

December 2023

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Banking & Finance

1. RBI Fines Bank Of America, N.A., HDFC Bank

- RBI has imposed a penalty of Rs 10,000 each on Bank of America, N.A. and HDFC Bank Ltd for violation of certain norms.
- The penalty on Bank of America, N.A. has been imposed for violation of Reserve Bank of India's instructions on reporting requirements under Liberalised Remittance Scheme of FEMA 1999.
- Brian Thomas Moynihan, current chairman and CEO of Bank of America.
- The penalty on HDFC Bank is for violation of directions on acceptance of deposits from non-residents.
- Besides, penalties have been imposed on five cooperative banks for non-compliance with various regulatory norms.
- The cooperative banks which have been penalised are The Patliputra Central Cooperative Bank, Bihar; The Balasore Bhadrak Central Co-operative Bank, Odisha; The Dhrangadhra People's Co-operative Bank, Gujarat; Patan Nagarik Sahakari Bank Ltd., Patan, Gujarat; and The Mandal Nagarik Sahakari Bank, Gujarat.
- In all cases, the RBI said the penalties are based on the deficiencies in regulatory compliance and is not intended to pronounce upon the validity of any transaction or agreement entered into by entities with their customers.

2. SBI MF gets RBI nod to buy 9.99% stake in Karur Vysya Bank

- The Reserve Bank has given its approval to SBI Mutual Fund (SBI MF) for acquiring up to 9.99% of the paid-up

share capital or voting rights of Karur Vysya Bank Ltd (KVB).

- If SBI MF fails to acquire major shareholding within a period of one year from the date of RBI's letter, this approval shall stand cancelled.
- Besides, SBI MF must ensure that the aggregate holding in the bank does not not exceed 9.99% at all times.
- Further, if the aggregate holding falls below 5%, prior approval of RBI will be required to increase it to 5% or more of the paid-up share capital or voting rights of KVB.
- KVB, meanwhile, announced the opening of four branches, of which three are in Tamil Nadu and one in Bengaluru. With this, the total number of branches has increased to 831.

3. Bank lending to pvt corporate rises 14.9 pc in Sep: RBI data

- Bank lending to the private corporate sector grew 14.9 per cent in September 2023 from 14.7 per cent a year ago, according to the Reserve Bank data.
- Another set of banking data released by the central bank showed the share of term deposits bearing a 6 to 8 per cent interest rate rose to 78.6 per cent in September 2023 against 12.5 per cent in March 2022.
- According to data on outstanding credit of banks at September-end 2023, loans to industry accounted for nearly one-fourth of total bank credit; they increased by 8.6 per cent (year-on-year) in September 2023 (against 12.3 per cent a year ago); working capital loans growth has remained in double digits for the last six quarters.

4. RBI says 97.26% of Rs 2000 notes back in the system

- **The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on December 1 said 97.26 percent of the Rs2000 banknotes in circulation as on May 19, 2023, has been returned to the banking system.**
- The total value of Rs2000 banknotes in circulation, which amounted to Rs3.56 lakh crore as at the close of business on May 19, 2023 when the withdrawal of Rs2000 banknotes was announced, has declined to Rs9,760 crore as at the close of business on November 30, 2023, the RBI said in a statement.
- **The RBI had announced the withdrawal of Rs2000 denomination banknotes from circulation on May 19, 2023 as part of the central bank's clean note policy.**
- The facility for deposit and exchange of the Rs 2000 banknotes was available at all bank branches in the country initially upto September 30, 2023, which was later extended upto October 07, 2023

5. TSI bags '200 cr via credit fund

- Piramal Alternatives and CDPQ-backed performing credit fund have agreed to extend a '200 crore sum to ATM (automated teller machines) operator Transaction Solutions International (India) Pvt Ltd (TSI) in a structured credit transaction.
- The capital, raised against convertible securities, will help with TSI's business expansion initiatives and accelerate its ATM deployment.

6. RBI, Bank of England sign MoU on co-operation and information exchange related to CCIL

- In a tactical move that could encourage the European Securities and Markets Authority (ESMA) to restore recognition to at least one of the Indian central counterparties (CCPs), **the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) and the Bank of England (BoE) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for cooperation and exchange of information in relation to the Clearing Corporation.**
- The MoU establishes a framework for the BoE to place reliance on the RBI's regulatory and supervisory activities while safeguarding UK financial stability.

7. RBI imposes monetary penalty on four co-operative banks

- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has imposed monetary penalties on four co-operative banks for deficiencies in regulatory compliance.
- **These co-operative banks are: Jijamata Mahila Sahakari Bank Ltd, Shri Laxmikrupa Urban Co-operative Bank Ltd, The Konark Urban Cooperative Bank Ltd and The Chembur Nagarik Sahakari Bank Ltd.**
- These penalties have been imposed in the exercise of powers conferred on RBI under certain provisions of the Banking Regulation Act, 1949, the banking regulator said.

8. RBI cancels licence of Kolhapur-based Shankarrao Pujari Nutan Nagari Sahakari Bank

- **Shankarrao Pujari Nutan Nagari Sahakari Bank Limited, Ichalkaranji, Kolhapur is prohibited from conducting the business of 'banking' which includes, among other things, acceptance of deposits and repayment of deposits as defined in Section 5(b) read with Section 56 of the Banking**

Regulation Act, 1949 with immediate effect, the Reserve Bank of India said.

- The RBI said the Shankarrao Pujari Nutan Nagari Sahakari Bank does not have adequate capital and earning prospects.
- As such, it does not comply with the provisions of Section 11(1) and Section 22 (3) (d) read with Section 56 of the Banking Regulation Act, 1949.
- **On liquidation, the Reserve Bank said that every depositor would be entitled to receive deposit insurance claim amount of his/her deposits up to a monetary ceiling of '5,00,000' from Deposit Insurance and Credit Guarantee Corporation (DICGC) subject to the provisions of DICGC Act, 1961.**
- As per the data submitted by the bank, 99.85% of the depositors are entitled to receive the full amount of their deposits from DICGC.

9. SBI to acquire 20 per cent stake in SBI Pension Funds for '230 crore

- **The Executive Committee of the Central Board (ECCB) of State Bank of India (SBI) has accorded final approval to the Bank for acquiring 20 per cent stake held by SBICAPS (SBI Capital Markets Ltd) in SBIPFPL (SBI Pension Funds Private Ltd).**
- The acquisition, which will be completed by December 15, 2023, is for a cash consideration of '229.52 crore.

10. Union Bank collaborates with Accenture to boost operational efficiency

- Union Bank of India said it will be collaborating with Accenture to design and develop a scalable and secure enterprise data lake platform to boost its operational efficiency.

- This will also enhance its ability to offer customer-centric banking services and manage risk.
- Manimekhalai, Managing Director & CEO, Union Bank of India
- Using predictive analytics, machine learning and artificial intelligence, this platform will leverage structured and unstructured data from within the bank as well as from external sources to generate business-relevant insights.
- The program will enable the bank to develop robust data visualization and reporting capabilities including interactive dashboards and reports for business, operational and regulatory purposes.
- Employees will have access to business intelligence that can enhance customer service and operational agility across the bank's branches, contact centers and digital channels.
- As a result, the bank will be able to make informed decisions and identify new data-led opportunities for value creation.
- These will have an impact across its business portfolio including corporate, retail, and micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) banking, and as well as across functions like risk management, treasury, customer service and operations, among others.

11. CARE upgrades rating of IDBI Bank's Tier-II bonds

- CARE Ratings has upgraded the rating of IDBI Bank's Basel III Compliant Tier II Bonds aggregating '2,000 crore' from 'A+' to 'AA-' and revised the outlook from 'positive' to 'stable'.
- The credit rating agency also reaffirmed the 'A1+' rating for the bank's Certificate of Deposits aggregating '10,000 crore.

- The revision in the rating assigned to the long-term debt instruments of IDBI Bank factors in the continued improvement in the bank's financial risk profile, with improvement in profitability and asset quality parameters with comfortable capitalisation levels over the past two years ended September 30, 2023, the agency said.
- The rating continues to factor in the bank's franchise with an increasing focus on retail lending in the past few years and relatively high current account savings account (CASA) deposit proportion.

12. RBI MPC Meeting : RBI enhances UPI transaction limit for hospitals, educational institutions to '5 lakh

- **RBI Monetary Policy Committee has kept the key policy repo rate unchanged at 6.5% by a unanimous decision.**
- This is the fifth meeting on the trot that the MPC decided to maintain the status quo on the repo rate.
- **RBI raised the GDP growth projection for FY24 to 7% from 6.5% earlier on buoyant domestic demand and higher capacity utilisation in the manufacturing sector.**
- **The Indian economy rose by 7.2% in the 2022-23 fiscal ended March 2023. CPI inflation projected at 5.4% for FY24 with Q3 at 5.6% and Q4 at 5.2%.**
- The retail inflation projected at 5.2% for Q1 FY25, 4% in Q2, 4.7% in Q3.
- RBI allows reversal of liquidity facilities under SDF and MSF even on weekends and holidays.
- **UPI limit has been increased to hospitals and educational institutions from Rs 1 lakh to Rs 5 lakh per transaction.**

- **The Reserve Bank of India has exempted the requirement of Additional Factor of Authentication (AFA) for transactions up to '1 lakh for certain categories of payments.** These include subscriptions to mutual funds, payment of insurance premiums, and payments of credit card bills.

13. RBI Imposes Fines On 4 Banks, Revokes Urban Cooperative Bank's Operating License

- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has imposed fines on four banks and revoked the license of Urban Cooperative Bank Limited for not abiding by its rules.
- This bank operates in Sitapur, Uttar Pradesh. The RBI has affirmed that this cooperative bank has insufficient funds for operations, and there is no prospect of future earnings. Therefore, the bank is being shut down.
- **The RBI has imposed fines on four cooperative banks, including Patan Cooperative Bank, District Central Bank, Rajarshi Shahu Cooperative Bank, and Primary Teachers' Cooperative Bank.**
- Among these, three banks each face a fine of Rs 1 lakh, and another bank has been fined Rs 10,000. The penalties have been imposed by the severity of the malpractices followed in these banks.

14. BoI launches exclusive savings bank product for women

- **Bank of India (BoI) has launched an exclusive savings bank product for women (Nari Shakti Savings Account) with an independent source of income.**
- The savings account, has features such as personal accident insurance cover of up to '1 crore, discounted health insurance and wellness products,

rebates on locker facilities for gold and diamond SB AC holders.

15. Poonawalla Housing Finance rebrands as Grihum Housing Finance post TPG takeover

- Following a change in ownership, **Poonawalla Housing Finance has been rebranded as Grihum Housing Finance with global private equity firm TPG now holding 99.02 per cent stake in the housing finance company.** Before being promoted by Poonawalla Fincorp, the housing financier was a part of the Magma Group.
- The Housing Finance corporation has recorded a CAGR of around 28 per cent in the last six years and has a network of 195 branches at present.

16. SBI to sign 70 million euro LoC with KfW for solar projects

- **The State Bank of India (SBI) signed 70 million euro (about Rs 630 crore) Line of Credit (LoC) with German Development Bank KfW for promoting solar project in the country.**
- The agreement signed at the bank's IFSC Gift City Branch in Ahmedabad. The LoC is aimed at supporting Solar Photovoltaics (PV) projects in India.
- The country's largest lender SBI reported a 9.13 per cent growth in consolidated net profit for the September quarter to Rs 16,099.58 crore as against Rs 14,752 crore in the year-ago period.

17. RBI authorises Bandhan Bank to disburse pensions to railway employees

- **Bandhan Bank has announced that it has been authorised by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) for the disbursement**

of pensions through e-PPOs on behalf of the Ministry of Railways.

- Indian Railways is the largest employer in the country with an employee strength of nearly 12 lakhs.
- Chandra Shekhar Ghosh- MD & CEO of Bandhan Bank
- The Bank will soon be integrating with the Ministry of Railways to operationalise the pension disbursement process.
- This authorisation enables Bandhan Bank to disburse pensions to all employees of the Ministry of Railways who have retired from their service.
- This mandate also provides the Bank an access to around 50,000 average Indian Railways retirees every year across all offices including 17 zonal railways and 8 production units of Indian Railways.

18. Housing finance firm Sitara secures '120 crore of debt from British International Investment

- **Affordable housing finance firm Sitara has secured '120 crore in debt finance from UK's development finance institution British International Investment (BII).**
- The firm will utilise the funds to grow its loan book and expand operations to new locations.
- Founded in 2015, Sitara is a housing finance company registered with the National Housing Bank and regulated by the RBI.

19. RBI imposes monetary penalty on 5 cooperative banks

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on December 14 said it has imposed a monetary penalty on five cooperative banks citing various rule violations. These cooperative banks are

Mumbai-based Janakalyan Sahakari Bank, Pune Merchants Co-operative Bank, Pune Municipal Corporation Servant's Co-operative Urban Bank, Indapur Urban Co-operative Bank and Patan Urban Co-operative Bank.

- RBI has imposed a monetary penalty of Rs 5 lakh on Janakalyan Sahakari Bank for non-compliance, Rs 1 lakh on Pune Merchants Co-operative Bank, Rs 5 lakh on Indapur Urban Cooperative Bank Bank, Rs 2 lakh on the Patan Urban Co-operative Bank and Rs 5 lakh on Indapur Urban Cooperative Bank Bank.

20. IndusInd Bank launches industry-first community banking program for Diamond Cohorts with 'Indus Solitaire Program'

- IndusInd Bank announced the launch of its 'Indus Solitaire Program,' a community banking initiative meticulously crafted for the diamond industry.
- This curated banking program will be offered through Bank's flagship branches in prime locations across various cities with concentration in Mumbai and Surat and will provide a range of exclusive benefits .
- Through the 'Indus Solitaire Program', IndusInd Bank is all set to offer a whole gamut of tailored banking services for the Diamond Industry, that includes 24*7 locker access at specific branches, add-on family accounts, debit and credit cards that come with membership benefits at top-tier hotels, concierge services, complimentary golf lessons and movie tickets, zero cross-currency mark-up fee on foreign exchange, complimentary lounge access, along with an appealing rewards structure and overseas hospitalization coverage on

credit cards and customized diamond industry employee salary account.

21. RBI directs banks to refrain from investing in any scheme offered by Alternative Investment Funds

- The Reserve Bank of India has directed all Commercial Banks, Co-operative Banks, Non-Banking Financial Companies including Housing Finance Companies and Financial Institutions to refrain from investing in any scheme offered by Alternative Investment Funds (AIFs), which has downstream investments either directly or indirectly in the bank's debtor company.
- RBI has stated that the debtor company means any company that has taken a loan from the bank anytime during the preceding twelve months.
- RBI has further directed banks to liquidate their investment from such AIFs within **thirty days**

22. MSME lender U Gro Capital raises '250 crore from Dutch development bank

- DataTech NBFC U GRO Capital has raised '250 crore from the Dutch Entrepreneurial Development Bank FMO through rupee-denominated non-convertible debentures (NCDs).
- The MSME-lending-focused NBFC has provided credit to more than 80,000 small businesses.
- Prior to this, it had raised '240 crore from Denmark's Investment Fund for Developing Countries (IFU) in May 2023.

23. Karur Vysya Bank, HDFC Life enter into corporate agency tie-up

- Private sector Karur Vysya Bank and HDFC Life have entered into a corporate

agency agreement to offer life insurance products to their respective customers.

- This corporate agency arrangement would enable customers of Karur Vysya Bank to avail HDFC Life's wide range of life insurance products which include solutions for protection, savings and investment and retirement.

24. After a year of waiting, RBI grants at least six payment aggregator licences

- After over a year of waiting, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) granted its final approval for at least six payment aggregator licences, thus lifting the ban on entities such as RazorPay and Cashfree Payments for acquiring new merchants.
- The final nod for the payment aggregator licence has come for **Razorpay, Cashfree Payments, Open Financial, EnKash, Google Pay, payment India**

25. Sebi proposes optional T+0, instantaneous settlement for equity cash segment

- **The Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) is contemplating the implementation of a same-day settlement cycle, known as T+0, in two phases.**
- This is seen as a preliminary step towards instantaneous settlement.
- The shorter T+0 settlement cycle is being considered for the equity cash segment as an optional mechanism, in addition to the current T+1 (Trade plus one day).
- As per the SEBI consultation paper, the implementation of T+0 and the instant settlement cycle of trades will be done as an option along with the current T+1 settlement cycle continuing.
- **SEBI introduced the T+3 settlement cycle in 2002, the T+2 settlement cycle was introduced in 2003 and the current T+1 settlement cycle was introduced in 2021 and was fully implemented by January 2023.**
- Under the T+1 settlement cycle, if an investor buys shares on Monday, he/she will receive them in their demat account on Tuesday.
- Similarly, if the shares are sold on Monday, they will receive the money in their bank account on Tuesday.
- SEBI has proposed the implementation of T+1 and the instant settlement cycle in two phases.
- In the first phase, an optional T+0 settlement cycle would be introduced for trading till 1:30 pm. The settling of those trades under the T+1 cycle could be settled on the same day by 4:30 PM.
- Under the second phase of implementation, optional immediate or instant trade-by-trade settlement of trades could be done till 3:30 pm. After the implementation of the second phase, the first phase (T+0 settlement) will be discontinued.
- SEBI has proposed to begin the implementation of the T+0 settlement cycle with the top 500 listed companies as per market capitalisation. This is proposed to be done in three phases of 200, 200, and 100 companies.
- As per SEBI, T+0 and the instant settlement cycle will bring advantages like instant receipt of funds and securities to the investor. Also, it will eliminate the risk of any kind of settlement shortage and give greater control over funds and securities to the investor.

26. RBI issues draft omnibus SRO framework for banks, NBFCs

- **RBI issued a draft omnibus framework for self-regulatory organisations (SROs) for banks, NBFCs and other entities regulated by it.**
- In order to be eligible to apply for an SRO license, the applicant shall set up a not-for-profit company with adequate net worth and the ability to create infrastructure to discharge various responsibilities on a continuing basis.
- In order to be eligible to apply for an SRO license, the applicant shall set up a not-for-profit company with adequate net worth and the ability to create infrastructure to discharge various responsibilities on a continuing basis.
- The applicant must also represent the sector and have the specified membership, or should at least submit the road map for attaining specified membership within a reasonable timeline.

27. Kotak Mahindra Life Insurance launch TULIP, combination of term, ULIP

- **Kotak Mahindra Life Insurance launched a new product, T.U.L.I.P, a term with a unit-linked insurance plan.**
- The product is a plan that gives a life cover up to 100 times the annual premium while permitting customers to earn returns like a ULIP product.
- Kotak Mahindra Life Insurance MD: Mahesh Balasubramanian.

28. RBI to offer higher amount to banks at VRR auction on Dec 22

- **The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has stepped up the amount it is willing to offer the banking system in the 7-day**

variable rate repo (VRR) auction, scheduled on December 22, to '1.75-lakh crore against '1-lakh crore offered last week to help banks overcome liquidity deficit.

- In the overnight segment, the weighted average rate continues to be slightly above 6.75 per cent (the marginal standing facility/MSF rate).
- Hence, huge bidding interest can be expected in the forthcoming VRR auction.
- In his latest monetary policy statement, RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das observed that system liquidity, as measured by the net position under the liquidity adjustment facility (LAF), turned into deficit mode for the first time in September 2023 after a gap of nearly four and a half years since May 2019.

29. IndusInd Bank Launches 'eSvarna', India's First Corporate Credit Card On RuPay Network

- **IndusInd Bank announced the launch of 'IndusInd Bank eSvarna', India's first Corporate Credit Card on RuPay network.**
- This launch positions IndusInd Bank as the first in the country to integrate UPI functionality with a Corporate Credit Card.
- The IndusInd Bank eSvarna credit card on the RuPay network comes with an array of exclusive perks and rewards.

30. Ola Electric files IPO papers with Sebi; first by auto company in 20 years

- **Ola Electric filed preliminary papers with capital markets regulator Sebi to raise funds through an initial public offering (IPO)-- the 1st issue by an automaker in India in more than 20 years.**

- The proposed IPO is a fresh issue of equity shares up to Rs 5,500 crore and an offer for sale (OFS) of 95,191,195 equity shares, according to the draft red herring prospectus (DRHP).

31. RBI Releases Draft Licensing Framework for Authorised Persons Under FEMA

- **The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) released a draft 'Licensing Framework for Authorised Persons (APs)' under Foreign Exchange Management Act (FEMA), 1999.**
- The RBI had, in its June monetary policy meeting, said that the Central Bank decided to rationalise and simplify the licensing framework for APs to effectively meet the emerging requirements of the rapidly growing economy.
- According to RBI release, the focus of the draft norms is on rationalising the authorisation framework for money changers in view of the widespread availability of banking services to public, to look at alternate models for facilitating foreign exchange related services and improve the scope of services being offered by AD-Category II entities.
- It added that it will also review the regulatory framework for APs.

32. Reserve Bank of India approves IDFC-IDFC First Bank merger

- **Reserve Bank of India has given its nod for the reverse merger of IDFC Ltd with its banking subsidiary IDFC First Bank.**
- The boards of IDFC First Bank and IDFC have approved the reverse merger in July.
- As part of the composite scheme of amalgamation, IDFC FHCL would first

merge with IDFC and then IDFC into IDFC First Bank Ltd.

- **IDFC began as an infra lender in 1997. It got in-principle approval from the RBI to set up a bank in April 2014, and in October 2015, it launched IDFC Bank when on-tap licensing began, following which loans and liabilities of IDFC were transferred to the bank.**
- In December 2018, it took over Capital First, a consumer and MSME-focused non-bank since 2012, and was renamed as IDFC First Bank and became a full-service universal bank.

33. RBI permits lending, borrowing in government securities except T-bills

- **In a move that will add depth and liquidity to the government securities (G-Secs) market, the RBI has permitted permit lending and borrowing of G-Secs.**
- The RBI said G-Secs issued by the Central government excluding Treasury Bills will be eligible for lending/borrowing under a **Government Security Lending (GSL)** transaction.
- This move comes even as India is set to be included in the globally tracked JP Morgan's Government Bond Index-Emerging Markets (GBI-EM) index, starting June 28, 2024.
- Securities obtained under a repo transaction, including through Reserve Bank's Liquidity Adjustment Facility, or borrowed under another GSL transaction will also be eligible to be lent under a GSL transaction.
- Further, G-Secs issued by the Central Government (including Treasury Bills) and the State Governments will be eligible for placing as collateral under a GSL transaction.
- In addition, Securities obtained under a repo transaction, including through

Reserve Bank's Liquidity Adjustment Facility, or borrowed under another GSL transaction will also be eligible to be placed as collateral under a GSL transaction.

- GSL transactions may be contracted using any mutually agreed trading process/platform, including but not limited to, bilateral or multilateral, quote driven or order driven process, anonymous or otherwise, RBI said in its "Reserve Bank of India (Government Securities Lending) Directions, 2023".

34. SEBI Extends Deadline To June 2024 To Add Nominees In Mutual Funds, Demat Accounts

- **Markets regulator Securities and Exchange Board of India extended the deadline to June 30 next year for demat & mutual fund account holders to provide a nomination.**
- Earlier, the deadline to nominate a beneficiary or opt out of it by submitting a declaration form was Dec. 31, 2023.
- Madhabi Puri Buch is the current chairperson of the Securities and Exchange Board of India.
- Further, SEBI asked asset management companies (AMCs), depository participants and Registrar and Transfer Agents (RTAs) to encourage the demat account holders and mutual fund unit holders to fulfil the requirement for nomination/opting out of nomination by sending a communication on fortnightly basis by way of emails and SMS to all such unit holders who are not in compliance with the requirement of nomination.

35. Central Bank of India enters in co-lending partnership with Kissetu Saison Finance for MSME loans

- **Public sector lender Central Bank of India entered into a strategic co-lending partnership with Kissetu Saison Finance, India for MSME Loans.**
- Bengaluru-based M/s. Kissetu Saison Finance is an NBFC with AUM (Assets under management) of the Company as of September 30, 2023, was more than Rs. 8200 crore. Mr. Matam Venkata Rao, Managing Director & CEO of Central Bank of India.
- Co-lending or co-origination is a set-up where banks and non-banks enter into an arrangement for the joint contribution of credit for priority sector lending.
- To put it simply, under this arrangement, both banks and NBFCs share the risk in a ratio of 80:20 (80 percent of the loan with the bank and a minimum of 20 percent with the non-banks).

36. RBI tweaks D-SIB designation methodology, inserts digital payments aspect

- **The Reserve Bank of India has revised the methodology for designating a bank as a Domestic Systemically Important Bank (D-SIB) by incorporating digital payments, value as well as volumes, under the substitutability indicator in the assessment.**
- The data requirement under this sub-indicator stands revised **from 'Payments made in INR using RTGS and NEFT systems' to the total value of Digital Payments made in Rupees (75 per cent weightage) and total volume of Digital Payments made in Rupees (25 per cent weightage).** The digital payments include all payments other than paper-based instruments, the RBI said in a statement
- The Reserve Bank of India on 28th December released the latest list of

domestic Systemically important banks. ICICI Bank continued to be in the same bucketing structure as last year whereas State Bank of India and HDFC Bank moved to higher buckets.

- SBI shifted from bucket 3 to bucket 4 and HDFC Bank shifted from bucket 1 to bucket 2.
- For SBI and HDFC Bank, the higher D-SIB buffer requirements on account of the bucket increase will be effective from April 1, 2025, said India's top bank.
- The additional Common Equity Tier 1 (CET1) requirement will be in addition to the capital conservation buffer.
- **The Reserve Bank had announced SBI and ICICI Bank as D-SIBs in 2015 and 2016.**
- **Based on data collected from banks as on March 31, 2017, HDFC Bank was also classified as a D-SIB, along with SBI and ICICI Bank.**
- The current update is based on the data collected from banks as on March 31, 2023 and factoring in the increased systemic importance of HDFC Bank post the merger of erstwhile HDFC Limited into HDFC Bank on July 1, 2023.
- In case a foreign bank having branch presence in India is a Global Systemically Important Bank (G-SIB), it has to maintain additional CET1 capital surcharge in India as applicable to it as a G-SIB, proportionate to its Risk Weighted Assets (RWAs) in India, i.e., additional CET1 buffer prescribed by the home regulator (amount) multiplied by India RWA as per consolidated global Group books divided by total consolidated global Group RWA.

37. RBI extends Payments Infrastructure Development Fund scheme till 2025

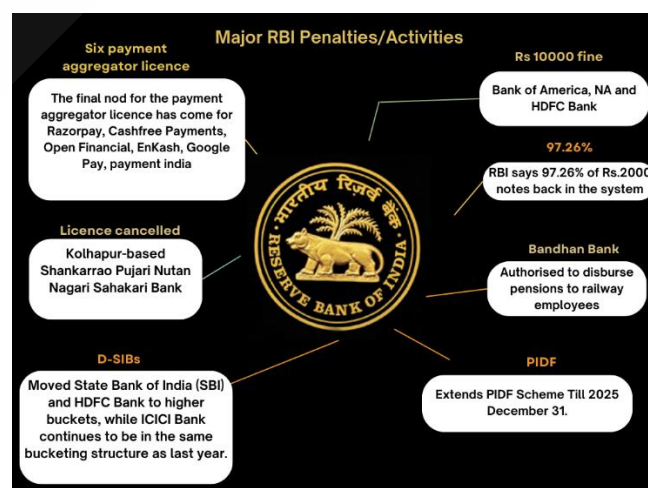
- **The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has extended the Payments Infrastructure Development Fund (PIDF) scheme till December 31, 2025.**
- **The scheme was first launched in 2021 for three years.**
- **All eligible installations since the inception of the PM Vishwakarma Scheme, i.e., September 17, 2023, may prefer claims under the PIDF Scheme.**
- Moreover, apart from physical and digital devices, Soundbox devices and Aadhaar-enabled biometric devices have been made eligible for subsidy under the scheme for installations made from October 1, 2023.
- The RBI also said that the amount of subsidy for devices deployed in special focus areas, including North Eastern States, Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh, has been increased from 75 per cent to 90 per cent of the total cost.
- This will be irrespective of the type of device and for installations made from October 01, 2023 onwards.
- It was primarily launched to facilitate and subsidise the development of payment acceptance infrastructure in tier-3 to tier-6 cities and the northeastern states of India.
- It envisaged creating 3 million new touchpoints every year in India. Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh are also the focus areas.

38. NPCI launches ASBA-like facility for secondary market

- **The 'UPI for Secondary Market' initiative is supported by key stakeholders, including clearing corporations, stock exchanges, depositories, stockbrokers, banks, and UPI app providers.**

- During this pilot, investors can block funds in their bank accounts, which will only be debited by the clearing corporations upon trade confirmation during settlement.
- ASBA-like facility of 'Trading supported by blocked amount in secondary market' through block mechanism was approved by the market regulator Sebi, based on the Reserve Bank of India approved facility of single-block-and-multiple-debit in UPI, with the implementation timeline of 1 January, 2024.
- During this pilot, investors can block funds in their bank accounts, which will only be debited by the clearing corporations upon trade confirmation during settlement.
- Clearing corporations will directly process payouts to these clients on a T+1 basis – which means any trade-related settlements must be completed within one day from the day of the transaction.
- HDFC Bank, HSBC, ICICI Bank, and Yes Bank are serving as sponsor banks for the clearing corporation and exchanges.
- Application Supported by Blocked Amount (ASBA) is a process used to apply for Initial Public Offerings (IPOs) or Follow-on Public Offerings (FPOs) in India.
- **SEBI proposed changes to the verification of market rumours for listed companies, including relaxation on the 24-hour timeline, verification only on material impact on stock prices, and clarity on the pricing of preferential issuances, buybacks and deals.**
- It has included the suggestions of the Industry Standard Forum (ISF) for feedback.
- Rumour verification by the company within 24 hours of 'material price movement'
- Currently, it is 24 hours of 'reporting in the mainstream media'
- Determination of 'material price movement' based on price range of securities
- A lower percentage move considerable as 'material' for high price range shares
- Factor-in movements of benchmark indices to decide material movement

39. Sebi proposes action points to ease rumour verification regulations



Economy

1. India's Power Consumption Grows 8.5% To 119.64 Billion Units In November

- The country's power consumption grew nearly **8.5% to 119.64 billion units** in November, showing a surge in electricity demand due to festivities and increased economic activities. In the year-ago period, power consumption stood at **110.25 BU**, higher than **99.32 billion units** recorded in November 2021, according to the government data.
- The peak power demand met -- the highest supply in a day -- rose to 204.60 GW in November.
- The peak power supply stood at 187.34 GW in November 2022 and 166.10 GW in November 2021.
- The power ministry had estimated the country's electricity demand to touch 229 GW during summer. The demand did not reach the projected level in April-July due to unseasonal rain.
- The peak supply, however, touched a new high of 224.1 GW in June before dropping to 209.03 GW in July. Peak demand touched 238.19 GW in August. In September this year, it was 240.17 GW. The peak demand was 222.16 GW in October 2023.

2. Highest Ever Coal Dispatch from Captive & Commercial Coal Blocks in November

- Coal production from captive/commercial coal mines during November 2023 comes to **11.94 million tonne (MT)**, with a growth of **37%** compared to 8.74 MT during November 2022.

- At the same time, coal dispatch from Captive/commercial coal mines during November 2023 is 12.92 MT with a growth of 55% compared to 8.36 MT the previous year.
- The average daily coal dispatch from such mines in the month of November 2023 is the highest ever with 4.3 lakh tonnes per day.
- Coal production and dispatch from captive and commercial coal blocks has shown a remarkable growth during the period of April to November 2023.
- The total coal production from captive & commercial coal mines during the period 1st April 2023 to 30th November 2023 was around 83.90 MT, while the total coal dispatch was 89.67 MT indicating a y-o-y growth of 24% and 31% respectively, from the same period of FY 2022-23.

3. GST collection rises 15% in Nov to Rs 1.68 lakh cr

- **GST revenue collection for November 2023 came at nearly Rs 1.68 lakh crore, which is a 15% jump on an annual basis, said government.**
- **Gross GST collection crossed Rs 1.6 lakh crore mark for the sixth time in FY24.**
- "The gross Goods and Services Tax (GST) revenue collected in the month of November, 2023 is Rs 1,67,929 crore out of which CGST is Rs 30,420 crore, SGST is Rs 38,226 crore, IGST is Rs 87,009 crore (including Rs 39,198 crore collected on import of goods) and cess is Rs 12,274 crore (including Rs 1,036 crore collected on import of goods).
- The government has settled Rs 37,878 crore to CGST and Rs 31,557 crore to SGST from IGST.

- As per Ministry of Finance, the total revenue of Centre and the States in the month of November, 2023 after regular settlement is Rs 68,297 crore for CGST and Rs 69,783 crore for the SGST, ".
- During the month, the revenues from domestic transactions (including import of services) are 20% higher than the revenues from these sources during the same month last year.
- It is for the sixth time that the gross GST collection has crossed '1.60 lakh crore mark in FY24.

4. IOC raises Panipat refinery expansion cost by 10%, pushes completion deadline by a year

- Indian Oil Corporation (IOC), the nation's top oil firm, has revised the estimates of cost of expanding the Panipat refinery in Haryana by 10 per cent to Rs 36,225 crore and pushed back completion deadline by more than a year to December 2025.
- IOC is expanding its 15 million tonnes a year refinery, about 100-km north of New Delhi, to 25 million tonnes.

5. India's emission intensity reduced by 33% between 2005 and 2019: Govt report

- India reduced its GDP emission intensity by 33 per cent between 2005 and 2019, achieving the target 11 years in advance, according to a government report.
- The report also said India's GDP grew at a cumulative annual growth rate of 7 per cent but its emissions rose by only 4 per cent per year during this period, suggesting that the country has been successful in decoupling its economic growth from planet-warming greenhouse gas emissions.

6. India's Goods sector surpasses services in exports for first time

- For the first time the Goods (Merchandise) sector has surpassed the services sector in Export.
- The export has reached 762 billion dollars in the last financial year.
- The Goods (Merchandise) export has gone upto 453 billion dollars, while services export was at 309 billion dollars.

7. India's coal imports drop over 4 per cent to 148 million in Apr-Oct period

- India's coal imports dropped 4.2 per cent to 148.13 Million Tonnes (MT) in the April-October period of the ongoing financial year.
- The country's coal imports were 154.72 MT in the corresponding period of the previous fiscal.
- Of the total imports in October, inbound shipments of non-coking coal stood at 16.88 MT, against 11.69 MT imported in October last year.

8. India's forex reserves surpasses \$600 billion mark after nearly four months

- India's foreign exchange reserves increased to USD 604 billion, surpassing the USD 600 billion mark after a gap of about four months.
- The forex reserves were last above the USD 600 billion mark on August 11 this year.

9. India's industrial production growth rises to 16-month high of 11.7 % in October

- India's industrial production growth rose to a 16-month high of 11.7 percent

in October against a contraction of 4.1 per cent in the same period last year.

- The data released by the National Statistical Office showed that the manufacturing sector's output grew by 10.4 per cent in October 2023 while Mining production rose 13.1 per cent during the month.
- Factory output is measured in terms of the Index of Industrial Production

10. Nine states record a higher rate of inflation in November, shows data

- As many as nine states have recorded a higher rate of inflation compared to the national average in November.
- **While the average Indian consumer's cost of living rose by 5.55 per cent compared to the same time last year, it increased by 7.65 per cent in Odisha, 6.99 per cent in Rajasthan, and 6.78 per cent in Haryana.**
- States like Bihar, Karnataka, Punjab, Telangana, Gujarat, and Uttar Pradesh — which have a higher inflation rate than the national average — recorded a rise between 5.56 per cent to 6.54 per cent.

11. India's overall exports in November 2023 is estimated at USD 62.58 Billion; an increase of 1.23 percent over Nov 2022

- **India's overall exports (Merchandise and Services combined) in November 2023 is estimated to be USD 62.58 Billion, exhibiting a positive growth of 1.23 per cent over November 2022. Overall imports in November 2023 is estimated to be USD 67.88 Billion, exhibiting a negative growth of (-) 6.16 per cent over November 2022.**
- India's overall exports (Merchandise and Services combined) in April-November 2023 are estimated to be **USD 499.46**

Billion, exhibiting a negative growth of (-) 1.39 per cent over April-November 2022. Overall imports in April-November 2023 are estimated to be USD 560.90 Billion, exhibiting a negative growth of (-) 7.58 per cent over April-November 2022.

- The estimated value of services export for November 2023 is **USD 28.69 Billion**, as compared to USD 26.93 Billion in November 2022.
- The estimated value of services import for November 2023 is **USD 13.40 Billion** as compared to USD 15.39 Billion in November 2022.

12. Reserve Bank of India sets sovereign gold bond issue price at Rs 6,199/gram

- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) announced that the issue price for the next tranche of Sovereign Gold Bond has been fixed at **Rs 6,199 per gram** and will open for subscription on December 18 for five days.
- The **Sovereign Gold Bond (SGB) Scheme 2023-24 - Series III** will be open for subscription during December 18, 2023.
- The SGBs will be sold through scheduled commercial banks (except small finance banks, payment banks and regional rural banks), Stock Holding Corporation of India Limited (SHCIL), Clearing Corporation of India Limited (CCIL), designated post offices, National Stock Exchange of India Limited and Bombay Stock Exchange Limited.
- The investors are compensated at a fixed rate of 2.50 per cent per annum payable semi-annually on the nominal value.
- The maximum limit of subscription shall be 4 kg for individuals, 4 kg for HUF and 20 kg for trusts and similar entities per fiscal year.

- The finance ministry said the tenor of the SGB will be eight years with an option of premature redemption after the fifth year to be exercised on the date on which interest is payable.
- The Reserve Bank of India issues the bonds on behalf of the central government.

13. Trade deficit narrows to nearly \$21bn in Nov

- **India's trade deficit in November narrowed to \$20.6 billion as goods exports and imports fell.**
- Goods exports declined due to a shrinkage in key product categories, including engineering goods, petroleum products, and garments.
- The fall in imports was driven by oil and coal.
- Despite the global economic slowdown and high inflation, India's exports numbers are healthy, according to Commerce Secretary Sunil Barthwal. Services exports increased, resulting in a trade surplus and helping narrow the overall trade deficit.
- However, exports remain weak due to sluggish global demand.

14. Gross Direct Tax collections for current Financial Year register over 17 percent growth

- **The Gross Direct Tax collections for the Financial Year 2023-24 have registered a growth of over 17 percent.**
- Before adjusting refunds, Gross Collection of Direct Taxes stands at over 15 lakh 95 thousand crore rupees as compared to 13 lakh 63 thousand crore in the corresponding period of 2022-23.
- The Ministry of Finance has said that the Direct Tax collections for this finance year up to 17th December, show that

net collections are at 13 lakh 70 thousand crore rupees which is an increase of 20.66 per cent.

- The Ministry added that advance Tax collections for the Fiscal Year 2023-24 stand at over 6 lakh 25 thousand crore rupees which shows a growth of 19.94 per cent.

15. Indian economy to grow 6.3% in FY24 and FY25: IMF

- **Indian economy is likely to log 6.3% growth in FY24 and FY25 on the back of macroeconomic and financial stability, International Monetary Fund's Executive Board.**
- The international fund lauded the macroeconomic policies and reforms of the government, stating that India could achieve even higher growth, with greater contributions from labour and human capital.
- IMF's growth projection is much lower than the Reserve Bank of India's Monetary Policy Committee growth forecast of 7% for FY24.
- The MPC revised its growth numbers in December owing to a strong performance in the first half.

16. 13 states raise Rs 19,692 crore; Karnataka, Uttar Pradesh top list

- Thirteen states raised Rs 19,692 crore, against a notified amount of Rs 19,592 crore through the auction for state government securities. In the previous week, eight states had raised Rs 12,100 crore.
- **The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) data showed that Karnataka and Uttar Pradesh raised the highest amount of Rs 4,000 crore each**

- Karnataka raised the amount of Rs 4,000 crore through two papers – Rs 2,000 crore through a 15-year paper with a cut-off yield of 7.60 per cent, and Rs 2,000 crore through a 16-year paper with a cut-off yield of 7.64 per cent.

17. Net FDI into India touches 21-month high at \$5.9 billion in October

- **The net foreign direct investment (FDI) into the country at \$5.9 billion rose to a 21-month high in October 2023, primarily due to strong gross inflows and lower repatriation.**
- Sequentially, net FDI rose from \$1.54 billion in September 2023 and \$1.16 billion in October 2022, according to Reserve Bank of India data.
- The major source countries were Mauritius, Singapore, Cyprus and Japan, contributing more than four-fifths of the total FDI inflows in October 2023.
- Around four-fifths of the gross inward FDI equity flows were received in manufacturing, retail and wholesale trade, electricity and other energy sector, and financial services sector.

