

National

1. CRC in Samba Jammu inaugurated

The Lieutenant Governor of UT of Jammu and Kashmir Shri Manoj Singh inaugurated the Composite Regional Centre (CRC) for Skill Development, Rehabilitation and Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities at Samba, Jammu. It is an initiative of the Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (DePWD) under the Ministry of Social Justice.

2. POWERGRID Vishram Sadan

Union Minister for Power and New & Renewable Energy Shri RK Singh inaugurated POWERGRID Vishram Sadan in Bengaluru. Similar Vishram Sadans have been built by POWERGRID at AIIMS Delhi, IGIMS Patna, DMCH Darbhanga, KGMU Lucknow, Guwahati and Vadodara.

3. ICER building at IISc Bengaluru

Union Minister Shri RK Singh laid the foundation stone for Interdisciplinary Centre for Energy Research (ICER) building at IISc Bengaluru. It is a significant step in scientific advancement for shaping the future of energy research and sustainable technologies.

4. Kapil Vatsyayan Memorial Lecture

The Kapila Vatsyayan Memorial Lecture was recently hosted by Kala Nidhi division of the Indira Gandhi National Centre for Arts (IGNCA). The event was held on the topic "Understanding India Through Indic Perspective". Dr Ritendra Sharma delivered this insightful Memorial Lecture.

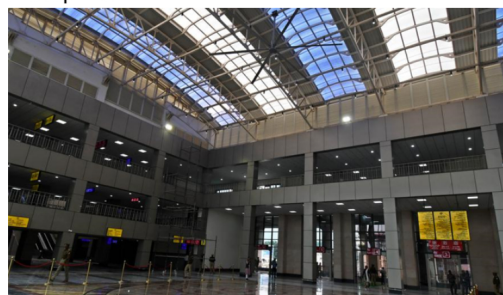
5. Postal Stamp released to mark 50 years of Pandit Jasraj's music festival

Union Minister Shri Piyush Goyal released "E-commerce Exports Handbook for MSMEs" in New Delhi. The Handbook is prepared by the Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT). The initiative supports objectives of Foreign Trade Policy 2023 and will act as

a guide for MSMEs in expanding their Exports.

6. PM Modi to inaugurate Ayodhya Railway Station

The Prime Minister of India Shri Narendra Modi will inaugurate the State of the art Ayodhya Railway Station. The Railway Station is equipped with Airport style amenities along with a cutting edge three storey complex.



7. RBI released report titled Trend and Progress of Banking in India

The Reserve Bank of India recently released a report titled "Trend and Progress of Banking in India". The report stated that Indian Banks are showing profitable growth along with falling bad loans and adequate capital buffers. The NPA Ratio of the scheduled commercial banks saw a decline of 3.2%, which is a 10 year low.

8. 99th International Tansen Samaroh in Gwalior

More than 1300 musicians created the Guinness Book of World Record for the "Largest Table Ensemble" at 99th International Tansen Mahotsav in Gwalior. The City of Gwalior was also listed as the Creative City of Music in the UNESCO Creative Cities Network (UCCN).

9. 6 SAMARTH curated Training Programs launched

Karmayogi Bharat along with NITI Aayog launched 6 SAMARTH Curated training programs on iGOT platforms. The programme has been launched for State Government Officials and it aims to enhance skills and competencies of government officials.

10. Postal Stamp released to mark 50 years of Pandit Jasraj's music festival

Union Home Minister Shri Amit Shah released a commemorative postal stamp to mark 50 years of Pandit Jasraj's Music festival- "Pandit Motiram Pandit Maniram Sangeet Samaroh" in New Delhi. The music festival was started by Pandit Jasraj in 1972 in loving memory of his late father Sangeet Ratna Pandit Motiram Ji.

11. MoU for Cooperation in Broadcasting between India and Malaysia

The Union Cabinet approved the MoU Agreement signed between Prasar Bharti and Radio Television Malaysia to strengthen cooperation in the field of Broadcasting. With the approval, Prasar Bharati creates a record of signing 46 MoUs with different countries.

