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29th March 2023

INTERNATIONAL

1) Northwestern Kagera region of Tanzania

- The Northwestern Kagera region of Tanzania has been declared an epidemic zone by the country's leaders after five people died and three others were diagnosed with Marburg viral disease (MVD) at a local hospital.

- The World Health Organization (WHO) has identified 161 individuals who are at risk of contracting the virus through contact tracing.

2) Saudi Arabian government

- The Saudi Arabian government has taken a significant step towards joining the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), a regional alliance dominated by China and Russia.

- During a cabinet meeting presided over by King Salman bin Abdulaziz, a memorandum was approved to initiate dialogue with the SCO.

- The decision to pursue membership was reportedly raised during a visit to Saudi Arabia by Chinese President Xi Jinping in December of last year.

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3) National Security Advisers

- The National Security Advisers of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation will convene in New Delhi, with China and Pakistan expected to attend virtually.

- Ajit Doval, the Indian National Security Adviser, will give the opening remarks, followed by discussions between SCO national security advisers and top officials.

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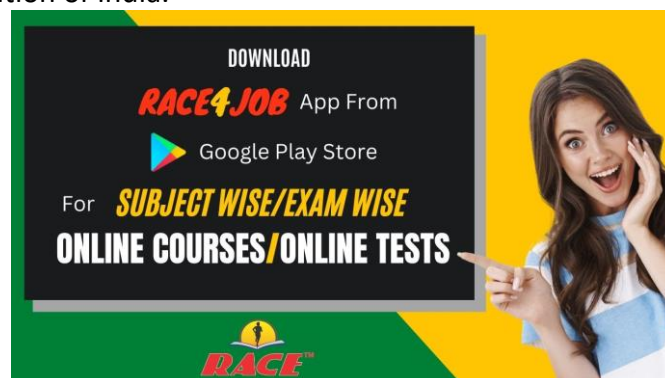
4) Indian and African army chiefs

- The inaugural joint conference between the Indian and African army chiefs is scheduled to take place in Pune, with Defense Minister Rajnath Singh as the guest of honor and Indian Army Chief General Manoj Pandey in attendance.
- This marks the first-ever conference of its kind between these nations, with 10 army chiefs and 31 representatives from African countries in attendance.
- Additionally, an exhibition under the Atmanirbhar Bharat initiative will be held to showcase defense products and target the African market.

NATIONAL

1) Unified Payments Interface

- From Starting from April 1, merchants carrying out transactions through the Unified Payments Interface using Prepaid Payment Instruments will be subjected to charges, according to a circular issued by the National Payments Corporation of India.



2) "MicroPay"

- Axis Bank, one of India's top private sector banks, has introduced a groundbreaking payment solution called "MicroPay" in collaboration with technical partners Ezetap by Razorpay and MyPinpad.

3) State Bank of India (SBI) has partnered with the NGO

- As part of its corporate social responsibility, the State Bank of India (SBI) has partnered with the NGO That's Eco Foundation to donate ₹48 lakh for the plantation of 32,000 tree saplings at Garden City University in Bengaluru.
- This initiative aims to contribute to the environment by increasing the green cover and promoting sustainable practices.

4) India is set to become a major exporter of defense equipment

- India is set to become a major exporter of defense equipment and materials, with exports projected to be worth Rs 35,000 to Rs 40,000 crore by 2026.

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- The announcement was made by Union minister Rajnath Singh during a speech at Symbiosis International University, where he emphasized the importance of self-reliance and creating an ecosystem that fosters self-confidence.
- Since adopting the Indianization program, India's defense exports have increased from Rs 900 crore in 2014 to Rs 15,000 crore to Rs 16,000 crore today. Singh expressed his pride in the country's defense forces, which are now meeting 80% of their needs through indigenous procurement.

5) Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority's

- The government increased the maximum age for Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority's (PFRDA) ombudsman from 65 to 70 years.
- The ombudsman is responsible for receiving, evaluating, and helping to resolve complaints or grievances that come under PFRDA regulations.

6) G20 Trade and Investment Working Group in Mumbai

- Over 100 delegates from various countries attended the first meeting of the G20 Trade and Investment Working Group in Mumbai.
- The participants engaged in two-panel discussions and visited the Bharat Diamond Bourse to learn about India's gem and jewelry industry. The delegates also took part in a Heritage Walk at the Gateway of India.

7) "Martians"

- The National Aeronautics and Space Administration is preparing four individuals to live on Mars on June 2023.
- The four "Martians" will be a part of NASA's human exploration trip on Mars, even though the American space agency has long sought to send humans to the neighbouring planet.
- Also, NASA has sending satellites, the InSight lander, a rover mission with the Perseverance rover, the Ingenuity small robotic helicopter, and related delivery systems, all of which are intended to provide the Red Planet with its first comprehensive examination.
- The four volunteers are a part of a 12-month project to get people ready for visiting Mars. When humans eventually land on Mars, they will do so in a habitat that replicates the circumstances there.