18. India's total debt rises to Rs 205 lakh crore in Sep quarter

- **The country's total debt, or the total outstanding bonds which are being traded in the market, rose to USD 2.47 trillion (Rs 205 lakh crore) in the September quarter, according to a report.**
- The total debt amount in the March quarter of the previous fiscal was USD 2.34 trillion (Rs 200 lakh crore).
- **The report is a collation of data from the RBI, Clearing Corporation of India, and SEBI.**

- The central government's debt stood at \$ 1.34 trillion, or Rs 161.1 trillion, in the September quarter, up from \$ 1.06 trillion, or Rs 150.4 trillion, in the March quarter, Vishal Goenka, Co-Founder of Indiabonds.com, said, quoting data provided by the Reserve bank of India.
- Indiabonds.com, which was launched in 2021, is a Sebi-registered online bond platform that provides investing solutions. The report is a collation of data from the RBI, Clearing Corporation of India, and the Securities and Exchange Board of India. At Rs 161.1 trillion, the central government's debt constitutes the highest 46.04 per cent share of the total amount.
- State governments' debt share was 24.4 per cent, or \$ 604 billion (Rs 50.18 trillion), the report said.
- Treasury bills were worth \$ 111 billion, or Rs 9.25 trillion, constituting 4.51 per cent of the total debt, it said.
- Corporate bonds had a 21.52 per cent share of the total debt at \$ 531 billion (Rs 44.16 trillion) in the second quarter of the current fiscal, as per the report.

19. The Centre released '72,961.21 crore as tax devolution to States

- Earlier, an instalment of ' 72,961.21 crore was released on December 11, 2023. This is in addition to the tax devolution which is due to the States on January 10, 2024.
- Of this latest '72,961.21 crore installment disbursed, the largest share has gone to Uttar Pradesh at '13,088.51 crore, followed by Bihar at '7,338.44 crore and Madhya Pradesh at '5,727.44 crore.
- Of this latest '72,961.21 crore installment disbursed, the largest share has gone to Uttar Pradesh at '13,088.51

crore, followed by Bihar at '7,338.44 crore; Madhya Pradesh at '5,727.44 crore; West Bengal at '5,488.88 crore; Maharashtra at '4,608.96 crore; Rajasthan at '4,396.64 crore and Odisha at '3303.69 crore. The remaining States' share has been lower than '3,000 crore and ranged from '281.63 crore (Goa) — '2,976.10 crore (Tamil Nadu).

- Currently, tax devolution is being administered by the recommendations of the erstwhile 15th Finance Commission chaired by N.K.Singh.
- The Finance Commission had recommended that states be given 41 per cent of the divisible tax pool of the Centre during the five-year period 2021-22 to 2025-26, which is at the same level as was recommended by the 14th Finance Commission.

20. India's forex reserves reach \$615.97 billion, highest in 20 months

- **India's foreign exchange (FX) reserves rose for the fifth time in the week ending December 15, touching an over 20-month high of \$615.97 billion- the highest level since March 2022.**
- In the previous week ended December 8, reserves had risen by \$2.82 billion to \$606.86 billion, as per the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) data. They had touched an all-time high of \$645 billion in October 2021.
- Within reserves, foreign currency assets increased by \$ 8.35 billion to \$545.05 billion as of December 15, whereas gold reserves rose \$446 million to \$47.58 billion. Special Drawing Rights (SDRs) were up \$135 million to \$18.32 billion. Further, data showed that India's reserve position with the IMF stood at \$5.02 billion, \$181 million higher on the week.

21. CBDT notifies ITR-1, ITR-4 forms for AY 2024-25

- **CBDT has notified two new return forms, ITR-1 (SAHAJ) and ITR-4 (SUGAM), for the Assessment Year 2024-25.**
- **These forms will come into effect from April 1, 2024.**
- ITR 1, or Sahaj, can be filed by a resident individual having income of up to '50 lakh from salary and agricultural income.
- ITR 4, or Sugam is for income of up to '50 lakh and income from business and profession.
- ITR 1, or Sahaj, can be filed by a resident individual having income of up to '50 lakh and who receives income from salary, one house property, other sources (interest), and agricultural income of up to '5,000.
- ITR 4, or Sugam, can be filed by individuals, Hindu undivided families (HUFs) and firms other than limited liability partnerships (LLPs) having total income of up to '50 lakh and income from business and profession.

22. IT major Infosys loses \$1.5 billion contract from global customer

- IT major Infosys announced the termination of its \$1.5 billion agreement with an undisclosed global company, focused on artificial intelligence (AI) solutions, signed in September.
- The Salil Parekh-led IT services giant had announced the \$1.5 billion contract for a 15-year period, inked on September 14, 2023.

23. Domestic Coal Based Power Generation increases by 8.38 % during April-Nov 2023

- India has witnessed a remarkable 7.71 percent surge in power generation and

11.19 percent in Coal-based power generation from April to November this year, as compared to the corresponding period of the previous year.

- The Ministry said that India is ranked third-largest consumer of energy in the world, with an annual electricity demand increase of about 4.7 percent.

24. Current account gap narrows to 1% of GDP at \$8.3 bn in Q2FY24: RBI

- **India's current account deficit (CAD) narrowed sequentially to \$8.3 billion, or 1 per cent of gross domestic product (GDP), in the quarter ended September (Q2FY24) due to lower merchandise trade deficit and growth in services exports.**
- **The CAD was \$9.2 billion, or 1.1 per cent of GDP, in Q1 and \$30.9 billion, or 3.8 per cent of GDP, in Q2FY23.**
- The CAD for the April-September quarter of FY23 was 2.9 per cent of GDP in H1FY23.
- The merchandise trade deficit narrowed to \$61 billion from \$78.3 billion in Q2FY23, according to Reserve Bank of India (RBI) data.
- Regarding the BoP position in April-September 2023 (H1FY24), there was an accretion of \$27 billion, compared to a depletion of \$25.8 billion in the year-ago period, the RBI noted.
- Services exports grew by 4.2 per cent Y-o-Y on the back of rising exports of software, business and travel services, the RBI said. Net invisible receipts were higher in H1FY24, owing to higher net receipts of services.

25. India's Steel Sector records remarkable growth, emerges as the 2nd largest global producer

- **India has emerged as a global force in steel production and the 2nd largest producer of steel in the world.**
- Domestic finished steel production stands at 89.711 million tonnes, which is 14.3% higher than corresponding period last year (CPLY).
- The domestic steel consumption stood at 87.066 million tonnes, which is 14.9% higher than CPLY of 75.765 million tonnes.
- Domestic crude steel production was 94.114 million tonnes, with a growth of 14.7 % when compared to the production of 82.072 million tonnes in the same period last year.
- During April – November 2023, **finished steel imports** increased from 3.751 million tonnes last year to **4.253 million tonnes** in the current year, witnessing a growth of 13.4%.

26. UP and Bihar get maximum special assistance for capital expenditure and investment

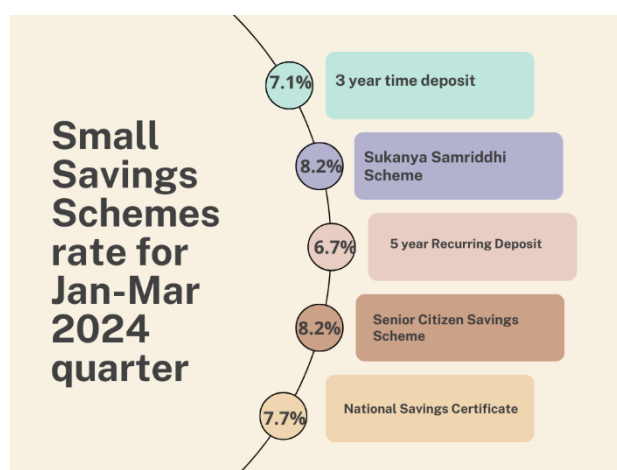
- Out of '1,67,518.6-crore special assistance(loan) allocated by Centre under the Scheme for Special Assistance to States for capital expenditure/investment, **UP has been highest recipient, securing '22,857.9 crore(14% of the total release) over the last 4 years.**
- Ministry of Finance reveals that in FY2023-24, up to December 13, the State has already received '12,458.43 crore.
- This amount constitutes a significant portion, accounting for 21 per cent of the total assistance released, which stands at '60,307.19 crore. This amount constitutes a significant portion, accounting for 21 per cent of the total assistance released, which stands at '60,307.19 crore.

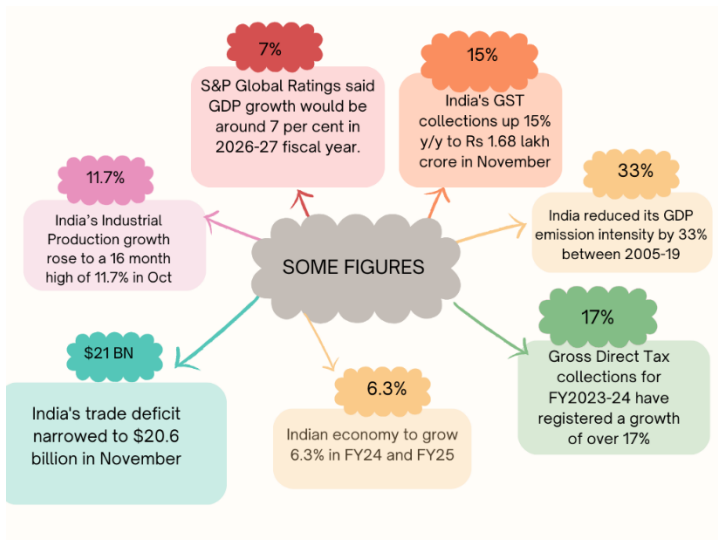
- **The Scheme for Special Assistance to States for Capital Expenditure was launched in FY2020-21.** The scheme has been expanded and continued as 'Scheme for Special Assistance to States for Capital Investment 2023-24' with allocation of **'1.3-lakh crore**.
- This includes an amount of '1-lakh crore under Part-I of the Scheme, which has been allocated to States in proportion to their share of Central taxes as per the award of the 15th Finance Commission and incentive amounts of '30,000 crore for reform-centric and sector-specific areas — scrapping old vehicles, urban planning reforms, financing reforms in urban local bodies to make them creditworthy for municipal bonds, housing for police personnel above or as part of police stations, unity malls, children and adolescent' library and digital infrastructure.
- Interestingly, while UP and Bihar are the top two States which have fulfilled the above-mentioned criteria and received maximum allocation under the Scheme in the last four years, Uttarakhand, Haryana, Kerala and Punjab are among the States which have received about 1-2 per cent of the total released amount under the Scheme.
- In fact, data shows that Andhra Pradesh, Kerala, Manipur and Punjab have not received any allocation in 2023-24 and as per the Ministry of Finance information provided to the Lok Sabha this month; these States have not met the eligibility criteria prescribed under the Scheme.
- The objective of the Special Assistance to States for Capital Expenditure/Investment is to enhance capital expenditure by the States.

- The guidelines of the Scheme for Special Assistance to States for Capital Investment 2023-24 specify targets for capital expenditure for each State in the financial year 2023-24 to qualify for the second instalment under Part-I (Untied) of the Scheme for that fiscal year.

27. Sukanya Samriddhi Schemes' interest rates hiked up to 20 bps for Q4FY24

- **The Centre hiked the interest rates of some of the small savings schemes, such as Sukanya Samriddhi Scheme, 3-year Time Deposit, for the January-March 2024 quarter.**
- As per the latest revised list, the interest rate of Sukanya Samriddhi Scheme will be 8.2%, while for 3-year TD it would be 7.1% for the last quarter of the current fiscal. Earlier, interest rates for Sukanya Samriddhi Scheme and 3-year TD were 8.0%, 7.1%.
- The PPF rates were kept unchanged for more than 3 years. It was last tweaked in April-June 2020, when it was slashed to 7.1 per cent from 7.9 per cent.





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National

1. Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar to inaugurate 5th Global Ayurveda Festival at Thiruvananthapuram in Kerala

- Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar will inaugurate the 5th edition of Global Ayurveda Festival in Thiruvananthapuram in Kerala.
- The Global Ayurveda Festival (GAF) 2023 would be held in the state capital of Kerala from December 1-5, with the theme 'Emerging Challenges in Healthcare and a Resurgent Ayurveda'.
- Delegations from over 70 countries will be present at the event, which underlines the growing recognition of Ayurveda's relevance in addressing global health concerns.
- The highlights of the festival include experts-led scientific sessions focusing on the latest scientific advancements in Ayurveda, high level industry and institutional participation showcasing innovative Ayurveda-based products, services and research initiatives as well as presentations of posters and papers.
- It also said that the National Arogya Fair at GAF will showcase a diverse range of medicinal plants and their utilisation in Ayurvedic preparations. All major Ayush institutions in the country will put up their stalls at the expo and there will be pavilions of 20 Ayurveda colleges.
- GAF 2023 will also see India's first dedicated Business-to-Business (B2B) meet on Ayurveda medical tourism, connecting healthcare pioneers with worldwide buyers and showcasing the country's wealth of Ayurvedic healthcare resources

2. Government Approves Terms Of Reference For 16th Finance Commission

- The government has approved the 'Terms of Reference' for the 16 Finance Commission, which makes recommendations on sharing of tax revenues between the Centre and states. The recommendations would cover a five-year period commencing April 1, 2026.
- The commission would submit its report by Oct. 31, 2025.
- The 15th Finance Commission was constituted on Nov. 27, 2017.
- It made recommendations covering a six-year period commencing April 1, 2020 through its interim and final reports.
- Article 280(1) of the Constitution lays down the modalities for setting up of a Finance Commission to make recommendation on the distribution of net proceeds of taxes between the Union and states; allocation between states of respective shares of such proceeds; grants-in-aid and the revenues of states and measures needed to supplement the resources of 'panchayats' during the award period.
- The distribution between the Union and states of the net proceeds of taxes which are to be, or may be, divided between them under Chapter I, Part XII of the Constitution and the allocation between states of the respective shares of such proceeds, are among the terms of reference (ToR) approved by the Cabinet.

3. Ministry of Tourism launches National Best Tourism Village and National Best Rural Homestays Competition 2024

- Ministry of Tourism has launched National Best Tourism Village

Competition 2024 and the National Best Rural Homestay Competition 2024 to strengthen the promotion and development of Rural Tourism in the country.

- The earlier version of the National Best Tourism Village Competition 2023 recognized 35 villages all over India in Gold, Silver, and Bronze categories.
- To foster collaboration and create a conducive environment for the growth of Rural Tourism, the Ministry has actively engaged Governments, industry stakeholders, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), and local communities through these competitions. This multi-stakeholder approach synergizes the efforts to strengthen the rural economies.
- The competition was launched on World Tourism Day i.e., 27th September 2023, and the applications for the competitions are open from 15th November to 31st December, 2023.

4. Gajraj System: Railways to install AI-based surveillance system to prevent elephant deaths on track

- The Indian Railways will be installing an AI-based surveillance system to prevent elephant deaths on railway tracks.
- These surveillance system will be installed on 700 kilometres of route passing through forest areas.
- Forest areas in Assam, West Bengal, Odisha, Kerala, Jharkhand and some parts of Chhattisgarh and Tamil Nadu which are home to elephants. We can call it 'Gajraj System'

5. PM Modi unveils grand statue of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj at Rajkot Fort in Sindhudurg district

- **PM Narendra Modi unveiled a grand statue of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj at Rajkot Fort in Sindhudurg district.**
- Navy Day 2023' celebrations at Sindhudurg pays homage to the rich maritime heritage of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj, whose seal inspired the new Naval Ensign which was adopted last year when the PM Modi commissioned the first indigenous aircraft carrier INS Vikrant.

6. Government decides to implement component of "Nari Adalat" in phased manner under Mission Shakti

- **Union Minister for Women and Child Development Smriti Irani has informed the Rajya Sabha that the Government has decided to implement the component of "Nari Adalat" in a phased manner under Mission Shakti.**
- In the first phase, Assam and the **Union Jammu and Kashmir have been selected by the Ministry to implement the component of Nari Adalat.**
- In Jammu and Kashmir, it is being implemented in two aspirational districts -Kupwara and Baramulla and in Assam, seven districts namely Barpeta, Goalpara, South Salmara Mankachar, Udalguri, Darrang, Morigaon and Kamrup have been covered under it.
- The Central government is implementing 'Mission Shakti' as an umbrella scheme for the safety, security and empowerment of women.
- It seeks to realise the Government's commitment for 'women-led development' by addressing issues affecting women on a life-cycle continuum basis and making them equal partners in nation-building through convergence and citizen-ownership.

- The budget allocation under Mission Shakti for the financial year 2023-24 is around 3 thousand 144 crore rupees.

7. GQG Partners checks in at GMR Airports Infrastructure, buys 4.7% stake

- **GQG Partners acquired a 4.7 per cent stake in GMR Airports Infrastructure on Friday, sending the stock up 12 per cent.**
- The US-based boutique investment firm, which has gained prominence because of its successful investments in Adani group stocks, purchased shares at Rs 59.1 each, amounting to a total outgo of Rs 1,672 crore, according to data provided by BSE.

8. PM addresses Infinity Forum 2.0

- **The Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi addressed the second edition of Infinity Forum, a global thought leadership platform on FinTech via video conferencing.**
- The 2nd Edition of Infinity Forum is being jointly organized by the International Financial Services Centres Authority (IFSCA), and GIFT City, under the aegis of the Government of India.
- **The theme of the 2nd edition of Infinity Forum is 'GIFT-IFSC: Nerve Centre for New Age Global Financial Services'.**
- The forum provides a platform, where progressive ideas, pressing problems, and innovative technologies from across the world get discovered, discussed and developed into solutions and opportunities.

9. Prime Minister applauds singer Kailash Kher for his new song 'Kashi Stuti'

- The Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi has applauded singer Kailash Kher for his new song 'Kashi Stuti'.

- Shri Modi also paid obeisances to glory of immortal and imperishable Kashi and said that the presentation of this song with full of devotion is captivating.
- Responding to the X post of Kailash Kher, the Prime Minister posted on X;“-- ! !”

10. Union Minister Nirmala Sitharaman inaugurates 'Krishnaveni Sangeetha Neerajanam' in Vijayawada

- Union Minister of Finance and Corporate Affairs, Smt. Nirmala Sitharaman inaugurated Krishnaveni Sangeetha Neerajanam, at Tummalapalli Kalakshetram, Vijayawada.
- The Three-day classical music extravaganza to host a variety of activities, including classical music performances by renowned musicians, exhibition and sale of regional cuisine, local handicrafts and handlooms

11. PM Narendra Modi to inaugurate first Indian Art, Architecture and Design Biennale 2023 at Red Fort in Delhi

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi will inaugurate the first Indian Art, Architecture and Design Biennale (IAADB) 2023 at Red Fort in Delhi.
- He will also inaugurate Aatmanirbhar Bharat Centre for Design at Red Fort and the student Biennale- Samunnati.
- IAADB is being organized in line with the PM's vision to develop and institutionalise a flagship global cultural initiative .

12. Youth for Unnati and Vikas with AI (YUVAi) to be featured in GPAI Summit 2023

- **The Ministry of Electronics and IT has said that the program- 'YUVAi- Youth for Unnati and Vikas with AI' will be featured at the Global Partnership on**

Artificial Intelligence (GPAI) Summit in New Delhi.

- The programme, designed to equip the youth with essential AI skills, has garnered attention for its innovative approach.
- The programme is a collaborative initiative of the National e-Governance Division, under the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) and Intel India.
- **YUVAi aims to foster a deeper understanding of AI, to enable school students from class 8 to 12 across the nation with AI skills**, and to empower them to become human-centric designers and users of AI.

13. Centre Introduced Certification Of Authenticity For Jute Products Under Jute Mark India Logo

- **The Ministry of Textiles has introduced certification of authenticity for Jute Products with the unveiling of Jute Mark India Logo on 09th July 2022.**
- Jute Mark India provides collective identity and assurance on origin and quality for traditional jute & jute diversified products. So far, 55 vendors have registered for availing Jute Mark India Logo. Union Minister of State for Textiles, Smt. Darshana Jardosh.
- The Government has approved an Umbrella scheme namely the **National Jute Development Program (NJDP) with a total outlay of Rs 485.58 crore for implementation during 2021-22 to 2025-26** for overall development and promotion of the Jute Sector.

NJDP covers following schemes:

- (i) Improved Cultivation and Advanced Retting Exercise (Jute ICARE) –To introduce

package of scientific methods of jute cultivation and retting exercises for improving fibre quality and productivity and reducing the cost of jute production and increasing farmers' income.

(ii) Jute Resource cum Production Centre (JRCPC)- To spread jute diversification programme by providing trainings to new artisans and WSHGs for sustained employment for production of Jute Diversified Products (JDPs).

(iii) Jute Raw Material Bank (JRMB)- To supply jute raw material to jute artisans, MSMEs for production of JDPs at Mill Gate price.

(iv) Jute Retail Outlets (JRO) Scheme – To facilitate existing and new artisans / entrepreneurs for promotion and sale of JDPs through Retail Outlets / Showrooms.

(v) Jute Design Resource Centre (JDRC)- For designing and development of market worthy innovative jute diversified products and helping existing and new JDP manufacturers and exporters.

(vi) Product Diversification (R&D) Studies- To explore Research & Development in Textile and Non Textile Applications.

(vii) Production Linked Incentive (PLI) Scheme – To support Jute Mills and MSME JDP units for manufacturing and exporting JDPs and making them cost competitive in the international markets.

(viii) Capital Subsidy for Acquisition of Plant & Machinery (CSAPM)- For manufacturing (JDPs) and to facilitate modernization / upgradation of the existing Jute mills and MSME JDP Units.

(ix) Market Development Promotion activities (Domestic & Exports)- To

support the JDP units for promotion and sale of JDPs, in the Domestic market and to registered jute exporters to boost export of jute goods.

Development of Jute Mark Logo for Certification of Quality Jute Diversified products and Launching publicity campaign to popularize jute.

(x) Scholarship Scheme for the girl children of the workers of jute mills, JDP- MSMEs: To support girl children of the workers of Jute Mills/MSME-JDP Units in the form of incentives

14. Centre approves financial assistance of over 338 crore rupees to Gujarat and 634 crore rupees for Himachal Pradesh

- The Centre has approved the financial assistance of over 338 crore rupees to Gujarat, which was severely affected by the Cyclone Biparjoy.
- The Home Ministry has also approved an additional financial assistance of around 634 crore rupees from the National Disaster Response Fund (NDRF) to Himachal Pradesh which was severely affected due to floods, cloudbursts, and landslides.

15. National Mission For Clean Ganga Targets Cumulative Sewerage Treatment Capacity Of 7,000 MLD By December, 2026

- Under Namami Gange Programme, in the Ganga basin, a total of 195 sewerage infrastructure projects have been taken up with a cost of ' 31,344.13 crore for creation & rehabilitation of 6,173.12 Million Litres per Day (MLD) of Sewage Treatment Plant (STP) capacity.
- National Mission for Clean Ganga targets to sanction a cumulative treatment capacity of 7,000 MLD by Dec 2026.

16. Central Tribal University to be set up in Telangana

- **The Parliament passed the Central Universities (Amendment) Bill, 2023 bill to establish a central tribal university in Telangana.**
- The university will be built at a cost of '900 crore.
- The university is expected to be set up in Mulugu and is named after tribal goddesses Sammakka and Sarakka.
- As per the state and objects of the Central Universities (Amendment) Bill, 2023, the Sammakka Sarakka Central Tribal University aims to fulfil regional aspirations by enhancing access and quality of higher education in Telangana.
- The new university is expected to promote higher education and research along with tribal art, culture, customs and technological advancements for the tribal population of India.
- With an added focus on tribal education, the bill states that the Sammakka Sarakka Central Tribal University will fulfil its education and other activities like other central universities.
- **The Central Universities Act, of 2009** was enacted to establish and incorporate central universities to support and improve the education and research ecosystem across the states of India.

17. Cabinet approves declaration of Surat Airport as an International Airport

- **The Union Cabinet chaired by the Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi has approved the proposal to declare Surat Airport as an International Airport.**
- Surat Airport will not only become a gateway for international travelers but also facilitate seamless export-import

operations for the thriving diamond and textile - industries.

18. Rate of Permanent Disablement Benefit (PDB) and Dependant's Benefit (DB) increased under ESI Scheme

- The 192nd Meeting of Employees' State Insurance Corporation was held today at ESIC Headquarters under the Chairmanship of Shri Bhupender Yadav, Union Minister for Labour and Employment, Environment, Forest and Climate Change and Chairman, ESIC.
- In order to neutralise the impact of inflation, the proposal to increase the basic rate of Permanent Disablement Benefit (PDB) and Dependant's Benefit (DB) was approved by ESI Corporation.
- **The PDB is paid at the rate of 90% of wages in the form of monthly payment depending upon the extent of loss of earning capacity as certified by a Medical Board.**
- **The DB is paid at the rate of 90% of wage in the form of monthly payment to the dependants of a deceased Insured person in cases where death occurs due to employment injury or occupational hazards.**

19. UGC says, no foreign higher educational institutions to be allowed to offer any programme in India without its prior approval

- **University Grant Commission (UGC) has mandated that no foreign higher educational institution (HEI) will offer any programme in India without the prior approval of the commission.**
- The regulations also mandate that the HEIs shall not offer programmes under any franchise arrangement and that such programmes shall not be recognised by the UGC.

- This includes Twinning Programmes, Joint Degree, and Dual Degree Programmes.
- UGC also noted that edtech companies that are giving advertisements for offering degree and diploma programmes in online modes in association with some foreign universities/institutions, are not permissible under the franchise agreement and any such programme or degree will not have UGC recognition.
- The University Grants Commission is a statutory organization under the Ministry of Education, Government of India, established by an Act of Parliament in **1956** for the promotion and co-ordination of University education and for the determination and maintenance of standards of teaching, examination and research in Universities, and for the purpose of performing its functions under this Act.

20. In a first, exploration licences to private agencies for mineral projects

- **In a first, the Ministry of Mines directly sanctioned exploration licences to five Notified Private Exploration Agencies (NPEAs) for critical and deep-seated mineral projects.**
- These licensees selected by the Centre sans any auction process would, however, be allowed to participate in the auction of the said minerals, a privilege that was previously not granted.
- **A total of 17 projects, including 11 of critical minerals, provided to the five NPEAs are in Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Odisha, Gujarat and Karnataka.**
- Gemcokati Exploration, an NPEA in Maharashtra, acquired the highest six

projects. Kolkata-based Maheshwari Mining secured four projects. Both Geovale Services and Geoexplore secured three projects each, while United Exploration received one project.

- The exploration blocks will contain a variety of minerals, including iron ore, graphite, platinum group elements (PGE), gold, bauxite, nickel, cobalt, and rare earth elements (REE).
- Since March 2022, the ministry has notified 16 Private Exploration Agencies to take up exploration projects through state governments, funded by the National Mineral Exploration Trust (NMET).
- The Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act, 1957, MMDR Act was amended through the MMDR Amendment Act, 2021, w.e.f. 28/3/2021 which, inter alia, empowers the central government to notify entities, including private entities, that may undertake prospecting operations.
- On August 17, 2023, an amendment to the MMDR Act identified 24 minerals, including graphite, nickel, PGE, REE, potash, among others, as critical and strategic minerals. A comprehensive list of 29 minerals was included in the 'Seventh Schedule' of the Act, opening the possibility for these private exploration agencies to obtain exploration licenses for these minerals.

21. Ola founder Bhavish Aggarwal's Krutrim announces ChatGPT rival

- **Krutrim Si Designs, the artificial intelligence (AI) venture of Ola co-founder Bhavish Aggarwal unveiled Krutrim, its base large language model (LLM).**
- Krutrim has joined the increasingly-competitive AI race dominated by

players such as Google, Microsoft and OpenAI.

- Krutrim, meaning “artificial” in Sanskrit, is a family of LLMs, including Krutrim base and Krutrim Pro, which will have multimodal, larger knowledge capabilities, and many other technical advancements for inference.

22. 'India's fastest' solar-electric boat Barracuda launched

- Taking ahead the cause of eco-friendly maritime transportation, Barracuda, said to be India's fastest solar-electric boat, was launched on at the yard of Navalt Solar and Electric Boats, located off Aroor in Alappuzha.
- Named after the swift, long fish, Barracuda was designed by Navalt and can be deployed even in the rough seas as a workboat to ferry up to 12 passengers.
- This cutting-edge vessel was jointly developed by Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders and Navalt.

23. PM Modi inaugurates Swarved Mahamandir in Varanasi

- **Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the world's largest meditation centre Swarved Mahamandir in Varanasi.**
- Verses of the Swarveda have been carved upon the walls of the Mahamandir a seven-floor superstructure.
- Following the inauguration of the Swarved Mahamandir, Modi along with UP Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath took a tour of the centre that can seat 20,000 people.

24. Union Minister Dr. Jitendra Singh to inaugurate Good Governance Week 2023 on 19th December, 2023

- Union Minister Dr. Jitendra Singh inaugurated the Good Governance Week (Sushasan Saptah) celebrations to be held from 19th December 2023 to 25th December 2023, the Good Governance Day.
- The Good Governance Week 2023 is the third consecutive year of week-long celebrations organized by Department of Administrative Reforms & Public Grievances (DARPG), Government of India.
- The Good Governance Week events yield very positive outcomes and generate a great sense of commitment and togetherness in the Government's steadfast objective of fostering administrative reforms.
- On this occasion, administrations of States, UTs and at the district level share the platform with Government of India and highlight the best practices in administration which in turn promotes cooperative federalism and improves the discharging of our administrative functions in a cohesive manner that further improves the lives of our citizens.

25. Post Office Bill 2023

- The Parliament passed the Post Office Bill that seeks to simplify the legislative framework to facilitate the evolution of India Post into a citizen-centric service network.
- The Post Office Bill, 2023 seeks to repeal the 125-year-old Indian Post Office Act and consolidate and amend the law relating to post offices in the country.
- It was introduced in the Rajya Sabha on August 10 2023 and passed on

December 4. Subsequently, the bill was passed in the Lok Sabha on December 18, 2023.

- The Bill maintains that the government will not have any 'exclusive privilege' over conveying letters.
- The Director General of Postal Services, who will head India Post will have the power to decide on matters pertaining to tariff and supply of the postal stamps.
- Moreover, the Bill exempts India Post from any liability for lapses in the postal service. However, the government may intercept an article sent via India Post on grounds of security and public order.

26. India Records 112 Deaths in 2022 from Tiger Attacks

- The Centre informed that in 2022 a total of 112 deaths took place in the country due to tiger attacks.
- In a written reply to Lok Sabha, Union Minister for Forest, Environment and Climate Change Bhupinder Yadav informed that the highest number of deaths is 85 in Maharashtra followed by 11 in Uttar Pradesh.
- He said during the past five years 302 people died in tiger attacks.

27. Lower house of Indian parliament passes 3 criminal law bills, replacing IPC, CrPC, Evidence Act

- The Lok Sabha passed the three crucial bills that will replace a raft of British-era laws after a day-long discussion in the Lower House.
- The Bharatiya Nyaya (Second) Sanhita will replace the Indian Penal Code, the Bharatiya Nagrik Suraksha (Second) Sanhita the Code of Criminal Procedure, and Bharatiya Saksha (Second) Bill the Evidence Act, 1872.

- The bills were passed even as 97 opposition MPs remained suspended and away from the all-important proceedings. The three bills were first introduced in the house in August during the monsoon session of the Parliament.
- The Bharatiya Nagrik Suraksha (Second) Sanhita will now have 531 Sections, down from the 533 Sections that the first bill had.
- The Bharatiya Sakshya Bill remains unchanged and has 170 Sections. Of these, 23 Sections have been sourced from the Indian Evidence Act.

28. Parliament passes 'Press and Registration of Periodicals Bill, 2023'

- **The Lok Sabha passed the Press and Registration of Periodicals Bill, 2023, repealing the Press and Registration of Books Act, 1867.**
- The Bill has already been passed by Rajya Sabha in the Monsoon Session.
- It will make the registration of periodicals simple and simultaneous, through an online system without the requirement of any physical interface.
- The title registration process which sometimes took 2-3 years, would now be done in 60 days

29. Parliament passes 'Telecommunications Bill, 2023'

- **The Parliament has passed the 'Telecommunications Bill, 2023' with the approval of Rajya Sabha with amendments.**
- The Bill has already been passed by Lok Sabha.
- It has been brought to transform and reform telecom sector, services, and its networks.

- The Bill seeks to amend and consolidate the law relating to the development, expansion, and operation of telecom services.
- **The Bill seeks to replace the 'Indian Telegraph Act, 1885'.**

30. Central Railway launches safety 'panic button' feature for women passengers

- With a view to strengthen security of women passengers in trains, Central Railway (CR) has introduced 'panic button' system to alert officials in case of an emergency.
- The security feature - Red push button - installed inside each of the four ladies coach of a local train was launched last week on a trial basis.

31. Union Minister Unveils Commemorative Stamp for AIIA Goa's First Foundation Day

- Union Minister of AYUSH Sarbananda Sonowal marked the first foundation day of the All India Institute of Ayurveda (AIIA), Goa by releasing a commemorative postal stamp in New Delhi.
- The satellite centre of AIIA in Goa was dedicated to the nation by Prime Minister Narendra Modi last year. AIIA is a premier centre for Ayurvedic research and treatment.
- The AIIA Goa, spanning a vast 50-acre campus, is meticulously modelled after its counterpart in Delhi. Its mission is to provide advanced preventive, diagnostic, and tertiary healthcare facilities.

32. CISF to replace Delhi Police for security duty of Parliament building complex

- **The Union Home Ministry has approved the deployment of the Central**

Industrial Security Force (CISF) in the Parliament complex.

- The decision comes days after the December 13 security breach in the Parliament.
- The Delhi Police, however, will continue to provide security outside the parliament building complex.

33. LIC gets time till 2032 to achieve minimum public shareholding norms

- **Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) will get time till May 2032 to comply with Minimum Public Shareholding (MPS) norms prescribed by the Securities and Exchange Board of India.**
- **As of September 30, 2023, the government owns 96.5 per cent in LIC.** The government divested 3.5 per cent of its shareholding in LIC last year, and accordingly, it got listed on stock exchange.
- Rule 19A of the Securities Contract Regulation Rules says every listed company, other than a public sector company, shall maintain a public shareholding of at least 25 per cent.
- Such a company will get three years from the date of listing to ensure MPS. Such a provision aims to bring more public as shareholding. The public can be an individual or an institution.

34. Govt extends zero import duty & agri-cess exemption on masur till March 2025

- **The government has extended current effective zero import duty on masur dal (lentil) till March 2025 in order to ensure steady supply of the key pulse from international market and keep domestic prices under check.**
- However, the government has not extended the current import duty

structure on three crude edible oils -- palm oil, soyabean oil and sunflower oil. India is the world's largest producer and import of pulses.

- According to a finance ministry notification, the exemption of zero import duty on masur as well as agri-cess of 10 per cent has been extended till March 2025
- This exemption on masur was valid till March 2024.
- It imported 24.96 lakh tonnes pulses during 2022-23.

35. MHA declares Muslim League Jammu Kashmir , Masarat Alam faction as 'unlawful association'

- **The Union Home Ministry declared the Muslim League Jammu Kashmir Masarat Alam faction (MLJK-MA) as an 'unlawful association' under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967 (UAPA).**
- This organisation and its members are involved in anti-national and secessionist activities in J&K supporting terrorist activities and inciting people to establish Islamic rule in J&K." Union Home Minister : Amit Shah.

36. Government issues notice to nine offshore cryptocurrency platforms for non-compliance under Prevention of Money Laundering Act

- **The Financial Intelligence Unit India has issued compliance show cause notices to nine offshore Virtual Digital Assets Service Providers.**
- Virtual Digital Assets Service Providers were brought into the ambit of Anti Money Laundering, Counter Financing of Terrorism (AML-CFT) framework under the provisions of the **Prevention of**

Money Laundering Act, 2002 in March 2023.

- The nine cryptocurrency exchanges served with the notices are **Binance, KuCoin, Huobi, Kraken, Gate.io, Bittrex, Bitstamp, MEXC Global and Bitfinex.**
- Digital asset service providers, whether operating within or outside India's borders, and involved in activities such as converting between digital assets and traditional currencies, transferring digital assets, safeguarding or managing digital assets, or utilizing instruments that grant control over digital assets, must undergo registration with the Financial Intelligence Unit India (FIU IND) as a 'Reporting Entity.'
- Additionally, they are obligated to adhere to a specified set of responsibilities outlined in the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) of 2002.
- **Financial Intelligence Unit – India (FIU-IND)** was set by the Government of India vide O.M. dated 18th November 2004 as the central national agency responsible for receiving, processing, analyzing and disseminating information relating to suspect financial transactions.
- FIU-IND is also responsible for coordinating and strengthening efforts of national and international intelligence, investigation and enforcement agencies in pursuing the global efforts against money laundering and financing of terrorism.
- FIU-IND is an independent body reporting directly to the Economic Intelligence Council (EIC) headed by the Finance Minister.

37. Cabinet approves projects worth Rs.5,500 crore for Bihar, N-E

- **The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs(CCEA) chaired by the Prime Minister Narendra Modi, gave its go ahead to construction of a bridge on Bihar and widening of a road in Tripura entailing an investment of over Rs 5500 crore.**
- CCEA approved a 4.56 km-long six-lane bridge over the Ganga connecting Digha and Sonapur in Bihar at a cost of Rs.3064.45 crore.
- The CCEA also approved a Rs.2,486.78 crore project of improvement and widening of 135-km stretch of the national highway from Khowai to Harina in Tripura. Thakur said the project would reduce the distance by 28km and the time taken by half. He said the project would improve connectivity between different parts of the state as well as between Tripura and Assam. The project includes a loan of Rs.1,511.70 crore from Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA). The project is expected to take two years to be completed.
- The CCEA also approved the minimum support price (MSP) for copra for 2024. The MSP for milling copra was increase by Rs.300 per quintal to Rs.11,160 per quintal and for ball copra by Rs.250 per quintal to Rs.12,000 per quintal. Thakur said the MSPs had more than doubled since 2014-2015, when the MSP for milling copra was Rs.5,250 per quintal and ball copra was Rs.5,500 per quintal. He said there had been “record procurement” this season, with more than 1.33 lakh metric tonnes of copra procured at Rs.1,493 crore in total.

38. Environment Minister Bhupender Yadav launches National Transit Pass System

- **Union Environment Minister Bhupender Yadav launched the National Transit**

Pass System (NTPS) pan-India to facilitate the seamless transit of timber, bamboo, and other forest produce across the country.

- NTPS is envisioned as a 'One Nation-One Pass' regime that will contribute to the ease of doing business.
- NTPS is designed for user convenience, featuring desktop and mobile

applications for easy registration and permit applications.

- Presently, 25 States and Union Territories have adopted the unified permit system, streamlining interstate business operations for producers, farmers, and transporters.



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International

1. COP28 Kicks Off in Dubai with Visionary Leadership and Urgent Climate Appeals

- The 28th Conference of the Parties (COP28) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) commenced in Dubai, marking a pivotal moment in the global fight against the escalating climate crisis.
- World leaders, policymakers, and climate experts from 198 parties have gathered for the two-week conference.

2. India re-elected to International Maritime Organisation with highest vote tally

- In elections held at its assembly for the 2024'25 biennium, India was re-elected to the International Maritime Organisation (IMO) Council with the highest tally.
- India's re-election falls under the Category of 10 states with "the largest interest in international seaborne trade", alongside Australia, Brazil, Canada, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Spain, Sweden, and UAE.
- India secured the large-scale support of the international community at the International Maritime Organisation for India to continue to serve the global maritime domain.
- The International Maritime Organisation (IMO) is the leading authority that regulates the maritime industry, which supports global trade, transportation, and all marine operations.

3. JT-60SA: World's biggest experimental nuclear fusion reactor inaugurated in Japan

- JT-60SA, the world's largest and most advanced nuclear fusion reactor started

its official operations in Japan's Ibaraki Prefecture.

- JT-60SA is a joint initiative between the European Union and Japan.
- The JT-60SA reactor is a six-storey-high machine, which is kept in a hangar in Naka north of Tokyo.
- It comprises a doughnut-shaped "tokamak" vessel set to contain swirling plasma heated up to 200 million degrees Celsius. JT-60SA is a forerunner for its big brother in France, the under-construction International Thermonuclear Experimental Reactor (ITER). JT-60SA and ITER both are to coax hydrogen nuclei inside to fuse into one heavier element, helium, releasing energy in the form of light and heat.

4. ADB to provide Rs 250 million to strengthen India's power sector

- The Asian Development Bank has approved a **Rs 250 million** policy-based loan to strengthen India's power sector by improving financial sustainability and facilitating the shift to renewable energy.
- This policy-based loan will help reduce barriers to scale up commercial financing for clean energy and contribute to India's fulfillment of its climate change mitigation commitment
- The Power Sector Reform Program (Subprogram 1) is the first of a two-part program to strengthen the development of markets for power trade and related ancillary services.
- This will facilitate the integration of intermittent renewable energy given India's target of 50 per cent of its power generation capacity from non-fossil fuel sources by 2030.

- These policy actions will, among others, help accelerate the deployment of solar and other renewable energy technologies, promote the use of renewables in the agriculture sector, and optimize dispatch of power plants to reduce emissions.
- The loan will also enable measures to improve the financial performance, corporate governance, and service quality of electricity distribution companies (DISCOM) and create a conducive environment for private sector investment.
- It will aid in the implementation of an incentive-based results-oriented approach to improving DISCOM performance on parameters including losses, cost recovery, metering and timely payment of dues in order to access government budget support.

5. Akshata Krishnamurthy becomes the first Indian citizen to operate a Mars rover

- **Akshata Krishnamurthy is an Indian woman who created history as she became the first person from the country to operate the Mars rover with the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) in the United States.**
- Akshata is a PhD holder from the MIT (Massachusetts Institute of Technology). She is among the few Indians who joined NASA for a full-time opportunity.

