

THE OAS GAZETTE

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APTI PLUS

Academy for Civil Services Pvt. Ltd.
CREATING CIVIL SERVANTS FOR THE NATION



Similipal National Park



Ama Odisha, Nabin Odisha' Scheme



Paradip Port



'Advika: I am Unique' Scheme



Sunabeda Wildlife Sanctuary

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COMPREHENSIVE COVERAGE OF CURRENT AFFAIRS FOR ODISHA STATE CIVIL SERVICES EXAMS



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And many more...

Odisha Current Affairs

Similipal National Park

- Similipal National Park was reopened for visitors after remaining closed for around a month.
- Located in northern part of Odisha's Mayurbhanj district
- Similipal derives its name from 'Simul' (Silk Cotton) tree
- It is a national park and a Tiger Reserve
- The tiger reserve is spread over 2750 sq km and has some beautiful waterfalls like Joranda and Barehipani.
- The park is surrounded by high plateaus and hills, the highest peak being the twin peaks of Khairiburu and Meghashini (1515m above mean sea level).
- At least twelve rivers cut across the plain area, all of which drain into the Bay of Bengal Burhabalanga, Palpala Bandan, Salandi, Kahairi and Deo.
- Prominent tribes - Kolha, Santhala, Bhumija, Bhatudi, Gondas, Khadia, Mankadia and Sahara.
- The vegetation is a mix of deciduous with some semi-evergreen forests.

Odisha Govt asks Banks to expedite Loans to SHGs

- The Odisha government has asked the banks to expedite the loans to Self-Help Groups (SHGs) to meet the target in financial year 2023-24.
- Mission Shakti department had set a target to provide Rs 15,000 crore loan in the financial year.
- The banks have sanctioned loans amounting to Rs 5,763 crore to 45,046 SHGs by September, achieving 38.43% of the target.
- While the average loan disbursement to SHGs was Rs 3.81 lakh, the department has planned to increase the amount to Rs 4 lakh
- Ganjam district topped in the state in achieving 59.47% of loan target, followed by Deogarh with 52.7% and Mayurbhanj 51.53%.

'Nua O' Programme

- Odisha government has extended the duration of the activities under its "Nua O" programme till January 15, 2024.
- Nutana unnata abhilasha (nua) Odisha is an attempt to take skill training to the grassroots with an aim to tap the latent potential of every district, fostering a robust and diverse workforce.
- It will also help bridge the skill gap by utilising new-age technologies in traditional sectors like handicraft, handloom and agriculture.

Odisha Startup Carnival 2023

- More than 70 startups and 15 investors were added to the Odisha Startup Carnival
- It began in Bhubaneswar.
- It was organised by AIC-Nalanda Institute of Technology Foundation (AID-NITF) in association with the Atal Innovation Mission of the Central government, Venture Capital Fund Fluid Ventures, Utkal Chamber of Commerce and Industry Limited (UCCIL) to strengthen the startup ecosystem of the state.

Kalahandi University renamed as Maa Manikeshwari University

- Kalahandi University here has been renamed as Maa Manikeshwari University,
- Kalahandi University comprising 50 colleges was formed on 1 September 2020.

Ekalabya Puraskar

- Promising tennis player Debasis Sahoo was presented the 31st Ekalabya Puraskar for his performances at the national and international levels.
- Ekalabya Puraskar, instituted by IMPaCT and managed by India's leading ferro alloys producer IMFA in 1993, is given every year to encourage young talents of Odisha.

OSDMA sets up gender and inclusion cell

- The Odisha State Disaster Management Authority (OSDMA) has set up a gender and inclusion cell
- This is done to implement gender transformative strategies aimed at fortifying disaster risk resilience.
- The strategic document, titled 'Roadmap for Gender and Inclusion Cell: Strategising a Gender Transformative Approach in Disaster Risk Resilience,' delineates five primary focus areas - programme review and alignment, capacity building, community resilience, knowledge and data management, and multi-stakeholder engagement and coordination.
- The roadmap will be a guiding document for stakeholders across government departments, civil society organisations, and individual contributors involved in disaster management.

Paradip Port

- Paradip Port achieved yet another 100 Million Metric Tonnes (MMT) of cargo handling, in shortest time, in its history

- Paradip Port is a natural, deep-water port on the East coast of India in Jagatsinghpur district of Odisha.
- It is situated at confluence of the Mahanadi river and the Bay of Bengal.
- The port is administered by the Paradip Port Trust (PPT), an autonomous corporation under the Major Port Trusts Act, 1963 functioning under Ministry of Shipping.

SWC approves Sustainable Energy Projects

- The Single Window Committee (SWC) of the state government's Energy Department has approved investment proposals of Rs 1079.62 crore.
- This is to boost to sustainable energy in Odisha.
- The proposals include a 30-MW ground-mounted solar project by GMR Kamalanga and 19.53-MW rooftop solar initiative by JSL which will transform the region's solar energy capacity.
- In hydroelectric power sector, the 63MW large hydro project by the state-run PSU Odisha Hydro Power Corporation Ltd (OHPC) has been approved
- The fund is meant for setting up transformative green energy projects to achieve the NetZero target.

Dropout rate in Odisha

- The highest dropout rate in Class X in 2021-22 was recorded in Odisha, where 49.9% students discontinued their studies
- Odisha was the worst performing state followed by Bihar at 42.1% and they were among the ten states where dropout rate was more than the national average, which decreased from 28.4% in 2018-19 to 20.6% in 2021-22.
- Odisha has had a downward trend over the past four years with its dropout rate rising from 12.8% in 2018-2019 to 49.9% in 2021-22.
- The dropout rate in the state was 38.35% in 2019-20 and 39.4% in 2020-21.

Ernst & Young Technology Hub in Bhubaneswar

- Chief Minister inaugurated a technology hub of Ernst & Young in Odisha capital
- Ernst & Young is a global leader in assurance, tax, strategy, transaction and consulting services.
- Its new technology hub in Bhubaneswar is the 15th such facility in India.
- It showcases the firm's commitment to Odisha's growing economic prowess and business landscape.

- The 15,000 sq ft state-of-the-art infrastructure at O-Hub, the expanded presence of EY in Bhubaneswar will create opportunities for existing employees as well as enable the company to harness the potential talent from the technical educational ecosystem in Odisha.

'Advika: I am Unique' Scheme

- The Advika programme has been converted into Advika: I am Unique' Scheme
- Scheme after 3 years of its launch.
- The programme was primarily targeted towards girls, but the scheme 'Advika: I am Unique' will focus on empowering adolescent boys too.
- It will attempt to bridge the gender disparity between girls and boys in the 10-19 years age group and will be implemented through the Anganwadi centers across the state.
- The scheme aims to empower them with essential life skills (digital literacy, career guidance, employability, skill development) to make informed decisions during their formative years and address issues like school dropouts, child labour and child marriages.

Economic offenses trial pendency 98 percent in Odisha

- At a time when economic offences rise exponentially, the pendency of trial of such cases in the courts stands at 98.8 per cent in Odisha.
- As per the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) report-2022, Lakshadweep topped with a 100 pc pendency rate, while Manipur stood second with 99.2 pc and Uttarakhand and Bihar at 99 pc each, followed by Odisha.
- The higher rate of pendency is attributed to the process of documentation by the police.

Child marriage cases come down in Odisha

- Even as the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) has pointed out a spurt in the number of missing children in Odisha, as per the Crime in India-2022 report, the number of child marriages has come down in the state.
- According to the report, the number of cases registered under The Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006 between 2021 and 2022 was 46.
- The number of child marriages continue to remain high if compared to the pre-pandemic period.
- In 2019, the number of cases registered under The Prohibition of Child Marriage Act was 22 and it was 24 in 2020.

Prof. Pravat Mohapatra, Prof. Bidyut Das Conferred Odisha Bigyan Academy Award

- Odisha Bigyan Academy, with the approval of the Science & Technology department, announced various awards for scientists for the years 2021 and 2022.
- Professor Pravat Kumar Mohapatra from Sambalpur and Professor Bidyut Kumar Das from SCB Medical College and Hospital in Cuttack will receive the 'Biju Patnaik Award' for Scientific Excellence for the years 2021 and 2022, respectively.

Odisha tops in Cyber Crime cases against Women under IT Act: NCRB

- Odisha witnessed modest improvement in its dismal record on crime against women in 2022, yet the state holds the top spot in cases related to cyber offences against women registered under the Information Technology Act in the same year.
- As per the latest 'Crime in India' report released by the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB), Odisha registered 23648 crime cases against women in 2022 as opposed to 31352 registered in 2021.
- Odisha was among the top five states registering maximum number of cases on the charges of assault on women with the intention to outrage the modesty of a woman victim.

Odisha to Host India's Largest Environmental Film Festival

- Odisha will host India's one and only environmental film festival, All Living Things Environmental Film Festival (ALT EFF)
- The film festival will be organised at Gajapati district, and near Berhampur.
- Gram Vikas is partnering with ALT-EFF to bring in-person screening of documentaries and short films, featuring Indian and international titles focused on environment, conservation and sustainability.
- Notably, actress Alia Bhatt's production house Eternal Sunshine Productions has teamed up with ALT EFF 2023 to use the power of cinema to address environmental topics.

Lifetime Achievement Award for Odisha-Born Transplant Surgeon Mukut Minz

- Odisha-born surgeon Mukut Minz was conferred with Lifetime Achievement award by PGIMER

Chandigarh during its recent 3-day summit to commemorate five decades of achievements in organ transplantation.

- He has performed over 3500 successful kidney transplant
- He mentored the Odisha government's plan to set up a kidney transplant unit at SCB Medical College and Hospital, Cuttack.
- In 2014, he was awarded the Odisha Gourav Samman by the government of Odisha for his contribution in the field of organ transplantation.
- He was also conferred with the Padma Shri for his contribution in medicine in 2017.

Odia Scientist discovers disease resistant Wild Okra

- A scientist from the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) in the state has discovered a new plant species of 'wild okra' that can be used for hybridisation to create a better variety having high disease resistance
- Till now 13 different species of wild okra have been discovered of which two are being harvested for consumption.
- The new species is the 14th variety of the plant species and has been named 'Abelmoschus Odishae' after the state from where the type specimens were originally collected.
- About the species
- The plant species is a perennial shrub up to 5 metre high with densely hispid prickly stem with retrorse hairs, large deep yellow flowers with around 8 (7-9) lanceolate epicalyx, ovoid to oblong bristly capsules, sub-reniform seeds with short, stout and non-spiral trichomes.
- The species also has a seeds viability of 95 per cent.

Chief Minister's assistance to Rescued Laborers

- Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik has given financial help of Rs 2 lakh each to four Odia laborers recently rescued from a partially-collapsed tunnel in Uttarakhand.
- The four workers, Raju Nayak, Dhiren Nayak, Bisheshwar Nayak, and Bhagaban Bhatra, reached Odisha from New Delhi via a special flight.
- The Chief Minister welcomed them at his residence, inquiring about their well-being and listening to their 17-day-long struggle inside the tunnel.
- Notably 5 workers from Odisha were saved from the tunnel.

AIPH University to Study on Anaemia in Odisha

- AIPH University plans a detailed study on different types of anaemia in different parts of Odisha, a region with high rates of underweight, stunting, wasting, and anaemia in children under five.
- In Odisha, anaemia in children aged 6-59 months rose from 45% (2015-16) to 64% (2019-21).
- Scheduled tribes had the highest prevalence at 73%.
- Stunting slightly decreased overall but remained high among scheduled tribe children (42%).

Maniabandha Pata handloom

- Khandua, also known as Maniabandi or Katak, represents a traditional ikat sari originating from Odisha.
- Women typically wear it during weddings, and there's a distinct variety worn by Jagannath.
- These garments often feature verses from the Gita Govinda.
- Specifically, the Kenduli Khandua, a unique type measuring 12 ft with 2 kani (each kani equivalent to the length of a hand), is offered to Jagannath.
- This serves as a special form of khandua adorned with stanzas and illustrations from the Gita Govinda.

Odisha's Padampur likely to get District Status soon

- A high-level site selection committee visited Padampur town and identified three different lands for the construction of a Collectorate for the proposed 'Padampur district'.
- The committee will submit its report to the Odisha Government, based on which the government will take a final call about site selection for the proposed Padampur Collectorate.

Odisha sees decline in cases of crime against women in 2022

- Odisha saw 24% decrease in cases of crime against women in 2022 compared to the previous year, according to the latest National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) annual crime report.
- Across India in 2022, the state stood fourth in rate of total crime against women at 103% after Haryana (118.7), Telangana (117), Rajasthan (115.1).
- Crime against children cases spiralled to 8,240 in 2022 compared to 7,899 in 2021 and 6,330 in 2020.

- There has also been a rise in cases of kidnapping and abduction in Odisha with 5,854 in 2022 compared to 5,625 in 2021 and 4,179 in 2020.
- The state is third in rate of kidnapping and abduction at 12.7%, after Haryana (13) and Assam (12.8).

Cabinet Nod for Amendment to Odisha Government Land Settlement Rules-1983

- The State Cabinet approved a proposal of the Revenue & Disaster Management department to amend the Odisha Government Land Settlement Rules-1983.
- This will help resolve the long pending land issues of Puri Municipality and wasteland lease for homestead purposes in Bhubaneswar and Jatni tehsils of Khurda district.

Transforming Keonjhar District into an Open-Air Elephant Safari Experience.

- The Keonjhar district has transformed into an unofficial open-air elephant safari due to the loss of natural habitat and a scarcity of food, leading elephants to venture into human settlements.
- Herds of 150 elephants are scattered across different areas of the district, having departed from their natural habitats in the jungles.

