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### **1. Union Minister Hardeep Singh Puri launches guidelines for City Finance Rankings and City Beauty Competition ( Dec. 28, 2022 )**

Union Minister Hardeep Singh Puri launches guidelines for City Finance Rankings and City Beauty Competition

Housing and Urban Affairs Minister **Hardeep Singh Puri** on 28th December launched the guidelines for **City Finance Rankings and City Beauty Competition** in New Delhi.

#### **Important facts**

- The City Finance Ranking aims to evaluate, recognize and reward cities based on their current financial status and improvements in financial performance over time.
- The City Beauty Competition guidelines aim to encourage and recognize the transformative efforts of wards and cities to create beautiful, innovative and inclusive public spaces.
- All cities and wards can participate in the City Beauty Competition.
- These initiatives will take the journey of urban rejuvenation of the country to another level.
- The government has launched several schemes like Swachh Bharat Mission, Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation Mission which transformed the country.

### **2. Indian Institute of Science Bengaluru to be G20 Science working group's secretariat ( Dec. 28, 2022 )**

Indian Institute of Science (IISc), Bengaluru,

The **Indian Institute of Science (IISc), Bengaluru**, will function as the **secretariat for Science 20 (S20)**, a working group set up [as part of the G20](#) which will be **presided over by India in 2023**.

#### **Important facts**

- The theme of the S20 in 2023 is '**Disruptive Science for Innovative and Sustainable Development**'.
- This broad issue will be discussed throughout the year in different regions of India.
- Three issues will be discussed at the discussions in **Agartala, Lakshadweep, and Bhopal**: universal holistic health, clean energy for a greener future, and bridging science and society.
- Apart from the discussions, there will be an inaugural conference in **Puducherry and a summit in Coimbatore**.

**About Science 20 (S20)**

- **Established in 2017**, the Science 20 (S20) is one of the newest groupings of the G20.
- In line with the G20, it has a non-permanent rotating secretariat and operates more like a **forum** rather than an organisation.
- The **main objective** of the S20 group is to present consensus-based recommendations for selected topics of interest to policy makers.
- These science-driven recommendations are developed through task forces consisting of international experts.
- A **Sherpa** is appointed to support and guide the task forces.
- Each task force focuses on a broad topic that is relevant to scientists, policy makers, and society alike.
- The S20 summit is held annually, usually before the respective G20 summit.

**3. 'Bomb cyclone' hits US, more than 200 million people affected ( Dec. 28, 2022 )**

'Bomb cyclone' hits US, more than 200 million people affected

Recently a powerful "**Bomb Cyclone**" has hit the **United States**, affecting at least 200 million people. At least **64 people have died**.

**Important facts**

- Temperatures are predicted to **plunge -57 degrees Celsius** in certain locations due to the largest winter storm to hit the country in decades.
- Temperatures dropped across the United States and heavy snow caused power outages in cities, thousands of flights were cancelled and people were stuck in their homes without food.
- New York's **Erie County**, which includes **Buffalo**, is one of the areas most affected by the winter storm, which stretches from the **Canadian to the Mexican border**.

**What is a 'Bomb Cyclone'?**

- Bomb cyclone is used by meteorologists to denote a **mid-latitude cyclone** that rapidly intensifies.
- It is a giant winter storm that hits the coast and brings **strong winds, flooding, snow and ice**.
- It consists of a combination of rapidly decreasing pressure and **extreme cold**.
- This particular storm is the most explosive ever seen on the **East Coast**.

- It is called a bomb cyclone because in this the **storm strengthens** explosively while
- the pressure subsides.

### **Formation of 'Bomb Cyclone'**

- Storms form when a **mass of low pressure air** (warm air mass) meets a **high pressure mass** (cold air mass).
- The lower the pressure, the stronger the storm.
- This occurs when a mid-latitude cyclone intensifies rapidly, dropping at least **24 millibars** (millibar measures atmospheric pressure) in 24 hours.
- This rapidly increases the pressure difference, or gradient, between the two air masses, causing the winds to be stronger.

