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WEEKLY CURRENT AFFAIRS

4 DEC - 10 DEC

DEC 2023

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1. ONDC'S (BUILD FOR BHARAT INITIATIVE)

ONDC in collaboration with Google Cloud, seed stage investor Antler, Paytm, Protean and Startup India has announced the 'Build for Bharat' initiative to tackle challenges in digital commerce. The initiative aims for active participation from over 2,00,000 individuals in startups, companies, and colleges. The initiative aims for active participation from over 2,00,000 individuals in startups, companies, and colleges, targeting various issues such as catalog creation, financial services, and warehousing as a service.

MORE ABOUT ONDC

The Open Network for Digital Commerce (ONDC), created on December 31, 2021, under the Ministry of Commerce and Industry's Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT), aims to democratize and decentralize e-commerce. ONDC's purpose is to give buyers more choices and autonomy while also ensuring accessibility and inclusion for sellers, particularly small and local businesses. The 'Build for Bharat' programme is in line with ONDC's objective to transform Indian digital commerce.

Next Gen Ventures (Category 1)

Dedicated to accelerating venture development on ONDC by offering a route for ambitious founders and early-stage teams to raise funding, launch, and scale businesses. Winners in this category will receive special opportunities, mentoring, and equity-free grants.

Scalable Solutions (Category 2)

Invites participation from organizations and individuals with a focus on addressing friction points faced by Network Participants (NPs) on the ONDC platform.

Foundation Solutions (Category 3)

Designed for college students over 18 years of age, aiming to identify proof of concept for the friction points faced by NPs.

Prizes and Collaborations:

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- Category 1 winners stand to gain exclusive opportunities from Antler in India, mentorship from industry leaders, and equity-free grants of up to 5 crore rupees ($600,000).
- Category 2 and 3 winners will receive Cloud credits from Google Cloud India to foster further innovation in their projects.

2. Google has launched its latest AI system known as GEMINI.

After months of speculation and some delay, Google has finally launched its next generation AI system called Gemini. While the company already has Bard, it is expected that Gemini AI is the AI system through which Google hopes to compete — even beat — the likes of ChatGPT by OpenAI. Announcing the launch of Gemini, Google CEO Sundar Pichai called it the "biggest science and engineering efforts we've undertaken as a company."

Additionally, Pichai stated that Google's eight years of AI research has culminated in Gemini. Gemini AI, according to him, will be offered in three modes: Ultra, Pro, and Nano. As the name implies, Gemini will use the largest LLM (long language model) to carry out its AI functions in Ultra. The Nano will utilize the smallest LLM, whilst the Pro will use a lesser LLM. This also raises the prospect that Nano will probably be able to be used locally on PCs and smartphones.

3. World's first indigenously designed portable hospital unveiled in Gurugram

The world's first portable hospital, the indigenously made Arogya matric cube which can be assembled and start within 1 hour of reaching the emergency site to treat the injured was unveiled in Gurugram.

These cubes are light and portable, and can be rapidly deployed anywhere, from airdrops to ground transportation.

Project Arogya Maitri

The Arogya Maitri project is a Continuum of India's growing role as a global healthcare leader. A flagship component of this project is the innovative "Aarogya Maitri Aid Cube" a modular trauma management and aid system designed for rapid deployment in mass casualty incidents whether in time of peace or war.

This cube, a part of the broader initiative name "Project BHISM"- Bharat Health initiative for Sahyog Hita and Maitri is tailored to treat up to 200 casualties, emphasizing rapid response and comprehensive care.

The portable hospital includes various cubes and these cubes can be converted into a surgical station that has all the facilities where small operating procedures can also be performed.

About Arogya Maitri Sahayata Cube:

1. This is the world's first portable Hospital.

2. Thiruvananthapuram (Kerala) based government of India's company, HLL Life Care, is the nodal agency for sourcing the Aarogya Maitri Cube.

