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**January
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Secretary, MeitY launches ERNET India's web portal for domain registration, DNS and value-added services for educational institutions?

Ministry of Electronics & Information Technology (MeitY) Secretary Shri S Krishnan launched ERNET India's newly developed integrated web portal for educational institutes in the country, at its head office here today. The portal will offer domain registration, DNS and value-added services viz. Website as a Service (WaaS) and Learning Management as a Service (LMaaS). The users can select from the variety of available templates for schools, colleges, universities as per their requirement and create their own website and Learning Management System. The user can publish the website and LMS by customizing the template with single click. This web portal has been developed utilizing open-source software and emerging technologies such as AI/ML.

Padma Bhushan Awardee Prof Ved Prakash Nanda Passes Away?

Professor Ved Prakash Nanda, a luminary in the Indian diaspora, recently passed away, leaving behind a legacy of profound contributions to literature, education, and international law. Born in 1934 in Gujranwala, British India, his journey transcended borders as his family migrated to India after the partition in 1947. Prof. Nanda's remarkable career, including being awarded the Padma Bhushan in 2018, reflects his dedication to academia, international law, and fostering global understanding.

Pubity Athlete Of The Year 2023: Indian Cricket Star Virat Kohli Beats Lionel Messi To Take The Honours?

Virat Kohli rounded off his phenomenal 2023 by landing the Pubity Athlete Of The Year award by beating Argentine football superstar Lionel Messi in the final voting count. Pubity, they are an online community, with over 20 channels. Their Instagram page has over 35 million followers with their subsidiary channel. Pubity Sport - hosting an online poll amongst the legends of sport, that included Virat Kohli and Lionel Messi.

LEO1 and NSDL Payments Bank launch prepaid ID card for students and institutes!

Edu-fintech startup LEO1, in collaboration with NSDL Payments Bank and with MasterCard as network partner, launched India's first numberless Prepaid ID card for students and educational institutions on Friday. As per the fintech startup the prepaid student card is designed with an aim to provide educational institutes and students with a streamlined and cost-effective payment solution.

The RBI has issued fresh guidelines to reduce the quantum of inoperative bank accounts and unclaimed deposits with focus on tracing customers!

The RBI carried out a review of the situation and, consequently, has decided to issue comprehensive guidelines to the banks to streamline the process of handling such cases further. These measures include placing a smooth mechanism for classifying accounts and deposits inoperative accounts and unclaimed deposits, at least one annual review of such accounts and deposits, attempting to contact the customers in such cases via registered mail the phone numbers, increasing customer awareness on their websites and branches, among other steps.

HDFC Bank goes live with NPCI-developed UPI in secondary market platform!

Effective January 1, Sebi and the stock exchanges permitted trading in the cash segment through block mechanism, on an optional basis, for the secondary market on the lines of Application Supported by Blocked Amount (ASBA) for primary markets where investors' funds will continue to remain in their savings account with the required funds being blocked instead of the investor having to upfront transfer the amount to the broker's account for placing trades.

ICICI Venture to sell its entire 42% stake in patisserie chain Theobroma?

ICICI Venture will sell its entire 42 per cent stake in patisserie chain Theobroma Food Pvt Ltd and has begun the talks with merchant bankers, along with other promoters and investors, a report by Mint said on Tuesday. It is expecting the 20-year-old chain to be valued at Rs 2,800 crore. According to the report, at this valuation, ICICI Venture's stake may fetch Rs 1,200 crore. The deal is expected to take six to nine months as the company's 2023-24 financials are yet to be released.

All you need to know about India's first Credit Pass, powered by TransUnion CIBIL!

Having real-time access to credit information can drive better borrowing and repayment decisions, helping dreams of homeownership and entrepreneurship flourish responsibly. However, subscription plans from credit information companies may not be a feasible option for everyone. That's where the Credit Pass steps in as an affordable and powerful alternative.

WB issued bonds in three currencies to finance social Projects!

The World Bank (WB) has raised funds by issuing bonds in three different currencies namely Canadian dollars (CAD), Australian dollars (AUD), and United States Dollars (USD) to support the financing of green and social projects, programs and activities in the member countries.

Bandhan Bank's INSPIRE program provides an annual interest rate of up to 8.35% on fixed deposits, along with an improved banking experience and healthcare benefits!

Elderly individuals who bank with Bandhan Bank can now celebrate a new initiative tailored just for them, known as 'INSPIRE', recently introduced by the bank. The 'INSPIRE' program extends the existing perks, including preferential interest rates, priority banking services, and doorstep banking facilities, to senior citizen customers of the bank.

RBI Cancels Licence Of The Botad Peoples Co-Op Bank, Permits To Function As NBFC!

Accordingly, RBI has cancelled the licence dated 17 February 1998, granted to The Botad Peoples Co-operative Bank Ltd, Botad to carry on banking business in India."This makes it obligatory on the part of The Botad Peoples Co-operative Bank Ltd., Botad to stop conducting the business of 'banking' within the meaning of section 5(b) of the Act ibid, including acceptance of deposits from non-members with immediate effect," RBI said in a statement.Further, The Botad Peoples Co-operative Bank Ltd, Botad shall have to ensure repayment of unpaid and unclaimed deposits of non-members held by it, whenever demanded, even after being notified as a non-banking Institution.

