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A Crucial Piece of Advice!

We find several students discussing the issue of lack of time and digging out content regarding how to use every second of your time efficiently. Some of you must be thinking, we have 86400 seconds each day, so why should we worry about just a single one? **Does a single second hold that much importance? YES!** When it comes to competition, each & every second is very crucial.

The first question that might come to your mind is “Is that even possible to use each second of your time effectively?” or “Do I even have that much spare time?” Let's help you by looking over the top time drainers of your daily routine:

- On an average, a person spends 67 minutes per day eating and drinking beverages while watching their favorite TV series.
- Travelling is one of the most overlooked time drainers. CNBC claims that the average commute is a little over 50 minutes per day.
- 44% of people waste tons of time just sitting in the traffic, while others keep scrolling through their feeds.
- Digital Information World suggests that people spend 2 hours and 22 minutes on social media.
- More often unproductive chats on WhatsApp are the major time drainers where you waste your time on without even knowing how much time is spent.

Adding up all these, you spend nearly **4 hours** daily or 1/6th of your day doing a whole lot of **NOTHING!** Over the course of a week that amounts to over **28 hours** of wasted time, and more than **1460 hours** or **52,560,000 seconds** annually!! Scary! Isn't it?

But what if you could effectively utilize this time to validate the knowledge you just gained during your study sessions? How about competing with your friend in a live Current Affairs battle instead of just sitting and listening to the traffic horns? How about dominating the English language leaderboard instead of searching for a filter on Snapchat?

Time and tide wait for none! Team Smartkeeda perceived the importance of time and practice in your test preparation journey. We understood how each second can make a huge difference to your career. Therefore, we were determined to build an application that has the competence to save each second of your preparation time making you 100% productive. We worked diligently for 3-4 years to build an application with the single aim of making each second of your test preparation time, efficient.

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We, team **Smartkeeda**, promise that with the effective use of the Qudoo app, you will be able to see a drastic change in your performance at exams including your **speed, accuracy, and percentile** within a couple of weeks with minimum effort. “KYUKI MAA-BAAP KI FIKRA KO FAKRA ME BADALNA HAI”, so every second counts!!

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INDEX

National & States Affairs	6
International Affairs	9
Banking, Finance, Insurance & Economic Affairs	10
Defence Affairs	12
Sports & Games	13
Science & Technology	15
Appointments & Resignations	15
Awards, Rewards, Recognition & Prizes	17
Obituaries	17
Meetings, Conferences and Summits	18
Ranks, Reports & Surveys	19
MoUs, Collaborations & Partnerships	20



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National & States Affairs

301. On January 14, Rajasthan has become the first State to implement a policy to control blindness, with the objective of ensuring the 'right to sight'. A massive drive will be undertaken in the State to reduce the rate of blindness, and bring light into the lives of over 3 lakh people suffering from visual impairment. [{Read more}](#)

Smart Points:

- Rajasthan – became the first State to implement a policy to control blindness with the objective of 'right to sight'
- Rajasthan: Capital – Jaipur | CM – Ashok Gehlot | Governor – Kalraj Mishra

302. On January 12, in order to minimize and control the fugitive dust in mining areas, Central Mine Planning and Design Institute Limited (CMPDIL), Ranchi (a consultancy subsidiary of Coal India Limited) has invented a "System and Method for Controlling Generation and Movement of Fugitive Dust" and obtained patent for the same. This system can be used in mines, thermal power plants, railway sidings, ports, construction sites wherein coal or other minerals/fugitive materials are stored under open sky. Apart from reducing the dust generation from open sources, it will also provide noise attenuation. Fugitive dust is a form of particulate matter that contributes to air pollution that is generated from various sources which are exposed to air and not discharged into the atmosphere through a confined flow stream. [{Read more}](#)

Smart Points:

- CMPDIL – invented a "System and Method for Controlling Generation and Movement of Fugitive Dust"
- It will minimize and control the fugitive dust in mining areas & provide noise attenuation
- CMPDIL – is a consultancy subsidiary of Coal India Limited
- HQs of CIL – Kolkata, West Bengal | CMD – Pramod Agrawal

303. On January 14, RailTel Corporation of India Ltd, a Mini Ratna Public Sector Unit (PSU) under the Ministry of Railways, has received a work order from the Department of Revenue and Disaster Management, Government of Puducherry, for design, develop, supply, install, test, commission and Operations & Maintenance (O & M) for 5 years of Integrated Command Control Centre (ICCC) and other associated activities for Puducherry Smart City. The estimated total value of the work order is Rs 170.11 Cr. It is the first smart city project awarded by Puducherry Government. [{Read more}](#)

Smart Points:

- RailTel – received a Rs 170.11 Cr contract from Puducherry for its Smart City Project
- Puducherry: CM – N. Rangasamy | Lt. Governor – Dr. Tamilisai Soundararajan (addi. charge)
- HQs of RailTel – New Delhi | CMD – Sanjai Kumar

304. On January 16, The National Council for Education Research and Training (NCERT) notified India's first national assessment regulator, PARAKH, which will work on setting norms, standards and guidelines for student assessment and evaluation for all recognised school boards in the country. The regulator aims to set up assessment guidelines for all boards to help remove disparities in scores of students enrolled with different state boards. PARAKH has been launched as part of the implementation of the National Education Policy (NEP)-2020 that envisaged a standard-setting body to advise school boards regarding new assessment patterns and latest research, and promote collaborations between them. PARAKH will work on three major assessment areas: large-scale assessments, school-based assessment, and examination reforms. PARAKH will also be responsible for conducting large-scale assessments, including the National Achievement Survey (NAS). The next NAS in 2024 will be conducted by PARAKH. [{Read more}](#)



Smart Points:

- NCERT – notified 'PARAKH', India's first national assessment regulator
- PARAKH will work on 3 major assessment areas: Large-scale, School-based, & Examination reforms
- PARAKH – will also be responsible for conducting large-scale assessments, including National Achievement Survey
- HQs of NCERT – New Delhi | Director – Dinesh Prasad Saklani | Founded in – 1961

