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### **1. '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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### **2. 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.
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### **3. India votes in favour of UNSC resolution on mental health of UN peacekeepers ( Dec. 22, 2022 )**

**India** on 21 December voted in favour of a **resolution on the mental health of UN peacekeepers**.

#### **Important facts**

- India's Permanent Ambassador to the UN **Ruchira Kamboj** said, as one of the largest troop contributing countries over the years, India attaches the highest importance to the **safety and well-being** of UN peacekeepers.
- Mental health is an essential component of the overall health in which UN peacekeepers work.
- Therefore, the medical care and well-being of UN personnel is the collective responsibility of all Member States.
- Meanwhile, Kamboj raised the issue of data and studies done in consultation with troop and police contributing countries and the Special Committee on **Peacekeeping Operations, or C34**.
- C 34 has been giving due consideration to the issue of mental health of **UN personnel in peace operations**.

#### **UNSC resolution on mental health**

- members of the [\*\*United Nations Security Council\*\*](#) unanimously passed a resolution on mental health and psychosocial support for personnel of UN peace operations.
- **Mexico** initiated the draft resolution on mental health and psychosocial support.

- The draft resolution will be the **first stand-alone Security Council resolution** on mental health.
- The draft resolution recognises the need to raise awareness of the importance of **mental health and psychosocial support** for UN peace operations personnel.
- It references the **2018 United Nations Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy**, a comprehensive approach to meeting the needs of UN personnel and improving organizational capabilities to maintain and protect mental health, which Applies to the entire United Nations system.
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#### **4. Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar becomes only University in India to get A grade by NAAC ( Dec. 21, 2022 )**

Guru Nanak Dev University get A grade by NAAC

The Guru Nanak Dev University ,Amritsar, Punjab has become the first University in India to get **A grade** by scoring **3.85** in National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) grading.

##### **National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC)**

The National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) was established in 1994 as an autonomous institution of the University Grants Commission (UGC) with its Headquarter in **Bengaluru**.

The NAAC conducts assessment and accreditation of Higher Educational Institutions such as colleges, universities or other recognised institutions to derive an understanding of the 'Quality Status' of the institution.

##### **Guru Nanak Dev University (GNDU)**

Guru Nanak Dev University was established at Amritsar on November 24, 1969 to mark the 500th birth anniversary of Sri Guru Nanak Dev Ji. It was set up by an act passed by the Punjab state legislature.

The University has also been conferred with the status of “University with Potential for Excellence” by UGC.

GNDU has been awarded the prestigious **Maulana Abul Kalam Azad trophy** for overall excellence in sports for a record 23 times.

Vice Chancellor of the University: **Dr Jaspal Singh Sandhu**

#### **5. India's manned Space flight Gaganyaan to be launched in in the fourth quarter of 2024: Union Minister Jitendra Singh ( Dec. 21, 2022 )**

Gaganyaan to be launched in in the fourth quarter of 2024

Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) Science & Technology; Atomic Energy and Space, **Dr Jitendra Singh** said that India's maiden human space flight mission is targeted to be launched in the **fourth quarter of 2024**. He gave this information in the Lok Sabha on 21 December 2022.

### **Gaganyaan Mission of ISRO**

Gaganyaan project envisages demonstration of human spaceflight capability by launching a crew of **3 members** to an orbit of 400 km for a 3 days mission and bring them back safely to earth, by landing in Indian sea waters.

The Gaganyaan project was conceived in 2007 and it was formally started in 2018 with a budget of Rs 10,000 crore. Initially the plan is to launch two unmanned missions in December 2020 and July 2021 before the final launch of the manned mission in December 2021.

Now according to the Minister the first unmanned mission will be launched in the last quarter of 2023 followed by the second unmanned mission in the second quarter of 2024.

### **Gaganyaan Astronauts**

Four Indian Air Force pilots have been identified as crew for the mission who are undergoing training in Russia. An astronaut training facility was set up in **Bengaluru** in May this year. Here the four astronauts will go through theory, physical fitness, flight suit training, microgravity, among other things.

### **Aim of Gaganyaan mission**

According to the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) **LMV3 rocket** will be used as a launch vehicle for the Gaganyaan mission. It will take the crew 16 minutes to reach space, where they will spend three days conducting scientific experiments. During the return, the crew module in which the crew will live will separate at an altitude of 120 km. It will splash down in the sea nearby 36 minutes after separation.

### **Human Space Flight**

At present only three countries, the United States, Russia and China have the capability to launch manned space missions.

The first person to go into space was **Yury Gagarin** of the Soviet Union on 12 April 1961 onboard the Vostok Rocket.

The **first woman** to go into space was **Valentina Tereshkova** of the Soviet Union on 16 June 1963 onboard the Vostok 6 Rocket.

