

News articles not to be missed

'March - Week 1'

Key test for India's third moon mission passes successfully, ISRO announces

Inside Story of the News:

- After passing the crucial EMI-EMC (Electromagnetic Interference/ Electromagnetic Compatibility) test at the U.R. Rao Satellite Centre in Bengaluru, the **Chandrayaan-3** lander paved the way for the **CE-20 cryogenic engine** to undergo a flight acceptance hot test the following day.
- The engine will power the Cryogenic Upper Stage of the LVM3 vehicle for the Chandrayaan-3 mission.
- The High-Altitude Test Facility conducted the hot test for the allotted 25 seconds.
- The test's propulsion parameters all met expectations and were deemed to be adequate.
- To realise the fully integrated flight cryogenic stage, the fluid lines, stage structures, and accompanying propellant tanks will all be more integrated with the cryogenic engine.

About Chandrayaan-3:

- Chandrayaan-3 interplanetary mission has three major modules - the Propulsion module, Lander module and Rover.
- Due to the complexity of the mission, radio frequency (RF) communication channels must be established between the modules.
- Chandrayaan-3 is India's third moon mission.
- It is a follow-up mission to Chandrayaan-2 and aims to show that safe landing and roving on the lunar surface can be accomplished end-to-end.
- The mission is slated to be launched later this year by Launch Vehicle Mark 3 (LMV3) from the Satish Dhawan Space Centre at Sriharikota.

Windsor Framework replaces Northern Ireland Protocol

Inside Story of the News:

- The UK government, with Prime Minister Rishi Sunak at the helm, has secured a historic deal with the European Union (EU) that will set the trade rules for Northern Ireland in the post-Brexit era.
- A new agreement called the **Windsor Framework** will replace the Northern Ireland Protocol, which has been a major source of contention and difficulty since Brexit, causing both economic and political issues.

About Windsor Framework:

- The framework has two crucial aspects -

- **The introduction of a green lane and red lane system for goods** that will stay in Northern Ireland and those that will go to the EU respectively.
- The **'Stormont Brake'**, which allows Northern Ireland lawmakers and London to veto any EU regulation they believe affects the region adversely.
- Northern Ireland-bound British goods will be able to use the "green lane" at ports, allowing them to pass through with minimal paperwork and checks.
- Physical checks will be carried out for items considered suspicious, replacing the routine checks currently in place.
- Meat products, such as sausages, travelling between the two UK regions are of particular importance as the EU has more stringent regulations on animal-based items.
- With the new streamlined checks, people in Northern Ireland can now easily purchase goods online from Britain, as many firms had previously ceased deliveries to the region due to the burdensome checks.
- With the new regulations in place, the transport of plants and seeds has become effortless, and pets can now travel without the expense of health treatments like rabies vaccines or vet certificates.
- The medicines with the same labels and packaging will now be accessible throughout the UK without the requirement for barcode scanning that was mandated by the old Protocol.
- The UK has taken on the responsibility of approving all medications for its citizens, including cutting-edge drugs like cancer therapies, instead of relying on the EMA as it did under the old Protocol.
- Products bound for the EU or Ireland must pass through the red lane, where they will be subject to customs and other relevant inspections.

About Stormont Brake:

- The newly implemented Stormont Brake empowers the Northern Ireland Assembly to object to any fresh EU trade rules that may significantly and permanently affect the lives of citizens in Northern Ireland.
- The assembly must secure the support of a minimum of 30 legislators from two different parties, after which the British government may use its veto power to block the law.

Background:

- Following the UK's exit from the European Union, Northern Ireland became the only constituent that shares a land border with an EU member state, namely the Republic of Ireland.
- Due to differences in product standards between the EU and the UK, border checks are required for goods to be transported from Northern Ireland to Ireland.
- The two Irelands have a complex and turbulent history, marked by prolonged conflict that culminated in the signing of the **Belfast Agreement**, also known as the **Good Friday agreement**, in 1998 to establish lasting peace.
- As tampering with the border was deemed too risky due to the history of conflict, it was agreed that inspections would be carried out between Great Britain (comprising England, Scotland, and Wales) and Northern Ireland (which, along with Great Britain, forms the United Kingdom). This agreement was referred to as the **Northern Ireland Protocol**.

