

International

India and Maldives sign MoU to introduce UPI in island nation



About News:-

- ❖ During the visit of External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar, India and the Maldives decided to fortify their bilateral relations by signing two memorandums of understanding (MoU). From August 9 to August 11, 2024, Dr. S. Jaishankar traveled to the Maldives for a three-day visit.
- ❖ The first Indian minister to visit the Maldives since the government of Mohamed Muizzu took office in November 2023 was Dr. Jaishankar.
- ❖ President Muizzu's pro-China stance and his affiliation with the India Out movement in the Maldives caused tensions in relations between India and the Maldives.

Key Points :-

- ❖ Dr. Jaishankar visited Maldivian Foreign Minister Moosa Zameer and President Dr. Mohamed Muizzu during his official visit to the country.
- ❖ Additionally, he had a meeting with the president of the Maldivian Democratic Party (MDP), Abdulla Shahid, and his entourage.
- ❖ In line with President Dr. Mohamed Muizzu's 5 Million Tree Project and Prime Minister Narendra Modi's "Ek Ped Maa ke Naam" initiative, Dr. Jaishankar, Environment Minister Thoriq Ibrahim, and Foreign Minister Moosa Zameer of the Maldives planted a tree at Male's Lonuziyaaraiy Park.
- ❖ Two Memorandums of Understanding were signed between the two nations during Dr. Jaishankar's visit.
- ❖ Over the years 2024–2029, India will train one thousand civil servants from the Maldives.

- ❖ The Maldives will adopt the Unified Payment Interface (UPI), an Indian payment system.
- ❖ Jaishankar launched the Maldives project with assistance from India
- ❖ The Indian-funded project to build a water and sewage network over 28 islands in the Maldives was jointly inaugurated by Maldivian Foreign Minister Moosa Zameer and Dr. S. Jayashankar in the presence of President Muizzu.
- ❖ He also officially opened the Addu Reclamation and Shore Protection Project and the Addu Detour Link Bridge Project, both of which are sponsored by Indians.
- ❖ Additionally, he went to the location of the Greater Male Connectivity Project (GMCP), which is funded by India and would link Male with the nearby islands of Villingili, Gulhifalhu, and Thilafushi.
- ❖ Additionally, six Indian grant-funded High-Impact Community Development Projects (HICDPs) about speech therapy, special education, mental health, and street lighting were launched.

About Maldives :-

- ❖ Capital of Maldives:- Male
- ❖ Currency:- Rufiyaa
- ❖ President:- Mohamed Muizzu

National

The government of India issues Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of 'Model Solar Village' under PM-Surya Ghar (Muft Bijli Yojana)

About News:-

- ❖ The operational rules for implementing the 'Model Solar Village' program under the 'Prime Minister (PM)-Surya Ghar: Muft Bijli Yojana' were released by the Ministry of New & Renewable Energy (MNRE) on August 9, 2024.
- ❖ One Model Solar Rural has been established in each district of India as part of the scheme component, to encourage the use of solar energy and empower rural communities to become self-sufficient in energy demands.

About the Muft Bijli Yojana and PM-Surya Ghar:-

- ❖ On February 29, 2024, the Union Cabinet, led by Prime Minister (PM) Narendra Modi, authorized the PM-Surya Ghar: Muft Bijli Yojana.
- ❖ The program, for which the Government of India (GoI) has allotted Rs 75,021 crore, would be carried out until the Financial Year 2026–2027 (FY27).
- ❖ Households will receive up to a 40% subsidy under the program to put solar panels on their roofs.
- ❖ It seeks to give one crore Indian households 300 units of free power every month.

Guidelines: -

- ❖ The Model Solar Village scheme component is covered by these guidelines.
- ❖ Budget Allocation: The MNRE has set up Rs 800 crore for the program's execution, with Rs 1 crore in central funding assistance given to each hamlet.
- ❖ Village Eligibility Requirements: A village shall be evaluated in the competition mode by the scheme parameters. A village must also have a population of at least 5,000 people (or 2,000 in special category states) and be a revenue village.
- ❖ Selection Procedure: Six months after the District Level Committee (DLC) announced the possible candidate, the villages will be chosen based on an evaluation of their total distributed Renewable Energy (RE) capacity installed.
- ❖ Every State district with the highest RE capacity will have a winning village.
- ❖ implementing Agency: Under the direction of the DLC, the Renewable Energy Development Agency (REDA) of each state or union territory (UT) will carry out the plan.
- ❖ This will guarantee that the program's chosen villages successfully make the switch to solar electricity and act as role models for other villages around the nation.

