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2023
MONTHLY GK
DIGEST

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MONTHLY GK DIGEST: DECEMBER 2023

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

UAE HAS COMMITTED 30 BILLION DOLLARS TO THE WORLD CLIMATE ACTION SUMMIT AT COP28

- The **UAE is the first Arab country to host the UN Climate Change Conference** and has pledged to bring the world together to unite, work, and deliver on climate action.
- The **\$30 billion fund, called ALTÉRRRA, is the world's largest private investment vehicle dedicated to climate action**, and aims to mobilize \$250 billion by 2030, focusing on emerging markets and developing economies.
- The **fund is designed to bridge the climate financing gap and facilitate affordable access to clean energy, low-carbon infrastructure, and climate resilience.**

WORLD'S BIGGEST EXPERIMENTAL NUCLEAR FUSION REACTOR JT-60SA INAUGURATED IN JAPAN

- The **JT-60SA reactor aims to investigate the feasibility of fusion as a safe, large-scale, and carbon-free source of net energy – with more energy generated than is put into producing it.**
- The **ultimate aim of both projects is to coax hydrogen nuclei inside to fuse into one heavier element, helium**, releasing energy in the form of light and heat, and mimicking the process that takes place inside the sun.

INDIA AND KENYA SIGN 5 PACTS

- In 2016, the **two countries signed seven pacts, including in the fields of defence and**

security, avoidance of double taxation, visa, housing and measuring standards.

- **India also extended a USD 44.95 million line of credit for Kenya's small and medium enterprises and textiles**, and agreed to build a cancer hospital in Kenya.
- These **pacts reflect the long-standing and rich bonds between India and Kenya, which share a common legacy of struggle** against colonialism and a large Indian diaspora in Kenya.

COP 28 NATURE, LAND USE, AND OCEANS DAY PLEDGES

- They acknowledged the **crucial role of nature, land, and the ocean in providing food, water, and climate regulation.**
- They encouraged **actors to accelerate climate action by implementing measures that significantly reduce emissions across both land (by at least 70 per cent by 2030 from 2020 levels) and ocean (up to 35% of the GHG emissions reduction needed by 2050).**

TIWB LAUNCHED PROGRAMME IN SAINT LUCIA FOR TAX ADMINISTRATION; INDIA CHOSEN AS PARTNER ADMINISTRATION

- **India has been chosen as the Partner Administration** and will provide Tax Experts for this programme.
- The **focus of the programme will be on effective use of automatic exchange of information** under the Common Reporting Standard (CRS) framework.
- This **programme is the seventh TIWB programme** that India has supported by providing Tax Experts.

SULTAN HAITHAM BIN TARIK OF OMAN AND PM MODI VISION PAPER

- The **meeting focused on expanding bilateral cooperation in diverse areas**, including trade and investment.
- This **visit marked a significant milestone in the diplomatic relations between India and the Sultanate of Oman.**
- The discussions **aimed to strengthen the strategic partnership between the two nations and explore avenues for future collaboration, focusing on regional stability, progress, and prosperity.**

VITA DANI BECOMES 1ST INDIAN TO BE INDUCTED AS ITTF GOVERNING BOARD MEMBER

- The **ITTF Foundation** was established in 2018 by the ITTF to attract more people to the sport.
- As the founder of the **Dani Foundation**, headquartered in India, Ms. Dani has consistently endeavored to effect meaningful change through her initiatives in sports and philanthropy.
- Her organization is **dedicated to fostering a self-sufficient society by empowering individuals** and involving communities through transformative societal actions.

FORBES' WORLD'S HIGHEST-PAID FEMALE ATHLETES 2023

- As for the **Indian badminton player PV Sindhu**, she secured the **16th spot** in the list with a total earning of **\$7.1 million**.
- This makes her the sole **Indian representative in the top 20** of the esteemed list.
- It's worth noting that nine of the **top 10 players in Forbes' list were tennis players**.

INDIA AND RUSSIA SIGNED THE AGREEMENT ON THE CONSTRUCTION OF FUTURE POWER UNITS

- The **Kudankulam nuclear power plant**, India's largest, is being built in **Tamil Nadu** with the **technical assistance of Russia**.
- The **plant is expected to start operating at full capacity in 2027**, according to Russian state media.
- The **agreements are expected to boost bilateral cooperation in the areas of nuclear energy, space, defence, trade, and connectivity**.

ADANI GLOBAL AND SIRIUM INTERNATIONAL PARTNERS TO FORM A JV – SIRIUM DIGITECH INTERNATIONAL

- The **joint venture will be owned 51% by Sirius and 49% by Adani**.
- **Sirius JV aims to capitalize on the global digital transformation expertise of Sirius and Adani's strategic insights** to focus on leading the \$175 Bn opportunity in digitalization of the Indian economy.

- This **digital opportunity is rapidly evolving to become a \$1 Tn market by 2030**.
- **Sirius JV plans to deploy an integrated ecosystem of digital platforms by leveraging the expanding power of artificial intelligence (AI), Internet of Things (IoT) and Secured Blockchain Products** across infrastructure industries and extending to areas that include FinTech, HealthTech and GreenTech.

INTERNATIONAL NEWS- ONE LINER

- The 28th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP) to the UNFCCC started in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, from 30 November until 12 December 2023. **The UN Climate Change conferences (or COPs) take place every year, and are the world's only multilateral decision-making forum on climate change with almost complete membership of every country in the world.**
- The **World Malaria Report 2023** has revealed. **The world is in danger of losing the fight against malaria, as cases of the disease rose by around 5 million year-on-year in 2022, exceeding global targets to contain it.** India was accountable for a staggering 66% of malaria cases within the South-East Asia region in 2022.
- **Pakistan has been elected as the Vice Chair of the UNESCO Executive Board for the term 2023-2025 from the Asia Pacific Group.** The elections were held during the 218th Session of the UNESCO Executive Board at UNESCO headquarters in Paris. Pakistan was elected with overwhelming support, getting 38 votes against India with 18 votes.
- **Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice President and Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai, inaugurated the world's largest concentrated solar power project on Wednesday, December 6, 2023.**
- India announced **\$1 million in immediate relief assistance to Papua New Guinea to help the island nation deal with the aftermath of the volcanic eruption of Mount Ulawun** on December 5, 2023.
- **The world's deepest underground physics laboratory is the China Jinping Underground Laboratory (CJPL). It is located 2.4 kilometers (7,874 feet) underground in southwest China's Sichuan Province.** The laboratory is also the world's largest underground lab with a room capacity of 300,000 cubic meters (79.3 million gallons), which is about the size of 120 Olympic-sized swimming pools. The laboratory went operational on Thursday, December 8, 2023.

- **Russian President Vladimir Putin recently announced the addition of two new nuclear submarines to the country's Pacific Fleet. The submarines, named Emperor Alexander III and Krasnoyarsk, were unveiled in a televised flag-raising ceremony.** Putin attended the ceremony in the northern city of Severodvinsk. These submarines are part of Russia's strategic drive to project its naval power.
- **The Global River Cities Alliance (GRCA) is a network of river cities from different countries that aims to promote integrated river management and address climate change impacts on the ecosystem.** The GRCA was officially launched on December 10, 2023, at the COP28 in Dubai, with the participation of 267 river cities from India, the USA, and Denmark.
- **Javier Milei was sworn in as the 51st president of Argentina on December 10, 2023, marking a significant shift in the country's political landscape.** His inauguration was met with both celebration and concern, as his unorthodox views and promises of radical change have generated both excitement and apprehension among Argentines.
- **American pop singer Taylor Swift has indeed been named Time Magazine's 2023 Person of the Year. Swift's selection was due to her record-breaking year in 2023,** which included a global tour and becoming the world's most-streamed musical artist.
- **The Cambridge Dictionary has indeed announced 'hallucinate' as its Word of the Year for 2023.**
- **The ongoing war in Ukraine could indeed pose a significant threat to the conservation of the Wisent, also known as the European wood bison.** This species was almost wiped out by 1927, but conservation efforts in its last remaining strongholds, including Ukraine and Russia, have raised hopes of a revival.
- **The 18th session of the Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage took place at the Cresta Mowana Resort in Kasane, Republic of Botswana** from Monday, December 4 to Saturday, December 9, 2023. The session was chaired by H.E. Mr Mustaq Moorad, Ambassador and Permanent Delegate of the Republic of Botswana to UNESCO.
- **The World Health Organization (WHO) has officially recognized Noma as a Neglected Tropical Disease. Noma, also known as cancrum oris or gangrenous stomatitis, is a severe gangrenous disease of the mouth and face.** It primarily affects malnourished young children (between the ages of 2 and 6) in regions of extreme poverty.
- **Abdel Fattah El-Sisi has indeed won his third term as Egypt's president, securing 89.6% of the votes. This election saw him face no serious challengers.** His new term will last for six years. He has vowed to address the country's ailing economy. The election was held amidst the Israel-Hamas war in Gaza on Egypt's eastern border.
- **Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah was sworn in as the 17th Emir of Kuwait. He started his political career through security and military work, spending over 56 years in these fields**
- **The United Nations has indeed declared 2024 as the International Year of Camelids. Camelids, which include species like alpacas, Bactrian camels, dromedaries, guanacos, llamas, and vicuñas, are key to the livelihoods of millions of households across over 90 countries.** They contribute to food security, nutrition, and economic growth, and hold a strong cultural significance for communities across the world.
- **Over 1500 people performed tabla simultaneously at the 'Taal Darbar' in Gwalior, setting a Guinness World Record. The event was part of the 99th Tansen Samaroh. Participants came from over 50 cities.** December 25 was declared 'Tabla Divas' by the Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh, Mohan Yadav.
- **The Migration and Mobility Agreement between India and Italy was signed on November 3, 2023 during External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar's visit to Italy.** The agreement aims to facilitate the smooth movement of workers, students, and professionals between the two countries and also address the challenges of illegal migration. The agreement was approved by the Union Cabinet on December 27, 2023.
- **Angola, Africa's second-largest oil producer, has announced its exit from the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) due to disagreements over production targets.** This decision comes after OPEC reduced Angola's oil output target last month as part of broader production cuts led by Saudi Arabia to support prices.
- **The Court of Appeals in Qatar has spared the lives of the eight former Indian Navy officers who were on death row since October 26 when a lower court in the West Asian nation had awarded them capital punishment for allegedly spying for Israel.**

- A **Protocol on Consultations** is a document that outlines the areas and modalities of bilateral cooperation between two countries. India and Russia have signed such a protocol for 2024-28 on December 28, 2023, during the 12th meeting of the India-Russia Joint Commission on Trade, Economic, Scientific, Technological and Cultural Cooperation (IRJCTC) in New Delhi.
- **Argentina has formally rejected the invitation to join the BRICS bloc of developing economies. The newly elected far-right President of Argentina, Javier Milei, has sent letters to BRICS leaders to formalize his decision. He stated that the moment was not "opportune" for Argentina to join as a full member.** This decision is a significant shift in Argentina's foreign policy, as the previous administration had endorsed joining the alliance as an opportunity to reach new markets.
- **US President Joe Biden has nominated Deven Parekh, a prominent Indian-American global venture capitalist, as a member of the Board of Directors of the International Development Finance Corporation (DFC).** Parekh is the managing director at software investment firm Insight Partners. His nomination will be for three years.

18 NEW PRODUCTS OF UTTARAKHAND GETS GI TAG

- **Uttarakhand became the 1st state in the country to get GI certificates for a maximum of 18 products in a single day.** Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami distributed GI certificates in a program organized at Chief Sevak Sadan located at the Chief Minister's residence.
- The **9 products from Uttarakhand – Tejpat, Basmati Rice, Aipan Art, White Rajma of Munsiyari, Ringal craft, Thulma, Bhotiya, Chiura Oil and Copper products** have already received GI tag.

NATIONAL MAHUA MOITRA'S ODYSSEY: FROM BANKER TO PARLIAMENTARIAN AND EXPLOSIVE EXIT

- The **Ethics Committee's report, holding her accountable for accepting gifts and illegal gratification,** paved the way for her expulsion.
- A **contentious debate where Moitra was denied the opportunity to speak,** Parliamentary Affairs Minister Pralhad Joshi proposed a motion to expel the Trinamool member for "**unethical conduct,**" a motion that was adopted through a voice vote.

NATIONAL NEWS

FORBES ASIA'S 2023 HEROES OF PHILANTHROPY LIST FEATURES 3 INDIAN: K.P. SINGH, NANDAN NILEKANI, & NIKHIL KAMATH

- Here's a brief overview of their philanthropic activities:
 - **K.P. Singh:** The Chairman Emeritus of DLF, K.P. Singh, sold his remaining direct stake in the Delhi-based property developer to fund philanthropic causes. He raised Rs 7.3 billion from the disposal of his 0.59% shareholding in DLF.
 - **Nandan Nilekani:** The co-founder and chairman of Infosys, Nandan Nilekani, donated Rs 3.2 billion (USD 38 million) to his alma mater IIT Bombay in June.
 - **Nikhil Kamath:** The co-founder of Zerodha, Nikhil Kamath, joined the Giving Pledge initiative in June. He is mainly interested in climate change, energy, education, health, and the foundation's mission to create a more equitable society.

PM NARENDRA MODI INAUGURATED 2ND EDITION OF IFSCA'S INFINITY FORUM

- The **Infinity Forum is a global thought leadership platform on FinTech.**
- The event was jointly organized by the **International Financial Services Centres Authority (IFSCA), and GIFT City, under the aegis of the Government of India.**
- The theme of the **2nd edition of Infinity Forum was 'GIFT-IFSC: Nerve Centre for New Age Global Financial Services'.**
- During his address, **PM Modi highlighted that India has emerged as a symbol of resilience and progress.**

INDIA'S FIRST BULLET TRAIN TERMINAL BUILT AT SABARMATI IN AHMEDABAD

- The **terminal is a part of the Mumbai - Ahmedabad High-Speed Rail (MAHSR) Corridor,** which is scheduled to be completed by 2028.
- The **terminal was revealed by Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw.**

- The **project, a collaboration between India and Japan, is designed to connect Ahmedabad and Mumbai** in approximately 2.07 hours, with a maximum design speed of 350 km per hour.
- The **total cost of the project is estimated to be around Rs 1,08,000 Crore, with 81% of the cost** being covered by a Japanese soft loan at a minimal interest rate of 0.1% per annum.

- The **Amrit Brikshya Andolan app** is a web portal and mobile application that **aims to plant a total of one crore (10 million) commercially-viable saplings across the state by individuals from various walks of life on September 17, 2023.**
- The Chief Minister also launched a **theme song for the Amrit Brikshya Andolan**, which is an **initiative to boost the state's green economy and fight against climate change.**

NITI AAYOG, IFPRI SIGN SOI TO STRENGTHEN POLICY FRAMEWORKS FOR AGRICULTURAL TRANSFORMATION

- The Sol **aims to strengthen policy and program frameworks that contribute to India's developmental objectives.**
- The Sol **activities include developing and tracking Rural Transformation Indicators, supporting the design and evaluation of flagship programs, providing policy analytical tools, and generating evidence on India's agri-food trade in regional and global contexts.**
- **IFPRI will provide policy analytics and support to NITI in mutually identified areas** within the broader realm of **food systems transformation, initially focusing on agriculture, rural development, trade, and climate change policies** in India.

INDIA WON ITS FIRST GOLD MEDAL IN THE WORLD ARCHERY CHAMPIONSHIPS

- It was a **historic moment** for Indian archery, as they had never **won a gold medal at the world championships** before. Congratulations to the Indian team!
- India also **won two more gold medals** in the individual compound events on Saturday, August 5.

THE SURAT DIAMOND BOURSE HAS BEEN INAUGURATED BY PM MODI

- The SDB is a significant **development for the diamond industry as it centralizes the sector under one expansive roof.**
- The **SDB spans 67 lakh square feet of floor space and has the capacity to house nearly 4,500 diamond trading offices.**
- The building, which is **part of the Diamond Research and Mercantile (DREAM) City, was recognized by the Guinness World Records as the largest office building in the world.**
- The SDB **aims to be a convenient hub for over 65,000 diamond experts, encompassing cutters, polishers, and traders.**

INDIA'S FIRST WOMAN CANDIDATE, UMA SEKCHAR, ELECTED TO GOVERNING COUNCIL OF UNIDROIT

- In the elections held on December 14, 2023, **Uma Sekhar secured an impressive 45 out of 59 votes in the first round.**
- This victory not only signifies **Ms. Sekhar's individual achievement but also elevates India to a prominent position** on the Governing Council for the term spanning 2024-28.
- The **election featured a competitive field with 32 contestants, including representatives from influential nations** such as the USA, China, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, and France.
- Notably, **candidates from Russia, the USA, and China failed to secure positions**, underscoring the significance of Ms Sekhar's successful bid for India.

