

Weekly Current Affairs PDF January 14 to January 21, 2023

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NATIONAL

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

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

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

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

SPORTS

ICC Under 19 Womens T20 World Cup 2023

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

APPOINTMENTS & RESIGNATIONS

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

- Justice Arjan Kumar Sikri, a retired judge from the Supreme Court, has been appointed by the Delhi High Court as Administrator to manage the use of funds for the next ISSF Shooting World Cup in 2023. The ISSF World Cup (Rifle/Pistol) will take place in March in Bhopal.

- Chief Justice Satish Chandra Sharma and Justice Subramonium Prasad's divisional bench noted that if there is any obstacle to arranging the World Cup event, which would require funds from the Central Government, the prestige of the nation will be harmed.
- The administrator may also enlist the services of any athlete of his choosing who has competed at the national or international level in shooting, according to the court. After the occurrence, the bench requested that a report be sent in a sealed cover.

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

- In order to transfer the keys over to longtime partner and co-CEO Ted Sarandos and chief operating officer Greg Peters, Netflix Inc. co-founder and CEO Reed Hastings resigned from his position as the company's chief executive.
- In after-hours trading, Netflix shares increased 6.1% to \$335.05 as the pioneer of streaming video also revealed that it had gained more customers than anticipated at the end of the previous year.
- As a result of losing consumers in the first half of 2022, the company has been under pressure.
- Its stock, once a favourite on Wall Street, has decreased by about 38% in the previous 12 months.
- Hastings will serve as executive chairman and share the role of chief executive with Sarandos and Peters.

SUMMIT'S & MOU's

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

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

ESAF Bank wins Inclusive Finance India Awards 2022

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

BOOKS & AUTHOR

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

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

BANKING AND ECONOMY

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

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

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

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

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INTERNATIONAL

India participates in international tourism trade fair FITUR in Madrid

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

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

- The India-Bangladesh Friendship Pipeline (IBFPL) would begin supplying diesel to Bangladesh on an experimental basis in June of this year, according to State Minister for Power Nasrul Hamid. Nasrul Hamid responded to a written inquiry before the national parliament, Jatiya Sangsad, in Dhaka, by stating that a pipeline of 131.5 kilometres long has been built for importing fuel from India.
5 kilometres of the pipeline are in Bangladesh, and 5 kilometres are in India, pre-commissioning of diesel imports through this pipeline is already in progress, according to UNB.

Vietnam President Nguyen Xuan Phuc announces his resignation following corruption scandals

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

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

- Aruna Miller has scripted history by becoming the first Indian-American politician to be sworn in as the Lieutenant Governor in the state of Maryland, adjoining the US capital. Aruna, 58, a former delegate to the Maryland House, made history when the Democrat became the 10th Lieutenant Governor of the state.
- The Lieutenant Governor is the state's highest official following the Governor and assumes the role when the Governor is out of state or incapacitated. Moore became Maryland's 63rd

governor, the state's first and the country's only current Black chief executive. The newly sworn-in Lt Governor took her oath on the Bhagwat Gita.

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

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

Jacinda Ardern resigns as prime minister of New Zealand

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

NATIONAL

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

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

Growth Enablers As Per Report

1. World's Information Technology and Services Hub
2. Digitalization: A Force Multiplier
3. Filling the credit gap to fuel growth
4. Thriving entrepreneurship spurred by private capital
5. Reaping the demographic dividend
6. Making domestic manufacturing competitive
7. Building the infrastructure of the future
8. Transition to sustainable energy

SPORTS

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

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

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

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

AWARDS AND RECOGNITION

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

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

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INTERNATIONAL

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

- World Bank forecast Pakistan's economic growth to slow further to two percent during the current year. This will mark a drop of two percentage points from its June 2022 estimates, according to the World Bank's Global Economic Prospects report. The report said that Pakistan's economic output was not only declining itself but also bringing down the regional growth rate as well. Forecasting Pakistan's GDP growth rate to improve to 3.2 per cent in 2024, the report said, "Policy uncertainty further complicates the economic outlook" of Pakistan.
- This pace reflects still robust growth in India, Maldives, and Nepal, offsetting the effects of the floods in Pakistan and the economic and political crises in Afghanistan and Sri Lanka. The deteriorating global environment, however, will weigh on investment in the region," the report said pointing to a "sharp, long-lasting slowdown" with the global growth expected at 1.7 per cent this year.

