



RAMAN ACADEMY
"inspiring excellence"

DECEMBER 2024

CURRENT AFFAIRS ENGLISH



- Topic wise current affairs
- 150 practice questions
- Detailed analysis of important events

BY RAMAN ACADEMY

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SECTION 1

TOPIC WISE CURRENT AFFAIRS



BY RAMAN ACADEMY

1: Important Days



World AIDS Day : 01 December :-

Every year on December 1st, the globe commemorates World AIDS Day, a day dedicated to educating people about HIV/AIDS and honoring those who have perished from the disease. The major purpose of the day is to emphasize the importance of human rights in the fight against the AIDS epidemic. UNAIDS and the World Health Organization (WHO) founded World AIDS Day in 1988. The theme for World AIDS Day 2024 is "Take the rights path: My health, my right!". This theme emphasises how important human rights are to reaching the 2030 AIDS eradication target.



National Pollution Control Day : 02 December :-

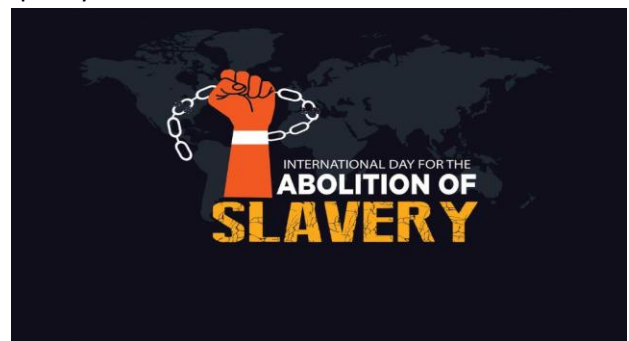
Every year on December 2, India celebrates National Pollution Control Day, also known as National Pollution Prevention Day. The goal of the day is to increase awareness about various pollution control techniques and the avoided development of industrial disasters. National Pollution Control Day is especially honored in memory of those who died in the 1984 Bhopal gas disaster. Regarded as one of the worst industrial environmental catastrophes in the history of India, the Bhopal Gas Tragedy took place on the intervening night

of December 2 and 3, 1984, when a deadly gas, methyl isocyanate, leaked from Union Carbide India Limited's pesticide facility in Madhya Pradesh. The theme of National Pollution Control Day 2024 is "Clean Air, Green Earth: A Step Towards Sustainable Living".



World Computer Literacy Day : 02 December :-

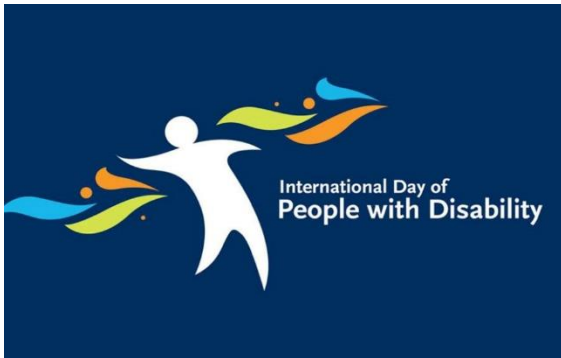
Every year on December 2, the world celebrates Computer Literacy Day. The Indian corporation National Institute of Information Technology (NIIT) began honoring World Computer Literacy Day in 2001. The corporation commemorated the day as the institute's 20th anniversary. During an occasion in 2002, various members of Parliament were given computer training in front of then-Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee to spread the concept of digital literacy. Computer literacy is crucial for individuals to participate in the digital economy, access information and enhance their overall quality of life.



International Day for the Abolition of Slavery : 02 December :-

According to the United Nations, approximately 150 million children are subjected to child labour worldwide.

More than 40 million people around the world are victims of modern slavery. The United Nations General Assembly declared the International Day for the Abolition of Slavery on December 2nd. This day focuses on eliminating present-day forms of slavery, such as trafficking in persons, sexual exploitation, child labour, forced marriage, and the pressurized recruitment of children for use in armed rivalry.



International Day of Persons with Disabilities : 03 December :-

Every year on December 3, the globe observes International Day of Persons with Disabilities (IDPD) to raise awareness and mobilize support for the liberties and welfare of persons with disabilities worldwide. The day is dedicated to supporting the rights and well-being of people with disabilities at all levels of society and development, as well as raising awareness about their position in all elements of political, social, economic, and cultural life. The theme for this year is "Amplifying the leadership of persons with disabilities for an inclusive and sustainable future."



International Day of Banks : 04 December:-

The International Day of Banks is observed on December 4 to highlight the role of international and global

development banks in supporting sustainable development. In 2019, the United Nations General Assembly declared December 4 to be International Bank Day. It is commemorated for the first time in 2020. Banks are financial institutions. Banks support the international community's goals by financing the sustainable development of member nations and providing information for achieving these goals. The theme for 2024 is "Empowering Sustainable Development Through Finance."



Indian Navy Day : 04 December :-

As part of the Navy Day celebrations, the Indian Navy will hold a big operational demonstration at Puri's Blue Flag Beach on December 4, 2024. The event commemorates the anniversary of Operation Trident, a crucial naval offensive during the 1971 Indo-Pak War, while also raising public awareness of the Indian Navy. The event will be hosted by Admiral Dinesh K Tripathi, Chief of Naval Staff, and will include the President of India, Droupadi Murmu, as the Chief Guest. The demonstration aims to highlight the Navy's capabilities and its dedication to protecting India's maritime interests.



World Soil Day : 05 December :-

World Soil Day is observed on December 5 each year to promote awareness about the importance of soil in our lives. In 2002, the International Union of Soil Sciences proposed that World Soil Day be observed annually on December 5. FAO also supported the formal foundation of World Soil Day as an international awareness-raising platform, led by the Kingdom of Thailand and operating within the framework of the Global Soil Partnership. The first World Soil Day was celebrated on 5 December, 2014. This theme for this year is "Caring for Soils: Measure, Monitor, Manage".

**International Volunteer Day : 05 December :-**

The United Nations General Assembly approved and began the annual observance of International Volunteer Day on December 5, 1985. This day celebration encourages many volunteers to become mobilized and collaborate with partners and government organizations to provide a framework for the program to promote and sustain domestic volunteerism in all nations. According to the UN, International Volunteer Day promotes peace and development by championing the recognition of volunteers and working with partners to integrate volunteerism into development programming.

**BR Ambedkar's death anniversary : 06 December :-**

On December 6, India commemorates Mahaparinirvan Divas in commemoration of Dr. Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar, also known as Dr BR Ambedkar. On April 14, 1891, BR Ambedkar, the chief architect of the Indian Constitution, was born. Dr. BR Ambedkar, often known as Baba Saheb, was a jurist, economist, politician, and social reformer who influenced various subsequent social movements. Dr BR Ambedkar, who campaigned against social discrimination against Untouchables (Dalits), was the first law minister of independent India. Baba Saheb died on December 6, 1956.

**International Civil Aviation Day : 07 December :-**

Every year on December 7, the world celebrates International Civil Aviation Day. The day aims to increase awareness about the importance of civil aviation and its substantial contribution to the global economy, among other things. The celebration day of International Civil Aviation was established in 1994 while commemorating the 50th anniversary of signing the Convention on International Civil Aviation by the International Civil Aviation Organisation. The theme for the year 2024 is "Safe Skies. Sustainable Future: Together for the next 80 years."

**Armed Forces Flag Day (India) : 07 December :-**

Armed Forces Flag Day, also known as Flag Day of India, has been observed since 1949 and is dedicated to commemorating the bravery of servicemen while also collecting welfare funds from Indian citizens to aid in the rehabilitation of ex-servicemen in need as well as the widows and dependents of martyrs. Following India's independence, the government was compelled to establish a welfare fund to care for its defence personnel. Hence, a committee was set up on August 28, 1949 that decided a Flag Day shall be celebrated annually on December 7.



International Anti-Corruption Day : 09 December :-

Since 2005, annually December 9 has been designated as International Anti-Corruption Day to raise awareness about this global issue. The United Nations General Assembly ratified the UN Convention Against Corruption in October of 2003. Following this, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) was designated as the Convention's Conference of States Parties secretariat. The assembly then designated December 9 as International Anti-Corruption Day. This year's theme is "Uniting with Youth Against Corruption: Shaping Tomorrow's Integrity".



Human Rights Day : 10 December :-

Human Rights Day, observed annually on December 10, commemorates the declaration of the Universal

Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) by the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) in 1948. This day is primarily concerned with the fundamental liberties and rights to which every person, regardless of location, is intrinsically entitled by virtue of society. It celebrates and promotes rights that are inalienable to any nationality, gender, ethnicity, race, sexual orientation, or religion. The 2024 Human Rights Day theme is "Our Rights, Our Future, Right Now".



International Mountain Day : 11 December :-

The UN General Assembly declared 2002 to be the UN International Year of Mountains, and on that occasion, 11 December was named as International Mountain Day beginning in 2003. International Mountain Day increases awareness of avalanche risks and the need to safeguard them. Over fifty percent of humanity's daily life is dependent on mountain waters. 80% of the world's food comes from 20 plant species, six of which originated and have been diversified in mountains: maize, potatoes, barley, sorghum, tomatoes, and apples. "Mountain solutions for a sustainable future – innovation, adaptation and youth" is the theme of this year's International Mountain Day.



UNICEF Day : 11 December :-

Each year, on December 11, UNICEF Day is observed. The United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) exists to save the lives of children around the world by providing humanitarian relief. It also protects children's rights and helps them reach their full potential from childhood to adolescence. Following World War II, the United Nations established the International Children's Emergency Fund. The goal was to protect and enhance the lives of people whose future was at risk.



International Day of Neutrality : 12 December :-

Every year on December 12, the International Day of Neutrality is observed to promote awareness about the need of neutrality in interstate interactions, as well as to strengthen global peace and security. According to the United Nations, neutrality is the legal status that results from a country's refusal to participate in a war between other states while remaining impartial toward the belligerents. On December 12, 2017, the International Day of Neutrality was proclaimed.



Universal Health Coverage Day : 12 December :-

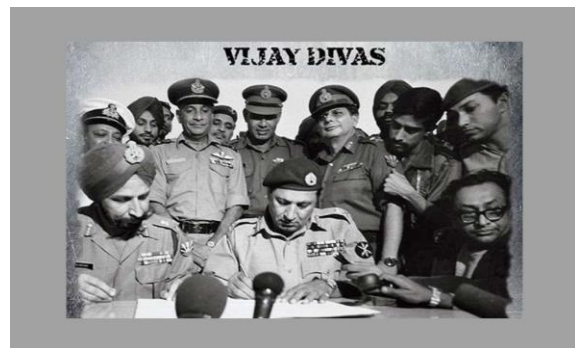
Universal Health Coverage (UHC) is a revolutionary concept that envisions a society in which everyone has access to critical healthcare services without financial barriers. December 12 is recognized worldwide as Universal Health Coverage Day, representing a shared

commitment to this objective. The day, declared by the United Nations in 2017, emphasizes the critical need for strong and resilient health-care systems capable of saving lives while promoting justice and sustainability. This year's theme, "Health: It's on the government"



National Energy Conservation Day (India) : 14 December :-

Every year on December 14, National Energy Conservation Day is observed to convey the message about the necessity of energy conservation and to highlight the country's achievements in energy efficiency and conservation. National Energy Conservation Day is a reminder of the critical role energy plays in our lives and the importance of conserving it. Introduced in 1991, this day is championed by the Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE) under the Ministry of Power, symbolizing the nation's commitment to energy efficiency and conservation.



Vijay Diwas : 16 December :-

Vijay Diwas, celebrated yearly on December 16th, is a day of immense pride and honour for India. It recalls the country's triumph over Pakistan in the 1971 war that resulted in the formation of Bangladesh. This day honors the heroism and sacrifices of the Indian Armed Forces, who were instrumental in one of modern history's most

crucial victories. On December 16, 1971, nearly 93,000 Pakistani troops surrendered to the Indian Army, marking one of the largest military surrenders since World War II. It was a victory that brought immense pride to our nation and reaffirmed our belief in the strength of unity and resilience.



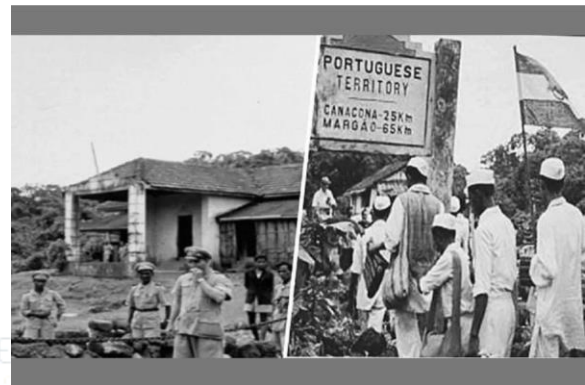
International Migrants Day : 18 December :-

Every year, on December 18, the globe honors International Migrants Day. In 1999, the United Nations General Assembly established the international convention on safeguarding of the rights of all migrant workers and their families. However, on December 4, 2000, in recognition of the enormous and increasing number of migrants around the world, the assembly declared December 18 as International Migrants Day. International Migrants Day was created by the global body to commemorate the significance of strengthening international cooperation and migration regionally, bilaterally, and globally. 'Honouring the contributions of migrants and respecting their rights' is the theme of the International Migrants Day 2024.



Minorities Rights Day (India) : 18 December :-

December 18 is National Minority Rights Day in India. It is a powerful reminder of the nation's commitment to protecting the rights of religious, ethnic, racial, and linguistic minorities. The creation of Minorities Rights Day coincides with the passage of the UN Declaration on December 18, 1992. This declaration underscored the entitlement of individuals from minority groups to freely embrace their own culture, practice their religion, and use their language without facing discrimination.



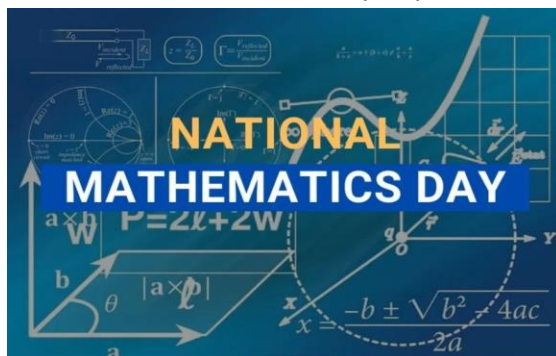
Goa's Liberation Day : 19 December :-

Annually on December 19, Goa, Daman, and Diu celebrate Liberation Day with enormous fervor and splendor. The significance of this day stems from the events of 1961, when the Indian Army successfully seized Goa, effectively ending 451 years of Portuguese control. Despite India's independence from British authority in 1947, Goa remained under Portuguese sovereignty, maintaining its distinct cultural and religious character. Goa Liberation Day is significant as it marks the official liberation and integration of Goa into the Indian Union in 1961, after centuries of Portuguese colonial rule.



International Human Solidarity Day : 20 December :-

Every year on December 20th, we mark International Human Solidarity Day. This day encourages states to reinforce their commitment to international agreements. Its foundation was formalized in 2000 at the United Nations Millennium Summit. This historic statement, spearheaded by international leaders, saw "solidarity" as a basis and incentive for the twenty-first century. The World Solidarity Fund was established in 2002 as a result of this shared responsibility idea, which eventually led to the official announcement of International Human Solidarity Day in 2005.



National Mathematics Day (India) : 22 December :-

Every year on December 22, National Mathematics Day commemorates the birth anniversary of Srinivasa Ramanujan, a famed Indian mathematician. The day honors and commemorates his accomplishments. On this day in 1887, the brilliant mathematician Srinivasa Ramanujan was born to a Tamil Brahmin Iyengar family in Erode, Tamil Nadu. The Indian government decided in 2012 to mark National Mathematics Day on December 22, Srinivasa Ramanujan's birth anniversary. Since then it has been celebrated on 22 December every year.



National Farmer's Day (India) : 23 December :-

National Farmer's Day is observed on December 23 annually in India. This unique day is observed to honor

farmers and recognize them as the backbone of the country. The day also commemorates the birth anniversary of India's fifth Prime Minister, Chaudhary Charan Singh, who served from July 28, 1979, until January 14, 1980. In 2001, the Indian government declared December 23, Chaudhary Charan Singh's birthday, to be National Farmers' Day. National Farmer's Day is celebrated every year in states like Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, Punjab, and Madhya Pradesh, where farmers are actively engaged in agriculture.



National Consumer Rights Day (India) : 24 December :-

Every year, on December 24th, the National Consumer Day is commemorated with much fanfare, as it recognizes the changing importance of the consumer movement in India. On this day, the Consumer Protection Act of 1986 was signed into law by the president. This year's Consumer Day is being commemorated in Delhi with the topic "Virtual Hearings & Digital Access to Consumer Justice". The concept is consistent with the goals of the new Consumer Protection Act of 2019, which seeks to provide customers with timely, cost-effective, and hassle-free justice.



Good Governance Day (India) : 25 December :-

Every year on December 25, Good Governance Day commemorates the birth anniversary of former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee. The day is held to raise public awareness of government accountability and management. Atal Bihari Vajpayee was born on December 25, 1924, in Gwalior, Madhya Pradesh. He served as Indian Prime Minister three times: first for 13 days in 1996, then for 13 months between 1998 and 1999, and then for a full term from 1999 to 2004. In 2014, the newly-elected Narendra Modi government announced that December 25 would henceforth be called the "Good Governance Day", in honour of the former Prime Minister.



Veer Bal Diwas : 26 December :-

On January 9, 2022, Prime Minister Narendra Modi made a historic announcement: December 26 would be designated as Veer Bal Diwas. Veer Bal Diwas honors the Sahibzadas, Guru Gobind Singh's four young sons, whose

bravery and martyrdom are forever inscribed in the annals of India's struggle for justice and faith. The Sahibzadas' bravery acts as an unifying narrative, reminding every Indian, regardless of age or condition, of the significance of fighting for justice and truth. Veer Bal Diwas is a reminder that India's heritage is rich with stories of bravery and sacrifice.



International Day of Epidemic Preparedness : 27 December :-

On December 7, 2020, the UN General Assembly passed a resolution declaring December 27 as International Day of Epidemic Preparedness. The coronavirus epidemic in China began in late 2019. As the infection rate rose and the number of infected persons increased, several areas of the city were walled off. Despite the fact that the virus spread over the world, authorities were unable to control it. The United Nations General Assembly declared the day in order to emphasize the value of epidemic prevention, readiness, and cooperation.

2: Agreements



Electric Propulsion Pact Signed by India, UK :-

India and the United Kingdom took a crucial step in improving India's naval capabilities by signing a Statement of Intent (SoI) on the development of Electric Propulsion Systems. The agreement was made during the third conference of the India-UK Electric Propulsion Capability Partnership, which took place in Portsmouth, UK, and represents a watershed moment in the two countries' increasing defence ties. This partnership is set to drive technological innovation, with a specific focus on

integrating advanced electric propulsion systems into India's naval platforms.



Andhra Pradesh Govt Signs MoU With Google To Advance AI :-

The Andhra Pradesh government has signed a key deal with Google to promote advances in Artificial Intelligence (AI). According to the agreement, Google will implement skill development programs in schools and colleges that will prepare students for AI-driven opportunities. It will also provide AI training to start-ups, traditional industries, and small companies. The collaboration will support the integration of AI and Machine Learning (ML) solutions in key areas like healthcare and environmental sustainability while facilitating the development of digital infrastructure to foster economic growth and build a robust AI startup ecosystem.



Google to open office in Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh govt signs MoU :-

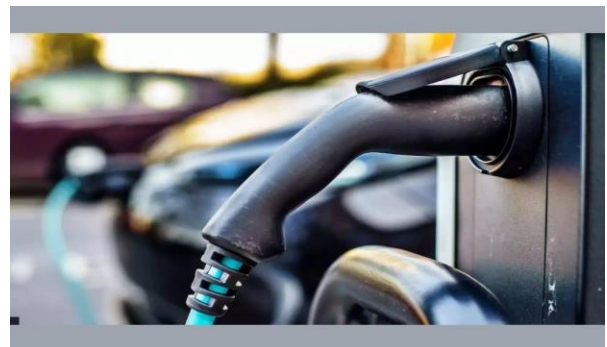
The Andhra Pradesh government inked a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with technological powerhouse Google to create an Artificial Intelligence (AI) Data Centre in Visakhapatnam, providing a huge boost to the state's digital environment. It should be noted that on

December 5, Google struck another agreement with the state government to collaborate on several AI efforts. CM Naidu stated that December 11 will remain as a memorable day for the State, especially its youth, as Google's presence would significantly transform Visakhapatnam.



Karnataka govt signs MoU with Krones for establishing manufacturing facility :-

The Karnataka government has inked a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Krones, a German manufacturer of bottling and packaging equipment, to reaffirm the company's ambitions to develop a cutting-edge manufacturing plant in the state's Vemagal Industrial Park Phase 2. The MoU was signed under the supervision of Minister for Large and Medium Industries M B Patil as part of the state's efforts to prepare for Invest Karnataka 2025, the state's showpiece Global Investors Meeting in February. The MoU ensures expedited operationalization of Krones' facility, with the state government assuring full support for a seamless setup.



Himachal GOVT Signs MOU To Boost e-Vehicle Infra :-

The state government has inked a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with two companies to expand

green energy and e-vehicle technology in Himachal Pradesh. DC Negi, Director of Transport, inked the memorandum of understanding on behalf of the state government, with Rahul Soni representing EVI Technology and Avinash Sharma representing Jio-BP, in the presence of Chief Minister (CM) Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu. CM Sukhu said that the MoU was signed with two companies to enhance facilities across five selected green corridors in the state and this initiative marks a significant step towards achieving the state government's vision of a sustainable green future.



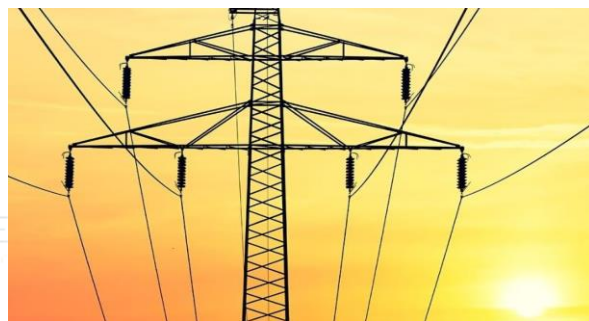
Switzerland Suspends 'Most Favoured Nation' Status To India :-

Swiss authorities have lifted the most favoured nation status (MFN) provision of the Double Taxation Avoidance Agreement (DTAA) with India, potentially affecting Swiss investments in India and raising taxes for Indian enterprises operating in Switzerland. According to a statement issued by the Swiss finance department on December 11, this decision follows an Indian court decision from last year, which identified that the MFN clause does not automatically activate when a country joins the OECD if India established a tax treaty prior to their OECD membership.



Gati Shakti Vishwavidyalaya, Navy Sign MoU for Logistics Education :-

Gati Shakti Vishwavidyalaya in Vadodara has inked a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Indian Navy to improve logistics-related education, research, and training for the force, according to an official announcement. "The collaboration is set to strengthen the Indian Navy's logistical framework by focusing on supply chain management, multimodal transportation and sustainability in logistics. It also aligns with national development initiatives such as the PM Gati Shakti National Master Plan 2021 and the National Logistics Policy 2022," a statement by the Ministry of Railways said.



Oriana Power signs Rs 10,000 crore MoU with Rajasthan govt :-

Oriana Power, which is listed on the NSE, announced that it has inked a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Rajasthan government to spend Rs 10,000 crore in the development of numerous projects, including solar, floating solar, green hydrogen, and energy storage. The MoU was inked in Jaipur at the recently completed Rising Rajasthan Global Summit 2024. The company said it has identified six locations across the state for developing its projects, including one in Bikaner, two in Churu, and three locations in Phalodi districts.



India and France Collaborate to Establish World's Largest Museum :-

India and France have inked a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for the construction of a new National Museum, similar to the Louvre in Paris, at the ancient North and South Blocks of the national capital. When completed, the museum, dubbed Yuga Yugeen Bharat, will be the world's largest. The 'Yuga Yugeen Bharat' museum will be built via adaptive reuse in partnership with France, which is known for its experience in such projects, as evidenced by the Louvre, the Grand Palais, and the Hotel de la Marine.



India and ADB sign \$42 million loan to help fortify Maharashtra's coastline :-

The Centre and the Asian Development Bank (ADB) have inked a \$42 million loan agreement to protect coastal and riverbank areas in Maharashtra, increasing the resilience of local communities and natural ecosystems. ADB will assist the Maharashtra Maritime Board in increasing its capability for shore management planning, including the development of a coastal infrastructure management unit. The project will support capacity building of stakeholders on gender equality, social inclusion, coastal management, and livelihood activities.



Tata Power and Canara Bank Partner for Rooftop Solar Loans :-

Tata Power Renewable Energy, a Tata Power subsidiary, has teamed with state-run Canara Bank to promote the

usage of rooftop solar systems under the government-backed PM Surya Ghar Scheme, which provides inexpensive financing choices to Indian families. According to a corporate statement, the effort intends to make renewable energy solutions more accessible by offering loans for household solar installations. Loans of up to Rs 2 lakh are available for systems with a capacity of up to 3 kW (kilowatt), requiring a 10 per cent margin and no collateral, with an interest rate of 7 per cent per annum and a 10-year repayment period.



India-Kuwait Elevate Ties to Strategic Partnership :-

Narendra Modi's tour to Kuwait, the first by an Indian Prime Minister in 43 years, was highlighted by the signing of a landmark deal to strengthen defense cooperation while also elevating relations to a strategic partnership. The defence deal is consistent with the Indian government's recent initiatives to strengthen security and defence cooperation with Gulf countries. "The agreement will institutionalise bilateral cooperation in the area of defence," said the Indian government, adding that key areas of cooperation will include joint military exercises, defense personnel training, coastal defense, maritime safety, and joint development and production of defense equipment.



Andhra Pradesh renews MoU with Toyama :-

Andhra Pradesh and Toyama, an industrial prefecture on the Japan Sea coast, have extended their Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to deepen bilateral connections and boost collaboration in manufacturing, medicines, tourism, and digital innovation. The agreement, which

was first established in 2015, was signed on December 21, 2024, by a 14-person team led by Toyama Governor Hachiro Nitta. Notable outcomes from the 2015 MoU include scholarship programs, academic collaborations, and pharmaceutical industry roundtables.

3: Appointments



India Re-Elected to UN Peacebuilding Commission for 2025-2026 :-

India has been re-elected to the United Nations Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) for the year 2025-2026, reiterating its commitment to global peace efforts. The Peacebuilding Commission, created in December 2005, is an intergovernmental advisory group that supports peace initiatives in conflict-affected countries and contributes to the international community's overall peace agenda. Its focus includes promoting a strategic and integrated approach to peacebuilding by engaging with member states, United Nations entities, and other relevant actors.



SC Collegium Recommends Justice Manmohan for Apex Court :-

The Supreme Court collegium has recommended to the Centre the name of Delhi High Court Chief Justice Manmohan for elevation to the supreme court. The five-member collegium, led by Chief Justice of India Sanjiv Khanna, recently met and voted to endorse Justice Manmohan as the country's top judge. Justices BR Gavai, Surya Kant, Hrishikesh Roy, and AS Oka are also on the panel. The Supreme Court's current strength is 32 against the sanctioned 34 judges, including the Chief Justice of India.



Murdu Fernando Becomes Sri Lanka's 2nd Female Chief Justice :-

As the 48th Chief Justice of Sri Lanka, Justice Fernando has created history by becoming the second female Chief Justice in the nation. The Constitutional Council recently confirmed her name for this prestigious position, which comes after Chief Justice Jayantha Jayasuriya retired. Justice Fernando started her work in the Attorney General's Department in 1985 and has had a distinguished career spanning more than thirty years. She rose through the ranks, becoming Deputy Solicitor General in 1997 and Additional Solicitor General in 2014.



Devajit Saikia Appointed Acting Secretary of BCCI :-

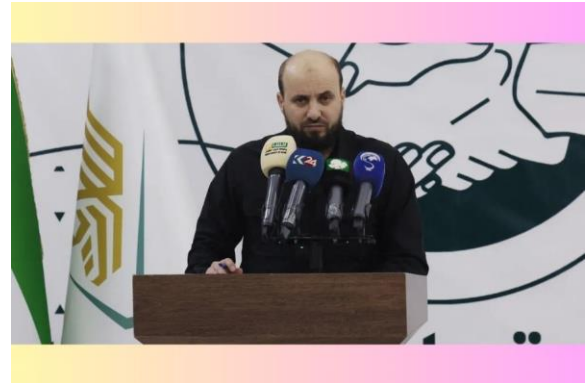
Devajit Saikia has been chosen as the BCCI's interim secretary by Board President Roger Binny, succeeding Jay Shah, who just became the new ICC President. Saikia, originally from Assam, is a former first-class cricketer. He currently serves as the BCCI's joint secretary. Binny used his constitutional authority to designate Saikia as acting secretary as a stopgap measure until a permanent secretary is chosen under BCCI rules and regulations. It is understood that Saikia will continue in this role till September next year before the vacancy is permanently filled up.



Sanjay Malhotra Appointed as New RBI Governor :-

The government nominated Sanjay Malhotra as the new Governor of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), putting an end to rumors that incumbent governor Shaktikanta Das' term would be extended. Malhotra, a seasoned administrator, would become the 26th governor of the apex bank, following Das, whose term expired on December 10. His appointment comes at a key juncture, as the RBI faces issues such as inflation management and a slowing of economic growth. Das, who was appointed as the RBI Governor in December 2018, has already

surpassed the typical five-year tenure that has been standard in recent decades.



Syrian Rebels Name Mohammed al-Bashir as Interim Prime Minister :-

Syrian militants who overthrew President Bashar al-Assad have named Mohammed al-Bashir as the country's interim prime minister. Al-Bashir, who formerly commanded the Hayat Tahrir al-Sham-dominated de facto government in Idlib province, will oversee a transitional Syrian government until March 1, 2025. Al-Bashir led the Syrian Salvation Government (SSG) in Idlib province prior to the 12-day lightning offensive stormed into Damascus, deposing longstanding leader al-Assad and ending more than a half-century of al-Assad family power. Al-Bashir has close ties to Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS) – the group that led the Damascus takeover – which is tied to the SSG he headed.



