

Weekly Current Affairs 20th November to 25th November 2023 - English

National News

India-bound ship hijacked by Yemen's Houthi rebels in Red Sea, says IDF

A cargo ship named "Galaxy Leader," en route from Turkey to India, has been hijacked by Yemen's Houthi rebels in the Red Sea. Approximately 50 crew members from various nations were on board. The Israeli Defence Forces (IDF) confirmed the hijacking but clarified that the ship is not Israeli. Hamas militants clashed with Israeli forces in Gaza's largest refugee camp. Reports of a potential hostage release deal between Israel and Hamas, involving women and children. Denial of a tentative deal by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and US officials.

India Dispatches Second Round Of Aid To Gaza Amidst Israel-Hamas Conflict

India has once again demonstrated its commitment to providing humanitarian aid to the Gaza Strip amidst the escalating conflict between Israeli forces and Hamas terrorists. The second batch of aid, carried by the Indian Air Force's C17 aircraft, comprises 32 tonnes of essential supplies. The aircraft is destined for the El-Arish Airport in Egypt, approximately 45km away from the Rafah crossing, the sole entry point for humanitarian aid into Gaza. This initiative follows India's earlier contribution on October 22, where the country sent the first batch of aid, including 6.5 tonnes of medical assistance and 32 tonnes of disaster relief materials. The aid encompassed life-saving medicines, surgical items, tents, sleeping bags, tarpaulins, sanitary utilities, and water purification tablets, addressing the urgent needs of the Palestinians affected by the ongoing conflict.

UK stance on agri GI items remains hurdle in FTA talks with India

Negotiations between the UK and India for a free trade agreement (FTA) are currently underway, with a key unresolved issue revolving around the level of protection for Geographical Indication (GI) products from the agricultural sector. The UK seeks heightened safeguards for its GIs, including renowned items like Scotch whisky, Stilton cheese, and Cheddar cheese. GI products, such as Scotch whisky and certain cheeses, are those whose quality and distinctiveness are attributed to a specific geographical origin. Once a product receives GI status, others cannot sell a similar item under the same name. The UK is pushing for a higher level of GI protection than what India traditionally provides. The negotiations include discussions on the intellectual property rights (IPRs) chapter, and the UK desires an elevated level of safeguarding for its GIs.

Anurag Thakur Launched Inaugural VFX And Tech Pavilion At 54th IFFI

In a groundbreaking move, Shri Anurag Singh Thakur, the Union Minister for Information and Broadcasting, inaugurated the VFX and Tech Pavilion at the 54th International Film Festival of India (IFFI) in Goa. This pavilion, a first in the history of Film Bazaar by NFDC at IFFI, is set to be a focal point for showcasing the latest advancements in film-making technology, encompassing animation, visual effects, virtual reality, and CGI. Minister Thakur took a tour of various sections within the Pavilion, including the Cine Museum and the Viewing Zones of streaming giants Amazon Prime and Netflix. The inspection also involved a firsthand demonstration of Sony's full frame Cinema Line Cameras. Notably, the Minister engaged with young filmmakers selected under the 75 Creative Minds of Tomorrow initiative and interacted with authors participating in the Book to Box section of the Tech Pavilion.

President of India Launches 'New Education for New India' Campaign in Odisha

In a significant move towards fostering values and uplifting the consciousness of students, the President of India, Smt Droupadi Murmu, launched the 'New Education for New India' campaign by Brahma Kumaris, Sambalpur, in Sambalpur, Odisha on November 22, 2023. The campaign aims to instill moral values in students, contributing to the creation of a better society. The launch of the 'New Education for New India' campaign reflects the commitment of the Indian government to the holistic development of students by integrating moral values into the education system. The President's address underscores the significance of moral education in shaping responsible citizens and fostering a positive societal outlook. Prajapita Brahma Kumaris Ishwariya Vishwa Vidyalaya's efforts in providing avenues for character-building and self-realization are acknowledged as valuable contributions to the pursuit of happiness and peace.

Bengal

GOVERNMENT OF WEST BENGAL

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+ কনটেন্ট + মক টেস্ট

Start Nov 24, 2023

India to Chair International Sugar Organisation

India is set to take the helm as the chairman of the International Sugar Organisation (ISO) in 2024, marking a significant milestone for the country. As the world's largest consumer and second-largest producer of sugar, this leadership role reflects India's growing influence in the global sugar sector. The announcement came during the 63rd council meeting of the ISO, headquartered in London.

International News**Luc Frieden Assumed The Position Of Prime Minister In Luxembourg**

Luxembourg, a small but influential European nation, is set to undergo a significant political shift as former finance minister Luc Frieden assumes the role of prime minister. This change comes on the heels of the recent election, where Frieden's Christian Social People's Party (CSV) emerged victorious, reshaping the country's political dynamics. After nearly six weeks of deliberations, a pivotal moment arrived as the CSV, under Frieden's leadership, signed a coalition agreement with the Democratic Party led by former Prime Minister Xavier Bettel. This collaboration solidifies a coalition government that combines the Christian democratic ideology of CSV with the liberal stance of Bettel's party.

Landmark Election In Argentina Since The Restoration Of Democracy

Argentina has witnessed a seismic shift in its political landscape as Javier Milei, a self-described anarcho-capitalist and right-wing populist, secured a decisive victory in the recent presidential runoff. Milei's triumph over Economy Minister Sergio Massa marks a departure from the traditional political order, promising a radical overhaul of the state in response to the nation's deep-seated discontent with soaring inflation and increasing poverty. In a stunning turn of events, with 97.6% of votes tallied, Milei emerged with 55.8%, outpacing Massa's 44.2%, a margin wider than anticipated by pollsters. This electoral outcome stands as the most significant mandate since Argentina's return to democracy in 1983, signifying a clear mandate for change and a rejection of the status quo.