'Ama Odisha, Nabin Odisha' Scheme

- Funds allocated under the 'Ama Odisha, Nabin Odisha' scheme by the state government have been granted to a school that is no longer operational following its consolidation with a neighbouring school in the Pottangi block of Koraput district.
- The project intends to implement steps to improve rural infrastructure in order to expedite village growth and transformation.
- Rs 5 lakh was sanctioned under the plan to Sitampadu New Primary School in Sitampadu village, Ralegada panchayat, Pottangi block, notwithstanding its closure following merger.

Greywater Management Projects in Ganjam district

- Odisha's Ganjam district administration will implement the greywater management projects in all its urban local bodies (ULBs).
- The district has 17 ULBs, excluding Berhampur Municipal Corporation (BeMC).
- Greywater is wastewater from non-toilet plumbing systems such as hand basins, washing

- machines, showers and baths. Waterbodies become polluted when greywater flows into them.
- Around 65 per cent of total household wastewater is greywater.
 - The state has been a pioneer in managing blackwater (used water from household toilets) by establishing FSTP (faecal sludge treatment plant).

Koraput district to be developed into a holistic tourist destination.

- The Centre has come up with a plan to develop the Koraput district into a holistic tourist destination.
- This is to attract more domestic tourists under its Swadesh Darshan scheme
- Odisha is a part of the 15 states shortlisted to be developed as sustainable and responsible destinations under the Ministry of Tourism's Swadesh Darshan 2.0 programme
- The scheme will help develop tourism activities, site infrastructure, and sanitation at the identified tourism sites within the district.

Sunabeda Wildlife Sanctuary

- It is a wildlife sanctuary and a proposed tiger reserve located in the Nuapada district of Odisha, adjoining Chhattisgarh.
- It has a total area of 600 km²
- The sanctuary harbours a great diversity of wildlife habitats, with a vast plateau, multiple valleys, gorges and magnificent waterfalls. The sanctuary forms the catchment area of the Jonk River, over which a dam has been constructed to facilitate irrigation.
- The Indra nullah and Udanti River lies to the south of the sanctuary.
- The important vegetation of the site comprises dry deciduous tropical forest.

Odisha Writer gets 'Timepass Booker Puraskar'

- Writer Mahasweta Sahu has been selected for the 16th 'Timepass Booker Puraskar' for her short story manuscript "Octopusra Atma"
- Also, Saral Kumar Das will be conferred "Timepass Bahibandhu Samman" for his dedication to promote Odia literature and books.

- The prize will be presented during a literary festival and the winning manuscript will be published as a book.

'Mandi Chalo' Campaign

- Kisan Congress, the farmers' wing of the Congress party, will launch a month-long "Mandi Chalo Abhiyan" (march to mandi campaign)
- The farmers across the state will participate in the campaign to press their 17-point charter of demands.
- The Kisan Congress demanded an increase in paddy procurement price to Rs 2930 per quintal and ensured payment of minimum support price to them.
- Payment of Rs 600 per quintal as bonus is their another demand
- Their other demands include procurement of paddy discolored due to untimely rain, installation of CCTV cameras in every procurement center, preventing the rice millers from entering the mandis for any reasons other than procurement of paddy, increasing farm input subsidy by one and a half times, payment of compensation of Rs 25,000 to the farmers sustaining crop loss, waiver of crop loan and special incentives to the farmers.

Hindalco to set up Battery Foil Manufacturing facility

- Hindalco Industries has planned to significantly expand its manufacturing capacity of fine quality aluminium foil.
- This will be used in rechargeable batteries to serve the rapidly growing market for electric vehicles (EVs) and energy storage systems.
- The company is investing Rs.800 crore to build a new plant near Sambalpur in Odisha that will initially produce 25,000 tonnes of the resilient product which forms the backbone of Lithium-ion and Sodium-ion cells.
- The factory will be located alongside a 25 MW solar power plant, and can access additional solar energy from a 400 KV National Grid connection.



OPSC Current Affairs

**NATIONAL**

Ahead of the dedication of the Ram Temple in Ayodhya, PM Modi unveils the airport and station.

- Ahead of the Ram temple's consecration ceremony on January 22, Prime Minister Narendra Modi made a major trip to Ayodhya, Uttar Pradesh.
- A number of significant announcements and newly launched initiatives accompanied the visit, demonstrating a dedication to the region's overall development.

Textiles Ministry unveils 'Paat-Mitro' App for Jute Farmers

- The Ministry of Textiles, in its continuous efforts to support and empower jute farmers, has introduced the "Paat-Mitro" mobile application.
- Developed by The Jute Corporation of India Limited (JCI), this application is a significant step towards providing essential information about Minimum Support Prices (MSP) and agronomy to jute farmers. The launch took place during the 'Jute Symposium,' with Smt. Rachna Shah, Secretary, Ministry of Textiles, inaugurating the application, which is available in six languages.

On Republic Day in India, French President Emmanuel Macron will be present

- President Emmanuel Macron is scheduled to be the primary guest at the Republic Day celebrations in New Delhi, which is a monument to the long-lasting relationship between France and India.
- This is the sixth time that a French leader has graced this esteemed occasion, underscoring the importance of the two-way connection.

Govt Suggests 'Decriminalizing Medical Negligence' In New Criminal Law Bill

- Union Home Minister Amit Shah has announced a significant amendment to the criminal law bill that will exempt doctors from criminal prosecution in cases of death due to medical negligence.
- This move comes in response to concerns raised by the medical community and aims to alleviate the burden of criminal liability on healthcare professionals.

Parliament Passes Post Office Bill, 2023, Replacing 125-Year-Old Indian Post Office Act, 1898

- The Indian Parliament recently approved the Post Office Bill, 2023, marking a significant overhaul of the 125-year-old Indian Post Office Act, 1898.
- The new legislation aims to modernize and consolidate the legal framework governing post offices in India.

PM Narendra Modi Launches Second Edition of Kashi Time Sangamam in Varanasi

- On a vibrant Sunday in Varanasi, Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the second edition of Kashi Tamil Sangamam, a cultural extravaganza aimed at fostering the cultural ties between Varanasi and Tamil Nadu.
- During the event, PM Modi also flagged off the Kashi Tamil Sangamam Express, symbolizing the unity of the diverse cultures within India.

Defense Minister Flags in 'Mission Antarctica' By Himalayan Mountaineering Team

- In a momentous event on December 13, 2023, Raksha Rajya Mantri Shri Ajay Bhatt ceremoniously flagged in a team from the Himalayan Mountaineering Institute, Darjeeling, which successfully completed 'Mission Antarctica.'
- The expedition, initiated in 2021, was led by Group Captain Jai Kishan and comprised three trekkers. The apex of their achievement was the hoisting of the National Flag, an impressive 7,500 sq ft and weighing 75 kilograms, atop Mt Rhenock in Sikkim Himalayas at an astounding altitude of 16,500 feet.

India Participates in COP28's UN "Race to Resilience"

- India's participation in the UN's worldwide "Race to Resilience" programme is a major step towards tackling the problems caused by climate change.
- This choice, which was made public during the just finished COP28 conference in Dubai, demonstrates India's dedication to enhancing climate resilience in its metropolitan centres.

PM Inaugurates First Indian Art, Architecture & Design Biennale 2023 at Red Fort, Delhi

- The Prime Minister of India, Shri Narendra Modi, inaugurated the first Indian Art, Architecture & Design Biennale (IAADB) 2023 at the iconic Red Fort.
- The event also marked the launch of the 'Aatmanirbhar Bharat Centre for Design' and the student Biennale, Samunnati.

"Green Rising": An Initiative to Involve Youth in Important Environmental Projects

- UNICEF's Generation Unlimited and the Indian Ministry of Environment, Forests, and Climate Change together presented the "Green Rising" programme on December 8th at COP28.
- Inspired by the Mission Life movement, this ground-breaking programme, implemented through India's YuWaah campaign, has a particular emphasis on getting young people involved in meaningful environmental initiatives at the local level.

Gajraj System: Indian Railways' AI-Powered Elephant Protection System

- The "Gajraj system," an AI-based solution meant to stop elephant deaths on train tracks, has been implemented by Indian Railways, marking a groundbreaking step towards animal protection.
- In order to reduce the chance of collisions, a 700-kilometer stretch of forest regions is being monitored by this monitoring system, which notifies train pilots when elephants are present on the tracks.

"Jal Itihas Utsav" is organised in Delhi by the Ministry of Jal Shakti.

- The "Jal Itihas Utsav" was held on December 1, 2023, at Shamsi Talab, Jahaz Mahal in Mehrauli, Delhi, by the National Water Mission, which is part of the Department of Water Resources, River Development, and Ganga Rejuvenation, Ministry of Jal Shakti.
- The event's objectives were to increase public awareness about the preservation of water heritage sites, foster a sense of community ownership, encourage tourism, and aid in the restoration of these historic buildings.

Blood+: India's First On-Demand Blood Platform

- In a significant stride towards transforming healthcare in India, Blod.in has unveiled its groundbreaking healthcare software and logistics platform, Blod+.
- This innovation aims to revolutionize blood management and delivery, addressing the alarming issue of blood wastage in healthcare facilities across the country.

MoT Announces Competition for 2024's National Best Rural Homestays and National Best Tourism Villages

- The National Best Rural Homestay Competition and the National Best Tourism Village Competition 2024 have been announced by the Ministry of Tourism, Government of India, in an effort to promote sustainable development and rural tourism.
- These competitions, which build on the success of the 2023 edition where 25 villages were honoured for their excellence, are meant to boost rural economies and encourage community involvement.
- The comprehensive National Strategy and Roadmap for the Development of Rural Tourism in India includes this effort.

India Reaches Significant Environmental Goal: 33% of Emissions Are Initiated Earlier Than Expected

- Between 2005 and 2019, India successfully reduced its GDP emission intensity by 33%, meeting its aim 11 years ahead of schedule.
- The Third National Communication to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, a government report, details the country's significant advancement in severing the link between greenhouse gas emissions and economic growth.

Launching the "Gramme Manchitra" GIS App is the Ministry of Panchayati Raj.

- The Ministry of Panchayati Raj introduced technologies such as the GIS app "Gramme Manchitra" and mobile solution "mActionSoft" to enhance grassroots spatial planning and empower Gramme Panchayats.
- By making use of geospatial technology, these tools provide a single platform for planning and

visualising development projects, which makes it easier to create the Gramme Panchayat Development Plan (GPDP).

Govt Unveils 'Mera Gaon, Meri Dharohar' Project to Document Village Heritage

- Union Minister G. Kishan Reddy, responsible for culture, tourism, and the development of the North Eastern Region, announced a groundbreaking project in the Rajya Sabha on Thursday.
- The initiative, titled "Mera Gaon, Meri Dharohar" (MGMD), is set to spotlight the cultural richness embedded in villages across the nation.

PM Modi to Inaugurate of Eastern Dedicated Freight Corridor

- In alignment with the government's commitment to fortify the logistics sector, Prime Minister Narendra Modi is set to inaugurate the 402 km-long segment of the Eastern Dedicated Freight Corridor (DFC) on 18 December.

Anand Marriage Act implementation in Jammu and Kashmir

- By enacting the Anand Marriage Act, the Jammu and Kashmir government has made a major contribution to meeting a long-standing demand of the Sikh community.
- By giving Sikh marriage ceremonies official legal legitimacy, this act permits Sikh couples to register

their weddings under particular guidelines as opposed to using the Hindu Marriage Act.

The Emergency Response System (ERS) mobile app was released by NHAI.

- India's traffic laws are shaped by the Motor Vehicles Act of 1988 and the Central Motor Vehicle Rules of 1989, which are continuously amended to improve road safety.
- Enforcing traffic laws is essential to this, and it is mostly the duty of Union Territory administrations and State Governments.
- To discourage infractions and promote a safer environment for all road users, strict enforcement is essential.

Anurag Singh Thakur, Union Minister, Started the "MY Bharat" Campaign

- Anurag Singh Thakur, the Union Minister for Information and Broadcasting, recently spoke to young people following the MY Bharat campaign launch and expressed optimism about India's impressive advancements in the international arena.
- He highlighted the noteworthy advancements made in a number of areas and credited the government's initiatives for the accomplishment.
- This article explores the salient features emphasised by Minister Thakur, highlighting the direction of India's progress.



INTERNATIONAL

Argentina Rejects BRICS Membership under President Javier Milei

- Argentine President Javier Milei has officially declined the invitation to join the BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa) grouping of major emerging economies.
- The rejection was conveyed through letters sent to BRICS leaders, solidifying Argentina's decision to abstain from the bloc.
- The libertarian outsider, who assumed office recently after a significant electoral victory over traditional political parties, had pledged during his campaign not to align Argentina with BRICS.

Pakistan Successfully Tests Advanced Rocket System Fatah-II

- Islamabad, Pakistan: Pakistan's military successfully conducted a flight test of the indigenously developed guided multi-launch rocket system Fatah-II, showcasing a significant advancement in its missile capabilities.
- The system boasts a 400-kilometer range and advanced features, marking a major milestone for the country's defense program.

Bhutan Plans 1,000-sq. km. Green City on Assam Border, linking South to Southeast Asia

- Bhutan, a picturesque Himalayan kingdom, is set to embark on a transformative journey with the

announcement of its ambitious “Gelephu Smartcity Project.”

- The Bhutanese King, Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck, revealed the plans for a massive “international city” spanning over 1,000 sq. km. on the border with Assam.

TIWB launched Saint Lucia Program, with India as the Administration Partner

- Tax administration plays a crucial role in a nation’s economic development and stability. Recognizing the importance of collaboration in this domain, 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 significant program in Saint Lucia on 14th December 2023.

