

Monthly Current Affairs

January 2023

English



India and Austria to sign migration and mobility agreement, shore up ties.

Why in the news: Close to similar mobility agreements with France, United Kingdom, Germany, and Finland, India will sign a "Comprehensive Migration and Mobility Partnership Agreement" (MMPA) with Austria.



- The migration and mobility partnership is set to encourage an increased exchange of students, academics, and researchers migrating for professional and economic reasons.
- It is abiding by equal treatment of nationals of both Parties in a similar situation. India has also signed agreements with other European countries, namely, France, the United Kingdom, Germany, and Finland.
- India is keen to finalize these agreements with European countries as a stepping stone to resolving issues over the long-pending India-European Union (EU) Free Trade Agreement and facilitating Indian professionals working in these countries; the European countries also see them as a way to curb illegal immigration from India.
- The Agreement will regulate multiple entry visas for professionals and student exchange programs and will be reviewed regularly by a Joint Working Group (JWG).
- India-Germany Agreement on Migration and Mobility partnership to foster the exchange of skills and talents was signed in December 2022.

(SOURCE - THE HINDU)



India, Pakistan exchange list of nuclear installations

Why in the news: In continuing a 32-year practice, India and Pakistan exchanged a list of their nuclear installations under a bilateral pact that prohibits the two sides from attacking each other's atomic facilities.

1. India and Pakistan today exchanged the list of nuclear installations and facilities covered under the Agreement on the Prohibition of Attack against Nuclear Installations and Facilities.
2. The Agreement was signed on December 31, 1988, and ratified on
3. January 27, 1991. It includes Nuclear power and research reactors, fuel fabrication, uranium enrichment, isotopes separation, and reprocessing facilities, as well as any other installations with fresh or irradiated nuclear fuel and materials in any form and establishments storing significant quantities of radioactive materials under the umbrella term "nuclear installations and facilities."
4. The need for the Agreement had been felt against the backdrop of Israel's 1981 bombing of Iraq's Osirak reactor near Baghdad.
5. The two countries also exchanged lists of prisoners held in each other's prisons under the provisions of the Agreement on Consular access signed in May 2008.



(SOURCE - TIMES OF INDIA)



India to assume chairmanship of Wassenaar Arrangement on 1 Jan

Why in the news: India joined the Wassenaar Arrangement, a multilateral export control regime, in 2017 and became its 42nd member.

1. India will assume the chairmanship of the Wassenaar Arrangement (WA), a multilateral technology control agreement, on January 1, 2023, for one year.
2. WA is a multilateral export control regime. Through regular information exchange among members on transfers of conventional arms and dual-use goods and technologies, it seeks to promote transparency and greater responsibility in such transfers and prevent destabilizing accumulations.
3. The organization's primary goal is to restrict access to sensitive technologies for terrorist outfits.
4. The Wassenaar Arrangement came into being in 1996 and has 42 members. The WA operates voluntarily, and decisions are made by consensus.
5. Every six months, members exchange information on deliveries of conventional arms to non-Wassenaar members that fall under eight broad weapon categories: battle tanks, armored combat vehicles (ACVs), large-caliber artillery, military aircraft/unmanned aerial vehicles, military and attack helicopters, warships, missiles or missile systems, and small arms and light weapons.
6. The WA maintains lists of technologies that are of interest. Tier 1 denotes a list of essential items, while Tier 2 denotes Sensitive or Very Sensitive Technologies.



(SOURCE - LIVEMINT)



What are the new DEXA scan tests that will determine Indian cricketers' fitness levels?

Why in the news: Through DEXA tests, BCCI and trainers can measure body fat percentage, lean muscle mass, water content, and bone density.

1. In a review meeting of the team's 2022 T20 World Cup debacle held in Mumbai that was attended by BCCI president Roger Binny, secretary Jay Shah, captain Rohit Sharma, head coach Rahul Dravid and NCA head of cricket VVS Laxman, the board has also re-introduced Yo-Yo test and DEXA scan results as criteria for selection.
2. The trainers can measure body fat percentage, lean muscle mass, water content, and bone density through DEXA tests.
3. DEXA, also known as the bone density test, is an X-ray technology that measures bone strength.
4. It can help identify if a person has a risk of breaking or losing bones and can be used to determine if a player is at risk of fracturing any body parts. Two X-ray beams at different energy levels are directed at the bone, and the resulting chart shows the bone's current bone density and mineral content.
5. The Yo-Yo test is a fitness test used to measure a person's endurance. It involves running back and forth between two cones placed 20 meters apart.
6. The speed at which the person runs increases over time and the test is stopped when the person cannot keep up with the required rate. The Yo-Yo test is often used in sports to evaluate athletes' endurance, and it is prevalent in soccer.



(SOURCE -INDIAN EXPRESS)



Sebi asks exchanges to set up Investor Risk Reduction Access platform.

Why in the news: IRRA service will be enabled upon the request of stockbrokers facing glitches that disrupt trading.

1. Stock exchanges have been directed by the Securities and Exchanges Board of India (SEBI) to set up an Investor Risk Reduction Access (IRRA) platform.
2. With the growing reliance on technology in the securities market, there is an increase in glitches in trading members' systems, some of which resulted in the disruption of trading services.
3. In these cases, investors with open positions are at risk of the non-availability of avenues to lose their jobs, especially at times when the markets are volatile.
4. The stock exchanges will jointly develop the Investor Risk Reduction Access (IRRA) platform to enable investors to square off their position or cancel the pending orders if the trading members disrupt services. Trading members are those who trade on their accounts as well as on the performance of their clients.
5. The SEBI has asked the stock exchanges and clearing corporations to operationalize the IRRA platform by October 1, 2023.

(SOURCE - BUSINESS STANDARD)

India's second longest cable-stayed eight-lane Zuari Bridge opens in Goa

Why in the news: Minister of Roads Transport and Highways Nitin Gadkari inaugurated the country's second longest cable-stayed eight-lane Zuari Bridge.



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1. The 640-meter-long bridge and the 13.20 km roads on both sides have been built in 3 phases.
2. The Zuari Bridge is between North Goa and South Goa, India. It carries the NH 66 over the tidal part of the Zuari River, between Agaçaim and Cortalim. It is a few meters downstream of the Konkan Railway Bridge.
3. The Zuari River is the largest in Goa, India.
4. It is a tidal river that originates at Hemad-Barshem in the Western Ghats.
5. The bridge project will be an expressway between Panaji and Margao over the Zuari river. The Rs.2530 Crore project consists of the new bridge from Bambolim to Verna.
6. India's longest cable bridge is over the Narmada River on the Ahmedabad-Mumbai section of NH-8 (New NH-48) in Bharuch, Gujarat.

(SOURCE -TIMES OF INDIA)

International flower show in Wayanad

Why in the news: A profusion of flowers might change the destiny of Wayanad, Kerala's most backward district, infamous for drought and farmer suicides.



- All arrangements are in place for the seventh edition of 'Poopoli,' an international flower show and agri fest jointly organized by the Kerala Agricultural University (KAU) and the Department of Agriculture Development and Farmers' Welfare at Ambalavayal in Wayanad from January 1 to 15.
- The festival takes place on 12 sprawling acres with a profusion of flowers, water ponds, and amusement options.
- There are gladioli, aster, chrysanthemum, gerbera, dahlia, and about 1,000 varieties of orchids.



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- This year the unique element will be the exhibition of 400 exotic fruit plants. The festival will also feature a seminar, a dog show, and a musical night.

(SOURCE - THE HINDU)

International Year of Millets (IYM) 2023 kick starts with Focussed Activities being undertaken by Central Ministries, State Governments and Indian Embassies

Why in the news: The United Nations has declared 2023 as the International Year of Millets after proposed by the Prime Minister of India, which also accounts for a fifth of the world's millets production.



1. In April 2018, Millets were rebranded as "Nutri Cereals," followed by the year 2018 being declared as the National Year of Millets, aiming at the more prominent promotion and demand generation.
2. In India, millets are primarily a Kharif crop, requiring less water and agricultural inputs than other similar staples.
3. PM Narendra Modi has also shared his vision to make IYM 2023 a 'People's Movement' alongside positioning India as the 'Global Hub for Millets.'
4. Next in the series, before the year-long celebration of 'International Year of Millets (IYM) 2023', the Department of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare hosted a special 'Millet Luncheon' for the Members of the Parliament at the Parliament house.
5. The states will conduct millet-centric activities, including mahotsavs/ melas and food festivals, training of farmers, awareness campaigns, workshops/ seminars, placement of hoardings, and distribution of promotional material at critical locations in the state, etc.
6. Millet is a common term for categorizing small-seeded grasses that are often called Nutri-cereals. Some of them are sorghum (jowar), pearl millet



(bajra), finger millet (ragi), little millet (kutki), foxtail millet (kakun), proso millet (cheena), barnyard millet (sawa), and kodo millet (kodon).

7. Millets are nutritionally superior to wheat and rice owing to their higher protein levels and a more balanced amino acid profile. Millets also contain various phytochemicals which exert therapeutic properties due to their anti-inflammatory and anti-oxidative properties.

(SOURCE - INDIAN EXPRESS)

Croatia Switches To Euro, Enters Europe's Passport-Free Zone

Why in the news: At midnight, the Balkan nation bid farewell to its kuna currency and became the 20th member of the Eurozone.

1. The country officially became the 20th member of the Eurozone on January 1, and the removal of land border controls with neighboring Slovenia and Hungary marks its inclusion in the Schengen zone.
2. The euro adoption is expected to improve borrowing conditions in Croatia and shield its economy when inflation is soaring worldwide.
3. The Schengen Area is an area that comprises 27 European countries that have abolished all passports and border control at their respective mutual borders. The name of this area comes from the 1985 Schengen Agreement that was signed in Schengen, Luxembourg.
4. It will also be the 27th nation in the passport-free Schengen zone.
5. The Eurozone, officially called the euro area is a monetary union of 20 of the 27 European Union (EU) member states which have



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adopted the euro as their common currency and sole legal tender.

6. It consists of Austria, Belgium, Cyprus, Croatia, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia, and Spain.

(SOURCE - CNN)

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

Why in the news: SIBs are perceived as 'Too Big To Fail' and their continued functioning is critical for the uninterrupted availability of essential banking services to the real economy.



1. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has named the top three lenders in India - State Bank of India (SBI), ICICI Bank, and HDFC Bank - as Domestic Systemically Important Banks (D-SIBs), or banks that are too big to fail.
2. A D-SIB is a bank considered crucial to the financial system, and its failure could cause significant disruption. As a result, these banks must maintain higher capital buffers to protect against potential losses and ensure their stability.
3. Banks classified as D-SIBs are subjected to additional standard equity tier 1 (CET1) capital requirements in addition to the capital conservation buffer. The other CET 1 requirement as a percentage of Risk Weighted Assets for SBI stands at 0.6 percent and 0.20 percent each for ICICI and HDFC Bank.



4. Foreign banks with a branch presence in India designated as Global Systemically Important Banks (G-SIBs) must also maintain additional CET1 capital surcharges in India as required by the rules for G-SIBs.

(SOURCE - THE INDIAN EXPRESS)

RBI launches Utkarsh 2.0 for the period 2023-2025.

Why in the news: Utkarsh is a three-year roadmap of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) to improve regulation and supervision, among other functions of the central bank

1. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has launched Utkarsh 2.0, the second phase of its medium-term strategy for strengthening regulatory and supervisory mechanisms. Utkarsh 2.0 builds upon the foundation laid by Utkarsh 2022, launched in July 2019, and covers the period from 2019 to 2022.
2. Utkarsh 2.0 will guide the RBI over the period from 2023 to 2025 and includes six vision statements that are designed to improve the performance of the RBI's statutory and other functions, enhance its relevance and significance at the national and global levels, and improve its internal governance, infrastructure, and human resources.
3. Utkarsh 2.0 will guide the RBI over the period from 2023 to 2025 and includes six vision statements that are designed to improve the performance and have - Transparent, accountable, and ethics-driven internal governance, Innovative, dynamic, and skilled human resources, Strengthened trust of citizens and institutions in the RBI among others.
4. The Reserve Bank of India is the central bank of India and was established under the Reserve Bank of India Act of 1934. It began operations on April 1, 1935, and was nationalized in 1949, with the government of India becoming its owner.



5. The headquarters of the RBI is located in Mumbai, and the current governor is Shaktikanta Das.

(SOURCE - ECONOMIC TIMES)

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

Why in the news: Traditional weavers to exhibit and sell handcrafted varieties of Saris at Handloom Haat, Janpath.

1. The second phase of the Sari Festival, "VIRAASAT,"- Celebrating 75 handwoven Saris of India, will begin from 3rd to January 17, 2023, at Handloom Haat, Janpath, New Delhi.
2. The Ministry of Textiles organizes the second phase, having 90 participants from different parts of the country, bringing enhanced attraction through the participation of famous Handcrafted varieties of Saris like Tie and Dye, Chikan embroidered Saris, Hand Block Saris, Kalamkari printed Saris, Ajrakh, Kantha and Phulkari.
3. The first phase of "VIRAASAT"- Celebrating 75 handwoven Saris of India started on December 16, 2022, and concluded on December 30, 2022.
4. A social media campaign has been launched under the ordinary hashtag #MySariMyPride to support our handloom weavers.
5. The Handloom sector is a symbol of our country's rich and varied cultural heritage, besides being one of the critical sectors employing many people, especially women. The event celebrates the tradition and the potential of the Handloom Sector at its full strength.

(SOURCE -PIB)



0. 'SMART' program for Ayurveda professionals to boost R&D in Ayurveda in the country

Why in the news: Ayush aims to open new avenues with the 'SMART' initiative for quality research in Ayurveda.

1. The National Commission for Indian System of Medicine (NCISM) and the Central Council for Research in Ayurvedic Sciences (CCRAS), the two prominent institutions under the Ministry of Ayush, Government of India for regulating medical education and conducting scientific research respectively, have launched 'SMART' (Scope for Mainstreaming Ayurveda Research in Teaching Professionals) program aimed to boost scientific research in priority healthcare research areas through Ayurveda colleges and hospitals.
2. The proposed initiative is conceptualized to identify, support, and promote innovative research ideas in healthcare research areas, including Osteoarthritis, Iron Deficiency Anaemia, Chronic Bronchitis, Dyslipidemia, Rheumatoid Arthritis, Obesity, Diabetes Mellitus, Psoriasis, Generalised Anxiety Disorder, Non-alcoholic fatty liver disease (NAFLD).
3. The eligible Ayurveda academic institutions may apply by January 10, 2023.
4. The 'SMART' program will motivate teachers to take up projects in designated areas of healthcare research and create an extensive database.



(SOURCE - PIB)

'Didir Suraksha Kawach' and 'Didir Doot' Initiatives in West Bengal



Why in the news: The public outreach comes at a time when the State government is battling scams including the recent protests at the panchayat level over irregularities in the allocation of Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana.

1. Trinamool Congress (TMC) Chief and West Bengal Chief Minister, Mamata Banerjee, has launched two initiatives ahead of the panchayat elections this year - 'Didir Suraksha Kawach' and 'Didir Doot.'



2. The program, 'Didir Suraksha Kawach,' will see 3.5 lakh party leaders reach every block and cover two crore families in 60 days, with workers staying in villages to understand the problems faced by locals and promoting the TMC government's flagship programs.
3. The 'Didir Doot' app has also been developed for people to register their problems. This initiative follows Banerjee's 'Didi ke Balo' program in 2019, which aimed to reach out to ordinary people and was successful.
4. These schemes cover all sectors, such as food, housing, health, education, social security, income, and employment, which touch a person's life.

(SOURCE -THE HINDU)

Centre has rolled out new integrated food security scheme starting 1 January 2023

Why in the news: The scheme would also ensure adequate and uniform implementation of the National Food Security Act.



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1. The Central Government of India recently announced the launch of a new integrated food security scheme, which will provide free food grains to 81.35 crore beneficiaries under the National Food Security Act (NFSA) for the year 2023.



2. The Cabinet has decided to implement this central sector scheme to fulfill the vision of "One Nation-One Price-One Ration" under Prime Minister Narendra Modi.
3. This commitment of the government is intended to benefit the most vulnerable 67% of the population, which is 81.35 crore persons covered under the NFSA.
4. The new integrated scheme will subsume two current food subsidy schemes of the Department of Food and Public Distribution- a) Food Subsidy to FCI for NFSA and b) Food Subsidy for decentralized procurement states, dealing with procurement, allocation, and delivery of free foodgrains to the states under NFSA.
5. Under the scheme, the Government of India will provide free foodgrains to all NFSA beneficiaries, i.e., Antyodaya Ann Yojana (AAY) households & Priority Household (PHH) persons, for the following year.

(SOURCE - INDIAN EXPRESS)

CJI announces launch of electronic Supreme Court Reports (e-SCR) project to provide access to judgements

Why in the news: electronic Supreme Court Reports (e-SCR) project to provide free access to about 34,000 judgments to lawyers, law students, and the common public.

1. The Chief Justice of India (CJI), D Y Chandrachudh, has announced the launch of the electronic Supreme Court Reports (e-SCR) project, which aims to provide free access to around 34,000



judgments of the apex court to lawyers, law students, and the general public.

2. These judgments will be available on the Supreme Court's website, mobile app, and on the National Judicial Data Grid's judgment portal.
3. The e-SCR project is part of the Indian judiciary's efforts towards digitization and aims to bring positive change for all stakeholders in the justice system, including litigants, members of the Bar, and judicial academies.
4. The judgments delivered by January 1, 2023, will be made available, and all decisions will be placed online within 24 hours. The Supreme Court has developed a search engine with the help of the National Informatics Centre (NIC), which uses elastic search techniques in the database of e-SCR.
5. In addition to the e-SCR project, the CJI also announced that neutral citations would be introduced in the Supreme Court. Neutral citations are standardized legal citations that do not identify the publisher of a legal document, allowing for impartial and objective referencing.