Central Bank of India partners with Kisetsu Saison Finance!

The Central Bank of India Ltd's shares rose 3.26 per cent after the company established a Co-Lending Partnership with Kisetsu Saison Finance (India) Private Limited, focusing on providing competitive MSME Loans. This collaboration aims to foster the expansion of portfolios for both entities.

LIC sold the shares at an average price of ₹79.58 through secondary market between June 2019 and December 2023!

Life Insurance Corporation of India's has reduced its shareholding in Bharat Heavy Electricals Ltd to 9.617 per cent from 11.701 per cent.In a disclosure to the exchanges, LIC said it sold the shares at an average price of ₹79.58 through secondary market between June 2019 and December 2023.LIC sold the shares at an average price of ₹79.58 through secondary market between June 2019 and December 2023, LIC trims stake in BHEL to 9.617%.

Nadia Calvino Appointed as New President of the European Investment Bank!

In a historic move, Nadia Calvino has been named the new president of the European Investment Bank, taking office on January 1. She succeeds Werner Hoyer to become the eighth president of the EU bank. Notably, Calvino is the first woman and the first Spaniard to lead this prestigious institution, marking a significant milestone in the bank's history.

Bank of India launches 175-day fixed deposit at 7.5% interest for high-value

deposits?

The public sector bank, in a statement, said the “Super Special Fixed Deposit”, which has been introduced with effect from January 1, 2024, is a high-yielding avenue for HNIs (high net worth individuals) and Corporates to deploy their surplus funds for the short term. Bank of India (BoI) has introduced a 175-day tenor fixed deposit at an interest of 7.50 per cent per annum for deposits of ₹2 crore & above to less than Rs.50 crore, amid liquidity tightness in the banking system and credit growth outstripping deposit growth.

REC, Bank of Baroda sign MoU to finance power, infra and logistics projects!

In a significant development aimed at boosting India's infrastructure, state-owned REC Limited has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Bank of Baroda (BoB) to jointly finance projects in the power, infrastructure, and logistics sectors over the next three years. The MoU was signed in presence of Vivek Kumar Dewangan, IAS, chairman and managing director (CMD), REC Limited and Debadatta Chand, managing director and CEO, Bank of Baroda along with Lalit Tyagi, executive director, Bank of Baroda.

Commercial paper, NCD issuers should disclose information relating to payment default on their website!

The Reserve Bank of India wants issuers of Commercial Papers (CPs) and Non-Convertible Debentures (NCDs) to disclose information on any payment default through various channels, including publicly disseminating such information through their websites. These requirements form part of the revised Master Direction on CPs and NCDs of original or initial maturity up to one year, and are aimed at improving the transparency and safety of money markets

EPFO extends deadline to upload wage details for higher pension options till May 31!

Retirement fund manager EPFO has extended the deadline till May 31 for employers to upload wage details of those opting for higher pension to its database. Earlier, the deadline for employers to upload wage details for those opting for higher pension on higher contribution was December 31, 2023, a labour ministry statement said. EPFO (Employees' Provident Fund Organisation) had earlier provided all its subscribers an online facility for submitting applications for validation of option/joint options for pension on higher contributions

Final decision on customer complaints should be communicated in 30 days, RBI tells Banks, NBFCs!

This directive is aimed at improving consumer grievance redress within the regulated entities, besides improving customer service standards. Further, REs (banks, Non-Banking Financial Companies, Non-bank System Participants and Credit

Information Companies) may appoint one or more Internal Ombudsman (IO) and Deputy Internal Ombudsman (DIO) depending on the volume of complaints received by them. IOs usually deal with customer complaints related to deficiency in service.

AU SFB launches Platinum Family Banking Program!

AU Small Finance Bank has launched a Platinum Family Banking Program that will offer facilities of family banking as well as offerings such as preferential pricing, priority processing, on-boarding offers, and a complimentary lifetime free debit card. Significantly, it will also provide a dedicated relationship officer to address the financial needs of the entire family.

Kerala Governor Arif Mohammad Launches Book on “Ram Mandir Rashtra Mandir Ak Sajhi Virast”!

In a significant cultural event, the Governor of Kerala, Arif Mohammad, unveiled a book titled “Ram Mandir Rashtra Mandir Ak Sajhi Virast” at the Rang Bhawan Auditorium in Delhi. The book launch ceremony was attended by prominent figures, including Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) president Alok Kumar and Shri Ram Janmabhoomi Teerth Kshetra Treasurer Govind Giri Maharaj.

Desert Cyclone: 5 things to know about India-UAE joint military exercise underway in Rajasthan!

The two-week-long joint military exercise ‘Desert Cyclone’ between India and UAE is underway in the arid landscape of Rajasthan. The first edition of the India-UAE military exercise aims to enhance interoperability through exchanging knowledge and sharing best practices in military operations.

India Ratings raises GDP growth forecast for FY'24 to 6.7% from 6.2%!

