

Current Affairs | December 2023

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The Most Important Current Affairs December 2023

PM Modi Inaugurated 2 New Amrit Bharat, 6 Vande Bharat Trains in Ayodhya

Prime Minister Narendra Modi marked a significant event on Saturday by flagging off two Amrit Bharat and six Vande Bharat Express trains from the redeveloped Ayodhya Dham Railway Station. This momentous occasion took place amid the festive atmosphere in Ayodhya, with the upcoming consecration of the grand Ram Temple on January 22, 2024.

Amrit Bharat Express: A New Milestone

The Amrit Bharat Express introduces a new category of superfast passenger trains with the distinctive feature of LHB push-pull technology. Notably, these trains prioritize efficiency with non-air-conditioned coaches. The locos at both ends contribute to better acceleration, while passengers enjoy enhanced amenities such as beautifully designed seats, improved luggage racks, mobile charging points, LED lights, CCTV surveillance, and a public information system.

The Amrit Bharat Train routes include:

- Darbhanga to Anand Vihar Terminal in Delhi via Ayodhya Amrit Bharat Express
- Malda Town to Bengaluru (Sir M. Visvesvaraya Terminal) Amrit Bharat Express

Vande Bharat Express Expansion

Six Vande Bharat Express trains were flagged off during the event, connecting key destinations across the country. The newly inaugurated routes include:

- Sri Mata Vaishno Devi Katra – New Delhi Vande Bharat Express
- Amritsar – Delhi Junction Vande Bharat Express
- Coimbatore – Bengaluru Vande Bharat Express
- Jalna – Mumbai (CSMT) Vande Bharat Express
- Ayodhya – Anand Vihar Terminal Delhi Vande Bharat Express
- Mangaluru – Madgaon Goa Vande Bharat Express

Railway Infrastructure Development

In addition to the train inaugurations, Prime Minister Modi dedicated three railway projects worth ₹2,300 crore to strengthen the rail infrastructure in the region. The projects encompass the Rooma Chakeri-Chanderi third line project, various sections of the Jaunpur-Ayodhya-Barabanki doubling project, and the doubling and electrification project of the Malhaur-Daliganj railway section.

Inaugural Run of Jalna-Mumbai Vande Bharat Express

The Prime Minister virtually flagged off the inaugural run of the Jalna-Mumbai Vande Bharat Express during the event. The 8-coach service is set to depart from Jalna at 11 am and reach Mumbai at 6:45 pm. Notable stops along the route include Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar, Manmad Junction, Nasik Road, Kalyan Junction, Thane, and Dadar before reaching Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Terminus (CSMT) in Mumbai.

Regular Schedule and Future Plans

Starting from January 1, the Jalna-Mumbai Vande Bharat Express will run regularly, departing from CSMT at 1:10 pm and arriving in Jalna at 8:30 pm. From January 2 onwards, the train will depart from Jalna at 5:05 am and reach CSMT at 11:55 am.

Inauguration Ahead of Ram Mandir Consecration

The inauguration of the Ayodhya Dham railway station by Prime Minister Modi holds symbolic significance as it precedes the 'pran pratishtha' or consecration ceremony of the Ram Mandir scheduled for January 22. The holy city of Ayodhya has been adorned with decorations, including flowers, murals, and thematic ornamental columns, while heavy security deployment ensures a smooth and secure environment for the event.

Sahitya Akademi Awards 2023 Winners Name List

Sahitya Akademi, announced its annual Sahitya Akademi Awards 2023 in 24 languages. 9 books of poetry, 6 of novels, 5 of short stories, 3 Essays and 1 Literary Study have won the Sahitya Akademi Awards 2023. The Awards, recommended by distinguished Jury members in 24 Indian languages, were approved by the Executive Board of the Sahitya Akademi which met today under the Chairmanship of Sri Madhav Kaushik, President, Sahitya Akademi.

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

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Category	Language	Awardees
	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
	Urdu	Sadiqua Nawab Saher
Short Stories	Assamese	Pranavjyoti Deka
	Bengali	Swapnamoy Chakraborti
	Bodo	Vinod Sona Minj
	Santali	Taraceen Baskey (Turia Chand Baskey)
	Telugu	T. Pattabhi Satyam
Essays	Nepali	Juddhar Rana
	Odia	Ashutosh Parida
	Sindhi	Vinod Asudani
Literary Study	Malayalam	E.V. Ramakrishnan

Sahitya Akademi Awards 2023 Winners

Language	Title and Genre	Name of the Author
Assamese	Dr. Pranavjyoti Deka Shrestha Galpa (Short Stories)	Pranavjyoti Deka
Bengali	Jabar Pari (Novel)	Swapnamoy Chakraborti
Bodo	Si-Ufari Sarni (Short Stories)	Vinod Sona Minj
Dogri	Daun Sadiyan Ek Seer (Poetry-Ghazal)	Vijay Verma
English	Requiem in Raga Janki (Novel)	Neelum Saran Gour
Gujarati	Sairandhree (Epic Novel)	Sandeep Joshi
Hindi	Mujhe Pahachano (Novel)	Sanjeev
Kannada	Mahabharata Anushandhana Bharata (Poetry)	Lakshmesh Tolpadi
Kashmiri	Yath Wavah Halis Toong Tsolay Zaley (Essays)	Manshoor Banhali
Konkani	Varsal (Short Stories)	Mahabaleshwar Sail
Maithili	Bodha Sanketan (Essays)	Basukinath Jha
Malayalam	Malayala Novelinete Deshakalangaal (Literary Study)	E.V. Ramakrishnan
Manipuri	Yangkhoibagi Nanglo Helli	Sorokhaibam

Language	Title and Genre	Name of the Author
	(Poetry)	Gambhini
Marathi	Ringan (Novel)	Kusumkhatri Rana
Nepali	Nepali Lokshitya Ra Loksanskritiko Pariyochoa (Essays)	Juddhar Rana
Odia	Aprastuta Prutyu (Poetry)	Ashutosh Parida
Punjabi	Mann Di Chip (Poetry)	Swarnjit Savi
Rajasthani	Manak Mati (Poetry)	Gaje Singh Rajpurohit
Sanskrit	Shunye Meghghanam (Poetry)	Arun Ranjan Mishra
Santali	Jaba Baha (Short Stories)	Taraceen Baskey (Turia Chand Baskey)
Sindhi	Hathu Hicro Pahinjaro (Ghazal)	Vinod Asudani
Tamil	Neeraviyal (Poetry-Short-Stories)	Rajasekaran (Devibharathi)
Telugu	Rameshwaram Kaakulu Marikonni Kathalu (Short Stories)	T. Pattabhi Satyam
Urdu	Rajdev Ki Amrai (Novel)	Sadiqua Nawab Saher

Sahitya Akademi Awards 2023 Winners Name Selection Process

The awardees were selected based on recommendations made by a Jury of three members in their respective languages. The names of the winners were made known after the approval. According to an official release, the awards relate to books first published during the five years immediately preceding the year of award (i.e., between 1 January 2018 and 31 December 2022).

Sahitya Akademi Awards 2023 Presentation

The Award in the form of a casket containing an engraved copper-plaque, a shawl and an amount of **Rs. 1,00,000/- towards each** will be presented to the awardees at the Award Presentation function which will be held on 12 March 2024 at Kamani Auditorium, Copernicus Marg, New Delhi-110 001.

About Sahitya Akademi Awards

Established on **March 12, 1954**, the **Sahitya Akademi** is an autonomous body under the Union Culture Ministry, dedicated to the promotion of literature in Indian languages. Over the years, it has played a pivotal role in recognizing and celebrating literary excellence across diverse linguistic landscapes in India.

In conclusion, the **Sahitya Akademi Awards for 2023** underscore the richness and diversity of Indian literature, honoring writers who have made significant contributions to the literary tapestry of the nation. The recognition serves to inspire and encourage continued creativity and exploration within the realm of literature in various languages.

National Mathematics Day 2023

Every year on **December 22**, the nation reveres the brilliance of **Srinivasa Ramanujan**, one of the greatest mathematicians in history, as **National Mathematics Day (NMD)**. This significant day serves as a tribute to Ramanujan's unparalleled contributions to the field of mathematics and promotes the awareness of the subject's importance.

National Mathematics Day: Timeline of events

Know about Srinivasa Ramanujan's life and his works in the timeline given here.

1887: The great mathematician was born on this day in Tamil Nadu's Erode to a Brahmin Iyengar family. Since his childhood days, he had a liking for mathematics which led him to master trigonometry at the age of 12. He was also eligible for a scholarship at the Government Arts College in Kumbakonam.

1912: Srinivasa Ramanujan started to work as a clerk in Madras Port Trust in 1912. There, his mathematics genius was recognized by some of his colleagues and one of them referred him to Professor GH Hardy of Trinity College, Cambridge University. He met Hardy in 1913, after which he went to Trinity College.

1916: This year the Ramanujan received his Bachelor in Science degree. After this, he published several papers on his subject with Hardy's help.

1917: Ramanujan was elected to the London Mathematical Society.

1918: The great mathematician was elected to the prestigious Royal Society for his research on Elliptic Functions and theory of numbers. He was also the first Indian to be elected a Fellow of the Trinity College.

1919: Ramanujan returned to India.

1920: On April 26, he breathed his last owing to deteriorating health. He was just 32 years old.

Historical Background of National Mathematics Day

The genesis of National Mathematics Day dates back to 2012 when the Manmohan Singh government officially designated December 22 for its observance. This day coincides with the birth anniversary of Srinivasa Ramanujan, born on **December 22, 1887, in Erode, Tamil Nadu**. The year 2012 was further celebrated as the National Mathematics Year, emphasizing the profound impact of mathematics on human progress.

Srinivasa Ramanujan: A Mathematical Prodigy

Ramanujan's mathematical prowess manifested at a remarkably young age. By 12, he delved into Trigonometry, and at 15, he acquired George Shoobridge Carr's "**Synopsis of Elementary Results in Pure and Applied Mathematics.**" His groundbreaking work spanned Riemann series, hypergeometric series, elliptic integrals, continued fractions, and functional equations of the zeta function.

In 1911, Ramanujan marked his entry into the mathematical arena by publishing his first paper in the Journal of the Indian

Mathematical Society. His scholarly journey led him to receive a B.A. degree by research at Cambridge University in 1916. Despite facing hardships and poverty in his early life, Ramanujan left an indelible mark on mathematics, leaving behind approximately 4,000 original theorems.

Significance of National Mathematics Day

National Mathematics Day aims to propagate the significance of mathematics in various aspects of life and illuminate Ramanujan's remarkable contributions. On this occasion, the focus extends beyond textbooks, encouraging children to embrace critical thinking and logical reasoning, mirroring Ramanujan's unconventional path of learning.

Educational institutions actively participate in the celebrations, organizing competitions, Olympiads, and other events to engage students and foster a love for mathematics. The day serves as a reminder of India's rich mathematical heritage, featuring luminaries like Aryabhata, Brahmagupta, Mahavira, and Bhaskara II.

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.

Key Provisions

1. Enhanced Powers for National Security

The Bill grants post office employees the authority to open, detain, or intercept any item during transmission in the interest of national security or public safety. However, this power is subject to specific conditions.

2. Immunity for Post Office Employees

While providing immunity for post office employees from liability in delivering services, the Bill includes conditions. Officers are exempt unless they act fraudulently or willfully cause loss, delay, or misdelivery of services.

3. Interception Authority

The Central Government, through notification, can empower officers to intercept, open, or detain items in transit by the post office. This authority extends to situations involving security of the State, friendly relations with foreign states, public order, emergencies, or public safety.

4. Duty Evasion and Prohibited Items

Post office officers can deliver items, suspected of duty evasion or being prohibited by law, to customs or relevant authorities. The handling of such items will follow legal provisions.

5. Liability Exemption

The post office and its officers are exempt from liability for any loss, misdelivery, delay, or damage incurred during the provision of services, except in cases of fraudulent or willful misconduct.

6. Recovery of Sums

The Bill includes provisions for the recovery of sums due in respect of services provided by the post office. Failure to pay charges for services renders the amount recoverable as if it were an arrear of land revenue.

7. Exclusive Privilege and Standards

The post office retains the exclusive privilege of issuing postage stamps. The Central Government may prescribe standards for addressing items, including address identifiers and the usage of postcodes.

Rationale for the Bill

The Post Office Bill, 2023, aims to replace the outdated Indian Post Office Act, 1898, to accommodate the evolving landscape of post office services. With over 1.5 lakh post offices in India, including a substantial presence in rural areas, the legislation addresses concerns related to national security, public safety, and the expanding role of post offices in citizen-centric service delivery.

French President Emmanuel Macron to Grace India's Republic Day

In a testament to the enduring friendship between **India and France**, **President Emmanuel Macron** is set to be the chief guest at the Republic Day celebrations in New Delhi. This marks the sixth instance of a French leader gracing this prestigious occasion, highlighting the significance of the bilateral relationship.

A Legacy of Friendship – French Leaders as Chief Guests

President Macron follows in the footsteps of his predecessors, with former French Prime Minister **Jacques Chirac** having been the Chief Guest in 1976 and 1998. Additionally, former Presidents Valery Giscard d'Estaing, Nicolas Sarkozy, and Francois Hollande have all contributed to this tradition in the years 1980, 2008, and 2016, respectively.

Commemorating 25 Years of India-France Strategic Partnership

This year's Republic Day celebrations hold special significance as India and France commemorate the **25th anniversary of their Strategic Partnership**. The enduring collaboration spans across diverse sectors, reflecting the depth and breadth of the diplomatic, economic, and cultural ties between the two nations.

Key Areas of Collaboration – A Comprehensive Partnership

Under the India-France Strategic Partnership, the two nations collaborate closely in critical areas such as defence, space, civil nuclear, trade, investment, education, culture, and people-to-people ties. This multifaceted engagement underscores the shared commitment to mutual growth and global cooperation.

Macron's Visit – Fostering Bilateral Relations

President Macron's presence at the Republic Day celebrations symbolizes a commitment to further strengthening the ties between India and France. His visit is expected to provide impetus to ongoing collaborations and pave the way for new avenues of cooperation in the years to come.

Diplomatic Gesture – Modi's Invitation and International Relations

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's invitation to President Macron underscores the warmth and camaraderie that characterize the diplomatic relations between the two nations. This gesture not only solidifies the bilateral partnership but also highlights India's role on the global stage.

UNESCO Awards Spotlight Indian Heritage Conservation Efforts

The **United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)** has 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.

Award of Excellence: Rambagh Gate and Ramparts, Punjab

The resilient urban revitalization project of **Rambagh Gate and Ramparts in Amritsar, Punjab**, received the highest honor, the **"Award of Excellence."** The jury lauded the project for its inclusivity and accessibility, ensuring that the revitalized heritage site benefits the broader community.

Award of Merit: Church of Epiphany, Haryana, and Bikaner House, Delhi

The **Church of Epiphany in Haryana and Bikaner House in Delhi** were bestowed with the **"Award of Merit"** for their exemplary conservation efforts. These projects showcase India's diverse architectural heritage and dedication to preserving its historical treasures.

Beyond India: Recognizing Conservation Efforts Across Asia-Pacific

While India's achievements deserve applause, the UNESCO awards acknowledged twelve exemplary projects from across the Asia-Pacific region. Among these, three projects – the Fanling Golf Course in Hong Kong SAR, China; Dongguan Garden Residences in Yangzhou, China; and Karnikara Mandapam at Kunnamangalam Bhagawati Temple, Kerala, India – each received the **"Award of Distinction."**

This recognition highlights the collaborative efforts of individuals and organizations throughout the region to safeguard cultural heritage for future generations.

Significance of UNESCO Awards

The UNESCO Asia-Pacific Awards for Cultural Heritage Conservation play a crucial role in:

Promoting heritage conservation: The awards raise awareness about the importance of preserving cultural heritage and inspire others to undertake similar initiatives.

Recognizing outstanding efforts: By acknowledging successful conservation projects, the awards incentivize individuals and organizations to strive for excellence in heritage preservation.

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- **Sharing best practices:** The awards platform facilitates the exchange of knowledge and best practices in heritage conservation, contributing to sustainable and effective preservation strategies.

The recent UNESCO awards underscore India's significant contributions to cultural heritage conservation and provide a platform for other countries to learn from its valuable experiences. As we strive to safeguard our shared past, such initiatives become increasingly important in shaping a richer future for generations to come.

National Sports Awards 2023

Major Dhyan Chand Khel Ratna Award 2023

This table lists the recipients of the Major Dhyan Chand Khel Ratna Award for 2023, highlighting their outstanding performance in the field of badminton over the past four years.

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

Arjuna Awards 2023:

The award is conferred for great performance over a time period of the last four years and for demonstrating qualities of sportsmanship, a sense of discipline, and leadership.

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

Recipient	Sport
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

Dronacharya Award for Outstanding Coaches in Sports and Games 2023

This table showcases the recipients of the Dronacharya Award for 2023, distinguishing between those recognized in the regular category and those honored in the lifetime category, across various sports disciplines.

For the Regular Category:

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:

This table lists the recipients of the Dhyan Chand Award for 2023, recognizing their significant contributions to sports both during their active career and post-retirement.

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

Maulana Abul Kalam Azad (MAKA) Trophy 2023:

Here's the information about the Maulana Abul Kalam Azad (MAKA) Trophy 2023, formatted into a table:

University	Achievement
Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar	Overall Winning University
Lovely Professional University, Punjab	1st Runner-Up University
Kurukshetra University, Kurukshetra	2nd Runner-Up University

Taylor Swift Named Time Magazine's Person Of The Year

Taylor Swift has been named **Time Magazine's Person of the Year for 2023**. This recognition comes on the heels of her title as the most-played artist on Spotify, underscoring the widespread impact of her music and influence.

As Taylor Swift receives the prestigious title of **Time Magazine's Person of the Year for 2023**, it serves as a reflection of her multifaceted impact on music, culture, and society. Beyond the accolades and financial success, Swift's ability to connect with audiences on a global scale showcases the enduring power of her artistry. In a world where influence is measured in various dimensions, Taylor Swift stands tall as a true person of the year.

Swift's Achievements in 2023:

This year has been nothing short of extraordinary for Taylor Swift, and the Time Magazine accolade further cements her standing as a global icon. Among her notable accomplishments are:

Eras Tour and Concert Movie: Swift's Eras Tour captured the hearts of fans worldwide, becoming a cultural phenomenon. The accompanying concert movie allowed even more people to experience the magic of her live performances.

Reimagined '1989' Album: Swift's ability to reinvent her own work was evident with the release of her reimagined '1989' album. The project showcased her musical versatility and creativity.

Relationship with Travis Kelce: Beyond her music, Swift's personal life, especially her relationship with Kansas City Chiefs tight end Travis Kelce, remained under the spotlight, capturing the interest of fans and the media alike.

Subject of College Courses: Swift's impact extends beyond entertainment, as she has become the subject of college courses. This highlights her cultural significance and influence on contemporary society.

Time Magazine's Recognition:

Swift faced tough competition for the Person of the Year title, standing out among a diverse group of finalists that included Barbie, King Charles III, and OpenAI chief executive Sam Altman. Time Magazine's selection acknowledges not only Swift's individual achievements but also her cultural resonance and influence.

