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Contact No. : +91 8123002808 | **website :** www.plutusacademy.com



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International News

EAM S. Jaishankar Boosts India-Nepal Relations In Two-Day Visit



EAM S Jaishankar concludes his 2-day Nepal visit, shares glimpses

In a diplomatic triumph, India's External Affairs Minister (EAM) S. Jaishankar concluded his two-day visit to Nepal, solidifying ties through various initiatives and agreements.

The pivotal event of the visit was the 7th India-Nepal Joint Commission meeting, culminating in a landmark accord for India to import 10,000 MW of hydroelectricity from Nepal over the next decade.

Moreover, India announced a financial package of Nepali Rs 1,000 crore (USD 75 million) for rebuilding infrastructure in areas affected by the 2015 earthquake.

Kyrgyzstan Declares Snow Leopard As National Symbol



Kyrgyzstan, a country nestled in the heart of Central Asia, has officially declared the snow leopard as its national symbol, signifying a profound commitment to conservation and ecological balance.

President Zhaparov has directed the Cabinet of Ministers to actively recognize the snow leopard as a national symbol and take measures to protect its population and the ecosystems it inhabits.

President Sadyr Zhaparov, through a signed decree, emphasized the snow leopard's role not only as a symbol of natural wealth and cultural prosperity but also as a vital indicator of the stability and health of the mountain ecosystems that cover a substantial portion of the global territory.

Bangladesh Election 2024: Sheikh Hasina Secures Fifth Term Amid Opposition Boycott



In a momentous turn of events, Bangladesh's Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has been re-elected for a fifth term, marking a significant milestone in the country's political landscape. According to the Election Commission and reports from various TV stations, the Awami League secured 216 seats out of 299 in the parliamentary election.

The ruling Awami League, under Hasina's

leadership, has triumphed once again, securing more than half of the parliamentary seats. This victory reaffirms Sheikh Hasina's position as the world's longest-serving female head of government.

Gabriel Attal Becomes France's Youngest-Ever Prime Minister At 34



French President Emmanuel Macron has made a significant political move by appointing Gabriel Attal as the new prime minister of France.

At 34 years old, Attal not only becomes the youngest prime minister in the country's history but also the first openly gay official to hold this prestigious position.

Attal's appointment comes in the midst of a cabinet reshuffle initiated by Macron to breathe new life into his government. With the departure of outgoing Prime Minister Elisabeth Borne, Attal is expected to play a crucial role in shaping the direction of the administration.

U.S. Designates Countries Including China, North Korea, Pakistan For Religious Freedom Violations

The United States, led by Secretary of State Antony Blinken, has identified several nations as 'Countries of Particular Concern' due to severe violations of religious freedom.

This decision aligns with the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998, emphasizing the commitment to advancing freedom of religion globally.



China, North Korea, Pakistan, Cuba, Eritrea, Iran, Nicaragua, Russia, Saudi Arabia,

Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Myanmar have been labeled as 'Countries of Particular Concern.'

Algeria, Azerbaijan, the Central African Republic, Comoros, and Vietnam are placed on the 'Special Watch List' for tolerating severe religious freedom violations.

Rajnath Singh Visits UK For Defense And Security Talks



Defence Minister Rajnath Singh has embarked on a crucial three-day visit to London, emphasizing the multifaceted dimensions of the India-UK Defence Partnership.

The visit aims to foster high-level discussions covering a broad spectrum of defence, security, and industrial cooperation issues between the two nations.

The discussions are anticipated to encompass a wide range of topics, including defence strategies, security challenges, and collaborative industrial ventures.

This engagement aims to foster partnerships, encourage investments, and explore avenues for joint ventures between Indian and British companies.

Notably, the bill does not stipulate penalties for individuals consuming dog meat.

South Korea Bans Trade Of Dog Meat In New Law



South Korea's parliament made history by passing a groundbreaking bill that bans the eating and selling of dog meat. This move marks the end of a centuries-old practice that has been increasingly criticized in the face of growing support for animal welfare.

Proposed by the ruling party and enjoying rare bipartisan support, the bill passed with an overwhelming majority of 208 votes and two abstentions in the single-chamber parliament.

The legislation aims to “eradicate the consumption of dogs” and will take effect after a three-year grace period. The breeding and slaughtering of dogs for human consumption will be punishable by up to three years in prison or a fine of 30 million won (\$22,800).