305. On January 16, Union Minister of Youth Affairs and Sports and Information and Broadcasting Anurag Singh Thakur attended the Bhoomi Pujan (groundbreaking ceremony) of the first National Centre of Excellence being set up with the joint partnership of the Sports Authority of India (SAI) and the Indian Railways. This NCOE is historical because this is the very first time that SAI has partnered with any other organisation to build a National Centre of Excellence. [{Read more}](#)

Smart Points:

- Anurag Singh Thakur – attended the Bhoomi Pujan of the 1st National Centre of Excellence in Cooch Behar, West Bengal
- It is being set up by = SAI + Indian Railways
- HQs of SAI – New Delhi | DG – Sandip Pradhan
- HQs of Indian Railways – New Delhi | Chairman & CEO – Anil Kumar Lahoti

306. On January 17, Joint venture between India and Russia, Indo-Russian Rifles Private Limited (IRRPL), has started producing AK-203 Kalashnikov assault rifles at Korwa in Uttar Pradesh. Korwa Ordnance Factory in Amethi, Uttar Pradesh, has produced the first batch of 7.62 mm Kalashnikov AK-203 assault rifles. The contract for over six lakh AK-203 rifles would be executed by the joint venture over a period of 128 months or close to 10 years. The first batch of 5,000 rifles would be delivered to the Army by March. [{Read more}](#)



Smart Points:

- Indo-Russian Rifles Private Ltd – started producing AK-203 Kalashnikov assault rifles at Korwa in Uttar Pradesh
- The contract for over 6 lakh AK-203 rifles would be executed by the JV over a period of 128 months
- The first batch of 5,000 rifles would be delivered to the Army by March 2023
- Russia – Moscow – Russian Ruble | PM – Mikhail Mishustin | President – Vladimir Putin
- UP: Capital – Lucknow | CM – Yogi Adityanath | Governor – Anandiben Patel

307. On January 16, Jammu and Kashmir Government declared the whole Union Territory as a "Free Area" for purposes of the Prevention and Control of Infectious and Contagious Diseases in Animals Act, 2009. The declaration has been made in the exercise of powers conferred by sub-section (5) of section 6 of the Prevention and Control of Infectious and Contagious Diseases in Animals (PCICDA) Act, 2009. [{Read more}](#)

Smart Points:

- J&K – declared as a "Free Area" for purposes of 'Prevention & Control of Infectious & Contagious Diseases in Animals Act, 2009'
- The declaration is made in exercise of powers conferred by sub-section (5) of section 6 of 'PCICDA Act, 2009'
- J & K: Capital – Srinagar | Lt. Governor – Manoj Sinha

308. On January 15, Union Minister of State Dr. Jitendra Singh, while addressing the occasion of 148th Foundation Day of India Meteorological Department (IMD), dedicated 4 Doppler Weather Radar Systems to the Western Himalayan States of Jammu and Kashmir, Ladakh, Uttarakhand, and Himachal Pradesh. He also announced that India will be covered by Doppler Weather Radar Network by 2025 to predict extreme weather events more accurately. Doppler weather radar, commonly known as Weather Surveillance Radar (WSR), is a type of radar used to find precipitation, determine its motion, and also the type of precipitation (rain, snow, hail, etc). The Minister also dedicated 200 Agro Automated Weather Stations to the Nation and informed that under Agro-Meteorological Services, it is targeted to establish 660 District Agro Meteorological Units (DAMUs) by 2025. [{Read more}](#)

Smart Points:

- Dr. Jitendra Singh – addressed the occasion of 148th Foundation Day of of IMD on January 15
- He dedicated 4 Doppler Weather Radar Systems to J & K, Ladakh, Uttarakhand, and Himachal Pradesh
- India will be covered by Doppler Weather Radar Network by 2025 to predict extreme weather events more accurately
- [HQs of IMD – New Delhi](#) | [Director General – Dr. Mrutyunjay Mohapatra](#) | [Founded in – 1875](#)

309. On January 17, the Institute of Chartered Accountants of India (ICAI) has come out with an audit standard for sustainability information, the first such effort in the world, to help its members provide ‘reasonable or limited’ assurance on such information by the reporting entities. Sustainability Reporting Standards Board of ICAI has released Standard on Sustainability Assurance Engagements (SSAE) 3000, “Assurance Engagements on Sustainability Information”. The ICAI has now issued 16 social audit standards (SAS) that will be applicable to social enterprises that will get listed on the social stock exchange. The 16 social audit standards (SAS) will be mandatory for social auditors registered with the Institute of Social Auditors of India (ISAI) which has been established by the ICAI. [{Read more}](#)

Smart Points:

- Sustainability Reporting Standards Board of ICAI – released Standard on Sustainability Assurance Engagements (SSAE) 3000, “Assurance Engagements on Sustainability Information”
- ICAI – the first in the world to come out with an ‘Audit Standard for Sustainability Information’
- [HQs of ICAI – Kolkata, West Bengal](#) | [President – Vijender Sharma](#) | [Vice-President – Rakesh Bhalla](#)

310. On January 13, Union health minister, Mansukh Mandaviya chaired the national symposium on India’s roadmap to eliminate Lymphatic Filariasis (LF). He informed that India is committed to eliminate Lymphatic Filariasis (LF) by 2027 three years ahead of the global target through mission mode through the five-pronged roadmap. Uttar Pradesh, Odisha, Telangana, and Bihar account for about 60% Lymphedema cases in India. The elimination of the disease will be achieved via multi-drug administration (MDA) campaign twice a year synchronized with national deworming day. [{Read more}](#)

Smart Points:

- Mansukh Mandaviya – chaired the ‘National Symposium on India’s Roadmap to eliminate Lymphatic Filariasis (LF)’
- India is committed to eliminate Lymphatic Filariasis (LF) by 2027 (3 years ahead of the global target)
- Uttar Pradesh, Odisha, Telangana & Bihar account for about 60% Lymphedema cases in India
- [Ministry of Health & Family Welfare: Mansukh L. Mandaviya](#) | [Constituency – Palitana, Gujarat](#)
- [MoS in Ministry of Health & Family Welfare: Bharati Pravin Pawar](#)



