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**JANUARY 2023**

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## NATIONAL NEWS

### Amit Shah lays the foundation stone of the Central Detective Training Institute (CDTI) in Karnataka

- Union Home and Cooperation Minister Shri Amit Shah laid the foundation stone of the Central Detective Training Institute (CDTI) at Devanahalli in Karnataka.
- This will be a resource that will make facilities for police forces more accessible.
- This will be the sixth CDTI of the Bureau of Police Research and Development under the Union Ministry of Home Affairs.
- The first CDTI was set up in Calcutta in 1958. The remaining four are at Chandigarh, Hyderabad, Jaipur and Ghaziabad.

### PM Narendra Modi launched the world's longest river cruise-MV Ganga Vilas from Varanasi to Assam

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched the world's longest river cruise in Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh to Dibrugarh in Assam on 13 January 2023.
- It is a luxury cruise and will cover a distance of more than 3,200 km in 51 days.
- It will flow across 27 river systems in five states in India and Bangladesh.

### Rajnath Singh inaugurated the steel arch Siyom Bridge in Arunachal Pradesh

- Defence Minister Rajnath Singh inaugurated Siyom Bridge in Arunachal Pradesh. This was inaugurated along with 27 other projects of Border Roads Organisation (BRO).
- It is a 100-metre 'Class-70' steel arch superstructure built on the Aalo-Yingkiong road between West Siang and Upper Siang districts.
- The bridge will facilitate faster induction of troops, heavy equipment like howitzers and mechanised vehicles to forward areas of the Upper Siang district, Tuting and Yinkiong regions along the Line of Actual Control (LAC).

#### Key Points (Border Roads Organisation)

Founded	- 7 May 1960
Headquarters	- New Delhi
Director General	- Lt. Gen. Rajeev Chaudhary

### Kollam becomes the country's first constitution-literate district.

- Kollam has become the country's first constitution-literate district. This announcement was made by Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan on 14 January.
- The success is the result of a seven-month campaign launched by the Kollam district panchayat, District Planning Committee, and the Kerala Institute of Local Administration (KILA) to educate citizens about the country's laws and their rights.

#### Key Points

Kerala's Capital	- Thiruvananthapuram
Kerala's Governor	- Arif Mohammad Khan

### Central Government constitutes a High Powered Committee to protect Ladakh culture, language and employment

- The Central government has constituted a High Powered Committee (HPC), to discuss measures to protect Ladakh's unique culture, language and employment.
- The 17-member committee has been constituted under the Chairmanship of Minister of State for Home Affairs Nityanand Rai.
- HPC will discuss the protections of culture and language considering the geographical location and strategic importance of Ladakh.
- HPC will also discuss the protections of land and employment for the people, inclusive development, employment generation and measures related to the empowerment of Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Councils of Leh and Kargil.

#### Key Points

Ladakh is a Union Territory formed on 31 October 2019.	
Ladakh's Capital	- Leh
Ladakh's Lieutenant Governor	- BD Mishra.
Ladakh is both the largest and the second least populous union territory of India.	

### Union Minister for Health and Family Welfare, Dr. Mansukh Mandaviya chairs a high-level meeting with State Governments to review the elimination of Kala-Azar from the country by 2023

- Health and Family Welfare Minister Dr. Mansukh Mandaviya chaired a high-level meeting with four State governments to review the elimination of Kala-Azar from the country by this year.
- Approximately 90 per cent of global cases of Kala-Azar were reported in eight countries.
- These are Brazil, Eritrea, Ethiopia, India, Kenya, Somalia, South Sudan, and Sudan in 2021. India is contributing 11.5 per cent of the total cases reported globally.
- Currently more than 90 per cent of Kala-Azar cases are contributed by Bihar and Jharkhand.

#### Key Points

Kala-Azar is also known as Visceral Leishmaniasis (VL) or Black Fever.

Causative agent-Protozoa parasite from 20 Leishmania species. Leishmania parasites are transmitted through the bites of infected female phlebotomine sandflies, which feed on blood to produce eggs.

### World's first Palm-leaf Manuscript Museum in Thiruvananthapuram

- The world's first Palm Leaf Manuscript Museum was opened in Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala. It contains 187 manuscripts and other artefacts related to the former Travancore kingdom from 650 AD until the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.
- It also has documents from the regions of Kochi and Malabar.
- The museum is located in a three-century-old building that is home to the Central Archives of the state government.
- The first phase of the museum's collection was selected from 1.5 crore palm leaf records that had been poorly preserved throughout the state.

### NCERT launched India's first national assessment regulator, PARAKH

- The National Council for Education Research and Training (NCERT) has released India's first national assessment regulator, PARAKH.

- PARAKH stands for Performance Assessment, Review and Analysis of Knowledge for Holistic Development. It is established within the education survey division of the NCERT.
- It will work on setting norms, standards and guidelines for student assessment and evaluation for all recognised school boards in the country.
- The PARAKH regulator aims to set up assessment guidelines for all boards to help remove disparities in the scores of students enrolled with different state boards.

#### Key Points

NCERT's President - Dharmendra Pradhan

NCERT's Director - Dr. Dinesh Prasad Saklani

Headquarters - New Delhi

### Government launches U-WIN to digitise India's universal immunisation programme

- The government has launched U-WIN to set up an electronic registry for routine vaccinations.
- U-WIN has been launched to digitise India's Universal Immunisation Programme (UIP) in a pilot mode in two districts of each state and Union Territory. It was launched on January 11, 2023 in 65 districts.
- It will be used to register and vaccinate every pregnant woman, record her delivery outcome, register newborn delivery, administer birth doses and all vaccination events, etc.
- It is going to be the single source of information for immunisation services, updating vaccination status, delivery outcome, planning of RI sessions and reports like antigen-wise coverage, etc.