MOHFW LAUNCHED E-CARE PORTAL

- The **e-CARe Portal** stands for **e-Certificate for Authorization of Remains**. It is a web-based application that **allows the relatives or friends of the deceased to apply for a certificate online, without visiting any government office.**
- The portal also **provides information on the guidelines and protocols for handling and disposal of human remains**, as well as the contact details of the nodal officers in each state and union territory.

ASSAM CM LAUNCHED AMRIT BRIKSHYA ANDOLAN APP

ZEPTO'S KAIVALYA VOHRA & AADIT PALICHA IN HURUN INDIA TOP 100 UNDER 30 LIST 2023

- **Zepto, the brainchild of Vohra and Palicha, stands out for its commitment** to delivering a diverse array of products within minutes.
- The app **caters to a wide spectrum of consumer needs, ranging from online groceries and fresh produce** to personal care items and electronics.
- Earlier this year, the company secured \$200 million in funding which propelled Zepto's valuation to \$1.4 billion, marking it as the first Indian unicorn of 2023.

NITIN GADKARI LAUNCHES DIGIELV TRADING PLATFORM

- The event took place at The Theatre, IHC, Delhi. This platform allows anyone who owns a Certificate of Deposit (CD) to sell it.
- In his announcement, Gadkari emphasized the need for a network of 1,000 vehicle scrapping centers and 400 automated fitness test centers across the nation.
- He revealed that the road ministry has already approved 85 vehicle scrapping facilities.
- This initiative is a significant step towards promoting vehicle scrapping and recycling in India.

SAANS CAMPAIGN 2023-24 HAS BEEN LAUNCHED BY MANIPUR HEALTH MINISTER TO TACKLE PNEUMONIA

- **Pneumonia is a serious respiratory infection** that can be fatal, especially for young children and older adults.
- Early diagnosis and treatment are essential to prevent complications and death.
- The SAANS Campaign likely aims to raise awareness about pneumonia, its symptoms, and the importance of seeking medical attention promptly.
- It may also focus on improving access to quality pneumonia care, particularly in rural areas.

SIX SAMARTH CURATED TRAINING PROGRAMS HAVE BEEN LAUNCHED BY THE GOVERNMENT

- These programs, collectively known as SAMARTH, are designed to equip officials with the knowledge and skills they need to meet the evolving demands of governance, improve service delivery, and contribute to effective policy implementation.
- The SAMARTH programs are available online on the iGOT Karmayogi platform, which is a comprehensive online learning platform that provides a convenient and accessible way for officials to participate in training.

RELIANCE JIO AND IIT BOMBAY COLLABORATING TO LAUNCH 'BHARAT GPT'

- This program aims to leverage large language models and generative AI to transform various sectors in India.
- This partnership is expected to deliver India-centric AI models and foster economic growth.
- It's an ambitious journey into the realm of AI, set to transform India's technological fabric.
- This collaboration is a significant step towards building indigenous AI capabilities in India.

TELANGANA CHIEF MINISTER A REVANTH REDDY LAUNCHED "ABHAYA HASTAM"

- The six guarantees include:
 - **Mahalakshmi:** A monthly financial assistance of Rs. 2,500 to women.
 - **Rythu Bharosa:** Financial assistance to farmers.
 - **Gruha Jyothi:** 200 units of free electricity per family per month.
 - **Indiramma Illu:** Land for the homeless to build houses.
 - **Yuva Vikasam:** Rs. 5 lakh educational assistance.
 - **Cheyutha:** Monthly pension of Rs. 6,000 to senior citizens, widows, and single women.
- As part of the program, the state government will take up a week-long exercise – "Praja Palana" (People's governance) – starting December 28.
- The program, aimed at receiving applications from the eligible beneficiaries of various schemes promised under Abhaya Hastam, will conclude on January 6.

NATIONAL NEWS- ONE LINER

- The 28th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP) to the UNFCCC started in Dubai, United Arab

Emirates, from 30 November until 12 December 2023. **The UN Climate Change conferences (or COPs) take place every year, and are the world's only multilateral decision-making forum on climate change with almost complete membership of every country in the world.**

- The **World Malaria Report 2023 has revealed. The world is in danger of losing the fight against malaria, as cases of the disease rose by around 5 million year-on-year in 2022, exceeding global targets to contain it.** India was accountable for a staggering 66% of malaria cases within the South-East Asia region in 2022.
- **Pakistan has been elected as the Vice Chair of the UNESCO Executive Board for the term 2023-2025 from the Asia Pacific Group.** The elections were held during the 218th Session of the UNESCO Executive Board at UNESCO headquarters in Paris. Pakistan was elected with overwhelming support, getting 38 votes against India with 18 votes.
- **Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice President and Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai, inaugurated the world's largest concentrated solar power project on Wednesday, December 6, 2023.**
- India announced **\$1 million in immediate relief assistance to Papua New Guinea to help the island nation deal with the aftermath of the volcanic eruption of Mount Ulawun** on December 5, 2023.
- **The world's deepest underground physics laboratory is the China Jinping Underground Laboratory (CJPL). It is located 2.4 kilometers (7,874 feet) underground in southwest China's Sichuan Province.** The laboratory is also the world's largest underground lab with a room capacity of 300,000 cubic meters (79.3 million gallons), which is about the size of 120 Olympic-sized swimming pools. The laboratory went operational on Thursday, December 8, 2023.
- **Russian President Vladimir Putin recently announced the addition of two new nuclear submarines to the country's Pacific Fleet. The submarines, named Emperor Alexander III and Krasnoyarsk, were unveiled in a televised flag-raising ceremony.** Putin attended the ceremony in the northern city of Severodvinsk. These submarines are part of Russia's strategic drive to project its naval power.
- The **Global River Cities Alliance (GRCA) is a network of river cities from different countries that aims to promote integrated river management and address climate change impacts on the ecosystem.** The GRCA was officially launched on December 10, 2023, at the COP28 in Dubai, with the participation of 267 river cities from India, the USA, and Denmark.
- **Javier Milei was sworn in as the 51st president of Argentina on December 10, 2023, marking a significant shift in the country's political landscape.** His inauguration was met with both celebration and concern, as his unorthodox views and promises of radical change have generated both excitement and apprehension among Argentines.
- **American pop singer Taylor Swift has indeed been named Time Magazine's 2023 Person of the Year. Swift's selection was due to her record-breaking year in 2023,** which included a global tour and becoming the world's most-streamed musical artist.
- **The Cambridge Dictionary has indeed announced 'hallucinate' as its Word of the Year for 2023.**
- **The ongoing war in Ukraine could indeed pose a significant threat to the conservation of the Wisent, also known as the European wood bison.** This species was almost wiped out by 1927, but conservation efforts in its last remaining strongholds, including Ukraine and Russia, have raised hopes of a revival.
- **The 18th session of the Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage took place at the Cresta Mowana Resort in Kasane, Republic of Botswana** from Monday, December 4 to Saturday, December 9, 2023. The session was chaired by H.E. Mr Mustaq Moorad, Ambassador and Permanent Delegate of the Republic of Botswana to UNESCO.
- **The World Health Organization (WHO) has officially recognized Noma as a Neglected Tropical Disease. Noma, also known as cancrum oris or gangrenous stomatitis, is a severe gangrenous disease of the mouth and face.** It primarily affects malnourished young children (between the ages of 2 and 6) in regions of extreme poverty.
- **Abdel Fattah El-Sisi has indeed won his third term as Egypt's president, securing 89.6% of the votes. This election saw him face no serious challengers.** His new term will last for six years. He has vowed to address the country's ailing economy. The election was held amidst the Israel-Hamas war in Gaza on Egypt's eastern border.
- **Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah was sworn in as the 17th Emir of Kuwait. He started his political career through security and military work, spending over 56 years in these fields**

- The **United Nations has indeed declared 2024 as the International Year of Camelids**. Camelids, which include species like alpacas, Bactrian camels, dromedaries, guanacos, llamas, and vicuñas, are key to the livelihoods of millions of households across over 90 countries. They contribute to food security, nutrition, and economic growth, and hold a strong cultural significance for communities across the world.
- **Over 1500 people performed tabla simultaneously at the 'Taal Darbar' in Gwalior, setting a Guinness World Record**. The event was part of the 99th Tansen Samaroh. Participants came from over 50 cities. December 25 was declared 'Tabla Divas' by the Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh, Mohan Yadav.
- **The Migration and Mobility Agreement between India and Italy was signed on November 3, 2023 during External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar's visit to Italy**. The agreement aims to facilitate the smooth movement of workers, students, and professionals between the two countries and also address the challenges of illegal migration. The agreement was approved by the Union Cabinet on December 27, 2023.
- **Angola, Africa's second-largest oil producer, has announced its exit from the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) due to disagreements over production targets**. This decision comes after OPEC reduced Angola's oil output target last month as part of broader production cuts led by Saudi Arabia to support prices.
- **The Court of Appeals in Qatar has spared the lives of the eight former Indian Navy officers who were on death row since October 26 when a lower court in the West Asian nation had awarded them capital punishment for allegedly spying for Israel**.
- **A Protocol on Consultations is a document that outlines the areas and modalities of bilateral cooperation between two countries**. India and Russia have signed such a protocol for 2024-28 on December 28, 2023, during the 12th meeting of the India-Russia Joint Commission on Trade, Economic, Scientific, Technological and Cultural Cooperation (IRJCTC) in New Delhi.
- **Argentina has formally rejected the invitation to join the BRICS bloc of developing economies**. The newly elected far-right President of Argentina, Javier Milei, has sent letters to BRICS leaders to formalize his decision. He stated that the moment was not "opportune" for Argentina to join as a full

member. This decision is a significant shift in Argentina's foreign policy, as the previous administration had endorsed joining the alliance as an opportunity to reach new markets.

- **US President Joe Biden has nominated Deven Parekh, a prominent Indian-American global venture capitalist, as a member of the Board of Directors of the International Development Finance Corporation (DFC)**. Parekh is the managing director at software investment firm Insight Partners. His nomination will be for three years.

BANKING

LIC JEEVAN UTSAV: NEW LIFE INSURANCE PLAN LAUNCHED WITH LIFETIME GUARANTEED RETURNS

- Here are some key details about the plan:
 - **Type of Plan:** Jeevan Utsav is a non-linked, non-participating, individual, savings, whole life insurance plan.
 - **Premium Paying Term:** This policy has a limited premium paying term of 5 to 16 years.
 - **Sum Assured:** The minimum basic sum assured is Rs. 5,00,000. There is no limit on the maximum basic sum assured.
 - **Returns:** The plan offers lifetime guaranteed returns. After maturity, the policyholder will get 10 percent of the sum assured life long.
 - **Benefits:** Based on the selected Premium Paying Term (Regular Income to Flexi Income), 10% of the Sum Assured is paid back annually after the specified years.
 - **Availability:** The plan can be purchased offline through licensed agents, corporate agents, brokers, insurance marketing firms as well as online directly through the LIC website.

UJJIVAN SFB PARTNERS WITH WATER.ORG TO OFFER WATER, SANITATION & HYGIENE LOANS

- **The average monthly gross GST collection for the fiscal year 2023-24 now stands at Rs.1.66 lakh crore, marking an 11% rise from the same period in the previous fiscal year.**
- **This robust GST collection highlights the underlying resilience of the Indian economy.**

RBI SUPERSEDED THE BOARD OF MUMBAI-BASED ABHYUDAYA CO-OP BANK FOR A YEAR

- This action was **taken due to certain material concerns emanating from poor governance standards in the bank.**
- The **RBI has appointed Satya Prakash Pathak**, a former Chief General Manager of State Bank of India, as the Administrator **to manage the affairs of the bank** during this period.
- A **Committee of Advisors** has also been **appointed to assist the Administrator.**
- The **members of this committee are Venkatesh Hegde** (former General Manager, SBI), Mahendra Chhajed (Chartered Accountant), and Suhas Gokhale (former MD, COSMOS Co-operative Bank Ltd).

HDFC SECURITIES LAUNCHES MOBILE TRADING APP HDFC SKY ON AWS CLOUD

- With **AWS as its preferred cloud provider, HDFC Securities is providing a secure, stable, and low-latency trading service** for the growing number of tech-savvy retail investors who prefer mobile trading.
- The **app, HDFC SKY, which is built on AWS, gives investors access** to the stock market at a scale of thousands of transactions per second.
- **HDFC SKY serves 75 million customers and all HDFC Group companies, investors, and traders** globally on trading of shares, commodities, futures, currencies, Initial Public Offerings (IPOs), mutual funds, and Exchange-Traded Funds (ETFs).

L&T CONSOLIDATES FINANCIAL SERVICES INTO A SINGLE ENTITY

- **LTFS** has recently announced that it will **consolidate its financial services into a single entity, L&T Finance Holdings Limited (LTFH)**, to simplify its structure and improve its operational efficiency.
- According to the announcement, **LTFH will merge with its four wholly-owned subsidiaries: L&T Finance Limited, L&T Infrastructure Finance Company Limited, L&T Housing Finance Limited, and L&T Investment Management Limited.**
- The **merger will result in a single non-banking financial company (NBFC)** that will **offer a wide range of financial solutions, such as rural finance,**

housing finance, infrastructure finance, and wealth management.

UNION BANK TIES UP WITH ACCENTURE FOR ANALYTICS BASED CUSTOMER SERVICES

- The program will **enable the bank to develop robust data visualization and reporting capabilities**, including interactive dashboards and reports for business, operational, and regulatory purposes.
- This will **provide employees with access to business intelligence that can enhance customer service and operational agility** across the bank's branches.
- They **focus on key areas like enterprise applications, data & analytics, core applications, and surrounding architecture like apps, call centers, and online banking.**
- This collaboration is likely to bring about a positive change in Union Bank's customer service experience.

ALL SCHEDULED COMMERCIAL BANKS (SCBS) HAVE WRITTEN OFF AROUND RS 10.6 LAKH CRORE

- This **write-off has helped banks reduce their burden of non-performing assets to a 10-year low of 3.9% of all loan advances.**
- The write-off procedure is in line with the **guidelines set by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) and policies sanctioned by the banks.**
- Despite the write-offs, the banks continue to pursue recovery actions initiated in written-off accounts through various recovery mechanisms available.

LIC NOTIFIES FRAMEWORK FOR APPOINTMENT OF SHAREHOLDERS' DIRECTOR IN ITS BOARD

- The new framework requires either **1,000 shareholders or 10% of the total shareholders, whichever is lower, to initiate the process.**
- The individual chosen as a **shareholders' director will be appointed by the board for a four-year term, with the option for re-election and re-appointment** for an additional four-year term.
- Also, the **second body/corporation in which they have been appointed should not be in a business**

that is competing or in conflict with the business of LIC.

- The Nomination and Remuneration Committee of the LIC Board has been tasked to carry out adequate due diligence at the time of appointment or re-appointment as a shareholders' director and for continuation as a shareholders' director.

WORLD BANK LAUNCHED VARIOUS INITIATIVES AT THE COP28 SUMMIT

- He also highlighted the World Bank's partnership with Microsoft to use artificial intelligence and satellite imagery to monitor and verify methane emission reductions.
- The World Bank Group Pavilion at COP28 hosted an event called "Back on Track: The Critical Path to 1.5°C by Bending the Methane Curve" on December 2, 2023.
- The fund will aim to help these countries reduce their methane emissions by up to 50% by 2030, while ensuring their economic development and social stability.

RBI CANCELS LICENCE OF URBAN CO-OP BANK, SITAPUR, UTTAR PRADESH

- The bank ceased to carry on business with effect from the closing hours on December 7, 2023.
- The Commissioner and Registrar of Cooperative, Uttar Pradesh has been requested to issue an order for winding up the bank and appoint a liquidator for the bank.
- Every depositor would be entitled to receive deposit insurance claim amount of his/her deposits up to a ceiling of ₹ 5 lakh from the Deposit Insurance and Credit Guarantee Corporation (DICGC).
- As per the data submitted by the bank, 99.98 per cent of the depositors are entitled to receive full amount of their deposits from DICGC.

SBI CARD JOINS BHARAT BILLPAY IN THE CREDIT CARD CATEGORY

- On 5th December 2023, SBI Card, one of the leading credit card issuers in India, has recently joined Bharat BillPay as a partner.
- This means that SBI Card customers can now use their credit cards to pay their utility bills, such

as electricity, water, gas, telecom, etc., through Bharat BillPay agents.

- This will make it easier and more convenient for SBI Card customers to manage their payments and avoid late fees or penalties.
- To use this service, SBI Card customers need to have an active SBI Card account and register it with Bharat BillPay.
- They can then visit any Bharat BillPay agent near them and select the biller from the list of available options.

BANK OF BARODA INTRODUCED BOB PARIVAR ACCOUNT FOR SAVINGS & CURRENT ACCOUNTS

- This is a new feature that allows customers to group their individual accounts under a single family or associated company and enjoy various benefits such as concessional interest rates, waiver of processing charges, concession in locker rent, demat AMC, and more.
- The BOB Parivar Account is available in three variants: Diamond, Gold, and Silver, with different PQAB requirements.
- The minimum number of members in the BOB Parivar Account is two and the maximum is six.
- The BOB Parivar Current Account Segment is available to proprietorship, partnership, LLP and Pvt. Ltd. companies, which are group companies.

