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1. Cabinet approves Air Services Agreement between India and Guyana (Feb. 22, 2023)

Union Cabinet on 22 February approved the signing of the **Air Services Agreement between the Government of India and Guyana.**

An overview of the news

- The Air Services Agreement will come into force after the **exchange of Diplomacy Notes.**
- The Diplomacy Notes shall confirm that both sides have completed the necessary internal procedures for the entry into force of this Agreement.
- The signing of the Air Services Agreement with Guyana will create a framework for the provision of air services between the two countries.
- The agreement will give a boost to the aviation market and aviation sector in India.
- To strengthen international air connectivity, India has so far signed air service agreements with many countries.
- India and Guyana are signatories to the Convention on **International Civil Aviation (Chicago Convention).**
- There is a significant Indian presence in Guyana and according to the 2012 census **Indians constitute about 40% of the population.**

What is an Air Services Agreement?

- Air Services Agreement (ASA) provides the **legal framework** for air operations between two countries.
- It is based on the sovereignty of the nations, the nationality of the carriers and the commercial opportunity for each side's designated airlines.
- Prior to this there was no Air Services Agreement between the Government of India and the Government of Guyana.

About Guyana

- Prime Minister: **Mark Phillips**
- President: **Mohamed Irfaan Ali**
- Capital: **Georgetown**
- Currency : Guyanese dollar (G\$)

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3. Nitin Gadkari lays Foundation Stone of the world's largest and unique Divyang Park (Feb. 22, 2023)

Union Minister for Road Transport and Highways **Nitin Gadkari** on 20 February laid the Foundation Stone of the **world's largest and unique Divyang Park - Anubhuti Inclusive Park in Nagpur**, Maharashtra.

An overview of the news

- This park is being developed keeping in mind the vision of Prime Minister Narendra Modi **to build an inclusive society.**
- Instead of sympathy, this park will show empathy, hence this park has been named **Anubhuti Divyang Park.**
- **In 2016**, the central government passed the **Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act** for the rights of persons with disabilities.
- This law gives the disabled the **right to live with dignity.**

About Anubhuti Inclusive Park

- This park is being built for disabled children and common citizens in **Pardi campus of Nagpur.**
- Its purpose is to give the message of **inclusion in the country and the whole world.**
- It is the **world's first inclusive disabled park.**
- **Nodal Ministry** - Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, Government of India.
- The park will have adapted facilities for all **21 types of disabilities**, including touch and smell gardens, hydrotherapy units, water therapy, independent rooms for mentally challenged children, etc.

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5. Govt forms cabinet secretary-led panel to monitor Mission Karmayogi (Feb. 21, 2023)

An **apex panel comprising seven secretaries** has been constituted under the leadership of **Cabinet Secretary Rajiv Gauba** to oversee the implementation of the **Karmayogi programme**, the government's ambitious mission for training government employees.

An overview of the news

- It is the coordination committee of the **Cabinet Secretariat** that will oversee Mission Karmayogi.
- It will review the progress of the program and guide the government to train and upgrade the competencies of all civil servants to match the role.
- A **Cabinet Secretariat Coordination Unit (CSCU)** was recently set up under the **National Program for Civil Services Capacity Building (NPCSCB) or Mission Karmayogi.**
- The CSCU will have nominees from the Prime Minister's Office (PMO), Secretary (Coordination), Cabinet Secretariat, Department of Personnel and Training Secretary, Home Secretary, Expenditure Secretary, Environment, Forest and Climate Change Secretary, Higher Education Secretary and Revenue Secretary as members.

About Mission Karmayogi Scheme

- Mission Karmayogi Yojana was launched on **2nd September 2020.**
- This scheme is operated under the leadership of **Prime Minister Narendra Modi.**
- The main objective of the Mission Karmayogi scheme is **to develop the capabilities of government employees.**

- Under the Mission Karmayogi scheme, a budget of **Rs 510.86 crore** has been set by the government for a period of 5 years for about 46 lakh central employees.
- For the successful operation of the scheme **iGOT Karmayogi platform** has also been formed through which online contact is made available.

6. Pangong Tso lake marathon registered as world's highest Frozen Lake Marathon in the Guinness Book (Feb. 21, 2023)

The **Frozen Lake Marathon** at **Pangong Tso Lake** in the Union Territory of **Ladakh** has been officially included in the **Guinness Book of World Records** as the **Highest Frozen Lake Marathon for the first time**.

