

Weekly Current Affairs PDF DECEMBER 18 to DECEMBER 24, 2022

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NATIONAL

UP's Sania Mirza clears NDA, set to become country's first Muslim woman fighter pilot

- Sania Mirza, a Mirzapur resident and the daughter of a TV mechanic, successfully passed the National Defense Academy admission examination (NDA). Sania Mirza is from the Jasovar village, which is within the jurisdiction of the Mirzapur Dehat Kotwali Police Station.
- Sania Mirza was born in the Jasovar hamlet under the Mirzapur Dehat Kotwali Police Station.
- Sania Mirza aspires to be a fighter pilot like Avni Chaturvedi, the nation's first female fighter pilot.
- She will join NDA Khadakwasla in Pune on December 27. Both Sania's parents and the villagers are pleased with her.

SPORTS

English all-rounder Sam Curran becomes most expensive IPL player ever, breaks Ishan Kishan's record

- Sam Curran breaks all the records and became the most expensive cricketer ever to be bought by any franchise of the Indian Premier League (IPL). Sam Curran is a 24-year-old English Cricketer who was bought by Punjab Kings on the first day of the IPL auction for ₹18.5 crores. The IPL auctions for the 2023 season are being held in Kerala.
- Sam Curran has broken the record of Ishan Kishan who was bought for ₹15.25 crore by Mumbai Indians.
- Punjab Kings Director Ness Wadia said that Same Curran is one of the best all-rounder players in the world and will bring good balance to our team.
- Other than Sam Curran, Cameron Green was bought by Mumbai Indians for ₹17.50 crore and Ben Stokes was bought by Chennai Super Kings for ₹16.25 crore.

OBITURY

Veteran Telugu actor Kaikala Satyanarayana passes away

- Veteran Telugu actor Kaikala Satyanarayana has died at his Filmnagar residence in the wee hours of Friday. He was 87. The last rites will be performed on Saturday in Hyderabad's Mahaprasthanam.
- Kaikala was admitted to the hospital in November 2021. Before that, he was on respiratory support at home following post-Covid complications. He was also admitted in October 2021, after a fall at his residence.
- Fondly known as Navarasa Natana Sarvabhooma, Kaikala was born on 25th July 1935 in the Krishna district of Andhra Pradesh. He starred in more than 770 films and has worked with over 200 directors.

IMPORTANT DAYS

National Consumer Rights Day 2022: History, Significance and More

- Every year on December 24, India observed the National Consumer Day or Bharatiya Grahak Diwas. This day is used to make all consumers aware of their powers and rights. This day was made under the Consumer Protection Act, which came to power in 1986 to create awareness and save consumers from market exploitation like defective products or expensive pricing.
- The significance of Bharatiya Grahak Diwas 2022 revolves around giving a wholesome shopping experience to consumers. They are provided protection against unfair trade practices like fake advertisements, false gift offers, and hoardings, among others. Owing to an effective complaint redressal forum, the Consumer Protection Act assures that there is an efficient settlement of consumer disputes. The act also brought changes in the process of how consumer complaints were dealt.
- World Consumer Rights Day is celebrated on March 15 every year. The day marks an opportunity to urge that all consumers' rights be recognised and safeguarded, as well as to protest market abuses and social injustices that jeopardise those rights.

AWARDS & RECOGNITION

The Last Show And RRR's Naatu Naatu Make It To Shortlist: Oscars 2023

- The Gujarati-language Chhello Show (The Last Show), which is India's official entry for the 2023 Academy Awards or Oscars awards in the International Feature film category, has been shortlisted for next year's Academy Awards. Meanwhile, the track Naatu Naatu from SS Rajamouli's RRR has been shortlisted in the Best Original Song Category. The Academy announced the list of shortlisted entries in 10 categories. The nominations for the Academy Awards will be announced on January 24.
- India's history with the Oscar entries for the last few years were – Koozhangal, Jallikattu, Gully Boy, Village Rockstars, Newton, Visaranani, all of which have failed to make the Oscar shortlist. The only Indian films to have been nominated for an Oscar so far have been Mother India, Salaam Bombay and Lagaan.
- As far as RRR's best song category is concerned, 15 songs have been shortlisted from among 81 tunes. Other songs include 'Nothing Is Lost' from 'Avatar: The way Of Water', 'Lift Me Up' from 'Blank Panther: Wakanda Forever', 'Hold My Hand' from 'Top Gun: Maverick' among others.

UIDAI bags top data security award for best practices in govt sector

- Data Security Council of India (DSCI), a not-for-profit, industry body on data protection in India, setup by NASSCOM awarded UIDAI for its significant role in securing national critical 'Aadhaar' infrastructure that provides digital identity based welfare services to residents.
- The jury recognized the forward looking security strategy, good security practices for safeguarding residents' demographic and biometric data and the proactive approach in addressing new age cyber security risks and threats through effective and efficient security governance and state of art security infrastructure deployment.
- This award is another feather in the cap for UIDAI, which takes pride to be the first Government Organization to be Privacy Certified on leading industry standard (ISO27701) and one of the leading government institutions that is ahead in innovation and incubation of indigenized technology implementation.

- The award was given in the just concluded three day 'Annual Information Security Summit (AISS)' of DSCI in New Delhi. Among over 270 nominations across five award categories, UIDAI was awarded by DCSI jury panel for 'Best Security Practices in Government Sector'.

The Rabindranath Tagore Literary Prize 2021-22 jointly won by Sudeep Sen and Shobhana Kumar

- The Rabindranath Tagore Literary Prize has been jointly won by Sudeep Sen for his genre and formbender Anthropocene: Climate Change, Contagion, Consolation (Pippa Rann Books & Media, 2021) and Shobhana Kumar for her haibun collection A Sky Full of Bucket Lists (Red River, 2021). The winners, awarded \$10,000 and a Rabindranath Tagore statuette, were picked from a shortlist of 11 at India International Centre, with the Tagore Prize for social achievement going to Sanjoy K Roy, producer of the Jaipur Literature Festival.
- The Rabindranath Tagore Literary Prize was started in 2018 to annually recognise literary and social accomplishments. In 2020, the award was won by Raj Kamal Jha, Chief Editor, The Indian Express, for The City and The Sea (2019, Penguin Books), and in 2019, it was awarded posthumously to Kabir for One Hundred Poems of Kabir, translated by Rabindranath Tagore.

NHPC wins 'Best Globally Competitive Power Company of India – Hydropower and Renewable Energy Sector' at PRAKASHmay '15th Enertia Awards 2022'

- NHPC Limited has been awarded as Winner of 'Best Globally Competitive Power Company of India – Hydropower and Renewable Energy Sector' at PRAKASHmay '15th Enertia Awards 2022'. Shri U.S. Sahi, Executive Director (EMS/CC/CSR), NHPC received the award on behalf of NHPC at a glittering function held at New Delhi Institute of Management, New Delhi on 22nd December 2022.
- The Award has been conferred to NHPC in recognition of its leadership in the hydropower sector with a gross asset class renewable energy capacity of more than 7000 MW. The award also recognizes that NHPC has more than 5000 MW of projects under construction and an ambitious 7000 MW plus plan for Solar capacity addition. The award was given by Shri V.M. Bansal, Chairman, New Delhi Institute of Management. During the event Shri K. Vijayanand, Special Chief Secretary, Energy, Government of Andhra Pradesh and Shri A.K. Singh, former CMD, NHPC were also present.

