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Pradhan Mantri Rashtriya Bal Puraskar 2024 will be given to 19 children

- President **Droupadi Murmu** will confer the **Pradhan Mantri Rashtriya Bal Puraskar 2024** to **19 exceptional children** in an award ceremony that will take place at Vigyan Bhawan on January 22.
- The Puraskar will be conferred upon 19 children selected from all regions of the country for their exceptional achievements in the field of Art and Culture (7), Bravery (1), Innovation (1), Science & Technology (1), Social Service (4), and Sports (5).
- There are nine boys and 10 girls among the awardees, belonging to 18 states and Union Territories, including two aspirational districts.
- The awards are conferred upon the children in the **age group of 5-18 years** for their excellence in seven categories, which deserve national recognition.
- Each awardee of PMRBP is given a medal and a certificate.
- The awards are given by the **Ministry of Women and Child Development** headed by the Union Minister Smriti Irani.





YS Jagan Mohan Reddy inaugurated the Statue of Social Justice

- The Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh, **YS Jagan Mohan Reddy** unveiled the 125 feet Bronze statue of Dr BR Ambedkar at Swaraj Maidan in **Vijayawada**.
- Termed as "**Statue of Social Justice**", it pays tribute to the contributions of DR BR Ambedkar and seeks to inspire future generations for an egalitarian society.
- The **125 feet Bronze statue of Dr BR Ambedkar** stands on a pedestal of 81 feet taking the total height to 206 ft.
- **Built at the cost of 400 crores** in about 18 acres, the Swaraj Maida also houses Dr BR Ambedkar Chaitya Museum, a convention centre, a colonnade with mural art works of life events of BR Ambedkar along with a musical fountain and a garden.

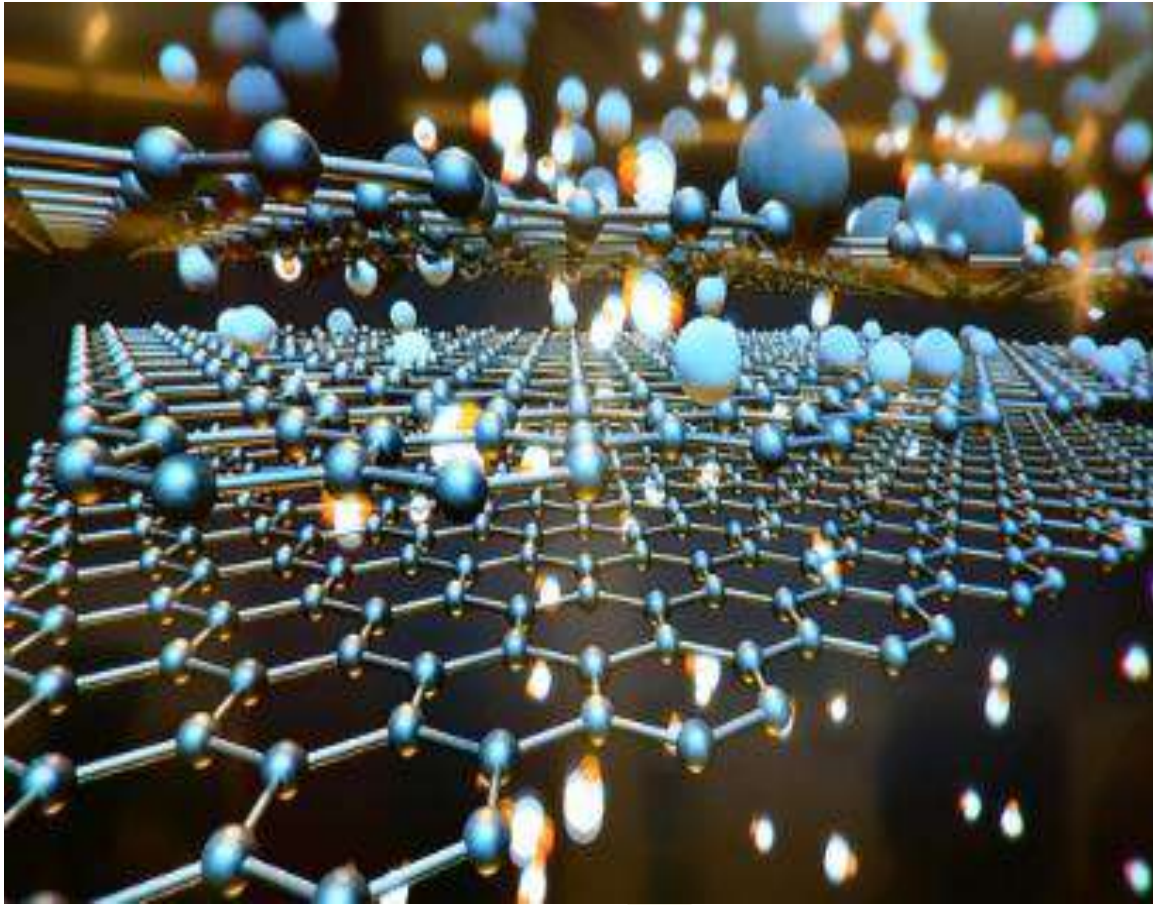
2023 Annual Status of Education Report (ASER)