According to Ind-Ra, the other factors that will boost the growth are: sustained government capex, deleveraged balance sheet of corporates/banking sector, the prospect of a new private corporate capex cycle, and sustained momentum in business and software services exports, coupled with remittances from the rest of the world despite global headwinds. However, it said there are risks to the global growth. The World Trade Organization (WTO) expects the world merchandise trade volume to have grown only 0.8 per cent as against the expected 1.7 per cent in 2023. However, WTO expects world merchandise trade volume to grow 3.3 per cent in 2024.

Reliance becomes first in India to use chemical recycling for circular polymers!

Reliance Industries Limited (RIL), operator of the world's largest integrated refining and petrochemical complex, has become the first Indian company to chemically recycle plastic waste-based pyrolysis oil into International Sustainability & Carbon Certification (ISCC)-Plus certified Circular Polymers. This new innovation is a

testimony to RIL's commitment in reducing plastic waste and supporting Circular Economy in India.

Slight Declines In Insurance Penetration, Female Policyholders' Proportion, IRDAI Report 2022-23!

States like Karnataka, Kerala, Mizoram, Sikkim and Meghalaya emerged with higher shares of life insurance policies issued to women, while Ladakh, Haryana, Jammu & Kashmir, Uttar Pradesh and Gujarat recorded comparatively lower percentages. Regarding claim settlement ratios for life insurance policies, there was a slight dip in 2022-23 to 98.45 per cent compared to 98.64 per cent in 2021-22. Both LIC and private sector insurers reported lower claim settlement ratios. In the health insurance sector, insurers settled 85.66 per cent of claims by policy count in 2022-23, but the figure dropped significantly to 71.62 per cent in terms of the amount paid. This discrepancy hinted at partial settlement of hospitalisation bills, a common issue among policyholders, often attributed to inflated hospital costs or insurer reluctance to reimburse reasonable expenses.

India will be self-sufficient in pulses by December 2027, says Amit Shah?

His remarks came while launching a tur dal procurement portal through which farmers can register and sell their produce to the National Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Federation of India Ltd (Nafed) and the National Cooperative Consumers' Federation of India (NCCF) at a minimum support price or market price. Nafed and NCCF are two central nodal agencies that undertake pulses procurement on behalf of the government for maintaining a buffer stock under the Price Stabilisation Fund (PSF). They also buy pulses under the Price Support Scheme when the rates fall below the MSP.

Government of India constitutes Sixteenth Finance Commission with Dr. Arvind Panagariya as its Chairman!

The Government of India, with the approval of the President of India, has constituted the Sixteenth Finance Commission, in pursuance to Article 280(1) of the Constitution. Dr Arvind Panagariya, former Vice-Chairman, NITI Aayog, and Professor, Columbia University will be the Chairman. Members of the Sixteenth Finance Commission would be notified separately. Shri Ritvik Ranjanam Pandey has been appointed as Secretary to the Commission. Detailed terms of reference for Sixteenth Finance Commission have also been spelt out in the notification issued today.

Jammu and Kashmir becomes first UT to implement PM Vishwakarma Yojana!

The official launch of PMVY in J&K took place on January 2, 2024, marking a momentous occasion for the UT. The inauguration ceremony, held virtually, witnessed the participation of Advisor to Lieutenant Governor, Rajeev Rai Bhatnagar, and Secretary of the Union Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship

(MSDE). The ceremony also saw the commencement of the training program for the first batch of 30 trainees (Viswakarmas) specializing in 'darzi craft'.

Female government employees can now nominate their child for pension!

Accordingly, after inter-ministerial consultations, it has been decided that in case divorce proceedings in respect of a female Government servant/female pensioner are pending in a Court of Law, or the female Government servant/female pensioner has filed a case against her husband under Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act or Dowry Prohibition Act or under Indian Penal Code, such female Government servant/Female Pensioner may make a request for grant of family pension after her death to her eligible child/children, in precedence to her husband and such request may be considered in the following manner:

DRDO celebrates 66th Foundation Day!

He stated that several systems have also either completed or are in the final stages of User evaluation and many other systems are undergoing Developmental trials. He set the target for DRDO to ensure that the systems which are under User trials and under final stages of developmental trials, get accepted by the User in 2024, so that they are ready for induction. He said that DRDO laboratories should focus on development of complex, first of its kind systems and development of advanced and critical technologies, which will enable the country to become AtmaNirbhar and a leader in Defence Technology.

Gujarat Claims The Title Of India's Petro Capital?

Gujarat has emerged as the nation's petrochemical powerhouse, boasting the world's largest grassroots oil refinery and a state-of-the-art petrochemical complex. The dynamic growth of the petrochemical sector in Gujarat is exemplified by the monumental achievements of Reliance Industries Ltd's (RIL) Jamnagar refinery and the ONGC Petro additions Limited (OPaL) petrochemical complex in Dahej.

World Braille Day 2024!

World Braille Day is observed every year on January 4 to honour the birth anniversary of Louis Braille, the inventor of the Braille writing system for blind and visually impaired individuals. World Braille Day is an international day on 4 January and celebrates awareness of the importance of braille as a means of communication in the full realization of the human rights for blind and visually impaired people.