BANKING AND ECONOMY

Jio deposits Rs 3,720 cr in SBI escrow account to acquire Reliance Infratel

- Reliance Projects and Property Management Services — a subsidiary of telecom major Reliance Jio — has deposited Rs 3,720 crore in an SBI escrow account to acquire mobile tower and fibre assets of Reliance Infratel. Reliance Infratel has fibre assets of about 178,000 route kilometres and 43,540 mobile towers across the country. The National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) gave an approval to Jio for the acquisition of Reliance Infratel (RITL).
- The Mukesh Ambani-led Reliance Jio had placed a bid of Rs 3,720 crore in November 2019 to acquire the tower and fibre asset of debt-ridden subsidiary of his younger brother Anil Ambani-managed firm Reliance Communications.
- The tribunal had asked Jio to deposit Rs 3,720 crore in the State Bank of India (SBI) escrow account to complete the acquisition of RCOM's tower and fibre assets.

Govt hikes copra MSP by 3-7% for 2023

- The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs(CCEA) chaired by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has approved Minimum Support Prices (MSPs) for copra for 2023 season. The approval is based on recommendations of the Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices and views of major coconut growing states.
- The MSP for Fair Average Quality of milling copra has been fixed at Rs. 10860/- per quintal and for ball copra at Rs. 11750/- per quintal for 2023 season.
- This is an increase of Rs. 270/- per quintal for milling copra and Rs. 750/- per quintal for ball copra over the previous season.
- This would ensure a margin of 51.82 percent for milling copra and 64.26 percent for ball copra over the all India weighted average cost of production.
- The announced MSP of copra for 2023 season is in line with the principle of fixing the MSP at a level of at least 1.5 times all India weighted average cost of production as announced by the Government in the Budget 2018-19.

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INTERNATIONAL

UNSC adopts first-ever resolution on Myanmar, demanding end to violence and release of political prisoners

- The U.N. Security Council has adopted its first ever resolution on Myanmar in 74 years to demand an end to violence and urge the military junta to release all political prisoners, including ousted leader Aung San Suu Kyi. Ms. Kyi, 77, has been a prisoner since the army toppled her government almost two years ago and violently cracked down on dissent.
- The 15-member council has long been split on how to deal with the Myanmar crisis with China and Russia arguing against strong action. They both abstained from the vote, along with India. The remaining 12 members voted in favor.
- The resolution urges the junta to immediately release all arbitrarily detained prisoners, including Suu Kyi and ex-president Win Myint.
- It also demands an immediate end to all forms of violence and asks for all parties to respect human rights, fundamental freedoms and the rule of law.
- It also urges “concrete and immediate actions” to implement a peace plan agreed upon by the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).

US to provide \$1.85 billion military aid to Ukraine, including critical Patriot missile system

- The United States is finalizing plans to send the Patriot missile defense system to Ukraine. Ukraine has asked its Western partners for air defenses, including U.S.-made Patriot systems, to protect it from heavy Russian missile bombardment including against its energy infrastructure. The system is part of \$1.85 billion in assistance unveiled in parallel with a visit to Washington by Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky.
- Former Russian President Dmitry Medvedev has warned NATO against providing Ukraine with Patriot missile defenses, and it is likely Moscow will view the move as an escalation.
- The Pentagon says Russia’s recent surge in missile strikes in Ukraine is partly designed to exhaust Kyiv’s supplies of air defenses so it can dominate the skies above the country.

- The Patriot is considered to be one of the most advanced U.S. air defense systems and is usually in short supply, with allies around the world vying for it.
- Ground-based air defense systems such as Raytheon Technology Corp's (RTX.N) Patriot are built to intercept incoming missiles.
- Patriot has been proven effective in Saudi Arabia against Iranian-design ballistic missiles fired from Yemen.

NATIONAL

PM Modi to inaugurate National Youth Festival in Hubballi-Dharwad on Jan 12: Karnataka CM

- Karnataka Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai said that a National Youth festival is poised to be hosted at Hubballi-Dharwad twin cities, which will be inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The National Youth Festival will be organized on January 12 in connection with the birth anniversary of Swami Vivekananda.
- Around 7,500 representatives from all the States will participate in the youth festival. The National Youth Festival is organised to commemorate the birth anniversary of Swami Vivekanand which falls on 12 January.
- The first National Youth Festival was started in 1995 as a major activity under the programme of National Integration Camp. The 25th National Youth Festival was organised in Puducherry.
- Swami Vivekananda's birthday on January 12 is always celebrated as National Youth Day and 12-16 January every year is observed as the National Youth Week.

Tourism sector receives industry status in Assam

- As the growth in the tourism sector is vital for socio-economic development in a state, the Assam State Cabinet led by CM Himanta Biswa Sarma approved the proposal for grant of industrial status to the tourism sector in the state.
- It has been highlighted that with such industry status, fresh investments in tourism infrastructures permanent in nature will contribute towards rapid employment generation, public-private partnership and infrastructure development.
- With the grant of industry status to the tourism sector, now, restaurants, cafeterias, health clubs, spas and wellness centres among others are eligible for incentives under the industrial policy.
- The ministry also said mentioned that the infrastructure can be developed through Public Private Partnership (PPP) mode, which will contribute to the overall development of the region.
- Assam has now become a nationally and internationally acclaimed all-season tourist destination for its unique wildlife, bio-diversity and experience of an unexploited wonderland.

About Assam:

Capital: Dispur

Chief Minister: Himanta Biswa Sarma

Governor: Prof. Jagdish Mukhi

Country's first infantry Museum opens for public in Mhow (Indore)

- The country's first Infantry Museum has been opened for the general public at Mhow, Indore, Madhya Pradesh. This museum is the first in the country and second in the world. Before this, such a museum has been built in America. The Army inaugurated to celebrate the Victory Day and the eve of the 75th year of the establishment of the Infantry School. The world-class

museum has been set up with the intention of showcasing the Infantry. The project was conceived in July 2003 as a national-level training hall cum research centre.

- The Infantry Museum covers the history of the Infantry from 1747 to 2020. It depicts the rich heritage, glorious past and supreme sacrifice of our brave soldiers preserved in sculptures, murals, and photo galleries.
- The construction of this museum has been in the works for a decade. This three-story building of the museum has been built on two acres of land. It has 17 different rooms covering the history and development of the Indian Infantry since 1747 in chronological order in 30 subject areas. In this museum, along with Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj, Subhash Chandra Bose, and Maharaja Ranjit, the history of many great men will be seen.

About Madhya Pradesh

Capital: Bhopal;

Governor: Mangubhai C. Patel;

Chief Minister: Shivraj Singh Chouhan.

SPORTS

FIFA chooses Morocco to host the 2023 Club World Cup

- Morocco was rewarded by FIFA with hosting rights for the next Club World Cup in February, with an expanded 32-team edition set to launch in 2025. The most recent edition of the tournament was held in the UAE in February 2022 and was won by the English football club, Chelsea. European champion Real Madrid, South American champion Flamengo and Seattle Sounders, the first CONCACAF Champions League winner from the United States, will play in the traditional seven-team tournament from Feb. 1-11.

About Federation International de Football Association (FIFA)

Founded: 21 May 1904;

Founded: Paris, France;

Headquarters: Zürich, Switzerland;

Membership: 211;

Languages: English, French, German, Spanish & Italian;

First President: Robert Guérin;

Current President: Gianni Infantino (Switzerland);

Secretary General: Fatma Samoura (Senegal).

OBITURY

Padma Shri awardee, H.R Keshava Murthy passed away at 89

- H.R. Keshava Murthy, a senior gamaka exponent, who was honoured with Padma Shri earlier this year, passed away. He was born in a family of gamaka artists. He had his initial training from his father Ramaswamy Shastry. Under the guidance of Venkateshaiah he continued his studies. Over the decades he has presented hundreds of programmes and trained many students. Through his performances, he publicised noted Kannada epics. Hosahalli, his native place, is known for many music talents.
- Keshava Murthy has been honored with many awards including Shantala Natya Shri award, by the State government and different cultural organisations. The President honoured him with the Padma Shri this year. The residents of his village celebrated the occasion.