National News

Ayodhya Airport Renamed As 'Maharishi Valmiki International Airport'; Gains International Status



The Union Cabinet recently gave its approval to declare Ayodhya Airport as an international airport. The airport will be named “Maharishi Valmiki International Airport, Ayodhyadham,” reflecting the historical and cultural significance of the region.

According to the government's press release, elevating Ayodhya Airport to international status is crucial for realizing the city's economic potential. Furthermore, it acknowledges Ayodhya's significance as a global pilgrimage site, with the international status expected to attract foreign pilgrims and tourists.

The airport's development will occur in phases. In its initial phase, the airport will have the capacity to handle 10 lakh (1 million) passengers annually. After the second phase of development, Maharishi Valmiki International Airport is expected to cater to a staggering 60 lakh (6 million) commuters annually.

ONGC Begins First Oil Production In Krishna-Godavari Deep-Water Block



Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC), one of India's leading energy exploration and production companies, achieved a significant milestone on January 7 by commencing the first oil production from the deep-water KG-DWN 98/2 Block.

Located in the Krishna Godavari (KG) basin off the Bay of Bengal on the Kakinada coast, this development marks a crucial step forward in India's energy landscape.

The anticipated peak production from the 98/2 field is remarkable, with expectations set at around 45,000 barrels of oil per day and over 10 Million Metric Standard Cubic Metres per Day (MMSCMD) of gas.

As the project advances, ONGC is actively working towards the final phase of the 98/2 block, with efforts underway to commence the production of the remaining oil and natural gas by mid-2024.

The primary focus was on unveiling key initiatives, such as the “Harit Nauka – Guidelines for Green Transition of Inland Vessels” and the “River Cruise Tourism Roadmap 2047.” Additionally, the meeting saw the signing of several Memorandums of

Understanding (MoUs), symbolizing collaborative efforts towards advancing inland

waterways and associated sectors.

Ujjain Unveils India's First Hygienic Food Street 'Prasadam'



Union Health Minister Dr Mansukh Mandaviya recently inaugurated 'Prasadam,' the nation's first healthy and hygienic food street, in a grand ceremony at Neelkanth Van, Mahakal Lok, Ujjain, Madhya Pradesh.

Spanning an impressive 939 square meters, "Prasadam" stands as a symbol of holistic development. Positioned near the Mahakaleshwar Temple, it is designed not just as a food street but as a multifaceted destination contributing to various aspects of community life. The food street comprises 17 shops, each offering a unique culinary experience.

"Prasadam" goes beyond offering a culinary delight. It provides an array of facilities, including a dedicated kids' play area, drinking water facility, CCTV surveillance, ample parking, public conveniences, and spacious seating areas. These facilities are aimed at enhancing the overall experience for visitors and locals alike.

State News

Assam Government Initiates 'Gunotsav 2024'



The Assam government is gearing up for the fifth edition of 'Gunotsav 2024,' a comprehensive state-wide assessment aimed at evaluating the performance of approximately 40 lakh students across government schools.

The initiative, slated to run from January 3 to February 8, 2024, is poised to play a pivotal role in enhancing the quality of education and improving learning outcomes in the state.

'Gunotsav' emphasizes active participation from all stakeholders, including teachers, students, administrators, and local communities. This holistic engagement is expected to foster accountability and contribute to an overall enhancement of the quality of education in Assam.

Delhi's Robust Economic Growth: Per Capita Income Soars By Over 14% To Rs 4,44,7

In a remarkable achievement, Delhi's per capita income surged by over 14%, reaching Rs 4,44,768 in the current fiscal year. The

latest Statistical Handbook-2023, released by the Economic and Statistics department of the Delhi government, highlights the capital's outstanding socio-economic progress.



The Kejriwal government achieved commendable benchmarks in the public services sector, with a notable enhancement in public transportation. An average of 41 lakh passengers daily commuted on buses in 2023.

Moreover, Delhi is at the forefront of the electric vehicle revolution, boasting 7,200 buses on the streets, including 1,300 electric buses. The number of electricity consumers increased by nearly 2.8 lakh, and over 1 lakh water connections were added in 2022-23.

West Bengal Secures GI Tags For Unique Products, Boosting Local Economies



In a significant stride towards safeguarding its cultural and agricultural heritage, West Bengal has successfully obtained Geographical Indi-

cation (GI) tags for several products under the National GI Drive Mission.