Myanmar Surpasses Afghanistan as World’s Leading Opium Source in 2023: UN Report

- Myanmar has emerged as the world’s largest source of opium in 2023, surpassing Afghanistan, according to a new report by the United Nations.
- This shift is attributed to a third consecutive year of expanding cultivation fueled by Myanmar’s civil war and a significant decline in opium cultivation in Afghanistan.

China unveils world’s first 4th-Generation Nuclear Reactor

- China has achieved a significant milestone in its quest to shift away from traditional coal-fired power plants and decrease its reliance on foreign technologies.
- Recently, the Shidao Bay nuclear power plant in eastern Shandong province commenced commercial operations, heralding the era of next-generation gas-cooled nuclear reactors.
- This development is crucial for China’s commitment to reducing carbon emissions and securing a sustainable energy future.

Indonesia’s Marapi Volcano Eruption

- Indonesia’s Mount Marapi, located in West Sumatra, recently erupted, leading to a tragic incident resulting in the loss of lives and the disappearance of several climbers.
- The eruption occurred on December 3, 2023, catching many by surprise as authorities scrambled to evacuate those in the vicinity.

Italy withdraws from China’s Belt and Road Project

- Italy has officially withdrawn from China’s ambitious Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) marking a significant departure from its previous stance as the only G7 nation to participate.
- This move comes more than four years after Italy initially joined the initiative in 2019 under the government of then Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte.
- The decision was long-anticipated and signals a strategic shift in Italy’s approach to its relationship with China and the broader global geopolitical landscape.

India resumes Venezuelan Crude Oil Imports, Explores Direct Deals

- Indian refiners, including Reliance Industries, have reinitiated the import of Venezuelan crude oil through intermediaries.
- The move comes in the wake of the temporary lifting of U.S. sanctions on Venezuela, opening avenues for direct deals between Indian companies and Venezuela’s state-owned oil firm, PDVSA.

India backs urgent Ceasefire in Israel-Gaza Conflict

- India voted in favor of a UN General Assembly (UNGA) resolution calling for an immediate humanitarian ceasefire in the Israel-Hamas conflict and the unconditional release of hostages.

Statue of Tamil icon ‘Thiruvalluvar’ unveiled in France

- On Sunday, December 10, a significant cultural milestone unfolded in the French town of Cergy with the inauguration of a statue dedicated to Thiruvalluvar, a revered cultural icon among Tamilians.
- This event holds special significance, emphasizing the enduring cultural ties between India and France.

Israel appoints Reuven Azar as New Ambassador to India with expanded Diplomatic role

- The Israeli government recently greenlit the appointment of Reuven Azar as the new Ambassador to India, underscoring his expansive role as the non-resident Ambassador to Sri Lanka and Bhutan as well. Azar’s nomination is part of a

larger cohort of 21 Heads of Missions cleared by Israel to assume their responsibilities soon.

prominent on the Governing Council for the term spanning 2024-28.

India's Uma Sekhar elected to Governing Council of UNIDROIT

- In a momentous occasion for India, Ms. Uma Sekhar achieved a remarkable victory by securing 45 out of 59 votes in the initial round of elections for the Governing Council of the International Institute for the Unification of Private Law (UNIDROIT) held in Rome, Italy.
- This historic win not only represents Ms. Sekhar's individual achievement but also elevates India to a

Angola Announces Departure from OPEC

- Angola, a significant oil-producing nation, has declared its decision to exit the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) with effect from January 1, 2024.
- This move follows the footsteps of Ecuador in 2020 and Qatar in 2019, reflecting a trend of nations with relatively small oil output distancing themselves from the influential oil-exporting organization.

GEOGRAPHY & ENVIRONMENT



Iridescent Clouds: Spotted

- Iridescent clouds, known as nacreous clouds, were spotted over parts of Scotland, northern England, and the West Midlands recently.
- The clouds, resembling mother of pearl, are known for their pastel light reflections during sunset and sunrise.
- This phenomenon occurs as sunlight diffracts around tiny ice crystals within the clouds, creating an effect similar to a thin layer of oil on water.
- Nacreous clouds are rare in the UK and are usually seen when cold air from the polar vortex temporarily hovers over the region.
- Iridescent clouds is diffraction, which occurs when small water droplets or small ice crystals scatter the sun's light.
- Larger ice crystals do not produce iridescence but can cause halos.

Polar Stratospheric Clouds: Captured Images

- Weather watchers have captured images of rare Polar stratospheric clouds over Scotland, northern England and the West Midland.
- Polar Stratospheric clouds (PSC) are also known as nacreous clouds or mother of pearl, due to their iridescence.
- These are formed in very cold conditions over Polar Regions and within the stratosphere, around 12-19 miles (19-31 km) high, far above our normal clouds.
- These clouds are made of smaller ice particles than those that form more common clouds.
- These small particles help to scatter light in a different way, which gives them their unique appearance
- PSCs typically make their first appearance in January.
- The frequency of these clouds is often a harbinger of ozone depletion, as they play a crucial role in stratospheric chemistry.
- PSCs provide a surface for chemical reactions where benign forms of chlorine are converted into reactive, ozone-destroying forms.

Volcano erupted in Iceland's Reykjavik

- A volcano erupted in Iceland's Reykjavik with lava fountains reaching high up in the air recently.
- In just the past two years, there have been four eruptions on the Reykjanes Peninsula, Iceland's most populated corner and home to its capital.
- Iceland volcano is an opening in the Earth's crust that allows molten rock, gases, and debris to escape to the surface.
- Movement of molten rock in the mantle, caused by thermal convection currents, coupled with gravitational effects of changes on the earth's surface (erosion, deposition, even asteroid impact and patterns of post-glacial rebound) drive plate tectonic motion and ultimately volcanism.

Katabatic Winds

- A surprising phenomenon has been observed in the Himalayas, where 'katabatic' winds are triggered when high temperatures affect high-altitude ice masses.
- This leads to cold air blowing to lower-altitude areas, potentially slowing down the effects of the global climate crisis in some regions.
- The study reveals that a temperature gap between air above the mountains and cooler air in contact with ice masses causes increased turbulent heat

exchange, leading to stronger cooling of the surface air mass.

- Anabatic Winds are upslope winds driven by warmer surface temperatures on a mountain slope than the surrounding air column.
- Katabatic winds are downslope winds created when the mountain surface is colder than the surrounding air and create a downslope wind.

Shaikh Hassan Khan climbed Mount Vinson

- Kerala government employee Shaikh Hassan Khan has climbed Mount Vinson.
- Mount Vinson is the highest mountain in Antarctica.
- It rises 4,892 metres (16,050 feet) above sea level.
- It is part of the Sentinel Range of the Ellsworth Mountains, near the Ronne Ice Shelf.
- There are five other tall mountains in the same area as Mount Vinson—the next five highest summits on the continent of Antarctica which are collectively referred to as Vinson Massif.
- It is located about 1,200 kilometres from the South Pole, one of the coldest places on Earth.
- Ellsworth Mountains are the mountain ranges in Antarctica.
- They are forming a 360 km (224 mi) long and 48 km (30 mi) wide chain of mountains in a north to south configuration.
- They are bisected by Minnesota Glacier to form the Sentinel Range to the north and the Heritage Range to the south.

New Scheme to expedite the exploration of Critical Minerals

- The Ministry of Mines has introduced a new scheme to expedite the exploration of critical and deep-seated minerals.
- Under this initiative, the ministry will directly sanction exploration projects to Notified Private Exploration Agencies (NPEAs).
- Additionally, these NPEAs are now permitted to bid for auctioning mineral blocks they have explored, a privilege previously unavailable to them.
- This decision aims to eliminate delays in project approvals, accelerate project execution, and encourage larger companies and international players to engage in exploration projects with NMET funding.
- Critical minerals such as copper, lithium, nickel, cobalt and rare earth elements are essential components in many of today's rapidly growing clean energy technologies i.e from wind turbines and electricity networks to electric vehicles.

Demand for these minerals is growing quickly as clean energy transitions gather pace.

Surat Diamond Bourse : World's Largest Corporate Office Hub

- Prime minister is set to inaugurate the world's largest corporate office hub, Surat Diamond Bourse.
- Surat Diamond Bourse is located in Khajod village, near Surat.
- It is the world's largest corporate office hub, taking over the erstwhile top position of
- It will also be a global centre for trading both rough and polished diamonds as well as jewellery.
- Buyers from all corners of the world will get a global platform to trade at the Surat Diamond Bourse.
- It is built on 35.54 acres of land at a cost of Rs 3,400 crore.
- It is the world's largest interconnected building, as it houses over 4,500 interconnected offices.
- The megastructure features 15 floors in addition to nine ground towers with office space ranging from 300 sq ft to 1 lakh sq ft.
- There is a central spine connecting the nine rectangular towers.
- The bourse will comprise a state-of-the-art 'Customs Clearance House' for Import-Export, a jewellery mall for retail jewellery business, and a facility for International Banking and Safe Vaults.
- It is the country's largest customs clearance house.
- The building has the capacity to house 4,200 traders from 175 countries who will come to Surat to buy polished diamonds.
- The building showcases a cutting-edge rooftop solar energy project, ensuring sustainability in common areas and employing a radiant cooling system.

Fault Line: Discovered on Canada's Vancouver Island

- A team of geologists, mineralogists, and Earth and ocean scientists affiliated with institutions in Canada, the U.S., and France recently discovered a 72-kilometer fault line on Canada's Vancouver Island.
- Fault Line is a line determined by the intersection of a geological fault and the earth's surface.
- A fault is a fracture or zone of fractures between two blocks of rock.
- This is caused by the stresses created as sections of a plate or two plates are moving in different directions.
- All faults are related to the movement of Earth's tectonic plates.

- The biggest faults mark the boundary between two plates.
- Faults allow the blocks to move relative to each other.
- This movement may occur rapidly, in the form of an earthquake, or it may occur slowly, in the form of creep.
- Faults may range in length from a few millimetres to thousands of kilometres, such as the San Andreas Fault in California and the Anatolian Fault in Turkey, both of which are visible from space.
- Most faults produce repeated displacements over geologic time.
- The fault surface can be horizontal, vertical or some arbitrary angle in between.
- Earth scientists use the angle of the fault with respect to the surface known as the dip and the direction of slip along the fault to classify faults.

Hatti Community: Protest for Scheduled Tribe (ST) Status to the Community

- Hatti community in Himachal Pradesh will organise a protest march on December 16 to press their demand for the implementation of a law giving the Scheduled Tribe (ST) status to the community.
- The Hattis are a close-knit community who take their name from their traditional occupation of selling home-grown crops, vegetables, meat, and wool at small-town markets known as 'haats'.
- Hatti men traditionally don a distinctive white headgear on ceremonial occasions.
- The Hatti homeland straddles the Himachal-Uttarakhand border in the basin of the Giri and Tons rivers, both tributaries of the Yamuna.
- The Tons marks the border between the two states, and the Hattis living in the Trans-Giri area in today's Himachal Pradesh and Jaunsar Bawar in Uttarakhand were once part of the royal estate of Sirmaur. Jaunsar Bawar was conquered by the British in 1814.
- The two Hatti clans, in Trans-Giri and Jaunsar Bawar, have similar traditions, and inter-marriages are common.
- They are governed by a traditional council called 'khumbli' which decides community matters.
- According to the 2011 census, members of the community numbered 2.5 lakh but at present population of the Hattis are estimated at around 3 lakhs.

Painganga River: Protest against a Proposed Dam Project

- Protests were staged against a proposed dam project on the Painganga river in the Vidarbha region of Maharashtra recently.
- Painganga River is the chief river of the Yavatmal district in Maharashtra and flows along the south-east boundaries of the district in a winding, meandering course.
- It originates in the Ajantha ranges in Aurangabad district in Maharashtra.
- It is a major tributary of the Wardha River, the other major river in the district.
- The Wardha River flows into the Wain Ganga River to form the Pranhita River, which finally joins the Godavari River.
- It is acutely deep-rooted and difficult to navigate.
- The total length of the river is 676 km.
- Major Tributaries: Include the Adan, Kas, Arunavati, Kayadhu, and Pus Rivers.
- The Painganga River gets flooded in the rainy and winter seasons and partially flooded in the summer.
- It provides irrigation to the Washim and Yavatmal districts in Maharashtra.
- There are two dams being constructed on the river, namely Upper Painganga and Lower Painganga.
- This dam is also known as Isapur Dam.

Mount Marapi: Erupted

- Indonesia's Mount Marapi in West Sumatra province erupted, spewing white-and-grey ash plumes for more than 3,000 metres (about 9,800 feet) into the air.
- Mount Marapi is located in West Sumatra.
- Its name means Mountain of Fire. With over 60 eruptions to its credit since the late 18th century, Marapi claims the title of the most active volcano in Sumatra.
- Pacific Ring of Fire also known as the Circum-Pacific Belt, is a path along the Pacific Ocean characterised by active volcanoes and frequent earthquakes.
- Its length is approximately 40,000 kilometres (24,900 miles).
- It traces boundaries between several tectonic plates—including the Pacific, Juan de Fuca, Cocos, Indian-Australian, Nazca, North American, and Philippine Plates.

International Container Transshipment Port in Great Nicobar Island

- The Union Minister for Ports, Shipping and Waterways (MoPSW) visited the site of the

proposed International Container Transshipment Port (ICTP) at Galathea Bay in Great Nicobar Island.

