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State Current Affairs



< Feb 2024

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PIB News



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Ebook



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Ebook



Feb 29 2024 CA Quiz - English
START

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Weekly: 24-29 Feb 2024 CA Q&A - English
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Weekly: 24-29 Feb 2024 CA Quiz - English
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PIB News



February 29 2024 PIB News - English
Article



February 28 2024 PIB News - English
Article

AFFAIRSCLOUD TODAY

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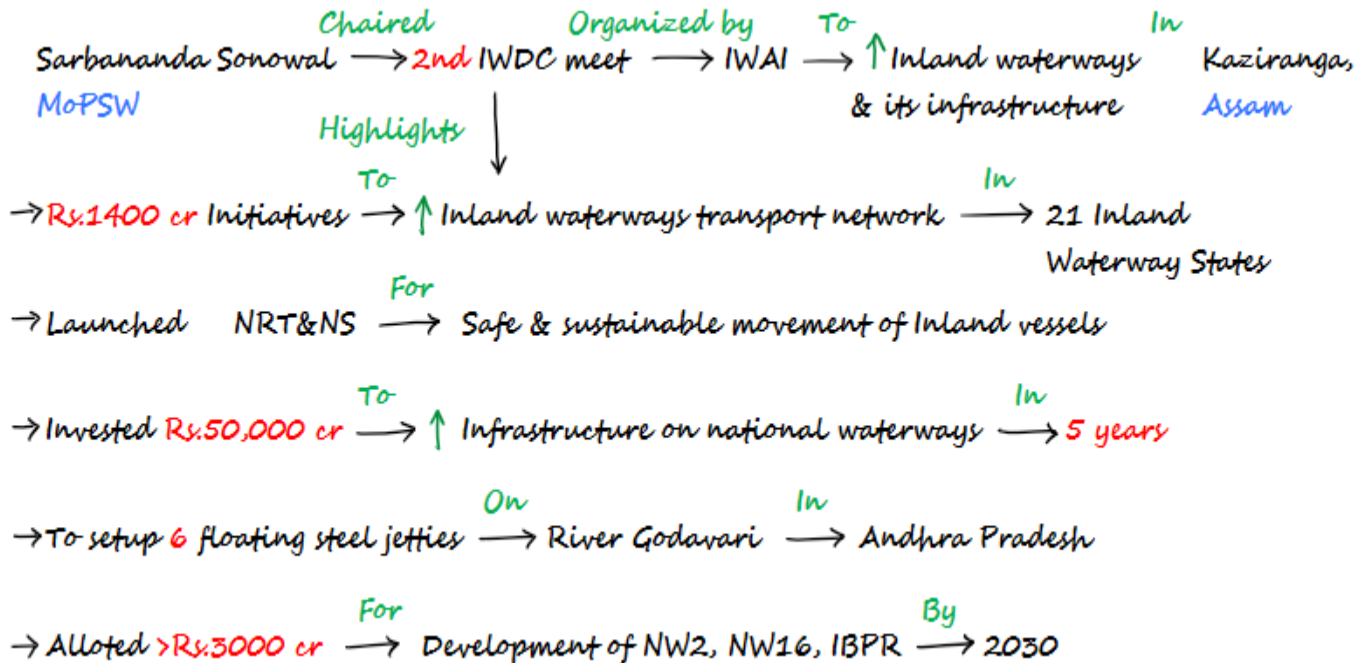
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Hand Written Notes

NATIONAL AFFAIRS

1)



MoPSW - Ministry of Ports, Shipping & Waterways

IWDC - Inland Waterways Development Council

IWA - Inland Waterways Authority of India

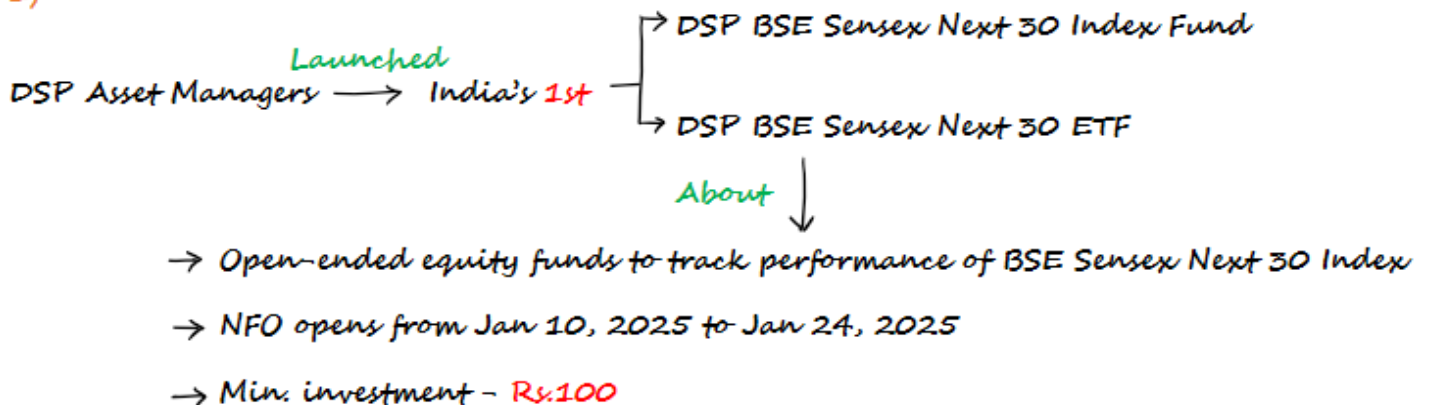
NRT&NS - National River Traffic and Navigation System

NW - National Waterways

IBPR - Indo Bangladesh Protocol Route

BANKING & FINANCE

1)

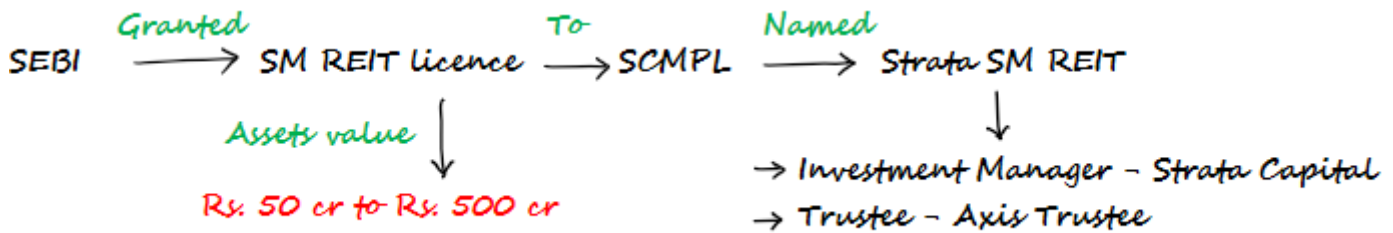


BSE - Bombay Stock Exchange

ETF - Exchange-Traded Fund

NFO - New Fund Offer

2)