12. Amrit Bharat Express

The Prime Minister of India Shri Narendra Modi is set to launch the Amrit Bharat Express on December 30, 2023. The Amrit Bharat trains aim to enhance the travel experience of Common man and provide them with luxurious facilities. It was previously called as Vande Sadharana and the train has a top speed of 130 kmph.

13. e-Svarna

IndusInd bank launched India's first corporate credit card "eSvarna" that allows linking with UPI applications. It is launched on Rupay Network and offers comprehensive facilities to business travellers.

14. Free Trade Agreement between India and EaEU

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar in the recent visit to Russia had negotiations on Free Trade Agreement with five member Eurasian Economic Union led by Russia. The Eurasian Economic Union is a five member Economic union of States located in Northern Eurasia and formed by a Treaty signed in 2014.



15. Tripartite Peace Accord

A Tripartite Peace Accord was signed between United Liberation Front of Asom (ULFA), the Central Government and Assam Government. The Peace Accord aims to bring peace in North Eastern Sister States. The signing ceremony was attended by Home Minister Amit Shah, CM Hemanta Biswa, ULFA members headed by Arabinda Rajkhowa.

16. Anganwadi cum Creche National Program

Union Minister of Women and Child Development Smriti Irani inaugurated the National Programme on Anganwadi cum Creche under Palna Scheme in New Delhi. Under the programme the Government aims to open 17000 Creche around the country.

17. Regulations on Determination of Turnover of Enterprises

Draft Regulations were unveiled by the Competition Commission of India (CCI) that were aimed at determining the "Turnover" of Enterprises. The Regulations will play a major role in calculation of penalties imposed on Enterprises for engaging in anti competitive conduct.

18. Decline in Formal Sector Employment

As per the official data released by the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI), the formal sector employment has seen a decline in the months of October. The data for employment related statistics is sourced from three major schemes

namely Employees Provident Fund (EPF) Scheme, Employees State Insurance (ESI) scheme and National Pension Scheme (NPS).

19. VGF for development of Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS)

The Government of India has approved the scheme for Viability Gap Funding (VGF) for development of Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS). Under the scheme 4000 mwh of BESS projects are to be developed by 2030-31.

20. 2nd National Stakeholders Workshop on Wildlife Health and One Health

The Central Zoo Authority (CZA) successfully conducted the 2nd National Level Stakeholder Workshop on Wildlife Health and One Health Collaboration. The workshop was chaired by Union Minister Ashwini Chaudhary. The workshop is aimed at the development of the National Referral Centre for Wildlife (NRC-W).

21. Bangalore's Kempegowda Airport named World's Most Beautiful Airport

The Bangalore Kempegowda International Airport has been named as the World's Most Beautiful Airport in a recent announcement from UNESCO's Prix Versailles 2023. The terminal 2 of the airport has won the World Special Prize for an Interior 2023.



22. Indigenous River Model BRAHMA-2D

Researchers at IIT Guwahati have developed an Indigenous River Model BRAHMA-2D that stands for Braided River Aid: Hydro-Morphological Analyser. The

BRAHMA-2D is a mathematical tool to measure flow of large braided rivers like Brahmaputra.

23. Sant Sammelan 2023

Sant Sammelan 2023 was organised on the occasion of International Geeta Mohotsav 2023 in Kurukshetra, Haryana on December 22, 2023. Union Home Minister Amit Shah addressed the event. The theme of the Mahotsav is "Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam: Srimad Bhagavad Gita and Universal Unity".

24. USD 100 million loan agreement for infrastructure development in Tripura

The Government of India and Asian Development Bank signed a USD 100 Million loan agreement to improve Urban Services and Tourism facilities in the northeastern state of Tripura. Municipal Infrastructure and Public Services in Urban local bodies along with the main national highway in Tripura will be targeted for development under the agreement.

25. PPP Beginners e-course

The World Bank along with the Department of Economic Affairs launched the Public Private Partnership (PPP) Beginner's e-course. The initiative will foster collaboration between Public and Private sectors in infrastructure capacity building.

International

1. Patriot PAC-3 missiles

Russia issued a warning to Japan on the export of Patriot PAC-3 anti-aircraft missiles to the United States. Japan ended a ban on military exports imposed in 1947 after World War 2 after the export of Missiles to the US. The PATRIOT PAC-3 entered into service with the US army in 2001.

