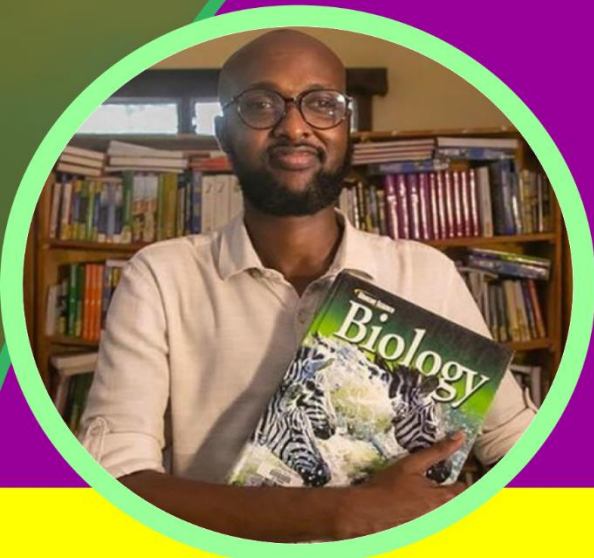


Addar Khobor Khoborer Adda CURRENT AFFAIRS

Important for all exams WBCS, Police, Miscellaneous,
WBPS Food SI, Clerkship, Rail, Bank, SSC

Ayodhya Airport to be renamed
Maharishi Valmiki Airport



HIGHLIGHTED POINTS

**Ayodhya Airport to be renamed
Maharishi Valmiki Airport**

**Gajraj System: AI-Based Elephant
Protection on Indian Railways**

**Top French civilian honour for
ISRO scientist VR Lalithambika**

**BCCI Decides to Retire MS Dhoni's
Iconic No.7 Jersey**

**Henry Kissinger, Nobel Peace Prize
Winner, Passed Away**

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Monthly Current Affairs Magazine – December 2023

National News

Hardeep Puri Inaugurates Second Floating CNG Station in Varanasi

In a landmark move towards a pollution-free Varanasi, Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas & Housing and Urban Affairs, Shri Hardeep Singh Puri, inaugurated the city's second floating Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) Mobile Refueling Unit (MRU) station at Ravidas Ghat. Developed by GAIL (India) Limited, this initiative signifies a significant stride in adopting sustainable energy solutions.

India Unveils Biogas Blending Plan to Reduce Natural Gas Imports and Achieve Net Zero Emissions

In a significant move towards energy sustainability, the Indian government has announced a phased introduction of blending compressed biogas with natural gas. This initiative aims to bolster domestic demand, decrease reliance on natural gas imports, and contribute to India's commitment to achieving net zero emissions by 2070. Commencing in April 2025, the government will initiate the mandatory blending of compressed biogas with natural gas at a rate of 1%. This initial phase will focus on utilization in automobiles and households, marking a crucial step towards diversifying the energy mix. As part of the phased approach, the mandatory blending percentage is set to increase to approximately 5% by 2028. This strategic escalation underscores the government's commitment to progressively integrating biogas into the mainstream energy consumption landscape, further reducing the carbon footprint.

Center Renames Ayushman Bharat Health and Wellness Centers to Ayushman Arogya Mandir

The Union Government has recently made a significant decision to rebrand the existing Ayushman Bharat Health and Wellness Centres (AB-HWCs) as 'Ayushman Arogya Mandir' with the tagline 'Arogyam Parmam Dhanam.' This move, communicated through a letter to all States and Union Territories by the Union Health Ministry, aims to enhance the identity and outreach of these primary healthcare facilities. The rebranding process is expected to be completed nationwide by the end of 2023.

Modi Govt Plans 7 New Bills For Winter Session

The upcoming Winter Session of the Parliament is poised to witness significant legislative activity, with the Narendra Modi government planning to introduce seven new Bills alongside addressing 11 pending bills. The proposed legislations cover a diverse range of topics, from establishing a Central Tribal University in Telangana to providing women's quota in Jammu and Kashmir and Puducherry Assemblies.

Union WCD Minister Launches 'Anganwadi Protocol for Divyang Children'

The Union Minister for Women and Child Development and Minority Affairs, Smt. Smriti Zubin Irani, recently launched the Anganwadi Protocol Divyang Children in a national outreach program at Vigyan Bhawan on November 28, 2023. The event aimed to strengthen the overall well-being of Divyang children and was attended by key officials, experts and stakeholders from various ministers and organizations. Union Minister Smt. Smriti Zubin Irani highlighted the ongoing efforts, with over 4.37 crore children receiving support for meals and ECCE, 4.5 crore children aged 0 to 3 benefiting from take-home relations and home visits and more than 8 crore children monitored for growth and health referrals. The Minister emphasized the importance of the Anganwadi network in achieving these milestones.

Union Home Minister Amit Shah Approves ₹1,658 Crore Recovery and Reconstruction Plan for Joshimath

Joshimath, a town in Uttarakhand, faced severe challenges due to landslides and ground subsidence. The high-level central committee, led by Union Home Minister Amit Shah, approved a comprehensive recovery and reconstruction (R&R) plan amounting to ₹1,658.17 crore to address the aftermath of these natural disasters. The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) aims to execute the recovery plan for Joshimath over three years, employing Build-Back-Better (BBB) principles, sustainability initiatives, and other practices. The MHA has designated technical agencies under the guidance of the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) to assist the state government in formulating and executing the recovery plan.

Amplifi 2.0: Urban Affairs Ministry's Data Initiative For Indian cities

The Union Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs in India has embarked on a groundbreaking initiative to centralize and streamline raw data from cities across the country. Launched as the Amplifi 2.0 (Assessment and Monitoring Platform for Liveable, Inclusive and Future-ready urban India) portal, this endeavor aims to facilitate data-driven policy-making, empower academics, researchers, and engage stakeholders in the urban development process. The platform, operational for three weeks, has successfully onboarded 225 urban local bodies (ULB), with data currently available for 150 cities. However, the process revealed a significant challenge—lack of data maturity in cities. As a result, only 150 ULBs were initially able to share their data. In response, the Ministry sent data quality parameters to all cities, emphasizing the importance of comprehensive and reliable data.

Bharat Coking Coal Ltd Starts 5.0 MTPA Madhuband Washery Operations

Bharat Coking Coal Limited (BCCL), a key player under the Ministry of Coal, has achieved a significant milestone with the initiation of commercial operations at its state-of-the-art 5.0 MTPA Madhuband Washery. The washery was formally inaugurated by Union Minister of Coal, Mines, and Parliamentary Affairs, Shri Pralhad Joshi, marking a momentous occasion for the coal and steel sectors in India. The facility, formally opened in March 2022 stands out for its technological advancements and logistical efficiency, solidifying its position as one of the largest Coking Coal Washeries in India. The facility has undergone rigorous Load Tests, Trial Run, and Performance Guarantee Tests (PGT) to ensure its operational efficacy, showcasing BCCL's commitment to delivering cutting-edge solutions to the coal industry.

Gajraj System: AI-Based Elephant Protection on Indian Railways

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. The Gajraj system exemplifies a significant stride in utilizing advanced technology for wildlife conservation. By effectively detecting and preventing potential train-elephant collisions, the Indian Railways not only ensures the safety of its operations but also plays a crucial role in preserving India's wildlife heritage.

India Achieves Remarkable Environmental Milestone: Emission Intensity Falls 33% Ahead of Schedule

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. Despite a cumulative annual GDP growth rate of 7%, India's emissions increased by only 4% per year during 2005-2019. This remarkable feat showcases India's ability to achieve sustainable economic growth while curbing emissions.

India's Concerns Lead to Non-Signing of COP28 Health & Climate Declaration

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. Despite India's overall support for the ministerial event hosted by COP28 Presidency, the World Health Organisation, and the UAE Ministry of Health and Prevention, the Health Day witnessed no participation from the Indian Health Ministry delegation. The COP28 Declaration on Climate and Health, signed by 124 countries, underscores the imperative for urgent and substantial reductions in greenhouse gas emissions. It outlines various measures to achieve health benefits through climate action, such as just transitions, lower air pollution, active mobility, and shifts to sustainable healthy diets.

Ministry of Panchayati Raj Launches 'Gram Manchitra' GIS App

To empower Gram Panchayats and improve grassroots spatial planning, the Ministry of Panchayati Raj launched tools like the GIS app "Gram Manchitra" and mobile solution "mActionSoft." Utilizing geo-spatial technology, these tools offer a unified platform for visualizing and planning developmental works, facilitating the formulation of the Gram Panchayat Development Plan (GPDP).

Government Initiative to Establish Subsidized Staple Food Stores at Delhi Metro Stations

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). In a collaborative effort, NCCF will partner with the Delhi Metro Rail Corporation for this pilot project. The government envisions this venture as a potential solution to alleviate the financial burden on consumers by offering essential food items at affordable rates.

Cyclone Michaung Strikes Andhra Pradesh: Transition from Severe Cyclonic Storm to Depression

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. The Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister's Office (CMO) reported significant consequences, affecting nearly 40 lakh people in 194 villages and two towns. Michaung's impact included the inundation of 25 villages, damage to 770 kilometers of roads, uprooting of 35 trees, and the unfortunate loss of three livestock.

Wax Statue of Baba Ambedkar Installed in Jaipur Wax Museum

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. Anoop Srivastava highlighted the decision to create the wax statue was influenced by the numerous tourists from across India who frequented the museum, expressing a desire to see a representation of Baba Saheb. The statue stands as a testament to the enduring popularity of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's legacy and the recognition of his pivotal role in shaping India's constitutional framework.

'Green Rising' Initiative Launched To Empower Youth In Meaningful Eco Initiatives

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. The global "Green Rising" initiative, along with the "Green Rising India Alliance," involves UNICEF, Generation Unlimited, and a diverse network of public, private, and youth partners.

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

The Prime Minister of India, Shri Narendra Modi, inaugurated the first Indian Art, Architecture & Design Biennale (IAADB) 2023 at the iconic Red Fort. The event also marked the launch of the 'Aatmanirbhar Bharat Centre for Design' and the student Biennale, Samunnati. 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. Addressing the gathering, the Prime Minister welcomed attendees to the World Heritage Site and underscored the role of symbols in connecting nations with their past. He praised the diverse works showcased at IAADB, describing it as an amalgamation of colors, creativity, culture, and community connect. The Prime Minister congratulated the Ministry of Culture, participating nations, and all involved for the successful organization of IAADB.

PM Modi Launches AI Summit at Bharat Mandapam In New Delhi

The annual Global Partnership for Artificial Intelligence (GPAI) 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 GPAI in 2024, excluding China from the member list. Prime Minister Narendra Modi, in his inaugural address, stressed the importance of addressing ethical, economic, and social aspects to build trust in AI. AI policymakers and industry experts were engaged in discussions, covering a broad spectrum of topics. Union Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw highlighted the significance of exploring issues related to farming and healthcare during the summit. Paytm's CEO, Vijay Shekhar Sharma, shed light on the challenges faced by Indian farmers in integrating data, emphasizing how AI could address ecological nuances, improve production, and bridge demand-supply gaps.

UIDAI Imposes Rs.50,000 Penalty for Overcharging Aadhaar Services, Suspends Operator: Govt.

In a significant move to ensure fair and affordable access to Aadhaar 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. The UIDAI, responsible for the implementation of the Aadhaar program, has established a comprehensive regulatory framework to govern the provision of Aadhaar services. This framework encompasses the enrollment and update processes, aiming to maintain transparency and prevent the exploitation of citizens through unauthorized charges.

Directorate General of Civil Aviation grants licence for Ayodhya Airport

In a significant development, the 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 Ayodhya Airport, named Maryada Purshottam Shri Ram International Airport, not only signifies a significant boost in connectivity but also serves as a testament to the cultural and religious heritage of the region. As it opens its gates to travelers, the airport is poised to become a key pilgrimage and transit point, seamlessly blending modern infrastructure with cultural resonance.

PM Modi Unveils 7th edition of 'Pariksha Pe Charcha'

The Minister of Education, Dharmendra Pradhan, has officially announced the commencement of applications for the seventh edition of Pariksha Pe Charcha. This unique initiative aims to foster student engagement and provide a platform for dialogue on various aspects of education. To participate in Pariksha Pe Charcha 2024, students must apply through the official website at innovateindia.mygov.in/ppc-2024/. The application window is open until January 12, 2024, providing ample time for students from classes 6 to 12 to register. The process allows for 'self participation' by students, as well as a 'teacher login' option. Additionally, parents and teachers have their separate login portals, creating a comprehensive engagement platform.

PM Modi Unveils Varanasi's Swarved Mahamandir, World's Largest Meditation Center

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.

PM Modi to Inaugurate of Eastern Dedicated Freight Corridor

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

Route and Cost: The dedicated section spans from New Deen Dayal Upadhyay Junction to New Bhaupur Junction, situated on the Delhi-Howrah rail route, covering districts like Chandauli, Mirzapur, Prayagraj, Kaushambi, Fatehpur, Kanpur Nagar, and Kanpur Dehat in Uttar Pradesh. The project, executed at a cost of Rs 10,903 crores, boasts 12 stations, comprising six junction stations and six crossing stations.

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

On a vibrant Sunday in Varanasi, Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the second edition of Kashi Tamil Sangamam, a cultural extravaganza aimed at fostering the cultural ties between Varanasi and Tamil Nadu. During the event, PM Modi also flagged off the Kashi Tamil Sangamam Express, symbolizing the unity of the diverse cultures within India. In his address, PM Modi emphasized the significance of Kashi Tamil Sangamam in reinforcing the sentiment of 'Ek Bharat Shrestha Bharat' - the idea of a united and diverse India. The inauguration ceremony, held at Namohat,

witnessed the presence of key dignitaries, including Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, Union Minister Dharmendra Pradhan and other prominent leaders.

India Launches 'Barracuda,' Nation's Fastest Solar Electric Boat

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. The Barracuda stands as a symbol of efficient and clean energy usage, showcasing India's commitment to a greener maritime future.

Kakrapar Unit-4 Power Project Attains Initial Criticality

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). KAPP-4 is part of the ambitious project to deploy sixteen indigenous Pressurised Heavy Water Reactors (PHWR) of 700 MW each across the country.

13 States Raise Rs 19,692 Crore in State Government Securities Auction

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. According to data from the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), Karnataka and Uttar Pradesh emerged as the leading states, each successfully raising Rs 4,000 crore.

Central Railways To Add Panic Switches At 117 Stations

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. The installation of panic switches at railway stations is a proactive measure to ensure the safety and well-being of passengers.

PM Celebrates 1 Crore Ayushman Cards In Viksit Bharat Sankalp Yatra

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. Health and Family Welfare Minister Mansukh Mandaviya disclosed that India has achieved a commendable landmark, with 1,02,23,619 Ayushman cards created during the Viksit Bharat Sankalp Yatra. Under the ongoing Viksit Bharat Sankalp Yatra, the cumulative footfall has reached 1,31,66,365 in 79,487 Health camps conducted at 3,462 Gram Panchayats and Urban Local Bodies.

Gwalior Achieves Guinness Record With 'Largest Tabla Ensemble' At Tansen Festival

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. The event, known as 'Tabla Darbar,' unfolded as part of the annual 'Tansen Samaroh' music festival at the iconic Karna Mahal of Gwalior Fort on the evening of December 25th, drawing attention and acclaim from distinguished guests, including Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Dr Mohan Yadav, Union Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia, and Assembly Speaker Narendra Singh Tomar.

Union Minister Anurag Singh Thakur Initiated 'MY Bharat' Campaign

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. Minister Thakur underscored India's evolution into a global focal point, where the world is closely observing its advancements. He asserted that the government's achievements reflect a quantum jump in development across infrastructure, economy, and various other fields.

Ayodhya Airport to be renamed Maharishi Valmiki Airport

Ayodhya, the holy city in Uttar Pradesh, is all set to get its first international airport, marking a significant development in its pilgrimage and tourism potential. However, amidst preparations for the grand inauguration on December 30 by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, a potential name change for the airport has emerged. 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.

Government To Market FCI Rice As Bharat Brand

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. The Ministry's attempts to curb retail rice prices by enhancing domestic availability through the Open Market Sale Scheme (OMSS) have faced a lukewarm response. Under OMSS, the Food Corporation of India (FCI) has been offering quality rice at a reserve price of ₹29 per kg.

Government Allocates Rs 1,170 Crore For Ladakh Roads: Gadkari

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. Gadkari shared the details of the allocation in a post on the social media platform X, highlighting that the sanctioned funds cover a range of projects, including state highways and other major roads. Moreover, as part of the Central Road and 2Infrastructure Fund (CRIF) scheme for the fiscal year 2023-24, an additional Rs 181.71 crore has been earmarked specifically for the construction of eight bridges in Ladakh.

International News

Robert Shetkintong Appointed as the Next High Commissioner of India to the Republic of Mozambique

In a significant diplomatic move, Robert Shetkintong, the current Ambassador of India to the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, has been designated as the next High Commissioner of India to the Republic of Mozambique. This strategic appointment marks a key transition for Shetkintong, a seasoned diplomat and a 2001 batch Indian Foreign Service (IFS) officer. Shetkintong's diplomatic career has been characterized by a commitment to fostering international relations and representing India on the global stage. Having served as Ambassador to Ethiopia, he has played a curial role in strengthening bilateral ties between India and Ethiopia during his tenure.

UK Detects First Human Case Of H1N2 Pig Virus

On Monday, the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) disclosed the first human case of H1N2, or the pig virus, discovered through routine national flu surveillance. The affected individual experienced mild illness and fully recovered, raising questions about potential pig-to-human transmission. The UKHSA detected the case through routine flu surveillance, highlighting the unidentified source of infection. Despite uncertainties, the agency reported the individual's recovery from a mild illness. This marks the first human instance of H1N2 in the UK, underscoring the virus's mysterious origin. Meera Chand, the incident director at UKHSA, emphasized the H1N2 virus's similarity to strains found in pigs. Though the first human case in the UK, the virus closely resembles those observed in swine populations, sparking concerns about potential pathways for transmission between pigs and humans.