- ICTP is envisioned to be a transformative initiative aligning with the Maritime India vision 2030 as well as one of the key projects in the Amrit kaal Vision 2047.
- The ICTP is a major infrastructure project that aims to facilitate the transshipment of containers between different ports.
- A transshipment deepwater seaport facilitates the handling of large cargo vessels, featuring a deep water channel and expansive berth areas for efficient loading, unloading, and the seamless transfer of goods between ships at the port.
- The proposed ICTP at Galathea Bay, Great Nicobar Island, is strategically positioned just 40 nautical miles from the International shipping trade route.
- The ICTP aims to become a leading container transshipment port by leveraging its strategic location, natural water depth, and capacity for the transshipment of cargo from nearby ports.
- In India, nearly 75% of transshipped cargo is handled at ports outside the country.
- Colombo, Singapore and Klang handle more than 85% of this cargo with 45% of it handled at Colombo Port alone.
- India is banking on the strategic location of Galathea Bay for export-import trade as it lies on international shipping routes.
- The project is expected to generate forex savings, attract foreign direct investment, and boost economic activity at other Indian ports.
- It will also contribute to enhanced logistics infrastructure, employment generation, and increased revenue share.
- The development of this Mega Container Terminal is a part of the holistic development of Great Nicobar Island.
- The project has received environmental clearance from the Ministry of Environment, Forests & Climate Change (MoEF&CC).
- Stage 1 forest clearance has also been obtained for the project.
- The project is planned to be developed in four phases, with Phase 1 proposed to be commissioned in the year 2028 with a handling capacity of approximately 4 Million (twenty-foot equivalent units)TEUs.
- The handling capacity is expected to increase to 16 Million TEUs in the ultimate stage of development by 2058.

Gulf of Aden

- A U.S. Navy warship responded to a distress call from a commercial tanker in the Gulf of Aden that had been seized by armed individuals recently.
- Gulf of Aden is an extension of the Indian Ocean, tucked between the Arabian Peninsula and the African continent.
- The gulf is named after “Aden,” a port city on Yemen’s coast.
- It is bounded to the south by Somalia and the Socotra Islands (part of Yemen), to the north by Yemen, to the east by the Arabian Sea, and to the west by Djibouti.
- The gulf is connected to the Somali Sea to the south by the Guardafui Channel and to the Red Sea on the west by the Strait of Bab el Mandeb.

Gajraj Suraksha: Indian Railways new approach

- Indian Railways has introduced a cutting-edge technology named ‘Gajraj’ to prevent elephant accidents on railway tracks
- Gajraj Suraksha uses an AI-based algorithm and a network of sensitive optical fibre cables to detect elephants getting close to railway tracks.
- It aims to address the issue of elephant fatalities resulting from train accidents.
- Gajraj Suraksha senses pressure waves generated by the movement of elephants along the tracks.
- As elephants move, the optical fibres detect vibrations caused by their footsteps.
- These vibrations trigger signals within the optical fibre network, enabling the system to identify the presence of elephants up to 200 metres ahead of their arrival on the track.
- The OFC-based Intrusion Detection System works by sending alarms to station masters whenever movement is detected along the tracks.

Cyclone Michaung

- Cyclone Michaung is a tropical cyclone that is tracking northwest in the western Bay of Bengal.
- ‘Michaung’ is named after a suggestion provided by Myanmar. It means strength and resilience.
- The National Crisis Management Committee (NCCM) recently convened to assess the readiness of State governments and Central Ministries for the approaching cyclone ‘Michaung’ in the Bay of Bengal.
- The India Meteorological Department (IMD) reported the storm’s current location and projected path, indicating potential landfall on coastal Andhra Pradesh.

- The NCMC is a committee set up to coordinate and implement relief measures and operations in the wake of a natural calamity.
- The NCMC coordinates and oversees the response to major crises, emergencies, and disasters that may affect India.
- NCMC is headed by the Cabinet Secretary.

ECONOMICS



Estimated Tripling of Tax Collection during Modi's Ten-Year Governing

- Under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, it is anticipated that corporate and personal income tax receipts in India will surpass Rs 19 trillion within a decade.
- This significant expansion gives the government the leeway to enact tax policies that benefit the general populace.

Government initiatives to Boost Local EV Manufacturing

- The government is actively engaged in discussions with both domestic and international stakeholders to formulate a policy aimed at enhancing local manufacturing of electric vehicles (EVs).
- A senior government official emphasized the ongoing talks with various countries, including Italy and Korea, and stressed the policy's inclusivity for both domestic and foreign car manufacturers.

Robust Fiscal Management: Centre and States maintain Sub-7% GDP Fiscal Deficit

- In the first half of the fiscal year 2023-24 (H1Fy24), the combined fiscal scenario of the Centre and the States in India has remained resilient, with the gross fiscal deficit (GFD) staying below 7% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP).
- A recent study by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) sheds light on the fiscal landscape, highlighting the role of enhanced revenue mobilization and prudent financial management.

Foreign Exchange reserves soar to 20-month high, reaching \$616 Billion

- In a significant financial development, India's foreign exchange reserves witnessed a remarkable surge, reaching an impressive \$616 billion in the week concluding on December 15.
- This milestone marked the highest level since March 25, 2022, as per data disclosed by the Reserve Bank of India.

India pays the UAE in Rupees for the first time in history to purchase Crude Oil

- The third-biggest energy user in the world, India, recently made history by paying for crude oil it bought from the United Arab Emirates (UAE) in rupees for the first time.
- This step is considered a component of a larger plan to lower transaction costs, diversify the sources of oil supplies, and establish the Indian rupee as a competitive trade settlement currency.
- This effort has its roots in the Reserve Bank of India's July 2022 decision, which permitted importers to make payments in rupees and exporters to receive payments in local currencies.

November Trade Deficit drops to nearly \$21 Billion

- India's goods exports dropped by 2.83% to \$33.90 billion in November 2023 from \$34.89 billion in the same month the previous year, reflecting a downturn in the country's economy.
- According to government data issued by the Commerce Ministry, the trade imbalance showed a positive trend and shrank to \$20.58 billion as a result of this decline.

India and Oman Fast-Track Free Trade Agreement Negotiations in Boost to Economic Ties

- A team of officials from India's Department of Commerce is currently in Muscat, engaged in negotiations for a comprehensive free trade agreement (FTA) with Oman.
- The department has set an internal deadline to finalize the deal by the end of the month.

IMF Reclassifies India's Exchange Rate Regime: Stabilised Arrangement Amid Divergent Views

- The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has reclassified India's de facto exchange rate regime from "floating" to "stabilized arrangement" for the period December 2022 to October 2023.

- This shift comes after an Article IV review, where the IMF staff diverged from Indian authorities' perspective on exchange rate stability.

China Adopts 'One Province, One Policy' approach to Financial Risk Management

- China's National Financial Regulatory Administration, led by Li Yunze, is introducing a groundbreaking approach to tackle financial risks at the provincial level.
- This move comes in the wake of concerns about the country's economic struggles, exacerbated by the lingering effects of restrictive Covid Zero policies and a persistent property crisis.

Bharatmala Pariyojana Phase I expenditure reaches Rs 4.10 Trillion: update by Nitin Gadkari

- As of October 31, 2023, a total expenditure of Rs 4.10 lakh crore has been incurred under

Bharatmala Pariyojana Phase I (BPP-I), according to Union Road Transport and Highways Minister Nitin Gadkari.

- The minister addressed concerns raised by the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) regarding the increase in the cost of Phase I of the project.

Cabinet Approves Terms For 16th Finance Commission

- Recently, the Union Cabinet greenlit the terms of reference for the Sixteenth Finance Commission (SFC).
- In a press briefing on Wednesday, Information and Broadcasting Minister Anurag Singh Thakur revealed that the chairman and members of the SFC would be appointed "as soon as possible."
- The SFC is slated to submit its comprehensive report by October 31, 2025, covering a five-year period set to take effect on April 1, 2026.

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY



NASA will examine Asteriod "Apophis," which is coming Earthward on April 13, 2029

- NASA, the well-known space agency, has decided to explore another celestial body, Apophis, with its OSIRIS-REx spacecraft instead of using it for its most recent mission to the asteroid Benu.
- On April 13, 2029, this asteroid—named after the Egyptian god of chaos—is predicted to pass quite close to Earth, at a distance of 32,000 km. Scientists have a rare chance to learn important information about this 370-meter-diameter asteroid thanks to this incident.

Reliance Jio and IIT Bombay collaborate for Bharat GPT Program and Smart TV Operating System

- In a strategic partnership, Reliance Jio Infocomm, under the leadership of Chairman Akash Ambani, is set to launch the 'Bharat GPT' program in collaboration with the Indian Institute of Technology-Bombay.
- Ambani revealed the company's comprehensive plans, including the development of an operating system (OS) for smart TVs, signaling the evolution of Jio's vision into "Jio 2.0."

Indian Government warns people about Potential Smishing Risks

- The Indian government has released a warning about "Smishing," a novel and sophisticated scam.
- This word refers to a criminal technique that uses text messages to trick people into disclosing personal information. It is a mix of the terms "phishing" and "Short Message Service."

Accenture launches New Generative AI Studio in Bengaluru

- Accenture, a global leader in professional services, has taken a significant stride in the field of artificial intelligence (AI) with the establishment of its Generative AI Studio in Bengaluru, India.
- This cutting-edge facility is poised to become a central hub for the development and application of generative AI technologies, showcasing Accenture's commitment to advancing AI solutions for businesses.

PM Modi's speech is translated into Indian languages by Bhashini AI

- During a recent speech in Uttar Pradesh, Prime Minister Narendra Modi used a ground-breaking use of the AI-powered Indian language translation engine "Bhashini."

- The government-developed programme intends to promote communication among the nation's various language communities by facilitating real-time translation.

Ola's Bhavish Aggarwal unveils 'Made for India' Krutrim AI

- Krutrim SI Designs, the new artificial intelligence venture founded by Bhavish Aggarwal, co-founder of Ola, has introduced a family of multilingual AI models specifically tailored to address the distinctive requirements of the Indian ecosystem.
- The models, named Krutrim Pro, are designed to operate in 22 Indian languages, emphasizing cultural connect and accessibility at India-first cost structures.

India successfully Flight Tests Indigenous High-Speed Flying-Wing UAV

- The Defence Research and Development Organization (DRDO) recently achieved a significant milestone by successfully conducting a flight trial of the Autonomous Flying Wing Technology Demonstrator, an indigenous high-speed flying-wing Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV).
- This successful demonstration places India in an elite group of countries that have mastered the controls for flying wing technology.

Genrobotics, a Kerala-Based startup, places Third in the world AI Summit for Indian Startups

- A Kerala-based business called Genrobotics has become a leader in the use of artificial intelligence (AI) to social transformation.
- Being named one of the top three AI companies in India at the Global Partnership on Artificial Intelligence (GPAI) Summit 2023 brought the company a great deal of notoriety.

Google announces India-First AI-powered experience for Maps

- Google Maps, a ubiquitous navigation tool, is set to undergo a transformative upgrade in India with a host of new features leveraging artificial intelligence (AI).
- Miriam Karthika Daniel, Vice President of Google Maps Experiences, unveiled these innovations, emphasizing the goal of providing accessible and useful information about the real world to users.

On January 1, 2024, ISRO will launch the first X-ray polarimeter satellite in India

- The Indian Space Research Organisation, or ISRO, has been making great progress in space exploration, and another ground-breaking mission is scheduled to launch in 2024.
- With the accomplishments of the Aditya-L1 and Chandrayaan-3 missions, ISRO is preparing for the XPoSat mission, which will be its newest endeavour.
- This mission, which is slated to launch on January 1, 2024, will be India's first venture into polarimetry, a field that is essential to understanding black holes and other astronomical phenomena that release X-rays.

Mengxiang embarks on a groundbreaking voyage to explore the Earth's mantle

- Mengxiang, China's innovative ocean drilling vessel, has been unveiled, marking a significant advancement in scientific research.
- The lofty aim of the vessel, which was developed by the China Geological Survey in conjunction with 150 research institutes and industries, is reflected in its Chinese name, "dream."
- The Mengxiang is humanity's first expedition into this unexplored region as it seeks to explore Earth's crust and unravel the secrets of the mantle.

China and Egypt collaboratively launch MisrSat-2 Satellite

- China and Egypt's joint efforts have advanced significantly with the successful launch of the MisrSat-2 satellite.
- This, developed and assembled together by the two countries, is a turning point in their developing space collaboration.
- The Long March-2C carrier rocket was used to launch the satellite, which was manufactured in Egypt with assistance from China, from the Jiuquan Satellite Launch Centre in northwest China.

"AI Alliance" launched by IBM and Meta to Advance Open-Source AI Development

- Meta and IBM have formed the AI Alliance, which is a noteworthy advancement for the artificial intelligence (AI) field.

- This is an attempt to differentiate them from rivals like Google, Microsoft, and Open AI by promoting a "open-science" approach to AI development.
- The main point of contention in this argument centres on whether AI technology should be created in a way that is publicly available or kept proprietary, bringing up issues related to safety, profit sharing, and regulatory impact.

Fusion Milestone: Japan Unveils JT-60SA, the World's Largest Experimental Nuclear Fusion Reactor

- In a historic moment for the field of nuclear fusion research, the JT-60SA, the world's largest and most advanced experimental nuclear fusion reactor has

officially commenced operations in Japan's Ibaraki Prefecture.

- Developed as a collaborative effort between the European Union and Japan, the JT-60SA represents a significant step forward in harnessing the potential of nuclear fusion as a clean and sustainable energy source.
- As the world grapples with the pressing need for sustainable energy solutions, the inauguration of the JT-60SA serves as a beacon of hope in the quest for harnessing nuclear fusion for practical energy generation.
- While challenges persist, the collaborative efforts between nations underscore the collective determination to unlock the transformative potential of nuclear fusion and pave the way for a cleaner, brighter future.

DEFENCE AND SECURITY



Paramilitary Forces embrace 'Sandes App' for Secure Official Commute

- In a strategic move aimed at bolstering data security and prioritizing indigenous technology, paramilitary forces are set to transition to the 'Sandes App' for all official communication and document sharing in the new year.
- This shift underscores the growing importance of safeguarding sensitive information and ensuring secure messaging platforms within security organizations.

