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Affairs

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NATIONAL NEWS**NITI Aayog launches National Birth Defect Awareness Month 2024**

- “Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana is an aspirational scheme which covers half of India’s health and that can be instrumental in child health too along with existing Rashtriya Bal Swashtya Karyakram.” Speaking on the occasion, Dr Paul lauded Rashtriya Bal Swashtya Karyakram which is proving to be a catalyst in child health.
- This was stated by Dr. V K Paul, Member (Health), NITI Aayog as he launched the National Birth Defect Awareness Month 2024 in the august presence of Shri Apurva Chandra, Secretary, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.

PM Modi launches Multiple development projects worth Rs 7200 crore in Arambagh Hooghly West Bengal

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated and laid the foundation stone for an array of development projects worth Rs 7,200 crore in Arambagh, situated in West Bengal's Hooghly district. The projects span diverse sectors including rail, ports, oil pipeline, LPG supply, and wastewater treatment.
- In his address, PM Modi underscored India's rapid strides in the 21st century and reiterated the nation's commitment to achieving full development by 2047. He emphasized the government's dedication to empowering various segments of society, including youth, women, farmers, and the underprivileged, highlighting the tangible impact of policies in lifting 25 crore people out of poverty.

Ministry of women and child Development Organizes ‘Poshan Utsav: Celebrating Nutrition’ in Delhi

- The Ministry of Women and Child Development organized the Poshan Utsav at The Oberoi on 29th February 2024. The event aimed to promote good nutrition behavior and highlighted India’s ongoing efforts to combat malnutrition by promoting good nutrition practices.
- The event was graced by the Union Minister for Women and Child Development and Minority Affairs, Smt. Smriti Zubin Irani, and Mr. Bill Gates, Co-Chair of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF).

Uttar Pradesh Becomes First State to Issue 5 Crore Ayushman Cards under Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana

- Uttar Pradesh has become as the first state in the country to issue 5 crore cards under the Ayushman Bharat Scheme providing health insurance. The state also maintains the leading position in terms of the highest number of such cards issued compared to other states, it was claimed. Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath emphasised “the importance of ensuring the health and well-being of every individual in Uttar Pradesh”.
- A total of 3,481,252 health claims have been filed under Ayushman Bharat in the state. Out of these, 3,275,737 claims have been settled, achieving a high settlement rate of 92.48%.

Union Minister Mansukh Mandaviya inaugurates Greenfield projects under the PLI Scheme for bulk medications and medical devices

- Union Minister for Chemicals and Fertilizers Dr Mansukh Mandaviya inaugurated the Greenfield Projects under the Production Linked Incentive Scheme-PLI Scheme for Bulk Drugs and Medical Devices at a function in New Delhi.
- Under it, a total of 51 plants were inaugurated out of which 22 are for bulk drugs and 39 are related to the manufacturing of various kinds of medical devices. In these plants, the bulk drugs being produced include Levofloxacin, Ofloxacin, Telmistran, Vitamin B6 and Diclofenac Sodium among others.

Chapchar Kut festival celebrated across Mizoram

- Chapchar Kut, the grandest festival in Mizoram, resonated throughout the state with vibrant traditional customs and jubilant festivities. Thousands of attendees converged upon the Assam Rifles Ground – Lammual – in the heart of Aizawl city, filling it to its capacity. The event featured a rich display of Mizo community traditions and culture, highlighted by traditional songs and captivating cultural dance performances, making it a day-long celebration to remember.
- Mizoram Chief Minister Lalduhoma emphasizes the importance of preserving and promoting Mizo cultural heritage. Addressing a gathering at the Chapchar Kut festival, Lalduhoma highlights the significance of cultural preservation.

Dharmendra Pradhan Launches Project ODISERV For Odisha's Graduates

- Union Minister of Education and Skill Development & Entrepreneurship, Dharmendra Pradhan launched Project ODISERV aimed at preparing young graduates from Odisha for employment opportunities in the financial services sector. Addressing the gathering, Pradhan emphasized that Project ODISERV will empower the nation's youth, enhancing their employability and helping them achieve their career aspirations.

- He highlighted the role of NEP 2020 in bridging the gap between education and skill development, fostering greater synergy and enabling students to acquire both job-ready skills and academic knowledge simultaneously.

India's First Green Hydrogen Plant in Stainless Steel Sector Unveiled by Scindia

- Union Minister for Steel and Civil Aviation, Sh. Jyotiraditya M. Scindia, virtually inaugurated India's 1st Green Hydrogen Plant in Stainless Steel Sector located at Jindal Stainless Limited, Hisar, on 4th March, 2024. The inauguration also witnessed the presence of Secretary, Ministry of Steel Sh. Nagendra Nath Sinha, Managing Director (Jindal Stainless Limited), Sh. Abhyuday Jindal, Founder, Hygenco Sh. Amit Bansal, and other officials of the Ministry of Steel.
- The inauguration of India's inaugural Green Hydrogen Plant by the Union Minister signifies a significant stride towards sustainability, underscoring India's dedication to environmental stewardship and economic advancement.

Telangana Government Announces Launch of Indiramma Housing Scheme

- Telangana CM A Revanth Reddy has announced the commencement of the Indiramma Housing Scheme starting March 11. The scheme aims to provide housing solutions to the economically disadvantaged sections.
- The first phase will witness the approval of 3,500 houses in each Assembly constituency, catering to a significant number of beneficiaries. Chief Minister Reddy emphasized the importance of ensuring that eligible individuals without homes benefit from the scheme.

Himachal Pradesh Chief Minister Sukhvinder Sukhu Introduces Monthly Rs 1,500 Aid for Women Aged 18-60

- Himachal Pradesh (HP) Chief Minister (CM) Sukhvinder Sukhu announced a monthly aid of ₹ 1,500 for women aged 18 to 60 from the next financial year, fulfilling a Congress party 'guarantee' promised before the state Assembly elections.
- The initiative is called the "Indira Gandhi Pyari Behna Sukh Samman Nidhi Yojna," and the state government plans to allocate ₹ 800 crore annually for this scheme. The financial support aims to benefit over 5 lakh women in the specified age group.

India's First Underwater Metro to Be Opened in Kolkata by Prime Minister

- This is the nation's first underwater Metro. As Prime Minister Narendra Modi threw open the underwater Metro link, connecting Kolkata and its twin, Howrah, history was created, with the first Metro zooming along the underwater section.

- The new lines (the PM inaugurated two more, apart from the under-river section) would be thrown open to all in seven to 10 days, said sources. Trains in the newly opened Esplanade-Howrah stretch will run at an interval of 12 minutes or less during rush hours. The East-West Metro, of which 2.5km is still incomplete, will be fully operational by October-end, they added.

Ashwini Vaishnaw to launch NITI Aayog's 'NITI for States' platform

- In a significant development, Union Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw will inaugurate the 'NITI For States' platform by NITI Aayog in New Delhi. This platform, serving as a Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI), is designed to bolster policy formulation and promote good governance across states.
- Offers access to 7,500 best practices, 5,000 policy documents, 900+ datasets, 1,400 data profiles, and 350 NITI publications, covering various sectors and cross-cutting themes. Covers 10 sectors including agriculture, education, energy, health, livelihoods and skilling, manufacturing, MSME, tourism, urban, water resources & WASH, alongside themes of gender and climate change.

Govt amends rules to allow postal ballots for those aged 85 or above

- In a significant development, the Indian government, following consultations with the Election Commission of India (ECI), has revised the minimum age criterion for senior citizens to avail the postal ballot voting facility.
- The decision, which comes into effect immediately, raises the eligibility age from 80 to 85 years, marking a pivotal change in the electoral process aimed at ensuring greater convenience for the nation's elderly population.

Union Minister Arjun Munda Inaugurates Agriculture Integrated Command And Control Center

- Union Minister of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare, Arjun Munda, unveiled the Agriculture Integrated Command and Control Centre at Krishi Bhawan, New Delhi. This initiative aims to empower farmers nationwide by providing them with essential information, services, and facilities.
- The primary goal is to enhance the self-reliance of farmers across the country. Farmers will gain access to real-time data regarding their farms, enabling informed decision-making. The initiative seeks to identify and tackle the genuine challenges within the agriculture sector.

Bengaluru to Get India's First Driverless Metro Train


- The Bengaluru Metro Rail Corporation Limited (BMRCL) has received the first set of six train coaches for its upcoming driverless metro line, called the Yellow Line. This 18.8 km-long line, connecting RV Road and Bommasandra, will be the first in India to have a driverless train system.
- The new metro line will use the Communication-based Train Control (CBTC) system, which is a modern radio communication system that provides timely and accurate train control information. The CBTC system enables Unattended Train Operations (UTO), allowing full automation of tasks like opening and closing of doors, stoppage, and movement of trains.

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Kerala Launches India's First state-Run OTT Platform CSpace

- Kerala has launched the first government-owned OTT platform 'CSpace' with Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan describing it as a decisive step in the onward journey of Malayalam Cinema.
- Inaugurating CSpace, managed by the Kerala State Film Development Corporation (KSFDC), the Chief Minister said this is a pioneering initiative that gives prominence to films with artistic and cultural value without hurting the mainstream film industry.

PM Modi inaugurates Sela Tunnel connecting Assam to Arunachal

- Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the state-of-the-art Sela Tunnel in the northeastern state of Arunachal Pradesh. The tunnel project, flagged off in Itanagar is part of several development projects launched by the Modi government for the northeastern states of India.
- Along with it, he also inaugurated and laid the foundation stone of several development projects worth about Rs 55,600 crore in Manipur, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Sikkim, Tripura, and Arunachal Pradesh.

India's first museum dedicated to cooperatives is coming up in Kozhikode

- Amul, Indian Coffee House, Indian Farmers Fertiliser Cooperative (IFFCO), Kerala Dinesh Beedi: these are brands from diverse sectors with one uniting factor — they are all cooperatives. These and many others will be showcased at the almost-ready 14-storey International Cooperative Museum (ICM) in the heart of Kozhikode, Kerala. It will be a destination to learn about India's cooperative movement that has a history of more than a century.
- There are more than 8 lakh cooperatives in India, with a collective membership of 29 crore. Maharashtra has the maximum number of cooperative societies, at 2.3 lakh, with 5 crore members. The museum will showcase the success and achievements of cooperative movements in India, especially Kerala.

Kerala tops chart of highest passport penetration among women in the country

- In line with the visible shift in the migration pattern from Kerala of late, women from the southern State hold the highest number of passports issued in the country till 2023, followed by Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Punjab, and Gujarat.
- Though Kerala has the highest number of total passport holders in the country with 98.92 lakh (including male and female), Uttar Pradesh has the highest number of male passport holders with 70.58 lakh. The number of female passport holders in Kerala stands at 42.17 lakh.

India is now the second-largest manufacturer of mobile phones worldwide

- At the end of the decade from 2014 to 2024, India has emerged as the world's second-largest producer of mobile phones. This achievement marks a significant transition for the country's electronics manufacturing sector.
- According to the India Cellular and Electronics Association, the mobile phone sector has transformed from being 78 percent import-dependent in 2014 to achieving 97 per cent self-sufficiency by 2024. Only 3 per cent of the total mobile phones sold in India are now imported.

Shri Nitin Gadkari approves Rs. 2281.10 crore for widening and strengthening of National Highways in Tamil Nadu

- Union Minister for Road Transport & Highways, Shri Nitin Gadkari Informed, in Tamil Nadu, a substantial allocation of Rs. 1376.10 crore has been approved for the widening of the existing 2-Lane Paved Shoulder from Tiruvallur to the Tamil Nadu/Andhra Pradesh border section of National Highway-716.

- This transformation to a 4-lane configuration with paved shoulders in Thiruvallur district spans 43.95 Km under Package-1. The development aims to establish a fully access-controlled corridor, integral to a significant route connecting the sacred cities of Tiruthani and Tirupathi.

Uttarakhand Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami Digitally Launches 122 Schemes Across 17 Departments Valued at ₹8275.51 Crore

- Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami 17 Inaugurated and laid the foundation stone of 122 different schemes of departments worth Rs 8275.51 crore through digital medium. This includes inauguration of schemes worth Rs 1048.15 crore of 11 departments and laying of foundation stone of various schemes worth Rs 7227.36 crore of 15 departments.
- On this occasion, the Chief Minister also laid the foundation stone of prepaid meter scheme of Energy Department worth Rs 2027 crore. The Chief Minister also distributed tool kits to the workers registered through the Building and Other Construction Workers Welfare Board. In the programme, the Chief Minister was met by Secretary Energy and MD Pitkul Shri P.C. A dividend cheque of Rs. 5 crore was also presented by Dhami.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi launches 112 National Highway projects for various states starting in Gurugram, Haryana

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated and laid the foundation stone of 112 National Highway projects spread across the country worth about one lakh crore in Gurugram, Haryana.
- The projects inaugurated include the Haryana section of the landmark Dwarka Expressway, three packages of Lucknow Ring Road, the Anandapuram – Pendurthi – Anakapalli section of NH16 in Andhra Pradesh, and the Kiratpur to Nerchowk section of NH-21 in Himachal Pradesh.

Bichom Becomes Arunachal Pradesh's 27th District

- Bichom, carved out of West and East Kameng, has been declared the 27th district of Arunachal Pradesh. Chief Minister Pema Khandu led the inauguration ceremony, marking a significant milestone for the region.
- Chief Minister Pema Khandu inaugurated Bichom district and laid the foundation stone for its headquarters at Napangphung. In February, the state assembly passed the Arunachal

Pradesh (Re-Organisation of Districts) (Amendment) Bill, 2024, facilitating the creation of Bichom and Keyi Panyor districts.

PM Modi Unveils Bronze Statue of Ahom General Lachit Borphukan in Assam's Jorhat

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi unveiled a 125-foot bronze statue of Ahom general Lachit Borphukan at his burial site in eastern Assam's Jorhat district. It was unveiled at the Lachit Borphukan Maidam Development Project at Hollongapar, an area spread over 16.5 acres, which is being developed as a tourist spot. The total project cost will be Rs 214 crore.
- Lachit Borphukan was a legendary army commander of the Ahom kingdom (1228-1826), known for his leadership in the 1671 'Battle of Saraighat'. He defeated the Mughal forces, led by Raja Ramsingh-I, in this battle, and thwarted a drawn-out attempt by them to take back Assam.

J&K Police launches "Operation Kamdhenu" to Combat Cattle Smuggling

- In Jammu and Kashmir, the police have initiated "Operation Kamdhenu" to curb the rampant issue of cattle smuggling in the Jammu, Samba, and Kathua (JSK) police ranges. This crackdown aims to tackle not only the immediate smuggling activities but also to target the masterminds behind these illicit operations.
- Under Operation Kamdhenu, a comprehensive strategy has been devised to scrutinize the activities of cattle smugglers. The focus is not just on apprehending the immediate perpetrators but also on identifying and registering the names of the main conspirators in the FIR (First Information Report).

