



CURRENT AFFAIRS 19th and 20th Jan 2024

National News

1.New Guidelines For Coaching Centres In India: Balancing Education And Welfare

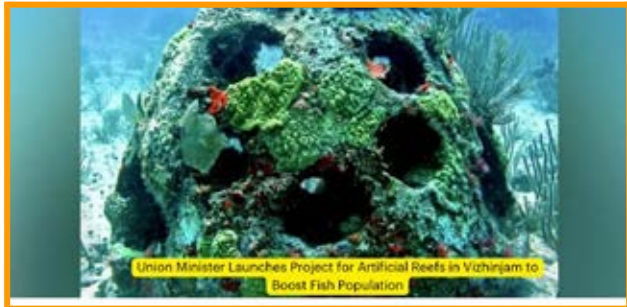


The Ministry of Education in India has announced new guidelines for coaching centres. These guidelines provide a legal structure for the operation of coaching centres. They define the minimum standards for the functioning of these centres.

Only those with a minimum qualification of graduation are eligible to teach. Coaching centres are prohibited from making false claims about ranks or marks to entice students. Students below 16 years old cannot be enrolled, and admission is allowed only for post-secondary school examinations.

These guidelines come in response to growing concerns about student welfare, unregulated growth of private coaching, and rising cases of student suicides and other incidents linked to coaching centres.

2.Union Minister Launches Project For Artificial Reefs In Vizhinjam To Boost Fish Population



In a significant move to boost fish production and promote sustainable fishing, Union Fisheries Minister Parshottam Rupala inaugurated an artificial reef project in Vizhinjam, Kerala.

This initiative aims to double the income of fishermen by enhancing fish stocks and contributing to the economic well-being of the local fishing community. The project is designed to boost fishery resources in the region, thus improving the livelihood of traditional fishermen.

The Kerala State Coastal Development Corporation, with technical assistance from the Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute (CMFRI), is overseeing the project. The project will deploy 6,300 artificial reef units across 42 fishing villages from Pozhiyoor to Varkala in Thiruvananthapuram district.

3.MeitY Secretary Launches India's First Graphene Centre And IoT CoE In Kerala



In a significant development, MeitY Secretary S Krishnan inaugurated the India Innovation Centre for Graphene (IICG) and a Centre of Excellence (CoE) in Intelligent Internet of Things (IIoT) Sensors in Kerala.

The Digital University Kerala (DUK) (formerly IIITMK) and CMET, Thrissur, play crucial roles as technical partners in establishing these pioneering centers.

The CoE in IIoT Sensors, situated at Makers Village Kochi, is a distinctive facility created by the collaborative efforts of MeitY, Government of India, and Government of Kerala.

The primary objective is to boost the development of sensors within the domain of Intelligent IoT systems, encompassing a wide array of applications across networks, devices, and sensor systems.

4.Farsi As India's New Classical Language



In a noteworthy development aimed at strengthening cultural ties, the Government of India, under the New Education Policy, has decided to include Farsi (Persian) as one of the nine classical languages of India.

This announcement was made by External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar during a two-day visit to Iran, highlighting the cultural, literary, and linguistic connections between Iran and India.

Farsi, also known as Persian, is an Indo-Iranian language belonging to the Iranian branch of the Indo-Iranian languages.

It has a rich historical and cultural significance, not only in Iran but also in the broader Persian-speaking world. The language is known for its extensive literary heritage, with poets like Rumi and Hafez making significant contributions to Persian literature.

International News

5.China's Population Challenge: Measures To Counter Declining Birth Rates



China faces a demographic crisis as its population dropped for the second year in a row in 2023. This decline is attributed to a falling birth rate and an increase in deaths, especially after the lifting of COVID-19 restrictions.

China's total population stood at 1.4 billion, with the country falling behind India as the world's most populous nation. Deaths rose by 690,000 to 11.1 million, more than double the previous year's increase, partly due to COVID-19 outbreaks.

The number of births fell for the seventh consecutive year, with only about 9 million babies born in 2023, half the total in 2016. High childcare and education costs, uncertainty in the job market, and gender discrimination are some factors discouraging couples from having more children.

6.The Houthis' Escalation In The Red Sea: Causes And Consequences



Yemen's Iran-backed Houthi rebels have intensified their attacks on ships in the Red Sea, citing revenge against Israel for its actions in Gaza.

This has prompted the US and UK to launch strikes against Houthi targets in Yemen, leading to concerns about a broader regional conflict.

