




14 March 2024

National and International News

<p>Exercise Bharat Shakti</p> 	<p>Context:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prime Minister Narendra Modi and a delegation of over 30 members observed the 'Bharat Shakti' tri-service exercise in Pokhran, Rajasthan. <p>Key points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This exercise integrates the firepower and manoeuvre capabilities of all three services. • It serves to exhibit the effectiveness of domestically manufactured defence equipment. • Through realistic scenarios, it showcases the Indian Armed Forces' ability to operate cohesively across various domains. • The exercise is in line with the Aatmanirbhara initiative, underscoring India's self-reliance in defence. <p>Key Equipment and Weapons Systems Participated:</p> <p>Indian Army:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Includes T-90 (IM) Tanks, Dhanush and Sarang Gun Systems, Akash Weapons System, Logistics Drones, Robotic Mules, Advanced Light Helicopter (ALH), and various unmanned aerial vehicles. <p>Indian Navy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deployed Naval Anti-Ship Missiles, Autonomous Cargo Carrying Aerial Vehicles, and Expendable Aerial Targets. <p>Indian Air Force:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Showcased the Light Combat Aircraft Tejas, Light Utility Helicopters, and Advanced Light Helicopters.
<p>India was the top arms importer in 2019-2023</p>	<p>Context:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • India ranked as the world's top arms importer from 2019 to 2023. • Imports increased by 4.7% compared to 2014–2018, according to SIPRI. <p>Key points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • European countries saw a 94% increase in arms imports from 2014–18 to 2019–23, likely influenced by the Ukraine war.



- Russia, **India's main arms supplier**, had its share drop below half for the first time since 1960–64.
- Nine out of the top 10 arms importers were from **Asia, Oceania, or the Middle East**.
- **Ukraine became the fourth largest arms importer** due to major arms transfers from over 30 states in 2022–23.
- In India's FY 2024–25 interim budget, the Defence Ministry received ₹6.2 lakh crore.
- This included ₹1.72 lakh crore for new procurements, a 5.78% increase from the previous year.

Global Arms Trade Trends

- **Pakistan, the fifth largest arms importer**, saw a 43% increase in imports, with China supplying 82% of its arms.
- U.S. arms exports grew by 17%, while Russian exports fell by more than half (-53%).
- France emerged as the world's second largest arms supplier with a 47% increase in exports.

SIPRI Overview

- SIPRI, or the **Stockholm International Peace Research Institute**, is an independent international institute established in 1966.
- It focuses on **research into conflict, armaments, arms control, and disarmament**.
- SIPRI provides **data, analysis, and recommendations to policymakers, researchers, media, and the public on international security matters**.

Nyepi day



Context:

- Nyepi Day is also known as **Bali's Day of Silence**.
- It marks the **Hindu New Year according to the Balinese calendar**.
- The majority of Bali's population follows Hinduism.

Significance

- Nyepi Day is a holy day aimed at purifying the island from the previous year's negativity.
- It sets the tone for a positive and prosperous new year.

Observance

- Nyepi is observed with **silence, fasting, and meditation**.



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All lights and sounds are turned off, and all activities cease. • The day is spent in silence, self-reflection, and meditation. • Traffic comes to a halt, and the island appears deserted.
<p>Electric Mobility Promotion Scheme 2024</p>	<p>Context:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Announcement: Ministry of Heavy Industries announces Electric Mobility Promotion Scheme 2024. • Duration: Scheme to be implemented from 1st April to 31st July 2024. • Total Outlay: Rs. 500 crore. • Objective: To promote electric two-wheeler (e-2W) and three-wheeler (e-3W) adoption, and boost electric vehicle manufacturing in India. • Eligible Categories: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Two Wheelers (electric) (e-2W) ○ Three-wheeler (electric) including registered e-rickshaws & e-carts and L5 (e-3W) • Applicability: Mainly for commercial e-2W and e-3Ws; privately or corporate owned registered e-2W also eligible. <p>Target Numbers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aim to support 3,72,215 EVs including e-2W (3,33,387) and e-3W (38,828 including 13,590 rickshaws & e-carts and 25,238 e-3W in L5 category). <p>Aatma Nirbhar Bharat Impact:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promotes efficient, competitive, and resilient EV manufacturing, aligning with the vision of Aatma-Nirbhar Bharat. • Phased Manufacturing Programme (PMP) adopted to encourage domestic manufacturing and strengthen EV supply chain, creating significant employment opportunities.
<p>PM Gati Shakti- National Master Plan in Coal Sector</p>	<p>Context:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Union Minister of Coal, Mines and Parliamentary affairs Shri Pralhad Joshi released “PM Gati Shakti-National Master Plan in coal sector”. • Aim:To offer in-depth insights into the coal sector through the geospatial layers available on the Ministry of Coal page of the PMGS-NMP portal. <p>Key points:</p>



