

Daily Current Affairs

30 December 2023

First Woman CISF Chief

- **Anish Dayal Singh** has been appointed as the **Director General of Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF)**. Earlier he was heading Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP). Mr Singh is a 1988-batch Indian Police Service (IPS) officer of Manipur cadre.
- Senior IPS officer **Rahul Rasgotra** has been appointed as the **Director General of Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP)**. Mr. Rasgotra is a 1989-batch IPS officer of Manipur cadre. Rahul Rasgotra, at present a special director in the Intelligence Bureau (IB).



- **Senior IPS officer Nina Singh** has been appointed as the **chief of Central Industrial Security Force (CISF)**. Nina Singh, 1989-batch IPS officer of Rajasthan cadre is currently working as Special Director General, CISF.
- **Vivek Srivastava**, a 1989-batch IPS officer of Gujarat cadre, will be Director General, Fire Service, Civil Defence and Home Guards.
- He has been appointed to the post till June 30, 2025, i.e. the date of his superannuation.

GCC Inks Free Trade Deal With South Korea

- The **Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC)** has taken a significant stride in **strengthening economic ties** with major Asian partners by signing its second free trade agreement (FTA) this year. The recent accord, inked with South Korea, underscores the bloc's commitment to fostering investment connections and diversifying its economic portfolio.
- As part of the **newly established FTA**, South Korea has committed to removing **tariffs on nearly 90% of all items**, including critical energy resources such as liquefied natural gas (LNG) and other petroleum products.



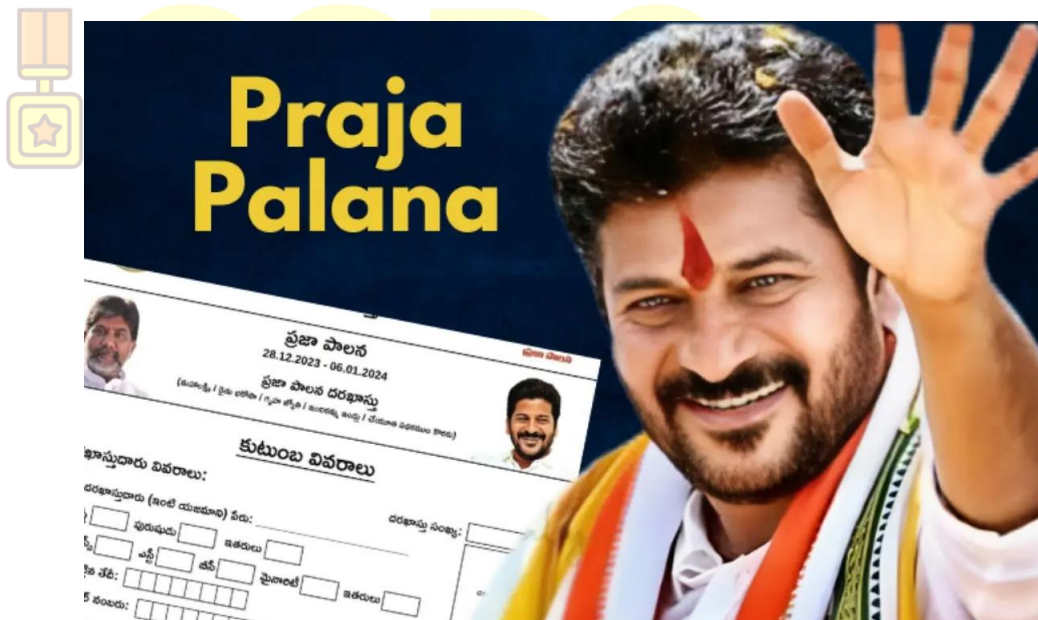
- On the other side, the **Gulf states will reciprocate** by scrapping tariffs on **76.4% of traded products** and **4% of traded goods**.
- This mutual reduction in trade barriers aims to stimulate economic activity and create a more conducive environment for bilateral commerce.



- The **scope of the agreement extends** beyond tariff elimination, encompassing trade in goods, services, government procurement, and cooperation among small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs).
- Additionally, the agreement addresses critical aspects such as customs procedures, intellectual property, and other facets crucial for promoting a seamless and mutually beneficial economic relationship, as outlined in a statement by the GCC.

