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**December
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General Awareness Topic(Covered)

- National
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Built on National Common Mobility Card (NCMC) specifications with offline enabled, these cards will advance the Government of India's vision of One Nation One Card, the company said

The One Nation Corporate Card will be offered to the Indian customers pan-India from June end. We aim to service a million customers both corporates and SME employees pan-India within 24 months of our launch," said Ambarish Parekh, CEO of PayCraft. Built on National Common Mobility Card (NCMC) specifications with offline enabled, these cards will advance the Government of India's vision of One Nation One Card, the company said. It also offers a solution for digitising business expenses for corporates and SMEs across the country. NSDL Payments Bank said the One Nation Corporate Card facilitates transactions seamlessly across four channels -- ATM, POS, e-commerce websites, and metro stations.

the Indira Gandhi Prize for Peace, Disarmament and Development for 2023 comes against the backdrop of the ongoing Israel, Hamas conflict

Music conductor Daniel Barenboim and peace activist Ali Abu Awwad, who have worked to promote amity among the Israeli and Palestinian people, have been jointly awarded the Indira Gandhi Prize for Peace, Disarmament and Development for 2023. Barenboim and Awwad, whose work focuses on the use of non-violent tools of music, dialogue and peoples' participation, were chosen by an international jury chaired by former chief justice of India, TS Thakur, according to a statement from the Indira Gandhi Memorial Trust.

Indian men's hockey team midfielder Hardik Singh and women's side captain Savita on Tuesday won the FIH Player of the Year and Goalkeeper of the Year (women) awards respectively.

The awardees were determined through a voting process involving a panel of experts, national associations represented by their team captains and coaches, as well as fans and media. Dutch player Xan de Waard, meanwhile, won the FIH Women's Player of the Year honour. Hardik Singh was part of India's Tokyo 2020 bronze medal-winning team. The midfielder was the standout player for India in the opening couple of matches of the 2023 FIH Hockey World Cup but was later ruled out due to a hamstring injury.

Children of Nobody from Israel, directed by Erez Tadmor, won Rs 51 lakh prize money along with the Golden Royal Bengal trophy at KIFF 2023.

The gala closing ceremony, with a special dance performance on the theme song at Rabindra Sadan witnessed a star-studded event with Aditi Rao Hydari as the chief guest. The team of eminent filmmakers from various corners of the world chose Carlos Daniel Malave from Venezuela as 'The Best Director' for the Golden Royal Bengal Tiger Award' under the category of 'Innovation In Moving Images' in

international competition.

Kotak Mahindra Bank partners with IITK to launch Kotak School of Sustainability through its CSR program

Dharmendra Pradhan, Union Minister of Education and Skill Development and Entrepreneurship was the chief guest at the launch event of the Kotak School of Sustainability. According to KMBL, this initiative will provide leadership solutions towards sustainability actions and prepare future generations to lead the cause of sustainable development.

The launch of SGB Scheme 2023-2024 Series III has come on the back of gold prices increasing by more than 10 percent in 2023 and defying expectations amid a high interest rate environment.

The new series for Sovereign Gold Bond (SGB) scheme opened for investment on December 18 and the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has set the issue price at Rs 6,199 per gram of gold. The launch of SGB Scheme 2023-2024 Series III has come on the back of gold prices increasing by more than 10 percent in 2023 and defying expectations amid a high interest rate environment. Given the run-up in prices, should investors go for this series or wait for the next one, which will open in February

Bancassurance partner with banks to sell policies, ICICI Pru Life, Ujjivan SFB enter into Bancassurance tie-up.

ICICI Prudential Life Insurance (ICICI PruLife) and Ujjivan Small Finance Bank (Ujjivan SFB) have entered into a bancassurance partnership for the distribution of life insurance products. Under the partnership, Ujjivan SFB will offer the entire suite of ICICI PruLife's entire suite of protection, long-term savings and retirement products to its customers through its network of 700+ branches across 26 states and Union Territories.

RBL Bank launches Electronic Bank Guarantee on NeSL Platform, RBL Bank customers can obtain e-BGs through different channels across the bank's digital platforms and branch network.

RBL Bank customers can obtain e-BGs through different channels across the bank's digital platforms and branch network. Rajesh Lahori, Head – Transaction Banking, RBL Bank, said, "Strengthening our capacity to structure solutions, the swift and completely paperless multi-channel issuance model improves the TAT and offers an enhanced value proposition for RBL Bank's client base.

Infibeam Avenues picks up 49% stake in Ahmedabad-based Pirimid Fintech

Leveraging the expertise and technological foundation provided by Infibeam Avenues, Pirimid Fintech is poised to develop innovative digital lending solutions to streamline

the lending process, offering faster and more efficient credit disbursement, enhanced customer experience, and improved risk management through advanced data analytics and AI algorithms.

LIC had recently diluted its shareholding in Hero MotoCorp Ltd from 11.252 per cent to 9.246 per cent.

LIC had recently diluted its shareholding in Hero MotoCorp Ltd from 11.252 per cent to 9.246 per cent. LIC stock inched up by 0.71 per cent on the NSE, trading at ₹801.80, while Dixon Technologies stock declined by 0.46 per cent on the NSE, trading at ₹6,288. Life Insurance Corporation of India has informed the exchanges that its shareholding in Dixon Technologies (India) Ltd has decreased from 5.012 per cent to three per cent of the paid-up capital of the said company, ie from 29,97,913 to 17,94,395 equity shares.

Indian Oil, Kotak Mahindra Bank partner for co-branded credit card, The card offers rewards on fuel and non-fuel spends

Kotak Mahindra Bank and Indian Oil Corporation on Friday announced a strategic partnership to launch the Indian Oil Kotak co-branded fuel credit card. The collaboration will offer more value to customers in the form of an enhanced rewards programme giving customers value on fuel spends and on special non-fuel and frequent-spend categories, such as dining and groceries.

