

International

Lebanon elects Joseph Aoun as president after two-year vacancy

About News:-



- ❖ Lebanon's parliament elected Army Chief Joseph Aoun as the country's new president on Thursday, ending a prolonged political deadlock and presidential vacancy.
- ❖ Aoun was elected after two rounds of voting, following extensive efforts by the United States and Saudi Arabia to garner support for him. Both countries have close ties with Aoun, which is aligned with Washington and Riyadh.

Key Points:-

- ❖ After his election, Aoun stepped down from his military role and arrived at the parliament in civilian attire to be sworn in.
- ❖ Notably, Hezbollah, the most heavily armed militant group in the Middle East, had significant influence in several countries until it suffered heavy losses in a recent war with Israel. This conflict, along with the weakening of its ally, Syrian President Bashar al-Assad, has reignited domestic debate on disarming the group.
- ❖ The US-brokered ceasefire agreement signed in November further weakened Hezbollah's position by stipulating its withdrawal from the border area with Israel, and Israeli forces are required to leave Lebanese territory by the end of January.
- ❖ Although Lebanon's army did not engage directly in the war with Israel, it played a crucial role in implementing the ceasefire terms.

- ❖ Lebanon had been without a president since October 2022, when former President Michel Aoun, backed by Hezbollah, completed his term. Efforts to elect a new president had failed 12 times over the past two years, deepening the divide between Lebanon's pro-Western and pro-Iran factions.
- ❖ In the second round of voting, Aoun won 99 votes out of 128. Hezbollah's parliamentary bloc supported his election in the second round to foster national unity but withheld their votes in the first round as a statement of their stance on sovereignty.

About Lebanon

- ❖ Capital: Beirut
- ❖ Currency: Lebanese Pound
- ❖ President: Joseph Aoun

National

Anji Khad Bridge, India's First Cable-Stayed Rail Bridge Ready in J&K

About News:-

- ❖ The Anji Khad Bridge is India's first cable-stayed rail bridge. It's one of the remarkable engineering feats of Indian Railways in Jammu and Kashmir.
- ❖ It is a part of the Udhampur-Srinagar-Baramulla Railway Link (USBRL) project.
- ❖ The bridge promises to add connectivity to the Kashmir Valley and this recent trial run brings the project closer to completion.



A look at some of the main factors about this bridge:

- ❖ An engineering marvel: Being India's first cable-stayed rail bridge, the Anji Khad Bridge is a true engineering marvel.

- ❖ The pylon rises 331 m above the riverbed which makes for an advanced infrastructure.
- ❖ Spanning 473.25 m, the bridge is supported by 48 cables that provide stability and strength to the structure, making it a standout in modern engineering.
- ❖ Part of the Udhampur-Srinagar-Baramulla Railway Link (USBRL) Project: The Anji Khad Bridge is a prime part of the Udhampur-Srinagar-Baramulla Railway Link project.
- ❖ The project's prime focus is on enhancing connectivity between the Kashmir Valley and the rest of India.
- ❖ Advanced Monitoring System: The bridge incorporates an advanced integrated monitoring system
- ❖ Having numerous sensors. These sensors help track the structural health and performance of the bridge over time. The monitoring system is prime to ensure the long-term safety and durability of the bridge, especially considering the region's seismic activity.
- ❖ Earthquake safety measures: Because this place is at seismic risk, IIT Roorkee conducted detailed
- ❖ Studies on site-specific earthquake parameters for the bridge. As part of the bridge's design, a large number of sensors were installed to monitor its behavior during earthquakes. This measure will make sure that the bridge can manage natural disasters while maintaining safe operations in the future.
- ❖ The Anji Khad Bridge is a groundbreaking achievement in India's infrastructure development and promises to be a key driver of connectivity and progress for Jammu and Kashmir.

Appointment

Signature Global names Sanjeev Kumar Sharma as its chief financial officer

About News:-

- ❖ Realty firm Signature Global Ltd announced on Tuesday the appointment of Sanjeev Kumar Sharma as its chief financial officer (CFO).



Key Points:-

- ❖ Sanjeev Kumar Sharma, a Chartered Accountant since 1997, brings nearly 30 years of expertise in financial planning and analysis (FP&A), mergers and acquisitions (M&A), investor relations, financing, reporting, taxation, and strategic decision-making.
- ❖ He has extensive experience across diverse sectors, including real estate, asset management, oil and gas, manufacturing, and banking.
- ❖ Over his career, he has worked with prominent organizations such as Brookfield Properties, Blackstone, BPTP, M3M India, Apollo Tyres, JK Paper, and ICICI Bank.