3. Indigenously designed under Project BHISM (India Health Initiative for Cooperation Interest and Friendship), the modular trauma management and support system is made up of 72 detachable mini-cubes, each with a specialized station for humanitarian efforts and emergency response.

4. It includes medical equipment and supplies such as a mini-ICU, an operation theater, a cooking station, food, water, an electricity generator, blood testing equipment, an X-ray machine.

5. This portable hospital can handle gunshots, burns, head, spinal cord and chest injuries, minor surgeries, fractures and major bleeding.

6. It can treat more than 200 patients.

7. These cubes are lightweight and portable, and can be rapidly deployed anywhere from airdrop to ground transportation.

Design

1. It consists of 72 cubes that can be combined to form a special cage capable of accommodating 36 mini-cubes. The mini-cubes are filled with everything needed for the survival of 100 individuals for a period of 48 hours.

2. The two master cubes are designed to be interconnected, allowing them to hold up to 200 survivors. Each Master Cube, consisting of 36 mini-cubes, has a total weight of less than 750 kg.

3. It relies on the Rubik's Cube concept and each cube is designed to weigh less than 20 kg, making it easy to carry manually.

4. The structure will also include a tablet-based application that can operate all 72 cubes.

4. MAJOR TAKEAWAYS FROM NCRB DATA 2022

- The crimes against women were up by 4 per cent in the year 2022, data by National Crimes Record Bureau (NCRB) revealed. According to the report, 'Cruelty by Husband or His Relatives' accounted for the majority of crimes against women.

- Crime against children also escalated by 8.7 per cent, primarily driven by cases related to kidnapping, abduction and offenses under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act.

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- Economic Offenses, Cyber Crimes: Recorded increases of 11.1 per cent and 24.4 percent respectively, suggesting a growing digital impact on criminal activities.

- Seizures and Arrests: Significant confiscations under Arms Act, explosives, fake Indian currency, alongside detailed arrest and conviction statistics, underscored law enforcement efforts.

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In absolute numbers, Uttar Pradesh (65,743) registered the maximum FIRs in cases of crimes against women in 2022, followed by Maharashtra (45,331), Rajasthan (45,058).

With 14,247 cases in 2022, Delhi registered the highest rate of crimes against women in the country at 144.4—way above the country's average rate of 66.4.

5. Outbreak of white lung syndrome

Term Origin: 'White lung syndrome' is a non-medical term emerging from recent respiratory illness outbreaks, primarily affecting children in several countries.

What is white Lung Syndrome?

Imaging Appearance:- Healthy lungs appear black in chest X-rays or CT scans due to air allowing radiation passage. Parts of the lungs appear white due to infections or other illnesses, hence the phrase "white lung syndrome."

Broad Representation: It generally refers to lung pathologies, including infections causing atypical pneumonia.

Associated Conditions: Often linked with acute respiratory distress syndrome (ARDS), typically secondary to severe lung infections.

Common Symptoms of White Lung Syndrome:

- Shortness of breath
- Coughing
- Chest pain
- Fever
- Fatigue

Causes of white lungs syndrome

While the exact Aetiology is unknown, doctors believe that White Lung Syndrome is caused by a mix of bacterial, viral, and environmental causes. This syndrome can be caused by viruses such as influenza or COVID-19, bacterial infections (such as Mycoplasma pneumoniae), and environmental causes such as breathing silica dust.

Treatment

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The treatment for White Lung Syndrome differs depending on the reason. Antibiotics, antivirals, oxygen therapy, mechanical breathing, and corticosteroids are all possible treatments. The chosen strategy is determined by the severity of the condition, with outcomes ranging from complete recovery to probable long-term lung damage.

6. Opening of a seed financing programme for startups

The Indian National Space Promotion and Authorization Centre (IN-SPACe) announced on Monday the opening of a seed financing programme for startups exploring space technology for disaster relief and urban development.