Nirmala Sitharaman Secure Spots on Forbes' "World's 100 Most Powerful Women" of 2023

In the latest release of Forbes' annual list of **"The World's Most Powerful Women,"** four notable Indian figures have garnered recognition. Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, HCL Corporation Chairperson Roshni Nadar Malhotra, Steel Authority Of India Chairperson Soma Mondal, and Biocon Executive Chairperson Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw have earned positions on this prestigious list.

Nirmala Sitharaman: Climbing Rankings in Financial Leadership

Nirmala Sitharaman, serving as **India's first full-time female finance minister**, achieves her best ranking yet at number 32, marking her fifth consecutive appearance on the list. Forbes highlights her groundbreaking role and emphasizes her prior experiences at the UK-based Agricultural Engineers Association and BBC World Service before entering politics.

Roshni Nadar Malhotra: Chairing HCL and Wildlife Enthusiast

Ranked 60th, **Roshni Nadar Malhotra**, who assumed the role of HCL's Chairperson in July 2020, holds an MBA from the Kellogg School of Management. Beyond her corporate success, her passion for wildlife and conservation is notable, as per her official website. She is married to Shikhar Malhotra, and the couple has two sons.

Soma Mondal: Record Financial Growth at SAIL

Soma Mondal, the Chairperson of Steel Authority Of India, secures the 70th spot. She made history as the **first woman to lead SAIL** in January 2021. Graduating in electrical engineering, Mondal's leadership is credited with propelling the state-run company to record financial growth, tripling profits to 120 billion rupees in her inaugural year at the helm.

Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw: Biocon Founder and Business Trailblazer

Founder of the biopharmaceutical firm Biocon in 1978, Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw ranks 76th. Also featured among India's richest individuals, she successfully steered Biocon into the lucrative US market, according to her Forbes profile.

Global Power Dynamics: Top Positions Held by Politicians

The top positions on the list are dominated by politicians, with Ursula von der Leyen, President of the European Commission, claiming the number 1 spot. Following her are European Central Bank President Christine Lagarde, US Vice President Kamala Harris, and Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni.

Diverse Influencers Beyond Politics: Taylor Swift, Beyoncé, Rihanna, and More

The list extends beyond politics, featuring influential figures like musician Taylor Swift at number 5, along with fellow musicians Beyoncé and Rihanna, media mogul Oprah Winfrey, philanthropists Melinda French Gates and MacKenzie Scott, and the iconic fashion doll Barbie.

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.

Record-Breaking Ballon d'Or Win

Lionel Messi's exceptional skills and consistent excellence on the field have **earned him the Ballon d'Or for an unprecedented eighth time**. This achievement not only cements his personal legacy but also reflects his enduring influence on the global football stage. Messi's ability to maintain a high level of performance year after year is a testament to his dedication and passion for the sport.

World Cup Triumph with Argentina

Messi played a pivotal role in **Argentina's triumph at the 2022 World Cup, securing their first title in 36 years**. The Argentine captain led his team to victory in a thrilling final against defending champions France. Messi's performance in the tournament showcased his leadership and unmatched skill, leaving an indelible mark on the history of Argentine football.

Choosing Inter Miami over Other Offers

Amidst considerable speculation about his next move after leaving Paris St Germain, Lionel Messi surprised many by choosing to sign with **Major League Soccer's Inter Miami**. Despite tempting offers from his former club Barcelona and the allure of a lucrative deal with Saudi side **Al-Hilal**, Messi opted for a new challenge in the rapidly growing American soccer scene.

RBI Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) December 2023

In the latest **RBI Monetary Policy Committee meeting**, the key policy repo rate remains unchanged at 6.5%, reflecting the committee's unanimous decision. This marks the fifth consecutive meeting where the MPC opted to maintain the status quo on the repo rate, following a 25 bps increase in February 2023.

RBI MPC December 2023: GDP Growth and Inflation Projections

The MPC projects a **GDP growth of 7%** for the fiscal year 2023-24. Inflation is anticipated to be at **5.4%** for the same period, with a detailed breakdown indicating 5.6% for Q3 and 5.2% for Q4. Looking ahead to FY25, CPI inflation is projected at 5.2% for Q1, 4% for Q2, and 4.7% for Q3.

RBI MPC December 2023: MPC's Vigilant Stance

RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das emphasized the MPC's vigilance, stating that **5 out of 6 MPC members voted in favor** of withdrawing accommodation. The committee stands ready to take necessary actions to address emerging economic scenarios.

RBI MPC December 2023: Liquidity Measures and UPI Limits

In response to evolving market dynamics, the RBI has allowed the reversal of liquidity facilities under Standing Deposit Facility (SDF) and Marginal Standing Facility (MSF) even on weekends and holidays. The UPI limit has been raised from **Rs 1 lakh to Rs 5 lakh per transaction for hospitals and educational institutions**.

RBI MPC December 2023: Enhancements in Digital Transactions

The RBI has proposed significant enhancements in digital transactions, including an increase in the e-mandate limit for recurring online transactions from **Rs 15,000 to Rs 1 lakh**. Additionally, the central bank plans to establish a fintech repository to better understand the growing fintech ecosystem. Fintech firms are encouraged to voluntarily contribute information to this repository, which is set to be operationalized by the Reserve Bank Innovation Centre in April 2024 or earlier.

RBI MPC December 2023: Regulatory Framework for Digital Lending

Recognizing the importance of digital lending, the RBI has decided to establish a regulatory framework for **web aggregation of loan products**. This move aims to improve customer-centricity and transparency in the digital lending space.

RBI MPC December 2023: Other Key Highlights

Net FPI inflows amount to **\$24.9 billion** as of December 6. The central bank has reduced its balance sheet size to **21.6%** in 2023-24 up to December 1. **CPI inflation is projected at 5.4%** for the full fiscal year 2023-24, with Q3 at 5.6% and Q4 at 5.2%.

RBI MPC December 2023: Policy Rates at a Glance

Repo Rate: 6.50%
Standing Deposit Facility Rate: 6.25%
Marginal Standing Facility Rate: 6.75%
Bank Rate: 6.75%
Fixed Reverse Repo Rate: 3.35%

Statutory Ratios

Cash Reserve Ratio (CRR): 4.50%
Statutory Liquidity Ratio (SLR): 18%

Supreme Court Upholds Abrogation of Article 370: Key Judgement Highlights

The Supreme Court's landmark decision on December 11, 2023, upheld the Union Government's 2019 move to abrogate the **special status of Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) under Article 370** of the Constitution. The judgment, delivered by a Constitution bench led by Chief Justice of India DY Chandrachud, addressed key constitutional questions and outlined significant conclusions.

1. Upholding the Abrogation of Article 370

The **Supreme Court validated** the Union Government's decision to revoke the special status of J&K under Article 370, emphasizing that the state had no internal sovereignty. The court clarified that the concurrence of the State Government was not necessary, and Article 370 was deemed a temporary provision.

2. Status of Union Territory (UT) and Election Directive

The Court refrained from adjudicating on the reorganization of J&K into a Union Territory but upheld the **creation of Ladakh as a UT**. It directed the Election Commission to conduct **elections for the J&K Legislative Assembly by September 30, 2024**.

3. Constitutional Order 272 and Validity of Presidential Actions

The Court addressed the modification of Article 367 through **Constitutional Order 272**, stating that changes made were ultra vires Article 370. However, this finding did not impact the overall judgment, as the recommendation of the J&K Constituent Assembly was deemed unnecessary for the President to declare Article 370 inoperative.

4. Recognition of J&K's Integration with India

The judgment underscored that Jammu and Kashmir did not retain an element of sovereignty upon joining the Union of India. The constitutional setup indicated that J&K became an integral part of India, with Article 370 being a feature of asymmetric federalism, not sovereignty.

5. Article 370 as Temporary Provision

The Court affirmed that Article 370 was a temporary provision, and the power of the President under Article 370(3) to declare it inoperative persisted even after the dissolution of the J&K Constituent Assembly. The recommendation of the Constituent Assembly was not binding on the President.

6. Presidential Power under Article 370(1)(d)

The Court held that the President's exercise of power under Article 370(1)(d) to apply all provisions of the Constitution to J&K did not require the concurrence of the State government. The principle of consultation and collaboration was not mandatory, and the President's action was deemed valid.

7. Validity of J&K Reorganisation Act 2019

The Court did not find it necessary to adjudicate on the validity of the J&K Reorganisation Act 2019, considering the Solicitor General's assurance that J&K's statehood would be restored. The reorganization of Ladakh as a Union Territory was upheld.

8. Directive for Truth and Reconciliation Committee

Justice SK Kaul recommended the establishment of a "Truth and Reconciliation Committee" to investigate human rights violations in J&K since the 1980s and propose reconciliation measures. However, the manner of setting up the committee was left to the government, considering the sensitivity of the issues involved.

9. Restoration of J&K's Statehood

The Court directed the Election Commission to conduct elections for the J&K Legislative Assembly by September 30, 2024, and emphasized the restoration of J&K's statehood as soon as possible.

Tiriyani Block Clinched Top Spot In NITI Aayog's Inaugural Delta Rankings

In a significant milestone for the Aspirational Blocks Programme (ABP), **Tiriyani Block** of Kumuram Bheem Asifabad district, **Telangana**, has secured the **top position** in the **first delta rankings announced by NITI Aayog**. The rankings, revealed during a virtual event at NITI Aayog, showcased the outstanding performance and progress achieved by blocks across the country in the month of June 2023.

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) Drive Competitiveness

The rankings were determined based on the performance of blocks and progress achieved in the **Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)** during the month.

This strategic approach aligns with the spirit of competitive and cooperative federalism, marking the first time that the ranking of blocks has been calculated as part of the Aspirational Blocks Programme.

ADP Rankings Recognize Achievements in October 2023

In addition to ABP, the event also announced the **Achievers of Development Programme (ADP)** rankings for October 2023.

Rayagada in Odisha and **Jamui in Bihar** secured the first and second ranks, respectively, in this initiative.

The top-performing blocks and districts in thematic and overall categories were felicitated, emphasizing the dual focus on both blocks and districts.

Wall of Fame: Showcasing Excellence and Impact

A novel initiative was unveiled during the event, where the top rankers of ABP and ADP will be displayed on the Wall of Fame at NITI Aayog.

The **Wall of Fame** serves as a testament to the endeavors and projects undertaken by Aspirational Blocks and Districts to improve their indicators and achieve notable progress.

Hon'ble Vice Chairman, along with Hon'ble Members of NITI Aayog, inaugurated the Wall of Fame, celebrating the achievements of the best-performing Aspirational Blocks and Districts in the country.

Zonal Rankings Highlight Regional Success

Geographically dividing the blocks into six zones, the rankings recognized the top performers in each zone.

Notable winners include:

Zone	Rank	Block	District	State
1	1	Amri	West Karbi Anglong	Assam
1	2	Ngopa	Saitual	Mizoram
2	1	Harraiya	Basti	Uttar Pradesh
2	2	Virno	Ghazipur	Uttar Pradesh

- Winners from Zones 3 to 6 were:

Blocks	Districts	States
Maski	Raichur	Karnataka
Narnoor	Adilabad	Telangana
Sironcha, Aheri	Gadhichiroli	Maharashtra
Tirla, Pati	Dhar, Barwani	Madhya Pradesh
Andar	Siwan	Bihar
Ramgarh	Dumka	Jharkhand

Recognition and Rewards for Zonal Winners

- The winners from each zone will be felicitated with a prize amount of **Rs. 1.5 crores** for the top rank and **Rs. 1 crore** for the second rank in all zonal categories, acknowledging their exceptional efforts and progress.

About Aspirational Blocks Programme (ABP)

Launched on **January 7, 2023**, ABP focuses on improving governance to enhance the quality of life in the most challenging and underdeveloped blocks of India.

The program includes 500 blocks from 329 districts across 27 states and 4 Union Territories, emphasizing convergence of existing schemes, defining outcomes, and constant monitoring.

Strategic Approach: Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and Baseline Data

In consultation with various stakeholders, **40 key performance indicators** (KPIs) were chosen to measure progress, grouped into 5 themes.

Baseline data as of March 31, 2023, and the first quarter on June 30, 2023, of 500 Aspirational Blocks were sourced through the Management Information System of 11 ministries.

The first Delta rank was calculated **based on the improvement made in the first quarter**.

Chandrayaan, Jawan, and IPL Dominate India's 2023 Google Search

As 2023 draws to a close, **Google** releases its annual insights into India's search trends, revealing a fascinating tapestry of interests and curiosities that captivated the nation. This year, the data highlights a captivating mix of scientific pursuits, cinematic anticipation, and enduring love for cricket.

Here are the top 10 events that generated interested among internet users in India

- Chandrayaan-3
- Karnataka Election Results
- Israel News
- Satish Kaushik
- Budget 2023
- Turkey Earthquake
- Atiq Ahmed
- Matthew Perry
- Manipur News
- Odisha Train Accident

The list shows that the conflict between Israel and Hamas, which began after the surprise October 7 attack by Hamas operatives inside the Israeli territory, also caught the interest of the users.

Google Search Trends in India: Year in Search 2023

Google Search trends offer valuable insights into the collective interests and curiosities of India's diverse population. From scientific advancements and legal reforms to sporting passions and practical how-to guides, these trends reflect the nation's dynamic and evolving landscape.

What's Trending:

- G20:** Interest in India's G20 presidency highlights the nation's growing global prominence.
- UCC:** Queries concerning the Uniform Civil Code reflect ongoing discussions about legal reform.
- ChatGPT:** Rising awareness and curiosity around AI technology.
- Hamas:** Global events continue to capture attention, with searches about the Palestinian organization Hamas.
- Chandrayaan-3:** India's ambitious space mission generates excitement.
- Instagram Threads:** Users explore the platform's new feature.
- Timed Out in Cricket:** Basic cricket rules remain a topic of interest.
- Impact Player in IPL:** New IPL rule sparks curiosity.
- Sengol:** A specific term or topic generates significant searches.

How-to Guides:

- Sun Damage Prevention:** Focusing on natural solutions for skin and hair.
- YouTube Growth:** Aspiring creators seek advice on audience building.
- Kabaddi Skills:** The popular Indian sport continues to attract interest.

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- **Car Mileage Improvement:** Practical tips for fuel efficiency.
- **Chess Mastery:** Aspiring chess players seek guidance.
- **Rakshabandhan Surprise:** Celebrating the special bond between siblings.
- **Kanjivaram Saree Identification:** Discerning authentic silk sarees.
- **PAN and Aadhaar Linking:** Navigating the legal requirements.
- **WhatsApp Channels:** Building communities on the popular messaging platform.
- **Instagram Verification:** Aspiring influencers seek recognition.

Sports Dominated by Cricket:

- **Indian Premier League:** The nation's premier cricket tournament reigns supreme.
- **Cricket World Cup:** International cricket continues to captivate fans.
- **Asia Cup:** Regional competition holds significant appeal.
- **Women's Premier League:** New women's cricket league generates excitement.
- **Asian Games:** Multi-sport event attracts attention.

- In a significant development in the realm of banking security, **iVIS, a subsidiary of Magellanic Cloud**, has officially partnered with **ICICI Bank** to enhance the distribution of cutting-edge e-surveillance services across the bank's branches. This strategic alliance **leverages state-of-the-art AI/ML and IoT Technology** to offer services such as real-time video monitoring, facial recognition, incident detection, reporting and data analytics.

- **Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC)**, a leading insurance and investment corporation in India, has announced a significant update in its governance structure. As per the Life Insurance Corporation of India (Shareholders' Director) Regulations, 2023, notified in the Gazette of India on December 1, 2023, LIC has outlined a new framework for the addition of a shareholder's director to its board.

- **Ujjivan Small Finance Bank (Ujjivan SFB)** has recently unveiled a strategic partnership with **Water.org**, a renowned global non-profit organization dedicated to providing access to safe water and sanitation through affordable financing solutions. This collaboration holds significant promise for **addressing the pressing issue of water and sanitation in India**, which boasts the world's highest population.
- The **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** made a significant move on Monday by canceling the license of Kolhapur-based

- **Indian Super League:** Domestic football league gains traction.
- **Pakistan Super League:** Interest in neighboring country's cricket league.
- **The Ashes:** The historic cricket rivalry continues to enthrall.
- **Women's Cricket World Cup:** Women's cricket gains global recognition.
- **SA20:** South Africa's new cricket league makes its mark.

(Maharashtra) **Shankarrao Pujari Nutan Nagari Sahakari Bank Limited**, Ichalkaranji. The apex bank instructed the bank to cease all banking operations, effective from the close of business on December 4, 2023.

- **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.
- 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.
- Crude oil futures faced a downward trend on Wednesday morning, with **February Brent oil futures reaching \$77.23**, a marginal increase of 0.04 per cent. Simultaneously, **January crude oil futures** on WTI (West Texas Intermediate) experienced a dip, settling at **\$72.31**, down by 0.01 per cent. This decline comes amid various global factors impacting the oil market.

- **ACKO General Insurance** and **PhonePe** have joined forces to revolutionize the landscape of insurance accessibility in India. This strategic collaboration aims to **provide users with a comprehensive range of car and bike insurance products directly through the PhonePe platform**. Beyond just convenience, the partnership reflects the shared commitment of both companies to democratize insurance, making it a readily available financial option for millions of PhonePe users.
- In a significant move towards sustainability, **Indian Oil Corp. Ltd (IndianOil)** and **EKI Energy Services** have joined forces to promote “**Surya Nutan,**” an innovative indoor solar cooking system developed by IndianOil. This collaboration aims to leverage carbon finance and other sustainable means to enhance the production, distribution and adoption of this eco-friendly cooking solution.
- The **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** has taken a significant step by cancelling the license of **Urban Co-operative Bank (UCB)** located in **Sitapur, Uttar Pradesh**. This decision comes into effect from the close of business on December 07, 2023, marking a crucial development in the banking sector.
- In a strategic move to stabilize pulse prices, the Indian government, through the **Directorate-General of Foreign Trade (DGFT)**, has lifted restrictions on the import of yellow peas. The move allows duty-free shipments of yellow peas **until March 31, 2024**, aiming to enhance the supply of pulses in the market.
- In a strategic move targeting the dynamic preferences of Millennials and Gen Zs, IDFC FIRST Bank has introduced the “**FIRST SWYP**” **credit card**, a youth-centric offering designed to cater to the unique demands of the new-age customer.
- The **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** took a significant step on Friday by announcing an increase in the UPI payment limits **from Rs 1 lakh to Rs 5 lakh**. This decision is expected to reshape the dynamics of financial transactions, particularly in the domains of healthcare and education. RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das, during the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) announcement, highlighted the rationale behind the move and its potential impact on consumers.
- In a significant move towards women’s financial empowerment, **Bank of India** has recently introduced the **Nari Shakti Savings Account**. This exclusive savings bank product is **designed to cater specifically to women aged 18 and above** who possess an independent source of income, marking a progressive step in fostering economic independence for women.
- In a strategic move following its acquisition by TPG Capital Asia, Poonawalla Housing Finance has undergone a significant rebranding, emerging with a new identity — **Grihum Housing Finance**. This transformation comes as TPG Capital Asia acquired a substantial 99.02% equity stake in the company from Poonawalla Fincorp earlier this year.
- In a significant move towards sustainable energy, the **State Bank of India (SBI)** is set to sign a **€70 million Line of Credit (LoC)** with the **German Development Bank KfW** to support solar projects in India. The agreement is scheduled to be inked on December 14 at SBI’s IFSC Gift City Branch in Ahmedabad, marking a pivotal step in fostering solar photovoltaics (PV) initiatives across the country. As SBI gears up to sign Line of Credit with KfW, it not only reinforces the commitment to sustainable energy solutions but also positions India on a brighter path towards increased solar power capacity.
- In the fiscal landscape of India, a concerning trend has emerged as twelve states are projected to witness their debt surpassing **35% of their Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP)** by the end of the financial year 2023-24. This revelation, detailed in the Reserve Bank of India’s (RBI) latest annual publication, points to potential fiscal mismanagement and raises alarms about the fragile fiscal situation of these states. The states drawing attention from the RBI for fiscal mismanagement include **Arunachal Pradesh, Bihar, Goa, Himachal Pradesh, Kerala, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Punjab, Rajasthan, and West Bengal**.
- Indian banks significantly increased their overseas presence, reaching **417 subsidiaries** in the fiscal year 2022-23, up from **399 in the previous year**, according to a recent Reserve Bank of India (RBI) survey. The survey encompasses **14 Indian banks** with foreign branches or subsidiaries and 44 foreign banks with a presence in India.
- Bandhan Bank recently announced its official authorization by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) to facilitate pension disbursement through **e-Pension Payment Orders (e-PPOs)** on behalf of the **Ministry of Railways**. The bank is in the process of integrating with the Ministry of Railways to streamline and operationalize the pension disbursement process. This mandate extends the bank’s reach to approximately **50,000 average Indian Railways retirees annually**, covering all offices, including 17 zonal railways and 8 production units of Indian Railways.
- Tamil Nadu has witnessed a cumulative **Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) inflow of nearly \$10 billion** in the past four years (October 2019 to September 2023). However, the state’s FDI for the fiscal year 2022-23 stood at \$2.17 billion, a decrease from the previous year’s \$3 billion.