- Goods coming from Great Britain to Northern Ireland were subject to trade and customs inspections under the Northern Ireland Protocol, which allowed Northern Ireland to remain in the EU single market. The inspections took place at ports along the Irish Sea.
- Trade between Great Britain and Northern Ireland was hindered by the checks, making it cumbersome for the movement of goods, particularly food products that lost their shelf life while waiting for clearance.

India's core sector output increases by 7.8% in January

Inside Story of the News:

- According to the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, **India's eight core industries** recorded a **growth of 7.8% in January 2023** compared to 4.0% in January 2022.
- The production of fertilisers, coal, electricity, steel, natural gas, cement, and refinery products increased in January 2023 as compared to the same month in the previous year.
- The core sector, also known as key infrastructure industries, carries a weight of 40.27% in the overall index of industrial production (IIP), and thus has a significant impact on industrial production data.

Data in % terms, YoY comparison:

Sectors	January '22	December '22	January '23
Coal	8.2	12.2	13.4
Crude Oil	-2.4	-1.2	-1.1
Natural Gas	11.7	2.6	5.3
Refinery Products	3.7	3.7	4.5
Fertilisers	-2.0	7.3	17.9
Steel	3.8	6.3	6.2
Cement	14.1	9.5	4.6
Electricity	0.9	10.4	12.0

Constitution of Greater Panna Landscape Council

Inside Story of the News:

- To ensure systematic and time bound implementation of the Greater Panna Landscape Management plan, the **Greater Panna Landscape Council (GPLC)** has been constituted under the chairmanship of Chief Secretary, Govt. of Madhya Pradesh with members from all the stakeholders.
- **Ken-Betwa Link Project (KBLP)**, the first interlinking of rivers project under **National Perspective Plan (NPP)** taken for implementation, would be a game-changer for the socio-economic prosperity of the Bundelkhand region, which faces recurrent drought situation.
- Ken-Betwa Link Project aims to provide water security in Bundelkhand region while ensuring overall landscape and wildlife conservation.

- **Integrated Landscape Management Plan** in Greater Panna Landscape is a major and unique measure in Conservation history of India.
- The goal of the GPL is to ensure “win-win” situation for conservation through integration with development process based on a balanced approach.

The Broad Objectives:

- The broad objectives are -
 - to enable betterment of habitat, protection, and management for flagship species viz. tiger, vulture, and gharial in the landscape
 - to consolidate the landscape for overall biodiversity conservation through spatial prioritisation and well-being of the forest dependent communities
 - to provide species-specific and site-specific monitoring strategies under the integrated landscape management in context with feedback loop and adaptive management options

SWAYATT initiative

Inside Story of the News:

- **Government e-Marketplace (GeM)** commemorates the success of “**SWAYATT**”, an initiative to promote **Start-ups, Women and Youth Advantage through e-Transactions** on GeM.
- Addressing the gathering, Shri P.K. Singh, CEO, GeM informed the house about the progress made so far in promoting social and financial inclusion by way of registering more than 8.5 lakh **Micro and Small Enterprises (MSEs)** on GeM portal.
- MSEs on GeM secure business worth over Rs. 1.87 lakh crore spread across 68 lakh+ orders.
- More than 1.45 lakh women MSEs have fulfilled 7.32 lakh orders worth 15,922 Crore.
- Approx. 43K SC/ ST MSEs have delivered 1.35 lakh+ order worth 2,592 Crore on the GeM portal so far.

About SWAYATT 2019:

- The initiative to promote “Start-ups, Women and Youth Advantage Through e-Transactions” (SWAYATT) on GeM was first launched in February 2019.
- The intent of SWAYATT 2019 was to promote inclusiveness of various categories of sellers and service providers on the portal, by taking proactive steps to facilitate their training and registrations of such specific category of manufacturers and sellers, develop women entrepreneurship and encourage participation of MSME sector and Start-ups in public procurement.