RBI UPS FY24 GROWTH FORECAST TO 7%

- Governor Das hiked the gross domestic product (GDP) forecast for 2023-24 (FY24) to 7 per cent from 6.5 per cent earlier.
- For the third quarter of the current financial year (Q3FY24), the projection has been hiked to 6.5 per cent from 6 per cent.
- For Q4FY24, the GDP projection has been hiked to 6 per cent from 5.7 per cent earlier.
- For Q1FY25, the projection has also been hiked to 6.7 per cent from 6.6 per cent earlier.
- In Q2FY25 and Q3FY25, the GDP projections have been kept at 6.5 per cent and 6.4 per cent, respectively.

RBI HIKES UPI LIMIT FOR HOSPITAL, EDUCATIONAL PAYMENTS

- The move is expected to benefit hospitals and patients alike, as it will enable faster and smoother transactions for medical expenses and education fees.
- The UPI transaction limit for normal payments is up to Rs 1 lakh per transaction.
- For some specific categories of transactions in UPI, like capital markets, collections, insurance, and foreign inward remittances, the transaction limit is up to 2 lakh.
- The RBI said that these measures are aimed at enhancing customer convenience, promoting digital payments, and supporting financial inclusion.

MAX HEALTHCARE TO ACQUIRE STARLIT MEDICAL CENTRE IN RS 940 CRORE DEAL

- The company has executed a binding share purchase agreement (SPA) for the acquisition of 100 per cent stake of Starlit Medical Centre Pvt Ltd, which had entered into a business transfer agreement with Sahara India Medical Institute Ltd for purchase of healthcare undertaking consisting of 550-bedded Sahara Hospital, Lucknow, on a slump sale basis, Max Healthcare Institute said in a statement.

INDIA'S FOREIGN EXCHANGE RESERVES CROSS \$600 BILLION AFTER FOUR MONTHS

- The forex reserves were last above the \$600 billion mark on August 11 this year.
- The reserves were \$597.935 billion in the preceding week ended November 24.
- This is a positive sign for India's economic recovery and resilience amid the global challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

RBI CANCELS LICENCE OF MAHARASHTRA'S SHANKARRAO PUJARI BANK & UP'S URBAN CO-OPERATIVE BANK

- The reasons for the cancellation were as follows:
 - The bank did not have adequate capital and earning prospects.
 - It did not comply with the provisions of Section 11 (1) and Section 22 (3) (d) read with Section 56 of the Banking Regulation Act, 1949.
 - The bank failed to comply with the requirements of Sections 22 (3) (a), 22 (3) (b), 22 (3) ©, 22 (3) (d) and

22 (3) (e) read with Section 56 of the Banking Regulation Act, 1949.

- The continuance of the bank was prejudicial to the interests of its depositors.
- The bank, with its present financial position, would be unable to pay its present depositors in full.
- The public interest would be adversely affected if the bank were allowed to carry on its banking business any further.

DPIIT COLLABORATES WITH WORLD BANK TO ELEVATE INDIA'S LOGISTICS EFFICIENCY

- This collaboration was marked by a comprehensive meeting chaired by Special Secretary (Logistics) Sumita Dawra.
- The meeting showcased a range of ongoing initiatives and upcoming reforms aimed at enhancing India's logistics efficiency.
- Some of the key initiatives and reforms discussed in the meeting include:
 - The implementation of the Land Port Management System (LPMS) to digitize operations at Integrated Check Posts (ICPs).
 - Plans for complete electrification of railway tracks, accelerated track construction speed, increased capacity for locomotives and wagons.

LIC REDUCES STAKE IN HDFC ASSET MANAGEMENT COMPANY TO 6.953% FROM 9.046%

- This corresponds to a decrease in shareholding from 9.046% to 6.953% of the paid-up capital of the company.
- The decrease of 2.093% in holding occurred during the period from December 14, 2022, to December 7, 2023.
- The average cost of acquisition during this period was Rs 2863.45. On the day of the announcement, the shares of LIC were trading at Rs 773.95.

BANK OF INDIA LAUNCHED THE 'NARI SHAKTI SAVINGS ACCOUNT'

- Here are some key features and benefits of the 'Nari Shakti Savings Account':
- It offers personal accident insurance coverage up to Rs. 100 lakhs.

- It provides discounted health insurance and wellness products.
- It offers attractive locker facility rebates for Gold and Diamond SB A/C holders, and free facilities for Platinum SB A/C holders.
- It provides free credit card issuance, a higher usage limit of up to Rs. 5.00 lakh on point-of-sale (POS) transactions, and a concessional interest rate on retail loans.

RBI REPORT STATE'S FINANCES IMPROVED FOR 2ND CONSECUTIVE YEAR; COMBINED GFD STOOD AT 2.8%

- The report highlights that the fiscal health of the States has improved for the second consecutive year after the sharp pandemic-induced deterioration in 2020-21.
- This improvement is attributed to a broad-based economic recovery and high revenue collections.
- The States' gross fiscal deficit (GFD) is budgeted to decline from 4.1% of the gross domestic product (GDP) in 2020-21 to 3.4% in 2022-23.
- However, the GFD was down to 2.8% of GDP in 2021-22.

CANARA HSBC LIFE INSURANCE LAUNCHES 'ALPHA WEALTH' PLAN WITH OPTION TO MODIFY PREMIUMS

- It encourages long-term savings with loyalty additions and wealth boosters.
- The 'Alpha Wealth' plan is flexible and provides three plan options based on life stages: 'Alpha Invest Plus,' 'Alpha Premium Plus,' or 'Alpha Life Plus'.
- It offers an array of options by investing in a wide variety of funds - debt/equity/liquid available in the market.
- At maturity, investors are also entitled to a return of 100% of the mortality charges deducted during the policy term.

WORLD BANK & WFP DEEPEN PARTNERSHIP AGAINST BACKDROP OF RECORD FOOD INSECURITY

- The leaders from both institutions met in Rome for a day-long discussion co-chaired by Anna Bjerde, World Bank Managing Director of Operations, and

Carl Skau, WFP Deputy Executive Director and Chief Operating Officer.

- The two institutions committed to further scaling up joint efforts to support governments and communities boost food security, transform food systems, and expand adaptive social protection programs.
- The collaboration will have a particular focus on addressing the interconnected challenges of food insecurity, climate change, fragility, and poverty.
- They aim to improve programmatic alignment, anchored in data and knowledge sharing, with a sharp focus on strengthening the capacities of institutions in the poorest and most vulnerable countries.

INDIA AND ADB HAS SIGNED \$200 MILLION LOAN AGREEMENT

- This loan is intended to improve the quality, efficiency, and reliability of power supply in the state of Uttarakhand.
- The focus of this project is on energy conservation and livelihood enhancement.
- The loan agreement between the Government of India and the Asian Development Bank (ADB) is part of the Official Development Assistance (ODA).
- ODA is defined as government aid that promotes and specifically targets the economic development and welfare of developing countries.

ICICI PRUDENTIAL LIFE & UJJIVAN SFB ENTERS BANCASSURANCE PARTNERSHIP

- This strategic move aims to expand their reach and provide insurance solutions to a wider audience.
- Under this partnership, Ujjivan SFB will offer the entire suite of ICICI Prudential Life's customer-friendly protection, long-term savings, and retirement products to its customers through its extensive network of 700+ branches across 26 states and Union Territories.
- This collaboration leverages the relationship between insurance companies and banks, allowing insurers access to the extensive customer base of the banking sector.

FEDERAL BANK RECOGNISED AS TOP PERFORMER OF 2023 CAFI AWARD

- This award, organized by the International Finance Corporation (IFC), recognizes financial institutions in emerging markets that excel in reporting on their climate investments and commitments.
- The bank stands out for its significant contributions in two areas:
 - **Highest Climate Loan Amount Reported:** This indicates that Federal Bank has allocated a substantial portion of its loans to projects that support climate mitigation and adaptation efforts.
 - **Most GHG Mitigated:** This suggests that the bank's investments have led to a measurable reduction in greenhouse gas emissions, demonstrating their effectiveness in tackling climate change.

INDUSIND BANK UNVEILS 'INDUS SOLITAIRE PROGRAM' TO PROVIDE SERVICES FOR DIAMOND INDUSTRY

- **Key Features of the Program:**
 - **Exclusive Banking Services:** 24/7 locker access at specific branches, add-on family accounts, customized diamond industry employee salary accounts, and more.
 - **Premium Perks:** Debit and credit cards with membership benefits at top-tier hotels, concierge services, complimentary golf lessons and movie tickets, zero cross-currency mark-up fee on foreign exchange, complimentary lounge access, and an appealing rewards structure.
 - **Financial Convenience:** Overseas hospitalization coverage on credit cards and customized solutions for various financial needs.

RIL & DBS BANK INDIA COLLABORATES TO PROMOTE CBG PLANTS ACROSS INDIA

- The collaboration aims to facilitate the development of an ecosystem for vendor partners to aggregate agricultural residue as inputs for Reliance's CBG production plants across India.
- The financing program is designed to make the CBG supply chain competitive and achieve enhanced commercial scale.
- This initiative is part of Reliance's net-zero emissions roadmap and aims to incentivize and finance the agricultural residue supply chain, which has been largely unorganized and underutilized.

LIC CARDS, IDFC FIRST & MASTERCARD COLLABORATE TO LAUNCH CO-BRANDED CREDIT CARD

- The credit card will be available in two versions: LIC Classic and LIC Select.
- This collaboration aims to cater to the diverse financial needs of over 27 crore LIC policyholders throughout India.
- The credit cards will let policyholders save in the form of reward points on every LIC insurance premium payment.
- It will also come with other benefits, including up to **Rs 50,000 cover for lost card liability and a personal accident insurance cover of up to Rs 5 lakh.**

AFTER RBI'S TIGHTER REGULATIONS, BORROWING COSTS RISE FOR NBFCS

- The cost of borrowing for companies, banks, and non-banks through commercial papers (CP) and certificates of deposits (CD) has increased by 15-25 basis points (bps) over the past month.
- Experts have highlighted that NBFCS that are competing with banks by offering aggressive interest rate hikes to attract customers will see a rise in the cost of funds.
- In a rising interest scenario, the cost of borrowings for NBFCS is expected to rise by 100-120 basis points (bps) in 2022-23, according to a CRISIL report.
- This increase in borrowing costs could pose challenges to NBFCS.

THE MONETARY PENALTY IMPOSED BY RBI ON FIVE CO-OPERATIVE BANKS

- The banks penalized are:
 - Indapur Urban Cooperative Bank
 - Janakalyan Sahakari Bank
 - Patan Urban Cooperative Bank
 - Pune Merchants Cooperative Bank
 - Pune Municipal Corp Servant's Cooperative Urban Bank
- The RBI stated that these penalties were based on deficiencies in regulatory compliance and were not intended to pronounce upon the validity of any transaction or agreement entered into by the banks with their customers.

THE 605TH MEETING OF THE CENTRAL BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF RBI WAS HELD ON 18 DECEMBER 2023

- It was chaired by **Governor Shaktikanta Das** and **included discussions on the current economic and financial situation, both domestically and globally**, along with challenges posed by geopolitical developments.
- The **board also reviewed the activities of specific central office departments and the draft Report on Trend and Progress of Banking in India, 2022-23.**

LIC NOTIFIES HIKE IN GRATUITY LIMIT TO RS 5 LAKH FROM RS 3 LAKH FOR AGENTS

- This increase was **effected by amending the Life Insurance Corporation of India (Agents) Regulations, 2017.**
- These **regulations may be called the Life Insurance Corporation of India (Agents) Amendment Regulations, 2023, and they came into force on the date of their publication** in the Official Gazette dated December 6, 2023.
- This move is part of a series of welfare measures approved by the Finance Ministry in September 2023, which included **enhancement of the gratuity limit and family pension, for the benefit of LIC agents and employees.**
- The ministry had enhanced the gratuity limit from Rs 3 lakh to Rs 5 lakh for LIC agents **aimed at bringing substantial improvements to the working conditions and benefits for them.**

INDIAN BANKS GLOBAL PRESENCE EXPANDED: RBI ITBS SURVEY

- The survey **focuses on cross-border fund-based banking services and financial auxiliary services charged by foreign branches** and overseas subsidiaries of Indian banks, as well as foreign banks operating in India.
- Here are some highlights from the survey:
- Indian banks increased their overseas presence through the subsidiaries route and their **employee strength rose by 0.5% and 6.2% for foreign branches and subsidiaries**, respectively, during 2022-23.
- The **number of branches and employees of foreign banks in India** contracted during the year.

- **Overseas business of Indian banks expanded as both mobilisation of deposits and lending activities** increased during the year.

BANDHAN BANK INTRODUCES NEW FACILITY FOR SENIOR CITIZENS

- **High-interest fixed deposits:** Earn up to 8.35% interest per annum on fixed deposits for a tenor of 500 days. This is higher than the regular fixed deposit rates offered by the bank.
- **Preferential interest rates:** Senior citizens already enjoy preferential interest rates on other types of deposits like savings accounts and recurring deposits.
- **Tax-saver fixed deposits:** Get 7.5% per annum interest on tax-saver fixed deposits, a valuable option for tax planning.
- **Enhanced banking experience:** Enjoy dedicated relationship managers, express customer service, and convenient banking hours at select branches.
- **Doorstep banking facilities:** Get banking services like cash withdrawals, cheque deposits, and account statements delivered to your doorstep.
- **Healthcare benefits:** Access discounts on health insurance premiums, medical checkups, and medicines through partnerships with healthcare providers.

GOI & ADB SIGN 37BN JAPANESE YEN LOAN FOR DELHI-MEERUT RRTS CORRIDOR

- Here are **some key details about the project:**
 - The **RRTS is a 82-kilometer high-speed rail line** that will connect Delhi with Meerut in Uttar Pradesh.
 - The project is expected to be completed by 2025.
 - The **RRTS will have a maximum speed of 180 kilometers per hour, significantly reducing travel time** between Delhi and Meerut.
 - The **project is estimated to cost Rs 17,843 crore** (US\$2.14 billion).
 - The **ADB loan will cover about 16% of the project cost.**

MAX LIFE INTRODUCES THE SMART TOTAL ELITE PROTECTION TERM PLAN

- Here are some **key features of the plan:**

- It offers a **comprehensive, customizable protection solution for you and your loved ones at an affordable price.**
- You pay only for the benefits that suit your requirement, and you have the freedom to design your own plan keeping in mind your protection needs.
- It offers several options **to customize your term insurance plan, given the fact that every individual can have different insurance needs.**
- It **provides coverage up to 85 years of age.**

CASHE REPOSITIONS THE BRAND AND LAUNCHES NEW WEBSITE AND MOBILE APP

- This strategic repositioning is aimed at **establishing the brand as a premier credit-centric financial platform, catering to the diverse financial needs of young working** millennials in urban hubs and tier 2+ cities across India.
- The company has launched a revamped website and a mobile application, designed to **expand its financial offerings to a broader audience and reinforce its national presence.**
- The **updated website and mobile application are intended to enhance the user experience and provide a distinctive experience** for digitally savvy customers.

RBI INTRODUCES CARD TOKENISATION FACILITY AT BANK LEVEL

- This facility is designed to **provide convenience for cardholders to get tokens created and linked to their existing accounts with various e-commerce applications.**
- The **tokenisation process involves replacing actual card details with an alternate code called the "token".**
- This **token is unique for a combination of card, token requestor (the entity which accepts the request from the customer for tokenisation of a card and passes it on to the card network to issue a corresponding token), and device.**
- This makes **online transactions more secure as the actual card details are not shared with the merchant during transaction processing.**

MBC PROVIDES \$120 MILLION LOAN TO AIR INDIA FOR A350-900 AIRCRAFT PURCHASE

- This is a **significant development for both parties, and it has several interesting implications:**
- **Fleet modernization:** The A350-900 is a fuel-efficient and modern aircraft, which will help Air India improve its operational efficiency and competitiveness.
- **Expansion plans:** This loan is part of Air India's larger plans to expand its fleet and network, as outlined in its recent order of 470 aircraft from Airbus and Boeing.
- **Financial flexibility:** Securing this loan allows Air India to spread out the cost of the aircraft purchase, potentially improving its cash flow and financial position.

