

Weekly Current Affairs PDF December 24 to December 30, 2023

Current Affairs PDF- December 30, 2023

INTERNATIONAL

Argentina Rejects BRICS Membership under President Javier Milei

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

About BRICS:

Founded: 16 June 2009

Founders: Russia, China, India, Brazil

NATIONAL

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

- Lt. Governor Shri Manoj Sinha of the Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir unveiled the commemorative plaque, officially inaugurating the Composite Regional Centre (CRC) for Skill Development, Rehabilitation & Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (Divyangjan) in Samba – Jammu.

Government Modifies Interest Rates on Small Savings Schemes

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

Gujarat to Unveil India's First Submarine Tourism in Dwarka

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

About Gujarat:

Capital: Gandhinagar

Chief Minister: Bhupendrabhai Patel

Governor: Acharya Devvrat

ULFA Peace Accord Marks Historic Day for Assam: Amit Shah

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

About Assam:

Chief Minister: Himanta Biswa Sarma

Governor: Gulab Chand Kataria

Founded: 15 August 1947

Capital: Dispur

Kerala CM Unveils Board for Transparent PSU Hiring

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

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

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

About Gujarat:

Capital: Gandhinagar

Chief Minister: Bhupendrabhai Patel

Governor: Acharya Devvrat

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

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

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

APPOINTMENTS & RESIGNATIONS

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

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

BOOKS & AUTHOR

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

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

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INTERNATIONAL

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

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

NATIONAL

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

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

Jammu and Kashmir Panchayati Raj Act Amended to Incorporate OBC Reservation

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

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

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

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

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

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

About ISRO:

Headquarters: Bengaluru

Founder: Vikram Sarabhai

Founded: 15 August 1969

OBITUARY

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

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

About European Union:

Founded: 1 November 1993, Maastricht, Netherlands

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

Wolfgang Schaeuble, German Political Giant, Passes Away At 81

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

APPOINTMENTS & RESIGNATIONS

Nina Singh First Woman CISF Chief Rahul Rasgotra ITBP Chief

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

AWARDS & RECOGNITION

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

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

BANKING AND ECONOMY

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

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

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INTERNATIONAL

Pakistan Successfully Tests Advanced Rocket System Fatah-II

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

About Pakistan:

President: Arif Alvi

Capital: Islamabad

NATIONAL

Union Minister Anurag Singh Thakur Initiated 'MY Bharat' Campaign

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

IOA Forms Ad Hoc Committee to Govern Suspended WFI

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

About Hoc:

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

About IOA:

President: P. T. Usha

Founded: 1927

Headquarters: New Delhi

Founders: Harry Buck, Arthur Noehren

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

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

Incident of Ammonia Gas Leakage Reported In Ennore Region, Chennai

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

About Tamil Nadu:

Founded: 1773

Chief Minister: M. K. Stalin

Governor: R. N. Ravi

Capital: Chennai

SPORTS

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

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

About NADA:

Headquarters: New Delhi

Founded: 24 November 2005

Chairman: Minister of Sports (India)

OBITUARY

Tamil Superstar and Politician Vijayakanth Passes Away at 71

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

BANKING AND ECONOMY

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

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

About Centre for Economics and Business Research (Cebr):

Founded: 1992

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

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

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

About Bank of Baroda:

Founder: Sayajirao Gaekwad III

Founded: 20 July 1908, Vadodara

Headquarters: Alkapuri, Vadodara

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

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

About International Cricket Council (ICC):

Headquarters: Dubai, United Arab Emirates

Founded: 15 June 1909

CEO: Geoff Allardice

Chairman: Greg Barclay

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INTERNATIONAL

Israel-affiliated merchant vessel hit by aerial vehicle off India

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

NATIONAL

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

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

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh to visit Rajouri on December 27

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

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

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

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

SPORTS

Warner picks Marcus Harris as his Test replacement

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

OBITUARY

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

- Warren Johnston, a veteran newsman, who put in tours of duty in six cities over four decades died on December 9 at the Dartmouth Hitchcock Medical Center in Lebanon, NH. He was 77. The cause was complications of cardiac surgery.
- Mr. Johnston got his start in the news business in coastal SC, first as a reporter at The Georgetown Times and then as editor of a monthly literary magazine, the Pawleys Island Perspective.
- In a long and prolific career that followed, he had stints as the editor of The Natchez Democrat, as Bureau Chief at The Tampa Tribune, as an editor at the Las Vegas Sun and as editor, reporter, and columnist at the Valley News in NH. Low key and gentle, but with high standards, he was an unflappable journalist, described by his co-worker, Mark Davis as a "true Southern gentleman" who epitomized the very best traits of the expression - soft spoken and slow to anger. Long-time food writer and restaurant critic at The Tampa Tribune, Mary Scourtes remembers him as an "authoritative editor who knew how to weigh a situation critically, while helping a reporter craft a story in the best possible light."