Defence Secretary opens Bengaluru's HAL Aero Engine R&D Centre

- On December 29, 2023, Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) at Bengaluru, Karnataka's Aero Engine Research and Development Centre (AERDC) held the grand opening of a new design and test facility by Defence Secretary Shri Giridhar Aramane.
- Two strategic engines are among the several new engines that the AERDC is actively designing and developing.

India unveils "Barracuda," the Fastest Solar Electric Boat in the Country

- At the Navgathi Yard in Panavally, Alappuzha, India presented "Barracuda," the country's fastest solar electric boat, marking a significant advancement in sustainable maritime technology.
- The innovative ship, called "Saur Shakthi," is the result of a partnership between the eco-marine tech companies Navalt and Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Ltd.

- The Barracuda represents clean and efficient energy use and India's dedication to a more environmentally friendly marine future.

India's Akash Missile Achieves Global First: Engages Four Targets Simultaneously at 25km

- In a groundbreaking display of technological prowess, India has achieved a global first by demonstrating the capability of its indigenous Akash missile system to engage four aerial targets simultaneously at a range of 25 kilometers.
- The Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) proudly announced this historic achievement, highlighting India's unique position as the first country to possess such a capability within a single firing unit.

India, Vietnam Armies Start 11-Day Hanoi Exercise

- The Indian and Vietnamese Armies have initiated an 11-day military exercise in Vietnam, commencing on December 11.
- This collaborative endeavor, named "VINBAX-23," reflects the deepening strategic partnership between the two nations and is a response to shared concerns over China's assertive actions in the South China Sea.

Indian Army Organizes 'Honour Run' in Delhi to Commemorate Kargil War Victory

- In a tribute to the historic military triumph during the Kargil War, the Indian Army orchestrated the 'Honour Run - Indian Army Veteran's Half Marathon' in Delhi on December 10, 2023.
- The event, conducted under the theme 'Honour Run,' aimed to foster a stronger connection between the Indian Army, veterans, and the public, especially the youth. Participants from diverse backgrounds paid homage to the bravehearts, showcasing the nation's caliber, potential, and energy.

In Andhra Pradesh, the Indian Air Force successfully tests the "SAMAR" air defence missile system

- The Indian Air Force (IAF) has announced with pride the successful test fire of its Surface to Air Missile for Assured Retaliation (SAMAR) air defence missile system, marking a significant victory for its domestic design and development capabilities.
- This achievement is a significant turning point in the IAF's strategic self-reliance aspirations.

At DSCSC Sri Lanka, Indian Armed Forces officers received the "Golden Owl" award

- Three Indian Armed Forces officers enrolled in the prestigious Command and Staff Course at Defence Services Command and Staff College (DSCSC) in Sri Lanka have demonstrated exceptional performance and have been awarded the coveted "Golden Owl" award for their great work.
- The award, which was given by President Ranil Wickremesinghe of Sri Lanka, honours their remarkable accomplishments in analytical abilities, strategic thinking, and leadership potential.

Biannual "Prasthan" exercise by the Indian Navy is held off the coast of Mumbai

- The Indian Navy recently finished a two-phase, extensive exercise called "Prasthan" in the Offshore Development Area off the coast of Mumbai, working with a number of defence, state, and civil organisations.

- This exercise, which is carried out every six months, is essential for verifying and improving policies and protocols meant to handle different emergencies that could occur on oil production sites.

A tabletop exercise is organised by the Indian Army to empower women officers in ASEAN.

- The Indian Army recently held a table-top exercise (TTX) for women officers from the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN), which was a significant step towards developing gender inclusion and boosting the capabilities of women military personnel in peacekeeping operations.
- This exercise is a part of the continuing cooperative military training programmes between ASEAN member states and India. It took place at the Manekshaw Centre in New Delhi from December 4 to 8.

The Indian Navy named its first female commanding commander of a warship.

- By designating a woman as the first commanding officer of a naval vessel, the Indian Navy has accomplished a historic first in a decision that is in line with the revolutionary concept of "all roles-all ranks."
- This declaration was delivered at a news conference before to Navy Day by Navy Chief Admiral R Hari Kumar.

Indian Naval Ship Sumedha Makes Inaugural Arrival at Port Lamu, Kenya

- As part of its ongoing long-range deployment to Africa, the Indian Naval Ship Sumedha made a historic arrival at Port Lamu, Kenya on 09 December 2023.
- This visit is significant as it marks the first port call by any Indian Naval Ship at the recently developed port in Kenya, showcasing the growing maritime collaboration between India and Kenya.

SPORTS



Mumbai Team's Owner in Indian Street Premier League is Amitabh Bachchan

- Legendary actor Amitabh Bachchan disclosed on Monday that he will be the owner of the Mumbai squad in the future Indian Street Premier League (ISPL) in a ground-breaking revelation.
- The first-ever Indian Super League (ISPL), a tennis ball T10 cricket competition played in a stadium, is scheduled to begin in Mumbai on March 2 and run through March 9.

In Guwahati, Maharashtra wins the women's title events while AAI wins the men's

- The 75th Inter State-Inter Zonal Badminton Championship was held in Guwahati, where Maharashtra won the women's team event in an incredible display of ability and perseverance.
- The Badminton Association of India hosted the competition, which saw Maharashtra's women's team win 3-0 to secure the title.

National Sports Awards 2023: Check Complete List of Winners

Major Dhyan Chand Khel Ratna Award 2023

Recipient	Sport
Shri Rankireddy Satwik Sai Raj	Badminton
Shri Chirag Chandrashekhar Shetty	Badminton

Arjuna Awards 2023

Recipient	Sport
Ms. Aditi Gopichand Swami	Archery
Shri Ojas Pravin Deotale	Archery
Ms. Parul Chaudhary	Athletics
Shri Sreeshankar M	Athletics
Shri Mohameed Hussamuddin	Boxing
Shri Mohammed Shami	Cricket
Ms. R Vaishali	Chess
Ms. Divyakriti Singh	Equestrian Dressage
Shri Anush Agarwalla	Equestrian
Ms. Diksha Dagar	Golf
Ms. Pukhrambam Sushila Chanu	Hockey
Shri Krishan Bahadur Pathak	Hockey
Ms. Ritu Negi	Kabaddi
Shri Pawan Kumar	Kabaddi
Ms. Nasreen	Kho-Kho
Ms. Pinki	Lawn Bowls
Ms. Esha Singh	Shooting
Shri Aishwarya Pratap Singh Tomar	Shooting
Shri Harinder Pal Singh Sandhu	Squash
Ms. Ayhika Mukherjee	Table Tennis
Ms. Antim	Wrestling
Shri Sunil Kumar	Wrestling
Ms. Naorem Roshibina Devi	Wushu
Ms. Sheetal Devi	Para Archery
Shri Illuri Ajay Kumar Reddy	Blind Cricket

Ms. Prachi Yadav	Para Canoeing
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Dronacharya Award for Outstanding Coaches in Sports and Games 2023

Recipient	Sport
Shri Lalit Kumar	Wrestling
Shri R. B. Ramesh	Chess
Shri Maheveer Prasad Saini	Para Athletics
Shri Shivendra Singh	Hockey
Shri Ganesh Prabhakar Devrukhkar	Mallakhamb

For the Lifetime Category

Recipient	Sport
Shri Jashkirat Singh Grewal	Golf
Shri Bhaskaran E	Kabaddi
Shri Jayanta Kumar Pushilal	Table Tennis

Dhyan Chand Award for Lifetime Achievement in Sports and Games 2023

Recipient	Sport
Ms. Manjusha Kanwar	Badminton
Shri Vineet Kumar Sharma	Hockey
Ms. Kavitha Selvaraj	Kabaddi

Women's Cricket: India wins first Test against Australia to complete Historic feat

- India Women's Test cricket's first "home season" in 28 years came to an end on December 24 in Mumbai when they defeated Australia in a historic first-ever Test match.
- The victory was a huge accomplishment for the Indian team and the culmination of a season filled with excellent bat and ball play.

With outstanding performances, Djokovic and Sabalenka win the ITF World Champion titles for 2023

- The International Tennis Federation has designated Novak Djokovic and Aryna Sabalenka the 2023 ITF World Champions, a befitting tribute to their extraordinary accomplishments on the tennis court.
- With their outstanding skill and consistency throughout the year, both athletes were awarded this esteemed title.
- Specifically, Djokovic broke the previous record by winning the ITF World Champion title eight times.

U-19 Asia Cup, Bangladesh beat UAE to lift Trophy

- In a fantastic cricket match, Ashiqur Rahman Shibli helped Bangladesh's Under-19 team win a big tournament called Under-19 Asia.
- Shibli did amazingly well with his bat, scoring a second century in five matches, leading Bangladesh to an impressive win over UAE. Let's break down the exciting game.

Italy clinches Admiral's Cup 2023 at Indian Naval Academy

- The 12th edition of the eagerly awaited Admiral's Cup Sailing Regatta concluded at Ettikulam Beach, INA, Ezhimala.
- The event concluded with a glittering closing ceremony, celebrating the triumphs and sportsmanship displayed by sailors from around the world.

Vijay Hazare Trophy: Harshal bowls Rajasthan to victory for Haryana

- At the Saurashtra Cricket Association Stadium in Rajkot, Haryana produced a historic upset by winning the 2023 Vijay Hazare Trophy.
- They defeated Rajasthan by 30 runs in the summit match to claim their first-ever trophy.
- With their undefeated campaign throughout the competition, Haryana demonstrated their

dominance and the triumph made it one of the best campaigns in the history of Indian domestic cricket.

Vaishali Rameshbabu becomes Grandmaster, creating history with Brother Praggnanandhaa

- Vaishali Rameshbabu, a 22-year-old chess player from India, has recently earned the title of Grandmaster at the IV El Llobregat Open in Spain.
- This achievement makes her only the third woman from India to become a Grandmaster, following in the footsteps of Koneru Humpy and Harika Dronavalli.
- Her victory over Turkish FM Tamer Tarik Selbes was pivotal in crossing the 2500 FIDE rating threshold required for the Grandmaster title.

Vidya Pillai wins the 6-Red World Snooker Championship

- Days before turning 46, seasoned cueist Vidya Pillai won the IBSF 6-Red Snooker World Championship in Doha, Qatar, marking a significant turning point in her remarkable career. With a dominant performance throughout the event, the Bengalurean emerged victorious 4-1 against her fellow countrywoman Anupama Ramachandran in the final match.

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In the 25-meter rapid fire final of the ISSF World Cup, Anish Bhanwala became the first Indian shooter to win a medal

- As the first shooter from India to win a medal in the men's 25-meter Rapid Fire event at the ISSF World Cup Final, Anish Bhanwala made history.
- This achievement was greater than that of previous Indian shooters who qualified for the final but were not successful in taking home a medal, such as Vijay Kumar in 2009 and Gurpreet Singh in 2015.

Ultimate Kho Kho Season 2 will premiere in Odisha on December 24, 2023

- Following up on the spectacular success of its first edition, Ultimate Kho Kho (UKK) is prepared to dazzle spectators with its grand second edition, which is slated to begin on December 24, 2023, and end on January 13, 2024.
- This explosive athletic event is set to take place at the Jawaharlal Nehru Indoor Stadium in Cuttack, Odisha, providing millions of fans who have been waiting impatiently for its return with thrills and enjoyment.

Hockey Punjab Wins 13th Hockey India Senior Men National Championship 2023

- In a thrilling final match, Hockey Punjab emerged victorious over Hockey Haryana to clinch the gold medal at the 13th Hockey India Senior Men National Championship 2023.
- The tournament was held from November 17 to 28, 2023, at the Mayor Radhakrishnan Hockey Stadium in Chennai, Tamil Nadu.



APPOINTMENTS

Santosh Jha assumes role as India's New Envoy to Sri Lanka

- India's diplomatic ties with Sri Lanka have taken a new turn with the appointment of Santosh Jha as the country's new High Commissioner.
- In a significant ceremony held in Colombo on Friday, Jha officially assumed charge and presented his credentials to President Ranil Wickremesinghe.

Parama Sen appointed Part-Time Member of PFRDA Board, filling all three vacancies

- In a recent development, Parama Sen, Additional Secretary in the Department of Expenditure at the Finance Ministry, has been appointed as a part-time member of the Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority (PFRDA).
- This appointment completes the trio of part-time members on the PFRDA board.

Indian-origin Samir Shah to lead BBC Board

- The U.K. government has selected Samir Shah to serve as the new chair of the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC). A 71-year-old media executive, Shah was born in Aurangabad and immigrated to the U.K. in 1960.
- With over four decades of experience in the media industry, Shah has held various positions, including a stint as a non-executive director at the BBC.

Jithesh John assumes role as IBBI Executive Director

- In a recent announcement, the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India (IBBI) confirmed that Jithesh John, a seasoned Indian Economic Service Officer from the 2001 batch, has assumed the position of Executive Director.
- This development marks a significant milestone in the leadership of IBBI.

Reuven Azar Appointed as Israel's New Ambassador to India

- In a significant diplomatic development, the Israeli government, on December 17, gave its nod to the appointment of Reuven Azar as the new Ambassador to India. Mr. Azar, currently serving as the Ambassador of Israel to Romania, will also take on the role of the non-resident Ambassador to Sri Lanka and Bhutan.
- His appointment is part of a broader initiative by the Israeli government to designate 21 new Heads of Missions. The seasoned diplomat brings a wealth of experience to his new role, having served in various key positions over nearly three decades.