6. US Prez nominates Indian American global venture capitalist to IDFC Board

- **President Joe Biden has nominated prominent Indian-American global venture capitalist Deven Parekh as a member of the Board of Directors of the International Development Finance**

Corporation, a development finance institution and agency of the US government.

- Parekh, the managing director at software investment firm Insight Partners, was nominated for the post last week.
- His nomination will be for a period of three years.
- By statute, the US International Development Finance Corporation (DFC) Board of Directors includes four members recommended to the President from Senate and House leadership.

7. World Radiocommunication Conference 2023 appoints UAE's Mohammed Al Ramsi as Chairman

- **United Arab Emirates' Mohammed Al Ramsi has been appointed Chairman of World Radiocommunication Conference 2023 (WRC 23).**
- The event is being held in Dubai, UAE, from November 20th to December 15th, 2023.
- **WRC is organised by International Telecommunication Union (ITU)** every four years to revise the global use of radio-frequency spectrum, geostationary-satellite and non-geostationary-satellite orbits.
- This year, more than 4,000 government officials and 900 international organisations from 193 countries are attending the conference.

8. Italy withdraws from China's Belt and Road project

- Italy has formally notified China of its withdrawal from Beijing's ambitious belt and road infrastructure initiative (BRI), a

significant trade and infrastructure project.

- The Italian prime minister, Giorgia Meloni, has long been critical of the project and had expressed her intention to withdraw from the deal, seen by many as an effort by China to buy political influence. Italy became the only G7 nation to join the initiative in 2019.
- The BRI scheme envisions rebuilding the old Silk Road to connect China with Asia, Europe and beyond with vast amounts of infrastructure spending on roads and shipping routes. However, critics see it as a tool for China to spread its geopolitical and economic influence – a state-backed campaign for global dominance.
- China spent \$240bn (£195bn) bailing out countries struggling under their BRI debts between 2008 and 2021, data showed in March this year.
- More than 100 countries have signed agreements with China to cooperate on BRI infrastructure and building projects since the scheme was launched in 2013.

9. The UN peacekeeping mission in Mali ends after 10 years

- **The United Nations ended its 10-year peacekeeping mission in Mali following the government's request that alleged the force was inadequate to respond to growing violent extremism in the West African nation.**
- The U.N. effort in Mali has been the deadliest peacekeeping mission in the world, with more than 300 personnel killed.
- Mali officially the Republic of Mali, is a landlocked country in West Africa.
- Landlocked Mali has struggled to contain an Islamic extremist insurgency since 2012. Extremist rebels were forced from

power in northern cities the following year with the help of a French-led military operation. But rebels regrouped in the desert and began launching attacks on the Malian army and its allies — which soon included the U.N. force.

10. COP28 concludes with historic agreement to try to tackle the climate crisis

- **The United Nations Climate Change conference, COP28, has concluded with a historic agreement to transition away from fossil fuels, triple renewable energy and increase climate finance for the most vulnerable.**
- It aims to keep alive the goal of the Paris Agreement to try to limit long-term global average near-surface temperature to 1.5C above the pre-industrial era.

11. Indian-American Medical Student Rijul Maini Crowned Miss India USA 2023

- **This year, the Miss India USA pageant was crowned to Rijul Maini, a medical student from Michigan held in New Jersey.**
- The 24-year-old Indian-American aspires to be a surgeon and hopes to serve as a role model to women everywhere.
- Meanwhile, Greeshma Bhat of Virginia was declared first runner-up and Ishita Pai Raikar of North Carolina was the second runner up.

12. China launches deepest lab on Earth

- **The world's deepest and largest underground laboratory became operational in China, state news agency Xinhua reported**
- The report said that the 2,400-metre-deep physics laboratory is located in southwest China's Sichuan Province.

- The report mentioned the scientists think that the lab provides a major boost to the global search for dark matter, which is a hypothetical form of matter that appears not to interact with light or the electromagnetic field.
- It is expected that the lab will open up new frontiers in deep-earth experiments as the extreme depth will help the scientists by blocking most cosmic rays that mess with the observation.

13. Noma added to WHO list of neglected tropical diseases

- **The World Health Organization (WHO) announced that the gangrenous disease noma has been added to its official list of neglected tropical diseases (NTDs).**
- Primarily found in sub-Saharan Africa, noma mainly affects malnourished children between the ages of 2 and 6 years. Poor oral hygiene, malnutrition, weakened immune systems, and extreme poverty are among the risk factors.

14. Amongst the leaders in gender equality, Finland awards International prize to Afghanistan-based NGO

- **Finland, awarded the International Gender Equality Prize for 2023 to an NGO in Afghanistan that works to promote and protect the rights of women in Afghanistan.**
- The organisation Afghan Women Skills Development Center does important humanitarian work to promote the safety of Afghan women.

15. Kuwait's new emir Sheikh Mishal takes oath of office

- **Kuwait's new emir, Sheikh Mishal al-Ahmad al-Sabah, has been formally**

sworn in before parliament to begin his rule.

- The new emir, took over after the passing of his half-brother, Sheikh Nawaf al-Ahmad al-Sabah.
- The 83-year-old Sheikh Mishal is Kuwait's third ruler in just over three years.

16. Over 1 mn Afghan children facing severe malnutrition, says WHO chief

- The World Health Organisation (WHO) has said that over one million children in Afghanistan are facing severe malnutrition.
- As per WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus the country needs \$ 185 million to fight against malnutrition.
- He also wrote on X that 30 per cent of the total Afghanistan population faces acute food insecurity.

17. UN announces 2024 as International Year of Camelids

- **The UN has designated 2024 as the International Year of Camelids.**
- Camels, llamas, alpacas, vicuas and guanacos are an important source of livelihood for millions of families - most of them pastoralists - in dryland and mountainous rangeland ecosystems around the world.
- The Year is meant to raise the public's and policymakers' awareness of the significant role of camelids.
- The resolution for the International Year of Camelids, proposed by the Government of Bolivia and presented by Ecuador as Country Chair of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean Countries (GRULAC), was approved by the UN General Assembly on 17 October 2017

upon recommendation by FAO (Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN).

18. Angola quits OPEC over oil production quotas disagreement

- **Angola says it will leave the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC)** over a disagreement regarding production quotas, a move that will bring the group down to 12 members.
- Angola, which first joined OPEC in 2007, has struggled to meet production quotas over the past several years.
- The country is joining others, such as Qatar and Ecuador, that have left OPEC.
- **OPEC Headquarters:** Located in Vienna, Austria.
- Angola is one of the largest oil exporters in Sub-Saharan Africa, alongside Nigeria.
- **Founded in 1960**, the 13-member OPEC cartel in 2016 partnered up with 10 other producers to form OPEC+ to gain more clout.
- Without Angola, OPEC countries will produce about 27 million barrels of oil per day, about 27 percent of the global supply.

19. Pakistan successfully tests Fatah-II guided multi-launch rocket system

- **Pakistan's military wing Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) claimed it had successfully conducted the flight test of Fatah-II**, a guided multi-launch rocket system (MLRS).
- Equipped with state-of-the-art avionics and navigation system, Fatah-II is capable of engaging targets with high precision up to a range of 400 kilometres.

20. BRICS group to double in 2024 after Saudi, Iran, UAE, Egypt, Ethiopia join ranks

- The BRICS club of emerging market countries is expected to double on January 1st when Saudi Arabia, Iran, the United Arab Emirates, Ethiopia and Egypt join the group.
- In August 2023, the current members of the group Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa invited six other countries to join them.
- Argentina formally rejected invitation to join BRICS.
- The newly elected President of Argentina, Javier Milei decided not to join the BRICS bloc of developing economies, saying that the timing for Argentina's membership in the bloc is not opportune.

Sports

1. Ruturaj Gaikwad becomes the fastest Indian to 4,000 T20 runs

- **Ruturaj Gaikwad has become the fastest Indian to accomplish 4,000 runs in men's T20 cricket.**
- He achieved the feat in the fourth T20I against Australia at the Shaheed Veer Narayan Singh International Stadium in Raipur.
- The 26-year-old only needed seven runs to achieve 4,000 runs in the shortest format of the game.
- Eventually, India posted 174/9 from their 20 overs.

2. R Vaishali becomes grandmaster, joins R Praggnanandhaa to become world's first brother-sister GM duo

- Indian chess ace R Vaishali joined younger sibling R Praggnanandhaa to become the world's first-ever brother-sister Grandmasters duo and only the third woman from the country to earn the GM title, at the IV El Llobregat Open in Spain.
- Vaishali achieved the feat after crossing 2500 ELO rating points.
- **She is the country's 84th GM.**

3. India bags 3 gold, 5 silver and 1 bronze medals in IBA Junior World Boxing Championship

- **On the last day of IBA Junior World Boxing Championship 2023, India bagged three gold, five silver and one bronze medals in Yerevan, Armenia.**
- Akansha won gold in 70 kg category, Pari clinched gold medal in 48 kg weight category, while Nisha won gold in 52 kg category. In 52 kg weight category, Vini

won silver medal, while Srishti Sathe won silver medal in 63 kg weight

- In the boys' category, Jatin won the silver medal in the 54 kg category. While Hardik Panwar in 80 kg category, Ameesha Kereta in the 54 kg category and Prachi Tokas in the 80 kg weight category had to settle for silver medals only.

4. Jimmy George Award for Sreeshankar

- **Olympian M. Sreeshankar, the long jump silver medallist in the Commonwealth Games and Asian Games, has won the 35th Jimmy George Foundation Award for the best sportsperson of Kerala.**
- The award carries a cash prize of Rs 1 lakh and a plaque.
- The award will be presented to Sreeshankar at the Jimmy George Sports Academy at Peravoor, Kannur, on December 22.

5. Men's Volleyball Club World Championship to begin in Bengaluru

- FIVB (Federation Internationale de Volleyball) Men's Volleyball Club World Championship 2023 will commence at the Koramangala Indoor Stadium in Bengaluru.
- This is the first time that the prestigious tournament will be held in India.
- The five-day tournament will see six teams compete for the top honours.
- Prime Volleyball League Season 2 champions, Ahmedabad Defenders, will become the first Indian team to feature in the competition.
- The Defenders qualified for the Club World Championship after winning the Prime Volleyball League earlier this year.

- Setter Muthusamy Appavu will lead the Defenders. The top two teams in the group stages will qualify for the semi-finals on December 9, and the final will be played on December 10.

6. Italy Wins Admiral's Cup 2023 Held At Indian Naval Academy

- The 12th edition of 'Admiral's Cup' Sailing Regatta concluded with a glittering closing ceremony at Ettikulam Beach at Indian Naval Academy (INA), Ezhimala, Kannur, Kerala.
- **Team Italy represented by Midshipman Avallone Antonio & Midshipman Creati Carlo Leonardo won the Admiral's Cup 23.**
- Team India represented by Midshipman PPK Reddy and Cadet GY Reddy was the Runners-Ups.

7. First-ever Khelo India Para Games begins in New Delhi

- The first-ever Khelo India Para Games kicked off today in New Delhi. More than 1,400 participants from across 32 states and Union Territories including Services Sports Control Board are participating in the 8-day event.
- Youth Affairs and Sports Ministry has said that athletes participating in the Khelo India Para Games will receive comprehensive medical coverage. The Ministry said that the medical coverage includes emergency medical services, on-site medical teams and access to necessary healthcare facilities.

8. Jaspreet Kaur shines with a gold; Yogesh Kathuniya adds to Haryana's tally

- **Jaspreet Kaur won the paralifting gold medal in the elite 45kg category with an**

inspired effort of 85kg at the Khelo India National Para Games.

- The girl from Punjab stood head and shoulders above the rest of the field, even as Sapna Shah from Gujarat took silver with 47kg.
- Sonam Patil of Maharashtra won bronze, with her best of 40kg.

9. Badminton pair Satwiksairaj-Chirag selected for Khel Ratna

- India's premier badminton men's doubles pair of **Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty is in line to receive the Major Dhyan Chand Khel Ratna Award**, the country's highest sports prize. The pair has had a remarkable year, reaching as many as six finals, winning five.
- They won at the Asian Games, Asian Championships, Swiss Open, Indonesia Open and Korea Open.

10. Antim Panghal named UWW Rising Star of the Year

- Two-time World under-20 champion and senior Worlds bronze medallist Antim Panghal (53kg) has been named United World Wrestling (UWW) Rising Star of the Year 2023 in women's section.
- Antim won a silver in her senior Asian championships debut, defended her U-20 World title and then won bronze at the World championships.
- The medal in Belgrade made the 19-year-old the youngest Indian to win a medal at the World Championships. Soon after, Antim traveled to Hangzhou for the Asian Games and won a bronze medal at 53kg.

11. Hardik Pandya to captain Mumbai Indians in IPL 2024, Rohit Sharma's 10-year-reign comes to an end

- In a momentous development, **Mumbai Indians have appointed the returning Hardik Pandya as their captain for the IPL 2024 season**, taking over the reins from Rohit Sharma after a 10-year stint as skipper.
- Hardik, who led Gujarat Titans to IPL crown in 2022, was traded back to MI after two years. Rohit, along with MS Dhoni, has won the title most times for his franchise ' five.

12. Khelo India Games to be held in Tamil Nadu in January, 2024

- **Khelo India Games will be held in Tamil Nadu in January next year. The State Government said that the games will be held in Chennai, Coimbatore, Madurai and Trichy from 19th to 31st January, 2024.**
- More than 5,500 sports persons and over 1,600 coaches are expected to participate in the event. More than 1000 referees and 1200 volunteers will be part of the sporting event.
- **For the first time, squash will be included in Khelo India games.**

13. Aryna Sabalenka, Novak Djokovic named as 2023 ITF World Champions, pair achieve special feat

- **Novak Djokovic and Aryna Sabalenka were honored by the International Tennis Federation as the 2023 ITF World Champions.**
- The pair were the only singles players who managed to reach at least the semi-finals of all four Grand Slam events this year.

- This is Djokovic's eighth ITF World Champion award, which is also a record. He finished the year as ATP No. 1 for a record-extending eighth time, where he bagged the Australian Open, French Open and US Open, which also took his majors' total to a men's leading 24. He was also runners-up at the Wimbledon and led the men's tour with seven titles.
- This is the first time Sabalenka has received this honour. She won the Australian Open this year, which was also her first Grand Slam title. She was runners-up at the US Open, and also made it to the semifinals of the French Open and Wimbledon. She also made her debut at No. 1 in the WTA rankings in September this year and finished the year at No. 2, behind Iga Swiatek.

14. Paes, Amritraj become first Asian men to be inducted into International Tennis Hall of Fame

- **Former doubles world No. 1 Leander Paes and broadcaster and promoter Vijay Amritraj of India have become the first Asian men to be inducted into the International Tennis Hall of Fame.**
- Besides the duo, renowned journalist and writer Richard Evans have also been elected in the Ultimate Honour in Tennis.
- Paes, an 18-time Grand Slam champion in doubles and mixed doubles, has been selected in the player category, while Amritraj and United Kingdom's Evans are inductees in the contributor category, which is considered for election every two years. The contributor category recognises true pioneers, visionary leaders, or individuals/groups who have made a transcendent impact on the sport.

15. Zinc Football Academy Bags AIFF's Topmost 'Elite 3-Star Rating'

- In just over 6 years since its inception, Zinc Football Academy ' a CSR initiative of Hindustan Zinc, has achieved yet another significant milestone and added a golden feather to its cap, as the academy has been bestowed with the prestigious 'Elite 3-star' rating by the All India Football Federation (AIFF).
- The AIFF rating firmly establishes Zinc Football among the best youth development academies in India.
- Zinc Football Academy's programme, with a full-scholarship model, is committed to fostering and nurturing young footballing talent, and has achieved several landmarks within a short span of time.
- The Academy currently hosts over 70 budding footballers categorized under the age groups of under-13, under-15, under-17 and under-19.
- The budding footballers get daily access to state-of-the-art infrastructure, world-class facilities, education, nutrition, hostel and top-notch training – all provided completely free of cost. The academy's holistic approach not only focuses on nurturing these young footballers but also on their overall development as future thought leaders of our society.

16. First-ever Khelo India Para Games conclude in New Delhi; Haryana dominates medal tally with 40 gold, 39 silver and 26 bronze

- The first-ever Khelo India Para Games (KIPG) concluded in New Delhi with Haryana winning the inaugural title by securing 105 medals including 40 gold, 39 silver, and 26 bronze.

- KIPG 2023, witnessed the participation of around 1,450 para-athletes from across the country.
- Uttar Pradesh came second with 62 medals including 25 gold, 23 silver, and 14 bronze, while Tamil Nadu finished third with 20 gold, eight silver, and 14 bronze medals. Athletes from 32 states and Union Territories participated in the Games.

17. Sandeep claims MRF Formula 2000 crown

- Sandeep Kumar and Chetan Surnineni won the MRF Formula 2000 and 1600 titles as the curtains came down on the fourth and final round of the MRF MMSC FMSCI Indian National Car Racing Championship 2023 at the Madras International Circuit.
- Also picking up the National titles in their respective categories were Gurunath Meiyappan (Race Concepts, Indian Touring Cars), Deepak Ravikumar (Performance Racing, Indian Junior Touring Cars) and T.S. Diljith (DTS Racing, Super Stock and Formula LGB 1300).

18. Vijay Hazare Trophy: Harshal Bowls Haryana To Title Against Rajasthan

- Haryana won the 2023 Vijay Hazare Trophy in a remarkable turn of events at the Saurashtra Cricket Association Stadium in Rajkot, claiming their first-ever trophy with a 30-run victory over Rajasthan in the final.
- The triumph capped off one of the most dominant campaigns in Indian domestic cricket history, with Haryana being unbeaten throughout the competition.

19. IPL Auction 2024: Mitchell Starc becomes most expensive player

- **Mitchell Starc of Australia emerged as the most expensive player in the history of the Indian Premier League (IPL) at the auction in Dubai.**
- He was bought by Kolkata Knight Riders (KKR) for '24.75 crore, breaking the record of Pat Cummins who was picked up for '20.5 crore by Sunrisers Hyderabad.

20. Maharashtra bags women's and AAI wins men's title events in Guwahati

- In team events of the 75th Inter State-Inter Zonal Badminton Championship 2023, Maharashtra bagged women's and Airport Authority of India (AAI) won the men's title events in Guwahati
- The prestigious national championship organized by Badminton Association of India is being held in Assam after four years.
- The dominant AAI team appeared in both the men's and women's team finals and managed to win the title in the men's category as they outclassed Karnataka 3-0. In the women's team event final, Maharashtra dominated AAI 3-0 with impressive displays from Shruti Mundada, Alisha Naik and the doubles pair of Simran Singhi and Ritika Thaker

21. Kiyana, Harsh win gold in Asian Youth Chess Championships

- Two Indian youngsters, Kiyana Parihar (U-8 Girls) and Harsh Suresh (U-16 open) won gold medals in the 25th Asian Youth Chess Championships (Classical), held at Al Ain Convention Centre in UAE.

- Kiyana had also bagged the silver medal in the Asian U-8 Girls rapid chess championship held last week.
- Three Indians, AS Sharvaanica (U-8 Girls), Aarit Kapil (U-8 Open) and G Tejaswini (U-18 Girls), won silver medals in their respective classical championships, while Aadya Ranganath won a bronze in the U-10 girls category.
- AS Sharvaanica, who had bagged two gold medals earlier in the 25th Asian Youth festival in U-8 Girls rapid and U-8 girls blitz categories, became the only player to win medals in all three (blitz, classical and rapid) categories.
- The Soviet players, who played under the FIDE flag, reigned supreme by winning four gold, four silver and two bronze medals while China bagged two gold, one silver and one bronze medals.
- India had bagged nine medals, including four gold (Bhagyashree Patil U-18 girls, Sapariya Ghosh U-14 girls, A S Sharvaanica U-8 girls and Muhammad Shyan Ibrahim U-8 Open), in the Asian Youth Rapid Chess Championships held December 13.
- The Asian Blitz Chess Championships held on December 17 saw three Indian girls -- V C Nivedita (U-12 girls), Pratitee Bordoloi (U-10 girls) and A S Sharvaanica -- win the gold medals for the country.

22. Women's Cricket: India achieve historic feat with maiden Test victory over Australia in one-off match in Mumbai

- **India recorded their maiden victory against Australia in a women's test match at Wankhede Stadium in Mumbai on 24 December 2023** with their comprehensive eight-wicket win in the one-off contest. This is India's first victory against Australia in 11 tests since

the teams first clashed in the longest format in 1977.

- India had taken control of the match with a commanding 187-run lead in the first innings. They needed just 75 runs to win the match after bowling Australia out for 261 in the second innings. India reached the target just after lunch losing two wickets.

23. Anmol Kharb wins women's singles title at National Badminton Championships in Guwahati

- In Badminton, Anmol Kharb has won the women's singles title at the National Badminton Championships 2023 in Guwahati. The teenager lost the first game of the final to Tanvi Sharma but fought back to level the score. The men's singles title clash saw an upset as the unseeded Chirag Sen secured the national title after defeating fourth-seed Tharun M.
- In the mixed doubles summit clash, Dhruv Kapila and Tanisha Crasto defeated the sixth-seeded duo of Nitin Kumar-Navdha Manglam 21-13, 21-8 to claim their maiden national title.
- Priya Devi Konjengbam and Shruti Mishra lifted the women's doubles title with a win over Ritika Thaker-Simran Singh.
- The men's doubles final was an edge-of-the-seat thriller where K Pruthvi Roy-Suraj Goala caused an upset by defeating Krishna Prasad Garaga-Vishnuvardhan Goud Panjala.

24. Former South Africa captain Dean Elgar announces retirement from international cricket after India series

- Former South Africa captain Dean Elgar has announced his retirement from

international cricket after a test series against India concludes early next month. Elgar, who has scored more than 5,000 runs with 13 centuries in his 84 tests, will play his final test at Newlands in Cape Town starting January 3.

- Elgar made his debut against Australia in Perth in 2011, making a duck in each innings in an inauspicious start to his 12-year test career, which has yielded 5,146 runs, including a high score of 199 against Bangladesh in 2017.
- He is South Africa's eighth highest scorer in tests.
- Elgar was elevated to captain in March 2021, replacing Quintin de Kock, and led the Proteas to series wins in the West Indies and at home against India, and a draw in New Zealand.

25. Indian Olympic Association forms 3-member ad hoc panel to run WFI

- The Indian Olympic Association (IOA) constituted a three-member ad hoc committee to run the day-to-day affairs of the WFI after the Sports Ministry suspended the wrestling national body for not following the provisions of its own constitution while taking decisions.
- Wushu Association of India president Bhupinder Singh Bajwa will be the chairman of the panel.
- Wushu Association of India president Bhupinder Singh Bajwa will be the chairman of the panel with hockey Olympian M M Somaya and former international shuttler Manjusha Kanwar being the other two members.
- The Sports Ministry suspended the WFI, three days after it elected new office bearers with Brij Bhushan Singh loyalist Sanjay Singh as president, and also asked IOA to constitute an ad-hoc panel to manage the affairs of the sports body.

26. World Rapid Chess Championship: Koneru Humpy wins silver in women's event.

- India's Koneru Humpy won the women's individual silver medal at the 2023 World Rapid Chess Championships in Samarkand, Uzbekistan.
- She lost to Anastasia Bodnaruk of Russia in a tie-break sudden death on time to concede the title.
- Humpy had previously won the bronze medal in 2012 at Moscow, Russia and was crowned the world champion in 2019 at Batumi, Georgia.



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Agreements & MoUs

1. iVIS partners with ICICI Bank to Boost Security with Advanced E-Surveillance Services

- **iVIS, a subsidiary of Magellanic Cloud, officially partnered with ICICI Bank for the distribution of cutting-edge e-surveillance services across its branches.**
- This collaboration will see iVIS deploying state-of-the-art AI/ML and IoT technology to deliver services such as real time video monitoring, facial recognition, incident detection and reporting.
- The strategic alliance aims to fortify ICICI Bank's branch-level security operations, specifically targeting areas like ATMs and cash counter operations.
- iVIS will implement real-time threat mitigations, remote security management, and automated response systems to ensure a comprehensive security infrastructure.
- iVIS boasts expertise in the e-surveillance domain, with a central command centre located in Hyderabad overseeing 20,000 ATMs and banking sites nationwide.

2. Tech Mahindra, AWS collaborate to propel sports entertainment into the digital future with sports cloud platform

- **Tech Mahindra announced a strategic collaboration with Amazon Web Services (AWS)** recently to develop a cutting-edge sports cloud platform catering to enthusiasts on a global scale. It aims to deliver an all-encompassing digital platform designed for sports organisations.

- This platform will include various use cases, including content and community engagement, customer data management, audience segmentation, and sports analytics, as detailed in a company statement.
- The platform will provide immersive stadium-to-home fan experiences by leveraging the capabilities of augmented reality and virtual reality (AR/VR), along with metaverse gamification.
- The platform seeks to redefine how sports fans engage with their favourite teams and events.

3. L&T Technology Services Joins Forces With Nasscom To Boost Gen AI Startups

- As a global frontrunner in Artificial Intelligence (AI) and digital engineering, LTTS possesses an array of expertise in creating advanced AI solutions. Its portfolio includes AiKno' and Chest-rAi'.
- AiKno' is an AI-driven platform that expedites the deployment of AI models, facilitating enterprises to seamlessly incorporate AI into their operations.
- Collaboration with nasscom's Generative AI Foundry set to fortify the startup landscape Bangalore, Karnataka, India – Business Wire India L&T Technology Services Limited (LTTS), a prominent global digital engineering and R&D services company, has announced its collaboration with nasscom GenAI Foundry initiative to stimulate the growth of Generative AI in India by providing comprehensive support to startups operating in this field.
- According to nasscom, Gen AI startups in the country have successfully raised over \$475 million in funding from 2021

through May 2023, signalling the sector's rapid expansion and potential.

- LTTs is poised to nurture this growth by offering resources and expertise to a select group of startups to bring their innovative concepts to fruition.

4. Zydus Lifesciences Gets USFDA Nod For Generic Heart Failure Treatment Drug

- **Zydus Lifesciences Ltd has received final approval from the U.S. health regulator for its generic version of Ivabradine tablets indicated for the treatment of heart failure.**
- The approval by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (USFDA) is for Ivabradine tablets of strengths 5 mg and 7.5 mg.
- The drug will be manufactured at the group's formulation manufacturing facility at Ahmedabad SEZ, India.
- Ivabradine is indicated to reduce the risk of hospitalisation for worsening heart failure in adult patients with stable, symptomatic chronic heart failure with certain conditions.
- It is also used in children aged six months and older for the treatment of stable symptomatic heart failure due to cardiomyopathy.

5. Infosys Inks Pact With Shell For Sustainable Data Centres

- **IT major Infosys has partnered with energy company Shell to accelerate the adoption of immersion cooling services for data centres.**
- Infosys and Shell will bring together their capabilities in digital and energy, respectively, along with an ecosystem of partners to create an integrated offering for green data centres.

6. Bharat Biotech, Sydney ID Announce MoU To Advance Vaccine Research Initiative

- **Bharat Biotech and the University of Sydney Infectious Diseases Institute announced a memorandum of understanding between them to advance vaccine research initiatives,** strengthen academic-industry partnerships and augment global efforts to combat infectious diseases.
- As per Bharat Biotech, the agreement aims to build strong sectoral and cross-organizational collaborations to design novel methodologies to tackle future epidemics and infectious diseases.
- It also aims at leveraging academia-industry strengths to advance the science of vaccines and biotherapeutics.

7. Shrinithi Capital to open 30 more branches in the South, inks pact with ESAF

- Chennai-headquartered Shrinithi Capital Pvt Ltd, which provides commercial vehicle and two-wheeler loans, plans to open 30 more branches in South India and aims to double its AUM (assets under management) from '300 crore to '600 crore by 2024.
- The company has entered into a Business Correspondent agreement with ESAF Small Finance Bank Ltd to expand its assets.

8. ReNew signs letter of intent with ADB for \$5.3 billion financing

- **ReNew Energy Global Plc has signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the Asian Development Bank (ADB) for debt financing of over \$5.3 billion for climate change mitigation and green energy projects.**
- The tie-up is also expected to help ADB achieve its ambition of investing \$100 billion in green energy projects by 2030.

- "The MoU covers projects with an investment value of more than \$5.3 billion between 2023 and 2028. It was signed at COP28 in Dubai by ReNew's founder, chairman & CEO Sumant Sinha and Suzanne Gaboury, director general, private sector operations department, ADB," read a company statement.

9. Indian Oil and EKI Energy ink deal to promote 'Surya Nutan

- **Maharatna energy company Indian Oil Corporation and Global carbon credit developer and supplier EKI Energy Services have collaborated to promote sustainable indoor solar cooking systems.**
- This strategic collaboration aims to promote 'Surya Nutan', IndianOil's innovative indoor solar cooking system.
- Under the MOU, Indian Oil will share the technology of Surya Nutan with EKI Energy to enhance its production and distribution, supported by carbon finance while contributing towards the betterment of society and the environment.
- EKI Energy will oversee the end-to-end management of Surya Nutan encompassing manufacturing, marketing, installation, and the provision of after-sales services.

10. Farm ponds to be built in Belagavi, Gadag districts

- **National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development, Deshpande Foundation, and Karnataka Vikas Grameena Bank have signed MoUs for promoting the construction of farm ponds in Belagavi and Gadag districts of northern Karnataka.**

- As per the MoU, farm ponds will be constructed in Belagavi and Gadag districts through formation and credit linkage of joint liability group.
- Under the agreement, Deshpande Foundation will form JLGs and build farm ponds, and NABARD will provide incentives for establishing and supporting JLGs. KVGB will provide institutional finance to JLGs for the development of agricultural ponds.

11. SBI Card joins Bharat BillPay in the credit card category.

- **NPCI Bharat BillPay (NBBL), a wholly-owned subsidiary of the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI), has successfully integrated SBI Card, one of India's leading credit card issuers, into the credit card category of Bharat BillPay.**
- This integration marks a significant advancement, streamlining the credit card bill payment process for millions of customers.

12. Ujjivan Small Finance Bank Partners with Water.org to offer Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Loans

- **Ujjivan Small Finance Bank (Ujjivan SFB) has announced a partnership with Water.org, a global non-profit organisation that helps people get access to safe water and sanitation through affordable financing, such as small loans.**
- India has the highest population globally, and this partnership holds immense promise in offering affordable financing solutions for safe water.
- Under the partnership, Water.org will assist Ujjivan SFB in identifying areas that require financing for clean water and hygienic sanitation. Water.org will

provide technical assistance, market assessment, development of Information, Education and Communication (IEC) material, monitoring and evaluation support.

- To support the cause, Ujjivan SFB will be offering loans to existing as well as new customers starting from Rs 6,000 up to Rs 1,00,000 to enable them to construct and/or renovate water and sanitation facilities.

13. LTTS collaborates with Nasscom to support generative AI start-ups

- IT firm L&T Technology Services Ltd (LTTS) is collaborating with Nasscom GenAI Foundry initiative to support start-ups that specialise in the field, in a bid to promote the growth of generative AI in India.
- The company aims to fuel the growth of generative AI by offering resources and expertise to a select group of 26 start-ups.
- The selected start-ups will be mentored and assisted with product development and innovation roadmaps. They will also be provided with Proof of Concepts and participate in boot camps and knowledge-sharing workshops hosted by LTTS to enhance their domain expertise.

14. Meta and IBM launch 'AI Alliance' to promote open-source AI development

- Facebook's parent company, **Meta**, and **IBM** launched a new group called the **AI Alliance** advocating for an '**open-science**' approach to AI development that puts them at odds with rivals Google, Microsoft and ChatGPT-maker OpenAI.
- The term 'open-source' comes from a decades-old practice of building

software in which the code is free or widely accessible for anyone.

- Open-source AI involves more than just code and computer scientists differ on how to define it depending on which components of the technology are publicly available and if there are restrictions limiting its use. Some use open science to describe the broader philosophy

15. REC signs 200 million euro loan with German Bank KfW to propel distribution sector reforms

- REC Limited, a Maharatna CPSE under the Ministry of Power, signed a 200 million Euro loan agreement with the German bank KfW.
- This marks REC's sixth line of credit under the Indo-German Development Cooperation and demonstrates the commitment to enhance the distribution infrastructure of DISCOMs in line with the Revamped Distribution Sector Scheme (RDSS) of the GOI.

16. RailTel signs MoUs with IIT Roorkee and University of Birmingham for strategic collaborations

- RailTel Corporation of India Ltd (RailTel) has signed two MoUs with IIT Roorkee and with University of Birmingham to establish a collaborative partnership in the fields skill development for Railway signalling, Telecommunication, ICT and development of digital twin for railway operation & maintenance respectively.
- The MoUs signed at the inaugural ceremony of IRSE International Railway Convention 2023.
- The collaboration with IIT Roorkee encompasses the launch of professional courses at RailTel's Center of Excellence,

coupled with extensive Research and Development activities. The partnership extends to the creation and operation of a Center for Safety Assessment, forging a robust alliance.

- The collaboration with the University of Birmingham open up opportunity for the usage of cutting technology like Digital Twin in the field of proactive Railway operation and Maintenance.

17. Tata Power ties up with Indian Oil to set up 500 EV charging points across India

- Tata Power said that its unit **Tata Power EV Charging Solutions Limited** has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with **Indian Oil Corporation Limited (IOCL)** to install more than 500 fast and ultra-fast electric vehicle (EV) charging points across India.
- Tata Power will install EV charging points across multiple IOCL retail outlets.
- These EV charging points will be installed in major cities like Mumbai, Delhi, Kolkata, Bengaluru, Ahmedabad, Pune, and Kochi, as well as across major highways such as the Mumbai-Pune Expressway, Salem-Kochi Highway, Guntur-Chennai Highway and the Golden Quadrilateral, the statement read.

18. RITES and CFM Mozambique ink deal for 10 diesel locomotives

- **State-owned RITES Ltd announced it has signed a pact with CFM Mozambique** for the supply of diesel locomotives and incidental services at a total cost of USD 37,680,080 (Rs 314.1 crore).
- The pact has been signed for the supply of ten diesel locomotives.

19. Intellect signs '80-crore deal with Indian Bank to deploy cash management system

- Intellect Design Arena Ltd, a global leader in cloud-native FinTech solutions, announces a landmark '80 crore, five-year deal with Indian Bank, reinforcing the bank's commitment to corporate banking modernization.
- The partnership sees the deployment of Intellect's eMACH.ai powered Cash Management System, a move set to transform transaction banking and fortify Indian Banks.

20. NITI Aayog and IFPRI sign SOI to strengthen policy frameworks for agricultural transformation and rural development

- **The National Institution for Transforming India (NITI Aayog) and the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) signed a Statement of Intent (Sol), aiming to fortify policy and program frameworks contributing to India's developmental objectives.**
- The five-year Sol grants IFPRI a broad mandate to support NITI's Agriculture Vertical in crucial areas.
- The Sol activities include developing and tracking Rural Transformation Indicators, supporting the design and evaluation of flagship programs, providing policy analytical tools, and generating evidence on India's agri-food trade in regional and global contexts.
- To ensure sustainable and inclusive agricultural and rural transformation, NITI Aayog has been actively guiding India's development programs through periodic monitoring and evaluation with a specific focus on agriculture.

21. Government of India and ADB sign \$200 million loan for Uttarakhand climate resilient power system development project

- **The Government of India and the Asian Development Bank (ADB) signed agreement for availing of a \$200 million loan from the Asian Development Bank (ADB), to improve the quality, efficiency and reliability of power supply in the state of Uttarakhand.**
- The ADB funding will strengthen power system infrastructure and help Uttarakhand in achieving its goal of providing 24x7 power
- Asian Development Bank Headquarters- Manila, Philippines
- The project will empower women self-help groups in rural hilly districts, providing them with access to renewable energy sources and energy-efficient equipment to enhance their livelihoods.
- ADB will facilitate training programs for communities, focusing on energy conservation and business management skills, while also conducting awareness and educational activities in schools to promote opportunities for employment in the energy sector. The project will involve nongovernmental organizations in implementing and monitoring the livelihood activities.

22. RIL ropes in DBS Bank for compressed biogas push

- In its push for adoption of greener energies, Reliance Industries has tied up with DBS Bank India to set up a financing program for farmers and aggregators for the management of crop residue that will be used to produce compressed biogas (CBG).
- The conglomerate, which is aggressively pursuing opportunities in non-fossil

fuels, is also working on the generation of CBG touted as an alternative to CNG and other fossil fuels. Farmers usually burn agriculture residue since they don't have the means, the infrastructure and the logistics required to process them.

- DBS has been roped in as the finance partner for this.
- RIL has already started on a massive program to set up biogas facilities across the country starting with Barabanki in Uttar Pradesh. This plant is expected to reduce carbon emissions by 40,000 tonnes annually.
- The plan is to set up about 100 CBG plants across the country over the next five years. This would help in consuming more than 5.5 million tons of agricultural residue and organic waste, leading to 2 million tons reduction in carbon emissions annually.
- The company is setting up biogas facilities at multiple locations in UP by using surplus agro residue and organic waste.

23. Tata Steel to invest '100 cr in centre for innovation in London

- **Tata Steel has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Imperial College London to set up a Centre for Innovation in Sustainable Design and Manufacturing in London.**
- The centre will enable the acceleration of technology development and deployment in strategic areas, attract talent and strengthen the industry-academia collaborative eco-system. Tata Steel will invest 10 million ('104 crore) over four years in this centre.

24. Cabinet approves MoU signed between India and Tanzania on Cooperation in the field of sharing successful Digital Solutions

- The cabinet approved the MoU between the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology of the Republic of India and the Ministry of Information, Communication and Information Technology of the United Republic of Tanzania on cooperation in the field of sharing successful Digital Solutions implemented at Population Scale for Digital Transformation.
- The MoU intends to promote closer cooperation and exchange of experiences, digital technologies-based solutions in the implementation of digital transformational initiative of both the countries.
- Both G2G and B2B bilateral Cooperation in the field of Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI) will be enhanced. The activities contemplated in this MoU would be financed through their administration's regular operating allocations.
- MoU envisages improved collaboration leading to employment opportunities in the field of IT.

25. KfW Development Bank to fund Bengaluru Suburban Rail Project

- The Bengaluru Suburban Railway Project got a major thrust when a loan agreement was signed with KfW Development Bank, Germany, by Rail Infrastructure Development Company (Karnataka) Limited (K-RIDE) in New Delhi.
- As per the agreement, KfW Development Bank will provide Euro 500 million (Rs 4,552 crore) and a grant of Euro 4.5 million (Rs 41 crore) for the BSRP.

26. Kotak Mahindra Bank partners with IITK to launch Kotak School of Sustainability through its CSR program

- To address the challenges of global warming, and promote pedigree education, research, and outreach, Indian Institute of Technology Kanpur (IITK) and the Kotak Mahindra Bank Limited (KMBL) joined hands to launch Kotak School of Sustainability.
- The newly launched Kotak School of Sustainability is India's first fully integrated school of sustainability at IIT Kanpur.
- According to KMBL, this initiative will provide leadership solutions towards sustainability actions and prepare future generations to lead the cause of sustainable development.

27. IIT Kanpur collaborated with Indian Navy to promote technology development

- **The Indian Institute of Technology, Kanpur (IITK) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Indian Navy signed at the Naval Headquarters.**
- The MoU has been signed with the aim to promote technology development, innovative solutions and joint R&D.
- The MoU would serve as a broader framework and enable both sides to enhance capacity building, provide solutions to field level issues and enhance training effectiveness through exchange of faculty/ guest lectures.
- The structured collaboration focuses on joint Research and Development initiatives involving teams from Centre of Excellence (Marine Engg.) at INS Shivaji, Lonavla and IIT Kanpur.

28. Government of India and ADB sign 37 billion Japanese Yen loan for Delhi-Meerut Regional Rapid Transit System Corridor

- The Government of India and Asian Development Bank (ADB) signed agreement for a 37 billion Japanese Yen (\$250 million) loan that will continue financing the construction of the 82-kilometre Delhi-Meerut Regional Rapid Transit System (RRTS) corridor.
- This project will enable the RRTS to improve urban mobility, and the project's economic impacts will also benefit women.

29. Government of India and ADB sign \$250 million loan for Industrial Corridor Development in India

- The Government of India and Asian Development Bank (ADB) signed a \$250 million policy-based loan that will continue support to industrial corridor development to make manufacturing more competitive, strengthen national supply chains and links with regional and global value chains, and create more and better jobs.
- The headquarters of ADB - Manila, Philippines,
- This loan builds on the \$250 million Subprogramme 1 loan approved by ADB in October 2021 that helped strengthen policy frameworks for the Government of India's National Industrial Corridor Development Programme (NICDP) and develop 11 industrial corridors.

30. Aditya Birla Sun Life, IDFC First Bank in pact to collaborate on financial solutions

- Aditya Birla Sun Life Insurance and IDFC First Bank have entered into a bancassurance partnership to offer

insurance solutions to the bank's customers.

