

IMPORTANT NEWS

India Signs the Artemis Accords

Inside Story of the News:

- **India signed the Artemis Accords** on June 21, 2023, marking its dedication to **sustainable and transparent space activity**.
- India has become the 27th country to sign the Artemis Accords.
- The signing ceremony took place at the Intercontinental Willard Hotel in Washington, D.C.
- Taranjit Sandhu, Indian ambassador to the United States, signed on behalf of the Indian government.
- Grounded in the Outer Space Treaty of 1967 (OST), the Artemis Accords are a non-binding set of principles designed to guide civil space exploration and use in the 21st century.
- In addition to making the space environment safer and more predictable, these principles—which include openness, pursuing benevolent goals, registering space objects, and disclosing scientific data—allow all nations, even those without space programmes, to gain from the knowledge gathered in space.
- The signatories of the Artemis Accords, which were initially eight countries in 2020, currently come from every part of the globe and have a range of space capabilities and interests.
- The Artemis Accords signatories are Australia, Bahrain, Brazil, Canada, Colombia, Czech Republic, Ecuador, France, India, Israel, Italy, Japan, the Republic of Korea, Luxembourg, Mexico, New Zealand, Nigeria, Poland, Romania, Rwanda, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, Spain, Ukraine, the United Arab Emirates, the United Kingdom, and the United States.
- Working with both new and existing partners will add new energy and capabilities to ensure the entire world can benefit from the journey of exploration and discovery.

DAY-NRLM Launches eSARAS Mobile App

Inside Story of the News:

- **Deendayal Antyodaya Yojna- National Rural Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NRLM) launched the eSARAS mobile app** as a next step in enhancing marketing support for products made by women in Self-help Groups (SHGs), which will enhance eCommerce initiatives for goods produced by SHGs.
- Shri Shailesh Kumar Singh, Secretary, Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India, launched the app in New Delhi.
- On this occasion, Shri Singh inaugurated the eSARAS Fulfilment Centre at the Ministry's Janakpuri office in New Delhi.
- The Foundation for Development of Rural Value Chains (FDRVC), a not-for-profit organisation established jointly by the Ministry of Rural Development and Tata Trust, will oversee the eSARAS fulfilment centre, which will be used to process, package, and ship products that customers purchase through the eSARAS Portal and eSARAS mobile App. The logistics necessary to deliver an online order to a customer's door will be handled by it.

- It is an initiative to promote the best and most genuine handicrafts and handlooms that was conceptualised by the DAY-NRLM, Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD).
- The handcrafted goods created by SHG Didis are now accessible to everyone through the eSARAS mobile app in an even more user-friendly manner.
- With popular on-grounds events like SARAS Melas and Saras Food Festivals, as well as cross-promotion of activities at online and on-ground platforms, DAY-NRLM's strategy takes a 360 degree approach.

James Webb Space Telescope Makes First Detection of Key Carbon Molecule

Inside Story of the News:

- **A crucial carbon molecule methyl cation** has been **discovered for the first time in space by NASA's James Webb Space Telescope**.
- The methyl cation, or CH_3^+ , molecule can facilitate chemical reactions that result in the formation of more complex carbon molecules, which are essential building blocks for life.
- According to scientific speculation, the methyl cation may have provided the foundations for organic chemistry and even life across the universe.
- Methyl cation was detected in a young star system, with a protoplanetary disk, known as d203-506, which is located about 1,350 light-years away in the Orion Nebula.
- Webb discovered the first alien methyl cation ever discovered by science in that location, in a ring of gas, dust, and rock orbiting a star. This material may one day coalesce into a planet.
- Under very dark skies, the Orion Nebula can be seen without a telescope, but a powerful telescope is required to identify the molecules that make it up.
- Although the Orion Nebula has been studied by scientists using other telescopes, including Hubble, only Webb has the capability to detect methyl cation. This is due to the fact that Webb examines the wavelengths of an electromagnetic radiation known as infrared light that is emitted by far-off objects in space.
- Astronomers can learn a wealth of information from this since each molecule emits and absorbs light at a certain wavelength.
- Webb can precisely identify the compounds present in a star or nebula by dissecting the infrared light emanating from it. That is how it can identify substances like water vapour or sand-like particles in the atmosphere of other planets.
- An international group of scientists identified the methyl cation signature in the wavelengths Webb recorded from this far-off star in the Orion Nebula. Their research was published in the journal Nature.

PM Modi Presents India's Bhashini to SCO Nations

Inside Story of the News:

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi stated during his speech at a virtual summit of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) that India would be pleased to share its **AI-based language platform, Bhashini**, with everyone in order to **break down linguistic barriers within the SCO**.