2. EBRD to increase Ukraine funding by 4 billion euros

The European Bank for Reconstruction and

Development (EBRD) approved a 4 billion euro capital increase for reconstruction projects in Ukraine. It is the third big investment in the history of EBRD and will double EBRD's investment in Ukraine. India became the 69th shareholder of EBRD in 2018.

3. 6th NSA meeting of CSC

The Sixth NSA meeting of the Colombo Security Conclave (CSC) recently took place in Mauritius. CSC is a regional grouping of 4 countries namely India, Sri Lanka, Maldives and Mauritius established in 2011.

4. Migration and Mobility Agreement between India and Italy

The Union Cabinet chaired by PM Narendra Modi gave approval to the External Affairs Ministry to sign and ratify the Migration and Mobility Agreement between India and Italy. The agreement aims to enhance people to people contacts, Mobility of business people, students etc.

5. Russia deployed AS-24 KILLJOY Hypersonic missile

Russia recently used its "invincible weapon" also known as AS-24 KILLJOY in an Aerial strike against Ukraine. It is a nuclear capable, air launched Hypersonic Ballistic Missile. Russia launched its missile for the first time targeting a military airfield in Central Ukraine.

6. Russia destroy Norwegian NASAMS

The Russian Military has recently announced that it had struck down Norwegian NASAMS (National Advanced Surface to Air Missile System) and French Crotale AD systems at Starokostiantyniv airfield. NASAMS are ground based air defence systems that can defend against Drone, Helicopter and Cruise Missiles attack.

7. UNESCO Asia-Pacific Awards 2023

Three Heritage Projects from Punjab and Haryana

namely the Rambagh Gate, Pinal Haveli and Church of Epiphany have secured prestigious spots among UNESCO Asia Pacific Awards for Cultural Heritage Conservation 2023. A total of 12 sites have been recognized including 5 from China, 6 from India and 1 from Nepal.

Sports

1. Nepal Cricketer Sandeep Lamichane convicted for Rape

Nepal's star Cricketer Sandeep Lamichhane has been recently convicted for rape of a 17 year old girl in Kathmandu hotel. He has also represented teams in International franchise Tournaments like BBL, IPL etc.

2. Uday Kumar becomes first International Arbiter in Chess

Uday Kumar became the first International Arbiter in Chess from Rayalaseema region. He is the fourth Arbiter from Andhra Pradesh. He also became the youngest Arbiter from Andhra Pradesh.

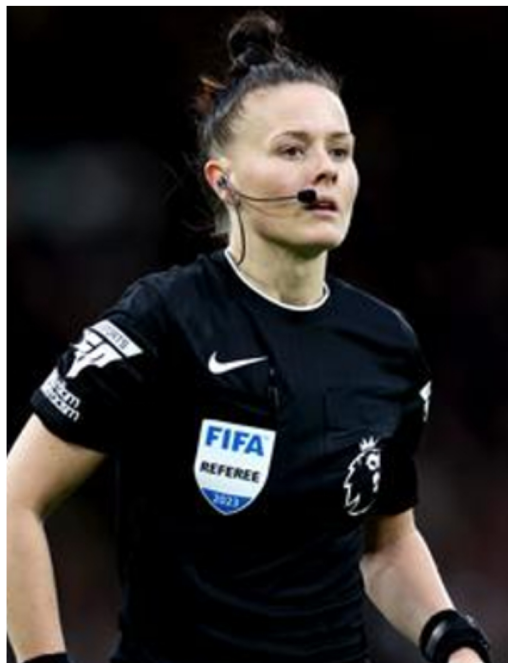
3. Olympic Gold Medallist and two time Pole Vault World Champion Katie Moon to be event ambassador for 19th edition of the Tata Mumbai Marathon. The Mumbai Marathon is a World Athletics Gold Label Race and is promoted by Procams International.

4. Haryana won Vijay Hazare Trophy 2023

Haryana clinched their maiden title after winning Vijay Hazare Trophy 2023 beating Rajasthan by a margin of 30 runs. Vijay Hazare Trophy is a limited over domestic cricket competition organised by BCCI annually.