- The **Asian Development Bank (ADB)** has taken a significant stride in fostering sustainable urban development by approving a **USD 200 million loan** to bolster the **Swachh Bharat (Clean India) Mission-Urban 2.0**. This initiative, committed to making **all cities garbage-free by 2026**, aims to introduce international best practices, integrate new technologies, and adopt climate- and disaster-resilient approaches in municipal solid waste management.
- Deposits and advances of all scheduled banks witnessed a remarkable surge, each exceeding **₹2-lakh crore** in the reporting fortnight concluding on December 1, 2023, as per the Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) Scheduled Banks' Statement of Position in India. Deposits experienced an impressive growth of **₹2,30,727 crore** during this period. Advances also recorded a substantial increase, reaching **₹2,15,584 crore**.
- India's economic landscape in November 2023 witnessed a decline in merchandise exports by 2.83%, totaling \$33.90 billion, compared to \$34.89 billion in the corresponding month the previous year. This downturn, however, contributed to a positive trend in the **trade deficit**, which narrowed to \$20.58 billion, as revealed by government data released by the Commerce Ministry.
- The **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** has recently taken strict action against **five cooperative banks**, issuing monetary penalties for deficiencies in regulatory compliance. These cooperative banks include **Indapur Urban Co-operative Bank Ltd**, **Janakalyan Sahakari Bank Ltd**, **The Patan Urban Co-operative Bank Ltd**, **Pune Merchants Co-operative Bank Ltd**, and **Pune Municipal Corporation Servant's Co-operative Urban Bank Ltd**. The penalties were imposed under the powers granted to the RBI by certain provisions of the **Banking Regulation Act, 1949**.
- **India's National Pension System (NPS)** has witnessed a substantial growth in assets, reaching a new milestone of **₹10.7 lakh crore** as of December 9, 25.95% higher than the previous year. Bolstered by a robust equity market, the latest data from the **Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority (PFRDA)** reveals noteworthy insights into the performance and trajectory of NPS investments.
- The call for a reduction in retail prices for petrol and diesel has intensified as international crude oil prices recently dropped below \$80 per barrel, **stabilizing in the \$76-77 range**. This demand is backed by the robust performance of oil marketing companies (OMCs) in the first half of fiscal year 2023 and the maintenance of retail inflation within the Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) comfort zone in November 2023.
- IndusInd Bank has recently launched the **'Indus Solitaire Program,'** an innovative community banking initiative specifically designed to cater to the unique needs of the

diamond industry. This comprehensive program is set to provide an array of exclusive benefits and features, reinforcing the bank's commitment to serving the diamond community.

In a significant step towards addressing the pressing issues of global warming and promoting sustainability education, research and outreach, the **Indian Institute of Technology Kanpur (IIT) and Kotak Mahindra Bank Limited (KMBL)** have joined forces to establish the **Kotak School of Sustainability**. The collaboration aims to provide leadership solutions for sustainability and prepare future generations to champion the cause of sustainable development.

The 605th gathering of the Central Board of Directors of the Reserve Bank of India, led by Governor Shaktikanta Das, meticulously examined the prevailing economic and financial landscape. The discussions, held against the backdrop of the challenging global geopolitical developments, aimed to dissect both domestic and international scenarios.

Payment processing giants **Razorpay** and **Cashfree** have received the final authorization from the **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** to operate as **Payment Aggregators (PAs)**. This significant development comes after a year-long pause in onboarding new merchants, in compliance with RBI advisory. Open, a neobanking fintech, has also secured the final approval from RBI to operate as a Payment Aggregator.

Shares of State Bank of India (SBI) have reached new heights, hitting a **record Rs 659.50**, marking a substantial 17% surge in the past month. This surge has outpaced the market, with S&P BSE Sensex and Nifty 50 up by nearly 9%, and the Nifty PSU Bank index gaining 14% during the same period. The remarkable rally has propelled SBI's market capitalization close to Rs 6 trillion, drawing attention to the bank's positive financial performance.

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has released projections for India's economic performance, utilizing its **Dynamic Stochastic General Equilibrium (DSGE) model**. The forecast indicates a real GDP growth of 7.1% for the fiscal year 2023-24, surpassing the previous estimate of 7%, and a subsequent slowdown to 6% in the following fiscal year, 2024-25.

After more than a year of anticipation, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has finally given its approval for at least six payment aggregator licences, signaling the end of the ban on entities such as **RazorPay and Cashfree Payments** from onboarding new merchants. The central bank had imposed temporary restrictions in December 2022, instructing platforms with in-principal approvals, including **RazorPay, Cashfree Payments, PayU, PineLabs, Paytm, and Stripe**, to halt merchant onboarding until additional documents and audit reports were submitted for final license consideration.

- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) announced on December 20 a pivotal decision to enable **Card-on-File Tokenisation (CoFT)** directly through card-issuing banks or institutions. This marks a shift from the previous method where a **Card-on-File (CoF) token** could only be generated through a merchant's application or webpage. The move is in alignment with the RBI's commitment to enhancing user convenience and security in digital transactions.
- In a landmark decision, the **Ministry of Railways** has issued a directive for the handover of all assets from the **National Academy of Indian Railways (NAIR)**, located in **Vadodara, to Gati Shakti Vishwavidyalaya (GSV)**. This directive comes in alignment with the vision of Prime Minister Narendra Modi to bolster the newly envisioned Central university. The move is poised to impact the esteemed legacy of NAIR, a pivotal training facility for railway officers over several decades.
- According to a comprehensive report compiled from data sourced from the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), Clearing Corporation of India, and the Securities and Exchange Board of India, India's total debt has witnessed a significant uptick in the September quarter. The total outstanding bonds traded in the market surged to **USD 2.47 trillion (Rs 205 lakh crore)**, marking an increase from the USD 2.34 trillion (Rs 200 lakh crore) reported in the March quarter of the previous fiscal year.
- Regulated entities like banks and NBFCs face a daunting task as they consider exiting their investments in **alternative investment funds (AIFs)**. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has mandated a 30-day window for these entities to evaluate and liquidate their AIF portfolios to address concerns about the disguised evergreening of loan exposures.
- The **Institute of Chartered Accountants of India**, recognized as the world's largest professional body of Chartered Accountants, recently revealed a **new logo** that encapsulates its commitment to an India-first approach and its role as a trusted partner in nation-building. This unveiling took place at the **Global Professional Accountants Convention (GloPAC)** in Gandhinagar, where the Vice-President, **Jagdeep Dhankhar**, and Commerce and Industry Minister, Piyush Goyal, were present.
- ICICI Bank has received the Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) approval for the re-appointment of **Sandeep Batra as the Executive Director (ED)**. The approval, conveyed through an official letter, is effective from December 23, 2023, to December 22, 2025.
- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) is set to increase its liquidity infusion into the banking system through the **7-day variable rate repo (VRR) auction** on December 22. The central bank, responding to a liquidity deficit near an 8-year high of ₹2.27-lakh crore as of December 20, has raised the offered amount to ₹1.75-lakh crore, up from ₹1-lakh crore in the previous week. This move aims to assist banks in overcoming liquidity challenges.
- Shares of the leading state-run insurer LIC surged to a new 52-week high on December 22 following a significant development. The Ministry of Finance has granted a one-time exemption to Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) regarding the **25% Minimum Public Shareholding (MPS) rule**. The decision allows LIC to achieve the mandated 25% MPS within 10 years of its listing, extending the deadline to May 2032.
- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has released a preliminary framework for **self-regulatory organizations (SROs)** aimed at overseeing banks, non-banking financial companies (NBFCs), and other entities under its regulatory purview. Seeking public input until January 25, 2024, the draft outlines eligibility criteria and operational guidelines for potential SROs.
- Bima Vistaar, a groundbreaking all-in-one insurance product encompassing life, health, and property coverage, is poised for launch in the first quarter of the upcoming financial year. The **Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI) reports** that the product design and crucial rollout aspects are nearing completion, with a keen focus on leveraging technology for a seamless launch.
- The **Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI)** is set to revolutionize the Indian stock market with a proposed two-phase implementation of **same-day settlement (T+0)** and instant settlement. In a consultation paper, SEBI invites public comments, emphasizing that the shorter settlement cycles will be supplementary to the existing T+1 cycle.
- 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.
- The **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** recently took decisive action against **four co-operative banks in Gujarat**, slapping monetary penalties on them for various non-compliances. The penalties range from **Rs 50,000 to Rs 7 lakh**, reflecting the severity of the regulatory infractions. The affected banks include Progressive Mercantile Co-operative Bank Ltd., The Kutch Mercantile Co-operative Bank Ltd., Shree Morbi Nagarik Sahakari Bank Ltd., and Bhabhar Vibhag Nagarik Sahakari Bank Limited.

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- **Education loans** in India have witnessed a remarkable year-on-year growth of **20.6%**, reaching ₹1,10,715 crore in the current financial year till October. This substantial increase, as reported by the **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)**, marks the **highest growth in the last five years**. In comparison, the growth registered in the corresponding period was 12.3% in FY23 and a negative 3.1% in FY22, reflecting a significant positive shift.
- The **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** has recently given its nod for the appointment of **C S Rajan** as the **part-time Chairman of Kotak Mahindra Bank**, marking a significant development for the financial institution. Rajan's tenure is set to commence on the 1st of January 2024, lasting for a period of two years.
- The **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** released a report applauding the performance of Indian banks and non-bank lenders, emphasizing the need for stronger governance and risk-management practices to fortify their balance sheets. Despite a remarkable **12.2% growth** in the consolidated balance sheet of scheduled commercial banks (SCBs) in 2022-23, the RBI underscored the importance of continued improvement.
- **Bank of Baroda (BoB)**, the second-largest public sector bank (PSB) in India, witnessed a surge in its share price, reaching a fresh 52-week high of ₹233.75 per share on the Bombay Stock Exchange (BSE). The boost came following the bank's announcement inviting potential buyers to sell stake in its New Zealand arm.
- The **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** has granted approval for the reverse merger of **IDFC Ltd** with its banking subsidiary, **IDFC First Bank**. The respective boards of IDFC First Bank and IDFC had previously greenlit the reverse merger in July.
- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has reaffirmed **State Bank of India (SBI), HDFC Bank, and ICICI Bank** as Domestic Systemically Important Banks (D-SIBs). Notably, SBI and HDFC Bank have been shifted to higher buckets, necessitating increased D-SIB buffer requirements effective April 1, 2025.
- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has granted approval to **ICICI Prudential Asset Management Company Ltd (ICICI AMC)** for the acquisition of up to 9.95% stake in Federal Bank. The approval, issued on December 28, comes with certain conditions in accordance with the Banking Regulation Act, 1949, and RBI's Master Direction and Guidelines on Acquisition and Holding of Shares or Voting Rights in Banking Companies dated January 16, 2023.
- **Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB)** is set to spearhead a fundraising round worth Rs 2,500 crore for the Sustainable Energy Infrastructure Investment Trust (InvIT) supported by the Mahindra Group. In this initiative, various domestic institutional investors (DIIs) will also be actively participating, according to sources familiar with the matter.

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- Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) into India witnessed a substantial contraction from the **Cayman Islands and Cyprus** during April-September in the current fiscal year, contributing to an overall decline of 24% in FDI inflows.
- Since April 2020, India has attracted FDI proposals totaling ₹1 lakh crore from countries sharing its land borders, including **China, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Bhutan, Nepal, Myanmar, and Afghanistan**. A crucial development came in April 2020 when the government mandated prior approval for such investments to safeguard domestic firms amid the COVID-19 pandemic.
- In November, India's manufacturing **Purchasing Managers Index (PMI)** exhibited a positive trajectory, reaching 56, a slight uptick from October's 55.5. While still below the September figure of 57.5, this rise indicates a rebound from the slowest rate of expansion recorded in October since February. The PMI, a key economic indicator, maintains the 50-mark threshold, distinguishing between expansion and contraction.
- GST collection surpassed the Rs 1.50 lakh crore mark every month in the current fiscal year. April 2023 recorded a historic high, reaching Rs 1.87 lakh crore in GST collection.
- The average gross monthly GST mop-up for FY 2023-24 stands at Rs 1.66 lakh crore, reflecting an 11% YoY increase from the previous fiscal year. Monthly average GST collection for 2022-23 showed a substantial growth of 30%, following a 22% YoY increase in 2021-22. In 2020-21, the average monthly GST collection was Rs 94,734 crore.
- India's GDP data for July-September has showcased the **construction sector's stellar performance**, growing by an impressive 13.3% year-on-year. This surge, the best in five quarters, has propelled India's overall economic expansion to a forecast-beating 7.6%, positioning it as one of the fastest-growing major economies globally.
- Himachal Pradesh stands out with the **highest overall unemployment rate at 33.9%**, making it the state with the most significant joblessness challenge in the 15-29 age group in urban areas during the specified quarter. Rajasthan closely follows with a rate of 30.2%. The overall unemployment rate in the 15-29 age group in urban areas across the country is 17.3%, with females experiencing a higher rate of 22.9% compared to males at 15.5%. This data provides a snapshot of the employment landscape, highlighting the challenges faced by the youth in various states.

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- The **Services Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI)** in India revealed a decline to 56.9 in November, marking a one-year low compared to October's 58.4. However, the sector maintained its expansion streak for the **28th consecutive month**, remaining above the crucial 50-point threshold that separates expansion from contraction.
- India's stock market achieved a significant milestone, surpassing a **market value of over \$4 trillion**. This development highlights the rapid growth of the world's fifth-largest equity market, closing the gap with a struggling Hong Kong. In less than three years, the market capitalization of companies listed on India's exchanges has surged by \$1 trillion.
- The World Bank and research agency BMI, a unit of Fitch Solutions, have jointly forecasted a **6.5% decline in global grain prices in 2024**. However, rice is expected to be an exception due to India's export restrictions and concerns related to El Nino.
- India's economy is poised for a strong rebound, with the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) projecting a growth of **6.8% in the current fiscal year (FY24)** and an acceleration to **7% in the subsequent fiscal year (FY25)**. CII attributes this optimistic outlook to the government's unwavering commitment to infrastructure development and the facilitation of ease of doing business.
- India's foreign exchange reserves have witnessed a notable upswing, reaching **\$604 billion as of December 1**, marking a significant milestone after a four-month hiatus. The last instance of the reserves crossing the \$600 billion threshold was recorded on August 11 earlier this year.
- India witnessed contrasting trends in its economic indicators in October and November, with the **Index of Industrial Production (IIP) surging** to a 16-month high while **retail inflation** experienced an uptick, reaching a three-month high. These developments have significant implications for GDP projections and monetary policy. The IIP recorded an impressive 11.7% year-on-year growth in October, marking a substantial increase from the 6.8% reported in September. Retail inflation, measured by the Consumer Price Index (CPI), increased to 5.55% year-on-year in November, up from 4.87% in October.
- In November, nine states in India experienced a **higher rate of inflation** compared to the national average, according to recent data. The average cost of living for Indian consumers rose by 5.55% compared to the same period last year.
- In a recent development, the Lok Sabha has given its approval for a net **additional spending of ₹58,378 crore** in the ongoing fiscal year, set to conclude in March 2024. Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman highlighted the government's commitment to fiscal prudence while maintaining a focus on social welfare programs.
- Global rating agency **Moody's Investors Service** has recently reaffirmed the **Baa2 rating for Reliance Industries Limited (RIL)**, maintaining a stable outlook. This affirmation reflects RIL's substantial market presence and strong performance across its diverse business sectors. Moody's projects a significant growth in RIL's consolidated EBITDA, estimating a **14% increase to ₹1.7 trillion (around \$21 billion)** for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2024. This growth is expected to be driven by robust performances in digital services, retail, and the upstream oil and gas segment.
- The **International Monetary Fund (IMF)** has approved the release of the second tranche, amounting to approximately **\$337 million**, under the **Extended Fund Facility (EFF)** to **Sri Lanka**. This financial support is a crucial component of Sri Lanka's recovery plan, aimed at overcoming the economic challenges resulting from a historic financial crash in the previous year.
- After seven consecutive months of deflation, **India's wholesale prices rebounded**, recording a growth of 0.26% in November, compared to the -0.52% rate observed in October. The **Commerce and Industry Ministry** attributes this upturn primarily to increased prices in various sectors, including food articles, minerals, machinery & equipment, computer, electronics & optical products, motor vehicles, other transport equipment, and other manufactured goods.
- India's logistics cost for the fiscal year 2021-22 has been revealed to be in the range of **7.8-8.9% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP)**, according to a government survey. This figure is notably lower than previous private survey estimates, which suggested a cost exceeding 10%.
- The **Asian Development Bank (ADB)** has adjusted India's growth projection for the current financial year, FY24, from 6.3% to a more optimistic 6.7%, citing a robust second-quarter performance that exceeded expectations.
- In the first eight months of the current fiscal year, **net direct tax collection** has witnessed a substantial surge, reaching Rs 10.64 trillion. This marks a remarkable 23.4% increase compared to the corresponding period last year. The Ministry of Finance reported that this collection represents 58.34% of the Budget Estimates (BE) for the fiscal year.
- In the automotive sector, **India** has stood out as a significant example of progress, surpassing its counterparts in the world's largest markets. According to **S&P Global Mobility forecasts**, India is set to witness a **remarkable 36% growth** in its light vehicle market in 2023, reaching 4.8 million units—a testament to the country's resilience and quick recovery in the post-pandemic era.

