

International

Nepal & China sign deal on Belt and Road plan, paving way for progress on projects



About News:-

- ❖ Nepal has signed a framework agreement with China on the Belt and Road initiative after an initial pact was signed seven years ago. Still, progress has not been made since, paving the way for project cooperation.
- ❖ Prime Minister K.P. Sharma Oli has been in Beijing since Monday on a four-day visit, his first to a foreign country since his July swearing-in, breaking tradition by not making New Delhi, with which Kathmandu has centuries-old ties, his first foreign port of call.

Key Points:-

- ❖ Nepal and China signed an initial deal in 2017 for President Xi Jinping's Belt and Road Initiative, which aims to build China's infrastructure and trade links with the world.
- ❖ However, no projects have been planned or begun in the past seven years, as a framework for cooperation had not been set and as Nepal struggled to get consensus from its political parties.
- ❖ China has loaned Nepal \$216 million to build an international airport in Pokhara, the second-largest city about 125 km (80 miles) west of Kathmandu, which began operating last year.
- ❖ But the Chinese-built airport, claimed by Beijing as a symbol of Belt and Road success, has grappled with problems such as a lack of international flights, due to India's refusal to let planes use its airspace.

National

Shri Pralhad Joshi launches 'Anna Chakra', the Public Distribution System Supply chain optimisation tool and SCAN (Subsidy Claim Application for NFSA) portal



About News:-

- ❖ To modernize the nation's public distribution system, the Indian government's Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food, and Public Distribution introduced "Anna Chakra" and the SCAN (Subsidy Claim Application for NFSA) Portal. It is anticipated that the SCAN Portal and the Anna Chakra tool would improve the effectiveness of the biggest public distribution system in the world.
- ❖ The Public Distribution System is a component of the nation's Food Security system, which provides food grains to the targeted poor and vulnerable segments of the population at heavily discounted or even free prices.

Who launched the SCAN Portal and Anna Chakra?

- ❖ On December 5, 2024, Pralhad Joshi, Union Minister for Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution & Renewable Energy, opened the SCAN portal and the Anna Chakra in New Delhi.

About the SCAN Portal

- ❖ The Public Distribution System's SCAN (Subsidy Claim Application for NFSA) Portal provides a one-stop shop for resolving subsidy claims.
- ❖ The state government purchases food grains from farmers and transfers them to the Food Corporation of India, which manages the buffer stock, as part of the Public Distribution System. Food grains are sent to the states from this buffer stock to be

distributed to the recipients of various central government programs covered by the National Food Security Act (NFSA) and other welfare programs.

- ❖ The state government receives reimbursement as a food subsidy for the difference between the Central Issue Price and the cost of purchasing food grains.
- ❖ The Department of Food and Public Distribution (DFPD) of the Union Ministry for Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution processes and disburses the subsidy amount to the state government.
- ❖ The state can submit a food subsidy claim using the SCAN Portal, and the DFPD will process it before releasing the cash to the state government.
- ❖ It will speed up the settlement of subsidy claims and make the entire process more transparent.

About Anna Chakra

- ❖ The DFPD's PDS Supply Chain optimization tool is the Anna Chakra. The Ministry created it in partnership with the World Food Programme and the Foundation for Innovation and Technology Transfer at IIT Delhi.
- ❖ The Anna Chakra is an online platform designed to increase the effectiveness of the nation's food grain supply operations.
- ❖ It will monitor the flow of food grains from farmers to ration stores and godowns. It will use sophisticated algorithms to determine the optimal supply path.
- ❖ This will lower fuel consumption, time, and logistics expenses while improving the efficiency of food grain transportation across the supply chain.