UAE Unveils \$30 Billion Fund For Global Climate Solutions At COP28

The United Arab Emirates, playing host to COP-28, has made a groundbreaking commitment of US\$30 billion to ALTERRA, a climate initiative by Lunate, the world's largest private climate investment vehicle. This privately managed fund aims to mobilize a staggering US\$250 billion globally by 2030, focusing on climate investments to reshape emerging markets and developing economies. Part of the initial tranche of funding has been allocated to develop over 6.0 GW of new clean energy capacity in India. This includes the establishment of 1,200 MW of wind and solar projects, set to commence clean power production by 2025. COP-28 President, Sultan Ahmed Al Jaber, will chair ALTERRA, with Majid Al Suwaidi serving as its Chief Executive Officer. Established by Lunate, an independent global investment manager, ALTERRA is domiciled in the Abu Dhabi Global Market.

India Re-Elected to International Maritime Organization with Highest Vote Tally

In a significant development, 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. The IMO Council, serving as the executive organ of the International Maritime Organization, holds a pivotal role in supervising the organization's work.

World Bank's Innovative Approach to Scaling Climate Finance Through Securitization

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. Ajay Banga emphasizes the goal of establishing a securitizable asset class in climate investments. The objective is to make these investments appealing to major players such as large pension funds and financial giants like BlackRock, providing an attractive avenue for deploying significant capital into climate deals. PSIL, launched under the World Bank's umbrella, collaborates with a group of 15 finance leaders, including Larry Fink of BlackRock, Thomas Buberl of AXA SA, and Noel Quinn of HSBC Plc.

India Provides \$250 Million Line of Credit to Kenya for Agricultural Modernization

In a significant development, India has extended a \$250 million Line of Credit to Kenya for the modernization of its agricultural sector. The announcement was made by Prime Minister Narendra Modi during the visit of Kenyan President William Samoei Ruto, where both countries expressed their commitment to strengthening bilateral ties not only in agricultural but also in defense, counter-terrorism and technology. Prime Minister Modi highlighted the shared agricultural heritage of both nations and announced the Line of Credit to facilitate the modernization of Kenya's agricultural sector. The funds are intended to support projects aimed at advancing agricultural practices and technologies. The joint statement emphasized the exchange of experiences and the potential for increased partnership in innovation and technology.

Indonesia's Marapi Volcano Eruption

Indonesia's Mount Marapi, located in West Sumatra, recently erupted, leading to a tragic incident resulting in the loss of lives and the disappearance of several climbers. The eruption occurred on December 3, 2023, catching many by surprise as authorities scrambled to evacuate those in the vicinity. As Mount Marapi unleashed its fury, a massive cloud of volcanic ash blanketed the sky and debris covered roads and vehicles. The eruption took place with 75 people in the area and while efforts were made to evacuate, 26 individuals were left behind. Abdul Malik, the head of the Padang Search and Rescue Agency, reported that out of the 26, only 14 have been accounted for, with three survivors and a devastating 11 casualties. Indonesia is situated on the "Ring of Fire," a volatile

tectonic region known for its seismic and volcanic activity. The country boasts 127 active volcanoes and Mount Marapi, standing at 2,891 meters (approximately 9,500 feet), is among the most active on Sumatra. Currently at the second-highest alert level on Indonesia's four-step warning scale, the volcano has a history of eruptions, with the deadliest recorded in 1979, claiming the lives of 60 people.

Italy Withdraws from China's Belt and Road Project

Italy has officially withdrawn from China's ambitious Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) marking a significant departure from its previous stance as the only G7 nation to participate. This move comes more than four years after Italy initially joined the initiative in 2019 under the government of then Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte. The decision was long-anticipated and signals a strategic shift in Italy's approach to its relationship with China and the broader global geopolitical landscape. The Belt and Road Initiative, spearheaded by Chinese President Xi Jinping, aims to enhance China's influence globally by investing in infrastructure projects across participating countries. With over 150 nations reportedly joining the initiative, it has become a cornerstone of China's efforts to expand its economic and political clout internationally.

Lahore Leads In Global Pollution Ranking

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. The AQI serves as a crucial metric for assessing the levels of pollution in the air. It is calculated based on five categories of pollutants: ground-level ozone, particulate matter, carbon monoxide, sulfur dioxide, and nitrogen dioxide. Each of these pollutants has distinct sources, ranging from industrial emissions to vehicular exhaust and agricultural activities.

Poland's Parliament Elects Donald Tusk as Prime Minister

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. Tusk's ascension to power followed a coalition victory in the elections two months prior. The coalition, consisting of left-wing to moderate conservative parties, pledged to collaborate under Tusk's leadership to address democratic concerns and strengthen ties with allies. The election was a response to the eight-year rule of the Law and Justice party, which faced accusations of eroding democratic norms, particularly in the judiciary and media.

China Unveils World's First 4th-Generation Nuclear Reactor

China has achieved a significant milestone in its quest to shift away from traditional coal-fired power plants and decrease its reliance on foreign technologies. Recently, the Shidao Bay nuclear power plant in eastern Shandong province commenced commercial operations, heralding the era of next-generation gas-cooled nuclear reactors. This development is crucial for China's commitment to reducing carbon emissions and securing a sustainable energy future. The Shidao Bay plant distinguishes itself by utilizing two high-temperature reactors cooled by gas, a departure from conventional pressurized water cooling systems.

Ban Ki-moon Honored With 2023 Diwali 'Power of One' Award At UN

Former UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, along with three distinguished diplomats, was honored at the annual 'Diwali Power of One Awards.' This prestigious ceremony, often hailed as the 'Oscars of Diplomacy,' celebrated their selfless contributions to shaping a more perfect, peaceful, and secure world. The other distinguished awardees for the year 2023 included Ambassador Mirsada Colakovic, Ambassador Kim Sook, and Miroslav Lajcak. Their invaluable contributions were acknowledged at a special ceremony held at the UN Headquarters, marking their commitment to global peace and development.

India-Korea Electronic Origin Data Exchange System (EODES) Launched for Swift Clearance of Imported Goods

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. EODES aims to streamline the implementation of the India-Korea Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) through the electronic exchange of origin information between the customs administrations of both nations, specifically for goods traded under CEPA.

Israel Appoints Reuven Azar as New Ambassador to India with Expanded Diplomatic Role

The Israeli government recently greenlit the appointment of Reuven Azar as the new Ambassador to India, underscoring his expansive role as the non-resident Ambassador to Sri Lanka and Bhutan as well. Azar's nomination is part of a larger cohort of 21 Heads of Missions cleared by Israel to assume their responsibilities soon. Reuven Azar currently serves as the Ambassador of Israel to Romania. His diplomatic journey is marked by diverse roles, including heading the Israel-US-China internal task force at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

India's Uma Sekhar Elected to Governing Council of UNIDROIT

In a momentous occasion for India, Ms. Uma Sekhar achieved a remarkable victory by securing 45 out of 59 votes in the initial round of elections for the Governing Council of the International Institute for the Unification of Private Law (UNIDROIT) held in Rome, Italy. This historic win not only represents Ms. Sekhar's individual achievement but also elevates India to a prominent position on the Governing Council for the term spanning 2024-28. The electorate triumph for Ms. Uma Sekhar was no small feat, as a minimum of 21 votes was required to secure a position on the Governing Council. With an overwhelming support of 45 votes, her victory underscores the confidence and trust vested in her capabilities.

Bhutan Plans 1,000-sq. km. Green City On Assam Border, Linking South To Southeast Asia

Bhutan, a picturesque Himalayan kingdom, is set to embark on a transformative journey with the announcement of its ambitious "Gelephu Smartcity Project." The Bhutanese King, Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck, revealed the plans for a massive "international city" spanning over 1,000 sq. km. on the border with Assam. This railway line is expected to enhance connectivity with roadways, border trading points into Assam and West Bengal, and eventually extend Bhutan's reach to Myanmar, Thailand, Cambodia, and Singapore.

China Hit By The Deadliest Earthquake In 13 Years

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. Chinese President Xi Jinping has taken swift action, ordering thousands of rescue crews to the region. Gansu province, among the poorest and most diverse in China, faces a daunting challenge in dealing with the aftermath of this natural disaster.

President Sisi Secures Third Term Amid Economic Challenges

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.

Afghan NGO Receives International Gender Equality Honor by Finland

Finland, a global champion of gender equality, recently conferred the International Gender Equality Prize for 2023 to the Afghan Women Skills Development Center, recognizing their unwavering commitment to promoting and safeguarding the rights of women in Afghanistan. The prestigious award, accompanied by a EUR 300,000 prize, was presented by Finnish Prime Minister Petteri Orpo during a ceremony in Tampere. The Afghan Women Skills Development Center stands out as an organization undertaking crucial humanitarian efforts to ensure the safety of Afghan women.

EU Expresses Disappointment as India Rejects Interim Arbitration in WTO Dispute

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.

Angola Announces Departure from OPEC

Angola, a significant oil-producing nation, has declared its decision to exit the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) with effect from January 1, 2024. This move follows the footsteps of Ecuador in 2020 and Qatar in 2019, reflecting a trend of nations with relatively small oil output distancing themselves from the influential oil-exporting organization. Angola became a member of OPEC in 2007, contributing approximately 1.1 million barrels per day to the global oil market. In comparison, the entire OPEC group, founded in 1960 by Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Venezuela, Iran, and Iraq, produces around 28 million barrels per day.

United Nations Declares 2024 as the International Year of Camelids

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.

India, Russia Sign Deals For Kudankulam Nuclear Plant Units

In a significant development affirming the enduring partnership between 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 Kudankulam nuclear power plant, India's largest, has been under construction in Tamil Nadu since March 2002 with technical assistance from Russia. The initial phase became operational in February 2016, operating at its designed capacity of 1,000 MW. Plans project the plant to reach full capacity by 2027.

Israel Grants Intel \$3.2 Billion for \$25 Billion Chip Plant Amid Ongoing Conflict

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. The chosen site for the expansion, Kiryat Gat, is located 42 km (26 miles) from the Hamas-controlled Gaza Strip. Intel views this expansion as a crucial element in fostering a more resilient global supply chain, aligning with the company's broader strategy.

GCC Inks Free Trade Deal With South Korea

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. As part of the newly established FTA, South Korea has committed to removing tariffs on nearly 90% of all items, including critical energy resources such as liquefied natural gas (LNG) and other petroleum products.

China's Groundbreaking Voyage: Mengxiang Sets Sail for Earth's Mantle Exploration

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.

Argentina Rejects BRICS Membership under President Javier Milei

Argentine President Javier Milei has officially declined the invitation to join the BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, South

Africa) grouping of major emerging economies. The rejection was conveyed through letters sent to BRICS leaders, solidifying Argentina's decision to abstain from the bloc. The libertarian outsider, who assumed office recently after a significant electoral victory over traditional political parties, had pledged during his campaign not to align Argentina with BRICS. President Milei's rejection was grounded in the assertion that Argentina's membership was "not considered appropriate at this time."

State News

Madhya Pradesh: India's Largest Tiger Reserve to be Set Up in Damoh

In a landmark development, Damoh district in Madhya Pradesh is poised to become the home of the country's largest tiger reserve, marking a significant stride in wildlife conservation efforts. The central government has greenlit the merger of Noradehi Sanctuary with the Durgavati Sanctuary in Damoh, creating an expansive tiger reserve spanning an impressive 2,300 square kilometers. Situated around the Jabera area of Damoh district, the new tiger reserve is strategically located to enhance conservation efforts. The geographical concentration around Jabera is expected to provide an optimal environment for the flourishing of the tiger population. Damoh's Forest Divisional Officer, MS Uiquey, emphasizes the significance of the tiger reserve in safeguarding the existing tiger population of 16. The merger is not only anticipated to secure a haven for these majestic creatures but is also poised to attract additional tigers to the region, thereby augmenting its overall conservation value.

CSJMU in Kanpur gets A++ Grading by NAAC

Chhatrapati Shahuji Maharaj University (CSMJU) in Kanpur, Uttar Pradesh, has achieved a significant milestone by securing the highest grading, A++, from the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC). This accomplishment places CSMJU among select state universities in Uttar Pradesh with a similar prestigious status. The university's remarkable journey from a 'B' grade in 2006 and 2015 to the top-tier 'A++' rating reflects its dedication to academic excellence and overall institutional development. The NAAC team conducted an evaluation of the campus from November 3 to 5, 2023, focusing on various aspects of higher education, including academics, sports, research and overall achievements. The university's leadership, guided by Chancellor Anandiben Patel and Vice Chancellor Professor Vinay Kumar Pathak, spearheaded initiatives and committees to ensure comprehensive progress in departmental performance, hostel maintenance, administrative efficiency, educational facilities and infrastructure.

Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik Greenlights Massive Investment in 12 Key Projects

Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik has given the green light to 12 pivotal projects, signaling a significant investment of Rs 84,918.75 crore. These initiatives are poised to generate substantial employment, benefiting 42,281 individuals across various sectors. The approved projects span multiple districts in Odisha, namely Cuttack, Dhenkanal, Ganjam, Jajpur, Jharsuguda, Kendrapada, Malkangiri, Rayagada, Sambalpur, and Sundargarh. They cover a diverse range of sectors, including apparel and textiles, green hydrogen and green ammonia, steel, power, renewable energy, and chemical and petrochemical downstream industries.

J&K Approves Four New Industrial Estates in Order to Boost Local Economy

In a significant move to stimulate the local economy, the Jammu and Kashmir admini

The Administrative Council (AC) has approved the setting up of industrial estates at the following locations:

Budhi in Kathua District

Medicity Jammu in Jammu District

Chandgam in Pulwama District

Lelhar in Pulwama District

These industrial estates are slated to be developed on 1,379 kanals of land, involving a substantial investment of Rs 136.65 crore. stration, under the leadership of Lt Governor Manoj Sinha, has given the green light for the establishment of four new industrial estates in the Union Territory.

Nitin Gadkari Inaugurates ‘Classic Imperial’ Luxury Cruise In Kerala

On November 29, Nitin Gadkari virtually marked the inauguration of ‘Classic Imperial,’ a luxury cruise vessel, in Kochi. This event was a significant milestone in the efforts to promote cruise tourism in the region. The Union Minister commended the commissioning of the vessel, emphasizing the display of professional excellence and entrepreneurial skills. Nishith K. John, the entrepreneur behind ‘Classic Imperial,’ received accolades from the Union Minister for his role in bringing this ambitious project to fruition. The vessel, touted as the largest of its kind built in Kerala, can accommodate 150 people at a time. The Union Minister expressed his congratulations to John and assured him of the government’s continuous support. ‘Classic Imperial’ has been constructed in adherence to the stringent safety standards set by the Indian Registrar of Shipping.

Nagaland Celebrates its 61st Statehood Day

Nagaland, a vibrant state in the northeastern region of India, is jubilantly celebrating its 61st Statehood Day on December 1, 2023. This marks a significant milestone in the historical journey of the Nagas, who became the 16th state of the Union

of India on December 1, 1963. The state-level function, to be held at the Nagaland Civil Secretariat Kohima, promises a day filled with cultural richness, reflections on the past and a focus on the future. The day’s festivities will commence with Chief Minister Neiphiu Rio taking the general salute and delivering an address to the people of Nagaland. In this address, he is expected to not only celebrate the achievements and opportunities since statehood but also unveil key initiatives for the future. Among these initiatives are the launch of the Nagaland School Safety Policy Digital Training Platform and the Nagaland Disaster Risk Reduction Road Map. These platforms are crucial steps toward ensuring the safety and resilience of the state.

Union Minister Dharmendra Pradhan Lays Foundation Stone for NSTI Plus

Shri Dharmendra Pradhan, Union Minister for Education and Skill Development & Entrepreneurship, marked a significant step by laying the foundation stone for the National Skill Training Institutes (NSTI) Plus. The initiative aims to enhance the skills of Odisha’s youth through demand-driven and high-quality vocational education. Under the Directorate General of Training (DGT), NSTI Plus will train 500 instructors in Phase-1 through the Craftsmen Instructor Training Scheme (CITS). Additionally, it plans to incorporate another 500 instructors for upskilling and reskilling, aligning with the vision of making India a global skilling destination.

Kolkata Inaugurated FITEXPO INDIA 2023

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. The mega expo, sprawling over 3 lac sq feet of indoor and outdoor space, is set to captivate over 5000 fitness, sports, and wellness enthusiasts. With an expected footfall of over 1.25 lac, FITEXPO INDIA 2023 is poised to be a colossal success. The expo caters to both business-to-consumer (B2C) and business-to-business (B2B) interactions, making it a holistic affair.

Shri Amit Shah At Mati Kala Mahotsav, Ahmedabad, Gujarat

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. In his address, Shri Amit Shah highlighted the historical significance of Khadi, tracing its origins back to

Mahatma Gandhi. He emphasized how Gandhi Ji linked Khadi with the freedom movement, using it as a means to connect impoverished individuals with employment. The movement also aimed to reduce dependence on foreign goods and instill the spirit of Swadeshi and Swaraj in every village.

Meghalaya's Lakadong Turmeric and Other Products Awarded Geographical Indication (GI) Tag

In a significant development, 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. Considered one of the finest turmeric varieties globally, Lakadong turmeric boasts an impressive curcumin content ranging from 6.8 to 7.5 percent. Grown organically in the Lakadong area of Jaintia Hills, this turmeric is renowned for its dark color, and cultivation is carried out without the use of fertilizers. The GI tag is expected to enhance marketing opportunities for farmers, ensuring customers have access to the genuine product.

Lalduhoma Set to Assume Office as Mizoram's Chief Minister

In a significant political development, 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. Earlier, Lalduhoma met with Governor Hari Babu Khambampati at the Raj Bhavan and formally staked claim to form the government. Following the meeting, the governor extended an invitation to Lalduhoma to take charge and form the new government.

Gujarat's Garba Dance Enters UNESCO's 'Intangible Cultural Heritage' List

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. The Garba dance, deeply rooted in the cultural fabric of Gujarat, has long been a symbol of devotion to Goddess Mother during the auspicious Navratri festival. Chief Minister Patel expressed pride in the approval, emphasizing that Garba has not only retained its age-old traditions but continues to evolve and thrive

5th Nagaland Honey Bee Day Celebrated In Kisama Village

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. Acknowledging the unique age-old tradition of beekeeping, T.R. Zeliang emphasized the need to transform it from a traditional hobby into a sustainable livelihood. Regular training programs on honey production and rearing have been provided to villagers, with the aim of improving beekeeping practices across the State.