- According to the Annual Status of Education Report (ASER) 2023, nearly 43% of children in the **14-18 age group** cannot read sentences in English, while among their rural counterparts, 25% struggle to read a Class 2 level text in their respective regional language, while more than half of them struggle with simple division problems.
- The ASER 2023 '**Beyond Basics**' survey was conducted in 28 districts across 26 states, reaching a total of 34,745 youths in the age group 14-18 years. This report is given by **“PRATHAM”** foundation
- Across enrollment categories, females (76 per cent) do better than males (70.9 per cent) in reading a Class 2 level text in their regional language.
- In contrast, males do better than their female counterparts in arithmetic and English reading.
- **The youths were surveyed on 4 points :**
- Basic reading, math and English abilities; Application of basic skills to everyday calculations;
- Reading and understanding written instructions; and
- Financial calculations that need to be done in real life.

Annual Status of Education Report



Facilitated by PRATHAM



India's first 'India Innovation Center for Graphene' (ICG) launched in Kerala

- **Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY)** Secretary S Krishnan launched a Centre of Excellence (CoE) in Intelligent Internet of Things (IIoT) Sensors and **India's first graphene centre** - India Innovation Centre for Graphene (ICG) in **Kerala**.
- The CoE in IIoT Sensors is a unique facility established at Makers Village Kochi by MeitY, Government of India and Government of Kerala to catalyse the development of sensors within the realm of Intelligent IoT systems covering a broad spectrum of applications of intelligent sensors in networks, devices and sensor systems.
- Further, the **India Innovation Centre for Graphene (ICG)** has also been established at **Makers Village Kochi** by MeitY and Government of Kerala along with **Tata Steel Limited**.
- This program aims to unite key figures from industries, startups, investors, academia, and R&D organisations involved in electronics hardware design and manufacturing.

‘Artificial Reef Project’ to boost fish production in Kerala

- Union Minister of Fisheries Sri. **Parshotham Rupala** launched the project of depositing artificial reefs in the seabed in **Vizhinjam, Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala** via Videoconferencing.
- The project, a joint initiative of the Central and State governments, is aimed at increasing the income of fishermen by enhancing the fish population in the region.
- The project is being implemented under **Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana** with a total outlay of 13.02 crore. Out of this, 7.812 crore is being provided by the Central Government and 5.208 crore is the State government’s share.
- Kerala State Coastal Area Development Corporation implements the project with technical assistance from the Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute.
- In the first phase, **6,300 artificial reefs** will be laid in 42 fishing villages from Pozhiyur to Varkala in Thiruvananthapuram district.
- These reefs create an artificial habitat on the sea floor, creating favourable conditions for fish breeding and their sustainable survival.



