

International

India and US sign MoU on Cybercrime Investigations



About News:-

- ❖ India and the US signed an MoU to enhance cooperation in cybercrime investigations on 17 January 2025 in Washington, D.C.
- ❖ Ambassador of India Shri Vinay Kwatra and Ms. Kristie Canegallo, the Acting United States Deputy Secretary of Homeland Security (DHS), signed the MoU with the United States.

Key Points:-

- ❖ From India, the Indian Cybercrime Coordination Centre (I4C), Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) is responsible for the execution of the MoU. From the US side, it is the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), and its constituent agencies the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), and the Homeland Security Investigations Cyber Crimes Center (C3).
- ❖ The MoU allows the respective agencies of the two countries to step up the level of cooperation and training concerning the use of cyber threat intelligence and digital forensics in criminal investigations.
- ❖ Cybercrime has intricate linkages with the common security challenges faced by India and the US, such as terrorism and violent extremism, terror financing, drug trafficking, organized crime, human trafficking, illegal migration, money laundering, and transportation security.

- ❖ The MoU on Cybercrime Investigations will enable further strengthening of India-US security cooperation, as part of our comprehensive and global strategic partnership.

About United States:-

- ❖ Capital:- Washington, D.C.
- ❖ Currency:- U.S. dollar

National

Mines Ministry to Host 3rd National Mines Ministers' Conference at Konark, Odisha

About News:-

- ❖ The Ministry of Mines, in collaboration with the Government of Odisha, is hosting the 3rd National Mines Ministers' Conference on January 20-21, 2025, at Konark.
- ❖ The two-day event aligns with the vision of "Viksit Bharat 2047" and will bring together more than 16 State Mining Ministers along with senior officials from the Central and Odisha Governments.
- ❖ The conference will be presided over by Union Minister for Coal and Mines, Shri G. Kishan Reddy, with Chief Minister of Odisha, Shri Mohan Charan Majhi gracing the inaugural session as the Chief Guest.



Key Highlights of the Conference

- ❖ **Release of the Report on States' Best Practices in Mining:** Showcasing innovative governance models implemented by states, the report aims to improve efficiency and transparency in mining practices.
- ❖ **Launch of the Mining Tenement System (MTS) Module:** A landmark step towards digital governance, this module will streamline mining operations and enhance accountability.

- ❖ **Handing Over of Sanction Letters to Startups:** Selected startups will receive sanction letters under initiatives promoting innovation in sustainable mining practices.
- ❖ **Handing Over of Geological Memoranda (GMs) and Geological Reports (GRs):** Comprehensive data will be provided to the Ministry of Mines and states, boosting exploration activities.
- ❖ **Transfer of Critical Mineral Block GRs by Chhattisgarh:** GRs of critical mineral blocks will be handed over to the Ministry of Mines, supporting India's self-reliance in critical minerals.
- ❖ **Awards to the Best-Performing States:** States excelling in mineral auctions and mining reforms will be honoured for their outstanding contributions.
- ❖ **Launch of the 5th Tranche of Critical Mineral Blocks:** The launch aims to accelerate exploration and attract private sector investment in critical minerals, reducing import dependency.

About Odisha:-

- ❖ Capital:- Bhubaneswar
- ❖ Governor:- Kambhampati Hari Babu
- ❖ Chief minister:- Mohan Charan Majhi (BJP)

State

Odisha & Singapore sign MoU to establish FinTech hub in Bhubaneswar

About News:-



- ❖ The Odisha Electronics and IT Department and Singapore's GFTN signed an MoU to establish a Global Competency Centre in Bhubaneswar, focusing on FinTech collaboration, InsureTech, and sustainability. The agreement, signed during Singapore President Tharman Shanmugaratnam's visit to Odisha, commemorates 60 years of India-Singapore diplomatic ties in 2025.

