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1. Election Commission proposes remote voting for inter-state migrants (Dec. 30, 2022)

The **Election Commission** of India has moved a proposal to all political parties to enable **domestic migrants** to vote for their home constituencies from their place of stay through a new **remote EVM (RVM)**.

Important facts

- RVM has been developed with the help of **Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL)** and **Electronics Corporation of India Limited (ECIL)**. It is based on the currently used **EVM system**.
- The Election Commission has sought written views of all recognized national and state-level parties by **January 30, 2023**, and has scheduled a demonstration of the **RVM prototype** to party representatives on January 16.
- The Election Commission has also sought views of political parties on **legal, administrative and technical challenges** in implementing it.
- According to the Election Commission, the Multi Constituency Remote EVM for Domestic Overseas Voters can handle **72 constituencies** from a single remote polling booth.
- It is expected that this step will help in boosting voter turnout and strengthen the democratic process of India.

Why has the proposal of remote voting been brought by the Election Commission?

- There were 834 million registered voters in the 2014 Lok Sabha elections out of which only **66.44% voted**.
- In the 2019 parliamentary elections, the number of registered voters increased to 912 million while the voter turnout was barely **67.40%**.
- Registered voters are unable to vote for various reasons, the main reason being **domestic migration**.
- Voters who are absent from their home places on the day of poll, even if they want to vote but are unable to reach their constituencies to vote due to various reasons.
- That is, a large part of the population is disenfranchised due to the need for work or lack of resources to travel.
- This goes directly against the EC's "**No voter left behind**" goal.

2. India, Cyprus signs three agreement during S. Jaishankar visits to Nicosia (Dec. 29, 2022)

Nicosia on 29 December 2022. This is the first visit of S. Jaishankar to Cyprus.

External Affairs Minister **S Jaishankar** who is on a three day visit (29-31 December 2022) to Cyprus signed a number of agreements with his Cypriot counterpart **Ioannis Kasoulides** in the capital **Nicosia** on 29 December 2022. This is the first visit of S. Jaishankar to Cyprus.

Three agreement signed

Both the ministers signed agreements to;

- Increase defence and military cooperation between the two countries ,
- Letter of Intent on immigration and mobility to check illegal migrations , as well as the agreement on
- Cyprus joining the International Solar Alliance (ISA).

S. Jaishankar also released the **commemorative stamp** on the **75 years of Indian Independence** and **60 years of establishing diplomatic ties with Cyprus**.

The minister said India and Cyprus were collectively working on pressing issues such as food and energy security, maritime security, as well as on sustainable environment.

During his three-day visit to Cyprus, Jaishankar will call **Annita Demetriou**, President of the Cyprus Parliament's House of Representatives.

He will also address the business and investment community of Cyprus, apart from an interaction with the Indian Diaspora.

Republic of Cyprus

It is an island European country in the eastern Mediterranean Sea.

It gained its Independence from Britain in 1960. The country has a majority population which are of Greece descent while the minority population are of Turkish origin.

Turkey invaded Cyprus in 1974 and created a Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus in 1983. Except Turkey no country recognises Turkish Cyprus.

India also recognises the Cyprus government.

Capital: **Nicosia**

Currency: **Euro**

President: **Nicos Anastasiades**

3. US Vice-President Kamala Harris names Indian-American Rajeev Badyal to the National Space Council Advisory Group (Dec. 29, 2022)

The American Vice President Kamala Harris has named Indian American Rajeev Badyal

The American Vice President **Kamala Harris** has named Indian American **Rajeev Badyal** to the National Space Council's Users Advisory Group (UAG). The UAG is tasked to maintain a

robust and responsible US space enterprise and preserve space for current and future generations. The UAG is headed by US Air Force Rtd General Lester Lyles.

Rajeev Badyal is currently the vice-president of **Project Kuiper** of Amazon. Under Project Kuiper a number of Low Earth Orbit satellites will be launched by Amazon that will provide low-latency, high-speed broadband connectivity to unserved and underserved communities around the world.

The UAG will provide the National Space Council advice and recommendations on matters related to space policy and strategy, government policies, laws, regulations, treaties, international instruments, programmes, and practices across the civil, commercial, international, and national security space sectors.

Kamala Harris

She is the first **woman to be elected as the Vice-President of the United States.**

She was elected as the Vice President in 2020 and Joe Biden was elected as the President of the United States of America.

Her mother Shyamala Gopalan was a Tamilian who immigrated to the United States and married a Jamaican Donald Harris.

4. Benjamin Netanyahu sworn in as the Prime minister of Israel for a record 6th time (Dec. 29, 2022)

Benjamin Netanyahu sworn in as the Prime minister of Israel for a record 6th time

Benjamin Netanyahu was sworn in as the Prime Minister of Israel for the **sixth time** on 29 December 2022. 73 years old Netanyahu was ousted from power 18 months ago. He replaced Yair Lapid whose party failed to win a majority in the Israeli Parliamentary election held on 1 November 2022. This was the 5th general election in Israel in the past four years.