RBI had revised upwards its GDP estimate to 7 percent from 6.5 percent, calling the revised number a "conservative".

Domestic rating agency Icria on Monday revised its FY24 GDP growth forecast to 6.5 per cent from 6.2 per cent earlier. However, the revised forecast is still much lower than the Reserve Bank of India's (RBI's) 7 per cent real Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth estimate for the ongoing fiscal. Earlier this month, the RBI had revised upwards its GDP estimate to 7 per cent from 6.5 per cent, calling the revised number a "conservative" one.

IndusInd Bank Ltd. has announced the launch of its 'Indus Solitaire Program', a new community banking initiative specifically tailored for the diamond industry.

IndusInd Bank Ltd. has announced the launch of its 'Indus Solitaire Program', a new community banking initiative specifically tailored for the diamond industry. This comprehensive program is set to offer a range of exclusive benefits and features, including 24/7 locker access at certain branches, family account add-ons, and specialized debit and credit cards offering perks such as complimentary golf lessons, movie tickets, and no foreign exchange fees.

CASHe, a leading credit-led AI-driven financial wellness platform, has unveiled its super app with the tagline - 'Bharat Ka Money App.'

This strategic repositioning underscores the brand's commitment to establishing itself as a premier credit-centric financial platform, meeting the diverse financial needs of young working millennials in urban hubs and tier 2+ cities across Bharat. The new tagline captures the company's steadfast focus on providing comprehensive financial solutions, seamlessly integrating credit, investment, and insurance - all customized to conveniently address the diverse financial needs of users on one unified platform.

The credit cards, available in two variants , LIC Classic and LIC Select, aim to provide over 27 crore policyholders nationwide the opportunity to accrue reward points with every LIC insurance premium payment.

The credit cards, available in two variants , LIC Classic and LIC Select, aim to provide over 27 crore policyholders nationwide the opportunity to accrue reward points with every LIC insurance premium payment. Aside from this, cardholders will benefit from features like a lost card liability cover of up to Rs 50,000 and a personal accident insurance cover of up to Rs 5 lakh. V Vaidyanathan, MD of IDFC Bank, expressed enthusiasm about extending these additional perks to LIC policyholders opting for this credit card, alongside co-brand benefits. He also emphasised the partnership with Mastercard as a global presence in this initiative.

Max Life Launches Smart Total Elite Protection Term Plan' a Comprehensive Solution to Align with the Evolving Lifestyle Preferences of Modern Consumers

Max Life Insurance Company Ltd. ("Max Life" / "Company"), has announced the launch of Smart Total Elite Protection Plan (UIN – 104N125V01), a comprehensive life insurance term plan crafted for today's lifestyles, providing comprehensive coverage, tailored to evolving consumer preferences. A non-linked, non-participating, individual pure-risk premium life insurance plan, Max Life Smart Total Elite Protection Term Plan ("STEP") offers policyholders multiple enhanced benefits like Instant Payment on Claim Intimation, Cover Continuance Benefit and Special Exit Value. This plan aims to enhance financial security in today's landscape, addressing the modern consumer's need for increased protection through higher coverage solutions.

Presence of Indian banks via subsidiaries increased to 417 in FY23

Shifting of retail business of a major foreign bank in India to a domestic private sector bank led to decline in aggregate deposits and credit of foreign banks, whereas their capital and investments increased during 2022-23. The consolidated balance sheet of foreign banks in India increased 5.7 per cent in US dollar terms. The tightening global monetary policy cycle during the year led to a substantial rise in interest income and expenses across bank groups. On the other hand, the number of branches and employees of foreign banks in India contracted during 2022-23 to 774 from 858 in 2021-22. Presence of Indian banks via subsidiaries increased to 417 in FY23.

The ADB has approved a \$250 million policy-based loan to support India's

wide-ranging reforms.

The ADB has approved a USD 250 million policy-based loan to support India's wide-ranging reforms that aim to strengthen and modernise the country's logistics infrastructure, improve efficiency, and lower costs. The loan will finance the first sub-program of the strengthening multimodal and integrated logistics ecosystem program, which supports the government's efforts to create a comprehensive policy, planning, and institutional framework at the federal, state, and city level.

Federal Bank Named "Bank of the Year (India)" by The Banker, Financial Times.

Federal Bank, a leading financial institution, has been recognised as "Bank of the Year (India)" by Financial Times owned The Banker, one of the only three global awards that considers the work of banks spanning 120 countries. This prestigious recognition is a testament to the Bank's unwavering commitment to innovation, customer-centric services, and its outstanding contributions to the banking industry over the past year.

Bandhan Bank has been appointed by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) as an authorised pension disbursement bank on behalf of the Central Pension Accounting Office (CPAO).

Bandhan Bank has said that it has been appointed by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) as an authorised pension disbursement bank on behalf of the Central Pension Accounting Office (CPAO), Ministry of Finance, for civil pensioners. The Bank will soon be integrating with the office of the CPAO to operationalise the disbursement process.

State Bank of India (SBI) will sign 70 million euro (about Rs 630 crore) Line of Credit (LoC) with German Development Bank KfW for promoting solar project in the country.

State Bank of India (SBI) will sign 70 million euro (about Rs 630 crore) Line of Credit (LoC) with German Development Bank KfW for promoting solar project in the country. The LoC is aimed at supporting Solar Photovoltaics (PV) projects in India. The agreement will be signed on December 14 at the bank's IFSC Gift City Branch in Ahmedabad.

ADB raises India FY24 growth forecast to 6.7%, cites industry performance.

The lender ADB revised its estimate based on India's higher-than-expected gross domestic product (GDP) growth, of 7.6 per cent, in the second quarter of FY24. Economic data also indicate the industrial sector in particular, including manufacturing, mining, construction, and utilities, grew by double digits. For FY2024 as a whole, agriculture is expected to grow slightly slower than expected, but this will be more than offset by industry's much stronger-than-expected growth, hence the

upward revision. India's economy would grow 6.7 percent in Financial Year 2023-24 (FY24), raising the estimate from 6.3 percent it made in September.