(SOURCE - TIMES OF INDIA)

U.N. Security Council welcomes new members including two first timers

Why in the news: The five latest UNSC members – Ecuador, Japan, Malta, Mozambique, and Switzerland – are replacing India, Ireland, Kenya, Mexico, and Norway, whose terms ended on December 31, 2022.



- The incoming members (Ecuador, Japan, Malta, Mozambique, and Switzerland) are replacing India, Ireland, Kenya, Mexico, and Norway, whose two-year terms have ended.
- Albania, Brazil, Gabon, Ghana, and the United Arab Emirates are currently in the middle of their two-year term as non-permanent members of the Security Council.
- The United Nations Security Council comprises 15 members, five permanent members (the United States, the United Kingdom, France, Russia, and China), and ten non-permanent members.
- The non-permanent members are elected for two-year terms by the U.N. General Assembly, with five new members replacing outgoing ones yearly.
- Becoming a member of the UNSC is a significant diplomatic accomplishment for a country, as it can increase its global profile and give smaller nations a more prominent voice on international peace and security issues.

(SOURCE - THE HINDU)

India to take over Asian Pacific Postal Union leadership

Why in the news: Asian Pacific Postal Union (APPU) is an intergovernmental organization of 32 member countries of the Asia-Pacific region. APPU is the only restricted Union of the Universal Postal Union (UPU) in the area, a specialized agency of the United Nations.



- Following the successful elections held during the 13th APPU Congress held in Bangkok during August-September, Vinaya Prakash Singh, former



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Member (Personnel) of the Postal Services Board, will take over the charge of secretary general of the Union for a tenure of four years.

- Asian Pacific Postal Union (APPU), having its Headquarters in Bangkok, Thailand, is an intergovernmental organization of 32 member countries of the Asia-Pacific region.
- APPU aims to extend, facilitate and improve postal relations between member countries and promote cooperation in the field of postal services.
- India seeks to improve the regional coordination with postal players in the Asia Pacific region to improve the growth of the business through the postal network and to ensure the sustainability of the Union.
- It is the first time an Indian is leading an international organization in the postal sector.

(SOURCE

LIVEMINT)

The world's longest river cruise that PM Narendra Modi will flag off on January 13

Why in the news: Ganga Vilas - with a capacity of 80 passengers - is a luxury river cruise vessel with 18 suites and all other associated facilities.

- PM will flag off the world's most extended river cruise – 'Ganga Vilas' – from Varanasi to Dibrugarh via Bangladesh on January 13.
- It will cover a journey of 3200 km in 50 days and pass through 27 river systems in India and Bangladesh. It will allow tourists to visit over 50 architecturally essential places, including world heritage sites.
- The river cruise will be operated by private players Antara Luxury River Cruises and J.M. Baxi River Cruises, along with the governmental partnership from the Inland Waterways Authority of



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India (IWAI). Ganga Vilas, the luxury river cruise vessel, has 18 cabins/suites and all other associated facilities.

- 'Ganga Vilas' will also pass through national parks and sanctuaries, including the Sundarbans Delta and the Kaziranga National Park.

(SOURCE -NEWS ON AIR)

PM addresses 1st All India Annual State Ministers' Conference on Water.

Why in the news: Water Vision @ 2047 is an essential dimension of the journey of Amrit Kaal for the next 25 years, and when the public is associated with a campaign, they also get to know the seriousness of the work.

- The Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi, addressed the 1st All India Annual State Ministers' Conference on Water. The theme of the conference is 'Water Vision @ 2047'.
- The forum aims to bring together critical policymakers to discuss ways to harness water resources for sustainable and human development.
- The subject of water comes under the State list in the constitution. Therefore, it is assumed that the efforts made by the state will go a long way in achieving the collective goals of the country.
- In the conference, the Prime Minister proposed that Gram Panchayats should lead the Jal Jeevan Mission. After the work is completed, they should also certify that sufficient clean water has been available.
- He also added that a system of periodic water testing should also be developed to ensure water quality.

(SOURCE - PIB)



CCEA approves Rs 2,539 crore BIND scheme for modernising Doordarshan, AIR

Why in the news: Govt plans to expand AIR FM coverage to 80% of people, distribute D.D. set-top boxes

- The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) approved the proposal on BIND, aimed at the infrastructure development of the Prasar Bharati, which includes AIR and D.D.
- To boost public sector broadcasting in India, the Union government-announced plans to expand coverage of All India Radio's F.M. channels to more than 80 percent of the population and distribute eight lacks D.D. Free Dish DTH set-top boxes (DTBs) to people living in remote areas.
- The scheme aims to promote and develop high-quality content for its domestic and global viewers and ensure the availability of a diverse range to accommodate more channels.
- The BIND scheme, through financial aid, will enable Prasar Bharati to undertake significant upgrades of its facilities with improved infrastructure, which will expand its reach to include areas with left-wing extremism, strategic locations, and border regions.

FACTS

- Prasar Bharati, established by an Act of Parliament in 1997, is a public service broadcaster in India. It is an autonomous body that operates Doordarshan and All India Radio and is responsible for distributing television and radio signals throughout India.

(SOURCE

-BUSINESS

STANDARD)



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Odisha Wins World Habitat Awards 2023 For Slum Upgradation Program

Why in the news: Under the leadership of CM Naveen Patnaik, Odisha has won the World's Habitat Award 2023.

1. Orissa has won a prestigious Bronze World Habitat award for its Jaga Mission which aims to upgrade slums in the state.
2. The Government of Odisha has set itself the ambitious target of becoming the first slum-free state in India. It leads the Jaga Mission program to upgrade the state's 2,919 slums, improving living conditions for 1.7 million people.
3. The award recognizes highly innovative, outstanding, and revolutionary ideas for housing projects and programs worldwide.
4. In 2019, Odisha's Jaga mission received World Habitat Awards for providing land tenure security to slum dwellers.



(SOURCE - TIMES NOW)

Madhya Pradesh government launch Chief Minister's Residential Land Rights Schem

Why in the news: The Residential Land Rights scheme, or Mukhyamantri Awasiya Bhu Adhikar Yojana, was launched by CM Shivraj Singh to provide correct land letters to eligible beneficiaries.

- It aims to provide free plots to the poor living in rural areas to build their houses.
- The scheme was launched in Tikamgarh district, where thousands of families were awarded plots worth ₹120 crores.



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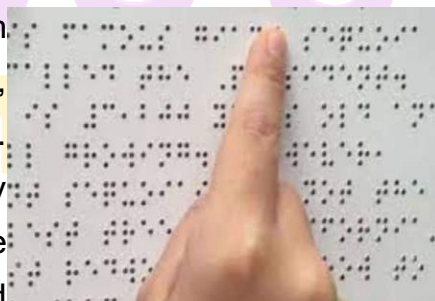
- The land will be given entirely free of cost, and along with the plot, the benefits of all other schemes will also be provided.
- The plots will be allotted in the name of both husband and wife, and no premium will be charged. Once a family gets a plot of land, it will benefit from schemes like the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojna (PMAY).
- The average size of the plot under the scheme will be around 600 sq ft but will vary a bit depending upon the availability of land.

(SOURCE - INDIAN EXPRESS)

World Braille Day 2023: Date, Theme, History, Significance, Facts & More

Why in the news: World Braille Day is celebrated on January 4, acknowledging that those with visual impairments deserve the same human rights as everyone else.

- The celebration of World Braille Day on January 4 is in honor of Louis Braille, the inventor of the Braille system. Braille was born in France on January 4, 1809, and his development of the system allowed blind individuals to read and write, increasing their independence and access to education and employment opportunities.
- The first World Braille Day was celebrated in 2019.
- Braille is a system of representing alphabetic and numerical symbols using six raised dots. The dots are arranged in a grid, with different combinations of dots representing other letters, numbers, and symbols. It allows blind individuals to read and write by feeling the raised dots with their fingers.



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- India also established the Central Braille Plant in Dehradun and the Central Braille Press in 1954, which produced simple Braille equipment such as slates and styluses.
- The Government of India has taken several steps to support people with disabilities, including enacting the Persons with Disabilities Act in 1995. This Act provides a category called "low vision" in addition to the type of "blind" and meets the stipulations of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

(SOURCE - TIMES OF INDIA)

Belinda Clark: Australia legend becomes first female cricketer to have statue

Why in the news: During her 14-year career, she hit the first double century in a one-day international, smashing 229 not out against Denmark in 1997.

- Former Australia captain Belinda Clark has become the first female cricketer to have a statue cast of her, with a bronze sculpture unveiled at the Sydney Cricket Ground.
- Clark retired from the sport in 2005 after winning two World Cups.
- She is Australia's leading Test and ODI run-scorer in women's cricket, with her highest Test score of 136 coming against England in 1998.
- The award for the best female Australian cricketer of the year is also named after Clark.



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- Since retiring from playing, Clark has held roles at Women's Cricket Australia, the Australian Cricket Academy, and the International Cricket Council's Women's Committee.

(SOURCE - BBC NEWS)

165k schools apply for PM-SHRI upgrade

Why in the news: Union Cabinet approved the ₹27,360-crore scheme for the upgradation of 14,500 schools across the country over the next five years.



- The scheme is expected to benefit 1.8 million students, ensure schools serve as model institutes, and encapsulate the spirit of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020.
- The maximum number of schools that have applied for the selection are from Uttar Pradesh (37,065), followed by Rajasthan (21,317), Madhya Pradesh (19,508), Maharashtra (16,614), and Andhra Pradesh (13,455).
- Only select schools will be able to compete for the PM-SHRI status and will be eligible to register themselves on the portal launched by the ministry on November 3, 2022.

FACTS-

- Prime Minister launched PM SHRI (PM Schools for Rising India) on September 5, 2022.
- It is a centrally sponsored scheme for the upgradation and development of more than 14500 Schools across the country. It aims at strengthening the selected existing schools from amongst schools managed by Central Government/ State/ UT Government/ local bodies.



(SOURCE HINDUSTAN TIMES)

India identifies copper and lithium mines in Argentina; to acquire soon.

Why in the news: The Government of India sent a geologist team to Argentina to assess and find potential lithium deposits in November 2022. They have identified a possible source of lithium and copper deposits in the south American country.

- Lithium is widely used in manufacturing batteries and other electronic products.
- Argentina is the fourth largest producer of lithium. It also has the third-largest reserve of minerals in the world.
- Khanij Bidesh India Ltd. (KABIL) will have ownership or leasing rights to the mines. It was established in 2019 and is a joint venture between the National Aluminium Company (Nalco), Hindustan Copper (HCL), and Mineral Exploration Corporation Ltd.
- "Lithium Triangle"- holds more than 75 percent of the world supply. It consists of Chile, Bolivia, and Argentina.
- During 2021-22 Geological Survey of India (GSI) has carried out seven projects on Lithium in Arunachal Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Jammu & Kashmir, and Rajasthan. However, the resource of lithium has yet to be augmented by GSI.



(SOURCE - BUSINESS STANDARD)

Union Minister Dr Jitendra Singh inaugurates National Genome Editing & Training Centre (NGETC) at Mohali, Punjab

Why in the news: The genome editing and training center is expected to empower researchers by providing them training and guidance about its know-how and application in crops.



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- NGETC will serve as a national platform to cater to the regional needs to adapt different genome editing methods, including CRISPR-Cas mediated genome modification.
- Genome editing is a crucial tool to cause site-specific gene mutations/changes so that essential crop traits can be developed. These mutations have the potential to mimic nature-like mutations and could be target specific in the genome. CRISPR-Cas9 has the potential to achieve these goals sustainably.
- The Minister also inaugurated a 4-day International Conference on Food and Nutritional Security 2023: - iFANS. The 4-day conference will brainstorm how genome editing could enhance the country's food and nutritional security in changing climate.
- iFANS-2023 will be jointly organized by the National Agri-Food Biotechnology Institute (NABI), Centre for Innovative and Applied Bioprocessing (CIAB), National Institute of Plant Biotechnology (NIPB), and International Centre for Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology (ICGEB) at NABI, Mohali.
- NABI, under the Department of Biotechnology, is a national institute with a mandate focusing on research activities at the interface of Agriculture, Food, and nutritional biotechnology.

(SOURCE -PIB)

Ghaziabad-Pandit Deen Dayal Upadhy section becomes India's longest rail track with automatic signaling system

Why in the news: Recently, with the commissioning of an Automatic signaling system in the Sath Naraini- Rundhi- Faizullapur Station section of Prayagraj Division, 762 KM long Ghaziabad-Pt. Deen Dayal Upadhyay section has been fully automated and has become the most extended automatic block signaling section of Indian Railways.



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- Indian Railways' Ghaziabad-Pandit Deen Dayal Upadhyay section has become the nation's longest fully Automatic Block Signalling (ABS) section. The 762 km long route has been fully automated. With its implementation, the increase in line capacity to run more train services will become possible.
- The Railways have planned to implement the project on existing high-density train routes.
- The railways have adopted the 'Electronic Interlocking' to derive benefits of digital and modern technologies in train operation and to enhance safety.
- Automatic Block Signalling (ABS) helps control the movement of the trains through automatic stop signals. These signals are operated automatically by passing trains into and out of the mechanical signaling sections.
- The system helps to increase the line capacity without constructing additional stations.

(SOURCE - PIB)

With over 5,000 delegates, Purple Fest is going to break stereotypes.

Why in the news: The first-of-its-kind inclusive festival in India, 'Purple Fest: Celebrating Diversity,' is set to begin on January 6, 2023, in Goa.



- The Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities, in collaboration with the Office of the Chief Commissioner for Persons with Disabilities (CCPD), is hosting a two-day sensitization session on January 6 and 7.
- It is an inclusive event that aims to highlight how working together can make the world more welcoming and inclusive for everyone.



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- Purple Fest will feature thrilling live performances, sporting events, major exhibitions, immersive experience zones, accessible movie screenings, and talks on important topics such as inclusive education, tourism, employment, and independent living.
- The event features exciting panel discussions, live artistic performances, large displays, immersive experience zones, and other activities.

(SOURCE - INDIAN EXPRESS)

Birsa Munda Stadium, the world's largest, to be inaugurated by CM Patnaik

Why in the news: The stadium was developed in a record nine months and is expected to offer a holistic environment for participating World Cup teams.



- The Odisha government has constructed the world's largest hockey stadium in Rourkela, named after legendary freedom fighter Bhagwan Birsa Munda.
- The FIH Odisha Hockey World Cup's mascot is 'Olly,' the endangered Olive Ridley sea turtle that travels thousands of miles across the oceans every year to make the coast of Odisha their nesting grounds.
- It is built over 15 acres of land at the Biju Patnaik University of Technology campus in Rourkela. The facility has a seating capacity of 20,000. It houses a swimming pool, a state-of-the-art fitness center, and a tunnel connecting the dressing rooms to the playground.

FACTS -

- Birsa Munda belonged to the Munda tribe in the Chotanagpur Plateau area. He led the Munda rebellion in the south of Ranchi in 1899-1900 against the British Government.



(SOURCE - THE HINDU)

World Day of War Orphans 2023

Why in the news: It is observed on January 6 to spread awareness about the war orphans' plight and address their traumatic conditions.

- The World Day of War Orphans is observed on January 6 every year to raise awareness about children orphaned in wars, spread information about their plight, and emphasize the psychological, social, and physical obstacles that children experience as they grow up.
- The French organization, SOS Enfants en Detresses, started World Day of War Orphans. The day highlights the lives of the children affected by the war's outcomes and aims for the betterment of their future.
- This year's theme is "Standing Up for War-Affected Children" and is meant to focus global attention on the challenges these children face and how to meet their needs best.
- The day has more relevance, mainly during pandemics, as it significantly impacts orphan children. The day also reminds us that caring for children in the worst circumstances is a duty, mainly during the coronavirus pandemic.



(SOURCE - TIMES OF INDIA)



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Qualcomm announces Snapdragon Satellite for two-way messaging on smartphones

Why in the news: Qualcomm announced Snapdragon Satellite developed with Iridium, which will support two-way messaging for premium smartphones and devices.



1. Snapdragon Satellite will offer global coverage from pole to pole and can support two-way messaging for emergencies, SMS texting, and other messaging applications for various purposes, such as emergencies or recreation in remote, rural and offshore locations.
2. The Snapdragon satellite can expand support to devices, including laptops, tablets, vehicles, and IoT. The satellite is planned to support 5G Non-Terrestrial Networks (NTN) as NTN satellite infrastructure and constellations become available.
1. Qualcomm is a multinational corporation known for designing and manufacturing semiconductors and wireless telecommunications products.
2. Apple announced a satellite feature for the iPhone 14 in September 2022.
3. Satellite connectivity is broadly considered the next frontier for mobile phones because it tackles the problem of "not-spots" - areas with no existing coverage.

(SOURCE -BUSINESS STANDARD)

Global food prices in 2022 hit record high amid drought, war.

Why in the news: The FAO Food Price Index dipped by 1.9% in December from a month earlier.



1. According to Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), Global prices for food commodities such as grain and vegetable oils were the highest on record last year, even after falling for nine months in a row due to Russia's war in Ukraine, drought and other factors drove up inflation and worsened hunger worldwide.



2. The FAO Food Price Index, which tracks monthly changes in the international prices of commonly traded food commodities, dipped by 1.9% in December from a month earlier
3. A drop led to the December decline in the price of vegetable oils amid shrinking import demand, expectations of increased soy oil production in South America, and lower crude oil prices. Grain and meat were also down, while dairy and sugar rose slightly.
4. The event features exciting panel discussions, live artistic performances, large displays, immersive experience zones, and other activities.