APPOINTMENTS & RESIGNATIONS

Puma India onboards Anushka Sharma as brand ambassador

- The manufacturer and designer of casual and athletic footwear, Puma has roped in Bollywood actor and entrepreneur Anushka Sharma as its brand ambassador. The association is intended to “accelerate Puma’s strong commitment towards women consumer segment”. The actor will endorse the brand’s footwear, apparel and accessories, including select collections through myriad activities and brand campaigns, throughout the year.
- The brand announced ‘End of Season Sale’ promotions on its social media featuring images of the actor in its products. Anushka took to her social media and called out the brand for using her imagery only after onboarding her as a brand ambassador. The brand’s other ambassadors in India include Kareena Kapoor Khan, MC Mary Kom, Yuvraj Singh, Sunil Chhetri, and most recently Harrdy Sandhu.

IMPORTANT DAYS

Indian National Farmer’s Day 2022: 23rd December

- December 23 is observed as Farmers’ Day or Kisan Diwas across India. Farmers are the backbone of our economy and to honour their hardship, this day was coined by the government of India in 2001. This day also marks the birth anniversary of the ‘Champion of Indian Peasants’ and the fifth Prime Minister of India, Chaudhary Charan Singh.
- The day aims to spread awareness of the contributions of farmers to the socioeconomic development of the nation. It also recognises the efforts of the former Prime Minister who helped in uplifting the farmers in the country, introduced Debt Redemption Bill and Land Holding Act.
- National Farmers Day or Kisan Diwas is the day marked every year to honor each and every farmer who is working continuously for the nation. Farmers are considered to be the backbone of the nation as without them none of us can survive. Agriculture is the basis for all our growth and consumption.

AWARDS & RECOGNITION

Sahitya Akademi Award Winner list 2022

- The award has been given by the central government for the best literature of every year. Accordingly, the central government has announced the Sahitya Akademi Award for literature on December 22. Writer M. Rajendran from Tamil Nadu has received this award for his novel ‘Kala Pani’. The awardee will be presented with a cash prize of one lakh rupees and a copper Shield. This ‘Kala Pani’ novel is a historical novel based on the war of Kalayarkovil or Kalayarkool.
- The Awards, recommended by distinguished Jury members in 23 Indian languages, were approved by the Executive Board of the Sahitya Akademi, under the Chairmanship of Dr. Chandrashekhar Kambar, President, Sahitya Akademi.

SAHITYA AKADEMI AWARD 2022:

Language	Title and Genre	Name of the Author
Assamese	Bhool Satya (Short Stories)	Manoj Kumar Goswami
Bodo	Sansrini Modira (Poetry)	Rashmi Choudhury

Dogri	Chhe Roopak (Drama)	Veena Gupta
English	All The Lives We Never Lived (Novel)	Anuradha Roy
Gujarati	Gher Jatan (Autobiographical Essays)	Gulam Mohammad Shaikh
Hindi	Tumadi Ke Shabd (Poetry)	Badri Narayan
Kannada	Bahutvada Bhaarata mattu Bouddha Taatvikate (Collection of Articles)	Mudnakudu Chinnaswamy
Kashmiri	Zael Dab (Literary Criticism)	Farooq Fayaz
Konkani	Amrutvel (Novel)	Maya Anil Kharangate
Maithili	Pen-Drive Me Prithvi (Poetry)	Ajit Azad
Malayalam	Ashaante Seethayanam (Literary Criticism)	M. Thomas Mathew
Manipuri	Leironnung (Poetry)	Koijam Shantibala
Marathi	Ujavya Sondechya Bahulya (Novel)	Praveen Dashrath Bandekar
Nepali	Saino (Drama)	K.B. Nepali
Odia	Dayanadi (Poetry)	Gayatribala Panda
Punjabi	Main Aynghosh Nahi (Short Stories)	Sukhjot
Rajasthani	Alekhun Amba (Play)	Kamal Ranga
Sanskrit	Deepmanikyam (Poetry)	Janardan Prasad Pandey 'Mani'
Santali	Sabarnaka Balire Sanan' Panjay (Poetry)	Kajli Soren (Jagannath Soren)
Sindhi	Sindhi Sahit Jo Mukhtasar Itihas (Literary History)	Kanhaiyalal Lekhwani
Tamil	Kaala Paani (Novel)	M. Rajendran
Telugu	Manodharmaparagam (Novel)	Madhuranthakam Narendra
Urdu	Khwab Saraab (Novel)	Anis Ashfaq

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INTERNATIONAL

India recorded 4 cases of BF.7 that's causing surge in China

- The BF.7 sub-variant of Omicron that is prevalent in China is thought to be the cause of the present spike in Covid-19 infections there. This isn't the first time BF.7 has been in the spotlight; back in October, it began to displace the main variations in the US and several other European nations. The massive Covid rise in China is being caused by the BF.7 sub-variant of Omicron, which has been found in four cases in India. In Gujarat and Odisha, the instances of BF.7 Covid Variant first came to light. Currently, the Covid protocol is not required in the nation.
- As the main stem of the SARS-CoV-2 tree sprouts branches and sub-branches, so do viruses when they change, creating lineages and sub-lineages.
- The Omicron sub-lineage BA.5 and the BF.7 are identical. The latter is also known as BA.5.2.1.7.
- The study found that another Omicron sub-variant named BQ.1 had a more than 10-fold higher neutralization resistance than BF.7, which is not the most resilient sub-variant.

NATIONAL

Indian Navy launches its first anti-submarine warfare ship "INS Arnala"

- The Indian Navy launched 'Arnala', the first of the eight indigenously-built anti-submarine warfare shallow water craft (ASW-SWC), at the shipbuilding facility of L&T in Chennai's Kattupall. Built by Garden Reach Shipbuilders and Engineers (GRSE), 'Arnala' made its first contact with the water of the Bay of Bengal.
- The ship has been named 'Arnala' to signify the strategic maritime importance accorded to the island of Arnala, located about 13 kilometres north of Vasai, Maharashtra, by Maratha warrior king Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj.
- The 'Arnala' class of ships will replace the 'Abhay' class ASW ships of the Indian Navy. These are designed to undertake anti-submarine operations in coastal waters and low-intensity maritime operations (LIMO), including subsurface surveillance in littoral waters. The 77.6-metre-long ASW-SWC ships have a displacement of 900 tonnes with a maximum speed of 25 knots and endurance of 1800 nautical miles (NM).
- It is anti-submarine warfare vessel in 700 ton displacement range and will replace Abhay-class corvette (a corvette is a small warship) currently serving in Indian Navy.

SPORTS

T20 World Cup for the Blind: India beat Bangladesh to claim third successive title

- The Indian national blind cricket team won the T20 World Cup for the Blind for the third time in a row. They defeated Bangladesh at Bengaluru's M Chinnaswamy Stadium by a commanding score of 120 runs. The Indian captain, Ajay Kumar Reddy elected to bat after winning the toss, and his side eventually set a challenging total of 277 runs for Bangladesh. The Bangladeshi team could only muster 157 runs for three in return.
- Sunil Ramesh won Man of the Match award in the championship. He was also given the B3 category's Man of the Series award. India, the tournament's victors and unbeaten team, won Rs. 3 lakh as prize money, while Bangladesh took second place and received Rs. 1.5 lakh. Ajay won

the title of Man of the Series in the B2 division. Mohammed Mahmud Rashid of Bangladesh won the title of Man of the Series in the B1 division.