Maharashtra

Ancient Maharashtra rock art declared 'protected monument'



About News:-

Under the Maharashtra Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains Act, of 1960, the Maharashtra government recently recognized the petroglyphs and geoglyphs in Ratnagiri to be protected monuments. These prehistoric paintings, which are from the Mesolithic period, show a variety of creatures and footprints. Over 1,500 pieces of art are spread across 70 locations in Ratnagiri, some of which are tentatively listed as World Heritage sites by UNESCO.

Key Points :-

- ❖ Petroglyphs: These 20,000–10,000-year-old artifacts were discovered in Deud, Ratnagiri. They have pictures of footprints, a donkey, a rhino, a deer, and monkeys. There are 210 square meters of protected space overall.
- ❖ Geoglyphs: There are more than 1,500 geoglyphs in Ratnagiri alone, which is home to 70 locations along the 900 km Konkan coast between Maharashtra and Goa. UNESCO has tentatively listed seven of these as World Heritage sites.
- ❖ Art Forms: Two separate ancient art forms that involve images or designs made on the surface of rocks or the soil are called geoglyphs and petroglyphs. The unusual and noteworthy concentration of these artworks on laterite plateaus in Konkan is unmatched.
- ❖ UNESCO's Perspective: These rock art collections, as described by UNESCO, are exceptional outdoor displays of prehistoric human expression, featuring a variety of species that were extinct from the area centuries ago, including mammals, amphibians, reptiles, birds, fish, and marine life.
- ❖ Conservationists are worried that a proposed oil refinery in Barsu would jeopardize the region's priceless geoglyphs and do harm to these important historical artifacts.

Economic

RBI notifies approval for FPI investments in sovereign green bonds in IFSC



About News:-

Foreign Portfolio Investors (FPIs) will be able to purchase Sovereign Green Bonds (SGrB) at the International Financial Services Centre (IFSC) in Gujarat starting in the second half of the Financial Year 2024–25 (FY25), according to an announcement made by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI).

Key Points :-

- ❖ In response, the RBI modified the Forex Management (Debt Instruments) Regulations, 2024, enabling non-residents to trade SGrBs if they have securities accounts in the IFSC.
- ❖ FPIs may use money from foreign currency accounts or inward remittances to cover the cost of SGrBs. Net of any relevant taxes, the sale or maturity profits from SGrBs may be sent outside of India.
- ❖ Through green bonds, the government has raised Rs 36,000 crore between 2022 and 2023. Due to unfavorable bids, only Rs 1,697 crore of the Rs 12,000 crore objective has been raised in FY25.

Appointment

Finance Secretary Somanathan appointed Cabinet Secretary



About News:-

Rajiv Gauba, whose term expires this month, has been replaced as India's Cabinet Secretary by Senior IAS Officer T.V. Somanathan. On August 30, 2024, Somanathan will start his two-year term. Until he formally takes up the position of Cabinet Secretary, he will also work as an Officer on Special Duty (OSD) in the Cabinet Secretariat.

Key Points :-

- ❖ Previous Roles: Somanathan, an IAS official from the Tamil Nadu cadre who was born in 1987, has performed several important roles. He has been the Finance Secretary since April 2021 and the Expenditure Secretary since December 2019. In addition, he held several positions in his home country and overseas, including the Prime Minister's Office.
- ❖ In addition to being a certified Chartered Accountant (CA) and Company Secretary (CS), he has a PhD in Economics from Calcutta University and speaks five languages fluently: English, French, Hausa, Hindi, and Tamil.
- ❖ In his capacity as Finance Secretary, Somanathan was instrumental in the FY22 budget's enhancement of fiscal transparency. He has a distinguished academic background with over 80 papers and publications on economics, and he has also been active in examining the government employee pension system.
- ❖ Rajiv Gauba has held the position of Cabinet Secretary for an unprecedented five years. Three extensions were given to him throughout his tenure, the most recent one being approved in August 2023.
- ❖ Gauba's contribution to the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation Act, 2019 is acknowledged, as it resulted in the division of the state into two Union Territories.