Praja Palana Program

- Telangana Deputy Chief Minister Bhatti Vikramarka Mallu recently inaugurated the **Government's Praja Palana programme** in Ibrahimpatnam, marking the initiation of an extensive initiative aimed at understanding and addressing the needs of the people at the grassroots level.
- The Praja Palana programme is designed **to gather comprehensive information** about the needs of the residents, creating a detailed database at the grassroots level.



- The initiative involves the **collection of applications from individuals**, enabling the government to identify potential beneficiaries of the six guarantees promised by the Congress during the run-up to the assembly elections.
- During this period, **teams of officials will visit two villages each day**, actively engaging with the local population to receive filled application forms in the prescribed format.

- He took the opportunity to explain the significance of the programme, emphasizing its goal of bringing the government closer to the doorsteps of the people.
- The initiative aims to **bridge the gap between the administration** and the citizens by actively addressing their concerns and needs.

Bateshwar's Intra District Chopper Service

- In a significant development aimed at **boosting tourism and infrastructure** in the state of Uttar Pradesh, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath inaugurated the state's **first intra-district helicopter service in Bateshwar**, a historical village located 65 km from Agra city.
- This venture, operating on a Public-Private Partnership (PPP) model, is expected to open new doors for tourism in the region.



- A strategically located helipad has been meticulously prepared in **Bateshwar village** to facilitate the launch of the intra-district helicopter service.
- Positioned just 65 km from Agra city, this helipad will serve as the departure point for flights connecting **Bateshwar to Goverdhan in Mathura**.
- The meticulous planning and preparation include the provision of a heliport service, further emphasizing the commitment to promoting tourism in the state.
- Adding a touch of cultural significance to the inaugural flight, artistes dressed as the iconic figures of Radha and Krishna will be seated in the first helicopter flight.
- This symbolic gesture **aims to celebrate the rich cultural heritage** of the region and make the inaugural event a memorable experience for the people of Bateshwar and beyond.

First Rupee Payment For Oil To UAE

- India, the UAE's second-largest trading partner, has made its **first-ever payment** in rupees for crude oil purchased from the Emirates, signalling what could be a paradigm shift in dollar-denominated global trade transactions while giving a game-changing fillip to the booming two-way trade that is on track to cross **\$100 billion mark** in a couple of years.

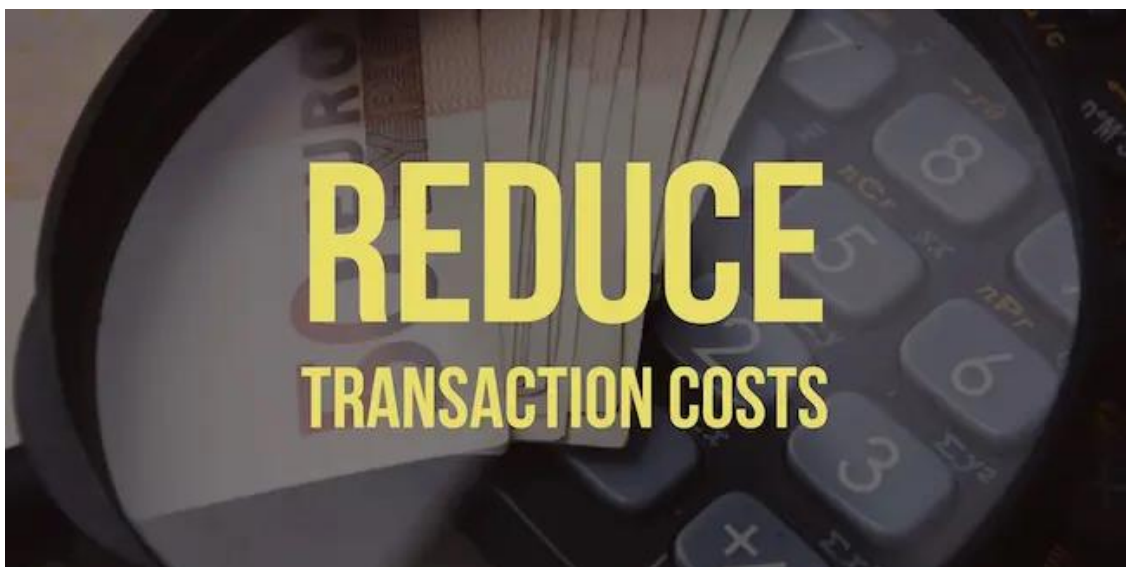


- India, the **world's third-largest energy consumer**, made its **first-ever payment** in **rupees for crude oil** purchased from the United Arab Emirates (UAE), signalling what could be a strategic push to promote the **local currency globally**.
- The move is part of India's broader efforts to **diversify oil suppliers**, cut transaction costs, and establish the **rupee as a viable trade settlement currency**.