Kuwait emir appoints Sheikh Mohammed Sabah al-Salem al-Sabah as prime minister!

Kuwait's new emir Sheikh Meshal al-Ahmad al-Sabah appointed Sheikh Mohammed Sabah al-Salem al-Sabah as the country's prime minister. Thee OPEC member with

the world's seventh-largest oil reserves is expected to preserve key Kuwaiti foreign policies, including support for Gulf Arab unity, Western alliances and good ties to Riyadh - a priority relationship.

Chinese Communist Party Delegation Enhances Ties with Solomon Islands!

A recent visit by a Chinese communist party delegation to the Solomon Islands has highlighted the growing cooperation between the two nations and its significance for their people. The delegation, led by Guo Yezhou, the deputy head of the international department under China's Communist Party central committee, engaged in high-level meetings with Solomon Islands' leadership during their visit.

MoU inked between QCI and KVIC to enhance quality of khadi products, empower artisans!

The Quality Council of India (QCI) and the Khadi Village and Industries Commission (KVIC) embarked on a collaboration to enhance the quality of khadi products, empower the artisans, and introduce the 'Made in India' label for Khadi. Khadi is a symbol of self-reliance and sustainable development and the incumbent government under Prime Minister Narendra Modi in New Delhi, in particular, has been actively promoting it.

REC Ltd, RVNL sign Rs 35,000 crore MoU to finance infrastructure projects!

REC Limited, a Maharatna Central Public Sector Enterprise (CPSE) under the Ministry of Power, has signed a MoU with Rail Vikas Nigam Limited (RVNL) to extend financial support of up to Rs35,000 crore for infrastructure projects over the next five years. The agreement encompasses a wide spectrum of projects, including multi-modal logistics hubs, rail infrastructure, road development, port facilities, and metro projects that RVNL is venturing into.

PFC signs MoU with Gujarat govt for power projects worth Rs 25,000 crore!

The MoU between the Non-Banking Financial Company (NBFC) and the state government will further bolster various projects undertaken by Gujarat Urja Vikas Nigam Limited (GUVNL), Gujarat State Electricity Corporation Limited (GSECL), Gujarat Energy Transmission Corporation Ltd (GETCO), Dakshin Gujarat Vij Company Ltd (DGVCL), Madhya Gujarat Vij Company Ltd (MGVCL), Paschim Gujarat Vij Company Ltd (PGVCL), and Uttar Gujarat Vij Company Ltd (UGVCL).

West Bengal government notifies Poila Boisakh as State Day and Banglar Mati Banglar Jal as State Song.

The West Bengal government has issued a notification declaring Poila Boisakh, the first day of the Bengali New Year, as the State Day and a song Banglar Mati Banglar Jal written by Rabindranath Tagore as the State Song. "After careful consideration, it

is hereby declared that the 'Poila Boisakh' (1st day of the month of Boisakh of Bengali calendar year) will be observed as State Day and it will be named 'Bangla Divas'," the notification dated December 30 by outgoing chief secretary H.K. Dwivedi on Saturday said.

All you need to know about Assam's Chandubi Festival.

BOKO: The five day-long Chandubi Festival, which started from January 1 to January 5 of this year, celebrated its 14th anniversary with colourful folk dances, ethnic food and locally produced different kinds of wines and beers. The festival was opened by the Palashbari constituency MLA Hemanga Thakuria in the presence of RHAC Chief Executive Member Tankeswar Rabha, vice chairman Ramakanta Rabha, Executive member Sumit Rabha, Nagarmal Swargiyary, Rashmi Bala Rabha, members of All Rabha Students Union (ARSU) along with many other invited dignitaries and people of the area. During the opening of the festival, the souvenir 'Lokeia' was also released by Gaurikanta Bhauyan, a teacher and creator of the Kuhipath along with other invited guests.

Change in leadership. Ramesh Kejriwal elected new president of All India Rubber Industries Association .

All India Rubber Industries Association (AIRIA) has elected Ramesh Kejriwal of India Oil Seals and Synthetic Products, Kolkata, as its president for the year 2022-23. Kejriwal will be succeeding Sawar Dhanania. Shashi Kumar Singh of Osaka Rubber Pvt Ltd., Mumbai, will be the senior vice-president and Sanjeev Sikka of Majestic Rubber Industries, Ghaziabad will be the vice-president.

General VK Singh releases book 'Sanskriti ke Ayaam' written by Manorama Mishra.

General V.K. Singh (Retd.), Union Ministers of State (MoS), Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MoRTH) and Ministry of Civil Aviation (MoCA) released the book 'Sanskriti ke Ayaam' authored by Manorama Mishra. The book, authored in Hindi language, is published by the National Book Trust, India functioning under the Ministry of Education (MoE). The book speaks about Indian knowledge, tradition and culture.

Himachal CM Sukhu launches portals for efficient governance.

