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1. Latvia host Joint Expeditionary Force (JEF) summit at Riga (Dec. 19, 2022)

Latvia host Joint Expeditionary Force (JEF) summit at Riga

Latvia hosted the 3rd summit meeting of **the Joint Expeditionary Force (JEF)** on 19 December 2022 in **Riga**. The summit meeting has been convened on the Initiative of the Prime Minister of Latvia **Krišjānis Kariņš**, with the support of the United Kingdom.

The JEF was founded in 2015 after the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) summit meeting in Wales in 2014. It comprises Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, Netherlands, Norway, Sweden and the United Kingdom. The JEF has been set up to prepare a high readiness force which can respond to crises in the High North and Northern Europe (caused by Russian aggression).

The summit meeting of the JFF was held virtually on 25 February 2022 after the invasion of Ukraine by Russia. The second Summit was hosted by the United Kingdom in London on 15 March 2022.

The third summit was dominated by the aggressive war of Russia in Ukraine and consequent changes in the security climate in the North Atlantic, Baltic Sea and the High North regions. They agreed to provide further assistance to Ukraine in its fight with the Russians.

Latvia

Latvia lies in North Eastern Europe and is one of the three Baltic countries. The other Baltic countries are Lithuania and Estonia.

It is called Baltic country as it lies along the Baltic Sea.

Latvia was occupied by the Soviet Union and it became Independent after the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991.

Capital: Riga

Currency: Euro

Prime Minister: **Krisjanis Kariņš**

2. Union Minister Jitendra Singh inaugurated 'Prashasan Gaon ki Ore' campaign under Good Governance Week 2022 (Dec. 19, 2022)

Union Minister Jitendra Singh inaugurated 'Prashasan Gaon ki Ore' campaign

Union Minister for Personnel, Public Grievances, and Pensions **Dr Jitendra Singh** inaugurated the '**Prashasan Gaon ki Ore**', a nationwide campaign under the **Good Governance Week 2022** in **New Delhi** on 19th December. He also launched the **Good Governance Week portal**.

Important facts

- In the **5 days campaign**, over 300 New Services identified by District Collectors across the country will be added for Online Service Delivery.
- The nationwide campaign for redressal of public grievances and improvement in service delivery will be organised in all districts, states and union territories of the country.
- More than **700 district collectors** will participate in the campaign and officers will visit tehsil and panchayat samiti headquarters.
- During the initial phase of Good Governance Week 2022, organised from 10th to 18th of this month, District Collectors have identified more than **81 lakh applications** for service delivery.
- Along with this, more than **19 lakh public grievances** are to be redressed through the State Portal.
- **373 best governance practices** were identified for discussion in district level workshops. The workshop will be organised on the 23rd of this month.
- During the 'Good Governance Week' of Good Governance Week-2022 from **December 19 to December 25**, 43 success stories in public grievances will also be shared.

What is Good Governance?

- Good governance refers to processes and institutions that produce outcomes that make the best use of resources while meeting the needs of society.
- The constitution is based on the principles of a sovereign, socialist, secular and democratic republic committed to democracy, the rule of law and the welfare of its citizens.
- Every citizen of the nation is primarily concerned with the efficient functioning of the government.

Principles of Good Governance

- Participation
- Rule of law
- Transparency
- Responsiveness
- Consensus orientation
- Equity
- Effectiveness and efficiency
- Accountability

3. India and Sri Lanka to launch ferry service between Kankesanthurai port and Pondicherry in January 2023 (Dec. 18, 2022)

India and Sri Lanka to launch ferry service between Kankesanthurai port and Pondicherry

According to the Sri Lankan Ports, Shipping, and Civil Aviation Minister Nimal Siripala de Silva a passenger ferry service between **Kankesanthurai** port in Jaffna district and **Karaikal ports** in Puducherry will start in January 2023.

The Minister said that passenger transport services will also be started from **Thoothukudi (Tamil Nadu)** to Colombo in Sri Lanka in near future.

He said that till now no firm conclusion has been reached about starting the ferry service between **Thalaimannar (Sri Lanka)** and **Rameshwaram (India)**.

Ferry Service

The ferry service between Tamil Nadu and the Northern part of Sri Lanka which is dominated by Sri Lanka Tamils was disrupted in 1980's due to the civil war in Sri Lanka. After the end of the civil war in Sri Lanka in 2009, efforts were made to revive the old transportation link between the two countries.

In 2011 a memorandum of understanding (MoU) was signed between the two countries to start ferry service between the two countries.

In 2018 India provided \$45.27 million for upgrading the **Kankesanthurai** harbour into a commercial port.

Benefits of the Ferry service

The ferry services will make travel to Sri Lanka easier from south India, thus providing a boost to tourism in Sri Lanka, which is suffering from its worst-ever economic crisis. Indians are the largest source of tourists to Sri Lanka.

They will also strengthen the cultural bonds between the two regions with linguistic similarities.

Boost to religious tourism

Tamils from Sri Lanka who are Hindus often visit India for religious purposes. The majority Sinhalese population of Sri Lanka are Buddhist and frequently visit the Buddhist tourist places in India.

