

Daily Current Affairs

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International Gita Mahotsav

- Kurukshetra, a sacred town resonating with **cultural heritage and spiritual significance**, witnessed a grand spectacle as it hosted the inauguration of the International Gita Mahotsav – 2023.
- This week-long celebration promises a **unique blend of spirituality, cultural diversity**, and global participation, captivating visitors until December 24.
- The auspicious event kicked off with the enchanting Gita Aarti and worship of the holy **scripture at Brahma Sarovar**. The serene surroundings echoed with verses from the Bhagavad Gita, setting the tone for a spiritually enriching experience.



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- The inaugural ceremony featured traditional cultural performances by artists from various states. This added a vibrant kaleidoscope of colors and expressions to the event, creating an atmosphere of joy and cultural richness.
- **Vice President Dhankhar and Chief Minister Khattar**, adhering to tradition, performed the ritualistic pouring of holy water from Brahma Sarovar. This was **followed by worship** and the offering of flowers to the sacred scripture, enhancing the luminous atmosphere of the event. Their active participation in the Gita Aarti further elevated the spiritual ambiance.
- As part of the festivities, the **Assam and Haryana pavilions** were formally inaugurated by the Vice President. These pavilions offer visitors a unique

opportunity to explore the diverse cultural and artistic heritage of these states. The state-level exhibition showcased scenes ranging from food and accommodation to clothing, creating a rich tapestry of cultural experiences.

India First AI Powered Experience for Maps

- Google Maps, a **ubiquitous navigation tool**, is set to undergo a transformative upgrade in **India with a host of new features** leveraging artificial intelligence (AI).
- **Miriam Karthika Daniel**, Vice President of Google Maps Experiences, unveiled these innovations, emphasizing the goal of providing accessible and useful information about the real world to users.



- In a **first-of-its-kind initiative for India**, Google plans to introduce the Address Descriptor early next year. This innovation aims to simplify location searches by offering a more intuitive experience. By automatically suggesting five landmarks in the vicinity when user drop a pin to share their location, Google enhances the visual mapping experience, moving beyond traditional latitude and longitude coordinates.
- To meet evolving user expectations for a richer visual mapping experience, **Google will launch lens** in Maps in 15 cities by January 2024, starting with Android. This feature allows users to point their camera at the street to gather information about nearby businesses and establishments, providing a preview of a location before physically visiting it.

- Building on the success of Street View, **Live View Walking will be introduced in 15 cities**, offering users a combination of Street View Data, AI and augmented reality (AR) technology.



- This feature overlays markers on the Maps screen to assist users in following directions more efficiently.
- **Google Maps takes a step towards sustainability** by introducing the most fuel-efficient routes for two-wheelers. Identified by a green leaf icon, these routes aim to reduce carbon emissions.
- Google has announced partnerships with the **Open Network for Digital Commerce (ONDC)** and **Namma Yatri**, a network-based ride-hailing service. This collaboration aims to bring metro schedules and bookings to Google Maps users, starting with the Kochi metro in mid-2024.

FICCI Water Award 2023

- In a notable achievement, **NTPC Kanti has been bestowed** with the 11th Edition of FICCI Water Award 2023 under the **“Industrial Water Use Efficiency”** category.
- The prestigious accolade was presented during the inaugural event of the 9th Edition of India Industry **Water Conclave** held at **FICCI Federation** House in New Delhi.
- The recognition **underscores the power plant’s exceptional efforts** in water conservation and its commitment to the efficient use of water resources in its operations.



- NTPC Kanti's Head of Project, AK Manohar, **expressed gratitude for the honor** and highlighted the company's dedication to sustainable water management. The awarded power plant has implemented a range of water conservation measures, including advanced wastewater treatment and the innovative reuse of treated water within its operations.
- One of the key aspects contributing to **NTPC Kanti's success** is its robust wastewater treatment system.
- By implementing **cutting-edge technologies**, the power plant treats wastewater to meet stringent quality standards. The reuse of treated water not only demonstrates environmental responsibility but also contributes significantly to reducing the plant's overall water footprint.



- Beyond internal measures, NTPC Kanti has taken proactive steps to **raise awareness about responsible water usage**.
- The power plant has initiated awareness campaigns among its employees and the local community, fostering a sense of shared responsibility for water conservation. This **community-focused approach** aligns with the broader goal of

promoting sustainable water practices beyond the plant's immediate operations.

- AK Manohar emphasized that the FICCI Water Award serves as a testament to NTPC Kanti's unwavering commitment to **environmental sustainability and responsible corporate citizenship**. The recognition reinforces the power plant's position as a leader in integrating eco-friendly practices into its operational framework.
- The **FICCI Water Awards**, presented annually, play a pivotal role in acknowledging organizations across various sectors for their exemplary efforts in water conservation and management. By promoting best practices, these awards contribute to the broader goal of encouraging sustainable water management practices throughout India.

