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ISRO Young Scientist Programme 2024 (YUVIKA)

- The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) introduces the Young Scientists Programme “**YUva Vigyna KAryakram (YUVIKA)**” to foster the innate curiosity of children and youth towards space science.
- YUVIKA aims to impart fundamental knowledge on Space Science, Technology, and Applications, particularly targeting rural areas.
- Students currently enrolled in **class 9** as of January 1, 2024, within India are eligible to apply for YUVIKA – 2024, They can register on ISRO **Antariksha Jigyasa Platform**.
- The program includes two weeks of classroom sessions, practical experiments, hand-on activities featuring CANSAT and robotic kits, interactions with ISRO scientists, and educational field trips.
- Having previously held sessions in 2019, 2022 and 2023, YUVIKA has garnered substantial participation nationwide, with over 1.25 lakh registrations recorded for the 2023 edition.

Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO):

- **Established in:** 15 August 1969
- **Headquarters:** Bangalore, Karnataka
- **Chairman:** Sreedhar Somanath



According to Bureau of Energy Efficiency data, Karnataka is the leading state in EV infrastructure development



- **Karnataka** has emerged as the frontrunner in India's **electric vehicle (EV)** infrastructure development, boasting the highest number of public charging stations according to **Bureau of Energy Efficiency** statistics.
- Karnataka leads with 5,059 public EV charging stations, surpassing **Maharashtra** and **Delhi**. Maharashtra follows with 3,679 stations and Delhi with 1,886. Other states with notable numbers include Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan.
- In Karnataka Bengaluru Urban district leads with 85% of Karnataka's charging infrastructure, boasting 4,281 charging stations. Bengaluru Electric Supply Company Limited has played a crucial role, witnessing a significant surge in EV registrations from 2022 to 2023.
- **Uttar Pradesh** leads in Electron Vehicles adoption with 7.45 lakh vehicles, followed by Maharashtra and Karnataka.
- Nationally, there are 16,721 operational public charging stations, with 80% charge point operators. Public sector undertakings have installed 4,994 charging stations, led by **Indian Oil Company**. Private sector entities, with **Ujoy Technology** at the forefront, have established 11,277 charging stations.
- **Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE)**: is an agency of the Government of India, under the Ministry of Power, created in March 2002 under the provisions of the nation's 2001 Energy Conservation Act.

India's First Indigenous Spy Satellite by TASL set for SpaceX Launch

- India is preparing to launch its **first spy satellite** developed by **Tata Advanced Systems Ltd (TASL)** aboard a **SpaceX rocket** in April. This satellite, designed for discreet information gathering, will bolster the country's defense capabilities by providing real-time monitoring and ground control.
- The electro-optical spy satellite has been assembled by Tata Advanced Systems Limited to meet specific imagery reconnaissance requirements of the armed forces who currently rely on foreign satellite inputs or expensive data purchases from overseas vendors. It will provide imagery with 0.5-metre spatial resolution.
- The ground control centre, which will be set up in **Bengaluru**, is also being worked on and is expected to be operational soon. This will be used for guidance and processing the imagery sent by the satellite.
- **Tata Advanced Systems Ltd.** Tata Advanced Systems Limited is an Indian aerospace manufacturing, military engineering and defence technology company. It is a fully owned subsidiary of Tata sons.
- **Headquarters:** Hyderabad, Telangana
- **Founded:** 2007



1 million US Dollars to Poverty and Hunger Alleviation Fund Given by India

- India has contributed 1 million US dollars to the Poverty and Hunger Alleviation Fund, which was established by **India**, **Brazil**, and **South Africa** (IBSA) to alleviate poverty and hunger.
- The cheque was handed over by India's Permanent Representative to the United Nations, Ambassador **Ruchira Kamboj**, to the Director of the United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation (UNOSSC), **Dima Al-Khatib**.

About IBSA Fund

- The IBSA Fund is an initiative established jointly by India, Brazil, and South Africa in March 2004.
- Became operational in 2006 with the ultimate goal of identifying replicable and scalable projects that can be disseminated to developing countries as examples of best practices in combating poverty and hunger on a demand-driven basis.
- Since it was established, the IBSA Fund has distributed over \$44 million and supported 35 development projects in 31 countries. As of 2020, there are a total of 8 ongoing projects, 24 completed projects, and 4 projects under preparation for implementation.
- India has been a consistent contributor to the IBSA fund, having donated US\$15.1 million to date. India was the IBSA Chair in 2021 under the theme "**Democracy for Demography and Development.**"



1 Million US Dollars
To Poverty and Hunger
Alleviation Fund
Given by India

Shashi Tharoor conferred France's Highest Civilian Medal

- On February 21, 2024, French authorities awarded Indian Member of Parliament and author **Shashi Tharoor** the distinction of '**Chevalier de la Legion d'Honneur**' (Knight of the Legion of Honour) – the highest French civilian honour. It recognizes his long-standing contribution in fostering Indo-French ties.
- Dr Shashi Tharoor is an acclaimed writer, former diplomat and currently a parliamentarian affiliated to Indian National Congress party representing Thiruvananthapuram constituency in the Lok Sabha.
- In 2019, Dr. Shashi Tharoor got the Sahitya Academy Award for his book '**An Era of Darkness: The British Empire in India**' in a non-fiction category in English language. Some of Notable works of Shashi Tharoor includes, Why Am I Hindu, Ambedkar: A Life, The Great Indian Novel and India: From Midnight to the Millennium.