ABOUT FAO -

1. FAO is a specialized agency of the United Nations that leads international efforts to defeat hunger.
2. World Food Day is celebrated every year on October 16 to mark the anniversary of the founding of the FAO in 1945.
3. It is one of the UN food aid organizations based in Rome (Italy). The World Food Programme and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) are its sister bodies.

(SOURCE - INDIAN EXPRESS)

India to deploy platoon of women peacekeepers in Sudan

Why in the news: This will be India's largest single unit of women peacekeepers in a UN Mission since it deployed the first-ever all-women's contingent in Liberia in 2007.



1. India is set to deploy a platoon of Women Peacekeepers in Abyei on the border of Sudan and South Sudan as part of the Indian Battalion in the United Nations Interim Security Force, Abyei (UNISFA).
2. The Indian contingent, comprising two officers and 25 Other Ranks, will form part of an engagement platoon and specialize in community outreach and perform extensive security-related tasks.
3. Women peacekeepers are highly regarded in peacekeeping missions worldwide for their ability to reach out and connect with women and children in the local population, especially victims of sexual violence in conflict zones.



FACTS-

1. UN Peacekeeping forces were established in 1948 when the UNSC deployed UN military observers to the Middle East. These forces aid nations in negotiating the difficult transition from war to peace.
2. International Day of UN Peacekeepers is celebrated on date May 29 every year.

(SOURCE - THE HINDU)

BIS launches portal for mapping of industrial units and laboratories

Why in the news: Portal for mapping Industrial Units and Laboratories was launched on the 76th Foundation Day of BIS.

1. It is a centralized platform for information on industrial units and laboratories nationwide. It will enable an analysis of test facilities in the country and help entrepreneurs access



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information about testing facilities.

2. Several other initiatives, Like Standard Clubs In Schools, the Standards National Action Plan 2022-27, and revised versions of the National Building Code of India and the National Electrical Code of India, were also launched.
3. These initiatives aim to promote a focus on quality and standardization in the country and contribute to India's overall development and progress.
4. The Standard Clubs In Schools aims to expose science students in grades nine and above to quality and standardization through student-centric activities by establishing standard clubs in schools.
5. The Standards National Action Plan (SNAP) 2022-27 aims to strengthen the quality culture in India and serve as a foundation for standardization to meet the emerging technologies and concerns of Sustainability and climate change.

(SOURCE - THE HINDU)

DPIIT to organize Startup India Innovation Week from 10th January 2023 to 16th January 2023

Why in the news: Startup India Innovation Week 2023 aims to engage startup ecosystem stakeholders across the nation and spur the spirit of entrepreneurship and innovation in India.

1. Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT), Ministry of Commerce and Industry is organizing Startup India Innovation Week from January 10, 2023, to January 16, 2023, to celebrate the Indian Startup Ecosystem as well as National Startup Day (January 16, 2023).
2. The events include dedicated workshops for women entrepreneurs, training of incubators, mentorship workshops, stakeholder round tables,



conferences, capacity-building workshops, and startup pitching sessions, amongst others.

3. 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.
4. To commemorate National Startup Day on January 16, 2023, DPIIT is organizing the felicitation ceremony for the winners of National Startup Awards 2022, a flagship initiative under Startup India.

(SOURCE - PIB)

Union Minister Thakur launches themes, website & logo of Y20 Summit

Why in news: India is hosting the Y20 summit for the first time. The Youth 20 India Summit brings together the trustees of our future generations from across the G20 nations to deliberate, discuss and deduce innovative solutions to social problems.

1. The Y20 is the official youth engagement group for the G20 (Group of 20), the forum for the world's largest and most advanced economies.
2. The Y20 is a process that brings together young leaders from across the globe to discuss and debate global challenges and agree on policy recommendations they would like to see G20 leaders take forward.
3. The activities to be undertaken by Y20 during India's presidency will focus on global youth leadership and partnership.
4. Themes of Y20 i.e.
5. Future of Work: Industry 4.0, Innovation & 21st Century skills,
6. Climate Change and Disaster Risk Reduction: Making Sustainability a way of life,
7. Peacebuilding and Reconciliation: Ushering in an era of No War,



8. Shared Future: Youth in Democracy and Governance and Health, Wellbeing & Sports: Agenda for Youth.

(SOURCE -PIB)

Hyderabad to Host First-Ever Formula E World Championship Race

Why in the news: The 2.8 km street circuit track with a total of 18 turns nestles along the picturesque Necklace Road on the banks of the Hussain Sagar lake, with the iconic Gautam Buddha statue at the backdrop. The Federation of Motor Sports Clubs of India (FMSCI) is hosting the Hyderabad leg of the Formula E World Championships in February.

1. The last time an international racing event was held in India was way back in 2013 when the Buddh International Circuit hosted the Formula 1 Indian Grand Prix in October.
2. Four jumbo jets will be bringing in the cars and racing equipment. Hyderabad will conduct Round 4 of the 17 races for the 9th season of the championship, which will be organized between January and July 2023.
3. Private firm Ace Nxt Gen is the official promoter of the Formula E Race in India. The firm is working in partnership with Formula E and the Telangana government.
4. A total of 11 teams and 22 drivers will be seen participating in season nine of the world championship, where cars will clock up to speeds more than 300 kmph.



(SOURCE - LIVEMINT)

In a first, IAF woman fighter pilot to participate in aerial wargames outside country in Japan



Why in the news: The women officers have been participating in wargames with the foreign contingents coming to India, including the French Air Force, where two of the lady fighter pilots took part, but this would be the first time they would be representing the country on foreign land.



1. Squadron Leader Avni Chaturvedi will leave for Japan to participate in exercise Veer Guardian 2023. She is a Su-30 MKI pilot.
2. The Veer Guardian 2023 will be held from January 16 to January 26. This 10-day exercise will be held between the Indian Air Force and the Japanese Air Self-Defence Force (JASDF) at Japan's Hyakuri and Iruma air bases.

JAPAN-INDIA EXERCISES -

1. Veer Guardian 23 will be India and Japan's first-ever bilateral combat air exercise.
2. India and Japan are currently conducting a Dharma Guardian exercise between the armies, SHINYUU Maitri between the air forces, and JIMEX between the navies.
3. Japan has been taking part in the India-US Malabar naval combat exercise since 2015. This exercise also includes Australia.
4. Japan took part in the Milan Exercise conducted by the Indian Navy for the first time in 2022.

(SOURCE - TIMES OF INDIA)

India, U.K sign and exchange letters for Young Professionals Scheme



Why in the news: The launch of the Young Professionals Scheme, conceived as part of an India-U.K. Migration and Mobility MoU signed in May 2021, was announced at the G20 summit in November.



1. Young Indian professionals are set to have a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to live and work in the U.K. for up to two years under Young Professionals Scheme.
2. The scheme allows up to 3,000 degree-holding citizens aged 18 and 30 to live and work in each other's countries for two years.
3. India is the first "visa-national country" to benefit from such a visa scheme, highlighting the strength of the UK-India migration and mobility partnership agreed upon last year.
4. The Young Professionals Scheme offers a unique opportunity for young Indians and Britons to gain international experience and expand their cultural horizons. It also has the potential to strengthen ties between the two countries by fostering cultural exchange and building networks of professionals.

(SOURCE -THE HINDU)

PM to inaugurate 26th National Youth Festival in Hubballi, Karnataka on 12th January

Why in the news: The program is being held on National Youth Day, which is celebrated on the birth anniversary of Swami Vivekanand, to honor and cherish his ideals, teachings, and contributions.



1. The National Youth Festival is held annually to expose our talented youth at the national level, galvanizing them towards nation-building. It brings



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diverse cultures from all parts of the country on a common platform and unites the participants in the spirit of Ek Bharat and Shreshtha Bharat.

2. This year, the Festival is being held in Hubballi-Dharwad in Karnataka from the 12th to the 16th of January, with the theme being "Viksit Yuva - Viksit Bharat."
3. The new initiative will improve the performance of blocks lagging on various development parameters to ensure holistic development in all areas.
4. The program will initially cover 500 districts across 31 states and Union Territories for quarterly ranking based on their performance in health, education, and nutrition sectors.
5. The Youth Summit will witness discussions on five themes covering diverse areas of work, industry, and innovation; climate change; health; peace; and shared future.
6. Competitive events will include folk dances and songs and will be held to provide an impetus to local traditional cultures. Non-competitive events will include Yogathon, which aims to mobilize close to 10 lakh people to do Yoga. National-level performers will also present eight indigenous sports and martial arts during the event.

(SOURCE - LIVEMINT)

RBI unveils plans to raise ₹16,000 crore via Sovereign Green Bonds

Why in the news: For the first time, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) will issue Sovereign Green Bonds (SgrBs) worth Rs 16,000 crore in two tranches of Rs 8,000 crore each in the current financial year. The first batch of 5 and 10-year tenor bonds will be issued on January 25 for ₹4,000 crores each.



1. The RBI will auction 5-year and 10-year green bonds worth ₹4,000 crores each on January 25 and on February 9, which would be a uniform price auction.
2. Green bonds are bonds issued by any sovereign entity or corporates whose proceeds are utilized for funding environmentally sustainable projects such as renewable energy, clean transportation, energy efficiency, sustainable water, waste management, etc.
3. The only difference between Green Bonds and other ordinary government-issued bonds is that the funds from investors are only used to support initiatives that positively influence the environment.
4. The government issued the framework for the sovereign green bond in November 2022. The framework established a committee headed by the Chief Economic Adviser to select eligible projects for financing.
5. Green Bonds will help the government tap the requisite finance from potential investors for deployment in public sector projects to reduce the economy's carbon intensity.

(SOURCE - NEWS ON AIR)

National Health Authority (NHA) introduces new system to measure and grade performance of hospitals empaneled under Ayushman Bharat PM-JAY scheme

Why in the news: The aim is to shift the focus of measuring hospitals' performance from the volume of services provided to the value of healthcare services.

1. The new initiative will introduce the concept of 'value-based care,' where payment will be outcome-based, and providers will be



rewarded according to the quality of the treatment delivered and not the quantity.

2. Under value-based care, the performance of AB PM-JAY impaneled hospitals will be measured based on five performance indicators such as:

1. Beneficiary Satisfaction;
 2. Hospital Readmission Rate;
 3. The extent of Out-of-Pocket Expenditure;
 4. Confirmed Grievances and
 5. Improvement in-patient's Health-Related Quality of Life.
1. The hospital's performance based on the above indicators shall also be made available on a public dashboard to help the beneficiaries make an informed decision.
 2. In this way, the hospital's performance shall not only determine the financial incentive of the hospital but also create a demand for quality treatment of beneficiaries under PMJAY.

Ayushman Bharat-PMJAY

1. Launched in February 2018, it offers a sum insured of Rs.5 lakh per family for secondary care (which doesn't involve a super-specialist) and tertiary care (which involves a super-specialist).
2. The National Health Authority (NHA) has been constituted as an autonomous entity under the Society Registration Act of 1860 to effectively implement PM-JAY in alliance with state governments.

(SOURCE - PIB)

Odisha: Bhitarkanika National Park witness rise in number of birds this year

Why in the news: Bhitarkanika National Park is a prime location for birds of different species and 130 km from Odisha's capital Bhubaneswar.



1. The recent census report of birds released by the



forest department in Odisha said that the number of migratory birds in Bhitarkanika National Park has risen to 1,39,959 this winter compared to last year's count of 1,38,107 birds.

2. However, the diversity of species has decreased compared to last year. This year the Bhitarkanika National Park saw 140 species of birds compared to 144 last year.

FACTS -

1. Bhitarkanika National Park is located in the Kendrapara district of Odisha.
2. It is India's second-largest mangrove ecosystem after the Sunderbans. It is home to the country's largest congregation of endangered Salt Water Crocodiles.
3. This National Park is a network of creeks and canals inundated with waters from Brahmani, Baitarani, Dhamra, and Patasala forming a unique ecosystem.

(SOURCE -TIMES OF INDIA)

Joshimath crisis: What is land subsidence and why does it happen?

Why in the news: The exact reason behind Joshimath land subsidence is still unknown, but experts cite unplanned construction, over-population, obstruction of the natural flow of water, and hydel power activities as possible causes.

1. According to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), subsidence is the "sinking of the ground because of underground material movement."



2. It can happen for various reasons, man-made or natural, such as removing water, oil, or natural resources and mining activities. Earthquakes, soil erosion, and soil compaction are well-known subsidence causes.



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3. The primary cause of the land subsidence in Joshimath is believed to be the National Thermal Power Corporation's Tapovan Vishnugad Hydro Power Project. However, climate change is also a contributing factor.
4. Over 60 families living in uninhabitable houses have already been moved to temporary relief centers, with at least 90 more families set to be evacuated.

(SOURCE - INDIAN EXPRESS)

India to observe National Science Day on Feb 28 with new theme

Why in the news: National Science Day is celebrated every year on February 28 to commemorate the discovery of the 'Raman Effect' by Indian physicist Sir C. V. Raman on February 28, 1928.

Union minister Jitendra Singh released the "National Science Day 2023" theme, "Global Science for Global Wellbeing." The theme indicates India's emerging global role and rising visibility in the international arena.



It also coincides with India's assumption of the presidency of the G20, where it will become the voice of the Global South, comprising developing countries in Asia, Africa, and South America.

On this day, Sir C.V. Raman announced the discovery of the 'Raman Effect' for which he was awarded the Nobel Prize in 1930.

FACTS -

- National Science Day was first celebrated in India in 1986, following a request by the National Council for Science and Technology Communication (NCSTC) to the Government of India.
- The celebration of National Science Day aims to spread awareness about the importance of science in daily life and to showcase the efforts and achievements in the field of science for human welfare.

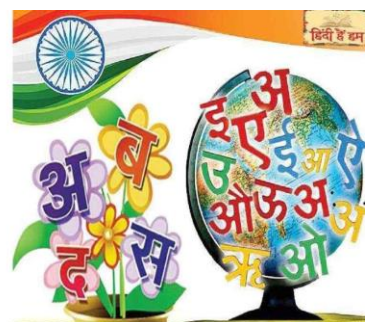


(SOURCE - LIVEMINT)

World Hindi Day 2023

Why in the news: World Hindi Day is an opportunity to celebrate Hindi as a universal language. The day marks the anniversary of the first time Hindi was spoken in the United Nations General Assembly in 1949.

1. World Hindi Day, also known as Vishwa Hindi Diwas, is annually observed on January 10.
2. To commemorate the date in 1949 when Hindi was first spoken in the UNGA Vishwa, Hindi Diwas was established.
3. Hindi is the third most spoken language in the world after Mandarin Chinese and English, with almost 600 million speakers worldwide.
4. The main theme of the 2023 World Hindi Day conference is "Hindi: Traditional Knowledge of Artificial Intelligence." This conference will take place at Denarau Island Convention Center, Nadi, Fiji.



FACTS -

1. The first-ever World Hindi Conference, inaugurated by the then-prime minister Indira Gandhi, was held in Maharashtra's Nagpur in 1975 to commemorate the accomplishment.
2. National Hindi Day is commemorated on September 14 annually.

(SOURCE - TIMES OF INDIA)



1. In 2021, 2.8 million children in sub-Saharan Africa died before reaching their



fifth birthday: UN report

Why in the news: The root cause of these deaths is a lack of access to basic rights such as quality healthcare, vaccinations, food, clean water, and sanitation.

1. According to the latest estimates released by the United Nations Inter-agency Group for Child Mortality Estimation (UN-IGME), Sub Saharan region accounted for 6 percent of all global under-five deaths in 2021.
2. With 2.8 million children dying in 2021, sub-Saharan Africa is at the highest risk of childhood deaths in the World, according to Levels and trends in child mortality report 2022.
3. The rate is 15 times higher than in Europe and North America and 19 times higher than in Australia and New Zealand.
4. Globally, the under-five mortality rate (U5MR) fell to 38 deaths per 1,000 live births in 2021, while it was 74 deaths per 1,000 live births under-five mortality rate (U5MR) for Sub-Saharan Africa.

(SOURCE -DOWN TO EARTH)



0. World's most powerful passports: Japan tops the list



Why in the news: According to Henley Passport Index, Japanese passport holders can visit 193 of 227 destinations visa-free. An Indian passport holder, on the other hand, can visit 59 destinations without a visa.

1. According to Henley Passport Index 2023, the Japanese passport is the most powerful among all passports in the World (for the fifth time), as it allows visa-free access to as many as 193 countries.
2. Conversely, India improved its position by two spots from last year and is currently ranked 85th on the index.
3. Mauritanian and Uzbekistan passports are as powerful as that of India.
4. Japan is followed by Singapore and South Korea on the list of the World's most powerful passports for 2023.
5. Afghanistan is at the bottom, while Iraq and Syria were ranked the second and third worst passports to hold, respectively.
6. Invented nearly 20 years ago by Dr. Christian H Kaelin, Chairman, Henley & Partners, the index is based on exclusive and official data from the International Air Transport Association (IATA). It is the original ranking of all the passports according to the number of destinations their holders can visit without a prior visa.

(SOURCE - THE FINANCIAL EXPRESS)



Successful training launch of Short-Range Ballistic Missile, Prithvi-II, carried out off Odisha coast

Why in the news: India carried out a successful training launch of the Prithvi-II Short Range Ballistic Missile (SRBM). The training launch was conducted from the Integrated Test Range in Chadinpur off the coast of Odisha.