### **4. Zeliangrong United Front signs a peace agreement with Central and Manipur government ( Dec. 27, 2022 )**

Zeliangrong United Front signs a peace agreement with Central and Manipur government

The government of India and the [Manipur](#) government have signed a Cessation of Operation Agreement with an insurgent group of Manipur, Zeliangrong United Front (ZUF), in New Delhi on 27 December 2022.

The agreement was signed by senior officers of the Union Home Ministry, the Manipur government, and the representatives of ZUF in the presence of State Chief Minister **N. Biren Singh**.

Under the agreement the ZUF has agreed to abjure violence and join the peaceful democratic process as established by law of the land. The agreement provides for the rehabilitation and resettlement of the armed cadres of ZUF. A Joint Monitoring Group will be constituted to oversee the enforcement of the agreed ground rules.

### **Zeliangrong United Front (ZUF)**

The **Zeliangrong United Front (ZUF)** was established in 2011. It is a Naga group which is active in Manipur. The group claims its objective is to safeguard the interest of 'Zeliangrong Naga tribes in Manipur, Assam and Nagaland. It aimed to create a 'Zeliangrong' state within the Indian Union comprising the Zeliangrong Naga tribe's area in Manipur, Assam and Nagaland.

### **Some prominent Insurgent groups active in Manipur**

- Kangleipak Communist Party (KCP)
- United National Liberation Front (UNLF),
- People's Liberation Army (PLA)
- People's Revolutionary Party of Kangleipak (PREPAK)
- National Socialist Council of Nagaland – Khaplang (NSCN-K)
- Manipur People's Liberation Front (MPLF)
- Kuki National Front (KNF)
- Kuki National Liberation Front (KNLF)

**5. Power ministry, DRDO ink pact to install early warning systems for power stations ( Dec. 27, 2022 )**

vulnerable hydroelectric projects/power stations.

On 27 December the **Ministry of Power** has signed a **Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)** with the **Defence Research and Development Organization (DRDO)** for the implementation of an early warning system for **vulnerable hydroelectric projects/power stations**.

**Important facts**

- Power Secretary **Alok Kumar** and DRDO Chairman **Dr Samir V Kamat** signed the MoU in New Delhi.
- It aims to jointly work towards developing appropriate mitigation measures against avalanches, landslides, glaciers, glacial lakes and other land hazards.
- DRDO's expertise will also be utilized in developing a **comprehensive early warning system** for vulnerable hydroelectric projects/power stations in hilly areas.
- With the comprehensive understanding developed through this MoU, separate and specific assignments will be drawn up between DRDO and the respective project developers.
- Under the leadership of Union Power Minister RK Singh, the Ministry of Power has taken the initiative to implement Early Warning System (EWS) in hydro power projects especially located in the upper reaches of hilly areas.

**Early Warning System (EWS)**

- It is an adaptive measure to climate change, which uses integrated communication systems to help communities prepare for dangerous climate-related events.
- A successful EWS saves lives and jobs, land and infrastructure and provides long-term sustainability.
- This will aid in planning in the public sector, saving money in the long run and protecting economies.

**6. NTPC inks pact with Italy based firm for green methanol production ( Dec. 27, 2022 )**

'National Thermal Power Corporation Limited' (NTPC)

India's largest power generation company '**National Thermal Power Corporation Limited**' (NTPC) has signed a non-binding **Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)** with Technimont Pvt Ltd, the Indian subsidiary of Italy-based **Maire Tecnimont Group**, on 26 December.

**Important facts**

- The objective of this MoU is to jointly evaluate and explore the possibility of developing a commercial scale **green methanol** production facility at NTPC's project in India.
- This green methanol project involves capturing **carbon from NTPC's power plants** and converting it into **green fuel**.
- This agreement will make a significant contribution to the energy transformation in India.