### India celebrated its 74<sup>th</sup> Republic Day on 26<sup>th</sup> January 2023.

- India celebrated its 74<sup>th</sup> Republic Day with great grandeur with the President Draupadi Murmu unfurling the national flag on the recently unveiled Kartavaya Path where a grand parade was held.
- Republic Day commemorates the implementation of the Constitution on January 26, 1950. January 26 was chosen as the Republic Day since it was on this day that the Indian National Congress declared 'Purna Swaraj', opposing the British regime's dominion status in 1929.
- It was in the year 1934, MN Roy initiated a move to draft a constitution for India and subsequently to

form a Constituent Assembly. Dr BR Ambedkar was appointed as the chairman of the drafting committee of the constitution. The constitution was finally adopted by the Constituent Assembly on November 26, 1949, and that's why November 26 is celebrated as Constitution Day.

- It took 2 years, 11 months, and 17 days to form the Indian constitution. During the drafting period, 11 sessions were held that were spread over 165 days.
- India celebrated its first republic day on 26 January 1950 with Dr Rajendra Prasad sworn in as India's first president on that day.

### Prime Minister virtually inaugurated Dr. Syama Prasad Mookerjee National Institute of Water and Sanitation in Kolkata

- Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi inaugurated the Dr. Syama Prasad Mookerjee National Institute of Water and Sanitation (SPM-NIWAS) at Joka in Kolkata via video conferencing on 30 December 2022.
- SPM-NIWAS has been set up at a cost of around ₹ 100 crore on 8.72 acres of land at Joka, Diamond Harbour Road, Kolkata, West Bengal.
- It was previously known as National Centre for Drinking Water, Sanitation and Quality.
- Through this, the Department of Drinking Water and Sanitation (DDWS) aims to bridge the knowledge and capacity building gap in the field of public health engineering, sanitation and hygiene, through short, medium and long-term courses which are not only related to engineering but also cover aspects of management, health, accounting, law and public policies.

#### Key Points

The Ministry of Jal Shakti was formed due to the merger of the Ministry of Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation and Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation.

Union Minister of Jal Shakti – Gajendra Singh Shekhawat

### President of India inaugurated Samvidhan Udyan at Raj Bhavan, Jaipur

- The President of India, Smt. Droupadi Murmu inaugurated Samvidhan Udyan, Mayur Stambh, National Flag Post, statues of Mahatma Gandhi and Maharana Pratap at Raj Bhavan, Jaipur.

- On the occasion, she virtually inaugurated the Transmission System for Solar Energy Zones in Rajasthan and laid the foundation stone for 1000 MW Bikaner Solar Power Project of SJVN Limited.

#### Key Points

Rajasthan's capital	- Jaipur
Governor	- Kalraj Mishra
Chief Minister	- Ashok Gehlot

### India's first-ever coal gasification based Talcher Fertiliser plant in Odisha will be ready by October 2024

- Union Health and Family Welfare and Chemicals and Fertilisers Minister Dr. Mansukh Mandaviya has said that the country's first-ever coal gasification-based Talcher Fertiliser plant in Odisha will be ready to be dedicated to the nation by October 2024.
- The urea plant at Talcher which uses Coal Gasification Technology to produce urea will be ready by the end of this year.
- This will reduce the import of urea in the country. This is being supported by Coal India Ltd, the Gas Authority of India Ltd and the National Fertiliser Corporation.

#### Key Points

Capital	- Bhubaneswar
Governor	- Ganeshi Lal
Chief Minister	- Naveen Patnaik

### Election Commission launched 'Mission-929' to take voter turnout in Tripura to over 90%

- The Election Commission (EC) is focusing on 929 polling booths across Tripura, setting a target of 92 per cent voter turnout in the assembly elections due early this year.
- These booths recorded a voter turnout of less than 89 per cent, which was the average across 3,328 booths in the 2018 assembly polls.

#### Key Points

Established	- 25 <sup>th</sup> January 1950
Chief Election Commissioner of India	- Rajiv Kumar
Headquarters	- New Delhi

### Government to hand over 1,000 monuments to the private sector under Monument Mitra Scheme

- The government will hand over around 1,000 monuments under the control of the Archaeological Survey of India to the private sector for their upkeep under the Monument Mitra Scheme.
- Corporate entities will take over these monuments as part of their Corporate Social Responsibility. Under this scheme, monument amenities will be revamped by the private sector.
- The government has set the target to hand over 500 sites under the revamped Monument Mitra Scheme by the end of Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav on 15<sup>th</sup> August 2023.

- This Monument Mitra Scheme was started some years back under the Ministry of Tourism. Now the Ministry of Tourism has transferred this scheme to the Ministry of Culture in respect of the monuments under the Archaeological Survey of India.

#### Key Points

Headquarters	- New Delhi
Director General	- V. Vidyavathi
Parent Organisation	- Ministry of Culture
Union Minister of Culture	- G. Kishan Reddy

## INTERNATIONAL NEWS

### Croatia adopts Euro as its currency and enters Europe's passport free-zone

- Croatia has switched to the euro and entered Europe's passport-free zone. These are two important milestones for the country after joining the European Union (EU) nearly a decade ago.
- It bid farewell to its Kuna currency and became the 20<sup>th</sup> member of the Eurozone.
- It is now the 27<sup>th</sup> nation in the Schengen zone, the world's largest passport-free travel area, which enables more than 400 million people to move freely around its members.

