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President approves conferment of Jeevan Raksha Padak Series of Awards-2023

- President Droupadi Murmu has approved the conferment of Jeevan Raksha Padak Series Awards-2023 to 31 individuals for acts of courage and selflessness on January 25, 2024.
- This year, three were awarded Sarvottam Jeevan Raksha Padak, seven were awarded Uttam Jeevan Raksha Padak and 21 were awarded Jeevan Raksha Padak.

➤ **About Jeevan Raksha Padak:**

- Basically this award is given for the commendable work of human nature in saving the life of a person.
- Individuals from diverse backgrounds qualify for these awards.
- These awards are also given posthumously.
- The decorations of this award are given to the awardee from time to time by the Central Ministry/Organisation/State Government to which the awardee belongs.
- Under this, medals, certificates signed by the Union Home Minister and lump sum monetary allowance are provided.



Vijay Raghavan Panel on
**RESTRUCTURING AND
REDEFINING
ROLE OF DRDO**



Vijay Raghavan Panel on Restructuring and Redefining Role of DRDO

- A nine-member committee headed by former Principal Scientific Advisor to government, **K Vijay Raghavan**, has been set up by the Ministry of Defence (MoD) to review functioning of Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) and suggest “restructuring and redefining” of its role to improve the output of the state-owned agency, aiding government’s move to make India self-reliant in military sector.
- Defence minister Rajnath Singh gave the nod for review of the DRDO functioning more than a fortnight back and the committee has been asked to submit its report in three month’s time.
- There are about 7,000 scientists, aware of development, working with the DRDO and there was need to fix accountability to clean up the system, enthuse professionalism and ensure time bound delivery mechanisms.
- On the directions of the MoD, the DRDO had also taken punitive action against black sheeps in the organisation including sacking a senior scientist, Pradeep Kurulkar, who was arrested in May by the Maharashtra Anti-Terrorism Squad (ATS) for passing confidential information to a Pakistani agent.



RBI Greenlights LIC's Acquisition of 9.99% stake in HDFC Bank

- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has granted approval to Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) for acquiring up to 9.99% aggregate holding in HDFC Bank, the nation's largest private sector bank.
- LIC has been advised to acquire the major shareholding in HDFC Bank within one year, concluding by January 24, 2025.
- The approval is contingent on adherence to provisions outlined in the Banking Regulation Act, 1949, RBI's Master Direction and Guidelines on Acquisition and Holding of Shares or Voting Rights in Banking Companies (issued on January 16, 2023), Foreign Exchange Management Act, 1999, SEBI regulations, and other applicable guidelines and statutes.

ZOMATO

GETS RBI NOD FOR ONLINE PAYMENT AGGREGATOR



Zomato gets RBI nod to operate as online payment aggregator

- Zomato Payments, a wholly owned subsidiary of Zomato Limited, has received the certificate of authorisation from the Reserve Bank of India to operate as an online payment aggregator.
- In an exchange filing, the food delivery platform said the central bank has allowed it to carry out the business as payment aggregator and issuer of pre-paid payment instruments with effect from January 24, 2024.
- Zomato Payments Private Limited (ZPPL) has been granted certificate of authorization dated January 24, 2024, from the Reserve Bank of India (“RBI”) to operate as an ‘Online Payment Aggregator’ in India with effect from January 24, 2024.
- Last year, Zomato had joined hands with ICICI Bank to launch its own unified payments interface (UPI) offering -- Zomato UPI. The feature was offered to select users and did not involve a KYC process. It eliminated the need for users to navigate to other payment apps, such as Google Pay, Paytm, and PhonePe, while placing orders on Zomato.

PREETI RAJAK

Became

Indian Army's

First Woman Subedar



Shooter Preeti Rajak becomes Army's first woman Subedar

- **Havildar Preeti Rajak**, a champion trap shooter, has been promoted to the rank of **Subedar**, making her the first woman in the Indian Army to hold that rank.
- Rajak joined the Corps of Military Police in December 2022 on the basis of her proven performance in trap shooting.
- She was the first meritorious sportswoman in the shooting discipline to be enrolled in the army as a **havildar**.
- At the 19th Asian Games 2022 held at Hangzhou in China, Rajak won the silver medal in the trap women team event.
- She currently ranked 6th in India (trap women event) and is training at the elite Army Marksmanship Unit in Mhow for the Paris Olympics.