PM inaugurates Kochrab Ashram in Sabarmati, Gujarat

- The Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi visited Sabarmati Ashram and inaugurated Kochrab Ashram and launched the Master plan of Gandhi Ashram Memorial. The Prime Minister paid floral tributes to Mahatma Gandhi's statue and visited Hriday Kunj. He also took a walkthrough of the exhibition and planted a sapling.
- Addressing the occasion, the Prime Minister said that the Sabarmati Ashram has always been a vibrant center of incomparable energy and we feel the inspiration of Bapu in ourselves. The Prime Minister recounted Gandhi Ji's time in the Kochrab Ashram where Gandhiji stayed before shifting to Sabarmati.

WCD Ministry introduces national curriculum for early childhood care and education

- The Ministry of Women and Child Development unveiled a national curriculum for three-to six-year-old children. They also implemented a national framework for early childhood stimulation for children aged birth to three years.
- Recognising that 85 percent of brain development occurs before the age of six, the Ministry emphasises the importance of a child's early years.

Assam cabinet decides to de-notify Pobitora Wildlife Sanctuary

- A day after Prime Minister Narendra Modi undertook a safari at the Kaziranga National Park, the Assam Cabinet on March 10 decided to de-notify another prime one-horned rhino habitat – the Pobitora Wildlife Sanctuary about 48km east of Guwahati.
- Environment activists said the decision, taken 26 years after the Assam Forest Department notified Pobitora as a wildlife sanctuary on March 17, 1998, is the first of its kind for any protected area in the country.

Maharashtra to become first state to buy land in Kashmir

- Maharashtra is set to buy land in Jammu and Kashmir to build a facility for tourists and officials, becoming the first state to do so. The facility, Maharashtra Bhawan, will be located in Budgam, near Srinagar. The Maharashtra cabinet approved the land purchase, which is 2.5 acres near Srinagar airport, for Rs 8.16 crore.
- The Jammu and Kashmir government has green-lighted the land transfer to the Maharashtra state government, contingent upon a payment of Rs 8.16 crore.

Maharashtra Cabinet Approves Renaming Ahmednagar District as Ahilya Nagar

- The proposal to rename Ahmednagar as Ahilya Nagar was first announced by Maharashtra chief minister Eknath Shinde in May last year. The decision was announced amid other announcements including the Cabinet's decision to rename seven railway stations in Mumbai which were earlier given British era names.
- The proposal to rename the city was first announced by Maharashtra chief minister Eknath Shinde in May last year on the 298th birth anniversary of the 18th-century queen Ahilyabai Holkar. The event was attended by Maharashtra deputy chief minister Devendra Fadnavis, Maharashtra minister Radhakrishna Vikhe Patil and BJP MLA Gopichand Padalkar among others.

Pandavula Gutta designated exclusive Geo-heritage site in Telangana

- Pandavula Gutta, a geological marvel older than the Himalayan hills, has been officially recognised as the sole Geo-heritage site in Telangana. This declaration was made by

Bhavesh Mishra, District Collector. In commemoration of the ongoing Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav, the Geological Survey of India (GSI), Telangana State Unit, Southern Region, organized a Geo-heritage walk at Pandavula Gutta on March 12. This event aimed to raise awareness about the region's rich geological heritage, blending education, culture, and nature conservation.

- Marking the celebration of Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav, the Geological Survey of India (GSI), Telangana, Southern Region, organised a Geoheritage Walk at Pandavula Gutta, the sole geoheritage site recognised by the Government of India in the state.

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Union Minister Amit Shah Launches National Investigation Agency's Digital CCMS

- In a major fillip to India's fight against terrorism and organised crime, Union Home Minister Amit Shah virtually inaugurated a unique digital Criminal Case Management System (CCMS), designed by the National Investigation Agency (NIA) in New Delhi, March 14. In the virtual event, Home Minister Shah also inaugurated NIA's 2 new branch offices in Jammu and Kochi and a residential complex in Raipur.
- Mr. Shah also launched a mobile app 'Sankalan' – A compendium of New Criminal Laws by the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB). The newly developed Criminal Case Management System will enable the NIA personnel to better coordinate in terrorism and organised crime cases, thereby improving justice delivery.

Rajasthan Government to Distribute Free Millet Seeds to Farmers

- The Rajasthan government has decided to distribute free seeds of millets and coarse grains to the state's farmers. This move aims to boost millet production in the state.
- The state government started the Rajasthan Millet Promotion Mission in 2022-23. A provision of Rs 40 crore was made to set up 100 primary processing units by farmers, entrepreneurs, and voluntary organisations.

Tamil Nadu Tops Illegal Trade in Shark Body Parts

- Tamil Nadu dominates the illegal trade in shark body parts, comprising nearly 65% of seizures between January 2010 and December 2022, as per a recent analysis by TRAFFIC and WWF-India. This alarming trend poses a significant threat to marine biodiversity, with Karnataka, Gujarat, Kerala, and Maharashtra also contributing to this illicit trade.
- TRAFFIC and WWF-India conducted a comprehensive study titled 'Netted in illegal wildlife trade: Sharks of India'. The confiscated shark products were intended for destinations such as Singapore, Hong Kong, Sri Lanka, and mainland China.

Election Commission Launches 'Mission 414' Campaign In Himachal Pradesh To Boost Voter Turnout

- The Election Commission has launched a special campaign in Himachal Pradesh to boost voter turnout in 414 polling stations with less than 60% voting during the last Lok Sabha polls. Appointing 'Mahila Preraks' (motivators) in gram panchayats to encourage women to vote.
- Conducting awareness campaigns and cultural events. Designating identified stations as model polling stations. Involving booth youth icons and distributing special invitation cards to prospective voters.

Election Commission Launches 'Know Your Candidate'

- Ahead of announcing the dates for the upcoming Lok Sabha elections, Chief Election Commissioner Rajiv Kumar introduced a new mobile application called 'Know Your Candidate' (KYC). This app will enable voters to find out if any electoral candidate in their constituency has any criminal records.
- Kumar said that voters have the right to know about the criminal records of candidates from their constituencies, as well as their assets and liabilities. "The voters can also now check for themselves the assets and liabilities that candidates with criminal antecedents hold. All relevant information in this regard will be made available on this application," he added.

PM Modi Inaugurates State-of-the-Art Medical Facility in Thimphu

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his Bhutanese counterpart Tshering Tobgay jointly inaugurated a modern hospital in the Bhutanese capital, Thimphu. The Gyaltsuen Jetsun Pema Wangchuk Mother and Child Hospital is a shining example of the strong development cooperation between India and Bhutan.

- The hospital is a state-of-the-art 150-bedded facility that has been built with Indian assistance. The construction was carried out in two phases, with the first phase costing ₹ 22 crore and becoming operational in 2019. The second phase, completed recently, was undertaken as part of Bhutan's 12th Five Year Plan at a cost of ₹ 119 crore.

ASI Begins Excavation in Madhya Pradesh To Find India's Oldest Temple

- The Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) is conducting excavations at two mounds in Nachne village, located in the Panna district of Madhya Pradesh. The goal of these excavations is to uncover what could potentially be the oldest temple in India.
- The excavation sites are situated just 30 meters away from two ancient temples – a Gupta-era Parvati temple and the Chaumukh Nath temple built by the Kalachuri dynasty. These temples, known as the Nachna Hindu temples, are among the earliest surviving stone temples in central India, alongside those found in Bhumara and Deogarh.

Allahabad High Court Strikes Down Madrasa Education Act

- The Allahabad High Court's Lucknow bench has declared the UP Board of Madarsa Education Act of 2004 as unconstitutional. The court ruled that the act violated the principle of secularism, as well as several articles of the Constitution, including Articles 14, 21, and 21-A. Additionally, the court found that the act also contravened Section 22 of the University Grants Commission Act of 1956.
- The court has directed the Uttar Pradesh government to provide regular school education to students enrolled in madarasas (Islamic seminaries). The ruling states that these students should be accommodated in primary, high school, and intermediate education boards of the state.

Gujarat State Education Minister Launches Shiksha Reform

- Gujarat's Minister of State for Education, Praful Pansheriya, launched the online learning platform Shiksha Reform in Surat. The event was attended by noted educationist Deepak Rajguru, trustees, principals, Kimmo Nikkanen from Finland's Kajaani University of Applied Sciences, and educationist Antti Isovita.
- Shiksha Reform is a collaborative effort with Microsoft and a leading Finnish university. It aims to deliver high-quality courses by experienced and highly qualified teachers to revolutionize education, particularly in technology.

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

9th SHAKTI International Women Entrepreneurs Summit

- Union Minister for MSME Shri Narayan Rane said in the last 10 years, under the transformative leadership of the respected Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi better policies as well as a better environment were created to promote women entrepreneurship, as a result of which there has been an unprecedented increase in the number of women entrepreneurs in India.
- Addressing the 9th Annual Shakti International Women Entrepreneurs Summit held in New Delhi today he said we are extremely proud to say that there has been an unprecedented increase in the number of women entrepreneurs in the MSME sector also. Shri Rane said today more than 1.40 crore MSMEs are led by women. The Union Minister said Zed Certification of women owned MSMEs is now completely free.

World Sustainable Energy Days celebrated from 5th March to 8th March

- The Commission adopted the communication ‘Stepping up Europe’s 2030 climate ambition – Investing in a climate-neutral future for the benefit of our people on the same day. It hosts events centred on sustainable energy production and use, which cover energy efficiency and renewable energy sources for buildings, industry, and transport.
- In her 2020 State of the Union address, President of the European Commission Ursula von den Leyen proposed the emissions reduction target be set at 55%, alongside a revision of the EU’s climate and energy legislation.

Australia’s Great Barrier Reef in grip of ‘mass bleaching event’

- A "mass bleaching event" is unfolding on Australia's famed Great Barrier Reef, as warming seas threaten the spectacular home to thousands of marine species. Often dubbed the world's largest living structure, the Great Barrier Reef is a 2,300 kilometre (1,400 mile) expanse of tropical corals that house a stunning array of biodiversity.
- But repeated mass bleaching events have threatened to rob the tourist drawcard of its wonder, turning banks of once-vibrant corals into a sickly shade of white.

India inks pact with EFTA, gets \$100 billion Commitment

- India and the four-nation European bloc EFTA signed a free trade agreement under which New Delhi has received an investment commitment of USD 100 billion over the next 15 years to facilitate the creation of one million jobs.

- The agreement was signed after a gap of almost 16 years as negotiations, started in 2008, but were put on hold in November 2013. Talks resumed in October 2016, and after 21 rounds of negotiations were held before its conclusion.

CAA implemented in India ahead of Lok Sabha elections

- The CAA rules aim to confer Indian citizenship to persecuted non-Muslim migrants - including Hindus, Sikhs, Jains, Buddhists, Parsis, and Christians - who migrated from Bangladesh, Pakistan, and Afghanistan and arrived in India before 2014. Applications have to be submitted online through a newly formed portal with citizenship hopefuls declaring the year in which they entered India without travel documents.
- The Centre implemented the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA), five years after it was passed in Parliament. The notification comes ahead of the announcement of dates for the Lok Sabha elections by the Election Commission of India.

World Telecommunication standardization assembly to be held in Delhi

- India is set to host the prestigious World Telecommunication Standardisation Assembly (WTSA) in 2024, marking a significant step towards the advancements of 5G and 6G networks. Union Communication & IT Minister, Ashwini Vaishnaw, made this announcement at the India Mobile Congress 2023, emphasizing the country's growing importance in the global technology landscape.
- The World Telecommunication Standardisation Assembly (WTSA) is a quadrennial event and serves as the governing conference of the ITU Standardisation Sector (ITU-T). It is one of the three world conferences organized by the International Telecommunication Union, an entity within the United Nations system.

Numaligarh Refinery Opens First Overseas Office in Bangladesh

- India's Numaligarh Refinery Limited (NRL) opens its first overseas office in Dhaka, Bangladesh, signaling its commitment to international expansion and stronger regional ties. High Commissioner of India to Bangladesh, Pranay Verma, inaugurates NRL's liaison office in the presence of NRL managing director Bhaskar Jyoti Phukan and other dignitaries.
- Jointly inaugurated by Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Bangladesh Premier Sheikh Hasina in March 2023. Designed to supply petroleum products to Bangladesh, with a capacity of 1 MMTPA of high-speed diesel. Bangladesh portion of the pipeline constructed at an estimated cost exceeding Rs 285 crore, funded by an Indian government grant.

UK tests a laser weapon that can hit a coin from a kilometer

- Britain has recently conducted successful test firings of its DragonFire Laser Directed Energy Weapon (LDEW), showcasing its capability to intercept enemy aircraft and missiles at a remarkably low cost. A January demonstration in Scotland displayed the laser's precision in targeting and destroying aerial threats, marking a potential game-changer in air defense technology.
- The DragonFire LDEW boasts precision equivalent to hitting a target as small as a £1 coin from a kilometer away. Its effectiveness lies in its ability to cut through targets, potentially causing structural failure or disrupting incoming warheads, making it a formidable defensive asset.

Reliance signs partnership with Sri Lanka-based beverage maker Elephant House

- Reliance Industries Ltd's Reliance Consumer Products has partnered with Sri Lanka's Elephant House to make and sell beverages under the Elephant House brand in India. This will add to the portfolio of beverage brands under Reliance Consumer including Campa Cola, Sosyo and Raskik.
- Elephant House is owned by Ceylon Cold Stores PLC, a subsidiary of John Keells Holdings, Sri Lanka's largest listed conglomerate. Under the Elephant House brand, it manufactures and sells a wide range of beverages including Necto, Cream Soda, EGB (Ginger Beer), Orange Barley and Lemonade.

Pokhara Set to be Designated as Nepal's Tourism Capital

- The government of Nepal officially declared Pokhara, located in the Gandaki province, as the tourism capital of the country. Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda' presided over the ceremony, which featured musical performances by renowned singers.
- The declaration, made during a ceremony at Barahighat near the picturesque Phewa Lake, marks a significant step for the city and the country's tourism industry.

India commits to increase support to Bhutan in its 13th Five Year Plan

- India is committed to increase support for Bhutan's 13th Five Year Plan and will also consider the request to assist in its 'economic stimulus programme, according to the joint statement by both nations on the visit of Bhutanese Prime Minister Dasho Tshering Tobgay to India.
- Modi congratulated Bhutan for the successful implementation of the 12th Five Year Plan (FYP), notwithstanding challenges posed by the Covid-19 pandemic, as well as for Bhutan's graduation from the Least Developed Countries in December 2023.

Air quality report, Bihar's Begusarai is the world's most polluted city

- India ranked third worst polluted country out of 134 countries trailing behind Bangladesh and Pakistan, as highlighted in World Air Quality Report 2023. India ranked third worst out of 134 countries in terms of average annual PM2.5 concentration, trailing behind Bangladesh and Pakistan, as highlighted in this 6th Annual World Air Quality Report, which unveils concerning insights into the world's most polluted countries, territories, and regions.
- Bihar's Begusarai topped the list as the “most polluted metropolitan area in 2023”, while Delhi has been identified as the capital city with the “poorest air quality” among global nations, as per the findings of the World Air Quality Report 2023 by the Swiss organization IQAir.