Apple Surpasses Samsung as Top Smartphone Maker for the first time since 2010

- **Apple Inc.'s** iPhone dethroned **Samsung Electronics** Co. devices to become the best-selling smartphone series over the course of 2023, the first time South Korea's largest company has lost the top spot since 2010.
- The iPhone accounted for a fifth of the global market with close to 235 million shipments last year, **research firm IDC** estimates. Samsung, whose shipments slumped double-digits to 226.6 million, came in second, ahead of Chinese device makers like Xiaomi Corp.
- While Apple has dominated the holiday quarter in recent years, its surge ahead of Samsung over a full year is unprecedented and suggests Apple is weathering an industry wide slump better than rivals.



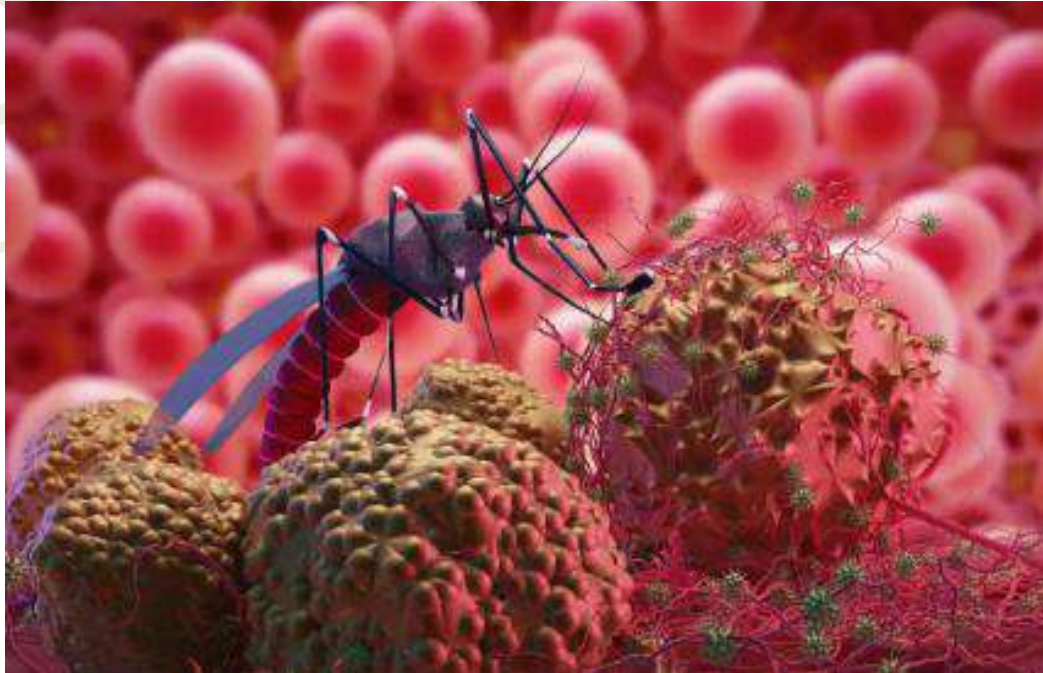
Chinese-developed nuclear-powered battery can last 50 years without charging

- **Betavolt** a company in **China** has developed a battery that it says can last longer than the devices it powers.
- The **nuclear-powered BV100** is smaller than a coin and can provide power for 50 years without the need for recharging.
- The prototype battery harnesses energy released by nuclear isotopes and uses semiconductors to convert that energy into electrical power.
- The battery could enable devices like smartphones to operate indefinitely without recharging or drones to fly without landing.
- Unlike traditional batteries, this nuclear battery operates safely under extreme conditions, from temperatures of 120 to minus 60 degrees Celsius (248 to minus 76 Fahrenheit), and is resistant to punctures and gunfire without catching fire or exploding.
- The underlying principle of the nuclear batteries is isotope technology. It captures energy from the nuclear decay of radioactive elements.



Cape Verde 3rd African country to be declared malaria-free

- Recently, the **World Health Organization (WHO)** has declared **Cabo Verde as a Malaria-free country**.
- Cabo Verde now joins Mauritius and Algeria as the third country in the WHO African region to be certified as malaria-free.
- WHO certifies a country as malaria-free when it demonstrates the interruption of nationwide malaria transmission for at least **3 consecutive years** and has a fully functional surveillance and response system preventing re-establishment of indigenous transmission.
- Till now, WHO has awarded the '**malaria-free**' certification to 43 countries and 1 territory.
- **South East Asian Region: Maldives** (2015) and **Sri Lanka** (2016) are certified malaria-free by WHO.
- India is not certified as Malaria free.



