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1. Dubai's airline Emirates unveils world's first robotic check-in assistant (April 29, 2023)

Dubai-based airline **Emirates** has unveiled the **world's first robotic check-in assistant** named '**Sara**'.

An overview of the news

- The system is part of a **new City Check-in and Travel Store** that is **set to launch in Dubai's Financial District**.
- In addition to the new check-in facility, Emirates passengers with a valid boarding pass will also have access to **select lifestyle amenities** at ICD **Brookfield Place**, as well as exclusive discounts and special offers at a range of **restaurants, gyms and luxury stores**.
- Passengers can connect directly to the airport via taxi or **Emirates Chauffeur Service**.
- This latest innovation from Emirates aims **to enhance the customer experience and make the check-in process more seamless and efficient**.

What is the world's first robotic check-in assistant 'Sara'?

- '**SARA**' will **match customers' faces with scanned passports**, check in passengers and guide them to the baggage drop area.
- This facility allows customers to **drop off their luggage at the airport up to 24 hours in advance** and up to 4 hours before their flight.
- Passengers can **check-in via self-check-in kiosks**, with Emirates agents at dedicated desks or with the help of Sara.
- The robot is equipped with **facial recognition technology** and can **print boarding passes** to make the check-in process more efficient. Sara is also portable and can move around to help those in need.
- Sources reveal that future iterations of the Sarah will also have weapons that can carry goods.

2. Agriculture Minister launches 'Millets Experience Centre' at Dilli Haat (April 29, 2023)

Agriculture Minister **Narendra Singh Tomar** launched the first of its kind '**Millets Experience Centre (MEC)**' at **Dilli Haat in New Delhi** on 28th April.

An overview of the news

- India has an important role to play in the celebration of the **International Year of Millets 2023**.

- India is poised to become a '**Global Hub**' for **Millets** and setting up of MEC is a major step in that direction.
- The **United Nations General Assembly** has declared the year 2023 as the **International Year of Millets (IYM 2023)**.

About Millets Experience Centre

- The **National Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Federation of India Limited (NAFED)** in association with the **Ministry of Agriculture** has set up the **Millets Experience Centre**.
- It aims **to increase awareness about millet and encourage its adoption among the general public**.
- Setting up a consumer-oriented 'Millets Experience Centre' will not only promote the dietary benefits of millets but also popularize Shree Anna (Millets) as a nutritional powerhouse.
- In addition to the unique dining experience, customers can also purchase a variety of **ready-to-eat and ready-to-cook products** from local millet start-ups at MEC.

International Year of Millet (IYOM)-2023

- The **United Nations General Assembly (UNGA)** adopted India's resolution and **declared 2023 as the International Year of millets** in March 2021.
- India's proposal received the **support of 72 countries**.
- In 2021, NITI Aayog signed a letter of intent with the **United Nations World Food Program (WFP)**.
- The partnership focuses on mainstreaming millets and helping India take a global lead in promoting its health benefits.
- The objective of this partnership is to build **resilient livelihoods for smallholder farmers and to build adaptability** to climate change and changing food systems.

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4. Germany and Britain intercepted three Russian military reconnaissance aircraft over the Baltic Sea (April 29, 2023)

Baltic Sea

The **German Air Force** on 26th April announced that it **intercepted three Russian military aircraft flying over the Baltic Sea**.

An overview of the news

- **Germany and UK Eurofighter** have been alerted to identify 3 military machines.
- The **two SU-27 flankers and one IL-20** from Russia flew again without a transponder signal in **international airspace over the Baltic Sea**.
- German and British forces were deployed to identify the two **Sukhoi Su-27 fighter aircraft and one Ilyushin Il-20 aircraft**.

- Germany handed over responsibility for **NATO's Baltic air policing mission to Britain earlier this month.**

About the Baltic Sea

- The Baltic Sea is an **arm of the Atlantic Ocean located in northern Europe.**
- It is a **shelf sea and marginal sea of the Atlantic**, with limited water exchange between the two, making it an inland sea.
- The Baltic Sea is **one of the largest brackish inland seas by area.**
- It is bordered by **Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Russia, Sweden, and the North and Central European Plain.**
- The **maximum depth is 459 m (1,506 ft).**
- The **Helsinki Convention** on the Protection of the Marine Environment of the Baltic Sea Region covers the Baltic Sea.