1. The Prithvi-II was earlier successfully test-fired during night hours in 2018 and 2019.
2. The nuclear-capable Prithvi-II Short Range Ballistic Missile was inducted into the Strategic Forces Command in 2003.
3. It is the first missile developed under Defence Research and Development Organization's prestigious Integrated Guided Missile Development Program (IGMDP).
4. The surface-to-surface missile, which has a strike range of 350 km, is powered by light propulsion twin engines.
5. It uses an advanced inertial navigation system to engage its target with enhanced precision and can carry payloads weighing 500 kg to 1000 kg.

Integrated Guided Missile Development Programme (IGMDP)

1. IGMDP was an Indian Ministry of Defence program to research and develop a comprehensive range of missiles. The project started in 1982-1983 under the leadership of Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam.
2. Five Missiles Developed under the IGMDP:
 - PRITHVI (Short range surface-to-surface ballistic missile)
 - AGNI (Medium to intercontinental surface-to-surface missile)
 - TRISHUL (Short range low-level surface-to-air missile)
 - AKASH (Surface-to-air missile having a range of up to 25 Km and a multi-target handling system)
 - NAG (Third generation "fire & forget," "top attack" anti-tank missile)

(SOURCE - NEWS ON AIR)



DAC nod to VSHORAD missile systems being designed by DRDO

Why in the news: Acceptance of Necessity (AoN) accorded to three capital acquisition proposals – two of the Army and one of the Navy – totaling Rs 4,276 crore.



1. The DAC also accorded AoN to procure the VSHORAD (IR Homing) missile system under design and development by DRDO.
2. The DAC accorded AoN for procurement of HELINA Anti-Tank Guided Missiles, launchers, and associated support equipment, which will be integrated into the Advanced Light Helicopter (ALH).
3. DAC approved the procurement of Brahmos Launcher and Fire Control System (FCS) for the Shivalik class of ships & Next Generation Missile Vessels (NGMVs) for Indian Navy.

FACTS -

1. The Defence Acquisition Council (DAC) was formed after recommendations made by the Group of Ministers on 'Reforming the National Security System' in 2001, post-Kargil war.
2. DAC is the highest decision-making body in the Defence Ministry (headed by the Minister of Defence) for deciding on new policies and capital acquisitions for the three services - Army, Navy and Air Force, and the Indian Coast Guard.
3. The objective of the DAC is to ensure the faster procurement of the approved requirements of the armed forces in terms of capabilities sought and time frame prescribed by optimally utilizing budgetary resources.

(SOURCE - PIB)

MSME minister Narayan Rane launches web portal for World Bank-assisted RAMP scheme



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Why in the news: Minister of MSMEs recently launched the web portal for the Rs 6,062.45 crore World Bank-assisted central government scheme, Raising and Accelerating MSME Performance (RAMP).

1. The scheme will begin with five states - Gujarat, Maharashtra, Punjab, Rajasthan, and Tamil Nadu, which are home to reportedly 54% of all registered MSMEs in the country.
2. A portal has been launched at the Regional Conference on Sustainable Development of MSMEs in the Northeast Region in Agartala to "scale up the implementation capacity and coverage of MSMEs in the country.
3. The scheme was originally announced in 2020 by the government and the World Bank to support Covid-hit MSMEs in the country. It aims to improve the performance of 5.55 lakh MSMEs by supporting institutional and policy reforms, research studies, and technology upgradation.
4. It is in line with the recommendations of the U K Sinha Committee, KV Kamath Committee, and the Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister (PMEAC).
5. During the first year of implementation, FY23, the RAMP scheme will invite states and union territories to prepare a financing roadmap called Strategic Investment Plans (SIPs).
6. The SIPs would include an outreach plan for the identification and mobilization of MSMEs under RAMP, identify key constraints and gaps, set milestones, and project the required budgets for interventions in priority sectors, including renewable energy, rural & non-farm business, wholesale and retail trade, village and cottage industries, women enterprises, etc.

(SOURCE -THE HINDU)

Kerala Govt's Year of Enterprises project gets recognition for 'best practice model' to promote MSMEs



Why in the news: The project by Kerala Government was started in the current fiscal year to create one lakh enterprises in one year.

1. The Kerala government's Industries department got recognition from the center for its Year of Enterprises project, which was selected as one of the best practices in the 'Thrust on Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs)' category.
2. Under this project, more than one lakh enterprises were set up in eight months in Kerala.
3. The Year of Enterprises has been regarded as the best practice model in the second Chief Secretaries National Conference held in New Delhi from January 5-7.
4. Kerala's ranking in the Ease of Doing Business index has improved to 15th this year from 28th.
5. As many as 1,01,353 enterprises were set up under the project, and the total investment stood at around Rs 6,282 crore by November 2022. The state government has set a target to scale up 1,000 MSMEs and turn them into Rs 100 crore turnover companies in the next three years.



(SOURCE - LIVEMINT)

Golden Globe Awards 2023

Why in the news: The 80th Annual Golden Globe Awards have been announced by the Hollywood Foreign Press Association (HFPA).



1. The Golden Globe Award is an American accolade bestowed by the 93 members of the Hollywood Foreign Press Association (HFPA), recognizing excellence in



film and television, both domestic and foreign. It was first awarded in 1944.

2. The 'Naatu Naatu' song from the blockbuster Telugu film 'RRR' has been shortlisted for the 2023 Oscar Awards in the 'Best Original Song' category.
3. The Gujarati film 'Chhello Show' was also shortlisted in the 'Best International Feature Film' category.

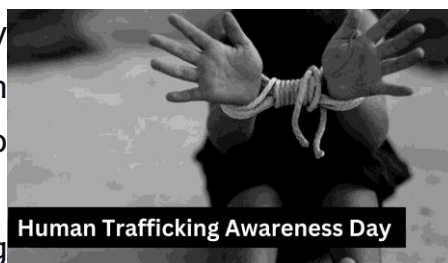
'RRR' was nominated in two categories, 'Best Picture - Non-English Language' and 'Original Song - Motion Picture' in Golden Globe Awards 2023. Directed by SS Rajamouli, the film became a runaway hit in the USA after it came out in Hindi on Netflix.

(SOURCE - TIMES OF INDIA)

National Human Trafficking Awareness Day 2023

Why in the news: Human trafficking, also known as trafficking in persons, is a type of modern-day slavery that involves the illegal transportation of individuals by force or deception for labor, sexual exploitation, or activities that benefit others financially.

1. National Human Trafficking Awareness Day is observed annually in the United States on 11th January. The day is dedicated to raising awareness about human trafficking.
2. The theme of National Human Trafficking Awareness Day is to wear blue to raise awareness.
3. Human trafficking is the use of force, deception, or coercion to obtain labor or commercial sex acts.
4. Since the US Senate established this day of observance in 2007, it has drawn massive public support from individuals and government-organized events.



(SOURCE - CNBC)

'A great day for the country': Uganda declares an end to Ebola outbreak

Why in the news: Uganda's outbreak was caused by the Sudan Ebola virus, one of six species of the Ebola virus and for which there is currently no confirmed vaccine.

1. Uganda declared an end to an Ebola virus outbreak that emerged almost four months ago and claimed the lives of 55 people.



2. The Country has reported no new infections in more than 42 days - twice the maximum incubation period of the virus, a World Health Organization benchmark for a country to be declared Ebola-free.

FACTS -

The Ebola virus transmits from wild animals to people. It spreads among the human population through a human-to-human population.

The natural hosts of the Ebola virus are fruit bats.

1. The methods used to diagnose Ebola are ELISA, Serum neutralization test, electron microscopy, virus isolation by cell culture, reverse transcriptase polymerase chain reaction (RT-PCR), and antigen capture detection tests.
2. The fatality rate of Ebola is 50%.

(SOURCE -DOWN TO EARTH)

World Bank makes big cut to its 2023 growth outlook, says globe is 'perilously close' to recession

Why in the news: Given fragile economic conditions, any new adverse development—such as higher-than-expected inflation, abrupt rises in interest



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rates to contain it, a resurgence of the COVID-19 pandemic, or escalating geopolitical tensions—could push the global economy into recession.

1. It is a flagship report (published twice a year) it examines global economic developments and prospects, with a special focus on emerging markets and developing economies (EMDEs)
2. Global growth is slowing sharply in the face of elevated inflation, higher interest rates, reduced investment, and disruptions caused by Russia's invasion of Ukraine, according to the World Bank's latest Global Economic Prospects report.
3. The World Bank slashed its 2023 global economic growth outlook to 1.7% 2023 from its earlier projection of 3%.
4. It would mark the first time in more than 80 years that two global recessions have occurred within the same decade.
5. It would mark the first time in more than 80 years that two global recessions have occurred within the same decade.

About World Bank -

1. It has 189 member countries. India is also a member country. Major Reports:
 - Ease of Doing Business.
 - Human Capital Index.
 - World Development Report.
 - Migration and Development Brief.
 - Global Economic Prospects.

(SOURCE - THE FINANCIAL EXPRESS)

Road Safety Week from 11th to 17th January 2023

Why in the news: During National Road Safety Week, celebrated from January 11 to 17 every year, various organizations and groups unite to educate the public about the consequences of reckless or negligent driving.

1. 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.



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2. During the Week, various activities are being organized throughout the Country to create awareness among the general public and to allow all stakeholders to contribute to the cause of road safety.
3. It includes various awareness campaigns related to the 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.
4. In addition, road-owning agencies such as NHAI, NHIDCL, etc., will conduct special drives related to compliance with traffic rules and regulations, pedestrian safety, eye check-up camps for drivers, and other road engineering-related initiatives throughout the Country.

(SOURCE - PIB)

Vice President inaugurates 83rd Conference of All India Presiding Officers' in Jaipur

Why in the news: The Vice President & Chairman Rajya Sabha, Shri Jagdeep Dhankhar, described India as the 'Mother of Democracy' and stressed that the essence of democracy lies in the prevalence of the mandate of the people and securing their welfare.



1. Vice President and Rajya Sabha Chairman Jagdeep Dhankhar inaugurated the two-day 83rd All India Presiding Officers Conference in Jaipur.
2. Om Birla is the Speaker of the Lok Sabha. Speakers and Deputy Speakers from various Legislative Assemblies, including the Deputy Chairman of the Rajya Sabha, were also present during the meeting.
3. The All India Presiding Officers' Conference (AIPOC) is the apex body of the Legislatures in India that completed its hundred years in 2021. The first Conference was also held in Shimla in 1921.



4. The upcoming 83rd session will focus on the following themes of contemporary relevance in its day-long discussions -
- The leadership of India in G-20 as the mother of democracy
 - The need to make Parliament and Legislature more Effective, Accountable and Productive
 - Integration of State Legislatures with Digital Parliament
 - The need to maintain a harmonious relationship between the Legislature and the Judiciary under the spirit of the Constitution
1. It is the fourth time that the Conference has been organized in the city of Jaipur.

(SOURCE -THE HINDU)

Uttar Pradesh govt launches 100-day 'UP Global City' campaign ahead of Global Investors Summit

Why in the news: The campaign will be implemented in all 762 urban bodies in the state.

1. The 100-day' UP Global City' campaign has been launched in all 762 urban bodies. The campaign will focus on urban facilities, improving air quality, cleanliness, and beautification. It also aims for garbage disposal, garbage installation, etc.
2. This move aims to transform the lifestyle of urban bodies of the state on par with global standards. State Urban Development and Energy Minister Arvind Kumar Sharma launched the campaign.
3. Global Investors Summit is a three-day long Global Investors Summit that will begin on February 10, 2023, and conclude on February 12, 2023, in Lucknow.
4. The Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath-led government has set a goal of making the state a USD 1 trillion economy in the next five years.



(SOURCE - LIVEMINT)



Bangalore, Delhi in Top 10 best-performing global airports of 2022

Why in the news: The travel and aviation sector returned to normalcy last year after the restrictions and regulations imposed due to the COVID-19 outbreak eased.

1. Tracking the performance of airports and airlines, Cirium issued a list of the top-performing global airports of 2022, in which Bangalore's Kempegowda International Airport won the 2nd rank. In contrast, Delhi's Indira Gandhi International Airport acquired the 7th spot.
 2. Delhi's IGI witnessed 81.84% on-time departure for 411,205 flights, while Kempegowda International Airport saw on-time departure for 84.08% of 201,897 flights.
 3. The top 10 airports, according to Cirium, are:
 - Haneda Airport (Tokyo, Japan)
 - Kempegowda International Airport (Bangalore, India)
 - Salt Lake City International Airport (Utah, US)
 - Detroit Metropolitan Wayne County Airport (Michigan, US)
 - Philadelphia International Airport (Pennsylvania, US)
 - Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport (Minnesota, US)
 - Indira Gandhi International Airport (Delhi, India)
 - Seattle-Tacoma International Airport (Washington, US)
 - El Dorado International Airport (Bogota, Colombia)
 - Charlotte Douglas International Airport (North Carolina, US)
- Cirium also released a list of the most punctual airlines worldwide, with Azul Airlines coming out as the "global leader." Azul is a Brazilian carrier based in São Paulo that offers flights to destinations within Brazil and other parts of South America, North America, and Europe.



(SOURCE - TIMES OF INDIA)



0. The Global Risks Report 2023

Why in the news: The report, published ahead of the Davos summit for the last 17 years, factors the views of 1,200 figures across the private and public sectors.



1. The World Economic Forum's annual Global Risks Report highlights the cost of living crisis as the biggest short-term risk facing the world right now, with climate change as the biggest long-term threat.
2. It examines risks across five categories: economic, environmental, geopolitical, societal, and technological.
3. This year's edition – produced with professional services firm Marsh McLennan and Zurich Insurance Group – said that Russia's war in Ukraine and the Covid-19 pandemic had propelled the energy crisis, food scarcity, and inflation as the most pressing global issues.
4. The report says the world must collaborate more effectively on climate mitigation and adaptation over the next decade to avoid "ecological breakdown" and continued global warming.
5. The World Economic Forum Davos summit begins on January 16 with the tagline "cooperation in a fragmented world."

(SOURCE - CNBC)

With \$10.8 billion, Bengaluru top city on start-up funding in 2022: Report

Why in the news: There were 22 unicorns in 2022, compared to 46 in 2021, and average funding before the unicorn round was around \$160 million



1. According to Tracxn, Bengaluru topped the startup funding chart in India with \$10.8 billion in 2022, followed by Mumbai at \$3.9 billion and Gurugram at a distant \$2.6 billion.
2. It is now taking an average of 5.1 years from Series A funding to the Unicorn round for the Indian startups.
3. LetsVenture, AngelList, and Y Combinator have topped the list of most active investors in 2022.
4. Despite the impact on funding in the tech sector, Byju's has topped the list of the highest funding raised in 2022. The tech giant raised over \$1.2 billion in 2022 from existing investors, which amounted to almost 50% of the total funding received in the tech sector.



FACTS -

1. A startup company with a valuation of over \$1 billion is referred to as a unicorn.
2. According to ASK Private Wealth Hurun India Future Unicorn Index 2022 - with 84 unicorns - India is ranked third globally in terms of the number of unicorns featured in the list.

(SOURCE - BUSINESS STANDARD)

Tamil Nadu Assembly passes resolution asking Centre to implement Sethusamudram project

Why in the news: The project, which aims to create a shipping route between India and Sri Lanka, had been the focal point of political and religious tensions for decades.

1. The project was originally conceived in 1860 by Commander Taylor at the cost of Rs. 50 lakh.



2. Local fishermen and environmentalists have opposed the scheme, saying that digging would mean that the seabed scooped from the straits will be dumped in deeper water out to sea. They say this will endanger a rich biosphere reserve with 400 endangered species, including sea turtles, dolphins, dugongs, and whales.
3. The bridge is 48 km long and separates the Gulf of Mannar (southwest) from the Palk Strait (northeast).

FACTS -

1. Sethusamudram Ship Channel Project envisages the dredging of a ship channel across the Palk Straits between India and Sri Lanka.
2. Two channels will be created - one across Adam's Bridge (the chain of islets and shallows linking India with Sri Lanka), southeast of Pamban Island, and another through the shallows of Palk Bay, deepening the Palk Straits.
3. To reduce the steaming distances between the east and west coasts of India and to improve navigation within the territorial waters of India, this project was envisaged.
4. The channel will cut short sailing of an additional distance of 254-424 nautical miles and 21-36 hours of sailing time.

(SOURCE -TIMES OF INDIA)

Petroleum Minister Hardeep S. Puri to address Bioenergy Summit Programme of CII

Why in the news: The Union Minister for Petroleum and Natural Gas, Hardeep S. Puri, addressed the 11th edition of the Confederation of Indian Industry's flagship event, the Bio Energy Summit.



1. The summit's theme is 'Energy Transition - Solution for a Sustainable Tomorrow.'
2. The summit will provide an opportunity for innovators and a way forward for clean and green energy solutions for the future. It will also dwell upon the relevance of biofuel in the overall sustainability agenda.
3. CII Bio-Energy Summit 2023 will see more than 30 speakers across six sessions focusing on compressed biogas, ethanol, financing, and waste to biofuels, besides ministerial sessions.
4. India has increased the ethanol blending in petrol from 1.53% in 2013-14 to 10.17% in July 2022.
5. The Government's strategy of setting up 2G refineries to make ethanol from Parali (Panipat) and Bamboo (Numaligarh) with the dual objective of reducing pollution and achieving energy security goals is another milestone in this direction.

