












12 October 2023

National and International News

<p><b>Operation Ajay</b></p>	<p><b>Key points:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Specially chartered flights have been arranged to evacuate Indian citizens who wish to return from conflict-hit Israel.</li> <li>• This operation has been codenamed as 'Operation Ajay'.</li> </ul>																		
<p><b>Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA)</b></p> <table border="1" data-bbox="115 806 485 1577"> <tr> <td colspan="2">Indian Ocean Rim Association</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="2"></td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="2">Map of IORA countries</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Headquarters</td> <td>Ebene, Mauritius</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Working languages</td> <td>English</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Type</td> <td>Intergovernmental</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Membership</td> <td>23 members: <a href="#">[show]</a> 11 dialogue partners: <a href="#">[show]</a></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Leaders</td> <td> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Secretary General: Salman Al Farisi, Secretary General<sup>[1]</sup></li> <li>• Chair:  India</li> <li>• Vice Chair:  Sri Lanka</li> </ul> </td> </tr> <tr> <td>Establishment</td> <td>6 March 1997 Indian Ocean Rim Association for Regional Co-operation</td> </tr> </table>	Indian Ocean Rim Association				Map of IORA countries		Headquarters	Ebene, Mauritius	Working languages	English	Type	Intergovernmental	Membership	23 members: <a href="#">[show]</a> 11 dialogue partners: <a href="#">[show]</a>	Leaders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Secretary General: Salman Al Farisi, Secretary General<sup>[1]</sup></li> <li>• Chair:  India</li> <li>• Vice Chair:  Sri Lanka</li> </ul>	Establishment	6 March 1997 Indian Ocean Rim Association for Regional Co-operation	<p><b>Context</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sri Lanka to take over as Chair of IORA.</li> <li>• Annual meeting of the <b>Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) was held in Colombo on October 11, 2023.</b></li> </ul> <p><b>About IORA</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) was previously named the <b>Indian Ocean Rim Initiative</b>.</li> <li>• It was also called the Indian Ocean Rim Association for Regional Cooperation or the <b>IOR-ARC</b> for short.</li> <li>• It is a <b>regional tripartite forum</b> that gathers government representatives, academia, and business leaders to encourage cooperation and greater interaction between them.</li> <li>• Currently, it has <b>23 member states</b>.</li> <li>• IORA has 22 member states, including Australia, Bangladesh, Comoros, India, Indonesia, Iran, Kenya, Madagascar, Malaysia, Maldives, Mauritius, Mozambique, Oman, Seychelles, Singapore, Somalia, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Tanzania, Thailand, UAE, and Yemen.</li> <li>• Its Secretariat is based in <b>Cyber City, Ebène, Mauritius</b>.</li> <li>• The IORA was formed in <b>March 1997</b>.</li> <li>• The idea for the IORA was formed by <b>India and South Africa</b>.</li> </ul>
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<p><b>3.21 lakh appeals pending with Information Commissions: report</b></p>	<p><b>Context</b></p> <p>According to a new report, more than three lakh appeals and complaints are pending in 27 State Information Commissions across the country and the backlog has been steadily increasing.</p>																		



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	<p><b>Key findings</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The name of the report is '<b>Report Card on the Performance of Information Commissions in India, 2022-23</b>'</li> <li>• Of the <b>3,21,537 pending appeals</b>, the maximum number was reported in Maharashtra (1,15,524) followed by Karnataka (41,047). Tamil Nadu declined to provide the information.</li> <li>• <b>Four Information Commissions — Jharkhand, Telangana, Mizoram, and Tripura</b> — are defunct as no new Information Commissioners were appointed upon incumbents demitting office.</li> <li>• <b>Six Information Commissions are currently headless</b> — the Central Information Commission, and the State Information Commissions of Manipur, Chhattisgarh, Maharashtra, Bihar, and Punjab.</li> </ul>
<p><b>BRI Summit</b></p>	<p><b>Context</b> India is likely to skip China's third summit of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), which will be held in the Chinese capital.</p> <p><b>Belt &amp; Road Initiative (BRI)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is an ambitious project that focuses on <b>connectivity and cooperation</b> among multiple countries spread across the continents of <b>Asia, Africa, and Europe</b>.</li> <li>• Initially announced in the year <b>2013</b>, the project involves building networks of roadways, railways, maritime ports, power grids, oil and gas pipelines, and associated infrastructure projects.</li> <li>• The project covers two parts. <b>Silk Road Economic Belt:</b> It is land-based and is expected to connect China with Central Asia, Eastern Europe, and Western Europe. <b>21st Century Maritime Silk Road:</b> It is sea-based and is expected to connect China's southern coast to the Mediterranean, Africa, South-East Asia, and Central Asia.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Cabinet okays royalty rates for lithium, niobium</b></p>	<p><b>Context</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Union government approved royalty rates for lithium, niobium, and Rare Earth Elements (REEs).</li> <li>• For <b>lithium and niobium</b>, a royalty rate of <b>3%</b> each has been fixed.</li> <li>• For <b>Rare Earth Elements (REEs)</b>, the rate has been set at <b>1%</b>.</li> </ul>



