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1. India and Fiji sign MoU on visa exemption for holders of diplomatic and official passports (Feb. 16, 2023)

memorandum of understanding (MoU)

India and Fiji signed a **Memorandum of Understanding** on **visa exemption for diplomatic and official passport holders** on 16 February in presence of External Affairs Minister **S Jaishankar** and Fiji Prime Minister **Sitiveni Rabuka**.

An overview of the news

- Under this agreement, holders of diplomatic and official passports will be able to **enter, transit and stay** in each other's territory without a visa for a **period of 90 days**.
- India and Fiji share close and long-standing relations and the two countries also reviewed bilateral relations.
- India and Fiji have inaugurated the **solarisation of the State House in Suva** and this is the first of a series that India is supporting in the **Pacific Islands**.
- It shows India's commitment towards **climate action**.
- The **Visa Waiver Agreement** will be helpful in encouraging greater travel between the two countries.

Republic of Fiji

- It is an archipelago consisting of around **300 islands** in the South Pacific Ocean.
- Capital: Suva
- Currency: **Fijian Dollar**
- President : **Wiliame Katonivere**
- Prime Minister: **Sitiveni Rabuka**

2. Bollywood actor Javed Khan Amrohi passes away (Feb. 15, 2023)

Javed Khan Amrohi

Bollywood actor **Javed Khan Amrohi** passed away due to **lung failure at a Mumbai hospital** on 14 February.

An overview of the news

- Amrohi is survived by a son and a daughter.
- He worked in more than **150 films** with many big stars including **Shah Rukh Khan to Aamir Khan and Salman Khan**.
- Javed Khan last worked in the **year 2020** in **Alia Bhatt and Aditya Roy Kapur starrer film 'Sadak 2'**.

- He started his career in 1973 with the film '**Jalte Badan**'.
- Apart from this, he worked in **many best films** like Satyam-Shivam-Sundaram, Prem Bandhan, Jhootha Kahin Ka, Prem Rog, Pasand Apni-Apni, Ram Teri Ganga Maili.
- Apart from this, Doordarshan's famous show '**Nukkad**' also gave him a lot of recognition, after that he also worked in Gulzar's '**Mirza Ghalib**', in which his role of a fakir was highly appreciated.
- Javed Khan was nominated for the **Academy Award for Best Actor** in 2001 for the film '**Lagaan**'.

3. WPL 2023: Smriti Mandhana created history, became the most expensive player (Feb. 15, 2023)

Smriti Mandhana

India's star opener **Smriti Mandhana** has become the **costliest player** in the ongoing player auction for the **Women's Premier League (WPL)**.

An overview of the news

- She joined **Royal Challengers Bangalore for Rs 3.4 crore** after winning the highest bid in the ongoing **Women's Premier League 2023** auction in Mumbai.
- A total of **448 players** were included in the auction, out of which **87 players** were bought by the franchises. **30 foreign players** were also involved in this.
- **Ashley Gardner (Australia)** was at **number two** in the list of expensive players. He was bought by Gujarat Giants for **Rs 3.20 crore**.
- **Natalie Sciver** is at number three. She was bought by Mumbai Indians for 3.20 crores.
- India's all-rounder **Deepti Sharma** is at **number four**. Deepti is included in UP Warriors for **2.60 crores**.
- **Jemima Rodrigues** was at **number five**. He was included in their team by **Delhi Capitals for 2.20 crores**.

About Smriti Mandhana

- Smriti Mandhana is a young and talented **left-handed Indian batsman** and former captain of the Indian women's cricket team.
- Mandhana is known for her attacking batting style and has been a consistent performer in the T20I format.
- Mandhana made her T20I debut in **April 2013 against Bangladesh**.
- In the T20 International format, he has played **65 matches and scored 1743 runs at an average of 27.61**.
- His highest score in T20 International format is 83 and he has 9 fifties to his name.

- In June 2018, the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) awarded her as the **Best Female International Cricketer**.
- In December 2018, the **International Cricket Council (ICC)** awarded her the **Rachael Hayhoe-Flint Award** for the best female cricketer of the year.

4. New Zealand declares national emergency after Cyclone Gabrielle lashes North Island (Feb. 14, 2023)

New Zealand government

The **New Zealand government** has declared a **national emergency** after **Cyclone Gabrielle** hit the North Island.