Defence

Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders delivers 6th Scorpene Submarine 'VAGHSHEER' to Indian Navy



About News:-

- ❖ Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders has delivered the Sixth Scorpene Submarine 'VAGHSHEER' of Project P-75 on 09 January 2025 to the Indian Navy, subsequently to be commissioned into the Indian Navy as INS Vaghsheer.
- ❖ Vaghsheer was launched on 20 April 2022 and has undergone a series of comprehensive and rigorous set of tests and trials, for more than a year, to ensure delivery of a fully Combat Worthy Submarine, capable of operation in all modes and regimes of deployment.

- ❖ The Vaghsheer boasts advanced stealth technologies, including reduced radiated noise levels and sophisticated hydrodynamic design, making it one of the quietest submarines in the world. Its combat capabilities include the use of precision-guided weapons such as torpedoes and tube-launched anti-ship missiles, further solidifying its role in both offensive and defensive naval operations. It is designed for a wide range of missions, from anti-submarine warfare to intelligence gathering, and is fully capable of operating in diverse maritime environments.

About the Shipyard

- ❖ The shipyard has already modernized its infrastructure to meet the growing demands of India's maritime defence requirements. MDL now boasts the capability to construct up to 10 capital warships and 11 submarines simultaneously, a testament to its expanding role in India's defence sector.
- ❖ As India continues to strengthen its naval forces, the successful delivery of INS Vaghsheer serves as both a landmark achievement and a foundation for future submarine projects that will further bolster India's strategic defence posture.

Award

Pravasi Bharatiya Samman Awards-2025

About News:-

- ❖ The Pravasi Bharatiya Samman Award (PBSA), the highest honor conferred on overseas Indians, will be presented at the 18th Pravasi Bharatiya Divas (PBD) Convention. This prestigious award recognizes the outstanding contributions of Non-Resident Indians (NRIs), Persons of Indian Origin (PIOs), and organizations or institutions established by them. The awards celebrate their achievements both in India and abroad.
- ❖ The 2025 Pravasi Bharatiya Divas Convention will be held from January 8 to January 10 in Bhubaneswar, Odisha. The awards will be presented during the Valedictory Session by the Honorable President of India.

- ❖ A Jury-cum-Awards Committee, chaired by the Vice-President of India and comprising the External Affairs Minister as Vice-Chair along with other distinguished members, reviewed the nominations. The committee unanimously selected the awardees, who represent excellence in fields such as community service, education, science, medicine, business, and public affairs.



The following are the recipients of the Pravasi Bharatiya Samman Awards 2025:

- 1) Prof. Ajay Rane, Australia – Community Service
- 2) Dr. Marialena Joan Fernandes, Austria – Education
- 3) Dr. Philomena Ann Mohini Harris, Barbados – Medical Science
- 4) Swami Sanyuktanand, Fiji – Community Service
- 5) Saraswati Vidya Niketan, Guyana – Community Service
- 6) Dr. Lekh Raj Juneja, Japan – Science & Technology
- 7) Dr. Prem Kumar, Kyrgyz Republic – Medical Science
- 8) Soukthavy Chowdhury, Laos – Business
- 9) Krishna Savjani, Malawi – Business
- 10) 'Tan Sri' Dr. Subramaniam K.V. Sathasivam, Malaysia – Politics
- 11) Dr. Sarita Boodhoo, Mauritius – Community Service
- 12) Mr. Abhaya Kumar, Moldova – Business
- 13) Dr. Ram Niwas @ Hla Tun, Myanmar – Education
- 14) Jaggannath Shekhar Asthana, Romania – Business
- 15) Hindustani Samaj, Russia – Community Service
- 16) Sudha Rani Gupta, Russia – Education
- 17) Dr. Syed Anwar Khursheed, Saudi Arabia – Medical Science
- 18) Atul Arvind Temurnikar, Singapore – Education

- 19) Robert Masih Nahar, Spain – Community Service
- 20) Dr. Kaushik Laxmidas Ramaiya, Tanzania – Medicine
- 21) H.E. Christine Carla Kangaloo ORTT, Trinidad & Tobago – Public Affairs
- 22) Ramakrishnan Sivaswamy Iyer, UAE – Business
- 23) Bonthala Subbaiah Setty Ramesh Babu, Uganda – Community Service
- 24) Baroness Usha Kumari Prashar, UK – Politics
- 25) Dr. Sharad Lakhanpal, USA – Medicine
- 26) Dr. Sharmila Ford, USA – Community Service
- 27) Ravi Kumar S., USA – Business (IT & Consulting)

The Pravasi Bharatiya Divas Convention aims to foster stronger ties between India and its global diaspora.

Sport

New Zealand batter Martin Guptill announced retirement from international cricket

About News:-

- ❖ New Zealand batter Martin Guptill on Wednesday announced his retirement from international cricket. The Kiwi player last played for New Zealand in October 2022.
- ❖ The 38-year-old will continue to take part in T20 leagues around the world.