5. First Premier League female Referee Rebecca Welch

Rebecca Welch became the first female referee of the Premier League in the match between Fulham and Burnley. She has handled matches in the second tier Championship and FA cup.



6. AITA loses appeal in ITF Tribunal

For the first time in 60 years, the Indian Tennis team is to visit Pakistan to play World Group 1 Play off tie in Islamabad. The International Tennis Federation (ITF) Tribunal rejected AITAs plea for a neutral venue

Person in News

1. Justice Sanjiv Khanna nominated as Executive Chairperson of NALSA

The President of India Shri Droupadi Murmu recently nominated Justice Sanjiv Khanna as the Executive Director of the National Legal Services Authority (NALSA). He is the second most senior judge after Chief Justice of India Shri DY Chandrachud. Justice Sanjeev Khanna will replace Justice SK Kaul.

2. Dr P Indira Devi conferred ISAE Fellow 2023 Title

Agricultural Economist from Kerala Dr P Indira Devi has been conferred with ISAE Fellow 2023 Title for her considerable work in the field of Agriculture. The award was given by the Indian Society of Agricultural

Economics (ISAE).

3. Sheiks Mishal takes oath as New amir of Kuwait

Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad al-Sabah has sworn in as the new Emir of Kuwait before the Parliament of Kuwait. He took over the position after his half brother Sheikh Nawaf AL Ahmad al-Sabah passed away.



4. French President to be Chief Guest at 75th Republic Day Celebrations

The French President Emmanuel Macron to attend the 75th Republic Day Celebrations of India on 26th January 2024 as the Chief Guest. It will be the 6th time after Independence that a French Leader will be the Chief guest at Republic Day Celebrations.

Science and tech/Defence/Space

1. Induction of MCA Barge, LSAM 10(Yard 78)

The Fourth Barge of 08× Missile Cum Ammunition Barge project namely MCA LSAM 10 was inducted at Naval Dockyard, Mumbai for NAD(karanja). The Induction ceremony for the LSAM 10 was presided over by Cmde MV Raj Krishna.

2. Asteroid God of Chaos

NASA recently launched a Spacecraft OSIRIS-APEX to explore an asteroid Apophis also known as God of

Chaos. The asteroid will make an extremely close flyby of Earth in the year 2029. The Asteroid is named after the Egyptian God of Chaos.

3. Japan's SLIM Spacecraft enters Moon Orbit

The Japanese Space Agency (JAXA) announced that its Smart Lander for Investigating Moon (SLIM) Spacecraft entered into Moon's Lunar Orbit. The SLIM Mission was launched by JAXA on September 7, 2023 from Tanegashima Spacecraft. The aim of the mission is to study the lunar surface.

4. INS Imphal commissioned into Indian Navy

Union Defence Minister Shri Rajnath Singh commissioned stealth guided missile destroyer INS Imphal at Naval Dockyard, Mumbai. It is the third in the series of four Visakhapatnam class destroyers. The development of the Ships is being done under Project 15B of the Indian Navy.



5. AI tool Watsonx.ai

NASA and IBM on the sidelines of COP28, Dubai launched an Artificial Intelligence tool called Watsonx.ai. The tool will be available on the open source platform Hugging Space. The tool will help predicting Hurricanes, Droughts and other catastrophic weather events.

6. Indian Ocean Naval Symposium 2023

The Royal Thai Navy conducted the 8th edition of Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS) 2023 Conclave of Chiefs at Bangkok, Thailand. The Indian Naval delegation attended the Symposium with Chief of Naval Staff, Admiral R Hari Kumar. 27 member countries participated in the Symposium.

Miscellaneous

1. Veer Baal Diwas to be observed on December 26

The Prime Minister of India Shri Narendra Modi participated in the event marking Veer Baal Diwas at Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi. The Day commemorates the martyrdom of two sons of Guru Gobind Singh. PM Modi announced 26th December to be observed as Veer Baal Diwas on the day of Prakash Purab of Shri Guru Gobind Singh ji dated 9th January 2022.

2. Good Governance day observed on December 25

The Good Governance Day is observed on December 25th annually to mark the birth anniversary of former Prime Minister of India, Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee. The day aims to educate citizens about the responsibilities and duties of the Government.



