

IACE

DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS

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DESCRIPTIVE

❖ Ministry of Defence inks over Rs. 9,100 crore contracts for improved Akash Weapon System

- The Ministry of Defence signed contracts for the procurement of an improved Akash Weapon System and 12 Weapon Locating Radars, WLR Swathi (Plains) for the Indian Army at an overall cost of over Rs. 9100 crore.
- The contract for procurement of improved Akash Weapon System (AWS) for the 3rd and 4th Regiments of Army Air Defence, comprising live Missiles and Launchers with upgrades, Ground Support Equipment, Vehicles and Infrastructure was signed with Bharat Dynamics Limited, worth over Rs 8160 crore.
- The AWS is a Short Range Surface Air Missile (SRSAM) Air Defence System, indigenously designed and developed by Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO).
- Defence Minister of India: **Rajnath Singh**

❖ Defence Ministry signs Rs 19,600 cr deal for 11 patrol vessels, 6 missile vessels

- In a huge boost to the Centre's 'Aatmanirbhar Bharat' (self-reliant India) initiative, the Defence Ministry signed contracts with Indian shipyards for the acquisition of 11 Next Generation Offshore Patrol Vessels and six Next Generation Missile Vessels at an overall cost of around Rs. 19,600 crore.
- The contract for acquisition of 11 Next Generation Offshore Patrol Vessels under Buy (Indian-IDDMM) category was signed with Goa Shipyard Ltd (GSL) and Garden Reach Shipbuilders and Engineers (GRSE), Kolkata at a total cost of Rs. 9,781 crore. Of the 11 ships, seven will be indigenously designed, developed &

manufactured by GSL and four by GRSE. The delivery of the ships is scheduled to commence from September 2026.

➤ The contract for acquisition of 6 Next Generation Missile Vessels (NGMV) was signed with Cochin Shipyard Limited (CSL) at a cost of Rs. 9,805 crore. The delivery of ships is scheduled to commence from March 2027.

➤ The construction of these ships will generate employment of 110 lakh man-days over a period of seven and half years.

❖ UAE President names son Khaled as Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi

➤ United Arab Emirates President Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan has appointed his eldest son Sheikh Khaled as crown prince of Abu Dhabi, the oil-rich capital of the Gulf state.

➤ Sheikh Mohammed, who became president and Abu Dhabi ruler last year after running the U.S.-allied OPEC oil producer for years, named his brother Sheikh Mansour as UAE vice president, alongside Dubai ruler Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum.

➤ Sheikh Mohammed appointed his other brothers Sheikh Tahnoun bin Zayed Al Nahyan as the UAE's national security adviser who controls a sprawling business empire, and Hazza bin Zayed Al Nahyan as deputy rulers of Abu Dhabi.

➤ Abu Dhabi has held the presidency since the founding of the UAE federation by Sheikh Mohammed's father in 1971.

❖ 22.7 lakh between age of 15 to 80 took foundational literacy test

➤ Over 22.7 lakh learners between the age of 15 to 80 took part in a foundational literacy test conducted by the Centre in the month of March this year.

➤ The Foundational Literacy and Numeracy Assessment Test, the first of its kind, is to declare adults literates if they pass the test. With 9.25 lakh candidates, Madhya Pradesh had the highest number of candidates with over 5 lakh women candidates.

The government is also incentivising school and college-going students to volunteer to teach adult learners.

➤ The ministry of education held the exam March 19 this year across 10 states and UTs to assess “basic reading, writing and numeracy skills”. Under this programme, non-literates above the age of 15 years are targeted, with a focus on women as well as educationally backward states.

➤ The test focuses on foundational literacy, numeracy, critical life skills, vocational skills, etc. Ministry officials said that the population of non-literates in the country is between 15-20 crore, and the government’s target is to add to that by 1 crore every year.

➤ Union Minister of Education: **Dharmendra Pradhan**

❖ **International Day of Drug Checking 2023: March 31, 2023**

➤ The International Day of Drug Checking is an annual event that has been observed since 2017 on March 31st.

➤ The purpose of the day is to educate people about drugs and their effects and to promote harm reduction initiatives to reduce the risks associated with drug use. The main objective is to raise public awareness about the availability of drug checking services and organizations worldwide. The day emphasizes the importance of harm reduction actions related to drugs and aims to decrease drug-related risks.

➤ According to the World Health Organization (WHO), drug abuse was linked to approximately 11.8 million deaths in 2017. Recently, more and more adolescents are becoming victims of substance abuse. The International Day of Drug Checking is an effort to collectively reduce drug abuse and create a drug-free world.