These portals aim to revolutionise communication, decision-making and data management within the government. The chief minister said the report management portal is designed to streamline the process of sending and monitoring various reports across departments, boards, and corporations. In a significant move towards administrative reforms, chief minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu launched the nation's first-ever report management portal and meeting management portal, developed by the Department of Digital Technology and Governance (DDTG) here on Wednesday.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will be visiting Tamil Nadu, Lakshadweep, and Kerala for two days on January 2.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will be visiting Tamil Nadu, Lakshadweep, and Kerala for two days on January 2, the PM said on Monday. During his visit to the southern states and union territory, Modi will attend programs and inaugurate various developmental projects. These works include projects relating to better internet connectivity, ensuring clean drinking water supply, solar energy, healthcare, and more," PM Modi wrote on X, formerly known as Twitter.

Defence ministry signs Rs 802 crore contract for military wagons, equipment.

The Ministry of Defence (MoD) has signed two worth Rs 802 crore for indigenous military equipment procurement. The first contract, valued at Rs 473 crore, was inked with Jupiter Wagons Limited for the acquisition of 697 bogie open military (BOM) wagons. The second contract, worth Rs 329 crore, was signed with M/s BEML Ltd for the procurement of 56 mechanical minefield marking equipment (MMME) Mark II.

Three varieties of handloom sarees in West Bengal get GI tag.

Three varieties of handloom sarees - tangail, korial and garad from West Bengal have received the GI tag, Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee said on Thursday. The tangail sarees are woven in Nadia and Purba Bardhaman districts, while korial and garad are woven in Murshidabad and Birbhum. The hugely popular tangail cotton sarees have finer count and are decorated with extra warp designs using coloured yarn.

NHAI signs MoU with NRSC for Development and Reporting of "Green Cover Index" for National Highways of India.

The overarching endeavour of the project is to capture the Green Cover Index region-wise for National Highways in the first assessment cycle. Subsequent annual cycles will focus on estimating the growth patterns of green cover for National Highways using scientific techniques. The findings of the index will facilitate comparison and ranking of various National Highways for timely and periodic intervention. As green cover would be estimated for every 1 km length of the National Highways, it would be possible to generate granular metrics for individual projects/packages as well. This initiative underscores a sincere commitment to evaluate NHAI's pivotal role in fostering the green transformation of highways, thereby, contributing to the nation's overall environmental well-being.

President Draupadi Murmu Gives Assent to Three Criminal Code Bills.

On December 25, President Draupadi Murmu granted her assent to three groundbreaking criminal code bills, marking a significant shift in India's legal landscape. These bills, namely the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, the Bharatiya Nagarik

Suraksha Sanhita, and the Bharatiya Sakshya Act, received parliamentary approval and are poised to replace the age-old Indian Penal Code, the Code of Criminal Procedure, and the Indian Evidence Act of 1872.

Uttar Pradesh Plans to Develop India's First AI City in Lucknow.

As the world witnesses a surge in the integration of artificial intelligence (AI) across various sectors, Uttar Pradesh, India's largest state, has announced ambitious plans to construct the nation's inaugural AI city in Lucknow. This strategic move aims to foster and propel the AI ecosystem to new heights.

Former India defender Prabir Majumdar passes away, AIFF condoles.

He also featured for the national side during the 1974 Asian Games held in Tehran, where the team failed to create an impact and finished at the bottom of the group table. In the domestic circuit, Majumdar was a part of East Bengal and Eastern Railways, besides also representing Bengal in the Santosh Trophy.

India launches a single-window portal for medical devices management.

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman had previously announced the creation of an investment clearance cell (ICC) during her Budget speech on February 1, 2020. The proposed ICC, now developed as the NSWS, enables investors to identify, apply, track, and obtain the necessary approvals before starting any business operations in India, eliminating the need for investors to visit multiple IT platforms and authorities, the Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation (CDSCO) notice read.

The founding countries of Brazil, Russia, India, and China held the first summit in Yekaterinburg, with South Africa joining the bloc a year later in 2010.

The BRICS nations encompass about 30% of the world's land surface and 45% of the global population.[a] Brazil, Russia, India, and China are among the world's ten largest countries by population, area, and GDP (PPP). All five initial member states are members of the G20, with a combined nominal GDP of US\$28 trillion (about 27% of the gross world product), a total GDP (PPP) of around US\$57 trillion (33% of global GDP PPP), and an estimated US\$4.5 trillion in combined foreign reserves (as of 2018).

CCI clears Punjab State Power Corp's purchase of GVK Power project.

The combination involves the acquisition of 100 per cent stakeholding of GVK Power (Goindwal Sahib) Ltd by Punjab State Power Corporation Ltd (PSPCL). "CCI approves the proposed acquisition of 100 per cent shareholding of GVK Power (Goindwal Sahib) Limited by Punjab State Power Corporation Ltd.

Historic cultural exchange and tourism collaboration launched between

Vietnam's Lam Dong and India's Leh Ladakh.

Dignitaries present at the launch included Pham S, Vice Chairman of the People's Committee of Lam Dong Province, Nguyen Trung Kien, Director of the Department of Culture, Sports, Vietnam's Tourism, Advocate Tashi Gyalsen, Chief Executive Councillor and Chairman of Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Council, Leh Union Territory of Ladakh (India), along with representatives from pertinent departments and agencies of Lam Dong and Leh Ladakh.