Gianni Infantino Honored with Sports Personality Award in Dubai

- **FIFA** President **Gianni Infantino** has received the award for **International Sports Personality of the Year** at the Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum Creative Sports Awards ceremony in **Dubai, United Arab Emirates**.
- Inspired by Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum's love of sport, the awards were established in 2009, and recognise individual achievement in a broad range of sport-related fields.
- International recipients have been eligible since 2012, and the International Sports Personality of the Year is the highest international honour, acknowledging innovators who develop sport and increase fair competition.
- The awards committee also commended Infantino's role in launching qualitative initiatives, including the expansion of the FIFA World Cup to 48 teams, a strategic pillar for FIFA's objectives over the next four years.
- **FIFA (Federation Internationale de football Association)**
- **Founded in:** 21st May 1904
- **Headquarters:** Zurich, Switzerland
- **President:** Gianni Infantino



India has 9th Largest Gold Reserves in the World

- **India** has been ranked **ninth** globally with most gold reserves in third quarter (Q3) of 2023, ahead of **Saudi Arabia, UK and UAE**, according to a latest data released by the **World Gold Council (WGC)**. It has **800.78 tonnes**, valued at 48,157.71 million dollars.
- **US ranked first** with 8,133.46 tonnes of gold reserves, valued at 489,133 million dollars, according to the WGC list.
- Germany is in the second spot with estimated gold reserves of 3,352 tonnes whereas, Italy, France, and Russia have occupied third, fourth, and fifth spots respectively.
- In terms of domestic production, Karnataka is the largest producer of gold in India.
- **Karnataka** produces 80% of the gold in India while, it is known as the **Land of Gold**, and **Kolar Gold Fields** is the largest gold mine in the country and is located in Kolar.





ICICI Bank Canada Launches 'Money2India (Canada)' Mobile Banking App

- **ICICI Bank Canada**, a wholly-owned subsidiary of ICICI Bank Limited, has introduced its latest mobile banking app, '**Money2India (Canada)**,' providing Canadian customers with a seamless platform for **24/7 fund transfers** to any Indian bank without the necessity of opening an account with ICICI Bank Canada.
- This App Enables Canadian customers to transfer funds to any Indian bank 24/7 without opening an account with ICICI Bank Canada, with a transaction limit of **CAD 30,000**.
- The app is safe and secure as it has implemented the latest security standards prescribed for digital channels, along with two factor authentication including a dynamic One-Time-Password (OTP) as an added layer of security.
- **ICICI Bank**
- **Established:** 5th January 1994
- **Headquarters:** Mumbai, Maharashtra
- **Chairman:** Girish Chandra Chaturvedi
- **MD & CEO:** Sandeep Bakshi

