





29 January 2023

National and International News

<p>Laughing gull (Leucophaeus atricilla)</p> 	<p>First-Time Sighting in the Country:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Laughing gull, a migratory bird from North America, discovered for the first time in the country. Sightings reported at the Chittari estuary in Kasaragod district. <p>Key Points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Known for unique laughter-like calls, the laughing gull traveled thousands of kilometers from North America to the coastal region of Kerala. <p>Identification Amidst Diverse Avian Population:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Smaller than the brown-headed gull, with distinctive features such as a dark upper part, black legs, long drooping bill, and a dark smudge on the back of the head. <p>Contribution to India's Bird Species Count:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The discovery elevates the total number of bird species found in India to 1,367. Kasaragod district contributes 400 species to the state's overall count of 554. <p>Conservation Status:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Least Concern (LC) on the IUCN Red List, as the species has a large and stable population.
<p>ISRO's INSAT-3DS Satellite</p>	<p>Context:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The INSAT-3DS satellite flagged off to the launch port at Satish Dhawan Space Centre in Sriharikota by the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO). Scheduled to be launched on board GSLV F14 next month. <p>Objectives and Significance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exclusive meteorological satellite designed to provide continuity of services to existing INSAT-3D and 3DR satellites (which aid in



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	<p>weather monitoring)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aims to significantly enhance the capabilities of the INSAT system. <p>Advanced Payloads:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State-of-the-art payloads include a six-channel imager and 19-channel sounder meteorology payloads. • Communication payloads, a data relay transponder (DRT), and a satellite-aided search and rescue (SAS&R) transponder. • DRT instrument receives meteorological and oceanographic data, augmenting weather forecasting capabilities. • SAS&R transponder incorporated for relaying distress signals/alerts, facilitating global search and rescue services.
<p>Nitish Kumar's Ninth Term as Bihar Chief Minister</p>	<p>Context:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nitish Kumar, President of Janata Dal (United), took oath as Bihar Chief Minister for the ninth time. • This marks his fifth switch in political alliances since 2015. • He rejoined the BJP-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA) after leaving it 18 months ago. <p>Key Points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alongside Nitish Kumar, six Ministers and two Deputy Chief Ministers Samrat Choudhary and Vijay Kumar Sinha from the BJP were sworn in. • The Cabinet is expected to be expanded further in the near future.
<p>Germany seeks inter-governmental deal for submarines with India</p> 	<p>Context:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Germany presents an inter-governmental proposal to sell 6 advanced conventional submarines to India. • The proposal is part of India's Navy P-75I procurement program. • Discussions were recently held in New Delhi with a senior German delegation. • The deal, expected to cost over ₹45,000 crore, is in competition between Germany and Spain. <p>India's Navy P-75I procurement program</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planned class of diesel-electric submarines for the Indian Navy. <p>Project Overview</p>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is an acquisition plan for six conventional diesel-electric attack submarines. • Project mainly emphasizes advanced capabilities, including air-independent propulsion (AIP), ISR, SOF, ASHW, ASW, ASuW, land-attack capabilities, and more. • All six submarines to be constructed in India. • The project aligns with the Make in India initiative, emphasizing self-sufficiency and indigenous manufacturing in defense projects.
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China's ties with Africa



Context:

- Chinese Minister of Foreign Affairs, **Wang Yi**, embarked on his 11th annual trip to Africa, visiting Egypt, Tunisia, Togo, and the Ivory Coast.
- The visit aimed at enhancing economic and security cooperation, implementing outcomes of the **China-Africa Leaders Dialogue in August 2023**.

Key Points:

Purpose of visit:

- Execution of three key initiatives: industrialization support, agricultural modernization, and talent development cooperation.
- Setting the groundwork for the upcoming Forum on **China-Africa Cooperation 2024 (FOCAC)**.
- Mediation efforts for peace in Gaza, specifically addressing the **Rafah border shared with Egypt**.

Why is Africa China's Primary Focus?

