

## National and International Weekly Current Affairs 25 to 31 December 2023

### Maharashtra State News

#### New Vande Bharat to soon operate on Mumbai-Jalna route

- A new **Vande Bharat train** is likely to **operate between Mumbai to Jalna**
- This proposed train will be the **fourth one from Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Terminus (CSMT)**

#### About:

- The **Vande Bharat Express** is a **medium-distance train service operated by Indian Railways**,
- It was **launched in 2019**
- It is capable of **reaching speeds up to 160 km/h**, significantly faster than most Indian trains.

#### Central Railway to procure 500 more fog devices

- The **Central Railway** is **procuring 500 additional fog safety devices to assist loco pilots during poor signal visibility** due to bad weather conditions.
- Aim is to **mitigate** accident risks.
- At **present, the Central Railway has 497 devices**, which have been given to different rail divisions under its jurisdiction.

#### MUHS thesis on tribal health in 4 Vid dists ready

- **Nagpur regional centre of Maharashtra University of Health Sciences (MUHS)** has compiled a thesis under the ambitious **BLOSSOM** project.
- It covered **18 villages having 85% tribal population** in four districts for screening and surveillance of these diseases.
- **BLOSSOM** was launched in **September 2022**
- It stands for **Breast cancer, Liver disease, Osteoporosis, Sickle cell, sexually transmitted diseases, Oral cancer, Malnutrition.**

#### Good Governance Day

- Good governance is observed annually on **December 25.**

- The day aims to let the citizens, the students, who are the future of the country know about the **government's responsibilities and duties that it needs to fulfill.**
- The day is also celebrated to commemorate the birth anniversary of India's former Prime Minister, **Atal Bihari Vajpayee.**

#### Key Points:

- **December 25th** marks the **birth anniversary of Atal Bihari Vajpayee**
- He was born in **Gwalior, Madhya Pradesh, in 1924**
- His life was a testament to dedication, resilience, and political acumen.
- He **served as Prime Minister three times**
- **Vajpayee initiated significant economic reforms**, ushering in an era of **liberalization and globalization.**
- **India conducted nuclear tests in 1998**, establishing itself as a nuclear power **under Vajpayee's leadership.**
- He is known for his **contributions to state integration.**
- **During his Prime Ministership (1998-2004)**, Vajpayee's government **oversaw the creation of three new states - Chhattisgarh, Uttarakhand, and Jharkhand.**

#### Himroo

- **Himroo is a luxurious brocade fabric woven with silk and gold or silver threads** widely associated with Aurangabad in Maharashtra
- The **origins of Himroo remain debated, with theories attributing its introduction to Persia or Europe during the Mughal era.**
- Himroo employs a complex **weft-based pick-and-pick technique**, where **silk warp threads are interlaced with silk wefts containing gold or silver zari threads.**
- This creates a **reversible fabric with shimmering metallic patterns and motifs** woven seamlessly into both sides

#### School edu dept to bring in new act to regulate kindergartens

- The **state's school education department** is gearing up to bring in a **new act to regulate**

pre-primary education, to be aligned with the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020.

- It will be implemented from the next academic year
- It aims to improve the quality of education and control arbitrary fees.
- The regulation emphasizes accreditation, curriculum standards, and minimum facilities, with the goal of ensuring equality in kindergarten education.

### Devendra Fadnavis conferred honorary doctorate by Japanese university

- Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis was bestowed with an honorary doctorate by Japan's Koyasan University.
- It was given in acknowledgment of his endeavors in establishing fundamental civic infrastructure, executing initiatives like the Jalyukta Shivar Yojana, and his role in advancing the industrial development of the state.

### Umed - Maharashtra State Rural Livelihoods

- Umed, also known as the Maharashtra State Rural Livelihoods Mission (MSRLM), is a state-level initiative launched in 2011 by the Government of Maharashtra
- Aim is to eradicate rural poverty and improve the livelihoods of rural communities.

#### Objectives:

- Reduce poverty by enabling poor households to access better income-generating opportunities.
- Empower rural communities through capacity building and social mobilization.
- Promote self-reliance and sustainable development in rural areas.
- Create vibrant rural economies through entrepreneurship and skill development.

#### Key Components:

- **Self-Help Groups (SHGs):** Formation and support of women-led SHGs for promoting micro-enterprises, savings, and collective action.
- **Skill Development and Training:** Providing vocational training and skill development programs in various sectors like agriculture, textiles, and handicrafts.

