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1. Border Security Force (BSF) started a seven-day "Operations Alert" exercise (Jan. 24, 2023)

The **Border Security Force (BSF)** has started an "**Operations Alert**" exercise to enhance security along the **Indo-Pak border** in Kutch district of Gujarat and Barmer in Rajasthan in view of the upcoming Republic Day celebrations.

An overview of the news

- The 'Operations Alert' exercise commenced on **January 21** and will continue till **January 28** "all along the Indo-Pak international border from **Sir Creek (marshy area) to the Rann of Kutch in Gujarat and Barmer district of Rajasthan.**
- The BSF will carry out special operations in the depth areas as well as in the creek and '**Harami Nala**' as part of the exercise.
- It has also planned public outreach programs as part of the exercise.
- The Indo-Pak border along Kutch in Gujarat is sensitive as several Pakistani nationals have been caught in the past after entering Indian waters on fishing boats.
- To enhance security, for the first time concrete "**permanent vertical bunkers**" are being built to deploy BSF troops in the strategically important Sir Creek and Harami Nala marshy areas.

Sir Creek

- Its original name is **Baan Ganga** which is named after a **British representative Sir Creek.**
- It is a **96 kilometre long strip** of water disputed between India and Pakistan in the **Rann of Kutch marshlands.**
- It opens into the **Arabian Sea and divides the Kutch region of Gujarat** from the **Sindh province of Pakistan.**

Harami Nala

- It is also known as the **Sir Creek area.**
- This area is a **22 km long** and about **8 km wide marshy area** which is navigable most of the time.

2. Union Petroleum Minister flags off low carbon cruise on Mahabahu Brahmaputra (Jan. 24, 2023)

Union Petroleum Minister flags off low carbon cruise on Mahabahu Brahmaputra

Union Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas, Housing and Urban Affairs, **Hardeep S Puri** on 24 January inaugurated the demo-run of **Inland Water Vessel** powered by **Methanol blended Diesel (MD15)**.

An overview of the news

- The boat ride was conducted on a **50-seater motor launch marine vessel** named '**SB Gangadhar**'.
- The ocean liner is equipped with two **Ruston-made diesel engines (105 hp engine each)**.
- The boat will be run on **MD-15 (15% methanol mixed HSD)**.
- Methanol is a low carbon hydrogen carrier fuel produced from high ash coal, agricultural residues, CO₂ from thermal power plants and natural gas.
- This is the best route to meet India's commitment to **COP 21**.
- Slightly lower in energy content than petrol and diesel, methanol can replace both these fuels in the transport sector (road, rail and marine), energy sector.
- NITI Aayog's '**Methanol Economy**' program aims to reduce India's oil import bill, greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and convert coal reserves and municipal solid waste into methanol.
- **India Energy Week 2023** (IEW 2023) to be held in **Bengaluru from 6-8 Feb 2023**.

About India Energy Week

- It is the first major event under India's G20 Presidency, which follows Prime Minister Narendra Modi's pledge at COP26 to cut **India's emissions to net-zero by 2070**.
- Organised under the aegis of the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas, India Energy Week is the only and all-encompassing international energy event supported at the highest level by the Government of India.
- The week is being organised with the participation of all **Public Sector Undertakings (PSUs)**.
- It is officially supported by the **Federation of Indian Petroleum Industry (FIPI)**.

3. NABH and HSSC Sign MoU for Skilling Initiatives of Healthcare Professionals Across the Country (Jan. 24, 2023)

National Accreditation Board for Hospitals & Healthcare Providers (NABH) and **Healthcare Sector Skill Council (HSSC)** signed a **Memorandum of Understanding** on 21 January.

An overview of the news

- The objective of the MoU is to accredit HSSC certification for NABH accreditation, develop training programs for essential skilling, reskilling and upskilling of healthcare professionals.
- The MoU was signed by **Dr. Atul Kochhar**, CEO, National Accreditation Board for Hospitals and Healthcare Providers (NABH) and with **Ashish Jain**, CEO, Healthcare Sector Skill Council (HSSC).
- This collaboration will help in achieving the goal of enhancing the quality of healthcare in India.

Healthcare Sector Skill Council (HSSC)

- It is a **National Council for Vocational Education and Training (NCVET)** recognized awarding body working under the ambit of Ministry of Skill Development & Entrepreneurship (MSDE).
- It aims to develop qualifications, learning resources, training programmes, assessment and certification mechanisms for skilling, reskilling and upskilling of professionals and facilitate placement and apprenticeship opportunities.

National Accreditation Board for Hospitals & Healthcare Providers (NABH)

- It is a constituent board of the **Quality Council of India** established to set up and administer programs for healthcare organisations.
- The board is structured to meet the desired needs of the consumers and to set benchmarks for the progress of the healthcare industry.
- The Board enjoys complete functional autonomy in its operations, despite being supported by all stakeholders including industry, consumers, and government.

4. Pradhan Mantri Rashtriya Bal Puraskar-2023 (Jan. 24, 2023)

President of India, **Droupadi Murmu** conferred the “**Pradhan Mantri Rashtriya Bal Puraskar**” instituted by the **Ministry of Women and Child Development** to 11 exceptional children on 23 January.