Science & Technology

MEA and NSIL signed an MoU for grant assistance for the launch of the Munal satellite

About News:-

- ❖ To launch the Nepalese satellite Munal, the Indian Ministry of External Affairs and New Space India Limited (NSIL) has inked a memorandum of understanding (MoU). As per the Memorandum of Understanding, NSIL will get funding from the Ministry of External Affairs to launch the satellite.
- ❖ Anurag Srivastava, Joint Secretary (North) of the ministry, and Arunachalam A., Director of NSIL in New Delhi, signed the Memorandum of Understanding.

- ❖ An agreement for the launch of the Munal satellite was signed by the NSIL and the Nepal Academy of Science and Technology (NAST) during the visit of Indian External Affairs Minister S. Jaishanker to Nepal in January 2024.

About Munal Satellite:-

- ❖ Under the auspices of the Nepal Academy of Science and Technology (NAST), a group of Nepalese students have created the Munal satellite. The Nepali government established the NAST, an independent organization, to advance science and technology in the nation.
- ❖ Antarikhya Pratishan Nepal (APN), a Nepalese space business, has helped Nepalese students with the Munal satellite's design and construction.
- ❖ The goal of the Munal satellite is to compile a database of the Earth's surface vegetation density.
- ❖ The Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV) of NSIL will launch the satellite.

About New Space India Limited (NSIL):-

- ❖ Established:- 6 March 2019
- ❖ Headquarters:- Bengaluru, Karnataka
- ❖ Chairman and Managing Director (CMD):- Radhakrishnan Durairaj

Defence

Indian Navy approves Mazagon Dock to build 6 submarines with German collaboration



About News:-

- ❖ Under the 'Project 75 India (P751)' initiative, the Indian Navy (IN) has given Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Limited (MDL) permission to build six cutting-edge submarines in collaboration with ThyssenKrupp Marine Systems (TKMS) of Germany.
- ❖ With an estimated cost of Rs 60,000 crore, the project is essential to bolstering India's naval power in the Indian Ocean, especially in light of China's and Pakistan's increasing influence.

Key Points:-

- ❖ The decision to use MDL came after successful testing of submarines fitted with Air Independent Propulsion (AIP) systems, which allowed the subs to stay underwater for up to two weeks in order to recharge their batteries.
- ❖ For this contract, MDL and TKMS faced off against Navantia and Larsen & Toubro.
- ❖ With AIP technology, diesel-electric submarines will have more endurance and capabilities than earlier generations.
- ❖ In addition, the government has launched Project 76, a joint venture between IN and the Defence Research and Development Organization (DRDO) that aims to construct six conventional submarines with a fully indigenous design.

About Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Limited (MDL):-

- ❖ Headquarters:- Mumbai, Maharashtra
- ❖ Chairman & Managing Director (CMD):- Sanjeev Singhal

Miscellaneous

PM Modi releases 109 climate-friendly and high-yielding crop varieties



About News:-

- ❖ Prime Minister (PM) Narendra Modi unveiled 109 new cultivars of 61 crops on August 11, 2024, at the ICAR-Indian Agricultural Research Institute (IARI), Pusa, New Delhi, Delhi. The ICAR developed the cultivars.
- ❖ Of the 61 crops, 34 are field crops and 27 are horticulture. These are the high-yielding, climate-robust, and biofortified types.

Key Points :-

- ❖ Present at the ceremony were Dr. Himanshu Pathak, Secretary of the Department of Agricultural Research and Education (DARE), Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare (MoA&FW), Director-General (DG)

of ICAR, and Ministers of State (MoS) Bhagirath Choudhary and Ram Nath Thakur.

- ❖ These types have a high nutritional content and are climate-adaptable.
- ❖ The introduction of these crops is intended to improve India's food security, increase agricultural diversity, and fulfill the country's nutritional needs.
- ❖ Cereals, millets, pulses, oilseeds, fiber, forage, fruits, vegetables, flowers, spices, medicinal plants, and other crops are all included in the new variety.

Important Crop Types:-

- ❖ A millet variety called "Pooja 1801" has a remarkable iron and zinc concentration. In collaboration with the Ministry of Ayurveda, Yoga and Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha, and Homoeopathy (AYUSH), this could fight child malnutrition.
- ❖ A millet cultivar called Pusa 2002 grows in about 70 days, while most other kinds take 110 days. Climate resilience is aided by this.
- ❖ Girnar 6' is a groundnut variety with a lot of oil.
- ❖ The "Nandyal 1267" variety of chickpeas is appropriate for mechanical harvesting.
- ❖ Improving the timely harvesting and safe storage of pulses is essential to raising the profitability and productivity of farmers.

