

pravahini

WEEKLY CURRENT AFFAIRS

15 JAN – 21 JAN



MRP ₹ 50.00



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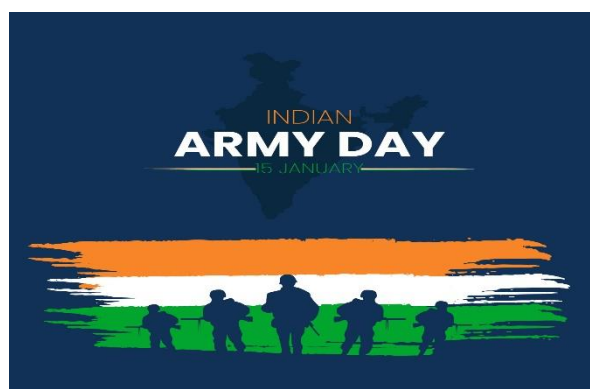
1. Pench Tiger Reserve Attains India's First Dark Sky Park Status:

- The Pench Tiger Reserve in Maharashtra has been designated as India's first Dark Sky Park and the fifth in Asia, protecting the night sky and preventing light pollution.
- The Pench Tiger Reserve (PTR) in Maharashtra is India's first Dark Sky Park within a tiger reserve for earmarking areas around the park that restrict light pollution for stargazers to access pristine dark skies.
- Dark Sky Place certification focuses on lighting policy, dark sky-friendly retrofits, outreach and education, and monitoring the night sky.
- The Reserve is located in the southern reaches of the Satpura hills in the Seoni and Chhindwara districts in Madhya Pradesh and continues in Nagpur district in Maharashtra as a separate Sanctuary.
- The area of the Pench Tiger Reserve and the surrounding area is the real story area of Rudyard Kipling's famous "The Jungle Book".



2. Indian Army Day, January 15:

- The Indian Army is the combat force on the front lines, risking its life to protect the nation against foreign invasions.
- Indian Army Day is celebrated annually on January 15 to commemorate the 1949 commissioning of the Indian Army's first Indian contingent.
- It's a day to honor the bravery, altruism, and unwavering commitment of the Indian Army to maintaining national security.



- On January 15, the India Army holds its annual Army Day parade. In 2024, Indian Army Day will have the theme "In Service of the Nation." This theme embodies the Indian Army's aim to serve the nation with unwavering enthusiasm, dedication, and professionalism.
- It emphasizes the unselfish sacrifices made by India Army soldiers to preserve the security and ideals of their country.

3. NHAI's 'One Vehicle, One FASTag' initiative:

- To enhance efficiency of the Electronic Toll Collection system and provide seamless movement at the Toll Plazas, NHAI has taken 'One Vehicle, One FASTag' initiative that aims to discourage user behavior of using single FASTag for multiple vehicles or linking multiple FASTags to a particular vehicle.
- NHAI is also encouraging FASTag users to complete the 'Know Your Customer' (KYC) process of their latest FASTag by updating KYC as per RBI guidelines.
- FASTags with valid balance but with incomplete KYC will get deactivated/blacklisted by banks post 31st January 2024.
- This initiative was taken in response to reports of multiple FASTags being issued for a single vehicle and issuance of FASTags without KYC, violating RBI's mandate.
- With 98% penetration and over 8 crore users, FASTag has transformed Indian toll collection efficiency. The 'One Vehicle, One FASTag' move will boost operations and ensure smooth highway journeys.



4. Indian Army's Operation Sarvashakti:

- (a) The Indian Army has launched Operation Sarvashakti in Jammu and Kashmir.
- (b) It involves security forces on both sides of the Pir Panjal range. The goal is to flush out terrorists who have ambushed Indian troops in Rajouri and Poonch.



About Pir Panjal Range

- The Pir Panjal Range constitutes a mountain chain in the Lower Himalayan region within the Western Himalayas of the northern Indian subcontinent.
- Serving as the largest range in the Lesser Himalayas, Pir Panjal exhibits a gradual elevation towards the Dhauladhar and Pir Panjal ranges.

About operation Sarvashakti

Sarvashakti is modeled on 2003's Operation SarpVinash in the region south of Pir Panjal. Operation Sarpvinash was implemented by the Indian Army and the Rashtriya Rifles.

5. National Social Organisations and Institutions Meet (NSOIM):

- The India International Science Festival (IISF) hosted the National Social Organisations and Institutions Meet (NSOIM) from January 17-19, 2024 in Faridabad.
- The Ministries of Science and Technology, Earth Sciences, Space, and Atomic Energy are among the government science organizations that collaborate to produce the India International Science Festival (IISF).
- The core goal of IISF is promoting scientific awareness and engagement with the general public in an enjoyable way that connects science to prosperity and quality of life.