Trump Picks Harmeet Dhillon As An Assistant Attorney General for Civil Rights :-

Harmeet K Dhillon, an Indian-American lawyer, has been nominated by US President-elect Donald Trump to serve as deputy attorney general for civil rights at the Justice Department. Harmeet K. Dhillon is the fourth Indian-origin nominee to the Trump 2.0 cabinet. Donald Trump

praised Harmeet Dhillon as a prominent election lawyer; the previous three members of the Trump 2.0 cabinet included Kash Patel, a 44-year-old Trump loyalist with Gujarati roots, as well as Tulsi Gabbard and Vivek Ramaswamy, both of whom are known for their strong Hindu heritage.



Bhavesh Jain Appointed as MD & CEO of TransUnion CIBIL :-

TransUnion CIBIL, an insight and information organization, has announced the hiring of Bhavesh Jain as managing director and CEO, according to a release. Jain succeeds Rajesh Kumar, who left as managing director and CEO after five years in the post. Jain formerly served as TransUnion CIBIL's chief revenue officer for the past five years. In a career stretching decades, he has previously worked with Citi and Kone. He holds a master's in management studies from the Welingkar Institute of Management and a bachelor's degree in engineering from VESIT, both at Mumbai University.



Manish Jain Appointed Executive Director at YES Bank

YES Bank, a private sector lender, stated the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has accepted Manish Jain's nomination as executive director (whole-time director) of the bank for three years. Jain has worked with YES

Bank since September 2023, leading the company's corporate and wholesale banking operations. Manish Jain was named the country's head of wholesale banking before the RBI approved his appointment as executive director. His appointment will become fully effective following approval by the bank's shareholders.



Google Appoints Preeti Lobana as India Head :-

Google has named Preeti Lobana as the new country manager and vice president of its India business, succeeding interim CEO Roma Datta Chobey. Lobana's appointment is notable since Google, along with Meta, becomes the second big Indian tech company to designate a female country head. Ms Lobana, Google's new Country Manager and Vice President for India, will play a crucial role in establishing the company's strategy to bring the revolutionary power of Artificial Intelligence (AI) to all customers while driving innovation, according to a Google statement.



Rama Mohan Rao Amara Appointed as SBI's New Managing Director :-

According to Reuters, Rama Mohan Rao Amara has been nominated Managing Director of State Bank of India by the Centre. The story went on to indicate that Amara's appointment had been approved for three years. The decision was taken by the Cabinet's Appointments

Committee, which is led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. In September of this year, Amara was suggested for the post by FSIB, the headhunter for directors of state-owned banks and organizations. The Financial Services Institutions Bureau (FSIB) had interviewed 9 candidates for the position of managing director of SBI.



Nepal re-appoints Shankar Sharma as ambassador to India :-

Ramchandra Paudel, Nepal's President, has reappointed Dr. Shankar Prasad Sharma as Nepal's Resident Ambassador to India. Along with this, Dr. Netra Prasad Timsina was named Nepal's Resident Ambassador to Malaysia. These appointments were made in accordance with Nepal's Constitution, Article 282 (1), and in response to Council of Ministers recommendations. Dr. Sharma, a distinguished economist and diplomat, previously served as Nepal's Ambassador to the United States from 2009 to 2014 and as Vice-Chairman of the National Planning Commission between 2002 and 2006.



Justice Madan Lokur Appointed Chairperson of UN Internal Justice Council :-

Madan B Lokur, a retired Supreme Court judge, has been nominated chairperson of the United Nations Internal Justice Council. The Internal Justice Council consists of five members selected by the Secretary-General. The remaining four members are Carmen Artigas (Uruguay),

Rosalie Balkin (Australia), Stefan Brezina (Austria), and Jay Pozenal (United States of America). Justice Lokur retired from the Supreme Court on December 31, 2018, after serving as a judge of the top court for over six years. During his tenure, Justice Lokur authored opinions in several significant rulings.



Trump Appoints Sriram Krishnan as Senior AI Policy Advisor :-

U.S. President-elect Donald Trump has appointed Sriram Krishnan, an Indian-American entrepreneur, venture capitalist, and author, as Senior White House Policy Advisor on Artificial Intelligence. Mr. Krishnan, who has previously headed product teams at Microsoft, Twitter, Yahoo!, Facebook, and Snap, will collaborate with David O. Sacks, who will serve as the White House AI and Crypto Czar. Mr. Krishnan said, "I'm honored to be able to serve our country and ensure continued American leadership in AI working closely with David Sacks." Mr. Krishnan's appointment has been welcomed by the Indian-American community.



Himachal, Uttarakhand High Courts get new Chief Justices :-

The Law Ministry announced the appointment of Justice G.S. Sandhawalia as Chief Justice of the Himachal Pradesh High Court and Justice Narender G. as Chief

Justice of the Uttarakhand High Court. Justice Sandhawalia is currently a judge of the Punjab and Haryana High Court, and Justice Narendar G. is a judge of the Andhra Pradesh High Court. The Supreme Court Collegium recommended Justice Narendar G.'s name on September 24. Two additional judges of the Delhi High Court — Justices Shailender Kaur and Ravinder Dubeja — were also elevated as judges, or what is commonly called 'permanent' judges.



V. Ramasubramanian Appointed NHRC Chairperson :-

The President of India has selected retired Supreme Court Justice V. Ramasubramanian as Chairperson of the National Human Rights Commission. The office of NHRC chief has been vacant since June of this year. The President also nominated Priyank Kanoongo and retired Justice Bidyut Ranjan Sarangi as members of the NHRC-India. A high-powered committee chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi convened to elect the next chairperson of the NHRC. Both Leaders of the Opposition (LoPs), Mallikarjun Kharge in the Rajya Sabha and Rahul Gandhi in the Lok Sabha also attended the meeting.



Amitava Chatterjee Appointed as MD & CEO of J&K Bank :-

Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) Bank announced that its board has accepted the nomination of Amitava Chatterjee as

managing director (MD) and chief executive officer (CEO) for a three-year term beginning December 30, 2024. He is currently the deputy managing director at SBI and previously served as the MD and CEO of SBICAPS. Chatterjee has had a successful banking career spanning more than three decades in a variety of geographical locales and strategic roles. His diverse experience includes heading the SBI's operation as CGM New Delhi, circle and Jaipur Circle with high end clientele like PSUs, NBFCs, and DISCOMs.



IAS Officer Arunish Chawla Appointed As New Revenue Secretary :-

Arunish Chawla, an IAS officer from the 1992 batch, has been named the new Revenue Secretary in a restructuring of prominent bureaucrats declared by the Centre. Arunish Chawla, of the Bihar cadre, is now the pharmaceuticals secretary. According to a notification issued by the Ministry of Personnel, he has been appointed secretary of the Ministry of Finance's Revenue Department. The post of Revenue Secretary had fallen vacant, earlier this month, after Sanjay Malhotra was appointed the RBI Governor to replace Shaktikanta Das whose extended tenure came to an end.



Dr. Sandip Shah Appointed Chairperson of NABL :-

Dr. Sandip Shah, an accomplished medical expert and visionary leader, has been appointed as the head of the

National Accreditation Board for Testing and Calibration Laboratories (NABL), which is a constituent board of the Quality Council of India. NABL seeks to improve the quality of testing and calibration services so that consumers, businesses, and regulators can trust the

products and services they use. Dr Shah, a gold medalist in MD Pathology and Bacteriology from BJ Medical College, Ahmedabad, has an extensive academic and professional background in pathology, molecular biology, and transplant immunology.

4: Awards



Gujarat's Gharchola Handicraft Gets GI Recognition :-

Gujarat's well-known handicraft 'Gharchola' has earned a 'Geographical Indication' from the Union government, bringing the state's total number of GI tags to 27, according to a news release from the Chief Minister's Office. Gujarat received the coveted GI badge for Gharchola handicrafts during the "GI and Beyond - Virasat Se Vikas Tak" program in New Delhi, which was organized by the Handlooms Development Commissioner of the Ministry of Textiles, Government of India. The GI recognition for Gharchola demonstrates Gujarat's commitment to guarding its rich artistic heritage.



Filmfare OTT Awards 2024: Kareena Kapoor, Diljit Dosanjh Bag Top Honours :-

The fifth edition of the renowned Filmfare OTT Awards was hosted in Mumbai. Heeramandi: The Diamond Bazaar received the most nominations in 16 categories, followed by Guns & Gulaabs (12) and Kaala Paani (8). Imtiaz Ali's Amar Singh Chamkila took home the prize for Best Film (Web Original). Diljit Dosanjh, the film's lead actor, earned the Best Actor, Web Original Film (Male) trophy. Kareena Kapoor bagged the Best Actor, Web Original Film (Female) award for Sujoy Ghosh's Jaane Jaan.



UNESCO Declares West Bengal a Top Heritage Tourism Destination :-

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee announced that UNESCO has designated the state as a top destination for heritage tourism, claiming that the sector employs lakhs of young people. Mamata Banerjee, speaking in the assembly, said the state had made "giant strides" in religious, heritage, and tea tourism. The state minister also said that the under-construction Jagannath temple in Digha would soon be available to devotees. "The tourism sector has generated jobs for lakhs of youths," she said. Minister of State for Tourism Indranil Sen said a "record" 2,489 homestays opened in the state, and 65 per cent of those are located in north Bengal.



Scottish Sikh Artist Wins 2024 Turner Prize :-

Jasleen Kaur, a Glasgow-born Scottish Sikh artist of Indian descent, has received the Turner Prize 2024 for her exhibit 'Alter Altar', which explores personal, political, and spiritual concerns. She got the GBP 25,000 (roughly Rs 27 lakh) prize at a ceremony held at Tate Britain in London. This year commemorates the prize's 40th anniversary. The Turner Prize jury highlighted Kaur's "evocative combination of sound and sculpture to address specifics of family memory and community struggle".



India Wins ISSA Good Practice Award for Asia and Pacific 2024 :-

This year, India received the International Social Security Association (ISSA) 'Good Practice Award' for Asia and Pacific for five services offered by the Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO). Dr. Mohammed Azman, president of ISSA, presented the award to the EPFO during the Regional Social Security Forum in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, earlier this week. The EPFO received five 'Certificates of Merit' for running 'efficient' communication channels, conduct of E-proceedings, outreach programme Nidhi Aapke Nikat, running multilingual call centres, and pension order delivery initiative Prayaas.



President Murmu Confers Honorary General Rank to Nepal Army Chief :-

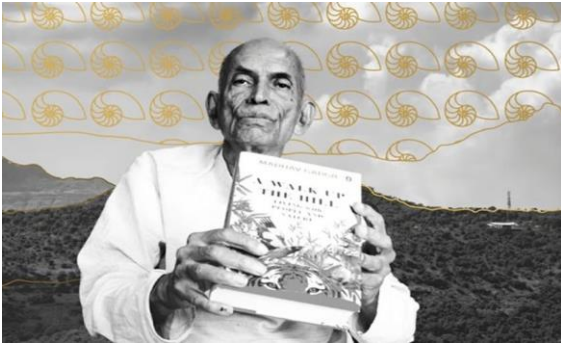
President Droupadi Murmu bestowed the honorary rank of General of the Indian Army on General Ashok Raj Sigdel, Chief of the Nepali Army, following an event at Rashtrapati Bhavan. The honor recognizes General Sigdel's contributions to Nepal's long-standing friendship with India, as well as his outstanding military experience. General Sigdel had high-level discussions with various prominent Indian officials, namely National Security Advisor (NSA) Ajit Doval, Chief of Defence Staff General Anil Chauhan, Defence Secretary Rajesh Kumar Singh, and Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri.



Indian Film "The Kumbaya Story" Wins the Global Sustainability Film Award :-

The Indian film "The Kumbaya Story" won an award at the 13th the Global Sustainability Film Awards, which were presented at the historic BAFTA in London. Produced by Kumbaya Producer Co. Ltd, the film won the Transforming Society Short Film category at the festival. "The Kumbaya Story" is the amazing story of strong women who improved their lives through the craft of weaving, culminating in the founding of the Kumbaya Producer Company. "Laapataa Ladies", India's official entry for the Oscars 2025 in the Best International

Feature category, also earned a place in the shortlist for the Founder's Award.



Ecologist Madhav Gadgil honoured with UNEP Champions of Earth Award :-

The United Nations recently honored renowned Indian ecologist Madhav Gadgil (82) with the Champions of the Earth award. He is one of six honorees who have received recognition for their services to conservation and environmental protection. The coveted UN award is one of the greatest distinctions awarded upon environmental pioneers by civil society and academia. The prize also acknowledges outstanding sustainable solutions in the public and private sectors. This year, Gadgil was chosen as the winner in the Lifetime Achievement category for his years-long contributions in the field of conservation and protection of marginalized communities.



Ayodhya Ram Temple Wins Global Safety Excellence Award :-

The Ram temple project in Ayodhya has received the renowned 'Sword of Honour' award from the British Safety Council, recognizing an important achievement in safety management standards. According to sources, the Sword of Honour award is one of the highest awards in safety management, bestowed for projects that satisfy the highest safety criteria. Prior to doing an on-site

evaluation, the British Safety Council performs a full audit of systems and practices. Projects that have a five-star rating in safety assessments are then eligible to compete for the 'Sword of Honour' award.



Bhutan Confers Royal Honour on Indian Educationist Arun Kapur :-

Bhutan has bestowed the 'Bura Marp' (red scarf) and 'Patang' (ceremonial sword) upon renowned Indian educationist Arun Kapur, who has established schools in India, Bhutan, and Oman. According to sources familiar with the situation, Bhutan's King Jigme Khesar Namgyel bestowed the Red Scarf and the title 'Dasho' on Kapur, who is currently the director of The Druk Gyalpo Institute. The honour, which was conferred at the 117th Bhutanese National Day celebrations in Thimphu's Changlimithang stadium, is rarely given to non-Bhutanese residents and comes with the honorific 'Dasho' title, otherwise used for senior officials.



The FIFA Best Awards 2024 :-

The FIFA Best Awards presentation in Doha recognized excellent football accomplishments, with Brazil and Real Madrid forward Vinicius Jr winning FIFA Men's Player of the Year. For the second year in a row, Aitana Bonmati of Spain and Barcelona was named Women's Player of the

Year. Vinicius Jr. had a remarkable season, scoring 24 goals in 39 matches across all competitions, impressing both fans and critics. His efforts played a key role in helping Real Madrid secure a La Liga and Champions League double. He also scored in the Champions League final against Borussia Dortmund.



Tom Cruise Receives US Navy's Highest Civilian Honor :-

Tom Cruise, a Hollywood icon, has received the US Navy's highest civilian honor, the Distinguished Public Service Award. According to Variety, Cruise received the Navy's highest civilian honor at a ceremony in London for his "outstanding contributions to the Navy and the Marine Corps" through his roles in Top Gun, Born on the Fourth of July, A Few Good Men, and the Mission Impossible trilogy. The ceremony took place in London, as Cruise is currently working in the UK. US Secretary of the Navy Carlos Del Toro presented the medal to Cruise.



PM Modi Honoured with Kuwait's Top Civilian Award :-

Prime Minister Narendra Modi received Kuwait's highest accolade, the 'Order of Mubarak Al Kabeer'. Kuwait's Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah bestowed the accolade on Prime Minister Modi. According to Kuwait's state-run news agency KUNA, Prime Minister Modi received the prize for boosting bilateral relations. The Order of Mubarak Al Kabeer is a

knighthood order of Kuwait. The order is awarded to Heads of State and foreign Sovereigns and to members of foreign royal families in sign of friendship.



Jaishankar Receives Sri Chandrasekarendra Saraswathi Award for Leadership :-

The South Indian Education Society (SIES) awarded External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar the Sri Chandrasekarendra Saraswathi National Eminence Award for Public Leadership. In his remarks, he hailed the SIES for the rare accolade bestowed upon by one of the country's oldest educational associations. Speaking about Maha Periyavar's contributions to international forums, Jaishankar emphasized Periyavar's Maithreem Bhajatham, a musical work that encourages universal brotherhood and compassion. Jaishankar highlighted the need to gain confidence in our nation's capabilities and not succumb to the voices which state otherwise.



President of India to confer the 'Pradhan Mantri Rashtriya Bal Puraskar' :-

The national Veer Baal Diwas program will be conducted on December 26, 2024, at Bharat Mandapam in New Delhi. The government of India awards the Pradhan Mantri Rashtriya Bal Puraskar (PMRBP) to children for outstanding achievements in seven categories: art and

culture, bravery, innovation, science and technology, social service, sports, and the environment. 17 children (7 boys and 10 girls) from 14 states/UTs have been chosen for the award. This year, the President of India, Smt. Droupadi Murmu, will present the honors to these children on December 26, 2024.



RINL Wins Gold at AP State Energy Conservation Awards 2024 :-

RINL, the business unit of Visakhapatnam Steel Plant, has won the prestigious "Gold Award" in the State Energy Conservation Award 2024 competitions (conducted by Andhra Pradesh's State Energy Conservation Mission) for its noteworthy programs in energy conservation in the Iron & Steel group. This renowned Gold award was given to RINL for implementing energy conservation measures over the last three years and utilizing waste energy. Sri A.K. Saxena, CMD (additional charge), RINL congratulated the Energy Management and supporting departments of Visakhapatnam steel plant for bringing laurels to RINL, yet again.

5: Banking



RBI Lifts Supervisory Restrictions on Navi Finserv :-

Following multiple rounds of conversation with Sachin Bansal's Navi Finserv Limited to address flaws, the Reserve Bank of India announced its intention to lift supervisory limitations on the company. On October 17, 2024, the central bank directed Navi Finserv Limited, Bengaluru (and three other NBFCs) to cease and desist from loan sanctioning and disbursement, effective as of October 21, 2024. Besides Navi, the central bank had put similar restrictions on three other NBFCs -- New Delhi-based DMI Finance Private Limited, Kolkata-based Arohan Financial Services Limited, and Chennai-based Asirvad Micro Finance Limited.



RBI Increases UPI Lite Wallet and Transaction Limits :-

To encourage wider adoption of the popular mobile payment system, the Reserve Bank extended the UPI Lite wallet limit to Rs 5,000 and the per-transaction limit to Rs 1,000. UPI Lite transactions are offline in the sense that Additional Factor of Authentication (AFA) is not required, and transaction alerts are not delivered in real time. Currently, the upper limit of an offline payment transaction is Rs 500 and the total limit for offline transactions on a payment instrument is Rs 2,000 at any point in time.



RBI Enables Small Finance Banks to Offer Pre-Sanctioned Credit via UPI :-

The Reserve Bank has recommended allowing small financing banks to provide pre-approved credit lines over the Unified Payments Interface (UPI). UPI is a real-time payment system designed by NPCI for mobile transactions. In September 2023, the scope of UPI was increased to allow commercial banks to link pre-sanctioned credit lines through UPI and utilize them as a funding account, with the exception of Payments Banks, Small Finance Banks (SFBs), and Regional Rural Banks. Credit line on UPI has the potential to make available low-ticket, low-tenor products to "new-to-credit" customers, RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das said.



RBI Eases FCNR(B) Deposit Rates to Boost Foreign Inflows Amid Global Softening :-

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has lifted interest rate ceilings on international Currency Non-Resident Bank [FCNR(B)] deposits in an effort to attract international money. However, experts foresee a minimal impact due to the availability of lower-cost foreign currency financing choices in international markets. According to a senior public sector banker, the RBI's action is unlikely to work because banks are already less active in acquiring FCNR(B) deposits at the current interest rate

ceiling. Banks will easily get money in foreign currency at rates cheaper than interest rate FCNR(B) deposits, he said.



RBI Introduces Secured Overnight Rupee Rate (SORR) :-

The RBI has revealed the launch of the Secured Overnight Rupee Rate (SORR), a benchmark built around secured money markets. The Reserve Bank established the Committee on the MIBOR Benchmark to study the rupee interest rate benchmarks in the country, particularly the use of the Mumbai Interbank Outright Rate (MIBOR), and to assess the necessity for a transition to other benchmarks. The Committee proposed numerous essential initiatives to expand the interest rate derivative market and strengthen the credibility of interest rate benchmarks. The Reserve Bank has examined the recommendations of the Committee as well as the feedback received.



SEBI issues warning letter to HDFC Bank :-

The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI), the market regulator, has released an administrative warning letter to HDFC Bank, citing noncompliance with certain regulations governing its investment banking operations. HDFC Bank stated that SEBI has issued an administrative warning letter to it in response to observations made during its periodic inspection of the

bank's investment banking activities, alleging noncompliance with certain provisions of the SEBI (Merchant Bankers) Regulations.



Max Life Rebrands to Axis Max Life Insurance :-

Max Life Insurance has changed its company name to Axis Max Life Insurance, following corporate and regulatory approval. Earlier this year, Axis Bank's board of directors authorized a plan to acquire Max Life shares, increasing Axis entities' overall stake in the insurance company to 19.99 percent from 19.02 percent. Following Axis Bank's stake acquisition, MFSL's stake in Max Life fell to 81% from 87% previously. The registrar of companies has given its approval for the change of name and issued a "fresh certificate of incorporation consequent upon change of name", according to an exchange filing by the company.



BOBCARD launches premium credit card 'TIARA' for women :-

BOBCARD Limited launched the Tiara Credit Card to promote, encourage, and honor women's financial freedom. The freshly announced Premium BOBCARD on the RuPay network is intended to fulfill the needs of modern women. The offering includes complimentary certificates and subscriptions valued up to Rs 31,000 from top brands. According to the bank, the Tiara Card

offers unlimited domestic airport lounge access, reduced forex markup, UPI payment access, and a host of exclusive offerings designed to enhance every spending experience.



RBI Raises Collateral-Free Agricultural Loan Limit to ₹2 Lakh :-

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has increased the collateral-free lending threshold for farmers from Rs 1.6 lakh to Rs 2 lakh beginning January 1, 2025. The move intends to provide financial relief to small and marginal farmers by eliminating collateral and margin conditions on agricultural loans up to Rs 2 lakh, addressing growing input costs, and enhancing credit availability. The agricultural ministry has hailed the RBI's decision, pointing out that more than 86% of India's farmers are small and marginal landowners who will gain directly from the enhanced loan ceiling.



RBI Lifts Restrictions on Edelweiss Group's ECL Finance and ARC :-

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) announced that it removed the restrictions on business enforced on ECL Finance and Edelweiss Asset Reconstruction Company (ARC), both part of the Edelweiss Group, in May of this year, after being satisfied with the companies' remedial measures to address the central bank's concerns. In May

this year, the RBI put business limitations on ECL Finance and Edelweiss ARC. ECL Finance was directed to cease and desist from undertaking any structured transactions in respect of its wholesale exposures, other than repayment and/or closure of accounts in its normal course of business.



HSBC India, Indian Hotels Company launch India's first co-branded hospitality credit card :-

HSBC India and Indian Hotels Company have collaborated to launch the HSBC Taj Credit Card, India's first premium co-branded hospitality credit card, designed for luxury aficionados and aimed at providing personalized experiences and superior services to discerning clients. The HSBC Taj metal co-branded credit card, launched in cooperation with Visa, is specifically designed for those who value finer life experiences and services, as well as those seeking unsurpassed luxury and exclusivity in travel. Affluent and super affluent Indians are increasingly spending more on health and wellness to enhance the quality of life for themselves and their families.



ICICI Bank, Times Internet Launch Premium Metal Credit Card :-

In order to serve wealthy Indians and the expanding number of high net worth people (HNIs), Times Internet,

the internet division of The Times of India Group, partnered with ICICI Bank and Visa to introduce the Times Black ICICI Bank Credit Card, a super-premium co-branded metal credit card. The card provides experiences, travel advantages, luxury lifestyle services, and selected privileges for high-net-worth individuals seeking differentiated premium experiences and services that no other card has before offered. In India, about a decade ago, one in every ten cards was co-branded. Today, that share is nearly 1 out of every three-four cards, said Sandeep Ghosh, group country manager, India & South Asia at Visa.



RBI Fines Manappuram Finance and IndusInd Bank for Non-Compliance :-

IndusInd Bank and Manappuram Finance have been hit with fines of Rs 27.3 lakh and Rs 20 lakh, respectively, by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) for breaking regulations. The RBI carried out the mandatory inspection of the enterprises based on their financial standing as of March 31, 2023. Manappuram Finance was penalized for failing to verify customers' PANs at the time of acceptance and for assigning several identification codes to certain clients rather than a Unique Customer Identification Code (UCIC) for every client.



RBI Sets Up Panel for Ethical AI Framework in Financial Sector :-

The RBI has constituted a council to oversee ethical AI use in the financial industry. IIT Bombay's Pushpak Bhattacharyya will lead the group on Framework for Responsible and Ethical Enablement of Artificial Intelligence (FREE-AI). The group also includes professionals from academia, industry, the government, and regulatory authorities. Its responsibilities include monitoring AI usage in financial services both internationally and in India, examining legislative methods, identifying risks, and developing frameworks for ethical governance and compliance. RBI's fintech department will support the committee, which is expected to submit its report within six months.



RBI Allows UPI Payments via Third-Party Apps for PPI Holders :-

According to a circular issued by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), consumers of prepaid payment instruments (PPIs) can now send and receive Unified Payments Interface (UPI) transactions from and to full-KYC-

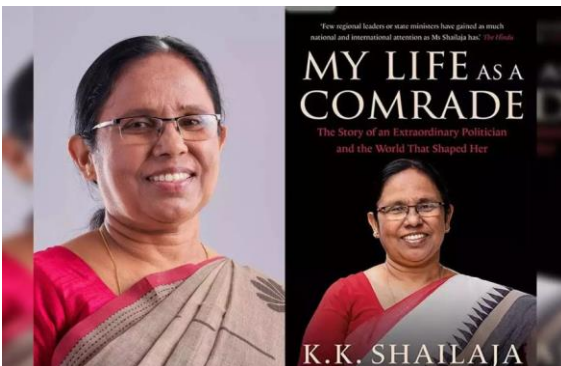
compliant PPIs via third-party mobile applications, extending the capabilities of digital payment services. The RBI's move intends to increase flexibility for PPI holders, including those who use gift cards, metro cards, and digital wallets, by allowing smooth UPI transactions via third-party applications. These transactions will be pre-approved before being processed through the UPI system.



Surge in Bank Fraud Cases in 2024 :-

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) recently released a report titled "Report on Trend and Progress of Banking in India 2023-24" that highlighted a significant increase in bank fraud cases within the first half of the current fiscal year. From April to September, there were 18,461 reported frauds totalling Rs 21,367 crore. This is a huge increase over the previous year, when 14,480 instances totaled only Rs 2,623 crore. To put this into perspective, the number of fraud cases has surged by nearly 28% compared to last year, while the total amount involved has skyrocketed more than eight-fold.

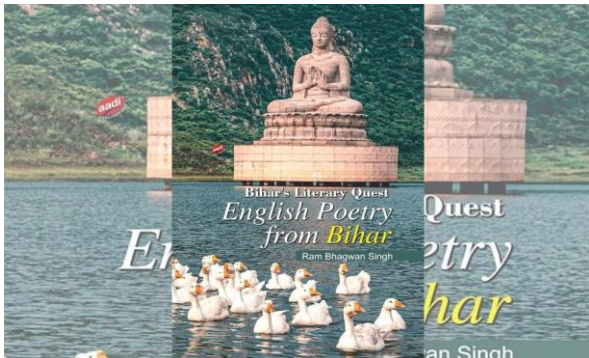
6: Books and Author



Kannada translation of K.K. Shailaja's memoir 'My Life as a Comrade' launched :-

The Kannada translation of previous Kerala Health Minister K.K. Shailaja's memoir Comrade Aagi Nanna Baduku (My Life as a Comrade) was published in Bengaluru. The book was translated into Kannada by Dr. H.S. Anupama and published by Kriya Madhyama. Dr. Anupama, the translator and a doctor herself, recommended that the CPI (M) publish the book in all

languages. Pointing out that Ms. Shailaja had done her B.Ed. in Kodagu in Karnataka, Dr. Anupama said the former Minister had a remarkable detachment to power, which is very special for a politician.



Book 'English Poetry from Bihar' launched :-

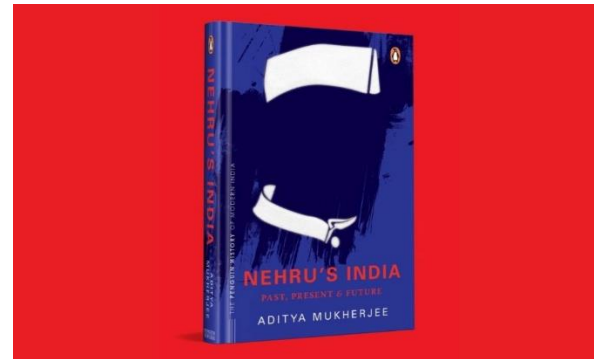
Prof. Ram Bhagwan Singh's book 'English Poetry from Bihar' was launched at the Press Club of India in New Delhi in the presence of Amod Kanth, former IPS, and Sudhansu Ranjan, founder of NGO Prayas. The book includes 22 poets from Bihar who wrote or wrote in English, beginning with Avadh Bihari Lal (1866-1921) and ending with current poets such as Tabish Khair and Abhay K. Speaking at the book launch poet Abhay K. whose nine poems including 'Nalanda' feature in this anthology, said --"I am delighted to see that a book on 'English poetry from Bihar' has come after the publication of The Book of Bihari Literature, which has generated a great interest in literature from Bihar".



Metro Mosaic, a book about the journey of Chennai Metro Rail Limited, launched :-

On the anniversary of its founding, Chennai Metro Rail Limited (CMRL) collaborated with The HinduGroup to release a coffee table book titled Metro Mosaic. The book tells the story of one of India's most transformational urban transportation projects. Metro

Mosaic is a rich tapestry of stories and milestones from the city's Metro Rail project, with photographs vividly showing its progress over time. Using old photographs of the city sourced from The Hindu Archives, the book provides a glimpse into the city's past while celebrating its present-day transformation through the Metro Rail's development.



Historian Aditya Mukherjee's Book "Nehru's India: Past, Present And Future" Launched :-

Congress politician Jairam Ramesh has released historian Aditya Mukherjee's book "Nehru's India: Past, Present, and Future" about Jawaharlal Nehru, the country's first prime minister. Nehru, India's first prime minister and one of the founders of the Non-Aligned Movement, was a pivotal figure in the post-colonial world. The new book by Mukherjee, a retired JNU professor and general president of the Indian History Congress (2023-24), illustrates this ongoing legacy. The book explores Nehru's vision for India and offers readers a peek into his democratic ideals, beliefs in secularism, and efforts toward modernisation.