About Government e-Marketplace (GeM):

- GeM, a Section 8 corporation established under the administrative supervision of the Department of Commerce, Ministry of Commerce and Industry, is used by Central Ministries, State Departments, PSEs, and Autonomous Bodies to acquire products and services.

- Social inclusion is a core value at GeM and the focus is on increasing participation from under-served sellers who face challenges in public procurement.

VAIBHAV Fellowship scheme

Inside Story of the News:

- The Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) Science and Technology unveiled the **VAIBHAV Fellowship scheme** for the Indian Diaspora living abroad on the occasion of "National Science Day" recently.
- Non-Resident Indian (NRI) researchers are offered the chance to work with a research or academic institution in India for a minimum of one month up to a maximum of two months per year through the fellowship program.
- The duration of the fellowship is three years with the government offering the researchers an amount of up to Rs 37 lakh for the entire period.
- The goal is to enhance the research ecosystem of higher educational institutions in India by enabling academic and research partnerships with top-notch institutions worldwide, accomplished by facilitating the mobility of researchers from overseas institutions to India.
- Researchers from institutions featuring in the top 500 QS World University Rankings will be eligible for the fellowship.
- The call for applications for 'VAIBHAV Fellowship' will be notified through the Department of Science and Technology's website.

Exercise Shinyuu Maitri

Inside Story of the News:

- The Indian Air Force (IAF) participated in **Exercise Shinyuu Maitri** with the Japan Air Self Defence Force (JASDF).
- The exercise was organised on the side-lines of the Indo-Japan Joint Army Exercise, Dharma Guardian, which was conducted from 13 February 2023 to 02 March 2023 at Komatsu, Japan.
- The IAF contingent participated in Exercise Shinyuu Maitri 23 with one **C-17 Globemaster III** aircraft.
- The Exercise was conducted on 01 and 02 March 2023.
- The first phase of the exercise consisted of discussions on transport operations and tactical manoeuvring, followed by the second phase of flying drills by IAF's C-17 and JASDF C-2 transport aircraft.
- The exercise provided a chance for the corresponding subject matter experts to converse and learn about one another's operational philosophies and best practices.
- The exercise also enhanced mutual understanding and interoperability between the IAF and the JASDF.
- Exercise Shinyuu Maitri 23 is a further development of the two nations' growing defence partnership and enables the Indian Air Force to operate in a variety of global contexts.

- The exercise was conducted at a time when the IAF's heavy lift transport aircraft fleet is also taking part in Exercise Desert Flag VIII in UAE and Exercise Cobra Warrior in the UK.

Previously undiscovered moai statue found on Easter Island

Inside Story of the News:

- Scientists have found a previously undiscovered **moai statue** in a volcano crater on **Easter Island**, uncovering the large stone statue in a dry lake bed on the tiny, remote island in the middle of the Pacific.
- The 1.6-metre tall moai will now undergo tests to determine what state it is in.
- Easter Island is a protected national park and a **UNESCO World Heritage site**.
- The statue is smaller than the island's other statues.

Union Education Minister to launch UGC's SATHEE

Inside Story of the News:

- **SATHEE, an interactive assessment platform** developed by University Grants Commission, Ministry of Education and IIT Kanpur, has been launched by the Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan.
- It is **a self-paced assessment platform**.
- Through watching videos created by IIT and IISc faculty, SATHEE strives to help students grasp the concepts and concentrate on their weak areas, so they feel secure facing any exam.
- The platform's goal is to fill the gap for students in society who cannot afford the pricey entrance exam coaching and counselling.
- The preparation material on the SATHEE platform will be available in multiple languages such as English, Hindi, and other Indian regional languages.
- Students will be able to use the study material to prepare for national competitive examinations like NEET and JEE.
- The platform will also be proven useful for the aspirants of UPSC recruitment examinations, CAT, and GATE exams.

President to appoint CEC, ECs on advise of committee comprising PM, LoP & CJI

Inside Story of the News:

- The Chief Justice of India, the Prime Minister, and the Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha will form a committee to advise the President on the nomination of the **Chief Election Commissioner (CEC)** and other **election commissioners (ECs)**, the Supreme Court ordered on Thursday.
- In a unanimous decision, a five-judge constitution bench led by Justice KM Joseph decided that this standard would remain in effect until Parliament passed a statute on the subject.