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	<p><b>Niobium</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It is a <b>soft, ductile transition metal</b> that is resistant to corrosion due to the presence of an oxide layer on its surface.</li> <li>It is one of the most common elements found in the Earth's Crust.</li> <li>It is often found in the pyrochlore mineral.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Uses of Niobium</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It is used in stainless steel alloys for cutting tools, nuclear reactors, jets, missiles, and welding rods.</li> <li>It is used in the manufacturing of MRI scanners and NMR equipment.</li> <li>Its alloys are used in making surgical implants.</li> <li>It is used for the production of stainless steel and high-temperature resistant alloys.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Rare Earth Elements (REE)</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>REE is a set of seventeen elements in the periodic table. These include the <b>fifteen lanthanides</b> on the periodic table plus <b>scandium and yttrium</b>.</li> <li>REE are all metals, and the group is often referred to as the <b>"rare earth metals</b>.</li> <li>Although called "rare", they are actually found relatively abundantly in the Earth's crust.</li> <li>They are called "rare" because these metals are very difficult to mine because it is unusual to find them in concentrations high enough for economical extraction.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Applications of REE</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>REE and alloys that contain them are used in many devices that people use every day such as computer memory, DVDs, rechargeable batteries, cell phones, catalytic converters, magnets, fluorescent lighting, and much more.</li> <li>Rare earths are used as catalysts, phosphors, and polishing compounds.</li> </ul>
<p><b>International Day of the Girl Child</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It is observed on <b>October 11</b>.</li> <li>The theme of International Day of the Girl 2023 according to UNICEF is, <b>"Invest in Girls' Rights: Our Leadership, Our Well-being."</b></li> <li>The theme focuses on taking action to curtail girls and women's rights and gain progress on gender equality.</li> </ul>



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INTERNATIONAL DAY OF THE GIRL CHILD  
OCTOBER 11

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Kerala Regional News

Cooperative & public-sector banks deposits decline in Kerala decline

In news:

- Total deposits in **cooperative and public-sector banks in Kerala declined in 2023**, while private-sector banks and small-finance banks reported significant growth.

Key Points:

- **Kerala State Cooperative Bank (KSCB)** saw a 1.02% YoY decline in deposits, and its share of total bank deposits in the state decreased by 8.7% in 2023.
- **Public sector commercial banks** in the state posted a 5% YoY growth in deposits, but their share in total deposits declined from 46.49% in March 2021 to 45.49% in March 2023.
- **Private sector commercial banks** saw a 10.78% YoY growth in deposits, and **small finance banks (SFBs)** experienced exceptional growth with a YoY rate of 19.69% in March 2023, increasing their share in total deposits from 1.28% to 1.73% over three years.



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Hands-on feel experience for Kerala tourists

In news:

- Kerala Tourism is launching an initiative called '**Ethnic Villages**' to allow tourists to experience the state's ethnic culture.

Key Points:

- The project will begin in **Idukki district**, jointly managed by the Responsible Tourism Mission and the District Tourism Promotion Council (DTPC).
- '**Ethnic Villages**' will feature a 2-acre space showcasing traditional art, cuisine, handicrafts, and cultural expressions of Kerala's tribal communities.
- The '**ethnic village**' will include accommodations designed like tribal houses, with modern amenities, and will be divided into a tourism activity zone and an accommodation zone.

SC Collegium recommends elevation of five judicial officers as judges of Kerala HC

In news:

- The Supreme Court Collegium, led by Chief Justice of India **D.Y. Chandrachud**, recommended the appointment of five judicial officers as judges for the **Kerala High Court**.

Key points:

- The Collegium recommends S/Shri (i) **Smt M.B. Snehalatha**, (ii) **Johnson John**, (iii) **G. Girish**, (iv) **C. Pratheepkumar**, and (v) **P. Krishna Kumar**, Judicial Officers, be appointed as Judges of the High Court of Kerala.

Qualifications to become High court judge:

- Must be a citizen of India.
- Must have held a **judicial office** in India for at least 10 years. OR.
- Should have been an **advocate** in any of the High Courts for at least 10 years.

Karthiyayini Amma Person in News



In news:

- Karthiyayini Amma, a **101-year-old woman from Alappuzha**, India, passed away recently.
- She was known for her remarkable achievements in **education**.

Key Points:

- She received the '**Nari Shakti Puraskar**,' the highest civilian award in India, for her commitment to learning and breaking age-related barriers.



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- Karthiyayini Amma achieved recognition by scoring **98%** in the **AksharaLaksham** exams at the age of 96.
- **Akshara Lakshyam** is a project of the mission to achieve cent percent literacy with focus mainly on **16-75 age group**.

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