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ISRO to launch weather satellite INSAT-3DS on February 17

- Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) will launch meteorological satellite INSAT-3DS on February 17 with the GSLV-F14/INSAT-3DS mission set for lift off at 5.30 pm from SDSC-SHAR, Sriharikota.
- This will be ISRO's second launch in the current calendar after the successful launch of XPoSAT from Sriharikota on January 1 in PSLV's 60th flight.
- The current mission is fully funded by the **Ministry of Earth Sciences**.
- The mission's primary objectives are to monitor Earth's surface, carry out oceanic observations and its environment in various spectral channels of meteorological importance, provide the vertical profile of various meteorological parameters of the atmosphere to provide the data collection and data dissemination capabilities from the Data Collection Platforms and to provide satellite aided search and rescue services.

INSAT-3DS

- It is a follow-on mission of Third Generation Meteorological Satellite from geostationary orbit. It is designed for enhanced meteorological observations and monitoring of land and ocean surfaces for weather forecasting and disaster warning.
- The satellite will augment the Meteorological services along with the presently operational INSAT-3D and INSAT-3DR satellites.



GSLV-F14

- GSLV is a three-stage 51.7 m long launch vehicle with a liftoff mass of 420 tonnes.
- The first stage (GS1) comprises a solid propellant (S139) motor having a 139-tonne propellant and four earth-storable propellant stages (L40) strap-ons, each carrying 40 tonnes of liquid propellant.
- The second stage (GS2) is also an earth-storable propellant stage loaded with 40-ton propellant.
- The third stage (GS3) is a cryogenic stage with a 15-ton propellant loading of liquid oxygen (LOX) and liquid hydrogen (LH2).

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World Marathon record holder Kelvin Kiptum dies in road accident

- The men's marathon world record holder, **Kenya's Kelvin Kiptum**, 24, has died in a road accident in his home country.
- He was killed alongside his coach, **Rwanda's Gervais Hakizimana**, in a car on a road in western Kenya.
- Kiptum made a breakthrough in 2023 as a rival to compatriot Eliud Kipchoge - one of the greatest marathon runners.
- Kiptum bettered Kipchoge's record, **clocking the 26.2 miles (42km) in two hours and 35 seconds in Chicago** last October.
- The two athletes had been named in Kenya's provisional marathon team for the Paris Olympics later this year.

MARATHON WORLD RECORD HOLDER KELVIN KIPTUM DIES



Dubai will have the world's first air taxi

- At the World Government Summit 2024, Dubai signed agreements to launch the world's first air taxi service.
- The agreements will pave the way for the deployment of a city-wide electric aerial taxi service and a vertiport network.
- **Joby Aviation S4** is an innovative aircraft designed to accommodate four passengers along with a pilot.
- It is powered by four battery packs and has a **maximum range of 161 km and a top speed of 321 km per hour.**
- It has Vertical take-off and landing capabilities and is ideal for urban areas.
- It will reduce noise pollution compared to helicopters. **The air-taxi network will commence its operations in 2026.**
- The air taxi is an important step toward a more sustainable and accessible transportation future.



The statue of the late General Rawat, India's first CDS, was unveiled in Dehradun by Rajnath Singh

- On February 12, the life-size statue of India's first Chief of Defense Staff, the late General Bipin Rawat, was unveiled by Defense Minister Rajnath Singh in Dehradun.
- The Defense Minister described General Rawat as a courageous soldier who will remain an inspiration for the coming generations.
- On 1 January 2020, **General Rawat was appointed as the first CDS**, one of the most significant reforms in the military history of the country.
- Lauding the decision to install the statue on the school premises, Rajnath Singh said it aims to educate children about the valor of the armed forces and inculcate patriotism and dedication in them.



India-Bangladesh open trade through Maia (West Bengal)-Sultanganj (Bangladesh) river ports

- India and Bangladesh started the first trial movement of vessels between Maia Port in India and Sultanganj Port in Bangladesh on February 12, 2024.
- The first Cargo vessels carrying stones from Maia port have been flagged off by **Shantanu Thakur**, Indian Minister of State for Ports, Shipping, and Waterways.
- **The riverine distance between Maia port and Sultanganj port is 16km.** Out of which, 4.5km of waterways is in India, and the remaining 11.5km are in Bangladesh.
- The route from Maia to Dhubri via Aricha shortens the journey by 930 kilometres.

The trial of using the Indo Bangladesh Protocol (IBP) Route no 5 & 6 will help in reducing the time of transportation.