State

PM Modi congratulates the people of Nagaland on the completion of 25 years of the Hornbill Festival



About News:-

- ❖ In honor of the Hornbill Festival's 25th anniversary, Prime Minister Narendra Modi welcomed the people of Nagaland. In 2024, the "Hornbill Festival," Nagaland's premier tourism and cultural event, will mark its 25th anniversary.
- ❖ The Nagaland government started the Hornbill festival in 2000 as a celebration of Naga culture, but it has since gained prominence and recognition, drawing tourists from both domestic and foreign countries.
- ❖ The elusive Hornbill bird is the source of the Hornbill Festival's moniker, which is also known as the "Festivals of Festivals."
- ❖ Through dances, processions, art exhibitions, and musical performances, 17 tribes from Nagaland highlight their culture and traditions during the event.

Opening Ceremony and Partner Country

- ❖ On December 1, 2024, Nagaland Chief Minister Neiphiu Rio presided over the opening ceremony of the 25th Hornbill Festival, which took place in the Kisama Heritage Village.
- ❖ The United States, Japan, Peru, and the United Kingdom are this year's international partners of the Hornbill Festival.
- ❖ Sikkim is this year's partner state for the Hornbill event.
- ❖ The British High Commissioner to India, the ambassadors of the United States, Japan, and Peru, as well as Nagaland's governor, La Ganesan, participated in the opening ceremony.
- ❖ Another guest during the inaugural event was A R Rahman, a composer of popular music.

Organiser of the Hornbill Festival

- ❖ The Tourism and Art & Culture Departments of the State government collaborate to organize the Hornbill Festival at the Kisama Heritage Village.
- ❖ The Hornbill event lasts for ten days, beginning on December 1 and concluding on December 10.

- ❖ December 1st also marks the founding day of the state of Nagaland, which was established on that day in 1963 by the State of Nagaland Act 1962.

Maharashtra

World Bank approves \$188 million loan to Maharashtra to stimulate growth in backward districts



About News:-

- ❖ A \$188.28 million loan from the World Bank has been granted for Maharashtra to accelerate economic growth in the state's impoverished districts. The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) is the lender for this loan, which has a 15-year maturity period with a five-year grace period. To boost economic growth and job creation, the initiative aims to improve e-government services, strengthen district-level governance, and encourage private-sector participation.

Key Objectives and Strategies

- ❖ Strengthening District-Level Planning: By providing districts with data, funds, and experience, the program will enable them to maximize public spending and foster equitable growth.
- ❖ Establishing the Maha Databank: One important component of the project is the establishment of the Maha Databank, a framework for data governance designed to address development issues including gender inequality, and facilitate evidence-based policymaking.

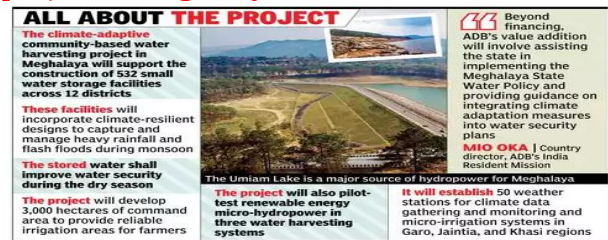
Improving E-Governance and Private Sector Engagement

- ❖ Improving Digital Platforms: To guarantee prompt access for the commercial sector, the project would improve Maharashtra's main online service portals, including MAITRI 2.0 for business services and the RTS site for government services.

- ❖ District Incentive Framework: Districts that achieve yearly performance goals will be given financial incentives, encouraging efficiency and competition in governance and service delivery.

Economic

Government of India and ADB sign \$50 million loan for climate-adaptative water harvesting project in Meghalaya



About News:

- ❖ To improve water security in Meghalaya and fund the installation of a water harvesting system, the Asian Development Bank (ADB) has agreed to lend \$50 million. On December 5, 2024, the Indian government and the ADB representative in New Delhi inked an agreement for this aim.
- ❖ Mio Oka, the Country Director of ADB's India Resident Mission, and Juhi Mukherjee, Joint Secretary, of the Department of Economic Affairs, Ministry of Finance, signed the loan agreement.