- **Financial Inclusion:** Facilitating access to credit and financial services for SHGs and individuals through partnerships with banks and microfinance institutions.
- **Infrastructure Development:** Improving rural infrastructure by constructing roads, markets, and other essential facilities.
- **Natural Resource Management:** Promoting sustainable practices for managing land, water, and forest resources.

### NGT Issues notice to Maharashtra over presence of Arsenic and fluoride groundwater

- The National Green Tribunal has issued notices to 24 states, including Maharashtra, and four Union Territories in a matter regarding the presence of arsenic and fluoride in groundwater.
- The presence of these metals or chemicals are "very serious" and requires "urgent preventive and protective steps".
- **Effects of Arsenic:** Long-term exposure to arsenic can lead to a multitude of health problems, including:
  - Skin lesions and hyperkeratosis (thickening of the skin)
  - Cancer of the skin, bladder, lung, and other organs
  - Cardiovascular diseases
  - Diabetes
  - Developmental problems in children
  - Neurological disorders
- **Safe Level:** According to the WHO, the safe limit for arsenic in drinking water is 10 micrograms per liter (µg/L).
- **Effects of Fluoride:** While fluoride in appropriate amounts helps prevent dental cavities, excessive exposure can cause:
  - Dental fluorosis (discoloration and weakening of teeth)
  - Skeletal fluorosis (stiffness and pain in bones and joints)
  - Gastrointestinal problems
  - Neurological damage
- **Safe Level:** The WHO recommends a fluoride level of 1.5 mg/L, with adjustments based on climate and age of the population.

#### About:

- The National Green Tribunal (NGT) is a specialized body in India established to

handle expeditious disposal of cases related to environmental protection and conservation of forests and other natural resources.

- It was set up under the National Green Tribunal Act, 2010, to address environmental disputes and provide speedy access to justice in such matters.
- NGT is a Quasi-judicial body
- It aims to deliver speedy resolutions to environmental disputes, reducing delays often associated with traditional courts.

country, has started an oncology OPD at Talegaon, where he conducted his first oncosurgery in 1982

- The Onco Life Cancer Centre also has a chemotherapy ward.
- The centre will conduct an OPD every second Saturday.

### Selu's Bhure is NU's first sprinter to clinch 100m bronze in zonal meet

- Adarsh Bure became the first Nagpur University sprinter to clinch bronze medal in 100 m race of North- East West Zone inter-university athletics meet at Bhubaneswar

### Temporary stay on Adani Green's soil testing for Patgaon project

- The Kolhapur Forest division's deputy conservator of forest (DCF) has temporarily stayed the permission to Adani Green Energy Limited (AGEL) for soil testing in forest areas of Patgaon dam backwaters in Budarghad tehsil of district for a proposed pumped hydropower project
- The project is to come up at Patgaon and at Anjiwade village in Kudal tehsil of Sindhudurg district

### CIDCO plans ₹14,321 cr infra projects in NAINA in 2024

- City and Industrial Development Corporation (CIDCO) has announced plans for infrastructure projects worth ₹14,321 crore in the NAINA region, Maharashtra.
- The projects will include a road network, stormwater management, water supply, sewer, and electrical works
- The tendering process for the projects to be implemented immediately will be done in January 2024

### No Registration or Renewal for Real Estate Agents from 1st January

- From January 1st, 2024, a significant change will impact the Indian real estate sector as there will be no new registrations or renewals for real estate agents without a valid MahaRERA Real Estate Agent Certificate of Competency.

### GN1 Corona

- Gen1 infection, which is spreading rapidly in many states in India, has been reported to be spreading in many states like Goa, Tamil nadu, Karnataka, Telangana, Kerala and Maharashtra as well.
- GN1 Corona is a relatively new strain of the coronavirus family, first identified in China in 2023.
- Compared to existing variants, it demonstrates some differences in characteristics and potential risks.

### Pioneer of bone marrow transplant starts onco OPD

- Dr Suresh Advani, a Pune doctor who pioneered bone marrow transplant in the

- Maharashtra Real Estate Regulation Authority has made it **mandatory for real estate agents to obtain training and certification** for registering or renewing their permits
- It aims to **enhance professionalism, transparency, and consumer protection** in the industry.

### IndiGo announces first ever direct flights from Mumbai to Ayodhya

- IndiGo, has announced to launch the **first-ever direct flights between Mumbai and Ayodhya**, the spiritual city in Uttar Pradesh
- Ayodhya is known for its **association with Lord Rama**.
- These daily flights **will commence on January 15, 2024**, bringing a convenient and faster option for pilgrims and travelers connecting the financial capital with the holy city.