An overview of the news

- Cyclone Gabrielle causes widespread **flooding, landslides and huge ocean swells** across the North Island.
- This is an **unprecedented weather event** that is having widespread impacts across much of the **North Island**.
- Gabriel appeared over some small islands about 100 km north-east of Auckland, but is now moving south-west.

National State of Emergency in New Zealand

- A national state of emergency has been declared in New Zealand on **two previous occasions** - the **first in 2011** after a magnitude 6.3 earthquake in Christchurch and the **second** in the early days of the **COVID-19 pandemic**.

5. Viacom18 gets 'WIPL' media rights for Rs 951 crore (Jan. 17, 2023)

Viacom18 gets

On January 16, 2023, BCCI Secretary **Jai Shah** tweeted that **Viacom 18** has acquired the media rights of the **Women's Indian Premier League (WIPL)**, which is going to start from **March-April 2023**.

An Overview of the news

- Viacom18 has bought the media rights of the women's IPL **for five years from 2023 to 2027 for Rs 951 crore**.
- Viacom18 gets this deal for the next 5 years (2023-27) at **Rs 7.09 crore per match**, which is quite attractive. Because the per match price of **PSL (Pakistan Super League) organised by Pakistan is Rs 2.44 crores**.
- It is worth mentioning in this context that the per match value of **Indian Premier League (IPL) is Rs 107.5 crore**.

- The auction process for the media rights of the WIPL took place on January 16, 2023. **Disney+ Hotstar, Sony-Zee and Viacom18** were the frontrunners in the race for the media rights of the league, which was finally bagged by Viacom18.

Five franchises in WIPL

- Five of the 10 IPL franchises have confirmed to The Times of India that they are keen on buying a **women's team**.
- Their names are Chennai Super Kings, Rajasthan Royals, Delhi Capitals, Kolkata Knight Riders and Punjab Kings. All are showing interest in investing in a team in WIPL.

6. DEXA: BCCI introduces new selection criteria for Team India (Jan. 2, 2023)

The BCCI announced a major change in the **selection criteria of players** on 1st January.

Important facts

- To review the team's performance in 2022, **Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI)** president **Roger Binny** and secretary **Jay Shah** met India captain **Rohit Sharma**, head coach **Rahul Dravid** and chief selector **Chetan Sharma** on January 1.
- The future of Indian cricket was discussed in the meeting, which was also attended by National Cricket Academy (NCA) director **VVS Laxman**.
- The new criteria have been brought in to ensure the fitness of players before their selection as the team has been facing a serious injury crisis for the last one year.
- The fitness of Indian cricketers has been a matter of concern with players like **Deepak Chahar** not playing regularly.
- Fast bowler **Jasprit Bumrah** is also out for a long time due to a back injury.

What are the new selection criteria?

- The new rule brought back the **Yo-Yo test** and made it mandatory for players to be selected for the national team.
- Players must take a '**DEXA**' before being selected for the Indian team across all formats.
- Emerging players have to play enough domestic seasons to be eligible for selection in the national team.

What is a Yo-Yo test?

- The Yo-Yo test is an **aerobic endurance fitness test** that involves running between markers placed **20 metres** apart at increasing speed.
- The test was introduced during **Virat Kohli's tenure** as India captain and initially the passing score was 16.1, which was increased to 16.5.

What is Dexa?

- DEXA, also called '**bone density test**', is an X-ray technique used to measure bone strength.
- From this it can be ascertained whether there is any risk of breaking or losing bones of the test taker or whether a player is at risk of fracturing any part of the body.
- It also helps measure body composition and record **body fat and muscle mass**.

7. Rajasthan Government to provide LPG cylinder at Rs 500 per cylinder; Ashok Gehlot (Dec. 20, 2022)

Rajasthan Government to provide LPG cylinder at Rs 500 per cylinder

The Rajasthan Government will provide **12 LPG cylinders** per year to the poor families at **Rs 500 per cylinder** from 1 April 2023. This was announced by the Rajasthan Chief Minister **Ashok Gehlot** at the Bharat Jodo Yatra in Alwar on 19 December 2022.

He said the decision was taken to provide relief to the people suffering from unprecedented inflation and unemployment.

Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana (PMUY)

'Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana' (PMUY) was launched by the Prime Minister Narendra Modi on 1 May 2016 in **Ballia, Uttar Pradesh**.

Under the scheme a poor household headed by a woman is provided with a free LPG gas stove and free first LPG Cylinder.

However under the scheme the beneficiaries have to buy the subsidized LPG cylinder.