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- Domestic rating agency ICRA has adjusted its **GDP growth projection for the fiscal year 2024**, increasing it to 6.5% from the previous estimate of 6.2%. This update, however, remains below the Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) more optimistic 7% GDP growth forecast for the current fiscal year.
- India's economic landscape has witnessed a significant transformation over the past few decades, marked by a notable decline in the share of agriculture in the Gross Domestic Product (GDP). According to recent government data, **the share of agriculture in India's GDP dropped from 35% in the fiscal year 1990-91 to 15% in 2022-23**. This shift can be attributed to the rapid growth experienced by the industrial and service sectors during this period.
- In October 2023, India experienced a surge in net **foreign direct investment (FDI)**, reaching a 21-month high at \$5.9 billion. This upswing was attributed to robust gross inflows and a decrease in repatriation. The Reserve Bank of India's data revealed a notable increase from \$1.54 billion in September 2023 and \$1.16 billion in October 2022.
- 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.
- Continuing its commitment to empower state governments, the central government has disbursed an additional instalment of **Rs 72,961.21 crore** as tax devolution to states on December 22, 2023. This comes as a follow-up to a similar transfer earlier in the month on December 11, according to an official statement from the finance ministry.
- In November, the production growth of **eight crucial infrastructure sectors** hit a six-month low at 7.8%, primarily attributed to declines in the crude oil and cement sectors. While this figure is higher than the 5.7% recorded a year ago, it reflects a slowdown from October's 12% growth. The last comparable dip occurred in May, with a growth rate of 5.2%. Despite the overall deceleration, coal and refinery product outputs demonstrated double-digit growth.

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- **Bajaj Group** achieved a significant milestone by surpassing **Rs.10 lakh crore in market capitalization**, making it the **fifth business houses to attain this feat**. This elite club already includes prominent names like **Tata, Reliance Industries, HDFC Bank and the Adani Group**. Let's delve into the key factors contributing to this remarkable achievement and the individual companies that played a pivotal role.
- **Bharti Airtel**, one of India's leading telecommunications companies, achieved a significant milestone by becoming the **8th company** to surpass **Rs.6 lakh crore on December 4**. This surge was attributed to the positive market sentiment following the Bharatiya Janata Party's resounding victory in state elections. The company's stock witnessed a **2% increase** during Monday's trade, contributing to a **year-to-date gain of 28%**.
- In a significant move, **Foxconn**, the Taiwan-based giant responsible for assembling around **70% of iPhones globally**, is set to invest an additional **139.11 billion rupees (\$1.67 billion) in the state of Karnataka**. This decision underscores Foxconn's ongoing efforts to diversify production away from China, driven by disruptions caused by the Covid-19 pandemic and geopolitical tensions.
- In a significant move to ensure fair and affordable access to Aadhar Services, the **Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI)** has implemented strict measures against operators found guilty of overcharging and also **imposed penalty of Rs.50,000 against them**. The move aims to ensure fair and accessible services for all citizens, **Minister of State for Electronics and IT, Rajeev Chandrasekhar**, revealed the details of these measures in a written reply to the Lok Sabha.
- **Tata Steel**, a global steel leader, as embarked on a groundbreaking collaboration with **Imperial College London** to establish the **Centre for Innovation in Sustainable Design and Manufacturing in London**. This Memorandum of Understanding signifies a strategic partnership aimed at accelerating technology development and deployment in critical areas, attracting talent and fostering a robust industry-academia collaborative ecosystem. To realize this vision, Tata Steel has committed a substantial **investment of Rs.104 crore over the next four years**.
- Union Civil Aviation Minister **Jyotiraditya Scindia** recently unveiled ambitious plans for Uttar Pradesh's aviation infrastructure. The Modi government, displaying a strong commitment to the civil aviation sector, is set to construct **nine new airports** in the state within the next two years. This initiative will propel the total number of airports in Uttar Pradesh to an impressive 18. Scindia highlighted the government's remarkable achievements in the aviation domain, citing the development of **75 airports over the past nine years**.
- In a significant move towards promoting sustainable and greener energy solutions, **Reliance Industries** has forged a strategic partnership with **DBS Bank India** to establish a financing program targeting farmers and aggregators. The primary objective of this collaboration is to **manage crop residue effectively, utilizing it in the production of compressed biogas (CBG)**.

Air India, the national carrier, recently revealed its revamped uniforms for **cabin crew and pilots**, designed by renowned **fashion designer Manish Malhotra**. The grand unveiling took place on **December 12**, adding a touch of glamour and sophistication to the airline's image.

Hindustan Coca-Cola Beverages (HCCB) has inked a significant Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the **Government of Gujarat**, indicating a massive investment of **Rs.3000 crore**. This strategic move showcases HCCB's dedication to establishing a cutting-edge manufacturing facility for juices and aerated beverages in Rajkot by 2026.

The **e-retail market in India** is poised for substantial growth, with a report by **Bain & Company in collaboration with Flipkart** projecting a surge past the **USD 160 billion mark by 2028**. The report highlights key factors contributing to this growth, including affordable data, improved logistics, fintech infrastructure and a robust digital consumer ecosystem.

Stellantis N.V. CEO Carlos Tavares highlighted the strategic importance of India in the company's global operations and outlined his vision for the country as part of the **Dare Forward 2030 global strategic plan**. The merged companies that formed **Stellantis** have invested **over \$1 billion since 2015** to establish a sustainable footprint in India, aligning with the Government of India's **"Make in India"** initiative led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

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.

In November, India experienced a notable surge in long-haul thermal coal imports, with shipments from the United States peaking at **1.40 million tonnes (MT)**, marking the highest level in over a year. The information comes from energy intelligence firm Kpler, which reported that India's total thermal coal imports for the month amounted to 17.51 MT, slightly lower than the 15-month high of 18.66 MT recorded in October 2023. Despite a month-on-month decrease, the data reveals a year-on-year increase of 6.92 MT.

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.

IndiGo, India's leading carrier, has achieved a historic milestone by becoming the **first Indian airline to transport 100 million passengers** in a single calendar year. This accomplishment places IndiGo in an elite global club of carriers operating such a massive scale, solidifying its position among the **world's top-10 airlines by passenger traffic**.

Thirteen Indian states participated in a state government securities auction, collectively raising Rs 19,692 crore, slightly surpassing the notified **amount of Rs 19,592 crore**. This marked an increase from the previous week, where eight states had raised Rs 12,100 crore through a similar auction.

Semiconductor powerhouses **MediaTek** and **Nvidia** have recently forged a strategic partnership aimed at bringing **artificial intelligence (AI)** to the forefront of the automotive industry. This collaboration signifies a bold step towards revolutionizing in-car experiences, shaping the evolution of autonomous driving systems, and establishing a new standard for smart vehicles.

The **Unit 4 of Kakrapar Atomic Power Project (KAPP 4 – 700 MW)** marked a historic moment in India's nuclear power landscape by achieving criticality, signifying the initiation of controlled fission chain reactions. This significant milestone, attained on December 17, 2023, is a testament to the stringent safety standards set by the **Atomic Energy Regulatory Board (AERB)**.

The ambitious disinvestment target for the current fiscal year is likely to be missed, with major plans, including **Bharat Petroleum Corporation Ltd (BPCL)**, **Shipping Corporation of India (SCI)**, and **CONCOR**, pushed to the backburner. Analysts suggest that substantive privatization may only resume after the April/May elections. Over the past decade, disinvestments have raised around Rs 4.20 trillion, with Rs 3.15 trillion coming from minority stake sales and Rs 69,412 crore from strategic transactions in 10 CPSEs. The lack of progress in the current fiscal year underscores the challenges inherent in the strategic sale process.

Cricket fans, raise a glass of your favorite **Coca-Cola beverage!** The iconic brand has cemented its long-standing relationship with the sport, signing an eight-year deal as the **global partner of the International Cricket Council (ICC)** until the end of **2031**. This partnership marks a significant extension from their initial five-year agreement in 2019, solidifying Coca-Cola's position as a major player in the cricketing world.

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."**

- In a strategic move, the **Life Insurance Corporation (LIC)**, often referred to as an insurance behemoth, has taken the decision to **open a branch office at GIFT City**, the sole operational International Financial Services Centre (IFSC) in the country. This development comes as part of LIC's ongoing efforts to enhance its global footprint and diversify its offerings.

Wardwizard Foods and Beverages Limited recently witnessed a significant surge in its shares, rising by 9.98 per cent, following the company's collaboration with the government of **Gujarat**. The strategic move was formalized through a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed by **DH Shah**, Managing Director of Gujarat Agro Industries Corporation Limited, and **Sheetal Bhalerao**, Chairperson and Managing Director of Wardwizard Foods and Beverages Limited.

Recent reports highlight **Ohio as the first U.S. state to experience a surge in cases** of a pneumonia-like illness dubbed 'white lung syndrome.' The outbreak, primarily affecting children, has led to a significant number of hospitalizations, causing concern among health officials. Global attention is drawn to the situation as the **World Health Organization (WHO)** monitors rising respiratory infections in Chinese children, with other countries like India also remaining vigilant.

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.

The President of the World Bank, **Ajay Banga**, has outlined a strategic initiative aimed at scaling up climate financing through securitization. This innovative approach, led by the **Private Sector Investment Lab (PSIL)**, focuses on creating a model of **"originate-to-distribute"** to attract substantial investments from deep-pocketed investors for climate-related projects.

Kenyan President William Samoei Ruto recently embarked on a three-day state visit to India, emphasizing the enduring friendship between the two nations dating back to 1948. The visit aims to consolidate diplomatic ties and explore opportunities for collaboration in various sectors. During a joint press meet with Prime Minister Modi, it was announced that India would provide a **line of credit of USD 250 million** to Kenya for modernizing its agricultural sector. Both leaders expressed commitment to exploring new opportunities for economic cooperation, with Prime Minister Modi noting India's role as a trusted development partner for Kenya.

India, the world's third-largest energy consumer, recently made a significant move by conducting its **first-ever payment in rupees for crude oil** purchased from the **United Arab Emirates (UAE)**. This move is seen as part of a broader strategy to diversify oil suppliers, reduce transaction costs, and position the Indian rupee as a viable trade settlement currency. The **Reserve Bank of India's decision in July 2022**, allowing importers to pay in rupees and exporters to receive payments in the local currency, has set the stage for this initiative.

Tata Power has emerged victorious in the bid for the **Bikaner-III Neemrana-II Transmission project**, a Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) established by PFC Consulting, a subsidiary of Power Finance Corporation. The estimated cost of the project is ₹1,544 crore, with a targeted commissioning period of 24 months from the date of the project SPV transfer.

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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.

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.

Often referred to as the **Jewish Christmas, Hanukkah** or Chanukah is a festival celebrated for eight days, usually in the month of December. It is also known as the **"festival of lights."** This year, Hanukkah festivities are taking place from **December 7 to December 15**.

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.

- In a historic vote on **December 11**, former EU leader **Donald Tusk** returned as **Poland's Prime Minister** after nearly a decade, marking a significant shift from **eight years** of stormy national conservative rule. Tusk's leadership is expected to usher in a new-pro-European era, with promises to restore democratic standards and improve ties with European allies.
- The **United Nations** has officially ended its decade-long peacekeeping **mission in Mali after 10 years**, responding to the government's claim that the force was inadequate in addressing the escalating threat of violent extremism. This move marks the conclusion of the deadliest peacekeeping mission globally, with over **300 personnel casualties**. The withdrawal comes as Mali grapples with persistent challenges from Islamic extremist insurgency **since 2012**.
- In a surprising turn of events, the long-standing stand-off between **Azerbaijan and Armenia** has found an unexpected resolution, setting the stage for **Baku, Azerbaijan**, to host the **United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP29) in 2024**. The resolution emerged as part of a prisoner swap settlement, underscoring the intricate relationship between geopolitical dynamics and global efforts to combat climate change.
- **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 and Egypt** have achieved a significant breakthrough in their collaborative efforts with the successful launch of the **MisrSat-2 satellite**. Developed and assembled jointly by the two nations, this marks a pivotal moment in their burgeoning space partnership. The satellite, assembled in Egypt with Chinese support, was launched from the Jiuquan Satellite Launch Center in northwest China, utilizing the **Long March-2C carrier rocket**.
- 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.
- In a groundbreaking development, **China** has achieved a significant milestone in the field of physics with the operationalization of the **world's deepest and largest underground laboratory**. According to a report, the physics laboratory, known as the Deep Underground and Ultra-low Radiation Background Facility for Frontier Physics Experiments (DURF), reaches an impressive depth of **2,400 meters**.
- The digital age has ushered in unprecedented connectivity but also raised concerns about the potential harm children may face on social media platforms. The **UK government**, led by Prime Minister Rishi Sunak, is contemplating additional measures to **protect teenagers below the age of 16 from online dangers**, despite the recent implementation of the Online Safety Act.
- 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.
- **Egypt's President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi** has clinched a third term, garnering 89.6% of the vote in the nation's latest election, held from December 10-12. Despite economic hardships and regional tensions, Sisi's victory was anticipated, given the limited opposition.
- The World Bank's latest report reveals India's leading position in global remittances, reaching **\$125 billion in 2023**. While remittances to low- and middle-income countries grew by 3.8%, challenges include declines in the Middle East and North Africa. The report underscores the crucial role of inclusive labor markets and social protection policies.
- **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.
- At least 118 people in north-west China have lost their lives in the **country's deadliest earthquake in 13 years**. The 6.2 magnitude quake struck the mountainous **Gansu province** around midnight on Monday, also affecting the neighboring Qinghai province. The aftermath has left hundreds injured, and the fatalities might rise as rescue operations are underway in the icy conditions.
- **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**.
- The European Union (EU) has conveyed disappointment at India's refusal to engage in interim arbitration for resolving the ongoing dispute concerning import duties on **specific Information and Communications Technology (ICT) products**, such as smartphones and components. India defends its stance, asserting that interim agreements undermine the right to appeal to a permanent standing body and emphasizes the need to restore the functioning of the WTO appellate body.

- In a landmark decision, the Colorado Supreme Court, consisting entirely of justices appointed by Democratic governors, declared **former U.S. President Donald Trump** ineligible for the presidency under the U.S. Constitution's insurrection clause. This move marks the first-ever use of Section 3 of the 14th Amendment to disqualify a presidential candidate.
- **Noma**, also known as **cancrem oris** or **gangrenous stomatitis**, has recently been added to the World Health Organization's (WHO) **list of Neglected Tropical Diseases (NTDs)**. This move aims to elevate awareness, stimulate research, secure funding and intensify efforts to combat this rare yet severe infection. Noma primarily affects impoverished communities in tropical and subtropical regions, particularly targeting **children aged 2 to 6 years old**.
- **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.
- **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.
- Israel's government has approved a substantial **\$3.2 billion** grant for Intel Corp.'s ambitious plan to construct a **\$25 billion chip plant in southern Israel**. This marks the largest investment ever made by a company in Israel, showcasing significant support amid the ongoing conflict with the Palestinian militant group Hamas.
- 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.
- China has introduced its groundbreaking ocean drilling vessel, **Mengxiang**, signifying a pivotal moment in scientific exploration. Developed by the **China Geological Survey** in collaboration with 150 research institutes and companies, the vessel is named "dream" in Chinese, reflecting its ambitious mission. The Mengxiang aims to penetrate Earth's crust and delve into the mysteries of the mantle, marking humanity's inaugural foray into this uncharted territory.
- In a bid to boost Rural Tourism and enhance sustainable development, the **Ministry of Tourism, Government of India**, has announced the **National Best Tourism Village Competition 2024** and the **National Best Rural Homestay Competition 2024**. Building on the success of the previous edition in **2023**, where **25 villages were recognized** for their excellence, these competitions aim to strengthen rural economies and foster community involvement. This initiative is part of the comprehensive National Strategy and Roadmap for the Development of Rural Tourism in India.
- India, a notable absentee from the list of signatories at the 28th UN Climate Change Conference (COP28), refrained from endorsing the **COP28 Declaration on Climate and Health**. The primary point of contention arises from India's apprehensions about the practicality and achievability of reducing greenhouse gas emissions for cooling within its healthcare infrastructure.
- India has successfully slashed its GDP emission intensity by 33% between 2005 and 2019, exceeding its target 11 years ahead of schedule. A government report, **'The Third National Communication to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change,'** outlines the nation's substantial progress in decoupling economic growth from greenhouse gas emissions.
- **The Indian Railways** has initiated a pioneering step towards wildlife conservation by deploying the **"Gajraj system,"** an Artificial Intelligence (AI)-based solution designed to prevent elephant fatalities on railway tracks. This surveillance system is being implemented along a 700-kilometer stretch in forest areas to alert locomotive pilots of elephants' presence on the tracks, thereby mitigating the risk of collisions.
- **India** has been re-elected to the **International Maritime Organization (IMO) Council for the 2024-25 biennium** with the highest tally. This re-election underscores India's influential role in the international maritime arena and reflects the global community's recognition of the country's contributions to seaborne trade. The **Union Minister for Ports, Shipping and Waterways, Shri Sarbananda Sonowal**, expressed gratitude for the international support, highlighting the government's commitment to bolstering India's role in global maritime operations.

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- India has unveiled the **world's first portable disaster hospital**, Aarogya Maitri Cube, a groundbreaking facility in Gurugram that can be airlifted and consists of **72 cubes**. This extraordinary endeavor is a component of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's ambitious "**Project BHISHM**" (Bharat Health Initiative for Sahyog Hita and Maitri), unveiled in February 2022.
- In a bid to address the soaring prices of essential food items, the central government is set to launch **retail stores at major metro stations** in Delhi. This initiative aims to make kitchen essentials, including onions, pulses, and atta, available to metro commuters at subsidized prices. The first proposed store will be situated at Central Delhi's Rajiv Chowk metro station, marking the commencement of this ambitious project. The establishment and operation of this store will be overseen by the **National Cooperative Consumer Federation of India (NCCF)**.
- Cyclone Michaung, initially a severe cyclonic storm, made landfall on the **south coast of Andhra Pradesh**, wreaking havoc and leaving a trail of destruction. The storm weakened into a depression as it crossed the coast, centered in Central Coastal Andhra Pradesh. Currently, it is positioned approximately 100 km north-northwest of Bapatla and 50 km southeast of Khammam.
- PM Modi emphasized that the restructuring of naval ranks is part of a broader initiative to shed colonial military legacies. The renaming process is intended to reflect India's rich cultural heritage, aligning the naval hierarchy more closely with indigenous traditions.
- In a significant tribute to the chief architect of the Indian Constitution, **Dr. B.R. Ambedkar**, a wax statue has been unveiled at the **Jaipur Wax Museum, Nahargarh Fort**. The Founder Director of the museum, Anoop Srivastava, shared the motivation behind this addition, citing the demand from tourists and visitors. The wax statue was inaugurated on December 6, coinciding with Mahaparinirvan Day, commemorating the passing of Baba Saheb Ambedkar.
- On December 8th, at **COP28, UNICEF's Generation Unlimited**, in collaboration with **India's Ministry of Environment, Forest, and Climate Change**, unveiled the "**Green Rising**" initiative. This groundbreaking initiative, carried out through India's YuWaah campaign, places a special emphasis on **engaging youth in impactful environmental actions** at the grassroots level, drawing inspiration from the Mission Life movement.
- 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.
- India has taken a significant step towards addressing the challenges posed by climate change by joining the United Nations' '**Race to Resilience**' global campaign. This decision, announced during the recently concluded COP28 event in Dubai, reflects India's commitment to building climate resilience in its urban areas.
- Mr. Sanjay Kumar Agarwal, Chairman of the Central Board of Indirect Taxes & Customs (CBIC), inaugurated the **India-Korea Electronic Origin Data Exchange System (EODES)** on December 6, 2023, in New Delhi. The ceremony was attended by Mr. KO Kwang Hyo, Commissioner of Korea Customs Service (KCS), and his delegation.
- 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.
- 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**.
- Prime Minister **Narendra Modi** marked a historic moment on Monday as he inaugurated the **Swarved Mahamandir in Umaraha, Varanasi**. This newly constructed meditation center stands tall at **seven floors**, accommodating an impressive **20,000 devotees** at a time for meditation. The inauguration ceremony showcased the Prime Minister's commitment to fostering spiritual well-being and cultural heritage in the holy city.
- **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 prominent position on the **Governing Council for the term spanning 2024-28**.