KPIT unveils India's 1st sodium-ion battery tech.

KPIT Technologies has unveiled India's first sodium-ion battery technology, which is a cheaper alternative to lithium-ion (Li-Ion) battery used in electric vehicles and for energy storage. This, the Pune-based company said, will help make available EV and storage batteries at prices 30 per cent lower than comparable Li-Ion batteries.

Industrial production grows to 16-month high of 11.7% in October

India's industrial production growth increased to a 16-month high of 11.7 per cent in October, mainly due to good show by manufacturing, mining and electricity sectors, according to the official data released on Tuesday. "India's IIP growth rate rises to a 16-month high of 11.7 per cent in October 2023," an official statement said.

This is the highest GDP growth in the last four quarters; sharpest surge in services sector; economists say growth is likely to slow in the rest of the year due to deficient rainfall, high inflation, and global concerns

Manufacturing GVA grew for the second quarter in a row, after half a year of contraction, with the pace of growth picking up slightly to 4.7% in the first quarter (Q1) of the year, from 4.5% in the previous quarter. Agriculture, forestry and fishing GVA grew 3.5% between April and June, but it was the services sectors that recorded the sharpest surge and lifted the estimates released by the National Statistical Office (NSO) on Thursday.

Coal for non-power purposes may surge significantly, with industrial production set to increase annually by 6% between 2024 and 2026!

"India becomes the driving force behind the upward pressure on global coal demand through to 2026, even if the global trend is decided in China. For the forecast period until 2026, we estimate Indian coal demand to rise by 3.5 per cent annually to 1,397 mt, with growth in every coal grade," IEA said in its latest coal report. Coal for non-power purposes may surge significantly, with industrial production set to increase annually by 6% between 2024 and 2026.

Unemployment rate among graduates declines to 13.4% between July 2022 and June 2023

As per the latest Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS), conducted by the Ministry of Statistics & Programme Implementation, the lowest unemployment rate among graduates aged 15 years and above witnessed in Chandigarh at 5.6%, which was followed by Delhi with 5.7 percent during 2022-23. The data showed the highest unemployment in Andaman & Nicobar Island at 33%, followed by Ladakh at 26.5%

and Andhra Pradesh at 24%.

\$40 million European Investment Bank (EIB) backing for Acre Impact Capital's innovative private debt fund to accelerate climate infrastructure investment across Africa

Export finance delivers long-term debt financing guaranteed by official export credit agencies ("ECAs"). Export finance allows project sponsors to significantly reduce the cost of debt by both obtaining very attractive funding on the ECA backed financing and obtaining long-term financing of up to 22 years. In doing so, ECAs can significantly enhance project affordability for the project sponsor and crowd-in private capital.

Fadnavis called Maharashtra the 'powerhouse of the Indian economy' and said he wants the state to become \$1-trillion economy by 2028.

Maharashtra is the 'powerhouse of the Indian economy' as it contributes more than 15 per cent of India's GDP, Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis said on Thursday. Maharashtra currently contributes 29 per cent of India's FDI and 20 per cent of the country's total industrial production, Fadnavis said after inaugurating 'Taiwan Expo 2023' in Mumbai's Goregaon.

ACG has joined the World Economic Forum's (WEF) Global Lighthouse Network, following the certification of its capsule manufacturing facility in Pithampur, India.

The country's largest capsules maker and integrated supplier and service provider to the pharmaceutical industry, ACG said the certification followed robust audits of 25-plus use cases for the facility that had led to manufacturing of superior quality products and transformed operations, creating new benchmarks for timely production. Indian drugmakers Dr Reddy's Laboratories and Cipla are also part of this network. "ACG's Pithampur factory exemplifies accelerated deployment of GenAI, addressing the evolving skill sets of employees in manufacturing through a remarkable standard operating procedure (SOP) and policy interfacing with Gen AI," the company said.

Aditya Birla Sun Life, IDFC First Bank in pact to collaborate on financial solutions

Aditya Birla Sun Life will offer products and services, including those that focus on retirement planning, ensuring a steady source of second income and tax-free returns tailored to their life stages. This collaboration will go a long way in enhancing accessibility, as well as making financial protection and planning easily available to a wider segment of customers served by IDFC FIRST Bank's extensive distribution network.

Ugro Capital has raised ₹250 crore through Non-Convertible Debentures (NCDs) from FMO, the Dutch entrepreneurial development bank

Shachindra Nath, Founder and Managing Director of Ugro Capital, commented on the collaboration, saying, "This transaction is proof of Ugro Capital's ability to forge partnerships with and attract funding from reputed global DFIs. We share a common vision of financial inclusion with impact funding organizations and are excited to collaborate with FMO to meet the diverse financial needs of India's underserved MSMEs."

The one-step UPI payment solution has been created in partnership with NPCI and Axis Bank, ensuring complete security and compliance!

Cashfree Payments' UPI Plug-in simplifies the UPI payment process by increasing conversion rates, reducing customer drop-offs and improving customer experience. The customer only needs to provide their 4 or 6-digit UPI PIN after clicking 'Pay Now' to complete the transaction, the company said

Private equity firm Bain Capital sells Rs 3,737 cr stake in Axis Bank.

Private equity firm Bain Capital on Wednesday sold shares worth Rs3,737 crore in private sector lender Axis Bank. Three affiliate firms BC Asia Investments VII, BC Asia Investments III and Integral Investments South Asia IV sold a total of 33.38 million shares (1.08 per cent stake) at Rs1,119.7 apiece, data showed. More than 50 entities, largely comprising foreign funds, were among the buyers, including Societe Generale, Morgan Stanley, Goldman Sachs and UBS.

