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1. India - France Partnership on Kaziranga Project (Dec. 6, 2022)

India - France Partnership on Kaziranga Project

India and France are collaborating under the **Kaziranga Project** in the **Kaziranga National Park in Assam**.

Important facts

- With France and India technical and financial support, the Indo-Pacific Parks Partnership will facilitate partnership activities for natural parks of the Indo-Pacific region.
- These activities include biodiversity conservation, wildlife management and engagement with local communities.

About the Kaziranga project

- The Kaziranga project is a part of a larger **Assam Project on Forest and Biodiversity Conservation (APFBC)** for which the **Agence Française de Développement (AFD)** has committed funding of €80.2 million for a 10-year period, between **2014-2024**.
- The project envisages afforestation of 33,500 hectares of land by 2024 and training of 10,000 community members in alternative livelihoods.
- The AFD program has been most effective in skill development in the area, especially in the forest dwelling communities.
- The Assam government has started a massive reforestation drive with the help of AFD.

About Kaziranga National Park

- It is a national park in the state of **Assam**, India. It is a **UNESCO World Heritage Site**. It is spread over an area of **42,996 hectares**.
- Two-thirds of the world's **one-horned rhinoceros** are found in this sanctuary.
- Kaziranga is home to the **highest density of tigers** among protected areas in the world, and was declared a **Tiger Reserve** in 2006.
- It is the largest undivided representative area of **Brahmaputra valley** floodplain grassland.
- It has been recognized by BirdLife International as an **Important Bird Area**.

2. India to become 8th largest advertising market in 2023; GroupM (Dec. 6, 2022)

India to become 8th largest advertising market in 2023

India is expected to overtake **Brazil** become the **eighth-largest** advertising market in 2023, according to [GroupM's](#) global end-of-year forecast.

In '**This Year, Next Year 2022**' report, GroupM has ranked India as the **ninth-largest advertising market globally**.

It says India's total advertising revenue in 2022 has grown by 15.8% to touch \$14.9 billion, led by growth in pure-play digital advertising. In 2023, it is expected to grow by 16.8%

According to the report, the retail media in India is estimated at \$551 million in 2022 and is expected to nearly double by 2027. TV advertising, representing 36% of the advertising market share, is expected to grow 10.8% this year and continue growing double digits, driven by strong growth in both traditional and connected TV.

Top Advertising market in the world

The United States is the largest advertising market in the world followed by (2) China, (3) Japan, (4) the United Kingdom, (5) Germany, (6) France, (7) Canada, (8) Brazil and (9th) India.

3. HAL and BEL in the top 100 defence companies list of SIPRI (Dec. 6, 2022)

HAL and BEL in the top 100 defence companies

Two Indian government owned defence companies **Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL)** and **Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL)** have been included by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute((SIPRI) in its list of **100 top defence companies in the world 2021**. In a report released by SIPRI on 5 December 2022 HAL was ranked **42nd** with \$3.3 billion in arms sales and HAL was ranked at **63rd** Rank with \$1.8 billion sales in 2021.

HAL is the manufacturer of fighter aircrafts like LCA Tejas, Su-30MKI, helicopters like LCH Prachand etc, and trainer aircrafts for the Indian Air Force. BEL manufactures advanced electronics equipment for the armed forces.

Last year apart from HAL and BEL, Indian Ordnance Factories were included in the top 100 defence companies.

Highlights of SIPRI report

In 2021, the total arms sales of the world's Top 100 totalled \$592 billion in 2021, marking an increase of **1.9 per cent** in their arms sales compared with 2020.

The **United States** has 40 companies in the top 100 defence companies in the world.

The top **5 companies are all American**.

China has 8 companies in the top 100 companies.

Country-wise, in the 2021 list,

- US companies topped with a share of 51 per cent of the total arms sales, followed by Chinese companies with 18 per cent,
- UK firms with 6.8 per cent, and
- French companies with 4.9 per cent share.

Russian companies garnered only 3 per cent of the global share.