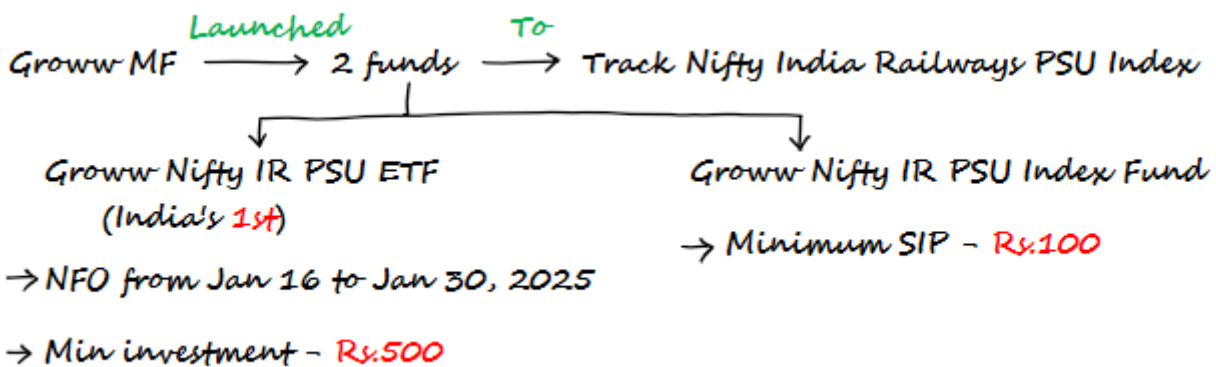


SEBI - Securities and Exchange Board of India

SM REIT - Small and Medium Real Estate Investment Trust

SCMPL - Strata Capital Management Private Limited

3)



MF - Mutual Fund

PSU - Public Sector Undertaking

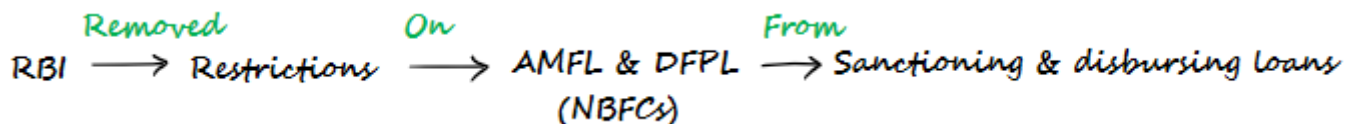
NFO - New Fund Offer

IR - India Railways

ETF - Exchange Traded Fund

SIP - Systematic Investment Plan

4)



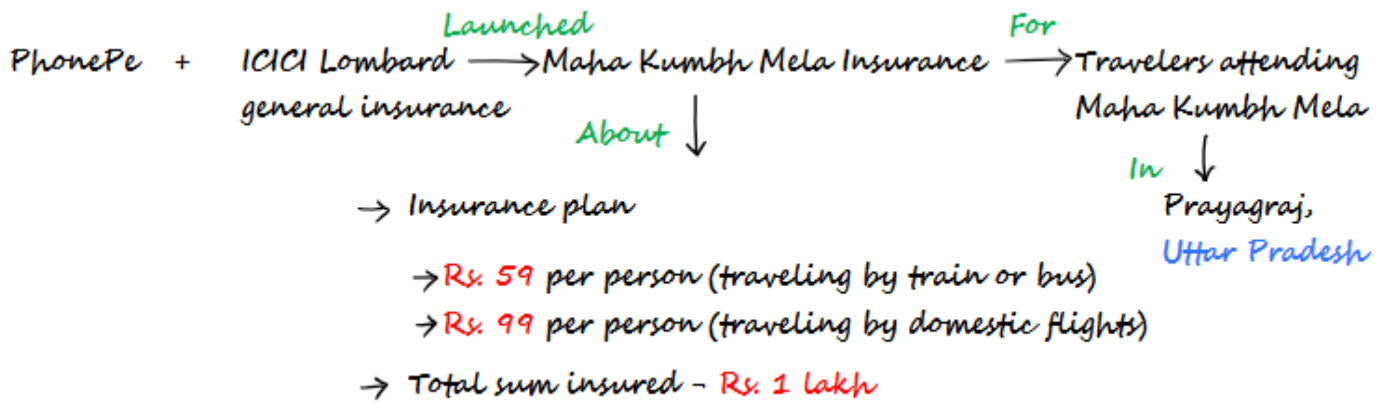
RBI - Reserve Bank of India

AMFL - Ashirvad Micro Finance Limited

DFPL - DMI Finance Private Limited

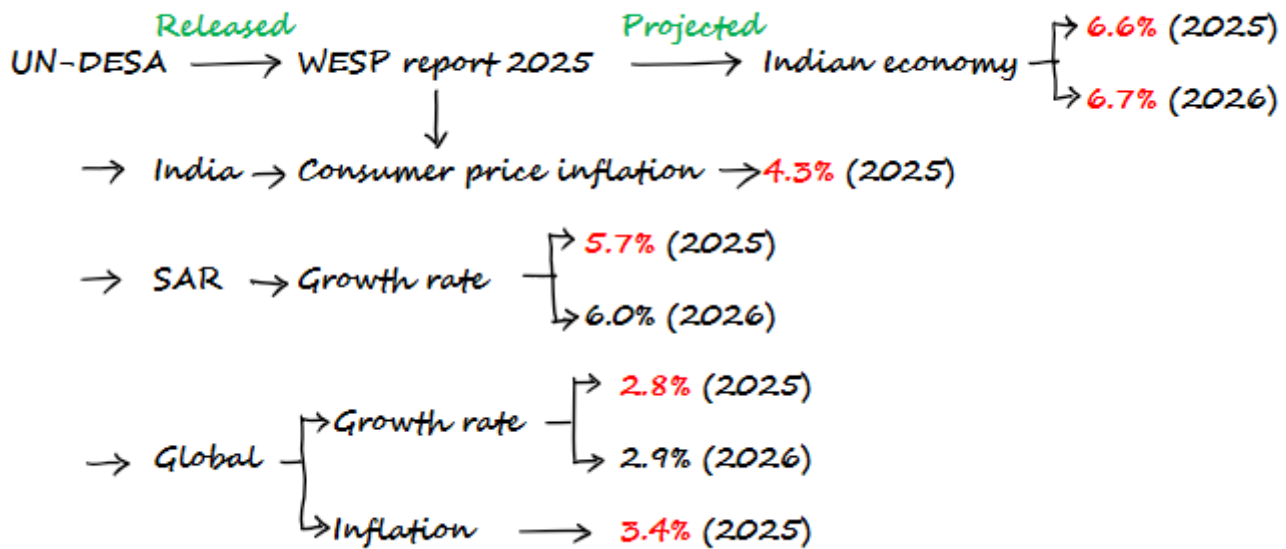
NBFC - Non-Banking Financial Company

5)



ECONOMY & BUSINESS

1)



UN - United Nation

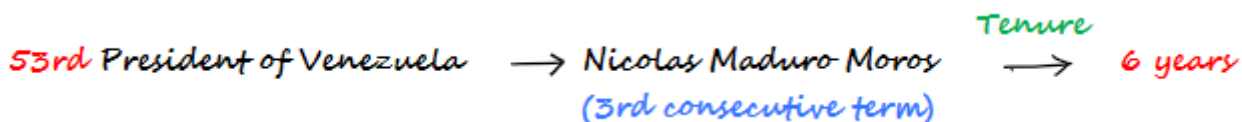
DESA - Department of Economic and Social Affairs

WESP - World Economic Situation and Prospects

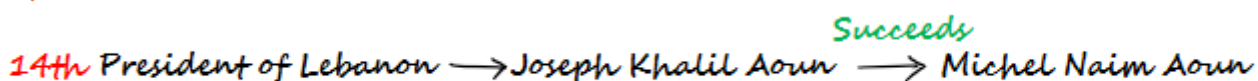
SAR - South Asia Region

APPOINTMENTS & RESIGNATIONS

1)