RBL BANK LAUNCHES ELECTRONIC BANK GUARANTEE ON NESL PLATFORM

- **NeSL is India's first Information Utility and is registered with the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India (IBBI)** under the aegis of the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, 2016 (IBC).
- The **electronic Bank Guarantee (e-BG) process is made simpler with NeSL's Digital Document Execution (DDE) technology,** which includes e-Stamp and e-Sign features.
- Beneficiaries using NeSL's platform will receive an **e-Bank Guarantee right away and without further verification.**
- This **digital transformation aims to make the process more efficient and secure.**

WORLD BANK SETS UP TASK FORCE TO STUDY RECOMMENDATIONS OF IEG ON MDBS REFORMS

- This initiative was **set up under India's G20 presidency.**
- The task force was announced by **the World Bank's group president, Ajay Banga.**
- The recommendations **aim to strengthen MDBs and make these global lenders bigger, better, and bolder.**
- The World Bank, which other MDBs look up to, is expected to take the lead in carrying forward the reform roadmap for MDBs.

RAZORPAY, CASHFREE ALONG WITH 4 OTHER FIRMS GETS RBI NOD TO OPERATE AS PAS

- This approval allows them to **onboard new merchants**.
- In addition to **Razorpay and Cashfree, Google Pay, Mumbai-based expense management company Enkash, payment gateway company Payments, and neo-banking startup Open** have also secured the central bank's go-ahead.
- This is a significant step for these companies as **they can now resume onboarding new customers and continue to drive exponential growth in the payments space**.
- However, **Paytm and PayU are yet to receive the RBI nod**.

AXIS BANK & AMERICAN EXPRESS PARTNERS TO LAUNCH CO-BRANDED CREDIT CARD

- The **Axis Privilege Credit Card on the American Express Network offers several benefits:**
 - **Cashback of flat 3% on online food delivery** across all restaurant aggregators.
 - **Cashback of flat 3% on local commute** on leading ride-hailing apps.
 - **Cashback of flat 3% on entertainment** on online ticketing platforms.
 - Customers also get a **1% cashback on all online and offline transactions**.

RBI REPORT: STATES' GROSS FISCAL DEFICIT BELOW BUDGET ESTIMATE FOR 2ND CONSECUTIVE YEAR

- This is below the **Budget Estimates for the second consecutive year**.
- The deficit reduction was achieved primarily through a reduction in the revenue deficit while sustaining robust capital outlays.
- The **implementation of goods and services tax (GST) has led to increased tax buoyancy** for the states.
- States' **total outstanding liabilities are budgeted to fall to 27.6% of GDP for 2023-24 from the peak of 31% in 2020-21**.
- However, **outstanding liabilities may remain higher than 30% of gross state domestic product (GSDP)** for many states.

HDFC LIFE & NKGSB BANK ENTERS INTO A CORPORATE AGENCY TIE-UP

- This **tie-up enables NKGSB Co-operative Bank customers to avail life insurance products** of HDFC Life.
- **NKGSB Co-operative Bank is a leading multi-state co-operative bank** and has always been at the forefront of adding value to its products by establishing correspondent relationships and strategic alliances.
- **NGKSB customers will now be able to avail a bouquet of traditional, term, pensions, and annuity products of HDFC Life**.
- In FY 2023, **HDFC Life, known for its innovative products and customer-centric approach, has secured more than 68 million lives** with an overall claim settlement ratio of 99.7%.
- This **alliance reflects the Bank's commitment in ensuring the well-being and financial security** of its valued customers.

NABARD SIGNS PACT WITH ADB TO FACILITATE CLIMATE ACTION IN INDIA'S ANR SECTION

- This **initiative was launched on 18th December 2023**.
- A **Technical Support Unit (TSU) has been set up in NABARD with the partnership of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF)**.
- The TSU will enable NABARD to **address the challenges posed by climate change, particularly in the areas of agriculture and rural livelihood sectors in India**.
- He also mentioned that **NABARD is committed to not just support rural financial institutions in India to identify and abate climate risks but also channel global pools of climate capital into India's ANR sector**.
- **Intellectap Advisory Services Private Limited has been appointed to manage this Technical Support Unit**.

WB AND DEA LAUNCH PPP BEGINNER'S E-COURSE TO FOSTER PPP COLLABORATION

- This **initiative is aimed at fostering collaboration between the public and private sectors in infrastructure capacity-building**.

- The course was launched by Shri Ajay Banga, President of the World Bank Group, in the presence of Shri Ajay Seth, Secretary of the DEA, Dr. V. Anantha Nageswaran, Chief Economic Advisor, Ministry of Finance, Government of India, and Shri Parameswaran Iyer, Executive Director, World Bank Group.
- The **PPP e-course is an infra-focused capacity-building program jointly undertaken by the Infrastructure Finance Secretariat, DEA, and the World Bank.**

IRDAI IS SET TO LAUNCH 'BIMA VISTAAR', THE FIRST OF ITS KIND INSURANCE PRODUCT

- **'Bima Vistaar' aims to establish a women-centric dedicated distribution channel** focused on enhancing insurance inclusion and creating awareness in every village / Gram Panchayat.
- This initiative is designed to improve the **accessibility and availability of insurance in every nook and corner** of the country.
- The **product will be made available through an agency called 'Bima Vahak'** representing all insurance companies. '
- A **'Bima Vahak' will sell and service 'Bima Vistaar' and other insurance products specified by the Authority.**

A DRAFT LICENSING FRAMEWORK RELEASED BY RBI FOR PRIVATE-PUBLIC PARTNERSHIP FEMA

- According to the **RBI press release, the draft framework aims to rationalise and simplify the licensing process for entities that provide foreign exchange-related services, such as money changers, full-fledged money changers, and authorised dealer category II entities.**
- The **draft framework also proposes to introduce alternate models for facilitating foreign exchange facilities**, such as digital platforms and aggregators.
- The **RBI has invited comments and feedback from stakeholders** on the draft framework by January 31, 2024.

INDUSIND BANK LAUNCHES 'ESVARNA', INDIA'S FIRST CORPORATE CREDIT CARD ON RUPAY NETWORK

Monthly One Liner GK Digest December 2023

- This **launch positions IndusInd Bank as the first in the country to integrate UPI functionality with a Corporate Credit Card.**
- The **eSvarna credit card facilitates smooth transactions at merchant outlets and allows users the flexibility** to make UPI payments by linking the card with UPI-enabled apps.
- This **card is targeted towards Indian professionals and businessmen who travel extensively and need lifestyle-related value-added benefits.**
- It **offers benefits across various categories, including travel, wellness, and lifestyle.**

RBI APPROVES IDFC-IDFC FIRST BANK MERGER; NOTIFIES GSL DIRECTIONS 2023

- The **boards of IDFC First Bank and IDFC had approved the reverse merger in July.**
- As **part of the composite scheme of amalgamation, IDFC Financial Holding Company (IDFC FHCL)** would first merge with IDFC and then IDFC into IDFC First Bank Ltd.
- Under the **proposed reverse merger scheme, an IDFC shareholder will get 155 shares for every 100 shares she/he holds in the bank.**
- **Both stocks have a face value of Rs 10 each.**
- Post the merger, the standalone book value per share of the bank will increase by 4.9 per cent, as calculated on the audited financials as of March 2023.
- As of June 2023, IDFC through its **non-financial holding company, owned 39.93 per cent in IDFC First Bank.**

SEBI ISSUES PROCEDURE FOR PUBLIC ISSUANCE OF ZCZP INSTRUMENT BY NPOS

- **ZCZP Instruments on the SSE are donation instruments** offering no interest or principal return.
- The procedure for Public Issuance of ZCZP Instruments by NPO is as follows:
- The **NPO, via lead manager(s), submits the draft fundraising document to the registered SSE with specified fees** and an application for in-principle approval.
- The **draft document is posted on both SSE and the organization's website for a minimum of 21 days for public comments.**

- The SSE provides observations within 30 days of filing or receiving clarifications from the organization.
- The organization incorporates SSE's observations into the draft fundraising document and submits the final version before initiating the issuance.

THE RESERVE BANK OF INDIA (RBI) ISSUED ITS LIST OF DOMESTIC SYSTEMICALLY IMPORTANT BANKS (D-SIBS)

- **The banks identified as D-SIBs are:**
 - **State Bank of India (SBI):** Moved from bucket 3 to bucket 4.
 - **HDFC Bank:** Shifted from bucket 1 to bucket 2.
 - **ICICI Bank:** Continues to be in the same bucket as last year.
- These changes will trigger higher D-SIB buffer requirements effective from April 1, 2025, impacting their Common Equity Tier 1 (CET1) ratios.
- The D-SIB framework aims to manage and regulate banks based on their Systemic Importance Scores (SISs), ensuring a resilient financial system.
- The additional CET1 requirements reflect the RBI's commitment to fortifying the financial sector's stability.

I-PRU AMC & I-PRU LIFE GETS RBI APPROVAL TO ACQUIRE A 9.95% STAKE IN RBL, IDFC FIRST, EQUITAS SFB, FEDERAL AND INDUSIND BANK

- The approval has been granted concerning an application submitted by I-Pru AMC and I-Pru Life to RBI.
- As per the RBI letter, I-Pru AMC and I-Pru Life have been accorded the approval to acquire the aforesaid shareholding in RBL Bank within a period of one year, i.e., by December 26, 2024, and to ensure that the aggregate holding in RBL Bank does not exceed 9.95% of the paid-up share capital or voting rights of the bank at all times.
- Further, if the aggregate holding falls below 5%, prior approval of the RBI will be required to increase it to 5% or more of the paid-up share capital or voting rights of the bank.
- As of December 22, 2023, the ICICI group (including ICICI Prudential Life Insurance Co. Ltd and ICICI

Prudential Asset Management Company Limited) held 2.08% of the equity share capital of RBL Bank.

CBDT ISSUES GUIDELINES ON UNDER SECTION 194-O OF IT ACT 1961

- Here are some highlights from the guidelines:
- **Multiple E-commerce Operators:** The guidelines outline the scenarios and the respective ECOs responsible for TDS in cases involving multiple ECOs.
- **Fees and Charges:** The circular addresses the inclusion of convenience fees, commission charges, and logistics/delivery fees in the "gross amount" for TDS calculation.
- **GST and State Levies:** Tax deduction under section 194-O should be on the amount credited without including GST, state levies, or other taxes if separately indicated in the invoice.
- **Purchase>Returns and Adjustments:** If tax has already been deducted before the purchase-return, adjustments can be made against the next transaction with the same seller in the same financial year.
- **Treatment of Discounts:** The circular distinguishes between seller, buyer ECO, and seller ECO discounts.
- These guidelines serve as a comprehensive guide for e-commerce operators and participants regarding TDS under section 194-O.

BANKING- ONE LINER

- The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has arrested Mohammad Shafi Dar, the former chairman of Jammu and Kashmir Cooperative Bank, in connection with a Rs 250-crore money laundering case.
- The Competition Commission of India (CCI) has approved the proposal by Atlas 2022 Holdings Limited to increase its shareholding in Vodafone Group Plc from 14.6% to less than 25%. Atlas 2022 Holdings is a wholly-owned subsidiary of Emirates Telecommunications Group (e&), incorporated in the Cayman Islands for acquiring and holding e&'s current 14.6% interest in Vodafone.
- SBI Mutual Fund (SBI MF) has received approval from the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) to acquire up to 9.99% of the paid-up share capital or voting rights of Karur Vysya Bank Ltd (KVB).

- **As many as 1.15 crore (or 11.5 million) digital life certificates were generated by pensioners across the country during a recently concluded special campaign.** This was part of the Jeevan Pramaan initiative, a biometric-enabled digital service for pensioners.
- **Radhakishan Damani, the founder of DMart, has topped the IDFC FIRST Private Hurun India's Top 200 Self-made Entrepreneurs of the Millennia 2023 list.** This list is a compilation of the 200 most valuable companies in India that were founded after the year 2000.
- **The Federal Bank and NCDEX e-Markets Limited (NeML) announced their collaboration to streamline e-procurement and e-auction systems on November 30, 2023.** This alliance is expected to facilitate an advanced e-procurement solution, streamlining processes for Central and State government organisations.
- **According to a report by Visa, there has been a 12.5% growth in contactless cross-border transactions during the World Cup as compared to July 2023.** This surge in transactions indicates the increasing adoption and convenience of contactless payments globally.
- **The Bombay High Court has ordered the department to refund the tax deposited by HSBC under protest. The bench of Justice G. S. Kulkarni and Justice Jitendra Jain observed that once the amounts were deposited by the petitioner and retained by the department without the authority of law, the claim of the petitioner for refund could not have been denied.**
- **The Reserve Bank on 7th December brought all entities facilitating cross-border payment transactions for the import and export of goods and services under its direct regulation.**
- **Aditya Birla Sun Life Insurance Company, the life insurance subsidiary of Aditya Birla Capital, on Tuesday, December 5, announced the launch of 'ABSLI Salaried Term Plan' for Salaried Individuals.** This plan offers a range of comprehensive life cover options to suit the diverse needs of policyholders.
- **Union Bank of India, a leading public sector bank in India is collaborating with Accenture (NYSE: ACN) to design and develop a scalable and secure enterprise data lake platform with advanced analytics and reporting capabilities on December 5 in Mumbai.**
- **SBI has announced its decision to acquire a 20% additional stake in SBI Pension Funds for Rs. 229.52 crore. SBI Pension Funds Private Limited was appointed as the Pension Fund Manager (PFM) to manage the pension corpus under the National Pension System.**
- **HDFC Bank and Tata Neu have partnered to launch a co-branded credit card that offers exclusive rewards and benefits for Tata Neu customers. The card is powered by RuPay/Visa and has two variants: Tata Neu Plus HDFC Bank Credit Card and Tata Neu Infinity HDFC Bank Credit Card.**
- **The National Asset Reconstruction Company (NARCL) has finalised the acquisition of the two SREI companies – SREI Equipment Finance and SREI Infrastructure Finance -- under the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC), paving the way for resolution of a Rs 32700-crore debt. The deal was inked on 8th December.**
- **The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has decided to allow reversal of liquidity facilities under both the Standing Deposit Facility (SDF) and the Marginal Standing Facility (MSF) during weekends and holidays with effect from December 30, 2023.**
- **The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has approved HDFC Bank's product on offline retail payments for adoption. This product was developed in partnership with Crunchfish AB23, a Swedish company. The product, known as 'OfflinePay', was piloted under RBI's Regulatory Sandbox Program.**
- **The Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) has received a demand order for Goods and Services Tax (GST) collection worth Rs. 183 crore, along with interest and penalty, from the Telangana state. This order is appealable before the Appellate Joint Commissioner (ST).**
- **The "FIRST SWYP" credit card by IDFC FIRST Bank is targeted towards the Gen Z generation. It offers lifestyle-related offers, EMI benefits, payment flexibility, and referral benefits. The card has an annual subscription fee of Rs.499/- + GST.**
- **REC Limited, a Maharatna CPSE under the Ministry of Power, has signed a 200 million Euro loan agreement with the German bank KfW. This marks REC's sixth line of credit under the Indo-German Development Cooperation. The loan is aimed at enhancing the distribution infrastructure of DISCOMs in line with the Revamped Distribution Sector Scheme (RDSS) of the Government of India.**
- **Intellect Design Arena Ltd, the Chennai-based FinTech company for financial and insurance clients, has signed a Rs.80 crore, five-year deal with Indian Bank to deploy Intellect's eMACH.ai powered Cash Management System.**
- **ACKO General Insurance and PhonePe have indeed partnered to offer a variety of comprehensive car**

- and bike insurance products directly to users on the PhonePe platform. This partnership combines ACKO's customer-first approach with PhonePe's massive distribution network, making insurance a readily accessible financial category for its users.
- **The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has authorised Bandhan Bank to disburse pensions on behalf of the Ministry of Railways.** This permission enables the bank to provide pensions to ex-Ministry of Railways employees.
 - **On December 12, 2023, SEBI has allowed Stock Brokers (SBs) and Clearing Members (CMs) to park client funds in Mutual Fund Overnight Schemes (MFOS).** These schemes invest only in risk-free government securities, offering a safe haven for short-term parking of funds. The move aims to improve the utilization of client funds and potentially generate some returns while ensuring security.
 - **In the RBI report an increase in the weighted average cut-off yield of State Government Security (SGS) issuances to 7.71% could have several implications,** both for the states and for investors.
 - **On December 14, 2023, the State Bank of India (SBI) signed a €70 million (approximately Rs 630 crore) Line of Credit (LoC) with KfW, the German development bank.** This agreement aims to promote solar projects in India. The agreement was signed at SBI's IFSC Gift City Branch in Ahmedabad. This LoC will provide financial assistance to Indian entities involved in developing solar power projects.
 - **Kotak Mahindra Bank and IIT Kanpur have indeed collaborated to launch the Kotak School of Sustainability.** The school aims to excel in sustainability education, research and innovation, technology development, entrepreneurship, and outreach. The launch event was attended by Dharmendra Pradhan, Union Minister of Education and Skill Development and Entrepreneurship, Government of India.
 - **The Competition Commission of India (CCI) has approved the acquisition of a stake in the company by Temasek and Motilal Oswal's India Business Excellence Fund IV (IBEF-IV).** Investment amount: A total of Rs 800 crore will be invested by the consortium, for a minority stake in Niva Bupa.
 - **State Bank of India's (SBI) Mutual Fund has acquired a 1.5% stake in Karur Vysya Bank for Rs 194.4 crore through open market transactions.** The shares were purchased at an average price of Rs 162 apiece, taking the combined aggregate deal size to Rs 194.40 crore.
 - **The Indian Banks' Association and unions have reached an agreement on a 17% wage hike for all public sector banks, totaling Rs 12,449 crore.** This decision will benefit around nine lakh employees, including 3.8 lakh officers, of PSU banks, including SBI and some old generation private banks.
 - **The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has approved a USD 250 million loan for the National Industrial Corridor Development Program (NICDP) Subprogram.** This aims to stimulate job creation across various sectors and develop multimodal logistics infrastructure.
 - **ADB has also approved an additional USD 200 million financing for the Rajasthan Secondary Towns Development Sector Project.** This project aims to improve water supply and sanitation systems and support urban resilience and heritage living in selected towns.
 - **Bain Capital did indeed sell a 1.08% stake in Axis Bank for Rs 3737 crore on December 13, 2023.** This follows their earlier sale of a 0.75% stake in June for Rs 2150 crore
 - **Cashfree Payments launched 'FlowWise', India's first self-hosted Payments Orchestration Platform, on December 13, 2023.** The platform allows businesses to use multiple payment aggregators with one integration, routes payments efficiently, improves success rates, cuts processing costs, and enhances security.
 - **Public Sector Banks (PSBs) in India have written off an aggregate loan amount of Rs. 10.42 lakh crore in the last nine years, from the financial year 2014-15 to the financial year 2022-23.**
 - **Infibeam Avenues has indeed acquired a 49% stake in Pirimid Fintech. The acquisition is part of Infibeam's strategic foray into the capital markets and digital lending software market.** The deal is worth Rs 25 crore.
 - **Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) has indeed reduced its stake in Dixon Technologies.** This move is part of LIC's broader strategy of reducing its stake in publicly traded companies to a record low in the December quarter ahead of its upcoming Initial Public Offering (IPO).
 - **Bandhan Bank secured the mandate to collect revenue on the e-GRAS portal from the Assam government on December 20, 2023.** his authorization allows the bank, which has a presence in all 35 districts of Assam, to facilitate payments to 70 departments via the Assam e-GRAS portal. This is a significant development for both the bank and the government of Assam.

