December 23rd news:

International:

North Korean sanctions get unanimous support from United Nations Security Council

The United Nations Security Council has voted unanimously in favour of new tough sanctions on North Korea that will cut oil supplies vital for Pyongyang's missile and nuclear programs. The resolution was drafted by the United States in response to last month's test-firing of a ballistic missile said to be capable of reaching the US mainland.

Nearly 90 per cent of refined petroleum product exports to North Korea would be banned under the resolution, with a cap of 500,000 barrels a year.

In what diplomats said was a last-minute change, the resolution also demands the repatriation of North Koreans working abroad within 24 months, instead of 12 months as first proposed.

Crude oil supplies to North Korea would also be capped at 4 million barrels a year. The US has been calling on China to limit its oil supply to its neighbour and ally.

The Security Council voted 15 to 0 to pass the resolution, Japan's ambassador to the UN said. Japan holds the presidency of the Security Council this month.

National:

India's First design University Opens in Haryana

India's first and only design university, ' the World University of Design' opened its campus at Sonipat, Haryana. The University is promoted by Om Parkash Bansal Educational and Social Welfare Trust of Mandi Gobindgarh, Punjab.

The university is currently located in a sprawling lush green picturesque campus with the state-of-the-art infrastructure and world-class facilities. WUD is India's first university dedicated to education in the creative domain.

Bilateral:

Loan Agreement Signed Between India & Germany for Pare Hydroelectric Plant Project

A loan agreement has been signed between India and Germany for providing additional funding of EUR 20 million for the Pare Hydroelectric Plant project under Indo-German Bilateral Development Cooperation.

The objective of the project is the generation of hydroelectric power for the socio-economic development of the North Eastern region.

The government of Germany signed a loan agreement with North Eastern Electric Power Corporation (NEEPCO) for providing EUR 80 million with the government of India's guarantee for the Pare Hydroelectric Plant project.

India-China boundary talks 'positive', says Ministry

Yet again the issue of settling the boundary question between India and China remained where it has been since the inception the Special Representatives' dialogue mechanism in 2003 without any tangible political outcome.

The 20th round of Special Representatives' talks was held on 22nd December between National Security Advisor Ajit Doval and Yang Jiechi, Chinese State Councillor and Member of Politburo of Communist Party of China's Central Committee.

Both Doval and Yang are the designated Special Representatives of their respective governments on the boundary settlement issue.

This was the first such meeting since both sides came out of a bitter military face-off atop Doklam plateau in the tri-junction region of India-China-Bhutan.

The MEA also highlighted that until such time the boundary issue is settled, it is critical both sides adhere to "peace and tranquility in the border areas".

It also said that both Special Representatives also swapped ideas on various confidence building measures. However, it was not clear what exactly those measures were as the statement did not mention those.

It seems that the Chinese side urged India to review its decision of boycotting the multi-billion dollar infrastructure project of 'One Belt One Road' (OBOR). India is opposed to the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), a section of OBOR, which cuts across Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK) and India considers it to be a disputed region

China also raised the issue of the 73-day long Doklam standoff that brought both countries almost on the brink of a skirmish. However, apart from the boundary issue, both officials also discussed other bilateral issues and vowed to maintain regular contact.

Economy:

Centre launches new rural financial inclusion project, DARPAN

The Union Minister of Communications, Manoj Sinha on 21st December launched DARPAN – "Digital Advancement of Rural Post Office for A New India" Project to improve the quality of service, add value to services and achieve "financial inclusion" of un-banked rural population.

He said, the goal of the IT modernisation project with an outlay of Rs. 1,400 crore is to provide a low power technology solution to each Branch Postmaster (BPM) which will enable each of approximately

1.29 lakhs Branch Post Offices (BOs) to improve the level of services being offered to rural customers across all the states.

Sinha said that as on date, 43,171 Branch Post Offices have migrated under the "DARPAN" project with the aim of financial inclusion to rural population and it is targeted to complete the project by March, 2018.

The project will increase the rural reach of the Department of Posts and enable BOs to increase traffic of all financial remittances, savings accounts, Rural Postal Life Insurance, and Cash Certificates; improve mail operations processes by allowing for automated booking and delivery of accountable article; increase revenue using retail post business; provide third party applications; and make disbursements for social security schemes such as MGNREGS (National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme).