Kanchan Devi Becomes First Woman Director General Of ICFRE

- Kanchan Devi, 1991-batch Indian Forest Service Officer from the Madhya Pradesh cadre, has been appointed as the Director General (DG) of the Indian Council of Forestry Research Education (ICFRE).
- This marks a historic milestone, with Kanchan becoming the first woman officer to ascend to this esteemed position within the premier council operating under the Union Ministry of Environment, Forest, and Climate Change.



AWARDS

Oscar Nominations 2024: Barbie, Oppenheimer, Killers of the Flower Moon

- The Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences recently unveiled the highly anticipated nominations for the 96th Oscars across ten categories. Greta Gerwig's 'Barbie' emerged as a frontrunner with five nominations, while Christopher Nolan's 'Oppenheimer' secured nods in three categories, including Makeup and Hairstyling, Sound, and Original Score. Unfortunately, no Indian film made the shortlist this year.

Bengaluru Airport's T2 recognized among UNESCO's 'Most Beautiful Airports'

- In a recent announcement from UNESCO's Prix Versailles 2023, Bengaluru's Kempegowda International Airport (KIA) Terminal 2 (T2) has

achieved global acclaim, being recognized as one of the 'world's most beautiful airports.'

- The world judges panel, chaired by renowned fashion designer Elie Saab, bestowed this honor, making it the sole Indian airport to receive such esteemed recognition.

2022 and 2023 SASTRA Ramanujan Awards Announced

- The University of California, Berkeley mathematicians Yunqing Tang and Ruixiang Zhang were awarded the SASTRA-Ramanujan Awards for 2022 and 2023 in a distinguished ceremony held at the SASTRA headquarters in Kumbakonam.
- Established by SASTRA in 2005, the prizes recognise those under 32 who have made outstanding contributions to mathematics.

Leif Erikson Lunar Prize is awarded to ISRO for its Chandrayaan-3 Moon Mission.

- The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) has won the esteemed Leif Erikson Lunar Prize, setting new records yet again.
- This prestigious award, given by the Husavik Museum, is evidence of ISRO's continuous dedication and significant contributions to lunar exploration.
- This award is centred around ISRO's ground-breaking Chandrayaan-3 mission, an endeavour that has greatly advanced our comprehension of astronomical secrets.

NTPC Kanti Receives FICCI Water Award 2023 for Industrial Water Use Efficiency

- In a notable achievement, NTPC Kanti has been bestowed with the 11th Edition of FICCI Water Award 2023 under the "Industrial Water Use Efficiency" category.

- The prestigious accolade was presented during the inaugural event of the 9th Edition of India Industry Water Conclave held at FICCI Federation House in New Delhi.

Israeli film 'Children of Nobody' Wins Golden Bengal Tiger Award

- The 29th Kolkata International Film Festival (KIFF) concluded with a momentous highlight as the Israeli film 'Children of Nobody' secured the prestigious Golden Royal Bengal Tiger Award for Best Film. Inspired by a true story, this compassionate Israeli drama sheds light on the often unnoticed and uncared-for individuals on the periphery of society.

Sahitya Akademi Awards 2023 Winners Name List

Category	Language	Awardees
Poetry	Dogri	Vijay Verma
	Gujarati	Sandeep Joshi
	Kannada	Lakshmesh Tolpadi
	Kashmiri	Manshoor Banhali
	Konkani	Mahabaleshwar Sail
	Maithili	Basukinath Jha
	Manipuri	Sorokhaibam Gambhini
	Rajasthani	Gaje Singh Rajpurohit
	Sanskrit	Arun Ranjan Mishra
Novel	English	Neelum Saran Gour
	Hindi	Sanjeev
	Malayalam	E.V. Ramakrishnan
	Marathi	Kusumkhatri Rana
	Punjabi	Swarnjit Savi
Short Stories	Urdu	Sadiqua Nawab Saher
	Assamese	Pranavjyoti Deka
	Bengali	Swapnamoy Chakraborti
	Bodo	Vinod Sona Minj
	Santali	Taraceen Baskey (Turia Chand Baskey)
Essays	Telugu	T. Pattabhi Satyam
	Nepali	Juddhar Rana
	Odia	Ashutosh Parida
Literary Study	Sindhi	Vinod Asudani
	Malayalam	E.V. Ramakrishnan

Poonam Khetrapal Singh honored with Bhutan's National Order of Merit

- In a notable recognition of her outstanding contributions to public healthcare services in Bhutan, Dr. Poonam Khetrapal Singh, the Regional Director of the World Health Organisation (WHO) South-East Asia, has been honored with Bhutan's National Order of Merit (NOM) Gold Medal.
- The prestigious award was presented by Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck, the Druk Gyalpo (dragon king) of Bhutan, during the celebration of Bhutan's 116th National Day on December 17, 2023, in Thimphu, Bhutan.

President Droupadi Murmu awards Crompton for Energy Conservation 2023

- Crompton Greaves Consumer Electricals Ltd. (CGCEL), a leading player in India's consumer electrical industry, has been honored with the prestigious National Energy Conservation Award 2023.
- The recognition was bestowed by the President of India, Droupadi Murmu, and the Ministry of Power, represented by the Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE), on the occasion of National Energy Conservation Day.

UNESCO Awards Spotlight Indian Heritage Conservation Efforts

- The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) have recognized four Indian projects for their outstanding contributions to cultural heritage conservation in the Asia-Pacific region.
- This prestigious recognition reflects India's commitment to preserving its rich past for future generations.

Poet Sukrita Paul Kumar wins Rabindranath Tagore Literary Prize for 'Salt & Pepper'

- The renowned Rabindranath Tagore Literary Prize has named poet-critic Sukrita Paul Kumar as its sixth recipient for her book, "Salt & Pepper: Selected Poems".
- This prestigious award recognizes outstanding literary work from around the globe, promoting world peace, literature, art, education, and human rights.
- At the award ceremony, Kumar received a cash prize of USD 5,000, a Tagore statue, and a

certificate acknowledging her significant contribution to literature.

Afghan NGO receives International Gender Equality Honor by Finland

- Finland, a global champion of gender equality, recently conferred the International Gender Equality Prize for 2023 to the Afghan Women Skills Development Center, recognizing their unwavering commitment to promoting and safeguarding the rights of women in Afghanistan.

Javed Akhtar to receive Padmapani Lifetime Achievement award at Ajanta-Ellora Film Festival

- The veteran lyricist-screenwriter Javed Akhtar is set to be honored with the Padmapani Lifetime Achievement Award at the upcoming Ajanta-Ellora Film Festival.
- This recognition celebrates his remarkable contributions to the Indian film industry, including iconic works like 'Zanjeer,' 'Deewar,' 'Sholay,' 'Don,' 'Kala Patthar,' and 'Mr India.'
- The award ceremony will take place on January 3, 2024, marking the opening day of the ninth edition of the festival.

Noted Hindi Writer Pushpa Bharati to receive 33rd Vyas Samman

- The literary world is set to celebrate as the 33rd Vyas Samman, 2023, is announced to honor the accomplished Hindi writer Pushpa Bharati for her 2016 memoir, "Yaadein, Yaadein aur Yaadein."
- This prestigious award is bestowed by the KK Birla Foundation, recognizing outstanding contributions to Hindi literature.

Indian Scientist Dr. Hemachandran Ravikumar receives Karmaveer Chakra Medal-2023

- In a momentous ceremony on Nov 27, 2023, in New Delhi, Dr. Hemachandran Ravikumar was honored with the Karmaveer Chakra Medal and Rex Karmaveer Global Fellowship by ICONGO in collaboration with the United Nations, in recognition of his exceptional contributions to R&D in Physical & Bio-Science and Microbiological Studies.

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

- Kabir Bedi was awarded the "Order of Merit of the Italian Republic" (Merito della Repubblica Italiana), the country's highest honour awarded to civilians, at a private ceremony held in Mumbai.
- This award, the most prestigious Italian honorific one, ultimately recognizes his unconditional feeling and passionate dedication to Italy.
- The "Order of Merit of the Italian Republic" stands as a testament to Italy's appreciation for those who have made outstanding contributions to society, embodying the nation's values of merit and excellence.

Ban Ki-moon Honored with 2023 Diwali 'Power of One' Award at UN

- Former UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, along with three distinguished diplomats, was honored at the annual 'Diwali Power of One Awards.'
- This prestigious ceremony, often hailed as the 'Oscars of Diplomacy,' celebrated their selfless contributions to shaping a more perfect, peaceful, and secure world.

Dr. Atul Shah's Game-Changing Innovation for Leprosy Care Earns Global Recognition

- Dr. Atul Shah, a plastic surgeon, has been honored with the 2023 REACH Game Changing Innovator award for his groundbreaking contribution to leprosy care.
- Three decades ago, Dr. Shah devised a simple surgery technique, 'One in Four Lasso,' to address deformities in leprosy patients.
- His journey took a transformative turn when he observed the challenges of managing unhealed foot wounds.

Prashant Agrawal receives National Award for 'Best Personality-Empowerment of Differently-abled'

- In a ceremony organized by the Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities, Prashant Agrawal, the President of Narayan Seva Sansthan, was honored with the prestigious National Award for 'Best Personality-Empowerment of Differently-abled.'
- The award was presented by President Draupadi Murmu at Vigyan Bhavan, New Delhi. The event highlighted Agrawal's commitment to the cause of disability empowerment.

Time Magazine names Lionel Messi 'Athlete of the Year' for 2023

- Argentina's football icon, Lionel Messi, has been named Time magazine's Athlete of the Year for 2023.
- This prestigious honor comes on the heels of Messi's historic eighth Ballon d'Or win, solidifying his status as one of the greatest footballers of all time.
- Beyond individual accolades, Messi's impact has transcended the football pitch, notably through his transformative move to Inter Miami, a Major League Soccer (MLS) club in the United States.

Federal Bank titled "Bank of the Year 2023" in India: The Banker

- In a momentous achievement, Federal Bank, a prominent financial institution, has been awarded the prestigious title of "Bank of the Year (India)" by The Banker, a renowned publication under the Financial Times umbrella.
- This accolade, one of the few global awards recognizing banks on a worldwide scale, reflects Federal Bank's exceptional commitment to innovation, customer-centric services, and its outstanding contributions to the banking industry in the past year.

Top French civilian honour for ISRO Scientist VR Lalithambika

- In a momentous recognition of her significant contributions to space cooperation between France and India, Lalithambika VR, a distinguished scientist and former Director of the Human Spaceflight Programme at the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO), was honored with the prestigious 'Légion d'Honneur.'
- The award was conferred upon her by Thierry Mathou, the Ambassador of France to India, in a ceremony held in Bengaluru.
- Lalithambika VR, aged 60, played a pivotal role in fostering collaboration between the French National Space Agency CNES and ISRO. She received acclaim for her instrumental role in the signing of the first joint agreement in 2018, focusing on human spaceflight and, specifically, the field of space medicine.

Odisha Pavilion bags award at IITF-2023

- The India International Trade Fair (IITF-2023) concluded on a triumphant note on November 27 at Pragati Maidan, New Delhi.

- Among the standout highlights was the Odisha Pavilion, which not only captivated visitors from the outset but also clinched the prestigious gold medal for “Excellence in Display” in the State Pavilion category.

NTPC Bongaigaon Secures Double Victory At Greentech Environment Award 2023

- NTPC Bongaigaon, a key player in the power generation sector, has recently garnered significant acclaim for its exemplary contributions to Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and Environment Protection.
- The power station proudly received two prestigious awards from the Greentech Foundation, underscoring its commitment to sustainable practices and social responsibility.



OBITUARIES

Dr. V Mohini Giri: A Champion for Women’s Rights Passes away at 86

- Dr. V Mohini Giri, a well-known advocate for women’s rights, passed away at the age of 86 after a brief illness.
- She made significant contributions to empowering women and was recognized for her efforts.

Emmy-Winning Actor Andre Braugher Passes Away at 61

- Emmy-winning actor Andre Braugher, renowned for his notable roles in series such as “Homicide: Life on The Street” and “Brooklyn Nine-Nine,” has sadly passed away at the age of 61. His publicist, Jennifer Allen, confirmed the news, citing a brief illness as the cause.
- Born in Chicago, Braugher gained widespread recognition with his breakthrough role in the 1989 film “Glory,” alongside Morgan Freeman and Denzel Washington.

Veteran Kannada Actor Leelavathi Passes Away at 86

- In a poignant moment for fans and the film fraternity, the revered Kannada actor Leelavathi has passed away at the age of 86.
- The seasoned artist, known for her versatile performances, left an indelible mark on the Kannada, Malayalam, Tamil, and Telugu film industries.
- Leelavathi, with a career spanning over 600 films, embarked on her cinematic journey with her debut in “Bhakta Prahlada” in 1958.
- Stepping into the Kannada film industry as a leading lady in “Mangalya Yoga” the same year, she quickly established herself as a prominent figure.

Benjamin Zephaniah, Poet and ‘Peaky Blinders’ Actor, Dies at 65

- Benjamin Zephaniah, the acclaimed British poet, writer, and actor renowned for his role as Jeremiah Jesus in the hit series “Peaky Blinders,” has passed away at the age of 65.
- The news of his demise was shared through a statement on Zephaniah’s official Instagram account, revealing that he succumbed to a brain tumor diagnosed just eight weeks prior.

R Subbalakshmi Dies at 87: Popular Malayalam Actress and Musician no more

- In a somber moment for the world of cinema, veteran actor R. Subbalakshmi, renowned for her remarkable contributions to Malayalam cinema, bid farewell to the mortal world at the age of 87.
- Her journey from being a trained Carnatic musician to gracing the silver screen with her powerful performances has left an indelible mark on the hearts of film enthusiasts.
- In this article, we pay tribute to the iconic actor and explore her illustrious career.