- A repo rate cut may be some distance away as the RBI's Dynamic Stochastic General Equilibrium (DSGE) model for the Indian economy has projected retail inflation to reach 4.8 per cent in FY25, which is above the monetary policy committee's 4 per cent target.
- The ruling by the Himachal Pradesh Appellate Authority for Advance Rulings (HPAAAR) stating that companies offering food to their employees are ineligible for Input Tax Credit (ITC) under GST is a complex and nuanced issue .
- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has imposed a penalty of Rs 2 lakh on the Thane District Central Co-operative (TDCC) Bank. The penalty was for an alleged violation of banking regulations by sanctioning a loan to one of the directors of the bank. This action by the RBI underscores the importance of maintaining strict adherence to banking regulations.
- The Centre has released an additional installment of Rs.72,961.21 crore as tax devolution to states. This is beyond the regular 14 installments recommended by the Finance Commission. This extra fund aims to strengthen the states' capacity for financing social welfare measures and infrastructure projects.
- Loan Agreements Signed Japan's JICA & India's GoI signed two loan agreements worth \$3 billion on Dec 21, 2023. High-Speed Rail Boost: \$2.9 billion to fund Phase V of the Mumbai-Ahmedabad High-Speed Rail Project, the biggest JICA loan for a single project ever. SDGs in Focus: \$108 million for Phase 2 of a program promoting UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in India
- The Government of India signed the agreement with the Asian Development Bank (ADB) to avail a USD 100 million loan on December 22, 2023. This loan is intended to improve urban services and tourism facilities in the northeastern state of Tripura.
- Kotak Life introduced a new insurance product called 'T.U.L.I.P', a Non-Participating Unit Linked Endowment Plan, on December 20, 2023. It offers life cover up to 100 times of the annual premium and promises loyalty additions of up to 30% of the fund value at the end of the term. It provides eight fund options across equity, debt, and hybrid categories. However, it doesn't offer any liquidity during the first five years.
- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has imposed a penalty of Rs. 5 crore on Bank of Baroda due to a shortage in soiled note remittances. A 'soiled note' is defined by the RBI as a note which has become dirty due to normal wear and tear. It also includes a two-piece note pasted together wherein both the pieces presented belong to the same note and form the entire note with no essential feature missing.
- Bharat Electronics Ltd (BEL) received orders worth Rs 2,673 crore from Goa Shipyard Ltd (GSL) and Garden Reach Shipbuilders & Engineers Ltd (GRSE) on December 22, 2023. The orders are for supplying sensors for Next Generation Offshore Patrol Vessels (NGOPV). This is part of the 'Atmanirbhar Bharat' initiative.
- Foreign Portfolio Investors (FPIs) play a crucial role in any economy as they bring in capital, which can boost the country's economic growth. This record investment of Rs.57,313 crore (about \$7 billion) indicates strong confidence in the market's potential.
- ICICI Prudential Mutual Fund has announced changes in its ETF product symbols on BSE and NSE. The codes will now be a combination of the name of the fund and the suffix 'IETF', which stands for ICICI Prudential ETF. This change is aimed at simplifying the identification of ETF Schemes for passive investment purposes. For example, 'ICICILIQ' will now be 'LIQUIDIETF', 'ICICINIFTY' will be 'NIFTYIETF', and so on.
- The Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI) has granted INR 12.45 Cr to ETO Motors to deploy 300 Electric 3-Wheelers (E3W) in Hyderabad and Delhi for first and last-mile passenger connectivity. This initiative is part of SIDBI's Mission 50K-EV4ECO, which aims to strengthen the EV ecosystem in India.
- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has granted a one-year extension to the co-branded credit card partnership between Bajaj Finance and RBL Bank. This extension is valid until December 21, 2024. Bajaj Finance had sought a longer extension for its credit card ties with RBL Bank.
- On 25th December 2023, Adani Green Energy (AGEL) signed a power purchase agreement (PPA) with the Solar Energy Corporation of India (SECI) to supply 1,799 MW of solar power. This agreement marks the completion of AGEL's power procurement arrangements for the 8,000 MW manufacturing-linked solar tender awarded by SECI in June 2020.
- Walt Disney and Reliance Industries have indeed signed a non-binding agreement to merge their Indian media operations. The agreement was signed on December 25, 2023. Under the merger, Reliance would own 51% through a combination of

shares and cash, with Disney holding the remaining 49%. This arrangement would give more control to Mukesh Ambani's Reliance group.

- **On December 19, 2023, the Open Network for Digital Commerce (ONDC) announced partnerships with Google and Meta. The partnership with Meta aims to digitally upskill five lakh MSMEs, while the collaboration with Google will enhance the accessibility of services like Kochi Metro's by connecting with Google Maps.**
- **On December 27, 2023, the Competition Commission of India (CCI) approved the acquisition of a controlling stake in Reliance Capital Limited (RCL) by IndusInd International Holdings Limited (IIHL), IIHL BFSI (India) Limited, and Aasia Enterprises LLP.**
- **Karnataka Bank has recently enabled the facility for its customers to make direct tax payments. This includes payments for income tax and advance tax. Customers can make these payments at their convenience through the bank's Internet banking facility or at any branch of Karnataka Bank. This initiative aligns with the bank's vision of leveraging technology to simplify financial transactions.**
- **The State Bank of India (SBI) has indeed signed a Line of Credit (LoC) with the World Bank for USD**

165 million (over Rs 1,300 crore). This LoC is aimed at promoting grid-connected rooftop Solar PV Projects in residential and institutional sectors.

- **The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has extended the timeline for implementing fair lending practices related to penal charges in loan accounts. The circular initially outlined instructions set to take effect from January 1, 2024. However, acknowledging the need for additional time and clarifications, the RBI has decided to extend the implementation timeline by three months.**
- **The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has indeed stated that Regulated Entities (REs) should communicate the final decision on customer complaints within 30 days of receiving the complaint. This is part of RBI's Master Direction on "Internal Ombudsman for Regulated Entities".**
- **The Indian government has increased the interest rates on two small savings schemes for the period of January to March 2024. The schemes that saw an increase are: Sukanya Samridhi Account Scheme (SSAS): The interest rate for SSAS has been hiked by 20 basis points to 8.2%. Three-year time deposit: This scheme also saw a 20 basis points increase in the interest rate.**

APPOINTMENTS

Name of the Person	Designation
Manisha Padhi	First woman Aide-De-Camp
Kanchan Devi	Director General of the Indian Council of (ICFRE)
Mr. Chandra Shekhar Ghosh	Managing Director & Chief Executive Officer of the Bank
Rahul Roy Chowdhury	Chief Executive Officer of their Private Wealth Services
Gopinath Natarajan	Chief Executive Officer of their Portfolio and Managed Assets services
Jitesh John	New Executive Director of IBBI
Suresh Raina	Youth Voter Awareness Ambassador
Vivek Kumar Gupta	Part-time government director
Rajiv Anand	Chairman of Max Life Insurance
SBI Pension Funds Private Limited	Pension Fund Manager
Mohammed Al Ramsi	Chairman of World Radiocommunication Conference 2023
Lalbiaktluanga Khiangte	Chief Secretary of Jharkhand
Arjun Munda	Additional charge of the Agriculture Ministry
Geraldo Martins	Prime Minister
Parama Sen	Part-time member of (PFRDA).
Hardik Pandya	New captain of the Mumbai Indians
Sanjay Singh	New president of the Wrestling Federation of India (WFI).
Maheshwar Dayal	General of Prisons and Correctional Services
Deepika Padukone	Global brand ambassador of Bisleri
Yogesh Dayal	Director on the board of RBL Bank
Pramod Agrawal	Chairman of BSE Ltd.
C S Rajan	Part-time Chairman of Kotak Mahindra Bank
Justice Shree Chandrashekar	Chief Justice of the Jharkhand High Court

Nina Singh	Director General of the Central Industrial Security Force
Dong Jun	China's Defence Minister
Jagdeep Dhankhar	Ex-officio Chancellor of Pondicherry University o
Anish Dayal Singh	Director General of the Central Reserve Police Force
Atanu Chakraborty	Part Time Non-Executive Chairman and Independent Director of the Bank to the Reserve Bank of India
Satish Kumar Kalra	Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of the North East Small Finance Bank
Seshadri	Chairman at IDRCL
Reuven Azar	Israel's New Ambassador

INDEX AND RANKING

INDIA HAS BEEN RANKED 49TH IN THE 2023 WORLD DIGITAL COMPETITIVENESS RANKING

- This ranking, **produced by the IMD World Competitiveness Center, measures the capacity and readiness of 64 economies** to adopt and explore digital technologies as a key driver for economic transformation in business, government, and wider society.
- It's a significant **achievement for India, reflecting its ongoing efforts to improve digital infrastructure and promote digital literacy.**
- The ranking is based on three **main factors: knowledge, technology and future readiness.**
- Each factor is composed of several sub-factors that measure different **aspects of digital competitiveness.**

UNIVERSITY OF DELHI RANKED 220TH ON QS WORLD UNIVERSITY RANKING FOR SUSTAINABILITY 2024

- The ranking **aims to reflect the changing priorities of students and the evolving missions of world-class higher education institutions today.**
- According to the ranking, India has only one university in the top 200: the University of Delhi (DU), which ranks 220th overall and 11th in India.**
- DU scored 100 out of 100 in the sustainability indicator, which measures how well universities are addressing environmental and social challenges.**
- DU is followed by two other Indian institutes in the top 300: IIT Bombay (281-300) and IIT Madras (281-300).**

S&P'S RANKING 2023: LIC BECOMES WORLD'S 4TH LARGEST INSURER BASED ON RESERVE

- LIC has reserves of \$503 billion** for the fiscal year 2022-2023.
- The **top three insurers are:**
- Allianz SE from Germany, with reserves of \$750.20 billion
- China Life Insurance, with reserves of \$616.90 billion
- Nippon Life Insurance, with reserves of \$536 billion

AWARDS AND HONOURS

Awardee	Awards
M. Sreeshankar	35th Jimmy George Foundation Award
Kalyan Srinivas Raygalla	Rex Karmaveer Global Fellowship (RKGf) and Chakra Award (Silver) Medal.
Deepak Sharma	REX Karmaveer Chakra (Silver) Award
Prashant Agrawal	National Award for the Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities
Shri Dharmendra Pradhan	National Award for Innovations and Good Practices
Pushpa Bharati's	Vyas Samman award
Mohammed Shami	Arjuna Award
Ali Abu Awwad and Daniel Barenboim	Indira Gandhi Prize
Professor Savita Ladage	Nyholm Prize
Novak Djokovic and Aryna Sabalenka	International Tennis Federation's

Dr. Srinivas Naik Dharavath	Visionary Leader Icon Award
Dr. Poonam Khetrapal Singh	National Order of Merit Gold Medal
Sukrita Paul Kumar	Tagore Literary Prize
Crompton Greaves Consumer Electricals Ltd	National Energy Conservation Award 2023
Axis Bank, SBI Card, Ujjivan Small Finance Bank, GAIL India Ltd., Bharat Electronics Ltd., Electronics Corporation of India Limited (ECIL), Tata Consultancy Services Ltd., Target India Pvt. Ltd., and Multi Commodity Exchange of India Ltd.	13th DSCI Excellence Awards
Bengaluru's Kempegowda International Airport	World Special Prize for an Interior 2023
NTPC Bongaigaon	Greentech Foundation
Odisha Pavilion	"Excellence in Display"
B. Anantha Sarma and Abhinav Verma	SKOCH Gold Award 2023.

IMPORTANT DAYS

Date	Day	Theme
1st December, 2023	World AIDS Day	Theme: "Let Communities Lead"
1st December, 2023	61st statehood day	Theme: -
1st December, 2023	59th Raising Day	Theme:
2nd December, 2023	World Computer Literacy Day	Theme: "A bridge over the digital divide."
2nd December, 2023	National Pollution Control Day	Theme: "Sustainable Development for a Clean and Healthy Planet".
2nd December, 2023	International Day for the Abolition of Slavery	Theme: "Fighting slavery's legacy of racism through transformative education".
3rd December 2023	International Day of Persons with Disabilities	Theme:-
4th December 2023	Indian Navy Day	Theme: "Operational Efficiency, Readiness, and Mission Accomplishment in the Maritime Domain".
4th December 2023	International Day of Banks	Theme: "Achieve sustainable development goals and improve the global financial architecture".
5th December 2023	International Volunteers Day	Theme: "The power of collective action".
5th December 2023	World Soil Day	Theme: "Soil and Water: A Source of Life".
7th December 2023	Armed Forces Flag Day	Theme: "Strengthening the Nation with Pride in our Armed Forces"
7th December 2023	International Civil Aviation Day	Theme: "Advancing Innovation for Global Aviation Development."
8th December 2023	Submarine Day	Theme: "Operational Efficiency, Readiness, and Mission Accomplishment in the Maritime Domain".
8th December 2023	SAARC Charter Day	Theme:-
9th December 2023	International Anti-Corruption Day	Theme: "Uniting the World Against Corruption".
10th December 2023	Human Rights Day	Theme: "Freedom, Equality, and Justice for All".
11th December 2023	UNICEF Day	Theme: "For every child, every right".
11th December 2023	International Mountain Day	Theme: "Restoring mountain ecosystems"
12th December 2023	International Day of Neutrality	Theme: "Promote peace and avoid violence: war is not the answer to any challenging situation".
12th December 2023	Universal Health Coverage Day	Theme: "Health for All: Time for Action"
14th December 2023	National Energy Conservation Day	Theme: "Go Green for Our Future".
16th December 2023	Vijay Diwas	Theme: "Run for the Soldiers, Run with the Soldiers".
17th December 2023	International Day to End Violence Against Sex Workers	Theme: "Solidarity for Safety and Dignity: Protect Sex Workers' Rights!".
18th December 2023	Minority Rights Day	Theme: "Celebrating Diversity and Inclusion".