- According to the Supreme Court, in the absence of the Lok Sabha opposition leader, the leader of the single largest opposition party will be in the committee to appoint the Chief Election Commissioner and elections commissioners.
- A group of petitions asking for a collegium-style method for choosing election commissioners and the chief election commissioner were decided upon by the bench.
- The Supreme Court ruled that elections in democracies must unquestionably be fair and that it is the Election Commission's responsibility to ensure that their integrity is upheld.

SAMARTH Scheme

Inside Story of the News:

- The Indian government intends to enlist more business partners to quicken the speed of training under its flagship **SAMARTH scheme** for **textile industry skill development**.
- Samarth is a demand-driven and placement-oriented umbrella skilling programme of Ministry of Textiles.
- The "Scheme for Capacity Building in Textile Sector (SCBTS)" shall be called as "SAMARTH," denoting the scheme's overarching goal of preparing young people for productive and long-term work in the textile industry.
- The implementation period of the scheme is up to March 2024.
- Employment linkage is mandated in the courses under organised textile sector with mandatory placement for 70% in entry level and 90% for Upskilling programmes.
- The Ministry has partnered with 116 Textile Industries / Industry Associations, 12 Central / State Government Agencies and 3 Sectoral Organisations of Ministry for undertaking training programmes under Samarth.
- The scheme has been penetrated across 28 States and 6 Union territories of the country and caters to all sections of the society.
- 1.5 lakh of the 3.47 lakh beneficiaries who were intended to receive training have already received it.

DART Mission

Inside Story of the News:

- The **Double Asteroid Redirection Test (DART)** research team at NASA has been analysing data collected over two weeks to show that the asteroid's orbit was successfully changed by the spacecraft's kinetic impact with its target, **Dimorphos**.
- This is the first full-scale demonstration of asteroid deflection technology, and the first-time humanity has purposefully altered the motion of a celestial object.

Prior to DART's collision:

- Dimorphos orbited **Didymos**, its bigger parent asteroid, for 11 hours and 55 minutes prior to DART's collision.
- Astronomers have been measuring how much that time has altered, using telescopes on Earth, since DART's deliberate collision with Dimorphos on September 26.
- The investigation team has now determined that the impact shorted Dimorphos' orbit around Didymos from 11 hours and 55 minutes to 11 hours and 23 minutes.
- NASA had established a minimum successful orbit period shift of 73 seconds or more for Dimorphos prior to the impact. Early statistics indicate that DART outperformed this minimum benchmark by a factor of more than 25 times.
- Neither Dimorphos nor Didymos poses any hazard to Earth before or after DART's controlled collision with Dimorphos.

More about DART:

- As a project of the Planetary Missions Program Office of NASA, Johns Hopkins APL developed, maintained, and managed the DART spacecraft as well as the DART mission.
- The DART team used telescopes from Goldstone, Green Bank Observatory, the Swope Telescope at the Las Campanas Observatory in Chile, the Danish Telescope at the La Silla Observatory in Chile, and facilities from the Las Cumbres Observatory global telescope network in Chile and South Africa to arrive at this conclusion.

G20 delegates enjoy a day at Sultanpur National Park

Inside Story of the News:

- For **G20 delegates**, the day was spent amid nature with a visit to the **Sultanpur National Park** (formerly Sultanpur Bird Sanctuary) near Gurugram.
- It is one of the 75 Ramsar sites in the country.
- Ramsar sites are wetlands of international importance.
- The 350-acre national park was decked up to welcome the delegates.
- Along with being greeted by folk dancers at the entry, the main draws for visitors included a handicrafts area, a G20 "tree park," an exhibition space inside showcasing the park's rich biodiversity, and birding spots.
- Following a guided tour of the sanctuary by expert birders from Delhi-NCR, who helped the delegates identify resident as well as migratory birds there, the delegates planted saplings in a special area designated for the summit.
- The group also tried their hand at pottery.