India is the **world's second-biggest importer** of weapons after Saudi Arabia and is also the world's **third-biggest spender** on defence after the US and China.

Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI)

SIPRI is an independent international institute dedicated to research into conflict, armaments, arms control and disarmament. It is funded mainly by the Swedish Government.

It was set up in 1966

Headquarters: Solana, Sweden

4. Narendra Singh Tomar inaugurates integrated 'Agriculture Investment Portal' (Dec. 6, 2022)

Agriculture Investment Portal

Union Minister for Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, **Narendra Singh Tomar** inaugurated the integrated '**Agriculture Investment Portal**' on 6 December.

Important facts

- Agriculture Investment Portal will prove to be a milestone in terms of **investment in the agriculture sector**.
- It will be a centralised one stop portal for agri-investors to avail benefits of various government schemes implemented by various departments related to agriculture and allied sectors.
- This portal would prove to be handy for the investors, they would get a lot of help from it.
- The Co-Chairperson of Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, **Melinda French Gates** held a meeting with the Union Minister of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, Narendra Singh Tomar in New Delhi.
- The government believes that if the power of the farmers increases, then as a result, the agriculture sector will improve and production will also increase.
- With the aim to further increase investment in agriculture, the government has allocated a special package of over ₹1.5 lakh crore for agriculture and allied sectors under the '**Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan**'.
- Work on these provisions has started, including the Rs 1 lakh crore Agriculture Infrastructure Fund. Once these are implemented, the Indian agriculture sector will be rejuvenated.

5. 18th Joint Working Group meet between India, Bangladesh on security, border management (Dec. 6, 2022)

18th Joint Working Group meet between India, Bangladesh on security

A two-day **18th Joint Working Group (JWG)** meeting on security and border management between **India and Bangladesh** started on 5 December in **Delhi**.

Important facts

- Both sides will discuss strengthening the bilateral mechanism to deal with the menace of terrorism and extremism in all its forms.
- Both sides will also discuss issues to develop mechanisms to further hasten the process of verification of nationality, and status of prisoners lodged in jails of either country.
- The Indian delegation for the JWG meeting is being led by **Piyush Goyal**, Additional Secretary in the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA).
- An Additional Secretary level officer is also heading the group of eight-member Bangladeshi delegation which will discuss the issues of common concern of the two neighbouring countries that **share a 4,096 km border**.
- This Additional Secretary level meeting is related to the preparation in advance for the Home Secretary level talks between India and Bangladesh.
- The **17th Home Secretary level talks** between India and Bangladesh and the meeting of the Joint Working Group between the two countries were held in **Dhaka on November 16-17, 2015** to discuss the security and border management-related issues.
- The Indian delegation was led by the then Union Home Secretary **Rajiv Mehrishi** and the Bangladesh delegation was led by the then Senior Secretary, Ministry of Home Affairs, **Dr Md. Mozammel Haque Khan**.

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7. NSA Doval meet counterparts from Central Asian countries in Delhi (Dec. 6, 2022)

NSA Doval meet counterparts from Central Asian countries

NSA Ajit Doval welcomes dignitaries to the **first India-Central Asia meeting** of the National Security Advisers/Secretaries of Security Councils on 6 December **in New Delhi**.

Important facts

- This was the first time that the NSAs of the **Central Asian countries** were in the national capital **Delhi** for a security meeting amid the humanitarian and security situation arising in Afghanistan.
- Earlier this year, Prime Minister Narendra Modi virtually hosted the **first India-Central Asia Summit on 27 January**, which was attended by the presidents of **Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan**.
- During the Summit, Prime Minister Modi and the Central Asian Leaders discussed the next steps in taking India-Central Asia relations to new heights.
- The leaders had agreed to institutionalise the Summit mechanism by deciding to hold it every two years.
- They also agreed on regular meetings of Foreign Ministers, Trade Ministers, Culture Ministers and Security Council Secretaries to prepare a plan of action for the summits.
- An **India-Central Asia Secretariat** will be set up in New Delhi to support the new mechanism.