Key Points:-

- ❖ Currently, Guptill is taking part in the ongoing Super Smash, New Zealand's domestic T20 competition. He also signed up for the Pakistan Super League (PSL) draft, where Islamabad United will have the option to retain the Kiwi batter.
- ❖ Guptill had taken part in 198 ODIs, where he scored 7346 runs. Only Ross Taylor (8607) and Stephen Fleming (8007) have scored more in the 50-over format for the Black Caps after Guptill. He is considered as a legend in the white ball cricket.

- ❖ In a New Zealand Cricket (NZC) statement, Guptill said that he will always cherish the memories. Meanwhile, in T20 format Guptill is the highest run scorer for the Black Caps, with 3531 runs from 122 games at a strike rate of 135.70. He also had an average of 31.81.
- ❖ The 38-year-old also represented New Zealand in 47 Test matches from 2009 to 2016, scoring 2586 runs at an average of 29.38, while wearing the silver fern.

Miscellaneous

West Asia's Largest Plastics Exhibition Spotlights India's Green Manufacturing Push

About News:-

- ❖ The 17th edition of ArabPlast, West Asia's premier trade exhibition for plastics and petrochemicals, opened in Dubai with India emerging as a key player in sustainable manufacturing solutions. The three-day event has attracted over 750 exhibitors across 12 international pavilions, showcasing innovations in plastics, recycling, petrochemicals, packaging, and rubber industries.

Key Points:-

- ❖ India's delegation, comprising 125 companies led by the Plastic Export Promotion Council of India (PLEXCONCIL), marks a 70% increase from the previous edition, underscoring the country's expanding role in the global plastics sector. This robust participation aligns with India's intensified focus on sustainable practices and circular economy initiatives, bolstered by stringent Plastic Waste Management Rules and restrictions on single-use plastics.



- ❖ In 2023, the West Asian region imported plastics worth \$30 billion, of which India accounted for just \$1.5 billion. The UAE, as India's third-largest plastics export destination, serves as a strategic hub, offering advanced logistics infrastructure for seamless access to European and African markets.
- ❖ This year's ArabPlast places a strong emphasis on environmental sustainability, with Indian companies showcasing innovative solutions in biodegradable plastics and advanced recycling technologies. The event also highlights the significance of the GCC petrochemical sector, which generates over \$100 billion in annual revenues.
- ❖ The Indian Pavilion was inaugurated by Satish Kumar Sivan, Consul General of India to Dubai and the Northern Emirates, underscoring the country's commitment to global collaboration in sustainable manufacturing.
- ❖ ArabPlast 2025 continues through January 9, solidifying Dubai's status as a global hub for industrial innovation and sustainable development. The exhibition serves as a platform for stakeholders to explore new technologies, forge partnerships, and advance environmentally responsible manufacturing practices in the region.

Obituary

Eminent playback singer P Jayachandran dies at 80

About News:-

- ❖ Renowned playback singer P Jayachandran, affectionately called 'Bhava Gayakan' for his soulful renditions that beautifully expressed emotions such as love, longing, and devotion, died in Thrissur on Thursday. He was 80.



Key Points:-

- ❖ The singer recorded over 16,000 songs in Malayalam, Tamil, Telugu, Kannada, and Hindi in a career spanning over five decades.
- ❖ Many of his songs, which came out in the 1970s and '80s, remain evergreen for generations of music lovers.
- ❖ He had won the national award for the best male playback singer in 1986. In 2020, he was conferred with the J C Daniel Award in recognition of his contributions to Malayalam cinema. He had also won state film awards in Kerala five times and two times in Tamil Nadu.
- ❖ In 1972, he got the first state award for a hit song 'Neelagiri yude' in the movie Panitheeratha Veedu. He created a wave in Tamil film music with the song 'Raasaathi unna' in the 1984 film Vaidehi Kaathirunal.

Important Day

National Human Trafficking Awareness Day - 11 January 2025

About News:-

- ❖ National Human Trafficking Awareness Day is observed annually on January 11.
- ❖ This day aims to raise awareness about human trafficking while highlighting the modern forms of slavery and advocating for the rights of victims.
- ❖ Traffickers often lure individuals with deceptive promises. According to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), approximately 225,000 people fall victim to trafficking worldwide.
- ❖ The theme for National Human Trafficking Awareness Day 2025 is "Connecting the Dots. Strengthening Communities, Preventing Trafficking."



History of National Human Trafficking Awareness Day

- ❖ National Human Trafficking Awareness Day was designated to coincide with the passage of the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000, a significant piece of legislation in the United States aimed at preventing and combating human trafficking.

- ❖ It serves as a reminder of the ongoing efforts to address this global issue.

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