Under the programme, a number of start-ups will be given seed money to develop an idea into a working prototype using space technology. Additionally, ISRO facility support, including Earth Observation (EO) data for concept validation, mentorship support, and access to data algorithms as a technology transfer from the Department of Science will be provided (DoS)

7. Treaty Between The Govt. Of UK And Rwanda

The UK government on Tuesday signed a new treaty with Rwanda which it says addresses the Supreme Court's concerns that blocked the original scheme to fly out illegal migrants to the African nation while their asylum claims are processed.

The agreement is part of the government's plan to ensure that illegal migrants can be lawfully relocated to Rwanda under the government's ambition to stop the boats

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– ensuring that people know that if they come to the UK illegally, they cannot stay here.

The landmark treaty is binding in international law and ensures that people relocated to Rwanda under the partnership are not at risk of being returned to a country where their life or freedom would be threatened – an act known as refoulement.

8. As the first female Indian Army medical officer stationed at Siachen

As the first female Indian Army medical officer stationed at Siachen, the highest battlefield on earth, Captain Geetika Koul of the Snow Leopard Brigade has made history. This significant accomplishment follows Captain Koul's triumphant completion of the demanding induction training programme at the esteemed Siachen Battle School. In October, Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL) commissioned a new base transceiver station (BTS) in Siachen glacier to extend mobile communication for the soldiers deployed at more than 15,500 feet.

9. Mera Gaon Meri Dharohar Initiative

The Government of India has decided to map and document all villages under Mera Gaon, Meri Dharohar (MGMD) Programme. This National Mission on Cultural Mapping is conducted in coordination with Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts (IGNCA) under the Ministry of Culture. A web portal on MGMD has also been launched on 27th July, 2023. The MGMD seeks to compile comprehensive information detailing the life,

history, and ethos of Indian villages and to make the same available to virtual and real-time visitors. Under the MGMD, information is collected under seven broad categories as given below-

- Arts and Crafts Village
- Ecologically Oriented Village
- Scholastic Village linked with Textual and Scriptural Traditions of India
- Epic Village linked with Ramayana, Mahabharata and/or Puranic legends and oral epics
- Historical Village linked with Local and National History
- Architectural Heritage Village

Any other characteristic that may need highlighting such as fishing village, horticulture village, shepherding village etc. *(PIB)*

10. 59th Seminar on Fertilizer Association Of India took place in New Delhi.

Union Minister of Chemicals & Fertilizers Dr Mansukh Mandaviya inaugurates 59th Fertiliser Association of India Annual Seminar 2023. "The Indian Fertiliser Sector has achieved the twin objectives of supporting 14 crore farming families by providing timely fertilizers, driving agronomic activities and emerging as a strong force in the fertilizers sector by playing a significant role in shaping up the global market": Dr Mansukh Mandaviya.

During the past 2-3 years, the Government of India has absorbed the impact of high global commodity prices and ensured the availability of fertilizers at stable MRP. This has resulted in stable fertilizer consumption and a record agricultural output during these years, as compared to degrowth in consumption globally. Under PM PRANAM initiative, a mass movement has started to save the health of Mother Earth by promoting sustainable and balanced use of fertilizers, adopting

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alternate fertilizers, promoting organic farming and implementing resource conservation technologies

India is the first nation to introduce Nano fertilizers such as Nano DAP and Nano Urea through the Indian Research ecosystem. NAMO Drone Didi scheme which was recently launched by the Hon'ble Prime Minister, will make drone spraying services accessible to farmers at affordable prices

The Union Government has set up close to 2 lakh Model Retail outlets known as Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samridhi Kendras which are acting as one-stop shops for all agricultural activities.