Use of the ADB loan amount

- ❖ The Climate-Adaptative Community-Based Water Harvesting Project in Meghalaya will be funded by the loan amount.
- ❖ As part of the project, a water harvesting system will be built in response to community demand.
- ❖ In 12 state districts, 532 small water storage facilities will be built.
- ❖ It will provide funding for the development of three water harvesting system micro-hydro power plants.
- ❖ To guarantee farmers' irrigation during the lean Rabi season, 3,000 hectares of command area will be developed.
- ❖ Fifty weather stations will be set up in the Garo, Jaintia, and Khasi regions to monitor micro-irrigation systems and collect climate data.

- ❖ It will also establish an institutional mechanism for community ownership and integrated management of natural resources through village employment councils, watershed management committees, and water users' associations.

Beneficiary of the Water Harvesting Project

- ❖ By enhancing people's access to water and lessening the effects of climate change, the recently built water harvesting system will increase the state's water security.
- ❖ By guaranteeing a steady supply of water, particularly throughout the rabi cropping season, it will help the farming community.
- ❖ It will enhance rural prosperity and boost the state's agricultural output.
- ❖ Better drinking water availability for the rural population.

Asian Development Bank

- ❖ Headquarters: Mandaluyong City, Metro Manila, Philippines
- ❖ President: Masatsugu Asakawa
- ❖ President Elect: Masato Kanda

Appointment

Eurogrip Tyres signs M S Dhoni as brand ambassador



About News:-

The renowned cricket player M.S. Dhoni has joined Eurogrip Tyres, a well-known Indian firm that sells off-highway, two-wheeler, and three-wheeler tires, as a brand ambassador. The collaboration aims to increase the brand's awareness and consumer trust while also being in line with Eurogrip Tyres' key principles of performance, dependability, and safety. The brand's goal of empowering riders is reflected in M.S. Dhoni's strong bond with motorcycles and his emphasis on dependability, performance, and love of riding.

Key Points

- ❖ The well-known cricket player M.S. Dhoni has agreed to serve as Eurogrip Tyres' brand ambassador.
- ❖ M.S. Dhoni and Eurogrip Tyres share qualities including dependability, performance, and a love of riding.
- ❖ Dhoni will support every product in Eurogrip's line of business.

Science & Technology

ISRO successfully launches PSLV-C59 rocket with European Space Agency's Proba-3 satellites



About News:-

- ❖ On December 5, 2024, the European Space Agency (ESA) Probe 3 spacecraft was successfully launched by the Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) from the First Launch Pad at the Satish Dhawan Space Centre (SDSC-SHAR), Sriharikota, Andhra Pradesh.
- ❖ ISRO's Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV) C-59 carried the ESA Probe 3 into orbit.
- ❖ Due to technical difficulties, the mission's scheduled launch date of December 4, 2024, was rescheduled for December 5, 2024.
- ❖ It was the second successful mission for NewSpace India Limited (NSIL) in two weeks following the GSAT-20/GSAT-N2 satellite's launch on SpaceX's Falcon 9 rocket.

NSIL's ESA Probe 3 Mission

- ❖ ISRO carried out the mission for NewSpace India Limited (NSIL), which signed an agreement with the ESA to use the PSLV rocket to launch the Europa Probe 3 satellite.
- ❖ In 2019, the Indian government established NSIL as an ISRO marketing arm. Its primary responsibility is to draw in customers and promote ISRO's satellite launch capability globally.
- ❖ With prices ranging from \$18 million to \$28 million per launch, the PSLV rocket has become one of the most dependable and affordable launch vehicles in its class globally.

About the ESA Probe 3 Spacecraft

- ❖ One example of ESA technology is the ESA Probe 3 spacecraft.
- ❖ There are two satellites on the spacecraft.
- ❖ It is the first precision formation-flying mission in history when two satellites will fly in tandem while keeping a fixed configuration, much like a single, massive, rigid structure in orbit.
- ❖ The satellites will investigate the Sun's outermost atmosphere or corona.