Recognition of Sunderbans Honey – ‘Mou-ban’: The coveted GI tag has been granted to Sunderbans honey, locally known as ‘Mou-ban,’ collected by the ‘Mouli’ community.

Black Nunia Rice – ‘Prince of Rice’: Hailing from Jalpaiguri district, Black Nunia rice, known as the ‘Prince of Rice,’ has earned its GI tag. This indigenous rice variety adds to the agricultural richness of the state.

Distinctive Sarees – Tangail, Gorod, and Kadiyal: West Bengal Forest Development Corporation Limited (WBFDCL) applied for the GI tag for Tangail, Gorod, and Kadiyal sarees, reflecting the rich textile heritage of the region. Mirzapur in Murshidabad district is renowned for producing exclusive Kadiyal sarees.

GIM2024: Tamil Nadu’s \$1 Trillion Economy Vision Unveiled



The Tamil Nadu government, led by Chief Minister MK Stalin, revealed its ambitious vision for the state to achieve a \$1 trillion economy by 2030 during the Global Investors Meet in Chennai on January 7.

It strategically aims for \$3.8-4.3 trillion in investments to attract FDI and boost local expansion. The goal is holistic growth, ensuring prosperity across all regions with a focus on climate consciousness and sustainability in

all initiatives.

Priorities include human capital growth, innovation through industry-academia partnerships, fostering an industry-friendly climate, advocating transparent governance, and developing sustainable infrastructure.

Mamata Banerjee Launches 'Yogyasree' For SC/ST Students In West Bengal



West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee has recently introduced a comprehensive social welfare scheme named “Yogyasree.”

The initiative aims to provide free training modules for Scheduled Caste (SC) and Scheduled Tribe (ST) students in West Bengal, specifically targeting entrance and competitive examinations.

The Yogyasree scheme encompasses the establishment of fifty training centres across the state. These centres will offer cost-free training for SC and ST students, focusing on competitive examinations. Additionally, 46 centres will provide similar opportunities for those aspiring to secure government jobs and pursue careers in civil services.

Kerala Woman Sets Guinness Record, Sings In 100+ Languages



Kerala teenager Suchetha Satish achieved a remarkable feat by setting a Guinness World Record during her performance at the ‘Concert for Climate’ in Dubai on November 24, 2023. Singing in an astounding 140 languages, she captivated the audience and earned widespread acclaim for her musical prowess.

Suchetha Satish, a 16-year-old prodigy, mesmerized the audience at the Indian Consulate Auditorium in Dubai during the Concert for Climate. The event was part of the COP 28 summit, attended by representatives from over 140 nations, emphasizing the global significance of her achievement.

Ms. Satish’s repertoire showcased her versatility, as she sang in 29 Indian languages and 91 international languages. The performance included a rendition of the Sanskrit song “Jan-ki Jane” from the Malayalam movie Dhvani, along with a Hindi composition by her mother, Sumitha Ayilliath, and renowned Bollywood composer Monty Sharma.

Chhattisgarh Launches “Ramlala Darshan” Scheme: Free Pilgrimage To Ayodhya Dham

Chhattisgarh Government will launch the Ramlala Darshan Scheme, a pilgrimage to the newly built Ram Temple at Ayodhya. The decision was made during a state cabinet meeting held in Raipur.



To fulfill Prime Minister Narendra Modi's guarantee, the state will send around 20,000 residents to Ayodhya for darshan of Shri Ramlala every year.

It is Open to Chhattisgarh residents aged 18-75 who pass a health exam. Disabled people can go with one family member. Chhattisgarh Tourism Board, funded by Tourism

Department, will manage. District committees under District Collectors will select beneficiaries.

Maharashtra Creates New Safe Haven For Endangered Canids And Diverse Wildlife



The Maharashtra government has established a crucial new wildlife habitat in Sangli district, aptly named the Atpadi Conservation Reserve.

Spanning a compact 9.48 sq. km, this reserve

prioritizes the protection of the endangered 'canid' family, including wild dogs, wolves, jackals, and foxes.

Strategically located, Atpadi bridges the gap between the Maini Conservation Area and

the Madhok Bird Sanctuary, fostering a safe wildlife corridor.