NATIONAL

PM inaugurates second phase of Sansad Khel Mahakumbh

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

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

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

OBITUARY

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

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

IMPORTANT DAYS

National Disaster Response Force Day 2023: History & Significance

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

RANKING

Global Firepower Index 2022 - World Military Strength Rankings

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

- The finance factors include external debt, defence budget, reserves of foreign exchange and gold and purchasing power parity.

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

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

BOOKS & AUTHORS

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

- The English version of the book titled 'Come! Let's Run' by Tamil Nadu Health and Family Welfare Minister, Ma. Subramanian was released by Krishnamachari Srikanth, former Captain of the Indian Cricket team. The Tamil version of the same book titled 'Odalam Vanga' was released on March 8, 2021. The book was published by Emerald Publishers and the English translation was done by Geeta Padmanaban (a teacher) along with J. Joicy and Sharon.
- This book is a fascinating account of the physical, emotional, and historical journey taken by Thiru. Subramanian during the course of running his marathons in Tamil Nadu, in India, and all over the world. He includes interesting facts and details about each place he ran a marathon while talking about the challenges of running each race. Every volunteer in the party has perseverance and is always ready to face challenges and win. This book is proof of that.

BANKING AND ECONOMY

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

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

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

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

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INTERNATIONAL

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

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

Janani Ramachandran becomes first LGBTQ of color city council

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

NATIONAL

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

- The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF) has listed Neelakurinji under Schedule III of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972, including it on the list of protected plants. Neelakurinji has been included in the list after the Center increased the earlier protected list of six plant species to 19.
- As per the order, those uprooting or destroying the plant will be fined Rs 25,000 and imprisoned for three years, furthermore, cultivation and possession of Neelakurinji are not permitted.

- Neelakurinji is a shrub found in the Western Ghats in the Shola forests in the Southern part of India. It is peculiar that it blooms only once in twelve years. It has also given the name Nilgiris to the mountains of the region owing to its blue color. Neelakurinji usually grows at an elevation of 1300 – 2400 m and a height between 30 – 60 cm.

1200-yr-old Miniature Stupas Found In Nalanda District

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

Odisha Govt to revamp Vedvyas Shrine in Sundargarh

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

SPORTS

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

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

OBITUARY

Italian film legend Gina Lollobrigida passes away at age 95

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

APPOINTMENTS AND RESIGNATIONS

Centre appoints Pankaj Kumar Singh as deputy national security advisor

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

SUMMITS AND MOU'S

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

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

AWARDS AND RECOGNITION

Press Trust of India: Federal Bank Literary Award for writer

- Noted writer K Venu was conferred with Federal Bank Literary Award 2022 for his autobiography 'Oranweshananthinte Katha.' Venu received the award from Balagopal Chandrasekhar, Chairman

and Independent Director of Federal Bank, at a special event held as part of the Kerala Literature Festival.

- 'Oranweshananthinte Katha' was chosen by the judging panel comprising writer and literary critic KC Narayanan, Sunil P Ilayidom and PK Rajashekharan. Judging panel member P K Rajashekaran commented that the essence of the book brought back the memory of the most intense political timeline in the modern history of Kerala.
- This is the first-ever literary award constituted by the Federal Bank. By constituting the award, Federal Bank aims to celebrate the diversity of contemporary literature and recognise writers for their cultural contributions.

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INTERNATIONAL

China's population falls, heralds a demographic crisis

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

NATIONAL

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

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

SPORTS

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

- Barcelona have won the Spanish Super Cup for the first time since the competition was revamped and moved to Saudi Arabia with a 3-1 victory over Real Madrid. Robert Lewandowski, Gavi and Pedri scored a goal each at King Fahd Stadium in Riyadh to give Barcelona its first Super Cup trophy since 2018, and the first since the tournament's Final-Four format began in 2020 in a lucrative deal for the Spanish football federation. It was also Barcelona's first title since former player Xavi took over as the team's coach in 2021, and since Lionel Messi left for Paris Saint-

Germain. Barcelona have now won the Super Cup a record 14 times. Madrid have 12 to their name.