Similarly many Tamils from India visit the temples of Sri Lanka .The ferry service will make travel easier for pilgrims from both nations.

India is separated from Sri Lanka by a narrow channel of seas formed by the Palk Strait and Gulf of Mannar.

4. CSIR's "One Week, One Lab" countrywide campaign from 6th January, 2023 (Dec. 18, 2022)

CSIR's "One Week, One Lab" countrywide campaign

Union Minister for Science & Technology, **Jitendra Singh**, who is also the **vice president of CSIR (Council of Scientific & Industrial Research)**, on 17 December announced the launching of "**One Week, One Lab**" **countrywide campaign** from January 6, 2023.

Important facts

- Dr Jitendra Singh announced this while addressing the **200th Governing Body Meeting of CSIR** at the Science Centre in New Delhi.
- He announces Special Call for Research Grant Proposals for **Women Scientists**.
- He launched the new tagline of the organisation, "**CSIR-The Innovation Engine of India**".
- In this campaign, **37 premier laboratories/institutes** of CSIR spread across the country will showcase their unique innovations and technological breakthroughs to the people of India.
- "One Week One Lab" theme-based campaign is expected to ignite the minds of young **innovators, students, academia, and industry** to look for opportunities through deep tech Start-ups ventures.
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who is President of CSIR, had chaired the meeting of **CSIR Society on** 15th October, 2022 and appreciated the efforts of CSIR in the past 80 years.
- The Prime Minister had urged CSIR in the Society meeting to develop a vision for 2042 when CSIR turns 100 years old.

About CSIR

- CSIR was established on **26 September 1942** and was registered as the CSIR Society under the **Societies Registration Act, 1860**.
- The first meeting of the Governing Body was held on **09 March 1942** in which the bye-laws for the Council were framed.

5. India ranked 3rd globally in the publication of scientific papers; Union Minister Jitendra Singh (Dec. 18, 2022)

India ranked 3rd globally in the publication of scientific papers

According to the Union Minister for Science & Technology **Dr Jitendra Singh** India has been ranked **3rd globally** in the publication of scientific papers. Quoting the National Science Foundation (NSF)'s Science & Engineering Indicators 2022 report of the United States, India's position globally in scientific publications, has improved from **7th position in 2010 to 3rd position in 2020**. He also said that India's scholarly output increased from 60,555 papers in 2010 to 1, 49,213 papers in 2020.

China leads the world in the publication of the maximum number of scientific papers followed by The **United States of America**.

Dr Jitendra Singh also said that India now ranks **3rd** in terms of the number of PhDs in science and engineering.

The National Science Foundation is an independent agency of the United States government that supports fundamental research and education in all the non-medical fields of science and engineering.

6. 63rd session of the IHRC inaugurated in Lucknow (Dec. 18, 2022)

63rd session of the IHRC inaugurated in Lucknow

The Uttar Pradesh Minister of State (Independent Charge), Ministry of Transport, **Daya Shankar Singh** inaugurated the two day (18 and 19 December) 63rd Session of the **Indian Historical Records Committee (IHRC)** in **Lucknow** on 18 December 2022.

The two days' Session will comprise Inaugural and Business Session on the first day and Academic Session on the next day. A total of 24 papers based on the original sources of post 1600 of Indian history will be presented by the Scholars on various aspects of history.

About IHRC

The Indian Historical Records Committee (IHRC) is an all India Forum of creators, custodians and users of records which was set up in 1919 to advice the Government of India on all issues connected with the management of records and their use for historical research.

The **National Archives of India**, New Delhi is the Secretariat of Indian Historical Records Committee (re-designated Indian Historical Records Committee in 1911). The IHRC is **headed** by the Union Minister of Culture and comprises 134 members including agencies of the Government of India, nominees of the Government of India, representatives from the State/UT Archives, Universities and Learned Institutions.

Union Minister for Culture: **G.Kishan Reddy**

7. Stealth guided missile destroyer Mormugao commissioned into Indian Navy (Dec. 18, 2022)

Stealth guided missile destroyer Mormugao commissioned into Indian Navy

India commissioned its latest [**stealth guided missile destroyer, Mormugao**](#), at the **Naval Dockyard in Mumbai** on December 18.

Important facts

- Defence **Minister Rajnath Singh**, CDS Gen **Anil Chauhan**, Navy chief Admiral **R Hari Kumar** and other dignitaries were present on this occasion.
- Against the backdrop of concerns over China's growing efforts, India is focusing on enhancing its maritime capability with a focus on the Indian Ocean.

- With a focus on indigenization and self-reliance, 42 of the 44 ships and submarines under construction are being built at Indian shipyards.

About INS Mormugao

- It is the **second warship** under the **navy's Project-15B** under which two more warships will be **delivered by 2025**.
- The first P-15B warship, **Visakhapatnam**, was commissioned in Mumbai in **November last year**.
- It is indigenously designed by the **Indian Navy's Warship Design Bureau** and constructed by **Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Ltd**.
- The ship measuring **163 metres in length** and **17 metres in breadth** with a **displacement of 7,400 tonnes** can be regarded as one of the most potent warships to have been constructed in India.
- 70% of the components used in the construction of INS Mormugao are **indigenous**.
- The ship is propelled by **four powerful gas turbines** and it is capable of achieving speeds over **30 knots**.
- The ship is equipped to fight under **Nuclear, Biological and Chemical (NBC) warfare** conditions and equipped with a modern surveillance radar.