This diverse sanctuary boasts three distinct forest types – semi-evergreen, moist deciduous, and dry deciduous. Its rich flora and fauna encompass 35 tree species, 15 shrubs, 14 vines, 116 herbs, and even a parasitic plant, creating a vibrant ecological tapestry.

Economy News

India Plans 'Bharat Park' Trade Zone In UAE For Global Showcase



The Indian government plans to establish 'Bharat Park,' a dedicated trade zone in the UAE, featuring showrooms and warehouses to display and store Indian-made goods for a global audience.

Addressing the future of the textile industry, Goyal underscores the prominence of Man Made Fibre Textiles due to challenges in meeting the increasing demand for cotton.

He encourages industry players to leverage free trade agreements with Japan, Australia, UAE, and South Korea, expressing concern over underutilization.

India's FY24 GDP Growth Projection At 7.3%: NSO Data



The National Statistical Office (NSO) has released its first advance estimates projecting

a robust 7.3% growth for India's GDP in the fiscal year 2023-24.

This surpasses the 7.2% growth recorded in the previous financial year. Notably, the construction sector is expected to lead with double-digit growth at 10.7%.

Real GDP at Constant Prices in FY24 is projected to reach ₹171.79 lakh crore, compared to the provisional estimate of ₹160.06 lakh crore for FY23.

India's Forex Reserves Surge To \$623.2 Billion, Registering A \$2.75 Billion Increase



In the week concluding on December 29, India's foreign exchange reserves witnessed a substantial uptick, surging by \$2.759 billion, reaching a total of \$623.2 billion, as reported by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on Friday.

This follows a previous week's increase of \$4.471 billion, bringing the overall reserves to \$620.441 billion. Notably, in October 2021, India's forex kitty had achieved an unprecedented peak at \$645 billion.

The major contributor to the reserves, FCAs, rose by \$1.869 billion to \$551.615 billion.

These assets are influenced by the fluctuations in the value of non-US units like the euro, pound, and yen.

Summits & Conferences News

Amit Shah Inaugurates 58th DGsP/IGsP Conference 2023 In Jaipur



Union Home Minister Shri Amit Shah inaugurated the 58th DGsP/IGsP Conference 2023 at the Rajasthan International Centre in Jaipur.

The three-day conference, held in a hybrid mode, brought together top law enforcement officials physically from Jaipur and over 500 police officers from various ranks participating through video conferencing from across the country.

During the conference, the Union Home Minister distributed Police Medals for Meritorious Service to Intelligence Bureau (IB) officers, recognizing their outstanding contributions.

The conference aimed to deliberate on various security-related issues of critical importance, including the security of borders, cyber-threats, radicalization, fraudulent issuance of identity documents, and threats emerging from AI.

Union Minister Piyush Goyal Unveils Logo And Booklet For Bharat Mobility Global Expo 2024

At a curtain-raiser program in New Delhi, Union Minister Piyush Goyal revealed the logo and

booklet for the highly anticipated “Bharat Mobility Global Expo 2024.” Scheduled from February 1-3, 2024, at Bharat Mandapam, Pragati Maidan, New Delhi, the expo boasts over 600 exhibitors from 50+ countries.]



It promises to showcase cutting-edge technologies in various specialized exhibitions, including Auto Show, ACMA Automechanika, large-scale tire exhibition, urban mobility solutions, EV Infra Pavilion, and Battery Tech Pavilion.

The Bharat Mobility Global Expo 2024, an industry-led and government-supported initiative coordinated by the Engineering Export Promotion Council India (EEPC India), will include major battery manufacturers, EV infrastructure services, and a CEO Conclave to discuss the future trajectory of the mobility industry.

Ranks & Reports News

UN Report: India's GDP Growth Forecast At 6.2% For 2024



In the eagerly awaited United Nations' World Economic Situation and Prospects 2024 report, India emerges as a key player, projecting a GDP growth of 6.2% in the coming year.

This slightly trails behind the 6.3% estimate for 2023, a testament to the country's robust domestic demand and the flourishing manufacturing and services sectors South Asia, driven by India's prowess, is anticipated to witness a GDP surge of 5.2% in 2024 after a commendable 5.3% growth in 2023.

Agreements News

Cabinet Approves India-USAID MoU For Railways' Net-Zero Emission Goal



The Union Cabinet, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, has given its approval for the MoU signed between India and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID).