U.S. recognizes Arunachal Pradesh as Indian territory

- The United States recognises Arunachal Pradesh as Indian territory and strongly opposes any unilateral attempts by China to advance its territorial claims across the Line of Actual Control (LAC), a senior Biden administration official has said, days after the Chinese military reiterated its claim over the State following Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit there.
- Amid China's protest over Prime Minister Narendra Modi's recent visit to the frontier state of Arunachal Pradesh to inaugurate the strategic Sela Tunnel, and the subsequent reiteration of its claim to the region, the United States clarified that it recognises the state as part of the Indian territory.

6 new sites of Madhya Pradesh have been included in the temporary list of UNESCO World Heritage Sites in March 2024

- Madhya Pradesh an offbeat destination of first choice is poised to get global recognition and tourism boost with UNESCO including six destinations of Madhya Pradesh in its tentative world heritage list. These are Gwalior Fort, the Historical Group of Dhanmar, Bhojeshwar, Mahadev temple of Bhojpur, Rock Art sites of Chambal valley, Khooni Bhandara of Buhranpur & Gond Memorial of Mandla.
- This is in addition to the 3 UNESCO World Heritage sites in the permanent list. These include The Khajuraho Group of Monuments (1986), Buddhist Monuments of Sanchi (1989), and The Rock Shelters of Bhimbetka (2003) which are major attractions especially for international tourists.

Iconic Indian Brand Amul Launches Fresh Milk in the US

- In a significant move, the Gujarat Cooperative Milk Marketing Federation (GCMMF), the organization behind the iconic Amul brand, is set to launch its fresh milk products in the United States for the first time. This expansion marks a major milestone for the brand, as it aims to cater to the Indian diaspora and Asian population in the US.
- Within a week, GCMMF will introduce four variants of fresh milk in the US market. The milk collection and processing will be handled by MMPA, while GCMMF will be responsible for the marketing and branding of Amul fresh milk.

Mumbai overtakes Beijing to become Asia's billionaire capital for the first time

- Mumbai has pipped Beijing to become Asia's billionaire capital for the first time. Indian billionaires' cumulative wealth reached US\$1 trillion, surpassing China's average wealth per billionaire (US\$3.2 billion vs US\$3.8 billion), according to the 2024 Hurun Global Rich List.
- This phenomenal rise is mirrored by India's addition of 94 new billionaires in a single year, surpassing China's 55 and solidifying India's position as the second-largest contributor to the global billionaire population.

ICG Ship Samudra Paheredar Reaches Manila Bay, Philippines

- In a significant move aimed at showcasing India's commitment to maritime cooperation and environmental stewardship, the Indian Coast Guard ship 'Samudra Paheredar' has docked at Manila Bay, Philippines, on a three-day visit.
- The arrival of this specialized Pollution Control Vessel marks a pivotal moment in India's engagement with ASEAN countries, emphasizing shared concerns regarding marine pollution and bolstering bilateral ties with the Philippine Coast Guard (PCG).

NEW APPOINTMENT NEWS

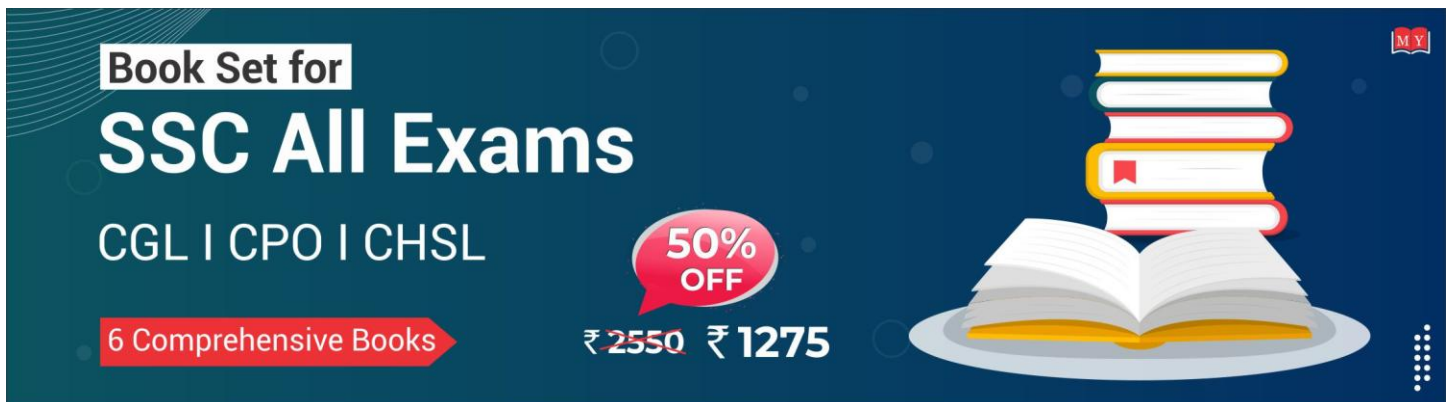
IPS officer Daljit Singh Chawdhary appointed as new director General of NSG

- Daljit Singh Chaudhary, a 1990 batch IPS officer, has been appointed as the Director General (DG) of the National Security Guard (NSG), marking a significant development in India's security apparatus. Chaudhary, currently serving as the DG of Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB), will now shoulder the additional responsibility of leading the NSG, commonly referred to as the "black cats".

- The NSG operates under federal jurisdiction, specializing in counter-terrorism and anti-hijacking operations. Trained rigorously to handle high-risk situations, the NSG is deployed selectively for extraordinary circumstances sanctioned by the government.

Brajesh Mehrotra appointed as new Chief Secretary of Bihar

- The Bihar government made a significant announcement, appointing senior IAS officer Brajesh Mehrotra as the new chief secretary of the state. This appointment underscores the government's commitment to efficient governance and administrative excellence.
- Brajesh Mehrotra, a seasoned bureaucrat from the 1989 batch, brings a wealth of experience to his new role. Currently serving as the additional chief secretary of revenue and land reforms, with additional responsibilities in general administration and parliamentary affairs, Mehrotra's illustrious career is marked by dedication and competence.




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Simon Harris has become the youngest Prime Minister of Ireland

- Simon Harris is set to become Ireland's youngest prime minister after he was appointed as the new leader of the governing Fine Gael party. Harris, 37, the higher education minister, was the only candidate when nominations closed at 1pm on Sunday, but he will not become taoiseach until 9 April when the Irish parliament, the Dáil, resumes after its Easter break.
- He outlined his leadership priorities on Sunday at a selection convention in Athlone, County Westmeath, to choose party candidates for the European parliament elections in June.8.Girija Subramaniam has been elected CMD of new India Assurance Company

Govind Dholakia was appointed the new chairman of Surat Diamond Bourse

- Diamond Baron Govind Dholakia has been appointed as the new chairman of Surat Diamond Bourse (SDB) --- India's second diamond trading hub that was inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, three months ago.The move to appoint a new head of SDB was necessitated after Vallabh Lakhani stepped down from the post earlier this week.

- When asked the reason for Lakhani to step down three months after the inauguration of SDB, a committee member told businessline, “Vallabh Lakhani had earlier indicated that he will hand hold the project only till its completion and handover. He had expressed his inability to continue taking responsibility”.

Abhay Thakur appointed as India's next ambassador to Myanmar

- Senior Indian diplomat Abhay Thakur has been appointed as the country's next ambassador or top envoy to Myanmar. This was announced by the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) on March 26. Abhay Thakur is a 1992-batch officer of the Indian Foreign Service (IFS). He is currently working as an Officer on Special Duty in the Ministry of External Affairs.
- Thakur's appointment as India's envoy to Myanmar comes at a crucial juncture or important time. Myanmar has been witnessing widespread violent protests demanding the restoration of democracy since the military seized power in a coup on February 1, 2021.

Hansha Mishra Appointed as Director in UPSC

- Hansha Mishra, an officer of the Indian Audit and Accounts Service (IA&AS) from the 2010 batch, has been appointed as Director in the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC), Delhi. Her appointment comes after she was recommended for central deputation by the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) of India.
- According to an order issued by the Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT) on 21.03.2024, the central government has approved Mishra's appointment to the post under the central staffing scheme. Her tenure as Director in the UPSC will be for a period of five years or until further orders, whichever is earlier.

Neeraj Chopra Named Eveready's new Brand Ambassador

- Eveready Industries India (EIL), a leading battery brand, has announced a partnership with Neeraj Chopra, the reigning Olympic gold medalist and World no. 1 in men's javelin throw, as its new brand ambassador.
- Through this collaboration, Eveready aims to strengthen its commitment to excellence and innovation by launching the new Ultima Alkaline battery series. The brand hopes to enhance its connection with the youth by offering long-lasting and value-for-money solutions for high-drain devices used by the new-age generation in India.

Bassirou Diomaye Faye Named as Senegal's next President

- Bassirou Diomaye Faye, a previously little-known tax inspector freed from jail two weeks ago, looks likely to become Senegal's next president after a vote that observers say is proof of the country's democratic resilience.
- While the electoral commission is expected to announce final results in the coming days, early tallies showed Faye winning an outright majority in election. His main rival, ruling party candidate Amadou Ba, conceded defeat late. And outgoing President Macky Sall congratulated the 44-year-old on the results.

Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas appointed Mohammad Mustafa to be the next New Prime Minister

- Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas is slated in the coming days to announce his appointment of economist and former senior government official Mohammad Mustafa as the next prime minister of the PA, three officials familiar with the matter told The Times of Israel.
- The move is part of an effort by Abbas to reform the PA, creating a technocratic government in the West Bank, which will be better prepared to eventually return to governing Gaza as well after Israel's war against Hamas concludes.

Former IAS Officer Navneet kumar Sehgal takes charge as new prasar Bharati chairman

- Retired Indian Administrative Service (IAS) officer Navneet Kumar Sehgal has been appointed as Chairman of Prasar Bharati for three years or until he attains the age of 70, whichever is earlier. He takes over the charge from Surya Prakash.
- Former IAS officer Navneet Kumar Sehgal today took charge as new Prasar Bharati Chairman. Mr. Sehgal is a 1988-batch retired bureaucrat of UP cadre. He is the successor of A Surya Prakash who completed his term as Chairman in 2020. Earlier President Droupadi Murmu appointed him after the Selection Committee for Chairman of Prasar Bharati headed by Vice-President Jagdeep Dhankhar cleared his name.

Government Names Sheyphali B Sharan as New Spokesperson Effective April 2024

- According to an order issued by the ministry of information and broadcasting, the government has appointed a 1990-batch Indian Information Service (IIS) officer, Sheyphali B Sharan as its new spokesperson.
- Sharan, will take charge as principal director general (PDG) of the Press Information Bureau (PIB) after incumbent PDG Manish Desai's tenure ends on 31 March, 2024.

Poonawalla Fincorp Appoints Arvind Kapil as MD & CEO

- Poonawalla Fincorp, a notable NBFC, has chosen Arvind Kapil, a seasoned retail banking expert from HDFC Bank, as its new Managing Director & Chief Executive Officer. Kapil will commence his five-year term on June 24, 2024, succeeding Abhay Bhutada, who opted for early retirement.
- Kapil currently serves as HDFC Bank's Group Head, managing the mortgage banking division with a substantial book size of 7.5 lakh crore. With his extensive experience and expertise, Kapil is set to lead Poonawalla Fincorp into its next phase of growth and development.

Vinay Kumar Appointed as next Ambassador of India to Russia

- Vinay Kumar, an Indian Foreign Service (IFS) officer of the 1992 batch, has been named as the next Ambassador of India to Russia. Kumar is currently serving as the Ambassador of India to Myanmar. The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said in a statement that Kumar is expected to take up the new assignment in Moscow shortly.
- Russia has been a longstanding partner of India, with diplomatic ties between the two countries forming a cornerstone of India's foreign policy. Kumar will replace Pavan Kapoor, who has been appointed as the new Secretary (West) in the MEA, as India's envoy in Moscow.

Jharkhand Governor CP Radhakrishnan has been given additional responsibilities of Telangana, Puducherry

- Jharkhand Governor CP Radhakrishnan has been given the additional responsibility as the in-charge governor of Telangana. This comes after Tamilisai Soundararajan resigned from her constitutional post as the Telangana Governor.
- A communique from Rashtrapati Bhavan stated that Tamilisai's resignation was accepted with immediate effect, and Radhakrishnan was appointed to take additional charge of Telangana. Radhakrishnan is the third person from Tamil Nadu to occupy the post of governor in Telangana for a consecutive term. The first was ESL Narasimhan, followed by Tamilisai Soundararajan.

Rahul Singh Appointed New CBSE Chief

- Senior bureaucrat Rahul Singh has been appointed as the chairperson of the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE), as part of a senior-level bureaucratic reshuffle effected by the Centre. Rahul Singh will succeed Nidhi Chhibber, who has been named Advisor in the Niti Aayog.

- The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC) has approved the appointment of Singh, a 1996-batch Indian Administrative Service (IAS) officer of Bihar cadre, as chairperson, CBSE.

M V Rao Elected as new Chairman of India banks Association

- The Indian Banks' Association (IBA) has elected M V Rao, Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of the Central Bank of India, as its new Chairman. The decision was taken during the IBA's managing committee meeting held.
- Madhav Nair, who previously held the position of Deputy Chairman, has been a management committee member since 2016. He has undertaken policy advocacy in areas such as Technology, Risk Management, and Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) factors.

Soumendu Bagchi, Abhilasha Joshi Appointed India's Next Envoys To Iraq, Chile Respectively

- The Government of India has named two distinguished diplomats as its new Ambassadors to key countries, further strengthening India's diplomatic ties on the global stage. Soumendu Bagchi, Indian Foreign Service (IFS) officer of batch 1993, has been appointed as India's next ambassador to Iraq.
- Bagchi is currently the Deputy Director General, of the Indian Council of World Affairs (ICWA). Meanwhile, Abhilasha Joshi, Indian Foreign Service officer of batch 1995, has been appointed as the next envoy of India to Chile. Presently, Joshi is an additional secretary in the Ministry of External Affairs.

Pakistan gets first sikh minister in Punjab province

- Sardar Ramesh Singh Arora, an influential minority leader, has been sworn in as a provincial minister, making him the first Sikh to occupy a ministerial position in post-partition Punjab. Mr. Arora, 49, was recently elected Pardhan (president) of the Pakistan Gurdwara Parbhandhak Committee and also as the ambassador to the Kartarpur Corridor.
- Belonging to the former prime minister Nawaz Sharif-led Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) party, Mr. Arora has returned to the Lahore provincial assembly for the third term after winning the February 8 polls.