**Green Methanol**

- Green methanol has a wide range of applications. It also includes use as a base material for chemical industries, storage of renewable electricity and as a transportation fuel.
- It is also considered as a substitute fuel for **maritime fuel applications**.
- The pilot scale green methanol project is in line with NTPC's commitment towards sustainability and renewable energy.

**About NTPC**

- The NTPC which was earlier known as National Thermal Power Corporation of India is owned by the Government of India. It was set **up in 1975**.
- The **Vindhyachal Thermal Power Station in the Singrauli** district of Madhya Pradesh, with an installed capacity of 4,760MW, is currently the **biggest thermal power plant** in India.
- It is a coal-based power plant owned and operated by NTPC.
- The total installed commercial capacity of the company was **69454 MW** before the JPL deal.
- Headquarters: **New Delhi**
- Chairman and Managing Director: **Gurdeep Singh**

**7. AVGC Task Force Report calls for National AVGC Mission with budgetary outlay ( Dec. 26, 2022 )**

AVGC Task Force Report calls for National AVGC Mission with budgetary outlay  
The Animation, Visual Effects, Gaming and Comic (AVGC) Task Force set up by the Union Information and Broadcasting Ministry has submitted its report to the government. The Task force headed by **Apurva Chandra, headed** by the Secretary, Ministry of Information & Broadcasting was set up in April 2022.

It also included members from State Governments of **Karnataka, Maharashtra, Telangana**, heads of education bodies such as All India Council of Technical Education, National Council of Educational Research and Training and representatives of industry bodies -

MESC(Media and Entertainment Skills Council), FICCI(Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry) and CII(Confederation of Indian industries ).

The Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman had announced in the Union Budget 2022-23 the constitution of a Task force on AVGC to identify interventions to build domestic capacity for serving our markets and the global demand.

### **Some of the key recommendation of the Task Force**

In a detailed report submitted to the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, the Task Force has recommended certain measures. Some of the recommendations are as follows;

- Government shall launch 'Create in India' campaign with exclusive focus on content creation, in India, For India & for World.
- A national AVGC-XR mission to be set up for integrated promotion and growth of the AVGC sector.
- Government shall set up a National Centre of Excellence for the sector.
- The Regional Centre of Excellence shall be instituted in collaboration with the State Governments to provide access to local industries and to promote local talent and content.
- It has been recommended by the Task Force to leverage National Education Policy to develop creative thinking with dedicated AVGC course content at school levels to build foundational skills and to create awareness about AVGC as a career choice.
- It has also been recommended to establish AVGC accelerators and innovation hubs in academic institutions, on the lines of Atal Tinkering Labs.
- A dedicated production fund shall be set up for domestic content creation from the country to promote Indian culture and heritage globally.

## **8. 15 Start-ups selected in product accelerator program ( Dec. 26, 2022 )**

15 Start-ups selected in product accelerator program

The **Ministry of Science and Technology** has said that **fifteen Startups**, selected in the first-of-its-kind product accelerator program for innovators developing sustainable solutions, will soon start working towards solutions in the **healthcare and agriculture domains**.

### **Important facts**

- This **Start-up Incubation and Innovation Center (SIIC)** is the first cohort of the manufacturing accelerator program launched by IIT Kanpur.
- A total of **15 startups** will be selected under the programme. The best performing startups in a cluster of 15 startups will receive a cash award of up to **Rs 10 lakh**.

### **About NIRMAN Accelerator Program**

- Startup Incubation and Innovation Centre, the technology business incubator at IIT Kanpur, launched the **NIRMAN Accelerator Program**.

- It is supported by the Department of **Science and Technology, Government of India.**
- The program focuses on manufacturing startups engaged in the healthcare and agriculture domains, to help them overcome challenges from their prototyping to market journey.
  - The manufacturing accelerator program has immense potential to tap and capitalize on startups operating in the sector.