The focus of this collaboration is to support Indian Railways in achieving 'net zero carbon emission' by the ambitious target year of 2030.

The primary objectives of this strategic alliance are to facilitate utility modernization, deploy advanced energy solutions and systems,

foster regional energy and market integration, encourage private sector participation and engagement, and conduct training sessions and workshops. The focus of these initiatives will be on specific technology areas such as renewable energy and energy efficiency.

Indian Railways And CII Ink MoU For Green Initiatives



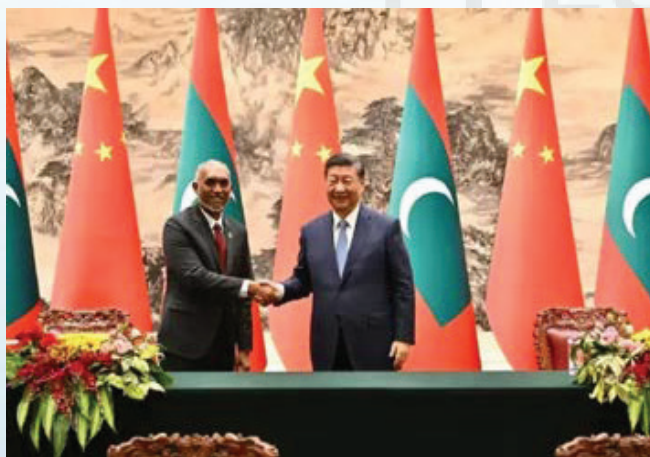
Indian Railways, a key player in the transportation sector, has reaffirmed its commitment to environmental sustainability by renewing its Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with

the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII).

The collaboration aims to reduce energy and water consumption, ultimately lowering greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. This marks the third consecutive term of partnership between Indian Railways and CII.

The collaboration between Indian Railways and CII began in July 2016, with the signing of the first MoU for a period of three years. Following its successful implementation, a second MoU was signed in 2019, leading to significant progress in various green initiatives.

Maldives And China Sign 20 Agreements For Diverse Cooperation



Chinese President Xi Jinping and Maldivian President Mohamed Muizzu recently held significant talks, culminating in the signing of 20 key agreements that span various areas of cooperation.

The leaders announced the elevation of bilateral ties to a Comprehensive Strategic Cooperative Partnership, demonstrating the mutual commitment to enhancing diplomatic relations between the two nations.

Twenty key agreements were signed, encompassing various sectors such as tourism cooperation, disaster risk reduction, blue economy, and investments in the digital economy. The agreements also included a commitment from

China to provide grant assistance to the Maldives, with specific details undisclosed.

Scientists From Mauritius And Bangladesh Join India's 43rd Antarctic Expedition



This December, India's 43rd Antarctic expedition, led by the National Centre for Polar and Ocean Research, welcomed scientists from Mauritius and Bangladesh onboard, marking a significant step in international polar research collaboration.

This initiative stems from the maiden Colombo Security Conclave (CSC) Oceanographers and Hydrographers conference held in 2022, which laid the groundwork for scientific partnerships among member nations.

The scientists joining the Antarctic expedition will spend 3-4 months actively engaged in collaborative research across various polar science disciplines. Their focus will lie on gaining insights into polar logistics and addressing the unique challenges posed by the harsh environment of the Antarctic.

Appointments News

Sanjiv Aggarwal Appointed CEO And MD Of NIIFL



The National Investment and Infrastructure Fund Limited (NIIFL) has welcomed Sanjiv Aggarwal as its new Chief Executive Officer and Managing Director.

Aggarwal, formerly a partner at the UK-based private equity firm Actis, brings a wealth of experience in energy investments, particularly in the Asian market, including India. Sanjiv Aggarwal's impressive track record includes successful stints at renowned financial institutions such as Citigroup and ANZ Investment Bank. Notably, his tenure at Actis saw remarkable accomplishments, including the sale of the Indian renewable energy platform Sprng Energy to Shell Plc for an enterprise value of \$1.55 billion in April 2022....

Senthil Pandian C Appointed As India's WTO Ambassador



The Indian government has named IAS officer Senthil Pandian C as the ambassador to the World Trade Organisation (WTO) in Geneva.

This appointment follows the conclusion of Brajendra Navnit's term as India's ambassador to the WTO on March 31, 2024.

Senthil Pandian C is currently serving as the commissioner of excise in Uttar Pradesh.