PRESIDENT OF INDIA PRESENTS NATIONAL ENERGY CONSERVATION AWARDS ON THE NATIONAL ENERGY CONSERVATION DAY ,ANY BUSINESS SHOULD NOT ONLY HAVE ECONOMIC BENEFITS BUT ALSO HAVE ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL BENEFITS: PRESIDENT MURMU

Addressing the gathering, the President said that the health and happiness of all of us lies in the conservation and good health of nature. If we make optimal utilization of the available resources, everyone's energy and other needs will be fulfilled without unnecessary pressure on nature and Mother Earth. She stated that along with optimal utilization, all stakeholders will have to promote energy efficiency and innovation. Energy saving measures have to be used on a large scale. She highlighted that energy saving is energy production – this message is very useful. She urged all to make every possible effort to spread this message.

Abdel Fattah El-Sisi has swept to a third, six-year term as Egypt's president, winning 89.6% of votes in an election.

Abdel Fattah El-Sisi has swept to a third, six-year term as Egypt's president, winning 89.6% of votes in an election in which he faced no serious challengers, the National Election Authority announced on December 18. The election took place as Egypt struggles with a slow-burning economic crisis and tries to manage the risk of spillover from the war in Gaza, which borders Egypt's Sinai Peninsula.

Strong rural demand supports manufacturing and economic revival and is critical for India's transformation over the next 25 years!

Agriculture will play a central role in India's development trajectory as strong rural demand supports manufacturing and economic revival, Niti Aayog Vice Chairman Suman Bery said on Wednesday. According to an official statement, the Aayog and the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) signed a Statement of Intent (Sol), aiming to fortify policy and programme frameworks contributing to India's development objectives. Strong rural demand supports manufacturing and economic revival and is critical for India's transformation over the next 25 years.

Apart from Vohra, Alok Pandey, who is popularly known as 'Physicswallah' and is the co-founder of the newly turned unicorn by the same name, debuted on the list ranking at 399 with a total wealth of Rs 4,000 crore.

Aadit Palicha and Vohra, who co-founded Mumbai-based Zepto in 2020, are also the youngest start-up founders in Hurun India's Hurun India Future Unicorn Index 2022 list. The Stanford dropouts started the company after they failed to get groceries in their area during the COVID-19 pandemic-induced lockdown. Vohra's wealth stands at Rs 1,000 crore. Formerly known as Kiranakart, Zepto's unique selling point became its quick and contactless delivery of groceries in just 10 minutes. In the same list, billionaire Gautam Adani has topped the list with a net-worth of Rs 10,94,400 crore beating Reliance's Mukesh Ambani. This list contains individuals residing or born and bred in India. This is the 11th annual ranking of the richest individuals in India. The wealth calculations are a snapshot as of August 30, 2022.

Reliance General launches healthcare policy to make global healthcare accessible to Indians!

According to the company, Reliance Health Global has a host of unparalleled features, redefining the landscape of health insurance offerings. Beyond its comprehensive coverage for overseas treatment, including critical illnesses like Cancer and Bypass Surgery, this policy stands out for its exceptional domestic coverage. With unlimited sum insured within India, it redefines the paradigm of health insurance, offering unparalleled security and peace of mind for policyholders.

Cabinet approves Memorandum of Understanding between India and Italy on Cooperation in the field of Industrial Property Rights!

The Union Cabinet has given its approval for signing of Memorandum of Understanding between the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade, Ministry of Commerce & Industry of the Republic of India and the Directorate General for the Protection of Industrial Property-Italian Patent. The MoU will promote between the Participants the establishment of a mechanism that allows them to develop cooperation activities in the field of IP and information technology services related to this field. The activities under the MoU will provide an opportunity for exchange and dissemination of best practices, experiences and knowledge in the field of IPRs through the participation in programs and events, organized singly or jointly by the Partic.

Exercise Astrashakti, Indian Akash air defence missile system destroys 4 targets simultaneously

Looking to export its indigenous weapon systems, India has strongly demonstrated the firepower of its Akash surface-to-air (SAM) weapon system, where a single firing unit simultaneously engaged and destroyed four unmanned targets during the recent Exercise Astrashakti 2023. With this demonstration during the Air Force Exercise Astrashakti-2023, India has become the first to demonstrate the capability of engaging four targets simultaneously at such ranges by command guidance using a single firing unit, defence officials told ANI.

DRDO successfully tests high-speed flying-wing UAV, Pitches India into an elite club that have mastered the controls for the flying wing technology.

Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) has successfully carried out a flight trial of an indigenous high-speed flying-wing Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV) from the Aeronautical Test Range, Chitradurga, in Karnataka. The DRDO stated in an official statement that the successful trial of what it called the "Autonomous Flying Wing Technology Demonstrator (FWTD)" is a testimony to maturity in the technology readiness levels in the country.

Union Road Transport and Highways Minister Nitin Gadkari on Monday said the country needs 1,000 vehicle scrapping centres and 400 automated fitness test centres.

We need 1,000 vehicle scrapping centres in the country and at least 400 automated fitness test centres," he said. DigiELV is a trading platform for End of Life Vehicle Certificate of Deposit. Anyone who currently owns a Certificate of Deposit (CD) can sell the CD through the platform. A CD is issued when a user submits a vehicle for scrapping at an RVSF.

HDFC Life Enters into a Corporate Agency Tie-up with Karur Vysya Bank (KVB) to Offer Life Insurance Solutions to its Customers

India is largely under-insured. The protection gap in India is higher than that of most developed markets. For every individual with responsibilities, it is necessary to secure themselves and their families financially. Life insurance is a product that not only provides financial security but also enables individuals to save over the long term in a disciplined manner thus fulfilling their long-term financial goals.

Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal said the logistics sector will play a key role in taking the country's economy to about \$35 trillion by 2047!

Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Chandigarh, and Gujarat are among the 13 States and Union Territories that have again been categorised as "achievers" in the logistics index chart 2023, according to a report released by the Commerce and Industry Ministry on Dec 16. The index is an indicator of the efficiency of logistical services necessary for promoting exports and economic growth. Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal said the logistics sector will play a key role in taking the country's economy to about \$35 trillion by 2047.

CCI approves 100% acquisition of Lanco Amarkantak Power by PFC Projects, REC, SJVN and Damodar Valley Corporation.

Gateway Velocity Holding Corp. (Gateway) is a newly formed Delaware, U.S. corporation. It is a holding company and does not have any business activities in India or elsewhere. It is a wholly owned subsidiary of Aramco Overseas Company B.V. (AOC), which is a wholly owned subsidiary of Saudi Arabian Oil Company (Saudi Aramco). Saudi Aramco is primarily engaged in prospecting, exploring, drilling, and extracting hydrocarbon substances and processing, manufacturing, refining and marketing these substances. In India, it is primarily engaged in the marketing and selling of hydrocarbons and derivatives (including polyethylene, polypropylene, resins, lubricants and base oils).

Rajiv Gandhi Swarojgar Startup Yojana: Boosting Self-Employment in Himachal

In the first phase, 500 permits for E-taxis will be issued, with the possibility of increasing this number based on demand. The state government aims to provide E-taxis to unemployed youth, offering a 50% subsidy on their purchase. Additionally, the scheme includes relaxed conditions for loans, ensuring accessibility to financial support. Chairman Bali highlighted that the government is extending the subsidy to the purchase of E-buses and E-trucks as part of this initiative. Private bus operators have also been issued 24 permits for E-buses. The state is actively establishing 17 charging stations for E-vehicles in the next two months, supporting the integration of electric transport.

The Global status report on road safety 2018, launched by WHO in December 2018, highlights that the number of annual road traffic deaths has reached 1.35 million.

Road traffic injuries are now the leading killer of people aged 5-29 years. The burden is disproportionately borne by pedestrians, cyclists and motorcyclists, in particular those living in developing countries. The report suggests that the price paid for mobility is too high, especially because proven measures exist. Drastic action is needed to put these measures in place to meet any future global target that might be set and save lives. The Global status report on road safety 2018, launched by WHO in December 2018, highlights that the number of annual road traffic deaths has reached 1.35 million.

NITI Aayog unveils inaugural delta ranking for aspirational blocks programme; Tiriyani Block in Telangana secures top spot.

The rankings were determined based on the performance and progress of the blocks in achieving key performance indicators (KPIs). This KPI-centric approach is integral to the program's core strategy, fostering a sense of competitive and cooperative federalism. Notably, this marks the first-ever calculation of block rankings as part of the aspirational blocks programme.

Eighteenth session of the Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage

The eighteenth session of the Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage took place at the Cresta Mowana Resort in Kasane, Republic of Botswana from Tuesday 5 to Friday 8 December 2023. The session was chaired by H.E. Mr Mustaq Moorad, Ambassador and Permanent Delegate of the Republic of Botswana to UNESCO.

International Day to End Violence Against Sex Workers is observed annually on December 17 by sex workers, their advocates, friends, families and allies.

Originally conceived as a memorial and vigil for the victims of the Green River Killer in Seattle, Washington, US, it has evolved into an annual international event. The day calls attention to hate crimes committed against sex workers worldwide, as well as the need to remove the social stigma and discrimination that have contributed to violence against sex workers and indifference from the communities they are part of. Sex worker activists also state that custom and prohibitionist laws perpetuate such violence.

International Human Solidarity Day 2023

International Human Solidarity Day, observed on December 20. International Human Solidarity Day is an annual occasion marked by countries across the globe. On this Human Solidarity Day, the international community comes together to pledge to adopt ways to promote the well-being of the global community and eradicate poverty, hunger, and diseases. The day is centred around people, the planet, and human rights. Governments around the globe are reminded on this day of their commitments

to international agreements on the need for human solidarity to fight poverty.

National Minorities Rights Day, December 18

Designated as National Minorities Rights Day, December 18 carries significant importance in India. It serves as a poignant reminder of the dedication to safeguarding the rights of religious, ethnic, racial, and linguistic minorities within the nation. With each annual observance, India seeks to raise awareness, promote understanding, and actively champion the rights of minority communities.

International Migrants Day, 18 December

Through UNESCO's International Coalition of Inclusive and Sustainable Cities, we promote a welcoming approach towards migrants at the local level. We are bolstering the capacities of journalists to address negative narratives and bring the stories of migrants to the fore. UNESCO is engaged with UN partners through the Global Migration Group, to shape a global compact for safer, orderly and regular migration.

UN Arabic Language Day, 18 December

UN Arabic Language Day is observed annually on December 18. The event was established by the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in 2010 seeking "to celebrate multilingualism and cultural diversity as well as to promote equal use of all six of its official working languages throughout the organization". December 18 was chosen as the date for the Arabic language as it is "the day in 1973 when the General Assembly approved Arabic as an official UN language".

The United Arab Emirates planned to use its role as the host of UN climate talks as an opportunity to strike oil and gas deals, the BBC has learned.

Leaked briefing documents reveal plans to discuss fossil fuel deals with 15 nations. The UN body responsible for the COP28 summit told the BBC hosts were expected to act without bias or self-interest. The UAE team did not deny using COP28 meetings for business talks, and said "private meetings are private". It declined to comment on what was discussed in the meetings and said its work has been focused on "meaningful climate action".

World Health Organization officially recognizes noma as a neglected tropical disease

In a pivotal move towards addressing one of the world's most underrecognized health challenges, the World Health Organization (WHO) today announced the inclusion of noma (cancrum oris or gangrenous stomatitis) in its official list of neglected tropical diseases (NTDs). This decision, which was recommended by the 17th meeting of the Strategic and Technical Advisory Group for Neglected Tropical Diseases (STAG-NTD), underscores WHO's commitment to expanding health services to the

world's most vulnerable populations.