### **Name of the 15 Start-ups**

1. LCB Fertilizers Private Limited
2. Saptkrishi Scientific Private Limited
3. BomLife Private Limited
4. Polycycling Solutions Private Limited
5. Surobhi AgroIndustries Private Limited
6. Primary Healthtech Private Limited
7. Lenek Technologies Private Limited
8. Aana Crop Solutions Private Limited
9. Wander Continental Flyer Private Limited
10. Climec lab Private Limited
11. ProPlant Foods Private Limited
12. Meukron Technologies Private Limited
13. Xfinito Biodesigns Private Limited
14. Life and Limb Private Limited
15. NadiPulse Prognostics Private Limited

### **9. Dharmadam, Kerala becomes first complete library constituency in India ( Dec. 26, 2022 )**

#### **Library and Kerala**

The Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan's constituency Dharmadam has become the first complete **library constituency** in India. In his Facebook post, the chief minister Vijayan said that out of the total 138 wards in the constituency, there were no libraries in 63 wards.

However, with the help of a people's organization, People's Mission for Social Development, this task was completed.

#### **Library and Kerala**

Kerala which was the first state to achieve 100% literacy status in India is also perhaps the only state in India that has a library in every village.

**Puthuvayil Narayana Panicker** of Kerala is also known as the **Father of the Library Movement in India**.

- He started **Granthashala Sangam** with about 50 small libraries in 1945 in Kerala which grew into a large network of thousands of libraries.
- To honour and acknowledge P.N.Panicker, Kerala Government declared June 19, his death anniversary, as **Vayanadinam (Reading Day)** in 1996
- In 2017, Prime Minister Narendra Modi declared June 19 his death anniversary as **National Reading Day** in India. The following month is also observed as National Reading Month in India.

#### **10. Garuda Aerospace becomes first drone company ever to get double certification by DGCA for 'Kisan Drones' ( Dec. 26, 2022 )**

Garuda Aerospace becomes first drone company ever to get double certification by DGCA for 'Kisan Drones'

Drone maker **Garuda Aerospace** has become the **first drone startup in India** to receive 'Type Certification' and 'Remote Pilot Training Organisation' (RTPO) approval by the DGCA for its indigenously designed **Kisan drone**.

#### **Important facts**

- DGCA Type Certification is provided on the basis of quality checks of the drones and is issued after a rigorous testing process.
- Kisan Drone has been designed keeping in mind the works related to **agriculture**. Type certification has been received for its **GA-AG model**.
- DGCA gives this certificate on the basis of quality check. It is issued only after strict investigation of the drone (unmanned aircraft).
- Remote Pilot Training Organization is a DGCA recognized organization which gives **Remote Pilot Certificate** under Rule-34 of Drone Rules-2021.
- In India, the government introduced type certification in **August 2021** under the Drone Rules.

#### **What are 'Kisan' drones?**

- Made in India '**Kisan**' **drones** are specially developed for agricultural purposes such as reducing crop losses, crop health monitoring, yield measurement etc. with latest manufacturing capabilities.
- These drones are used for uniform spraying of pesticides, monitoring of crops, gathering of data related to land and collection of data etc.



- Priced at **Rs 4.50 lakh**, the 'Kisan' drone is India's most affordable advanced automated agriculture drone that falls under the sub **25 kg category**.
- Garuda Aerospace recently raised its **\$30 million Series A** at a valuation of \$250 million.
- Former Indian cricket team captain **Mahendra Singh Dhoni** has invested in it and is also the brand ambassador of the company.
- MS Dhoni has recently launched a drone named **Droni**. Garuda Aerospace has a fleet of 400 drones across 26 different cities and a well-trained team of over 500 pilots.

### **Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA)**

- It is the regulatory body in the field of **Civil Aviation**, primarily dealing with safety issues.
- It is responsible for the regulation of air transport services for India and enforcement of civil air regulations, air safety and airworthiness standards.
- It also co-ordinates all regulatory functions with the **International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO)**.