Union Minister Shri Anurag Singh Thakur Launches 17th Film Bazaar At IFFI, Goa

The Union Minister for Information and Broadcasting, Youth Affairs & Sports, Shri Anurag Singh Thakur, inaugurated the Film Bazaar, the largest South Asian film market at Marriott Resort, Goa. The film bazaar is a bustling marketplace of ideas, a haven for filmmakers, producers, and storytellers from around the world. It is described as a confluence of creativity and commerce, where ideas and inspirations form the foundation of a thriving cinematic marketplace. Shri Anurag Singh Thakur highlighted the robust growth of the Indian media & entertainment industry, boasting an annual growth

rate of 20%. It is recognized as the fifth-largest and most globalized industry globally. The Film Bazaar, now in its 17th year, has become an integral part of the International Film Festival of India (IFFI), growing into one of Asia's premier film markets.

Israel and Hamas Reach Truce Deal, Set to Release 50 Hostages

Israel and Hamas have reached a significant diplomatic breakthrough in their ongoing conflict. The deal, announced involves the release of at least 50 hostages and numerous Palestinian prisoners. The agreement also includes a four-day truce for besieged Gaza residents after weeks of intense warfare. As part of the deal, Palestinian militants are set to release 50 women and children who were kidnapped during a raid into southern Israel on October 7. The Hostages and Missing Families Forum group expressed happiness about the pending partial release, emphasizing the lack of clarity regarding specific individuals. Hamas welcomed the "humanitarian truce," indicating that 150 Palestinians would be released from Israeli jails. The resistance committed to the truce as long as Israel honored it. The conflict began with a severe attack by Hamas gunmen on October 7, prompting Israel to declare war on Hamas.

UAE Inaugurates World's Largest Single-Site Solar Power Plant

The United Arab Emirates (UAE) has inaugurated the world's largest single-site solar power plant, the 2-gigawatt (GW) Al Dhafra Solar Photovoltaic (PV) Independent Power Project (IPP). The plant, located 35 kilometers from Abu Dhabi city, will generate enough electricity to power almost 200,000 homes and is expected to displace 2.4 million tonnes of carbon emissions annually. The project was inaugurated by Sheikh Hazza bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Deputy Ruler of Abu Dhabi, and emphasized the importance of the plant as a symbol of progress in solar power efficiency, innovation, and cost competitiveness.

Report: US Granted \$677 billion In Aid To 213 Countries From 2001 to 2023

According to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the United States emerges as the foremost aid provider in 2022. The data from ForeignAssistance.gov, an official US government platform, reveals key insights into the patterns and destinations of US aid between 2001 and 2023. A comprehensive analysis indicates that the US has disbursed a staggering \$677 billion in aid to 213 countries from 2001 to 2023. This financial assistance spans various nations, addressing diverse needs and challenges. Despite the ongoing conflict between Israel and Hamas, the US has been a consistent source of financial support for Israel. In 2022, Israel topped the list of recipients of US military financing with a substantial sum of \$3.3 billion. This support is part of a larger trend where Israel has historically been a major beneficiary of US aid.

Afghanistan Closes Its Embassy In India Permanently

The Afghanistan embassy in New Delhi has officially announced its permanent closure, citing persistent challenges from the Indian government as the primary reason. This decision comes after the embassy had already ceased operations on September 30, hoping for a favorable change in the Indian government's stance. The embassy clarified that the closure should not be seen as an internal conflict or a result of diplomats switching allegiance to the Taliban. Instead, it attributes the decision to broader changes in policy and interests, emphasizing the challenges faced in maintaining normal diplomatic operations.

State News

Bihar Governor Approves Bill Raising Reservation From 50% to 65%

In a significant move towards addressing social inequality, the Governor of Bihar, Rajendra Vishwanath Arlekar, approved the 'Bihar Reservation Amendment Bill' on November 17. This legislative development comes after the State Government passed the bill unanimously during the winter season, with Chief Minister Nitish Kumar expressing his commitment to swift implementation. The bill raises the reservation quota for Backward, Extremely Backward Classes, Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes from 50% to 65%, surpassing the 50% ceiling set by the Supreme Court. This article delves into the key aspects of the reservation amendment, its implications and the social justice agenda it aims to promote.

Gyanodaya Express to Revolutionize Education in J&K : LG Manoj Sinha

flagged off the Gyanodaya Express from the Katra railway station in Reasi district. This unique project, also known as the "College on Wheels," aims to empower approximately 700 girl students from universities in the Union Territory. The initiative is set to revolutionize education by providing immersive and collaborative learning experiences beyond traditional classroom boundaries. The Gyanodaya Express draws inspiration from the life of Mahatma Gandhi, who embarked on an epic train journey across the country, interacting with people from diverse backgrounds. The initiative aligns with Gandhi's principles of Satya and Ahimsa (Truth and Non-violence), aiming to awaken society with universal and eternal values.

"Ghol" Fish Declared State Fish of Gujarat

In a significant move to recognize and promote the rich aquatic biodiversity of the region, the 'Ghol' fish has been officially declared the state fish of Gujarat. The announcement was made by Gujarat Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel during the inaugural ceremony of the first Global Fisheries Conference India 2023 held at Gujarat Science City. Union Minister for Fisheries Parshottam Rupala was also present at

the event, which brought together stakeholders from across the globe.

Odisha Achieves Rs 50,000 Crore Mining Revenue in the Financial Year 2021-22, Announces Chief Secretary

Odisha Chief Secretary P K Jena announced a significant milestone in the state's economic landscape during the 77th annual technical meeting of the Indian Institute of Metals. The mining sector, a crucial contributor, has propelled Odisha's revenue from Rs 4,900 crore in 2016-17 to an impressive Rs 50,000 crore in the fiscal year 2021-22. Jena emphasized the transformative journey of the mining sector, highlighting a remarkable ten-fold increase in revenue over the past five years. The surge from Rs 4,900 crore to Rs 50,000 crore showcases the sector's pivotal role in reshaping Odisha's financial fortunes. Acknowledging the strategic importance of metals and metallurgical infrastructure, Jena assured continued support for the industry.

Meghalaya Launches 'Water Smart Kid Campaign' For Youth Water Conservation Awareness

In a significant move to instill a sense of responsibility and awareness among the younger generation regarding water conservation, Meghalaya Chief Minister Conrad K. Sangma launched the 'Meghalaya Water Smart Kid Campaign.' This initiative, operating under the Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM), aims to educate children about the vital importance of water conservation.