(SOURCE - LIVEMINT)

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

Why in the news: The National Centre for Drinking Water, Sanitation and Quality in Kolkata has been renamed as Dr. Syama Prasad Mookerjee National Institution of Water and Sanitation,



1. Dr. Syama Prasad Mookerjee National Institute of Water and Sanitation has been set up at the cost of around Rs. 100 Crore, on 8.72 acres of land at Joka, Diamond Harbour Road, Kolkata, West Bengal.
2. Through this apex institute on Water and Sanitation, the Department of Drinking Water and Sanitation (DDWS) aims to bridge the knowledge and capacity-building gap in the field of public health engineering, sanitation & hygiene through short, medium & long-term courses which are not just



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related to engineering but also cover aspects of management, health, accounting, law, and public policies.

3. The conference was chaired by the Union Minister for Kal Shakti, Shri Gajendra Singh Shekhawat.

(SOURCE -THE HINDU)

Culture Ministry organises a grand curtain raiser program 'Sur Sarita - Symphony of Ganga' at Kashi Vishwanath Corridor on the eve of launch of world's longest river cruise

Why in the news: With the launch of the world's longest river cruise MV Ganga Vilas, a new history will be created in India's waterways sector, which will also mark the beginning of a new era of river cruise tourism.

1. Ministry of Culture will organize a grand curtain raiser cultural program, 'Sur Sarita - Symphony of Ganga,' on the eve of the launch of the world's longest river cruise today in Varanasi.
2. Ganga Vilas Cruise will cross Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Bangladesh, and Assam in a journey of 51 days.
3. Renowned singer Shankar Mahadevan will lead a grand concert being organized at the Kashi Vishwanath Corridor.
4. National Council of Science Museums (NCSM), Kolkata, under the Ministry of Culture, is organizing a Mobile Science Exhibition on Maa Gange: Arth Ganga from January 12. The exhibition will be flagged off from Varanasi before the concert.
5. The exhibition is a tribute to the Ganga for public awareness about the conservation and restoration of the holy river. The exhibition will travel to the districts/sites near the river Ganges.

(SOURCE - NEWS ON AIR)

PM Modi inaugurates Tent City, lays foundation stone for several waterways projects in Varanasi



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Why in the news: The Tent City will provide tourist accommodation facilities, live classical music, and yoga sessions.

1. Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated Tent City and laid the foundation stones of several waterways project worth more than Rs 1,000 crores in Varanasi.
2. The Tent City, developed by the Varanasi Development Authority in public-private partnership mode on the banks of the Ganga, aims to increase tourism opportunities in the region.
3. It can be accessed by boats from different ghats of Varanasi. It will provide accommodation facilities to tourists and live classical music and yoga sessions.
4. The Tent City will be operational from October to June and dismantled for three months due to the rise in river water level in the rainy season.

(SOURCE - PIB)

Union Minister Sonowal and Tripura CM inaugurate School of Logistics, Waterways and Communication

Why in the news: This new institution aims to provide world-class education and training to the region's talented individuals, allowing them to excel in the transportation and logistics industry.



1. To unlock the promised economic potential of the Northeast, the School of Logistics, Waterways, and Communication inaugurated in Agartala will enable the innate capacity of human resources along our abundant waterways.
2. The school will encourage the rich pool of talent in the region to become world-class experts in the transportation and logistics sector.
3. The Centre for Logistics, Communication, and Waterways would facilitate conducting studies/research, training, workshops/seminars for stakeholders



like businesses, exporters/importers, Chambers of Commerce and Industries, local entrepreneurs, tourist operators, etc., to improve the logistics and transport sector.

4. It has been set up under the State Institute of Public Administration and Rural Development (SIPARD).
5. SIPARD is an autonomous body funded by the Government of Tripura and partially by the Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India.

(SOURCE - INDIAN EXPRESS)

0. Odisha government's CAMPA steering committee approves ₹1,086 crore

U'S
PREP

action plan for 2023-24

Why in the news: The Odisha government's State-level steering committee for the Compensatory Afforestation Fund Management and Planning Authority (CAMPA) has approved an annual plan of INR 1,086 crore for the 2023-24 fiscal year, with a focus on reducing man-animal conflict.

1. The CAMPA annual plan of operations (APO) for 2023-24 emphasizes taking up plantations and other activities such as maintenance of old plantations, forest protection, fire protection, simultaneous silvicultural operations for bamboo forests, soil and moisture conservation activities in



forest lands, wildlife management, relocation of villages from protected areas, and forest infrastructure development

FACTS -

1. The Compensatory Afforestation Fund Act 2016, which came into being more than a decade since it was devised, established an independent authority – the Compensatory Afforestation Fund Management and Planning Authority – to execute the fund.
2. Per the rules, 90% of the CAF money is to be given to the states, while the Centre retains 10%.
3. Compensatory afforestation means that whenever forest land is diverted for non-forest purposes such as mining or industry, the user agency pays for planting forests over an equal area of non-forest land, or when such land is unavailable, twice the area of degraded forest land.

(SOURCE - BUSINESS STANDARD)

Centre approves proposal to invite online applications for opening Janaushadhi Kendra in 651 districts

Why in the news: The Pharmaceuticals and Medical Devices Bureau of India (PMBI), the implementing agency of PMBJP, invited online applications to open new Jan Aushadhi Kendras in 651 districts of different States/UTs.



1. With an objective of making quality generic medicines available at affordable prices to all, Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Janaushadhi Pariyojana (PMBJP) was launched by the Department of Pharmaceuticals, Ministry of Chemicals & Fertilizers, Government.
2. Under this scheme, there are already more than 9000 Jan Aushadhi Kendras functional across the country.
3. The Government has set a target to increase the number of Jan Aushadhi Kendras to 10,000 by March 2024.



4. The product basket of PMBJP comprises 1759 medicines and 280 surgical devices covering all major therapeutic groups.
5. Under PMBJP, an incentive of Rs. 5.00 lakh is provided to the Jan Aushadhi Kendras as financial assistance, and a one-time additional incentive of Rs. 2.00 lakh (as reimbursement for IT and Infra expenditure) is provided to Jan Aushadhi Kendras opened in North-Eastern States, Himalayan areas, island territories and backward areas identified as aspirational districts by NITI Ayog or if opened by Women Entrepreneur, Ex-serviceman, Divyang, SCs & STs.

(SOURCE - TIMES OF INDIA)

Sweden's LKAB finds Europe's biggest deposit of rare earth metals

Why in the news: Swedish state-owned mining company LKAB had identified more than 1 million tonnes of rare earth oxides in the Kiruna area in the far north of the country, the largest known deposit in Europe.



1. Rare earth minerals are essential to many high-tech manufacturing processes and are used in electric vehicles, wind turbines, portable electronics, microphones, and speakers.
2. Rare earth elements need to be mined in Europe, leaving the region depending on imports from elsewhere. At the same time, demand is expected to rise in the coming years due to a ramp-up in electric vehicles and renewable energy.
3. India has 6% of the world's rare earth reserves, it only produces 1% of global output, and it meets most of its requirements of such minerals from China.
4. The vast majority of rare earth is currently mined in China.

FACTS -



1. Rare Earth Minerals have unique magnetic, luminescent, and electrochemical properties and thus are used in many modern technologies.
2. They are a set of seventeen metallic elements. These include the fifteen lanthanides on the periodic table and scandium and yttrium, which show similar physical and chemical properties to the lanthanides.

(SOURCE -CNBC)

Four dinosaur species found in Chilean valley for first time: Study

Why in the news: The fossils were found in Cerro Guido, in southern Chile's Las Chinas valley near the border with Argentina.

1. Scientists have found the remains of four species of dinosaurs, including a mega raptor, in a barren valley in Chilean Patagonia that has emerged over the past decade as an essential fossil deposit.
2. They belong to dinosaurs that have yet to be identified in the area.
3. Each collaborated with the University of Chile and the University of Texas on the expedition.
4. They identified the remains - including teeth and postcranial bone pieces - of four species of dinosaur, including the mega raptor, which belongs to the theropod family.
5. These carnivorous dinosaurs inhabited 66 and 75 million years ago, at the end of the Cretaceous period.



(SOURCE - CNBC)



Indian Railways to launch Bharat Gaurav Tourist Train

Why in the news: The unique pilgrimage initiative known as "Shri Ram-Janaki Yatra: Ayodhya to Janakpur" would cover the two most significant pilgrimage sites - Ayodhya and Janakpur, from neighboring countries India and Nepal.

1. Intending to showcase India's rich cultural heritage and magnificent historical places, Indian Railways is launching the Bharat Gaurav tourist train from Ayodhya to Janakpur in February.
2. The unique pilgrimage initiative known as "Shri Ram-Janaki Yatra: Ayodhya to Janakpur" will strengthen bilateral relations and promote cultural ties between the two countries.
3. The tour called 'Shri Ram-Janaki Yatra: Ayodhya to Janakpur' will start from Delhi on February 17. The train will also cover Nandigram, Sitamarhi, Kashi, and Prayagraj. The visit will be covered in the day's halt at the destination.
4. The features of the state-of-art Deluxe AC Tourist Train include two fine dining restaurants, a modern kitchen, shower cubicles in coaches, sensor-based washroom functions, and a foot massager.



(SOURCE -THE HINDU)

Centre puts Neelakurinji on the list of protected plants

Why in the news: The plant was endemic to a slight stretch in the Western Ghats from the Mangaladevi hills to the Nilgiris hills.

1. The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF) has listed Neelakurinji (*Strobilanthes Ludhiana*) on the list of protected plants under Schedule III of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972,



2. This plant species is expected to be protected through this measure from being destroyed or uprooted.
3. The move also disallows the cultivation of Neelakurinji, which is endemic to Western ghats.
4. The most popular Neelakurinji is *Strobilanthes kunthiana* which blooms once in 12 years. However, some other rare varieties of Neelakurnji are also found in the Western Ghats region.

(SOURCE - NEWS ON AIR)

Union Minister for Health and Family Welfare, Dr Mansukh Mandaviya chairs National Symposium on India's Roadmap to Eliminate Lymphatic Filariasis (LF)

Why in the news: For India, Lymphatic Filariasis (LF) is not a neglected disease as may be the case in some other countries, but a priority disease for elimination in a time-bound manner.

1. A five-pronged strategy for the elimination of LF was released.
 - Multi-drug administration (MDA) Campaign twice a year synchronized with National Deworming Day (February 10 and August 10)
 - Early diagnosis and treatment; engagement of medical colleges for strengthening Morbidity management and disability (MMDP) services
 - Integrated Vector Control with multi-sectoral coordinated efforts
 - For inter-sectoral convergence with allied departments and ministries
 - Leveraging existing digital platforms for LF and exploring alternate diagnostics
1. Four States (UP, Odisha, Telangana, and Bihar) account for ~60% of Lymphedema cases, while four States (Odisha, Jharkhand, UP, and Bihar) account for ~80% of Hydrocele cases.

FACTS -

1. Lymphatic filariasis, commonly known as elephantiasis, is a neglected tropical disease. Infection occurs when filarial parasites are transmitted to humans through mosquitoes.



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2. It impairs the lymphatic system and can lead to abnormal enlargement of body parts, causing pain, severe disability, and social stigma.
3. It is caused by infection with parasites classified as nematodes (roundworms) of the family Filarioididea. The Tent City will be operational from October to June and dismantled for three months due to the rise in river water level in the rainy season.

(SOURCE - PIB)

India's First Centre of Excellence in Online Gaming to be set up in Shillong

Why in the news: Next Wave of Digital Technology Startups to come from Meghalaya and the Northeast Region: MoS Shri Rajeev Chandrasekhar.

1. Digital India Startup Hub shall set up India's first Centre of Excellence in Online Gaming at Shillong through the Software Technology Parks of India by March 2023.
2. The Centre of Excellence in Shillong is expected to catalyze startups and entrepreneurs from the North East Region to build the Next Gen Online Gaming ecosystem.
3. Government is Re-launching Skill India through PMKVY 4.0, which shall train around 50,000 youth in Meghalaya in future-ready skills with Industry backed Job Opportunities.

(SOURCE - INDIAN EXPRESS)

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

Why in the news: DoT facilitates collaborations under 5G use case promotional pilots of startups & SMEs to accelerate Digital Transformation across socio-economic verticals.



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1. Vidisha, an aspirational district of Madhya Pradesh, became the first-ever district in India for the on-ground deployment of innovative 5G use cases offered by startups - a joint initiative by Vidisha District Administration and Centre for Development of Telematics (C-DOT), Department of Telecommunications (DoT) under the guidance of Additional Secretary (Telecom) & Administrator USOF.
2. DoT has been facilitating collaborations of Digital Communication Tech - startups & SMEs to potential user communities like state governments, smart cities, etc., for developing telematics.
3. It will provide innovative solutions for Health, Agriculture, Diary, Education & Skill Development, benefiting the Vidisha community. It will promote Digital Transformation across socio-economic indicators.
4. Startups demonstrated the following 5G/IoT use cases in collaboration with C-DOT-
 - Superceuticals- 5G/4G Enabled smart health kiosk for measuring vitals & performing tests almost instantaneously with
 - Ambupod: 5G/4G Enabled Auto Ambulance with essential life safety support & measurement of vitals with remote doctor support.
 - LogyAI: Cataract Eye Screening application using a smartphone for quick & effective screening of cataract disease
 - Easiofy: AR/VR-3D visualization application for Lung & Brain scans (CT/XRAY etc.) for effective diagnosis.
 - TechXR: AR/VR- 3D immersive experience kit for students for enhanced learning & teaching tool for innovative teaching methods.

FACTS -

1. 5G wireless technology is meant to deliver higher multi-Gbps peak data speeds, ultra-low latency, more reliability, massive network capacity, increased availability, and a more consistent user experience to more users.

(SOURCE - BUSINESS STANDARD)



India honours 82 best agripreneurs with National Awards on National Youth Day

Why in the news: The Agri-Clinics and Agri-Business (AC&ABC), a GoI scheme, aims to transform unemployed youth into self-employed agripreneurs in the country with a provision for availing loans and subsidies from the banks.



1. Agri-Clinics and Agri-Business (AC&ABC), a mega flagship Scheme of Govt. of India implemented in the country in collaboration with NABARD since 2002, aims to transform unemployed youth into self-employed Agripreneurs through a 45 days free residential training at different parts of the country with a provision for availing loan and subsidy from the banks.
2. The AC&ABC Scheme is being implemented by the National Institute of Agricultural Extension Management (MANAGE), Hyderabad, in different states with a network of 136 Nodal Training Institutes (NTIs) spread across all the states.
3. It is a central sector scheme to support agriculture development.
4. Its objective is to supplement efforts of public extension by providing extension and other services to farmers either on a payment basis or free of cost as per the business model of agri-preneur, local needs, and affordability of the target group of farmers.

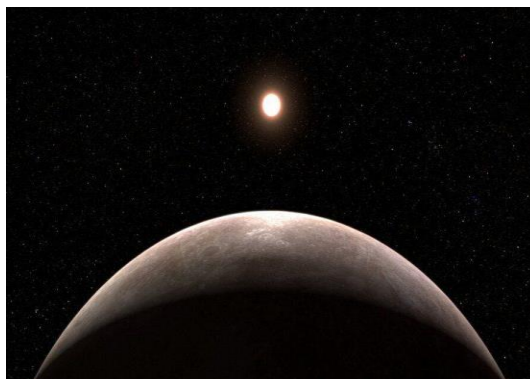
(SOURCE - TIMES OF INDIA)

James Webb telescope discovers its first Earth-sized exoplanet: What are exoplanets?

Why in the news: Exoplanets are planets that orbit other stars and are beyond our solar system. According to NASA, more than 5,000 exoplanets have been discovered.



1. NASA's Transiting Exoplanet Survey Satellite (TESS) mission has discovered a second Earth-sized, rocky planet within the habitable zone of its star - the range of distances where liquid water could occur on a planet's surface.
2. The planet, named TOI 700 e, is one of only a few systems with multiple minor, habitable-zone planets that we know of.
3. Astronomers have previously discovered three planets in the TOI 700 system: TOI 700 b, c, and d. Planet d also orbits within the habitable zone, but the scientists needed an additional year of TESS observations to discover TOI 700 e. The non-permanent members are elected for two-year terms by the UN General Assembly, with five new members replacing outgoing ones yearly.
4. The discovery of TOI 700 e expands the known sample of potentially habitable rocky planets. It opens the door to future studies to understand the habitability of these worlds and search for signs of life in them.



(SOURCE - THE HINDU)

Rajnath Singh launches 'Soul of Steel' Alpine Challenge to promote tourism in border areas

Why in the news: Defence Minister Rajnath Singh recently kick-started the 'Soul of Steel' alpine challenge, an initiative to promote tourism in border areas, at an event in Dehradun coinciding with Veterans Day.

1. The 'Soul of Steel' expedition will test one's high-altitude endurance and adventure in Uttarakhand's Garhwal Himalayas.
2. CLAW Global, a group of veterans, is organizing it.



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3. It will initially have 12 Indian participants plus six international teams between 18 and 30.
4. The challenge will be spread across three months. It is based on the lines of the 'Ironman triathlon,' a long-distance triathlon held in Europe which tests an individual's physical capabilities.
5. The initiative is aimed at enabling life skill training and youth development.

(SOURCE - PIB)

Centre to launch National Urban Technology Mission for municipal services and ULBs

Why in the news: The mission will identify six essential ordinary citizen services which every urban local body will have to offer online. These include issuing birth and death certificates, providing water and electricity connections, computing and collecting property tax, and grievance redress.

1. The Centre is set to launch a five-year National Urban Technology Mission, which will infuse technological innovations in municipal services and infrastructure of 4,500 urban local bodies in the country.
2. The ministry of housing and urban affairs will lead the mission and have three major sub-heads and an outlay of ₹15,000 crores for five years.
3. The purpose is to improve the online governance and monitoring of the environmental infrastructure of 1,000 cities.
4. Under the mission, all urban local bodies will be required to offer six standard services to citizens, including issuing birth and death certificates, providing water and electricity connections, computing and collecting property tax, and grievance redress.
5. The mission would be monitoring and efficient management of the environmental infrastructure of 1,000 cities.
6. Under the mission, these cities' sewage treatment, air quality, flood management, and water bodies will be monitored through technological interventions.