5. Summit on Farm Machinery Technology (April 28, 2023)

Union Minister of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare **Narendra Singh Tomar** on 27th April inaugurated the **Summit on Farm Machinery Technology**, organized by the **Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) and the Tractor and Mechanisation Association (TMA) in New Delhi.**

An overview of the news

- In his address, Tomar said, there are about **85 percent of small farmers in the country**, who should get the **benefit of technology and machinery.**
- **From 2014-15 to 2022-23**, an amount of **six thousand 120 crore 85 thousand rupees** has been released to the states for various activities like **training, testing, establishment of CHCs, hi-tech hubs and farm machinery banks.**
- Apart from this, **15 lakh 24 thousand lakh agricultural machinery and equipment** have been distributed through state governments at subsidized rates, which include **tractors, power tillers and automated machinery.**
- The summit was attended by stakeholders including **original equipment manufacturers, policy planners, suppliers, and product development and design firms.**

About Confederation of Indian Industry (CII)

- CII is a **non-profit and non-governmental organisation.**
- The objective of CII is **to achieve a conducive environment for the development of industry and civil society in India.**
- It was **established in 1895.**

- It has over **8,000 members from both the public and private sectors.**
- Headquarter : **New Delhi**
- President : **Sanjiv Bajaj**

6. India-UK NET Zero Innovation virtual centre (April 28, 2023)

India and the United Kingdom have agreed to create an **India-UK Net Zero Innovation Virtual Centre.**

An overview of the news

- The center will provide a platform for stakeholders from both countries to work together in areas such as **manufacturing processes, transportation systems and decarbonization of green hydrogen as a renewable source.**
- This was announced by Science and Technology Minister **Dr Jitendra Singh** at a meeting of the **India-UK Science and Innovation Council meeting** in the presence of **United Kingdom Minister George Freeman.**
- India is fast marching towards becoming an economic powerhouse driven by its extraordinary technology and innovation.
- India is committed to achieve its **climate change and environment goals within the stipulated time period.**
- **Energy efficiency and renewable energy are the central pillars**, where India has already taken the lead through various initiatives like **Solar Alliance and Clean Energy Mission.**
- Dr Jitendra Singh is leading a **high-level official Indian delegation** from the **Ministry of Science and Technology** on a six-day visit to the United Kingdom.

United Kingdom

- The inclusion of **Northern Ireland in Great Britain is called the United Kingdom.**
- That is, the United Kingdom is a kingdom consisting of **England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.**
- The **Queen of England** is the **head of both the United Kingdom/Britain.**
- The **capital of the United Kingdom/Great Britain is London.**

7. Total enrolment under Atal Pension Yojana crossed 5.20 crore mark (April 28, 2023)

Atal Pension Yojana (APY)

The Finance Ministry has said that the **total enrollment under the Atal Pension Yojana (APY)** has crossed the figure of **five crore 20 lakh till March 31 this year.**

An overview of the news

- The scheme envisages enrollment of **more than one crore 19 lakh new subscribers** in the financial year **2022-23 as compared to 99 lakh in the previous financial year, showing a growth of over 20 per cent.**
- According to the ministry, the total assets under management in APY is more than **Rs 27 thousand 200 crore** and the scheme has earned an **investment return of 8.69 per cent since the inception of the scheme.**
- In the public sector banks (PSBs) category, **nine banks achieved the annual target**, while Bank of India, State Bank of India and Indian Bank opened more than a hundred APY accounts per branch, according to ministry data.
- Under the category of **Regional Rural Banks (RRBs), 32 banks achieved the annual target**, while Jharkhand State Gramin Bank, Vidarbha Konkan Gramin Bank, Tripura Gramin Bank and Baroda Uttar Pradesh Gramin Bank opened more than 160 APY accounts per branch.