West Bengal News

Mamata Banerjee Names Sourav Ganguly As The 'Brand Ambassador of Bengal'

The Bengal Global Business Summit, an annual event held in Kolkata, marked a significant moment this year as Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee declared former cricketer and ex-president of the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI), Sourav Ganguly, as the "Brand Ambassador of Bengal." Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, in her inaugural address at the Bengal Global Business Summit 2023, unveiled a series of ambitious policies aimed at transforming the economic landscape of the state. These policies include doubling the state's exports, upgrading logistical infrastructure, and fostering the manufacturing of renewable energy. Expressing her rationale for choosing Sourav Ganguly as the Brand Ambassador, Banerjee stated, "Sourav Ganguly is a very popular figure, and he can work for the young generation in a very good manner. I want to involve him as the Brand Ambassador of Bengal." This move not only adds a prominent personality to the state's promotional efforts but also leverages Ganguly's influence to connect with the younger demographic.

Economy News

Global economy: Inflation eases in US, UK; India's trade gap widens in Oct

In recent developments, both the United States and the United Kingdom have experienced a slowdown in inflation. This has led to growing speculation that central banks on both sides of the Atlantic may initiate interest rate cuts by the middle of the next year. While expectations for economic growth in Europe are on the rise, there are disparities within the European Union. The economic recovery in the EU's eastern region remains fragile, even as other parts of Europe show signs of improvement. In Asia, the economic recoveries in China and Japan are facing uncertainties, with factors such as slowing consumption contributing to shaky prospects. Bloomberg charts highlight a broad slowdown in US inflation during October. Market participants view this as a positive signal, indicating that the Federal Reserve might conclude its interest rate hikes.

Rural Retail Inflation Outpaces Urban Counterpart for 18 Out of 22 Months

As the central government continues its efforts to address economic challenges, recent data from the National Statistical Office (NSO) reveals a concerning trend in India's inflation dynamics. Despite initiatives like the extended free-food programme and ongoing efforts to stimulate rural demand, rural inflation has consistently surpassed urban inflation in 18 of the past 22 months, spanning from January 2022 to October 2023.

India Set to Extend Rice Export Bans Through 2024, Impacting Global Prices

India, the leading global exporter of rice, is anticipated to prolong its restrictions on overseas sales into the next year. This decision is poised to keep rice prices near their highest levels since the 2008 food crisis. For the past decade, India has been a major player in global rice exports, constituting almost 40% of the total. However, to maintain domestic supplies and curb price surges, the Indian government has imposed export duties and minimum prices. Notably, certain rice varieties, including broken and non-basmati white rice, are prohibited from export. In response to these measures, rice prices soared to a 15-year high in August. Buyers from vulnerable importing nations hesitated to make purchases, and some even sought waivers.

Covid Call: Over a third of EPFO Members Opted for Non-Refundable Withdrawals

In response to the challenges posed by the Covid-19 pandemic, the Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO) introduced a special window allowing non-refundable withdrawals for its subscribers. This measure aimed to alleviate financial strains during the unprecedented times. EPFO manages the retirement savings of approximately 60 million subscribers. The organization oversees a corpus of

around ₹18 lakh crore. The government amended the EPF Scheme, 1952, allowing members non-refundable withdrawals. Members could withdraw funds equivalent to basic wages and dearness allowance for three months or up to 75% of the amount in their EPF account, whichever was less.

Anticipated Deceleration in Growth for 'Unsecured Retail Loans' in FY24

Recent regulatory measures implemented by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) are set to reshape the landscape of unsecured retail loans in Mumbai. Crisil Ratings predicts a notable deceleration in the growth of these loans, contrasting sharply with the robust 45% expansion observed last year. According to Crisil Ratings, the growth of unsecured retail loans is likely to slow down to 20-30%, reflecting a strategic shift by non-banking financial companies (NBFCs) in response to the regulatory changes. This contrasts with the steady growth anticipated in secured asset classes. The recent RBI directive instructing banks and NBFCs to allocate more capital for consumer loans is expected to have significant repercussions. Compliance with these guidelines is estimated to cost a substantial ₹84,000 crore in capital.

Indian Rupee Hits Record Low at 83.38 Against US Dollar

The Indian rupee closed at a new low of 83.38 against the US dollar, marking a slight decline from the previous close of 83.34. This drop was attributed to increased dollar demand from oil companies and intervention by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) to mitigate a steeper fall.

Dollar Demand from Oil Companies: The primary factor contributing to the rupee's decline was the heightened demand for dollars from oil companies. This demand, coupled with RBI interventions, played a crucial role in shaping the day's forex market dynamics.

RBI Intervention: The Reserve Bank of India actively intervened to stabilize the rupee, preventing a more significant depreciation. Despite these efforts, the currency closed at a new low, indicating the challenges faced by the central bank in managing the forex market.

Rankings & Reports News

Delhi's Khan Market world's 22nd priciest high street retail location

Real estate consultant Cushman & Wakefield has unveiled its 'Main Streets Across the World' report, shedding light on prime retail rental rates globally. Delhi's upscale Khan Market has secured the 22nd spot, marking a slight drop from the 21st position last year. The annual rent per square foot stands at USD 217. Despite the slip, New York's Fifth Avenue continues to dominate as the world's most expensive retail destination. Milan's Via Montenapoleone climbed to second place, displacing Hong Kong's Tsim Sha Tsui to third. London's New Bond Street and Paris's Avenues des Champs-Élysées retained the fourth and fifth positions.

TCS Claims Top Spot In Customer Satisfaction Among IT And Cloud Services Providers In Spain

Indian IT giant Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) has achieved remarkable success in Spain, securing the number one position in service delivery quality and commercial competitiveness, according to an independent survey conducted by Whitelane Research. The survey, which encompassed insights from 285 CXOs of leading IT spending organizations, assessed 28 top IT service providers based on a comprehensive investigation of over 875 unique IT sourcing relationships and more than 1,050 cloud sourcing relationships. The company's commitment to delivering high-quality services and maintaining a competitive edge has propelled it to the forefront of the Spanish IT market.