Dr. Gao Yaojie, Renowned AIDS Activist Dies at 95

- Dr. Gao Yaojie, a trailblazing Chinese doctor and activist, passed away at the age of 95 in her home in the United States.
- She was known for her fearless exposure of the AIDS virus epidemic in rural China during the 1990s.
- Columbia University professor Andrew J. Nathan, who had legal power of attorney for Gao, confirmed her passing.

Sheikh Nawab AI-Ahmad AI-Sahab, Kuwait Emir, Passed Away at the age of 86

- India is in a somber state as it observes a one-day state mourning on Sunday, December 17, following the passing of the Emir of Kuwait,

Sheikh Nawab AI-Ahmad AI-Jaber AI-Sabah, who died on December 16, 2023, at the age of 86.

- The Union Home Ministry has issued a communication to all states outlining the protocols to be observed during this period of mourning.



IMPORTANT DAYS

1 December - World AIDS Day

- World AIDS Day is observed on 1 December every year to raise awareness and knowledge about HIV and a call to move toward ending the HIV epidemic.
- It was first celebrated in 1988. The theme of 2023 is "Lead The Communities".

2 December - National Pollution Control Day

- National Pollution Control Day is celebrated on 2 December to raise awareness about pollution and its hazardous effects.
- This day is observed in memory of the people who lost their lives in the Bhopal gas calamity which is considered one of the biggest industrial disasters.

2 December - International Day for the Abolition of Slavery

- It was observed on 2 December to make people aware of the modern slavery that works against human rights.
- Do you know more than 40 million people in the world are victims of modern slavery? This day reminds the situations of exploitation that a person cannot refuse due to threats, violence, coercion or abuse of power.

3 December - World Day of the Handicapped or International Day of Persons with Disabilities

- World Day of the Handicapped is also known as the International Day of People with Disabilities (IDPD).
- It is observed on 3 December to raise awareness about understanding and accepting people with disabilities.
- The theme for 2021 was "Leadership and participation of persons with disabilities toward an inclusive, accessible and sustainable post-COVID-19 world."

4 December - Indian Navy Day

- Indian Navy Day is celebrated every year on 4 December to highlight the role, achievements, and difficulties that Navy people face.

5 December - World Soil Day

- World Soil Day is observed on 5 December to raise awareness about the importance of soil, healthy ecosystems, and human well-being.

6 December - BR Ambedkar's death anniversary

- On 6 December 1956, he passed away. The day is observed to commemorate his unforgettable contribution to society and his achievements.

9 December - International Anti-Corruption Day

- International Anti-Corruption Day is observed on 9 December every year to highlight how corruption affects health, education, justice, democracy, prosperity, and development.

10 December - Human Rights Day

- Human Rights Day is celebrated on 10 December.
- The Universal Declaration of Human Rights was adopted in 1948 by the United Nations General Assembly.
- This day is observed to protect the fundamental human rights of all people and their basic human freedom.

11 December - UNICEF Day

- It is observed on 11 December by the United Nations. UNICEF stands for United Nations International Children Emergency Fund.

14 December - National Energy Conservation Day

- It is observed on 14 December to raise awareness about the need for energy and its conservation in daily life. Since 1991, it is celebrated every year on

14 December by the Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE), under the Ministry of Power.

16 December- Vijay Diwas

- Vijay Diwas is celebrated on 16 December in India to remember the martyrs, and their sacrifices, and to strengthen the role of armed forces for the cause of the nation.

18 December - Minorities Rights Day in India

- Minorities Rights Day in India is observed on 18 December to preserve and promote the rights of minority communities in India.
- This day focuses on issues like the safety of minorities in the state. On this day several campaigns, seminars, and events are conducted to inform and educate people about them.

18 December - International Migrants Day

- International Migrants Day is celebrated on 18 December to raise awareness about the protection of migrants and refugees.
- The International Organisation for Migration (IOM) is calling on the international community to come together and remember the migrants and refugees who have lost their lives or have disappeared while reaching a safe harbor.

20 December - International Human Solidarity Day

- International Human Solidarity Day is observed on 20 December annually to highlight the importance of unity in diversity.
- This day also reminds people to work together in fighting poverty, hunger, and disease.

22 December - National Mathematics Day

- National Mathematics Day is celebrated on 22 December annually to commemorate the birth anniversary of the famous mathematician Srinivasa Ramanujan.
- He had made remarkable contributions to various fields of mathematics and its branches. He was

born on 22 December 1887 in Erode (today in the city of Tamil Nadu).

24 December - National Consumer Rights Day

- National Consumer Rights Day is observed on 24 December annually with a particular theme across the country.
- The Consumer Protection Act, of 1986 received the assent of the president on this day. No doubt it is considered a historic milestone in the consumer movement in the country.
- This day also provides awareness about consumer rights and responsibilities.

25 December - Good Governance Day (India)

- Good Governance Day in India is observed on 25 December to commemorate the birth anniversary of Atal Bihari Vajpayee, His Samadhi namely 'Sadiav Atal' was dedicated to the nation and reflects his personality as a poet, humanist, statesman, and a great leader.
- He died at the age of 93 on 16 August 2018. The Good Governance Day was established in 2014 to pay tribute to the former PM Atal Bihari Vajpayee to raise awareness about accountability in governance among the people of India.

27 December: International Day of Epidemic Preparedness

- International Day of Epidemic Preparedness is observed on December 27 to fulfil the great need to raise awareness, the exchange of information, scientific knowledge and best practices, and quality education to curb the fatality of the Epidemic.

29 December: Guru Gobind Singh Jayanti

- It is celebrated as the birth anniversary of Guru Gobind Singh and this year it falls on 9 January.
- He was the tenth Guru out of a total of ten Sikh Gurus. On 22 December 1666, he was born in Patna, Bihar as per the Julian calendar.



1. Who has been appointed as the first woman chief of the Central Industrial Security Force?
 - (a) Arunima Sinha
 - (b) Neena Singh
 - (c) Avani Chaturvedi
 - (d) Aditi Saxena
2. What has the Indian Railway Conference Association renamed the railway station 'Ayodhya Junction'?
 - (a) 'Ayodhya Dham'
 - (b) Ramnagari
 - (c) Ayodhyapuri
 - (d) Shri Ram Junction
3. Who has been appointed as the new chairman of Kotak Mahindra Bank?
 - (a) Rana Kapoor
 - (b) Vineet Sinha
 - (c) CS Rajan
 - (d) S Chandra
4. Who has recently been appointed as Chief Risk Officer by LIC?
 - (a) Abhay Maken
 - (b) S Sundar Krishnan
 - (c) Pratap Chandra Paikarai
 - (d) Rekha Swaminathan
5. In which state will Karbi Youth Festival 2024 be organized?
 - (a) Meghalaya
 - (b) Gujarat
 - (c) Maharashtra
 - (d) Assam
6. In which country did the Union Cabinet recently approve the opening of the Consulate General of India?
 - (a) France
 - (b) Argentina
 - (c) Russia
 - (d) New Zealand
7. Which city is being developed as India's first 'AI City'?
 - (a) Lucknow
 - (b) Jaipur
 - (c) Chennai
 - (d) Kolkata
8. Who has become the Indian batsman who has scored the most runs in the World Test Championship?
 - (a) Rohit Sharma
 - (b) K L Rahul

- (c) Virat Kohli
 - (d) Ajikya Rahane
9. Which stealth guided-missile destroyer was recently inducted into the Indian Navy?
 - (a) INS 'Imphal'
 - (b) INS 'Chakra'
 - (c) INS 'Dhwaj'
 - (d) INS 'Kavaratti'
10. Who has Techno Smartphone recently appointed as its brand ambassador?
 - (a) Alia Bhatt
 - (b) Deepika Padukone
 - (c) Ranbir Kapoor
 - (d) Virat Kohli
11. Which cricket player will be honored with Arjuna Award?
 - (a) Rohit Sharma
 - (b) Mohammed Shami
 - (c) Suryakumar Yadav
 - (d) Shubhman Gill
12. 'Bhoomi Rashi Portal' is an initiative of which ministry?
 - (a) Ministry of Agriculture
 - (b) Ministry of Rural Development
 - (c) Ministry of Road Transport and Highways
 - (d) Ministry of Cooperation
13. Which has become the first Indian airline to carry 100 million passengers in a year?
 - (a) Indigo
 - (b) SpiceJet
 - (c) Vistara
 - (d) Air India
14. Who was recently awarded Bhutan's prestigious National Order of Merit Gold Medal?
 - (a) S Jaishankar
 - (b) Mamata Banerjee
 - (c) Jaya Bachchan
 - (d) Poonam Khetrapal Singh
15. How many people will be honored with the Major Dhyani Chand Khel Ratna Award 2023?
 - (a) 2
 - (b) 3
 - (c) 4
 - (d) 5
16. Which team bought Pat Cummins, who became the second most expensive player in IPL history?
 - (a) Sunrisers Hyderabad
 - (b) Delhi Capitals

- (c) Mumbai Indians
- (d) Chennai Super Kings

17. Who has been elected the Speaker of Chhattisgarh State Assembly?

- (a) Bhupesh Bhagel
- (b) Raman Singh
- (c) Shatrughan Sinha
- (d) Ashok Gehlot

18. In which city did PM Modi inaugurate the world's largest meditation center?

- (a) Patna
- (b) Varanasi
- (c) Lucknow
- (d) Ahmedabad

19. Who has become the 8th bowler in the world to take 500 or more wickets in Test cricket?

- (a) Nathan Lyon
- (b) Ravindra Jadeja
- (c) Adam Zampa
- (d) Ravichandran Ashwin

20. Which Indian recently successfully climbed Antarctica's highest peak 'Mount Vinson'?

- (a) Arunima Sinha
- (b) Luv Raj Singh Dharamshaktu
- (c) Sheikh Hasan Khan
- (d) Anshu Jamsenpa

21. Which bank has signed 'Line of Credit' with German Development Bank for solar project?

- (a) State Bank of India
- (b) Bandhan Bank
- (c) Punjab National Bank
- (d) ICICI Bank

22. Who won the title of Miss India USA 2023?

- (a) Ayushi Kapoor
- (b) Rijul Maini
- (c) Kirti Kamra
- (d) Saloni Rammohan

23. BCCI has recently decided to retire the jersey of which former cricketer?

- (a) Saurabh Ganguly
- (b) Rahul Dravid
- (c) Yuvraj Singh
- (d) MS Dhoni

24. For which cricketer has 'Arjun Award' been recommended by BCCI?

- (a) Shubman Gill
- (b) Suryakumar Yadav
- (c) Shreyas Iyer

- (d) Mohammed Shami

25. Which British Indian composer has been included in the 2024 Booker Prize judging panel?

- (a) Amitabh Ghosh
- (b) Kiran Desai
- (c) Salman Rushdie
- (d) Nitin Sahni

26. Who has become the first woman medical officer to be posted at the 'operational post' of Siachen Glacier?

- (a) Fatima Wasim
- (b) Shiva Chauhan
- (c) Geetika Kaur
- (d) Avani Chaturvedi

27. Who has recently been selected for Vyas Samman, 2023?

- (a) Yashpal
- (b) Pushpa Bharti
- (c) Nirad Chandra Chaudhary
- (d) Aarti Goswami

28. Who has been awarded the ICC Women's Player of the Month award for November 2023?

- (a) Harmanpreet Kaur
- (b) Nahida Akhtar
- (c) Annabel Sutherland
- (d) Deepti Sharma

29. Who has been elected as the Prime Minister of Poland?

- (a) Beta Szydlow
- (b) Donald Tusk
- (c) Andrzej Duda
- (d) None of these

30. Who has been named as the United World Wrestling Rising Star of the Year 2023?

- (a) Sakshi Malik
- (b) Nisha Dahiya
- (c) Geetika Jakhar
- (d) Antim Panghal

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- (a) Sakshi Malik
- (b) Nisha Dahiya

- (c) Geetika Jakhar
- (d) Antim Panghal

41. Which advanced AI model has been launched by Google's parent company Alphabet?

- (a) Aqua
- (b) Gemini
- (c) Neo
- (d) Gossip

42. Who has taken oath as the new Chief Minister of Mizoram?

- (a) Vanlalruata
- (b) Lalduhoma
- (c) Zoramthanga
- (d) Kambhampati Hari Babu

43. Who has been named 'Person of the Year' by Time Magazine?

- (a) Narendra Modi
- (b) Georgia Meloni
- (c) Taylor Swift
- (d) Joe Biden

44. Garba dance was included in the list of UNESCO's 'Intangible Cultural Heritage', it belongs to which state?

- (a) Assam
- (b) Rajasthan
- (c) Gujarat
- (d) Maharashtra

45. Who has taken oath as the new Chief Minister of Telangana?

- (a) N. Uttam Kumar Reddy
- (b) K.Chandrashekhara Rao
- (c) Anumula Revanth Reddy
- (d) DK Shivakumar

46. Who is the title sponsor of 'Patna Pirates' team of Pro Kabaddi League?

- (a) Dream 11
- (b) Steel Authority of India
- (c) Bihar Government
- (d) Vivo

47. Who has taken charge as the Executive Director of Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India?

- (a) Jitesh John
- (b) Ajay Kapoor
- (c) Anand Kishore Mathur
- (d) Arvind Sinha

48. Which Indian-origin novelist was honored with Singapore's highest art honour?

- (a) Alka Singh

- (b) Meera Chand
- (c) Asha Lata
- (d) Preeti Desai

49. Who has become the first Indian to operate NASA's Mars Rover?

- (a) Preeti Narayan
- (b) Soni Sarang
- (c) Akshata Krishnamurthy

- (d) Surabhi Kumari

50. Who has been chosen as 'CEO of the Year' by Time Magazine?

- (a) Sundar Pichai
- (b) Tim Cook
- (c) Sam Altman
- (d) Satya Nadella

ANSWERS

1. Answer: (b)

- Manipur-cadre Indian Police Service (IPS) officer Neena Singh has been appointed as the first woman in the Central Industrial Security Force (CISF). Singh will continue in this post till July 31, 2024 (till retirement). The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet has approved the appointment of Intelligence Bureau officer Rahul Rasgotra as the Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) chief and Anish Dayal Singh has been made the Director General of the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF).

