

On January 18, the Steering Committee of the Ken-Betwa Link Project (KBLP) held its third meeting in New Delhi. The Secretary of the Department of Water Resources, in the Ministry of Jal Shakti, reiterated that the KBLP was a “flagship” project of the national government and that it “is critical for the water security and socio-economic development of Bundelkhand region”. The link will be in the form of a canal that will be fed by the new Daudhan Dam on the Ken, to be built within the Panna Tiger Reserve.

The national government has said that the dam will generate 103MW of hydroelectric power. Diversion or stopping or enhancement of the flow of water into or outside wildlife sanctuaries/parks is taboo unless doing so is deemed to be necessary to improve and better manage wildlife within a sanctuary or a national park. And in the case of the Panna Tiger Reserve, the Central Empowered Committee (CEC) of the Supreme Court has found such diversion to not be necessary to improve and better manage wildlife in the park.

India has lost access to 26 out of 65 Patrolling Points (PP) in eastern Ladakh, according to one of the research papers submitted at last week’s annual police meet in Delhi, accessed by The Hindu. The “play safe” approach of the Indian Army that restricts the movement of the district administration and local people in forward areas has turned areas that were once accessible into informal “buffer” zones, the paper said.

A day after Union Sports Minister Anurag Thakur announced the setting up of a five-member Oversight Committee to investigate sexual harassment charges against Wrestling Federation of India president Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh, the wrestlers, who led the protests on Tuesday expressed disappointment over the setting up of the committee without consulting them.

Amid the running battle between the Executive and the Judiciary over judicial appointments, Union Law Minister Kiren Rijiju on Tuesday said it was a matter of “grave concern” that the Supreme Court Collegium put certain portions of sensitive reports of the Intelligence Bureau (IB) and the Research and Analysis Wing (RAW) in public domain. Intelligence agency officials, who work in a secret manner, will “think twice” in future if their reports are made public, Mr. Rijiju told presspersons.

46 percentage, the increase in toll collection through FASTag on NH fee plazas to ₹50,855 crore in 2022, the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) informed. Toll collection in 2021 was ₹34,778 crore. The average daily toll collection by FASTag in December 2022 was ₹134.44 crore. The single day highest collection of ₹144.19 crores was on December 24, 2022.

94 films screened at the International Science Film Festival of India (ISFFI), organised as a part of the India International Science Festival (IISF) at

CERN (EUROPEAN ORGANIZATION FOR NUCLEAR RESEARCH) SHORTENS LHC RUNNING PERIOD

1. Known for discovering ‘god particle’ in 2012, CERN has shortened running period of their Large Hadron Collider (LHC) to reduce its energy intake. Higgs boson or God particle is fundamental force-carrying particle of Higgs field, which is responsible for granting other particles their mass.
2. LHC, first started in 2008, is world’s largest and most powerful particle accelerator ever built that pushes protons or ions to near the speed of light. It consists of 27-kilometer ring of superconducting magnets with several accelerating structures to boost the energy of particles. 3.LHC is used to smash accelerated protons or lead ions to measure energies, directions, and velocities of these particles at four particle detectors- ATLAS, CMS, ALICE and LHCb.
4. **Purpose:** To find answers to open questions left in Standard Model of Particle Physics such as origin of mass evidences of supersymmetry, dark matter, dark energy etc. CERN has proposed to develop a Future circular collider (FCC), a successor to current LHC. FCC is next generation of higher performance particle colliders planned to have a 100 km circumference and reach 100 TeV (tera electron Volts) of collision energy.
5. CERN founded in 1954, is a Geneva-based particle physics laboratory that provide a unique range of particle accelerator facilities that enable research at forefront of human knowledge. Currently, it has 23 member states. India is an Associate Member State of CERN along with others while Japan, US, UNESCO, and EU hold observer status.