(SOURCE - LIVEMINT)

PM Modi announces 'Aarogya Maitri' project

Why in the news: PM Modi announced the 'Aarogya Maitri' project to provide essential medical supplies to developing countries affected by natural disasters or other humanitarian crises

1. India unveiled three initiatives to assist the Global South in areas ranging from technology to health at the concluding session of the Voice of Global South Summit.
2. Under the Aarogya Maitri project, India will provide essential medical supplies to any developing country affected by natural disasters or humanitarian crises.
3. India will launch the Global South Science and Technology Initiative to share its space technology and nuclear energy expertise and establish the Global South Center of Excellence for research on developing solutions that can be scaled up and implemented worldwide.
4. PM Modi proposed a "Global South Young Diplomats Forum" to connect young officers of foreign ministries for "synergizing our diplomatic voice" and said India would institute the "Global South Scholarships" to allow students from developing states to pursue higher education in the country.

(SOURCE -LIVEMINT)

Rajasthan government has implemented a policy for blindness control

Why in the news: In a first in the country, the Rajasthan government has implemented a policy for blindness control with the objective of 'Right to Sight'.

1. The Department of Medical and Health, on the direction of Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot, released the policy document for the prevention of blindness.



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2. The policy has been introduced to bring light to the lives of more than three lakh people with visual impairment in the state. The prevalence rate of blindness in the country was 1.1 percent in 2020, and work would be done to bring it down to 0.3 percent through the blindness control policy.
3. Under the policy, the Rajasthan government will mandatorily run Keratoplasty Centres and Eye Banks at all government medical colleges. Also, cornea collected by private organizations and NGOs getting financial help from the government will have to be provided to the government institutions on priority.
4. In collaboration with voluntary organizations, trusts, hospitals, and other charitable institutions working in this field, efforts to eliminate visual impairment would be made in the districts.
5. Special training will be imparted to eye experts, eye surgeons, post-graduate students, counselors working for eye donation and eye assistants, etc.

(SOURCE - TIMES NOW)

1200-yr-old miniature stupas found in Nalanda district

Why in the news: Archeological Survey of India (ASI) has discovered two 1200-year-old miniature votive stupas during landscaping activities near Sarai Tila mound on the premises of 'Nalanda Mahavihara,' a world heritage site in Nalanda district.

1. A Stupa is a hemispherical structure that symbolizes the burial mound of Buddha. It rose to prominence after the advent of Buddhism and peaked during Ashoka's reign. Stupas evolved as Chorten in Tibet and pagodas in East Asia.
2. A votive stupa has a distinctive domelike drum, which originates in eight cylindrical structures where the Buddha's relics are placed after his death.
3. Votive stupas were offered in fulfillment of a vow. Beginning in the 7th century CE in India, small miniature terracotta stupas became popular as votive offerings.



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4. The Nalanda Mahavihara site comprises the archaeological remains of a monastic and scholastic institution dating from the 3rd century BCE to the 13th century CE. It includes stupas, shrines, viharas (residential and educational buildings), and essential artworks in stucco, stone, and metal.

(SOURCE -THE PRINT)

Captain Surbhi Jakhmola, 1st woman officer posted on foreign assignment at BRO

Why in the news: The Border Roads Organisation (BRO) builds and maintains road networks along India's borders and in friendly neighboring countries.

1. 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).
2. 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.
3. The Indian Air Force has the highest proportion of women officers, accounting for 13.69%, followed by the Indian Navy at six percent and the Indian Army at 3.97 percent.

(SOURCE - HINDUSTAN TIMES)

In India, 5% own more than 60% of country's wealth: Oxfam report

Why in the news: The report titled 'Survival of the Richest' further said that if India's billionaires are taxed once at 2 percent on their entire wealth, it will support the requirement of Rs 40,423 crore for the nutrition of malnourished in the country for the next three years.



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1. Oxfam has called for immediate action to tackle a post-Covid widening in global inequality after revealing that almost two-thirds of the new wealth amassed since the start of the pandemic has gone to the wealthiest 1%.
2. On gender inequality, the report said that female workers earned only 63 paise for every 1 rupee a male worker earned.
3. The wealthiest one percent in India now own more than 40 percent of the country's total wealth, while the bottom half of the population together share just 3 percent of the wealth.
4. Oxfam said the number of billionaires in India increased from 102 in 2020 to 166 in 2022.

(SOURCE - INDIAN EXPRESS)

India and France to hold high-intensity naval exercise 'Varuna'-2023

Why in the news: The French and Indian navies begin the 21st edition of the bilateral naval exercise, Varuna 2023, on the Western Seaboard. Both navies will conduct various tactical exercises to enhance their inter-operability in maritime domains.

1. The French and Indian navies begin the 21st edition of the bilateral naval exercise, Varuna 2023, on the Western Seaboard.
2. While the bilateral exercise between the two navies was initiated in 1993, it was christened as 'VARUNA' in 2001 and has become a hallmark of the India - France strategic bilateral relationship.
3. This year, the bilateral exercise will involve the participation of indigenous guided missile stealth destroyer INS Chennai, guided missile frigate INS Teg, maritime patrol aircraft P-8I and Dornier, integral helicopters, and MiG29K fighter aircraft.

ABOUT FAO -

1. SHAKTI Exercise is a bilateral exercise between the armies of India and France.



2. The GARUDA exercise is held between Indian Airforce and France Airforce; the latest edition of the exercise was held in Jodhpur in 2022.

(SOURCE - INDIAN EXPRESS)

National aquifer mapping programme to be completed in a year: Jal Shakti Ministry

Why in the news: The National Aquifer Mapping and Management program, which is aimed at delineating aquifer and water availability, is set to be completed in one year



1. Ministry of Water Resources (now Jal Shakti ministry) launched the National Aquifer Mapping and Management program (NAQUIM) in 2012.
2. The NAQUIM is the world's largest program for aquifer management to support the effective management of groundwater in the country. It is focused on the scientific delineation of aquifers, mapping them, and multidisciplinary studies to quantify and evaluate issues to develop a viable water management strategy.
3. The National Aquifer Mapping and Management program (NAQUIM) is being implemented by the Central Ground Water Board (CGWB).
4. NAQUIM was initiated as part of the Ground Water Management and Regulation Scheme to delineate and characterize the aquifers and develop groundwater management plans

(SOURCE -BUSINESS STANDARD)

ISRO 'Shukrayaan' mission to planet Venus reportedly shifted to 2031

Why in the news: The concept was conceived in 2012; five years later, after the Department of Space got a 23% increase in the 2017-2018 budget, ISRO started preliminary investigations.



1. Shukrayaan I, the ISRO Venus mission, was scheduled to launch in December 2024 when Earth and Venus are aligned closely enough for the spacecraft to be put in the planet's orbit using minimum propellant.
2. ISRO mentioned the pandemic for delaying Shukrayaan I's launch from mid-2023 to December 2024.
3. Shukrayaan will be India's first orbiter mission to Venus after sending similar missions to the Moon and Mars. The mission aims to study the surface of the hottest planet in our solar system and unravel the mysteries under the Sulfuric Acid clouds enveloping it.



FACTS-

1. Venus has been called Earth's twin because of the similarities in their masses, sizes, and densities and their similar relative locations in the solar system.
2. A day on Venus is longer than a year. It takes Venus longer to rotate once on its axis than to complete one orbit of the Sun.

(SOURCE - THE HINDU)

Union Minister Dr Jitendra Singh launches “Geospatial Hackathon” to promote Innovation and Start-Ups in India’s Geospatial ecosystem

Why in the news: This hackathon aims to promote partnerships among the public and private geospatial sectors and strengthen our country's geospatial Start-Up ecosystem.



1. Department of Science and Technology is organizing the 'DST GEOSPATIAL HACKATHON' program in partnership with TBI at IIIT Hyderabad and Microsoft to mobilize and inculcate innovative ideas and applied research in the Geospatial domain.
2. Geospatial technology is a term that describes the range of modern tools contributing to the geographic mapping and analysis of the Earth and human societies.
3. It enables better measurement, management, and maintenance of assets, monitoring of resources, and even providing predictive and prescriptive analysis for forecasting and planned interventions.
4. "Geospatial Hackathon" will end on 10th March 2023, and there will be Two Sets of Challenges- A research Challenge and a Startp-Up Challenge to find out four winners for the Best Solutions to the Geospatial Select Problem Statements.



(SOURCE - THE HINDU)

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

Why in news: Womaniya seamlessly aligns with the government's initiative to set aside a target of three percent in public procurement for women-owned and led MSEs.

1. The Womaniya Initiative was launched in 2019 to encourage the participation of women entrepreneurs.
2. The "Womaniya" initiative seeks to address the triple challenge of "access to markets," "access to finance," and "access to value-addition" faced by women entrepreneurs and strives to align the untapped entrepreneurial energy of last-mile producers and service providers in India with local Government buyers.



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3. Presently, 1.44 lakh+ Udyam-verified women micro, small enterprises (MSE) known as "Womaniya" are registered as sellers and service providers on the GeM portal and have fulfilled 14.76 lakh+ orders worth INR 21,265 Crore in Gross Merchandise Value (GMV).
4. The ratio of the order value is 74 percent (%) in products to 26 percent (%) in Service categories.
5. The top five (5) product categories in which women have registered their presence include Desktop Computers, Smart Phone-IS:13252, Special Purpose Telephones (Smart Phone For ICDS), Smart Phone and Hopper Tipper Dumper, and
6. The top five (5) service categories include Manpower Outsourcing Services - Minimum Wage, Custom Bid for Services, Human Resource Outsourcing Service, Monthly Basis Cab & Taxi Hiring Services, and Manpower Outsourcing Services - Fixed Remuneration.

FACTS -

1. GeM Portal was launched in 2016 to bring transparency and efficiency to government buying.
2. The procurement of goods and services by Ministries and the Central Public Sector Enterprises (CPSEs) is mandatory for goods and services available on GeM.

(SOURCE - PIB)

RBI proposes expected loss-based approach for provisioning by banks

Why in the news: Presently, banks are required to make loan loss provisions based on an 'incurred loss' approach, which used to be the standard globally till recently.



1. THE RBI has proposed adopting an



expected loss-based approach for provisioning against loan loss by banks in India.

2. Banks make loan loss provisions based on the 'incurred loss' approach, which has been the standard globally till now.
3. The Expected loss-based approach is a more forward-looking method, where banks must make provisions based on self-designed models that the regulator approves.
4. Under the proposed framework, banks will be required to classify financial assets (primarily loans, including irrevocable loan commitments, and investments classified as held-to-maturity or available-for-sale) into one of three categories - Stage 1, Stage 2, and Stage 3 depending upon the assessed credit losses on them, at the time of initial recognition as well as on each subsequent reporting date and make necessary provisions.
5. Adopting the forward-looking expected credit loss approach to estimating loss provisions is likely to result in excess provisions compared to a shortfall in provisions.
6. The proposed norms are for all scheduled commercial banks, excluding regional rural banks and smaller cooperative banks (based on a threshold to be decided based on comments)

(SOURCE -PIB)

Kollam is India's first Constitution literate district

Why in the news: As part of the Constitution Literacy campaign, around 16.3 lakh people in the district above ten have been educated on various aspects of the Constitution.



1. The Indian district of Kollam in Kerala has become India's first constitution-literate district.
2. The success of such a result is attributed to a seven-month campaign run by the Kollam district Panchayat, DPC, and Kerala Institute of Local Administration to educate citizens about their constitutional rights.



3. The Constitution Literacy Campaign aims to provide constitutional literacy to 23 lakh people; for this, classes were organized for approximately 90% of the people.
4. Kollam, also known as Quilon, is an ancient port city located on the banks of Ashtamudi Lake in the Indian state of Kerala. Kollam was once a major international trade center, particularly in spices and cashew nuts, and was an important port for the Chinese, Arabs, and Europeans.

(SOURCE - THE HINDU)

Shah Rukh Khan beats Tom Cruise, becomes only Indian on world's richest actor list

Why in the news: Beating fellow immensely famous actors like Tom Cruise, Jackie Chan, and George Clooney, Shah Rukh Khan took the fourth position in the list of eight richest actors in the world released by World of Statistics.

1. 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.
2. According to this list, the richest actor was Jerry Seinfeld, with a net worth of ₹82 billion (\$1 billion). The American actor tied with Diary of a Black Woman fame Tyler Perry at \$ 1 billion.
3. Dwayne Johnson followed them at ₹64 billion (\$800 million).

(SOURCE - TIMES OF INDIA)

India-UAE Summit To Highlight Manufacturing, Agritech Opportunities

Why in the news: The India-UAE Partnership Summit, scheduled to be held next week, will see comprehensive deliberations on the crucial economic subjects of manufacturing, AgriTech, food processing, and fintech.



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1. The event to be held on January 23 to 25, 2023, is organized by International Business Linkage Forum (IBLF) and Dubai Chamber.
2. The summit will feature several keynotes and panel discussions and bring together leading business and government speakers from both the public and private sectors to discuss strategic issues and trends influencing the future of trade and the economy.
3. One session during the summit is focused on manufacturing and startups, which is pertinent considering Indian startups have raised USD 42 billion and added 46 Unicorns in 2021. The Production-Linked Incentive (PLI) scheme is fuelling the manufacturing sector in India.
4. The summit will discuss the golden Visa Scheme of UAE and the success stories of businesses that thrived in Dubai.

ABOUT CEPA -

1. CEPA is Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement. India and UAE signed the agreement in 2022. India has signed the CEPA agreement with two other countries other than UAE. They are Japan and South Korea.
2. CEPA is expected to increase the trade between the countries to 100 billion USD within five years.
3. Golden Visa Scheme is an immigration scheme where a businessman (a wealthy individual) gets a residence permit and even citizenship in some cases.

(SOURCE - INDIAN EXPRESS)

India to overtake China as world's most populous nation

Why in the news: Although India's population growth has slowed, World Population Review said it expected the number to continue to rise until at least 2050.

1. As China's birth rate hit an all-time low in 2022, India is poised to overtake the Communist giant as the world's most populous country in the next few years.



2. As of last year, India was home to 1.417 billion people, compared to China's 1.426 billion, per UN figures. But as India's population continues to grow, China's population is expected to decline – to 1.313 billion by 2050
3. India is projected to have a population of 1.668 billion in 2050, more than China's 1.313 billion by the middle of this century.
4. The milestone could have major economic and societal implications for both countries – and may eventually influence trade flows and upend the global balance of power.
5. In its estimate, the report said that more than half of the estimated increase in global population between 2022 and 2050 would be in just eight countries: Congo, Egypt, Ethiopia, India, Nigeria, Pakistan, the Philippines, and Tanzania.

(SOURCE -BUSINESS STANDARD)

SPIC MACAY and Ministry of Culture collaborates for 'Music in the Park' series under "Shruti Amrut".

Why in the news: In this series, the first event of 2023 was held today at 3 pm in Nehru Park, Chanakyapuri, New Delhi.



1. SPIC MACAY is organizing its very popular 'Music in the Park' series this year under the name "Shruti Amrut" in collaboration with the Ministry of Culture and the New Delhi Municipal Council.
2. Eminent artists showcased the beauty of Indian Classical Music from across the country.
3. The concert began with a Sarod performance by Aman Ali Bangash, a 7th Generation musician from Senia Bangash Gharana.
4. He was accompanied by Anubrata Chatterjee (Tabla) and Abhishek Mishra (Tabla). Following this, a Hindustani Vocal performance by Padma Bhushan Begum Parween Sultana of Patiala Gharana accompanied by



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Akram Khan (Tabla), Shrinivas Acharya (Harmonium), and Shadaab Sultana (Vocals) was performed.

FACTS-

1. SPIC MACAY- The Society for Promotion of Indian Classical Music and Culture amongst youth is a voluntary youth movement that promotes the tangible & intangible aspects of Indian & world heritage by organizing programs and workshops on Indian Classical, Folk Music and dance, Yoga, meditation, crafts, and other aspects of Indian culture.
2. It is a movement started in 1977 and has chapters in over 850 towns worldwide.

(SOURCE - THE PIB)

Sebi proposes facility of blocking of funds for secondary market trade

Why in the news: Under the proposed model, funds will remain in the client's account but will be blocked in favor of the CC till the expiry date of the block mandate or till the block is released by the CC, whichever is earlier.



1. Capital markets regulator Sebi proposed discontinuing the current practice of advancing funds to stockbrokers before secondary market trades are executed.
2. The move will safeguard investors' money from misuse and default by stock brokers; it is similar to the Application Supported by Blocked Amount (ASBA)-like facility already available for the primary market, which ensures that money from an investor gets only moved when an allotment happens.
3. SEBI proposed introducing a blocking of funds facility for trading in secondary markets, which would provide client-level settlement visibility



(both pay-in and pay-out) to clearing corporations (CC) by directly settling funds and securities between clients, investors, and CC.

4. Under the existing framework, clients' assets pass through stock brokers and clearing members before reaching CC.
5. It will also ensure that the interest on the funds is accrued to the investor and not to the broker.

(SOURCE - LIVEMINT)

Bhopal Declaration released after discussion in two-day meeting of Think-20 under G20.

Why in the news: In Madhya Pradesh, more than 300 intellectuals from India and abroad released the Bhopal Declaration after discussing the G-20 agenda in the two-day meeting of Think-20 under G20 in Bhopal.