311. On January 14, Indian Railways announced to run a special train for pilgrims, connecting Ayodhya in Uttar Pradesh to Janakpur in Nepal using its Bharat Gaurav Deluxe AC Tourist Train. The route will include visits to Nandigram, Sitamarhi, Kashi and Prayagraj. The route is set to start from February 17 this year. The seven-day trip will include hotel stays at Janakpur and Varanasi (one night each) with day time halts at Ayodhya, Sitamarhi and Prayagraj. The route will include train and bus travel, with all-inclusive prices starting from Rs. 39,775/- per person. [{Read more}](#)

Smart Points:

- Indian Railways – announced run a special train for pilgrims, connecting Ayodhya in UP to Janakpur in Nepal
- The route will include visits to Nandigram, Sitamarhi, Kashi and Prayagraj
- The route will include train and bus travel, with all-inclusive prices starting from Rs. 39,775/- per person
- [HQs of Indian Railways – New Delhi](#) | [Chairman & CEO – Anil Kumar Lahoti](#)

International Affairs

312. On January 14, amid criticism that military expenditure was more than the allocation for health care and education in the 2023 budget, Sri Lanka announced plans to reduce the current strength of its military to half by 2030 to build a technically and tactically sound and well-balanced defence force. The Army's strength is to be reduced to 1,00,000 by the year 2030, down from the current figure of 2,00,783. The defence allocation of Rs 539 billion in the budget 2023 drew criticism as the island nation faced its worst economic crisis since 1948. [{Read more}](#)

Smart Points:

- Sri Lanka – announced plans to reduce the current strength of its military (2,00,783) to half by 2030
- Sri Lanka allocated Rs 539 billion to defence sector in its 2023 Budget
- [Sri Lanka – Colombo/Sri Jayawardenepura Kotte – Sri Lankan Rupee](#)
- [PM – Dinesh Gunawardena](#) | [President – Ranil Wickremesinghe](#)

313. On January 12, El Salvador, which became the first country in the world to recognize bitcoin as a legal tender two years ago, approved a law that would regulate the issuance of other digital assets by both the state and private entities. The law provides for legal framework for Bitcoin-backed bonds, "Volcano Bonds". The law also establishes the creation of the National Commission for Digital Assets and the Bitcoin Funds Administration Agency. The bill aims to attract national and foreign investors while creating new financing opportunities for citizens, companies and the government. The purpose of this law is to establish the legal framework that grants legal certainty to transfer operations to any title of digital assets used in public issuance offers. [{Read more}](#)

Smart Points:

- El Salvador – approved a law to provide for legal framework for Bitcoin-backed bonds, "Volcano Bonds"
- [El Salvador – San Salvador – USD](#) | [President – Nayib Bukele](#)

314. India has announced a donation of 12,500 doses of pentavalent vaccines to Cuba. The decision was announced during Union Minister of State for External Affairs Meenakshi Lekhi's visit to Cuba from January 12-14. Pentavalent vaccine provides protection to a child from 5 life-threatening diseases - Diphtheria, Pertussis, Tetanus, Hepatitis B and Hib. During her visit, Lekhi visited Fidel Castro Centre in Havana and the 'panchakarma centre' in International Health Centre (La Pradera) that was set up in association with AYUSH Ministry. Furthermore, Lekhi paid floral tribute at Mahatma Gandhi's bust in Havana. [{Read more}](#)



Smart Points:

- Meenakashi Lekhi (MoS for External Affairs) – visited Cuba from January 12-14
- India – announced a donation of 12,500 doses of pentavalent vaccines to Cuba
- Cuba – Havana – Peso | President – Miguel Díaz-Canel Bermudez | PM – Manuel Marrero Cruz
- Ministry of External Affairs: S. Jaishankar | Constituency – Gujarat
- MoS in Ministry of External Affairs: Rajkumar Ranjan Singh, V. Muraleedharan & Meenakashi Lekhi

Banking, Finance, Insurance & Economic Affairs

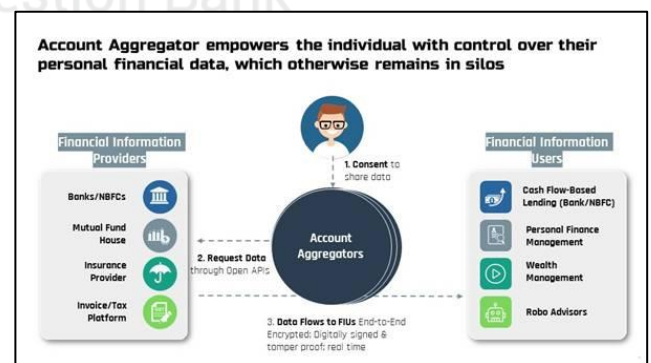
315. Trade between India and China touched an all-time high of \$136 billion in 2022, overtaking the \$125-billion mark of 2021. With this, India's trade deficit with China has crossed \$100 billion for the first time in 2022. China's exports to India climbed to \$119 billion, a year-on-year increase of 22%. During 2022, China's imports from India dwindled to \$17.5 billion, a year-on-year decline of 38%. The trade deficit for India stood at \$101 billion, crossing the 2021 figure of \$69.4 billion. In 2021, India's overall trade with China totalled \$126 billion. [{Read more}](#)



Smart Points:

- Bilateral Trade between India & China touched an all-time high of \$136 billion in 2022
- China's exports to India – \$119 billion | India's exports to China – \$17.5 billion (Trade deficit for India – \$101 billion)
- With this, India's trade deficit with China has crossed \$100 billion for the first time in 2022
- China – Beijing – Renminbi | President – Xi Jinping

316. On January 16, Protean eGov Technologies Limited (formerly NSDL e-Governance Infrastructure Limited) received approval from the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) for its wholly owned subsidiary to operate as an Account Aggregator (with an NBFC-AA certificate). An Account Aggregator (AA) is a type of RBI regulated entity (with an NBFC-AA license) that helps an individual securely and digitally access and share information from one financial institution they have an account with to any other regulated financial institution in the AA network. Data cannot be shared without the consent of the individual in this network. [{Read more}](#)



Smart Points:

- Protean eGov – received approval from RBI for its wholly owned subsidiary to operate as Account Aggregator
- HQs of Protean eGov Technologies – Mumbai, Maharashtra | MD & CEO – Suresh Sethi
- HQs of RBI – Mumbai, Maharashtra | Governor – Shaktikanta Das (25th) | Established on – 1st April, 1935
- Total Deputy Governors (4) – Mahesh Kumar Jain | T. Rabi Sankar | Michael D. Patra | M. Rajeshwar Rao

317. On January 16, The Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI) entered into a partnership with VFS Capital to extend MSME loans upto Rs 5 lakh at 13% interest rate per annum. VFS Capital expects to disburse Rs 30-40 Cr under the scheme this fiscal. The company is planning to expand its footprint in the north-western part by launching operations in Rajasthan by the end of January. At present, it operates in 13 states including West Bengal, Assam and Tripura. VFS Capital also plans to add 35 branches within this fiscal, taking the number to 270 across the country and to raise Rs 100 Cr in 2023-24. [{Read more}](#)

Smart Points:

- SIDBI + VFS Capital = partnership to extend MSME loans upto Rs 5 lakh at 13% interest rate per annum
- VFS Capital expects to disburse Rs 30-40 Cr under the scheme this fiscal
- HQs of SIDBI – Lucknow, UP | MD & Chairman – Sivasubramanian Ramann | Established in – 1990
- HQs of VFS Capital – Kolkata | MD & CEO Kuldip Maity

318. On January 16, Paytm Payments Bank Ltd (PPBL) has received final approval from the Reserve Bank of India to operate as a Bharat Bill Payment Operating Unit (BBPOU). Under Bharat Bill Payment System (BBPS), a BBPOU is allowed to facilitate bill payment services of electricity, phone, DTH, water, gas insurance, loan repayments, FASTag recharge, education fees, credit card bill and municipal taxes. BBPS is owned by the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI). PPBL has got this final approval from RBI under the ‘Payment and Settlement Systems Act, 2007’. [{Read more}](#)

Smart Points:

- Paytm Payments Bank – received final approval from the RBI to operate as a Bharat Bill Payment Operating Unit
- HQs of Paytm – Noida, Uttar Pradesh | MD & CEO – Vijay Sekhar Sharma | Founded in – 2010

319. On January 16, the RBI has defined “major shareholding” as “aggregate holding” of 5% or more of the paid-up share capital or voting rights in a banking company by a person. So now, any person looking to acquire more than 5% stake in a bank will need prior approval from the RBI. After an acquisition, if the shareholding falls below 5%, the person will be required to seek fresh approval from the RBI. Any person from the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) non-compliant jurisdiction will not be allowed to acquire a major shareholding in a bank. [{Read more}](#)

Smart Points:

- RBI – defined “major shareholding” as “aggregate holding” of 5% or more of the paid-up share capital in any bank
- Any person looking to acquire more than 5% stake in a bank will need prior approval from the RBI
- HQs of RBI – Mumbai, Maharashtra | Governor – Shaktikanta Das (25th) | Established on – 1st April, 1935
- Total Deputy Governors (4) – Mahesh Kumar Jain | T. Rabi Sankar | Michael D. Patra | M. Rajeshwar Rao

320. On January 17, South Indian Bank (SIB) and Steel Authority of India Ltd (SAIL) signed an MoU to provide financial assistance to the dealers of SAIL across India. The tie-up will offer SAIL’s dealers with financial assistance for working capital, especially steel procurement. [{Read more}](#)

Smart Points:

- SIB + SAIL = an MoU to provide financial assistance to the dealers of SAIL across India
- HQs of South Indian Bank – Thrissur, Kerala | MD & CEO – Murali Ramakrishnan
- HQs of SAIL – New Delhi | CEO – Soma Mondal | Founded on – January 24, 1973



321. On January 16, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) released a report titled “State Finances: A Study of Budgets of 2022-23”. The fiscal health of the states has improved from a sharp pandemic-induced deterioration in 2020-21, as per the report. The improved fiscal health of states also stepped up revenue collections and the States’ gross fiscal deficit (GFD) is now budgeted to decline from 4.1% of gross domestic product (GDP) in 2020-21 to 3.4% in 2022-23 within the indicative target of 4% set by the centre. While States’ debt is budgeted to ease to 29.5% of GDP in 2022-23 as against 31.1% in 2020-21. The States’ capital outlay-GDP (Gross Domestic Product) ratio is budgeted to increase to 2.9% in FY 2022-23 from 2.3% in FY22. The theme of this year’s Report is also “Capital Formation in India - The Role of States”. [{Read more}](#)

Smart Points:

- “State Finances: A Study of Budgets of 2022-23” report – released by RBI
- Theme of the report – “Capital Formation in India - The Role of States”
- States’ gross fiscal deficit (GFD) is now budgeted to decline to 3.4% of GDP in FY23 (from 4.1% in FY21)
- States’ capital outlay-GDP ratio is budgeted to increase to 2.9% in FY23 (from 2.3% in FY22)

322. On January 17, State Bank of India (SBI), in its Ecowrap report, estimated India’s fiscal deficit at around Rs 17.95 lakh crore or 6% of GDP for FY 2023-24 and Rs 17.50 lakh crore for FY 2022-23 . According to Dr. Soumya Kanti Ghosh, Group Chief Economic Adviser of SBI, for FY23, total receipts of the Government would be higher than the budget estimates (BE) by around Rs 2.3 lakh crore. Net market borrowing of the Centre in FY24 will be around Rs 11.7 lakh crore and with repayments of Rs 4.4 lakh crore, gross borrowing is expected at Rs 16.1 lakh crore. [{Read more}](#)

Smart Points:

- SBI’s Ecowrap report estimated India’s fiscal deficit at Rs 17.95 lakh Cr or 6% of GDP for FY24 (Rs 17.50 lakh for FY23)
- Net market borrowing of the Centre in FY24 is estimated at around Rs 11.7 lakh Cr
- HQs of SBI – Mumbai, Maharashtra | Chairman – Dinesh Kumar Khara
- MDs – Challa Sreenivasulu Setty | Alok Kumar Choudhary | Ashwini Kumar Tewari | Swaminathan Janakiraman