U.P. Police Launches Whatsapp Channels

- **Uttar Pradesh Police** has taken a significant step towards enhancing **public outreach and transparency** by becoming one of the **first in the country** to **launch WhatsApp Channels** for its headquarters and all district units.
- The initiative aims to **publicize the commendable work** of the district police and provide timely information about actions taken in criminal and law and order incidents.
- The decision aligns with the **state government's directives** to widely publicize the praiseworthy efforts of the police force.



- This forward-thinking approach reflects the commitment of the Uttar Pradesh Police to **embrace modern communication tools for better public engagement**.

- With the ability to add an **unlimited number of members to a channel**, this feature provides an effective platform for disseminating information to the masses. The Uttar Pradesh Police is set to leverage this functionality to its full potential.
- The versatile applications of WhatsApp Channels include promoting various actions of the district police, showcasing *commendable works*, debunking misleading news, offering traffic-related advisories, and delivering accurate information to the media promptly.
- The move is poised to **bridge the gap between law enforcement agencies and the public**, fostering a sense of collaboration and shared responsibility.
- One of the primary objectives of launching WhatsApp Channels is to enhance transparency in the functioning of the police force.
- By providing real-time updates on actions taken and sharing authentic information, the Uttar Pradesh Police aims to build trust and confidence among the public.

Operation Prosperity Guardian

- “The recent escalation in reckless **Houthi attacks originating from Yemen** threatens the free flow of commerce, endangers innocent mariners and violates international law,” Austin said in a statement. “This is an international challenge that demands collective action.”



- The **attacks in the Red Sea**, which handles about **12% of world trade** as a key waterway for goods and energy, have emerged as a fresh threat to global supply chains and an extension of the hostilities in the Gaza Strip.
- Austin said the countries involved in **the new task force** — dubbed Operation Prosperity Guardian — include the US, the UK, Bahrain, Canada, France, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, the Seychelles and Spain.

- It will be run under the umbrella of a pre-existing grouping in the region, the Combined Maritime Forces, and the leadership of its **Task Force 153, which focuses on the Red Sea.**



- The US has been consulting with **Gulf allies** about potential military action against the Houthis in response to their increasingly brazen attacks.
- The Houthis have claimed repeated attacks in the Red Sea on **commercial vessels** in the last several days, incidents that the US and allies say are intended to provoke a wider **Middle East War.**



- Al-Bukhaiti said one message received by the Houthis had been an offer to seek a peaceful end the conflict in Yemen in exchange for stopping attacks in the Red Sea. He said the group rejected that idea.

- **Oil prices gained** Monday after BP Plc said it's pausing all shipments through the Red Sea and Norwegian energy company Equinor ASA said it's diverting vessels away from the region.
- **Brent crude futures rose as much as 3.9%** in London trading. The disruption also impacted the European natural gas market, with benchmark prices jumping as much as 13% in Amsterdam.
- Liquefied natural gas tankers often travel between the Middle East and Europe via the Red Sea and Suez Canal.



Bhutan's National Order Of Merit

- In a notable recognition of her outstanding contributions to **public healthcare services in Bhutan**, **Dr. Poonam Khetrupal Singh**, the Regional Director of the World Health Organisation (WHO) South-East Asia, has been honored with **Bhutan's National Order of Merit (NOM) Gold Medal**.
- The prestigious award was presented by **Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck**, the Druk Gyalpo (dragon king) of Bhutan, during the celebration of Bhutan's 116th National Day on December 17, 2023, in Thimphu, Bhutan.



- Dr. Poonam Khetrupal Singh, a retired Indian Administrative Service (IAS) officer, played a pivotal role as the WHO Regional Director in supporting transformative healthcare leadership in Bhutan. Her efforts were instrumental in Bhutan achieving significant milestones in public health, notably becoming one of the **first countries to eliminate measles in 2017 and rubella in 2023**, ahead of schedule.



- In 2014, Dr. Poonam Khetrupal Singh made history by becoming the **first Indian and the first woman** to be elected as the Regional Director of WHO South-East Asia. In 2019, she was re-elected to the post for another 5-year term. Her tenure witnessed transformative healthcare initiatives and significant strides in disease elimination in the region.
- The **National Order of Merit, instituted in 2008** by King Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck, is a prestigious recognition for distinguished and meritorious services to Bhutan. The award is presented in three classes: First Class (Gold), Second Class (Silver), and Third Class (Bronze).

Leif Erikson Lunar Prize

- The **Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO)** has once again soared to new heights by clinching the prestigious **Leif Erikson Lunar Prize**.
- This esteemed accolade, bestowed by the Husavik Museum, stands as a testament to ISRO's unwavering commitment and substantial contributions to lunar exploration.



- The focal point of this recognition is **ISRO's groundbreaking Chandrayaan-3 mission**, a venture that has significantly deepened our understanding of celestial mysteries.
- On August 23, 2023, India etched its name in the annals of space exploration history with the successful landing of Chandrayaan-3 near the **Moon's South Pole**.
- This groundbreaking achievement positioned **India as the first country** to accomplish a lunar touchdown in this challenging region.
- The mission's success can be attributed to a myriad of technological advancements, particularly in software enhancements that refined navigation algorithms, guidance systems, and fault tolerance mechanisms. These upgrades played a pivotal role in ensuring a flawless descent and landing on the lunar surface.