Aamir Khan Attends Historian Yuval Noah Harari's Book Launch Event :-

Yuval Noah Harari, noted historian and celebrated writer of books that include 'Sapiens: A Brief History of

Humankind' and 'Homo Deus: A Brief History of Tomorrow', talked with Bollywood superstar Aamir Khan about his latest book 'Nexus: A Brief History of Information Networks from the Stone Age to AI'. Crossword Bookstores, in association with Penguin Random House India, hosted the event at The Lalit Mumbai, which was moderated by psychiatrist Dr Rajesh Parikh. Yuval Noah Harari said that the future is shaped by today's choices and that an advancement like AI has the potential to transform lives.



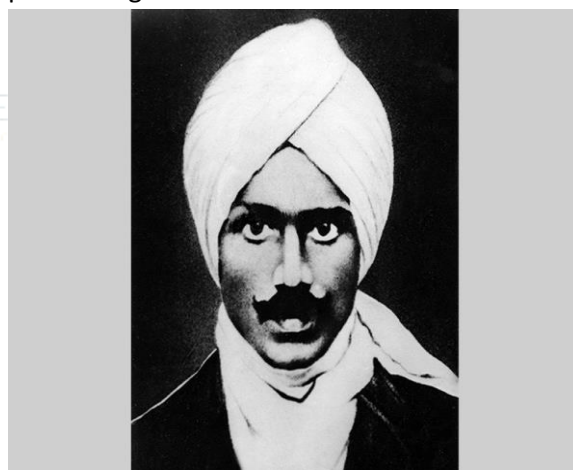
Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M.K. Stalin released the centenary commemorative book titled 'Sattasabai Nayagar – Kalaigar' :-

Chief Minister M.K. Stalin unveiled the centenary commemorative book, 'Sattasabai Nayagar - Kalaigar'. The book was created by a committee led by Speaker M. Appavu. The initial copy was received by Minister of Water Resources, Durai Murugan. The book emphasizes Kalaigar M. Karunanidhi's noteworthy remarks in the Tamil Nadu Legislative Assembly, as well as landmark resolutions enacted during his stint as Chief Minister. It also includes congratulatory messages and essays from various eminent personalities, including current and former ministers, MLAs, journalists, and spiritual leaders.



Dr. Dinesh Shahra Launches Dalai Lama's Secret to Happiness at the Esteemed Library of Tibetan Works & Archives :-

Dr. Dinesh Shahra, an acclaimed philanthropist, writer, and thought leader, published his much-anticipated book, Dalai Lama's Secret to Happiness, in Dharamshala's famed Library of Tibetan Works & Archives (LTWA). The event was noteworthy in terms of recognizing His Holiness the Dalai Lama's teachings and preserving Tibetan culture. Dr. Shahra said at the launch that the book would be available for purchase, with all sales benefiting the Library of Tibetan Works & Archives. The event was enriched by cultural performances celebrating Tibetan traditions, adding a vibrant touch to the proceedings.



Subramania Bharati's collected works released by PM Modi :-

Prime Minister Narendra Modi released a comprehensive collection of works by Tamil poet and independence fighter Subramania Bharati to commemorate his 143rd birth anniversary. The compendium, entitled Kaala Varisayil Bharathi Padaippugal, has been arranged by Seeni Viswanathan and contains the legendary poet's full works in chronological sequence. The compilation was released in 23 volumes by the Alliance Company, a storied publisher in Chennai that has been active since 1901, with "details of the editions, explanations, documents, background information and philosophical presentation, among others," the government said in a release.



10-Volume Collection Of Rajya Sabha Deputy Chairman Harivansh's Writings Released :-

Harivansh, the Rajya Sabha Deputy Chairman, released a 10-volume collection of his writings covering four decades at the Patna Book Fair. Speaking at the event, the journalist-turned-politician remarked that his work included his journalism, which was mostly focused on Bihar, Jharkhand, and other parts of the country and world. "I joined journalism in 1977. This is a collection of whatever I have written about society, economics and the world for 40 years till 2017. I would like to thank those who have helped me," Harivansh said, after the release of the collection of his writings, titled 'Samaye ke Sawaal'.



AAP's Arvind Kejriwal launches book called 'The Delhi Model' :-

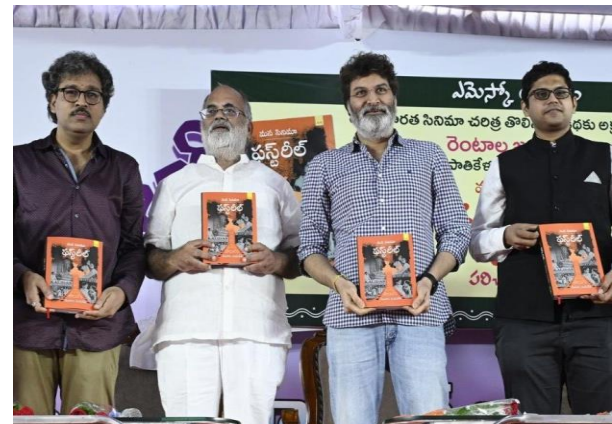
Arvind Kejriwal, Delhi's former chief minister, has published 'The Delhi Model,' a book about the AAP government's "transformative" governance. The book provides a "in-depth" assessment of these changes, combining facts, stories, and a policy-driven viewpoint to demonstrate how the AAP government fulfilled its promise of Vyavastha Parivartan, or systemic

transformation, according to the statement. "It represents not just the Delhi model of governance but also the AAP model of politics," Kejriwal said.



HarperCollins Announces the publication of 'BRING IT ON The Incredible Story of My Life' by Deepa Malik :-

HarperCollins India has announced the imminent publication of Deepa Malik's 'BRING IT ON: The Incredible Story of My Life'. In Bring It On, Deepa provides readers an unfiltered peek at her extraordinary life as she meets one hurdle after another, fights sexism and politics, and confronts the pettiness that society frequently saves for the differently abled. Readers will get a firsthand look into the psyche of a para athlete who has survived three spinal tumors, prefers to be a victor rather than a victim, and identifies as 'wheelchair-liberated' rather than 'wheelchair-bound'. On every page, Deepa demonstrates the power of her indomitable spirit and proves that 'impossible' is just an opinion.



Film director Trivikram launched Book 'First Reel' at Hyderabad Book Fair :-

At the 37th Hyderabad Book Fair, film director Trivikram launched the book 'Mana Cinema First Reel', written by

prominent journalist Rentala Jayadeva. The first copy was given to IRS official Krishna Kaundinya. Mr. Trivikram stated that Jayadeva's presentation of the evolution of Indian cinema from the silent era to the next phase, as well as the behind-the-scenes information of the making

of early films in Telugu, Tamil, Kannada, and Malayalam languages, makes for an interesting read. He described the author as a master in film criticism and analysis, but said he can tell interesting stories and that the writer in him should now focus more on dishing out books.

7: Defence



India-Sri Lanka Joint Operation Seizes 500 kg Crystal Meth :-

Approximately 500 kilograms of crystal methamphetamine narcotics were recovered from two fishing vessels in the Arabian Sea during a combined operation by the Indian and Sri Lankan navies. The coordinated action occurred after the Indian Navy's long-range maritime patrol planes and drones conducted a surveillance mission in crucial water routes based on information from the Sri Lankan Navy, according to officials. The Indian Navy's Gurugram-based Information Fusion Centre (IFC) that has emerged as a key hub in tracking movements of ships and other developments in the Indian Ocean region also provided certain details for the operation, the officials said.



India-Cambodia Joint Exercise CINBAX Being Held in Pune :-

At the Foreign Training Node in Pune, the Indian and Cambodian militaries began their first Joint Table Top Exercise, or CINBAX. The exercise between the Indian Army and Cambodian Army contingents, each consisting of 20 soldiers from an Infantry Brigade, is set to take place from December 1–8. According to Ministry of Defence press release, CINBAX is a planning exercise aimed to wargame conduct of joint Counter Terrorism (CT) operations under Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter.



Adani Defence Delivers 2nd Drishti-10 Drone to Indian Navy for Maritime Security :-

Adani Defence and Aerospace has deployed a second Drishti-10 Starliner surveillance drone to the Indian Navy, increasing the maritime forces' ability to monitor shipping lanes and counter pirate concerns. The Drishti 10 is a force multiplier. Drishti 10 is India's sole indigenous UAV capable of operating stably over 32,000 feet, with a significant payload carrying capability and exceptionally long endurance. It can not only endure harsh conditions but excel, proving its resilience over challenging terrains and climates of the Himalayas.



US Approves \$1.17 Billion Deal for Indian Navy Chopper Equipment :-

Outgoing US President Joe Biden's administration has authorized a USD 1.17 billion package within its Foreign Military Sales (FMS) program to provide modern communication systems, sensors, and logistical support to improve the capacities of the Indian Navy's Sikorsky MH-60R multi-role helicopters. The Indian Navy recently received six MH-60R helicopters, which are deployed in Kochi with the same configuration as the US Navy. The remaining 18 helicopters will include customised configurations to meet Indian requirements.



India Plans Anti-Drone Unit for Border Security :-

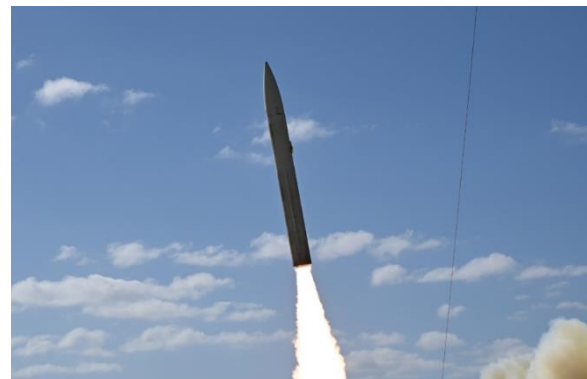
Union Home Minister Amit Shah has stated that India will soon establish a comprehensive anti-drone force to defend its borders, citing the "menace" of unmanned aerial vehicles as a growing threat. Addressing BSF troops during the force's 60th Raising Day celebration here at its training camp, around 300 kilometers from the India-Pakistan border, Mr. Shah stated that the initial findings of a "laser-equipped anti-drone gun-mounted" system have been positive. This has led to an increase in drone

neutralisation and detection cases, up from 3% to 55%, along the India-Pakistan border in Punjab, he said.



INS Tushil Commissioned into Indian Navy :-

The Indian Navy's Russian-built guided missile frigate INS Tushil was commissioned into service in Russia's coastal city of Kaliningrad in the presence of Defence Minister Rajnath Singh. INS Tushil was built in Russia as part of a deal for over USD 2.5 billion signed by New Delhi and Moscow in 2016 for four stealth frigates for the Indian Navy. According to the agreement, two ships would be built in Russia, while the other two would be manufactured in India. The 3,900-tonne ship with a length of 125 metres packs a lethal punch and is an impressive blend of Russian and Indian cutting edge technologies and best practices in warship construction.



Dark Eagle Hypersonic Missile Tested by US Armed Forces :-

The United States military has successfully tested its Long-Range Hypersonic Weapon (LRHW), bringing it closer to fielding advanced hypersonic technology. The test, held at the Cape Canaveral Space Force Station in Florida, demonstrated the missile's capacity to reach speeds of 3,800 miles per hour, above five times the

speed of sound, and strike distant targets. Officials praised the exercise as a crucial step in making the weapon combat ready. The hypersonic system, also known as "Dark Eagle," is part of a joint effort by the Army and Navy.



India, France, UAE conducted trilateral air exercise over Arabian Sea :-

In the midst of continuous geopolitical turmoil, India, France, and the UAE conducted a massive air combat exercise known as "Desert Knight" over the Arabian Sea, increasing trilateral defense cooperation and improving military interoperability. The "large force engagement" involved heavy combat maneuvers over the Arabian Sea, approximately 350 to 400 kilometers southwest of Karachi. All such exercises on a bilateral, trilateral or multilateral basis build strategic cooperation with like-minded countries in the crucial Indo-Pacific, a region where China's continued muscle-flexing and expansionist tactics have raised concerns among many nations.



SLINEX 2024 : SRI LANKA-INDIA EXERCISE 2024:-

The Eastern Naval Command will host the bilateral naval exercise SLINEX 2024 (Sri Lanka-India Exercise) at

Visakhapatnam from December 17 to 20, 24. The drill will be divided into two phases: the Harbour Phase (17-18 December) and the Sea Phase (19-20 December). SLINEX, which began in 2005, is an important series of bilateral naval exercises that have helped India and Sri Lanka develop their maritime cooperation over time. Over the years, SLINEX has expanded in scope, enabling both navies to enhance interoperability and share best practices.



INS Nirdeshak to be commissioned on December 18 :-

Sanjay Seth, Union Minister of State for Defence, is slated to head to Visakhapatnam on December 18 to officiate over the INS Nirdeshak commissioning ceremony at the Visakhapatnam Naval Dockyard. The event will be conducted by the Flag Officer Commanding-in-Chief of Eastern Naval Command. Senior naval authorities and Garden Reach Shipbuilders and Engineers (GRSE) representatives are anticipated to attend. The ship, built at GRSE Kolkata, boasts over 80% indigenous content, reaffirming India's expertise in ship design and construction and Indian Navy's trust in Aatmanirbharta.



Indian Army Unveils AI Incubation Centre for Future Warfare :-

The Indian Army has established the Indian Army AI Incubation Centre (IAAIC) in Bengaluru, marking a watershed moment in the country's technological advancement efforts. The virtual inauguration, headed by Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Upendra Dwivedi, is a watershed moment in the Army's ongoing transformation as it adopts Artificial Intelligence (AI) to revolutionize its operational capabilities. The IAAIC is part of the Indian Army's broader strategy to modernize and stay ahead in the ever-evolving landscape of military technology.



Defence Ministry signed a deal with L&T for K9 VAJRA-T Guns :-

At a total cost of ₹7,628 crore, the defense ministry has signed a deal with Larsen & Toubro Ltd to purchase K9 Vajra artillery guns for the Indian Army, which could greatly increase the force's ability to strike. With its state-of-the-art technology, the gun can fire deadly shots

at a great distance with great accuracy. According to information obtained, the ministry is acquiring approximately 100 Vajra firearms, primarily for use along the Line of Actual Control (LAC). The procurement of K9 Vajra-T will catalyse the artillery modernisation and enhance overall operational readiness of the Indian Army, it said.



Exercise SURYA KIRAN 2024 :-

More than 300 Indian Army personnel went for Nepal to participate in the India-Nepal joint military exercise Surya Kiran, which is scheduled to take place in Saljhandi from December 31 to January 13. During the exercise, soldiers from both countries will be able to share best practices, improve interoperability, and build a stronger link in the conduct of joint operations. Surya Kiran demonstrates the deep friendship, trust, and cultural ties that exist between India and Nepal. It also gives a platform for a productive and fruitful engagement between the armies of India and Nepal.

8: Economy



India Secures \$98 Million ADB Loan to Enhance Horticulture Health :-

India has inked a \$98 million loan arrangement with the Asian Development Bank (ADB) to boost horticulture crop yield, according to the Ministry of Finance. ADB official Yeo stated that the project is consistent with the government's Atmanirbhar Clean Plant Programme (CPP), which aims to improve plant health management. According to the finance ministry, the project aims to set up clean plant centers equipped with state-of-the-art laboratories for disease diagnostics, staffed with trained experts.



Government Ends Windfall Tax on Crude Oil and Petroleum Exports :-

Following a drop in worldwide oil prices, the government eliminated a 30-month-old windfall profit tax on locally produced crude oil as well as the export of jet fuel (ATF), diesel, and petrol. India first introduced windfall profit taxes on July 1, 2022, joining a growing list of countries that tax energy businesses' above-average profits. Export tariffs were assessed at ₹6 per litre (\$12 per barrel) for petrol and ATF, and ₹13 per litre (\$26 per barrel) for diesel. A ₹23,250 per tonne (\$40 per barrel) windfall profit tax on domestic crude production was also levied.



RBI adds 27 tonnes gold to country's reserve in October

Central banks increased their gold purchases to 60 tonnes in October, topped by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), which added 27 tonnes to its holdings, according to the World Gold Council. India purchased 27 tonnes of gold in October, raising its total gold purchases from January to October to 77 tonnes, according to WGC figures based on monthly data from the International Monetary Fund (IMF). This buying by RBI represents a five-fold increase as compared to the same period of 2023, said WGC.



Flipkart and DPIIT Collaborate to Boost India's Startup Ecosystem :-

In an essential component toward promoting India's startup environment, the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) has inked a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with e-commerce platform Flipkart. According to a statement from the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, the alliance intends to empower technology entrepreneurs by providing them with the tools, chances, and networks they need to grow and prosper. So far, the company has invested in 20 startups and continues to identify high-potential ventures for further support. This partnership is expected to accelerate innovation and create a conducive environment for budding entrepreneurs.



S&P Global Maintains 6.8% Growth Forecast for FY25 :-

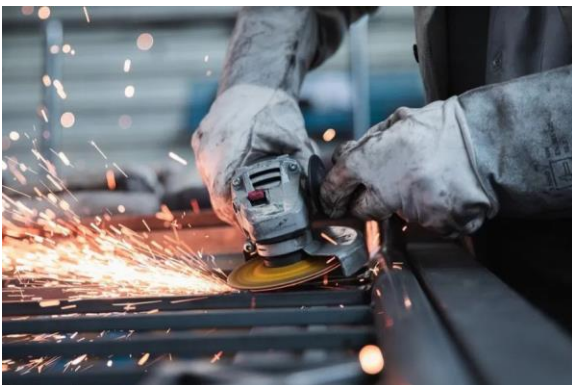
A day after the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) reduced India's growth prediction for fiscal year 2024-25 to 6.6%, S&P Global maintained its forecast of 6.8%. The credit rating agency anticipates the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) to lower the policy interest rate next year. S&P Global's prediction comes as GDP growth slowed to 5.4% in the July-September quarter, forcing

other agencies to lower full-year projections. Meanwhile, the government is hopeful of better growth for the full fiscal, dismissing Q2 number as one-off.



India's Retail Inflation Eases to 5.48% in November :-

Retail inflation fell to 5.48 percent in November from 6.21 percent in October, owing to lower food prices, particularly vegetables, according to official data. Consumer Price Index (CPI) data provided by the National Statistics Office (NSO) show that food inflation fell to 9.04 percent in November. It was 10.87% in October and 8.70% in November 2023. The CPI-based headline inflation increased from an average of 3.6 per cent during July-August to 5.5 per cent in September and further to 6.2 per cent in October 2024.



Industrial Output Growth Slows to 3.5% in October 2024 :-

According to government figures, industrial production growth slowed to 3.5% year on year in October 2024, burdened by poorer performance in the mining, electricity, and manufacturing sectors. The Index of Industrial Production (IIP) rose 11.9% in October 2023, indicating a considerable deceleration. However, industrial output improved somewhat sequentially,

climbing from 3.1% in September to recover from a 0.1% drop in August 2024. For the April-October period, IIP growth stood at 4 per cent compared with 7 per cent in the same period last year.



India launches world's first green steel taxonomy :-

India introduced the world's first Taxonomy of Green Steel, establishing a standard for decarbonizing the steel sector. H D Kumaraswamy, Union Minister of Steel and Heavy Industries, launched the project at Vigyan Bhavan, in the presence of Minister of State Bhupathi Raju Srinivasa Varma, senior officials, and industry representatives. The taxonomy provides a framework for measuring and classifying green steel based on emission intensity, in line with India's net-zero goals by 2070. The framework defines green steel in terms of its emission intensity, setting a threshold of 2.2 tonnes of CO₂ per tonne of finished steel (tCO₂/tfs). Steel with emissions below this level qualifies for green certification, while products exceeding the threshold are not eligible.



Public Sector Banks Record Net Profit of Rs 85,520 Crore In First Half FY2024-25 :-

According to the Finance Ministry, public sector banks (PSBs), notably State Bank of India (SBI), are expected to

exceed their record-breaking net profit of ₹1.46 lakh crore in 2023-24. In the first half of FY 2024-25, PSBs (including SBI) recorded an aggregate net profit of ₹85,520 crore, a 26% increase from ₹67,850 crore in the same period last year. This highlights the operational and financial resilience of PSBs, driven by improved asset quality, enhanced credit monitoring, and increased efficiency.



Wholesale Inflation Eases to 1.9% in November Amid Cooling Food Prices :-

India's wholesale price inflation dropped to 1.9% in November as the cost of food fell, according to official data. The Wholesale Price Index-based inflation rate was 2.4% in October. A year ago, it was 0.4%. Wholesale inflation averaged 2.1% in fiscal 2024-25 through November, compared to a decline of 1.3% in the same period last year. Easing of the wholesale inflation comes alongside a reduction in retail inflation, which slowed to 5.5% in November from a 14-month high of 6.2% in October.



Net Direct Tax Collection Sees Robust 16.45% Growth to Rs 15.82 Lakh Crore :-

According to the most recent official figures, net direct tax receipts for the current fiscal year have grown by

16.45% year on year to more than Rs 15.82 lakh crore. Gross direct tax receipts before refunds increased by 20.32% year on year, from Rs 15.96 lakh crore in FY 2023-24 to Rs 19.21 crore. Refunds made during this period were Rs 3.38 lakh crore, representing a 42.49% increase. Segment-wise, corporate tax (CT) collections performed steadily, with gross collections reaching Rs 9.24 lakh crore, up from Rs 7.90 lakh crore last year.



CCI Approves UltraTech's ₹3,954 Cr India Cements Deal

The Competition Commission of India (CCI) has cleared UltraTech Cement, the flagship firm of the Aditya Birla Group, to acquire India Cements Ltd (ICL). J. Sagar Associates, Advocates & Solicitors (JSA) acted as UltraTech Cement Ltd's sole counsel in obtaining CCI permission. In July, UltraTech Cement announced a ₹3,954-crore deal to purchase a 32.72% share in India Cements from its promoters and affiliates. The acquisition aims to increase UltraTech Cement's presence in the competitive and rapidly rising southern cement market, particularly Tamil Nadu.



Adani Group Acquires 85.8% Stake in Air Works for Rs 400 Crore Enterprise Value :-

Adani Group has announced plans to buy Air Works, an aviation maintenance, repair, and overhaul (MRO)

services provider, for Rs 400 crore. "Adani Defence Systems & Technologies Ltd (ADSTL) has signed a share purchase agreement to acquire 85.8 per cent shareholding in Air Works, India's largest private sector MRO company with the largest pan-India footprint," the firm said in a statement. With operations spanning 35 cities and a workforce of over 1,300 personnel, Air Works brings extensive expertise in servicing both fixed-wing and rotary-wing aircraft.



Govt Infuses ₹500 Cr in IFCI to Boost Financial Health :-

The government decided to make an investment of Rs 500 crore in state-owned IFCI to strengthen its financial position ahead of the company's anticipated restructure and consolidation into a group. With the investment, the government of India's stake in the corporation is scheduled to rise from 71.72 percent as of September 2024. Last week, the Lok Sabha passed the first Supplementary Demand for Grants for 2024-25, which approved IFCI's capital injection plan. The Supplementary Demand for Grants for 2024-25 made an allocation for an additional amount of Rs 499.99 crore for 'Subscription to the Share Capital of Industrial Finance Corporation of India (IFCI).



ADB to Lend USD \$500 Million to India for Sustainable Infrastructure :-

India and the Asian Development Bank (ADB) inked a USD 500 million loan to assist green and environmentally friendly building projects that comply with the country's climate objectives. According to a statement from the Union Finance Ministry, the ADB loan, backed by a sovereign guarantee, will be extended to the India Infrastructure Finance Company Limited (IIFCL). Signatories to the Financing Environmentally Sustainable Growth in Infrastructure Project were Juhi Mukherjee Joint Secretary, Department of Economic Affairs, Ministry of Finance, for the Government of India, and Country Director Mio Oka for ADB.



GST Council recommends 18% tax on used vehicle sales

The GST Council has recommended raising the tax rate on used car sales margins to 18%, which now includes electric vehicles (EVs) as well as selected petrol and diesel autos. This recommendation was given at a GST Council meeting. According to the GST laws, the 18% GST slab applies to both electric vehicles (EVs) and petrol cars with engine capacities greater than 1,200 cc or lengths greater than 4,000 mm. Additionally, diesel cars with an engine capacity over 1,500 cc or a length exceeding 4,000 mm, and SUVs are also subject to this tax rate.



India's Record Coal Production in 2023-24 :-

India reached its highest-ever coal output of 997.826 million tonnes (MT) in fiscal year 2023-24, representing a stunning 11.71 percent increase over 893.191 MT in 2022-23. According to the Ministry of Coal, the government's Integrated Coal Logistics Plan aims to produce 1.5 billion tonnes of coal by fiscal year 2030.

Coal output reached a tentative 988.32 MT in the calendar year 2024 (up to December 15), representing a 7.66% increase over the previous year. Coal supplies also saw significant growth, with 963.11 MT provisionally supplied by December 15, 2024, an increase of 6.47 per cent over the previous year.

9: International



Australia Bars Under-16s from Social Media :-

Australia's parliament has enacted the world's strongest social media regulations, which would prohibit children under the age of 16 from using them. The prohibition, which will not take effect for at least 12 months, could result in fines of up to A\$50 million (\$32.5 million; £25.7 million) for internet corporations that do not comply. Prime Minister Anthony Albanese said the legislation is necessary to safeguard young people from the "harms" of social media, which many parent groups have echoed. This is not the first attempt globally to restrict children's social media use, but the minimum age of 16 is the highest set by any country. Unlike other attempts, it also does not include exemptions for existing users or those with parental consent.



Adani Group to Invest \$2 Billion in European Ports :-

A spokesperson for the Adani Group stated that the company intends to invest \$2 billion in port acquisitions in order to increase its international market position. The company's flagship, Adani Ports & Special Economic Zones Ltd., is looking for terminals in Europe, which accounts for 40% of global marine traffic. "We are looking for two or three terminals in Europe only and deals should happen in the near future," the spokesperson said. The company has ports in Sri Lanka, Israel, Australia, Tanzania and Greece and is seeking to further expand abroad.



Nebraska Declares December 6 as Mahatma Gandhi Remembrance Day :-

Nebraska Governor Jim Pillen named December 6 "A Day of Remembrance for Mahatma Gandhi" in his state, according to a consulate press release. "December 6 marks a significant day as we come together to celebrate the unveiling of this statue and reflect on the principles of non-violence, tolerance and justice that Gandhi espoused," according to the announcement. The governor also dedicated a statue of Mahatma Gandhi at the Governor's Office in Lincoln, Nebraska's historic State

Capitol. This is the first such installation across nine states under the Indian Consulate in Seattle's jurisdiction.



UNGA Declares December 21 as World Meditation Day

:-

The United Nations General Assembly unanimously approved a resolution proclaiming December 21 as World Meditation Day. A core group of countries, which includes India, Liechtenstein, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Mexico, and Andorra, is driving the plan. India's permanent representation to the United Nations underlined meditation's universal benefits, characterizing it as "an effective tool to achieve inner transformation and peace in the modern day." The mission stated, "Modern science attests to the numerous benefits of meditation, including significant stress reduction and enhanced cognitive and physical functions."



Syrian Rebels Topple President Assad :-

Syrian rebels took authority of the country's capital Damascus and President Bashar al-Assad's sprawling palaces as the 59-year-old autocrat fled the war-torn country and arrived in Moscow, where he was granted asylum following the overthrow of his 24-year-old

regime by opposition forces in a lightning offensive. Meanwhile, the United States announced that its forces had conducted many airstrikes on Islamic State targets in Syria during the rebel seizure. Syria had been ruled by the Assad family for over five decades, with Assad taking power in 2000 following the death of his father, Hafez Assad.



John Mahama Returns as Ghana's President :-

According to provisional results, Ghana's electoral commission proclaimed ex-president and main opposition leader John Dramani Mahama the victor of the presidential election, with 56.55% of the vote. To alleviate tensions, Mahama's major competitor, vice president and ruling-party presidential candidate Mahamudu Bawumia, has acknowledged defeat in both the presidential and legislative elections. The electoral commission said it had counted votes from 267 out of the West African country's 276 constituencies. Voter turnout was 60.9%.



Bangladesh Court Stays 'Joy Bangla' Slogan Decision :-

The Bangladesh Supreme Court has halted a high court decision declaring "Joy Bangla" as the country's national slogan. The slogan was popularized by Sheikh Mujibur

Rahman, the father of former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, who was deposed on August 5 this year following major rallies against her administration. Following the change of government, the state tried to suspend the high court's order and filed a leave to appeal petition with the Supreme Court, requesting a stay on the high court's verdict issued on March 10, 2020.



Francois Bayrou appointed as France's new Prime Minister :-

In a dramatic event, French President Emmanuel Macron has nominated centrist friend Francois Bayrou as Prime Minister in an effort to calm the country's political instability following last week's parliamentary vote that deposed the previous cabinet. Bayrou, 73, is a veteran of French politics and a major member of Macron's centrist alliance. His extensive political experience is expected to play a crucial role in navigating the challenges posed by the absence of a clear majority in the National Assembly.



Britain Joins Indo-Pacific Trade Bloc As First European Member :-

Britain officially become the 12th member of an Indo-Pacific trading bloc that includes Japan, Australia, and Canada, as it strives to strengthen regional connections and expand global economic links after exiting the

European Union. Britain stated last year that it would join the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP), its largest trade agreement since Brexit. The accession means Britain will be able to apply CPTPP trade rules and lower tariffs with eight of the 11 existing members - Brunei, Chile, Japan, Malaysia, New Zealand, Peru, Singapore, and Vietnam.



Mikheil Kavelashvili Becomes Georgia's New President :-

Georgia's disputed parliament has picked a former Manchester City footballer as president, following 17 days of pro-EU protests across the country. Mikheil Kavelashvili, 53, is a former MP for the increasingly authoritarian ruling Georgian Dream party and the lone candidate for the position. On December 14, 224 of 225 members of Georgia's electoral college voted for him. The four main opposition groups have rejected Kavelashvili and have boycotted parliament, insisting that the elections held in October were rigged.



Chennai-Born Caitlin Sandra Neil Crowned Miss India USA 2024 :-

Caitlin Sandra Neil, a Chennai-born Indian American, won the title of Miss India USA 2024 at the yearly contest in

New Jersey. The 19-year-old is a second-year student at the University of California, Davis. Caitlin was born in Chennai and has lived in the United States for the past 14 years. She wants to be a web designer, as well as a model and actor. Nirali Desia of Illinois and Manini Patel of New Jersey were named first and second runners-up, respectively, in the Miss India USA competition. Meanwhile, Sanskriti Sharma from Illinois was crowned Mrs India USA and Arshita Kathpalia from Washington won the Miss Teen India USA in the pageant organised by the India Festival Committee (IFC).