Bopanna the oldest man to win a Slam title

- Rohan Bopanna became only the third Indian to win a men's doubles Grand Slam title, taking the Australian Open crown with partner Matthew Ebden following a commanding win over Simone Bolelli and Andrea Vavassori.
- In a high-quality game of tennis, second seeded Bopanna and Ebden won 7-6(0) 7-5 in the final that lasted one hour and 39 minutes.
- Only the iconic Leander Paes and Mahesh Bhupathi have won Major titles for India in men's tennis while trailblazer Sania Mirza did it in women's tennis.
- For Bopanna it is his **second Grand Slam title**, having won the French Open mixed doubles with Canada's Gabriela Dabrowski in 2017.
- At 43, Bopanna also became the **oldest Grand Slam champion** in men's tennis.



Sabalenka crushes Zheng, becomes first woman in 11 years to defend

- Aryna Sabalenka crushed Qinwen Zheng's hope in the women's singles on the Rod Laver Arena, winning 6-3, 6-2 in just an hour to successfully defend her Australian Open crown.
- With the win, the world No. 2 became the second player to win back-to-back women's title at Melbourne Park after Victoria Azarenka, who won in 2012 and 2013.
- Sabalenka did not drop a single set through the fortnight, having won 28 of her last 29 sets in Melbourne, which included her title-winning run in 2023.
- The 25-time tour-level titlist hence became the fifth player in history to win the **Daphne Akhurst Memorial Cup** without conceding a set, after Ash Barty in 2022, Serena Williams in 2017, Maria Sharapova in 2008 and Lindsay Davenport in 2000.



'Sada Tanseeq' joint military exercise between India and Saudi Arabia

- The joint military exercise between the armies of India and Saudi Arabia – Sada Tanseeq is going to start in Rajasthan from 29 January 2024. This 'Sada Tanseeq' will be organised in Rajasthan from 29 January to 10 February 2024.
- 'Sada Tanseeq' is the first exercise of its kind to be organised between the two countries.
- The objective of this exercise is to share the best military activities and experiences between the armies of the two countries.
- This exercise will promote military cooperation and interoperability between India and Saudi Arabia.
- This joint exercise will focus on counter-terrorism operations under the UN mandate.

➤ **About Saudi Arabia:**

➤ **Capital:** Riyadh

➤ **Currency:** Riyal

➤ **Prime Minister:** Mohammed bin Salman

➤ **About Rajasthan:**

➤ **Chief minister:** Bhajan Lal Sharma

➤ **Founded:** 30 March 1949

➤ **Governor:** Kalraj Mishra

➤ **Capital:** Jaipur



Sada Tanseeq

Joint Military Exercise

Between

India and Saudi Arabia

Netherlands won FIH Hockey5s Women's World Cup

- India finished as runner-up at the inaugural edition of the FIH Hockey 5s Women's World Cup after a 7-2 loss to the Netherlands in the final in Muscat.
- India tried to make a comeback and scored twice – Jyoti Chhatri (20th minute) and Rutaja Dadaso Pisal (23rd minute) – but could not catch the Dutch team.
- **Gold Medallists:** Netherlands
- **Silver Medallists:** India
- **Bronze Medallists:** Poland
- **Best Goalkeeper:** Marta Kucharska (Poland)
- **Top Scorer:** Teresa Viana (Uruguay) with 19 goals
- **ABest Player:** Noor De Baat (Netherlands)



MoU on India, Oman cooperation in Information Technology approved by Union Cabinet

- The Union Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi approved a memorandum of understanding between the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) and the Ministry of Transport, Communication and Information Technology of the Sultanate of Oman on cooperation in the field of Information Technology.
- This MoU intends to promote comprehensive cooperation between both countries through mutual support, sharing of technologies, information and investments in the field of IT.
- The MoU remains in force for a period of three years.
- This envisages improved collaboration leading to employment opportunities in the field of Information Technology.