323. On January 18, Tamilnad Mercantile Bank (TMB) has bagged ‘Best Small Bank Award’ in the ‘Best Banks Survey for the Year 2022’ done by Business Today-KPMG (BT-KPMG Best banks survey). The bank has won this award under the category of banks with the book size of less than Rs 1 lakh Crore. The BT-KPMG is conducting this survey and awarding the best banks for the past 27 years with 37 parameters for declaring a bank as an awardee. [{Read more}](#)

Smart Points:

- ‘Best Banks Survey for the Year 2022’ – by Business Today-KPMG
- Tamilnad Mercantile Bank – won the ‘Best Small Bank Award’ in this survey
- HQs of TMB – Thoothukudi, Tamil Nadu | CEO – Krishnan Sankarasubramaniam

Defence Affairs

324. On January 16, the 21st edition of the Bilateral Naval Exercise between India and France, “Exercise Varuna”, commenced on the Western Seaboard. While the bilateral exercise between the two navies were initiated in 1993, it was christened as ‘VARUNA’ in 2001 and has become a hallmark of India-France strategic bilateral relationship. This edition will witness participation of indigenous guided missile stealth destroyer INS Chennai, guided missile frigate INS Teg, maritime patrol aircraft P-8I and Dornier, integral helicopters and MiG29K fighter aircraft. [{Read more}](#)



Smart Points:

- 21st edition of “Exercise Varuna” between India & France – commenced on the Western Seaboard
- INS Chennai + INS Teg + P-8I + MiG29K = participated in the exercise
- France – Paris – Euro | President – Emmanuel Macron | PM – Elisabeth Borne

Sports & Games

325. In January 2023, Olympic champion and No. 1 seed Viktor Axelsen claimed badminton’s Malaysia Open men’s singles title by beating Kodai Naraoka of Japan. It was Axelsen’s ninth consecutive final in BWF Super 1000 level tournaments, a new record. Japan’s Akane Yamaguchi beat An Se-Young of Korea for the women’s crown in the opening World Tour event of 2023. Moreover, other winners of men’s doubles, women’s doubles, and mixed doubles are mentioned below. [{Read more}](#)



Smart Points:

- Malaysia Open 2023 (aka PETRONAS Malaysia Open) – held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
- Men’s Singles title – Viktor Axelsen (Denmark)
- Women’s Singles title – Akane Yamaguchi (Japan)
- Men’s Doubles title – Fajar Alfian & Muhammad Rian Ardianto (Indonesia)
- Women’s Doubles title – Chen Qing Chen & Jia Yi Fan (China)
- Mixed Doubles title – Zheng Si Wei & Huang Ya Qiong (China)

326. On January 14, Indian team of Yuki Bhambri and Saketh Myneni won the Bangkok Open title, their sixth together on the ATP Challenger Tour beating Christopher Rungkat and Akira Santillan. They will next compete in the Australian Open, the season’s first Grand Slam, where they have been given a wild card entry. The men’s singles title was won by France’s Arthur Cazaux. [{Read more}](#)



Smart Points:

- Bangkok Open winners:
- Men’s Singles – Arthur Cazaux (France)
- Men’s Doubles – Yuki Bhambri & Saketh Myneni (India)
- Thailand – Bangkok – Thai Baht | PM – Prayut Chan-o-cha

327. In January 2023, the International Cricket Council (ICC) announced the winners of the ICC Player of the Month awards for December 2022. England’s Harry Brook won ‘ICC Men’s Player of the Month’ award for December 2022, following impressive performances in the ICC World Test Championship series in Pakistan. Also, Australia’s Ashleigh Gardner won the ‘ICC Women’s Player of the Month’ award for December 2022. [{Read more}](#)



Smart Points:

- Harry Brook (England) – ICC Men’s Player of the Month for December 2022
- Ashleigh Gardner (Australia) – ICC Women’s Player of the Month for December 2022
- HQs of ICC – Dubai, UAE | Chairman – Greg Barclay | CEO – Geoff Allardice | Members – 108 countries





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Science & Technology

328. On January 16, Russia's space agency Roscosmos announced to launch a new spacecraft, "Soyuz MS-23", to bring back cosmonauts Sergey Prokopyev and Dmitry Petelin and U.S. astronaut Frank Rubio. The Soyuz MS is a revision of the Russian spacecraft series Soyuz first launched in 2016. It is an evolution of the Soyuz TMA-M spacecraft. It is used by Roscosmos for human spaceflight. [{Read more}](#)



Smart Points:

- Roscosmos – announced to launch a new spacecraft, "Soyuz MS-23"
- Russia – Moscow – Russian Ruble | PM – Mikhail Mishustin | President – Vladimir Putin

329. On January 17, Mastercard announced the new phase of its flagship 'Girls4Tech' programme in India, which will benefit over 10,800 girls from 30 government schools in Tamil Nadu. Supported by the Mastercard Impact Fund and in partnership with the American India Foundation (AIF), the expansion of the programme aims to reach an additional 1 lakh female students across India by 2024 to encourage them to take up Science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) education. STEM courses will be offered to girls aged 8 to 14. [{Read more}](#)

Smart Points:

- Mastercard – announced the new phase of its flagship 'Girls4Tech' programme in India
- The expansion of the programme aims to reach an additional 1 lakh female students across India by 2024
- HQs of Mastercard – New York, US | CEO – Michael Miebach | Founded in – 1966

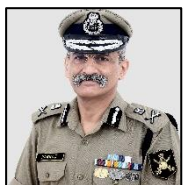
330. In January 2023, P. Sreekumar, the Satish Dhawan Professor at the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) and advisor to its space science programme, announced that the ISRO has not yet received approval from the Indian government for the Venus mission, 'Shukrayaan I'. As a result, the mission may be delayed until 2031. Shukrayaan I, the ISRO Venus mission, was scheduled to be launched in December 2024. The concept was conceived in 2012. Sreekumar also claimed that the VERITAS and EnVision missions of the NASA and European Space Agency (ESA), respectively, both have Venus missions scheduled for 2031. [{Read more}](#)

Smart Points:

- ISRO's Venus mission 'Shukrayaan I' (scheduled to be launched in Dec 2024) – may be delayed until 2031
- 'VERITAS' – NASA's Venus mission | 'EnVision' – ESA's Venus mission
- HQs of ISRO – Bengaluru, Karnataka | Director – S. Somanath | Formed on – August 15, 1969
- HQs of NASA – Washington D.C., US | Administrator – Bill Nelson | Founded in – 1958
- HQs of ESA – Paris, France | DG – Josef Aschbacher

Appointments & Resignations

331. On January 18, Retired Director General of the Border Security Force (BSF) Pankaj Kumar Singh has been appointed as the Deputy National Security Adviser in National Security Council (NSC) Secretariat for a period of two years. Singh retired as the BSF chief on December 31, 2022. Singh, a 1988-batch Indian Police Service officer of the Rajasthan cadre, has been appointed on a re-employment contract. The NSC is headed by the Prime Minister and the NSA is its Secretary. The headquarters of NSC is in New Delhi and the current NSA is Ajit Doval. [{Read more}](#)



Smart Points:

- Pankaj Kumar Singh – appointed as the Deputy National Security Adviser in NSC Secretariat for 2 years
- HQs of NSC – New Delhi | NSA – Ajit Doval | Deputy NSA – Pankaj Kumar Singh

332. On January 17, Nilakshi Sinha has been appointed as the next Ambassador of India to the Republic of Armenia. She is presently Joint Secretary in the Ministry of External Affairs. M. Sridharan, presently Joint Secretary in the Ministry of External Affairs, has been appointed as the next Ambassador of India to the Republic of Azerbaijan. [{Read more}](#)



Smart Points:

- Nilakshi Sinha – appointed as the next Ambassador of India to the Republic of Armenia
- M. Sridharan – appointed as the next Ambassador of India to the Republic of Azerbaijan
- Armenia – Yerevan – Dram | PM – Nikol Pashinyan | President – Vahagn Khachaturyan
- Azerbaijan – Baku – Manat | PM – Ali Asadov | President – Ilham Aliyev

333. On January 17, India has taken over the Presidency of the 13th assembly of the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA), an intergovernmental organisation mandated to facilitate cooperation, advance knowledge, and promote the adoption and sustainable use of renewable energy. A 14-member delegation from the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) participated in the 13th session of the IRENA Assembly from January 13 to 15 in Abu Dhabi, UAE. [{Read more}](#)

Smart Points:

- India – took over the Presidency of the 13th assembly of the IRENA
- A 14-member delegation from the CII participated in the 13th session of the IRENA Assembly – in Abu Dhabi, UAE
- HQs of IRENA – Abu Dhabi, UAE | DG – Francesco La Camera | Members – 168 countries

334. On January 14, Rakesh Kumar Jain has taken over as the chairman of Indraprastha Gas Ltd, the firm that retails CNG to automobiles and piped natural gas to household kitchens in the national capital region and neighbouring towns. IGL is a joint venture of GAIL and Bharat Petroleum Corporation Ltd (BPCL), and they hold 22.5% stake each. The two firms appoint directors on the board and rotate chairmanship among themselves. Rakesh Kumar Jain is Director (Finance) at state gas utility GAIL (India) Ltd. Jain replaced Sukhmal Kumar Jain, Director (Marketing) of BPCL. [{Read more}](#)



Smart Points:

- Rakesh Kumar Jain – took over as the chairman of Indraprastha Gas Ltd (succeeding - Sukhmal Kumar Jain)
- IGL is a JV between = GAIL + BPCL (hold 22.5% stake each)
- HQs of IGL – New Delhi | Chairman – Rakesh Kumar Jain | Founded – 1998

335. On January 13, Indian American Democratic Party politician Usha Reddi was sworn in as State Senator for District 22 in Kansas state of the US. She replaced longtime Manhattan Senator Tom Hawk who last month announced retirement from the Legislature. Reddi has served on the Manhattan City Commission since 2013 & served twice as mayor. Reddi will complete the remainder of Senator Hawk's term, which expires in 2025. Reddi's family immigrated from India to the US in 1973. [{Read more}](#)



Smart Points:

- Usha Reddi (Indian American) – sworn in as State Senator for District 22 in Kansas state of US (succeeding - Tom Hawk)
- US – Washington, D.C. – US Dollar | 46th President – Joe Biden | 49th VP – Kamala Harris

Awards, Rewards, Recognition & Prizes

336. On January 16, Bhavin Rabari, the lead child star of India's official entry for the Oscars, Chhello Show, and global blockbuster RRR have been honoured by the International Press Academy (IPA). The IPA announced the winners of the Special Achievements Awards recipients for its 27th Annual Satellite Awards. Bhavin Rabari won the Breakthrough Performance Award, while SS Rajamouli's film "RRR" was given the Honorary Satellite Award. Chhello Show is produced by Siddharth Roy Kapur, Dheer Momaya, Nalin and Marc Duale. Pan Nalin is the director of the film. [{Read more}](#)

Smart Points:

- Bhavin Rabari (lead star of 'Chhello Show') – won the 'Breakthrough Performance Award' at 27th Annual Satellite Awards
- "RRR" film (by SS Rajamouli) – won the 'Honorary Satellite Award' at 27th Annual Satellite Awards

337. On January 15, S.S. Rajamouli's global blockbuster RRR won Best Foreign Language Film and Best Song for "Naatu Naatu" at the 28th Critics Choice Awards (CCA) in Los Angeles. The track has been composed by veteran music director M.M. Keeravaani and voiced by singers Kala Bhairava and Rahul Sipligunj. In the Best Foreign Language Film, RRR was competing against films such as All Quiet on the Western Front, Argentina 1985, Bardo, False Chronicle of a Handful of Truths, Close and Decision to Leave. The film was nominated in five categories at the CCA, Best Picture, Best Director (Rajamouli), Best Foreign Language film, Best Visual Effects (V. Srinivas Mohan) and Best Song ('Naatu Naatu'). [{Read more}](#)



Smart Points:

- RRR – won 'Best Foreign Language Film' and 'Best Song' for "Naatu Naatu" at the 28th Critics Choice Awards
- The song is composed by – MM Keeravaani | Singer – Kala Bhairava & Rahul Sipligunj | Lyricist – Chandrabose

338. On January 11, the prestigious "Gangadhar National Award for Poetry 2021" was conferred on noted Malayalam poet K. G. Sankara Pillai by the Sambalpur University on 56th foundation day of the institution. The Gangadhar National Award for Poetry was instituted by Sambalpur University in 1989 in memory of Swabhava Kabi Gangadhar Meher, to honour an Indian poet for his/her creative excellence and distinctive attainment in Indian poetry. The award carries a cash prize of Rs 1 lakh, a shawl and a citation. Sankara Pillai is one of Kerala's finest poets who came into prominence in the 1970s with the publication of the poem 'Bengal' and is now one of the most popular among the modern poets of Kerala.