- Officials have stressed that **internationalisation is an ongoing process**, and currently, there are no specific targets.
- In July, **India formalised an agreement with the UAE** for rupee settlements, leading to the **Indian Oil Corporation (IOC)** making payments for purchasing one million barrels of crude oil from Abu Dhabi National Oil Company (Adnoc) in Indian rupees.

- Additionally, some Russian oil imports have also been settled in rupees. With over **85 per cent of its oil needs reliant on imports**, India has adopted a multifaceted strategy, emphasising sourcing from the most cost-effective suppliers, diversifying supply sources, and adhering to international obligations.
- India's strategy, aimed at saving **billions of dollars by sourcing Russian oil post-Ukraine war**, involves settling trade in rupees rather than dollars. The move aims to reduce transaction costs by eliminating the need for dollar conversions.
- Despite these efforts, India aims to explore trade settlements in rupees rather than dollars to streamline transactions by **eliminating currency conversions**.



- The oil ministry, addressing a parliamentary standing committee, emphasised that payments for crude oil can be made in Indian rupees, contingent on suppliers adhering to regulatory guidelines.
- The ministry added that **there has not been much international interest in making payments using the Indian rupee** as suppliers are wary of the repatriation of funds and high transactional costs.



- In the **financial year 2022-23** (April 2022 to March 2023), India spent \$157.5 billion on importing 232.7 million tonnes of crude oil. Key suppliers included Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Russia, and the UAE, with West Asia contributing 58 per cent of all supplies. The domestic supply meets less than 15 per cent of the demand.
- “The **internationalisation of the Indian rupee** may eventually reduce the cost of borrowing for India and helps to make the rupee an accepted mode of payment for the settlement of international trades.
- With the **rupee becoming a popular mode of payment for global trade**, it may eventually become a hard currency akin to the US currency.”

Government To Market FCI Rice As Bharat Brand

- In a **bid to address the soaring rice inflation**, the Government of India is contemplating a strategic move—**selling rice under the ‘Bharat’ brand**, a proposal that is currently under consideration.
- While the discounted rate for this initiative is yet to be finalized, it marks a significant step in the **government’s efforts to stabilize retail rice prices**.
- The Ministry’s attempts to curb retail rice prices by enhancing domestic availability through the **Open Market Sale Scheme (OMSS)** have faced a lukewarm response.



- However, the program has not yielded the desired results, prompting the government to explore alternative strategies such as selling rice under the **‘Bharat’ brand**.
- The proposal to retail **‘Bharat rice’** is on the table, but the crucial aspect of determining the selling price remains undecided.

- The official revealed that whether the rice would be sold at the existing reserve price or at a reduced rate is a decision that lies in the hands of the Group of Ministers.
- This deliberation underscores the importance of **striking a balance between making rice more affordable for consumers** and ensuring the financial viability of the initiative.
- The government has already ventured into selling essential commodities like wheat flour (atta) and pulses under the 'Bharat' brand.
- These products are **made available through outlets managed** by key entities such as the National Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Federation of India (NAFED), National Cooperative Consumers' Federation (NCCF), and Kendriya Bhandar.
- The expansion of the '**Bharat**' brand to include rice aligns with the **government's** broader strategy to provide essential food items to the masses at affordable rates.

AIIB Takes Lead In Rs 2.5k Crore Funding

- **Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB)** is set to spearhead a fundraising round worth **Rs 2,500 crore for the Sustainable Energy Infrastructure Investment Trust (InvIT)** supported by the Mahindra Group. In this initiative, various domestic institutional investors (DIIs) will also be actively participating, according to sources familiar with the matter.



- The Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) is positioned as the **lead investor in this substantial funding effort**, emphasizing its commitment to supporting sustainable energy infrastructure projects.

