturday night in Turkey, will be buried in the family vault in the Mecca Masjid courtyard. The preparation of the vault where other members of the Nizam’s family who governed Hyderabad starting in 1724 are buried was overseen by representatives of the Nizam Trust.

- Two of the most renowned dynasties in the Muslim world were connected to Mukarram Jah, also known by his title Nawab Mir Barkat Ali Khan Walashan Mukarram Jah Bahadur.
- Durrushehvar, his mother, was the lone child of Abdul Majid, the final Caliph of Islam who was exiled by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk when the Caliphate was abolished.
- His father was Nizam Mir Osman Ali Khan's oldest son, Azam Jah, whose kingdom united with India on September 18, 1948.

Hong Kong DJ who broadcast for six decades dies at 98

- Ray Cordeiro, who interviewed music acts including the Beatles during a six-decade career on Hong Kong radio that earned him the title of the world's longest-working disc jockey, has passed away. Cordeiro, who was born in Hong Kong in 1924 of Portuguese descent, was recognized by the Guinness Book of Records as the world's longest-working DJ. He joined Hong Kong's public broadcaster in 1960 after working as a prison warden and bank clerk. His "All the Way With Ray" show of easy listening music was on RTHK Radio 3 for 51 years until his retirement.
- Cordeiro interviewed the Beatles, then the world's biggest music act, in 1964 following a study course in London with the British Broadcasting Corp. He said John Lennon recounted their early days in Hamburg, Germany, where they lived in relative poverty and played in clubs. The broadcast of the Beatles interview on Hong Kong radio made Cordeiro a celebrity. He also interviewed other stars and met Elton John and Tony Bennett.

Constantine II, last king of Greece dies at 82

- Constantine II, the former and last King of Greece who ruled Greece before the country became a republic in 1974 passed away in Athens, Greece, at 82. He was born of King Paul I, younger brother to King George II, of Greece and German aristocrat Princess Frederica of Hannover, Germany, on 2nd June 1940 in Psikhikó near Athens, Greece.
- When Constantine was an infant, the royal family fled Greece during the German invasion of World War II, moving to Alexandria (Egypt), South Africa. They returned to Greece in 1946.
- Constantine II, the 2nd cousin of Britain's King Charles III, is the only son of King Paul and Queen Frederica of Greece, he ascended to the throne in 1964 at the age of 23 after the demise of his father. His reign was marred by political instability, culminating in a military coup on 21st April 1967. A military coup was launched as a result of the episode involving the defection of numerous lawmakers from the ruling party, which is widely known as the "apostasy" in Greece. He remained in Rome until the regime abolished the monarchy in 1973.

Sharad Yadav From Fighting Emergency To Championing Mandal dies at 78

- Socialist stalwart and former JD(U) chief Sharad Yadav passed away. He was 75. He is survived by his wife, daughter and son. A 7-term Lok Sabha and 4-term Rajya Sabha member, Yadav, a former Union Minister, had not been keeping well for some time.
- Born on July 1, 1947 at Babai in Hoshangabad district of Madhya Pradesh, Yadav was a gold medallist in engineering from the Jabalpur Engineering College. He soon became active in youth politics, greatly influenced by socialist leader Ram Manohar Lohia.

- He participated in a number of mass movements and was detained under MISA during the turbulent 1970s. Much later, he was among the leaders who played a significant role in the implementation of the Mandal Commission recommendations.

Rahman Rahi, Valley's only Jnanpith awardee, dies at 98

- Professor Rehman Rahi, renowned poet and Kashmir's first Jnanpith awardee took his last breath in the early hours on Monday at his residence in the Nowshera area of Kashmir. At the time of his death, the globally acclaimed poet was 98 years old. He is survived by four children.
- Born on May 6, 1925, Rahi wrote several collections of poems and translated the works of some of the celebrated poets in other languages into Kashmiri.
- He had started his career as a clerk in a government department in 1948 after which he continued his education and completed MA in Persian and English in 1950s and 60s. He was an academic at Kashmir University for most part of his life.
- Rahi had received the Sahitya Akademi Award in 1961 for his poetry collection Nawroz-i-Saba and got the Padma Shri in 2000.
- He received the highest literary honour of the country — Jnanpith award — in 2007 for his collection 'Siyah Rood Jaeren Manz' (In Black Drizzle).

Father of laparoscopic surgery passed away at 88

- Padma Awardee Dr Tehemton Erach Udawadia, an Indian Surgeon and Gastroenterologist, who was known as the 'father of laparoscopic surgery in India' passed away, at the age of 88. He was born on 15th July 1934 in the Bombay Presidency, British India (now Mumbai, Maharashtra, India).
- Tehemton E Udawadia pursued medicine and started his career as a research fellow at the King Edward Memorial Hospital and Seth Gordhandas Sunderdas Medical College in 1958 and stayed till 1962.
- In 1993, he found the Indian Association of Gastrointestinal Endo-Surgeons and he served as its President from 1993 to 1998.
- He was the 1st surgeon in India to introduce laparoscopy in surgery in 1972, and the 1st to perform laparoscopic surgery in the developing world in 1990.

Keshari Nath Tripathi, former West Bengal Governor Bengal and senior BJP leader, passes away at 88

- Senior leader of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and former West Bengal governor, Keshari Nath Tripathi passed away at 88. Born on November 10, 1934 in erstwhile Allahabad, Tripathi was also a senior advocate at the Allahabad High Court. He joined RSS when he was just 12 and later switched to Bharatiya Jana Sangh. He was jailed in Naini Central Jail in 1953 for participating in the 'Kashmir Andolan' and again in 1990 for taking part in the Ram Janmabhoomi movement.
- A senior advocate of Allahabad high court, Tripathi served as a member of the UP Legislative Assembly six times. He represented the Jhansi seat between 1977-1980) and Allahabad South seat for five consecutive terms between 1989-2007). He also served as the Speaker of the UP Legislative Assembly thrice between 1991 and 2004.

Former Pope Benedict XVI dies in Vatican monastery aged 95

- Statement released by the Vatican, the former Pope Benedict XVI has passed away in the Mater Ecclesiae Monastery in the Vatican. He was 95 years old. The head of the Catholic Church, former Pope Benedict, was the first pope in 600 years to resign. He resigned in 2013 and was replaced by the present pope Francis. Pope Benedict was the first German to become pope in 1000 years. He was the head of the Vatican City from 19 April 2005 until his resignation on 28 February 2013. He was born as Joseph Aloisius Ratzinger on April 16, 1927, in the southern German village of Marktl, close to Austria.
- Pope is a title which is given to the Bishop of Rome who is the head of the Roman Catholic Church. He is also the head of the sovereign country of Vatican City. Roman Catholics are the largest of the three major branches of Christianity.

Tata Group veteran RK Krishnakumar, 84, passes away in Mumbai

- R Krishnakumar, a close confidante of Ratan Tata and a group veteran, passed away. Kerala-born Krishnakumar, who had served at multiple positions in the group, including heading its hospitality arm Indian Hotels, was 84. In 2009, Krishnakumar was awarded Padma Shri.
- Krishna Kumar, well known as KK, was instrumental in the 271 million pounds buy-out of Tetley in 2000, which not only catapulted Tata Global Beverages to the No. 2 spot among the world's tea makers but also brought the group and India Inc to the international stage.

APPOINTMENTS AND RESIGNATIONS

Shooting World Cup 2023: HC appoints ex-SC Judge AK Sikri as administrator to see fund utilisation

- Justice Arjan Kumar Sikri, a retired judge from the Supreme Court, has been appointed by the Delhi High Court as Administrator to manage the use of funds for the next ISSF Shooting World Cup in 2023. The ISSF World Cup (Rifle/Pistol) will take place in March in Bhopal.
- Chief Justice Satish Chandra Sharma and Justice Subramonium Prasad's divisional bench noted that if there is any obstacle to arranging the World Cup event, which would require funds from the Central Government, the prestige of the nation will be harmed.
- The administrator may also enlist the services of any athlete of his choosing who has competed at the national or international level in shooting, according to the court. After the occurrence, the bench requested that a report be sent in a sealed cover.

Reed Hastings is stepping down as Netflix's co-CEO

- In order to transfer the keys over to longtime partner and co-CEO Ted Sarandos and chief operating officer Greg Peters, Netflix Inc. co-founder and CEO Reed Hastings resigned from his position as the company's chief executive.
- In after-hours trading, Netflix shares increased 6.1% to \$335.05 as the pioneer of streaming video also revealed that it had gained more customers than anticipated at the end of the previous year.
- As a result of losing consumers in the first half of 2022, the company has been under pressure.

- Its stock, once a favourite on Wall Street, has decreased by about 38% in the previous 12 months.
- Hastings will serve as executive chairman and share the role of chief executive with Sarandos and Peters.

Centre appoints Pankaj Kumar Singh as deputy national security advisor

- Retired director general of the Border Security Force (BSF), Pankaj Kumar Singh was appointed as the Deputy National Security Adviser in National Security Council Secretariat for a period of two years. Singh, a 1988-batch IPS officer of the Rajasthan cadre, has been appointed on a re-employment contract. Singh had retired as the BSF chief on December 31, 2022.
- When Singh took charge of the BSF on August 31, 2021, he had created history of a son and a father holding the top post of a paramilitary force during their services. His father and retired IPS officer of the 1959-batch, Prakash Singh, had also headed the BSF from June, 1993 to January, 1994. Singh holds LLB and MPhil degrees, besides MBA from the IIM, Ahmedabad.
- Currently, retired IPS officer Dattatray Padsalgikar, former R&AW chief Rajinder Khanna and retired IFS officer Pankaj Saran also served as Deputy National Security Advisors.

Clare Lombardelli appointed as OECD Chief Economist

- Chief Economic Adviser to the Treasury, Clare Lombardelli, has been appointed as the new Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Chief Economist. She will lead the OECD's economic work, replacing France's Laurence Boone, who has held the post since 2018. A British national, Clare holds a Master's Degree in Economics from London School of Economics and Political Science and Bachelor's Degree in Philosophy, Politics and Economics from Oxford University.
- Clare was selected after a highly competitive merit-based selection process. She is a highly regarded economic policy leader who joins the OECD with 20 years of experience in economic analysis and policy-making in the United Kingdom, including as the Chief Economist at the UK Treasury and the Joint Head of the UK Government Economic Service over the past five years.

Captain Surbhi Jakhmola Became the First Woman Officer Posted On Foreign Assignment In The Border Roads Organisation

- Captain Surbhi Jakhmola of the Indian Army's 117 Engineer Regiment will be the first woman officer to be posted on a foreign assignment at the Border Roads Organisation (BRO). The officer will be sent to Bhutan as part of Project Dantak. The Border Roads Organisation (BRO) is an executive road construction force in India that supports the Indian armed forces.
- The BRO's deployment comes just days after the Indian Air Force deployed woman fighter pilot squadron leader Avani Chaturvedi to Japan for the exercise Veer Guardian 2023, which will take place from January 16 to 26 at the Hyakuri Air Base and its surrounding airspace in Omitama, as well as the Iruma Air Base in Sayama in Japan.

- Avani Chaturvedi, a Su-30MKI pilot and one of India's first three women fighter pilots will depart for Japan shortly to take part in the exercise. Chaturvedi was born, raised, and completed her education in Madhya Pradesh. She was inducted into the IAF fighter squadron after six months of intensive training at the Air Force Academy in Dundigal, Hyderabad.

Paytm Payments Bank receives RBI nod to appoint Surinder Chawla as Managing Director and CEO

- Paytm Payments Bank has received banking regulator RBI's nod to appoint Surinder Chawla as its Managing Director and CEO. The RBI, however, continues to bar Paytm Payments Bank from on-boarding new customers. Before joining PPBL, Chawla was working with RBL Bank, where he served as Head – Branch Banking and focused on expanding the CASA base, fee revenue, and cross-selling across channels. The company in its regulatory filing said that the latest appointment comes as part of PPBL's ongoing efforts to strengthen its leadership team, enhance its technology capabilities and drive financial inclusion in the country.
- Chawla brings with him a career in retail banking spanning over 28 years across institutions such as HDFC Bank, RBL Bank, ABN Amro Bank and Standard Chartered Bank. He joins PPBL from RBL Bank, where he served as head of branch banking and focused on expanding the Current Account Savings Account (CASA) base, fee revenue, and cross-selling across channels.

Bank of Singapore hires CEO from Julius Baer

- Bank of Singapore (BoS), the private banking arm of Oversea-Chinese Banking Corporation (OCBC), announced that it has appointed Jason Moo as its new CEO. BoS's announcement comes after Bloomberg's article on Dec 26, 2022. Moo will succeed Bahren Shaari officially from March 6 onwards.
- Moo comes with over 25 years of experience in private banking, wealth management and capital markets. This includes 22 years in Goldman Sachs, as well as time spent in New York, Hong Kong and Singapore. From 2017 to 2019, Moo was the CEO for Goldman Sachs (Singapore). Moo joins BoS from Julius Baer where he was head of private banking, Southeast Asia and branch manager Singapore.
- Aside from Singapore, he has also worked in New York and Hong Kong. Shaari was appointed CEO in 2015. Under his leadership, the bank successfully integrated Barclays Asia after the acquisition, and grew its assets under management from US\$55 billion to US\$109 billion as at September 30 2022.