#### Key Points

Capital	- Zagreb
President	- Zoran Milanović
Prime Minister	- Andrej Plenković

### India strongly backs Sri Lanka's debt restructuring plan

- India has told the International Monetary Fund that it strongly supports Sri Lanka's debt restructuring plan as it seeks a \$2.9 billion loan from International Monetary Fund (IMF).
- Sri Lanka requires the backing of China and India – its biggest bilateral lenders – to reach a final agreement with the IMF on the \$2.9 billion loan that is essential to help the country emerge from its worst financial crisis in seven decades.

#### Key Points

Capital	- Sri Jayawardenepura Kotte (legislative) and Colombo (executive and judicial)
Prime Minister	- Dinesh Gunawardena
President	- Ranil Wickremesinghe

*Note:* The two capitals of Sri Lanka represent the two largest urban areas in the country.

### China is the first country in Asia and the second country in the world to launch hydrogen powered train

- China's CRRC Corporation Ltd. launched a hydrogen urban train, and it is the first in Asia and the second such train in the world.
- Germany was the first country to launch such trains.
- The hydrogen trains have a speed of 160 km per hour and the operational range without refuelling is 600 km. The trains launched by Germany have a record of 1,175 km range set.
- India is all set to get its indigenous hydrogen trains by 2023.

#### Key Points

Capital	- Beijing
President	- Xi Jinping

### United States approves world's first vaccine for declining honey bee

- The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has recently granted a conditional license for a vaccine aiming to protect honey bees from American foulbrood disease, an infection caused by the bacterium *Paenibacillus larvae* that weakens and kills honey bee colonies and currently has no treatment.
- This vaccine – developed by the U.S. biotech company Dalan Animal Health – raises hopes for a new and powerful weapon against a disease that routinely ravages colonies that are highly important for food pollination.

#### Key Points

Capital	- Washington, DC
President	- Joe Biden

### Punjabi to be taught in public schools in Western Australia

- Punjabi is all set to be the newest language to be taught in public schools of Western Australia.
- The Australian government is adopting Punjabi as the newest language after a 2021 census showed that it was the fastest-growing language in Australia with more than 239,000 people using it at home, an increase of over 80 per cent from 2016.
- The move to teach Punjabi in schools was considered after the syllabus included Tamil, Hindi and Korean languages in 2021.

#### Key Points

Capital	- Canberra
Prime Minister	- Anthony Albanese

### India takes over leadership of the Asian Pacific Postal Union

- India took over the leadership of the Asia Pacific Postal Union (APPU) in January 2023.
- Dr Vinaya Prakash Singh will take over the charge of Secretary General of the Union for a tenure of 4 years.
- Asian Pacific Postal Union (APPU) is an intergovernmental organisation of 32-member countries of the Asia-Pacific region. APPU is the only restricted union of the Universal Postal Union (UPU) in the region, which is a specialised agency of the United Nations. The goal of APPU is to extend, facilitate and improve postal relations between member countries and to promote cooperation in the field of postal services.

### Canada to commercialise world's first photonic-based fault tolerant quantum computer

- Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau has announced a new federal investment to build and commercialise the world's first photonic-based, fault-tolerant quantum computer.
- The investment of 40 million Canadian dollars will enable Xanadu Quantum Technologies Inc., a Toronto-based Canadian quantum computing company, to develop the quantum computer which will have the potential to provide world leading capabilities to help solve complex data problems and can be used in a variety of sectors such as finance, transportation, environmental modelling and health.

#### Key Points

Capital	- Ottawa
Prime Minister	- Justin Trudeau

## GOVERNMENT SCHEMES

### 'SMART' program for Ayurveda professionals to boost R&D in Ayurveda launched

- The National Commission for Indian System of Medicine (NCISM) and the Central Council for Research in Ayurvedic Sciences (CCRAS) have launched 'SMART' (Scope for Mainstreaming Ayurveda Research in Teaching Professionals) program aimed to boost scientific research in priority healthcare research areas through Ayurveda colleges and hospitals.

- NCISM and CCRAS are the two prominent institutions under the Ministry of Ayush, Government of India for regulating medical education and conducting scientific research, respectively.
- It is conceptualised with an objective to identify, support and promote innovative research ideas in healthcare research areas including Osteoarthritis, Iron Deficiency Anaemia, Chronic Bronchitis, Dyslipidemia, Rheumatoid Arthritis, Obesity, Diabetes Mellitus,

Psoriasis, Generalised Anxiety Disorder, Non-Alcoholic Fatty Liver Disease (NAFLD).

- 'SMART' program is being implemented under the overall supervision and guidance of Ministry of Ayush, Government of India.

#### Key Points

Ministry of Ayush is responsible for the research, development and education of traditional medicine in India. It includes Ayurveda, Yoga and Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha, Sowa Rigpa and Homeopath.

Union Minister of AYUSH – Sarbananda Sonowal

#### Cabinet approves National Green Hydrogen Mission

- The Union Cabinet has approved National Green Hydrogen Mission with the aim to make India a 'global hub' for using, producing and exporting green hydrogen.
- The initial outlay for the Mission will be ₹ 19,744 crore including an outlay of ₹ 17,490 crore for the Strategic Interventions for Green Hydrogen Transition Programme (SIGHT) programme, ₹ 1,466 crore for pilot projects, ₹ 400 crore for R&D and ₹ 388 crore towards other mission components.
- Under this mission, the government will incentivise the commercial production of green hydrogen and make India a net exporter of the fuel.
- The government aims to entail over ₹ 8 lakh crore of total investments and is expected to generate six lakh jobs.
- It will also lead to a cumulative reduction in fossil fuel imports by over ₹ 1 lakh crore and an abatement of nearly 50 MT of annual greenhouse gas emissions.
- The Ministry of New and Renewable Energy is the nodal ministry.