Uttar Pradesh Delegation Heads to Davos for World Economic Forum

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. The delegation includes key figures such as Minister for Industrial Development Nand Gopal Gupta 'Nandi,' Finance Minister Suresh Kumar Khanna, Infrastructure and Industrial Commissioner Manoj Kumar Singh, and Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath's Secretary, Amit Singh.

Uttar Pradesh to Witness Aviation Boom: Nine New Airports in Two Years, Reveals Aviation Minister

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. This is a substantial leap compared to the 74 airports established in the first 65 years of India's independence. The total count of airports, heliports, and waterdromes nationwide has now reached 149. The Modi administration's focus on greenfield airports, constructed from the ground up on new sites, is evident. Since 2014, they have successfully built 12 greenfield.

U.P. Police Launches WhatsApp Channels For Districts

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. Under the visionary guidance of the Director General of Police, Uttar Pradesh, Vijay Kumar, the WhatsApp Channels were initiated. The decision aligns with the state government's directives to widely publicize the praiseworthy efforts of the police force. This forward-thinking approach reflects the commitment of the Uttar Pradesh Police to embrace modern communication tools for better public engagement.

Vasudev Devnani Elected As The Speaker Of Rajasthan Assembly

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. The motion for his appointment was moved by Chief Minister Bhajan Lal Sharma and seconded by Congress leader and Tonk MLA Sachin Pilot, reflecting a rare unity between the ruling party and the opposition. Vasudev Devnani, representing Ajmer North, has been a prominent face of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) in the BJP governments led by Vasundhara Raje. His political journey includes two terms as the Education Minister, during which he made controversial decisions, such as the compulsory recitation of Saraswati Vandana and the mandatory practice of Surya Namaskar in schools.

KSRTC Unveils 'Namma Cargo' Logistics In Karnataka

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. KSRTC has strategically partnered with KMS Coach Builders Private Limited, securing cargo trucks on a rental basis for an initial period of two months. This collaboration reflects the corporation's commitment to efficiently utilizing resources for the successful implementation of the logistics service.

Amit Shah Reveals Chandigarh Projects Worth 368 Crore Rupees

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.

Incident Of Ammonia Gas Leakage Reported In Ennore Region, Chennai

Late on Tuesday night, 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. Late on Tuesday night, 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.

MHA Declares Muslim League Jammu Kashmir (Masarat Alam faction) Unlawful Under UAPA

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-terrorism Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA). Masrat 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.

Jammu and Kashmir Panchayati Raj Act Amended to Incorporate OBC Reservation

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. The draft J&K Panchayati Raj Act (Amendment) Bill 2023 was initially submitted to the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA), Government of India. Following this, observations raised by the MHA were carefully examined, leading to necessary amendments being incorporated into the revised draft.

Lt. Governor Inaugurated CRC Samba-Jammu for Person With Disabilities

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. The inauguration ceremony, held at Second Extension, Gandhi Nagar, Green Belt Jammu-180004, witnessed the convergence of esteemed dignitaries, government officials, and representatives from the disability community.

Gujarat To Unveil India's First Submarine Tourism In Dwarka

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. According to ancient mythological texts, Bet Dwarka is believed to house a submerged city created by Lord Krishna himself. This mystical aspect adds an extra layer of intrigue to the submarine tourism project, as it promises to unveil the secrets hidden beneath the waves.

Kerala CM Unveils Board For Transparent PSU Hiring

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 board is chaired by former Chief Secretary VP Joy, signifying a well-structured and experienced leadership to guide the recruitment processes.

Economy News

18 Largest States to Spend 18-20% More on Capex: Crisil

India's 18 largest states are poised to witness a significant surge in capital expenditure for the fiscal year 2023-24, as per a recent report by Crisil. The report projects an 18-20% increase in spending compared to the previous year, attributing this growth to factors such as robust goods and services tax collections, stable central government devolution, and the allocation of interest-free loans totaling ₹1.3 lakh crore to states.

Women's Labor Force Participation Reaches Record High of 24% in Q2FY24, Unemployment Trends Shift

The second quarter of FY24 witnessed a historic surge in women's labor force participation, reaching an all-time high of 24%, according to official data. While this is a positive development, deeper analysis reveals nuances in the employment landscape for women.

Overall Unemployment Rate: The overall unemployment rate remained steady at 6.6%, with a marginal increase in men's unemployment to 6% from the previous quarter's 5.9%.

Women's Unemployment Rate: Notably, the women's unemployment rate dipped below 9% for the first time in five years, reflecting a positive trend.

Despite these positive trends in the labor market, there are indications that the Indian economy may have experienced a slowdown in the second quarter. The projected growth rate is 6.7%, as per a median estimate from an Economic Times poll, down from the 7.8% acceleration in the first quarter of FY24.

Forex Reserves Jump \$2.53 b to \$597.93 bn

India's foreign exchange reserves witnessed a significant increase of \$2.5 billion in the week ending November 24, as reported by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI). This boost, primarily attributed to foreign portfolio flows into the debt market, reflects a strategic move by the RBI to manage the rupee's level. The surge in reserves is largely attributed to substantial foreign portfolio flows into the Indian debt market. Experts in foreign exchange suggest that the RBI strategically absorbed these inflows to regulate the rupee's value, contributing to the overall growth in reserves. Gold reserves increased by \$296 million, reaching a total of \$46.3 billion. This surge is attributed to a sharp rise in global bullion prices during the reporting week.

India's Fiscal Progress: GST Collections Surge to Record High in FY 2023-24

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman reported a consistent upward trend in India's Goods and Services Tax (GST) collection, emphasizing the fiscal year's remarkable achievements in a Lok Sabha session. 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.

India's Stock Market Surpasses \$4 Trillion Mark, Closing in on Hong Kong

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. India's key stock benchmarks, already trading at all-time high levels, have experienced a remarkable 13% increase this year. This upward trajectory positions India's equity market for an unprecedented eighth consecutive year of gains. In contrast, Hong Kong's key equity measure has witnessed a 17% decline, with the overall market value dropping to less than \$4.7 trillion.

IDFC FIRST Bank Unveils Youth-Centric “FIRST SWYP” Credit Card in Collaboration with Mastercard

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.

India’s Forex Reserves Surpass \$600 Billion Mark After Four-Month Interval

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. In his recent monetary policy statement, RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das highlighted a crucial development—the issuance of the master direction for foreign exchange market participants. This initiative is part of a comprehensive strategy aimed at assisting market participants in effectively managing risks within the dynamic foreign exchange market.

Union Cabinet Allocates Rs 2,500 Crore for Extended Interest Equalisation Scheme

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. Facilitate pre and post-shipment Rupee export credit at competitive rates. Continue benefiting manufacturer and merchant exporters in identified tariff lines. Foster growth in the MSME sector, crucial for employment generation.

India Implements Duty-Free Import of Yellow Peas to Regulate Pulse Prices

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. Yellow peas, primarily imported from Canada and Russia, were initially subjected to a 50% duty in November 2017. The recent decision shifts their import status from “Restricted” to “Free” as part of New Delhi’s efforts to manage the overall pulse basket prices.

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

A team of officials from India’s Department of Commerce is currently in Muscat, engaged in negotiations for a comprehensive free trade agreement (FTA) with Oman. The department has set an internal deadline to finalize the deal by the end of the month. This development gains significance as negotiations between India and the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) have faced obstacles, particularly with Saudi Arabia, delaying progress for over a year. If successful, Oman would become the second GCC member, after the UAE, to sign an FTA with India. Insiders suggest that the FTA with Oman is expected to follow the template of the comprehensive economic partnership agreement (CEPA) signed between India and the UAE in February 2022. This approach is seen as a strategic move to strengthen economic ties with West Asia.

Lok Sabha Approves Additional Spending of ₹58,378 Crore in Current Fiscal

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. The gross additional spending sought by the government amounted to over ₹1.29 lakh crore, with a significant portion allocated to key areas. Notably, ₹13,351 crore has been earmarked for the fertilizer subsidy, demonstrating the government’s support for the agricultural sector. Additionally, about ₹7,000 crore is allocated for spending by the Department of Food and Public Distribution, emphasizing the importance of food security measures.

Nine States Exceed National Inflation Average in November

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. Odisha led the pack with the highest inflation at 7.65%. Rajasthan followed closely with an inflation rate of 7%. Haryana recorded a significant increase of 6.8%. Other States Above National Average: Bihar, Karnataka, Punjab, Telangana, Gujarat, and Uttar Pradesh also witnessed inflation rates exceeding the national average, ranging from 5.56% to 6.54%. The inflation rate surpassed the central bank’s tolerance threshold of 6% in eight states, including Gujarat, Bihar, Punjab, Karnataka, and Telangana. Uttar Pradesh, with a 5.56% inflation rate, was the only other major state exceeding the national average of 5.55%.

India's E-Retail Market Estimated to Cross USD 160 Billion by 2028: Report

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. As of 2023, the e-retail market in India is expected to be in the range of USD 57-USD 60 billion, with an annual shopper base of approximately 240 million. This represents a significant annual addition of USD 8-12 billion since 2020. Despite this growth, online spending in India currently constitutes only 5-6% of total retail spending, indicating substantial headroom for expansion compared to the US (23-24%) and China (35%).

Robust Growth in Net Direct Tax Collection: At Rs 10.6 trillion, rises 23.4% in Apr-Nov

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.

Net Tax Collection: Rs 10.64 trillion, up by 23.4% from the previous year.

Gross Collections: Before issuing refunds, gross collections experienced a growth of 17.7%, reaching Rs 12.67 trillion in the April-November period.

Refunds: Refunds amounting to Rs 2.03 trillion were issued from April to November.

Govt Reports a Decline In Agriculture's GDP Share To 15% In FY23

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. Union Agriculture Minister Arjun Munda, in a written reply to Lok Sabha, shed light on the factors contributing to this decline. He emphasized that the decrease in the share of agriculture in the Gross Value Added (GVA) of the economy is not a result of a reduction in agricultural GVA but rather stems from the remarkable expansion of the industrial and service sector GVAs.

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

In the first half of the fiscal year 2023-24 (H1FY24), the combined fiscal scenario of the Centre and the States in India has remained resilient, with the gross fiscal deficit (GFD) staying below 7% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP). A recent study by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) sheds light on the fiscal landscape, highlighting the role of enhanced revenue mobilization and prudent financial management.

India's Net FDI Hits 21-Month High at \$5.9 Billion in October 2023

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. However, the cumulative net FDI for April-October 2023 plummeted by half, reaching \$10.43 billion compared to \$20.76 billion in the same period of 2022. This downturn is attributed to the worldwide economic slowdown affecting both inbound and outbound investment flows.

India's Total Debt Surges to Rs 205 Trillion in September Quarter: Report

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. In the September quarter, the central government's debt soared to USD 1.34 trillion (Rs 161.1 lakh crore), up from USD 1.06 trillion (Rs 150.4 lakh crore) in the preceding March quarter.

SEBI Proposes Two-Phase Transition to Instant Settlement in Indian Stock Market

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.

Innovative All-in-One Insurance Product, Bima Vistaar, to Debut in Q1 FY25

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. Bima Vistaar holds strategic importance as part of the "Insurance Trinity," a trio featuring Bima Sugam (a digital platform), Bima Vistaar, and Bima Vahak (a women-led field distribution force). Aligned with IRDAI's vision to achieve universal insurance coverage by 2047, these components aim to address existing gaps in product design, pricing, and distribution.

Education Loans Experience 20.6% Spike From April To October

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.

India-ASEAN Trade Pact Undergoes Review for Modernization in February

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. The negotiations will primarily concentrate on the introduction of product-specific rules and trade remedies, with the overarching goal of enhancing the efficiency of the FTA. Recognizing the need for a comprehensive overhaul, the discussions will delve into critical aspects such as the Rules of Origin (ROO) and the integration of a dedicated chapter on trade remedies to safeguard domestic industries.

CEBR Forecasts India As Third-Largest Economy By 2032, Global Economic Leader By Century's End

The Centre for Economics and Business Research (CEBR) has recently released a groundbreaking report projecting India's trajectory as the preeminent global economic superpower by the close of the century. This bold projection places India on a course to surpass both China and the United States in Gross Domestic Product (GDP), underlining its sustained and robust economic growth. According to the latest World Economic

League Table by CEBR, India's GDP is poised to exceed that of China by a staggering 90% and surpass that of the United States by 30%. This monumental shift is anticipated to materialize post-2080, aligning with demographic estimates and projections.

Government Initiatives to Boost Local EV Manufacturing

The government is actively engaged in discussions with both domestic and international stakeholders to formulate a policy aimed at enhancing local manufacturing of electric vehicles (EVs). A senior government official emphasized the ongoing talks with various countries, including Italy and Korea, and stressed the policy's inclusivity for both domestic and foreign car manufacturers. Notably, the statement gains significance amid reports of discussions between the government and Tesla regarding policy support for establishing manufacturing facilities in the country. While no specific timeline has been set for the proposed EV policy, the government is navigating diverse interests to ensure a comprehensive and balanced approach.

India Makes First-Ever Rupee Payment for the Purchase of Crude Oil from UAE

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.

Projected Threefold Growth in Tax Collection Under Modi's 10-Year Governance

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.

Core Sector Output Growth Hits Six-Month Low at 7.8% in November

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.

Rankings & Reports News

LIC Ranks Fourth Globally in S&P Global's 2022 Insurance Report

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.

Global Ranking:

Allianz SE (Germany): Securing the top spot with reserves amounting to \$750.20 billion.

China Life Insurance Company (China): Claiming the second position with reserves totaling \$616.90 billion.

Nippon Life Insurance Company (Japan): Grasping the third position with reserves reaching \$536.80 billion.

Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC): Notably, LIC clinches the fourth spot globally, boasting reserves of \$503.7 billion.

Regional Dominance

European Firms: Among the top 50 global life insurance companies, European firms dominate the scene, occupying 21 positions.

United States: Leading on an individual country basis, the US houses the highest number of life insurers on the list, with eight companies headquartered in the region.

United Kingdom: Following closely, the UK claims the second spot among individual countries, hosting seven companies in the top 50.

Asian Representation

Overall Presence: Asian firms make a significant mark, securing 17 spots among the top 50 global life insurance companies.

China and Japan: These two Asian powerhouses share the top spots in the region, with five companies each headquartered in China and Japan.

Nirmala Sitharaman and Three Other Indians 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. 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.

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

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.

1910: ITC originated as the Imperial Tobacco Co of India Ltd, a subsidiary of the British parent, in a modest office on Radha Bazar Lane in central Calcutta.

1926: The company acquired a plot on Chowringhee, relocating its office to the present-day Virginia House.

As ownership gradually shifted to Indian hands, the company underwent name changes, becoming India Tobacco Company Limited in 1970 and later I.T.C. Limited in 1974.

BAT Plc, formed in 1902 through a joint venture of American Tobacco Co Ltd and Imperial Tobacco Co Ltd, holds a substantial 29.04% stake in ITC, valued at \$19.9 billion.

Despite being classified as foreign direct investment, FDI restrictions on tobacco companies in India limit BAT's options.

Startup funding: India slips to 4th spot in global ranking after dismal 2023

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. After consecutively holding the third position, India finds itself behind the US, the UK, and China in 2023, receiving a meager \$7 billion in total funding by December 5, according to data from Tracxn. In the third quarter of 2023, India further slipped to the fifth position among the highest-funded countries, lagging behind the US, the UK, China, and France. Q3 witnessed a substantial 30% drop from Q2 2023 and a staggering 54% drop compared to Q3 2022.

India's Remarkable Climb to 7th Place in Global Climate Performance Index

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's exceptional ascent is primarily attributed to its outstanding performance in renewable energy, surpassing other developing nations. This achievement is particularly notable, considering the comparative evaluation within the same timeframe. India shines in the greenhouse gas emissions category, boasting low emission levels and minimal travel-related impact. The focus on the food sector, a crucial component of the CCPI, significantly contributes to India's remarkable standing.

Mercer’s Survey: Pune 2nd In India For Quality Of Living After Hyderabad

In a recent release of the 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. Vienna (Austria), Zurich (Switzerland), and Vancouver (Canada) clinched the top three spots globally in that order, according to the 2023 index.

Sl.No.	City	Position
1	Vienna	1
2	Zurich	2
3	Vancouver	3
4	Hyderabad	153
5	Pune	154
6	Bengaluru	156

Shah Rukh Khan Tops UKs List of World’s Top 50 Asian Celebrities Post Success of Pathaan and Jawaan

In a triumphant year for Bollywood, the 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.” The UK weekly publication, ‘Eastern Eye,’ recently unveiled its annual list, where Shah Rukh Khan emerged victorious, beating tough competition and securing the top spot. As 2023 draws to a close, Shah Rukh Khan is poised to achieve a remarkable feat as the first leading man from the modern era to deliver three massive Bollywood blockbuster hits in a single calendar year. The actor’s ability to draw large audiences back into cinema halls with global juggernauts has not only revitalized the industry but also had a transformative effect on the perception of Bollywood cinema.

Bhupender Yadav Unveils NITI Aayog’s Report On Global Green Growth

In a momentous occasion, Shri Bhupender Yadav, the Hon’ble Minister for the Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change and the Ministry of Labour & Employment, launched a G20 report titled ‘A Green and Sustainable Growth Agenda for the Global Economy’ today in New Delhi. The event witnessed the presence of key figures such as Shri Amitabh Kant, Sherpa, G20 India, Shri Suman Bery, Vice Chairman, NITI Aayog, Shri B.V.R. Subrahmanyam, CEO, NITI Aayog, Shri Ajay Seth, Secretary, Department of Economic Affairs, and Shri Kapil Kapoor, Regional Director for Asia, International Development Research Centre.

Bengaluru Airport’s T2 Recognized Among UNESCO’s ‘Most Beautiful Airports’

In a recent announcement from UNESCO’s Prix Versailles 2023, Bengaluru’s Kempegowda International Airport (KIA) Terminal 2 (T2) has achieved global acclaim, being recognized as one of the ‘world’s most beautiful airports.’ The world judges panel, chaired by renowned fashion designer Elie Saab, bestowed this honor, making it the sole Indian airport to receive such esteemed recognition. This accomplishment firmly establishes Bengaluru’s Kempegowda International Airport among the leading airports globally, setting a high standard for design, sustainability, and passenger experience on the world stage.