EC names folk singer Maithili Thakur its Bihar icon

- Folk singer Maithili Thakur was appointed the state icon for Bihar by the Election Commission. The singer will create awareness among the voters for their participation in the electoral process. This recognition will give her (Maithili) more impetus to spread Bihar's folk music across continents and generate awareness about the importance of participating in the electoral process.

- Maithili, born in Bihar's Madhubani district, along with her two brothers, were trained by their grandfather and father in folk, Hindustani classical music, harmonium and tabla. She has rendered traditional folk songs of Bihar in Maithili, Bhojpuri and Hindi.
- Thakur, trained in Indian classical and folk music, was recently selected for the Ustad Bismillah Khan Yuva Puraskar of the Sangeet Natak Akademi for her contribution to the folk music of Bihar for 2021.

Ajay Kumar Srivastava becomes new MD and CEO of Indian Overseas Bank

- Ajay Kumar Srivastava has been elevated as Managing Director and CEO of Indian Overseas Bank with effect from January 1, 2023 from his current posting as executive director. He started his banking career as a probationary officer in 1991 with Allahabad Bank where he worked in various capacities in different parts of the country. He is an astute and hardcore banker with vast field-level experience and has the distinction of having successfully led the largest and most critical areas of Uttar Pradesh, Gujarat, and Delhi while working at a senior level in Allahabad Bank.
- After the successful completion of about 27 years in Allahabad Bank he was elevated as Executive Director of IOB in October 2017.
- He made strategies for each of the key areas and successfully implemented them at the ground level with the support of the Board.

International Year of Millets (IYM) 2023 kick starts

- The Government of India sponsored the proposal for International Year of Millets (IYM) 2023 which was accepted by the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA). The declaration has been instrumental for the Government of India to be at the forefront in celebrating the IYM. PM Narendra Modi has also shared his vision to make IYM 2023 a 'People's Movement' alongside positioning India as the 'Global Hub for Millets'.
- Recognising the enormous potential of Millets, which also aligns with several UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the Government of India (GoI) has prioritized Millets. In April 2018, Millets were rebranded as "Nutri Cereals", followed by the year 2018 being declared as the National Year of Millets, aiming at larger promotion and demand generation. The global millets market is projected to register a CAGR of 4.5% during the forecast period between 2021-2026.

IMPORTANT DAYS

1 February – Indian Coast Guard Day

- On 1st February, the Indian Coast Guard celebrates its foundation day. This year, the Indian Coast Guard is celebrating its 46th Raising Day. Indian Coast Guard has played a significant role in securing the Indian Coasts and enforcing regulations within the Maritime Zones of India.

International Zebra Day

- Every January 31, people around the world celebrate International Zebra Day. The purpose of the day is to spread knowledge about how you can support the conservation of this animal.

Martyrs Day or Shaheed Diwas

- 30 January is celebrated as Martyr's Day or Shaheed Diwas every year in the memory of Mahatma Gandhi and the sacrifice of three revolutionaries of India. As, on 30 January, 1948, the 'Father of Nation' was assassinated. And on 23rd March 3 heroes namely Bhagat Singh, Shivaram Rajguru, and Sukhdev Thapar of the nation were hanged to death by the British.

World Leprosy Day

- World Leprosy Day is observed on the last Sunday of January to focus on the target of zero cases of leprosy-related disabilities in children. As we know disabilities do not occur overnight but happen after a prolonged period of undiagnosed disease.

Indian Newspaper Day

- A day set aside to honour the beginning of newspapers in India is known as Indian Newspaper Day. This day is intended to raise awareness of Indian newspapers. Indian Newspaper Day, which is observed on January 29th each year, is today. However, there is no theme to observe this important occasion.

National Puzzle Day

- January 29 is National Puzzle Day, the perfect day to do a little brain exercise. Whether it's a crossword, jigsaw, or Sudoku, puzzles engage our brain in more ways than one. Scientists have discovered that when we work on a jigsaw puzzle, we utilize both sides of the brain, improving memory, cognitive function and problem solving skills in the process. By utilizing puzzles, people can stimulate the brain improve a number of skills.

Data Privacy Day

- January 28 is celebrated as Data Privacy Day (DPD) across the world.
- The objective of the day is to sensitize individuals and disseminate privacy practices and principles. It encourages everyone to own their privacy responsibilities to create a culture of privacy.

The theme for this year is 'Think Privacy First'.

International Day of Commemoration in memory of the victims of the Holocaust

- International Day of Commemoration in Memory of the Victims of the Holocaust is observed on January 27. It is the anniversary of the liberation of the Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration camp. The United Nations Holocaust memorial ceremony in the United Nations General Assembly Hall will be under the theme 'Home and Belonging' for 2023.

13th National Voters' Day (NVD)

- The theme for this year's NVD, 'Nothing Like Voting, I Vote for Sure' is dedicated to voters which conveys individual's feeling and aspiration towards participation in the electoral process through power of their vote.
- Since 2011, National Voters' Day has been celebrated on January 25 every year, to mark the foundation day of the Election Commission of India.
- National Tourism Day 2023
- India is celebrating National Tourism Day on January 25. The day is marked annually in order to raise awareness about the importance that the tourism industry plays in the country.
- In 2022, the National Tourism Day was part of the 'Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav', the 75-week grand celebration marking 75 years of Indian Independence.

National Girl Child Day

- National Girl Child Day is marked on January 24 to celebrate the girl child. The day, an initiative of Ministry of Women and Child Development, has been celebrated in India every year since 2008. It was celebrated for the first time with an aim to raise awareness about the inequalities faced by girls and women in society at various levels.

International Day of Education

- The United Nations General Assembly proclaimed 24 January as the International Day of Education with an aim to emphasise the role of education for peace and development. The theme for 2023 is 'To Invest in People, Prioritize Education.' UNESCO has dedicated this year's International Education Day to women of Afghanistan who are being deprived of their right to education.

Parakram Diwas 2023 celebrates as Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose Birth Anniversary Parakram Diwas 2023:

- Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose Jayanti or Netaji Jayanti is a national event celebrated in India as Parakram Diwas on January 23 to mark the birth of prominent Indian freedom fighter Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose.
- This year nation celebrates 126th birth anniversary of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose. For the first time, Netaji Jayanti was celebrated as Parakram Divas in 2021 on the occasion of his 124th birthday.
- In West Bengal, Jharkhand, Tripura, and Assam, it is a recognised holiday.

UNESCO to dedicate the 2023 International Day of Education to Afghan girls and women

- Marking the occasion of the International Day of Education, being held on January 24, the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) announced the decision to dedicate the day to girls and women in Afghanistan who have been forcefully stripped of their basic right to education.

National Disaster Response Force Day 2023: History & Significance

- 18th National Disaster Response Force day is celebrated on January 19, 2023 by the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF). The day has been celebrated on this day since 2006 when the rescue force was officially formed. The specialised, multi-skilled rescue force is made up of battalions from the Border Security Force (BSF), Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF), Central Industrial Security Force (CISF), Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP), Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB) and the Assam Rifles. The NDRF is the primary agency responsible for conducting rescue operations during disasters like drowning, building collapses, landslides, devastating floods, earthquakes and cyclones.
- With 12 battalions and 13,000 NDRF personnel spread across the country, the NDRF has managed to save 1.44 lakh human lives and evacuated more than 7 lakh stranded individuals in its 17 years of service. In 2021 alone, the NDRF saved 12,000 lives in various rescue operations. The NDRF Raising Day is an important day as it provides an opportunity for the brave personnel of the rescue force to be recognised, honoured and awarded for their work. On NDRF Raising Day 2022, 8 NDRF rescuers were given the 'Union Home Minister's Special Operation Medal' for their extraordinary work in 2021.

National startup Day: 16th January 2023

- India is recognized as a startup hub and such government initiatives encourage innovation across sectors. January 16 is celebrated as National Startup Day every year in the country. Prime Minister Narendra Modi had made this announcement last year to assist percolate startup tradition to the grassroots level.
- This year Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT), Ministry of Commerce and Industry initiative of organizing Startup India Innovation Week to celebrate the Indian Startup Ecosystem as well as National Startup Day (16th January 2023).
- The initiative will bring together young celebrated entrepreneurs to brainstorm, innovate and excel. Enclosed are some startup leaders that congratulate and celebrate this iconic day.

Army Day to be celebrated on January 15 in Bengaluru

- Indian army day 2023 is celebrated on 15th January 2023 and it mark the 75th anniversary of the Indian army day. Every year on January 15, India celebrates its Army Day. It is the day on which Field Marshal Kodandera M. Cariappa (then a Lieutenant General) took over as the first Commander-in-Chief of the Indian Army from the last British Commander-in-Chief of India, General Fransis Bucher in the year 1949. Parades, medal presenting and other ceremonies are organized to celebrate the Army Day. With "Service before self" as its motto, the Indian Army is the largest component of the Indian Armed Forces.
- Originally, the Indian army was formed under the British rule on April 1, 1895 and was called as British Indian Army. After India got its independence in the year 1947, it was only on January 15, 1949, when the country got its first Indian chief. Lt Gen K M Carriappa took over as commander-in-chief of the Indian Army in 1949 from General Francis Butcher, the last British commander-in-chief of India.

Raksha Mantri Shri Rajnath Singh to preside over 7th Armed Forces Veterans Day Celebrations at Dehradun

- The Armed Forces Veterans Day is celebrated on 14th January since 1953, the First Indian Commander in Chief (C-in-C) of Indian Army- Field Marshal KM Cariappa, who led Indian Forces to Victory in the 1947 war, had formally retired from the Services. The Day is celebrated as Armed Forces Veterans Day and dedicated to our esteemed Veterans. The First Armed Forces Veterans Day was celebrated on January, 14, 2016 and it was decided to commemorate this day every year by hosting such interactive events in the honor of our Armed Forces Veterans and their families.
- Raksha Mantri Shri Rajnath Singh preside over 7th Armed Forces Veterans Day Celebrations by addressing an Armed Forces Veterans Rally at Jaswant Ground in Dehradun Cantonment. He also launch the 'Soul of Steel Alpine Challenge', a joint adventure sport initiative of the Indian Army and CLAW Global, by flagging off a car expedition from Dehradun to Ghamshali located in the Niti Valley.

National Youth Day: 12th January 2023

- National Youth Day is celebrated every year on January 12 to mark the birth anniversary of Swami Vivekananda. Every year on this occasion, the government organises National Youth Festival in collaboration with one state willing to host from January 12 to January 16. This year Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurate the festival on January 12 in Huballi, Karnataka.
- The basic objective of National Youth Day is to bring the youth of the country together in an attempt to showcase their talents in various activities to cover almost all socio-cultural aspects of life, providing an opportunity to amateur young artists to express themselves and interact with fellow artists and to further learn the new art forms from experts of various disciplines.
- The Centre said the festival is held to provide exposure to youths at a national level and this year's theme for the four-day programme is "Viksit Yuva – Viksit Bharat (Developed Youth – Developed India)".

National Road Safety Week: 11th to 17th January 2023

- Ministry of Road Transport & Highways, Government of India is observing the Road Safety Week from 11th to 17th January 2023, under "Swachhata Pakhwada", to propagate the cause of safer roads for all. During the Week, various activities is being organised throughout the Country to create awareness among general public and to give an opportunity to all stakeholders to contribute to the cause of road safety. This includes various awareness campaigns related to causes of road accidents and measures to prevent them. Various activities with School/college students, drivers and all other road users have also been planned.
- Ministry will conduct several activities including Nukkad Nataks (Street Shows) and Sensitization Campaigns at various locations in the Capital. Further, Essay Writing & Poster Making competition for school students, Exhibition & Theatre Pavilion by corporates / PSUs / NGOs actively working in the field of road safety, Walkathon and Talks/ Interactions with senior officers will also be held at Indian Agricultural Research Institute (IARI), Pusa, Delhi.

Startup India Innovation Week: January 10th To January 16th

- The Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT), Ministry of Commerce and Industry is organising Startup India Innovation Week from 10th January 2023 to 16th January 2023 to celebrate the Indian Startup Ecosystem as well as National Startup Day (16th January 2023).
- Startup India Innovation Week 2023 aims to engage startup ecosystem stakeholders across the nation during 10th January-16th January 2023 and spur the spirit of entrepreneurship and innovation in India.
- Startup India Innovation Week 2023 will include Knowledge Sharing Sessions for entrepreneurs, aspiring entrepreneurs, and other enablers, involving relevant stakeholders from the startup ecosystem such as government officials, incubators, corporates and investors.
- As a part of Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav celebrations, various startup related events are being organised in more than 75 places across the country to foster a spirit of entrepreneurship and innovation by involving the startup community across length and breadth of the country.