Key Points:-

- ❖ Commenting on the MoU, Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi said, Odisha aims to leverage GFTN's global expertise and resources to drive innovation and create tailored Fintech solutions in the state.
- ❖ The MoU aims to support India's national vision of "Insurance for All" by 2047, where every citizen will have appropriate life, health, and property insurance coverage.
- ❖ States like Odisha are taking strides in implementing the new policy to ensure the regulatory architecture is aligned with the market dynamics and innovation is turbocharged while mainstreaming technology for financial inclusion.
- ❖ Notably, eight MoUs were exchanged between Odisha and various Singaporean entities on Friday to strengthen collaboration in key sectors in the presence of Singapore President Tharman Shanmugaratnam.
- ❖ Earlier, Singapore President Tharman visited the World Skill Center in Bhubaneswar, marking a significant milestone in the growing partnership between Singapore and the State of Odisha.
- ❖ The President was welcomed by CM Majhi. The Chief Minister expressed enthusiasm for the deepening ties, stating, "There is tremendous potential for collaboration between Singapore and Odisha."
- ❖ A detailed briefing was presented by Manoj Ahuja, Chief Secretary of Odisha, covering key themes such as skill development, industrial parks, master planning, ports and Paradip, renewable energy, semiconductors, information technology, data centres, culture, and connectivity.

About Singapore:-

- ❖ Capital:- Singapore city
- ❖ Currency:- Singapore dollar
- ❖ President:- Tharman Shanmugaratnam
- ❖ Prime Minister:- Lawrence Wong

Maharashtra

Maharashtra govt announces names of 36 guardian ministers

About News:-



- ❖ Over a month after ministers took oath, the Maharashtra govt on Saturday announced guardian ministers for all 36 districts across the state.
- ❖ Political observers said it was the first time the state govt appointed joint guardian ministers, especially when there are 42 ministers in the state council of ministers.
- ❖ Guardian ministers control the District Planning and Development Council (DPDC) funds, which are used for development and beautification projects. They also preside over events like Independence Day and Republic Day.

Full List of Maharashtra Guardian Ministers:-

- 1) Gadchiroli - Devendra Fadnavis
- 2) Thane - Eknath Shinde
- 3) Mumbai City - Eknath Shinde
- 4) Pune - Ajit Pawar
- 5) Beed - Ajit Pawar
- 6) Nagpur - Chandrashekhar Bawankule
- 7) Amravati Chandrashekhar Bawankule
- 8) Ahmednagar - Radhakrishna Vikhe Patil
- 9) Washim - Hasan Mushrif
- 10) Sangli - Chandrakant Patil
- 11) Nashik - Girish Mahajan
- 12) Palghar - Ganesh Naik
- 13) Jalgaon - Gulabrao Patil
- 14) Yavatmal - Sanjay Rathod
- 15) Mumbai Suburban - Ashish Shelar and Co-Guardian Minister - Mangalprabhat Lodha

- 16) Ratnagiri - Uday Samant
- 17) Dhule - Jaykumar Rawal
- 18) Jalna - Pankaja Munde
- 19) Nanded - Atul Save
- 20) Chandrapur - Ashok Uike
- 21) Satara - Shambhuraj Desai
- 22) Raigad - Aditi Tatkare
- 23) Latur - Shivendraraje Bhosale
- 24) Nandurbar - Manikrao Kokate
- 25) Solapur - Jaykumar Gore
- 26) Hingoli - Narhari Jirwal
- 27) Bhandara - Sanjay Savkare
- 28) Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar - Sanjay Shirsat
- 29) Dharashiv - Pratap Sarnaik
- 30) Buldhana - Makarand Jadhav
- 31) Sindhudurg - Nitesh Rane
- 32) Akola - Akash Fundkar
- 33) Gondia - Babasaheb Patil
- 34) Kolhapur - Prakash Abitkar and the joint guardian minister - Madhuri Misal
- 35) Wardha - Pankaj Bhoyar
- 36) Parbhani - Meghna Bordikar

Economic

Cabinet approves Revival plan for Rashtriya Ispat Nigam Ltd (RINL) at a total cost of Rs 11,440 crores

About News:-



- ❖ The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA), chaired by Hon. Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, has approved the revival plan for RINL for a total of Rs 11,440 crores.

