

Weekly Current Affairs PDF January 08 to January 14, 2023

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NATIONAL

Music of the soul at Mongeet in Assam at Majuli

- Mongeet is a festival of music, poetry, art, craft, food, culinary techniques, indigenous herbs, and culture celebrated in Majuli, Assam. The Mongeet festival started in the year 2020 as a movement of arts and music and it aims to nurture the upcoming musical talents of Assam. It was started by actor Adil Hussain and Kaushik Nath, an actor-director-turned-entrepreneur.
- Mongeet festival will be held on 15th, 16th, and 17th January at Dekasang, Majuli and on 19th and 20th January at Dekasang, Sadiya.
- This edition of the Mongeet festival will witness Montulika, a creative painting workshop, and Monmritikka, a special workshop on the rich art and sculpture of Assam.
- In the Mongeet festival, renowned Assamese Chef Atul Lahkar will host a masterclass, Aharor Aakholi (food and traditional kitchen) to talk about food conservation, identification of ingredients, modern cooking methods about indigenous techniques, and ways to promote regional cuisine.

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

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

Tripura State Government launches "Saharsh" special education program

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

- The school education department has introduced 36 reforms in the last five years and the higher education department has 19 reforms.

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

- A joint initiative by the Vidisha District Administration and the Centre for Development of Telematics (C-DOT), Department of Telecommunications (DoT), under the direction of Additional Secretary (Telecom) & Administrator USOF, made Vidisha, a district of Madhya Pradesh, the first district ever in India for on-ground implementation of groundbreaking 5G use cases proposed by startups.
- The Department of Telecommunications (DoT) has been fostering partnerships of Digital Communication Tech – startups & SMEs to potential user communities, viz. State governments, Smart cities, Aspirational districts, vertical industries, etc., through the Telecom Startups & MSMEs Mission (TSuM) & 5G Vertical Engagement Partnership Program (VEPP). This is accomplished to accelerate Digital Transformation across socio-economic verticals.
- To implement 5G/4G/IoT innovative approaches of Startups & SMEs at Vidisha (Aspirational district), Madhya Pradesh with a primary focus on Health, Agriculture, Dairy, Education & Skill Development, benefiting the Vidisha community as a whole, the “5G use case promotional pilot” is being spearheaded by the Centre for Development of Telematics (C-DOT), DoT, which is a trailblazer in emerging Digital communication Technologies.

SPORTS

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

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

IMPORTANT DAYS

Army Day to be celebrated on January 15 in Bengaluru

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

commander-in-chief of the Indian Army in 1949 from General Francis Butcher, the last British commander-in-chief of India.

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

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

SUMMITS AND MOU'S

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

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

AWARDS AND RECOGNITION

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

- Over 1,000 Indian peacekeepers serving with the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) have been honoured with the prestigious UN medals at an award ceremony where the parade was led for the first time by a woman officer of the Indian Army.
- At a special award ceremony in Upper Nile, 1,171 peacekeepers from India deployed with the UN mission in South Sudan were honoured with UN medals for their exemplary service. for the first time, a female officer of the Indian Army, Major Jasmine Chattha, led the parade of the large

Indian contingent, comprising infantry, engineers and medical officials, at the award ceremony in Upper Nile.

- Last week, India deployed the largest platoon of women peacekeepers to the United Nations Interim Security Force, Abyei (UNISFA), heralding New Delhi's intent of increasing significantly the number of women in peacekeeping contingents.

BANKING AND ECONOMY

PVR-INOX Merger Scheme Gets NCLT Approval

- In a major boost to the film and entertainment industry, PVR-Inox merger has been approved by the National Company Law Tribunal. The NCLT judge has approved the scheme of merger in a verbal order. A written order is likely to be passed in the next 15-20 days. On March 27, PVR and Inox Leisure announced their merger, which has already been approved by their respective shareholders, creditors as well as leading bourses NSE and BSE.
- The merger of PVR-INOX has been much talked about since 2022. It must be noted that being the country's top multiplexes, both INOX and PVR were also front-running competitors. The two companies' boards — the country's largest multiplex chain operators — approved an all-stock merger to create a film exhibition entity with a network of more than 1,500 screens. The share-swap ratio in the merger stands at three shares of PVR for 10 shares of Inox — which means investors will get three shares of PVR for every 10 INOX shares held.

