

IACE

DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS

31st Dec 23, 1st Jan 24

DESCRIPTIVE

❖ Argentina has pulled out of the BRICS organization

- Argentina has announced that it will not be a part of the BRICS intergovernmental organisation for which it was granted membership earlier this year.
- Argentina's new President, Javier Milei, has withdrawn the country from its planned entry into the expanding BRICS club of nations.
- Argentina was among six countries that were granted membership in BRICS during its annual summit held in South Africa this year, the others being Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates (UAE).
- The membership of these six nations was supposed to take effect from January 1, 2024.
- The BRICS bloc was established in 2009, with the inclusion of Brazil, Russia, India and China. It later incorporated South Africa in 2010.
- The BRICS nations are considered the foremost geopolitical rival to the G7 bloc of leading advanced economies, implementing competing initiatives such as the New Development Bank, the BRICS Contingent Reserve Arrangement, the BRICS payment system, the BRICS Joint Statistical Publication and the BRICS basket reserve currency.

❖ Jagannath Temple hosted Gole Mela Festival

- In Jammu and Kashmir, a Popular Festival known as Gole Mela was organized at Jagannath temple in Udhampur.
- A large number of devotees assembled and paid obeisance at Jagannath temple.
- Various stalls were established at the venue of the festival. The devotees from Udhampur district as well as from outside of Jammu and Kashmir enjoyed the festival along with their families.
- Gole Mela is organized twice every year. Devotees believe that from this day the night time starts decreasing and day time starts increasing day by day.
- Moreover, two ancient temples are dedicated to Lord Jagannatha across India. One is situated in Puri, Orissa and other in Udhampur District of Jammu and Kashmir.

❖ FIH Hockey World Cup will be held in Muscat, Oman

- The 2024 Hockey5s World Cup will be the first edition of the International Hockey Federation (FIH) Mens Hockey5s World Cup, the quadrennial world championship for mens national hockey5s teams organized by the FIH.
- It will be held from 28 to 31 January 2024, in Muscat, Oman.
- As a permanent addition to the FIH event portfolio, this event for the short form version of hockey will be held every four years.
- A total of 16 men's and 16 women's teams will participate in the competition.

About FIH:

- **Founded:** 7th Jan 1924
- **CEO:** Thierry Weil
- **Headquarters:** Lausanne, Switzerland
- **Founder :** Paul Leautey

❖ **India-UAE joint military exercise Desert Cyclone will held in Rajasthan**

- The Joint Military Exercise Desert Cyclone 2024 between India and UAE will be held from January 2 to January 15 in Rajasthan.
- The joint drills under Desert Cyclone 2024 will aim to enhance interoperability by learning and sharing best practices in urban operations.
- India and the UAE enjoy strong bonds of friendship which are founded on millennia-old cultural, religious and economic intercourse between the two regions.
- The first-ever India-UAE Joint Air Forces exercise took place in September 2008 at the Al-Dhafra base in Abu Dhabi.
- India has also been a regular participant at the biennial International Defence Exhibition (IDEX) in Abu Dhabi.

About UAE :

- **Capital :** Abu Dhabi
- **Currency :** Dirham
- **President :** Mohammed Bin Jayed Al Nahyan

❖ **UN chief appoints new deputy executive director of UNFPA**

- Andrew Paul Saberton from Britain has been appointed as the new Assistant Secretary-General and Deputy Executive Director (Management) of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA).
- According to a press note from the UN Chiefs office, Saberton succeeds Ib Petersen of Denmark, who has been acknowledged by both the Secretary-General and the Executive Director of UNFPA for his commendable service.
- Saberton has been serving as the Assistant Secretary-General and Deputy Executive Director (Management) ad interim since November 2023.

➤ He has also been the UNFPA comptroller and director for the Division of Management Services since September 2016.