His extensive experience in administrative roles within the Indian bureaucracy positions him well to represent the country's interests on the global trade stage

Tshering Tobgay Re-Elected As Bhutan's Prime Minister



Bhutanese voters have overwhelmingly chosen Tshering Tobgay as their Prime Minister for a second term. The People's Democratic Party (PDP), led by Mr. Tobgay, secured a landslide victory, winning nearly two-thirds of the seats in the recent election, as announced by the election commission on January 10.

Tshering Tobgay, a former Prime Minister who previously held office from 2013 to 2018, has promised to strengthen ties with India, Bhutan's key trading partner.

A 58-year-old former civil servant, Tshering

Tobgay is a passionate conservation advocate holding degrees in mechanical engineering from the University of Pittsburgh and public administration from Harvard. He played a pivotal role as the leader of the Opposition when Bhutan's first parliament was established in 2008....

Banking News

RBI's Financial Stability Report (FSR) – December 2023: Key Highlights



The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) recently released the 28th issue of the Financial Stability Report (FSR), offering a comprehensive evaluation of the Indian financial system's resilience and potential risks.

The report, based on the findings of the Sub-Committee of the Financial Stability and Development Council (FSDC), sheds light on both global and domestic economic conditions.

Scheduled commercial banks (SCBs) showcase strength with a Capital to Risk-Weighted Assets Ratio (CRAR) of 16.8% and a Common Equity Tier 1 (CET1) ratio of 13.7% in September 2023.

SCBs' Gross Non-Performing Assets (GNPA) ratio hits a multi-year low at 3.2%, with

Net Non-Performing Assets (NNPA) at 0.8% in September 2023.

IndusInd Bank Introduces 'Samman RuPay Credit Card' For Government Employees



In a strategic collaboration with the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI), IndusInd Bank has launched the UPI-enabled 'Samman RuPay Credit Card,' exclusively tailored for government sector employees.

The Samman RuPay Credit Card combines traditional credit card advantages with advanced UPI features, streamlining financial transactions.

Benefits include cashback on various expenditures, complimentary movie tickets, no cash advance charges, and surcharge waivers for IRCTC and fuel transactions.

The card not only offers financial incentives but also aims to simplify and enrich the day-to-day transactional experience for government employees. Users can link RuPay credit cards to UPI IDs, facilitating secure and convenient payment transactions.

Business News

Vietnam Invests \$2 Billion In Tamil Nadu EV Facility



Vietnamese electric vehicle giant VinFast Auto Ltd made a significant announcement on

Sunday, revealing plans to establish an integrated electric vehicle facility in the Indian state of Tamil Nadu.

With an eye on breaking into the world's third-largest automobile market, the automaker confirmed its commitment to invest a staggering \$2 billion in the state.

VinFast Auto earmarked an initial investment of \$500 million for the first phase of the project, spanning a five-year period from the commencement date. The ambitious project is set to kick off construction this year, with the capacity to produce as many as 150,000 electric vehicles annually...

First Meeting Of Inland Waterways Development Council Held In Kolkata

The Inland Waterways Authority of India, operating under the Ministry of Ports, Shipping, and Waterways, created history by hosting the inaugural meeting of the Inland Waterways Development Council (IWDC) in Kolkata.



This event, spearheaded by Union Minister of Ports, Shipping & Waterways, Sarbananda Sonowal, brought together representatives from waterway states, central government officials, and experts aboard the MV Ganga Queen.

Government To Invest 60,000 Cr In River Cruise Tourism And Green Vessels



Union Minister Sarbananda Sonowal announced a significant government investment of Rs 60,000 crore by 2047 in the development of river cruise tourism and eco-friendly vessels. This initiative aims to boost tourism, enhance water transport, and create employment opportunities.

Sonowal outlined the plan, stating that Rs 45,000 crore would be allocated to river

cruise development, increasing passenger capacity from 2 lakh to 15 lakh by 2047.

Additionally, the government plans to invest Rs 15,000 crore over the next decade in green transport, intending to develop 1,000 environmentally friendly vessels and ferries.

Microsoft's 'AI Odyssey' To Upskill 100,000 Indian Developers: Boosting AI Talent In India



Microsoft India has unveiled the 'AI Odyssey' initiative, aiming to train 100,000 Indian developers in the latest AI technologies.

