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2nd & 3rd April 2023

INTERNATIONAL

1) Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership

- In a significant development for post-Brexit Britain, the UK has reached its largest trade deal yet.
- The country is set to join the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP), which covers a market of around 500 million people with a combined GDP of £9tn.

2) Norwegian company Norled

- Norwegian company Norled has successfully launched the world's first ferry that runs on liquid hydrogen. The vessel, called MF Hydra, is a hybrid that uses both batteries and liquid hydrogen fuel cells.
- It underwent sea trials for two weeks after initial testing at Hjelmeland quay earlier this year. The Norwegian Maritime Authority (NMA) has given final approval for the ferry to operate.
- This milestone achievement is a significant step towards reducing greenhouse gas emissions in the maritime industry, as hydrogen fuel cells produce only clean water as a byproduct.



3) Georgia Assembly has passed a resolution that condemns Hinduphobia

- Georgia Assembly has passed a resolution that condemns Hinduphobia and anti-Hindu bigotry, making it the first state in America to take such legislative action.
- The resolution highlights that Hinduism is a diverse religion with over 1.2 billion adherents worldwide, and it promotes values of acceptance, mutual respect, and peace.
- The resolution recognizes the contributions of the American-Hindu community in various fields, such as science, medicine, engineering, and hospitality.
- Additionally, the resolution acknowledges the contributions of yoga, meditation, ayurveda, music, and art, which have enriched American culture.

4) Foreign Trade Policy (FTP) 2023

- The Ministry of External Affairs declared that trade between India and Malaysia can now be conducted using the Indian Rupee (INR) as a mode of settlement, in addition to other currencies.

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- This announcement follows the launch of the Foreign Trade Policy (FTP) 2023 by the Ministry of Commerce the day before, which reaffirmed the government's determination to establish the rupee as a global currency.

- This move is expected to boost bilateral trade between the two countries and reduce transaction costs for businesses.

NATIONAL

1) Vande Bharat Express

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the Vande Bharat Express train service between Rani Kamalapati Railway Station in Madhya Pradesh and Hazrat Nizamuddin Railway Station in Delhi.

- The train will cover a distance of 701 kilometres in 7 hours and 30 minutes and will operate on all days except Saturday. It will stop at Veerangana Laxmibai Jhansi, Gwalior, and Agra.

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2) India Post Payments Bank

- India Post Payments Bank (IPPB) launched its WhatsApp Banking Services in New Delhi, allowing customers to conveniently access banking services on their mobile phones.

- The new WhatsApp Banking channel will enable customers to connect with the bank on WhatsApp and access a range of services, including requesting doorstep services, finding the nearest Post Office, and more.

3) 10th annual SLINEX-2023 bilateral maritime exercise between India and Sri Lanka

- The 10th annual SLINEX-2023 bilateral maritime exercise between India and Sri Lanka has commenced in Colombo, Sri Lanka.

- The exercise is divided into two phases, the Harbour Phase and the Sea Phase, each lasting three days. The Indian Navy is represented by INS Kiltan and INS Savitri, while the Sri Lanka Navy is represented by SLNS Vijayabahu and SLNS Samudura.

- In addition, the exercise also includes participation from the Indian Navy's Chetak helicopter and Dornier Maritime Patrol Aircraft, as well as Sri Lanka Air Force's Dornier and BEL 412 helicopters.

- The exercise will also feature the Special Forces of both navies working together.

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4) India's unemployment rate

- India's unemployment rate has risen to a three-month high of 7.8% in March 2023, according to the latest data released by the Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy (CMIE).
- This marks an increase from the 7.2% unemployment rate recorded in February and represents a setback for the country's efforts to revive its economy in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic.

5) Goods and Services Tax

- The Goods and Services Tax (GST) revenue collection for March 2023 has increased by 13% to Rs 1.60 lakh crore, according to data released by the Ministry of Finance.
- This marks the third consecutive month of increase in GST collections and is a positive sign for India's economy, which has been grappling with the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.