- Organized by National Innovation Foundation's DST-SEED Division and VibhaVani India, NSOIM-2023 builds bridges between innovation and India's communities. It highlights homegrown science that transforms lives.
- NSOIM-2023 has the theme of "Technological Innovations for Grassroots Development."

6. Buffalo Fights Revived in Assam After 9 Years:

- After a hiatus of almost nine years, traditional Moh-Juj (buffalo) fights were held in Ahatguri, Assam.
- In December 2022, the Assam cabinet granted approval to frame detailed procedures for permitting buffalo and bull fights during Magh Bihu.
- The standard operating procedures aim to prevent cruelty against animals while enabling locals to celebrate the state's centuries-old heritage.
- However, in 2014, the Supreme Court banned events like Jallikattu, bullock-cart races, and other similar activities that were deemed harmful to animals.
- in May 2022 – a Supreme Court bench upheld amendments to animal cruelty legislation by certain states.
- The riverside town of Ahatguri has hosted buffalo fight tournaments as part of Magh Bihu since 1972.



7. India and Argentina's Agreement on Lithium Exploration:

- India has reached a historic milestone by signing an agreement between Khanij Bidesh India Limited (KABIL) and Argentina's state-owned enterprise, Catamarca Minera y Energética

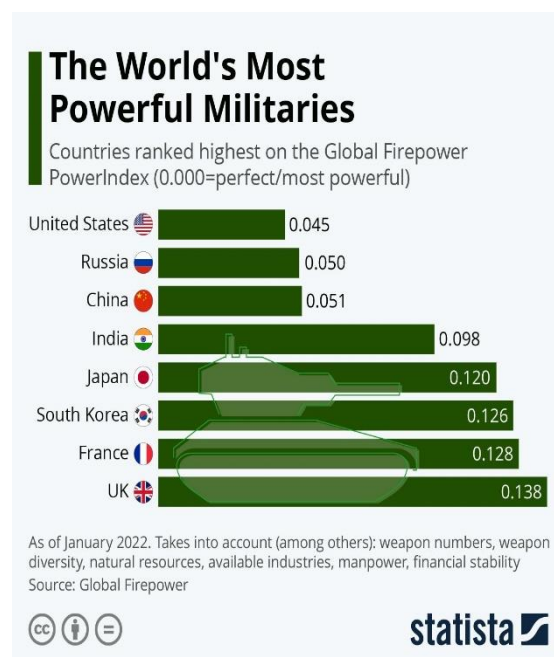


Sociedad del Estado (CAMYEN SE), marking the first-ever lithium exploration and mining project by an Indian government company.

- The agreement allows KABIL to explore and develop five lithium brine blocks in Argentina's Catamarca province, covering approximately 15,703 hectares.
- KABIL is a joint venture, involving NALCO, MECL, and HCL, and is focused on identifying and acquiring strategic minerals overseas for India's use.
- The Andes Mountains, which run through both Argentina and Chile, are known for hosting lithium-rich brine deposits. The region's unique geological conditions make it conducive to the formation and concentration of lithium resources.

8. Global Firepower Ranking (USA has the strongest army in the world):

- The United States took the first spot in Global Firepower's Military Strength Rankings 2024, followed by Russia and China. India clinched fourth spot, above the United Kingdom and Japan.
- According to GFP's assessment, India holds a Power Index (PwrIndx) score of 0.1023. (A score of 0.0000 is considered 'perfect'). The US holds a Power Index score of 0.0699, Russia 0.0702 and China 0.0706.
- A total of 145 countries were assessed based on their global military prowess for the Global Firepower's 2024 Military Strength Rankings.
- (d)The index takes into account around 60 factors, including the number of troops, military equipment, financial stability, geographic location and available resources. (e) Notably, South Korea overtook the UK and became the fifth