The longest serving Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu heads a coalition government which is considered to be one of the most right wing governments in the history of the country.

The Israeli Parliament is called the **Knesset**. It is a unicameral house which has a term of **four years**. It has 120 members.

In the 120 member Israeli Parliament called as Knesset, Netanyahu has the support of 64 members. It included his **Likud party** supported by the ultra-orthodox Shas, United Torah Judaism, the far-right Otzma Yehudit, Religious Zionist Party, and Noam.

However the controversial leader is already facing protest in the country. During his speech to the Knesset thousands of people gathered outside the Knesset to protest against his government.

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State of Israel

It is a small country located in West Asia. It is the only Jewish nation in the world with the Jews constituting $\frac{3}{4}$ population of the country.

Israel was created by dividing the Palestine region into two. The Arab part was called Palestine and the Jewish part was called Israel.

It came into being on 14 May 1948.

Capital: Jerusalem (But it is not recognised internationally). The Government of India also doesn't accept Jerusalem as the capital of Israel .

Currency: Israeli shekel

Parliament: **Knesset**

President: **Isaac Herzog**

5. India-assisted Mangdechhu Hydroelectric Project handed over to Bhutan's Druk Green Power Corp (Dec. 29, 2022)

India-assisted Mangdechhu Hydroelectric Project handed over to Bhutan's Druk Green Power Corp

The **720 MW Mangdechhu Hydropower Project** built with India's assistance in **Bhutan** was **handed over** to **Bhutan's Druk Green Power Corporation (DGPC)** on 27 December.

Important facts

- It was handed over during a program held in the capital of Bhutan which was attended by **Lyonpo Loknath Sharma**, Bhutanese Minister for Economic Affairs and **Sudhakar Dalela**, Ambassador of India to Bhutan.
- With the handing over of this project, India and Bhutan have successfully completed four major hydroelectric projects.

About Mangdechhu Hydroelectric Power Project

- This 720 MW Project was jointly inaugurated by Prime Minister **Narendra Modi** and his Bhutanese counterpart **Lotay Tshering** in 2019.
- The Mangdechhu hydroelectric power plant has been established on the **Mangdechhu River** in the **Trongsa district of central Bhutan**.
- The commissioning of the project has increased Bhutan's Electrical Power Generation Capacity by **44 per cent** and it is now at **2,326 Mega Watts**.
- It is a benchmark hydroelectric project completed in an efficient manner at optimum cost, while maintaining high quality and performance standards.
- Since commissioning, the project has generated over **9000 million units of energy**, reducing emissions by **2.4 million tonnes** annually.

- The project received the **Brunel Medal 2020** from the Institute of Civil Engineers, London.
- It was recognized for its excellence in civil engineering and for its social and environmental credentials.
- The project increased Bhutan's hydropower revenue by **31 percent in 2020**.

6. Union Home Minister presides over the conference of Lieutenant Governors, Administrators of Union Territories (Dec. 29, 2022)

Union Home Minister presides over the conference of Lieutenant Governors, Administrators of Union Territories

Union Home Minister **Amit Shah** chaired the conference on development works in Union Territories in **New Delhi** on 29 December.

Important facts

- Lieutenant Governors and Administrators of UTs including from **Delhi, Chandigarh, Andaman and Nicobar, Puducherry, Ladakh and Jammu and Kashmir** attended the conference.
- The conference reviewed the **economic development, tourism and major schemes** and future roadmap of the Union Territories to ensure their strong growth.
- Chief Secretary **Dr Arun Kumar Mehta** and **Umang Narula**, Advisor to Lieutenant Governor of Ladakh represented Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh UTs respectively.
- The objective of the conference is to ensure the development of the Union Territories in all respects including development works, projects and centrally sponsored schemes, besides ensuring that they (schemes) do not miss the deadline.
- The focus of the conference was on economic development, tourism potential and flagship schemes.
- In another programme, Shah also inaugurated the **Border Security Force's BSF App and BSF Manuals**.

7. IT minister launches 'Stay Safe Online' campaign to tackle cybercrime (Dec. 29, 2022)

As part of India's G20 presidency,

As part of **India's G20 presidency**, the Minister for Electronics & Information Technology, Communications and Railways, **Ashwini Vaishnaw** has launched the "**Stay Safe Online**" campaign and the "**G20 Digital Innovation Alliance**" (**G20-DIA**), at Delhi on 28th December.

Important facts

- **MeitY**, the nodal ministry for the G20 **Digital Economy Working Group (DEWG)**, has represented India in several working groups and ministerial sessions.
- During India's G20 presidency, MeitY will focus on three priority areas, namely Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI), Cyber Security, and Digital Skill Development, together with the Stay Safe Online campaign and DIA programme under the DEWG.
- MeitY aims to advance the vision of digital transformation of the global digital economy for public service delivery through innovation in a secure cyber environment and a future-ready digitally skilled workforce.