SCIENCE & TEHNOLOGY

Gaganyaan: India Targets Q4 2024 For Launch Of Its Maiden Human Space Flight Mission

- The Government has said, the country's maiden human space flight mission, Gaganyaan, is targeted to be launched in the fourth quarter of 2024. Science & Technology Minister, Dr. Jitendra Singh said, in view of the paramount importance of crew safety, two uncrewed flights are scheduled, before the final human space flight- 'H1 mission', to demonstrate the performance of the crew escape system and parachute-based deceleration system for different flight conditions.
- He said, uncrewed 'G1 mission' will be targeted in the last quarter of next year, followed by the 'G2' in the second quarter of 2024. Dr. Jitendra Singh said the astronaut designates for the Gaganyaan are identified and undergoing mission-specific training at Bengaluru. The first uncrewed flight of Gaganyaan programme 'G1' mission is aimed at validating the performance of the human rated launch vehicle, Orbital module propulsion system, mission management, communication system, and recovery operations. The mission will carry a humanoid as a payload.

OBITURY

Songwriter Shirley Eikhard, who wrote 'Something to Talk About', dies at age 67

- The legendary singer and songwriter Shirley Eikhard died at the age of 67. Shirley Eikhard was one of the most prolific songwriters in the industry. She penned the Grammy-winning single Something to Talk About.
- Shirley Eikhard died on Thursday at the healthcare centre in Orangeville. According to her publicist, Eric Alper, she died cause of severe cancer-related complications. She took her last breaths at the Headwaters healthcare Centre in Ontario.
- During her musical journey, Shirley Eikhard released 18 albums between 1972 to 2021. She was a self-taught performer and taught herself to play instruments like drums, bass, guitar, piano and many others.

IMPORTANT DAYS

National Mathematics Day 2022: 22nd December

- National Mathematics Day is celebrated on December 22 across the nation every year. The National Mathematics Day is marked to recognise and celebrate the works of Srinivasa Ramanujan. Srinivasa Ramanujan, the Indian mathematical genius, was born on this day in 1887. This year nation celebrates his 135th birth anniversary of Ramanujan. The main objective behind the celebration of National Mathematics Day is to make people aware of the development of mathematics and its importance in the growth of humanity.
- The day was announced on 26 February 2012 by the then Prime Minister Manmohan Singh to mark the 125th anniversary of the birth of the Indian mathematical genius Srinivasa Ramanujan (22 Dec 1887- 26 Apr 1920). 2012 was also observed as National Mathematics Year. Ramanujan had a wealth of ideas that have transformed and reshaped 20th-century mathematics. These ideas continue to shape the mathematics of the 21st century.

AWARDS & RECOGNITION

Oscars 2023: RRR's Naatu Naatu, Last Film Show, among others shortlisted for the 95th Academy Awards

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BANKING AND ECONOMY

Parliament proceedings: Note in circulation rise 8% annually to ₹32 lakh crore

- Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said note in circulation (NiC) has witnessed an annual growth of 7.98 per cent to Rs 31.92 lakh crore as of December 2, 2022. The demand for currency depends upon several macroeconomic factors, including economic growth and level of interest rates, she said.
- Six years after demonetisation, the currency in circulation has jumped to a new high of Rs 32 lakh crore reflecting that cash still remains the preferred choice of payment for Indians. Compared with the pre-demonetisation period, it has increased by a massive 72 per cent from Rs 17 lakh crore on November 4, 2016. The demonetisation (of Rs 500 and Rs 1,000 notes that ceased to be legal tender) was announced by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on November 8, 2016, with the aim of reducing the circulation of black money in the economy, among other objectives.

IPL Turns Decacorn As Valuation Crosses \$10 Billion, Witnesses 75% Growth Since 2020

- IPL surpasses \$10 billion valuation: The Indian Premier League (IPL), whose total valuation has surpassed \$10 billion, has evolved into a decacorn. A D and P Advisory report made public on Tuesday states that the league is currently worth \$10.9 billion. Notably, it has shown a startling 75% rise since 2020.
- IPL's expansion has been aided by lucrative agreements with industry titans in media. A company valued at more than \$10.0 billion is referred to as a decacorn.
- In less than 15 years since its beginning, the IPL has reached the milestone.
- The D and P Advisory said in a study titled "Beyond 22 Yards" that the IPL attained the significant milestone after selling its media rights for the years 2023 to 2027. The league recorded a three-fourth increase in revenue over the previous cycle when it sold its media rights for \$6.2 billion. The rights were divided among numerous broadcasters for the first time.

Gross Direct Tax collections for the FY 2022-23 show 25.90% growth: CBDT

- The Gross collection of Direct Taxes has registered a growth of 25.90 percent which stood at 13,63,649 crore rupees in the financial year 2022-23. The Gross collection in the corresponding period stood at 10,83,150 crore rupees. According to the Finance Ministry data, the Net Direct tax collection for FY 2022-23 stood at 11,35,754 crore rupees, registering a growth of 19.81 percent. The Net Direct tax collection for the corresponding period was recorded at 9,47,959 crore rupees.
- It stood at ₹11,35,754 crore compared to ₹9,47,959 crore in the corresponding period of the preceding financial year, which is about 80% of the full-year Budget target.
- The net direct tax collection of ₹11,35,754 crore includes Corporation Tax (CIT) at ₹6,06,679 crore (net of refund) and personal income Tax (PIT) including Securities Transaction Tax (STT) at ₹5,26,477 crore (net of refund).
- There has been a remarkable increase in the speed of processing of income tax returns filed during the current fiscal, with almost 96.5% of the duly verified ITRs having been processed till 17.12.2022.

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NATIONAL

Steel Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia launches country's first Green Steel Brand

- Union Steel Minister, Jyotiraditya Scindia has launched India's first Green Steel Brand "KALYANI FERRESTA" in New Delhi. This first-of-its-kind steel has been manufactured by a Pune-based Steel company, Kalyani group by using renewable energy resources, leaving zero carbon footprints in the environment.
- The Kalyani Group initiative will help transform the steel sector's long-standing identity as a carbon-emitting 'hard to abate sector' to a reduced carbon emitting-green steel-producing industry.
- The steel industry produces 7 per cent of CO₂ emissions internationally, while the Indian steel industry accounts for 12 per cent of such emissions. Green steel is manufactured using low-carbon energy sources such as hydrogen, coal gasification and electricity instead the widely used coking coal. The company avoided 76,484 total carbon dioxide (tCO₂) emissions, reduced water consumption by 10 per cent and recycled 99.4 per cent of its waste.

Agriculture Ministry to host Millets Food Festival for members of Parliament

- To raise awareness about the importance of millet, the Agriculture Ministry is hosting a Millet food festival in Parliament for the members. As the global agrifood systems face challenges to feed an ever-growing global population, resilient cereals like millet provide an affordable and nutritious option. The United Nations has passed a resolution declaring the year 2023 as the International Year of Millets (IYM). The IYM 2023 and the push towards increasing millet production will also contribute to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.
- Recently, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations organised the opening ceremony of the International Year of Millets – 2023 (IYOM 2023) in Rome, Italy.
- The United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) accepted the proposal by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, to celebrate 2023 as the International Year of Millets.

Indian Navy gets 5th Scorpene Submarine 'Vagir'; 3rd in 24 months

- The fifth Scorpène submarine, Vagir of Project – 75 Kalvari Class submarines has been delivered to the Indian Navy by Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Limited (MDL) Mumbai. Defence Ministry said, the submarine would shortly be commissioned into the Navy and enhance its capability. Project-75 includes the indigenous construction of six submarines of Scorpene design. These submarines are being constructed at Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Limited (MDL) Mumbai, under collaboration with Naval Group, France.
- Launched on the 12th of November 2020, Vagir commenced the sea trials on the 1st of February 2022 and it has completed all major trials including the weapon and sensor trials in the shortest time in comparison to the earlier submarines. Construction of these submarines in an Indian yard is another step towards Aatmanirbhar Bharat and a notable achievement is that this is the third submarine delivered to the Navy in a span of 24 months. In all, six submarines of the Kalvari class, based on the Scorpene design of the Naval Group of France, are being constructed at the MDL in collaboration with the Naval Group of France.