Rubber meet to be held in Guwahati on Feb 23

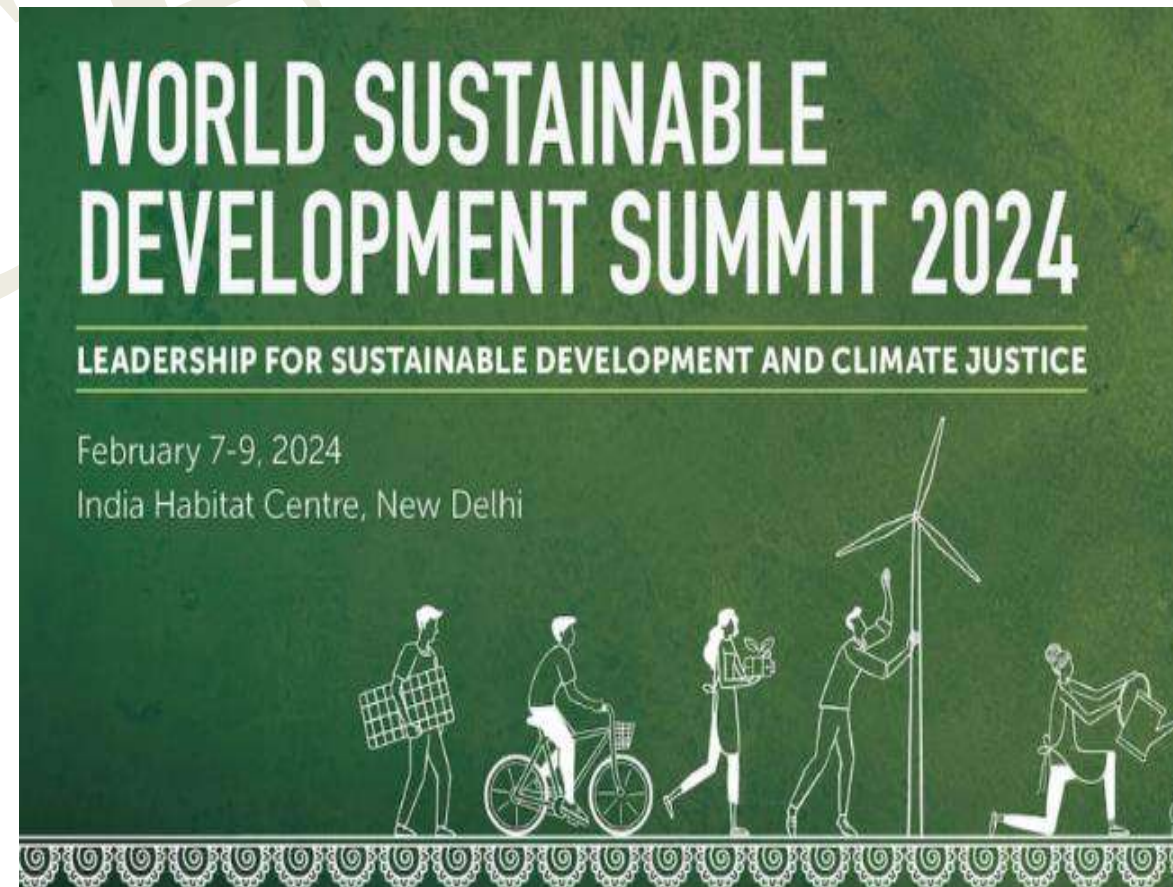
- The **seventh edition** of "India Rubber Meet (IRM 2024)" will be held in Guwahati on February 23.
- The theme this year is **‘Natural Rubber - Changing Landscape, Emerging Trends and Insights for Tomorrow’**.
- The event, organised by the "India Rubber Meet Forum (IRMF)", will feature talks, panel discussions, and interactions on various topics including the future of the global and Indian natural rubber industry, economy and commodity prices, and challenges and opportunities in the tyre, non-tyre, and synthetic rubber industry.
- The objective of the meet is to provide a platform for rubber stakeholders to interact, share knowledge, address future concerns, and network for the advancement of the rubber industry.
- The event is expected to attract around 500 delegates from India and abroad.
- **About Assam:**
- **Founded:** 15 August 1947
- **Chief minister:** Himanta Biswa Sarma
- **Capital:** Dispur
- **Languages:** Assamese, Bengali, Bodo