An overview of the news

- It was organised on 20 February at the world-famous **Pangong Lake**, situated at an altitude of **4,350 metres above sea level**.
- The Frozen Lake Marathon is being organised for the **first time in the country** and is considered to be one of the toughest because of the **high altitude and cold**.
- The theme of this marathon is '**The Last Run**' and it is organised with the aim of creating **awareness about climate change in Ladakh** and **promoting border tourism**.
- It was organised under the **Vibrant Village Program** to accelerate the pace of development in border villages.
- The **21 km long marathon** that started at **Luking village** was organised by the **Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Council** in association with the **Adventure Sports Foundation of Ladakh**.

Pangong Tso lake

- It is a long narrow, deep **landlocked lake** situated at an altitude of over **14,000 feet in the Himalayas**.
- The western end is located **54 km to the south-east of Leh**.
- This **salt water lake** freezes in winter.
- It is about **135 km long**, of which more than **two-thirds is under Chinese control**.
- The **Line of Actual Control** passes through the **middle of this lake**.

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8. India and Singapore launch joint digital payment mechanism (Feb. 21, 2023)

India and Singapore on 21 February launched a **joint digital payment mechanism** to enable residents of both countries to make **easier and faster cross-border transactions**.

An overview of the news

- The facility was jointly launched by **Shaktikanta Das**, Governor of the Reserve Bank of India and **Ravi Menon**, Managing Director of the Monetary Authority of Singapore.
- India's **Unified Payments Interface (UPI)** and **Singapore's PayNow** have entered into an **agreement** in this regard to facilitate these transactions.
- Prime Minister **Narendra Modi** and Prime Minister of Singapore **Lee Hsien Loong** participated in the virtual launch of Real Time Payment Linkage.
- This will add a new chapter in **fintech connectivity**. Now people can make cost effective and fast money transfers from their mobile phones.

- This real-time payment system will help the **Indian diaspora** in Singapore, especially **migrant workers and students**.

9. Union Minister of Food Processing Industry inaugurates India Pavillion at Dubai (Feb. 21, 2023)

India Pavillion' at Gulfood, Dubai was inaugurated by **Pashupati Kumar Paras**, Minister of Food Processing Industries, Government of India in the presence of **Sunjay Sudhir**, Ambassador of India to the UAE on 20 February.

An overview of the news

- The 'India Pavillion' is the **largest pavilion at Gulfood 2023**.
- The 'India Pavillion' has **306 companies**, including leading SMEs and startups, participating on one platform.
- Indian companies are exhibiting in all sectors of Gulffood including beverages, pulses, cereals, food, meat and poultry, dairy, fats and oils etc.
- Major Indian companies participating include **Amul, MDH, Parle, Rasna, Bikanerwala, Bikaji, Everest Foods, Markfed, Safal and Red Fort**.
- In the 'India Pavillion', special promotion and branding of millets superfoods will be done as the United Nations celebrates the **International Year of Millets 2023**.
- **APEDA** will sign an MoU with Lulu Group International for in-store promotion of millets in its supermarkets in the UAE.

Food Processing Industry of India

- **India is the second largest producer** of fruits and vegetables, rice, fish and tea.
- **India ranks first** in terms of production of milk, millets, spices, pulses.
- India has agricultural exports of US\$ 46.1 billion and 23 operational mega food parks and 12 agro-processing clusters.
- India has shown renewed interest in **millets** because of their nutritional value and sustainability.

10. India to host Permanent Mission Roundtables at UN Head Quarter as Chair of G- 20 (Feb. 21, 2023)

India as the **Chair of the G-20** will host the **Permanent Mission Roundtable at the UN Headquarters** ahead of the **Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) Summit** to be held in **New York** this year.

An overview of the news

- A series of round table conferences have been lined up for the **next few months**.

- A roundtable titled '**Gandhian Trusteeship: A panel discussion on Sustainable Lifestyles and Enduring Pace**' will be held.
- This will be followed on March 9 by a roundtable on '**The world we women and girls want: Technology-driven social and economic advancement**'.
 - On March 16, a roundtable on '**Grassroots leadership and transformation: Charting the path of empowerment through technology and skill development**' will take place.
 - A special program has been planned to commemorate the birth anniversary of **Dr BR Ambedkar on 14th April**.
 - During the event, the focus will be on India's growth story and achievements.
 - The **2023 SDG Summit** will be held in **September 2023** under the auspices of the United Nations General Assembly.