INS Trikand takes part in IMX/CE-23

Inside Story of the News:

- **INS Trikand** is participating in the **International Maritime Exercise/ Cutlass Express 2023 (IMX/CE-23)** being held in the Gulf region from 26 Feb to 16 Mar 23.
- With the purpose of boosting maritime security and maintaining the region's sea lanes as safe as possible for maritime commerce, she will exercise alongside participants from more than 50 countries and international maritime agencies.
- IMX/CE-23 is one of the largest multinational maritime exercises in the world.
- While this is the Indian Navy's first time taking part in IMX, it also is the second time a ship from the Indian Navy is taking part in a CMF exercise.
- Earlier, in November '22, INS Trikand had participated in the CMF led **Operation Sea Sword 2**.

Swachh Sujal Shakti Samman and Jal Shakti Abhiyan - Catch the Rain initiative

Inside Story of the News:

- The **Jal Shakti Abhiyan - Catch the Rain** initiative was introduced in New Delhi by President Droupadi Murmu on March 4, 2023.
- The theme of the campaign is source sustainability for drinking water.
- The President stated that as India only has 4% of the world's freshwater resources, water management and conservation are India's top priorities.
- Due to unplanned urbanisation, traditional methods of conserving water have disappeared across the nation.
- The world is facing the issues of water scarcity and global warming. She continued by saying that despite using new technologies, it was vital to maintain and restore old water conservation techniques.
- Recognising the roles of the women in water conservation and sanitation, **Swachh Sujal Shakti Samman** was held on March 4, 2023, the week of International Women's Day.
- This was to honour women's leadership in achieving Swachh and Sujal Gaon under the Swachh Bharat Mission (Grameen), Jal Jeevan Mission, and National Water Mission/other National water conservation efforts.
- A "Swachh Sujal Bharat" is being created, and the "Swachh Sujal Shakti Samman" honours and recognises the leadership and contributions of women at the grassroots level.
- The Hon'ble President of India felicitated the women who had made outstanding contributions to the National Flagship Missions in ODF Plus Model Villages, Har Ghar Jal Villages, Water Conservation, etc. on this occasion.

Organoid Intelligence – A tool that could make AI look slow

Inside Story of the News:

- Scientists at Johns Hopkins University have introduced **organoid intelligence** that could make faster, more efficient and powerful computers of the future.
- Scientists are optimistic that human brain-powered biocomputers will become a reality sooner than we had anticipated.
- This would dramatically increase the computing power available today and open up a new branch of intelligence.

What is Organoid Intelligence (OI)?

- According to the researchers, OI is an emerging, multidisciplinary field that uses brain-machine interface technologies and 3D cultures of human brain cells (brain organoids) to build biological computing.
- Current brain organoids will be scaled up into intricate, long-lasting 3D structures filled with cells and genes related to learning, and they will be coupled with next-generation input and output devices and artificial intelligence/machine learning systems.

Raisina Security Dialogue and Raisina Dialogue 2023

Inside Story of the News:

- On March 1, the **Raisina Security Dialogue**, the second gathering of top officials from international intelligence and security agencies, was secretly held in India during the G20 Foreign Ministers' Conference and before the Raisina Dialogue.
- The Munich Security Conference and Singapore's Shangri-La Dialogue served as models for the Raisina Security Dialogue, which this year included intelligence and security leaders from over 26 countries.
- With **India's G20 Presidency** going on at full thrust with a motto of 'One Earth, One Family, One Future', the **Raisina Dialogue** 2023 is yet another forum to enhance global cooperation.
- The Raisina Dialogue, held from March 2–4, 2023, was a high-profile event that drew participants from over 100 nations.
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the 8th Edition of the Dialogue in New Delhi.
- The Dialogue is India's flagship conference on geopolitics and geo-strategy.
- Giorgia Meloni, the Italian prime minister, attended the opening session as the chief guest.
- The theme of the 2023 Edition of Dialogue is "Provocation, Uncertainty, Turbulence: Lighthouse in the Tempest."
- The conversation centred on the five debate pillars for this year –
 - Neo Insurgence: Geographies, Domains, Ambitions,
 - Amoral Mosaic: Contest, Cooperate, or Cancel,
 - Chaotic Codes: Sovereignty, Security, Society,

- Pernicious Passports: Climate, Commons, Citizens,
- Grey Rhinos: Democracies, Dependencies, and Debt Traps.