18th December 2023	International Migrants Day	Theme: "Act today for a better tomorrow for all: Improving the health of migrants to unleash the power of migration".
18th December 2023	UN Arabic Language Day	Theme: "The Language of Poetry and Arts".
19th December 2023	Goa Liberation Day	Theme: "Freedom and Self-Determination".
20th December 2023	International Human Solidarity Day	Theme: "Advocate for Change".
21st December 2023	Corps Day	Theme:-
21st December 2023	World Basketball Day	Theme: "Crafting an Enduring Legacy for A Better Future".
22nd December 2023	National Mathematics day	Theme:-
23rd December 2023	National Farmers' Day	Theme: "Delivering Smart Solutions for Sustainable Food Security and Resilience."
24th December 2023	National Consumer Rights Day	Theme: "Consumer Protection in the Era of E-Commerce and Digital Trade."
25th December 2023	Christmas day	Theme:-
26th December 2023	Good Governance Day	Theme:-
26th December 2023	Veer Bal Diwas	Theme:-
27th December 2023	International Day of Epidemic Preparedness	Theme:-
27th December 2023	100th Jayanti of Justice Konda Madhava Reddy	Theme:-

MOUS SIGNED

Signed Between	Date Signed	Purpose
(RBI) and (BoE)	1st December 2023	To establish a framework for the BoE to place reliance on the RBI's regulatory
Ujjivan SFB partners with Water.org	1st December 2023	To Offer Water, Sanitation And Hygiene Loans
KSUM and Business Finland	1st December 2023	To establish a framework for sustained collaboration
CNSA and EGSA	6th December 2023	For Space Cooperation
Gujarat and AAI	7th December 2023	To develop 11 airports in the state
ACKO And PhonePe	7th December 2023	To Make Insurance Accessible To Millions
REC With German Bank KfW	8th December 2023	Enhancing the distribution infrastructure of DISCOMs
Tata Power & Indian Oil	11th December 2023	Deal For 500+ EV Charging Points At Pumps
Reliance Teams With DBS Bank	13th December 2023	To manage crop residue efficiently for the production of compressed biogas
Government of Bihar and around 300 companies	-	Attracting investments to boost Bihar's industrial growth and create employment opportunities
United States of America and the Republic of India (NSDC) and the government of Saudi Arabia	14th Dec, 2023	To enhance innovation ecosystems
Indian Navy and IIT Kanpur	15th December 2023	To protect the rights of skilled labourers from India.
Indian Navy and IIT Kanpur	15th December 2023	to strengthen the collaborative relationship between academia and the armed forces,
Quality Council of India and the Andhra Pradesh government	19th December 2023	To transform the agriculture sector
Indian Coast Guard (ICG) and Amazon India.	20th December 2023	to provide work opportunities for ex-service personnel
SREC and CLE	22nd December 2023	To train 150,000 workers
MoRD) and Reliance Retail's JioMart	22nd December 2023	To facilitate the outreach of products from Self-Help Groups (SHGs)

(ATGL) and Flipkart

27th December 2023

To reduce carbon footprint across the supply chain of e-commerce

GOVERNMENT SCHEMES

ODISHA CM NAVEEN PATNAIK LAUNCHED AMA BANK

- This initiative is a major push to cover **4,373 unbanked gram panchayats** under the financial inclusion programme.
- The aim is to provide banking services through **Customer Service Point (CSP) Plus banking outlets**.
- The 'Ama Bank' model is the **first-of-its-kind in the country** and is expected to be a role model for other states.
- The state government, in **collaboration with six public sector banks namely State Bank of India, Punjab National Bank, Union Bank of India, UCO Bank, Bank of India, and Bank of Baroda, has come up with the 'Ama Bank' scheme.**

PM MODI HAS LAUNCHED THE GREEN CREDITS INITIATIVE AT COP28

- This initiative has **been conceptualized to incentivize voluntary efforts to address the climate crisis** and is being seen as a **positive step towards a sustainable future**.
- The initiative involves **creating an inventory of degraded wastelands, which can be utilized for planting by individuals and organizations.**
- **Participants undertaking environmentally positive actions** will receive tradable green credits.
- The **Green Credits Programme is an effort to create a market-based incentive for different kinds of environment-positive actions, not just for carbon emission reductions.**

FIVE SCHOOL INITIATIVES LAUNCHED BY THE MAHARASHTRA GOVERNOR RAMESH BAIS

- Schemes such as '**Chief Minister My School, A Beautiful School**', '**Goshtincha Shanivar**', '**Enjoyable Reading**', '**Cleanliness Monitor**' etc. were launched on the occasion.
- **Initiatives like Adopt Schools, Mahavachan Utsav, 'My School My Yard'**, were also launched.

- To ensure that the future generations are responsive and responsible towards their environment, these **initiatives aim for overall personality development of students.**

RBI, THE GOVERNMENT HAS DECIDED TO ISSUE NEW SOVEREIGN GOLD BONDS (SGBS) IN TRANCHES

- The **date for subscription for 2023–24 Series III is December 18–22, 2023**, while Series IV is scheduled for February 12–16, 2024.
- The **investors will receive an interest rate of 2.50 per cent per annum payable semi-annually on the nominal value.**
- **No capital gains tax has to be paid if redemption is done after maturity.**

THE INDIAN FOREST & WOOD CERTIFICATION SCHEME HAS BEEN LAUNCHED

- It was launched by the **Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change on December 7, 2023.**
- The **scheme has three components: forest management certification, tree outside forest management certification, and chain of custody certification.**
- The **scheme is endorsed by the Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification (PEFC), a leading international forest certification organization.**
- The **scheme is implemented by the Network for Certification and Conservation of Forests (NCCF), a not-for-profit organization in India.**

PUNJAB GOVT LAUNCHES 'BHAGWANT MANN SARKAR, TUHADE DWAAR' SCHEME

- This initiative **aims to deliver 43 essential services directly to the people's doorsteps.**
- The **services include certificates of birth and deaths, income, residence, caste, pensions, electricity bill payments, and others.**
- The **scheme was launched on December 10, 2023.**

- Residents can avail themselves of the service through both sewa kendras and the dedicated helpline number 1076.

GOVERNMENT ALLOWED ADDITIONAL BORROWING OF RS 60,000 CRORE TO 22 STATES FOR THE NATIONAL PENSION SCHEME

- Here are some key points:
 - **Additional borrowing space:** This extra borrowing is granted over and above the regular net borrowing ceiling for states, which is set at 3% of their Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP).
 - **Purpose of borrowing:** This additional borrowing is specifically for states that are actively contributing to the NPS for their government employees.
 - **Benefits for states:** This move provides relief to states concerned about meeting their pension obligations without exceeding their borrowing limits.
 - **Benefits for NPS:** Increased participation from states is likely to boost the overall corpus of the NPS, making it a more attractive retirement saving option for individuals.

HIMACHAL GOVT INITIATES RAJIV GANDHI SWAROZGAAR YOJNA TO PROMOTE SELF-EMPLOYMENT

- The scheme aims to connect the youth of the state with self-employment by providing a grant of 25% to 35% on machinery to establish businesses.
- This is expected to help reduce the unemployment rate in the state.
- Under the RGSY-2023, eligible individuals between the ages of 18 and 45 can avail themselves of incentives, concessions, and facilities to establish new industrial enterprises within Himachal Pradesh.
- The scheme offers a term or composite loan from banks, covering 90% of the project cost, while the beneficiary contributes the remaining 10%.

UNION MSME MINISTER NARAYAN RANE LAUNCHED 3 SUB-SCHEMES UNDER RAMP PROGRAMME

- Here are the details of the three sub-schemes:
 - **MSME Green Investment and Financing for Transformation Scheme (MSE GIFT Scheme):** This scheme aims to help MSMEs adopt green technology

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with interest subvention and credit guarantee support.

- **MSE Scheme for Promotion and Investment in Circular Economy (MSE SPICE Scheme):** This is the first-ever scheme in the government to support circular economy projects
- **MSE Scheme on Online Dispute Resolution for Delayed Payments:** This is a first-of-its-kind scheme to synergise legal support with modern IT tools and Artificial Intelligence to address the incidences of delayed payments for Micro and Small Enterprises.

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

DR. AKSHATA KRISHNAMURTHY, 1ST INDIAN WOMAN TO OPERATE A ROVER ON MARS WITH NASA

- **Dr. Krishnamurthy has a Ph.D. in Aeronautics and Astronautics from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.**
- She joined the **Jet Propulsion Laboratory, a research laboratory owned by NASA, and has worked on multiple space missions, including the Perseverance rover, collecting samples to bring back to Earth.**
- She moved to the **United States more than a decade ago with a dream to work at NASA and lead breakthrough science and robotic operations on Earth and Mars.**

A SUCCESSFUL TRAINING LAUNCH OF A SHORT-RANGE BALLISTIC MISSILE, 'AGNI-1' WAS CONDUCTED

- The missile is a proven system already inducted into the **Strategic Forces Command (SFC)**, and is capable of striking targets with a very high degree of precision.
- The user launch successfully validated all operational and technical parameters of the missile.
- The **Agni-1 has a strike range of 700 km and can carry a nuclear warhead of up to 500 kg.**
- The **Agni series consists of five missiles: Agni-1 (700 km), Agni-2 (2,000 km), Agni-3 (3,000 km), Agni-4 (4,000 km) and Agni-5 (5,000 km).**

SPORTS

VAISHALI RAMESHBABU BECOMES INDIA'S 84TH CHESS GRANDMASTER

- Here are some **interesting facts about her achievement**:
- **Vaishali Rameshbabu is the third female Grandmaster from India after Koneru Humpy and Harika Dronavalli.**
- **The 22-year-old and her younger brother R. Praggnanandhaa are now officially the first-ever sibling pair in chess history to achieve the Grandmaster title.**
- She achieved **the Grandmaster title at the IV El Llobregat Open in Spain.**
- **Vaishali has gained over 75 FIDE rating points this year.**

KHELO INDIA PARA GAMES 2023

- **More than 1350 athletes from across the country will be competing in athletics, shooting, archery, football, badminton, table tennis, and weightlifting.**
- The disciplines will be contested in **the Nehru Stadium, Dr. Karni Singh Shooting Range, and Indira Gandhi Stadium.**
- **Union Minister of Youth Affairs and Sports and Department of Information and Broadcasting, Anurag Singh Thakur, formally declared the Khelo India Para Games 2023 open.**

ASIAN YOUTH CHESS CHAMPIONSHIPS 2023 KIYANA PARIHAR HARSH SURESH

- This **championship featured three events: Standard, Rapid, and Blitz Championships.**
- In the **Standard category, India won 7 medals in total (2 gold, 3 silver, and 2 bronze). Apart from Kiyana and Harsh, AS Sharvaanica (U-8 Girls), Aarit Kapil (U-8 Open), and G Tejaswini (U-18 Girls) won silver medals, while Aadya Ranganath (U-10 Girls) won a bronze medal.**
- In the **Rapid Championships, India secured 9 medals (4 gold, 3 silver, and 2 bronze) and finished 1st in the medal tally.** The gold medalists were Bhagyashree Patil (U-18 girls), Saparya Ghosh (U-14 girls), A. S. Sharvaanica (U-8 girls), and Muhammad Shayan Noushad Ibrahim (U-8 Open).
- In the **Blitz Championships, India finished 2nd with three gold medals, which were won by V.C. Nivedita (U-12 girls), Pratitee Bordoloi (U-10 girls), and A.S. Sharvaanica in their respective categories.**

MANCHESTER CITY DEFEATS FLUMINENSE TO WIN FIFA CLUB WORLD CUP 2023

- The goals were scored by **Julian Alvarez (1', 88')**, an own goal from **Fluminense's Nino (27')**, and **Phil Foden (72')**.
- This victory is a **significant achievement for Manchester City, marking a remarkable year in which they held the Premier League, FA Cup, UEFA Champions League, UEFA Super Cup, and FIFA Club World Cup simultaneously.**
- The **FIFA Club World Cup 2023 final between Manchester City and Fluminense took place at the King Abdullah Sports City in Saudi Arabia.**
- **Manchester City made history by beating Fluminense 4-0 to win the FIFA Club World Cup Saudi Arabia 2023.**
- This victory saw them become the **first English team to conquer the competition at their first attempt.**

INDIAN OLYMPIC ASSOCIATION (IOA) HAS FORMED AN AD HOC COMMITTEE

- This **decision was taken after the Sports Ministry suspended the WFI.**
- The **members of the ad hoc committee are:**
 - Bhupendra Singh Bajwa (Chairman)
 - MM Somaya (Member)
 - Manjusha Kanwar (Member)
- This **committee will oversee various tasks and activities of the WFI, including player selections, sending names of players for international tournaments, organizing sporting events, and managing bank accounts.**
- The **formation of this committee is a significant step towards ensuring fair play, transparency, and accountability in the operations of the WFI.**

SPORTS- ONE LINER

- **Cristiano Ronaldo became the highest goal scorer with headers in football he scored the second goal for Al Nassr against US Monastir in a King Salman Club Cup game at the King Fahd International Stadium in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia,**
- **Iga Swiatek is currently ranked as the World No. 1 in women's singles by the Women's Tennis Association (WTA) .**
- The **Indian women's hockey team achieved a momentous victory in the prestigious Torneo del**

Centenario 2023 tournament held in Terrassa, Barcelona.

- **Commonwealth Games bronze medallists Treesa Jolly and Gayatri Gopichand** progressed to the second round of the Australia Open Super 500 badminton tournament with a straight game win over Canada's Catherine Choi and Josephine Wu.
- **Ace Indian players Kidambi Srikanth and PV Sindhu** have progressed into the Singles quarter-finals of the Australian Open on August 3rd.
- The **7th Men's Asian Champions Trophy is set to begin in Chennai, Tamil Nadu at the Mayor Radhakrishnan Stadium.**
- **Olympic badminton champion Viktor Axelsen** added the Japan Open 2023 title to his haul, beating Indonesian star Jonatan Christie in the men's singles final.
- The **Indian men's hockey team** beat the People's Republic of China 7-2 in its opening match of the **Asian Champions.**
- **Jyothi Yarraji**, a star Indian athlete, achieved a remarkable feat at the World University Games in Chengdu by smashing her own national record in the women's 100m hurdles and winning a bronze medal.
- **Gukesh** overtook India's chess pioneer **Viswanathan Anand** in the live ratings, ranking ninth, ahead of Anand at 10.
- **Prarthana Thombare**, in partnership with Anastasia Tikhonova, defeated Estelle Cascino and Diana Marcinkevica 3-6, 6-1, [10-7] in the doubles final of the \$60,000 ITF women's tennis tournament in Barcelona
- The world No. 1 men's doubles pairing of **Pramod Bhagat and Sukant Kadam** won a gold medal in the SL3-SL4 category at the Four Nations Para-Badminton International in Sheffield, England.
- The Indian under-31 bridge team won a bronze medal in the **18th World Youth Teams Bridge Championships** held in **Veldhoven, the Netherlands.**
- India ended its **World University Games (WUG) campaign** on Tuesday with its best-ever performance, winning a record haul of 26 medals, including 11 gold.
- **Kuldeep Yadav, the Indian leg spinner**, has become the fastest Indian bowler to complete 50 wickets in T20 Internationals.
- **Arjun Erigaisi joined Vidit Gujrathi** in the pre-quarterfinals after Koneru Humpy bounced back with a resolute victory to stay alive in the race of women's quarterfinals in the FIDE World Cup in Baku, Azerbaijan
- **India beat Malaysia 4-3 to win the Asian Champions Trophy 2023.** India thrashed Japan 5-0 in the last-four clash to set up a title showdown of the Asian Champions Trophy with Malaysia.
- **Lima, Peru** has been reinstated as the host city for the 2024 **World Athletics Under-20 Championships.**
- **Dipa Karmakar**, the **Indian gymnast who achieved a historic fourth-place finish at the 2016 Rio Olympics**, has been excluded from the Indian squad for the upcoming Hangzhou Asian Games.
- **Four Indian chess players** have entered the **quarterfinals of the FIDE World Cup 2023.** They are **Gukesh D, Arjun Erigaisi, R Praggnanandhaa, and Vidit Gujrathi.**
- **Aditi Swami**, a 17-year-old Indian archer, won the senior world championship in the compound women's category at the **World Archery Championships.**
- The new **Chennai Formula Racing Circuit** has been launched and is set to host India's first-ever night street race later this year.
- The Indian men's and women's compound archery teams both made their way into the finals of the ongoing **2023 Archery World Cup Stage 4 in Paris.**
- **Indian Grandmaster R Praggnanandhaa** defeated compatriot **Arjun Erigaisi** 5-4 via the sudden death tie-break to enter the semifinals of the FIDE World Cup chess tournament in Baku on Thursday (August 17).
- **Indian wrestler Priya Malik** won the gold medal in the women's 76kg category at the 2023 U20 World Wrestling Championships in Jordan.
- The Indian men's 10m air pistol team, comprising **Shiva Narwal, Sarabjot Singh, and Arjun Singh Cheema**, won a **bronze medal at the ISSF World Championship 2023** in Baku, Azerbaijan.
- **Akhil Sheoran secured a Paris 2024 Olympics quota and won a bronze medal at the ISSF World Championships** in Baku, Azerbaijan. He finished third in the men's rifle 3-position competition with an aggregate of 450.0 in the eight-man final.
- **Indian Grandmaster R. Praggnanandhaa** held the **fancied American player Fabiano Caruana** to a **draw in the first game of their semifinal clash at the FIDE World Cup in Baku, Azerbaijan.**

- The Indian junior men's hockey team defeated Spain 6-2 in their opening match at the 4-Nations Tournament in Dusseldorf, Germany.

