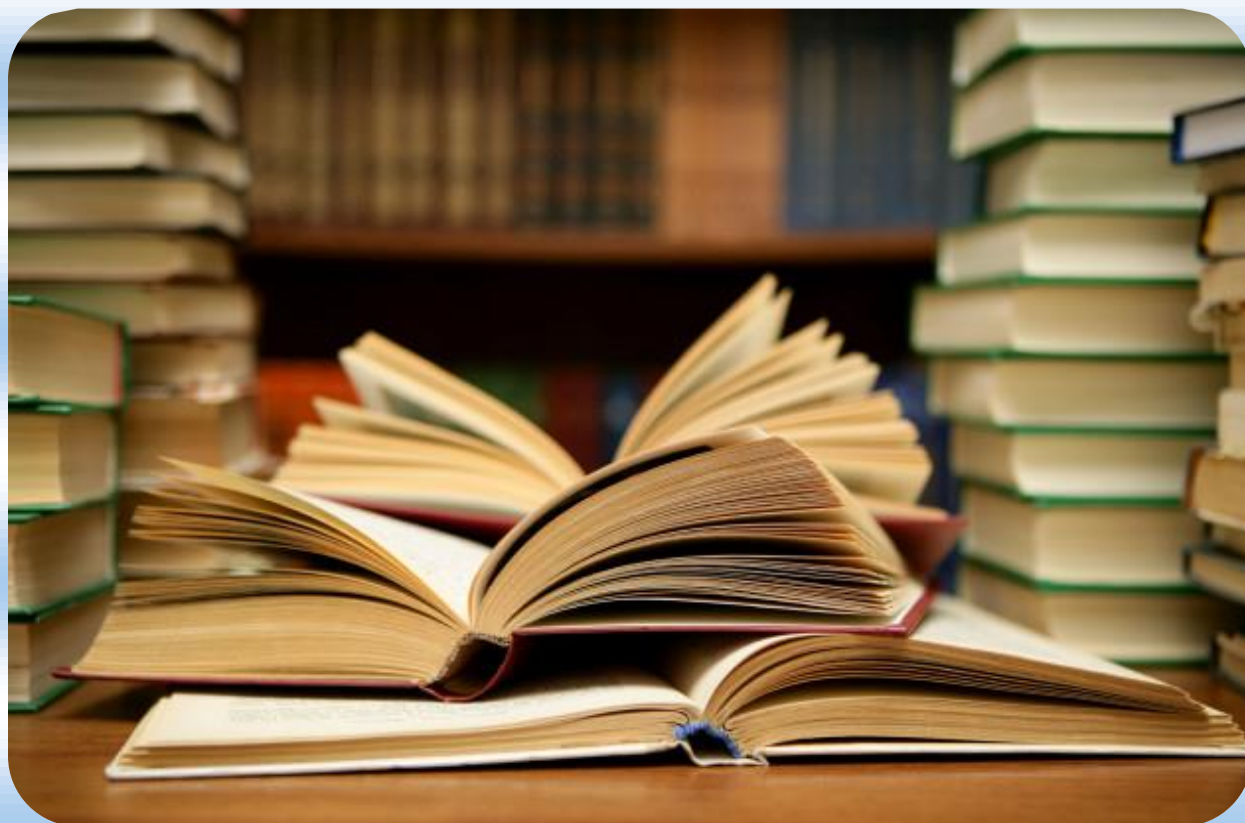


# LIBRARY & RESOURCE CENTER, NOIDA

## GENERAL KNOWLEDGE MONTHLY



# JANUARY-2023

# NATIONAL CURRENT AFFAIRS

## *Forex Reserves at \$562.9 bn; Fall by \$70 bn in 2022*

India's foreign exchange reserves fell by \$70.1 billion in 2022, data released by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) shows. The forex reserves stood at \$562.9 billion in the week ended December 30.



## *GST collections in December up by 15 percent to Rs 1.49 lakh cr*

India's goods and services tax receipts in December rose 15% year-on-year to Rs 1.49 lakh crore (\$18.07 billion), a government statement said on Sunday, reflecting strong economic activity during the festive season. Goods and services taxes brought in Rs 1.46 lakh crore in November. The gross GST revenue collected during December 2022 is Rs 1,49,507 crore, of which CGST is Rs 26,711 crore, SGST is Rs 33,357 crore, IGST is Rs 78,434 crore (including Rs 40,263 crore collected on import of goods) and Cess is Rs 11,005 crore (including Rs 850 crore collected on import of goods).