Business News**Bengaluru Tops in Women-Led Startups, Followed by Mumbai and Delhi**

India's startup landscape has witnessed remarkable growth, emerging as the third-largest hub in the world, following the United States and China. Bengaluru, the capital of Karnataka, topped the list of women-led startups, boasting 1,783 women-led startups, leading the charge for gender diversity in entrepreneurship. Despite the overall success of the startup ecosystem, the gender gap remains a significant challenge. According to the data of Traxon, Bengaluru is at the forefront of women-led startups, with 1,783 ventures, followed by Mumbai (1,480) and Delhi (1,195). Noida, Kolkata and Ahmedabad also make notable contributions, ranking eighth, ninth and tenth, respectively, showcasing the geographic distribution of women entrepreneurs in India.

Nippon Life India AIF Set to Mobilize ₹1,000 Crore for Private Credit Expansion

In the dynamic financial landscape of Mumbai, Nippon Life India Asset Management has strategically entered the realm of private credit, aligning with the shifting trends following regulatory tightening by banks and mutual funds withdrawing from promoter funding. This move echoes similar initiatives by Centrum and Avendus.

Fundraising Drive: Nippon Life India Alternative Investment Fund aims to raise a substantial ₹1,000 crore, targeting investors such as high-net-worth individuals and family offices.

Strategic Deployments: Having already invested 100 crore in two strategic deals, the fund is poised for further growth with a green shoe option to secure an additional 1,000 crore.

Warren Buffett's Exit from Paytm: A Rs 507 Crore Loss

Warren Buffett-led Berkshire Hathaway has made headlines by completely divesting its 2.46% stake in One 97 Communications, the parent company of Paytm. The move resulted in a significant loss of about Rs 507 crore for the legendary investor. Berkshire Hathaway's entire stake was sold at an average price of Rs 877.2 per share. The shares were acquired by Ghisallo Master Fund and Cophall

Mauritius Investment, with the former purchasing 42,75,000 shares and the latter acquiring 75,75,529 shares. Berkshire Hathaway garnered nearly Rs 1,371 crore from the transaction. Berkshire Hathaway's entire stake was sold at an average price of Rs 877.2 per share.

Mastercard and U GRO Capital Collaborate for MSME Financing

Mastercard, a prominent global technology company in the payments industry, has forged a strategic partnership with U GRO Capital, a Non-Banking Financial Company (NBFC) specializing in Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSME) financing. This collaboration aims to provide financial solutions to small businesses in India, addressing the longstanding challenge of limited access to capital faced by MSMEs. In India, over 64 million MSMEs encounter significant hurdles, with only 14% having access to credit, according to recent reports. This collaboration seeks to alleviate these challenges by offering a comprehensive digital supply chain financing solution tailored for millions of small businesses in the country.

Agreement News**India and EU ink Semiconductor Agreement To Boost Supply Chain**

India and the European Union (EU) marked a significant milestone on Friday by signing a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on semiconductors. This collaborative effort aims to establish a robust supply chain, promote innovation, and align both regions with global developments in the semiconductor industry.

The signing of the MoU between India and the European Union signifies a pivotal step in fortifying their collaboration in the semiconductor industry.

As the digital landscape evolves, this partnership is poised to drive innovation, create a skilled workforce, and contribute to the global semiconductor ecosystem.

Appointment News**Mira Murati Appointed As Interim Chief Executive Officer At OpenAI**

On November 18, OpenAI, the prominent artificial intelligence research and deployment company, made headlines by announcing the dismissal of its CEO and co-founder, Sam Altman. The decision came following an official statement released by the company's board on November 17. In the wake of Altman's departure, Mira Murati has been appointed as the interim Chief Executive Officer of OpenAI. Mira Murati, a 34-year-old mechanical engineer born to Albanian parents, has been an integral part of the OpenAI team. She initially joined the company in 2018 as the Vice President of AI and partnerships. Expressing her thoughts on the new role, Murati sees this as a positive development and an opportunity to shape a future where artificial intelligence is harnessed for the greater good.

Microsoft Names Aparna Gupta As Leader Of Global Delivery Center

In a strategic move to strengthen its leadership team, Microsoft has recently announced the appointment of Aparna Gupta as the new Global Delivery Center (GDC) leader. In this role, Ms. Gupta is set to spearhead customer innovation and delivery excellence, playing a pivotal role in advancing Microsoft's commitment to providing cutting-edge solutions to its global clientele. Microsoft's Global Delivery Center (GDC) serves as the delivery arm of Industry Solutions Delivery, with its roots dating back to its establishment in Hyderabad in 2005. Over the years, it has expanded its footprint to include two more locations: Bangalore and Noida. The GDC is a multifaceted entity encompassing four Centers of Excellence (CoE) specializing in app innovation, data and Artificial Intelligence, infrastructure and security, and business applications. Additionally, it oversees crucial functions such as partner and delivery management, along with adoption management.

Banking News

Acko partners with R Madhavan as their 'voice of the customer'

ACKO, the insurtech company making insurance convenient, transparent, and accessible for Indians, has partnered with renowned actor R Madhavan as its 'Voice of the Customer'. This collaboration aims to dispel common misconceptions about insurance and empower consumers to make informed decisions. This strategic partnership between ACKO and R Madhavan marks a significant step forward in bridging the trust gap in the Indian insurance industry. By leveraging Madhavan's influence and ACKO's expertise, the collaboration aims to empower consumers with the knowledge and tools they need to make informed insurance decisions.

RBI Takes Action Against Abhyudaya Cooperative Bank's Governance Issues

In a move aimed at addressing governance-related concerns, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) announced on Friday that it has superseded the board of Abhyudaya Cooperative Bank for a duration of 12 months. This action comes as a response to certain material concerns arising from observed poor governance standards within the bank. As part of the regulatory intervention, Satya Prakash Pathak, former Chief General Manager of State Bank of India, has been appointed as the Administrator to oversee the bank's affairs during the 12-month period. The RBI clarified that while the board has been superseded, no business restrictions have been imposed on the bank. Normal banking activities will continue under the guidance of the appointed Administrator.