Punjab CM Bhagwant Mann launches 122 online portals, aims to reduce paperwork.

To reduce paperwork and bring more transparency in the government's functioning, Punjab chief minister Bhagwant Mann on Saturday launched 122 online portals, giving a big push to digitisation in various departments and aiming to make the delivery of services to public hassle-free.

FinMin imposes anti-dumping duty on 'Wheel Loaders' imports from China.

The government on Wednesday imposed an anti-dumping duty on the import of wheel loaders into India, in a bid to protect the interests of the domestic industry. Wheel loaders are self-propelled wheel-mounted equipment with an articulation joint having a front-end loading mechanism.

GDP growth to 'comfortably' exceed 6.5% in 2023-24.

The Finance Ministry expects the country's GDP growth rate in 2023-24 to "comfortably" exceed its earlier forecast of 6.5 per cent on the back of Q2 GDP growth performance that surprised on the upside at 7.6 per cent. Already the country's GDP grew 7.7 per cent in the first half this fiscal. The Union Budget for 2023-24 had pencilled in a nominal GDP of 10.5 per cent for current fiscal.

RBI extends payments infrastructure development fund scheme till 2025.

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on Friday announced its decision to extend the Payments Infrastructure Development Fund (PIDF) for two years up to December 31, 2025. Earlier, the scheme was launched in 2021 for a period of three years. As part of the announcement, beneficiaries of the PM Vishwakarma Scheme have been included as merchants under the PIDF scheme. Similarly, sandbox devices and Aadhaar-enabled biometric devices are eligible to claim subsidy as part of the scheme.

Changes to J&K Panchayat Act drops payments to panches, sarpanches.

The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) has amended the Jammu and Kashmir Panchayati Raj Act, 1989, omitting a provision requiring payment of honorarium to panches and sarpanches (village head) in the newly created Union Territory. The

amended law also says that Halqa Panchayat shall be required to get its accounts audited by a chartered accountant every year. Halqa means the area comprising a village or contiguous number of villages determined by the government.

Patnaik launches 3rd phase of Odisha's health scheme, says will cover 90% people.

Odisha chief minister Naveen Patnaik on Friday launched the third phase of the state's flagship health scheme - Biju Swasthya Kalyan Yojana (BSKY) which will now cover about 90% of the state's population. Naveen Patnaik said over 1.10 crore families, covering nearly 90% of the population, will be provided health assurance under BSKY, Patnaik launches 3rd phase of Odisha's health scheme, says will cover 90% people.

Online modules of Certificate of Approval and Technology Approval launched under TEC voluntary certification scheme.

Shri A.K.Sahu, Member (S), Digital Communication Commission (DCC) has launched the online modules of Certificate of Approval (CoA) and Technology Approval under voluntary certification scheme of Telecommunication Engineering Centre (TEC), the technical arm of Department of Telecommunications (DOT); Developed by CDOT, the modules aim at enhancing the Ease of Doing Business and Promote Atmanirbhar Bharat.

Jaishankar's visit to Russia provided opportunity to further strengthen Special and Privileged Strategic Partnership.

External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar's visit to Russia this week provided an opportunity to review ongoing bilateral cooperation and examine ways to further bolster the Special and Privileged Strategic Partnership, according to an official statement on December 30. During his visit, from December 25 to 29, Mr. Jaishankar called on President Vladimir Putin and held discussions with the Deputy Prime Minister and the Minister of Industry and Trade Denis Manturov. He also held discussions with his Russian counterpart Sergey Lavrov.

Congo's President Felix Tshisekedi is declared winner of election that opposition wants redone.

Congo's President Felix Tshisekedi won re-election with more than 70% of the vote, the country's election commission said Sunday. The preliminary results of the Dec. 20 election were announced in the capital, Kinshasa, amid demands from the opposition and some civil society groups for the vote to be rerun due to massive logistical problems that put the validity of the outcome into question.

Kerala launches K-Smart tech solution to streamline local self-government services.

Speaking after the launch, Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan said that the State is once again setting a model for the rest of the country in the modern technology sector through K-Smart. It is for the first time that a system that makes available the entire gamut of services of a department in a single click is being introduced in the country. K-Smart is the latest example of Kerala in utilising the development in technology for multi-faceted development of the State, he said.

Durga Shankar Mishra, a 1984 batch IAS officer, is new UP Chief Secretary.

The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet has approved repatriation of Mishra to his cadre for "his proposed appointment as Chief Secretary, Uttar Pradesh by the State Government of Uttar Pradesh", the order said. Mishra was due to superannuate on Friday but has been given one year extension in service. He replaces Rajendra Kumar Tiwari, a 1985 batch IAS officer who is due to retire in February 2023. On his arrival in Lucknow on Thursday morning, Mishra was received at the airport by top officials and then given a guard of honour at Yojana Bhawan.

The Central government had been holding unconditional negotiations with the Arabinda Rajkhowa-led faction for over 12 years.