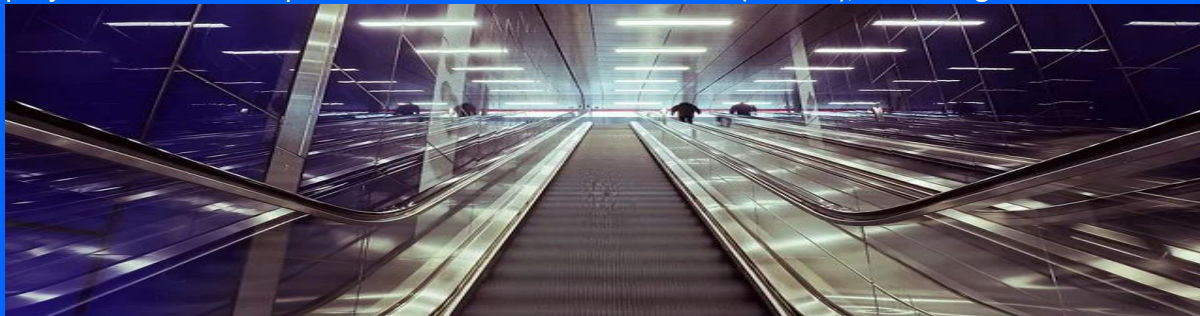
## *Koustav Chatterjee becomes India's 78th Grandmaster*

Koustav Chatterjee became India's 78th Grandmaster in MPL 59th National Senior Chess Championship in New Delhi on Saturday. The 19-year-old drew his game against GM Mitrabha Guha. Koustav cruised through the game.



### ***India's first underwater metro to become operation by December 2023***

India's Kolkata Metro Rail (KMRC) is set to complete the development of the country's first underwater metro service by December 2023. The upcoming project, called East-West Metro Corridor, will pass through the Hoogly river and link Howrah with Kolkata, reported ANI. The project will be developed at a cost of more than Rs80bn (\$967m), according to Times Now.



### ***Coffee Export From India Rose Almost 2% to 4 Lakh tonne***

Coffee shipments from India, Asia's third-largest producer and exporter, rose 1.66 per cent to 4 lakh tonne in 2022 on rise in instant coffee exports and re-exports, according to the Coffee Board. Exports stood at 3.93 lakh tonne in 2021. In value terms, coffee export was higher at Rs 8,762.47 crore in 2022 as against Rs 6,984.67 crore in the previous year. India ships both Robusta and Arabica varieties, besides instant coffee.



### ***'SMART' program for Ayurveda professionals launched to regulate and boost R&D in Ayurveda***

A special government initiative aimed to boost scientific research in healthcare areas through Ayurveda colleges and hospitals was launched on Monday. The Scope for Mainstreaming Ayurveda Research in Teaching Professionals (SMART)



### ***In 4:1 Majority Verdict, Supreme Court Finds no Flaw in Demonetisation Process***

A majority of four judges on a Constitution Bench of the Supreme Court on Monday found no flaw in the government's process to demonetise ₹500 and ₹1000 banknotes through a gazette notification issued on November 8, 2016. The sole woman judge, Justice B.V. Nagarathna, on the five-member Bench however disagreed with the majority, saying the government's notification issued under Section 26(2) of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) Act was unlawful.



### ***UPI Processes Record 7.82 bn Transactions in December, ends 2022 on a High***

India's flagship payment platform, the Unified Payments Interface (UPI), ended the 2022 calendar year on a high note as the volume of transactions touched a record 7.82 billion in December, amounting to Rs 12.82 trillion, again a record high. Data released by the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI), the umbrella body for retail digital payments in the country, showed volume of transactions in December was up 7.12 per cent compared to November, while value of transactions was up 7.73 per cent during the same period.

### ***President Droupadi Murmu Inaugurates Samvidhan Udyan in Jaipur***

President Droupadi Murmu arrived in Jaipur today on a two-day visit to Rajasthan. She inaugurated Samvidhan Udyan at Raj Bhavan in Jaipur. President Murmu will also inaugurate the Transmission System for Solar Energy Zones in Rajasthan and lay the foundation stone for one thousand Mega Watt Bikaner Solar Power Project virtually. She will also grace the launch of a National Campaign on 'RISE-Rising India through Spiritual Empowerment', organized by Brahma Kumaris. Tomorrow, the President will grace the inauguration of 18th National Jamboree of the Bharat Scouts and Guides at Pali, Rajasthan.