### Madrassas in Maha will now get ₹10 lakh for modernization

- The Maharashtra government has announced a **tenfold increase** in the annual grant for modernization of madrassas in the state.
- **Previously**, madrassas received **only ₹2 lakh per year**, but **under the new Zakir Hussain Madarsa Modernization Scheme**, each madrassa will now receive **₹10 lakh annually**.
- It aims to **improve the teaching infrastructure, learning environment, including classrooms, libraries, laboratories, and computer labs**.and overall quality of education in madrassas across Maharashtra.

### Discharge of water from Koyna dam initiated again

- Koyna Dam, a crucial water source in Maharashtra, has **resumed water discharge** to cater to the increasing demand from the Sangli district.
- The **discharge of 1,050 cusecs of water from Koyna dam** has been initiated into Krishna river to cater to the irrigation demand of Sangli district.
- It was in view of recent lack of rainfall and depleting water levels in rivers like Krishna.

### Mumbai, Pune among top cities propelling growth of India's real estate sector in 2024

- In its latest analysis, **housing.com has identified Mumbai, Pune, and Hyderabad** as pivotal players **propelling the anticipated growth of India's residential real estate sector in 2024**.
- The data, focusing on online homebuyer activity, **underscores these cities as dynamic hubs** set to shape the sector's narrative in the coming months.

### Wagh nakh will be brought to state

- The state cultural affairs minister said that the **Wagh Nakh** claimed to have been **used by Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj to kill Adilshahi general Afzal Khan** will be brought back to Maharashtra.

#### About:

- It is a **tiger claw dagger** used by Maratha warrior king Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj
- It is set to **return to Maharashtra from the Victoria and Albert Museum** in London.

### Pune, Nashik get 10.3% recovery rate for sugarcane

- The **state sugar commissioner's office has fixed the base sugar recovery rate** for all **five revenue divisions in Maharashtra**.
- The **recovery rate for Pune and Nashik divisions will be 10.25%**, while it will be **9.50% for the remaining three divisions**.
- The mills from Pune and Nashik divisions **will have to pay Rs 3,150 per tonne** to the farmers, while the mills from the three **other divisions have to pay Rs 2,920 per tonne**

#### Note:

- A higher recovery rate translates to **more sugar extracted from the same amount of sugarcane**, leading to higher payments for farmers.

### Waste-to-energy plants coming up in Mumbai

- Mumbai is grappling with a **waste management crisis, generating over 6,000 metric tons of solid waste daily, 70% of which is organic**.
- To address this issue and promote greener practices, the **Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC)** is **setting up mini waste-**



**to-energy plants in five major civic-run hospitals.**

**Key Points:**

- **Five Hospitals:** KEM Hospital, Sion Hospital, Rajawadi Hospital, TB Hospital (Sewri), and Nair Hospital (Mumbai Central) will house these plants.
- **Bio-methanation Technology:** Each plant will employ bio-methanation technology, which converts organic waste like food scraps and garden trimmings into biogas.
- **Waste Capacity:** Each plant will process around 2 metric tons of organic waste daily.

- **Limited green cover:** Compared to other areas, BKC has less green space, which helps absorb pollutants and improve air quality.

**India's sugar sector upbeat as MH reports increase in cane yield, sugar production**

- **India's sugar production** for the crushing year **2023-24** is expected to witness a **positive trend** following a boost in yield from two key sugarcane producing states – **Maharashtra and Karnataka.**
- Millers in both the states have **reported increased per-hectare yield** which has led them to revise their production figures by **10 to 15 per cent.**
- At the **national level**, the **sugar production is expected to reach 305 lakh tonnes (lt)** as against the **291.50 lt** at the start of the season

**BKC has poor AQI at 292, Kandivali best at 77**

- **Mumbai's air quality** continues to be a mixed bag, with some areas **grappling with unhealthy levels of pollution** while others enjoy relatively cleaner air.
- **Bandra Kurla Complex (BKC)**, the city's financial hub, is struggling with a **poor Air Quality Index (AQI) of 292**, while **Kandivali**, a western suburb, is breathing easy with an **AQI of 77**, which falls under the 'moderate' category.

**The high AQI in BKC is likely due to:**

- **Traffic congestion:** BKC is a major commercial center with heavy traffic flow, leading to increased emissions from vehicles.
- **Construction activity:** Ongoing construction projects can generate dust and particulate matter, further impacting air quality.