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1. Kerala to host the inaugural Zayed Charity Marathon in 2024 (Sept. 8, 2023)

The inaugural Zayed Charity Marathon in India is scheduled for 2024 and will be organized by the Higher Organizing Committee.

An Overview of the News

- With the cooperation of both the Kerala state authorities and the Indian community living in the UAE, Kerala has been selected as the host state for this important event.
- The primary objective of the Zayed Charity Marathon is **to raise funds for charitable causes, and the proceeds from the Kerala-based marathon will be directed to supporting healthcare initiatives within the state.**
- The event has sponsorship and support from various entities including the UAE Government, Government of Kerala, and the Indian community in the UAE.
- The registration fee for the marathon will be contributed to charity.

Zayed Charity Marathon

- The Zayed Charity Marathon is a prestigious event honoring the legacy of the late Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan, former President of the UAE.
- It was launched in Abu Dhabi in 2001 to promote humanitarian and charitable messages in line with Sheikh Zayed's philanthropic legacy.
- The event is expanding its reach to India in collaboration with the Kerala state authorities and the Indian community in the UAE.

Charitable purpose

- Proceeds from the marathon will be directed to innovative cancer research and treatments.
- The monetary prize for the marathon winners will amount to AED1 million.

Inclusiveness

- The marathon is open to runners of all skill levels, with several race distances offered including full marathon, half marathon and 10 km.

2. Japan's 'Moon Sniper' Lander SLIM Launched Successfully, Aims to Land on the Moon Next Year (Sept. 7, 2023)

Japan has successfully launched its lunar exploration spacecraft, known as the "Moon Sniper", using the domestically developed H-IIA rocket.

An Overview of the News

- The achievement puts Japan in contention to **become the world's fifth country to land on the moon**, with the landing planned for early next year.
- The **Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA)** said the rocket's launch from the **Tanegashima Space Center in southern Japan** went as scheduled. It also successfully deployed the lunar lander, **Smart Lander for Investigating Moon (SLIM)**.
- Japan's ambitious goal is to **land SLIM on the lunar surface within 100 meters of its intended target site. The \$100 million mission is expected to reach the moon by February.**
- Notably, the launch follows India's recent achievement of **becoming the fourth nation to successfully land a spacecraft on the Moon through its Chandrayaan-3 mission, which specifically aimed to explore the uncharted lunar south pole.**
- This achievement by Japan comes after two previous lunar landing attempts by the country failed within the last year.

Japan's Lunar Landing Challenges: Loss of Contact, Lunar Lander Accident, and Collaborative Satellite Mission:

- In November, JAXA suffered a setback when they lost contact with the OMOTENASHI lander, leading to the cancellation of their lunar landing attempt.
- In April, the Hakuto-R Mission 1 lander, developed by a Japanese startup called iSpace, crashed while landing on the lunar surface.
- Additionally, the H-IIA rocket was tasked with carrying the X-ray Imaging and Spectroscopy Mission (XRISM) satellite. The satellite is part of a collaborative effort by JAXA, NASA, and the European Space Agency.

About JAXA

Founded - **1 October 2003**

President - **Yamakawa Hiroshi;**

Headquarters - **Chōfu, Tokyo, Japan.**

3. Georgia officially declares October as 'Hindu Heritage Month' (Sept. 3, 2023)

Georgia Governor Brian Kemp officially declared October as 'Hindu Heritage Month'.

An Overview of the News

- It aims **to celebrate Hindu heritage while emphasizing the rich cultural and spiritual traditions of India.**

- It recognizes and appreciates the valuable contributions made by the **Hindu-American community** in the state of Georgia.
- Hinduism is accepted as the third largest religion globally, with one billion followers worldwide and about three million followers in the United States.
- Throughout October 2023, the Hindu community in Georgia will collectively celebrate its heritage by focusing on the culture and diverse spiritual traditions of India.

Georgia's historic resolution against Hinduphobia:

- **In April 2023, Georgia passed a historic resolution condemning Hinduphobia, making it the first US state to do so.**
- The resolution condemns Hinduphobia and anti-Hindu prejudice, emphasizing the widespread and ancient nature of Hinduism, with more than 1.2 billion adherents in more than 100 countries.
- It outlines the diverse traditions and belief systems within Hinduism, all based on the principles of acceptance, mutual respect, and peace.
- **According to the Hindu American Foundation,** Hindu Heritage Month (HHM) serves as a global effort to highlight the longstanding tradition of Hinduism and its significant contributions to humanity.

