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1. RBI's revised bank locker rules to come into effect from 1st of January (Dec. 26, 2022)

RBI's revised bank locker rules to come into effect from 1st of January

The **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** has amended the **bank locker rules**, which include providing customers with updated locker agreements. The rules will take effect from **January 1, 2023**.

What are the new guidelines?

- As per the Reserve Bank of India notification, the agreements should follow the model prepared by the **Indian Banks' Association (IBA)**.
- All existing locker depositors are required to submit proof of eligibility for new locker arrangement.
- They need to sign a renewal agreement before the specified date.
- RBI has advised banks to install **CCTV cameras** at entry and exit points of strong rooms and common areas of operations.
- It will be mandatory for all banks to keep the recording of cameras safe for at least one hundred and eighty days.
- RBI has directed banks to ensure that there are no unfair provisions or conditions in bank agreements.
- As per the guidelines, if a customer makes a complaint to the bank about his locker being opened without his knowledge or any theft or security lapse, the bank will be required to preserve the CCTV recording till the completion of the police investigation and disposal of the case.

2. Former Maldivian President Abdulla Yameen sentenced to 11 years in prison for money laundering and bribery (Dec. 26, 2022)

Former Maldivian President Abdulla Yameen sentenced to 11 years in prison for money laundering and bribery

The **Maldives criminal court** on 25th December sentenced former president **Abdulla Yameen** to **11 years in jail** and fined him \$5 million after he was found guilty of **money laundering and accepting bribe**.

Important facts

- The court found Yameen guilty of accepting money to lease an island owned by the government.
- The court sentenced the former leader to seven years in the money laundering case and four years in the bribery case.

- Yameen was accused that he had given permission to develop a resort on **V Ara's land** by taking money during his tenure.
- Yameen was accused of misusing his position to get the Ara's land to ex-parliamentarian Yusuf Nai by taking **US \$ 1 million**.
- Yameen was also fined US \$ 5 million in this case.
- According to the court's decision, Yameen will have to deposit the fine amount to the **Maldives Inland Revenue Authority (MIRA)** within six months.

About Maldives

- It is also called **Maldiv Islands**, an independent island country in the north-central Indian Ocean.
- It extends more than 510 miles (820 km) from north to south and 80 miles (130 km) from east to west.
- Basis of economy - **fisheries, tourism**
- Industries - handicraft or cottage including the making of coir (coconut-husk fibre) and coir products, fish canning, and boatbuilding.
- Capital - **Male**
- President - **Ibrahim Mohamed Solih**
- Official Language - **Dhivehi (Maldivian)**
- Official Religion - **Islam**
- Currency - **Rufiyaa**

3. Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda' appointed as the Prime Minister of Nepal for the third time (Dec. 25, 2022)

Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda' appointed as the Prime Minister of Nepal for the third time

President **Bidya Devi Bhandari** of Nepal has appointed **Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda'** as the new prime minister of Nepal on 25 December 2022. Prachand will become the prime minister for the third time.

In the recently held parliamentary election no party got any clear majority. Prachand's **Maoist Center Party** won 32 seats in Nepal's 275-member House of Representatives.

He has formed a coalition government with the support of the Communist Unified Marxist-Leninist (UML) party, Rastriya Swatantra Party (RSP), Rastriya Prajatantra Party and other smaller parties. Prachanda has the support of 165 lawmakers in the 275-member House of Representatives.

According to the deal with the UML party he will remain prime minister for the **first half of the five-year term** and later will be replaced by a candidate from the UML party.

Pushpa Kamal Dahal will replace **Sher Bahadur Deuba** of the Nepali Congress party as the Prime Minister.

Nepal's Parliament

The Federal Parliament of Nepal is called **Sanghiya Sansad**. It is a bicameral house.

The Upper house is called the **National Assembly or Rastriya Sabha**. It consists of 59 members. It is a permanent body and the term of a member of the house is **six years**.

The lower house is called the **House of Representative or Pratinidhi Sabha**. It consists of 275 members with a term of five years.

Currency of Nepal: **Nepalese Rupees**

Capital: **Kathmandu**

President: Vidya **Devi Bhandari**

4. 81 crore people to get free foodgrains for one year under NFSA (Dec. 24, 2022)

81 crore people to get free foodgrains for one year under NFSA

The government on 23 December decided to provide **free foodgrains to 81.35 crore people for one year** under the **National Food Security Act (NFSA)** at an estimated cost of Rs 2 lakh crore. It will be implemented from **1 January 2023**.