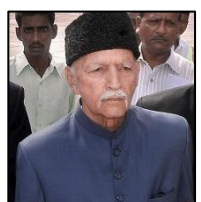
[{Read more}](#)

Smart Points:

- K.G. Sankara Pillai (Malayalam poet) – conferred "Gangadhar National Award for Poetry-2021" by Sambalpur University
- The Award was instituted in 1989 in memory of Swabhava Kabi Gangadhar Meher
- Kerala: Capital – Thiruvananthapuram | CM – Pinarayi Vijayan | Governor – Arif Mohammad Khan

Obituaries

339. On January 14, the last Nizam of Hyderabad Mukarram Jah Bahadur passed away in Turkey. He was laid to rest in the family's vault in the forecourt of Mecca Masjid near Charminar in Hyderabad. Mukarram Jah, or as he was titled Nawab Mir Barkat Ali Khan Walashan Mukarram Jah Bahadur, became Nizam VIII after the inauguration ceremony on April 6, 1967. His father was Azam Jah, the eldest son of Nizam Mir Osman Ali Khan, whose kingdom was merged with India on September 18, 1948. [{Read more}](#)



Smart Points:

- Mukarram Jah Bahadur – Last Nizam of Hyderabad – passed away in Turkey
- He became Nizam VIII after the inauguration ceremony on April 6, 1967

340. On February 14, Ray Cordeiro, who interviewed music acts including the Beatles during a six-decade career on Hong Kong radio that earned him the title of the world's longest-working disc jockey (DJ), passed away. He was 98. Cordeiro, who was born in Hong Kong in 1924 of Portuguese descent, was recognized by the Guinness Book of Records as the world's longest-working DJ. His "All the Way With Ray" show of easy listening music was on RTHK Radio 3 for 51 years until his retirement. [{Read more}](#)



Smart Points:

- Ray Cordeiro (Hong Kong) – world's longest-working disc jockey on Hong Kong Radio – passed away

Meetings, Conferences & Summits

341. On January 13, the Central government announced to organize India's first Global Tourism Summit in New Delhi in April 2023 as part of the G-20 presidency, where all G-20 member countries will participate. The Global Tourism Investors Summit 2023 will be organized by the Union Ministry of Tourism, in association with Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) as the Industry Partner. Ahead of the Global Tourism Investors' Summit, a road show was held in Kolkata. [{Read more}](#)

Smart Points:

- India's 1st "Global Tourism Summit 2023" in New Delhi = to be organised by Ministry of Tourism + CII (in April 2023)
- HQs of CII – New Delhi | President – Sanjiv Bajaj | VC – Sanjiv Puri | DG – Chandrajit Banerjee | Founded in – 1895
- Ministry of Tourism: G. Kishan Reddy | Constituency – Secunderabad, Telangana
- MoS in Ministry of Tourism: Shripad Yesso Naik & Ajay Bhatt

342. On January 16, two-day "Think-20" meeting under the G20 was held at the Kushabhau Thackeray International Convention Centre in Bhopal during which experts and foreign guests discussed various topics including the 'Environment-friendly lifestyle-ethical values and global good governance'. The main speaker at the inaugural session was Tetsushi Sonobe, Dean and CEO of the Asian Development Bank Institute, Tokyo. On January 17, there were two plenary sessions, a round table meeting and a valedictory session with the concluding speech of Governor Mangubhai Patel. [{Read more}](#)



Smart Points:

- "Think-20" meeting under G20 was held at – Kushabhau Thackeray International Convention Centre in Bhopal
- The main speaker at inaugural session – Tetsushi Sonobe, Dean & CEO of ADB Institute, Tokyo
- Madhya Pradesh: Capital – Bhopal | CM – Shivraj Singh Chouhan | Governor – Mangubhai Chhaganbhai Patel



343. On January 16 to 20, the 53rd edition of the annual meeting of World Economic Forum (WEF) was held at Davos in Switzerland. The theme for this year's WEF meeting was "Cooperation in a Fragmented World". World leaders shared their insights on the prevalent economic conditions across the globe. According to the WEF's annual Global Risks Report, recession threat, cost-of-living crisis and debt distress is likely to dominate the outlook for at least two years. The congregation of experts, academics, investors, and political and business leaders discussed some of the pressing issues the world is facing today, such as the Russia-Ukraine crisis, global inflation and climate change and promote innovative solutions. [{Read more}](#)



Smart Points:

- 53rd edition of annual meeting of WEF – held at Davos in Switzerland
- Theme for this year's WEF meeting – "Cooperation in a Fragmented World"
- HQs of WEF – Cologny, Switzerland | Exe Chairman – Klaus Schwab | President – Borge Brende | Founded in – 1971

Ranks, Reports & Surveys

344. On January 16, the "World Employment and Social Outlook: Trends 2023 (WESO Trends)", released by the International Labour Organization (ILO), stated that the total working hours per person are still below pre-pandemic levels in Asia Pacific region. The report projected that global employment growth will be only 1% in 2023, less than half the level in 2022. On the other hand, the global unemployment is slated to rise slightly in 2023, by around 3 million, to 208 million (corresponding to a global unemployment rate of 5.8%). Globally, the labour force participation rate of women stood at 47.4 % in 2022, compared with 72.3% for men. [{Read more}](#)

Smart Points:

- "World Employment and Social Outlook: Trends 2023 (WESO Trends)" – released by the ILO
- Global Employment growth will be only 1% in 2023
- Global Unemployment is slated to rise by around 3 million in 2023 – to 208 million
- Globally, the labour force participation rate of women stood at 47.4 % in 2022 (72.3% of men)
- HQs of ILO – Geneva, Switzerland | DG – Gilbert F. Houngbo | Founded in – 1919