- The **Leif Erikson Lunar Prize** was received on ISRO's behalf by **Ambassador Balasubramanian Shyam**, underscoring the international acclaim for India's growing prowess in space exploration.
- This recognition not only celebrates the success of Chandrayaan-3 but also **acknowledges ISRO's overarching contributions** to advancing our knowledge of the cosmos.
- Named after the iconic **Norse explorer Leif Erikson**, the Leif Erikson Lunar Prize is awarded by the **Exploration Museum in Husavik, Iceland**.
- This prestigious award is reserved for individuals and organizations that have made significant strides in the field of lunar exploration.
- ISRO's reception of this accolade underscores its position as a global leader in space exploration, propelling India to the forefront of lunar research and scientific discovery.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Where Was The International Gita Mahotsav – 2023 Inaugurated

- A. Varanasi
- B. Kurukshetra
- C. Thimphu
- D. Delhi

ANSWER: B

2. Power Plant Received FICCI Water Award For Industrial Water Use Efficiency

- A. Kaiga Power Plant
- B. Mundra Power Plant
- C. Sasan Power Plant
- D. NTPC

ANSWER: D

3. Who Received Bhutan's National Order Of Merit Gold Medal

- A. G Ashok Kumar
- B. Miriam Karthika Daniel
- C. Dr. Poonam Khetrapal Singh
- D. Vijay Kumar

ANSWER: C

4. Which State Inaugurated Whatsapp Channels For Police Units For Better Public Engagement

- A. Punjab
- B. Uttar Pradesh
- C. Haryana
- D. Assam

ANSWER: B

5. Leif Erikson Lunar Prize Is Won By

- A. ISRO
- B. NASA
- C. JAXA
- D. ESA

ANSWER: A

6. Operation Prosperity Guardian Is Launched To Target

- A. Indian Ocean
- B. Red Sea
- C. Baltic Sea
- D. Kara Sea

ANSWER: B

7. Which Country Awarded ISRO The Leif Erikson Lunar Prize

- A. Norway
- B. Iceland
- C. Sweden
- D. Denmark

ANSWER: B

8. Annual Festival 'Shar Amartala Torgya' Is Celebrated Every Year In Which State

- A. Sikkim
- B. Tripura
- C. Mizoram
- D. Arunachal Pradesh

ANSWER: D

9. G7 Nations Have Planned To Block Entry Of Which Country's Diamonds Into Their Markets

- A. China
- B. Iran
- C. Democratic Republic of Congo
- D. Russia

ANSWER: D

10. Houthi Rebels, Making News Recently, Originate From Which Country

- A. Oman
- B. Egypt
- C. Yemen
- D. Palestine

ANSWER: C

11. Essequibo Region In News, Subject Of Dispute Between Which Two Countries

- A. Venezuela and Guyana
- B. Venezuela and Brazil
- C. Brazil and Guyana
- D. Guyana and Surinam

ANSWER: A

12. The Term "Middle Technology Trap" Was Making News In Context With Which Country Recently

- A. United States
- B. India
- C. Russia
- D. China

ANSWER: D

13. Gelephu Special Administration Region That Was Recently In News, Is Located In Which Country

- A. Nepal
- B. China
- C. Bhutan
- D. India

ANSWER: C

14. International North South Transport Corridor Will Not Pass Through Which Of The Given Countries

- A. Russia
- B. Iran
- C. Azerbaijan
- D. Uzbekistan

ANSWER: D

15. The Terms “JN.1” & “Pirola”, That Were Recently Making News, Are Related To Which Of The Following

- A. Artificial Intelligence Developments
- B. Climate Change Initiatives
- C. Covid-19 Variants
- D. Malaria

ANSWER: C

16. Headquarters Of Cotton Corporation Of India

- A. New Delhi
- B. Bhopal
- C. Mumbai
- D. Surat

ANSWER: C

17. Establishment Of Centre For Innovation In Sustainable Design And Manufacturing In London By Imperial College London &

- A. Tata Steel
- B. ArcelorMittal
- C. Vinod steel
- D. Nippon Steel

ANSWER: A

18. Which City Ranked Highest In The Quality Of Living Index 2023 By Mercer

- A. Vienna
- B. Zurich
- C. Munich
- D. Vancouver

ANSWER: A

19.What Penalty Has UIDAI Imposed Against Operators Found Guilty Of Overcharging For Aadhaar Services

- A. Rs.50,000
- B. Rs.10,000
- C. Rs.75,000
- D. Rs.25,000

ANSWER: A

20.In Which Of The Following States Is Kardang Monastery Situated

- A. Sikkim
- B. Himachal Pradesh
- C. Karnataka
- D. West Bengal

ANSWER: B