- Under this collaboration, the insurer will leverage the extensive distribution network of IDFC First Bank.
- The partnership will provide customers with a one-stop-shop for their financial needs, including a range of insurance and banking products, and enhance the customer experience. The two organisations will also collaborate to create financial solutions that cater to the changing needs of customers, they said in a joint release

31. Govt inks '1614-crore pact with Mazagon Dockyard Shipbuilders for 6 offshore patrol vessels

- Ministry of Defence (MoD) signed a contract with Mumbai-based state-owned Mazagon Dockyard Shipbuilders Ltd (MDL) for procurement of six Next Generation Offshore Patrol Vessels (NGOPVS) for the Indian Coast Guard (ICG) valued at '1614.89 crore.
- These multi-role state-of-the-art vessels will be indigenously designed, developed, and manufactured by the MDL.

32. ArSRLM inks MoU with SBI for banking services to SHGs

- Arunachal State Rural Livelihoods Mission (ArSRLM) has inked an MoU with State Bank of India (SBI) to expedite the SHG Bank Linkage on Savings, Credit, Insurance & Remittances for 12000 self help groups (SHGs) promoted under the Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana National Rural Livelihood Mission (DAY-NRLM) in Arunachal Pradesh.

33. SBI signs Rs 1,300 cr LoC with World Bank for rooftop solar projects

- The State Bank of India (SBI) said it has signed a \$165 million (over Rs 1,300 crore) Line of Credit (LoC) with the World Bank for promoting rooftop solar projects in the country.
- Earlier this week, SBI signed a 200 million euro (about Rs 1,800 crore) LoC with the European Investment Bank (EIB) for supporting climate action projects.

34. Nabard and ADB jointly launch climate action initiative with tech support from Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation

- The National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) has teamed up with the Asian Development Bank (ADB) to help the farming sector tackle the adverse impact of climate change.
- The two organisations, in association with the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, will tap climate capital to fund agricultural, natural resources and rural development (ANR) initiatives.

35. Maruti Suzuki signs MoA with Haryana government to set up second JIM

- Maruti Suzuki India (MSIL) said it has signed a memorandum of agreement (MoA) with the government of Haryana to set up second Japan-India Institute for Manufacturing (JIM), at Kansala, in Rohtak.
- Spread over five acres, the existing ITI Kansala will be upgraded to a JIM with an investment of '5.8 crore as a CSR activity of the company.

36. JSPL Tie-Up With RINL To Secure Supply Of Liquid Steel To Upcoming Angul Plant

- Jindal Steel Power Ltd said its partnership with Rashtriya Ispat Nigam Ltd will ensure the supply of liquid steel to its upcoming hot strip mill at Angul in Odisha.
- JSPL said it has entered into a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with RINL for the operationalisation of the latter's blast furnace-3 (BF-3). JSPL Managing Director (MD) : Bimlendra Jha.
- The blast furnace BF-3 at the RINL plant in Visakhapatnam has been closed since January 2021.
- The restart of the BF-3 is planned for Dec. 30, 2023, at a capacity of 2 lakh tonnes of hot metal per month.
- Rashtriya Ispat Nigam Ltd (RINL), under the Ministry of Steel, is among the top six steel manufacturing companies in India.
- There are three blast furnaces of 2.5 million tonne (MT) each at its plant in Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh.
- JSPL will provide working capital support or raw material supply of Rs 800-900 crore under a pact signed between the companies.

37. Coca-Cola extends partnership with ICC till 2031

- The Coca-Cola Company and International Cricket Council (ICC) have signed an agreement at the latter's headquarters extending the partnership till end of 2031, becoming a brand having the longest association with the cricket body.
- In 2019, the Atlanta-based beverage major had entered into a four-year partnership with ICC covering major events.

38. Reliance Jio joins hands with IIT Bombay to launch Bharat GPT, to bring OS for smart TVs

- **Jio is set to launch its new AI project Bharat GPT, in a joint venture with Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Bombay.**
- Jio is planning to introduce its AI project across all the segments of its company, stretching across all the sectors of the society. Ambani said that the next 10 years will be defined by large-language models and generative AI.

39. ONDC partners with Google, Meta to reach small businesses

- **Ministry of commerce-backed e-commerce protocol Open Network for Digital Commerce (ONDC) announced two separate partnerships with Google and Meta, to expand its outreach to small businesses through Google Maps and WhatsApp.**
- This, in turn, will help the service scale up its net transactions per month among consumers and large enterprises alike.
- With Google Maps, ONDC is onboarding the Kochi Metro as a mobility service on its platform. Users can make ticket bookings for the metro service directly in Google Maps, through the ONDC framework.
- For Meta, ONDC is being integrated into WhatsApp, where small businesses will be able to streamline their onboarding process on the framework. The move will also form a key part of Meta's focus on monetizing its India market in 2024

40. HDFC Life and NKGSB Co-Operative Bank announce corporate partnership

- **HDFC Life & NKGSB Co-operative Bank have entered into a corporate agency tie-up, enabling NKGSB Co-operative**

Bank customers to avail of life insurance products from HDFC Life.

- NKGSB Co-operative Bank is a multi-state co-operative bank and has been at the forefront of adding value to its products by establishing correspondent relationships. Sunil Panse, MD of NKGSB Co-operative Bank.

41. PNGRB, World Bank studying pathways for transmission of Hydrogen via gas pipelines

- **The Petroleum and Natural Gas Regulatory Board (PNGRB) has joined hands with the World Bank and initiated a study to develop pathways for transmission of Hydrogen in natural gas pipelines both on its own and as Hydrogen blended with Compressed Natural Gas (CNG).**
- Under the initiative of National Green Hydrogen Mission, the Government of India has taken significant steps.
- The study comprises of mapping demand and supply of Hydrogen, Technical Assessment of the existing pipeline network for its compatibility, commercial assessment of the pipeline sector, identifying bottlenecks in of policy and regulatory framework and framing of roadmap milestones till 2040 for expeditious implementation of Hydrogen-blending in India.

42. India, Russia ink pacts on construction of future power units of Kudankulam nuclear plant

- **India and Russia have decided to expand their civilian nuclear cooperation, with Moscow willing to share technology for a small modular reactor used in power generation, even as both sides are pushing towards the completion of Phase 1 the of 6,000MW**

Kudankulam nuclear power project in Tamil Nadu.

- The small modular reactors have a power generation capacity of 75MW to 300MW.
- The small modular reactors – these are advanced nuclear reactors -- have a power generation capacity of 75MW to 300MW.
- **The Kudankulam nuclear power plant, India's largest, is being built in Tamil Nadu with the technical assistance of Russia.** The construction began in March 2002.
- Since February 2016, the first power unit of the Kudankulam NPP has been steadily operating at its design capacity of 1,000 MW. The plant is expected to start operating at full capacity in 2027, according to Russian state media.

43. Centre, Assam sign peace pact with ULFA faction

- **The Union Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA), the Assam government and the pro-talks faction of the United Liberation Front of Asom (ULFA) signed a memorandum of settlement.**
- The ULFA was born during the anti-foreigners movement of 1979 demanding a sovereign State for the Assamese people after several Bengali speaking people crossed over to India post 1971.
- The ULFA was born during the anti-foreigners movement of 1979 demanding a sovereign State for the Assamese people after several Bengali speaking people crossed over to India post 1971 coinciding with the Bangladesh Liberation War.




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Schemes

1. The Government of India has disbursed over 2.60 Lakhs Crore rupees to more than 11 Crore farmers under the PM-KISAN scheme

- **The government has introduced Face recognition and Aadhaar identification based eKYC of farmers to ensure transparency in the PM-Kisan Samman Nidhi scheme (PM-Kisan).**
- To ensure good governance and transparency in direct benefit transfer to farmers, a new eKYC has been initiated after the release of the 13th PM-Kisan fund.
- The Government of India has disbursed over 2.60 Lakhs Crore rupees to more than 11 Crore farmers under the PM-KISAN scheme.
- In the scheme, an amount of six thousand rupees is transferred annually in three equal instalments of two thousand rupees directly into the bank accounts of the farmers.
- **The PM-KISAN Scheme was launched in February 2019** to provide financial assistance to all cultivable landholding farmer families across the country.

2. Government to set up subsidised staple food stores at Delhi Metro Stations

- **The central government will make available kitchen essentials such as onion, pulses and atta at subsidised prices to consumers by opening retail stores at major metro stations in the national capital this month.**
- If the project is successful, it plans to extend it to other cities like Mumbai, Chennai and Bengaluru which have metro rail networks, the official said.
- Elevated prices of food essentials - wheat, rice, pulses, sugar, onions - is a

major concern for the union government, which will face voters in the general elections in April-May 2024.

- The first store will be opened at Central Delhi's Rajiv Chowk metro station, to tap into the high footfall it receives. It will be owned and operated by National Cooperative Consumers' Federation of India Ltd .
- **NCCF an organisation that procures agricultural commodities like food grains, pulses, spices, oil seeds, pharmaceutical items and other consumer goods on behalf of the government and sells to consumers at reasonable rates.**

3. Finance ministry gave Rs 10,000 crore advance for MGNREGS from contingency fund: Govt

- **The finance ministry has provided Rs 10,000 crore as advance for the rural employment guarantee scheme from Contingency Fund of India, over and above the budgetary allocation of Rs 60,000 crore.**
- Financial allocation of Rs 60,000 crore was made for the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS) for the financial year 2023-24 at budget estimate stage.
- The MGNREGS is a flagship scheme aimed at enhancing livelihood security of households in rural areas of the country by providing at least 100 days of guaranteed wage employment in a financial year to every household whose adult members volunteer to do unskilled manual work.

4. DARPG launches Scheme and Web-portal for National Awards for e-Governance 2024

- The Web-portal (<http://www.nceg.gov.in>) for National Awards for e-Governance (NAeG) 2024 has been launched on 8th December, 2023.
- The formal launching was organised by the Department of Administrative Reforms & Public Grievances (DARPG).
- The Central Ministries / Departments as well as the Principal Secretaries (AR) and (IT) and the DCs/DMs of all the 28 States and 8 UTs of India as well as Award Winners of NAeG 2023 were invited for the launch ceremony in hybrid mode.

5. Railways withdraws emergency cashless treatment scheme

- The Indian Railways has withdrawn the Cashless Treatment Scheme in Emergency (CTSE), a medical facility which benefitted a few lakh serving and retired employees and their dependent family members across the country.
- A pilot project for providing cashless treatment during emergencies in private Railway-empanelled hospitals was initially launched in metro cities in 2016. Later the ambit of the scheme was expanded across the railway network facilitating serving and retired employees and their dependent family members to avail treatment in private hospitals during emergencies.

6. Indian Forest & Wood Certification Scheme launched to promote Sustainable Management of forests and agroforestry

- The Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change has launched the **Indian Forest & Wood Certification Scheme**.

- This national forest certification scheme offers voluntary third-party certification designed to promote sustainable forest management and agroforestry in the country.
- **About the Scheme:**
- The scheme includes forest management certification, tree outside forest management certification, and chain of custody certification.
- The Indian Forest and Wood Certification Scheme can provide market incentives to various entities that adhere to responsible forest management and agroforestry practices in their operations.
- This includes state forest departments, individual farmers, or Farmer Producer Organizations engaged in agroforestry and farm forestry, as well as other wood-based industries in the value chain.
- **The Forest Management certification is based on the Indian Forest Management Standard**, consisting of 8 criteria, 69 indicators and 254 verifiers, which is an integral part of the National Working Plan Code 2023, launched earlier this year.
- A separate Trees Outside Forests Standard, is now introduced as a part of the newly launched Indian Forest & Wood Certification Scheme.
- The Indian Forest and Wood Certification Scheme, will be overseen by the Indian Forest and Wood Certification Council, which will act as a multistakeholder advisory body.
- The Council is represented by members from eminent institutions such as Indian Council of Forestry Research and Education, Forest Survey of India, Quality Council of India, Indian Institute of Forest Management including representatives from the Ministries of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare and

Ministry of Commerce and Industry, State Forest Departments, Forest Development Corporations, and representatives from wood-based industries.

- **Indian Institute of Forest Management, Bhopal will act as the scheme operating agency** and will be responsible for overall management of the Indian Forest and Wood Certification Scheme.
- The National Accreditation Board for Certification Bodies under the Quality Council of India will accredit the certification bodies which will carry out independent audits and assess adherence of various entities on the standards prescribed under the scheme.

7. Atal Pension Yojana (APY) enrolments cross the 6 crore mark

- **The total enrolment under the Atal Pension Yojana (APY) has crossed 6 crore, with over 79 lakh enrolments in the current Financial Year.**
- The APY, a flagship social security scheme of the Government of India, was launched on 9th May 2015 to provide old age income security to Indian citizens, with a particular focus on the poor and workers in the unorganized sectors.
- The Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority (PFRDA), in the recent past, has taken several initiatives for awareness creation of the scheme including the release of a one-page simple APY flyer/handout in Hindi, English, and 21 regional languages.
- Under the APY, the subscriber is eligible to get triple benefits, as guaranteed by the Govt. of India, i.e. lifelong monthly pension of Rs. 1,000 to Rs. 5,000 from the age of 60 years, depending on their

contributions, which itself would vary based on the age of joining the APY.

- The same pension would be paid to the spouse of the subscriber after the demise of the subscriber and on the demise of both the subscriber and spouse, the pension wealth as accumulated till age 60 of the subscriber would be returned back to the nominee.

8. 69% of the total 44.46 crore loans sanctioned under Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana, have been sanctioned to women

- As on 24.11.2023, out of total 44.46 crore loans sanctioned under Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana (PMMY), 30.64 crore (69%) have been sanctioned to women.
- PMMY was launched on 08.04.2015 to provide collateral free institutional credit to Small/ Micro enterprises for income generating activities.

9. PMBJP achieves generic medicines sales of Rs 1,000 crore this year

- The government said the **Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Janaushadhi Pariyojana (PMBJP) achieved a landmark of selling generic medicines worth Rs 1,000 crore this year.**
- A total savings of about Rs 5,000 crore was made by people who purchased medicines from the Jan Aushadhi Kendras, which is present in more than 785 districts across the country, an official release said.
- **Govt has set a target to open 25,000 Janaushadhi Kendras across India by March 2026.**

10. MSME Ministry launches 3 sub-schemes under RAMP programme; makes ZED scheme free for women

- **MSME Minister Narayan Rane launched three sub-schemes under the ministry's existing RAMP ((Raising and Accelerating MSME Productivity) programme to encourage the adoption of sustainable technology in business, boost the circular economy and address delayed payments issue.**
- **The MSME Green Investment and Financing for Transformation Scheme (MSE GIFT Scheme)** will help enterprises adopt green technology with interest subvention and credit guarantee support while **the MSE Scheme for Promotion and Investment in Circular Economy (MSE SPICE Scheme)** is the first-ever scheme in the government to support circular economy projects which will be done through credit subsidy and support MSME sector towards zero emissions by 2070, the ministry said in a statement.
- The third scheme **MSE Scheme on Online Dispute Resolution for Delayed Payments**, said ministry, is a first-of-its-kind scheme to synergise legal support with modern IT tools and artificial intelligence in order to address the issue of delayed payments for micro and small enterprises.
- The key objectives of RAMP are to accelerate centre-state collaboration in MSME promotion and development, enhance the effectiveness of existing schemes of the MSME Ministry for technology upgradation, strengthen the receivable financing market for MSMEs, enhance the effectiveness of CGTMSE, promote guarantee for greening initiatives of MSEs and women-owned MSEs, and

reduce cases of delayed payments to MSEs.

- Moreover, the **ZED scheme** of the ministry, which aims to promote manufacturing without any negative impact on the environment, has now been made completely free for women-led MSMEs. In addition, the government will guarantee payment of 100 per cent financial support for the certification cost under the scheme.

11. Union Minister Smriti Irani inaugurates National Programme on Anganwadi-cum-Crches in New Delhi

- Women and Child Development Minister Smriti Irani inaugurated National Programme on Anganwadi-cum-Crches in New Delhi.
- Government has planned to open 17 thousand creches all around the country and urged states and districts officials to identify groups of women construction workers and women farm labourers who can take advantage of the initiative.

12. Rajasthan and Andhra Pradesh have commissioned higher capacity under solar park scheme

- **Rajasthan and Andhra Pradesh ' have deployed higher capacities through the solar park scheme.**
- The **Scheme for 'Development of Solar Parks and Ultra Mega Solar Power Projects'** was rolled out in December 2014 with an aggregate capacity of 20,000 MW.
- Further, the capacity of the Solar Park Scheme was enhanced to 40,000 MW in March 2017 to set up at least 50 Solar parks. The timeline of the scheme is up to 2023-24.
- **Objective of the Scheme :**

- The objective of this scheme is to provide land and transmission to RE developers on a plug-and-play basis. i.e, the infrastructure such as land, roads, power evacuation system water facilities are developed with all statutory clearances/approvals. Thus, the scheme helps expeditious development of utility-scale solar projects in the country.
- The capacity of the Solar Parks is generally 500 MW and above. However, smaller parks (up to 20 MW) are also considered in States/UTs where there is a shortage of non-agricultural land. It is estimated that 4-5 acres per MW of land is required for setting up of solar parks
- Under the solar park scheme, the **Union Ministry of New and Renewable Energy provides Central Financial Assistance (CFA) of up to '25 lakh per solar park for the preparation of a Detailed Project Report (DPR)**. Besides this, CFA of up to '20 lakh per MW or 30 per cent of the project cost, including grid-connectivity cost, whichever is lower, is also provided for achieving the milestones prescribed in the scheme
- The total Central Grants approved under the Scheme is '8,100 crore. Solar Energy Corporation of India & Indian Renewable Energy Development Agency (IREDA) implement the scheme and also handle the funds being made available under the scheme.

13. PMKVY Trains 1.4 Crore Candidates, Announces India Skills 2023-24

- **The Government has said that nearly one crore 40 lakh candidates have been trained so far under Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY) since its launch in 2015.**
- The Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship said, PMKVY aims to

provide avenues for the Indian youth to access short-term skilling opportunities.

- **Under the Skill India Mission, MSDE launched its flagship scheme, Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY) on 15 July 2015.**
- PMKVY 4.0 (FY 2023-26) was announced in the last Union Budget 2023-24 with an aim to skill lakh of youth and provide training in courses on Industry 4.0, AI, robotics, mechatronics, IoT and drones. PMKVY 4.0 has received the approval of EFC and the same has been submitted for the approval of the cabinet.
- However, the Department of Expenditure, Ministry of Finance has granted approval for the release of funds under PMKVY 4.0 based on the Expenditure Finance Committee (EFC) Memorandum with the condition of early approval of the scheme from the Cabinet.

The broad design principles of PMKVY 4.0 are:

- Customized courses with high employability and duration up to 210 hours.
- The scheme aims to synergize vocational and educational streams and increase the network of quality training providers by increasing partnerships of educational institutions termed Skill Hubs.
- Skill Hubs can be set up in Central and State Government Schools, Higher Educational Institutes (HEIs), Colleges and Universities (including Skill Universities) with requisite infrastructure for providing Short-term Training under PMKVY.
- Skill Training is being imparted through Skill India Centres in Educational Institutes, Government

- Institutions, PMKKs, ITIs, JSSs, IITs, IIMs and others
- v. Focus is given on skilling in Futuristic/New Age job roles pertaining to Industry 4.0, Web 3.0, AI/ML, AR/VR, Drone Technology etc
 - vi. Skill courses will be selected as per industry demand, largely mapped in the district Skill Development Plan.
 - vii. Special Projects for identified areas and groups in agriculture, handicraft and high-end courses.
 - viii. Skill India Digital to be a single-point enrolment and provide a platform for candidate training life cycle

14. Jal Jeevan Mission Achieves 72% Rural Tap Water Coverage, Eyes 100% In 2024

- Under Jal Jeevan Mission, approximately 72% of rural households now have access to tap water connections, according to official data.
- In 2024, the Jal Shakti ministry faces the crucial target of achieving the 100% coverage of tap water connection to every rural household -a commitment made by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in 2019. Nine states and Union Territories have already achieved 100% coverage.

15. PLI schemes attracted over Rs 95,000 cr investment till Sep 2023: Centre

- The production-linked incentive (PLI) schemes for 14 sectors have attracted over Rs 95,000 crore in investment till September this year, an official statement said.

- According to the Commerce and Industry Ministry, as many as 746 applications have been approved till November 2023 under these schemes.
- In the Union Budget 2021-22, the government announced an outlay of Rs 1.97 trillion for the schemes.
- The sectors included electronics, telecommunication, pharma, white goods (AC and LED light components), and textiles. The aim is to enhance India's manufacturing capabilities and exports.
- It added that of the USD 101 billion worth of total electronics production in 2022-23, smartphones constituted USD 44 billion, including USD 11.1 billion as exports.
- Import substitution of 60 per cent has been achieved in the telecom sector and India has become almost self-reliant in Antennae, GPON (Gigabit Passive Optical Network) and CPE (Customer Premises Equipment).
- About PLI in the white goods (AC and LED light components), it said that 64 companies have been selected under the scheme.
- Out of this, 34 would invest Rs 5,429 crore for air conditioner components and 30 would invest Rs 1,337 crore for LED component manufacturing.

16. Women account for approximately 49% of the total Ayushman cards created, says Health Ministry data

- Women account for approximately 49% of the total Ayushman cards created and approximately 48% of total authorised hospital admissions, noted data released by Health Ministry.
- Ayushman cards are made under Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri-Jan Arogya Yojana (AB PM-JAY), which

provides health cover of '5 lakhs per family per year for secondary and tertiary care hospitalisation.

- Currently as per government figures 55 crore individuals corresponding to 12 crore families are covered under the scheme and many states and union territories implementing AB PM-JAY

have further expanded the beneficiary base, at their own cost.

- Government data further revealed that as of December 20, 2023, approximately 28.45 Crore Ayushman Cards have been created since the inception of the scheme, out of which, approximately 9.38 crore Ayushman Cards have been created during the year 2023.



The banner features a central gold laurel wreath with a shield in the center. The shield contains the text 'RADHEY KI REASONING BANK + SSC SPECIAL' and a 'LIVE' button. To the right, there is a profile for 'Radhey Sir', a Reasoning Expert with 11+ years of experience, wearing an Oliveboard t-shirt. A gold circular badge indicates a '20% OFF' discount. Below the main title, a section titled 'Radhey Ki Reasoning : Highlights' lists four key features: 100+ Live Classes Covering 1000+ Qs, Complete Coverage of Critical Reasoning Qs, Special Focus on Long Puzzles & Seating Arrangement, and Coverage of Previous Year's and New Pattern Type Qs. At the bottom, it prompts users to download the Oliveboard App to enroll, with a 'GET IT ON Google Play' button.

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Appointments & Resignations

1. Grounded Airline Go First's CEO Kaushik Khona Resigns

- Grounded Go First's CEO **Kaushik Khona** has put in his papers, nearly seven months after the no-frills airline filed for insolvency proceedings. In an e mail to the airline's employees, Khona said that Nov. 30 is his last day at the company. Khona had returned to Go First in August 2020 as its CEO.

2. Hindustan Unilever appoints former revenue secretary Tarun Bajaj as an independent director

- Hindustan Unilever Limited (HUL) has announced the appointment of **Tarun Bajaj** as an Independent Director on its Board, effective December 1, 2023, for a five-year term. Mr. Bajaj, aged 61, brings a wealth of experience, having served in the Indian Administrative Service since 1988, belonging to the Haryana Cadre.
- Before retiring in November 2022, Mr. Bajaj held the position of Revenue Secretary, Government of India. In this role, he played a pivotal part in stabilizing the Goods and Services Tax (GST) and significantly increasing revenue collections under GST and Income Tax.

3. Rural Marketing Association of India appoints Puneet Vidyarthi as its president

- Rural Marketing Association of India (RMAI), the premier body of rural marketers in India said it has appointed **Puneet Vidyarthi** as its president for 2023-2025, taking over from Biswabaran Chakrabarti.

- Vidyarthi is head of marketing, business development at CASE New Holland, a construction equipment business.

4. Kanchan Devi becomes first woman officer to be appointed as DG of ICFRE

- 1991-batch Indian Forest Service Officer of Madhya Pradesh cadre **Kanchan Devi** has been appointed as the Director General (DG) of the Indian Council of Forestry Research Education (ICFRE)
- Kanchan is the first woman officer to hold this post of the premier council under the Union Ministry of Environment, Forest, and Climate Change.
- With its headquarters in Dehradun, the ICFRE is the country's leading organization for advising the Government of India, the state governments and other stakeholders like farmers, industries and academicians on the issues relating to forestry research and technologies for meeting the new challenges in the field of forest conservation

5. Max Life Insurance appoints Rajiv Anand as Chairman, Analjit Singh resigns

- Max Life Insurance, a material subsidiary of Max Financial Services, has a new Chairman, **Rajiv Anand**.
- This follows the stepping down of Analjit Singh from the Chairmanship and membership of the Board of Directors of Max Life Insurance.
- Before this elevation, Anand, a non-executive director of Max Life, was nominated by Axis Bank Ltd as Chairman of Max Life Insurance.

6. Vice Admiral Dinesh Tripathi to become India's new Vice Chief of Navy Staff

- The Government of India has approved several high-profile appointments, including the elevation of **Vice Admiral Dinesh K Tripathi** to the position of Vice Chief of the Naval Staff.
- He is set to take on the crucial role of Vice Chief of the Naval Staff, effective early January 2024.

7. IDFC FIRST Bank's ED Madhivanan resigns

- IDFC FIRST Bank said its Executive Director **Madhivanan Balakrishnan** has tendered his resignation.
- The Nomination & Remuneration Committee and the Board of Directors of the Bank at their respective meetings held has accepted the said resignation (tendered on December 06, 2023)
- He continues to serve the Bank for necessary handovers until December 15, 2023

8. Indian-origin media executive Samir Shah to head BBC Board

- A British-Indian has been picked by the U.K. Government to head the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) as its next chair.
- **Samir Shah**, a 71-year-old former BBC non-executive director and media executive, was born in Aurangabad and moved to the U.K. in 1960.

9. Bimal Dayal appointed as CEO of Adani Infra India

- Adani Energy Solutions' transmission business chief **Bimal Dayal** has been appointed as the CEO of Adani Infrastructure India.

- Dayal will oversee the implementation of the pipeline of infrastructure projects in thermal, renewable energy and green hydrogen by Adani Infrastructure India, Adani Energy Solutions Ltd (AESL) said in a statement on Friday.

10. Dr Mohan Yadav Appointed As Chief Minister Of Madhya Pradesh; Jagdish Devda, Rajendra Shukla As Deputy CMs

- **Dr Mohan Yadav** has been announced as the Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh. Narendra Singh Tomar was appointed as assembly speaker.
- Malhargarh MLA Jagdish Devda and Rewa MLA Rajendra Shukla have been appointed as two deputy CMs of the state. The 58-year-old CM-designate replaces CM Shivraj Singh Chouhan.

11. Parama Sen appointed part-time member of PFRDA board

- The Centre has appointed **Parama Sen**, Additional Secretary, Department of Expenditure in the Finance Ministry, as a part-time member in Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority (PFRDA).
- PFRDA has a chairman besides three whole-time members and three part-time members.
- Parama Sen replaces Anne George Mathew, who demitted office this year.
- All three part-time member posts in PFRDA board are now filled.
- The two other part-time members — Rahul Singh (Department of Personnel and Training) and Pankaj Sharma (Department of Financial Services) — were appointed last year.
- Dr. Deepak Mohanty is the 11th & current Chairperson of Pension Fund.

Regulatory and Development Authority (PFRDA).

- The Pension Fund Regulatory & Development Authority Act was passed on 19th September, 2013 and the same was notified on 1st February, 2014. PFRDA is regulating NPS, subscribed by employees of Govt. of India, State Governments and by employees of private institutions/organizations & unorganized sectors.

12. India's Uma Sekhar elected to governing council of UNIDROIT

- **Uma Sekhar**, India's first woman candidate, was elected in the Governing Council of the International Institute for the Unification of Private Law (UNIDROIT).
- It is noteworthy that all 25 positions on the Governing Council are occupied by distinguished legal experts.
- The International Institute for the Unification of Private Law (UNIDROIT) is an independent intergovernmental Organisation with its seat in Rome, Italy. Its purpose is to study needs and methods for modernising, harmonising and co-ordinating private and in particular commercial law as between States and groups of States and to formulate uniform law instruments, principles and rules to achieve those objectives.

13. Senior IPS officer Maheshwar Dayal takes over as Director General of Prisons

- Senior IPS officer and Additional Director General of Police (ADGP) **Maheshwar Dayal** took charge as Director General of Prisons and Correctional Services
- He had served as Superintendent of Police (SP) in Virudhunagar, The Nilgiris

and Nagapattinam districts and Deputy Commissioner of Police in Tirunelveli, Tiruchi and Gurgaon, Haryana.

14. Sanjay Singh elected new president of Wrestling Federation of India

- **Sanjay Singh** has been elected the new president of the Wrestling Federation of India (WFI).
- Sanjay Singh is the vice president of the Uttar Pradesh Wrestling Association and previously served on the WFI's executive council.
- He has also been the national federation's joint secretary since 2019.
- He will take over the reins of the WFI chief from Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh.

15. ICICI Bank receives RBI nod for Sandeep Batra's 2-year extension as executive director

- Private sector lender ICICI Bank Ltd on December 20 said it has received approval from the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) for the re-appointment of **Sandeep Batra** as executive director effect from December 23, 2023, to December 22, 2025.

16. Indian envoy Santosh Jha presents credentials to Sri Lankan President

- India's new High Commissioner to Sri Lanka **Santosh Jha** has assumed charge and presented his credentials to President Ranil Wickremesinghe.
- Jha replaces Gopal Baglay, who has been appointed as the next High Commissioner of India to Australia.
- Jha, a senior diplomat, was India's Ambassador to the European Union, Belgium & Luxembourg before taking up his assignment here.

17. SEBI approves Pramod Agrawal's appointment as BSE Chairman

- The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) has approved the appointment of **Pramod Agrawal** as the new Chairman of the Bombay Stock Exchange (BSE). Agrawal's tenure will start on January 17, 2024, as per a regulatory filing by the stock exchange. Agrawal, a former IAS officer, previously held the position of Chairman at Coal India till June 2023.
- The decision to appoint Agrawal was endorsed by the BSE Board, following the conclusion of SS Mundra's term as Chairman and Public Interest Director on January 16, 2024. Popularly known as BSE, the bourse was **established as 'The Native Share & Stock Brokers' Association' in 1875**. In 2017 BSE became the 1st listed stock exchange of India.

18. North East SFB Appoints Satish Kumar Kalra As Interim CEO

- North East Small Finance Bank has appointed **Satish Kumar Kalra** as its interim managing director and CEO.
- Kalra's appointment has also received approval from the Reserve Bank of India, apart from the Guwahati-based bank's board.
- The RBI has approved the merger of fintech startup Slice and North East Small Finance Bank Ltd. to ensure financial inclusion.
- Slice is based out of Bengaluru, and runs a non-banking financial company, name

Quadrillion Finance Pvt to provide credit to young Indians.

19. RBI approves appointment of C S Rajan as part-time chairman of Kotak Mahindra Bank

- Kotak Mahindra Bank said the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has approved the appointment of **C S Rajan**, Independent Director of the bank, as the Part-time Chairman, for a period of two years, effective January 1, 2024.
- C S Rajan was appointed as an Independent Director on the Board of the Bank, with effect from October 22, 2022.
- CS Rajan's appointment as the next Part-time Chairman of the Bank's Board follows the retirement of the incumbent Part-time Chairman, Prakash Apte, whose term expires on 31st December 2023.

20. Rahul Rasgotra appointed ITBP chief; Nina Singh becomes first woman to head CISF

- Intelligence Bureau officer **Rahul Rasgotra** got the charge of the Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP), **Nina Singh** becomes the 1st woman to head the Central Industrial Security Force.
- **Anish Dayal Singh** has been made the Director General of the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF).
- **Vivek Srivastav** has been appointed Director General, Fire Service, Civil Defence and Home Guards. Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) is the world's largest paramilitary force.

Awards

1. Hindustan Shipyard Ltd bags five SODET Silver Awards

- **Hindustan Shipyard Ltd (HSL), a Defence PSU has received five SODET Silver Awards at the National Quality Circles Competition for defence PSUs.** The event, themed around Innovation, indigenisation and quality, took place at GRSE, Kolkata.
- SODET (Society of Defence Technologists) a non-profit certification body is established by like-minded people from different organisations have come together to provide management system certification services as per the relevant national and international standards in an ethical and impartial manner in line with the requirements of society at large.

2. Power Grid conferred SKOCH Gold Award 2023

- **Power Grid Corporation of India Limited (PGCIL), a Maharatna CPSU under Ministry of Power, has been conferred the prestigious SKOCH Gold Award 2023.**
- The award was given for the Pugalur Thrissur 2000 MW Voltage Source Converter HVDC System.

3. PR Icon Suganthy Sundararaj Receives PRSI National Award for Outstanding Contributions to Healthcare Communications

- **Suganthy Sundararaj, Regional Head, Public Relations, Apollo Hospitals, has been honoured with the PRSI National Award for Outstanding Contributions to the Public Relations Society of India and the public relations industry.**

- Suganthy Sundararaj received the Award at the International Public Relations Festival underway at New Delhi.
- The Award recognizes her dedication to the communications and public relations industry and her stellar role in shaping the strategic management of the public relations function in the healthcare domain.

4. President Droupadi Murmu to confer National Awards for empowerment of Divyangjan in New Delhi

- President Droupadi Murmu will confer the National Awards for the empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (Divyangjan), 2023.
- The President will confer the awards on the occasion of International Day of Persons with Disabilities (IDPD), for their outstanding achievements and work done towards empowerment of Persons with Disabilities every year.
- The programme will be organized by the Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (Divyangjan), Union Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment at Vigyan Bhawan in New Delhi. The theme for the IDPD in 2023 is "United in action to rescue and achieve the SDGs for, with and by persons with disabilities."

5. Social Innovators from India win accolades at the 4th edition of ASEAN India Grassroots Innovation Forum (AIGIF) in Malaysia

- Two grassroots innovators and one student innovator from India won prizes in the grassroots innovation and student innovation competition respectively at the 4th edition of ASEAN India Grassroots Innovation Forum (AIGIF), a

flagship programme hosted by Malaysia's Ministry of Science, Technology, and Innovation (MOSTI) which concluded on November 30, 2023.

- **Mr. Dipak Bharali** from Sualkuchi, Kamrup, Assam, India won the 1st prize in the grassroots innovation competition category for the innovation Weft Insertion Device while **Mr Sunil Shinde** from Jalna, Maharashtra won the 3rd prize in the grassroots innovation competition category for the innovation Silkworm Breeding Net Folding Machine.
- In the student innovation competition, **Ms Aanchal Aggarwal** from Delhi has won the 3rd prize for her innovation Parkinson Lathi.

6. ESIC bags 'ISSA Vision Zero 2023' Award at the 23rd World Congress on Safety and Health at Work in Sydney, Australia

- **The Employees' State Insurance Corporation (ESIC) bagged the 'ISSA Vision Zero 2023' Award in the recently held 23rd World Congress on Safety and Health at Work in Sydney, Australia.**
- 'Vision Zero' is a transformational approach for prevention of accidents at work places integrating the three dimensions of safety, health and well-being at all levels of work.
- ESIC was awarded with "ISSA Vision Zero 2023" as it had great success in outreach in the field of safety and health at work places by aligning the prevention strategy besides post-accidental mechanism for medical care and cash benefits to the workers and their dependents. The award also underlines the improvements that have been made in the service delivery of the ESI Corporation as well as increase in its administrative and operational efficiency using IT enabled initiatives.

7. President Draupadi Murmu gives national award to Narayan Seva Sansthan's president

- **Prashant Agrawal, President of Narayan Seva Sansthan, was honoured with the prestigious National Award for 'Best Personality- Empowerment of Differently-abled'** by President Draupadi Murmu at a ceremony organised by the Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities.
- Recognised for his outstanding contributions, Prashant Agrawal has led initiatives in establishing residential schools, and vocational rehabilitation centres, and providing assistive devices for differently-abled individuals.
- Agrawal, upon receiving the award, dedicated the recognition to the beneficiaries of Narayan Seva Sansthan.
- The organisation, committed to serving humanity and disability causes since 1985, has conducted over 445,000 surgeries and aided nearly 40,000 amputees with artificial limbs.

8. Amazon India Wins Prestigious National Award for Empowering Individuals with Disabilities

- **Amazon India announced its receipt of the prestigious National Award for Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities, awarded by the Government of India.**
- The award was presented by Smt. Droupadi Murmu, Honourable President of India, at Vigyan Bhavan on International Day of Persons with Disabilities .
- Amazon India has implemented a comprehensive strategy to integrate inclusivity across its operations, products, and services.
- This includes:

- **Building a Diverse and Inclusive Workplace:** Increasing the onsite representation of PWD's by 2X (2400+) in our off-roll representations and by 8X (85+) in on roll representations across our Operations sites in India
- **Accessible Workplace Practices:** Implementing innovative workplace adaptations and technologies to accommodate diverse needs, ensuring a supportive and inclusive work environment for employees with disabilities.
- **Government Partnerships and Community Programs:** Collaborating with the central and multiple state governments (Maharashtra, Gujarat, Haryana, Tamil Nadu and Karnataka) through MoUs for providing employment opportunities, NGOs and National institutes to facilitate skill-building programs.
- **Accessible Products and Services:** Continuously innovating to enhance the accessibility of Amazon shopping, devices and services, enabling seamless experiences for customers with disabilities

9. Indian-origin novelist bags Singapore's highest arts accolade

- Eighty-one-year-old Indian-origin writer **Meira Chand** was among the three Singaporeans conferred the Cultural Medallion, the city-state's most prestigious arts accolade, in recognition of their artistic excellence and contribution to enriching the country arts and culture scene.
- Chand, fellow novelist Suchen Christine Lim and Malay dance veteran Osman Abdul Hamid received the award from President Tharman Shanmugaratnam at a ceremony held at the Istana.

10. BHEL wins CII-EXIM Bank Award for Business Excellence - 2023

- **Bharat Heavy Electricals Limited (BHEL) has won the prestigious CII EXIM Bank Award for Business Excellence 2023.**
- This award is a testament to the company's unwavering commitment to excellence, resilience and its ability to adapt to the dynamic business landscape. The CII-EXIM Bank Award is based on the internationally recognized European Foundation for Quality Management.

11. Woman AI innovator from Alappuzha bags international prize

- **Sreya Francis**, an artificial intelligence (AI) innovator from Cherthala, won the Alconics Solutions Implementer of the Year award at the AI Summit held in New York
- The prize is given to individuals who have developed in-house innovation and successfully implemented AI to drive meaningful change and business growth for their brand.
- Ms. Francis, who works as head of technical innovation at Farm Mutual Re in Ontario, Canada, emerged as the winner beating a line-up of five shortlisted AI innovators.

12. Azentio wins double honours at IBSi Global FinTech Innovation Awards 2023

- **Azentio has announced that it won two awards at the 5th edition of the prestigious IBS Intelligence Global FinTech Innovation Awards 2023.**
- The awards were formally presented at the Cedar-IBSi Summit on Digital & Core Banking, recently held in Mumbai.
- Azentio Software provides critical, vertical-specific software products for

customers in banking, financial, and insurance.

- Azentio won the awards for 'Best Islamic Banking Implementation: Best Project Implementation' for its work with Summit Bank Limited, Pakistan; and 'Best Transaction Banking Implementation: Best Adopted Tools and Practices' for its work with Vision Bank, United Arab Emirates (UAE). Both awards honoured the outcome-driven implementations of iMAL, Azentio's Islamic Banking platform, and were the first to be certified by the Accounting and Auditing Organisation for Islamic Financial Institutions (AAOIFI). The Global FinTech Innovation Awards seek to honour banks, financial institutions, and technology players for their excellence in innovations using emerging technologies.

13. Javed Akhtar to be felicitated with Padmapani Lifetime Achievement Award at the Ajanta-Ellora Film Festival

- **Veteran lyricist-screenwriter Javed Akhtar will be felicitated with the Padmapani Lifetime Achievement Award at the Ajanta-Ellora Film Festival.**
- Akhtar, the co-writer of Hindi cinema classics such as 'Zanjeer', 'Deewaar', 'Sholay', 'Don', 'Kaala Patthar' and 'Mr India', will be honoured for his contribution to the Indian film.
- The award ceremony will take place at Rukmini Auditorium in MGM University campus of Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar on January 3, 2024.

14. Former United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon honored with Lifetime Achievement Award

- In the United States, **former United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon was honoured with Lifetime Achievement Award at The Power of One Award 2023 ceremony**, organised by the Diwali Foundation USA.
- The awards are granted to selfless individuals for their help to form a peaceful and secure world for all.
- They are hailed as the 'Oscars of diplomacy'

15. At COP28: Game-Changing Innovator award for plastic surgeon Dr Atul Shah

- At the recently concluded UN Climate Change COP-23 at Dubai, **Dr Atul Shah was felicitated with the 2023 REACH (Recognizing Excellence Around Champions of Health)'s Game Changing Innovator award that recognises unsung heroes of global health.**
- The awards ceremony was held at the Reaching the Last Mile Forum, held within COP28's Health Day.
- Some three decades ago, plastic surgeon Dr Atul Shah realised that a simple surgery without the use of special equipment could tackle deformities of leprosy-affected patients.
- He soon published 'One in Four Lasso' operative techniques in the European Journal of Hand Surgery
- But it was the unavailability of adequate care to deal with smelly and poorly bandaged unhealed foot wounds that led this surgeon to design a 'self-care kit'.
- This innovative solution has been integrated into the country's National Leprosy Eradication Programme (since 2007) and benefited 80,000 people across India.