An overview of the news

- This year the award has been given to **11 children from 11 States/UTs**, who represent the diversity of the nation for their exceptional achievements.
- This year's awardees include one in the category of bravery and social service, two in the category of innovation, three in sports and four in art and culture.
- Out of **11 awardees, 5 are girls and 6 are boys**.

- **Smriti Zubin Irani** also released a book "**Young Heroes of India**" on Bal Veer during the ceremony, who presented the first copy to the President of India.

Pradhan Mantri Rashtriya Bal Puraskar

- Every year, the Government of India presents the '**Pradhan Mantri Rashtriya Bal Puraskar**' for exceptional achievement to children in the age group of 5 to 18 years.
- The awards are given to the children for their achievements in 6 categories - **Art & Culture, Bravery, Innovation, Scholastic, Social Service and Sports** which are worthy of national recognition.
- Each awardee receives a medallion, a cash prize of **Rs.1,00,000/-**, a certificate and a citation.

Awardees of Pradhan Mantri Rashtriya Bal Puraskar -2023

S. no	name	category	state
1,	Aadithya Suresh	Art & Culture	Kerala
2.	Aditya Pratap Singh Chauhan	Innovation	Chhattisgarh
3.	Anoushka Jolly	Social Service	Delhi
4.	Hanaya Nisar	Sports	Jammu & Kashmir
5.	Kolagatla Alana Meenakshi	Sports	Andhra Pradesh
6.	M.Gauravi Reddy	Art & Culture	Telangana
7.	Rishi Shiv Prasanna	Innovation	Karnataka
8.	Rohan Ramchandra Bahir	Bravery	Maharashtra
9.	Sambhab Mishra	Art & Culture	Odisha
10.	Shauryajit Ranjitkumar Khaire	Sports	Gujarat

11.	Shreya Bhattacharjee	Art & Culture	Assam

5. US President Biden nominates Julie Turner as North Korea human rights envoy (Jan. 24, 2023)

US President **Joe Biden** has nominated **Julie Turner** as **special envoy for human rights in North Korea** on 24 January.

An overview of the news

- The move to fill the post, which has been **vacant since 2017**, comes amid debate over human rights issues as well as efforts to counter Pyongyang's nuclear weapons program.
- Julie Turner is currently the **director for East Asia and the Pacific** in the State Department's Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor.
- Turner has served in the office for East Asia and the Pacific for more than 16 years, primarily focusing on initiatives related to the **promotion of human rights in North Korea**.
- The post of special envoy had become controversial in South Korea as the previous administration tried to bring North Korea to the negotiating table.
- Some activists said that human rights had been sidelined due to national security priorities.
- North Korea has repeatedly denied allegations of human rights abuses and blamed the sanctions for the dire humanitarian situation.
- **A landmark 2014 United Nations report** on North Korean human rights concluded that North Korean security chief and leader **Kim Jong Un** should face justice for Nazi-style atrocities.

6. Ministry of AYUSH ties up with ITDC to promote Medical Value Travel in India (Jan. 24, 2023)

Ministry of AYUSH ties up with ITDC to promote Medical Value Travel in India

The **Ministry of AYUSH** has **signed an MoU with India Tourism Development Corporation (ITDC), Ministry of Tourism, to promote Medical Value Travel in Ayurveda and other traditional systems of medicine.**

An overview of the news

- The MoU was signed by Dr. Shashi Ranjan Vidyarthi, Director, Ministry of AYUSH and Shri Piyush Tiwari, Director (Commercial & Marketing), ITDC.
- Under the MoU, the Ministry of AYUSH will provide training to ITDC officials to sensitise them about the medical value of travel in Ayurveda and other traditional systems of medicine.
- The implementation and progress of the MoU will be monitored by a Joint Working Group (JWG), which will be co-chaired by representatives of the Ministry of AYUSH and ITDC.
- JWG will also identify best practices adopted by Malaysia, Singapore and Thailand etc. to promote themselves as preferred destinations for medical value travel.
- The opportunities and challenges to promote **Medical Value Travel in India were discussed by the G20 delegates at the recently concluded first G20 Health Working Group meeting under the chairmanship of India in Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala.**

Medical Value Travel

- Medical Value Travel is created to promote itself as a quality healthcare destination for patients around the world.
- According to the Global Wellness Institute (GWI) report 'The Global Wellness Economy: Looking Beyond Covid', the global wellness economy will grow at a rate of 9.9 percent annually.
- The AYUSH based **healthcare and wellness economy is estimated to grow to \$70 billion by 2025.**

7. Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) Film Festival (Jan. 24, 2023)

Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) Film Festival

The Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) Film Festival will be **organised by the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting** through the National Film Development Corporation (NFDC) **in Mumbai from January 27 to January 31, 2023.**

An overview of the news

- The SCO Film Festival is being organised during the Presidency of India in the SCO.
- The festival aims to build cinematic partnership, act as a bridge between the cultures of different countries in the SCO and create harmony among the film communities of the SCO members through a collective cinematic experience.
- A total of 57 films from SCO countries will be screened at the SCO Film Festival. In which 14 feature films will be screened in the competition section and 43 films will be screened in the non-competition section.