Assam Cabinet approved a bill to ban 'magical healing' in the state

- The Assam Healing (Prevention of Evil) Practices Bill, 2024, has been passed by the Assam cabinet.
- It has banned magical healing practices in the name of treatment.
- The bill will provide relief to victims of fraudulent magical treatments.
- The bill proposes imprisonment and fines in the case any individual is found guilty of engaging in illegal practices of magical healing.
- Magical healing is generally used for treating diseases such as deafness, dumbness, blindness, physical deformities, and autism.
- The state cabinet also approved the establishment of the **Wildlife Safari & Rescue Centre in Namdang Reserved Forest, Dibrugarh district.**
- It will have international-standard safaris for herbivores, carnivores, and bird aviaries.
- The cabinet also approved the **Village Defence Organisation (Amendment) Bill, 2024**, and amendments to the **Assam Municipal Act, 1956.**
- The proposed bill defines the roles and responsibilities of three state municipal cadres: Assam Urban Administrative Service, Assam Urban Engineering Service, and Assam Urban Financial Service.



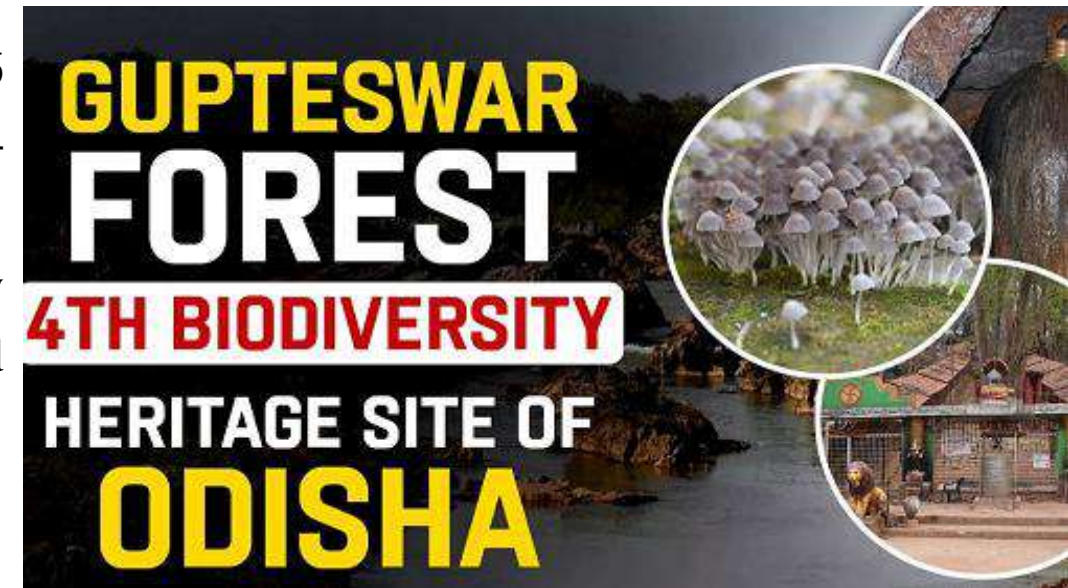
Center of Excellence launched by IIT Guwahati to boost health sector

- The Center of Excellence on Smart Wearable Advanced Nano Sensing Technologies in Healthcare ACISs (**SWASTHA**) was inaugurated by S Krishnan, Secretary, Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) and Rajeev Ahuja, Acting Director, IIT Guwahati.
- It was launched with state-of-the-art ISO five and six clean room facilities at the centre of the **Department of Nanotechnology of the institute.**
- The SWASTH project aims at intensive technological innovation, startup support, sustainability, entrepreneurship, and revenue generation.
- The SWASTH project will revolutionize the healthcare industry through advanced nanoelectronic theranostic devices, focusing on micro/nanoelectronics and nanomaterials for healthcare and energy applications.
- Additionally, the ISO five and six clean room facilities focus on increasing awareness of micro or nanoelectronics manufacturing, facilitating industrial research and development, and supporting the Indian Nano Electronics User Programme.



Gupteswar Forest in Odisha has been declared a Bio-Diversity Heritage site

- Gupteswar Forest in Koraput district has been declared the fourth biodiversity heritage site (BHS) of Odisha.
- The other three are- Mandasaru BHS in Kandhamala district, Mahendragiri BHS in Gajapati district, and Gandhamardan BHs in the Bargarh and Bolangir districts.
- It is spread over more than 350 hectares area of land. The local community traditionally worships its sacred grove.
- The Odisha Biodiversity Board has conducted the biodiversity inventory and survey.
- It shows that 608 faunal species, including 28 species of mammals, 188 species of birds, 18 species of amphibia, 48 species of reptiles, 43 species of moths, and 141 species of butterflies, have been found in this area.
- Eight species of bats out of the total 16 species found in southern Odisha have been found in the limestone caves of Gupteswar.
- This Bio-Diversity Heritage site has 182 species of trees, 76 species of shrubs, 177 species of herbs, 69 species of climbers, 14 species of orchids, and threatened medicinal plants.
- The state government has also directed the Odisha Biodiversity Board to prepare a long-term plan for intensive conservation and development of these sites with the help of local communities.