Important facts

- As per the cabinet decision, beneficiaries under NFSA will get free food grains for one year **till December 2023**.
- The decision comes a few days before the [Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana \(PMGKAY\)](#) expires on **December 31, 2022**.
- The beneficiaries will not have to pay a single rupee to get foodgrains.

About PMGKAY

- It is a food security welfare scheme announced by the Central Government in **March 2020**, during the Covid-19 pandemic.
- It is a part of the **Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Package (PMGKP)** to help the poor in the fight against COVID-19.
- The program is run by the **Department of Food and Public Distribution** under the Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution.
- Under the programme more than 80 crore beneficiaries are provided 5 kg free wheat/rice per person per month.
- It is the **largest food security program** in the world.

Objective of the scheme

- To provide food security to all priority households (ration card holders and those identified by the Antyodaya Anna Yojana scheme), to provide food grains to India's poorest citizens through the Public Distribution System.

National Food Security (NFS) Act, 2013

- It aims to provide subsidized food grains to approximately two-thirds of India's 1.2 billion people.
- This includes **Re 3 per kg of rice, Re 2 per kg of wheat and Re 1 per kg of coarse grains** under the Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS).
- It converts the existing food security programs of the Government of India into a legal mandate.
- The existing food security programs include the **mid-day meal scheme, the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) scheme and the Public Distribution System (PDS).**

5. Sitiveni Rabuka becomes the new Prime Minister of Fiji (Dec. 24, 2022)

Sitiveni Rabuka became Fiji's prime minister on 24 December 2022

Sitiveni Rabuka became Fiji's prime minister on 24 December 2022 after a coalition of parties voted narrowly to install him as leader of the country. It also signals the end of the former Prime Minister **Frank Bainimarama's** 16 years in power. In the 55 member Parliament of Fiji, Sitiveni Rabuka secured 28 votes against Bainimarama's 27 votes.

Rabuka now heads a three-party coalition government consisting of his **People's Alliance**, the National Federation Party led by Biman Prasad and the Sodelpa Party, led by Viliame Gavoka.

Fiji will have three deputy prime ministers in Biman Prasad (finance), Viliame Gavoka (tourism), and Manoa Kamikamica (external trade) under the coalition arrangement.

Republic of Fiji

It is an archipelago of 300 islands and 500 islets in the South Pacific Ocean near New Zealand.

It gained Independence from Great Britain in 1970.

About two-fifths of the Fijian populations are Indians who were brought as indentured labourer by the British from North India to work in the sugar fields of Fiji.

English, Fijian, and [Fijian Hindi](#) are the official languages of the country.

The Parliament of Fiji is unicameral and consists of **55 members**. The term of the Fijian parliament is of **four years**.

Capital of Fiji: **Suva**

Currency: **Fijian Dollar**

President: **Jioji Konrote**

6. PM Modi addressed the 75th 'Amrut Mahotsav' of Shree Swaminarayan Gurukul Sansthan (Dec. 24, 2022)

75th Amrut Mahotsav of Shree Swaminarayan Gurukul Rajkot Sansthan

75th

Amrut

Mahotsav

of

Shree

Swaminarayan

Gurukul

Rajkot

Sansthan

Prime Minister **Narendra Modi** addressed the **75th Amrut Mahotsav of Shree Swaminarayan Gurukul Rajkot Sansthan** via video-conferencing on December 24.

Important facts

- The five-day Amrit Mahotsav celebrations were inaugurated by Chief Minister **Bhupendra Patel at Sahajanand nagar in Rajkot** on 22 December.
- Spiritual leaders, saints and devotees from across the world are participating in large numbers in the grand Amrit Mahotsav celebrations to be held at **Sahajanand Nagar** in Rajkot.
- Mega blood donation camps, free medical check-up camps are being organized during Amrit Mahotsav celebrations, where renowned doctors are providing free medical services and free medicines to the people.

About Shree Swaminarayan Gurukul Rajkot Sansthan

- It was established at Rajkot in **1948** by seer **Shri Dharmajivandasji Swami**.
- It has expanded significantly and currently has more than 40 branches across the world, providing school, undergraduate and postgraduate education to more than 25,000 students.

7. 3 cases of Omicron subvariant BF.7 found in India, causing COVID surge in China (Dec. 22, 2022)

According to official sources, three cases of **Omicron subvariant BF.7** have been detected in India so far which is apparently driving the current surge of Covid cases in **China**.

