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1. New Russian frigates will be armed with hypersonic Zircon missiles (June 24, 2023)

New-Russian-frigates-will-be-armed-with-hypersonic-Zircon-missiles

The **Commander-in-Chief** of the **Russian Navy** has recently made an announcement stating that all **new frigate and corvette class vessels of the Russian Navy** will be **equipped with hypersonic Zircon missiles**.

About Zircon Missile

- The Zircon Missile, also known as the **3M22 Zircon or SS-N-33**, is a **hypersonic cruise missile developed in Russia**.
- It is designed as an **anti-ship missile** with advanced capabilities.

Characteristics of Zircon Missile

- The Zircon Missile can achieve **speeds of over 9,500 kilometers per hour (6,000 miles per hour)**, which is approximately nine times the speed of sound.
- It is a **two-stage missile**, utilizing solid fuel in the **first stage and a scramjet motor in the second stage**.
- The missile has a range of more than **1,000 kilometers (620 miles)** and is capable of accurately pinpointing targets within that range.
- The Zircon Missile employs an **active and passive radar seeker as its guidance system**.

Hypersonic Cruise Missiles

- Hypersonic cruise missiles are a type of missile designed to travel at extremely **high speeds, typically exceeding Mach 5 (five times the speed of sound)**.
- They are propelled by rocket engines and are equipped with **guidance systems for target navigation**.
- One notable characteristic of hypersonic cruise missiles is their ability to maneuver during flight, making them difficult to track and intercept.

2. US agrees to provide market access to India's steel and aluminum products (June 24, 2023)

US-agrees-to-provide-market-access

The **United States** on 23 June has **agreed to grant market access to India's steel and aluminium products**, according to the Ministry of Commerce and Industry.

An overview of the news

- As per the agreement, the US Department of Commerce will clear **70 percent of steel and 80 percent of aluminium applications** for products originating in India.
- The decision was made during Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to the United States.
- The **Ministry of Commerce and Industry** expects this agreement to **boost India's steel and aluminium exports by approximately 35 percent**.
- The **US had restricted market access for Indian steel and aluminium products since June 14, 2018**, under the exclusion process of Section 232 of the **Trade Expansion Act 1962**.
- Under this restriction, additional duties of **25 percent and 10 percent** were imposed on steel and aluminium products, respectively.
- In response, India had implemented retaliatory tariffs on certain products, which it has now agreed to remove.
- However, the **basic import duties applicable** to all imports of steel and aluminium products will continue.

3. India and UAE signed a Mutual Recognition Arrangement for Authorized Economic Operators (June 24, 2023)

India-and-UAE-signed-a-Mutual-Recognition

India and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) on 23 June have signed a **Mutual Recognition Arrangement for Authorized Economic Operators**.

An overview of the news

- The agreement was formally signed during the **World Customs Organization's (WCO) Customs Co-operation Council meeting** held in **Brussels**.

Aim of Mutual Recognition Arrangement

- The Mutual Recognition Arrangement aims to **promote trade facilitation and ease of doing business** between the two countries.
- It establishes a framework for recognizing **Authorized Economic Operators (AEOs)** from both India and the UAE.

Significance

- The recognition of AEO status will streamline **customs procedures, reduce administrative burdens, and lower costs** for authorized businesses.
- This agreement signifies an important milestone in the **economic cooperation** between India and the UAE and is expected to **strengthen bilateral trade ties**.

- By leveraging the benefits of the Mutual Recognition Arrangement, both countries aim to enhance **trade facilitation, improve the ease of doing business, and encourage investments.**

India-UAE Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA)

- The signing of this arrangement is in line with the broader objective of the **India-UAE Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA)** signed in **February 2022.**
- CEPA aims to significantly **increase the total value of bilateral trade** in goods and services within five years.
- The Mutual Recognition Arrangement is expected to contribute to achieving the trade targets set under the CEPA, fostering **greater economic growth and cooperation** between India and the UAE.

4. 8th Global Pharmaceutical Quality Summit 2023 (June 24, 2023)

8th-Global-Pharmaceutical-Quality-Summit-2023

The **Indian Pharmaceutical Alliance (IPA)** on 23 June successfully concluded the **8th edition of the Global Pharmaceutical Quality Summit at Mumbai.**

An overview of the news

- The theme for the Summit was, **'Patient Centricity: New Paradigm of Manufacturing and Quality'**.
- The two-day Summit brought together **industry leaders, global regulators, quality experts, and stakeholders** to foster knowledge exchange and deliberate on areas of importance in shaping the pharmaceutical landscape in India.
- The event was inaugurated by **Samir Mehta**, Chairman, Torrent Pharmaceuticals and President, IPA.
- **Dr. Mansukh Mandaviya**, Union Minister for Chemicals and Fertilizers and Health and Family Welfare addressed the summit.
- India played a vital role as the "Pharmacy to the World" during the COVID-19 pandemic by ensuring a steady supply of quality medicines and vaccines across the globe.
- The Indian pharmaceutical industry has demonstrated its potential both in terms of quality and quantity.