- ❖ The infusion includes ₹10,300 crore as equity capital into Rashtriya Ispat Nigam Ltd. (RINL) and Conversion of ₹1140 crore working capital loan as 7% Non-cumulative Preference Share Capital redeemable after 10 years to keep RINL as a going concern.

Key Points:-

- ❖ RINL is a Schedule-A CPSE under the administrative control of the Ministry of Steel with 100% ownership of the Government of India.
- ❖ RINL operates the Visakhapatnam Steel Plant (VSP), the only offshore steel plant under the Government sector in the state of Andhra Pradesh. It has an installed capacity of 7.3 Mtpa of liquid steel.
- ❖ The financial condition of RINL is critical (as on 31.03.2024, the net worth of RINL was ₹(-)4538.00 crore, current assets were ₹7,686.24 and current liabilities were ₹26,114.92 crores).
- ❖ RINL has exhausted the sanctioned borrowing limits from banks for working capital and was not in a position to get further loans from Banks. RINL also defaulted on the Capex Loan repayments and Interest payments in June 2024.
- ❖ The equity infusion of ₹10,300 crore into RINL will help it overcome the operational problems related to raising working capital and start Blast furnace operations most productively.
- ❖ This would allow the company to gradually reach its full production capacity which is critical and is in the national interest to have stability in the Indian steel market by augmenting steel production and also save the livelihoods of employees (regular and contractual) and those dependent on the operations of the steel plant.
- ❖ The revival plan envisages that RINL will start full production with two blast furnaces in January 2025 and with three blast furnaces in August 2025.
- ❖ Steel production is a core sector of the economy and is one of the indicators of economic development of any country.

- ❖ The revival and continued operation of VSP at its full capacity will ensure efficient utilization of public resources and help in achieving the objectives of National Steel Policy, 2017.

About Rashtriya Ispat Nigam Ltd

- ❖ Founded:- 18 February 1982
- ❖ Headquarters:- Visakhapatnam, India
- ❖ Chairman & MD:- Ajit Kumar Saxena

Science & Technology

Pixxel launches India's first private satellite constellation for earth imaging

About News:-

- ❖ Google-backed Indian space tech startup Pixxel has successfully launched three of its six hyperspectral imaging satellites, marking a significant milestone for both the company and the country's growing private space sector.
- ❖ The satellites which are a part of the Firefly constellation have been launched on a SpaceX rocket from California.
- ❖ The launch took place at 1915 GMT (just after midnight in India) from the Vandenberg Space Force Base.

Why are these satellites are 'different'

- ❖ The satellites, called Fireflies, are currently the world's highest-resolution commercial-grade hyperspectral satellites.
- ❖ They bring precision to monitor the planet and set "a new benchmark for hyperspectral imaging capabilities."
- ❖ The satellites have a 5-meter resolution attained for the first time in a hyperspectral spacecraft making Fireflies six times sharper than the 30-meter standard of most existing hyperspectral satellites.



- ❖ This allows them to capture fine details that are said to be previously invisible to conventional systems, the company says.

What will these satellites do?

- ❖ Pixxel, a five-year-old startup backed by Google, leverages hyperspectral imaging technology (relating to the measurement of light across a wide range of wavelengths for each pixel in an image) to capture highly detailed data across hundreds of light bands.
- ❖ This advanced technology has numerous applications across various sectors, including agriculture, mining, environmental monitoring, and defense.
- ❖ By analyzing this data, industries can gain valuable insights, such as optimising crop yields in the agricultural sector, tracking resources effectively, and monitoring environmental concerns like oil spills. with greater precision.

Pixxel to expand Firefly constellation

- ❖ Pixxel plans to expand its constellation, adding 18 more satellites to the six already launched.
- ❖ The company has already secured approximately 65 clients, including major players like Rio Tinto, British Petroleum, and the Indian Ministry of Agriculture, with some clients already paying for data from its demonstration satellites.
- ❖ Apart from Google which was a part of a \$36 million round of funding in the Bengaluru-based spacetechnology startup in 2023, companies like Accenture and Canada's Radical Ventures, have also invested in Pixxel.
- ❖ Google CEO Sundar Pichai said at the Google For India 2022 annual event that the company will invest \$300 million in homegrown startups.