Bandhan Bank Board Approves Reappointment of Chandra Shekhar Ghosh as MD & CEO

The board of directors at Bandhan Bank has given the green light for the reappointment of Chandra Shekhar Ghosh as the Managing Director & Chief Executive Officer (MD&CEO). The

Kolkata-based private sector lender has extended Ghosh's tenure for a period of three years. The current term is set to expire on July 09, 2024. The reappointment is contingent upon the approval of both the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) and the shareholders of the bank. As per regulatory provisions, the application for the reappointment of the MD & CEO must be submitted to the RBI at least six months before the conclusion of the current term. Ghosh is set to assume his renewed role from July 10, 2024, and will not be liable to retire by rotation.

Schemes and Committees News

Government's 'Skills on Wheels' Initiative for Rural Empowerment

In a bid to empower rural communities, the government is set to launch the 'Skills on Wheels' initiative, aiming to deliver skill training directly to the doorsteps of rural individuals, with a particular focus on equipping rural youth, especially women, with foundational digital skills. In the initial phase, the Ministry of Skills Development plans to collaborate with the private sector, leveraging corporate social responsibility (CSR) programs for skill impartation. Ved Mani Tiwari, the CEO of the National Skills Development Corporation (NSDC), revealed that discussions are underway with various corporate entities to take up the initiative under their CSR spend, with the intention of rapidly expanding the program's reach.

SATHI Program Faces Cancellation Under Department of Science and Technology

The recent cancellation of the SATHI (Sophisticated Analytical and Technical Help Institutes) program under the Department of Science and Technology (DST) has ignited a wave of apprehension among researchers and academics. This move has raised concerns regarding its potential impact on research funding, particularly in the context of the anticipated introduction of the National Research Foundation (NRF) and the potential influence of the private sector in shaping the research landscape. Launched in 2020, the SATHI program aimed to establish centers equipped with advanced analytical instruments, fostering collaboration and resource-sharing among institutions. The recent cancellation of the call for proposals under SATHI has left educational institutions, especially in Kerala, anxious about the future of their research initiatives.

'AGNI' Initiative to Promote Innovations by Ayurveda Practitioners

In a pioneering move towards fostering innovation and research in Ayurveda, the Central Council for Research in Ayurveda Sciences (CCRAS), under the Ministry of Ayush, has introduced the "Ayurveda Gyan Naipunya Initiative" (AGNI). This initiative is strategically designed to encourage Ayurveda practitioners to contribute, document, and validate innovative medical practices for the betterment of educational and academic realms.

Summits & Conference News

2nd CII India Nordic Baltic Business Conclave 2023

The 2nd edition of the CII India Nordic Baltic Business Conclave is taking place in New Delhi on 22-23 November 2023. This initiative, in collaboration with the MEA, GOI, aims to foster collaboration between India and the Nordic Baltic Eight (NB8) countries, known for their prowess in innovation and technology. The conclave is strategically designed to facilitate dialogue among diverse stakeholders. Its primary focus is on key sectors, providing a platform for discussions that can potentially lead to groundbreaking partnerships. The event will also lay the groundwork for potential policy changes, fostering an environment conducive to impactful collaborations. The NB8, comprising Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, and Sweden, represents a formidable force in innovation and technology. This collaboration holds immense promise, especially given India's increasing emphasis on technology as a driver of economic growth.

Union Minister Shri Nitin Gadkari Inaugurates the 8th India Water Impact Summit (IWIS) in New Delhi

Nitin Gadkari, the Union Minister of Road Transport and Highways, recently inaugurated the 8th Edition of the Indian Water Impact Summit (IWIS) on 22nd November 2023 in New Delhi. Organized by the National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG) and the Center for Ganga River Basin Management and Studies (cGanga), the three-day summit from November 22 to 24, 2023, brought together scientific experts, stakeholders and government representatives to address the dynamic challenges and opportunities in India's water sector. Shri Nitin Gadkari, the Union Minister of Road Transport and Highways, delivered a compelling address, emphasizing the pivotal role of ethics, ecology, environment and economics in shaping a sustainable future.

Awards & Honors News

Indira Gandhi Peace Prize for 2022 Presented to COVID-19 Warriors

The prestigious Indira Gandhi Prize for Peace, Disarmament and Development for the year 2022 was jointly awarded to the Indian Medical Association (IMA) and Trained Nurses Association of India. The award ceremony took place on November 19, where former Vice-President Hamid Ansari presented the honor to Dr. Sharad Kumar Agarwal, President of the IMA and Professor (Dr.) Roy K. George, President of the Trained Nurses Association of India. The award symbolizes a tribute to the relentless efforts of the COVID-19 warriors in India. Congress Parliamentary Party chairperson Sonia Gandhi, who heads the Indira Gandhi Memorial Trust, emphasized that the recognition extends to every doctor, nurse, paramedic and support staff for their selfless service, dedication and perseverance in the face of the unprecedented challenges posed by the pandemic.

Uttar Pradesh bags First Prize for Best State in Inland Fisheries

Uttar Pradesh, under the leadership of the Yogi Adityanath government, has secured a notable 'Best State' award for inland fisheries (plain areas). The state is set to receive this prestigious accolade at the two-day Global Fisheries Conference-2023 in Delhi on November 21 and 22. Cabinet Minister for Fisheries, Sanjay Nishad, announced this achievement, attributing it to the relentless efforts of the government to promote fisheries and elevate the income of fishermen. The success in fisheries is further underscored by the implementation of 31 projects under the Pradhan Mantri Sampada Yojna in Uttar Pradesh. A substantial sum of Rs.15,282.5 has been disbursed to beneficiaries as part of these initiatives. This financial support aims to empower individuals involved in the fisheries sector and contribute to the overall growth of the industry.