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NATIONAL NEWS

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

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

SPORTS

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

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

approvals for both drone manufacturing type certificate and RTPO. Recently, MS Dhoni and Garuda had also launched a short film 'Kheton Ke Kaptan', aimed at encouraging youth and farmers to lead in their respective farms.

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

- Harry Brook received the ICC Men's Player of the Month award after a blistering run of scores that helped England claim a historic World Test Championship (WTC) series victory in Pakistan. On the other hand, Australia's Ashleigh Gardner bagged the ICC Women's Player of the Month award for her contributions with bat and ball in the T20I series against India.
- The 23-year-old Brook scored 468 runs in three matches in the recently concluded Test series against Pakistan. England won the series 3–0 in which Brook made his important contribution.
- Gardner won the award after his impressive individual performance in the series against India in December 2022. He received this award leaving behind Charlie Dean of England and Suzie Bates of New Zealand.

OBITUARY

Constantine II, last king of Greece dies at 82

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

Sharad Yadav From Fighting Emergency To Championing Mandal dies at 78

- Socialist stalwart and former JD(U) chief Sharad Yadav passed away. He was 75. He is survived by his wife, daughter and son. A 7-term Lok Sabha and 4-term Rajya Sabha member, Yadav, a former Union Minister, had not been keeping well for some time.
- Born on July 1, 1947 at Babai in Hoshangabad district of Madhya Pradesh, Yadav was a gold medallist in engineering from the Jabalpur Engineering College. He soon became active in youth politics, greatly influenced by socialist leader Ram Manohar Lohia.
- He participated in a number of mass movements and was detained under MISA during the turbulent 1970s. Much later, he was among the leaders who played a significant role in the implementation of the Mandal Commission recommendations.

BOOKS AND AUTHORS

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

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

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

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

BANKING AND ECONOMY

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

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

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

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

- India has increased the ethanol blending in petrol from 1.53 per cent in 2013-14 to 10.17 per cent in 2022. To achieve 20 per cent blending by 2025, the country needs 10.2-11 billion litres of ethanol.

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

- Retail inflation declined to a one-year low of 5.72 per cent in December 2022, mainly due to softening prices of food items. Also, it was well within the Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) comfort range of 2 per cent-6 per cent for a second month, data released by the Ministry of Statistics & Programme Implementation (MoSPI) showed. The Consumer Price Index (CPI)-based inflation rate eased to 5.72 per cent in December. It was 5.88 per cent in November, and 6.77 per cent in October 2022.
- After remaining above the Reserve Bank of India's upper tolerance threshold of 6 per cent since January 2022, retail inflation declined in November to 5.88 per cent and further in December to 5.72 per cent — its lowest level in one year.
- The marginal dip in inflation was driven by lower food prices, especially vegetables. It may be noted that food inflation for December came in at 4.1 per cent, compared to 4.67 per cent in November. The inflation rate for vegetables saw the biggest contraction at 15.08 per cent. Inflation rate for fuel and light, however, increased mildly to 10.97 per cent against 10.62 per cent in November.

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INTERNATIONAL

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

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

NATIONAL

India's Fastest Payment App PayRup Launched

- India's fastest payment app PayRup was launched in India on 9th January 2023. PayRup is built with the finest technology of web 3.0. PayRup provides an advanced digital payment experience with an outstanding user experience. PayRup users can pay utility bills and landline bills, recharge their mobile, broadband, DTH, and purchase gift cards.
- PayRup services are planned to expand across various financial instruments. These instruments include multiple payment services such as school fees, pay rent, and other payment collection services.

- PayRup has announced ticketing and booking services for flights, buses, and hotels along with other USPs. PayRup opens 24/7 customer care facilities for help and support for users.
- Customer Support desk runs with leading CRM technologies and supports by the global standard. PayRup ensured the 5 dimensions of service quality and follows SERVQUAL standards to provide the best service experience.

SPORTS

France Goalkeeper Hugo Lloris Announces Retirement from International Football

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

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

DAC gives nod to purchase indigenous defence systems

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

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

- Defence Acquisition Council (DAC) approved three proposals worth 4,276 crore rupees to strengthen the country's deterrence and combat readiness. Defence Ministry said, a meeting of Defence Acquisition Council held under the chairmanship of Defence Minister Rajnath Singh. The DAC has accorded approval for procurement of HELINA Anti-Tank Guided Missiles, launchers and associated support equipment which will be integrated to the Advanced Light Helicopter.