#### Government approved BIND (Broadcasting Infrastructure and Network Development) Scheme

- The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs approved the proposal of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting regarding the Central Sector Scheme "Broadcasting Infrastructure and Network Development" (BIND) Scheme at a cost of ₹ 2,539.61 crore for infrastructure development of Prasar Bharati, i.e., All India Radio (AIR) and Doordarshan (DD) with an outlay of ₹ 2,539.61 crore up to 2025–26.
- Under this scheme, financial support will be provided to Prasar Bharati for expenses related to expansion

and up gradation of its broadcasting infrastructure, content development and civil work related to the organisation.

- It will help Prasar Bharti to undertake a major upgradation of its facilities with better infrastructure which will widen its reach, including in the LWE, border and strategic areas and provide high quality content to the viewers.

#### Key Points

Prasar Bharti Headquarters	- New Delhi
Prasar Bharti CEO	- Gaurav Dwivedi
Union Minister of Information and Broadcasting	- Anurag Thakur

#### National strategic plan and roadmap for leprosy launched 2023–27

- The Government of India has launched National Strategic Plan (NSP) and Roadmap for Leprosy (2023–27) to achieve zero transmission of leprosy by 2027. This will be three years ahead of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 3.3.
- The NSP and roadmap contain implementation strategies, year-wise targets, public health approaches and overall technical guidance for the programme.
- The strategy and roadmap focus on awareness for zero stigma and discrimination, promotion of early case detection, prevention of disease transmission by prophylaxis (Leprosy Post Exposure Prophylaxis) and roll out of web-based information portal (Nikusth 2.0) for reporting of leprosy cases.
- After achieving elimination status at the national level, the National Leprosy Eradication Programme (NLEP) has taken a number of initiatives to encourage early case detection of leprosy patients to prevent Grade 2 Disabilities, and to ensure cost-free treatment of leprosy patients.

#### Key Points

Hansen's disease is also known as leprosy  
Causative agent – Mycobacterium leprae bacteria

#### PM Modi announces 'Aarogya Maitri' for medical supplies to developing nations

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced a new 'Aarogya Maitri' project under which India will provide essential medical supplies to any developing country



affected by natural disasters or humanitarian crisis and proposed to set up a 'centre of excellence' to facilitate development solutions to these countries.

- India will launch the Global South Science and Technology Initiative to share its expertise in areas such

as space technology and nuclear energy and establish the Global South Centre of Excellence for research on development solutions that can be scaled up and implemented around the world.

## BANKING, FINANCE AND ECONOMY NEWS

### India's Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman tabled Economic Survey 2022–23 in the Parliament

- India's Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman tabled the Economic Survey 2022–23, which reviews how the economy performed in this fiscal year and the road ahead for the next year.
- The Economic Survey was prepared by Chief Economic Adviser V. Anantha Nageswaran.
- It forecasts India's economy to grow at 6.5 per cent in 2023–24, compared to 7 per cent this fiscal and 8.7 per cent in 2021–22.
- The Economic survey predicted nominal growth, which takes inflation into account, predicted at 11%.
- India is the world's third-largest economy in PPP (purchasing power parity) terms and fifth largest in terms of exchange rate.
- The Economic Survey comes a day ahead of the Union Budget for the next fiscal year starting April 1. The Economic Survey presented to the Houses reflects the state of India's economy and presents detailed statistical data on different sectors and how they performed during the previous year.

### Asian Development Bank provides \$100 million loans to Shriram Finance Limited

- Non-Banking Financial Company (NBFC) Shriram Finance Ltd. has secured a long-term funding of \$100 million from Asian Development Bank (ADB) to finance its purchase of new and used vehicles across India.

#### Key Points

Headquarters	- Mandaluyong, Philippines
Formation	- 19 <sup>th</sup> December 1966
President	- Masatsugu Asakawa

### RBI launched Utkarsh 2.0 for the period 2023–25

- RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das launched Utkarsh 2.0, the second phase of the central bank's medium-term

strategy for strengthening regulatory and supervisory mechanism. Utkarsh 2.0 addresses the period 2023-25.

- The first strategy framework (Utkarsh 2022) covering the period 2019–22 was launched in July 2019. It became a medium-term strategy document guiding the Bank's progress towards realisation of the identified milestones.

#### Key Points

Headquarters	- Mumbai
Formation	- 1 April 1935

### Indian Government and ADB sign \$1.22 billion loan agreements for infrastructure projects

- The Indian government and the Asian Development Bank (ADB) signed loan agreements totalling \$1.22 billion for developing infrastructure in various Indian states, a statement from the finance ministry said.
- The agreements would cover projects for improving the power sector and highways in the northeastern states of Tripura and Assam, metro rail connectivity in the southern city of Chennai and improvement of key economic areas in the western state of Maharashtra.

### HDFC Bank partnered with Microsoft for digital transformation

- HDFC Bank has partnered with Microsoft in the next phase of its digital transformation journey and unlocking business value by transforming the application portfolio, modernising the data landscape and securing the enterprise with Microsoft Cloud.
- It is part of its Future Ready strategy to develop in-house IPs as well as partner with several companies including FinTechs to co-create technology IPs.