Shidaowan plant in China's northern Shandong province is designed to use fuel more efficiently and improve its economics, safety and environmental footprint.

China has started commercial operations at a new generation nuclear reactor that is the first of its kind in the world, state media said on Wednesday. Compared with previous reactors, the fourth-generation Shidaowan plant in China's northern Shandong province is designed to use fuel more efficiently and improve its economics, safety and environmental footprint as China turns to nuclear power to try to meet carbon emissions goals.

China has successfully launched a reusable robotic spacecraft for the third time since 2020, in a series of secretive orbital test flights that it says are aimed at developing reusable technologies to reduce space mission costs.

The uncrewed spacecraft was launched atop a Long March 2F rocket, the same rocket series used by China to transport its astronauts to space, at the Jiuquan Satellite Launch Centre in northwest China. The spacecraft will operate in orbit for "a period of time" before returning to a designated landing site in China. During its flight, reusable technologies will be "verified" and space experiments conducted, state media reported, giving no other details.

The World Bank's latest Migration and Development Brief reveals a continuing growth in remittance flows to low- and middle-income countries (LMICs) in 2023, albeit at a slower pace compared to previous years.

According to the World Bank, the report highlights India's significant position as the top remittance recipient, drawing attention to the evolving dynamics in the remittance landscape. Remittances to LMICs grew by an estimated 3.8 per cent in 2023, reaching a total of USD669 billion. Resilient labour markets in advanced economies and Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries played a pivotal role in supporting migrants' ability to send money home.

Uma Sekhar was elected to the Governing Council of the International Institute for the Unification of Private Law (UNIDROIT) with in the first round at the elections held in Rome.

Government sources described victory of the Indian woman candidate as "historic". In a historic victory for India's first woman candidate, Uma Sekhar was elected to the Governing Council of the International Institute for the Unification of Private Law (UNIDROIT) with an impressive 45 votes out of 59 votes in the first round at the elections held in Rome.

Retired Punjab cadre IAS officer of 1975 batch and WHO South-East Asia regional director Dr Poonam Khetrapal Singh has been awarded Bhutan's

prestigious National Order of Merit Gold Medal for her distinguished services to the country.

“Dr Poonam Khetrapal Singh, the first woman regional director of WHO South-East Asia Region, played a pivotal role in supporting transformative healthcare leadership in Bhutan from 2014 to 2024. Her tenure witnessed remarkable strides, including Bhutan becoming one of the first countries to eliminate measles and rubella ahead of schedule. She made significant contributions to help Bhutan excel in Covid-19 vaccination.

City of Nizams, Hyderabad, reigns supreme in Mercer's 2023 Quality of Living Ranking. Here are the other best Indian cities to live in!

For the sixth time in a row, Hyderabad is the best Indian city to live in, as per Mercer's Quality of Living (City Ranking) Survey 2023. The city is ranked 153 in the global list and has topped parameters such as cost of living, political stability, healthcare, education, infrastructure and socio-economic environment.

Vishnu Deo Sai, his two deputies take oath in Chhattisgarh Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Home Minister Amit Shah, among others, attend the swearing.

Senior Bharatiya Janata Party leader Vishnu Deo Sai on Wednesday took oath as the Chief Minister of Chhattisgarh. Mr. Sai, a tribal leader from Jashpur, is the fourth Chief Minister of the State. State BJP president Arun Sao and general secretary Vijay Sharma took oath as Deputy Chief Ministers in a brief swearing-in ceremony held at Raipur's Science College ground, and attended by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Home Minister Amit Shah, among others.

Mumbai professor bags Royal Society of Chemistry's Nyholm prize, In addition to the prize, Professor Savita Ladage will be awarded £5,000 as well as a medal and a certificate.

Professor Savita Ladage from Mumbai's Homi Bhabha Centre for Science Education, Tata Institute of Fundamental Research, received the Royal Society of Chemistry's Nyholm Prize for Education in recognition of her contributions to chemistry education. Prof. Ladage bagged the award for her advocacy of the significance of chemical education. Her efforts include mentoring chemistry educators and spearheading impactful teacher and student programs that advance chemistry education in the country.

Defence Ministry's Defence Acquisition Council's recent meeting had cleared the proposal for the acquisition of two types of these rockets, known as Area Denial Munition Type 2 and Type-3.

In a major boost for the Indian Army, the Defence Ministry has approved a Rs2,800 crore proposal for buying around 6,400 rockets for Pinaka multi-barrel rocket launcher systems. The Defence Ministry's Defence Acquisition Council's recent meeting had cleared the proposal for the acquisition of two types of these rockets, known as Area Denial Munition Type 2 and Type-3. The rockets would be procured by the Indian Army from indigenous sources only and two main contenders include the Economic Explosives Limited of Solar Industries and the Munitions India Limited-- one of the ammunition-producing companies created by the corporatisation of the erstwhile Ordnance Factories.

Veteran actor Kabir Bedi was honoured with the lifetime achievement award at Venice Film Festival.

Veteran actor Kabir Bedi was honoured with the lifetime achievement award at Venice Film Festival. The actor, known for his performances in Bollywood and Hollywood titles, was awarded the Filming Italy Movie Lifetime Achievement Award at the Venice Production Bridge market. Variety reported that the award was presented by Tiziana Rocca, actor and producer, and Roberto Stabile, the head of the international department of Italian national audiovisual body ANICA.

The Barracuda, India's fastest solar,electric boat sets sail for sustainable future.

In a move towards eco-friendly maritime transportation, the Barracuda, India's fastest solar-electric boat, was ceremoniously launched at the Navgathi Panavally Yard in Alappuzha. This cutting-edge vessel was jointly developed by Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders and Navalt.

Sanganer MLA Bhajanlal Sharma was sworn in as the new Chief Minister of Rajasthan at a mass ceremony.