APPOINTMENTS AND RESIGNATIONS

1) Vice-Admiral Sanjay Jasjit Singh

- On April 2nd, Vice-Admiral Sanjay Jasjit Singh assumed the position of Vice-Chief of Naval Staff (VCNS) as part of a series of high-level changes in the Indian Navy.
- Vice Admiral Singh graduated from the National Defence Academy in Pune and joined the Indian Navy's executive branch in 1986. Over his 37-year career, he has served on various types of ships and held many leadership roles, including Assistant Chief of Naval Staff (CSNCO), Flag Officer Commanding of the Western Fleet, Commandant Naval War College, and Controller Personnel Services.
- Prior to his current position as VCNS, he was Deputy Chief of Integrated Defence Staff (Operations). In recognition of his distinguished service, he was awarded the Nao Sena Medal in 2009 and the Ati Vishist Seva Medal in 2020.

SPORTS

1) Russian tennis star Daniil Medvedev

- Russian tennis star Daniil Medvedev claimed his fourth title of the year by defeating Jannik Sinner in a closely-contested final match in Miami Opens 2023.



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- Medvedev, who was once the top-ranked player in the world, has now won 24 out of his last 25 matches, including his latest victory at the prestigious Miami Open.

- The win marked his first-ever title win at the Miami Open. Medvedev clinched his fifth Masters 1000 title and 19th title overall by beating Sinner, who has also been in impressive form this season, with a scoreline of 7-5, 6-3. Interestingly, Medvedev has won each of his 19 titles in different tournaments. This was also his first Masters 1000 title since winning in Toronto back in 2021.

2) Red Bull's Max Verstappen

- Red Bull's Max Verstappen has claimed his first Australian Grand Prix 2023. Seven-time world champion Lewis Hamilton, who drove superbly in his Mercedes, finished second, while Aston Martin's Fernando Alonso filled third spot on the podium.

- Verstappen had appeared to be coasting to victory with an eight-second lead when debris from Kevin Magnussen's Haas forced the second of three red flags issued in the race with three laps remaining.



BOOKS AND AUTHORS

1) "Courting India: England, Mughal India and the Origins of Empire"

- "Courting India: England, Mughal India and the Origins of Empire" is a book written by Nandini Das, a professor of English Literature at the University of Liverpool.

- The book explores the complex relationship between England and Mughal India in the early modern period, focusing on the cultural and literary exchanges that took place between these two worlds.

IMPORTANT DAYS

1) World Autism Awareness Day

- Autism Speaks, an organization that advocates for individuals with autism, observes World Autism Month every April, starting with World Autism Awareness Day on April 2nd.

- This year marks the 16th anniversary of the day, which is recognized by the United Nations and aims to promote awareness and advocacy for the rights of people with autism.

- Autism is a condition that usually begins during childhood and can continue into adulthood.



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2) Prevention of Blindness Week

- The Government of India organises the Prevention of Blindness Week from April 1-7 every year to raise awareness about the causes and prevention of blindness.
- The annual event aims to support individuals with visual impairments, and to promote access to eye care services. The Government of India organises several events to highlight many factors that cause blindness. Several departments work towards bringing inclusivity to the blind, and their disability.
- The week-long campaign aims to raise awareness about the causes of blindness, its prevention, and treatment. Various organizations, including government and non-governmental organizations, conduct activities such as eye camps, free eye checkups, and awareness programs during the week.
- Several institutional aspects such as improving employment opportunities for the blind, building more eye care health institutions, and covering various health-related topics remain in focus at various events and campaigns organised during the week. On this Prevention of Blindness week, here is all you need to know about the history and significance of the observance.

OBITUARY

1) Salim Durani has passed away

- Salim Durani, a former Indian cricketer known for his striking looks, humor, and ability to hit powerful sixes, passed away at the age of 88.
- Salim Durani, who was originally from Kabul, Afghanistan, was a talented cricketer known for his explosive batting and left-arm orthodox bowling. He played in 29 Tests for India and played a significant role in India's 2-0 victory over England in a five-match Test series in 1961-62.
- Durani was especially influential in India's victories at Calcutta and Madras, where he took eight and 10 wickets, respectively. He was renowned for his ability to hit the ball out of the park and was considered an all-rounder due to his talent with both bat and ball.

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