About Stay Safe Online Campaign

- It aims to raise awareness among citizens to stay safe in the online world due to the widespread use of social media platforms and rapid adoption of digital payments.
- Rapid growth in the number of Internet users in India and rapidly evolving technology have presented unique challenges.
- The campaign will sensitise citizens of all age groups, especially children, students, women, senior citizens, teachers, officials of Central/State Governments, etc., about cyber risk and ways to deal with it.
- The campaign will be run in English, Hindi and local languages to reach out to a wider audience.

About G20 Digital Innovation Alliance (G20-DIA)

- It aims to identify and enable adoption of innovative and impactful digital technologies developed by startups from G20 countries.
- It can address the needs of humanity in the critically important sectors of **agri-tech, health-tech, ed-tech, fin-tech, secured digital infrastructure, and circular economy**.
- Startup products in the aforementioned six themes enabled through Digital Public Goods Infrastructure can create a global population-scale impact and reduce the digital divide and enable sustainable, and inclusive techno-socio-economic development.

8. Indian Army inaugurates first ever two-storey 3-D printed dwelling unit in Ahmedabad (Dec. 29, 2022)

Indian Army inaugurates first ever two-storey 3-D printed dwelling unit in Ahmedabad

The **Indian Army** inaugurated its **first 3-D Printed House Dwelling Unit** (with Ground plus One configuration) for soldiers at **Ahmedabad Cantt** on 28 December 2022.

Important facts

- The dwelling unit has been constructed by **Military Engineering Services (MES)** in association with **MiCoB Pvt Ltd**, incorporating the latest 3D Rapid Construction Technology.
- The **71 sqm dwelling unit** with **garage space** was completed in just 12 weeks using 3D printed foundations, walls and slabs.
- The disaster-resistant structures comply with **Zone-III earthquake** specifications and green building norms.
- The formation is a testimony to the commitment of the Indian Army in promoting the '**Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan**'.

About Technology

- This technique uses a solid 3D printer that accepts computerized three-dimensional designs.
- It builds up a 3-D structure in a layer-by-layer manner by extruding a specially designed special type of concrete.
- The Ahmedabad-based Golden **Katar Division of the Indian Army** has been instrumental in taking forward the project with manifold applications in operation.

What is 3D Printing?

- 3D printing uses computer aided design (CAD) to create three-dimensional objects through the layering method.
- The model to be printed with the help of software is first developed by the computer, which then instructs the 3D printer.

9. India grants permission to NEA to export additional 40 megawatts of electricity (Dec. 29, 2022)

Nepal Electricity Authority (NEA)

India has allowed the **Nepal Electricity Authority (NEA)** to export an additional **40 MW** of power from two more hydroelectric projects.

Important facts

- The **Central Electricity Authority of India** has approved the sale of surplus power from two more hydro projects - **25 MW Kabeli B-1** and **20 MW Lower Modi** - at competitive rates in the Indian energy market.
- With this, **452.6 MW** of surplus power can be exported to India from **10 hydropower projects**.

- NEA has stopped the export of surplus power to India from 19 December as generation from river-based hydroelectric power stations has reduced.
- NEA has generated a net income of **Rs 11.16 billion** by trading **1.36 billion units of surplus power** at a competitive rate in the Indian energy market till 18 December.
- The current electricity demand of Nepal stands at around **1,680 MW**, while the domestic production is **1,000 MW**.

10. Department of Posts launches Online request Transfer Portal for Gramin Dak Sevaks (Dec. 29, 2022)

Department of Posts launches Online request Transfer Portal for Gramin Dak Sevaks

The **Department of Posts** under the Ministry of Communications has launched an '**Online request Transfer Portal**' for Gramin Dak Sevaks (GDS) on 28th December.

Important facts

- **Alok Sharma**, Director General Postal Services launched the portal through video conference in the virtual presence of Chief Postmaster Generals of **23 Postal Circles** and senior officers of the Department.
- The process from the stage of receiving application from GDS to approval and issue of transfer order through the above portal has now been made paperless and simplified.
- The launch of this portal is a major step towards bringing transparency and accountability in governance processes by leveraging technology.
- The online process will also save time and resources.
- Transfer of more than **5000 GDS** at a time has been approved through the online portal on the day of portal launch.

About Department of Posts

- For more than **150 years**, the Department of Posts (DOP) has played an important role in the **socio-economic development** of the country.
- It is the largest network of post offices in the world with more than **one lakh 56 thousand post offices** all over India.
- Postal facilities are provided through **Gramin Dak Sevaks (GDS)**.
- It provides services for Indian citizens like delivering mail, accepting deposits under small savings schemes, providing life insurance cover under Postal Life Insurance (PLI) and Rural Postal Life Insurance (RPLI), bill collection etc.
- Formed - **1 October 1854**
- Headquarters - **New Delhi**

• Director General Postal Services - **Alok Sharma**