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1. Captain Shiva Chauhan becomes the first women officer to be operationally deployed in Siachen (Jan. 3, 2023)

Captain Shiva Chauhan becomes the first women officer to be operationally deployed in Siachen

Fire and Fury Corps officer **Captain Shiva Chauhan** became the first woman officer to be operationally deployed at the highest battleground in Kumar Post on the Siachen glacier.

This information was tweeted by the official account of the Fire and Fury Corps of the Indian Army.

Ms Shiva had to undergo arduous training before her posting in Kumar Post.

Siachen Glacier

The Siachen glacier lies in the Karakoram Range .It is 75 km (47 miles) long, which makes it the second longest nonpolar glacier in the world, after Fedchenko Glacier in Tajikistan.

Strategic Significance of Siachen Glacier

The Siachen Glacier is the highest battleground on earth, where India and Pakistan have fought intermittently since 1984. The Glacier is of strategic significance for India namely;

- The Glacier guards the routes which lead to Leh, the capital of Ladakh.
- Secondly the Salto Ridge overlooks the area of Gilgit-Baltistan of Pakistan Occupied Kashmir.
- Thirdly, it overlooks and dominates the Shaksgam Valley, which was illegally ceded to China by Pakistan.
- Fourthly, it is close to the Karakoram Pass through which the Karakoram Highway passes connecting Gilgit-Baltistan to Xinjiang Province of China.

Due to its strategic significance both countries maintain a permanent military presence in the region at a height of over 6,000 metres (20,000 feet).

More than 2,000 soldiers have died in this inhospitable terrain, mostly due to weather extremes and the natural hazards of mountain warfare.

Operation Meghdoot

Operation Meghdoot was launched by the Indian Armed Forces to take control of Siachen Glacier on the morning of April 13, 1984 before the Pakistani army did so.

At that time Siachen Glacier was in the State of Jammu and Kashmir but presently it is in the **Union Territory of Ladakh**.

2. MOIL registers record production in December (Jan. 3, 2023)

MOIL has registered its best December production of **1,41,321 tonnes of manganese ore** in December, 2022.

Important facts

- MOIL has registered an increase of **18 percent** in production as compared to November 2022.
- Along with this, **sales of 1,64,235 tonnes** have also been done for the month of December with an increase of about **91 percent** as compared to November 2022.
- Besides this, the company has increased prices in an effective range of **2.7-15%**.

About MOIL

- It is a **Schedule-A, Miniratna category-1 Company** under the administrative control of the **Ministry of Steel**, Government of India.
- It is the largest producer of manganese ore in the country with about **45% market share**, operating eleven mines in the states of **Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh**.
- The company aims to almost double its production to **3 million tonnes by 2030**.
- It is also looking for business opportunities in the state of **Gujarat, Rajasthan and Odisha** apart from other regions of the state of Madhya Pradesh.

3. PM Modi to launch world's longest river cruise from Varanasi to Assam on 13 January (Jan. 3, 2023)

PM Modi to launch world's longest river cruise from Varanasi to Assam on 13 January

Prime Minister **Narendra Modi** will launch the world's longest river cruise, which will travel from **Varanasi** in Uttar Pradesh to **Dibrugarh** in Assam via Bangladesh on 13 January 2023. This will be the single largest river journey by a single river ship in the world.

The cruise, which has been named '**Ganga Vilas cruise** will cover 4000 Kilometers along 27 river systems, including Ganga-Bhagirathi-Hooghly, Brahmaputra, and West Coast Canal in 50 days.

Route of the river cruise

The Ganga Vilas cruise will start from Varanasi in Uttar Pradesh to Dibrugarh in Assam via Bangladesh. In Bangladesh it will cover an 1100 Kilometers route before entering India again.

This will be possible under the Indo-Bangladesh Protocol Route, which has already opened trade and transit channels connecting the two countries on Ganga and Brahmaputra rivers.

50 significant tourist destinations will be visited throughout the journey, including some historical monuments, the iconic Varanasi Ganga Aarti, and protected areas like **Kaziranga National Park, Assam** and the **Sundarbans Delta in West Bengal** during the cruise.

Who will operate the cruise?

The Varanasi-Dibrugarh cruise is expected to be run on a public-private partnership (PPP) model. The government's Inland Waterways Authority of India (IWAI) has signed an agreement

with Antara Luxury River Cruises and JM Baxi River Cruises for the initiative. The ticket price would be decided by the operators without Centre's intervention.

Union Minister for Port, Shipping and Waterways: **Sarbananda Sonowal**

4. China becomes the first country in Asia and second in the world to launch Hydrogen powered Train (Jan. 3, 2023)

China becomes the first country in Asia and second in the world to launch Hydrogen powered Train

China became the **first country** in Asia and **second** in the world to launch Hydrogen powered urban trains. Germany was the first country to introduce hydrogen powered trains in September 2022.