- There were three proposals – two for the Army and third was for the Indian Navy. The defence ministry said the DAC accorded Acceptance of Necessity (AoN) for three capital acquisition proposals, amounting to ₹4,276 crore. The DAC granted approval for procurement of Brahmos Launcher and Fire Control System (FCS) for the Shivalik class of ships and next generation missile vessels (NGMVs) for the Indian Navy.

IMPORTANT DAYS

National Youth Day: 12th January 2023

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

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

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

AWARDS AND RECOGNITION

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

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

- As SII has produced 160 vaccinations, Adar Poonawalla is continuing his father Dr. Cyrus Poonawalla's legacy, according to Pawar. The chief minister of HP requested that Bharti Vidyapeeth and SII establish facilities in his state.

RANKING

Japan tops the World's strongest passport list in 2023

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

BANKING AND ECONOMY

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

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

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SPORTS

South Africa All-Rounder Cricketer Dwaine Pretorius Announces International Retirement

- Cricket South Africa (CSA) has confirmed that Proteas all-rounder Dwaine Pretorius has retired from international cricket with immediate effect. Since making his international debut in 2016, the 33-year-old has represented South Africa across all three formats in 30 T20 Internationals (T20I), 27 One-Day Internationals (ODI) and three Tests. He has also featured in two World Cups. Pretorius showed his prowess both with the bat and ball in the international arena, aggregating 1895 runs and scalping 77 wickets across formats.

- Announcing his retirement, the 33-year-old expressed his desire to play more franchise cricket around the world 'to have a better balance in my career and family life.' The all-rounder will be seen in the IPL this year as he is part of the Chennai SuperKings squad.

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

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

OBITUARY

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

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

Father of laparoscopic surgery passed away at 88

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

AWARDS & RECOGNITION

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

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

Golden Globes Awards 2023 announced, Winners

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

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

BOOKS & AUTHOR

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

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

BANKING AND ECONOMY

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

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

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

- Fintech platform BharatPe said it has received in-principle authorisation from the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) to operate as an online payment aggregator (PA). The company said that an in-principle nod was awarded to Resilient Payments Private Ltd, a 100 percent subsidiary of Resilient Innovations Private Ltd (BharatPe).
- RBI's nod comes amid a slew of high profile exits the Sequoia Capital and Tiger Global-backed firm, which has been battling controversies since last year. It is currently fighting a court battle with its former co-founder Ashneer Grover alleging financial misappropriation. Grover was ousted last year in March.
- Payment aggregators are entities that facilitate e-commerce sites and merchants to accept various payment instruments from the customers. The merchants do not need to create a separate payment integration system of their own.

- The payment aggregator framework, introduced formally in March 2020, mandates that only firms approved by the RBI can acquire and offer payment services to merchants. RBI has been strict in its evaluation of entities that have applied for the payment aggregator licence.

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

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

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NATIONAL

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

- Prime Minister has launched the government's Aspirational Block Programme (ABP), which is aimed at improving the performance of blocks lagging on various development parameters. The Aspirational Blocks Programme is on the lines of the Aspirational District Programme that was launched in 2018 and covers 112 districts across the country.
- NITI Aayog in partnership with the states will release a quarterly ranking of these blocks based on their performance on development indicators covering sectors such as health, education and nutrition among others.
- The Centre had announced its intention to launch this initiative in the Union Budget 2022-23. The programme will cover 500 districts across 31 states and Union Territories initially. Over half of these blocks are in 6 states—Uttar Pradesh (68 blocks), Bihar (61), Madhya Pradesh (42), Jharkhand (34), Odisha (29) and West Bengal (29).

SPORTS

Sania Mirza announces her retirement from professional Tennis

- Indian Tennis Player Sania Mirza (36-year-old), the former doubles World No. 1, has confirmed her retirement from professional Tennis. She announced that the Dubai Tennis Championships, a Women's Tennis Association (WTA) 1000 event in Dubai in February 2023 will be her last match. Prior to her last appearance, she is going to play in women's doubles at the Australian Open in 16 to 29 January 2023 alongside Kazakhstan's Anna Danilina.
- She has won six Grand Slam doubles titles. She won her first grand slam in 2009 by winning Australian Open Mixed doubles title with Mahesh Bhupathi. The pair also won the French Open 2012.
- Sania Mirza and Martina Hingis of Switzerland won 3 women's doubles – Wimbledon 2015, the US Open 2015 and the Australian Open 2016.

- In 2007, She was ranked among the 30 and also reached her career-high ranking of world number 27(Singles).