About the Indian Pharmaceutical Alliance (IPA)

- IPA was **established in the year 1999 in Mumbai.**
- IPA represents **24 research-based national pharmaceutical companies.**
- Collectively, the IPA companies contribute to over **85 percent** of the private sector investment in pharmaceutical research and development in India.

- IPA companies are responsible for more than **80 percent** of the country's exports of drugs and pharmaceuticals.
- They also serve over **60 percent** of the domestic market in India.

5. Apple to launch its credit card in India (June 23, 2023)

Apple-to-launch-its-credit-card-in-India

Apple Inc is planning to introduce its credit card, known as **Apple Card**, in India to take advantage of the growing opportunities in the country's financial sector.

An overview of the news

- Apple intends to collaborate with **HDFC Bank** to offer Apple Card to Indian customers.
- Apple CEO **Tim Cook** met HDFC Bank CEO and MD **Shashidhar Jagadishan** during the launch of the Apple Store in India in April.
- RBI has directed Apple to follow the standard procedures set up for other co-branded credit cards.

Features of Apple Card

- Physical Apple Card users can earn up to **1% cashback** for regular purchases, which increases to **2%** when paying with **Apple Pay**.
- The cashback percentage has increased to 3% for payments made at Apple Stores and select partners.
- Apple does not charge Apple Card holders **late fees, foreign transaction fees, returned payment fees, or annual credit card fees**. However, the users are responsible for paying the interest charges levied for maintaining the balance.
- Apple Card owners have the option of opening a savings account with an **interest rate of 4.15%**, with no minimum balance requirement, to deposit their daily cash.
- Each Apple Card user receives a unique card number for each device.
- These numbers are securely stored in the device, used by Apple Pay for transactions and on-device cryptographic functions.

6. Minister of Steel inaugurates Silica Reduction Plant Project at SAIL-Bhilai Steel Plant's Dalli Mines (June 23, 2023)

Minister-of-Steel

Union Minister of Steel and Civil Aviation, **Jyotiraditya M. Scindia** virtually inaugurated the **Silica Reduction Plant at Dalli Mines of Bhilai Steel Plant of Steel Authority of India Limited (SAIL)** from New Delhi on 23 June.

An overview of the news

- SAIL's silica reduction plant was inaugurated virtually and is located at the company's **Dalli iron ore mine**.
- This enables SAIL to utilize **low-grade ore** from Dalli mines through beneficiation process.
- About **80 per cent** of the iron ore reserves present in the mine have already been utilised.
- The newly inaugurated plant will improve the **iron (Fe) content by 62-64 per cent** and reduce the silica content by **2-3 per cent**.
- SAIL Chairman **Amarendu Prakash** emphasized the need to refine iron ore of size less than 1 mm to obtain the desired grade for effective use in blast furnaces at SAIL's Bhilai Steel Plant (BSP).
- The Silica Reduction Plant has been set up with an investment of about **Rs 149 crore** and is equipped with state-of-the-art beneficiation equipment.
- Its operation will increase iron ore supply to BSP, which will lead to higher annual production from blast furnace, reduce coke consumption and reduce carbon emissions.
- SAIL, functioning under the Ministry of Steel, is one of the leading steel producers in India with an annual capacity of about **20 million tonnes**.

Bhilai Steel Plant

- It is located in **Bhilai of Chhattisgarh state**.
- A ten-time winner of the **Prime Minister's Trophy for Best Integrated Steel Plant in the country**, Bhilai Steel Plant (BSP) is a flagship unit of **Steel Authority of India Limited (SAIL)**, a Government of India undertaking.
- It produces high strength rails, heavy structures, broad and heavy steel plates of various grades, commercial products, wire rods etc. Bhilai became the first integrated steel plant in the country to cross the **5 MT mark** in crude oil production in the year 2005-06.
- Bhilai has the unique distinction of having the cleanest rail network in the world.

7. NHAI launches 'Knowledge Sharing Platform' for inclusive development of National Highways (June 23, 2023)

NHAI-launches-'Knowledge-Sharing-Platform'

The Ministry of Road Transport and Highways launched a 'Knowledge Sharing Platform' in collaboration with NHAI (National Highways Authority of India).