SPORTS

Abhishek Bachchan's Jaipur Pink Panthers Wins The Trophy Of Pro Kabaddi League 9!

- Jaipur Pink Panthers won the Pro Kabaddi League Season 9 Final against a hard-fighting Puneri Paltan by a score of 33-29 to win their second PKL championship. After Patna, Jaipur Pink Panthers, the league's first-ever winners, are currently only the second team to win multiple titles. The tournament was played across Bengaluru, Pune, and Hyderabad while the playoffs were played in Mumbai. Jaipur Pink Panthers team is currently led by Sunil Kumar Malik and coached by Sanjeev Baliyan. The team is owned by Abhishek Bachchan.

PKL Season 9: Award winners 2022

- Perfect Player of the Final: Sunil Kumar (Pink Panthers)
- Game Changer of the Final: V Ajit Kumar (Pink Panthers)
- Moment of the Final: Ankush Rathee (Pink Panthers)
- Move of the Final: V Ajit Kumar (Pink Panthers)
- Perfect Moment of the Final: Sunil Kumar (Pink Panthers)

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

Indian Armed Forces To Get Pralay Missile; 150-500 Km Range Will Allow Targeting Of Chinese Infra In Tibet

- As the conflicts in the border region with China increase, the Indian armed forces are now set to procure the 'Pralay' ballistic missile that can hit the target from 150 to 500 km. Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) had successfully conducted the maiden flight test of the indigenously developed surface-to-surface missile 'Pralay', from Dr A P J Abdul Kalam Island off the coast of Odisha in December 2021.
- "The new missile followed the desired quasi ballistic trajectory and reached the designated target with high degree accuracy, validating the control, guidance and mission algorithms. All the sub-systems performed satisfactorily. All the sensors deployed near the impact point across the eastern coast, including the down range ships, tracked the missile trajectory and captured all the events," the statement read.

- The Pralay missiles combined with the BrahMos supersonic cruise missiles would be the longest-range tactical weapon system in the defence forces as the long-range strategic weapons are controlled by the strategic forces command. The missile can help the troops to completely destroy or take out enemy air defence sites or similar high-value targets.

OBITURY

Hawaii's Last Princess, Abigail Kawānanakoa passed away at the age of 96

- Abigail Kinoiki Kekaulike Kawānanakoa, a Hawaiian princess whose lineage included the royal family that once ruled the islands and an Irish businessman who became one of Hawaii's largest landowners, passed away at the age of 96 in Honolulu, Hawaii. She was born on 23rd April 1926 in Honolulu, Oahu, Territory of Hawaii.
- Her great-grandfather, James Campbell, an Irish businessman who owned a sugar plantation, was the source of her enormous wealth, which was kept in trust and is estimated to be worth USD 215 million (175 million in a pound). Iolani Palace, the royal residence of the rulers of the Kingdom of Hawaii, is the only royal residence in the United States of America. She was a symbol of Hawaiian national identity that endured after the kingdom was overthrown by American businessmen in 1893.

APPOINTMENTS & RESIGNATIONS

Major General Mohit Seth appointed as General Officer Commanding

- Major General Mohit Seth has taken over as the General Officer Commanding (GOC) of the Counter Insurgency Force Kilo. He took over from Major General Sanjiv Singh Slaria who has been moved to Northern Command headquarters in Udhampur. In his distinguished military career spanning over three decades, the General Officer has held various prestigious staff and command appointments in Jammu and Kashmir, the northeast and at the Army headquarters.
- Major General Mohit Seth has also served as Indian Army Liaison Officer, High Commission of India, United Kingdom.
- Maj Gen Seth, who took over as GOC of Kilo Force was commissioned into 3 MADRAS Regiment in December 1991. He is an alumnus of the National Defence Academy, Maj Gen Seth attended the prestigious NDC at New Delhi.

SUMMIT'S & MOU's

UAE Set to Host World's Largest Trade Minister Meeting in 2024

- The next World Trade Organization ministerial conference will be held in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates in February 2024, the global trade watchdog confirmed in a statement. The UAE and Cameroon were both vying to host the event and came to an informal agreement for Abu Dhabi to host the first one and Cameroon to do the next, trade sources said.
- For the UAE, hosting the meeting is part of its own push to position itself as a global hub for business amid growing competition in the Middle East. It has been rolling out bilateral trade deals with fast-growing markets since the pandemic. Next year the Gulf Arab state will host COP28, the UN's Climate Change conference.
- The top priority for the WTO's 13th ministerial conference, known as MC13, will be reaching an agreement to reform the trade body's hobbled dispute settlement system and modernising its 27-year-old rulebook.

BANKING AND ECONOMY

IDFC First Bank waives fee on savings accounts and multiple banking services

- IDFC FIRST Bank has declared ZERO Fee Banking on savings accounts and waived fees on multiple banking services, including Passbook charges, NEFT charges. The bank said that customers maintaining as low as Rs 10,000 Average Monthly Balance, and the Rs 25,000 AMB savings account variant will get these benefits.
- Number of Cash Transactions at branches per month (Cumulative of Deposit and Withdrawal)
- Value of Cash Transactions (Cumulative of Deposit and Withdrawal) at Branches
- Third-party Cash Transaction Charges (Cumulative of Deposit and Withdrawal) at Branches
- Demand Drafts/ PO (Issuance Charges) – at Bank Locations
- IMPS Charges per Transaction– Outward

Government launches first-ever 'Surety Bond Insurance' for infrastructure projects

- Road, transport and highways minister Nitin Gadkari launched the country's first-ever surety bond insurance product, a move that would reduce the dependence of infra developers of bank guarantee. Surety Bond Insurance will act as a security arrangement for infrastructure projects and will insulate the contractor as well as the principal. The product will cater to the requirements of a diversified group of contractors, many of whom are operating in today's increasingly volatile environment.
- The Surety Bond Insurance is a risk transfer tool for the Principal and shields the Principal from the losses that may arise in case the contractor fails to perform their contractual obligation.
- The product gives the principal a contract of guarantee that contractual terms and other business deals will be concluded in accordance with the mutually agreed terms. In case the contractor doesn't fulfil the contractual terms, the Principal can raise a claim on the surety bond and recover the losses they have incurred.

Current Affairs PDF- DECEMBER 20, 2022

INTERNATIONAL

EU deal set to trigger 'domino effect' for global minimum tax deal

- The European Union has adopted a plan for a global minimum 15% tax on big business. The landmark deal between nearly 140 countries aims to stop governments racing to cut taxes in a bid to attract companies. It was praised by US Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen as "an historic agreement which helps even the playing field".
- EU member states reached agreement in principle to implement at EU level the minimum taxation component, known as Pillar 2, of the OECD's reform of international taxation. The ambassadors of EU member states decided to advise the Council to adopt the Pillar 2 directive, and a written procedure for the formal adoption will be launched.
- Corporation tax is usually based on a company's profits. But often they might be able to pay less depending on where their offices are registered or how they invest in their business.

NATIONAL

Tamil Nadu government makes Aadhaar a must for all of its schemes

- The Tamil Nadu government has announced that all those who are eligible for benefits (other than minor children) under various government schemes are required to submit proof of possession of an Aadhaar number or undergo Aadhaar identification. According to the order, Aadhaar is mandatory for government employees, government pensioners and beneficiaries of various schemes implemented by the State government through various Departments by their implementing agencies.
- Any individual desirous of availing himself of benefits, but does not possess an Aadhaar number or has not yet enrolled for Aadhaar, shall be required to make an application for Aadhaar enrolment before registering for the "Scheme."