Rajendra Prasad goyal Assumes Additional charge As Chairman and MD of NHPC Limited

- Rajendra Prasad Goyal, Director (Finance) of NHPC, has recently assumed the additional charge of Chairman and Managing Director of NHPC Limited, a premier hydropower company in India and a Schedule 'A' enterprise under the Government of India. This transition marks a significant moment in the company's leadership, bringing Goyal's extensive experience and expertise to the forefront.
- Goyal's journey within NHPC commenced on November 18th, 1988, as a Finance Professional. Over the years, he has showcased remarkable growth, driven by a profound sense of responsibility, ethical conduct, and unwavering dedication to the company's goals.

Arun Goel quits as Election Commissioner ahead of polls

- The resignation of Election Commissioner Arun Goel has sparked buzz in political circles, just days before the announcement of the schedule for the 2024 Lok Sabha elections.
- Speculations have emerged regarding the reasons behind his resignation, with the Congress and other opposition parties questioning whether it was due to differences with the Chief Election Commissioner or the Modi government.

BJP's Nayab Singh Saini is Haryana's new chief minister

- Haryana State BJP president and MP, Nayab Singh Saini, was sworn in as the new Chief Minister of Haryana after Manohar Lal and his Council of Ministers resigned as the strained ruling coalition of the BJP and the Jannayak Janta Party (JJP) broke apart, amid differences over seat-sharing for the general election.
- The other MLAs who have taken oath in the new Cabinet include Kanwar Pal Gujjar, Jai Parkash Dalal, Moolchand Sharma, and Banwari Lal. One Independent MLA Ranjit Singh was also administered oath by Governor Bandaru Dattatreya.

Justice Satyendra kumar singh sworn in as new Lokayukta of Madhya Pradesh

- Justice Satyendra Kumar Singh was appointed as the new Lokayukta (anti-corruption ombudsman) of Madhya Pradesh. He took the oath of office, with the ceremony being administered by Governor Mangubhai Patel at Raj Bhavan.
- The appointment of Justice Singh as the new Lokayukta has faced criticism from the opposition Congress party, which has termed the appointment as "unconstitutional." Umang Singhar, the Leader of Opposition in the MP Assembly, has written to Chief Minister Mohan Yadav, accusing the state government of making the appointment without following the constitutional process.

Surendra Singh yadav is appointed new Chandigarh DGP

- The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) appointed 1997-batch IPS officer Surendra Singh Yadav as the Director General of Police (DGP) of Chandigarh Police, thereby revoking its earlier order on February 9 that appointed 1995-batch Madhup Kumar Tiwari as the DGP.
- “In modification of MHA’s order of the same number dated February 9, Surendra Singh Yadav is hereby transferred from Delhi and posted as DGP, Chandigarh. Additionally, the transfer/ posting of Madhup Kumar Tiwari is hereby cancelled with immediate effect and until further orders,” the revised order stated.

Sukhbir Sandhu & Gyanesh kumar appointed election commissioners

- The newly-appointed Election Commissioners Gyanesh Kumar and Sukhbir Singh Sandhu took charge of the office . They were appointed election commissioners by the selection panel chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.
- The two vacancies were created in the Election Commission after the retirement of Anup Chandra Pandey in February and the surprise resignation of Arun Goel recently, days ahead of Lok Sabha polls 2024.

BANKING NEWS

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman Leads Review Meeting on National Bank for Financing Infrastructure and Development (NaBFID) Performance in New Delhi

- Union Minister for Finance and Corporate Affairs Nirmala Sitharaman chaired the meeting to review the performance of the National Bank for Financing Infrastructure and Development (NaBFID) in New Delhi.
- To date, NaBFID has made total sanctions of more than ₹ 86,804 crore, with projects spread across the country and in diversified sub-sectors of infrastructure, such as Roads, Renewable Power, Ports, Railways, Water and Sanitation, City Gas Distribution, etc.

Major Financial Institutions Mandated to Disclose Climate Change Risk Management Frameworks by Fiscal Year 2026

- Banks and large finance companies are mandated to disclose their governance, strategy, and risk management structures to address climate change risks by Fiscal Year 2026 (FY26).
- The central bank has released a draft disclosure framework titled “Disclosure Framework on Climate-related Financial Risks, 2024.” This framework provides guidelines for disclosing climate-related financial risks and includes definitions for key terms.

State Bank of India Achieves Landmark of 500 Million Customers

- The State Bank of India (SBI), India's largest public sector lender, announced that it has crossed the significant milestone of having over 50 crore customers, marking a monumental achievement for the bank.
- SBI made the announcement via its social media channels, highlighting the milestone and the significance it holds for the bank. Chairman's Acknowledgment: Upon reaching this milestone, Dinesh Khara, the Chairman of SBI, expressed gratitude to the bank's customers for their trust and support.

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Reserve Bank of India Announces National Electronic Funds Transfer Achieves New Record of 4.10 Crore Daily Transactions

- The National Electronic Funds Transfer (NEFT) has recorded its highest ever single-day transactions with the payment system processing 4.10 crore transactions on that day. NEFT settles retail payments, whereas RTGS handles wholesale transactions.
- NEFT has been operational 24/7, 365 days a year since December 16, 2019, while RTGS followed suit from December 14, 2020. Both NEFT and RTGS systems are managed by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI).

RBI issues warning against Juice Jacking

- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has issued a cautionary message to mobile phone users advising them against charging their devices using public ports. The warning comes amidst growing concerns over the security risks posed by a cyberattack known as “juice jacking.”
- Juice jacking is a form of cyberattack where hackers tamper with public USB charging ports, infecting them with malware or making hardware changes that allow them to steal data from devices connected to them. This type of attack has been a growing concern, with incidents reported in various public spaces such as airports, hotels, and shopping centres.

Amit Shah launches umbrella body for urban co-op banks

- Union Home Minister and Minister of Cooperation, Shri Amit Shah inaugurated the umbrella organization for Urban Cooperative Banks (UCBs), the National Urban Cooperative Finance and Development Corporation Limited (NUCFDC), in New Delhi.
- The umbrella organization will provide various facilities to small banks, facilitate dialogue between banks and regulators, and work on improving communication.

RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das Declares India's Share of Global Digital Payments Volume at 46%

- During the Digital Payments Awareness Week on March 4, 2024, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) Governor Shaktikanta Das revealed that digital transactions in India have experienced a remarkable 90-fold increase over 12 years.
- Retail digital payments in India surged from 162 crore transactions in the financial year 2012-13 to over 14,726 crore transactions in 2023-24 (till February 2024). India accounts for nearly 46% of the world's digital transactions, based on 2022 data.

Flipkart Partners with Axis Bank to Introduce UPI Handle, Aiming to Compete with Third-Party Apps

- E-commerce platform Flipkart has ventured into the digital payments sector by launching its own unified payments interface (UPI) handle, @fkaxis, in collaboration with Axis Bank.
- Alongside the UPI handle, Flipkart introduced the initiative 'India's Most Rewarding UPI,' aimed at providing unique and rewarding UPI experiences for users. Availability and Registration: Currently accessible to Android users through the Flipkart app, the UPI handle allows users to register for a new UPI ID for seamless fund transfers and in-app payments.

Reserve Bank of India Prohibits JM Financial from Offering Financing Secured by Shares and Debentures

- The Reserve Bank of India has barred JM Financial Products from doing any form of financing against shares and debentures after it found 'serious deficiencies' that are detrimental to the interest of the customers, during a review of its books.
- The action taken by the RBI is based on information provided by the Securities & Exchange Board of India (SEBI), the market regulator, indicating that JMFPL has contravened regulatory norms.

Former Life Insurance Corporation Chief MR Kumar Appointed as Non-Executive Chairman of Bank of India

- Bank of India (BoI) has announced the appointment of MR Kumar, former chairman of Life Insurance Corporation (LIC), as its non-executive chairman. Alongside MR Kumar's appointment, Bank of India also announced the appointment of Rajiv Mishra as an executive director.
- Apart from serving as the chairman of LIC, he also served as a director on the boards of Kenindia Assurance, Kenya, and ACC India. He has held leadership roles such as chairmanship of the governing board of National Insurance Academy and presidency of the Insurance Institute of India.

India will host the India Mobile Congress and the World Telecommunication Standardization Assembly in the year 2024

- Minister of Communications Ashwini Vaishnaw today launched the Curtain Raiser of World Telecom Standardization Assembly Delhi 2024 (WTSA 2024) and India Mobile Congress (IMC 2024). The International Telecommunication Unions' (ITU) prestigious WTSA event will be held from 15-24 Oct 2024 preceded by Global Standards Symposium (GSS 2024) on 14 Oct 2024 and eighth edition of Asia's premier digital technology exhibition, IMC 2024 from 15-19 Oct 2024 at Pragati Maidan in New Delhi.
- While emphasising the importance of collaboration and cooperation among stakeholders to propel the sector forward, the Telecommunications Minister announced telecom reforms and reiterated the government's commitment to driving reforms in the telecom sector to create a conducive environment for investment and innovation. During the event, he also unveiled the policy on Spectrum Regulatory Sandbox that holds the potential of advancing India's telecommunications landscape and fostering global collaboration in the field. Minister also announced a complete abolition of Wireless Operating License (WOL) that further simplifies the licensing processes in telecom.

Income Tax Department Levies Rs 103.63 Crore Penalty on Tata Chemicals

- The Income Tax Department has imposed a penalty of Rs 103.63 crore on Tata Chemicals for violation related to disallowance of interest. The penalty has been imposed under Section 270A of the Income Tax Act for disallowance of interest under section 36(1)(iii) of the Act.
- Based on the merits of the matter, prevailing law and the advice of the counsel, Tata Chemicals said it is planning to appeal against this order before the National Faceless Appeal Centre (appellate authorities).

Modi Government Allocates Rs 6212.03 Crore for Strengthening Regional Rural Banks

- The Modi government has allocated Rs 6212.03 crore to Regional Rural Banks (RRBs) as part of the recapitalization scheme on March 6. RRBs, established in 1975 and owned by the Indian government, function at the regional level across various states. They were set up with the objective of offering fundamental banking and financial services to rural regions, specifically targeting small and marginal farmers, agricultural laborers, artisans, and small entrepreneurs.
- Consolidated Capital to Risk-weighted Assets Ratio (CRAR) reached an all-time high of 13.83 percent by December 31, 2023, indicating strengthened financial position.

Asset Reconstruction Companies Secure 55% of KSK Mahanadi Power's ₹29,330 Crore Debt

- Six asset reconstruction companies (ARCs), including Aditya Birla and Kotak Mahindra-backed ARCs, have accumulated 55% of KSK Mahanadi Power's ₹ 29,330-crore debt from lenders in separate transactions.
- Purpose of Acquisition: The ARCs acquired the debt with the expectation of potential demand for thermal power companies, anticipating a significant upside. This acquisition occurred due to lenders' exit from the company after facing over a four-year delay in its debt resolution process.

Private Banks Expand ATM Network While PSU Banks Decrease

- In the 12 months ending January 2024, public sector banks (PSUs) reduced their Automated teller machine (ATM) network by 1,343 machines to 1,36,173 ATMs. In contrast, private banks expanded their ATM network by adding 3,502 ATMs, bringing their total to 79,225 machines. This highlights the diverging strategies between PSU and private banks regarding ATM deployment and network expansion.
- PSBs have primarily reduced their offsite ATM deployment, which decreased to 93,381 from 96,243 a year ago and 87,160 two years ago. This reduction may be attributed to factors such as profitability concerns due to capped charges and uncertainty surrounding new regulations that could increase operational costs.

SEBI Grants Approval for Beta Version Launch of T+0 Settlement from March 28

- The Capital markets regulator Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) has approved the launch of the beta version of the T+0 settlement on an optional basis from March 28, 2024.

- On March 15, 2024 after a meeting with its Board, SEBI announced the new and optional settlement cycle. T+0 settlement means that the funds and securities for a transaction will be settled on the day the trade was entered into.

Reserve Bank of India Renews Committee of Advisors for Abhyudaya Cooperative Bank

- Former Chief General Manager of the State Bank of India (SBI), Devendra Kumar has been appointed to the 'Committee of Advisors' of Abhyudaya Cooperative Bank by the RBI following the resignation of Mahendra Chhajed.
- Mahendra Chhajed tendered his resignation from the Committee effective from March 4, 2024, citing personal reasons. It was registered as a Multi-State Co-op Bank by the Central Registrar, New Delhi, on January 11, 2007.

Tata Sons Announces Sale of 0.6% Stake in TCS for Over ₹9,300 Crore

- Tata Sons plans to offload 2.34 crore shares, constituting 0.65% equity of TCS, for ₹ 9,362.3 crore. The offer price for offloading is set at ₹ 4,001 per share, aiming to raise at least ₹ 9,200 crore.
- This action is part of a broader strategy to reduce the consolidated borrowings of Tata Sons, which stood at ₹ 1.58 lakh crore as of March 2023.

Adani Group Plans To Invest ₹ 1.2 Lakh Crore In Portfolio Companies In FY25

- Adani group plans to invest more than ₹ 1.2 lakh crore (\$14 billion) across its portfolio companies that range from ports to energy, airports, commodities, cement and media in fiscal year starting April 1, as it doubles down on its \$100 billion investment guidance over the next seven-ten years to grow businesses
- The projected capital expenditure or capex for 2024-25 (April 2024 to March 2025) fiscal is 40% higher than what the portfolio is estimated to have incurred in FY24. According to analysts, the portfolio is estimated to have incurred a capex of around \$10 billion in FY24 that ends on March 31.

India to join U.S.-led carbon market project

- India has decided to join at least one of the four cooperative work programmes launched last week under the 'clean energy pillar' of the US-led Indo Pacific Economic Framework (IPEF) – the one on facilitating and promoting carbon market activities.
- In India, the Ministry of Power, which is working on deepening the country's carbon markets, brought in amendments to the carbon credits trading scheme (CCTS) recently

which puts it on track towards establishing independent standards for carbon trading and also allows non-obligated entities to generate carbon credits.

FinMin notifies 90 coin to commemorate 90 years of RBI

- The Government of India will be issuing a set of five commemorative coins in the denominations of Re. 1, Rs. 2, Rs. 5, Rs. 10 and Rs. 75 to mark the occasion of Platinum Jubilee of Reserve Bank of India. While a gazette notification in respect of these coins has already been issued on 23 February, 2010 in Official Gazette of India, Prime Minister Shri Man Mohan Singh will release the coin in an official function at NCPA, Nariman Point, Mumbai in a Grand Finale event to mark end of Platinum Jubilee celebrations. Finance Minister Shri Pranab Mukherji would also be present on the occasion besides other dignitaries.
- The coins in the denomination of Re.1, Rs.2, Rs.5, Rs.10 will also be issued as circulation coins. In a set of five coins where the Re.1 and Rs.2 will be of FSS (Ferritic Stainless Steel), the Rs.5 coin will be Nickel Brass, the Rs.10 will be bimetallic and the Rs.75 coin will be a Silver Alloy.