16. Indian Scientist Dr. Hemachandran Ravikumar Received Karmaveer Chakra Medal-2023

- **Dr. Hemachandran Ravikumar was honored with the Karmaveer Chakra Medal and Rex Karmaveer Global Fellowship by ICONGO in collaboration with the United Nations in New Delhi, in recognition of his exceptional contributions to R&D in Physical & Bio-Science and Microbiological Studies.**
- The Rex Karmaveer Chakra Medal, regarded as one of the most distinguished civilian distinctions, is given to persons who have made remarkable contributions to the well-being of humanity on a global scale.
- Dr. Hemachandran Ravikumar's outstanding contributions to scientific knowledge and the comprehension of biological sciences have justifiably won him this prestigious award.

17. Veteran actor Kabir Bedi awarded Italy's civilian honour 'Order of Merit'

- **Veteran actor Kabir Bedi has been recently conferred with one of Italy's highest civilian honors, the 'Order of Merit.'**
- This prestigious accolade recognizes his contributions to the world of cinema and his remarkable achievements in the entertainment industry spanning several decades.
- Kabir Bedi, known for his versatility and impactful roles in Indian cinema and international projects, received this honor as a token of appreciation for his outstanding career. His notable performances in iconic movies like "Octopussy," "The Bold and the Beautiful," and acclaimed Indian films

have established him as a distinguished actor globally.

18. NTPC Wins Two Silver Awards in Brandon Hall Group's Excellence in Technology Awards

- **NTPC, India's largest integrated power company, has been declared as the winner at the Brandon Hall Group's Excellence in Technology Awards 2023.**
- NTPC stands out as the only PSU in India to secure dual accolades in the Technology Awards category.
- The company received the coveted silver awards in two distinct categories: "Best Advance in Corporate Wellbeing Technology" and "Best Advance in Augmented and Virtual Reality."
- This recognition underscores NTPC's commitment to innovation and technological excellence, placing it at the forefront of advancements in corporate wellbeing and immersive technologies.
- The Silver Award in the 'Best Advance in Corporate Wellbeing Technology' Category was won by NTPC for its efforts in leveraging Technology to design an Individual-Centric Health Care Ecosystem which overcomes the limitations posed by the diversity and remoteness of NTPC Sites and provides effective medical services to all employees across all locations, thereby facilitating employees to contribute fully towards achievement of company goals

19. Daniel Barenboim, Ali Abu Awwad awarded Indira Gandhi Prize for Peace

- **Music conductor Daniel Barenboim and peace activist Ali Abu Awwad, who have worked to promote amity among the Israeli and Palestinian people, have been jointly awarded the Indira Gandhi**

Prize for Peace, Disarmament and Development for 2023.

- Barenboim and Awwad, whose work focuses on the use of non-violent tools of music, dialogue and peoples' participation, were chosen by an international jury chaired by former chief justice of India, TS Thakur, according to a statement from the Indira Gandhi Memorial Trust.

20. Professor Savita Ladage to get prestigious Royal Society of Chemistry prize

- **Professor Savita Ladage** from Homi Bhabha Centre for Science Education (HBCSE), an autonomous institute affiliated to Tata Institute of Fundamental Research, has been selected by the London-based Royal Society of Chemistry (RSC) to receive its **Nyholm Prize for Education, in recognition of her contribution to advancing chemistry education.**

21. Dr. Srinivas Naik Dharavath, Conferred with Global Icon Award at G20 Initiative Summit in Colombo, Sri Lanka

- Real Vision Homes Pvt Ltd's Chairman, **Dr. Srinivas Naik Dharavath** has been **Conferred with Global Icon Award at G20 Initiative Summit in Colombo, Sri Lanka.**
- The G20 Initiative Summit, organized as part of the Global Economic Forum, was an exclusive gathering that brought together global leaders, policymakers, and industry visionaries.

22. Indian Armed Forces officers awarded 'Golden Owl' for outstanding performance at DSCSC Sri Lanka

- **All three Indian Armed Forces officers undergoing the Command and Staff**

Course at Defence Services Command and Staff College (DSCSC) in Sri Lanka have been awarded the 'Golden Owl' for their outstanding performance.

- The DSCSC course is a program designed to prepare senior officers for leadership roles in joint operations and higher command.
- The 'Golden Owl' award admires analytical skills, strategic thinking, and potential for future leadership.

23. Genrobotics chosen among top three Indian startups at global AI summit

- **Genrobotics, a Kerala-based startup acclaimed for leveraging technology for social change, has been adjudged among top three Artificial Intelligence (AI) startups of India at the Global Partnership on Artificial Intelligence (GPAI) Summit 2023** organised by the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology in New Delhi.
- Genrobotic's G-gaiter Robotic Technology won the award in 'AI Game Changers' category at the December 12-14 summit held at Bharat Mandapam, inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

24. Gaja Capital Business Book Prize: 'Against All Odds', 'Winning Middle India' declared joint winners

- **"Against All Odds: The IT Story of India" and "Winning Middle India: The Story of India's New-Age Entrepreneurs" have been announced as the joint winners of the 'Gaja Capital Business Book Prize' 2023.**
- "Against All odds" written by S 'Kris' Gopalakrishnan and N and N Dayasindhu and Krishnan Narayana. "Winning

Middle India" by TN Hari and Bala Bala Srinivasa.

25. Bhutan top honour for former Punjab cadre IAS officer Dr Khetrapal

- Retired Punjab cadre IAS officer of 1975 batch and WHO South-East Asia regional director **Dr Poonam Khetrapal Singh has been awarded Bhutan's prestigious National Order of Merit Gold Medal for her distinguished services to the country.**
- Dr Poonam Khetrapal Singh became the first Indian to be elected as the regional director of WHO South-East Asia.

26. NTPC Kanti receives FICCI Water Award 2023 for industrial water use efficiency

- **NTPC Kanti has been awarded the 11th Edition of FICCI Water Award 2023 under the "Industrial Water Use Efficiency" category.**
- The award was presented to NTPC Kanti during the inaugural event of the 9th Edition of India Industry Water Conclave held at FICCI Federation House in New Delhi.
- NTPC Kanti has implemented various water conservation measures including wastewater treatment, and reuse of treated water in its operations. The company has also initiated awareness campaigns among its employees and the local community to promote responsible water usage. The FICCI Water Awards are presented annually to recognize exemplary efforts in water conservation and management by organisations across different sectors. The awards aim to encourage best practices and promote sustainable water management practices in India.

27. Joshi launches India's National Geoscience Data Repository (NGDR) portal

- Minister for Mines Pralhad Joshi launched India's National Geoscience Data Repository (NGDR) portal.
- NGDR is a comprehensive online platform that will host the geospatial data for the entire country.
- The launch of the portal puts India in the league of nations like the US, Australia and Canada, that are advanced in their mineral mining journey.
- Spearheaded by the Geological Survey of India (GSI) and Bhaskaracharya Institute of Space Applications and Geoinformatics (BISAG-N), the NGDR portal will democratise critical geoscience data by placing it in the public domain for anyone to access

28. Sahitya Akademi awards for 2023 announced in 24 Languages.

- Nine books of poetry, 6 novels, 5 short story collections, three essays and one literary study have won the Sahitya Akademi Awards this year.
- **Tamil author Rajasekaran has been chosen for his novel Neervazhi Padoom, Telugu writer Patanjali Sastry for his short story collection and Malayalam litterateur EV Ramakrishnan for his literary study Malayala Novelinte Deshakalangal.**
- The authors who will receive the honour for their poetry collections include **Vijay Verma in Dogri, Vinod Joshi in Gujarati, and Ashutosh Parida in Odia.**
- The authors who have been chosen for their short stories include **Pranavjyoti Deka in Assamese, Nandeswar Daimary in Bodo, and Taraceen Baskey in Santali.**
- **Sanjeev will get Sahitya Akademi Award for his Hindi novel Mujhe Pahachaano**

and Neelam Saran Gour will get the award for her English Novel Requiem in Raga Janki.

- The award, in the form of a casket containing an engraved copper-plaque, a shawl, and one lakh rupees will be presented at the award presentation function on 12th March next year. The awards relate to books first published during the five years immediately preceding the year of award, that is between January 2017 and 31st December, 2021.

29. UNESCO awards Rambagh Gate & Ramparts project highest honor, Award of Excellence for inclusivity & access to broader community

- **UNESCO has awarded the resilient urban revitalisation of Rambagh Gate and Ramparts in Punjab, as well as the heritage conservation projects related to Haryana's Church of Epiphany and Delhi's Bikaner House.**
- The Rambagh Gate and Ramparts project received the highest honor, the 'Award of Excellence,' for its inclusivity and access to the broader community. 3 projects, including Church of Epiphany and Bikaner House, received an 'Award of Merit'.
- The UNESCO Asia-Pacific Awards for Cultural Heritage Conservation recognize the efforts of individuals and organizations in restoring and conserving structures of heritage value.
- Twelve projects from China, India, and Nepal were acknowledged by the awards jury this year.
- Three projects - the Fanling Golf Course in Hong Kong SAR, China; Dongguan Garden Residences in Yangzhou, China; and Karnikara Mandapam at Kunnamangalam Bhagawati Temple,

Kerala, India - garnered an 'Award of Distinction' each.

30. UNESCO: Bengaluru Airport's T2 named among 'world's most beautiful airports'

- UNESCO's Prix Versailles 2023, **Bengaluru's Kempegowda International Airport (KIA) Terminal 2(T2) managed to stand out, and has been recognized as one of the 'world's most beautiful airports.'**
- The world judges panel, chaired by renowned fashion designer Elie Saab, bestowed this honour, and honoured T2 with the recognition, making it the sole airport in India to receive this. The airport was honoured with the prestigious 'Special Prize for an Interior'.

31. FIH Hockey Star Awards 2023: India's Hardik Singh, Savita Punia Land Top Honours

- Indian men's hockey team midfielder **Hardik Singh** and women's side captain **Savita Punia** won the **FIH Player of the Year and Goalkeeper of the Year (women) awards** respectively.
- This is Hardik's second big award this year as he was also conferred the Hockey India Balbir Singh Sr Award for Player of the Year 2022.
- This is Savita's 3rd consecutive FIH Women's Goalkeeper of the Year award.

32. Poet Sukrita Paul Kumar bags Tagore Literary Prize

- **The sixth edition of the Rabindranath Tagore Literary Prize was awarded to poet-critic Sukrita Paul Kumar for her book, 'Salt & Pepper: Selected Poems'.**
- An amount of USD 5,000, a Tagore statue and a certificate for contribution to literature was given to Kumar.

- The Rabindranath Tagore Literary Prize for social achievement was awarded to Nobel laureate Abhijit Banerjee.
- Founded in 2018 by US-based publisher Peter Bundalo, the award is a platform for world peace, literature, art, education and human rights. It also recognises works towards human rights and world peace with the Social Achievement Prize.
- The Rabindranath Tagore Literary Prize for social achievement was awarded to Nobel laureate Abhijit Banerjee for his contributions to societal welfare.
- Last year, the prize was given to journalist-author Raj Kamal Jha for his novel 'The City and The Sea'.

33. President of India Confers Crompton with the Prestigious National Energy Conservation Award 2023

- **Crompton Greaves Consumer Electricals Ltd. (CGCEL), one of India's leading consumer electrical companies, has been conferred with the prestigious National Energy Conservation Award 2023.**
- The honor was conferred by the President of India, Droupadi Murmu and the Ministry of Power through its body viz. Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE).
- The National Energy Conservation Awards (NECA) is a prominent annual event that highlights exceptional contributions to energy conservation. Since its inception on December 14, 1991, these awards, presented by the esteemed dignitaries of the Government

of India, acknowledges the exemplary efforts in energy conservation being undertaken across diverse sectors of the economy. This initiative has further been instrumental in inspiring industries and establishments nationwide to adopt and champion the energy-efficient measures.

34. SASTRA Ramanujan awards presented to University of California mathematicians Yunqing Tang and Ruixiang Zhang

- **The SASTRA-Ramanujan Awards for 2022 and 2023 were presented, respectively, to Yunqing Tang and Ruixiang Zhang, both mathematicians at the University of California in Berkeley, at the SASTRA campus in Kumbakonam.**
- The award, instituted by SASTRA in 2005, with a cash prize of USD 10,000 and a citation, is presented annually to individuals aged 32 and below.
- The award, instituted by SASTRA in 2005, with a cash prize of USD 10,000 and a citation, is presented annually to individuals aged 32 and below, who have made outstanding contributions in the field of mathematics. The awards are presented on the birthday of Ramanujan.
- Seven of the SASTRA-Ramanujan Award winners have won the Fields Medal and other prestigious awards such as the Cole Award. Prof. Manjul Bhargava, winner of the first SASTRA-Ramanujan Award in 2005 won both the Fields Medal and the Cole Award subsequently, the press release said.

Ranks & Reports

1. All-India House Price Index Moderates To 3.4% In Q2 FY24: RBI Data

- The all-India House Price Index (HPI) moderated to 3.4% in the July-September quarter of 2023-24 from 4.5% in the year-ago period, according to data released by the Reserve Bank of India. The RBI releases HPI-based on transaction-level data received from the registration authorities in 10 major cities.
- The cities are Ahmedabad, Bengaluru, Chennai, Delhi, Jaipur, Kanpur, Kochi, Kolkata, Lucknow, and Mumbai.
- "All-India HPI growth (year-on-year) moderated to 3.4% in Q2:2023-24 from 5.1% in the previous quarter and 4.5% a year ago; annual growth in HPI varied widely across the cities - ranging from the high growth of 6.5% (Chennai) to a contraction of 0.2% (Jaipur),".
- On a sequential (quarter-on-quarter) basis, all-India HPI contracted by 1.2% in the second quarter of 2023-24; seven of the 10 cities witnessed price increase in housing registration during the latest quarter.

2. In 2022, India accounted for 66% of malaria cases in WHO South-East Asia Region: World Malaria Report

- In 2022, India accounted for 66% of malaria cases in the WHO South-East Asia Region noted the new '2023 World Malaria Report' published by the World Health Organization (WHO).
- It adds that almost 46% of all cases in the region were due to Plasmodium vivax, which is a protozoal parasite and a human pathogen, which is the most

frequent and widely distributed cause of recurring malaria.

- Released earlier this week, the report highlights that despite strides in expanding access to insecticide-treated nets and medicines to help prevent malaria in young children and pregnant women, more people were getting sick with malaria.

3. Nandan Nilekani, Nikhil Kamath On Forbes Asia Heroes Of Philanthropy List

- Nandan Nilekani, co-founder of Infosys Ltd., KP Singh, chairman emeritus at DLF Ltd., and Nikhil Kamath, co-founder of Zerodha, have been named on the 17th edition of Forbes Asia's Heroes of Philanthropy list.
- The unranked list "highlights business leaders who are donating from their fortunes and giving personal time and attention to their select causes", Forbes said in a press release.
- The annual list, which spotlights 15 philanthropists, does not include corporate philanthropy except for privately-held companies where the individual is a majority owner.
- As per Forbes, Nandan Nilekani, co-founder and chairman of tech giant Infosys, have made it to the list for donating Rs 320 crore (\$38 million) to his alma mater IIT Bombay in June.

4. Crime against women: 4.45 lakh FIRs filed in 2022, almost 51 every hour. Delhi tops

- According to the annual crime report of the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB), Delhi registered the highest rate of crime against women in the country in 2022.

- The national capital recorded 14,247 cases in 2022 with a rate of 144.4 (per lakh), which was way above the national average of 66.4.
- The crime against women in the national capital stood at 14,277 in 2021 and 10,093 in 2020.
- **The NCRB data revealed that Uttar Pradesh registered 65,743 crime against women FIRs in 2022 followed by Maharashtra 45,331, Rajasthan 45,058, West Bengal 34,738 and Madhya Pradesh 32,765.**
- These five states together contributed 50.2% (2,23,635 cases) of the total cases lodged in the country in 2022

5. India's emission intensity reduced by 33% between 2005 and 2019: Govt report

- **India reduced its GDP emission intensity by 33 per cent between 2005 and 2019, achieving the target 11 years in advance, according to a government report.**
- The report also said India's GDP grew at a cumulative annual growth rate of 7 per cent but its emissions rose by only 4 per cent per year during this period.
- The country has been successful in decoupling its economic growth from planet-warming greenhouse gas emissions.

6. India Ranks 49th In World Digital Competitiveness Ranking Among 64 Economies: Report

- **India ranked 49th in the world digital competitiveness ranking (WDCR), among the 64 economies marking its significance in cybersecurity knowledge, according to the International Institute for Management Development (IMD) report.**

- The report said the ranking also underlined India's lack on the fronts like technology and future readiness.
- It stressed the leading economies in this year's ranking are akin to "digital nations," implying countries that actively promote the comprehensive integration of digital technologies, encompassing AI, across governmental, corporate and individual spheres.
- IMD found that in the Asia-Pacific region, India's position slipped to the 12th spot among the 14 countries, after being 11th for the last four consecutive years.
- On the other hand, among the 27 nations with a population of more than 20 million, India ranked 18th, falling two positions compared to last year, it added.
- Shedding light on India's knowledge in the cybersecurity space the report emphasised that the country has improved on parameters like talent, training and education, but retreated on a sub-factor of scientific concentration.
- Graduates in sciences and R&D productivity by publication emerged as the top strengths.
- Additionally, in terms of technology, India stood at the 50th spot as enforcing contracts, wireless broadband, and internet users were the biggest weaknesses, while investment in telecommunications, along with IT and media stock market capitalisation proved as the biggest strengths for the company.

7. Kolkata Is The Safest City With Least Crime Rate For Third Year In Row: NCRB

- **For the third year in a row, Kolkata has been declared as the safest city in India with least number of cognisable offences per lakh population, according**

to the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) 2022 data.

- In 2022, Kolkata recorded the least number of cognisable offences per lakh population -- 86 cases per lakh people.
- The city has witnessed a drop of 16 per cent in cases as compared to last year. According to the NCRB 2021 data, the city recorded 103.4 cases of cognisable offences per lakh people. The rankings were decided after comparing Kolkata against 18 other cities that have a population of over two million.
- According to the latest NCRB data, based on cases recorded and shared by the state governments to the Centre, the metropolitan city was followed by Maharashtra's Pune, with 280.7 cases per lakh people and Telangana's Hyderabad with 299.2 cases per lakh people, PTI reported.

8. Himachal Pradesh, Rajasthan report highest urban unemployment in July-September

- According to data released by the Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) of the National Sample Survey Office, **Himachal Pradesh topped the urban unemployment chart with 33.9%, followed by Rajasthan with 30.20% among the age group of 15 to 29 years during July-September 2023**, against the national average of 17.3% of the same age group during the period.
- Rajasthan registered 39.4% of urban female unemployment in the quarter as against 27.2% in males, the PLFS data revealed.
- **Jammu & Kashmir also reported a high urban unemployment rate of 29.8% in the age group.**
- Unemployment was high among females at 51.8% in the quarter compared to

19.8% among males in the July-September quarter.

9. Solar power potential of 75,000 GW by 2050 possible with long-duration storage: Report

- **Solar power generation capacity can go up to 75,000 gigawatts by 2050 globally with long-duration storage capacity, a report by the International Solar Association (ISA) and LDES Council, said.**
- The report, presented at COP28 in Dubai, emphasized the transformative potential of combining solar energy with LDES to ensure continuous, reliable, and affordable renewable energy.
- The report emphasized the necessity of LDES to fully realize the potential of solar installations for complete decarbonization and achieving a solar capacity of 75,000 GW by 2050.
- It presented a case study of isolated island utilities in the US, demonstrating the financial viability of LDES in areas with limited interconnectivity and high local fuel costs. The combination of solar, wind, and LDES emerges as the most cost-effective solution for achieving 100 percent renewable energy.
- The LDES Council estimates that LDES will become a USD 4 trillion industry by 2040, with an installed capacity potential of 8 TW, the statement said.
- This growth is essential for enabling solar energy to meet global electricity demands affordably and reliably.
- The report also identified barriers to the widespread adoption of solar and LDES, including regulatory challenges, financing issues, and technical limitations, and proposed solutions to overcome these hurdles.

10. Hal, Bel And Mazagon Docks Psus Among World's Top 100 Arms Producing Companies: SPIRI REPORT

- According to a SIPRI report, sales of arms and military services by the 100 largest armament companies in the world reached \$597 billion in 2022. Geopolitical tensions and the Russian invasion of Ukraine fuelled increased demand for weapons globally.
- Indian defence PSUs Hindustan Aeronautics, Bharat Electronics, and Mazagon Docks are among the top 100 arms-producing companies.
- The US dominates the list, but its revenues fell by 7.9%. Asian arms companies, including those in China and India, benefited from sustained government investment in military modernization reported

11. India set to become 3rd largest economy by 2030, GDP to be around 7% in 2026-27: S&P Global Ratings

- India is set to become the world's third largest economy by 2030, S&P Global Ratings said in its latest report . It said that the nation's GDP growth would be around 7 per cent in 2026-27 fiscal year.
- In its Global Credit Outlook 2024, S&P predicted a 6.4 per cent GDP growth in the fiscal year year through March 2024 as compared 7.2 per cent in the previous financial year This would mean that India will surpass Japan and Germany

12. India ranks 7th in Climate Change Performance Index

- India has been placed 7th in this year's Climate Change Performance Index (CCPI).

- The country improved one rank from the previous one, and also remained among the highest performers.
- According to a report released during the global climate conference (COP-28) in Dubai, India maintained its top 10 position for the fifth year in a row.
- The Index evaluates the climate mitigation efforts of 63 countries and the European Union, covering over 90 percent of global greenhouse gas emissions.
- **China, the largest polluter came in at number 51 while the US, the second biggest emitter came in at number 57.**
- India's past performance in the CCPI ranking shows significant improvement from 31st rank in 2014 to seventh in 2023.

13. ITC becomes world's 3rd most valuable tobacco company after London-based BAT sinks

- Diversified conglomerate ITC, with a market cap of \$67 billion (Rs 5.6 lakh crore), surpassed British American Tobacco Plc (BAT) to become the third most valuable tobacco company in the world.
- London-based BAT, which sells cigarettes, tobacco, and other nicotine products, has seen a sell-off in its shares in the past week, rendering its market cap below ITC to \$64 billion.
- US-listed Philip Morris International and Altria Group currently occupy the top spots above ITC as the two most valuable tobacco companies in the world. The evolving stricter regulations and growing awareness of health risks have been squeezing tobacco companies' traditional business lately, driving declines in cigarette volumes in some markets.

14. Bengaluru tops in acid attacks against women in 2022, followed by Delhi and Ahmedabad, reveals NCRB data

- **Bengaluru witnessed the highest number of acid attacks against women in the country in 2022**, with the city police registering six cases, according to the latest report released by the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB)
- Among the 19 metropolitan cities listed in the NCRB data, Bengaluru recorded eight women falling prey to acid attack last year, followed by Delhi with seven women, and Ahmedabad recorded five cases, according to NCRB.

15. Adani Green Energy ranked second-largest global solar PV developer: Mercom

- **Adani Green Energy Limited (AGEL) has been declared the second-largest global solar PV developer in the global solar energy sector, according to Mercom Capital Group's Annual Global Report.**
- Mercom Capital Group is a clean energy communications and research firm.
- Mercom Capital Group is a clean energy communications and research firm. In its global annual report, it has unveiled the top ten leading global large-scale solar PV developers based on data compiled from July 2022 to June 2023. AGEL was ranked this position based on its contribution and performance in the renewable energy sector.
- France-based TotalEnergies, which holds a total capacity of 41.3 GW, was ranked number one and followed by AGEL with its total solar capacity of 18.1 GW. Canada-based Brookfield Renewable Partners came in third with 18 GW.

16. Total digital payment transactions volume increased from 2,071 crore in FY2017-18 to 13,462 crore in FY2022-23 at a CAGR of 45%

- Digital payments have significantly increased in recent years, as a result of coordinated efforts of the Government with all stakeholder.
- **The total digital payment transactions volume increased from 2,071 crore in FY 2017-18 to 13,462 crore in FY 2022-23 at a CAGR of 45% and crossed 10,998 crore during current financial year till 27.11.2023.**
- The initiatives undertaken by the Government to promote digital transactions include, *inter alia*;
- incentive scheme for promotion of RuPay Debit cards and low-value BHIM-UPI transactions (P2M)
- advisories by Government of India to various stakeholders to improve payment acceptance infrastructure
- allocation and monitoring year-wise digital payment transaction & Merchant acquisition targets to the Public and Private Sector Banks
- Pradhan Mantri Gramin Digital Saksharta Abhiyaan (PMGDISHA) to augment digital literacy in rural India, and
- other promotion activities conducted with digital payment stakeholders and Law Enforcement Agencies (LEAs).

17. Niti Aayog Delta Rankings: Tiriyani Block Clinches Top Spot

- **Tiriyani Block has emerged triumphant, securing the foremost position in the inaugural Delta Rankings instituted by Niti Aayog.**
- This accolade for **Tiriyani Block**, nestled in the state of **Telangana**, is indicative of its remarkable strides in crucial domains encompassing healthcare, education,

infrastructure, agriculture, and socio-economic welfare.

- The rankings, formulated to assess and foster competitiveness among 114 aspirational districts, serve as a testament to the commendable progress achieved in various developmental sectors.

18. Myanmar surpasses Afghanistan as world's largest source of opium

- **Myanmar has surpassed Afghanistan to become world's largest source of opium in 2023** after a third consecutive year of expanding cultivation fueled by the country's civil war, the United Nations said in a new report.
- After the Taliban imposed a ban on drugs in 2022, opium cultivation in Afghanistan decreased by 95%, leading to a global shift in the opium supply to Myanmar.

19. RBI report: State's finances improved for the second consecutive year

- The report mentioned that the improvements by the state in their finances in the financial year 2021-2022, were sustained even in the current financial year 2022-2023.
- The State's combined gross fiscal deficit (GFD) stood at 2.8 percent of the gross domestic product (GDP).
- This figure is below the budget estimate for the second consecutive year.
- The States anticipate prudent fiscal management for 2023-24, with the consolidated GFD budgeted at 3.1 percent of GDP. The implementation of goods and services tax (GST) has led to increased tax buoyancy for the states," the report said. The state's total outstanding liabilities are budgeted to be

at 27.6 percent of GDP for 2023-24, from 31 percent in 2020-21

20. Presence of Indian banks via subsidiaries increased to 417 in FY23: RBI

- **Indian banks increased their overseas presence through the subsidiaries route to 417 during 2022-23, from 399 at the end of the preceeding fiscal, as per Reserve Bank data released.**
 - Their employee strength, too, rose 0.5 per cent and 6.2 per cent for foreign branches and subsidiaries, respectively, during 2022-23.
 - The survey covers 14 Indian banks having overseas branches or subsidiaries and 44 foreign banks having branches or subsidiaries in India.
- On the other hand, the number of branches and employees of foreign banks in India contracted during 2022-23 to 774 from 858 in 2021-22.

21. For the 6th time, Hyderabad emerges as the best city to live in India

- For the sixth time, **Hyderabad has raced ahead of all its competitors to be crowned as the best Indian city to live in, according to the Mercer's Quality of Living (City Ranking) survey, 2023.**
- The factors that pushed it to the top are political stability, healthcare, education, infrastructure, and socio-cultural environment.
- Prior to Covid-19 pandemic, Hyderabad had won this Mercer recognition five times in a row between 2015 and 2019. And while its global ranking slipped a few places this time - from 143 in 2019 to 153 in 2023 - it still stayed ahead of all other Indian cities like Pune (154), Bengaluru (156), Chennai (161), Mumbai (164), Kolkata (170), and Delhi (172).

22. Pune breaks record: 3,066 parents read stories to their children for four minutes

- **The Pune Municipal Corporation (PMC)'s event of 'parents telling story to their child' has made it to Guinness Book of World Records** with 3,066 parents simultaneously telling stories to their children for four minutes.
- The earlier record of 2,479 parents simultaneously telling stories to their children was held by China.
- The event was a part of the Pune Book Festival, organised by the National Book Trust from December 16 to 24 on the grounds of Fergusson College, aimed to inculcate reading habits in children.

23. Developing nations spent record high on debt in 2022 says World Bank

- Developing countries spent nearly half a trillion dollars to service their external public and publicly guaranteed debt in 2022, draining funds from critical health, education and climate needs, and putting the poorest countries at increasing risk of "tumbling into a debt crisis," the World Bank said
- **In its latest International Debt Report, the bank said the debt-service payments - including principal and interest - rose 5% to a record \$443.5 billion from a year earlier amid the biggest surge in global interest rates in four decades. It said the payments could shoot 10% higher in 2023-2024.**
- The 75 poorest countries were hardest hit, said the report, now in its 50th year. Their external public debt service payments reached a record \$88.9 billion in 2022 and would surge by 40% over the 2023-2024 period. Their interest payments alone had quadrupled since 2012 to \$23.6 billion, it said.

- The World Bank and other multilateral creditors, helped fill the gap, providing a record \$115 billion in new financing for developing countries in 2022, the report said.

24. Shah Rukh Khan named top Asian celebrity in the world for 'saving' Bollywood

- **Shah Rukh Khan has clinched the top spot in the "Top 50 Asian Celebrities In The World" list for 2023.**
- Published by the UK-based Eastern Eye newspaper, the list sees Khan outshining global stars from cinema, television, music, arts, literature and social media.
- His blockbuster hits, *Pathaan* and *Jawan*, along with the much-anticipated *Dunki*, have played a pivotal role in reviving the Hindi cinema industry.

25. With \$10 b in 4 years, TN ranks fourth in attracting FDI

- **Cumulative Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) inflow in to Tamil Nadu has touched nearly \$10 billion in the last four years from the period between October 2019 and September 2023.**
- **Tamil Nadu ranks fourth in attracting FDI in the period between Oct 2019 and September 2023, after Maharashtra, Karnataka and Gujarat--but a distant fourth.** The tiny states of Haryana and Telangana are close behind Tamil Nadu.
- With the Tamil Nadu Global Investors Meeting scheduled to take place on January 7 and 8, 2024 in Chennai, the State government hopes to attract more investment to the State.

26. Hyderabad ranked 1st in food adulteration cases: NCRB

- **Hyderabad has ranked first in the country for food adulteration cases,**

according to the data released by the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB).
Telangana stands second, closely followed by Andhra Pradesh.

- In 2022, a total of 291 cases of food adulteration were reported across 19 major cities in India.

27. IndiGo makes history, becomes first Indian airline to carry 100 million passengers a year

- IndiGo, India's preferred carrier has created history by becoming the first Indian airline to carry 100 million passengers in a single calendar year. With this achievement, it has joined a select club of global carriers to operate on such a scale.
- This development further cement IndiGo's standing among the 10 largest airlines in the world by passenger traffic.

28. UP now second-largest economy in India

- In a major milestone achieved by the Yogi Adityanath government, Uttar Pradesh has emerged as the second largest economy of India after Maharashtra in terms of gross domestic product (GDP) share.
- In the context of GDP share, UP has outpaced states such as Tamil Nadu (9.1 per cent), Gujarat (8.2 per cent) and West Bengal (7.5 per cent).
- States like Karnataka (6.2 per cent), Rajasthan (5.5 per cent), Andhra Pradesh (4.9 per cent) and Madhya Pradesh (4.6 per cent) are significantly behind UP.

30. Union Minister Bhupender Yadav launches a NITI Aayog report, 'A Green and Sustainable Growth Agenda for the Global Economy'.

- In a collaborative effort, NITI Aayog, in partnership with International Development Research Centre (IDRC)

and Global Development Network (GDN), published a report, 'A Green and Sustainable Growth Agenda for the Global Economy' based on the proceedings of the G20 international conference held in New Delhi on 28-29 July 2023, featuring 40 leading experts from 14 countries.

31. Delhi, followed by Bangalore and Mumbai lead India's crypto adoption: Report

- A report by crypto trading platform CoinSwitch showed **Delhi maintained its lead in India's crypto adoption, followed by Bangalore and Mumbai.**
- The parameter for this was in terms of value invested: Delhi (9 per cent), Bangalore (8 per cent) and Mumbai (5 per cent). Ghaziabad claimed the 10th position in the list of the top invested cities, replacing Patna.

32. India Skills Report finds Kerala the most preferred State to work

- **Kerala is the most preferred state to work for employable talent in the country, with Kochi being the top choice among Indian cities for female job aspirants, according to the 'India Skills Report 2024',** released by talent assessment firm Wheebox in partnership with organisations including Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) and All India Council for Technical Education.
- **Kerala pushed Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh to the second and third spots respectively to emerge on top in the category.**
- While Kochi was the top choice for female job seekers, Thiruvananthapuram was the third preferred destination. For male employable talent, Kochi and

Thiruvananthapuram were the third and fifth choices respectively among cities in the country.

- For both male and female job seekers combined, Kochi and Thiruvananthapuram figured in the second and fourth positions respectively.
- As per the report, Kerala was second in terms of 'highest employable resources in the 18-21 years age group'. "Telangana has the highest concentration of employable talent in the age group of 18-21 with 85.45% found employable followed by Kerala with 74.93% employable resources in this age group," it said.
- Thiruvananthapuram clinched the third spot among cities in the 'highest employable resources in the 18-21 years age group' category. "Among top cities with employable talent in the age group of 18-21, Pune came first with 80.82% of candidates found highly employable, followed by Bengaluru with 72.18% and then Thiruvananthapuram with 67.22% employable in this age group," the report pointed out.

33. PV Sindhu makes it into Forbes list of highest paid women athletes in 2023

- Badminton star **PV Sindhu** has made it into the list of 2023's highest paid women athletes by Forbes where she finished at the 16th spot alongside gymnast Simone Biles with her \$7.1 million earnings. Last year Sindhu was placed 12th with her \$7.1 million earnings in a list which was led by Japanese tennis star **Naomi Osaka**.
- The list is being headed by Polish tennis star **Iga Swiatek** who is valued at \$23.9 million. She won the French Open and

ended the year as the No.1 ranked player in the world.

- She is followed by freestyle skiing star Eileen Gu from China whose value is \$22.1 million. Tennis player Coco Gauff comes in at 3rd with \$21.7 million while the same sports' UK's Emma Raducanu (\$15.2 million) Japan's Naomi Osaka (\$15 million), Belarus's Aryna Sabalenka (\$14.7 million), US's Jessica Pegula (\$12.5 million), US's Venus Williams (\$12.2 million), Kazakhstan's Elena Rybakina (\$9.5 million) and Canada's Leylah Fernandez (\$8.8 million) close out the top 10.

34. Banks log 12.2% growth in FY23, gross bad loans down for 5th year: RBI report

- **The consolidated balance sheet of scheduled commercial banks (SCBs) expanded in 2022-23 by 12.2%**, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) said in its Report on Trend and Progress of Banking in India 2022-23, released on December 27. The expansion was driven by credit to retail and services sectors, the report said. Deposit growth also rose; this, however, trailed credit growth.
- According to the report, higher net interest income and lower provisioning drove net interest margin (NIM) and profitability higher in 2022-23. The improvement in asset quality of banks, which started in 2018-19, continued during 2022-23, the report showed.
- Number of frauds reported in April-September FY24 doubled on an annual basis to 14,483 from 5,396 seen in the same period last year, the report said. However, the amount involved in the frauds reduced from Rs 17,685 crore to Rs 2,642 crore, it added.

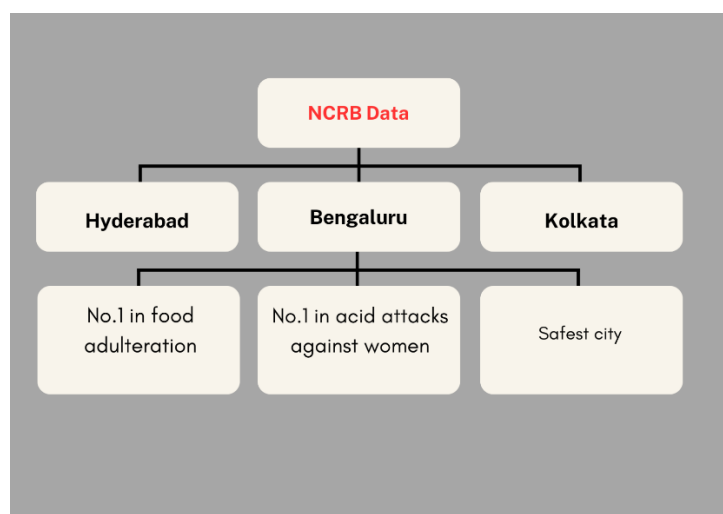
The key highlights of the report are:

- The capital to risk weighted assets ratio (CRAR) of SCBs was 16.8 per cent at end-September 2023, with all bank groups meeting the regulatory minimum requirement and the common equity tier 1 (CET1) ratio requirement.
- The improvement in asset quality of banks that began in 2018-19 continued during 2022-23 and H1:2023-24, with gross non-performing assets (GNPA) ratio at 3.2 per cent at end-September 2023.
- Higher net interest income and lower provisioning boosted net interest margin (NIM) and profitability in 2022-23.
- The combined balance sheet of urban co-operative banks (UCBs) expanded by 2.3 per cent in 2022-23, driven by loans and advances. Their capital buffers and profitability improved through 2022-23 and Q1:2023-24.
- The consolidated balance sheet of non-banking financial companies (NBFCs) expanded by 14.8 per cent in 2022-23, led by double digit credit growth. Profitability and asset quality of the sector also improved in 2022-23 and in H1:
- 2023-24, even as the sector remained well-capitalised with CRAR higher than the regulatory requirement.

- Number of complaints received under the RB-IOs by consumers increased by 68.2 per cent in 2022-23.
- This report is a statutory publication in compliance with Section 36 (2) of the Banking Regulation Act, 1949. It showcases the performance of the banking sector, including co-operative banks and NBFCs.

35. India 15th in top 25 AI nations but has 'greatest upward potential'

- India may be 15th among the top 25 Artificial Intelligence nations, but it has the 'the greatest upward potential' according to research by Tufts University's business school, the Fletcher School.
- At the top is the US, followed by China, fighting for global leadership in AI followed by the UK, Japan, and Germany.
- In 15th spot, India is ahead of Brazil, Argentina, Indonesia, Mexico, Turkey & Thailand.



Important Days

1. World AIDS Day | 1 December

- Each year, on 1 December, the world commemorates World AIDS Day. People around the world unite to show support for people living with HIV and to remember those who have died from AIDS-related illnesses.
- **World AIDS Day 2023, theme 'Let communities lead'.**
- According to WHO reports, Globally, 9.2 million people do not have access to the HIV treatment that they need. Each day 1700 lives are lost from HIV-related causes, and 3500 people are infected, with many not knowing their status or having access to treatment.

2. International Day For the Abolition of Slavery | 2 Dec

- The International Day for the Abolition of Slavery, 2 December, marks the date of the adoption, by the General Assembly, of the United Nations Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Persons and of the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others (resolution 317(IV) of 2 December 1949).
- The focus of this day is on eradicating contemporary forms of slavery, such as trafficking in persons, sexual exploitation, the worst forms of child labour, forced marriage, and the forced recruitment of children for use in armed conflict.
- **2023 Theme: Fighting slavery's legacy of racism through transformative education.**

3. International Day of Persons with Disabilities | 3 December

- International Day of Persons with Disabilities (IDPD) is a UN day that is celebrated every year on 3 December.
- The day is about promoting the rights and well-being of persons with disabilities at every level of society and development, and to raise awareness of the situation of persons with disabilities in all aspects of political, social, economic, and cultural life.
- WHO joins the UN in observing this day each year, reinforcing the importance of securing the rights of people with disabilities, so they can participate fully, equally and effectively in society with others, and face no barriers in all aspects of their lives.

4. World Soil Day | 5 December

- World Soil Day is observed on December 5th each year.
- This date was chosen to coincide with the birthday of the late King Bhumibol Adulyadej of Thailand, a champion of soil resources conservation.
- It highlights the need for sustainable soil management practices to protect and preserve this valuable resource for future generations.
- World Soil Day was officially designated by the United Nations General Assembly in 2013 to raise awareness about the significance of soil as a vital resource. It has since become an annual event to promote soil conservation and sustainable land management.

5. International Volunteers Day | 5 December

- International Volunteers Day is observed globally on December 5th each year.
- This date offers a chance to acknowledge and celebrate the

remarkable achievements of volunteers and to reflect on the impact of volunteerism on society.

- International Volunteers Day was established by the United Nations General Assembly in 1985.
- It was first observed in 1986.

6. December 9 | International Anti-Corruption Day

- International Day Against Corruption or International Anti-Corruption Day (IACD) is celebrated on December 9, every year, to raise awareness among the general public on the impact of the prevailing malice in many countries. It also raises concern on the harmful effects of corruption on the progress, development and the society at large.

7. 10 December | International Human Rights Day

- 10 December 2023 marks the 75th anniversary of one of the world's most groundbreaking global pledges: the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR).
- The Declaration was proclaimed by the United Nations General Assembly in Paris on 10 December 1948 and sets out, for the first time, fundamental human rights to be universally protected.