### ***Govt seeks to ban social media sites' promotion of online betting***

The Ministry of Electronics and IT (MeitY) has proposed to ban advertisements of online betting sites on social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram and YouTube, as per draft rules for online gaming released Monday. The Indian Express was the first to report, in October, on how these social media platforms were rife with such advertisements and that the government could soon intervene to curb them.



### ***India's Unemployment Rate Rises to 8.30% in Dec 2022***

India's unemployment rate rose to 8.30% in December, the highest in 16 months, from 8.00% in the previous month, data from the Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy (CMIE) showed on Sunday. The urban unemployment rate rose to 10.09% in December from 8.96% in the previous month, while the rural unemployment rate slipped to 7.44% from 7.55%, the data showed. Mahesh Vyas, managing director of the CMIE, said the rise in the unemployment rate was "not as bad as it may seem," as it came on top of a healthy increase in the labour participation rate, which shot up to 40.48% in December, the highest in 12 months.

### ***HDFC Bank collaborates with Microsoft as part of its digital transformation***

HDFC Bank announced that it is partnering with Microsoft in the next phase of its digital transformation journey and aims to unlock business value by transforming the application portfolio, modernising the data landscape, and securing the enterprise with Microsoft Cloud.



### ***Banks Report High Credit Growth with Indian Economy Showing Stability***

Two banks -- one government-owned and the other representing the private sector -- on Tuesday reported around 19-22% advances growth, reflecting improved demand for loans with the Indian economy showing stability despite global headwinds. Bank of Maharashtra said that its gross advances grew nearly 22% year-on-year to Rs 1.57 lakh crore, while privately owned Federal Bank reported 19% rise to Rs 1.71 lakh crore.

### ***50 Electric Buses launched in Delhi under FAME India Phase II scheme***

As many as 50 electric buses were launched in Delhi with support under the FAME India Phase II scheme of the Ministry of Heavy Industries, informed the government on Monday. In 2019, the government approved ₹10,000 crore for a period of three years. Out of total budgetary support, about 86 percent of the fund has been allocated for incentives so as to create demand for electric vehicles. Union minister for heavy industries Mahendra Nath Pandey said the government placed orders for 3,538 electric buses. Out of those, a total of 1,716 buses have been deployed so far.

### ***India Takes Over Leadership of the Asian Pacific Postal Union***

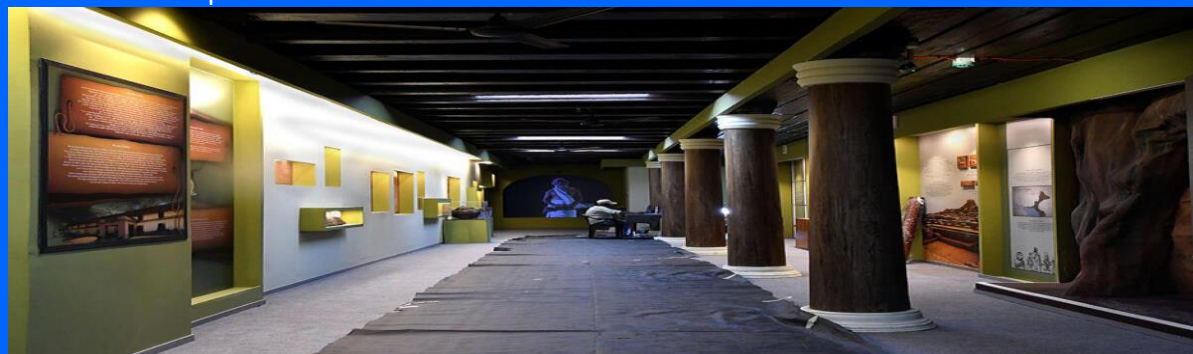
NEW DELHI: India will take over the leadership of the Asian Pacific Postal Union (APPU) from this month, the Ministry of Communications said in a statement. Following the successful elections held during the 13th APPU Congress held in Bangkok during August-September, Vinaya Prakash Singh, former Member (Personnel), Postal Services Board, will take over the charge of secretary general of the Union for a tenure of four years.

### ***Election Commission appointed Maithili Thakur as Bihar's state icon***

Folk singer Maithili Thakur was on Monday appointed the state icon for Bihar by the Election Commission. Thakur, trained in Indian classical and folk music, was recently selected for the Ustad Bismillah Khan Yuva Puraskar of the Sangeet Natak Akademi for her contribution to the folk music of Bihar for 2021. The ECI has approved the proposal of appointment of Maithili Thakur, folk singer as State Icon of Bihar, the letter sent to the Chief Electoral Officer of Bihar by the poll panel said. The singer will create awareness among the voters for their participation in the electoral process, a senior official of the state election commission said.