Central Bank in tie-up with PPFAS Mutual Fund

- The Central Bank of India on informed that the Bank has entered into a distributorship Agreement with PPFAS Asset Management Company Limited for the distribution of its Mutual Fund Products to its customers on Do it yourself (DIY) model.
- The participation by both entities in this arrangement will result in offering the customers of the Central Bank of India, an opportunity to unlock the value of their savings through various mutual fund products offered by PPFAS Asset Management Company Ltd.

RBI fines TMB,DCB nearly 2 crore for violating norms on lending rates

- Reserve Bank of India, on March 13, imposed a penalty of ₹ 1.3 crore on Tamilnad Mercantile Bank for non-compliance with directions on 'Interest Rate on Advances' and 'Central Repository of Information on Large Credits (CRILC) - Revision in Reporting'.
- The inspection for FY22 revealed that the bank failed to reset the interest rates at the prescribed periodicity in certain MCLR linked floating rate advances. It also failed to benchmark the interest rate of certain floating rate retail and MSME loans to an external benchmark lending rate.

Yes Bank Partners with Indian Olympic Association for Paris Olympics

- YES Bank has forged a strategic partnership with the Indian Olympic Association (IOA) to become the Official Banking Partner for Team India at the Paris Olympics 2024. This collaboration aims to provide comprehensive support to India's Olympic athletes and their families.
- YES Bank introduces the 'Milkar Jitayengey' campaign to signify unity and determination in achieving victory. The campaign embodies the spirit of collaboration between YES Bank and the Indian Olympic Association to support Team India in their quest for success at the Paris Olympics.

The share of women investors in mutual funds grows to 21% in December 2023

- The shares of assets owned by women investors in mutual funds have increased 21 per cent as of last December-end against 15 per cent in March 2017. The report 'Mutual Growth' has underscored the significant strides women have made in mutual funds participation.
- According to the Association of Mutual Funds in India data, curated by CRISIL share of MF assets owned by women from beyond top-30 cities increased to 28 per cent from 17 per cent and that of their folios was up to 18 per cent from 15 per cent during the same period.

Indian Oil Produces formula 1 Fuel in India

- Indian Oil Corporation Ltd (IOC), the nation's premier oil firm, is set to revolutionize the motorsports industry by manufacturing fuel tailored for adrenaline-pumping Formula One (F1) racing. With its latest offering, 'Storm' petrol, IOC aims to expand its repertoire of niche fuels, catering to the high-performance demands of motor racing enthusiasts.
- IOC recently unveiled 'Storm' petrol, a high-performance fuel specifically designed for the Asian region motorcycle road racing championship. This move marks a significant milestone as IOC becomes the first company in India to produce fuel conforming to the rigorous specifications required for road racing.

World Bank Commits \$3 Billion to Egypt Following Agreement with International Monetary Fund

- Egypt is set to receive a \$3 billion loan from the World Bank following an initial agreement with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to expand the IMF's loan arrangement, part of a larger \$20 billion package from various international partners.
- Composition of \$20 Billion Package: The \$20 billion package includes approximately \$11 billion from international partners such as the World Bank, European Union, Japan, and the United Kingdom (UK).

Bank of Baroda Introduces Special Offers for Female Account Holders

- On the occasion of International Women's Day (March 08, 2024), Bank of Baroda has announced attractive offers and benefits for its women account holders on the opening of either a bob Mahila Shakti Savings Account or a bob Women Power Current Account – accounts designed specifically for women.
- This offer is applicable for accounts opened till June 30, 2024 and loan facilities availed till December 31, 2024. To empower women financially by providing them with tailored financial products and attractive benefits.



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IndusInd Bank Introduces India's First Contactless Payment Wearable 'Indus PayWear'

- IndusInd Bank announced the launch of its contactless payments wearables, 'Indus PayWear,' India's first All-in-One tokenizable wearables for both debit and credit cards exclusively on Mastercard, with the offering to be extended to other card networks shortly.
- To revolutionise the payment experience by enabling users to tokenize their IndusInd Bank credit or debit cards onto a chip-enabled wearable device. This feature enhances convenience and security by eliminating the need for physical cards or payment apps.

SCIENCE & TEC NEWS

Union Minister launches revamped Jiyo Parsi Programme and Avesta – Pahlavi Language Centre

- In the spirit of Ek Bharat Shrestha Bharat, the Ministry of Minority Affairs Smriti Zubin Irani launched the revamped Jiyo Parsi Programme and the Avesta-Pahlavi Language Centre at the Mumbai University in an event at New Delhi. Speaking on the occasion, the Minister highlighted the importance of the revival of languishing languages, especially those related to notified minority communities.

- The Ministry of Minority Affairs in collaboration with Mumbai University aims to establish the Centre and required infrastructure for undertaking certificate courses, diploma courses, and PhD programs with an amount of 11.20 Crore rupees.

Google DeepMind Unveils Genie: AI Model Generates Interactive Video Games from Text or Image Prompts

- Google DeepMind has unveiled Genie, a new Artificial Intelligence (AI) model capable of generating interactive video games solely from a text or image prompt. Genie serves as a foundation world model trained on videos sourced from the Internet.
- The model can “generate an endless variety of playable (action-controllable) worlds from synthetic images, photographs, and even sketches.” It is the first generative interactive environment that has been trained in an unsupervised manner from unlabelled internet videos

First – ever Made –in- India ASTDS tug ‘Ocean Grace’ at Paradip Port

- The inauguration of the 'Ocean Grace' tug and the Medical Mobile Unit (MMU) at Paradip Port marked a significant milestone in maritime development. Sarbananda Sonowal, Minister of Ports Shipping and Waterways (MoPSW), virtually launched the 'Ocean Grace,' the first indigenous ASTDS Tug developed by Cochin Shipyard Limited under MoPSW, and the MMU, part of the port's corporate social responsibility commitment.
- The 'Ocean Grace,' costing Rs 45 crores, represents a milestone in maritime engineering, featuring advanced technology and a powerful 60-tonne bollard pull. Aligned with the 'Aatmanirbhar Bharat' initiative, the tug aims for self-reliance in the maritime sector.

Neolithic Child Burial site Unearthed in Chengalpattu ,Tamil Nadu

- A groundbreaking archaeological discovery has been made in Chettimedu Pathur village, approximately 77 kilometres from Chennai, Tamil Nadu. Researchers from the Department of Ancient History and Archaeology at the University of Madras have unearthed a child burial site dating back to the Neolithic period, around 2500 BCE to 3000 BCE, offering new insights into ancient burial rites and cultural practices in the region.
- The excavation, spearheaded by Jinu Koshy, in-charge of excavation and professor in the department, and J Soundararajan, associate professor and head-in-charge, commenced on February 5th. It was prompted by the discovery of material remains following soil erosion and human activity in the area.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi Announces India’s Own Space Station by 2035

- Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi unveiled India's ambitious plans to launch its own space station by 2035 during his visit to the Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre (VSSC) in Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala.
- Seed of Scientific Temperament: Addressing the audience at VSSC, PM Modi stated that India's success in the space sector is fostering a scientific temperament among the country's youth. India's LVM3 rocket has been designated as the launch vehicle for the Gaganyaan mission due to its reliability.

India's first indigenous fast Breeder Reactor at Kalpakkam

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi marked the beginning of a new era in India's nuclear energy sector by witnessing the "Core Loading" at the Prototype Fast Breeder Reactor (PFBR) in Kalpakkam, Tamil Nadu. This event signifies the near completion of India's first indigenous PFBR, a landmark project fully designed and constructed within the country by Bharatiya Nabhikiya Vidyut Nigam Limited (BHAVINI), in collaboration with over 200 Indian industries, including numerous MSMEs.
- With the commissioning of the 500 MWe PFBR, India is set to become only the second country after Russia to operate a commercial Fast Breeder Reactor (FBR). This achievement not only places India at the forefront of nuclear technology but also underlines its commitment to developing clean and efficient energy sources.

Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi Unveils 4 Astronaut-Designates for Gaganyaan Mission

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi disclosed the identities of the four pilots currently undergoing training for India's first human space flight mission, Gaganyaan, during his visit to the Vikram Sarabhai Space Center (VSSC) in Kerala's Thiruvananthapuram.
- The astronauts, Group Captain P Balakrishnan Nair, Group Captain Ajit Krishnan, Group Captain Angad Pratap, and Wing Commander S Shukla, were also awarded 'astronaut wings' by the Prime Minister. Accompanying PM Modi were Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan, Union Minister Muraleedharan, and ISRO Chairman S Somanath.

The Government Launches Digital Intelligence Platform for Telecom Fraud

- The Centre launched two new digital platforms, 'Chakshu' and 'Digital Intelligence Platform', that will help citizens flag calls and text messages by fraudsters, and enable real-

time coordination between law enforcement agencies, banks, financial intermediaries and other stakeholders to block numbers that are engaged in frauds, respectively.

- Government has been persistently making efforts to check cyber-frauds under the Secure India project, at three levels- National, Organisational and Individual. The Minister pointed out that together with two portals- DIP and Chakshu, these tools will further appreciably enhance the capacity and ability to check any kind of cyber security threat.

India's 1st Dolphin Research Centre Inaugurated in Patna

- India's first National Dolphin Research Center (NDRC) was officially inaugurated by Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar. This landmark facility, built at a cost of Rs 30 crore, is situated on the banks of the Ganges River within the Patna University campus.
- The NDRC's primary objective is to aid researchers and students in understanding the behavior and ecology of freshwater dolphins, particularly the endangered Gangetic dolphin. These fascinating creatures inhabit the Ganges-Brahmaputra-Meghna and Karnaphuli-Sangu river systems of South Asia and were first documented in 1801.

Country's first ready-to-serve dragon fruit juice, ready-to-eat jackfruit curry unveiled at ICAR-IIHR

- For what is touted as the first time in the country, scientists at the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) - Indian Institute of Horticultural Research (IIHR) have developed a ready-to-serve (RTS) dragon fruit/kamalam fruit beverage.
- It is difficult to prepare an RTS dragon fruit beverage due to the tiny seeds and the nature of its pulp, according to Pushpa Chethan Kumar, senior scientist at IIHR.

IN-SPACE technical centre focussed on 'satellited & payloads's inaugurated in Ahmedabad

- Union Minister of State for Science and Technology Jitendra Singh inaugurated a pioneering technical center in Ahmedabad, representing a significant advancement in India's space sector. Established by the Indian National Space Promotion and Authorisation Centre (IN-SPACE), this center aims to revolutionize private sector involvement in space technology development and testing.
- Situated at IN-SPACE headquarters in Bopal, Ahmedabad. Primarily directed towards satellites and payloads, with additional provisions for launch vehicle simulation and mission planning. Equipped with cutting-edge resources including a Climate Simulation

Test Facility, Thermal and Vacuum Environment Simulation Facility, and Space Systems Design Lab.

AgniKul Cosmos postpones maiden rocket launch due to ‘technical issue’

- Agnikul Cosmos, the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT)-Madras incubated startup, has postponed its maiden rocket launch due to a ‘technical issue’. The Chennai-headquartered company had initially scheduled the launch of the mission ‘Agnibaan SOrTeD’ (Sub Orbital Technology Demonstrator) for March 22, 2024.
- The launch was planned to take place from its private launch pad located within the campus of ISRO at Sriharikota in Andhra Pradesh, approximately 100 km from Chennai. The Agnibaan SOrTeD mission is described as an innovative, single-stage Sub-Orbital Technology Demonstrator.

Government notifies PIB’s Fact Check Unit under IT Rules 2021

- The government has notified the ‘Fact Check Unit’ (FCU) under the Press Information Bureau (PIB) of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, as the fact check unit of the Centre.
- The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) notified the PIB FCU under the provisions of the sub-clause (v) of sub-rule (1) of rule 3 of the Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021.

IAU approves ‘Statio Shiv Shakti’ as name for Chandrayaan-3 landing site

- Nearly seven months after Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced that Chandrayaan-3’s landing site will be called “Shiva Shakti”, International Astronomical Union (IAU) approved the name on March 19.
- According to the Gazetteer of Planetary Nomenclature, planetary nomenclature, like terrestrial nomenclature, is used to uniquely identify a feature on the surface of a planet or satellite so that it can be easily located, described, and discussed.

Scientists uncover Milky Way’s ancient building blocks, Shakti and Shiva

- Astronomers have identified two ancient streams of stars - named after the Hindu deities Shakti and Shiva - that appear to be among the Milky Way's earliest building blocks, offering new insight into how our galaxy came together long ago.
- Shakti and Shiva are comprised of stars with similar chemical compositions that formed 12-13 billion years ago, the researchers said. Each of the structures has a mass about 10 million times greater than our sun.

Election Commission Keeps Close Eye On Election Process Through The ‘cVIGIL’ App

- The Election Commission is keeping a close eye on the election process through the cVIGIL app. It is a single app for recording, reporting and resolving violations of model code of conduct. Through this app, online complaints regarding violations of model code of conduct can be made by capturing photos, videos etc.
- The cVIGIL app of Election Commission has become an effective tool in the hands of people to flag election code violations. The citizens can report Model Code of Conduct and expenditure violations through this app. Chief Election Commissioner Rajiv kumar said that the cVIGIL empowers citizens to report model code of conduct violations and assured action within 100 minutes.

Bharat Biotech Starts Clinical Trials Of Tuberculosis Vaccine MTBVAC In India

- Bharat Biotech has begun clinical trials of the Spanish anti- tuberculosis vaccine among adults in India, the Hyderabad-based pharmaceutical company announced. The vaccine candidate called MTBVAC is the first live attenuated vaccine of mycobacterium tuberculosis isolated from a human.
- BCG (Bacillus, Calmette and Guérin), is an attenuated variant of the bovine TB pathogen. It is at least a 100 years old and has a limited effect on pulmonary tuberculosis, which is responsible for the transmission of the disease.

ISRO’s POEM-3 mission accomplishes zero orbital debris mission

- The PSLV-C58 Mission was accomplished on January 1, 2024. After completing the primary mission of injecting all satellites into their desired orbits, the terminal stage of PSLV was transformed into a 3-axis stabilized platform, the POEM-3. The stage was de-orbited from 650 km to 350 km, which facilitated its early re-entry, and was passivated to remove residual propellants to minimize any accidental break-up risks.
- POEM-3 was configured with a total of 9 different experimental payloads to carry out technology demonstrations and scientific experiments on the newly developed indigenous systems. Out of these, 6 payloads were delivered by NGEs through IN-SPACe. The mission objectives of these payloads were met in a month.

IIT Guwahati Transfers Pioneering Swine Fever Vaccine Technology to BioMed Pvt

- The Indian Institute of Technology-Guwahati (IIT-G) has transferred a first-of-its-kind vaccine technology to BioMed Pvt. Ltd., a company specializing in vaccine manufacturing. This revolutionary technology involves a recombinant vector vaccine specifically designed

to combat the classical swine fever virus in pigs and wild boars. It fills a significant gap in India's vaccine landscape.