The program seeks to equip developers with skills essential for executing AI projects aligning with business goals. It is open to all AI enthusiasts in India, regardless of experience.

The program is divided into two levels. Level One focuses on using Azure AI services with practical skills. Level Two involves an online assessment and interactive lab tasks for Microsoft applied skills credentials. Completion offers a chance to win a VIP Pass for the Microsoft AI Tour in Bangalore on Feb 8, 2024.

LIC Approves Acquisition Of 10% Stake In NHB-Promoted Company

In a recent regulatory filing, Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) announced its board's approval to acquire up to 10% stake in a new

company promoted by the National Housing Bank (NHB).



The investment is targeted towards residential mortgage-backed securities and will be made through equity contribution in one or more tranches.

While the specific details about the company in question have not been disclosed, LIC's move signals a strategic venture into the residential mortgage sector. The decision aligns with LIC's broader financial portfolio and underscores its commitment to diversifying investments in promising sectors.

PFC Secures RBI Approval For IFSC Finance Company In GIFT City



Reserve Bank of India (RBI) greenlights Power Finance Corporation (PFC) to establish a finance company within Gujarat's GIFT City, an International Financial Services Centre (IFSC).

The RBI issued a no objection letter on January 9, signaling approval for PFC's venture into setting up a finance company at GIFT City. This move is anticipated to elevate

PFC's standing in the financial sector. Prior to this milestone, PFC had already entered into an initial agreement with the Gujarat government. The agreement focused on PFC provid-

ing comprehensive financial support for the state's projects related to power generation, transmission, and distribution.

Ranks & Reports News

Top 3 States Driving India's MSME Landscape: Insights From CBRE-CREDAI Report



A recent report by CBRE-CREDAI sheds light on the landscape of micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) in India, revealing noteworthy trends and state-wise contributions.

As of December 2023, the country boasts over 3 crore registered MSMEs, with Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, and Uttar Pradesh jointly constituting nearly 40% of this vibrant sector.

Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu emerge as pivotal contributors, collectively representing a significant portion of the registered MSMEs in India.

Uttar Pradesh secures a notable position among the top three states, holding a 9% share in the national MSME landscape. Policy initiatives, including interest subsidies and stamp duty exemptions, have catalyzed this growth.'

Cities like Agra, Kanpur, Varanasi, Lucknow, Meerut, and Ghaziabad have witnessed the robust emergence of MSME clusters, actively participating in the Udyam scheme...

Read more at:

Defence News

Indian Navy's P-8I Aircraft Reaches Guam For Exercise Sea Dragon 24



The Indian Navy marked its presence in the Pacific, on January 9th, 2024, with the arrival of a P-8I aircraft at Guam, USA.

This deployment signals the navy's participation in the fourth edition of Ex Sea Dragon 24, an Anti-Submarine Warfare (ASW) exercise spearheaded by the US Navy.

Ex Sea Dragon 24 fosters collaboration and interoperability among the navies of the US, Australia, South Korea, Japan, and India. The exercise aims to refine coordination and com-

munication through professional interactions both on the ground and in the air, as per the Indian Navy's official statement.

DRDO Launches Assault Rifle 'Ugram' For Indian Army



The Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) of India, in a significant advancement, introduced 'Ugram,' an advanced

7.62 x 51 mm calibre assault rifle. 'Ugram,' meaning 'ferocious' in Sanskrit, aligns with the operational needs of India's armed forces, paramilitary, and state police units.

The rifle, notable for its effective range of 500 meters and lightweight design of under four kilograms, was developed at the DRDO's Pune-based Armament Research and Development Establishment (ARDE).

With a 20-round magazine capacity, Ugram offers versatility through its single and full-auto firing modes. Its design parallels the modern AK and AR type rifles, yet stands out with a distinctive rivet-free construction, enhancing its robustness and reliability in various combat scenarios.

Schemes News

Street Vendors Get A Boost: PAiSA Dashboard & PM SVANidhi Portal Launched



Union Minister Hardeep S. Puri emphasized the importance of strong grievance redressal committees under the Street Vendors Act 2014, aiming to swiftly resolve disputes among vendors. He further unveiled two key initiatives to empower street vendors:

PAiSA Dashboard: This online platform provides real-time updates on the progress of

the PM SVANidhi Mission scheme. Vendors can track loan applications, disbursements, and repayments at their fingertips, fostering transparency and accountability.