An Overview of the News

- The objective of this platform is **to promote inclusive development of National Highways**.
- It provides a collaborative space for experts and citizens to share ideas and knowledge.

- Topics covered include **road design, safety, construction, environmental sustainability and related fields.**
- The platform encourages exchange of best practices and innovative ideas from around the world.
- It aims to contribute to the development of **India's national highway infrastructure.**
- Minister of Road Transport and Highways - **Nitin Jairam Gadkari**

About National Highways Authority of India (NHAI)

- The NHAI was created through a promulgation of the **National Highways Authority of India Act, 1988.**
- It is **an independent organization established by the Government of India.**
- NHAI manages and maintains a vast network of more than 50,000 km of National Highways across India, which represents about 40% of the total length of National Highways in the country.
- NHAI is responsible for maintaining and upgrading the quality of National Highways in India and ensuring their smooth operation for the benefit of road users.

Establishment - **1995**

Headquarters - **New Delhi**

Objective - **Development and maintenance of National Highways**

Parent Agency - **Ministry of Road Transport and Highways of India**

8. DGCA suspends licence of Air India pilot (June 23, 2023)

Directorate-General-of-Civil-Aviation-(DGCA)

The **Directorate of Civil Aviation (DGCA)** has recently **suspended the license of an Air India pilot for one year** due to a **breach of protocol.**

An overview of the news

- The pilot allowed an individual who did not have proper authorization to enter the **cockpit of the Chandigarh-Leh flight.**
- The first officer, who was responsible for the cockpit, did not raise any concerns about the unauthorized person's presence.
- The incident occurred on the 3rd of this month during the Air India flight from Chandigarh to Leh.
- The unauthorized person remained in the cockpit throughout the duration of the flight.

- As a result of the investigation, the DGCA suspended the license of the first officer pilot for one year.
- This disciplinary action is a consequence of allowing the **unauthorized entry and failing to address the violation promptly.**
- The first officer was found to be lacking assertiveness in preventing the unauthorized entry and also failed to report the violation.

Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA)

- It is a **statutory body** and formed under the **Aircraft (Amendment) Bill, 2020.**
- It investigates aviation accidents and enforces **all regulations related to aviation.**
- It registers and provides **certificates to civil aircrafts.**
- It is attached to the **Ministry of Civil Aviation**, Government of India.
- It coordinates all regulatory functions with the **International Civil Aviation Organisation.**

9. Indian Railways signs MoU with USAID/India (June 23, 2023)

Indian-Railways-signs-MoU-with-USAID-India

Indian Railways signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the United States Agency for International Development/India (USAID/India).

An Overview of the News

- It aims **to reduce the carbon footprint of Indian Railways and achieve the mission Net Zero Carbon Emission.**
- Indian Railways is actively working towards achieving **net zero carbon emissions by 2030** and has a multi-pronged strategy.
- The **MoU was signed on June 14, 2023** by **Naveen Gulati of Indian Railways and Isabel Coleman of USAID.**
- USAID is a US government agency that supports international development in a variety of fields.
- The MoU covers areas such as **long-term energy planning, energy efficiency policy, clean energy procurement, regulatory support and bidding management** for renewable energy.

About USAID

- The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) is an **independent agency of the US federal government.**
- USAID is primarily responsible for **administering civilian foreign aid and development assistance programs.**

- The agency has a **substantial budget of over \$27 billion**, making it one of the largest official aid agencies globally.

Formation - **November 3, 1961**

Headquarters - **Washington, D.C., US**

Motto - "**From the American People**"

10. Digi Yatra app user base crosses the one million mark (June 22, 2023)

Digi-Yatra-app-user-base-crosses-the-one-million-mark

The number of passengers who have installed the **Digi Yatra application** on their mobile phones has **surpassed one million** till 20th June 2023.

An overview of the news

- Since its launch on December 1, 2022, a total of **1.746 million individuals** have utilized this facility.

About Digi Yatra

- The Digi Yatra initiative was initially inaugurated at three airports - **New Delhi, Bengaluru, and Varanasi - in December 2022.**
- Subsequently, in **April 2023**, it was introduced at **Vijayawada, Kolkata, Hyderabad, and Pune** airports, expanding its coverage.
- Digi Yatra is an initiative led by the **Ministry of Civil Aviation**, focusing on implementing a biometric boarding system utilizing **Facial Biometric Verification Technology.**
- Its primary objective is to enhance the airport experience for passengers by streamlining the verification process, eliminating the need for manual ticket and **ID checks at multiple touchpoints.**
- This is achieved through a **Digital Framework** that optimizes existing infrastructure.