- Alongside AIIB, Dutch pension fund APG Asset Management and the International Finance Corp (IFC) of the World Bank are engaged in separate discussions to contribute capital to this initiative.
- The funding will specifically **benefit Mahindra Susten**, the renewable energy arm of the **Mahindra Group**.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Who Has Been Appointed As Director General Of Central Reserve Police Force

- A. Anish Dayal Singh
- B. Rahul Rasgotra
- C. Nina Singh
- D. Vivek Srivastava

ANSWER: A

2. Which Country Signed 2nd FTA With The Gulf Cooperation Council

- A. India
- B. China
- C. South Korea
- D. Japan

ANSWER: C

3. Praja Palana Programme Launched By

- A. Gujrat
- B. Telangana
- C. Kerala
- D. Goa

ANSWER: B

4. What Initiative Is Government Of India Contemplating To Address Rice Inflation

- A. Selling Rice Under The 'Bharat' Brand
- B. Distributing Rice For Free
- C. Importing Rice From Other Countries
- D. Increasing Rice Prices

ANSWER: A

5. Term Used For Iridescent Clouds Spotted Recently Over Parts Of Scotland, Northern England, And The West Midlands

- A. Nacreous clouds
- B. Cirrus clouds
- C. Stratus clouds
- D. Cumulus clouds

ANSWER: A

6. Who Has Been Awarded The 'Impact Fielder Of The ODI Series

- A. K L Rahul
- B. Shubman Gill
- C. Sai Sudarshan
- D. Mohammad Shami

ANSWER: C

7. How Many Corridors Are Being Developed Under The National Industrial Corridor Development Programme

- A. 12
- B. 11
- C. 8
- D. 15

ANSWER: B

8. Scientists Identified Hydrogen Cyanide, A Vital Molecule For The Formation Of Life, On Enceladus, A Moon Of

- A. Jupiter
- B. Saturn
- C. Mars
- D. Venus

ANSWER: B

9. Name Of The Carbon Tax That UK Plans To Implement From 2027

- A. Carbon Border Tax (CBT)
- B. Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM)
- C. Global Emissions Import Levy (GEIL)
- D. Cross-Border Carbon Surcharge (CBCS)

ANSWER: A

10. International Gender Equality Prize Is Given By Which Country

- A. Sweden
- B. Finland
- C. Norway
- D. Estonia

ANSWER: B

11. Name Of The Potato Disease That Has Caused Substantial Damage To Potato Crops Across Various Districts Of Punjab

- A. Downy Mildew
- B. Late Blight
- C. Powdery Mildew
- D. Verticillium Wilt

ANSWER: B

12. Whose Forthcoming Memoir Is Titled 'Four Stars Of Destiny

- A. Admiral Karambir Singh
- B. Air Chief Marshal R K S Bhadauria
- C. General M M Naravane
- D. Lieutenant General Rajendra Singh

ANSWER: C

13. Which Ministry Has Launched The 'Bhoomi Rashi Portal'

- A. Ministry of Agriculture
- B. Ministry of Rural Development
- C. Ministry of Road, Transport and Highways
- D. Ministry of Finance

ANSWER: C

14. Which University Has Won Maulana Abul Kalam Azad Trophy 2023

- A. Gautam Buddha University
- B. Guru Nanak Dev University
- C. Delhi University
- D. Jawahar Lal Nehru University

ANSWER: B

15. Namdapha Flying Squirrel, That Was Recently In News, Is Endemic To Which Indian State

- A. Tamil Nadu
- B. Assam
- C. Arunachal Pradesh
- D. Andaman & Nicobar

ANSWER: C

16. Church Of Epiphany Secured UNESCO Asia-pacific Award For Cultural Heritage Conservation, Is Located In Which State

- A. Maharashtra
- B. Haryana
- C. Goa
- D. Kerala

ANSWER: B

17. Which Country Is Not A Member Of Organization Of The Petroleum Exporting Countries

- A. Congo
- B. Gabon
- C. Nigeria
- D. Qatar

ANSWER: D

18. As Per India Skills Report 2024, Which State Is Most Preferred State To Work

- A. Karnataka
- B. Telangana
- C. Kerala
- D. Gujarat

ANSWER: C

19. Who Has Been Recently Named Health Ambassador For Salaam Bombay Foundation

- A. Deepika Padukone
- B. Amrita Raichand
- C. Alia Bhatt
- D. Pankaj Tripathi

ANSWER: B

20. At Which Among Following Places, The Dharma-chakra Jina Vihara Was Constructed By Gahadavala Queen Kumaradevi

- A. Bodha Gaya
- B. Rajgrih
- C. Kushinagar
- D. Sarnath

ANSWER: D