As part of IT modernisation project, the Department of Posts (DoP) has carried out business process reengineering across various functional areas and has created To-Be processes that will enable it to achieve these objectives.

As an achievement, Department of Posts has established 991 ATMs across the country, which are interoperable with other banks and the common people has directly benefited with the wide network of Department of Posts especially in rural areas.

Till now, 1,12,85,217 transactions have been carried out on the DOP's ATMs out of which 70,24,214 transactions have been done by the non-DOP customers. Department of Posts is the only Government player in this space.

Sports:

Birmingham to Host Commonwealth Games in 2022

The Birmingham city will host the Commonwealth Games in 2022. The 2022 Commonwealth Games were originally given to Durban in 2015, but the South African city was stripped of the event this year because of financial difficulties. The multisports event was last in Britain in 2014 when it was held in Glasgow. Before that, Manchester hosted in 2002.

Rohit Sharma Created Records Twenty-20

India beat Sri Lanka by 88 runs in the second T20 International to take an unassailable 2-0 lead in the three-match series in Indore on 22nd December. Chasing a victory target of 261 runs, Sri Lanka were all out for 172 runs in 17.2 overs. The records in the match, created by Rohit Sharma…

➢ Opening India's innings, Rohit Sharma and KL Rahul were responsible for a stand of 165 runs which is the highest for India for any wicket in T20 matches.
➢ Rohit Sharma 35 ball hundred was joint fastest century in Twenty20, the other being of David Miller of South Africa.

> ➤ Rohit Sharma also became the first Indian captain to score a century in T-20. He also became the first Indian player to hit 10 or more sixes in both ODIs and T20s.

Persons in news:

Salvi: The union government appointed Justice U D Salvi as officiating chairperson of the National Green Tribunal (NGT) following the superannuation of Justice Swatanter Kumar. He will remain in the saddle until his retirement on February 13, 2018. The selection panel is headed by the Chief Justice of India or his nominee, with other members recommended by or from the Environment Ministry.

Vijay Rupani: Vijay Rupani is set to take charge as Gujarat's chief minister for a second time. Nitin Patel will continue in his role as deputy chief minister.

Rupani, who won the Assembly polls by a margin of over 50,000 votes from the Rajkot West seat, was unanimously elected leader of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) legislature party at a meeting on 22nd December, which was attended by all the MLAs. Rupani and Patel said they would continue to work together to ensure the development of Gujarat.

Forbes rich list: Bollywood star Salman Khan has been ranked the numero uno on the sixth Forbes India Celebrity 100 List. Shah Rukh Khan and India's cricket captain Virat Kohli took the second and third spot, respectively, with actor Priyanka Chopra being the only female celebrity on the top 10 list.

The 2017 Forbes India Celebrity 100 List rankings are based on the estimates of entertainment-related earnings of celebrities. The period under consideration is October 1, 2016, to September 30, 2017.

Fifty one-year-old Salman Khan grabbed the top spot for the second successive year, despite the subdued box-office performance of *Tubelight* .

The actor earned Rs. 232.83 crore, backed by endorsements of several consumer-facing brands. In fact, his earnings constitute 8.67 per cent of the total earnings – Rs. 2,683 crore – of the top 100 celebrities for the year.

Shah Rukh Khan, with Rs. 170.5 crore, also retained his position at No 2, as did India's cricket captain, Virat Kohli, with Rs. 100.72 crore, at No 3. But although the top three held on to their ranks, their cumulative earnings declined by almost 20 per cent, down to Rs. 504.05 crore, compared to last year's total of Rs. 626.52 crore.

The revised methodology this year, focusing only on celebrity earnings (compared to the previous combination of fame and earnings), witnessed increased representation from the prolific South Indian film industry.

There are 13 actors from the South this year against last year's 11. The number of Bollywood actors is down from 35 to 33, reducing their cumulative earnings by 13 per cent compared to the previous year.

Shuttler PV Sindhu (Rs. 57.25 crore) was the highest money gainer in percentage terms, as her total earnings soared nearly 17 times, propelled by several brand endorsements following her silver medal at

the 2016 Rio Olympics. There is only one woman in the list, Priyanka Chopra (No 7; Rs. 68 crore), as she continues to make her mark internationally.