About UNFPA

➤ **Headquarter** : New York, US

➤ **Founded** : 1969

➤ **President** : Fernando Carrera

➤ **Head** : Natalia Kanem

❖ **Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Tourism Forum 2024 will be held in Vientiane, Laos**

➤ Lao PDR will be hosting the ASEAN TOURISM FORUM 2024 from 22nd to 27th January 2024 in Vientiane Capital with the theme: **Quality and Responsible Tourism - Sustaining ASEAN Future.**

➤ Aim: To strengthen collaboration in further improving tourism products to attract more international tourists, and at the same time, to contribute more to community and to sustainability of tourism within the region.

➤ In 2024, there will be important events for Laos such as Lao PDR will be the chair of ASEAN Summit, host of ASEAN Tourism Forum 2024 and launching the Visit Laos Year 2024.

➤ The Lao News Agency quoted Minister of Information, Culture, and Tourism Suanesavanh Vignaket, who stated that the event will promote Laos as a nature-based tourism destination.

About ASEAN :

➤ **Founded** : 8th August 1967

➤ **Headquarters** : Jakarta, Indonesia

❖ Maharashtra to celebrate Olympian K.D Jadhavs birthday as State Sports Day

➤ The birth anniversary of the great sportsman Jadhav, who won Indias first individual Olympic Medal, will be celebrated as ‘State Sports Day’ on January 15th, in the state of Maharashtra.

➤ A legendary wrestler, K.D. Jadhav (Jan. 15, 1926-Aug. 14, 1984) was born in the tiny Goleshwar village in Satara district, but went down in sports history as the first sportsman of Independent India to win an individual Bronze Medal in the Helsinki Olympics in 1952 in the freestyle wrestling category.

➤ A freedom-fighter turned athlete, Jadhav - who died in a road accident as an Assistant Commissioner of Police (ACP) - was posthumously honoured with the Chhatrapati Award (1992-1993) of Maharashtra Government, the Arjuna Award (2000) of the Centre, the wrestling avenue of the New Delhi Commonwealth Games 2010 was named after him, and conferred other accolades.

➤ The State Sports Day will be marked by participation of all the top government and private sports bodies and academies, plus organising a series of sports-related events, rallies, various types of sporting competitions for different disciplines and age groups, marathons, sports camps, guidance and interaction with leading athletes, honouring national and international sports achievers, prize distribution, lectures on sports, etc.

➤ Additionally, the state government will give a grant of Rs 225,000 to each district – up from the current Rs 10,000 to celebrate the State Sports Day (Jan. 15), the National Sports Day (Aug. 29) and the Sports Week.

➤ These amounts would be used as Rs 75K for the State Sports Day, Rs 50K for the National Sports Day and Rs 100K for the Sports Week.

❖ Arvind Panagariya appointed as 16th Finance Commission Chairman

- The government appointed former Niti Aayog vice chairman Arvind Panagariya as the Chairman of the 16th Finance Commission.
- Joint Secretary in the finance ministry Ritvik Ranjanam Pandey will be the secretary to the commission.
- The commission will submit its report for the five-year period (2026-27 to 2030-31) to the President by October 31, 2025.
- The Union Cabinet, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, last month approved the Terms of Reference (ToR) of the 16th Finance Commission.
- The erstwhile 15th Finance Commission under NK Singh had recommended that states be given 41 per cent of the divisible tax pool of the Centre during the five-year period 2021-22 to 2025-26, which is at the same level as was recommended by the 14th Finance Commission.
- **Finance Commission Formed:** 22 November 1951
- **Headquarters:** New Delhi

❖ Urban Affairs Minister Inaugurates National Street Food Festival in New Delhi

- Housing and Urban Affairs Minister Hardeep Singh Puri inaugurated the National Street Food Festival in New Delhi.
- Mr Puri lauded PM SVANidhi scheme has benefitted over 57 lakh street vendors across the country.
- He added that 45 percent of beneficiaries of the scheme are women and 72 percent belong to marginalised sections.
- The 13th edition of the food festival is being organized by the National Association of Street Vendors (NASVI) at Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium in New Delhi.

➤ Mr. Puri said that over 80 lakh loans have been sanctioned and 76 lakh 22 thousand loans worth 10 thousand 58 crore rupees have been disbursed under the scheme.