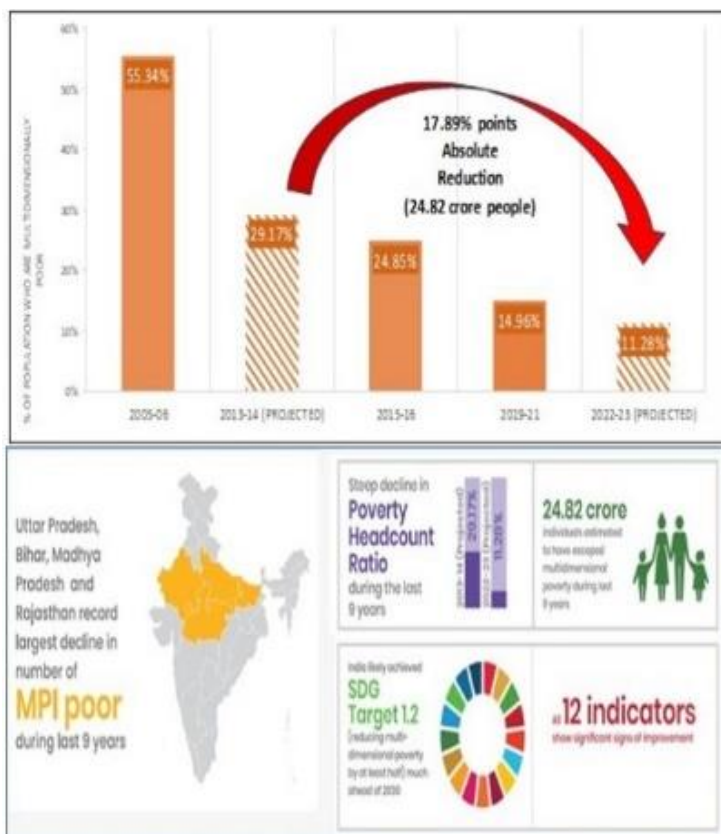


most powerful country in the world in terms of military strength. Pakistan at number 9 while Bhutan has the least powerful military in the world.

9. More than 24 crore people have come out from the Multidimensional Poverty in Last 9 years: NITI Aayog:

The NITI Aayog estimates that in the past nine years, about 25 crore Indians have been lifted out of poverty.

- Today, the planning agency published a discussion paper titled "Multidimensional Poverty in India since 2005 to 2006," which aims to examine the various ways in which poverty rates have decreased.
- According to the report, in the last nine years, the percentage of people living in poverty has decreased from over 29% to over 11%.
- It also stated that over the last nine years, about 6 crore people have been lifted out of poverty in Uttar Pradesh, which has seen the biggest decrease in poverty among Indian states. Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, and Bihar come next.
- According to NITI Aayog, India will soon experience single-digit poverty this year, which is a tremendous accomplishment considering that over 50% of the population lived in poverty in 2005.
- It further stated that India will surpass its 2030 target by a significant margin in meeting its Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) of halving multidimensional poverty. (f) The Alkire and Foster (AF) technique is used by NITI Aayog's

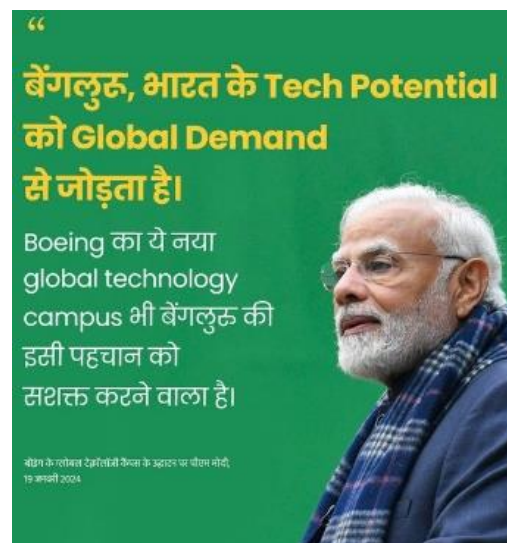


national Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) to estimate the drop-in poverty rates.

- On the other hand, the global MPI consists of 10 indicators, whereas the national MPI has 12.

10. Boeing India Engineering & Technology Center (BIETC) campus in Bengaluru:

- The Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi inaugurated the new state-of-the-art Boeing India Engineering & Technology Center (BIETC) campus in Bengaluru, Karnataka.
- Built with an investment of Rs 1,600 crores, the 43-acre campus is Boeing's largest such investment outside the USA.
- The Prime Minister also launched the Boeing Sukanya Program which aims to support the entry of more girl children from across India into the country's growing aviation sector.
- India has become the world's third largest aviation domestic market.



11. Denmark's King Frederik X Ascends As Queen Margrethe II Steps Down After 52 Years:

- On January 14, Denmark saw a momentous event when King Frederik X took the throne from his mother, Queen Margrethe II, who formally abdicated after an amazing 52 years in office.



- Queen Margrethe gave no particular explanation for her decision to abdicate; she had previously stated that she intended to hold the kingdom for life.
- She did, however, bring up a serious back surgery she had in February of the prior year, which made her think about the future.
- The Danish monarchy is experiencing unprecedented public support and enthusiasm as King Frederik X and Queen Mary take on their positions.