➤ World Health Organization Founded: 7 April 1948

➤ World Health Organization Headquarters: Geneva, Switzerland

➤ World Health Organization Head: Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus.

❖ **Badri Srinivasan to head APMEA regions for Wipro**

- Wipro Limited, a leading technology services and consulting company, announced that Badri Srinivasan will lead the India and Southeast Asia businesses under the company's APMEA (Asia Pacific, Middle East, India, and Africa) Strategic Market Unit.
- Badri joined Wipro in January 2022 as the Managing Director for Southeast Asia, where he led the consolidation of strategic transformational engagements with clients while strengthening Wipro's talent base and brand presence.
- The initiatives under his leadership helped accelerate Wipro's business growth and revenue expansion across key markets in the region. Badri is a member of the Board of Wipro's strategic subsidiaries and acquired entities in Asia (Capco, Rizing and Designit), and a member of Wipro's Global Leadership Team.
- Wipro Founder & Chairman: **Azim Hashim Premji**
- Wipro Headquarters: **Bengaluru, Karnataka**

❖ **Jaipur to get India's 2nd largest cricket stadium named after Anil Agarwal**

- Vedanta's Hindustan Zinc Limited (HZL) signed an MoU with the Rajasthan Cricket Association for the development of the world's third-largest cricket stadium in the village of Chonp in Jaipur.
- Vedanta's HZL will spend INR 300 crore on the stadium, one of the largest corporate investments in India's sports infrastructure. The stadium would be named as Anil Agarwal International Cricket Stadium, Jaipur.
- Currently Narendra Modi Stadium, Melbourne Cricket Ground and Eden Gardens are the top three largest stadiums respectively.
- The announcement came during the Invest Rajasthan Summit 2022 when Anil Agarwal himself announced the cooperation between the cricket board and his company. Speaker of the Assembly Dr. CP Joshi, RCA President Vaibhav Gehlot, chairperson, Hindustan Zinc Limited and Director Vedanta Limited Priya Agarwal,

CEO Hindustan Zinc Limited Arun Mishra, Rajasthan Royals head coach Kumar Sangakkara and other dignitaries were present on the occasion.

➤ Rajasthan Chief Minister: **Ashok Gehlot**

➤ Rajasthan Governor: **Kalraj Mishra**

➤ Rajasthan Capital: **Jaipur**

❖ **World Bank approves \$363 million loan to Karnataka for rural water supply programme**

➤ The World Bank's Executive Board of Directors has approved a USD 363 million loan to Karnataka to provide clean drinking water supply to two million rural households in the state through a piped water connection in their homes.

➤ Almost 77 per cent of Karnataka is arid or semi-arid and is vulnerable to climate-change-related variable rainfall causing droughts and floods, and leading to groundwater depletion, and deteriorating water quality.

➤ The Karnataka Sustainable Rural Water Supply Program will support the Government of Karnataka's ambition to provide functioning tap water connections to every rural household in the state. This will include the construction of the drinking water distribution network and the installation of water meters in rural households and will benefit around 10 million people across all 31 districts in the state.

➤ Karnataka CM: **Sri Basavaraj Bommai**

➤ Karnataka Governor: **Thawar Chand Gehlot**; Karnataka Capital: **Bengaluru**

❖ **Justice T.S. Sivagnanam appointed as Acting Chief Justice Calcutta High Court**

➤ **Justice T.S. Sivagnanam** was appointed as the **Acting Chief Justice of the Calcutta High Court** with effect from 31 March 2023.

➤ He will take over as the **Acting Chief Justice** after the retirement of the current Chief Justice **Prakash Srivastava**.

➤ Justice Sivagnanam is a **senior judge in the Indian Judiciary, born on June 10, 1961 in Tamil Nadu**. He specialised in Constitutional Law, Commercial Law, Civil Law and Criminal Law. He served as a **permanent judge in the Madras High Court** for over a decade before being transferred to the Calcutta High Court in 2018.

➤ *West Bengal CM: Mamata Banerjee; West Bengal Governor: Dr CV Ananda Bose*

❖ **Srinagar-Leh's Z-Morh tunnel to be inaugurated in April**

➤ The crucial **Z-Morh tunnel** that **connects Gagangir and Sonamarg** on the **Srinagar-Leh highway** will be **inaugurated in April 2023**.