Daljit Singh Chaudhary became Director General of Sashtra Seema Bal

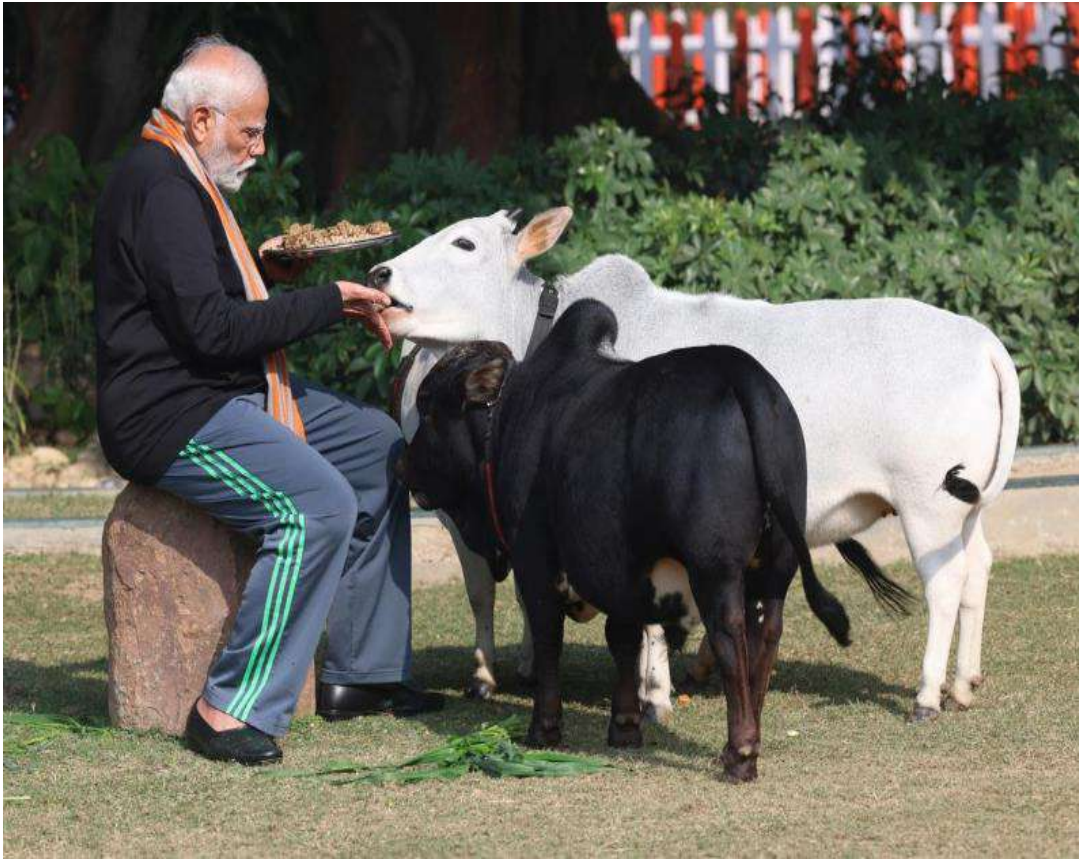
- Senior IPS officer **Daljit Singh Chaudhary** has been appointed as New Director General of **Sashtra Seema Bal (SSB)** as per the order released by the Personnel Ministry on 18 January 2024.
- The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC) has approved his appointment for a period up to **November 30, 2025**.
- He is a 1990 Batch IPS officer of the Uttar Pradesh cadre. He currently holds the post of Special Director of the General of the **Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF)**.
- He replaced **Anish Dayal Singh** (extra charge) who was given charge after former DG Rashmi Shukla became the first DG of Maharashtra Police.
- **About Sashtra Seema Bal (SSB):**
 - Sashtra Seema Bal was incepted in 1963 in the wake of the Indo-China War of 1962. Its motto is **'Service Security Brotherhood'**. It is one of the Central Armed Police Forces under the **Ministry of Home Affairs**.
 - Sashtra Seema Bal guards the **Indo-Nepal and Indo-Bhutan border**.



**Daljit Singh
Chaudhary**

New Director General

of SSB



The Punganur Cow- India's shortest Humped cattle Breed

- The Prime Minister fed cows of the **Punganur breed** of Andhra Pradesh on the occasion of Pongal/ Makar Sankranti.
- **About Punganur Cow Breed:** The Punganur cow is an indigenous breed native to the **Punganoor, Vayalapadu, Madanapalli,** and Palamaneer talukas of **Chittoor district** in the Rayalaseema region of southern **Andhra Pradesh**.
- They're a distinctive dwarf breed, recognized as the '**World's Shortest humped cattle**' (standing at just around 70-90 cm tall and weighing less than 200kg).

- According to **20th livestock Census** conducted in 2019, the total number of Punganur was recorded at 13,275, which included 9,876 pure and 3,399 graded heads of cattle.
- The Andhra Pradesh government has launched "**Mission Punganur**" to boost the cattle population using IVF technology. Centre has also sanctioned funds for the promotion of Punganur and other indigenous breeds of cattle in Telangana.