Ministry of culture in collaboration with Prasiddha foundation organises Delhi

- Ministry of Culture in collaboration with Prasiddha Foundation inaugurated Delhi International Arts Festival at Kartavya Path with the tag-line – 'Where Bharat Meets India.
- The festival aims to celebrate the great Epics, the Warriors Who Fought for Our Freedom, and the many policy decisions and schemes instituted by our Government towards 'Women Empowerment', towards 'Cleaning Our Holy Rivers', towards keeping our Country 'Clean and Free from Dirt and Disease'.
- In the festival dance performances such as Kathak, Odissi along with theatre, classical musical performances and other cultural performances will be organised. A series of events and performances will be organised at various venues like Kartavya Path India Gate Lawns, Central Vista, Samvet Auditorium Indira Gandhi National Centre for Arts Janpath, Amphitheatre Indira Gandhi National Centre for Arts Janpath, etc in Delhi.

Gujarat CM to unveils Urban G20 logo, website and social media handle

- In Gujarat, Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel has unveiled the logo, website and social media handles of the Urban-20 conference in Gandhinagar. The UNESCO heritage city Ahmedabad will host the Urban 20 cycles as part of G-20 meetings between February to July. The logo unveiling event in Gandhinagar was attended by senior officials of the Gujarat government and the Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation (AMC).
- CM Patel said the unveiling of the U20 logo heralds the launch of the U20 cycle, which will begin in February next year with the Sherpas' meeting and end with the U20 Mayors' summit.
- Along with C40 (Climate 40) and United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG), Ahmedabad will organise various events including City Sherpas' inception meeting on February 9 and 10.
- This city diplomacy initiative facilitates a productive dialogue between the national and local governments and helps promote the importance of urban development issues in the G20 agenda.

Indian Railways opens nation's longest 'escape tunnel' in Kashmir

- The Indian Railways on Thursday completed the construction of a tunnel on a 111-kilometre section of the Udhampur-Katra railway line in Kashmir. The 'escape tunnel', which is the longest of its kind in the country, is located at an elevation of 12.89 meters.

- According to railway officials, the tunnel was constructed to allow emergency response teams to carry out rescue operations in case of an accident. It passes through various drainages and reservoirs in the Chenab River, including the Khoda, Hingni, and Kundan nullahs making its drilling and construction a challenging task.
- The tunnel, which is the fourth on the Banihal-Katra route, was constructed using a modern technique known as the New Austrian Tunnelling Method. It was completed in January this year.

SPORTS

Rafael Nadal crowned ITF World Tennis Champion for fifth time

- Spanish Tennis Player, Rafael Nadal has been named the Men's International Tennis Federation (ITF) World Champion 2022 for the 5th time after an outstanding 2022 season. Previously, He has been named the men's ITF World Champion in 2008, 2010, 2017 and 2019. Polish tennis player, Iga Świątek, has been named Women's ITF World Champion 2022 for her performance in 2022 winning 2 Grand Slam titles and 8 titles.
- The winners will be honoured at the annual ITF World Champions Awards event which will be held on 8th July 2023 at Victoria and Albert Museum, London, United Kingdom(UK). The event is usually held in Paris France.

About International Tennis Federation (ITF):

President→: David Haggerty

Headquarters→: London, United Kingdom (UK)

Establishment:→ 1913

IMPORTANT DAYS

International Human Solidarity Day 2022: Date, Theme, Significance

- International Human Solidarity Day (IHSD) is observed annually on December 20 across the globe to celebrate the ideal of unity in diversity. IHSD highlights the goal of the United Nations and its member states to create awareness about poverty and the need to reduce poverty in independent nations.
- The celebration of the International Day of Human Solidarity is a significant step in the aim of the United Nations Sustainable Development Agenda for 2030, to eradicate poverty in all its forms across the globe. The annual celebration reminds world citizens of the issues faced by poor people and nations affected by poverty. The day serves to remind governments, civil society members and other institutions that poverty can be tackled and eradicated only through a united effort to help usher in an era where social equality, dignity and justice prevails

AWARDS & RECOGNITION

Sonakshi Sinha is PETA India's 2022 'Person of the Year'

- Bollywood actress, Sonakshi Sinha has been awarded PETA India's 2022 Person of the Year title. Sonakshi's actions helped save the lives of many animals killed for fashion, but her strong advocacy for dog and cat rights earned her the title. She is actively involved in animal welfare activities and regularly voices out the need for stronger animal protection laws. The international animal rights non-profit group endorsed the title and celebrated the actions of the "Dabang" actress for saving animal lives in India.
- Last year, Alia Bhatt was awarded the same title. Previously PETA India Person of the Year winners include former Supreme Court Justice KS Panicker Radhakrishnan, cricketer Virat Kohli,

comedian Kapil Sharma; and actors John Abraham, Anushka Sharma, Sunny Leone, R Madhavan, Jacqueline Fernandez, Hema Malini, and Sonam Kapoor Ahuja, among others.

BANKING AND ECONOMY

India's monthly merchandise trade deficit comes down to a six-month low

- India's overall trade deficit for goods and services in November this year has fallen to \$11.11 billion, lower than year-ago and month-ago levels. Moreover, thanks to a recovery in exports, India's monthly merchandise trade deficit came down to a six-month low of \$23.81 billion. Trade deficit is the amount by which a country's import costs exceed its export value in a given period.
- November's goods exports stood at \$31.99 billion against \$29.78 billion in October and \$30.04 billion a year ago. The export data is still the lowest since November 2021 due to lower prices and volumes. Also, November goods imports were recorded at \$55.88 billion against \$56.69 billion a month ago. The number stood at \$52.94 billion a year ago. November goods trade deficit has fallen to \$23.81 billion against \$26.9 billion in October and \$22.9 billion year-on-year (YoY). The November goods deficit is the lowest since May.
- The November trade deficit is down on marginal recovery in exports and a fall in services imports.

RBI holds 599th central board meeting, reviews economic situation

- The 599th meeting of the board was held in Kolkata on December 16. The meeting was chaired by RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das.
- Directors of the Central Board, Satish K. Marathe, Revathy Iyer, Sachin Chaturvedi, Venu Srinivasan, Pankaj Ramanbhai Patel and Dr Ravindra H. Dholakia attended the meeting. RBI deputy governors Mahesh Kumar Jain, Dr Michael Debabrata Patra, M. Rajeshwar Rao, and T. Rabi Sankar too attended the meeting.
- The Central Board of Directors of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) reviewed the current economic situation, and global and domestic challenges including the overall geopolitical developments, finance, and trade. The Board also discussed the activities of select Central Office Departments and the draft Report on the Trend and Progress of Banking in India, 2021-22.

Current Affairs PDF- DECEMBER 19, 2022

INTERNATIONAL

Indian-origin Leo Varadkar set to become Ireland's prime minister for second time

- Indian-origin Leo Varadkar has returned for a second term as Ireland's Prime Minister as part of a job-sharing deal made by the country's centrist coalition government. His appointment was confirmed when he received the seal of office from President Michael D. Higgins, Ireland's head of state.
- This is the second time that Varadkar has been elected as Irish prime minister. He first became the Irish prime minister in June 2017. In June 2020, the Fine Gael party led by Varadkar formed a coalition government with Fianna Fail and Green Party, in which he served as deputy prime minister and Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment.
- According to an agreement reached by the three parties in setting up a coalition government, Fianna Fail party leader Micheal Martin will first serve as Irish prime minister until December

2022 and Fine Gael party leader Varadkar will replace Martin to be the new prime minister until the five-year term of the current government comes to an end.