1. The two-day Think 20 convention held under the aegis of G20 concluded in Bhopal with Bhopal Declaration.
2. The Bhopal Declaration appealed to all the stakeholders to focus more on
3. inclusive development and care for the welfare of every section of society in comparison to GDP,
4. Give special attention to children,
5. Encourage the model of development led by women,
6. Bridge the gap between North and South and work together to ensure all health.
7. The necessity of triangular cooperation between government, society, and private organizations
1. The importance of localization in achieving G-20 sustainable development goals has been acknowledged in the Bhopal Declaration.



FACTS -

1. The Think 20 (T20) is a form of think tank from G20 countries that provides policy recommendations to the leaders of the G20.
2. It was created in 2012 to bring the expertise of think tanks from around the world to bear on the G20's policy-making process, and it meets annually in the lead-up to the G20 summit.

(SOURCE - NEWS ON AIR)

Ministry of Shipping launches Bharat Pravah scheme

Why in the news: The initiative aims to highlight the importance of rivers-ports-shipping in the common man's everyday life through literature, dialogue, and communication.

1. Union Minister Sarbananda Sonowal launched an initiative called 'Bharat Pravah - India along its Shores' to highlight the role of rivers-ports-shipping in the everyday life of a common man through literature, dialogue, and communication,
2. Under the Bharat Pravah initiative, events would be organized around various topics, such as 'Rivers and Sea-Centric Development in India: Through a Historical Lens' and 'Sea, Rivers, Ports, and Ship in Folk Culture' Literature,' among others.
3. Intellectuals, influencers, and practitioners of the society are invited to debate, discuss and exchange dialogues on policies, perspectives, and problems of the shipping sector.
4. These events would yield a set of new literature on the significance of the ports/riverways/shipping in everyday life.

(SOURCE -ECONOMIC TIMES)



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Karnataka firm Squadrone flies country's first autonomous drone in underground mines

Why in the news: Squadron completed a Proof of Concept at Hindustan Zinc Ltd.'s (Vedanta) underground mines in Udaipur, Rajasthan.

1. Bengaluru-based technology-driven mining services company, Squadron, has become the first Indian firm to fly autonomous drones in underground mines in the country.
2. The success of this project proved that the Application of drone-based Hovermap LiDAR technology would bring about a huge transformation in the way underground mines are worked in India and would make a huge difference in the life of every miner in India with enhanced safety, productivity, and higher efficiency.
3. Hovermap is a drone-based LiDAR sensor that works on the latest SLAM (Simultaneous Localization and Mapping) technology, comprising revolutionary equipment for mapping underground workings by autonomous flying in underground mines, tunnels, and remote locations without GPS.
4. LIDAR is a remote sensing method that uses light as a pulsed laser to measure ranges (variable distances) to the Earth.

(SOURCE - THE HINDU)

New Goa Manohar International Airport wins best sustainable greenfield airport award

Why in the news: The award was presented for "excellent initiatives" taken by GGIAL in implementing sustainability as one of the core concepts.



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1. GMR Goa International Airport (GGIAL), a subsidiary of GMR Airports Infrastructure, has won the 'Best Sustainable Greenfield Airport' award under aviation sustainability and environment at ASSOCHAM's 14th International Conference-cum-Awards for Civil Aviation 2023.
2. The forum recognizes the companies engaged in civil aviation initiatives that adopt best practices and technological advancement in their daily operation.
3. The awards criteria are contribution, innovativeness, applicability, relevance, and impact potential in their respective areas.
4. New Goa Manohar International Airport is designed to be a zero-carbon footprint airport and will join the elite club of green airports worldwide.

(SOURCE - TIMES OF INDIA)

Inaugural Edition of Indo-Egypt Joint Training Exercise Cyclone - I Commences in Rajasthan

Why in the news: Exercise "Cyclone - I" is the first exercise of its kind, bringing the special forces of both nations on a common platform.

1. The first-ever joint exercise between the special forces of the Indian Army and the Egyptian Army, named "Exercise Cyclone-I," has been in progress at Jaisalmer in Rajasthan since January 14, 2023.
2. The exercise aims to bolster defense cooperation between the two nations and focus on sharing professional skills and interoperability of Special Forces in desert terrain while undertaking counter-terrorism, reconnaissance, raids, and other special operations.
3. The 14-day-long exercise, carried out in the deserts of Rajasthan, engages the contingents to advance special forces skills such as Sniping, Combat Free Fall, Reconnaissance, Surveillance & Target Designation, and sharing of information on weapons, equipment, innovations, tactics, techniques & procedures.



4. The joint exercise would provide an insight into the culture and ethos of both armies, thereby fostering military cooperation and interoperability to further strengthen the diplomatic relations between India and Egypt.

(SOURCE - BBC NEWS)

KVIC through RE-HAB project of the Honey Mission Programme aims to reduce elephant attacks on humans and farmers' crops

Why in news: KVIC initiated a pilot project with the Technical assistance of the College of Forestry, Ponnampet, Kodagu District and the results were encouraging.

1. KVIC has distributed live Bee Colonies, Beekeeping equipment, and 200 Bee-Boxes to the trained beneficiaries at Sulia at Dakshina Kannada, Karnataka, under the RE-HAB Project (Reducing Elephant-Human Attacks using Bees), an initiative under the Honey Mission Programme.
2. Under Project RE-HAB, "Beefences" is created by setting up bee boxes in the passageways of elephants to block their entrance to human habitats. The boxes are connected with a string so that when elephants attempt to pass through, a tug or pull causes the bees to swarm the elephant herds and dissuade them from moving further.
3. Six such projects were sanctioned in the most wanted states, namely Assam, Maharastra, West Bengal, Orissa, and Uttarakhand, apart from Karnataka.
4. Under the RE-HAB, farmers are trained in beekeeping. Each of them is supplied with 10 Bee boxes and installed in the elephant corridors, so bee boxes and bee hives are placed in the Elephant corridor to restrict elephants from approaching the agricultural field.
5. The KVIC launched the Honey Mission in 2017 to provide awareness, training, Bee Boxes, and Bee Colonies to the farmers.

(SOURCE - PIB)



Millets & Organics -2023: Three-day International Trade Fair event kicks off at Thripuravasini, Bengaluru

Why in the news: Union Minister of State, Agriculture & Farmers Welfare calls farmers in large numbers to diversify their crops with millet and further added that millet will help reduce malnourishment.



1. Millets & Organics 2023 - International Trade Fair kicks off in Thripuravasini, Bengaluru, on January 20. The three-day event was divided into multiple segments including Exhibition, Pavilion, B2B networking, and much more.
2. The trade fair is a platform for farmers, farmer groups, domestic and international companies, and central and state institutions in the organic and millet sector to connect and explore opportunities in agriculture, horticulture, processing, machinery, and agri-technology. The Government of Karnataka has been a leader in promoting millets - The first Organics and Millets Fair was held in 2017, and the second and third editions in 2018 and 2019 in Bengaluru.
3. To generate mass awareness, increase production, productivity and strengthen the value chain towards promoting 'golden grain' Millets as the avenue to food & nutritional security, accepting the Government of India's proposal, the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) has declared 2023 as the International Year of Millets (IYM) - 2023.
4. The declaration has been instrumental for the Government of India to be at the forefront of celebrating the IYM 2023 grandly.
5. Honorable PM of India, Narendra Modi, has also shared his vision to make IYM 2023 a 'People's Movement' alongside positioning India as the 'Global Hub for Millets.'

(SOURCE - PIB)



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IOA sets up committee to probe charges against Wrestling Chief .

Why in the news: Indian Olympic Association (IOA) has formed a seven-member committee to probe the allegations of sexual harassment against WFI chief Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh.

1. The committee was formed after the agitating wrestlers had earlier in the day reached out to the IOA, demanding the formation of an inquiry committee to probe the allegations against Singh, a day after threatening to lodge multiple FIRs against the WFI chief.
2. Apart from Mary Kom, the panel includes wrestler Yogeshwar Dutt, archer Dola Banerjee and Indian Weightlifting Federation (IWLFF) president and IOA treasurer Sahdev Yadav. The committee also has two advocates - Talish Ray and Shlok Chandra - besides former shuttler and IOA joint secretary Alaknanda Ashok as its vice chairperson.
3. In a letter addressed to the IOA president, the wrestlers alleged financial misappropriation on the part of the WFI and claimed that the coaches and sports science staff at the national camp were "absolutely incompetent."
4. Shiva Keshavan was a special invitee to a meeting. The committee also has two advocates - Talish Ray and Shlok Chandra - besides former shuttler and IOA joint secretary Alaknanda Ashok as its vice chairperson.

Indian Olympic Association (IOA)

1. It was established in 1927 as a Non-Profit Organisation under Societies Registration Act 1860. It is an autonomous body recognized by the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports.
2. It is Responsible for selecting athletes to represent India at the Olympic Games, Asian Games, and other international athletic meets and managing the Indian teams at these events.

(SOURCE -LIVEMINT)



Kerala's Wayanad becomes first district in country to provide basic documents to all tribal people

Why in the news: 1,42,563 services were rendered to 64,670 beneficiaries as part of the district's Akshaya Big Campaign for Document Digitisation campaign rich.

1. Wayanad becomes the country's first district to provide all tribespeople with basic documents and facilities such as Aadhaar cards, ration cards, birth/death certificates, election ID cards, bank accounts, and health insurance.
2. The campaign is aimed at ensuring basic documents to all citizens belonging to the Scheduled Tribes communities and these documents are digitalized and saved in DigiLocker accounts opened for them.
3. The Wayanad district administration has attained meritoriously by providing 1,42,563 services to as many as 64,670 tribal beneficiaries as part of the Akshaya Big Campaign for Document Digitisation (ABCD) campaign.
4. It includes ration cards to 15,796 families, Aadhar cards to 31,252, birth certificates to 11,300, voters' identity cards to 22,488, and digital locker facilities to 22,888 persons through the ABCD campaign.
5. The drive was launched in November 2021 at Thondarnadu grama panchayat.



(SOURCE - THE HINDU)

UNESCO dedicates this year's International Day of Education to Afghan girls and women

Why in the news: Audrey Azoulay, Director-General of UNESCO, has decided to dedicate the 2023 International Day of Education (January 24)



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to women and girls of Afghanistan and will use the opportunity to renew its calls for their fundamental right to education to be restored.

1. UNESCO has dedicated the International Day of Education on January 24, 2024, to Afghan girls and women.
2. The international community has the responsibility to ensure that the rights of Afghan girls and women are restored without delay.
3. According to UNESCO, around 80 percent of school-aged Afghan girls and young women are out of school under Taliban rule, as they are denied access to secondary schools and universities.

(SOURCE - NEWS ON AIR)

Jio is India's strongest brand, ranked ninth globally: Report

Why in the news: This makes 'Jio' ahead of brands like EY, Coca-Cola, Accenture, and Porsche and behind the likes of Google, YouTube, Deloitte, and Instagram.



1. According to a report published by Brand Finance, Billionaire Mukesh Ambani's Reliance Jio is the strongest brand in India and ranked ninth among the world's strongest brands.
2. The report titled 'Global 500 - 2023' is published annually and ranks the world's most valuable and strongest brands.
3. With a Brand Strength Index of 90.2, Jio is the only brand among the world's strongest 25 brands.
4. The methodology of Brand Finance to calculate the Brand Strength Index involves a scorecard of metrics that underpin a brand's strength.
5. Brand Strength Index is primarily a quantitative analysis, where scores for the independent measures are informed by market research (functional and emotional drivers) and financial data (marketing investment, price premium, revenue growth).
6. Brand Finance is headquartered in London.

(SOURCE - TIMES OF INDIA)



Mukesh Ambani is No.1 among Indians, 2nd globally on Brand Guardianship Index 2023

Why in news: Brand Guardianship Index (BGI) 2023 saw the rise of Nvidia CEO, Jensen Huang, and Mukesh Ambani of Reliance Industries Ltd to 1st and 2nd position respectively.

1. Billionaire Mukesh Ambani has overtaken the likes of Satya Nadella of Microsoft and Google's Sundar Pichai to be ranked No.1 among Indians and second globally on the Brand Guardianship Index 2023.
2. Brand Finance constructs its Brand Guardianship Index similarly to the Brand Strength Index, which underpins its corporate brand valuations.
3. The Brand Guardianship Index includes 'Equity' factors, which reflect current perceptions, 'Performance' factors which reflect the tangible results of these perceptions and 'Investment' factors which support future performance.
4. The Brand Guardianship Index is a global recognition of CEOs who sustainably build business value by balancing the needs of all stakeholders -- employees, investors, and the wider society.



(SOURCE - INDIAN EXPRESS)

Egyptian President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi to be Chief Guest at India's Republic Day celebrations on 26th January

Why in the news: India and Egypt are celebrating 75 years of establishment of diplomatic relations this year.



1. President of Egypt, Abdel Fattah El-Sisi, will pay a state visit to India from the



24th to the 26th of this month.

2. President El-Sisi will be the Chief Guest at India's 74th Republic Day. He will accompany a high-level delegation, including five Ministers and senior officials.
3. It's the first time the President of Egypt has been invited as Chief Guest at India's Republic Day celebrations.
4. A military contingent from the Egyptian Army will also participate in the Republic Day parade.

(SOURCE -BUSINESS STANDARD)

Tourism Ministry to organize 1st Global Tourism Investors Summit from 10th to 12th April 2023

Why in the news: Ministry of Tourism will organize the first Global Tourism Summit, and the Confederation of Indian Industry will be the Industry Partner for the event. The central government will organize the country's first global tourism investors summit in Delhi from April 10-12 under India's G20 Presidency.



1. The summit aims to bring together global business leaders and policymakers to understand and explore Tourism Business opportunities in India.
2. The event focused on promoting India as an investment destination for travel, tourism, and hospitality by identifying State-Specific investment possibilities and discussing avenues to promote sustainable tourism.
3. All G20 members will be invited to the summit.

(SOURCE - THE HINDU)



0. BharOS India's indigenous mobile operating system by IIT Madras

Why in the news: BharOS is an indigenous OS that can be installed in commercial off-the-shelf handsets; it comes with No Default Apps, meaning that users are not forced to use apps they don't trust.

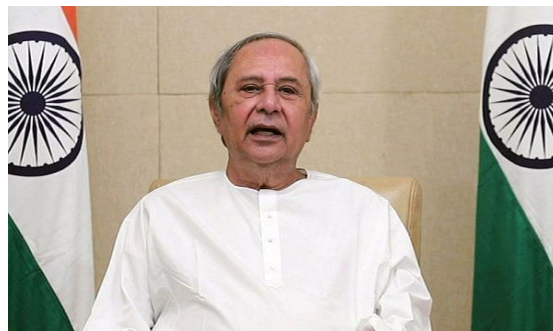
1. An IIT Madras-incubated firm has developed an indigenous mobile operating system called BharOS, which is provided to organizations with stringent privacy and security requirements and where users handle sensitive information.
2. The software is developed by JandK Operations Pvt. Ltd., which has been incubated by IIT Madras Pravartak Technologies Foundation, funded by the Department of Science and Technology, Government of India, under its national mission on Interdisciplinary Cyber-Physical Systems.
3. BharOS, a play on Bharat Operating System, is an indigenous OS that can be installed in commercial off-the-shelf handsets and is touted by IIT to be a contribution towards Aatmanirbhar Bharat. It provides access to apps that meet organizations' specific security and privacy standards.
4. BharOS provides users more freedom, control, and flexibility to choose and use the apps that fit their needs.
5. BharOS offers Native Over The Air (NOTA) updates automatically downloaded and installed, ensuring that the software is up-to-date with security and bug fixes.

(SOURCE - THE HINDU)



Odisha CM inaugurates 'International Craft Summit'

Why in the news: On Friday, Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik inaugurated an 'International Craft Summit' in Jajpur.



1. This first-of-its-kind craft summit features pioneering craftspeople, culture, and art enthusiasts. International delegates from 15 countries have arrived in Jajpur to engage with local artisans and other stakeholders informing the government.
2. Jajpur was the ancient capital of Odisha and had existing assets of religious tourism, urban tourism, and Buddhist tourism.
3. The state has implemented various policies on tourism, handicraft, apparel, and technical textiles.
4. Odisha's government is making concerted efforts to develop Odisha as a global hotspot for tourists, provide livelihoods and employment opportunities, and make the state attractive to investors.

(SOURCE - THE PRINT)

Punjab CM Bhagwant Mann Launched 'School of Eminence' Project

Why in the news: 'Schools of Eminence' aims to re-imagine education in government schools for the holistic development of children and prepare them to be responsible citizens.

1. The 'School of Eminence' project aims to rejuvenate education in government schools and ensure the holistic development of students. Under the 'School of Eminence' project, the Punjab government will upgrade 117 government schools in 23 districts with special emphasis on classes 9 to 12.
2. The five pillars of the 'School of Eminence' are state-of-the-art infrastructure, academics, human resource management, sports, co-curricular activities, and community engagement.



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3. The project is also concerned with inducing innovative teaching methods for the students to guide for professional examinations.
4. The government has decided to send 36 teachers from the state to Singapore to update their expertise.

(SOURCE -HINDUSTAN TIMES)

BSF conducts 'Ops Alert' exercise to step up security along India-Pakistan border in Gujarat and Rajasthan ahead of Republic Day

Why in the news: The BSF will carry out special operations in forward and depth areas as well as creeks and 'Harami Nalla' as part of the exercise.

1. The exercise began on Saturday and was carried out to "thwart any ill designs of anti-national elements" during the Republic Day celebrations.
2. During the exercise, the security personnel will hold drills in the India - Pakistan border between Rann of Kutch and Sir Creek and the Barmer district of Rajasthan. The border is highly vulnerable in these regions.

