

❖ Former Indian captain MS Dhoni's iconic No.7 jersey retired by BCCI

- India's former cricket captain, the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) has reportedly decided to retire the iconic No. 7 jersey carried by MS Dhoni.
- Although Dhoni retired from international cricket in August 2020, he remains active in franchise cricket and will lead the Chennai Super Kings in the upcoming season of the Indian premier League.
- While wearing the No. 7, Dhoni led India to three white-ball ICC titles: the T20 World Cup in 2007, the ODI World Cup in 2011, and the Champions Trophy in 2013.
- This decision follows the BCCI's official retirement of Sachin Tendulkar's No. 10 jersey in 2017.
- The BCCI has informed the national team that the jersey numbers worn by Dhoni (7) and Tendulkar (10) are no longer available, even for new players entering the team.

❖ Oman Sultan to arrive in India for three-day state visit

- The Head of State of the Sultanate of Oman, Sultan Haitham bin Tarik, will be arriving in India for his three-day state visit.
- He comes with a high-level delegation of senior ministers and officials.
- India and Oman share a long-standing friendship rooted in historical, cultural, and economic ties.
- The people-to-people contact between the two countries can be traced back 5,000 years.

➤ The diplomatic relations between the two countries were established in 1955, and the relationship was upgraded to a strategic partnership in 2008.

➤ This will be the first state visit of Oman's Sultan Haitham bin Tarik to India and marks a significant milestone in the diplomatic relations between India and the Sultanate of Oman.

➤ In 2018, Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Oman marked a significant chapter in bilateral relations between the two countries.

➤ **About Oman:**

➤ **Capital:** Muscat

➤ **Currency:** Omani Rial

➤ **The Sultan of Oman:** Haitham bin Tarik

❖ **Denmark introduces green tax on air passengers from 2025**

➤ Denmark agreed to impose a tax on air passengers to help finance the airline industry's transition to greener practices, which will be gradually phased in from 2025.

➤ The government in November proposed imposing an average tax of 100 Danish crowns (\$14.35) on air travel to help finance the industry's green transition, which aims to enable all domestic flights to use 100% sustainable fuels by 2030.

➤ The tax will by 2030 reach around 50 Danish crowns (\$7.35) per passenger for intra-European flights, 310 crowns for medium-distance flights, and 410 for long-distance.

➤ Transit flights leaving after a stop-over in a Danish airport will be exempted.

➤ **About Denmark:**

➤ **Capital:** Copenhagen

➤ **Currency:** Danish Krone

➤ **Prime Minister:** Mette Frederiksen

❖ **RBI authorises Bandhan Bank to disburse pensions on behalf of Indian Railways**

- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has authorised Bandhan Bank to disburse pension through e-PPOs on behalf of the railway ministry.
- This authorisation will allow Bandhan Bank to give pensions to all former employees of the Ministry of Railways.
- Bandhan Bank will also get an access to around 50,000 Indian Railways retirees every year on average across all offices, including 17 zonal railways and 8 production units of Indian Railways.
- The Indian Railways is the biggest employer in the country, employing nearly 1.2 million people.
- The bank will soon work together with the Ministry of Railways to start the process of giving out pensions.
- Bandhan Bank's net profit more than tripled for the quarter ended September 2023 to Rs 721 crore.
- The net profit rose by a massive 245%, compared with Rs 209 crore in the last-year period.
- **About Bandhan Bank**
- **CEO:** Chandra Shekhar Ghosh
- **Founder:** Chandra Shekhar Ghosh
- **Founded:** 2001
- **Headquarters:** Kolkata, West Bengal

❖ **Indian Navy & IIT Kanpur join forces to drive innovation through research partnership**

- Indian Navy and Indian Institute of Technology Kanpur, signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) at Naval Headquarters, New Delhi, symbolising their commitment to promote technology development, innovative solutions and joint R&D.
- IN and IIT Kanpur share common interest in academic exchange of scientific research activities in the field of Engineering related to defence technologies.
- The MoU would serve as a broader framework and enable both sides to enhance capacity building, provide solutions to field level issues and enhance training effectiveness through exchange of faculty/ guest lectures.
- The structured collaboration focuses on joint Research and Development initiatives involving teams from Centre of Excellence at INS Shivaji, Lonavla and IIT Kanpur.
- This Strategic alignment signifies a move towards a symbolic relationship between the academia and the armed forces, fostering a conducive environment for innovation and knowledge exchange.