### ***World's first Palm-leaf Manuscript Museum in Kerala capital***

A treasure house of both obscure and celebrated tales of the erstwhile Travancore kingdom that became Asia's first to defeat any European power on Indian soil, the recently opened Palm leaf Manuscript Museum in the Kerala capital has further brightened the state's cultural and academic space.



### ***IIT Madras & DRDO tie-up for Advanced Defence Technologies***

IIT-Madras has created a 'centre of excellence' at a campus unit set up by the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) to develop advanced technologies for national defence and security. The interdisciplinary research group will bring in faculty and researchers from multiple departments for translational research. Called 'DRDO Industry Academia-Ramanujan Centre of Excellence' (DIA-RCoE), it will also work towards the 'Aatmanirbhar Bharat' goal in the defence sector, says a release from the institute.

### ***Pranesh M became India's 79th Grandmaster***

M Pranesh clinched the title in the Rilton Cup, the first tournament of the FIDE Circuit, here to become India's 79th chess Grandmaster. The 16-year-old Pranesh crossed the 2500-rating threshold and became a GM, having completed his three norms before the Rilton Cup.



### ***Ghaziabad-Pt Deen Dayal Upadhyay section becomes the longest fully ABS section of Indian Railways***

Indian Railways' Ghaziabad-Pandit Deen Dayal Upadhyay section has become the nation's longest fully Automatic Block Signalling (ABS) section. The 762 km long route has been fully automated. With its implementation, the increase in line capacity to run more train services will become possible. The Railways has planned to implement the project on existing high density train routes.



### ***Axis Bank Partners with OPEN to Launch a Fully Digital Current Account***

Credit and Finance for MSMEs: Private lender, Axis Bank announced joining hands with the digital banking fintech company, OPEN on Thursday to launch a digital current account for its customers including SMEs, freelancers, homepreneurs, influencers and others. The current account holders will get access to Axis bank's over 250 banking services along with OPEN's financial automation tools for business management including payments, accounting, payroll, compliance, expense management and other such services.

### ***SEBI Issues debt broker License to Zerodha-backed GoldenPi Technologies***

The Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) has issued a debt broker license to Bengaluru-based fintech firm GoldenPi Technologies. With the development, GoldenPi became the first online bond platform provider to receive a debt brokerage license from Sebi. Last year, the regulator introduced regulations for online debt trading platforms which stated that no company or individual shall act as an online bond platform provider without the certificate of registration as a stock broker under the SEBI Regulations, 2021.

### ***Kerala Becomes Country's First Fully Digital Banking State***

Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan on Saturday declared Kerala as the first state in the country to go fully digital in its banking service and said this recognition would boost the state economy. In an event held here, Vijayan said this achievement was possible due to social interventions through local self-government institutions along with infrastructure development and technological advances in the banking sector.

### ***Kerala Sets up Welfare Board to Provide Pension to MGNREGS Workers***

For the first time in the country, Kerala government has launched a welfare fund board for the workers registered for the MGNREGS and the state's urban job guarantee scheme — Ayyankali Urban Employment Guarantee Scheme. This will facilitate the workers to get a monthly pension from the board on they turn 60.



### ***Chetan Sharma reappointed as Chairman of BCCI's selection committee***

Weeks after the selection committee he headed was sacked, the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) reappointed former India pacer Chetan Sharma as the chairman of the five-member panel on Saturday. Shiv Sunder Das, Salil Ankola, Subroto Banerjee and S Sharath are the other members of the committee, which has collectively played 47 Tests and 95 ODIs. The BCCI Cricket Advisory Committee (CAC), comprising former India batsman Ashok Malhotra, Jatin Paranjpe and Sulakshana Naik, had shortlisted 11 individuals for personal interviews after receiving nearly 600 applications for the five-member selection panel.

### ***RS Sodhi steps down as Amul MD, Jayen Mehta takes interim charge***

R S Sodhi, managing director of Gujarat Cooperative Milk Marketing Federation (GCMMF), the owner of India's biggest dairy brand Amul, has stepped down with immediate effect. Chief operating officer Jayen Mehta has been named interim managing director. Sodhi, who worked for Amul since 1982, was at the helm of affairs since 2010. Under his leadership, GCMMF's turnover surged from Rs 9,774.2 crore in 2010-11 to Rs 46,481 crore in 2021-22. After stepping down, Sodhi told Business Standard: "I was given an extension for two years and now I have resigned from the post of MD of Amul."