2)



3)

CMD of NALCO → Brijendra Pratap Singh ^{Succeeds} → Sridhar Patra

CMD - Chairman-cum-Managing Director

NALCO - National Aluminium Company

AWARDS & RECOGNITIONS

1)

FEE ^{Granted} → Blue Flag certification ^{To} → Kappad beach (Kozhikode, Kerala)
(Denmark) → Chal beach (Kannur, Kerala)

Key points

Blue flag beaches in Asia - India (Rank 4) after South Korea, Japan & UAE

India has 12 Blue Flag beaches

Shivrajpur (Gujarat), Ghoghla (Daman & Diu), Kasarkod (Karnataka), Padubidri (Karnataka), Kappad (Kerala), Rushikonda (Andhra Pradesh), Golden beach (Odisha), Radhanagar (Andaman and Nicobar), Kovalam (Tamil Nadu), Eden (Puducherry), Tarkarli (Maharashtra) and Bangaram (Lakshadweep)

FEE - Foundation for Environmental Education

UAE - United Arab Emirates

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

1)

Pixxel + SIIS ^{To supply} → Hyperspectral satellite data → To solve industries ^{In} → Korea complex challenges
(Korea)
^{To launch} ↓
SpaceEye-T → Korea's 1st private Earth ^{For} → Ultra-high-resolution ^{In} → March spatial data 2025
observation platform

SPORTS

1)

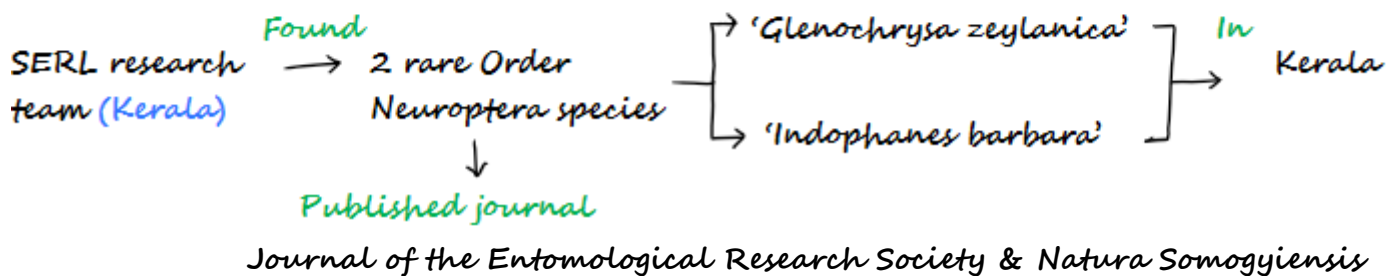
Martin Gupthill ^{Announced} → Retirement ^{From} → International cricket
New Zealand

→ 1st New Zealand cricketer to score an ODI double-century in world cup 2015

ODIs - One Day Internationals

ENVIRONMENT

1)

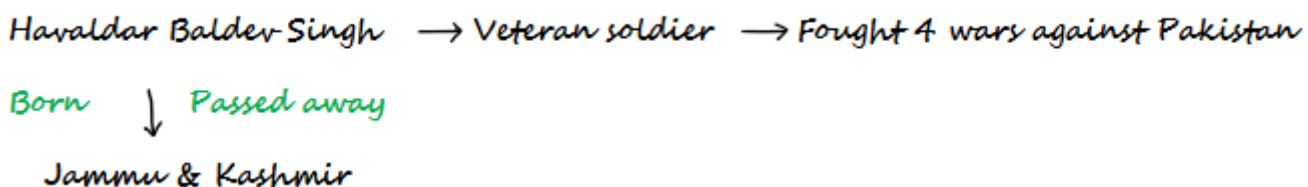


ZSI - Zoological Survey of India

SERL - Shadpada Entomology Research Lab

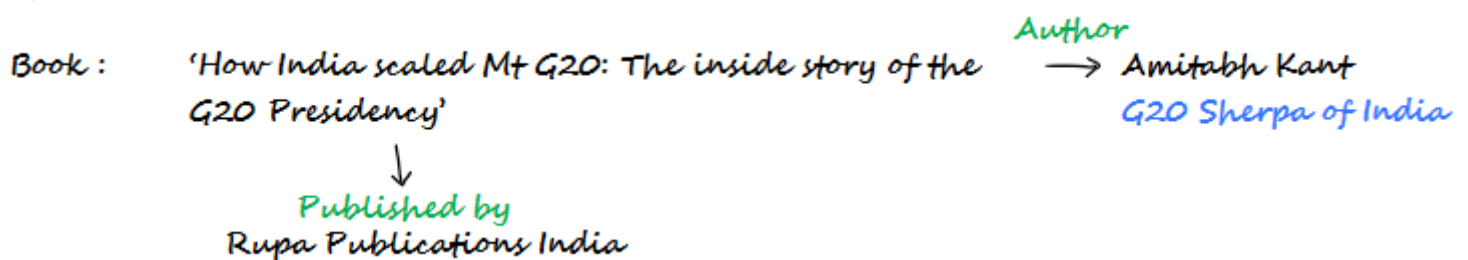
OBITUARY

1)