2. Answer: (a)

- The Indian Railway Conference Association has issued a statement announcing the change of name of the railway station located in Uttar Pradesh from "Ayodhya Junction" to "Ayodhya Dham". This railway station will be inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on 30 December. The previously allotted station code 'AY' has been retained.

3. Answer: (c)

- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has approved the appointment of CS Rajan as part-time Chairman of Kotak Mahindra Bank. Rajan is currently serving as an independent director of the bank. His appointment is effective from January 1, 2024 and will last for a period of two years. CS Rajan is playing the role of independent director on the board of the bank from October 22, 2022.

4. Answer: (b)

- Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) has appointed S Sundar Krishnan as Chief Risk Officer (CRO), replacing Pratap Chandra Paikarai. Sundar Krishnan DSP has experience in services at Merrill Lynch, Credit Lyonnais Bank and Bank International Indonesia. LIC is a central public sector life insurance company headquartered in Mumbai.

5. Answer: (d)

- President Draupadi Murmu will attend the Golden Jubilee Celebrations of Karbi Youth Festival 2024 to be held at Taralongso, Diphu in Karbi Anglong district of Assam on January 17. The Golden Jubilee Celebration of Karbi Youth Festival 2024 will be organized on January 12-19, 2024. Karbi Youth Festival is organized annually and thousands of Karbi youth from Assam and other parts of the country participate in it.

6. Answer: (d)

- The Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi approved the proposal to open the Consulate General of India in Auckland, New Zealand. The opening of the Consulate General of India in Auckland will further strengthen the relations between India and New Zealand. This Consulate is

likely to be opened and fully operational within a time frame of 12 months.

7. Answer: (a)

- Lucknow city, known as the 'City of Nawabs', will be developed as India's first 'AI City'. Noida has already emerged as an IT hub, on the same lines now Tier 2 cities like Lucknow are also being developed as IT hubs. According to a report by Grand View Research, the size of the global AI market was estimated at \$ 137 billion in the year 2022. UP Electronics Corporation Limited has issued Expression of Interest (EOI) for the development of AI City.

8. Answer: (c) Virat Kohli

- Veteran Indian batsman and former captain of the Indian team, Virat Kohli has become the Indian batsman who has scored the most runs in the World Test Championship (WTC). This new record was achieved in the first match of the ongoing Test series against the South African cricket team. He left Indian captain Rohit Sharma behind. Rohit has so far scored 2,097 runs in 42 innings of 26 Tests in the WTC. Virat has so far scored 2101 runs in 57 innings of 35 test matches.

9. Answer: (a)

- The latest stealth guided-missile destroyer 'Imphal' has recently been inducted into the Indian Navy. It was inducted into the Navy in the presence of Defense Minister Rajnath Singh. INS 'Imphal' is the first warship to be named after a city in the north-east. It has been designed by 'Warship Design Bureau' and constructed by Mazagon Dock Limited, Mumbai.

10. Answer: (b)

- Premium global smartphone brand TECNO has appointed Indian superstar Deepika Padukone as its brand ambassador. This step has been taken keeping in mind the needs of consumers and to provide innovation. Techno Mobile is a Chinese mobile phone manufacturer based in Shenzhen, China. It was established in 2006. Techno Mobile operates in more than 70 countries.

11. Answer: B

- Mohammed Shami will be honored with the country's prestigious sports award Arjuna Award for his outstanding performance in the ODI World Cup 2023. The Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports has announced the National Sports Awards 2023. 26 players including Shami will be honored with Arjun Award. This award will be presented by the President in a specially organized ceremony at Rashtrapati Bhavan on January 9 next year.

12. Answer: C

- The Union Minister for Road Transport and Highways recently said that 1467 projects of the National Highway Authority of India have been brought under the Bhoomi Rashi portal. It is an e-governance initiative of the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways. Its objective is to speed up the process of land acquisition for national highways.

13. Answer: A

- Indian airline IndiGo has become the first Indian airline to carry 100 million passengers in a year. IndiGo has become India's largest airline after carrying 100 million passengers in the year 2023. IndiGo has started its flights on 20 new international routes in the last six months. InterGlobe Aviation Limited, doing business as IndiGo, is headquartered in Gurgaon.

14. Answer: D

- Poonam Khetrapal Singh, Regional Director of WHO South-East Asia, has been awarded Bhutan's prestigious National Order of Merit Gold Medal for distinguished services. Poonam is a retired IAS officer of Punjab cadre. Bhutan King Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck honored him at the 116th National Day celebrations of Bhutan.

15. Answer: A

- The Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports has announced the National Sports Awards 2023. These awards will be presented by the President of India at Rashtrapati Bhavan on January 09, 2024. This time Major Dhyan Chand Khel Ratna Award will be given to badminton players Chirag Chandrashekar Shetty and Rankireddy Satwik Sai Raj. This time 26 players will be honored with the Arjuna Award.

16. Answer: A

- Australian captain Pat Cummins created history in the IPL auction. Cummins has become the second most expensive selling player in IPL history. Sunrisers Hyderabad bought the Australian captain with a base price of Rs 2 crore for Rs 20.5 crore. Whereas Mitchell Starc was bought by KKR for Rs 24.75 crore (about 2,982,000 US dollars), which is the most expensive player till date.

17. Answer: B

- Former Chief Minister of Chhattisgarh Raman Singh has been unanimously elected as the Speaker of the State Assembly. Chief Minister Vinshu Dev Sai proposed to elect 71-year-old Raman Singh as the speaker, which was supported by Deputy CM Arun Sao. Raman Singh has won Rajnandgaon seat four consecutive times in 2008, 2013, 2018 and 2023.

18. Answer: B

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated and laid the foundation stone of several beneficial projects in his parliamentary constituency Varanasi. In this series, PM Modi also inaugurated the world's largest meditation center Swarved Mahamandir. It is a 7-storey meditation center which is the largest in the world. The newly constructed Swaraveda Mahamandir is spread over 3 lakh square feet. In this centre, 20 thousand people can participate in yoga sessions simultaneously.

19. Answer: A

- Australia's experienced spinner Nathan Lyon has become the 8th bowler in the world to take 500 or more wickets in Test cricket. He achieved this feat in the Perth Test against Pakistan. He has become the third bowler from Australia to take 500 or

more wickets. From Australia, only Shane Warne (708) and Glenn McGrath (563) are ahead of him.

20. Answer: C

- Kerala government employee Sheikh Hasan Khan has conquered Antarctica's highest peak 'Mount Vinson'. This is the fifth highest peak conquered by him. Mount Vinson is 4,892 meters (16,050 ft) above sea level. Apart from Mount Vinson, Khan has conquered four other high peaks, Mount Everest in Asia, Mount Denali in North America, Mount Kilimanjaro in Africa and Mount Elbrus in Europe.

21. Answer: A

- State Bank of India (SBI) has signed a Line of Credit (LOC) of Euro 70 million (about Rs 630 crore) with German development bank KfW to promote solar projects in the country. The objective of the LOC is to promote solar photovoltaics (PV) projects in India.

22. Answer: B

- Rijul Maini, a medical student from Michigan (US), won the title of Miss India USA 2023 in the annual competition held in New Jersey. Sneha Nambiar of Massachusetts was declared Mrs. India USA. Saloni Rammohan of Pennsylvania was given the title of Miss Teen India USA. This year marks the 41st anniversary of the competition which is the longest running Indian competition outside India.

23. Answer: D

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24. Answer: D

- BCCI has nominated Indian fast bowler Mohammed Shami for the Arjuna Award. BCCI has recommended Shami's name to the Sports Ministry. Shami performed brilliantly in the ODI World Cup 2023 and became the bowler taking the highest wicket. After Major Dhyan Chand Khel Ratna Award, Arjun Award is India's second highest award in the field of sports.

25. Answer: D

- British Indian composer Nitin Sawhney has been announced as a member of the 2024 Booker Prize judging panel. He is best known for the screen adaptation of Salman Rushdie's 1981 Booker Prize-winning *Midnight's Children*. The International Booker Prize is an international literary award held in the United Kingdom.

26. Answer: A

- Captain Fatima Wasim has become the first woman medical officer to be posted at the operational post of Siachen Glacier. Fatima has been trained in Siachen Battle School. Fatima Wasim has been posted at a post at an altitude of 15200 feet. Recently, Captain Geetika Kaul of Snow Leopard Brigade had become the first woman medical officer to be deployed in Siachen.

27. Answer: B

- Noted Hindi writer Pushpa Bharti's 2016 memoir, 'Yaadein, Yaadein aur Yaadein', has been selected for the 33rd Vyas Samman, 2023. This information has been given by KK Birla Foundation in an official statement. Vyas Samman is a literary award which was first given in 1991.

28. Answer: B

- Bangladesh's left-arm spinner Nahida Akhtar has been awarded the ICC Women's Player of the Month Award for the month of November. She has become the first Bangladeshi female player to win the award. Australia's World Cup-winning star Travis Head has been named the ICC Men's Player of the Month for November 2023.

29. Answer: B

- The Parliament of Poland has elected Donald Tusk as Prime Minister. Tusk came to power after the coalition's victory in the elections held two months ago. 248 parliamentary votes were cast in support of Tusk in the 460-seat lower house of parliament. Poland is a Central European country, its capital is Warsaw.

30. Answer: D

- Two-time U-20 world champion and senior world bronze medalist Anant Panghal (53kg) has been named as the United World Wrestling (UWW) Rising Star of the Year 2023 in the women's category. Antim Panghal won a silver medal in his Senior Asian Championship debut. In view of his excellent performance, United World Wrestling has honored him with the Rising Star of the Year 2023.

31. Answer: a

- State Bank of India (SBI) has signed a Line of Credit (LOC) of Euro 70 million (about Rs 630 crore) with German development bank KfW to promote solar projects in the country. The objective of the LOC is to promote solar photovoltaics (PV) projects in India.

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33. Answer: D

- The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) has decided to retire the iconic number 7 jersey worn by former captain MS Dhoni. BCCI has taken this decision to honor Dhoni's achievements. Earlier, BCCI had retired the jersey number 10 of the great Sachin Tendulkar. Now Dhoni's name has also been added to this special club.

34. Answer: D

- BCCI has nominated Indian fast bowler Mohammed Shami for the Arjuna Award. BCCI has recommended Shami's name to the Sports Ministry. Shami performed brilliantly in the ODI World Cup 2023 and became the bowler taking the highest wicket. After Major Dhyan Chand Khel Ratna Award, Arjun Award is India's second highest award in the field of sports.

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41. Answer: b

- Google's parent company Alphabet has launched its advanced AI model Gemini AI to give a tough competition to Open AI's Chat GPT. Gemini is Google's large language model. The Gemini AI model is inspired by human interactions.

42. Answer: b

- Zoram People's Movement (ZPM) leader Lalduhoma took oath as the Chief Minister of Mizoram. Party leader Vanlalruata also took oath as a cabinet minister at the Raj Bhavan. Mizo National Front leader and outgoing Chief Minister Zoramthanga was also present on the occasion. Lalduhoma has taken oath as the sixth Chief Minister of the state.

43. Answer: c

- Famous singer Taylor Swift has been named Time Magazine's Person of the Year for 2023. This underlines the breadth of his music and influences. Swift, 33, has performed worldwide on her "Eras Tour", performing music from throughout her career. Time magazine named Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky its "Person of the Year" for 2022.

44. Answer: c

- Gujarat Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel announced that UNESCO has included the traditional Garba dance of Gujarat in its list of 'Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity'. Garba dance is the 15th intangible cultural heritage of India to be included in this list.

45. Answer: c

- Telangana Pradesh Congress Committee President Anumula Revanth Reddy has taken oath as the Chief Minister of the state. Governor Tamilisai Soundararajan administered him the oath of office and secrecy. After the formation of Telangana state, he is the second Chief Minister of the state.

46. Answer: c

- Bihar government will sponsor 'Patna Pirates' team of Pro Kabaddi League. Bihar Government will be the title sponsor of "Patna Pirates" team of Pro Kabaddi League. Patna Pirates players will play wearing jerseys with 'Anandmay Bihar' written on them. Bihar is becoming a sponsor of any sport for the first time. Sandeep Kumar of Patna has been selected for the first time in the team of Patna Pirates from Bihar in Pro Kabaddi League.

47. Answer: a

- 2001 batch Indian Economic Service officer Jitesh John has taken charge as the Executive Director of Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India (IBBI). In October this year, Sandeep Garg was made a full-time member of IBBI. IBBI is

48. Answer: b

- Singapore-based Indian-origin writer Meera Chand, 81, was awarded the Cultural Medallion, the country's most prestigious art honour, for her artistic excellence and her contribution to enriching the country's art and culture landscape. President Tharman Shanmugaratnam presented the award to Chand along with fellow novelist Suchen Christine Lim and Malay dance legend Osman Abdul Hamid.

49. Answer: c

- Akshata Krishnamurthy has become the first Indian to operate a Mars rover with the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) in the United States. He has given this information through a social media post. Akshata is a PhD holder from MIT (Massachusetts Institute of Technology) and has joined NASA for a full-time opportunity.

50. Answer: c

- Time Magazine has named OpenAI founder Sam Altman as 'CEO of the Year'. Sam Altman is the co-founder of ChatGPT, developed by OpenAI, which was launched in November 2022. Argentina's star football player Lionel Messi has been named 2023 'Athlete of the Year'.