- Historical ties dating back to the **1950s**, with China supporting African liberation movements.
- Importance of African support in China **acquiring a UN Security Council seat in the 70s**.
- Evolution from ideological support to the **"Go Out Policy"** encouraging Chinese companies to invest in Africa in 1999.
- Growth of **Sino-African relations through FOCAC dialogues, the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI)**, and strategic military presence.

Objectives of China in Africa:



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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Securing access to crucial resources (cobalt, platinum, coltan) vital for China's tech industry. • Strengthening geopolitical alliances with Africa to sway international resolutions in forums like the UN General Assembly. • Promoting the use of the Chinese Yuan (RMB) in trade, offering financial incentives, and restructuring African debt. • Exploiting commercial opportunities through Africa's import of finished goods, supporting Chinese exports and economy. <p>Concerns and Criticisms:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Western concerns about Chinese investments being predatory, leading to debt traps. • Varied African responses, with some poorly managing debt (e.g., Kenya, Zambia) and others benefiting from manageable arrangements. • Chinese 'non-interference' stance providing space for authoritarian regimes in Africa to maintain power.
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Kerala Regional News

<p>Beating retreat ceremony</p>	<p>Context:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Beating Retreat ceremony is a vibrant spectacle marking the culmination of Republic Day festivities in India. • It is held on the evening of January 29th at the iconic Vijay Chowk in New Delhi. • The music bands of Indian Army, Indian Navy, Indian Air Force and Central Armed Police Forces (CAPF) will play 31 captivating and foot-tapping Indian tunes before a distinguished audience. • Audience comprises President and Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces Smt. Droupadi Murmu, Vice President Shri Jagdeep Dhankhar, Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, Raksha Mantri Shri Rajnath Singh, other Union Ministers, senior officials and the general public. • The event will come to a close with the ever-popular tune of 'Sare Jahan se Acha'.
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘Beating Retreat’ traces its origins to the early 1950s when Major Roberts of the Indian Army indigenously developed the unique ceremony of display by the massed bands.
<p>Indian Newspaper Day</p>	<p>Context:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indian Newspaper Day is celebrated annually on January 29th. • It commemorates the launch of the first Indian newspaper, Hicky's Bengal Gazette, on the same date in 1780. • This day recognizes the immense contribution of newspapers to India's history, democracy, and society. • Newspapers have played a crucial role in informing citizens, providing a platform for diverse voices, and holding power accountable. • They continue to be a vital source of news and information, even in the age of digital media. <p>Do you know?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mumbai Samachar (previously Bombay Samachar) is India's oldest existing newspaper, first published in Gujarati in 1822. • Most newspapers are published in India's Uttar Pradesh, and their language is Hindi. • G. Subramanya Aiyer founded India's first Tamil newspaper, the Swadesamitran, as a weekly in 1882. • Newspapers in India are produced in over 100 languages, including English, despite the fact that only 22 major languages are mentioned in the Constitution's Eighth Schedule.
<p>IIT Palakkad beckons public with ‘open house</p>	<p>Context:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Palakkad threw open its Nila campus at Kanjikode for the public on Saturday as part of celebrating its annual open house. • The two-day open house is attracting school students in groups. • The event named Petrichor also marked the annual techno-cultural festival of the institute.
<p>Machinery Expo logo launched</p>	<p>Context:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The logo for the upcoming Machinery Expo 2024, organized by the Kerala Industries and Commerce Department, was unveiled on



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January 27th.

Key Points:

- The machinery expo kerala 2024 is a one step destination to display state of the art technologies and manufacturing solutions for the promotions for the micro small and medium enterprises.
- The event will be held from February 10th to 13th at the KINFRA International Exhibition Cum Convention Centre in Kakkanad.
- This 6th edition of the Machinery Expo aims to showcase cutting-edge technologies and manufacturing solutions, particularly for micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs).

Kerala's GER in higher education records significant fall

Context:

- Kerala's Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) in higher education has witnessed a concerning decline according to the All India Survey of Higher Education (AISHE) 2021-22.
- The GER fell from 43.2% in 2020-21 to 41.3%, marking a significant drop and pushing the state down to the seventh rank among states and union territories.
- This raises questions about the potential causes and implications of this trend.

About:

- GER is a measure of the percentage of the eligible population enrolled

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