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DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS 03-12-2024

NATIONAL NEWS

EPFO Approves Amnesty Scheme for Employers

The Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO) has introduced the Amnesty Scheme 2024, aimed at encouraging compliance among employers.

This initiative provides a limited-time opportunity for employers to deposit past provident fund dues without penalties.

Objectives and Benefits

Voluntary Compliance: Employers can disclose and rectify past non-compliance without legal or financial repercussions.

Formalization of Workforce: Encourages more employers to bring workers under the formal social security framework.

Ease of Declaration: Requires only a simple online declaration to avail of benefits.

Boost to Employment Linked Incentive (ELI) Scheme: Facilitates implementation of ELI announced in the FY25 budget to promote employment generation and job formalization.

The Amnesty Scheme 2024 provides confidence to employers, especially MSMEs, to enroll without fear of penalties.

Amendments to interest and claim processing improve member benefits and grievance redressal.

Investments in diverse instruments like ETFs, InvITs, and REITs aim to optimise returns for EPFO's interest account, benefiting members.

Kolkata International Film Festival Designates France as a Focus Country

The 30th edition of the Kolkata International Film Festival (KIFF) will begin on December 4, 2024 and run until December 11, 2024.

The festival will feature 175 films from 29 countries, showcasing a diverse range of cinematic works.

The festival will include special screenings of classic Indian and international films.

France is the focus country of this year's festival, with a selection of 21 French films.

The French selection includes contemporary films by women directors, French classics, short films, and documentaries.

The festival will also feature films screened with projections from their original celluloid format, including Chokh and Debsishu by Utpalendu Chakraborty.

The festival will honour centenary tributes to renowned film personalities such as: Tapan Sinha, Marlon Brando, Akkineni Nageswara Rao, Talat Mahmood, Mohammed Rafi, and Sergei Parajanov.

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

16th COP of the UNCCD Commences in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia

The 16th session of the Conference of the Parties (COP) of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) commenced in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia on 2 December 2024.

The COP to the UNFCCD is held every two years, and the 15th COP was held in May 2022 in Abidjan, Cote d'Ivoire.

The UNCCD is one of three global agreements reached at the 1992 Rio Earth Summit: the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD).

The 16th Conference of Parties of the UNCCD is being organised by the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification and is hosted by the Saudi Arabian Government.

The theme of the 16th COP of the UNCCD is Our Land. Our Future.

The Indian delegation at the 16th CoP of the UNCCD is being jointly led by the Union Minister for Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Bhupendra Yadav and the chief minister of Haryana, Nayab Singh Saini.

The United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) is the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), also known as the Earth Summit, organised by the United Nations Environment Programme in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil from 3-14 June 1992.

The Convention entered into force on 26 December 1996 and currently has 197 parties.

The UNCCD aims to stop desertification and land degradation worldwide. Land degradation and increasing desertification are among the major causes of biodiversity destruction and climate change.

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

Skylark Teams Up with Fortinet to Launch Cybersecurity Centre of Excellence

Skylark Information Technologies partnered with Fortinet to establish India’s first Operational Technology (OT) Centre of Excellence (CoE) in Chennai.

The CoE aims to provide advanced security solutions specifically tailored for OT environments, supporting industries such as manufacturing, healthcare, logistics, utilities, and critical infrastructure like power, oil and gas, and transportation.

The lab will support digital transformation across various industries, addressing cybersecurity challenges arising from the integration of OT and IT systems.

The CoE will offer a hands-on lab environment where OT customers can simulate real-world use cases and develop cybersecurity solutions.

It provides a platform to explore integrated cybersecurity measures, reducing complexities in OT security and helping enhance digital transformation efficiency.

Skylark's initiative to open an OT security CoE reflects a commitment to protecting industrial operations and critical infrastructure from cyber threats.

The facility allows customers to experience Fortinet’s OT security platform, enabling better management and enhanced security for OT environments.

DEFENCE

1st Indo-Cambodian ‘CINBAX” Exercise

India-Cambodia's first Joint Tabletop Exercise, codenamed ‘CINBAX,’ commenced at the Foreign Training Node, Pune, Maharashtra, on 1 December 2024.

The first CINBAX exercise between the Armies of both countries will be held in Pune from 1 to 18 December 2024.

The exercise is part of the military diplomacy of both countries to strengthen friendly ties between the two countries, especially military-to-military ties.

During the CINBAX exercise, Indian-made weapons systems and equipment will be displayed to the Cambodians to promote the Indigenous defence capabilities of India.

In the first CINBAX military exercise, 20 members of the Indian Army's Infantry brigade and an equal number of Cambodian Army personnel are participating.

The CINBAX exercise will be conducted in three phases so that the participants and personnel of

both armies will understand the practical issues involved in joint counter-terrorism operations.

Phase I will focus on preparing and orienting participants for counter-terrorism operations during UN peacekeeping missions.

Phase II will involve the conduct of the Table Top exercises and

Phase III will involve the finalisation of plans and summing up.