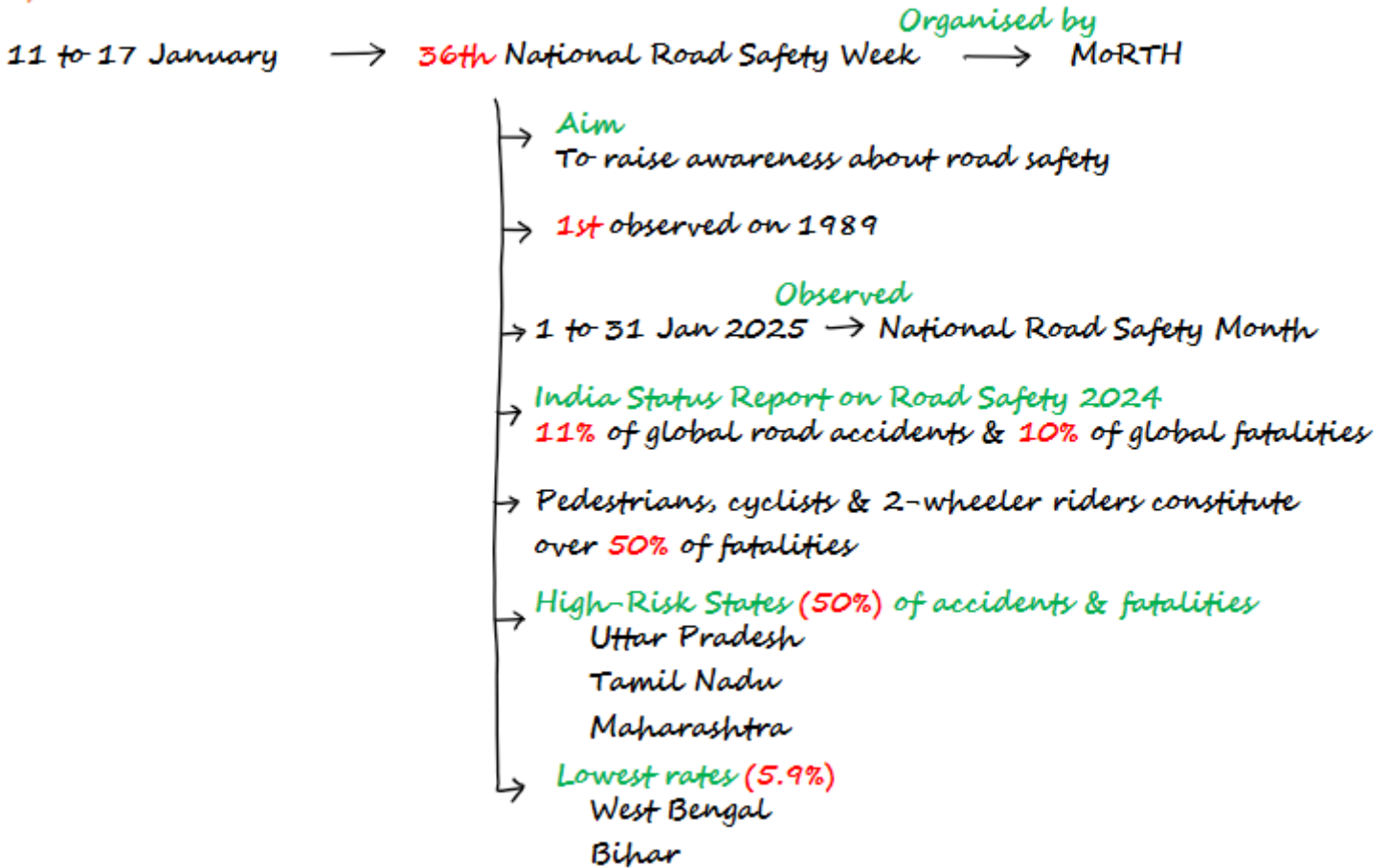
BOOKS & AUTHORS

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IMPORTANT DAYS

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MoRTH - Ministry of Road Transport and Highways

STATE NEWS

1)



FIR - First Information Report

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- ▶ [Radar Equipment for measurement of speed of vehicles being included under Legal Metrology \(General\) Rules, 2011](#)
- ▶ [Climate change is biggest disruptor in aquaculture: FAO](#)
- ▶ [Delhi govt inaugurates one-stop solar power portal](#)
- ▶ [Haryana government forms new committee to finalise State song](#)
- ▶ [Haryana govt notifies 'Haryana Good Governance Award Scheme' to promote excellence in governance](#)


Detailed Content

Current Affairs 12 & 13 January 2025 : Headlines




AFFAIRSCLOUD TODAY

ENGLISH



Union Minister Sonowal launches *National River Traffic & Navigation System*

India's economy likely to grow 6.6% in 2025, 6.7% in 2026: UN report



CURRENT AFFAIRS

12 & 13 JANUARY 2025

- ▶ Union Minister Sarbananda Sonowal chaired 2nd IWDC Meet in Assam
- ▶ DSP Asset Managers Launches India's First BSE Sensex Next 30 Index Fund And ETF
- ▶ SEBI Grants License to Strata for SM REIT
- ▶ Groww Asset Management Launches India's First Groww Nifty India Railways PSU ETF
- ▶ RBI Lifts Restrictions on AMFL and DFPL
- ▶ PhonePe and ICICI Lombard Unite for Maha Kumbh Mela Insurance
- ▶ UN-DESA's WESP 2025 Report: Indian Economy Likely to Grow 6.6% in 2025
- ▶ Kerala's Kappad and Chal Beaches Earn 'Blue Flag' Certification
- ▶ Nicolas Maduro Moros Sworn in as President of Venezuela for 3rd consecutive term
- ▶ Joseph Khalil Aoun elected as the 14th President of Lebanon
- ▶ Brijendra Pratap Singh appointed as CMD of NALCO
- ▶ Pixxel announced partnership with SIIS to supply Hyperspectral Satellite Data in Korea
- ▶ New Pangolin species discovered in Arunachal Pradesh by ZSI team
- ▶ New Zealand Cricketer Martin Guptill Retires from International Cricket
- ▶ Veteran Soldier Havaldar Baldev Singh Passed Away
- ▶ 'How India scaled Mt G20: The inside story of the G20 Presidency' authored by Amitabh Kant
- ▶ National Road Safety Week 2025 - January 11 to 17
- ▶ Karnataka launches 'Garudakshi' portal for Forest Protection

NATIONAL AFFAIRS

Union Minister Sarbananda Sonowal chaired 2nd IWDC Meet in Assam

The **2nd** Inland Waterways Development Council (IWDC) meet, organized by the Inland Waterways Authority of India (IWAI), the nodal agency for the development of waterways under the Ministry of Ports, Shipping & Waterways (MoPSW), was held from **9th January to 10th January 2025** in **Kaziranga, Assam** to discuss upon the policies to enhance inland waterways and its infrastructure in India.



- The meeting was presided over by the Union Minister **Sarbananda Sonowal**, Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways(MoPSW).

Key People:

The meeting was attended by Union Minister of State(MoS) Shantanu Thakur, MoPSW; Aleixo Sequeira, Ports Minister of Goa; Jogen Mohan, Transport Minister of Assam; Khashim Vashum, Transport Minister of Manipur; Satish Sharma, Transport Minister of Jammu & Kashmir(J & K); Pu Vanlalhlana, Transport Minister of Mizoram, and Ojing Tasing, Transport Minister of Arunachal Pradesh(AR), among others.

Highlights of 2nd IWDC Meet :

Launches:

- During the meeting, Union Minister Sarbananda Sonowal unveiled Initiatives worth more than **Rs.1400 crore** to boost inland waterways transport network across 21 Inland Waterway States.
- The National River Traffic and Navigation System (**NRT&NS**) was launched to create a safe, seamless and sustainable movement of Inland vessels during the event.
- The **Central Database Module** and Issuance of Certificates was also launched with an aim to streamline out the process of certification for vessel owners.
- The government also plans to launch 1,000 green vessels to boost economic opportunities through sustainable inland waterway transport.

Announcements:

- During the meeting, Union Minister Sarbananda Sonowal announced an investment of **Rs.50,000 crore** over the next **five** years to strengthen infrastructure on national waterways.
 - He also announced the setting up of Regional Centre of Excellence (RcoE) in Dibrugarh, Assam.
- The Union Minister also announced the setting up of 6 floating steel jetties on river Godavari (NW 4) at Gandipochamma Temple, Pochavaram, Perantapalli village in Andhra Pradesh (AP).
- A feasibility study on river Penna (NW 79) was also announced along with DPR of NW 4 to get additional inputs for development.



iv. A budget of more than **Rs.3000 crore** will be allocated for the development of National Waterways (NW)2, NW16 and the Indo Bangladesh Protocol Route (IBPR) by 2030.

Points to Note:

i. The cargo traffic on national waterways has increased in the last 10 years – from 18 million tons a decade ago to **133 million tons** in Financial Year (FY) 2023-24 at a Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) of over **22%**.

ii. A policy initiative named **Riverine Community Development Scheme** was launched with an aim to improve the socio-economic well-being of communities along the waterways through infrastructure upgrades, trade and tourism promotion, and skill development for coastal communities.