24th BIMSTEC Senior Officials Meeting (SOM) :-

Jaideep Mazumdar, Secretary (East), Ministry of External Affairs, represented India virtually at Thailand's 24th BIMSTEC Senior Officials Meeting (SOM). According to a press release from the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), the senior officials met virtually to discuss BIMSTEC progress since their last meeting in March 2023. Thailand's Deputy Permanent Secretary for Foreign Affairs, Paisan Rupanichkij, chaired the 24th virtual session of BIMSTEC Senior Officials meeting. Nepal's Acting Foreign Secretary Amrit Rai represented Nepal at the meeting.



Ex-IMF Chief Rato Faces New Prison Sentence For Corruption :-

Rodrigo Rato, the former IMF chief and Spanish economics minister, will face a more than four-year prison sentence for tax evasion, money laundering, and corruption, according to a Madrid court. Rato was found guilty of "three offences against the Treasury, one offence of money laundering, and one offence of corruption between individuals," according to a court statement. Rato had already been jailed in 2018 for misuse of funds, and he had returned to Madrid's Court of Justice facing fresh charges of tax fraud, corruption and money laundering.



Azerbaijan Airline Crashes in Kazakhstan :-

A plane crash in Kazakhstan's Aqtau city left 29 passengers alive. Twenty-two people, including an 11-year-old kid and a 16-year-old teen, were hospitalized. The Ministry of Emergencies in Kazakhstan reported at least 38 verified deaths. The airliner, an Azerbaijan Airlines jet carrying 62 passengers and five crew, was flying from Baku to Russia's Grozny. The Kazakh Transport Ministry said 37 of the plane's passengers were from Azerbaijan, six were from Kazakhstan, three were from Kyrgyzstan, and 16 were from Russia.



Tonga Elects Aisake Valu Eke as New Prime Minister :-

Tonga's government has chosen a new leader, two weeks after its former prime quit abruptly following a power

battle with the Pacific nation's royal family. Aisake Valu Eke, a veteran politician, was elected prime minister by secret ballot in parliament, with 16 votes against his opponent Viliami Latu's 8. Eke was initially elected to parliament in 2010 and became the finance minister from 2014 to 2017. Oxford-educated Sovaleni, who was prime minister from 2021, resigned just hours before facing a vote of no confidence led by Eke.



China Approves \$137-Billion Mega Dam on Brahmaputra Near Indian Border :-

China has authorized the construction of the world's largest dam, estimated to cost \$137 billion, on the Brahmaputra River in Tibet near the Indian border, prompting worries in riparian states such as India and Bangladesh. According to an official statement cited by state-run news agency Xinhua, the Chinese government has approved the development of a hydropower plant in the lower parts of the Yarlung Zangbo River, the Brahmaputra in Tibetan. The dam is to be built at a huge gorge in the Himalayan reaches where the Brahmaputra river makes a huge U-turn to flow into Arunachal Pradesh and then to Bangladesh.



US Declare Bald Eagle As National Bird :-

The bald eagle is now the official national bird of the United States, according to a statute signed by President Joe Biden on Christmas Eve that recognizes the white-headed and yellow-beaked bird of prey. The bird has served as a national emblem in the United States for many years, appearing on the Great Seal of the United States, which is used on US papers, since 1782. However, it was not formally declared as the national bird until last week, when Congress passed the law, which was sent to Biden's desk for signature. Not everyone has always agreed about the national status of the bald eagle. Founding Father Benjamin Franklin objected to the creature being chosen to represent the country, calling it a "bird of bad moral character".



Russia Declares Federal Emergency Over Black Sea Oil Spill :-

Russia has declared a federal emergency in response to a large oil spill along the Black Sea coast, which has caused significant environmental damage. The disaster, caused by storm-damaged Russian-flagged oil tankers in the Kerch Strait on December 15, discharged thousands of tons of heavy fuel oil, known as mazut, into the sea. The incident has polluted around 55 kilometers (34 miles) of coastline, raising major worries about cleanup operations and long-term effects. According to Interfax, this decision allows federal funds to be made available for the operation to be carried out, which has come under public scrutiny due to being deemed insufficient and uncoordinated.



China's First Type 076 Amphibious Assault Ship :-

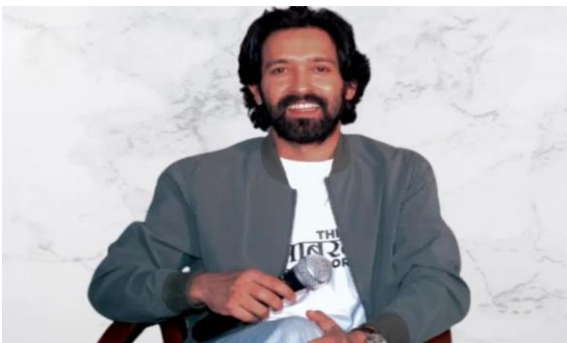
China has launched its first next-generation amphibious assault ship, adding a formidable cutting-edge vessel to the country's rapidly expanding fleet as it seeks to rival the United States' military supremacy. The independently designed ship, named Sichuan after a southwestern Chinese region, is lauded as a "key asset" for advancing the Navy's reform and improving its long-range operations capabilities, according to the announcement. The Type 076 amphibious assault ship entered the water at a launch ceremony at a shipyard in Shanghai, the People's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN) said in a statement.



UAE Emerges as Africa's Top Investor :-

The United Arab Emirates (UAE) has emerged as Africa's largest investor in new business projects, providing ample cause to expect that cash will return to the continent. On the flipside, the increase of investment has sparked worries about worker rights and low environmental norms. Between 2019 and 2023, UAE corporations announced an astonishing \$110 billion in projects, with \$72 billion going to the renewable energy industry. Such figures surpass investment flows from the companies in the UK, France, or China.

10: Miscellaneous



Vikrant Massey Retires from Acting at 37 :-

Fans are shocked by Vikrant Massey's most recent Instagram post. The actor declared his retirement from acting at the age of 37. According to reports, Vikrant Massey is presently filming two movies: Aankhon Ki Gustaakhiyan and Yaar Jigri. Vikrant Massey reportedly went to Versova, Mumbai's St. Anthony's High School. Later, at Bandra, Mumbai, he finished his further study at R. D. National College of Arts & Science. Vikrant

Massey made his acting debut with the 2007 musical sitcom Dhoom Machaao Dhoom.



Maharashtra Govt Declares December 6 As Holiday To Mark Dr BR Ambedkar's Death Anniversary :-

The Maharashtra government has designated Friday, December 6, as a "local holiday" to commemorate Dr. BR Ambedkar's Mahaparinirvana Diwas. The Mahaparinirvan Diwas commemorates Dr. Ambedkar's death anniversary. He passed away on December 6,

1956, in Delhi. As chairman of the Drafting Committee, he guided the Constituent Assembly in methodically writing the world's longest-written constitution. It is a day to reflect on Ambedkar's legacy and his contributions to Indian society. This is the third local holiday declared by the Maharashtra government, following Dahi Handi and Ganesh Visarjan.



Eurogrip Tyres Appoints M.S. Dhoni as Brand Ambassador :-

Eurogrip Tyres, a prominent company that specialises in two-wheeler, three-wheeler, and off-road tyres, has named cricket legend Mahendra Singh Dhoni as its brand ambassador. As part of this partnership, Dhoni will be promoting the Eurogrip brand and its whole product line, according to the firm. TVS Srichakra Ltd, the maker of Eurogrip, TVS Eurogrip, and TVS Tyres, was founded in 1982 and is an important vertical within the USD 3 billion TVS Mobility. M S Dhoni, known for his dependability, performance, and passion for riding, embodies the values that align with Eurogrip Tyres' vision of empowering riders with control and confidence on every journey, the company said in a statement.



RBI Introduces Podcast Facility for Public Communication :-

Shaktikanta Das, governor of the Reserve Bank of India, has announced the commencement of a podcast series to engage with the public. The RBI left its benchmark interest rate steady, citing inflation risks, but reduced the Cash Reserve Ratio, which banks must maintain with the central bank, increasing money with lenders to assist a sluggish economy. Shaktikanta Das stated that during monetary policy committee meetings, they explored how to improve financial literacy using technologies such as podcasts. The central bank had also recently organized a series of events, including a quiz competition for students.



Bhopal and Kurukshetra Set Historic Records on Gita Jayanti 2024 :-

Gita Jayanti was commemorated across India with great festivities that marked watershed moments in religious and cultural history. On Gita Jayanti, over 5,000 Acharyas read 'Shlokas' or verses from the third chapter of the Bhagavad Gita, 'Karma Yog', setting a new Guinness World record. Gita Jayanti celebrations in Haryana's Kurukshetra reverberated around the world. At the newly renamed Keshav Park, 18,000 children chanted Gita verses, joined by approximately 1.5 crore people worldwide via an online platform.



Delhi Govt. Announces ₹2,100 Monthly Aid for Women :-

:-

Arvind Kejriwal, national convener of the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), has announced the launch of the Delhi government's Mukhya Mantri Mahila Samman Yojana. The monthly stipend for women aged 18 and above has been increased from ₹1,000 to ₹2,100. However, Mr. Kejriwal stated that, while registration would begin on December 13, the first installment would not be credited to beneficiaries' bank accounts until after the Delhi Assembly election in February, as the model code of conduct is expected to go into effect soon.

"SAMPARK 4.0"
VETERAN OUTREACH INITIATIVE BY THE INDIAN NAVY
TEAM ECHS(N) EXTENDS INVITATION TO BRAVE VETERANS AND VEER NARIS OF MAHARASHTRA
 JOIN US AT THE FOLLOWING ECHS POLYCLINICS FOR AN INTERACTIVE AND IMMERSIVE SESSION OF ECHS RELATED DISCUSSIONS:-

THANE	16 DEC 24
NASIK	17 DEC 24
AURANGABAD	18 DEC 24
AHMEDNAGAR	19 DEC 24
SOLAPUR	20 DEC 24
KOLHAPUR	21 DEC 24
PUNE	23 DEC 24

TIME: 1000 HRS
 echsdelhi@navy.gov.in
 9667325533

Indian Navy initiates 'Sampark' health outreach for veterans in Maharashtra :-

The Indian Navy has created a specific outreach effort, 'Sampark', to address health concerns among its veterans in the state. A team of one officer and four navy men will conduct interactive sessions with naval veterans and their families in Pune, Nasik, Ahilyanagar, Chhatrapati Sambhajanagar, Kolhapur, Solapur, and Thane to better understand their concerns. The team will convene at these locations between December 16 and December 26. This outreach will also enhance awareness amongst veterans and their families by educating them about various healthcare services, entitlements, and procedures within ECHS, empowering them to access these benefits in a better manner, added Navy officials.



Ravichandran Ashwin announces retirement from international cricket :-

R Ashwin, the Indian cricket team's spinner, announced his retirement from international cricket during the third Test against Australia in Brisbane on December 18. After the game finished in a draw, Ashwin and skipper Rohit Sharma announced the news at a post-match press conference. Ashwin will continue to play T20 competitions and will represent the Chennai Super Kings in the IPL 2025. In the white-ball format, Ashwin made 181 appearances and snatched 228 wickets. He made 116 ODI appearances and took 156 wickets at an average of 33.20, with best figures of 4/25.



Salman Khan Named Brand Ambassador for Kho Kho World Cup :-

The Kho Kho Federation of India (KKFI) has announced that Indian actor Salman Khan will be the brand ambassador for the inaugural Kho Kho World Cup, which will be held in New Delhi from January 13th to January 19th, 2025. Salman expressed his delight for the inaugural Kho Kho World Cup, recalling his involvement with the sport. The megastar praised the initiative to hold the World Cup in the nation's capital and expressed

his excitement to see the sport flourish around the world. The Kho Kho World Cup will see 21 Men's and 20 Women's teams competing in the week-long tournament, seeing participation of 24 nations traveling for the tournament to India.



India to Host ISSF Junior World Cup 2025 :-

The National Rifle Association of India has been selected to host the 2025 International Shooting Sport Federation (ISSF) Junior World Cup Rifle/Pistol/Shotgun competition. This will be the third top-level ISSF event held in the country in the last two years, following the senior ISSF World Cup in Bhopal in 2023 and the season-ending ISSF World Cup Final in October this year at the Dr. Karni Singh Shooting Range in New Delhi, which will feature the season's top shooters. This will be the ninth top-level Shooting championship to be held in India over the past decade but the first ISSF Junior World Cup.



AIM & UNDP Launch Youth Co:Lab 2025 to Empower Disability-Inclusive Innovation :-

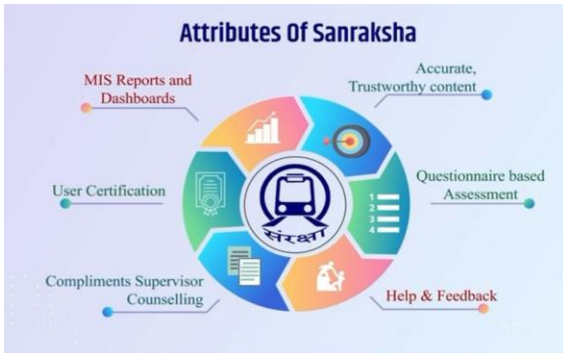
The Atal Innovation Mission (AIM), NITI Aayog, and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), in collaboration with Citi Foundation, have announced the seventh round of the Youth Co:Lab National Innovation Challenge for 2024-2025. This the season's challenge calls on young entrepreneurs, including those with disabilities, to create creative solutions that "enhance access to opportunities and well-being for Persons with Disabilities" (PwDs). The initiative, designed to foster social entrepreneurship and drive sustainable development, will be implemented in collaboration with AssisTech Foundation (ATF).



Defence secretary launches Rashtraparv website, mobile app :-

Defence Secretary Rajesh Kumar Singh unveiled the Rashtraparv website and mobile app to commemorate Good Governance Day and the birth anniversary of former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee. The new platform will provide complete information about national holidays like Republic Day, Beating Retreat, and Independence Day. It includes live streaming, ticket purchasing choices, seating arrangements, and travel maps for participants. Defence Secretary Singh highlighted that the website and app, developed by the Ministry of Defence, include a Tableau Management Portal.

11: National



Sanraksha App launched for Enhancing Rail Passenger Safety :-

Indian Railways has released the smartphone application 'Sanraksha' to ensure the safety of passengers across the entire nation. According to railway officials, the smartphone application intends to improve railway safety by strengthening capability among the railway's frontline safety category staff. According to the official, the application was built by Dilip Singh, a 2013 batch IRTS Officer who is currently employed as Senior Divisional Commercial Manager, Nagpur, South East Central Railway. The Railway Board has decided to launch the app in all railway zones with 16 divisions selected initially for rollout.



Ratapani Tiger Reserve, Madhya Pradesh notified as 57th Tiger Reserve of the country :-

Shri Bhupender Yadav, Union Minister for Environment, Forest, and Climate Change, has formally designated the Ratapani Tiger Reserve in Madhya Pradesh as India's 57th Tiger Reserve. This unprecedented achievement demonstrates India's commitment to tiger protection

and the country's dedication to maintaining its unique biodiversity. The reserve, located in the forests of Ratapani, Bhopal, and Sehore, has a diverse wildlife population and is home to the majestic tiger. Its designation as a tiger reserve will enhance wildlife management and provide a secure habitat for tigers and other wildlife species.



MHA Grants FCRA Licenses to CNI and USIN Foundation

The Union Home Ministry has given licenses under the Foreign Contribution Registration Act (FCRA) to the USIN Foundation, a think tank, and The Synodical Board of Social Services of The Church of North India (CNI), among others. The USIN Foundation, which is funded by the US India Strategic Partnership Forum, was founded by Ajay Banga, president of the World Bank, and Indra Nooyi, former chairman of Pepsico. Each NGO has been issued a five-year FCRA licence. USIN Foundation has been granted licences for economic activities whereas CNI can carry out activities under six different heads such as religious, cultural, economic, educational and social, added officials.



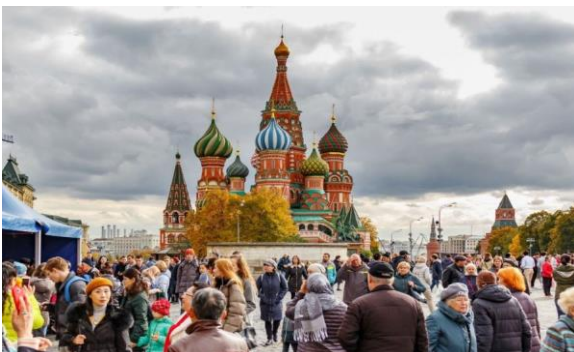
4th National Conference of Chief Secretaries 2024 :-

Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi presided over the 4th National Conference of Chief Secretaries in Delhi on December 14th and 15th, 2024. The Conference has been conducted yearly for the past three years. The first Chief Secretaries Conference took place in June 2022 in Dharamshala, followed by the second and third conferences in New Delhi in January and December 2023, respectively. The three day Conference held from 13th to 15th December 2024 was emphasised on the evolution and implementation of a common development agenda and blueprint for cohesive action in partnership with the States.



Government Introduces 'Jalvahak' for Waterway Connectivity :-

The Union government launched the 'Jalvahak' initiative to encourage freight movement across inland waterways, a significant step toward encouraging sustainable and cost-effective transportation along National Waterways 1 (Ganga), 2 (Brahmaputra), and 16 (Barak River). Sarbananda Sonowal, Union Minister of Ports, Shipping, and Waterways, flagged off three cargo ships and launched the vessel's fixed schedule service. He said the scheme aims to unlock the trade potential of inland waterways while reducing logistics costs and decongesting road and rail networks.



Indians Will Soon Be Able To Travel To Russia Without A Tourist Visa :-

Indian travelers may soon be able to visit Russia without a visa within the coming year. Since August 2023, Indian travelers have been eligible for e-visas to Russia, which are usually approved within four days. The new agreement would improve tourism relations between the two countries. Currently, Indian passport holders can travel without a visa to 62 countries. Russia granted 9,500 e-visas to Indian visitors in 2023, which was a total of 6 per cent of the total e-visas issued by Moscow. This puts India among the top five countries which were granted easy travel access by Russia.



Kisan Kavach – Bharat's Indigenous Anti-Pesticide Bodysuit :-

Dr. Jitendra Singh, the Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Science and Technology, introduced Kisan Kavach, India's maiden indigenous anti-pesticide bodysuit. Dr. Jitendra Singh underscored the significance of the effort, stating that the Kisan Kavach is a ground-breaking solution that fills a key need in farmer safety. The bodysuit, developed by BRIC-inStem in Bangalore in partnership with Sepio Health Pvt. Ltd., protects against pesticide-induced poisoning, which can lead to significant health consequences like as breathing disorders, vision loss, and, in extreme situations, death.



Vice President Dhankhar Inaugurates GSI Geoscience Museum in Gwalior :-

Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar opened the Geological Survey of India's (GSI) cutting-edge Geoscience Museum at the Victoria Market Building in Gwalior, Madhya Pradesh. The event, attended by dignitaries, was a watershed moment in presenting India's geological heritage and scientific achievements. The Gwalior Geoscience Museum has two galleries that focus on Earth's geological wonders and the emergence of life. Gallery I, Planet Earth: Its Uniqueness in Diversity, showcases the planet's natural phenomena such as volcanoes, meteorites, and magnetic fields. The exhibits include rare geological specimens, such as Antarctic rocks, Himalayan fossils, dinosaur eggs, and volcanic rocks from Japan.



Amit Shah attended the SSB Raising Day event in Bengal's Siliguri :-

Union Home Minister Amit Shah visited the Sashastra Seema Bal's (SSB) 61st Raising Day festivities in Siliguri, West Bengal, and commended the force for its tremendous contributions to India's security. Shah praised the SSB for its alertness and tireless efforts along the Indo-Nepal and Indo-Bhutan borders, emphasizing the force's vital role in national defense and law enforcement. He expressed satisfaction with the SSB's efforts in securing the Indo-Nepal and Indo-Bhutan borders, which are vital to the nation's security.



Bharat Mobility Global Expo 2025 :-

India's main motor exhibition, Auto Expo, will be hosted under the aegis of Bharat Mobility, the government's initiative to consolidate all mobility-related trade fairs under one platform, beginning January 17 next year in Dwarka, Delhi. The six-day Bharat Mobility Global Expo 2025 will take place simultaneously at Bharatmandapam, Yashobhoomi (India International Convention and Expo Center), Dwarka, and India Expo Center & Mart, Greater Noida, from January 17 to 22 of next year. Bharat Mobility Global Expo is an annual event and it appears that now on Auto Expo is likely to be held every year.



Centre Ends No Detention Rules In Schools :-

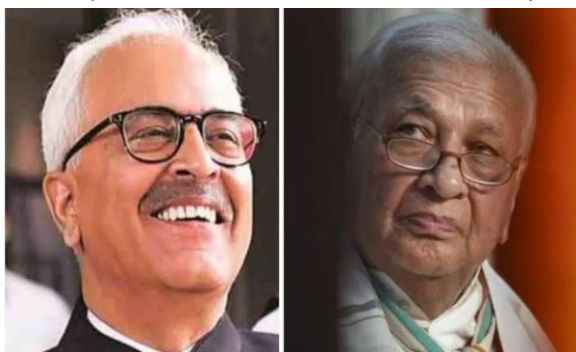
The central government announced the abolition of the 'no detention policy' for pupils in classes 5 and 8, as well as the decision that students from these two classes who fail the annual exams will not be promoted. According to the new guidelines, students who do not pass the yearly exam will be given the opportunity to repeat the examination within two months and will remain in the same class if they fail the retest. Schools are barred from removing children until they have completed Class 8. Several states and union territories including Odisha, Jharkhand, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Karnataka, and

Delhi subsequently opted to detain students who failed classes 5 or 8.



India's First Bio-Bitumen Stretch Inaugurated by Nitin Gadkari :-

Nitin Gadkari, Union Minister for Road Transport and Highways, opened a 1km stretch of Asia's first roadway with a bio-bitumen blended surface. The trial patch begins near the 'Kamptee 22Km' milestone along the Jabalpur-Nagpur line. The project will help reduce pollution from stubble burning because bio-bitumen is derived from readily available crop stubble, which farmers can sell rather than torching the waste. Calling it his dream project, Gadkari hoped if the technology takes off, air pollution will be reduced dramatically.



President Appoints New Governors For Five States :-

In a substantial overhaul, President Droupadi Murmu nominated two new governors and reassigned three others, reorganizing leadership in five states. Ajay Kumar Bhalla, an experienced administrator, has been chosen the new Governor of Manipur, succeeding Anusuiya Uikey. Another important appointment is Arif Mohammed Khan, the governor of Kerala, who has been relocated to Bihar. Other key appointments include Hari Babu Kambhampati, the Governor of Mizoram, who has

been transferred to Odisha, and General (Dr.) Vijay Kumar Singh, a decorated retired officer, who will now serve as the Governor of Mizoram.



Rajnath Singh and Yogi Adityanath Unveil Atal Ji's Statue :-

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath inaugurated the statue of 'Bharat Ratna' and former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee at Lucknow's Kudiya Ghat, which is located on the banks of the Gomti River. They also praised the sculptor Amarpal Singh for his outstanding work. These two politicians, along with other public figures, paid floral tributes to the former Prime Minister's statue at Lok Bhavan. The CM also extended greetings on the birth anniversary of Mahamana Madan Mohan Malviya and on Christmas.



Amit Shah Sets BBSSL Target to Add 20,000 Cooperatives by 2025-26 :-

Union Minister of Cooperation Amit Shah, while examining the performance of seed cooperative BBSSL (Bhartiya Beej Sahkari Samiti Ltd), set a goal of incorporating 20,000 new cooperatives into its fold by 2025-26, and also directed it to maintain water-efficient traditional seed varieties. BBSSL, which was established

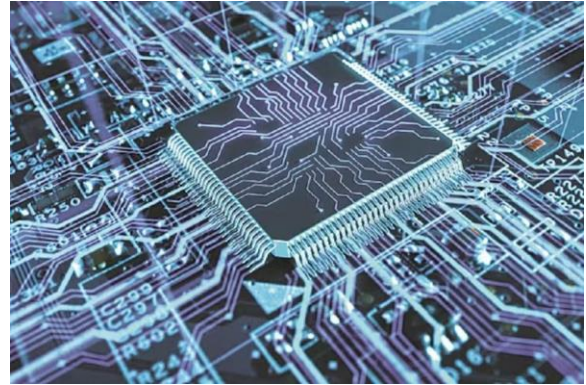
as a multi-state cooperative society in 2024, is now growing foundation and certified seeds on 5,596 hectares across six states, with an estimated production of 164,804 quintals from 49 kinds of eight crops during the current Rabi season.



Centre Greenlights Memorial For Dr. Manmohan Singh

A day after former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh died, the Central Government reportedly approved the plan to build a 'Rashtriya Smriti' at the Samadhi Complex in the national capital. According to sources, this designated location would be used to administer the last rites of national leaders such as current and former Presidents, Vice Presidents, Prime Ministers, and other dignitaries as decided by the Cabinet. Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge wrote to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, urging him to conduct the last rites of former PM

Manmohan Singh at a place where a memorial can be built. He wrote the letter after speaking to Modi about setting up a memorial for Singh, who was a two-term prime minister revered by the people of the country.



India Launches UG Minor in Quantum Technologies :-

Undergraduate students in India can now explore the fascinating world of quantum technology. The All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) and the Department of Science and Technology (DST) have launched a new curriculum aimed at producing a competent workforce prepared for the future. Students will earn a total of 18 credits by combining theory and lab-based courses. Each course carries three credits, with theory courses involving one hour of weekly instruction per credit and lab courses requiring three-hour lab sessions per credit.

12: Obituaries



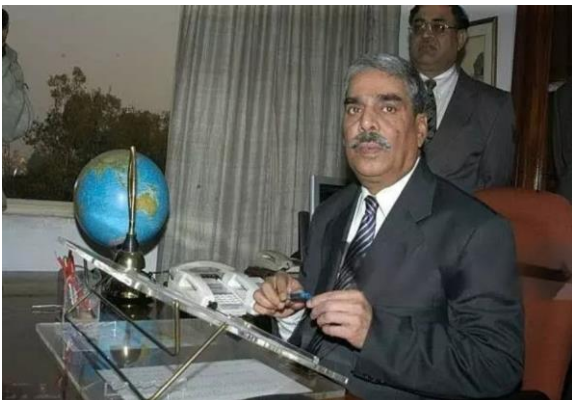
Kannada Actor Shobitha Shivanna Passed Away:-

According to the authorities, Kannada actress Shobitha Shivanna was found dead in her apartment, and it is likely that she committed suicide. A body was discovered hanging at her apartment, prompting an investigation by officials. Shobitha, who was born on September 23, 1992, in Bangalore, had a strong interest in the arts since childhood. Shobitha's acting career began in 2015 with the Kannada film 'RangiTaranga', which gained critical acclaim and represented a significant milestone in her career. Over the years, she became a familiar face in both Kannada cinema and television, starring in popular films such as 'Eradondla Mooru', 'ATM: Attempt to Murder', and 'Jackpot'.



Film producer Manu Padmanabhan Nair passes away :-

Malayalam film producer Manu Padmanabhan Nair died lately. Manu Padmanabhan reportedly collapsed and died while traveling by bus from Coimbatore to Palakkad. Manu had financed several successful Malayalam films, including 'Vellam,' 'Kooman,' and many others. Manu took part in both commercial and drama films, both of which proved to be successful. Reportedly, Manu has an upcoming project in the pipeline, named 'Whine.' The film is touted to be a thriller that is directed by Saheer Abbas and scripted by Amalnath.



Former CBI director Vijay Shankar passes away at 76 :-

Vijay Shankar, the former director of the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), died at the age of 76 following a protracted illness. Shankar, known for his management of high-profile cases which include the Aarushi-Hemraj double murder and Abu Salem's extradition, had a notable law enforcement career. In accordance with his ultimate wishes, his family has opted to give his corpse to AIIMS. Prior to his appointment as CBI director, Shankar headed the National Disaster Response Force, Civil Defence, and Home Guards.



Neale Fraser, Former Australia Davis Cup Captain, Passes Away At 91 :-

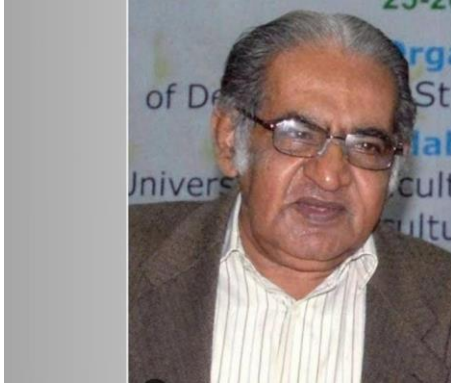
Neale Fraser, Australia's captain for 24 years, won three Grand Slam singles titles and led his country to four Davis Cup championships, passed away at the age of 91. In between sweeps at the U.S. Open, when he won the singles, men's doubles, and mixed titles in 1959 and 1960, Fraser overcame Australian tennis icon Rod Laver to win Wimbledon in 1960. At least two of the eleven major men's doubles titles he won were from each of the four Grand Slam competitions. In 1984, Fraser received an induction into the International Tennis Hall of Fame.



Former Maharashtra Minister Madhukar Pichad Passes Away :-

Madhukar Pichad, 84, a former Maharashtra cabinet minister and senior Bharatiya Janata Party leader, died at Nine Pulse Hospital in Nashik, Maharashtra. During his college years, Pichad actively joined in movements for the rights of oppressed tribal farmers. His name is well-known in Maharashtra politics because he was a prominent tribal leader who represented the Akole Assembly constituency in Ahilyanagar district from 1980 to 2009. He also served as the undivided NCP's State

President, Minister for Tribal Development, Forest, and Environment, and a minister in multiple Congress governments until 1995.



Development economist Professor V.K. Natraj passes away in Mysuru :-

Prof. V.K. Natraj (85), a retired professor and former Director of the Institute of Development Studies at the University of Mysore, as well as the Madras Institute of Development Studies (MIDS) in Chennai, died on December 9 at a private hospital in Mysuru following a brief illness. Prof. Natraj, a distinguished academician specializing in Development Economics, spent almost three decades at the University of Mysore. He was also its registrar before his appointment as the Director of MIDS, Chennai, from 2000 to 2005.