United Nations High Seas Treaty

Inside Story of the News:

- On March 4, a proposed international agreement known as the **UN High Seas Treaty** was finalised to regulate nations' behaviour in "open seas," which refers to the vast majority of the world's oceans that are outside the purview of any one nation.
- Although this agreement is still in the draft form, it will become enforceable if it is ratified by nations (which necessitates that they also pass it in their respective Parliaments).
- The treaty to address Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction is also known as the '**Paris Agreement for the Ocean**'.
- Member states of the United Nations have reached this agreement on a framework to safeguard marine biodiversity and regulate international seas after 20 years of discussions and a protracted 38-hour final session of negotiations.
- The High Seas Treaty will apply to waters that are 370 kilometres from a country's shoreline and outside of its sovereign jurisdiction. On Earth, these oceans cover more than 70% of the surface.

International Big Cat Alliance (IBCA)

Inside Story of the News:

- India has proposed to establish a massive worldwide coalition under its leadership to safeguard large cats and has pledged backing for the initiative over a five-year period with a \$100 million financing guarantee (over Rs 800 crore).
- **International Big Cat Alliance (IBCA)** will work towards the protection and conservation of the **seven major big cats** — tiger, lion, leopard, snow leopard, puma, jaguar and cheetah.
- Its goal is to serve as a forum for the communication of knowledge on best practices, capacity building, resource repositories, research and development, awareness raising, etc.

About IBCA:

- The organisation's primary activities will be advocacy, partnerships, a knowledge e-portal, capacity building, ecotourism, collaborations amongst expert groups, and finance tapping.
- The General Assembly, a council of at least seven but no more than fifteen member countries chosen by the General Assembly for a term of five years, and a Secretariat will make up the IBCA's governing body.
- The IBCA Secretary General will be appointed by the General Assembly for a defined period on the advice of the Council.
- The IBCA is anticipated to be self-sustaining after the first five years through membership fees, contributions from bilateral and multilateral organisations, and the private sector.

- The 97 range countries, which include the big cats' natural habitat, as well as other interested countries, international organisations, etc., will be able to join the alliance.
- The alliance is inspired by the arrival of cheetahs in 2022 from Namibia.

Indian Railways installs ISRO-developed RTIS system

Inside Story of the News:

- For automatic acquisition of the trains' "movement time at the stations, including that of arrival and departure or run-through," the **Real Time Train Information System (RTIS)**, developed in partnership with the **Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO)**, is being installed on the trains.
- With the **Control Office Application (COA)** system, they are automatically plotted on the control chart for those trains.
- RTIS devices have been installed for 2,700 locomotives in 21 electric loco sheds.
- As part of Phase-II roll out, 6,000 more locomotives across 50 loco sheds shall be covered by utilising ISRO's Satcom hub.
- Presently, the COA receives a direct GPS feed over 6,500 locomotives.
- Through the COA and the National Train Enquiry System (NTES) integration, this has made it possible to automatically chart trains and provide passengers with information in real time.

Yaoshang festival begins in Manipur

Inside Story of the News:

- The five-day-long **Yaoshang festival**, Manipur's version of Holi, began on March 7.

About Yaoshang:

- On the full moon of Lamta (February–March) in the Meitei lunar calendar, the event is observed annually.
- Yaoshang begins just after sunset followed by **Yaosang Mei thaba**, also known as Burning of the Straw Hut.
- In a practice called as "**nakatheng**", kids ask their neighbours for monetary donations.
- Manipur comes alive during the course of these five days with traditional "**thabal chongba**" dance in the night and sporting competitions during the day.
- The "thabal chongba" is a traditional dance of the Meitei, where boys and girls gather in an open ground and dance in a circle.
- During Yaoshang, commercial operations and public transportation stop completely.
- Also, all public and private educational institutions are closed.