#### Key Points

Headquarters	- Mumbai
CEO	- Sashidhar Jagdishan
Chairman	- Atanu Chakraborty

### SBI, ICICI, HDFC Bank remain Systemically Important Banks (SIBs)

- The Reserve Bank of India said SBI, ICICI Bank and HDFC Bank remain domestic systemically important banks (D-SIBs).
- Domestic Systemically Important Banks (D-SIBs) are those banks whose failure can impact the whole of the financial system and create instability.
- In addition to the usual capital conservation buffer, D-SIBs will need to maintain additional Common Equity Tier 1 (CET1).
- The RBI had announced SBI and ICICI Bank as D-SIBs in 2015 and 2016. Based on data collected from banks as on March 31<sup>st</sup>, 2017, HDFC Bank was also classified as a D-SIB, along with SBI and ICICI Bank.

#### Key Points

SBI's Headquarters	- Mumbai
SBI's chairman	- Dinesh Kumar Khara
ICICI's Headquarters	- Mumbai
ICICI's chairman	- Girish Chandra Chaturvedi
ICICI's MD & CEO	- Sandeep Bakshi

### RBI survey for price movements, inflation assessment launched

- The RBI launched Inflation Expectations Survey of Households (IESH) that aims at capturing subjective assessments on price movements and inflation based on their individual consumption baskets across 19 cities.
- Consumer Confidence Survey (CCS) to be conducted in 19 cities seeks qualitative responses from households, regarding their sentiments on general economic situation, employment scenario, price level, households' income and spending.

### State Bank of India (SBI) has launched e-Bank Guarantee (e-BG) facility in association with National e-Governance Services Limited (NeSL)

- State Bank of India (SBI) has launched e-Bank Guarantee (e-BG) facility in association with National e-Governance Services Limited (NeSL).
- This facility will bring about a revolutionary change in the banking ecosystem, where bank guarantee is frequently used in large volumes.
- By using the NeSL's platform, the bank customers

and other beneficiaries will instantly get an e-Bank guarantee without additional verification.

### India surpasses Japan to become 3<sup>rd</sup> largest auto market globally

- India has surpassed Japan in terms of auto sales last year to become the third-largest auto market globally for the first time.
- India's total sales of new vehicles stood at around 4.25 million units, based on preliminary results, topping the 4.2 million sold in Japan.
- China maintained its lead in the global auto market. The US remained second with 15.4 million vehicles.

### Government starts process to buy 100 more K9-Vajras

- The Defence Ministry has started the process for the procurement of 100 more K9-Vajra tracked self-propelled howitzers.
- These are built in India by Larsen & Toubro (L&T) using technology transferred from South Korean defence major Hanwha Defence based on its K9 Thunder.
- The 100<sup>th</sup> gun was delivered to the Army in 2021.
- The K9 Vajra is a 155 mm, 52-calibre tracked self-propelled howitzer, a short gun for firing shells on high trajectories at low velocities.

### Petrol blended with 20% ethanol from April 1

- The phased roll-out of E20 (20 per cent ethanol blending in gasoline) will begin on April 1<sup>st</sup>, Petroleum Minister Hardeep Singh Puri has said.
- The fuel will be available at select outlets and will not require changes to car engines.
- The proposed roll-out will give further impetus to the government's plans of achieving the level of 20 per cent ethanol blending in the overall petrol supply in the country by ethanol supply year (ESY) 2025–26.
- The deadline for achieving this had been brought forward from 2030 as the supply of raw ethanol has grown at a fast clip.
- India was on track to contribute 25 per cent of global ethanol demand by 2040.

### UN slashes India's economic growth forecast by 20 bps to 5.8% for 2023

- The United Nations slashed down India's growth forecast by 20 basis points to 5.8 per cent for 2023 calendar year, citing the effect of tighter monetary policy and weak global demand.

- The report is titled UN's World Economic Situation and Prospects 2023 and is written by the UN's Department of Economic and Social Affairs, the UN Conference on Trade and Development, and the regional economic commissions for Africa, Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean, Asia and the Pacific, and Western Asia.

#### Key Points

Headquarters	- New York
Secretary General	- António Guterres
Total members	- 193
Founding Year	- 1945

#### Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO) launches a revamped Nidhi Aapke Nikat program

- EPFO had launched massive District Outreach Programme in all the Districts of the country through a revamped Nidhi Aapke Nikat programme.
- The Nidhi Aapke Nikat 2.0 will be conducted on 27<sup>th</sup> of every month starting from January 2023
- It will not be only grievance redressal platform and information exchange network for the employers and the employees but also a platform for exchange of information with the district level authorities of various State and Central Government departments.

#### Key Points

Parent Ministry	- Ministry of Labour and Employment
Headquarters	- New Delhi
Central Provident Fund Commissioner (CPFC)	- Neelam S Rao

#### IMF expects Indian economy to grow at 6.1% in 2023 vs 6.8% in 2022

- The International Monetary Fund (IMF) said that it is expecting some setbacks for the Indian economy next fiscal and pegged the growth rate to 6.1 per cent in 2023, down from 6.8 per cent in 2022.
- It said that the growth rate of the Indian economy will go back to 6.8 per cent in 2024, according to its World Economic Outlook.
- IMF Chief Economist and Research Department Director Pierre-Olivier Gourinchas attributed the decline in India's growth rate during 2023 largely due to external headwinds.

#### Key Points

Headquarters	- Washington, DC
Managing Director	- Kristalina Georgieva
Formation	- 1945

#### India's fastest payment app PayRup launched

- India's fastest payment app PayRup was launched on 9<sup>th</sup> January 2023. PayRup is built using the finest technology of web 3.0.
- It provides an advanced digital payment experience with outstanding user experience and can pay utility bills and landline bills, recharge their mobile, broadband, DTH, and purchase gift cards.