- In a revelation during the ongoing Winter Session, the Indian Parliament disclosed a concerning trend in unclaimed deposits within the country's banking sector. The unclaimed deposits have witnessed a substantial **28% annual rise**, reaching a staggering **₹42,270 crore** by the end of the last financial year in March 2023. This marks a significant jump from the previous year's figure of ₹32,934 crore.
- The **Institute of Chartered Accountants of India**, recognized as the world's largest professional body of Chartered Accountants, recently revealed a **new logo** that encapsulates its commitment to an India-first approach and its role as a trusted partner in nation-building. This unveiling took place at the **Global Professional Accountants Convention (GloPAC)** in Gandhinagar, where the Vice-President, **Jagdeep Dhankhar**, and Commerce and Industry Minister, Piyush Goyal, were present.
- **Central Railway** general manager **Ram Karan Yadav** has recently announced a significant step towards enhancing passenger safety. In his first news conference after assuming office, Yadav disclosed plans to **install panic switches at 117 railway stations under the Central Railway network**. This move aims to provide passengers with a quick and efficient means of alerting the Railway Protection Force (RPF) in case of emergencies.
- **President Draupadi Murmu** granted her assent to three groundbreaking criminal code bills, marking a significant shift in India's legal landscape. These bills, namely the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, and the Bharatiya Sakshya Act, received parliamentary approval and are poised to replace the age-old Indian Penal Code, the Code of Criminal Procedure, and the Indian Evidence Act of 1872.
- In a significant development, India is poised to secure exploration and development rights for **five lithium blocks in Argentina**, marking its second international foray into critical minerals after a partnership with Australia in 2022. The deal is on the verge of finalization between **Khanij Bidesh India Ltd. (KABIL)** and **Catamarca Minera Y Energética Sociedad Del Estado (CAMYEN)**, an Argentine state-owned mining and energy company.
- In a significant development for the city of **Chandigarh**, Union Home Minister **Amit Shah** inaugurated **nine projects with a total investment of 368 crore rupees**. Additionally, he laid the foundation stone for three ambitious projects valued at 32 crore rupees. This marks a substantial commitment to the infrastructural and developmental growth of Chandigarh. Amit Shah also flagged off a **fleet of Chandigarh Police cars**, collectively valued at 3.75 crore rupees. Among them, a state-of-the-art police control vehicle named **'Eagle'** was introduced. This move aims to enhance the operational capabilities and efficiency of law enforcement in the city.
- India's rail network continues to evolve, with the recent unveiling of the **Amrit Bharat train**, set to be flagged off by **Prime Minister Narendra Modi**. **Union Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw** highlighted the advanced features of the train, emphasizing the incorporation of **push-pull technology for enhanced speed and passenger comfort**. This article delves into the key aspects of the Amrit Bharat train, showcasing its innovative technologies and the significant role played by India's Make in India initiative.
- Prime Minister **Narendra Modi** has cemented his dominance in the digital realm, becoming the first world leader to surpass the **2 crore subscriber mark on YouTube**. With over **4.5 billion views on his channel**, Modi has left his global peers trailing far behind, highlighting his adeptness at utilizing social media for public engagement.
- In a virtual launch ceremony, **Dr. Mansukh Mandaviya, Union Minister of Health and Family Welfare and Chemicals & Fertilizers**, introduced **'MedTech Mitra'**, a strategic initiative aimed at nurturing the talents of young innovators in the country. The platform seeks to shape their research, knowledge, and logic while providing essential support for obtaining regulatory approval.
- The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) has designated the **Muslim League Jammu Kashmir (Masarat Alam faction)** as an "unlawful association" for a five-year period under the anti-terror **Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA)**. Masarat Alam, who has been in detention in Jammu and Kashmir for the past 20 years, with intermittent releases, is currently held in Delhi's Tihar jail since 2019. He assumed the leadership of the separatist group, Hurriyat Conference, following the demise of chairman Syed Ali Shah Geelani in 2021.
- 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.
- In a bid to address the soaring rice inflation, the Government of India is contemplating a strategic move—**selling rice under the 'Bharat' brand**, a proposal that is currently under consideration. While the discounted rate for this initiative is yet to be finalized, it marks a significant step in the government's efforts to stabilize retail rice prices.
- In the span of 10 years under **Prime Minister Narendra Modi's** leadership, both personal income and corporate tax collections in India are expected to surge to over Rs 19 trillion. This substantial growth provides the government with flexibility to introduce tax measures benefiting the public.

- The Karnataka government is embarking on a strategic journey to elevate the state's economic landscape, eyeing an impressive annual investment of **Rs 1.4 trillion, a substantial 75% increase** from the current levels. The overarching goal is to position Karnataka as a premier investment destination in Asia, particularly focusing on future technology and advanced manufacturing.
- Union Home Minister and Minister of Cooperation, **Shri Amit Shah**, recently addressed the **Khadi Mati Kala Mahotsav** in **Ahmedabad, Gujarat**, emphasizing the multidimensional and multi-purpose aspects of the Khadi movement. The event witnessed the presence of distinguished guests, including Union Minister **Shri Narayan Rane** and **Shri Bhanupratap Singh Verma**.
- The **FITEXPO INDIA 2023**, one of Asia's premier sports, fitness, and wellness trade expos, commenced on December 1 at the Biswa Bangla Mela Prangan in **Kolkata**. The grand inauguration ceremony was attended by notable dignitaries, including the Guest-of-Honour, **Shri Radhe Shyam Goenka**, Chairman, Emami, and prominent figures from the fitness, sports, and wellness industry.
- On **December 4, 2023**, **Prime Minister Narendra Modi** marked a historic moment by unveiling the statue of **Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj at Rajkot Fort in Maharashtra's Sindhudurg district**. This gesture not only pays tribute to the legendary Maratha warrior king but also emphasizes the importance of preserving and celebrating India's rich maritime heritage.
- The actions undertaken by the **Bihar government** in the field of **afforestation**, particularly through the **Jal-Jeevan-Hariyali Abhiyan** (Rural Development Department), received praise from the international community at the ongoing **United Nations Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP-28)** in **Dubai**.
- The Uttarakhand government is set to host the **Global Investors Summit** in Dehradun from December 8-9, focusing on showcasing over **15 investor-friendly policies**. The summit aims to highlight good governance measures, a supportive regulatory framework, and sustainable practices to attract potential investors.
- **Lalduhoma**, the Zoram People's Movement (ZPM) leader and legislature party leader, is poised to be sworn in as the **new Chief Minister of Mizoram** on December 8. A Raj Bhavan official confirmed that Lalduhoma, along with other members of his council of ministers, will take the oath of office at 11 am in a ceremony at the Raj Bhavan.
- **Meghalaya's Lakadong turmeric**, known for its exceptional quality, has been granted the prestigious **Geographical Indication (GI) tag**. Agriculture Minister Ampareen Lyngdoh made the announcement, highlighting the positive impact on local farmers and authentic product access for consumers. Alongside Lakadong turmeric, three more products from Meghalaya were honored with the GI tag: Garo Dakmanda (traditional dress), Larnai pottery, and Garo Chubitchi (alcoholic beverage).
- The **5th Nagaland Honey Bee Day** was celebrated with great enthusiasm at Naga Heritage Village, Kisama, under the theme "**Bee & Honey Trials**." The event witnessed the presence of Deputy Chief Minister, Planning & Transformation and National Highway, **T.R. Zeliang**, who congratulated the mission and the accomplished Honey Bee farmers at both the State and District levels.
- A high-level delegation from the Uttar Pradesh government is set to participate in the **World Economic Forum (WEF) meeting in Davos, Switzerland**, scheduled from January 15 to 19. The delegation aims to showcase the state's strides towards becoming a trillion-dollar economy and transforming metropolitan towns into focal points across various sectors.
- Union Minister of Finance and Corporate Affairs, **Smt. Nirmala Sitharaman**, inaugurated the **Krishnaveni Sangeetha Neerajanam at Tummalapalli Kalakshetram in Vijayawada**. The event took place in the presence of notable dignitaries, including **Smt R K Roja**, Minister for Tourism, Government of Andhra Pradesh, and **Shri Buggana Rajendranath**, Minister for Finance, Government of Andhra Pradesh.
- **Bhajan Lal Sharma**, a prominent figure in **Rajasthan's** political landscape, is set to become the **state's next Chief Minister**. At 56 years old, he brings a wealth of political experience and accomplishments to the position. This article delves into his background, political journey, recent electoral victory, and key details about the upcoming leadership in Rajasthan.
- Punjab Chief Minister **Bhagwant Mann** and AAP national convenor **Arvind Kejriwal** recently launched the "**Bhagwant Mann Sarkar, Tuhade Dwaar**" scheme in **Ludhiana**, marking a historic day for the state. This initiative, inspired by the successful Delhi Model, aims to revolutionize governance by **providing doorstep delivery of essential services**. Mann and Kejriwal inaugurated the "Mobile Sahayaks," a fleet of delivery men adorned in distinctive yellow T-shirts featuring Mann's image. These sahayaks will play a crucial role in providing doorstep delivery of 43 critical services to the citizens of Punjab.

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- Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) worth an impressive **Rs 50,530 crore** have been successfully inked with approximately 300 companies, reflecting a resounding success for Bihar. These agreements span diverse sectors, underlining the state's appeal to investors.
- **Telangana**, known for its vibrant culture and rapid urbanization, is set to embark on a transformative journey as the state government unveils its ambitious plan to decentralize development. Governor Tamilisai Soundararajan recently announced the **strategic division of the state into three zones**, positioning **Hyderabad as the central hub** for this groundbreaking initiative.
- In a landmark decision, the Indian Parliament has given its nod to the establishment of the **Sammakka Sarakka Central Tribal University** in Telangana. The approval comes in the form of **The Central Universities (Amendment) Bill, 2023**, which successfully passed through the Rajya Sabha, having been previously cleared by the Lok Sabha. This move signifies a significant stride towards providing quality education in tribal regions and fostering inclusive learning environments.
- **Goa Liberation Day 2023**, celebrated annually on **December 19**, holds special significance as it commemorates the liberation of the state from **Portuguese colonial rule**. The year 2023 marks the **62nd anniversary** of this momentous occasion, highlighting the resilience and determination of the people of Goa in their quest for freedom.
- **Kurukshetra**, a sacred town resonating with cultural heritage and spiritual significance, witnessed a grand spectacle as it hosted the inauguration of the **International Gita Mahotsav – 2023**. This week-long celebration promises a unique blend of spirituality, cultural diversity, and global participation, captivating visitors until December.
- The **Uttar Pradesh Police** has taken a significant step towards **enhancing public outreach and transparency** by becoming one of the first in the country to **launch WhatsApp Channels for its headquarters and all district units**. The initiative aims to publicize the commendable work of the district police and provide timely information about actions taken in criminal and law and order incidents. ~
- **Tamil Nadu** has once again secured the coveted '**Achiever**' status among coastal states in the **Logistics Ease Across Different States (LEADS) 2023 rankings**, affirming its position as a logistic powerhouse in India. The state's remarkable performance in the export-import ecosystem has earned accolades, marking the second consecutive time it has achieved this prestigious status. ~
- Two prominent Indian states, **Rajasthan and Andhra Pradesh**, have taken significant strides in deploying higher capacities under the "**Development of Solar Parks and Ultra Mega Solar Power Projects**" scheme. This initiative, launched in December 2014 with an initial capacity of 20,000 MW, was later expanded to 40,000 MW in March 2017, aiming to establish at least 50 solar parks by 2023-24.
- The **16th Rajasthan Assembly** witnessed a significant development as **Vasudev Devnani**, a seasoned BJP MLA with five terms under his belt, was unanimously elected as the **Speaker**.
- In a groundbreaking move, **Uttar Pradesh, India's largest state**, is set to establish the **country's first AI city in Lucknow**. This initiative aims to create a thriving hub for artificial intelligence, integrating cutting-edge technology, research centers, and educational institutions to foster innovation and nurture the workforce of the future. (
- The **Karnataka State Road Transport Corporation (KSRTC)** marked a significant milestone in its journey by venturing into the logistics business. Minister for Transport **Ramalinga Reddy** inaugurated the initiative under the brand name "**Namma Cargo**," introducing cargo services on KSRTC route buses. The launch event saw the **deployment of 20 cargo trucks to kickstart the 'Namma Cargo' services in various districts across the state**.
- The holy city of **Ayodhya** is gearing up for a major transformation, with the renaming of its iconic railway junction and the inauguration of a brand new airport.
- The **Ayodhya Dham railway station** is now a state-of-the-art facility that seamlessly blends ancient Indian architecture with modern amenities.
- A **fertilizer plant in North Chennai's Ennore area experienced an ammonia gas leak**, leading to the hospitalization of around 50 people. The incident has raised concerns about the safety protocols in place and the potential environmental impact of such leaks. The gas leak occurred from an underwater pipeline that runs from the sea to the fertilizer manufacturing facility of Coromandel International Limited.
- The airport currently boasts the lengthy name "Maryada Purushottam Shri Ram International Airport." The Yogi Adityanath government is reportedly considering renaming it "Maharishi Valmiki Airport," honoring the revered poet who authored the epic Ramayana. ~
- **Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh**: In a push towards clean energy and tackling climate change, **Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath** has directed officials to implement the state's **Green Hydrogen Policy-2023**. This policy aims to incentivize and boost the production and utilization of green hydrogen, a promising alternative to fossil fuels.~

- Uttar Pradesh, **Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath** inaugurated the **state's first intra-district helicopter service in Bateswar**, a historical village located 65 km from Agra city. This venture, operating on a Public-Private Partnership (PPP) model, is expected to open new doors for tourism in the region. ~
- Telangana Deputy Chief Minister **Bhatti Vikramarka Mallu** recently inaugurated the **Government's Praja Palana programme** in Ibrahimpatnam, marking the initiation of an extensive initiative aimed at understanding and addressing the needs of the people at the grassroots level.
- **Gujarat** has emerged as the **nation's petrochemical powerhouse**, boasting the world's largest grassroots oil refinery and a state-of-the-art petrochemical complex. The dynamic growth of the petrochemical sector in Gujarat is exemplified by the monumental achievements of Reliance Industries Ltd's (RIL) Jamnagar refinery and the ONGC Petro

additions Limited (OPaL) petrochemical complex in Dahej.

- Kerala's Chief Minister, Pinarayi Vijayan, recently inaugurated the **Kerala Public Enterprises (Selection and Recruitment) Board**, a pivotal step toward **enhancing transparency and efficiency in the recruitment processes of public sector units (PSUs)**. This establishment, located at Vellayambalam, is set to play a crucial role in identifying and appointing capable candidates within state-run entities.
- The **Gujarat government**, in collaboration with **Mazgaon Dock Limited (MDL)**, is set to make waves in the tourism industry by introducing **India's first submarine tourism venture**. This ambitious project aims to explore the mesmerizing marine life surrounding Bet Dwarka, a sacred island off the coast of Dwarka city, steeped in mythological significance within Hinduism.

Schemes and Committees

- In a significant move towards transparency and accountability, the **Union Housing and Urban Affairs Ministry** has mandated the display of the **Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana – Urban (PMAY-U)** logo and beneficiary details on all houses constructed under the scheme. The directive applies to all States and Union Territories, aiming to streamline the implementation of the flagship mission of the Government of India.
- The Union Cabinet, led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, has sanctioned an additional **Rs 2,500 crore for the Interest Equalisation Scheme**. The scheme is extended until June 30, 2024, aiming to support exporters from specific sectors and all MSME manufacturer exporters.
- 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.
- Women's empowerment is crucial for building a strong and developed nation, especially when women thrive economically, contributing to rural prosperity. Prime Minister Narendra Modi's initiative, **NAMO Drone Didi**, announced on November 30, aims to **empower 15,000 women Self Help Groups (SHGs) by providing drones for agricultural purposes**. This innovative approach harnesses technology to empower rural women, positioning them at the forefront of the agricultural revolution.
- The **PM Street Vendor's AtmaNirbhar Nidhi (PM SVANidhi) scheme**, launched during the **COVID-19 outbreak**, has emerged as a crucial initiative in supporting urban street vendors. The scheme, designed as a micro-credit program, has disbursed an impressive total of **Rs 9,790 crore** in loans to beneficiaries, as disclosed by the government in the Rajya Sabha.
- **YUVAi-Youth for Unnati and Vikas with AI**, a collaborative initiative of the **National e-Governance Division (NeGD)**, Ministry of Electronics & Information Technology (MeitY), Government of India, and **Intel India**, is poised to take center stage at the upcoming Global Partnership on Artificial Intelligence (GPAI) Summit. This groundbreaking program, designed to impart essential AI skills to the youth, is gaining recognition for its innovative approach and commitment to building a future-ready workforce.
- The **Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change** has introduced the **Indian Forest & Wood Certification Scheme**. This voluntary national certification initiative aims to encourage sustainable forest management and agroforestry practices in India. The scheme encompasses forest management certification, tree outside forest management certification, and chain of custody certification.