The pro-talks faction of the United Liberation Front of Asom (ULFA) on Friday signed a peace accord with the Central government and the Assam government in the presence of union home minister Amit Shah and chief minister Himanta Biswa Sarma. With this Memorandum of Settlement, the ULFA faction has formally agreed to shun violence and join the mainstream.

Uttar Pradesh Tops in Usage of Criminal Justice Data Platform.

Uttar Pradesh has ranked first for the third straight year in recording the highest usage of India's Inter-Operable Criminal Justice System (ICJS). The digital platform enables seamless data sharing across courts, police, prisons and forensic labs. The wide adoption allows police advanced analytics for predicting and controlling crime. Prosecution and courts also benefit from ready data access.

'Awaam Se, Awaam ke liye' | DGP launches police grievance redressal portal.

Director General of Police (DGP) R R Swain today launched the Jammu and Kashmir Police Grievance Redressal Portal "Awaam Se, Awaam Ke Liye" at an impressive function organised at Police Headquarters here. According to a press release, the portal is aimed at listening to the issues of citizen and also of police personnel and to interact with common citizen or grievance redressal seeker in a more structured and decentralised manner and also to improve the density and quality of resolving their issues.

Amendments to the PLI Scheme for the Automobile and Auto Components

Industry.

In addition, the amendments outline that if an approved company falls short of meeting the threshold for an increase in Determined Sales Value over the initial year's threshold, it will not receive any incentive for that specific year. Nevertheless, eligibility for benefits can be retained in the following year if the company fulfills the threshold criteria based on a 10 percent year-on-year growth over the initial year's threshold.

Tamil Nadu chief minister MK Stalin's autobiography "Ungalil Oruvan" launched.

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi launched the first volume of Tamil Nadu chief minister MK Stalin's autobiography Ungalil Oruvan (One Among You) in Chennai. The first part of the autobiography contains his early life experiences. In it, he traces his school and college days, adolescence, early political contributions, marital life and the MISA struggle, recalling 23 years up to 1976.

GI tags for over 17 products from Odisha, Arunachal Pradesh, West Bengal, and J&K.

The traditional Lanjia Saura paintings, the exquisitely embroidered Dongaria Kondh shawl, the delicious Khajuri Guda from Odisha and the Handmade Carpets and Wancho Wooden Craft from Arunachal Pradesh were among the 17 products that bagged the Geographical Indications (GI) tag on Thursday. The Lanjia Saura paintings are a style of wall mural art. Those paintings also called ekons or the idital, and have a significant spiritual importance for the tribe. The Lanjia Sauras are an indigent society today, and labour in preserving their culture - the iditals being an important part of it.

NewSpace India Plans to Launch GSAT-20 Satellite on SpaceX's Rocket!

the commercial arm of the Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO), has announced that it will be launching its communication satellite GSAT-20, renamed as GSAT-N2, onboard SpaceX's Falcon-9 rocket in the second quarter of 2024. This partnership aims to address the growing broadband communication needs of the country. GSAT-20 is a high throughput Ka-band satellite, designed to deliver high-speed broadband internet connectivity and digital video and audio transmission. It offers Ka-band HTS capacity with 32 beams, providing pan-India coverage, including remote and unconnected areas such as the Andaman and Nicobar Islands and Lakshadweep Islands.

GlobalSpace Technologies unveils 'GoRoga' anti-stress wearable, shares rise!

'GoRoga' is designed to activate cortisol by connecting to a phone and utilizing sticky pads on the ears, delivering tailored stimulations scientifically calibrated to address

stress levels. The device aims to reduce anxiety-related beta waves while promoting calming alpha waves and relaxation-inducing theta waves. The recommended usage is 20 minutes per day, up to a maximum of 60 minutes daily for 3 to 4 weeks.

Ola Electric Becomes First Indian EV Company To Get PLI Nod!

In a recent report by ET Auto, it has been disclosed that Ola Electric successfully met the stringent eligibility criteria outlined in the PLI scheme, including a minimum of 50% domestic value addition to its electric vehicles (e2W). This accomplishment makes Ola Electric the first Indian e-scooter company to gain approval, paving the way for potential financial benefits ranging from INR 15,000 to 18,000 per unit.

Tenure of Production Linked Incentive (PLI) Scheme for Automobile and Auto Components extended by One Year with partial amendments!

The Ministry of Heavy Industries has issued a Gazette Notification to announce the extension of the tenure of the Production Linked Incentive (PLI) Scheme for Automobile and Auto Components by one year. This decision has been made after receiving the approval of the Empowered Group of Secretaries (EGoS). In pursuance of the approval of EGoS, the Ministry of Heavy Industries has made partial amendments in the Production Linked Incentive (PLI) Scheme for the Automobile and Auto Component Industry and Guidelines of the Scheme. These amendments, effective from the date of publication in the Official Gazette, aim to provide clarity and flexibility to the scheme. Under the amended scheme, the incentive will be applicable for a total of five consecutive financial years, starting from the financial year 2023-24. The disbursement of the incentive will take place in the following financial year 2024-25. The scheme also specifies that an approved applicant will be eligible for benefits for five consecutive financial years, but not beyond the financial year ending on March 31, 2028.