About Atal Pension Yojana

- Atal Pension Yojana is a guaranteed pension scheme of the Government of India administered by the **Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority (PFRDA).**
- The scheme allows any citizen of India between the age **group of 18-40 years** to join through bank or post office branches where the person has a savings bank account.
- Under this scheme, a subscriber will receive a **minimum guaranteed pension of Rs 1000 to Rs 5000 per month from the age of 60** years, depending on his contribution.
- On the death of the subscriber, the **pension is guaranteed to the spouse for life.**
- In the event of death of both the subscriber and his/her spouse, the **full pension amount is paid to the nominee.**

8. Pennsylvania Recognizes Diwali as an Official State Holiday (April 27, 2023)

The **United States state of Pennsylvania** officially recognized the Hindu festival of **Diwali as a state holiday.**

An Overview of the News

- State **Senators Greg Rothman and Nikil Saval** introduced legislation to make **Diwali a state holiday in February this year.**

- The **bill was passed unanimously by the Senate**. According to My Twin Tears,
- there are approximately 200,000 South Asian residents in Pennsylvania, many of whom celebrate Diwali as a time to gather and reflect.

Pennsylvania:

- It is a state **located in the northeastern region of the United States of America**.
- It is one of the **original 13 colonies** that **declared independence from Great Britain** and **became a kingdom on December 12, 1787**.
- The state's capital is **Harrisburg**, and its largest city is **Philadelphia**, which is known as the **birthplace of the United States of America**.
- Pennsylvania is **bordered by six other states, including New York to the north, New Jersey to the east, Maryland to the south, West Virginia to the southwest, Ohio to the west, and Lake Erie to the northwest**.
- The state has a diverse geography, including the **Appalachian Mountains in the central and eastern parts of the state**, the Allegheny Plateau in the western part of the state, and a coastal plain in the southeastern part of the state.

9. Ministry of Finance approves Navratna status to Rail Vikas Nigam (April 27, 2023)

The Government of India upgraded the status of **Rail Vikas Nigam Limited (RVNL) to 'Navratna' Central Public Sector Enterprise (CPSE)**.

An Overview of the News

- Prior to this upgrade, RVNL was earlier classified as a **'Miniratna' CPSE**.
- The decision to upgrade RVNL was approved by the **Finance Minister and is effective from April 26, 2023**.
- RVNL is a **mid-cap company** under the Ministry of Railways.
- For the year 2021-22, RVNL has an annual turnover of **Rs 19,381 crore and a net profit of Rs 1,087 crore**.
- This upgrade makes RVNL the **13th Navratna company among CPSEs in India**.

About Navratna CPSE

- It is a **select group of public sector enterprises** in India that have been granted greater **autonomy in decision making and financial management by the government**.
- The term "**Navratna**" means "**Nine Gems**" in Hindi and refers to the original **nine CPSEs that were granted this status in 1997**.

- Navratna CPSEs are also subject to certain obligations, such as **achieving certain performance targets and maintaining minimum levels of public shareholding.**
- Some examples of Navratna CPSEs include **Bharat Electronics Limited, Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Limited and Power Grid Corporation of India Limited.**

List of Navratna Companies in India 2023

1. Shipping Corporation of India Limited
2. Rashtriya Ispat Nigam Limited
3. Oil India Limited
4. NMDC Limited
5. Neyveli Lignite Corporation Limited
6. National Building Construction Corporation Limited
7. National Aluminum Company Limited
8. Mahanagar Telephone Nigam Limited
9. Hindustan Aeronautics Limited
10. Engineers India Limited
11. Container Corporation of India Limited
12. Bharat Electronics Limited

10. WHO issues alert over India-made cough syrup Guaifenesin (April 27, 2023)

The **WHO** has issued a red alert due to "**unacceptable amounts of diethylene glycol and ethylene glycol**" in the tested samples of **Guaifenesin TG syrup** manufactured by **Punjab-based QP Pharmachem Ltd.**

An overview of the news

- The World Health Organization has said that a **consignment of this contaminated cough syrup** made in India has been found in the **Marshall Islands and Micronesia.**
- Guaifenesin is used to **relieve the symptoms of cough and tightness in the chest.**
- Samples of Guaifenesin Syrup TG Syrup from the Marshall Islands were analyzed and it was found that the product contained **unacceptable amounts of Diethylene Glycol and Ethylene Glycol as contaminants.**

- Ingestion of diethylene glycol and ethylene glycol are **toxic to humans, and can prove fatal.**
- The latest alert comes months after the **WHO linked another cough syrup made in India to child deaths in Gambia and Uzbekistan.**
- **India is the world's largest exporter of generic drugs**, which meet most of the medical needs of developing countries.
- But in recent months, several Indian companies have come under scrutiny for the quality of their drugs, with experts **raising concerns about the manufacturing practices used to make these drugs.**