8. International Mountain Day | 11 December

- International Mountain Day 2023, which is observed on December 11, is an opportunity for us to increase awareness and call for nature-based solutions, best practices, and investments that can enhance the resilience and adaptability of mountain ecosystems.

- **The theme of International Mountain Day 2023 is "Restoring Mountain Ecosystems,"**

- Mountains, the natural jewels that we should cherish, are facing numerous threats. They are not only home to 15% of the world's population but also host half of the world's biodiversity hotspots. These majestic landscapes provide freshwater for everyday life to half of humanity, while also supporting agriculture, clean energy, and medicine production.

9. International Day Of Neutrality | 12 December

- International Day of Neutrality is commemorated on December 12 every year to raise awareness regarding the importance of neutrality in intergovernmental relations and to strengthen peace and security at the global level.
- The day is marked globally by holding various types of events aimed at raising public awareness of the value of neutrality in international relations.
- The idea of the International Day of Neutrality was proposed by Turkmenistan, a country in Central Asia which has been recognised as a permanent neutral state by the United Nations since December 1995. The United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) approved the proposal on February 2, 2017
- On December 12, 2017, the International Day of Neutrality was proclaimed. It also highlights the link between peacekeeping and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.
- The resolution recognised how some states' national neutrality policies can help in improving global peace and

security and play a major role in promoting friendly ties between several nations across the world.

10. National Energy Conservation Day | 14 December

- The National Energy Conservation Day is being celebrated every year on December 14 since 1991. The Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE), under Ministry of Power spearheads the celebrations every year.
- The objective to celebrate the National Energy Conservation Day is to drive mass awareness about the importance of energy efficiency and conservation.
- BEE recognizes and encourages endeavours of industries in reducing energy consumption by felicitating them with National Energy Conservation Awards.
- BEE also awards prizes to the national winners of the annual National Painting Competition on Energy Conservation.
- Formed under the Union Ministry of Power, the Bureau of Energy Efficiency 'BEE', has been leading the celebrations of National Energy Conservation Day annually on December 14 since 1991.
- A constitutional body that falls under the Government of India, the Bureau of Energy Efficiency assists in the development and implementation of strategies and policies to reduce excessive consumption of energy. The committee also executed 'The Energy Conservation Act' in 2001.

11. Vijay Diwas, marking India's triumph over Pakistan in 1971 war, being celebrated

- Vijay Diwas is being commemorated across the country today. Every year 16th December is celebrated as Vijay

Diwas, to mark India's victory over Pakistan in the 1971 war and to pay tribute to the soldiers who sacrificed their lives for the country.

- Following a 13-day battle, India secured a triumph over Pakistan on this day in 1971, leading to the creation of Bangladesh, earlier known as East Pakistan. India supported the Bangladesh nationalist forces during the war, which ended with Pakistan surrendering and agreeing to the formation of Bangladesh.

12. International Human Solidarity Day | 20 December

- International Human Solidarity Day is observed on December 20th each year.
- It's a day to reflect on the importance of solidarity and take concrete actions to support those in need and contribute to a more equitable world.
- International Human Solidarity Day was established by the United Nations General Assembly in 2005 to promote the concept of solidarity.

13. Judge Advocate General Department celebrates 40th Corps Day

- The Judge Advocate General (JAG) Department, the judicial and legal wing of the Army responsible for dispensation of justice to all ranks is celebrating its 40th Corps Day today on 21st Dec 2023. It was on this day in 1949 wherein the Bill for the Army Act was introduced in the Parliament.
- Being the legal branch of the Indian Army, it deals with military related cases. Current Judge Advocate General: Maj Gen Sandeep Kumar
- Being the legal branch of the Indian Army, it deals with military related

disciplinary cases and litigation. The Judge Advocate General is the legal advisor to the Chief of Army Staff in matters of military, martial (in its fighting service aspect) and international law and also assists the Adjutant General in matters relating to discipline involving application of military law.

- This Dept is actively involved in assisting all ranks in observing Human Rights and the rule of law. Pertinently, the origin and evolution of JAG Department is closely linked with the evolution of Military Law in England and traces its history to British "Article of War-1385". Its origin in India goes back to 1841. Brig (Justice) DM Sen (Retd) was the first Indian JAG after independence.

14. National Mathematics Day 2023 | 22 December

- National Mathematics Day is celebrated on 22 December every year. This day has been observed since 2012. The then Prime Minister, Dr Manmohan Singh paid tribute to the birth anniversary of Ramanujan as National Mathematics Day.
- Srinivasa Ramanujan was born on December 22, 1887, in Erode, Tamil Nadu, India.

15. National Farmer's Day 2023 | 23rd December

- National Farmers' Day, also known as 'Kisan Diwas', is observed every year on December 23.
- It commemorates the occasion as it marks the birth anniversary of former prime minister Chaudhary Charan Singh who belonged to Uttar Pradesh and worked for the welfare of farmers of the nation.

- 2023 theme: is 'Delivering Smart Solutions for Sustainable Food Security and Resilience'.

16. National Consumer Rights Day 2023 | December 24

- In 1986, the Consumer Protection Act was passed and it received the assent of the President on December 24.
- Since then, National Consumer Rights Day has been celebrated on this day to commemorate the occasion. The Consumer Protection Act acts to protect consumers from defective goods, negligent services, and unfair trade practices.
- The six fundamental rights of the Consumer Protection Act are the Right to safety, Right to choose, Right to be informed, Right to be heard, Right to seek redressal, and Right to consumer education.
- In 2019 some amendments were made in the act and it came into force on 20 July 2020. This act was passed protecting the rights of consumers and protecting them from market abuse or exploitation.
- The Consumer Protection Act 2019 was passed to widen the scope of the Consumer Protection Act 1986.
- It also includes punishment against misleading advertisements, false product descriptions, or any kind of guarantee of products and services. The Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA) will impose fines and penalties against the companies for such false and misleading advertisements.

17. Good Governance Day | 25 December

- Good Governance Day will be celebrated today on the birth anniversary of former

Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee. The day is celebrated on the 25th of December every year to foster awareness among the people of the country about accountability in Governance and Government.

- To honour the late Atal Vihari Vajpayee, Prime Minister Narendra Modi declared December 25 as "Good Governance Day" in 2014.

18. International Day of Epidemic Preparedness | 27 December

- The United Nations proclaimed on December 7, 2020, that December 27 would be the International Day of Epidemic Preparedness.
- The first-ever International Day of Epidemic Preparedness was organised on December 27, 2020, to show how important it is to be ready for and fight against epidemics.

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Summit & Conferences

1. SBM-GOBARdhan Biogas Conference to be held

- Acceleration of the Compressed Biogas sector will be high on the agenda of the SBM-GOBARdhan Biogas Conference to be held in New Delhi.
- The conference will be organized under the aegis of the Housing and Urban Affairs Ministry in collaboration with the United Nations Industrial Development Organization.
- Galvanizing Organic Bio-Agro Resources Dhan (GOBARdhan) is an initiative that aims to convert waste to wealth and build a robust ecosystem for setting up compressed biogas plants. It aims to drive sustainable economic growth and promote a circular economy.
- The conference will have discussions on transformational policies for 'waste to compressed biogas' projects, the existing National policies, and initiatives that promote biogas development in India.
- India aims for net-zero emissions by 2070 as per Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC) in which waste to biogas is expected to play a crucial role.

2. India co-hosts with UAE the Global Green Credit Initiative at COP-28

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi together with President Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan of UAE, co-hosted the High-level event on 'Green Credits Programme' at COP-28, on 1 December 2023 in Dubai.
- The event saw participation of H.E. Mr. Ulf Kristersson, Prime Minister of Sweden, H.E. Mr. Filipe Nyusi, President

of Mozambique and H.E. Mr. Charles Michel, President of the European Council.

- This global initiative aims to facilitate global collaboration, cooperation and partnership through exchange of knowledge, experiences and best practices in planning, implementation and monitoring of environment positive actions through programs/mechanisms like Green Credits.

3. India Internet Governance Forum IIGF'23 to be held in New Delhi

- **The third edition of the IIGF is being conducted under the overarching theme 'Moving Forward' Calibrating Bharat's Digital Agenda' Calibrating Bharat's Digital Agenda' on December 5 from 9am to 18:30 in New Delhi.**
- The first two editions of the IIGF were convened in 2021 and 2022.
- The Internet Governance Forum (IGF) is a multi-stakeholder platform bringing together representatives from various groups, considering all to be at par to discuss public policy issues related to the internet.
- India Internet Governance Forum 2023 (IIGF-2023) is a hybrid event; for attendee in person the event is being held at Bharat Mandapam, Pragati Maidan, New Delhi.

4. Global Investors Summit in Dehradun from December 8-9

- Dehradun is gearing up to host the Global Investors Summit on December 8-9, where organisers are anticipating a turnout of 5,000 delegates from India and abroad.

- The Summit aims to foster collaboration between exhibitors, private enterprises, and government organisations by giving them a platform to display advanced technologies, innovations, and upcoming trends.

5. India to host four-day 27th WAIPA World Investment Conference in New Delhi

- **India will host the four-day 27th WAIPA World Investment Conference in New Delhi.**
- National Investment Promotion and Facilitation Agency of the Government of India, and World Association of Investment Promotion Agencies are organizing the conference at the India International Convention & Expo Centre - Yashobhoomi, New Delhi. World Investment Conference is being held in India for the first time.

6. PM Narendra Modi to inaugurate Global Partnership on Artificial Intelligence at Bharat Mandapam

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi will inaugurate the Global Partnership on Artificial Intelligence (GPAI) Summit, at Bharat Mandapam in New Delhi.
- GPAI is a multi-stakeholder initiative, which aims to bridge the gap between theory and practice on Artificial Intelligence by supporting cutting-edge research and applied activities on AI-related priorities.
- The Summit will provide an opportunity to know what the world is thinking on Artificial Intelligence and what India is offering.
- Launched in June 2020 with 15 members, the GPAI's membership has expanded to 28 member countries and the European Union. During the three

day summit, multiple sessions on diverse topics like Artificial Intelligence and global health, education and skilling, Artificial Intelligence and data governance, among others will be organised.

7. GPAI 2023 begins in New Delhi

- **Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced India's hosting of the Global Partnership on Artificial Intelligence (GPAI) Summit from December 12-14, 2023.**
- Comprised of 28 nations and the European Union, GPAI collaborates to address the challenges and opportunities presented by Artificial Intelligence (AI) while advocating for its responsible development.
- The Global Partnership on AI (GPAI) is a multi-stakeholder initiative which aims to bridge the gap between theory and practice on AI by supporting cutting-edge research and applied activities on AI-related priorities.
- Launched in June 2020 with 15 members, GPAI is the fruition of an idea developed within the G7. Today, GPAI's 29 members are Argentina, Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Czech Republic, Denmark, France, Germany, India, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Mexico, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Poland, the Republic of Korea, Senegal, Serbia, Singapore, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Turkey, the United Kingdom, the United States, and the European Union.
- GPAI has a Council and a Steering Committee, supported by a Secretariat hosted by the OECD, and two Centres of Expertise: one in Montreal (CEIMIA, the International Centre of Expertise in Montreal for the Advancement of Artificial Intelligence) and one in Paris (at

INRIA, the French National Institute for Research in Digital Science and Technology). Currently, GPAI has four working groups on the themes of Responsible AI, Data Governance, the Future of Work, and Innovation and Commercialization.

- India is a founding member of GPAI, having joined initiative on June 15, 2020

8. Delhi University, OP Jindal Global University join hands to host 74th AICC

- Delhi University and the OP Jindal Global University are set to organise the 74th Annual All India Commerce Conference (AICC) of the Indian Commerce Association from December 13-15.
- The conference, scheduled to be held at the campuses of both the organising universities, is expected to see participation from more than 2,500 delegates from different parts of India and abroad. The main theme of the 74th AICC is 'One Earth-One Family-One Future'.

9. ISF 2023 Outreach Programme of CSIR-NIScPR

- CSIR-National Institute of Science Communication and Policy Research (CSIR-NIScPR) organized the outreach event for India International Science Festival (IISF), in New Delhi.

- So far eight editions of India International Science Festival have been successfully celebrated since 2015. The mega science festival aims to honour and highlight the scientific achievements. The primary objective is to connect science with the society.

10. Dalai Lama to open first International Sangha Forum in Bodhgaya

- Tibetan spiritual leader the Dalai Lama will inaugurate the first International Sangha Forum 2023 in Bodhgaya in Bihar, the sacred place where Gautama Buddha attained enlightenment.
- Over 2,000 members of the sanghas and invited guests from 33 countries including Thailand, Myanmar, Bangladesh, Cambodia, Laos, Sri Lanka, Tibetan, Bhutan, Nepal, Vietnam, Taiwan, Japan, Korea.
- The primary focus of the conference is to compliment ongoing dialogues and collaborations among practitioners of the Pali, Sanskrit and Tibetan Buddhist traditions.
- The conference aims to identify and emphasise the shared benefits of studies and practices across all traditions, while nurturing an appreciation and understanding of the unique strengths within each tradition.
- Moreover, the conference will deliberate on the role of Buddhist followers to become a Buddhist in the 21st century.

Science & Technology

1. ISRO Unveils XPoSat: India's Pioneering X-Ray Polarimeter Satellite

- India is gearing up to launch its inaugural, as announced by the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO).
- The mission aims to delve into the polarisation of intense X-Ray sources.
- The **XPoSat spacecraft** is set to orbit in Low Earth Orbit at an altitude of approximately ~650 km and a low inclination of around six degrees. It will be carrying two scientific payloads. These payloads enable simultaneous studies of temporal, spectral, and polarisation features of bright X-Ray sources.
- The mission's primary objectives include measuring X-Ray polarisation in the 8-30 keV energy band and conducting long-term spectral and temporal studies of cosmic X-Ray sources in the 0.8-15 keV energy band. With an anticipated mission life of five years, XPoSat's payloads will observe X-Ray sources during the spacecraft's transit through Earth's shadow, particularly during eclipse periods.
- The primary payload, POLIX (Polarimeter Instrument in X-rays), developed by the Raman Research Institute (RRI) in Bengaluru with support from various ISRO centres, is designed to measure the degree and angle of polarisation in the medium X-ray energy range.
- The secondary payload, XSPECT (X-ray Spectroscopy and Timing), developed by the U.R. Rao Satellite Centre (URSC), ISRO, will provide spectroscopic information within the 0.8-15 keV energy range.
- The XPoSat mission is scheduled to be launched by the Polar Satellite Launch

Vehicle (PSLV) from the Satish Dhawan Space Center in Sriharikota.

2. Aurobindo Pharma Gets USFDA Nod for HIV Drug

- **Aurobindo Pharma has received approval from the U.S. health regulator to market a generic medication for the treatment of human immunodeficiency virus infection.** The company has received final approval from the U.S. Food and Drug Administration to manufacture and market Darunavir tablets in strengths of 600 mg and 800 mg.
- The company's product is therapeutically equivalent to the reference listed drug, Prezista tablets, 600 mg and 800 mg.
- Darunavir tablets, 600 mg and 800 mg, in combination with other antiretroviral agents, are indicated for the treatment of HIV-1 infection in adult and pediatric patients 3 years of age and older.
- As per IQVIA data, the approved product has an estimated market size of \$274.8 million for the 12 months ended Oct. 2023.
- Aurobindo noted that it now has a total of 500 Abbreviated New Drug Application.

3. Aurobindo Unit Gets USFDA Nod To Market Generic Asthma Medication

- **As per the Aurobindo Pharma its subsidiary has received approval from the U.S. health regulator to market a generic medication to treat asthma in children.**
- Eugia Pharma Specialities, a wholly-owned subsidiary of the company, has received final approval from the U.S. Food & Drug Administration (USFDA) to

manufacture and market Budesonide Inhalation Suspension, the Hyderabad-based drug firm said in a regulatory filing.

- The company's product is therapeutically equivalent to Astrazeneca Pharmaceuticals LP's Pulmicort Repsules Inhalation Suspension, it added.
- The product, indicated for treatment of asthma and as prophylactic therapy in children of age 12 months to 8 years, is expected to be launched in FY25, Aurobindo Pharma said.
- As per IQVIA data, the approved product has an estimated market size of \$226.4 million for the 12 months ended September 2023.

4. Hiranandani's Yotta Data to install over 20,400 NVIDIA GPUs by June 2024

- **Hiranandani group-owned data centre company Yotta Data Services plans to install over 20,400 NVIDIA GPU-based super computers by June 2024.**
- GPU (Graphics Processing Unit), which are used for processing multimedia content, have become the main chipsets for processing artificial intelligence technology-related data and there is a shortage of these chipsets across the globe.

5. Researchers of IISER Bhopal conduct maiden genome-sequencing of Jamun plant to study its medicinal value

- **The Indian Institute of Science Education and Research (IISER) Bhopal has completed the first-ever genome sequencing of the Jamun plant, scientifically called 'Syzygium cumini'.**
- The Jamun plant is known for its medicinal properties, fruits, and ornamental value.

- the research team sequenced the *S.cumini* genome from the world's largest tree genus *Syzygium* using Oxford Nanopore and 10x Genomics sequencing technologies to understand the genomic and evolutionary basis of the plant's medicinal values.

6. IBM releases first-ever 1,000-qubit quantum chip

- **IBM has unveiled the first quantum computer with more than 1,000 qubits 'the equivalent of the digital bits in an ordinary computer.**
- For years, IBM has been following a quantum-computing road map that roughly doubled the number of qubits every year.
- **The chip unveiled called Condor**, has 1,121 superconducting qubits arranged in a honeycomb pattern. It follows on from IBM's other record-setting, bird-named machines, including a 127-qubit chip called Eagle, released in 2021 and a 433-qubit one called Osprey, announced last year.

Quantum computers promise to perform certain computations that are beyond the reach of classical computers. They will do so by exploiting uniquely quantum phenomena, such as entanglement and superposition, which allow multiple qubits to exist in multiple collective states at once.

But these quantum states are also notoriously fickle, and prone to error. Physicists have tried to get around this by coaxing several physical qubits ' each encoded in a superconducting circuit, say, or an individual ion ' to work together to represent one qubit of information, or 'logical qubit'

7. Breakthrough Nutraceutical 'AKTOCYTE' by the Department of Atomic Energy Set to Transform Cancer Care

- In a breakthrough towards enhancing the quality of life for cancer patients undergoing radiotherapy, **scientists from Department of Atomic Energy and M/s. IDRS Labs Pvt. Ltd. Bengaluru have joined hands to develop AKTOCYTE tablets.**
- AKTOCYTE has received approval from the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India, operating under the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare.
- Experts from Bhabha Atomic Research Centre, Mumbai; Tata Memorial Hospital, Mumbai; Advanced Centre for Training Research and Education in Cancer, Navi Mumbai collaborated with the IDRS Labs with a primary aim of minimizing the side effects of radiotherapy.
- **The AKTOCYTE tablets have shown remarkable results, particularly in pelvic cancer patients suffering from radiotherapy-induced Cystitis (Blood in urine).** Patients treated with AKTOCYTE tablets demonstrated an extraordinary recovery, eliminating the need for surgical removal of the urinary bladder. The tablets, designed as an adjuvant to cancer radiotherapy, regenerative nutraceutical, immunomodulator, and antioxidant, mark a significant advancement in cancer care.

8. Amrit Technology For Removal Of Arsenic And Metal Ions From Water

- **The Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) - Madras has developed a technology called 'AMRIT' (Arsenic and Metal Removal by Indian Technology) for the**

removal of Arsenic and Metal ions from water.

- The technology uses nano-scale iron oxy-hydroxide, which selectively removes arsenic when water is passed through it.
- This water purifier has been developed for both domestic as well as community levels. Also, the technology has been recommended by the erstwhile 'Standing Committee' of the Department of Drinking Water and Sanitation for the examination of the best technologies concerning water and sanitation.

10. Accenture launches generative AI studio in Bengaluru, aiming at business optimisation

- **Accenture launched a generative AI Studio in Bengaluru.**
- The studio will bring together the company's talent and technology investments to offer a full stack of generative AI capabilities to optimize business processes and enable enterprise reinvention.
- The Bengaluru studio will help clients around the globe prioritize capabilities across the entire value chain and make the shift to scale their AI investments, rapidly and responsibly

11. NASA's 3D-printed Rotating Detonation Rocket Engine Test a Success

- NASA has achieved a new benchmark in developing an innovative propulsion system called the Rotating Detonation Rocket Engine (RDRE).
- Engineers at NASA's Marshall Space Flight Center in Huntsville, Alabama, successfully tested a novel, 3D-printed RDRE for 251 seconds (or longer than four minutes), producing more than 5,800 pounds of thrust.

12. Aditya-L1: India's first solar mission to reach destination, 1.5 million km from Earth, says ISRO

- ISRO Chairman S Somanath has announced that Aditya-L1 will arrive at the Lagrangian point L1 on January 6.
- **This point is 1.5 million km away from Earth.**
- Launched from Sriharikota on September 2, India's first solar mission will perform an important manoeuvre upon reaching L1.
- Once it is successfully placed on L1 point, it will be there for the next five years, gathering all the data which are very important not for India alone but for the entire world.
- The spacecraft will study solar upper atmospheric dynamics, chromospheric and coronal heating, physics of the partially-ionised plasma, initiation of the coronal mass ejections, and flares. It will also observe the in-situ particle and plasma environment providing data for the study of particle dynamics from the Sun, magnetic field topology and magnetic field measurements in the solar corona.

13. Lupin Gets USFDA Nod For Generic Loteprednol Etabonate Ophthalmic Suspension

- Pharma major Lupin Ltd has received approval from the U.S. health regulator to market its generic Loteprednol Etabonate ophthalmic suspension indicated for temporary relief of seasonal allergic conjunctivitis. The approval by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (USFDA) is for the abbreviated new drug application for Loteprednol Etabonate ophthalmic suspension, 0.2%.

- It is a generic equivalent to the reference listed drug (RLD) Alrex ophthalmic suspension, 0.2% of Bausch & Lomb Inc.

14. Bengal researchers discover plant-growth promoting bacteria, name it after visionary Tagores

- **A group of researchers from Visva-Bharati University's botany department have discovered a bacteria capable of boosting plant growth and named it 'Pantoea Tagorei' after Nobel laureate Rabindranath Tagore.**
- The bacteria has immense potential to revolutionise agricultural practices, microbiologist Bomba Dam, assistant professor at the varsity's botany department said.
- In 1906, Rabindranth Tagore, who would become India's first Nobel Prize winner seven years later, sponsored three young men from Santiniketan to study agriculture and dairy farming at the University of Illinois in the USA.
- The Nobel Prize in Literature 1913 was awarded to Rabindranath Tagore "because of his profoundly sensitive, fresh and beautiful verse, by which, with consummate skill, he has made his poetic thought, expressed in his own English words, a part of the literature of the West"

15. IIT-M develops 3D-printed faces for black fungus survivors

- **Researchers with the prestigious Indian Institute of Technology-Madras (IIT-M) have developed 3D-printed face implants for people suffering from Black Fungus, whose numbers have increased post Covid-19 pandemic.**
- This new technology is expected to help patients with Black Fungus from

economically-weaker sections due to its affordability.

- Black Fungus, also known as Mucormycosis, has been found in patients who tested positive for Covid-19, those with HIV/AIDS, uncontrolled diabetes, and other medical conditions and loss of facial features is one of the effects of the disease. Reconstructive surgery was considered as the most viable solution for people with Black Fungus, but many poor people weren't

able to access the treatment due to its high cost.

- IIT-M has partnered with ZorioX Innovation labs, a start-up founded by Dental Surgeons in Chennai, to implement this initiative, which is based on metal 3D printing or additive manufacturing. While ZorioX Innovations Labs takes part in the surgical procedures, the IIT-M handles the design and 3D printing.



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Defence

1. Cochin Shipyard launches 3 anti-submarine watercrafts for Indian Navy

- **The first three ships in the series of eight Anti-Submarine Warfare Shallow Water Crafts under construction in Cochin Shipyard Limited for Indian Navy were launched at CSL's Kochi Yard.**
- The first three ships in this series should bear the name **'INS Mahe, INS Malvan and INS Mangrol** upon commissioning into the Indian Navy.
- Contract for building eight ASW SWC ships was signed between Ministry of Defence (MoD) and Cochin Shipyard Ltd (CSL, on April 30, 2019. The Mahe Class of Ships will replace the in-service Abhay class ASW Corvettes of Indian Navy and are designed to undertake anti-submarine operations in coastal waters, Low Intensity Maritime Operations (LIMO) and Mine Laying Operations including subsurface surveillance.

2. India Approves Defence Acquisition Projects Worth Rs 2.23 Lakh Crore

- **India has accorded an initial approval to defence acquisition projects worth Rs 2.23 lakh crore that included procurement of 97 Tejas light combat aircraft and 156 Prachand combat helicopters, in a major move to significantly enhance the combat capabilities of the armed forces.**
- The Defence Acquisition Council (DAC), chaired by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, cleared the projects, at a time India is locked in a bitter military standoff with China at a number of friction points in eastern Ladakh for over three years.

- As per the defence ministry, 98 per cent of the total procurement worth Rs 2.23 lakh crore will be sourced from the domestic industries and that the move will give a substantial boost to the Indian defence industry in achieving the goal of 'Aatmanirbharta' (self-reliance) in defence industry.
- The DAC also approved a proposal of the Indian Air Force to upgrade its Su-30 fighter fleet by state-run aerospace major Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd (HAL).
- The DAC further accorded Acceptance of Necessity (AoN) or initial approval for procurement of two types of anti-tank munitions namely area denial munition (ADM) type-2 and type-3.

3. Defence Ministry Inks Rs 2,956 Crore Contract With BHEL To Procure 16 Super Rapid Gun Mount For Navy

- **The defence ministry sealed a Rs 2,956 crore deal with state-run Bharat Heavy Electricals Ltd to procure 16 upgraded super rapid gun mount (SRGM) and accessories for Indian Navy.**
- The SRGM is a medium caliber anti-missile and anti-aircraft defence weapon system that provides a sustained rate of fire and high accuracy.
- The ministry said the upgraded SRGMs will be installed onboard Indian Navy's in-service and newly built ships.
- "The Ministry of Defence has signed a contract with M/s Bharat Heavy Electricals Limited (BHEL), Haridwar on Nov. 28 for procurement of 16 Upgraded Super Rapid Gun Mount (SRGM) along with associated equipment/accessories for Indian Navy under Buy (Indian) category at a total cost of Rs 2956.89 crore.

4. Indian Army's initiatives for employment to youth of Jammu and Kashmir, conducts two-day Job Fair in Srinagar

- Indian Army's initiatives for employment to youth of Jammu and Kashmir, Indian Army conducted a two-day Job Fair in Srinagar during last two days. The Job Fair was held at Chinar Nau Jawan Club, Boniyar. It attracted nearly 2500 youth of J&K for nearly 600 job vacancies.
- The event was organized in close cooperation with the Directorate of Employment, J&K which brought together employers from the Union Territory and outside, allowing the candidate to seek jobs in different sectors like agriculture & farming, Horticulture, Animal Husbandry and Handlooms.

5. Indian Navy Day | 4 December

- Indian Navy Day is celebrated every year on 4 December.
- Indian Navy Day holds a special place in the hearts of Indians and they celebrate it with great pride and valour.
- This special occasion is observed to celebrate "Operation Trident."
- It is important to note that the operation was launched by the Indian Navy against the Karachi Harbour during the war between India and Pakistan in 1971. They celebrate this day grandly.
- Indian Navy Day came into existence after a significant event during the Indo-Pak War of 1971. It is important to note that the war lasted from 3 December to 16 December, and it led to the formation of the independent nation of Bangladesh.

6. GRSE delivers largest ever survey vessel 'INS Sandhayak' to India Navy

- Garden Reach Shipbuilders and Engineers (GRSE) Limited has delivered by the INS Sandhayak, the largest survey vessel ever built in India and the first in the series of four Survey Vessels (Large) being built by it, to the Indian Navy.
- GRSE has partnered with the Indian Navy for the last 62 years after delivery of the first indigenously-built INS Ajay in 1961
- The INS Sandhayak is the lead vessel in a series of four Survey Vessels (Large) or SVLs and is actually the reincarnation of another ship by that name.
- That ship – also a survey vessel – was commissioned into the Indian Navy in 1981 and decommissioned in 2021. The new INS Sandhayak and the remaining ships of the series are far more advanced than their predecessors that have all been decommissioned.
- These survey ships are capable of full-scale coastal and deep-water hydrographic survey of port and harbour approaches as well as the determination of navigation channels and routes.
- In addition, the Sandhayak-class of SVLs can undertake surveys of maritime limits and collection of oceanographic and geographical data for defence applications. Such data adds muscle to India's maritime capabilities. These ships can also carry a helicopter each, participate in low-intensity combat and function as hospital ships. They can also be used for Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief operations.

7. INS SUMEDHA - Mission Deployed At Antsiranana, Madagascar

- As part of Indian Navy's Long Range Mission Based Deployment, Indian Naval Ship Sumedha is undertaking port call at

Antsiranana, Madagascar from 04 to 06 December 2023.

- The visit is aimed at reinforcing Indian Navy's commitment to enhance Maritime Security, building bridges of friendship and strengthening maritime co-operation with Madagascar.

8. INS Vikramaditya, INS Vikrant to be deployed for Milan-2024

- The Indian Navy has planned to deploy both its aircraft carriers INS Vikramaditya and INS Vikrant on the eastern seaboard during Milan-2024, a flagship international naval exercise hosted by Vizag from February 19-27 next year.
- Navies from the US, Japan, Australia, France, Bangladesh, South Korea, Vietnam, Indonesia and Malaysia are set to be among the participating nations

9. Indian Navy conducts bi-annual exercise 'Prasthan' off Mumbai coast

- The exercise, which is conducted every six months, was held on the R12A (Ratna) Platform of Oil & Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) around 83 km away from Mumbai harbour.
- The 'Prasthan' is conducted to validate measures and procedures to address various contingencies that may arise in the oil production platforms and was held in two phases.
- The Indian Navy, in conjunction with the Indian Air Force, deployed its anti-sabotage teams to neutralise security threats in the affected oil platform.

10. INDIAN ARMED FORCES CONTINGENT REACHES HANOI FOR JOINT MILITARY EXERCISE 'VINBAX-2023'

- The Indian Armed Forces contingent comprising 45 personnel reached Hanoi,

Vietnam to take part in the fourth edition of Joint Military Exercise VINBAX-2023.

- The exercise will be conducted at Hanoi, Vietnam from 11th to 21st December 2023.
- Exercise VINBAX was instituted in 2018 and the first edition was conducted at Jabalpur, Madhya Pradesh.

11. Defence Ministry approves Rs 2800 crore rockets for Pinaka weapon system

- In a major boost for the Indian Army, the Defence Ministry has approved a Rs 2,800 crore proposal for buying around 6,400 rockets for Pinaka multi-barrel rocket launcher systems.
- The Defence Ministry's Defence Acquisition Council's recent meeting had cleared the proposal for the acquisition of two types of these rockets, known as Area Denial Munition Type 2 and Type-3.
- The rockets would be procured by the Indian Army from indigenous sources only and two main contenders include the Economic Explosives Limited of Solar Industries and the Munitions India Limited-- one of the ammunition-producing companies created by the corporatisation of the erstwhile ordnance factories.

12. India successfully flight tests indigenous high-speed flying-wing UAV

- Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) has successfully carried out a flight trial of Autonomous Flying Wing Technology Demonstrator, an indigenous high-speed flying-wing Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV) from the Aeronautical Test Range, Chitradurga in Karnataka.

- The successful flying demonstration of this autonomous stealth UAV is a testimony to maturity in the technology readiness levels in the country.
- With this flight in the tailless configuration, India has joined the elite club of countries to have mastered the controls for the flying wing technology.
- This UAV is designed and developed by DRDO's Aeronautical Development Establishment. The maiden flight of this aircraft was demonstrated in July 2022, followed by six flight trials in various developmental configurations using two in-house manufactured prototypes.

13. Akash missile system destroys 4 targets simultaneously during Air Force exercise

- **The firepower of the indigenous Akash Missile system was demonstrated during the recent Astrashakti 2023 exercise at Suryalanka Air Force station in Andhra Pradesh.**
- A single Akash missile system engaged four unmanned aerial targets simultaneously during the Astrashakti exercise held by the Indian Air Force (IAF).
- During the exercise, four targets came from the same direction in a close formation and split to attack defence assets from multiple directions simultaneously.
- India has become the first country to demonstrate the capability of engaging four targets simultaneously at around 30 km ranges by command guidance using a single firing unit.
- The Akash firing Unit was deployed with Firing Level Radar (FLR), a Firing Control Center (FCC), two Akash Air Force Launcher (AAFL) launchers having five armed missiles.

14. INS Shivaji Gets Original 'Vir Chakra' Awarded To 1971 War Hero

- The Indian Navy's premier technical training establishment, INS Shivaji, has received the original 'Vir Chakra' awarded to late Vice-Admiral Benoy Roy Chowdhury for his gallant actions during the 1971 India-Pakistan war.
- The Vir Chakra is an Indian wartime military bravery award presented for acts of gallantry on the battlefield, on land or in air or at sea.

15. Indian Air Force successfully testfires 'SAMAR' air defence missile system at Exercise Astrashakti

- In a major success for its in-house design and development efforts, the Indian Air Force has successfully testfired its SAMAR air defence missile system. The IAF has developed the Surface to Air Missile for Assured Retaliation (SAMAR) air defence missile system by using its old Russian-origin air-to-air missile systems.
- The Indian Air Force has carried out the successful firing trials of its in-house designed and developed SAMAR air defence missile system during exercise AstraShakti-2023 at Air Force Station Suryalanka held recently. The air defence system 'SAMAR' (surface-to-air missile for assured retaliation) has been developed by a unit under the IAF's Maintenance Command
- The system can engage aerial threats with missiles operating at a speed range of 2 to 2.5 Mach. The SAMAR system consists of a twin-turret launch platform with the capability of launching two missiles in single and salvo mode, depending on the threat scenario, the IAF officials said.

16. Navy unveils new epaulettes for Admirals

- The new epaulettes have the new golden Navy button carrying the new naval crest which was unveiled last year, a red octagon as the backing to the national emblem, and a sword and a telescope.
- Navy said the new design is drawn from its naval ensign and inspired from the Rajmudra of Maratha ruler Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj, reflecting the rich maritime heritage of Marathas.
- The new epaulettes are for the ranks of Admiral, Vice Admiral, Rear Admiral, Surgeon Vice Admiral and Surgeon Rear Admiral.
- Barring the medical officers, there would be around 100 officers of rank Rear Admiral and onwards, in the Navy.
- The new epaulettes have the new golden Navy button carrying the new naval crest which was unveiled last year, a red octagon as the backing to the national emblem, and a sword and a telescope. The ones for the medical officers have a red border as well.
- The earlier epaulettes for the same ranks did have a red backing for the national emblem, but not an octagonal one. Moreover, the button at the top of the epaulette reflected the old crest of the Navy which had a fouled anchor—a colonial era vestige.
- The old epaulettes carried a baton and a sword, but new ones carry an Indian sword and a telescope. The stars on the new epaulettes are also designed differently than the older ones.
- The new Navy button reflects the new crest, sans the fouled anchor which was a colonial era vestige. As per the Navy, the red octagon reflects the eight cardinal directions indicative of an all-round long-term vision. It is inspired by the new naval ensign that was unveiled last year and inspired from the Rajmudra of Maratha ruler Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj who had built the massive Maratha Navy which has a rich maritime legacy.
- The Navy said that the Indian sword represents being the cutting edge of national power and winning wars through dominance, defeating adversaries and overcoming every challenge, while the telescope symbolises a long-term vision, foresight, and a weather-eye in the changing world.
- The change is in line with the Indian Armed Forces' increasing efforts in the last two years to discard their colonial-era vestiges, customs and traditions.

Books & Authors

1. CM Pushkar Dhami releases book highlighting PM Modi's role in transforming disaster management

- A book which highlights PM Modi's efforts in bringing about a "paradigm shift" in India's disaster management was officially released by Uttarakhand CM Pushkar Singh Dhami in Dehradun.
- **The book, 'RESILIENT INDIA: How Modi Transformed India's Disaster Management Paradigm', was released at the sixth World Congress on Disaster Management.**
- Edited and compiled by Bluekraft Digital Foundation and Modi Story, which highlights various facets of Modi's personal and political journey on social media, the book credits him for bringing about a "gigantic shift in India's disaster management paradigm". It includes changes in approach to helm different dimensions of disaster management, including resilience, preparedness, capacity building, etc.

2. Huma Qureshi launches 1st novel 'Zeba', says 'would love to convert this into a film'

- **Popular Bollywood actor Huma Qureshi has now turned author with her debut novel titled 'Zeba: An Accidental Superhero'.**
- Set in a fantasy land with its own geo- and socio-political spin, she launched her book at the 12th edition of the Bangalore Literature Festival (BLF)
- The book is a fantasy fiction novel set very specifically between 1992 and 2019. It talks about a make believe kingdom and an evil king and how this girl, Zeba, who has these superpowers, manages to defeat him."

3. Former President Ram Nath Kovind launches book ' Naye Bharat ka Samveda' in New Delhi

- Former President of India, Ram Nath Kovind launched a book ' **Naye Bharat ka Samveda**' in New Delhi.
- The book is a compilation of speeches of Prime Minister Narendra Modi on the Indian Constitution.

Miscellaneous

1. Third edition of Rainbow Literature Festival kicks off in New Delhi

- The Rainbow Lit Fest ' Queer And Inclusive, seeks to be inclusive, bringing together different identities and sections of society to explore common ground. The hope is that ultimately we collectively stitch together more informed narratives about diversity.
- Rainbow Literature Festival was set up by journalist Sharif D. Rangnekar in 2019.
- Sitting pretty much at the intersections of alternative and mainstream, the Fest is a mix of different forms of expression such as prose, poetry, art, music, dance, films, talks and discussions. This year's line-up includes lawyers Saurabh Kirpal and Rohin Bhatt, actor Kalki Koechlin, poet Hoshang Merchant, activist Urvashi Butalia, filmmaker Alankrita Shrivastava, among others.

2. Indian Army organises 'Army Veterans Honour Run' in Delhi

- The Indian Army organised the 'Army Veterans Honour Run' at Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium, New Delhi. The race honours the valour of Indian Army veterans, soldiers who were disabled in service, and the next of kin of soldiers who lost their lives in the line of duty. The race was organized by the Directorate of Indian Army Veterans (DIAV). The Honour Run ' Indian Army Veterans Half Marathon (IAVHM) is a 21.1 km race.



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Obituary

1. Berkshire Hathaway vice-chairman Charlie Munger dies aged 99

- **Charlie Munger**, the billionaire philanthropist, Berkshire Hathaway vice chairman and regarded as Warren Buffett's closest aide, has died aged 99 in California. Responding to Munger's death, Warren Buffett, the CEO of Berkshire Hathaway said that the company could not have been built to its present status without Charlie's "inspiration, wisdom and participation."

2. Henry Kissinger, dominant US diplomat of Cold War era, dies aged 100

- **Henry Kissinger**, the most powerful U.S. diplomat of the Cold War era, who helped Washington open up to China, forge arms control deals with the Soviet Union and end the Vietnam War, but who was reviled by critics over human rights, has died aged 100.
- Kissinger was at the height of his powers during the 1970s in the middle of the Cold War when he served as national security adviser and secretary of state under Republican President Richard Nixon.
- After Nixon's resignation in 1974 amid the Watergate scandal, he remained a diplomatic force as secretary of state under Nixon's successor, President Gerald Ford.
- Kissinger was the architect of the U.S. diplomatic opening with China, landmark U.S.-Soviet arms control talks, expanded ties between Israel and its Arab neighbors, and the Paris Peace Accords with North Vietnam.

3. Former Mr Universe Bodybuilder Shaun Davis Dies At 57

- Former Mr Universe bodybuilder **Shaun Davis** has died at the age of 57. In his bodybuilding career, he won a string of titles including Mr Britain and Mr Europe before being named Mr Universe in 1996, Metro reported.
- Mr. Davis, weighed a whopping 334lbs (151 kg) at the height of his Mr. Universe success and earned the title of 'Dinosaur;'

4. Jubilant Industries MD Manu Ahuja passes away

- In a regulatory filing, Jubilant Industries Ltd said, 'We regret to inform you of the sudden and sad demise of **Manu Ahuja**, Managing Director & CEO of the company on December 9, 2023.' Ahuja's sudden and unexpected passing away will be an irreparable loss to the company, it said.
- Ahuja joined the company in May 2018.
- Jubilant Industries Ltd is the flagship company of agri and performance polymers business of the Jubilant Bhartia group.

5. Kuwait's emir, Sheikh Nawaf Al Ahmad Al Sabah, dies at age 86

- Kuwait's Emir **Sheikh Nawaf al-Ahmad al-Jaber al-Sabah** has died at 86. Kuwait's crown prince and his half-brother, Sheikh Meshaal al-Ahmad al-Jaber al-Sabah, 83, was subsequently named new emir. Sheikh Nawaf was sworn in in September 2020 after the death of his half-brother, Sheikh Sabah al-Ahmad al-Jaber al-Sabah.