Chinese company CRRC Corporations Ltd built a train that has a top speed of 160 KM per hour and can run without refuelling for 600 Km . The German Coradia iLint serial train developed by French **company Alstom** has set a record 1175 Km range without refuelling.

According to the Chinese officials, the operation of the train will reduce CO2 emissions compared to diesel traction by 10 tons per year.

Hydrogen powered Trains

Hydrogen is considered to be the green fuel of the future. The Hydrogen fuel cell is environment friendly and it does not emit any greenhouse gasses. The hydrogen fuel cell uses hydrogen and air to generate electricity. The combination of air and hydrogen will produce water as a by-product which will be released by the Train.

India is committed to achieve **zero net carbon emission by 2070**.

Hydrogen Train in India

As per Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw, India will most likely get its first-ever indigenous Hydrogen trains by December 2023. As per the minister, like Vande Bharat Express, the Indian Railways is working on the new environment-friendly trains and the engineers are designing it. "The design process is already going on and we should be able to roll out the first hydrogen train in the country by December 2023," he added.

5. Croatia adopts Euro currency, also included in Europe's free passport club (Jan. 3, 2023)

Croatia adopts Euro currency, also included in Europe's free passport club

On January 1, 2023, **Croatia** adopted the **euro currency** and also joined **Europe's free passport club (Schengen area)**, nearly a decade after joining the European Union.

Important facts

- On January 1, 2023, Croatia with a population of about 4 million said goodbye to its **Kuna currency** and became the **20th member of the Eurozone**.

- It will be the **27th country in the world's largest passport-free Schengen zone**, which enables more than 400 million people to move freely within its member states.
- Adoption of the euro will help Croatia's economy at a time when **global inflation** has been rising since Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, which has pushed up **fuel and food prices**.
- It will also boost Croatia's major **tourism industry**, which accounts for **20 percent of its gross domestic product (GDP)**.
- The Eurozone consists of **19 members of the European Union (EU)**, which uses the Euro as their official currency.

What is the Schengen Zone?

- The border-free Schengen Area guarantees **visa-free movement** for over 400 million EU citizens, as well as tourists, students living in the EU and visiting the EU.
- Free movement of persons enables every EU citizen to travel, work and live in an EU country without special formalities.
- The Schengen provision eliminates checking at the EU's internal borders, while providing a set of rules for controls at external borders.

About Croatia

- Croatia is a country located in the northwestern part of the **Balkan Peninsula**.
- Prime Minister: **Andrej Plenković**
- President: **Zoran Milanović**
- Capital: **Zagreb**
- Currency : **euro**

6. India's manufacturing output reaches 13-month high in December (Jan. 3, 2023)

India's manufacturing output reaches 13-month high in December

India's manufacturing sector activity rose to a **13-month high in December**, supported by healthy inflows of new business and strong demand conditions, according to a monthly survey.

Important facts

- The seasonally adjusted **S&P Global India Manufacturing Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI)** rose to **57.8 in December from 55.7** in November.

- The reason for this is that the fastest improvement is now being seen in business activities in the last 2 years.
- The December data showed that overall operating conditions improved for the **18th consecutive month**.

Meaning of PMI Index

- In the language of Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI), a score **above 50 means expansion**, while a figure **below 50 indicates contraction**.
- The beginning of 2022 was very good, since then the performance of the manufacturing sector has remained consistently good.
- The S&P Global India Manufacturing PMI is prepared by S&P Global on the basis of responses received from purchasing managers of **400 manufacturers**.

7. 50 Electric Buses launched in Delhi with support under FAME India Phase II scheme (Jan. 3, 2023)

50 Electric Buses launched in Delhi with support under FAME India Phase II scheme

On 3 January 2022, **50 electric buses** were launched in **Delhi** with support from the government under the [FAME India Phase II scheme](#) of the Ministry of Heavy Industry.

Important facts

- In 2019, the government approved **Rs 10,000 crore** for a period of three years.
- Out of the total budgetary support, about 86 per cent of the funds have been allocated for incentives to generate demand for electric vehicles.
- Union Heavy Industries Minister **Mahendra Nath Pandey** said that the government has placed an order for **3,538 electric buses**. Of these, a total of **1,716 buses** have been deployed so far.
- The Union Territory of Delhi had sanctioned **400 electric buses – 300 to the Delhi Transport Corporation (DTC)** for intra-city operations and **100 to the Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC)** for last-mile connectivity – in August 2019.
- A total of **250 buses** have already been deployed by DTC and now the remaining **50 buses** have been launched fulfilling MHI's commitment of providing 300 electric buses to DTC.

FAME India Scheme

- To improve the infrastructure required for the large-scale use of electric vehicles, the Government formulated a Scheme namely **FAME India (Faster Adoption and Manufacturing of Hybrid and Electric Vehicles) in 2015**.

