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MY

Current Affairs

04th January, 2024

Today's
Important News

Russia and NASA Extend Joint ISS
Flights Until 2025

1. Russia and NASA Extend Joint ISS Flights Until 2025

- Russian and US space agencies have agreed to keep working together to deliver crews to the International Space Station (ISS) until at least 2025, Russian corporation Roscosmos. Russia's space state agency Roscosmos said that a cross-flight programme with NASA to the International Space Station (ISS) had been extended until 2025, Interfax news agency reported.
- The International Space Station Program brings together international flight crews, multiple launch vehicles, globally distributed launch and flight operations, training, engineering, and development facilities, communications networks, and the international scientific research community.



Foot Note:

About Russia :

Capital : Moscow

President : Vladimir Putin

Prime Minister : Mikhail Mishustin

Currency : Ruble

About NASA :

Established : July 29, 1958

Headquarters : Washington, D.C, United States of America

Administrator : Bill Nelson

2. IIT Madras targets incubating 100 startups across various sectors in 2024

- Indian Institute of Technology Madras (IIT Madras) is targeting incubating at least 100 start-ups across various sectors next year, in 2024. Sharing the institute's targets for 2024, V. Kamakoti, Director, IIT Madras, said, "We are looking at closing this financial year ending March 31, 2024 with 366 patents. We will try our best to see one patent a day.
- Kamakoti said the institute is working hard towards maintaining the number 1 ranking in the National Institutional Ranking Framework (NIRF). Hopefully, we are also looking to move to higher rankings in World Rankings as well. We want to start a couple of new courses in IITM Zanzibar.



3. India to become world's largest metallurgical coal importer by 2026

- Growing industrialisation leading to higher steel consumption and limited availability of coking coal will aid in India becoming the world's largest importer of metallurgical coal in 2026, surpassing China.
- Rise in India's metallurgical coal imports will be aided by growing industrialization, higher steel consumption and limited availability of coking coal. As per the IEA, China and India have been the main drivers of this surge, with China overtaking India to regain its position as the largest importer of metallurgical coal.



4. Govt extends tenure of PLI scheme for Auto industry by a year with partial amendments

- The Ministry of Heavy Industries issued a Gazette notification to extend the tenure of Production Linked Incentive (PLI) Scheme for Automobile and Auto Components by one year with partial amendments to provide clarity and flexibility to the scheme.
- However, it will still be eligible for benefits in the following year if it meets the threshold calculated based on a 10% year-on-year increase over the earlier year's threshold. The amendment also includes changes in the table showing the incentive outlay, taking the total indicative incentive amount to Rs 25,938 crore.



5. World Braille Day observed on 4th January

- As the world prepares to celebrate World Braille Day on 4 January, a global commemoration is underway to acknowledge the significance of Braille as a vital medium of communication for blind and partially sighted individuals. This day holds special importance as it marks the birthday of Louis Braille, the visionary inventor of the Braille script, born in France in 1809.
- Recognizing the paramount role of Braille in education, communication, and social inclusion, the United Nations has designated 4 January each year as World Braille Day. Braille, a universal code rather than a language, serves as a tool to write and read in various languages, including Sanskrit, Arabic, Chinese, Hebrew, Spanish, and many others.



6. Muthoot FinCorp Secures ₹200 Crore through Private Placement of NCDs from SBI

- Muthoot FinCorp, the flagship company of Muthoot Pappachan Group (Muthoot Blue), has announced ₹200 crore investment by State Bank of India (SBI) in the non-convertible debentures (NCDs) under private placement with a face value of ₹1 lakh for each NCD.
- The maturity/tenure options of this issue is five years with half yearly being the frequency of the interest payment. The secured issued NCDs is rated as AA-/stable by CRISIL and listed on the debt market segment of BSE, Muthoot FinCorp said in a statement.



Foot Note:

About Muthoot FinCorp:

Founder: Mathai George Muthoot

Founded: 1939, Kerala

Headquarters: Kochi

7. Kerala Introduces K-Smart Tech Solution for Streamlining Local Self-Government Services

- Aimed at making available all services of local self-government institutions over a uniform digital platform, Kerala has introduced K-Smart (Kerala Solutions for Managing Administrative Reformation and Transformation), the first of its kind project in the country.
- It is for the first time that a system that makes available the entire gamut of services of a department in a single click is being introduced in the country. Initially, K-Smart will be operational in corporations and municipalities and later will be rolled out in grama panchayats as well.



Foot Note:

About Kerala:

Capital: Thiruvananthapuram

Chief Minister: Pinarayi Vijayan

Governor: Arif Mohammad Khan

National Parks: Periyar National Park

8. Record 8.18 crore Income Tax Returns filed so far in current financial year

- India has witnessed a substantial surge in the number of Income Tax Return (ITR) filings, setting a new record at 8.18 crore filings by December 31, 2023. This marks an increase of 9 per cent from the 7.51 crore returns filed by the same time in the previous year.
- During the same period, a total of 1.60 crore audit reports and other forms were filed, surpassing the 1.43 crore filings in the corresponding period of the preceding year. To encourage taxpayers to file their ITRs and forms early, over 103 crore outreaches were made through targeted e-mail, SMS and other creative campaigns.



9. NASA Reinitiates Spacecraft Mission to Study ‘God of Chaos’ Asteroid Apophis

- The National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) has relaunched a spacecraft to study asteroid Apophis. The former OSIRIS-REx spacecraft has now been renamed OSIRIS-APEX. OSIRIS-REx had carried out a seven-year journey to bring Earth a sample of asteroid Benu.
- The National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) has relaunched the OSIRIS-REx spacecraft to intercept the ‘God of Chaos’ asteroid Apophis as it approaches Earth’s orbit. The spacecraft has been renamed OSIRIS-APEX (Origin, Spectral Interpretation, Resource Identification, and Security–Apophis Explorer).



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10. REC Limited signs MoU with Rail Vikas Nigam Limited, to Finance Multi-Modal Infrastructure Projects up to Rs. 35,000 crores over next 5 Years


- REC Limited has entered into an MoU with Rail Vikas Nigam Limited (RVNL) to finance up to Rs. 35,000 Crores for Infrastructure Projects to be executed by RVNL over the next 5 years. These projects constitute multi-modal logistics hub projects, rail infrastructure projects, road, port, and metro projects where RVNL has forayed into.
- RVNL is primarily undertaking Railway projects and has also made forays into road, port, irrigation and metro projects, many of which have forward and/or backward linkages with Railway infrastructure one way or the other.



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