Defence

Indian Naval Ship Mumbai To Participate In Multi-National Exercise La Perouse

About News:-

- ❖ The indigenously designed and built guided missile destroyer INS Mumbai is participating in the fourth edition of the Multinational Exercise LA PEROUSE.



- ❖ This edition will witness the participation of personnel/surface and sub-surface assets from various maritime partners including the Royal Australian Navy, French Navy, Royal Navy, United States Navy, Indonesian Navy, Royal Malaysian Navy, Republic of Singapore Navy, and Royal Canadian Navy.

Key Points:-

- ❖ The exercise aims to develop common Maritime Situational Awareness by enhancing the cooperation in the field of maritime surveillance, maritime interdiction operations, and air operations along with the conduct of progressive training and information sharing.
- ❖ The exercise provides an opportunity for like-minded navies to develop closer links in planning, coordination, and information sharing for enhanced tactical interoperability.
- ❖ The exercise will witness complex and advanced multi-domain exercises including surface warfare, anti-air warfare, air defense, cross-deck landings, and tactical manoeuvres, as also the constabulary missions such as VBSS (Visit, Board, Search and Seizure) operations.
- ❖ Participation of the Indian Navy in the exercise showcases the high levels of synergy, coordination, and interoperability between the like-minded navies and their commitment to a rules-based international order in the maritime domain.
- ❖ This visit aligns with India's vision of SAGAR (Security and Growth for All in the Region) to enhance maritime cooperation and collaboration for a safer and secure Indo-Pacific Region.

Miscellaneous

National Science Drama Festival 2024 -25 is Set to Unfold at The National Science Centre, Delhi on 18th January 2025

About News:-



- ❖ One of the premier events of the National Council of Science Museums (NCSM), the National Science Drama Festival 2024-25 is set to unfold at the National Science Centre, Delhi on 18th January 2025.
- ❖ The Chief Guest of the ceremony shall be Shri Chitranjjan Tripathi, Eminent Film & Theatre Actor and Director, National School of Drama, New Delhi.

Key Points:-

- ❖ The event is earlier organised at the Block, District, and State/UT level in all 28 States and 8 Union Territories of India in which more than 40,000 students actively participate and showcase creative science dramas, in an entertaining and educational format, covering topics from Artificial Intelligence, Climate Changes, and Water Conservation to medical breakthroughs.
- ❖ It is a well-known fact that integrating science into various subjects through engaging activities promotes cross-curricular learning.
- ❖ The intersection of science and literature shapes thinking, while science communication through diverse media cultivates a scientific mindset, countering misinformation and superstition, and fostering informed citizens in today's world."

- ❖ It is in respect of the above fact; that the National Council of Science Museums (NCSM) has embraced innovative tools, with drama being a notable one.
- ❖ Through collaborations with theatre professionals, this medium has successfully conveyed the essence of science, engaging audiences in dynamic and interactive ways.
- ❖ It is therefore expected that, like previous editions, this year's festival will witness enthusiastic participation, vibrant performances, and compelling plays by talented young students.

Important Day

Penguin Awareness Day - 20 January

About Day:-

- ❖ Penguin Awareness Day 2025, celebrated annually on **20 January**, is dedicated to raising awareness about the unique and fascinating world of penguins.
- ❖ These flightless birds, known for their adorable waddle and resilience, are a crucial part of our ecosystem.
- ❖ Penguin Awareness Day 2025 is an opportunity to learn about their habitat, challenges, and how we can protect these remarkable creatures.



History of Penguin Awareness Day

- ❖ Penguin Awareness Day was established to promote global recognition of these remarkable birds and their importance in maintaining ecological balance.

- ❖ While the exact origins of this day remain unclear, it has become a significant date for conservationists and animal lovers worldwide.
- ❖ Penguins have existed for millions of years, with fossil records tracing their history back to the Paleocene period.

- ❖ From being symbols of climate change awareness to cultural icons in films and literature, penguins hold a special place in our hearts and minds.

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**MPSC
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