Business News

Sebi reduces minimum issue size for social stock exchange to Rs 50 lakh

The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) has granted approval for Not for Profit Organisations (NPOs) to enhance their fundraising capabilities through the social stock exchange. In a significant move, the regulator is introducing flexibility measures to facilitate this process. To support NPOs on the social stock exchange, SEBI has decided to decrease the minimum issue size for public issuance of Zero Coupon Zero Principal Instruments (ZCZP) from Rs 1 crore to Rs 50 lakh. This reduction aims to make fundraising more accessible for NPOs, fostering a conducive environment for social impact initiatives. These platforms will be brought under the regulatory framework for small and medium Real Estate Investment Trusts (REITs), ensuring a structured and secure environment for investors participating in this segment.

Virgin Atlantic Flies World’s 1st 100% Sustainable Aviation Fuel Flight From London To US

In a groundbreaking move, a Virgin Atlantic passenger jet, fueled entirely by sustainable aviation fuel (SAF), completed a London-to-New York journey, showcasing the aviation industry’s commitment to low-carbon options. Despite challenges, the flight signifies a crucial step towards reducing emissions in an industry responsible for 2-3% of global carbon emissions. Virgin Atlantic’s Boeing 787, powered by Rolls-Royce Trent 1000 engines, completed the long-haul flight using 100% SAF. Notably, it is the first commercial airliner to achieve such a feat, underlining the industry’s push for cleaner alternatives.

India Inc Looking to Recruit Talent with ‘Green’ Skills

Indian companies are undergoing a transformative shift as they increasingly prioritize sustainability in their operations.

According to a survey conducted by IBM and Morning Consult, a staggering 82% of Indian business leaders express a strong intent to hire professionals with expertise in green and sustainability technologies. In a survey encompassing over 250 business leaders, the report reveals that 4 out of 5 Indian companies are actively seeking individuals with a background in sustainability. The demand for skills in sustainability technology is underscored, indicating a shift towards eco-friendly practices in corporate India. Despite the enthusiasm to embrace sustainability, the study highlights a significant skills gap in the field. Nearly 75% of business leaders express confidence in their organizations' plans to invest in IT sustainability training by the end of the next year.

TEC Plans to Expand in India & Middle East

Hong Kong-based flexible workspace provider, The Executive Centre (TEC), is strategically focusing on its fastest-growing markets, India and the Middle East, with plans to add approximately 500,000 sq ft. Despite global economic uncertainties, these regions have displayed resilience and robustness, making them prime targets for TEC's expansion. TEC has already invested nearly 200 crore in Dubai and Abu Dhabi, underlining its commitment to the Middle East. An additional 50 crore is earmarked for a new centre in the region, showcasing the company's confidence in the market's potential.

Adani Power to Co-fire Green Ammonia at Its Mundra Power Plant

In a significant step towards decarbonization, Adani Power Ltd (APL) has announced its pioneering green ammonia combustion pilot project at the Mundra power plant in Gujarat. This initiative aligns with APL's commitment to adopting sustainable practices and reducing its carbon footprint. As part of its multipronged decarbonization efforts, Adani Power is set to co-fire green ammonia, produced from green hydrogen, along with conventional coal in the boiler of a 330 MW unit at the Mundra plant. This innovative approach aims to blend up to 20% green ammonia with the total fuel requirement for the boiler. Green ammonia, derived from green hydrogen produced through electrolysis using renewable energy, serves as a carbon-neutral feedstock for the boilers. Notably, ammonia combustion does not emit carbon dioxide (CO₂), making it a sustainable, long-term alternative to traditional fossil fuels.

Actis Unit BluPine Buys Acme Solar Assets for EV of ₹1,700 cr

London-based private equity firm Actis Llp has announced the successful acquisition of Kolkata-based Atha Group's 404MW solar power assets by its portfolio company, BluPine Energy.

The deal, valued at around ₹2,100 crore, reinforces Actis' commitment to driving India's energy transition and expanding BluPine's renewable energy capabilities. BluPine Energy, a subsidiary of Actis Llp, has secured the 404MWp operating pan-India solar portfolio from Atha Group for an equity value of approximately \$100 million. The enterprise value of Atha's solar assets in the deal stands at ₹2,100 crore. This strategic move aligns with BluPine's goal to contribute significantly to India's clean energy transition by targeting a 4GW portfolio capacity over the next 4-5 years.

UPI recorded 11.24 billion transactions worth Rs 17.40 lakh crore

The Unified Payments Interface (UPI) platform in India has witnessed remarkable growth, breaking records and setting new milestones in recent months. This article delves into the key statistics and trends surrounding UPI transactions, shedding light on the factors driving this surge and offering insights into future projections. In November, UPI transactions reached a staggering ₹17.40 lakh crore, surpassing the previous high of ₹17.16 lakh crore in October. This amounted to a 1.4% increase in the value of transactions on a monthly basis and an impressive 46% year-on-year growth, as reported by the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI).

LIC Introduces Framework for Shareholder's Director: Enhancing Board Structure

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.

Bajaj Group Becomes Fifth Conglomerate to Breach ₹10 Lakh Crore in Mcap

On December 4, 2023, the 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. The market valuation of the Pune-based Bajaj Group has witnessed a remarkable 41% surge since April, underscoring its robust performance in the financial landscape. Bajaj Auto emerged as a major contributor, posting a staggering 63% increase during the same period.

Bharti Airtel Becomes the 8th Company to Surpass ₹6 Lakh Crore Mcap

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%. The buoyant market sentiment reflected in the overall stock market, with Bhart Airtel's shares gaining an additional 2% on Monday, bringing its year-to-date gain to an impressive 28%. In contrast, the benchmark Nifty recorded a 14.3% gain during the same period. The company has consistently delivered positive returns for the past five years, with 2019 marking the highest surge at close to 60%. The upward trend continued with gains of 12% and 37% in 2020 and 2021, respectively.

Tata Steel to Invest ₹100 Cr. in Centre for Innovation in London

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. Tata Steel is demonstrating its commitment to sustainable innovation by investing Rs.104 crore over the next four years. This financial commitment underscores Tata Steel's dedication to fostering cutting-edge research and technology development in the field of sustainable design and manufacturing.

BEL Receives Orders Worth Rs.4878 Crores from Indian Army

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's inclusion of various electronic and associated industries, especially MSMEs, underscores the collaborative and inclusive approach of the 'Atmanirbhar Bharat' programme. Apart from the Rs.4,522 crore order, BEL has also secured additional orders valued at Rs.356 crores since the last disclosure on December 6, 2023.

SBI Ventures into Paper Packaging with ₹49.99 Crore Investment in Canpac Trends

State Bank of India (SBI) has recently made a strategic move into the paper packaging industry by investing ₹49.99 crore in Canpac Trends Private Limited, an Ahmedabad-based company specializing in paper-based packaging solutions. In an exchange filing, SBI disclosed the execution of transaction documents to acquire 6.35% (3,70,644 shares) of Canpac Trends at ₹1,349 per share. The total investment amounts to ₹49.99 crore. SBI's investment in Canpac Trends is driven by the objective of capital appreciation, emphasizing the potential growth and profitability of the paper packaging sector.

Kotak Mahindra Bank Partners with IITK to Launch Kotak School of Sustainability

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. Dharmendra Pradhan, Union Minister of Education and Skill Development and Entrepreneurship, graced the launch event as the chief guest.

LIC Granted Extension till 2032 to Achieve 25% Public Shareholdin

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.

LIC To Open New Branch Office In GIFT City

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. The decision to establish a presence at GIFT City was formally approved by the Board of LIC during its meeting on Tuesday. The life insurer shared this significant decision through a filing with the stock exchanges, underlining the importance of this move in the evolving landscape of international financial services.

AIIB Takes Lead in Rs 2.5k Crore Funding for Mahindra-OTPP's Green InvIT

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.

Tata Power Secures Rajasthan Transmission Project

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. The transmission initiative will be executed on a Build-Own-Operate-Transfer (BOOT) basis and is designed to facilitate the evacuation of 7.7 GW of renewable energy from the Bikaner Complex in Rajasthan. The project involves the creation of a 340 km transmission corridor, connecting the Bikaner-III pooling station to the Neemrana II substation.

Agreement News

PLI and FTAs to Give Fillip to Manmade Fibre Textile Exports

Buoyed by the Production Linked Incentive (PLI) scheme and favorable free trade agreements with the UAE and Australia, India's manmade fibre (MMF) textile industry is poised for substantial growth. Forecasts indicate a staggering 75% increase in exports, reaching \$11.4 billion by 2030, up from around \$6.5 billion in 2021-22. India currently holds the position of the second-largest producer of MMF textiles globally, following China. The MMF sector dominates global textile fibre consumption, commanding a significant 72% share, while natural fibres account for the remaining 28%. This shift towards MMF is attributed to the inherent limitations in the growth of cotton and other natural fibres. A government official emphasizes that "technical textiles" represent the sunrise sector and the future of the industry. Ambitious targets have been set to capitalize on this potential growth, particularly fueled by the PLI scheme and free trade agreements.

Ujjivan SFB partners with Water.org To Offer Water, Sanitation And Hygiene Loans

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 collaboration will extend beyond mere financial support, with Water.org offering technical assistance, market assessments, development of Information, Education, and Communication (IEC) materials, as well as monitoring and evaluation support. Ujjivan SFB, in line with its commitment to social responsibility, will provide loans ranging from ₹6,000 to ₹1,00,000 to both existing and new customers.

Indian Oil and EKI Energy Ink Deal to Promote 'Surya Nutan'

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. IndianOil, a Fortune 500 company with a prominent presence in India's hydrocarbon sector, has committed to achieving net-zero carbon emissions by 2046. As part of its diversification strategy, the state-owned oil and gas producer has ventured into alternative energy sources. The development of "Surya Nutan" underscores IndianOil's dedication to environmentally friendly solutions.

REC Signs 200M Euro Loan With German Bank KfW For Distribution Sector Reforms

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.

COP28 Concludes with Historic Agreement on Fossil Fuels

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. Extensive negotiations and multiple drafts were necessary to reach the final agreement, extending the conference past its scheduled closure date. The Presidency underscored the need for ambitious language to limit global temperature rise to 1.5 degrees Celsius, describing it as the "North Star." Despite these efforts, the final decision left some developing countries dissatisfied.

Reliance Teams With DBS Bank For Biogas Initiative

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). Reliance Industries, a conglomerate at the forefront of aggressively pursuing opportunities in non-fossil fuels, is actively engaged in the generation of CBG. This innovative approach positions CBG as a viable alternative to conventional fuels like compressed natural gas (CNG) and other fossil fuels. Farmers often resort to burning agricultural residue due to the lack of means, infrastructure, and logistics required for proper processing.

DAE and IDRS Labs Collaborate On Aktocyte Tablets For Cancer

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. Experts from the Bhabha Atomic Research Centre in Mumbai, Tata Memorial Hospital in Mumbai, and the Advanced Centre for Training Research and Education in Cancer in Navi Mumbai have joined forces with IDRS Labs in this pioneering project. The collaboration reflects a synergy of knowledge and resources from leading institutions, combining their strengths to address the challenges posed by pelvic cancer treatment, specifically focusing on minimizing the side effects associated with radiotherapy.

HCCB Signs MoU with Gujarat government for ₹3,000-cr Juice & Aerated Beverages facility in Rajkot

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 MoU reflects HCCB's commitment to building a state-of-the-art manufacturing facility, underscoring its focus on quality and innovation. The proposed facility in Rajkot is poised to become a key player in the production of a diverse range of beverages, contributing to the company's extensive product portfolio.

IIT Kanpur Collaborated with Indian Navy to Promote Technology Development

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. Rear Admiral K Srinivas, Asst. Chief of Material (Dockyard & Refits) and Prof. S. Ganesh, Director of IIT Kanpur, formalized this partnership, marking a significant step towards bolstering defense capabilities through academic and technological prowess.

Suzlon and REC Ltd Collaborate On Non-Fund Based Working Capital

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. Suzlon Group, a global player in the renewable energy sector, boasts an impressive 20.3 gigawatts (GW) of wind energy capacity across 17 countries. With operations spanning across 14 manufacturing facilities in India, the company is on a mission to expand its reach and efficiency in the renewable energy landscape.

ArSRLM Signs MoU With SBI For SHG Banking Services

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. The MoU signing ceremony, held on Tuesday, saw the participation of key representatives from both ArSRLM and SBI. Amarnath Talwade, the secretary of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj, represented ArSRLM, while Aftab Ahmad Mallick, deputy general manager of SBI Dibrugarh, represented the banking giant.

Ministry of Rural Development Collaborates with JioMart to Expand Reach of Self-Help Groups' Products

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.

India to acquire five lithium blocks in Argentina

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. The Indian government plans to invest around Rs 200 crore over the next five years for exploration, signaling a strategic commitment to securing a domestic supply of critical minerals. The proposal is awaiting approval from the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs.

Appointment News**HDFC Bank appoints former NABARD chairman Harsh Kumar Bhanwala as director**

In a recent development, HDFC Bank's Board of Directors has greenlit the nomination of Harsh Kumar Bhanwala as the Additional Independent Director. The tenure for this position is set for three years, commencing from January 25, 2024. Former Executive Chairman of Capital India Finance, a prominent Non-Banking Finance Company (NBFC). Chairman of the National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) from 2013 to 2020. Past roles include Chairman & Managing Director of India Infrastructure Finance Company, Senior Vice President at IL&FS Water, and Managing Director of the Delhi State Cooperative Bank. Simultaneously, the HDFC Bank Board has given the nod for the appointment of V Srinivasa Rangan as the new Executive Director (whole-time Director). This three-year term is effective from November 23, 2023.

Sheshadri Appointed IDRCL Chair, Incumbent Gupta to Head NARCL

Former KPMG managing partner, Narayan Seshadri, is set to assume the role of Chairman at IDRCL, the government-backed bad bank, following the resignation of Diwakar Gupta. Gupta, in turn, is expected to take over as Chairman of NARCL. This leadership shift aims to expedite the resolution of bad loans, a process that has faced challenges and delays. Narayan Seshadri, a seasoned financial sector veteran, will take over as Chairman of IDRCL. Diwakar Gupta, former IDRCL Chairman, is anticipated to assume the role of Chairman at NARCL in the coming week. The IDRCL Chairman position became vacant as Diwakar Gupta resigned to join NARCL. Seshadri, currently an independent director at IDRCL, brings experience in revitalizing distressed companies.

Madagascar Court Confirms Andry Rajoelina's Election To The Presidency

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. The election took place amid significant challenges, including the withdrawal of ten out of thirteen presidential contenders. Despite their withdrawal, their names remained on the ballot, adding a layer of complexity to an already contentious electoral process. The opposition parties, critical of Rajoelina's candidacy for a third term, urged their supporters to abstain from voting, contributing to a historically low voter turnout of 46%. Head of the Constitutional Court, Florent Rakotoarisoa, announced Rajoelina's victory and affirmed that he is elected as the president for a third term.

Anand Kripalu Takes the Charge as Chairperson and Independent Director at Swiggy

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. With an illustrious career spanning over 40 years in the fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) industry, Anand Kripalu brings a wealth of experience to Swiggy's leadership team. This appointment comes as part of Swiggy's ongoing efforts to strengthen its board with industry veterans. Swiggy's Board of Directors has officially welcomed Anand Kripalu as the Chairperson and Independent Director with immediate effect. His appointment adds a seasoned leader to the executive board, further enhancing the strategic direction and governance of the company.

Captain Geetika Koul Becomes First Woman Medical Officer Deployed at Siachen

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 deployment of women officers like Captain Geetika Koul at Siachen and Lieutenant Commander Perna Deosthalee's command appointment at INS Trinkat mark a new chapter for women in the armed forces. As India progresses towards greater gender inclusivity, these achievements highlight the commitment to recognizing and leveraging the capabilities of women officers, fostering a more diverse and resilient military force.

K.S. Reddy Appointed Hyderabad Commissioner Of Police

In a significant move towards ensuring clean governance, Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy has appointed seasoned police officials to spearhead the Hyderabad and Cyberabad police commissionerates. The appointments of Kothakota Srinivas Reddy and Avinash Mohanty mark a strategic shift in leadership to uphold integrity and transparency in law enforcement. Kothakota Srinivas Reddy, a distinguished officer with a track record of effective leadership, is set to assume the role of Hyderabad Police Commissioner. Having served as Mahabunagar district superintendent of police and later heading the elite anti-Maoist force Greyhounds, Srinivas Reddy has been instrumental in redefining training modules and intensifying combing operations.

Parama Sen Appointed Part-Time Member of PFRDA Board, Filling All Three Vacancies

In a recent development, Parama Sen, Additional Secretary in the Department of Expenditure at the Finance Ministry, has been appointed as a part-time member of the Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority (PFRDA). This appointment completes the trio of part-time members on the PFRDA board. Parama Sen, a 1994 batch Indian Audit and Accounts Services (IAAS) officer, assumes the role, succeeding Anne George Mathew, who vacated the position earlier this year. The PFRDA board consists of a chairman, three whole-time members, and three part-time members. The Member (Law) post, vacant since May last year, remains unfilled. Earlier appointments include Rahul Singh from the Department of Personnel and Training and Pankaj Sharma from the Department of Financial Services, both appointed in the previous year.

Reuven Azar Appointed as Israel's New Ambassador to India

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

Senior IPS Officer Maheshwar Dayal Takes Over as Director General of Prisons

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. Maheshwar Dayal's journey in law enforcement began as a Superintendent of Police (SP) in Virudhunagar, where he quickly demonstrated his dedication and leadership skills. His proficiency led to subsequent appointments as SP in The Nilgiris and Nagapattinam districts, showcasing his ability to adapt to diverse operational environments.