About Legion of Honour Medal

- The Legion of Honour medal created in 1802 by **Napoleon Bonaparte** as a military order was later expanded to cover eminent services advancing French interests globally. It is the highest civilian award given by the **French Republic** for outstanding service to France, regardless of the nationality of the recipients.



Ashish Vijayakar Appointed as MD & CEO of SBM Bank India

- **Ashish Vijayakar** has been appointed as the Managing Director (MD) and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of SBM Bank (India) Limited for a period of 3 years, with effect from February 17, 2024.
- He succeeds Sidharth Rath, who resigned from the post of MD and CEO of **SBM Bank India** in November 2023. Ashish Vijayakar has worked at Standard Chartered Bank for more than 24 years.
- He has expertise in the domain of business transformation, risk management, innovation, and managing changing business environment processes, among the other areas of operations.

About SBM Bank (India) Limited:

- It is the first bank to receive a universal banking license from the Reserve Bank of India to set up and operate as a Scheduled Commercial Bank under wholly owned subsidiary mode, offering banking services in India.
- SBM Bank is a wholly Owned Subsidiary of **SBM Holdings – Mauritius** (erstwhile State bank of Mauritius)
- **MD & CEO:** Ashish Vijayakar
- **Headquarters:** Mumbai, Maharashtra
- **Established:** 2018



Shubman Gill designated as Punjab 'state icon' for Lok Sabha polls

- In a significant move to boost voter engagement and participation in the upcoming Lok Sabha elections, the **Punjab Chief Electoral Officer's** office has announced Indian cricketer **Shubman Gill** as the new **"state icon"** for Punjab.
- This appointment is a strategic effort to connect with the youth and sports enthusiasts, ensuring that the electoral process resonates more deeply across various demographics.
- Under the ambitious target of **"Is Vaar 70 Paar"**, the electoral office aims to surpass a 70 per cent voter turnout in the forthcoming polls. This initiative follows the previous voter turnout of 65.96 per cent during the 2019 Lok Sabha elections across the 13 seats in Punjab.
- By engaging a figure like Shubman Gill, who holds considerable influence among the younger population, the electoral office is optimistic about achieving and even exceeding this target.



INDUS-X summit started in New Delhi

- The **INDUS-X Summit**, a joint effort between India and the United States in defense innovation, is set to take place on February 20-21, 2024 in **New Delhi**.
- The India-U.S. Defence Acceleration Ecosystem, also known as INDUS- X, was launched in June 2023 during the State Visit of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi to the US.
- It's organized by **inventions for Defence Excellence (iDEX)** under the Department of Defence Production, Ministry of Defence, and Department of Defence (DoD), United States. also in confluence with the U.S- India Business Council and the **Society of Indian Defence Manufacturers (SIDM)**.
- The INDUS- X Summit is a two- day event that brings together stakeholders from both nations to explore and subsidize rising openings. The peak features a dynamic line- up of conditioning designed to foster collaboration, invention, and knowledge exchange.
- INDUS- X Summit is a significant initiative which helps in the advancement of defence collaboration and innovation between **India** and **the United States**. It sets the stage for unborn technological advancements and strategic hookups.



**Finance Minister
Sitharaman
unveils three
commemorative
coins including
Ram temple
coin**



Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman unveils 3 commemorative Coins at 19th Foundation Day

Celebrations of SPMCIL

- Union Minister **Nirmala Sitharaman**, Ministry of Finance (MoF), released 3 souvenir coins, during the 19th Foundation Day celebrations of the **Security Printing and Minting Corporation of India Limited (SPMCIL)**, a wholly owned Miniratna Category-1 **Central Public Sector Enterprise (CPSE)** of the Government of India in **New Delhi**.

- Those 3 Coins includes: A Coloured Souvenir coin on Endangered Animals of India – Greater **One Horned Rhinoceros**, a bi-metallic clad souvenir coin on the **Enlightenment of Buddha** and **Shree Ram Janmabhoomi Mandir Ayodhya** (Coloured Souvenir Silver Coin).
- All 3 coins were launched by the India **Government Mint, Kolkata (IGM, Kolkata)** in West Bengal. It is a unit of SPMCIL engaged in manufacture of circulation coins, commemorative coins, and medals such as Bharat Ratna, Padma Shri, military awards like Param Veer Chakra, etc.

About SPMCIL (Security Printing & Minting Corporation of India Limited):

- SPMCIL is a company under the **Department of Economic Affairs**, which is department under the Ministry of Finance. It is responsible for conducting printing and minting activities of the Government of India.
- SPMCIL was formed in 2006, headquarters located at New Delhi. It has 9 units including
- 4 Indian Government Mints at **Mumbai, Kolkata, Hyderabad & Noida**
- 2 Currency Note Presses at **Dewas & Nashik**
- 2 security printing presses at **Nashik & Hyderabad**
- 1 Security Paper Mill at **Narmadapuram**.