World Hindi Day: 10th January 2023

- World Hindi Day or Vishwa Hindi Diwas is celebrated on 10th January every year to promote awareness about the language across the world. It is also the day when Hindi, India's national language, was spoken for the first time in the United Nations General Assembly. It was on this day in 1975 that the first World Hindi Conference was held in Nagpur. Since then, such conferences are organised in different parts of the world every year.
- The theme this year is "Hindi – Traditional Knowledge to Artificial Intelligence". This year, the 12th World Hindi Conference will be organised in Fiji by the Foreign Ministry in collaboration with the Fiji government from February 15 to 17. The location for the 2023 event was decided during the 11th World Hindi Conference held in Mauritius last year.

09th Jan 2023: Nation Celebrates 17th Pravasi Bharatiya Divas

- Pravasi Bharatiya Divas or NRI Day is formally observed on 9 January to celebrate the day when Mahatma Gandhi returned from South Africa to Mumbai, India. The day is celebrated to acknowledge the contribution of the non-resident Indian community in helping in the development of the country. Pravasi Bharatiya Divas 2023 has conducted in Indore, Madhya Pradesh, from 8–10 January, 2023. It is important to note that this is the 17th Pravasi Bharatiya Divas, or NRI Day.
- According to the Ministry of External Affairs, the official theme of the Pravasi Bharatiya Divas 2023 is "Diaspora: Reliable Partners for India's Progress in Amrit Kaal." The theme focuses on the importance of the Indian diaspora in the development of the country. It is important to note that every year a new theme is chosen to celebrate the day.
- The purpose of Pravasi Bharatiya Divas is to give NRIs a forum to discuss their attitudes toward India and to build bridges of goodwill with their fellow citizens. It also entails informing the natives of their brothers' accomplishments abroad and informing the foreigners of what their fellow citizens expect of them.

World Day of War Orphans 2023: 6th January

- The World Day of War Orphans is observed on January 6 every year with an aim to raise awareness about children orphaned in wars. These children are subjected to hardships that are more than just physical neglect after losing their caregivers. It is an important event to note that the aftermaths of war are not just harsh on a single part of the society.
- Most significant reason the day is marked is to highlight the debilitating aftereffects of war. The focus is especially shifted to orphans and their plight. Children who have no direct part in the war, often end up suffering the most. The day is marked to understand the full impact of how destructive wars can be and the weight of loss it brings along. The day is also commemorated to give a platform to the war orphans and let them know their voices are heard.

World Braille Day 2023: 4th January

- World Braille Day, marked on January 4, emphasises the significance of Braille as a form of communication for the partially sighted and blind. The United Nations has been commemorating the day since 2019. World Braille Day also commemorates the birth anniversary of Louis Braille, who was born on January 4, 1809. After losing his sight during childhood, the French educator devised the Braille technique.
- The purpose of the day is to raise awareness of the braille language, which attempts to bridge the gap among normal and differently-abled individuals. Coupvray, France, gave birth to the creator of an extensively adopted touch device enabling blind persons to read and write. Braille created a system of writing that employed, paradoxically, an awl-like instrument to punch symbols on a sheet that can be sensed and read by blind people after himself being irreparably blinded at the age of three in his father's saddle-making factory.

DRDO celebrates its 65th Foundation Day; Floral tributes paid to former President Dr APJ Abdul Kalam at DRDO Headquarters in New Delhi

- Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) Headquarters in New Delhi has marked the 65th Foundation Day of the Organisation, which is celebrated on 1st January every year. DRDO Chairman Dr S V Kamat addressed the DRDO fraternity on the occasion. He reaffirmed DRDO's commitment towards R&D excellence and briefed about the development of cutting edge technologies for self-reliance in defence.
- On the occasion of the day, a DRDO monograph 'Infrared Signatures, Sensors and Technologies' authored by Dr Kamal Nain Chopra, a former DRDO Scientist, was also released by the Chairman DRDO. DRDO calendar 2023 was also released. In addition, Secretary DD R&D and Chairman DRDO felicitated all the employees who have completed 25 years of their service in DRDO.
- It is a premier defence research and development agency under the Ministry of Defence, Government of India.
- It is working on several cutting-edge military technology areas, including aeronautics, armaments, combat vehicles, electronics, instrumentation, engineering systems, missiles, materials, naval systems, advanced computing, simulation, cyber, hypersonic technology, quantum computing and communications.

SUMMITS AND MOU'S

Memorandum of Agreement signed between Indian Ports Association and RIS for setting up Centre for Maritime Economy and Connectivity

- The Indian Ports Association (IPA) and Research & Information System for Developing Countries (RIS) signed a Memorandum of Agreement for setting up a Centre for Maritime Economy and Connectivity in the presence of the Minister for Ports, Shipping & Waterways and Ayush Shri Sarbananda Sonowal. During the function, various other dignitaries were also present.
- Dr. Sanjeev Ranjan, Secretary (PSW) complimented the IPA and RIS teams for the effort put in for setting up the center.
- He informed that the proposed project of the Transshipment Port at Galathea bay at Greater Nicobar in Andaman & Nicobar Islands will be the future which will be advantageous for the BIMSTEC Nations.

ESAF Bank wins Inclusive Finance India Awards 2022

- ESAF Small Finance Bank has bagged the prestigious Inclusive Finance India Awards 2022 for its contributions in advancing the goal of financial inclusion and supporting inclusive growth. This award is a recognition of ESAF's unique spectrum of Financial Inclusion projects ESAF Dhansree, ESAF Udyog Jyothi, LSEDP (Local Sustainable Economic Development Project), ESAF Balajyothi, ESAF Vayojyothi, and ESAF Garshom.
- The Inclusive Finance India Awards initiative aims to celebrate and encourage deserving institutions to continue to enhance outreach to the poor by way of motivating management and staff through recognition of their painstaking efforts and enhancing the credibility of the institution, thereby making it more attractive for funding.

Taiwan's Gogoro, India's Belrise to invest \$2.5bn in Maha for battery swapping infra

- Taiwan-headquartered electric vehicle and infrastructure company Gogoro is advancing its plans to deploy battery swapping network in India. The company along with Belrise Industries (formerly known as Badve Engineering) has inked a strategic energy partnership with the Maharashtra government to establish a battery swapping infrastructure. This follows up to Gogoro's earlier announced partnership with Hero MotoCorp and Zypp Electric among others.
- As per the understanding, Gogoro and Belrise Industries are planning a 50-50 JV to invest around \$2.5 billion (Rs 20,617 crore) over a course of eight years to build energy infrastructure across the state. The non-binding MoU agreement was signed at the Maharashtra pavilion, World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland. The battery swapping infrastructure expects to begin deploying across the State of Maharashtra in 2023 which will leverage Gogoro's smart energy ecosystem including smart battery stations, swapping technologies, network management solutions.

B20 inception meeting in Gandhinagar from 22 to 24 January 2023

- The first 15 meetings of the Business 20 (B20) India Inception Meeting will be held in Gandhinagar from January 22nd to 24th, 2023. The Gujarat Government to host a dinner for

G20 delegates followed by a delegation visiting the Dandi Kutir. India has been assumed as the G20 under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

- The nation aspires to play an important role on the world stage by finding practical global solutions for the welfare of all. The G20 chairman for India is a historic event as it comes while celebrating the 'Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav'. The 18th G20 Summit will be held in September 2023.
- Gujarat will be a part of this historic event and has prepared itself to complete facilities to conduct discussions, consultations, and meetings. The first 15 meetings to be held in Gujarat in the B20 India Inception Meeting.

Annual Meeting of World Economic Forum begins today in Switzerland

- Today marks the start of the 53rd World Economic Forum (WEF) in Davos, Switzerland. The meeting will go on through January 20. The WEF meeting's 2018 theme is "Cooperation in a Fragmented World." The gathering of professionals, academics, investors, and political and commercial leaders will discuss and support creative solutions for some of the most serious problems confronting the world today, such as the climate change, global inflation, and the Russia-Ukraine situation.
- The prospect of a recession, the cost of living crisis, and financial strain are expected to dominate the future for at least two years, according to the WEF's annual Global Risks Report.
- European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen, German Chancellor Olaf Scholz, President of the European Parliament Roberta Metsola, Presidents of South Africa Cyril M. Ramaphosa, Spain's Pedro Sanchez, South Korea's Yoon Suk-yeol, Switzerland's Alain Berset, and Finland's Sanna Marin are among the world leaders attending the meeting.

Think-20 meeting under G-20 to start from today at Kushabhau Thackeray International Convention Center, Bhopal

- The two-day Think-20 meeting under the G-20 is starting from today at the Kushabhau Thackeray International Convention Center in Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh(MP). The first Think-20 meeting in MP will be inaugurated by Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan. AIR correspondent reports, there will be a discussion held on, 'Global Governance with LiFE values and wellbeing.'
- G-20 Chief Coordinator Harsh Vardhan Shringla informed in Bhopal that more than 300 ministers, intellectuals and subject experts from India and abroad will brainstorm in plenary and parallel sessions, round table conferences and cluster briefings. Of these, 94 international delegates, 115 from different states and about 100 local participants will be involved in discussions.
- In addition, representatives of international organizations such as the Asian Development Bank, ADB Institute, African Union, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, UN, UNDP and UNICEF will also attend the event. There will be 3 plenary and 10 parallel sessions will be held on the first day and after these sessions, the guest will visit the Tribal Museum in Bhopal and participate in the cultural programs.

Rajasthan becomes first state to adopt blindness control policy

- Under its campaign of Nirogi Rajasthan, Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot has implemented the policy for Blindness Control with the objective of 'Right to Sight'. With this, Rajasthan has become the first state to have such a policy. This policy has been brought with an aim to bring light in the lives of more than 3 lakh people suffering from visual impairment in the State. The prevalence rate of blindness in the country was 1.1% in 2020 and the initiatives under the Blindness Control Policy will help to bring it down to 0.3 percent.
- Under the policy for Blindness Control, the state government will mandatorily run Keratoplasty Centre and Eye Bank in all the government medical colleges. The government funded private organizations and NGOs that are collecting cornea will have to provide the collected cornea to the government institutions on priority.
- Efforts to eliminate visual impairment would be made in the districts in collaboration with voluntary organizations, trusts, hospitals and other charitable institutions working in this field.

UAE names its oil company chief to lead U.N. climate talks

- The United Arab Emirates has named a veteran technocrat who both leads Abu Dhabi's state-run oil company and oversees its renewable energy efforts to preside over the upcoming United Nations climate negotiations in Dubai. Emirati authorities nominated Sultan al-Jaber, a confidant of UAE President Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, who serves as CEO of the Abu Dhabi National Oil Co.
- The announcement prompted fierce criticism from environmental activists. Al-Jaber's firm pumps some 4 million barrels of crude a day and hopes to expand to 5 million daily, generating more of the heat-trapping carbon dioxide the UN annual climate negotiations aim to limit. The Emirates' state-run WAM news agency made the announcement, noting al-Jaber's years also serving as a climate envoy.
- In its announcement about al-Jaber, more than \$50bn in renewable energy projects across 70 countries, with plans to invest a minimum of \$50bn over the next decade.
- Al-Jaber also led green initiatives including a \$22bn "carbon-neutral" city on Abu Dhabi's outskirts. The project was halted after the global financial crisis that struck the Emirates hard beginning in 2008.

India to host Voice of Global South Summit next week, over 120 nations invited

- India will host 'The Voice of Global South' Summit on January 12-13, Foreign Secretary Vinay Kwatra said. As many as 120 countries will participate in the summit. The virtual summit is significant as India currently holds the presidency of the G20 group and Prime Minister Narendra Modi had earlier indicated that priorities would be shaped in consultation with developing countries.
- The 'Voice of Global South Summit' under the theme 'Unity of Voice, Unity of Purpose' envisages bringing together countries of the Global South to share their perspectives and priorities on a common platform.
- The MEA said that the summit envisages ten sessions, four sessions on January 12 and six sessions on January 13. Each session is expected to witness the participation of leaders or ministers from 10-20 countries.

- The inaugural and concluding sessions would be at the head of state or government level and hosted by the Prime Minister. The theme of the Inaugural Leaders' session is 'Voice of Global South – for Human-Centric Development' and that of the Concluding Leaders' session is 'Unity of Voice -Unity of Purpose'.

JSW Group named as global partner for FIH Men's Hockey World Cup in India

- The International Hockey Federation (FIH) has signed a partnership with the JSW Group for the upcoming FIH Odisha Hockey Men's World Cup 2023 Bhubaneswar-Rourkela, which will kick-off later this month. The group supports and promotes Olympics in India and has created an Olympic Training Institute in the Inspire Institute of Sport as well as has Olympic training centres across the country. The 15th edition of FIH's flagship event for men will be played from 13 January to 29 January in Odisha, India.
- JSW Group is ranked among India's leading business houses, active in various sectors including Steel, Energy, Infrastructure, Cement, Paints, Venture Capital and Sports. JSW is committed to using sports as a means of nation-building and has a long history of supporting and promoting Olympic sport in India.