➤ The Minister appreciated NASVI for providing training to 1,50,000 street vendors in food safety and hygiene.

➤ He also noted the establishment of two Regional Street Food Vendors Training Institutes (SVTI) which will be launched by NASVI in 2024 in Delhi and Patna.

➤ These institutes will not only provide training in culinary skills but will also prioritise food safety and hygiene.

❖ **Françoise Bettencourt Meyer: L'Oréal heiress first woman to amass \$100bn fortune**

➤ Françoise Bettencourt Meyers, the 70-year-old heir to the L'Oréal beauty empire and the world's richest woman, is now also the first woman to amass a staggering \$100 billion fortune.

➤ According to the Bloomberg Billionaires Index, her wealth recently crossed this monumental mark, securing her position as the 12th richest individual globally.

➤ Bettencourt Meyers, born on July 10, 1953, inherited a substantial fortune and assets, including a 35 per cent majority stake in the luxury brand L'Oréal, founded by her grandfather in 1909.

➤ The beauty products empire, valued at over \$240 billion, has thrived under the family's guidance.

❖ **Canada-based Babbar Khalsa's Lakhbir Singh Landa declared terrorist by MHA**

- The Home Ministry has designated Lakhbir Singh Landa, a 33-year-old Canada-based gangster, as a terrorist under the stringent anti-terror law UAPA.
- Landa was involved in a rocket attack on the Punjab Police Intelligence Headquarters in Mohali in 2021, among other terrorist activities, according to the Union Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA).
- Born in Punjab's Tarn Taran district in 1989, Landa fled to Canada in 2017.
- The MHA identifies him as a member of the notorious Khalistani group, Babbar Khalsa International (BKI).
- Landa is believed to have close ties with Harvinder Singh, also known as Rinda, a gangster based in Pakistan who has collaborated with the BKI.
- According to the Home Ministry, Landa was not only responsible for the rocket attack in Mohali but also involved in the supply of Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs), arms, sophisticated weapons, and explosives from across the border to various modules engaged in terrorist activities in Punjab.

❖ **ISRO plans to launch 50 satellites in five years for intelligence gathering**

- Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) chief S Somanath said that India is planning to launch 50 satellites in the next five years for geo-intelligence gathering.
- The initiative involves the creation of a layer of satellites in different orbits with a capacity to track the movement of troops and image thousands of kilometers of area.
- He further added that it is important to improve the ability of satellites to detect changes, to bring in more of AI-related and data-driven approach to analyse data, reduce data downloads and get only the necessary information.

➤ Spacecrafts are capable of observing a country's borders and neighbouring regions.

➤ If India is able to launch satellites at this scale, threats to the country can be better mitigated.

➤ **About ISRO:**

➤ **Headquarters:** Bengaluru

➤ **Founder:** Vikram Sarabhai

➤ **Founded:** 15 August 1969

❖ **NPCI Launches UPI for Secondary Market Trading from January 1, 2024**

➤ The National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) is set to launch a Unified Payments Interface (UPI) feature for stock trading in the secondary market starting January 1, 2024.

➤ This initiative will start in its beta testing phase for the equity cash segment and aims to streamline trading and enhance security and profitability for investors.

➤ The Unified Payments Interface (UPI) for the secondary market will start its beta phase for the equity cash segment.

➤ Key stakeholders will support it, including clearing corporations, stock exchanges, depositories, stockbrokers, banks, and UPI app providers.

➤ This Beta launch is facilitated by Groww as the brokerage app, alongside BHIM, Groww, and YES PAY NEXT as UPI apps.

➤ Initially, HDFC Bank and ICICI Bank customers will be able to avail this facility.

➤ Further, HDFC Bank, HSBC, ICICI Bank, and Yes Bank are sponsor banks for the clearing corporation and exchanges.

➤ **About NPCI:**

➤ **Headquarters:** Mumbai, Maharashtra

➤ **Founded:** 2008

➤ **Founders:** Reserve Bank of India, Indian Banks' Association