4. Ministry to celebrate 6th Rashtriya Poshan Maah in September 2023 (Sept. 2, 2023)

The sixth Rashtriya Poshan Maah will be celebrated by the Ministry of Women and Child Development throughout September 2023.

An Overview of the News

- The focus of the Rashtriya Poshan Maah initiative is **to comprehensively address malnutrition using a life-cycle approach in sync with Mission Nutrition 2.0.**
- POSHAN (Prime Minister's Overarching Scheme for Holistic Nutrition) campaign, the flagship initiative of the **Government of India, was launched to tackle malnutrition.**
- It targets **pregnant women, lactating mothers, teenage girls and children below 6 years of age.**
- During the period of the **15th Finance Commission,** it was combined with other schemes to strengthen nutrition assistance.

The theme of Rashtriya Poshan Maah 2023:

- The theme of Poshan Maah 2023 is **"Suposhit Bharat, Sakshar Bharat, Sashakt Bharat"** (Nutrition-rich India, Educated India, Empowered India).

Activities and Initiatives:

- Various activities and initiatives have been planned during Poshan Maah, including special breastfeeding and complementary feeding campaigns.
- Healthy Child Competition aims **to promote healthy competition for nutrition and overall well-being.**
- Other initiatives include **combining nutrition and education (Poshan Bhi Padhai Bhi), promoting lifestyle changes for better nutrition (Mission Life), tribal-centric sensitization, and addressing anemia through testing and treatment.**

Jan Andolan movement:

- The Jan Andolan movement under Poshan Maah serves as a platform for a united celebration, emphasizing the country's journey to independence and progress.
- This also includes the '**Meri Maati Mera Desh**' campaign.

Role of Mission Saksham Anganwadi and Poshan 2.0:

- The objective of encouraging nutrition-seeking behavior is continued through Mission Saksham Anganwadi and Poshan 2.0.

A vision of a well-nourished India:

- Poshan Maah 2023 aims to engage communities at large, including Gram Panchayats and urban local bodies, to fulfill the vision of a well-nourished India envisioned by the Honorable Prime Minister during the **Amrit Kaal.**

5. NCERT gets Deemed University Status (Sept. 1, 2023)

On September 1, 2023, Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan made this announcement during the 63rd Foundation Day celebrations of the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) in Delhi.

An Overview of the News

- Bal Bhavan will be merged with NCERT.
- An Augmented Reality (AR) and Virtual Reality (VR) laboratory was inaugurated to integrate technology in education.
- NCERT will include a chapter on the success story and findings of Chandrayaan-3 in 22 recognized languages.
- A Vidhya Samiksha Kendra was also inaugurated as part of the celebrations.

About NCERT

- It is an autonomous organization of the Government of India.

- NCERT was **established in 1961** and functions as a literary, scientific, and charitable society under the Societies Registration Act.
- The headquarters of the organization is located at **Sri Aurobindo Marg in New Delhi.**
- **Dr. Dinesh Prasad Saklani** has been the **director of NCERT since 2022.**
- In 2023, NCERT constituted a 19-member committee.
- The objective of the committee is **to finalize the syllabus, textbooks, and learning material for the students of classes 3 to 12.**
- Prominent personalities including author and Infosys Foundation Chairperson Sudha Murthy and singer Shankar Mahadevan are part of the committee.

6. Union Minister Bhupendra Yadav started chemotherapy services in 30 ESIC hospitals (Aug. 31, 2023)

Union Minister for Labor and Employment and Environment, Forest and Climate Change Bhupendra Yadav inaugurated chemotherapy services in 30 Employees' State Insurance Corporation (ESIC) hospitals across India.

An Overview of the News

- The inauguration took place during the 191st ESI Corporation meeting at ESIC Headquarters in New Delhi.
- This initiative is in line with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision for the overall welfare of Indian workers (Shram Yogis) in the Amrit Kaal of India.
- In-house chemotherapy services will provide better cancer treatment for the insured workers and their dependents.

Control Panel with Dashboard: Streamlining Hospital Operations

- Minister Bhupendra Yadav also inaugurated a control room having ESIC dashboard.
- These dashboards will enhance monitoring of hospital resources, bed availability, and ongoing construction projects.