Paytm E-commerce has changed itself to Pai Platforms

- The Registrar of Companies gave official approval to rebranding.
- **The name of Paytm E-Commerce Private Limited has been changed to Pai Platforms Private Limited.**
- Elevation Capital is the largest shareholder in the Pai Platforms.
- Paytm E-commerce has also acquired the Bitsila, a key seller platform operating with the ONDC.
- Innobits Solutions Private Limited operates under the name of Bitsila. It was launched in 2020.





National Creators Awards announced by the government for new age influencers

- 'National Creators Awards' announced by the government to recognize new age influencers and creators and celebrate India's digital creator economy.
- The 'National Creators Awards' aims to highlight the diverse voices and talents shaping India's development and cultural narrative, driving positive social change, and fostering innovation and creativity in the digital sector.
- The National Creators Awards, which honour digital innovators and content creators for their significant contributions to India's digital ecosystem, have been announced by MyGov India.
- The award recognizes exceptional creativity and innovation across more than 20 categories, including storytelling, social change advocacy, environmental sustainability, education, gaming, and more.

- The '**Disruptor of the Year**' award is given to a creator who has challenged the status quo by bringing significant change or innovation in his or her field.
- The '**Celebrity Creator of the Year**' recognizes a high-profile creator who has leveraged their celebrity status to influence positive change and set an example for creative and influential online content.
- The '**International Creator Award**' honors foreign-based creators who are helping enhance India's culture and soft power.
- The '**Tech Creator Award**' is for those who uncover the secrets of technology while providing insights, reviews, and recommendations on the latest gadgets and innovations.
- The selection process involves a combination of the nomination phase, screening of nominations, followed by public voting, and jury review.
- The winners will be announced based on a combination of jury and public votes.
- The aim of the National Creators Awards is to inspire, recognise, and celebrate the transformative potential of digital media in building more inclusive, participatory, and empowered societies.



PM Street Vendor's Atmanirbhar Nidhi (PM SVANidhi)

**A Special Micro-Credit Facility
for Street Vendors**



PM-SVANidhi increased the annual income of street vendors by Rs 23,000

- According to a study, the first tranche of 10,000 provided under the PM-SVANidhi has increased the annual income of 23,460 street vendors.
- This study was carried out by the **Centre for Analytical Finance of the Indian School of Business (ISB)**.
- PM SVANidhi was launched in 2020 to help street vendors resume their livelihoods impacted by the Covid-19 lockdown.
- PM-SVANidhi portal shows that 60.65 lakh first-term loans, 16.95 lakh second-term loans and 2.43 lakh third-term loans have been disbursed.
- This study covered 5,141 vendors across 100 urban local bodies in 22 states.
- As per the report, 95% of those surveyed said that the PM-SVANidhi loan was their first-ever bank loan. 72% of the surveyed people said that it was their first business loan.
- 94% of those beneficiaries who had availed the first loan of Rs 10,000. As per the study, 13.9% of all the loans disbursed had been declared as non-performing assets (NPAs).
- The NPAs were the highest during the Covid-19 pandemic and declined over time.
- The study found that after the launch of PM SVANidhi, there had been no significant improvement in the street vendors getting formal credit from other sources.
- **According to the survey, there hasn't been much of an improvement in street sellers receiving credit from other sources.**

Tawangchu Tides International Kayaking Championship-2024 started in Arunachal Pradesh

- The three-day Tawangchu Tides International Kayaking Championship-2024 started in the Tawang District of Arunachal Pradesh.
- The Deputy Commissioner of the Tawang District inaugurated the championship at Dongshengmang in Bongleng village.
- 51 Kayakers from different countries participated in the event.
- This event was organized by an organization called **“SWYTCH”**.
- The main goal of this event is to make Arunachal Pradesh a global hub for kayaking.
- **Kayaking is a fun water sport using a kayak, which is a narrow boat with a double-blade paddle to move on water.**



The sub-plan for PM Matsya Kisan Samriddhi-Yojana approved by the government

- Pradhan Mantri Matsya Kisan Samriddhi Sah-Yojana, a Central Sector Sub-Scheme under Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada for the fisheries sector, has been approved by the Union Cabinet.
- A total of Rs 6000 crore has been earmarked for this scheme in the next 4 years.
- Out of the total, Rs 3,000 crore will come from public finance, including World Bank and AFD external financing, and the remaining 50% will be contributed by private sector beneficiaries.
- This sub-scheme will help in creating a National Fisheries Digital Platform to provide work-based identification to 40 lakh small and micro enterprises.
- This scheme will be implemented in all states and union territories for 4 years, from FY 2023-24 to FY 2026-27.
- In addition, the extension of the Fisheries Infrastructure Development Fund (FIDF) for another 3 years up to 2025-26 has also been approved by the Cabinet.
- The government approved the fund size of 7522.48 crore rupees and budgetary support of 939.48 crore rupees.