❖ **Canara HSBC Life Insurance launches 'Alpha Wealth' plan with option to alter premiums**

- Canara HSBC Life Insurance has launched '**Alpha Wealth**' plan with comprehensive features to ensure financial security for the insured and their family.
- It also encourages long-term savings with loyalty additions and wealth boosters
- The product offers an array of options by investing in a wide variety of funds - debt/equity/liquid available in the market.
- Investors are also entitled to a return of 100% of the mortality charges deducted during the policy term.

➤ The product offers increased flexibility, allowing investor to alter premiums, premium payment term, policy term and sum assured to accommodate changing financial requirements.

➤ The insurance plan is flexible in terms of providing to choose from three plan options based on the life stages: **‘Alpha Invest Plus,’ ‘Alpha Premium Plus,’ or ‘Alpha Life Plus.’**

❖ **Govt approves declaration of Surat Airport as International Airport**

➤ The Union Cabinet approved the proposal to declare Surat Airport as an International Airport.

➤ This strategic move promises to unlock unprecedented economic potential, making Surat a key player in the international aviation landscape.

➤ Surat Airport will not only become a gateway for international travelers but also facilitate seamless export-import operations for the thriving diamond and textile industries.

➤ It added that this strategic move promises to unlock unprecedented economic potential, making Surat a key player in the international aviation landscape and fostering a new era of prosperity for the region.

➤ Elevating Surat Airport to international status is paramount for enhancing economic growth, attracting foreign investment and bolster in diplomatic ties.

➤ With a surge in passenger traffic and cargo operations, the airport's international designation will provide a crucial impetus for regional development.

❖ **Indian-American medical student Rijul Maini crowned Miss India 2023**

➤ Rijul Maini, a medical student from Michigan, recently crowned Miss India USA 2023 in New Jersey.

➤ Saloni Rammohan and Sneha Nambiar secured Miss Teen and Mrs India USA titles, respectively.

- Greeshma Bhat and Ishita Pai Raikar were first and second runners-up.
- Model and medical student Rijul Maini aspires to be a surgeon, aiming to inspire women globally.

❖ **Savita Ladage has been honoured with the Royal Society of Chemistry's Nyholm Prize**

➤ Professor Savita Ladage, who lives in Mumbai, has been named winner of the Royal Society of Chemistry's Nyholm Prize for Education in recognition of contributions to chemistry education.

➤ Based at Homi Bhabha Centre for Science Education, Tata Institute of Fundamental Research, Professor Ladage won the prize for enthusiastically advocating the importance of chemical education, through mentoring chemistry educators and initiating teacher and student programs that promote chemistry education in India.

➤ All the winners join a prestigious list of past winners in the RSC's prize portfolio, 60 of whom have gone on to win Nobel Prizes for their work, including 2022 Nobel Laureate Carolyn Bertozzi and 2019 Nobel laureate John B Goodenough.

➤ Professor Ladage also receives £5000, a medal and a certificate.

❖ **SBI Mutual Fund buys 1.5% stake Karur Vysya Bank for Rs 190 crore**

➤ SBI Mutual Fund acquired shares of scheduled commercial bank Karur Vysya Bank for Rs 190 crore through open market transactions.

➤ According to the bulk deal data available with the BSE and NSE, SBI Mutual Fund (MF) purchased a total of 1,20,00,000 shares, amounting to a 1.5 per cent stake in Karur Vysya Bank.

➤ The shares were picked at an average price of Rs 162 apiece on both bourses, taking the combined aggregate deal size to Rs 194.40 crore. Details of the sellers could not be ascertained.