Former Karnataka chief minister S M Krishna passes away :-

The Karnataka government proclaimed a public holiday for all educational institutions and government offices on December 11 in honor of former chief minister SM Krishna (92), who died early on December 10. After a long tenure with the Congress, he entered the BJP near the end of his political career. Karnataka Chief Minister

Siddaramaiah was "shocked" by the news. He said that Mr Krishna's service as a State and Union Minister and Chief Minister is unparalleled. Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu said "he was a true leader who always prioritised the welfare of his people."



Siyaram Baba passes away at 94 :-

Saint Siyaram Baba, notable for uplifting the Narmada River ghats and temples in Madhya Pradesh's Nimar area, died on December 11 at the age of 94 following a brief illness. His passing triggered a wave of sadness throughout the region. According to the sevadars, Baba, a devotee of Lord Hanuman, used to accept donations of Rs10 and utilize the money to restore Narmada Ghats and improve various religious institutions and temples. Despite not being very educated, he recited Ramcharitmanas continuously. He filled the visiting devotees with positive energy by giving them spiritual guidance.



Black arts literary icon Nikki Giovanni dies at 81:-

Nikki Giovanni, a noted poet and important player in the Black Arts movement, died at the age of 81. Her literary works and activism left an indelible mark on American culture, particularly among the African American

community. Giovanni, born Yolanda Cornelia Giovanni, Jr. in 1943, has garnered numerous honors throughout her decades-long career, including seven NAACP awards. She self-published her first two books, *Black Feeling* and *Black Talk and Black Judgement*, in 1968, quickly becoming a leading voice in the black arts movement.



Legendary Gujarati singer Purushottam Upadhyay passes away at 90 :-

Purushottam Upadhyay, an established Gujarati singer and composer, died at the age of 90 in his home in Mumbai. Upadhyay, who received the Gujarat Gaurav Puraskar and the Padma Shri, had a long-lasting impact on the music industry. He captured the hearts of listeners with classic melodies like 'He Ranglo Jamyo', 'Divaso Judaina Jay Che', 'Ae Jaashe Jarur Milan Sudhi', and 'Kahu Chu Jawanine'. With compositions for over 20 films and 30 plays, Upadhyay's work extended beyond the Gujarati community. Purushottam Upadhyay was born on August 15, 1934, in Kheda, Gujarat. His love for music was from a young age, and he won many awards in school.



Zakir Hussain, Legendary Tabla Maestro, Passes Away At 73 :-

Zakir Hussain, a tabla maestro, passed away in a hospital in San Francisco, the United States, his family announced on December 16. He was 73. Zakir Hussain died as a

result of complications from idiopathic pulmonary fibrosis, his relatives stated. Beginning at the age of seven, he worked with almost all of India's prominent performers, including Ravi Shankar, Ali Akbar Khan, and Shivkumar Sharma. Zakir Hussain received four Grammy Awards in his career, including three at the 66th awards ceremony earlier this year.



Tulsi Gowda, the 'Encyclopedia of Forests,' Passes Away

Padma Shri Awardee Tulsi Gowda, an environmentalist from Karnataka known as the "tree goddess" by the Halakki tribal people, died of age-related causes at her home in Honnali village, Ankola taluk, Uttara Kannada district. Gowda, also known as the 'encyclopedia of Forest', was born in Honnali village, Ankola taluk, Uttara Kannada district, in 1944. Gowda has been recognized with planting and caring around 1 lakh trees in Karnataka. Her contributions have strengthened one community reserve, five tiger reserves, 15 conservation reserves, and 30 wildlife sanctuaries, ensuring the preservation of diverse ecosystems.



Former Haryana CM Om Prakash Chautala Passes Away at 89 :-

Om Prakash Chautala, the supreme leader of the Indian National Lok Dal (INLD) and former chief minister of

Haryana, died on Friday, December 20, at the age of 89, in Gurugram. Om Prakash Chautala, the son of former Deputy Prime Minister of India Chaudhary Devi Lal, was Haryana's sixth chief minister. Chautala was born in a tiny village near Haryana's Sirsa. Chautala won the election to the Rajya Sabha in 1987 and served until 1990. In December 1989, he became Haryana's chief minister, replacing his father who had been appointed as the deputy PM of India.



Meena Ganesh, Iconic Malayalam Star, Dies :-

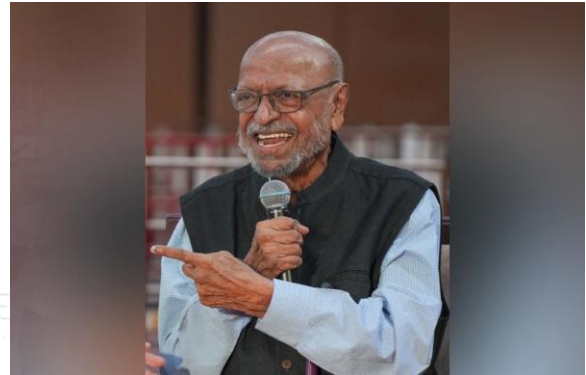
Meena Ganesh, a Malayalam film and serial actor, died lately at a private hospital in Shoranur, Palakkad, Kerala. She was 81. She had been in treatment for age-related concerns for quite some time. Meena Ganesh is said to have had her acting debut in the 1977 film 'Mani Muzhakkam', directed by PA Backer and starring Hari, Beatrice, and many others in crucial parts. Before stepping into the film industry, Meena Ganesh was a prominent theatre artist and she is the wife of the film actor cum theatre artist AN Ganesh. Meena Ganesh has acted in almost 105 films, majorly in supporting roles.



Epigamia Co-Founder Rohan Mirchandani Passes Away At 42 :-

Rohan Mirchandani, co-founder of popular yogurt brand Epigamia, died of heart arrest, according to a press

release. Epigamia's top team, headed by Chief Operating Officer and founding member Ankur Goel, and co-founder and director Uday Thakker, will continue to handle the company's day-to-day operations. Mirchandani graduated from New York University's famous Stern and Wharton Schools and founded Drums Food International in 2013. The company became the parent of Epigamia, a new age FMCG brand which has now become India's most prominent Greek yogurt brand.



Filmmaker Shyam Benegal passes away at the age of 90

Shyam Benegal, a renowned filmmaker who made important contributions to Indian cinema, died at the age of 90. Benegal's nearly seven-decade career encompassed a diverse range of themes, mediums, and perspectives, including rural hardships, feminist challenges, biting satire, and biographical narratives. His oeuvre encompassed documentaries, films and epic television shows, including "Bharat Ek Khoj", an adaptation of Jawaharlal Nehru's "Discovery of India", and "Samvidhaan", a 10-part show on the making of the Constitution.



M.T. Vasudevan Nair, doyen of Malayalam literature and cinema, passes away :-

M T Vasudevan Nair, a renowned Malayalam writer, died at a private hospital in Kozhikode after being admitted with heart failure. He was 91 years old. Madath Thekkepat Vasudevan Nair, also known as MT, is one of Kerala's most prominent writers, leaving an indelible imprint in the worlds of literature and film over a seven-decade career. He has won various state, national and international laurels, starting with the Kerala Sahitya Akademi Award for his debut novel, Naalukettu, in 1959 at the age of 23.



Former Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh Passes Away :-

Former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, 92, died at the All India Institute of Medical Sciences in Delhi. Dr. Singh, who served as Prime Minister for two terms in the Congress-led United Progressive Alliance government from 2004 to 2014, has been in poor health for several months. As Finance Minister under former Prime

Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao, he oversaw economic changes in 1991 that altered the course of India's economic development. As a mark of respect to the former Prime Minister, all Union government functions were cancelled and a seven- day national mourning was declared.



Osamu Suzuki, Former Suzuki Chairman Passes Away Aged 94 :-

Osamu Suzuki, the former president, chairman, and CEO of Suzuki Motor Corporation, died at the age of 94. According to Japanese news agency Kyodo, Suzuki's more than 40-year leadership converted the Japanese automaker into a major player worldwide, especially within India's automotive sector. Suzuki served as president, chairman, and CEO from 1978 until his retirement in 2021 at the age of 91. During his tenure, Suzuki Motor's consolidated sales grew exponentially from approximately 300 billion yen (USD 1.9 billion) in 1978 to beyond 3 trillion yen in fiscal 2006.

13: Ranks & Reports



India's GDP growth slips to 7-quarter low of 5.4% in Q2

India's economic growth slowed to 5.4% in July-September, the worst rate in seven quarters, as sluggish urban demand pulled down manufacturing activity, despite an increase in the rural sector, according to official figures. The country's GDP growth rate has slowed for the third quarter in a row. GDP growth has dropped substantially after a healthy 8.6% expansion from October to December of last year. It fell to 7.8% in the January-March 2024 period and to 6.7% in the first quarter of the current financial year.



India's Core Sector Growth Picks Up with 3.1% Growth in October:-

Growth in the country's critical core sector picked up in October, boosted by four industries, including coal and steel. According to data issued by the commerce and industry ministry, the infrastructure sector, which includes coal, crude oil, natural gas, refinery products, fertilisers, steel, cement, and power, increased by 3.1% year on year in October, up from 2.4% the previous month but down from 12.7% in October last year. The core sector accounts for nearly 41% of the index of industrial production and the improvement is likely to reflect in the factory output data expected next month.



FDI inflows jump 45% to USD 29.79 billion in April-September 2024 :-

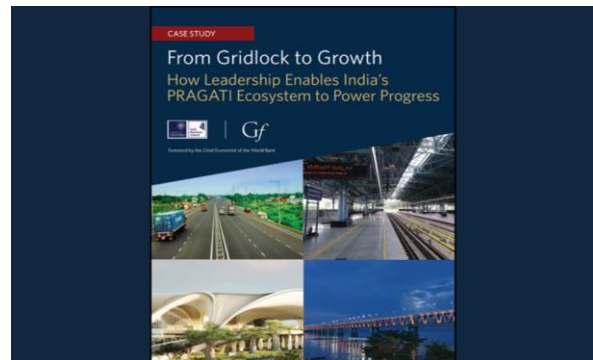
According to government figures, foreign direct investment in India increased by 45 percent year on year to USD 29.79 billion between April and September of current fiscal year, driven by strong inflows into the services, computer, telecom, and pharmaceutical sectors. FDI inflows totaled USD 20.5 billion in April-September 2023-24. In the July-September quarter, inflows increased by roughly 43% year on year to USD 13.6 billion, up from USD 9.52 billion in the same quarter

last fiscal year. The foreign direct investment in India was up 47.8 per cent to USD 16.17 billion in the April-June quarter.



UPI Breaks Record in October with 16.58 Billion Transactions Worth Rs 23.5 Trillion :-

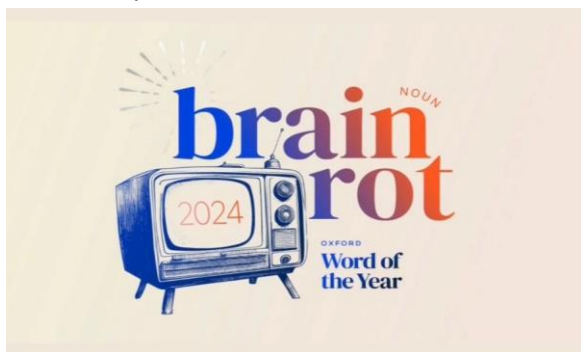
Unified Payments Interface (UPI) transactions fell 7% in volume to 15.48 billion and 8% in value to Rs 21.55 trillion in November compared to the previous month, as per data from the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI). They reached an all-time high in October, boosted by holiday sales. In October, UPI processed 16.58 billion transactions totaling Rs 23.5 trillion, the most since the digital system went live in April 2016. In September, volume was seen at 15.04 billion, and value at Rs 20.64 trillion.



India's PRAGATI Boosts 340 Infra Projects: Oxford Study

A groundbreaking case study by Oxford's Said Business School, supported by the Gates Foundation, titled 'From Gridlock to Growth: How Leadership Enables India's PRAGATI Ecosystem to Power Progress', highlights PRAGATI (Pro-Active Governance and Timely Implementation) as a game changer in India's digital governance landscape. According to the report, this innovative platform has aided in the acceleration of over

340 vital projects worth \$205 billion since its debut in March 2015, highlighting its critical role in expediting infrastructural and social development activities around the country.



Oxford picks 'Brain Rot' as word of the year 2024 :-

"Brain rot" has been voted Oxford's Word of the Year for 2024. The word used for this title reflects growing concerns about the influence of trivial social media content on mental health. Oxford University Press (OUP) has emphasized the growing use of the term "brain rot" to characterize the perceived detrimental effects of excessive consumption of low-quality internet content. OUP also noted that "the first recorded use of 'brain rot' that we've identified was in Henry David Thoreau's book *Walden* in 1854, with a small number of further occurrences in the nineteenth century."



Morgan Stanley Cuts India's FY25 GDP Growth to 6.3% :

Morgan Stanley has reduced its GDP growth forecast for India to 6.3% for the current fiscal year, down from 6.7% previously. This comes only days after India's GDP dropped to a seven-quarter low in the July-September quarter. Morgan Stanley reduced India's FY25 growth projection to 6.7% earlier in November, ahead of Q2 GDP data. India's GDP growth dropped to 5.4 percent year on

year (YoY) in the July-September quarter of 2024, its slowest rate since March 2023. This was below the 6.7 per cent growth seen in the previous quarter and also fell short of Morgan Stanley's forecast of 6.3 per cent, as well as the consensus estimate of 6.5 per cent.



OECD Raises India's FY25 Growth Forecast to 6.8% :-

The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) upped India's economic growth prediction for 2024-25 to 6.8% from 6.6% in May, citing robust investment and agricultural output. It had previously predicted 6.7% growth for the country in its September interim outlook. India's GDP growth dropped to a seven-quarter low of 5.4% in the second quarter of this fiscal year, owing to sluggish manufacturing, according to official figures released last week. The economy expanded by 6.7% in the first quarter.



India's FDI Inflows Surpass \$1 Trillion, Solidifying Global Investment Status :-

Foreign direct investment (FDI) inflows into India surpassed \$1 trillion between April 2000 and September 2024, firmly solidifying the country's status as a safe and key investment destination around the world. According to figures from the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT), the total amount of

FDI, including stock, reinvested earnings, and other capital, was \$1,033.40 billion for the same time. India received \$177.18 billion from Mauritius, \$167.47 billion from Singapore and \$67.8 billion from the U.S. during the period under review, as per the data.



India's Billionaire Count Soars to 185, China Sees Drop Amid Slowdown :-

India's billionaire club continues to grow rapidly, and the country currently ranks third in the world billionaire count, trailing only China and the United States. The number of billionaires in India has increased by more than 20%, reaching 185 in 2024 from 153 in 2023. In China, the number of billionaires has declined. This was primarily owing to the economic slowdown the country has been witnessing, pushing down the number of billionaires from 520 in 2023 to 427 individuals in 2024.



Dubai Unveils World's Largest Gold Bar Weighing Over 300 KG :-

The world's heaviest pure gold bar, weighing 300.12 kg and valued at approximately \$25 million, was unveiled in Dubai. The bar, which has been recognised by Guinness World Records, will be on exhibit this weekend at Dubai Gold Souk Extension, where visitors can see it outside the Emirates Minting Factory shop. The previous record for this category was a 250 kilogram gold bar displayed in

Japan. According to the Guinness World Records website, Emirates Minting Factory LLC envisioned breaking the record years ago "as a way to honour the UAE's legacy and show gratitude for the support received".



Taste Atlas Reveals 2024-25 Top Food Cities :-

The newly released TasteAtlas 2024/25 awards have highlighted Indian cuisine on a global scale. India ranked 12th in the "100 Best Cuisines in the World" list. In addition, four non-vegetarian Indian dishes were named to the "100 Best Dishes in the World," highlighting the country's culinary variety. Of these 100 cities, six Indian cities made the list: Mumbai at 5th, Amritsar at 43rd, New Delhi at 45th, Hyderabad at 50th, Kolkata at 71st, and Chennai at 75th. In Mumbai, Pav bhaji, Vada Pav, and Bombay biryani were among the most recommended dishes.



India Men's Hockey Team Moves to 5th in Latest FIH Rankings for 2025 :-

The Indian men's hockey team will finish the thrilling year in fifth spot in the FIH world rankings, while the women's team is ranked ninth in the most recent update issued by the International Hockey Federation (FIH). At the 2024 Paris Olympics, the Indian men's hockey team created history by winning back-to-back medals for the first time

since Munich in 1972. The Netherlands, the Olympic champions (3267 points), lead the rankings. The Netherlands started the year in the top spot following a great run in the FIH Hockey Men's World Cup, and gold medals at the FIH Hockey Pro League and the EuroHockey Championship in 2023.



India Ranks 39th in Travel and Tourism Development Index 2024 :-

The World Economic Forum's (WEF) Travel and Tourism Development Index (TTDI) 2024 report ranks India 39th out of 119 countries. In the previous index, issued in 2021, India was rated 54th. However, due to a change in the WEF's methodology, India's 2021 ranking has been modified to 38th place. India's tourism appeal is boosted by its rich cultural heritage, which comprises around forty-three World Heritage Sites and fifty-six potential sites. In order to improve accessibility for visitors, the nation has also made investments in high-speed trains like Vande Bharat, 150 new airports, and 500 new air routes.



Madhya Pradesh Named "Go-To Global Destination for 2025" by WSJ :-

Madhya Pradesh has garnered global acclaim as one of the Wall Street Journal's "Go-To Global Destinations for 2025," highlighting its rich legacy, diverse wildlife, and natural beauty. This coveted recognition adds to the state's continuous attempts to position itself as a top vacation destination. Madhya Pradesh's presence on the Wall Street Journal's list emphasizes the state's appeal as a world-class destination, attracting international visitors looking for history, adventure, and breathtaking scenery. Principal Secretary of Tourism, Sheo Shekhar Shukla, emphasized that this recognition further establishes the state's global tourism status.



India's Defence Exports Reach Rs. 21,083 Crore In 2023-24 :-

India's defence exports continue to soar, reaching a record Rs 21,083 crore (approximately USD 2.63 billion) in FY2023-24, a 32.5 percent increase over the previous fiscal year when the amount was Rs 15,920 crore. According to the numbers, exports increased by 31 times over the last decade compared to FY 2013-14. "The defence industry, including the private sector and DPSUs (Defence Public Sector Undertakings), have made tremendous efforts in achieving the highest-ever exports. The private sector and DPSUs contributed about 60 per cent and 40 per cent respectively," the Defence Ministry said in its year-end review 2024.

14: Schemes & Committees



Piyush Goyal Launches Ease of Doing Business Portal :-

Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal has unveiled the CII Ease of Doing Business and Regulatory Affairs portal, which will provide insights into India's business environment as well as gather and track proposals for improvements. The portal was unveiled at the 2nd Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT)-Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) national conference on Ease of Doing Business in New Delhi. The portal attempts to provide status and updates on key initiatives on 'Ease of Doing Business' by both the government and apex business chamber CII.



PM Modi to Launch 'Bima Sakhi Yojana' in Haryana on 9th December :-

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will visit Panipat on December 9 to launch the "Bima Sakhi Yojana," which aims to empower women, Haryana Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini announced. He further stated that the prime minister's 'Beti Bachao Beti Padhao' initiative began in Panipat in 2015. According to the chief minister, both the federal and state governments are executing a number

of initiatives to empower women. The chief minister assured that the trust of people will be upheld and the government will accelerate its development efforts in this third term.



Govt Issues 14 lakh Ayushman Cards to Citizens Aged 70+ :-

The government informed Parliament that around 14 lakh Ayushman Vay Vandana cards for older citizens aged 70 and above had been created as of November 25 under the Ayushman Bharat-Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB-PMJAY). In a written response to a question in the Lok Sabha, Minister of State for Health Prataprao Jadhav estimated that there are 4.5 crore families with beneficiaries aged 70 and up, which corresponds to the six crore individuals covered by the policy.



Telangana's Rythu Bharosa: Boosting Farmer Welfare:-

Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy announced the execution of the Rythu Bharosa plan following Sankranti, claiming that the crop loan waiver scheme had been extended to all eligible beneficiaries in the state and branding his government as 'farmer friendly'. The chief

minister's announcement to implement the Rythu Bharosa program, which will enhance subsidies from Rs 10,000 to Rs 15,000 per year, is one of the Congress government's six assurances. Revanth highlighted that his government has released Rs 7,625 crore towards the pending arrears of crop loan waiver pertaining to Kharif 2023.



Atal Innovation Mission, Swedish Embassy celebrate SheSTEM 2024 :-

The Atal Innovation Mission (AIM) of the NITI Aayog and the Office of Science & Innovation at the Embassy of Sweden, in collaboration with Nordic Partners - Innovation Norway, Innovation Centre Denmark, and Business Finland, is happy to announce the successful completion of SheSTEM 2024. This annual initiative celebrates the contributions of women in STEM and serves as a catalyst to inspire the next generation of innovators by encouraging young minds to explore careers in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM).



Mahila Samman Savings Certificate offers 7.5% interest

The Mahila Samman Savings Certificate Scheme (MSSC) was introduced in March 2023 exclusively for women and minor girls to promote financial independence by offering competitive interest rates and to help meet the

government's financial inclusion goals. In a written response to a Rajya Sabha question on December 3, 2024, Union Minister of State for Finance Shri Pankaj Chaudhary stated that 43,30,121 accounts have been opened under the initiative as of October 10, 2024. The interest rate for MSSC is 7.5% per annum which is compounded quarterly and credited to the account.



उपभोक्ता मामले विभाग
DEPARTMENT OF
CONSUMER AFFAIRS

Centre Set To Launch eMaap Portal for Fair Trade and Consumer Protection :-

The Government of India's Department of Consumer Affairs is working on the National Legal Metrology Portal (eMaap), which would connect State Legal Metrology Departments and their portals into a uniform National System. This program seeks to streamline the processes for providing licenses, completing verifications, and managing enforcement and compliance. By creating a centralized database, eMaap eliminates the need for stakeholders to register on multiple State Portals, fostering ease of doing business and transparency in trade practices.



Pralhad Joshi Launches 'Anna Chakra' and SCAN Portal

Pralhad Joshi, Minister of Food and Consumer Affairs, has presented 'Anna Chakra', a game-changing supply chain optimization tool for the Public Distribution System. According to an official announcement, the system was developed in collaboration with the World

Food Programme and IIT-Delhi. An official statement said it uses complex algorithms to optimize foodgrain flow across the country's logistical network. The initiative covers 4.37 lakh Fair Price Shops and 6,700 warehouses, targeting the country's food security programme serving 81 crore beneficiaries.



Bharatiya Vayuyan Vidheyak passed to modernise country's aviation sector :-

The 90-year-old Aircraft Act of 1934 is now history, with the Rajya Sabha passing the contemporary Bharatiya Vayuyan Vidheyak (BBV) 2024 after the Lok Sabha approved it in August. BBV 2024 aspires to increase the ease of doing business in the aviation industry. The 1934 Act had been revised twenty-one times. Civil Aviation Minister K Ram Mohan Naidu stated in Rajya Sabha that the bill's name change from English to Hindi, which several members opposed to, was done to "showcase India's heritage and culture", and "there was no violation of Constitutional rule." It will be difficult to pronounce the name of the bill in Hindi initially but one will get used to it, he added.



PM Modi Launches LIC's Bima Sakhi Yojana for Women Empowerment :-

Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the Bima Sakhi Yojana, a state-owned Life Insurance Corporation (LIC) project aimed at financially empowering women by

enrolling 100,000 Bima Sakhi in 12 months. The plan is intended to benefit women aged 18 to 70 years who have completed Class 10. "Expansion of the insurance sector will be spearheaded by women via the scheme. The data suggests LIC agents earn up to Rs 15,000/month on an average," Modi said while inaugurating the scheme in Panipat. Modi said that the scheme will play an important role in providing social security to every household.



Moldova Joins International Solar Alliance :-

Randhir Jaiswal, a spokesperson for the Ministry of External Affairs, announced that Moldova was added to the International Solar Alliance. Jaiswal stated that India welcomes Moldova's attempts to promote sustainability. The agreement was inked by External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar and Moldovan Deputy Prime Minister Mihai Popsoi. A treaty-based international intergovernmental organisation, International Solar Alliance (ISA), aims at mobilising more than USD 1000 billion of investment needed by 2030 for the massive deployment of solar energy.



Govt Forms Committee to Assess IAF's Capability Development Amid Rising Threats :-

Given China and Pakistan's growing air power and the Indian Air Force's fighter aircraft shortage, the Defence

Ministry has created a high-level committee led by Defence Secretary Rajesh Kumar Singh to examine the service's overall capability development through indigenous design, development, and acquisition projects. During the meeting, top Defence Ministry officials were briefed on the requirements for futuristic combat aircraft, as well as the holes that must be filled in the capability that the force hopes to have in the future to address the threat perception on both fronts.



Kejriwal Launches Dr Ambedkar Scholarship for Dalit Students Abroad :-

Ahead of the Delhi assembly elections, AAP leader Arvind Kejriwal proposed an Ambedkar scholarship for free international study for the city's Dalit students. "Under the scheme, any Dalit student from Delhi will be able to receive education in foreign universities. If they get admission in any such university, the Delhi government will bear the entire cost of their education, travel and accommodation," Kejriwal stated. Children of government employees will additionally be qualified for the plan, he said, without specifying how or when the scholarships will be awarded.



PM Modi Launches Ken-Betwa River-Linking Project :-

Prime Minister Narendra Modi set the groundwork for the Ken-Betwa river-linking project in Madhya Pradesh's Khajuraho district, which aims to alleviate water shortages in the Bundelkhand area, which spans portions of Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh. The project will bring 8.11 lakh hectares of land under irrigation in ten districts of Madhya Pradesh's parched Bundelkhand region, while the 221-kilometer-long Ken-Betwa canal will irrigate 59,000 hectares of agricultural land in Uttar Pradesh and stabilize water supply over 1.92 hectares in the state's Mahoba, Jhansi, Lalitpur, and Banda districts.



'Viksit Panchayat Karmayogi' Initiative :-

Dr. Jitendra Singh, Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Science and Technology, has launched the 'Viksit Panchayat Karmayogi' initiative. The initiative, part of the larger 'Prashasan Gaon Ki Aur' campaign, seeks to improve the capacity and competence of Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) by providing elected representatives and officials with the tools and knowledge needed for effective governance and participatory planning. Speaking at the event, Dr. Jitendra Singh emphasized that governance reforms must begin at the grassroots to bring about long-lasting and meaningful change as well as to fill up the capacity gaps.

15: Science & Technology



China Opens First Atmospheric Monitoring Station in Antarctica :-

China has established its first foreign atmospheric monitoring station in Antarctica, as it expands its influence in the cold and resource-rich southernmost continent by constructing research facilities. Located in the Larsemann Hills in East Antarctica, the Zhongshan National Atmospheric Background Station will conduct "continuous and long-term operational observations of concentration changes in Antarctic atmospheric components, and provide a faithful representation of the average state of atmospheric composition and related characteristics in the region", said an article.



Union Minister Kirti Vardhan Singh Launches Nano Bubble Tech to Purify Delhi Zoo Pond Water :-

Kirti Vardhan Singh, Union Minister of State for Forest, Environment, and Climate Change, unveiled 'Nano Bubble Technology' to clean and purify water at Delhi's National Zoological Park, as well as to boost aquatic animal health. According to an official statement, this

technique effectively cleans unclean pond water by removing algae and other growths. It is being tested in the zoo for the first time as a 15-day trial. If successful, it will be used in the zoo. Kirti Vardhan Singh explained that the primary goal of this technology is to keep water clean, ensuring the health and well-being of aquatic creatures.



Amazon Enters Multimodal AI Race With Nova :-

At its yearly AWS conference in Las Vegas, Amazon revealed a new set of artificial intelligence (AI) platforms known as foundation models, which can generate text, photos, and videos. These capabilities, dubbed "Nova," are Amazon's most ambitious step yet toward establishing itself as a generative AI leader, taking on competitors such as Adobe, Meta, and OpenAI. Amazon's chief of artificial general intelligence, Rohit Prasad, stated that the new models would stand out for their speed and cost-effectiveness. While acknowledging the industry's early stage, Prasad added that Amazon has the opportunity to take the lead as AI technology evolves.



ISRO PSLV-C59 Successfully Launched With European Space Agency's Proba-3 :-

The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) successfully launched the European Space Agency's (ESA) Proba-3 mission atop the Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV)-C59 rocket, after being rescheduled for a day due to an anomaly found. "The PSLV-C59/PROBA-3 mission is successfully accomplished. The spacecraft has been placed in the right orbit," ISRO Chairman S. Somanath said. ISRO said the mission had successfully achieved its launch objectives, deploying ESA's satellites into their designated orbit with precision.



RBI Unveils MuleHunter.AI to Fight Financial Fraud :-

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has announced the launch of MuleHunter.AI, an Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Machine Learning (ML)-based model to prevent and minimize digital fraud via mule accounts. This public infrastructure facility, developed by the Reserve Bank Innovation Hub (RBIH) in Bengaluru, will assist banks in dealing with the issue of mule bank accounts more quickly and reducing digital fraud, according to RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das. He said banks and card systems and other entities are free to use their own fraud detection systems but they can make use of MuleHunter additionally.



Google's AI Model Outperforms Top Weather Forecast System :-

Google's DeepMind team has announced GenCast, an AI model for weather prediction that outperforms the world's top weather forecast system. In a report

published in the journal Nature, DeepMind researchers claimed that GenCast beats the European Centre for Medium-Range Weather Forecasts (ECMWF), the world's leading operational forecasting system. "New AI model advances the prediction of weather uncertainties and risks, delivering faster, more accurate forecasts up to 15 days ahead," said Google in a statement.



IIT Madras Completes 410-Meter Hyperloop Test Track

IIT Madras has completed a 410-meter Hyperloop test track, a significant step forward in India's march to futuristic transportation technologies. Union Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw announced the great development, which included a video of the test track. The project is being directed by IIT Madras' Avishkar Hyperloop team in collaboration with TuTr, a firm fostered by the institute. The Hyperloop concept, originally popularised by Elon Musk in 2012, is now gaining traction worldwide.