First G-20 meeting to take place in Puducherry on Jan 31, says LG Dr. Tamilisai Soundararajan

- Puducherry Lieutenant governor Dr. Tamilisai Soundararajan said that the first G-20 meeting will be held in Puducherry on 31st January. The G20 logo for the meeting was released by Lieutenant Governor Dr. Tamilisai Soundararajan at a function held at Beach Road Gandhi Tidal. Dr. Tamisai thanked Prime Minister Narendra Modi for giving all the states the opportunity to host the G-20 meetings. He released stickers, posters and badges and also inaugurated a selfie booth in the presence of Chief Minister Rengasamy.
- These programs will be organised in different parts of the country in different segments. Kolkata will host the first meeting on the Global Partnership for Financial Inclusion.
- Since India is holding the presidency of the group, it is also setting an agenda for the wellbeing of the world at large. Needless to say whilst G20 priorities are in the process of being firmed up and a lot of them would come up as the talks go on, India is showing a path with focus on inclusive, equitable and sustainable growth.

Cabinet Committee approves over Rs 2,500-cr scheme for upgrading infra of DD, AIR

- In a bid to upgrade Prasar Bharati's broadcast infrastructure and network, the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) approved a scheme worth more than Rs 2,500 crore for Doordarshan and All India Radio. Under the scheme, eight lakh DD Free Dish DTH set top boxes (STBs) will also be distributed to people living in remote, tribal, LWE, border areas and 'aspirational' districts.
- Information and Broadcasting Minister Anurag Thakur announced the Central Sector 'Broadcasting Infrastructure and Network Development (BIND)' scheme with an outlay of Rs 2,539.61 crore up to 2025-26, which was approved by the CCEA.
- The BIND scheme is the vehicle for providing financial support to Prasar Bharati for expenses related to expansion and upgradation of its broadcasting infrastructure, content development and civil work related to the organization.

The BIND scheme will enable the public broadcaster to undertake a major upgradation of its facilities with better infrastructure which will widen its reach, including in the LWE (Left Wing Extremism), border and strategic areas and provide high quality content to the viewers.

India & Austria ink pact on migration and mobility

- Last year witnessed “exploding number of Indians” who arrived at the borders of Austria as illegal immigrants, said the Foreign Minister of Austria Alexander Schallenberg on January 2, 2023.
- The Minister made the comment soon after the Indian and the Austrian teams signed a Comprehensive Migration and Mobility Partnership Agreement that Mr Schallenberg described as “most important”. He called for dialogue to resolve the ongoing conflict in Ukraine and described India as a voice of “peace” and “reason”.

BREAKING BARRIERS: THE STORY OF A DALIT CHIEF SECRETARY

- Former IAS officer Kaki Madhava Rao has authored a new book titled “Breaking Barriers: the Story of a Dalit Chief Secretary” which addresses the details about the dynamics of civil services at the ground level and also fills the gap in the knowledge about micro policies and governance. The book is published by Emesco Books Private Limited. K Madhava Rao is a 1962 batch Indian Administrative Service (IAS) officer, who retired as Chief Secretary of Andhra Pradesh (AP). He was born in Pedamaddali village of Krishna district, AP in 1939. He also served in the Reserve Bank of India(RBI) as a Director and as a member of a sub-committee, the Board for Financial Supervision.
- Chapters 2,3,4, and 5 are full of details on his exposure to the national stage, a different world from rural Andhra Pradesh. The account here is of how a provincial young man matures into an adult in the world at large.

AWARDS AND RECOGNITION

University Of Auckland’s Summer Lab Awarded For Excellence In Entrepreneurial Education

- Summer Lab, a four-week University of Auckland experience highlighting innovation and entrepreneurship education, is enjoying its day in the sun after winning a United States Association of Small Business and Entrepreneurship award (USASBE).
- This year, the University of Auckland is the only institute outside North America to take out a USASBE award after Summer Lab won the Entrepreneurship Education Excellence award for innovation in co-curricular education.

President approved 412 Gallantry Awards for Defence personnel

President Droupadi Murmu has approved 412 Gallantry awards and other Defence decorations to Armed Forces personnel and others. These include six Kirti Chakras, including four posthumous, and 15 Shaurya Chakras including two posthumous. These include one Bar to Sena Medal (Gallantry), 92 Sena Medal, including four posthumous, one Nao Sena Medal (Gallantry), 7 Vayu Sena Medal.

Siddharth Sharma appointed CEO of Tata Trusts, Aparna Uppaluri as COO

- Tata Trusts has appointed Siddharth Sharma as the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the Trusts and Aparna Uppaluri as the Chief Operating Officer (COO).
- Their appointment will come into effect from 1 April 2023.
- Sharma, the chief sustainability officer at Tata Sons, will succeed N Srinath, who stepped down from the CEO's post in 2022 following his retirement.

Shamalbhai B Patel re-elected as chairman of Amul

- Gujarat Cooperative Milk Marketing Federation that markets milk and dairy products under the Amul brand announced the appointment of Shamalbhai B Patel as its chairman and Valamjibhai Humbal as vice chairman. Shamalbhai B Patel is the chairman of Sabarkantha District Cooperative Milk Producers Union Ltd., Sabar dairy and associated with dairy cooperatives of Gujarat.

The Elephant Whisperers has been nominated for Best Documentary Short in Oscar Awards 2023

- The Oscar nominations were announced on January 24, 2023, and India received three nominations for the 95th Academy Awards.
- The Elephant Whisperers, a 41-minute short by Kartiki Gonsalves, was also nominated for Best Documentary Short.
- SS Rajamouli's RRR received only one nomination in the Best Original Song category for "Naatu Naatu," despite the fact that it has a big fan base in the United States. The film did not receive nominations for Best Picture or Best Director.
- All That Breathes by Shaunak Sen was nominated for Best Documentary Feature Film.

New Goa Manohar International Airport wins best sustainable greenfield airport award

- GMR Goa International Airport (GGIAL), a subsidiary of GMR Airports Infrastructure, has won 'Best Sustainable Greenfield Airport' award under aviation sustainability and environment at ASSOCHAM's 14th International Conference-cum-Awards for Civil Aviation 2023. The award was presented for "excellent initiatives" taken by GGIAL in implementing sustainability.

Subhash Chandra Bose Aapda Prabandhan Puraskar-2023 announced

- For the year 2023, Odisha State Disaster Management Authority (OSDMA) and Lunglei Fire Station (LFS), Mizoram, both in the Institutional category, have been selected for the Subhash Chandra Bose Aapda Prabandhan Puraskar-2023 for their excellent work in Disaster Management.

Nepalese ophthalmologist Dr Sanduk Ruit wins Bahrain's ISA Award for Service to Humanity

- Himalayan Cataract Project Co-Founder Dr Sanduk Ruit has won the ISA Award for Service to Humanity, a top civilian award of Bahrain.
- The award carries a cash prize of USD 1 million, a certificate of merit and a gold medal. Dr Ruit is pioneer in delivering high-quality microsurgical procedures in remote eye camps.
- In 2018, the Government of India awarded him the Padma Shri.

Vikram Dev Dutt appointed as next DGCA director general

- The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet on Saturday approved the appointment of Vikram Dev Dutt as the next Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA). Dutt will take over the charge as the DGCA chief on February 28 after the superannuation of Arun Kumar, the incumbent DGCA chief.
- Dutt was the last government-appointed Chairman & Managing Director of the Air India.

Civil Aviation 2023: New Goa Manohar International Airport Wins 'Best Sustainable Greenfield Airport' Award

- The New Goa Manohar International Airport (MIA), built by the GMR Goa International Airport Ltd (GGIAL), a subsidiary of GMR Airports Infrastructure Limited, won the prestigious “Best Sustainable Greenfield Airport” award under Aviation Sustainability and Environment at ASSOCHAM 14th International Conference-cum-Awards for Civil Aviation 2023 at New Delhi.
- The award was presented for “excellent initiatives” taken by GGIAL in implementing sustainability as one of core concepts. During the conference, Union Minister of Civil Aviation Jyotiraditya Scindia presented the award to the senior officials from GGIAL in the presence of industry dignitaries and participants.
- The forum recognises the companies engaged in civil aviation initiatives that adopt best practices and technological advancement in their daily operations, a GMR Goa International Airport release said.
- The criteria of awards are contribution, innovativeness, applicability, relevance and impact potential in their respective areas.

Press Trust of India: Federal Bank Literary Award for writer

- Noted writer K Venu was conferred with Federal Bank Literary Award 2022 for his autobiography ‘Oranweshananthinte Katha.’ Venu received the award from Balagopal Chandrasekhar, Chairman and Independent Director of Federal Bank, at a special event held as part of the Kerala Literature Festival.
- ‘Oranweshananthinte Katha’ was chosen by the judging panel comprising writer and literary critic KC Narayanan, Sunil P Ilayidom and PK Rajashekharan. Judging panel member P K Rajashekharan commented that the essence of the book brought back the memory of the most intense political timeline in the modern history of Kerala.

- This is the first-ever literary award constituted by the Federal Bank. By constituting the award, Federal Bank aims to celebrate the diversity of contemporary literature and recognise writers for their cultural contributions.

Critics Choice Awards 2023: RRR Bags Two Wins

- The 28th Critics Choice Awards were held, and once again, SS Rajamouli's RRR has made India proud, as the film scored two awards. RRR won Best Song award for Naatu Naatu, as well as Best Foreign Language film. RRR was also nominated for Best Director, Best Picture and Best Visual Effects.
- The American Canadian Critics Choice Association CCA show Who shows for the finest In cinematic achievement. The Critics Choice Movie award Formerly known as the Broadcast Film Critics Association award was held. Critics Choice Awards Winner 2023 shows were hosted by Chelsea Handler.
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Best Animated Series: "Harley Quinn"
Best Foreign Language Series: "Pachinko"
Best Comedy Special: "Norm Macdonald: Nothing Special"
Best Talk Show: "Last Week Tonight With John Oliver"
SeeHer Award: Janelle Monáe
Lifetime Achievement Award: Jeff Bridges

Indian peacekeepers deployed with UNMISS honoured with UN medal for exemplary service

- Over 1,000 Indian peacekeepers serving with the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) have been honoured with the prestigious UN medals at an award ceremony where the parade was led for the first time by a woman officer of the Indian Army.
- At a special award ceremony in Upper Nile, 1,171 peacekeepers from India deployed with the UN mission in South Sudan were honoured with UN medals for their exemplary service. for the first time, a female officer of the Indian Army, Major Jasmine Chattha, led the parade of the large Indian contingent, comprising infantry, engineers and medical officials, at the award ceremony in Upper Nile.
- Last week, India deployed the largest platoon of women peacekeepers to the United Nations Interim Security Force, Abyei (UNISFA), heralding New Delhi's intent of increasing significantly the number of women in peacekeeping contingents.

SII's Adar Poonawalla gets 1st Patangrao Kadam award for fight against Covid

- Devendra Fadnavis, the deputy chief minister of Maharashtra, honours Adar Poonawalla with Patangrao Kadam award for vaccine work. Devendra Fadnavis also praised Serum Institute of India and its CEO Adar Poonawalla on Sunday for their work in the fight against COVID-19.
- 'Patangrao Kadam was a leader who founded 190 institutes to deliver great education and generate quality human resources.'

- Sharad Pawar, the leader of the Nationalist Congress Party, and Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu, the chief minister of Himachal Pradesh, both attended the ceremony.
- As SII has produced 160 vaccinations, Adar Poonawalla is continuing his father Dr. Cyrus Poonawalla's legacy, according to Pawar. The chief minister of HP requested that Bharti Vidyapeeth and SII establish facilities in his state.

Golden Globes 2023: SS Rajamouli's RRR wins Best Original Song for 'Naatu Naatu'

- Composer MM Keeravani, along with singers Kaala Bhairava and Rahul Sipligunj, has won the Golden Globe for Best Original Song, for the track "Naatu Naatu," from epic drama "RRR". "Naatu Naatu," a dance number featuring stars Jr NTR and Ram Charan, was competing against Taylor Swift's "Carolina" from Where the Crawdads Sing, "Ciao Papa" from Guillermo del Toro's Pinocchio, Lady Gaga's "Hold My Hand" from Top Gun: Maverick, and "Lift Me Up" from Black Panther: Wakanda Forever, performed by Rihanna.
- The historical epic has also been nominated in the Best Non-English Language Film category at the 80th Golden Globes. In the 'best picture-non English segment', "RRR" will face off with Korean romantic mystery film "Decision To Leave", German anti-war drama "All Quiet on the Western Front", Argentine historical drama "Argentina, 1985", and French-Dutch coming-of-age drama "Close".

Golden Globes Awards 2023 announced, Winners

- The 80th edition of 2023 Golden Globes show, hosted by Jerrod Carmichael, airs live on NBC and Peacock. The 80th Golden Globe Awards is the first edition of the annual spectacle to be on TV since an ethics, finance and diversity scandal involving the Hollywood Foreign Press Association, the group behind the awards, led NBC to decide not to air the 2022 ceremony.

As in years past, the show will hand out honors in both film and TV categories.