- The Super Cup used to be played between the Spanish league champion and the Copa del Rey winner. Now the runners-up in both competitions also participate.

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

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

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

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

OBITUARY

Mukarram Jah Bahadur, Hyderabad's Last Nizam passes away

- The last Nizam of Hyderabad, Mukarram Jah Bahadur, who passed away on Saturday night in Turkey, will be buried in the family vault in the Mecca Masjid courtyard. The preparation of the vault where other members of the Nizam's family who governed Hyderabad starting in 1724 are buried was overseen by representatives of the Nizam Trust.
- Two of the most renowned dynasties in the Muslim world were connected to Mukarram Jah, also known by his title Nawab Mir Barkat Ali Khan Walashan Mukarram Jah Bahadur.
- Durrushehvar, his mother, was the lone child of Abdul Majid, the final Caliph of Islam who was exiled by Mustafa Kemal Ataturk when the Caliphate was abolished.
- His father was Nizam Mir Osman Ali Khan's oldest son, Azam Jah, whose kingdom united with India on September 18, 1948.

SUMMITS AND MOU'S

B20 inception meeting in Gandhinagar from 22 to 24 January 2023

- The first 15 meetings of the Business 20 (B20) India Inception Meeting will be held in Gandhinagar from January 22nd to 24th, 2023. The Gujarat Government to host a dinner for G20 delegates followed by a delegation visiting the Dandi Kutir. India has been assumed as the G20 under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi.
- The nation aspires to play an important role on the world stage by finding practical global solutions for the welfare of all. The G20 chairman for India is a historic event as it comes while celebrating the 'Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav'. The 18th G20 Summit will be held in September 2023.
- Gujarat will be a part of this historic event and has prepared itself to complete facilities to conduct discussions, consultations, and meetings. The first 15 meetings to be held in Gujarat in the B20 India Inception Meeting.

Annual Meeting of World Economic Forum begins today in Switzerland

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

RANKING

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

- Bollywood actor Shah Rukh Khan with his more than three decades of work in the film industry has garnered millions of fans all over the world and an estimated net worth of ₹627 million (\$770 million), making him the richest actor in Asia and fourth richest actor all over the world. Beating fellow immensely famous and cult actors like Tom Cruise, Jackie Chan, and George Clooney, Shah Rukh Khan took the fourth position in the list of eight richest actors of the world released by World of Statistics.
- The Shah Rukh Khan has made a great impact with his cameos in films like R Madhavan's Rocketry: The Nambi Effect and Ayan Mukerji's Brahmastra Part 1: Shiva. Now, ahead of the release of his comeback film, Pathaan, the actor has been featured in the list of the richest actors in the world.

BANKING AND ECONOMY

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

- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) said that the finances of Indian states are projected to improve in 2022-23 with the consolidated gross fiscal deficit to gross domestic product ratio seen falling to

3.4 percent from 4.1 percent for the previous year. The fiscal health of the states has improved from a sharp pandemic-induced deterioration in 2020-21 on the back of a broad-based economic recovery and resulting high revenue collections. During the pandemic years, states' finances were under pressure due to rising expenditures and limited revenue growth.

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

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INTERNATIONAL

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

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

NATIONAL

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

- The renowned Jallikattu bull-taming competition got underway on Sunday in the Tamil Nadu village of Avaniyapuram. Aneesh Sekhar, the district collector of Madurai, as saying that preparations had been made to ensure a successful Jallikattu. ensuring the players' and bulls' safety. Bulls are protected in the play area by three levels of barricading, as are spectators.
- Several eager young men participated in the sport, which received a fawning round of applause.
- During the Pongal harvest season, which starts in mid-January, jallikattu is a well-liked sport. The winner is determined by how long the tamer stays on the bull's hump.
- It is customarily done as a part of Mattu Pongal, the third day of Tamil Nadu's four-day harvest festival.

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

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

Doppler weather radar network to cover entire country by 2025

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

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

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

OBITUARY

Hong Kong DJ who broadcast for six decades dies at 98

- Ray Cordeiro, who interviewed music acts including the Beatles during a six-decade career on Hong Kong radio that earned him the title of the world’s longest-working disc jockey, has passed away. Cordeiro, who was born in Hong Kong in 1924 of Portuguese descent, was recognized by the Guinness Book of Records as the world’s longest-working DJ. He joined Hong Kong’s public

broadcaster in 1960 after working as a prison warden and bank clerk. His “All the Way With Ray” show of easy listening music was on RTHK Radio 3 for 51 years until his retirement.