Indian Army Commence 2024 Harimau Shakti Exercise

India and Malaysia commenced the bilateral Joint Military Exercise “Harimau Shakti” on 2 December 2024 at Bentong camp, Pahang district, Malaysia. In 2023, the Indian Army hosted the exercise at its Umroi Cantonment in Meghalaya.

The 2024 edition of the annual bilateral exercise will be held from 2 to 15 December 2024.

The first annual bilateral military exercise, Harimau Shakti, between the Indian Army contingent and the Malaysian Army contingent was held in October 2012 in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

The joint combat exercise aims to create greater synergy and interoperability between the two armed forces.

The exercise will boost friendly military ties between the two countries and enhance their capability to undertake joint counter-insurgency operations in jungle terrain.

The exercise will be conducted in two phases.

Phase I—The first phase will focus on cross-training between both Armies, including lectures, demonstrations, and practice of various drills in jungle terrain.

Phase II- Both armies will take an active part in a simulated exercise, wherein troops will execute various drills, including Anti- Ambush, Occupation of Harbour, and Carrying out Recce Patrol, Ambush and an Attack on an area taken over by the terrorists.

AWARDS & PRIZES

Indira Gandhi Prize for Peace, Disarmament, and Development 2023

The Indira Gandhi Prize for Peace, Disarmament, and Developmentfor 2023 was awarded to Daniel Barenboim, a world-renowned pianist and conductor, and Ali Abu Awwad, a Palestinian peace activist.

This prestigious honour highlights their exceptional efforts in fostering peace and non-violence across cultural and political divides.

Daniel Barenboim: Building Bridges Through Music

He was recognized for using music as a powerful medium to promote understanding and harmony across cultures.

His musical initiatives serve as tools to reduce cultural and political tensions, demonstrating the unifying power of art.

Ali Abu Awwad: A Champion of Non-Violence

He was honored for his peace-building efforts through his organisation, Roots, which fosters dialogue between Palestinians and Israelis.

Despite personal tragedy, including the loss of his brother in the conflict, Awwad advocates for reconciliation over revenge.

SPORTS

2024 Syed Modi International Badminton Tournament

The Indian badminton ace PV Sindhu and Lakshya Sen, respectively, won the women's and men's titles of the 2024 Syed Modi International badminton tournament.

It was PV Sindhu's first BWF title since the 2022 Singapore Open title.

The USD 2.10 Lakh prize money BWF (Badminton World Federation) World Tour 300 Syed Modi International badminton tournament was held at the Babu Banarsi Das Indoor Stadium in Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh from 26 November -1 December 2024.

In the final, Lakshya Sen defeated Singapore's Jia Heng Jason Teh 21-6, 21-7.

PV Sindhu defeated Chinese player Wu Luo Yu 21-14, 21-16 in the final to winSyed Modi International Badminton singles title.

2nd Indian Chess Player to Achieve 2800 Elo Rating

Grand Master Arjun Erigasi has become the second Indian chess player and 16th in the world to achieve 2800 Elo rating points in classical chess.

The 21-year-old Indian is the second India after Vishwanathan Anand to achieve 2800 Elo rating points.

The 21-year-old Arjun Erigasi is currently ranked number 4 by FIDE, after Grand Master Magnus Carlsen, Grand Master Fabiano Caruana, and Grand Master Hikaru Nakamura.

He won the individual gold medal at the 45th FIDE Chess Olympiad, held in Budapest, Hungary, from 10 to 23 September 2024.

Erigasi was also instrumental in the Indian men's team performance which won the gold at the 45h Chess Olympiad.

Elo rating was devised by an American physics professor and chess player, Arpad Elo.

The Elo rating system has been designed to rate the strength of a chess player.

The Elo rating system was officially adopted by FIDE in 1970.

IMPORTANT DAYS

National Pollution Control Day

National Pollution Control Day 2024 is observed on the 2nd of December 2024.

National Pollution Control Day is observed to create awareness about pollution which is causing harm to our environment and to living beings.

It is nationally observed for the remembrance of an Industrial accident that took place in Bhopal which took thousands of lives in 1984.

The Bhopal gas tragedy happened on the night of 2nd and 3rd December in the year 1984 because of the unintentional discharge of the poisonous chemical known as Methyl Isocyanate (also called MIC) as well as some other chemicals released from the Union Carbide Chemical Plant positioned in the city.

Nearly 25000 people died due to the release of Poisonous gas and it is reported as one of the biggest Industrial Pollution disasters that took place in history.

International Day for the Abolition of Slavery

International Day for the Abolition of Slavery 2024 is observed on the 2nd of December 2024.

The International Day for the Abolition of Slavery focuses on eradicating modern forms of slavery like trafficking, sexual exploitation, child labour, forced marriage, and forced recruitment of children into armed conflict.

The International Labor Organization puts the number of victims of modern slavery at 40 million worldwide.

From past times to the present, slavery has spanned various nations, civilizations, and religions. Similarly, victims of slavery hailed from a wide range of races and religious backgrounds.

ILO has adopted a legally binding Protocol designed to strengthen global efforts to eliminate forced labour, which entered into force in November 2016.