FACTS

1. Sir Creek is a disputed maritime boundary. The creek is a narrow waterway. It is a marshland along the shore.
2. India and Pakistan fought over Sir Creek in 1965. The creek is one of the largest fishing grounds in the world. Also, there is a possible occurrence of oil and gas reserves in the region. It is home to migratory birds and flamingos with good tourism potential.
3. India follows the THALWEG principle in the dispute - In the THALWEG principle, if there is a water body between two countries, then the center of the water body should be taken as the border. Thalweg principle is an International Maritime Law.

(SOURCE - TIMES OF INDIA)

IAF's massive exercise near LAC in northeast amid China border row



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Why in the news: Exercise Pralay: The exercise would see significant combat assets of the Air Force, including the Rafale and Su-30 fighter jets, activated along with the transport and other aircraft.

1. The Indian Air Force will carry out Exercise Pralay involving all its major air bases in the northeast, including the recently moved drone squadrons in the northeast amid the ongoing standoff with China.
2. The "command-level" exercise will witness the Eastern Air Command, which has its headquarters at Shillong, from February 1 to 5.
3. The Indian armed forces have taken several measures to reduce any threat to the Siliguri corridor or the 'Chicken's Neck,' a narrow strip of land connecting the northeast with the rest of India and other vulnerable areas.
4. The Government of India conducts military exercises on the border to control the infiltrations. Infiltrations are joint in the Line of Control, India - Pakistan border, and the Line of Actual Control, India - China border.

(SOURCE - INDIAN EXPRESS)

AMPHEX 2023: Largest biennial amphibious exercise of tri-services concludes in Kakinada

Why in the news: Indian Navy has carried out a six-day-long mega military exercise along with the Army and the IAF near Kakinada in Andhra Pradesh.

1. The largest biennial Tri-Services amphibious exercise - AMPHEX 2023 - involving the Indian Army, Indian Air Force (IAF), and the Indian Navy was conducted near Kakinada in Andhra Pradesh from January 17 to January 22.
2. The joint operations conducted during the exercise saw the participation of many troops from the Indian Army, amphibious warships from the Indian Navy, and aircraft from the IAF.



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3. AMPHEX 2023 included complex activities in all domains that demonstrated a high level of preparedness and coordination among the three services to undertake the full spectrum of amphibious operations.
4. The exercise occurred amid growing concerns over China's increasing military forays into the Indian Ocean, a region considered the backyard of the Indian Navy.

(SOURCE - INDIAN EXPRESS)

US launches Welcome Corps Scheme

Why is in news: The program is intended to deepen the connections between the local communities and incoming refugees, as well as take some cost of resettlement off the shoulders of the government.

The United States is launching a new programme that will allow groups of people and organizations in the US to “sponsor” refugees seeking sanctuary in the country.

- . Under the programme, sponsors will form groups of at least five members. These groups will raise funds (a minimum of \$2,275 per assigned refugee), prepare initial housing, greet refugee newcomers at the airport, enroll children in schools, and help adults find employment.

- . Once the groups are formed, sponsors will participate in a training program before they receive certification, ensuring that they have raised enough funds to properly go about their work.

- . Once certified, sponsor groups will be matched with a refugee individual or family of any nationality who has completed all application and vetting steps required by the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program (USRAP).

- . The goal has been set to place all 5,000 refugees with sponsors by the end of the 2023 fiscal year.

(SOURCE - BBC NEWS)

Europe's mission to Jupiter's icy moons ready for launch



Why in the news: The mission will characterize these moons as both planetary objects and possible habitats, explore Jupiter's complex environment, and would enable the in-depth and broader study of the Jupiter system as an archetype of gas giants across the Universe.



1. The European Space Agency (ESA) is ready to launch the Jupiter Icy Moons Explorer (JUICE), an extraterrestrial spacecraft, with Airbus Defence and Space as the lead contractor.
2. The mission will focus on three of Jupiter's Galilean moons: Ganymede, Callisto, and Europa.
3. The JUICE will explore -
 - The habitable zone characterizes the oceans, icy shells, compositions, surfaces, environments, and activity of Ganymede, Europa, and Callisto.
 - The broader Jupiter system characterizes Jupiter's atmosphere, magnetic environment, ring system, and other satellites (including Io).
1. JUICE builds on the previously proposed Europa Jupiter System Mission (EJSM-Laplace), a planned joint mission between ESA and NASA that would have carried out an in-depth study of the Jovian system and its icy moons.
2. It will pave the way for extensive future exploration of the diverse extreme environments in the distant outer Solar System.
3. Jupiter has 80 moons; the four largest moons - Io, Europa, Ganymede, and Callisto - were first observed by the astronomer Galileo Galilei in 1610.

(SOURCE - OUTLOOK INDIA)

0. Switzerland Becomes 1st in WTO to Formally Adopt Fisheries Deal



Why in the news: Switzerland became the first World Trade Organization member to submit its acceptance of the fisheries subsidies agreement struck at the 12th Ministerial Conference at WTO.

1. Adopted by consensus at the WTO's 12th Ministerial Conference (MC12) held in Geneva on 12-17 June 2022, the Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies sets new binding, multilateral rules to curb harmful subsidies, which are a crucial factor in the widespread depletion of the world's fish stocks.
2. The Agreement bars subsidies to illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing; and bans the same for fishing overfished stocks and fishing on the unregulated high seas.
3. The prohibition of harmful marine capture subsidies is a significant contribution of the multilateral trading system toward achieving the UN's sustainable development goals.
4. Two-thirds of WTO members' acceptance is required for the Agreement to come into effect.



(SOURCE - CNBC)

Centre issues new Endorsement guidelines for social media influencers, celebs

Why in the news: The Union Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food, and Public Distribution issued a directive for celebrities and social media influencers called "Endorsements Know-How!" intending to defend consumers' rights.

1. The guidelines aim to ensure that individuals do not mislead their audiences when endorsing products or services and that they comply with the Consumer Protection Act and any associated rules or guidelines.



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2. It mandates compulsory disclosure of monetary or material benefits of a product or a brand they promote through social media platforms.
3. Non-disclosure of brand affiliations by influencers may invite a penalty of up to Rs 50 lakh.
4. Endorsements are a form of advertising that uses famous personalities or celebrities who command a high degree of recognition, trust, respect, or awareness among the people.
5. The new guidelines align with the Consumer Protection Act of 2019, enacted to protect consumers from unfair trade practices and deceptive advertising.

(SOURCE -LIVEMINT)

PM distributes title deeds for over 50,000 beneficiaries in Karnataka's Kalaburagi

Why in the news: The word 'Hakku' means "the right," and 'Patra' means a "paper" or "document." It is a legal document that states an individual's rightful property inheritance.



1. PM Modi distributed title deeds (hakku Patra) to the eligible beneficiaries of newly declared revenue villages of Karnataka.
2. In line with the Prime Minister's vision of 100 percent saturation of government schemes, about 1475 unrecorded habitations have been declared New Revenue villages in the five districts of Kalaburagi, Yadgiri, Raichur, Bidar, and Vijayapura.
3. The issuance of title deeds to more than fifty thousand beneficiaries, who are largely from the marginalized and vulnerable communities from the SC, ST, and OBC, is a step to provide formal recognition from the government for their land and will make them eligible for receiving government services like drinking water. A title deed is a property ownership document. The bearer of the document owns the land.



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4. The title deeds enable owners to avail of bank loans with the said document. It makes you the legitimate owner of your land or property by giving an up-to-date and official record of who owns the land.
5. Hakku Patra registration resolves all types of disputes regarding the ownership or rights over the land. The document helps in preventing any encroachment via trespassing on the boundaries.

(SOURCE - INDIAN EXPRESS)

Aska police station awarded as number 1 in the country

Why in the news: The award was given during the DGsP/IGsP Conference - 2022, which began in New Delhi.

1. Union Home Minister Amit Shah awarded the Aska Police Station of Ganjam, district of Odisha, as the number one police station in the country.
2. The Inspector in charge, Prashanta Kumar Sahu of the Aska Police station, received the award.
3. The ranking of Police stations across the country is an annual exercise by the Ministry of Home Affairs.
4. The judgment is based on 165 different parameters, including crime rate, investigation, disposal of cases, infrastructure, and public service delivery.
5. About 20 percent of the total points are also based on feedback about the police station from citizens.
6. The main objective of the ranking is to improve the quality of policing and make the police stations friendly.



(SOURCE - THE HINDU)



International Education Day

Why in the news: The United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) on December 3, 2018, passed a resolution for January 24 to be considered the International Day of Education.

1. The fifth International Education Day is being celebrated today (January 24).
2. The event is celebrated for the role of education in bringing global peace and development.
3. This year, the theme of International Education Day is “to invest in people, prioritize education,” according to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) website.
4. UNESCO has dedicated the fifth edition of International Education Day to all the girls and women of Afghanistan who have been denied their right to learn, study and teach. The international community has the responsibility to ensure that the rights of Afghan girls and women are restored without delay.
5. The first SDG4 benchmark publication will also be launched by UNESCO's Global Education Monitoring Report and Institute for Statistics. It will monitor the country's progress toward the benchmarks.
6. UNESCO has also pointed out that almost 244 million children and youth are out of school, and 71 million adults are illiterate.

(SOURCE - FINANCIAL EXPRESS)

National Girl Child Day 2023

Why in the news: To mark the occasion this year, the Women and Child Development Department will celebrate National Girl Child Week from 24 to January 30.



National Girl Child Day is observed every year in India on January 24 to



promote awareness about the rights of girl children and to promote the importance of their education, health, and nutrition.

1. The day was first initiated in 2008 by the Ministry of Women and Child Development. It was celebrated for the first time to raise awareness about the inequalities faced by girls and women in society at various levels.
2. Several programs, campaigns, and workshops will also be organized throughout the day. Some include the "Beti Bachao-Beti Padhao" signature campaign, plantation and nameplate drive in daughters' names, awareness campaign on women's rights, and mass oaths for girl child protection.
3. The goal of this day is to transform people's perceptions of girls. The official theme for National Girl Child Day 2023 has not yet been announced by the government of India. However, the slogan for National Girl Child Day 2023 is "Digital Generation, Our Generation."

(SOURCE - TIMES OF INDIA)

NASA to test nuclear fission-powered spacecraft engine by 2027

Why in the news: Defence Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA) is working on nuclear power fission power spacecraft along with NASA called the Demonstration Rocket for Agile Cislunar Operations (DRACO).

1. NASA will partner with the US military's Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA) to develop the nuclear thermal propulsion engine and launch it into space.
2. A nuclear thermal rocket engine uses a fission reactor to generate extremely high temperatures. The heat is then transferred to a liquid propellant, which "is expanded and exhausted through a nozzle to propel the spacecraft."
3. A nuclear thermal rocket can be three or more times more efficient than conventional chemical propulsion. That means that a spacecraft powered by nuclear fission could result in faster travel times and less risk to



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astronauts. The technology could also allow for more power for instruments and communications on board.

4. No country on earth has succeeded in this technology. China, Russia, and USA are space racing on the technology.

(SOURCE - BBC NEWS)

Five billion people unprotected from trans fat leading to heart diseases: WHO

Why in the news: The World Health Organization (WHO) has released a new report that revealed that five billion people globally remain unprotected from harmful trans fat, increasing their risk of heart disease and death.

1. The report, called "Countdown to 2023 - WHO report on global trans fat elimination 2022", is an annual status report published by WHO in collaboration with Resolve to Save Lives to track progress towards the goal of trans fat elimination in 2023.
2. It monitors global progress towards the 2023 target for eliminating industrially produced Trans-Fatty Acids (TFA) worldwide.
3. The report finds that 5 billion people globally are exposed to harmful trans-fat, increasing their heart disease and death risk. Almost 9 of the 16 countries do not have a best-practice policy.
4. TFAs are unsaturated fatty acids that are of two types.
 - Naturally occurring trans-fat occurs naturally in some dairy and meat products.
 - Industrially produced trans-fat adds hydrogen to liquid vegetable oils to make them more solid. It is found in packaged foods, baked goods, cooking oils, and spreads.
1. World Health Organization (WHO) has launched a comprehensive plan called "REPLACE" to eliminate industrially-produced artificial trans-fats from the global food supply by 2023.
2. FSSAI limits the content of not more than 2% by mass of total oils and fats from January 2022. It has made it mandatory for food manufacturing units to specify TFA content on the nutrient label.

(SOURCE - INDIA TODAY)



First time in 12 years, India invites Pakistan's foreign minister for SCO meet

Why in the news: Pakistan has not participated in the SCO Film Festival to be held in Mumbai later this month. While all countries have sent entries, Pakistan is the only country that did not send any film for screening in the group's third such film festival.

1. India has sent an invitation to Pakistan's foreign minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari to attend the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) foreign ministers' meeting, which is scheduled to take place in Goa.
2. It was in 2012 when Hina Rabbani Khar visited India as foreign minister of Pakistan.
3. The 20-year-old organization has Russia, India, China, Pakistan, and four central Asian countries - Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan as its members.
4. Iran is the latest country to become a member and, under Indian Presidency, will, for the first time, attend the grouping's meeting as a full-fledged member.
5. The last meeting of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization was held in Samarkand, Uzbekistan.
6. SCO meet to be held under the theme "FOR A SECURE SCO." Here SECURE includes the following concept:
 - S: Security for citizens
 - E: Economic Development
 - C: Connectivity
 - U: Unity
 - R: Respect
 - E: Environmental Protection

(SOURCE - PIB)



NARCL acquires first stressed account from IDBI Bank-led lenders

Why in the news: The bad loan transferred to NARCL, or bad bank, is Jaypee Infratech, among the 12 large accounts referred by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) to the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) in 2017.

1. NARCL, an Asset Reconstruction Company (ARC)/bad bank, has acquired its first stressed asset- Jaypee Infratech- from lenders.
2. NARCL, which was set up by banks last year, is aggregating and consolidating select stressed assets (above ₹500 crores each) in the financial system for their subsequent resolution. It is incorporated under the Companies Act 2013, and Public sector banks hold a majority stake in the ARC.
3. Stressed assets will be acquired through a 15 percent upfront cash payment and 85 percent security receipts.
4. It is registered with RBI as an ARC under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002.
5. Establishing NARCL is part of the government's efforts to clean up the financial system, which sits on one of the world's most enormous piles of bad assets.

(SOURCE -LIVEMINT)

The First Ever India Stack Developer Conference to be organized in New Delhi

Why in the news: India Stack is a multi-layer cluster of digital solutions - Aadhaar, UPI, Digi Locker, Co-Win, GeM, and GSTN that have played a significant role in the digital transformation in India.

1. The first India Stack Developer Conference will be held in New Delhi, which will dwell on ways and means to ensure wider adoption of India's digital goods all over the world.



2. It will be attended by over 100 digital leaders from the Industry, Government, start-ups and unicorns, and academia. Delegates from G20 countries and G20 Secretariat have also been invited to the Conference.
3. It will provide a platform for the Industry and developer community to explore ways to develop robust start-ups and innovation systems within the country and take India stack products to other countries.
4. India Stack will be one of the focus areas at the World Government Summit 2023, which is being held in Abu Dhabi next month.
5. India Stack refers to the ambitious project of creating a unified software platform to bring India's population into the digital age.

(SOURCE - INDIAN EXPRESS)

Mass mortality of Olive Ridley turtles in Godavari region of Andhra Pradesh raises concerns

Why in the news: The Locals blame it on effluents from oil exploration facilities, aqua ponds, forest dept. Launches probe.



1. Olive Ridley Turtles (*Lepidochelys olivacea*) have been washed ashore along the coastline between Kakinada and Antarvedi in the Godavari region during the annual breeding season on the east coast.
2. The Olive Ridley Sea Turtle, also known as the Pacific ridley sea turtle, is a medium-sized sea turtle found in warm and tropical waters, primarily in the Pacific and Indian Oceans.
3. The species is listed as Vulnerable in the IUCN Red List, Appendix 1 in CITES, and Schedule 1 in Wildlife Protection Act, 1972.
4. They are best known for their behavior of synchronized nesting in mass numbers, termed Arribadas.



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5. Most of the turtles are killed after getting trapped in the plastic nets or hit by heavy mechanized boats, and efforts to create awareness have not yielded desired results.

(SOURCE - THE HINDU)

NSG to hold joint anti-terror drill with US Special forces.

Why in the news: It is the 6th Edition of the Counter Terrorism Exercise between India's NSG (National Security Guard) and US Special Operations Forces (SOF).

1. Anti-terror crack force National Security Guard will conduct a month-long, joint anti-terror mock exercise with American special forces at Chennai from January 14 to February 16. They will share best practices to carry out swift and well-coordinated operations to counter terrorist attacks in an urban environment.
2. NSG and US Special forces will exchange knowledge for the first time about how to effectively neutralize chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear threats.
3. The joint training will result in greater synergy & interoperability between both forces in countering terrorism.

(SOURCE - FINANCIAL EXPRESS)

National Tourism Day 2023

Why in the news: National Tourism Day is celebrated across the country on January 25 every year.

1. The Ministry of Tourism observes National Tourism Day to appreciate India's beauty and spread awareness about the importance of tourism and its impact on the economy.
2. This year, national tourism day will be celebrated in Pochampally, a village in Telangana. This place is famous for its hand-woven products and ikat silk saree.



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3. The theme for National Tourism day 2022 was 'Rural and Community-Centric Tourism.'
4. The authorities organize several programs, seminars, and cultural events to raise awareness among the people about the importance of tourism.

(SOURCE - TIMES OF INDIA)