PM SVANidhi Mission Monitoring Portal: This dedicated portal offers comprehensive data and insights on the scheme's nationwide implementation. Stakeholders, including government officials, lenders, and street vendor associations, can access valuable information to monitor progress, identify challenges, and ensure effective execution.

Important Days News

National Birds Day 2024



The United States of America declares January 5 as National Bird Day to raise awareness of the significance of birds to our ecosystem.

The day is set apart to make all of us understand that birds are not made to be caught or had as showpieces in our homes, rather, they are nature's lovely creatures that deserve to live with complete freedom.

The day was first observed by the Avian Welfare Coalition, which is involved in the cause of promoting awareness about birds that are caught or end up in captivity for either monetary profit or for human entertainment.

World Day Of War Orphans 2024



On January 6, 2024, the world will observe the World Day of War Orphans, a day dedicated to highlighting the struggles and needs of the most vulnerable victims of war – the children.

This day comes amidst ongoing global conflicts, serving as a poignant reminder of the deep and lasting impact war has on the lives of innocent children.

This year, World Day of War Orphans is marked with two powerful themes: "Orphan Lives Matter" and "Standing Up for War-Affected Children." These themes are a clarion call for global attention and action to support and protect war-affected children.

Pravasi Bharatiya Divas 2024

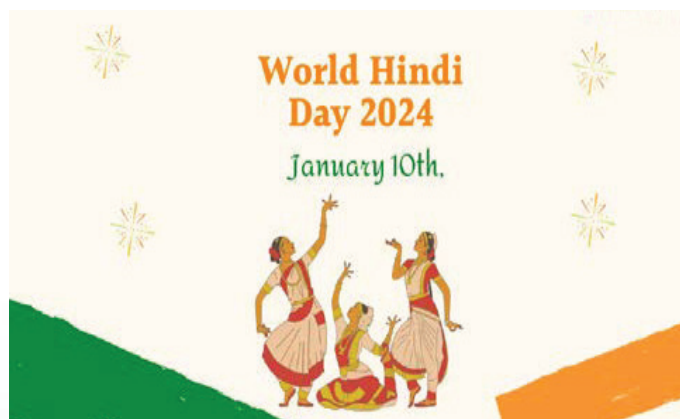


Pravasi Bharatiya Divas, also known as Non-Resident Indian (NRI) Day, celebrated on January 9, serves as a tribute to the contributions and achievements of the overseas Indian community to the development of India.

The day also marks the return of Mahatma Gandhi from South Africa to India in 1915, symbolizing the leadership that fueled India's freedom struggle.

The inaugural celebration of Pravasi Bharatiya Divas took place in 2003. Originally an annual event, the format underwent revision in 2015, transforming it into a biennial celebration. This restructuring included the introduction of theme-based conferences during the intervening years, bringing together overseas diaspora experts, policy-makers, and stakeholders.

World Hindi Day 2024



Every year on January 10th, the world celebrates World Hindi Day, a day dedicated to recognizing the cultural significance and global influence of the Hindi language. In 2024, the theme of the World Hindi Day is “Hindi–Bridging Traditional Knowledge and Artificial Intelligence”.

The journey of Hindi to this global stage began in 1949 with a momentous occasion – its first address at the United Nations General Assembly. In 2006, under the leadership of then-Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh, the first Vishwa Hindi Diwas was officially observed, marking January 10th as World Hindi Day on the global calendar.

World Hindi Day serves as a platform to celebrate and promote using Hindi in various spheres. Educational institutions hold events like essay writing competitions, poetry recitals, and plays to highlight the beauty and depth of the language....

National Human Trafficking Awareness Day 2024

National Human Trafficking Awareness Day, observed annually on January 11, serves as a poignant reminder of the need to address this global crisis and bring an end to the suffering endured by victims.

This year, National Human Trafficking Aware-

ness Day falls on a Thursday, January 11.



The annual observance serves as a rallying point for individuals, communities, and organizations to come together, share information, and take collective action against human trafficking.

Human trafficking encompasses forced labor, criminal activities, sexual exploitation, organ removal, and smuggling. Despite our progress, slavery persists in the shadows.

In 2007, the United States Senate declared January 11 as National Human Trafficking Awareness Day. President Barack Obama further dedicated the entire month of January

2010 to raise awareness about this deeply rooted issue.