Mysterious flu-like illness kills 31 in Congo :-

According to the World Health Organization, a strange sickness in the Democratic Republic of Congo has infected over 400 people and killed over 30, the majority of them are children. The WHO was just told about the outbreak two weeks ago, and it is localized in a remote area of the central African nation, in the southwestern

province of Kwango, according to WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus. Symptoms of the flu-like disease so far include headaches, cough, fever, breathing difficulties, and anemia.



New Damselfish Species Found in Maldives :-

A group of ichthyologists from the California Academy of Sciences discovered a new damselfish species in the Maldives' deep sea coral reefs. The team's research in the journal ZooKeys explained how they discovered multiple examples of the fish during an excursion to explore deep-sea coral reefs in the Maldives. The researchers called the new damselfish species Chromis abadhah. The fish, averaging 6.9 cm in length, features a pale blue underside with a white top, a common two-tone adaptation for deep-sea camouflage.



India Launches First Diabetes Biobank in Chennai :-

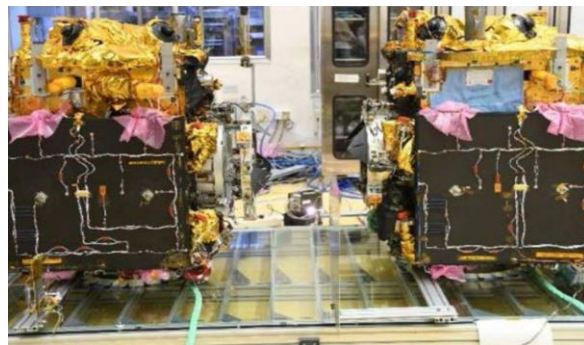
The Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) and the Madras Diabetes Research Foundation (MDRF) have established the country's first diabetes biobank, a collection of population-based biological samples to facilitate scientific study, in Chennai. The biobank established at the MDRF in Chennai intends to collect, process, store, and disseminate biospecimens to aid scientific research, with ICMR clearance. The biobank will

facilitate advanced research on the causes of diabetes, the variations of the Indian type of diabetes and related disorders, said Dr V Mohan, chairman of the MDRF and Dr Mohan's Diabetes Specialities Centre.



China breaks NASA's decade-old record with 9-hour spacewalk :-

China has smashed the US record for the world's longest spacewalk, with two of its astronauts completing a nine-hour spacewalk. Cai Xuzhe and Song Lingdong, Chinese astronauts aboard the Tiangong space station, have completed a nine-hour extravehicular activity (EVA), popularly known as a spacewalk. The previous record was set by US astronauts James Voss and Susan Helms, who lasted eight hours and 56 minutes outside the space shuttle Discovery on a trip to the International Space Station on March 12, 2001, according to the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA).



SpaDeX Mission: A leap towards India's space ambitions

India is about to take another huge stride forward in space technology with the Indian Space Research Organisation's SpaDeX mission, which will launch soon with PSLV-C60 and demonstrate in-space docking using two tiny spacecraft. This technology is essential for future moon missions, the construction of the Bharatiya

Antariksh Station (BAS), and other projects. With this mission, India hopes to join the privileged group of countries with space docking capability. Through this mission, India is marching towards becoming the fourth country in the world to have space docking technology.



ISRO, ESA Join Hands for Human Spaceflight Advancements :-

The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) and the European Space Agency (ESA) have inked an agreement to work together on astronaut training, mission implementation, and research projects. According to Isro, the agreement establishes a framework for collaborative activities in human space exploration and research, concentrating on astronaut training, assistance with experiment development and integration (which includes the utilization of ESA facilities on the International Space Station), human and biomedical research experiments, and joint educational and outreach initiatives..

16: Sports



Siddarth Kaul Retires from Indian Cricket :-

Former Indian bowler Siddarth Kaul, who was a member of Virat Kohli's title-winning Under-19 ODI World Cup team in 2008, has declared his retirement from professional cricket. The 34-year-old Punjab pacer, who has appeared in the IPL for the Delhi Daredevils, Kolkata Knight Riders, Sunrisers Hyderabad, and Royal Challengers Bangalore, made the announcement via social media. Kaul played a total of 88 First-Class matches for Punjab and claimed 297 wickets. In 111 List A games, the right-arm pacer snaffled 199 wickets and another 182 in 145 T20s.



Arjun Erigaisi Joins Elite 2800 ELO Club, Second Indian After Anand :-

Grandmaster Arjun Erigaisi, 21, has made history by becoming the second Indian to earn the renowned 2800 Elo rating in classical chess. He joins the illustrious Viswanathan Anand in this exclusive club. Erigaisi is presently ranked fourth in the world. Erigaisi has had a fantastic year, capped by his excellent performance at the Chess Olympiad. Hailing from Warangal, Telangana, Erigaisi achieved the Grandmaster title at the remarkably young age of 14 years, 11 months, and 13 days.



Syed Modi International 2024: PV Sindhu, Lakshya Sen clinch singles titles :-

Top ranked P V Sindhu and Lakshya Sen delivered dominant performances to win the women's and men's singles titles, respectively, in the Syed Modi International badminton competition. Sindhu, a two-time Olympic medalist, broke her long title drought by defeating China's world number 119 Wu Luo Yu 21-14, 21-16 to win the trophy for the third time, following victories in 2017 and 2022. Sindhu's victory marks her return to the top of the podium after over two years, with her last title win being at the Singapore Open in July 2022.



Pavan Kampelli Wins Bronze in eFootball at Asian Esports Games :-

In a momentous achievement, India's Pavan Kampelli has claimed the bronze medal in eFootball, the country's first-ever podium finish in the event, at the 2024 Asian Esports Games in Bangkok. On way to the bronze medal, Pavan, popularly known as 'Mr Tomboy', also defeated the 2022 eFootball World Finals Winner (Mobile), Asgard Azizi of Team Indonesia, 2-1. Pavan competed against some of the best eFootball players from across Asia and faced a tough start against eventual winner, TXRO of

Team Thailand. However, he showed remarkable resilience and bounced back by securing hard-fought victories over players from Indonesia, Syria, and Laos -- all with an identical 2-1 margin -- to bag the historic medal.



India Wins 5th Junior Hockey Asia Cup, Beats Pakistan 5-3 :-

The Indian junior men's hockey team won its fifth title after defeating Pakistan 5-3 in the Men's Junior Asia Cup 2024 final in Muscat, Oman. India has already won this tournament a record five times, with previous victories in 2023, 2015, 2008, and 2004. On this occasion, Hockey India declared a financial prize of two lakhs for each player and one lakh for each support staff member for their flawless title defense and overwhelming performances in the Men's Junior Asia Cup. Japan defeated Malaysia 2-1 to claim the third spot earlier in the day.



Norris Wins Abu Dhabi GP, Ends McLaren's 26-Year Wait :-

Lando Norris won the season-ending Abu Dhabi Grand Prix, giving McLaren its first Formula One constructors' title since 1998, after teammate Oscar Piastri collided

with Max Verstappen on the first lap and finished tenth. Ferrari's Carlos Sainz and Charles Leclerc finished second and third, respectively, as the only team capable of defeating McLaren and winning the title. McLaren finished with 666 points to Ferrari's 652 and Red Bull's 589. Seven-time world champion Lewis Hamilton finished fourth in his last race for Mercedes, overtaking teammate George Russell on the 58th and final lap.



9-year-old Aarit Kapil becomes youngest Indian to beat a chess Grandmaster :-

Aarit Kapil, a nine-year-old from Delhi, defeated Grandmaster Raset Ziatdinov of the United States. The triumph came during the ninth round of the KIIT International Open Chess Tournament in Bhubaneswar. Aarit's victory made him the youngest Indian to take down a Grandmaster in a classical chess game. At 9 years, 2 months, and 18 days old, he is the world's third youngest to attain this distinction. The record for the youngest player to beat a Grandmaster is held by Indian-origin Singaporean Ashwath Kaushik. Kaushik defeated Jacek Stupa of Poland at the age of 8 years and six months earlier this year.



20th Asian Women's Handball Championship – Japan Triumphs Over South Korea :-

India matched its best-ever placing at the Asian Women's Handball Championship 2024, finishing sixth after a 41-30 loss against the People's Republic of China in the fifth and sixth playoffs at New Delhi's Indira Gandhi Arena. Later, Japan upset reigning and record handball champions the Republic of Korea in a thrilling final, winning 25-24 after rallying from a 12-9 lead to end South Korea's seven-game championship winning streak. The Indian team had some standout performers in the tournament, including youngster Bhawana Sharma and experienced goalkeeper Nina Shil.



Haris and Wyatt-Hodge crowned ICC Players of the Month for November :-

The star In November 2024, England's women's opener Danni Wyatt-Hodge and Pakistan's fast bowler Haris Rauf have won the ICC Players of the Month title. Rauf defeated rivals Marco Jansen and Jasprit Bumrah to claim the prize, giving Pakistan back-to-back wins after Noman Ali's triumph in October. Danni defeated Sharmin Akhter and Nadine de Klerk in the women's division. The right-handed batter delivered outstanding performances during England's 3-0 T20I series victory in their ongoing South Africa tour.



D. Gukesh Shatters Records to Become Youngest World Champion :-

India's D. Gukesh defeated China's Ding Liren in the 14th round to win the World Chess Championship 2024 title in Singapore. With this, Gukesh, 18, became the youngest World Chess Champion, breaking Garry Kasparov's previous record. The Indian Grand Master entered the event on the back foot, having lost in the first round. However, Gukesh came back to tie the final in the third round. Gukesh took the lead in the 11th round, only to lose the next game as Ding struck back. But Gukesh had the last laugh as he triumphed in the final round.



India clinched the Women's Hockey Junior Asia Cup 2024 title :-

The Indian women's hockey team successfully defended its title in the final of the Women's Junior Asia Cup in Muscat, Oman, defeating China 3-2 in a penalty shootout. Jinzhuang Tan (30') scored the first goal for China, but Kanika Siwach (41') equalized in the third quarter for India, sending the match to a penalty shootout. India's goalie Nidhi made three important saves in the penalty shootout to help her team win the title. Hockey India, announced a reward of Rs 2 lakh for each player and Rs 1 lakh to each support staff for everyone's effort and winning the championship.



Mumbai Clinches Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy 2024 :-

Mumbai used their combined batting power to defeat a valiant Madhya Pradesh side by five wickets and win the

Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy for the second time. Chasing 175 on a tough surface, Mumbai scored 180/5 in 17.5 overs, capping off a thrilling final. Madhya Pradesh, backed by skipper Rajat Patidar's fluent undefeated 81, fought bravely but fell short of their first crown, delaying their celebration for another season. Despite Rajat Patidar's notable innings as captain that helped set a challenging target, Mumbai's batting unit handled the chase efficiently.



Bumrah Surpasses Kapil Dev to Become India's Top Wicket-Taker in Australia :-

On December 18, Jasprit Bumrah created history as India's top Test wicket-taker in Australia. He broke Kapil Dev's old record of 51 wickets throughout the second session of the penultimate day of the ongoing third Test at the Gabba. Bumrah now has 52 wickets from ten Tests in Australia, while Kapil Dev finished his career with 51 wickets from eleven Tests on Australian soil. Nathan Lyon, an Australian spinner, is the most wicket-taker in Test matches between India and Australia, with 63 wickets in 18 Tests played on Australian soil. Currently the top-ranked Test bowler, Bumrah took six wickets for 76 runs in the first innings of the Brisbane Test.



Richa Ghosh Smashes Record-Breaking Fifty in Women's T20Is :-

Richa Ghosh, India's wicketkeeper-batsman, hit the joint-fastest half-century in women's T20 Internationals during the third T20I versus West Indies at the DY Patil Stadium in Navi Mumbai. Ghosh scored 50 runs in 18 balls, matching the records of Sophie Devine of New Zealand and Phoebe Litchfield of Australia. She was eventually got dismissed for 54 off 21 balls, with three fours and five sixes. The 21-year-old's cameo and skipper Smriti Mandhana's 47-ball 77 powered India to 217 for four in 20 overs, its highest total in T20I cricket.



India to Host World Boxing Cup Final 2025 :-

In a watershed moment for Indian boxing, New Delhi was given the hosting rights for the World Boxing Cup Final and the World Boxing Congress, both of which will take place in November 2025. The World Boxing Cup Final will be the climax of three World Boxing Cups held earlier this year. The boxing event, which awards ranking points, will pit stage winners against other top-ranked boxers in a battle for ultimate glory. The 2025 World Boxing Cup calendar begins in Brazil in March, followed by events in Germany and Kazakhstan, before the season finale in India's capital.



Delhi to Host 2025 Para Athletics World Championships

The global governing organization WPA announced that the Para Athletics World Championships will be held in

India's national capital in 2025, marking a historic first. The event, scheduled for September 26 to October 5, will be hosted at the Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium, which will additionally host the World Para Athletics Grand Prix from March 11 to 13. The Para Athletics World Championships are going to be hosted in Asia for the fourth time, marking their 12th edition. Over 1,000 athletes from more than 100 nations are expected to participate, with the competition serving as a key event in the lead-up to the Los Angeles Paralympic Games 2028.



India beat Bangladesh by 41 runs to clinch Women's U19 T20 Asia Cup title :-

India defeated Bangladesh by 41 runs in the final to win the inaugural Women's U-19 Asia Cup at Kuala Lumpur's Bayuemas Oval. Gongadi Trisha, one of the key reasons for India's victory in the Women's T20 World Cup in South Africa last year, struck a half-century to help Niki Prasad and Co win the final in style. After losing the toss, India was asked to bat first and managed only 117 for seven, with none of the hitters scoring more than Trisha. Opening the innings for India, Trisha scored 52 runs off 47 balls, including five fours and two sixes.



Russian Tennis Star Daniil Savelev Banned For 2 Years Over Doping :-

The International Tennis Integrity Agency announced that Russian tennis player Daniil Savelev agreed to a two-year suspension for doping. The ITIA stated that Savelev tested positive for the illegal drug meldonium in July 2024. He has been under provisional suspension since August of this year. This means that his suspension will terminate in August 2026. The ITIA said that it believed that Savelev had not intentionally taken the banned substance, saying that Savelev admitted to ingesting meldonium tablets, confusing family medication for supplements of a similar appearance.



Indian team concludes Asian Youth, Junior Weightlifting Championships 2024 with 33 medals :-

According to Olympics.com, the Indian contingent finished their campaign at the Asian Youth and Weightlifting Championships, Junior Weightlifting Championships 2024 in Doha, Qatar, with an outstanding 33 medals. Jyoshna Sabar won three gold medals in the

women's youth 40kg division, lifting a total of 135kg (60kg snatch + 75kg clean and jerk), setting a new Asian record. Koyel Bar (women's youth 55kg) and Sairaj Pardeshi (men's youth 81kg) added golds to India's tally, while Nilam Devi claimed three silvers in the women's junior 55kg.



Shahu Tushar Mane won the gold medal in the 10m air rifle event at the 67th National Shooting Championships :-

Shahu Tushar Mane defeated Dhanush Srikanth by 0.1 point to win the men's air rifle gold in a thrilling finish to the 67th National Shooting Championship at the Madhya Pradesh Academy in Bhopal. Shahu led by 0.1 point heading into the final two strokes, when Dhanush matched him with equal 10.6 and 10.5, resulting in an incredible finale. Yash Vardhan won the bronze as he pipped world champion Rudranksh Patil by 0.1 point. Smit Moradiya, qualification topper Himanshu (632.5), Mukul Kumar and Ravi Kumar were the others to make the final.

17: State



Telangana Joins Mineral Auction Regime, Auctions Limestone Blocks :-

The Ministry of Mines has successfully integrated Telangana into its mineral auction regime, with two limestone blocks auctioned earlier in November. Telangana is the 14th state to join the Center's mineral auction process. Limestone blocks, a vital raw material for cement production, were auctioned in Sultanpur and Saidulnama alongside NCL Industries and Deccan

Cement. More blocks are likely to be put up for auctions soon. The Centre had earlier this year written to the A Revanth Reddy-led government to auction 11-odd limestone blocks in the first phase.



UP Declares Maha Kumbh Area a New District for 2025 Mela :-

The Uttar Pradesh government has announced the formation of a new district centered on the Maha Kumbh region in Prayagraj. According to officials, the newly constructed district, officially dubbed Maha Kumbh Mela, was created to ensure the smooth planning and management of the big religious festival. With this, the state will now have 76 districts rather than 75. This measure intends to improve administrative efficiency and streamline operations for the forthcoming Kumbh Mela in January 2025. This was decided at a meeting of ministers convened by Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath at his Lok Bhavan office in Lucknow.



CM Devendra Fadnavis, Eknath Shinde, Ajit Pawar take oath as members of Maharashtra Assembly :-

On December 7, the first day of the Maharashtra Legislative Assembly's three-day extraordinary session, Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis took oath as a member. Deputy Chief Ministers Eknath Shinde and Ajit

Pawar both took oaths as members of the Maharashtra Assembly. The three leaders were sworn in as MLAs by the Legislative Assembly's Pro-tem Speaker, Kalidas Kolambkar. The election for the Speaker is scheduled for December 9, followed by a trust vote for the Devendra Fadnavis-led Mahayuti Government.



World Bank Approves \$188.28 Million Loan for Maharashtra's Backward Districts :-

According to a media release, the World Bank has granted a loan of \$188.28 million to encourage economic growth in the Indian state of Maharashtra, particularly in lagging regions. Investments made through the operation will provide districts with the required data, cash, and experience to maximize the value of public dollars used to drive growth and job creation. The \$188.28 million Maharashtra Strengthening Institutional Capabilities in districts for enabling growth operations will support district planning and growth strategies, the bank said in a statement.



Arunachal CM Launches New Logo for Eaglenest Bird Festival :-

Pema Khandu, the Chief Minister of Arunachal Pradesh, has revealed a new logo for the famed Eaglenest Bird

Festival. The logo, which represents the state's vast biodiversity, is intended to draw both national and international attention to the festival. The Eaglenest Bird Festival takes place every year at the magnificent Eaglenest Wildlife Sanctuary, which is located in Arunachal Pradesh's West Kameng district. The sanctuary, famous for its biodiversity, is home to over 450 bird species, including several rare and endangered ones.



Bihar government signs MoU for super speciality eye hospital in Patna :-

The Bihar government inked a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) alongside Sankara Eye Foundation India, Coimbatore, in Samvad at the Chief Minister Secretariat in the company of Chief Minister Nitish Kumar. The Memorandum of Understanding was signed for the development and management of a superspecialty eye hospital in Patna. On December 3, the Bihar cabinet approved giving 1.60 acres of land in Kankarbagh neighborhood of Patna on conditional lease for ₹1 to Sankara Eye Foundation India, Coimbatore to develop a super speciality eye hospital.



Prayagraj: PM Modi Inaugurates Projects for Maha Kumbh Prep :-

Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched several development programs in Prayagraj, Uttar Pradesh, paving the way for the Mahakumbh 2025. The initiatives involve crucial infrastructure upgrades to improve connectivity, spiritual tourism, and public amenities in the region. PM Modi launched rail and road projects, including ten new Road Over Bridges (ROBs), flyovers, permanent ghats, and riverfront roadways. These developments aim to provide seamless connectivity and cater to the large influx of devotees expected during the Mahakumbh.



Uttarakhand to Implement Uniform Civil Code from January 2025 :-

The Uttarakhand government, led by Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami, plans to introduce the Uniform Civil Code (UCC) in the state in January 2025. The BJP-ruled mountain state would be the first to implement the UCC. The state administration stated that a site and mobile app are also in the works, as it believes that digital measures would make registration, appeals, and other services more accessible for residents to access online. On March 11, this year, the President signed the UCC Bill, opening the road for it to become law. Thereafter, the state government had formed a nine-member committee for preparing the rules related to the procedures and other matters related to the implementation of the UCC Act.



Uttarakhand Unveiled Mascot, Logo, Anthem, and Tagline Of The 38th National Games :-

The 38th National Games will commence on January 28, 2025, in the state of Uttarakhand. Raksha Khadse, Union Minister of State for Sports, revealed the National Games' official logo and theme music at a gathering in Dehradun. The event's mascot, Mouli, was inspired by the Monal, a Himalayan pheasant and Uttarakhand's state bird. The anthem for the event and the tagline "Sankalp se Shikhar Tak" were also made public in the program which was held at the Maharana Pratap Sports College.



Madhya Pradesh Hosting 10th International Forest Fair

The 10th International Forest Fair in Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh, runs from December 17 to December 23. The expo will provide a large venue for conversation amongst collectors, producers, merchants, entrepreneurs, scientists, administrators, and policymakers involved in forest issues. Governor Mangubhai Patel and Chief Minister Dr. Mohan Yadav inaugurated the fair. Representatives from Sri Lanka, Nepal and Australia are participating in the fair. Madhya Pradesh Forest Minister Dilip Ahirwar informed that this year the forest fair will be based on "Women Empowerment through Minor Forest Produce".



India Conducts First-ever Ganges River Dolphin Tagging in Assam :-

The Ministry of Environment, Forest, and Climate Change (MoEFCC) carried out the first Ganges River Dolphin tagging in Assam. As to a MoEFCC press release, the Wildlife Institute of India (WII) collaborated with the Assam Forest Department and Aaranyak to implement the initiative, which was funded by the National CAMPA Authority. This is the first tagging not only in India, but also for this species. The achievement represents a substantial advancement for Project Dolphin. The tagging exercise will help in understanding their seasonal and migratory patterns, range, distribution, and habitat utilization, particularly in fragmented or disturbed river systems.



Mamata Banerjee Launches Banglar Bari Housing Initiative :-

Mamata Banerjee, West Bengal's Chief Minister, established the "Banglar Bari" project to provide housing for the state's rural poor. Ms Banerjee distributed the funding to 42 beneficiaries across 21 districts and stated that approximately 12 lakh people in the state are eligible for the first instalment. The plan's debut is significant since Ms. Banerjee announced it before of the

Lok Sabha elections, stating that if the Centre does not grant funding for the PM Awas Yojana, the West Bengal government will implement its own scheme.



NTPC to Establish Nuclear Power Project in Bihar, Says CMD Gurdeep Singh :-

In order to expand its non-fossil energy portfolio, power giant NTPC intends to establish a nuclear facility in Bihar, according to Gurdeep Singh, the company's chairman and managing director (CMD). Speaking at a session at the 'Bihar Business Connect 2024' event, he added that NTPC has also asked the state government for a piece of land in an appropriate position to advance its nuclear aspirations. "Looking at the future of the energy sector, nuclear (energy) is expected to become extremely important for the energy sector, 20-30 years down the line. I want to share that NTPC is now entering the nuclear energy space," Singh said.



Udan Yatri Cafe inaugurated at Kolkata airport to offer food at reasonable price :-

To deal with the matter of overpriced food and beverages at airports, the Ministry of Civil Aviation and the Airports Authority of India (AAI) opened the UDAN Yatri Cafe at Kolkata's Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose International Airport. The cafe provides budget-friendly dining options for travelers. According to the menu, customers can buy a water bottle and tea for Rs 10, while coffee, samosas, and the sweet of the day for Rs 20. Aam Aadmi Party's (AAP) Rajya Sabha MP Raghav Chadha raised the issue of overpriced food and beverages at airports during Parliament's winter session.



Centre Approves 6.5 Lakh PMAY Houses for Maharashtra :-

Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis thanked the Central Government for approving 6.5 lakh residences under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY). He also announced plans to build an additional 13 lakh dwellings in the state. Fadnavis termed the endeavor as "historic" when speaking with reporters. "This is a significant gift to Maharashtra from the Central Government. So far, 26 lakh people have registered, and 20 lakh will be given houses. This is a historic achievement," he said.

18: Summits & Conferences



PM Modi to Inaugurate Rising Rajasthan Global Summit in Jaipur on Dec 9 :-

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will open the Rising Rajasthan Global Summit in Jaipur on December 9. According to Chief Minister Bhajanlal Sharma, Prime Minister Modi will open the three-day event at the Jaipur Exhibition and Convention Centre (JECC) in Sitapura. He stated that the state administration is in mission mode to finalize preparations and plans. The chief minister also said that the summit will play an important role in bringing Rajasthan forward in various fields including mining, stone, education, medicine and automobile, among others.



Kolkata International Film Festival announces France As The Focus Country :-

The 30th edition of the Kolkata International Film Festival (KIFF), which begins on December 4, has unveiled a program of 175 films from 29 nations, with France serving as this year's focus country. The program includes 42 feature-length films, 30 shorts and documentaries in competitive categories, and 103 films in non-competitive genres. Screenings will take place in

20 venues in different parts of the city between December 5 and 11. Like other years, the 30th edition of the KIFF has unveiled 'Unheard India', a non-competitive category that boasts of screenings of multiple films made in Indian languages like Garhwali, Konkani and Tulu.



Asia-Oceania Meteorological Satellite Users' Conference :-

The India Meteorological Department (IMD), in partnership with the Ministry of Earth Sciences, will conduct the 14th Asia-Oceania Meteorological Satellite Users' Conference (AOMSUC-14) in New Delhi from December 4 to 6. Dr. Jitendra Singh, Hon'ble Minister of State (Independent Charge) of the Ministry of Earth Sciences, will open the conference on December 4th at Vigyan Bhavan. The AOMSUC-14 aims to highlight the significance of satellite observations, promote advancements in satellite technology, and foster collaboration between satellite operators and users.



Chennai To Host World Maritime Conference 2024 :-

The World Maritime Technology Conference (WMTTC), a triennial international convention hosted by the World Maritime Technology Congress (WMTTC), will be place in

Chennai on December 4–6. This marks the conference's return to India after a 15-year absence, with the previous edition held in Mumbai, according to CV Subba Rao, the Conference's forum chairperson. The previous conference, which was delayed due to the Covid pandemic, was held in Copenhagen in April 2022. Some of the cities that hosted the event in the past include Shanghai, Houston and St Petersburg, he said.



India Highlights Green Initiatives at UNCCD COP16 in Riyadh :-

Union Minister for Environment, Forests, and Climate Change Bhupender Yadav has described India's efforts to combat land degradation and desertification, which are consistent with the goals of the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD). While delivering India's speech at the UNCCD's CoP16 Ministerial Dialogue on Drought Resilience in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, the minister outlined India's path in addressing land degradation and desertification. Yadav informed that India had transitioned from reactive drought responses to proactive, sustainable strategies centred on preparedness and prevention.



ISAM Hosted 63rd Annual Conference In Bengaluru :-

The Indian Society of Aerospace Medicine (ISAM) has scheduled its 63rd annual conference at the Institute of

Aerospace Medicine (IAM) in Bengaluru on December 5 to 7, 2024. The Institute focuses on military and civil aerospace medicine, as well as the human aspects of the country's space flight programs. Established in 1952, it is India's first registered association dedicated to promoting the science and practice of aeronautical medicine. The current conference is themed 'Collaborate for Research' which highlights a forward-thinking approach to foster partnerships and innovations within the fields of aviation and space medicine.



India to Chair 68th Session of UN Commission on Narcotic Drugs :-

According to a statement from the Indian Embassy in Austria, India has been chosen to chair the Commission on Narcotic Drugs' (CND) 68th session. Ambassador Shambhu S Kumaran, India's Permanent Representative to the United Nations in Vienna, officially took over as chairman of the distinguished UN forum. The CND is the United Nations' major policy-making organization on drug-related issues. It is mandated to monitor global drug trends, support Member States in formulating balanced policies, and oversee the implementation of the major international drug conventions.



IHRD International Conference On AI Held In Thiruvananthapuram:-

The Institute of Human Resources Development (IHRD) hosted the International Conclave on Artificial Intelligence (AI) in Thiruvananthapuram from December 8 to 10. Higher Education Minister R. Bindu, who opened the conclave, emphasized the importance of AI in modern society while warning against making it the "master of masters." Presiding over the inaugural session, V.K. Prasanth, MLA, emphasised the need for discussions on the benefits and risks of AI, especially in an era where it has become challenging to differentiate truth from fiction.



Ahead of next year's summit, India, EU agree to hold strategic foreign policy dialogue :-

India and the European Union have decided to have the first-ever ministerial strategic foreign policy conversation soon to jointly address a number of crucial concerns, including geopolitical tensions and Chinese aggression in the Indo-Pacific and beyond. The decision to hold the dialogue comes months before India and the EU convene summit-level talks in New Delhi, which are expected to yield major results in terms of strengthening collaboration in a variety of areas, including security, digital public infrastructure, and commerce.



Conference on advances in medical technology :-

From December 12–14, the Sree Chitra Tirunal Institute for Medical Sciences and Technology will organize the international conference TransMedTech-2024 on Advances and Challenges in Medical Technology Translations in Thiruvananthapuram. The Society for Biomaterials and Artificial Organs (India) and the Society for Tissue Engineering and Regenerative Medicine (India) are collaborating to organize the event. Close to 300 delegates from within and outside the country, including distinguished academicians, researchers, scientists, doctors, and industrialists are taking part in the event which focuses on the latest in medical technologies which can transform healthcare.



Viraasat Sari Festival 2024 :-

From December 15–28, 2024, the third iteration of the mega event "Viraasat Sari Festival 2024" will take place at Handloom Haat, Janpath, New Delhi, organized by the Ministry of Textiles, Government of India. The "Virasat Sari Festival" was held in 2022–2023 and 2023–2024. It was a huge success, drawing an amazing 20,000 visitors of all ages and providing much-needed attention to the industry. The third edition of the "Viraasat Sari Festival 2024" will continue the series of events by bringing together sari designers, handloom weavers, sari enthusiasts, and purchasers nationwide, with a special focus on Handloom Saris from around the country. The event will showcase the Handloom heritage of India.



PM Modi Chairs 45th PRAGATI Meeting :-

Prime Minister Narendra Modi presided over the 45th edition of PRAGATI, an ICT-based multi-modal platform for proactive governance and timely execution including the Central and State governments. During the meeting, eight important projects were discussed, including six metro urban transport projects and one each for road connection and thermal power. According to an official release, the combined cost of these projects, spanning various states and Union Territories, exceeds Rs 1 lakh crore. The Prime Minister also reviewed public grievances related to the banking and insurance sectors.



SECTION 2

PRACTICE QUESTIONS WITH ANSWERS



BY RAMAN ACADEMY

SECTION 3

DETAILED ANALYSIS OF IMPORTANT EVENTS



BY RAMAN ACADEMY

Economics

North Eastern Tea Association (NETA)



Why in the News?

The Ministry of Commerce and Industry has received a petition from the North Eastern Tea Association (NETA) asking for authorisation for tea farmers to sell their goods through both private and public auction systems.