Madhuri Dixit Receives Award At 54th IFFI

Legendary actress Madhuri Dixit has been honored with the 'Special Recognition for Contribution to Bharatiya Cinema' award at the 54th International Film Festival of India (IFFI) in Panaji, Goa. The announcement was made by Union Minister for Information & Broadcasting and Youth Affairs & Sports, Shri Anurag Singh Thakur, along with MoS Information & Broadcasting, Dr. L. Murugan, and Goa Chief Minister Pramod Sawant. Spanning four remarkable decades, Dixit's illustrious career stands as a testament to her enduring impact on the silver screen. Shri Anurag Singh Thakur fittingly describes her as an "icon across the ages," acknowledging her exceptional ability to breathe life into diverse characters.

NIF Book Prize For 2023 To Be Revealed On December 1st

The Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay National Institute of Fashion Technology (NIF) Book Prize has unveiled its shortlist, comprising five outstanding works that delve into diverse facets of India's history, society, and culture. The winner is slated to be announced on December 1, adding anticipation to the literary community.



Bengali

WBCS 2024 Batch 2

Complete Prelims + Mains Batch

লাইভ ক্লাস + রেকর্ডেড ভিডিও + স্টাডি ম্যাট + মক টেস্ট

Start Date: 20 Nov 2023

This books are -

Founding Mothers of the Indian Republic by Achyut Chetan
Delhi Reborn: Partition and Nation Building in India's Capital
by Rotem Geva

Writer, Rebel, Soldier, Lover: The Many Lives of Agyeya by
Akshaya Mukul

Land Guns Caste Woman: Memoirs of a Lapsed Revolutionary
by Gita Ramaswamy

Nehru's India: A History in Seven Myths by Taylor C. Sherman

Ishwak Singh Won Best Actor Award At Stars Asian International Film Festival

Ishwak Singh won the Best Actor award at the Stars Asian International Film Festival (SAIFF) for his performance in the film 'Berlin,' serving as a testament to the universal appeal of his work and highlighting not only his exceptional talent but also his dedication to his craft. The film "Berlin" has not only gained acclaim for Ishwak Singh's outstanding portrayal but has also enjoyed successful screenings at several film festivals, such as the Indian Film Festival of Los Angeles and Jio MAMI 2023. Produced by Zee Studios and Yippie Ki Yay Motion Pictures, the movie showcases a remarkable ensemble cast that includes Aparshakti Khurana, Rahul Bose, Kabir Bedi, and Anupriya Goenka in significant roles. "Berlin" maintains its grip on audiences, captivating them with its compelling narrative and exceptional performances. This solidifies its position as a standout film with international appeal.

Important Dates News

World AMR Awareness Week 2023 (November 18-24): Date, Theme, Significance

The World Antimicrobial Resistance Awareness Week takes place from November 18 to 24, 2023, with the aim of enhancing awareness and comprehension of AMR while advocating best practices among One Health stakeholders. The primary goal is to diminish the emergence and transmission of drug-resistant infections. The chosen theme for WAAW 2023 will stay consistent with the previous year – "Preventing Antimicrobial Resistance Together," just as it was in 2022. Antimicrobial resistance (AMR) poses a significant threat to humans, animals, plants, and the environment, impacting all facets of our interconnected world. This year's theme emphasizes the imperative for collaborative efforts across various sectors to safeguard the efficacy of antimicrobials.

World Fisheries Day 2023: Date, Significance and History

World Fisheries Day is observed annually on November 21st to highlight the importance of sustainable fisheries management and to draw attention to the critical role of small-scale fishers in ensuring food security and livelihoods for millions around the world. This global event serves as a platform to raise awareness about the challenges facing fisheries, including overfishing, habitat destruction, and

climate change. The theme for World Fisheries Day 2023 is 'Celebrating the Wealth of Fisheries and Aquaculture'.

Shaheedi Diwas or Martyrdom Day of 'Guru Tegh Bahadur'

In the annals of Indian history, the sacrifice and valor of individuals who stood against oppression and defended their religious beliefs resonate as timeless tales of inspiration. Among these luminaries is Guru Tegh Bahadur Singh, the 9th Guru of the Sikhs, whose martyrdom day is commemorated on November 24. Born on 21st April 1621, in Amritsar to Mata Nanaki and Guru Hargobind, Guru Tegh Bahadur's life is a testament to courage, conviction and the unwavering commitment to protect the Sikh faith. In his early years, Guru Tegh Bahadur, then known as Tyagamal, displayed remarkable courage. At the age of 13, he accompanied his father Guru Hargobind Sahib to Kiratpur, where they faced a Mughal army in Palahi village near Phagwara. In this skirmish, the young Teg demonstrated extraordinary bravery, earning him the name Teg Bahadur, which means 'brave sword.' This incident marked the beginning of a journey that would lead him to the throne as the 9th Guru of the Sikhs.

Sports News

Novak Djokovic Wins Record Seventh ATP Finals Title

Novak Djokovic made history on November 19, by securing his seventh ATP Finals title in Turin, Italy. The world number one defeated local favorite Jannik Sinner in a commanding fashion with a 6-3, 6-3 victory. This triumph places Djokovic ahead of the retired Roger Federer in ATP Finals victories, capping off a remarkable season that included three Grand Slam wins, bringing his total to a record-breaking 24 and claiming his 40th Masters 1000 titles. In the final against Sinner, Djokovic asserted control early in the match by breaking Sinner in the fourth game and comfortably serving out the opening set. The Serbian continued his dominance by breaking serve again at the start of the second set. Djokovic's command over the match silenced the partisan crowd, which had been fervently supporting Sinner throughout the tournament. The world number one reeled off 14 consecutive points, showcasing his exceptional form at the crucial moments of the tournament.