About Inland Waterways Authority of India (IWAI):

Chairman– Vijay Kumar

Headquarters– Noida, Uttar Pradesh (UP)

Founded– 1986

BANKING & FINANCE

DSP Asset Managers Launches India's First BSE Sensex Next 30 Index Fund And ETF

In January 2025, Mumbai (Maharashtra)-based **DSP Asset Managers Private Limited**, a leading Indian asset management company (AMC) offering a range of mutual funds (MF), introduced a **first-of-its-kind** investment opportunity with the launch of two new schemes: '**DSP BSE (Bombay Stock Exchange) Sensex Next 30 Index Fund**' and '**DSP BSE Sensex Next 30 ETF (Exchange-Traded Fund)**'.



- The New Fund Offer (NFO) for these innovative schemes opened on **January 10, 2025**, and will remain available for subscription until **January 24, 2025**.

About BSE Sensex Next 30 Index Fund And ETF:

i. These schemes are **open-ended** equity funds specifically designed to track the performance of the BSE Sensex Next 30 Index.

ii. These funds aim to give investors access to **30 large companies** that are not part of the BSE Sensex but hold strong potential for future growth. While they could offer better returns, they also come with higher levels of risk.

iii. The index is diversified across key sectors, including Financial Services (19%), Consumer Discretionary (18%), Commodities (18%), Energy (10%), Healthcare (10%), Fast-Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) (8%), and Industrials (8%).

- The portfolio reconstitution, or changes to the index constituents, will take place every six months.

iv. Investors can contribute either through a **lump-sum investment** or by setting up a Systematic Investment Plan (SIP).

Investments:

i. Investors can begin with a minimum investment of **Rs.100**, applicable to both lump sum and additional investments, while the same amount applies to SIPs.

- The Opening Net Asset Value (NAV) for the fund is Rs.10.

ii. The scheme will allocate 95-100% of its assets to equity and equity-related securities included in the BSE SENSEX Next 30 Index.

iii. A small portion, ranging from 0-5%, will be held in cash and cash equivalents to manage liquidity.

About DSP Asset Managers Private Limited:

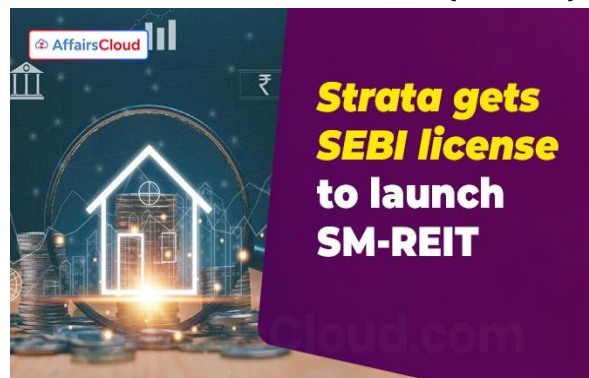
Chairman– Hemendra Mathradas Kothari

Headquarters- Mumbai, Maharashtra

Established– 1996

SEBI Grants License to Strata for SM REIT

In January 09 2025, the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) granted the licence to Bengaluru (Karnataka) based Strata Capital Management Private Limited (SCMPL), a real estate fractional ownership platform, for its Small and Medium Real Estate Investment Trust (SM REIT), named **Strata SM REIT**.



- This is SEBI's **fourth** approval, following similar licenses issued to Property Share, Rudrabhishek Enterprises Limited (REPL), and Emberstone.
- Strata Capital will serve as the Investment Manager for the SM REIT, with Axis Trustee acting as the trustee.

About Strata SM REIT:

i. Strata SM REIT will provide retail and institutional investors with access to premium commercial properties in key locations, streamlining real estate investments. It also enhances transparency, safeguards investors, and ensures a regulated investment environment.

- It aligns with SEBI's regulations to streamline fractional ownership platforms into a structured investment model.

ii. Strata plans to list assets worth Rs. 2,000 Crore by Financial Year 2025–26 (FY26), offering retail and institutional investors access to commercial real estate through SM REIT.

- It aims to launch up to six SM REIT schemes in FY26 and gradually introduce one scheme each month.

About Small and Medium Real Estate Investment Trusts (SM REIT):

i. SM-REIT was introduced by SEBI in March 2024 to encourage smaller real estate investments and increase participation in the sector.

ii. SM-REITs are a type of Real Estate Investment Trust (REIT) that enables individual investors to invest in properties such as office buildings, hotels, hospitals, and retail malls.

- They provide an opportunity for smaller investors to participate in the real estate market with lower capital requirements.

iii.Regulations:

- SM REITs can invest in real estate assets valued between **Rs. 50 crore and Rs. 500 crore**.
- It must have a minimum of 200 investors, excluding the investment manager and their associates.
- The minimum investment amount for SM REITs is Rs.10 lakh.

Groww Asset Management Launches India's First Groww Nifty India Railways PSU ETF

The **Groww Nifty India Railways PSU (Public Sector Undertaking) Index Fund** and **Groww Nifty India Railways PSU ETF (Exchange Traded Fund)** were launched by **Groww Mutual Fund**, an Asset Management Company. Both are passive funds that track the Nifty India Railways PSU Index, focusing on public sector undertakings in the railway sector.



- **Groww Nifty India Railways (IR) PSU ETF** will be first of its kind in India. The New Fund Offer (NFO) will be available from January 16 to January 30, 2025.
- The scheme will re-open for investments on or before February 13, 2025.
- Both schemes aim for long-term capital appreciation by investing in equity and equity-related instruments of companies constituting the Nifty India Railways PSU Index.

About Groww Nifty India Railways PSU ETF:

The Groww Nifty India Railways PSU ETF is an open-ended scheme that tracks the Nifty India Railways PSU Index – TRI (**Total Return Index**). It has been created following the guidelines and regulations set by the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) for mutual funds, ensuring it complies with the latest amendments.

- Exit Load: None.
- Minimum Investment: Rs.500 and above in multiples of Rs.1.
- Asset Allocation:
- 95-100% in Nifty India Railways PSU Index securities.
- 0-5% in money market/debt instruments.
- Strategy: Mirror the index with minimal tracking error.

About Groww Nifty India Railways PSU Index Fund:

- Exit Load: 1% if redeemed within 30 days; nil thereafter.
- Minimum SIP (Systematic Investment Plan): Rs.100 and above in multiples of Rs.1.
- Asset Allocation:
- 95-100% in Nifty India Railways PSU Index equities.

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- 0-5% in debt instruments or ETFs.
- Strategy: Minimize tracking error via portfolio rebalancing.

Note: The Nifty India Railways PSU Index has performed well, even outperforming the Nifty 500 Index, emphasizing the strong growth prospects of this sector.

About Groww Asset Management Limited:

Chief Executive Officer (CEO)- Varun Gupta

Headquarters– Mumbai, Maharashtra

Established– 2008

RBI Lifts Restrictions on AMFL and DFPL

On January 8, 2025, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) removed business restrictions imposed on Chennai (Tamil Nadu) based Ashirvad Micro Finance Limited (AMFL) and New Delhi (Delhi) based DMI Finance Private Limited (DFPL) following remedial measures initiated by the lenders and their commitment to adhere to fair loan pricing and regulatory guidelines.

- The RBI directed the 2 Non-Banking Financial Companies (NBFCs) to cease and desist from sanctioning and disbursing loans, effective from the close of business on **October 21, 2024**.
- The RBI had found that AMFL and DFPL were charging excessive interest rates and not complying with regulatory guidelines, particularly concerning Weighted Average Lending Rates (WALR) and interest spreads.