Wing Commander **Rakesh Sharma** is the only Indian to go into space. He was part of the Soviet mission aboard Soyuz T-11 on 3 April 1984.

Humans who travel in space are called astronauts. The Chinese call them Taikonauts and the Russians call them Cosmonauts.

### **Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO)**

It was set up on 15 August 1969

It is India's national space agency.

Headquarters: **Bengaluru**

Chairman: **S.Somanath**

## **6. iDEX sets record with signing its 150th contract ( Dec. 21, 2022 )**

iDEX sets record with signing its 150th contract

**Innovation for Defense Excellence (iDEX)**, a flagship initiative of the **Department of Defense Production**, has set a milestone with the signing of its **150th contract** on December 21, 2022 in New Delhi.

### **Important facts**

- The contract was signed by Joint Secretary (Defence Industries Production) & Additional CEO/DIO **Anurag Bajpai** with CEO, Altair Infrasec Pvt Ltd **Anil Anand** in the presence of Defence Secretary **Giridhar Aramane**.
- iDEX achieved this milestone within five months of signing its **100th contract** on July 26, 2022.
- The contract relates to an Indian Navy project of the **Defence India Start-up Challenge (DISC 7) SPRINT edition**.
- The challenge was titled '**Expendable Mobile Anti-Submarine Warfare (ASW) Training Target (EMATT)** capable of simulating the sound and movement of a submarine' and the winner was Altair Infrasec Pvt Ltd, Pune.
- It envisaged the development of a training target capable of being deployed on platforms from **P8I aircraft, MH60R helicopters, ships** with speeds of up to 10 knots and other remotely operated aircraft, requiring EMATT to be launched.

### **About iDEX framework**

- It was launched by the Prime Minister in **2018** with the objective to provide a platform of co-creation and co-development in the defence sector, engage start-ups and develop defence and aerospace set up in the country.
- It is being implemented by the **Defence Innovation Organisation (DIO)**, established under the **Department of Defence Production**.
- Till date, iDEX has received over **6,500 applications** from individual innovators, MSMEs and start-ups under DISC, PRIME and OC.
- It has also been able to create thousands of jobs and attract India's talent back to the country.
- It has also been awarded the prestigious **Prime Minister Award for Public Policy in Innovation Category** for the year 2021.
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**7. Government set a target of 205 lakh tonnes Nutri Cereals production for the year 2022-23 ( Dec. 21, 2022 )**

205 lakh tonnes of Nutri Cereals in the country by 2022-23

The Government of India has set a target of production of **205 lakh tonnes of Nutri Cereals in the country by 2022-23**. This information was given by the Union Minister of State for Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution, Ms. **Sadhvi Niranjan Jyoti** in a written reply to a question in Lok Sabha on 21 December 2022.

**Nutri-cereals refers to a group** of crops comprising **sorghum** (Jowar), **pearl millet (Bajra)**, **finger millet (Ragi/Mandua)**, and small millets like **little millet (Kutki)**, **kodo millet (Kodo)**, **barnyard millet (Sawa/Jhangora)**, **foxtail millet (Kangni/Kakun)**, and **proso millet (Cheena)**. They are highly nutritious and government is trying to promote the usage and productions of millets as Nuti Cereals.

**Effort to increase the production of Nutri- Cereals in India**

India declared **2018 as the National Year for Millets** to promote millets for nutrition security.

The Government of India has launched NFSM-Nutri Cereals, a sub scheme under the National Food Security Mission. It is being implemented from the year 2018-19 in 212 districts of 14 states.

**Rajasthan** is the largest producer of nutri-cereals in India followed by Maharashtra and Karnataka.

According to the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), India is the largest producer of millet in the world followed by Niger and China.

**The United Nations has declared 2023 as the International Year of the Millets.****8. Indian Government to close its overseas tourism offices by March 31 next year ( Dec. 21, 2022 )**

Indian Government to close its overseas tourism offices

The Union Ministry of Tourism has decided to shut down its seven overseas offices tasked with tourism promotional activities by 31st March 2023.

At present, the ministry runs tourism offices in London, Tokyo, Beijing, Dubai, Singapore, New York and Frankfurt.

According to the report, "The government feels that the expenses incurred on the functioning of these offices are not worth the promotions that the Indian tourism sector gets abroad." The government feels that digital medium and existing embassies can be good alternatives.

They say that the first tourism office was opened in 1952 in New York with a purpose to promote Indian culture, heritage and monuments and in the later years, 25 such centers were opened in different countries.

According to the Union Tourism Ministry, the number of **Foreign Tourists** visiting India during 2021 was [1.52 million](#). India received maximum foreign tourists from the **United States of America** followed by Bangladesh, the United Kingdom, Canada, and Nepal.