The war has resulted in one of the world's worst humanitarian crises, with millions in need of aid, widespread displacement, and significant casualties. A 2022 ceasefire lapsed after six months, and efforts to bring a permanent end to the conflict have proven challenging.

7.Japan's Lunar Ambition: Smart Lander Mission Set For Success On January 20



Japan is poised to join an exclusive group of nations that have successfully landed on the Moon. The Smart Lander for Investigating Moon (SLIM), developed by the Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA), is scheduled to touch the lunar surface on January 20, 2024.

This mission marks a significant milestone in Japan's space exploration endeavours and offers a unique opportunity to advance lunar science. Launched on September 6, 2023, aboard a H-IIA rocket, SLIM represents a significant leap in lunar exploration technology.

The mission aims to demonstrate highly accurate landings, a capability that will enhance the science value of future lunar missions. The lander's target is the rim of Shioli crater, where it aims to land within 100 meters of its target point, a level of precision unprecedented in lunar exploration.

State News

8.Moh-Juj Fights: A Cultural Resurgence In Assam



After a hiatus of nine years, Moh-Juj, the traditional buffalo fights, have made a comeback in Assam. This revival, held during the Magh Bihu festival in mid-January 2024, marks a significant cultural reclamation in Assam.

The tradition of Moh-Juj was suspended in 2015 following the Supreme Court's ban on similar events like Jallikattu in Tamil Nadu. The ban was primarily due to concerns regarding animal cruelty.

However, recognizing the cultural significance of Moh-Juj, the Assam government, after deliberations and the issuance of detailed SOPs, decided to permit these events again. Moh-Juj symbolizes strength and valor in Assamese culture. The revival of Moh-Juj is seen as a reclamation of Assam's rich cultural traditions that have been passed down through generations.

9.Mamata Banerjee Opens 47th Kolkata Book Fair, Featuring The UK As The Theme Country



Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee inaugurated the 47th International Kolkata Book Fair on January 18, amidst a drizzle that posed challenges for last-minute preparations for several stall owners.

The United Kingdom (UK) holds the spotlight as the theme country for this year's book fair, which is scheduled to continue till January 31.

The Kolkata Literature Festival is set to enrich the fair with discussions, readings, and interactions with prominent literary figures. The festival adds a dynamic layer to the overall cultural experience, providing attendees with opportunities to engage with thought-provoking discussions.

10.Unveiling Arunachal Pradesh's Pakke Paga Hornbill Festival And The Nyishi Tribe



Arunachal Pradesh, nestled in the northeastern part of India, boasts a vibrant cultural mosaic and unparalleled biodiversity. The Pakke Paga Hornbill Festival (PPHF) serves as a testament to this diversity, bringing together communities, traditions, and conservation efforts.

The PPHF, inaugurated in 2015, holds a unique purpose: recognizing the Nyishi tribe's crucial role in hornbill conservation within the Pakke Tiger Reserve.

Beyond cultural festivities, the festival aims to establish alternative income sources, steering away from harmful practices like hunting and logging. It serves as a platform for creating national awareness about the natural wonders of the Pakke Tiger Reserve and its surroundings.

11.Tallest Ambedkar Statue To Be Unveiled Today In Vijayawada, Andhra Pradesh



The Andhra Pradesh government is set to unveil the world's tallest statue of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, the esteemed architect of the Indian Constitution, in a grand ceremony today in Vijayawada.

The colossal structure, named the 'Statue of Social Justice,' stands at an impressive height of 206 feet, making it one of the top 50 tallest statues globally, with Sardar Vallabhai Patel's 'Statue of Unity' claiming the top spot.

The 'Statue of Social Justice' stands tall at 125 feet, mounted on an 81-foot pedestal, making it the tallest statue of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar in the world. The sheer magnitude of the structure is a visual representation of the profound impact of Dr. Ambedkar's ideals on justice and equality.

Banking News

12.HDFC Bank Aims For Singapore Expansion With Banking License Application



In a strategic move, HDFC Bank Ltd, India's largest private sector lender, is actively pursuing its first branch in Singapore. Following its significant merger with Housing Development Finance Corp. last year, HDFC Bank is looking to expand its global footprint.

With Singapore hosting a substantial Indian diaspora of nearly 650,000 non-residents and persons of Indian origin, HDFC Bank sees an opportunity to cater to this market. The bank is strategically positioning itself to offer a range of financial products and services tailored to the needs of the Indian community in Singapore....

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