NATIONAL

Assam government launches Orunodoi 2.0 scheme

- Turning Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision of direct benefit transfer into reality, the Himanta Biswa Sarma-led Assam government has launched a special scheme, Orunodoi 2.0, under which 10.54 lakh beneficiaries will be given Rs 1,250 every month, officials said.
- With the fresh inclusion, the total number of beneficiaries under the poverty alleviation scheme, which was first launched on December 1, 2020, will be around 27 lakh. The Orunodoi benefit is usually transferred to the bank account of each beneficiary by the 10th day of every month, an official said. It is one of the 18 flagship schemes of the Assam government currently in operation.
- "Our government has been extending economic and nutritional security to lakhs of financially vulnerable families across the state and the foremost among the schemes has been Orunodoi," Sarma said. The chief minister said the greater version of Orunodoi is being launched to ensure that the benefits reach the financially vulnerable and underprivileged families of the state. The total financial outlay for Orunodoi is Rs 4,142 crore per annum, making it one of the largest DBT schemes in the country.

63rd session of Indian Historical Records Committee begins in Lucknow

- Two-day 63rd session of the Indian Historical Records Committee (IHRC) organised by the National Archives of India (NAI), New Delhi, got under way at Uttar Pradesh State Archives' Mahanagar Extension office here on Sunday.
- "The IHRC has aided in preserving Indian history and culture and it is one method we can teach to the next generation about the rich past we have," said minister of state for transport (independent charge) Daya Shankar Singh while inaugurating the event.
- "It would not have been possible to know our beginnings if the epics—the Ramayana and the Mahabharata—were not maintained and archived," he added while requesting all the delegates coming from different states to visit Uttar Pradesh and see how it has changed.
- The event will comprise inaugural and business sessions on the first day and academic session on the second and the concluding day. A total of 24 academic papers based on original sources of post 16th century of the Indian history will also be presented by scholars on various aspects of history during the event.

Karnataka Govt set up development board for nomadic communities

- The Karnataka government has issued an order to set up a Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe Nomadic Communities Development Board for the upliftment of these communities which are among the most downtrodden.
- This is aimed at helping 51 communities among Scheduled Castes and 23 communities among Scheduled tribes, as per the order. As per the 2011 census, there are 9,91,184 people belonging to nomadic and semi-nomadic communities. At the Central level, there is Development and Welfare Board for De-notified, Nomadic and Semi-Nomadic Communities.

SPORTS

Indian Women's Hockey Team Wins FIH Hockey Women's Nations Cup Spain 2022

- The Indian women Hockey team led by Captain Savita Punia beat Spain 1-0 in the final to win the inaugural FIH Nations Cup played at Valencia, Spain. The winning goal was scored by Gurjit Kaur of India. The inaugural FIH Nations cup was held in Valencia, Spain from 11-17 December 2022. India and Spain had played in the FIH women's Hockey Pro League 2021-22 season as replacement teams after pull-outs by Australia and New Zealand due to COVID-19 related issues.
- The result also means that Janneke Schopman-coached side has been promoted to the FIH Pro League 2023-24. Hockey India has announced cash prize of Rs 2 lakh for every member of the squad and Rs 1 lakh each for all the support staff. India ended the tournament with a perfect record of five wins in five matches. Indian team beat Chile (3-1), Japan (2-1), and South Africa (2-0) in the group stage before a thrilling 2-1 win over Ireland in the penalty shootout in the semifinal.

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

NASA Successfully Launches Game-Changing SWOT Mission To Survey Earth's Water

- The US National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) and the French space agency Centre National d'Etudes Spatiales (CNES) have jointly launched the newest Surface Water and Ocean Topography (SWOT) spacecraft to track nearly all the water on the surface of the Earth. It was launched atop a SpaceX rocket from Space Launch Complex 4E at California's Vandenberg Space Force Base. It will remain operational for 3 years.
- The Surface Water and Ocean Topography (SWOT) mission is a satellite altimeter jointly developed and operated by NASA and CNES (French space agency) in partnership with the space agencies of the UK and Canada.
- The mission's objective is to make the world's first-ever global survey of the Earth's surface water, capable of observing the finer details of the ocean surface topography and measuring the changes in the terrestrial surface water bodies.
- As it uses wide-swath of altimetry technology, the mission will be capable of almost completely observing the world's oceans and freshwater bodies with repeated high-resolution elevation measurements.
- The satellite can measure the height of water in freshwater bodies and the ocean on more than 90 percent of the Earth's surface.
- The information obtained from this mission can be used to understand the ocean's influence in climate change, impact of global warming on the waterbodies.

APPOINTMENTS & RESIGNATIONS

Rail Minister Ashwini Vaishnav appointed 1st Chancellor of Gati Shakti University

- Union Minister of Railways, Ashwini Vaishnav has been appointed as the Chancellor of Gati Shakti Vishwavidyalaya, Vadodara, by President Smt. Draupadi Murmu. It is noteworthy to mention that Shri Ashwini Vaishnav will be the first Chancellor of Gati Shakti Vishwavidyalaya. President also appointed Dr Manoj Chaudhary as the first Vice Chancellor of Gati Shakti University, Vadodara. As per the Central University Act, 2009, Dr Manoj Chaudhary will hold the position of Vice Chancellor of Gati Shakti University for five years from the date he assumes office.
- Gati Shakti University was granted the central status by the Union Cabinet in July 2022.

- In August this year, the Central Government introduced a bill in the Lok Sabha to convert the National Rail and Transportation Institute, into Gati Shakti Vishwavidyalaya, an autonomous central university.
- The Central Universities (Amendment) Bill was introduced by Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan which seeks to expand the scope of the university from beyond the railways to cover the entire transport sector to support the ambitious growth and modernisation in the field.

SUMMIT'S & MOU's

Amit shah chairs the eastern zonal council meeting in Kolkata

- Union Home Minister Amit Shah will chair the Eastern Zonal Council meeting at the West Bengal secretariat here on Saturday, officials said.
- West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee and her counterparts from Bihar, Jharkhand, Odisha and Sikkim are likely to attend the EZC meeting.
- Sources in the secretariat, however, said that Bihar CM Nitish Kumar and Odisha CM Naveen Patnaik may skip the meeting.
- Among other issues, Mr. Shah is slated to hold discussions on matters related to boundaries of the five states and the completion of the eastern freight corridor.
- Along with the CMs, chiefs of all central armed forces are also expected to attend the meeting, which was earlier scheduled for November 5, but got postponed due to Shah's unavailability, owing to other engagements.

RANKING

India Ranks Third Globally In Scientific Publications, Higher Budgetary Allocations Expected For DST: Minister

- Union Minister for Science and Technology, Jitendra Singh has revealed that India had jumped from 7th to 3rd in global scientific publications and scholarly output, according to a report by America's National Science Foundation. India also ranks third globally in the number of PhDs produced annually. In a similar upward trend, the number of patents granted by the India Patents Office to Indian scientists has more than doubled in just the last four years.
- India's scholarly output increased from 60,555 papers in 2010 to 1, 49,213 papers in 2020.
- China leads the world in the publication of the maximum number of scientific papers followed by The United States of America.
- The National Science Foundation is an independent agency of the United States government that supports fundamental research and education in all the non-medical fields of science and engineering. Its medical counterpart is the National Institutes of Health.

Current Affairs PDF- DECEMBER 18, 2022

NATIONAL

Jaishankar declares India's candidature for 2028-29 UNSC term

- India looks forward to being back in the UN Security Council, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar said, as he declared the country's candidature as non-permanent member for the 2028-29 term. Jaishankar arrived at UN to preside over two signature events on counter-

terrorism and reformed multilateralism held under India's current Presidency of the UN Security Council, before the curtains come down this month on the country's two-year tenure as elected member of the 15-nation top organ of the world body.