- The vaccine utilizes a reverse genetic platform pioneered and refined at IIT-G, according to a statement from the institute on March 26. Classical swine fever is a highly contagious disease among pigs, posing a severe threat with a very high mortality rate, although it does not affect humans.

Adani Green Energy operationalises 126 MW wind power plant in Gujarat

- Adani Green Energy announced the operationalisation of an additional 126 MW capacity in its 300 MW wind power project in Gujarat. This comes after the earlier operationalisation of 174 MW, marking a significant milestone for the company.
- Adani Wind Energy Kutchh Four Limited (AWEK4L), a subsidiary of Adani Green Energy Limited (AGEL), has successfully operationalised 126 MW of wind power in Gujarat. Together with the previously operationalised 174 MW, the project now boasts a total capacity of 300 MW.

Indigenous drug for sickle cell disease developed

- Pharmaceutical manufacturer Akums on Saturday announced that it had launched the country's first indigenous hydroxyurea oral solution, which is used for the treatment of sickle cell disease in children. The company said that the drug will be provided to the government at the cost of R600, which is nearly 1% of the R77,000 that the medicine currently available globally costs.
- Another major benefit of the suspension manufactured by Akums is that it is stable at room temperature, unlike its global counterpart that requires storage in 2-8 °Celsius.

After Google,Meta announces to work with ECI to flag unlawful content from its platforms

- Meta, the owner of popular social media companies like Instagram, Threads and Facebook, has unveiled a 'comprehensive approach' to limit misinformation, eliminate voter interference and increase transparency and accountability on its platform during the upcoming Lok Sabha elections. Recently, the Election Commission had announced that the 18th general elections will be held in seven phases from April 19 to June 1.
- Additionally, the social media giant noted that it is working closely with the Election Commission of India through a voluntary code of ethics signed in 2019, which provides the ECI with a "high priority" channel for flagging unlawful content.

Indian Navy & IIT Kharagpur join forces to drive innovation through research partnerships

- Indian Navy and Indian Institute of Technology Kharagpur, signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) at Naval Headquarters, New Delhi, symbolising their commitment to promote technology development, innovative solutions and joint R&D. Rear Admiral K Srinivas, Asst. Chief of Materiel (Dockyard & Refit) at Naval Headquarters and Prof. (Ms) Rintu Banerjee, Dean (R&D) of IIT Kharagpur signed in presence of Prof. Virendra Kumar Tiwari, Director of IIT Kharagpur.
- The strategic collaboration focuses on joint research and development initiatives involving teams from Indian Navy and IIT Kharagpur. The MoU will be co-ordinated by INS Shivaji, Lonavala. This alignment signifies a move towards a symbolic relationship between the Academia and the Military, fostering an environment conducive to innovation and knowledge exchange.

Dr.Sultan Al Jaber Honored for Sustainable Energy Leadership

- Dr. Sultan Al Jaber, President of COP28, was awarded the prestigious ‘CERAWeek Leadership Award for Building Global Consensus towards a Sustainable Energy Future’ at the CERAWeek by S&P Global conference at Houston.
- Dr. Al Jaber’s pivotal role in shaping the UAE Consensus, a significant framework for global climate action, was highlighted. This consensus provides clear directives for nations to limit global warming to 1.5°C and emphasizes collaboration between governments and industries.

MeitY/ NIXI successfully unveils BhashaNet portal at universal Acceptance day event in New Delhi

- The National Internet Exchange of India (NIXI) is gearing up to introduce the BhashaNet portal during the upcoming Universal Acceptance (UA) Day. This initiative aims to advance digital inclusion and linguistic diversity in India, showcasing collaborative efforts between NIXI and the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY).
- NIXI and MeitY’s successful partnership underscores their commitment to fostering digital inclusivity nationwide. The support from the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN) and MeitY’s Internet Governance division further strengthens UA Day’s significance.

Indian Army Inducts First Apache 451 Aviation Squadron

- The Indian Army has raised its first squadron, the 451 Aviation Squadron, to operate the newly acquired AH-64E Apache attack helicopters. The squadron was formally established on March 15 at Jodhpur.
- In February 2020, India signed a deal worth around \$800 million with Boeing for six Apache helicopters for the Indian Army. As part of the deal, six pilots and 24 technicians from the Indian Army were trained by Boeing in the U.S.

new moons discovered orbiting Uranus and Neptune

- The International Astronomical Union's (IAU) Minor Planet Center announced the discovery of three new moons in our solar system Feb. 23. Uranus has one additional moon, while Neptune has picked up two.
- "The three newly discovered moons are the faintest ever found around these two ice giant planets using ground-based telescopes," said Scott S. Sheppard, astronomer for Carnegie Institute of Science, in a press release. "It took special image processing to reveal such faint objects."

Spacex sends MethaneSAT Satellite into Orbit to track Methane Gas

- MethaneSAT, a groundbreaking initiative spearheaded by the Environmental Defense Fund (EDF), heralds a new era in environmental monitoring. Designed to address the elusive yet critical issue of methane emissions, MethaneSAT promises to revolutionize how policymakers and industries tackle greenhouse gas pollution.
- MethaneSAT's development showcases the strength of collaboration and innovation. Key contributors include the Environmental Defense Fund, New Zealand Space Agency, Harvard University, BAE Systems, and Google. This collaborative effort reflects the urgency and significance of addressing the methane emission challenge.

India's fastest and indigenously designed IP/MPLS router launched

- Union Minister for Railways and IT Ashwini Vaishnaw remarked that designing and developing an indigenous 2.4 tbps router is really a momentous achievement for the country. He was speaking while inaugurating the fastest indigenously developed router by Bengaluru-based Nivetti Systems.
- India's fastest and indigenously designed IP/MPLS (Multiprotocol Label Switching) router was launched in Bengaluru by Ashwini Vaishnaw, Union Minister for Communications, Electronics and Information Technology.

Samudrayaan set to explore ocean bed by 2025 end

- Samudrayaan mission set to explore ocean bed by 2025-end, the earth sciences minister Kiren Rijiju has said. The announcement came after an underwater acoustic telephone, developed by National Institute of Ocean Technology (NIOT) for the submersible project, was successfully tested at a depth of about 500 metres in the Bay of Bengal.
- The minister had reviewed the project and scientists should be able to carry out the first shallow water testing by the end of this year.

UGC introduces SheRNI helping female scientists and faculty connect

- The University Grants Commission's (UGC) Information and Library Network (INFLIBNET) Centre unveiled a groundbreaking initiative, known as the 'She Research Network in India' (SheRNI). This initiative aims to address the gender disparity in the field of science by ensuring equal representation of women scientists.
- SheRNI challenges stereotypes and serves as a beacon of inspiration for future generations of female scientists, researchers, and faculty members. By providing a platform for visibility and recognition, it aims to encourage more women to pursue careers in science and research.

PM Modi lays foundation stone of 3 semiconductor projects worth Rs.1.25trn

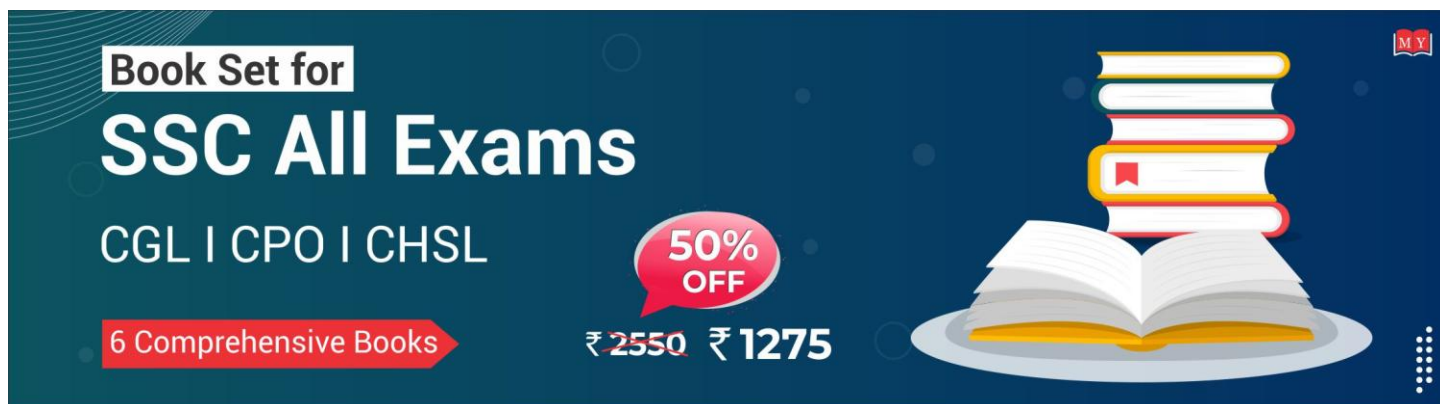
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated three semiconductor projects virtually, with a combined investment of approximately Rs 1.25 Lakh Crore. These projects signify a significant step towards bolstering India's semiconductor industry. The three facilities include a semiconductor fabrication unit in Dholera, Gujarat, an Outsourced Semiconductor Assembly and Test (OSAT) facility in Morigaon, Assam, and another OSAT facility in Sanand, Gujarat.

Information and Broadcasting Minister Releases book Titled Israel war diary

- Information and Broadcasting Minister Anurag Singh Thakur has released a book titled Israel War Diary written by Vishal Pandey at a function in New Delhi. Addressing the gathering on the occasion, Mr Thakur said that every country should refrain from war as war is not a solution, dialogue is the only solution.
- Mr Thakur also highlighted that this book will give insight to the people about India's stance on the Israel-Hamas war. It will provide a detailed overview of the war between Israel and Hamas. Mr Thakur further said that the Government has set a target to achieve Defence exports worth 40 thousand crore rupees. The country has its defence production worth one lakh crore rupees and it exported defence equipment worth 16 thousand crore rupees last year.

DEFENCE NEWS**Indian Navy to commission INS JATAYU naval base in Minicoy Islands on March 6**

- The Indian Navy is set to inaugurate a new naval base, INS Jatayu, on Minicoy Island, marking a significant step in bolstering security infrastructure in the strategically vital Lakshadweep Islands. Scheduled for March 6, the commissioning ceremony will be graced by Admiral R Hari Kumar, Chief of the Naval Staff, underscoring the importance of this development.
- Minicoy Island, situated as the southernmost outpost of the Lakshadweep archipelago, commands a crucial position along the Sea Lines of Communications (SLOCs). Its proximity to major maritime routes underscores its strategic importance in ensuring maritime security and safeguarding India's interests in the region.




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Rajnath Singh launches ADITI scheme to boost defence innovation

- During DefConnect 2024 in New Delhi on March 4, 2024, Raksha Mantri Rajnath Singh unveiled the Acing Development of Innovative Technologies with iDEX (ADITI) scheme. The scheme aims to promote innovations in critical and strategic defence technologies, providing start-ups with significant grants for research and development.

Objective: Promote innovations in critical and strategic defence technologies.

Grant-in-Aid: Up to Rs 25 crore for research, development, and innovation in defence technology.

Duration and Budget: Rs 750 crore allocated for 2023-24 to 2025-26.

Targets: Develop approximately 30 deep-tech critical and strategic technologies.

Indian Navy Gets Its Own Headquarters Named 'Nausena Bhawan'

- The Indian Navy has finally got its own dedicated headquarters building. The newly constructed Nausena Bhawan located at Delhi Cantonment was formally inaugurated by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on March 15th, 2024.
- This marks a significant milestone for the Indian Navy. It establishes the Navy's first independent headquarters in Delhi. Previously, the Navy operated from 13 different locations, making it difficult to coordinate.

10th Edition of Joint Military Exercise “LAMITIYE-2024”

- An Indian Army contingent has departed for Seychelles today to participate in the Tenth edition of the Joint Military Exercise “LAMITIYE-2024” between the Indian Army and Seychelles Defence Forces (SDF). The exercise will be conducted in Seychelles from 18-27 March 2024.
- Enhance cooperation and interoperability between the Indian Army and Seychelles Defence Forces during Peace Keeping Operations. Build and promote bilateral military relations between the two armies. Exchange skills, experiences, and good practices between the two armies.

Indian Army Inducts First Apache 451 Aviation Squadron

- The Indian Army has raised its first squadron, the 451 Aviation Squadron, to operate the newly acquired AH-64E Apache attack helicopters. The squadron was formally established on March 15 at Jodhpur.
- In February 2020, India signed a deal worth around \$800 million with Boeing for six Apache helicopters for the Indian Army. As part of the deal, six pilots and 24 technicians from the Indian Army were trained by Boeing in the U.S.

Prez Murmu presents President's Standard and colours to four IAF Units at Air Force Station

- President Droupadi Murmu presented the President's Standard and Colours to four Indian Air Force Units at Air Force Station in Hindon, Uttar Pradesh. She presented the President's standard to the Indian Air Force - 221 Squadron and the 45 Squadron. The President's Standard and Colours is the highest military honour for any armed forces unit.
- According to the IAF, the award of President's Standard and Colour is one of the greatest honours bestowed upon an Air Force Unit or Squadron in recognition of exceptional service rendered by it to the nation, both during war and in peace. The President's Standard was awarded after 18 years of service and the President's Colours award after 25 years of service.

Indian Navy at Exercise Cutlass Express 2024

- The Indian Navy recently took part in a major maritime exercise called Exercise Cutlass Express – 24 (CE-24). This exercise was held in Port Victoria, Seychelles from 26 February to 08 March 2024.
- The Indian Navy was represented by the ship INS Tir, which is the lead ship of the First Training Squadron. INS Tir was led by Senior Officer, First Training Squadron, Capt Anshul Kishore. The exercise was inaugurated by the President of Seychelles, Wavel Ramkalawan, in the presence of dignitaries from India, USA, and African countries.

BOOKS NEWS

Phool Bahadur, The First Magahi Novel in English

- The Dibrugarh University International Literary Festival held on 19-21 March 2024 witnessed the launch of a remarkable literary work – the English translation of the first Magahi novel, ‘Phool Bahadur’. The translation was done by Abhay K, a renowned writer from Nalanda, Bihar.
- ‘Phool Bahadur’ was originally written by Jayanath Pati and published in 1928. Despite being the first Magahi novel, it failed to gain much popularity among readers initially. However, it has now been rediscovered and is gaining fame thanks to Abhay K’s English translation. The translator stumbled upon this literary gem while editing ‘The Book of Bihari Literature’.

The Conspiracy” book written by Gotabaya Rajapaksa

- Former Sri Lankan President Gotabaya Rajapaksa emerged from a long period of silence, unveiling a book in which he asserts that his removal from office was orchestrated by geopolitical tensions, particularly between China and other nations. Entitled The Conspiracy to Oust Me from the Presidency, Rajapaksa’s book hit the shelves without an official launch, shedding light on his perspective regarding the circumstances leading to his departure.
- In the pages of his book, Rajapaksa lays out his belief that external forces, motivated by geopolitical interests, played a significant role in his ousting. He alleges that a major foreign power exerted pressure to ensure his continued tenure, citing a determination to maintain Sri Lanka’s alignment with their strategic objectives.

