



Current Affairs

20th April, 2024



Today's Important News

OpenAI hires Pragya Misra as first employee in India

1. OpenAI hires Pragya Misra as first employee in India

- OpenAI has recruited its first employee in India. The ChatGPT developer has reportedly roped in Pragya Misra as head of government relations. The report also mentioned that the Microsoft-backed company has not made the appointment public yet.
- According to a Bloomberg report, “The hiring highlights the generative-AI company’s efforts to push for favourable rules as governments around the world consider how to regulate the rapidly developing technology.”



2. Permanent Education Number (PEN) Required for Students Starting Academic Year 2024-25

- In a move to simplify and streamline the process of students’ transition from one school to another, the School Education Department in the state has made the use of Permanent Education Number (PEN) mandatory from the academic year 2024-25. PEN is a unique identification number assigned to



every student by the Union Ministry of Education, through the UDISE+ (Unified District Information System for Education Plus) portal, which covers more than 14.89 lakh schools, 95 lakh teachers, and 26.5 crore children.

- According to S. Suresh Kumar, Commissioner of Andhra Pradesh School Education, the implementation of PEN would pave the way for streamlining and simplifying the process of students' transition from one school to another in the new academic year.

3. India's Commitment to Debris-Free Space Missions by 2030

- At the 42nd Inter-Agency Space Debris Coordination Committee (IADC) annual meet, ISRO Chairman S. Somanath announced India's pledge to achieve debris-free space missions by 2030. This commitment aligns with global efforts to ensure the sustainability of space exploration.
- India aims to achieve debris-free space missions by involving all space actors, both governmental and non-governmental, by 2030. This initiative underscores the nation's commitment to long-term space sustainability.



4. India Delivers First Batch of BrahMos Missiles to Philippines

- In a significant move reflecting the deepening military cooperation between India and the Philippines amid rising tensions in the South China Sea, India has successfully delivered the first batch of BrahMos supersonic cruise missiles to the Philippines. This delivery marks the fruition of a \$375 million deal signed in January 2022, making the Philippines the first export customer for this joint venture missile between India and Russia.
- The delivery was facilitated by the Indian Air Force, utilizing a C-17 Globemaster transport aircraft to transport the missiles and launchers to the Philippines' Marine Corps.



Foot Note:

About Philippines:

Capital: Manila

President: Bongbong Marcos

5. Airtel Payments Bank Launches NCMC-enabled Debit and Prepaid Cards

- Airtel Payments Bank has introduced NCMC-aligned debit and prepaid cards in collaboration with NPCI, powered by RuPay. These cards are designed to support India's One Nation, One Card initiative. Savings account holders can avail NCMC-enabled debit cards, while wallet users can opt for prepaid cards. Crafted from eco-friendly e-PVC material, these cards offer versatility in payment options, including offline transit transactions, online shopping, and enhanced security with EMV Chip protection.
- Seamlessly use the card for offline transit transactions like metros, buses, tolls, and parking. From offline shopping to e-commerce purchases, ticket bookings, and fuel payments, the card covers various transaction needs.



Foot Note:

About Airtel Payments Bank:

Headquarters: New Delhi

CEO: Anubrata Biswas

Founded: 1 April 2010

6. Meta Unveils Upgraded AI Assistant Powered by Llama 3

- Meta CEO Mark Zuckerberg has announced the launch of the company's advanced AI assistant, Meta AI, powered by the state-of-the-art language model Llama 3. The new AI offering is designed to enhance the user experience across Meta's popular apps, including WhatsApp, Instagram, Facebook, and Messenger, while also being available on a dedicated website, meta.ai.
- In a significant move, Meta AI is expanding its services to over a dozen countries, including Australia, Canada, Ghana, Jamaica, and South Africa, after previously being available only in the United States. The AI assistant has been seamlessly integrated with major Meta apps, allowing users to access its features without switching between different platforms.



7. European Astronomers Uncover the Largest Stellar Black Hole in Our Galaxy

- European astronomers have made a groundbreaking discovery – the largest stellar black hole in our Milky Way galaxy. Named 'BH-3', this celestial behemoth has a staggering mass 33 times greater than our Sun and is located a mere 2,000 light-years away from Earth.



- The existence of ‘BH-3’ was unveiled by the Gaia Space Observatory, a cutting-edge mission operated by the European Space Agency (ESA). Launched in 2013, the Gaia telescope is designed to map the positions, motions, and characteristics of billions of celestial objects with unprecedented precision.

8. Santosh Viswanathan Appointed India Region Head of Intel

- In a strategic move to capitalize on the rapid economic growth in India and fortify its presence in the Asia-Pacific region, Intel Corporation has announced the appointment of new executives for its Sales, Marketing, and Communications Group (SMG). This reorganization is part of the company’s ongoing transformation initiatives.
- Hans Chuang has been named the General Manager of SMG for the Asia Pacific and Japan (APJ) region, effective immediately. Based in Taiwan, Hans will oversee Intel’s entire operations in the Asia-Pacific area, driving revenue growth, fostering new opportunities within the local ecosystem, and strengthening relationships with existing partners and customers.



9. Kaushik Rajashekara Honored with International Fellowship by the Engineering Academy of Japan

- Kaushik Rajashekara, a distinguished professor at the University of Houston’s Cullen College of Engineering, has been elected as an International Fellow of the prestigious Engineering Academy of Japan. This honour recognizes his outstanding contributions to the field of power conversion and the electrification of transportation.
- Originally hailing from a small village in Karnataka, India, Professor Rajashekara’s remarkable journey has been marked by numerous achievements and accolades. His election as an International Fellow specifically honours his “outstanding scientific research and scientific-technical developments in the field of energy,” which promote greater efficiency and environmental security for energy sources worldwide.



Foot Note:

About Japan:

Capital: Tokyo

Prime minister: Fumio Kishida

10. ReNew partners with JERA to evaluate joint development of green ammonia project in India


- ReNew Energy Global (ReNew) signed an initial agreement with JERA, Japan's largest power generation company, to jointly evaluate developing a green ammonia production project in India.
- Under the agreement, ReNew, through its subsidiary ReNew E-Fuels, and JERA will jointly evaluate the development of a green ammonia production project in Paradip, Odisha. The project will utilize around 500 megawatts (MW) of high-capacity utilisation factor (CUF) renewable energy to produce green hydrogen, a key feedstock for green ammonia.



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