Sanjay Singh Becomes New Chief Of Wrestling Federation of India (WFI)

In the recently concluded Wrestling Federation of India (WFI) elections, Sanjay Singh, a prominent figure within the former WFI chief Brij Bhushan's faction and currently the UP Wrestling Association vice president, clinched victory with an overwhelming 40 votes against Anita Sheoran's meager seven. The Wrestling Federation of India (WFI), the governing body for wrestling in the country, is based in New Delhi. Sanjay Singh, affiliated with Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) and a native of Varanasi, previously held a position on the WFI's executive council. Since 2019, he has served as the joint secretary of the national federation. Additionally, he holds the position of Vice President in the Uttar Pradesh Wrestling Association.

Santosh Jha Assumes Role As India's New Envoy To Sri Lanka

India's diplomatic ties with Sri Lanka have taken a new turn with the appointment of Santosh Jha as the country's new High Commissioner. In a significant ceremony held in Colombo on Friday, Jha officially assumed charge and presented his credentials to President Ranil Wickremesinghe. This development comes as Jha takes over the role from Gopal Baglay, who has been appointed as the next High Commissioner of India to Australia.

Banking News

HDFC Securities Launches Mobile Trading App HDFC SKY on AWS Cloud

In significant move to enhance its technological capabilities, HDFC Securities, a leading investment service provider in India, has successfully launched its mobile trading app, HDFC SKY, on Amazon Web Services (AWS) cloud. The partnership with AWS is anticipated to yield substantial benefits, including a remarkable 50% reduction in annual IT infrastructure and management costs compared to traditional on-premises solutions. HDFC Securities is set to achieve a significant cost reduction of up to 50% by leveraging AWS cloud services, demonstrating the cost efficiency and scalability of cloud infrastructure.

BI extends payments infrastructure scheme by 2 years till Dec 2025, expands scope

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has announced a two-year extension of the Payments Infrastructure Development Fund (PIDF) scheme until December 31, 2025. This move is aimed at promoting digital transactions at the grassroots level and includes an expansion of beneficiaries under the scheme. The PIDF scheme, operational since January 2021 for three years, initially focused on incentivizing the deployment of payment acceptance infrastructure in tier-3 to tier-6 centers, north-eastern states, and Union Territories of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh. In August 2021, beneficiaries of the PM SVANidhi Scheme in Tier-1 and 2 centers were included. The decision to broaden the scope of targeted beneficiaries, now including those under the PM Vishwakarma scheme, is expected to give a boost to the RBI's efforts in promoting digital transactions at the grassroots level.

RBI Fines Bank of America, N.A., HDFC

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) took regulatory action on Thursday, imposing penalties on Bank of America, N.A. and HDFC Bank Ltd. for violations of specific norms. Additionally, penalties were levied on five cooperatives banks for non-compliance with various regulatory requirements. The penalties are based on deficiencies in regulatory compliance and are not intended to pass judgement on the validity of transactions or agreements between entities and their customers. The RBI has imposed a penalty of Rs. 10,000 on Bank of America, N.A. for violating the reporting requirements under the liberalized Remittances Scheme of FEMA 1999. This action comes as a consequence of non-compliance with the Reserve Bank of India's instructions, indicating a lapse in adherence to regulatory guidelines.

RBI inks pact with Bank of England on bond clearing settlement

Banking regulators in India and the United Kingdom (UK) achieved a significant milestone as they signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU). The focus of the MoU is the oversight of the Clearing Corporation of India (CCIL), a crucial entity in local transaction settlement. This development opens the doors for substantial trade in Indian sovereign bonds routed through London lenders, marking a pivotal agreement for the commitment of personal funds and discharge of custodian roles. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) and the Bank of England (BoE) are the primary regulatory bodies involved in this agreement.

RBI Cancels License Of Kolhapur Based Shankarrao Pujari Nutan Nagari Sahakari Bank Limited

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) made a significant move on Monday by canceling the license of Kolhapur-based (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. In a statement, the RBI declared that Shankarrao Pujari Nutan Nagari Sahakari Bank Limited is now prohibited from conducting the business of 'banking,' which encompasses the acceptance and repayment of deposits as defined in Section 5(b) read with Section 56 of the Banking Regulation Act, 1949. This immediate action was taken as the co-operative bank was found to be lacking in adequate capital and earning prospects, thereby violating the provisions of Section 11(1) and Section 22 (3) (d) read with Section 56 of the Banking Regulation Act, 1949.

Monetary Policy Tools in India: A Comprehensive Overview

Monetary policy tools are crucial instruments employed by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) to regulate the money supply, influence economic growth, and manage macroeconomic factors like inflation and unemployment. Divided into Quantitative and Qualitative categories, these tools play a pivotal role in shaping the financial landscape of the country.

RBI Monetary Policy Committee(MPC) Meeting Highlights - 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. 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 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.

Bank Of India Launches Nari Shakti Savings Account For Women

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. The Nari Shakti Savings Account is conceptualized as a robust financial savings tool, aiming to support working women with an independent income source. The primary objective is to empower women, enabling them to become self-reliant and experience a higher degree of financial freedom.

Poonawalla Housing Finance Becomes Grihum Housing Finance

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. The new name, Grihum, is a fusion of ‘Grih’ (home) and ‘Hum’ (togetherness), reflecting the company’s commitment to fostering collaboration and unity. Grihum Housing Finance is dedicated to creating the cherished space of a ‘Dream Home’ for its customers, a significant portion of whom are self-made individuals and micro-entrepreneurs in semi-urban, peri-urban, and rural regions, constituting 62% of the business from the self-employed informal sector.

RBI Grants Authorization to Bandhan Bank for Pension Disbursement to Retired Railway Employees

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. Bandhan Bank’s newfound authorization empowers it to disburse pensions to retired employees of the Ministry of Railways, encompassing individuals who have concluded their service with the organization. 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.

Indian Banks Expand Overseas Presence to 417 in FY23: RBI Survey

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. Indian banks expanded their overseas presence through subsidiaries, reaching 417 in FY23 compared to 399 in the previous fiscal year, as per RBI data. The growth is highlighted by a 0.5% and 6.2% increase in employee strength for foreign branches and subsidiaries, respectively.

RBI Fines 5 Co-Operative Banks

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. Neglected to classify certain accounts as Non-Performing Assets (NPA).

IDFC FIRST Bank, LIC Cards, and Mastercard Introduce Exclusive Co-Branded Credit Card

In a significant partnership, IDFC FIRST Bank, LIC Cards, and Mastercard have joined forces to unveil an exclusive co-branded credit card tailored to address the ever-evolving financial requirements of the nation. The collaboration aims to cater to the diverse needs of over 27 crore policyholders across India. The newly launched credit cards come in two distinct variants – LIC Classic and LIC Select. These variants offer policyholders the opportunity to accumulate reward points with every LIC insurance premium payment, presenting a valuable avenue for savings.

IndusInd Bank Introduces ‘Indus Solitaire Program’ for the Diamond Industry

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.

India And ADB Ink \$250M Loan For Industrial Corridor Development

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. Ms. Juhi Mukherjee, Joint Secretary of the Department of Economic Affairs, Ministry of Finance, represented the Government of India, while Mr. Hoe Yun Jeong, Deputy Country Director, and Officer-in-Charge of ADB’s India Resident Mission, signed on behalf of ADB.

Challenges for Banks Exiting AIF Units: Limited Options in Absence of Secondary Market

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 absence of an

active secondary market in India for AIF units poses a significant challenge for entities looking to sell their investments. Parul Jain, Head of Fund Formation Practice at Nishith Desai Associates, highlights the difficulty, stating, "It is not easy to sell the AIF units as these are not listed and there is no readily available market to offload these."

Aditya Birla Sun Life and IDFC First Bank Collaborate On Financial Solutions

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.

RBI Proposes Draft Framework for Self-Regulatory Organisations (SROs) in Banking and NBFCs

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. To qualify for an SRO license, applicants must establish a not-for-profit company possessing sufficient net worth and infrastructure capabilities for ongoing responsibilities. Applicants must represent their respective sectors and demonstrate specified membership or provide a roadmap for achieving it within a reasonable timeframe. Clean legal records, both for the applicant and its directors, are imperative, with adherence to fit and proper criteria in all aspects.

RBI Boosts Liquidity Support in 7-Day VRR Auction on Dec 22

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.

ICICI Bank Secures RBI Nod for Sandeep Batra's Re-Appointment as Executive Director

In a significant development, 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

shareholders had previously granted their approval on May 29 for Batra's appointment as ED, endorsing a five-year term starting from the RBI's approval date. The current tenure of Batra, which received RBI approval for three years, concludes on December 22, 2023.

RBI Unveils Forex Correspondent Scheme to Enhance Foreign Exchange Services

In a strategic move to enhance the accessibility of foreign exchange services, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) is set to introduce a groundbreaking category of money changers known as Forex Correspondents (FxCs). This innovative approach is designed to streamline foreign exchange transactions and foster greater ease for users. The FxCs will operate under a principal-agency model, partnering with Category-I and Category-II Authorised Dealers (ADs) without the need for separate authorization from the RBI.

Science & Technology News

Space-Tech Startup Agnikul to Flight Test 3D-printed Engine By Year-End

Chennai-based startup Agnikul is gearing up to launch its groundbreaking rocket, Agnibaan, featuring the world's first 3D-printed engine. The company, incubated at the Indian Institute of Technology, Madras, is set to conduct a technology demonstrator mission by the end of this year, paving the way for its first commercial launch in 2024. Agnibaan boasts the pioneering Agnilet engine, a single-piece 3D-printed marvel, designed and manufactured entirely in India. This engine, successfully test-fired in early 2021, marks a significant milestone in 3D printing technology for the country. Unlike traditional sounding rockets, Agnibaan is a highly customizable, single-stage launch vehicle capable of carrying up to 300 kg payloads to orbits around 700 km high (low Earth orbits).

India, US To Launch Joint Microwave Satellite For Earth Observation

India and the United States are set to elevate their space collaboration to new heights with the upcoming joint launch of the NASA-ISRO Synthetic Aperture Radar (NISAR) satellite. Union Minister Dr Jitendra Singh, in a recent meeting with a high-level NASA delegation led by Administrator Mr. Bill Nelson, announced the launch schedule for the first quarter of the next year. NISAR, slated for launch aboard India's GSLV, is a microwave remote sensing satellite designed for comprehensive Earth observation. The satellite's data will be instrumental in studying diverse aspects, including land ecosystems, solid earth deformation, mountain and polar cryosphere dynamics, sea ice behavior, and coastal ocean phenomena at both regional and global scales.

Railways To Upgrade 'Kavach' To LTE: Ashwini Vaishnaw

In a bid to enhance railway safety and address concerns over increasing accidents, Railways Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw announced the Ministry of Railways' plans to upgrade its indigenous anti-collision system, Kavach, to 4G/5G (LTE-based) technology. Kavach, an Automatic Train Protection (ATP) system, has proven instrumental in preventing collisions by activating a train's braking system automatically if the driver fails to do so. Kavach, developed indigenously, has been deployed across more than 1,465 route kilometres (rkm), with ongoing work for an additional 3,000 rkm. The Ministry of Railways aims to expedite the implementation of this anti-collision system and make it more efficient over longer ranges.

IBM Unveils Its Latest 1,000-Qubit Quantum Chip Named 'Condor'

IBM has recently unveiled its latest quantum computing milestone with the introduction of Condor, a quantum 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. For several years, IBM has been diligently following a quantum computing roadmap characterized by a doubling of qubit numbers annually. The culmination of this effort is the Condor chip, featuring 1,121 superconducting qubits arranged in a distinctive honeycomb pattern. This achievement builds upon IBM's previous breakthroughs, including a 127-qubit chip in 2021 and a 433-qubit one in the preceding year.

Bhashini AI Translates PM Modi's Speech In Indian languages

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.

Kerala-Based Startup, Genrobotics Ranks Top 3 In Global AI Summit For Indian Startups

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. The prestigious event, organized by the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology in New Delhi from December 12-14, witnessed Genrobotics securing its place in the spotlight.

MediaTek, Nvidia Unite To Power Artificial Intelligence In Cars

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. MediaTek, a global leader in semiconductor technology, and Nvidia, renowned for its graphics processing units (GPUs) and AI solutions, have joined forces with a shared vision of creating intelligent, connected vehicles. The partnership prioritizes safety, efficiency, and an enhanced driving experience as core pillars of their collaboration.

ISRO's Chandrayaan-3 Moon Mission Earns Leif Erikson Lunar Prize

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.

Textiles Ministry Unveils 'Paat-Mitro' App For Jute Farmers

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

Visva-Bharati Researchers Discover Bacteria Named After Rabindranath Tagore

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 lead researcher, Dr. Bomba Dam, an assistant professor at the university's botany department, believes that *Pantoea Tagorei* has the potential to significantly reduce the need for commercial fertilizers. This could lead to cost savings for farmers and boost crop yields. The Association of Microbiologists of India (AMI) has officially recognized the discovery, and the findings have been published in the Indian Journal of Microbiology.

Aditya-L1's Arrival Confirmed For January 6 By ISRO Chairman

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. Launched from Sriharikota on September 2, Aditya-L1 is poised to execute a crucial manoeuvre upon reaching the Lagrangian point L1. This manoeuvre is designed to ensure a stable orbit, enabling continuous and in-depth studies of the Sun.

ISRO To Launch India's First X-Ray Polarimeter Satellite on Jan 1, 2024

ISRO (Indian Space Research Organisation) has been making significant strides in space exploration, and the year 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.

Schemes and Committees News**Viksit Bharat Sankalp Yatra Launched in SWGH**

An impressive launch marked the initiation of the Viksit Bharat Sankalp Yatra in South West Garo Hills, orchestrated by the District Rural Development Agency (DRDA) at MFC, Ampati. The nationwide initiative, a pivotal component of the Hamara Sankalp Viksit Bharat campaign, aims to inform and empower citizens about the various flagship schemes programs introduced by the Central Government. South West Garo Hills Deputy Commissioner R.P. Marak addressed the gathering, emphasizing the significance of the Viksit Bharat Sankalp Yatra. He highlighted the lack of awareness among rural residents regarding the numerous welfare schemes meant for their benefit. Agriculture being the Nodal department, Marak outlined the district's plan target 540 villages under the campaign. Stressing the importance of Aadhar seeding for availing full benefits, he shared the action plan and activities to be implemented at the block and VEC levels.

PM Inaugurates 10,000th Jan Aushadhi Kendra at AIIMS Deoghar

Prime Minister Narendra Modi marked a significant milestone in the healthcare sector by inaugurating the 10,000th Jan Aushadhi Kendras at AIIMS, Deoghar. This event also witnessed the launch of an ambitious program aimed at

increasing the number of Jan Aushadhi Kendras in the country from 10,000 to 25,000. Additionally, the Prime Minister unveiled the Pradhan Mantri Mahila Kisan Drone Kendra, reflecting a holistic approach to healthcare and agricultural prosperity. The Prime Minister initiated an interactive session with Ruchi Kumar, the beneficiary and operator of the 10,000th Jan Aushadhi Kendras. Ms. Kumari shared her motivation behind establishing the Kendras, emphasizing the pressing need for affordable medicines in the region. Prime Minister Modi commended her efforts and highlighted the significant price difference, where medicines available for 100 rupees in the market are often priced at 10 to 50 rupees in the Jan Aushadhi kendra.

Mandatory Display of PMAY-U Logo on Houses Ensures Transparency and Accountability

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 Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana – Urban, launched on June 25, 2015, is a flagship mission with the primary goal of addressing the urban housing shortage among the less privileged. The mission aims to ensure housing for all eligible urban households. Implemented through four verticals – Beneficiary Led Construction (BLC), Affordable Housing in Partnership (AHP), In-Situ Slum Redevelopment (ISSR), and Credit Linked Subsidy Scheme (CLSS) – PMAY-U adopts a multi-faceted approach to meet the diverse housing needs of urban communities.

'NAMO Drone Didi' Scheme: Drones for Women's Self-Help Groups

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. This initiative also opens doors for young start-ups to explore the untapped potential of drone aeronautics. The Atmanirbhar Bharat scheme focuses on reviving closed-down units and establishing new ones, ensuring stable fertilizer prices for farmers. Facing challenges from the Covid-19 pandemic and global geopolitical tensions, the government encourages indigenous research, resulting in groundbreaking liquid nano fertilizers.

Arvind Kejriwal and Punjab CM Mann Initiate Scheme For Doorstep Services

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. The launch event took place at the cycle valley in Dhanansu village, Ludhiana, where Mann expressed his optimism for a citizen-centric model that could be a beacon for the entire nation.

Jal Jeevan Mission: Transforming Rural India Through Accessible And Quality Tap Water

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. Since the initiation of the Jal Jeevan Mission, there has been remarkable progress in enhancing access to tap water for rural households. At the outset in August 2019, only 16.8% of rural households (3.23 Crore) had tap water connections. As of December 7, 2023, States/UTs report that an additional 10.53 Crore rural households have been provided with tap water connections under JJM. 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.

MSME Ministry Unveils 3 RAMP Sub-Schemes, Makes ZED Scheme Free For Women

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.

PLI Schemes Drew Rs 95,000 Cr Investments By September 2023: Centre

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. These schemes cover 14 sectors, including electronics, telecommunication, pharmaceuticals, white goods (AC and LED light components), and textiles, with the overarching goal of fortifying India’s position in global manufacturing and trade.

Health Minister Launched ‘MedTech Mitra’ to Advance Health Solution

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. MedTech Mitra, a groundbreaking platform aimed at nurturing the talents of young innovators in the field of medical technology, was officially launched by Dr. Mansukh Mandaviya, Union Minister of Health and Family Welfare and Chemicals & Fertilizers.

Government Modifies Interest Rates on Small Savings Schemes

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 Samridhi 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%.

Summits & Conference News**Odisha CM Launches ‘AMA Bank’ for Gram Panchayat Banking**

Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik launched the “AMA Bank” scheme, a historic initiative aimed at providing banking services through CSP Plus banking outlets in all unbanked Gram Panchayats (GPs) of Odisha. This visionary project, unveiled in the first phase, marks Odisha as the pioneer state in India to conceptualize and implement such a comprehensive scheme for financial inclusion. The challenges posed by a lack of brick-and-mortar bank branches in approximately 65% of gram panchayats necessitated a revolutionary approach to ensure the last-mile delivery of public services.