Category	Winners
Best TV Series, Musical or Comedy	"Abbott Elementary"
Best Performance by an Actor in a TV Series, Drama	Kevin Costner, "Yellowstone"
Best Director, Motion Picture	Steven Spielberg, "The Fabelmans"
Best Screenplay, Motion Picture	Martin McDonagh, "The Banshees of Inisherin"
Best Motion Picture, Non-English Language	"Argentina, 1985"
Best Performance by an Actress in a Motion Picture, Drama	Cate Blanchett, "Tár"
Best Performance by an Actress in a TV Series, Drama	Zendaya, "Euphoria"
Best Performance by an Actor in a Motion Picture, Drama	Austin Butler, "Elvis"
Best Motion Picture, Animated	"Guillermo del Toro's Pinocchio"
Best Performance by an Actress in a Motion Picture, Musical or Comedy	Michelle Yeoh, "Everything Everywhere All at Once"
Best Performance by an Actor in a Motion Picture, Musical or Comedy	Colin Farrell, "The Banshees of Inisherin"

CJI Chandrachud To Receive Harvard Law School's 'Award for Global Leadership'

- The Harvard Law School Center on the Legal Profession (HLS CLP) has announced Chief Justice of India Dr. DY Chandrachud as the 2022 recipient of its "Award for Global Leadership" in recognition of his lifetime service to the legal profession in India and across the world. The award will be presented to him in a virtual event on 11th January 2023.
- Professor David Wilkins of Harvard Law School will have a conversation with Chief Justice Dr. DY Chandrachud at the event.
- The "Award for Global Leadership" is the Centre's highest Professional Honor.
- The Centre brings together leading academics, legal practitioners, and thought leaders to honor and recognize individuals whose achievements have been impactful to the legal profession.

Kerala University wins 'Overall Championship' at youth festival held in Tirupati

- University of Kerala bagged the 'Overall Championship' at Padma Tarang, the 36th Inter University South Zone Youth Festival at Sri Padmavati Mahila Viswa Vidyalayam (SPMVV) in Tirupati. Mahatma Gandhi University, Kottayam, came the runners-up. With more than 700 registered participants from universities across South India converging on the campus.
- The SPMVV is hosting the event for the third time in collaboration with the Association of Indian Universities (AIU). In all, there will be 27 competitive events during the five-day festival. Of the eighteen universities that deputed student contingents to the event, Kerala ranked first with seven varsities.

Odisha Wins World Habitat Awards 2023 For Slum Upgradation Program

- Odisha won the UN-Habitat's World Habitat Awards 2023 for Jaga Mission, a 5T initiative of the state. The awards recognise and highlight innovative, outstanding and revolutionary housing ideas, projects and programmes from across the world. The Jaga mission is the land titling and slum upgrading program that aims at empowering the lives of slum dwellers.
- Jaga mission is the world's largest land titling and slum upgrading program which aims at empowering the lives of slum dwellers. Under the inspiring leadership of Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik, the Government of Odisha has set itself the ambitious target of becoming the first slum-free state in India and is leading the Jaga Mission programme to upgrade all of the state's 2,919 slums.
- In the last 05 years of the initiative, 1,75,000 families have been granted land tenure security. 100% households in 2,724 slums have been provided with pipe water connections, 707 slums transformed fully into Liveable Habitats, 100% households in 666 slums have individual toilets, and 8 cities have become slum-free.

Central Government Declared Pravasi Bharatiya Samman Awards 2023

- 17th Pravasi Bharatiya Samman Award: 27 Indians living overseas have been chosen by the Indian government for the Pravasi Bharatiya Samman Awards (PBSA), for outstanding achievements both in India and abroad. The award is the highest honour conferred upon Indians living abroad, including Non-Resident Indians (NRIs), Persons of Indian Origin (PIOs) or organisations/institutions established and run by them.
- The jury that selected the recipients comprised Vice-President Jagdeep Dhankhar as its chairman and External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar as its Vice-Chair, among other distinguished dignitaries from different fields. The awards will be conferred upon the recipients by President Droupadi Murmu during the 17th edition of the PBSA, which is scheduled to be held from 8-10 January in Indore, Madhya Pradesh.

RANKING

Mukesh Ambani Overtakes Gautam Adani as Richest Indian in the world

- Adani Group stocks have been under stress since Hindenburg in its research report last week questioned the accounting and corporate governance practices of the conglomerate.
- Reliance Industries chairman and Managing Director Mukesh Ambani has been named the richest Indian in the world, according to the Forbes Real Time Billionaires' list, reported news agency ANI.

Australian Open 2023: Aryna Sabalenka beats Elena Rybakina to secure title

Aryna Sabalenka registered an incredible 4-6, 6-3, 6-4 come-from-behind win over Elena Rybakina to win her maiden Australian Open title. The Australian Open crown is also Sabalenka's maiden Grand Slam title. Stay updated with Times of India to get all the live updates of Australian Open 2023 Women's Singles Final between Elena Rybakina and Aryna Sabalenka.

Jio is India's strongest brand, ranked ninth globally: Brand Finance report

- Reliance Jio has been ranked as the strongest brand in India and placed ninth among the world's strongest brands, according to the latest report 'Global 500 – 2023' published by Brand Finance.
- 'Jio' was placed ninth among the world's strongest brands ahead of brands like EY, Coca Cola, Accenture and Porsche, and behind the likes of Google, YouTube, Deloitte and Instagram.

Global Firepower Index 2022 - World Military Strength Rankings

- The Global Firepower Index ranks the countries based on their potential military strength. India is ranked fourth in the index. The Global Firepower Index ranked 145 countries. The countries were evaluated based on prolonged offensive and defensive military campaigns.
- The Global Firepower Index is calculated using fifty individual factors from geography to logistical capability.
- It also includes manpower, land forces, airpower, natural resources, naval forces, logistics and financials.
- Under manpower, the factors considered are total population, paramilitary, reaching military age annually, active reserves and active services.
- The finance factors include external debt, defence budget, reserves of foreign exchange and gold and purchasing power parity.

TCS, Infosys consolidate their positions among top three global IT brands

- Tata Consultancy Services and Infosys grew their brand value to retain their positions as the second and third most valuable IT services brands, according to the 'IT Services 25' list prepared by UK-based consultancy Brand Finance for the year 2023.
- Accenture retained the top slot for the fifth year straight, with a brand valued at \$39.8 billion. It is the strongest IT services brand in the ranking with a Brand Strength Index (BSI) score of 87.8 out of 100 and a corresponding AAA brand rating.
- TCS's brand value was up 2 per cent at \$17.2 billion. TCS has delivered many tailored transformation programmes as clients migrated to various hybrid working methods, said the Brand Finance report.
- Infosys's brand value rose 2 per cent to \$13 billion as it consolidated its position amongst the top three most valuable IT services brands globally. A rating of AAA helped Infosys to enter the top 150 most valuable brands in the world.

Shah Rukh Khan only Indian to beat Tom Cruise, Jackie Chan and others on world's richest actor's list

- Bollywood actor Shah Rukh Khan with his more than three decades of work in the film industry has garnered millions of fans all over the world and an estimated net worth of ₹627 million (\$770 million), making him the richest actor in Asia and fourth richest actor all over the world. Beating fellow immensely famous and cult actors like Tom Cruise, Jackie Chan, and George Clooney, Shah Rukh Khan took the fourth position in the list of eight richest actors of the world released by World of Statistics.

- The Shah Rukh Khan has made a great impact with his cameos in films like R Madhavan's Rocketry: The Nambi Effect and Ayan Mukerji's Brahmastra Part 1: Shiva. Now, ahead of the release of his comeback film, Pathaan, the actor has been featured in the list of the richest actors in the world.

For First Time Ever, Environment Tops Global Risks

- The world faces a set of risks that feel both wholly new and eerily familiar. The Global Risks Report 2023 explores some of the most severe risks we may face over the next decade. As we stand on the edge of a low-growth and low-cooperation era, tougher trade-offs risk eroding climate action, human development and future resilience. The World Economic Forum taking place in Davos, Switzerland released the 18th edition of the Global Risk Report 2023 based on the 2022-2023 Global Risks Perception Survey (GRPS).
- The next decade will be characterized by environmental and societal crises, driven by underlying geopolitical and economic trends. "Cost-of-living crisis" is ranked as the most severe global risk over the next two years, peaking in the short term. "Biodiversity loss and ecosystem collapse" is viewed as one of the fastest deteriorating global risks over the next decade, and all six environmental risks feature in the top 10 risks over the next 10 years.

Richest 1% own 40.5% of India's wealth, says new Oxfam report

- The richest one per cent of Indians own over 13 times more wealth than the bottom 50 per cent, according to a report by Oxfam India. The top five per cent own 61.7 per cent of the total wealth, nearly 20 times more than the 3 per cent owned by the bottom half. According to the "Survival of the Richest: The India Supplement", released by the non-government organisation (NGO), wealth inequality gets denser on the top. More than half of the wealth of the top 10 per cent of richest Indians is owned by the top 1 per cent. The combined wealth of India's 100 richest persons reached Rs 54.12 lakh crore in 2022. The total wealth of the 10 richest Indian stood at Rs 27.52 lakh crore in 2022, a 32.8% rise from 2021.
- The share of the top 10 per cent in India's total wealth has risen from 45 per cent to 63 per cent between 1981 and 2012. On the other hand, the wealth of the bottom half halved during the same period. The total number of billionaires also increased in India from 102 in 2020 to 142 in 2021 and 166 in 2022. In a stark contrast 22.89 crore persons live in poverty in India – the highest in the world, the report said.

Japan tops the World's strongest passport list in 2023

- Japan continues to top the list of the world's most powerful passport for the year 2023, according to the Henley Passport Index report released on January 10. Japanese citizens can travel to as many as 193 countries visa-free or visa-on-arrival access destinations around the world.
- The second spot is shared by Singapore and South Korea and gives visa-free access destinations to 192 countries. Countries like France, Ireland, Portugal and the United Kingdom are tied at the sixth spot with a visa-free score of 187.
- Countries like the United States, Belgium, New Zealand, Norway, Czech Republic and Switzerland are tied at the seventh position with regard to the most powerful passports in the world with a visa-free score of 186.

Power Grid Corporation of India ranks first in services sector in PE survey 2021-22

- Power Grid Corporation of India Limited (POWERGRID) has been ranked 1st in Services Sectors across categories Gross Block, Value Addition, Net Profit, Net Worth, Dividend Declaration, and Contribution to the Central Exchequer and has also been ranked 3rd among the Top 10 profit-making Closes.
- The results were published in the Public Enterprises Survey 2021-2022 by the Department of Public Enterprises (DPE), Ministry of Finance, Government of India.
- The Public Enterprises Survey is a unique data repository to measure the progress and contribution of the CPSEs to the Indian economy.
- The total transmission assets of POWERGRID and its subsidiary as on 31st December 2022 include 1,73,791 circuit km of transmission lines.

1,668 journalists killed from 2003-2022 in connection with their work

- A total of 1,668 Journalists have been killed worldwide with murders, contract killings, ambushes, war zone deaths, and fatal injuries. These journalists have been killed in connection with their work in the last two decades from 2003 to 2022. The reports gave an average of more than 80 journalists being killed every year.
- Christopher Deloire, RSF Secretary General said that behind the figures, there are the faces, personalities, talent, and commitment of those who have paid with their lives for their information gathering their search for the truth, and their passion for journalism.

BOOKS AND AUTHORS

Book 'COACHING BEYOND: My Days with the Indian Cricket Team' by R. Kaushik, R. Sridhar

- A book titled 'COACHING BEYOND: My Days with the Indian Cricket Team' authored by R. Kaushik & R. Sridhar. The book reflects primarily on R. Sridhar's seven-year coaching tenure with the Indian cricket team as its fielding coach. This book isn't as technical as it is anecdotal. It throws light, for instance, on how Virat Kohli overcame a dismal Test series in England in 2014 to smash four hundreds in as many matches in his next overseas outing, in Australia.
- It also traces Rishabh Pant's journey towards becoming the ferocious ball-striker and outstanding gloveman he is today while delving into the minds of players and the support staff to analyse India's progression towards the number 1 Test ranking. Revelations of behind-the-scenes parleys jostle with the then head coach Ravi Shastri's motivational skills in a riveting read that provides an insider's account of the rise and rise of Indian cricket.

Book "Come! Let's Run" Authored by Health Minister of Tamil Nadu Released

- The English version of the book titled 'Come! Let's Run' by Tamil Nadu Health and Family Welfare Minister, Ma. Subramanian was released by Krishnamachari Srikanth, former Captain of the Indian Cricket team. The Tamil version of the same book titled 'Odalam Vanga' was released on March 8, 2021. The book was published by Emerald Publishers and the English translation was done by Geeta Padmanaban (a teacher) along with J. Joicy and Sharon.

- This book is a fascinating account of the physical, emotional, and historical journey taken by Thiru. Subramanian during the course of running his marathons in Tamil Nadu, in India, and all over the world. He includes interesting facts and details about each place he ran a marathon while talking about the challenges of running each race. Every volunteer in the party has perseverance and is always ready to face challenges and win. This book is proof of that.

Prince Harry's memoir, titled 'Spare,' to come out in 10th January

- Prince Harry, Duke of Sussex, a member of the British royal family, has released his memoir titled "Spare". The book was written with the assistance of American novelist J. R. Moehringer. The book is published by Transworld Publishers Ltd, a division of Penguin Random House.
- The book reveals the details of Harry's relationship with his father, King Charles, his elder brother, Prince William, and other members of the royal family. Prince Harry announced that the proceeds from his memoir will be used to support British charities with donations including USD 1.5 million to Sentebale, an organization Prince Harry founded with Prince Seeiso in their mothers' legacies, which supports vulnerable children and young people in Lesotho and Botswana.