Union Minister for Tourism: **G Kishan Reddy**

## **9. Peru orders Mexico's ambassador to leave country within 72 hours ( Dec. 21, 2022 )**

**Peru** declared Mexico's ambassador in Lima "**persona non grata**" and ordered him to leave the country on December 20, Peru's foreign minister announced, amid heightened tensions between the two countries after **Pedro Castillo** was ousted as president.

### **Important facts**

- The order gives Mexico's envoy to the South American country **just 72 hours** to leave the country.
- Castillo was removed from office earlier this month after trying to dissolve parliament. He is being investigated in Peru on charges of rebellion and conspiracy.
- Mexican President **Andrés Manuel López Obrador** called Castillo's removal from office undemocratic.
- The Peruvian government last week declared a 30-day nationwide state of emergency.
- Protests have rocked the country in the tumultuous days since President Pedro Castillo was removed from office on charges of rebellion and conspiracy last week.
- Castillo remains in government custody for 18 months.
- Castillo was prevented from taking refuge at the Mexican embassy in Lima. The lawmakers then swore in 60-year-old Dina Boluarte as the new president.

### **About Peru**

- Peru is the third largest country in **South America**, after Brazil and Argentina.
- President: **Dina Boluarte**
- Capital: **Lima**
- Currency : **Nuevo Sol**
- Major Mountain Ranges: **Andes**
- Major Rivers: **Amazon, Ucayali, Madre de Dios**
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**10. Sun Temple at Modhera, Vadnagar town Rock cut sculpture, Unakoti added to tentative list of UNESCO heritage sites ( Dec. 20, 2022 )**

UNESCO heritage sites

The Union Ministry of Culture announced on 20 December 2022 that **Vadnagar town, Gujarat, Sun Temple Modhera, Gujarat and Rock Cut Sculptures and reliefs of the Unakoti, Tripura** have been added to the tentative list of UNESCO's world heritage sites.

The submissions were made by Archaeological Survey of India, which is responsible for the conservation and preservation of Indian monuments.

With the addition of these three sites, UNESCO has **52** proposals in the tentative list of India.

According to UNESCO, countries are encouraged to submit their Tentative Lists which mentions the properties which they consider to be cultural and/or natural heritage of outstanding universal value and therefore suitable for inscription on the World Heritage List.

**The newly included sites in the tentative list;****Vadnagar**

Vadnagar also known as Chamatkarpur, Anandpur, Snehpur and Vimalpur is located in the Mehsana district in Gujarat. The city has been mentioned in the Puranas as well by the Chinese traveller, Hieu-en-Tsang (7th century). Vadnagar is famous for its Buddhist sites, torans, a pair of 12th century Solanki-era columns, 40 feet tall and built in red and yellow sandstone to celebrate a war victory.

**Sun Temple, Modhera and its adjoining monuments**

Modhera is known for the Sun temple situated on the bank of the Pushpavati River. The temple was built after 1026-27 CE during the reign of Bhima I of the Chalukya dynasty. Modhera village is the first solar powered village in the world.

**Rock-cut Sculptures and Reliefs of the Unakoti**

Unakoti is famous for its massive stone and rock-cut sculptures that have been carved out from the hillside in the Kailashahar Subdivision of Tripura. Surrounded by lush greenery, this place is also a Shaivite pilgrimage site dating back to the 8th or 9th centuries CE.

Unakoti literally means 'One Less Than a Crore'. According to Hindu mythology Lord Shiva once spent a night here en route to Kashi. He was accompanied by 99, 99,999 gods and goddesses. He had asked his followers to wake up before sunrise and make their way towards Kashi. Unfortunately, none awoke, except for Lord Shiva himself. Before he set out for Kashi alone, he put a curse on the others turning them to stone. And that's how the site got its name

**Indian sites in the UNESCO World Heritage List**

There are 32 cultural, 7 natural, and 1 mixed property in the 40 UNESCO World Heritage sites in India. In 2021 **Dholavira**, an Indus Valley site in Gujarat and **Rudreswara temple (Ramappa Temple)** at Palampet, Warangal, and Telangana were the 40th and 39th sites respectively.



The first Indian sites to be included in the UNESCO list were **Ajanta, Ellora Caves, Taj Mahal** and **Agra Fort** in 1983.

## **UNESCO**

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) is a specialized agency of the United Nations (UN).

- It seeks to build peace through international cooperation in Education, Science and Culture.
- Headquarters: **Paris, France**
- Director General: **Audrey Azoulay**
- Founded: 16 November 1945 in London, United Kingdom
- The organisation has 193 members and 11 Associate members.