2 day Seminar On Santha Kavi Bhima Bhoi & Mahima Cult Legacy Launched In Bhubaneswar

Union Minister for Education and Skill Development & Entrepreneurship, Shri Dharmendra Pradhan, inaugurated

the two-day 'International Seminar on Santha Kavi Bhima Bhoi and the legacy of Mahima Cult' in Bhubaneswar. The event witnessed the participation of numerous academicians, dignitaries, Vice-Chancellors, and eminent speakers, showcasing a profound exploration of the cultural and literary heritage of Odisha. The Central University of Odisha, Guru Ghasidas Viswavidyalaya, Central Tribal University of Andhra Pradesh, SOA Deemed University Bhubaneswar, and the Centre of Excellence for Studies in Classical Odia, CIIL, joined hands with the Ministry of Education to organize this enlightening seminar. Shri Pradhan, in his inaugural address, emphasized the significance of the literary contributions of Santha Kavi Bhima Bhoi and Santha Balaram Das's Laxmi Puran. He highlighted how their philosophy addressed the issues faced by the most vulnerable in society, reawakening the cultural and literary consciousness of Odia society.

PM Modi proposes to host COP33 in India in 2028

In a significant announcement, Prime Minister Narendra Modi extended India's commitment to climate action by proposing to host the UN climate meet (COP33) in 2028. This offer was made during his address at the inaugural session of the World Climate Action Summit at COP28 in Dubai. Prime Minister Modi reiterated India's dedication to the process and principles outlined by the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). He emphasized India's proactive role in addressing climate change challenges. Addressing the COP28 Summit, Modi underscored the centrality of climate justice in India's approach to climate action. He drew attention to India's G20 presidency and emphasized the importance of climate-related issues as a cross-cutting theme.

Global Investors Summit in Dehradun: December 8-9, 2023

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. Ahead of the Summit, Uttarakhand CM Pushkar Singh Dhami emphasized the state's safety, branding it as one of the safest in the nation and a prime investment destination. Investment proposals worth ₹2 lakh crore have been confirmed, with a primary focus on creating job opportunities.

PM Modi To Address Infinity Forum 2.0 On December 9

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. The first edition of the Infinity Forum, organized in 2021, saw an overwhelming response with over 95,000 registrations from more than 80 countries. A key highlight of the event was the 'FinTech Showcase,' featuring over 100 virtual exhibitors alongside the main proceedings.

GPAI 2023: Artificial Intelligence Research Symposium To Be Held On December 12-14

Currently serving as the incoming Support Chair of GPAI, India is set to take on the Lead Chair position for GPAI in 2024. To showcase its commitment to the advancement of AI, India is hosting the Annual GPAI Summit from December 12 - 14, 2023. The event is anticipated to be inaugurated by the Hon'ble Prime Minister on December 12, 2023. The Global Partnership on Artificial Intelligence (GPAI), established in June 2020, is a groundbreaking multi-stakeholder initiative. India is one of the founding members of GPAI in 2020. With a primary objective to bridge the gap between theory and practice in the field of AI, GPAI supports cutting-edge research and applied activities on AI-related priorities. Initially launched with 15 member countries, GPAI has significantly expanded its membership to include 28 member countries and the European Union.

India Joins UN's 'Race to Resilience' at COP28

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. The 'Race to Resilience' is a worldwide platform that aims to unite non-state actors, investors, businesses, cities, regions, and civil society. The goal is to enhance the resilience of the most vulnerable communities to the impacts of climate change by 2030. Established in 2020, this campaign serves as a collaborative space to develop and implement strategies that mitigate climate-related risks and build resilient urban environments.

Youth for Unnati and Vikas with AI (YUVAi) at GPAI Summit 2023

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. YUVAi is a transformative initiative aimed at fostering a deeper understanding of AI

among school students from class 8 to 12 nationwide. The program's primary goal is to equip these students with essential AI skills, empowering them to become human-centric designers and users of artificial intelligence. YUVAi stands as a beacon, guiding the next generation towards responsible and impactful AI usage to address societal challenges.

Awards & Honors News

REC Receives 'Best Employer in Diversity & Inclusion' award by Assocham

REC Limited, a Maharatna CPSE under the Ministry of Power, achieved a significant milestone by receiving the "Best Employer for Policies in Diversity & Inclusion" Award at the 4th Diversity & Inclusion Excellence Awards and Conclave organized by Assocham. Shri TSC Bosh, Executive Director of REC, graciously accepted the award on behalf of the organization. His acceptance of the award symbolizes REC's unwavering commitment to promoting diversity and inclusion within its workforce. The "Best Employer for Policies in Diversity & Inclusion" award underscores REC's commitment to creating a workplace that celebrates differences, fosters innovation, and promotes equal opportunities for all employees. The company's HR policies play a pivotal role in achieving this milestone, contributing to a conducive and employee-friendly work environment.

Abdullahi Mire Wins 2023 UNHCR Nansen Refugee Award

Abdullahi Mire, a Somali refugee, has been named the 2023 UNHCR Nansen Refugee Award Global Laureate for his work championing the right to education for displaced children. Mire, who grew up in the Dadaab refugee camps in Kenya, has put over 100,000 books in the hands of displaced children and youth in the country. He will be presented with the award at a ceremony in Geneva, Switzerland, on December 13, 2023. The UNHCR Nansen Refugee Award consists of a commemorative medal and a monetary prize of USD 100,000. The global laureate is expected to reinvest the prize in the humanitarian initiatives they are being recognized for. Several regional winners will also receive a smaller monetary prize to further their humanitarian work.

Odisha Pavilion bags award at IITF-2023

The India International Trade Fair (IITF-2023) concluded on a triumphant note on November 27 at Pragati Maidan, New Delhi. Among the standout highlights was the Odisha Pavilion, which not only captivated visitors from the outset but also clinched the prestigious gold medal for "Excellence in Display" in the State Pavilion category. The Odisha Pavilion, a focal point since the inception of the trade fair, maintained its silver streak by securing the coveted gold medal. The Director of Information and Public Relations Dept, Saroj Kumar Samal,

received the award on behalf of Odisha. The Pavilion, under the direction of Suryaranjan Mohanty and Additional Director Santosh Das, showcased the State's unwavering commitment to women's empowerment and their role in economic prosperity. It featured a diverse array of tribal art, artifacts, and products.

NTPC Bongaigaon Secures Double Victory At Greentech Environment Award 2023

NTPC Bongaigaon, a key player in the power generation sector, has recently garnered significant acclaim for its exemplary contributions to Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and Environment Protection. The power station proudly received two prestigious awards from the Greentech Foundation, underscoring its commitment to sustainable practices and social responsibility. At a ceremony held at Sonmarg, Jammu and Kashmir, NTPC Bongaigaon was honored with two distinct awards. The first trophy was bestowed upon the power station in the Environment Protection Category at the 22nd Annual Greentech Environment Award 2023. The second accolade came in the Rural Development Category at the 10th Annual Greentech CSR India Awards. The awards were presented by Shri Ravi Shankar Prasad, IAS, Addl. Chief Secretary, Environment, Govt. of Assam, in the presence of esteemed dignitaries including Dr. Arup Kumar Mishra, Chairman, Assam Pollution Control Board, and Shri Shantanu Kumar Dutta, Member Secretary, Pollution Control Board, Assam.

Top French civilian honour for ISRO scientist VR Lalithambika

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

Olympian M. Sreeshankar Clinches 35th Jimmy George Foundation Award

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. The Jimmy George Foundation Award, now in its 35th edition, is a distinguished accolade in Kerala's sporting community. The award comprises a cash prize of Rs 1 lakh and a plaque, symbolizing the recognition of exceptional contributions to the field of sports. The award committee, headed by Jose George and including Jimmy George's brothers Robert Bobby, Sebastian, Stanley, and Olympian Anju Bobby George, played a crucial role in selecting the deserving recipient.

Bihar Garners International Recognition At COP-28 For Afforestation Efforts

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. During a dedicated session on "Building Climate Resilience" at the Indian Pavilion, Ms. Preyashi and Mr. Singh delivered a detailed presentation titled "Afforestation Activities in Bihar to Combat Climate Change." Ms. Preyashi highlighted the larger policy framework and inter-departmental coordination under Jal-Jeevan-Hariyali Abhiyan.

ISRO and Team Chandrayaan-3 Honoured for Outstanding Contribution to Brand India

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. Chandrayaan-3's success is not only a reflection of India's scientific ingenuity but also a demonstration of efficient budget management. Executed at a cost of Rs.600 crore, the mission achieved what Hollywood's various depictions of space explorations often portray at a fraction of the cost. In contrast, the recent Russian moon mission, which unfortunately ended in failure, incurred a cost of around Rs.16,000 crore.

Amazon India Wins National Award For Empowering Individuals With Disabilities

Amazon India received the National Award for Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities from President Smt. Droupadi Murmu at Vigyan Bhavan on the International Day of Persons

with Disabilities. This accolade serves as a testament to Amazon India's unwavering commitment to fostering a diverse and equitable workplace where everyone has the opportunity to thrive. The company has implemented a comprehensive strategy that encompasses various facets of inclusivity, spanning its operations, products, and services. One of the key initiatives undertaken by Amazon India is the significant increase in the onsite representation of Persons with Disabilities (PWDs). To ensure an inclusive work environment, Amazon India has implemented innovative workplace adaptations and technologies.

Social Innovators from India Win Accolades at the 4th edition of AIGIF in Malaysia

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.

Indian-Origin Novelist Meira Chand Receives Singapore's Highest Arts Award

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. President Tharman Shanmugaratnam presented the Cultural Medallion to the recipients in a ceremony held at the Istana. The award, the city-state's highest arts honor, is accompanied by an SGD 80,000 grant for each awardee, supporting their continued artistic endeavors.

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. 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 played a pivotal role in Argentina's triumph at the 2022 World Cup, securing their first title in 36 years.

Prashant Agrawal Receives National Award For 'Best Personality- Empowerment of Differently-abled'

In a ceremony organized by the Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities, Prashant Agrawal, the President of Narayan Seva Sansthan, was honored with the prestigious National Award for 'Best Personality- Empowerment of Differently-abled.' The award was presented by President Draupadi Murmu at Vigyan Bhavan, New Delhi. The event highlighted Agrawal's commitment to the cause of disability empowerment. Prashant Agrawal's recognition stems from his exceptional efforts in leading initiatives aimed at empowering differently-abled individuals. His instrumental role in establishing residential schools, vocational rehabilitation centers, and providing assistive devices has significantly impacted the lives of many.

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

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

Nikhil Dey Named '2023 International Anti-Corruption Champion' by the US Government

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.

Noted Hindi Writer Pushpa Bharati to Receive 33rd Vyas Samman

The literary world is set to celebrate as the 33rd Vyas Samman, 2023, is announced to honor the accomplished Hindi writer Pushpa Bharati for her 2016 memoir, "Yaadein, Yaadein aur Yaadein." This prestigious award is bestowed by the KK Birla Foundation, recognizing outstanding contributions to Hindi literature. Instituted in 1991, the Vyas Samman acknowledges exceptional Hindi literary works by Indian citizens published in the last 10 years. The award includes a cash prize of ₹4 lakh, a citation, and a plaque, recognizing the profound impact of the recipient's contribution to the literary landscape.

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

In a momentous ceremony on Nov 27, 2023, in New Delhi, Dr. Hemachandran Ravikumar was honored with the Karmaveer Chakra Medal and Rex Karmaveer Global Fellowship by ICONGO in collaboration with the United Nations, in recognition of his exceptional contributions to R&D in Physical & Bio-Science and Microbiological Studies. Dr. Hemachandran Ravikumar's exemplary work in advancing scientific knowledge and promoting the understanding of Biological Sciences has rightfully earned him this esteemed accolade. A prominent figure in the scientific community, Dr. Hemachandran Ravikumar holds the esteemed position of Ambassador & Elected Member of the Royal Society of Biology (MRSB) in London. His dedication to the field of Biology has been further acknowledged through the receipt of the Registered Scientist Award 2023 from the Science Council of the United Kingdom.

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

Kabir Bedi was awarded the "Order of Merit of the Italian Republic" (Merito della Repubblica Italiana), the country's highest honour awarded to civilians, at a private ceremony held in Mumbai. This award, the most prestigious Italian honorific one, ultimately recognizes his unconditional feeling and passionate dedication to Italy. The "Order of Merit of the Italian Republic" stands as a testament to Italy's appreciation for those who have made outstanding contributions to society, embodying the nation's values of merit and excellence. The "Order of Merit of the Italian Republic," known as "Merito della Repubblica Italiana" in Italian, is one of Italy's highest honors. Established on March 3, 1951, the order is bestowed to individuals who have made significant contributions to various fields, including arts, literature, economy, public service, and social, philanthropic, and humanitarian activities.

Javed Akhtar to Receive Padmapani Lifetime Achievement Award at Ajanta-Ellora Film Festival

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

and a monetary award of Rs 2 lakh, will be presented to Javed Akhtar by the Ajantha-Ellora Film Festival Organizing Committee Chairman Nandkishore Kagliwal and Chief Guide Ankushrao Kadam.

Mohammed Shami nominated for Arjuna Award, Satwiksairaj-Chirag for Khel Ratna

India's premier badminton men's doubles pair of Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty is in line to receive the Major Dhyan Chand Khel Ratna Award, the country's highest sports prize. The pair has had a remarkable year, reaching as many as six finals, winning five. They won at the Asian Games, Asian Championships, Swiss Open, Indonesia Open and Korea Open. They were runners-up at China Masters. India pace ace Mohammed Shami, who finished as the top wickettaker in the ODI World Cup with 24 scalps, is in the list for the Arjuna Award, it is learnt. Satwik-Chirag, the first Indian doubles pair to rise to the top of the international game, also rose to No.1 in the BWF world rankings this year, also a first for an Indian doubles pair.

Rijul Maini wins Miss India USA 2023

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.

Gaja Capital Business Book Prize 'Against All Odds', 'Winning Middle India' Declared Joint Winners

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. This article delves into the winning books and the insights they offer into the insights they offer into the realms of technology, entrepreneurship and the evolving consumer sphere. Authorized by Kris Gopalakrishnan, N Dayasindhu and Krishnan Narayanan, Against All Odds meticulously weaves together the firsthand accounts of over fly distinguished individuals who have played pivotal role in shaping IT industry.

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

In a notable recognition of her outstanding contributions to public healthcare services in Bhutan, Dr. Poonam Khetrapal Singh, the Regional Director of the World Health Organisation (WHO) South-East Asia, has been honored with Bhutan's

National Order of Merit (NOM) Gold Medal. The prestigious award was presented by Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck, the Druk Gyalpo (dragon king) of Bhutan, during the celebration of Bhutan's 116th National Day on December 17, 2023, in Thimphu, Bhutan.

President Droupadi Murmu Awards Crompton for Energy Conservation 2023

Crompton Greaves Consumer Electricals Ltd. (CGCEL), a leading player in India's consumer electrical industry, has been honored with the prestigious National Energy Conservation Award 2023. The recognition was bestowed by the President of India, Droupadi Murmu, and the Ministry of Power, represented by the Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE), on the occasion of National Energy Conservation Day. This accolade reinforces Crompton's commitment to energy-efficient innovations, marking a significant achievement in the Most Energy Efficient Appliance of the Year 2023 category for its storage water heater.

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

The renowned Rabindranath Tagore Literary Prize has named poet-critic Sukrita Paul Kumar as its sixth recipient for her book, "Salt & Pepper: Selected Poems". This prestigious award recognizes outstanding literary work from around the globe, promoting world peace, literature, art, education, and human rights. At the award ceremony, Kumar received a cash prize of USD 5,000, a Tagore statue, and a certificate acknowledging her significant contribution to literature. In recognition of his exceptional contributions to social welfare, Nobel laureate Abhijit Banerjee was awarded the Rabindranath Tagore Literary Prize for Social Achievement. This further signifies the award's dedication to highlighting both artistic and societal impacts.

Important Dates News

World Sustainable Transport Day 2023: 26 November

The United Nations General Assembly, in a decisive move towards fostering sustainable and environmentally friendly transportation, has designated November 26 as World Sustainable Transport Day. This resolution underscores the critical role of transport in connectivity, trade, economic growth, and employment, while acknowledging its significant contribution to greenhouse gas emissions. The pursuit of sustainable transport is not only an environmental imperative but a key strategy for achieving broader sustainable development goals. World Sustainable Transport Day 2023 focuses on the theme "Sustainable transport, sustainable development".

World Soil Day 2023 Observed on 5 December

Every year on December 5, people worldwide unite to commemorate World Soil Day (WSD), an occasion dedicated to recognizing the pivotal role soil plays in sustaining life on Earth. This annual event serves as a poignant reminder of the intricate relationship between soil, plants, animals, and humans, underscoring the critical need to preserve and protect this invaluable resource. As we approach World Soil Day 2023, the theme ‘Soil and Water, a Source of Life’ takes center stage, emphasizing the symbiotic connection between these fundamental elements. The United Nations has declared the theme for World Soil Day 2023 as ‘Soil and water, a source of life.’

Mahaparinirvan Diwas 2023: BR Ambedkar Death Anniversary

December 6, 2023, marks the Mahaparinirvan Diwas 2023, commemorating the death anniversary of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, a towering figure in the Indian history. As the architect of the Indian Constitution and a champion of social justice, his contributions have left an indelible mark on the nation. This article explores the significance of Mahaparinirvan Diwas and delves into the life and contributions of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar. The term Mahaparinirvan derives its significance from Buddhism’s fundamental concept of Parinirvana. This state symbolizes the attainment of nirvana, freedom both in life and after death. In the context of Dr. Ambedkar, his embrace of Buddhism and renunciation of Hinduism align with the principles of Parinirvana. The use of the term Mahaparinirvan Diwas to mark his death underscores his stature as a revered Buddhist leader. The article sheds light on the historical and philosophical underpinnings of Mahaparinirvan. Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, the chief architect of the Indian Constitution and Independent India’s first Law Minister, was a multifaceted leader known for his tireless efforts against untouchability. In 1947, he established the ‘Drafting Committee’ to present the final constitution draft. His leadership and commitment to social reform are encapsulated in his significant role in shaping India’s constitutional framework.