Health/Agriculture/Environment

1. Calotes Wangi lizard discovered in China

Researchers in China have recently discovered a new species of lizard named Calotes Wangi or Wang's Garden Lizard. It was confused for a close iguana relative for years found in Southern China and Vietnam.

2. First Eurasian Otter discovered in Kerala

In an extraordinary finding by Team of researchers, an Eurasian Otter was discovered for the first time in Chinnar Wildlife Sanctuary in Idukki, Kerala. The IUCN status of the species is Near Threatened and it is kept in Schedule 2 of Wildlife Protection act 1972.



3. Climate change effects on Aardvarks

A study from Oregon State University stated that warming climate is negatively impacting the chances of long term survival of Aardvarks in Sub Saharan Africa. These nocturnal species are also known as Earth Pigs and have IUCN status of Least Concern.

4. Omicron Subvariant JN.1 declared as Variant of Interest

The World Health Organisation (WHO) recently declared Omicron Subvariant JN.1 as a Variant of Interest (VOI) following a rapid surge. The Researchers at University of Tokyo have predicted that the Variant will become the dominant lineage of the SARS-CoV-2 virus worldwide.

5. Scientists sequence Genome of Giant Bacterium

Researchers at Cornell University, New York have sequenced the Genome of a mysterious species of Giant Bacterium *Epulopiscium Viviparum* for the first time. The Bacteria is so large that it can be seen without a microscope. The Bacteria was first discovered in 1985.

6. Area around Pong dam Sanctuary declared as Eco Sensitive Zone

The Union Environment Ministry has recently announced one kilometres area around Pong dam Wildlife Sanctuary located in Himachal Pradesh as an Eco-friendly Sensitive Zone. The Pong Dam Lake Wildlife Sanctuary was declared as a Ramsar Site in 2002.

7. Leprosy declared as Reportable Disease in Odisha

The Odisha Government recently declared a NTD namely Leprosy, a Reportable Disease in the state. It is an infectious disease that leads to physical deformity and morbidity in the patient. India has eliminated Leprosy as per WHO criterion of less than one case per 10,000 population.

8. Jumping Spider Species discovered in South India

Two New Species of Jumping Spiders belonging to Genus *Afraflacilla* have been discovered from Kerala and Tamil Nadu. *Afraflacilla Adavathurensis* was discovered from Adavathur while *Afraflacilla Kerala* were spotted in Irinjalakuda and Kuttanad.

9. MedTech Mitra

The Union Minister of Health and Family Welfare, Dr Mansukh Mandaviya launched the MedTech Mitra portal. It is a strategic initiative to empower MedTech Innovators and Advance Healthcare Solutions. ICMR and CDSCO will be coordinating the portal under the guidance of NITI Aayog's Atal Innovation Mission.

10. New species of Bacteria *Pantoea Tagorei* discovered

The researchers from Visva Bharati University, Kolkata have discovered a new species of bacteria "*Pantoea Tagorei*", named after Nobel Laureate RabindraNath Tagore. The species has been discovered from soil samples collected at Jharia Coal Mines.



11. WHO grants prequalification to R21/Matrix-M



Date : 31st Dec 2023

Weekly Current Affairs

English

Malaria Vaccine

The World Health Organisation grants pre-qualification to the second Malaria vaccine R21/Matrix-M. The first vaccine that got pre-qualification in June 2022 was RTS,S/AS01. Malaria is a disease transmitted by Parasites like Mosquitoes and mostly children in the African region are affected by it.

12. Polar Stratospheric Clouds over Arctic

Rare Rainbow Clouds scientifically known as Polar Stratospheric Clouds have been witnessed by residents in the Arctic. The phenomenon was observed over various locations including Norway, Sweden, Scotland and Finland.

13. Fossilised Megalodon tooth found

Oceanographers from the USA in collaboration with Zoologist from Germany's SNSB- Bavarian State Collection of Zoology have made a groundbreaking discovery of the first in situ fossilised megalodon tooth in deep sea. The researchers were surveying the area aboard the Exploration Vessel Nautilus and filmed the In situ before collection.