According to a notice published in the gazette on February 26, 2024, all dust teas shall be sold at public auction.

About North Eastern Tea Association (NETA)

Details	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• NETA is an association of tea producers headquartered in Golaghat, Upper Assam.• Established in 1981.• A key constituent of the Joint Forum and the Consultative Committee of Plantation Associations (CCPA), Assam Valley branch.• Focuses on promoting the interests of its members and enhancing the tea industry in Assam.
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Structural Mandate	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Presence: Strong presence in Golaghat, Assam.• Role: Represents tea producers and plays a pivotal role in the development of Assam’s tea industry.• Mandate: Advocates for improvements in the tea industry, assists with policy suggestions, and provides guidance on the development of the tea sector.
Powers and Functions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Advisory Role: Provides expert opinions and advice to the government of Assam and its members on issues related to the tea industry.• Policy Advocacy: Urges for changes in government policies to improve the tea industry, e.g., suggesting the relocation of the Tea Board of India’s headquarters to Guwahati.• Industry Growth: Encourages high-quality tea production and advises growers to enhance the quality of tea to attract international buyers.• Small Tea Grower Representation: Advocates for amendments to the definition of Small Tea Growers, proposing that those holding up to 50.6 hectares of land be recognized as small growers.• Government Relations: Provides suggestions to the government for the betterment and scaling up of the tea industry in Assam.

Windfall Gains Tax on Oil Production, Diesel-Petrol Export Removed



Why in the News?

With global oil prices stabilizing and domestic fuel supply improving, the government has decided to scrap the windfall gains tax, ensuring more predictable taxation for the oil industry.

What is Windfall Tax?

A windfall tax is a fee placed on businesses that make unanticipated earnings as a result of outside events like market fluctuations or disasters.

On July 1, 2022, it was implemented in India, focussing on the export of petrol, diesel and ATF as well as domestic crude oil production. In the face of rising global fuel costs following Russia's invasion of Ukraine, the tax was designed to secure a sufficient domestic fuel supply and collect windfall profits.

Crude oil was subject to Special Additional Excise Duty (SAED), whereas fuel exports were subject to Additional Excise Duty (AED), also known as the Road and Infrastructure Cess (RIC).

At first, the tax was Rs 6, per litre for petrol and ATF exports, Rs 13, per litre for diesel exports, and Rs 23,250 per tonne for crude oil exports.

The tax was periodically evaluated in light of changes in the price of oil around the world.

Impact of Removing Windfall Tax

A stable tax environment encourages long-term investments in oil production by increasing predictability.

Revenue Decline: From Rs 25,000 crore in FY 2022–2023 to Rs 6,000 crore in FY 2024–2025, the tax was bringing in less money.

The profitability of oil companies: greater earnings for manufacturers who no longer have to pay the levy, such as ONGC and Reliance Industries.

Encourages Domestic Production: Encourages increased exploration and production of oil domestically.

Policy Confidence: Indicates India's faith in steady world oil pricing and supplies in the future.

National Cooperative Policy



Ministry of Cooperation | सहकारिता मंत्रालय
Government of India | भारत सरकार

The Union Minister of Cooperation has provided crucial information regarding India's National Cooperative Policy to the Lok Sabha.

The new National Cooperative Policy is almost ready and will be announced in 2-3 months.

Update regarding the New National Cooperative Policy:

	Details
National Level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A 48-member National Level Committee was formed under the chairmanship of Shri Suresh Prabhakar

Committee Formation	<p>Prabhu.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The committee includes experts from the cooperative sector, representatives from National, State, District, and Primary level cooperative societies, and officers from Central Ministries/Departments. The task of the committee was to formulate the New National Cooperation Policy for the development of the cooperative sector in India. 17 meetings and 4 regional workshops were conducted across the country to finalize the draft report of the policy.
Aims and Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revitalize the cooperative sector and enhance its efficiency at national, state, district, and primary levels. Strengthen the cooperative movement in India by creating a structured policy that fosters growth and sustainability. Establish financial viability and governance mechanisms for cooperatives. Ensure cooperative federalism by allowing state cooperatives to function autonomously, avoiding undue centralization.
Features of the Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The policy adopts an inclusive approach, including all levels of cooperatives from district to primary. Close collaboration with State Governments to promote the cooperative sector and implement cooperative federalism. The draft policy was developed after

	extensive consultations, ensuring broad public and expert participation.
Provisions under the Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strengthening Cooperative Structure: Set up District Central Cooperative Banks (DCCBs) and district milk producers' unions in all uncovered districts. NABARD will prepare an action plan for this. Expansion of Multipurpose PACS: New multipurpose PACS, primary dairy/fishery cooperative societies will be established in uncovered Panchayats/villages across India within the next five years.

India launched the World's first Green Steel Taxonomy



The Ministry of Steel unveiled the world's first Taxonomy of Green Steel, setting a benchmark for decarbonizing the steel industry.

About the Green Steel Taxonomy:

What is it?	<p>India established a legal framework to specify and encourage the production of steel with lower carbon emissions.</p> <p>With the goal of assisting the Indian steel industry in its shift to low-carbon production techniques, it establishes precise guidelines</p>
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Key Features	<p>for what qualifies as green steel.</p> <p>The carbon emission intensity of the steel plant is used by the taxonomy to determine greenness percentages.</p> <p>is to make sure that output meets India's 2070 net-zero emissions target.</p>		<p>greenness certificates and star ratings annually.</p> <p>Review Period: The thresholds for green ratings will be reviewed every 3 years.</p>
	<p>The threshold for emissions: According to emissions intensity, steel mills must maintain emissions below 2.2 tCO₂ per tonne of finished steel (tfs) in order to be categorised as green.</p> <p>Star Rating System:</p> <p>Five-star: Emission intensity lower than 1.6 t-CO₂e/tfs.</p> <p>Four-star: Emission intensity between 1.6 and 2.0 t-CO₂e/tfs.</p> <p>Three-star: Emission intensity between 2.0 and 2.2 t-CO₂e/tfs.</p> <p>Steel exceeding 2.2 t-CO₂e/tfs does not qualify as green steel.</p> <p>Emissions Scope: Includes Scope 1, Scope 2, and limited Scope 3 emissions, covering production, agglomeration, beneficiation, and emissions from raw materials and intermediates.</p> <p>Certification: NISST will oversee Measurement, Reporting, and Verification (MRV), issuing</p>	Significance	<p>Environmental Sustainability: Aims to reduce carbon footprint in line with national climate goals.</p> <p>Market Creation: Promotes innovation in low-carbon steel products.</p> <p>Global Competitiveness: Ensures Indian steel meets international sustainability standards.</p> <p>Guidance for Industry: Encourages adoption of greener practices.</p>
		Other Key Initiatives	<p>National Mission on Green Steel (NMGS): Policy support, funding, and incentives for low-carbon technologies.</p> <p>Electrification of Steelmaking: Use of electric arc furnaces (EAF) to reduce reliance on coal.</p> <p>Hydrogen-based Steelmaking: Exploring hydrogen as a clean fuel.</p> <p>Carbon Capture and Storage (CCS): Technologies to capture CO₂ emissions.</p> <p>Public Procurement Policies: Promotes green steel use in public infrastructure.</p> <p>Research and Development: Investments in low-carbon technologies and materials.</p>

Comprehensive Telecom Development Plan



Why in the News?

The Comprehensive Telecom Development Plan for North Eastern Region (NER) funded from Digital Bharat Nidhi (DBN) aims to provide mobile coverage to uncovered villages and National Highways

About the Comprehensive Telecom Development Plan (CTDP):

Overview	CTDP aims to enhance telecommunications infrastructure in India's North Eastern Region (NER) by improving mobile and broadband access. The plan is funded by the Digital Bharat Nidhi (DBN) programme.
	Digital Bharat Nidhi (DBN): Established under the Telecommunications Act, 2023. Replaces the Universal Service Obligation Fund (USOF).

	<p>USOF was created to provide telecom services in remote and rural areas at affordable prices.</p> <p>Funded by a 5% Universal Service Levy on the Adjusted Gross Revenue (AGR) of telecom operators.</p> <p>Aimed to expand telecom networks in low-profit remote and rural areas.</p> <p>Statutory Status: Granted in December 2003 through amendments to the Indian Telegraph Act (now superseded by the Telecom Act, 2023).</p>
Salient Features	<p>Mobile Coverage Expansion: Extend mobile coverage to previously uncovered villages and National Highways in NER.</p> <p>Enhanced Connectivity: Installation of 2,619 mobile towers, covering 3,223 villages and 286 highway locations.</p> <p>4G Saturation: Providing 4G connectivity to remote villages.</p> <p>Support for Socio-Economic Development: Empower citizens through ICTs for development.</p>

	Digital Inclusion: Help bridge the digital divide in NER.
Structural Mandate and Implementation	<p>Funding: Primarily funded by the Digital Bharat Nidhi (DBN) programme.</p> <p>Implementation: Coordinated through DBN-funded schemes focusing on mobile towers, 4G coverage, and broadband development.</p> <p>Agencies Involved:</p> <p>Ministry of Communication: Oversees implementation, ensures spectrum and policy approvals.</p> <p>DBN: Provides funding and operational support.</p> <p>Telecom Service Providers: Deploy infrastructure like towers and 4G networks.</p> <p>State Governments of NER: Facilitate local implementation.</p> <p>Project Management Agencies: Involved in setting up towers and maintenance.</p>

Pradhan Mantri Annadata Aay Sanrakshan Abhiyan (PM-AASHA)



Why in the News?

Since its launch, PM-AASHA has significantly benefitted farmers, contributing to the procurement of 195.39 lakh metric tonnes (LMT) of agricultural commodities, valued at ₹1,07,433.73 crore, from over 99 lakh farmers.

Procurement Details:

In the Rabi 2023-24 season, 6.41 LMT of pulses, valued at ₹4,820 crore, were procured from 2.75 lakh farmers. This included:

2.49 LMT of Masoor

43,000 metric tonnes of Chana

LMT of Moong

In addition, 12.19 LMT of oilseeds, valued at ₹6,900 crore, were procured from 5.29 lakh farmers.

In the ongoing Kharif season, the government has procured 5.62 LMT of Soyabean, valued at ₹2,700 crore, benefiting 2.42 lakh farmers.

About the PM-AASHA Scheme

Details	Launched in 2018, PM-AASHA is an umbrella scheme encompassing various components to ensure farmers receive fair prices for their produce.
Aims and Objectives	Ensuring fair prices for farmers by providing price support when market

	<p>prices fall below the Minimum Support Price (MSP).</p> <p>Stabilize the prices of essential commodities, benefiting both farmers and consumers.</p> <p>Addressing price fluctuations and ensuring sustainable agricultural practices for crops like pulses, oilseeds, and copra.</p>	<p>Federation of India Limited) for MSP procurement.</p> <p>Department of Consumer Affairs (DoCA) will procure pulses at market price from pre-registered farmers on eSamridhi Portal of NAFED and eSamyukti Portal of NCCF when prices exceed MSP.</p>
Structural Mandate and Implementation	<p>Type: Central Sector Scheme (Fully funded by the Centre).</p> <p>Nodal Ministry: Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare.</p> <p>Fund Allocation: Rs. 35,000 crore during the 15th Finance Commission Cycle (up to 2025-26).</p> <p>Central Nodal Agencies (CNA):</p> <p>Guarantees to lender banks for extending cash credit facilities to agencies like NAFED (National Agricultural Co-operative Marketing Federation of India Limited) and NCCF (National Co-operative Consumer's</p>	<p>Key Components:</p> <p>Price Support Scheme (PSS):</p> <p>The PSS, which functions through state governments to purchase notified commodities at the Minimum Support Price (MSP) levels, is the central part of PM-AASHA.</p> <p>It offers remunerative prices, encourages investment in agriculture, and helps farmers financially when market prices drop below MSP.</p> <p>To guarantee a fair wage for farmers, the government sets the MSP for 24 crops at 1.5 times the Cost of Production (CoP).</p> <p>PDPS, or the Price Deficiency Payment Scheme:</p>

	<p>If oilseed market prices drop below the MSP, producers will get direct payments under the PDPS.</p> <p>It ensures farmers continue to receive a fair return by helping to close the gap between MSP and market prices.</p> <p>Market Intervention Scheme (MIS): Under the MIS,</p>
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	<p>states can receive financial support to stabilise the prices of perishable agricultural products that are not covered by MSP, such as potatoes, tomatoes, and onions.</p> <p>By stabilising prices, this program helps farmers and consumers alike handle price volatility.</p>
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Environment & Diversity

World Wildlife Conservation Day



Why in the News?

We are reminded to concentrate on conserving and safeguarding the severely endangered species in India and around the world on December 4, which is World Wildlife Conservation Day.

"Connecting People and Planet: Exploring Digital Innovation in Wildlife Conservation" is this year's theme.

World Wildlife Conservation Day: Key Facts

Every year on December 4th, it is observed. The goal is to increase public awareness of the value of protecting endangered species and their habitats as well as animals.

On the eve of the 1948 signing of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES), the United Nations created it in 2012.

It promotes international animal conservation initiatives and is in line with SDGs 14 (life below water) and 15 (life on land).

Aims for India's Critically Endangered Species

In India, 73 species are listed as severely endangered as of 2022, which indicates that their chances of going extinct in the wild are the highest.

Better data availability and monitoring have contributed to the increase in the number of critically endangered species from 47 in 2011.

Eight of the nine severely endangered mammal species in India are endemic, meaning they are only found in particular areas of the country.

The Malabar Large-spotted Civet, Andaman Shrew, Jenkin's Shrew, Nicobar Shrew, Namdapha Flying Squirrel, Leafletted Leaf-

nosed Bat, and Kashmir Stag (Hangul) are a few of these.

Though these animals receive significant attention for tourism purposes, they are only three of the critically endangered species in India.

Lions: Asiatic lions in the Gir Forest are critically endangered.

Tigers: Bengal tigers are also listed as critically endangered.

Cheetahs: They are also part of India's endangered wildlife.

Great Indian Bustard is a bird facing significant threats due to power lines in Rajasthan.

Assessment of Water Resources of India, 2024 by CWC



Why in the News?

The Central Water Commission (CWC) recently released its study titled 'Assessment of Water Resources of India, 2024'.

It estimated India's average annual water availability from 1985 to 2023 at 2,115.95 billion cubic meters (BCM).

Key Highlights of CWC's 'Assessment of Water Resources of India 2024' Report:

Total Water Availability: India's average annual water availability between 1985 and 2023 is estimated at 2,115.95 billion cubic meters (BCM).

Top 3 Basins in (annual water availability):

Brahmaputra Basin: 592.32 BCM

Ganga Basin: 581.75 BCM

Godavari Basin: 129.17 BCM

Bottom 3 Basins in (annual water availability):

Sabarmati Basin: 9.87 BCM

Pennar Basin: 10.42 BCM

Mahi Basin: 13.03 BCM

Comparison to Previous Assessment (2019):

The 2019 projection of 1,999.2 BCM is lower than the current amount of 2,115.95 BCM.

The inclusion of Nepal's and Bhutan's contributions to the Ganga and Brahmaputra basins is what caused the increase.

Per Capita Water Availability:

1,486 cubic meters for 2021, according to the 2019 study.

Based on a population of 1.398 billion, the new data projects a per capita availability of 1,513 cubic meters for 2024.

India is still experiencing water stress (less than 1,700 cubic meters per capita) in spite of the rise.

Utilizable Water Resources:

Utilisable surface water is estimated by the CWC to be 690 BCM of the 1,999.2 BCM total.

Compared to bigger basins, such as the Brahmaputra sub-basin, smaller basins have a larger percentage of usable water.

About the Central Water Commission (CWC):

On the recommendation of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, CWC was founded in 1945 as the Central

Waterways, Irrigation and Navigation Commission (CWINC).

functions under the auspices of the Department of Water Resources, River Development, Ganga Rejuvenation, and the Ministry of Jal Shakti.

an official advisory group for the management and development of water resources.

New Delhi is the headquarters.

The Chairman is the Government of India's Ex-Officio Secretary.

Responsibilities include:

Control, conservation, and utilization of water resources.

Maintaining the National Register of Large Dams (NRLD).

Conducting hydrological surveys.

Handles surface water, while the Central Groundwater Board (CGWB) manages groundwater resources.

Wings:

Designs and Research (D&R) Wing.

River Management (RM) Wing.

Water Planning and Projects (WP&P) Wing.

The Central Zoo Authority has initiated the development of the National Wildlife Health Policy (NWHP) through a consultative workshop held in New Delhi.

About the National Wildlife Health Policy (NWHP):

<p>Details</p>	<p>A program started by the Central Zoo Authority (CZA) to reduce zoonotic infections and enhance the health of wildlife.</p> <p>CZA is a statutory independent organisation under the MoEFCCC, having been founded in 1992 under the Wildlife Protection Act of 1972.</p> <p>As a component of the National Wildlife Action Plan (2017–31), it adheres to the One Health philosophy, which combines environmental, animal, and human health.</p>
<p>Aims and Objectives</p>	<p>Prevent and Control Zoonotic Diseases: Strengthen monitoring and control of diseases.</p> <p>Improve Disease Surveillance: Develop systems for early epidemic detection.</p> <p>Promote One Health Principles: Integrate</p>

National Wildlife Health Policy



Why in the News?

	<p>human, animal, and environmental health.</p> <p>Community Advocacy: Increase awareness on wildlife health and conservation.</p>
Programs/Initiatives Under the Policy	<p>Wildlife Health Management Unit (WHMU): A dedicated unit to implement wildlife health programs.</p> <p>Disease Surveillance and Early Detection: Early detection of diseases, especially in protected areas.</p> <p>Biosecurity Protocols: Strengthen measures to minimize disease risks.</p> <p>Epidemic Preparedness and Response: Response strategies for wildlife disease outbreaks.</p> <p>One Health Approach Integration: Coordination between health sectors for better management.</p>
Structural Mandate and Implementation	<p>Wildlife Health Management Unit (WHMU) (proposed) to oversee wildlife health programs.</p> <p>Collaboration Across Agencies: Coordination</p>

	<p>with MoEF&CC, Wildlife Institutes, and state wildlife authorities.</p> <p>Surveillance and Monitoring: Monitor and track wildlife diseases, with research support from Indian Veterinary Research Institute (IVRI).</p> <p>Capacity Building: Training programs for wildlife health professionals.</p> <p>Funding and Resources: Significant resources for surveillance, research, and capacity building.</p>
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Ken-Betwa Link Project (KBLP) launched



Why in the News?

The first project under the National Perspective Plan (NPP) for interlinking rivers, which was conceived in 1980, was the Ken-Betwa River Linking National Project, for which PM Modi placed the foundation stone. More than 10% of the Panna Tiger Reserve's core area would be submerged as a result of the project.

About the Ken-Betwa Link Project (KBLP):

About	<p>Objective: Transfer water from the Ken River to the Betwa River, both tributaries of the Yamuna.</p> <p>Ken-Betwa Canal: Envisages a 221 km canal (including a 2-km tunnel) for water diversion.</p> <p>Submergence area: Jhansi, Banda, Lalitpur and Mahoba districts of UP and Tikamgarh, Panna and Chhatarpur districts of MP.</p> <p>It's the first interlinking project under the National Perspective Plan (1980).</p> <p>Targeted completion within 8 years, as per the Ministry of Jal Shakti.</p>		<p>submerging ~9,000 ha across 10 villages.</p> <p>Construction contract awarded to NCC Ltd.</p>
Key Components	<p>It will irrigate 10.62 lakh ha (8.11 lakh ha in MP and 2.51 lakh ha in UP) and provide drinking water to ~62 lakh people.</p> <p>Power Generation: Aims for 103 MW of hydropower and 27 MW of solar power.</p> <p>Phases:</p> <p>Phase-I: Construction of Daudhan Dam, related tunnels, canal, and powerhouses.</p> <p>Phase-II: Building of Lower Orr Dam, Bina Complex Project, and Kotha Barrage.</p> <p>Daudhan Dam:</p> <p>Foundation stone laid in December 2024 by PM Narendra Modi.</p> <p>2,031 m in length and 77 m in height,</p>	Geographical Features of Ken and Betwa River	<p>Ken River: Rises near Ahirgawan in Madhya Pradesh, flows through Bundelkhand, joins the Yamuna near Chilla village in UP.</p> <p>Betwa River: Originates in the Vindhya Range (near Hoshangabad, MP), also flows through Bundelkhand, and meets the Yamuna at Hamirpur (UP).</p> <p>Both rivers traverse hilly and plateau regions of Bundelkhand, often facing drought-like conditions.</p> <p>Both are highly seasonal; flows depend largely on monsoon rainfall.</p>
		Significance	<p>Water Scarcity Mitigation: Aims to alleviate drought-like conditions in Bundelkhand by ensuring year-round irrigation.</p> <p>Enhanced Agriculture: 10.62 lakh ha of farmland to benefit, improving crop yields and farm income.</p> <p>Drinking Water Supply: Targets ~62 lakh people in MP and UP, improving public health.</p> <p>Energy Generation: A total of 130 MW (103 MW hydropower + 27 MW solar), boosting</p>

	renewable energy capacity in rural areas. Bundelkhand Development: Expected to spur socio-economic growth, reduce rural distress and migration, and aid industrial expansion.
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	Template for Future Projects: As the first interlinking project under the National Perspective Plan, its success could pave the way for additional river-linking schemes nationwide.
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Governance

National Mission on Cultural Mapping



Why in the News?

The Union Minister for Culture and Tourism has provided details of the National Mission on Cultural Mapping in the Rajya Sabha.

About National Mission on Cultural Mapping (NMCM):

Details	Launched by: Ministry of Culture, Government of India. Implemented by: Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts (IGNCA).
Aims and Objectives	Document India's cultural heritage, including art forms, artists, crafts, and performing arts. Mapping of 6.5 lakh villages across India; Initial stages will focus on Bihar. IT-enabled platform to store and manage cultural data. Web portal and mobile app (Mera Gaon Meri Dharohar).

	Mera Gaon Meri Dharohar (MGMD): Part of NMCM, by the Ministry of Culture and IG Purpose: Documents India's villages, focusing on and traditions. 7 Categories: Covers Arts & Crafts, Ecology, School Traditions, Epics, History, Architecture, and u
Features	Raise awareness about cultural heritage's role in economic development and national unity. Create National Register of Artists and Art Practices.

National Library Mission



Why in the News?

The Union Minister for Culture and Tourism has provided information regarding the National Mission on Libraries (NML) Scheme in Rajya Sabha.

About National Mission on Libraries (NML):

Establishment	Launched in 2012 by the Ministry of Culture to implement National Knowledge Commission (NKC,
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	2005) recommendations on library and information sciences development.
Objectives	To modernize public libraries, create a digital database, enhance library staff competence, and promote equitable library access, especially in backward areas.
Structural Mandate	<p>Nodal Agency: Raja Rammohun Roy Library Foundation (RRRLF), Kolkata to oversee and coordinate efforts. (It is an autonomous body under the Ministry of Culture.)</p> <p>Key Components:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. National Virtual Library of India (NVLI): Digital resources, census of libraries, and reading habit studies. 2. Model Libraries: 6 Ministry libraries, 35 state central libraries, 35 district libraries, and 629 district libraries with network connectivity. 3. Library Survey: A survey of 5,000 libraries for infrastructure, resources, and usage data. 4. Capacity Building: Training programs for improving skills and knowledge of library staff.

4th Good Governance Week, 2024



Why in the News?

“Prashasan Gaon Ki Ore” a nationwide campaign is launched by the Government of India, from December 19–24, 2024, as part of the 4th Good Governance Week.

About the Nationwide Campaign ‘Prashasan Gaon Ki Ore’

It is a national initiative to resolve public complaints and enhance service provision in both urban and rural locations.

It seeks to improve grassroots government and provide practical answers to the average citizen.

With an emphasis on providing prompt solutions and raising the standard of services offered to citizens, it would be carried out in all Indian districts, states, and union territories.

Key objectives of the campaign include:

Resolving Public Grievances: Ensuring prompt resolution of citizens' grievances regarding government services.

Improving Service Delivery: Increasing the effectiveness of local government services.

Raising Awareness: Educating the public about sound governance principles and motivating them to take advantage of the services that are offered.

Key Observations from the Good Governance Index (GGI) 2022

The GGI, 2022 evaluates 58 indicators across 10 governance sectors, such as agriculture and allied sectors, human resource development, public health, and law and order, among others. The key observations are as follows:

Top Performers: Kerala, Tamil Nadu, and Maharashtra all had the best records for economic, human resource, and public health governance.

Service Delivery: Leading states in service delivery, including as Tamil Nadu and Kerala, were commended for their accountability, transparency, and citizen-focused policies.

Agriculture and Rural Development: In line with Prashasan Gaon Ki Ore's objectives, Uttar Pradesh and Bihar shown advancements in these areas.

Health and Education: With large investments in public programs and infrastructure, Kerala and Tamil Nadu demonstrated excellence in these areas.

Sustainable Development: Environmental governance and sustainable development methods were prioritised by states such as Sikkim.

Food Security Act, 2013



Why in the News?

While attorney Prashant Bhushan noted that the National Food Security Act (NFSA) still uses data from the 2011 census, the Supreme Court stated that creating jobs is a long-term solution to food security challenges.

About National Food Security Act, 2013:

	Details
Launch	<p>The NFSA became a law on September 12, 2013, and it went into force retroactively on July 5, 2013.</p> <p>Its goal is to give about two-thirds of India's population subsidised food grains.</p>
Aims and Objectives	<p>Two-thirds of India's population, or around 75% of rural and 50% of urban areas, should receive subsidised food grains.</p> <p>transforms initiatives for food security into legal rights.</p> <p>acknowledges the maternity rights of children, nursing moms, and expectant mothers.</p>
Structural Mandate	<p>States are instructed by the central government to carry out the Act's requirements (Section 38).</p> <p>requires that the subsidised rates stay the same for three years (no change has been made yet).</p> <p>guarantees that, under the Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS), qualified households are legally entitled to food grains at reduced prices.</p>
Features and Programs	<p>PDS offers 5 kilogrammes of rice (₹3/kg), wheat (₹2/kg), and coarse grains (₹1/kg) each individual every month.</p> <p>When it comes to distributing ration cards, the oldest woman in the home—18 years of age or older—is regarded as the head of the household.</p>

	<p>offers free meals under the ICDS and midday meal programs to expectant mothers, nursing moms, and children ages 6 months to 14 years.</p> <p>guarantees a ₹6,000 financial reward, payable in stages, to expectant and nursing mothers.</p> <p>PDS reaches 50% of people in cities and 75% of people in rural areas, whereas ICDS and Midday Meals are universal.</p> <p>Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY) families receive 35 kg of food grains per month, while Priority</p>
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	households receive 5 kilogramme per person.
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Why it is still driven by figures from 2011 Census?

Data Inconsistency: Extensions for the 2021 census are being granted arbitrarily. It would have found more beneficiaries—possibly as much as 10 crore more.

Problem with Ration Cards: In spite of multiple court orders, many migrant labourers have yet to get their ration cards.

Administrative and Logistical Restrictions: A change in policy at the federal level and in the states, as well as significant administrative cooperation, are necessary to update census-based allocations.



History

Maha Kumbh Mela, 2025

Why in the News?

The 2025 Maha Kumbh Mela will take place in Prayagraj from January 13 to February 26.



About Kumbh Mela

Details	<p>A major pilgrimage and festival in Hinduism, occurring four times in twelve years at different locations in India. It attracts millions of pilgrims for spiritual purification.</p> <p>Types of Kumbh Mela:</p>
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Kumbh Mela: Regular festival, celebrated every 12 years at one of the four locations.

Maha Kumbh Mela: The largest, celebrated once every 12 years at Prayagraj (confluence of Ganges, Yamuna, and Sarasvati).

Ardh Kumbh Mela: Held every 6 years in Prayagraj (half of the full Kumbh Mela).

Purna Kumbh Mela: Held when a complete 12-year cycle is completed.

Locations: Kumbh Mela rotates between four cities:

	<p>Haridwar (on the banks of the Ganges), Prayagraj (confluence of the Ganges, Yamuna, and the mythical Sarasvati river), Ujjain (on the banks of the Shipra River), Nashik (on the banks of the Godavari River).</p> <p>Key Rituals:</p> <p>The Shahi Snan, or Royal Bath, is a custom in which pilgrims bathe in the sacred river during Akharas, or processions.</p> <p>Worship and Prayers: Pilgrims participate in fire rites, attend spiritual talks, and give prayers along riverbanks.</p> <p>Religious Processions: There are a number of religious processions that include saints, gurus, and followers.</p> <p>Community Prayers and Spiritual Teachings: Devotees receive spiritual instruction from saints and religious authorities.</p>
Significance and Features	<p>Spiritual Significance: regarded by Hindus as a sacred occasion, it seeks to purify the soul, bring about salvation, and free the soul from the cycle of reincarnation (Moksha).</p> <p>Cultural Unity: Millions of people from all over the world come together for this amazing event that highlights India's variety and unity.</p>

	<p>Mass Gathering: With millions of pilgrims in attendance, it holds the Guinness World Record for the largest peaceful gathering. With almost 120 million attendees, the 2019 Kumbh Mela saw the biggest peaceful public gathering ever.</p> <p>Pilgrimage Tourism: With a large number of pilgrims from both domestic and foreign countries, the Kumbh Mela also greatly increases local tourism, which benefits both the local and national economies.</p> <p>UNESCO Recognition – Kumbh Mela was recognized as an Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity by UNESCO in 2017.</p>
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In news: Durgadi Fort



Why in the News?

The Majlis-E-Mushawarat Trust's claims were rejected by the Kalyan civil court, which declared that the Maharashtra government is the rightful owner of Durgadi Fort.

The Trust initially asserted in its 1976 claim that the fort contains a temple devoted to Goddess Durga in addition to a mosque and an idgah (prayer hall).

Key facts about Durgadi Fort:

Historical Significance	<p>It was a component of the Adil Shahi Sultanate, which was situated in Kalyan and dated back to the 16th century.</p> <p>containing a tomb, a place of prayer, and other buildings, and has been mentioned in British papers since 1570.</p> <p>The Marathas constructed a wooden temple in honour of Durgadevi and christened it Durgadi Killa in 1760 after seizing Kalyan.</p> <p>The temple stopped operating after the British took over in 1818, and by 1876, the goddess' image had been stolen.</p>
Geographical Location	<p>Located in Kalyan (Thane district), about 50 km northeast of Mumbai it is situated on elevated ground and offers scenic views over the Ulhas River.</p>
Cultural and Religious Impact	<p>Both Muslims and Hindus were greatly influenced by the fort's religious significance.</p> <p>Originally housing a mosque, the Marathas eventually adapted it to accommodate a Durga temple.</p> <p>The complex junction of Maharashtra's historical legacy and religious identity is reflected in the fort's history as a location of communal friction.</p>

Communist Party of India (CPI)



Why in the News?