- The Ministry of Food Processing reveals substantial growth in the sector, with beneficiaries of the **Production Linked Incentive (PLI) Scheme** investing a staggering ₹7,126 crore. Notably, cumulative sales reached ₹49,825 crore during the April-September period. The PLI Scheme, spearheaded by the Ministry, aims to address critical aspects of the food processing industry. With a focus on generating employment for **approximately 250,000 individuals**, the scheme incentivizes manufacturing in four key categories: ready-to-cook and ready-to-eat products, processed fruits and vegetables, marine products, and mozzarella cheese.
- The Government of India, unwavering in its commitment to providing safe and potable tap water to every rural household in the country launched the **Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM)** in August 2019. This mission, implemented in collaboration with states, aims to ensure the provision of water in adequate quantity and of prescribed quality on a regular and long-term basis. Consequently, out of the 19.24 Crore rural households in the country, approximately 71.51% (13.76 Crore) now have tap water supply in their homes.
- EPFO recorded a substantial rise to 28.69 lakh women subscribers in FY23, a significant increase from 15.94 lakh in 2019-20, signaling positive job creation trends.
- The Indian government is on a mission to achieve comprehensive coverage for the **Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB PM-JAY)** by January 26, a colossal undertaking that involves incorporating 270 million additional individuals into its flagship health scheme. New directives have been issued to central ministries and agencies overseeing welfare schemes, emphasizing the need for rapid “saturation” of beneficiaries, ensuring the inclusion of all intended recipients.
- In a significant move towards fostering sustainable practices and addressing critical issues faced by **micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs)**, Minister of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) **Narayan Rane** unveiled **three pioneering sub-schemes** under the existing RAMP (Raising and Accelerating MSME Productivity) programme. These initiatives aim to encourage the adoption of sustainable technology, promote circular economy projects, and tackle the persistent challenge of delayed payments.
- In a significant move, the **Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD)** has entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with JioMart, a venture of Reliance Retail. This partnership aims to amplify the reach of products crafted by Self-Help Groups (SHGs) associated with the **Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana-National Rural Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NRLM)**, empowering rural artisans.
- In a significant move aimed at addressing **childhood pneumonia**, Dr. Sapam Ranjan Singh, the State Health and Family Welfare Minister of Manipur, recently inaugurated the **SAANS Campaign 2023-24** in Imphal. Concurrently, the minister also dedicated the **Jawaharlal Nehru Institute of Medical Sciences (JNIMS)** as the State Newborn Resource Centre, emphasizing the state’s commitment to child healthcare.
- In a significant move, the Bihar Police has announced the implementation of **‘Mission Investigation@75 Days,’** aiming to streamline and expedite the criminal justice process in the state. Starting from January 1 next year, investigators will be mandated to complete the **investigation of cases within 75 days of the registration of First Information Reports (FIRs)**.
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi expressed his delight as the **issuance of one crore Ayushman cards** marked a significant achievement during the ongoing **Viksit Bharat Sankalp Yatra (VBSY)** across the country. Under the Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (#PMJAY), these cards **offer free treatment of up to Rs 5 lakh per annum** per family at empanelled hospitals nationwide.
- **Union Minister for Information and Broadcasting, Anurag Singh Thakur**, recently addressed the youth after the **launch of the MY Bharat campaign**, expressing confidence in India’s remarkable progress on the global stage. He emphasized the significant strides made across various sectors, attributing the success to the government’s initiatives. This article delves into the key points highlighted by Minister Thakur, showcasing India’s growth trajectory.
- The **production-linked incentive (PLI) schemes** introduced by the Indian government have emerged as a key driver for attracting investments and boosting manufacturing across various sectors. As of September this year, these initiatives have garnered an impressive **Rs 95,000 crore in investment**, marking a significant stride towards enhancing India’s manufacturing capabilities and exports.
- **Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri — Jan Arogya Yojana (AB PM-JAY)** has emerged as a beacon of hope in India’s healthcare landscape, particularly for women. Data released by the Health Ministry reveals a significant contribution by women to the scheme’s success, with approximately **49% of the total Ayushman cards** created attributed to them.
- In a recent decision, the Union government announced adjustments in the returns on specific savings schemes, leaving the Public Provident Fund (PPF) rate untouched for the sixth consecutive quarter. The **Sukanya Samriddhi Account Scheme (SSAS)** will now yield 8.2%, up from the previous 8%, while the 3-year time deposit rate increases marginally to 7.1% from 7%. Despite expectations of a broader reset, the **PPF rate remains stagnant** at 7.1%.

- **Sri Lanka**, in the throes of a severe economic crisis, has taken a significant step towards resolving its debt issues. An “**agreement in principle**” has been reached with India and the Paris Club group of creditors, including Japan. This development is crucial for Sri Lanka as it paves the way for accessing the next tranche of the **International Monetary Fund’s (IMF) nearly \$3 billion** recovery package.
- **ACKO General Insurance** and **PhonePe** have joined forces to revolutionize the landscape of insurance accessibility in India. This strategic collaboration aims to **provide users with a comprehensive range of car and bike insurance products directly through the PhonePe platform**. Beyond just convenience, the partnership reflects the shared commitment of both companies to democratize insurance, making it a readily available financial option for millions of PhonePe users.
- In a significant move towards digital advancement, **Union Bank of India** has joined forces with **Accenture**, a global professional services company. The collaboration is poised to bring about a transformative journey through the implementation of advanced analytics and cutting-edge technologies.
- **REC Limited**, a prominent Maharatna Central Public Sector Enterprise (CPSE) under the **Ministry of Power**, achieved a significant milestone by signing a **200 million Euro loan agreement with the German bank KfW**. This agreement, marking **REC’s sixth line of credit** under the Indo-German Development Cooperation, emphasizes the corporation’s commitment to strengthening the distribution infrastructure of DISCOMs in alignment with the **Revamped Distribution Sector Scheme (RDSS)** of the Government of India.
- In a significant move towards bolstering the electric vehicle (EV) infrastructure in India, **Tata Power EV Charging Solutions Ltd (TPEVCSL)** has entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with **Indian Oil Corporation Limited (IOCL)**. The collaboration aims to **set up more than 500 EV charging points** across the country, with a focus on creating a robust intercity charging network.
- 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. Oman currently stands as **India’s 29th largest trading partner**, with bilateral trade showing robust growth. From \$3.15 billion in FY22, trade has surged to \$4.48 billion during FY23, marking a substantial 42% YoY increase.
- The **Government of India** and the **Asian Development Bank (ADB)** recently solidified their collaboration with the signing of a **\$250 million policy-based loan** on December 15, 2023. This financial support, part of the **Industrial Corridor Development Programme (Subprogramme 2)**, aims to enhance manufacturing competitiveness, fortify national supply chains, and integrate with global value chains.
- The **Indian Institute of Technology, Kanpur (IITK)** and the **Indian Navy** have joined hands in a landmark **Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)** signed at the Naval Headquarters. This collaborative initiative aims to propel technology development, foster innovative solutions and engage in joint Research and Development (R&D) endeavors.
- **Suzlon Group**, India’s largest renewable energy solutions provider, has recently inked a definitive agreement with **REC Limited**, a state-run entity, for crucial working capital facilities. This strategic partnership is geared towards bolstering Suzlon’s capacity to meet its working capital needs, pivotal for executing its extensive current order book and prospective future projects.
- In a strategic move to broaden their service offerings and strengthen their market presence, **Aditya Birla Sun Life Insurance** and **IDFC First Bank** have joined forces through a bancassurance partnership. This collaboration aims to **provide comprehensive insurance solutions to the bank’s extensive customer base** by leveraging the robust distribution network of IDFC First Bank.
- 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.
- In a significant move towards empowering self-help groups (SHGs) in **Arunachal Pradesh**, the **Arunachal State Rural Livelihoods Mission (ArSRLM)** has forged a strategic alliance with the **State Bank of India (SBI)**. The memorandum of understanding (MoU) signed between the two entities aims to **provide comprehensive banking services to the SHGs operating in the state**.
- **Indian IT services giant Infosys** has recently announced a strategic partnership with energy company **Shell** to drive the adoption of immersion cooling services in data centers. This collaboration aims to harness the strengths of both organizations in digital and energy domains, supported by a network of partners, to create an integrated solution for environmentally friendly data centers.

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- **India and Russia**, crucial agreements were signed on Tuesday, marking a major stride in the construction of future power-generating units at the **Kudankulam nuclear power plant**.
- The **Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC)** has taken a significant stride in strengthening economic ties with **major Asian partners** by signing its second free trade agreement (FTA) this year. The recent accord, inked with **South Korea**, underscores the bloc's commitment to fostering investment connections and diversifying its economic portfolio.
- In a landmark development, the pro-talks faction of the **United Liberation Front of Asom (ULFA)** inked a historic peace accord with the central and state governments, marking a significant stride towards ending decades of insurgency in Assam.
- **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.
- **Swiggy**, a prominent player in the online food ordering and delivery space, has made a strategic move by appointing **Anand Kripalu** as the Chairperson and Independent Director of its Board.
- **Kothakota Srinivas Reddy**, a distinguished officer with a track record of effective leadership, is set to assume the role of **Hyderabad Police Commissioner**.
- 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.
- 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.
- **Senior IPS officer Maheshwar Dayal** officially assumed the role of **Director General of Prisons and Correctional Services on Monday, December 18**. With a distinguished career marked by various leadership roles across multiple districts and specialized units, Dayal brings a wealth of experience to his new position. Let's delve into his illustrious journey through the ranks of law enforcement.
- The **Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI)** has given its nod to the appointment of **Pramod Agrawal, the former Chief of Coal India, as the Chairman of the Bombay Stock Exchange (BSE)**. This regulatory approval paves the way for Agrawal to assume his role on the Governing Board of BSE, **effective from January 17, 2024**. The move comes as the term of the **current Chairman, SS Mundra**, concludes on **January 16, 2024**.
- **Madagascar's Constitutional Court** has recently confirmed the re-election of **President Andry Rajoelina** from the **Young Malagasies Determined political party**, marking his **third term** in office. The court declared Rajoelina the winner with **59% of the votes cast**.
- In a historic development, **Captain Geetika Koul**, a woman army doctor, has been deployed at Siachen, the world's highest battlefield, marking a significant stride towards gender inclusivity in India's armed forces. This follows the deployment of Captain Shiva Chouhan, from the Corps of Engineers, at the same location almost a year ago.
- 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.
- In a recent development, **Max Life Insurance**, a prominent player in the insurance sector and a material subsidiary of Max Financial Services, witnessed a significant leadership change. The outgoing Chairman, **Analjit Singh**, stepped down from the Chairmanship and membership of the

- Bengaluru-based fintech **Slice-backed North East Small Finance Bank (NESFB)** has recently revealed the appointment of **Satish Kumar Kalra** as its interim managing director (MD) and chief executive officer (CEO).
- **Sony Sports Network (SSN)** has kicked off a new era of football enthusiasm in India by appointing Bollywood heartthrob and Gen Z icon **Kartik Aaryan** as their official brand ambassador for the beautiful game. This strategic partnership aims to bring football closer to a wider Indian audience and ignite passion for the sport across generations.
- In a groundbreaking achievement, **Vita Dani**, a prominent sports entrepreneur, has etched her name in history by becoming the **first Indian** to be appointed as a governing board member of the **International Table Tennis Federation's (ITTF) Foundation**.
- 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.
- Central government has appointed **Nina Singh** as the **first woman Director General of the Central Industrial Security Force (CISF)**, marking a significant milestone in the traditionally male-dominated realm of security forces. **Rahul Rasgotra**, the **Special Director of the Intelligence Bureau (IB)**, has been named the new **Director General of the Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP)**. **Anish Dayal Singh**, the **outgoing chief of the ITBP**, has been appointed as the **Director General of the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF)**. **Vivek Srivastava**, a **1989-batch IPS officer from the Gujarat cadre**, has been appointed as the **Director General of the Fire Service, Civil Defence, and Home Guards**.
- **Vice President of India, Jagdeep Dhankhar**, has been appointed as the **ex-officio Chancellor of Pondicherry University**. This appointment comes as a result of a **modification in Statute 1(1) of the Pondicherry University Act of 1985**. The official communication from Rajneesh Bhutani, Registrar-in-charge of the University, highlights that this change is effective from December 5, as published in the official gazette by the Government of India.

Sports Current Affairs

- **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.
- In a rare doping case within Indian football, Kerala footballer **M Viknesh's** appeal against a two-year ban has been turned down by the **National Anti-Doping Agency (NADA) appeal panel**. This decision stems from Viknesh's failed dope test during the National Games in Gujarat, where his sample revealed the presence of the banned substance 'Terbutaline,' commonly found in cough syrups.
- The International cricket scene is abuzz with excitement as the **ICC T20 World Cup** undergoes a dynamic makeover with the **launch of its new brand identity on December 7**. The transformation aims to encapsulate the inherent drama, fast-paced action and high-octane moments that define T20 cricket – a format celebrated for its relentless energy.
- The cricket world witnessed outstanding performances in **November 2023**, with Australian batter **Travis Head** and spin maestro **Nahida Akter** earning the prestigious **ICC Men's and Women's Player of the Month awards**, respectively. Let's delve into their remarkable achievements that secured them these honors.
- Pakistan's cricket fraternity bids farewell to one of its stalwarts as **Asad Shafiq**, the middle-order batter, announces his retirement from all forms of the game at the age of 37. Shafiq, who made his international debut in 2010, leaves behind a legacy of resilience and reliability, particularly in Test cricket.
- In a major milestone, the **Indian Premier League (IPL)** has achieved decacorn status, with its combined brand value seeing a remarkable **28%** surge to reach an impressive **\$10.7 billion**. This significant growth is reported by Brand Finance, marking a phenomenal **433% increase** in the IPL system's brand value since its launch in 2008.
- 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. The top honor of the Admiral's Cup 23 went to **Team Italy**, represented by **Midshipman Avallone Antonio** and **Midshipman Creati Carlo Leonardo**. Their exceptional sailing skills and strategic prowess secured the coveted Admiral's Cup for Italy.

- Indian wrestler **Antim Panghal** has been named the **Rising Star of the Year among women** by the **United World Wrestling (UWW)**, the sport's global governing body. The 19-year-old dynamo, competing in the 53 kg category, has had a remarkable season that has not only garnered accolades but has also overshadowed senior stalwart Vinesh Phogat in the same weight class.
- In a move echoing the tribute to cricket legends, the **Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI)** has decided to retire the iconic **No.7 jersey** worn by former captain **MS Dhoni**. This decision follows the precedent set by **Sachin Tendulkar's No.10, retired in 2017**. Going forward, no other Indian cricketer will sport the No.7 jersey.
- The **Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI)** is reportedly considering the **introduction of a T10 format cricket league**, aiming for a launch window between **September and October 2024**. This move aligns with the flourishing popularity and valuation of cricket leagues, particularly the Indian Premier League (IPL), which recently attained a decacorn status with a valuation of **approximately \$10.7 billion**.
- In a historic turn of events at the **Saurashtra Cricket Association Stadium in Rajkot, Haryana** emerged victorious in the **2023 Vijay Hazare Trophy**, securing their **first-ever title with a 30-run triumph** over **Rajasthan** in the summit clash. The victory marked one of the greatest campaigns in Indian domestic cricket history, as Haryana showcased their dominance by remaining unbeaten throughout the tournament.
- 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.
- In just over 6 years since its inception, **Zinc Football Academy**, a CSR initiative of Hindustan Zinc, has achieved yet another significant milestone by being awarded the prestigious **'Elite 3-star' rating** by the **All India Football Federation (AIFF)**. This recognition firmly places Zinc Football among the best youth development academies in India, marking a historic moment in the academy's journey.
- The **Khelo India Para Games 2023** concluded on **December 17 in New Delhi**, showcasing the remarkable talents of para athletes from across the country. The inaugural edition of the event saw Haryana clinched the top spot, securing a **total of 105 medals, including 40 gold, 39 silver and 26 bronze**. **Uttar Pradesh claimed the second position** in the medal tally, bagging a **total of 62 medals**. The state's para athletes demonstrated their prowess with **25 gold, 23 silver and 14 bronze medals**. **Tamil Nadu** secured the third spot, showcasing commendable performances and earning a total of **20 gold, eight silver and 14 bronze medals**.
- **Mitchell Starc** marks a remarkable return to the **IPL**, securing a spot with **Kolkata Knight Riders for the 2024 season** after the franchise successfully bid **₹24.75 crore** for the Australian pace bowler. Fast bowler Pat Cummins will make his return to the IPL, joining Sunrisers Hyderabad, who pay a fee of **₹20.5 crore**.
- legendary actor **Amitabh Bachchan** revealed his ownership of the Mumbai team in the upcoming **Indian Street Premier League (ISPL)**. The **ISPL, India's first tennis ball T10 cricket tournament** played within a stadium, is set to kick off its inaugural edition from **March 2 to March 9 in Mumbai**.
- In a stunning display of skill and determination, **Maharashtra** emerged victorious in the **women's team event at the 75th Inter State-Inter Zonal Badminton Championship** held in **Guwahati**. The championship, organized by the Badminton Association of India, witnessed Maharashtra's women's team clinching the title with a **commanding 3-0 victory**.
- Indian hockey team midfielder, **Hardik Singh**, clinched the prestigious title of **Men's FIH Player of the Year at the FIH Hockey Star Awards 2023**. **Dutch player Xan de Waard** emerged victorious as the **Women's FIH Player of the Year**, showcasing outstanding prowess in the field of hockey. **Savita Punia**, captain of the Indian women's hockey team, secured the title of the **Best Goalkeeper of the Year**.
- Acclaimed Indian wrestler **Sakshi Malik**, a bronze medalist at the 2016 Rio Olympics, **declared her retirement in protest of the Wrestling Federation of India's (WFI) recent leadership change**. The move follows allegations of sexual abuse against the ousted president, Brij Bhushan Singh, and the controversial election of his close ally, Sanjay Singh.
- The **Khelo India Youth Games**, a pinnacle in India's sporting landscape, is set to kick off its 2023 edition on January 19, 2024, in **Tamil Nadu**. The southern state has proudly been chosen as the host, and the Games will unfold across four vibrant cities: **Chennai, Madurai, Trichy, and Coimbatore**. Organized by the Sports Development Authority of Tamil Nadu in collaboration with the Sports Authority of India and various **National Sports Federations (NSF)**, this event is a crucial platform for nurturing the nation's young sports talent.
- India Women concluded their **first 'home season' of Test cricket in 28 years** with a historic **maiden victory over Australia in a one-off Test match in Mumbai on December 24**. The win marked a significant achievement for the Indian team, capping off a season characterized by exemplary performances with both bat and ball.