PhonePe and ICICI Lombard Unite for Maha Kumbh Mela Insurance

On January 09, 2025, Bengaluru (Karnataka) – based **PhonePe** and Mumbai (Maharashtra) – based **ICICI Lombard General Insurance Company Limited** launched the first-of-its-kind insurance coverage created exclusively for travelers attending the Maha Kumbh Mela in Prayagraj, Uttar Pradesh (UP), from January 13 to February 26, 2025.

- The insurance plan is offered in two options to suit a wide range of travelers: **Rs. 59 per person** for those traveling by train or bus, and **Rs. 99 per person** for those traveling by domestic flights.
- The product offers a total sum insured of **Rs. 1 lakh**, covering various risks with specific amounts for each.

i. The plan provides devotees with wide-ranging coverage, including hospitalization, doctor visits, outpatient care, personal accidents, lost baggage, trip cancellations, missed flights, and repatriation of remains.

ii. Users can purchase this plan on PhonePe until February 25, 2025, and enjoy full coverage throughout their journey and stay at the Maha Kumbh Mela, ensuring a safe pilgrimage for millions.

ECONOMY & BUSINESS

UN-DESA's WESP 2025 Report: Indian Economy Likely to Grow 6.6% in 2025

In January 2025, United Nations- Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN-DESA) released a report titled "[World Economic Situation and Prospects \(WESP\) 2025](#)". The report has projected that India economy will grow by **6.6%** in 2025, mainly driven by strong private consumption and investment growth.

- Indian economy is further expected to expand by **6.7%** in 2026.
- The report revealed that Indian economy registered the growth rate of **6.8%** in 2024.
- The report has projected that global economic growth rate will be at **2.8%** (in 2025) and **2.9%** (in 2026).



India-Specific Findings:

- i. The report highlights that capital expenditure (capex) on infrastructure will significantly boost India's economic growth in the coming years.
- ii. The report underscored that strong export growth in services and certain categories, particularly pharmaceuticals and electronics, along with expansion in the manufacturing and services sectors will strengthen economic activity for India.
- iii. The public sector in India continues to fund large-scale infrastructure projects, physical and digital connectivity, and social infrastructure, including improvements in sanitation and water supply. Strong investment growth is estimated to continue through 2025.
- iv. Consumer price inflation in India is expected to decelerate from an estimated 4.8% (in 2024) to 4.3% (in 2025). This is in line with the Reserve Bank of India (RBI)'s 2 to 6% medium-term target range.

- Easing inflation has led most central banks to halt rate hikes or reduce policy rates in 2024. The RBI has kept its **6.5% policy rate unchanged since February 2023** due to ongoing inflation risks.

v. The United Nations (UN) estimates India's growth rate at 6.6% for this FY 2025-26, slightly higher than the **National Statistics Office (NSO)** projection of 6.4% for 2024-25.

Note – National Statistics Office (NSO) is an Indian government agency under the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (**MoSPI**).

Key Findings Related to South Asia Region:

- i. As per the report, South Asia Region (SAR) is expected to remain robust, with growth rate at **5.7%** (in 2025) and **6.0%** (in 2026).
 - This growth is mainly driven by strong performance in India as well as economy recovery in countries like: Bhutan, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka.
 - Pakistan and Sri Lanka are projected to see modest GDP growth of 3.4% and 4.0%, respectively.
 - Bhutan and Nepal are expected to grow by over 5%, while Bangladesh's economy may slow due to unrest and ongoing political uncertainty in mid-2024.
- ii. The report observed that investment growth has remained strong particularly in East and South Asia region, partly supported by domestic and foreign investments in new supply chains in countries like: Indonesia, and Vietnam.
- iii. The report has outlined certain challenges like: weaker external demand, persistent debt challenges, social unrest and political uncertainties in some countries may dampen the outlook for SAR.

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Global Scenario:

- i. The report has projected that global economic growth rate will be at **2.8%** (in 2025) and **2.9%** (in 2026). These projections are largely same from the rate of 2.8% registered in 2023 and estimated for 2024.
- ii. The report highlighted that Global inflation has decreased from 5.6% (in 2023) to an estimated 4.0% (in 2024) and is expected to further decrease to **3.4% in 2025**.
- iii. The United States of America (**USA**) is expected to grow at **1.9%** in 2025 and recover marginally to 2.1% in 2026 amid weaker labour market performance, modest income growth and cuts in public spending.
- iv. As per the report, the growth rate of China is estimated at **4.9%** for 2024 and is expected to decrease marginally by 10 basis points (bps) i.e. to 4.8% in 2025.
- v. The Economic growth in the Least Developed Countries (**LDCs**) is projected to increase from 4.1% estimated for 2024 to 4.6% in 2025.
 - While, the growth rate for Small Island Developing States (**SIDS**) is projected to increase by an average of 3.4% in 2025, decrease from 3.8% in 2024.

About United Nations Department of Economic & Social Affairs (UN-DESA):**Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs – Li Junhua****Headquarters-** New York, the United States of America (USA)**Establishment-** 1948

AWARDS & RECOGNITIONS

Kerala's Kappad and Chal Beaches Earn 'Blue Flag' Certification

On January 10 2025, Kerala's renowned **Kappad beach** in Kozhikode and **Chal beach** in Kannur respectively received the coveted '**Blue Flag certification**' from the Denmark based non-profit organization 'Foundation for Environmental Education' (**FEE**).



- This certification is awarded to beaches and marinas that meet **33 criteria**, focusing on environmental education, water quality, safety, services, and waste management.

Key Points:

- i. **Kappad Beach** has earned the Blue Flag certification for the **4th consecutive** year. The beach underwent upgrades in 2020, including the installation of **solar-powered lights, bio-toilets, and disabled-friendly pathways**, to meet the stringent criteria required for certification.
- ii. **Chal Beach** also secured the Blue Flag certification, contributing to Kerala's rising profile as a sustainable tourism destination.

Note: The historical significance of Kappad was the site where **Portuguese explorer Vasco da Gama** 1st landed in 1498.

About Blue Flag certification:

- i. The Blue Flag certification is an eco-label awarded to beaches, marinas, and sustainable boating tourism operators that meet stringent environmental and safety standards globally as a mark of excellence.

- The 'Blue Flag' programme was started in 1987, initially in Europe and the certification is awarded annually.
- In 2024, over **5,000 beaches**, marinas, and tourist boats across 51 countries have received a Blue Flag.
- India is now the **4th country** in Asia after South Korea, Japan and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) with 'blue flag beaches'.

ii. As of November 2024, India has **12 Blue Flag** beaches. The beaches are: Shivrajpur (Gujarat), Ghoghla (Daman & Diu), Kasarkod (Karnataka), Padubidri (Karnataka), Kappad (Kerala), Rushikonda (Andhra Pradesh (AP)), Golden beach (Odisha), Radhanagar (Andaman and Nicobar (A&N)), Kovalam (Tamil Nadu (TN)), Eden (Puducherry), Tarkarli (Maharashtra) and Bangaram (Lakshadweep).

About Kerala:

Chief Minister (CM)- Pinarayi Vijayan

Governor- Rajendra Vishwanath Arlekar

Stadium- Lal Bahadur Shastri stadium, VKN Menon Indoor Stadium

APPOINTMENTS & RESIGNATIONS

Nicolas Maduro Moros Sworn in as President of Venezuela for 3rd consecutive term

On January 11 2025, **Nicolas Maduro Moros** was sworn in as the **53rd President** of Venezuela for the **3rd** consecutive term. The swearing-in ceremony was held at the National Assembly in Caracas, Venezuela.