- The leaders discussed far-reaching proposals for cooperation in trade and connectivity, development cooperation, defense and security, cultural and people-to-people contacts.
- These include the Round Table on Energy and Connectivity, the Joint Working Group at Senior Official Level on Afghanistan and the use of Chabahar Port, the display of Buddhist exhibitions in Central Asian countries and joint counter-terrorism exercises.
- They also agreed on annual 100-member youth delegations from Central Asian countries to India and special courses for Central Asian diplomats.

8. ESIC can invest up to 15 per cent surplus funds in equity through ETFs (Dec. 5, 2022)

ESIC can invest up to 15 per cent surplus funds in equity

The Government of India has allowed Employee State Insurance Corporation (ESIC) to invest up to 15 per cent of its surplus funds into equity through **exchange-traded funds (ETFs)**.

The decision was taken at an ESIC meeting chaired by the Union labour minister **Bhupender Yadav** at the corporation's headquarters in New Delhi on 4 December 2022.

A labour ministry statement said that the decision to invest surplus funds into equity was taken due to the low returns on debt instruments and the need to diversify the corporation's portfolio. The initial investment shall start **at 5% and increase up to 15% gradually, after review of two quarters**. The investment will be confined in Exchange Traded Funds i.e., Nifty50 and Sensex. It will be managed by Fund Managers of AMCs.

New hospital in Agartala and in Idukki

ESIC approved the proposals for setting up a new 100 bedded ESIC Hospital at Shyamlibazar, **Agartala, Tripura** and 100 bedded ESIC Hospital at **Idukki, Kerala**.

Nirman se Shakti initiative

The Union Minister Bhupendra Yadav said that the '**Nirman Se Shakti**' initiative has been started to strengthen and modernize the infrastructure of hospitals and dispensaries in a phased manner.

WHAT IS ESIC

The Employees State Insurance (ESI) Scheme is one of the largest social security schemes in the world which comes under the Employees State Insurance Corporation (ESIC) under the Union Labour and Employment Ministry.

The ESIC was set up in 1952 under the ESI act 1948.

It provides medical benefits to the insured employees and their dependents under the scheme. There is no limit on the medical expense.

Who are eligible?

It is applicable on factories employing 10 or more workers.

It is applicable on shops, establishments, insurance, Non-Banking Financial Companies etc employing 20 or more persons.

Wage Limit

It provides medical insurance facility to workers earning up to Rs.21, 000/- per month (Rs.25, 000/- per month in the case of Persons with Disability).

Contribution

The insured employee has to contribute 1% of his monthly wages per month to the scheme and the employer is required to contribute 3% of the employee's wages to the Scheme.

9. NDDB, Amul to provide technical support to enhance milk production in Sri Lanka (Dec. 5, 2022)

NDDB, Amul to provide technical support to enhance milk production in Sri Lanka

According to the Sri Lankan President's office statement released on 5 December 2022 , India will provide technical support to Sri Lanka to enhance its dairy industry and milk output. India is the largest producer of Milk in the world and **National Dairy Development Board (NDDB)** played a crucial role in it.

The Sri Lankan government is being assisted by the officials of the National Dairy Development Board (NDDB) and the Gujarat Cooperative Milk Marketing Federation (GCMMF), which markets milk under the Amul brand. They will provide necessary technical support for the production of milk in Sri Lanka.

India's success in increasing the production of milk and dairy products is result of a cooperative dairy model pioneered by NDDB and its marketing done by the GCMMF which is also a cooperative .

National Dairy Development Board(NDDB)

It was set up in 1966 as a society under the Societies Act 1860. The first chairman of NDDB was Verghese Kurien . Kurien is also called as the father of White Revolution in India .

It comes under the Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying.

Headquarters: **Anand, Gujarat**

It launched operation flood in India which has made India, largest producer of milk in the world.

Gujarat Cooperative Milk Marketing Federation (GCMMF)

It is the largest food marketing organization in the country.

It was set up in 1973 and is the owner of the **Amul brand**.

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