6. Mohini Giri, an icon of women's rights movement, dies at 86

- Renowned women's rights activist **Dr V Mohini Giri** died following a brief illness.
- Dr Giri was the former Chair of the National Commission for Women (NCW) (1995-1998) and of the Central Social Welfare Board.
- She was also the Chairperson of the Guild of Service, a New Delhi-based social service organisation.
- She founded the War Widows Association in 1972.

7. Actor and DMDK founder 'Captain' Vijayakanth passes away in Chennai

- DMDK founder-leader **Vijayakanth** passed away in Chennai at 71.
- Fondly referred to as "Captain" owing to his on-screen portrayal of military characters, he featured in 154 movies before venturing into politics.
- Vijayakanth founded the Desiya Murpokku Dravida Kazhagam (DMDK) in 2005 and made its electoral debut in the 2006 Tamil Nadu Legislative Assembly elections. Vijayakanth served as leader of the Opposition in the Tamil Nadu Assembly from 2011-2016



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Person in news

1. Indian Army's Captain Geetika Koul becomes first woman medical officer to be deployed at Siachen

- **Captain Geetika Koul** from the Snow Leopard Brigade becomes the first woman medical officer of the Indian Army to be deployed at the world's highest battlefield, Siachen, after successfully completing the induction training at Siachen Battle School.
- The training programme at the prestigious Siachen Battle School is extremely tough and a candidate has to undergo preparation in high-altitude acclimatisation, special medical procedures and survival techniques. Siachen Glacier is in the northern part of the Himalayas. It is of strategic significance and is controlled by India but Pakistan claims it. The region around Siachen Glacier is known for its unforgiving climate.

2. US pop star Taylor Swift named Time Magazine's person of the year

- **Taylor Swift** was named TIME's 2023 Person of the Year, making her the first woman to appear twice on a Person of the Year cover since the franchise began in 1927.
- Swift was also named Person of the Year in 2017, when she was recognized as one of the Silence Breakers who inspired women to speak out about sexual misconduct.
- She's the first person to be selected because of her achievement in the arts, and is only the fourth individual selection who was born in the last 50 years. As the first woman to be recognized more than once, Swift joins a

small group of repeat designees, alongside several U.S. presidents and world leaders

3. Indian social activist Nikhil Dey named as International Anti-Corruption Champion by US State Department

- **Nikhil Dey**, an Indian social activist, has been named as the International Anti-Corruption Champion by the US State Department.
- He has been acknowledged for his noteworthy support of social movements that oppose corruption in government welfare programs in India by encouraging transparency and accountability, public audits, and participatory democracy.
- Dey's efforts as a co-founder of Mazdoor Kisan Shakti Sangathan (MKSS) contributed to anti-corruption and transparency reforms in India, assisting the state of Rajasthan in establishing public policies that promote accountability and transparency.

4. WHO S-E Asia Director Poonam Khetrapal Singh awarded Bhutan's National Order of Merit Gold Medal

- **Poonam Khetrapal Singh**, Regional Director WHO South-East Asia, and a retired Punjab cadre IAS officer of 1975 batch, has been awarded Bhutan's prestigious National Order of Merit Gold Medal for her distinguished services to the country.
- The King of Bhutan Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuk honoured Singh at Bhutan's 116th National Day celebration.

5. Actress Aastha Rawal crowned with Miss Continental International 2023

- The fifth season of Miss Continental International 2023 took centre stage in India for the first time and **Aastha Rawal**, an accomplished actress, was crowned Miss Continental International 2023.


6. Deepika Padukone appointed as Hyundai Motor India's brand ambassador

- Hyundai Motor India has roped in popular Bollywood actress **Deepika Padukone** as its brand ambassador, the Korean automaker said.
- Her association adds a touch of star power, emphasising Hyundai's

commitment to style, performance and an unparalleled driving experience, the company said in a statement.


7. Francoise Bettencourt Meyers becomes first woman with \$100-billion net worth after L'Oral SA shares jump to record high

- Francoise Bettencourt Meyers** became the first woman to amass a \$100 billion fortune, marking another milestone for the heiress and for France's expanding fashion and cosmetics industries.
- Her wealth jumped to \$100.1 billion on Thursday(28 Dec), according to the Bloomberg Billionaires Index. She's the 12th-richest person in the world, just behind Mexico's Carlos Slim.



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Insurance

1. LIC amends norms for inclusion of shareholders' directors on its board

- State-owned insurer LIC has amended a framework to allow the induction of shareholders' directors on its board.
- The corporation would, upon notice of not less than one thousand shareholders or one-tenth of the total number of shareholders, whichever is lower, elect a shareholders' director through a general meeting of such shareholders.
- The person elected as a shareholders' director would be appointed by the board for a term of 4 years and eligible for re-election and re-appointment for another term of 4 years, it added. At present, LIC has five executive directors, including Chairman Siddhartha Mohanty, nine independent directors and one government nominee Director MP Tangirala.

2. With \$503 bn in reserves, LIC becomes world's fourth-largest insurer

- **State-owned Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) has become the fourth largest insurer in the world, ahead of US-based MetLife and Prudential Financial Inc.**
- The LIC is only behind Germany's Allianz SE, China's China Life Insurance (CLI), and Japan's Nippon Life Insurance, according to a new ranking by capital market company S&P Global.
- The state-run insurer, which got listed in May 2022, has \$503.07 billion in reserves, while Allianz has \$750.20 billion, CLI has \$616.90 billion, and Nippon has \$536.80. Allianz SE, CLI, and Nippon Life Insurance Co are the three

largest life insurance companies in the world, according to the ranking.

- S&P Global recently came out with a list of the world's 50 largest life insurers. In the list, Asia accounts for 17 spots on the list of top global life insurers, making it the region with the second-highest number.
- **China and Japan share the top spot in Asia with five companies headquartered there.**
- Mumbai-headquartered LIC ranked at the fourth position in the ranking

3. ICICI Pru Life, Ujjivan SFB enter into Bancassurance tie-up

- **ICICI Prudential Life Insurance (ICICI PruLife) and Ujjivan Small Finance Bank (Ujjivan SFB) have entered into a bancassurance partnership** for the distribution of life insurance products. Under the partnership, Ujjivan SFB will offer the entire suite of ICICI PruLife's protection, long-term savings and retirement products to its customers through its network.
- Insurance regulator IRDAI had in 2022 widely thrown open the bancassurance channel for insurers as part of its overall effort to increase insurance penetration in the country and achieve the long-term goal of 'insurance for all' by 2047, when the country will celebrate its golden jubilee of independence.

4. LIC notifies hike in gratuity limit to Rs 5 lakh from Rs 3 lakh for agents

- **Life Insurance Corporation (LIC) has notified an increase in gratuity limit to Rs 5 lakh from Rs 3 lakh for its agents.**

- The increase was effected by amending the Life Insurance Corporation of India (Agents) Regulations, 2017.
- These regulations may be called the Life Insurance Corporation of India (Agents) Amendment Regulations, 2023, LIC said in a regulatory filing.

5. Life Insurers' Premium Income Rises Nearly 13% To Rs 7.83 Lakh Crore In FY23

- **Premium income of life insurance companies grew 12.98 per cent to Rs 7.83 lakh cr. in fiscal 2023 while that of general insurers increased by 16.4% to Rs 2.57 lakh cr.** Private sector life insurers have clocked a growth of 16.34% in premiums, while the public sector life insurer recorded a 10.90% rise in premiums, as per the Irdai's annual report.
- Renewal premium continues to contribute the majority of total premiums underwritten by life insurers at 52.56 per cent in 2022-23. The rest 47.44 per cent is contributed by the new business premium.
- However, the growth in new business premium was higher at 17.90 per cent compared to renewal business at 8.88 per cent, as per the report.
- During 2022-23, Irdai said, life insurers issued 284.70 lakh new policies under individual business, out of which public sector insurers issued 204.29 lakh

policies (71.75 per cent) and private life insurers issued 80.42 lakh policies (28.25 per cent).

- Profit after tax of the life insurance industry grew over five-fold to Rs 42,788 crore in 2022-23 against 7,751 crore in the preceding fiscal.
- The public sector reported 800 per cent profit, while private insurers together registered an increase by 72.36 per cent in 2022-23.

6. LIC to open branch office in GIFT City

- **Life Insurance Corporation (LIC) has decided to open a branch office at GIFT City, the country's sole operational International Financial Services Centre.**
- Already LIC has presence in 14 countries through branch offices, subsidiaries and joint ventures.
- IndiaFirst Life Insurance Company was the first life insurer to obtain registration for opening office in GIFT City.
- LIC directly operates through its branch offices in Fiji (Suva and Lautoka), Mauritius (Port Louis) and United Kingdom (Watford).
- Besides it has subsidiaries in Bahrain, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh.
- LIC is now joining a select club of Indian life insurance companies who have established presence in GIFT City in Gujarat.

India & World

1. Out of Rs 1 lakh cr worth of FDI proposals from nations sharing land border with India, half is cleared

- The government has received foreign direct investment (FDI) proposals worth about Rs one lakh crore since April 2020 from countries sharing land border with India and half of those applications have been cleared so far.
- Countries which share land borders with India are China, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Bhutan, Nepal, Myanmar and Afghanistan.
- In April 2020, the government came out with a press note under which the Centre made its prior approval mandatory for foreign investments from countries that share land border with India to curb opportunistic takeovers of domestic firms following the Covid-19 pandemic.

2. India resumes imports of Venezuelan crude oil, Reliance seeks direct deal

- Indian refiners have resumed Venezuelan oil purchases through intermediaries, with Reliance set to meet executives from state firm PDVSA next week to discuss direct sales following the easing of U.S. sanctions on the South American country.
- India last imported Venezuelan crude in 2020.

3. India refuses to sign COP28 Declaration on Climate and Health

- India has refused to sign the COP28 Declaration on Climate and Health.
- The report also states the India cited the lack of practicality in curbing greenhouse

gases use for cooling in the health sector, as the reason.

- The declaration has been signed by 124 countries till now with the US and India, which are among the top greenhouse gas emitters did not signed the declaration
- The declaration, aimed at addressing the critical intersection between climate change and global health, emphasises the need for swift and substantial reductions in greenhouse gas emissions.
- However, a sticking point emerged as the draft outlined a commitment to reducing greenhouse gases for cooling applications within healthcare infrastructure - a measure India finds difficult to comply with, sources said.

4. India joins Battery Energy Storage Systems Consortium for RE integration

- India became a member of the Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS) Consortium, an initiative led by The Global Leadership Council (GLC) of the Global Energy Alliance for People and Planet (GEAPP).
- As part of this collaborative effort, India stands among the pioneering nations committed to securing 5 Gw of BESS commitments by the conclusion of 2024
- India has taken significant steps for the integration of BESS, which will be crucial in supporting its goal of energy security and access to reliable round-the-clock energy for all.

In September this year, the Government of India approved a scheme committing to the development of 4,000 MWh of BESS projects by 2030-31, with financial support of up to 40% of the capital cost to developers in the form of Viability

Gap Funding (VGF). The scheme is expected to bring down the costs of BESS infrastructure projects and incentivise public-private partnerships.

5. India provides \$250 million Line of Credit to Kenya for agricultural modernisation

- India announced a \$250 million line of credit to Kenya for modernisation of its agricultural sector as Prime Minister Narendra Modi and visiting Kenyan President William Samoei Ruto agreed to strengthen bilateral ties in the field of defence, trade, energy, digital public infrastructure and healthcare.

6. Government of India and ADB sign \$175 million loan to improve connectivity in Madhya Pradesh

- The Government of India and the Asian Development Bank (ADB) signed a \$175 million loan to improve connectivity and resilience of roads in the state of Madhya Pradesh.
- The project will upgrade about 500 kilometers of state highways and major district roads to a standard two-lane feature.
- Since 2002, ADB has supported road development in Madhya Pradesh upgrading more than 9,000 kilometers of state highways and major district roads.
- This project continues these efforts and will connect rural areas to growth centres and industrial corridors and establish roads that are better, safer, and more climate-resilient.

7. NMCG Launches Global River Cities Alliance at the United Nations Climate Change Conference in Dubai

- The Global River Cities Alliance (GRCA), led by the National Mission for Clean

Ganga (NMCG) under the Ministry of Jal Shakti, Government of India, was launched at COP28, the United Nations Climate Change Conference in Dubai.

- GRCA is a unique alliance covering 275+ global river-cities in 11 countries, international funding agencies and is first of its kind in the world.
- The launch of GRCA, signifies a momentous step in global efforts toward river conservation and sustainable water management. Following this, partner countries are poised to coordinate post-COP activities, shaping the architecture of GRCA for effective implementation.
- United Arab Emirates with countries namely India, Egypt, Netherlands, Denmark, Ghana, Australia, Bhutan, Cambodia, Japan and river-cities of The Hague (Den Haag) from the Netherlands, Adelaide from Australia, and Szolnok of Hungary and International funding agencies the World Bank, Asian Development Bank (ADB), Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) and knowledge management institution like KPMG entering into a partnership, widely expanding the reach of the existing River Cities Alliance (RCA), formed by NMCG in association with National Institute of Urban Affairs (NIUA) in 2021.

8. India joins UN's 'Race to Resilience' initiative at COP28

- India has joined the United Nations 'Race to Resilience', a global campaign to mainstream the idea of climate resilience in cities across India during the recently concluded COP28 event in Dubai.
- The Climate Centre for Cities (C-Cube) at the National Institute of Urban Affairs

(NIUA), under the ministry of housing and urban affairs, will spearhead this initiative.

- 'Race to Resilience' is a global platform to bring together non-state actors, investors, businesses, cities, regions, and civil society to increase the resilience of the most vulnerable to the climate crisis by 2030.
- In existence since 2020, the C-Cube has developed and implemented the ClimateSmart Cities Assessment Framework (CSCAF), a first-of-its-kind city assessment framework on climate-relevant parameters for Indian cities.
- Currently, the third round of the assessment is in progress for 220 cities across India. Under the CSAF framework, C-Cube has developed and delivered 26 training modules to improve aspects of urban planning, green cover, and biodiversity; energy and green buildings; mobility and air quality; water management and waste management.

9. Thiruvalluvar Statue Unveiled in France, Strengthening Cultural Ties

- In a significant cultural event, a statue of Thiruvalluvar, a revered Tamil poet and philosopher, was inaugurated in the French town of Cergy.
- The statue serves as a symbol of the deep-rooted ties that bind the two nations and stands as a testament to the enduring legacy of Thiruvalluvar's teachings.

10. India-United States Anti-Money Laundering and Countering Financing of Terrorism Dialogue held in New Delhi

- India-United States Anti-Money Laundering and Countering the Financing of Terrorism Dialogue was held in New

Delhi to address illicit finance risk across both the countries. The meeting was held between Revenue Secretary Sanjay Malhotra and the US Treasury Under Secretary for Terrorism and Financial Intelligence, Brian Nelson.

11. Global Partnership on Artificial Intelligence nations adopt New Delhi declaration

- India, the Chair of the Global Partnership on Artificial Intelligence (GPAI), successfully hosted the GPAI Summit from December 12 - 14, 2023, at the Bharat Mandapam in New Delhi. All 29 member nations of the Global Partnership on Artificial Intelligence (GPAI) Summit, held in New Delhi, unanimously adopted the New Delhi Declaration.
- The New Delhi Declaration underscores the necessity of developing regulations, policies, and standards while addressing concerns surrounding misinformation, unemployment, transparency, fairness, protection of intellectual property, personal data, and upholding human rights and democratic values.

- 29 international partners have joined together to guide the responsible development and use of artificial intelligence, grounded in human rights, inclusion, diversity, innovation and economic growth:

- Argentina
- Australia
- Belgium
- Brazil
- Canada
- Czech Republic
- Denmark
- France
- Germany

- India
- Ireland
- Israel
- Italy
- Japan
- Republic of Korea
- Mexico
- Netherlands
- New Zealand
- Poland
- Senegal
- Serbia
- Singapore
- Slovenia
- Spain
- Sweden
- Türkiye
- United Kingdom
- United States
- European Union

12. NSDC signs MoU with Saudi govt to protect rights of skilled labourers from India

- The National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the government of Saudi Arabia to protect the rights of skilled labourers from India.
- The registration process will be free of cost adding that skilled labourers from all categories, including AC mechanics, and car painters, can register themselves on NSDC.

13. Saint Lucia's Tax Inspectors without Borders (TIWB) programme launched in partnership with India

- Tax Inspectors Without Borders (TIWB), a joint initiative of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Organisation for Economic

Cooperation and Development (OECD), launched a programme in Saint Lucia on 14th December, 2023.

- India has been chosen as the Partner Administration and will provide Tax Experts for this programme. This programme is the seventh TIWB programme which India has supported.
- This programme is expected to be of 12-18 months' duration in which India, in collaboration with the TIWB Secretariat and support of the UNDP Country Office, Barbados and the Eastern Caribbean, aims to aid Saint Lucia in strengthening its tax administration by transferring technical knowledge and skills to its tax administration, and through sharing of best practices. The focus of the programme will be on effective use of automatic exchange of information under the Common Reporting Standard (CRS) framework.

14. India tops global remittance flows at \$125 billion in 2023: World Bank

- India saw the highest amount of remittance inflows in the world in 2023 at \$125 billion, driven by several factors, including the country's agreement with the UAE, for promoting the use of dirhams and rupees for bilateral trade, the World Bank said.
- India was followed by Mexico (\$67 billion), China (\$50 billion), the Philippines (\$40 billion) and Egypt (\$24 billion).
- In a report, the World Bank further said growth in remittances in India is expected to halve to 12.4 per cent in 2023 from a historic peak of 24.4 per cent in 2022.

15. World Bank and Economic Affairs launch PPP Beginner's e-course in infrastructure capacity-building

- The PPP e-course is a infra-focused capacity-building programme jointly undertaken by the Infrastructure Finance Secretariat, DEA and the World Bank. The course aims to provide foundational knowledge and insights to individuals keen on understanding and contributing to the dynamic realm of PPPs in India.
- Dr. V. Anantha Nageswaran, Chief Economic Advisor of India. Shri Ajay Banga, President, World Bank Group.

16. Union Cabinet Nod For Migration, Mobility Pact With Italy Inked In November

- The Union Cabinet granted ex-post facto approval to sign and ratify the Migration and Mobility Agreement with Italy that allows Indian students temporary residence in the European nation for up to one year after studies to gather professional experience.
- The agreement was signed on Nov. 2 by External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar and Italian Foreign Minister Antonio Tajani.

17. India makes first-ever rupee payment for the purchase of crude oil from UAE

- India, the world's third-largest energy consumer, made its first-ever payment in rupees for crude oil purchased from the United Arab Emirates, signalling what could be a strategic push to promote the local currency globally.
- The move is part of India's broader efforts to diversify oil suppliers, cut transaction costs, and establish the rupee as a viable trade settlement.
- This initiative aligns with the Reserve Bank of India's move on July 11, 2022, allowing importers to pay in rupees and exporters to receive payments in the local currency.
- In July, India formalised an agreement with the UAE for rupee settlements, leading to the Indian Oil Corporation (IOC) making payments for purchasing one million barrels of crude oil from Abu Dhabi National Oil Company (Adnoc) in Indian rupees. Additionally, some Russian oil imports have also been settled in rupees.
- In the financial year 2022-23 (April 2022 to March 2023), India spent \$157.5 billion on importing 232.7 million tonnes of crude oil. Key suppliers included Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Russia, and the UAE, with West Asia contributing 58 per cent of all supplies. The domestic supply meets less than 15 per cent of the demand.

Environment

1. Cyclone Michaung Set To Make Landfall In Southeast India

- Cyclone Michaung is set to make a landfall in southeast India. The storm is expected to cross the coast of Andhra Pradesh near Bapatla, with a maximum sustained wind speed of 90 to 100 kilometers (56-62 miles) an hour, gusting to 110 kilometers.
- The cyclone is the sixth to develop in the Indian Ocean this year and fourth to form in the Bay of Bengal. Cyclone Michaung: The name was proposed by Myanmar, denoting resilience and fortitude.

Apps & Portals

1. JCI launches dedicated 'Paat-Mitro' app for jute farmers

- Jute Corporation of India launched an app that would provide vital knowledge to farmers on various issues for optimal jute cultivation and maximisation of income.
- Rachna Shah, Secretary, Ministry of Textiles, launched app.
- It will also feature information on jute gradation parameters, farmer-centric schemes like 'Jute-ICARE', weather forecasts & procurement policies.



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Acquisitions & Mergers

1. TCL gets NCLT Kolkata nod for merger with Tata Consumer Products, TCPL Beverages & Foods

- Tata Coffee Ltd's merger with Tata Consumer Products and TCPL Beverages & Foods gets NCLT Kolkata's nod, enhancing operational efficiency.
- Approved on November 10, 2023, the order was received by the company on December 1.
- This move aims to streamline management, boost synergy, and optimize operations for the global consumer product business. Tata Coffee primarily focuses on instant coffee extraction, branded coffee, and plantation activities. TCL's shares closed at Rs 279.75, marking a 0.68% increase on Friday's BSE.

2. Tata Power acquires Bikaner-Neemrana Transmission Project

- Tata Power has acquired Bikaner-Neemrana Transmission Project through a bidding process. Bikaner-III Neemrana-II Transmission Ltd is a special purpose vehicle (SPV) set up by PFC Consulting, for the project. The company has acquired Bikaner-Neemrana Transmission Project to boost renewable energy evacuation in India.
- The project, which will be developed on a Build-Own-Operate-Transfer (BOT) basis, will enable the evacuation of 7.7 GW of renewable energy from the Bikaner Complex in Rajasthan.
- The project entails establishment of a 340-km transmission corridor from Bikaner-III pooling station to Neemrana II substation.

- Tata Power will maintain the transmission project for a period of 35 years. It is estimated to cost Rs 1,544 crore and is expected to be commissioned within 24 months from the date of transfer of the project SPV.

3. NARCL finalises acquisition of two SREI companies

- The National Asset Reconstruction Company (NARCL) has finalised the acquisition of the two SREI companies SREI Equipment Finance and SREI Infrastructure Finance under the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC), paving the way for resolution of a Rs 32700-crore debt.
- NARCL was formed by the government in 2021 with public sector banks owning a majority stake in NARCL. Canara Bank is the sponsor bank.
- It has been set up with a strategic initiative to clean up banks' legacy stressed assets valued Rs 500 crore and above. It has so far aggregated debt of over Rs 25500 crore covering 6 assets.
- The SREI resolution plan received approval from the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT), the Reserve Bank of India, and the Competition Commission of India.

4. Gautam Adani's group acquires 50.50 per cent stake in news agency IANS

- Gautam Adani increased his footprint in the media space when group flagship Adani Enterprises (AEL) announced the acquisition of a 50.50 per cent stake in news agency IANS India for an undisclosed sum. This is the conglomerate's third acquisition in this segment.

- This is the conglomerate's third acquisition in this segment. Adani had forayed into the media business in March last year when AMG Media Networks, a subsidiary of AEL, bought a 49 per cent stake in Raghav Bahl-curated digital business news platform Quintillion Business Media (QBML) for about Rs 48 crore.
- In November this year, the Adani group acquired the remaining 51 per cent to take full control of the entity. QBML operated the business and financial news digital media platform BQ Prime.
- Later that year, it acquired around 65 per cent in broadcaster NDTV. BQ Prime has now been rebranded as NDTV Profit. Simultaneously, NDTV also announced that it has re-launched its business channel, NDTV Profit, after BQ Prime.

5. SBI invests '49.99 crore in Canpac Trends, eyes paper packaging industry

- State Bank of India has executed transaction documents to purchase 3,70,644 shares (6.35 per cent) of Ahmedabad-based Canpac Trends Private Limited at '1,349 per share, aggregating '49.99 crore.
- The Bank, in an exchange filing, said the investment in Canpac Trends, which is in the paper packaging industry, is being made with the objective of capital appreciation.

6. IBM to acquire Software AG's enterprise technology platforms, aiming to boost AI and Hybrid Cloud frontier

- BM, US-based IT giant, is set to acquire German software company Software AG's enterprise technology platforms for \$2.33 billion.

- The deal is aimed at enhancing its artificial intelligence and hybrid cloud offerings. The purchase will be funded with IBM's available cash, and includes Software AG's StreamSets and webMethods platforms, known for their application integration.

7. CCI Clears Alpha Alternatives Group Stake Purchase In Dilip Buildcon

- Fair trade regulator Competition Commission of India has granted an approval to Alpha Alternatives Group for the acquisition of a 10% stake in Dilip Buildcon.
- The transaction involves the acquisition of 9.99% of the equity stake in DBL by way of subscription to warrants by Alpha Alternatives Holdings Pvt Ltd, and its other entities.
- Ravneet Kaur, current Chairperson of CCI. The CCI cleared the deal under the green channel route.
- The commission has also approved the acquisition of 26% equity shareholding and investment in certain non-convertible debentures in DBL's Special Purpose Vehicles by AAHPL along with its affiliates.
- The SPVs operate Hybrid Annuity Model projects (constructed and under-construction projects) engaged in the road infrastructure sector in India.
- Meanwhile, in another deal, the anti-trust regulator also gave its nod to purchase M&G Plc's 11 per cent stake in Trustroot Internet Pvt Ltd.
- Trustroot Internet is an online B2B e-commerce platform by the name of 'Udaan'.
- Under the green channel route, a transaction which does not raise any risk of an appreciable adverse effect on competition is deemed to be approved

on being intimated to the fair-trade regulator.

8. Blackstone To Buy 80% Of Sony Payment Unit For \$280 Million

- Blackstone Inc. will take a majority stake in a payment service provider under Sony Group Corp. for about \$280 million.
- Sony Group also operates a financial services business which includes Sony Bank and its subsidiary Sony Payment.
- Sony Bank will keep a 20% minority stake in the payment business, which is valued in total at 50 billion yen (\$350 million).

9. HDFC Bank board approves re-appointment of Atanu Chakraborty as chairman

- Private lender HDFC Bank said that its board has recommended the re-appointment of Atanu Chakraborty as the part-time non-executive chairman and independent director.
- The bank further added that the matter is with the Reserve Bank of India for a second term of three years from May 5, 2024, to May 4, 2027 approval.
- Pursuant to the applicable provisions of the Banking Regulation Act, 1949 and the Companies Act, 2013, the re-appointment, HDFC Bank said, will be subject to the approval of the RBI and the shareholders of the Bank. Accordingly, the Bank will make an

application to the RBI in this regard under Section 35B of the Banking Regulation Act, 1949.

10. Competition Commission Clears IndusInd International Holdings-Reliance Capital Deal

- Fair trade regulator Competition Commission of India has cleared the proposed stake acquisition in Reliance Capital by IndusInd International Holdings Ltd, IIHL BFSI (India) Ltd, and Aasia Enterprises. Reliance Capital Ltd (RCL) is an RBI-registered non-banking, non-deposit-taking systemically important company (NBFC-CIC-ND-SI).
- The combination relates to the acquisition of a controlling stake in Reliance Capital Ltd by IndusInd International Holdings Ltd, IIHL BFSI (India) Ltd, and Aasia Enterprises.

11. RBI nod for I-Pru AMC and I-Pru Life to acquire 9.95% stake in RBL Bank

- The Reserve Bank of India has accorded its approval to ICICI Prudential Asset Management Company Ltd. and ICICI Prudential Life Insurance Company Limited to acquire an aggregate holding of up to 9.95 per cent of the paid-up share capital or voting rights in RBL Bank Ltd. The approval has been granted with reference to the application made by I-Pru AMC and IPru Life to RBI.

Agri-Business

1. Cabinet approves Minimum Support Price for Copra for 2024 season

- The MSP for Fair Average Quality of milling copra has been fixed at Rs.11,160/- per quintal and for ball copra at Rs.12,000/- per quintal for 2024 season.
- The MSP for 2024 season is an increase of Rs.300/- per quintal for milling copra and Rs.250/- per quintal for ball copra over the previous season.
- In order to provide remunerative prices to the cultivators, government had announced in the Union Budget of 2018-19, that MSPs of all the mandated crops will be fixed at a level of at least 1.5 times of all India weighted cost of production.
- In the last 10 years, the Government has increased MSP for milling copra and ball copra from Rs.5,250 per quintal and Rs.5,500 per quintal in 2014-15 to Rs.11,160 per quintal and Rs.12,000 per quintal in 2024-25, registering a growth of 113 percent and 118 percent, respectively.

2. UAE initiates process of investing \$2 billion in food parks in India

- The UAE has initiated the process of channelising its long-promised \$2-billion investments into food parks in India, starting with Gujarat, after the two countries sorted out concerns on curbs imposed by the Essential Commodities Act.
- The investments are being made as part of the four nation I2U2 (India-Israel-UAE-USA) initiative to develop a series of integrated food parks



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External Affairs

1. Raksha Rajya Mantri Shri Ajay Bhatt to attend UN Peacekeeping Ministerial Meeting in Accra, Ghana

- Raksha Rajya Mantri Shri Ajay Bhatt will pay an official visit to Accra, Ghana from December 05 to 06, 2023 to attend the United Nations (UN) Peacekeeping Ministerial Meeting.
- The Department of Peace Operations, UN and the Republic of Ghana are the hosts of the meeting.
- The UN Peacekeeping Ministerial meeting aims to address the security and operational challenges being faced by the UN peacekeepers and generate support for these missions deployed across the world. India has always been at the forefront by sending maximum number of troops and equipment to various UN Peacekeeping missions.






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FinTech

1. Paytm to cut down on small-ticket loans after RBI tightens consumer lending norms, set to expand higher-ticket ones

- After the Reserve Bank of India tightened rules on consumer lending, Paytm has decided to cut down on disbursing loans under '50,000, said the digital payments firm In addition to this, the bank is likely to expand to higher-ticket loans
- The company is planning to reduce the proportion of small-ticket loans, also called postpaid loans, from its future loan distribution.

2. RBI allows REs to use HDFC Bank-Crunchfish AB's offline payments product

- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has given a nod for regulated entities such as banks and non-banking financial companies (NBFCs) to adopt an offline digital payments product made by HDFC Bank in collaboration with Sweden's Crunchfish AB.
- HDFC Bank had stated that it would roll out this service as part of a limited pilot for four months in over 16 cities and towns. The product 'Offline Retail Payments' lets customers and merchants transact offline.
- The product 'Offline Retail Payments' lets customers and merchants transact offline. The solution, which functions in the absence of a network connection, is aimed at enhancing the adoption of digital payments in regions that lack sufficient network capacities.
- In February this year, HDFC Bank launched the pilot, in partnership with Crunchfish, to test offline digital payments for merchants and customers after the regulator in September 2022 selected the entity under the 'On Tap' application facility for the theme 'Retail Payments' of the Regulatory Sandbox to conduct a 'test phase' of the product.

3. IDFC FIRST Bank, LIC Cards and Mastercard collaborate to launch a co-branded credit card to meet the financial needs of India

- IDFC FIRST Bank, LIC Cards and Mastercard announced their collaboration to launch an exclusive co-branded credit card. Available in two variants --- LIC Classic and LIC Select, the credit cards will provide more than 27 crores policyholders across the country an opportunity to save in the form of reward points on every LIC insurance premium payment. V. Vaidyanathan, MD & CEO, IDFC FIRST Bank. Siddhartha Mohanty, Chairperson, LIC Cards.
- It will also come with other benefits, including up to '50,000 cover for lost card liability and a personal accident insurance cover of up to '5 lakh.
- **About LIC:**
- Life Insurance Corporation of India ("Corporation") is a statutory corporation established on 1st September 1956, under the Life Insurance Corporation Act, 1956 ('Governing Act').
- **About LIC Cards:**
- LIC Cards Services Limited (LIC CSL) a wholly owned subsidiary of LIC of India was incorporated on 11th November 2008 with an aim to provide solution to all financial needs of its customers and enhance the value of digital solution by providing a variety of benefits to LIC policyholders.

States/UTs

Andhra Pradesh

1. Andhra Pradesh CM kicks off programme to distribute Rs 620-crore tabs

- Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy launched the programme to distribute free tabs to Class VIII students of government schools at Chinturu in Alluri Sitarama Raju district.
- Tabs worth Rs 620 crore will be distributed to 4,34,285 students over the next ten days across the State.

Assam

1. Amrit Brikshya Andolan: Assam govt creates nine Guinness World Records

- The Amrit Brikshya Andolan launched by the Government of Assam received fitting recognition, as the state created nine Guinness World Records in nine different categories.
- Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma received the certificates from Guinness World Record Adjudicator Swapnil Dangarikar at a function held at Srimanta Sankardev Kalakshetra.
- Sarma launched Amrit Brikshya Andolan and as a part of the drive a total of 1,11,17,781 seedling of commercially valuable tree species were planted across the State on a single day on 17 September, 2023.
- The entire exercise was carried out in Jan Bhagidaari model, through active involvement of the Self-Help Group Members, ASHA Workers, Anganwadi Workers, educational institutions, police personnel including VDP, tea garden workers, government officials and other citizens.

- During Amrit Brikshya Andolan started by the Department of Environment and Forests attempts were made to create Guinness World Records. Accordingly, nine records were made in nine categories.
- In the first category that is in the Longest Line of Potted Saplings category, record was made at Veterinary College Field, Khnapara, Guwahati by Kamrup East Forest Division and 22.22 km long line of 3,22,444 poly potted saplings were arranged in a spiral form with beautiful lighting. It was a new category of Guinness World Records. The seedlings arranged in spiral form were of Agar and Mahogany species.

2. Assam govt partners with NDDDB to set up Rs 2,000-cr dairy joint venture

- The Assam government and National Dairy Development Board on Friday signed an agreement to create a Rs 2,000-crore joint venture for holistic development of the sector in the state.
- As per the MoU, a joint venture company will be set up for Rs 2,000 crore with a target of processing 10 lakh litres of milk through six new units in seven years.

Chhattisgarh

1. New Chief Minister of Chhattisgarh Vishnu Deo Sai takes oath along with Deputy Chief Ministers Arun Sao and Vijay Sharma

- In Chhattisgarh, senior tribal leader Vishnu Deo Sai took the oath as the Chief Minister of the State. Governor Biswabhusan Harichandan administered the oath of office and

secrecy in a ceremony held at the Science College ground in Raipur.

- BJP State president Arun Sao and the Party's State General Secretary and young leader Vijay Sharma took the oath as Deputy Chief Minister

Goa

1. Goa Liberation Day | 19 December

- The 'Goa Liberation Day' is celebrated to commemorate the liberation of the state from Portuguese rule in the year 1961.
- On this unique day, there is a sense of pride and independence in the air as the golden sun rises over the beautiful state of Goa.
- Liberation Day in Goa is a historic event that resonates with resilience and freedom.
- On this day in 1961, the Indian Army captured Goa, which had been under Portuguese rule for some 451 years. Goa was also somewhat influenced by the Indian independence movement of the 19th century, though not significantly. In the 1940s, a small number of Goan citizens participated in Satyagraha.

Karnataka

1. Karnataka releases draft biotechnology and AVGC-XR policy

- The Karnataka government has released the draft biotechnology, and Animation, Visual Effects, Gaming, Comics, and Extended Reality (AVGC-XR) policy, at the Bengaluru Tech Summit, aimed at fostering development in the particular sectors and growing the state's economy.
- The core focus of the new Biotechnology Policy is on 'Transformation through impactful Implementation' aiming to

elevate growth from a linear trajectory to an exponential one that quadruples the overall bioeconomy of the state.

- Currently, Karnataka, recognized as the 'Biotechnology Capital of India', with a bioeconomy that reached \$27.1 billion in 2022.
- Karnataka has also invested over \$200 million in biotech R&D and stands as the third-largest ethanol producer in India, housing more than 60 producers.
- India aspires to reach a \$150 billion Bioeconomy by 2025 and further elevate it to \$300 billion by 2030.
- This new Biotechnology Policy aligns seamlessly with existing state policies, including the Industrial Policy, R&D and Innovation Policy, ER&D Policy, and Start-up Policy, while maintaining distinct measures to support the biotech sector's growth in the state.
- Further, in a bid to encourage graduating students or professionals with experience to pursue entrepreneurship related to biotechnology business idea, a fellowship of Rs.50,000/- per month for a period of 12 months will be given.
- A Rural Biotechnological Innovation & Application Centre promote the concept of 'Bio-Village' will be established.

Kerala

1. Kerala capital to host short film festival on autism

- Thiruvananthapuram: The Centre for Autism and other Disabilities Rehabilitation Research and Education (CADRRE) announced an international short film festival on autism.
- The CADRRE International Film festival on Autism, invited entries of short films between one to five minutes duration

that explore the diverse narratives and experiences related to Autism.

Madhya Pradesh

1. Madhya Pradesh government to set up PM College of Excellence in all districts of the state

- Madhya Pradesh government will set up PM College of Excellence in all districts of the state.
- The government will upgrade one college in every district out of total 570 government colleges as "PM College of Excellence".
- More than Rs 460 crore will be spent on the development of these colleges.
- The Council of Ministers has also decided to implement a cyber tehsil system in all the districts and ban on illegal use of loudspeakers at religious and other places.

Meghalaya

1. Meghalaya's Lakadong turmeric gets Geographical Indication tag

- Meghalaya's Lakadong turmeric has been awarded the Geographical Indication (GI) tag.
- Along with Lakadong turmeric, Garo Dakmanda (traditional dress), Larnai pottery and Garo Chubitchi (alcoholic beverage) were also awarded the GI tag.
- Lakadong is found in Lakadong area of Jaintia Hills.
- Lakadong turmeric is considered to be one of the world's best varieties of turmeric, with a curcumin content of around 6.8 to 7.5 per cent. It is darker in colour and is grown organically without the use of fertilisers.
- Dakmanda is a handwoven ankle-length lower garment which is part of the traditional attire of Garo women

of Meghalaya. Chubitchi is a rice-based fermented drink of the Garo community consumed during feasts and ceremonies. Larnai pottery is made of black clay from Larnai village and the art form has been passed down through generations.

Mizoram

1. ZPM leader Lalduhoma to be sworn in as New Chief Minister of Mizoram

- Zoram People's Movement (ZPM) leader Lalduhoma will be sworn in as Chief Minister of Mizoram.
- The ZPM emerged victorious in Mizoram assembly polls by winning 27 out of 40 seats. Mizo National Front (MNF) won 10 seats, the BJP won two seats and the Congress won one.

Nagaland

1. Hornbill Festival 2023 concludes in Nagaland

- In Nagaland, after a ten-day long fanfare with a cultural extravaganza with performances of 18 Cultural Troupes from various tribes and communities, the curtain has fallen on the 24th edition of the Hornbill Festival 2023.
- The closing ceremony was held at Naga Heritage Village.
- Cultural troupes presented unity dance around the bonfire which were lit by the honoured guests and the winners of Miss Nagaland 2023

Rajasthan

1. Bhajan Lal Sharma to be the new CM of Rajasthan; Diya Kumari and Premchand Bairwa named as Deputy CMs

- Bhajanlal Sharma will be the new Chief Minister of Rajasthan. Mr. Sharma was unanimously elected the leader of the BJP Legislative Party in a meeting held at BJP headquarters in Jaipur.
- Diya Kumari and Prem Chand Bairwa have been named as Deputy Chief Ministers.
- MLA from Ajmer North Vasudev Devnani will be the Speaker of the Assembly.

Tamil Nadu

1. PM Modi approves India's first project to tackle urban floods after Chennai deluge

- In response to the urgent need for effective flood management solutions, Prime Minister Narendra Modi has sanctioned an ambitious India's first urban flood mitigation project to focus on Chennai, with a budget allocation of Rs. 561.29 crore under the National Disaster Mitigation Fund (NDMF).
- The city's struggle with extreme weather events has brought to light the increasing vulnerability of India's urban landscape to sudden and severe flooding due to excessive rainfall.
- The 'Integrated Urban Flood Management activities for Chennai Basin Project' represents a proactive measure to address the challenges posed by urban flooding. It is designed to enhance Chennai's resilience to such natural disasters by implementing comprehensive flood management strategies.

2. World Bank provides \$300 million loan to Tamil Nadu to help 21 Urban Local Bodies

- According to the World Bank, the newly approved USD 300 million Tamil Nadu Climate Resilient Urban Development Program is set to enhance access to quality water and sewerage services, promoting climate-resilient cities in the face of escalating climate shocks such as floods and droughts.
- The program will target 21 Urban Local Bodies (ULBs), upgrading their delivery systems.

Tripura

1. Govt, ADB sign USD 100 mn loan agreement to improve tourism facilities in Tripura

- The Union government signed an agreement with Asian Development Bank (ADB) to avail of a USD 100 million loan to improve urban services and tourism facilities in the northeastern state of Tripura. ADB support will also strengthen the capacity of ULBs for integrated planning, including climate and disaster resilience, and identification of community and private sector.

Uttar Pradesh

1. Union Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw inaugurates new factory of Dixon Technology in Noida

- Union Electronics and IT Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw inaugurated a new factory of Dixon Technology in Noida, Uttar Pradesh yesterday to boost the local smartphone ecosystem.
- Mr Vaishnaw said, Dixon's new manufacturing facility will create five thousand jobs.

- Uttar Pradesh alone is manufacturing 60 percent of mobile phones.

2. UP team to attend World Economic Forum in Davos

- A delegation of the UP government will travel to Davos, Switzerland, to attend the World Economic Forum (WEF) meeting there from January 15 to 19.
- It will brief delegates about efforts being made to make Uttar Pradesh a trillion-dollar economy and develop metropolitan towns as hubs of different sectors that include efforts to develop Lucknow as India's first AI city.