International Civil Aviation Day 2023: 7 December

International Civil Aviation Day, observed on December 7, holds special significance as it marks the establishment of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) in 1944. This year’s theme, “Advancing Innovation for Global Aviation Development,” emphasizes the crucial role of innovation in shaping the future of civil aviation worldwide. The United Nations General Assembly declared December 7 as International Civil Aviation Day in 1996. This date commemorates the 50th anniversary of the establishment of ICAO, a pivotal organization working to foster global cooperation and uniformity in civil aviation.

Armed Forces Flag Day 2023 Celebrates on 7th December

Armed Forces Flag Day, celebrated on December 7 each year, holds a special place in our hearts as we pay tribute to the indomitable spirit and sacrifices of the soldiers, sailors, and airmen who stand guard at our borders. This day serves as a reminder of the unwavering dedication of our armed forces and provides an opportunity for citizens to contribute towards their welfare. Established on August 28, 1949, by the Ministry of Defence, Armed Forces Flag Day was designated to honor the brave men and women in uniform. December 7 was chosen as the annual day for this tribute, a day to recognize the selfless service and sacrifice of our armed forces personnel. Soldiers are one of the greatest assets of any country.

SAARC Charter Day: Celebrating 39 Years of Regional Cooperation

SAARC Charter Day is observed annually on 8th December, marking a significant milestone in the history of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC). This day commemorates the signing of the SAARC Charter in 1985 during the First SAARC Summit held in Dhaka. This year, the regional group The SAARC Charter was signed by the Heads of State or Government of seven founding member countries: Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka. The signing ceremony took place in Dhaka, Bangladesh, signifying the collective aspirations of the peoples and governments of South Asia to foster understanding, good neighborly relations, and meaningful cooperation. It celebrates its 39th Anniversary, highlighting the enduring commitment of South Asian nations to collaboration and mutual progress.

Human Rights Day 2023: Date, Theme and History

The year 2023 marks the 75th anniversary of a monumental global commitment—the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). Adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on December 10, 1948, this transformative document remains a beacon of hope, enshrining the inalienable rights that every individual is entitled to, irrespective of diverse factors. 10 December 2023 marks the 75th anniversary of one of the world’s most groundbreaking global pledges: the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). The chosen theme for the 2023 celebrations is “Freedom, Equality, and Justice for All.” Over the decades since the UDHR’s adoption, human rights have gained increasing recognition and protection worldwide.

International Migrants Day 2023: Date, Theme, History and Significance

International Migrants Day 2023, observed annually on December 18, serves as a global platform to recognize and appreciate the significant contributions of migrants while

shedding light on the challenges they face. This day serves as a reminder to reflect on and celebrate the invaluable contributions of millions of migrants worldwide, recognizing their role as dynamic agents for the development in both their countries of origin and destination. The theme for International Migrants Day 2023 is "Promoting Safe Migration." Through this theme, the United Nations calls for nations to affirm their dedication to upholding the human rights of all migrants, irrespective of their legal standing.

National Farmers Day 2023: Date, History and Significance

National Farmer's Day 2023, also known as Kisan Diwas, is celebrated on December 23 in India to honor and recognize the invaluable contribution of farmers to the country's socio-economic fabric. This day marks the birth anniversary of Chaudhary Charan Singh, a former prime minister of India and a dedicated advocate for the welfare of farmers. The significance of National Farmer's Day lies in acknowledging the pivotal role farmers play in sustaining the nation's prosperity. Chaudhary Charan Singh, born in 1902 in Uttar Pradesh's Meerut, emerged from a humble peasant family. Serving as the prime minister from 1979 to 1980, he dedicated his life to championing the cause of farmers. In 2001, recognizing his substantial contributions, the Indian government declared his birth anniversary as National Farmer's Day.

Veer Bal Diwas 2023 Observed on 26th December

Since 9th January 2022, the day of the Prakash Purab of Sri Guru Gobind Singh Ji, the Hon. Prime Minister had announced that 26th December would be observed as 'Veer Bal Diwas', to mark the martyrdom of sons of Sri Guru Gobind Singh – Sahibzadas Baba Zorawar Singh Ji and Baba Fateh Singh Ji. Veer Bal Diwas is a solemn occasion to pay tribute to the immense sacrifices made by Sahibzada Zorawar Singh and Sahibzada Fateh Singh. These young sons of Guru Gobind Singh Ji played a crucial role in shaping the legacy of courage and resilience in the face of adversity.

ULFA Peace Accord Marks Historic Day for Assam: Amit Shah

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. Union Home Minister Amit Shah lauded the signing of the accord as "a golden day" for Assam, expressing optimism about the region's future. The development is a result of over 12 years of unconditional negotiations with the Arabinda Rajkhowa-led faction. However, the hardline faction of ULFA, led by Paresh Baruah, remains outside the peace agreement. Baruah, reportedly residing along the China-Myanmar border, poses a continued challenge to achieving comprehensive peace in the region.

Sports News

Shubman Gill Takes the Helm as Gujarat Titans Captain for IPL 2024

In a strategic move, Gujarat Titans have named Shubman Gill as the captain for the upcoming Indian Premier League (IPL) 2024 season. This decision follows the departure of all-rounder Hardik Pandya, who was traded to Mumbai Indians. Shubman Gill, initially making his mark with the Kolkata Knight Riders in 2018, joined Gujarat Titans in 2021 for a substantial sum of Rs 7 crore. Known for providing explosive starts, Gill has become a linchpin for the team, showcasing his ability to set the tone of the innings.

Anish Bhanwala Becomes First Indian Shooter To Win a Medal In 25m Rapid Fire at ISSF World Cup Final

Anish Bhanwala etched his name in history by becoming the first Indian shooter to clinch a medal in the men's 25m Rapid Fire event at the ISSF World Cup Final. This accomplishment surpassed the efforts of past Indian shooters like Vijay Kumar in 2009 and Gurpreet Singh in 2015, who had reached the final but fell short of claiming a medal. Anish's journey to success began with winning the national championship in 2017, competing against formidable opponents such as Vijay Kumar. The same year, he became the junior world champion and successfully defended his title in 2018. The Gold Coast Commonwealth Games marked another milestone in his career as he secured a medal, signaling his emergence at the senior level.

Odisha to Host Ultimate Kho Kho Season 2 from December 24, 2023

In a thrilling continuation of its inaugural success, Ultimate Kho Kho (UKK) is all set to enthrall audiences with its grand second edition, scheduled to commence on December 24, 2023 and conclude on January 13, 2024. The Jawaharlal Nehru Indoor Stadium in Cuttack, Odisha, will play host to this high-octane sporting event, promising excitement and entertainment to the millions of fans eagerly anticipating its return. Inspired by Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik's vision of 'sports for youth, youth for the future,' the Odisha government has emerged as a hub for major global sports events. Boasting world-class multi-sport infrastructure, Odisha has become a destination for sports enthusiasts. The state's commitment to fostering sports is evident in its role as the host for the second edition of Ultimate Kho Kho.

Vidya Pillai Clinches 6-Red Snooker World Title

Seasoned cueist Vidya Pillai achieved a monumental milestone in her illustrious career as she secured the IBSF 6-Red Snooker World Championship title in Doha, Qatar, just days before her 46th birthday. The Bengalurean showcased a stellar performance, dominating her opponents throughout

the championship, with a standout victory of 4-1 against compatriot Anupama Ramachandran in the title clash. Vidya Pillai has garnered numerous international medals for India, attaining a gold medal in the IBSF World Team Snooker Championship in 2013. She secured another gold in the IBSF Australian Women's Ranking Snooker Championship in 2016. Notably, in 2017, she made history as the first Indian woman to reach the finals of the WLBSA World Women's Snooker Championship.

Rahul Dravid to Continue as India's Head Coach

Rahul Dravid has accepted the Board of Control for Cricket in India's (BCCI) offer to extend his term as India's head coach, ensuring his continued leadership of the national team until at least the 2024 T20 World Cup in June. Dravid's initial two-year tenure concluded at the end of the 2023 ODI World Cup, but his impressive achievements and the team's growth under his guidance prompted the BCCI to seek his extension. His first assignment after the contract renewal will be the tour of South Africa. Despite not securing any ICC trophies during his first stint, Dravid has guided India to the top of the Test, ODI, and T20I rankings, showcasing his tactical prowess and ability to nurture young talent. India's dominant performance in the 2023 ODI World Cup, winning all nine league matches and the semi-final before falling to Australia in the final, exemplified the team's progress under Dravid's leadership.

West Indies Shane Dowrich Announces International Retirement

In a surprising turn of events, Shane Dowrich, the seasoned wicketkeeper-batsman, has announced his retirement from international cricket and subsequently withdrawn from the West Indies squad set to face England in the upcoming ODI series. The West Indies Cricket Board (CWI) confirmed the unexpected decision, marking the end of Dowrich's international cricket journey. Shane Dowrich's return to the West Indies squad earlier this month came as a surprise, marking his comeback to international cricket after a hiatus of three years from Test cricket and four years from One Day Internationals (ODIs). However, his reentry was short-lived as the 32-year-old has now opted for retirement, stepping away from the game just ahead of the ODI series against England.

Ruturaj Gaikwad becomes the fastest Indian to 4,000 runs in men's T20

Ruturaj Gaikwad, the talented Indian cricketer, has achieved a remarkable milestone in men's T20 cricket. In the fourth T20I against Australia at the Shaheed Veer Narayan Singh International Stadium in Raipur, Gaikwad etched his name in the record books by becoming the fastest Indian to amass 4,000 runs in the shortest format of the game. Let's delve into the details of this exceptional feat. Ruturaj Gaikwad entered

the match needing just seven runs to reach the coveted 4,000-run mark in T20 cricket. He accomplished this remarkable feat in only 116 innings, showcasing his exceptional batting prowess. This achievement makes Gaikwad the quickest Indian batsman to achieve the milestone, surpassing the previous record held by KL Rahul, who reached 4,000 runs in 117 T20 innings. Virat Kohli, one of India's cricketing legends, is the third-fastest Indian to achieve this feat, taking 138 T20 innings to do so.

Vaishali Rameshbabu Becomes Grandmaster, Creating History with Brother Praggnanandhaa

Vaishali Rameshbabu, a 22-year-old chess player from India, has recently earned the title of Grandmaster at the IV El Llobregat Open in Spain. This achievement makes her only the third woman from India to become a Grandmaster, following in the footsteps of Koneru Humpy and Harika Dronavalli. Her victory over Turkish FM Tamer Tarik Selbes was pivotal in crossing the 2500 FIDE rating threshold required for the Grandmaster title. This accomplishment is particularly significant as it makes Vaishali and her younger brother, Rameshbabu Praggnanandhaa, the first brother-sister pair in history to both hold Grandmaster titles. They have also become the first brother-sister duo to qualify for the Candidates, a prestigious chess tournament.

Travis Head wins ICC Men's Player of Month award for November 2023

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. In a thrilling display of cricket prowess, Travis Head played a pivotal role in Australia's triumphant journey to their sixth ICC Cricket World Cup title. The highlight of his outstanding performance was an explosive century that not only earned him the Player of the Match award in the semi-final against South Africa but also significantly contributed to Australia's victory in the blockbuster final against India in Ahmedabad.

BCCI Decides to Retire MS Dhoni's Iconic No.7 Jersey

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 retirement of MS Dhoni's No.7 jersey stands as a symbolic gesture, honoring the exceptional contribution of a cricketing legend whose leadership and prowess left an indelible mark on the sport in India.

Antim Panghal named UWW Rising Star of the Year

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 the men's freestyle category, Greece's Georgios Kougioumtsidis received the Rising Star of the Year award, while Azerbaijan's Hasrat Jafarov took the honors in the Greco-Roman category. As Antim Panghal continues to script her success story, her journey serves as an inspiration for aspiring wrestlers and highlights the growing prowess of Indian women in the fiercely competitive world of wrestling.

Djokovic and Sabalenka Clinch 2023 ITF World Champion Titles with Stellar Performances

In a fitting recognition of their outstanding achievements on the tennis court, 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.

Haryana Dominates Medal Tally With 40 Gold, 39 Silver and 26 Bronze in Inaugural Khelo India Para Games

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. The competition, which began on December 10, featured around 1,450 para athletes representing 32 states and Union Territories. In a spectacular display of skill and determination, Haryana emerged as the overall winner of Khelo India Para Games 2023. The state's athletes secured an impressive medal haul, with 40 gold, 39 silver and 26 bronze medals.

U-19 Asia Cup, Bangladesh Beat UAE To Lift Trophy

In a fantastic cricket match, Ashiqur Rahman Shibli helped Bangladesh's Under-19 team win a big tournament called Under-19 Asia. Shibli did amazingly well with his bat, scoring a second century in five matches, leading Bangladesh to an impressive win over UAE. Let's break down the exciting game! Ashiqur Rahman Shibli's outstanding performance didn't go unnoticed. He was named the Player of the Match and Series. Shibli scored a total of 378 runs in five innings during the tournament, showing he was a key player for Bangladesh.

Amitabh Bachchan Becomes Owner of Mumbai Team in Indian Street Premier League

In a groundbreaking announcement on Monday, 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. The ISPL introduces a unique and exciting cricketing format, bringing together the thrill of T20 matches and the grassroots essence of tennis ball cricket. The tournament aims to provide a platform for street cricketers to showcase their talent on a professional stage.

Maharashtra Bags Women's and AAI Wins Men's Title Events in Guwahati

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. The Airport Authority of India (AAI) showcased exceptional prowess in the men's team event, securing the championship title by overpowering Karnataka with a resounding 3-0 win. The dominant performance by the AAI team demonstrated their skill and strategic play on the badminton court. The clash for the women's team event title unfolded in a thrilling encounter between AAI and Maharashtra. The Maharashtra team exhibited outstanding performances, securing a 3-0 triumph. Shruti Mundada, Alisha Naik and the formidable doubles pair of Simran Singhi and Ritika. Thaker played pivotal roles in Maharashtra's decisive victory.

Most Expensive Player in IPL 2024

The Indian Premier League (IPL) 2024 Auction was nothing short of a cricketing carnival, witnessing 333 players, including 214 Indians and 119 overseas players, go under the hammer. The extravaganza featured a mix of seasoned cricketers and rising talents, creating a buzz in the cricketing fraternity. Let's delve into the top 10 buys that shaped headlines and left fans eagerly anticipating the upcoming IPL season. World Cup-winning Australian captain Pat Cummins became the costliest player in IPL history when he was picked up by the Sunrisers, only for his record to be beaten by teammate Mitchell Starc's Rs. 24.75 crore move to the Kolkata Knight Riders.

Sakshi Malik Quits After Election Of New Wrestling Federation Chief

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. Sakshi Malik, a vocal advocate against harassment in Indian sports, led protests earlier in the year, demanding accountability for Singh's alleged sexual misconduct towards female wrestlers. Charges filed in June accused Singh of harassing six athletes, including a minor, during his tenure as WFI chief.

Women's Cricket: India Achieve Historic Feat with Maiden Test Victory Over Australia

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. Playing more than one Test at home for the first time since 1995, India Women displayed a flawless performance, hardly putting a foot wrong. The team adhered to the promise of playing 'positive cricket,' weathering challenges and dictating terms against fancied opponents like Australia and England.

Khelo India Youth Games 2023 Set To Be Held In Tamil Nadu

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. This year's edition will feature 27 sports disciplines, including the demonstration of Tamil Nadu's traditional sport, Silambam.

Coca-Cola Scores a Victory Lap: Secures 8-Year Partnership with ICC as Global Cricket Partner

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.

Obituaries News

C.K. Gopinathan, a Director On The Board Of Dhanlaxmi Bank Passed Away

On November 27, the banking community and shareholders of Kerala-based Dhanlaxmi Bank mourned the sudden demise

of Mr. C.K. Gopinathan, a director on the bank's board and a significant shareholder. The loss was attributed to a major heart attack, marking the end of a distinguished career spanning more than 25 years in the banking and finance sectors. C.K. Gopinathan's journey in the world of finance began over two decades ago. With a wealth of experience, he made a mark in various capacities within the industry. Notably, he served as a Director at the Catholic Syrian Bank for nearly eight years, from September 26, 2008, to July 20, 2016, leaving an indelible impact on the institution.

Henry Kissinger, Nobel Peace Prize winner, passed away

Henry Kissinger, a towering figure in American foreign policy, passed away on November 29, 2023, at the age of 100. He served as the United States Secretary of State under Presidents Richard Nixon and Gerald Ford, and played a pivotal role in shaping US foreign policy during the 1970s. Kissinger was born Heinz Alfred Kissinger in Fürth, Germany, on May 27, 1923. His family fled Nazi Germany in 1938, and he immigrated to the United States. After serving in the US Army during World War II, he studied at Harvard University, earning a doctorate in government in 1954.

Dinesh Phadnis, who played Fredericks in CID passed away

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. Earlier reports had suggested that Dinesh Phadnis had suffered a heart attack. However, Dayanand Shetty dispelled these rumors, revealing that the actor was actually dealing with liver damage. The clarification came amid speculations about the cause of Dinesh's health issues.

Former Mr. Universe Bodybuilder Shaun Davis, Dies at 57

Former Mr Universe bodybuilder Shaun Davis has tragically passed away at the age of 57, leaving behind a legacy of remarkable achievements in the world of bodybuilding. Hailing from Derbyshire, in east England, Davis had an illustrious career that saw him clinch prestigious titles such as Mr Britain and Mr Europe before reaching the pinnacle of success by being crowned Mr Universe in 1996, as reported by Metro. At the height of his Mr. Universe success, Shaun Davis was known for his impressive physique, weighing a whopping 334lbs (151 kg). His imposing presence earned him the fitting moniker of 'Dinosaur' within the bodybuilding community. His dedication and hard work in the sport garnered him widespread admiration and respect.

Former West Indies batter Joe Solomon dies at 93

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. Early Success and Quick Rise. Joe Solomon started playing cricket when he was 26, which is a bit later than most players. But he made a spectacular entrance into the game by scoring three centuries in his first matches: 114 not out against Jamaica, 108 against Barbados, and 121 against the touring Pakistan team. This impressive start got him into the West Indies team for the tour of India. In only his fourth Test, he scored a fantastic unbeaten century in Delhi, with an average of 117 in the series.