Tallon griekspoor wins maharashtra open tennis tournament

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

IMPORTANT DAYS

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

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

World Hindi Day: 10th January 2023

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

SUMMIT'S & MOU's

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

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

AWARDS & RECOGNITION

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

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

BOOKS & AUTHOR

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

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

BANKING AND ECONOMY

RBI: Some Lenders still Continuing with Libor Contracts

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

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INTERNATIONAL

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

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

Manpreet Monica Singh First female Sikh judge in US

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

Hawaii's Kilauea volcano erupts again after brief pause

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

NATIONAL

International Kite Festival 2023 begins in Ahmedabad

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

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

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

Kerala establishes welfare board for workers under employment guarantee programmes

- The Kerala Cabinet approved a scheme to ensure those employed under the Mahatma Gandhi Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS) in the poll-bound state get benefits like pension and medical assistance. It has recommended that governor Arif Mohammad Khan issue an ordinance in this regard.

- The state government and local bodies will give an equal contribution and ₹50 will be deducted from a worker's salary every month for it.
- Those who are between 18 and 55 can register for membership and they can submit their contribution every month or on yearly basis. People aged up to 75 are eligible for employment under MGNREGS.

SPORTS

Chetan Sharma retained as chairman of selectors

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

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

- The anthem, mascot and a 'smart torch' for the fifth edition of the youth games were unveiled by chief minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan, Union MoS sports Nisith Pramanik and state sports minister at a glittering event in Bhopal on Saturday evening.
- The 5th KIYG 2022 will be held from January 30 to February 11. There are 27 sporting disciplines on the schedule, with over 6,000 athletes competing. 'Hindustan Ka Dil Dhadka Do' – this is the heartpounding anthem of the Khelo India Youth Games 2022. And cheetah Asha, who was named by PM Narendra Modi, the Games mascot.
- The importance of sports and fitness in one's life is invaluable. Playing sports inculcates team spirit, develops strategic & analytical thinking, leadership skills, goal setting and risk taking. A fit and healthy individual leads to an equally healthy society and strong nation.

APPOINTMENTS & RESIGNATIONS

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

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

IMPORTANT DAYS

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

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

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INTERNATIONAL

Taiwan passes Chips Act, offers tax credits to local chipmakers

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

NATIONAL

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

- President Droupadi Murmu laid the foundation stone of state-owned energy firm SJVN’s 1,000 MW Bikaner Solar Power Project. The event was done virtually by the President of India in Jaipur, Rajasthan. The project is being implemented by SJVN Limited through its owned subsidiary SJVN Green Energy Limited (SGEL).
- The solar power project is being developed on 500 acres near the village of Banderwala, district Bikaner of Rajasthan. It is one of the highest solar yield areas in India.
- The development cost of the Bikaner Solar Power Project is ₹5492 crore and viability gap funding support of ₹44.72 lacks per megawatt.

- After commissioning the project will generate 2454.55 million units in the first year and approximately 56838 MU would be generated on a cumulative basis over 25 years.

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

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

OBITUARY

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

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

AWARDS & RECOGNITION

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

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

RANKING

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

- Power Grid Corporation of India Limited (POWERGRID) has been ranked 1st in Services Sectors across categories Gross Block, Value Addition, Net Profit, Net Worth, Dividend Declaration, and

Contribution to the Central Exchequer and has also been ranked 3rd among the Top 10 profit-making Closes.

- The results were published in the Public Enterprises Survey 2021-2022 by the Department of Public Enterprises (DPE), Ministry of Finance, Government of India.
- The Public Enterprises Survey is a unique data repository to measure the progress and contribution of the CPSEs to the Indian economy.
- The total transmission assets of POWERGRID and its subsidiary as on 31st December 2022 include 1,73,791 circuit km of transmission lines.

BANKING AND ECONOMY

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

- India's foreign exchange reserves fell by \$70.1 billion in 2022, data released by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) shows. The forex reserves stood at \$562.9 billion in the week ended December 30. The decline in the forex reserves is partly due to the RBI intervention in the currency markets to stave off volatility and partly on account of depreciation of other major currencies held by the central bank. The RBI net sold \$33.42 billion till September, Union finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman said. The RBI holds major currencies including pound sterling, yen and euro in its reserves, which are expressed in US dollar terms.

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

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

ICICI Prudential Life Insurance ropes in Suryakumar Yadav for new campaign

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