Sanganer MLA Bhajanlal Sharma was sworn in as the new Chief Minister of Rajasthan at a mass ceremony, attended by thousands of BJP workers enthused by the first-time legislator occupying the top post. Prime Minister Narendra Modi, several Union Ministers, and the CMs of BJP-ruled States were in attendance.

53rd Vijay Diwas Ultra Marathon Run

In commemoration of the 53rd Vijay Diwas, an inspiring endurance event is currently unfolding at Pune's historic Race Course, organized by the Southern Command of the Indian Army. Twenty-four selected participants have embarked on a 53-hour Ultra Marathon, symbolizing the enduring spirit and celebrating the 53rd anniversary of the triumphant victory of 1971. This extraordinary run, which commenced in the early hours of December 14 at 2: 00 AM is scheduled to conclude on December 16 at 7:00 AM. This unique Ultra Marathon at Race Course, Pune, pays tribute to the resilience and determination exhibited by Indian Soldiers during the Indo-Pak war of 1971. The 53 hour tribute run will serve as a prelude to the Southern Star Vijay Run on

December 16, which will be flagged off by Lieutenant General AK Singh, AVSM, YSM, SM, VSM, Army Commander, Southern Command, at the same venue. Anticipated to draw participation from at least 50,000 runners simultaneously across 23 locations in 11 states, the Vijay Run promises to be a remarkable event, fostering a collective remembrance of the historic victory.

Hyderabad-based HC Robotics will make advanced gimbals for Indian Armed forces.

A delegation from French company Merio met IT and Industries Minister D Sridhar Babu on Friday and expressed interest to invest in the state. The minister assured them that necessary support would be extended to them. Taking to X, Sridhar Babu tweeted: "Met a French delegation and discussed their interest to invest in Hyderabad and assured them of governmental support. Hyderabad-based HC Robotics Pvt Ltd to make advanced gimbals for armed forces with the technology coming from a French company Merio.

Saint Lucia's Tax Inspectors without Borders (TIWB) programme launched in partnership with India.

This programme is expected to be of 12-18 months' duration in which India, in collaboration with the TIWB Secretariat and support of the UNDP Country Office, Barbados and the Eastern Caribbean, aims to aid Saint Lucia in strengthening its tax administration by transferring technical knowledge and skills to its tax administration, and through sharing of best practices. The focus of the programme will be on effective use of automatic exchange of information under the Common Reporting Standard (CRS) framework.

In 2024, total voter turnout at the current rate of polling can touch 68 crores, of which 49% can be women.

The number of women voters is projected to outstrip men voters in 2029 and this inflection point would be a testimony to the former getting their due share on socio-economic fronts and should be a harbinger of harmonized growth, according to SBI's economic research department (ERD).

National Skill Development Corporation signs MoU with Saudi government to protect rights of skilled labourers from India.

The National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the government of Saudi Arabia to protect the rights of skilled labourers from India. "Skilled labourers in India can register themselves at NSDC... after which we will come to know where they are going, for which work and with whom they will be working," NSDC CEO Ved Mani Tiwari said.

Aryna Sabalenka and Novak Djokovic have been named as the 2023 ITF World

Champions and the pair also achieved a special feat this year.

This is Djokovic's eighth ITF World Champion award, which is also a record. He finished the year as ATP No. 1 for a record-extending eighth time, where he bagged the Australian Open, French Open and US Open, which also took his majors' total to a men's leading 24. He was also runners-up at the Wimbledon and led the men's tour with seven titles.

Leander Paes and broadcaster and Vijay Amritraj have become the first Asian men to be inducted into the International Tennis Hall of Fame.

Former doubles world No. 1 Leander Paes and broadcaster and promoter Vijay Amritraj of India have become the first Asian men to be inducted into the International Tennis Hall of Fame. Besides the duo, renowned journalist and writer Richard Evans have also been elected in the Ultimate Honour in Tennis.

Sri Lanka President Ranil Wickremasinghe awarded Golden Owl Award to three Indian officers.

In Sri Lanka, three Indian officers were awarded the prestigious Golden Owl award by Sri Lanka President Ranil Wickremasinghe at the graduation ceremony held yesterday evening. The officers were undergoing Command and Staff course at Sri Lanka's Defence Services Command and Staff College at Colombo. The officers, Wing Commander Sumeet Mahajan, Major Rohit and Lieutenant Commander Sunny Sharma received the award for standing first amongst the foreign student officers.

Government of India and ADB sign 37 billion Japanese Yen loan for Delhi-Meerut Regional Rapid Transit System Corridor.

The Government of India and Asian Development Bank (ADB) on 15th December 2023 signed agreement for a 37 billion Japanese Yen (\$250 million) loan that will continue financing the construction of the 82-kilometre Delhi-Meerut Regional Rapid Transit System (RRTS) corridor. The signatories to the loan agreement were Ms. Juhi Mukherjee, Joint Secretary, Department of Economic Affairs, Ministry of Finance, for the Government of India, and Mr. Hoe Yun Jeong, Deputy Country Director, and Officer-in-Charge of the India Resident Mission, for ADB. Earlier, ADB had approved a \$1,049 million Multi-tranche Financing Facility (MFF) for the project in 2020 to support construction of RRTS, the first of three priority rail corridors planned under the NCR Regional Plan 2021, to connect Delhi to other cities in adjoining states. The RRTS will have multi-modal hubs to ensure smooth interchange with other transport modes. The first tranche of the ADB loan amounted to \$500 million with another \$500 million co-financed by AIIB.

Farewell No. 7! BCCI retires MS Dhoni's iconic jersey, young players advised not to pick number!

A BCCI official said that there are just about 30 or so numbers available for young players to choose from. ICC allows players to pick any number from 1 to 100, but in India at least 60 numbers are designated to the regular Indian team players and those in contention. As per the report, even if a player is out of the team for about a year, the number is not given away.