- Cordeiro interviewed the Beatles, then the world’s biggest music act, in 1964 following a study course in London with the British Broadcasting Corp. He said John Lennon recounted their early days in Hamburg, Germany, where they lived in relative poverty and played in clubs. The broadcast of the Beatles interview on Hong Kong radio made Cordeiro a celebrity. He also interviewed other stars and met Elton John and Tony Bennett.

IMPORTANT DAYS

National startup Day: 16th January 2023

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

SUMMITS AND MOU’S

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

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

AWARDS AND RECOGNITION

Critics Choice Awards 2023: RRR Bags Two Wins

- The 28th Critics Choice Awards were held, and once again, SS Rajamouli’s RRR has made India proud, as the film scored two awards. RRR won Best Song award for Naatu Naatu, as well as Best Foreign Language film. RRR was also nominated for Best Director, Best Picture and Best Visual Effects.

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

RANKING

For First Time Ever, Environment Tops Global Risks

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

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NATIONAL

Flybig starts flight from Itanagar to Guwahati

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

Air Operator's Certificate (AoC) on 14th December 2020. It began operations with a single ATR-72-500.

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

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

SPORTS

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

- Star cricketer Virat Kohli became the fifth-highest run-scorer in history of ODI cricket, overtaking Sri Lankan legend Mahela Jayawardene to enter into top-five. At the time of becoming the fifth-highest run-scorer, Virat had 12,652 runs in 268 ODIs at an average of 57.78, with 45 tons and 65 half-century. His best score in the format is 183.
- As per records, the highest run-scorer in ODI history is Indian legend Sachin Tendulkar, who has scored 18,426 runs at an average of 44.83. He has 49 centuries and 96 fifties in this format, with the best of 200*. Followed by Sachin, Sri Lankan great Kumar Sangakkara (14,234 runs in 404 matches), Australian great Ricky Ponting (13,704), Sri Lankan all-rounder Sanath Jayasuriya (13,430 in 445 matches) and Virat.
- 10 Kohli's ODI hundreds against Sri Lanka. He's the first player to hit ten ODI centuries against an opponent. Kohli also has nine hundreds against West Indies, while Tendulkar also has nine against Australia.
- 96 ODI wins for India against Sri Lanka, the most by a team against an opponent in this format, surpassing Australia's 95 wins against New Zealand.

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

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

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

embrace issuing beginning and loss of life certificates, offering water and electrical energy connections, computation and assortment of property tax and grievance redress.

APPOINTMENTS AND RESIGNATIONS

Clare Lombardelli appointed as OECD Chief Economist

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

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

- Captain Surbhi Jakhmola of the Indian Army's 117 Engineer Regiment will be the first woman officer to be posted on a foreign assignment at the Border Roads Organisation (BRO). The officer will be sent to Bhutan as part of Project Dantak. The Border Roads Organisation (BRO) is an executive road construction force in India that supports the Indian armed forces.
- The BRO's deployment comes just days after the Indian Air Force deployed woman fighter pilot squadron leader Avani Chaturvedi to Japan for the exercise Veer Guardian 2023, which will take place from January 16 to 26 at the Hyakuri Air Base and its surrounding airspace in Omitama, as well as the Iruma Air Base in Sayama in Japan.
- Avani Chaturvedi, a Su-30MKI pilot and one of India's first three women fighter pilots will depart for Japan shortly to take part in the exercise. Chaturvedi was born, raised, and completed her education in Madhya Pradesh. She was inducted into the IAF fighter squadron after six months of intensive training at the Air Force Academy in Dundigal, Hyderabad.

SUMMITS AND MOU'S

Rajasthan becomes first state to adopt blindness control policy

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

- Efforts to eliminate visual impairment would be made in the districts in collaboration with voluntary organizations, trusts, hospitals and other charitable institutions working in this field.

RANKING

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

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

BANKING AND ECONOMY

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

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

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

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