PM Modi receives book titled "Braving A Viral Storm: India's Covid-19 Vaccine Story"

- Health and Family Welfare Minister Mansukh Mandaviya has officially launched the book titled "Braving A Viral Storm: India's Covid-19 Vaccine Story" in New Delhi. The book is co-authored by Aashish Chandorkar and Suraj Sudhir. The book launch comes ahead of India's second anniversary of starting its COVID-19 vaccination drive in January 2021.
- In this book, the inside story of India's fight against Corona and the challenges of making a vaccine in difficult circumstances is told. The whole story from India's preparation to making it in the vaccine race has been told through words in this book. India had established a Covid management model towards an exemplary vaccination with public participation.

Dhoni releases autobiography of Prof. K.K. Abdul Gaffar

- Techno-educationalist, Professor K.K. Abdul Gaffar's autobiography, 'Njaan Sakshi' (me as the witness), was released by cricket legend Mahendra Singh Dhoni. The book was introduced by senior journalist T.A. Shafi. The first copy was received by Marwan Al Mulla, the CEO of Dubai Health Authority (DHA), from M S Dhoni. He also presented copies of the book to dignitaries including actor Tovino Thomas present at the occasion.
- Senior Supreme Court Attorney and son of Kapil Sibal, Akhil Sibal, Former Union Minister Salim Iqbal Sherwani, Uduma MLA, C.H. Kunhambu, Kasaragod MLA, N.A. Nellikkunnu, Mangaluru City South MLA Vedavyas Kamath, participated in the event.
- Incidentally, the book includes the infamous disappearance of P. Rajan, an engineering student from Kozhikode REC, during the emergency period and recalls the pressure put on him on behalf of the government and the police to influence him as a witness in the case.

Assam CM publishes 'Chief Minister's Dairy No 1', former CJI Ranjan Gogoi releases book

- Former Chief Justice of India and member of the Rajya Sabha Ranjan Gogoi has released a book titled 'Chief Minister's Dairy No.1' containing the account of events of the first year in office of Assam chief minister Himanta Biswa Sarma. The book featured accounts of daily activities he undertook as a chief minister.
- Assam Chief Minister said that without bringing his personal life into the limelight, the book featured accounts of daily activities he undertook as a Chief Minister. His diary essentially featured the growth initiatives that Assam witnessed over the last 11 months.
- Ranjan Gogoi is presently a member of the Rajya Sabha. He served as the 46th Chief Justice of India for 13 months from 2018 to 2019.

BANKING AND ECONOMY

Sitharaman has set a record of being the sixth minister to present five consecutive Budget

- Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, who arrived at the Rashtrapati Bhavan wearing a red colour saree to call on President Droupadi Murmu, will present Union Budget 2023-24 on Wednesday. Sitharaman has set a record of being the sixth minister to present five consecutive Budget. She has joined a select league of leaders likes of Manmohan Singh, Arun Jaitley and P Chidambaram.

Budget 2023 Taxation and more

- FM Sitharaman proposes to increase income tax rebate limit to Rs 7 lakh under new tax regime.
- Govt to reduce customs duty on shrimp feed to promote exports: FM Sitharaman
- Taxes on cigarettes hiked by 16 percent
- Basic import duty on compounded rubber increased to 25 percent from 10 percent.
- Basic customs duty hiked on articles made from gold bars
- Customs duty on kitchen electric chimney increased to 15 percent from 7.5 percent.
- Customs duty on parts of open cells of TV panels cut to 2.5 percent.
- Govt proposes to reduce customs duty on import of certain inputs for mobile phone manufacturing.
- Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman proposed increase in the agriculture credit target in the Budget 2023 to Rs 20 lakh crore, with an emphasis on industries such as animal husbandry, dairy and fishery. She also proposed a sub-scheme of PM Matsya Sampada Yojana with a targeted investment of Rs 6,000 crore.

FY24 nominal GDP growth assumed at 10.5%

- "Nominal GDP for BE 2023-2024 has been projected at Rs 3,01,75,065 crore (Rs 301.75 lakh crore) assuming 10.5 percent growth over the estimated Nominal GDP of Rs 2,73,07,751 crore (Rs 273.08 lakh crore) as per the First Advance Estimates of FY 2022-23," the Budget documents said.

The Railway Ministry has been allocated 2.40 lakh crore

- In the Budget 2023, the Railway Ministry has been allocated 2.40 lakh crore. The amount allocated in this year's budget is 9 times of what was allocated in 2013.

The Education Budget 2023 saw the highest-ever allocation for the education sector

- With Rs 1.12 Lakh Crore. School Education and Higher Education allotment increased by 8 and 7.9%, respectively. The Union Budget 2023 allocated a total of 1,12,898.97 crore to the education sector. The Education Budget 2023 saw an increase of 8621.25 crore in its allocation, compared to 104,277.72 crore in the previous year.

Crypto-currency price on January 31 quick take: The global market cap stood at \$1.04 trillion early Tuesday morning

- Bitcoin (BTC), the world's oldest and most popular crypto, slid below the \$23,000 mark on early Tuesday morning. Ethereum (ETH), on the other hand, managed to remain stable within the \$1,500 range. Other popular altcoins — including the likes of Dogecoin (DOGE), Litecoin (LTC), Ripple (XRP), and Solana (SOL) — mostly landed in the reds. The MINA token continued to remain the top gainer, with a 24-hour gain of over 11 percent. BitDAO (BIT) emerged to be the biggest loser, with a 24-hour dip of over 17 percent.
- Economic Survey pegs GDP growth at 6.5% in real, 11% in nominal terms in 2023-24
- India's GDP will grow at a baseline value of 11% in nominal terms and 6.5% in real terms in 2023-24, according to the 2022-23 Economic Survey, which was tabled in Parliament on January 31. The survey, which pegged real growth in the range of 6-6.8% depending on downside and upside risks, underlined the fact that "agencies worldwide continue to project India has the fastest growing major economy" despite the three shocks of Covid-19, the Russia-Ukraine war, and synchronised policy rate hikes by central banks across the world that led to appreciation of the US dollar and widening of the current account deficit (CAD) in net importing economies.

Adani loses \$34bn in 3 days, now only 11th richest

- With a current fortune of \$84.4 billion, Adani now sits just one spot above rival and Reliance Industries Ltd. chairman Mukesh Ambani, whose net worth is \$82.2 billion,
- Gautam Adani has slipped out of the list of the world's top 10 richest people and could soon be supplanted as Asia's wealthiest person if shares in his conglomerate continue to slide.
- IMF says, India to remain fastest-growing major economy in the world with 6.1 per cent growth in 2023. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has said that India to remain the fastest-growing major economy in the world despite global headwinds. The IMF released its January update on World Economic Outlook

today. It said that India will grow at 6.1 per cent in 2023 before picking up to 6.8 per cent in 2024 fuelled by resilient domestic demand.

UN slashes India's economic growth forecast by 20 bps to 5.8% for 2023

- The United Nations pared down India's growth forecast by 20 basis points to 5.8 per cent for 2023 calendar year, citing higher interest rates and risks of recession in the developed world weighing on investment and exports. The report has projected global trade to contract 0.4 per cent and the world economy to grow at 1.9 per cent in 2023.

India's Services Exports to Cross the Goal of 300bn \$ in this Financial Year

- The country's services exports are doing "extremely well" and going by the current trend these outbound shipments would register about 20 per cent growth in this fiscal and cross the USD 300 billion target despite global economic uncertainties, Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal has said.
- He said that on the merchandise front also, exports are so far registering healthy growth despite the world being under recession, huge inflationary pressure, and overstocking of various commodities.
- With all these stress, where every global leader is talking of "very" tough times, India's exports rose 9 per cent year-on-year during April-December 2022-23

India cenbank to guide inflation towards 4% target by 2024

- The Reserve Bank of India's 2023 monetary policy objective is to hold inflation within the mandated tolerance band and guide it towards the medium-term target of 4% by 2024, it said in its monthly bulletin published recently.
- The government has mandated the central bank to keep inflation at 4 per cent with a +/- 2 per cent band.

CSR: Collaboration to Improve Road Safety: SBI General Insurance and Partners Join Forces

- SBI General Insurance, a leading general insurance company in India, has partnered with Doers NGO to support the Himachal Pradesh police in reducing the number of road accidents. As part of its CSR program, SBI General has provided a well-equipped ambulance for immediate medical care for road accident victims in the Mandi district within the crucial "Golden Hour".
- The partnership between SBI General, Doers NGO, the Himachal Pradesh Police, and the Civil Hospital in Sundarnagar aims to provide timely treatment and access to lifesaving medical resources for road accident victims. In addition to this, SBI General has also collaborated with the Himachal Pradesh Police to provide road signages to increase awareness and caution in accident-prone areas on the highway, with the goal of preventing road accidents.
- According to a report by Ministry of Road Transports and Highways Transport Research Wing, road accidents in India kills almost 1.5 lakh people annually. India accounts for almost 11% of the accident-related deaths in the World.

Canara Bank Sells its Stake in Russian JV to SBI for Rs 114 Crore

- Canara Bank said it plans to sell its stake in Russian Joint Venture(JV) Commercial Indo Bank LLC (CIBL) to the other venture partner State Bank of India (SBI) for about Rs 114 crore. CIBL, incorporated in 2003, is a joint venture in Russia between SBI (60 per cent) and Canara Bank (40 per cent).
- Based on the share sale agreement and with the consent of the Central Bank of Russia, the entire shares held by Canara Bank was transferred to SBI on November 30, 2022, said the Bengaluru-headquartered public sector in a regulatory filing. However, consideration (\$14.67 million equivalent) in USD as agreed by the parties is not yet received, the Bank said. The transaction is expected to completed on or before March-end 2023.
- Canara Bank is an Indian public sector bank under the control and ownership of Ministry of Finance, Government of India. Established in 1906 at Mangalore by Ammembal Subba Rao Pai, the bank also has offices in London, Dubai and New York.

Amazon has reclaimed the top spot as the world's most valuable brand

- Billionaire Jeff Bezos's e-commerce company Amazon has become the most valued brand, overtaking Apple, last year's topper. Amazon has reclaimed the top spot as the world's most valuable brand despite its brand value falling 15 per cent this year from \$350.3 billion to \$299.3 billion. According to brand valuation consultancy Brand Finance's report, "Global 500 2023", while Amazon is back at No 1, its brand value has fallen by over \$50 billion this year, with its rating slipping from AAA+ to AAA. This is as consumers evaluate it more harshly in the post-pandemic world.
- iPhone maker Apple slipped to the second slot to be ranked the world's second most valuable brand (brand value down 16% to \$297.5 billion from \$355.1 billion). This year's fall in brand value relates to a fall in forecast revenue with supply chain disruptions and a constrained labour market expected to limit the supply of its marquee hardware products.

Google India pilots 'Soundpod by Google Pay' for UPI payments

- Google is actively working on a Soundbox for the India market, similar to the Paytm or PhonePe ones that you see at your neighbourhood shop which gives a sound alert on the digital payment that has been made. The company has branded them as 'Soundpod by Google Pay' and is currently distributing it as a pilot with some shopkeepers in north India, including Delhi.
- The 'Soundpod by Google Pay' is accompanied by a QR code of a merchant linked with their Google Pay for business account. Users can use any UPI-based app to make a payment by scanning the code.

States' finances are improving; gross fiscal deficit set to fall in 2022-23:RBI

- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) said that the finances of Indian states are projected to improve in 2022-23 with the consolidated gross fiscal deficit to gross domestic product ratio seen falling to 3.4 percent from 4.1 percent for the previous year. The fiscal health of the states has improved from a sharp pandemic-induced deterioration in 2020-21 on the back of a broad-based economic recovery and resulting high revenue collections. During the

pandemic years, states' finances were under pressure due to rising expenditures and limited revenue growth.

- The debt of the States is expected to ease from 31.1 percent of GDP in 2020–21 to 29.5 percent in 2022–23, although it is still more than the 20 percent suggested by the Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management Review Committee in 2018.
- The central bank advised governments to set up a fund for longer-term expenditure when revenue collection is strong.
- It is worthwhile considering creating a capex buffer fund during good times to smoothen and maintain expenditure quality and flows through the economic cycle, the central bank added.
- Despite a significant increase in federal government capital expenditures, which has an impact on economic growth, the report found that state capital spending expanded by just 0.9 percent from April to October of the previous year.

IDBI Strategic Stake Sale: SMBC Bank, Oaktree Capital Management Submit Eols

- Sumitomo Mitsui Banking Corporation Group (SMBC Bank) of Japan and Oaktree Capital Management are among those that have submitted expressions of interest (Eols) for the strategic stake sale in IDBI Bank. Oaktree is a US alternative assets firm founded by Howard Marks, one of the world's most formidable distressed debt investors. The stake being sold is held by the Centre and LIC. "Multiple expressions of interest received for the strategic disinvestment of govt and stake in IDBI Bank," Tuhin Kanta Pandey, secretary, Department of Investment and Public Asset Management (DIPAM), had said. The transaction will now move to the second stage.
- The government and LIC together are looking to sell 60.72% in IDBI Bank and had invited bids from potential buyers last October. The government will offload 30.48 per cent of its stake in the bank and the LIC will sell 30.24 per cent.