Obituary

Former External Affairs Minister Natwar Singh passes away at 93



About News:-

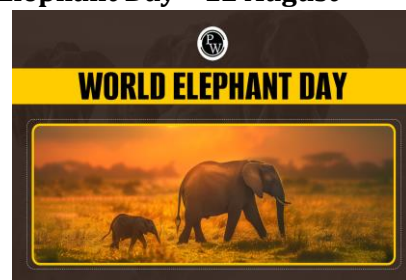
- ❖ Awarded Padma Bhushan Former External Affairs Minister and diplomat Kunwar Natwar Singh passed dead in Gurugram, Haryana, at the age of 93. He was born in Bharatpur, Rajasthan, in 1929.
- ❖ The Government of India (GoI) bestowed upon him the title of Padma Bhushan (Civil Service) in 1984.

Concerning Kunwar Natwar Singh:-

- ❖ The Indian Foreign Service (IFS) was joined by Kunwar Natwar Singh in 1953.
- ❖ He has held several appointments, including those of High Commissioner to Zambia in 1977 and Deputy High Commissioner to the United Kingdom (UK) for India from 1973 to 1977.
- ❖ From 1980 to 1982, he represented India as an ambassador to Pakistan.
- ❖ From 1982 to 1984, he worked as the Secretary of the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA). In addition, he presided over the 7th Non-aligned Movement (NAM) Summit, which took place in New Delhi, Delhi, in 1983 as Secretary-General (SG).
- ❖ Kunwar left the IFS in 1984 and became a member of the Indian National Congress (INC).
- ❖ He was chosen from Bharatpur to serve as a Member of Parliament (MP) in 1984, and he was re-elected in 1998.
- ❖ Under then-prime minister (PM) Rajiv Gandhi, he also held the position of Union Minister of State (MOS) for Steel, Mines, and Coal, as well as Agriculture, from 1985 to 1989.
- ❖ In 2002, he was elected (indirectly) from Rajasthan to the Rajya Sabha. Under the direction of then-prime minister Manmohan Singh, he held the position of External Affairs Minister (EAM) from 2004 to 2005.
- ❖ He left the position in 2006 as a result of the accusations surrounding the oil-for-food scheme.

Important Day

World Elephant Day - 12 August



About Day:-

- ❖ Elephants are crucial to maintaining ecological balance and biodiversity as keystone species. World Elephant Day 2024,

observed on August 12th, is a global event dedicated to raising awareness about the urgent need to protect and conserve elephants worldwide.

- ❖ World Elephant Day highlights the challenges faced by these magnificent creatures and promotes initiatives that ensure their long-term survival in their natural habitats. As we approach World Elephant Day 2024, it is crucial to understand its history, significance, and the ongoing conservation efforts in India.
- ❖ The official theme for World Elephant Day 2024 is 'Personifying prehistoric beauty, theological relevance, and environmental importance'.

History:-

- ❖ World Elephant Day was first celebrated in 2012, initiated by the Elephant Reintroduction Foundation and Canadian filmmaker Patricia Sims. The goal was to draw attention to the challenges faced by these magnificent animals among people and cultures worldwide.
- ❖ Since then, World Elephant Day has become an annual event, bringing together individuals, organizations, and governments globally to protect and preserve elephants for future generations.

Elephant Population in India:-

- ❖ More than 60% of the world's wild Asian elephant populations are found in India.
- ❖ There were roughly a million wild elephants in India ten years ago. Poaching is the main cause of the sharp drop and is a problem throughout Asia.
- ❖ There are four areas in India where wild elephants can be found: the northeastern states, the Himalayan foothills in the north, the forests of east-central India, and the forested Western and Eastern Ghats in the south.
- ❖ Since 2022, India has been conducting elephant censuses every five years to determine the number of wild elephants by utilizing the methodologies of direct count and dung count.

- ❖ As per the results of the 2017 census, 29,964 elephants are dispersed throughout an area of 110,000 square kilometers in India, of which 33 elephant reserves occupy 65,000 square kilometers.
- ❖ In 2010, the elephant was designated as India's National Heritage Animal.