DEFENCE

INDIAN ARMY AND MEITY PARTNERS TO INFUSE DIGITAL INFRASTRUCTURE IN ARMY

- This **collaboration aims to infuse digital infrastructure into the core of the Indian Army's operational framework.**
- **Key aspects of this partnership include:**
- **Technological Advancements:** The Indian Army is integrating indigenous 5G solutions into its operations, with plans to establish 5G labs and designate the Military College of Telecommunication Engineering as a pioneering 6G test bed.
- **Innovative Software Development:** The Indian Army and MeitY are jointly developing in-house software, including advanced AI-driven decision-making tools, predictive analytics, and robust cybersecurity measures.
- **Research and Training:** The Military College of Telecommunication Engineering has become a hub for AI research and development.
- **Digital Innovation Initiatives:** Initiatives like SRIJAN, Raksha Bhoomi, and MISO reflect the Army's commitment to digital innovation.

INDIAN NAVY COMMISSIONED INS TARMUGLI AT NAVAL DOCKYARD IN VISAKHAPATNAM

- Here are some key details about the event:
 - **INS Tarmugli:** Named after a picturesque island in the Andaman group, this 320-tonne vessel is 48 meters in length and can achieve speeds exceeding 30 knots. It's a Trinkat-class fast attack craft known for its agility and firepower.
 - **Re-induction:** Interestingly, INS Tarmugli wasn't a new acquisition. It was previously gifted to the Maldivian National Defence Forces (MNDF) in 2006 as MCGS Huravee and served there until its decommissioning in May 2023. Now, it has been refurbished and re-inducted into the Indian Navy.
 - **Significance:** The re-induction of INS Tarmugli strengthens India's maritime capabilities, particularly in the strategically important Indian Ocean region. It also underscores the close relationship between India and Maldives.

IRAN'S NAVY INCLUDES CRUISE MISSILES TALAEIEH & NASIR TO ITS ARMOURY

- This **development has significant implications for the military capabilities of Iran and the wider regional security situation.**
- Here are some key details about the missiles:
 - **Talaeieh:** This **long-range, "fully smart" missile boasts a range exceeding 1,000 kilometers (620 miles)** and reportedly possesses the ability to adjust its target during flight.
 - **Nasir:** **Shorter in range at 100 kilometers (62 miles), the Nasir is designed for deployment on Iranian warships.**

SUMMITS AND CONFERENCES

Name of the Summit	Organized/Led by	Venue	Aim/Theme
COP 28 Summit	United Arab Emirates	Expo City, Dubai	To support the most vulnerable countries in the face of climate-related disasters.
Third National Conference	Shri Narendra Modi	Delhi	Theme: : 'Ease of Living'.
Uttarakhand Global Investors Summit	Shri Narendra Modi	Dehradun	To showcase the state's 15+ investor-friendly sectoral policies,
Artificial Intelligence (GPAI) Summit	Shri Narendra Modi	Delhi	brings together leading experts
Pre-Vibrant Gujarat Summit	Gujarat Urban Development Mission	Gandhinagar, Gujarat	Theme: "Liveable Cities of Tomorrow"
Infinity Forum	Shri Narendra Modi	Gandhinagar, Gujarat	To serve as a global thought leadership platform on FinTech.

ECONOMY- ONE LINER

- In October 2023, **India's Index of Industrial Production (IIP) rose to a 16-month high of 11.7%**. This growth was mainly due to double-digit growth in the manufacturing, power, and mining sectors.
- **India is projected to contribute more than 16 per cent of the global growth. As per IMF's annual Article IV consultation with India, IMF sees India's economy grow at 6.3% in current fiscal year** IMF report also says that India is on track to be one of the fastest-growing major economies in the world.
- The **domestic rating agency ICRA has indeed revised its FY24 GDP growth forecast for India to 6.5% from the earlier 6.2%**.
- In November 2023, **India's thermal coal imports from the US reached a two-year high. According to the energy intelligence firm Kpler, India imported a total of 17.51 million tonnes (MT) of thermal coal, with inbound shipments from the US rising to 1.40 MT, its highest in over a year.**
- **The share of agriculture in India's GDP has indeed declined to 15% in the fiscal year 2022-23.** This is a significant decrease from 35% in 1990-91. The decline is attributed to the rapid growth in the industrial and service sector. Union Agriculture Minister Arjun Munda confirmed this in a written reply to Lok Sabha.
- **The unemployment rate among graduates in the age group of 15 years and above has declined to 13.4% in 2022-23 from 14.9% in the previous year.** This data is according to the latest Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) conducted by the Ministry of Statistics & Programme Implementation.
- In November 2023, the **power sector's coal imports rose by 84% year-on-year. This increase was supported by domestic supply and reduced demand, which facilitated restocking.**
- **Education loans registered a record year-on-year growth of 20.6 percent at Rs.1,10,715 crore in the current financial year till October compared with Rs.96,853 crore in the year-ago period.** According to Reserve Bank of India (RBI) data, spurt in education loans was the highest in the last five years.
- **India's coking coal imports have reached a five-year high of 38.14 million tonnes (mt) for the April-November period of this fiscal year. Australia** remains the dominant supplier, accounting for 60% of the shipments.
- **India's current account deficit (CAD) declined to \$8.3 billion, which is 1% of the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in the second quarter of FY24 (July 2023 -September 2023) owing to a "narrowing of merchandise trade deficit" the RBI said in its latest release of data.**
- **India Ratings and Research has indeed warned that India's fiscal deficit could exceed the targeted 5.9% for FY24.**
- **The core sector output growth in India slowed to 7.8% in November 2023 due to a decline in output from crude oil and cement, and a decrease in growth rates for coal, fertilizer, steel, and electricity.**
- **The Department of Economic Affairs (DEA) has projected that India's GDP growth will comfortably exceed 6.5% in FY24.** This is supported by the Reserve Bank of India, which has recently projected India's economic growth at 7% in the current fiscal year, up from 6.5% earlier.
- **The unemployment rate for persons aged 15 years and above in urban areas declined to 6.6 per cent in April-June 2023 from 7.6 per cent a year ago.** The high unemployment rate in the same period last year was due to Covid-related restrictions.
- **The output of eight key infrastructure sectors jumped by 12.1 per cent in October 2023 against 0.7 per cent expansion in the year-ago period on account of a sharp uptick in production of coal, steel, cement and electricity, according to the official data released on Thursday.**
- **The government's fiscal deficit at the end of October stood at ₹8.03 lakh crore, or 45% of the full-year budget estimate, according to data released by the Controller General of Accounts (CGA).**
- **The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) on Wednesday retained its growth projection for India at 6.3 per cent for FY24 holding that surging services exports and public investment will continue to drive the economy.**
- **India's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) grew at a higher-than-expected 7.6% in the July to September 2023 quarter, as per initial estimates from the National Statistical Office.**

- All eight industries recorded positive growth in October 2023; coal, electricity, and cement sectors shine. The eight core industries' output growth grew 12.1 percent in October 2023, much higher than the 0.7 percent growth recorded in the same month last fiscal.
- Lower demand forced the services sector to moderate in November as S&P Global's Purchasing Managers Index (PMI) slipped to a year low at 56.9 in the said month as against 58.4 in October.
- According to a government report, India reduced its GDP emission intensity by 33% between 2005 and 2019. This achievement was made 11 years in advance of the target. The energy sector accounted for the maximum share of emissions (75.81%), followed by agriculture (13.44%), industrial process & product use (8.41%), and waste (2.34%).
- According to a report by S&P Global Ratings, India is on track to become the world's third-largest economy by 2030. This projection is based on the expectation that India's annual nominal gross domestic product (GDP) growth will average 6.3% through 2030. The economy is expected to more than double to \$7.3 trillion over this period, from \$3.5 trillion in 2022.
- The Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) has upped its GDP growth forecast for the current fiscal to 6.8 per cent from 6.7 per cent projected earlier, its President R Dinesh has said. "This upward revision in projection is because of good performance of economy in first two quarters.
- The funding for Indian tech startups has seen a significant decline in 2023. According to reports, there has been a 72% decline in funding across all stages. This is the lowest funding in five years.
- M&A activity has been quite dynamic in 2023. After a muted second half of 2022, M&A activity was expected to pick up in 2023. The total domestic M&A deals fell to \$8.7 billion in 2023 (YTD) from \$70.75 billion in 2022.
- According to the Ministry of Coal, Government of India, the all India production of coal in the year 2021-2022 was 778.19 MT and in the year 2022-2023 (up to February, 2023) was 893.19 MT with a positive growth of 14.77%.
- India's industrial production growth accelerated to a 16-month high of 11.7% in October 2023. This was mainly due to double-digit growth in manufacturing, power, and mining sectors' output.
- Retail inflation in India did indeed rise to a three-month high of 5.55% in November 2023, as reported by the National Statistical Office (NSO). This increase was primarily driven by a surge in food prices, which rose 8.7% year-on-year compared to 6.6% in October
- The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has indeed raised India's growth forecast for the financial year 2023-24 (FY24) to 6.7%. This is an increase from their earlier projection of 6.3%.
- India's exports declined by 2.83% to \$33.90 billion in November 2023 compared to the previous year. This data was released on December 15, 2023. Imports also declined to \$54.48 billion in the same month. During the April-November period of this fiscal year, exports contracted by 6.51% to USD 278.8 billion.
- Wholesale price-based inflation rose fastest in eight months at 0.26 per cent in November mainly due to a sharp rise in food prices. The WPI inflation was in the negative zone for the past seven months, at (-) 0.52 per cent in October.
- The trade deficit for November eased sharply to \$20.58 billion from the all-time high of \$31.5 billion in the previous month. India's goods exports slipped back into contraction to drop 2.83% in November to \$33.9 billion, while imports fell by a sharper 4.33% to \$54.48 billion.
- The cumulative Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) inflow into Tamil Nadu, which touched nearly \$10 billion, in the last four years, from October 2019 to September 2023. This places Tamil Nadu as the fourth state in India in terms of attracting FDI, following Maharashtra, Karnataka, and Gujarat. The state government is taking steps to attract more investment.
- The International Energy Agency (IEA) announced on December 15, 2023, that India's coal demand is projected to grow by 3.5% annually until 2026, despite the country's efforts to increase its solar power capacity.

OBITUARY- ONE LINER

- Henry Kissinger, the former U.S. Secretary of State and a Nobel Peace Prize laureate, passed away at

the age of 100. He died on November 29, 2023, at his home in Connecticut.

- On 1st December 2023 **Former Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O'Connor, the first woman to serve on the highest court, has passed away at the age of 93.**
- **The iconic actor and musician R Subbalakshmi, aged 87, passed away.** She was known for her significant impact on Malayalam cinema and television, and distinguished herself with outstanding portrayals in grandmother roles.
- **Emir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah was the ruler of Kuwait from 29 September 2020 until his death on 16 December 2023.** He was born on 25 June 1937 and was the fifth son of Kuwait's former ruler Sheikh Ahmad al-Jaber al-Sabah. During his three-year rule as emir, he grappled with internal political disputes.
- **Dr. V. Mohini Giri, a renowned women's rights activist and former chairperson of the National Commission for Women, passed away following a brief illness.** She was 86 years old. Dr. Giri was a significant figure in the women's rights movement and made substantial contributions to the field.
- **Robert M. Solow, the celebrated economist and Nobel laureate, passed away at the age of 99.** He was a recipient of the 1987 Nobel Economics Prize and was best known for his work on growth theory. Solow was a longtime professor at MIT and a mentor to many in his field.
- **Vijayakanth, the founder of Desiya Murpokku Dravida Kazhagam (DMDK) and a popular actor in Tamil cinema passed away on December 28, 2023, at the age of 71.** He had been suffering from respiratory illness and was admitted to MIOT Hospital in Chennai.
- **Jacques Delors, the former President of the European Commission and a key figure in the creation of the euro currency, has passed away.** He was 98 years old. Delors, who was also a French politician, died in his sleep.

- **The Chief Minister of Uttarakhand, Pushkar Singh Dhama, officially released a book titled "Resilient India: How Modi Transformed India's Disaster Management Paradigm" in Dehradun.** The book highlights Prime Minister Narendra Modi's efforts in bringing about a "paradigm shift" in India's disaster management.
- **The book, 'RESILIENT INDIA: How Modi Transformed India's Disaster Management Paradigm', was officially released by Uttarakhand Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhama.** This book is authored by the BlueKraft Digital Foundation.
- **The former President of India, Ram Nath Kovind, launched a book titled "Naye Bharat ka Samveda" in New Delhi on Thursday, 7th December 2023.** The book is a compilation of speeches by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on the Indian Constitution.
- **General Manoj Mukund Naravane, the twenty-eighth Chief of the Indian Army, has written an autobiography titled "Four Stars of Destiny".** The book is set to be released around April 30, 2024. The book also includes lessons on leadership and management with universal applicability and emphasizes the importance of family and maintaining a work-life balance.
- **"Breaking the Mould: Reimagining India's Economic Future" is a book written by economist Rohit Lamba and former governor of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), Raghuram Rajan.** The book was published on 7th December 2023.
- **The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) has released a book on Finite Element Analysis using 'FEASTsmt' software. The book is titled 'Introduction to Finite Element Analysis.** It has been written by practicing structural analysis experts of Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre (VSSC) and Liquid Propulsion Systems Centre (LPSC). The book was edited by Dr S Somanath, Chairman, ISRO, Secretary, Department of Space and Dr Unnikrishnan Nair.

MONTHLY CURRENT AFFAIRS QUESTION BANK: DECEMBER 2023

Q.1 Who was arrested by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) in connection with a Rs 250-crore money laundering case?

- Mohammad Shafi Dar
- Hilal A Mir
- Both A and B

BOOKS

- **The book "India's Moment: Changing Power Equations Around the World" by Mohan Kumar was indeed launched by the Indian High Commissioner to the United Kingdom, H.E. Mr. Vikram K. Doraiswami.**

- d) All of the above
- e) None of the above

Answer (a): The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has arrested Mohammad Shafi Dar, the former chairman of Jammu and Kashmir Cooperative Bank, in connection with a Rs 250-crore money laundering case.

Q.2 Who developed the DIGI-PHARMed application?

- a) Indian Medical Association
- b) Pharmacy Council of India
- c) All India Institute of Medical Sciences
- d) National Institute of Pharmaceutical Education and Research
- e) None of these

Answer (b): The DIGI-PHARMed application is a portal developed by the Pharmacy Council of India (PCI).

Q.3 Who launched the Amplifi 2.0 portal?

- a) Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare
- b) Union Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs
- c) Union Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology
- d) Union Ministry of Human Resource Development
- e) None of these

Answer (b): The Amplifi 2.0 portal has indeed been launched by the Union Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs.

Q.4 Who is the new Chief Secretary of Madhya Pradesh?

- a) Iqbal Singh Bains
- b) Sanjay Rana
- c) Veera Rana
- d) All of the above
- e) None of the above

Answer (c): Bhopal, on Nov 30, 2023- Veera Rana, a 1988 batch IAS officer, took additional charge of Chief Secretary of Madhya Pradesh.

Q.5 When is the International Day for the Abolition of Slavery observed every year?

- a) December 1
- b) December 2
- c) December 3
- d) December 4
- e) None of these

Answer (b): The International Day for the Abolition of Slavery is observed every year on December 2 to raise awareness and reinforce global efforts to eliminate all forms of slavery.

Q.6 Who is the author of the book 'RESILIENT INDIA' ?

- a) Pushkar Singh Dhami
- b) Narendra Modi
- c) BlueKraft Digital Foundation
- d) All of these
- e) None of the above

Answer (c): The book, 'RESILIENT INDIA: How Modi Transformed India's Disaster Management Paradigm', was officially released by Uttarakhand Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami. This book is authored by the BlueKraft Digital Foundation.

Q.7 What is the main aim of the India Internet Governance Forum (IIGF)?

- a) To discuss public policy issues related to the Internet
- b) To promote the use of the Internet in India
- c) To regulate the Internet in India
- d) To monitor Internet usage in India
- e) None of these

Answer (a): The India Internet Governance Forum 2023 (IIGF-2023) was held in New Delhi on December 5. The Internet Governance Forum (IGF) is a multi-stakeholder platform that brings together representatives from various groups. The event aimed to delve deeper into issues such as building a secure, trusted, and resilient cyberspace for Bharat.

Q.8 Who has been appointed as the Youth Voter Awareness Ambassador for Jammu & Kashmir?

- a) Virat Kohli
- b) Suresh Raina
- c) MS Dhoni
- d) Sachin Tendulkar
- e) None of these

Answer (b): Former Indian cricketer Suresh Raina has been appointed as the Youth Voter Awareness Ambassador for the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir.

Q.9 What is the projected average annual nominal GDP growth for India through 2030 according to S&P?