Dr. Gao Yaojie, Renowned AIDS Activist Dies At 95

Dr. Gao Yaojie, a trailblazing Chinese doctor and activist, passed away at the age of 95 in her home in the United States. She was known for her fearless exposure of the AIDS virus epidemic in rural China during the 1990s. Columbia University professor Andrew J. Nathan, who had legal power of attorney for Gao, confirmed her passing. Gao rose to prominence as China's most prominent AIDS activist, exposing blood-selling schemes that infected thousands with HIV. Her unwavering commitment to addressing the crisis earned her international recognition and forced the Chinese government to confront the AIDS epidemic well into the 2000s. In 2009, she made the bold move to the United States, where she continued her advocacy through public talks and writing about her experiences. Her move to the U.S. provided a platform for her to share her experiences and insights, further raising awareness about the AIDS crisis in rural China.

Dr. V Mohini Giri: A Champion for Women's Rights Passes Away at 86

Dr. V Mohini Giri, a well-known advocate for women's rights, passed away at the age of 86 after a brief illness. She made significant contributions to empowering women and was recognized for her efforts. Dr. Giri served as the Chair of the National Commission for Women (NCW) from 1995 to 1998 and led the Central Social Welfare Board. She was also the head of the Guild of Service, an organization in New Delhi that supports women's and children's rights, focusing on education, employment, and financial security. Beyond her role as a women's rights activist, Dr. Mohini Giri was the daughter-in-law of former President Dr. V V Giri. She leaves behind a son and daughter. Dr. Giri was involved in various organizations, including being the founder and trustee of Women's Initiative for Peace in South Asia.

Parasite Actor Lee Sun-kyun Passed Away At 48

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. Born in Seoul, South Korea, on March 2, 1975, Lee Sun-kyun left an indelible mark as an actor and manager, earning acclaim for his roles in films like Parasite (2019) and A Hard Day (2014). Affectionately dubbed "The Voice" by fans, he earned this nickname due to his distinctive deep voice. In Korea, he was widely acclaimed for his roles in the thriller Helpless (2012), the romantic comedy All About My Wife (2012), and the crime/black comedy A Hard Day (2014).

Tamil Superstar and Politician Vijayakanth Passes Away at 71

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. Vijayakanth's legacy transcends both cinema and politics. He was a man of the people, adored for his on-screen persona and respected for his political aspirations. His journey from humble beginnings to stardom and political relevance is an inspiration to many.

Founding Father of EU's Single Currency Project Jacques Delors Dies Aged 98

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. His contributions include the completion of the integrated single market, the introduction of the euro, and the development of a common foreign and security policy. This article pays tribute to his legacy and examines his impact on European integration.

Defence News**Indian Coast Guard and Navy to acquire 15 C-295 Aircraft for Maritime Surveillance**

In a significant stride towards enhancing self-reliance in the defence sector, the Indian Coast Guard and Navy are set to acquire 15 C-295 transport aircraft. The proposals for the acquisition are currently in advanced stages within the defence ministry, with the Navy eyeing nine planes and the Indian Coast Guard planning to procure six. The C-295 transport aircraft are being manufactured in India through a collaborative effort between Tata Advanced Systems and

Airbus. This collaboration not only strengthens the country's defence capabilities but also promotes indigenous manufacturing and technological expertise. The aircraft will play a crucial role in maritime operations, aligning with the strategic objectives of the Indian armed forces. The acquired transport aircraft will be equipped with state-of-the-art radars and sensors, undergoing transformation into maritime patrol planes by the Defence Research and Development Organisation's Centre for Airborne Systems (CABS).

India Navy appointed first woman commanding officer in naval ship

In a groundbreaking move aligning with the philosophy of 'all roles-all ranks,' the Indian Navy has achieved a historic milestone by appointing its first woman commanding officer for a naval ship. Navy Chief Admiral R Hari Kumar made this announcement during a press conference held ahead of Navy Day. Admiral Kumar highlighted the Indian Navy's significant operational achievements over the past year. Ships, submarines, and aircraft maintained a high operational tempo in strategic waters, undertaking missions with military, diplomatic, constabulary, and benign roles. The Navy's units were consistently deployed across the Indian Ocean Region and beyond to safeguard and promote national interests.

Indian Army Agniveer Salary 2023: A Comprehensive Overview

The Indian Army has recently announced the Agniveer Recruitment 2023, a dynamic initiative designed to bolster its ranks. This recruitment drive, characterized by rallies across various regions, aims to attract young men and women aged 17.5 to 23 years, passionate about serving in the armed forces. This article delves into the salary structure of the Agniveers, as outlined in the latest recruitment notification. Given the scheme's four-year tenure, the salary for the Indian Army Agniveer salary package initiates at INR 30,000.

GRSE Delivers India's Largest Survey Vessel To Navy

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. INS Sandhayak was launched on December 5, 2021, and subsequently underwent extensive fitting out and trials. The vessel's completion and delivery align with Navy Day, observed on December 4, adding a symbolic touch to the occasion. The dedication and precision exhibited by GRSE in the construction of this sophisticated survey vessel underscore the organization's commitment to bolstering India's naval capabilities.

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

As part of its ongoing long-range deployment to Africa, the Indian Naval Ship Sumedha made a historic arrival at Port Lamu, Kenya on 09 December 2023. This visit is significant as it marks the first port call by any Indian Naval Ship at the recently developed port in Kenya, showcasing the growing maritime collaboration between India and Kenya. During the port call, personnel from both the Indian Navy and the Kenyan Navy will engage in a wide range of professional interactions. This includes deck visits, where naval officers and sailors will have the opportunity to share insights and experiences, fostering a deeper understanding of maritime operations.

Indian Army Organizes Table-top Exercise To Empower ASEAN Women Officers

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 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. The initiative is spearheaded by the Centre for United Nations Peacekeeping (CUNPK), reflecting a broader commitment to international cooperation and capacity-building in the realm of peacekeeping. The exercise stands as a landmark initiative, explicitly designed to promote gender inclusivity and elevate the capabilities of women military personnel operating in peacekeeping environments. By bringing together women officers from ASEAN countries, the Indian Army aims to create a platform for shared learning, strategic collaboration, and the exchange of experiences.

India, Vietnam Armies Start 11-Day Hanoi Exercise

The Indian and Vietnamese Armies have initiated an 11-day military exercise in Vietnam, commencing on December 11. This collaborative endeavor, named "VINBAX-23," reflects the deepening strategic partnership between the two nations and is a response to shared concerns over China's assertive actions in the South China Sea. The Indian Army highlights that the exercise is instrumental in promoting understanding and interoperability, further strengthening the defense cooperation between the friendly armies. This cooperation was underscored earlier in July when India gifted its in-service missile corvette, INS Kirpan, to Vietnam. Vietnam, an essential member of the ASEAN, faces territorial disputes with China in the South China Sea region. India, in a show of support, has ongoing oil-exploration projects in Vietnamese waters within the contested region, reinforcing their strategic alignment against common challenges.

Indian Navy to recommission Maldives-gifted, decommissioned ship

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 ship has a unique distinction of having served under the flag of two nations with three names during her distinguished service till date," stated a Navy spokesperson. Originally commissioned in the Indian Navy as INS Tillanchang, a Trinkat Class ship, it served actively until 2006.

MoD Seals Rs 5,336.25 Crore Deal With BEL For 10-year Supply Of Electronic Fuzes

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. Aligned with the 'Aatmanirbhar Bharat' vision, this contract is a crucial step towards achieving self-sufficiency in ammunition manufacturing and securing the nation's defense needs for the next decade. This initiative aims to meet the long-term ammunition requirements of the Indian Army while reducing dependence on imports.

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

In a groundbreaking display of technological prowess, India has achieved a global first by demonstrating the capability of its indigenous Akash missile system to engage four aerial targets simultaneously at a range of 25 kilometers. The Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) proudly announced this historic achievement, highlighting India's unique position as the first country to possess such a capability within a single firing unit. The remarkable feat took place during the 'Astrashakti' military exercise conducted by the Indian Air Force on December 12.

Indian Armed Forces officers awarded 'Golden Owl' at DSCSC Sri Lanka

In a remarkable display of excellence, 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. Wing Commander Sumeet Mahajan, Major Rohit, and Lieutenant Commander Sunny

Sharma, representing the Air Force, Army, and Navy wings respectively, demonstrated unparalleled excellence by securing the top positions among foreign student officers.

Lt. Vice Admiral Benoy Roy Chowdhury Posthumously Honored With 'Vir Chakra'

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 'Vir Chakra' stands as a testament to acts of gallantry on the battlefield, whether on land, in the air, or at sea. It is a prestigious Indian wartime military bravery award, and Vice Admiral Benoy Roy Chowdhury's name now graces the list of recipients, adding to the honor and legacy of INS Shivaji. Vice Admiral Dinesh Prabhakar, AVSM, NM, VSM (Retd), currently holding the position of Distinguished Chair Marine Engineering at INS Shivaji, received the 'Vir Chakra' on behalf of the Indian Navy.

Pakistan Successfully Tests Advanced Rocket System Fatah-II

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

Books & Authors News**The book, titled 'Pranab, My Father: A Daughter Remembers' by Sharmishtha Mukherjee**

The book, titled 'Pranab, My Father: A Daughter Remembers' authored by Sharmishtha Mukherjee. The book is being brought out by Rupa Publications. The book is also a mirror to the father-daughter relationship between Pranab Mukherjee and Sharmishtha. This and other nuggets of Mukherjee's life from an unprepossessing village in West Bengal's Birbhum district to a roller-coaster career thereafter are the highlights of an about-to-be-released biography penned by his daughter, classical dancer Sharmishtha Mukherjee.

India's Moment: Changing Power Equations Around the World Launched in London

The High Commissioner of India to the United Kingdom, Vikram K. Doraiswami launched the book titled India's Moment: Changing Power Equations around the World, by Professor (Dr.) Mohan Kumar, Dean, Strategic & International Initiatives, O.P. Jindal Global University last week. This book dwells on some of those fundamental factors and traces how India's positions in international negotiations have evolved over time.

Miscellaneous News

Barda Wildlife Sanctuary is set to become the second home for Asiatic lions

After Gir National Park and Sanctuary, the Barda Wildlife Sanctuary (BWLS) is set to become the second home to Asiatic lions. The Gujarat Forest Department presented its proposal to make BWLS the second home to the lions as part of "Project Lion @ 2047". Project Lion is an initiative launched by the Government of India in 2021 to conserve and protect the Asiatic Lion and its habitat. The project aims to address the threats faced by the Asiatic lion population in India, which is found only in the Gir National Park and Sanctuary in Gujarat. The project also aims to create new habitats for the lions to increase their distribution and establish a second home for them outside Gir.

"Rizz" Crowned Oxford University Press Word of the Year by Generation Z

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. The selection of "rizz" as the Word of the Year by Oxford University Press highlights the dynamic nature of language, especially in the realm of Generation Z. This linguistic evolution serves as a testament to the ever-changing landscape of communication, reflecting the unique ways in which younger generations shape and redefine the words that encapsulate their experiences, perspectives, and interactions in the modern world.

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

In a historic moment for the field of nuclear fusion research, the JT-60SA, the world's largest and most advanced experimental nuclear fusion reactor, has officially commenced operations in Japan's Ibaraki Prefecture. Developed as a collaborative effort between the European Union and Japan, the JT-60SA represents a significant step forward in harnessing the potential of nuclear fusion as a clean and sustainable energy source.

Google Doodle Celebrates Ahmed The Elephant Known for His Big Tusks

Google Doodle, the creative and artistic platform used by Google to commemorate significant events and individuals, has dedicated a doodle today to Ahmed the Elephant. Ahmed's story is a remarkable tale of a majestic elephant born in 1919 in the forests of Mount Marsabit, Kenya. The doodle, featuring

illustrations of elephants and tourists, serves as a tribute to Ahmed's legacy and the efforts to protect him from poachers. Ahmed's journey began in the pristine landscapes of Mount Marsabit, Kenya, where he was born in 1919. His majestic tusks, said to scare the ground, earned him the title "The King of Marasabit." Though rarely seen, Ahmed's legacy grew and hikers in the North Kenya mountains began spreading tales of this extraordinary elephant.

Indian Parliament Face Security Breach 'intruders throw smoke bombs' at MPs

Two unidentified individuals entered the chambers of the lower house of India's parliament, allegedly throwing smoke bombs, marking a significant security lapse. This incident occurred on the 22nd anniversary of a 2001 terrorist attack on parliament that resulted in casualties. The two person entered the area where lawmakers were seated during the zero hour, releasing smoke canisters and filling the space with yellow smoke.

The two persons, detained for the protest outside the Parliament are identified as—identified as Neelam (42) and Amol Shinde (25).

Cyclone Jasper hits Australia

Tropical Cyclone Jasper, the first named storm of the 2023–24 Australian region cyclone season, made landfall in northeast Australia, impacting northern Queensland with destructive winds and the looming threat of flash flooding. This active tropical cyclone emerged as the third disturbance of the 2023–24 South Pacific cyclone season. Originating from a low-pressure area in the South Pacific Ocean, Jasper initially moved southwest through Fiji's area of responsibility. While slow to develop initially, the system gained strength, prompting the Australian Bureau of Meteorology (BoM) to classify it as a Category 1 tropical cyclone on the Australian scale.

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

Krutrim AI Designs, the new artificial intelligence venture founded by Bhavish Aggarwal, co-founder of Ola, has introduced a family of multilingual AI models specifically tailored to address the distinctive requirements of the Indian ecosystem. The models, named Krutrim Pro, are designed to operate in 22 Indian languages, emphasizing cultural connect and accessibility at India-first cost structures. Krutrim, which means 'artificial' in Sanskrit, comes in two sizes. The base model, Krutrim, is trained on an impressive 2 trillion tokens and unique datasets. Its larger counterpart, Krutrim Pro, is set to launch next quarter, boasts advanced problem-solving and task execution capabilities.

India Sees 112 Deaths In 2022 Due To Tiger Attacks

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 data revealed that Maharashtra witnessed the highest number of deaths, with 85 reported cases in 2022. This alarming statistic underscores the urgent need for addressing the human-tiger conflict in the state.

'Word of the Year' (2023) by Different Dictionaries

As the curtain closes on 2023, prominent dictionaries around the world have unveiled their "Word of the Year" selections, offering unique insights into the linguistic trends and patterns

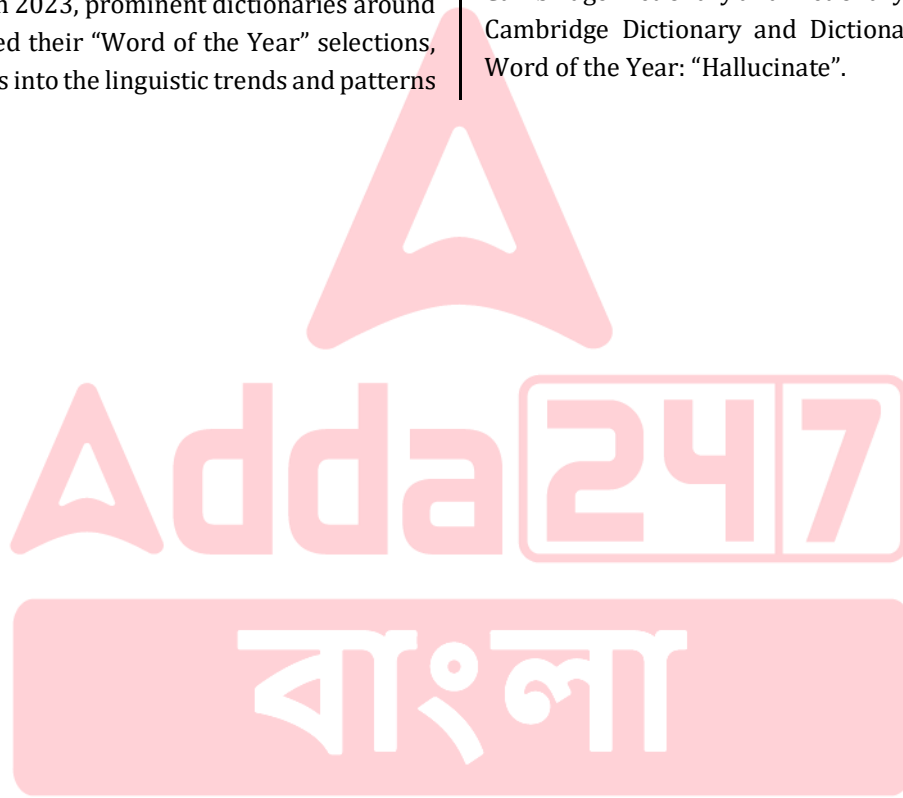
that dominated the past year. These chosen words reflect not only the most searched-for or talked-about terms, but also the cultural zeitgeist and the issues that resonated most deeply with the global community.

Oxford Dictionary: Rising to the top spot for Oxford is "Rizz", a slang term referring to one's natural charm, charisma, and ability to attract romantic partners.


Merriam-Webster: In contrast, Merriam-Webster champions "Authentic" as its Word of the Year.

Collins Dictionary: For Collins Dictionary, the future reigns supreme. Their Word of the Year is "AI" (artificial intelligence), recognizing its transformative potential and its ever-growing influence on various aspects of our lives.

Cambridge Dictionary and Dictionary.com: Interestingly, both Cambridge Dictionary and Dictionary.com share the same Word of the Year: "Hallucinate".



BILINGUAL



WBPS 2023-24
LDC CLERK PRELIMS
সম্পূর্ণ বাংলায় সমাধান

10 TOTAL TESTS

WBCS MAHAPACK PRO

Mahapack এখন নতুন রূপে

A BANGLA



- লাইভ ক্লাস
- রেকর্ডেড ভিডিও
- অনলাইন মক টেস্ট
- ই-বুক স্টাডি ম্যাট
- হার্ড কপি মক টেস্ট বই
- একাধিক অপশনাল সাবজেক্ট
- পার্সোনালিটি টেস্ট এর গাইডেন্স ভিডিও
- অনলাইন এবং অফলাইন