About the PSLV Rocket

- ❖ The PSLV is a medium-lift launch vehicle owned by ISRO that can send satellites up to 1,750 kg into 600 km-high sun-synchronous polar orbits.
- ❖ The PSLV C-59 is a four-stage rocket and ISRO's third-generation launch vehicle.
- ❖ Its height is 44.5 meters.
- ❖ With a 97% success rate, PSLV has been ISRO's most successful launch vehicle. The only two times it failed were during its development in 1993 and the 2017 IRNSS mission.

About Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO)

- ❖ Headquarters: Bengaluru
- ❖ Chairman: S.Somnath

Award

India awarded for social security good practices at Asia-Pacific forum in Saudi



About News:-

- ❖ At the Regional Social Security Forum in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, Dr. Mohammed Azman, President of the International Social Security Association (ISSA), honored India with the esteemed ISSA Good Practice Award for Asia and Pacific 2024. Five Certificates of Merit were also given to the Employees'

Provident Fund Organization (EPFO) in recognition of their creative social security delivery methods. These honors serve as a testament to EPFO's efforts to improve communication, inclusivity, and service delivery for the benefit of its sizable and varied workforce.

ISSA Good Practice Award for Asia and Pacific

- ❖ In recognition of its ongoing efforts to improve and modernize the nation's social security services, India's EPFO received the coveted ISSA Good Practice Award.
- ❖ The prize was given out at the Regional Social Security Forum, a major forum for social security issues, which took place in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.
- ❖ Merit certificates
- ❖ Five Certificates of Merit were awarded to EPFO for exceptional efforts in a range of service delivery domains.

Communication Channels

- ❖ Electronic proceedings
- ❖ The extensive district outreach program, Nidhi Aapke Nikat 2.0
- ❖ Call centers with many languages
- ❖ The Prayaas Project

Miscellaneous

16th GRIHA Summit 2024 Inaugurated to Foster Climate Action in the Built Environment



About News:-

- ❖ The 16th GRIHA Summit, the annual flagship event organized by the GRIHA Council, commenced today in New Delhi, with a focus on the theme "Accelerating Climate Action in the Built Environment".
- ❖ The Summit brings together industry leaders, policymakers, and sustainability experts to explore innovative approaches for sustainable urban development and climate resilience in the construction and infrastructure sectors, addressing the challenges of climate change.

Key Points:-

- ❖ This year's theme underscores the critical role of transitioning the built environment towards sustainability as a cornerstone of effective climate action. As the 2030 deadline for global climate commitments nears and the 2050 target for decarbonizing the building and construction sector looms large, the summit provides a platform to explore opportunities for climate-resilient development, breaking the cycle of rising heat, energy demand, and carbon emissions.
- ❖ The GRIHA Summit also aligns with India's aspirational vision of Viksit Bharat @2047, a comprehensive roadmap that integrates sustainable urban development with the nation's goals of economic growth, social progress, environmental sustainability, and good governance.

Important Day

International Civil Aviation Day – 7 December

About News:-

- ❖ International Civil Aviation Day 2024, on December 7th, will highlight the significance of civil aviation in connecting people and cultures while emphasizing the role of aviation organizations in ensuring safe and sustainable air travel worldwide.
- ❖ The theme is "Safe Skies. Sustainable Future: Together for the next 80 years."



History:-

- ❖ International Civil Aviation Day was established in 1994 to commemorate the 50th anniversary of ICAO. The United Nations officially recognised the day in 1996. Its primary objective is to generate awareness about the importance of international civil aviation for social and economic development.

- ❖ The roots of this observance trace back to 7 December 1944, when the Convention on International Civil Aviation, also known as the Chicago Convention, was signed. The signing of the convention by 52 countries, including India marked the formation of the ICAO, which would go on to become a specialized agency of the United Nations responsible for promoting safe and secure civil aviation across the globe.