#### Alibaba sells Paytm stake worth \$125 million via block deal

- China's Alibaba Group sold a 3.1% stake in Indian digital payments firm Paytm for a total of \$125 million through a block deal.
- Alibaba, which held a 6.26% stake in Paytm as of end-September, sold the stake at 536.95 rupees a piece. Morgan Stanley advised Alibaba on the deal.

#### Key Points

CEO & Founder	- Vijay Shekhar Sharma
Headquarters	- Noida, India

#### NCLT gives approval to the merger of PVR-Inox

- The National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) has approved the merger of PVR Ltd. and Inox Leisure Ltd.
- The merged entity, PVR Inox Ltd. will be India's largest film exhibition entity with a network of more than 1,500 screens.
- The existing multiplex screens will retain their brands and new cinemas opened post merger will be known as PVR Inox.

#### Adani partners with Leyland, Ballard to make hydrogen fuelled electric truck

- Adani Enterprises Limited (AEL) signed an agreement to launch a pilot project to develop a hydrogen Fuel Cell Electric Truck (FCET) for mining operations and developing green hydrogen projects for sourcing, transporting and building out hydrogen refuelling infrastructure.
- Ballard, an industry leading PEM fuel cell engine manufacturer, will supply the FCmove™ fuel cell

engine for the hydrogen truck and Ashok Leyland, one of the largest manufacturers of buses in the world, will provide the vehicle platform and technical support.

- The FCET is scheduled to be launched in India in 2023.

### India's First Centre of Excellence in Online Gaming to be set up in Shillong

- Digital India startup hub through the Software Technology Parks of India shall set up India's first Centre of Excellence in Online Gaming at Shillong by March 2023.
- The announcement was made by the Minister of State for Electronics and Information Technology and Skill Development and Entrepreneurship, Shri Rajeev Chandrasekhar.

### MAARG portal for startups' mentorship launched by Piyush Goyal

- The MAARG (Mentorship, Advisory, Assistance, Resilience and Growth) platform was launched by Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal.
- The platform was launched by the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) under the Ministry of Commerce and Industry. It will facilitate mentorship between startups and entrepreneurs across sectors, stages and functions.

### PepsiCo Foundation and CARE launch 'She Feeds the World' programme

- PepsiCo Foundation, the philanthropic arm of PepsiCo and CARE, have launched 'She Feeds the World' program in India to strengthen the role of small-scale women producers through sustainable training and economic support.
- The program, which will be implemented in the Alipurduar and Cooch Behar districts of West Bengal, aims to reach out to more than 48,000 women, men and children and indirectly benefit 1,50,000 individuals.

### India-Bangladesh Friendship pipeline to start supplying diesel to Bangladesh from June 2023

- The India-Bangladesh Friendship pipeline (IBFPL) will start supplying diesel to Bangladesh on an experimental basis for June 2023.
- The international pipeline will carry diesel from the Siliguri based marketing terminal of the Numaligarh Refinery Limited to Parbatipur depot of Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation (BPC).

- The pipeline has a capacity of one million metric tonne per annum (MMTPA). The project is being built under grant assistance from the government of India. It is 131.5 kilometre long pipeline and has been constructed for importing diesel from India. Out of this, 126.5 kilometre pipeline is in Bangladesh and 5 kilometre is in India.

#### Key Points

Capital	- Dhaka
President	- Mohammad Abdul Hamid
Prime Minister	- Sheikh Hasina

### Shri Sarbananda Sonowal inaugurates National Logistics Portal-Marine, a Single Window Logistics Portal to reduce the logistics cost

- Union Minister for Ports, Shipping and Waterways and Ayush Shri Sarbananda Sonowal inaugurated the National Logistics Portal (marine) in New Delhi.
- It is a one-stop platform aimed at connecting all the stakeholders of the logistics community using IT, to improve efficiency and transparency by reducing costs and time delays and achieving easier, faster and more competitive offerings of services to promote the growth of the logistics sector and thereby improve trade.

### NTPC starts India's first green hydrogen blending operation in PNG network

- NTPC Ltd commissions India's first green hydrogen blending project. The green hydrogen blending has been started in the piped natural gas (PNG) network of NTPC Kawas township, Surat.
- The project is a joint effort of NTPC and Gujarat Gas Limited (GGL).
- This set-up is geared up to supply H<sub>2</sub>-NG (natural gas) to households of Kawas township at Adityanagar, Surat. Green hydrogen in Kawas is made by electrolysis of water using power from already installed 1 MW floating solar project.
- Petroleum and Natural Gas Regulatory Board (PNGRB), the regulatory body, has given approval for 5% vol./vol. blending of green hydrogen with PNG to start with and the blending level would be scaled phase wise to reach 20%. Green hydrogen, when blended with natural gas, reduces CO<sub>2</sub> emissions keeping net heating content same.