AWARDS NEWS

Odisha's Centuries – Old 'Silver Filigree' Gets GI Tag

- The Silver Filigree of Cuttack, which is a centuries-old craft, has been awarded the prestigious Geographical Indications (GI) tag. Expressing his happiness, Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik said that the centuries-old sophisticated craft practised in the Silver City of Cuttack gives a distinct identity to our State for its intricate workmanship.
- The Chief Minister also extended his best wishes to the people of the State, especially Cuttack and the district administration. In a momentous achievement for Odisha, the age-old tradition of Silver Filigree, fondly referred to as Chandi Tarakasi of Cuttack, has been granted the prestigious Geographical Indications (GI) tag.

India is 3rd largest digitalised country among G20 nations

- According to the State of India's Digital Economy Report, 2024, by the Indian Council for Research on International Economic Relations (ICRIER), India is the third largest digitalised country in the world, only behind the United States of America (USA) and China.
- However, at the level of individual users, India is ranked 12th in terms of digitalisation among the G20 countries. The study is based on 'CHIPS' framework wherein it has scored countries on five pillars – connect, harness, innovate, protect and sustain. India has the world's second-largest internet network with more than 700 million users.

Cuttack's Rupa Tarakasi and Banglar Muslin Awarded Geographical Indication (GI) Tag

- Cuttack's renowned Rupa Tarakasi, also known as Silver Filigree, has been awarded the Geographical Indication (GI) tag by the Geographical Indications Registry in Chennai, recognizing its unique geographical origin and craftsmanship.
- The application for the GI tag was filed by the Odisha State Co-operative Handicrafts Corporation Limited, with facilitation from the Department of Textile and Handicrafts, Government of Odisha, underscoring the state's support for promoting local crafts.

Beena Aggarwal and James Boyce were honored with the Global Inequality Research Award

- Bina Agarwal and James Boyce have been awarded the first "Global Inequality Research Award" for their significant contributions to understanding global inequalities, specifically in the areas of social and environmental inequalities. The laureates will be invited to receive their awards and present an overview of their work at conferences in Paris in the fall and spring of 2024.

- These conferences will be organized in conjunction with Sciences Po's Social-Ecological Transitions (SET) initiative. The University of Manchester's Global Development Institute (GDI) for Bina Agarwal. The University of Massachusetts Amherst's Political Economy Research Institute (PERI) for James Boyce.

Carlos Sainz wins Formula One Australian Grand Prix

- Lying in bed just nine days ago with the wound from his appendectomy still tender, Carlos Sainz had held no expectation of even competing in the Australian Grand Prix. Yet there was the Spaniard in Melbourne afternoon, roared on by an appreciative crowd when he climbed from his car after a victory as unlikely as it was valiant.
- An achievement with doubtless special resonance for Sainz, the driver who had come back from surgery and helped return Ferrari's first one-two since 2022 as world champion Max Verstappen's dominant run of victories came to an explosive end, but who, as yet, does not have a Formula One drive for next season.

Michel Talagrand Awarded the 2024 Abel Prize

- Michel Talagrand receives the prize for his work in probability theory and stochastic processes. From the outset, the development of probability theory was motivated by problems that arose in the context of gambling or assessing risks.
- The common theme in Michel Talagrand's groundbreaking discoveries is working with and understanding the random processes we see all around us. It has now become apparent that a thorough understanding of random phenomena is essential in today's world. For example, random algorithms underpin our weather forecasting and large language models.

Chameli Devi Jain Award 2024 for Outstanding Woman Media Person

- The Chameli Devi Jain Award for Outstanding Woman Media Person of the Year was set up by The Media Foundation in 1980. It is named after Chameli Devi Jain, a freedom fighter and community reformer who was imprisoned during India's independence movement.
- The first award was given in 1982, and since then, it has been presented annually. The award recognizes impactful journalism in fields such as social development, politics, gender justice, human rights, health, conflict, and consumer values.

Ratan Tata Awarded PV Narasimha Rao Memorial Award for Philanthropy Work

- Ratan Tata, former chairman of Tata Sons, has been bestowed with the prestigious PV Narasimha Rao Memorial Award. He received the award for his outstanding philanthropic contributions. The award ceremony took place in Mumbai on March 15, 2024.

- The PV Narasimha Rao Memorial Award is named after the former Prime Minister of India. It is an award of recognition for individuals who have demonstrated exceptional dedication to social welfare and humanitarian causes.

Vladimir Putin wins Russian Presidential Elections for record fifth term

- Russian President Vladimir Putin has clinched a historic fifth term, securing a landslide victory in the presidential polls. Mr. Putin hailed his preordained electoral victory as a sign of the country's trust and hope in him.
- Communist candidate Nikolai Kharitonov finished second and newcomer Vladislav Davankov third. This victory has solidified Mr. Putin's position as Russia's longest-serving leader, surpassing Josef Stalin.

Prabha varma selected for Saraswati Samman for The Year 2023

- Noted Malayalam poet and author Prabha Varma has been selected for the prestigious 33rd Saraswati Samman for the year 2023. He won the award for his novel in verse 'Roudra Sathwikam' published in 2022.
- The Saraswati Samman, instituted by the K.K. Birla Foundation in 1991, is one of the highest literary honors in India. It recognizes outstanding literary works in any of the Indian languages published in the last 10 years.

Chameli Devi Jain Award 2024 for Outstanding Woman Media Person of the year

- The Chameli Devi Jain Award for Outstanding Woman Mediaperson is an Indian journalism award named after Chameli Devi Jain, an Indian independence activist who became the first Jain woman to go to prison during India's independence struggle.[1] The award was instituted in 1980 by The Media Foundation and is given to women in the field of journalism.
- The Media Foundation was founded in 1979 by B. G. Verghese, Lakshmi Chand Jain, Prabhash Joshi, Ajit Bhattacharjea and N. S. Jagannathan. The award was instituted in 1980 by Verghese and the family of Chameli Devi.

Sangita Kalanidhi award for T.M. Krishna, Nritya Kalanidhi for Neena Prasad

- Renowned carnatic singer T M Krishna has been conferred the Sangita Kalanidhi for 2024 by the Music Academy. The Executive Committee of the Sangeet Academy decided to give him this award in its meeting on March 17, 2024.
- He will be honored with the prestigious Sangita Kalanidhi Award by The Music Academy, Madras. The news about the award was given to TM Krishna by Music Academy President

N Murali. Krishna was given this honor for doing many remarkable works in the field of music.

F1 champion Max Verstappen wins season-opening Bahrain Grand Prix

- Para-athletes are given a classification depending on the type and extent of their disability. The classification system ensures that athletes compete against only those who have a similar level of ability.
- Jhahharia is the only Indian double Paralympics gold medallist and was recognised for his stupendous achievements with a Khel Ratna in 2017. He had won the Arjuna Award in 2004 and Padma Shri in 2012.

Krystyna Pyszkova from Czech Republic crowned Miss World

- Krystyna Pyszková of the Czech Republic has been crowned the 71st Miss World in a grand ceremony held in Mumbai. The 24-year-old Pyszková competed against contestants from 115 countries. Last year's winner, Miss World 2022 Karolina Bielawska of Poland crowned Krystyna as the 71st Miss World. Meanwhile, Yasmina Zaytoun of Lebanon was crowned the First Runner-Up at the beauty pageant.
- According to Miss World Organisation, Krystyna Pyszková is a student, volunteer, and international model. The 24-year-old is studying for two degrees in Law and Business Administration while working as a model.

India receive 'Measles and Rubella Champion' Global Award for its exemplary efforts in combating these Diseases

- India has been awarded the prestigious 'Measles and Rubella Champion' Award by The Measles and Rubella Partnership. This award recognizes India's exemplary efforts in preventing measles and rubella diseases.
- The award was presented on March 6th, 2024, at the American Red Cross Headquarters in Washington D.C., USA. Ambassador Sripriya Ranganathan, Deputy Chief of Mission, Embassy of India, received the award on behalf of the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India.

Riken Yamamoto of Japan declared winner of the 2024 Pritzker Architecture Prize

- Japanese architect Riken Yamamoto was this week declared winner of the 2024 Pritzker Architecture Prize, the highest international award in the field, which is sometimes referred to as the "Architecture Nobel". The prize has been awarded every year since its founding in 1979, and Yamamoto is the ninth laureate from Japan.

- The Pritzker Architecture Prize was instituted by Jay A Pritzker, the late founder of the Hyatt Hotels chain, and his wife Cindy, “to honour a living architect whose built work demonstrates talent, vision and commitment, who has produced consistent and significant contributions to humanity and the built environment through the art of architecture”.

English author Neelum saran gaur and Hindi novelist Sanjeev ,received the Sahitya Akademi Award for 2023

- The awards were given for literary works including nine books of poetry, six novels, five of short stories, three essays and one literary study. The award ceremony coincided with the 70th anniversary celebrations of the National Academy of Letters at the 'Sahityotsav'.
- Sanjeev for his novel "Mujhe Pehchaano" and Gaur for her book "Requiem in Raga Janki" received the prestigious award. Sadiqua Nawab Saher received the award for her book "Rajdev Ki Amrai" in Urdu, while Swarnjit Savi was awarded for his book of poetry "Mann Di Chip" in Punjabi.

Manjula Ramaswamy conferred with the Sangeet Natak Akademi award

- Veteran Bharatanatyam guru Manjula Ramaswamy, has been conferred with the Sangeet Natak Akademi award for 2022-23 for her contribution to Bharatanatyam. The 66-year-old dancer and the director of Hyderabad-based dance institute Sri Rama Nataka Niketan was honoured by President Droupadi Murmu on March 6, 2024, at Vigyan Bhavan, New Delhi.
- “I get satisfaction from seeing my students succeed and excel, a remarkable reward. However, receiving recognition from the president is an additional inspiration for me to continue to train and guide my students,” says Manjula after her return to Hyderabad.

Indian Writer Amitav Ghosh Awarded Prestigious Erasmus prize 2024

- The Praemium Erasmianum Foundation has awarded the Erasmus Prize 2024 to the Indian writer Amitav Ghosh. He receives this prestigious honour for his passionate contribution to the theme “imagining the unthinkable,” in which he explores the unprecedented global crisis of climate change through his literary works.
- Ghosh has delved deeply into the question of how to give justice to the existential threat of climate change, which defies our imagination. His work offers a remedy by making an uncertain future palpable through compelling stories about the past. He wields his pen to show that the climate crisis is a cultural crisis resulting from a lack of imagination.

SPORTS NEWS**ZSI names a newly discovered head – shield sea slug after President Droupadi Murmu**

- Scientists of Zoological Survey of India (ZSI), who have discovered a new species of headshield sea slug in the Bay of Bengal along the Odisha-West Bengal coast, have named it after President Droupadi Murmu.
- “The new species, discovered in Udaipur and Digha coast in Odisha and West Bengal, respectively, was named *Melanochlamys droupadi* in honour of the President,” said Dhriti Banerjee, director, ZSI. The proposed common name of the new species is Droupadi’s headshield sea slug, said one of the scientists who discovered the species.

Indian Grandmaster R Praggnanandhaa wins the Prague Masters Chess match against fellow countryman Vidit Gujrathi.

- Indian Grandmaster R Praggnanandhaa defeated compatriot Vidit Gujrathi in the fifth round of Prague Masters Chess in the Czech Republic. In the other match, D. Gukesh went down against the Czech Republic's David Navara. Praggnanandhaa shares the fourth spot with Navara and Gukesh with four rounds to play.
- In the Challengers section, Grandmaster R. Vaishali went down to Erwin L’Ami of Holland. The Prague Chess Festival is taking place from February 27 to March 7 at the Don Giovanni Hotel. Praggnanandhaa shares the fourth spot with Navara and Gukesh with four rounds to play.

Pro Kabaddi League season 10, Puneri Paltan Clinches Maiden Title

- The 10th edition of the Pro Kabaddi League (PKL) concluded with Puneri Paltan emerging as champions for the first time, after a closely contested final against Haryana Steelers. The final score read 28-25 in favor of Puneri Paltan, with the match taking place on March 1. Pankaj Mohite shone brightly for Paltan, scoring nine raid points, including a crucial super raid that proved to be a game-changer.
- The Haryana Steelers, despite their commendable journey to the final, were let down by their defense in the crucial moments. Key defenders like Mohit Nandal, Jaideep Dahiya, Rahul Sethpal, and Mohit were only able to secure a single point in the second half, contributing to their three-point defeat.

Indian Paralympic Committee’s ban is immediately lifted by the Sports Ministry

- The Sports Ministry has revoked the suspension of the Paralympic Committee of India (PCI) with immediate effect. The Paralympic Committee of India that the main ground for

suspension is being addressed and PCI will be hosting the 2024 World Shooting Para Sport World Cup from 6th March to 15 March 2024 at New Delhi.

- The Ministry in February this year, had suspended the government recognition of PCI due to delay in holding the election after the expiry of the term of the executive committee of PCI and non-compliance with its guidelines.

India's Sathiyam Gnanasekaran Clinches Men's Singles Title At World Table Tennis Feeder

- In Table Tennis, India's Sathiyam Gnanasekaran has clinched the Men's Singles title at WTT Feeder Beirut tournament in Lebanon yesterday. World Number 103 Sathiyam defeated compatriot and World Number 74 Manav Vikas Thakkar, 3-1 (6-11, 11-7, 11-7, 11-4) victory over compatriot Manav Vikas Thakkar in the final yesterday. Earlier, Sathiyam overpowered World Number 39 Chinese Taipei's Chuang Chih-yuan in the semi-finals.
- However, Manav had a heartbreaking day as he missed out on any gold medal despite making it in all three finals. He lost 1-3 to a Cuban pair in the men's doubles final, partnering Manush Utpal Shah. Earlier, he lost in the mixed doubles final to another Indian pair of Diya Chitale and Manush Shah.

Nagaland was the third edition of North East Games 2024 launched

- In Nagaland, the 3rd edition of North East Games 2024 kick-started with a glittering opening ceremony at Regional Centre for Sporting Excellence, Sovima last evening. Nagaland Chief Minister Neiphiu Rio officially declared open the 3rd North East Games 2024.
- Akashvani's correspondent reports, that more than 3000 athletes from eight North Eastern states are competing in 15 disciplines being held in 12 venues across three districts Chumoukedima, Dimapur and Kohima. Highlights of today's event include Archery, Athletics, Badminton Basketball, Boxing, football, lawn tennis, Pencak Silat, S, Table Tennis, Taekwondo, Volleyball, And Wushu.

Sharath Kamal to be India's flag-bearer at the 2024 Paris Olympics

- Ranked World No. 88, Kamal has won the national table tennis championship a record 10 times. He has also claimed 13 medals at the Commonwealth Games (CWG), including seven golds, and has earned two medals at the Asian Games. The legendary player is a three-time bronze medalist at the World Championships.