- He will be serving as the President of Venezuela for a period of **6 years** until 2031.

About Nicolas Maduro:

i. **Nicolás Maduro Moros** is a Venezuelan politician who began his political career in the 1990s as a Member of the United Socialist Party of Venezuela (**PSUV**).

ii. In 2006, he served as the Foreign Minister of Venezuela, a position he held until 2013 and gained international recognition for his advocacy of socialist policies.

iii. In 2010, he served as **24th Vice President (VP)** of Venezuela under Hugo Rafael Chávez Frías (Former Venezuela President).

iv. In March 2013, he was appointed as interim President (following the death of the former President).

- He won the presidential election and served as the President of Venezuela since April 2013 (6 years term).

v. In March 2018, he served as the President for the 2nd consecutive term.

Awards and Honors:

i. In 2015, he received 'the **Order of the Liberator from Bolivia**' Venezuela's highest civilian award, in recognition of his outstanding services to the country.

ii. In 2007, he received the "**Orden Francisco de Miranda**" Venezuela's highest civilian award for his outstanding contributions to the country's progress.

About Venezuela:

Venezuela is a country in South America.

Capital- Caracas

Currency- Venezuelan Bolívares (VEF)

Joseph Khalil Aoun elected as the 14th President of Lebanon

On January 9 2025, General **Joseph Khalil Aoun** was elected as the **14th President** of Lebanon. He won the parliamentary election by securing 99 votes out of 128 votes. The session was the legislature's 13th attempt to elect a successor to former President **Michel Naim Aoun** whose term ended in October 2022.



- He is the fifth army commander to become president in Lebanon's history.
- Currently, he is serving as the **Commander** of Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF).

About Joseph Khalil Aoun:

i. Joseph Khalil Aoun joined the 'Lebanese Army' in 1983 during the Civil War and received training in the United States of America (USA) and Syria.

- He served as a Platoon commander in the army rangers and participated in several key operations, including the 'Adma Battle', Lebanon during the war.

ii. He was promoted to the rank of general in 2013 and he has led the 9th Infantry Brigade in the LAF since 2015.

iii. He was appointed as the **14th Commander** of the LAF in 2017 where he successfully led the LAF in counter-terrorism operations against the 'Islamic State' and 'Al-Nusra Front'.

iv. He received widespread backing from political groups within Lebanon, and in December 2023, his term as LAF commander was extended twice, notably during the 2024 Israeli invasion.

Honors and Awards:

i. He has received several military honors, including the War Medal (3 times), 'Medal of the Wounded' (twice), and the 'Order of Merit' in various classes for his outstanding contributions in LAF.

ii. He has also been recognized with the 'National Order of the Cedar', including the rank of 'Knight and Officer'.

About Lebanon:

Prime Minister (PM)– Najib Azmi Mikati

President- Joseph Khalil Aoun

Capital- Beirut

Currency- Lebanese Pound (LBP)

Brijendra Pratap Singh appointed as CMD of NALCO

On January 10 2025, **Brijendra Pratap Singh** was appointed as the Chairman-cum-Managing Director (**CMD**) of National Aluminium Company (**NALCO**) succeeding Sridhar Patra. He will be presiding over the corporate office of NALCO located in Bhubaneswar, Odisha.

- Prior to joining NALCO, he served as the Director-In-Charge for **Burnpur** and Durgapur Steel Plant (**DSP**), West Bengal(WB) and was a member of the Board of Directors (BoD) of Steel Authority of India Limited (**SAIL**).

i. In 1989, he began his career in the steel industry at the Iron Ore Mine of Bhilai Steel Plant (BSP), Chhattisgarh and has since worked in key positions in both frontline operations and leadership at 4 of SAIL's integrated steel plants: BSP, BSL (Bokaro Steel Limited), DSP and ISP (Indian Iron and Steel Company (IISCO) Steel Plant).

ii. He has over **35 years** of experience in the field of mining and steel sectors.

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

Pixxel announced partnership with SIIS to supply Hyperspectral Satellite Data in Korea

In January 2025, Bengaluru (Karnataka)-based **Pixxel**, a space technology startup specialising in hyperspectral earth-imaging technology, announced partnership with Korea-based **SIIS Co., Ltd.** to supply **hyperspectral satellite data** in Korea.



- The agreement was signed in November 2024, during the Satellite Utilization Conference in Seoul, South Korea, a major milestone in the process of providing hyperspectral data to relevant institutions and companies in the country.

Key Points:

- This partnership aims to provide transformative insights that enable end-users across industries to tackle complex challenges.
- Pixxel's hyperspectral data provides significantly more spectral resolution than standard multispectral data, allowing for accurate analysis of the physical and chemical aspects of the Earth's surface and atmosphere.
- Through a partnership with Pixxel, SIIS aims to strengthen its position in the market by fusing material insights from hyperspectral imaging with high-resolution spatial data.
- Pixxel is set to launch its **Fireflies constellation** of six commercial-grade hyperspectral satellites in 2025.
 - These satellites are designed to deliver 5-meter(m) resolution, a 40-kilometer(km) swath, and daily revisit capabilities across hundreds of spectral bands.
- SIIS plans to enhance its Earth observation capabilities with the launch of **SpaceEye-T** in March 2025.
 - This satellite will be **Korea's first** private Earth observation platform, offering 30 centimetre(cm) class ultra-high-resolution spatial data to support various applications and industries globally.

About Pixxel:

Pixxel is the first Indian space startup to secure the order from NASA.

Founder and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) – Awais Ahmed

Headquarters – Bengaluru, Karnataka

Established – 2019

ENVIRONMENT

New Pangolin species discovered in Arunachal Pradesh by ZSI team

In January 2025, a new species of pangolin named, the Indo-Burmese pangolin, scientifically called '**Manis indoburmanica**', was discovered by researchers at the Zoological Survey of India (ZSI) from Arunachal Pradesh (AR). It separated from the Chinese pangolin (*Manis pentadactyla*) about 3.4 million years ago.



- This finding has been published in the paper 'Indo Burmese pangolin (*Manis indoburmanica*): a novel phylogenetic species of pangolin evolved in Asia' in the German-published popular scientific journal **Mammalian Biology**.

About Indo-Burmese pangolin:

i. This new species belongs to the family 'Manidae'. The scale is dark brown and dark olive brown, while the face is pinkish in color. The body is covered in bristle-like fur, just like other Asian pangolins.

ii. The species have evolved in isolation during the Pliocene and Pleistocene epochs due to geological and climatic changes.

- Its present range includes parts of AR and Assam, and it may also reach Nepal, Bhutan, and Myanmar.

iii. Dr. Mukesh Thakur of the ZSI led the study, which analyzed mitochondrial genomes using state-of-the-art genomic methods.

iv. The discovery of Indo-Burmese pangolin highlights the necessity of region-specific conservation initiatives while also enhancing our knowledge of Asian pangolins.

About Pangolins:

i. Pangolins are among the most trafficked wild mammals globally.

ii. India is home to two species: the Indian Pangolin, found across the subcontinent; and the Chinese Pangolin, found across a larger area in south Asia.

- Bihar, West Bengal (WB) and Assam have both species in their States.

Note: World Pangolin Day is observed every year on the third Saturday in February.