### ***Some Lenders still Continuing with Libor Contracts, says RBI***

The Reserve Bank has expressed concern over lenders not fully complying with its advisory about robust "fallback clauses" in all financial contracts that reference Libor. In July 2021, the RBI issued an advisory to banks and financial institutions to cease entering into new financial contracts that reference Libor as a benchmark and instead use any widely accepted alternative reference rate (ARR) by December 2021. The issue figured in a meeting between RBI and senior executives of all top banks in December.

### ***Indian Tennis star Sania Mirza announced her retirement***

Sania Mirza has confirmed her retirement from professional Tennis. The former doubles World No. 1 champion has announced that she will retire at the WTA 1000 event in Dubai in February. Mirza spoke about her retirement in an interview with the Women's Tennis Association (WTA) website.



### ***Vivek Agnihotri's 'The Kashmir Files' selected for Oscars 2023***

Academy Awards 2023 nomination list has a new addition - 'The Kashmir Files'. Vivek Agnihotri, the director, took to Twitter to share the good news with his followers. "BIG ANNOUNCEMENT: #TheKashmirFiles has been shortlisted for #Oscars2023 in the first list of @TheAcademy. It's one of the 5 films from India. I wish all of them the very best. A great year for Indian cinema," he tweeted. The director also revealed that the 'TKF' cast has also bagged Oscar nominations in the 'Best Actor' category, and tagged actors Pallavi Joshi, Mithun Chakraborty, Darshan Kumar, and Anupam Kher.

### ***Vikas Purohit the new global business head of Meta in India***

Meta on Monday appointed Vikas Purohit as the Director of Global Business Group in India, the company said in a statement. Vikas Purohit will report to Arun Srinivas, the director and head of ads business for Meta in India. Welcoming Vikas Purohit, Srinivas said he joins the team to "shape the role that Meta platforms can play in enabling businesses, supporting India's economic growth, and building the digital advertising ecosystem of the country".

### ***IISC, Axis Bank Ink Pact For Maths, Computing Centre***

BENGALURU: The Indian Institute of Science (IISc) on Monday said it signed an MoU with Axis Bank to establish a centre for mathematics and computing. Spread over 1.6-lakh-square feet, the Centre will have state-of-the-art labs and programmes that will benefit faculty and students from more than twenty departments of IISc. It will host the new IISc BTech programme in mathematics & computing and the ongoing interdisciplinary PhD programme in mathematical sciences.

### ***RBI Lists 6 Rating Agencies for Banks' Capital Adequacy Purposes***

The Reserve Bank of India on Monday released a list of domestic credit rating agencies banks are advised to use for risk weighting their claims about capital adequacy. The central bank listed Acuite Ratings & Research Limited, Credit Analysis and Research Limited (CARE), CRISIL Ratings Limited, ICRA Limited, India Ratings and Research Private Limited, and INFOMERICS Valuation and Rating Pvt Ltd.

### ***BharatPe Gets in-principle nod from RBI to Operate as Online Payment Aggregator***

Fintech platform BharatPe on Tuesday said it has received in-principle authorisation from the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) to operate as an online Payment Aggregator (PA), as it fights a fierce court battle with its former co-founder and Managing Director Ashneer Grover over a Rs 88.6 crore fraud case. The company said that the in-principle approval has been awarded to Resilient Payments Private Ltd, a 100 per cent owned subsidiary of Resilient Innovations Private Ltd (BharatPe).

# INTERNATIONAL CURRENT AFFAIRS

## *India and Pakistan Exchange Lists of Nuclear Assets and Prison Inmates*

New Delhi: India and Pakistan exchanged lists of nuclear installations through their representatives in each other's capitals, for the 32nd time as part of an annual ritual that has been in practice for more than three decades. They also shared a list of prisoners held in each other's custody.



## *Inacio Lula da Silva Sworn in As the President of Brazil for the 3rd Time*

Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva took office on January 1 for a third term as Brazil's President, in a ceremony snubbed by outgoing leader Jair Bolsonaro, underlining the deep divisions the veteran leftist inherits.



## *Koneru Humpy won Silver at the World Chess Blitz Championship*

GM Koneru Humpy scripted yet another historic moment in Indian chess when she clinched a silver - the first ever for any Indian - in the the FIDE World Blitz Chess Championships in Almaty (Kazakhstan).