NATIONAL ASSET RECONSTRUCTION COMPANY LTD (NARCL) ACQUIRES FIRST STRESSED ASSET

1. NARCL, an Asset Reconstruction Company (ARC)/bad bank, has acquired its first stressed asset- Jaypee Infratech- from lenders. NARCL/Bad bank is a corporate structure that isolates risky assets held by banks in a separate entity. It was announced in Union Budget 2021-22. 2.NARCL will take over large value NPA accounts (over ₹500 crore) from banks with total assets to be acquired of around ₹2 lakh crore. Stressed assets will be acquired through a 15 percent upfront cash payment and 85 percent in form of security receipts (SR).
3. NARCL is incorporated under Companies Act with Public Sector Banks holding a majority stake. It is registered with RBI as an ARC under Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002.
4. **Significance of Bad Bank**-Reduce NPAs of banks, improving financial system stability and efficiency. Improve recoveries and promote competition, as NARCL allows Swiss Challenge to get the best for banks from stressed assets. Opportunities for other ARCs at MSME’s level, as NARCL reconstruct assets only where banks total exposure is more than ₹500 crore.

EMERGENCY CREDIT LINE GUARANTEE SCHEME (ECLGS) BAILED OUT 14.6 LAKH MSMEs: SBI RESEARCH REPORT

1. As per report, incentives provided by ECLGS have helped in boosting credit flow to MSMEs. Key findings-MSME loan accounts worth Rs 2.2 lakh crore improved for entire banking industry. Saved 12 percent of outstanding MSME credit from slipping into Non-Performing Asset and livelihood of nearly 6.6 crores.
2. MSME units becoming larger with several units crossing threshold of ₹250 crore turnover and turning into mid-sized corporates by new definition of MSME units. ECLGS is a special scheme to provide 100 percent guarantee coverage to banks and NBFCs to enable them to extend emergency credit facilities to Business Enterprises/MSMEs.
3. It was announced as part of Aatma Nirbhar Bharat Package with: Emergency Credit Line of upto 20% of total outstanding as on February 29, 2020. 100% Guarantee Coverage with maximum tenure of 4 years from date of disbursement and one year moratorium on principal amount. It is managed by National Credit Guarantee Trustee Company Ltd (NCGTC) under trusteeship management.
4. **Other recent steps taken**-MSME definition was changed in 2020 with introduction of a composite criteria Udyam Assist Platform, developed by SIDBI (Small Industries Development Bank of India), to bring all informal micro enterprises (IMEs) into formal ambit. It would benefit up to 5 crore IMEs.

ELECTION COMMISSION OF INDIA (ECI) HOSTS 2ND INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON THEME ‘USE OF TECHNOLOGY & ELECTRONICS INTEGRITY’

Bhopal. At the film festival 61 Indian and 33 foreign films were screened. Nine Indian movies received awards in various categories; the highest number of awards received by a country.

63,449 number of households provided with 100 days of employment in Ganjam district, Odisha, becoming the top district to provide the same to rural households under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) till January 22 this fiscal.

38 percentage decrease in venture capital (VC) investments in Indian start-ups in 2022 as economic uncertainty and market volatility affect fundraising and investment activities, according to Global Data. A total of 1,726 VC funding deals worth \$20.9 billion were announced in India in 2022 compared to 1,715 deals worth \$33.8 billion in 2021.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday discussed a range of issues, including mental health, with the children who won the Pradhan Mantri Rashtriya Bal Puraskar, 2023. In a freewheeling interaction with the 11 winners, Mr. Modi talked about the stigma surrounding mental health and the important role of family in tackling it. He suggested that the awardees make a beginning by solving small problems, gradually build capacity and develop confidence to solve bigger problems later on in life.

Egyptian President Abdel Fateh el-Sisi arrived here on Tuesday on a four-day state visit. Mr. Sisi is the first Egyptian leader to be invited as the chief guest for the Republic Day Parade. During the visit, officials said, both sides will sign several MoUs and discuss taking ties forward on strategic issues, defence, trade, agriculture and renewable energy. The invitation to Mr. Sisi is also being seen as part of the government's push to engage the "Global South", and as a rekindling of the principles of non-alignment that have come back to the fore after the Russian war in Ukraine began in February last year.