Two rare Neuroptera species found in Kerala

Researchers have found two rare Order Neuroptera species, '**Glenochrysa zeylanica**' and '**Indophanes barbara**' from Kerala.

- The findings were produced by the Shadpada Entomology Research Lab (SERL) research team at Christ College, Irinjalakuda, Kerala.
- The findings are published in the recent issue of the two international scientific journals: Journal of the Entomological Research Society and Natura Somogyiensis.

About *Glenochrysa zeylanica*:

i. *Glenochrysa zeylanica* is a green lacewing of the Chrysopidae family in Order Neuroptera.

- This is the 12th green lacewing species and 8th antlion species reported from Kerala.

Note: Neuroptera is a group of insects commonly called lacewings because of the complex vein patterns in the wings, giving them a lacy appearance.

ii. The species was rediscovered after 111 years from Mananthavady and Thirunelly in Wayanad district, Kerala.

iii. This species was found for the first time in India, previously endemic to Sri Lanka.

About Indophanes barbara:

i. Indophanes barbara is an antlion belonging to the Myrmeleontidae family. It can be easily distinguished by their long distinct antennae.

- An antlion species has been identified across various locations in Kerala.

ii. Unlike common antlion species, Indophanes barbara larvae do not form pits. They are shielded from the sun, wind, and rain by living under the surface in loose soils.

SPORTS

New Zealand Cricketer Martin Guptill Retires from International Cricket

On 9th January 2025, New Zealand cricketer 38-year-old **Martin Guptill** announced his retirement from international cricket. He played 367 games for New Zealand in total and scored 13,463 runs in his 14-year international career.

i. He played 198 One Day Internationals (ODIs), 122 Twenty20 Internationals (T20Is), 47 Tests and scored 23 centuries across the three formats and breaking numerous white-ball batting records.

ii. He became the first New Zealand cricketer to score an ODI double-century achieving an unbeaten 237 in the International Cricket Council (ICC) Cricket World Cup 2015 quarter-final against the West Indies at Wellington Stadium, New Zealand.

iii. He is the current captain of the Auckland Aces now will continue to play T20 franchise and domestic cricket matches.

OBITUARY


Veteran Soldier Havaladar Baldev Singh Passed Away

In January 2025, Veteran soldier (retired) **Havaladar Baldev Singh**, who fought four wars against Pakistan, passed away at the age of 93 in Rajouri district, Jammu and Kashmir (J&K). He was born on 27th September 1931 in Naunihal village, Nowshera, J&K.

i. Singh had volunteered at age 16 to join **Bal Sena Force** under the leadership of Brigadier Usman, Commander of the 50 Para Brigade, during the battle of Nowshera and Jhangar in 1947-48.

ii. In 1950, he joined the Indian Army, where he served for nearly three decades. He served during several battles, notably the India-Pakistan conflicts in 1961, 1962, and 1965.

iii. He retired from service in 1969, but he was recalled during the India-Pakistan war in 1971 and served for another eight months.



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BOOKS & AUTHORS

'How India scaled Mt G20: The inside story of the G20 Presidency' authored by Amitabh Kant

In January 2025, the book titled '**How India scaled Mt G20: The inside story of the G20**

Presidency' written by **Amitabh Kant** was released. This book was published by Rupa Publications India.

- The book explores India's pivotal role in hosting and shaping the Group of Twenty (G20) during its presidency (December 1, 2022 and ended on November 30, 2023).

i. The book highlights India's initiatives to address pressing global challenges, such as economic disparities, climate change, and technological innovation.

ii. Amitabh Kant, G20 Sherpa of India, served as the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the National Institution for Transforming India (NITI) Aayog, the Government of India (GoI).

IMPORTANT DAYS

National Road Safety Week 2025 – January 11 to 17

National Road Safety Week, organised by the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MoRTH), is annually observed across India from **January 11-17** every year to raise awareness about road safety. It highlights the need for responsible driving, pedestrian safety, and better road infrastructure to prevent and reduce accidents and save lives.



- 2025 marks the observance of the **36th** National Road Safety Week.

Background:

i. The **1st-ever** National Road Safety Week, introduced by the MoRTH, was observed in **1989**.

- It was later expanded to a month-long observance in 2021 to intensify road safety efforts.

ii. The annual observance is led by the MoRTH to promote road safety measures.

- The National Safety Council of India (**NSC**) under the Ministry of Labour & Employment (MoL&E), also organises the National Road Safety Week.

National Road Safety Month (RSM):

i. It is an annual observance introduced by the MoRTH to sensitize citizens and road users about the severity of the challenges of road safety.

- The first National RSM was observed in 2021.
- In 2025 the National RSM is being observed from **January 1-31, 2025**.

Key Highlights on Road Safety in India:

i. The 'India Status Report on Road Safety 2024' of Indian Institute of Technology (**IIT**) New Delhi (Delhi) indicates concerning trends in road safety. As per the Report,

- **Accident Statistics:** India accounted for **11%** of global road accidents and **10%** of global fatalities.

- **Vulnerable Groups:** Pedestrians, cyclists, and 2-wheeler riders constitute over **50%** of fatalities.
- **High-Risk States:** States like Uttar Pradesh (UP), Tamil Nadu (TN), and Maharashtra report the highest number (50%) of accidents and fatalities. West Bengal(WB) and Bihar had the lowest rates at (5.9%).

ii.The **Motor Vehicles (Amendment) Act, 2019** was implemented to strengthen road safety norms and law enforcement to reduce fatalities.

iii.The National Highway Accident Relief Service Scheme (**NHARSS**) was introduced to provide quick medical aid to accident victims.

iv.The National Road Safety Policy (NRSP) was introduced in 2010 following recommendations by the **S. Sundar Committee** in 2007 to reduce road accidents and fatalities in India.

UN's Global Road Safety Week:

i.The United Nations Global Road Safety Week (**UNGRSW**) is a biennial campaign, hosted by the World Health Organization (WHO), aimed to raise awareness of road safety and reduce the number of road deaths.

- This week-long event is observed across the globe in May every year.
- In 2024, it was observed from **May 10-14**.

ii.The UN General Assembly (UNGA) adopted resolution "Improving global road safety " with the ambitious target of preventing at least 50% of road traffic deaths and injuries by 2030.

STATE NEWS

Karnataka launches 'Garudakshi' portal for Forest Protection

In January 2025, Karnataka's Forest Department launched '**Garudakshi**' portal to register an online First Information Report (**FIR**) cases for forest crimes such as encroachments, poaching, and illegal logging.

- The initiative was inaugurated by the Minister of Forests, Ecology, and Environment **Eshwar B. Khandre**, which was developed in collaboration with Noida(Uttar Pradesh, UP) based Wildlife Trust of India (**WTI**).

i.This system aims to increase public participation in forest conservation activities, case management, and efficiency.

ii.Initially, Garudakshi will be implemented on a pilot basis in five divisions: Bengaluru Urban Division, Bengaluru Forest Mobile Squad Division, Bhadravati Division, Sirsi Division, and Male Mahadeshwara Wildlife Division.

iii.The program will be further improved and gradually expanded to all divisions around the State based on experience from the departments.

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CATEGORIES	QUESTIONS COLLECTED	OVERALL	QUIZ	HANDWRITTEN NOTES
Current Affairs	42	37	29	16
Current Static Banking	1	—	—	—
Current Static GK	2	1	—	—
Static Banking	—	—	—	—
Static GK	—	—	—	—
Total	45	38	29	16

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