11. Indian Army has conducted Table-Top exercise for ASEAN Women Peacekeepers.

In a historic move to advance gender parity and strengthen the capacities of female soldiers in peacekeeping missions, the Indian Army hosted a Table-Top Exercise (TTX) for the Women Officers of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) from December 4–8, 2023, at the Manekshaw Center in New Delhi.
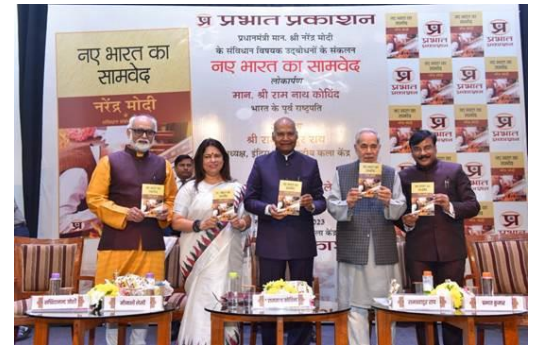
The exercise is a component of the Center for United Nations Peacekeeping (CUNPK's) Continuous Efforts to improve cross-national collaboration and capacity-building for peacekeeping operations, with an emphasis on women's empowerment in the field. One of the Indian Army's top training facilities for peacekeeping missions is CUNPK.

CUNPK had earlier conducted the ASEAN Women Military Officers Course from 18th to 29th September 2023. This TTX is a follow up exercise of ongoing joint military training between India and ASEAN member states. The Exercise underscores India's shared commitment to world peace, stability, and gender equality.

Through this exercise, participants were able to model and plan their answers to intricate peacekeeping scenarios that mirrored real-world difficulties. It also exposed participants to intricate operational environments for peacekeeping and strategies for ensuring the safety and security of women.

12. Naye Bharat ka Samaveda: Shri Narendra Modi's powerful speeches

The inauguration of "Naye Bharat ka Samaveda," a groundbreaking compilation featuring Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi's powerful speeches that delve deeply into the fundamental ideas and principles enshrined in our country's Constitution, was graced by former President Shri Ramnath Kovind. Smt. Meenakshi Lekhi, Minister of State for Culture and External Affairs, presided over the ceremony, which was organized by Shri Rambahdur Rai, President of IGNCA. One of the notable guests was Dr. Sachchidanand Joshi, the IGNCA Member Secretary. During the book launch, Prabhat Kumar from Prabhat Publications was also there. The distinguished occasion was held at the Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts' "Samvet" auditorium.

This significant launch celebrated the fusion of India's constitutional heritage and contemporary resonance, encapsulating the essence of the nation's ethos.

13. US Govt. has named Nikhil Dey as "2023 International Anti-corruption Champion"

Indian social activist Nikhil Dey was named the International Anti-Corruption Champion for 2023 along with 10 others by the US State Department Thursday. He received this recognition for his work in building "peasant and worker empowerment campaigns" to expose corruption in the delivery of government services.

According to the US Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs, Dey is recognised as an Anti-Corruption Champion for his significant contribution to social movements that challenge corruption in government welfare programmes in India by promoting openness and accountability, public audits, and participatory democracy.

14. 10th December- Human Rights Day. Theme- "Freedom, Equality and Justice for All".

Every year on December 10, Human Rights Day is observed to remember the day the UN General Assembly ratified the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948. The world is reminded on this significant day of the fundamental freedoms and rights to which all people are entitled, irrespective of their nationality, ethnicity, religion, or any other distinction. All members of the national and international community are reminded and given the chance to consider their past, present, and future deeds and obligations, as well as to work toward the advancement and defense of human rights, on this day.

The theme for Human Rights Day 2023 is *"Freedom, Equality and Justice for All"*. Human Rights Day was observed on this day in 1948, when the UN General Assembly ratified the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The Assembly's adoption of resolution 423(V) in 1950 officially recognised December 10 as Human Rights Day and urged all interested states and organizations to mark it. The popularity of Human Rights Day was demonstrated by the fact that around 200,000 persons pre-ordered the 1952 commemorative stamp from the United Nations Postal Administration.

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