345. On January 17, according to a report in The Times of India, Russia has become India's fourth-largest trading partner with imports from the country spiking five-fold to \$32.9 billion during the April-December. There are two main contributors to India's higher imports from Russia - crude oil and fertilisers. Moreover, according to a Reuters report, Russia had become the biggest fertiliser supplier to India in the first half of the FY23 for the first time by offering discounts over prevailing global prices. India's fertiliser imports from Russia surged 371% to a record 2.15 million tonnes in the first 6 months of the year that started on April 1. [{Read more}](#)

Smart Points:

- Russia – become India's 4th largest trading partner with imports spiking five-fold to \$32.9 billion during the Apr-Dec
- Two main contributors to India's higher imports from Russia – Crude Oil & Fertilisers
- Russia – became the biggest fertiliser supplier to India in H1 FY23 for the first time
- India's fertiliser imports from Russia surged 371% to a record 2.15 million tonnes in H1 FY23
- Russia – Moscow – Russian Ruble | PM – Mikhail Mishustin | President – Vladimir Putin



MoUs, Collaborations & Partnerships

346. On January 16, Warehousing Development Regulatory Authority (WDRA) signed an MoU with State Bank of India to help farmers in getting low interest rate loans. The MoU was signed with the intent of promoting awareness about the new loan product called 'Produce Marketing Loan' to exclusively fund against e-NWRs (electronic Negotiable Warehouse Receipt) with features such as nil processing fee, no additional collateral and attractive interest rates. [{Read more}](#)

Smart Points:

- WDRA + SBI = an MoU to help farmers in getting low interest rate loans through new product, 'Produce Marketing Loan'
- HQs of SBI – Mumbai, Maharashtra | Chairman – Dinesh Kumar Khara
- MDs – Challa Sreenivasulu Setty | Alok Kumar Choudhary | Ashwini Kumar Tewari | Swaminathan Janakiraman

347. On January 18, Siemens signed a 3-billion-euro (\$3.25 billion) or Rs 26,000 Cr contract to supply and service freight trains in India, the biggest locomotive deal in its history. Siemens will deliver 1,200 electric locomotives and provide servicing for 35 years under the agreement, also its biggest ever in India. The Siemens-designed, 9,000-horsepower trains with a top speed of 120 km (75 miles)/hr will be assembled in Dahod, Gujarat, India over the next 11 years, with deliveries starting in 24 months. India is looking for technology, better efficiency, and longer lifespan for its trains. [{Read more}](#)

Smart Points:

- Siemens – signed a 3-billion-euro (\$3.25 billion) or Rs 26,000 Cr contract to supply and service freight trains in India
- Siemens will deliver 1,200 electric locomotives and provide servicing for 35 years
- The Siemens-designed, 9,000-horsepower trains with a top speed of 120 km (75 miles)/hr will be assembled in India
- HQs of Siemens AG – Munich, Germany | CEO – Roland Busch
- HQs of Indian Railways – New Delhi | Chairman & CEO – Anil Kumar Lahoti

348. On January 18, India's Adani Enterprises Limited (AEL) signed an agreement with Ashok Leyland and Canada's Ballard Power to launch a pilot project to develop a Hydrogen Fuel Cell Electric Truck (FCET) for mining logistics and transportation. The FCET is scheduled to be launched in India in 2023. Hydrogen, made by splitting water with an electrical process called electrolysis, can be used as a fuel. If the devices that do that, electrolyzers, are powered by renewable energy, the product is called green hydrogen. Adani has a tie-up with French energy company TotalEnergies as part of a deal to form a new green hydrogen project in India. [{Read more}](#)

Smart Points:

- Adani Enterprises + Ashok Leyland + Ballard Power (Canada) = an agreement to develop a Hydrogen Fuel Cell Electric Truck (FCET) for mining logistics and transportation
- HQs of Adani Enterprises – Ahmedabad, Gujarat | Chairman – Gautam Adani | MD – Rajesh Adani
- HQs of Ashok Leyland – Chennai, TN | CEO – Shenu Agarwal | President – Sanjay V. Jorapur (owned by Hinduja Group)

349. On January 11, Chennai's SRM Institute of Science and Technology signed an MoU with the Indian Navy and the Naval Welfare and Wellness Association (NWWA). The MoU will promote academic cooperation, scientific understanding of defence technology and research and development. Students will have the opportunity to visit naval centres and understand the environment on a ship. The MoU will also facilitate collaborations between students and researchers from SRM and officers in the Navy in the fields of Artificial Intelligence, RADAR, quantum analysis and data science. [{Read more}](#)



Smart Points:

- SRM Institute of S&T (Chennai) + Indian Navy + NWWA = an MoU for collaborations in the fields of AI, RADAR, quantum analysis & Data Science
- HQs of Indian Navy – Delhi | Chief – Admiral R. Hari Kumar | VC – S. N. Ghormade | Founded in – 26th Jan, 1950

350. On January 13, During RK Singh's three-day visit to Abu Dhabi, India and the UAE signed an agreement on green hydrogen development and the laying of undersea cable connecting India to the UAE under 'One Sun, One World, One Grid initiative.' During his visit, RK Singh held a meeting with COP28 President designate and UAE's Special Envoy for Climate Change Sultan Ahmed Al Jaber. COP28 is scheduled to be held in November in Dubai. The two sides discussed the priorities of the two nations in the area of energy and how India and the UAE could cooperate to make India's G20 Presidency. [{Read more}](#)



Smart Points:

- India + UAE = an agreement on green hydrogen development and the laying of undersea cable
- The cable will connect India to the UAE under 'One Sun, One World, One Grid initiative'
- COP28 – to be held in November in Dubai | President designate – Sultan Ahmed Al Jaber
- India has set a goal of becoming net zero by 2070
- UAE – Abu Dhabi – Dirham | President – Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan
- Ministry of Power and Ministry New & Renewable Energy: Raj Kumar Singh | Constituency – Arrah, Bihar
- MoS in Ministry of Power: Krishan Pal Gurjar



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