AIFF and Odisha Govt Ink MoU For FIFA-AIFF Academy

On November 21, 2023, a significant milestone was achieved in Indian football as the All India Football Federation (AIFF) and the Government of Odisha, in collaboration with FIFA, signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to establish the AIFF-FIFA Talent Academy. The ceremony, graced by the presence of Mr. Arsene Wenger, FIFA's Chief of Global Football Development, marked a crucial step toward nurturing and developing football talent in India. The MoU, symbolizing the commitment of the AIFF and the Government of Odisha to football development, was formally signed in the presence of distinguished dignitaries. Mr. Kalyan Chaubey,

President of AIFF, and Mr. R Vineel Krishna, Commissioner-Secretary, Department of Sports and Youth Services, Government of Odisha, were present at the event. Additionally, Mr. Tushar Kanti Behera, the Sports Minister of Odisha, graced the ceremony with his presence.

ICC Bans Transgender Players From International Women's Cricket

In a significant policy decision, the International Cricket Council (ICC) has recently implemented a ban on transgender cricketers from participating in international women's cricket at the highest level. This decision has raised discussions around inclusivity, athlete rights and the impact of the ban on transgender individuals. The move is said to be in alignment with the International Olympic Committee's (IOC) guidelines, considering cricket's inclusion in the 2028 Olympics. The decision comes on the heels of controversy sparked by Canada's Danielle McGehey, who became the first transgender cricketer to participate in an official international match just two months ago. The 29-year-old opening batter playing in all six of Canada's matches during the Women's T20 World Cup Americas region qualifiers event in Los Angeles.

ICC moves men's U-19 World Cup from Sri Lanka to South Africa

The International Cricket Council (ICC) Board has made a decisive move by relocating the upcoming men's Under-19 World Cup from Sri Lanka to South Africa. This decision comes in the wake of the ICC's provisional suspension of Sri Lanka Cricket (SLC), prompted by concerns of government interference in the administration of cricket in the island nation. Interestingly, it was Sri Lanka Cricket (SLC) that first approached the ICC, bringing attention to the government's interference in cricket operations within the country. The ongoing discord between SLC and the Sports Ministry has been marked by accusations of corruption and mismanagement against SLC officials. An ICC Board member revealed that the decision to shift the U19 World Cup to South Africa was formally approved at a recent ICC Board meeting in Ahmedabad.

Anahat Singh Becomes Second Youngest to Win National Squash Championship Title

In a remarkable turn of events at the Senior National Squash Championships 2023, 15-year-old Anahat Singh scripted history by becoming the second youngest title winner in the tournament's prestigious history. The young prodigy faced off against Tanvi Khanna in the final, where Khanna was unfortunately forced to retire midway through the match due to a knee injury. Anahat's victory marked a historic moment, as she triumphed against her opponent who is 12 years her senior. The championship match witnessed a gripping battle between the generations, with Anahat initially losing the opener 9-11. However, she showcased her resilience in the second game, leading 6-4 before Khanna's untimely injury.

The retirement of Khanna resulted in Anahat securing the title and etching her name in the record books as the second youngest Senior National Squash Champion in 23 years.

Marlon Samuels, Former West Indies Player, Receives 6-year Ban

On November 23, Marlon Samuels, the former West Indies batter, was handed a six-year ban from all forms of cricket by the International Cricket Council (ICC). The ban was imposed due to his failure to disclose benefits received during the Abu Dhabi T10 league, actions that could have brought the sport into disrepute, concealing information, and non-cooperation with the investigation officer. Samuels, who had an illustrious international cricket career playing 71 Tests, 207 ODIs, and 67 T20Is, faced charges related to his participation in the Abu Dhabi T10 league in 2019. The Emirates Cricket Board's anti-corruption code was violated on four counts, leading to charges by the ICC in September 2021.

Obituaries News

Dhoom Director Sanjay Gadhvi Passed Away At 56

On Sunday, November 19, the film industry lost a creative force with the sudden demise of renowned filmmaker Sanjay Gadhvi. Best known for directing the blockbuster films "Dhoom" (2004) and its sequel "Dhoom 2" (2006), Gadhvi's contribution to Indian cinema has left an indelible mark. Sanjay Gadhvi, aged 56, passed away at his Mumbai home, leaving behind a legacy that continues to resonate with audiences. His untimely departure occurred just three days before he would have celebrated his 57th birthday. Sanjay Gadhvi was born to Manubhai Gadhvi, a prominent figure in Gujarati folk literature. Gadhvi clinched the title of 'Hottest Young Filmmaker' at the 2007 Stardust Awards for his work on Dhoom 2 (2006).

Former RBI Governor S. Venkitaramanan Passed Away At 92

Former Governor of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), S. Venkitaramanan, breathed his last at the age of 92 on November 18, succumbing to age-related issues at a private hospital in Chennai. Born on January 28, 1931, in Tirumayam of Pudukottai district, Venkitaramanan was not only academically inclined but also had a diverse educational background. He earned a post-graduate degree in physics from the University College Thiruvananthapuram. Subsequently, in 1968, he obtained a post-graduate degree in management from the Carnegie Mellon University in the U.S. He joined the Indian Administrative Service (IAS) in 1953. His administrative acumen was complemented by a keen understanding of economic and financial intricacies.

Malayalam writer P. Valsala passes away at 85

Award-winning Malayalam writer P. Valsala, aged 85, breathed her last in Kozhikode. Ms. Valsala, a trailblazer among women writers in Malayalam, leaves behind a rich literary legacy marked by accolades and critical acclaim. The literary community mourns the loss of a stalwart as P.

Valsala's journey comes to a close. Her profound impact on Malayalam literature, marked by accolades, empathy, and a diverse body of work, ensures that her legacy will continue to inspire and resonate with readers for generations to come.

India's first woman Supreme Court judge Justice Fathima Beevi Passes Away

Justice Fathima Beevi, the first female Supreme Court judge, passes away at the age of 96. Her remarkable journey, spanning the corridors of justice and governance, leaves an indelible mark on the nation's legal landscape. Justice Fathima Beevi's life and career stand as a testament to her dedication to justice, equality, and the rule of law. As India mourns the loss of a legal luminary, her legacy will continue to inspire generations of aspiring lawyers and jurists, reminding them of the transformative power of unwavering commitment to justice. Born in 1927, Justice Beevi embarked on her legal journey by earning her Bachelor of Law Degree from the prestigious Government Law College. She took her first step into the legal realm by enrolling as an advocate on November 14, 1950, setting the stage for a trailblazing career. Justice Beevi's ascent in the judicial hierarchy began with her service in the lower Judiciary of Kerala in 1950. From a Munsiff in the Kerala Subordinate Judicial Services to a Subordinate Judge, Chief Judicial Magistrate, and eventually a District and Sessions Judge, she demonstrated unwavering commitment and excellence in every role she undertook.