- a) 4.3%
- b) 5.3%
- c) 6.3%

- d) 7.3%
- e) None of these

- c) Chief Minister of Delhi
- d) Minister of Culture
- e) None of these

Answer (c): According to a report by S&P Global Ratings, India is on track to become the world's third-largest economy by 2030. This projection is based on the expectation that India's annual nominal gross domestic product (GDP) growth will average 6.3% through 2030.

Answer (b): The first Indian Art, Architecture and Design Biennale (IAADB) 2023 was inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi at Red Fort in Delhi on December 8, 2023.

Q.10 What is the name of the satellite that China launched jointly with Egypt?

Q.14 Who acquired Sanghi Industries?

- a) MisrSat-1
- b) MisrSat-2
- c) MisrSat-3
- d) MisrSat-4
- e) None of these

- a) Adani Group
- b) Ambuja Cements
- c) Reliance Industries
- d) Tata Group
- e) None of these

Answer (b): China has indeed launched the MisrSat-2 satellite, which was jointly developed with Egypt.

Answer (b): Ambuja Cements, a part of Adani Group, has completed the acquisition of Sanghi Industries, a cement and building material company, at an enterprise value of Rs 5,185 crore.

Q.11 When was the Defense Cooperation Agreement (DCA) signed between Sweden and the United States?

Q.15 When is Hanukkah celebrated in 2023?

- a) December 6, 2022
- b) December 6, 2023
- c) May 2022
- d) All of the Above
- e) None of the above

- a) November 25 to December 3
- b) December 7 to December 15
- c) December 25 to January 2
- d) December 1 to December 9
- e) None of these

Answer (b): Sweden and the United States signed a Defense Cooperation Agreement (DCA) on Tuesday, December 6, 2023, in Washington.

Answer (b): Hanukkah, also known as Chanukah, is a Jewish festival that lasts for eight days and nights. It usually falls in late November to late December. In 2023, it is being celebrated from December 7 to December 15.

Q.12 Who is the first female medical officer to be stationed in Siachen?

Q.16 What is the name of IBM's first-ever 1,000-qubit quantum chip?

- a) Captain Anjali Singh
- b) Captain Divya Ajith Kumar
- c) Captain Geetika Koul
- d) Captain Tania Shergill
- e) None of these

- a) Heron
- b) Flamingo
- c) Condor
- d) Starling
- e) None of these

Answer (c): Captain Geetika Koul is the first woman medical officer of the Indian Army to be deployed at Siachen, the world's highest battlefield.

Answer (c): IBM has indeed announced the release of its first-ever 1,000-qubit quantum chip. This chip, named Condor, is the largest transmon-based quantum processor yet released, with 1,121 functioning qubits.

Q.13 Who inaugurated the first Indian Art, Architecture and Design Biennale (IAADB) 2023?

Q.17 When is UNICEF Day observed annually?

- a) President of India
- b) Prime Minister of India

- a) December 10

- b) December 11
- c) December 12
- d) December 13
- e) None of these

- b) Ram Nath Kovind
- c) Rajnath Singh
- d) Amit Shah
- e) None of these

Answer (b): UNICEF Day, also known as UNICEF Foundation Day, is annually observed on December 11.

Answer (b): The former President of India, Ram Nath Kovind, launched a book titled “Naye Bharat ka Samveda” in New Delhi on Thursday, 7th December 2023.

Q.18 Where is the GPAI Summit 2023 being held?

- a) Paris, France
- b) New Delhi, India
- c) Tokyo, Japan
- d) New York, USA
- e) None of these

Q.22 When is the International Day of Neutrality observed?

- a) December 10
- b) December 12
- c) December 14
- d) December 16
- e) None of these

Answer (b): The Global Partnership on Artificial Intelligence (GPAI) Summit 2023 is being held from 12th to 14th December 2023 in New Delhi, India.

Answer (b): The International Day of Neutrality is observed every year on December 12.

Q.19 Who conducted the exercise ‘Prasthan’?

- a) Indian Army
- b) Indian Navy
- c) Indian Air Force
- d) State Police
- e) None of these

Q.23 Which bank signed a €70 million LoC with KfW for solar projects in India?

- a) HDFC Bank
- b) ICICI Bank
- c) SBI
- d) Axis Bank
- e) None of these

Answer (b): A co-ordinated exercise code-named 'Prasthan' was conducted on 08 December 2023, by the Indian Navy and other defence, State and civil agencies in the Offshore Development Area off Mumbai.

Answer (c): On December 14, 2023, the State Bank of India (SBI) signed a €70 million (approximately Rs 630 crore) Line of Credit (LoC) with KfW, the German development bank.

Q.20 Which block achieved the top rank in the 1st Delta Ranking of Aspirational Blocks Programme (ABP)?

- a) Kaushambi Block
- b) Tiryani Block
- c) Kumaram Bheem Asifabad Block
- d) All of the above
- e) None of the above

Q.24 What is the percentage of Indians who were unable to afford a healthy diet in 2021 according to the FAO report?

- a) 76.2%
- b) 74.1%
- c) 82.2%
- d) 66.1%
- e) None of these

Answer (b): The 1st Delta Ranking of Aspirational Blocks Programme (ABP) was released by NITI Aayog on 7th December 2023. The top rank was achieved by Tiryani Block of Kumaram Bheem Asifabad District, Telangana, and the second rank was secured by Kaushambi block of Kaushambi District, Uttar Pradesh.

Answer (b): The Regional Overview of Food Security and Nutrition 2023: Statistics and Trends report by the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) was released on December 13, 2023. which stated that 74.1% of Indians were unable to afford a healthy diet in 2021.

Q.21 Who launched the book “Naye Bharat ka Samveda”?

- a) Narendra Modi

Q.25 Who has developed India’s first Sodium-Ion (Na) battery technology?

- a) ISRO

- b) DRDO
- c) KPIT Technologies
- d) TATA Motors
- e) None of these

e) None of these

Answer (c): KPIT Technologies has developed India's first Sodium-Ion (Na) battery technology, which is a cost-effective alternative to lithium-ion cells.

Answer (c): On 13th December, The United World Wrestling (UWW) named India's Antim Panghal, Greece's Georgios Kougioumtsidis, and Azerbaijan's Hasrat Jafarov as the Rising Stars of the Year 2023 in their respective categories. Antim Panghal from India was named the Women's Rising Star of the Year 2023.

Q.26 What is the name of India's fastest solar-electric boat?

- a) Dolphin
- b) Barracuda
- c) Shark
- d) Whale
- e) None of these

Answer (b): India's fastest solar-electric boat, the "Barracuda," was launched on December 14, 2023.

Q.30 Who unveiled the translations of Thirukkural at the Kashi Tamil Sangamam 2023?

- a) President of India
- b) Prime Minister of India
- c) Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh
- d) Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu
- e) None of these

Answer (b): Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the second phase of the Kashi Tamil Sangamam 2023 at Namoo Ghat in Varanasi.

Q.27 Who won the ITF World Champion Awards 2023?

- a) Serena Williams and Roger Federer
- b) Novak Djokovic and Aryna Sabalenka
- c) Rafael Nadal and Naomi Osaka
- d) Andy Murray and Venus Williams
- e) None of these

Answer (b): Novak Djokovic and Aryna Sabalenka were honored as the International Tennis Federation's 2023 ITF World Champions.

Q.31 What is the primary purpose of the NGDR portal?

- a) To sell geological data to private companies
- b) To centralize and share geospatial information across India
- c) To promote tourism in areas with geological significance
- d) To create a digital archive of historical maps
- e) None of these

Answer (b): The portal, spearheaded by the Ministry of Mines and developed in collaboration with the Geological Survey of India (GSI) and Bhaskaracharya Institute of Space Applications and Geoinformatics (BISAG-N), is a comprehensive online platform for accessing, sharing, and analyzing geospatial information across the nation.

Q.28 Where was the Global Summit on 'Liveable Cities of Tomorrow' organized?

- a) Ahmedabad, Gujarat
- b) Surat, Gujarat
- c) Gandhinagar, Gujarat
- d) Rajkot, Gujarat
- e) None of these

Answer (c): The Pre-Vibrant Gujarat Summit on "Liveable Cities of Tomorrow" was held in Gandhinagar, Gujarat on 15th December 2023.

Q.32 Who inaugurated the 402 km section of the Eastern Dedicated Freight Corridor (DFC) on December 18, 2023?

- a) President Ram Nath Kovind
- b) Prime Minister Narendra Modi
- c) Minister of Railways Ashwini Vaishnaw
- d) Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh Yogi Adityanath
- e) None of these

Answer (b): Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the 402 km section of the Eastern Dedicated Freight Corridor (DFC) on December 18, 2023.

Q.29 Who was named the Women's Rising Star of the Year 2023 by the United World Wrestling (UWW)?

- a) Georgios Kougioumtsidis
- b) Hasrat Jafarov
- c) Antim Panghal
- d) None of the above

Q.33 Which two books won the 'Gaja Capital Business Book Prize' 2023?

- a) 'Winning Middle India: The Story of India's New-Age Entrepreneurs' and 'Capture the Dream'
- b) 'Against All Odds: The IT Story of India' and 'Winning Middle India: The Story of India's New-Age Entrepreneurs'
- c) 'Capture the Dream' and 'Essentially Mira'
- d) 'Essentially Mira' and 'Against All Odds: The IT Story of India'
- e) None of these

Answer (b): The books 'Against All Odds: The IT Story of India' and 'Winning Middle India: The Story of India's New-Age Entrepreneurs' have been announced as joint winners of the 'Gaja Capital Business Book Prize' 2023.

Q.34 Who launched the "Janavani- Kalushya Nivarani" mobile app?

- a) Haryana State Pollution Control Board
- b) Telangana State Pollution Control Board
- c) Karnataka State Pollution Control Board
- d) Kerala State Pollution Control Board
- e) None of these

Answer (b): The "Janavani- Kalushya Nivarani" mobile app was launched by the Telangana State Pollution Control Board (TSPCB) on December 18, 2023.

Q.35 Who won the men's team title at the 75th Inter State-Inter Zonal Badminton Championships 2023?

- a) Karnataka
- b) Airport Authority of India (AAI)
- c) Badminton Association of India (BAI)
- d) RG Baruah Sports Complex
- e) None of these

Answer (b): The Airport Authority of India (AAI) indeed won the men's team title at the 75th Inter State-Inter Zonal Badminton Championships 2023.

Q.36 What is the area of the Swarved Mahamandir?

- a) 1 lakh square feet
- b) 2 lakh square feet
- c) 3 lakh square feet
- d) 4 lakh square feet
- e) None of these

Answer (c): On December 18, 2023, Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the Swarved Mahamandir in Umaraha, Varanasi. The temple, spread across 3 lakh square feet, can accommodate about 20,000 people for meditation. It features teakwood ceilings and doors, 101 fountains, and verses of the Swarveda carved on the walls.

Q.37 What award did the Rambagh Gate and Ramparts in Amritsar, Punjab receive in 2023?

- a) The Nobel Prize for Architecture
- b) The Pritzker Architecture Prize
- c) The Award of Excellence at the UNESCO Asia-Pacific Awards for Cultural Heritage Conservation
- d) The Aga Khan Award for Architecture
- e) None of these

Answer (c): The Rambagh Gate and Ramparts in Amritsar, Punjab, were indeed awarded the prestigious Award of Excellence at the 2023 UNESCO Asia-Pacific Awards for Cultural Heritage Conservation.

Q.38 Who won the Chennai Grand Masters 2023 tournament?

- a) Pentala Harikrishna
- b) Dommaraju Gukesh
- c) Arjun Erigaisi
- d) All of the above
- e) None of the above

Answer (b): In the Chennai Grand Masters 2023 tournament, Indian chess prodigy, Dommaraju Gukesh clinched the title by holding compatriot Pentala Harikrishna for a draw on 21st December 2023.

Q.39 What type of plan is T.U.L.I.P?

- a) Participating Unit Linked Endowment Plan
- b) Non-Participating Unit Linked Endowment Plan
- c) Participating Unit Linked Insurance Plan
- d) Non-Participating Unit Linked Insurance Plan
- e) None of these

Answer (b): Kotak Life introduced a new insurance product called 'T.U.L.I.P', a Non-Participating Unit Linked Endowment Plan, on December 20, 2023.

Q.40 What award did Crompton Greaves Consumer Electricals Ltd. (CGCEL) receive in 2023?

- a) National Innovation Award

- b) National Energy Conservation Award
- c) Best Consumer Electrical Company Award
- d) Corporate Social Responsibility Award
- e) None of these

- b) General Bipin Rawat
- c) General V. K. Singh
- d) General Dalbir Singh Suhag
- e) None of these

Answer (b): Crompton Greaves Consumer Electricals Ltd. (CGCEL), one of India's leading consumer electrical companies, was conferred with the prestigious National Energy Conservation Award 2023.

Answer (a): General Manoj Mukund Naravane, the twenty-eighth Chief of the Indian Army, has written an autobiography titled "Four Stars of Destiny".

Q.41 Who approved the loan for the Tamil Nadu Climate Resilient Urban Development Program?

Q.45 Who has been appointed as the interim Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of the North East Small Finance Bank (NESFB)?

- a) The Government of India.
- b) The Reserve Bank of India.
- c) The World Bank.
- d) The International Monetary Fund.
- e) None of these

- a) Ratan Tata
- b) Mukesh Ambani
- c) Satish Kumar Kalra
- d) Anand Mahindra
- e) None of these

Answer (c): On December 21, 2023, the World Bank approved a \$300 million loan for the Tamil Nadu Climate Resilient Urban Development Program.

Answer (c): On 25th December 2023, Satish Kumar Kalra, a former executive of Andhra Bank, was appointed as the interim Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of the North East Small Finance Bank (NESFB).

Q.42 Where was the 8th Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS) Conclave of Chiefs (CoC) held?

Q.46 Who inaugurated the first Intra District Chopper Service in Uttar Pradesh?

- a) Bangkok, Thailand
- b) Seoul, South Korea
- c) New Delhi, India
- d) Sydney, Australia
- e) None of these

- a) Prime Minister Narendra Modi
- b) Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath
- c) President Ram Nath Kovind
- d) Home Minister Amit Shah
- e) None of these

Answer (a): The 8th Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS) Conclave of Chiefs (CoC) was held in Bangkok, Thailand from December 19-22, 2023.

Answer (b): On 25th December 2023, Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath inaugurated the state's first Intra District Chopper Service from Bateshwar in Agra to Govardhan in Mathura.

Q.43 Who has been approved by SEBI as the Chairman of BSE Ltd?

- a) SS Mundra
- b) Pramod Agrawal
- c) Ratan Tata
- d) Mukesh Ambani
- e) None of these

Q.47 Who are the authors of the book?

- a) Dr S Somanath and Dr Unnikrishnan Nair
- b) Practicing structural analysis experts of VSSC and LPSC
- c) Scientists of ISRO
- d) Researchers of the Department of Space
- e) None of these

Answer (b): The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) has approved the appointment of Pramod Agrawal as the Chairman of BSE Ltd.

Answer (b): The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) has released a book on Finite Element Analysis using 'FEASTsmt' software. The book is titled 'Introduction to Finite Element Analysis. It has been written by practicing structural

Q.44 Who is the author of the book "Four Stars of Destiny"?

- a) General Manoj Mukund Naravane

analysis experts of Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre (VSSC) and Liquid Propulsion Systems Centre (LPSC).

Q.48 Where was the 'Taal Darbar' event held?

- a) Gwalior
- b) Chandigarh
- c) Delhi
- d) Mumbai
- e) None of these

Answer (a): Over 1500 people performed tabla simultaneously at the 'Taal Darbar' in Gwalior, setting a Guinness World Record.

Q.49 How many tigers did India lose in 2023 according to the Wildlife Protection Society of India (WPSI)?

- a) 100
- b) 204
- c) 300
- d) 400
- e) None of these

Answer (b): In 2023, India lost a record 204 tigers, according to the Wildlife Protection Society of India (WPSI).

Q.50 Who has extended the deadline for mutual fund and demat account holders to nominate a beneficiary or opt-out?

- a) Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI)
- b) Reserve Bank of India (RBI)
- c) Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI)
- d) Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority (PFRDA)
- e) None of these

Answer (a): The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) has extended the deadline for mutual fund and demat account holders to nominate a beneficiary or opt-out.

Q.51 Where was the 12th Divya Kala Mela-2023 held?

- a) Panipat, Haryana
- b) Surat, Gujarat
- c) Mumbai, Maharashtra
- d) Kolkata, West Bengal
- e) None of these

Answer (b): The 12th Divya Kala Mela-2023, a unique event showcasing the products and craftsmanship of Divyang entrepreneurs/artisans, was inaugurated in Surat, Gujarat.

Q.52 Who launched the National Transit Pass System (NTPS)?

- a) Shri Narendra Modi
- b) Shri Bhupender Yadav
- c) Shri Amit Shah
- d) Shri Rajnath Singh
- e) None of these

Answer (b): Union Minister for Environment, Forest and Climate Change and Labour and Employment, Shri Bhupender Yadav, launched the National Transit Pass System (NTPS) on December 29, 2023.