Focus on Medical Education: Strengthening Health Care Professionals

- The plans include setting up new ESIC Medical Colleges and Hospitals based on the assessed needs.
- Presently, ESIC operates 8 Medical Colleges, 2 Dental Colleges, 2 Nursing Colleges and 1 Para-Medical College.

Agenda deliberations: promotion and approval

- In-principle approval given for setting up of 15 new ESI hospitals and 78 ESI dispensaries.

- ESIC Hospital, Beltola, Assam, ESIC Medical College and Hospital, K.K. Nagar, Chennai, Tamil Nadu and ESIC Medical College and Hospital, Faridabad, Haryana approved bed capacity enhancement.

Unveiling Important Documents: Promoting Transparency

- Minister Bhupendra Yadav unveiled key documents during the event, which include Citizen's Charter, Audit and Accounts Manual of ESIC, Referral Policy and Equipment Policy.

Identifying iGOT Learners: Capacity Development

- Minister Bhupendra Yadav felicitated 5 top performing iGOT learners of ESIC on iGOT (Karmayogi Bharat) learning platform.
- These learners excelled in ESIC offices located in Rajasthan, Kerala and Bengaluru.
- The iGOT platform aims to enhance capacity development among the civil services.

About ESIC

- It is one of the two social security bodies in India, supervised by the Ministry of Labor and Employment of the Government of India.
- Its counterpart is the Employees Provident Fund Organisation.
- ESIC operates under government ownership and comes under the Ministry of Labor and Employment.
- The management of the Employees' State Insurance Fund is under the purview of ESIC.
- The guidelines and provisions for the operation of ESIC are outlined in the Employees' State Insurance Act 1948.

Formation - **24 February 1952**

Headquarter - **New Delhi**

7. India and New Zealand signed MoU to enhance cooperation in the field of civil aviation (Aug. 30, 2023)

India and New Zealand recently formalized a cooperative agreement through a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to strengthen their cooperation in the field of civil aviation.

An Overview of the News

- The MoU covers a wide scope of cooperation, focusing on key aspects such as the facilitation of new flight routes, the establishment of codeshare services, the allocation of traffic rights, and the determination of capacity entitlements.
- Eminent officials present: The signing ceremony took place in the capital of India, New Delhi with the presence of eminent officials from both countries. Civil Aviation Secretary

Rajeev Bansal and New Zealand High Commissioner David Paine were the signatories to the MoU.

- The event was attended by key ministers including India's Civil Aviation Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia and New Zealand's Trade and Export Development Minister Damian O'Connor.

Major Provisions for Airlines

- The MoU outlines specific provisions to benefit New Zealand's airlines. New Zealand's designated airlines are permitted to operate an unrestricted number of services using any type of aircraft.
- New Zealand airlines have also been granted third and fourth freedom traffic rights for connectivity to six major Indian cities: **New Delhi, Mumbai, Bengaluru, Chennai, Hyderabad, and Kolkata.**
- Indian airlines designated by the agreement are similarly provided with enhanced operational freedom. They have the authority to operate unlimited services with any type of aircraft.
- Additionally, Indian airlines have been granted third and fourth freedom traffic rights to travel to and from important New Zealand cities: Auckland, Wellington, and Christchurch. In addition, the Government of India will later designate three additional destinations in New Zealand for equal traffic rights.

8. Sri Lanka hosts 'Karnataka Cultural Festival' for the first time (Aug. 29, 2023)

Sri Lanka hosted the Karnataka Cultural Festival on August 27, 2023.

An Overview of the News

- This program is organized by the **International Cultural Council of India, Swami Vivekananda Cultural Center, and M.E. Organized in association with the Global Peace Foundation.**
- The festival featured a variety of performances from over 30 artists from Karnataka: traditional dances, folk music, multilingual poems, ballet, and puppet shows
- The focus was on **highlighting the cultural heritage and heritage of Karnataka.**
- The cast included lead artist Madhuri Bondre and her troupe.