What is Project 15B?

- The contract for the four ships of **Project 15B**, known as the **Visakhapatnam class ships**, was signed on **28 January 2011**.
- The project is a follow-on to the **Kolkata class (Project 15A)** destroyers commissioned in the previous decade.
- **Four Ships** are to be developed under Project 15B -

1. Visakhapatnam
2. Mormugao
3. Imphal
4. Surat

- These four ships have been **named after major cities** from the four corners of the country. **Visakhapatnam, Mormugao, Imphal and Surat**.
- These are designed by Directorate of Naval Design, Indian Navy's in-house design organisation and built by Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Ltd, Mumbai.

8. Leo Varadkar re-elected as the Prime Minister of Ireland (Dec. 17, 2022)

Leo Varadkar re-elected as the Prime Minister of Ireland

Indian origin **Leo Varadkar** was elected as the prime minister of the Republic of Ireland for the second time on 17 December 2022. He took over from Michael Martin under an arrangement struck between their two parties under a 2020 coalition pact. Michael Martin has become the deputy Prime minister and Foreign minister.

Earlier in a special session in the lower house of the Irish parliament, **Dail** voted to approve Leo Varadkar's nomination as the prime minister. It was later also confirmed by the Irish President **Michael D. Higgins**.

After the 2020 general election Martin's Fianna Fail party and Varadkar's **Fine Gael** party entered into a coalition deal under which powers were to be shared between the two parties.

Leo Varadkar was earlier Prime Minister of Ireland from 2017 to 2020.

Republic Of Ireland

The Republic of Ireland is a western European country which shares a boundary with Great Britain.

The Parliament of Ireland is called the **Oireachtas**. The lower house of the parliament is called **Dail** and the upper house is called **Seanad Éireann** (Senate).

The term of Dail is five years.

President of Ireland: **Michael D. Higgins**

Currency: **Euro**

Capital: **Dublin**

9. External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar host a millet based lunch in New York for Top UN diplomats (Dec. 17, 2022)

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar host a millet based lunch in New York

External Affairs Minister **S Jaishankar** hosted a millets based lunch in **New York** on 15 December 2022 for the United Nations Secretary General **Antonio Guterres** and other top diplomats of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) member states to **commemorate the International Year of Millets 2023** (IYM 2023).

The External Affairs minister was in New York to chair two key UNSC debates being held under the [Presidency of India](#). India is the President of the UNSC for the month of December 2022. India's 2 year term as the non -permanent member of the UNSC ends on **31 December 2022**.

The United Nations General Assembly at its 75th session in March 2021, had adopted an Indian sponsored resolution to declare 2023 as the International Year of Millets.

In his message at the opening ceremony of the International Year of Millets at [Rome](#), the Prime Minister Narendra Modi had said that "India will steer the IYM 2023 celebrations worldwide and organise campaigns to promote the cultivation and consumption of millets,"

Millet is one of the oldest known foods to humans. They are called a superfood as they are rich in nutrients such as copper, magnesium, phosphorus, and manganese. They are low on glycaemic index.

10. Opening Ceremony of International Year of Millets 2023 held in Rome, Italy (Dec. 7, 2022)

The United Nations agency Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) hosted an opening ceremony of the International Year of Millets – 2023 (IYM2023) in **Rome, Italy** on 6 December 2022 in a hybrid mode.

An Indian delegation led by **Shobha Karandlaje**, Minister of State, Agriculture & Farmers Welfare along with other senior officials were present at the opening ceremony.

Shobha Karandlaje conveyed PM Modi's compliments to the United Nations for declaring the Year 2023 as the International Year of Millets. PM, through his message, thanked the global community for supporting India's proposal to mark the International Year of Millets (IYM).

PM Modi said that "India will steer the IYM2023 celebrations worldwide and organise campaigns to promote the cultivation and consumption of Millets, both in India and abroad during the next year."

Speaking on the occasion, Director General, FAO Mr. QU Dongyu said the IYM2023 will provide us with a unique opportunity to give visibility to crops that have great potential to strengthen global nutrition, food security.

Millets and India

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

- The total production of millets in India in 2020-21 was 17.96 million tonnes which was nearly 41% of the world production.
- **Rajasthan** was the largest millet producing state in India.
- Millets are grown in about 21 states in the country including Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Telangana, Uttarakhand, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, and Haryana.
- India was **the 5th largest exporter of millet** in the world in 2020 .

FAO (Food and Agricultural Organisation)

- The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations is a specialized agency of the United Nations that leads international efforts to defeat hunger and improve nutrition and food security.
- It was founded in 1945.
- Its headquarters is in Rome (Italy).
- It was conferred with the Nobel Peace Prize in 2020

Director General: QU Dongyu