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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shri Anandji Prasad, Advisor (Projects), Ministry of Coal, echoed that the release of the PM-Gati Shakti National Master Plan aims to develop a smart, integrated, and sustainable coal logistics ecosystem. • This will ensure the availability of adequate infrastructure, optimize logistics costs, and promote modernization through the adoption of information and communication technology. • The initiative aligns with the vision of 'Atmanirbhar Bharat' by promoting cost efficiencies, minimizing disruptions, and fostering inclusive growth.
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Kerala Regional News

<p>Kerala Cabinet approves AVGC-XR policy</p>	<p>Context:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Kerala cabinet approved a new policy focused on Animation, Visual Effects, Gaming, Comics, and Extended Reality (AVGC-XR). • This initiative aims to make Kerala a leading hub for these industries in India. <p>Key targets of the policy include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creating 50,000 new jobs by 2029. • Attracting 250 new companies to the state • Capturing 10% of India's AVGC-XR exports • The policy will introduce various measures to achieve these goals, including: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Funding for research and development 2. Skill development programs from school to university level 3. Encouragement for startups in the AVGC-XR sector 4. Establishment of a Centre of Excellence
<p>Patent for e-Crop, an IoT device for smart farming developed by CTCRI</p>	<p>Context:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Central Tuber Crops Research Institute (CTCRI) has developed an IoT device called e-Crop. • This device helps farmers with smart farming practices by: • Simulating crop growth: e-Crop takes into account real-time data like weather, soil moisture, and



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	<p>nutrient levels to simulate crop growth.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Calculating resource needs: Based on the simulation, e-Crop calculates the daily water and nutrient requirements of the crop. ● Generating agro-advisories: e-Crop provides farmers with recommendations on fertilizer and irrigation needs, optimizing resource use.
<p>State-level workshops to set up IEDCs in medical institutions begin</p>	<p>Context:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Kerala Startup Mission (KSUM) is launching a program to establish Innovation and Entrepreneurship Development Cells (IEDCs) within medical and dental colleges across the state. ● This initiative is likely spurred by workshops aimed at setting up these IEDCs. ● These cells will presumably foster an environment that encourages medical professionals to develop innovative ideas and potentially turn them into entrepreneurial ventures. ● This could lead to new medical technologies, treatments, or healthcare services.
<p>Forest dept. to set up landscape monitoring centre in Munnar</p>	<p>Context:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● In a first for the state of Kerala, the Forest Department will establish a landscape monitoring centre (LMC) in Munnar, Idukki. ● This center's primary purpose will be to monitor wildlife movement and assess food and water availability within the forest areas. ● This initiative signifies a significant step towards improved conservation efforts in Kerala.
<p>Rubber Board to explore export options to stimulate domestic market</p>	<p>Context:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Rubber Board in Kerala is looking to increase rubber exports to stimulate the domestic market. ● They are meeting with exporters and firms to discuss the current situation and explore opportunities, particularly for sheet rubber. ● This initiative comes amid pressure to align domestic prices with the international market. ● To incentivize exports, the Indian government offers a 1.4% benefit on the value of exported sheet rubber under the RoDTEP scheme. ● Additionally, the Rubber Board is promoting Indian rubber under the unique brand "Indian Natural Rubber".



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