India's Wholesale Inflation Declines To 4.95%, Hits Another Low

- In December 2022, the wholesale price-based inflation fell to 4.95 percent, primarily as a result of lower costs for food items and crude oil. Inflation measured by the Wholesale Price Index (WPI) was 5.85% in November 2022 and 14.27% in December 2021.
- In December 2022, the inflation rate for food items was (-)1.25% while it was 18.09% for fuel and electricity.
- According to a statement from the ministry of trade and industry, inflation in manufactured goods was 3.37 percent in the month.
- Declining prices for food items, mineral oils, crude oil, natural gas, textiles, chemicals, and chemical products are the main factors behind the decrease in the inflation rate in December 2022.

PVR-INOX Merger Scheme Gets NCLT Approval

- In a major boost to the film and entertainment industry, PVR-Inox merger has been approved by the National Company Law Tribunal. The NCLT judge has approved the scheme of merger in a verbal order. A written order is likely to be passed in the next 15-20 days. On

March 27, PVR and Inox Leisure announced their merger, which has already been approved by their respective shareholders, creditors as well as leading bourses NSE and BSE.

- The merger of PVR-INOX has been much talked about since 2022. It must be noted that being the country's top multiplexes, both INOX and PVR were also front-running competitors. The two companies' boards — the country's largest multiplex chain operators — approved an all-stock merger to create a film exhibition entity with a network of more than 1,500 screens. The share-swap ratio in the merger stands at three shares of PVR for 10 shares of Inox — which means investors will get three shares of PVR for every 10 INOX shares held.

Centre clears incentives on digital payments across RuPay, BHIM-UPI transactions

- The Union Cabinet has approved the incentive scheme for the promotion of RuPay Debit Cards and low-value BHIM-UPI transactions (person-to-merchant) for the current financial year. The approved incentive scheme for promotion of RuPay Debit Cards and low-value BHIM-UPI transactions (P2M) in FY 2022-23 has a financial outlay of Rs 2,600 crore.
- Under the said scheme, acquiring banks will be provided financial incentive, for promoting Point-of-Sale (PoS) and e-commerce transactions using RuPay Debit Cards and low-value BHIM-UPI transactions (P2M) for the current financial year FY 2022-23.
- In the financial year 2021-22, the government had approved an incentive scheme in compliance with the budget announcement of FY22 to give a further boost to digital transactions.

20% ethanol-blended petrol to debut within days: Oil min Hardeep Singh Puri

- The phased roll-out of E20 (20 per cent ethanol blending in gasoline) will begin on April 1, Petroleum Minister Hardeep Singh Puri has said. The fuel will be available at select outlets and will not require changes to car engines. The proposed roll-out will give further impetus to the government's plans of achieving the level of 20 per cent ethanol blending in the overall petrol supply in the country by ethanol supply year 2025-2026.
- Being rolled out in 11 states/UTs of Delhi, Bihar, Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Punjab, Daman Diu and Dadra & Nagar Haveli, E20's initial target was April 1, 2023, but the government had advanced it. Under phase 1, 15 cities will be covered, the minister said.
- India has increased the ethanol blending in petrol from 1.53 per cent in 2013-14 to 10.17 per cent in 2022. To achieve 20 per cent blending by 2025, the country needs 10.2-11 billion litres of ethanol.

Retail inflation eases to a 12-month low of 5.7% in December

- Retail inflation declined to a one-year low of 5.72 per cent in December 2022, mainly due to softening prices of food items. Also, it was well within the Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) comfort range of 2 per cent-6 per cent for a second month, data released by the Ministry of Statistics & Programme Implementation (MoSPI) showed. The Consumer Price Index (CPI)-based inflation rate eased to 5.72 per cent in December. It was 5.88 per cent in November, and 6.77 per cent in October 2022.

- After remaining above the Reserve Bank of India's upper tolerance threshold of 6 per cent since January 2022, retail inflation declined in November to 5.88 per cent and further in December to 5.72 per cent — its lowest level in one year.
- The marginal dip in inflation was driven by lower food prices, especially vegetables. It may be noted that food inflation for December came in at 4.1 per cent, compared to 4.67 per cent in November. The inflation rate for vegetables saw the biggest contraction at 15.08 per cent. Inflation rate for fuel and light, however, increased mildly to 10.97 per cent against 10.62 per cent in November.

World Bank forecasts India's FY23 GDP at 6.9%; warns of global recession

- India's growth is expected to slow to 6.9 per cent in Financial Year 2023, a 0.6 percentage point decrease since June, as the global economy and rising uncertainty weigh on export and investment growth, according to the World Bank. The World Bank predicted that global growth in 2023 would slow to 1.7 per cent from the 3 per cent expected six months ago, citing elevated inflation, higher interest rates, reduced investment and disruptions caused by Russia's invasion of Ukraine.
- Growth in India is expected to slow from 8.7 per cent in FY 2021-22 to 6.9 per cent in FY2022-23, with the latter revised 0.6 percentage points lower since June. The global economic slowdown and rising uncertainty will weigh on export and investment growth.
- Growth is expected to slow to 6.6 per cent in FY2023-24 before returning to its potential rate of just above 6 per cent. India is predicted to have the fastest growing economy among the seven largest developing economies (EMDEs).

Axis Bank signs up with IISc to set up math and computing centre

- Axis Bank has signed an agreement with the Indian Institute of Science (IISc), Bengaluru, to establish a Centre for Mathematics and Computing at the institute. The Axis Bank Centre for Mathematics and Computing is India's first comprehensive Academic Research Centre on Mathematics and Computing. It will play a vital role in building the nation's future as many contemporary and futuristic areas such as Artificial Intelligence and Data Science rely on the foundations of mathematics and computing.
- Spread over 1.6 lakh square feet of space, the Centre will have state-of-the-art labs and programmes that will benefit faculty and students from more than twenty departments of IISc. The Centre will host the new IISc B.Tech programme in Mathematics & Computing and the ongoing Interdisciplinary PhD programme in Mathematical Sciences. It is expected that over 500 engineers and scientists will benefit from the Centre every year.
- Mathematics and Computing are at the core of critical disciplines like Computational Fluid Dynamics, Computational Biology, Quantum Computing, Precision Medicine, Digital Health, Climate Science, Materials Genomics, Cybersecurity, AI, ML, and Data Science.

BharatPe receives in-principle nod from RBI for online payment aggregator

- Fintech platform BharatPe said it has received in-principle authorisation from the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) to operate as an online payment aggregator (PA). The company said that an in-principle nod was awarded to Resilient Payments Private Ltd, a 100 percent subsidiary of Resilient Innovations Private Ltd (BharatPe).

- RBI's nod comes amid a slew of high profile exits the Sequoia Capital and Tiger Global-backed firm, which has been battling controversies since last year. It is currently fighting a court battle with its former co-founder Ashneer Grover alleging financial misappropriation. Grover was ousted last year in March.
- Payment aggregators are entities that facilitate e-commerce sites and merchants to accept various payment instruments from the customers. The merchants do not need to create a separate payment integration system of their own.
- The payment aggregator framework, introduced formally in March 2020, mandates that only firms approved by the RBI can acquire and offer payment services to merchants. RBI has been strict in its evaluation of entities that have applied for the payment aggregator licence.

RBI issues list of six raters to assess banks' Basel-III capital regulations

- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) issued the list of six credit rating agencies that banks can use for the purpose of risk weighting banks' claims for capital adequacy purposes. The six credit rating agencies are Acuite Ratings & Research Limited, Credit Analysis and Research Limited (CARE), CRISIL Ratings Limited, ICRA Limited, India Ratings and Research Private Limited (India Ratings) and INFOMERICS Valuation and Rating Pvt Ltd. Banks have to get ratings from these agencies to comply with Basel-III capital regulations.
- The RBI said no fresh ratings shall be obtained from Brickwork Ratings India Private Limited. In October last year, the Securities and Exchange Board of India has cancelled the Certificate of Registration (CoR) granted to Brickwork Ratings India Private Limited as a Credit Rating Agency (CRA) and directed it to wind down its operations within a period of six months.

RBI: Some Lenders still Continuing with Libor Contracts

- With the end near for the London Interbank Offered Rate (Libor), the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) told banks and other financial institutions to stop using the benchmark as soon as possible and mandatorily by December 31 and move to any Alternative Reference Rates (ARR). Secured Overnight Financing Rate (SOFR) and Sterling Overnight Interbank Average Rate (SONIA) are the two popular alternatives, but are nowhere near as popular internationally as Libor, which is being phased out by this year's end.
- Libor had to be scrapped after a rate fixing scandal was unearthed a few years back. In August 2020, the RBI had advised banks to move away from Libor.
- Almost all banks that deal in foreign exchange by now are ready with the transition to ARR, but they have not yet decided which one will be the most reliable ARR.
- With the demise of Libor, the popular Indian benchmark Mumbai Interbank Forward Outright Rate (MIFOR), which uses Libor as a benchmark, has to be scrapped too.

Forex reserves rise \$44 million to \$562.9 billion as of Dec 30

- India's foreign exchange reserves fell by \$70.1 billion in 2022, data released by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) shows. The forex reserves stood at \$562.9 billion in the week ended December 30. The decline in the forex reserves is partly due to the RBI intervention in the currency markets to stave off volatility and partly on account of depreciation of other major currencies held by the central bank. The RBI net sold \$33.42 billion till September, Union

finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman said. The RBI holds major currencies including pound sterling, yen and euro in its reserves, which are expressed in US dollar terms.

RBI to issue green bonds in two tranches of ₹8000 cr. each

- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) will auction ₹16,000 crore of sovereign green bonds (SGrBs) in two tranches. The RBI will auction 5-year and 10-year green bonds worth ₹4,000 crore each on 25 January and on 9 February, and this would be a uniform price auction.
- The proceeds will be deployed in public sector projects, which help in reducing the carbon intensity of the economy. As announced in the Union Budget 2022-23, the central government as part of its overall market borrowings will be issuing Sovereign Green Bonds for mobilising resources for green infrastructure.
- Green bonds are issued by companies, countries and multilateral organisations to exclusively fund projects that have positive environmental or climate benefits and provide investors with fixed income payments.
- Proceeds from these bonds are earmarked for green projects. This is unlike standard bonds, the proceeds of which can be utilised for various purposes at the discretion of the issuer.

ICICI Prudential Life Insurance ropes in Suryakumar Yadav for new campaign

- ICICI Prudential Life Insurance has announced the launch of its '360° Financial Protection with ICICI Prudential Life Insurance' digital-first campaign featuring cricketer Suryakumar Yadav. According to the company, Yadav has emerged as a consistent and dependable batter in the white ball format since his international debut. The campaign's central message is how ICICI Prudential Life Insurance offers a comprehensive suite of protection products providing all-around life cover that offers 360-degree financial protection in any critical situation.
- Since his international debut, Suryakumar Yadav has quickly risen to emerge as one of the most consistent and dependable batters in the white ball format. The multi-dimensional batter is popularly known as "Mr. 360 degree" for his wide array of shots covering every inch of the field.

Equitas Small Finance Bank surges 7% to hit 52-week high after RBI's nod to stake acquisition

- The Reserve Bank of India gave its approval to SBI Funds Management Ltd to acquire up to 9.99% stake in Equitas Small Finance Bank through the schemes of SBI Mutual Fund, the bank said in an exchange filing. Franklin Templeton Mutual Fund and DSP Mutual Fund have also received RBI's approval to buy 9.99% stake each in the bank.
- Shares of Equitas Small Finance Bank witnessed a surge in buying activity, with the stock price rising as much as 7% to hit a fresh record high, in an otherwise weak broader market. The share price of the private lender got a boost after the Reserve Bank India (RBI) gave nod to SBI Funds Management Limited (SBIFML) to acquire shares in the bank.
- The aforesaid approval by RBI is subject to compliance with the relevant provisions of Banking Regulation Act, 1949, Master Direction on Prior Approval for Acquisition of shares or voting rights in Private Sector Banks dated November 19, 2015 and Master Direction on Ownership in Private sector Banks dated May 12, 2016, issued by RBI.

Zerodha-backed fintech receives debt broker license from Sebi

- Zerodha-backed GoldenPi Technologies has become the first online bond platform provider to receive a debt brokerage license from market regulator Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi). The Bengaluru-based fintech firm expects this development to spur greater trust in online bonds and debentures investment space.
- The regulator introduced regulations for online debt trading platforms which stated that no company or individual shall act as an online bond platform provider without the certificate of registration as a stock broker under the SEBI Regulations, 2021.
- The awarding of the license by Sebi to GoldenPi is expected to work as a catalyst for greater investor trust in the online bonds and debentures investment space, the company said in a release.
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Axis Bank and fintech company, OPEN join hands to launch a digital current account for businesses

- Axis Bank has partnered with OPEN to provide a fully native digital current account journey for its customers including SMEs (small and medium enterprises), freelancers, homepreneurs, influencers and more. This has been the bank's first-ever partnership with a fintech player to launch a fully digital current account. Using this account, customers can avail 250+ banking services and claim up to 50 per cent cashback through grab-deals. With this partnership, all existing Axis bank account holders also get access to OPEN's all-in-one digital banking platform that is used by over 30 lakh businesses currently.
- The partnership is aiming to offer access to Axis Bank's holistic banking services coupled with OPEN's end-to-end financial automation tools for business management like payments, accounting, payroll, compliance, expense management and several other services to a larger business community.