12. Union Minister Ajay Bhatt Flags Off Astra Missile For IAF Delivery:

- Ajay Bhatt, the Union Minister of State for Defence, signaled a historic milestone by launching the locally developed Astra air-to-air missiles.
- The ceremony, which marked a significant milestone toward the missile's introduction into the Indian Air Force, was held at Bharat Dynamics Limited's (BDL) Kanchanbagh plant in Hyderabad (IAF).
- An example of India's technological strength is the beyond visual range (BVR) air-to-air missile, or Astra.
- The Astra Weapon System, created by the Defence Research and Development Organization (DRDO) and produced by BDL for the IAF, has an impressive range of more than 100 kilometers and unmatched capabilities in its class.



13. Red Sea Crisis:

- The Ministry of Commerce and Industry (MoCI) reports that Indian exports to Europe, especially low-value products such as agriculture and textiles, are facing



disruptions due to escalating tensions in the Red Sea and ongoing drought issues at the Panama Canal.

- The rerouting of shipments through the Cape of Good Hope, in response to heightened security concerns in the Red Sea and Panama Canal, has led to delayed sailings and a significant increase in freight rates to Europe.

About Red Sea

- The Red Sea is a semi-enclosed tropical basin, bounded by northeastern Africa, to the west, and the Arabian peninsula, to the east.
- The elongated and narrow-shaped basin extends between the Mediterranean Sea, to the northwest, and the Indian Ocean, to the southeast.

14. IMD Unveils Initiatives to Monitor Weather to Mark its 150th Year:

- The India Meteorological Department (IMD) recently unveiled a National Framework for Climate Services in honor of its 150th anniversary (NFCS).
- In addition, a number of other efforts were unveiled to employ cutting-edge science and technology to more accurately track and forecast extreme weather. Users can frequently exchange timely climatic data on the NFCS platform.
- Its goal is to greatly improve climate service delivery and uptake. The aim is to safeguard India's vital industries from the effects of climate change.
- safeguard India's vital industries from the effects of climate change.
- Among major initiatives launched is the Panchayat Weather Service. It will provide all India panchayats customized weather forecasts on parameters like temperature and rainfall.

15. Global Hydrogen Price Index:

- The Indian Gas Exchange (IGX) and Gujarat State Petroleum Corporation have partnered with the International Financial Services Centre (IFSC) at GIFT City in Gandhinagar (GSPC).
- The creation of a Global Hydrogen Price Index is the shared objective. Global institutions will be able to trade hydrogen contracts and derivatives inside the GIFT City Special Economic Zone thanks to a platform that GSPC and IGX will jointly develop (SEZ).
- With capabilities spanning banking, capital markets, and other financial verticals, GIFT City is an International Financial Services Centre (IFSC) in India.
- The Global Hydrogen Price Index is a benchmark that would help India's expanding green hydrogen sector by facilitating price discovery and offering vital market data.



WEEK THROUGH MCQs

- 1) What is the IUCN status of 'Gentoo Penguin', which was recently seen in the news?
 - a) Endangered
 - b) Least Concern
 - c) Vulnerable
 - d) Critically endangered

Ans b)

- 2) FASTag, recently seen in the news, works on which of the following techniques?
- a) WiFi Frequency Identification b) Infrared Frequency Identification
c) Radio Frequency Identification d) Electrical Frequency Identification

Ans b)

- 3) Where is the 12th General Assembly of the Asian Buddhist Conference for Peace being held?

- a) Kathmandu b) Colombo
c) New Delhi d) Dhaka

Ans c)

- 4) Which country will host the 'Global Peace Summit' on Ukraine?

- a) USA b) France c) Switzerland d) Japan

Ans c)

- 5) With which country has India signed an agreement for exploration and mining of Lithium?

- a) Malaysia b) Argentina c) France d) Australia

Ans b)

- 6) Which city is set to get India's first centrally sponsored cow sanctuary?

- a) Muzaffarnagar b) Mathura
c) Varanasi d) Sitapur

Ans a)

- 7) Panama Canal, which has been in news, connects which two oceans?

- a) Atlantic Ocean & Pacific Ocean b) Atlantic Ocean & Indian Ocean
c) Indian Ocean & Arctic Ocean d) Pacific Ocean & Arctic Ocean

Ans a)

- 8) Which organization recently issued Japanese Yen Denominated Green Bonds?
- a) REC Limited
 - b) International Monetary Fund
 - c) World Bank
 - d) Japan Green Finance Organization

Ans d)

- 9) Which state recently launched the Mahtari Vandana Yojana?
- a) Chattisgarh
 - b) Madhya Pradesh
 - c) Uttar Pradesh
 - d) Bihar

Ans a)

- 10) Who Will Represent India At G-77 Third South Summit In Kampala
- a) Dr. S Jaishankar
 - b) Dr. Rajkumar Ranjan Singh
 - c) V. Muraleedharan
 - d) Smriti Irani

Ans c)