Rio Tinto celebrates 150 years with a special stamp by the Indian Department of Posts.

Marking 150 years of finding better ways to provide the materials the world needs, Rio Tinto has collaborated with the Department of Posts in India to launch a customised 'My Stamp' and special cover called 'Rio Tinto 150'. The stamp denotes Rio Tinto's commitment to driving innovation and continuous improvement to produce the minerals and metals used in everyday life in the safest and most sustainable way possible.

Union minister of earth sciences Kiren Rijju said India's winter expeditions to the Arctic will now be regularly undertaken annually.

"The Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES) will make necessary budgetary and other allocations, provide administrative support for the winter expeditions to the Arctic, which will now be regularly undertaken annually," the minister said. Rijju added, "The Arctic and the Antarctic are very crucial from the point of view of climate study. Since Prime Minister (Narendra) Modi's aim is to provide a great push in the field of science, our ministry has decided to make Himadri—India's station in the Arctic—fully functional throughout the year. By the time this team returns, the next team will be ready for their journey ahead."

Indian Forest & Wood Certification Scheme launched to promote Sustainable Management of forests and agroforestry.

The Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change has launched the Indian Forest & Wood Certification Scheme. This national forest certification scheme offers voluntary third-party certification designed to promote sustainable forest management and agroforestry in the country. The scheme includes forest management certification, tree outside forest management certification, and chain of custody certification. The Indian Forest and Wood Certification Scheme can provide market incentives to various entities that adhere to responsible forest management and agroforestry practices in their operations. This includes state forest departments, individual farmers, or Farmer Producer Organizations engaged in agroforestry and farm forestry, as well as other wood-based industries in the value chain.

The 10-year contract between the defence ministry and BEL has been signed for the procurement of electronic fuzes for Indian Army.

The Ministry of Defence (MoD) has signed a landmark contract with Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL) in Pune worth Rs 5,336.25 crore for the procurement of electronic fuzes for the Indian Army. The contract, signed on Friday, will span over the next 10 years and comes under the "Manufacture of Ammunition for Indian Army by Indian Industry" initiative by the central government.

China launches deepest lab on Earth, it is more than 2,000m below ground.

The report mentioned the scientists think that the lab provides a major boost to the global search for dark matter, which is a hypothetical form of matter that appears not to interact with light or the electromagnetic field. It is expected that the lab will open up new frontiers in deep-earth experiments as the extreme depth will help the scientists by blocking most cosmic rays that mess with the observation.

TSPCB is also upgrading and shifting the existing zonal laboratory located at Vaddepally (V) to the new building under construction adjacent to KUDA office complex

TSPCB being the chief regulator for implementation environmental protection and pollution control laws in the State, plays an important role in enforcing various laws, rules, regulations notifications etc. pertaining to prevention and control of pollution. TSPCB also carry out monitoring of pollution sources and initiates preventive and corrective action. Primary role of TSPCB is that of a regulator. However, TSPCB also conducts awareness programs on the laws and their provisions and advises all stake-holders involved in environmental management and pollution control for compliance of the laws and to provide adequate control systems.

The ship has a unique distinction of having served under the flag of two nations with three names during her distinguished service till date," says Navy spokesperson

The Indian Navy will be re-inducting a refurbished 22-year-old fast attack craft, INS Tarmugli, INS Tarmugli, a Fast Attack Craft has been commissioned into the Navy at a ceremony held at Naval Dockyard, Visakhapatnam. Vice Admiral Sandeep Naithani, AVSM, VSM, Chief of Materiel, Indian Navy commissioned the Trinkat Class FAC which was gifted to the Maldivian Naval Defence Forces (MNDF) in 2006 by India.

Rocket Lab returned the Electron vehicle to flight on Friday with a successful mission for Japanese company Q-shu Pioneers of Space, Inc.

Rocket Lab returned the Electron vehicle to flight on Friday with a successful mission for Japanese company Q-shu Pioneers of Space, Inc., known as iQPS. This was Rocket Lab's first mission after resolving an issue that caused the September launch failure. This was Rocket Lab's 10th mission in 2023. While the gap in launches due to the failure kept Rocket Lab from hitting its target of 15 missions this year, it still reached a new annual record for launches, beating last year's nine missions.

Mitchell Starc hits ₹24.75 crore KKR jackpot as IPL auction's costliest buy, Pat Cummins' record barely lasts an hour

Pat Cummins had set the record for being the most expensive player in the history of the Indian Premier League when Sunrisers Hyderabad had shelled out a whopping ₹20.5 crore for the Australia captain at the IPL auction 2024 in Dubai. But little did Cummins know that his accomplishment would barely last an hour as he was beaten by none other than his Australia teammate Mitchell Starc. Mitchell Starc beat Pat Cummins' record to become the most expensive player in IPL auction history at ₹24.75 crore. He will play for Kolkata Knight Riders.

The Khelo India Para Games 2023 wrapped up in New Delhi on December 17 with Haryana winning the inaugural title by securing 105 medals: 40 gold, 39 silver and 26 bronze.

KIPG 2023 began on December 10 and witnessed the participation of around 1,450 para athletes from across the country. Uttar Pradesh came second on the KIPG 2023 medal tally with 62 medals: 25 gold, 23 silver and 14 bronze while Tamil Nadu finished third with 20 gold, eight silver and 14 bronze medals. Athletes represented 32 states and Union Territories at the inaugural Khelo India Para Games.

Vijay Hazare Trophy 2023, Haryana beats Rajasthan by 30 runs to clinch maiden title

In a pulsating Vijay Hazare Trophy final, Sumit Kumar's ubiquitous brilliance and Harshal Patel's flashes of inspiration scripted Haryana's 30-run win over Rajasthan and secured the state team's first title triumph in more than 32 years at the Saurashtra Cricket Association Stadium here on Saturday.