- Joining Kamal in the spotlight is MC Mary Kom, who has been named as the chef de mission for the Paris 2024 Summer Games. Mary Kom is the first female boxer in history to have captured six world titles.

Historic Day-Night Women's Ashes Test at MCG

- In a historic move, the Melbourne Cricket Ground (MCG) will host a day-night Test match between the Australian and English women's cricket teams. This will be the first time a pink-ball Test is played at the iconic venue. The four-day match is scheduled from January 30 to February 2, 2025.
- The Test match holds special significance as it will mark the 90th anniversary of the first-ever women's Test, played in December 1934. Additionally, it will be the first time the Australian women's team plays a Test at the MCG since 1949.

Para Archer and Arjuna Awardee, Ms. Sheetal Devi, will be ECI National PwD Icon


- The Election Commission of India (ECI) has announced Para Archer and Arjuna Awardee, Sheetal Devi, as its National PwD Icon. Her name was announced at an exhibition cricket match between the teams of the Indian Deaf Cricket Association (IDCA) and the Delhi and District Cricket Association (DDCA) held on Saturday in Delhi.
- The ECI in association with the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) organised the exhibition match to foster voter education and inclusivity. The event was graced by Chief Election Commissioner Rajiv Kumar and Election Commissioners Gyanesh Kumar and Sukhbir Singh Sandhu.

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Indian Athlete Gulveer Singh Shatters National Record By Over 20 Seconds

- Asian Games bronze medallist athlete Gulveer Singh shattered a 16-year-old national record in the men's 10000m to finish second in his heat at The Ten in San Juan Capistrano in California.

- Avinash Sable, who was competing in the same event, did not finish (DNF) his heat, pulling out of the race in the 15th lap at the 6000m mark. The 25-year-old clocked 27.41.81 on Saturday to better the earlier national mark of 28:02.89 by over 20 seconds that stood in Surendra Singh's name since 2008.

Matthew Wade retires from red-ball cricket to focus on shorter formats

- Australian wicketkeeper-batter Matthew Wade, will retire from first-class cricket after the upcoming Sheffield Shield final but will remain available for selection in white-ball formats.
- Former Australian Test wicketkeeper Matthew Wade has called time on the red-ball game, but will continue playing cricket's shorter formats. The Sheffield Shield final between Tasmania and Western Australia, beginning here on March 21, will be Wade's final red-ball match of a career that started in 2012.

Odisha CM Naveen Patnaik Inaugurates India's First Indoors Athletics and Aquatic Centres

- Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik inaugurated India's first indoor athletics stadium and indoor aquatic centre at the Kalinga stadium in Bhubaneswar. The Chief Minister also laid the foundation stone for a new indoor diving centre in the stadium complex.
- According to Patnaik, the new indoor facilities will help athletes train throughout the year without fear of weather-related disturbances. The newly developed indoor athletics stadium is the first of its kind in India. It has facilities to host national and international athletic events.

Royal Challengers Bangalore Lift Women's Premier League Title

- Spinners Shreyanka Patil, Sophie Molineux, and Asha Sobhana took nine wickets between them while Ellyse Perry showed calmness with an unbeaten 35 to help Royal Challengers Bangalore win the Women's Premier League (WPL) 2024 title with an eight-wicket win over Delhi Capitals at the Arun Jaitley Stadium .
- The long-used phrase of 'Ee Sala Cup Namde', which translates to 'this year the cup is ours', and the ridicule around it came to an end as a far-fetched dream finally became a reality for RCB in winning their first-ever WPL title and become just the second winners in the history of the competition.

3rd Edition Of North East Games 2024 Begin in Nagaland

- Nagaland Wushu team ended the Wushu competition of the 3rd North East Games 2024 with eight medals (one gold, three silver and four bronze) with Yoto Chizo winning the only

gold in the 75 kg event for Nagaland. The Wushu team have bettered the medal tally of the second edition where the team had won six bronze medals.

- The two-day wushu competition was held as part of the NE Games 2024 at Sovima Futsal ground with a total of 58 players from different state of Northeast. Vipu Zhimomi, Nupa Kiho and Kekhrieneitso Angami had to settle for a silver medal losing the final round, but Yoto Chizo defeated Sanjenbam Rohit Meitei from Manipur state in the final match giving much cheer and celebration as both Nupa Kiho and Kekhrieneitso Angami lost against counterpart Manipur team in their finals.

India is ranked first in all three formats and first in the ICC Test rankings

- Rohit Sharma-led Indian side gained the number one spot in ICC rankings across all formats after beating England by 4-1 in a recently concluded Test series. India overtook the mighty Australian side in the latest rankings released by the International Cricket Council (ICC) after registering a comprehensive victory over the Ben Stokes-led England side in the fifth and final Test of the series at HPCA stadium in Dharamshala.
- After losing the first Test of the series in Hyderabad by a close margin of 28 runs, India fought back in style to win the remaining four Tests against England. Wins in Vizag, Rajkot, Ranchi, and now Dharamshala have helped the side return to the top position in the ICC Test Team Rankings.

OBITUARIES NEWS

Former Canadian PM Brian Mulroney dies at age of 84

- Brian Mulroney, the former Canadian Prime Minister known for his transformative policies and complex legacy, has died at the age of 84. His passing marks the end of an era in Canadian politics and prompts reflections on his significant contributions and controversies.
- Brian Mulroney led the center-right Progressive Conservatives to a historic victory in 1984, defeating Pierre Trudeau's Liberals. His nine-year tenure was marked by significant policy reforms, including the negotiation of the Canada-United States Free Trade.

Padma Shri Awardee Arun Sharma Passed away

- The world of archaeology mourns the loss of one of its most distinguished figures, Padmashree Dr. Arun Kumar Sharma, who passed away at the age of 90 at his residence in Raipur, Chhattisgarh. Sharma's career was marked by significant contributions to Indian

archaeology, including his pivotal role in the excavation of the Ram Janmabhoomi Ayodhya site.

- Born on November 12, 1933, in Chandkhuri, Raipur district, Dr. Sharma's academic journey led him to complete his MSC in Anthropology from Sagar University in 1958. His passion for archaeology propelled him to join the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) a year later, where he excelled and topped the All-India diploma course in archaeology, earning the Maulana Abul Kalam Azad gold medal.

Razia Baig of Qadir Ali Baig Foundation passed away at 73

- Razia Baig, chairperson of Qadir Ali Baig Theatre Foundation and wife of the late Qadir Ali Baig, passed away. She was 73. She co-founded Qadir Ali Baig Theatre Foundation with her son Mohammad Ali Baig.
- Remembered for her husband's 'New Theatre Hyderabad' adaptations, she also shared her love for Hyderabadi cuisine through newspaper columns. Surrounded by family and theatre luminaries, she left an indelible mark on the theatre fraternity. Her son Mohammad Ali Baig hailed her as a guiding light and mentor.

Karnataka writer Gurulinga Kapse passes away

- Former chairman of Karnataka Sahtya Academy and writer Professor Gurulinga Kapse died after prolonged illness. He was 96 and is survived by two sons and as many daughters.
- Born in B K Loni village of Indi taluk in Vijayapura district, Kapse had written a thesis on the life and works of litterateur Madhura Channa. He has also written on philosophy, spirituality and Kannada prose and poetry besides editing several felicitation volumes.

Creator of 'Dragon Ball' Series and Renowned Anime Artist, Akira Toriyama, Passed Away

- Akira Toriyama, the creator of the widely popular "Dragon Ball" comics and anime, has passed away at the age of 68.
- Akira Toriyama, born on April 5, 1955, was a renowned Japanese manga artist and character designer. He gained recognition with his manga series "Dr Slump".

Paul Alexander ,The Man In The Iron Lung,Passed Awalu at 78

- Paul Alexander, a man who was confined to an iron lung after contracting polio as a child, died on Monday at the age of 78 at a Dallas hospital, said Daniel Spinks, a longtime friend. He said Alexander had recently been hospitalised after being diagnosed with Covid-19, but he did not know the cause of death.

- Alexander managed to train himself to breathe on his own for part of the day, earned a law degree, wrote a book about his life, built a big following on social media and inspired people around the globe with his positive outlook.

Renowned Artisan and Padma Shri Awardee Kapildev Prasad Passed away

- Kapildev Prasad, a renowned artisan and Padma awardee for his contributions to the handloom industry and the revival of Bababuti sarees, passed away in Basavanbigha village, Bihar Sharif. His demise has left the local community and handloom enthusiasts mourning the loss of a true pioneer.
- Born in Basavan Bigha village, Kapildev Prasad dedicated his life to preserving and promoting the art of handloom and Bababuti sarees, a traditional weaving craft passed down from his ancestors. He played a vital role in distributing the skills and knowledge of this intricate art form, transforming it into a sustainable means of employment for many.

IMPORTANT DAYS

National Safety day observed on 4th March

- National Safety Day 2024 is celebrated on March 4th, 2024. To create awareness about the importance of all guidelines like safety, workplace safety, and the safety of human health and the environment the National Safety Day 2024 is celebrated every year on 4th March.
- In 1965, a decision was taken to set up national and state-level Safety Councils by the Ministry of Labour and Employment and the Standing Labour Committee's session approved this in February 1966.

World Theatre Day observed on March 27

- World Theatre Day is celebrated every year on March 27. In 1961, the International Theatre Institute (ITI) proposed that there should be a day every year to celebrate the importance of theatre. Every year on this day, a certain message is spoken about by a renowned theatre performer.
- While people usually consider the acting and narration of a story as a play, there are multiple elements like the writer, director, actors, sound producer, costume designer, light and set designer, show caller and more who works tirelessly to successfully execute the entire performance.

Global Recycling day observed on 18th March

- Every year on March 18th, Global Recycling Day is celebrated to increase people's comprehension about the harmful effects of plastic on the environment. This day also promotes recycling as a crucial concept and encourages people to organize events throughout the year to spread awareness about this cause.
- The theme of Global Recycling Day 2023 is "Creative Innovation". When it comes to recycling, we all have to be creative. In order to do it effectively, we need to think outside the box. Putting our recyclables in the bin is not sufficient – we need to be proactive and find new ways to reduce, reuse, and recycle.

Ordnance Factories day (India) observed on 18th March

- The East India Company of England, to increase their economic interest and political hold, considered manufacturing military hardware as a vital element. The British authorities in 1775 established a Board of Ordnance in Fort William, Kolkata, which marks the official beginning of the Army Ordnance in India.
- They further set up a gunpowder factory in 1787 at Ishapore, which started production in 1791. In 1801, the British established a Gun Carriage Agency at Cossipore, Kolkata and production started on March 18, 1802.

International day of Happiness is observed on 20 March

- Back in 2011, the idea was introduced to the United Nations by the advisor Jayme Illien. Illien also founded the United Nations New Economic Paradigm project and 'happytalism', which aim to change the way nations approach economic growth by focusing on 'happytalism' over capitalism.
- The General Assembly of the United Nations agreed with the proposal and officially founded the International Day of Happiness in July 2012, with the occasion first being observed in 2013.

World Down Syndrome day observed on 21st March

- World Down Syndrome Day 2024 is celebrated all over the world on the 21st of March 2024. In 2005, the UN's general assembly decided that in fulfilling the UN's Sustainable Development Goal no one should be left behind and persons with disabilities must also come forward to help the UN in its targets of Agenda 2030.
- WHO, which is the United Nations' leading organization/department in terms of mental and physical health has been active and has further diversified its activities for better and unique health facilities for the tenants of planet Earth.

Bihar Foundation day observed on 22nd March

- The Indian state of Bihar comes alive with the festivities of Bihar Diwas (Bihar Day). This public holiday marks the formation of the state in 1912, when the Bihar and Orissa divisions of the Bengal Presidency were separated.
- Bihar Diwas serves as a time for reflection. It's an opportunity to acknowledge the state's progress and identify areas for further development. The day encourages everyone to work together towards a brighter future for their beloved state.

World Water day observed on 22nd March

- World Water Day 2024 is celebrated all over the world on March 22nd, The day is used to advocate for the sustainable management of freshwater resources. World Water Day celebrates water and raises awareness of the 2.2 billion people living without access to safe water.
- It is about taking action to tackle the global water crisis. The idea for this international day goes back to 1992, the year in which the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro took place.

Poshan Pakhwada 2024 from 9th -23rd March

- The Ministry of Women and Child Development will organize Poshan Pakhwada nationwide from March 9 to March 23, 2024. This 15-day celebration aims to spread awareness about nutrition, dietary practices, and women's health.
- Improving nutrition through Mission Life (water conservation, rainwater harvesting) . Promoting Millets & Poshan Vatikas (kitchen gardens) for sustainable food systems. Adopting healthy lifestyles through Ayush practices .Focus on Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WaSH) and diarrhea management

Pi day observed on 14 March

- Pi Day, celebrated on March 14th (3/14), pays homage to the mathematical constant π (pi), which represents the ratio of a circle's circumference to its diameter. It was founded by Larry Shaw in 1988. Later, in 2009, the United States House of Representatives supported the designation of Pi Day. UNESCO's 40th General Conference designated Pi Day as the International Day of Mathematics in November 2019.
- The number π is irrational, meaning it cannot be expressed as a simple fraction, and its decimal representation goes on forever without repeating. It is a fundamental constant in mathematics, extensively used in geometry, trigonometry, and various branches of science

and engineering. The significance of 3, 1, and 4 in Pi Day's date reflects the first three digits of the mathematical constant: 3.14.

World consumer rights day observed on 15 March

- World Consumer Rights Day, an annual event dedicated to reminding us of the importance of consumer rights in our global marketplace. This day emphasizes the need for transparency regarding the quantity, quality, and price of goods, as well as the significance of safeguarding consumer rights.
- World Consumer Rights Day serves as a platform to educate and empower consumers about their rights and responsibilities, while also advocating for fair and ethical business practices worldwide. The focus is on addressing concerns such as privacy breaches, dissemination of misinformation, and biased practices perpetuated by AI-driven platforms. It underscores the importance of adopting AI technologies responsibly to mitigate potential harms and ensure fairness for consumers in the digital age.

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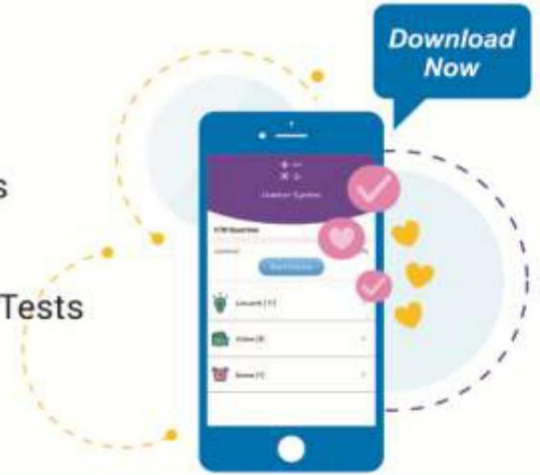
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