➤ **Nine tunnels** were being built between **Jammu and Srinagar** and **Asia's longest tunnel at Zojila** would also be ready by 2024.

➤ Zoji-Morh tunnel is an under-construction tunnel located in the Indian state of **Jammu and Kashmir**.

➤ It is a **6.5 km long tunnel between Gagangir and Sonamarg** on the **Srinagar-Leh highway**. The tunnel is being constructed at an **altitude of 11,578 feet** and will provide **all-weather connectivity to the Kashmir Valley**.

➤ The project is being implemented by the **National Highways and Infrastructure Development Corporation Limited (NHIDCL)**.

➤ This tunnel will reduce the **travel time between Srinagar and Leh by about four hours**.

❖ Praveer Sinha reappointed Tata Power CEO & MD

- Tata Power has re-appointed Praveer Sinha as the company's Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and Managing Director. His present tenure as a CEO and MD is scheduled to conclude on April 30, 2023.
- His re-appointment to the top post is for a period of four years from May 1, 2023, to April 30, 2027, subject to the approval of the members of the company.
- Under his current leadership, Tata Power is at the forefront of transforming itself from a century-old power utility company into a new-aged sustainable, technology-oriented and customer-centric green energy solutions company.
- A PhD from the Indian Institute of Technology, Delhi, Sinha is a visiting Research Associate at Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), Boston, USA.

❖ Tamil Nadu Govt. to celebrate centenary year of Vaikom Satyagraha

- The Tamil Nadu government would organise year-long celebrations to commemorate the centenary of the Vaikom Satyagraha - the struggle for temple entry for the Dalits at the Vaikom Mahadeva temple in Kerala's Kottayam.
- Vaikom satyagraha took place in 1924-25 in India's history of reforms.
- Vaikom struggle was led by social reformer Periyar E.V.Ramasamy who played a key role in the social justice struggle in India.
- The Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu announced that 'Vaikom Award' will be awarded to eminent personalities or organisations that worked for the welfare of oppressed classes.
- The award will be presented on the birth anniversary of late Periyar on September 17th which is also observed as the 'Day of Social Justice' by Tamil Nadu.
- Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu: **M.K.Stalin**; Tamilnadu Governor: **R.N. Ravi**

❖ 95-year-old Bhagwani Devi clinches 3 gold medals at World Masters Athletics Indoor Championship 2023

- India Bhagwan Devi Dagar clinched three gold medals at the World Masters Indoor Athletics Championship 2023.
- The 95- year-old came out on top in 60m, shot put and discus throw.
- This isn't the first time the elderly athlete is bringing glory to India in the international stage. In July 2022, she had won three medals at the World Masters Athletics Championship which was held in Tampere, Finland.
- Currently, India has five medals (3gold, 1silver, 1 bronze) in the ongoing World Masters Athletics Indoor Championship in Poland, which is slated to go till 1st April, 2023.

❖ Idly - A food for Indian astronauts in space

- For the first Indian manned mission to space, idly is on the menu of the astronauts.
- According to the Defence Food Research Laboratory (DFRL), small Idlys – the size of Rs.2 coins with the sides of sambhar powder and coconut chutney will be sent to space with the astronauts.
- The Idlys will be dried using infrared radiation at a temperature of 700° C, and the made moisture less further by microwaving but the smell and nutrients will be kept intact in the process, so that the Indian astronauts can enjoy this in space, as they miss their home planet.
- World Idly Day is celebrated on **March 30th**.

❖ World Bank announces \$100 million as loan for Odisha

- The World Bank has announced a loan of \$100 million for Odisha, to help the State strengthen its early forecasting systems for improved response to disasters; and enhance its social protection coverage for poor and vulnerable households,

through digital platforms. The rate of poverty among the tribals in Odisha, 63%, is the highest in the country.

- Odisha is vulnerable to Natural disasters with cyclones hitting the state every 15 months on average.
- According to an assessment by the World Bank, Odisha's human development indicators remain among the worst in India. Tackling poverty among tribals has been much slower than the state wide average, as evidenced by a poverty rate of 63% among tribal populations compared to 33% for the state overall.
- The loan is being given under the "Odisha State Capability and Resilient Growth Programme" which covers the social protection delivery platform, strengthening the economics and statistics wing and enhancing the capacity for disaster resilience.
- The program has a maturity of 12.5 years with a grace period of 3 years.
- Odisha Chief Minister: **Naveen Patnaik**; Odisha Governor: **Prof. Ganeshi Lal Mathur**; Odisha Capital: **Bhubaneswar**