Oil palm plantations raised on the Andaman and Nicobar Islands in the past have proven to be a total commercial failure, the Supreme Court constituted Central Empowered Committee has said, questioning the need to revive the crop in the islands. The panel said any permission for diversion of forest land for red oil palm plantation "is bound to open flood gates in all the States for similar agricultural purposes on forest lands".

1. It is a follow on to the 'summit for Democracy', an initiative from USA with three pillars of focus (refer image). As part of 'Summit for Democracy', India through ECI is leading 'Democracy Cohort on Election Integrity' to share its knowledge, technical expertise, with other democracies around world.
2. Three broad verticals highlighted by ECI on technology deployment to Election Management Bodies (EMBs) are Ease of registration for voters, Facilitating political parties & candidates, and Election management & logistics/security.
3. **Use of technology in Elections:** Managing a database of over 94.5 crore electors or ease voter registration, facilitating election-related decision-making, rationalization of polling stations, etc.
4. **Threats of technology in Elections:** Cybersecurity with respect to transmitting voting data, deepfake narratives to elections etc. in India and worldwide.
5. **Technology interventions by ECI-** cVigil Application for filling Model Code of Conduct Violation cases by citizens. Saksham App for Accessible elections for people with disabilities (PwDs). Electronic Voting Machines (EVM), an electronic device, for recording votes. Voter verifiable paper audit trail (VVPAT) or verified paper record (VPR) provides feedback to voters using a ballot-less voting system.

FIFTH SCORPENE-CLASS SUBMARINE INS VAGIR COMMISSIONED INTO INDIAN NAVY

1. INS Vagir, launched in 2020, is among the six submarines being built in India under Indian Navy's Project-75 at Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Limited (MDL) in Mumbai under collaboration with Naval Group, France.
2. Also called 'Sand shark', INS. Vagir represents 'Stealth and Fearlessness'. Vagir can undertake multifarious types of missions i.e., anti-surface, anti-submarine, intelligence gathering, mine laying, area surveillance, etc.
3. **Project-75**, signed in 2005, includes indigenous construction of six submarines of Scorpene (diesel- electric) design. Four of them, Kalvari, Khanderi, Karanj, and Vela have already been delivered to Navy and commissioned.
4. **INS Vagsheer will be commissioned in late 2023.** P-75I, succeeds P75, is part of 30-year submarine building plan that ends in 2030. P-75I envisages construction of six conventional submarines with better sensors and weapons and Air Independent Propulsion System (AIP).
5. It provides boost to indigenous design and construction capability of submarines in India, in addition to bringing in latest submarine design and technologies. AIP is a technology that allows a conventional submarine to remain submerged for much longer period (fortnight) than ordinary diesel-electric submarines. Fuel cell-based AIP has merits in performance compared to other technologies.
6. **Scorpene Submarines-**They have been advanced acoustic absorption techniques, low radiated noise levels, hydro-dynamically optimised shape. They can launch attack using precision guided weapons including torpedoes, and missiles.

LIGHT POLLUTION AND SKYLOW

1. Globe at night an international citizen-science campaign, study has highlighted that: Night sky brightness has increased by 7-10% per year from artificial light between 2011-22. Visibility of stars in night sky is declining by 10% per year because of light pollution.
2. Light pollution, also known as photo pollution, is the presence of anthropogenic light in night environment.
3. Impact of Light Pollution: Interferes with astronomical research, disrupts ecosystems, threat to nocturnal wildlife especially birds etc. Skyglow is a form of light pollution characterized by diffuse illumination of night sky. Easily visible over cities, it does not include natural light sources such as moon and visible individual stars.



"I share the same roadmap with everyone. But only a few walk it."

DR. KHAN
(KSG)