

Anji Khad Bridge

On 25th December 2024, the Indian Railways successfully conducted a trial run of electric engines on India's first cable-stayed rail bridge in J&K.

Key Points

- ❖ The Indian Railways conducted a trial run of an **electric engine on the Anji Khad Bridge**.
- ❖ This marks a crucial step toward the **commencement of rail services to the Kashmir Valley, expected to begin in January 2025**.

About Anji Khad Bridge

- ❖ It is **India's first cable-stayed rail bridge, situated in Jammu and Kashmir's Reasi district**.
- ❖ The Bridge is part of the ambitious **Udhampur-Srinagar-Baramulla Railway Link (USBRL) project**, designed to provide seamless rail connectivity to the Kashmir Valley.
- ❖ The Anji Khad Bridge **features a single pylon with a height of 331 meters** above the riverbed.
- ❖ It is supported by 48 lateral and central span cables, the bridge stretches 473.25 meters in total length, with a viaduct of 120 meters and a central embankment of 94.25 meters.



Ancient Stepwell

An ancient stepwell was unearthed during excavation efforts in the Laxman Ganj area of Sambhal's Chandausi in Uttar Pradesh.

Key Points

- ❖ An ancient stepwell is estimated to be between **125 and 150 years old**.
- ❖ It spans approximately 400 square meters.
- ❖ It contains two idols safely housed in separate temples.
- ❖ The stepwell's **upper floor is made of bricks, while the second and third floors are of marble**. The structure also features four rooms and a well.
- ❖ According to local sources, the stepwell was constructed during the reign of the maternal grandfather of the king of Bilari.



Committee to develop FREE-AI

The Reserve Bank has constituted an eight-member committee to develop a Framework for Responsible and Ethical Enablement of Artificial Intelligence (FREE-AI) in the Financial Sector.

Key Points

- ❖ The committee will be headed by **Dr. Pushpak Bhattacharyya**, who serves as a Professor in the Department of Computer Science and Engineering at IIT Bombay.
- ❖ The committee **will assess the current level of adoption of AI in financial services, both globally and in India**.
- ❖ The committee will also identify potential risks associated with AI, if any, and recommend an evaluation, mitigation, and monitoring framework.

PRAGATI

On 26th December, 2024, Prime Minister Narendra Modi chaired the 45th edition of PRAGATI.

Key Points

- ❖ It is an **information and communication technology-based, multimodal platform for proactive governance and timely implementation, involving the Centre and state governments.**
- ❖ During the meeting, six metro projects for urban transport and one project each related to road connectivity and thermal power were reviewed. These projects cost more than one lakh crore rupees and are spread across different states and union territories.

About PRAGATI

- ❖ It was **launched by Prime Minister of India, Shri Narendra Modi on 25 Mar, 2015.**
- ❖ It is a **unique integrating and interactive platform.**
- ❖ The platform is aimed at addressing common man's grievances, and simultaneously monitoring and reviewing important programmes and projects of the Government of India as well as projects flagged by State Governments.
- ❖ It is a three-tier system (PMO, Union Government Secretaries, and Chief Secretaries of the States).

Short News- Uttar Pradesh

- ❖ The Supreme Court directed the states of **Uttar Pradesh and Haryana to impose a complete ban on firecrackers until January 1, 2025**, aligning with Delhi's stringent year-round prohibition aimed at curbing air pollution.

- ❖ The Uttar Pradesh legislative assembly passed four bills, paving the way for the establishment of three **new private universities and foreign university campuses in the state.** This initiative is set to position Uttar Pradesh as a leading educational hub in the country. As part of this reform, **new universities such as Vidya Vishwavidyalaya (Meerut), Vivek Vishwavidyalaya (Bijnor), and Chandigarh Vishwavidyalaya (Unnao) are set to be established.**
- ❖ Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath along with Defence Minister Rajnath Singh inaugurated '**Atal Yuva Maha Kumbh**' in Lucknow to commemorate the birth centenary year of former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee.

Person In News- Obituary

Manmohan Singh

- ❖ He was an **Indian politician, economist, academician, and bureaucrat** who served as the 13th Prime Minister of India from 2004 to 2014. He died on 26th December 2024 at the age of 92.
- ❖ Born on 26th September 1932, in a village in the Punjab province of undivided India.
- ❖ He was **India's first Sikh prime minister.**
- ❖ He is the **fourth longest-serving prime minister** after Jawaharlal Nehru, Indira Gandhi and Narendra Modi.
- ❖ He also served as **finance minister under the then Prime Minister PV Narasimha Rao.**
 - ❖ He was the architect of economic reforms in 1991.



Schemes/Initiatives

Viksit Panchayat Karmayogi

- ❖ In a significant step towards strengthening grassroots governance, Union Minister of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions, Dr. Jitendra Singh launched the **'Viksit Panchayat Karmayogi'** initiative on **Good Governance Day**, celebrated to mark the 100th birth anniversary of former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee.
- ❖ The initiative aims to enhance the capacity and competence of Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) by equipping elected representatives and officials with the tools and knowledge required for effective governance and participatory planning.
- ❖ It is launched on pilot basis in Odisha, Assam, Gujarat, and Andhra Pradesh.
- ❖ The initiative leverages e-learning platforms, AI-powered chatbots, and mobile apps to bridge knowledge gaps and enhance service delivery.

Sports

Hockey India League (HIL) 2024-25

- ❖ On 28th December, the **Hockey India League (HIL) 2024-25** began at the **Birsa Munda Hockey Stadium** in **Rourkela, Odisha**.

- ❖ The men's league will be played in two phases. Phase One will run from the 28th of December to the 18th of January, with each team competing once. Phase Two will begin on January 19, 2025 where teams will be split into two pools and play against the others in their respective pools.

Important News- Worldwide

China

- ❖ China has greenlighted the construction of the **world's largest dam on the Brahmaputra River in Tibet**, with an estimated cost of USD 137 billion.
- ❖ The construction of a hydropower project on the lower reaches of the Yarlung Zangbo River, the Tibetan name for the Brahmaputra.

USA

- ❖ US President Joe Biden has **officially declared the bald eagle the national bird of the United States**.
- ❖ In 1782, the bald eagle became a central part of the Great Seal of the United States, used on official documents



Miscellaneous

- ❖ The **4th Sushasan Saptah 2024** and the **'Prashasan Gaon ki Ore'** campaign concluded on 25th December 2024.
 - The Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances coordinated both the Sushasan

Saptah and the nationwide "Prashasan Gaon ki Ore" campaign, which took place from the 19th to the 25th of December. This marks India's largest campaign focused on citizen-centric governance and the doorstep delivery of services.

- ❖ The Goods and Services Tax (GST) Council met for its **55th gathering in Jaisalmer, Rajasthan** under the chairmanship of the Union Finance & Corporate Affairs Minister.

- ❖ Salman Rushdie's, British-Indian novelist, controversial book "**The Satanic Verses**" has quietly returned to India 36 years after it was banned by the Rajiv Gandhi government.
- ❖ Union Home Minister and Minister of Cooperation Shri Amit Shah chaired a review meeting of **Bhartiya Beej Sahkari Samiti Limited (BBSSL)** in New Delhi.



UPPSC
WALLAH

