






23 December 2023

National and International News

<p>Chief guest at the 2024 Republic Day celebrations</p> 	<p>Context</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • French President Emmanuel Macron will be the chief guest at the 2024 Republic Day celebrations • As Strategic Partners, India and France share a high degree of convergence on a range of regional and global issues. • This year marks the 25th anniversary of the India-France Strategic Partnership
<p>DevINE scheme</p>	<p>Context</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region (DoNER) convened a meeting with the Chief Ministers of the States in the region • The meeting comes in the wake of a review by the Prime Ministers Office (PMO) that found that the scheme was yet to take off despite adequate funds. <p>About Prime Minister’s Development Initiative for North East Region (PM-DevINE) Scheme</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is a Central Sector Scheme with 100% central funding. • It will be implemented by the Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region (DoNER). • It will have an outlay of Rs.6,600 crore for the four year period from 2022-23 to 2025-26. • The infrastructure projects will be funded in line with the priorities laid down under the PM Gati Shakti program. • The objectives of PM-DevINE are to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fund infrastructure convergently, in the spirit of PM Gati Shakti; • Support social development projects based on




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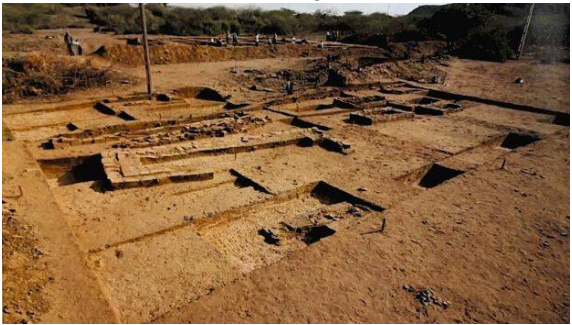
	<p>felt needs of the NER;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enable livelihood activities for youth and women; • Fill the development gaps in various sectors.
<p>Palna Scheme</p> 	<p>Context</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Women and Child Development Ministry aims to establish 17,000 creches in anganwadis across the country. • The Ministry plans to depute two additional creche workers in each anganwadi. <p>Key points</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • These initiatives are being taken under the 'Palna' scheme to address the need for quality daycare facilities or creches for children of working women by providing a safe and secure environment for the nutritional, health and cognitive development of the children, thereby enabling more women among all socio-economic groups to take up gainful employment in the organised and unorganised sector. • According to government data, participation of women in the workforce has increased to 37% in 2022. • As of March 31, 2021, 13.87 lakh anganwadi and mini-anganwadi centres are operational across the country.
<p>China bans export of rare earth technologies</p> 	<p>Context</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • China, the world's top processor of rare earths, banned the export of technology to extract and separate the strategic metals, as it overhauled a list of technologies deemed key to national security. • It also banned the export of production technology for rare earth metals and alloy materials as well as technology to prepare some rare earth magnets. • The move comes as Europe and the U.S. scramble to wean themselves off rare earths from China, which accounts for 90% of global refined output. • Rare earths are a group of 17 metals used to make magnets for use in EVs and other electronics.
<p>One-stop health sector regulator</p>	<p>Context</p>



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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Central government is exploring setting up a health sector regulator that will bring private and government health insurance schemes under its purview to facilitate affordable insurance coverage for all • The Ministries of Finance (MoF) and Health are in “initial discussions” over the need for a sector watchdog. • Doctors’ bodies have urged that private and government insurance be brought under a single regulator. Meaning, regulating government schemes like Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana, the Central Government Health Scheme, Employees’ State Insurance Corporation, etc.
<p>Female Athlete of the Year</p> 	<p>Context</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • U.S. gymnast Simone Biles has been voted Associated Press’ Female Athlete of the Year for a third time. • Her triumphant return that included her record eighth U.S. national championship and a sixth world all-around gold made Biles the fourth woman in last 50 years to claim the honour for a third time after tennis stars Serena Williams (five times), Chris Evert (four) and golfer Annika Sorenstam (three).

Kerala Regional News

<p>Kerala University gets field discovery award for research project</p> 	<p>Context:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Department of Archeology in Kerala University has won the Field Discovery Award by Shanghai Archeology Forum in China for a research project. • The discovery was made by a team led by Dr SV Rajesh. • The award was given to nine people who were selected from 131 people who were nominated from different parts of the world. <p>Key Points:</p>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Location: Juna Khatiya, a large burial ground, is the graveyard of the early Indus Valley Civilization (3200-2600 BC). ● Discovery: Kerala University's Department of Archaeology discovered Juna Khatiya in 2016. ● Extent: The burial ground spans 16 hectares and contains more than 500 graves. ● Artifacts: In the 197 graves unearthed at Juna Khatiya, a variety of artifacts were found, including conch shell bangles, pearls, pottery, and skeletons. ● Pottery Similarities: Each grave contained about 60 pots resembling those found in southern Balochistan during the Harappan period. ● Building Materials: The tombs at Juna Khatiya were constructed using stones collected from locations within a six-kilometer radius.
<p>KUFOS uses space technology to develop spectral library of Uma rice</p> 	<p>Context:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● To enhance precision farming and improve crop management strategies, the Kerala University of Fisheries and Ocean Studies (KUFOS), in association with the Centre for Water Resources Development and Management (CWRDM) has developed a spectral library for Uma rice, a popular indigenous rice variety in Kerala, using space technology. ● It utilized remote sensing to study the variations in the spectral signature of Uma at different growth stages and identified spectra indicative of water stress conditions.
<p>UNESCO recognition for Kunnamangalam temple's 'Karnikara mandapam'</p> 	<p>Context:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Six-hundred-year-old Kunnamangalam Bhagawati temple's 'Karnikara mandapam' has been selected for UNESCO's Asia Pacific Award for cultural heritage conservation. ● It got special recognition for sustainable development for its transformative heritage practices for following a sustainable method for restoring the 'Karnikara mandapam' in front of the temple.
<p>K-Rail Project</p>	<p>Context:</p>



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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The K-Rail project, also known as the SilverLine, is a proposed semi-high-speed railway line in the Indian state of Kerala. It aims to connect Thiruvananthapuram, the capital city, with Kasaragod in the north, significantly reducing travel time between the two ends. <p>Key features:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Length: 529.45 km Stations: 11 Maximum speed: 200 km/h (though some sources mention 300 km/h) Project Cost: Estimated at ₹66,079 crore (US\$8.3 billion) Benefits: Proponents claim it will boost economic growth, improve connectivity, and reduce environmental impact.
<p>National Farmer's Day</p> 	<p>Context:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> National Farmer's Day is celebrated annually on December 23. <p>History and Origin:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Celebrated on the birth anniversary of Chaudhary Charan Singh. Chaudhary Charan Singh served as the Prime Minister from 1979 to 1980. He initiated welfare programs to improve farmers' conditions. The Government of India declared December 23 as National Farmer's Day in 2001. Honors Chaudhary Charan Singh's contributions and transformation from a farmer to the head of the state. Theme for 2023: Cultivating the Future: Innovation and Sustainability in Agriculture.

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