The target of the PMUY was to release **8 crore LPG connections** by March 2020 which was achieved on 7 September 2019.

PMUY 2.0

It was launched virtually by PM Modi on 10 August 2021 at **Mahoba, Madhya Pradesh**.

It aims to provide additional 1.6 crore LPG connections with special focus on migrant households.

Connection is provided to an adult woman belonging to a poor household.

The beneficiaries should belong to any of the following categories:

- Eligible as per Socio Economic Caste Census 2011 list,
- Belongs to SC/ST households, be a beneficiary of Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY), Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY), Forest dwellers, Most Backward Classes (MBC), Tea and Ex-Tea Garden Tribes, People residing in river Islands.

8. Fifth Scorpene Submarine 'Vagir' delivered to Indian Navy (Dec. 20, 2022)

Fifth Scorpene Submarine 'Vagir' delivered to Indian Navy

The **fifth submarine of the Project -75, Kalvari Class submarines, Yard 11879 (Vagir)** was delivered to the Indian Navy on 20 December.

Important facts

- Project -75 includes indigenous construction of **six submarines of Scorpene design.**
- These submarines are being constructed at **Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Limited (MDL) Mumbai**, under collaboration with M/s Naval Group, France.
- **Launched on 12 Nov 20, Vagir** commenced sea trials from 1 Feb 2022 and has completed all major trials, including weapon and sensor trials, in less time than earlier submarines.
- The construction of these submarines in an Indian yard is another step towards '**Atmanirbhar Bharat**' and instills confidence in the region.
- What is also a remarkable achievement is that this is the third submarine delivered to the Indian Navy in a span of 24 months.

Project- 75

- Project- 75 intends to build six diesel-electric attack submarines of the **Kalvari class** that are based on the **Scorpene-class**, which are being built at MDL (Mazagon Dock Limited).
- Project 75 (I), approved in 2007, is part of the **Indian Navy's 30 year Plan** for indigenous submarine construction.

9. Hrishikesh Kanitkar appointed batting coach of Indian women cricket team by BCCI (Dec. 6, 2022)

Hrishikesh Kanitkar appointed batting coach of Indian women cricket team

The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) on 5 December 2022 announced the appointment of **Hrishikesh Kanitkar** as the Batting Coach of the Senior Women's cricket team. Kanitkar will take charge of the team from the upcoming five-match T20I series against Australia starting 9th December in Mumbai.

The Indian national women cricket team has been without a head coach for the past two months since the completion of the tenure of Romesh Powar.

Romesh Powar has since joined the **National Cricket Academy (NCA), Bengaluru** as a spin bowling coach.

Hrishikesh Kanitkar was the head coach of the under -**19 men's cricket team which won the world cup held in West Indies in 2022.**

Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI)

It is the governing body of men's and women's cricket in India. It selects the Indian team for International tours and for International Cricket Council (ICC) and Asian Cup tournaments.

The BCCI is an autonomous, private organisation and does not fall under the purview of the National Sports Federation of India.

It was set up in 1928.

Grant Govan was the first President of the BCCI.

Headquarters: **Mumbai**, Maharashtra

President: **Roger Binny**

10. A fine performance by Sheldon Jackson and Jani help Saurashtra win the Vijay Hazare trophy 2022-23 (Dec. 2, 2022)

Vijay Hazare trophy 2022-23

A fine century by Sheldon Jackson (133 runs) and Chirag Jani's hat trick(3 for 43) helped Saurashtra defeat Maharashtra's to win their **second Vijay Hazare Trophy title** (2022-23) in the final played at the **Narendra Modi Stadium in Ahmedabad , Gujarat.**

Saurashtra won the Vijay Hazare Trophy for the first time in 2007-08.

Himachal Pradesh was the 2021-22 winner.

Batting first, the Maharashtra team scored 248 for 9 in their allotted 50 overs, helped by captain Ruturaj Gaikwad's fourth century in five matches in the tournament to help Maharashtra post 248 for 9. Ruturaj scored 108 runs. Saurashtra scored 249 for 5 in 46.3 overs.

Sheldon Jackson was the player of the match while **Ruturaj Gaikwad** was declared the Player of the series.

Vijay Hazare Trophy

The **Vijay Hazare Trophy** named after a famous Indian batsman **Vijay Hazare. It is an** annual domestic limited-overs cricket domestic competition. It is organized by the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI).

The tournament was started in the 2002-03 season.

Tamil Nadu is the most successful team having won the trophy five times.