### ***Croatia Adopts Euro and Entered Europe's Borderless Zone***

Croatia has switched to the euro and entered Europe's passport-free zone – two important milestones for the country after joining the European Union (EU) nearly a decade ago. At midnight on Sunday, the Balkan nation bid farewell to its kuna currency and became the 20th member of the eurozone. It is now the 27th nation in the Schengen zone, the world's largest passport-free travel area, which enables more than 400 million people to move freely around its members. "It is the season of new beginnings.

### ***Kevin McCarthy named as new speaker of the US House of Representation***

In a historic post-midnight 15th round of voting, Republican leader Kevin McCarthy on Saturday (January 7) finally became the Speaker of the United States House of Representatives after he successfully persuaded the hard right rebels of his party to support him.



### ***Indian-origin Manpreet Monica Singh sworn in as 1st female Sikh judge of USA***

Indian-origin Manpreet Monica Singh on Friday became the first female Sikh judge in the US. She was sworn in as a judge of the Harris County Civil Court at Law No. 4 in Texas. "Mama we made it! It is a 'true honor' to rep the people of Harris County as a Sikh civil court judge. Thank you to everyone for making this a historic moment, one that someday won't be an uncommon event - because there will be a judiciary that includes countless Sikh people and other minorities. I'm ready to put my 2 decades of experience to good use," she wrote in a Facebook post.

### ***Gabon names Vice-President and new Prime Minister***

Gabon's President Ali Bongo on Monday appointed the country's first female Prime Minister Rose Christiane Ossouka Raponda to the role of Vice-President and named a new PM to replace her, his secretary general said. Ossouka Raponda, 59, was appointed in July 2020 after her predecessor stepped down. She was Defence Minister before that. She had to navigate a delicate political scene as Prime Minister after a coup attempt in 2019 while Bongo was on prolonged medical leave following a stroke.

### ***Start Me Up UK Space Mission That Failed***

Britain's attempt to become the first European nation to launch satellites into space ended in bitter disappointment early on Tuesday when Virgin Orbit said its rocket had suffered an anomaly that prevented it from reaching orbit.



### ***Henley Passport Index 2023, Japan retained its top position***

Japan has retained its position as the most favourable passport in the world, allowing visa-free entry to 193 global destinations, according to the latest Henley Passport Index, which the country tops for the fifth consecutive year. Singapore and South Korea came in a joint second on the ranking, followed by Germany and Spain, and then a slew of other European nations. The US was among the top 22, with visa-free access to 186 places.

### ***Jason Moo appointed as CEO of Bank of Singapore***

Bank of Singapore appoints Jason Moo as chief executive officer, according to a statement, effective March 6. Moo will replace Vincent Choo, a board member who assumed the role of interim CEO on January 1 following the retirement of ex-CEO Bahren Shaari on December 31. Moo, a Singapore national, has more than 25 years of experience in private banking, wealth management and capital markets.

### ***Belinda Clark becomes first women cricketer to have statue cast at Sydney Cricket Ground***

Australia's Belinda Clark has become the first female cricketer to have a statue cast in her honour, a bronze sculpture of the trailblazing former captain unveiled outside Sydney Cricket Ground on Thursday.



### ***India Identifies two Lithium and one Copper mine in Argentina for a Possible Acquisition***

India has identified two lithium mines and one copper mine in Argentina, and it may acquire or lease them soon, a report by BusinessLine (BL) said. In November 2022, the Indian government sent a team of geologists to South America to "assess potential lithium deposits".



### ***India Surpasses Japan to become 3rd Largest Auto Market Globally***

India eclipsed Japan in auto sales last year, according to the latest industry data, making it the third-largest auto market for the first time, Nikkei Asia reported on Friday. India's sales of new vehicles totalled at least 4.25 million units, based on preliminary results, topping the 4.2 million sold in Japan.



### ***Taiwan Passes its Chips Act, Offers Tax Credits to Chipmakers***

Taiwanese lawmakers have passed new rules that let local chip firms turn 25% of their annual research and development expenses into tax credits, part of efforts to keep cutting-edge semiconductor technologies at home and maintain the island's technology leadership. Officials there have repeatedly said they will ensure the latest chip technologies remain in Taiwan, a point that has been reaffirmed by executives at Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Co. and other local chip giants. While Taiwan's assisted local chipmakers in the past with infrastructure construction and other measures, the island is now stepping up its efforts.