- Marathi film Godavari directed by Nikhil Mahajan and Gujarati film 'The Last Film Show' directed by Pan Nalin have been nominated from India.
- Shoojit Sircar's Sardar Udham, SS Rajamouli's period film RRR SCO focus are included in the country.

About SCO

- SCO is a multilateral organisation, which was **established on 15 June 2001**.
- **Headquarters - Beijing, China**
- **Member Country**
- Eight member countries - China, India, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Pakistan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan
- three observer states - Belarus, Iran and Mongolia

8. 'Moidams' nominated for UNESCO World Heritage Site (Jan. 23, 2023)

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has selected the 'Pyramids of Assam' as the country's sole nomination for the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) World Heritage Site out of 52 heritage sites.

An overview of the news

- The Ahom-era **'Moidams' (cemetery of the royal family)** in **Assam's Charaideo district** will be India's only nomination for recognition as a UNESCO World Heritage Site.
- The 'Moidams' of the Ahom dynasty at Charaideo were first included in the tentative list of UNESCO World Heritage Site in April 2014.
- **'Moidams' will be nominated in the category of cultural sites.**
- **India currently has 40 World Heritage Sites** - 32 of them cultural sites, seven natural sites and one mixed site.
- Currently, Kaziranga National Park and Manas National Park in Assam in the Northeast are among the seven natural sites while there is no World Heritage Site in the cultural heritage category.

About UNESCO:

- The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) is a specialised agency of the United Nations (UN).
- It is also a member of the United Nations Sustainable Development Group (UN SDG), a coalition of United Nations agencies and organisations that aims to meet the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

- Headquarters:- Paris, France
- Director General: -Audrey Azoulay
- Founded:- 16 November 1945 in London, United Kingdom
- The organisation has -193 members and 11 associate members.

9. PM Modi named 21 islands of Andaman and Nicobar after Paramveer Chakra awardees (Jan. 23, 2023)

Modi named **21 islands of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands** after **21 Param Vir Chakra awardees** on the auspicious occasion of Parakram Divas organised to mark the 126th birth anniversary of Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose on 23 January.

An overview of the news

- The Prime Minister also unveiled the model of the **National Memorial dedicated to Netaji** to be built on **Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose Island**.
- PM and Home Minister Amit Shah participated in the program organised in Andaman-Nicobar through video conference.
- In 2019, the museum related to Netaji was inaugurated at the **Red Fort in Delhi**.
- The eldest Anam Island was named after the first Paramveer Chakra Award winner, the second largest Anam Island was named after the second Paramveer Chakra Award winner.
- This step will be an everlasting tribute to our heroes, many of whom made the ultimate sacrifice protecting the sovereignty and integrity of the nation.
- The **Ross Islands** were renamed **Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose Islands** in 2018 to honor Netaji's sacrifices.

Islands to be named after the following Param Vir Chakra winners

- Major Somnath Sharma, Subedar and Honorary Captain (then Lance Naik) Karam Singh, MM 2nd Lt. Rama Raghoba Rane, Naik Jadunath Singh, Havildar Major Piru Singh Capt GS Salaria, Lt. Col. (then Major) Dhan Singh Thapa, Subedar Joginder Singh, Maj. Shaitan Singh, Abdul Hameed, Lieutenant Colonel Ardeshir Burjorji Tarapore, Lance Naik Albert Ekka, Major Hoshiar Singh, Second Lieutenant Arun Khetrapal, Flying Officer Nirmaljit Singh Sekhon, Major Ramaswamy Parameswaran, Naib Subedar Bana Singh, Captain Vikram Batra, Lieutenant Manoj Kumar Pandey, Subedar Major (then Rifleman) Sanjay Kumar and Subedar Major Retd Grenadier Yogendra Singh Yadav

10. Aska police station of Odisha's Ganjam district became the country's number one police station (Jan. 23, 2023)

Aska police station in Ganjam district of Odisha was awarded as **number one police station** by Home Minister Amit Shah during the DGSP/IGSP conference 2022 held at National Agricultural Science Complex, New Delhi.

An overview of the news

- Aska police station got this title in the annual ranking of police stations for the year 2022.
- On this occasion, Aska police **station in-charge Inspector Prashant Kumar Sahu was awarded the prestigious award** along with a citation by the Home Minister.
- **Gangapur police station in Odisha's Ganjam district** has been awarded the **second best police station** award.
- **Banbasa police station in Champawat district of Uttarakhand** has been selected as the **third best station**.
- **Sadar Bazar police station was adjudged the best police station in the year 2021** while Gangapur police station was awarded the second best police station award.
- The ranking of police stations across the country is an annual exercise by the Ministry of Home Affairs. The rank is decided on the basis of 165 different parameters such as crime rate, investigation and disposal of cases, infrastructure and public service delivery.