- Under this scheme, by the year 2022, **60-70 lakh hybrid and electric vehicles** are targeted to be put on the roads across the country.
- This will reduce the consumption of about 950 crore litres of petrol and diesel, which will also save Rs 62 thousand crores spent on this.
- The main objective of this scheme is to **reduce pollution and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.**
- **Phase-II of FAME India Scheme** is being implemented for a period of 3 years from **April 1, 2019.**
- The **Phase-I** of this Scheme was launched for a period of 2 years from **1st April 2015**, which was extended from time to time and the last extension was allowed up to **31st March 2019.**

What are Electric Vehicles?

- Electric Vehicles are vehicles that are partially or fully powered on electric power.
- They have low running costs and are also very **environmentally friendly** as they use little or no fossil fuels (petrol or diesel).
- These vehicles can solve the problems of increasing **pollution, global warming, depleting natural resources etc.**

8. Second Phase of Sari Festival “VIRAASAT”- Celebrating 75 handwoven Saris of India begins in New Delhi (Jan. 2, 2023)

Second Phase of Sari Festival “VIRAASAT”- Celebrating 75 handwoven Saris of India begins in New Delhi

The second phase of the Sari Festival “**VIRAASAT**”- **Celebrating 75 handwoven Saris of India** will begin from 3- 17 January 2023 in **New Delhi** . The **Union Ministry of Textile** is organising the festival.

Over 90 participants from different parts of India the will display a wide variety of sarees like handloom Saris of Jamdani, Ikat, Pochampally, Banaras Brocade, Tussar Silk (Champa), Baluchari, Bhagalpuri Silk, Tangail, Chanderi, Lalitpuri, Patola, Paithani etc

The first phase of “VIRAASAT”- Celebrating 75 handwoven Saris of India started on 16th December 2022 and concluded on 30th December 2022. The event was inaugurated by Hon’ble Finance Minister Smt. Nirmala Sitharaman on 16th December 2022, along with Hon’ble Minister of State Smt. Darshana Jardosh and other women parliamentarians.

The event is likely to bring renewed focus on the age-old tradition of Sari weaving and thereby improve earnings of the handloom community.

Union Textile minister: **Piyush Goel**

9. 'SMART' program for Ayurveda professionals launched to regulate and boost R&D in Ayurveda (Jan. 2, 2023)

In order to regulate Ayurvedic medical education and boost the research and development in Ayurveda, the government has launched '**SMART**' (**Scope for Mainstreaming Ayurveda Research in Teaching Professionals**) program on 2 January 2023.

The SMART program has been jointly launched by the **Indian System of Medicine (NCISM)** and the **Central Council for Research in Ayurvedic Sciences (CCRAS)**. Both the Institutions come under the Union Ministry of Ayush.

The proposed initiative is conceptualized with an objective to identify, support and promote innovative research ideas in healthcare research areas through Ayurveda colleges and hospitals.

The program was launched by **Vaidya Jayant Deopujari**, Chairman, NCISM and **Prof. Rabinarayan Acharya**, Director General, CCRAS in the presence of **Prof. B. S. Prasad**, President of Board of Ayurveda, NCISM and other senior officials.

Every year **23 October** is observed as [Ayurveda Diwas](#) in India.

Union Ministry of AYUSH (Ayurveda, Yoga, Unani, Siddha, Homoeopathy)

- The Ministry of AYUSH was set up on the 9th of November 2014 to revive the knowledge of traditional Indian systems of medicine.
- It focuses on education and research in the fields of Ayurveda, Yoga Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha, and Homoeopathy.
- Minister of AYUSH: **Sarbananda Sonowal**

10. Elon Musk becomes first person ever to lose \$200 billion (Jan. 2, 2023)

According to **Bloomberg Billionaires Index** Tesla Chief **Elon Musk** became the only person in history to lose **\$200 billion** from their net worth.

Important facts

- Musk, who recently acquired the micro-blogging platform **Twitter for \$44 billion**, was the second person to amass over **\$200 billion after Jeff Bezos**.
- After the acquisition, Musk had a takeover of Twitter, resulting in a **loss of Tesla shares**.
- According to the Bloomberg Billionaires Index, **Musk's wealth declined to \$137 billion**. Musk also sold several Tesla shares throughout the year.
- Currently, Musk's stake in his **Space Exploration Technologies Corp.** is valued at **\$44.8 billion**, which is higher than his roughly \$44 billion position in Tesla stock (he still has options worth an estimated \$27.8 billion).
- Elon Musk became the richest person in the world when his wealth reached **\$340 billion** on November 4, 2021.

- He lost the title to French fashion and cosmetics magnate **Bernard Arnault** in early **December 2022**.

Who is Elon Musk?

- He is the charismatic **chief executive officer (CEO) of electric car maker Tesla** and rocket manufacturer **SpaceX**.
- Musk completed the deal to buy **Twitter** in October 2022, becoming the owner of the social media company.
- Born and raised in **South Africa**, Musk spent time in Canada before moving to the United States.