About Karnataka

- It is a state in southwest India and is bordered by Maharashtra to the north, Goa to the northwest, Andhra Pradesh to the east, Tamil Nadu to the southeast, and Kerala to the southwest.
- Chief Minister - **Siddaramaiah**

- Governor - **Thawar Chand Gehlot**
- Official language - **Kannada**
- Official Dance - **Yakshagana**

About Sri Lanka

- Capital - **Sri Jayawardenepura Kotte**
- President - **Ranil Wickremesinghe**
- Prime Minister - **Dinesh Gunawardena**
- Official Language - **Sinhala**

9. SBI launches innovative Aadhaar-based enrollment for social security schemes through Customer Service Points (CSPs) (Aug. 29, 2023)

State Bank of India (SBI) on August 25, 2023, introduced a new Customer Service Point (CSP) with an aim to enhance convenience for its customers through technology.

An Overview of the News

- SBI's Customer Service Points (CSPs) allow hassle-free and paperless enrollment for important social security schemes using Aadhaar.
- Customers can now easily enroll in schemes like **Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana (PMJJBY), Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bima Yojana (PMSBY), and Atal Pension Yojana (APY) with just their Aadhaar.**

Enhanced coverage of social security schemes

- SBI's initiative is aimed at taking the benefits of flagship social security schemes to a wider audience.
- The goal is **to ensure that those who need these schemes the most can take advantage of them.**

Promoting Financial Inclusion through Innovation

- SBI's technology-driven approach empowers financial inclusion.
- By simplifying the enrollment process, SBI aims to uplift the marginalized and underprivileged sections of society.

Streamlined Enrollment Process

- Customers can now enroll in social security schemes using the Aadhaar-based mechanism, thereby eliminating the need for passbooks.

- SBI's advanced system speeds up the enrollment process, making it more convenient for customers.

Reduction in Paperwork

- The new system significantly reduces paperwork, making the overall process simpler and more efficient.
- Customers no longer need to carry passbooks to the CSP outlet for enrolment.

About SBI, or State Bank of India

- It is one of the largest and oldest banks in India.
- It was established in 1806 as the Bank of Calcutta and later renamed as the Imperial Bank of India.
- In 1955, the Government of India nationalized the bank and it became the State Bank of India.
- It offers a wide range of banking products and services to its customers including Personal Banking, Corporate Banking, Agricultural Banking, and International Banking.
- Its personal banking services include savings and current accounts, loans, credit cards, and investment products.
- It has launched several digital initiatives to provide convenient banking services to its customers. These include SBI YONO, an integrated digital banking platform, and SBI Quick, a mobile app for instant banking services.
- SBI has received several awards and honors for its performance and services, including the Best Bank Award by Euromoney Magazine, the Best Retail Bank Award in India by Asian Banker, and the Best Bank Award in India by Global Finance Magazine.

Headquarters - **Mumbai, Maharashtra**

SBI Chairman - **Dinesh Khara**

10. Indian Navy participates in 5th 'AUSINDEX-23' held in Australia (Aug. 28, 2023)

From August 22 to 25, 2023, the 5th edition of the biennial AUSINDEX maritime exercise occurred in Sydney, Australia, conducted collaboratively by the Indian Navy and the Royal Australian Navy.

An Overview of the News

- Indian Navy and Royal Australian Navy (RAN) jointly organized the exercise.
- The participating ships included **INS Sahyadri, INS Kolkata from the Indian Navy, and HMAS Choules and HMAS Brisbane from RAN**
- The exercise not only involved ships and their helicopters but also fighter aircraft and maritime patrol aircraft.

- Over the course of 4 days, AUSINDEX involved a series of complex exercises covering all
- three maritime operational domains.

Indian Navy (IN):

- It is the marine branch of the **Indian Armed Forces.**
- The **President of India is the Supreme Commander of the Indian Navy.**
- The Chief of Naval Staff, **a four-star admiral, leads the Navy.**
- The Navy operates as a blue-water force in areas such as the **Persian Gulf, the Horn of Africa, and the Malacca Straits.**

Establishment - **26 January 1950**

Headquarters - **New Delhi**

Motto - **Sham no Varunah (Sanskrit)** Translation - 'May the Lord of the waters be auspicious unto us'

Navy Day - **4 December**

About Australia

- It is a sovereign country located in the Southern Hemisphere and is geographically isolated from the rest of the world.
- Capital - **Canberra**
- Emperor - **Charles III**
- Governor-General - **David Hurley**
- Prime Minister - **Anthony Albanese**