Defence News

Droupadi Murmu To Confer President's Colour Award To AFMC On Dec 1

On December 1, President Droupadi Murmu is set to confer the prestigious President's Colour to the Armed Forces Medical College (AFMC) in a grand ceremony, marking its platinum jubilee year. This event holds significant importance, considering AFMC's reputation as a premier establishment within the Armed Forces Medical Services (AFMS) and its standing as one of the leading medical colleges in the country. The AFMC stands as a beacon of medical education within the AFMS and is recognized globally for its ethos and unwavering commitment to the highest standards of medical training. One distinguishing feature of AFMC is its role in commissioning medical cadets into the Army, Navy, and the Air Force.

Indo-US Joint Special Forces Exercise "VAJRA PRAHAR 2023" Commences in Meghalaya

The 14th edition of the Indo-US Joint Special Forces exercise, known as "VAJRA PRAHAR 2023," commenced at the Joint Training Node in Umroi, Meghalaya, signaling a renewed commitment to enhancing military collaboration and interoperability between the Indian Army and the US Army Special Forces. Exercise VAJRA PRAHAR, initiated in 2010,

stands as a testament to the robust partnership between the Indian Army and the US Army Special Forces. The exercise focuses on the exchange of best practices and experiences, with a primary emphasis on joint mission planning and operational tactics. Over the years, it has evolved into a vital platform for Special Forces from both nations to collaborate, fostering stronger defense cooperation.

Indian Navy deploys INS Sumedha in Mozambique to boost interoperability

Indian Naval Ship Sumedha arrived at Maputo, Mozambique on November 21, 2023, as part of the ongoing Extended Operational Deployment to Africa. This strategic port call aims to fortify long-standing diplomatic relations, enhance maritime cooperation, and promote interoperability between the Indian and Mozambican navies. The arrival of INS Sumedha in Maputo signifies India's commitment to strengthening its ties with Mozambique and the broader African region. Through professional exchanges and collaborative activities, both nations aim to not only deepen their maritime cooperation but also contribute to the overall stability and security in the Indian Ocean region. This deployment exemplifies the Indian Navy's proactive role in building international friendships and promoting peace and security across the seas.

Headquarters, Integrated Defence Staff, CSIR tie up for R&D in defence tech

A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was officially inked between the Headquarters, Integrated Defence Staff (HQ IDS) and the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR). The agreement, focused on technical collaboration, joint research, and development in the realm of defence technology, is poised to significantly impact India's defence capabilities. The MoU ceremony, a testament to the commitment of both entities, featured the signatures of Lt General JP Mathew, Chief of Integrated Defence Staff to the Chairman Chiefs of Staff Committee (CISC), Ministry of Defence (MoD), and N Kalaiselvi, Director General, CSIR & Secretary, Department of Scientific and Industrial Research (DSIR), Ministry of Science & Technology (MoST). The MoU establishes an encompassing framework to foster collaborative interactions between CSIR Labs, HQ IDS, and the Indian Armed Forces—comprising the Indian Army, Indian Navy, and Indian Air Force.

Indian Army Heads To Australia For Joint Military Exercise AUSTRALIND-23

In a significant development following the India-Australia 2+2 summit, an Indian Armed Forces contingent, comprising personnel from all three services, embarked on a journey to Perth for the second edition of AustraHind-23 – a collaborative military exercise between the two nations. This joint exercise, spanning two weeks from Nov 22 to Dec 6, aims to enhance inter-operability and conduct multi-domain operations in urban and semi-urban terrains, adhering to the

United Nations peacekeeping operations protocol. Reflecting the collaborative spirit, the Australian side will also field representatives from all three services, with the Australian Army contingent boasting 60 personnel from the 13th Brigade, and 20 personnel each from the Royal Australian Navy and Royal Australian Air Force.

India and Nepal Convene for the 17th Edition of Joint Military Exercise SURYA KIRAN

The 17th edition of the Joint Military Exercise SURYA KIRAN is set to strengthen the longstanding ties between India and Nepal as military contingents from both nations converge in Pithoragarh, Uttarakhand, for this annual event. The exercise, scheduled from 24th November to 7th December 2023, alternates between the two countries, underscoring their commitment to mutual cooperation. The Nepal Army contingent, comprising 334 personnel, has arrived in India for this collaborative endeavor. Represented by the Tara Dal Battalion, they join hands with the Indian Army contingent of 354 personnel, led by a Battalion from the esteemed KUMAON Regiment.

Miscellaneous News

Saffron From Kishtwar In Jammu and Kashmir Gets GI Tag

Kishtwar saffron, a prized spice cultivated and harvested in the Kishtwar Region of Jammu and Kashmir, has recently been bestowed with the prestigious Geographical Indication (GI) tag by the Geographical Indications Registry. This recognition solidifies the unique identity and quality of saffron produced in the Kishtwar region of Jammu, complementing its already legendary reputation. Kishtwar saffron finds its roots in the

picturesque Kishtwar region, situated in the mountainous terrains of Jammu. This spice, locally known as "KUNG" and nationally as "KESAR," is a vital cash crop in this isolated district. The saffron production area, aptly named Mandal, covers about 120 hectares of cultivable land, making Kishtwar a significant hub for saffron cultivation.

Bengaluru Set To Host Namma Kambala On November 25 and 26

Kambala, the popular buffalo racing contest native to the coastal Karnataka region, is all set to captivate the urban landscape of Bengaluru this weekend. The traditional folk sport, usually held in the aftermath of the southwest monsoon, will unfold its excitement at the iconic Palace Grounds on November 25 and 26. Organized by Tulukoota Bengaluru, this marks the first time Kambala has found a venue in the heart of Bengaluru.



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