Indian GDP pegged to grow at 7% in FY23: NSOs advance estimates

- India's economy is expected to grow 7.0% in the current financial year, according to the first advance estimates by the National Statistical Office (NSO). New Delhi had pegged India's growth at 8.7% in the last fiscal year that ended March 31, 2022.
- Earlier last month, the Reserve Bank of India had lowered the country's GDP (gross domestic product) growth forecast to 6.8 per cent for the current fiscal from 7 per cent earlier, on account of continued geopolitical tensions and tightening of global financial conditions.
- The RBI had projected the real GDP growth for 2022-23 at 6.8 per cent, with the third quarter at 4.4 per cent and the fourth at 4.2 per cent. It had pared the growth projection for 2022-23 for the third time in December 2022.

In the January 2023 round, RBI Survey for Price Movements, Inflation Assessment Launched

- The Reserve Bank of India has launched the Inflation Expectations Survey of Households (IESH) which will provide useful inputs for monetary policy. In the January 2023 round, the

survey will be conducted across 19 cities. It aims to capture subjective assessments of price movements and inflation, based on individual consumption baskets.

- The survey will be conducted in Ahmedabad, Bengaluru, Bhopal, Bhubaneswar, Chandigarh, Chennai, Delhi, Guwahati, Hyderabad, Jaipur, Jammu, Kolkata, Lucknow, Mumbai, Nagpur, Patna, Raipur, Ranchi and Thiruvananthapuram.
- The agency — Hansa Research Group, Mumbai — has been engaged to conduct the survey of this round on behalf of the ventral bank.
- The selected households will be approached by the agency and they will be requested to provide their response. Other individuals, who are not approached by the agency, can also participate in this survey by providing their responses using the linked survey schedule.

India aims for \$17 bln cut in food, fertiliser subsidies in 2023/24

- India aims to cut spending on food and fertiliser subsidies to 3.7 trillion rupees (\$44.6 billion) in the fiscal year from April, down 26% from this, to rein in a fiscal deficit that ballooned during the COVID-19 pandemic. Spending on fertiliser subsidies will likely fall to about Rs 1.4 lakh crore. That compares with nearly Rs 2.3 lakh crore this year.
- Food and fertiliser subsidies alone account for about one-eighth of India's total budgetary spending of ₹39.45 trillion this fiscal year, but reducing these subsidies could be politically sensitive given the impending elections.
- The government anticipates allocating roughly 2.3 trillion for food subsidies in the upcoming fiscal year as opposed to 2.7 trillion for the year that has just ended on March 31.
- The amount spent on fertiliser subsidies will probably decrease to roughly 1.4 trillion in contrasts to 2.3 trillion this year.

Cabinet approves National Green Hydrogen Mission

- The Union Cabinet approved an initial outlay of Rs 19,744 crore for the National Green Hydrogen Mission. Addressing the nation on its 75th Independence Day in 2021, Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched a national mission for green fuels in line with the Centre's stated target of making India energy-independent before completing 100 years of Independence. The mission will have four components that aim at enhancing domestic production of green hydrogen and promote the manufacturing of electrolyzers — a key constituent for making green hydrogen.
- The initial outlay for the mission will include Rs 17,490 crore for strategic interventions for green hydrogen transition (SIGHT) programme, Rs 1,466 crore for pilot projects, Rs 400 crore for research and development (R&D), and Rs 388 crore towards other mission components.
- The initial target is to produce 5 million tonnes (mt) of green hydrogen annually. It will include two financial incentive mechanisms for the domestic manufacturing of electrolyzers and the production of green hydrogen.
- The mission will also support pilot projects in emerging end-use sectors and the production pathways. Regions capable of supporting large-scale production and/or utilisation of hydrogen will be identified and developed as green hydrogen hubs.
- Microsoft Cloud. HDFC Bank as a part of its Future Ready strategy is developing in house IPs as well as partnering with several companies including FinTechs' to co -create technology

IPs. HDFC Bank as a part of its Future Ready strategy is developing in house IPs as well as partnering with several companies including FinTechs' to co -create technology IPs.

- The bank will leverage Microsoft Azure to consolidate and modernize its enterprise data landscape through a Federated Data Lake to scale its information management capabilities across enterprise reporting, and advanced analytics using artificial intelligence.

Election Commission's 'Mission-929' to take voter turnout in Tripura to over 90%

- The Election Commission (EC) is focusing on 929 polling booths across Tripura, setting a target of 92 per cent voter turnout in the assembly elections due early this year. These booths recorded a voter turnout of less than 89 per cent, which was the average across 3,328 booths in the 2018 assembly polls. The EC is also working on 'Mission Zero Poll Violence' to make the assembly elections peaceful.
- According to the ECI, these booths recorded a voter turnout of less than 89 percent in the 2018 assembly polls. Except for these booths almost all the booths in the state recorded a voter turnout of 91 % or more .The voter turnout was 89.5% in the 2018 Tripura assembly election.
- The Election commission plans to launch an awareness campaign, poll officials will visit senior citizens and persons with disability, and appeal to them to cast their votes.
- The ECI will make requisite arrangements such as ramps, wheelchairs and separate queues will be arranged at every polling station to felicitate senior citizens and persons with disability. This will also ensure that voters can cast their votes peacefully in the assembly election to be held in 2023.

India's unemployment rate rises to 8.30% in December, highest in 16 months: Report

- Unemployment rate in India rose to 8.30 per cent in December 2022, the highest in 16 months, according to data from Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy (CMIE). It was 8 per cent in the month of November. While urban unemployment rose to 10.09 per cent in December, from 8.96 per cent in November, rural unemployment moved to 7.44% from 7.55%, the data revealed.
- The urban unemployment rate rose to 10.09% in December from 8.96% in the previous month, while the rural unemployment rate slipped to 7.44% from 7.55%.
- The rise was "not as bad as it may seem," as there was a simultaneous increase in the labour participation rate, which rose to 40.48 per cent in December, the highest in 12 months.
- Most importantly, the employment rate has increased in December to 37.1%, which again is the highest since January 2022.
- The unemployment rate had declined to 7.2% in the July-September quarter compared to 7.6% in the previous quarter, according to separate quarterly data compiled by state run National Statistical Office (NSO) and released in November.

Overseas financial assets of Indian residents declined by USD 43.9 bn during Jul-Sep 2022: RBI

- India's international financial assets declined by \$56.5 billion during July-September 2022 with valuation losses accounting for a major part. Reserve assets remained the dominant component (62.9% share) of India's international financial assets. The net claims of non-

residents on India increased by \$34.3 billion during Q2 of FY23 and stood at \$389.6 billion in September.

- The fall in India's foreign liabilities during Q2 was attributed primarily to direct investment (net) outflows.
- Portfolio and other investments also recorded marginal decline on a net basis, barring trade credit which increased by \$5.1 billion.
- Variation in the exchange rate of rupee vis-a-vis other currencies also impacted the change in liabilities, when valued in U.S. dollar terms.
- Debt and non-debt liabilities continued to have equal share in total external liabilities. The ratio of international assets to international liabilities moderated to 68.5% in September from 71.5% a quarter ago.

UPI Transactions Rise Over 7.82 Billion in December 2022. Here's How UPI Has Grown Over The Years

- India's Unified Payments Interface (UPI) processed a record 7.82 billion transactions in December, worth a total of INR 12.82tn (\$174.6bn). This represents an increase of 7.12% in volume and 7.73% in value compared to November. On a year-on-year basis, volume and value increased by 71% and 55% respectively.
- In 2022, UPI processed over 74 billion transactions worth INR 125.94tn. In 2021, it processed 38 billion transactions worth INR 71.54tn.
- This represents a YoY increase of 90% in volume and 76% in value.
- UPI reached 1 billion transactions in October 2019, 2 billion in October 2020, and 3 billion in January 2021.

SBI, ICICI, HDFC Bank remain systemically important banks: RBI

- The Reserve Bank of India said SBI, ICICI Bank, HDFC Bank remain domestic systemically important banks (D-SIBs). D-SIBs are those interconnected entities whose failure can impact the whole of the financial system and create instability. In addition to the usual capital conservation buffer, D-SIBs will need to maintain additional Common Equity Tier 1 (CET1). As per the RBI's latest press release, SBI will have to maintain an additional 0.6 per cent CET1 as a percentage of its risk-weighted assets. Similarly, ICICI Bank and HDFC Bank need to maintain additional 0.2 per cent each.
- The additional CET1 required for D-SIBs was phased-in from April 1, 2016 and became fully effective from April 1, 2019. The additional CET1 requirement will be in addition to the capital conservation buffer.
- The Reserve Bank had issued the framework for dealing with D-SIBs on July 22, 2014. The D-SIB framework requires the Reserve Bank to disclose the names of banks designated as D-SIBs starting from 2015 and place these banks in appropriate buckets depending upon their Systemic Importance Scores (SISs). Based on the bucket in which a D-SIB is placed, an additional common equity requirement has to be applied to it.

Coffee exports up nearly 2% to 4 lakh tonne in 2022

- Coffee shipments from India, Asia's third-largest producer and exporter, rose 1.66 per cent to 4 lakh tonne in 2022 on rise in instant coffee exports and re-exports. Exports stood at

3.93 lakh tonne in 2021. In value terms, coffee export was higher at Rs 8,762.47 crore in 2022 as against Rs 6,984.67 crore in the previous year. India ships both Robusta and Arabica varieties, besides instant coffee.

- According to the Board's latest data, shipment of Robusta coffee declined marginally to 2,20,974 tonne in 2022 from 2,20,997 tonne in the previous year.
- Similarly, export of Arabica fell 11.43 per cent to 44,542 tonne from 50,292 tonne. However, export of instant coffee increased 16.73 per cent to 35,810 tonne in 2022 from 29,819 tonne in the previous year. About 99,513 tonne of coffee was re-exported in 2022, higher than 92,235 tonne in the previous year.

RBI launches Utkarsh 2.0 for the Period 2023-2025

- The Reserve Bank of India's Medium-term Strategy Framework for the period 2023-2025 – 'Utkarsh 2.0' – was launched by Shri Shaktikanta Das, Governor, RBI. The first strategy framework (Utkarsh 2022) covering the period 2019-2022 was launched in July 2019. It became a medium-term strategy document guiding the Bank's progress towards realisation of the identified milestones. Utkarsh 2.0 would allow the central bank to both react and act proactively to confront socio-economic challenges.
- Utkarsh 2.0 harnesses the strengths of Utkarsh 2022 by retaining the six Vision statements as well as Core Purpose, Values, and Mission statement. Collectively, they create a strategic guiding path.
- The desired outputs are proposed to be realised in terms of strategies calibrated through milestones. The Reserve Bank of India attaches high importance to its medium-term strategy and monitors its implementation and progress through a Sub-committee of its Central Board.

Gross GST collection in Dec up 15% to Rs 1.49L cr

- According to a government announcement, India's goods and services tax receipts increased 15% year over year in December to Rs 1.49 lakh crore (\$18.07 billion), suggesting robust economic activity throughout the holiday season. In November, revenue from goods and services taxes totaled Rs. 1.46 lakh crore.
- The total amount of GST revenue collected in December 2022 was Rs 1,49,507 crore, of which the CGST portion was Rs 26,711 crore, the SGST portion was Rs 33,357 crore, the IGST portion was Rs 78,434 crore (including Rs 40,263 crore from the collection of GST on goods imported), and the Cess portion was Rs 11,005 crore (including Rs 850 crore collected on import of goods).
- The government made a regular settlement of Rs 36,669 crore to CGST and Rs 31,094 crore to SGST from IGST.
- After monthly payments in the month of December 2022, the combined income for the Centre and the States is Rs 63,380 crore for the CGST and Rs 64,451 crore for the SGST.

SBI Card collaborates with Punjab & Sind Bank to launch co-brand credit cards

- Public sector bank Punjab and Sind Bank (PSB) has partnered with SBI Card to launch co-brand credit cards for the bank's customers. PSB has also entered the credit card market as a new product segment in its portfolio as a result of this collaboration. Three card variants—

the PSB SBI Card ELITE, PSB SBI Card PRIME, and PSB SimplySAVE SBI Card—have been launched by both partners. This collaboration also marks the entry of PSB into ‘credit cards’ as a new product segment under the bank’s portfolio.

- The joining price for the PSB SBI Card ELITE is Rs 4,999 plus taxes, the PSB SBI Card PRIME is Rs 2,999 plus taxes, and the PSB SimplySAVE SBI Card is Rs 499 plus taxes. The PSB SBI Cards ELITE and PRIME will be offered on the VISA platform, while the PSB SimplySAVE SBI Card will be offered on the RuPay network.