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APPOINTMENTS AND RESIGNATIONS

1) Upendra Kumar Sinha

- NDTV announced to the stock exchanges that Upendra Kumar Sinha, the former chairman of Securities Exchange Board of India, has been appointed as the non-executive chairperson and independent director of the NDTV board of directors. Additionally, Dipali Goenka, the CEO of Welspun India, has also been appointed as an independent director on the NDTV board.

- Mr. U.K. Sinha, who was the Chairman of SEBI from 2011 to 2017, previously served as the Joint Secretary in the Ministry of Finance, where he was responsible for overseeing the Banking and Capital Markets Divisions. He began his career as a member of the Indian Administrative Service in 1976 and holds both an M.Sc. and LLB degree. Ms. Dipali Goenka is the Chief Executive Officer and Managing Director of Welspun India Limited.

- She previously served as the chairperson of the ASSOCHAM Women's council and currently serves on the board of Consumption platform at the World Economic Forum. She holds a degree in Psychology and is an alumna of Harvard University.

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2) Pranav Haridasan

- Pranav Haridasan has been appointed as the new Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of Axis Securities for the next three years.

- B Gopkumar, who is currently the MD & CEO of Axis Securities, has been transferred to Axis Asset Management Company as MD & CEO. Pranav Haridasan has been appointed as the new Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of Axis Securities for the next three years.

- He is currently serving as Managing Director and Co-Head of Equities at Axis Capital, and has over 20 years of experience in financial markets, having worked with Citigroup Global Markets as Director and Head of India/ ASEAN Execution Services before joining Axis Capital.



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3) Lt. Manmeet Colon

- Lt. Manmeet Colon, who is of Indian origin and a Sikh woman officer, has recently taken up the position of assistant police chief in the state of Connecticut, becoming the first-ever person of Asian descent to hold the position.

- She has been a member of the New Haven Police Department (NHPD) for 15 years and was appointed as the city's third assistant police chief in an official ceremony.

BOOKS AND AUTHORS

1) 'Basu Chatterji: And Middle-of-the-Road Cinema'

- A new book titled 'Basu Chatterji: And Middle-of-the-Road Cinema' has been released, which chronicles the life and times of the veteran Indian filmmaker Basu Chatterjee.

- The book is written by Aniruddha Bhattacharjee, an award-winning author, and has been published by Penguin Random House India (PRHI).

- The book takes readers behind the scenes of some of Chatterjee's most memorable films, such as 'Chitchor', 'Sara Aakash', 'Khatta Meetha' and 'Baton Baton Mein'. It provides insights into Chatterjee's filmmaking style and the cultural and social context in which his films were made.

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AWARDS AND RECOGNITIONS

1) Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman

- The Foundation of SAARC Writers and Literature presented a unique literary award to Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman of Bangladesh for his trilogy of books, which includes The Unfinished Memoirs, The Prison Diaries, and the New China 1952.

- FOSWAL acknowledged Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's exceptional literary skills and awarded him for his outstanding literary excellence in the trilogy, according to the citation provided by the organization.



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2) Wildlife conservationist Aliya Mir

- The Union Territory has awarded wildlife conservationist Aliya Mir for her exceptional efforts in conservation. Aliya is the first woman from Jammu and Kashmir to work for Wildlife SOS and is the first woman in the region to receive this honour.
- She received the award from Lt. Manoj Sinha at the World Forestry Day celebrations hosted by the Jammu and Kashmir Collective Forests.
- Aliya was recognized for her remarkable contributions to wildlife conservation, including rescuing and releasing wild animals, caring for injured animals, and saving bears in Kashmir.

3) Children's Champion Award 2023

- Tapoban, an NGO based in Pathsala, Assam, which focuses on supporting children with special needs and autism, has been honored with the prestigious Children's Champion Award 2023 in the health and nutrition category.
- This award is presented by the Delhi Commission for Protection of Child Rights and acknowledges individuals and organizations that have made significant contributions to the welfare of children in various areas such as education, justice, health, nutrition, sports, and creative arts.

4) Perumal Murugan's novel 'Pyre'

- Perumal Murugan's novel 'Pyre', which deals with caste-based discrimination, has been nominated for the 2023 International Booker Prize longlist.
- Originally written in Tamil under the title 'Pukkuli', the book follows the story of a couple from different castes who flee their village, triggering a dark and ominous tale.
- The book was translated into English by Aniruddhan Vasudevan in 2016.

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