- The previous eight terms that India has been in the Council are 1950-1951, 1967-1968, 1972-1973, 1977-1978, 1984-1985, 1991-1992 and 2011-2012. On December 1, India assumed the monthly rotating Presidency of the Security Council, the second time after August 2021 that India is presiding over the Council during its two year tenure as elected UNSC member.

SPORTS

Messi and Argentina's World Cup wait ends with dramatic final win over France

- FIFA World Cup 2022: Messi's Argentina clinched their 3rd World Cup trophy from six final appearances in history, seeing off France 4–2 on penalties (3–3 after extra time) to win the biggest prize in men's football at the Lusail Stadium in Lusail, Qatar. It had won two in 1978 and 1986 under Diego Maradona. Lionel Messi had come close to winning in 2014 but La Albiceleste lost the final 0-1 to Germany. The only similarity from Messi's 2014 campaign in Qatar was his Golden Ball award for Player of the Tournament award. He became the first player to win two World Cup Golden Balls.
- The 22nd edition of the World Cup just ended and for another 4 years for the next World Cup. Also, The 2026 World Cup will be held across three different countries, the United States, Canada and Mexico.
- Top 4 team Rankings: Argentina (Winner), France (2nd), Croatia (3rd) and Morocco (4th)
- Golden Boot Award: Kylian Mbappe (France); (8 Goals)
- Golden Ball Award: Lionel Messi (Argentina); (7 goals and registering 3 assists)
- Golden Glove Award: Emiliano Martinez (Argentina)

Neeraj Chopra pips Usain Bolt to become most written-about athlete in 2022

- According to the World Athletics, Tokyo Olympics gold medalist javelin thrower Neeraj Chopra of India was the most written about track and field athlete in 2022, displacing the Jamaican legend Usain Bolt from the top lists. The data collated by media analysis company Unicepta was cited by World Athletics, the global governing body for athletics.
- Neeraj Chopra, the Tokyo Olympics men's javelin champion, led the way with 812 articles ahead of the Jamaican women's sprint trio of Olympic champion Elaine Thompson-Herah (751 articles), 100m world champion Shelley-Ann Fraser-Pryce (698 articles) and 200m world champion Shericka Jackson (679 articles). Usain Bolt, the world record holder in 100m and 200m men's sprint, comes in fourth in the list with 574 mentions. The Jamaican, who is now retired, had previously topped the annual list for most written-about athlete for years.

APPOINTMENTS & RESIGNATIONS

Harvard appoints Claudine Gay as first Black president

- Harvard University named Claudine Gay, a dean of the Faculty of Arts and Science, as its new president, the first African American to hold the post at the prestigious university. Gay, 52, is just the second woman to be elected to head the school in Cambridge, Massachusetts. Gay, the daughter of Haitian immigrants, will take over as the university's 30th president on July 1, 2023.

- The daughter of Haitian immigrants, Gay graduated from Stanford and then earned her Ph.D. in government at Harvard in 1998, winning the Toppan Prize for best dissertation in political science.
- Gay was elected to the presidency by the Harvard Corporation, the university's principal governing board.

IMPORTANT DAYS

18 December International Migrants Day 2022: History, Significance

- International Migrants Day is observed annually on December 18 to bring attention to the social and economic realities of migrants around the world. This day is observed to guarantee that the rights of migrants are equally respected and not violated. The mobility of people is still influenced by a range of factors despite the world's rapid growth and change.
- Currently, 281 million individuals are international migrants who reside in nations other than their own. International Migrants Day serves as a reminder that the challenges faced by migrants in every country remain unresolved, and policymakers must continue to develop constructive and comprehensive policies to address the issue.
- The day is set aside to honour the health, security, and welfare of all migrants. During the Intergovernmental Conference in December 2018, it was decided to adopt the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly, and Regular Migration.

Minority Rights Day celebrated at the National Commission for Minorities

- National Minorities Rights Day is commemorated on December 18 every year in India. Its aim is to safeguard the individual rights of the religious, ethnic, racial, or linguistic minorities in the country. This day is a reminder about the rights of minorities and to raise awareness about it. Minority Rights Day in India is commemorated by conducting debates and seminars on topic related to minority communities.
- Awareness about their linguistic, national, cultural and religious identity are also a topic of study during this day. The day revolves around understand the issues faced by these communities and how discrimination against them can be stopped.
- The Union Government set up the National Commission for Minorities under the National Commission for Minorities Act 1992. Following this five religious communities have been notified as minority communities in the Gazette of India by the Union Government all around the country. These religious communities are Muslims, Sikhs, Buddhists, Christians, and Zoroastrians.

AWARDS & RECOGNITION

India's Sargam Koushal wins Mrs World 2022

- Sargam Koushal created history as she finally won the Mrs World 2022 title after 21 years while competing for India in the pageant. The 32-year-old won the competition in Las Vegas after defeating competitors from 63 other nations.
- Sargam Koushal beat Mrs. Polynesia to win the title.
- The Jammu and Kashmir-born beauty queen previously worked as a teacher in Vizag.
- Koushal is shown beaming in photographs from her historic victory that were posted on the Mrs India pageant's official Instagram account. "The long wait is over; the CROWN is returned after 21 years!" Check out the caption.

- Sargam Koushal, an Indian contestant, won the title of Mrs. World on Sunday at a gala held in Las Vegas.

RANKING

2022 GFSI Report released by British weekly The Economist

- The 2022 Global Food Security Index (GFSI) report was released by the British weekly The Economist. The 11th Global Food Security Index shows a deterioration in the global food environment for the third year, threatening food security. In this report, South Africa overtook Tunisia to become the most food-secure country in Africa.
- Vulnerability to Shocks: The global food environment is deteriorating, making it vulnerable to shocks. Significant progress was made in global food security from 2012 to 2015, with the overall GFSI score increasing by 6 percent.
- Widening food security gap: In 2022, 8 of the top 10 performing countries are in Europe, with Finland topping the list with a score of 83.7.
- Africa's Most Food-Secure Country: South Africa, at the 59th position, was recognized as the most food-secure country in Africa. It made a record leap from the 70th rank in 2021.
- India is ranked at 68th position along with Algeria with the overall score of 58.9. China's position is at 25th with the score of 74.2.

BOOKS & AUTHOR

Book "The Light We Carry: Overcoming In Uncertain Times" by Michelle Obama

- The Light We Carry: Overcoming in Uncertain Times is a nonfiction book written by Michelle Obama and published, by Crown Publishing. The Light We Carry will inspire readers to examine their own lives, identify their sources of gladness, and connect meaningfully in a turbulent world. The author "shares the contents of her 'personal toolbox' – the habits and practices, attitudes and beliefs, and even physical objects that she uses to overcome her feelings of fear, helplessness and self doubt."
- The Light We Carry: Overcoming in Uncertain Times has generally received positive reviews by book critics for herself on biography. In The Light We Carry, the former First Lady shares her practical wisdom and powerful strategies for staying hopeful and balanced in today's highly uncertain world.

BANKING AND ECONOMY

Sitharaman holds 48th GST Council meet, panel agrees to decriminalise certain offences

- The 48th Goods and Service Tax (GST) Council meeting at the national capital Delhi on 17 December has concluded without any decisions on the highly anticipated GST Appellate Tribunals, tax rate applicable on gutkha and pan masala.
- Increase in monetary threshold, from the current ₹5 crore to ₹20 crore, for launching legal proceedings against offenders. Additionally, the fee payable by a taxpayer for compounding of GST offences be lowered to 25% of the tax amount, down from the up to 150% currently.
- A report on tax evasion by the tobacco industry (pan masala, gutka), along with a possible mechanism to curb the evasion.
- As proposed by a Group of Ministers (GoM), increasing the indirect tax on online gaming, casinos, and horse racing, to 28%, from the existing 18%.