### PEOPLE IN NEWS/APPOINTMENTS

Name	Designation
Qin Gang	Foreign Minister of China
R'Bonney Gabriel	Miss Universe 2022
Kevin McCarthy	Speaker of the US's House of Representatives
Manpreet Monica Singh	First ever female Sikh judge in the US
Rose Christiane Ossouka Raponda	Gabon's First Female Vice-President
Alain-Claude Bilie	Gabon's Prime Minister
Aruna Miller	Maryland's first Indian-American Lieutenant Governor
Janani Ramachandran	First LGBTQ woman of colour to take oath as US City Council member
Sundararaman Ramamurthy	Managing Director (MD) and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of BSE
Ajay Kumar Srivastava	MD and CEO of the Indian Overseas Bank
Maithili Thakur	Bihar's state icon
Inacio Lula da Silva	Brazil's President
Petr Pavel	President of the Czech Republic
Pankaj Kumar Singh	Deputy National Security Adviser in National Security Council Secretariat
Jeff Zients	US Chief of Staff

### DAYS AND THEMES

Date	Day	Theme
11 January	National Human Trafficking Awareness	Wear blue to raise awareness
14 January	Armed Forces Veterans Day	
15 January	Indian Army Day	
16 January	National Start-up Day	
23 January	Parakram Diwas – Birth anniversary of freedom fighter Subhas Chandra Bose	
24 January	International Day of Education	Self Defence Training for Girls
25 January	National Voter's Day	Nothing Like Voting, I Vote for Sure
27 January	International Holocaust Remembrance Day	Home and Belonging
28 January	Data Protection Day	Think Privacy First
30 January	Martyr's Day or Shaheed Diwas	

### OBITUARIES (NATIONAL)

Name	Occupation/ Field	Place
Manjula Subramaniam	Gujarat's first woman Chief Secretary	Gujarat
Jamuna	Film actress	Hyderabad
Balkrishna Doshi	Architect	Gujarat
Keshari Nath Tripathi	Governor	West Bengal
Rehman Rahi	Poet	Kashmir
Tehemton Udawadia	Surgeon and Gastroenterologist	Mumbai
Prababen Shah	Social Worker	Daman

### OBITUARIES (INTERNATIONAL)

Name	Occupation/Field	Place
Benedict XVI	Pope	Vatican
Leopoldo Roberto García Peláez Benítez (Polo Polo)	Comedian	Mexican
Lucile Randon	Nun	France
Ronald E. Asher	Educator	England

### RANKS AND INDICES

#### Bangalore and Delhi in Top 10 best-performing global airports of 2022

- Cirium issued a list of the top-performing global airports of 2022 in which Bangalore's Kempegowda International Airport won the 2<sup>nd</sup> rank, whereas Delhi's Indira Gandhi International Airport acquired the 7<sup>th</sup> spot.
- Kempegowda International Airport saw on-time departure for 84.08% of 2,01,897 flights, Delhi's IGI witnessed 81.84% on-time departure for 4,11,205 flights.
- The list is topped by Haneda Airport, Japan.

#### Henley Passport Index 2023: India rises two spots in passport strength index

- India's passport has been ranked on the 85<sup>th</sup> spot, moving it up two places from its position in 2022.
- The index ranks airports based on data available from the International Air Transport Association.
- The first edition of the Henley Passport Index was published in 2006 India was ranked 71. Japan allows visa-free travel to 193 countries (85% of the world), i.e., a gateway to 98% of the global economy. On the other hand, an Afghanistan passport allows the passport-holder to have visa-free access to only 1% of the world's economy.

#### Global Fire Power Index 2023

- The Global Firepower Report 2023 has ranked India as the 4<sup>th</sup> most powerful army in the world in a list of 145

countries.

- The most powerful country in the world is the United States of America, followed by Russia, China, India. It is calculated using fifty individual factors from geography to logistical capability.
- It also includes manpower, land forces, airpower, natural resources, naval forces, logistics and financials.

#### Mukesh Ambani is No. 1 among Indians, 2<sup>nd</sup> globally on Brand Guardianship Index 2023

- Billionaire Mukesh Ambani has overtaken Satya Nadella of Microsoft and Google's Sundar Pichai to be ranked No. 1 among Indians and second globally on the Brand Guardianship Index 2023.
- Brand Finance constructs its Brand Guardianship Index in a similar way to the Brand Strength Index that underpins its corporate brand valuations.
- The Brand Guardianship Index includes 'Equity' factors, which reflect current perceptions, 'Performance' factors which reflect the tangible results of these perceptions, and 'Investment' factors which support future performance.

#### Aska Police Station of Odisha awarded as the Best Police Station in India

- Union Home Minister Amit Shah awarded the Aska Police Station of Ganjam, district of Odisha as the number one police station in the country.
- The Union Home Ministry ranks the police stations across the country in an annual exercise.

## SPORTS NEWS

**Odisha CM inaugurated the state-of-the-art hockey stadium in Rourkela**

- Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik inaugurated the state-of-the-art hockey stadium in Rourkela. The stadium is named after legendary freedom fighter Bhagwan Birsa Munda.
- It has been built at a cost of 261 crore rupees in a record time of 15 months.

**Germany beat Belgium 5-4 in penalty shootout to win FIH Men's Hockey World Cup in Bhubaneswar**

- Germany beat Belgium 5-4 in the penalty shootout to win the FIH Men's Hockey World Cup 2023 at the Kalinga Stadium in Bhubaneswar, India.
- This is Germany's third Hockey World Cup title after they won it in 2002 and 2006.

**120-foot-tall Polo Statue inaugurated by Amit Shah in Manipur**

- Union Home Minister Amit Shah inaugurated a 120-foot tall statue of a polo player riding a polo at Marjing Polo Complex in Imphal, Manipur.
- Manipur is known as the birthplace of the game polo.

**Indian Tennis Player Sania Mirza retires from professional tennis**

- Indian Tennis Player Sania Mirza, the former doubles World No. 1, has confirmed her retirement from professional tennis.
- She announced that the Dubai Tennis Championships, a Women's Tennis Association (WTA) 1000 event in Dubai in February 2023 will be her last match.
- Prior to her last appearance, she is going to play in women's doubles at the Australian Open in 16 to 29 January 2023 alongside Kazakhstan's Anna Danilina.