APPOINTMENTS & RESIGNATIONS

IPS officer resigns to pursue social and personal goals

- Anand Mishra, the IPS officer from Assam-Meghalaya cadre batch of 2011, who began his uniformed career in the Garo Hills, taking on the might of the then most powerful militant outfit Garo National Liberation Army in the jungles of East and south Garo Hills, has finally called it a day.

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

IMPORTANT DAYS

27 December: International Day of Epidemic Preparedness

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

AWARDS & RECOGNITION

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

- At a glittery function in Mumbai, Kohinoor Group was crowned as The Best Brands of 2023, a testament to its outstanding position amidst a competitive field of hundreds of national brands.
- Mr. R. Gopalakrishnan, the Independent Director and Non-Executive Chairman of Castrol India, presented the awards to the winners. The Kohinoor Group was represented by Mr. Sameer Desai, Director of Marketing, Mr. Prasanth Gopinath, Director of Commercial BU, and Mr. Raghu Iyer, Director of Residential BU, who accepted the award on behalf of the group and expressed their gratitude.
- With a rich legacy of 40 years, Kohinoor Group has not only redefined excellence in Pune's real estate sector but has also undertaken visionary steps to adapt to the evolving industry landscape.

- Under the visionary leadership of Mr. Krishnakumar Goyal, Founder and Chairman of Kohinoor Group, the company has successfully transformed from a family-run entity to a professionally managed organization. This evolution is marked by the establishment of a professional board of experts in Commercial Real Estate, Residential Real Estate, Marketing & Branding, Finance, Strategy, and HR. These experts contribute their insights and expertise to propel Kohinoor Group's success to new heights.

BANKING AND ECONOMY

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

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

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

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

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NATIONAL

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

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

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

- If you have spent time in Bengaluru, you may be familiar with the daily challenges of booking online rides, whether it's Ola, Uber, Namma Yatri, or Rapido.

- Navigating through normal autorickshaw fares and traffic management can often be a struggle, causing people to miss exams, meetings, flights, or trains due to pricing and congestion.
- In a 'Peak Bengaluru' moment shared by X user Shruti, @Shruwa12, she recounted an intriguing encounter with her Rapido driver. Shruti said the driver told her he was a corporate manager at a major company.

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

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

SPORTS

Andhra Pradesh CM Kicks Off State-Wide Sports Competition

- According to PTI, Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy on Tuesday kicked off 'Aadudam Andhra', a multi-sport competition that will be held right from the grassroots to the state level in the Guntur district of Andhra Pradesh.
- Starting today, the 47-day competition is scheduled till February 10 at Nallapadu village in the district and will encourage and identify talent in cricket, volleyball, badminton and other sports.

OBITUARY

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

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

APPOINTMENTS & RESIGNATIONS

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

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

IMPORTANT DAYS

26 December: Veer Bal Diwas

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

26 December: Boxing Day

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

AWARDS & RECOGNITION

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

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

BANKING AND ECONOMY

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

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

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

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

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NATIONAL

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

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

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

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

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

- In a major success for its in-house design and development efforts, the Indian Air Force has successfully testfired its SAMAR air defense missile system. The IAF has developed the Surface to Air Missile for Assured Retaliation (SAMAR) air defense missile system by using its old Russian-origin air-to-air missile systems.

SPORTS

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

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

OBITUARY

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

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

APPOINTMENTS & RESIGNATIONS

SEBI approves Pramod Agrawal's appointment as BSE Chairman

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

IMPORTANT DAYS

25 December - Christmas Day

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

25 December - Good Governance Day (India)

- Good Governance Day in India is observed on 25 December to commemorate the birth anniversary of Atal Bihari Vajpayee.

- His Samadhi namely 'Sadiav Atal' was dedicated to the nation and reflects his personality as a poet, humanist, statesman, and a great leader.

AWARDS & RECOGNITION

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

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

BANKING AND ECONOMY

MOCI Minister Piyush Goyal releases 5th LEADS Survey Report:

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

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

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

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NATIONAL

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

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

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

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

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

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

SPORTS

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

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

OBITURY

Stand-up comedian Neel Nanda dies at 32

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

APPOINTMENTS & RESIGNATIONS

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

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

IMPORTANT DAYS

National Consumer Rights Day – 24th December

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

AWARDS & RECOGNITION

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

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

BANKING AND ECONOMY

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

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