3. Bharat Electronics Secures '445 Cr Deal For UP Dial 112 Project

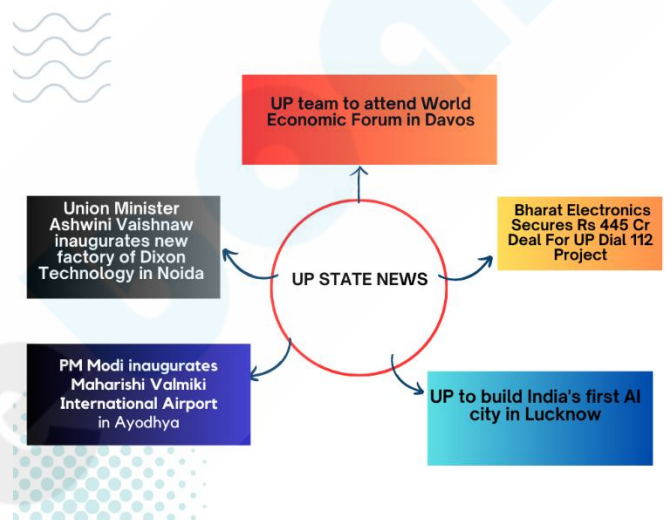
- Navratna DPSU BEL has signed a contract for a value of '445 Cr with the UP Government for next generation UP Dial 112 project, the company announced through an exchange filing.
- BEL will be providing comprehensive and state-of-art hardware, AI based software tools and Cyber Security solutions for the Dial 112 project, which is spread across the entire state of UP.

4. UP to build India's first AI city in Lucknow

- Lucknow will be developed as India's first Artificial Intelligence city. The government of Uttar Pradesh has approved the development of Lucknow, the state capital, as an AI city, establishing the "city of nawabs" as the nation's newest IT hub. By 2030, it is expected to contribute \$15.7 trillion to the global economy.

5. PM Modi inaugurates Maharishi Valmiki International Airport

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated Maharishi Valmiki International Airport in the temple town of Ayodhya in Uttar Pradesh, shortly after launching the redeveloped Ayodhya railway station and flagging off two Amrit Bharat and six Vande Bharat trains, some virtually.
- Phase 1 of the state-of-the-art airport has been developed at a cost of more than '1450 crore.



West Bengal

1. The 29th Kolkata International Film Festival ends, Israeli film 'Children of Nobody' won Best film award

- The 29th Kolkata International Film Festival ended. The prize distribution and closing ceremony were held at Rabindra Sadan.
- 219 films from 39 countries were screened at 23 locations across Kolkata.
- Israeli film 'Children of Nobody' directed by Erez Tadmor, has won the Best Film award under International Competition in Innovation Moving Images.
- The Best Director award was bagged by Carlos Daniel Malave. Anjan Dutta's 'Chalchitro Ekhon' bagged the Special Jury Award.

Director duo Sharmistha Maity and Rajdeep Paul's 'Mon Potongo' was awarded best film under Bengali Panorama category. For the best film 'Royal Bengal Tiger Trophy' 51 lakh rupees were given as an award. Apart from these Hirall Memorial Trophy, Netpack Award were also given. The best short film and documentary were also awarded with Royal Bengal Tiger Trophy

Jammu and Kashmir

1. Udhampur district of J&K has achieved maximum saturation in all the agriculture and health benefit schemes

- Udhampur district of Jammu & Kashmir has achieved maximum saturation in all the agriculture and health benefit schemes rolled out by the Central government under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi.
- Udhampur has achieved 100% saturation in PM Kisan Yojana by providing annual support of Rs.6,000 to 51,035 farmers.
- Similarly, 100% saturation has also been achieved by providing Kisan Credit Cards to 51,035 farmers, he added.

2. Anand Marriage Act, which gives statutory recognition to Sikh marriage rituals, implemented in J-K Jammu

- 'Jammu and Kashmir Anand Marriage Registration Rules, 2023' has been framed for the registration of 'Anand marriages', under which tehsildars concerned shall be the registrar of such marriages within their respective territorial jurisdiction, as per a government notification issued.
- The emergence of the Anand Marriage Act dates back to 1909 when the British

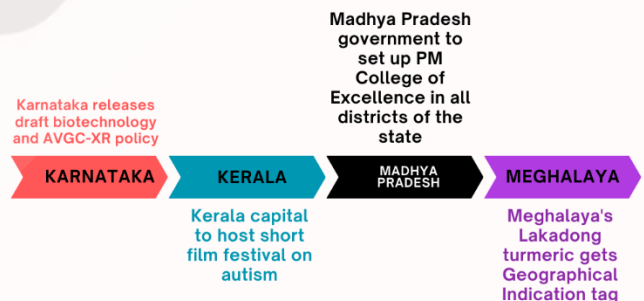
Imperial Legislative Council passed a legislation for the recognition of the Sikh wedding ceremony Anand Karaj.

- In 2012, the Parliament passed the Anand Marriage (Amendment) Bill, bringing Sikh traditional marriages under the purview of legal recognition.

3. Chilla-i-Kalan' the 40-day period of harsh winter begins in Kashmir on December 21.

- 'Chilla-i-Kalan' is the 40-day harshest winter period when a cold wave grips the region and the temperature drops considerably. 'Chillai-Kalan' will end on January 31.
- Minimum temperature in Srinagar, Pahalgam, Gulmarg, Qazigund and Kokernag settled below freezing point.

State News



State/UT's



Important CA

1. 115-million-year old shark fossils discovered in Jaisalmer: Research

- A team of researchers have discovered India's first Early Cretaceous shark fossils, 'which are 115-million year old' in Jaisalmer area of Rajasthan.
- According to the researchers, the Early Cretaceous was a period of great change for sharks, as new species evolved and old ones disappeared.
- The fossils discovered from the Habur Formation of Jaisalmer Basin in Rajasthan sheds light on a small assemblage of Early Cretaceous (Aptian) sharks

Possible Question: Recently, a team of researchers have discovered India's first Early Cretaceous shark fossils, 'which are 115-million year old' in _____.

2. 'Garba Of Gujarat' Declared as Intangible Cultural Heritage by UNESCO

- Garba of Gujarat' has been inscribed in the Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity by UNESCO, under the provisions of the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage during the 18th meeting of the Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage from 5th - 9th December, 2023 in Bostwana.
- **Garba of Gujarat is the 15th ICH element from India to join this list.**
- This inscription underscores Garba's pivotal role as a unifying force that fosters social and gender inclusivity.
- Garba as a dance form is entrenched deeply in ritualistic and devotional roots, involving people from all walks of life

and it continues to thrive as a vibrant living tradition bringing communities together.

- The inscription further highlights the commitment and efforts of the Ministry of Culture, Government of India towards the safeguarding, promotion and preservation of our intangible cultural heritage.

Possible Question: Garba of Gujarat' has been inscribed in the Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity by UNESCO, under the provisions of the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage. Garba of Gujarat is the _____ Intangible Cultural Heritage element from India to join this list.

3. Argentina superstar Lionel Messi named Time's Athlete of the Year for 2023

- Argentina captain Lionel Messi has been named Time magazine's Athlete of the Year for 2023 after winning the Ballon d'Or for a record-extending eighth time and elevating the profile of the sport in the U.S. with his move to Inter Miami.
- Messi joins the likes of Simone Biles, Michael Phelps, LeBron James and the United States women's national team to win the award. New York Yankees right fielder Aaron Judge won the award in 2022.

Possible Question: Who has been named Time magazine's Athlete of the Year for 2023?

4. From FM Sitharaman to Roshni Nadar, meet 4 Indians on Forbes' list of 'most powerful women for 2023'

- The list of 100 most powerful women in the world was released by Forbes where 4 Indian women bagged a spot.
- **The Indian woman who takes the highest spot is Finance Minister and Minister of Corporate Affairs, Nirmala Sitharaman, who ranks 32. Her rankings improved as compared to last year when she occupied 36th place,.**
- Indian billionaire and philanthropist, Roshni Nadar Malhotra occupied 60th rank who is the first Indian woman to lead a listed IT company in India. Daughter of HCL founder Shiv Nadar, she is recognised as the richest woman in India as per IIFL Wealth Hurun India Rich List (2019).
- Chairperson of the Steel Authority of India, Soma Mondal ranks 70. She was honoured with 'CEO of the Year' award at the ET Prime Women Leadership Awards that took place this year. Renowned Indian billionaire entrepreneur,
- Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw secured 76th rank in the list. Biocon Limited and Biocon Biologics Limited in Bangalore are founded and run by her. She has also served as former chairperson of the Indian Institute of Management, Bangalore.

Possible Question: Forbes released its annual list of Most Powerful Women and four Indians were included in the 2023 edition of the list. Who among the following is the highest-ranking Indian woman on the list?

5. UNICEF in collaboration with India to launch "Green Rising" initiative at COP28 Summit in Dubai

- **UNICEF's Generation Unlimited, in collaboration with India's Ministry of Environment, Forest, and Climate**

Change will unveil the "Green Rising" initiative at COP28 in Dubai.

- The global "Green Rising" initiative and the "Green Rising India Alliance" marks a collaborative effort involving UNICEF, Generation Unlimited and a diverse network of public, private, and youth partner
- The "Green Rising" initiative focuses on engaging youth for impactful environmental actions at the grassroots level, aligning with the global effort to address the severe impacts of climate change. Through the YuWaah campaign in India, the focus is on engaging youth to drive impactful environmental actions at the grassroots level, inspired by the Mission Life movement.

Possible Question: Which of the following statements is/are correct about 'Green Rising' initiative?

- It was launched by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) at the COP 28 Summit in Dubai.
- It focuses on engaging youth for impactful environmental actions at the grassroots level.
- India is the partner country of the initiative.

6. Travis Head wins ICC Men's Player of Month award for November 2023

- Australian batter Travis Head, who smashed an explosive century to help Australia win their sixth ICC Cricket World Cup title, has been named as the ICC Men's Player of the Month for November 2023.

- Head beat tough competition from teammate Glenn Maxwell and India seamer Mohammed Shami to claim the honour.

Possible Question: Who among the following has been named as the ICC Men's Player of the Month for November 2023?

7. Writer Pushpa Bharati's memoir selected for Vyas Samman award

- Noted Hindi writer **Pushpa Bharati's** 2016 memoir, *Yaadein, Yaadein aur Yaadein*, has been selected for the 33rd Vyas Samman, 2023.
- Instituted in 1991, the award is given to an outstanding Hindi literary work by an Indian citizen published during the last 10 years. It carries a cash prize of '4 lakh, a citation and a plaque.

Possible Question: Which of the following statements is/are correct about the 'Vyas Samman' award?

- The award was instituted in 1991.
- The award is given to an outstanding Hindi literary work by an Indian citizen.
- The award carries a cash prize of Rs. 5 lakh, a citation and a plaque.

8. Cabinet approves MoU between India, Italy on Cooperation in the field of Industrial Property Rights

- The Cabinet gave its approval for signing of Memorandum of Understanding on Cooperation in the field of Industrial Property (IP) Rights between the Department for Promotion of Industry

and Internal Trade, Ministry of Commerce and Industry of India and the Directorate General for the Protection of Industrial Property-Italian Patent and Trademark Office of the Ministry.

Possible Question: In December 2023, The Cabinet gave its approval for signing of Memorandum of Understanding on Cooperation in the field of Industrial Property (IP) Rights between the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade, Ministry of Commerce and Industry of India and the Directorate General for the Protection of Industrial Property of which country?

9. Shri Piyush Goyal releases the 'Logistics Ease Across Different State (LEADS) 2023'

- Union Minister of Commerce & Industry, Consumer Affairs, Food & Public Distribution, and Textiles, Sh. Piyush Goyal released the 'Logistics Ease Across Different State (LEADS) 2023' report in New Delhi. The 5th edition of the LEADS annual exercise - LEADS 2023 report, provides insights into improvement of logistics performance at State/UT level.
- LEADS was conceived on the lines of **Logistics Performance Index** of World Bank in 2018 and has evolved over time. While the LPI relies entirely on perception-based surveys, LEADS incorporates both perception as well as **objectivity** thereby enhancing the robustness and comprehensiveness of this exercise.
- It highlights an enhanced overall stakeholder perception and impact of various reforms, across States and UTs. This report, signalling a **positive shift** in States' performance across the **key pillars** – Logistics Infrastructure, Logistics Services and Operating and Regulatory

Environment, **empowers** the State/UT Governments by providing **region specific insights** for informed decision making and comprehensive growth. This report is based on a **pan-India primary survey**, conducted between May and July 2023, covering over **7,300 responses** across 36 States/UTs. Additionally, over 750 stakeholder consultations, facilitated by National, Regional, and State Associations, significantly contributed to this comprehensive evaluation.

• **Performance Highlights from LEADS 2023: Coastal Group**

- Achievers: Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu
- Fast Movers: Kerala, Maharashtra
- Aspirers: Goa, Odisha, West Bengal

Landlocked Group

- Achievers: Haryana, Punjab, Telangana, Uttar Pradesh
- Fast Movers: Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Uttarakhand
- Aspirers: Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Himachal Pradesh, Jharkhand

North-East Group

- Achievers: Assam, Sikkim, Tripura
- Fast Movers: Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland
- Aspirers: Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram

Union Territories

- Achievers: Chandigarh, Delhi
- Fast Movers: Andaman & Nicobar, Lakshadweep, Puducherry
- Aspirers: Daman & Diu/ Dadra & Nagar Haveli, Jammu & Kashmir, Ladakh

Possible Question: Union Minister of Commerce & Industry, Consumer Affairs, Food & Public Distribution, and Textiles, Sh. Piyush Goyal released the 'Logistics Ease Across Different State (LEADS) 2023' report in New Delhi. In landlocked states group, which of the following states was placed under the Achievers category?

- I. Haryana
- II. Jharkhand
- III. Punjab
- IV. Bihar
- V. Telangana

10. ISRO Bags Leif Erikson Lunar Prize For Chandrayaan-3 Mission

- **ISRO awarded the 2023 Leif Erikson Lunar Prize by the Exploration Museum in Iceland's Husavik for its successful Chandrayaan-3 mission.**
- The award celebrates the first soft-landing of a spacecraft near the lunar south pole and ISRO's indomitable spirit in advancing lunar exploration and contributing to understanding celestial mysteries. The Leif Erikson Award is an annual prize given by the Exploration Museum since 2015.
- The Leif Erikson Award is an annual prize given by the Exploration Museum since 2015. It is named after Leif Erikson -- a Norse explorer thought to be the first European to set foot on continental America, almost four centuries before the expedition of Christopher Columbus.
- Chandrayaan-3 was India's third mission to the moon, and the second attempt to carry out a soft-landing on the lunar surface. ISRO managed to place the Vikram lander on the lunar surface and roll out the robotic rover, Pragyaan.

Possible Question: ISRO has been awarded the 2023 Leif Erikson Lunar Prize by the Exploration Museum in _____ Husavik for its successful Chandrayaan-3 mission.

11. Chirag Shetty, Satwik honoured with Major Dhyan Chand Khel Ratna Award; Mohammed Shami bags Arjuna Award

- India's star badminton duo of Chirag Shetty and Satwiksairaj Rankireddy were confirmed as the recipients of the Major Dhyan Chand Khel Ratna Award as the sports ministry confirmed the annual sports awards for 2023.
- The Arjuna Award was confirmed for 26 sportspersons, including India pacer Mohammed Shami and archery's breakout star of 2023 Aditi Gopichand Swami.

- Arjuna Awards for 2023:** Ojas Pravin Deotale (archery), Aditi Gopichand Swami (archery), Murali Sreeshankar (athletics), Parul Chaudhary (athletics), Mohameed Hussamuddin (boxing), R Vaishali (chess), Mohammed Shami (cricket), Anush Agarwalla (equestrian), Divyakriti Singh (equestrian dressage), Diksha Dagar (golf), Krishan Bahadur Pathak (hockey), Sushila Chanu (hockey), Pawan Kumar (kabaddi), Ritu Negi (kabaddi), Nasreen (kho-kho), Pinki (lawn bowls), Aishwary Pratap Singh Tomar (shooting), Esha Singh (shooting), Harinder Pal Singh Sandhu (squash), Ayhika Mukherjee (table tennis), Sunil Kumar (wrestling), Antim (wrestling), Naorem Roshibina Devi (wushu), Sheetal Devi (para

archery), Illuri Ajay Kumar Reddy (blind cricket), Prachi Yadav (para canoeing).

- Dronacharya Award (regular category) for outstanding coaches:** Lalit Kumar (wrestling), RB Ramesh (chess), Mahaveer Prasad Saini (para athletics), Shivendra Singh (hockey), Ganesh Prabhakar Devrukhkar (mallakhamb).
- Dronacharya Award (life-time category) for outstanding coaches:** Jaskirat Singh Grewal (golf), Bhaskaran E (kabaddi), Jayanta Kumar Pushilal (table tennis).
- Dhyan Chand Award for lifetime achievement:** Manjusha Kanwar (badminton), Vineet Kumar Sharma (hockey), Kavitha Selvaraj (kabaddi).
- Maulana Abul Kalam Azad (MAKA) Trophy 2023:** Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar (overall winner university); Lovely Professional University, Punjab (1st runner-up), Kurukshetra University, Kurukshetra (2nd runner-up).

Possible Question: Which of the following Arjuna Award winner of 2023 is incorrectly paired with their field of sport?

12. French President Emmanuel Macron accepts PM Modi's invite, to be chief guest at Republic Day celebrations

- French President Emmanuel Macron will be the chief guest at the Republic Day celebrations next January, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) announced.

- Mr. Macron has acknowledged the invite and announced that he will be here on January 26 for the festivities.
- Macron is the sixth French leader who will be the chief guest at the 2024 Republic Day parade.
- Egypt's President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi was the chief guest at the 2023 Republic Day.
- Macron is the sixth French leader who will be the chief guest at the 2024 Republic Day parade. Former French Prime Minister Jacques Chirac graced the event twice, in 1976 and 1998. Former presidents Valry Giscard d'Estaing, Nicolas Sarkozy and Franois Hollande, attended the celebrations in 1980, 2008, and 2016, respectively.
- Every year, India invites foreign leaders to attend its Republic Day celebrations. There were only two instances -- in 2021 and 2022 -- when no Republic Day chief guest was invited due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Possible Question: French President Emmanuel Macron will be the chief guest at the Republic Day celebrations in January, 2024, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) announced. Macron is the _____ French leader who will be the chief guest at the 2024 Republic Day parade.

13. INS Imphal, India's first warship named after a northeastern state, commissioned

- **The Indian Navy commissioned its latest stealth-guided missile destroyer Imphal, at the Naval Dockyard, Mumbai.**
- It is the first warship to have been named after a city from the Northeastern region, the approval for which was accorded by the President in April 2019. The ship was delivered by the

Mazagon Dock Ltd to the Indian Navy on October 20, 2023.

- According to the Defence Ministry, the ship measures 163m in length and 17m in breadth, with a displacement of 7,400 tonnes and is among the most potent warships built in India. It is propelled by four powerful gas turbines, in a combined gas and gas configuration, and is capable of speeds in excess of 30 knots.
- INS Imphal is the third of the four 'Visakhapatnam-class destroyers developed and designed by the Indian Navy. Visakhapatnam-class destroyers are classified as P-15 Bravo or P-15B and are an upgraded version of P-15A Kolkata class destroyers.
- The other destroyers in the Visakhapatnam class are INS Visakhapatnam, INS Mormugao, Imphal and Surat, representing different regions of different states. The Destroyers just come next to the aircraft carriers in terms of capabilities and operational relevance.
- India's indigenous guided missile destroyer programme started in the 1990s with Project 15, the Delhi-class destroyer, followed by Project 15A, the Kolkata-class destroyer and now Project 15B.

Possible Question: Which of the following statement is/are true for INS Imphal?

- I. It is the first warship to have been named after a city from the Northeastern region.
- II. The ship was delivered by the Cochin Shipyard Cochin

- III. Shipyard to the Indian Navy in October 2023. INS Imphal is the third of the four 'Visakhapatnam-class' destroyers developed and designed by the Indian Navy.


14. Raghuram Rajan's new book "Breaking the Mould: Reimagining India's Economic Future" launched

- Former Reserve Bank of India (RBI) governor Raghuram Rajan's new book

'Breaking the Mould' was released recently.


- Rajan's latest book, written in collaboration with fellow economist Rohit Lamba, will discuss the future of India's economic development.
- The former central banker's latest book - his third since he exited the RBI governor's office in September 2016 - comes ahead of the national elections

Possible Question: The recently released book "Breaking the Mould: Reimagining India's Economic Future" was authored by who among the following?





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BANKING

Cash Reserve Ratio (CRR)	4.50%
Statutory Liquidity Ratio (SLR)	18.00%

POLICY/EXCHANGE RATE & RESERVE RATIO	PERCENTAGE
Repo Rate	6.50%
Reverse Repo Rate	3.35%
Marginal Standing Facility Rate (MSF)	6.75%
Bank Rate	6.75%

APPOINTMENTS

APPOINTMENT	POST
Tarun Bajaj	Independent Director in the board of Hindustan Unilever Limited (HUL)
Puneet Vidyarthi	President of Rural Marketing Association of India (RMAI)
Kanchan Devi	Director General (DG) of the Indian Council of Forestry Research Education (ICFRE)
Rajiv Anand	Chairman of Max Life Insurance
Dinesh K Tripathi	Vice Chief of the Naval Staff
Samir Shah	Chairman of British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC)
Dr Mohan Yadav	Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh
Parama Sen	Part-time member in Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority (PFRDA)
Uma Sekhar	Member of Governing Council of the International Institute for the Unification of Private Law (UNIDROIT)
Maheshwar Dayal	Director General of Prisons and Correctional Services
Santosh Jha	India's High Commissioner to Sri Lanka
Pramod Agrawal	Chairman of the Bombay Stock Exchange (BSE)
Satish Kumar Kalra	Interim managing director and CEO of North East Small Finance Bank
C S Rajan	Independent Director of Kotak Mahindra Bank
Rahul Rasgotra	Chief of Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP),
Nina Singh	Chief of Central Industrial Security Force
Anish Dayal Singh	Director General of the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF)
Vivek Srivastav	Director General, Fire Service, Civil Defence and Home Guards
PU Lalduhoma	Chief Minister of Mizoram
Bhajan Lal Sharma	Chief Minister of Rajasthan
A Revanth Reddy	Chief Minister of Telangana

Vishnu Deo Sai	Chief Minister of Chhattisgarh
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IMPORTANT DAYS

DATE	DAY	THEME
1st December	World AIDS Day	Let communities lead
2nd December	International Day for the Abolition of Slavery	Fighting slavery's legacy of racism through transformative education
4th December	Indian Navy Day	
5th December	World Soil Day	
5th December	International Volunteers Day	
9th December	International Day Against Corruption or International Anti-Corruption Day	
10th December	International Human Rights Day	
11th December	International Mountain Day	Restoring Mountain Ecosystems
12th December	International Day of Neutrality	
14th December	National Energy Conservation Day	
20th December	International Human Solidarity Day	
22nd December	National Mathematics Day	
23rd December	National Farmers' Day	Delivering Smart Solutions for Sustainable Food Security and Resilience
24th December	National Consumer Rights Day	
25th December	Good Governance Day	
27th December	International Day of Epidemic Preparedness	

SPORTS

NAME OF THE SPORTS PERSON	RELATED FIELD
Ruturaj Gaikwad	Cricket
R Vaishali	Chess
M. Sreeshankar	Long Jump
Satwiksairaj Rankireddy	Badminton
Chirag Shetty	Badminton
Antim Panghal	Wrestling
Hardik Pandya	Cricket
Rohit Sharma	Cricket
Novak Djokovic	Tennis
Aryna Sabalenka	Tennis
Leander Paes	Tennis
Vijay Amritraj	Tennis
Sandeep Kumar	Car Racing
Chetan Surnineni	Car Racing
Mitchell Starc	Cricket
Pat Cummins	Cricket
Kiyana Parihar	Chess
Harsh Suresh	Chess
Anmol Kharb	Badminton
Chirag Sen	Badminton
Dean Elgar	Cricket
Koneru Humpy	Chess
PV Sindhu	Badminton
Iga Swiatek	Tennis
Ojas Pravin Deotale	Archery
Aditi Gopichand Swami	Archery
Sreeshankar M	Athletics
Parul Chaudhary	Athletics
Mohameed Hussamuddin	Boxing
Mohammed Shami	Cricket
Anush Agarwalla	Equestrian
Divyakriti Singh	Equestrian Dressage
Diksha Dagar	Golf
Krishan Bahadur Pathak	Hockey
Pukhrambam Sushila Chanu	Hockey
Pawan Kumar	Kabaddi
Ritu Negi	Kabaddi
Nasreen	Kho-Kho
Pinki	Lawn Bowls
Aishwary Pratap Singh Tomar	Shooting
Esha Singh	Shooting

Harinder Pal Singh Sandhu	Squash
Ayhika Mukherjee	Table Tennis
Sunil Kumar	Wrestling
Antim	Wrestling
Naorem Roshibina Devi	Wushu
Sheetal Devi	Para Archery
Illuri Ajay Kumar Reddy	Blind Cricket
Prachi Yadav	Para Canoeing

SCHEMES

NAME OF THE SCHEME	THEME
PM-Kisan Samman Nidhi scheme (PM-Kisan)	Financial assistance to all cultivable landholding farmer families across the country
Indian Forest & Wood Certification Scheme	Promote sustainable forest management and agroforestry in the country
Atal Pension Yojana	Old age income security to Indian citizens
Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana (PMMY)	Provide collateral free institutional credit to Small/ Micro enterprises for income generating activities
Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Janaushadhi Pariyojana (PMBJP)	Provide quality medicines at affordable prices to the masses through special kendras known as Pradhan Mantri Bharatiya Janaushadhi Pariyojana Kendra.
RAMP ((Raising and Accelerating MSME Productivity)	Encourage the adoption of sustainable technology in business, boost the circular economy and address delayed payments issue.
Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY)	Provide avenues for the Indian youth to access short-term skilling opportunities
Jal Jeevan Mission	Achieving the 100% coverage of tap water connection to every rural household
Production-linked incentive (PLI) scheme	Promote Manufacture Sector

OBITUARY

OBITUARY	RELATED FIELD
Charlie Munger	Industrialist
Henry Kissinger	US Diplomat
Shaun Davis	Mr. Universe
Manu Ahuja	Industrialist
Sheikh Nawaf al-Ahmad al-Jaber al-Sabah	Emir of Kuwait
Dr V Mohini Giri	Women Right Activist
Vijayakanth	Actor and Politician

BOOKS & AUTHORS

BOOKS	AUTHORS
RESILIENT INDIA: How Modi Transformed India's Disaster Management Paradigm	
Zeba: An Accidental Superhero	Huma Qureshi
Naye Bharat ka Samveda'	
Breaking the Mould: Reimagining India's Economic Future	Raghuram Rajan

DEFENCE

DEFENCE EXERCISE NAME	COUNTRIES INVOLVED
Prasthan	Indian Navy
Vinbax - 23	India and Vietnam
Milan - 24	Multilateral Naval Exercise by Indian Navy

INDIA AND WORLD

COUNTRIES INVOLVED	FIELD OF CO-OPERATION
India and Venezuela	Crude Oil
India and Kenya	Credit for agricultural modernisation
India and France	Thiruvalluvar Statue
India and USA	Anti-Money Laundering and Countering the Financing of Terrorism Dialogue
India and Saudi Arabia	NSDC MoU to protect rights of laboureres from India
India and Italy	Mobility Pact and MoU on Cooperation in field of Industrial Property Rights

ACQUISITION AND MERGERS

ENTITY	ACQUIRED BY/MERGED WITH
Tata Coffee Ltd	Tata Consumer Products and TCPL Beverages & Foods
Bikaner-Neemrana Transmission Project	Tata Power
SREI Equipment Finance and SREI Infrastructure Finance	NARCL
IANS India	Adani Enterprises Ltd
Software AG	IBM
Dilip Buildcon	Alpha Alternatives Group
Sony Group Corp.	Blackstone Inc
Reliance Capital	IIHL and Aasia Enterprises

RBL Bank	ICICI Prudential AMC and ICICI Prudential Life
SBI Pension Funds	SBI

AWARDS

AWARDEE	AWARD NAME	RELATED FIELD
Hindustan Shipyard Ltd	SODET Silver Awards	National Quality Circles Competition
Power GRID	SKOCH Gold Award	
Suganthi Sundararaj	PRSI National Award	Healthcare Communications
Dipak Bharali(Weft Insertion Device) and Sunil Shinde(Silkworm Breeding Net Folding Machine)	4th ASEAN India Grassroots Innovation Forum	Grassroot Innovation
ESIC	ISSA Vision Zero 2023	Safety and Health at Work
Narayan Seva Sansthan	Best Personality - Empowerment of Differently-abled	National Award
Amazon India	Best Personality - Empowerment of Differently-abled	National Award
Meira Chand	Cultural Medallion	Singapore's prestigious arts accolade
BHEL	CII EXIM Bank Award	Business Excellence 2023
Sreya Francis	Alconics Solutions Implementer of the Year	AI
Azentio	IBSi Global FinTech Innovation Awards	
Javed Akhtar	Padmapani Lifetime Achievement Award	Given at Ajanta-Ellora Film Festival
Ban Ki-Moon	Lifetime Achievement Award	Given to individuals for their help to form a peaceful and secure world for all.
Dr Atul Shah	Game Changing Innovator	Global health
Dr Hemachandran Ravikumar	Karmaveer Chakra Medal and Rex Karmaveer Global Fellowship Medal	R&D in physical & bio-science and microbiological studies
Kabir Bedi	Order of Merit	Italy's highest civilian honor
NTPC	Brandon Hall Group's Excellence in Technology Awards 2023	Technology awards
Daniel Barenboim and Ali Abu Awwad	Indira Gandhi Prize	Peace, Disarmament and Development for 2023

Savita Ladage	Royal Society of Chemistry Prize	Chemistry
Srinivas Naik Dharavath	Global Icon Award	Given at G20 Initiative Summit
Indian Armed Forces	Golden Owl	Outstanding performance by DSCSC in Sri Lanka
Genrobotics	Adjudged among top 3 AI startups of India	Awarded at Global Partnership on Artificial Intelligence (GPAI) Summit 2023
Against All Odds: The IT Story of India, Winning Middle India: The Story of India's New-Age Entrepreneurs	Gaja Capital Business Book Prize 2023	
Dr Poonam Khetrapal Singh	National Order of Merit Gold Medal	Bhutan's top honour
NTPC Kanti	FICCI Water Award 2023	Industrial Water Use Efficiency
Rambagh Gate and Ramparts in Punjab, Haryana's Church of Epiphany and Delhi's Bikaner House	UNESCO's Awards	Resilient Urban Revitalisation
Bengaluru Kempegowda International Airport Terminal 2	One of World's Most Beautiful Airport by UNESCO's Prix Versailles 2023	
Hardik Singh, Savita Punia	FIH Player of the Year and Goalkeeper of the Year	FIH Hockey Star Awards
Sukrita Paul Kumar for her book 'Salt & Pepper: Selected Poems'	Tagore Literary Prize	Literature
Crompton Greaves Consumer Electricals Ltd (CGCEL)	National Energy Conservation Award 2023	
Yunqing Tang and Ruixiang Zhang	SASTRA Ramanujan Awards for 2022 and 2023	Mathematics
Lionel Messi	Athlete of the Year 2023	By Time's Magazine
Nirmala Sitharaman, Roshni Nadar Malhotra, Somal Mondal, Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw	List of Most Powerful Women 2023	Forbes' List
Pushpa Bharati	33rd Vyas Samman Award	Literature
ISRO	2023 Leif Erikson Lunar Prize	Annual Prize by Exploration Museum
Garba of Gujarat	Intangible Cultural Heritage	By UNESCO

Sahitya Akademi has announced its annual Sahitya Akademi Awards in 24 languages. 9 books of poetry, 6 of novels, 5 of short stories, 3 Essays and 1 Literary Study have won the Sahitya Akademi Awards 2023.

Category	Awardees
Poetry	Vijay Verma (Dogri), Vinod Joshi (Gujarati), Manshoor Banihali (Kashmiri), Sorokkhaibam Gambhini (Manipuri), Ashutosh Parida (Odia), Swarnjit Savi (Punjabi), Gaje Singh Rajpurohit (Rajasthani), Arun Ranjan Mishra (Sanskrit) and Vinod Asudani (Sindhi)
Novel	Swapnamay Chakrabarti (Bengali), Neelum Saran Gour (English), Sanjeev (Hindi), Krushnat Khot (Marathi), Rajasekaran (Devibharathi) (Tamil) and Sadiqua Nawab Saher (Urdu)
Short Stories	Pranavjyoti Deka (Assamese), Nandeswar Daimari (Bodo), Prakash S. Parienkar (Konkani), Taraceen Baskey (Turia Chand Baskey) (Santali) and T. Patanjali Sastry (Telugu)
Essays	Lakshmisha Tolpadi (Kannada), Basukinath Jha (Maithili) and Judhabir Rana (Nepali)
Literary Study	E.V. Ramakrishnan (Malayalam)

SUMMITS AND CONFERENCE

SUMMIT/ CONFERENCE NAME	THEME	LOCATION
29th Kolkata International Film Festival		Kolkata
UN Peacekeeping Ministerial Meeting		Accra, Ghana
SBM-GOBARDhan Biogas Conference		New Delhi
Global Green Credit Initiative		Dubai
India Internet Governance Forum	Moving Forward - Calibrating Bharat's Digital Agenda	New Delhi
Global Investors Summit		Dehradun
27th WAIPA World Investment Conference		New Delhi
Global Partnership on Artificial Intelligence		New Delhi
74th Annual All India Commerce Conference	One Earth-One Family-One Future	Delhi University and OP Jindal Global University
India International Science Festival		New Delhi
International Sangha Forum		Bodhgaya

COMMITTEE

THEME OF THE COMMITTEE	FORMED BY	CHAIRPERSON
3 member Ad Hoc Committee to run Wrestling Federation of India(WFI)	Indian Olympic Association	Bhupinder Singh Bajwa

RANKS AND REPORTS

NAME OF THE REPORT/INDEX	RELEASED BY	RANKING OF INDIA/STATE/COMPANY ETC	COUNTRY WHICH TOPPED THE LIST
5th LEADS 2023	Union Minister of Commerce & Industry	Tamil Nadu - Achiever	
2023 World Malaria Report	WHO	In 2022, India accounted 66% of malaria case in WHO South-East Region	
World Digital Competitiveness	Institute for Management Development	49th - India	
Periodic Labour Force Survey	NSSO	Himachal Pradesh, Rajasthan - highest unemployment rate	
Climate Change Performance Index		India - 7th	
Annual Global Report	Mercom Capital Group	Adani Green Energy - 2nd largest global solar PV developer	
Delta Rankings	NITI Aayog	Tiriyani Block	
Southeast Asia Opium Survey 2023	UN Office on Drugs and Crime		Myanmar
Quality of Living (City Ranking) Survey 2023	Mercer	Hyderabad	
Foreign Direct Investment		Tamil Nadu - 4th	
A Green and Sustainable Growth Agenda for the Global Economy	NITI Aayog		
Crypto Adoption	CoinSwitch	Top 3 - Delhi, Bengaluru and Mumbai	

Report on Trend and Progress of Banking in India 2022-23	RBI		
Top 25 AI Nations	Fletcher School	India - 15th	Top 3- US, China and UK

IMPORTANT STATIC & CURRENT INFO

INDIAN STATES, CAPITALS, CHIEF MINISTERS & GOVERNORS

STATE	CAPITAL	CHIEF MINISTER	GOVERNOR
Andhra Pradesh	Amaravati	Y. S. Jagan Mohan Reddy	Justice (Retd.) S. Abdul Nazeer
Arunachal Pradesh	Itanagar	Pema Khandu	Lt. General Kaiwalya Trivikram Parnaik
Assam	Dispur	Himanta Biswa Sarma	Gulab Chand Kataria
Bihar	Patna	Nitish Kumar	Rajendra Vishwanath Arlekar
Chhattisgarh	Raipur	Vishnu Deo Sai	Biswa Bhusan Harichandan
Goa	Panaji	Pramod Sawant	P.S. Sreedharan Pillai
Gujarat	Gandhi Nagar	Bhupendra Patel	Acharya Dev Vrat
Haryana	Chandigarh	Manohar Lal Khattar	Bandaru Dattatraya
Himachal Pradesh	Shimla	Sukhwinder Singh Sukhu	Shiv Pratap Shukla
Jharkhand	Ranchi	Hemant Soren	CP Radhakrishnan
Karnataka	Bengaluru	Siddaramaiah	Thaawarchand Gehlot
Kerala	Thiruvananthapuram	Pinarayi Vijayan	Arif Mohammed Khan
Madhya Pradesh	Bhopal	Mohan Yadav	Mangubhai Chhaganbhai Patel
Maharashtra	Mumbai	Eknath Shinde	Ramesh Bais
Manipur	Imphal	N Biren Singh	Sushri Anusuiya Uikye
Meghalaya	Shillong	Conrad Kongkal Sangma	Phagu Chauhan
Mizoram	Aizawl	PU Lalduhoma	Dr Kambhampati Haribabu
Nagaland	Kohima	Neiphiu Rio	La. Ganesan
Odisha	Bhubaneswar	Naveen Patnaik	Raghubar Das
Punjab	Chandigarh	Bhagwant Mann	Banwarilal Purohit
Rajasthan	Jaipur	Bhajan Lal Sharma	Kalraj Mishra
Sikkim	Gangtok	PS Golay	Lakshman Prasad Acharya
Tamil Nadu	Chennai	M. K. Stalin	R. N. Ravi
Telangana	Hyderabad	A Revanth Reddy	Tamilisai Soundararajan
Tripura	Agartala	Dr. Manik Saha	Indra Sena Reddy Nallu
Uttar Pradesh	Lucknow	Yogi Aditya Nath	Anandiben Patel
Uttarakhand	Dehradun	Pushkar Singh Dhami	Lt. Gen. Gurmit Singh
West Bengal	Kolkata	Mamata Banerjee	C V Ananda Bose

UNION TERRITORIES, LIEUTENANT GOVERNORS & ADMINISTRATORS

UNION TERRITORY	LT. GOVERNOR & ADMINISTRATOR
Andaman and Nicobar Island (UT)	Admiral D K Joshi (Lieutenant Governor)
Chandigarh (UT)	Banwarilal Purohit (Administrator)
Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Daman and Diu (UT)	Praful Patel (Administrator)
Delhi (NCT)	Vinai Kumar Saxena (Lieutenant Governor)
Jammu and Kashmir (UT)	Manoj Sinha (Lieutenant Governor)
Lakshadweep (UT)	Praful Patel (Administrator)
Puducherry (UT)	Dr.Tamilisai Soundararajan (Addl. Charge) (Lieutenant Governor)
Ladakh (UT)	Brig. (Dr.) BD Mishra (Retd.) (Lieutenant Governor)

UNION MINISTERS & PORTFOLIO

UNION MINISTER	PORTFOLIO
Narendra Modi	Ministry of personnel, public grievances and pensions Department of Atomic Energy Department of Space
Rajnath Singh	Ministry of Defence
Amit Shah	Ministry of Home Affairs Ministry of Cooperation
Nitin Gadkari	Ministry of Road Transport and Highways
Nirmala Sitharaman	Ministry of Finance Ministry of Corporate Affairs
Piyush Goyal	Ministry of Commerce and Industry Ministry of Textiles Ministry of Consumer affairs, food and public distribution
Narendra Singh Tomar	Ministry of agriculture and Farmers welfare
Dr Subrahmanyam Jaishankar	Ministry of External Affairs
Arjun Munda	Ministry of Tribal Affairs
Smriti Zubin Irani	Ministry of Women and child Development Ministry of Minority Affairs
Dharmendra Pradhan	Ministry of Education Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship
Pralhad Joshi	Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs Ministry of coal Ministry of Mines
Narayan Tatu Rane	Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises
SarbanandaSonowal	Minister of Ports, Shipping and Waterways Ministry of Ayurveda, Yoga and Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha and Homoeopathy (AYUSH)

Dr. Virendra Kumar	Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment
Giriraj Singh	Ministry of Rural Development Ministry of Panchayati Raj
Jyotiraditya M. Scindia	Ministry of Civil Aviation Ministry of Steel
Ashwini Vaishnaw	Ministry of Railways Ministry of Communications Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology
Pashu Pati Kumar Paras	Ministry of Food Processing Industries
Gajendra Singh Shekhawat	Ministry of Jal Shakti
Kiren Rijiju	Ministry of Earth Sciences
Raj Kumar Singh	Ministry of Power Ministry of New and Renewable Energy
Hardeep Singh Puri	Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs
Mansukh L. Mandaviya	Ministry of Health and Family Welfare Ministry of Chemicals and Fertilizers
Bhupender Yadav	Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change Ministry of Labour and Employment
Mahendra Nath Pandey	Ministry of Heavy Industries
Parshottam Rupala	Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying
G. Kishan Reddy	Ministry of Culture Ministry of Tourism Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region
Anurag Singh Thakur	Ministry of Information and Broadcasting Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports
Arjun Meghwal	Ministry of Law and Justice




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