Govt sets up 3-member panel to settle unforeseen disputes between developers and implementing agencies!

The upper age limit for DRC members is set at 70 years, and the committee members are chosen from Delhi-NCR to avoid additional expenses related to air travel and accommodation. The DRC's jurisdiction extends to all renewable energy schemes, programs, and projects implemented through REIAs. Additionally, it covers contractual agreements between REIAs and EPC contractors executing renewable energy projects owned by a REIA. However, this is contingent on the REIA committing to abide by the decisions arising from this mechanism.

ISRO successfully launches maiden X-ray Polarimeter Satellite to study black holes and neutron stars in Space!

Ten other scientific payloads were also launched along with XPoSat. This mission marks India's first dedicated scientific endeavour to study the polarisation of cosmic X-rays from celestial sources. Following the launch of XPoSat, India has become the second country in the world after the United States to send a specialised astronomy observatory to study black holes and neutron stars in our galaxy. The mission life of the primary payload XPoSat is about five years. ISRO Chief S Somanath said, XPoSat has been successfully ed into a 650 km Low Earth Orbit as intended.

The company has acquired Bikaner-Neemrana Transmission Project to boost renewable energy evacuation in India!

The company has acquired Bikaner-Neemrana Transmission Project to boost renewable energy evacuation in India, a company statement said. The company received the letter of intent (LOI) after emerging as a successful bidder in the Tariff-Based Competitive Bidding (TBCB) process, as per the guidelines issued by Ministry of Power, it added. The project, which will be developed on a Build-Own-Operate-Transfer (BOOT) basis, will enable the evacuation of 7.7 GW of renewable energy from the Bikaner Complex in Rajasthan.

United States Space Force launches seventh X-37B mission!

The United States Space Force, in partnership with SpaceX, successfully launched USSF-52 on a Falcon Heavy rocket from Kennedy Space Center Launch Complex 39A. The SpaceX rocket carried into orbit an X-37B Orbital Test Vehicle (OTV), marking the seventh space flight for the X-37B program and its first launch on a Falcon Heavy. The X-37B tests include operating in new orbital regimes, experimenting with space domain awareness technologies and investigating radiation effects to NASA materials.

SpaceX launched 21 Starlink satellites, including six "direct-to-cell" satellites that can be used to access internet directly using smartphones!

Essentially the Direct-to-Cell Starlink satellites have advanced modems that act as cellphone towers in space. This could potentially be used to eliminate cell phone service deadzones on the ground. Similar to how network providers work with other network providers in different countries to offer global roaming services to their customers, they would soon be able to partner with Starlink to offer this Direct to Cell service to their customers.

7th Ferrycraft, 'Manjula' (Yard 786) has been delivered to Indian Navy on 29 Dec 23 in presence of Rear Admiral Deepak Kumar Goswami, ASD (Mbi).

Contract for construction and delivery of 07 x 250 Men Ferry Craft was concluded with M/s Shalimar Works Ltd, Kolkata, in consonance with "Aatmanirbhar Bharat" initiatives of the Government of India. Six out of Seven Ferrycraft have already been delivered to IN. 7th Ferrycraft, 'Manjula' (Yard 786) has been delivered to Indian Navy

on 29 Dec 23 in presence of Rear Admiral Deepak Kumar Goswami, ASD (Mbi). With all major and auxiliary equipment/ systems sourced from indigenous manufacturers, these Ferrycraft are proud flag bearers of “Make in India” initiatives of Ministry of Defence.

World Rapid Chess Championship!

The World Rapid Chess Championship is a chess tournament held to determine the world champion in chess played under rapid time controls. Prior to 2012, FIDE gave such recognition to a limited number of tournaments, with non-FIDE recognized tournaments annually naming a world rapid champion of their own. Since 2012, FIDE has held an annual joint rapid and blitz chess tournament and billed it as the World Rapid & Blitz Chess Championships. FIDE also holds the Women's World Rapid & Blitz Chess Championship. The current rapid world champion is grandmaster Magnus Carlsen. Anastasia Bodnaruk from Russia is the current women's rapid world champion. Carlsen has won the event a record five times.

Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports announced 'Rashtriya Khel Protsahan Puruskar' 2023!

The applications were invited online and sportspersons/coaches/entities were permitted to self-apply through a dedicated Online Portal. A large number of applications/nominations were received for this award in 2023, which were placed before the Selection Committee headed by Smt. Sujata Chaturvedi, Secretary (Sports), GoI and consisting members from previous awardees, industry association, sports journalist/Experts/Commentators, Secretary (Sports) of State Government, Indian Olympic Association and Non-Governmental Organization, active in sports.

2023 World Blitz Chess Champions: Magnus Carlsen and Valentina Gunina

Carlsen finished the Open Blitz with 16 points scored in 21 games. Daniil Dubov came in second, just half a point behind Carlsen. Vladislav Artemiev – the leader of day one and led for most of the second day of the Blitz – finished third on 15 points. Valentina Gunina dominated the Women's Blitz tournament, netting 14 points out of 17 games. The former World Champion Alexandra Kosteniuk won second place (13.5), while China's Zhu Jiner was third (12.5).