- The Goa Tourism Department introduced the "**Beach Vigil App**", allowing the general public to report various illegalities on the shoreline, subsequently addressed by relevant authorities.
- State Tourism Minister Rohan Khaunte highlighted that the app, initially launched in July last year, is now open for public use.
- Users can report issues such as illegal vending, massages, deck beds, hawking, and touting.
- The app allows users to report as many as 16 violations relating to beaches, from garbage dumping to illegal constructions coming up.
- Khaunte emphasized that unresolved complaints would escalate to higher authorities. Developed by the state-run Goa Electronic Limited, the app has witnessed 1,300 downloads and 1,240 reported violations since its soft launch, with 1,091 issues already addressed.
- The recent legal amendment empowers the police to take action against beach illegalities under section 188 of IPC, reinforcing Goa's commitment to a positive tourist experience.
- **About Goa:**
- **Founded:** 30 May 1987
- **Chief minister:** Pramod Sawant
- **Capital:** Panaji

23rd World Sustainable Development Summit to be held in New Delhi from Feb 7-9

- Thought leaders, policymakers, and experts in the Global South will come together to discuss environmental sustainability and social equity during the **"23rd World Sustainable Development Summit (WSDS) to be held here from February 7-9"**.
- Organised by The **"Energy and Resources Institute (TERI)"**, this independent international summit aims to address global challenges such as conflict, planetary crises, and setbacks in Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
- The summit inaugurated by the Vice President of India, the summit will host prominent speakers, including ministers from Fiji, Kiribati, and Spain, as well as representatives from the World Bank and the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change.
- Under the theme **'Leadership for Sustainable Development and Climate Justice'**, the summit will emphasise the crucial role of visionary leadership in steering the world toward sustainability.
- In addition to the inaugural and valedictory sessions, the 23rd WSD Summit will feature 11 plenary sessions and high-level discussions on women's leadership, businesses, and youth.



Dr Nitya Anand, man who discovered India's first oral contraceptive pill 'Saheli', dies at 99

- Dr Nitya Anand, known for developing India's first oral contraceptive pill, 'Saheli' passed away, at the age of 99 at Sanjay Gandhi Post Graduate Institute of Medical Sciences (SGPGIMS), Lucknow, due to prolonged illness.
- He had joined Central Drug Research Institute (CDRI) in 1951 as a scientist, headed Medicinal Chemistry Division from 1963 to 1974 and became the Director of CDRI from 1974 to 1984.
- Dr Nitya Anand was behind the discovery of 'Centchroman', famously known as 'Saheli' India's first oral contraceptive pill.
- Saheli is the first of its kind and only non-hormonal, non-steroidal and once-a-week oral contraceptive pill available worldwide till date.



Rana Talwar, the first Indian to head a global bank, passes away

- Veteran banker Rana Talwar, who was the first Indian to head a global bank - Standard Chartered, died at the age of 76 years.
- Born in 1948, Talwar started his career as a banker in India with Citi Bank after passing out of the prestigious St Stephens College, Delhi.
- During his stint at Citi Bank, Gurvirendra Singh Talwar also known as Rana Talwar, was responsible for building the US-based bank's retail businesses across Asia Pacific and the Middle East.
- Talwar left Citibank in 1996 to join Standard Chartered Plc as Global Chief Executive.
- He was the first Asian to become the Chief Executive of an FTSE 25 company and of a major global bank.



India, France agree on surveillance ties

- India and France have agreed to intensify their cooperation in the Southwest Indian Ocean, building on the “**joint surveillance missions**” carried out from French La Reunion in 2020 and 2022 while the two countries welcomed the progress in bilateral dialogue and identification of specific opportunities for using India “as a base” for the manufacture and export of defence equipment for friendly countries in the region.
- France is the first major Western military power with which India has conducted joint patrols under which Indian Navy P-8I maritime patrol aircraft were deployed to the French island territory of La Reunion.
- **About France:**
- **Prime minister:** Gabriel Attal
- **Capital:** Paris
- **Currency:** The euro