- This can serve as an example of digital technology for inclusive growth.
- Bhashini was unveiled by the Indian government in 2022.
- By translating in real time and enabling cross-language communication through digital platforms, this native AI-based language platform can break down language boundaries.
- The Bhashini project in India was championed by the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY).
- The platform uses techniques like AI/ML and NLP to create and distribute open-source models, tools, and solutions for Indian languages.
- It was created to offer a technological answer to digital language barriers.
- The aim was to help the nation's non-English speaking populations connect to the global internet and use it in their own language.
- The PM's Science, Technology, and Innovation Advisory Council (PM-STIAC) named one of its primary tasks the necessity for an AI-based language translation system.

About SCO:

- The SCO was founded in 2001.
- Russia, China, the Kyrgyz Republic, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan served as the SCO's founding members.
- India and Pakistan joined the group as permanent members in 2019.
- Recently, Iran also gained permanent membership in SCO.
- Although SCO is a multinational organisation, Mandarin and Russian are its official languages. PM Modi introduced Bhashini to SCO, highlighting the organisation's linguistic obstacles as a crucial step towards fostering equitable growth.

Indian Navy Hosts JIMEX 2023

Inside Story of the News:

- The Indian Navy hosted the **seventh edition of the bilateral Japan-India Maritime Exercise 2023 (JIMEX 23)**, which took place at/off Visakhapatnam from July 5–10, 2023.
- This edition marks the 11th anniversary of JIMEX, since its inception in 2012.
- The exercise was taken part in by units of the Japan Maritime Self Defence Force (JMSDF) under the command of RAdm Nishiyama Takahiro, Commander Escort Flotilla One, and ships of the Indian Navy under the command of RAdm Gurcharan Singh, Flag Officer Commanding Eastern Fleet.
- The first indigenously built guided missile destroyer in India, the INS Delhi, an indigenously designed and built anti-submarine warfare corvette, the INS Kamorta, fleet tanker INS Shakti, a submarine, the maritime patrol aircraft P8I and Dornier, ship-borne helicopters, and fighter aircraft all took part in JIMEX 23.
- The guided missile destroyer JS Samidare and its integral helicopters served as the JMSDF's representation.
- The exercise was divided into two phases over the course of six days, with the harbour phase taking place in Visakhapatnam and featuring professional, sports and social interactions. Following this, the two navies worked together to hone their maritime warfighting capabilities and improve their

interoperability through challenging multi-discipline operations in the surface, subsurface, and air domains.

- JIMEX 23 provides an opportunity to learn from each other's best practises and facilitates operational encounters between IN and JMSPDF to foster mutual collaboration and reaffirm their shared commitment to maritime security in the area. It has grown in breadth and complexity over the years.

IOC Announces ₹22,000 Crore Rights Issue

Inside Story of the News:

- As part of the government's strategy to inject money into three state-owned fuel retailers to fund their net zero carbon emission projects, **Indian Oil Corporation Ltd. (IOC)**, the nation's top oil firm, announced it **plans to raise Rs 22,000 crore capital through a rights issue of equity shares.**
- The government, which is the majority owner of the company, is most likely to participate in the rights issue and inject equity in the company.
- On June 28, the Bharat Petroleum Corporation Ltd. (BPCL) board decided to approve a rights issue to raise up to Rs 18,000 crore.
- In order to support the energy transition and net zero initiatives of the state-run petroleum retailers BPCL, IOC, and Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Ltd (HPCL), the government announced in the annual Budget for 2023–24 (April 2023 to March 2024 fiscal) Rs 30,000 crore in capital support.
- In order to obtain the funding, HPCL, which is majority held by the state-controlled Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC), is probably going to issue preferential shares to the government.
- IOC had last month doubled its authorised share capital to Rs 30,000 crore.
- As part of the announcement, the firm stated that its board approved formation of a joint venture company for battery swapping business in India as a private limited company with 50:50 collaboration between IndianOil and Sun Mobility Pte Ltd Singapore (SMS).
- IOC stated that it would invest Rs 1,800 crore in equity up until the fiscal year 2026–2027.
- Additionally, the board gave its approval for an investment of USD 78.31 million in IOCL Singapore Pte Ltd, Singapore (an IndianOil fully owned subsidiary) for the purpose of acquiring SMS preference shares and warrants, subject to receipt of necessary statutory/regulatory approvals.

IN-USN Salvage and EOD Exercise SALVEX Conducted

Inside Story of the News:

- From June 26 to July 6, Kochi hosted the **seventh edition of the Indian Navy-US Navy (IN-USN) Salvage and Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) exercise, SALVEX.**
- Since 2005, IN and USN have taken part in joint salvage and EOD drills.
- Both navies took part in the exercise, sending ships including the INS Nireekshak and USNS Salvor as well as Specialist Diving and EOD teams.
- Over the course of ten days, the diving teams from the two nations exchanged knowledge on maritime salvage and collaborated on training exercises for both land-based and maritime EOD operations.

- Joint training exercises were also conducted as part of SALVEX to enhance interoperability, cohesiveness, and mutual learning in maritime salvage and EOD operations.
- The diving teams' skill sets were improved by the positive operational interactions, which included mine detection and neutralisation, wreck location, and salvage.