**Suryakumar Yadav has become the fastest player to reach 1,500 runs in T20 International cricket**

- Suryakumar Yadav has become the fastest player to reach 1,500 runs in T20 International cricket in terms of balls faced. He took only 843 balls to reach this landmark. However, he is the third-fastest batter to reach the 1,500-run mark in terms of innings.

**India beat England to win inaugural ICC Under-19 Women's T20 World champions**

- India became the first-ever ICC Under-19 Women's T20 World Cup winners. They defeated England by seven wickets in Potchefstroom.

**Virat Kohli became the fifth-highest run scorer in history of ODI cricket**

- Star cricketer Virat Kohli became the fifth-highest run scorer in history of ODI cricket, overtaking Sri Lankan legend Mahela Jayawardene to enter into top-five.
- At the time of becoming the fifth-highest run-scorer, Virat had 12,652 runs in 268 ODIs at an average of 57.78, with 45 tons and 65 half-century. His best score in the format is 183.
- The highest run-scorer in ODI history is Indian legend Sachin Tendulkar, who has scored 18,426 runs at an average of 44.83.

**Viacom 18 bags media rights for Women's Indian Premier League for 951 crore**

- Viacom 18 have grabbed the media rights for the upcoming Women's IPL for ₹ 951 crores for five years.
- The global rights comprise three categories — linear (TV), digital and combined (TV and digital). In the men's IPL, separate rights are sold across regions.
- The inaugural Women's IPL is likely to begin in the first week of March. Five teams will compete and all the matches will be held in Mumbai.

**Khelo India Youth Games inaugurated in Madhya Pradesh**

- Madhya Pradesh's Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan inaugurated the fifth edition of the Khelo India Youth Games (KIYG) at the Taty Tope stadium, Bhopal.
- Nearly 6,000 athletes from across the country in 27 disciplines participated in the games.
- KIYG will be held at 23 venues across eight cities of the state in which nearly 6,000 athletes will take part in 27 different sports.

## EVENTS

### Imoinu Eratpa festival celebrated in Manipur

- Imoinu Day is celebrated in Manipur as a part of the Meitei cultural ritual. The traditional festival of Imoinu Day is celebrated on the 12<sup>th</sup> day of the Meitei Lunar Month of Wakching.
- Imoinu goddess is regarded as a goddess of wealth and prosperity and as a part of the celebration, people will offer different dishes to Imoinu goddess and prayers will be held.

### Gaan Ngai festival of Zeliangrong community celebrated in Manipur

- In Manipur, the Gaan Ngai festival of the Zeliangrong community will be celebrated. The Gaan Ngai festival is one of the major festivals of Manipur which is celebrated every year after harvesting.
- The festival also marks the end of the year when the farmers have stored their food grain in their granaries. During the festival, the Zeliangrong community shows their gratitude by offering to the almighty a good harvest and praying for a better and prosperous life

in the coming year. It is a custom to produce new fire by rubbing dry wood and split bamboo pieces and distributing them to every household on the day of the festival to mark the beginning of the new year.

- The Zeliangrong community in Manipur comprises Rongmei, Liangmei and Zeme tribes.

### India's First Festival of Inclusion, Purple Fest kicks off in a glorious ceremony in Goa

- India's first-of-its-kind inclusivity, 'Purple Fest: Celebrating Diversity' began in Goa. The festival aims to showcase how we can come together to create a welcoming and inclusive world for everyone.
- It aims to showcase how we can come together to create a welcoming and inclusive world for everyone.

### 17<sup>th</sup> Pravasi Bharatiya Divas 2023

- The 17<sup>th</sup> Pravasi Bharatiya Divas 2023 Convention was held in Indore (Madhya Pradesh), India from 8 to 10 January, 2023.
- The theme was "Diaspora: Reliable Partners for India's progress in Amrit Kaal".

## AWARDS AND HONOURS

### New Goa Manohar International Airport wins best sustainable greenfield airport award

- GMR Goa International Airport (GGIAL), a subsidiary of GMR Airports Infrastructure, has won 'Best Sustainable Greenfield Airport' award under aviation sustainability and environment at ASSOCHAM's 14<sup>th</sup> International Conference-cum-Awards for Civil Aviation 2023.
- The award was presented for 'excellent initiatives' taken by GGIAL in implementing sustainability as one of core concepts.

### Subhash Chandra Bose Aapda Prabandhan Puraskar-2023

- Odisha State Disaster Management Authority (OSDMA) and Lunglei Fire Station (LFS), Mizoram, both in the Institutional category, have been selected for the Subhash Chandra Bose Aapda Prabandhan Puraskar-2023 for their excellent work in Disaster Management.
- The award carries a cash prize of ₹ 51 lakh and a certificate in case of an institution and ₹ 5 lakh and a certificate in case of an individual.

- It aims to recognise and honour the invaluable contribution and selfless service rendered by individuals and organisations in India in the field of disaster management.

### RV Prasad honoured with the most distinguished scientist of the year award

- R Vishnu Prasad was awarded "The most distinguished scientist of the year 2022" at Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi.
- He has 69 patents to his name and has been honoured with the Indian Achievers Award.

### Hindustani vocalist Padma Vibhushan Dr Prabha Atre conferred with Pandit Hariprasad Chaurasia Lifetime Achievement Award

- Hindustani vocalist Padma Vibhushan Dr Prabha Atre was conferred with the Pandit Hariprasad Chaurasia Lifetime Achievement Award.
- The award was presented by the Chief Minister of Maharashtra, Eknath Shinde.