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- **Dean Elgar**, has decided to bid farewell to international cricket after the upcoming test series against India. Elgar, known for his resilient batting and leadership skills, will play his final test at Newlands in Cape Town, starting January 3.
- Indian wrestler **Pooja Dhanda**, a decorated athlete with international accolades, has been suspended for one year by the National Anti-Doping Agency (NADA) due to three whereabouts failures. This article examines the details of the case and its implications.
- Former Indian cricketer **Ambati Rayudu** embarked on a new journey as he officially joined the **Yuvajana Sramika Rythu Congress Party (YSRCP) led by Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy**. The significant political move was marked by an event in Vijayawada, attended by prominent dignitaries, signaling Rayudu's foray into active politics.
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi is set to address the **second edition of the Infinity Forum**, a premier Financial Technology event scheduled for December 9, 2023. The event, hosted by the **International Financial Services Centres Authority (IFSCA)** and **GIFT City**, is under the auspices of the Government of India. Building on the success of its inaugural edition in December 2021, the Infinity Forum 2.0 promises to be a global thought leadership platform focusing on financial services.
- Currently serving as the incoming Support Chair of GPAL, India is set to take on the Lead Chair position for GPAL in 2024. To showcase its commitment to the advancement of AI, **India is hosting the Annual GPAL Summit from December 12 – 14, 2023**. The event is anticipated to be inaugurated by the Hon'ble Prime Minister on December 12, 2023.
- In a significant development within the **Indian Navy**, a major reshuffle is set to take place at the top echelons of the force, with **Vice Admiral Dinesh Tripathi** slated to assume the position of **Vice Chief of Naval Staff on January 4**. This transition marks a crucial moment for the Navy, as Vice Admiral Tripathi steps into a role responsibility for overseeing the modernization efforts of the force.
- 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. During the inaugural ceremony, Shri Modi unveiled the 'Aatmanirbhar Bharat Centre for Design' and explored the exhibition, emphasizing the Red Fort's historical importance. The establishment of cultural spaces in **five major cities namely Delhi, Kolkata, Mumbai, Ahmedabad and Varanasi** was highlighted as a historic step to enrich these cities culturally.
- **Invest India**, the National Investment Promotion and Facilitation Agency of the Government of India, is set to host the **27th World Investment Conference (WIC)** from December 11-14, 2023. The event, under the aegis of the **Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT)**, promises to be a groundbreaking platform for global investment promotion and innovation stakeholders. This year's conference will delve into the theme of "**Empowering Investors: IPAs Pioneering Future Growth.**"
- 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.
- India has decided to defer the **Quad summit meeting**, originally scheduled for January 2024, citing scheduling conflicts for certain Quad partners. The summit involves the participation of India, Australia, the US, and Japan.
- The annual **Global Partnership for Artificial Intelligence (GPAL) Summit** commenced at Bharat Mandapam in New Delhi on December 12, emphasizing crucial discussions on **AI safety** and development challenges. With participation from 29 countries across North and South America, Europe, and Asia, India stands as the **lead chair for GPAL in 2024**, excluding China from the member list.

- The 28th Conference of Parties (COP28) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change concluded with a groundbreaking decision – the **“UAE Consensus”** – marking a historic step towards addressing the climate crisis. However, the agreement has stirred debates due to perceived discrepancies between words and actions and a lack of financial commitments.
- The **two-week-long COP28 in Dubai**, United Arab Emirates (UAE), concluded on December 13 with member nations engaging in extended talks on the final text. In the closing plenary, **COP28 President Sultan Al Jaber** highlighted the summit’s achievements, emphasizing a robust action plan aimed at limiting global warming to the **targeted 1.5 degrees Celsius over pre-industrial times set in the 2015 Paris deal**.
- India and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) are poised to commence negotiations in February aimed at modernizing their existing free trade agreement (FTA) and addressing the prevailing trade deficit, currently standing at \$43.57 billion. The initiative seeks to revamp the **ASEAN India Trade in Goods Agreement (AITGA) by 2025**.
- In a testament to their commitment to social causes, three prominent Indian business leaders – **Nandan Nilekani, KP Singh and Nikhil Kamath**, have earned a coveted spot on the **17th edition of Forbes Asia’s Heroes of Philanthropy list**. Released recently, this unranked compilation recognizes individuals who leverage their fortunes and personal resources to contribute significantly to various charitable causes.
- In a major leap towards sustainable practices, India has clinched the **7th position** in the latest edition of the **Climate Change Performance Index (CCPI)**. The announcement, made during the COP-28 in Dubai, solidifies India’s status as a top performer for the fifth consecutive year.
- **India**, once a powerhouse in the global startup ecosystem, has experienced a significant downturn in its funding trajectory, slipping to the **fourth position** in the **global ranking** among the highest-funded geographies in **2023**. This decline comes after securing the third spot in both 2021 and 2022.
- In a significant market shift, **ITC Ltd** has emerged as the **third most valuable tobacco company globally**, overtaking **British American Tobacco (BAT)**. The transition follows a sell-off in BAT shares, underscoring ITC’s dynamic business diversification.
- In a recent survey conducted by US-based consultancy firm **‘Morning Consult,’** Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi has secured the top position as the world’s most popular leader, boasting an impressive **approval rating of 76%**. This notable achievement places him more than 10 percentage points ahead of the next leader in the rankings.
- **Quality of Living Index 2023** by Mercer, a renowned global consultant for businesses, **Pune has secured the second-best position** in terms of **‘quality of life’** in India. The city trails just behind Hyderabad, marking a significant improvement from the previous rankings. The Quality of Living City Index by Mercer positions Pune at **154th**, with **Hyderabad slightly ahead at 153rd**, and **Bengaluru following closely at 156th**.
- **58-years-old iconic actor, Shah Rukh Khan**, has etched his name in the annals of box office history with two action-packed thrillers, **“Pathaan”** and **“Jawaan,”** and is now gearing up for the release of the **comedy-drama film, “Dunki.”** While Shah Rukh Khan claimed the top position,
- In the recent **Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS)** conducted by the **National Sample Survey Office (NSSO)**, concerning data has emerged regarding unemployment rates in the age group of 15 to 29 years in urban areas during the July-September quarter of 2023. The study covered 22 states, revealing notable variations in joblessness across regions. Himachal Pradesh stands out with the **highest overall unemployment rate at 33.9%**, making it the state with the most significant joblessness challenge in the 15-29 age group in urban areas during the specified quarter. Rajasthan closely follows with a rate of 30.2%.
- In a recent report by S&P Global Market Intelligence, the Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) has secured its position as the **world’s fourth-largest insurer**. The ranking is based on the life and accident & health reserves of companies for the year 2022.
- **Lahore**, the second-largest city in Pakistan, is grappling with a severe smog crisis that poses significant threats to the health and well-being of its residents. According to **IQAir**, an organization that monitors global air quality, Lahore recently earned the dubious distinction of having the **worst air quality in the world**, with a hazardous Air Quality Index (AQI) of 400 in the morning. This alarming revelation underscores the urgent need to address the underlying causes of the city’s deteriorating air quality.

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the talented and popular actress **Alia Bhatt secured the second spot on the list. Priyanka Chopra Jonas**, a global icon, clinched the third position on the **‘Eastern Eye’** annual list. Securing the fourth place on the prestigious list is **Diljit Dosanjh**, celebrated as the **biggest Punjabi star**.

- The recently unveiled **Hurun India Top 100 Under 30 List 2023** has showcased inspiring success stories of young entrepreneurs making waves in various industries. Kaivalya Vohra (21) and Aadit Palicha (22), the founders of the Quick Commerce app Zepto, have claimed the top spots.

- The Commerce and Industry Ministry recently released the fifth **LEADS (Logistics Ease Across Different States) 2023 report**, shedding light on the logistics performance of various states and Union Territories in India. Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Chandigarh, and Gujarat are among the 13 states and Union Territories recognized as “achievers” in the logistics index chart for 2023.
- The NCRB data pointed out that Hyderabad topped the nation in food adulteration cases in 2022. In close second place was Andhra Pradesh, trailing after Telangana.

Important Days

Date	Day & Theme
December 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> World Computer Literacy Day 2023 National Pollution Control Day 2023 Theme: “Sustainable Development for a Clean and Healthy Planet,”
December 3	The International Day of Persons with Disabilities (IDPD) or World Day of the Handicapped 2023
December 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Indian Navy Day Theme: “Operational Efficiency, Readiness, and Mission Accomplishment in the Maritime Domain.” International Cheetah Day
December 5th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> International Volunteer Day (IVD) theme: The Power of Collective Action: If Everyone Did World Soil Day Theme: ‘Soil and Water, a Source of Life’
December 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> International Civil Aviation Day Theme: “Advancing Innovation for Global Aviation Development,” Armed Forces Flag Day
8th December	SAARC Charter Day
December 9	International Anti-Corruption Day Theme: UNCAC at 20: Uniting the World Against Corruption.’
9 December	International Day of Commemoration and Dignity of the Victims of the Crime of Genocide
December 10	Human Rights Days
December 11	International Mountain Day Theme: “Restoring Mountain Ecosystems.”
December 12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> International Day of Neutrality Universal Health Coverage (UHC) Day Theme: “Health For All: Time for Action,”
December 14	National Energy Conservation Day
December 16	Vijay Diwas
December 18	International Migrants Day 2023 Theme: Promoting Safe Migration
December 20th	International Human Solidarity Day 2023
December 21	World Basketball Day
December 23	National Farmer’s Day 2023, also known as Kisan Diwas
December 24th	National Consumer Rights Day
December 25	Good Governance Day 2023
26th December	Veer Bal Diwas’
December 27th	International Day of Epidemic Preparedness

- The **International Day of Persons with Disabilities** witnessed a grand ceremony in New Delhi as **President Droupadi Murmu** bestowed the **National Awards for the Empowerment of Divyangjan 2023 upon 21 individuals and 9 institutions**. Recognizing exemplary contributions across various fields, the awards underscored the government's commitment to prioritizing the empowerment of Divyangjan, constituting **15%** of the global population.
- In a celebration of athletic excellence, Olympian **M. Sreeshankar** has been honored with the prestigious 35th Jimmy George Foundation Award for emerging as the best sportsperson of Kerala. This recognition comes as a testament to Sreeshankar's outstanding achievements, including securing the long jump silver medal in both the Commonwealth Games and Asian Games.
- In a historic moment on **August 23, India's Chandrayaan-3** achieved remarkable lunar landing, making India the first country to reach the Lunar South Pole. The successful mission, a testament to India's scientific prowess, has solidified its status as a space superpower. Notably, this achievement did not only resonate in the scientific community but also garnered recognition in the business world. The Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) and the **Chandrayaan-3 team** were recently honored with the **"Outstanding Contribution to Brand India" award at the 19th India Business Leader Awards (IBLA), held in Mumbai on December 2.**
- Indian para archer **Sheetal Devi** emerged victorious at the **fourth edition of the Asian Awards in Riyadh** securing the prestigious title of Best Youth Athlete. The Asian Awards, organized by the Asian Paralympic Committee, is a ceremony dedicated to honoring outstanding achievements of Asian para athletes and officials.
- In a momentous occasion at the **Red Sea International Film Festival**, Bollywood actor **Ranveer Singh** was honored for his significant contributions to cinema. The prestigious accolade was presented to him by the iconic Hollywood actress Sharon Stone, adding a touch of glamour to the event attended by luminaries like Johnny Depp. As the festival unfolds until December 9, it promises to be a captivating cinematic experience, blending cultures and stories on the shores of the Red Sea.
- **Singapore** recently bestowed its prestigious Cultural Medallion upon three distinguished individuals, recognizing their artistic excellence and significant contributions to the nation's rich arts and culture. Among them, **Meira Chand**, an eighty-one-year-old Indian-origin writer, shares this esteemed accolade with novelist **Suchen Christine Lim** and **Malay dance veteran Osman Abdul Hamid**.
- The **4th edition of the ASEAN India Grassroots Innovation Forum (AIGIF)**, hosted by **Malaysia's Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation (MOSTI)**, concluded on **November 30, 2023**. The event celebrated grassroots and student innovators from India and across the ASEAN Member States (AMS). Among the notable winners were **Dr. Dipak Bharali, Mr. Sunil Shinde and Ms. Aanchal Aggrawal** from India.
- Amidst the global efforts to combat climate change, two remarkable individuals, **Michelle Zárate Palomec** from Mexico and **Sebastian Mwaura** from Kenya, are set to be honored as winners of the **UN Global Climate Action Awards**. Their outstanding contributions, aimed at creating sustainable, resilient, and equitable communities, will be celebrated during the upcoming UN Climate Change Conference COP28 in Dubai.
- 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.
- Indian social activist **Nikhil Dey** has been honored as an **International Anti-Corruption Champion by the US government for 2023**. This recognition highlights his decades-long commitment to empowering peasants and workers while exposing corruption in the delivery of government services. Dey is the **co-founder of the Mazdoor Kisan Shakti Sangathan (MKSS)**, a Rajasthan-based organization at the forefront of transparency and anti-corruption movements in India.
- **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.
- 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.
- 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.

- 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.
- The veteran lyricist-screenwriter **Javed Akhtar** is set to be honored with the **Padmapani Lifetime Achievement Award** at the upcoming **Ajanta-Ellora Film Festival.**
- **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.
- **Indira Gandhi Prize for Peace, Disarmament, and Development for 2023** has been jointly conferred upon renowned classical pianist and conductor **Daniel Barenboim** and Palestinian peace activist **Ali Abu Awwad.** The award recognizes their exceptional contributions in bringing together the youth and peoples of Israel and the Arab World for a non-violent resolution of the Israel-Palestine conflict.
- legends **Vijay Amritraj and Leander Paes** have etched their names into the annals of the sport as the first Asian men to be inducted into the esteemed International Tennis Hall of Fame. This achievement not only crowns their remarkable careers but also elevates India to the 28th nation represented in this prestigious institution.
- In a significant recognition of her outstanding contributions to chemistry education, **Professor Savita Ladage** from Mumbai's Homi Bhabha Centre for Science Education, Tata Institute of Fundamental Research, has been awarded the prestigious **Royal Society of Chemistry's Nyholm Prize for Education.** Her unwavering dedication to advancing chemistry education in India and mentoring fellow educators has placed her among the esteemed winners of this accolade.
- The **Asian Development Bank (ADB)** has taken a significant stride in fostering sustainable urban development by approving a **USD 200 million loan** to bolster the **Swachh Bharat (Clean India) Mission-Urban 2.0.** This initiative, committed to making **all cities garbage-free by 2026,** aims to introduce international best practices, integrate new technologies, and adopt climate- and disaster-resilient approaches in municipal solid waste management.
- In a remarkable event that celebrated beauty, talent, and cultural pride, the annual **Miss India USA 2023 pageant** held in New Jersey showcased the triumph of **Rijul Maini**, a 24-year-old medical student from Michigan. The pageant, now in its 41st year, witnessed contestants from over 25 states participating in three categories: **Miss India USA, Mrs India USA, and Miss Teen India USA.**
- **Real Vision Homes Pvt Ltd** proudly announces the remarkable achievement of its esteemed Chairman, **Dr. Srinivas Naik Dharavath**, who has been honored with the **Visionary Leader Icon Award of the Year 2023** by the Advocates Association For Social Responsibility And Awareness (AASRAA). The prestigious award was presented at the 5th National Summit held at the Constitution Club of India in New Delhi on 24th Nov 2023.
- **Aster Medcity**, located in **Kochi, Kerala**, and a unit of Aster DM Healthcare, has emerged as a frontrunner in the healthcare industry. The hospital has recently achieved the remarkable feat of being ranked **No.1** in the **'Best Multi-specialty Hospital Emerging'** category by **The Week-Hansa Research 2023**, as published in December 2023.
- **Real Vision Homes Pvt Ltd** proudly announces that its Chairman and Managing Director, **Dr. Srinivas Naik Dharavath**, has been honored with the prestigious **Global Icon Award** at the G20 Initiative Summit in Colombo, Sri Lanka. The summit, a key event organized by the Global Economic Forum, brought together world leaders, policymakers, and industry visionaries for an exclusive gathering from November 21-24, 2023.
- **Novak Djokovic and Aryna Sabalenka** have been named the **2023 ITF World Champions** by the **International Tennis Federation.** Both players showcased remarkable consistency and skill throughout the year, earning this prestigious honor. Djokovic, in particular, set a new record with his eighth ITF World Champion 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.
- The **Gaja Capital Business Book Prize**, a prestigious annual recognition, has crowned two exceptional narratives in its **2023 edition.** **Against All Odds: The IT Story of India and Winning Middle India: The Story of India's New-Age Entrepreneurs** emerged as joint winners, capturing the essence of India's dynamic business landscape.

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- 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.
- 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.
- **Pradip Kumar Das**, Chairman & Managing Director of **Indian Renewable Energy Development Agency Limited (IREDA)**, has been honored with the esteemed “**CMD of the Year**” award under the **Mini-Ratna category** at the **13th PSE Excellence Awards**. The event was hosted by the Indian Chamber of Commerce in New Delhi, marking the second consecutive financial year in which Shri Pradip Kumar Das has received this prestigious accolade.
- **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**.
- In a significant achievement for India’s maritime capabilities, the **Garden Reach Shipbuilders and Engineers (GRSE) Ltd** delivered the largest-ever survey vessel built in the country, **INS Sandhayak**, to the Indian Navy. The **110-meter-long vessel** is the first in a series of four survey ships being constructed by GRSE for the navy, marking a crucial milestone in the indigenous shipbuilding industry.
- The Ministry of Defence (MoD) has recently signed a significant contract worth ₹588.68 crore with Telecommunications Consultants India Limited (TCIL) for the implementation of the “**Digital Coast Guard (DCG)**” project. This initiative is a crucial step towards bolstering the Indian Coast Guard’s technological capabilities.
- In a significant step towards **fostering gender inclusivity** and strengthening the capabilities of women military personnel in peacekeeping operations, the **Indian Army** recently conducted a **table-top exercise (TTX)** for women
- In a prestigious ceremony at the **SASTRA campus in Kumbakonam**, the **SASTRA-Ramanujan Awards for 2022 and 2023** were bestowed upon mathematicians **Yunqing Tang and Ruixiang Zhang**, both affiliated with the University of California in Berkeley. The awards, instituted by SASTRA in 2005, honor individuals under the age of 32 who have made remarkable contributions to the field of mathematics.
- 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.
- 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.
- In a momentous ceremony held on **December 28, 2023**, **Mr. L.P. Hemanth K. Srinivasulu**, the newly appointed **Director of the Latin America and Caribbean Trade Council**, was bestowed with the prestigious “**Man of the Year-2023**” award. The honor, presented by **Shri Amit Shah, the Home Minister of India**, serves as a recognition of Mr. Hemanth’s outstanding contributions to trade diplomacy and global economic relations.

Defence Current Affairs

officers from the **Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN)**. This exercise, held at the **Manekshaw Centre in New Delhi** from December 4 to 8, is part of the ongoing joint military training initiatives between India and ASEAN member states.

- 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.
- The **Indian Navy**, in collaboration with various defense, state, and civil agencies, recently concluded a comprehensive two-phased exercise named ‘**Prasthan**’ in the Offshore Development Area off the Mumbai coast. This exercise, conducted every six months, is pivotal in validating and refining measures and procedures aimed at addressing various contingencies that may arise in oil production platforms.

- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- The **Indian Navy** is set to re-induct a refurbished 22-year-old fast attack craft, **INS Tarmugli**, in a ceremonial commissioning ceremony at the naval dockyard in Visakhapatnam. This event marks a significant milestone, as **INS Tarmugli** returns to active service more than seventeen years **after being gifted to the Maldives** and subsequently returned to India in May of the current year. (
- 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.
- **Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL)**, a **Navratna Defence Public Sector Undertaking**, has recently clinched a significant order worth **Rs.4,522 crore from the Indian Army**. The order, pertaining to the supply of fuses for various calibres, is a testament to BEL's continued commitment to contributing to the **'Atmanirbhar Bharat' (Self-Reliant India) initiative**. The project is set to involve the collaboration of Indian Electronics and associated Industries, including Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) serving as sub-vendors for BEL.
- The **Ministry of Defence**, in a significant development on December 15, 2023, sealed a landmark contract with **Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL), Pune**. This groundbreaking agreement entails the procurement of **Electronic Fuzes** for the Indian Army over a 10-year period, amounting to a total cost of Rs 5,336.25 crore.
- In a significant triumph for its indigenous design and development capabilities, the **Indian Air Force (IAF)** has proudly announced the **successful test firing** of its **Surface to Air Missile for Assured Retaliation (SAMAR)** air defence missile system. This accomplishment marks a milestone for the IAF's strategic self-reliance efforts.
- 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 remarkable feat took place during the **'Astrashakti' military exercise** conducted by the Indian Air Force on December 12. This exercise served as a platform to showcase the exceptional capabilities of the Akash missile system, illustrating its ability to engage multiple targets concurrently.
- Three officers from the **Indian Armed Forces**, undergoing the prestigious Command and Staff Course at **Defence Services Command and Staff College (DSCSC) in Sri Lanka**, have been honored with the coveted **'Golden Owl' award** for their outstanding performance. The award, presented by Sri Lankan President Ranil Wickremesinghe, recognizes their exceptional achievements in analytical skills, strategic thinking, and their potential for future leadership.
- In a poignant ceremony held at **INS Shivaji**, the esteemed Training establishment of the Indian Navy, the original **'Vir Chakra'** was posthumously awarded to **Late Vice Admiral Benoy Roy Chowdhury**. The ceremony, marked by solemnity and reverence, took place on 18th December 2023. (
- The **Indian Air Force (IAF)** and the **United Services Institution of India (USI)** recently collaborated to host the inaugural Marshal of the Air Force **Arjan Singh Annual Lecture** at USI, Shankar Vihar. This significant event serves as a tribute to the exemplary life and achievements of Marshal of the Air Force Arjan Singh.
- Defence Secretary Shri Giridhar Aramane inaugurated a **new design and test facility at Aero Engine Research and Development Centre (AERDC) of Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL)** in Bengaluru, Karnataka on December 29, 2023. The AERDC is currently involved in the design and development of several new engines including two strategic engines. The newly inaugurated facility, spanning **over 10,000 sq. meters**, is poised to be a hub of innovation in the field of aerospace engineering.

- **Prime Minister Narendra Modi** announced the unveiling of **new designs for Admirals' epaulettes** and a **renaming of ranks within the Indian Navy**. This announcement was made during **Navy Day celebrations at Sindhudurg on December 4**, emphasizing a shift towards embracing **Bharatiyata** and breaking free from what the Navy referred to as "**Ghulami ki Maansikta**" or the slave mentality. The redesigned Admirals' epaulettes mark a symbolic departure from the past, with the octagon taking center stage. Inspired by the naval ensign and drawing from the **rajmudra (royal seal) of Chhatrapati Shivaji**, the new design aims to encapsulate India's rich maritime heritage. The **octagon, golden navy button top, and symbols of an Indian sword and telescope crossed**, along with stars indicating ranks, contribute to a visual representation of the Navy's commitment to national pride and heritage.

The Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) has recently announced its ambitious plan to launch the country's **first X-Ray Polarimeter Satellite (XPoSat)**. This groundbreaking mission aims to delve into the polarization of intense X-Ray sources, introducing a novel dimension to X-Ray astronomy. With a focus on simultaneous studies of temporal, spectral and polarization features, **XPoSat** is poised to make significant contributions to our understanding of cosmic X-Ray sources.

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.

- Google parent company **Alphabet** made a significant announcement on December 6, unveiling **Gemini**, its latest and most advanced AI model to date. In a bid to outpace competitors like OpenAI's GPT-4 and Meta's Llama 2, Gemini represents a major leap forward for the tech giant in the rapidly evolving field of artificial intelligence.

In a significant development within the **artificial intelligence (AI) community**, **Meta and IBM** have joined forces to establish the **AI Alliance**. This aims to promote an "**open-science**" approach to AI development, setting them apart from competitors such as Google, Microsoft and Open AI. The crux of the debate revolves around whether AI technology should be developed in a manner that is widely accessible for kept proprietary, raising questions about safety, profit distribution and regulatory influence.

IBM has recently unveiled its latest quantum computing milestone with the introduction of **Condor**, a quantum

Science and Technology

processor boasting an impressive **1,121 qubits**. This marks a significant advancement in IBM's quantum roadmap, showcasing a quantum machine with over 1,000 qubits for the first time. However, the company is now shifting its focus from sheer qubit quantity to prioritizing error resistance in its quantum machines.

In a landmark collaboration, scientists from the **Department of Atomic Energy (DAE)** and **Bengaluru-based IDRS Labs** have united their expertise to develop **Aktocyte tablets for the treatment of pelvic cancer**. The tablets, designed as an adjuvant to cancer radiotherapy, regenerative nutraceutical, immunomodulator, and antioxidant, mark a significant advancement in cancer care, according to a statement from the DAE.

Genrobotics, a **Kerala-based startup**, has emerged as a frontrunner in the field of Artificial Intelligence (AI) for social change. The company achieved significant recognition by being adjudged **among the top three AI startups in India** at the Global Partnership on Artificial Intelligence (GPAI) Summit 2023.

In a groundbreaking move, Prime Minister Narendra Modi utilized an **AI-powered Indian language translation tool, 'Bhashini'**, during a recent speech in Uttar Pradesh. The tool, developed by the government, **aims to facilitate real-time translation**, fostering communication across diverse linguistic communities within the country.

The **Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO)** has once again soared to new heights by clinching the prestigious **Leif Erikson Lunar Prize**. This esteemed accolade, bestowed by the Husavik Museum, stands as a testament to ISRO's unwavering commitment and substantial contributions to lunar exploration. The focal point of this recognition is **ISRO's groundbreaking Chandrayaan-3 mission**, a venture that has significantly deepened our understanding of celestial mysteries.

- The **Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO)** Chairman, S Somanath, recently announced a significant milestone in India's space exploration journey. The Aditya-L1, India's first solar mission, is set to reach the **Lagrangian point L1** on January 6. This point, **located 1.5 million kilometers away from Earth**, marks a critical stage in the mission's objectives.
- **ISRO** (Indian Space Research Organisation) has been making significant strides in space exploration, and the year

Books & Authors

- In a significant stride towards recognizing Prime Minister Narendra Modi's contributions to disaster management in India, a compelling book titled **'RESILIENT INDIA: How Modi Transformed India's Disaster Management Paradigm's** was officially released in **Dehradun**. The unveiling ceremony took place during the sixth World Congress on Disaster Management and was graced by Uttarakhand Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami.
- Bollywood actor **Huma Qureshi** has ventured into a new realm as an author, marking her debut with the fantasy fiction novel titled **'Zeba: An Accidental Superhero.'** The book was officially launched during the 12th edition of the Bangalore Literature Festival (BLF), adding a new chapter to Huma Qureshi's creative journey.

2024 is set to begin with yet another groundbreaking mission. Following the successes of the Chandrayaan-3 and Aditya-L1 missions, ISRO is gearing up for its latest venture – the **XPoSat mission**. Scheduled for launch on January 1, 2024, this mission marks **India's maiden foray into polarimetry**, a field crucial for studying black holes and other celestial sources emitting X-rays.

- Former President Shri **Ramnath Kovind** graced the launch of **'Naye Bharat ka Samaveda,'** a seminal collection spotlighting **Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi's** impactful speeches, delving deep into the core essence and values embedded in our nation's Constitution.
- On December 25, Prime Minister **Narendra Modi** unveiled the first series of 11 volumes comprising the collected works of **Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya**. This significant event took place on the occasion of the 162nd birth anniversary of Pandit Malaviya, the visionary founder of Banaras Hindu University.
- Former Reserve Bank of India (RBI) governor, **Raghuram Rajan**, in collaboration with economist **Rohit Lamba**, has released a groundbreaking book titled **'Breaking the Mould: Reimagining India's Economic Future.'** This latest addition to Rajan's literary contributions marks a significant exploration into the potential and challenges of India's economic trajectory.

Miscellaneous Current Affairs

- The deep depression looming over the Bay of Bengal has rapidly intensified, evolving into a **severe cyclonic storm** named **'Michaung'** as per the latest update from the Indian Meteorological Department (IMD). The transformation occurred at 8:30 am today, signaling an escalating threat to the eastern coast of India.
- **Oxford University Press** has unveiled **"Rizz"** as its Word of the Year, reflecting the linguistic choices of Generation Z. The term, used to describe someone's ability to attract or seduce another person, triumphed over finalists like **"Swiftie," "situationship," and "prompt"** in the annual decision made by language experts at the renowned publisher of the Oxford English Dictionary.
- In a momentous announcement, Gujarat Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel declared that the vibrant and culturally significant **Garba dance** has been officially recognized by **UNESCO**, earning a coveted spot on the **"Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity."** The announcement was met with enthusiasm from Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who commended the global acknowledgment of this traditional Indian dance form.

- In a momentous occasion for India, **Pune** has etched its name in the prestigious **'Guinness World Record'** books by hosting the **largest reading activity** in collaboration, surpassing China's previous record. On December 14th, 2023, from 8-10 am at SP College, a remarkable total of **3,066 parents gathered to read aloud to their children**, creating a magical atmosphere and leaving an indelible mark in history.
- **Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA)** has granted an aerodrome license for the **Ayodhya Airport**, paving the way for its inaugural flight on December 30. Developed by the Airports Authority of India (AAI) at a cost of **₹350 crore**, the airport is strategically timed for inauguration ahead of the upcoming **Ram Mandir inauguration in Ayodhya**.
- The Jammu and Kashmir administration has formulated detailed rules for the registration of marriages under the Anand Marriage Act. The set of regulations, titled **'Jammu and Kashmir Anand Marriage Registration Rules, 2023,'** outlines the procedures for registering "Anand marriages." According to a government notification issued on November 30, tehsildars within their respective territorial jurisdictions will serve as registrars for such marriages.

- In a significant stride towards sustainable maritime technology, India has unveiled '**Barracuda**,' the nation's fastest solar electric boat, at the **Navgathi Yard in Panavally, Alappuzha**. This cutting-edge vessel, named 'Saur Shakthi,' is a collaborative effort between Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Ltd and Navalt, an eco-marine tech company.
- **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.
- Tiger attacks on humans have been a concerning issue in India, with the Centre recently providing information on the extent of this problem. **In 2022 alone, a total of 112 deaths occurred in the country due to tiger attacks**. The Union Minister for Forest, Environment, and Climate Change, **Bhupinder Yadav**, shared these statistics in a written reply to the Lok Sabha, shedding light on the gravity of the situation.
- The **Indian government** has issued a warning regarding a new and sophisticated scam known as "**Smishing**." This term is a combination of "**SMS**" (Short Message Service) and "**phishing**," signifying a malicious practice that exploits text messages to deceive individuals into divulging confidential information.
- The **Ministry of Mines** marked a historic moment with the launch of the **National Geoscience Data Repository (NGDR)** Portal. This initiative, spearheaded by the **Geological Survey of India (GSI)** and **Bhaskaracharya Institute of Space Applications and Geoinformatics (BISAG-N)**, is poised to revolutionize access to critical geoscience data.
- India's coking coal imports have soared to a **five-year high**, registering 38.14 million tonnes for the April-November period of the current fiscal year. This reflects a marginal year-on-year increase, with nearly 38.12 million tonnes imported during the corresponding period last year. Notably, **Russia** has secured its position as **India's third-largest coal supplier**, a significant shift in the country's historical coal import landscape.
- In a move highlighting the crucial role of camelids in the lives of people worldwide, the **United Nations** has declared **2024 as the International Year of Camelids**. This decision aims to spotlight the diverse contributions of camelids, including alpacas, Bactrian camels, dromedaries, guanacos, llamas, and vicuñas, in promoting food security, nutrition, and economic growth, particularly for Indigenous Peoples and local communities.
- **Gwalior**, often hailed as the **City of Music**, recently witnessed an extraordinary spectacle as **1500 tabla performers converged at the historic Karna Mahal of Gwalior Fort**. This monumental gathering not only set a Guinness World Record for the most persons performing tabla simultaneously but also marked a significant moment in the city's rich musical heritage.
- A team of researchers from **Visva-Bharati University's botany department** has made a groundbreaking discovery that has the potential to revolutionize agricultural practices. They have identified a new bacteria strain capable of boosting plant growth and named it '**Pantoea Tagorei**' in honor of **Nobel laureate Rabindranath Tagore**.
- The Administrative Council (AC), chaired by Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha, recently approved crucial changes to the **Jammu and Kashmir Panchayati Raj Act, 1989**. The amendments focus on incorporating a definition of Other Backward Classes (OBCs) within the Act to facilitate their reservation in grassroots democratic institutions.
- In a historic event, the **Lt. Governor Shri Manoj Sinha of the Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir** unveiled the commemorative plaque, officially inaugurating the **Composite Regional Centre (CRC) for Skill Development, Rehabilitation & Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (Divyangjan) in Samba – Jammu**. This momentous occasion signifies a significant stride towards inclusivity and empowerment for individuals with disabilities in the region.
- In a significant move towards enhancing infrastructure in **Ladakh**, Union Minister Nitin Gadkari announced that the government has sanctioned a whopping **Rs 1,170.16 crore for 29 road projects in the region**. This development aims to address the connectivity challenges faced by Ladakh, the largest Union Territory in terms of area and the second least populous in the country.

Obituaries Current Affairs

- Actor **Dinesh Phadnis**, renowned for his portrayal of the funny and innocent CID officer **Fredericks on the popular Sony TV show CID**, has passed away. His demise was confirmed by his co-star Dayanand Shetty, who clarified that Dinesh suffered from liver damage and not a heart attack. The actor had been undergoing treatment at Mumbai’s Tunga Hospital.
- Veteran character actor **Junior Mehmood**, known for his roles in iconic Bollywood films such as Caravan, Haathi Mere Saathi, and Mera Naam Joker, passed away at 67. **Mehmood Junior**, whose real name was **Naeem Sayyed**, began his acting journey when he was very young.
- **Joe Solomon**, the former **West Indies and Guyana cricket player**, has passed away at the age of 93. Solomon was a big part of West Indies cricket in the late 1950s and 1960s, and he’s remembered for his amazing performances on the field.
- 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**.
- **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.
- 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.

- **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 Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah**, who died on **December 16, 2023, at the age of**
- **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.
- Tamil Nadu mourns the passing of beloved actor and politician **Vijayakanth**, fondly called “Captain,” who breathed his last today at the age of 71. His contributions to both cinema and the political landscape of the state leave an enduring legacy.
- South Korean actor **Lee Sun-kyun**, widely recognized for his role in the Oscar-winning film **Parasite**, has been found dead in an apparent suicide in central Seoul. The 48-year-old actor’s tragic end comes amidst ongoing investigations related to alleged illegal drug use, adding a somber note to his celebrated career. **Wolfgang Schaeuble**, with over 50 years in the German parliament, has passed away at 81, concluding **one of Germany’s lengthiest political careers**, during which he played a crucial role in anchoring his country at the center of Europe.
- **Jacques Delors**, the **former European Commission chief** and a key figure in the formation of the European Union (EU), has **died at the age of 98**. A prominent French socialist, Delors played a crucial role in shaping the EU during his **three-term presidency from January 1985 to the end of 1994**.

List of the Important Mountain Passes of India Static Current Affairs

Name	State	Height (ft)	Between/Separating
Asirgarh	Madhya Pradesh	-	-
Auden’s Col	Uttarakhand	17,552	-
Banihal Pass	Jammu and Kashmir (Jammu, Kashmir)	9,291	Jammu & Kashmir
Bara-lacha-la	Himachal Pradesh	16,400	-
Bomdila	Arunachal Pradesh	-	-
Changla Pass	Jammu and Kashmir (Ladakh)	17,585	Leh & Changthang
Chanshal Pass	Himachal Pradesh	14,830	-
Dehra Compass	Jammu and Kashmir (Ladakh)	-	-
Debsa Pass	Himachal Pradesh	17,520	-

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Name	State	Height (ft)	Between/Separating
Diphu Pass	Arunachal Pradesh	4,587	-
Dongkhala	Sikkim	12,000	-
Dhumdhar Kandi Pass	Uttarakhand	-	-
Fotu La	Jammu and Kashmir (Ladakh)	13,451	-
Goecha La	Sikkim	16,207	-
Haldighati Pass	Rajasthan	-	-
Indrahar Pass	Himachal Pradesh	14,473	-
Jelep La	Sikkim	14,300	-
Khardung La	Jammu and Kashmir (Ladakh)	17,582	Leh & Nubra
Kongka Pass	Jammu and Kashmir (Ladakh)	16,965	Ladakh & Aksai Chin
Lanak Pass	Jammu and Kashmir (Ladakh)	17,933	Ladakh & Tibet
Kunzum Pass	Himachal Pradesh (Lahaul and Spiti)	14,931	Lahaul & Spiti
Karakoram Pass	Jammu and Kashmir (Ladakh)	-	Ladakh & Xinjiang
Lipulekh Pass	Uttarakhand	17,500	-
Lungalacha La	Jammu and Kashmir (Ladakh)	16,600	-
Lamkhaga Pass	Himachal Pradesh	17,336	-
Marsimik La	Jammu and Kashmir (Ladakh)	18,314	-
Mayali Pass	Uttarakhand	16,371	-
Nama Pass	Uttarakhand	18,399	-
Namika La	Jammu and Kashmir (Ladakh)	12,139	-
Nathu La	Sikkim	14,140	Sikkim & Tibet
Palakkad Gap	Kerala	750	Kerala & Tamil Nadu
Thamarassery Pass	Wayanad Kerala	1,700	Malabar & Mysore
Shenkottai pass	Kollam Kerala	690	Travancore & Tamil Nadu
Pensi La	Jammu and Kashmir (Ladakh)	-	-
Rezang La	Jammu and Kashmir (Ladakh)	-	-
Rohtang Pass	Himachal Pradesh	13,051	Manali & Lahaul
Sasser la	Jammu and Kashmir (Ladakh)	17,753	Nubra & Siachen Glacier
Sela Pass	Arunachal Pradesh	14,000	-
Shipki La	Himachal Pradesh	-	-
Sia La	Jammu and Kashmir (Siachen Glacier)	18,337	-
Shingo La	Jammu and Kashmir (Ladakh)	-	-
Spangur Gap	Jammu and Kashmir (Ladakh)	-	-
Gyong La	Jammu and Kashmir (Siachen Glacier)	18,655	-
Bilafond La	Jammu and Kashmir (Siachen Glacier)	17,881	-
Sin La	Uttarakhand	-	-
Tanglang La	Jammu and Kashmir (Ladakh)	17,583	-
Traill's Pass	Uttarakhand	17,100	-
Zojila Pass	Jammu and Kashmir (Kashmir, Ladakh)	12,400	Kashmir & Ladakh

List of Best Intelligence Agencies of the World

Agency	Country
Central External Liaison Department	China
Australian Security and Intelligence Organisation	Australia
K.G.B/G.R.U	Russia
Bureau of State Security (B.O.S.S)	South Africa
M.I (Military Intelligence)-5 and 6, Special Branch, Joint Intelligence Organisation	United Kingdom
Research and Analysis Wing (RAW), Intelligence Bureau (IB)	India
Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI)	USA
MOSSAD	Israel
Mukhabarat	Egypt
Naicho	Japan
SAVAK (Sazamane Etelaat va Amniate Kechvar)	Iran
AI Mukhabarat	Iraq
DGSE (Direction General de Securite Exterieur)	France
Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS)	Canada