➤ Shares of Karur Vysya Bank rose 1.32 per cent to close at Rs 164.90 apiece on the BSE and gained 0.52 per cent to settle at Rs 164.70 per piece on the NSE.

❖ **India's fastest' solar-electric boat Barracuda launched**

➤ The Barracuda, India's fastest solar-electric boat, was ceremoniously launched at the Navgathi Panavally Yard in Alappuzha, Kerala.

➤ It is jointly developed by Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders and Navalt, the cutting-edge Barracuda stands as a testament to collaborative innovation in the maritime sector, The Barracuda which is named after the swift long fish, is designed by Navalt for workboat purposes.

➤ It Boasts a top speed of 12 knots and a remarkable range of 7 hours on a single charge, the 14-meter long and 4.4- meter wide vessel is equipped with twin 50 kW electric motors, a marine-grade LFP battery, and 6 kW solar power.

➤ It can accommodate 12 passengers, promising a noise-free, vibration-free, and pollution-free journey.

❖ **Pune Surpasses China, Clinches Guinness World Record For Largest Reading Activity**

➤ In a momentous occasion for India, Pune has etched its name in the prestigious 'Guinness World Record' book by hosting the largest reading activity in collaboration, surpassing China's previous record. The previous record, held by China, stood at 2,884 simultaneous readers.

➤ On December 14th, 2023, from 8-10 am at SP College, a remarkable total of 3,066 parents gathered to read aloud to their children, creating a magical atmosphere and leaving an indelible mark in history.

➤ The Pune Municipal Corporation (PMC), along with the Maharashtra government, Savitribai Phule Pune University (SPPU), National Book Trust (NBT), and Sir Parashurambhau (SP) College organized the event with the ambitious goal of setting a Guinness World Record.

❖ **NASA PACE Mission 2024: Mission To Study Environmental Changes On Earth**

➤ NASA is gearing up to enhance our understanding of Earth's atmosphere with the upcoming Plaknton, Aerosol, Cloud, Ocean Ecosystem (PACE) mission, scheduled for launch in early 2024.

➤ **About PACE Mission:** The mission will employ, advanced polarimeters to study the interplay of light, aerosols, and clouds, contributing to a deeper comprehension of their impact on air quality and climate. The PACE mission will not only analyse aerosols but also delve into studying the colour of the ocean.

➤ The primary science instrument for PACE is the Ocean Colour Instrument (OCI) which is designed to measure the ocean's colour across a spectrum from ultraviolet to shortwave infrared.

➤ It will feature two polarimeters – the Spectro-polarimeter for Planetary Exploration (SPEXone) and the Hyper Angular Research Polarimeter (HARP2).

➤ This mission scheduled to launch no earlier than Feb. 6, 2024, on a SpaceX Falcon 9 rocket from Space Launch Complex 40 at Cape Canaveral Space Force Station in Florida.

➤ **About NASA(National Aeronautics and Space Administration):**

➤ **Established:** July 29th , 1958

➤ **Administrator:** Bill Nelson

➤ **Headquarter:** Washington, USA

❖ Arvind Kejriwal and Punjab CM Mann Initiate Scheme For Doorstep Services

- Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann and AAP national convenor Arvind Kejriwal recently launched the “Bhagwant Mann Sarkar, Tuhade Dwaar” scheme in Ludhiana, marking a historic day for the state.
- This initiative, inspired by the successful Delhi Model, aims to revolutionize governance by providing doorstep delivery of essential services.
- Mann and Kejriwal inaugurated the “Mobile Sahayaks,” a fleet of delivery men adorned in distinctive yellow T-shirts featuring Mann’s image.
- These sahayaks will play a crucial role in providing doorstep delivery of 43 critical services to the citizens of Punjab.
- The launch event took place at the cycle valley in Dhanansu village, Ludhiana, where Mann expressed his optimism for a citizen-centric model that could be a beacon for the entire nation.
- **About Punjab:**
- **Chief Minister:** Bhagwant Mann
- **Capital:** Chandigarh
- **Governor:** Banwarilal Purohit