December 26, 2024, marks the 100th foundation day of the Communist Party of India (CPI). The CPI has played a pivotal role in India's freedom struggle, social reforms, and political evolution.

About the Communist Party of India (CPI)

Reasons for Formation:

Founded on December 26, 1925, at the Kanpur Conference, inspired by the 1917 Russian Revolution.

Earlier efforts included the Tashkent group (1920) led by M.N. Roy and Abani Mukherji, supported by the Comintern (Communist International).

Faced early repression through cases like:

Kanpur Bolshevik Conspiracy Case (1924).

Meerut Conspiracy Case (1929–1933).

Dissatisfaction with Gandhian methods and moderate nationalism.

Inspiration from the Soviet Revolution (1917) and global socialist movements.

Split (1964):

Ideological rift during the Cold War over alignment with the Soviet Union or China.

Led to the creation of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) or CPI(M).

Prominent Leaders and Key Contributions

Prominent Leaders:

M.N. Roy (1920s): Founder of the Tashkent group; advocated socialism and anti-colonialism.

Abani Mukherji (1920s): Drafted the Indian Communist Manifesto.

S.A. Dange (1924): Founding CPI member; labour leader implicated in the Kanpur Conspiracy Case.

Muzaffar Ahmed (1920s): Mobilized workers and peasants; key figure in AITUC (1920).

Shaukat Usmani (1920s–1930s) and M. Singaravelu (1925): Early CPI activists.

Key Contributions:

Demand for Poorna Swaraj (1927):

Advocated for complete independence, influencing the Indian National Congress (INC).

Workers and Peasants Movements (1920s–1950s):

Mobilized workers through AITUC (1920) and peasants through All India Kisan Sabha (1936).

Led uprisings like the Telangana Rebellion (1946–1951).

Opposition to British Rule (1920s–1947):

Organized strikes and protests during the Quit India Movement (1942).

Achievements of CPI

In the First Lok Sabha (1952–57), CPI was the single largest opposition party.

In 1957, CPI won the state elections in Kerala, becoming the first democratically elected communist government in independent India.

International Relations

India-Australia CECA Stocktake



Why in the News?

A stocktake visit for the India-Australia *Comprehensive Economic Cooperation*

Agreement (CECA) recently concluded in New Delhi.

Key Takeaways from the Meet

The discussions covered a wide range of critical aspects of the CECA, including:

Trade in goods and services

Mobility and agri-tech cooperation

Market access modalities that align with India's food security objectives.

Both parties underlined their mutual dedication to making sure the CECA yields significant advantages and results in a fair outcome for both countries.

The conversations have created opportunities for improved cooperation in fields like supply chain resilience, market access, and agricultural innovation.

About India-Australia CCEA Negotiations:

India and Australia have a comprehensive trade agreement called CECA.

more extensive than the previous restricted trade agreement, the India-Australia Economic Cooperation and Trade Agreement (ECTA), which went into effect in December 2022.

CECA negotiations started in May 2011, were put on hold in 2016, and were resumed in 2021 with the conclusion of the ECTA.

Ten rounds of negotiations have been held thus far.

Key Features of CECA:

Covers goods, services, digital trade, government procurement, and Rules of Origin/Product-Specific Rules Schedule.

New areas: competition policy, MSMEs, innovation, agri-tech, critical minerals, sports.

India-AU Trade Statistics:

2023-24:

India's imports from Australia fell by 15% to USD 16.15 billion.

India's exports to Australia rose by 14.23% to USD 7.94 billion.

Australia is India's 13th largest export destination and 14th largest import source.



Why in the News?

An umbrella agreement on Quick Impact Projects (QIPs) has been struck between Nicaragua and India.

Through the implementation of QIPs in Nicaragua, the agreement seeks to promote socioeconomic growth, which will have a direct positive impact on local people.

About Nicaragua: Quick Facts

Nicaragua is a country in Central America that shares borders with the Caribbean Sea to the east, the Pacific Ocean to the west, Honduras to the north, and Costa Rica to the south.

Managua serves as the country's capital, Spanish is the official language, and the Nicaraguan córdoba (NIO) is the country's currency.

A unitary presidential republic governs Nicaragua.

Agriculture, which includes sugar, coffee, and bananas, as well as manufacturing and mining, are the main drivers of the nation's economy.

Geographical Features:

The centre of Nicaragua is primarily mountainous, whereas the Pacific and Caribbean coasts have lowland plains.

In news: Nicaragua

More than 20 volcanoes may be found in the nation, including active ones like Masaya and San Cristóbal.

One of the biggest lakes in Latin America, Lake Cocibolca, often called Lake Nicaragua, is the largest lake in Nicaragua.

The Río Coco, the longest river in Central America, and the San Juan River, which empties into the Caribbean Sea, are two of Nicaragua's notable rivers.

India- Nicaragua Relations:

In March 1983, diplomatic ties were established, and Nicaragua is also accredited to the Indian Embassy in Panama.

Since the closure of its embassy in India in 1990, Nicaragua is now represented in India by its embassy in Tokyo.

What are Quick Impact Projects (QIPs)?

QIPs are programs created to help local communities quickly and visibly, particularly in places that require significant infrastructure and social development.

These tasks are frequently carried out quickly.

They are concentrated on resolving pressing problems that can significantly benefit the community.

Organisations like the UNHCR frequently use the phrase to refer to these kinds of initiatives in times of crisis or displacement.

Examples of QIPs may include:

Building roads in remote areas to improve connectivity.

Establishing community centers that serve as hubs for local services.

Improving healthcare facilities with basic medical equipment and services.

Upgrading educational infrastructure by building schools or providing learning materials.

What is OPEC+?



Why in the News?

OPEC+ delegates worry about increased US oil production as Donald Trump may return to the White House.

His administration's emphasis on energy sector deregulation may result in higher oil production, which would further reduce OPEC+'s market share.

About 'Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries' Plus (OPEC+)

<p>What is OPEC+?</p>	<p>Formation and Purpose:</p> <p>In order to control oil output and maintain stable oil prices worldwide, OPEC+ is an alliance of OPEC members and non-OPEC oil-producing countries.</p> <p>The alliance was established in 2016 as a result of declining oil prices brought on by the United States' growing oil output, especially from shale oil.</p> <p>OPEC Members:</p>
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	<p>OPEC was founded in 1960 and includes 12 member countries:</p> <p>Algeria, Angola, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Libya, Nigeria, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates (UAE), Venezuela.</p> <p>Non-OPEC Members in OPEC+:</p> <p>OPEC+ includes 10 non-OPEC members:</p> <p>Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Brunei, Kazakhstan, Malaysia, Mexico, Oman, Russia, South Sudan, Sudan.</p> <p>Global Influence:</p> <p>OPEC+ countries together produce approximately 40% of the world's crude oil and control about 80% of the world's proven oil reserves.</p>
Factors are influencing OPEC+'s oil production cuts	<p>Growing US oil production: OPEC+'s power has been impacted by the US shale revolution, which has expanded its market share.</p> <p>Stability of world pricing: To keep oil prices from dropping too low, OPEC+ reduces production.</p> <p>Low demand worldwide: Prolonged cuts brought on by low demand, particularly in large economies.</p>
Implications of OPEC+'s policies	<p>Diminished market share: In 2024, OPEC+'s global oil share fell from 55% in 2016 to 48%.</p>

	<p>Price volatility: While stabilising prices is the goal of OPEC+'s production cuts, this objective is impacted by rising US output.</p> <p>Stability of the economy: Production reductions support stable prices for economies that produce oil.</p>
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UN Internal Justice Council (IJC)



Why in the News?

Justice Madan B Lokur, retired judge of the Supreme Court of India, has been appointed as the Chairperson of the United Nations Internal Justice Council (IJC).

Justice Lokur's Legacy:

From June 2012 until December 2018, Justice Lokur served in the Supreme Court of India, rendering significant rulings in a variety of legal fields.

He joined the Supreme Court of Fiji's non-resident panel in August 2019 and was reappointed in January 2022 for a further three-year term.

His notable judgments include:

Religious Disqualification in Elections (January 2017): Wrote a concurring opinion in a seven-judge panel decision that disqualified candidates from running for office on the basis

of caste, religion, race, or other identifying markers.

Raising the Age of Consent in weddings (October 2017): In support of child protection laws, Justice Deepak Gupta and the court decided to raise the age of consent in weddings to 18 years old.

About UN Internal Justice Council (IJC):

Establishment	<p>Created in 2009 with the goal of strengthening and reforming the internal justice system of the UN.</p> <p>ensures that the system handles workplace conflicts inside the UN in an efficient, fair, and transparent manner.</p>
Overview and Structural Mandate	<p>Mandate:</p> <p>Safeguards the independence and integrity of the internal justice system.</p> <p>The IJC is responsible for overseeing the administration of the UN's internal justice system.</p> <p>It supervises:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Office of Staff Legal Assistance (OSLA) UN Dispute Tribunal (UNDT) UN Appeals Tribunal (UNAT) <p>Recommends measures to ensure judicial independence and efficiency in dispute resolution.</p> <p>Composition:</p> <p>5 members: 2 tribunal judges (from UNDT and UNAT), two</p>

	<p>staff representatives, and one external legal expert.</p> <p>Chairperson is selected by consensus and appointed by the UN Secretary-General.</p> <p>Members serve a four-year term, renewable once.</p>
Powers, Functions, and Jurisdiction	<p>Judicial Appointments:</p> <p>Recommends candidates for UNDT and UNAT judge positions based on merit and judicial competence.</p> <p>Proposes a shortlist for final selection by the Secretary-General.</p> <p>Oversight and Accountability:</p> <p>Monitors tribunal functioning to ensure fairness and transparency.</p> <p>Identifies and addresses systemic issues, proposing improvements.</p> <p>Judicial Independence:</p> <p>Protects the impartiality of tribunal judges and safeguards judicial integrity.</p> <p>Advocates for institutional protections against external influence.</p> <p>Advisory Role:</p> <p>Provides expert advice on internal justice reform.</p> <p>Evaluates tribunal processes to enhance efficiency and accessibility for UN staff.</p> <p>Scope of Jurisdiction:</p> <p>Covers grievances related to administrative decisions,</p>

employment conditions, and workplace disputes brought forward by UN staff worldwide.

China approves dam over Brahmaputra



Why in the News?

China has announced the construction of world's largest dam on the Brahmaputra River (known as Yarlung Zangbo in Tibet), sparking concerns in India and Bangladesh, the lower riparian states.

About the Dam

This project is a component of China's long-term development policy through 2035 as well as its 14th Five-Year Plan (2021–2025).

The dam will be built in Tibet, close to the Indian border, in the lower reaches of the Yarlung Zangbo River.

It is located in the Himalayas in a huge gap where the river does a U-turn to enter

Arunachal Pradesh and subsequently Bangladesh.

Its \$137 billion investment dwarfs that of any other major project, including the Three Gorges Dam in China.

Three Gorges Dam: It is a hydroelectric gravity dam that spans the Yangtze River near Sandouping in Yiling District, Yichang, Hubei province, central China, downstream of the Three Gorges.

What are the concerns associated with the Dam Construction?

Geopolitical Control: Concerns about interruption and abuse during wars are raised by China's power to control water flow.

Environmental Impact: Dangers to downstream ecosystems, silt movement, and biodiversity in a vulnerable Himalayan region.

Seismic Hazards: There is a higher chance of earthquakes because the dam is situated on a tectonic plate border.

Livelihood Disruption: Possible damage to local communities that depend on the river for fishing, agriculture, and other activities.

Transparency Issues: Riparian states' mistrust is heightened by a lack of data sharing and unilateral actions.

Polity

Impeachment of Judges



Why in the News?

The Opposition in Rajya Sabha is preparing to move a motion for impeachment of Allahabad High Court Judge for his controversial remarks inciting communal hatred.

Impeachment Process for Judges in India:

About	In order to remove the judge, Parliament must send an address to the president.
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	Two-thirds of the MPs who are present and voting in both the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha must support the resolution in order for it to be passed, with a majority of more than 50% of each House's total membership.
Key Constitutional Provisions	<p>Article 124(4): Only a presidential order, approved by a majority of both Houses of Parliament, may dismiss a judge.</p> <p>Two-thirds of the members who are present and voting must cast a ballot.</p> <p>Judges of the High Court are subject to the same regulations under Article 218 of the Constitution.</p> <p>By restricting political influence and upholding a high standard for removal, the impeachment procedure guarantees judicial independence.</p>
Grounds for Impeachment	<p>A judge of the Supreme Court or High Court can be impeached on two grounds: "proved misbehaviour" or "incapacity" as per the Constitution of India.</p> <p>Further clarified in the Judges (Inquiry) Act, 1968, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Misuse of office Grave offences that undermine the judge's integrity

	Contravention of the provisions of the Constitution.
What does the process entail?	<p>Procedure under the Judges Inquiry Act, 1968:</p> <p>Initial Step: The impeachment motion must be signed by at least 100 MPs in the Lok Sabha and 50 MPs in the Rajya Sabha.</p> <p>Committee Formation: Once the motion is introduced, the Speaker or Chairperson of the respective House forms a three-member inquiry committee:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Headed by the Chief Justice of India or a Supreme Court judge. The second member is usually a Chief Justice of any High Court. The third member is a distinguished jurist, appointed by the Speaker or Chairman. <p>Investigating the charges, cross-examining witnesses, and controlling its process are all part of the inquiry process.</p> <p>If the charge involves mental incompetence, the committee may additionally ask for a medical examination.</p> <p>Result: The motion is denied if the committee determines that the judge is not guilty. It will be reported back to the House for additional action if found guilty.</p>

Instances of Impeachment in India:

1993: Financial misconduct led to the impeachment of Supreme Court Justice V Ramaswami. Even though the motion was found guilty, it was unsuccessful.

2011: The Calcutta High Court's Justice Soumitra Sen was impeached for corruption, but she resigned before the Lok Sabha could consider the case.

2015: On allegations of sexual harassment, Justice S K Gangele of the Madhya Pradesh High Court was impeached; however, the committee cleared him in 2017.

2015: After the judge erased the remarks, the motion to impeach Gujarat High Court Justice J B Pardiwala for his divisive remarks regarding reservations was abandoned.

For financial malfeasance and victimising a Dalit judge, Justice C V Nagarjuna of the Andhra Pradesh & Telangana High Court was facing impeachment in 2017, but the motion was not pursued.

Ten Rajya Sabha members and twenty-one Lok Sabha members will make up the committee.

About Joint Parliamentary Committee (JPC):

<p>What is a JPC?</p>	<p>The JPC is a committee established by both houses of parliament to thoroughly examine a topic or bill.</p> <p>Members from the Rajya Sabha (Upper House) and Lok Sabha (Lower House) are included.</p> <p>Both the opposition and the ruling parties are represented by members.</p> <p>A JPC's membership is determined by the Parliament and might change depending on the work at hand.</p> <p>When the JPC's work is finished or its time is up, it is disbanded.</p> <p>One House of Parliament passes a motion, and the other House concurs.</p>
<p>Structural Mandate</p>	<p>The motion that creates a JPC determines its mandate.</p> <p>looking closely at relevant documents.</p> <p>calling them in for interrogation.</p>

Joint Parliamentary Committee (JPC)



Why in the News?

The Law Minister is suggesting that a Joint Parliamentary Committee (JPC) be tasked with further reviewing the "One Nation, One Election" bills.

	<p>submitting a report to the government along with suggestions.</p> <p>Except in cases involving issues of public interest, the processes and conclusions are kept private.</p> <p>Any disagreements over the evidence are settled by the speaker of the house.</p>
Nature of JPC Recommendations	<p>Although recommendations are persuasive and advisory, the government is not required to follow them.</p> <p>The recommendations are up to the government to decide whether or not to implement.</p>

	<p>Parliament must receive an Action Taken Report from the government detailing the steps it has taken in response to the JPC's recommendations.</p>
Notable JPCs in the Past	<p>Telecom Licenses and Spectrum Allocation (2011).</p> <p>Stock Market Scam (1992) and related matters.</p> <p>Irregularities in Securities and Banking Transactions.</p> <p>Bofors Contract Inquiry (1987).</p> <p>Constitutional and Legal Position Regarding the Office of Profit.</p> <p>Waqf (Amendment) Bill (2024).</p>

Science, Technology, Art & Culture

Marburg Virus outbreak in Rwanda

Why in the News?

An outbreak of Marburg Virus (*Bleeding Eyes*) disease (MVD) has killed and infected many in Rwanda.



About Marburg Virus:

Overview	<p>Marburg Hemorrhagic Fever is another name for Marburg Virus Disease (MVD).</p> <p>It is a member of the filovirus family, which includes Ebola.</p> <p>Found in 1967 during epidemics in Frankfurt and Marburg, Germany.</p> <p>Depending on the strain and efficacy of treatment, the case mortality rate can range from 24% to 88%.</p>
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	<p>How does it spread?</p> <p>The main source of animal-to-human transmission is Rousettus bats, particularly Egyptian fruit bats that are located in mines or caves.</p> <p>Direct contact with blood and bodily fluids (saliva, vomit, faeces, semen, and breast milk) can result in human-to-human transmission. indirectly spread by contaminated clothing or surfaces as well.</p>
Symptoms and Treatment	<p>Fever, chills, headache, muscle aches, nausea, vomiting, and severe diarrhoea are some of the early symptoms.</p> <p>Progresses to bleeding from other body parts, and organ failure and blood loss usually result in death 8–9 days after symptoms first appear.</p> <p>No antiviral medication or vaccine has been licensed. Blood transfusions, symptom control, and hydration are examples of supportive care. There is research being done on experimental vaccines.</p>
Why is it a Global Concern?	<p>High Fatality Rate: MVD is one of the deadliest diseases due to its case fatality rate, which ranges from 24% to 88%.</p> <p>Spread: Persistent outbreaks, mostly in Africa, but also in Tanzania and Rwanda.</p> <p>Threat to Public Health: Rapid spread and human-to-human</p>

transmission present serious difficulties.

Economic Impact: Because of travel bans and quarantine regulations, outbreaks have an adverse effect on regional economies, healthcare systems, and international trade.

Nagaland's Hornbill Festival



Why in the News?

This year's edition of the Hornbill Festival has sparked a significant public debate regarding the relaxation of Nagaland's liquor prohibition law, a subject that has been contentious for over three decades.

What is Hornbill Festival?

Kohima, Nagaland, hosts the Hornbill Festival annually from December 1 to December 10.

In the year 2000, the event made its debut.

The Indian hornbill (*Buceros bicornis*), a huge, colourful woodland bird that is included in the folklore of the majority of the state's tribes, is the inspiration behind its name.

The exhibition of traditional Naga Morungs crafts, food and herbal medicine stalls, floral displays and sales, cultural medleys featuring songs and dances, fashion

presentations, and more are some of the festival's attractions.

Each of the 14 recognised Naga tribes' major cultural festivals, each with its own customs and traditions, are showcased on this platform.

About Great Indian Hornbill:

CITES: Appendix I, IUCN Status: Vulnerable (upgraded from Near Threatened in 2018)

One of the biggest hornbill species is the great pied hornbill.

can survive in captivity for up to 50 years. It mostly consumes fruit, although it also feeds on birds, reptiles, and small mammals.

Because of its size and colour, it is revered in many tribal cultures and rituals.

mostly found in India, particularly in the Nilgiris and Western Ghats.

Some of the highest nesting bird numbers can be found in the Nilgiris North Eastern Range.

Often referred to as "forest engineers" or "farmers of the forest," they are essential to the spread of tropical tree seeds, which is a sign of the balance and health of their forest ecosystems.

What is the Nagaland Liquor Total Prohibition (NLTP) Act 1989?

The government of Nagaland passed the NLTP Act, a law that forbids the manufacture, distribution, and use of alcoholic beverages within the state.

The following are the main characteristics of the Act, which is among India's strictest laws prohibiting alcohol:

Key Features of NLTP Act 1989:

Total Prohibition of Alcohol: The NLTP Act prohibits the manufacture, distribution, and use of all alcoholic beverages, including wine, spirits, and beer. This covers both commercial and local alcoholic beverages, such as rice beer.

There are several legal exceptions, such as the legalisation of alcohol for scientific or medical purposes and in specified regulated environments, such as special licenses for visitors from outside the area for particular occasions (like the Hornbill Festival).

Support from Religious Groups: Because they believe that alcohol drinking is immoral and detrimental to communal life, Christian church entities, which make up the majority in the state, have strongly supported the Act.

Role of Alcohol in the Hornbill Festival:

The state's ban on alcohol is frequently interpreted as an exception during the Hornbill Festival.

The celebration is traditionally associated with the use of Thutse, a local rice beer. Scholar Theyiesinuo Kreditsu claims that the state only allows the open sale and consumption of alcohol, including Thutse, during the Hornbill celebration.



Why in the News?

The Union Ministry of Culture is planning to revive and relaunch the National Mission for Manuscripts (NMM) and is considering the formation of an autonomous body to help preserve India's ancient texts.

Why Center is re-evolving this scheme?

The Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts is currently home to the NMM.

The new organisation, which is anticipated to be called the National Manuscripts Authority, will probably operate independently under the Ministry of Culture and Tourism.

About the National Mission for Manuscripts (NMM):

Aims and Objectives	<p>To preserve, digitise, document, and share India's legacy of manuscripts.</p> <p>Create more than 100 manuscript conservation and resource centres throughout India.</p> <p>Manuscripts that are at least 75 years old and have substantial scientific, historical, or aesthetic significance are frequently composed of materials like paper, bark, fabric, metal, or palm leaves.</p>
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	<p>An estimated 10 million manuscripts in India include a wide range of subjects, languages, scripts, and drawings.</p> <p>Unlike historical records, the majority of the substance in manuscripts is knowledge.</p> <p>80% of manuscripts are privately held, which restricts their accessibility to the general public.</p>
Structural Mandate	<p>Formed in 2003 by the Ministry of Tourism and Culture.</p> <p>Managed by the National Archives of India.</p> <p>Currently operates as part of the Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts.</p>
Features and Programs under the Mission	<p>300,000 titles have been digitised and 5.2 million manuscripts' metadata has been documented; however, only one-third of them have been uploaded.</p> <p>Only 70,000 of the 130,000 manuscripts that have been uploaded can be viewed because there is no access policy in place.</p> <p>Over the course of 21 years, 9 crore folios have been preserved both curatively and preventively.</p>

Centre wants States to make Snakebites a Notifiable Disease



Why in the News?

The Union Health Ministry has urged states to make snakebites a Notifiable Disease, meaning both private and public hospitals must report it to the government.

Snakebites Menace in India:

In India, between 3 and 4 million snakebite incidents are reported each year, making them a serious public health risk.

The 2020 Indian Million Death Study estimates that it results in 58,000 deaths annually.

The states with the most snakebite reports include Bihar, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, Uttar Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Rajasthan, and Gujarat.

Making snakebites reportable is part of the government's National Action Plan for Prevention and Control of Snakebite Envenoming (NAPSE), which was introduced earlier in 2024 and seeks to cut the number of snakebite deaths in half by 2030.

What are Notifiable Diseases?

Notifiable diseases are those that must be reported to the government for effective public health monitoring and management.

These are typically:

Infectious diseases likely to cause outbreaks.

Diseases that result in deaths or require quick action to prevent wider transmission.

Legal Basis:

WHO's 1969 International Health Regulations state that illness reporting is essential for worldwide surveillance.

The Epidemic Diseases Act of 1897, which specifies the reporting procedures for diseases deemed a public health danger, is the main law governing notifiable diseases.

The precise list of diseases that must be reported, however, might range from one state to the next and is usually decided by the state governments in accordance with their own public health acts.

Hepatitis, HIV, cholera, malaria, dengue, and tuberculosis are common examples of diseases that must be reported.

Why snakebite is considered a Notifiable Disease?

Timely attention is essential since snakebite injuries can result in serious health problems, such as tissue damage, paralysis, and deadly haemorrhages.

To avoid death and long-term consequences, victims must receive antivenom therapy as away.

In recognition of snakebite's pervasive influence on public health, the WHO included it on its list of Neglected Tropical Diseases (NTD) in 2009.

Adding snakebites to the list of diseases that need to be reported will improve

monitoring, track the number of cases, and advance national treatment plans.

In areas where snakebites are common, it will guarantee that there are enough antivenoms available.

To lower death rates, medical personnel will get training on how to treat snakebite situations.

Japan, India startups collaborate to tackle space debris



Why in the News?

In an effort to combat the rising problem of orbital congestion, space entrepreneurs from India and Japan announced a collaborative agreement to investigate the usage of laser-equipped satellites for garbage removal from orbit.

What is Space Debris?

Non-operational spacecraft, leftover rocket stages, and pieces from satellite collisions or disintegration make up space trash, often known as space garbage.

These objects pose serious threats to manned missions and operating satellites because of their fast orbits around the Earth.

What are laser-equipped satellites for removing debris from orbit?

Service spacecraft can more easily rendezvous with and de-orbit defunct satellites thanks to laser-equipped satellites, which employ

concentrated laser beams to target and vaporise small pieces of space trash, so stopping its rotation.

Businesses like Orbital Lasers in Japan and InspeCity in India are working together to investigate potential commercial applications for these laser systems.

As a sign of their increasing interest in global collaboration to address the problem of space debris, they intend to demonstrate this technology in orbit, with possible satellite deployment following compliance with national regulations.

What are the concerns related to space debris?

Collision Risks: As space debris accumulates, there is a greater chance of collisions with operational satellites and spacecraft, which can cause a chain reaction known as the Kessler Syndrome that generates more junk.

Environmental Impact: Debris buildup in low Earth orbit (LEO) poses a risk to the long-term viability of space operations and may impede further space research.

What are the initiatives to tackle space debris globally?

International Cooperation: To track and control space debris, agencies such as the United Nations have called for immediate action, highlighting the necessity of international cooperation.

Technological Innovations: Businesses like Orbital Lasers are investigating cutting-edge approaches, like employing spacecraft fitted with lasers to de-orbit retired satellites and reduce debris by vaporising portions of their surfaces.

Regulatory Frameworks: A number of nations are creating rules to guarantee responsible

satellite launches and operations, such as recommendations for disposing of end-of-life satellites to reduce the production of debris in the future.

What are the measures should be taken by Satellite? (Way forward)

- Tracking and Monitoring: To track the location of space debris and forecast the likelihood of collisions, satellites employ both onboard systems and tracking data from the ground.
- Avoidance Manoeuvres: To change their course away from debris, satellites use "collision avoidance manoeuvres," or proactive orbital modifications.
- Resilience and Shielding: In low-risk situations, some satellites have protective shielding to resist small strikes from debris, reducing the possibility of damage.

Google’s GenCast AI



Why in the News?

Google DeepMind has unveiled its revolutionary GenCast AI model, designed to predict the weather more accurately and farther in advance than current forecasting tools.

About GenCast:

What is it?	Google DeepMind created the AI-based weather forecasting model GenCast. Compared to conventional models, it employs machine learning
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	approaches to produce forecasts that are longer-term and more accurate. GenCast employs an ensemble of artificial intelligence (AI)-generated forecasts that have been trained on 40 years of reanalysis data, in contrast to conventional numerical weather prediction (NWP) models. surpasses conventional methods in forecasting wind power generation, tropical cyclones, and extreme weather.
How GenCast Works	Trained using a combination of historical data and current estimates from 40 years of reanalysis data (1979–2019). A neural network with 41,162 nodes and 240,000 edges powers it; nodes process data, while edges link them. a diffusion model that increases forecast accuracy by 30 stages of data refinement for noisy data. It provides probabilistic forecasts (such as the likelihood of rain, not the precise amounts) and produces roughly 50 projections at once. uses a single TPU v5 unit to provide forecasts in 8 minutes, which is far faster than the hours it takes for typical NWP models.
Significance of GenCast	Performs better than the ECMWF ensemble forecasts on 97.2% of

	<p>targets, particularly when it comes to forecasting extreme weather.</p> <p>offers longer-term forecasts with a 12-hour interval and a 0.25° x 0.25° geographic resolution for up to 15 days.</p> <p>helps people better prepare for extreme weather by providing probabilistic forecasts.</p> <p>reduced forecast time from hours to minutes due to faster</p>		<p>processing compared to previous models.</p> <p>The model's scalability and sustainability enable it to be extended to additional weather prediction domains.</p> <p>While acknowledging the value of conventional models, Google works with weather authorities to improve AI forecasting techniques.</p>
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Security Issues

Commissioning of INS TUSHIL



Why in the News?

INS Tushil, a multi-role stealth guided missile frigate, is set to be commissioned by the Indian Navy at Kaliningrad, Russia.

About INS Tushil:

Details	<p>A multipurpose stealth guided missile frigate, INS Tushil is a member of the Krivak III class (Project 1135.6).</p> <p>Following the Talwar-class ships (three constructed at the Baltiysky Shipyard in St.</p>
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	<p>Petersburg) and the Teg-class ships (three constructed at the Yantar Shipyard in Kaliningrad), it is the seventh in the Krivak III frigate series.</p> <p>Development of INS Tushil:</p> <p>Constructed in Kaliningrad, Russia, at the Yantar Shipyard.</p> <p>The Indian Navy, JSC Rosoboronexport, and the Indian government inked a contract in October 2016.</p> <p>The Warship Overseeing Team's Indian team of experts kept an eye on the building.</p> <p>In 2024, numerous trials were carried out, such as the Factory Sea Trials, State Committee Trials, and Delivery Acceptance Trials.</p>
Special Features	<p>Over 30 knots of speed</p>

	<p>Advanced radar-absorbing characteristics in a stealthy design.</p> <p>Outfitted with radars, sophisticated weapon systems, and guided missiles.</p> <p>Improved combat capabilities with an emphasis on air and surface warfare.</p> <p>The operational helicopter deck.</p>		<p>Increases the Indian Ocean Region's (IOR) naval capability.</p> <p>A component of a continuous endeavour to equip the fleet with cutting-edge technologies.</p> <p>Improves defence relations between Russia and India.</p> <p>Will be crucial for regional defence and maritime security, particularly in disputed regions.</p>
		Significance	