Important facts

- The first case of BF.7 in India was detected in October by **Gujarat Biotechnology Research Centre**.
- So far, two cases have been reported from **Gujarat** while one case has been reported from **Odisha**.
- Chinese cities are currently in the grip of the highly contagious Omicron strain, with most BF.7 cases spreading to **Beijing**.

About Omicron variant BF.7

- BF.7 is a sub-lineage of the **Omicron variant BA.5** and has the strongest infection ability since it is highly transmissible.
- It has a shorter incubation period, and has a higher capacity to cause reinfection or infect even those vaccinated.
- It has already been detected in several other countries, including the **US, the UK** and European nations such as **Belgium, Germany, France and Denmark**.
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8. UNSC adopts first-ever resolution on Myanmar (Dec. 22, 2022)

The **U.N. The Security Council** on 21 December adopted its **first ever resolution on Myanmar** in 74 years to demand an end to violence and urge the **military junta** to release all political prisoners, including ousted leader [Aung San Suu Kyi](#).

Important facts

- **The 15-member council** has long been split on how to deal with the Myanmar crisis with China and Russia arguing against strong action.
- The resolution also demands “**an immediate end to all forms of violence**” and asks for “**all parties to respect human rights, fundamental freedoms and the rule of law.**”
- The motion was adopted with 12 votes in favour. Permanent members **China and Russia** opted not to use the veto after amending the wording. India also remained absent.

- The resolution sent a "**strong message**" to the world that the junta must "**end its violence across the country**" and free prisoners.
- The only resolution regarding Myanmar was passed by the United Nations in **1948 approving** its membership in the UN Security Council.
- **About Myanmar**
 - Capital - **Naypyidaw**
 - Currency - **Kyat**
 - Prime Minister - **Min Aung Hlaing**
 - Nobel Laureate - **Aung San Suu Kyi** of the National League of Democracy (NLD) party, was awarded Nobel Peace Prize in 1991, for her non-violent struggle for democracy and human rights.
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9. 'Naatu Naatu' from RRR movie becomes the first Indian song to be shortlisted for Oscar Award (Dec. 22, 2022)

The song '**Natu-Natu**' from **SS Rajamouli's** film '**RRR**' has been shortlisted for **Oscars 2023**.

Important facts

- This song has been shortlisted in the **Best Song category**, which is one of the 15 songs shortlisted for Oscars 2023.
- This is **India's first song** to be shortlisted for Oscars.
- Besides Natu Natu, other songs on this list include **Nothing Is Lost** from the movie Avatar: The Way of Water, '**Lift Me Up**' from **Blank Panther** and '**Hold**' from Top Gun: Maverick. Hold My Hand'.
- Song 'Naatu-Naatu' is composed by **MM Keeravani** and written by **Chandrabose**, voiced by **Rahul Sipligunj and Kaal Bhairav**.
- The song was released as "Naacho Naacho" in Hindi, "Nattu Koothu" in Tamil and "Halli Naatu" in Kannada.
- This song was also nominated for **Best Original Song** at the **80th Golden Globe Awards**.
- The **95th Academy Awards** ceremony, presented by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences (AMPAS), will honor films releasing in 2022.
- The award ceremony will be held on March 12, 2023, at the Dolby Theater in **Los Angeles, California**.

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10. US to provide its key Patriot missile defence system to Ukraine (Dec. 22, 2022)

The **United States** has announced on 21 December that it would provide its key **Patriot missile defence system** to **Ukraine**.

Important facts

- The White House stated that the Patriot missile system would be part of another **1.85 billion dollars in aid to Ukraine**.
- The package also includes **military vehicles, mortars, ammunition for HIMARS (High Mobility Artillery Rocket Systems), and small arms**.
- The aid announcement comes at a time when Ukrainian President **Volodymyr Zelensky** is on a visit to Washington to strengthen military ties between the two countries.

About Patriot missile system

- It is a **surface-to-air guided missile** system that was first deployed in the **1980s**.
- It can target aircraft, cruise missiles and short-range ballistic missiles.
- Each Patriot battery consists of a **truck-mounted launching system** with eight launchers that can hold up to four missile interceptors each, a ground radar, a control station and a generator.
- Patriot batteries can also shoot down aircraft.
- In military circles this weapon system is seen as a **protective shield**, which protects the population, soldiers or even buildings from incoming fire.