Secretary of DARPG Launches Third Edition of NeSDA Portal

Inside Story of the News:

- **The third edition of the National e-Governance Service Delivery Assessment (NeSDA) portal** was recently **launched** by V. Srinivas, Secretary of the Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances (DARPG).
- The NeSDA 2023 portal intends to significantly enhance the delivery of e-governance services and make it easier for best practices to be shared throughout the nation.
- **The DARPG-developed NeSDA framework** evaluates central ministry, union territory, and state-level e-governance service delivery in an impartial manner.
- The goal is to assess the depth and effectiveness of the current mechanisms and to encourage improvements.
- The NeSDA 2023 framework has been updated to take into account the demands of today's citizens, international trends in digital government, and UN e-Government Survey studies.
- It also expands the emphasis areas to include transport and public grievances and includes new assessment parameters including open government data, e-participation, and leveraging emerging technologies. Other additions include evaluating e-government at the city level.
- In order to improve their citizen-centric services and disseminate best practises across the country, the respective governments will be able to use the portal as a platform for gathering online data from their respective citizens.

India Joins the Champions Group of GCRG

Inside Story of the News:

- In response to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's invitation from United Nations Secretary General (UNSG) António Guterres, **India has joined the Champions Group of the Global Crisis Response Group (GCRG).**
- India's choice to join the Group is a reflection of its growing global leadership and commitment to tackling today's issues.
- India's participation will strengthen the UN's efforts to identify practical answers to global development problems, especially those that affect developing nations.
- The GCRG process has assigned Shri Sanjay Verma, Secretary (West), Ministry of External Affairs, the role of Sherpa.

About the Global Crisis Response Group:

- In order to address urgent and crucial global challenges pertaining to interconnected crises in food security, energy, and finance and to coordinate a worldwide response, the UNSG established the Global Crisis Response Group (GCRG) in March 2022.
- The Champions Group, which consists of HOS/HOGs from Bangladesh, Barbados, Denmark, Germany, Indonesia, and Senegal, is in charge of the GCRG.

Outstanding Performance by India in UNESCAP's Global Survey

Inside Story of the News:

- As indicated by its impressive performance in the recently released **United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia Pacific (UNESCAP) Global Survey on Digital and Sustainable Trade Facilitation**, India continues to showcase its commitment to digital and sustainable trade facilitation.
- **With a remarkable score of 93.55% in 2023** compared to 90.32% in 2021, India has been placed at the forefront of international trade facilitation efforts in the 2023 study, which evaluated 60 trade facilitation measures across more than 140 economies.



- India received a flawless score of 100% in four important categories—transparency, formalities, institutional arrangement and cooperation, and paperless trade—in the 2023 Survey, which recognised the nation's extraordinary development across many sub-indicators.

- With initiatives like Turant Customs, Single Window Interface for Facilitation of Trade (SWIFT), Pre-Arrival data processing, e-Sanchit, Coordinated Border Management, etc., India has made remarkable strides in streamlining trade processes, increasing transparency, and encouraging cooperation among stakeholders.
- The score for the "Women in Trade Facilitation" component in India increased significantly from 66.7% in 2021 to 77.8% in 2023, demonstrating a commitment to gender inclusivity and the empowerment of women in the trade sector.
- India now has the best performance out of all the South Asian nations.
- India scored higher overall than many developed countries like Canada, France, the United Kingdom, Germany, etc.
- India has maintained a strong commitment to advancing ease of doing business by implementing next-generational trade facilitation measures, as evident by the fact that its overall score has improved year after year.

Government Brings Goods and Services Tax Network under PMLA

Inside Story of the News:

- The Central Government issued a notification recently **to bring the Goods and Services Tax Network (GSTN) under the purview of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA)**.
- Under the PMLA Act, information recorded on GSTN can now be shared.
- Due to this, it will be feasible to take strict action against those involved in tax evasion and manipulation of documents.
- With this government decision, the PMLA Act can now be used to request information on the GST network. As a result, the PMLA Act would now cover offences under the GST, such as creating bogus invoices and input tax credits.
- The purpose of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act is to stop money laundering and make provisions for the confiscation of property obtained from, used in, or connected to money laundering, as well as for matters related to or incidental to it.
- To meet the needs of GST, the government has established a strong IT network called the GSTN.
- For the purpose of implementing GST, the GSTN offers a shared IT infrastructure and services to the central and state governments, taxpayers, and other stakeholders.
- The functions of the GSTN, among other things, include:
 - (i) facilitating registration;
 - (ii) forwarding the returns to Central and State authorities;
 - (iii) computation and settlement of IGST;
 - (iv) matching of tax payment details with banking network;
 - (v) providing various MIS reports to the Central and the State Governments based on the taxpayer return information;
 - (vi) providing analysis of taxpayers' profile; and
 - (vii) running the matching engine for matching, reversal and reclaim of input tax credit.
- The Prevention of Money Laundering Act was passed by the Central Government in 2002. After three years, PMLA went into effect on July 1st, 2005.